THIS IS NOT A DRILL

*By*

*Laurie Allen*

Copyright © 2022 Laurie Allen

CAUTION: Professionals and Amateurs are hereby warned that performance of **THIS IS NOT A DRILL** is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of The United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth) and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic, and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission of which must be obtained from the Author in writing.The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions, and Canada for **THIS IS NOT A DRILL** are controlled exclusively by Next Stage Press. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance written permission and paying the requisite fee. Inquiries concerning production rights should be addressed to genekato@nextstagepress.com

 **SPECIAL NOTE**

Anyone receiving permission to produce **THIS IS NOT A DRILL** is required to give credit to the Author as sole and exclusive Author of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the Author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and in size of type equal to 50% of the size of the largest, most prominent letter used for the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the Author.

*Dedicated to the Snyder High School Drama Department and the*

*influence Jerry Worsham made in our lives to pursue our dreams.*

CAST

STUDENT 1: Confined to a wheelchair. Observant.

STUDENT 2: Popular student. Cheerleader.

STUDENT 3: Confident. Takes charge.

STUDENT 4: Nervous. Easily shaken.

STUDENT 5: Sensitive. Peacemaker.

STUDENT 6: Senior who tends to bully others.

STUDENT 7: Loner.

STUDENT 8: Freshman. Brainiac.

OFFICER GIVENS

ANNOUNCER: Off stage voice.

PRODUCTION NOTE: All characters can be cast as male or female. Also, for reality purposes, students may use their own names and call each other by those names during the play, if desired.

SETTING

A high school classroom.

**THIS IS NOT A DRILL**

*The stage is dim or dark. A spotlight comes up on STUDENT 1, center stage, who sits in a wheelchair.*

**STUDENT 1.** High school. It’s supposed to be the time of your life. Where memories are made. Memories that follow you into adulthood. Then years later, you find yourself saying, “Hey, remember that time…?” (*Looks off for a moment,* *remembering, then back to the audience.*) Yeah, I remember that time. We all do. Who could forget? Even if you wanted to. Yeah, preparing for natural disasters makes sense. Tornadoes. Fires. But preparing for people…that doesn’t make sense. Statistically, it’s highly unlikely you’re going to be involved in a school shooting. But that doesn’t mean you don’t take drills and warnings seriously. You do. Trust me. You do. But high school, it’s supposed to be about getting an education. And sports. Music. Band. Drama. First kisses. (*Shrugs, glances down for a moment.*) Or not. Friendships. Laughing until it hurts. Sometimes crying. Hormones. Yeah, we’ve got those. We’re emotional human beings. We can’t help it. But for some teens, life’s just a little bit harder. But does that mean you give up? No! Of course not. Cry? Maybe. Ok, yes. The crying is good. It releases all those pent-up feelings. You can’t hold all that stuff in. So, get it out, then move on. That’s what I do. And you know what they say. What doesn’t kill you, makes you stronger. (*Student 1 exits. Lights fade. An announcement is made over the intercom.)*

**ANNOUNCER.** Lockdown. Lockdown. This is not a drill. All staff, students, and visitors need to go to the nearest classroom at this time. Again, I repeat, this is not a drill. (*Slowly, lights come up on an empty classroom. The door swings open as* *STUDENT 2, STUDENT 3 and STUDENT 4 rush in*.)

**STUDENT 2.** Well, that was bad timing! I was headed to the gym to get things ready for the Pep rally this afternoon. We had cheers to practice, posters to hang, and balloons to blow up. Ugh!

**STUDENT 3.** Yeah. Why would they have a drill in between classes. It’s too chaotic.

**STUDENT 4.** They said it wasn’t a drill. This is scary. I don’t like this. I really don’t like this.

**STUDENT 3.** I’m sure they’ll give us the all clear soon. It’s probably just a prank or something stupid like that.

**STUDENT 2.** Yeah. This is Kennedy High. (O*r insert school's name.*) Nothing bad would ever happen here.

**STUDENT 4.** Let’s hope not. (*STUDENT 5 and STUDENT 6 rush in*.)

**STUDENT 5.** What’s going on? Does anyone know what’s going on? Is everyone ok in here?

**STUDENT 6.** Man, oh, man! Everyone was running for it! Heck, I never run for anything. But it’s crazy out there! You’d think the bell just rang and everyone was late for class. Halls emptied out in two seconds flat. I heard it’s not a drill. Is that right?

**STUDENT 2.** We think it’s just a prank.

**STUDENT 4.** No one said it was a prank.

**STUDENT 3**. I said maybe. Hopefully.

**STUDENT 6**. Well, that’d be a stupid thing to do. More stupid than when I pulled the fire alarm and blamed a freshman for it.

**ANNOUNCER.** Attention, teachers, students. This is a lockdown. Again, this is a lockdown. This is not a drill. Repeat. This is not a drill. *(STUDENT 7 and STUDENT 8 rush in.)*

**STUDENT 7.** This isn’t our class, but can we come in?

**STUDENT 6.** You’re here, aren’t you?

**STUDENT 5.** Be nice! We’re all freaking out here!

**STUDENT 8.** Does anyone know what’s going on?

**STUDENT 2.** No. We don’t know anything.

**STUDENT 7.** (*Looking around.*) Where’s the teacher?

**STUDENT 3.** It’s just us.

**STUDENT 8.** No teacher?

**STUDENT 5.** It’s just us. But we’ll be ok.

**STUDENT 3.** I’m going to lock the door. And turn off the lights. (*Locks door and* *flips light switch*.)

**STUDENT 4.** It’s still bright in here with all the windows.

**STUDENT 3.** I know, but that’s what we’ve been told to do. Ok, now let’s all move to the corner of the room. (*Everyone moves to the corner of the room, except for Student 6 who sits down at a desk in the middle of the room and puts his* *feet up*.)

**STUDENT 6.** Can’t we just chill? Sounds like it’s just a prank.

**STUDENT 3.** (*To Student 6.*) What are you doing? We need to move to the corner of the room.

**STUDENT 6.** Who put you in charge? I think I should be the one in charge. I’m like the only Senior in this room. You babies don’t know how to handle a real crisis. Not that this is one.

**STUDENT 3.** This isn’t about who’s in charge! It’s about our safety!

**STUDENT 6.** And I say, seniority matters. So, I say…let’s chill out, put our feet up and enjoy our freedom. I am.

**STUDENT 3.** (*Standing over Student 6*.) Are you kidding me? This isn’t recess! It’s a lockdown!

**STUDENT 6.** Yeah, yeah…nothing’s going to happen.

**STUDENT 4.** You don’t know that! They said on the intercom that it wasn’t a drill! So, get over here with the rest of us!

**STUDENT 6.** No, thank you. I’m good.

**STUDENT 3.** (*Slams hand on desk*.) Who do you think you are?

**STUDENT 6.** (*Jumps up*.) Who do you think you are?

**STUDENT 3.** I think I’m the one getting everyone to a safe area! Including you! So, come on! Don’t make me…!

**STUDENT 6.** Make you? Make you? You can’t make me do anything! (*Pushes him/her*.) Unless you wanna try! Do you? Do you? Come on! Let me see you try!

**STUDENT 3.** This isn’t the time or the place!

**STUDENT 6.** Yes, it is! (*Pushes him/her again.*) Come on! Come on! Are you scared?

**STUDENT 3.** I’m not scared of you!

**STUDENT 6.** (*Grabs Student 3 by the collar or shirt and gets in his/her face*.)

You should be scared of me! Because I can take you down!

**STUDENT 3.** Let go! (*Pushes Student 6 off*.) I said, let go!

**STUDENT 5.** (*Rushes over and stands between Student 3 & Student 6.*) Stop it! Stop it! This isn’t the time to be fighting!

**STUDENT 3.** Tell him/her! I’m just trying to get some control in this room. Get us to a place of safety.

**STUDENT 5.** (*To Student 6.*) Stop trying to prove something to everyone! We’ve got to do what we’ve been told!

**STUDENT 6.** (*To Student 3.*) You and me…we’ve got business to deal with later! Got it?! Punk!

**STUDENT 3.** Whatever! But like I said, for now, we all need to move to the corner of the room!

**STUDENT 2.** That’s right! We need to prepare for the worst.

**STUDENT 5.** Yes. And act as if we have a teacher in here. Follow instructions. And not fight! (*Moves to the corner of the room.*)

**STUDENT 6.** (*Takes out headphones from shirt or backpack and sits back down.*) Do I look afraid?

**STUDENT 3.** Honestly, we don’t care if you’re afraid or not! This is about all of us being safe! It could be a matter of life or death!

**STUDENT 4.** Yeah, don’t put us all at risk!

**STUDENT 5.** Please! (*Students in the corner say, “Come on! Get over here*! *Don’t be stupid*.”)

**STUDENT 6.** (*Jumps up*.) Alright, fine! Fine! Just give me my space! I don’t need you losers getting in my personal space! (*Student 6 joins the others in the corner of* *the room. They sit on the floor and look at their phones*.)

**STUDENT 2.** I’m going to text Jaycee and see where she’s at.

**STUDENT 4.** I wonder if I should text my mom. I don’t want to scare her if it’s nothing.

**STUDENT 4.** I really don’t like this.

**STUDENT 5.** It’s going to be okay.

**STUDENT 2.** Jaycee said she’s in the cafeteria with a ton of students. Some of them are crying.

**STUDENT 7.** Crying?

**STUDENT 4.** Which means it’s real! Man! This is real! I wonder what’s happening out there? (*There is a loud knock on the door*.)

**STUDENT 2.** Oh, my gosh! Who could that be?

**STUDENT 4.** Shhh! Be quiet!

**STUDENT 1.** (*Outside the door, still knocking*.) Let me in! Please, let me in!

**STUDENT 6.** No. No one’s coming in.

**STUDENT 3.** Doors are not to be opened during a lockdown.

**STUDENT 6.** Well, at least we agree on one thing.

**STUDENT 4.** Shhh! We’re supposed to be quiet! (*Student 5 moves to the door*.)

**STUDENT 3.** What are you doing?

**STUDENT 5.** Hold on!

**STUDENT 8.** I wouldn’t open the door. Policy states to keep the doors locked. Do not voluntarily open them for anyone. And anyone means anyone.

**STUDENT 1.** (*Knocking outside the door*.) Let me in! Please! Let me in!

**STUDENT 6.** Go away! No one’s coming in!

**STUDENT 4.** Can you guys just be quiet? We’re supposed to be quiet in here! Not draw attention to ourselves!

**STUDENT 5.** I’ve got to open the door! We can’t leave someone out there to be gunned down! Do any of you guys want that on your conscious?

**STUDENT 2.** No, but…

**STUDENT 6.** Stop with the dramatics!

**STUDENT 3.** (*Stands*.) Don’t do it! We’re not supposed to open the door! Just get back over here! You don’t know who’s out there!

**STUDENT 4.** Don’t open the door! Don’t do it!

**STUDENT 1. (***Off. Still knocking*.) Please! Please! Please let me in!

**STUDENT 5.** I’ve got to let him/her in!

**STUDENT 4.** Don’t! It could be the shooter!

**STUDENT 5.** Shooters don’t knock on the door!

**STUDENT 7.** How do you know?

**STUDENT 1.** (*Outside the door*.) Come on, guys! Let me in! Please! I’m in a wheelchair.

**STUDENT 5.** She’s/He’s in a wheelchair!

**STUDENT 3.** (*Jumps up.*) What? (*Rushes to the door.*) In a wheelchair?

**STUDENT 5.** Yes! How can we leave him/her out there? We can’t! We’ve got to let him/her in!

**STUDENT 3.** Then do it! Hurry! Hurry!

**STUDENT 4.** No, don’t!

**STUDENT 5.** (*Quickly unlocks and opens the door.*) Come on! Hurry! Hurry!

(***STUDENT 1*** *enters. Student 3 locks the door*.)

**STUDENT 4.** That’s it! No one else comes in!

**STUDENT 5.** Calm down. It’s ok. It’s ok.

**STUDENT 1.** (*Looking around*.) Where’s the teacher?

**STUDENT 2.** There’s not one. It’s just us.

**STUDENT 1.** There’s no teacher?

**STUDENT 5.** No. It’s just us. Come on. (*Motions to the corner*.) Come over here. Do you need any help?

**STUDENT 1.** No, I’m good. Just scared.

**STUDENT 5.** We all are. Did you see anything out there?

**STUDENT 1.** Nothing. But I heard someone running. And several doors slamming.

**STUDENT 2.** How did you get locked out?

**STUDENT 1.** I was in the bathroom and by the time I got to the hall, everyone had disappeared. And I mean, everyone! I knocked on several doors, but… (*Shakes* *head*.) I was so scared! Thanks for letting me in.

**STUDENT 6.** Shouldn’t have. It’s against the policy to open the door. But would anyone listen to me? No!

**STUDENT 2.** (*To Student 6*.) Shut up! Will you just shut up?

**STUDENT 4.** Can we all be quiet now? (*Student 1 follows Student 5 to the corner* *of the room. They all go back to their phones.)*

**STUDENT 8.** (*After a long pause*.) I’m checking Facebook for updates.

**STUDENT 4.** Got a bunch of text messages here asking me what’s going on. I wish I knew.

**STUDENT 2.** Jaycee said they pushed tables in front of the cafeteria doors and are hiding in the kitchen. She doesn’t know either. Just scared.

**STUDENT 5.** Yeah, I think we’re all scared.

**STUDENT 6.** Speak for yourself.

**STUDENT 4.** (*Phone to ear*.) I’m calling my sister, Sara. She works in the office. I’ll find out what’s going on. She’ll tell me. (*Dials, then puts phone to ear. Pause.*) Weird. She’s not answering. Really weird. I hope everything’s ok.

**STUDENT 8.** (*Looking at phone*.) Nothing. Nothing. Where’s all the local updates when you need them?

**STUDENT 6.** Because it’s a prank! They aren’t gonna cover that! That’d make ‘em look stupid. “*Shots fired at Kennedy High*.” Oh, never mind. It’s just a car backfiring. As hundreds of parents’ rush to the school crying.

**STUDENT 4.** You don’t know that it’s not real!

**STUDENT 6.** Betcha!

**STUDENT 4.** No thank you.

**STUDENT 3.** Here it is! “Kennedy High School has gone into lockdown. Unidentified male wearing full camouflage clothing exited school office without showing ID or getting a visitor pass.”

**STUDENT 6.** Probably an angry parent.

**STUDENT 7.** Wearing camo?

**STUDENT 8.** Non-military camouflage can be a fashion statement or…

**STUDENT 2.** Or?

**STUDENT 8**. Or symbolizing force. Worn on the battlefield.

**STUDENT 4.** Kennedy High is not a battlefield!

**STUDENT 3.** It also says they set up a perimeter around the school. And a reporter is on the way and will have more information as they learn it.

**STUDENT 5.** I’m sure it’s nothing. We just have to wait for the all clear.

**STUDENT 4.** Did you hear that?

**STUDENT 1.** I heard something.

**STUDENT 2.** What was that?

**STUDENT 3.** Wait! Be quiet! Listen! (*Silence as they listen*.)

**STUDENT 5.** It’s gone. Maybe it was nothing.

**STUDENT 1.** Could’ve been a door slamming.

**STUDENT 4.** Or a gun.

**STUDENT 5.** Stop! Don’t stay that!

**STUDENT 8.** But it could’ve been.

**STUDENT 5.** It was nothing. Listen. It’s quiet now.

**STUDENT 1.** Maybe we should text our parents. Let them know we’re ok.

**STUDENT 8.** Yeah. (*Texts*.) Hey, mom, I’m ok. At least for now.

**STUDENT 7.** For now?

**STUDENT 8.** For now. (*Silence as they stare at their phones and send text messages*.)

**STUDENT 2.** I wish we had a teacher in here.

**STUDENT 4.** Me, too. Or an update.

**STUDENT 1.** Nothing new is coming up.

**STUDENT 8.** Statistics show…

**STUDENT 6.** Stop! We don’t need some freshman giving us statistics! The reality is…this is just an overreaction to a lame threat, or someone called in saying they thought they saw something.

**STUDENT 8.** You don’t know that.

**STUDENT 6.** I know more than a stupid freshman!

**STUDENT 8.** Are you talking to me?

**STUDENT 6.** Yeah, I’m talking to you!

**STUDENT 8.** Unbelievable. Just unbelievable.

**STUDENT 6.** What?

**STUDENT 8.** You.

**STUDENT 6.** Me?

**STUDENT 8.** Yeah. You speaking to me. You never speak to me. You act as if…as if I’m a nobody.

**STUDENT 6.** Well, you are a freshman. (*Student 8 shakes head. They go back to their phones. After a moment, Student 6 stands up and moves to center stage. Lights dim as spotlight goes up on Student 6*.)

**STUDENT 6.** I admit it. I don’t talk to him/her. Freshmen. Give me a break. Yeah, I make fun of the confused freshmen who run down the hallways like little ants. They’re afraid to be late for class. (*Chuckles*.) But I push it to the last second. Heck, most of the time, I enter the classroom just as the bell is ringing. Yeah, I like to show them I’m all that. Hey, I’m a Senior. I’ve earned it. So, do I speak to freshmen? Nah. Who needs them? Not me. (*Short pause. Glances back*.) Yeah, they’ve got nothing on me. Stupid lockdown. I’m not afraid. (*Glances back*.) Well…not really. Yeah, so we’re safe, right? Right. And my dad, he said you don’t show fear. (*Yells as if he is his father*.) “You got it? You stand up straight when I’m talking to you! I said, stand up straight!” (*Stands tall, continues as father*.) “Why would I waste my hard-earned money on stupid graduation announcements? Especially when you barely scraped by all these years! Mediocre grades every time I turn around! I said stand up straight when I’m talking to you!” (*Readjusts his stance*.) “You’re graduating by the skin of your teeth! So, no! We’re not buying graduation announcements! Got it?! Got it?! Good!” (Pause. Softly, as if fighting back tears.) I got it. And I don’t care. And I’m not afraid. (*Student returns to the corner and sits down. Lights up.*)

**STUDENT 5.** (*To Student 1*.) You doing ok? I could help you get down on the floor if you want me to.

**STUDENT 1.** No, I’m ok. And heck, if someone tries to come in, I’ll just push my wheelchair up against the door to help secure it. And if they shoot, well, it’s metal. Maybe even bullet proof.

**STUDENT 3.** Speaking of, we should push some desks and chairs against the door.

**STUDENT 2.** That’s what they did in the cafeteria.

**STUDENT 3.** (*Stands*) Yes, let’s do that! But let’s be quiet about it.

**STUDENT 1.** Sorry I can’t help.

**STUDENT 3.** You’re good. Stay put. (*All but Student 1 quietly push desks and chairs against the door, then return to the corner*.)

**STUDENT 4.** I never thought this would happen here.

**STUDENT 5.** Relax. Nothing’s happened.

**STUDENT 4.** Yet! I’m scared. I’m really scared.

**STUDENT 6.** Oh, man, are you going to start crying? Please, spare us.

**STUDENT 5.** Would you stop?

**STUDENT 6.** I’m just saying I don’t like crybabies.

**STUDENT 1.** And we don’t like bullies!

**STUDENT 6.** Who asked you to pipe in?

**STUDENT 5.** (*To Student 1*.) Ignore him/her.

**STUDENT 1.** Not a problem.

**STUDENT 6.** Yeah, just ignore me. Like I care.

**STUDENT 3.** Stop. We’re just a bunch of random students who got thrown into this room together and we need to make the most of it. Maybe we’re not friends. Maybe we could be. Maybe we’re enemies. But that’s not the point. The point is, we have to come out of this together. Alive.

**STUDENT 7.** Yeah. Alive is the key word.

**STUDENT 6.** Yeah, whatever.

**STUDENT 2**. (*Looking at her phone.*) Jaycee said they heard gunshots!

(*Student 4 puts his/her head down and starts crying*.)

**STUDENT 5.** Oh, great! The crying begins. This is torture in itself.

**STUDENT 4.** Shut up! Just shut up!

**STUDENT 1.** Hey, tough guy! Why don’t you back off?

**STUDENT 6.** Crying is for babies! That’s what my dad says. Crybaby!

**STUDENT 3.** Everyone stop! Just stop! Let’s be quiet! (*After a pause, Student 5 stands and moves center stage. Lights dim and as spotlight comes up on Student 5*.)

**STUDENT 5.** Have you ever noticed how mean some people can be? It’s just exhausting. And you have to wonder, have they always been that way? Or did something happen to make them that way? Or are they just covering for some deep hurts? That’s what I choose to believe. I believe there’s good in everyone. (*Short pause.*) At least there once was. But something happens to change them. Like a shooter. What happens to that person? Because we all know that he or she was once an adorable little baby. Smiling, cooing, crawling. Learning first words. So, what happened? That’s what I’d like to know. I guess life happens. Mean people are mean to other people and it becomes a vicious cycle. So, how about his? How about we all just be nice? How hard is that? It’s not. Trust me. Give someone a smile. A second chance. An offer of friendship. It’s really not that hard. Trust me. Because every smile and kind word has the opportunity to change the world. (*Looks out to the audience and smiles*. *Student 5 returns to the group. Lights up*.)

**STUDENT 4.** This is nerve wracking. Like we’re just sitting here waiting. Waiting for something bad to happen.

**STUDENT 7.** The police have to be on their way.

**STUDENT 8.** Probably already here. (*Stands*.) I’m going to look out the window. I’ll be quick.

**STUDENT 3.** No! That’s not a good idea. You need to stay down.

**STUDENT 4.** That’s why we have drills. To show us what to do. And not to do.

**STUDENT 8.** Oh, yeah…like not open the door?

**STUDENT 1.** (*To Student 5*.) Thanks for opening the door for me. I was so scared. But next time, I would just leave me out there.

**STUDENT 5.** There won’t be a next time.

**STUDENT 4.** We’re also not supposed to talk.

**STUDENT 2.** Yeah. But it’s kinda hard not to. I mean, look… (*Motions to the door*.) How could a person get through that?

**STUDENT 7.** We don’t know if it’s just one person. Or that *they* won’t shoot through the door.

**STUDENT 4.** What kind of crazy idiot…?

**STUDENT 6.** (*Stands.*) I’ll look outside. I’m not scared.

**STUDENT 4.** No, don’t!

**STUDENT 3.** Yeah, don’t! Sit down!

**STUDENT 6.** (Ignores them, moves to the window, and looks out.) Wow…

**STUDENT 1.** What? What do you see?

**STUDENT 2.** Tell us!

**STUDENT 6.** Man! Oh, man! There’re tons of cop cars! And there’s police officers carrying rifles from every direction you look! Wow! Oh! And there’s helicopters circling overhead! This is unreal! Is this really our school? Unbelievable!

**STUDENT 3.** Get back over here! Come on! Hurry!

**STUDENT 6.** (*Still looking out*.) But the funny thing is, none of the deputies are coming into the school. They’re all geared up and some are ducking behind vehicles as if waiting. Do you think they’re afraid to come in?

**STUDENT 8.** They’re not afraid.

**STUDENT 7.** Then what?

**STUDENT 8.** They’re being cautious.

**STUDENT 4.** Just seems to me like they need to come in here to save us.

**STUDENT 5.** They will.

**STUDENT 1.** What was that?

**STUDENT 5.** I don’t know. A door slamming?

**STUDENT 3.** Get back over here!

**STUDENT 6.** (*Still looking out*.) This is scary. (*Realizes what he said, then glances* *back*.) I mean…not really scary, but…I meant crazy.

**STUDENT 8.** (*Jumps up and grabs Student 6 by the arm and pulls him away from the window.*) Get away from there! It’s not safe!

**STUDENT 6.** Let go! (*Pulls free from Student 8*.) Why are you worried about me?

**STUDENT 8.** Just get down! We all have to take care of each other.

**STUDENT 6.** (*Sits down*.) Still don’t know why you’d care about me. (*Lights dim as Student 8 moves center stage and spotlight goes up*.)

**STUDENT 8.** I may be a freshman, but I’m not heartless. Or stupid. 4.0. Does that sound stupid? I’ve always been smart – make that incredibly smart. My mom says I’m smart beyond my years. Guess I was born that way. Hey, I’m not trying to sound arrogant. Really. I just get it. Calculus, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry…I get it. So, needless to say, I’m ranked number one in my class. I’ll be the Valedictorian when I graduate. Yeah, applying to all the best colleges out there. Harvard. Duke. Princeton. Yale. I know. I’m going to need the full package to get into those schools. “A” grades in challenging courses, impressive extracurricular activities, glowing letters of recommendations, and high SAT scores. No problem. I’ve got this. (*Deep breath. Short pause*.) If nothing messes it up for me. Why would anyone do that? What have I ever done to them? Breathe? As they say, live and let live. (*Glances back*.) Yeah. I’m getting out of here. I’ve got plans. (*Student 8 returns to the group. Lights up*.)

**STUDENT 4.** I can’t stop shaking.

**STUDENT 5.** We’re going to be ok. I promise.

**STUDENT 4.** How do you know?

**STUDENT 5.** No one’s getting through that door. And there’s eight of us. Eight. We’re stronger than one stupid idiot out there.

**STUDENT 4.** With a gun?

**STUDENT 5.** No one’s getting in. I promise.

**STUDENT 1.** (*Looking at phone.*) Here’s something. “Breaking News. Kennedy High School has been put on lockdown after a male wearing camouflage clothing was seen carrying a weapon. Police were immediately notified and are on the scene. This is an active situation.”

**STUDENT 6.** They haven’t got him yet.

**STUDENT 2.** You don’t know that!

**STUDENT 8.** Come on guys. They train for situations like this. I’m sure they stormed the building as soon as the call came through. They know what they’re doing.

**STUDENT 1.** True. Sad, but true.

**STUDENT 7.** I wonder if it’s someone we know.

**STUDENT 1.** I hope not.

**STUDENT 2.** I’m just ready for this to be over. (*Pause, then they jump, look around and at each other*.)

**STUDENT 6.** That was loud!

**STUDENT 4.** (*Covers ears*.) This is bad! This is bad! Our school will never be the same again!

**STUDENT 3.** Maybe that was it.

**STUDENT 4.** It?

**STUDENT 3.** Officers taking down the bad guy. It never ends well for them.

**STUDENT 2.** Why? Why would anyone do this? Why?

**STUDENT 1.** Retaliation?

**STUDENT 7.** For what?

**STUDENT 1.** Being bullied?

**STUDENT 2.** We’ve all been bullied at one time. Made fun of. Teased. The brunt of the joke.

**STUDENT 7.** Ignored.

**STUDENT 8.** Made fun of.

**STUDENT 1.** Overlooked.

**STUDENT 3.** Criticized.

**STUDENT 5.** Harassed.

**STUDENT 4.** Rejected.

**STUDENT 2**. But that doesn’t give you the right to harm others. Innocent people! Where does that get you? Where?

**STUDENT 7.** Dead.

**STUDENT 6**. Yeah. Nothing should hurt that bad.

**STUDENT 8.** (*To Student 6*.) Have you ever been bullied? Do you know what it feels like?

**STUDENT 6.** Yeah. (*Short pause.*) I have.

**STUDENT 8.** Really? By who?

**STUDENT 6.** My dad. He’s a bully. A mean one. And yeah, I know how it feels. But would I ever do something like the piece of trash that’s roaming our halls right now? No! Never! In fact, I hope it wasn’t me. I hope I wasn’t the one who made him feel he had reached his limit. Taunted him. Rolled my eyes at him. Pointed and laughed… God, I hope it wasn’t me!

**STUDENT 8.** It wasn’t.

**STUDENT 7.** No, of course not. People like that are just plain evil.

**STUDENT 6.** Well, it makes you stop and think. Maybe I could’ve done better. Been nicer maybe. Maybe…maybe I will be from now on.

**STUDENT 4.** Do you really think the police have entered the school yet? Or are they just waiting?

**STUDENT 3.** Of course, they have. They’re probably right down the hall. Going room to room. We just have to wait a bit longer until they get to us. (*Lights dim as Student 4 moves center stage and spotlight goes up*.)

**STUDENT 4.** The waiting it the hardest. Are you waiting for good news?... Or bad news? We can only hope to hear… “All is clear, no one’s been injured and we’re free to go home.” Go home as if nothing has happened. Or…Or… It’s the *or* I’m afraid of. Yeah, what if it’s someone we know? Someone I sat next to in class. Someone I should’ve said hi to. Someone I didn’t say hi to. And what if…what if it’s bad out there? What if I know the shooter, and he’s done something bad? To someone I love. My sister, Sara. To that girl/guy I have a crush on. To that teacher I roll my eyes at when I’m with my friends, but deep down inside, I think she’s the best teacher in the universe. What if this incident ruins my entire universe? Yeah, I’m scared. I’m not only shaking on the outside, but the inside too. (*Student 4 returns to the group. Lights up*.)

**STUDENT 3.** I keep texting everyone that we’re ok.

**STUDENT 2.** My mom’s on the way here.

**STUDENT 1.** Mine too.

**STUDENT 6.** My dad…he wouldn’t come.

**STUDENT 1.** I’m sure he’s coming.

**STUDENT 6.** Nah. But it’s ok.

**STUDENT 5.** (*Looking at her phone.*) No news is good news.

**STUDENT 4.** Are you kidding me? There is no good news to be heard. Either way, this is a bad situation.

**STUDENT 5.** Just trying to stay optimistic.

**STUDENT 4.** About what? That we haven’t heard any gunshots in the past few minutes?

**STUDENT 5.** That was a door slamming.

**STUDENT 4.** Come on! You really believe that?

**STUDENT 5.** (*Looks down. Pause*.) No.

**STUDENT 7.** We’re alive. How’s that for optimism?

**STUDENT 1.** I like it. (*Lights dim as Student 7 moves center stage and spotlight goes up*.)

**STUDENT 7.** No, I’m not a big talker. In fact, I don’t normally talk this much. This is probably the most I’ve spoken to other students all semester. Yeah, you could say I’m one of those weird nerdy guys/girls. Not a smart nerdy guy/girls. Just a weird nerdy guy/girl. See, I don’t really feel comfortable talking to people. I wouldn’t say its low self-esteem. I’d just say I’m a recluse. It takes all types of people, right? I like to be alone. I like to be in my own thoughts. So what? (*Glances back*.) But believe it or not, I kinda like this group of guys. Maybe I need to give people more of a chance. Yeah, we’re all different, but it doesn’t mean we can’t get along. And protect each other. (*Student 7 returns to the group. Lights up*.)

**STUDENT 6.** Man, I want to look out the window again.

**STUDENT 3.** Don’t. We need to stay down.

**STUDENT 6.** Why? The bad guys not out there. He’s in our building.

**STUDENT 8.** He has a point.

**STUDENT 3.** No. We need to stay put. Wait for the authorities to get here. It could take a while. Going from room to room.

**STUDENT 2.** It’s so quiet. What do you think is going on?

**STUDENT 1.** (*Looking at phone*.) My mom’s here. She’s trying to find answers. No one’s telling her anything.

**STUDENT 8.** My brother left work. He’s here too. He said people are being told to get back. He said a lot of moms are crying and demanding answers, but they’re just being pushed back.

**STUDENT 7.** They haven’t got him yet.

**STUDENT 4.** I hate this waiting!

**STUDENT 6.** You know what I feel like doing?

**STUDENT 3**. What?

**STUDENT 6.** I feel like leaving! And if I happen to come across the shooter in the halls, well…I’ll just take him down with my bare hands!

**STUDENT 1.** That’s about as smart as me taking him down with my wheelchair!

**STUDENT 6.** (*Stands*.) I can do it!

**STUDENT 3**. No! Sit down!

**STUDENT 6.** Maybe the police need help. I can do it. I’m not scared.

**STUDENT 3.** (*Stands*.) No! No one’s leaving! We’re in this together and we’re leaving together!

**STUDENT 6.** We don’t know what’s going on out there! Maybe I can help!

**STUDENT 3.** How? How can you help? Law enforcement doesn’t need a high school wannabe hero. If you go out that door, you’re just volunteering to be a victim. You’ll be standing there saying… (*Holds arms out*.) “Here I am! Shoot me! Shoot me!”

**STUDENT 8.** Not to mention put the rest of us at risk.

**STUDENT 2.** We’re all in this together. Like a team. And believe me, I know about teams. Sometimes we have to cheer each other on. And sometimes we have to pick each other up. But either way…

**STUDENT 3.** That’s right. We huddle together. We leave together. A team.

**STUDENT 1.** And when it’s over…bonded forever.

**STUDENT 6.** (*Sits.*) Ok, fine. Fine.

**STUDENT 3.** (*Sits*.) Thank you.

**STUDENT 6.** We are a good team. I mean, if I had to choose people to be stuck with…

**STUDENT 8.** What? You’d pick us?

**STUDENT 6**. Yeah. (*Lights dim as Student 3 moves center stage and spotlight goes up*.)

**STUDENT 3.** I was once team captain of my baseball team. I had the best coach ever. He taught me to always give 100 percent and to lead by example. And if you make a mistake, you own up to it and apologize if necessary. And since we don’t have a teacher in here, someone has to take charge. Be courageous and level-headed. I can’t just let someone go running off into danger! We’re a team. A team! And when you hear the word team, there has to be someone who will lead them. And I’m going to do just that! (*Student 3 returns to the group. Lights up*. *Pause.*)

**STUDENT 1.** Who’s your favorite teacher?

**STUDENT 4.** Mrs. Davis. She’s a really calm person and makes sure we understand everything before moving on in chapters. And we always play fun games and do cool worksheets that make the tests she gives really easy.

**STUDENT 5.** Mr. Freeman. He’s always telling jokes and making us laugh. I’d like to hear one of his jokes right now.

**STUDENT 7.** Mrs. Bruce. Because she says no one likes her and she doesn’t care. She has that I don’t care attitude. I like that. But the truth is, we all like her. She’s not that bad.

**STUDENT 6.** Mr. Johnson. He’s patient. Even when I don’t get it. Doesn’t scream. Doesn’t get mad. Just patient. He’ll say, “We can go over it again. Take your time. You can do it.” I like that.

**STUDENT 3.** Coach Meyers. He motivates me to work hard and believe in myself. He’s awesome.

**STUDENT 8.** Mr. Dickens. He can make anyone like math. Of course, I do like math, but still…he teaches math through solving problems in the context of real-world problems. He says math is a tool of science. Dickens could probably put some equation to this maddening problem.

**STUDENT 1.** Mine is Mrs. May because she’s always smiling. I don’t think I’ve ever seen her frown. You just know that no matter what kind of day you’re having, when you get into her classroom, it’s going to be all right. I wish she was in here right now. (*Lights dim as Student 2 moves center stage and spotlight goes up*.)

**STUDENT 2.** My favorite teacher is Mrs. Pierce. Every morning she has us recite this saying. It goes like this. “I am somebody. I was somebody when I came, and I’ll be a better somebody when I leave.” I think she borrowed that from someone else. That’s what she said. It’s a nice quote even though I don’t really have issues with self-esteem. Not really. I mean, I am a cheerleader. Straight A student. Liked by my peers. But…there are days I question myself. Like, am I a fake? Or…when I leave high school, will I struggle to find my place? Sure, I’m doing ok now, but the world out there can be cruel. Apparently high school can be cruel, too. I don’t know. What if I enter adulthood and no one knows I was popular in high school? Will they snub me? Will I care? Isn’t there more to life than being popular in school? I think so. And today, I’m figuring out that life is short. And I’m always going to remember Mrs. Pierce’s saying. “I am somebody. I was somebody when I came, and I’ll be a better somebody when I leave.” (*Student 3 returns to the group. Lights up. The students look at their phones. Suddenly, this is a loud knock on the door.*)

**OFFICER GIVENS. (***Off*.**)** This is Officer Givens! Is anyone in there?

**STUDENT 3**. (*Rushes to the door*.) We’re here! There’s eight of us!

**OFFICER GIVENS** (*Off*.)You’re safe now. I’m going to show you my badge under the door, then you can open the door.

**STUDENT 3.** Hold on! We have to move some desks and chairs! (*Students rush to the door to remove the barricade. They look down to see the badge from under the door*.)

**STUDENT 3.** It’s him! We’re safe now! (*Unlocks and opens the door*. OFFICER GIVENS enters.) Is everyone okay in here? (*The students reply with “Yes.” “We’re good.” “I’m ok.”*)

**OFFICER GIVENS.** The lockdown is over now. You may exit the building.

**STUDENT 3**. What happened?

**STUDENT 4.** Yeah, what happened?

**OFFICER GIVENS.** The authorities will speak to you about it when you get outside. I’m glad everyone in here is ok. Let’s go. Follow me. (*The students follow Officer Givens offstage. Student 1 moves center stage.*)

**STUDENT 1.** It was bad. It’s not something I even like to talk about. Because you see…not every student made it out. But we did. We were the fortunate ones. But the others… (*Shakes head*.) Suddenly they’re missing. Your friend. A teacher. The person who sat behind your desk that you never bothered to say hi to. People you didn’t know, but people you wish you had known. You try to make sense out it, but you can’t. I guess if we could, we’d figure out a way to stop it. In the meantime… Drills. You’ve got to be prepared! You’ve got to pay attention! If you see something, say something! Don’t think it could happen at your school? Trust me. It could. Take it from me. Someone who knows. (*Looks down. Deep breath. Looks back at the audience*.) It was like I said in the classroom. Bonded forever. Years later, we still stay in touch. Different paths. Different fears. Dreams. But we bonded that day. Maybe for a lifetime. The shooter…well, his life is over. Sad story. True story. And yes, what doesn’t kill you, makes you stronger.

 **END OF PLAY**