

# CRUSHED!

By Scott Haan

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*A Ten Minute Comedic Drama Skit*

**By Scott Haan**

**SYNOPSIS:** Four people struggling with addiction attend a support group to deal with their obsession. However, the addiction ruining their lives is not drugs or alcohol, but something much more evil and insidious. No matter what they try, they can't seem to stop...playing "Candy Crush."

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(1 female, 3 either, 0-20 extras; gender flexible)*

MODERATOR (f) ..... Rational and intelligent.  
(21 lines)

BRADLEY/BRITNEY (m/f) ..... Sullen and prone to anger.  
(21 lines)

VANESSA/VICTOR (m/f) ..... Perky and upbeat, but not  
terribly bright. (15 lines)

JUDITH/JUDD (m/f) ..... Sarcastic and quick-witted.  
(10 lines)

EXTRAS (m/f) ..... Optional; you can expand the  
group with as many extras as  
you want. (*Non-Speaking*)

**TIME:** Early evening on a weeknight, present day.

## SETTING

An indoor meeting room, with only a few folding chairs (one for each actor). This show could be performed on an otherwise blank stage.

## PROPS

- Clipboard (MODERATOR)
- Paper (MODERATOR)
- Pen (MODERATOR)
- 4 Cell Phones

**AT RISE:** *All four chairs are in a semi-circle. BRADLEY is the only one standing; everyone else is seated. The MODERATOR has a clipboard and a pen. VANESSA is extremely fidgety, playing with her hair and/or bouncing her leg up and down.*

**BRADLEY:** *(Reluctantly.)* Uh...hi. My name is Bradley, and I...am an addict.

**VANESSA, JUDITH and MODERATOR:** *(In unison.)* Hi, Bradley.

**BRADLEY:** At first it was just an escape...Forget all my problems for a while. Money, work, deadlines...All the stress would just melt away. But eventually I got in over my head. Got hooked. Suddenly this escape from all my problems became the biggest problem of all. Everything in my life suffered. *(Counting off these problems on his fingers.)* I slacked off at work because I found it hard to focus...I think most of my brain cells had been destroyed. *(Second finger.)* I kept having to hide that my eyes were bloodshot. *(Third finger.)* The money became even tighter, because...well, this won't be a newsflash to you guys, but this can be a very expensive addiction. *(Fourth finger.)* And every time I blew through more money, I tried to hide how much I was spending from my family. Because I was ashamed, and I— *(He catches himself, suddenly self-conscious. He sits.)* Aw, this is stupid. Never mind.

**MODERATOR:** *(Gentle encouragement.)* Go on, Bradley. You're doing fine.

**BRADLEY:** I've never been to a meeting before, or even talked about this with anyone. It's embarrassing.

**MODERATOR:** I know. We've all been there. But you're doing great. Please.

**BRADLEY:** *(Looks around, deliberates, takes a deep breath, and stands again.)* When it started, it was just at night, right before I went to bed. Just to take the edge off...help me sleep. When it took over my weekends, I still didn't really see the harm in it. But soon it was also first thing in the morning, every single day. Before long I was even doing it at work. Morning break, lunch, afternoon... *(Beat.)* I would even sneak it into the bathroom with me and get a fix while hiding out in the stall, that's how strung out I was. I was obsessed. I craved it ALL THE TIME. And these withdrawal symptoms are not getting any better.

**MODERATOR:** How long has it been?

**BRADLEY:** Three days now. I know that doesn't sound like much, but it hasn't been easy. *(Sits.)*

**MODERATOR:** Three days is GREAT, Bradley. We just take this one day at a time. Thank you for sharing. *(Standing.)* I know some of you have heard this before, but I see a few new faces here, so I'm going to introduce myself again. My name is Pat, and I know exactly what Bradley is going through. It's the whole reason I started this support group. Just like all of you, I am addicted. *(Pause while she pulls out cell phone and holds it up.)* To playing "Candy Crush."

**BRADLEY, VANESSA and JUDITH:** *(In unison.)* Hi, Pat.

**MODERATOR:** It's been two weeks since the last time I played, but staying "clean" is a daily struggle, and we need all the help and support we can get. So...let's take a moment to recite the group motto. Ready?

**ALL:** *(In unison.)* "If I don't crush the candy, the candy won't crush me."

**MODERATOR:** Very good. Now I don't know about the rest of you, but I can pinpoint the exact moment I hit rock-bottom. It was two a.m., and I couldn't sleep. I was obsessing about the game. My husband walked in and saw that I had it open on four devices at the same time. He said, "Honey, this isn't healthy. We need to have an intervention." And he was right; this ridiculous game had taken over my life. That was when I vowed, not only to quit, but to start this group. Did anyone else have a rock-bottom moment? *(Sits.)*

**JUDITH:** Yep. I was supposed to pick up my daughter *(or "sister," if that's more age-appropriate)* Lisa from volleyball practice, but I had about ten minutes, so I decided to play a few quick levels. Normally I can burn through all five lives that fast, but I was in the zone and kept winning. I was just starting a new level when Lisa walked in, slammed the door, said "Thanks a LOT," and ran up to her room. I had been playing for an hour...completely lost track of time. Her coach drove her home. She didn't speak to me for a week.

**BRADLEY:** My darkest moment was a Thursday. I went to work without my phone, and I didn't get to play all morning. By lunch, I was so desperate that I played with REAL candy.

**MODERATOR:** Really? How?

**BRADLEY:** I bought Skittles from the vending machine, arranged them on the table in rows, and ate them as I matched the colors. I went through fifteen bags of Skittles in an hour. Gained nine pounds.

**VANESSA:** For me, it's when I was driving home, and some guy swerved into my lane and almost hit me, and I saw that HE was playing "Candy Crush."

**BRADLEY:** (*Outraged.*) While DRIVING? He could have KILLED someone!

**VANESSA:** I know, right? What a jerk! Because I was playing it too, so at least ONE of us should have been watching the road!

**BRADLEY:** (*Wide-eyed.*) You were— (*Speechless at her stupidity, he stops and turns to the MODERATOR.*) I got nothing.

**MODERATOR:** (*To VANESSA.*) But you don't play and drive any more, right?

**VANESSA:** Oh no, of course not. (*Beat.*) Not since I crashed into that telephone pole. After that, they took my license away.

**BRADLEY:** Remind me to send a "thank you" card to that pole.

**VANESSA:** (*Her hand raised.*) Hey, can I axe a question?

**MODERATOR:** Sure, Vanessa. Axe away.

**VANESSA:** So, like, I'm working on the twelve steps, right? And I'm on step eight. "Make a list of everyone you have harmed." But I don't really know what that means.

**MODERATOR:** Well, anyone you've neglected so you could play more. Or, anyone who suffered because of your addiction.

**VANESSA:** What about, like, people who un-friended me on Facebook because I sent them too many requests for help?

**MODERATOR:** Excellent example. If you annoyed someone enough that they un-friended you just because of that, it wouldn't hurt to apologize to them. How many people are you talking about?

**VANESSA:** Like, three hundred and eighty-seven.

**JUDITH:** Wow. That's more friends than I HAVE.

**MODERATOR:** Yes, Vanessa, I think that would be a healthy course of action. (*To Everyone.*) I know we all feel guilt and shame over this, but that's why these steps are important. They help us admit that we have a problem, and make amends. I mean, look at ME. I'm a behavioral psychologist, and I have treated patients dealing with Internet Gaming Disorder. Not just "Candy Crush," but

“Farmville,” “Minecraft,” and many others. And yet here I am, doing exactly the same thing. So if anyone should know better, it’s me.

**JUDITH:** Physician, heal thyself.

**MODERATOR:** Exactly. But this game was DESIGNED to be addictive. First of all, it has bright colors, upbeat music, and even CANDY to stimulate the pleasure centers of our brains. The puzzle concept is simple and the early levels are easy, which gives you a sense of accomplishment. Victories release dopamine in your brain, and condition you to crave that reward and keep playing even as the levels get harder. I know all of this intellectually, but I STILL find it difficult to fight the addiction.

**JUDITH:** Plus, I’m no computer whiz, but I think they somehow programmed the software to release nicotine.

**VANESSA:** I think you guys are wrong. If they want you to be addicted, why do they only give you five lives? I mean, that keeps you from playing too much, because you can only play it a few times and then you have to stop.

**MODERATOR:** Ah, but that’s the most devious trick of all. By putting you in “time-out” after you run out of lives, it leaves you wanting more. It feels like a reward to be let back in and play again, which is why so many people are willing to pay for extra lives. That’s how the company got to be worth BILLIONS. Half a billion people have downloaded this game. Some never buy anything, but others spend about a million dollars a day to play this “free” app. Make no mistake, this game was invented by very clever people.

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