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*Dramatic Publishing*

# **FORK IN THE ROAD**

By  
Y YORK

Inspired by the Ninth Commandment

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## CHARACTERS

DESIE, 17, dressed for school

IAN HASKEL, 17, dressed in grease-covered overalls.

Although similar in intelligence, they cope with the pain of reality differently.

SETTING: Along a moderately traveled road in a moderately sized town.

TIME: The present. Early morning.

## Fork in the Road

AT RISE: *Early morning along the road. DESIE watches cars drive by, waves. Unseen by her, IAN HASKEL stops to watch. She lets a few cars pass, then she waves again.*

IAN HASKEL. I don't get it.

DESIE (*jumps in surprise*). Ah!

IAN HASKEL. What are you doing?

DESIE. ...Nothing.

IAN HASKEL. Yeah you are—you're waving at cars. I saw you... Do you even know those people?

DESIE. Yeah.

IAN HASKEL. Who are they?

DESIE. ...They're the people who live across the street.

IAN HASKEL. Across what street?

DESIE. Across the street.

IAN HASKEL. Across the street from you?

DESIE. Yeah.

IAN HASKEL. ...The blue car or the white car?

DESIE. What?

IAN HASKEL (*slowly*). Do the people in the blue car or do the people in the white car live across the street from you?

DESIE. ...Both.

IAN HASKEL (*laughs*). So what's their name?

DESIE. Jones.

IAN HASKEL. Jones is your name. Desie... You crack me up.

DESIE. I didn't mean to.

IAN HASKEL. So how come you're waving? How come you wave when two cars pass and not when one car passes? (*Silence.*) Come on, spill. (*Silence.*) Hey, I don't care. I'm not going to "turn you in to the authorities."

DESIE. Were you in jail, Ian Haskel?

IAN HASKEL. Jeez, who said that?

DESIE. Nobody. I saw the police car. Then you weren't there anymore.

IAN HASKEL. Don't believe everything you hear.

DESIE. I didn't hear it, I thought it.

IAN HASKEL. Then don't believe everything you think.

DESIE. I don't know how to do that—

IAN HASKEL. Bunch of guys stand up and point their finger, doesn't mean it's true. I was no "danger," no danger to anybody. I punched the wall. That's all who I punched, the wall.

DESIE. ...The hole between the boys' room and the girls' room?

IAN HASKEL (*checks his fist*). Hurt like crazy. But I didn't punch a guy. None of them were ever in any danger, and they knew it—

DESIE. It was a plaster wall. Very thick.

IAN HASKEL. I wouldn't ever hurt a person, I wouldn't. Mike McKeon wasn't even there. The other guys just told him about it, and he's the one everybody believed...! almost believed him myself, he told such a good story. What are you supposed to do when somebody tells a good story like that on you? Under oath!

DESIE. Mike McKeon is a very good speaker.

IAN HASKEL. See. You believe him, and you didn't even hear what he said.

DESIE. They fixed the hole.

IAN HASKEL. I don't care—I'm not going back. I'm in the real world now. I fix engines. I punch a clock. (*He makes a fist and jabs the air.*) I'm there on time because they pay me to be there on time, which is a better reason to be on time than school reasons, which I never even knew what they were. (*He jabs the air. For the first time, DESIE is a little scared.*)

DESIE. What time is it?

IAN HASKEL. I don't know. It's early yet.

DESIE. I should go to school.

IAN HASKEL. Don't be scared—I told you I didn't punch anybody—

DESIE. No, I just have to get there before the bell.

IAN HASKEL. Yeah? You going to meet somebody? Somebody going to share their morning muffin with you?

DESIE. No muffin.

IAN HASKEL. You going to let somebody copy your homework? Some friend?

DESIE. They look at you if you get there after the bell.

IAN HASKEL. You're not going to miss the bell.

DESIE. What time does your work start?

IAN HASKEL. I just got off. Ian Haskel works while the rest of the world sleeps. Does that make you feel safer? To know that Ian Haskel works while you sleep?

DESIE. I wasn't feeling unsafe—I told you—I don't want to be late for school is all I'm feeling.