

The Wrong Side of the Road

by

James Chalmers

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A One Act Play for 3 Young Players

2 Male 1 Female

Age Range 14 - 18

Running Time 25 Minutes

Genre - Drama

The Characters

DANNY

Comes from an affluent part of town. His parents are well off. He is intelligent, thoughtful and sensitive. He attends the same school as Ben. He is both protected and controlled by Ben.

BEN

Comes from the rough part of town. Not as bright as Danny. Naïve and isolated from the real world by being immersed in violent video games. Loses his temper easily. Influenced and controlled by Rachael.

RACHAEL

Confident, manipulative and nasty. Doesn't give a damn about anyone but herself.

Character Ages

Danny and Ben are the same age. Rachael is older than Danny and Ben. Rachael is old enough to hold a motorcycle driving licence. Neither Danny nor Ben have driving licences - but this doesn't have to be because they're too young to hold a licence.

Back Story

Rachael tells Ben she'll spend the weekend with him if he gets Danny to make his parents' holiday cottage available. Danny's parents are away on a cruise. Ben persuades Danny to steal his father's car so they can get to the cottage. Rachael says she'll make her own way on her motorbike. What Ben doesn't know is that Rachael's regular boyfriend is also heading that way.

Minutes away from their destination, Danny misjudges a sharp bend and ends up on the wrong side of the road. The driver of a car coming the other way takes avoiding action, but brakes too hard and loses control. The car smashes through a crash barrier and tumbles down a steep escarpment. Danny doesn't stop and they arrive at the holiday cottage with Danny's father's car unscathed.

The play opens shortly after Danny and Ben's arrival at the cottage.

Stage Set

The Play is set in one room of the holiday cottage. The single act is one continuous scene. There is one Entrance/Exit point - the cottage front or back door. The minimum requirement for the set is a table with one chair. The Theatre Company can dress the set to suit their preferences, adding other pieces of furniture, a door etc, if they so wish.

Strong Language

There are no swear words in the script, however a few of the lines may be considered unsuitable for young players or a young audience. Softer alternatives are suggested where this occurs. (See pages 4, 5 & 21)

Notes for the Director

The Director is free to be liberal with his or her interpretation of the stage directions in this script. For example according to the script Danny doesn't get up from his chair until almost the end of the play. The Director may have a different way of emphasising Danny's character through his stage movements.

The Ending

The Director is free to be imaginative when it comes to the final few seconds of the play (i.e. page 24). An example of an alternative ending has been suggested. This involves adult actors - the purpose being to emphasise that the young characters are really little more than children. The adult parts are non-speaking. However this may not be permitted under Drama Festival rules.

SFX (Before Curtains/Lights Up)

SQUEAL OF CAR TYRES AS DRIVER APPLIES BRAKES AND LOSES CONTROL. FOLLOWED BY THE SOUND OF THE CAR SMASHING THROUGH A CRASH BARRIER.

OPEN (Curtains/Lights Up)

Danny is slumped in a chair head in hands - resting his elbows on the table. He's staring straight ahead - paying no attention to Ben. Ben is pacing up and down - phone in hand - playing a noisy video game.

BEN (*Pausing the game. A little anxious*)

Where's Rachael? She should be here by now.

Danny doesn't reply. Ben resumes playing the game. Ben brings the phone over to Danny. Ben shows Danny the screen.

BEN

The crash was just like this.

Without looking at the phone - Danny pushes the phone away. Ben moves away from Danny and continues with the game. After a short silence Danny speaks.

DANNY

We were almost here. If we'd been just one minute earlier it wouldn't have happened.

BEN (*Turning off the phone*)

They were going too fast, Danny

DANNY

Ben - I cut the corner. I was on the wrong side of the road.

BEN

He'd have been OK if he hadn't hit the brakes so hard. Did you hear the tyres squeal?

DANNY

I can't get the sound out of my head. Or the noise when the car hit the crash barrier.

BEN

Why is it called a crash barrier? The car went straight through it.

DANNY

It's all my fault. I shouldn't have been driving my dad's car.

BEN

Who's going to know?

DANNY

We should have stopped.

BEN *(Puts phone on the table. Moves up close to Danny - angry)*
I'm your best mate Danny. And it's my job to keep you out of trouble. There's not a scratch on your dad's car. You did the right thing.

DANNY

The right thing! This isn't a video game. It's reality.

Ben grabs hold of Danny. Momentarily losing his temper

BEN

The car crashed. They'll all be dead. No witnesses. So that means it's nothing to do with you and nothing to do with me. Got it?

Ben lets go of Danny. He picks up his phone - goes back to playing the video game.

DANNY

I don't have a driving licence. I've got no insurance. I took the car without the owner's consent. I'll go to jail for this.

(pause)

Will you please turn that off! It's giving me a headache.

BEN

What if Rachael rings?

DANNY

Turn the game off.

Ben turns the game off. He spends a moment or two searching the internet. He goes over to Danny. He shows Danny the phone. Danny immediately looks away. Ben keeps on trying to show him the image on the screen.

BEN

What's the matter with you?

DANNY

I'm not interested in that kind of thing.

BEN *(Looking at the image on the phone)*

Nice tits. *(Alternatively - leave this two-word sentence out)*

Not bad for year-nine. Go on take a look.

Ben forces Danny to take the phone. Danny glances at the screen before laying the phone face down on the table.

DANNY

Got any pictures of Rachael flashing her tits?

(Alternatively)

Got any pictures of Rachael with nothing on?

BEN (*Angry response*)

No.

DANNY

I didn't think you would. She's always one step ahead of things like that. And in your case five steps.

Ben lunges at Danny - grabs him by his clothing and lifts him out of the chair.

BEN

She's

SFX

BEN'S PHONE RINGS

Ben pushes Danny back onto the chair. Picks phone up.

BEN (*Relieved it's Rachael calling*)

It's Rachael.

Answers call

Where are you?

(pause)

Yeah. You're nearly there.

(pause)

That's right.

(pause)

There's a farm track.

(To Danny)

Is the farm track on the left or the right?

DANNY

Leave me alone will you.

BEN (*To Phone*)

No use asking him anything.

(pause)

Nothing much.

DANNY

Nothing much! I've just killed a load of people in a car.

BEN (*To Phone*)

I'll tell you when you get here.

(Pause - then to Danny)

What's this place called?

DANNY (*Quietly*)

Willow Cottage.

BEN (*To Phone*)

Willow Cottage.

(pause)

Okay. See you.

Ben ends the call. Lays phone on table. He then anxiously paces up and down the room.

BEN

She's just down the road.

Ben paces up and down the room some more.

BEN

She rides her bike really fast. I don't know why she's not here already.

Danny picks up Ben's phone

BEN

What are you doing?

DANNY

Calling an ambulance. There might be someone still alive in the car wreck.

Ben rushes over and grabs the phone from Danny

BEN

They'll trace the call.

DANNY

We're going to get found out in the end.

BEN

You're not calling anyone.

(Phone in his left hand - holds out his right hand)

Give me your phone.

DANNY

I don't have a phone.

BEN

What?

DANNY

You heard - I don't have a phone.

BEN

Everyone's got a phone.

DANNY

Have you ever seen me with one?

BEN

No – but.....

DANNY

But what?

BEN

I mean - how do you

DANNY

I haven't got a phone - end of story.

BEN

You're weird.

(Lays phone on table - out of reach of Danny)

Don't touch it - OK?

Ben takes out two bottles of beer from a carrier bag. He gets an opener either from his pocket or the carrier bag. He opens the two bottles. He holds onto one of the bottles. He places the other bottle in front of Danny.

BEN

Have a drink.

Danny ignores the bottle of beer.

BEN

I said have a drink.

DANNY

I don't drink.

BEN

You don't drink?

DANNY

You're not listening to me.

BEN

Oh I get it. You drink wine. Is there a bottle in the fridge?

DANNY

No

BEN

Has this place got a wine cellar?

DANNY

It's a holiday cottage - not a stately home.

BEN

Well where does your dad keep the wine?

DANNY

My mum and dad don't drink.

BEN

Not ever? Not even at Christmas?

DANNY

No.

BEN

But you live in a big house? You've got loads of money. Rich people drink wine - lots of it.

DANNY

There's no alcohol at home. And there's no alcohol here.

BEN

How come you ended up at the same school as me? Your dad's probably got enough money to send you to a private school with all those other posh kids.

DANNY

I don't want to talk about my family. So stop asking questions.

BEN

Not until you tell me why you're at my school?

DANNY

My dad didn't want me growing up thinking I was in a privileged position. He wanted me to experience how life really was for the majority of people. So he sent me to the local Academy. But look what's happened as a result. I stole his car. And caused a fatal accident.

BEN

What's that got to do with you going to my school?

DANNY

Because it wouldn't have happened if I'd been at a private school. Because I wouldn't have met you.

BEN (*Disappointed*)

I thought we were best mates?

Danny's facial expression/body language - indicating he doesn't share this view

BEN

I look after you Danny. The psychos at school don't come anywhere near you. They're shit scared of me. (*Alternative is to leave out the word "shit"*)

DANNY

Yeah OK - but it's come at a price.

BEN

I've never taken any money from you.

DANNY

No but I've had to do whatever you wanted. You knew I'd never driven a car before and all that other stuff about not having a licence. But you still made me do it. It should have been me that went through the crash barrier. The way I'm feeling right now - I'd be better off dead.

BEN

Give it a rest will you. Where's Rachael? What's she doing?

DANNY

Shut up about Rachael. If it weren't for you running after her - we wouldn't be in this mess.

BEN

You Dad's car will back tomorrow night. And we'll make sure the cottage is clean and tidy. No empty bottles lying around.

Pause - no reaction from Danny

BEN

Loosen up will you? The bit about the empty bottles was a joke.

Pause - Danny says nothing. Ben drinks from his bottle - almost emptying it.

BEN (Holding out the other bottle to Danny)

Try a couple of mouthfuls? It'll make you feel better.

Danny ignores Ben. Ben puts the both bottles on the table - then starts to nervously pace the floor.

BEN

What do you think has happened to Rachael?

DANNY

You don't give a damn about the people in that car. All you're worried about is Rachael.

BEN

She's my best mate.

DANNY

I thought I was?

BEN

Yeah you are - but Rachael's ...

DANNY

Your girlfriend?

BEN

No but

DANNY

But what?

BEN

She's a really good mate.

DANNY

You fancy her don't you? But I'm sure she's not interested in an immature kid like you.

Ben rushes over to Danny and grabs him by his clothing - lifting him out of the chair

BEN

What did you call me?

DANNY

You heard.

Ben pushes Danny back down onto the chair - letting go of Danny's clothing. Ben turns his back on Danny and moves away.

DANNY

Why do you think she wanted to spend the weekend here with us?

BEN

Not us Danny - me. You're just the taxi driver.

DANNY

Sorry I was forgetting that. So whose idea was it?

Ben turns to face Danny

BEN

It was mine.

DANNY

Who else is coming? Her regular boyfriend?

BEN

She hasn't got one.

DANNY

I've never seen Rachael without crowd of lads around her.

BEN

She hasn't got a steady boyfriend.

Danny doesn't reply - indicates with body language that he doesn't believe Ben

BEN

I'll ask her when she gets here.

DANNY

Ask her what?

BEN

If she's got a boyfriend?

DANNY

Yeah I'm sure you will. But she may not actually get here.

BEN

She was just down the road when she rang.

DANNY

What if the Police have found the car? They'll have closed the road. Rachael will have to turn back.

BEN

I didn't think of that. We'll just have to stay here and wait until everything gets sorted. You know - the wreck hoisted up by a crane and taken away.

DANNY

And wait for a knock on the door when they come to arrest me.

BEN

They won't be bothered to come all the way up here. But if they do we'll tell them we don't know anything about the accident. We'll say we got here last night.

DANNY

My parents are on a cruise. They couldn't have brought us here. So who do we say drove the car?

SFX.

MOTORCYCLE ARRIVING OUTSIDE THE COTTAGE - ENGINE IS TURNED OFF

DANNY

I told you the police would come.

BEN

No it's Rachael. I know what her bike sounds like.

ENTER RACHAEL

Rachael is dressed in motorcycle leathers and carrying a crash helmet

RACHAEL *(Putting the helmet on the table)*

There's been an accident. Just down the road. You must have got here just before it happened.

DANNY

Tell her Ben.

RACHAEL

Tell me what?

BEN

We saw it happen.

RACHAEL

Wow! It must have been like something out of the movies?

BEN

Yeah it was - but ten times better.

DANNY

Ben - tell her what happened.

BEN

It doesn't matter what happened. There's not a scratch on your dad's car. End of story.

DANNY

It was all my fault. I was on the wrong side of the road. The car coming the other way lost control and went through the crash barrier.

Rachael gets out her phone - keys in a number

BEN

Danny wanted to call an ambulance. I thought that was a bad idea. But if you think it's

RACHAEL *(Interrupting)*

Shut up.

(To Phone)

Craig - where are you?

(Pause)

We'll stay there.

(Pause)

There's a problem.

(Pause)

I know that - but things are serious.

DANNY *(To Ben)*

I knew there would be someone else. She didn't come all this way to spend the weekend with you.

RACHAEL *(To Phone)*

Yeah I'm here. But I'm leaving right now.

Rachael ends the call - puts phone in her pocket

BEN *(To Rachael)*

You've only just got here.

RACHAEL

I don't want to be here when the cops arrive.

Rachael takes a hand-gun out of a pocket of her jacket and lays it on the table.

Ben picks it up.

BEN

Wow - it's real. I've always wanted a gun.

RACHAEL

Put it down Ben. You can play with it after I've gone.

Ben lays the gun on the table

DANNY

Oh my God! As if things aren't bad enough already. Where did the gun come from?

RACHAEL

The car wreck.

BEN

You've been down to the wreck?

RACHAEL

Yes.

BEN

What was it like?

RACHAEL

It was mess. The car was on its roof.

DANNY

Why did you want to do that? Go and have a look at a crashed car. And dead people. Are you sick in the head or what?

RACHAEL

I wouldn't have bothered if I'd known you'd caused it.

DANNY

Were there any dead children?

RACHAEL

No - it was three men.

BEN

Where was the gun?

RACHAEL

On the ground next to one of the bodies.

BEN

Drug dealers. You've nothing to worry about Danny. The cops will think they were pushed off the road by a rival gang.

RACHAEL

The guy with the gun was a cop.

DANNY

Oh Christ - I've killed a policeman.

Danny grabs the gun from the table and puts it to his head. Ben can't bear to look - he turns away. Danny pulls the trigger but nothing happens.

DANNY

What's the matter with it?

Ben manages to turn round to look at Danny

RACHAEL

Give me the gun.

Rachael takes the gun from Danny and puts it on the table.

BEN *(Goes to pick the gun up)*

I know about guns.

RACHAEL *(Stopping Ben from picking up the gun)*

You couldn't look could you?

BEN

What do you mean?

RACHAEL

You didn't have the guts to watch Danny blowing his brains out.

BEN

No I

RACHAEL

You're all talk and no action. Now listen - they weren't all dead. The guy in the back of the car was moaning.

DANNY

We need to call an ambulance.

RACHAEL

Wait until I've gone. Then you can do what the hell you like.

