

THE DRILL

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SETTING

The present. A high school in a small town in America.

CHARACTERS, in order of appearance

BRENDA	High school senior.
ANDRE	High school senior.
MR. BLEDSOE	Drama teacher. 40s. Funky glasses.
MS. GUNDERSON	School security coordinator. Late 30s. Polo shirt, track pants, maybe a whistle.

Words in [square brackets] are unspoken.

SCENE 1

(Lights up on the hallway of a high school in an American small town. BRENDA and ANDRE lie near each other on the floor with glistening red bullet wounds -- one on BRENDA's cheek, and one on ANDRE's forehead. Silence and stillness for ten seconds.)

(Then, BRENDA slyly reaches an arm out and starts to tickle ANDRE. He keeps it together for all of two seconds.)

ANDRE

Ohmigod stop it.

(BRENDA continues.)

Brenda! Oh my god.

(ANDRE tickles back in retaliation.)

BRENDA

Oh ho ho, that's how it's gonna be?

(BRENDA redoubles her tickling.)

(MR. BLEDSOE enters.)

BLEDSOE

Guys.

(BRENDA and ANDRE immediately stop the tickling and attempt composure in their original poses.)

Come on now. Don't do this, guys.

BRENDA

It's boring.

BLEDSOE

Think of it like tech rehearsal.

(See's ANDRE's forehead.)

Yikes. That wound is not looking good.

BRENDA

(Pointing at it.)

He got some on the floor.

ANDRE

Sorry, Mr. Bledsoe.

BLEDSOE

I'll be back. Do not move.

(BLEDSOE goes back to the entrance he came from. Before he can get there, MS. GUNDERSON enters from the other side, pissed.)

GUNDERSON

Is there a problem?

ANDRE

I messed up my wound, so we called for Mr. Bledsoe.

(GUNDERSON looks to BLEDSOE. He shakes his head "no" and exits per his original intention.)

GUNDERSON

We are blessed to have been given the resources to practice this with law enforcement officers. I need you guys to be leaders for the underclassmen looking up to you.

(BLEDSOE returns holding a little case with a clasp and some brown paper towels.)

BLEDSOE

Stand up for me, Andre. Mr. Bledsoe's old. Brenda, can you please get the floor?

(Hands the paper towels to BRENDA, who wipes the floor. ANDRE stands up and patiently faces BLEDSOE. BLEDSOE tries to open his case. To GUNDERSON.)

How much time do we have?

GUNDERSON

Four minutes.

BLEDSOE

(His case is stuck.)

My thing, it's just not [opening]--

(It opens. To GUNDERSON.)

Thank you, four.

(GUNDERSON leaves. BLEDSOE gets tube of fake

blood and a q-tip out of his case. He starts touching up the wound on ANDRE's forehead.)

If you guys weren't tardy so much, you wouldn't need this extra credit.

BRENDA

Mr. Bledsoe, isn't it dumb that we have to rehearse for something where we would die anyway? Why don't they rehearse us escaping?

BLEDSOE

It's not for you guys, it's for the police officers. Who are working for you. So it goes in a big ol' circle.

(Puts the finishing touch on ANDRE's wound make-up.)

Assume the position, kids.

(BRENDA, who is still sitting up on the floor, clownishly tips over onto her back. ANDRE gets down beside her.)

Keep your fingers in.

(They curl up their fingers.)

Beautiful work. I should cast you guys as corpses more often.

BOTH KIDS

(Sing-songy.)

Thank you, Mr. Bledsoe.

BLEDSOE

Be good. It'll be over before you know it.

(BLEDSOE exits. Beat. BRENDA sits up.)

BRENDA

Mr. Bledsoe totally wants to suck your penis.

ANDRE

Gross.

BRENDA

It's true. I'm very perceptive. I don't want to be dead yet. C'mon.

(She gestures for ANDRE to sit up, and he does.)

It's creepy how quiet it is, right?

ANDRE

Yeah.

BRENDA

You see Caitlinn Vanderson crying when Bledsoe was putting the make-up on her? Not even started yet, she's all:

(Makes baby-eye-rubbing cartoon crying motions, giggles.)

ANDRE

My friend at Jefferson said a ton of people were crying during their drill.

BRENDA

Why?

ANDRE

It's an intense experience.

(Beat.)

BRENDA

Hey, you going to prom?

ANDRE

Nah. I mean, Kendall and some of them are going as a group, so I might.

(Beat.)

You?

BRENDA

I want to ask somebody.

ANDRE

Like a very special somebody in particular?

BRENDA

Maybe.

ANDRE

Who?

BRENDA

That is classified.

ANDRE

C'moo/ooooon.

BRENDA

Nope. Nope. Nope. Will you help me out though?

ANDRE

How?

BRENDA

I've never asked a guy out. Let me practice on you.

ANDRE

Okay.

BRENDA

What should I say?

ANDRE

I gotta do all the work?

BRENDA

I need your male perspective.

ANDRE

Just say, "Hey, I like you, would you like to accompany me to prom?"

BRENDA

Barf.

ANDRE

I never pretended to be an expert.

BRENDA

(Mockingly.)

"Hey, I like you, would you like to accompany me to prom?"

ANDRE

There you go. Like a professional.

BRENDA

Thanks, asshole.

(Beat.)

Hey, Andre?

ANDRE

Yeah?

BRENDA

(Sincere.)

I like you. Would you like to accompany me to prom?

ANDRE

Brenda. Prom is stupid.

BRENDA

Of course it's stupid. The whole point of high school is that it's stupid and we have these weird traditions and it's not real, so why not just like, leap into it, because when else in your whole life will you ever get to worry about dresses and flowers. C'mon. You know you wanna. We'll have fuuuun.

(She's flirty, gripping the front of his shirt.)

ANDRE

Yes. I would love to be your date to prom.

BRENDA

Seriously?

ANDRE

Get it while it's hot.

BRENDA

Oh, yay!

(She hugs ANDRE. He looks around.)

ANDRE

Shhhh. We should get down. I hear 'em comin'.

SCENE 2

(A gathering space -- gym, cafeteria, etc.
GUNDERSON speaks to the group, i.e. the audience. Maybe she has a clipboard.)

GUNDERSON

Seven minutes elapsed from shots being fired to safety personnel engaging the shooter. That's the best time so far for any active shooter drill in the entire district, so give yourselves a big pat on the back.

(She models this.)

Today was exciting for some of us and emotionally difficult for others.

Whatever your personal experience, you helped build community. I know there's a lot of bad stuff on the news, and it all seems far away, in big cities, in other countries, but remember Sandy Hook. Columbine. I don't want to think it could happen here, but I wouldn't be doing my job real well, if I didn't try to protect us from any unpleasant eventualities, okay? Let's prepare for those unpleasant eventualities now, with a drill, so when they come, they won't be so unpleasant. Everybody go get ice cream on the way home. You can tell your parents I said that. Dismissed.

SCENE 3

(In front of the school. BRENDA is waiting -- maybe we saw her get in place during GUNDERSON's speech. She still has the wound makeup on her cheek.)

GUNDERSON

(Entering.)

Someone coming to pick you up?

BRENDA

I texted my mom.

GUNDERSON

And she's coming?

BRENDA

Eventually.

(Beat.)

Are you just going to stand there and wait with me?

GUNDERSON

Yup.

BRENDA

Do you have to?

GUNDERSON

Yup.

BRENDA

I know it's technically against the rules but you live near me so you could just give me a ride home and we'd be done for the night.

GUNDERSON

Can't, sweetie.

(Beat.)

You want a kleenex to [wipe that blood makeup off]?

BRENDA

(As if to say "no thank you")

I like it.

(Beat.)

GUNDERSON

It's probably real normal to get that upset.

BRENDA

I don't want to talk about it.

(Beat.)

I should be happy, because today was a really good day, otherwise. Like objectively very good things happened.

GUNDERSON

So be happy. Or go talk to Ms. Martinez in Guidance. She's smart.

BRENDA

I know I should be happy, but when the drill started, I got this ominous feeling, like what if the guy had real bullets and the whole thing was like this ploy to kill all of us.

GUNDERSON

Brenda, did that happen?

BRENDA

No, but when it didn't happen, that's when I just kinda lost it. Because ultimately *nothing* happened.

GUNDERSON

You are a dark and dramatic one, Ms. Shoemaker.

(Beat.)

BRENDA

I know it's the law that we have to do the drill, but I'm not worried about school shooters, since, really, those are super rare and they get way overpublicized. But black kids are getting shot, and I have friends who are black and I love them and what if --

(Beat.)

My cousin works for TSA, bag check at the airport. Everybody knows it's bullshit--

GUNDERSON

Language.

BRENDA

--BS. Nobody's making bombs out of four ounce bottles of shampoo. Everybody knows it's BS. How often do we have to do these drills?

GUNDERSON

Once a year. You're off the hook forever.

BRENDA

I guess you don't get to traumatize me again.

GUNDERSON

You know I love me some traumatized kids.

BRENDA

This place is trying to bore holes through my skull.

GUNDERSON

Brenda. I just sat here and listened to you tell me that objectively good things happened to you today. Tell me about those.

BRENDA

I'll jinx it. I know good things happened today. I just don't trust them.

(Beat.)

GUNDERSON

(Pulls her keys out of her pocket.)

C'mon. Let's get you home.

BRENDA

You won't get in trouble?

GUNDERSON

Nobody's gonna die.

SCENE 4

(Elsewhere in the school. BLEDSOE has his bag and looks ready to go. ANDRE enters. He's cleaned

off the fake bullet hole, at least most of it.)

ANDRE

Hey, Mr. Bledsoe.

BLEDSOE

Hey Andre. How ya feelin'?

ANDRE

I'm real even. I figured it would freak me out more than it did, but I guess I'm older than the freshmen who were acting in it, so, it didn't faze me as much.

BLEDSOE

Brenda's recovered?

ANDRE

I haven't seen her in a minute.

BLEDSOE

You're a good friend to her.

ANDRE

What'd you think?

BLEDSOE

It was loud.

ANDRE

Yeah it was. I got a blank bullet casing as a souvenir.

BLEDSOE

Awesome. See you tomorrow, bud. Excellent dead work, today.

ANDRE

Ha! Thanks.

(Beat. BLEDSOE nods goodbye and heads to his car.)

ANDRE

What are we doing in class tomorrow?

BLEDSOE

You're rehearsing your scenes.

Right. Cool.

ANDRE

(Beat.)

So *you* left me the notes?

BLEDSOE

Graduation's real soon.

ANDRE

I'm flattered, and I think you're a great kid, but it's definitely not appropriate.

BLEDSOE

Nobody has to know.

ANDRE

That's not the only problem.

BLEDSOE

You're single, right?

ANDRE

None of your business, actually.

BLEDSOE

I don't care. I mean, I think that's a good thing. I like you a lot.

ANDRE

Shouldn't you have a crush on a jock?

BLEDSOE

I'm realistic.

ANDRE

Gosh, thanks!

BLEDSOE

No no no, just, it's a small town, so...

ANDRE

I'm honored to be your safety school.

BLEDSOE

ANDRE

I'm tryna be serious. You know there aren't a lot of options here for me. You're a great teacher, and you're full of love, y'know? So I thought maybe we could try that, after I graduate.

BLEDSOE

You're going to State in the fall?

ANDRE

Yeah.

BLEDSOE

Even there, it'll be better.

ANDRE

So what? Who cares about there? Right now I'm here. I've got these feelings. Here they are. I'm showing them to you. Why not do what's right, do what feels good now, y'know? You're always telling us we're supposed to be enjoying the best years of our lives -- which, if that's true, what the *hell* -- But you're also telling us to chill out and control ourselves, and nothing matters, and why are you so upset all the time. I'm upset all the time because this is supposed to be the most magical time of my life and it sucks.

(Beat.)

I'm an idiot. I shoulda waited till graduation.

(Beat.)

BLEDSOE

Andre, buddy. First off, please don't ask me about this again after graduation, even if you want to. Please don't. Secondly, though. Andre, in a few months, you are going to wake up in your dorm room and the sun'll be shining and you'll get food with your friends, and you're going to realize that none of this was real.

BLACKOUT. THE END.