

SCHEME SPACE

A one-act drama by
Claudia Haas

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www.youthplays.com
info@youthplays.com
424-703-5315

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

JESSIE, female, 17, typically angst-driven teen, a bit more insecure than people realize.

LISA, female, 13, Jessie's younger sister, more mature than she knows.

ALLISON, female, 17, Jessie's "best friend," seeks the high school life portrayed in movies.

LAUREL, female, 17, life is dull, so why not generate some excitement.

JOSH, male, 17, an amiable hanger-on who dabbles in all crowds.

JOE, male, 18, seems amiable but a bit of a schemer.

MARELLA, female, 16, usually a bit of a loner.

SCENES

The play is episodic and should move quickly from scene to scene. The stage should be split between Jessie's room and a family room at Laurel's home.

SCENE 1

(LAUREL and JOE are on the computer. JOSH and ALLISON are nearby. MARELLA is apart doing some homework. They can be eating, texting on their phones—multi-tasking. On the other side of the stage, JESSIE is by her computer. She is plugged into an iPod or MP3.)

LAUREL: I hope you know what you're doing.

JOE: I'm a master at this. Let me finish setting up. You're going to love it.

JOSH: What?

JOE: It's something my cousin did at his school. It got him a lot of attention. I'm almost done.

LAUREL: Looks sexist.

JOE: Sexy, Laurel—it's sexy. Leave me alone and let me finish.

ALLISON: I'm not getting the math.

JOE: Talk to Marella. She's a whiz.

MARELLA: Wait a minute—I never intended to do everyone's homework. It was just that one time, remember? 'Cause you were fried from practice.

JOSH: We won't ask anymore. Not after football season is done.

ALLISON: I'm not asking for the answers. Just the explanation.

MARELLA: One last time, and that's it.

LAUREL: I don't believe you're actually doing this.

JOE: Got a problem?

LAUREL: Well ... no. Loving it.

JOE: Okay – I'm just putting the finishing touches on it and then I send! What do you think?

(All gather around the computer.)

ALLISON: You're rating all the girls in the high school?

MARELLA: Whaaat????

JOE: Just the ones I remember. Josh and I were doing this after practice. Something to do.

MARELLA: As opposed to doing your homework?

JOSH: As opposed to working on yet another boring, meaningless worksheet that has nothing to do with life and will be thrown out by the teacher at the end of the week.

MARELLA: As I recall, I did the worksheet.

JOSH: And you did an awesome job – thanks.

JOE: Okay – sending.

ALLISON: With the photos.

JOE: Oh yeah – the one of Jessie – how'd you get her to pose like that? Pretty hot.

ALLISON: We were fooling around – you know. I don't think she ever thought it would go anywhere. But in this day and age – one can't be too careful.

JOSH: Nice undies.

ALLISON: Victoria's Secret. We splurged.

MARELLA: I'd die.

JOE: Get over yourself! This could be the best thing to ever happen to her! She's going to be the "sex kitten" of the school. She'll thank us one day. Finally get a date.

MARELLA: But – she didn't know that picture would go anywhere.

ALLISON: Well then she can get off of her high and mighty judgmental horse of hers.

MARELLA: Weren't you friends?

ALLISON: Once-upon-a-time. Before she decided that she didn't want any part of "fun" in her life.

JOSH: This won't get traced back to us?

JOE: Nobody can trace it anywhere. I'm that good!

ALLISON: Hope I got a good rating. And you picked a good photo.

JOE: If you're in this room— not to worry. You're like a cover girl. Anyone else— well, I enjoyed myself. I've been collecting photos for days. You'd be surprised what's out there.

(The lights dim on the grouping and come up on Jessie who is working on her computer. We hear LISA calling Jessie. Jessie suddenly clicks and stares at the computer screen. Lisa enters.)

JESSIE: What the—

LISA: Younger child alert! Watch your words.

(Lisa appears but Jessie does not realize. She is fixated on something on the computer.)

Hey— Jess— what's the matter—

JESSIE: What are you doing here? Can't a person have any privacy?

LISA: I've been calling you to dinner.

JESSIE: Yeah. Well, I didn't hear. Get lost, okay?

(Jessie blocks Lisa from the computer.)

LISA: Don't shoot the dinner messenger. What're you hiding?

JESSIE: Nothing!

(Jessie covers the computer and waits. Lisa watches her.)

Go! I'll be right down.

LISA: I want to see —

JESSIE: It's nothing — stupid. That's what it is.

LISA: What is?

JESSIE: NOTHING!

(Lisa approaches as Jessie clicks her mouse.)

LISA: Whoa, Jess! Was that you?

JESSIE: Maybe.

LISA: Deleting it won't help — it's out there.

JESSIE: Yeah ...

LISA: — For a billion people to see —

JESSIE: Shut-up!

LISA: How'd ... I mean — why would you ... you know.

JESSIE: Prom time. No dates — we took our prom dress money and splurged on — other things. Allison and I were making ourselves feel better. Stupid! STUPID! Why'd I do that?

LISA: Tell Mom.

JESSIE: NO! Breakdown. She'll be popping pills within five minutes.

LISA: Dad —

JESSIE: — he'll make sure we're never on the computer again.

LISA: You can't leave it.

JESSIE: I'm in denial. Making believe it isn't out there.

(The lights dim on Jessie and Lisa and return to the larger grouping of kids. Marella does homework and Joe, Josh and Allison are grouped around Joe's laptop.)

JOE: And the comments roll in! We are popular!

ALLISON: But nobody knows it's us, right?

JOE: Oh. Yeah— not to worry.

JOSH: Come on, Laurel. You're missing the fun.

LAUREL: Just finishing up math. Since Marella is no help! What do the comments say?

JOSH: All from the guys so far ... thanking us. They're clicking on Mira's picture like crazy.

MARELLA: But she was— like— drunk— right?

JOE: Yeah. She won't do that again!

JOSH: Whoa! Good reaction on Jessie's pic.

JOE: Uh oh. Trouble in paradise. Olivia's threatening to report this to the school.

JOSH: Wasn't she on the "grimey" list?

JOE: Yeah—if the cyber-space police get a hold of this—it'll come down. Gather ye comments while ye may.

LAUREL: How can they take it down?

JOE: They have this "report offensive" content nonsense. Don't worry, it takes awhile. We'll get to have our fun.

ALLISON: Hear from Jess?

JOE: Nope. But she picked it up—I have stuff embedded—I know she saw it.

ALLISON: *(Putting away her computer:)* We'll hear from her.

LAUREL: She may not care to acknowledge—

ALLISON: She will. She won't let this stay on.

(The lights switch to Jessie and Lisa.)

JESSIE: *(Looking closely at it:)* I can't believe it's there—for anyone—anyone in India or China—

LISA: Forget India. Think about your classmates.

JESSIE: I am.

(Jessie deletes the message.)

LISA: Report it.

JESSIE: Maybe...

LISA: Who else is on there?

JESSIE: Mira. Olivia. Allison—here—look at Allison—

LISA: Whoa! Nice.

JESSIE: Yeah—why did she get the glamour shot—and I get—

(They both stare at the screen.)

LISA: You got a greeting.

JESSIE: Someone wants me to comment.

LISA: Allison?

JESSIE: I don't know. Someone.

LISA: Are you going to?

JESSIE: No! I'm ignoring—the whole thing. I just don't get it. It's like I'm being targeted.

LISA: Let me see—

JESSIE: NO! Let's just go downstairs. Have dinner like this never happened. Don't say anything to anyone.

(Lisa and Jessie exit as we return to Laurel's home. Allison, Joe and Josh are leaving.)

JOE: Tomorrow's going to be awesome.

ALLISON: Come on—you've got to hit the weight room and I'm already late.

LAUREL: Later guys. Can't wait.

(And they are gone.)

MARELLA: I guess...I'll pack up also.

LAUREL: Wait! Did you ever finish the math?

MARELLA: Well, yeah—and you did, too. You said you were working on it.

LAUREL: I—well—was finishing up another project. Actually never got to it. You don't mind—

MARELLA: —doing a favor? Guess not. Just don't want this to turn into a regular thing.

LAUREL: These are special times. It's just for now.

MARELLA: What were you doing?

LAUREL: A social experiment. Believe me, what I was doing has more to do with real life than pre-calc.

MARELLA: I don't know—pre-calc trains you to think—sort of logically—

LAUREL: I'm a complete social animal. Those are the talents that I am fine-tuning. You don't have to give me the math answers, Marella. There are others who will.

(Marella looks at Laurel and hands Laurel her answers. The lights go down. And come up on Jessie's bedroom. Jessie and Lisa enter. Lisa heads to the computer.)

JESSIE: Don't turn it on!

LISA: Just want to say "hi" to some friends. Not getting on your stuff.

JESSIE: You'll see your friends tomorrow.

LISA: It's my computer, too.

JESSIE: DON'T!

LISA: Afraid of more photos?

JESSIE: Don't want to talk about it.

LISA: Did you tell Allison what's going on?

JESSIE: She's the only one who had that photo. They didn't get it from me.

LISA: Thought you two were joined at the hip.

JESSIE: She's in some sort of tiff because I'm not wild about her new best friend.

LISA: Who?

JESSIE: That new kid—Laurel. She just seems—terminally bored with life. Really don't need that negativity around me.

LISA: Too bad. You and Allison have a lot of years together.

JESSIE: Yeah. But things change. She's into "Life's a party" and I'm into—"get into college and have a life later" mode.

LISA: I'm just going to get on for five minutes—

JESSIE: —no!

LISA: You can't punish me because you're mad at the computer. It's half mine.

JESSIE: I'm stressed, okay? Someone sends around a—totally inappropriate picture of me and then has the gall to be mad because I haven't reacted? Just leave the computer off for one night. Text people from your phone if you're desperate.

LISA: All right. But you owe me ... want to play a game or ... something? Monopoly? Take your mind off of everything.

JESSIE: I'm going to bed.

LISA: It's seven o'clock!

JESSIE: I'm tired.

LISA: Well, I'm not going to bed. I'll read.

JESSIE: Read in another room. I can't sleep with the light on.

LISA: You're a royal pain tonight, you know that?

(LISA grabs a book.)

All right, I'm gone. "Sleep tight, little Jessie. Don't let the bed bugs bite."

(Lisa exits as Jessie sits alone in the dark staring at the computer. She gets up and sits by it. She goes to turn it on and then changes her mind. And just sits there. In the dark.)

SCENE 2

(The lights come on in Laurel's home. Marella, Laurel and Allison burst through. They have cell phones on, backpacks. It is the end of the school day.)

LAUREL: I knew he was going to ask you!

MARELLA: Are you serious?

LAUREL: He told me days ago.

MARELLA: Why didn't you tell me?

LAUREL: Wanted it to be a surprise.

MARELLA: My first date.

ALLISON: Sweet sixteen and never been kissed. That's about to change!

MARELLA: What?

ALLISON: That's what Jessie and I used to say about ourselves when we turned sixteen. As far as I know, Jessie's "sweet seventeen" and never been kissed – but I am happy to report that my status has changed!

LAUREL: Stick with me. Everything will change.

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