

Text This

By Tim Mogford

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Dedication

This one is for my mother and father.

STORY OF THE PLAY

For two weeks Amy's life has been unbearable. An intimate conversation she had online with a boy she likes has been cut and pasted so many times that she is now the laughing stock of the school. To make matters worse, she has been receiving threatening text messages, and her family has been plagued by a series of anonymous phone calls which have been intimidating and offensive by turns. The play opens as she sits alone in a classroom, and she is soon joined unexpectedly by Kara, who is apparently looking for a prom committee meeting. However, when Amy leaves, it becomes increasingly clear that Kara, and her friends Jordan and Jess, have not come here to discuss the prom. In fact, even they are not aware of all the reasons for their being here. As the play turns from one half-truth to the next, the girls find themselves forced to confront not only their role in what has happened, but what their actions betray about themselves.

Premiere Performance

This play was first presented at the Bucks County Playhouse, PA on May 15, 2008, where it won awards for excellence in writing and acting (Jamie Weist and Jenne Gampe). The cast was as follows:

AMY: Abbie Richards

KARA: Jamie Weist

JORDAN: Lynsey Graeff

JESS: Jenne Gampe

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 w)

AMY: Normally bright and intelligent, she has been driven to the limits of her character and personal convictions.

KARA: Conscientious and sensitive, she finds herself out of her depth in what transpires during the course of the play.

JORDAN: Attractive, popular and self-assured, Jordan's capacity for casual brutality will be uncomfortably familiar to everyone who remembers "that girl" in high school.

JESS: Amy's long-time best friend, Jess has an impulsive, provocative streak which has driven a wedge between them.

SETTING

All the action takes place in a high-school classroom, between the end of the school day and the start of sports and activities. Upstage is a teacher's desk, on which sit a school computer, printer, keyboard, and webcam: the kind of equipment we all are so accustomed to that we pay it almost no notice. Three or four student desks and chairs are arrayed around the stage, suggesting the classroom arrangement.

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(AT RISE: AMY sits at a desk CS, an empty book bag by her chair. She has books, paper and pencils around her, but she seems only half-hearted about doing her work. From time to time she glances stage left, at the "door." After a few beats KARA enters. She is initially taken aback to see AMY, but recovers quickly.)

KARA: Hi.

AMY: Hey.

KARA: I didn't expect to see you – are you waiting for something?

AMY: My ride. She's always late. Thought I'd try and get this government stuff finished.

KARA: Yeah. It's not bad.

AMY: I'm pretty much done. What are you here for? *(SHE starts to pack up her stuff.)*

KARA: Oh – a prom committee thing. I think they said it was in here.

AMY: I thought you guys met in Miss Taylor's room?

KARA: Oh, she has something today after school. I'll hang out for a little anyway, see if anyone shows up.

AMY: OK. *(SHE moves SL to exit, but pauses. Turns.)*
Kara, did you hear anything about that posting on Ben's site?

KARA: Oh, no. Hey – are you doing OK now?

AMY: Better. It's still ... hard.

KARA: You mean with ...

AMY: ... everything. He posted the entire conversation. Did you read it?

KARA: *(After a pause.)* Yeah. I didn't know it was there, I was just ...

AMY: Yeah.

KARA: I'm sorry – that must have been rough. What's it been – a week?

AMY: Nearly two. I'd just like to know why he would do that. I just don't understand how he ... could have *done* a thing like that.

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AMY: *(Cont'd.)* And now I've been getting these text messages ... and phone calls Like I need what I said rubbed in my face again. And that's not him, I'm sure. That's someone else. Why would someone *do* that?

KARA: It's weird.

AMY: Yeah, well look. Just let me know if you hear anything, OK?

KARA: Sure. Of course.

AMY: OK. Well, *(Looks at watch.)* I guess she'll be here by now. I'm going home. Have a good night. I hope this is where your meeting is.

KARA: Right, yeah. Me, too.

AMY: OK, then.

(AMY exits SL. As soon as she does so, KARA takes out her cell phone and begins to text message rapidly. She moves to the "door" as she does so, looking off in the direction AMY has taken.)

KARA: *(Looking feverishly at her phone.)* Come on ... come on! Where are you? *(Her face registers a text reply. Immediately, she begins another in response, talking to herself as she types.)* She's coming toward you. Find a room, find a room. Quick, come on. *(For another panicked moment she stares at her phone. Suddenly, it rings, surprising her. She quickly answers it.)* Where are you? *(Listens.)* Oh – good. Did you see her? *(Listens.)* Did she see you? *(Listens.)* I told her it was for a prom committee meeting. I didn't know what else to say. *(Listens.)* I *know* it meets in Miss Taylor's room, Jordan: I'm *on* it. I think I just said Taylor had something going on in her room today. *(Listens.)* Well, I didn't know what else to say. She was fine. She didn't think anything about it. She left.

(Enter JORDAN, cell phone to her ear.)

JORDAN: Are you sure?

KARA: Completely. (*Beat – SHE registers that the voice is live. Looks at JORDAN.*) Jerk.

JORDAN: (*Putting away her cell phone.*) Well, you're being pretty dumb. So what if she did see me? She wouldn't know I was coming in here, would she? And even if she did, so what?

KARA: All I'm saying is ... look, that Ben thing has her really shaken up. I just don't want her – you know.

JORDAN: Oh, relax. It's all fine. I don't know why *you're* getting all worked up. If Josh ever finds out, I'm *really* screwed. It'll be over. And that's not going to happen. I told you: I'm marrying him – I've got it all planned.

KARA: Yeah, well I'm happy for you. Just don't mess this up, or Josh will be the least of your worries.

(*Pause.*)

JORDAN: Does she have *any* idea?

KARA: No. She actually asked *me* if I knew who did it.

JORDAN: Of course. She has no imagination.

KARA: Getting Ben to go along with it didn't hurt. He certainly seems crazy about you.

JORDAN: Well, you can't blame him for that. It's hard to resist me. I can be very persuasive.

KARA: Shut up. How did you get him to agree to it? Doesn't he *know* about you and Josh?

JORDAN: Of course he does, but he's a guy. Josh is miles away. He won't be back from college until the summer, and by then it'll all be ancient history.

KARA: You really *do* have it all planned out, don't you? I can't believe she went for it.

JORDAN: Why wouldn't she, Kara? People believe what they want to believe. Especially when IM's involved.

KARA: And you.

JORDAN: Yeah. (*Looks at her watch.*) Where is she? What time did she say?

KARA: (*Checking.*) Now. I really hate doing this *here*. Why didn't we meet later at Jess's house? Amy could walk in any time.

JORDAN: Amy's home by now. You said she left.

KARA: Well, one of her *friends*, then.

JORDAN: Kara. *You* are her friends.

KARA: (*Laughing.*) You are *so* bad.

JORDAN: What are you talking about? It was time for the world to *know* about her private longings, Kara. You were doing her a favor. Like good friends *should*.

KARA: Jordan ...

JORDAN: Don't give me that crap, Kara. *You're* the one sending her mean-girl messages, not me.

KARA: Well, at least I have a *reason*. You do it because you *enjoy* it.

JORDAN: Oh, right – like you *don't*.

KARA: That scholarship was mine. She stole it. That's all. I was just paying her back for that. I'm done now.

JORDAN: (*With a derisive laugh.*) You are *so* full of it.

KARA: What?

JORDAN: If it was just about a stupid scholarship, why didn't you just walk up to her and start yelling? You *wanted* to freak her out. You *wanted* to shake her up.

KARA: A few bitchy e-mails is hardly *intimidation*, Jordan.

JORDAN: Kara, you used – what? Your *cousin's* phone?!

KARA: So? You used some pathetic boy with a crush on you to do your dirty work! (*Pause.*) Screw college. We should do *this* for a living.

(*Enter JESS.*)

JESS: Hey.

JORDAN: About time you showed up.

KARA: I was trying to call you earlier. Why didn't you pick up?

JESS: I can't find my phone. Must've left it somewhere. Sorry.

JORDAN: We were just deciding we should go into business.

KARA: The "freak-out-your-friend" business.

JESS: She's not *my* friend. Not after what she did.

KARA: Right. Things any better?

End of Freeview

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