

WayToLive.Org Vignettes

MONOLOGUES**The Story**

SARAH

Being connected to God is, it—it's almost like Suddenly remembering that you are breathing...when, really, you're Already breathing, and have been, since the moment you were born...and before...you're surrounded by God...everyone, everything is breathing with you...together...(sighs) I want to remember that.

Bodies

CHLOE

My arms are wings
 my feet are dancers
 and my stomach is a drum
 where my childhood beats through my heart,
 sings through my skin.
 Songs of scars and bruises,
 growing inches, then feet,
 biding time through bad hair cuts
 time slipping through last year's fingers.
 The same fingers,
 I once slipped between my parents' hands,
 begging to fly.

Stuff

ANNA

I want two pairs of pants, six shirts, seven sweaters, eleven skirts, fourteen new CDs, eighteen pairs of sunglasses and twenty-three tickets to Disney Land because I've only been there once and I hear that if you go there twenty-four times you get one free ticket to go back and I could finally get the Minnie Mouse action figure that I'm missing from my Disney collection--have you seen those?-- they're cute, really cute--I wanna get all 100 figures because it's really not worth Anything if you only have 99—

Food

NICK

I was starving because we spent the whole day trying to find the Mona Lisa—long story--but we walked in their house and that had this huge long table and it was covered, I mean covered with food from one end to the other, food I'd never even seen before and I really didn't even know these people, or speak French but they knew my Dad and so they invited us over and I'm telling you, I never knew people could eat for seven hours. Seven hours! And the food kept coming! And no body was in a hurry to go home or

even talked about being full...they just kept talking and eating and drinking wine and I swear it was the longest meal I ever had and I still remember this duck they served...I didn't know I like duck...but it was pretty amazing.

Creation

MICHAEL

Where does all that trash go? You ever think about that?...Or every time you take a shower or flush the toilet?...Where's that pipe going?...Where does everything Go?...There are five kids in my family and that makes for a lot of trash and a lot of showers and a lot of toilet flushing. Multiply that times billions of families and people...every single day?...where's all that Going? Who's keeping track?

Creativity

NICK

Frogs mostly. Then I got into bigger things, like chickens. I had to draw the perfect chicken. I'd get obsessed. Had to get the beak just right and the wings—they don't even do anything with them – but, but I had to make sure they were just like I saw them. Exactly. I'd spend hours. I've got books filled with frogs and chickens...Now, I draw a chicken and I don't even think about it – I know I've mastered it ...

Work

SARAH

I've seen him dig the paper out of the trash on his way in...8:30 sharp. I bring him the same one egg, one toast. Refill his coffee four times. He leaves me the same one quarter tip. A quarter!...Some customers complain that he smells...I like when he comes in...We have a routine, this guy and me. We don't really talk...I mean, I smile at him, but he doesn't really smile back...*(she smiles)*...But, everyday beside the quarter is a little piece of his newspaper that he thinks I'll like, like a weird picture or a funny story...or a piece of the want ads for a better job...I think that's a joke between us...he'd miss me.

Play

MICHAEL

Play. *(thinks of as many synonyms as possible)* Fun, amusement, pastime, entertainment, recreation, clown around, dally...dilly dally, revelry, merry making, monkey business, goof off, joke around, frolic...fun...I, I already said that, didn't I?

Time

SARAH

I had to wake up—I woke up late—I had to wake up, take a shower, get dressed, get to school in twenty minutes, no breakfast. I was starving. Then I had to go to school all

day, act interested, learn something. Then I had band practice. Then I had—what did I have next—oh, right—then I had to go with my Mom to the store to buy a new chair, which took forever. Then I had to come home, do my homework, eat dinner, practice piano. Then I had to—

Truth

CHLOE

It's the glue. ...It is...I don't know how else to explain it... I just know when I feel it. And when I don't...it can be confusing. I think. *(laughs)* Isn't it?...I mean, what about the gray area? The white lies? You don't want to hurt people's feelings...people don't want to hurt your feelings...but...still...in the moment, what are you going to do?

Choices

ANNA

I'd like to talk to them about it...at least tell them about it and see what they think...I think it's a good idea, but you know, they might think I'm making a huge mistake and I wouldn't know it...maybe I am making a big mistake...it could turn out terrible...I'm not sure...see...it's complicated...it's a big decision.

Friends

MICHAEL

I like you...do I tell you that enough?...have I ever told you that? Does, does that make you uncomfortable?...no? Really? ...Good. *(pause)* I love you...what?...I do! come back—

Welcome

MICHAEL

(the sound of a party in the background, the character speaks above the sound of the crowd.) For 15 years of my life, I've been told Not to talk to strangers. It's been drilled in to me. *(he waves to someone off camera—smiles)* In the park. On the street. On the playground. And I realize, it was well intentioned. Good advice. *(he waves again, to someone else)* There are some real freaks out there. Kids have gotten hurt —*(someone interrupts him, he addresses the person)* Hey, no problem *(he listens)* Oh, sure, it's just down —*(he looks at camera)* excuse me—*(he begins to point in a direction in the crowd, to give the stranger directions.)*

Forgiveness

NICK

If, if it were an insect, it would have been, been a flea. I swear. Barely the size of a flea. It was that small, and fast...And it maybe wouldn't have mattered—maybe—but I got

caught, see. And getting caught in it, even though it was tiny, teeny tiny, it was still a lie...It hurt him.

Justice

ANNA

Some kids can't afford to go to college...but they have to listen to the other kids talk about all their plans for school and all the things they are going to buy for their dorm rooms, and all the fun they are going to have in the new place...and I watch their faces, and I sometimes see them just shut down...or sometimes they laugh it off...but really, most of the time, they just listen, just sit there and listen...I wonder what they're thinking...if they're mad...and at who?

Grieving

SARAH

The kid who sits behind me in fourth period was killed in a car accident last night. (*silence.*) And I'm supposed to go to school today?

Music

CHLOE

She sings "This Little Light of Mine," unaccompanied.

Prayer

MICHAEL

How do you pray? Yes, you...right there...See, I've been taking a poll recently and it's pretty amazing what kind of praying is going on out there. I mean, the hands together and the bowed head and the quiet conversation with God is still pretty much a classic, but, there's quite a few styles floating around, making their way in the world. I'm not trying to be forward, but if you'll click on me, I'll show you what I found. (*pause*) It's pretty cool.

DIALOGUES**The Story**

TORAH AS PROP.

Sarah stands beside two lit candles in her family living room, along with Michael and Kate. Beside the candles is a picture of Sarah as a thirteen year old, and a TORAH. (The sunset can be seen by reflection in a window in the background...possible?)

Sarah: Every Friday.

Michael: At Sunset.

Sarah: Yeah.

Kate: Just two candles?

Sarah: Well...in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, I guess there were always two candles constantly burning...one represented the material realm, and the other the spiritual. The idea is that God wanted to share fire when His creatures were afraid of the sun setting—

Michael: Shabbat?

Kate: Every Friday?

Sarah: Yeah. But it's only women who light them—

Mom O.C: Sarah, Michael, Kate! Dinner!

Kate: And so everyone, who's Jewish, is burning candles right now?

Sarah: If they practice the ritual.

Kate: Like a group prayer. Kind of.

Sarah: Yeah. Kind of.

Michael: We light candles at the beginning of church.

Kate: So do we.

Sarah: Have you guys ever been in a synagogue?

Michael: No.

Kate: Yeah. For your bat mitzvah, remember?

Sarah: Oh yeah.

Kate: That was fun.

Sarah: It's like a personal wedding for thirteen year-olds.

Kate: I know. I've never seen so many presents.

Mom (off camera): Kids! Dinner!

Sarah: That's all some kids care about, but I really like the history...we learn the Torah and its really intense learning all these old Hebrew texts to recite and standing in front of people...it's this kind of big Jewish 'rite of passage'.

Sarah looks them, smiles.

Sarah: I'm an adult.

Michael: Like confirmation.

Sarah: Yeah. I guess so. Kind of.

Michael: Part of God.

Kate: Is it the same God, you think?

Sarah: Isn't it?

Bodies

Chloe, Anna and Nick stand looking in the girl's bathroom mirror. (The mirror is camera – they are looking at us.) Behind them reads, GIRLS in large letters on the wall. (I suppose it would read backwards, if it is reflected in the mirror?)

FASHION MAGAZINE IS PROP.

Chloe: I hate my ears. And my nose.

Nick: I like them.

Chloe: I have my mother's nose. And ears. And my father's eyes.

Nick: You do?

Chloe: Don't I?

He looks her over.

Chloe: What?

Nick: No...I was going to say the opposite. You have your mother's eyes, and your—

Chloe: Do I?

Nick: Yeah.

Chloe: But, I'm built like my mom, aren't I? You have your dad's nose.

Nick: Your smile is like hers.

Chloe: My dad thinks it's like his. My mom thinks it's like hers...If I had a brother or sister they wouldn't have to argue about who I look like. There'd be more to go around—

Nick: You really think I have my dad's nose?

Chloe: What about you, Anna?

Anna: I don't know.

Chloe: What—

Anna: I'm adopted—

Chloe: Oh. Right. I'm sorry—

Anna: But I'm sure I look like my parents. They just don't know it.

Nick: My dad's nose is bigger than mine.

Chloe: My dad's moving out.

Nick: What?

Chloe: My parent's are getting a divorce.

Nick: When'd they tell you?

Chloe: Last night.

Anna: I'm sorry, Chloe.

Silence.

Chloe: I don't really mind my nose. Or my ears. I mean, they're ok, aren't they?

Nick: Yes—

Chloe: I mean, I really think I look like both of them. Don't you?

Stuff

Close-up on Anna and Kate in a big store. Anna's eyes follow the stuff, while Kate tries to have a conversation. Kate pushes a shopping cart.

SHOPPING CART IS PROP.

Kate: I'm giving away all my toys.

Anna: Why?

Kate: And my old clothes.

Anna: Why?

Kate: I don't need them. My mom does it every year. Just goes through the house and fills a big bag of stuff to give away.

Anna's eyes remain on the bright stuff in front of her.

Kate: She gives it to a homeless shelter.

Anna: I'd never give away my toys. Or my clothes.

Kate: Why not?

Anna: I'm saving them.

Kate: For what?

Anna: For my kids.

Kate: What if they don't want them?

Anna: Of course they'll want them—if they were mine—oh, cool. Look at that. What do you think that's made of?

Kate: Glitter—

Anna: I like that—

Kate: I'm sure my kids will have their own stuff. I'd rather give mine away. It's crowding my room. I can't walk in there anymore.

Anna: Maybe you should buy some shelves or something—wouldn't you miss your stuff?

Anna finally looks at her, thinking.

Anna: Isn't that what makes it feel like your room?

Kate: No. I don't know...

Anna: Like your old dolls, and those kissing frogs by your bed?

Kate: I'm keeping my bed.

Anna: Still. It won't feel the same. It'll be weird and empty.

Kate: I don't know.

Anna: And your clothes? No one wears clothes like you do, Kate—

Kate: Is that a compliment?

Anna: Yes—

Kate: Oh. Thanks. But they don't fit anymore—

Anna: But they're You.

Kate: They're in a pile. Im in a pile.

Anna: Don't give them away.

Kate: But I want to. I don't need them. My mom calls it 'cleansing'.

Anna: Maybe—hey, look at that—cool.

Food

A late-night burger joint. Nick and Jim sit stuffing hamburgers in their face. They carry-on a conversation through eating the food.

HAMBURGERS ARE PROP.

Nick: No. Uh huh. You can't.

Jim: Where's the salt?

Nick: The thing is—John—

Jim: Jim.

Nick: Sorry. Jim, the thing is—

Jim: Pass the ketchup.

Nick: The thing is, if you're fasting, you can't eat. That's the idea. You fast then feast...celebrate the food...

Jim: Salt?

Nick: That's the whole point. I was reading about it last night. And my friend Sarah, do you know Sarah—

Jim: Kinda.

Nick: My friend Sarah does it every year. For Yom Kippur, they don't eat, and you know Mohammed—

Jim nods.

Nick: He doesn't eat for Ramadan—

Jim: That's why I don't fast.

Nick: Why?

Jim: Because you can't eat.

Nick: But isn't that the idea?

Jim: What?

Nick: Not eating.

Nick shoves fries in his mouth.

Nick: To anticipate food.

Jim: Yeah. I can't take it.

Nick: What?

Jim: The anticipation.

Jim shoves fries in his mouth.

Nick: Maybe you could.

Jim: Nope. I get hungry just thinking about it

Jim takes a long sip of his drink.

Nick: I don't know...it might feel good. Freeing. To know hunger, to understand it. You'd appreciate food --

Jim: No, I'm growing too fast. It might be harmful.

Nick: No, it wouldn't. They've been doing it, since they were kids, right? I mean—

Jim: Look at my pants. An inch shorter already. Can't do it.

Nick: I'm gonna try it.

Jim: When?

Nick: Soon. I don't know. Maybe next week. Then make a big dinner afterwards. Invite lots of people. You wanna come?

Jim takes another big sip of his drink.

Jim: Can I have the rest of your fries?

Creation

Michael and Sarah walk in the wilderness. They stop for a drink of water. The sound of birds and water running in the distance. Michael stops mid-drink and sniffs.

A SAPLING IS PROP.

Michael: Ahh... You smell that?

Sarah: Fall.

Michael: I love that smell.

Sarah: Me too.

Michael: Is that leaves or wood smoke?

Sarah: Both.

They walk toward us. Sarah eyes a small bit of trash.

Michael: I remember when I was a kid, my dad would take us camping at the first sign of fall because he couldn't stand not being out in it. He would smile the whole time, and say, "this is the season, kids. Right here. Look at these leaves. Magic. Some people go on and on about spring, but this right here is the thinking man's season."

Sarah: What's that mean?

Michael: I have no idea.

They walk toward us. Closer.

Sarah: The leaves turn, fall off, die, get raked, burned, or ground to mulch.

Michael: Yes.

Sarah: Who wants to think about that?

Michael: My dad...I think this is my favorite season too...I love it...it just makes me feel excited about things. The smell. And the trees. Gold and red everywhere. Everything feels really fresh or something.

Sarah picks up the paper from the ground. We see that it's a gum wrapper.

Sarah: "Fresh and minty".

She puts it in her pocket. They keep walking.

Michael: The trees seem like they're showing off.

Sarah: 'Look what I can do.'

Michael: 'I'm so beautiful. Watch me change.'

Sarah: 'Now I'm naked'.

Michael: 'Oh my, it's cold out here'.

Sarah: Hey, you think you would ever live in a tree, like that woman did that old redwood---what was her name---Julia

Michael: Butterfly Hill—

Sarah: Yeah. Would you live in a tree because you like, thought it was so sacred and loved it so much you wanted to save it from getting chopped down?

Michael: She was up there for two years or something.

Sarah: I know. Would you do it?

Creativity

BLANK PAGE IN SKETCHPAD IS PROP.

Outside school. The football field and parking lot are in the distance. Nick sits drawing in a small sketchpad. He is surrounded by art supplies and a larger blank sketchpad. Anna stands over him watching him work. Nick looks up, then down at his drawing. Up, then down. Sounds of cars and birds and kids in the background.

Anna: It's what?

Nick: A mountain.

Anna looks up to see what he's looking at - there's nothing there.

Nick: And there's a village down here. Some goats. That's a road that goes to the next village.

Anna looks in the direction he keeps looking.

Nick: I'm thinking a river down here. Some birds over here.

Anna: How do you get that, from That?

Nick: Oh, I'm using the perspective, not the parking lot. I need the scale.

Anna: Oh....It's good.

Nick: Thanks.

Anna: I might put some people in there. Moving around. Over there in the corner or something.

Nick stops drawing and looks at her.

Nick: Really?

Anna: Just a few people. One or two.

He hands her the picture.

Nick: Go ahead.

Anna: Oh no.

Nick: Yes.

Anna: I can't draw.

Nick: Here.

Anna: No. I can't. I'm not an artist. I was just making a suggestion—

Nick: Take it.

Anna: I don't want to ruin it.

Nick: You won't.

Anna: Really. I can't draw. I shouldn't have said anything—

Nick: No, really, I'm serious. Take my pencil. Put some people in there. You can make them giants if you want.

Anna: Nick—I was just making a small suggestion.

Nick: And I'm saying go ahead and draw. Try it. Put some people in there. Lots of people. We'll make it together.

Anna: Nick—

He hands her his pencil.

Nick: "It takes a village to raise a child".

Anna: You're gonna laugh.

Nick: I won't.

Anna: I can't draw.

Nick: They'll be great. You're expanding my vision.

Anna: Their heads may be bigger than the rest of their body.

Nick: It's a smart village.

She sits down beside him. Looks in the direction that Nick has been looking.

Work

Inside a small restaurant/diner. Sarah and Kate methodically/routinely refill ketchup bottles. They are bored to death, and show it. The stranger sits at a table behind them.

A TIP JAR IS PROP.

Kate: I am so bored.

Sarah: I know.

Kate: Five people. All morning? We'll be lucky if we leave with two bucks each.

Sarah: I know.

Kate: What's the point? I could have slept in.

Sarah: But, two of the five people would have gone hungry.

Kate: I could have laid around, in my pajamas...not a care in the world.

Sarah: Those two hungry people would begin to eat at you, in your pajamas, and suddenly you'd begin to wonder, who needs more coffee? Are those eggs scrambled or over easy? Who's gonna give them the service they deserve?

Kate: You.

Sarah: Sure, but they want the team, don't they? They come in here looking for Both of us. The weekend team and who are we to disappoint them?

Kate: I don't even think they notice.

Sarah: Are you kidding?

Kate: How many people actually know your name?

Sarah: Lots.

Kate: Really?

Sarah: Yes.

Kate: Who?

Sarah: That guy, back there, knows my name.

Kate: I've never even heard him speak.

Sarah: But he's heard my name. He knows what it is.

Kate: OK. One person.

Sarah: Do you know their names?

Kate: Who?

Sarah: The customers? The regulars?

Kate: No.

Sarah: Well, maybe you should ask.

Kate: Hand me that bottle.

Sarah hands her another bottle.

Kate: They'll just think I want a bigger tip.

Sarah: Maybe...but they may just like to be called by their name. Especially the ones who eat alone all the time. Like that guy.

Kate: I hate eating alone.

Sarah: I know.

Kate: There's no one to look at.

Sarah: But us.

They both suddenly realize that they are being watched. They stand up straighter, and smile.

Play

A kitchen table. A clock on the wall in the background. Nick and Michael sit over a game of checkers. It's Michael move. (The first move of the game.) Nick tosses a ball up and down as he waits. Nick looks at the clock.

BALL IS PROP.

Nick: Anytime now.

Michael: Uh huh.

Nick waits.

Nick: Before tomorrow...Mr. "merry maker".

Michael: I'm going.

Nick waits.

Nick: Before I graduate...

Nick waits.

Nick: Isn't this a lovely "pastime".

Michael: Shut up.

Nick waits.

Nick: Before I marry...you really like the "monkey business".

Michael: OK, OK! Gezz.

Michael almost moves a piece, but changes his mind.

Nick: Before I take my daughter to her first day of school. Ah, the “revelry”.

Michael: C’mon, Nick! I’m concentrating!

Nick waits.

Nick: Before my son asks to borrow the car. “Just for “fun”, Dad!”

Michael: Shut up!

Michael looks over the board.

Nick: Before my wife and I decide to take that “recreational” cruise to the Bahamas instead of that trip around the world because my daughter has just wiped out all my savings on her perfect, absolutely gorgeous wedding, but really, I have to say, we all had a lovely time, just a lovely time, danced all night, and he’s a great guy, I’m not kidding you, you couldn’t ask for a better son in law, top notch guy...and my own son, great kid, has just decided to go to Med school and has asked if we could help him out a bit in the next four years as he really wants to concentrate on his studies and he’s really excited about helping other people in the world, really making a difference, and saving lives, can you imagine, my son, saving lives? And of course, we’re excited for him, but I really, just between you and me, I don’t like boats much. I get sea sick. I’d really rather be golfing.

Michael makes his move.

Michael: Your turn.

Time

Sara’s house. Living room. Sarah sleeps on the couch, her head on a pillow, while her mother and father speak to her off camera. Occasional snores are heard coming from Sarah.

PILLOW IS THE PROP.

Mother: Did you hear that, Sarah?...Your father and I thought that would be a good idea.

Father: A great idea, kid.

Mother: And I think we can fit it in between your job and band practice. It’s just an hour a day.

Father: An hour? A day?

Mother: Yes.

Father: Every day?

Mother: Yes. They say it makes a huge difference for colleges.

Father: You want to commit to an hour a day, Sarah?

Mother: You really want to have a lot of choices for schools.

Father: She has a lot of choices. She's a smart kid—

Mother: I know, but you don't want to take any chances.

Father: She'll get in wherever she wants.

Mother: But this will help.

Father: I just don't want her to feel pressure. That kid gets more done in a day than I do. My parents used to tell me to just go out in the yard after school. "Go outside". That was it.

Mother: Some kids double their SAT score, Sarah.

Father: Now you got all these car pools and plans and schedules. We had a yard. That's it.

Mother: It makes a difference.

Father: What do you think, Sarah? You can just go out in the yard if you want.

Mother: I think I can move your piano lessons back an hour too, and then you can do your homework after dinner—

Father: Don't pressure her. There's no pressure, kid. You do what you want.

Mother: Oh, my, and your recital, Sarah...She's got a recital on Thursday...We've got to remember to get a new dress for that.

Father: A new dress?

Mother: Yes, she needs a dress for that...OK, Sarah? How about tomorrow?...I think I can pick you up after your—

Sarah continues to sleep.

Truth

Chloe and Nick sit in the front seat of a car. Nick holds a cell phone against his head, trying to make a decision. Chloe checks her watch.

CELL PHONE IS PROP.

Nick: I guess I could tell him I'm sick.

Chloe: Didn't you just see him an hour ago?

Nick: Or the movie's sold out.

Chloe: I don't know...

Nick: That's pretty lame.

Nick thinks. Gets frustrated.

Nick: Why can't we just invite him?

Chloe: I told you.

Nick: But I already invited him, Chloe. He's waiting for me to call—

Chloe: I really wanted to be alone with you.

Nick: So, why don't I just tell him that?

Chloe: OK. Tell him that.

Nick: I can't.

They both are frustrated.

Chloe: I don't want him to think I don't like him...I just, I just don't want it to be the three of us.

Nick: Why?

Chloe: I just want to be alone—

Nick: I'm not going to ignore you.

Chloe: I didn't say you would.

Nick: Then what's the problem?

Chloe: You're gonna want to talk to each other.

Nick: He's going to figure out we ditched him.

Chloe: I don't want him to think I don't want him to come.

Nick: But you don't! You just said you didn't want him to come.

Chloe: Still! I don't want to hurt his feelings.

Nick: He knows you like him—

Chloe: I just, I feel like you guys have more fun without me.

Nick: Why?

Chloe: I don't know, you can joke around. Make fun of the actors.

Nick: It's a movie. That's the best part. You can make fun of them too—

Chloe: I just wanted it to be the two of us, Nick. A nice, simple date. Alone. Together. I told you that yesterday but you invited him anyway.

Nick: He wanted to see the movie.

Chloe: I don't care. Tell him what you want, but it starts in 20 minutes.

Nick: But I already invited him.

Nick thinks. Sighs. Dials the cell phone.

Choices

Anna's room. It's a bright, colorful room covered with posters of various rock bands. Stuffed animals sit on the floor. Anna lay on her bed, writing in her journal. She swings her legs as she writes, occasionally stops writing to think.

JOURNAL IS PROP. DATES ENTER SCREEN.

MAY 2: I got another D in math today. My parents are going to kill me...I'll tell them tomorrow...I've been dreaming about my sister in Korea. It's weird. She's always tall and quiet in my dreams...and I keep reaching for her. Then I wake up.

MAY 4: I swear, I can't stop thinking about my sister. I talked to Michael about it and told him I think I want to go over there and meet her. If I can find her. He thinks it sounds scary. Like I'm searching my unknown past...maybe I am...but I wonder what she looks like and who she is and if she remembers me. Of course she remembers me, if I remember her, right?...I can't go to Michael's party. I'm grounded until I pull up my math grades. Great.

MAY 9: Now Michael and Kate both think I should go and try and find her, but they think I should wait a couple of years. After college or something. I want to go this summer. I prayed about it with my Pastor last night. He liked the idea but asked me to think about the trip and what it might mean to both of us, and to my family. He told me to be honest with my parents...I think I'm afraid to talk to my parents about it because I think they are going to tell me not to go. Or they are going to be hurt that I want to find her, like they're not good enough and my sisters here aren't good enough or something. It's not that at all.

MAY 17: I just think it would be good for my sister and me to meet. Maybe just once. To see each other. In person. See what that feels like...to know we're both really out there. I think that's what I'll tell to my parents. That's how I feel. I want them to know that...maybe I'll see if they want to come...

Friends

Michael's house. Michael sits on the couch, Anna stands beside him. Michael is holding Anna's hand, as if he's just grabbed it.

THEIR HANDS HELD TOGETHER IS THE PROP.

Anna: I just don't know if I feel that, That way about you.

Michael: Oh, no, Anna...I don't mean it like That.

Anna: What?

Michael: I'm gay.

Anna: You are?

Michael: Uh huh.

Anna: Really?

Michael: Yeah.

Anna: Really?

Michael: Yes.

Anna looks at him, closely. He shrugs.

Michael: I thought you knew.

Anna: So you aren't in love with me?

Michael: Not like that.

Anna: Oh.

Silence

Anna: Is it my hair? Too long?

They laugh.

Michael: Yes. The hair. And the whole math business. The failing grades. I just can't handle it—

She drops his hand.

Anna: My parents are going to kill me.

Michael: You haven't told them?

Anna: No.

Michael: You want some help?

Anna: You wanna tell them?

Michael: No.

Anna: But you said you loved me—

Michael: I do. So, I'll help you. I'm a math whiz, you know—

Anna: How long have you known you're gay? I mean...I won't tell anyone—

She grabs his hand again.

Michael: It's not a secret.

Anna: Then why am I just finding out now?

Michael: Because I thought you knew...and I didn't think it mattered.

Anna: It doesn't.

Welcome

Outside a house. An open blue door. "Happy Birthday Michael" is written on a sign across the door. Paint cans sit against the house. A trash can. The sound of a party in the background. Jim and Nick stand alone.

BLUE DOOR IS PROP.

Jim: I don't know anyone in there. Do you?

Nick: Yeah...I, pretty much, know everyone.

Jim: Oh.

Silence.

Nick: Do you want to meet them? I mean, I can introduce you—

Jim: No. That's OK.

Nick: I don't mind--

Jim: No. That's OK.

Silence.

Nick: Are you just gonna stand here all night?

Jim: Pretty much.

Nick: Why'd you come?

Jim: I was invited.

Nick: Did the invitation ask that you please stand outside the house all night?

Jim: “Please come to my house for a birthday party. I’ve never talked to you before in my life but come join a crowd of my drama friends. You will feel stupid for coming since you are a jock and they will be singing songs from their last musical, but please come anyway. If all else fails, feel free to paint the outside of the house as my dad has still not gotten around to it.”

Nick: Huh.

Jim: You gotta read the fine print. Always read the fine print.

Nick: I see...But...Maybe, you were invited so that people Could talk to you.

Jim: They’re singing in there.

Nick: How’s your voice?

Jim: Feel like painting?

Nick: Come on. Come inside. I’ll introduce you--

Jim: No...I feel stupid.

Nick: Why?

Jim: I don’t know anyone.

Nick: Yet. You don’t know them yet. Come on. I’ll introduce you—what’s your name?

Jim: Uh, Jim, Jim McDon--

Nick: Hey...didn’t you just win State in track or something?

Jim: I got second—I’m not gonna have to sing, am I?

Nick: Second in the whole State?

Jim: Yeah.

Nick: Wow.

Jim: It was a close race—

Nick: Then you certainly can’t stand out here all night, Jim. Oh no. No way. We gotta take you inside to mingle. People to meet. People to meet. We gotta keep those legs moving.

Jim: Why

Nick: Well, personally, I've tried stood out here for, oh, say, about half an hour, basically scoping the lay of the land, and it's really no good for the legs. Very harmful. Very limiting to the whole body. And I can't run. Think what it will do to you?

Jim: Well—

Nick: Inside, Jim.

Forgiveness

Michael's house. Michael sits with his arms crossed on the couch. Nick stands beside him.

A FAMILY PICTURE WITH A PERSON TORN OFF ONE SIDE IS PROP.

Nick: I'm sorry.

Michael: For what?

Nick: I know Anna saw us at the movies.

Michael: Did she?

Nick: C'mon, Michael.

Michael: What? I don't know what you're talking about.

Nick: I know Anna told you.

Michael: How could Anna see you and Chloe at the movies when you were kind enough to tell me, at the last minute, that it was already sold out, and I shouldn't bother to come?

Nick: I'm sorry.

Michael: Why'd you invite me?

Nick: I wanted you to come.

Michael: But Chloe didn't?

Nick: No. Well, she just wanted to be alone with me. On a date. Alone. She told me that before but I invited you anyway. It's my fault.

Michael nods.

Nick: I'm sorry...

Silence

Nick: I just didn't know how to uninvite you...I know it was a lame excuse...and I, Chloe and I...I didn't want to hurt your feelings.

Michael: You could have told me the truth.

Nick: I know. But I was trying---I didn't want you to feel bad.

Michael: Thanks.

Michael looks away.

Nick: How long are you going to be mad?

Michael: My father hasn't spoken to his brother in 15 years.

Silence.

Nick: Why?

Michael: He's mad at him.

Nick: Damn. What a waste.

Michael: My family's good at holding a grudge.

Nick: You're not.

Michael: I am too.

Nick: Sixth grade, that time I hit you in the head with my pencil?

Michael: But you didn't mean to do it.

Nick: Yes I did.

Michael: You did?

Nick: The point is, you forgave me in like two seconds.

Michael: Only because recess came. Who else was I going to play with?

Nick sits beside him on the couch.

Michael: That was such a stupid excuse. That movie is Never going to be sold out.

Nick: It's horrible.

Michael: I could have told you that.

Justice

Anna and Kate stand in the school hall by their lockers. A young woman in a yellow dress walks by.

EARTH IS PROP.

Anna: That, that was your dress.

Kate: Where?

Anna: Lisa's wearing your old dress.

Kate: Hey look at that...it fits her.

Anna: Why'd she get it?

Kate: Oh. Well. I, I guess she lives at the shelter.

Anna: What?...I didn't know that...

Kate: Me either...I took all my old stuff to the homeless shelter. They must have given it to her.

They both watch her walk in the distance.

Anna: You think she knows that was your dress?

Kate: I don't know. No. I hope not. I wouldn't want her to feel embarrassed.

Anna: No.

Kate: I mean, I hope she feels good in it.

Anna: Yeah. Still...it doesn't seem fair.

Kate: What?

Anna: That's all she's got. And it was just something that you didn't want anymore.

Kate: Yeah?

Anna: It was just extra.

Kate: That's why I gave it away. So someone else could use it—

Anna: But it still doesn't seem fair. Why should we have plenty, and extra, while someone else has nothing?

Kate: I know. It's not fair. It sucks.

Anna and Kate look toward where Lisa walked away.

Anna: Sometimes I think about when I was adopted...how many kids got picked over while I got to come to the States. You know? Like, why did I get a family, and they didn't? What happened to them?...

They look toward where Lisa walked away again.

Anna: I have a sister over there. Somewhere.

Kate: Really?

Anna: She's older.

Kate: Hey, maybe someday you'll meet her.

Anna: What if she's homeless?

Grieving

Sarah, Nick, Michael, Anna, Chloe, Kate and Jim all sit gathered around a candle and small shrine of flowers and gifts set before a student's locker.

CANDLE/SHRINE IS PROP.

Silence. Wiping of eyes. Tears. Hands joined.

Nick: It was a stupid mistake.

Sarah: Nick, I'm sure he didn't see it coming.

Nick: Everyone knows that turn is there. Clarke road is famous for it.

Sarah: Still.

Nick: He's been on that road a million times. I've driven it with him.

Sarah: Well—

Nick: He grew up on Clarke.

Silence.

Michael: I've known him since first grade.

Kate: Me too.

Sarah: He sat right behind me in math. I could smell his cologne.

Anna: He wore a lot of cologne.

Sarah: I know.

Jim: No kidding...I just met him. But he cracked me up in class, man. He was always getting in trouble.

Anna: I know.

Michael: Are you going to the funeral?

Sarah: I am.

Kate: Me too. Michael?

Michael: Yeah.

Nick: I'm not.

Michael: Why not? You've known him as long as I have, Nick. He's parents are going to wonder why you didn't come—

Nick: I don't care.

Michael: C'mon. What's your problem?

Nick: I just don't want to go.

Michael: What about them?

Silence.

Chloe: He was really funny.

Sarah: He laughed the loudest.

Michael: I know.

Anna: He cracked himself up.

Kate: I know.

Nick: Stupid.

Michael: Nick, knock it off, alright?

Michael grabs Nick, and Nick begins to cry.

Music

Chloe and Jim stand in the hall of school. Jim has headphones around his neck, and a disk man in his hand. Chloe has a song book in her hand, she's busy studying a new song. Practicing (perhaps singing more of the song from the monologue?)

SONG BOOK IS PROP.

Jim: You have a good voice.

Chloe: Oh. Thank you.

Chloe returns to her book.

Jim: You sing in the choir or something?

Chloe: Yes.

Jim: Do they teach how to sing like that?

Chloe: Well, kind of. We learn how to sing together. But, I've been singing a long time.

I've been singing in church since I was a kid.

Jim: Sounds like it.

Chloe: You? We're always looking for more boys--

Jim: What?

Chloe: Sing?

Jim: Sure—

Chloe: You should join us—

Jim: In the shower. And the car...And in my room, when no one's home.

Chloe: Only alone?

Jim: It's preferable. By many. Believe me.

Chloe: How do you know? If no one's heard you.

Jim: It's a blessing. Believe me.

Chloe: But you enjoy it.

Jim: Well, sure. Of course. I love it. It's awesome. I mean, who doesn't—

Chloe: Let's see.

Jim: What?

Chloe: Let me hear you sing.

Jim: Here?

Chloe looks around.

Chloe: I'm the only one here.

Jim: No.

Chloe: Pretend there's water running. Or traffic.

Jim: There's no music.

She puts the headphones on his ears.

Chloe: You know the words?

Jim: Yes.

She pushes the play button.

Chloe: Let me have it.

Jim clears his throat. Looks around him. Begins...

Prayer

All seven characters stand waiting in a line outside a small club, waiting to get in to hear a band. Michael approaches them with a microphone and a video camera. He's making his own documentary on prayer.

Anna: How do I pray? Umm...I don't know...that seems kind of personal.

Michael: So it's a personal thing for you?

Anna: Yeah.

Michael: Anna finds it to be a personal experience. With God?

Anna: Yeah. And I write in my journal. Every day.

Michael: Does God read it?

Anna: Yes.

Michael: I might try that. But that doesn't mean you edit it, does it?

Anna: No.

Michael: Whoa...

Anna: Yeah.

Michael: Chloe?

Chloe: Well, I sing in church, and in school, I think I pray most when I'm singing.

Michael: Interesting.

Chloe: The music connects me, I think. It's like this big huge great feeling goes deeper. I can feel God with me. In me. And it's almost like I don't know the difference between my voice and the music and everyone around me because He's singing through me and my friends and the church and school—and it's great—

Nick butts in.

Michael: Nick?

Nick: Nick here. Yes, I tend to believe that I am always praying.

Michael: Always.

Nick: Yes. Yesterday, for example, I was washing the dog, and while I didn't really want to wash the dog, because I tend to be wetter than he is in the end, I do think that there is something, I don't know, spiritual about that. It's as if, every month, we baptize each other. And, believe me, the whole family feels better about the dog when he's clean.

Michael: Cleaning the dog as prayer. Uh huh.

Nick tries to say more. Michael moves past him.

Nick: He's a big dog!

Michael: Sarah?

Sarah: It's part of my family. I think we pray together to be closer. To each other. To God. To the world around us.

Michael: Would you call it a kind of intimacy?

Sarah: Yes. Definitely.

Michael: Sarah defines it as intimacy. And how would you define that?

Sarah: I don't know...getting, no, feeling, no, being closer to God...through an action or thought?

Kate stands right next to Sarah.

Michael: Yeah. Right. I like that...Kate?

Kate: I, I've, uh, just started working at the homeless shelter.

Michael: Yeah?

Kate: I change beds and check people in.

Michael: (whispers) Uh, Kate, this is about prayer?

Kate: Jesus was homeless.

Michael nods, getting it.

Michael: Yes. Right. Exactly. Gotcha.

The line of people moves. Getting closer to the band beginning.

Michael: Oh, hey, and we have one young man, kind of hiding over here. I think your name is Jim, isn't it?

Jim: It is. Jim.

Michael: How do you pray, Jim?

Jim: I, uh, I dance.

Michael: Dance?

Jim: Yes.

Michael: Ever heard of King David?

The band begins in the background.

Jim: No...Are they playing tonight—

Michael: He could cut a rug.

Jim: Really? Like this?

Jim starts dancing – some wild moves, all at once. He then stops. Smiles. Michael looks into the camera.

Michael: Amen.