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*Dramatic Publishing*

# **SURVIVING LUNCH**

**a play about bullying**

by

KT CURRAN



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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Robert . . . . . CHRIS WAELTI  
Danny . . . . . MATT WALCZAK  
Conner. . . . . DEREK HAKIM  
Delia . . . . . ANDREA ZAMPELLA  
Lacey. . . . . LAUREN CHASE  
Shauna. . . . . SAMANTHA PESHKIN

\* \* \* \*

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# **SURVIVING LUNCH**

A Play in One Act  
For 3 teen boys and 3 teen girls

## **CHARACTERS**

**ROBERT COURTLAND** is smart and good at athletics, but he can be very mean and bullying to kids younger or smaller than himself. His father, after a domestic violence incident, has been given a restraining order and is not supposed to contact Robert or his mother. As the family conflict escalates, Robert is getting more and more violent with bullying.

**DANNY** is athletic and likes to kid around but also has a sensitive side. He cares about people and is a genuinely, nice guy. Danny is Robert's best friend and has known him for years. While Danny has always enjoyed the fun and adventure he has with Robert, lately he is feeling uncomfortable as his friend becomes more and more violent. Danny is aware of the domestic violence going on in Robert's family and it worries him.

**DELIA** is from New York City and has just moved to a new town in Florida. Delia's father died last year, and she and her mother have moved away to make a fresh start. A sensitive and artistic girl, she feels out of place in the new town. She misses her father and spends all her time writing poetry in her journal.

CONNER is small for his age. He is very intelligent but has trouble standing up for himself. He is shy and finds it hard to make friends.

LACEY is pretty and sweet but allows her friend Shauna to push her around.

SHAUNA is outspoken and bossy. She enjoys her position as one of the most popular girls in school. Her mom puts a lot of pressure on Shauna to be perfect and worries about her gaining weight.

SETTING: A school cafeteria, a school hallway and behind the gym.

(The original production used a simple set of two long tables and eight wooden boxes to represent a school lunchroom, hallway and sidewalk.)

TIME: The present.

DELIA. Conner? Conner, what happened? *(He doesn't answer.)* Was it Robert Courtland again?

CONNER. Sometimes I think if I had a gun I would kill him. *(Quietly.)* Or kill myself. *(DELIA sits next to him on the ground.)*

DELIA. You're lip is bleeding. *(She takes out a tissue and gently wipes his face.)*

CONNER. I just don't...I don't see what's so wrong with me. I mean I don't understand why he hates me so much. I'm not that bad, am I? I look in the mirror and I



just can't see what it is he sees. Every day I walk around this school and I feel...I don't know...ashamed, and I don't even know what I have to be ashamed of.

DELIA. Conner. There is nothing wrong with you. I know it's probably hard for you to get that. But there is nothing wrong with you. It's him. It's Robert. He's the one that's screwed up.

CONNER (*weakly smiles*). What makes you so smart about everything?

DELIA. I don't know... My dad. (*She and CONNER are quiet for a moment.*) If he were here, he'd know what to do.

CONNER. Yeah?

DELIA. He was like the bravest man I ever knew. And he died because of some stupid punk like Robert.

CONNER. What do you mean? What happened?

DELIA (*looking at CONNER*). Here I am talking on and on and you're sitting there with your face bleeding. Come on. Let's go to the office. This stuff with Robert is gonna stop.

CONNER. No. I'm not running to the office. I tried telling Mr. Dawson what was going on, and he just blew it off. I'll just...I don't know. Go hide in the bathroom till lunch is over.

DELIA. You can't just—

(*DANNY enters. When CONNER sees him he flinches.*)

DANNY. Hey, Delia—

CONNER. I gotta go.

DELIA. Conner, wait. (*CONNER exits.*)

DANNY (*laughing*). What's he so freaked out about?

DELIA. Don't even talk to me.

DANNY. What do you mean? What did I do?

*(SHAUNA enters. She sees DANNY.)*

SHAUNA. Danny, we've been looking all over for you.

DANNY. Delia, stop. *(He runs over to DELIA.)*

DELIA. You know, for some reason I thought you might be...I don't know...kind of cool. *(She looks at SHAUNA and then back at DANNY.)* But you're just like everybody else.

DANNY *(still talking to DELIA)*. What did I do?

DELIA. Nothing. That's the whole point. *(She turns away.)*

SHAUNA. Danny, Robert said—

DANNY *(to SHAUNA)*. Would you just shut up a minute? *(SHAUNA looks at him, surprised. She gives DELIA a dirty look and exits. He turns back to DELIA.)* Okay, now tell me what you're talking about. 'Cause I don't have a clue.

DELIA. I asked you to get your friend to stop picking on Conner.

DANNY. Yeah, and that was like, what, an hour ago? I haven't exactly—

DELIA. Well, in that hour he came after him again.

DANNY. What happened?

DELIA. He was calling him names—

DANNY. Oh come on. Everybody does that.

DELIA. And pushing him and hitting him hard.

DANNY. He's just kidding around. I'm telling you, Delia, it's what guys do.

DELIA. It's what guys do when they're...equal, okay? Not when one's bigger and meaner than the other and delib-

erately trying to hurt somebody. I mean he's got that kid really scared. How do you think that feels?

DANNY. I'm just saying—

DELIA. Why do you keep wanting to defend Robert? Look me in the eyes and tell me you think it's just kidding around. (*DANNY is silent.*) You can't, can you? (*She walks away and then stops. Pause.*) Danny, if you stand by and do nothing you're just as bad as he is.

DANNY (*pause*). Okay. I'll...I don't know, I'll figure something out.

(*ROBERT enters with SHAUNA.*)

DELIA. Now's your chance. (*She exits.*)

ROBERT (*watching her go*). I don't even know that chick and she's already getting on my nerves.

SHAUNA (*to DANNY*). What were you two talking about that was like, sooo important?

DANNY. I don't know. Nothing.

ROBERT. That girl is weird, man.

SHAUNA. Did you check out her clothes? Like, where does she shop? Salvation Army?

DANNY. Would you two just shut up?

ROBERT. Dude, what is your problem?

DANNY. Nothing. I'm having a bad day.

SHAUNA (*pause*). So, are Lacey and I gonna see you guys after school, or what?

ROBERT (*to DANNY*). I said we'd teach them how to skate.

DANNY. Great.

SHAUNA. So I'll see you later then.

ROBERT. Yeah. Later. Make sure Lacey comes! (*She exits.*) Dude, that girl totally has the hots for you, and you're acting like a jerk. Not to mention the fact that you could be totally screwing things up for me with Lacey. (*Pause.*) What is wrong with you?

DANNY. Nothing.

ROBERT. Well then just get over it, okay? I'll see you after school. (*ROBERT walks away.*)

DANNY. Robert—

ROBERT. Yeah?

DANNY. Never mind.

ROBERT (*smiles*). You idiot.

DANNY. Fathead.

ROBERT. Moron.

DANNY. Jackass. (*They both laugh.*)

ROBERT (*joking*). We'll finish this later, boy.

*(He exits. DANNY turns to go the other way and runs into CONNER. When CONNER sees DANNY he starts to run.)*

DANNY. Conner, wait up.

CONNER. I...I gotta go.

DANNY. Calm down, dude. I'm not gonna do anything. Just...just hold on a minute. I want to talk to you.

*(CONNER stops.)* So...what's going on?

CONNER. What do you mean?

DANNY. I mean, how's it going?

CONNER. Why do you want to know?

DANNY. I'm just asking!

CONNER. Okay, okay.

DANNY (*noticing a red mark on CONNER's face*). So what happened to your face?

CONNER. Nothing.

DANNY. Listen, Conner...I just wanted to tell you...I'm sorry about Robert and all the stuff he's been doing. He doesn't mean to...I mean...what I'm saying is I'm sure he doesn't—

CONNER. Did he...did he get you to do this? Where is he? Hiding around the corner waiting to jump me? (*He starts to leave.*)

DANNY. Dude, wait. He's not hiding around the corner. I just wanted to talk to you. That's all.

CONNER. That's all? You just...wanted to talk?

DANNY. Yeah.

CONNER (*pause, lets out a breath*). Sometimes I think he's gonna kill me.

DANNY. He's not gonna kill you, dude. (*Pause.*) I don't know what it is, man, but...it's like when you're walking down the hallway you just...it's like you're asking to be picked on.

CONNER. What's that supposed to mean?

DANNY. I don't know...you always look so...scared.

CONNER. I am scared.

DANNY. And when he calls you names and stuff...you turn around and look. You start shaking all over. You're giving Robert just what he wants.

CONNER. Listen, *you* know as well as I do. I've tried everything to get him to stop. I've tried ignoring him—

DANNY. No. Can't you see? That just makes him mad.

CONNER. I've tried running away—

DANNY. If you cry and act all scared he's just gonna come at you even harder.

CONNER. I even tried hiding in the bathroom. But wherever I am, he always seems to track me down. My whole existence has become about surviving lunch.

DANNY. Dude, I'm gonna give you probably the best advice you're ever gonna get in this school. Just...don't act scared. 'Cause guys like Robert, they're like...dogs, man. They can smell scared a mile away.

CONNER. But I'm telling you I really am scared!

DANNY. Then you've just got to pretend you're not. You know, just fake it.

CONNER. Like how?

DANNY. I don't know... Okay. Say I'm you, all right? I'll show you what to do.

CONNER. Are you serious?

DANNY (*grabbing CONNER's shirt*). And don't tell anybody I did this, okay? Because if you do I'm gonna do the exact same thing that—

CONNER. Okay, okay, okay.

DANNY (*letting go of CONNER's shirt*). So...all right I'm you. And I'm walking down the hall. You be...you be Robert.

CONNER. Uhhh... Okay. (*He tries to act tough.*) Hey, queer face. (*DANNY doesn't look. He keeps walking. CONNER lightly shoves him.*)

DANNY. Shut up. Leave me alone. (*He keeps walking.*)

CONNER. Don't walk away from me, you little weirdo. I can call you whatever I want.

DANNY (*still walking*). I said, "Shut up."

CONNER. Huh?

DANNY. I mean, yeah, I'm small. My clothes are weird. So what? Sucks to be me, man. Whatever, dude. But get off my friggin' case.

CONNER. I couldn't say all that.

DANNY. Yeah you can. Okay now, push me. Hit me.

CONNER. Uhhh... *(He pushes DANNY.)*

DANNY. Hey!

CONNER. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

DANNY. No man, that wasn't bad. You're not as weak as you look. You know that? Now push me again.

*(DELIA enters. They do not see her.)*

CONNER *(pushing DANNY and laughing)*. You faggot.

DELIA *(to DANNY)*. What are you doing?

CONNER *(laughs)*. Nothing. We're just kidding around.

DELIA *(to DANNY)*. Is this your idea of helping?

CONNER. What are you talking about? *(DELIA is silent. CONNER looks at her and then DANNY. Neither one of them speaks.)* Did you ask him to help me? *(DELIA, realizing that she has somehow humiliated CONNER, is silent. He exits.)*

DELIA *(to DANNY)*. What did you do? Tell him to fight back? Tell him it's no big deal, boys will be boys? Tell him he just needs to make some friends, so go join the chess club? That's what everybody says. All the teachers and parents and therapists and all the rest of the idiots who don't have a clue what's going on. That kid is not the one with the personality problem. It's guys like Robert...and *you*.

DANNY. What's that supposed to mean? I was trying to help him!

DELIA. Making him feel like it's all his fault is not helping. The only thing that's gonna help is if every single one of us stands up and says being a bully is not okay.

'Cause if we don't, they're just gonna get meaner and tougher until one day somebody really gets hurt.

DANNY. I don't see why you're freaking out on me here when I'm trying to be the good guy. (*Uncomfortable with the emotion, DANNY walks away.*) I've got stuff to do.

DELIA. Danny, wait. (*Pause.*) Did you hear about that thirteen-year-old kid in New York who...who brought a gun to school and killed his history teacher? That teacher was my dad.

DANNY (*stares at her, not knowing what to say*). Oh man... (*He crosses to her. Pause.*) I'm sorry.

DELIA. He was just this...punk...you know. Just a bully.

DANNY (*after a long pause, begins to speak with difficulty*). When Robert and I started at this school all the older kids would...beat us up and stuff. Call us names. And everybody would say...it's just part of being a guy. And we couldn't wait till the day when we were the big shots... But it's stupid to have to act tough all the time. You get...like this tight feeling, you know? Like you're gonna have a heart attack.

DELIA. Yeah.

DANNY (*pause*). Hey. Aren't you supposed to be in class?

DELIA. Yep.

DANNY. Me too. Looks like another detention.

DELIA. See you later.

DANNY. Hey, Delia?

DELIA. Yeah?

DANNY. I'm sorry about your dad. (*She smiles. They both exit.*)