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*This play could not have been made possible without the staggering compassion of the following young people:*

*Allie Cislo, Ben Loya, Elliot Friedman, Katie Calcado, Lucy Tan, Matt Mazur, Serena Lam, Natalie Glick, Corey Hadschuch, Vlad Ignolnikov, Matt Spector, Caitlin Colona, Sarah Levy, Greg Schaller, Joey Sbarro, and Adam "James" May, the original cast of **Just Like I Wanted**.*

*Also to my mom and pop, my brother, Mike, and all the residents, both old and young, of Livingston who wrote letters and started conversations with me and each other.*

## **Cast of Characters**

**JOEY** (male), 16—protagonist. Joey is dead at the play's opening and serves as the narrator of his own flashbacks. Still reeling from the pain of his life, he finds purpose in trying to explain how his life came to a sudden end. He finds himself encased in a nightmare; seeing the mistakes of his past with the inability to change them.

**NORA** (female), 16—introverted, sweet. Suffering from severe depression, Nora is unable to express her anguish, locking herself in silence, with the justification that her life is insignificant. She is able to recognize this similarity in Joey, but is unable to reach out to him until it is too late.

**PANDERS** (male), mid-forties—an unresponsive teacher; his heart is in the right place, but he is unable to take a firm stand over the unfolding events. Instead he meanders as a middle man.

**THERAPIST** (male or female), Mid-forties—an unresponsive therapist; unable to employ the necessary skills on his group to help them with their respective problems.

**KID #1** (male or female), high school age.

**KID #2** (male or female), high school age.

**KID #3** (male or female), high school age.

**KID #4** (male or female), high school age.

**SHANE** (male), 16—simple-minded; he seems to agree with Ron on most issues.

**LIZ** (female), high school age—she is atypical from the classical Goth stereotype, trying to see through her illness and is able to recognize areas of her life that bring her happiness.

**ALYSSA** (female), high school age—rational, pessimistic, insecure.

**RON** (male), high school age—bitter, sarcastic, temperamental. His depression only causes him to lash out at everything around him. His cynicism severely dampens the moral of the group.

JOEY'S MOM (female), mid-late forties—deeply depressed, kind-hearted. She is unable to hide her sadness from her children, which only makes fall into a deeper sadness.

JOEY'S DAD (male), mid-late forties—impatient, rash. He clearly feels the stress of his wife's mental illness and as a result has little tolerance for his son.

HAYLEY (female), 9—sweet, innocent, playful. Not only is Joey her best friend and playmate, but she looks up to him tremendously. Her innocence enables her to communicate with Joey in a way that no one ever has.

PASTOR (male or female), any age, a caring voice.

### **Character Notes**

Panders may double as Pastor.

Shane, Liz, Ron, Alyssa may double as Kids.

## **Author Notes**

1. Any or all of the parts in this play can be portrayed by either a male or a female (other than Joey's mom or dad.) If you so desire, simply change the name of the character to fit the desired gender. The importance of these characters is in the characters themselves and therefore, it is of little consequence which gender is portraying them.
2. Joey is dead at the play's opening. He serves as the narrator of his own story (a flashback). In it, he goes back and forth between being himself in the past and telling the story in the present. When Joey wears his hat, which should be integrated into the blocking of the play, it symbolizes the past of these two different phases.
3. Joey is talking to his class (which includes the audience).
4. If I could encourage anything, because this play has a great deal of talking, and talking about a matter of tremendous emotional struggle, the actor/actress playing Joey should let the words speak for themselves. No screaming or tantrums are necessary. This kid desperately wants to connect with his/her audience. They need to make them listen, not chastise them or wallow in his/her own emotions.

## **Set**

The set is abstract. Only simple chairs and a table are necessary.

# JUST LIKE I WANTED

by Rebecca Schlossberg

*(A slow music fade up. [The song: Oleander's "Runaway Train."] A single light fades up on an empty space Stage Left. NORA, 16, soon occupies this space. She is dressed in dark colors; it is hard to make out her face. She also wears headphones, as she tries to absorb herself into the music.)*

*(Clusters of kids pass around her, back and forth. They talk loudly, slowly building into a crescendo of loud noise and messy clusters. NORA is drowned out and runs Offstage-Stage Right.)*

*(Darkness to a slow fade up. A teacher, PANDERS, stands Center Stage in back of an overhead projector. The projector lists "Suicidal Statistics." Kids, dressed in dark colors, sit in desks around them. JOEY, 16, dressed in all white, slowly rises holding his head.)*

**PANDERS.** Seven hundred thousand high school students in the US will attempt suicide... That's one in every 13 high school students.

**JOEY.** I was never good at math.

**PANDERS.** For every two homicides in the US, there are three suicides.

**JOEY.** Gotta love that lack of personalization in statistics.

**PANDERS.** Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death for all people regardless of age, sex or race.

**JOEY.** A quick amount of information in a short amount of time. A nice wrap-up.

**PANDERS.** Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people aged 15 to 24. In 1996, more teenagers and young adults died of suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease combined.

**JOEY.** Nineteen ninety-six was a really crappy year then, wasn't it?

**PANDERS.** For every completed suicide there are an estimated 30 to 50 attempts. Every two hours and two point five minutes another young person commits suicide.

**JOEY.** Wow. Let's get even *more* depressed, Panders.

**PANDERS.** A Department of Health Report on youth suicide found that gay and lesbian youth are up to five times more likely to attempt suicide.

**JOEY.** Are they implying something about me now?

**PANDERS.** Suicide and attempted suicide has increased 300% in the last thirty years.

**JOEY.** And you gotta wonder why.

**PANDERS.** Nine out of ten suicides take place in the home.

**JOEY.** Guilty!

**PANDERS.** Seventy percent of suicides occur between the hours of 3 P.M. to midnight.

**JOEY.** Guilty again. Jeez Panders, you're on a roll!

**PANDERS.** Males complete suicide four times more often than females. Females account for 75% of attempted suicides, mainly with drug overdoses.

**JOEY.** Hey, I used pills when I did it. Girls use pills and homosexuals are more likely to commit suicide... Damn, talk about making me feel like less of a man. But hey, it's not like I was much of a man even before I...

**PANDERS.** Spring and fall are the months of highest risk. (*Looking up at his class.*) Why do you think that is?

*(Main action freezes. JOEY removes the overhead sheet and puts up his own, reading "Half of all kids who make a suicide attempt will make another." He stands Center Stage.)*

**JOEY.** (*Reading the overhead:*) Half of all kids who make a suicide attempt will make another. If at first you don't succeed try...try again.

*(He walks Down Stage.)*

*(To the class [which includes the audience]:)* I think it's about time I took over here. I'll try and tell you why I did what I did. Not like that's an effective measure of suicide prevention. Most people can't hear stories from the dead. *Usually.*

What teachers don't tell you in high school can get you killed. Gotta get an A or you're screwed. What's the point anyway? I couldn't fight against it. I hated myself.

I hated how I meant nothing.

I hated how I was just a little kid stuck in a great big hole. So after two tries, I gave in. Just like I wanted.

*(KIDS behind JOEY unfreeze and transform into the next scene: the halls and classrooms of Joey's high school.)*

**JOEY.** Unable to breathe. A huge hole. Seven feet long, six feet deep. Nowhere to jump. Nowhere to brace my feet. A hole in the desert. Nobody around. No water. Just stuck in a hole. With no one to pull me out. Nothing and nobody. Completely trapped.

I was encased in a daily soap opera that I called, "My life."

*(JOEY walks Stage Right. Two boys await him. JOEY hands the two boys a bill, they slip him a small bag of drugs.)*

**JOEY.** *(Pointing to the drug dealers, then speaking to the audience:)* If you buy six bags, you get the seventh half off.

*(He walks further Stage Left, slips into a desk. A guy and girl flirt around him and eventually kiss. They do not stop. JOEY watches the couple make out. After a few seconds of that, he gets up, frustrated.)*

**JOEY.** *(To the couple:)* STDs are on the rise, my friends.

*(He walks to another desk, sits Stage Left. Several kids sit near him. PANDERS returns to the overhead, looking up.)*

**JOEY.** And my favorite, Mr. Pander's class.

**PANDERS.** So, the test will be on Monday then.

**KID #2.** Can't we have it on Tuesday?

**KID #4.** I have so many tests on Monday!

(PANDERS *says nothing.*)

**KID #3.** So is it on Tuesday?

**PANDERS.** No, the test is on Monday.

(*The class groans.*)

**KID #1.** Wait, when is it?

**JOEY.** (*Screaming:*) Monday! It's on Monday! Jesus!

(PANDERS *ignores JOEY's outburst, probably wanting to scream it himself.*)

**PANDERS.** (*To the class:*) So who can tell me what THC is?

(*The frame freezes again.*)

**JOEY.** (*Sarcastic:*) Thank God I had group therapy. My shoulder to cry on. My rock. Funny thing was, every time I was there, I'd always hold my sleeves in my hands. Just like I wanted.

(*Scene transforms into Joey's group therapy session. The "doctor" of these sessions is the THERAPIST. The kids in it are NORA, RON, LIZ, ALYSSA, SHANE, and JOEY. LIZ is dressed in Goth.*)

**THERAPIST.** Okay everyone, let's settle in. How's everyone been?

**JOEY.** (*To audience:*) I always secretly wanted to speak, but I never did. I was never able to. I thought it would take too long or something to put it all together. Nobody cared anyway.

**SHANE.** Hey Doc, do you realize if you separate the word "therapist" in half, it spells "the rapist"?

**THERAPIST.** Anybody else?

(*A beat.*)

**JOEY.** Group therapy. We weren't a unit. We were the most divided group of people on the planet. Each scrambling for the most attention. I didn't want part of that, you know?

**THERAPIST.** How's everyone been feeling?

**RON.** (*Sarcastic:*) Like peaches and cream, Doc.

**THERAPIST.** Why the sarcasm, Ron?

**RON.** Because my life hasn't been peaches and cream.

**JOEY.** Nobody cared. Nobody cared to listen. Nobody cared if I got better. Or happier. Or not. So I just kept on digging holes. Tons of them. Millions.

**ALYSSA.** Everything with you we gotta explain.

**THERAPIST.** Well, I can't read minds here folks you have to—

**RON.** No way! Really? I must be in the wrong place.

**THERAPIST.** Why don't we continue with what you're saying, Ron? What's troubling you?

**RON.** Everything.

**THERAPIST.** Well, let's break down this "everything" a bit. Start small.

**RON.** School. Parents. My girlfr—

**THERAPIST.** Okay, okay. Let's take each of these slowly so we can really get into each topic. School. Anybody else experiencing similar problems with school?

*(An awkward moment again.)*

**LIZ.** You want us to raise our hands or something?

**THERAPIST.** No, feel free to talk. The floor is yours, folks. What about you, Nora?

*(Everyone looks to NORA.)*

**THERAPIST.** Nora? Any opinion?

**NORA.** No.

**THERAPIST.** Nothing?

**NORA.** No.

**THERAPIST.** Okay, Liz?

**LIZ.** I don't think anyone of us here likes school.

**THERAPIST.** Okay, now why is that?

**LIZ.** The kids in it. They have no sense of anything. All they care about is themselves or the latest piece of gossip. Or how to get high. Or what car mommy and daddy are going to buy them next.

**THERAPIST.** Is that why you threatened to kill the members of your class Liz—

**LIZ.** I threatened to kill the members of my class because they called me a dyke behind my back, thinking I wouldn't hear it, and then ripped up my notebook, one of those jocks. It was—

**ALYSSA.** Humiliating.

**LIZ.** That was my notebook. Not theirs. Who taught them these things? What right do they have to make me feel like crap? What right do they have to take my property? If they have that right, then I had the right to take back my pride. Tell them that I could kill them if they dare to touch me or my stuff again. And I could. And they should never forget that. Maybe that will shatter their little world.

**THERAPIST.** Now, I am correct in saying three of you made homicidal threats too, correct? Ron?

**RON.** Gotta love zero tolerance.

**THERAPIST.** And Liz. And Nora? Nora? Is that so? You had a similar case?

**NORA.** Yeah.

**THERAPIST.** And Shane, Joey, and Alyssa, have you ever experienced similar feelings?

*(A beat. JOEY, in the moment, finally speaks up.)*

**JOEY.** I've never wanted to hurt anyone.

**SHANE.** Yeah, me neither.

**ALYSSA.** Ditto. I guess, my reason for being in here is totally different.

**THERAPIST.** Oh, and what is yours Alyssa?

**ALYSSA.** I called a suicide group over the phone. You know, like the 1-800 anonymous numbers or something like that. My mom picked up and freaked. It was the biggest mistake of my life.

**THERAPIST.** Well no, those groups are quite helpful in—

**ALYSSA.** Those groups are crap anyway. It's good that my mom picked up. Someone had to cut me off.

**THERAPIST.** Now, why is that?

**ALYSSA.** I mean, if you call one of the groups or go on the Internet... suicide has become a business, along with everything else, people like you get paid to talk to people like me. It's so impersonal.

**RON.** You see it as un-personal—

**SHANE.** Yeah.

**ALYSSA.** No, I see it how it is. Nobody else seems to notice.

**RON.** Well then, how should things get done, how could people get help from professionals—

**LIZ.** If people were different in the first place, we wouldn't need professionals.

**RON.** We could all just be friends!

**ALYSSA.** Shut up, you jerk. I'm making a point.

**THERAPIST.** But we live in a new world where that is an unfortunate impossibility.

**ALYSSA.** That's why I don't want to be in it anymore—

**THERAPIST.** Alyssa, we've been over this time and again—

*(JOEY takes over. The kids from group therapy exit the stage in both directions, taking their chairs with them.)*

**JOEY.** And again...and again, and again.

I went straight from group to my house. Four times a week. Every week.

*(JOEY walks to the other side of the stage. The scene transforms into Joey's home.)*

Everyday, I came home to an empty house. Everyday, I came home to an empty hole.

Mom...

*(JOEY'S MOM enters. Slowly.)*

**JOEY'S MOM.** Hey, sweets.

**JOEY.** You alright?

**JOEY'S MOM.** *(She is not.)* Sure.

*(A beat.)*

**JOEY.** How was work?

**JOEY'S MOM.** Terrible.

**JOEY.** Sorry.

*(She starts to cry.)*

**JOEY.** Mom?

**JOEY'S MOM.** I'm just gonna go lie down.

**JOEY.** Okay.

**JOEY'S MOM.** Watch Hayley.

*(She exits. As soon as she leaves, JOEY slams his head down on the desk. The second after JOEY's action, HAYLEY, 9 or 10, who has been hiding in a chest, pops out next to JOEY.)*

**HAYLEY.** Boo!

**JOEY.** Oh my god—

**HAYLEY.** *(Pointing a finger at him:)* Hey!

**JOEY.** You scared me!

**HAYLEY.** Joey, today we got Polly Pockets!

**JOEY.** Hayley, I got work.

**HAYLEY.** Please. Five minutes.

**JOEY.** Polly Pockets, huh?

**HAYLEY.** Come here!

*(She pulls him over to a pile of Polly Pockets and other toys, including a noticeable teddy bear, resting on the floor Stage Left.)*

**JOEY.** *(To the audience:)* This, sadly, was the highlight of my day. Every single day.

**HAYLEY.** Okay, you be Jesse.

*(She hands him a doll.)*

**JOEY.** Oh, I get to be the guy this time.

**HAYLEY.** Okay. I put the turkey in the oven. And then it cooks.

*(She hums to herself.)*

And then! You take the table and the spoons. And you put the dishes on the table and you take the corn and put that on the table. And you get the dishes and put them on the spots. Ding! Turkey's ready! And you sit the whole family down and everyone eats. Jesse sits down first!

**JOEY.** Oh, yeah?

**HAYLEY.** Yeah.

*(She makes it so that the dolls are now eating dinner.)*

Gobble. Gobble.

**JOEY.** *(Pulling Hayley's teddy bear up:)* And then Teddy destroys the kitchen!

*(He smashes the teddy bear down on the Polly Pockets.)*

**HAYLEY.** *(Laughing hysterically:)* No!

**JOEY.** *(Not stopping:)* Yes! Ahhh! Crazy Teddy!

*(JOEY'S DAD enters.)*

**JOEY'S DAD.** *(Shouting:)* Joey! Your mother is trying to sleep!

*(HAYLEY jumps into JOEY's lap. She looks down for the following dialogue, still playing with her toys.)*

**JOEY.** Sorry. Jeez.

**JOEY'S DAD.** Take her outside to play.

**JOEY.** It's freezing.

**JOEY'S DAD.** Just put on a jacket!

**JOEY.** Just shut your door! God!

**JOEY'S DAD.** I can't have you two—

**JOEY.** She just wants to play—

**JOEY'S DAD.** What if I started carrying on when you tried to sleep? Have some respect.

**JOEY.** I'd close my door. I'll stop, okay?

**JOEY'S DAD.** Good.

**JOEY.** If I'm such a freakin' bother.

**JOEY'S DAD.** Oh Jesus, just be quiet.

*(He exits.)*

**JOEY.** All right, let me up, kid.

**HAYLEY.** More later?

**JOEY.** Sure. Just got to work first.

*(She runs off, taking Teddy with her.)*

**JOEY.** Off to work I go. Every single day. The same old kids. The same old mindless attitudes.

*(JOEY walks Stage Right. The same two boys from before await him. JOEY hands the two boys a bill, they slip him a small bag of drugs.)*

**JOEY.** Just a little therapy going into therapy.

*(He walks further Stage Left. The same couple from before make out again right in front of him, blocking his path. As he tries to get around them, he pauses, frustrated.)*

**JOEY.** You'd almost think it was strategic. Like these two were just dying to stand by my locker and make out just so I couldn't get in.

*(NORA walks on stage. Enters from Stage Left.)*

**JOEY.** Oh, hey Nora.

*(NORA waves.)*

*(KIDS enter from Stage Right. They take their seats as PANDERS takes over the overhead.)*

**PANDERS.** Okay, so noticing that we're not having a very active class environment here and noticing that a bunch of you keep complaining about how you never get any sleep, I've taken the liberty of putting together a few sleep helping strategies for you.

*(The KIDS do not seem interested. A few chat quietly.)*

**JOEY.** A high school naptime would be nice.

**PANDERS.** Okay, so listen up, people.

*(The KIDS continue to talk.)*

**PANDERS.** Come on people, listen up.

1. Do not take work to bed with you.
2. Have at least some physical exercise during the day.
3. Make sure your bed is comfortable and you are neither too hot nor too cold.
4. Use different relaxation tendencies like meditation or breathing exercises.

I can give anyone who is interested worksheets on how to do this.

5. If you can't sleep, don't stay in bed restlessly tossing and turning, get up for awhile and try and go back to sleep when you're feeling more tired.

Alright, so there you go. This could help a few of you, I'm sure, right? Now you will all be fresh and ready to talk in my class, right?

*(Nobody says anything.)*

Good.

**KID #3.** *(To KID #1 who is asleep:)* Dude, wake up.

*(KID #1 reluctantly wakes.)*

**PANDERS.** Okay, moving on to relieving stress techniques.

**JOEY.** *(To the audience:)* I felt like I was on a different plane than everyone else. Like in school, I couldn't understand how these kids could just go about their daily lives while there was so much wrong with everything.

Panders helped me realize this. That's all we ever usually talked about in his class.

Like the fact that AIDS was growing.

And pollution was on the rise.

And terrorism was going to strike again.

We talked about how we shouldn't step out on the street at night.

Because snipers are waiting to kill us.

Or how we should try to avoid escalators because they wait to trample children.

Or how we shouldn't use a trampoline.

And how we should watch out for killer bees.

And sharks.

By the time I left class every day I felt like the world was deliberately tainted. That's why I felt so different. Everyone else swallowed this down like a pill. And I couldn't stop thinking about it.

They focused on other things. Themselves mostly.

**KID #1.** What you get in physics?

**KID #3.** A-.

**KID #1.** God, I'm the only one who got a B in that class.

**KID #3.** Oh. *(A beat.)* Well, you'll do better next time.

**KID #1.** I can't believe this. I am so bad in that stupid class.

**KID #3.** Well, she'll average all your grades together. I wouldn't worry about it.

**KID #1.** My other grades aren't that much better. God, I hate this. Her tests are so unfair.

**JOEY.** I wish I could have saved Jenn the suspense— *(Directly to her, sarcastic:)* You're not going to be a nuclear physicist, Jenn. I'm sorry...

I just sat there and kept quiet, un-noticed. Just like I wanted.

And Nora sat there too.

*(NORA has been looking at her notebook this whole time, either writing or drawing.)*

**JOEY.** Nora.

*(Her head whips up.)*

**JOEY.** I hope you're taking this important info to heart.

**NORA.** *(Playing along:)* Of course.

*(KID #4 taps NORA on the shoulder.)*

**KID #4.** Nora, can I borrow your English? Last time...I swear.

**NORA.** Yeah, I guess. Here.

*(NORA opens her binder and slowly hands KID#4 the homework.)*

**KID #4.** Thank you so much.

*(NORA begins to close her binder.)*

**KID #3.** *(To KID #4:)* Oh, get the critique.

**KID #4.** Um, can I catch that one too?

*(NORA reopens her binder. She reluctantly hands KID #4 the work.)*

**KID #3.** *(To NORA:)* Oh, I love you.

*(KID #4 goes back over to his seat.)*

**JOEY.** Why'd you do that?

**NORA.** I don't care.

**JOEY.** I would care. I hate that kid.

*(KID #4 shares Nora's work with KID #3.)*

**NORA.** Yeah, me too. *(Making an observation:)* He looks like a gerbil with an oversized head.

**JOEY.** *(Laughing:)* I've never really thought about it that way. So why'd you give it to him then?

**NORA.** So he wouldn't hate me or something if I said no.

**JOEY.** *(Nods.)* What are you writing?

**NORA.** Oh no. I'm taking notes, of course.

**JOEY.** *(Playing along:)* Of course. Because you have nothing else to do.

**NORA.** Absolutely.

**JOEY.** Wanna see my "notes"?

**NORA.** *(A bit nervous:)* Sure.

*(JOEY picks his binder up and shows NORA a drawing from one of the pages.)*

**NORA.** Wow. That's a really good one of Panders.

**JOEY.** Yeah, I like the horns.

**NORA.** What's that say at the bottom? Merchant of Deeds?

**JOEY.** Death.

**NORA.** Oh, whoops.

*(Taking it in, he begins to laugh.)*

**NORA.** That's a nice piece. Are you in AP art?

**JOEY.** Ha, no.

**NORA.** You should be.

**JOEY.** Yeah, I'm sure they'd let me in under my sample work.

*(KID #4 walks back over to NORA and JOEY, making sure PANDERS doesn't notice. He quickly sits in a seat next to them. He hands her the papers.)*

**KID #4.** Thank you so much. If you ever need something, let me know.

**NORA.** That's okay.

**KID #4.** No, I owe you.

**JOEY.** Yeah, if she ever needs pot, I'm sure you're her man.

*(KID #4 retracts back to his spot next to #3. KID #3 and #4 begin to laugh at JOEY and NORA.)*

**NORA.** You don't have to Joey—

**JOEY.** Maybe he'll leave you alone now. Hey, he's an asshole. You should do some—

**NORA.** Last time I did something, I ended up in group.

**JOEY.** I don't mean threaten the guy's life, just... Here, let's laugh back.

**NORA.** What?

**JOEY.** Yeah, come on.

**NORA.** Joey, no.

**JOEY.** *(Laughing:)* Come on.

*(The two do some very realistic fake laughter.)*

**PANDERS.** *(Thinking his class has finally woken up:)* Now, what is so funny?

*(Kids from group therapy come on stage with their chairs. They sit. The kids from group, and the THERAPIST, hold papers in their hands. The sheets read "Symptoms of Teen Suicide.")*

**THERAPIST.** *(Holding up his paper:)* Let's go through these, okay?

**ALYSSA.** Hit it, Doc.

**LIZ.** What is this?

**THERAPIST.** It's a list of symptoms of suicide. This will help isolate and make you aware of direct symptoms of suicidal behavior. Some of you might even possess these symptoms. Number one. "Change in eating and sleeping habits."

**RON.** Like eating just pie.

**SHANE.** Sleeping!

**RON.** What's sleep?

**SHANE.** No teenagers sleep.

**LIZ.** They do if they plan correctly.

**RON.** Plan, what?

**LIZ.** Schedules, you know.

**RON.** How can you plan if your mom and dad are yelling until 2 am!

**SHANE.** Think before you talk, moocher.

**LIZ.** No, I'll just blurt out everything I say like you two.

**THERAPIST.** Okay kids, number 2: "Withdrawal from friends and family."

**RON.** Well it wouldn't have anything do with those guys being idiots, now would it?

**LIZ.** Not all of us hate our parents over here.

**RON.** Oh bravo, you want a medal?

**ALYSSA.** Who do you hate then?

**LIZ.** Everybody else—

**THERAPIST.** Guys over here, please. "Loss of interest in pleasurable activities."

**RON.** Like sex?

**THERAPIST.** "Drug and alcohol use."

**RON.** As opposed to using *either* drugs or alcohol. No, you *have* to use both.

**SHANE.** Yeah, it's not like no one else in our school uses drugs anyway.

**THERAPIST.** "Usual neglect of personal appearance."

**ALYSSA.** Can lead to suicide?

**RON.** (*Pointing to LIZ.*) Kinda like Edgar Allen over there?

**LIZ.** Shut up.

**RON.** Sorry. Couldn't resist.

**JOEY.** You never can, can you?

**RON.** Hey, look you know what they say, "It's not the person who wears Goth that you have to worry about doing something crazy, it's the guy in the corner reading *Catcher in the Rye*."

**THERAPIST.** Okay, enough Ron. Opinion Nora? On any of this?

**NORA.** No.

**THERAPIST.** No?

**NORA.** No.

**THERAPIST.** Why no? Nora?

**NORA.** Nobody cares. Seriously, nobody cares.

**THERAPIST.** This is a group activity, Nora. Everyone has an opinion. Yours is open to share with us.

**NORA.** My opinion is that everyone here cares about talking about themselves, not about what I have to say.

**THERAPIST.** That's a start. This is a unification process, Nora. We can't be unified without your help. Now, if I were to ask you if you have experienced such symptoms would you agree?

**NORA.** Yes, I would agree, but that's only if I was forced to answer.

**RON.** (*Laughing.*) What!

**NORA.** See what I mean?

*(RON continues to laugh. JOEY hits RON on the shoulder. RON stops laughing and stares at JOEY. A moment of tension rises, but the moment passes. THERAPIST continues.)*

**THERAPIST.** Well, has anyone here exhibited at least one of these kinds of behaviors?

*(No reaction.)*

Come on, people. Nora has put herself on the line. Work together.

*(Everyone but JOEY slowly raises their hands.)*

**LIZ.** But that's not right. You bring in anyone off the street. They'd raise their hand, too.

**THERAPIST.** Joey didn't. Joey?

**JOEY.** Six, I guess, but not really.

**THERAPIST.** "Marked personality change."

**JOEY.** It wasn't marked, it just kind of happened.

**THERAPIST.** Gradually.

**JOEY.** Yeah, I just, felt like there was nothing for me...like I had nothing... I just wanted somebody—

**THERAPIST.** Well, what could make you feel this way?

**JOEY.** My mom is depressed, and my dad acts like I don't exist. But, they're not malicious or anything. It's just me. There's nothing. Emptiness. Nothing's real. Nothing changes...just emptiness.

**THERAPIST.** Sometimes emptiness roots to things from our family backgrounds.

**JOEY.** No, that doesn't explain anything. How could my family make me not feel anything? I'm not mad at my mom. And my dad I don't think about at all. I don't want to waste time thinking about him. I just don't feel anything. So I might as well be dead.

**THERAPIST.** But why—

**JOEY.** I don't know.

**THERAPIST.** No deeper root?

**JOEY.** Sometimes things just are! In your mind, you can't change them.

**THERAPIST.** Well, let me tell you this. A thirteen-year-old girl committed suicide over the past year by slitting her wrists. Now like you, they felt there was nothing. There was no reason for her death. Why did she do it, everyone asked. They researched a bit, checked things, and it turns out her father was molesting her. She did it to escape. All they had to do to find out why she did what she did was to do a little bit of research.

**JOEY.** You could have just said I strongly believe there is a deeper root. I didn't need that freakin' story. You can't find *something* if it isn't there.

**THERAPIST.** I think it is bothering you a lot more than you think. You have to think about it.

**JOEY.** Think about what? It just is! It's not them. It's me!

**RON.** Wish I could say that.

**THERAPIST.** Ron, you traced yours back right?

**RON.** To my father, he's such an asshole.

*(JOEY interrupts the action. Group therapy exits.)*

**JOEY.** Blame! That's all we did. Point fingers! Place the blame somewhere. I couldn't believe it, the whole rest of the meeting he just focused on him. He let Ron distract him! He never even went back to me.

After that I didn't want to speak up anymore. So I didn't talk at all. I just dug more holes. A new hole every time. I just keep digging and digging. It was either that or yell my lungs out everyday.

Why do that when I could keep on digging holes? I just put myself in there. And didn't think about it. Well, almost.

After all, who cared if I thought about it? I could do whatever I wanted. Bound by nothing and no one! I could do whatever the hell I wanted.

*(JOEY backs up a bit. JOEY'S MOM enters and sits at one end of the table.)*

**JOEY.** Mom. Hey ma. Can I talk to you?

**JOEY'S MOM.** Sure dear, sit.

**JOEY.** You want some coffee or something?

**JOEY'S MOM.** No. Thank you.

**JOEY.** You alright, Mom?

**JOEY'S MOM.** Oh, Joey.

**JOEY.** Did I do something?

**JOEY'S MOM.** No! God no! I just feel a little down lately.

**JOEY.** *(Trying not to bother her, but feeling the truth:)* A little?

**JOEY'S MOM.** Sometimes...when you are older you'll understand.

**JOEY.** I hope I don't understand. Can I help?

**JOEY'S MOM.** No, sweetie.

*(JOEY'S MOM tries for his sake not to cry. JOEY tries to ignore her upcoming tears. An awkward silence.)*

**JOEY.** I wish I could.

**JOEY'S MOM.** Oh Joey, just do what you've been doing. That helps me. What did you want to tell me?

**JOEY.** That I'm...here for you, if you need it. To help with Hayley or you or whatever.

**JOEY'S MOM.** You're very sweet, dear. That's one thing I did right. You and Hayley...thank God for you. I'm gonna go lie down.

**JOEY.** Yeah, go ahead.

*(She exits and JOEY is left alone with his thoughts. He turns to the audience, then laughs at himself to cover for his error.)*

**JOEY.** Let me re-phrase: when I said I could do anything, I *meant* that I could only do what I wanted to do. And I didn't want to add weight to *that* sinking ship.

Who cares, you know? I didn't do anything wrong. It's not like I did anything. I didn't do anything. I can't do anything, and I can't change anything. That's it.

I used to ask myself all the time, torture myself, saying things like "why our family?" Why don't they make a movie about my little life? Or maybe it's just that they've made too many movies about my stupid life and nobody cares anymore.

What's worse is that I miss her. I still do. Because she wasn't always like this. She was happy, you know? She was really happy...

*(HAYLEY enters holding Teddy and a plastic tea cup.)*

**HAYLEY.** Joey! I got a tea party set up for today.

**JOEY.** Hey, Hayley. What's up?

**HAYLEY.** A tea party.

**JOEY.** Not right now.

**HAYLEY.** *(Recognizing that look in JOEY:)* You're sad.

**JOEY.** No, I'm just...yeah, I am.

**HAYLEY.** Why? We got a tea party today.

**JOEY.** Hayley, sometimes grown up problems or almost grown up problems they can't be solved with just a tea party.

*(A beat.)*

**HAYLEY.** Well, I'll make the tea party bigger! Want me to get my Barbies too?

**JOEY.** *(Smiling:)* No.

**HAYLEY.** Today, we set the tea party in Disneyland.

**JOEY.** Disney? Why there?

**HAYLEY.** You were happy there. Remember?

**JOEY.** *(Taking it in:)* Yeah, of course.

**HAYLEY.** Everyone was happy. And we'll go back there. And we'll eat Mallomars.

**JOEY.** Mallomars?

**HAYLEY.** And Pizza Hut pizza.

**JOEY.** Extra large pizza.

**HAYLEY.** With everything but the little fishes.

**JOEY.** Oh, wait. I don't want pineapples on it either.

**HAYLEY.** And we could eat it by the beach.

**JOEY.** Right on the sand?

**HAYLEY.** Uh huh! We could!

**JOEY.** I doubt it, Hayley.

**HAYLEY.** Why! We have soooo much time.

**JOEY.** To eat pizza on the beach?

**HAYLEY.** Yeah! Like that!

**JOEY.** *(Smiling still:)* Sleep by the beach.

**HAYLEY.** While I go swimming. And Teddy'd come, too.

**JOEY.** You'd swim. I'll make out with a beach girl.

**HAYLEY.** Make out?

**JOEY.** Then at night in the hotel.

**HAYLEY.** I'd take all the shampoos as a souvenir.

**JOEY.** We'd have a pillow fight.

**HAYLEY.** I'd win.

**JOEY.** Then I get to sleep. On clean pillows.

**HAYLEY.** And then Disneyland in the morning. Peter Pan ride first!  
Oh, I forgot chocolate milk! We need chocolate milk too.

**JOEY.** You could have it after the ride.

**HAYLEY.** I'd make friends with Mickey.

**JOEY.** Maybe I'd meet someone too.

**HAYLEY.** And you'd be happy, Joey.

*(HAYLEY freezes.)*

**JOEY.** *(To the audience:)*

And she was right.

At that moment I believed her.

For that one moment.

I felt that I actually could be happy.

Away from everything.

Everyone.

Just out on the beach.

Sitting by the water.

Washing my hands in the ocean.

Carving my name in the sand.

As the waves wash it away.

Digging my feet in the soft sand.

Soaking in the sun.

Not even looking back.

High school behind me.

Everything behind me.

Just me, all peaceful.

Cool.

Calm.

With nothing but the sun beaming down on me.

Laughing.

Laughing so much my chest would hurt.

Eating Oreos with peanut butter.

On the sands of the beach.

All peaceful.

Calm and cool.

Perfect.

And I'd be happy.

Perfectly happy.

Only happiness.

And nothing else.

*(HAYLEY unfreezes.)*

**HAYLEY.** You could be happy, Joey.

**JOEY.** Yeah, just like I want.

*(Scene ends. Group therapy begins a new session.)*

**THERAPIST.** Okay everyone, going back to number 7, “Persistent boredom, difficulty concentrating, or a decline in the quality of schoolwork.” This applies especially today. Report cards were issued. I received a copy of all of yours, so there’s nothing to hide. *(He laughs to himself; the kids silence it.)* Anyway, let’s continue. *(Pulling out the report card, Alyssa’s is on top:)* Alyssa, these are pretty impressive.

**ALYSSA.** I got a C- in calc.

**THERAPIST.** Don’t focus on that. You got an A in Photography I.

**ALYSSA.** It doesn’t matter; it’s an art class.

**RON.** It doesn’t matter so long as you get anything below a B minus in this school. You might as well be an idiot.

**THERAPIST.** Now, what does that mean, Ron?

**RON.** Our school is a good one. I know this. So does every other kid. Some people do so well here that everyone else is relatively an idiot compared to them.

**SHANE.** Nobody notices the kids who do okay. They only notice the ones who excel as being smart.

**LIZ.** As much as I hate him, I agree.

**RON.** *(Putting it together:)* And the kids that do okay or worse than okay think they are stupid even though they are really not, and then they give up on academics as a result of thinking that they’re stupid.

**LIZ.** Yeah, everyone who gets B’s in standard math might as well be—

**ALYSSA.** Non-existent.

**SHANE.** And the kids that get less than 1900 on the SATs are gonna end up—

**RON.** Unmarried, and living in a one-room apartment.

**THERAPIST.** Which is certainly not the case. However, if you recognize it, Ron, why does it bother you?

**JOEY.** Yeah, if you realize that our school judges us like that, then you should realize that you are smart. Don't call the rest of us stupid.

**THERAPIST.** Folks, I was an average student in high school. I went to college and excelled. You can never tell what you're gonna end up doing in your life.

**RON.** And look where you ended up.

**THERAPIST.** I'm proud of what I do, Ron.

**RON.** What do you do? Who here has gotten any better? When we leave here, you can't control what we're gonna do.

**THERAPIST.** No, I can't. But I can help prepare you for the world, help you learn how to make good decisions.

**RON.** Please, dude. You can't even decide which one of us you're gonna agree with next. Or what color socks to wear.

**LIZ.** You only acted on us when something happened.

**ALYSSA.** When we made threats, you freaked.

**RON.** You dragged us in here.

**SHANE.** You ignored us before.

**RON.** You thought we were nothing before. But now, you have to deal with us.

**THERAPIST.** You choose this type of attention, not me.

**LIZ.** Attention! I wanted to kill those kids!

**THERAPIST.** All right, then let me tell you this. Back in the old west, there were these two rival cowboys.

**RON.** Oh, this should be good.

**THERAPIST.** They hated each other and loved to play pranks. The sheriff was pretty good at catching the both of them. But one day

right in the middle of the town square, one of the cowboys pulled a gun on the other. As he was about to fire, the sheriff tackled him to the ground. He stopped the cowboy. He caught it just in time. Sometimes actions *are* the only way to tell. Sometimes they are good enough.

**RON.** (*Laughing:*) What!

**LIZ.** Lecturing...

**ALYSSA.** That's all I hear.

**RON.** I am so sick of being lectured to, Doc.

**ALYSSA.** I've heard it all my life.

**LIZ.** Starting with fourth grade.

**RON.** (*Like a little girl screaming:*) No more please!

**THERAPIST.** Most adults and I are just trying to give—

**SHANE.** Well, people do have to talk somehow.

**RON.** Then talk different!

**SHANE.** Yeah.

**RON.** Talk funny!

**LIZ.** Talk to us, not at us!

**ALYSSA.** Get at our level.

**LIZ.** Hell, be on our level.

**THERAPIST.** Wait, not all of you offered an opinion yet. Nora? Nora? Opinion?

**NORA.** No.

**THERAPIST.** Sure?

**NORA.** Yes, I'm sure.

*(A beat.)*

**RON.** (*To NORA:*) You are such a freak, man. You come in here...you sit down and think you're so much above us because

you don't participate. Well, guess what? You got yourself in here, right along with us.

**JOEY.** What are you talking about, Ron? You don't want her to talk; you just want to do all the talking yourself. So why do you care about what Nora thinks? Just leave her alone. Jesus.

**RON.** Oh yeah, Joe. Just jump right in and save her.

**JOEY.** Well, at least she has his own brain, unlike your little side-kick.

*(He points to SHANE.)*

**SHANE.** Oh, great. What are you picking on me for?

**RON.** Well, of course you agree with Nora. You're her little kiss ass.

**JOEY.** *(As if RON was a child:)* No, I agree with Nora because unlike you and me, Nora and I both have similar tastes and a fully functional brain.

What about you, Ron? Do you honestly think you're so godly that you shouldn't be in here? Do you really believe that you're so unique, because you're the only one here whose father is a jerk? Lemme be the first to let you know: you're not that special, pal. You're not that unique. You have to wait for anyone's weakness and then shoot them down. That's why your father and you hate each other, jerk-off. Because you can't stop attacking people for more than five minutes.

*(He turns to LIZ.)*

**JOEY.** And Liz, they are idiots...those jocks. But screw them and get on with it! Why let them affect you! Forget it! Get high like Shane does if you have to! I mean, up until 5 months ago it seemed to be working for him! It worked for Alyssa too! And Ron! And Nora, I'm sure, must have tried it once! That's four out of six! That works for you Ron, doesn't it? As long as you have the majority it means you're right! Certainly works for our great doctor over here! Just taking whatever statistics he can to shove them in our faces, beating us down with them, making us think we are just another statistic. He organized us into categories the very first day we got here! You know, I wish I could be as quiet as Nora could! That way

I could forget about all you guys! Or maybe then I could forget about my own little pity party that I call my life! Nothing but pissing and moaning. That's all we do here!

*(JOEY begins to bring down his yelling into a stiff calmness.)*

**JOEY.** But at least I don't go around and yell about it like you, Ron. At least, Nora and I are so much above you! At least I know that and have that satisfaction! At least I don't take it up the—

*(RON punches JOEY. Blackout. The scene ends. A long beat. JOEY stands alone in a beam of light.)*

**JOEY.** For the second time in my life, I attempted suicide. And for the second time in my life, along with being Hayley's older brother, I succeeded at something. That night I used a canister of sleeping pills, 27 to be exact, to kill me. Just thought you'd be curious on how I did it.

When my mom found out what happened she cried. But she always cried anyway. When my dad found out he yelled. But he always yelled anyway.

If I was aiming to change something about the way my parents acted, I didn't change a damn thing.

But I jumped out of the burning building just the same.

People'd only think about me after I was gone. That made sense to me. That was logic. After all, people only act when something happens.

*(Scene transforms into Panders' classroom. Kids sit in silence.)*

**JOEY.** One thing was clear. This time, I got myself into a hole I couldn't dig my way out of. This time, all I could do was stay in. So I buried myself inside my own hole. My own coffin. Already dug. All I did was seal it up and sleep inside it.

No more holes. Just sleep. Just like I wanted.

I'd pictured my funeral before. Dozens of times. Over and over actually. Like a record. Turns out, I was right. I was right about pretty much everything.

I pictured my class the day after.

*(The stage is transformed into a classroom, a few students sit. PANDERS sits in the center.)*

**PANDERS.** Do you folks want to talk about what happened?

**JOEY.** Except I didn't picture this. I didn't picture Panders actually talking about what happened during class. During 9/11 he shut the TV off and went on with class—

If one of his students dropped dead right there in front of him I doubt he'd notice. He'd just go on with class. He had his own deadlines to meet.

**PANDERS.** Any thoughts or anything? Anyone?

**KID #1.** It doesn't make sense. Everything was fine. He was fine. There were no signs. He was happy.

**JOEY.** *(To her:)* You're a nice kid Jenn, but you know so little about life—

**PANDERS.** Sometimes things are a lot more than they seem—

**KID #2.** He was a selfish bastard.

**PANDERS.** Okay now...

**KID #2.** He was! I'll say it plain. He makes everything shitty because he was thinking of himself and only that.

**JOEY.** He's right. I'm not gonna lie to you people. But so what? I was selfish. I put myself first. Who else should I put first?

**KID #4.** People fight to survive, they work so hard with so many more problems, and this guy killed himself.

**PANDERS.** You don't know what Joey was feeling. Maybe he was so overwhelmed, so a—

**KID #1.** Great way to talk about him, Todd! He was a good kid. He never bothered anybody.

**KID #3.** He never wanted anybody to bother him.

**KID #2.** Great, say it as his funeral.

**KID #4.** Yeah, cut class to go.

**KID #1.** You have no respect. Nobody's got any respect anymore.

**KID #2.** No, people are too sensitive.

**KID #3.** He was sweet. Just think of him like that.

**PANDERS.** He was a good kid.

*(The scene changes to Joey's funeral. Kids stand in clusters. They have candles in their hands. PANDERS changes into religious attire. He is now the PASTOR. A large table is placed Stage Right for Joey's coffin.)*

**PASTOR.** A good kid. Never mean-spirited, never malicious.

**JOEY.** Funerals, only meant to comfort the living.

*(JOEY appears in the background of the following conversation, he eventually lights a candle in his hand. The following lines are all added on to each other like a string of thoughts.)*

**KID #1.** He loved food. When he was little anybody who fed him or gave him Dunkin Donuts...he was their best friend.

**KID #2.** Yeah, he wrestled me once for a box of Fruit Roll-Ups.

In fourth grade he stayed at my house until 10 o'clock at night to help me with math. That was late for us back then!

**KID #3.** He was in my math class. He was pretty quiet.

**KID #4.** Yeah, reserved, I heard that.

**PASTOR.** Did you know him?

**KID #4.** I knew *of* him. I knew his name. He was in my class.

**KID #1.** He wanted to be an electrician; I remember that, he was good at math too.

**KID #2.** He had such an amazing talent for building things. And now he's dead.

**KID #4.** He was a kick ass basketball player. In gym class, we always fought to have him on our team.

**KID #3.** Yeah, but he never bragged about it. He just played his best. Such a waste.

**JOEY.** I never thought the pastor could do a ten-minute sermon on me though. What could he possibly say? He was a junkie, he had a quick temper, he had so many problems, so young... *(As the PASTOR:)* Joey was one in thirteen students. He killed himself. He was one of 700,000 people each and every year.

**PASTOR.** He was such a good-hearted soul. Never wanting to hurt anyone,

**JOEY.** Never did.

**PASTOR.** Always compassionate.

**JOEY.** Such a shame, never complimented until death.

**PASTOR.** So compassionate...so loved.

**JOEY.** So misunderstood!

**PASTOR.** And loving. And generous. Such a good life, a life lead to the fullest. Size is no matter in life. It is how we live it...and he did...he did—

**JOEY.** Nora came. I didn't picture that either.

*(Kids fall into the background. They remain there. NORA enters, crossing to Joey's coffin.)*

**NORA.** *(Speaking to JOEY.)* Hey, dude. More tax dollars gone to waste, right? What the hell was wrong with us? We were the same. Why'd we ever let the politics of middle school split us apart? Wanna hear the worst part about all this? You are the only person in ten years to stand up for me.

Nobody's ever stood up for me like that...not my mom. And my dad, well he... You're the only one. And now you're... *(Smiles to herself, looking up:)* But I don't blame you. I really don't. I blame myself mostly. If I could have just talked to you...like any other normal person! But like I said, I get you. I get it. You had it right. *(Facing us:)* You had it right. Must be great. Sitting back, having everyone noticing you, wanting to know what you thought about things. Cu-

rious about you. You had it right. The only thing you messed up on was the pills. I'd of suffocated myself with my own pillow.

*(A beat. NORA exits Stage Right.)*

*(JOEY'S PARENTS enter Stage Left. As JOEY speaks, his PARENTS freeze frame. When they speak, he does not.)*

**JOEY.** Well dad, you said I could never do anything right. You were wrong weren't you?

**JOEY'S DAD.** Thank you all for coming—

**JOEY.** Yeah, this place is packed.

**JOEY'S DAD.** We just ask you to remember our son fondly. *(Trying to hold back emotion:)* Bury all thoughts about the cause of his death with him, just think of him fondly.

**JOEY.** You never did. Why didn't you dad? Mom—

*(She is still, silently crying.)*

**JOEY.** Mom...I was just stuck. But I do love you. I love you, mom.

I've never made her cry before. Mom—

Mom, you and Hayley...you were the only things that kept me here.

*(JOEY'S PARENTS exit.)*

**JOEY.** Mom!

*(HAYLEY enters. She sits underneath the large table, Stage Right.)*

**JOEY.** And then Hayley. My baby sister Hayley.

*(JOEY walks over to the table, he squats next to HAYLEY. He places his candle down near her. He speaks to her.)*

**JOEY.** Hayley. Hayley, kid, Hayley— *(To the audience:)* I know. I know she can't hear me. But...but I gotta keep trying, right? Maybe if I scream loud enough.

Hayley!

---

*(No reaction. A long beat. JOEY rises from his position on the ground.)*

I uh...I hate this part. I still can't get over...

*(He tries again. Louder.)*

Hayley! Hayley!

*(Still nothing. Tears fill JOEY's eyes. He stands and walks Down Stage to the audience.)*

I still worry about her, you know? Every time I see her, I keep thinking that I really didn't know anything. I knew nothing at all.

And then I think if only someone could have warned me. But to be honest, it's not like I would have listened anyway. Everyone thinks they are some kind of exception.

But then I think if only someone could have told me. Not to worry so much about each moment. Moments pass. Time moves on. So does pain. Pain moves on and leaves you. If only someone had told me. That youth shouldn't be wasted on the young. That there is life after high school. Life is only what you make it. And I made it my own. Me. And only me.

And every time I wake up, I fall into the same damn thing. A nightmare.

A flashback and nothing more.

And every time I wake up, I wish more and more that Hayley could hear me. That I could tell her everything I learned. If I could just tell someone. If I could get someone to listen. You even. Just one kid. Just once. If I just tell Hayley. If I could just tell her...I know now. I get it now.

*(JOEY rushes back over to HAYLEY, in the same position as he was in before.)*

**JOEY.** *(Speaking to her:)* Hayley. *(Shouting:)* Hayley!

**HAYLEY.** *(Looking out straight, not at JOEY, cutting him off:)* Joey—

**JOEY.** Oh my god...Hayley?

**HAYLEY.** Joey?

**JOEY.** Oh Hayley, I love you—

**HAYLEY.** I love you too. Where are you?

**JOEY.** I'm...in Teddy.

**HAYLEY.** That's weird.

**JOEY.** *(Laughing:)* Yeah... Can I have a hug?

*(KID #1 blows out his candle. HAYLEY slowly hugs Teddy.)*

**JOEY.** I almost felt that.

**HAYLEY.** But where are you?

**JOEY.** I'm gone baby, I'm—

**HAYLEY.** Who hurt you?

**JOEY.** No one. I...I did.

*(KID #2 blows out his candle.)*

**HAYLEY.** Why?

**JOEY.** I was hurt already, baby.

*(KID #3 blows out his candle.)*

**HAYLEY.** No. No! You had me! Why?

**JOEY.** It wasn't you—

**HAYLEY.** I wasn't good enough.

**JOEY.** No...no, you were always enough. You are to me...you *were* to me.

**HAYLEY.** We were gonna go to Disneyland. Together.

*(KID #4 blows out his candle. HAYLEY runs out from under the table with Teddy, off stage.)*

**JOEY.** Hayley! *(A beat. To the audience:)* She'll heal. She'll...

*(He clenches his fists.)*

Selfish. I am. I was. But...Hayley. I didn't know. I didn't even think about her before I... Or Disneyland. Or anything...I didn't know.

## **THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!**

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