

LIFE REFRAINS

A One-Act Play

By Renee C. Rebman

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Ryan Brewster's drinking bout at the school dance leads to a disastrous and shocking conclusion, leaving his family and friends to deal with the aftermath. His sister, Megan, is flooded with anger and grief, lashing out at everyone in her search for answers. She places blame and responsibility for Ryan's death on herself and others. Ryan's girlfriend, Pam, suggests professional counseling, an idea Mrs. Brewster supports as a final desperate bid to keep her family together. The powerful dialogue of this play rings true and sends a positive message on dealing with grief through professional help when necessary.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 M, 4 F)

RYAN BREWSTER: A high school student.

MEGAN BREWSTER: His sister.

MRS. BREWSTER: Ryan and Megan's mother.

PAM HARRIS: Ryan's girlfriend.

AMY REYNOLDS: A school friend.

ALAN FINLEY: A school friend.

TIME: The present.

SETTING

Scene 1: The parking lot of a high school. (Bare stage)
The actors are dressed for a casual school dance. Costume changes for Scene 2 should be simple and must be made quickly.

Scene 2: Takes place in the Brewster's kitchen which can be suggested by a table and two chairs. A full set is not necessary. The play was designed to be easily staged and appropriate for touring.

PROPS

RYAN: Car keys.

MRS. BREWSTER: Small bag of groceries, zippered portfolio filled with torn papers and brochures, and a bank book.

MEGAN: Bag of chips.

PAM: Piece of paper.

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: It is late evening. PAM is in the parking lot alone. She is upset and paces back and forth. RYAN enters from SR. He is also upset and angry. Pam steps back as he enters and glances around to see if they are alone.)

RYAN: What are you doing out here?

PAM: I just wanted a little fresh air.

RYAN: You could've told me you were going outside, Pam.

PAM: I'm surprised you even noticed I'd left. You were pretty much wrapped up with your friends.

RYAN: I've been paying plenty of attention to you, too. Hey, I didn't want to come to this dance, anyway. School dances are stupid.

PAM: You didn't use to think so, Ryan.

RYAN: What's that supposed to mean?

PAM: Nothing. You've changed, that's all. I don't understand you anymore.

RYAN: Well I don't understand why you're making such a big deal about this. I'm just not into this tonight.

PAM: I'm worried about you, Ryan. Where were you today during science lab? You skipped class. Were you hanging out with your new friends?

RYAN: What if I was?

PAM: Hanging out with people like them is dangerous. You could get hurt doing the things they do.

RYAN: Forget about them. Come on back inside. Let's dance.

PAM: I don't feel like it.

RYAN: *(Grabbing HER wrist.)* Come on, Pam. You can't hang around in the parking lot all night.

PAM: *(Trying to pull away.)* Don't tell me what to do!

RYAN: *(Not letting go.)* What the hell is wrong with you?

PAM: What the hell is wrong with you? You're acting like a jerk.

RYAN: Let's just go back inside! *(HE tries to pull HER along.)*

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PAM: Let go of me! You're hurting my wrist. *(HE is holding HER close against himself.)* What's that smell? Have you been drinking, Ryan? *(HE lets go of HER and backs away.)* Damn it, have you?

RYAN: *(Sarcastically.)* Yeah, I have. So what? Loosen up. Everyone does it.

PAM: I don't! What's with you? You never used to pull stuff like this.

RYAN: You're right...always the good boy, the perfect student, some kind of hero...and boring as hell.

PAM: And you think drinking makes you more exciting? Not to me it doesn't.

RYAN: It's no big deal. Forget about it. You're not going to let this screw up the whole night are you?

PAM: It is a big deal.

(ALAN, MEGAN and AMY enter from SL. They are laughing and in a good mood.)

ALAN: Hey guys, what's up?

RYAN: *(Cold, harshly.)* Nothing's up, Alan.

AMY: *(Put off.)* Sorry. We didn't realize we were walking into the middle of something.

RYAN: You aren't. I was just leaving. *(HE gets his car keys out of his pocket.)*

ALAN: What's your problem?

RYAN: I got no problem.

MEGAN: You look like you do.

RYAN: Shut up, Megan. I don't need any lip from my baby sister.

AMY: We might as well leave.

MEGAN: *(Stubbornly.)* I don't feel like leaving, Amy. He can't push me around.

RYAN: Well, it's way too crowded for me. I'm out of here. You can find your own way home, can't you, Pam? Maybe good old Alan here will help you out.

PAM: *(Concerned.)* Don't go, Ryan! You shouldn't be driving.

RYAN: Mind your own business.

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ALAN: What's going on?

RYAN: Nothing at all. Not a damn thing. *(HE exits SR.)*

PAM: *(Yelling after HIM.)* Come back here!

AMY: Did you two have a fight?

PAM: *(Nervous and upset.)* Not exactly. Go after him, Alan. He's been drinking.

ALAN: Shit. *(Yelling to RYAN as HE runs off SR.)* Ryan! Ryan, wait up!

MEGAN: Drinking? You're kidding.

PAM: I wish I were.

AMY: *(Looks offstage anxiously.)* Ryan's in his car!

MEGAN: *(The GIRLS are craning to see better.)* Alan's not with him.

PAM: *(Yelling. SHE is frightened.)* RYAN!

(PAM starts after HIM but the other GIRLS hold her back.)

AMY: God, he's driving way too fast. He'll never make the curve.

MEGAN: *(Screaming to ALAN.)* Alan, go after him! *(HER eyes widen in terror as she "witnesses" RYAN'S crash - SOUND EFFECT, if available.)*

PAM: *(Crying hysterically.)* Ryan! Oh, God, Ryan!

(PAM sinks to her knees. MEGAN screams and buries her face against AMY'S shoulder. BLACKOUT.)

END OF SCENE 1

SCENE 2

(AT RISE: The Brewster's kitchen. It is four weeks later. MRS. BREWSTER enters the kitchen carrying a small bag of groceries. She puts it down on the kitchen table and starts to unload it as MEGAN enters sullenly from SR. Megan sits in a chair and opens a bag of chips. She eats very few. The tension between Megan and her mother is obvious.)

MRS. BREWSTER: I was really busy at work today. I didn't feel like tackling the grocery store, so I just picked up a few things. I can order pizza, if you like.

MEGAN: I'm not that hungry.

MRS. BREWSTER: Did your father call?

MEGAN: No. He's probably working late again.

MRS. BREWSTER: How was school today? *(MEGAN just shrugs her shoulders.)* You didn't go, did you? Did you, Megan?

MEGAN: I wasn't up to it.

MRS. BREWSTER: *(Sitting opposite MEGAN.)* It's been four weeks, honey. It can't be good for you sitting in the house alone all day.

MEGAN: *(Trying to brush it off.)* Don't worry about me.

MRS. BREWSTER: But I am worried.

MEGAN: Do you expect me to just snap out of it or something? Everything is different. My brother is dead. I can't simply go to school like nothing happened. I don't want to.

MRS. BREWSTER: You have to. You have a life to live. We all do. Ryan would want you to.

MEGAN: *(Bitterly.)* What the hell do you know about Ryan?

MRS. BREWSTER: *(Shocked at HER anger.)* What do you mean?

MEGAN: Nothing.

MRS. BREWSTER: That's not fair, Megan. *(Breaking down.)* He was my son. I love him and I miss him.

MEGAN: *(Standing.)* I do, too.

End of Freeview

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