

IF ONLY

By Mike Willis

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A One Act Drama

By Mike Willis

SYNOPSIS: Sydney has been in a serious automobile accident. Friends and family, gather around her bedside and discuss the accident that left her comatose. She tries to communicate with them but they're unable to hear. Is this the harsh reality or is it all a dream? *If Only* she had not been texting while driving.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(8 either, 0-1 extras; gender flexible, doubling possible)

SYDNEY/SID (m/f).....	Seventeen years old. (98 lines)
MOM/DAD (m/f).....	Fortyish, Sydney's parent. (36 lines)
RACHEL/RAY (m/f)	Fifteen year old. Sydney's sibling. (13 lines)
BROOK/BROOKS (m/f)	Thirteen years old. Sydney's sibling. (13 lines)
DANIELLE/DANNY (m/f)	Seventeen years old. Sydney's best friend. (17 lines)
TONY/TONI (m/f).....	A teenager, friend of Sydney. (13 lines)
NICKY/NICK (m/f).....	A teenager, friend of Sydney. (14 lines)
MAX/MAXINE (m/f).....	A young man or woman. An accident victim. (62 lines)
RADIO ANNOUNCER (m/f)	Optional offstage speaker or recorded vice. (1 line)

DURATION: 25 minutes

TIME: The present.

SETTING: A twin bed placed center-stage with a night-stand next to it. The bed faces down-stage. There is a chair on each side of the bed. A cell phone sits on the night-stand. Next to the cell phone is a small CD player/radio. The bed and night-stand are framed in a pool of light. The rest of the stage is dark.

PROPS

- ☐ 2 Cell Phones
- ☐ CD Player

SOUND EFFECTS

- ☐ Door Bell
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Cell Phone Beeps

PRODUCTION HISTORY

If Only, was first performed as a staged reading at Platteville High School, in Platteville, Wisconsin on September 5th, 2013. The play was then entered in the 2014 Wisconsin High School Forensics' Association's One Act Fall Play Festival. The original cast and crew was as follows:

SYDNEY.....	Danielle Dillon
DANIELLE	Rachel Ababio
MOM.....	Eleanor Clement
RACHEL.....	Rachel Schaefer
BROOK.....	Brook Gassman
NICKY	Francesca Bisi
TONI.....	Lucy Tran
MAX	Ivan Acierno

TECHNICAL CREW: Michael Prestegard, Austin Lange, Chanel Toney, and Cloe Sieckman

AT RISE: *SYDNEY is lying on her back in the bed. She is facing down-stage with her head elevated by a number of pillows. A light blanket covers SYDNEY, who appears to be sleeping. Soft music is coming from the CD player on the nightstand. The music fades out and the RADIO ANNOUNCER'S voice comes over the radio with news.*

RADIO ANNOUNCER: *(Offstage or Recording.)* Now for a WJBD news brief. The National Safety Council has just released figures indicating that an estimated 1.6 million automobile accidents each year are the result of cell phones being used while driving. Of these 1.6 million accidents, 21 percent of all fatal crashes involving teens between the ages of 16 through 19, were the result of cell phone usage. The National Safety Council urges everyone; please, don't text and drive. That was a 93.2 FM news brief...and now back to some more easy listening on, WJBD.

Music resumes. RACHEL enters with her cell phone and starts texting. The cell phone on the night-stand beeps and lights up. SYDNEY does not react. RACHEL continues texting as BROOK enters. A few moments pass and the phone beeps again. There is still no reaction from SYDNEY. SYDNEY rises and crosses DR.

BROOK: What, are you doing?

RACHEL: What's it look like? I'm texting.

BROOK: Who? Sydney?

RACHEL: Yeah.

BROOK: You do realize that she's not going to answer it, don't you?

The cell phone lights up and beeps a third time.

RACHEL: Yeah, so what?

BROOK: So why do it?

RACHEL: Because I want to.

BROOK: You're weird.

RACHEL switches to camera mode on her phone and begins taking pictures of SYDNEY'S bed.

Now what are you doing?

RACHEL: I'm taking her picture.

SYDNEY: Who's picture?

BROOK: Why are you taking Sydney's picture?

SYDNEY: Me?

RACHEL: I thought I'd post a picture of her on Facebook. Along with...

MOM enters and over hears.

MOM and SYDNEY: Oh, no you're not!

MOM: You will do no such thing.

SYDNEY: Thanks, Mom.

MOM: We need to respect Sydney's privacy.

RACHEL: But, I was going to write a little blurb or something to go with the pic...

MOM: No. No picture and no, blurb. (*Doorbell sounds.*) That will be Danielle with some of your sister's friends. She called and asked if it would be okay if they stopped by for a while. You two go out and let them in.

BROOK: But...

MOM: No buts, after you let them in, go and finish drying the dishes.

RACHEL and BROOK exit. MOM slowly crosses to the bed, turns off the CD player; music ends. MOM stands looking down at the place on the bed where SYDNEY had been lying. After a few moments, she moves to a chair next to the bed and sits. DANIELLE, TONY, and NICKY enter individually from different areas of the wings and gather around looking down at the empty bed. All of their movements are slow and tentative. SYDNEY watches them from DR.

MOM: (*Calling softly and shaking a pillow on the bed.*) Sydney, Sydney...

SYDNEY: What, Mom?

MOM, DANIELLE, NICKY and TONY do not react to SYDNEY. They continue looking down at the bed as though SYDNEY is still lying there.

MOM: *(Speaking to the empty bed.)* Sydney...can you hear me, sweetheart?

SYDNEY: Of course I can hear you, I'm not deaf.

MOM: Sydney dear, you have visitors.

DANIELLE: *(Softly, looking down at the bed.)* She looks like she's sleeping.

SYDNEY: Sleeping? I'm not sleeping. I'm right over here. Danielle, I'm over here. Look over here. What's going on here?

SYDNEY crosses behind OTHERS trying to get their attention.

NICKY: She does, doesn't she?

SYDNEY: Hey, look at me!

TONY: I wonder if that's what it feels like.

DANIELLE: What, what feels like?

TONY: The coma. I wonder if the coma feels like sleeping.

SYDNEY: Coma? What, coma? Who's in a coma?

NICKY: I don't think so.

TONY: Why not? She looks fine, like she just fell asleep.

NICKY: Because...she's in a coma. She has a brain injury. If you're sleeping your brain still works.

DANIELLE: *(Slightly irritated.)* Sydney's brain *is* still working! Don't say it isn't working.

SYDNEY: Of course my brain is working. Why wouldn't it be working? Hey, look at me! Look at me you guys!

NICKY: I didn't mean it wasn't working...just that it's not, not...working right, ya know?

SYDNEY: There's nothing wrong with my brain!

MOM: *(To NICKY.)* Yes, we know. *(Softly calling to the empty bed.)* Sydney...Sydney, can you hear me?

SYDNEY crosses to the OTHERS who continue to not see or react to her.

SYDNEY: Yes! I told you, I can hear you. What is the matter with you guys? Why won't you answer me?

DANIELLE: Do you think she heard you?

SYDNEY: What?!

MOM: I don't know. I hope so.

SYDNEY: You hope so? Mom.....

DANIELLE: (*Starting to cry.*) It's all my fault.

TONY: What is?

SYDNEY: Yeah, what is? Danielle, why are you crying?

DANIELLE: The coma! It's all my fault, she's in a coma.

SYDNEY: (*Shouting.*) I'm not in a coma!

They don't reacts to SYDNEY'S outburst.

NICKY: It's not your fault.

DANIELLE: (*Starting to cry.*) Yes, it is. If I hadn't...

MOM: (*Comforting DANIELLE.*) No dear, it is not your fault. You mustn't blame yourself. Sydney....

DANIELLE: If only I hadn't sent her that text, she'd be...

SYDNEY: What text? What are you talking about? I didn't receive any text.

TONY: You had no way of knowing that she was driving when you sent it.

NICKY: Or that she'd try to answer it without pulling over and stopping.

MOM: (*To DANIELLE.*) They're right, dear. You couldn't have known. Sydney, acted on her own. She had a choice and unfortunately she made the wrong one. She made a mistake.

MAX enters from SR and crosses behind DANIELLE.

SYDNEY: What, mistake?

MAX: Texting and driving.

SYDNEY: (*Startled.*) What!? Who are you?

MAX: My name's Max. I'm the victim.

SYDNEY: What, victim?

MAX: The guy you hit...when you were texting and driving.

SYDNEY: I never hit anyone...and I don't text and drive.

MAX: Well...

MOM: (*To DANIELLE, TONY and NICKY.*) Sydney should have known better than to text and drive.

SYDNEY: What.! But, I do know better. I never text and drive...
(*Catching herself.*) well, uh, almost never. So, maybe a few times, but...

MAX: (*To SYDNEY.*) There you have it.

MOM: It only takes one time. Just one second of taking your eyes off of the road.

DANIELLE: I feel terrible. If only I hadn't sent that text. It wasn't important. I just wanted to ask her where she was and if she wanted to meet us for pizza.

MOM: (*To DANIELLE.*) Danielle, you need to stop blaming yourself.

NICKY: It wasn't your fault. It could have been any one of us who sent her that text. We all have cell phones.

TONY: And we were right there with you when you sent it. We didn't know she was in her car...or that she would try to answer it while driving.

MOM: If only she had pulled over and stopped...or waited. (*MOM strokes the pillow where SYDNEY'S head would be.*) Oh Sydney, what were you thinking?

SYDNEY crosses to MOM and is followed by MAX. The OTHERS don't acknowledge SYDNEY and MAX but continue as if SYDNEY is lying in the bed.

SYDNEY: Mom...

DANIELLE: (*To MOM.*) What does the doctor say?

MOM: The doctor says...if and when she comes out of the coma, she may have some brain damage.

SYDNEY: I don't have brain damage. Mom, I'm right here! (*Crossing to TONY.*) Tony, I'm here. Look at me!

MOM: And, she may have trouble speaking and walking.

SYDNEY: I can walk...and I can talk. (*To MAX.*) Why can't anyone hear me? Mom, I'm here, I'm right here. (*Crossing to DANIELLE.*) Danielle, I'm here. (*To MAX.*) Tell her I'm here.

MAX: I can't. They can't see or hear me either.

SYDNEY: This isn't happening.

MAX: My family is having the same problem.

SYDNEY: What problem?

MAX: The seeing and hearing thing.

SYDNEY: They can't hear you?

MAX: Nope. So, if it will make you feel any better—

SYDNEY: No, it won't make me feel better! Why don't you...wait, you have a family?

MAX: Uh, huh.

DANIELLE: (*Leans over the bed.*) I can't bear the thought of her not being able to walk. Sydney, Sydney...

SYDNEY: I *can* walk! I'm walking right now. Look at me...Danielle, I'm walking.

NICKY: (*To DANIELLE and TONY.*) She's just lying there. How can anyone be that still?

TONY: It must be the coma.

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