

CARL

by
E. Jack Williams

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-- Revised 2020 --

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The play is dedicated to Carl.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Inspired by a true story, CARL tells of a young man's experience with being teased and bullied throughout school. The play opens with a 10-year reunion, then flashes back to his high school days, to episodes in the lunchroom and classroom. We even see a brief bit of Carl's home life. Through the moving portrayal of Carl's life and ultimate suicide, members of the audience are compelled to examine their reactions to people who may be different.

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"We all knew a CARL as a kid; too bad we feel guilty as an adult." Gary Bohm, High School Counselor.

CARL is the winner of Minnesota's "Arc of Excellence Community Media Award."

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CARL was first produced by Waseca High School, Waseca, Minnesota, on January 25, 1991, under the direction of E. Jack Williams. Original cast and crew included: Ann, Brian, Eric, Gabriel, Ginnie, Gregg, Julie, Joel, Leah, Adam, Ben, Grant, Jeff, Jared, and Jon.

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CHARACTERS

In order of appearance
(6 m, 5 w, extras if desired, doubling possible)

JOSI: Sharp dresser, sensitive.

RACHEL: Rough, tough-talking defender of Carl.

BUTCH: Group leader. A bully.

AL: Butch's follower.

JERRY: Butch's follower.

JACK: Butch's follower.

MOTHER: Carl's protective mother.

FATHER: Carl's harsh father.

JAIMEE DAVIES: Student, commencement speaker.

CARL: "The guy everybody loved to pick on."

MS. DUFF: Classroom teacher.

EXTRAS: Play various onstage roles and offstage voices.

FOUR STUDENTS

ALLI

TEACHER

KATIE

Options for doubling:

AL and FATHER

MOTHER, TEACHER and KATIE

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THE SET

The original set consisted of a self-supporting center flat. To the right and left of the center unit are two window flats hinged together and covered with theatrical gauze. (For stability, a support flat should be hinged to each window unit.) Carl's room is stage left. The walls remain in the same position for the entire play. Only the furniture will be moved to establish the change of scenes. The furniture consists of eight boxes or stools, three tables, a 10-YEAR REUNION sign, graduation CONGRATULATIONS! sign, podium, and casket.

MUSIC

Up-tempo party music, transition music, Johannes Brahms - LULLABY, Edward Elgar - POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCES No 1 in D, Patty Smith Hill and Michael J. Smith - HAPPY BIRTHDAY SONG, and John Newton - AMAZING GRACE.

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SCENE 1 THE REUNION

(SFX: Party MUSIC plays in the background. AT RISE: A banner reading 10-YEAR REUNION is draped across the back wall. Memory table with punch bowl CS. AL, JERRY, and JACK form a group RCS. JOSI stands SL. She is dressed in pink and is putting the final touches to her make-up. Looking into a compact mirror. SL LIGHTS up.)

JOSI: That's as good as it's going to get. I'm not sure how I feel about class reunions. Whoever invented them must have been a caterer. *(Examining pictures, yearbooks, and other memorabilia.)* Ten years. Why does it seem that life passes by so quickly when you're not in any hurry? Some of my old friends seem to continue to live in the past, while some of us would like to keep it hidden, buried, forgotten. It's nice to reminisce about some great moments of the "days gone by." *(Looking at a yearbook.)* Rachel. I haven't seen her since graduation. The class chameleon. Every week she changed her appearance. Orange hair one day and green the next. Pierced ears, nose, lips, whatever. Her clothes were eclectic. She told you what was on her mind. I liked her! I hope she shows up. Not everyone goes to reunions. There are some who wouldn't attend if their life depended on it. We, the lucky ones, get a chance to find out about Judy's latest marriage, Betty's real estate deals, Nancy's five, six, or seven kids. Most of us have changed, thank heaven for that. There isn't much I would change about high school, not much. *(Pause.)* Just one thing.

RACHEL: *(Offstage.)* JOSI! HEY JOSI!

(FULL STAGE LIGHTS up. RACHEL enters running from SR. She wears a pale blue denim skirt, black and red checkered sleeveless flannel shirt. MUSIC fades.)

JOSI: RACHEL! I was hoping you'd be here! *(THEY embrace CS.)*

RACHEL: Josi, you look great! How do you do it?

JOSI: I just try to eat right and exercise whenever I have time.
But Rachel, you look fantastic!

RACHEL: Yeah, I know, a regular sex symbol.

JOSI: Love your outfit.

RACHEL: I just picked clothes off the floor and threw them on.

JOSI: Yeah, really?

RACHEL: No, really, that's what I did. Just picked them up off the floor. Are you ready to join the mob?

JOSI: Lead the way. *(Cross to SL.)*

(BUTCH enters SR. He wears a colorful Hawaiian shirt. He moves to AL, JERRY, and JACK.)

BUTCH: HEY, HEY, HEY! NOW THAT BUTCH HAS ARRIVED, LET THE PARTY BEGIN!

RACHEL: *(To JOSI.)* His voice reminds me of dragging your fingernails across a chalkboard.

JOSI: If there were an award for THE STUDENT MOST LIKELY TO NEVER GROW-UP, Butch would win, hands down.

BUTCH: So, the guy said, "Hey mister, I don't know about your organ, but your monkey's burning up." *(The GUYS laugh.)* Did'ja notice all the gray hair, wrinkles, and beer bellies when we came in? That goes for some of the guys, too. *(The GUYS laugh.)* Geez, I hate it, every time I walk into a room, all the women undress me with their eyes. *(BUTCH crosses to JOSI and RACHEL.)* How ya doing, Josi?

JOSI: Hi, Butch.

BUTCH: Rachel, what CAVE did you fly out of?

RACHEL: Butch, you're still the same classy guy.

BUTCH: Wat'cha looking at, Josi?

JOSI: The old yearbook.

AL: Let's see. *(Takes the yearbook from JOSI.)*

JERRY: Ah, the good old days. *(With enthusiasm.)* Remember. *The Case of the Missing Green Bean?* "Buggy" Fritz noticed his prize green bean, he was growing in the greenhouse, was gone.

End of Freeview

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