

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

A Play in One Act

by

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Cast of Characters

2F & 2M

- ANNA: A female high school junior. Charlie's older sister.
- CHARLIE: A male high school freshman. Anna's younger brother.
- DEVIN: A female high school senior. Mel's older sister.
- MEL: A male high school freshman. Devin's younger brother.

Scene

In the family room of Anna and Charlie's family home.

Time

The present.

SYNOPSIS:

Siblings Devin and Mel are forced to spend every other Friday afternoon following school with siblings Charlie and Anna while waiting for their mom to pick them up. The sets of siblings start as strangers but grow closer over the course of five different times together. They learn about themselves and each other while exploring the differences and similarities between friends and family.

PRODUCTION HISTORY:

Performed on May 20th, 2015 at Westview High School in Portland, OR.

COSTUMING:

In general, all characters need to wear something clearly different for every new scene because two weeks have elapsed between each of the scenes. However, due to time constraints, it is best if this change is small and easy; for example: loose shirts that can be quickly thrown on and off backstage while a generic pair of pants stays the same. Devin, the character who cares the least about clothing, could get away with wearing repeat outfits of a dark color scheme. Similarly, Mel could wear variations of the same t-shirt or button-up to make his costume changes simpler. Anna and Charlie should have slightly more variation as they are more concerned with appearances than the other two characters.

PROPS:

4 Backpacks	3 Cell-phones
1 Bowl of Skittles	1 Throw pillow
1 Monopoly Set	3 TV Remotes
8 Cans of Coke or other soda*	1 Jacket

*Some cans can be empty and open for repeated use throughout the show. They only need to be opened on stage if indicated.

SET DESIGN:

The set can be as complex or simple as desired. The only necessities are a couch (with a couple of throw pillows), an armchair, a coffee table and something to hang coats on. The doors can theoretically "exist" just offstage and out of sight from the playing space.

LIGHTING:

All that is necessary for light is a full coverage of the stage. It works best if the light transitions between scenes are abrupt. Lights up at the beginning of each scene will be cued by the actor "turning on the lights" by the front door. Ideally, the light would be softer and more

homey. Also, if desired, a side-lamp can be on the set and turned on for the duration of the play to give more of a home feeling.

SOUND & MUSIC:

- 1 Latin Pop Song
- 1 Doorbell Sound
- 1 Relevant Pop Song

SCENE 1

SETTING:

Modern day. Mid-afternoon. The family and entry room of the Warren's house.

A front door sits in the stage-right wall of the space. There is a small mat in front of the door and a coat rack to the left with a short shelf for storing shoes beside that. A staircase upstage-left goes up to Anna and Charlie's bedrooms. A door downstage-left leads to the kitchen. Posed family photos line all the walls. Small, well-maintained, potted plants are placed on various surfaces throughout the room. The home was clearly designed to look cozy but the intention only executes itself superficially.

A large, sofa sits in the center of the room with an armchair to the stage-left side. The armchair is angled toward a theoretical TV "located" downstage-right in front of the sofa and armchair. There is a coffee table with magazines in front of the sofa and two end tables on either side.

AT RISE: The house is empty and quiet for a brief moment – lights off except for possibly a side lamp left on in the family's daily absence. Both of the Warren parents are away at their work and the kids have been at school. The sound of a young man's voice – CHARLIE – telling a story can be heard from behind the front door with some distance between the noise and the house. ANNA, silent, enters through the front door and turns on the room's lights. She takes off her shoes and puts her backpack onto the couch. CHARLIE enters followed by DEVIN and MEL, both of whom are seeing this house for the first time.

CHARLIE (*taking off his shoes and backpack while finishing a story*): ... so I told the teacher:

"You asked me to build a bridge - you didn't tell me it had to work." He was pissed! To be honest, I really just taped a couple of Popsicle sticks into trapezoid, which sort of looked like a bridge if you squinted. I mean, I'm not going to grow up to be some bridge engineer – that's for sure. So who really cares, right? Mr. Thatcher didn't agree with me at all. (*He chuckles at himself.*)

(*DEVIN and MEL stand in the entryway and look around awkwardly – not knowing what they should do.*)

ANNA (*sarcastic; to CHARLIE*): Hilarious, Charlie. (*politely; to DEVIN and MEL*;) Come on in you guys. Take your shoes off. Make yourselves at home. (*trying to seem cool; in Spanish*;) Nos casa es su casa.

MEL (*to himself; correcting ANNA*): *Nuestro* casa es su casa-

DEVIN: -God, Mel, don't.

MEL: What?

DEVIN: You're always correcting people.

MEL: No I'm n-

ANNA (*trying to diffuse the situation*): Oh it's ok. I never really liked Spanish. I was terrible. Still am. Finished the required two years and never thought about it again... Are you in Spanish, Mel?

MEL: Yeah. Same class as Charlie.

CHARLIE: Oh, yeah, you sit in the back corner right?

MEL: Yeah.

DEVIN: Typical Mel.

CHARLIE: You corrected the teacher yesterday in class. That was awesome! Are you fluent or something?

MEL: My mom spoke it to me and Devin when we were little kids.

CHARLIE: That's so cool.

ANNA (*trying to make conversation*): So you're fluent too, Devin?

DEVIN: No, I haven't spoken Spanish since I started middle school, which seems like forever ago, so...

ANNA: Oh. Ok.

(A long awkward moment of silence. They all stand in the entryway. No one knows what to say.)

CHARLIE (*joking*): Someone cue the crickets...

ANNA: Do either of you want a snack? I think my mom said she put some Skittles in a bowl on the kitchen counter. I'll get them. One second. (*exits to the kitchen*)

CHARLIE (*to MEL and DEVIN*): You can put your backpacks down and take a seat or something. (*He takes Anna's backpack off of the coach and throws it across the room.*) Make yourselves comfortable.

DEVIN: Thanks...

(DEVIN and MEL sit rigidly on opposite ends of the coach. DEVIN pulls out her phone and starts to text someone.)

CHARLIE: You guys just moved here, right? From...

DEVIN: Redmond.

CHARLIE: I think our Aunt lives in Redmond. Either there or Medford. She's that Aunt no one really talks to; you know what I mean? *(MEL forces a smile and DEVIN continues to text.)* How was it?

DEVIN: What?

CHARLIE: The move.

DEVIN: Terrible.

CHARLIE: Oh, jeez. What happened?

DEVIN: We moved.

CHARLIE *(after a small chuckle):* I see... *(Beat.)* I've never moved before. Well, I mean, I'm always moving – can't sit still! But, like, I've never moved from Portland. *(He quietly laughs to himself.)*

DEVIN: You're lucky.

(Silent pause.)

CHARLIE *(desperately trying to get DEVIN or MEL to talk so that things are not as unbearably awkward):* I think my mom was saying you two live pretty far away, right? You can't take the bus home on Fridays or something? You have to get picked up from here for some reason?

DEVIN *(puts her phone down):* Our mom still lives in Redmond. We have to spend every other weekend with her and she can't get to Portland until five o'clock. They won't let us hang around the school for two hours so ... sorry.

CHARLIE: Oh, no it's no prob-

DEVIN: *Your* mom was the one who suggested to *our* mom that we come here. We could've walked to a Starbucks or something. But, our mom always thinks her ideas are the best ideas-

CHARLIE *(as though he had said the following many times before today):* We love having guests here at the Warren home. The more the merrier! *(Seeing that this got DEVIN to stop her rant, CHARLIE, takes a deep breath.)*

(ANNA enters and places a bowl of Skittles on the coffee table.)

CHARLIE (quietly; to ANNA): What took you so long?

ANNA: That was not very long.

(ANNA sits between DEVIN and MEL - it is the last available seat on the couch. More silence.)

CHARLIE cannot handle it.)

CHARLIE: So...your parents are...um...

DEVIN: Divorced. Yeah.

ANNA: Jeez, Charlie, be polite.

CHARLIE: I was just asking.

(CHARLIE takes a handful of Skittles and eats them.)

ANNA: Sorry that my brother's such a pest, Devin.

DEVIN: Don't worry, so is mine.

ANNA (jokingly): I promise, I'm nicer.

DEVIN: I can already tell.

(ANNA smiles.)

ANNA (figuring out something to say): Are you texting your friends from back home?

DEVIN: It's my boyfriend. Our two-year anniversary is next week and I'm going to be here.

ANNA: Oh, that sucks. But, uh, congratulations, I guess.

DEVIN: Yeah, thanks.

CHARLIE: Wait, you have a *boyfriend*? I thought you were les-

(ANNA shoots a look at CHARLIE.)

DEVIN: What?

CHARLIE (thinks quickly): Single...

ANNA (changing the topic): I just broke up with *my* boyfriend. But we were only together for a couple months, so...

CHARLIE: Thanks for sharing, Anna...

(Yet another awkward pause.)

ANNA: Oh, I just remembered! I have to finish the first season of House of Cards today... Do either of you watch that?

DEVIN: I only watch old movies, usually.

ANNA: Oh, I love old movies!

CHARLIE (to ANNA): No you don't.

ANNA (gives CHARLIE a look; to DEVIN): There's just something about a movie when it's in black and white. Almost like going back in time. You know what I mean?

DEVIN: What's your favorite movie?

ANNA: Oh, I don't know exactly. I haven't been able to watch much lately since I've been so busy researching colleges and stuff. But I feel like I can't have a conversation with someone these days without knowing what happened in House of Cards, so I watch it. I don't even really like the show! (She laughs at herself uncomfortably.)

DEVIN: I've never seen it.

CHARLIE: Orange is the New Black is way better in my professional opinion.

MEL: I like that show.

CHARLIE: He speaks!

MEL: How far are you?

CHARLIE: Just half way through the first season!

MEL: Get ready.

CHARLIE: What? What's going to happen? Don't tell me. Is it bad?

MEL: You'll see...

CHARLIE: Ahh! ... Well, I know what I'm doing right after you guys leave.

ANNA: Be polite, Charlie!

CHARLIE: Sorry, Jeez.

ANNA: Does anyone want to play a board game or something? We have Monopoly or Life, I think.

CHARLIE: What are we, little kids?

DEVIN: I am one hell of a monopolier.

ANNA (gives CHARLIE a look): Great! Monopoly it is. I'm going to be honest, though: I don't remember how to play. Can I get some help from the master monopolier, Devin?

DEVIN: Yeah! Just as long as you don't beat me.

ANNA: Don't think you have to worry about that. (She laughs at herself and quickly gets up from her seat.) The games in the closet down the hall. I'll run and grab it for us. Be back in a second. (She exits through entrance to the kitchen.)

CHARLIE: Well, if this is going to get serious I want to establish right now that I call playing as the hat. Otherwise, you can count me out.

MEL: I usually pick the hat too.

CHARLIE (*being overly-dramatic in an effort to lighten the mood*): I knew we had more in common than meets the eye. But don't think that cute little attempt at winning my sympathy will cause me to give up my prized piece. The hat or death!

MEL: You can have it. I'll just use the boat.

CHARLIE: And for you, Devin?

DEVIN (*not amused*): What ever piece is left over, I guess.

CHARLIE (*yelling through the house*): FIND IT YET, ANNA? (*to himself*:) Jeez.

(BLACKOUT)

SCENE 2

SETTING:

Two weeks later. Mid-afternoon. The family and entry room look exactly as they did in the start of Scene 1.

AT RISE: The house is empty and quiet – lights off inside. ANNA enters through the front door, visibly annoyed with something. She turns on the light throws off her shoes and backpack. She walks into the kitchen and quickly returns with a Coke in hand. While checking social media on her phone, she walks over to the armchair and plops down into it. CHARLIE barges through the front door, boisterously singing a pop song at the top of his lungs. MEL follows and smiles at the spectacle CHARLIE makes.

ANNA: WILL YOU BE QUIET!

CHARLIE: Stop suppressing my god-given talent, Anna! I could be a star if it wasn't for people like you!

ANNA: Your screaming is the last thing I need to hear after a stressful week of school. I hope you're not too offended.

CHARLIE: Only a little.

ANNA: Mel, what happened to Devin? I was excited for her to come and hang out with us.

MEL: She skipped school. Again.

ANNA: Really?

MEL: This is the fourth time she's skipped since we moved. My mom's going to be pissed when she's not here to get picked up.

ANNA: I don't understand how she just doesn't show up to school. I feel guilty when I'm five minutes late to a class. Was she like this in Redmond too?

MEL: Well-

CHARLIE: God, Anna, why do you care so much about Devin? You hung out with her one time for a couple of hours two weeks ago. (*teasing:*) Do you "like" her or something?

ANNA: I don't "like" her, ok? I just-

CHARLIE: Well you should like her! She's Mel's sister. Have some manners, Anna, jeez.

ANNA (*gets up from seat*): Ugh! You are so annoying! I'm going to...study.

CHARLIE: On a Friday afternoon?

(*ANNA storms off to her room.*)

CHARLIE (*to Mel*): It's just too easy getting her to freak out. I can't resist.

(*MEL smiles.*)

CHARLIE: Ok, so, if you don't mind, I was hoping you could help me with the Spanish homework for a bit? Then we can stalk people on Instagram or something.

MEL: Sure. I finished mine in class.

(*CHARLIE sits on the armchair and pulls out some papers from his backpack. MEL sits across from him on the couch.*)

CHARLIE: I guess my first question is: Why the hell are there two different past tenses in this language.

MEL: Yeah, it's weird but you'll get it after a while.

CHARLIE: Hopefully... (*He looks over his papers and takes in a deep breath.*) Sometimes I have absolutely zero motivation to do a single piece of homework. You know what I mean?

MEL: I feel like that all the time.

CHARLIE (*with disbelief*): Yeah, sure. Then how come you always get it done so quickly?

MEL: Well, because I have to. My parents need me to get good grades, so I do. I have to prove to them that I'm f-

CHARLIE: Look, I always say that I “need” a new phone when my phone works fine. I mean come on, you parents don’t *really* “need” that, do they?

MEL: Yeah. I guess. Sort of. It’s hard to explain. *(He goes silent, thinking.)*

CHARLIE *(feeling uncomfortable):* Hey, do you want a Coke? I’ll get us some. Be right back.

(CHARLIE leaves into the kitchen. MEL gets lost in thought. He puts his head in his hands.)

CHARLIE enters the room with a Coke in each hand. MEL sits up.)

CHARLIE: Were you crying? I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to-

MEL: No I wasn’t crying. I’m fine. It’s fine. Everything is fine.

(CHARLIE puts the cokes on the coffee table and sits next to MEL on the couch – he wants to comfort Mel but feels uncomfortable.)

CHARLIE: It’s ok to cry-

MEL: I wasn’t.

CHARLIE: How about we not talk about parents now?

MEL: Yeah, maybe another time.

CHARLIE: Whenever you want, amigo.

MEL *(smiles):* Thanks.

(They both sit silently for a moment, thinking. CHARLIE pulls out his phone and scrolls.)

MEL: Charlie, can I ask you something?

CHARLIE: Always.

MEL: How do you do it? How do you stay happy and positive and funny all the time?

CHARLIE: Hmm... I’ve never really think about it. It’s just the way I am, I guess.

MEL: I wish is could be like you, then.

CHARLIE: Oh you don’t want to be like me, Mel, trust me. *(He has a thought but wonders for a moment if he should share it with Mel. He decides to:)* See, last year my Dad said we needed to go on a “family” vacation to Jamaica. And even though we all flew there together, we spent the whole time in the resort doing our own things; just like we do when we’re here, except in the tropics.

MEL: I’m confused.

CHARLIE: Anyway, I went – by myself – to a local palm-reader that the resort brought in. She said all the same things about me that you did: that I was out-going, positive, funny. Except, after that, she said that I was also... afraid: afraid of being alone and unwanted. She said I used

all those things about myself to hide away from the fear. And she was right. I mean, even what she was saying scared me. I've tried not to think about it since then. I don't think about a lot of things like that, actually.

(Beat.)

MEL: Yeah. Its nice to take a break from thinking about things for a while, though.

CHARLIE: I'll drink to that.

(CHARLIE opens both Cokes and hands one to MEL. He picks up the other one for himself.)

CHARLIE: To the unavoidable shittiness of life!

(They both drink a sip of their Coke. CHARLIE gets and idea and puts his coke down on the coffee table.)

CHARLIE: I know exactly what we need, Mel.

MEL: Girlfriends? *(smiles at his own joke)*

CHARLIE: Yes, that. But what *I'm* thinking of is way less scary.

MEL: What is it?

CHARLIE: First, get those filthy homework papers out of my sight!

MEL: Do you want them in your backpack or something?

CHARLIE: I don't care. Just make them gone!

(MEL pushes all of the papers off on the table and onto the floor.)

CHARLIE: Perfect. *(pulls out his phone)* Now with the magical power of Bluetooth...

(presses his phone a couple of times) We can have a Dance Party!

(Suddenly, Latin dance music is blasting throughout the house. CHARLIE gets really into it.

MEL sways uncomfortably. CHARLIE jumps on the coffee table and pulls MEL up to join him.

Eventually, Mel starts dancing as well.)

ANNA (from offstage-left): TURN THAT OFF CHARLIE!!!

CHARLIE (yelling back): COME DANCE WITH US!!!

ANNA (from offstage-left): NO!!!

(CHARLIE quickly pauses the music. MEL begins laughing uncontrollably at how awkward the situation is. CHARLIE smiles. They both sit on the couch.)

CHARLIE (yelling to ANNA offstage): Sorry, Anna!

(No response.)

(MEL and CHARLIE both laugh.)

