



**Sample Pages from  
Just Girls Talking**

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# JUST GIRLS TALKING

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT BY  
*Robert Wing*



*Just Girls Talking*

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## **Characters**

(6F)

**Miss Crane:** Devoted high school English teacher.

**Amanda:** Class Valedictorian

**Molly:** Class Salutatorian

**Brandy:** Class President

**Tiffany:** Dress code violator

**Shirelle:** Head of the junior steering committee.

## **Staging & Costuming**

Minimal, easy and inexpensive – especially if performed in a school. Directors already have everything easily within reach: some desks and chairs for the actors, and maybe a desk for Miss Crane.

Really, when it comes down to it, directors may visualize the space any way they want. The costumes are simple – the actors dress like high school students, which they are. Easy. Miss Crane needs an outfit appropriate for a high school teacher. Actors can easily pull something together for her look. Tiffany is dressed inappropriately, of course. Like Brandy says, her skirt is too high and her top is too low, but she is quickly covered up – a relief to any director.

Stage directions are intentionally minimal. A few have been included to provide the reader with an overall sense of how the actors should occupy the space, but this, too, is open to interpretation. Again, when it really comes down to it, directors may block the play any way they wish.

## **A Few Words (Very Few Words) About Tech**

Lights up and lights down. It doesn't get much easier than that. Or, if directors wish to go in an entirely different direction, please feel free.

There is a point at which even justice does injury.

*Sophocles*

## **Production History**

*Just Girls Talking* was first performed under the direction of Cheri Skurdall at North Country Union High School on November 14, 2012 with the following cast:

**TIFFANY:** Jessi Sackett

**MISS CRANE:** Shania Russin

**BRANDY:** Erin Spoerl

**MOLLY:** Jade Cota

**AMANDA:** Kendra Perkins

**SHIRELLE:** Shannon Smith

## **Dedication**

To Kate, Grace, Jarren, Josh, Zack, Althea, Emily and Oliver from their no-good, birthday forgetting Uncle Rob.

## Scene I Introductions

*Enter TIFFANY, closely followed by MISS CRANE. TIFFANY is carrying a large purse. MISS CRANE has with her some kind of cover-up, maybe a jean jacket, or a hoodie. TIFFANY takes a desk and begins removing an arsenal of hair care and beauty products from her large purse as she speaks her lines. By the end of the scene, TIFFANY has arranged her bag and beauty products into a sort of wall that audience members and actors can't see behind. What's behind that wall of cosmetics? A small recording device.*

MISS CRANE: Tiffany Amber Perkins, I knew this was going to happen!

TIFFANY: (*groaning*) Miss Crane, please! Give it a rest!

MISS CRANE: I don't know what's gotten into you lately. Would you please cover up?

TIFFANY: Why? I'm already in detention.

MISS CRANE: (*holding out cover-up*) You've gone your entire high school career without so much as a blemish on your record and here you are, assigned to a detention because of that ridiculous outfit! Please, cover up!

TIFFANY: Okay, okay! (*takes cover-up from MISS CRANE and puts it on*) You know, it's not like I planned on it happening.

MISS CRANE: Did you think that top was going to hold itself up?

TIFFANY: Miss Crane, please – enough! I've never been so embarrassed in my life and my parents are going to kill me!

MISS CRANE: Look, I get it. It's the last quarter of your high school experience and you're looking to redefine the person you are, to put your high school past behind you – I get it. But the clothes and the hair and the make-up – what's going on?

TIFFANY: Nothing is going on.

MISS CRANE: Tiffany Amber Perkins, I have known you since day one of your freshman year – something's going on.

TIFFANY: So I changed my look? Who cares?

MISS CRANE: I care! And I know that when a young person with your intelligence and common sense does a complete 180 in appearance and attitude, then something is wrong.

TIFFANY: Attitude? Now you're on me for my attitude? Great! First it's my clothes and then it's my attitude.

MISS CRANE: You've been withdrawn and moody for weeks. What's going on?

TIFFANY: Nothing is going on.

MISS CRANE: Is there a boy?

TIFFANY: No! There isn't a boy.

MISS CRANE: You know you can tell me anything – I only want what's best for you – (*TIFFANY laughs quietly*). No, I mean it. I'm here for you. What is it?

TIFFANY: (*laughing softly*) Oh, Miss Crane. You crack me up.

MISS CRANE: Come on, Tiffany. Is there anything I need to know? Every teacher instinct in my body tells me there is.

TIFFANY: (*shouts*) You're killing me, Miss Crane! Why do you have to be so nice? (*An awkward moment. MISS CRANE says nothing. She waits for TIFFANY to make the next move.*) Oh, Miss Crane. (*MISS CRANE knows what's coming. She puts her arms out. TIFFANY goes in for the hug she needs so badly.*) How can you stay so nice when everything else in the world is so rotten?

MISS CRANE: Is something rotten in your life, Tiffany?

TIFFANY: (*Pulls away; she's embarrassed by display of weakness. She gets a hold on herself.*) You shouldn't be so nice, Miss Crane. Nice people get eaten alive. You should be meaner.

MISS CRANE: Why would I want to do that?

TIFFANY: Because people only want to hurt you.

MISS CRANE: Has somebody hurt you, Tiffany? Is that what all this is about?

TIFFANY: No, but someone has hurt someone I care about, and I don't know what to do. I have a plan, but –

MISS CRANE: – You're not going to hurt anyone, are you? Promise me you won't hurt anyone.

TIFFANY: Forget I said anything.

MISS CRANE: Tiffany, promise me you won't hurt anyone – or yourself. Promise me!

TIFFANY: (*giving in*) Okay, I won't hurt anyone.

MISS CRANE: (*not quite believing it*) Tiffany, the world is filled with hateful people – you must never, ever join their ranks. Always do the right thing – no matter what how hard it is.

TIFFANY: (*kindly*) Why do you have to be so nice?

MISS CRANE: (*kindly*) Tiffany – you're better than (*indicating her outfit*) all this – and (*picking up a bottle from her desk*) this! What are you doing with all this – mess?

TIFFANY: (*takes bottle back from MISS CRANE and puts it back in her "wall"*) I have decided that I'm going to make the most of my detention. I'm going to have a spa day – or, a spa hour or, however long I'm going to be here. I thought I'd do my nails, maybe read a magazine, I don't know...maybe I'll...moisturize...or experiment with my hair...You know, girl stuff.

MISS CRANE: (*concerned*) Oh, Tiffany, this isn't you.

*ENTER BRANDY and MOLLY.*

BRANDY: Oooooo! Where's my girl Tiffany? I gotta see this outfit the whole school is talking about. Let's see. Skirt too high? Check. Top too low? Check. You want my opinion?

ALL ACTORS: No!

*ENTER AMANDA.*

BRANDY: (*undeterred*) This new look is a lot better. I never those baggy sweatshirts, ratty jeans and sneakers held together with duct tape you used to wear. This new look of yours? I think it's fierce!

MOLLY: You know, you set the women's movement back fifty years when you wear clothes like that. You're not doing anything to further our cause!

AMANDA: Not 'the cause' again.

MOLLY: I'm just saying that it's bad enough when men objectify us – we don't need to objectify ourselves. Look at this! Lotions... and... hair spray...and (*picking up a bottle and reading the label*) "Anti-aging cream."

TIFFANY: Don't touch! (*TIFFANY takes the bottle back from her and places it in the same spot in the wall of products*)

MOLLY: Tiffany, you are not this person.

MISS CRANE: My sentiments exactly!

MOLLY: You know what, Tiffany? I'm glad you got busted and sent to detention.

TIFFANY: Well, thank you Molly, I've always know I could turn to you for support.

MOLLY: Support? Maybe if you'd been thinking about support when you were getting dressed for school this morning you wouldn't have had that "wardrobe malfunction" in Mr. Drake's debate class.

MISS CRANE: (*sensing danger*) That's enough, Molly! I think Tiffany has reached the limits of her patience. Let her serve her detention in peace. (*glances at watch*) Listen, ladies, I can't be at today's graduation meeting. Mr. Billings needs to see me about something.

BRANDY: Ooooo! Miss Crane's in trouble with the Principal!

MISS CRANE: I want you to start the meeting without me. I'll be back as soon as I can. (*Enter SHIRELLE*) Oh! Here's Shirelle!

BRANDY: (*shouts*) Shirelle!

SHIRELLE: Brandy! (*SHIRELLE squeals and hugs BRANDY*) I knew you were going to win senior class president! You've got the most class spirit and the biggest heart of anybody at Lincoln High! If I were a senior, I'd have voted for you! (*they hug and squeal some more*)

MISS CRANE: The administration wants juniors to play a bigger role in graduation planning and Shirelle has graciously volunteered to lend us a hand. (*glances at watch again*) I'm late! Molly has the agenda and the minutes from the last meeting. (*just before she steps offstage*) And please think about my suggestion for the graduation robes....Pretty please? (*exit MISS CRANE*)

AMANDA: Good! Maybe we'll get something done without her blabbering on. What is it with English teachers? They never shut up.

BRANDY: Oooo! Shirelle! I want you to hear my graduation speech. I've been working on it and it's awesome!

AMANDA: (*glances at MOLLY*) Yeah, Brandy, about your graduation speech idea...

MOLLY: Amanda and I don't think it's going to work.

BRANDY: Don't worry, you guys. I went home after our last meeting and put my ideas on paper and it flowed right outta me. It's so good. You're gonna love it! (*realizing that SHIRELLE doesn't know anybody*) Oh, Shirelle, this is Molly – she's a total hippie chick – but cool, and she's salutatorian – that means she's number two in the class – (*indicating AMANDA*) and this is –

SHIRELLE: (*interrupting and impressed*) – Amanda Whittimore. You probably don't know me but I know you – everybody knows you. I've been watching you since I was a freshman. (*laughs*) Not like "I-know-where-you-live" watching or "Can-I-have-a-lock-of-your-hair" watching. I just remember being a freshman and thinking "Wow! Look at her! Everyone likes her and she's the head of this club and the president of that club – How does she do it?" So, I sort of... paid close attention to you. (*awkward*) Did that sound creepy?

BRANDY: I'll vouch for Shirelle. She's not creepy – she's cool – and Miss Crane says she's in line to be next year's valedictorian.

AMANDA: (*it dawns on her; she's seen SHIRELLE before*) Wait a minute. I've met you before. You helped set up for the prom, right?

BRANDY: (*interrupting before SHIRELLE has a chance to respond*) Oooo! The prom! Our class is gonna be remembered for having the best prom ever! "Midnight in Paris." It was so classy! The chocolate fountain was my idea and my dress matched my boyfriend Troy's cummerbund and everybody wanted a band and I was like "Bands stink – we gotta get a DJ" and somebody in this room (*looking at MOLLY*) said I was wrong, but I was right in the end, wasn't I?

MOLLY: So I wanted a band – get over it.

BRANDY: Yeah, some hippie tub-thumpers.

MOLLY: Hey! My dad and uncle are the founding members of the Mad Hollow Mud Boggers – and they don't "thump tubs" – they play traditional Appalachian instruments.

BRANDY: Which are tubs!

MOLLY: They're not tubs – they're "folk percussive instruments."

BRANDY: Tub's are tubs!

AMANDA: (*fully remembering SHIRELLE*) I remember you now – you knocked over the Eiffel Tower. You know, we nearly lost our security deposit on that thing because of the damage you did. (*SHIRELLE looks very uncomfortable*) But my dad took care of it.

He told the rental company what he thought of their contract. He threatened to sue if they didn't give us our deposit back.

MOLLY: Amanda's dad is a lawyer.

AMANDA: Really, what were they thinking? They thought they'd go head to head with my dad because of a scratch on a ten-foot cardboard replica of the Eiffel Tower? He had them shaking in their shoes when he was done with them.

BRANDY: (*suddenly realizes that SHIRELLE hasn't been introduced to TIFFANY*) Oh, Shirelle, that's Tiffany over there. (*SHIRELLE shoots her a friendly wave. TIFFANY waves back.*) She's on lockdown. Dress code violation – big time.

AMANDA: (*sauntering over to TIFFANY'S desk*) I have to say, Tiffany, this new look of yours – it's not really working for you, is it? (*AMANDA picks up one of the bottles from TIFFANY'S desk; TIFFANY snatches it back.*) Touchy, touchy!

*AMANDA saunters away from TIFFANY.*

BRANDY: You know, I don't see what the big deal is. Tiffany pops out of her top and the whole school is in an uproar, but I've seen Mr. Lippincott, the French teacher, mowing his lawn shirtless and he has way bigger boobs than Tiffany!

SHIRELLE: You've seen him, too?

MOLLY: We've all seen him.

AMANDA: How could anyone miss him? (*with a shudder of disgust*) All that... bouncing.

SHIRELLE: And jiggling.

MOLLY: It's so unfair! Men can whip off their shirts and shake their moneymakers and nobody cares. But a woman breastfeeds in public – and it's the end of civilization! It's wrong and it's sexist!

AMANDA: You think everything's sexist.

MOLLY: And did you know that there are no emissions standards for riding lawn mowers? So, when he's out there bouncing all over his lawn, sunning his man boobs, he's not only grossing out the neighborhood, but he's contributing to global warming. I don't know what's worse: the crime against the environment, or the crime against my eyes.

SHIRELLE: Eyes!

BRANDY: Definitely the eyes!

AMANDA: All right, enough with the boob talk! Let's get going. I've got tennis practice in an hour. Molly, what's on the agenda?

## Scene 2 Girl Talk

MOLLY: Okay. We left off last week's meeting still undecided about the color of the graduation gowns. Miss Crane thinks they should be white. She has this idea that graduation is like a rebirth and white robes would suggest a new beginning –

AMANDA: (*interrupting*) She's not even here and she's still blabbering. I can't stand her.

BRANDY: How can you not like Miss Crane?

AMANDA: My dad says that those who can – do. Those who can't – teach. Come on, Molly – let's go. Tennis practice, remember?

MOLLY: Hold on a second, Amanda. I think Miss Crane has a point about the whole rebirthing idea.

AMANDA: Of course, you do. You're a total hippie.

BRANDY: (*to SHIRELLE*) Molly's family lives in the woods – with no electricity! They don't have phones or computers or anything.

MOLLY: Of course we have electricity! I have everything you have, a computer and a cell phone and all that stuff. I lead a perfectly normal life. It's just that my family and I try to leave the smallest carbon footprint we can.

BRANDY: Is it true you have an outhouse?

AMANDA: Worse! They have one of those toilets with moss in it.

BRANDY: Ew!

MOLLY: It's called a composting toilet – and how do you know I have one? You've never been to my house before.

AMANDA: Deeanna Gillespie told me. She said she slept over at your house once and she got a bladder infection from holding her pee all night. She said there was no way she was going to sit on that disease factory.

MOLLY: Composting toilets are perfectly sanitary.

AMANDA: Look, getting back to this white graduation robe idea – I say no way.

BRANDY: Amanda's right. I love Miss Crane, but white graduation robes? Come on!

AMANDA: White robes would make our graduation look like a creepy cult wedding – and white isn't flattering on anybody. You could be 5'11, 110 pounds, and you'd still look huge in a white gown. Black is way more slimming. (to SHIRELLE) What do you think?

SHIRELLE: (*reluctant to give her opinion as she's new to the group*) Oh, I don't know... I think you guys should decide.

AMANDA: Just say what's on your mind, Shirley.

SHIRELLE: Well, I look at it like this: we're girls – we can handle wearing white. But boys? Forget about it. White is too girly; it'll push them over the edge.

AMANDA: Shirley's right.

TIFFANY: Her name is Shirelle.

AMANDA: (*ignoring TIFFANY*) Just getting boys into gowns is a struggle. And then there's the marching. It's left foot, pause, right foot, pause, – and repeat. Is it really that complicated?

MOLLY: Men! Let me tell you, if women ran the world things would be different.

AMANDA: (*groans*) Do we really need to hear this again, Molly?

MOLLY: For one thing, women wouldn't cut down all the forests and pollute all the rivers.

AMANDA: That's two things.

MOLLY: And there wouldn't be any famine and war.

BRANDY: So, no white graduation gowns?

MOLLY: (*on a roll*) Women don't start wars. In fact, the desire to get ahead at another person's expense is entirely male.

TIFFANY: I don't know about that. Girls can be pretty ruthless.

MOLLY: That's because we've been conditioned to act like men – by men.

BRANDY: So, those white graduation gowns...

SHIRELLE: You know, I think the Greeks had it right. (AMANDA, MOLLY and BRANDY share a look that says “Huh?”) The Greeks? Don’t you remember Freshman English? With Miss Crane? Don’t you remember how she read us *The Odyssey*? How one day she dressed up like Hera and one day she was dressed up like Zeus?

AMANDA: I remember how stupid she looked.

BRANDY: I only remember one thing about *The Odyssey* – Brad Pitt’s butt! Remember that scene? It’s after he kills some tall guy, or maybe it was a whole bunch of guys, I don’t know, but there he is in that leather skirt thing he’s rocking, and he goes back to his tent and the next thing you know – BAM! There it is!

AMANDA: That was the movie *Troy* – not *The Odyssey*.

BRANDY: Are you sure? The big wooden horse? Isn’t that *The Odyssey*?

MOLLY: No, that’s the first part of the story, *The Illiad*.

BRANDY: Are you sure?

MOLLY: I’m sure.

BRANDY: Whose butt was in that? Orlando Bloom’s?

MOLLY: (exasperated) Shirelle, what were you saying about the Greeks “getting it right”?

SHIRELLE: Think about the goddess Athena for minute. She was this great mix of male and female. She was all woman, and she was tough, and best of all, she was smart. Where did she come from? She sprang from a man’s head – her father’s head. You see, she was in there, fully grown, jabbing at the inside of Zeus’s skull with her spear, and he’s writhing in agony until he can’t take it any more so he calls in his brother to crack open his skull – and out she pops! Ready to take on the world! I like Athena.

TIFFANY: You know, warriors prayed to her for cunningness in battle; she was the goddess of strategy. She could be nurturing, but ruthless too. She was especially ruthless when it came to helping out the underdog and punishing the wicked.

MOLLY: But Athena was only in her father’s head because he felt threatened by her – so he ate her.

BRANDY: I thought my family was messed up.

MOLLY: And Athena was vain. If you didn’t worship her – watch out.

BRANDY: (*catching up*) Oh! I know who she is now. She turned that girl into a spider, right?

SHIRELLE: That's her. (*letting an idea sink in for a minute*) You know, Molly, you're right about Athena being vain. Maybe that's what helping the just and punishing the wicked really is – just vanity. I mean, who's to say what the right thing is? (*TIFFANY and SHIRELLE lock eyes*) Who's to say what's just? (*TIFFANY gives her a look that says "It's all right. Keep going."*)

AMANDA: It's all relative. We all have different definitions of justice.

BRANDY: I don't know about that.

AMANDA: Don't tell me you believe in some kind of universal right and wrong?

BRANDY: That's exactly what I'm saying.

AMANDA: Ha!

BRANDY: You can "Ha!" all you want. I know what's right and I know what's wrong.

AMANDA: That's what I said – it's different for each of us.

BRANDY: That's not what I said.

MOLLY: I think what Brandy is saying is that she has more traditional values.

BRANDY: Amen!

AMANDA: "Traditional" – what does that mean? Whose tradition?

BRANDY: You know, "Thou shalt not steal" – traditional values.

AMANDA: Oh, those values. Which, by the way, aren't values – they're Commandments.

BRANDY: Commandments/values – same thing. And, if people don't have them or follow them, then you've got nothing but chaos and society falls apart.

AMANDA: You don't need the Ten Commandments to hold society together. You only need one thing –

SHIRELLE: (*interrupting her*) Power. All you need to hold society together is power.

AMANDA: Exactly! Power!

MOLLY: (to SHIRELLE) Power – do you really believe that?

SHIRELLE: I don't know. (*shares another look with TIFFANY*) I guess I'm still trying to figure it out.

AMANDA: There's nothing to figure out. Power is everything. If you have power, then you can decide what's right and what's wrong.

MOLLY: Come on, Amanda. Justice isn't that simple.

AMANDA: Sure it is. Who decides what's just or unjust? The person with the power. Period.

BRANDY: Oh, yeah? What about God?

AMANDA: (*laughs*) God? You must be joking.

BRANDY: (*shocked*) So, you're saying we're all just flopping around, doing what we want, without any consequences, not answerable to anybody? Don't you think bad people should be punished?

AMANDA: Sure, why not? Go ahead. Punish bad people.

TIFFANY: But you have to catch them first.

BRANDY: I say catch 'em, lock 'em up, and throw away the key.

MOLLY: Research shows that prison doesn't rehabilitate. It just turns criminals into hardened criminals. Punishment doesn't teach anybody anything. The power to punish isn't really power anyway. The only real power comes from forgiveness.

AMANDA: Spoken like a true tree-hugger. (*switching gears*) All right, let's get focused. Let's remember what we're here for, the graduation ceremony.

BRANDY: So...white graduation robes. Is it a yes or a no?

MOLLY: I say yes.

AMANDA: No.

SHIRELLE: (*apologetically to MOLLY*) No.

BRANDY: And it's a big no from me. That's three votes to one. Sorry, Molly, it's black robes for graduation. What's the next item on the agenda?

MOLLY: (*glances at agenda and speaks with a little disappointment*) Your speech.

BRANDY: Yes! (*pulls speech out of her purse*) Now, I know you guys weren't crazy about my butterfly idea, but I've actually written a draft of my speech and, when I read it to you, it'll all make sense.

SHIRELLE: What's your butterfly idea?

MOLLY: That's right. You weren't here. Tell her, Brandy.

BRANDY: Oooo! It's the best idea ever! After we all give our speeches and all the diplomas have been handed out and we've turned our tassels and whatnot, then we cue the music – I'm thinking that Mariah Carey song *Butterfly* – it's kinda old but it's real good – and then (*pauses for dramatic effect*) each of us releases a butterfly.

SHIRELLE: (*not quite grasping it*) I don't understand. How do you get butterflies....I mean...Huh?

AMANDA: (*appalled*) You buy the butterflies – they come in envelopes. It's gross.

SHIRELLE: You're joking, right?

BRANDY: No, Shirelle, I'm serious! They do it at weddings all the time.

AMANDA: Maybe at tacky weddings.

BRANDY: It isn't tacky! My cousin Drita did it at her wedding and it was beautiful. All those butterflies floating away on the breeze. Kind of like us, you know what I mean?

AMANDA: It's gross.

BRANDY: It isn't gross! Well, except for the ones that suffocate in the envelopes...

MOLLY: See! It really is inhumane, Brandy. The thought of those poor little things with their wings smashed down inside envelopes, limbs snapping, scared out of their little butterfly minds. It's terrible!

BRANDY: Oh, they don't feel anything.

MOLLY: You don't know that, Brandy!

BRANDY: Come on guys, hear me out! Listen to my speech. It'll all make sense when you hear it. Come on, please!

MOLLY: We'll listen, but I'm telling you now there's no way I'm going to vote for butterflies in envelopes!

BRANDY: Just keep an open mind. Okay? Here goes. (*Clears throat. Reads speech.*) The Oxford English dictionary defines the word butterfly as “an insect with two pairs of large wings, which feeds on nectar.”

AMANDA: Kill me now.

BRANDY: (*ignoring her*) Today, my friends of the graduating class of the year \_\_\_\_\_, we are like butterflies, preparing to leave the nest.

AMANDA: Butterflies don't live in nests!

MOLLY: (*shaking her head*) Just let her finish.

BRANDY: Our mothers and fathers have done their jobs, vomiting worms and stuff into our mouths to make us strong –

AMANDA: What?

MOLLY: Shh!

AMANDA: Did you even take Biology?

BRANDY: (*shouts*) Let me finish!

AMANDA: Okay. Okay.

BRANDY: But it wasn't just our mothers and fathers who filled us with their nourishing vomit, teachers did too. Day after day they regurgitated into our little mouths so that we might grow strong and someday leave the nest. This school has been our nest and knowledge our vomit. For, you see, knowledge is vomit. Like the butterfly, we are going to open our wings and fly away from home to far away locations. We will be frightened and uncertain, but we know, with the lessons we've learned from our parents and our teachers here at Lincoln High that we will soar. We will soar into our futures and our futures will be as bright as our multicolored wings. (*stops reading and talks to girls*) So what do you think? Shirelle? Molly?

### Scene 3 True Colors

SHIRELLE: It's just a draft, right?

MOLLY: It has... potential.

AMANDA: (*interrupting; to MOLLY and SHIRELLE*) Stop sugarcoating it! Her speech is tacky and horrible and if she reads it at graduation she'll be the laughing stock of the school. Look, I'm only saying

this for her own good. Someone has to tell her. It's the right thing to do.

TIFFANY: So you think hurting someone is the right thing to do?

AMANDA: When it comes to telling the truth, yes!

SHIRELLE: You don't think there's a better way to get your point across?

AMANDA: There might be a better way – who's to say? My point is that honesty is always the best policy. And I'm just being honest when I tell Brandy that her speech stinks. If you cared for her you'd do the same.

TIFFANY: So, you care for Brandy?

AMANDA: What's with the cross examination? Yeah, sure I care for Brandy. She's nice and I'm glad she's class president. I'm sure that she'll look back at these years at Lincoln High as the best ones of her life.

BRANDY: (*the insult registers*) What's that supposed to mean? Are you saying that I'm some kind of a loser who's never gone make anything out of her life?

AMANDA: No, I'm just saying that being voted class president is a popularity contest, and you're very popular. But, it isn't like being salutatorian or valedictorian. Those titles have to be earned. No offense, but it was my G.P.A. that made me valedictorian of our graduating class, not an election.

BRANDY: (*angry and insulted*) You're saying you're smarter than me, so you're more important than me and –

MOLLY: (*interrupting as she senses danger*) All right! Let's move on. (*An awkward moment. Consults her agenda.*) Remember, Miss Crane needs copies of all of our speeches the week before graduation. She proofs them one last time and then sends copies to the local paper.

BRANDY: (*with fear*) Our speeches go in the paper? Oh, my God! I don't want my speech to stink!

MOLLY: It's not going to stink. It'll be fine. We'll help you with it.

TIFFANY: Aren't you nervous about giving your speech, Amanda?

AMANDA: Nope.

BRANDY: I get butterflies just thinking about it. A-ha! See? Butterflies? It all ties in with my speech. I'm telling you, I know I can make my idea work. (to MOLLY) Have you started yours yet?

MOLLY: Are you kidding? I've rewritten it about ten times.

BRANDY: Really? So it's not just me?

MOLLY: You know what I wrote in my latest draft, Brandy? "The road of life is stretched out before us. There will be many potholes along the way and rest areas are few and far between." I know! It's terrible! Miss Crane told me to get the bad speech out of my system so that the good one can emerge – but what if I don't have a good one in me?

AMANDA: Don't get hung up on what Miss Crane says. She's all "Let your inner poet come out...blah, blah, blah."

SHIRELLE: So, what's your graduation speech about, Amanda?

TIFFANY: Why don't you practice it for us?

MOLLY: That's a great idea!

BRANDY: I'd love to hear it.

TIFFANY: You know, Shirelle, Amanda won the Governor's Scholarship for Academic Excellence. She got a big ol' check for college and got to meet the Governor himself.

AMANDA: It's not that big of a deal. I'd met him, like, a thousand times before. He and my dad went to law school together.

TIFFANY: Well, la-dee-da.

AMANDA: What? I should be embarrassed because my father has connections? Because he's successful?

TIFFANY: And it's a good thing you got that scholarship because we all know how stretched your family is.

MOLLY: Tiffany, lay off Amanda. She hasn't done anything wrong.

TIFFANY: (to MOLLY) Aren't you the least bit mad that a rich girl got a scholarship and you got nothing?

AMANDA: That's not true. She got lots of financial aid. My family doesn't get financial aid.

TIFFANY: Oh, boo-hoo.

AMANDA: You don't know me! You don't know my life!

TIFFANY: Oh, I know you.

BRANDY: Come on you guys. Let's get back to the graduation ceremony.

SHIRELLE: You didn't go away completely empty-handed though, did you Molly? You won departmental honors in English. Your name is on a plaque in the teacher's work area. Miss Crane selected you personally.

MOLLY: Yeah, she did. (*smiles*) Miss Crane is the best.

SHIRELLE: I'd be very proud of that, Molly.

MOLLY: I am...I am very proud of that...but...

TIFFANY: But what, Molly?

MOLLY: Nothing. Look, Tiffany, you've got this all wrong. Amanda has the higher G.P.A. – she outplaced me fair and square.

SHIRELLE: You're saying that you didn't want to win the Governor's Scholarship?

MOLLY: Of course I did...I really could have used the money. (*she winces*) Oh, I'm sorry, Amanda, I don't mean to make you feel bad.

AMANDA: You got all the loans you needed, right?

MOLLY: Oh, yeah. That's all taken care of. (*trying to sound cheerful*) I'll be paying them off until I'm about seventy, but I'm going to college and that's the important part.

AMANDA: See, everything worked out for both of us.

TIFFANY: Amanda was accepted to all the colleges she applied to, weren't you, Amanda?

SHIRELLE: The "five B's," right?

AMANDA: (*beginning to register TIFFANY and SHIRELLE as a threats*) How'd you two know that?

BRANDY: What are the five B's?

AMANDA: (*Ticking them off*) Brown, Bard, Bates, Brandeiss and... and...

TIFFANY and SHIRELLE: Boston College.

AMANDA: (*She knows something is "up."* Pauses. Changes subject.) Tennis practice is waiting. What's next on that agenda of yours, Molly?

MOLLY: (*consults agenda*) The faculty speech. Who are we going to ask? Mr. Drake or Miss Crane?

BRANDY: Oh, that's easy – Miss Crane.

SHIRELLE: Miss Crane.

MOLLY: Miss Crane.

AMANDA: I'm going to sit this one out.

*A moment of awkwardness.*

BRANDY: Okay, then, Miss Crane it is.

TIFFANY: 'Fraid not. I know for a fact that Miss Crane is not permitted to speak at our graduation.

BRANDY: Miss Crane? No way. Everyone loves Miss Crane.

MOLLY: Does Miss Crane know this?

SHIRELLE: I think Mr. Billings is telling her right now.

TIFFANY: (*making her move*) How's that speech of your coming along, Amanda?

AMANDA: (*recognizing that TIFFANY is on the offensive*) You know, Tiffany, I don't think I like you.

SHIRELLE: So, how's that speech of yours coming along, Amanda?

AMANDA: And I don't think I like you either, Miss Junior Class Superstar.

BRANDY: Whoa, whoa, whoa – what's going on here? (*to SHIRELLE and TIFFANY*) Do you two know something that Molly and I don't know?

AMANDA: They don't know anything. And all anybody in this room needs to know is that Miss Crane will not be giving the speech at this year's graduation. Now let's move on with the agenda.

TIFFANY: You know, I bet Molly would love to hear your graduation speech.

AMANDA: Why are you here?

TIFFANY: Because of a dress code infraction.

AMANDA: Uh-huh. (*to SHIRELLE*) and what about you, Shirley?

TIFFANY: Her name is Shirelle and she is here because she is the head of the Junior Steering Committee and she has volunteered to assist –

AMANDA: (*interrupting*) You two are here to cause trouble! Well, let me warn you right now, you don't want to mess with me.

MOLLY: Will someone explain what's going on?

SHIRELLE: I can tell you what's going on.

TIFFANY: So can I.

AMANDA: Don't say another word!

SHIRELLE: Miss Crane isn't allowed to attend graduation this year.

MOLLY: What did she do?

SHIRELLE: It isn't what she did – it's what she refused to do. It's what every teacher in this school refused to do. (*pause*) Miss Crane refused to write Amanda a letter of recommendation for college.

MOLLY: But, she's valedictorian.

TIFFANY: No, Molly. You're the valedictorian.

## Scene 4 The Whole Story

MOLLY: I don't understand.

TIFFANY: Molly, you should be valedictorian – not her. You have the higher G.P.A.

MOLLY: No, Amanda does.

SHIRELLE: She does now, today, because her father convinced the school board to allow students to earn credit for student aide positions. A  $\frac{1}{4}$  credit for each semester.

BRANDY: But that's okay. I was an aide in the nurse's office for a semester during my sophomore year and I got credit for it.

SHIRELLE: But it wasn't a numerical grade folded into your G.P.A. – so it didn't affect your class rank. Amanda's dad changed that.

BRANDY: So, she got credit for being an aide for a semester?

TIFFANY: No, she got credit for being an aide for eight semesters. Amanda's father made it retroactive. Amanda bumped Molly from

being valedictorian by a fraction of a point. Miss Crane went ballistic when she found out about it! She confronted Amanda's dad – and he's been out to get her ever since.

MOLLY: (*stunned*) Amanda, is this true? I should be valedictorian?

AMANDA: It wasn't personal, Molly. My dad saw the opportunity and took it.

BRANDY: And did you try to stop him?

AMANDA: You don't understand and I don't expect you to.

BRANDY: Why? Because I'm too stupid?

AMANDA: No, because you're too nice. And so are you, Molly. You're too nice. (*indicating SHIRELLE and TIFFANY*) But these two, I'm not so sure about them. (*to SHIRELLE*) You're not very nice. Are you, (*emphasizing the correct pronunciation of her name*) Shirelle ?

SHIRELLE: (*seriously; she's struggled with this question herself*) I don't know. I don't want to hurt people, but sometimes, I guess, you have to if you want to do the right thing.

AMANDA: "Do the right thing?" That's why you wormed your way into this meeting? Because you wanted to do the right thing? (*the thought hits her; she turns to TIFFANY*) Wait a minute. Did you get thrown yourself thrown into detention on purpose?

TIFFANY: No! I mean, yes! The thing, with my dress, the "malfunction" – that wasn't supposed to happen. (*frustrated*) Tell her, Shirelle!

SHIRELLE: She was just supposed to be get sent to detention because of a dress code violation. She wasn't supposed to...you know... fall out.

TIFFANY: I had to be in this room, right here, right now because I know what you did – and Shirelle knows what you did – and we know what your father did to Miss Crane!

AMANDA: And what? You're going to stand up to him? To his money and his influence? He had the power to change this school's grading policy to bump me one step ahead of you, Molly – and, yes, I let him do it! I'm sorry it was you that I bumped, but that's just the way it goes. You'd do the same thing – any of us would.

MOLLY: Would I?

TIFFANY: I wouldn't.

SHIRELLE: Me neither.

BRANDY: Never in a million years!

AMANDA: You don't know that because you've never had the opportunity. I had the opportunity – and I took it. I shouldn't have to apologize for it, but I will if you want me to. So, I'm sorry– there, you have it. (to SHIRELLE) Are you satisfied?

SHIRELLE: It isn't me you should be apologizing to.

AMANDA: Fine! (to MOLLY) I'm sorry! Is everybody happy now?

BRANDY: You don't mean it.

AMANDA: Of course I don't mean it! But, like my dad says, sometimes you just have to go through the motions to make everyone think you're sorry.

BRANDY: You're evil.

AMANDA: My dad says there's no such thing as evil. There's only opportunity.

BRANDY: Here's an idea: maybe your dad is full of crap!

SHIRELLE: (Uncertainly. Looks to TIFFANY.) I don't think I can do this.

TIFFANY: Hold it together, Shirelle! We're almost done. Don't flake out on me now!

SHIRELLE: (to TIFFANY) Are we doing the right thing?

TIFFANY: The world is filled with hateful people – Miss Crane says it all the time. Don't you want to take out the bad people? Don't you? And what do we have to do first? Come on, Shirelle, tell me what we have to do first.

SHIRELLE: (regaining her nerve) We have to catch them first.

AMANDA: Oh, I get it now. (laughs) You and Shirelle are like Athena. (laughs) This meeting here – you volunteering to join us, and you getting yourself thrown into detention – this was your attempt to catch me? (laughs) You idiots. Gods don't exist. Or, if they do, they don't step in and fight for the little guy. (TIFFANY gives SHIRELLE a look that says, "Okay, this is it. Let's do it." SHIRELLE moves into TIFFANY's spot behind the wall of beauty products, from whence she will secretly "work her magic" with the recording device and her cell phone. AMANDA Turns away from SHIRELLE and addresses the other girls.) Now, this is what we're going to do. We're going to wrap up this meeting and I'm going to go to tennis practice and that is that. Everything my father did with school

board was perfectly legal – and there’s nothing anyone can do about it.

TIFFANY: There’s a difference between legal and ethical.

AMANDA: (*laughs*) You want to know what my father says about the difference between legal and ethical? He says “The difference between legal and ethical is the difference between a winner and a loser.” (*composes herself*) Now, Molly, what’s next on today’s agenda?

MOLLY: (*still stunned*) Yes, the list...back to the meeting... (*puts down list as the thought hits her*) Wait a minute. If you didn’t have any letters of recommendation, how’d you get into college? How you get into five colleges? (*AMANDA does not respond*) Amanda?

AMANDA: It doesn’t matter, Molly. I just got in, that’s all. Let it go.

MOLLY: How’d she do it, Tiffany? How’d she get into college without any letters of recommendation?

TIFFANY: (*laughs softly*) It’s obvious isn’t it? Her father hired someone to take care of it.

AMANDA: They’re called college consultants and Dad hired the best one he could find. But you’re wrong about there being no teacher writing me a letter of recommendation. I got one in the end.

MOLLY: But colleges require two.

AMANDA: You can get around that. It’s one of the first things a really good college consultant tells you.

MOLLY: So, which teacher wrote you a letter of recommendation?

AMANDA: Molly, just let it go.

MOLLY: (*to TIFFANY*) How’d she do it, Tiffany?

TIFFANY: We don’t know for sure, but Shirelle has an idea.

BRANDY: (*to SHIRELLE*) Who was it?

SHIRELLE: (*from behind the wall of cosmetics where she remains throughout the scene*) Miss Crane.

BRANDY: But you said Miss Crane refused!

SHIRELLE: Yes, but I’ve got a hunch that Amanda didn’t give up. But Miss Crane, you see, she’s a fighter too, and I just don’t see her



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