

Adam's Letter

By John Cosper

Adam's Letter

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Nicole Edwards- Vice president of her junior class. A Christian with a compassionate heart and an open mind.

Sean Gilbert- Nicole's long time friend and next door neighbor. A "fanboy", meaning he's into comics and sci-fi. A junior.

Marty Brooks- Adam Krieger's best friend. A freshman, and a fangirl who hides her pain behind sarcasm and wit.

Lindsay Booker- A junior. Close friends with Nicole and Brandon. She is known as the virgin queen for her stand on abstinence, and hides a secret from the past.

Brandon Miller- A junior. Cocky, some what arrogant, and an outspoken young Republican type.

Jake Hall- A junior. A once promising student turned burnout, often comes to school high or hung over.

Kimmy Vanover- A sophomore. Had a one night stand with Jake. Shy, somewhat popular, burdened by a secret that she can't hide for very much longer.

Vanessa Dietrick- A senior, and a preacher's kid. Popular, puts on an air of kindness but is not all that out-going and friendly inside.

Larry- A kid from another school convicted of assault Vanessa meets in a sensitivity awareness class.

Adam Krieger- A "nobody" who publishes his suicide note on the internet. Optional voice-over role, reading from his manifesto in between scenes.

Adam's Letter

HOW TO USE THIS PLAY

The underlying theme of this play is the idea of community, getting young people to see the need to put their differences aside and care for one another. My hope is that this play will not only find audiences in churches and ministries, but in private and public schools.

Being a Christian and believing that the ultimate example of self-sacrifice (not to mention the ultimate hope for all mankind) is in Christ, Scene Eleven ends by addressing the hope we have in Jesus. However, in order to accommodate people who might wish to perform this play in schools where they may not be allowed to give a religious message, I have constructed the play in such a way that you have some options for a non-religious presentation.

OPTION ONE is of course, to perform the play in its entirety. This is the most complete version of the show, and hopefully the most effective.

OPTION TWO is to cut the end of Scene Eleven. An optional ending for that scene is marked in the script. This solution would work best for people doing an in-school presentation that does not allow for the Christian message to be overtly presented.

OPTION THREE is to split the play in two acts. The first part would end in the middle of Scene Eight. The script is marked as to where the best place is to leave the audience hanging, and wanting to see the end. The second act would resume in the middle of Scene 8, or you may opt to back up and start a little earlier, to get the audience back into the story. This solution would allow you to give the audience most of the story during school hours without getting into religious talk. The first act ends on a cliff-hanger, and hopefully the lack of resolution will lead kids to stick around for an after-hours presentation of the second act and conclusion.

In between scenes, parts of Adam's manifesto are included in a difference font. These can be read by a student in the role of Adam appearing on stage, or read from off stage.

Another feature of this play is the web site, AdamsLetter.com. This web site not only features production information, but a complete draft of the script, Adam's manifesto, and links and resources for students who turn to the site afterwards out of curiosity or a desire for more answers. Hopefully, the web site will extend the ministry of the play beyond the stage.

OTHER DETAILS TO KNOW

Adam's Letter is a work of fiction. There is no such person as Adam, nor is the author aware of this sort of story ever happening in real life. Any resemblance between the characters, places, and events to any real people is purely coincidental.

Adam's Letter

ADAM – Part 1

To the man and woman who chose to conceive a child, the result of which was me, when it fit in with their five year plan;

To the teachers who never really cared, no matter what they say;

To my fellow geeks, dweebs, et. al., who will no doubt receive more abuse upon my passing, as my tormentors will no longer have me to kick around;

To my fellow students who made my life a living nightmare when they should have focused on their education;

To those who never cared, never spoke, probably never knew my name;

To the one true friend, whose caring was the only thing that prevented this even from happening sooner;

To the God, if he does exist, who chose to play a cruel, cruel joke on me when he placed me where he did and surrounded me with so many uncaring faces;

To all of you, goodbye.

I am leaving a world to which I never truly belonged or fit in. Do not weep for me, or mourn my passing. I say this not because I expect to be missed, but to allow those who truly did not care go on with their lives with a clean conscience and dry eyes. I know you don't want to weep for me. So don't. But I do ask you to listen to the final words of a young man who has taken charge of his own destiny.

SCENE ONE

(The scene takes place in the lobby of a funeral home. A sign is on stage, directing people to Adam's viewing. A few chairs are also set up on stage. Nicole enters, holding a cell phone. She puts it to her ear.)

NICOLE- *(hushed voice)* Hello?... Oh, hi, Mom... I can't talk louder, Mom... Because I'm in a funeral home... Yes I did... Mom, I know I told you about this... This morning at breakfast?... Yes, the kid who committed suicide last week... No, Sean's with me... Well, after this we were planning on getting a bite to eat...

(Sean enters.)

NICOLE- Well, I guess I can, sure... Okay, how 'bout I call you when we're done here?... I dunno, 30 minutes or so?... Okay, I will... love you, too... bye. *(hangs up)*

SEAN- Who was that?

NICOLE- My mom. Nothing more embarrassing than having your phone ring in the middle of a funeral home.

SEAN- Hence the reason I don't carry one.

NICOLE- Oh yeah? You visit funeral homes often?

SEAN- No I mean I don't want my mom to be able to reach me anywhere I go.

NICOLE- Oh, to have such freedom. How is everything in there?

SEAN- It's not pleasant. Adam's mom is almost inconsolable.

NICOLE- Are lot of people?

SEAN- Surprisingly no. Just some relatives, a few friends of the family.

NICOLE- No one from school?

SEAN- (*shakes her head no*) Mrs. Bader's inside. Nobody our age.

NICOLE- Mrs. Bader? I had her in eighth for English.

SEAN- So did Adam apparently. Plus she lives across the street, so she's kind of here for the family.

NICOLE- I can't believe that no other students are here. Did he have any friends?

SEAN- (*shrugs*) Got me. I mean he had acquaintances, like the rest of us in the sci-fi club. But Adam always seemed to keep to himself.

NICOLE- That's so sad, having no one from school to mourn him. And no one who could have seen it coming.

SEAN- He never acted depressed that I knew. He laughed and smiled like every other person in the sci-fi club. And he could quote everything from *Logan's Run* to *Buckaroo Banzai*.

NICOLE- An important life skill, I'm sure.

(*Marty enters, sees the others, slows down.*)

SEAN- Sign of a true fanboy. Far from an indicator that he would blow his brains out.

NICOLE- Don't put it that way, Sean. What if his family heard you?

SEAN- Marty?

MARTY- Hi, Sean.

SEAN- What are you doing here?

MARTY- Not a lot. I'm here to see a friend.

SEAN- A friend? Someone who knew Adam?

MARTY- He was Adam.

SEAN- I'm sorry, I didn't know.

MARTY- It's okay.

SEAN- Oh, this is Nicole Edwards.

MARTY- I know who she is.

NICOLE- It's good to meet you, Marty. Sorry it's under these circumstances.

MARTY- That makes two of us. So you're really here to see Adam off on the Great Adventure?

NICOLE- We sure are.

MARTY- Forgive my asking, but did you even know Adam?

NICOLE- Not exactly. We spoke once or twice, incidentally, but we didn't talk on a day to day basis.

MARTY- Too bad. You might have liked him if you'd given him the chance.

NICOLE- I'm sure I would have.

MARTY- Guess we'll never know now. So what are you really doing here?

SEAN- Same as you. We came for Adam.

MARTY- (*shakes her head*) You didn't know him either.

SEAN- So?

NICOLE- He was a classmate. We wanted to come.

MARTY- And your being a class officer had nothing to do with this?

NICOLE- No. Well, sort of. I am here on behalf of the rest of our class.

MARTY- And the school, no doubt. They asked you to come, didn't they?

NICOLE- I had made up my mind to come long before they asked.

MARTY- If you say so.

NICOLE- I'm telling the truth.

MARTY- This had nothing to do with the school trying to give the appearance that Adam went to school with kids who cared?

NICOLE- Nothing.

MARTY- Or the web site?

NICOLE- What web site?

MARTY- You have read the manifesto, right?

NICOLE- I don't know what you're talking about.

MARTY- The web site. *(pause)* Adam's suicide note, his manifesto. You've read it, haven't you?

NICOLE- I hadn't even heard of it.

MARTY- Please—

NICOLE- Honest, this is the first... Sean, do you know anything about this?

SEAN- Nothing.

MARTY- Poor Adam. Even in death, no respect. He sent a letter to the school district, with instructions to give it out to the rest of the student body. Good thing he made sure to pass the address on to me as well.

NICOLE- What's this all about?

MARTY- AdamsLetter.com. The place to go on the web to read Adam Krieger's farewell address to his parents, his school, his classmates. Even you, Miss Class Vice President.

NICOLE- Me?

MARTY- Oh, didn't I tell you? You're one of the people he mentioned by name.

(Marty starts to walk to the viewing room.)

SEAN- *(stops Marty)* Whoa, whoa, wait a sec. What's that supposed to mean, mentioning her by name?

MARTY- Adam made special mention of folks he considered to have left—how did he put it?—a significant impact on his life.

NICOLE- Doesn't sound like he meant that in a positive way.

MARTY- You would know better than I, Nicole.

NICOLE- I never did anything to hurt him. At least, nothing that I can remember.

SEAN- Same here.

NICOLE- What could he possibly have to say about us?

MARTY- You'll have to look it up for yourself.

SEAN- On the Internet?

MARTY- AdamsLetter.com. Check it out for yourselves.

(Marty exits.)

NICOLE- You didn't hear anything about this?

SEAN- No. What do you make of it?

NICOLE- I don't know. But if it is a tell all manifesto like she says, I can only imagine the uproar it's going to cause.

(Sean and Nicole exit.)

ADAM – Part 2

Perhaps my parents might feel something inside which causes them to shed tears. They may pretend that it's sorrow for their "loss", but I hope it is something else. Perhaps sorrow for bringing a child into this world when they really didn't have the time or desire to raise him. I wasn't the product of love, born of a desire to prepare another human being to grow and lead the human race. I was merely the next acquisition, the next task, the next project on their list of things that bring significance.

No child should be brought into this world for the mere purpose of being just another possession. I am not an asset to be cataloged and listed on your tax forms beside your house and car, or fought over during your divorce proceedings. I am a human being. I'm sorry that it took this to make you realize that. If you don't yet get it, then I'm even sorrier.

What about my teachers? Will they be sorry to see another student become a statistic? Certainly the administration and Principal Chowning will mourn, as my death will not reflect well on them as an institution. Well, I apologize for making the statistics for your administration worse. But I don't expect an apology for the false sympathies of people like Mrs. Dunfee, and the broken promises of others like Mr. Richman.

As for my fellow students, those who made a more significant impact on my life, I know better than to expect my tormentors to mourn.

SCENE TWO

(A computer room in school. Brandon is on a computer downstage, looking up the web site. Jake is up stage at another computer, but asleep. Brandon starts reading, following the screen with his finger. He starts to chuckle. Then he laughs a bit harder. He laughs more, laughing louder. Jake's head pops up. Half-coherent he focuses his eyes on Brandon.)

JAKE- Hey. What's all the racket?

BRANDON- Jake? I didn't see you over there.

JAKE- A little courtesy, please. It's my naptime.

BRANDON- Sorry. I was just reading that Adam kid's manifesto.

JAKE- His manifold?

BRANDON- Manifesto.

JAKE- Now what in the blazes is a manifesto?

BRANDON- Come take a look for yourself.

JAKE- You mean read it?

BRANDON- No, I was thinking you'd want to lick it. YES read it.

JAKE- If I wanted to read, I'd be in school.

BRANDON- You are in school, genius.

JAKE- You have a point there.

BRANDON- Come on over and read this.

JAKE- What's so exciting that you just have to share it with me?

BRANDON- For starters he wrote about you.

JAKE- Who?

BRANDON- *(sighs)* Adam Krieger.

JAKE- Who?

BRANDON- The dork who committed suicide.

JAKE- Krieger... Oh, you mean Queerer.

BRANDON- It's Krieger.

JAKE- *(walking to Brandon)* I know, but we always called him Queerer.

BRANDON- No wonder he hated you.

JAKE- He hated me?

BRANDON- He makes special mention of you in this note.

JAKE- No kidding?

BRANDON- *(reads)* "Perhaps I could have understood such abuse had I established a more public profile. On the other hand, perhaps it would have opened me to more intensive abuse. I was a virgin, yes, though more because I never had the chance to be anything else. I may be chaste, but I'm not a prude like virgin queen Lindsay Booker. Had I been so stuck up, I might have understood Jake Hall's harassment."

JAKE- What do you know? I'm famous.

BRANDON- "Jake never bothered to learn how good - or how bad - I was to give me the ribbings he did: the way he chided me in the locker room, advancing his own manhood while demeaning me. But really, who were you to judge me, Jake? How long has it been since you last went a day without a drink? Or maybe I shouldn't mock your infirmity. After all, the insults you dished were impressive, considering you were never less than half-drunk when making them."

JAKE- Hey, just because I don't go a day with out drinking doesn't make me an alcollic... I mean an alka seltz—a lush.

BRANDON- (*sarcastic*) No, not at all.

JAKE- I wouldn't get so cocky just yet, partner.

BRANDON- Why not?

JAKE- 'Cause it looks like he had some things to say about you, too.

BRANDON- What?

JAKE- The next parachute—whatever, the next break in writing.

BRANDON- (*reads*) "Had I chosen to be a liberal democrat, I could have seen the justification for Brandon Miller and his right-wing fascist lectures. Brandon never knew the real me to know where we disagreed. Like Jake, he inflated his ego through the deflating of my own. What will you be some day, Brandon? A lawyer? A politician? I die a better man than you will ever be, because I never judged before walking a mile in another person's shoes."

JAKE- Ha. He really pinned you to the wall.

BRANDON- He what? Please, this is nothing like me. Judgmental? Fascist? Who does he think he is?

JAKE- It says right there. A better man than you.

BRANDON- A real man would have stood up and said these things to my face, not written them out to be read from beyond the grave.

JAKE- Who else does he mention in here?

BRANDON- He ripped his own parents first, then he took some pot shots and a few teachers. Mrs. Dunfee, Mr. Richman, and Principal Chowning. He had fairly nice things to say about Andy Riker, James Moon, and Sean Gilbert. Then there's you and me.

JAKE- How nice to be first on the naughty list. Who else does he bash?

BRANDON- Let's see... Heh, the ladies in my life. Melinda Tunney, Jessica Silvers, and dear Kimmy Vanover.

JAKE- A guy like Queerer could never get a girl like Kimmy Vanover.

BRANDON- Doesn't look like he did. He mentions her laughing in his face.

JAKE- Oh that's classic.

BRANDON- Whoa, check this out. "I must single out Rebecca Cull and Vanessa Dietrich for their tremendous dedication to the cause of destroying any shred of self-esteem I might dare to foster."

JAKE- Whoa. He's right on that one. Rebecca's the queen of sarcasm in this school. And Vanessa...

BRANDON- Not a more stuck up creature in this school.

JAKE- Nice to see her getting her due.

BRANDON- You know her dad's a minister?

JAKE- Shut up. Vanessa Dietrich?

BRANDON- Yup.

JAKE- (*whistles*) I'd hate to be around when Daddy learns the truth about his little angel.

BRANDON- I dunno. It might be fun to watch her get what's coming.

JAKE- True. You know, you're not a half bad guy, Brandon. It's a wonder we don't hang out together.

BRANDON- Not really. I'm a focused, driven young man with ambitions and direction and you're a burned out party boy.

JAKE- Yeah, but other than that, I think we get along quite well.

BRANDON- A common enemy makes strange allies. C'mon, Jake, I'll buy you a drink.

JAKE- Beer?

BRANDON- Why don't you try a Yoo Hoo instead?

JAKE- Yoo Hoo? Never heard of it. What proof is it?

BRANDON- None, but it's rich and chocolatey.

JAKE- What the heck. I'm all for trying new things.

(Jake and Brandon exit.)

ADAM – Part 3

But if I'm going to address those who belittled me, I'd be remiss if I failed to include the ladies in my life. I guess that's not entirely accurate, as the ones I refer to fall in two basic categories: those who refused to

be in my life, and those who I would rather have excluded from my life. In the former category, Melinda Tunney, Jessica Silvers, and dear Kimmy Vanover, whose laughed in my face after I asked her to the homecoming dance, humiliating me in front of I don't know how many other classmates. In the latter category are too many to mention, though I must single out Rebecca Cull and Vanessa Dietrich for their tremendous dedication to the cause of destroying any shred of self-esteem I might dare to foster. Why can't you accept the things that make other people different rather than insisting everyone conforms to your will?

Sure, some did offer friendly gestures. Nicole Edwards often would greet me and ask about my life. Not that I ever felt comfortable enough to tell her anything; I never trusted her enough to give her the chance. What was the purpose? Did you really give a flip about the shy, quiet kid who sat behind you in 8th grade history? Or was it all about creating an illusion that you care, just to guarantee my voting for you as a class officer.

SCENE THREE

(Vanessa enters on a portable phone.)

VANESSA- Kaitlyn? It's Vanessa... Oh, I've been better. Lots better. Have your parents checked out that website yet?... No Internet at your house? Aren't you the lucky one... Yeah I read it. So did my father. The little geek mentioned me by NAME!... Yeah, I thought it was creepy too. My parents? They thought something completely different... It's a sign of my immaturity and lack of respect for other living beings... *(tracking a bug flying around)* Yeah, me, lack of respect for other living things. Can you believe that? *(stomps on the bug)* Oh, this will kill you. I'm not grounded. But I am going to be working on my attitude... They're sending me to sensitivity training!!!... Well, I get to spend 2 nights a week, 2 hours a night, learning how to respect and reach out to my fellow human beings... I don't know. It's some place my dad knows about. He's sent some of the people he's counseled through the class... Right. Plus, I hear they put juvenile offenders through it as well... I'd come over if I could, but my first session is tonight... Tuesday and Wednesday nights for the next two months... Oh, I'll be sure and tell you all about the class and the sickos I meet... Bye, hun.

(Vanessa exits.)

SCENE FOUR

(The library. Nicole sits at a table alone, reading a printed copy of the manifesto. Kimmy sits at another table nearby, reading books on child rearing and pregnancy [not obvious to the audience]. Lindsay enters.)

LINDSAY- Hey, Nicole.

NICOLE- Hey, Lindsay. What are you doing here?

LINDSAY- I think you've already found what I came for.

NICOLE- You heard about it?

LINDSAY- It's all anyone in this town talks about this weekend.

NICOLE- You heard you were mentioned?

LINDSAY- Nothing I haven't heard before. Another swipe at the virgin queen.

(Kimmy perks up, listening in.)

NICOLE- That's not a title to be ashamed of.

LINDSAY- *(shrugs)* It's a title I'll be glad to leave behind next year.

NICOLE- What happens next year?

LINDSAY- I'll be at a college thousand miles away from anyone who knows about me or the party in 9th grade when I turned Rick Ferris down.

NICOLE- Oh... right.

LINDSAY- What did you think I meant?

NICOLE- I... you don't want to know.

LINDSAY- Oh please, Nicole, you know me better than that.

(Kimmy goes back to her book.)

NICOLE- I know.

LINDSAY- So you saw what Mr. Krieger said about you?

NICOLE- I read it, yeah.

LINDSAY- This web site is gonna make life miserable for a lot of people. Vanessa Dietrich's dad sent her to sensitivity training.

NICOLE- No kidding. Oh that's funny. Any idea how Brandon reacted?

LINDSAY- He thought it was hilarious.

NICOLE- Guess we can't expect him to take it seriously.

LINDSAY- What do you mean? Surely you're not taking what he said about you serious.

NICOLE- He did kinda sting me with his comments.

LINDSAY- Nicole, you're one of the most giving, friendly people in this school. He had no right to judge you.

NICOLE- But is that how people perceive me? Do they see me like you, as a genuine, approachable person, or do they see me as a politician who wants people to like me and vote for

me?

LINDSAY- If people really felt that way about you, you wouldn't have been elected class president. Just look at Diana Faith.

NICOLE- Still... makes me want to do something. To fix things.

LINDSAY- You can't fix things, Nicole. Not with Adam.

NICOLE- I know I can't change the past. But going forward, I want to make more of a difference to other people.

(Marty enters.)

LINDSAY- Any ideas?

MARTY- Hey.

NICOLE- Hey, Marty. How are you?

MARTY- You wanted to meet me here?

NICOLE- This is my friend, Lindsay. Lindsay, this is Marty.

LINDSAY- It's nice to meet you.

MARTY- *(half smile to Lindsay)* Sure. So what's up, Nicole?

NICOLE- Yeah. Though I was wondering if maybe you might like to go shopping with me.

MARTY- I don't shop.

NICOLE- I'm not talking clothes. See, a good friend of mine has a birthday coming up and I was thinking you could help me pick out a good gift.

MARTY- Like I said, I don't shop.

NICOLE- As I understand it, you do shop at my best friend's favorite store. Cool Planet?

MARTY- *(raises eyebrow)* The comic book store?

NICOLE- He's big on a bunch of comics, but I don't know them well enough to make a good selection.

MARTY- What's his favorite stuff?

NICOLE- Well, let me see. He talks about Sandman quite a bit. Daredevil. Elektra. The Dark Knight's another one.

MARTY- You mean Batman?

NICOLE- No, no, the Dark Knight. I know that's his favorite too, because he's always going on about the Dark Knight and the author Frank Miller.

MARTY- *(stifling a laugh)* That's Batman, Nicole. The Dark Knight series by Frank Miller is about Batman.

NICOLE- Can you tell I need help?

MARTY- More than you realize. Okay, we'll go shopping. But not at Cool Planet. The Comic Web is a much better place.

NICOLE- I knew you were the person to consult.

MARTY- Let me drop off some books, and we can go.

NICOLE- Meet me out front. I'll just say bye to Lindsay.

MARTY- Gotcha.

(Marty exits.)

LINDSAY- Who is she?

NICOLE- Adam Krieger's best friend.

LINDSAY- Really? So you're not entirely focused on the Dark Knight, are you?

NICOLE- I'll let her focus on that. I'm focused on her.

LINDSAY- Good luck, Nicole.

NICOLE- Thanks. I'll let you know how it goes.

LINDSAY- Call my cell. I'm getting ready to leave and go shopping with my mom.

NICOLE- Sounds good. Have fun.

LINDSAY- You too.

NICOLE- Bye.

(Nicole exits. Lindsay starts to pack her things. Kimmy turns to Lindsay.)

KIMMY- Excuse me?

LINDSAY- Hmm?

KIMMY- I couldn't help over hearing... You're Lindsay Booker?

LINDSAY- The virgin queen, in the flesh.

KIMMY- Kimmy Vanover, the girl who laughed in his face.

LINDSAY- *(laughs)* Well, nice to put a name with a face.

KIMMY- Can I share something with you?

LINDSAY- Sure.

(Kimmy walks over to the table, sits beside Lindsay.)

KIMMY- I... I read what Adam said about you. And I've... heard other people say some things.

LINDSAY- Okay.

KIMMY- Well, I don't mean to talk about something that I know makes you uncomfortable, but I have to say... your friend? She's right. You really shouldn't be ashamed of it.

LINDSAY- Yeah?

KIMMY- Oh definitely. I mean yet everything from MTV to health class not only says sex is okay, but normal. But sex causes so many problems that people our age... we're just not ready for, you know?

LINDSAY- *(nods)* I agree.

KIMMY- For what it's worth, I think you're an example for others. For people like me. And I hope... forgive my saying this, but I think if you would be more vocal for your stand to remain a virgin, you could have a real positive impact on others.

LINDSAY- No one wants to hear about remaining a virgin.

KIMMY- I think you're wrong. Seriously, you could keep a lot of girls and guys from causing a lot of problems for themselves, just by saying that chastity is okay. Even preferable.

LINDSAY- I appreciate your saying that. *(stands with her stuff)* Kimmy was it?

KIMMY- Yes.

LINDSAY- It was good to meet you. And thanks for the encouragement.

KIMMY- Think about what I said, will you?

LINDSAY- Sure thing.

KIMMY- There are a lot of girls who need to hear it's okay to save themselves.

LINDSAY- You think so?

KIMMY- More than you can know.

LINDSAY- I'll think it over. Bye.

(Lindsay exits.)

KIMMY- *(to herself)* Please, Lindsay... So no one else has to go through this.

(Blackout.)

ADAM – Part 4

I can only conceive of one person in this world who will truly be sad at my parting. Marty, my best friend, you talked me out of this decision three times before. You even called 911 after I swallowed a bottle of pills. That is why I did not tell you anything this time, and why I do this in secret, alone. I wish you were coming with me on this great adventure, into the final frontier. Where ever I go, yours will be the one face I carry with me. The one soul I will miss. Yours is also the only forgiveness I ask and beg for as I depart from this life. I love you, and always will.

SCENE FIVE

(Nicole and Marty walk on. Nicole carries a shopping bag with comics and a toy in it.)

NICOLE- Wow. Sean is so going to love this stuff. I can't thank you enough.

MARTY- Hey, my pleasure.

NICOLE- *(checks watch)* Hey, it's still early in the day. You wanna grab some dinner?

(Marty stops. Nicole turns, see her stopped in her tracks.)

NICOLE- Something the matter?

MARTY- You didn't ask me to hang out with you just for my comic expertise, did you?

NICOLE- Why did you say that?

MARTY- Answer the question, Nicole.

NICOLE- Is there anything wrong with trying to initiate a friendship?

MARTY- Friendship? Is that what this is supposed to be?

NICOLE- I was hoping.

MARTY- Look, I appreciate the sympathy. You've done far more than I would have ever asked. But it's quite unnecessary.

NICOLE- Sympathy? Marty, do you find it so hard to believe that I would not be interested in a friend like you?

MARTY- Yes.

NICOLE- Why?

MARTY- We're from completely different worlds, you and I. I'm a fangirl to the core, and

you're a... Come on, Nicole, you don't want to hang around with someone like me.

NICOLE- You forget. I went to Adam's funeral with someone like you. (*holds up the shopping bag*) Sean?

MARTY- He's your next door neighbor. It doesn't count.

NICOLE- I went to see *The Matrix* with him.

MARTY- Still doesn't count.

NICOLE- I bought him the *Logan's Run* DVD.

MARTY- He probably told you he wanted it.

NICOLE- I sat through every one of the *Star Trek* movies with him after he had his wisdom teeth out.

MARTY- I don't believe you.

NICOLE- It's true! Ask him yourself.

MARTY- What was the name of Captain Kirk's son?

NICOLE- David.

MARTY- And the actress who played Lt. Saavik in *Wrath of Khan*?

NICOLE- Kirstie Alley.

MARTY- (*pause*) Okay, now that is friendship. But this is, your taking an interest in me, is charity. And I will not be a charity case.

NICOLE- Marty, I don't see you as a charity case.

MARTY- You can't tell me you're not here because of Adam.

NICOLE- No I can't. Adam died thinking no one in our school cared about him. I can't stand the thought of any one else feeling the same way he did. If you'll let me, I'd like to be your friend.

MARTY- You want to be my friend.

NICOLE- Yes.

MARTY- Why me? Why not some other nobody in the school?

NICOLE- Well, I did need to find a gift for Sean. You had the insider's knowledge to help. It just all came together.

MARTY- Supposing I say no?

NICOLE- (*shrugs*) If you say no, there's no point in my pressing the matter. I'll drive you home, we'll say hi in the hallways, and never hang out again. Simple as that.

MARTY- Huh.

NICOLE- But I'd be disappointed if you did say no.

MARTY- Why's that?

NICOLE- Well... because I like you.

MARTY- How sweet.

NICOLE- Seriously! You're funny. You're a very strong person. You have a way of putting guys in their place that's just marvelous.

MARTY- How do you know that?

NICOLE- Sean told me a few stories on you.

MARTY- Did he now?

NICOLE- Let's see... I think he was spouting off about the technology behind the transporter beams on *Star Trek*, and you corrected him on some minor detail. He gave you a "What do you know? You're a girl," response, so you looked it up in the *Star Trek* manual and proved him wrong.

MARTY- (*mischievous smile*) That was a beautiful moment. Guys can be so dumb.

NICOLE- Marty, give me one more hour. We'll go get something to eat, we'll talk, and then... if you don't want to be friends, I'll understand.

MARTY- I don't know.

NICOLE- What are you afraid of?

MARTY- That this is some phase, your way of dealing with all that's been going on. That you'll use me to make yourself feel better for reaching out to a nerd, but then eventually we'll stop hanging around and I'll be... alone again.

NICOLE- I promise that's not the case.

MARTY- Saying it and doing it are two different things.

NICOLE- I need you to give me a chance to prove it's not merely words.

MARTY- Just answer me one question.

NICOLE- Shoot.

MARTY- You're not gonna go *Clueless* on me, are you?

NICOLE- What do you mean?

MARTY- You remember that stupid Alicia what's-her-face flick where she and her friend picked out a new girl and turned her into an airhead bimbo like them? You're not thinking you're gonna mold me in your image, are you?

NICOLE- I promise.

MARTY- Okay, Madam Vice President. Let's go get some dessert.

(Nicole and Marty exit.)

SCENE SIX

(Brandon enters on a phone. Sean enters from the other side.)

SEAN- Hello?

BRANDON- Sean!

SEAN- Yes?

BRANDON- It's Brandon.

SEAN- Oh, hi.

BRANDON- How are you?

SEAN- Fine, and you?

BRANDON- Okay, I guess. I've been trying to track down your best friend all afternoon and I'm having no luck at all.

SEAN- You mean Nicole?

BRANDON- Yup. I tried her cell several times. She's not answering.

SEAN- Yeah, she left it at my house.

BRANDON- That explains it.

SEAN- She's out with a friend this afternoon. But I think she's going to church later so you could catch her there.

BRANDON- It'll be too late by then. Ollie North is in town and he's speaking at the college tonight.

SEAN- Ollie North? Who's that?

BRANDON- Only one of the greatest Republican heroes of the 1980's. Not that you would know. He never had his own comic series.

SEAN- Oh, yes, of course. What was I thinking? Well, she's out with Marty now, but you might try leaving a message at her house in case she stops there before church.

BRANDON- Who's Marty?

SEAN- Marty Brooks.

BRANDON- Should I know that name?

SEAN- Not necessarily. She was Adam Krieger's best friend.

BRANDON- The internet kid? What's she doing with his best friend?

SEAN- Reaching out, making friends.

BRANDON- Why?

SEAN- I dunno. I guess that's a question you'll have to ask her yourself.

BRANDON- I sure will. Well, thanks for your help.

SEAN- No problem.

BRANDON- Catch you later.

SEAN- Bye.

(Sean exits.)

BRANDON- What in the world is she thinking?

(Brandon shakes his head and exits.)

ADAM – Part 5

There's another group I have not yet addressed: those not like me who left me alone. Or I should say ignored me. I appreciate your sparing me any further harassment, but your inaction, your withheld hellos and how are yous did more to hurt than any name calling. Your inaction effectively excluded me from student life, from the human race. You left me isolated and alone, and no words I could say can convey to you the suffering you caused. I could name names, but in doing so, I would do more now for you than you ever did for me in life.

SCENE SEVEN

(Vanessa and Larry enter. Vanessa's walk and expression communicate that she is not there by choice. Larry is more nonchalant. They both hold notepads and pens.)

VANESSA- Okay, where do you wanna do this?

LARRY- I don't care.

VANESSA- If you had moved a little faster, we could have taken my dad's office with the cushy

couch.

LARRY- Sorry. How 'bout here?

VANESSA- Here? In the hallway?

LARRY- *(shrugs)* Why not?

VANESSA- It's not exactly private.

LARRY- What do you need privacy for? I think it's safe to say we ain't gonna be sharing no secrets.

VANESSA- That's right. I'm not anyway.

LARRY- I didn't ask you to.

VANESSA- Well don't.

LARRY- I won't.

VANESSA- Good.

LARRY- So, the hall?

VANESSA- Fine.

(Larry sits.)

VANESSA- Wait a sec.

(Vanessa exits, brings back a chair. She sits in the chair, towering over Larry.)

LARRY- No thanks, I like the floor. You don't have to get me a chair.

VANESSA- I didn't offer.

LARRY- And you said you didn't need to be in a class on sensitivity.

VANESSA- Look, you don't like me, I don't like you. But since we're stuck here for the next few hours, let's just do what we have to and get this over with, okay?

LARRY- Just make with the questions.

VANESSA- Why me? Why don't you go first?

LARRY- Ladies first, I insist.

VANESSA- Ugh... what a pathetic attempt at manners. Name?

LARRY- Name...

VANESSA- Name!!

LARRY- Name what? My favorite food? My pet? My favorite ball player?

VANESSA- No, what is your name?

LARRY- Ah, a complete sentence. Now was that really so hard?

VANESSA- Just answer the stupid question!!

LARRY- It's Larry.

VANESSA- Larry...?

LARRY- Yes??

VANESSA- Last-- I mean, can you tell me your last name too?

LARRY- Vesser.

VANESSA- Your last name's Vesser?

LARRY- You disapprove?

VANESSA- No. It's just that it's kind of unusual.

LARRY- Not a lot of us around. And no, it's not 'cause so many of us have been shot on the streets.

VANESSA- Actually, smart aleck, I knew someone with that last name. In fact, I dated a guy with that name in 10th grade.

LARRY- Is that so? Who was he?

VANESSA- Hey, I'm asking the questions.

LARRY- Well, we have time. Let's pause the get to know you questions a moment. What was his name?

VANESSA- Daniel.

LARRY- Daniel Vesser?

VANESSA- Yep.

LARRY- Birthday's December 5, went to Harding High School, played on the soccer team, graduated last spring?

VANESSA- Oh my gosh, you know him?

LARRY- Sure I do. He's my cousin.

VANESSA- No kidding? How is he?

LARRY- He's doing fine. Going to school, working.

VANESSA- Wow. You'll have to tell him I said hi.

LARRY- You'll have to give me your name first.

VANESSA- It's Vanessa.

LARRY- Vanessa? Oh my goodness!

VANESSA- What?

LARRY- *(trying not to laugh)* You're Vanessa?? THE Vanessa?

VANESSA- Yeah? What's so funny.

LARRY- Nothing.

VANESSA- Something sure is. You're about to explode with laughter.

LARRY- It's nothing. Go on with the questions.

VANESSA- Did he say something about me?

LARRY- What do you mean?

VANESSA- What did he say about me?

LARRY- Just that he dated this girl named Vanessa.

VANESSA- Just that?

LARRY- And that she was a total loon.

VANESSA- He said that? About me?

LARRY- Yeah.

VANESSA- And did he mention that it was I who dumped him because he was a miserable, wretched guy in the world?

LARRY- He said something to that effect. But it was more along the lines of "She made me the most miserable, wretched guy in the world."

VANESSA- Well, I am sorry if Daniel was unable to be mature and act like a grown-up, but that was hardly my fault.

LARRY- Oh come on now. If anyone was immature in that relationship it was you.

VANESSA- Me?

LARRY- You heard me.

VANESSA- I was the best thing that ever happened to him. I took him to the ballet, the orchestra. I taught him how to dress, and how to appreciate the finer things in life.

LARRY- And in the process you destroyed the guy you fell in love with.

VANESSA- I did not!

LARRY- You did! He was perfectly happy and content with life until you came along.

VANESSA- Oh please!

LARRY- Think back. Think about your first date. Where did he take you?

VANESSA- (*groans*) He took me to Chuck E. Cheese's because he's a little boy.

LARRY- And yet you went out with him again. Why?

VANESSA- Glutton for punishment?

LARRY- You sure you didn't have a good time?

VANESSA- In a children's place? What do I look like?

(*Larry stares at her, as she evades eye contact.*)

VANESSA- Okay, I had fun. You got me! Daniel and I had a lot of fun. But still, he was such a child. His favorite movie stars were the Three Stooges. His favorite musician was Weird Al Yankovic. And his favorite TV show? WWF Wrestling!

LARRY- He also had a huge collection of wrestling toys dating all the way back to the pre-Wrestlemania days.

VANESSA- Don't remind me.

LARRY- Then you came along. He sold off his entire toy collection, got rid of the Stooges videos, quit watching his favorite shows.

VANESSA- Like that's really a bad thing. I mean it was all garbage!

LARRY- It was something he enjoyed since he was a kid, and believe it or not, it was what shaped him into the fun-loving guy you dated.

VANESSA- But he could have been so much more. I introduced him to Beethoven and Chopin. I took him shopping at nice places and expanded his wardrobe beyond Stone Cold Steve Austin T-shirts out of his wardrobe. Things were really going well. But then he started getting all miserable and nasty.

LARRY- Mmm hmm. Funny how that happened as you were shaping him into your ideal man, isn't it?

VANESSA- Why do you insist on blaming me for our relationship's failure?

LARRY- Why can't you accept the things that make other people different rather than insisting everyone conforms to your will?

VANESSA- *(taken aback)* That's the same thing that stupid kid wrote on his web site. *(snaps out of her momentary doubt)* Look, I don't have to take this from you. Okay? I don't even know why we got on the subject.

LARRY- It's not like it's irrelevant to our being here. We were sent here to learn how to be more sensitive, something you failed to be for Daniel.

VANESSA- And I suppose you have authority to talk? I'm here because some idiot I barely knew wrote me into his suicide note blaming me for all of his problems. Why are you here?

LARRY- You wouldn't believe me.

VANESSA- Try me.

LARRY- I punched a guy in a wheel chair.

VANESSA- *(pause, trying to make sense of Larry's words)* You mean you punched a guy, and now he's in a wheelchair?

LARRY- Nope. He was already in the wheelchair when I hit him.

VANESSA- What kind of sick twisted jerk would hit a guy in a wheelchair?

LARRY- The kind that won't let guys take advantage of girls. The dude was a disabled, but he was also a jerk. We were at a party, he was hitting on my friend Christine. He put his hand on her rear. I put my fist in his face.

VANESSA- Okay, now I don't believe you.

LARRY- Neither did the court, unfortunately. No one could bring themselves to believe a disabled person could be capable of sexual harassment. So here I am.

VANESSA- Well, that's certainly disappointing.

LARRY- Ehh, it could have been worse. Least I didn't go to jail.

VANESSA- No, not the punishment, the crime. I had you figured for a gang member, or something more exciting like that.

LARRY- I'm not sure if I should I be flattered or offended by that comment.

VANESSA- I'm not sure I know how I meant it either. But I'll say this, and I mean it as a

compliment. Thanks for standing up for your friend. Too bad there aren't more guys like you, who know how to respect a girl.

LARRY- Too bad there aren't more girls who know how to respect guys in the same way.

ADAM – Part 6

I do not know if what awaits me at the end of this gun. Will there be a void? Or will I come face to face with God? I just don't care any more. If you're anything like your people, I wouldn't want to know you. You preached to love one another, yet I've felt everything except love from Christians. Even if I could know you were different, well, I still reject you. You have left your "followers" to treat people like me poorly. You have allowed so many of the people you "love", including me, to suffer. So you want me to trust you with my life? I don't want to spend eternity with a careless deity like you, or with the company you keep.

SCENE EIGHT

(A coffee shop. Nicole sits alone, sipping her coffee. A paperback novel is in front of her. Lindsay enters with a flavored soda and her backpack.)

NICOLE- Interesting choice of beverage.

MARTY- I'm not one for doing things just because other people do it. Coffee tastes nasty. Give me a fruit-flavored soda any day.

NICOLE- That stuff's too sweet for me.

MARTY- You brought my book.

NICOLE- Yes I did.

MARTY- Wasn't it the most wholly remarkable book you ever ready?

NICOLE- Heh, it was interesting.

MARTY- Good or bad interesting?

NICOLE- Confusing more like it. I expected a humorous spoof of travel books, detailing the mysteries of the galaxy. Instead, I get the story of the Earth being blown up and mice, and this ultimate answer to life.

MARTY- Life, the universe, everything.

NICOLE- Which is 42.

MARTY- Yes.

NICOLE- No explanation, no elaboration. Just 42.

MARTY- Right.

NICOLE- Okay, what does it mean?

MARTY- That's just it. It doesn't mean anything. Not unless you know the question.

NICOLE- And what is the question?

MARTY- No one knows. That's why the Earth was built by the mice.

NICOLE- But it was destroyed by the Vogons.

MARTY- Yes, and?

NICOLE- Seems like poor planning or communication to me. Didn't they tell the Vogons what was going on? Don't the Vogons care about learning the answer?

MARTY- Of course not. The Vogons are unpleasant and hate everyone.

NICOLE- (*sighs*) I give up.

MARTY- (*puts another book on the table*) So I guess you won't be wanting this?

NICOLE- A sequel?

MARTY- Part two of the trilogy of five books?

NICOLE- A trilogy of five—I'm not even going to ask.

MARTY- You want to read it?

NICOLE- Sure.

MARTY- (*pats Nicole on the back*) You've taken your first step into a much larger world.

NICOLE- Who said that, Gandalf?

MARTY- Ben Kenobi.

NICOLE- I'll get this eventually.

MARTY- I've been reading your book too.

NICOLE- You have, huh?

MARTY- Yes... in a fit of boredom. I couldn't sleep, and it was either read the Death of Robin series again, or something new.

NICOLE- How did you like it?

MARTY- Frankly, I was just as confused over it as you were over the *Guide*. But, I'm not giving up either. I'm gonna read some more this evening.

(*Brandon and Lindsay enter.*)

NICOLE- I'm glad to hear it.

BRANDON- Nicole, hey.

NICOLE- Hi, guys. Lindsay, you remember Marty.

LINDSAY- Of course. Hi.

MARTY- Hello again.

NICOLE- Brandon, this is Marty. Marty, Brandon.

BRANDON- Ah, yes. You're Marty.

MARY- Since the day I was born.

BRANDON- Cute. So what are you two doing here?

NICOLE- Trading books. (*pick up a book*) Ever read this?

BRANDON- *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*? What is it, like some travelogue about space?

MARTY- Not exactly. More of a... well, it's a science fiction epic with lots of British humor.

BRANDON- You mean like Monty Python?

MARTY- Yeah.

BRANDON- Can't stand Monty Python. But I do enjoy science fiction. Big time.

MARTY- What's your favorite stuff?

BRANDON- *Star Trek the Next Generation* was great.

MARTY- What about the original?

BRANDON- Ehh, I hate old *Star Trek*. Kirk was a total wuss.

MARTY- Hey, watch what you say about the good captain. I've seen guys beaten for saying less.

BRANDON- It was so campy. Give me good sci-fi, something like *Lost in Space*.

MARTY- The TV show or the movie?

BRANDON- They made a TV show from that movie?

MARTY- Oh brother.

NICOLE- The TV show came first.

MARTY- You know, hard as it is to believe, there was science fiction being made and written before 1977.

BRANDON- What happened in 1977?

MARTY- Oh boy.

LINDSAY- Just a little film called *Star Wars*. Even I know that one, Brandon.

MARTY- I think I need a brownie. Nicole, wanna split one with me?

NICOLE- Sounds good.

MARTY- I'll be right back.

(Marty exits.)

BRANDON- If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I'd have never believed it.

NICOLE- What's that?

BRANDON- You and that kid.

NICOLE- That "kid"?

BRANDON- Sean told me about your little outreach program.

NICOLE- Outreach program?

LINDSAY- I never said anything about an outreach program. I just said that she and Marty were hanging out.

BRANDON- Right, Marty, the dead kid's best friend.

LINDSAY- Wanna say that a little louder? I don't think she can hear you over at the counter.

BRANDON- That is her, right? The best friend?

NICOLE- Yes she is. And she also happens to be my friend.

BRANDON- I never would have believed it.

NICOLE- Believed what?

BRANDON- Of all people, you would let that manifesto get to you.

NICOLE- My friendship with Marty has nothing to do with that website.

BRANDON- Can you honestly say you'd be meeting her here if Adam hadn't published it?

NICOLE- I don't know. Maybe.

BRANDON- Maybe?

NICOLE- I met her at Adam's visitation, before I even knew about the website. I knew she was broken up inside, and you guys know how I am with hurting people.

LINDSAY- I know.

NICOLE- I called her up started invited her shopping with me. We got to know each other better... we became friends. Maybe I wouldn't have met her without Adam, but I wouldn't wish things to be different.

BRANDON- All right. I believe you. I just... well, I hope it's not because of what Adam wrote about you.

LINDSAY- So what if it was? Adam said some pretty pointed things in his letter. Can you honestly say it didn't affect you when you read it?

BRANDON- Not in the slightest.

NICOLE- Oh come on.

BRANDON- I am not going to be moved to tears over the death of a whiner like him. He's the perfect example of the damage Clinton did to America. Boo hoo, I'm the victim. Everybody else is guilty but me. He blames his parents. His teachers. His classmates. People he doesn't even know. We're to blame for his suicide?

NICOLE- You knew him though.

BRANDON- Sure, I had a class with him. We talked about different stuff. But he was not the kind of guy I'd hang around and be friends with.

NICOLE- Isn't that pretty much what Adam wrote about you?

BRANDON- What do you expect him to say? You think he's going to take responsibility for his own actions?

NICOLE- You're right. I suppose that is too much to ask, for someone to take responsibility, own up to their own faults and try to do something to correct them.

BRANDON- I can't believe what I'm hearing! Are you honestly blaming me for that boy's death?

NICOLE- Of course not. But perhaps you are guilty of the inaction he accused you of.

BRANDON- Adam Krieger was no responsibility of mine. And that girl is not your responsibility either. He couldn't handle his problems, so he chose the chicken way out.

(Marty walks back in. Brandon can't see her, but Lindsay, and Nicole can.)

BRANDON- And as for Marty, whether she learns to deal with life, or ends up like her buddy Adam is something she'll decide on her own. You can't save a soul without their consent, so

don't feel like you have to baby-sit her 'cause it's not your problem.

(Silence. Nicole looks at Marty, not knowing what to say. Lindsay is steaming. Marty goes stone-faced. Brandon realizes why the girls are silent.)

NICOLE- Marty--

MARTY- I don't want to hear it.

(Marty drops the brownie on the table and grabs her bag.)

NICOLE- Marty, he wasn't speaking for me.

MARTY- *(sifts through her bag)* I don't have your book to give back to you. Guess I'll bring it to you on Monday.

NICOLE- Marty, let's talk about this.

MARTY- I don't want to talk about this. Adam was a fool to write that web site. He did it for you all, you know. He would have been better off keeping silent, and let Khan destroy you.

NICOLE- What's that supposed to mean?

MARTY- If you mean what you said about caring, you'll figure it out for yourself.

(Marty runs out. Nicole turns and glares at Brandon. She gathers her things and leaves after Marty.)

BRANDON- Hmm, didn't realize Ghengis Khan was any kind of a threat to modern day high school students.

OPTIONAL BREAK/ END OF ACT ONE

(He looks at Lindsay, who is obviously mad at him.)

BRANDON- What? Come on, it was going to come to this sooner or later. I mean Nicole can't very well look after her when she goes away to college, can she? It's better for Marty too, to let her sink or swim. Can't go on being the victim all her life.

LINDSAY- Brandon, I've met some cold hearted people in my life. But nothing I have ever witnessed before compares to what I just witnessed.

BRANDON- What are you talking about?

LINDSAY- I'm talking about you.

BRANDON- Me?

LINDSAY- Yes, you.

BRANDON- So now you're blaming me for Adam's death, too?

LINDSAY- No one's accusing you of murder. But you can be certain no one's going to call you a hero.

BRANDON- If you say so.

LINDSAY- You think everyone's responsible for their own miseries. No matter what a person has suffered through no one ever deserves a helping hand.

BRANDON- What's the use of giving a helping hand if the other person doesn't want help? Unless you honestly desire to be healed, it's not going to happen.

LINDSAY- Some times people suffer so much, they need someone else to love them first. Unless they can feel loved, they may never believe they deserve to be healed.

BRANDON- Sorry, Lindsay. I just don't buy that. I've had my share of bumps in life. My parents divorced. I lost my grandfather whom I was very close to. I've always managed to rebound. And look at you. You came from a one parent house hold. You had to drop out of school for four months to take care of your mom when she went on disability. And in spite of your trials, you're a strong person with firm convictions on everything from politics to sexual purity to--

LINDSAY- Shut up.

BRANDON- What?

LINDSAY- I said shut up.

BRANDON- What's the matter? I'm speaking the truth, aren't I?

LINDSAY- You don't know a thing about me. And there's a good reason for that. Because even before Adam's web site, I knew the real you. You're judgmental, arrogant, and not to be trusted. But today, I'm going to tell you some things I swore you'd never know, just so you can see how wrong you are. People like you always pat me on the back for my moral convictions. Where other people ridicule the virgin queen, you go just as far to worship her. You wanna know why I never put out in junior high? It's not my faith, because I don't really have any. When I was a little girl, my father abused me sexually. I was not only raped, but photographed. Six years old, I was used and degraded by a child pornographer. My own father, Brandon!! That's why I won't let any guy touch me. And that's why I don't have faith. In God or any higher being. But I am so thankful, that after all I went through my mother didn't say the same things to me that you just did. You can't ask a six year old child to pick herself up and carry on after an experience like that. All you can do is hold her, and love her. And maybe, some day, she'll learn to love herself again.

(Blackout.)

ADAM – Part 7

As my final moments tick away, I wonder what impact these words will create. It depends first on this web

site being found, as I doubt whether school administration will want such venom spoken publicly about their lack of caring. Still, the Internet is a remarkable place where even the least significant individual can be heard. Will anyone listen? Will anyone take action? Will students pause and pay attention to the hurting hearts around them? And even if they do, will it be a temporary salve for their egos, to convince themselves they're really not bad people... or will real change happen?

SCENE NINE

(Kimmy sits on a bench outside of school. Jake enters, carrying a rose. He sneaks up behind her and covers her eyes, holding his hands - and the rose stem - over her eyes.)

KIMMY- OW!

JAKE- Guess who?

KIMMY- Jake, you're stabbing me in the eye!

JAKE- *(pulls hands away)* Whoa!

KIMMY- I thought it was you.

JAKE- Sorry about that. *(sheepishly offers the rose)* Here you go.

KIMMY- Thank you.

JAKE- I am so glad you called. It's been weeks since we last were together, and I really thought we had a good thing going.

KIMMY- *(not in agreement)* Oh you think so?

JAKE- Yeah. *(senses the uncertainty in Kimmy)* Well... what did you think?

KIMMY- I'm not sure. We had some drinks, and then we...

JAKE- *(smiling proudly)* We made some magic, didn't we?

KIMMY- I don't know that I would call it magic.

JAKE- It was a night to remember.

KIMMY- Certainly a night I'll never forget.

JAKE- So what are you thinking? We due for an encore?

KIMMY- Jake... what do you think of me?

JAKE- Well, let me think. You're beautiful. You're a good kisser.

KIMMY- Jake, what do you think of me as a person?

JAKE- Those are personal things.

KIMMY- No, Jake... forget about my looks or my kiss. Do you care about me?

JAKE- Well, yeah.

KIMMY- As a friend?

JAKE- Huh?

KIMMY- Do you think of me as a friend, not just someone you had a fling with?

JAKE- I guess so... are you saying you just want to be friends?

KIMMY- I'm telling you that right now, I need a friend. I want you to be that friend.

JAKE- What's going on?

KIMMY- Jake... I don't know how to tell you this. I've rehearsed it in my mind a hundred times, and none of them came out right.

JAKE- Awww, are you trying to say you love me?

KIMMY- Jake, I'm trying to tell you that I'm... I'm pregnant.

JAKE- *(long pause, as it sinks into his think head)* Oh my.

KIMMY- That's all you can say?

JAKE- Sorry, Kimmy, I haven't had time to rehearse my lines like you have. *(shakes his head)* Oh my gosh. You're sure about this?

KIMMY- I have two home tests and a blood test from my doctor that all say yes.

JAKE- Wow. I need something to drink.

KIMMY- Jake, I need your help. I can't face this alone.

JAKE- Why not?

KIMMY- What do you mean why not?

JAKE- It's not that big a deal. You go to the clinic, you're in and out in a couple hours. My sister had one last year.

KIMMY- You mean an abortion?

JAKE- Yes. Don't tell me you—You want to keep it?

KIMMY- I haven't decided that yet. My youth pastor's talked to me about some local ministries that help teenage moms. He's also given me information about adoption.

JAKE- That's nice, but what about—

KIMMY- Abortion is out.

JAKE- I think it needs to be considered.

KIMMY- It's my decision. I'm going to have the baby.

JAKE- Oh that's just great.

KIMMY- Sorry, Jake.

JAKE- How can you do this to me? To force me to become a father?

KIMMY- No one forced you to have sex with me. It was your choice and mine.

JAKE- We were drunk.

KIMMY- Well, I hate to break it to you, but being drunk is not an effective form of birth control.

JAKE- Thanks for the news flash.

KIMMY- Jake, I need your help. The baby needs your help.

JAKE- Why me? Isn't there someone else?

KIMMY- You're the father. I just thought maybe you might be ready and willing to take responsibility and help me. *(she puts a hand on her belly)* Help both of us.

JAKE- *(shudders at the sight of Kimmy touching her belly)* You asked the wrong guy.

KIMMY- Jake don't say that, please.

JAKE- I'm sorry, Kimmy. I'm not ready to have a child?

KIMMY- You selfish jerk, do I look like I'm ready??

JAKE- You've heard my solution. You decide to end this, I'll help pay for it. Otherwise... You're on your own.

KIMMY- Jake, don't leave me. I need you.

(Jake glares at Kimmy, then exits. Kimmy sits on the bench. She breaks the rose in half in anger and tosses it. She leans forward on her hands, crying. Vanessa enters, walking through. Vanessa stops at the side of the stage. She pivots to look at Kimmy, who buries her head in her hands. Vanessa bends over, peering for a closer look.)

VANESSA- Hey? Hey, you, girl! *(peers even closer)* Are you crying?

(There's no answer. Vanessa puts down her backpack, opens it, and digs out her notes from her sensitivity class. She reads, stilted and verbatim, from a page. This should be played for laughs.)

VANESSA- Ex-cuse me. I no-ticed you seemed down. Can I be of some a-ssis-tance?

KIMMY- It's okay. I'll be fine.

VANESSA- Are you cer-tain? Come on, you can talk to me.

KIMMY- I'd rather not.

VANESSA- It might make you feel bett-er. Come on. What-e-ver it is, it will feel good ha-ving it out.

(Kimmy looks up at Vanessa. Vanessa smiles, then in an embarrassed move hides her cheat sheet behind her back.)

KIMMY- You really wanna know?

(Vanessa turns around fishes for the response.)

VANESSA- Yes. Tell me what it is and I'll list them—I mean listen!

KIMMY- *(turns away)* You don't have to do this.

VANESSA- *(checks her sheet, then hides it)* I want to.

KIMMY- Are you sure?

(Vanessa searches her notes again. She sees Kimmy looking at her.)

VANESSA- *(answering on her own)* Yeah. *(folds up and tosses her notes away)* Yeah, I really do. *(sits beside Kimmy)* My name's Vanessa.

KIMMY- Kimmy.

VANESSA- Now Kimmy, what can I do for you?

KIMMY- Right now? Just hold me.

(Vanessa holds Kimmy. Blackout.)

ADAM – Part 8

My heart certainly goes out to my fellow outsiders. With me gone, some of you will certainly feel more of the pain and hurt that I did. No one understands you. No one cares how your day is going. No one bothers to get to know you as anything more than a nerd, a geek, a loser. You can do nothing for their social status, save the occasional boost to the ego they get from putting you in your place. Some of you, like Andy Riker, will find outlets in writing. Some, like James Moon, will have an escape in art. Some, like Sean Gilbert, will live their lives pursuing unicorns that they will never, ever catch. I never had a talent to lose myself in, or a dream or unicorn to chase, and so I have taken the path most dreaded. Some of you may soon join me, and I look forward to welcoming a brother or sister to the land where you will never suffer the loneliness and rejection that faces you now.

SCENE TEN

(Sean's house. Sean is in his room, working on a note.)

SEAN- *(reading over his writing)* "I can't believe I'm actually doing this. I've bitten my lip and kept silent for a long, long time. But recent events have caused me to reflect on my life, and I can't keep silent any longer. How many times have we shared long talks about our lives, what we're up to now, and dreamed about the future? I don't know if it's even possible to count. But equally hard would be tracking the times I have longed to be able to share not only our present, but our futures. You are unlike any other girl I have ever known. You're smart, and insightful. You see things in me and in the world that I totally miss, and I love when you shared them. What's more, you don't give me that, 'What planet are you from?' look girls have given me since... well, as long as I can remember. What I really mean to say is..." *(deep breath)* "I love you. I always have. And more than anything, I would like to—"

NICOLE- *(off stage)* Sean? You here?

SEAN- *(caught like a deer in headlights)* Yeah, just a second.

(Nicole walks into the room briskly. Sean coolly slides the note underneath a stack of other things.)

NICOLE- I'm glad I caught you. I need some... *(observes his move)* help.

SEAN- I'll do my best. What's up?

NICOLE- Did I interrupt something?

SEAN- Nothing big.

NICOLE- Uh oh.

SEAN- What?

NICOLE- I know you, Sean. You're hiding something from me.

SEAN- It's nothing, really.

NICOLE- Nothing?

SEAN- Nothing that I can share. With you. Now.

NICOLE- So what's her name?

SEAN- Why do you automatically assume it's a girl?

NICOLE- Just a hunch.

SEAN- Maybe it is, maybe it isn't. But I'm not at liberty to discuss it now.

NICOLE- Then I won't press you on it.

SEAN- I appreciate that.

NICOLE- Listen, Marty said something and I need to see if you can interpret it for me.

SEAN- Something German?

NICOLE- Sci-fi. At least I hope it was sci-fi.

SEAN- Tell me about it.

NICOLE- We met over at Highland Coffee Co. yesterday to talk about the books we were both reading. Things were cool like always, and then Brandon and Lindsay showed up. Marty went to get herself a brownie, and Brandon... well, he was Brandon.

SEAN- Heh, I saw Lindsay last night. Sounds like she ripped him a new one.

NICOLE- He deserved it.

SEAN- I will say this, Adam forced people to take a different look at themselves whether they want to or not. Some people are still fighting it, some people have really changed. Just this morning, I saw Vanessa Dietrich out having breakfast with Kimmy Vanover.

NICOLE- That's nothing. I met Vanessa's new boyfriend the other day. He's an ex-con.

SEAN- No way.

NICOLE- Some guy named Larry she met at her sensitivity awareness group. She said he was the only guy she ever met who wasn't intimidated by her. She loved that.

SEAN- Wonder what her dad thinks?

NICOLE- That's the funniest part. Her dad blew a fuse at first, but Ness shut him up, suggesting that if he was going to be quick to judge Larry, maybe he needed to go to the same class with Vanessa.

SEAN- Good one. So anyway, back to your story.

NICOLE- Marty came back to the table as he was spouting off about how all I was doing was baby-sitting her to make sure she doesn't kill herself too, and she thought that was how I really felt—or at least I assume that's what happened. Anyway, I asked if we could talk. She turned around and told us that Adam was a fool to post his web site. She told us that he had done it for our benefit.

SEAN- Done what? The web site.

NICOLE- Yes. And then she said he would have been better off keeping silent, and "let Khan destroy" us.

SEAN- Khan?

NICOLE- Do you know what that's supposed to mean?

SEAN- Khan... Let me take another look at that web site.

(Sean pulls out a printed copy.)

NICOLE- You printed it off?

SEAN- A memento. The school board's trying to get the ISP to take it down.

NICOLE- Hadn't heard that.

SEAN- A few more days, and AdamsLetter.com will be no more. Let me see... Yes, of course. Here. The last line. It's from *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. Remember?

NICOLE- It's been a while, Sean.

SEAN- This quote, it's from the conversation Spock and Kirk had about dying. They later spoke the same words when Spock sacrificed himself to save the ship after the battle with Khan.

NICOLE- You're right. This is it. This is what she was trying to tell me. That's why Adam killed himself. *(hugs Sean)* Thanks, pal.

SEAN- No problem.

NICOLE- I need to get over and see her. Oh—good luck with the, uhm... whoever she might be.

SEAN- Hmm? Oh the note.

NICOLE- I'm sure she'll love it.

SEAN- Yeah.

(Nicole exits. Sean pulls the note back out.)

SEAN- I sure hope you do, Nicole.

(Blackout.)

Adam – Part 9

Farewell forever. I am going to another place. Where, I do not know. But logic dictates that it can only be an improvement. Perhaps my passing will only prove a footnote in a school yearbook. Then again, perhaps the sacrifice of one might bring hope to others. If my death makes life for one person a little more bearable, or a little more enlightened, do I really die in vain?

"The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or the one."

SCENE ELEVEN

(Marty's house, in the den. She walks in with a stack of papers, an envelope, a bowl, and a small plastic bag from the grocery. She folds the papers, and tucks them into the envelope. Then she reaches in the bag, and pulls out a bottle of water, and a bottle of pills. She opens the pill bottle

and pours its contents into the bowl. She opens the bottle of water. She leans forward, gazing at the pills. Finally, she picks up a handful. There's the sound of a door knocking. She lowers her hand with the pills, frustrated. She hesitates a long moment. The knock is heard again. She tries to scoop the pills back into the bottle, but spills some. She picks them up by hand, dropping them in the bag. Another knock.)

MARTY- Just a minute.

(Marty twists the top of the bag closed and sets it behind her on the couch. She then walks off, and returns with Nicole trailing behind, treading lightly.)

MARTY- You want something?

NICOLE- "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. Or the one." That's why Adam killed himself. For the good of the many.

MARTY- I heard someone on the news the other day talking about my best friend as if he were some... some laboratory animal. He had all the classic traits of a school shooter, they said. Adam was not a killer! He played video games, yes. He loved comics and science fiction. But those things did not make him a murderer. If anything, they made him a philosopher. He determined to do something to benefit mankind.

NICOLE- So he killed himself, hoping that in death, he could make a statement that would change lives for his peers and classmates.

MARTY- What better way to gain a platform for himself, for his beliefs, than to die for his beliefs? Would you have listened to him if he had come up to you in class and told you all that was on his mind?

NICOLE- I would.

MARTY- How about Brandon? Or Vanessa Dietrich? Do you think Jake Hall would have given him the time of day?

NICOLE- Probably not.

MARTY- Of course not! But look at what happened. Adam forced them to see who they really were. Even you. He obviously didn't reach everyone, but those he did, he changed for the better.

NICOLE- I agree. But in spite of the things that have happened, I don't believe that killing himself was for the best.

MARTY- There was no other way. Adam knew the price he had to pay, and he did it, without regard to himself.

NICOLE- Or the ones who loved him.

MARTY- Nobody loved Adam!

NICOLE- What about you? You cared about him, didn't you?

MARTY- Sure I did. I was the only one.

NICOLE- And he was all you had in the way of friends, too.

MARTY- So what?

NICOLE- So Adam not only disregarded himself, he disregarded the ones he loved.

MARTY- He did what he did for me as much as anyone else.

NICOLE- Why didn't he tell you what he was going to do? If he loved you so much, why didn't he explain it to you ahead of time instead of letting you see the note with everyone else?

(Marty turns away silent.)

NICOLE- Why didn't he talk to you beforehand?

MARTY- Because I knew I would have... I would have tried to stop him.

NICOLE- Even though it was for the good of the many.

(Pause. Marty holds back tears.)

NICOLE- You miss him?

MARTY- Of course I do.

NICOLE- Do you wish he was still here?

MARTY- How can you ask me that? After all the good his death has caused--

NICOLE- Do you wish he was still here, Marty? If it meant giving back all the good, all the things that have changed, would you want him back?

(Long pause.)

NICOLE- You would, wouldn't you?

MARTY- Of course I would. *(hands Nicole her note)* But who ever said I have to remain behind?

(As Nicole reads the note, Marty grabs the bag off the couch, partially to hide it, partially to draw attention to it. She is torn as to what she wants.)

NICOLE- *(looks up)* You were ready to do it.

MARTY- *(putting up a strong front)* I still am.

NICOLE- *(sees the bag)* You can't do it.

MARTY- Why not?

NICOLE- *(moving to take the bag)* Because I won't allow you to follow him.

MARTY- *(holding the bag back)* What do you care?

NICOLE- *(taking hold of the bag)* I'm your friend.

MARTY- *(wrestling for the bag)* Are you now? Or are you simply afraid that you'll make the naughty list in my farewell letter? Don't worry, Nicole. I have nothing but good things to say about you. I won't destroy your reputation.

NICOLE- Marty, let go!

(Nicole takes the bag away. Marty attacks Nicole for it.)

MARTY- Give it back!! Give it to me!!

(Nicole pushes Marty off. She collapses in a heap, crying.)

MARTY- I miss him so much.

NICOLE- I know you do.

MARTY- Why won't you let me go to him?

NICOLE- *(kneeling beside Marty, setting the pills a distance away)* If you go, it'll hurt me just as badly as he hurt you. And I don't believe you want me to go.

MARTY- Why not?

NICOLE- If you really wanted to do it, you would have never let me in the door.

MARTY- You want to leave, you can. I'm not keeping you here.

NICOLE- I'm not going. Not even if you tried to force me out. I will not let another person die because they felt they were all alone. I can't bring Adam back. But I'm going to do the next best thing.

MARTY- Which is what?

NICOLE- Be your friend. A real friend.

MARTY- A friend. Where were you before all this happened? Where were you when Adam needed a friend? You didn't even know my name before the other day at the funeral home.

NICOLE- I didn't. But things have changed. I'm here for you now. So talk to me.

OPTIONAL ENDING FOR SCENE 11

MARTY- There's nothing to talk about. I could talk for hours on end, and it wouldn't make any

difference.

NICOLE- Might help you to get things out in the open.

MARTY- But I need someone to understand. How can you possibly understand what I'm feeling?

NICOLE- Maybe I can't. But I know someone who can. Someone who died for the good of the many, of all mankind, long before we were born.

(This next bit should be played for humor.)

MARTY- Oh no.

NICOLE- What?

MARTY- You're talking about Jesus. You're gonna preach to me, aren't you?

NICOLE- I'm not going to preach to you.

MARTY- Yes you are. This is one of those conversations where you're going to tell me that Jesus is the answer, because if I believe in Him, I will go to Heaven and be free from pain and sorrow, and then I'm supposed to accept Him. Well forget it. I don't need a promise of Heaven 50 years from now. I need a little a little pain relief right here and now.

(More serious now.)

NICOLE- You can have it, Marty. See, Jesus died for our sins, and to give us eternal life. But that's not the whole story. Part of the reason Jesus came to Earth was to learn what it was like to be human. He lived the human experience for 33 years.

MARTY- Yeah, I read the book.

NICOLE- You did?

MARTY- Duh, you gave it to me when I gave you the *Hitchhiker's Guide*.

NICOLE- Then you know how much he experienced. He learned what it was like to work, to eat, to go hungry, to have friendships, to lose friends, to be heart broken, to be betrayed. He knows every pain and hurt that you feel. And he knows loneliness better than you or I will ever know.

MARTY- And this helps me, how?

NICOLE- He knows how you feel, and He knows how to comfort you. He won't always take away the pain, but He will always be with you, and never, ever leave.

MARTY- I've never known anyone to keep that promise. Adam's gone. My father left my mother and I when I was three. My pastor at the church where I grew up made that pact with me as well. Then he cheated on his wife, and he was gone. So how can I trust Jesus to be any different?

NICOLE- Because Jesus is not just a man. He is God. He created you, and He loves you. I know it's a little hard to believe.

MARTY- It's very hard to believe.

NICOLE- But what do you have to lose? You say everyone else in this world has let you down. You risk nothing if you give God a chance.

MARTY- How do I know I won't just be talking to the air?

NICOLE- How do you know you won't get an answer back?

MARTY- You mean God's going to talk to me? I'd like to know how.

NICOLE- So give Him the chance. Don't take my word for it, or anyone else. Give Him a chance to prove Himself. And you'll see there is someone out there who will never leave, never let you down.

(Lights out.)

SCENE TWELVE

(With lights out, a phone is heard ringing. Nicole's answering machine picks up.)

NICOLE- *(voice)* Hi, this is Nicole and Jill's room. We're off studying for finals, so leave a message, and we'll call you back when our brains unscramble. Merry Christmas!

(Beep.)

MARTY- *(voice)* Hey, Nicole, it's Marty. I ran into your mom today, and she said you should be home Saturday for holiday break. Just thought you might want to know I'll be signing my comic at the Great Escape Saturday from 1-4, so come by if you can. And if you're not busy that night, I'd love to hang out. See ya.

(Lights up. Marty sits at a card table with a stack of comics. She has written a comic book called "A New Hope." Jake enters, all sobered up, wearing a grocery store uniform. Marty does not know who he is.)

JAKE- Hi.

MARTY- Hi there.

JAKE- I'll take one of those with your autograph, please.

MARTY- Okay. *(opens a book to sign it)* Who shall I make it out to?

JAKE- Make it to Chase.

MARTY- To... Chase... There you go, Chase.

JAKE- Oh, Chase is my son. My name's Jake.

MARTY- Jake.

JAKE- Jake Hall? Your, uh, friend might have mentioned me.

MARTY- Oh my goodness, yes. How... how are you?

JAKE- Great, great. Like many people who walked the halls of our school last year, I'll never be the same. I've been clean and sober for four months, and I'm helping Kimmy Vanover raise our son.

MARTY- The pregnant girl?

JAKE- Well, she was. Chase is five months old now. Here. *(pulls a picture out of his wallet)*
There he is.

MARTY- He's adorable.

JAKE- Yeah, he's a character all right. And to think I might have never known him if... Ah, but what's the use of talking if's, right?

MARTY- Exactly.

JAKE- It is a shame, though, that I'll never get to thank Adam.

MARTY- I think a lot of people feel the same way. But like you said, no use in dwelling on the if's.

JAKE- Right.

MARTY- Anyway, Adam's death may have affected a few people, but what's really great is how those people are making a difference with their lives. You and Kimmy are obviously doing well. Lindsay's sharing her story with other abuse victims.

JAKE- You're telling your story in comics.

MARTY- Thanks to Sean. He's the one who got me the publishing deal. Now if only he'd get up the courage to tell Nicole how he feels.

JAKE- And then there's Vanessa.

MARTY- Wasn't she the girl who helped Kimmy with having the baby?

JAKE- You haven't heard the rest of the story? She eloped with the guy she met in her sensitivity training class and joined the peace corps.

MARTY- You're kidding!

JAKE- Yeah. We just for the first pictures from them in Africa. I never saw such a strange sight, even when I was stoned.

MARTY- You'll have to show me some time.

JAKE- Anyway, thanks for this. For sharing your story in this way. I just hope my son will be able to learn from this, rather than the hard road I took.

MARTY- Thanks for the encouragement. Gosh, you know a year ago, who would have ever thought we'd be having a conversation like this? You and me?

JAKE- Maybe this story will start some conversations.

MARTY- If it keeps one Adam from committing suicide, it was all worth it.

JAKE- See ya around, Marty.

MARTY- Bye.

(Jake exits. Marty's cell phone rings.)

MARTY- Hello? Hey, Nicole... Five o'clock? I'll be there... Sure, I'll bring a copy, just for you... See you soon.

(Marty hangs up. Blackout.)