

NAMELESS

By Trevor Poole

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SYNOPSIS

Does someone you love ever really leave you? A loved high school student meets an early end on a highway one night. This hard hitting drama is filled with accounts from the people who knew the boy the best; his parents, friends, teachers and girlfriend. They weigh in on what made him special and begin the long road to acceptance.

CAST OF CHARACTERS (in alphabetical order)

(Flexible cast, 5 Male, 5 Female, 6-16 Either; Total cast 16-26)

(Number of lines in parenthesis)

BEST FRIEND/JASON (JASE)*	A loud, charismatic teenager, age eighteen, NAMELESS' best friend. (37)
DAD	NAMELESS' dad; a man's man. (18)
DOCTOR	Aging local family practitioner; sympathetic, meticulous and overworked. (4)
DOESN'T CARE/VANESSA*	A bratty, dramatic teenager, age seventeen, friend of GIRLFRIEND, interested in BEST FRIEND. (9)
DOUBTER 1	Person in a crowd, ages vary, persuasive. (5)
DOUBTER 2	Person in a crowd, ages vary, persuasive. (5)
DOUBTER 3	Person in a crowd, ages vary, persuasive. (5)
FIREFIGHTER	A thoughtful firefighter, mid-forties. (1)
GIRLFRIEND/AMANDA*	Kind, caring and heartbroken teenager, age seventeen, NAMELESS' girlfriend. (38)
NURSE/MARJORIE*	A local nurse, fifty+, motherly type. (1)
MISS. RIVERS	High school chemistry teacher, mid-thirties. (5)
MOM	NAMELESS' stay-at-home mom (16)

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NAMELESS	A well-liked, quiet teenager, age eighteen. (47)
STUDENT 1	High school senior, male or female, age seventeen/eighteen. (4)
STUDENT 2	High school senior, male or female, age seventeen/eighteen. (4)
STUDENT 3	High school senior, male or female, age seventeen/eighteen. (4)
STUDENT 4	High school senior, male or female, age seventeen/eighteen. (4)
TOWNSPEOPLE	Various, six speaking roles* (11 lines with various speakers)
TV REPORTER	Typical young reporter who cares about the story and little else. (2)
YOUNG BEST FRIEND	Elementary school child.(3)
YOUNG NAMELESS	Elementary school child. (4)

DURATION

Approx. 40 minutes

PRODUCTION NOTES

SET

Minimalistic set; the story takes place in a variety of locations including a bedroom, outside a movie theatre and at a funeral. These locations can be fully staged with a full assortment of props but can also be pulled off with just a few simple black boxes of varying sizes.

COSTUMES

BEST FRIEND - trendy clothes/black clothes/ hospital gown

DAD – work clothes/funeral clothes

DOCTOR – white doctor's coat overtop of work clothes

DOESN'T CARE - trendy clothes/black clothes

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DOUBTERS – black clothes

FIREFIGHTER – work clothes with a fireman's vest and hat

GIRLFRIEND - trendy/school clothes/black clothes/NAMELESS' zip-up sweater

MARJORIE – nurse uniform with coat overtop (or scrubs)

MISS RIVERS – teacher clothes/black formal clothes

MOM – housecoat/regular clothes/funeral clothes

NAMELESS – three tee-shirts/jeans for differentiating time lapses/two zip-up sweaters

STUDENTS – school clothes/funeral clothes

TOWNSPEOPLE – regular clothes (or black)

TV REPORTER – formal/business clothes

YOUNG BEST FRIEND – elementary student clothes

YOUNG NAMELESS – elementary student clothes

AUTHOR NOTES

This is, bottom line, a play about a well-liked boy dying when nobody expected it. It is meant to be authentic and therefore use of the actors' real names instead of the generic Amanda, Jason, etc. is encouraged. The characters interact with each other using the generic names Vanessa, Amanda and Jason in this script. They and the towns/setting are marked with an asterisk*. (Example, *Amanda**, *Rocanville**) These names/places can be changed to make the play more identifiable for your area and cast. Jason* is sometimes shortened to Jase*, do the same with your actor's name. (Example, Brittany, Britt. Samuel, Sam. Benjamin, Ben.)

NAMELESS, BEST FRIEND, YOUNG NAMELESS, DAD and YOUNG BEST FRIEND are all recommended to be portrayed by male actors. GIRLFRIEND, DOESN'T CARE, MISS. RIVERS, MOM and MARJORIE are all recommended to be portrayed by female actors. In my mind, DOCTOR was also female.

Doubling characters is encouraged; the STUDENTS could also play both the DOUBTERS and TOWNSPEOPLE, for example. YOUNG NAMELESS and YOUNG BEST FRIEND parts can be played by the older respective actors. The desired effect of both the students and doubters lines are that the lines almost overlap for a constant string of sound, building to a climax, as to appear as a subconscious group thought and not just a jumble of well-paced lines. The 'I'm...' lines at the very end of the play contain the names of the Original Cast.

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I strongly recommend that you use your actor's real names at this time because the characters in this play are meant to be identified with and if your cast uses their actual names the characters cease to be characters and their messages become real. In the original production, NAMELESS' LITTLE BROTHER made an appearance as a three-year-old in the funeral scene, standing/held by MOM and DAD. All the scene direction written into the play is merely a suggestion of how the scenes play out – individual creativity is encouraged.

The original cast used the song "Your Guardian Angel" by the Red Jumpsuit Apparatus for the ending music to great effect. Although it started out as a dream sequence, this play was ultimately written with my home drama group in mind and for all those who have lost someone they cared about in the hopes that none of those 'lost people' will become nameless. That said; please enjoy this play as it has been a pleasure to write it.

"It's true that we don't know what we've got until we lose it, but isn't it also true that we don't know what we've been missing until it arrives?" – Unknown

PROPERTIES

Zip-up sweaters (Two – one blue, one black)
Framed picture of NAMELESS and GIRLFRIEND
Beer bottles (two)
Baby bundle, possibly wrapped blankets
School books (two sets)
Notebooks/textbooks (four sets)
Cell phones for: NAMELESS, GIRLFRIEND, BEST FRIEND, DAD and DOESN'T CARE
T.V. and remote (optional)
Newspapers
Battery operated candles (Or similar)
IV stand (optional)
Clipboard
Test papers
Pills in cup
Basketball

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Original Production

Senior Marquee Theatre Company

June 18th, 2012 at McNaughton High School Theatre,
Moosomin, Saskatchewan, Canada

Directed by Mrs. Sherrie Meredith and Trevor Poole

Cast and Crew

NAMELESS..... Trevor Poole
BEST FRIEND..... Edrich Crouse
GIRLFRIEND..... Breanna Glasser
DOESN'T CARE Morgan Fisk
MISS RIVERS McKayla Crouse
MOM..... Sierra Thom
DAD..... Justin Bradley
NAMELESS' BROTHER Gabriel Fingas
DOCTOR..... Melissa Whelpton
TV REPORTER/STUDENT..... Jordan Bradley
MARJORIE/TOWNSPERSON..... Telisa McGonigal
DOUBTER/STUDENT/TOWNSPERSON..... Naomi Loyola
DOUBTER/TOWNSPERSON..... Ashley Simon
DOUBTER/TOWNSPERSON..... Laura Kindlein
FIREMAN/TOWNSPERSON/STUDENT Jory Schwean
STUDENT/TOWNSPERSON..... Megan Beckett
YOUNG NAMELESS Jayce Hayhurst
YOUNG BEST FRIEND Mark Whelpton
LIGHTS/SOUND Maryann Gibson, Tracy Russell and Melissa DeRoo
PROMPTER..... Melissa McGonigal
PROPERTIES/SETS..... Cast and Crew

NAMELESS

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AT RISE: Party music and background noise. Enter, BEST FRIEND and NAMELESS, both of whom carry beer bottles, NAMELESS' is full. THEY wear normal teenager clothing. NAMELESS should be in a blue sweater. THEY move into light.

BEST FRIEND: Did you see her? She was all over me!

NAMELESS: Hey! Listen to me carefully. She's drunk. *(Laughs.)*

BEST FRIEND: So am I! Seriously, dude that's got to be the best party ever! Good friends... *(Punches NAMELESS' arm.)* Good drinks... *(Drinks from bottle.)* Good times!

NAMELESS: Hey, isn't that your 'good time'?

(BEST FRIEND looks as lights come up on DOESN'T CARE.)

BEST FRIEND: Hey, yeah it is! *(Laughs.)* Hey!

(DOESN'T CARE looks at him.)

You ready for another round?

(HE starts to tipsily move but then looks pleadingly back at NAMELESS. BEST FRIEND really wants to go with DOESN'T CARE, silently asking for NAMELESS' permission to go.)

NAMELESS: *(Nods his head.)* Go ahead, man, but don't be too long. I'll go start the truck. I'll text you when I've found my girlfriend and we're ready to go.

BEST FRIEND: I owe you one, dude!

(Exit BEST FRIEND. Spotlight on NAMELESS.)

NAMELESS: Doctors, lawyers, parents and especially teachers; even a high school senior like me. We all get stressed out, so who's to blame us for wanting to kick back and enjoy ourselves with drinks and friends on a Saturday night?

(HE contemplates drinking a small sip from beer bottle.)

Nobody should blame us. *(Center.)* So when my friends asked me to DD at the party I said, "Sure, it's been a while since it was my turn. I'll do it." My best friend wouldn't have cared if I had *one* sip to drink. It is a party, right? You can't get drunk from *one* sip and besides, I say, live in the moment. Party hard and let loose while there's still some party to go around.

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(Toasts the audience and is about to take a sip when HE pauses and lowers the bottle.)

Then again, they say things can change in a minute; *(Sets down bottle, pause.)* but it was probably just an old dead guy who said that. And did he change anything? Nope, probably not... *(Exit.)*

(Silent dark stage, distant radio music grows, lights grow to full; NAMELESS, GIRLFRIEND and BEST FRIEND are in the truck – final moments before the accident. The lights are shot out in to the sounds of a crash. Silence falls; complete and utter silence. Sirens in distance, soft light on FIREFIGHTER.)

FIREFIGHTER: I hate this part of the job. *(Pause/sigh.)* It was a nice, silent night.

(Lights down, exits. Lights up on DOCTOR with clipboard.)

DOCTOR: Victim, eighteen year-old male; driving Southbound on highway North in an old pick-up. Two passengers involved; one with moderate injuries. Driver's Time of death, 2:17 A.M. from a cerebral haemorrhage. No airbag. *(Pause.)* A right shame.

(Phone rings. Lights on home setting with ringing phone.)

MOM: *(Into phone.)* It is almost three in the morning, young man! What is so important that you...? Yes, I am she... Yes, my son was out tonight, but he was with his friends... Come down to the hospital...? But... *(Turns away from audience.)* No... you must have the wrong number... no...

(Sobs, out lights. Lights up on MOM and DAD.)

DAD: It had been a quiet night. We tucked his brother in and then sat down for a late night movie, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. I fell asleep, nothing unusual.

MOM: I thought it would be him on the phone. Who else would call at three A.M.? I thought he'd say that the party was fun and he was just going to stay at a friend's overnight. I wouldn't have been mad about that.

DAD: I didn't cry – not until we saw him.

MOM: We went to the hospital. I felt cold the whole way there and my hands were shaking so much; but I held it together. Then we saw him. He looked just as perfect and just as still as when he had been sleeping in the hospital nursery. A baby, not even a week old. He will always be our baby.

DAD: A part of me wouldn't, couldn't believe this was happening. 'This type of thing doesn't happen to your family; it only happens to other

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people,' I told myself. We saw him and all I could picture was teaching him how to throw a ball. Ride a bike. Drive... God, he couldn't have been more proud of buying and driving around in that stupid old truck.

MOM and DAD: We love him and we miss him. *(Fade.)*

(Lights up on DOESN'T CARE.)

DOESN'T CARE: I heard about it the next day: car crash, crying parents, the whole deal. It didn't affect me though. I barely knew the kid. Saw him a few times at school and parties. He had his crowd and I had mine. I really didn't know him personally.

(Dials phone and as it rings, lights come up on GIRLFRIEND lying on her bed, nearly dead to the world. Her phone rings and SHE answers.)

GIRLFRIEND: *(Lifelessly.)* Hello?

DOESN'T CARE: Hey! It's me! What's up?

GIRLFRIEND: Have you heard?

DOESN'T CARE: About the car crash? Yeah, it'll be big news at school on Monday. I've been texting Jase* but he won't return my messages. I bet it's 'cause he's still in the hospital. You hurt bad?

GIRLFRIEND: I'm fine but I miss him already... so much. *(Sniffles.)*

DOESN'T CARE: You only dated him for a while.

GIRLFRIEND: *(Getting mad.)* Almost a year.

DOESN'T CARE: Yeah, sure, but you'll get over it. You're strong. Just think of all the boys who'll want to date you now!

(Awkward/stunned silence GIRLFRIEND looks out, clearly hurt.

DOESN'T CARE continues.)

Even Jase* will want to be with you; like, you could comfort each other! He's a great kisser; I was with him at the party but only because I was tipsy. If you wanna be with Jase*, nobody will stop you.

(Silence, questioningly, SHE continues, GIRLFRIEND hasn't been listening.)

Hey! Are you even there?

GIRLFRIEND: Huh? Oh, sorry... umm, sure?

DOESN'T CARE: Are you still hung-over or something?

GIRLFRIEND: *(Pause.)* M-maybe?

DOESN'T CARE: Ugh! Me too. Take some Advil, the pain just goes away! Talk to you at school on Monday!

(Hangs up and exits. GIRLFRIEND sets picture down on side table. It is of her and NAMELESS. SHE stands, impassioned.)

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GIRLFRIEND: She's wrong. She doesn't understand anything. I could never look at his best friend like that! That stupid grin, the way he walks and talks, even his voice. They remind me too much of...
(Looks at picture, pause.) Ten and a-half months; 320 days. That's how long I had with him. I remember our first date. It was November 21st. We'd been texting a lot and I had been waiting for him to ask me out. It took him forever! The *seventh Harry Potter** had just come out and we both really wanted to see it. It gave him the perfect opportunity.

(Lights up outside school. NAMELESS is frozen wearing the black zip-up sweater. Enter GIRLFRIEND, both hold school books.)

NAMELESS: Hey, wait up!

GIRLFRIEND: Oh, hey. (Giggles shyly.)

NAMELESS: What's up?

GIRLFRIEND: Not much, just going home to finish that Chem lab. Did you get H₂O as the answer to number three?

NAMELESS: No; I think I got CO₂.

GIRLFRIEND: Shoot! I'm hopeless at chemistry.

NAMELESS: I can help you tomorrow at lunch, if you want.

GIRLFRIEND: Thanks! Can I pay you to tutor me? I'm so lost.

NAMELESS: Not as lost as some people. You can't be worse than Jase*. (Laughs)

GIRLFRIEND: Wanna bet?

NAMELESS: Can I bet that you're the best?

GIRLFRIEND: Doesn't matter to me. I *know* I suck worse, but I'll take your money either way.

NAMELESS: (Laughs.) How about a trade?

GIRLFRIEND: Okay. What?

NAMELESS: (Takes a nervous breath.) You let me take you to *Harry Potter** this weekend and I'll help you everyday at lunch until you can teach the class better than anyone! (Pause.) And that probably won't take long, you're really smart.

GIRLFRIEND: Well, I guess we'll see about that. You have a deal.

(THEY handshake, NAMELESS freezes. Lights fade and come back up on GIRLFRIEND in her bedroom.)

How could I have said anything but yes? He was so cute. Our study sessions would eventually become less about chemistry, and more about *biology*; but that was long after our first date. It was a cold night but the movie theatre was warm and the company was *hot*.

(Lights up on outside the movie theatre. NAMELESS stands frozen dressed in date/cool clothes. GIRLFRIEND enters and NAMELESS

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offers the black zip-up sweater to GIRLFRIEND who takes it, throwing it around her shoulders.)

NAMELESS: You looked cold. So, did you enjoy the movie?

GIRLFRIEND: Yes. I was looking forward to seeing it all week! Thank you for taking me.

NAMELESS: Thanks for saying yes; I was really nervous you know.

GIRLFRIEND: Nervous about what? That I would say no?

NAMELESS: Nervous about talking to you in general.

GIRLFRIEND: *(Jokingly.)* I am pretty frightening. Oh well, was it really as bad as you thought it would be?

NAMELESS: Much worse. I can't even look at you when I talk because you're so...

GIRLFRIEND: Bland, tasteless, gross -

NAMELESS: - Beautiful.

GIRLFRIEND: Oh. *(SHE reaches for his hand.)* Thanks.

(THEY walk to the truck holding hands. Lights shift to truck, THEY enter, soft motor sounds.)

Do you want your jacket back now?

NAMELESS: You keep it, that is, if you want to?

(GIRLFRIEND nods, HE smiles.)

Hey... so...

GIRLFRIEND: Yes?

NAMELESS: Umm... Can I ask you something?

GIRLFRIEND: Of course, anything.

NAMELESS: Why did you agree to go out with me? I mean, we've only known each other for a little while.

GIRLFRIEND: I dunno; because you're funny, cool, cute, and you're always nice to, like, everybody. It just seems like I've known you for a long time.

NAMELESS: And doesn't that make me boring?

(Car sound stops.)

GIRLFRIEND: No. It makes me think that you're someone I could get used to having around.

(THEY hold each other's gaze and NAMELESS shyly leans in for a kiss. Lights fade. Soft light comes back up on GIRLFRIEND, who has shed the zip-up. NAMELESS has exited.)

I'd never kissed anyone on the first date; but with him, it had never even seemed like a first date. He was so familiar. I felt like we could have been an old married couple; one of those old, battle-hardened

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kind. A couple that had been high school sweethearts, prom king and queen, swirled up in teenage romance. We'd have married young and raised seven kids never arguing once, except maybe over dishes. I could've pictured us eventually bickering on a front porch, surrounded by our children and grandchildren. He was someone I could've gotten used to. I did get used to him. Then he left me all alone, in this horrible, messed up world. I hate him for that! I was in that truck too! Why couldn't it have been both of us or just me? I need him! I miss him...!

(SHE breaks down and cries, lights shift to MISS RIVERS standing by her desk with three desks in front of her. Two are filled by STUDENTS with notebooks. Two STUDENTS stand. One seat is vacant. All this set-up happens as the ANNOUNCEMENTS are made.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS: *(Live or pre-recorded)* Welcome back to this stormy Monday morning. Teachers are asked to please call down all absences to the office since we expect there to be plenty throughout the day. Grief counsellors are available for students in the library. Lastly, Meredith Bradley and Sandra Kim please come down to the office.

(The STUDENTS, by now, are ALL staring at the vacant seat.)

MISS RIVERS: *(Recalling attention)* Alright students, please work on questions 1-10 in your textbooks. They are on the ICE charts we learned on Friday. I'll be marking at my desk if you have any questions. *(Sits.)*

(STUDENTS, almost overlapping, hit the WHY.)

STUDENT 1: *Why* is everyone upset?

STUDENT 2: *Why* is the class so silent?

STUDENT 3: *Why* are we even in school right now?

STUDENT 4: *Why* won't my brain just shut off?

STUDENT 2: *Why* can't we all just have a do-over?

STUDENT 4: *Why* do I care so much about this?

STUDENT 1: *Why* did this happen to *them*?

STUDENT 3: *Why* did this happen to *us*?

STUDENT 4: *Why?*

STUDENT 3: *Why??*

STUDENT 2: *WHY?*

STUDENT 1: *WHY??*

(THEY ALL point at the vacant desk.)

STUDENTS: *WHY HIM?*

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(Light on MISS RIVERS at desk, STUDENTS continue pointing.)

MISS RIVERS: Because! *(Hits the desk, lone spotlight)* Because why not him? It could happen to any of us; any of *you*. Deaths due to car crashes are a leading cause of death across the world. We think we're above it. He thought he was above it. We're all wrong.

(SHE stands, STUDENTS lower hands.)

I remember meeting him years ago when I still taught grade nine science. He was a nice boy; quiet, but well liked. He followed the rules: never missed an assignment, always scored well on my tests, even corrected my spelling a few times. They're saying he drank a lot the night it happened. I don't believe that. *(Holds up test paper.)* I don't believe that someone this smart could possibly be that dumb. Maybe I'm wrong; who knows? Either way, I'll remember him how he should be remembered: a kind, caring young man who was always willing to help his friends or a teacher.

(Lights fade as bell goes off. MOM and DAD enter.)

MOM: We had one beautiful boy for many years and we loved him with all our hearts.

DAD: We thought that our family was as big as it was ever going to get-

MOM: -but we were wrong. We got to give our son the biggest surprise, and sometimes, biggest curse any parents can give their child.

MOM and DAD: A sibling.

DAD: Those nine months were probably the quickest months of our three lives.

MOM: Finally, it happened. I was out for lunch with some friends and by eight o'clock that night, our little family of three had become a perfect family of four.

DAD: I was on lunch when I got the call. I grabbed my coat and broke the speed limit to get to the hospital. As soon as I got to the hospital I called the school. "Mom's having the baby, son!" I shouted through my cell phone. It was hard to tell which one of us was more excited.

(Lights on NAMELESS)

NAMELESS: *(Through phone.)* It's only wood shop left! Can't I come Dad? Please?

(NAMELESS moves to DAD during the following line and then together THEY meet MOM, who carries a bundle.)

DAD: I went and got him from school and then we went back to the hospital.

MOM: Our family was complete with a six pound, three ounce miracle.

NAMELESS: He's ours? Wow. He's so small!

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DAD: I remember when you were that small. I said the same thing, son.

MOM: *(To NAMELESS.)* He already looks so much like you.

NAMELESS: Mom! C'mon! He's so small, how can you tell?

MOM: Mother's instinct. Do you want to hold him?

NAMELESS: Can I!?!

(MOM and DAD gather around NAMELESS who carefully takes the bundle (baby) from MOM.)

He's heavy for someone so small! *(To baby.)* You're a big guy already aren't you? I'm going to teach you everything! How to spit, how to ride a bike, how to dribble a basketball! We're gonna have so much fun!

DAD: *(Laughs.)* You might have to wait a few years for that. But when it comes time, son, you can potty-train him.

NAMELESS: DAD! *(To baby.)* You're gonna have to watch out for *him*.

Dad thinks he's funny, but you'll figure out *really* quick that he's not.

MOM: Really, you two. How am I —?

NAMELESS: Mom, look! He smiled at me! *(Awestruck.)* He's awesome!

DAD: He loves you already kiddo.

MOM: Your father and I are going to need a lot of help with him. Are you up for being his role model?

NAMELESS: Are you kidding? I'm going to be his hero! He's *my* little brother.

MOM: It's settled then.

DAD: He's all ours.

NAMELESS: Good. *(Pause.)* So, what's his name?

(Short blackout with some sound effect to introduce the TV REPORTER. Lights up, on TV REPORTER and MARJORIE.)

TV REPORTER: And this past Saturday was indeed a sad day in the **small town of Moosomin, Saskatchewan**. As three teenagers headed home from a party their driver, an eighteen year-old male, lost control of the vehicle and drove into oncoming Northbound traffic. Fifty-six year old *Marjorie** Stanton, a local nurse, was heading home at that time and remembers seeing the truck enter her lane.

NURSE: It must have been a touch before two A.M. and I was driving home from work. I usually take the night shift and, like always, it had been a busy day and I wanted to get home as quickly as possible. As I drove down the highway, I rounded a corner and a truck entered my lane. It scared me half to death. I hit the brakes and at the same time the truck driver swerved and hit the ditch. I thought to myself, '*Marj**, you must be the luckiest person in the world! Now you hustle

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yourself over to that other vehicle because he probably wasn't so lucky.' I pulled over to the side of the road and, sending up a prayer, called a friend from the E.M.S. Then I ran over to see if I could help. The truck had rolled. When I got close I yelled, "Are you okay?!" I'll tell you something; I've been a nurse for thirty-odd years and I've seen some pretty heavy stuff. I'll *never* forget that girl's screams. I can't even begin to imagine what she was going through.

TV REPORTER: Yes, it must truly have been a horrible sight. The eighteen year old driver died from a cerebral haemorrhage en route to the hospital. He had two passengers; a female, seventeen, escaped with scrapes and bruises. The other passenger, an eighteen year-old male, is currently in the hospital with cracked ribs and internal bleeding. Both passengers are *expected* to make full recoveries. We are not releasing names due to the ongoing police investigation; the police suspect that the accident *was not* due to alcohol consumption, but they aren't ruling anything out yet.

(Lights shift to BEST FRIEND, lying in hospital bed. HE clicks a remote, shutting off the T.V. and sits up.)

BEST FRIEND: He died. He didn't drink, and he still died. How fair is that? I should have died from alcohol poisoning that night, and he dies of what? *(Gesturing at the T.V.)* They say cerebral haemorrhage. I don't know what hell that means. He died of bad luck: stupid, dumb, freak, bad luck. It was that stupid truck with its stupid brakes. Are you happy? You loved that truck and it killed you! You left your girlfriend. You left your parents. You left me! I've known you for forever and you just leave me!? Can you understand that?? *(Pause. HE moves to stand up but can't from pain.)* Ahhh, man! We were like twins, you and me. Remember kindergarten? You had a killer right hook back then.

(Flashback. Lights up on YOUNG NAMELESS and YOUNG BEST FRIEND (YBF). YBF approaches YOUNG NAMELESS.)

YOUNG NAMELESS: Hi!

YBF: Hi. Nice ball, can I play?

(YBF takes ball from YOUNG NAMELESS.)

YOUNG NAMELESS: Hey! That's mine!

YBF: Not anymore, it's not. It's my turn to play with it.

YOUNG NAMELESS: NO! It's mine you stupid head!

YBF: *(Gasping.)* You said a bad word! If you don't let me have it, I'll tell the teacher.

YOUNG NAMELESS: No you won't!

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(Punches YBF in the mouth. HE reels from it, dropping the ball which YOUNG NAMELESS happily picks up. YBF starts wailing as lights fade back to the hospital scene.)

BEST FRIEND: We were best friends by the time that detention was over. I guess you figured I wouldn't be able to tell the teacher on you if I had a fat lip. When it came down to it, though, studying for a test, bumming a ride off you, or even teaching me the perfect jump shot, you were always there to help. I wouldn't have made the basketball team or finished grade eleven without you. *(Pause.)* I remember when you came to see me in the hospital after I fell out of that tree in seventh grade. A good thing you came to see me too. After all, it was you who dared me to climb it in the first place...

(BEST FRIEND sits up in bed, NAMELESS enters.)

NAMELESS: *(Shouting offstage.)* I won't be long dad! Man! You shoulda heard the crack your leg made! All the girls were like, 'Ewwwww,' and I was like, 'Yup he's my best friend!'

BEST FRIEND: Did they really do that?

NAMELESS: Yeah! We're going to be more popular than Tyson James when you come back to school.

BEST FRIEND: *(Chidingly.)* Nobody is more popular than Tyson James! Not even, like, God!

NAMELESS: Well, God is; but dude, we're gonna rule the school!

BEST FRIEND: The girls are gonna be ours!

NAMELESS: *(Laughs.)* Hey, are you gonna be able to play in the soccer match against Rocanville* this weekend? We can't win without you!

(NAMELESS freezes. BEST FRIEND lies back down. NAMELESS leaves.)

BEST FRIEND: I wasn't able to play for a long time after that but, whenever you weren't on the field at games you were beside me, making me feel like I was part of every win and loss. That meant a lot to me. *(HE again tries to move but can't.)* We went to high school. I was so nervous the first day that I walked into the girl's bathroom and do you know what you did? You came in to get me and dragged me out, laughing the whole time. That's when I knew it was all going to be okay. *(Pause.)* The things we did, it's amazing we ever became cool but we owned that place by senior year. You won that election for student council by a landslide and I beat you out for captain on the basketball team; no hard feelings. It was always you and me growing up and that never changed, even when we both started dating. Dude, your girlfriend really misses you, and I know you miss her too. You two were *stupid cute* together, you know. I

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never told you, but if you two had been, like, old, I would have wanted you as parents. You know mine always fought and somehow, I never thought you two would. You were just too right for each other, I guess...

(Lights up where NAMELESS is on the phone with (or texting) BEST FRIEND. If texting, the ACTORS just say the lines as if THEY were reading what THEY were writing out loud.)

NAMELESS: She's so beautiful, man.

BEST FRIEND: Yeah dude, rub it in. You have a beautiful girl and I can barely get anyone to talk to me.

NAMELESS: Sorry man. Hey, we going to the party this weekend? It's in Rocanville*.

BEST FRIEND: Sure. You gonna DD, or is she? I wanna drink!

NAMELESS: Well then nobody's gonna stop you. I can DD. It's no big deal; and man, maybe 'you-know-who' will be there.

(DOESN'T CARE somehow appears next to BEST FRIEND so we know that SHE's 'you-know-who'.)

BEST FRIEND: Yeah? *(Laughs.)* She'd better be! I might have a chance with her drunk.

NAMELESS: Maybe you'd have a chance with a decent girl if you didn't chase everything in a skirt.

BEST FRIEND: *(Laughs.)* Who would you call decent?

NAMELESS: I dunno, there are plenty of decent girls around.

BEST FRIEND: Like your girl?

NAMELESS: She's a lot better than just decent.

BEST FRIEND: So things are good with you two?

NAMELESS: Of course.

BEST FRIEND: *(Teasingly.)* Do you love her?

NAMELESS: You know I do, more than anything.

BEST FRIEND: That's gross.

NAMELESS: *(Laughs.)* How's that?

BEST FRIEND: It just is!

NAMELESS: You'd rather I be like you and hit on every girl that moves?

BEST FRIEND: Yeah! Forget about your girl and we can make a man of you yet!

NAMELESS: Why don't we try to keep me as a man with a girlfriend?

BEST FRIEND: Well I'll be here when you come to your senses.

NAMELESS: *(Smirks.)* Thanks, *man*.

BEST FRIEND: You owe me, *kid*.

(Exit NAMELESS.)

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We both knew that it was all just talk; but we were just guy-ing it up. I wish I could talk to you again. Your parents are still in shock, man, and for good reason too. They would've completely fallen to pieces if it wasn't for that little brother of yours. You better make sure *nothing* happens to him. Your parents don't deserve this, let alone that. Sometimes I wish all three of us had died in that crash. Then maybe the pain would've been spread around a bit more. Maybe then people would care more and they would do something to stop it from happening again. What would they do? I sure as hell don't know. It's pretty hard to stop freak accidents. *(Pause.)* I'm going to your funeral on Tuesday. Your parents asked me if I wanted to say anything but I just can't. *(Sigh.)* They're really nice, your parents. They told me their place is always open if I need it. I think they want everything to just be normal again and what's more normal than me hanging out at your place? No offence dude, but I really don't want to go to your funeral. Funerals are all stuffy and they don't change very much; that person is gone forever after all. The funeral isn't the real problem though. I don't wanna see people remembering you. I don't want to see your mom and dad crying or you brother looking around, wondering where you are. *(Mockingly)* Surprise kid! Your brother's dead! He's not gonna get to play peek-a-boo with you anymore! *(Softening.)* I don't want your girlfriend there, man. I doubt she can take it anymore. None of us can. Why did you leave? It was selfish and immature! Why didn't you take me with you? *(HE becomes increasingly emotional)* I hate you! I wish I'd never met you! I wish we'd never been born! I miss you, you big idiot! I... I...

(Lights fade as BEST FRIEND grips his side and falls down on bed. I.V. beeping sounds. DOCTOR enters as lights continue to slowly fade.)

DOCTOR: What was he doing? He's pulled out his stitches! C'mon kid, don't die on me! *(Shouting offstage.)* Call a code!

(Lights up on TOWNSPEOPLE milling about, all reading from newspapers.)

TOWNSPERSON 1: "Teen Death Continues to Impact Town"

TOWNSPERSON 2: The recent death of *McNaughton High School's** student council president...

TOWNSPERSON 3: Basketball star...

TOWNSPERSON 4: Straight A Student...

TOWNSPEOPLE: The recent death has...

TOWNSPERSON 5: Affected the town greatly.

TOWNSPERSON 6: The young man's death has come as a great shock to his parents...

TOWNSPERSON 2: Brother...

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TOWNSPERSON3: Friends...

TOWNSPERSON 4: Teachers...

TOWNSPEOPLE: And loved ones.

TOWNSPERSON 5: He is predeceased by his great grandparents...

TOWNSPERSON 6: And survived by...

TOWNSPEOPLE: Everyone else.

(Slow fade as TOWNSPEOPLE look up from newspapers. Lights up on BEST FRIEND and DOCTOR. DOCTOR hands BEST FRIEND some pills from a cup.)

DOCTOR: Eat those up quick. You have a visitor.

(Enter GIRLFRIEND.)

GIRLFRIEND: Hey, how're you feeling?

BEST FRIEND: *(Swallows the pill.)* A bit better; now that someone who isn't gonna poke me with needles is here. You?

GIRLFRIEND: I'm holding up.

BEST FRIEND: Sure. No better than me I suppose.

GIRLFRIEND: No, you're right. *(Pause.)* Why him? What did he do?

BEST FRIEND: I dunno. Nothing. Nobody did anything wrong. It just, sorta, happened.

GIRLFRIEND: What do you remember?

BEST FRIEND: That I was the only one hammered. You two were fine.

GIRLFRIEND: I wasn't sober.

TOGETHER: He was sober.

BEST FRIEND: Yeah. A hellava lot of good it did him.

GIRLFRIEND: *Don't...*

(Pause – Quiet, then...)

BEST FRIEND: Sorry. *(As if HE's been repressing it.)* All I did was cry about my *stupid* ribs. You were banged up just as bad as me, and all you cared about was him.

GIRLFRIEND: No, don't say that about yourself. You –

BEST FRIEND: Only cared about *me*! Not him. I heard you screaming for help. Holding him and begging him to stay. He would have done it too; if he could have; even if it were only for you.

GIRLFRIEND: Thanks.

BEST FRIEND: Don't thank me for that. Thank me for this. *(Tosses her the black zip-up hoodie.)* The docs mixed up our clothing and thought it was mine. He gave it to you, so you hold on to it. I asked them not wash it so –

(GIRLFRIEND smells the hoodie and hugs it to her.)

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Yeah..., did you get asked to speak?

GIRLFRIEND: At the funeral? Yes, but I can't. It hurts too much and nobody wants to hear from me. They can't understand what he meant to me.

BEST FRIEND: Yeah. I couldn't do it either.

(Silence.)

GIRLFRIEND: I can't go. *(Sniffle.)* I don't have anyone to go with anymore.

BEST FRIEND: Yes, you do.

(Pause, then realizing.)

GIRLFRIEND: You?

BEST FRIEND: Yup. The only way I'm not going to cry at this thing is if I have someone with me who knew him like I did. *(Extends his hand.)*

GIRLFRIEND: Alright. *(Takes his hand.)* I –

BEST FRIEND: Don't mention it.

*(THEY drop hands and GIRLFRIEND puts on the hoodie and THEY both freeze; soft fade. MOM and DAD enter and stand in formal clothes, holding unlit candles. *You may wish to include a toddler-aged child as the younger brother.* Almost the entire cast is now on stage in darkness, lights up on MOM and DAD.)*

DAD: We miss you kiddo. We miss seeing that smile you had that could get you out of anything. We miss the comfort we always had when everyone was home, together and safe. We miss everything about you, the good and the bad, because all of it together made you our son.

MOM: We miss you baby. We miss going to your activities from sports to singing in the elementary school choir. We miss hearing about all the things you did each day at dinner time. You made our lives interesting and so much better just by being a part of them.

DAD: We'll keep you with us and your brother will know all about you. When asked, we'll say, "We have two amazing boys – "

MOM: "– that have made us the proudest parents in the world." There are so many things that remind us of you. The biggest one is your brother. He lost more than all of us when you left. He missed the chance to get to know you. He missed the countless hours of teasing that only two brothers can share. He missed out on learning from you. The time you spent with him – you were his biggest hero. Nobody could get him to smile like you could.

DAD: We love you –

MOM: – and we'll be together again, someday.

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(THEY walk upstage after turning on candles. Meanwhile, DOESN'T CARE and MISS RIVERS take up position in the light, BOTH with unlit candles.)

DOESN'T CARE: Why am I here? The boy didn't mean anything to me. I barely knew him. I guess you could say I'm just here to offer what I can to those who did know him. Wanna know the thing I don't get though? People die every day – so why is his death such a big deal? I don't understand...

MISS RIVERS: Well, here we are. You're still at the head of the class but this is one lesson I'm not qualified to teach. You have left a lot of good people behind, young man. So you listen to me; these people are going to need help getting through this mess and you're their guardian angel now. I pray you help them find the peace you undoubtedly have. I know you won't let anyone down.

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