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Dramatic Publishing

A SICK WORLD

A One-act Play
by
ROBERT LOPEZ



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(A SICK WORLD)

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I would like to thank all my friends and family for their support through the years of my interest in theatre; it isn't the grandest of businesses, but it's my life. Thank you for understanding. I hope my passion for the theatre comes through in everything I do.

— RL

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A SICK WORLD

**A One-act Play
For 2 Men**

CHARACTERS

DAVID 16 years old

ADAM in his 30s

PLACE: Emergency shelter for youth services.

TIME: The present.

Running time: 20-25 minutes.

Cal State Los Angeles presented A SICK WORLD at The John Lion New Works Festival 2000. The production was directed by Laurie Woolery and included the following artists:

Cast

Adam..... PETER MALONEY
David..... VICTOR RODRIGUEZ JR

Production Staff

Scenic Design LAWRENCE MELENDEZ
Lighting Design/Costume Coordinator . G. SHIZUKO HERRERA
Associate Producer/Program. JOOYOUNG SONG
Production Stage Manager ALYSIA ROBBINS
Faculty Festival Supervisor JOSE CRUZ GONZALEZ
Faculty Scenic Supervisor SNEZANA PETROVIC

Staff

José Figueroa, Tim Jones, Tony Martinez,
Connie Porras, Bruce Zwinge

A SICK WORLD

SETTING: *An office at an emergency shelter for youth services. DAVID is looking around the office. He nervously waits for someone. ADAM enters with a sandwich. He hands it to DAVID.*

ADAM. I come bearing food. *(No response.)* I thought you'd like this. It's uh, turkey and American.

(DAVID accepts the sandwich and stares at ADAM as he eats it. Both are standing and a little nervous.)

ADAM. Have a seat? Make yourself comfortable. *(ADAM and DAVID sit.)* My name is Adam. I'm going to ask you a couple of questions, is that okay? *(No response.)* Is it good? *(DAVID looks.)* The sandwich. Is it good? *(DAVID takes a big bite.)* Good. Now, is it okay if we talk? Talk about why you're here? ... Do you wanna talk?

DAVID. Whatever.

ADAM. Good. *(There's silence.)* So, where would you like to begin?

DAVID. I dunno. Isn't that your job to decide?

ADAM. Well, true, But I would like to give you the option.

DAVID. I'll pass.

ADAM. All right then, let's start with something simple.

DAVID. What, you want me to recite my ABCs?

ADAM. Actually, I was thinking more along the lines of your name.

DAVID. I think we should stick to the ABCs.

ADAM. Okay. Are you going to sing, or just recite it, or maybe a little bit of both?

DAVID (*seeing ADAM isn't breaking*). Harvey.

ADAM. Harvey? Like the imaginary rabbit movie?

DAVID. ...Arnold.

ADAM. Schwarzenegger?

DAVID. ...David.

ADAM. David. That sounds about right. Am I right?

DAVID. I guess.

ADAM. So, David, how old are you?

DAVID. Why are you asking me this?

ADAM. Well, we still don't have anything on you yet. They're still examining your fingerprints. We can't bring up your files till then. We just need some information so we can...

DAVID. Can what? Call my parents? Fuck that! I'm not going home.

ADAM. David.

DAVID. Do you think I'd be living on the streets if I could go home? What are you people, fucking stupid?

ADAM. Okay, David, calm down. Calm down. We're not planning on sending you home, but we do need to find out some more information. Now, do you wanna talk about why you're living on the streets?

DAVID. Because I had nowhere else to go.

ADAM. Nowhere?

DAVID. No. (*Looking at ADAM's notes and files.*) ...Has anyone filed a missing person's report on me?

ADAM. None that fit your description, no.

DAVID. See? No one cares for me except myself.

ADAM. Is that what you believe?

DAVID. No, I just left home because everything was just perfect and I couldn't stand living in a home where people care for me.

ADAM. Why did you leave home?

DAVID. Why does it matter now? It's all said and done.

ADAM. I might be able to help you out. To help you realize that this is not your fault.

DAVID. Oh, I know this isn't my fault; it's my father's.

ADAM. What about your father? Did he hit you?

DAVID. Look, can we talk about something else?

ADAM. All right, what would you like to talk about?

DAVID. ... You.

ADAM. Me? What about me?

DAVID. I dunno... your childhood, maybe.

ADAM. My childhood? Look, David, this isn't...

DAVID. What are you afraid of? Afraid I might learn something horrible about your past?

ADAM. No, David.

DAVID. Then?

ADAM. Okay, um, I had a pretty good childhood. Uh, in elementary school I was just a normal student, and the same goes for junior high. But I was very active in high school. I was on the... student council, and the volleyball team.

DAVID. What about at home?

ADAM. Home? Well, home wasn't too good.

DAVID. What happened?

ADAM. ...My parents divorced and I was left to choose between them, so I chose my mother. My father has resented me till this day. We still haven't spoken.

DAVID. That's it?

ADAM. Yah, that's pretty much "my life."

DAVID. Wow, heartfelt. I dunno how I would survive something like that? Maybe become a psychiatrist?

ADAM. David, we're here to talk about you, not me.

DAVID. Oh, that's right. But you were sure willing to tell me your sob story.

ADAM. Whatever it might take to get you to speak.

DAVID. ... Whatever.

ADAM. Okay then—

DAVID. When was the first time you had sex?

ADAM. David, I don't see how this is going to help you in any way.

DAVID. Maybe if you're willing to tell me a few private things about yourself, I'll talk. You know, it's the confiding thing.

ADAM. ... You'll talk?

DAVID. Maybe.

ADAM. ... All right. All right, seems fair enough... I was seventeen.

DAVID. With a guy or a girl?

ADAM. A girl.

DAVID. Are you gay?

ADAM. No, David, I'm a married man.

DAVID. That doesn't answer my question.

ADAM. The answer is still no.

DAVID. But you've had sex with a man before, haven't you?

ADAM. No, I haven't.

DAVID. But you'd like to?

ADAM. David.

DAVID (*looking into ADAM's eyes, he laughs*). All right, I believe you. Let's get down to business, as they say.

ADAM. Good. Now, do you wanna tell me why you left home?

DAVID. ...I can't talk about that right now ...

ADAM. Okay ... Okay. What do you wanna talk about?

DAVID. I dunno, just not that. Not right now.

ADAM. How about anything from your past...your childhood. Is there anything in particular that you remember?

DAVID. I remember lots of things. Some, I'd rather not.

ADAM. Well, how about something or someone that was special to you? Like a...a friend or relative.

DAVID. I remember my kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Hollenberg.

ADAM. Good. What do you remember most about her?

DAVID. Lots of things. I remember how she used to smell like...baby powder...the good kind. I remember how I used to love her. She was kind of old, but not really. You know the kind; I mean all kindergarten teachers are the same. Sweet, gentle women who teach you how to play right with the other kids and make sure you don't throw sand in the sandbox. I was...five years old and I knew that I loved her. For some reason I loved her more than my...my mom. I guess it was because I was there at school half the day and I got a lot of attention from her. She would help me color inside the lines, and when I forgot the words to a song she would mess up too, probably so I wouldn't look so stupid. I knew that she did that for me, and I loved her for that... Then one day she didn't show up to school. We had a substitute

teacher instead. The principal came in and told us that Mrs. Hollenberg had died and gone to heaven, and that she wouldn't be coming back. For weeks I would cry and ask for Mrs. Hollenberg but she never came back.

ADAM. Did your parents ever explain anything to you about death?

DAVID. No, not really.

ADAM (*pause*). How were your parents?

DAVID. I hate them both.

ADAM. Do you wanna talk about that?

DAVID. Well, I guess I'm gonna have to sooner or later, huh? Might as well get it over with. So, what do inquiring minds wanna know?

ADAM. Why did you leave home?

DAVID. Why did I leave home? Well, my dad couldn't keep his hands off me. So one day I finally got enough balls to leave.

ADAM. How long ago was this?

DAVID. About two years ago. I had just turned fourteen.

ADAM. Where did you go?

DAVID. Around. Wherever there was somewhere to sleep. Fields, old garages, doorways, alleys, backyards, schools, wherever.

ADAM. The school was where the police found you, right?

DAVID. Yeah. That's one of my favorite places to sleep 'cuz there's so many different places to hide. But see, there was these kids who broke into the soda machine down in the quad and the police came to check it out and found me sleeping, so I was brought in, I guess...

(DAVID has been eyeing the candy on the desk. ADAM offers him some.)