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Playscripts, Inc.
P.O. Box 237060
New York, NY 10023

Phone/fax: 1-866-NEW-PLAY (639-7529)
Email: questions@playscripts.com
Web: www.playscripts.com

Cast of Characters

TEDDY

DUSTIN

BARBARA

Acknowledgements

Painted Rain was originally produced in 1988 at The Kennedy Center, with the following cast:

Laura Kenyon

Jerome McGill

DeMarco Boone

Painted Rain was produced in New York City in 1989 at Playwrights Horizons, with the following cast:

Kimble Joyner

Christopher Shaw

Debra Monk

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PAINTED RAIN

by Janet Allard

Scene 1

(The lights rise to reveal the bedroom of two foster children. There are two beds situated to the side of a rather large window, which is separated into squares of glass by a thin wooden frame. There are a few personal items, a couple of old-looking pictures and painting tools scattered about Dustin's side of the room. Teddy's side is mostly bare. As the lights rise to a dim, early morning, we find DUSTIN, a boy of sixteen, lying in bed asleep. Behind the bed, and barely visible, are a wheelchair, a pair of long leg braces and a pair of crutches. TEDDY, a boy of about eleven, is sitting on his bed singing a simple, childlike song, or humming and playing absentmindedly with his bed sheets. He quiets down and pauses, then looks over at DUSTIN.)

TEDDY. *(Softly:)* Dustin? *(Pause.)* Hey, Dustin?

(TEDDY gets up, wanders over to DUSTIN's bed, and stands looking down on him.)

Dustin, are you awake?

(DUSTIN remains still, and there is silence. TEDDY stands looking down on him for another minute, then begins his singing again. He walks softly back to the area between the two beds and sits in the middle of the floor. Leaning over, TEDDY reaches under his bed and pulls out a large bag filled with many interesting items he's collected over the years. One by one he pulls these things out and places them on the floor. As he does this, he begins talking. The sound of rain hitting against the windowpane can be heard softly in the background.)

TEDDY. Look, Dustin, it's raining. *(DUSTIN remains asleep.)* Not very hard, though. I guess whoever's making the rain doesn't want to wake you up. *(He looks over at DUSTIN.)* Dustin? *(Pause.)* Dustin? You awake yet?

DUSTIN. *(Groggily:)* Yeah.

TEDDY. Want to go out and play?

DUSTIN. I want to go back to sleep. It's two o'clock in the morning.

TEDDY. No, it's not. It's three.

DUSTIN. Who the hell cares? Just shut up and go to sleep.

TEDDY. *(Softly:)* I care.

(TEDDY goes back to the floor and, singing softly, puts his stuff back in his bag. He comes across a pair of dark glasses, which he examines with interest, then puts on. He puts his stuff back under the bed, keeping the glasses on. He starts feeling around in front of him as if he were blind. He gets up and walks forward still pretending he's blind, and runs into the furniture.)

Dustin?

(No response.)

Dustin, I'm blind.

(Still pretending, TEDDY walks over to DUSTIN's bed and looks down on him.)

Dustin, I can't see.

(After getting no response, TEDDY reaches down and touches DUSTIN's face. DUSTIN bolts to a sitting position.)

DUSTIN. What are you doing?

TEDDY. I'm blind, Dustin.

DUSTIN. Would you take off those stupid dark glasses and quit playing around?

TEDDY. No. Dustin, come play with me. You could lead me around.

DUSTIN. I don't want to. I want to sleep.

TEDDY. Then I guess I'm just going to run into things, huh?

(TEDDY starts walking around, hits DUSTIN's bed, and falls on top of him.)

DUSTIN. Hey, cut it out! Get off of me!

TEDDY. That's what happens when nobody leads blind people around.

DUSTIN. You're not blind, stupid. Now, let me sleep.

TEDDY. But, Dustin...

DUSTIN. Teddy, I mean it!

(TEDDY goes back over to his bed and lies down on his back. Keeping the dark glasses on, he feels in the air, still pretending he's blind. TEDDY begins singing softly again and slowly raises his voice. DUSTIN turns over and looks at TEDDY.)

DUSTIN. I can't even go back to sleep now.

TEDDY. Why not?

DUSTIN. Because I'm mad, that's why.

TEDDY. I didn't do anything. I only wanted you to lead me around.

(DUSTIN pays little attention to TEDDY. He sits up, brings the wheelchair around from behind his bed, and drags himself into it with his arms. As soon as DUSTIN is in his chair, the lights brighten.)

DUSTIN. Well I'm not going to.

TEDDY. Then I'll lead you around. Now that you're up, we can play.

DUSTIN. No. Now that I'm up, I can paint.

TEDDY. Dustin, you're my brother. You're supposed to play with me.

DUSTIN. I am not your brother.

TEDDY. Well, we're almost brothers.

DUSTIN. You can't almost be brothers with someone.

TEDDY. Yes, you can. We've lived together for a long time and that makes us almost brothers.

DUSTIN. It hasn't been more than a year.

TEDDY. That's a long time.

DUSTIN. That's relative.

TEDDY. Barbara says that I could think of you as my brother if I wanted.

DUSTIN. Well, don't.

TEDDY. Why not?

DUSTIN. Just don't.

TEDDY. She says that I could think of you as my brother as long as I know that if you get adopted, you can belong to someone else too.

DUSTIN. Yeah, well, I'm not going to get adopted.

TEDDY. Okay. I won't either.

(TEDDY turns away and begins singing again. DUSTIN pulls out his paints and starts painting. TEDDY's singing gets louder and louder until DUSTIN interrupts.)

DUSTIN. Will you shut up!

TEDDY. Yeah. I think I will.

(DUSTIN goes back to painting, ignoring TEDDY.)

TEDDY. I didn't have anything to sing anyway. I'm running out of songs. Help me pick one, Dustin.

DUSTIN. How would I know what you want to sing?

TEDDY. I don't know. You could help me make one up.

DUSTIN. Teddy—

TEDDY. We could sing a song about painting if you want.

DUSTIN. Shut up! I'm trying to work.

TEDDY. A true artist could paint with me talking. But that's okay. We'll make the room very quiet so you can concentrate.

(Both of them are silent. Then they look over at each other at the same time.)

DUSTIN. Teddy!

TEDDY. Shhh! You're trying to concentrate.

(DUSTIN throws a pillow at TEDDY.)

TEDDY. Okay, okay, you win!

(Silence. Then TEDDY looks over at the painting.)

What are you painting?

DUSTIN. Come over here and take a look.

TEDDY. No.

DUSTIN. If you took off those stupid dark glasses, you could see it from there.

TEDDY. I want you to tell me about it.

DUSTIN. Teddy, paintings are meant to be looked at, not told about.

TEDDY. Who says?

DUSTIN. Everybody says. That's just the way it is.

TEDDY. Aw, com'on, Dustin. Any artist could show their painting. It takes a really good one to describe it.

DUSTIN. Where did you hear that one?

TEDDY. I made it up. It's just that I've never heard anyone describe a painting before.

DUSTIN. Well, I'm not going to describe it.

TEDDY. Then I'm going back to sleep.

DUSTIN. Good.

TEDDY. Why is that good?

DUSTIN. Because it's three o'clock in the morning.

TEDDY. No, it's not. I bet it's almost four.

(Lights fade to black.)

Scene 2

(TEDDY bends over backward from his bed, reaches under it, and pulls out a bottle of orange juice. He then flips over onto the floor and opens the lid. DUSTIN keeps painting.)

TEDDY. Hey, Dustin?

DUSTIN. What?

TEDDY. Want some orange juice?

DUSTIN. Where did you get that?

TEDDY. Under the bed.

DUSTIN. You can't keep orange juice under the bed, stupid. It'll spoil.

TEDDY. I'm going to drink it before it spoils, so I can keep it wherever I want.

(He takes a long sip, then offers it to DUSTIN, who turns away.)

DUSTIN. At least drink it out of a glass.

TEDDY. Why?

DUSTIN. Because everybody drinks out of glasses.

TEDDY. Well, I don't. Maybe everyone else should drink like I do.

DUSTIN. *(Absentmindedly:)* Maybe.

TEDDY. Adults always say you should drink out of glasses and paint the sky blue and the trees green. Why?

DUSTIN. What are you asking me for? I'm not an adult.

TEDDY. If everyone else jumped off a cliff, would you do it too?

DUSTIN. Of course I wouldn't. Would you?

TEDDY. Maybe I would, but it would be a *different* cliff.

DUSTIN. Teddy, just leave me alone for a while.

TEDDY. *(Moves over to DUSTIN)* Dustin, why is it all sort of blue?

DUSTIN. Why is what blue?

TEDDY. Your painting.

DUSTIN. I don't know. It just is.

TEDDY. What time is it?

DUSTIN. Time?

TEDDY. In the painting.

DUSTIN. *(As if he's picking a time at random:)* It's two o'clock in the morning.

TEDDY. And it's *blue*?

DUSTIN. Yeah. What's wrong with blue?

TEDDY. Never mind, you don't care.

DUSTIN. You're right.

TEDDY. It's just that it's yellow at two o'clock in the morning.

DUSTIN. The sun's not up yet. It's blue.

TEDDY. If you wanted to do it right, you'd paint it yellow. That's the color it is at that time.

DUSTIN. I told you it doesn't matter. Besides, yellow wouldn't look right anyway.

TEDDY. How about red?

DUSTIN. Red?

TEDDY. Yeah, a big red splash.

DUSTIN. It would look out of place.

TEDDY. Not if you were the red splash.

DUSTIN. Teddy, you can't be a red splash.

TEDDY. I can be whatever I want to. Maybe you couldn't pretend you're one. But I could.

DUSTIN. That's stupid, Teddy.

TEDDY. Splash.

DUSTIN. What?

TEDDY. From now on I want you to call me Red Splash.

DUSTIN. Teddy—

TEDDY. Splash.

DUSTIN. You're being stupid, Theodore.

TEDDY. Teddy!

DUSTIN. I thought you wanted me to call you Splash.

TEDDY. I changed my mind. I don't like it.

DUSTIN. Good.

(TEDDY gets up, moves over to the window and stands looking out. DUSTIN begins to look over at TEDDY and take an interest in what he's doing.)

DUSTIN. You like what you see out there, Teddy?

TEDDY. Yeah, you can just look straight out into the trees and grass. At home I used to just look out the window and watch the rain.

DUSTIN. Did it rain a lot?

TEDDY. Yeah, all the time. I used to sit with my face right up against the glass and try and see if I could find one raindrop and follow it all the way until it hit the ground.

DUSTIN. Could you?

TEDDY. Naw, they always moved too fast. It works with snow, though. Snow just kinda floats.

DUSTIN. You like snow, Teddy?

TEDDY. *(Nods)* I like rain better. Raindrops are more fun to watch. Did you ever watch 'em?

DUSTIN. I guess I must've.

TEDDY. Do you like rain?

DUSTIN. It's okay.

TEDDY. Do you like it to go out in?

DUSTIN. I did when I was a little kid.

TEDDY. Not that it matters, but I just thought I'd tell you that I would have followed you out into the rain, Dustin.

DUSTIN. What are you talking about?

TEDDY. About that one time when you were really mad at me and I went out into the rain and you didn't follow me. Remember that time?

DUSTIN. No, not really.

TEDDY. Dustin?

DUSTIN. What?

TEDDY. Never mind. *(Pause.)* Dustin?

DUSTIN. What?

TEDDY. Would you follow me out into the pouring rain?

DUSTIN. It's not pouring, Teddy.

TEDDY. If it was.

(DUSTIN doesn't answer.)

TEDDY. We could jump out through the window if you wanted.

DUSTIN. What?

TEDDY. If we go out through the window, then you're out in the rain right away. We'd have more time to play. We wouldn't have to walk down the hall and go through lots of doors.

DUSTIN. That's stupid.

TEDDY. No, it's not. I could help you through the window.

DUSTIN. I don't think so. You're being childish.

TEDDY. *Childlike.* It would be fun. Come on.

DUSTIN. Teddy, I'm busy.

TEDDY. You could stop painting and we could go out and climb trees and play in the mud. We could just splash around in the puddles if you wanted.

DUSTIN. Naw, I don't feel like it.

TEDDY. Why not?

DUSTIN. I'm not in the mood to splash around.

TEDDY. You would be when we got out there. You could probably make bigger splashes than I could.

DUSTIN. *(Motioning to his wheelchair:)* Not in this thing.

TEDDY. Dustin.

DUSTIN. Forget it, Teddy. It's hardly raining anymore. It wouldn't be much fun.

(He goes back to painting.)

TEDDY. I guess. Rain is always more fun when it's coming down hard.

(DUSTIN looks away, frustrated by Teddy's childlike way of thinking. There is a sound of a doorbell.)

TEDDY. It's probably Barbara.

DUSTIN. Barbara?

TEDDY. Yeah, she was going to stop by to talk to us sometime.

DUSTIN. When?

TEDDY. I thought you didn't care about time.

DUSTIN. Teddy—just go let her in.

TEDDY. Why can't you?

DUSTIN. Because I'm *painting*.

TEDDY. Okay!

(TEDDY exits. DUSTIN waits until he's gone, then wheels to the corner of the room, where his braces are resting. He picks them up, wheels back to the bed, and leans down, shoving the braces under the

bed. DUSTIN returns to painting. TEDDY bounds into the room, jumps on the bed, then collapses, and lies down on his back with his hands behind his head. BARBARA enters. She is a social worker in her early thirties, noticeably overweight.)

BARBARA. Hi, guys!

TEDDY. Barbie! What a surprise. Look, Dustin, Barbara stopped by to see us.

DUSTIN. I can see her, Teddy.

BARBARA. How do you think I look?

DUSTIN. Fine.

BARBARA. I lost a few pounds last week.

TEDDY. It looks like you found them again this week.

BARBARA. *(Laughs)* What's that supposed to mean?

TEDDY. It means that I *didn't* lose any weight last week, and I'm still skinnier than you.

BARBARA. Aw, come on. I'm not that fat.

TEDDY. Well, you have something to bug us about, so we have to bug you about something too.

BARBARA. The only reason you say I'm overweight is because other than a couple pounds, you can't find anything wrong with me.

TEDDY. Oh, yeah?

BARBARA. Yeah! You can't even see straight with those dark glasses on. So I shouldn't even listen to you.

TEDDY. I don't have to see straight. I can tell you're fat anyway.

BARBARA. How?

TEDDY. You sound fat.

BARBARA. Why don't you take them off, Teddy?

TEDDY. 'Cause I like them on.

BARBARA. Come on now. This game was fun for a little while, but its time to take off the glasses.

TEDDY. I can't. I'm blind.

BARBARA. You are not blind, honey.

TEDDY. I am too.

BARBARA. Two weeks ago you were pretending you were deaf.

TEDDY. So what?

BARBARA. So you can't keep pretending there's something wrong with you.

TEDDY. There's nothing wrong with me. I'm just blind, that's all.

DUSTIN. Cut it out, Teddy.

TEDDY. Why?

DUSTIN. 'Cause Barbara's not here to play games with you.

TEDDY. Yeah, she's here to bug me about being blind.

BARBARA. We do have some things we should talk about, Ted.

TEDDY. I just want to play right now.

DUSTIN. Didn't you hear her? She said she wants to talk to you.

TEDDY. I want you to come.

DUSTIN. No. We just can't go outside and play and leave Barbara here.

(TEDDY walks to the door frame and looks at DUSTIN.)

TEDDY. Are you coming or not?

DUSTIN. No. Now, come back here and sit down.

(TEDDY exits.)

DUSTIN. Teddy!

(DUSTIN jerks his wheelchair toward the door and looks as if he's going to go after him. He stops himself slowly turns back, and begins painting again.)

BARBARA. That's all right. Let him go. I wanted to talk to you a little too.

DUSTIN. Anything special, or you just want to talk about whatever comes to mind?

BARBARA. How about Teddy?

DUSTIN. He's been acting real weird lately.

BARBARA. (*Making both beds:*) Weird? How?

DUSTIN. I mean, he's been acting like he's a little kid. I can't even carry on a conversation with him.

BARBARA. Could you ever?

DUSTIN. (*Laughs*) He also asked me to go out and play with him when it was raining really hard. I mean, it just came out of nowhere. All of a sudden he wanted me to go climb trees in the rain.

BARBARA. Did you go play with him?

DUSTIN. I'm too old to play his stupid little games.

BARBARA. Is that all?

DUSTIN. Well, the wheelchair doesn't help any. And I really wanted to paint. I mean, look at this. (*He holds up his painting for BARBARA.*) It's a lot more fun to create something like this than to try and climb a tree in a wheelchair.

BARBARA. What about using your braces?

DUSTIN. You think I could climb a tree with *them* on?

BARBARA. No. But I do think you could walk with them on.

DUSTIN. I guess so.

BARBARA. Speaking of walking, your teacher called today. She said you've been going to therapy late.

DUSTIN. I've been busy.

BARBARA. Try to make it on time next week, all right?

DUSTIN. Fine.

BARBARA. Does Teddy ever help you walk?

DUSTIN. No. He used to watch me a lot, but now it's like I don't even have an impairment. He completely ignores it and asked me to climb out the window and splash in the puddles.

(They both look out the window.)

BARBARA. How does it feel to watch him play outside when you're in here?

DUSTIN. The same way it feels for him to sit there and watch me paint.

BARBARA. What do you mean?

DUSTIN. Do you feel bad 'cause you're not playing right now?

(BARBARA shakes her head no.)

DUSTIN. Neither do I.

BARBARA. Things would just be a lot easier if you could walk.

DUSTIN. You mean I would get adopted into a real home faster.

BARBARA. That's not what I said.

DUSTIN. Well, look at Teddy. He can walk and he's still here with me.

BARBARA. Has Teddy talked to you about leaving?

DUSTIN. *(Defensively:)* No, why?

BARBARA. We've been working out an arrangement for a couple to adopt him.

DUSTIN. It'll probably fall through.

BARBARA. I don't think so. They're stopping by to see him again next week. It looks like this time it's really going to work out.

DUSTIN. Does he know that?

BARBARA. I told him.

DUSTIN. And he's still pretending he's blind.

BARBARA. Yeah, that's the problem. He has to be ready next week. He can't be running around refusing to take off a pair of dark glasses.

DUSTIN. Ya know, he asked me to describe my painting to him today.

BARBARA. Did you?

(TEDDY enters, having heard Dustin's last line, and bounces onto the bed.)

DUSTIN. No. I mean, how do you describe a painting?

TEDDY. You did too describe it. It's all kinda blue. I think it's pretty.

DUSTIN. You can't see it.

TEDDY. I already know what it looks like.

BARBARA. You can't really know what it's like if you don't see it.

TEDDY. And you can't really know what it *feels* like if you do see it.

BARBARA. Honey, the whole idea of a painting is that they're to look at it. You can't get the effect of a painting by just hearing about it.

DUSTIN. See, I told you.

TEDDY. Nobody asked you.

(TEDDY reaches under the bed for his orange juice and feels the braces.)

DUSTIN. *(Forcefully:)* Your orange juice isn't under there, Teddy.

BARBARA. *(Turning to TEDDY:)* You keep juice under your bed?

TEDDY. Let me guess, *you* don't, right?

DUSTIN. *(Forcefully:)* I put it back in the fridge.

TEDDY. Thanks.

BARBARA. Ted, the couple you met is going to drop by to visit with you again sometime next week, okay?

TEDDY. Me and Dustin don't need any visitors. We do just fine by ourselves.

BARBARA. They want to see you and show you your new home.

TEDDY. I can't see them. I'm blind.

DUSTIN. How did I know he was gonna say that?

BARBARA. Ted, you're not, and you have to stop playing this silly game.

TEDDY. How do you know I'm not?

DUSTIN. Teddy, stop.

TEDDY. I'm not doing anything wrong.

BARBARA. No one said you were, sweetie.

TEDDY. Then quit bugging me!

BARBARA. Pretending you can't see is not going to prevent you from being adopted.

TEDDY. I didn't say it was. Leave me alone.

DUSTIN. I told you it was hopeless.

BARBARA. Okay. Well, Dustin what do you say we show Teddy how to cooperate and get you to do some walking now?

DUSTIN. Why?

BARBARA. Just for a bit of extra practice.

DUSTIN. I left my braces at school.

BARBARA. They're not going to do you any good there. Get them home so you can practice.

DUSTIN. I wouldn't have time. I have to finish my art project.

BARBARA. Walk first, paint later.

TEDDY. Play first, walk later, and don't worry about painting.

BARBARA. Whatever, just get it straightened out, all right, Dustin?

TEDDY. And then he'll be well rounded just like you.

BARBARA. *(Playfully:)* All right, that's enough. I'll see you guys tomorrow.

DUSTIN. Okay.

TEDDY. *(Sarcastically:)* We'll all be looking forward to it.

BARBARA. Good. Then maybe I'll give you the cookies I have in my bag.

(BARBARA swings her bag tauntingly over her shoulder, gives the boys a smile, and exits. There is silence, then TEDDY reaches under his bed and pulls out the braces. DUSTIN stops painting to watch him. TEDDY crosses to DUSTIN's bed and puts the braces back. TEDDY lies down on DUSTIN's bed. DUSTIN continues painting. TEDDY watches him intently.)

DUSTIN. What do you want?

TEDDY. Nothing. I was just watching you paint.

DUSTIN. Well, don't.

TEDDY. *(He rolls over onto his stomach)* Do you think you could teach me how to paint, Dustin?

DUSTIN. I told you it's too hard to teach. You would do better if you learned yourself.

TEDDY. But you could just teach me how to hold the brush, and then we could both paint.

DUSTIN. I've tried to teach you how to hold the brush. You won't listen to me.

TEDDY. I'll listen this time, I promise. Just put my hand on top of yours.

DUSTIN. No, Teddy. You're being stupid.

TEDDY. Please, Dustin.

(TEDDY gets on his knees and walks over until he is standing next to DUSTIN.)

DUSTIN. Well, what would you want to paint?

TEDDY. Something clear.

DUSTIN. You can't paint something clear. Not unless you leave the canvas blank.

TEDDY. Blank canvas could be white.

DUSTIN. Who's the painter here anyway? Look, just go back to your side of the room and let me paint on my own.

TEDDY. Dustin—

DUSTIN. I'm not gonna let you if you're going to be stupid and paint something like rain.

TEDDY. Dustin, what's your problem?

DUSTIN. Just shut up!

(TEDDY pauses thoughtfully in silence for a while.)

TEDDY. Dustin, how come you hid your braces from Barbara?

DUSTIN. It doesn't matter.

TEDDY. Yes, it does.

DUSTIN. Because I didn't want to walk.

TEDDY. Why not?

DUSTIN. Could we just drop this?

TEDDY. No. I'm confused. Barbara said you wanted to walk.

DUSTIN. Well, I don't.

TEDDY. Why not?

(DUSTIN doesn't answer.)

TEDDY. You won't even try anymore.

DUSTIN. And you won't take off those damn glasses. We're even. What do you want to be blind for? Why the hell would you want to be blind?

TEDDY. If you tell me why you won't walk, I'll tell you why I wear these.

DUSTIN. I don't care why.

TEDDY. Well, I do.

DUSTIN. Teddy, there are more important things to me than walking, and...

TEDDY. And what?

DUSTIN. And that's all.

TEDDY. It's because you can't do it perfect, right?

(DUSTIN ignores him and returns to painting.)

TEDDY. How come you never tell Barbara anything?

(DUSTIN ignores him.)

TEDDY. I could tell her if you want.

DUSTIN. Look! I don't want you to do anything but let me finish this. Go someplace that's not in the way.

(TEDDY crosses over and lies down on the bed. He takes off his sunglasses, examines them for a while, then looks at DUSTIN.)

TEDDY. Dustin, you could wear these for a while if you let me paint with you.

DUSTIN. I don't want to wear your stupid dark glasses, Teddy. I'm busy. Just go away.

TEDDY. Okay.

(TEDDY goes to exit.)

DUSTIN. Teddy?

TEDDY. What?

DUSTIN. Never mind.

TEDDY. Dustin, are you okay?

(He moves toward DUSTIN and puts his hand on DUSTIN's shoulder.)

DUSTIN. I'm fine.

(TEDDY turns to leave again and exits.)

DUSTIN. Teddy—don't go.

(Blackout.)

Scene 3

(The lights come up on TEDDY and BARBARA sitting, eating cookies. DUSTIN is painting.)

TEDDY. Dustin says you can't paint things if they're clear.

BARBARA. No. I guess not. Dustin's the artist here.

TEDDY. But I've seen paintings of glass before, or a window.

BARBARA. Have you?

TEDDY. Yeah. When I was really little, my mom took me to this art place. I think there was a painting with glass in it.

BARBARA. Do you remember much of that place?

TEDDY. Only that Mom would hold me up so I could touch the paintings, even though she wasn't supposed to. *(Pause.)* Barb, have you seen my Mom?

BARBARA. No, sweetie.

TEDDY. I don't remember, but I bet she was pretty. Dustin, you should've met my Mom. You would've liked her. She could even have helped you paint. Barbara, do you know where she is?

BARBARA. No, Ted. But you have some people who want to be your mom and dad.

TEDDY. Do they want to be Dustin's too?

BARBARA. They only want one child, and they like you.

TEDDY. Is it because Dustin can't walk?

(DUSTIN turns to look at TEDDY.)

BARBARA. No.

TEDDY. If Dustin could walk, would they take him too?

BARBARA. I don't think so, Ted.

TEDDY. I want to stay with Dustin. We do fine by ourselves, right, Dustin?

DUSTIN. I guess.

BARBARA. Have you done any walking lately?

TEDDY. Yeah, I've done a lot.

BARBARA. *(Laughs)* Not you. Dustin.

TEDDY. If you were trying to get me to walk instead of him, you wouldn't have to work anymore.

BARBARA. True, but we want Dustin to walk. It's a priority.

TEDDY. Whose priority?

DUSTIN. Teddy—

TEDDY. No. I want to know who wants him to walk.

BARBARA. Lots of people.

TEDDY. Does that mean Dustin too?

BARBARA. Well, Dustin agreed to it at the meeting in school. Right, Dustin?

DUSTIN. Yeah.

TEDDY. Then why isn't he walking?

DUSTIN. Teddy, cut it out.

TEDDY. I'm just trying to help. You said yourself...

DUSTIN. Teddy, shut up!

TEDDY. But you said...

DUSTIN. I can speak for myself.

TEDDY. Then why aren't you?

DUSTIN. If I wanted you to talk for me, I would have asked you. But I didn't ask. I don't need your help. Leave me alone and I'll do just fine.

BARBARA. Dustin—

DUSTIN. (*He wheels around to face her*) And I don't need your help either. 'Cause you're *not* helping. You're always telling me I should walk. Why?

BARBARA. Because it's a sad thing to see a sixteen-year-old boy not be able to go outside and walk around because he won't try.

DUSTIN. It's sad for you, not me! Can't you see that?

BARBARA. But it's important for you to keep at it. You don't want to spend the rest of your life in a wheelchair, right?

DUSTIN. Maybe I do. How the hell would you know what I want? You never ask.

BARBARA. But it was your choice. You said...

DUSTIN. Yeah, of course I said I wanted to walk. They asked me when I was five. How was I supposed to know it meant wearing clumsy braces and dragging my feet along with my arms? Can't you see I don't want to do that?

BARBARA. Dustin, we had our first meeting, you said you'd start trying again. I'd hate to see you give all that up now.

DUSTIN. I haven't given anything up.

BARBARA. I know you feel awkward, but that's just because you haven't practiced enough.

DUSTIN. Yeah. And if I keep practicing, I'll be running marathons, just like the people on TV.

BARBARA. I didn't say that, but at least you'd be able to get around.

DUSTIN. I get around fine!

BARBARA. I'm just trying to help you.

DUSTIN. Why? You don't care about me. I'm just another job for you. I'm just another file that sits on your desk.

BARBARA. That's not true...

DUSTIN. Then maybe you do this to make yourself feel good. A fat lady can make a kid walk. Wow, what a miracle worker!

BARBARA. Wait a minute now, that's not fair.

DUSTIN. And what you're doing is?

BARBARA. I'm doing this for you. It hurts me to see you confined to a wheelchair when you don't have to be.

DUSTIN. That's all you can see, isn't it? My legs? Well, if you were more observant, you might see that I don't mind that much. And if you do, well then, that's your problem. Just keep it to yourself.

TEDDY. Dustin—

DUSTIN. Shut up, Teddy.

BARBARA. It's not just me. Your teachers want to help too.

DUSTIN. If they really did, then they would quit trying to make me do something I don't want to do. Just give me a box of paints and show me how to move my wheelchair around better instead of trying to drag me out of it.

BARBARA. You can't just sit around and paint all the time.

DUSTIN. I want to paint. And if it will make you happy, I'll get onto the floor and do a few pushups every now and then.

BARBARA. Dustin—

DUSTIN. Barbara, just think of me instead of your job.

BARBARA. I am thinking about you. If you don't take the chance to walk now, I'm afraid you'll regret it later.

DUSTIN. And then I would blame you, and you would feel guilty, and you don't want that. See, you don't care about me, you care about yourself.

BARBARA. Dustin, maybe we could talk to your teachers about this.

DUSTIN. Maybe. But for right now I think I want to be alone.

BARBARA. All right. I think you should cool down. Come on, Teddy, let's go play.

TEDDY. In a minute.

(BARBARA exits.)

TEDDY. Dustin—

DUSTIN. Go play, Teddy.

TEDDY. Dustin, don't be mad at me.

DUSTIN. Just leave me alone. You're the one who got me into this mess in the first place.

TEDDY. *(Frustrated, angry:)* You don't need to walk. You do it fine already.

DUSTIN. What?

TEDDY. It doesn't matter that you're in a wheelchair. You're always walking away. I can walk, but I'm still here.

DUSTIN. You're not talking about walking, you're talking about people turning away from each other. It's different, stupid.

TEDDY. You're the stupid one. All you care about is painting, I'm here, too, you know.

DUSTIN. Yeah, well, I want to be alone right now.

TEDDY. *(Suddenly:)* Go away!

DUSTIN. What?

TEDDY. I hate you. That's all you ever tell me to do: "Go away, Teddy." "I don't want to play, Teddy." "I'm busy." Yeah, well, I don't care. I was just trying to be nice, that's all. But I don't care anymore. I wouldn't let you play if you wanted to.

(TEDDY throws a beanbag at DUSTIN. DUSTIN, moving to avoid it, knocks his painting off the easel.)

DUSTIN. What did you do? What the hell did you do?

TEDDY. It's your fault. You didn't catch it.

DUSTIN. I don't believe you. What are you trying to do?

TEDDY. Dustin, stop it. I didn't mean it.

DUSTIN. It was wet. You messed it up.

TEDDY. You can fix it, right?

DUSTIN. Maybe. Don't worry about it.

TEDDY. I thought you'd catch it. Honest I did.

DUSTIN. Never mind.

TEDDY. Dustin, I didn't mean it. Don't be mad.

DUSTIN. I'm not.

TEDDY. I'm sorry.

DUSTIN. Teddy—

TEDDY. Dustin, I love you.

DUSTIN. Aw, come on, Teddy.

TEDDY. You're my brother. I can love you if I want.

DUSTIN. Don't.

TEDDY. Why?

DUSTIN. Just don't. It makes things hard on both of us.

TEDDY. So what. You're my brother.

DUSTIN. I am not your brother.

TEDDY. I can love you anyway.

(DUSTIN looks at TEDDY for a minute in silence.)

TEDDY. Dustin? Why wouldn't you follow me out into the rain?

DUSTIN. It doesn't matter.

TEDDY. It does to me.

DUSTIN. I guess because people don't belong in rain. They just kind of stand out. It's like in painting. If you put a person, a real person, in a painting, they wouldn't seem to fit. They'd just look like they didn't belong in a perfect setting. You know what I mean?

TEDDY. No.

DUSTIN. Go play.

(Lights fade to black.)

Scene 4

(The stage is dimly lit. DUSTIN is lying in bed sleeping and TEDDY is packing a suitcase that is lying open on his bed. He is talking to no one in particular as he is packing. The sound of rain hitting against the windowpane is noticeable, but soft. It will grow more noticeable as the scene progresses.)

TEDDY. Ya know, sometimes I think it really wouldn't be so bad to be blind. You wouldn't have to worry about what everything looked like. You could make things look like you wanted them to. You could wear clothes that didn't match, and nobody would tell you you had no taste. They would think you dressed like that just 'cause you couldn't see. If we couldn't see, we'd start seeing the things inside people more.

(TEDDY stops packing and wanders over to Dustin's easel. Picking up a paintbrush, he goes back to his bed, reaches under it, pulls out his bag of stuff and adds the paintbrush to his collection. TEDDY picks up the suitcase and walks to the door. Putting the suitcase down, he turns to look at DUSTIN.)

TEDDY. Dustin? *(Silence.)* You awake, Dustin? *(Silence.)* Dustin?

DUSTIN. *(Annoyed:)* What?

TEDDY. I want to talk to you.

DUSTIN. It's two o'clock in the morning. Go to sleep!

TEDDY. What's wrong?

DUSTIN. Just go to sleep.

TEDDY. Dustin? I'm leaving tomorrow. I want to talk to you.

DUSTIN. I'll talk to you in the morning. Now, go lie down.

TEDDY. Dustin—

DUSTIN. Teddy—leave me alone.

TEDDY. Dustin?

(When Dustin doesn't answer, TEDDY reaches up and gently puts his hand on DUSTIN's face. DUSTIN bolts to a sitting position.)

DUSTIN. Quit it! You're not blind.

TEDDY. I'm cold. Just hold me a minute.

(The two boys look at each other for a minute, then DUSTIN turns over and lies down again, with his back to TEDDY.)

TEDDY. Dustin...this is the last time...this is the last time... Can't you just... Forget it! This is the last time you'll see me. I'm the only thing you have, and I'm leaving.

DUSTIN. Good! Now, go to sleep.

(TEDDY turns away and goes back to his bed. He curls up and softly begins crying. DUSTIN is silent for a while. He then pulls himself into his wheelchair, talking softly to TEDDY.)

DUSTIN. I used to think that the morning light was yellow. That's the color streetlights are and the color the moon is and everything. Then one night I woke up and looked around. It was two o'clock, and it was blue. You know what I wanted to do, Teddy? I wanted to wake you up and show you that everything was blue, not yellow like I thought. But I didn't. It's different tonight. Everything should be blue in here, but it's not. Maybe I should paint the sky yellow, like you said, and red. Yeah, a red splash could mix in just fine.

(By this time the rain can be heard against the windowpane. DUSTIN has gotten into his wheelchair and now wheels over to TEDDY's bed.)

Teddy? *(Pause.)* I need you. I'm scared.

(TEDDY looks up and then goes to DUSTIN and sits in his lap.)

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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