

CONVERSATION THERAPY

By Bradley Hayward

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CHARACTERS

MISS WHITTLE	daffy art teacher
MINDY	17, self-assured and pretty
CORT	17, cocky athlete
WOODY	16, talkative do-gooder
LILY	17, radical activist
JAYNE	18, has multiple personalities
KYLE	17, shy, with a speech impediment
BETTY	tyrannical school superintendent
LETTY	the same as Betty, but worse
NETTY	the same as Netty, but even worse yet

SETTING

A high school psychologist's room. It is very white. There is a table with a white cloth on it, many folding chairs, an uncomfortable sofa and a desk. The surroundings are overly clean. A plastic plant here and there is an attempt to make the room homey, but the sterility of the room cannot be tamed.

SOUND EFFECT

School bell

PROPS LIST

Stack of notebooks
Container of Jello
Comb
Flashlight
Walkman (with headphones)
3 clipboards

COSTUMES

MISS WHITTLE: flowing dress with a loud floral print

MINDY: hip huggers and a trendy top

CORT: jeans and a jersey

WOODY: khaki pants and a preppy sweater vest

LILY: lots of beads, buttons and bracelets that support numerous causes

JAYNE: mismatched items she threw on in a hurry

KYLE: jeans and a polo

BETTY/LETTY/NETTY: severe looking power suits

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AT RISE: It is early in the morning. MISS WHITTLE enters with a large stack of notebooks in her hand. SHE is curiously dim in mind, yet always pleasant at heart. SHE tries to close the door, the books come toppling to the floor. Frazzled, SHE whimpers loudly.

WHITTLE: Oh dear. Of course I dropped my books. Well, they're not really my books. They're the kids' books. ***(picks the books up)*** I should have left them here last night, but no, I wanted to mark them at home. But what does it matter? I'm being fired today...I wish I could tell the kids, but it's just too hard to say. I love them too much. ***(drops the books)*** Oh dear. There they go again. ***(picks up the books)*** Don't worry, desk. I'll get them to you soon. ***(drops the books)*** No, I'll leave them right there, I guess. They want to be there, so why should I deny them that? ***(There is a knock at the door.)*** Come in!

(MINDY enters. SHE'S a very pretty girl, capable of anything.)

MINDY: Hello, Miss Whittle.

WHITTLE: Don't trip on the books, Mindy.

MINDY: Let me pick them up for you.

WHITTLE: Oh no, don't do that, dear. They want to be there.

MINDY: ***(shrugs her shoulders)*** Miss Whittle, is it alright that I came early?

WHITTLE: Are you happy?

MINDY: What?

WHITTLE: Are you happy?

MINDY: ***(confused)*** Yes.

WHITTLE: Yes.

MINDY: Yes what?

WHITTLE: Yes it's okay.

MINDY: What's okay?

WHITTLE: You're happy.

MINDY: Yes. So?

WHITTLE: You can stay.

MINDY: ***(shrugs her shoulders)*** Sure.

(CORT barges in the room; HE is athletic, smart and pretty)

CORT: Do I look good?

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WHITTLE: Yes. Watch out for the books. **(CORT bends to pick them up.)** Please don't touch them. They will come when they are good and ready.

(CORT shrugs his shoulders.)

MINDY: Hi, Cort.

CORT: Hi there, Mindy. Do I look good today?

MINDY: Why today?

CORT: I cut my hair this morning. I was sleepy so maybe I cut it too short.

MINDY: Your hair looks exactly the same as it did yesterday.

CORT: Hmmm....maybe I dreamed about cutting it. Thanks. But I still look good.

WHITTLE: You're both early.

CORT: I thought I was going to cut my hair, but I didn't, so I had extra time on my hands.

MINDY: And I was hungry. I knew you had candy like always and that's so much better than mom's pancakes.

WHITTLE: No candy today, Mindy.

MINDY: Why not?

WHITTLE: I ate it. I'm getting more today.

MINDY: What am I gonna do now? I'm starving.

CORT: Maybe I dreamed about eating. I could be hungry.

MINDY: Let's go to the cafeteria.

CORT: Cool.

WHITTLE: Watch out for the books.

(MINDY and CORT exit. MISS WHITTLE sits on the floor next to the books.)

WHITTLE: I mean, I didn't even mark one book. So why I brought them home in the first place, I'll never know. **(opens a notebook and starts to read it)** "Art is what makes pictures pretty and color is pretty so color is art. The answer is pretty colors is what art is. I hope that this is a good answer to your question because art is really something that I like and hope to someday teach art maybe. But the answer to your question is art is pretty colors that make pictures pretty." Oh dear...I almost forget what I asked. But if I give him a bad grade, he might hate art and I don't want that. I hope I get across to the kids. I'll give you a B+.

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(The door opens and slams MISS WHITTLE in her back. SHE ignores it. WOODY enters. HE tries so hard to be his best, but rarely succeeds. HE then proceeds to trip over MISS WHITTLE. HE comes crashing into her lap.)

WOODY: Sorry, Miss Whittle.

WHITTLE: What for?

WOODY: I hit you in the back and tripped over you and now I'm sitting on your lap.

WHITTLE: Blame it on the books. If they weren't so stubborn, I'd be grading them on the desk.

WOODY: **(shrugs his shoulders)** Sure, Miss Whittle.

WHITTLE: My, my, everyone is early today.

WOODY: I had a meeting this morning.

WHITTLE: Student council?

WOODY: No.

WHITTLE: Drama club?

WOODY: No.

WHITTLE: What then?

WOODY: With fate.

WHITTLE: What?

WOODY: A meeting with fate. I woke up this morning and thought that today something good would happen if I came early so I came early and really nothing good has happened since I got here, but I'm sure that my intuition won't let me down because my intuition has always been good to me and any time I have a feeling, something comes of it. Except of course for the time when it didn't, so actually this could be the second time my intuition has let me down which means the other times my intuition was right were really flukes and I have no intuition at all. What do you think?

WHITTLE: I think I just marked your journal.

WOODY: Really? What did I get?

WHITTLE: B+.

WOODY: Oh great! I knew something good would happen! I do have an intuition. Thank you, Miss Whittle! Thank you!

WHITTLE: Sure.

(The door opens and LILY enters. SHE is dressed in all brown, with beads dangling from every part of her body. HER hair is braided.)

LILY: **(overly dramatic)** Why? Why are we here? All we do is destroy what the world has to offer. I wish we all could live in harmony with nature instead of marking our territory and leaving everything else to rot. I don't understand.

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WHITTLE: Oh, Lily, I'm so glad to see you're cheering up.

WOODY: Lily, I take pride in the earth, although it is hard for me to juggle school and my environmental volunteering along with my family and friends and, oh yes, the chess club, but because of you I am going to try so hard to achieve peace between man and nature. How does that sound?

LILY: It sounds like you've been into Miss Whittle's candy.

WHITTLE: No candy, today. I ate it.

LILY: Aww...

WHITTLE: Don't worry. I should be getting a shipment later today.

WOODY: A shipment?

WHITTLE: It takes a lot of candy to keep my students ticking.

(The door opens and MINDY and CORT return. MINDY eats Jello.)

MINDY: Oh, look! Some more people are here!

WOODY: ***(swoons)*** Hi, Mindy.

MINDY: Hey, Woody.

WOODY: Hi Cort. Did you cut your hair?

CORT: I'm not sure.

MINDY: Lily, I haven't seen you here in a long time.

LILY: Did you know that Jello has meat in it? How could you?

MINDY: I was hungry.

WHITTLE: Jello? You must eat more than just Jello for breakfast.

MINDY: I was just about to say that I was full.

LILY: Full of poison.

MINDY: Meat is not poison. Besides, I'm on a diet. Nothing fattening for me.

WHITTLE: Listen, I don't think any of you have eaten a good breakfast. And I know for a fact that you cannot have a healthy day without a healthy breakfast. Here's some money. I want you all to go to the cafeteria and buy yourselves something good to eat. It's still early, so you have plenty of time. Besides, I have work to do before our session begins.

MINDY: Alright, Miss Whittle.

CORT: I suppose some milk would add to my muscles. If they can get any bigger.

MINDY: I like your muscles.

CORT: I know.

LILY: I will not patronize a place that kills cows.

WOODY: Don't worry, Lily. I won't have any meat just because of you.

WHITTLE: Run along. The only students I can help are those with healthy tummies.

LILY: Fine, but I'm warning you I won't be happy.

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(They all exit. MISS WHITTLE returns to the floor, begins reading another notebook. The door opens slowly. JAYNE tip-toes in the room, making sure not to hit MISS WHITTLE with the door, quietly shuts it, tip-toes to MISS WHITTLE's desk, and sits in the chair.)

JAYNE: *(in her best WHITTLE impression)* And what, young lady, do you think you're doing on the floor?

WHITTLE: *(startled)* Jayne! What on earth are you doing?

JAYNE: Who's Jayne?

WHITTLE: Stop this nonsense, Miss Potter.

JAYNE: Who's Miss Potter?

WHITTLE: Jayne, stop this nonsense. You are not me. You have got to stop taking my personality away from me. I thought we were making progress. *(JAYNE does not respond.)* Jayne? Jayne? *(shakes JAYNE)* JAYNE!

JAYNE: *(comes to HER senses, as herself)* Was I doing it again?

WHITTLE: Yes. Honestly, Jayne, this personality snatching is really going to get you into a lot of trouble.

JAYNE: I know, but I just can't help it. It comes and goes so quickly. I'm sorry.

WHITTLE: When you're being yourself, you're a very sweet girl. But when you become someone else, especially me, you're insufferable.

JAYNE: I know, but what can I do?

WHITTLE: Wait until the others arrive and we'll begin this morning's session. I have a new game for you that just might help.

JAYNE: Alright.

WHITTLE: Good. Now if you don't mind, I think I'll get back to correcting these notebooks. *(sits on the floor again)*

JAYNE: Miss Whittle?

WHITTLE: Yes?

JAYNE: Why are you sitting on the floor?

WHITTLE: The books don't want to be on the desk. I'm a slave to my job.

JAYNE: *(shrugs her shoulders)* Okay.

WHITTLE: Are you hungry? I just sent the others to the cafeteria. Maybe you could join them. Get a muffin or something. Wait a minute...that sounds wonderful! I want a muffin. I have to go get one. I'll be right back, Jayne.

(MISS WHITTLE exits. JAYNE picks up a yellow notebook and looks at it. Suddenly she transforms into MISS WHITTLE again. SHE goes to the desk and starts to correct the notebook.)

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JAYNE: (*as MISS WHITTLE*) I need to start correcting these notebooks. Let's look at this one. Yellow is my favorite color. A+. I don't even have to read it. (*There's a knock at the door.*) Come in.

(*KYLE enters. HE is a nice young kid, but a little confused and very shy.*)

KYLE: I hope I'm not interrupting, but is this the conversation therapy room?

JAYNE: (*firmly*) Yeah, this is it. That's why it says "Conversation Therapy" on the door. Can't you read? Sit down.

KYLE: I really need to talk to someone. I've been having this problem.

JAYNE: Spit it out.

KYLE: I have this terrible fear of being in large groups. And it's getting worse. Sometimes I get so nervous that I start to hyperventilate. It's very scary.

JAYNE: That is scary. You're weird. How do you make it through the day?

KYLE: That's not the worst of it. When I get really nervous, I have an uncontrollable speech impediment. I lose all control over my talking. It's starting to make my friends uncomfortable. If we go to a restaurant with too many people, my heart races. Then when I talk, the impediment makes me spit my food across the table. I don't know what I'm going to do. (*JAYNE just stares at him as if HE were insane.*) I'm sorry for talking so much. Who are you?

JAYNE: I'm Miss Whittle.

KYLE: Really? I expected you to be older.

JAYNE: I am old, so shut-up.

KYLE: And nicer. They told me you would help me. I thought you were a teacher.

JAYNE: I'm busy, so would you please just go away?

KYLE: Isn't this your job?

JAYNE: My job is not to help morons like you, but to grade art journals. I am the art teacher, not a psycho consultant.

(*WHITTLE enters eating an apple.*)

WHITTLE: This muffin is incredible.

JAYNE: When will these interruptions stop? I have work to do!

WHITTLE: Not again. Stop it, Jayne.

JAYNE: Who's this Jayne you keep referring to? Get lost. I have work to do.

WHITTLE: I know. (*sees KYLE*) Hello. And who is this nice young man?

JAYNE: This is a nice young man who's leaving!

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WHITTLE: Jayne, get a hold of yourself. **(to KYLE)** Just one moment and I will be right with you. **(shakes JAYNE)** Jayne! I want you to snap out of this! You are not me! I am not you!

KYLE: I think I'll be going now.

WHITTLE: Don't go. This is normal.

KYLE: That's what worries me.

WHITTLE: Jayne! Jayne! **(SHE does not respond.)** Hmm...Miss Whittle.

JAYNE: Yes?

WHITTLE: Finally. I need your help, Miss Whittle. I need you to go to the bathroom and put your head under a tap of cold running water.

JAYNE: Yes, ma'am. Whatever you say. **(exits happily)**

WHITTLE: That girl really has problems.

KYLE: Good-bye.

WHITTLE: Please stay. As soon as she gets wet, everything will be alright. That's Jayne. She likes to assume my personality.

KYLE: Oh.

WHITTLE: And who are you? Are you in need of help?

KYLE: Actually, I am.

WHITTLE: Well, you've come to the right woman. Would you like a bite of my muffin?

KYLE: That's an apple.

WHITTLE: So it is! What's your name?

KYLE: Kyle Murphy.

WHITTLE: That's nice. And what's your problem?

(MINDY, CORT, WOODY and LILY enter.)

MINDY: Don't you just hate that new janitor? The school smells like a sewer.

CORT: I don't know about that. Everything is so squeaky clean that I can see my reflection on everything.

LILY: He doesn't eat meat. I like him.

WOODY: Is there meat in hamburger stew?

KYLE: **(terrified)** So many people! Oh my goodness!

MINDY: Who is that?

LILY: Is he the new kid?

CORT: He's not cuter than me, is he?

MINDY: No.

CORT: I know.

WOODY: What's wrong with him?

WHITTLE: I'm not sure. Are you okay?

KYLE: **(wobbles and his speech impediment starts to show)** So many people. I have to go. I can't control myself.

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WHITTLE: Don't go! We were just about to start.

WOODY: Yeah, stay. Miss Whittle will help you.

KYLE: Evvwything is spinning.

LILY: Leave him alone.

MINDY: But he's sick.

LILY: He probably ate pork.

MINDY: Will you stop with that meat business.

LILY: As soon as cows become domestic.

WHITTLE: Kyle, just relax. Then we'll discuss our problems as a group.

KYLE: But I can't be in big gwoups. That's why I need thewapy.

WHITTLE: You just sit here and we'll start. Everyone, Kyle wants to start the discussion. Since we're all here, we might as well begin. Gather around, everyone!

(They gather into a group, on cushions on the floor.)

WHITTLE: We love fresh new faces.

KYLE: That's just it. I don't like fwesh new faces.

MINDY: ***(sets the cushions down)*** We don't bite. Here, Kyle. Have a cushion.

KYLE: Thanks.

LILY: Are you a carnivore?

KYLE: A what?

LILY: A CARNIVORE?

KYLE: No, I've never had a girlfriend.

WHITTLE: Let's begin! Today I have a new game. It's called "storytelling." We're going to go around in a circle and each tell an interesting story about something that has happened to us. This hopefully will tame our fears of speaking in front of people. But before we begin, I have to introduce a new member of our group. Everyone, this is Kyle Murphy. Kyle, this is everyone. Great. Now let's get to work. Kyle, let's start with you.

KYLE: I weally don't think that I can...

MINDY: Please don't worry, Kyle. We're all perfectly harmless.

(JAYNE enters. Her head is soaking wet.)

JAYNE: I feel so much better. ***(shakes her head and gets everyone wet)***

CORT: Hey, you're getting me all wet.

MINDY: Stop it, Jayne.

LILY: What are you, a cat?

JAYNE: Meow!

WHITTLE: Sit down, Jayne. We're going to start story hour.

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WOODY: You can sit next to me. I like cats.

JAYNE: Me too. Meow.

WHITTLE: Come on, Kyle. Time for you to tell your story.

KYLE: But I have a pwoblem with gwroups...

LILY: Fine, I'll go first. What a baby.

WHITTLE: We're not here to judge, Lily.

LILY: I am.

KYLE: I'll just sit and listen to all of your stowies. Forget I'm even here.

LILY: We will. Anyway...what story should I tell? I'll tell the one about the best day of my life.

WHITTLE: I'm glad to see it's a positive story.

LILY: It's about the day I knocked Mickey Steven's lights out. I was walking down the street, minding my own business, when Mickey Stevens came walking around the corner listening to his Walkman. There's nothing I hate more than guys who think they're so cool when they wear headphones. And I'm not talking about wimpy little headphones. These were huge headphones that weighed more than his head. And their amplitude was certainly greater than his IQ. He's bopping away, shaking his head like an idiot. Finally, I got so annoyed that I wanted to smack his head so hard that the headphones would fly onto the street...So I did.

(Pause.)

WHITTLE: And?

LILY: And what? I felt like hitting him, so I did. Anyway, I hit him on the head so it probably didn't do much damage. That's the greatest day of my life.

JAYNE: Way to go, Lily.

MINDY: That's cool of you, standing up to a guy.

WHITTLE: That's not much of a story, but it's a start. Who wants to go next?

(WOODY raises his hand excitedly, but is ignored.)

MINDY: I have a great story.

WHITTLE: Then let's hear it.

MINDY: I was with my cousin Sissy and we went to the mall. Her car was broken so I had to ask my mom if we could use her van. She said yes...

LILY: Spoiled brat.

WHITTLE: Stop that, Lily.

MINDY: We were at the mall for a little while and it was really fun. We had milk shakes, I bought a couple CDs and then we saw a movie.

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But I suddenly got so sick. And I don't mean just kind of sick. I was going to hurl. I felt like something really bad was going to happen, so Sissy said we should go home. When we went outside, we could hardly believe our eyes. The sky was so black that it looked like it was the middle of the night. And the wind was blowing so hard that I could hardly stand up.

CORT: I remember that storm. My hair never recovered.

MINDY: We got home and Mom was so happy to see us. All of a sudden the radio said that there was a tornado in town. We were already scared, but that made it worse. Then we heard this terrible noise in the yard so we went to the window to see what was happening.

WOODY: You're not supposed to do that during a tornado.

MINDY: I know, but we wanted to see what the noise was. We looked outside and the big tree in our yard was almost about to fall on top of the van. Mom got so mad at me.

CORT: Because you didn't put the van in the garage?

MINDY: No, I still hadn't done my homework. Anyway, the tree snapped and crushed the van.

WHITTLE: Oh my goodness.

MINDY: **(getting increasingly dramatic)** My mom was yelling and screaming and told us to get into the basement. But I was like, oh my gosh, my CDs! You can imagine how freaked I was, so Sissy and I ran outside to get them.

WOODY: You ran into the storm to get your new CDs?

MINDY: I hadn't even listened to them yet. What was I supposed to do? You tell me. Anyway, we got the CDs and listened to them that night.

LILY: But what's the point?

MINDY: The point is, if you ever get a stomach ache, check for tornadoes.

WHITTLE: That's great, Mindy. While I don't think going out into storms was very intelligent, you really grasped the concept of storytelling. Now who would like to go next?

(WOODY raises his hand excitedly. Again, HE's looked over.)

WHITTLE: Cort, how about you?

CORT: Me? I dunno.

MINDY: Come on. I want to hear your story.

CORT: Cool. My story is about something that really scares me.

LILY: Going bald?

CORT: Hey! I resent the fact that everyone thinks I'm nothing but a guy with good hair.

LILY: Resent? That's a big word for you.

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CORT: True, I do have great hair, but there's more to me than just my follicles. I realize I'm not the smartest person in the world, but I also know that I'm not the dumbest.

WHITTLE: We know you're not dumb, Cort.

CORT: I know you don't think I'm dumb, Miss Whittle, and that's why I like to come to these meetings. All the other guys think it's kind of stupid, but since I'm so cool, none of them make fun of me.

WOODY: Nobody makes fun of me being here.

CORT: Yes they do.

WOODY: Really?

JAYNE: Oh yeah.

CORT: I just want you all to hear my story without making fun of me.

MINDY: We won't make fun of you.

CORT: Okay, then I'll tell you. My story is about my biggest fear. It's kind of hard to say without sounding stupid, but I'll try. I was walking down by the creek one day when I noticed that something was in the water. At first I thought it was just a rock, but it turned out to be a suitcase. Of course I couldn't just leave it there because I had to know what was in it. It was in the middle of the creek, so I knew it would be tough to get at. I tried using a long stick to loosen it, but that didn't work. Then I found some twine and tried to rope it in, but I don't know how to tie knots and the twine kept snapping in half. Finally, I realized that if I wanted it that badly, I would have to get soaking wet and walk into the middle of the creek. So I hiked up my pant legs and walked straight to the suitcase. Just as I grabbed the suitcase, I lost my footing and fell splat into the water. I got soaking wet and sprained my ankle. And if that wasn't enough, the suitcase broke free and sailed down the creek. I never saw it again.

WHITTLE: That's a good story, but what's your big fear?

CORT: My big fear is that I do the stupidest things for curiosity. What if I never get the suitcase in life? What if I keep doing stupid things and never do anything important?

WHITTLE: You worry too much, Cort. The only thing you have to worry about is not exploring your curiosity. The moment you stop using your imagination is when you become stupid.

MINDY: She's right. Just imagine what could have been in that suitcase. Money! Diamonds!

LILY: A corpse.

CORT: I guess you're right, Miss Whittle.

WHITTLE: Of course I am. Life is only exciting when you're hanging on by a hair.

CORT: Is there something wrong with my hair? (*whips out a comb and fixes his hair*)

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WHITTLE: Let's continue. We've heard from Lily, Mindy and Cort. Who's next?

WOODY: Me! Me! Me!

WHITTLE: Would you like to go, Woody?

WOODY: Yes! Yes! Yes!

JAYNE: **(raises her hand)** Miss Whittle?

WHITTLE: You'll have to wait until Woody is finished.

JAYNE: Can I wait out in the hall until it's my turn?

WHITTLE: Why?

JAYNE: I don't want to listen to Woody's story.

WHITTLE: That's not very nice.

JAYNE: He talks too much.

WOODY: I do not.

MINDY: Yes you do. You never shut your mouth.

LILY: They're right.

WOODY: Why are you all ganging up on me? I don't think I talk too much. Maybe sometimes, but it's just because I have a lot on my mind. I don't want to bother anyone, but I thought you liked to hear me talk. Why hasn't anyone said anything before? And besides, I thought the reason we come to conversation therapy is to talk using "conversation," isn't it?

WHITTLE: Woody—

WOODY: I come here because I like all of you. My feelings get hurt easily and here was the one place I felt safe.

WHITTLE: Woody—

WOODY: But now I'm so confused. I like it here and I just want to tell my story.

WHITTLE: Woody—

WOODY: You let Mindy talk about her tornado and Lily talk about her assault and Cort talk about his suitcase, but as soon as I want to talk, you cut me off.

WHITTLE: Woody—

WOODY: **(standing up)** Well not anymore! You're going to hear me talk and you are all going to listen to my story! I'm not going to take it anymore!

WHITTLE: **(loses her temper)** Woody, please shut-up!

WOODY: **(shocked)** Okay.

WHITTLE: I'm sorry, Woody. Everyone, I'm sorry for that outburst. **(changes the subject)** Kyle, are you having a good time?

KYLE: Well...

WHITTLE: Good. Let's move on to Jayne. What's your story?

JAYNE: I'd like to tell you all a story that is near and dear to me. Do you have a flashlight, Miss Whittle?

WHITTLE: What for?

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JAYNE: Nevermind. Just give me one.

WHITTLE: I think I have one in my desk. I'll go get it.

JAYNE: Good.

MINDY: What's your story about?

CORT: And why do you need a flashlight?

JAYNE: You'll see.

WHITTLE: **(hands JAYNE a flashlight)** Here you are.

JAYNE: Thanks.

WOODY: Miss Whittle, why do you have a flashlight?

WHITTLE: I got lost in the basement once. Never again.

JAYNE: My story needs to be told in the dark.

(JAYNE flips the lights off and it becomes pitch black. KYLE tries to hold in a scream.)

MINDY: What was that noise?

KYLE: **(whispers)** Me.

MINDY: Who's me?

KYLE: Kyle. I'm frightened of the dark.

JAYNE: Don't be frightened.

KYLE: **(petrified)** Okay.

JAYNE: **(turns the flashlight on her face)** My story is about a dark and spooky night.

WHITTLE: This isn't a ghost story, is it? The story has to be something that actually happened to you.

JAYNE: It's about the night I was born.

WHITTLE: Oh, okay.

LILY: Do we really want to hear this?

JAYNE: I don't know, let's find out. It was a dark and spooky night. It was a full moon and a storm was brewing in the thick and mysterious clouds above. Everything was quiet and my family was awaiting the storm. All the while, I was inside my mother's womb thinking, "I'm sick of these cramped quarters and I want to leave." So I punched my mother in the stomach and yelled, "I WANT OUT OF HERE!!!" Having no choice, she braved the storm and went to the hospital. I cannot tell you how utterly amazing the journey was to my birth. Feeling my body emerge into the world is the greatest feeling I've ever had. It's a shame how few people get to remember this monumental moment of their lives. But I remember being born! Isn't that amazing?**(Pause.)** Isn't it?**(Another pause.)** Hello?

(Nobody responds. JAYNE moves the light from her own face and shines it on WOODY, who's making advances on MINDY. The light slowly drifts over to MINDY, who shoves WOODY. JAYNE shines

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the light on CORT, who is listening to music on headphones. From the dark, we see LILY's hand smack CORT on the head and his headphones go flying. SHE shines the light on KYLE, who sobs with fear. Finally, SHE shines the light on WHITTLE. SHE's fast asleep. The light then appears on JAYNE's face once more. SHE's very angry and flips on the lights.)

JAYNE: What is everyone doing?! Did anybody listen to my story?!

WHITTLE: **(wakes up)** Great story, Jayne. Who's next?

JAYNE: Miss Whittle, did you see what happened? Nobody listened to my story.

WHITTLE: That's terrible.

JAYNE: Neither did you.

WHITTLE: Really? Didn't you tell a story about your parents being dragons?

JAYNE: No.

WHITTLE: Then that was a really good dream. Okay, everyone. Time for the next person.

MINDY: Kyle!

KYLE: **(still shivering)** I'm too scared to go next. Do I have to go?

WHITTLE: We won't make you do anything you don't want to.

KYLE: Thank you.

WHITTLE: Then I guess that's it for storytelling.

WOODY: Aren't you going to tell a story, Miss Whittle?

MINDY: Yeah!

WHITTLE: You want to hear my story?

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