Cast of Characters

ANNIE
LIZ
GABBY
WENDY
SARAH
HANNA
KATIE
SEAN
HOLLY
CAROLINE
TORI
ALEX
ZACHARY
BRIAN
PETER
DAN
SHANE
JOHN
LUKE
TRAVIS
NATE

Production Note

If you need to shorten *The Long View* for competition or other constraints, feel free to delete or shorten scenes or monologues. This version runs about an hour and five minutes; I have a shortened version we used for competition that runs about 55 minutes. Feel free to contact me if you'd like to see the cuts we made.

—Alan Haehnel

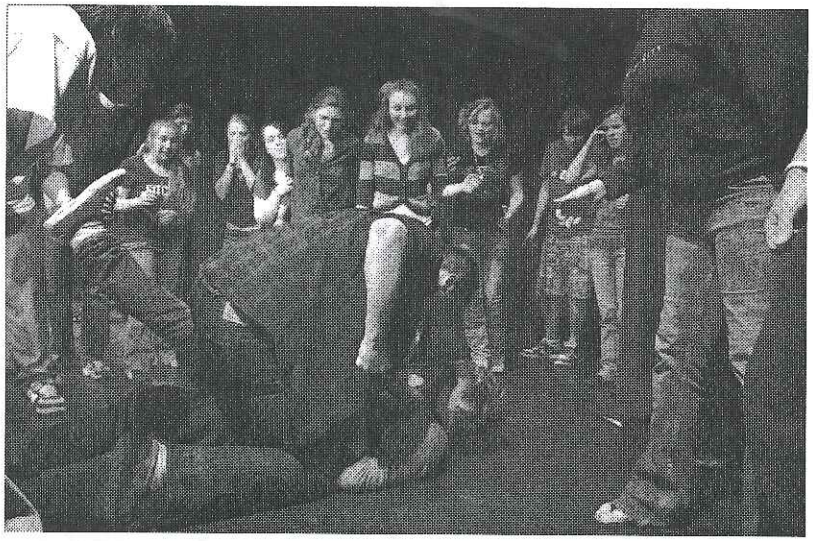
Acknowledgments

Hartford High School Drama presented the premiere of *The Long View* on February 12, 2009. It was directed by Alan Haehnel with the following cast:

ANNIE ..... Merrill Cameron
LIZ ..... Sally Tucker
GABBY ..... Rebecca White
WENDY ..... Erika Wetzel
SARAH ..... Jenna Bushor
HANNA ..... Ava Donaldson
KATIE ..... Tiffany Morelli
SEAN ..... Kristin Kozlowski
HOLLY ..... Mia Rocchio
CAROLINE ..... Rebecca Scelza
M.G. (Understudy to CAROLINE) ..... Manuel Grajeda
TORI ..... Devinne Gosselin
ALEX ..... Hunter Cox
ZACHARY ..... Teddy Gales
BRIAN ..... Aaron Locke
PETER ..... Brett Hausler
DAN ..... Noah Detzer
SHANE ..... Ben Pfister
JOHN ..... Carl Barr
LUKE ..... Travis Conrad
TRAVIS ..... Ethan Lawrence
NATE ..... Jake Haehnel

Lights ..... Niko Pearson

"The Long View" Song:
Lyrics co-written by Alan Haehnel and Rebecca Scelza
Music co-written by Rebecca Scelza and Jacob Haehnel
(For the tune, refer to the YouTube video "The Long View" with Rebecca Scelza.)



The Long View, Hartford High School, White River Junction, Vermont (2009). Photo: Devinne Gosselin

THE LONG VIEW
by Alan Haehnel

(Lights up to a bare stage. CAROLINE *sits against the proscenium arch, strumming the guitar and humming. After a few seconds,* HANNA, DAN, ANNIE, *and* LIZ *enter.)*

DAN. Oh, man that test was…

HANNA. It was so stupid! Why does she make the test questions so different from the homework questions?

ANNIE. I need chocolate.

HANNA. Homework is supposed to be training, right?

ANNIE. Hey, Caroline.

CAROLINE. Hey.

ANNIE. You guys, Caroline's rehearsing. We should go somewhere else.

CAROLINE. No, it's fine; I'm just… I'm not rehearsing anything. Stay.

HANNA. Cool. Listen, like I was saying—homework is supposed to be practice, isn't it?

DAN. Just eat. Forget about it.

HANNA. I can't eat.

ANNIE. If you've got chocolate, I'll eat it for you.

LIZ. I thought Mr. G. didn't want us having lunch out here.

ANNIE. There's no set; it's between shows. He doesn't care.

*(*NATE *and* HOLLY *enter quickly, with several others*—TORI, SEAN, JOHN, BRIAN, WENDY, *and* GABBY.*)*

GABBY. Get in there—go on, go on!

HOLLY. They won't look for us here.

BRIAN. I hope not.

NATE. Look, this is stupid. I'm not going to keep hiding from him.

HOLLY. You have to.

NATE. I am not afraid of him!

TORI. He should be.

LIZ. What are you guys doing?

DAN. What's going on?

JOHN. Travis Dunn—he's on a rampage, looking for Nate.

HANNA. Why?

SEAN. Why do you think?

HANNA. I have no idea.

GABBY. Uh, duh! Where have you been?

HANNA. *(Indicating* NATE *and* HOLLY:*)* Wait a minute—are you two going out now?

GABBY. All right, I have to ask again—where have you been?

HANNA. Shut up! I've been studying for a stupid Geometry test, how about that?

JOHN. They've been going out for a lot longer than you've been studying for the test.

NATE. I'm telling you, if he feels like he has to scream at me or whatever, fine. I just want to get it over with.

SEAN. Screaming isn't quite Travis's style.

GABBY. You're kind of forgetting something, right? Like that Travis specializes in beating the crap out of people?

NATE. I don't care! Look, I'm not going to pretend that we're not going out. He's going to have to deal with it.

HOLLY. He will. But I need to talk to him.

GABBY. Oh, right.

HOLLY. What?

GABBY. Travis Dunn? Talk?

SEAN. I think they call that an oxymoron.

HOLLY. He's not stupid. He's just...he's not dealing with this—with us—very well.

GABBY. Oh, I don't know why you'd say that. I mean, he only put a three-inch dent in my locker a minute ago.

*(*TRAVIS *enters with* KATIE, SARAH, SHANE, LUKE, ALEX, *and* PETER.*)*

TRAVIS. You going to keep running? You going to keep bad-mouthing me and running away, huh?

NATE. Bad-mouthing? What are you...?

TRAVIS *(To* PETER:*)* Watch the door.

PETER. Got it.

TRAVIS. You going to keep running away or are you ready to man up?

HOLLY. Travis, stop.

TRAVIS. Oh, no, see, I'm not the one that needed to stop anything, remember? You're the one who stopped things. You're the one!

NATE. Hey, you need to cool it.

TRAVIS. Oh, I'll cool it, all right. Just as soon as I break you in half I'll cool it.

NATE. Look, it doesn't have to be like this.

*(*TRAVIS *pushes him.)*

TRAVIS. Maybe I think it does have to be just like this!

*(*ZACHARY *enters and watches. No one notices him.)*

HANNA. Hey, you know something? Some of us just came here to eat some lunch and chill out.

SHANE. Just shut up and leave, then.

HANNA. No, no, no—we were here first.

SARAH. Get lost, you stuck up witch!

NATE. Stop! This isn't some gang war!

TRAVIS. No, it's not. It's a you-and-me thing.

NATE. Yeah, so let's just the two of us settle it, alone, some other place.

TRAVIS. Oh, no, that just means you want more time to run.

HOLLY. Travis, please stop. What do you think you're going to accomplish? You're just going to get in trouble; you're going to get us all in trouble. But it's not going to get me back.

TRAVIS. Huh. Well, guess what? Maybe I'm not interested anymore. Maybe I've figured out what a lying, two-timing...thing you are. Maybe I'd rather be with a pig than you. Maybe I'd rather go out with some ugly, diseased...

*(*NATE *tackles* TRAVIS. *They go sprawling, brawling around, lots of noise and commotion.)*

PETER. *(Entering:)* Hey! Hey! Teacher's coming! Come on!

(They all exit. NATE, *with* HOLLY *comforting him, holds his nose as if it's bleeding. After several seconds with a clear, empty stage,* WENDY *enters.)*

WENDY. I hated it. The fight. It happened during lunch, and then right after that, I had to go to Bio., and I had a test. I failed it. I couldn't...get it to matter. Their faces, all angry and twisted up... that's all I could...

All I wanted to do was get home. When school finally got over and I finally got on the bus, I kept trying to figure out why, why was I so bothered by the whole thing? I mean, it was a fight. Between Travis and Nate. I mean, you say it, right? You say Travis and Nate had a fight. Fine. Big deal. People fight. People...do that. So why did I feel so... You know that saying, that you're "beside yourself"? I don't know where that came from, but sitting there on the bus, on the way home, I felt...that. Or, something like it, like being apart from myself. It broke me up, seeing Travis and Nate like that. See, that's another saying: "broken up." "She was all broken up by the death of her..." fill in the blank—dog or uncle or whatever. I just had this sense of not being...together. Humpty Dumpty, you know, I guess. Broken. The fight broke something, and nobody even touched me.

(WENDY *exits as* HANNA *enters.)*

HANNA. I want life to be fair. Is that so much to ask?

That day...that was a very bad day for me, all things considered. My brother ate the last of the Cocoa Puffs and drank the last of the milk at breakfast—both unfair events because I was the one who went to the store and bought those items when they ran out the last time. First period, Mr. Collesco marked me tardy, which, I admit, I was, but so was Rebecca Halloren, even more tardy than I was, but Mr. Collesco happened not to be looking when she snuck in, so she didn't get marked late. And then, unfairness to top all unfairness, Ms. Moore, that lovely Geometry teacher of mine, decided that the questions on this extremely-heavily-weighted test she invented should have nothing to do with the homework we had been doing for the past two weeks leading up to said test! Unfairness bothers me.

So normally, if some boy Bozo—and generally, all boys are Bozos—decided he wanted to fight some other boy Bozo, and the first Bozo was clearly more qualified to pound the stuffing out of the second Bozo—in other words, if the match of the Bozos was completely unfair—normally, I would not have cared. But that day, I could not keep myself from taking a stand, to try to diminish, just slightly, the lack of equity in my world. And what did I get for my efforts? Sarah Dobson—whose nose rarely drops below an upraised angle of 120 degrees (I am very good at Geometry, by the way)—Sarah chooses to call me a stuck up witch! And I didn't even get a chance to pull her hair out! *(Whispered:)* Unfair.

(HANNA *exits as* NATE *enters, riding a skateboard.)*

NATE. I blew it. I just plain completely lost it. And the thing that is so maddening is that...there was my one chance, to test my convictions. I mean, how many times have I cited these anti-violence quotes? "Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding."—Albert Einstein. "Anyone who has proclaimed violence his method inexorably must choose lying as his principle." —Alexander Solzhenitsyn. "Make love, not war." —Some hippy. So there I was, facing my own little war. What did I do? Talk it out? Turn the other cheek? No! I hit him first. I started it.

But the thing that took me so much by surprise was that, when Travis was insulting not me, but her—Holly, my first girlfriend—I lost it. My philosophy has always been that human beings should have the capacity to rise above pettiness and avoid violence. But what I felt, that need to protect both my girlfriend and my pride, that didn't feel petty. It felt just about...inevitable. So now, I'm having to re-think this whole noble human being idea. Now, I just don't know.

(NATE *exits.* LUKE *and* ALEX *enter, excitedly sparring.)*

LUKE. Yes! Waa-hoo! I love a fight!

ALEX. Dude, who doesn't?

LUKE. No kidding. Nothing like it. Nothing in the world like it. Right? Am I right?

ALEX. Dead on, man.

LUKE. Like, school. Waste of time.

ALEX. Total waste.

LUKE. You're bored to death, and then, next thing you know, here comes Travis, ripping, ready to go.

ALEX. Let's get ready to rumble!

LUKE. All the sudden, the day has something to it.

ALEX. Some meat to it!

LUKE. Yeah! Meat on the bones, baby!

ALEX. *(Playing air guitar:)* Get 'er done!

LUKE. Here's the thing. I ain't gonna lie. That fight yesterday, with Travis and that kid, that Nate kid?

ALEX. Fair to poor, hate to say.

LUKE. Poor to awful. Because, like, that Nate kid, he got in a cheap shot, right? I mean, by the time Travis got rolling, the thing was over 'cause a teacher was coming. If he'd a had another...

ALEX. 15 seconds. In a fight, that's a long time.

LUKE. Oh, yeah. You got a watch on you, dude?

ALEX. Yeah.

LUKE. Let's show 'em 15 seconds.

ALEX. Okay, okay, here we go. Go!

LUKE. 15 seconds, Travis would've had time to get back up, and then he would've started whaling on him. *(Punching and kicking:)* Bang, bang, bang, bang, oo, oo, pow, pow, pow! I mean, that Nate kid, he didn't have nothing! A shot to the face, he would've been down, a kick to the ribs, he would've been curled up like road kill!

ALEX. 15! That's time.

LUKE. See what I mean?

ALEX. No kidding. Plenty of time.

LUKE. Yeah. But you know something, it wasn't much of a fight, but still, that feeling—you know?

ALEX. Oh, yeah.

LUKE. That feeling when you see it coming, when you just know somebody's gonna get it...

ALEX. It's a rush!

LUKE. Sweetest rush in the world.

ALEX. Love a fight!

LUKE. Know what they should set up in the gym? And then they wouldn't have to worry about me being late ever again?

ALEX. What's that?

LUKE. An Octagon, dude—just one big, beautiful steel cage.

ALEX. Ultimate Fighter!

(He plays another lick on the air guitar.)

LUKE. Yeah. Hey, you hungry?

ALEX. I'm hungry.

LUKE. Let's get some foodage.

*(*LUKE *and* ALEX *enter as* CAROLINE *enters with her guitar.)*

CAROLINE. I don't like to talk to people very often, one on one. I guess I'm shy. That's the label I get. The thing is, though, I have a lot to share, but I like to do it with this. *(She pats her guitar.)* I like to... translate my thoughts into songs and tell the world that way. People think it's weird, I guess, that I'm always trying to find places to perform—talent shows, coffee shops—I could even see myself singing in the subway down in Boston. I would like that. They think it's weird that I like to perform, but I'm no good at just striking up a conversation. Maybe it is weird, but, oh, well: It's me.

I've been thinking a lot about the fight. It comes up in my dreams—nightmares, really—so I know it's bothering me. So I go to my therapist *(Referring to the guitar:)* and we try to figure it out together. *(She strums a bit, then sings:)* "Whatever happened, whatever brought them to this place?" *(Spoken:)* It takes a long time, usually. We go down so many different paths before we can get the matter settled. But then, when we do, when I can sing about it...the nightmares go away.

*(*CAROLINE *stays onstage, working on her song. She often plays underneath the other scenes and monologues.* TRAVIS *enters.)*

TRAVIS. I didn't mean it, when I said about how I'd rather go out with a pig than her. I didn't mean it. That sounds so stupid. It's what a five-year-old says when he does something wrong. "I didn't meant to." But this isn't like I just spilled my oatmeal or something. When I was telling her that, I was hating myself, even right while I said it, because I knew it was a complete lie. I wanted to say... I wanted to tell her, "Holly, I can't be without you! I love you more than I've ever loved anything or anyone." I wanted to say, "Please, please, please take me back."

But I couldn't. I couldn't because she finished it, right then and there, in front of everybody. She said, no matter what I did, I wasn't going to get her back. I wish she had just stabbed me right in the gut right then. I didn't know what to do, when she said that. It hurt so bad.

So I did what I always do. I got mad. And I said things that I don't believe. And the next thing you know, that kid—that Nate—he was on me and I was trying to punch his face in. But that's not what I wanted, either. It was just...something to do. When you can't possibly get what you really want, you just get mad. You just punch things. And all the time you're doing it...it doesn't help. Because the thing you really want just keeps getting farther and farther away. You feel like you're drowning—flailing around, screaming—but the boat, the one thing that can save you...it's gone. She was gone.

*(*TRAVIS *exits;* WENDY *enters.)*

WENDY. So I got home, at last, and I said hi to my mom and she said, "Sh, the baby's sleeping." My brother, Tad—he was eight months old. I didn't know what to do with myself. I thought about talking to my mother, but she was sitting in the chair with her eyes closed, trying to get a break while Tad was asleep. I was so restless!

I walked past Tad's room. The door was open just a crack, and I saw him lying in the crib. He wasn't asleep. He was just lying there, looking up at the mobile hanging from the ceiling, the one with the tiny stuffed clowns on it. It was swinging gently. I pushed the door open just a bit more, and I crawled into the room. Tad never saw me. I just sat in the middle of the room, looking at my little brother. Eight months old. Perfectly content, just playing with his toes, wiggling his fingers. I felt myself calming down, coming back together. The thought came to me: All of us—every one of us at that fight—we were all like this once.

(Everyone in the cast comes out and lies down on his or her back, acting like Wendy's description of Tad at eight months.)

We were all children. Innocent. Adored by our brothers and sisters and parents. We were all fascinated by shapes and textures and sensations around us. That was our world, our whole world! And we all had no idea that life could get so complicated.

I watched Tad until he fell asleep. His motions got slower and slower. Then his breathing got really heavy and regular. Right on the floor, in the middle of the room, I curled up and took a nap, too. That's where my mother found us an hour later, Tad in his crib, me on the floor. She said she didn't know which of us looked younger.

*(*CAROLINE *plays a gentle tune on her guitar as everyone settles down, as if falling asleep for a nap. After several seconds,* GABBY *sits up.)*

GABBY. I spoke my first word when I was eight months old. I said, "Mom."

*(*GABBY *exits.* TRAVIS *rises, then exits after his line. The rest of the actors follow the same pattern.)*

TRAVIS. My first word, when I was 13 months old, was "yucky."

ZACHARY. Ball.

SARAH. No.

NATE. Mama.

HANNA. Poop.

LIZ. Dadda.

ANNIE. Cow.

LUKE. Nose.

HOLLY. Meow.

TORI. Yay!

SHANE. Daddy.

SEAN. Doggy.

BRIAN. Hot.

PETER. Choo-choo.

DAN. Da.

WENDY. Kitty.

JOHN. Mama.

ALEX. Eye.

KATIE. No-no!

*(*KATIE *exits.* CAROLINE *finishes her lullaby.* PETER *enters excitedly.)*

PETER. Watch the door. Watch the door. After running after this Nate guy for him, helping him take care of his latest...quest for revenge, right, he wants me to watch the damned door! You know that invisible ink stuff? You know what somebody wrote on me in invisible ink and everybody can see it but me? Here's the message: "Let me be your slave." It's on me, somewhere, right? 'Cause everybody certainly treats me like that. And what do I say? Sure, I say. Watch the door? I'm on it. Feed the cat. 10-4. Pull the pin out of this grenade, why don't you, and then sit on it for a while. I'd love to, I tell 'em! One of these days, I'd like to... "Watch your own damned door!" I should've said. But I never do. I missed the whole fight because I was such a wimp, right, and I watched the door, and the whole time I'm thinking, one of these days...!

Listen, don't tell anybody, okay? There was never any teacher. I just ...I said there was because... Well, because if I'm going to be stuck watching the door, and if I don't have any power in this world, I'm going to invent a teacher and I'm going to say he's coming and I'm going to send everybody running just so I can do something. Something. And now I feel like an idiot.

*(*PETER *exits;* GABBY *enters.)*

GABBY. Shane was there, at the fight. We've been neighbors all our lives, just three houses away from each other. I hardly ever see him

now; we don't talk. I wonder if he remembers, though, when we were, like, eight years old. It was the first time I ever tried to confide in a boy.

SHANE. Hey, Flabby Gabby. Flabby Gabby. That's a tongue twister.

GABBY. Why don't you just go away, okay, Shane?

SHANE. Why? I thought we were going sledding.

GABBY. No.

SHANE. Come on! I won't call you Flabby Gabby anymore. And you can ride the sled without the hole in it, the blue one. It goes really fast. You wanna know my secret? I put butter on the bottom of it. I used a whole stick.

GABBY. No, thanks.

SHANE. You know how slippery a hot ear of corn is, with butter on it? You know how it won't stay on your plate? That's how slippery that sled is, and the hill is like a plate. Zoom-a!

GABBY. Well, you go use it.

SHANE. Come on!

GABBY. Shane, stop.

SHANE. What do you want to do, talk?

GABBY. Maybe.

SHANE. And then can we go sledding?

GABBY. Maybe.

SHANE. So talk.

GABBY. I just don't get why...

SHANE. Why what?

GABBY. Why people have to fight.

SHANE. Like who?

GABBY. Like...my mom and dad.

SHANE. My parents are divorced. They just fight on the phone.

GABBY. It's so dumb. I mean, like, Miss Nostrand says to us kids, "Now, no fighting! You can find better ways to take care of your disagreements, can't you? You're old enough now." Well, my parents are way older than we are! So, like, shouldn't they know better?

SHANE. Probably. Maybe. I don't know!

GABBY. Anyway, thanks for talking.

*(*GABBY *puts her hand on* SHANE's *arm. He looks at it for a moment, then suddenly rises.)*

SHANE. Oh!

GABBY. What?

SHANE. I just thought of something.

GABBY. What?

SHANE. What if my mother counts the butter sticks in the fridge and finds out one is missing?

GABBY. I don't think she's going to figure out you took it.

SHANE. She probably will.

GABBY. Why?

SHANE. 'Cause I did it before, so she might check.

GABBY. Oh. *(Looking off in the distance:)* The dog's eating your sled.

SHANE. It's the butter! *(Running off.)* Get away from there! Go on! Stop eating it, you rotten mutt!

GABBY. I wonder if he remembers. Probably not.

*(*GABBY *exits;* TORI *enters.)*

TORI. That fight wasn't bad, was it? It was...enjoyable, particularly for me because I created it.

I call what I do social engineering.

I'm not precisely sure why I chose them. The big difference in status and intelligence didn't bother me particularly. But Travis—he was obviously so incredibly happy with her. It was sickening, really, very Hallmark-y; it needed to end.

It didn't take all that much, really—just a couple well-placed rumors about Travis getting drunk and ending up in the back seat of his car with Shelly Grossman. Complete fabrication, but, these days especially, truth is a matter of media coverage, not facts.

But here's the nice part—after the two of them were done, when I saw just how depressed Travis was—I thought, I could get some more mileage out of this. So one day I dropped a note on the floor, right where Holly would see it. So she's reading all this drivel I made up until, lo and behold, she sees her very own name in a single line that went—now how did I phrase it?—something like, "So, yeah, I heard that Nate thinks Holly is pretty cute. They'd make a nice couple, dontcha think?" So I plant the seed. Then, just to help cinch the deal,

I switched a couple partners in Bio., got the two of them together dissecting a baby pig. Nothing like scissors and the smell of formaldehyde to spark a romance. Meanwhile, I'm planting a few anonymous posts on Travis's Facebook page: "Dude, what happened with Holly and you?" and "Yo, Travis, Nate's been trash-talking you."

I began my work approximately 15 days ago and saw it come to fruition this afternoon. It wasn't my best project. I really would've liked to see Travis end up being taken away in a cop car. But it wasn't bad, overall. I give it a one thumb up.

Oh, by the way, I don't hate any of these people, no more than I would hate, say, pawns on a chess board. They're going to ride the roller coaster of life anyway, with or without my engineering. This way, though, they provide me entertainment. That's really the measure of success, isn't it? How many hours of the day you spend entertained.

*(*TORI *exits;* SEAN *enters.)*

SEAN. So, we go to band together, me and Holly, every day, at 8:45. About a month into school, what happens one day when we're walking through the courtyard? This moron named Travis Dunn decides he's going to hang out the window and say to Holly…

TRAVIS. *(Entering:)* Hey, what's your name?

SEAN. And I tell her, Just keep walking. Ignore him. He's an idiot. So, next day…

TRAVIS. Hey, you—you, in the green sweater, what's your name, anyway?

SEAN. Don't acknowledge him.

HOLLY. Who is he?

SEAN. A Certified Redneck Jerk.

HOLLY. What's his problem?

SEAN. He probably likes your butt, and he wants to take you to a Monster Truck rally where he can ply you with alcohol and have his way with you. Don't even look at him.

HOLLY. I won't, I won't.

SEAN. She lied, she lied.

TRAVIS. *(Sing-song:)* I see you! I'm going to find out your name.

HOLLY. He doesn't give up, does he?

SEAN. Yeah—rabies does that woodchucks, makes them very stubborn. But she's starting to smile, Holly is, before she even gets to the courtyard. She's interested! And then, one day, she does the worst possible thing…

TRAVIS. So, here's the thing—do you even have a name?

HOLLY. Depends who's asking.

SEAN. She talks to it! She flirtatiously drops that little line just before making her exit. I stopped her that day. Holly, I said.

HOLLY. Yeah?

SEAN. Why did you just acknowledge that pile of barf in the courtyard?

HOLLY. I don't know.

SEAN. Yes, you do know. Now, listen, I can understand if you're a little bored with your life, but you do not, I repeat, do not want to cure any of your ills by flirting with Travis Dunn.

HOLLY. Who says I was flirting?

SEAN. I say, and I'm an expert. Cut it out. Listen, Travis Dunn is poison, Holly—poison. He has, as they say, anger issues, and, if you think he might be some frog that just needs to be saved by your gentle kiss, consider this: He's had plenty of kisses and word has it he does not turn into a prince; he turns into one very large and very ugly horny toad.

HOLLY. Who is standing right behind you.

SEAN. No, he's not.

HOLLY. Uh, yeah.

SEAN. Uh…and sure enough, I turned around, and there it was. I left. I abandoned Holly to the Great Satan and I knew she was going to keep flirting with him and I knew she would probably end up giving birth to his devil spawn, but I also knew there was probably nothing I could do it about it. I just went to band.

HOLLY. So.

TRAVIS. So.

HOLLY. I have to go.

TRAVIS. Mm-hm.

HOLLY. And my name is Holly.

TRAVIS. Mm-hm.

HOLLY. So you can stop yelling out the window every day now.

TRAVIS. Mm-hm.

HOLLY. Yeah. Good-bye.

TRAVIS. Just so you know, I'll probably come up with another reason to yell out the window to you.

HOLLY. Really?

TRAVIS. Yeah. Like, maybe I'll say, Hey, Holly, what's your number? Or maybe, Hey, Holly, you want to hang out some time?

HOLLY. Mm-hm. See you.

TRAVIS. One other thing. Your friend, there—she just might be right about me.

*(*TRAVIS *and* HOLLY *exit;* KATIE *enters.)*

KATIE. So I usually don't take this one way home, up past the VA, because I don't like the way the road twists? For some reason, I feel like I'm going to tip over. Except, the afternoon after the fight, I took it because I was talking to Shelly Nickerson after school, telling her about what happened, and we talked too long and she ended up missing her bus so I ended up taking her to her house.

So anyway, I took the curvy-tippy road near the VA because that's the quickest way home from Shelly's house, and I was going slow because I did not want to have that tipping over sensation, you know? And I'm right next to the entrance to the VA when this car comes right out in front of me! There was no way I could have missed it. It was definitely the other guy's fault. Actually, it wasn't a guy; it was an old woman with a guy in the passenger's seat. He never got out of the car. He had one of those oxygen things hooked up to his face.

But this lady, she was like, Ooo, and she was all shaky and kept saying she was sorry, are you hurt, are you hurt? I mean, between me going so slow because of the curvy-twisty road and she going so slow because she was, like, a hundred and twelve, it's not like we hit each other going more than four miles an hour, so of course I was okay. But you know what? You know what that lady said to me when we were waiting for the police to come? She, like, reached out and she held my arm, up here, and she looked right at me and she said, seriously, like I even thought she might cry, she said, "Honey, don't ever get old." And I told her I wasn't really planning on it. And then she said, "Neither was I." And that kind of got me, you know?

*(*KATIE *exits as* DAN *enters.)*

DAN. The last words I will speak before I die, at age 84, will be, "No."

*(*DAN *walks off. The rest of the cast walks across the stage, turning briefly to state their "last words.")*

ANNIE. My final words will be, "You'll be all right."

WENDY. Shut the door; you'll let flies in.

TRAVIS. I'm cold.

LIZ. Turn down the radio and watch where you're driving.

GABBY. This is ridiculous.

BRIAN. Yes.

ZACHARY. I love you.

SHANE. Where's my muffin?

HOLLY. Take care of your father.

LUKE. I'm coming, Jesus.

PETER. Oh, that hurts.

SARAH. I'm tired.

ALEX. Nose.

JOHN. Right over there.

KATIE. Wisconsin.

HANNA. Let me go, Honey.

TORI. I can't taste anything.

NATE. Peace, peace, peace.

SEAN. I'll write you when I get there.

*(*SEAN *exits;* ZACHARY *enters.)*

ZACHARY. Um...I told my teacher I had to go to the bathroom. I don't do that much 'cause I once...a lot of kids like to kind of pick on me, and in the bathroom one time I, uh, they made me...drink some. I puked it up. But I had to go that day. I mean, I had to leave because I made up my mind. I had the bottle from my mother's medicine cabinet that she told me never to get into 'cause it could... But I heard them yelling in where the stage is, so I had the bottle but I left it in the bathroom so I could go and see what they was yelling about. They was fighting, some of them boys that, um, liked to pick on me. They picked on me...and I know it was because I'm stupid and it ain't right that they should have to...have me around. So I decided. But I left the bottle of my mother's pills in the bathroom 'cause I wanted to see what they was yelling about and then I was going to go back and...and eat 'em. But you know, they was yelling at each

other, not at me. That one kid, uh, Nate—he's with that girl, Holly, all the time, and she's so pretty and he's... I never thought a kid like that could get...they was...they was picking on him! They was! They was picking on...

And then the fight, it got over and I went back in the bathroom and I got my mother's pills and I took 'em to the nurse and I walked right into her office and I handed them to the nurse and I said I weren't supposed to have 'em. And she talked to me about why I had 'em. We talk a lot now, her and me. It's better. I'm glad I seen 'em fight. I'm glad I seen 'em.

(ZACHARY *exits;* PETER *enters.)*

PETER. When I am 38 years old, my boss is going to tell me I have to work another weekend, the third one in a month, even though nobody else in the company has ever had to work more than one weekend a month. I never say no, right? I roll over for everybody and everything. But by the time I am 38 years old and I have worked at this same rotten job for seven and one half years, I will have saved enough money to be able to say to my boss when he asks me, "Hey, I need you to work next weekend," I'm going to tell him, "Nope. Can't." They will be the sweetest words I have ever said. And the look on that fat jerk boss's face will be the sweetest look I have ever seen. And then I will say, "And by the way, I won't be in tomorrow." And that walk out that office door will be the sweetest walk I will ever take.

(PETER *exits;* HOLLY *enters.)*

HOLLY. I think the way a relationship ends might say a lot about what it was...made of, you know? My head was always clear with Nate. I could reason. The night we broke up, I had it all figured out. I told him we were probably not meant to be boyfriend and girlfriend, but we just sort of fell into that role because the situation was right. I just needed someone to help me not feel so lonely.

NATE. *(Entering:)* I'm glad I was there for you. I'm still here for you.

HOLLY. Thank you. But I'm better now. And I'm not doing anything for you. I'm a burden.

NATE. No, that's not true.

HOLLY. I know you'd rather be with your friends.

NATE. I spend time with them.

HOLLY. But you feel guilty because you think you should be spending it with me. Be honest.

NATE. Well, sort of...

HOLLY. But then, when you have to spend time with me, you'd rather be with them.

NATE. Holly.

HOLLY. Honesty.

NATE. I...I want to want to be with you more.

HOLLY. You want to want to?

NATE. I'm sorry. It's just...

HOLLY. The feeling's mutual, Nate.

NATE. It is?

HOLLY. Yeah. It's like, we're a great couple—everybody says so. And we would be except...

NATE. We're not.

HOLLY. Yeah.

NATE. So, then, is this...? Are we...?

HOLLY. I think it would be the best thing.

(NATE *goes to leave.)*

NATE. For the record, you were a great first girlfriend.

HOLLY. Thanks.

(NATE *leaves.)*

See? Can you even call that a breakup? It was more of a...fade-out. But with Travis...it wasn't about words. And it certainly wasn't about reason.

(TRAVIS *screams as he enters.)*

TRAVIS. You can't do this! Why are you doing this?

HOLLY. Travis...I just...I...

TRAVIS. Don't you know that I love you?

HOLLY. Yes! I know, but...

TRAVIS. Don't tell me you believe that crap about me and Shelly? Is that what you think, that I cheated on you?

HOLLY. Travis, it's complicated!

TRAVIS. Do you?

HOLLY. I don't know! I don't know!

(TRAVIS *roars again, exits.)*

HOLLY. And I didn't know. I couldn't put it into words, why I needed to end it with Travis. He could be so wonderful. So spontaneous and fun and romantic. One night, just after it had snowed, he bought me three dozen red roses, and he spread them out on the lawn below my window. They froze. I couldn't even put them in a vase. He said he just wanted me to wake up and see how beautiful they were, the red against the white.

But he was also so incredibly needy. If I didn't call him three times a day, he got...agitated. He constantly needed to know that I wasn't going to leave him. I loved him! I loved him deeply! But one day, I saw this flag that had been left out in the weather. It was all tattered, flapping like mad. And I thought, somebody needs to bring that flag in. And I realized, going out with Travis, I felt just like that flag. I couldn't keep going. So when I heard this story about him and Shelly, even though I doubted it was true, I used it as a way to...

It took days to break up with him. Hours on the phone, gallons of tears. He punched walls, he threatened suicide, he drove his car up and down my street all night. He said I was his world. I was ending his world. I was a wreck.

SEAN. *(Entering:)* Girl, you are a wreck.

HOLLY. Sean, I don't know what to do. What am I supposed to do?

SEAN. Well, first, you're supposed to tell me I was right all along about that thug. Was I right?

HOLLY. He can be so sweet.

SEAN. Yeah, I had a sweet cat like that once. Liked to make nice claw marks down the side of my face. Lovely animal. My father ran it over with the lawn tractor.

HOLLY. He's never been bad to me.

SEAN. Oh, except for the cheating thing. But you're right; he was just being kind, giving you a night off.

HOLLY. I don't even think he did it.

TRAVIS. *(Off stage:)* Holly! Holly!

HOLLY. I should go to him.

SEAN. No!

HOLLY. His whole life he's been let down by the people he loves!

SEAN. Oh, no, no—none of this savior stuff. He's on his own to figure out his life.

TRAVIS. *(Off stage:)* Holly!

SEAN. She moved to Acapulco! Go away!

TRAVIS. *(Off stage:)* Tell her to come down!

SEAN. Do the words restraining order mean anything to you, moron?

TRAVIS. *(Off stage:)* Holly! Holly!

HOLLY. I can't take it. I can't, I can't, I can't!

SEAN. I'm calling 9-1-1, Travis—I'm dialing it right now!

TRAVIS. *(Off stage:)* I love her!

SEAN. Then leave her alone!

TRAVIS. *(Off stage:)* Holly! Holly!

HOLLY. I can't, I can't. What am I going to do?

SEAN. You're going to get over it. He's going to stop screaming; you're going to stop crying; and the world is going to keep spinning. It'll be okay.

TRAVIS. *(Offstage:)* Holly! Holly!

SEAN. *(Exiting:)* Would you shut up, already?

HOLLY. She was right. But for a long, long time—even past the fight when I finally told Travis, flat out, in public, he was never going to get me back—I still felt like that ragged flag that somebody needed to take in.

*(*HOLLY *exits;* DAN *enters.)*

DAN. 36 years from now, I will be 52 years old, nearing retirement from the post office. I will be sitting on the couch in my living room. I will have gathered my wife and my children in the room with me. We will all watch the television, unbelieving, for hours, as the news broadcasters unfold the horrific details. The numbers will climb—500,000; 600,000; 700,000. Within six months, the figure will climb to over a million. Human beings. Families. Dead. Ten times the population of the town we will live in...gone. All because a tiny group of people will believe that their definition of good and evil justifies unprecedented slaughter. 36 years from now, when I am 52 years old, I will believe I am witnessing the end of the world.

*(*DAN *exits;* BRIAN *and* LIZ *enter.)*

BRIAN. 26 years from now, I will be 42 years old, and I will have a 12-year-old daughter named Karen. I will get a call from her school.

LIZ. 17 years from now, I will be 31 years old, and I will have a 12-year-old son named Rob. I will get a call from his school.

BRIAN and LIZ. The principal will tell me, "Your son/daughter has been involved in a fight. You need to come get her/him." When Karen/Rob gets in the car, I will ask him/her what happened.

BRIAN. Karen will tell me, "It wasn't my fault! This stupid girl just came up to me and starting hitting me all the sudden, for no reason."

LIZ. Rob will tell me, "I just couldn't take it anymore. Josh has been bugging me all year; he had it coming."

BRIAN and LIZ. I will pull the car over, and I will turn to her/him, and I will say, "Now, you need to listen to me."

BRIAN. "I don't care what the reason is, or if there isn't any reason at all. Your job, when it comes to a fight, is to walk away if you can, run away if you must, but never, never, never let someone say you were a part of it. Do you understand me?"

LIZ. "Maybe I shouldn't say this, but I'm proud of you. That Josh has been a pain, and knowing his mother, I can see just where he got it. I hope you beat him good, and I don't care how long your suspension is. Sometimes, a situation calls for a fight; there's just no way around it. So good for you."

BRIAN. I will ground her for a week.

LIZ. I will buy him a new video game.

BRIAN and LIZ. I will feel...

BRIAN. Sick about it and wonder where I went wrong.

LIZ. Great about it and be glad I raised him right.

*(*BRIAN *and* LIZ *exit;* ZACHARY *enters.)*

ZACHARY. Next year, I will tell my uncle I ain't going to school no more, but he will tell me I just need some special help. My uncle will help me go to a different school where I ain't so weird and I don't get picked on no more. By the time I'm 18, I'll find out I like computers a whole lot and I'm good at 'em. I will graduate from college at 21; several software companies will try to recruit me, and I will work for the one that shows the most promise in the field of nano-computing. At 29, my talents will draw the attention of the CIA. While working for the government, I will develop several innovations that radically change the nature of intelligence-gathering. Though over a million will die in the largest terrorist attack ever executed, my insights will save millions more by thwarting an even larger plan. When I am 67 years old, I will be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

*(*ZACHARY *exits;* LUKE *enters.)*

LUKE. So, right, two days after the fight, I'm driving my truck and old Travis is sitting in the passenger seat and I had just been telling him about how I thought he would've pounded the crap out of Nate if he'd of just had, like 15 more seconds...

TRAVIS. *(Entering:)* It was two days after the fight and I was driving in Luke's truck. He was going on and on about the fight, but all I could think about was Holly.

NATE. *(Entering on skateboard:)* It was two days after the fight. I took my board and headed out for a long ride, the only thing that seems to clear my head.

LUKE. And there he was! Nate, riding that stupid skateboard thing. What a beautiful, unbelievable set-up for the perfect pounding! I pulled up on the sidewalk, right in front of him. The blood's pumping like crazy. If he makes a break for it, I am ready to run him down.

NATE. I thought, who is this, practically running me over?

LUKE. But he didn't go anywhere! He just stood there, the old deer in the headlights. Except it was daytime and I didn't have my headlights on, but you know what I mean. And I'm saying to Travis...

TRAVIS. Luke's yelling to me, "There he is! There he is! We've got him now!"

NATE. I saw who it was. I thought of trying to get away, but I decided, no—if now's the time, now's the time. Travis got out of the truck.

TRAVIS. I told Luke to shut up and stay in the truck. I got out.

LUKE. Travis told me he wanted to deal with it on his own. I didn't mind, because I figured I was about to see one beautiful show! Yes!

TRAVIS. Part of me wanted to pound him into the pavement, to just keep punching and punching until there was nothing left.

LUKE. Hit him! Hit him! Man, I wanted to see some blood!

NATE. Thoughts raced through my brain. I wanted to tell him that fighting wasn't the way to solve any problems, that, if we were civilized people, we could...

TRAVIS. But then I thought, "What good would it do?"

NATE. That we had practically a moral responsibility to work out our problems in some non-barbaric way, that we needed to evolve as a race...

LUKE. I was dying! Travis was just standing there, looking at Nate—I mean, they were just looking at each other, for the longest time! Hit the sucker! Punch him in the face!

NATE. That we were something more than just a couple of elks or walruses punching at each other, locking horns or tusks or whatever it might be, that we were human beings, for God's sake, and we could rise above the mere animal desire to have a territory and to fight over who would have the chance to mate!

TRAVIS. No matter who I punched, I wasn't getting her back. And if I beat him up, that would only take her farther away from me.

NATE. And so I finally said, "Hey, listen!" And he said…

TRAVIS. No, you listen. You listen.

LUKE. Oh, what, are we having a little chat now? Come on!

NATE. And then all my fancy justifications just flew from my head and I could only think, I'm about to get really hurt.

LUKE. Somebody do something.

NATE. But he didn't punch me. He took a step closer. I tried not to back away.

LUKE. Okay, that's it. Do it!

NATE. He looked me in the eye for a long moment, and then he totally surprised me. He said…

TRAVIS. Take care of her.

NATE. What?

LUKE. What's he saying?

TRAVIS. You don't deserve her, but neither do I. You just got lucky. Do you understand that?

NATE. I…yeah, okay. I got…

TRAVIS. Take care of her.

NATE. I will.

TRAVIS. You better.

NATE. I will. He stared at me, right in the eyes, as if he was checking to be certain I was telling the truth.

LUKE. Oh, no. Don't tell me.

NATE. I guess he saw what he was looking for. He just said…

TRAVIS. Good.

NATE. And then he left, without so much as taking a swing at me. He got back in the truck with his buddy, and he left.

LUKE. He got in the truck. I knew he didn't want to say anything, but I couldn't help it. I had to say it: What the heck was that? What did I just see, huh? And I wanted to scream at him; I wanted to call him the yellowest son of a… But it wasn't going to make a bit of difference, not with Travis. So I drove away.

TRAVIS. I never spoke to him again.

NATE. *(Simultaneous with* TRAVIS's *line:)* He never spoke to me again.

LUKE. Complete waste of time.

*(*TRAVIS *and* LUKE *exit.)*

NATE. 31 years from now, I will create a blog that I hope will someday be successful enough to let me quit my job as manager of an assisted-living facility. It will be approaching Father's Day, and I will want to write an appropriate entry. My own father will have died two years before. A surprising thing will happen as I brainstorm about the essay I want to publish. I'll be trying to recall a time when my father sat me down to give me advice about life, and I won't be able to remember a single incident. The odd thing, though, is when I will close my eyes and try to envision me, the son, having a face-to-face with my father, I will remember instead a boy from high school, the only boy I ever fought with. I will remember him looking me in the eye and telling me, "Take care of her." The "her," I'll be able to recall, was Holly Munsy, my first real girlfriend. The boy, though…I won't be able to remember his name. I will only remember his eyes boring into mine, and the strange exchange of duty that passed between us. The irony will strike me, and I will write about it. The final line of the essay will read, "Flesh-and-blood fathers are temporal, I suppose, but the principle of fatherhood can show up anywhere, even in a memory of an old high school nemesis."

*(*NATE *exits;* ANNIE *enters.)*

ANNIE. I will eat chocolate every day for the rest of my life, which will last 101 years. To celebrate my 97th birthday, I will eat ½ a chocolate cake with chocolate icing all by myself. And, despite the discouragement of my children, grand-children and great-grandchildren; and despite the encouragement of my fourth husband—despite all these people telling me I shouldn't or I should do it, to celebrate my 97th birthday, I will go sky-diving for the first time in my life. And the only thing I will break is a world record! *(She walks off, kicks her heels, turns back to us.)* I'll be able to do that until I'm 99, by the way. Only not quite so high. *(She kicks again, a bit lower, as she exits.)*

*(*ANNIE *exits;* ALEX *and* SARAH *enter.)*

ALEX. When I was five, I went to my mother and told her that the only thing I wanted in the world—and I would never ask for another thing, I promise, I promise, I promise—was to be a snowman for Halloween. With a black top hat and a real carrot glued to my nose.

SARAH. When I am seventy-five, I will tell my husband that the only thing I want in the world—and I would never ask for another thing, I promise, I promise, I promise—was to have every one of our five children stay faithful to the church.

(ALEX *and* SARAH *exit;* JOHN *enters.)*

JOHN. 18 years from now, I will get a notice for my 15th high school reunion; my wife will see it and remind me that her and the kids will be visiting her mother on the week-end of the reunion, so you should go, she'll tell me. So I'll go. It will be a little weird at first. People will nod and I'll nod back and that'll be the end of it. I'll start realizing I really didn't make very many friends in high school. I'll start thinking I should leave when this guy will come up to me and say...

BRIAN. *(Entering:)* Hey, John, right?

JOHN. Hi—Brian?

BRIAN. Yeah! Good to see you!

JOHN. And it will be good to see him because I'll feel a lot less like a loser. I'll remember how we used to toss the football every day after school, even when it snowed. I'll be relieved to see him. I'll ask him how he's been.

BRIAN. Fine, just fine, how about you?

JOHN. Can't complain—wouldn't do any good if I did.

(They laugh a bit.)

Yeah, so, what are you up to?

BRIAN. Well, you know, all kinds of things, but nothing big enough to make the evening news.

JOHN. What are you doing for a living?

BRIAN. I'm a free-lance designer—do a lot of work from home. You?

JOHN. Oh, I, uh...I'm working with my father, keeping the landscaping business going. Can't do that from home much.

BRIAN. No, I guess not.

JOHN. You married?

BRIAN. Yes, I am, thanks. You?

JOHN. Six years next month, believe it or not.

BRIAN. Wow.

JOHN. Yeah. Got any kids? I've got two—a five-year-old and a three-year-old, another one on the way.

BRIAN. Wow again—congratulations.

JOHN. Yeah, thanks. What about you?

BRIAN. We're hoping to adopt.

JOHN. No kidding?

BRIAN. Yeah, it's in the works. We're hoping.

JOHN. Your wife here?

BRIAN. Uh, not exactly.

JOHN. Not exactly? What is she, half here? Mine's off visiting my in-laws; gone 'til Monday.

BRIAN. I see.

JOHN. So...?

BRIAN. My spouse is here. But...he's my husband.

JOHN. I'll just stare at him. I'll stand there with my drink in my hand and I'll just stare at the guy. And then he'll say...

BRIAN. Good seeing you, John.

JOHN. And he'll walk away, and I'll watch him go over to this tall blond guy across the room. He'll put his hand on the guy's back, just like I'll do with my wife when I see her again. And it won't be that I have anything against him being...you know, like that. I'll just be standing there like an idiot, thinking to myself, "How many other things do you think you know, but you really have no idea?"

(JOHN *exits;* SARAH *enters.)*

SARAH. Twelve years from now, I will have just finished my Master's Degree in Mechanical Engineering. I will be at party, celebrating my accomplishment. I will be at a table in a bar with an old friend, complaining. I will tell him I am the Queen of Unrequited Love. From the time I was in second grade and made two dozen valentines to put in the envelope on the front of Jack Foster's desk at school, and he didn't even have a single store-bought Valentine for me—from that time forward, I have loved and not been loved in return. I will tell my friend, with still-lingering bitterness, about adoring Travis Dunn in high school. Obsessing over him. Being there for him, every moment, even defending his honor in a fight over

another girl, all the while figuring he was eventually going to turn around and discover me—this gem, hidden in plain sight, there all the time.

Only it never happened. The closest I ever came was when Travis thanked me for listening to him and told me I was like a really cool sister he never had. I will tell my friend, yup, that's me—a pathetic, also-ran, "really cool sister." And I will ask him, "Do you know what that's like?" And he will say, "Yeah, I do." But because he's a very good-looking guy, I will say, "Right. When was the last time you loved somebody and they didn't love you back?" He will look me in the eye and say, "Right now." And I will say, "Holy crap."

100 years from now, in a graveyard in Michigan, people will be able to read his name and mine on the same stone monument.

(SARAH *exits;* TRAVIS *and* HOLLY *enter.)*

TRAVIS. 16 years from now, I will be a soldier in Pakistan, driving an armored vehicle. An insurgent IED will explode on the passenger side of the truck, knocking it on its side, and I will be trapped for over an hour, unable to get out because my left leg will be shattered, the bones of it broken in 19 places. I will come home after that accident, permanently deaf in my right ear and lame in my left leg, despite the pins and plates the surgeons will use to reconstruct it. My worst injuries will not be visible.

HOLLY. 16 years from now, I'll be living in Nevada with my husband and my twin children, Kayley and Nicholas. I'll be visiting in this area, home for my grandmother's 102nd birthday. I will be in Shaw's, and I'll see Travis, carrying a small shopping basket with orange juice, doughnuts and a newspaper in it. At first, I'll duck into another aisle to avoid talking to him, but then I'll tell myself to grow up, and I'll go to him. Hello, I'll say.

TRAVIS. Hello.

HOLLY. Travis, right? Do you… I'm Holly. Holly Dickerson now. It used to be Munsy.

TRAVIS. Hello, Holly.

HOLLY. I, um…we went to school together. I will think, my God, could he possibly not even remember me? After he almost killed himself over me, even though it's been 16 years, can a man be that… closed off to his own life?

TRAVIS. I will not remember her. She will be entirely blank to me. I will reach in my back pocket and hand her one of the laminated

cards that the VA people will suggest I have printed up. I will tell her I am sorry, and I will walk away.

HOLLY. The card will say, "Please accept my apologies for not remembering who you are. I was involved in an accident during my military service, an accident which affected my mental capabilities. My memories are sporadic. Please do not take offense if I cannot recall the part you once played in my life. Sincerely, Sergeant Travis Dunn."

TRAVIS. I will know my mother, but know barely any of what she will tell me happened in my life. I will recognize re-runs of The Simpsons. I will greet my second cousin, remembering fully all that we ever did together. But my own father, my brother, my two sisters, so many other people… Do you know what it is like to be embraced by complete strangers who know you and say they love you, yet, no matter how hard you try, you cannot make any connection to them? That's why I will have the cards made up.

HOLLY. 16 years from now, I will watch Travis Dunn limp away from me, toward the checkout counter. I'll look back down at the card he will give me and read the line that says, "Please do not take offense if I cannot recall the part you once played in my life. Sincerely, Sergeant Travis Dunn." I'll leave my cart full of groceries right there, in the middle of the store, and I'll go out to my car and cry for a long, long time.

(HOLLY *and* TRAVIS *exit.* CAROLINE *sings her completed song. [For the tune for "The Long View," a YouTube video is available. Look up "The Long View" song with Rebecca Scelza.])*

The Long View—A Song

Well, a hundred years ago some boys fought for love
And a hundred years from now they'll be shouting of
The same old simple story, push will come to shove—
If only we could see the time from some space above.
Time, space, love.

He fell in love with her but never realized
That she was moving on despite his pain and his cries.
Now everything he's ever known he feels is just a lie
'Cause now his love is gone, and the cycle just rolls on.
It rolls on and on and on.

Take the long view…
We're born, we live, we die.
Take the long view…
We wish, we wonder why.

Please, we plead, we need to be seen!
Please, we cry, we have to be heard!
Our hands, these hands, they ache to be clean!
Won't someone stop right now and read our heart-felt word?
Won't you read it, just read this word?

Ashes go to ashes, dust down to dust
And sometimes just a maybe turns into must.
And all those fine distinctions: like, love or lust—
Will fall apart and never again will they adjust.
Like, love, lust.

Take the long view...
We're born, we live, we die.
Take the long view...
We wish, we wonder why.

(After ending the song, CAROLINE *returns to the position she was in at the beginning of the play. We watch the first scene again, but perhaps see it differently.* CAROLINE *sits against the proscenium arch, strumming the guitar and humming. After a few seconds,* HANNA, DAN, ANNIE, *and* LIZ *enter.)*

DAN. Oh, man that test was...

HANNA. It was so stupid! Why does she make the test questions so different from the homework questions?

ANNIE. I need chocolate.

HANNA. Homework is supposed to be training, right?

ANNIE. Hey, Caroline.

CAROLINE. Hey.

ANNIE. You guys, Caroline's rehearsing. We should go somewhere else.

CAROLINE. No, it's fine; I'm just...I'm not rehearsing anything. Stay.

HANNA. Cool. Listen, like I was saying—homework is supposed to be practice, isn't it?

DAN. Just eat. Forget about it.

HANNA. I can't eat.

ANNIE. If you've got chocolate, I'll eat it for you.

LIZ. I thought Mr. G. didn't want us having lunch out here.

ANNIE. There's no set; it's between shows. He doesn't care.

*(*NATE *and* HOLLY *enter quickly, with several others—*TORI, SEAN, JOHN, BRIAN, WENDY, *and* GABBY.*)*

GABBY. Get in there—go on, go on!

HOLLY. They won't look for us here.

BRIAN. I hope not.

NATE. Look, this is stupid. I'm not going to keep hiding from him.

HOLLY. You have to.

NATE. I am not afraid of him!

TORI. He should be.

LIZ. What are you guys doing?

DAN. What's going on?

JOHN. Travis Dunn—he's on a rampage, looking for Nate.

HANNA. Why?

SEAN. Why do you think?

HANNA. I have no idea.

GABBY. Uh, duh! Where have you been?

HANNA. *(Indicating* NATE *and* HOLLY*:)* Wait a minute—are you two going out now?

GABBY. All right, I have to ask again—where have you been?

HANNA. Shut up! I've been studying for a stupid Geometry test, how about that?

JOHN. They've been going out for a lot longer than you've been studying for the test.

NATE. I'm telling you, if he feels like he has to scream at me or whatever, fine. I just want to get it over with.

SEAN. Screaming isn't quite Travis's style.

GABBY. You're kind of forgetting something, right? Like that Travis specializes in beating the crap out of people?

NATE. I don't care! Look, I'm not going to pretend that we're not going out. He's going to have to deal with it.

HOLLY. He will. But I need to talk to him.

GABBY. Oh, right.

HOLLY. What?

GABBY. Travis Dunn? Talk?

SEAN. I think they call that an oxymoron.

HOLLY. He's not stupid. He's just...he's not dealing with this—with us—very well.

GABBY. Oh, I don't know why you'd say that. I mean, he only put a three-inch dent in my locker a minute ago.

*(*TRAVIS *enters with* KATIE, SARAH, SHANE, LUKE, ALEX, *and* PETER.*)*

TRAVIS. You going to keep running? You going to keep bad-mouthing me and running away, huh?

NATE. Bad-mouthing? What are you...?

TRAVIS. *(To* PETER:*)* Watch the door.

PETER. Got it.

TRAVIS. You going to keep running away or are you ready to man up?

HOLLY. Travis, stop.

TRAVIS. Oh, no, see, I'm not the one that needed to stop anything, remember? You're the one who stopped things. You're the one!

NATE. Hey, you need to cool it.

TRAVIS. Oh, I'll cool it, all right. Just as soon as I break you in half I'll cool it.

NATE. Look, it doesn't have to be like this.

*(*TRAVIS *pushes him.)*

TRAVIS. Maybe I think it does have to be just like this!

*(*ZACHARY *enters and watches. No one notices him.)*

HANNA. Hey, you know something? Some of us just came here to eat some lunch and chill out.

SHANE. Just shut up and leave, then.

HANNA. No, no, no—we were here first.

SARAH. Get lost, you stuck up witch!

NATE. Stop! This isn't some gang war!

TRAVIS. No, it's not. It's a you-and-me thing.

NATE. Yeah, so let's just the two of us settle it, alone, some other place.

TRAVIS. Oh, no, that just means you want more time to run.

HOLLY. Travis, please stop. What do you think you're going to accomplish? You're just going to get in trouble; you're going to get us all in trouble. But it's not going to get me back.

TRAVIS. Huh. Well, guess what? Maybe I'm not interested anymore. Maybe I've figured out what a lying, two-timing...thing you are. Maybe I'd rather be with a pig than you. Maybe I'd rather go out with some ugly, diseased...

*(*NATE *tackles* TRAVIS. *They go sprawling, brawling around, lots of noise and commotion.)*

PETER. Hey! Hey! Teacher's coming! Come on!

(They all exit. NATE, *with* HOLLY *comforting him, holds his nose as if it's bleeding.)*

End of Play