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May I Have Your Attention, Please?

By Catherine Rhoden-Goguen

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DEDICATION

This play is dedicated first to my parents, who always sacrificed so I could have the best opportunities in life. Secondly, I acknowledge the drama students at Knox Central High School for believing in the play and bringing the characters to life.

—Catherine Rhoden-Goguen

Coping Strategies for Teens

- Spend time with family and friends.
- Get involved with after-school activities.
- Volunteer—you have a lot to offer.
- Think about and plan your future.
- Set realistic goals.
- Try to be open with your feelings.
- Write your feelings and thoughts in a journal or diary.
- Read books on subjects that uplift you.
- Laugh and keep your sense of humor!
- Consider the importance of spirituality in your life.
- Welcome others’ thanks, compliments toward you and praise for you.
- Eat right! Chocolate is good!
- Exercise regularly.
- Do not tolerate physical, emotional or sexual abuse from anyone. Get help immediately!
- Seek help if you feel overwhelmed or troubled.

Needing help is not a failing... it is simply being human. It's okay to ask for help!

Don't Ignore a Cry for Help

- Stay with the person—you are their lifeline!
- Listen, really listen! Take them seriously.
- Get or call for assistance immediately. It's okay to ask for help!

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1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)
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CAST OF CHARACTERS
(In Order of Appearance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRENT BORTHWICK</td>
<td>popular, attractive teenager and star athlete; 17 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRS. BORTHWICK</td>
<td>typical stay-at-home mom who has devoted her life to making a happy home and family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JILL BORTHWICK</td>
<td>younger sister of Chris and Brent who is well liked by all, sweet and the peacemaker of the family; 13 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR. BORTHWICK</td>
<td>stern, disciplinarian father who is a successful advertising executive and a workaholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABBY HOLLAND</td>
<td>Brent's girlfriend, a ditzy, popular cheerleader, but somewhat shy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHARLIE</td>
<td>mentally-challenged teen neighbor of the Borthwicks who is also friends with Chris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHRIS BORTHWICK</td>
<td>misunderstood teenager, the class clown who is infamous for his practical jokes; 15 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEAKERS 1-7</td>
<td>optional. May be played by male or female actors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AUTHOR’S NOTE

The character of CHARLIE was added to the play when a special education student enrolled in my theatre class and needed a part. CHARLIE has become one of the favorite characters of the play but can be modified to reflect the needs of the cast.

Suicide victims are not trying to end their life—they are trying to end the pain!

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SETTING

Time: The present.
Place: A middle class home.

Only one set is used for the entire play. The living room should be decorated with pictures of Brent and show signs of his career in sports, including trophies and medals. There are some pictures of Jill, as well. Items relating to Chris are purposefully not displayed to demonstrate Chris’s alienation from his family. The set should be simple but “homey.” EXIT LEFT leads to the front door, EXIT RIGHT to the kitchen.

There are three options for portraying the videotape of Chris onstage:

Option 1: Build a “big screen TV” large enough to hold the actor who plays Chris. Hang a black curtain across the front, which slides to suggest when the TV is on and off. Actor “freezes” when the tape pauses. This option adds depth to Chris’s character development and has been well-received in previous productions.

Option 2: Use a real television set and have the character of Chris offstage. A video camera can be set up backstage to transmit Chris live on TV. Make sure to use a TV large enough to be seen by the audience.

Option 3: Videotape the parts of Chris and play the actual videotape, starting and stopping the tape, using a remote control.

See PRODUCTION NOTES for more details.

PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES

ONSTAGE: Representation of a television (a real TV set with VCR or a large, constructed “big screen TV” with black curtain across “screen”); living room furniture, bean bag chair, trophies, medals and photographs of BRENT and JILL.

BROUGHT ON:
- Newspaper (MR. BORTHWICK)
- Duster, bowl of popcorn (MRS. BORTHWICK)
- Nail polish, bowl of popcorn (JILL)
- Videotape (CHARLIE)
- Woman’s hat, business man’s hat, baseball cap, crown, stuffed duck, small prop gun, crown, other wacky props (CHRIS).

ABOUT THE “TV”

Whether you choose to have CHRIS simulate the video onstage in a constructed “big screen TV” or have a live broadcast or pre-recorded tape on TV, timing is everything. The actor’s “freeze” must coincide with the use of the remote control in all cases. However, as the play progresses, JILL no longer needs to use the remote control to “pause” and “play” the tape every time FAMILY MEMBERS talk to one another or to the TV. If acting live, CHRIS can freeze while FAMILY MEMBERS speak to him, according to the script. If CHRIS is shown on TV, pausing and playing can be controlled from offstage. It is important to maintain flow during these intense “interactions” without showing the unnecessary action of pushing a button on the remote.

COSTUMES

Modern dress. BRENT could wear a sports jersey, perhaps from a local high school or professional sports team. Chris wears a tuxedo and changes hats throughout the performance as he addresses different family members. You will need a variety of hats and props for his character. Don’t limit yourself to the ones listed here. CHRIS should be very spontaneous and have a variety of wacky and bizarre props to play with, such as a rubber chicken, a stuffed duck, etc. Use your imagination.

SOUND EFFECTS

Doorbell, television static.
MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE?

AT RISE: LIGHTS UP on the Borthwick family living room. BREN'T is standing, showing ABBY his latest trophy. MR. BORTHWICK is reading the newspaper. MRS. BORTHWICK is busy dusting, and JILL is sitting in her favorite beanbag chair, polishing her nails.

BRENT: (Agitated, but talking to all of his FAMILY.) I hope you know I don't want to be here.

MRS. BORTHWICK: Now honey, we are your family. What can be more important than spending time with us? And besides, Chris wanted us all here. He said it was very important.

BRENT: If it's so important, where is Mr. Chris? (Glances at his watch.) It's already five til.

JILL: (Tries to play peacemaker.) He'll be here. Just chill, Brent.

BRENT: Let's get this straight. I'm gonna kill the little brat if he's caused me to miss the (Insert name of a popular band.) concert, and then he doesn't even show up.

MRS. BORTHWICK: Brent, don't speak about your brother that way.

MR. BORTHWICK: I am inclined to agree with Brent this time. We all have better things to do with our time than sit around here waiting for… Lord knows what.

JILL: Daddy, please just be patient… for me? (Smiles at MR. BORTHWICK and gives him that look that always wins him over.)

MR. BORTHWICK: Anything for you, my angel. (Kisses her on the forehead and goes back to his paper.)

JILL: And you, Brent?

BRENT: Don't even go there, Jill. You wanna give me back the $100 I spent on the concert tickets and the private time with my girl here, then we'll talk. (Leads ABBY to the loveseat. She is blushing.)

ABBY: Shhh… (Whispering.) Don't say things like that in front of your parents.

JILL: It isn’t going to hurt you to hear him out. After all, he is your brother, too.

BRENT: Oh, yeah. Don't remind me.

MR. BORTHWICK: At seven if he’s not here, I’m out of here. I have that big ad campaign to work on.

MRS. BORTHWICK: Honey, you’re always so busy. I think it’s nice to have the whole family together for a change.

BRENT: I wish this was the whole family.

END OF PLAY
JILL: Brent, stop that. How could you say that about your own brother? I love Chris!

BRENT: We would all be better off without him. You’re cool, Jill. You’re like me. But Chris—(Rolls his eyes.) he’s a freakin’ nutcase.

MRS. BORTHWICK: Brent, I won’t have you speak of your brother like that. It’s not seven yet, and we owe him at least the courtesy of seeing what he has to say. It might even be something exciting. After all, he asked me to pop some popcorn. Want to help me with that, Jill?

JILL: Sure, Mom. (EXITS RIGHT with MRS. BORTHWICK.)

ABBY: What’s going on with Chris? Does anyone know?

MR. BORTHWICK: There’s no telling with that boy. I have never seen someone waste so much talent. He is always goofing off… doing some stupid thing. This is probably just another stupid event to add to the list. (Changes the subject.) So, Brent, how was practice?

BRENT: It was awesome, Dad. I did awesome. (Smiles at ABBY.) Coach says the scholarship is mine in basketball or football. Talent scouts are going be at one of our next games.

MR. BORTHWICK: I am awfully proud of you, son. I wish Chris could be more like you.

BRENT: Well, Dad, just be glad you have me. Chris won’t ever be anything but a freak, some kind of Jim Carrey (or other popular comedian.) wannabe. He’s got serious problems, Dad.

JILL: (ENTERS RIGHT with MRS. BORTHWICK.) Popcorn! Popcorn! Who wants some popcorn?

BRENT: (Looks at his watch.) It’s seven by my watch, and as I said, I’m not staying here all night. (SOUND EFFECT: DOORBELL RINGS.)

MRS. BORTHWICK: I wasn’t expecting company. I wonder who that could be. (JILL EXITS LEFT to answer the door.)

BRENT: It’s probably Chris. He’s probably locked himself out of the house. If this is him just goofin off, I’m going to bust his freakin’ head.

MRS. BORTHWICK: Now, Brent, I don’t want any trouble. I am sure your brother has a purpose for all of this.

BRENT: (Sarcastically.) I am sure he has a purpose, too. He is probably somewhere watching to see who was stupid enough to actually show up.

JILL: (From OFF LEFT.) Charlie! How are you tonight? Come on in.

BRENT: Oh, Chris, you haven’t failed me. I have just done what any other sister would do. I love you, Chris. I always have been proud to be your sister.

CHRIS: There’s no sense in prolonging this event anymore. I asked you all here tonight to witness one final event in my life. You know it’s funny and even a little sad, but this is the longest I have ever had your attention. (Pulls out a gun and ALL gasp.) I have decided to name the program you are watching tonight, "May I Have Your Attention, Please?" That is all I have ever really wanted from any of you. And tonight, I feel I have finally felt a part of this family, even if only through a TV screen. I am going to end this program and end all of the embarrassment I have caused each and every one of you. I love you all. (Freezes. [Tape pauses.])

MR. BORTHWICK: What the hell is he talking about?

BRENT: Chris, damn it, you better not kill yourself. I need you. (Cries.) I am sorry… so sorry. Give me another chance, and I’ll tell everyone you’re my brother.

MRS. BORTHWICK: (Frantic.) Don’t just sit there, Keith. Call 911 or something. For God’s sake, do something! (MR. BORTHWICK grabs the phone.)

BRENT: (Directed at the AUDIENCE and his FAMILY.) Hey, everyone, it’s just a joke. Dad, put down the phone, it’s just a joke. Good one, Chris. Your best one yet. You really are a genius.

MRS. BORTHWICK: (Still worried, but coming to realize.) Maybe it is just a joke, Keith. Chris has that strange sense of humor.

MR. BORTHWICK: (Touches the TV screen.) I love you, son.

BRENT: (Stands and goes to the TV also.) Me, too, Chris.

ABBY: We all do. (Stands and goes to comfort BRENT.)

JILL: Put down the gun. This joke has gone far enough. (Stands near the screen.)

BRENT: Yeah, Chris, enough is enough. Come on out and tell us the punch line.

CHARLIE: Yeah, the punch line. (Laughing, stands with the rest of the FAMILY at the TV screen. CHRIS unfreezes and puts the gun to his head.)

BRENT: Oh, God, no!

JILL: No!

ALL: (Scream.) Chris!! (TV curtain closes. [The TV screen goes black.] With panic expressions frozen on their faces, they turn...
CHARLIE: (ENTERS LEFT with JILL, carrying a videotape.) Hi, Jill. The best basketball player to ever play in the state of New York. (Substitute the name of any state or province.)

BRENT: Yeah, that sounds about right.

CHRIS: "Mr. Popularity," "Mr. Can-get-any-girl-he-wants," "Mr.-I-don’t-have-to-do-anything-I-don’t-want-to-do." Brent, let’s talk about you. (Freezes. [Tape pauses.])

BRENT: No, let’s not. He’s just a jealous little punk, but I don’t feel guilty. I don’t feel guilty at all! I tried to help him. I tried to fix him up with a halfway decent girlfriend, but what did he do? He blew it.

CHRIS: (Unfreezes. [Tape resumes.]) Everything has always come so easy for you. The looks, the charm, the athletic ability. Before I came to high school, I was your biggest fan. I was proud to be your brother. I was in awe of you, and my classmates couldn’t believe that I got to use the same bathroom as you and even ride the same bus as you. But when I got to high school, it was pretty obvious you weren’t glad to be my brother. You would always go the other direction when you would see me walk anywhere near you. And you’d always say the same thing when anyone asked if we were brothers. (Covers his head with his hands, mocking BRENT, as if he was hearing voices.) "Unfortunately, yes, but I don’t claim him. We’re nothing alike." You said it a million times. (Freezes. [Tape pauses.])

BRENT: It’s not like that, Chris. I had to say that. I had to say it. I had an image to keep up with. Was I supposed to say? I worked hard to get where I was, and I wasn’t going to let your stupidity ruin it for me. Why couldn’t you just for once act like a normal human being?

CHRIS: (Unfreezes. [Tape resumes.]) You fixed me up with girls you knew would dump me. Popular girls you knew would only make fun of me. Despite all of that, you’re a great guy, and I admire you. I could never compete with you, and to tell you the truth, I never really wanted to. I always wanted a brother, just maybe not the world’s greatest everything brother. I just wanted your support and just for once to hear you say, “That’s my kid brother.” And finally, Jill. (Puts on a crown.) You truly are the only person I ever felt really tried to understand me. If I ever did anything close to good on this earth, it was being your brother. I know you have had to put up with a lot of my practical jokes and my spying on your friends and all, but I did it all out of love. I still do love you, and I only wish I could have been an even better big brother to you. You deserve only the best. I know I have failed you because I haven’t given you that. (Head down.)
very special occasion, and I hope that this will truly be a— (Puts hands up as if snapping a camera for a photo shoot.) work with me, baby— night to remember. (JILL pauses the tape, using the remote control. [CHRIS freezes.])

BRENT: Geez, why don’t we put him at Charter? Mom, Dad, he’s a freakin’ nutcase, I’ll say for the umpteenth time.

MRS. BORTHWICK: Oh, but look how handsome he is.

BRENT: It is a face only a mother could love.

ABBY: (Whispering.) He has nothing on you, stud muffin. But he is very handsome, Mrs. Borthwick. All of your children are. You should be very proud.

MRS. BORTHWICK: Oh, I am. I am always proud of my family, and so is their father. Right, dear?

MR. BORTHWICK: What has Chris given us to be proud of? I really do think it is about time we looked into getting him some help. If there was ever any doubt, this stunt tonight should remove it.

MRS. BORTHWICK: Chris is very bright. You know what the doctors said. He is a genius.

MR. BORTHWICK: I had such high hopes for him, and for what? Only to have him turn out acting like a lunatic. No family should have to be embarrassed this way.

MRS. BORTHWICK: Honey, don’t talk that way.

MR. BORTHWICK: It’s the truth, and sooner or later, you need to face up to it. Whether you’re aware of this or not, (Pause.) people talk about us. We’re not going to get parent of the year awards for Chris.

BRENT: Look, you guys, two out of three ain’t bad.

JILL: Maybe if you tried to understand Chris more… you might see him differently.

BRENT: I understand him fine, Jill. He acts like a freak to get attention, and then when he gets the attention, it’s not what he wanted. He wants us to feel sorry for him. Well, not me. No way am I going to feel sorry for him.

MR. BORTHWICK: (Realizing.) It’s not like that. It’s not like that at all. I don’t want you to be just like me and be too busy for your family. (Stands next to the TV as if talking to CHRIS.) I admire your love of life and your free-spirited nature, but those things don’t put food on the table. The real world is a tough, cold place sometimes. I only wanted to help you see that. (Drops head and returns to seat.)

CHRIS: (Comes out of sad mode.) Now once again, on with the show. No show could be complete without you, Brent. (Puts a ball cap on games. You said he was so much like you, it was like being you all over again. You used to take Brent fishing, and you would wrestle with him and even have tea parties with Jill. But you never had time for me. What about me?

MR. BORTHWICK: You were never interested in that stuff.

CHRIS: You see, your time would have meant a lot to me, too. You saw talent in every other child in the world, but what about my talents? What about me? Why was it that when I tried out for cheerleader, you weren’t there? And why was it that when I was the team mascot, you said I was being a fool? Why didn’t you see that my back flips and my team spirit were my gifts? Why, Dad? Why? I could never be the athlete Brent was. Why could no one accept me for who I was? I look up to you, Dad. I truly do. But I could never be you, and you could never let me be me. (Almost in tears. Freeze.)
other kids. On the first day of school, I was so courageous and tried to be a big boy by registering myself. I got all the information right and was so proud and brave. Well, brave on the outside at least, but inside I was scared to death. I needed you to be there with me. (Freezes. [Tape pauses.])

MRS. BORTHWICK: And I was proud of him. He was such a cute little guy, the most handsome one in the whole school. But my dad was dying of cancer then, and I needed to be with him. I wanted to be with Chris, but I knew he could do it all by himself.

CHRIS: (Untfreezes. [Tape resumes.]) I did learn, however, that I could get people’s attention by making them laugh, so I became the class clown, or maybe the class clown became me. I was a real riot tying people’s shoelaces together and telling knock-knock jokes. (Pulls out a stuffed duck.) I did all the things the other kids dreamed of doing but never dared to. Now, family, here’s a joke for you. (Uses the stuffed duck to speak.) Knock knock. (Silence.)

CHARLIE: Who’s there?

CHRIS: Now, in case one of you actually answered, then I say “family.” Come on, family, you know the drill. You ask, “Family who?”

CHARLIE: Family who?

CHRIS: Why, the Borthwick family, of course. That’s who. (Laughs hysterically, and CHARLIE joins in.)

ABBY: What is wrong with him?

MR. BORTHWICK: Is he on any kind of drugs, Brent? Any that you know of?

BRENT: It’s like I told you, Dad. He has serious mental problems, no drugs needed.

CHRIS: ( Stops laughing.) I don’t hate you or even blame you. I know you did the best you could, and I guess I just wanted you to know that when I was little and you spent time with me, Mom, it was the happiest time of my life. I love you for being my mom, and I miss that time. I wish you could know how much.

MRS. BORTHWICK: I wish I would have known.

CHRIS: (In a happier tone.) Now, on with the show. Next, we have Dad, Dad, dear old Dad. (Puts on a businessman’s hat.) You’re a successful advertising executive, president of the PTA, and in the eyes of the world, father of the year. You did all the right things for Brent. You taught him how to shoot the basketball, how to get all the right girls and how to be everything to everyone. You’d pal around with him in all your spare time. You never missed any of Brent’s
MRS. BORTHWICK: Jill’s right, dear. We should hear him out. We owe him that much.

MR. BORTHWICK: We owe him? We owe him?! Patty, where is your mind? We have paid our dues. We have given him life and a nice home. We give him food to eat, a bed to sleep in and the best clothes that money can buy. I have worked my fingers to the bone—to the very bone—for these kids, so they could have a better life than what I had. And this is the thanks I get?! No, we don’t owe him. He owes us. He owes us respect, loyalty and just common, human decency. When will he pay us? That is the big question!

CHARLIE: This is good popcorn, Mrs. Borthwick. There’s Chris on the TV. Chris is a star, oh, yeah!

JILL: Oh, yeah, Charlie. Chris is the man! (Gives CHARLIE a thumbs up. Plays the tape. [CHRIS unfreezes.])

CHRIS: And Jill, when you were born, it was the happiest day, for Heaven was sharing one of its best angels with the Borthwick family. You’ve lived up to your angel status ever since.

JILL: Awww, I love you, bubby!

CHRIS: Now, as fate would have it, I made my grand entrance on a very appropriate day, April first. April Fool’s Day. Yeah, good ol’ April Fool’s Day. Do you all know what it is like to be born on April Fool’s Day? (Pauses as if waiting for their answer.) I didn’t think so. Well, it’s not just a birthday… it’s an adventure. But April Fool’s Day turned out to be a very appropriate day for me to enter the world, for you, my family, like many others, have always viewed me as a fool. I never really viewed this as a bad thing, until I knew that you, my family, thought it was a bad thing. (Freezes. [Tape pauses, if real tape is used. See PRODUCTION NOTES.])

BRENT: Why? Because he is an egotistical little jerk. He wants to lay a guilt trip on all of us. But I’m not feeling guilty.

JILL: Maybe we should feel guilty. After all, we haven’t accepted him for who he is.

CHRIS: (Unfreezes. [Tape resumes.]) Congratulations, family! You have just won one million dollars!

CHARLIE: (Throws some popcorn in the air.) Oh, yeah!

CHRIS: Gotcha! (Laughs hysterically.) I have not called you all here to tell you you’ve won the lottery or even the Publisher’s Clearinghouse Sweepstakes, but I have called you here, nonetheless, and I feel it is important that you hear me out.

MRS. BORTHWICK: Chris doesn’t look so good.

CHRIS: I have a few things to say to each and every one of you about my so-called life.

JILL: You’re right, Mom. He doesn’t look at all like himself. Kinda strange… sad even.

CHRIS: Christopher David Borthwick, April Fool’s baby, middle child of the Borthwick family, child genius. Let’s take a trip down memory lane, back to the time you thought I was a genius. (Freezes. [Tape pauses.])

BRENT: Short trip. I never did think you were a genius.

MRS. BORTHWICK: Now, Brent, when Chris was only one year old, he learned the whole alphabet. He learned things so quickly.

MR. BORTHWICK: I must admit, those first few years I thought we had one of the great minds of the century, a child prodigy even.

MRS. BORTHWICK: Yes, I thought we had another Einstein on our hands.

CHRIS: (Unfreezes. [Tape resumes.]) Mom, (Puts on a woman’s hat.) you were the greatest teacher. You were so proud of me when I learned my ABCs backwards and forwards. I was always your cute little man. Why, I still remember those ABCs to this day. (In song.) z y x w v u t s r q p o n m l k j i h g f e d c b and a. (In the style of Elvis bowing.) Thank you, thank you, thank you very much.

BRENT: He always was wasting his time on worthless crap like that.

MRS. BORTHWICK: That’s my baby. I still have the paper where he wrote those.

CHRIS: What I remember most about that day is you, Mom. You were so proud of me when I learned my ABCs backwards and forwards. I was always your cute little man. Why, I still remember those ABCs to this day. (In sing song.) z y x w v u t s r q p o n m l k j i h g f e d c b and a. (In the style of Elvis bowing.) Thank you, thank you, thank you very much.

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CHRIS: What I remember most about that day is you, Mom. You were so proud of me. I will never forget that smile you had. You were almost beaming with pride. I never saw that smile much after that. (Freezes. [Tape pauses.])

MRS. BORTHWICK: I did the best I could, Chris. It was hard to find time for smiling, or for anything really. Brent was always busy with sports, and Jill was just a baby. Your father worked all the time. And Chris, you always seemed happy doing your own thing. He didn’t seem to need me as much as the other children, so it made sense to divide up all my time accordingly. Maybe I was wrong.

MR. BORTHWICK: You were a wonderful mother, hon. Don’t let him get you down.

CHRIS: (Unfreezes. [Tape resumes.]) I wanted you to be there… to be like all the other mothers. But then again, I wasn’t like all the
SETTING

Time: The present.
Place: A middle class home.

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BROUGHT ON:
- Newspaper (MR. BORTHWICK)
- Duster, bowl of popcorn (MRS. BORTHWICK)
- Nail polish, bowl of popcorn (JILL)
- Videotape (CHARLIE)
- Woman’s hat, business man’s hat, baseball cap, crown, stuffed duck, small prop gun, crown, other wacky props (CHRIS).

ABOUT THE “TV”

Whether you choose to have CHRIS simulate the video onstage in a constructed “big screen TV” or have a live broadcast or pre-recorded tape on TV, timing is everything. The actor’s “freeze” must coincide with the use of the remote control in all cases. However, as the play progresses, JILL no longer needs to use the remote control to “pause” and “play” the tape every time FAMILY MEMBERS talk to one another or to the TV. If acting live, CHRIS can freeze while FAMILY MEMBERS speak to him, according to the script. If CHRIS is shown on TV, pausing and playing can be controlled from offstage. It is important to maintain flow during these intense “interactions” without showing the unnecessary action of pushing a button on the remote.

COSTUMES

Modern dress. BRENT could wear a sports jersey, perhaps from a local high school or professional sports team. Chris wears a tuxedo and changes hats throughout the performance as he addresses different family members. You will need a variety of hats and props for his character. Don’t limit yourself to the ones listed here. CHRIS should be very spontaneous and have a variety of wacky and bizarre props to play with, such as a rubber chicken, a stuffed duck, etc. Use your imagination.

SOUND EFFECTS

Doorbell, television static.
### CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Appearance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th># of lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRENT BORTHWICK</td>
<td>popular, attractive teenager and star athlete; 17 years old</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRS. BORTHWICK</td>
<td>typical stay-at-home mom who has devoted her life to making a happy home and family</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JILL BORTHWICK</td>
<td>younger sister of Chris and Brent who is well liked by all, sweet and the peacemaker of the family; 13 years old</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR. BORTHWICK</td>
<td>stern, disciplinarian father who is a successful advertising executive and a workaholic</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABBY HOLLAND</td>
<td>Brent's girlfriend, a ditzy, popular cheerleader, but somewhat shy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHARLIE</td>
<td>mentally-challenged teen neighbor of the Borthwicks who is also friends with Chris</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHRIS BORTHWICK</td>
<td>misunderstood teenager, the class clown who is infamous for his practical jokes; 15 years old</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEAKERS 1-7</td>
<td>optional. May be played by male or female actors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AUTHOR'S NOTE**

The character of CHARLIE was added to the play when a special education student enrolled in my theatre class and needed a part. CHARLIE has become one of the favorite characters of the play but can be modified to reflect the needs of the cast.
MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE?

DEDICATION
This play is dedicated first to my parents, who always sacrificed so I could have the best opportunities in life. Secondly, I acknowledge the drama students at Knox Central High School for believing in the play and bringing the characters to life.

—Catherine Rhoden-Goguen

Coping Strategies for Teens

- Spend time with family and friends.
- Get involved with after-school activities.
- Volunteer—you have a lot to offer.
- Think about and plan your future.
- Set realistic goals.
- Try to be open with your feelings.
- Write your feelings and thoughts in a journal or diary.
- Read books on subjects that uplift you.
- Laugh and keep your sense of humor!
- Consider the importance of spirituality in your life.
- Welcome others’ thanks, compliments toward you and praise for you.
- Eat right! Chocolate is good!
- Exercise regularly.
- Do not tolerate physical, emotional or sexual abuse from anyone. Get help immediately!
- Seek help if you feel overwhelmed or troubled.

Needing help is not a failing... it is simply being human. It's okay to ask for help!

Don't Ignore a Cry for Help

- Stay with the person—you are their lifeline!
- Listen, really listen! Take them seriously.
- Get or call for assistance immediately. It's okay to ask for help!

Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program®
1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)
www.yellowribbon.org

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