

# HOLLOW

## By Bradley Walton

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## CHARACTERS

CHRIS	(F), a teenage girl
HOMELESS PERSON	(M or F), can be male or female
TERI	(F), a teenage girl, Chris' best friend
MR. LEE	(M), Teri's father
MRS. LEE	(F), Teri's mother
MILDRED	(F), a teenage girl, a friend of Chris and Teri
MR. REILLEY	(M), Mildred's father
TOM or TERESA STEINBERG	(M or F), a business person

If doubling/tripling is used, HOMELESS PERSON/ MILDRED/ STEINBERG or HOMELESS PERSON/ MR. REILLEY and MILDRED/STEINBERG are recommended combinations.

## SETTING

A small kitchen table and four chairs occupy center stage. These remain in place throughout the play and will be used for the scenes in the Lees' kitchen. Other scenes take place on different areas of the stage but do not involve set pieces. Because of the large number of scenes, it is important that transitions between scenes move as quickly as possible.

# PRODUCTION NOTES

## PROPS

Purse – Chris, scene 1

Purse – Teri, scene 1

Dollar – Chris, scene 1

Vodka bottle – Teri, scene 2

Paper bathroom cup – Teri,  
scene 2

School books – Teri and Chris,  
scene 3

Cell phone – Chris, scene 4

Briefcase – Mr. Lee, scene 12

Cell phone – Mr. Lee, scene 12

Wallet – Mr. Lee, scene 12

Dollar – Mr. Lee, scene 12

## COSTUMES

CHRIS, MILDRED and TERI are all contemporary, upper-middle-class teenage girls and dress accordingly.

HOMELESS PERSON dresses as. . . well, a homeless street person

MR. LEE wears a suit in scene 12. In scene 4, he wears the same clothing, but without the jacket and tie.

MRS. LEE lives in a state of delusion that things are better than they actually are. She dresses up to help compensate for her insecurities. . . even when she's not leaving the house.

MR. REILLEY is dressed casually in a polo shirt and khaki pants.

STEINBERG is dressed in a suit.

## LIGHTING

If possible, only the portion of the stage that is being used for each scene should be lit.

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**SCENE 1— A CITY STREET**

***AT RISE: HOMELESS PERSON is sitting or standing DR. CHRIS, a fifteen-year-old girl, enters R, looks at him, and nervously starts to walk L at a brisk pace. SHE is carrying a small purse.***

HOMELESS PERSON: Hey, got any change?

CHRIS: Oh. ***(pauses, uncertain)*** I . . . uh. . . I guess I do have a dollar to spare.

***(CHRIS pulls a dollar out of her purse and moves toward the HOMELESS PERSON. Just as SHE is about to hand him the bill, TERI, about the same age as CHRIS, enters L. CHRIS abruptly pulls away from the HOMELESS PERSON without having given him the money. SHE turns to face TERI. The HOMELESS PERSON bows his head.)***

TERI: Chris! There you are! Don't wander off like that, okay? You know we're under parental orders to stay together.

CHRIS: Oh, yeah. Sorry, Teri. I was just looking around and got a little sidetracked, you know?

TERI: Yeah, I guess. ***(looking at HOMELESS PERSON)*** Geez, poor guy.

CHRIS: Yeah. Poor guy.

***(CHRIS and TERI walk away from HOMELESS PERSON and exit L.)***

***(Blackout.)***

**SCENE 2—THE LEES' BASEMENT, THAT NIGHT**

***(CHRIS and TERI are sitting on the stage DL. MR. LEE enters R, coming up behind them.)***

MR. LEE: You two all set for the night?

TERI: Yeah, dad. I think we're good to go.

MR. LEE: Chris, I know your being here makes Teri's birthday that much more special. Thanks for coming. I'm glad your parents decided to let you spend the night with us.

CHRIS: Yeah. Uh. . . thanks.

TERI: 'Night, dad.

CHRIS: Good night, Mr. Lee.

**(MR. LEE exits L.)**

CHRIS: "That much more special?" Geez.

TERI: The dialogue is stilted, but the performance is pretty amazing. Oh well. Not gonna think about him right now. **(looking at her watch)** Right now. . . right now it's 10:23. Right now I am officially fifteen years and two minutes old. Wanna celebrate?

CHRIS: I kinda thought that's what I was doing here.

TERI: No, I mean like, for real. My dad's got a liquor cabinet.

CHRIS: No, I uh. . . I really don't think that'd be a good idea.

TERI: Suit yourself. I'm gonna have a swig of something. **(exits L.)**

CHRIS: It's your birthday.

**(CHRIS sits at the edge of the stage, looking uncomfortable. TERI re-enters with a bottle and a paper bathroom cup.)**

TERI: Okay, this looks intriguing.

CHRIS: What is it?

TERI: Vodka.

CHRIS: Is your dad going to know it's missing?

TERI: I'm going to have a little drink, put the bottle right back, and throw away the cup. He'll never know.

CHRIS: Look. . . *your dad* drinks this, right?

TERI: So?

CHRIS: You know how your dad is.

TERI: Yeah. I know.

CHRIS: Do you love your dad?

**(Pause.)**

TERI: I don't know. I guess.

CHRIS: Does your mom love your dad?

TERI: I guess so. She's always making excuses for him.

CHRIS: So if you love him, why don't either of you make him stop?

TERI: He's. . . y'know, dad. The boss. You don't make him stop.

CHRIS: Even if you love him?

TERI: Maybe I don't.

CHRIS: So you let him beat you because you don't love him?

TERI: Look, I just live here and try to stay out of the way, okay? If it bugs you so much, why don't you do something about it?

***(There is an uncomfortable pause.)***

TERI: That's what I thought. ***(looks at the bottle in her hand)***

CHRIS: Teri, why do you want to drink it?

TERI: Because if dad found out ***(snorts)***, he'd kill me.

***(TERI begins laughing outright. CHRIS chuckles uncomfortably.)***

TERI: He'd be so mad I touched his precious booze. He might have a coronary, but I probably wouldn't be that lucky.

MR. LEE: ***(shouting off-stage)*** Where is it? What did you do with it?

TERI: Oh, no.

***(TERI grabs the bottle and cup and runs off-stage L.)***

MRS. LEE: ***(off-stage)*** I don't know. You had it last.

MR. LEE: I always put it back on the coffee table!

***(TERI re-enters.)***

CHRIS: What's he talking about?

TERI: Probably the TV remote.

CHRIS: He's that worked up over the TV remote?

TERI: You really don't know my dad.

MR. LEE: ***(off-stage, furious)*** Where is it?

MRS. LEE: ***(off-stage)*** Did you carry it downstairs with you?

***(MR. LEE enters from L.)***

MR. LEE: Teri! Have you seen the TV remote?

TERI: No, sir.

MR. LEE: Well, start looking! If it doesn't turn up in five minutes, ***(looking intently at TERI)*** I promise you it'll never get lost again.

***(CHRIS opens her mouth, as if to say something to MR. LEE.)***

MR. LEE: ***(abruptly changing his tone of voice—not so drastic as to be humorous—his voice is distinctly irritated but substantially calmer)*** What is it, Chris?

CHRIS: Nothing, sir.

MR. LEE: I'm sorry you had to see this, Chris. Some people have no sense of responsibility. **(yelling off-stage L.)** Did you find it yet?

MRS. LEE: **(off-stage)** No, but I'm looking, dear.

**(Throughout the following speech, TERI is looking frantically around the stage while CHRIS hyperventilates, clearly upset and becoming more so with each passing second.)**

MR. LEE: I don't believe this! I work late, I come home, I try to relax, I give permission for a sleepover, and this is the thanks that I get! I have to wander around the house looking for the remote because somebody in my worthless family is too lazy to put it back where it belongs!

**(MR. LEE strikes TERI, who falls to the floor, sobbing. CHRIS grabs his arm and pulls him off-balance towards her. HE doesn't fall, but stumbles.)**

CHRIS: Stop it you filthy, stinking, drunken *animal*! Can't you see what you're doing? This is your daughter! This is your family! How can you treat them like this?! What kind of a man are you?!

**(MR. LEE raises his hand to strike CHRIS. SHE raises her arms defensively and recoils. MR. LEE lowers his hand.)**

MR. LEE: **(seething, barely controlling his temper)** How dare you. . . speak to me that way. You're a guest in my home.

CHRIS: Go to—

MR. LEE: **(cutting her off)** I am going to call your mother. I am going to tell her how you interfered in the discipline of my daughter and how you spoke to me, and you are never to set foot in my home again. As much as I would dearly love to forbid you from seeing Teri, I'm not stupid enough to think that's possible. You'll talk at school. I can't do anything about that. But if you call here, or if I even see you near our home, Teri will be punished. Do you understand me?

CHRIS: **(sobbing)** Yes, sir.

**(Blackout.)**

**SCENE 3—THE HALLWAY AT SCHOOL, SEVERAL WEEKS LATER**

***(TERI enters R. CHRIS enters a few steps behind her. Both are carrying school books.)***

CHRIS: Hey.

TERI: Hey.

CHRIS: You okay?

TERI: Yeah. It's nothing.

CHRIS: Your dad again?

TERI: Yeah. Pretty much.

CHRIS: I'm sorry.

TERI: Me too.

CHRIS: Has he ever started letting you watch TV again?

TERI: Actually, he let that go after a few days. Kind of surprised me.

CHRIS: Wow. He seemed a lot angrier than that.

TERI: Maybe he figured that after the special birthday beating he gave me, an extended grounding wasn't necessary. You know, if you hadn't butted in, it would have just blown over, like it always does.

CHRIS: I'm sorry, Teri.

TERI: I'm sorry, too. Look, I—I know you worry about me and you were just trying to help, but next time, stay out of it, okay?

CHRIS: I don't know if this makes any difference, or if this just makes me an even worse person, but for whatever it's worth. . . I wasn't trying to help. I wasn't thinking. I was just mad.

TERI: You lost your temper?

CHRIS: Yeah.

TERI: You've never lost your temper before in your life. Your timing stinks so bad. . . ***(starts laughing)*** oh my gosh, I don't know whether to hug you or hit you.

***(MILDRED, a student, rushes onstage.)***

MILDRED: Chris! Teri!

CHRIS: Hey, Mildred. What's up?

MILDRED: It's—I can't believe it—they—

TERI: What? What is it?

MILDRED: Teri, your dad! Doesn't he work in the—my dad—my dad is probably there, too!

***(Blackout.)***

**SCENE 4—THE LEES' BASEMENT, THE FOLLOWING EVENING**

*(Spot on TERI, sitting on the edge of the stage DL, talking into a cell phone.)*

TERI: They said he was still in the tower when it collapsed. *(begins sobbing)* That he'd carried down some guy with a broken leg, and then went back up to get somebody else. And then the building collapsed. *(sobbing uncontrollably)* The other tower had already gone down. He must have known what was going to happen. And he went back up. He went back up. . .

*(Blackout.)*

**SCENE 5—THE LEES' KITCHEN, THE NEXT EVENING**

*(Lights come up C on a table and chairs, the LEES' dining room. CHRIS and TERI are standing by the table.)*

CHRIS: I shouldn't be here.

TERI: It's okay.

CHRIS: He threw me out of your house. He told me not to come back.

TERI: Mom said she wants you here.

*(MRS. LEE enters. SHE is in her forties and wearing a nice-looking dress.)*

MRS. LEE: Mr. Reilley should be here any minute now. Chris, would you like a soda?

CHRIS: No, thank you, ma'am.

*(REILLEY enters.)*

REILLEY: Mrs. Lee. Teri.

MRS. LEE: Mr. Reilley. Please sit down. This is Teri's friend, Chris.

REILLEY: We've met. My daughter, Mildred, is friends with Chris, too. Hi Chris. Nice to see you again.

CHRIS: You too, sir. I'm glad you're okay. Mildred was really worried about you, but she told us later that you. . . *(her voice wavers as SHE glances at TERI and MRS. LEE)* . . .got out.

TERI: Yeah. We're uh, we're glad you're all right.

REILLEY: Thank you. I wish all the other firefighters had been as lucky.

***(Pause. REILLEY glances at CHRIS and then at MRS. LEE.)***

MRS. LEE: It's okay. I think I know what you're going to say, and I'd like her to hear. Albert certainly deserved it.

***(CHRIS and TERI exchange glances.)***

REILLEY: Well, I guess I should say that I barely knew Mr. Lee—Albert. I'd talked to him a few times over the years. Seemed like a real nice guy. But the other morning. . . I think I saw what kind of man he really was. ***(takes a deep breath)*** That day, it was just. . . I can't begin to describe it. ***(pause)*** I was in the north tower, me and another firefighter, coming out of one of the lower floors into the stairwell. . . we were heading out of the building, and Albert comes down the stairs, carrying a guy in his arms. And he just hands this guy over to me and says, "He's hurt. Take him." Albert didn't say anything else. He was sweating and coughing, but there was this look in his eyes. . . this calm, unshakable resolve. I remember thinking it was like God had reached down from heaven and replaced his spine with an iron bar. I mean, he looked so set that I didn't understand for a second why he was handing this injured guy over to me. And then I realized that he had to be dead exhausted, so me and the other firefighter, we took the injured guy and carried him down the steps. I thought your dad was behind us, but when I looked back, he was gone. The injured guy, he tells us that there was somebody in a wheelchair way back up in the building that your dad had promised to go back and get. And I thought back to that look in his eyes. I will never, ever forget that look as long as I live. He was a hero. They were all heroes, all the people we lost that day—the firefighters and the rescue workers. And Albert stood right up there with the best of them. He was a brave man. A good man. I hope that helps a little.

MRS. LEE: Thank you.

REILLEY: You're welcome. I wanted you to know.

***(Blackout.)***

## **SCENE 6—THE LEES' BASEMENT, THAT NIGHT**

***(CHRIS and TERI are sitting on the stage DL.)***

CHRIS: She wanted me to hear. "Albert certainly deserved it." Can you believe that crap?

TERI: Her opinion of him was never exactly grounded in reality.

CHRIS: But he did do something utterly extraordinary.

TERI: Yeah. Hooray for him.

CHRIS: Does it make you feel. . . better. . . about him?

TERI: No. I feel like everything he ever did to me shouldn't matter anymore. Except it does. I feel marginalized. Hollow.

CHRIS: Are you mad?

TERI: I think I feel this. . . rage. This bitter, gnawing, ugly rage, that's racing around the pit of my stomach, and it doesn't know which way to go, and it feels like it's going to eat me alive from inside out. I don't know who to hate the most. . . my dad, or the terrorists. They wanted to break us. But instead they gave my dad the kind of chance that hardly anybody ever gets. I guess it says. . . *something*. . . that he rose to the occasion. And now people are going to look up to him. They didn't know him. Nobody knew him. And right now, I don't think anybody wants to know, because in times like these, people need all the heroes they can get.

CHRIS: Where does that leave you?

TERI: Bruised, bleeding, and forgotten, I guess.

CHRIS: How can you be forgotten if no one knew what he was doing to you in the first place?

TERI: It doesn't matter. No one would have cared.

CHRIS: I cared.

TERI: I didn't see you doing anything about it.

CHRIS: I stood up to him.

TERI: And it made things worse! It wasn't even intentional! Why are you trying to build yourself up?

CHRIS: Because I hated him and I can't allow myself to believe that he was better than me!

TERI: Of course you were better than him. You never did anything to hurt anybody.

CHRIS: I never did anything to help anybody, either. At least he did that much in the end. With me, it's like I'll know what the right thing is, but I get paralyzed and I can't bring myself to do it. Your dad going back up those stairs when every instinct must've been telling him to get out of the building. . . he made himself do the right thing. He was a hero. There's no question.

TERI: And now we have to live with it.

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