

KYRA'S LEGACY

By Deborah Karczewski

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CHARACTERS

In Order of Appearance:

SUZE: Kyra's tall, commanding but playful, college-aged cousin

MANDY: Kyra's younger sister, high school freshman, petite; like an iceberg there is more to Mandy than first meets the eye

SARAH: seventeen, Kyra's best friend, sad, kind, and preoccupied

CASSIE and ANNETTE: The script calls for two blondes, but the lines can be changed to fit any two lovely seventeen year old girls, who look very similar. They are popular, bubbly, and innocently oblivious to those outside their circle of friends.

HELENE: raised by a single mother, seventeen, lower income than Kyra's other friends

MEG: seventeen or eighteen, shy, unassuming, tolerant, and sweetly empathetic

EVE: seventeen, mysterious, dark, eloquent, wears a black lace veil that covers her eyes

ELISE: seventeen, brilliant, and defensive

SETTING

Set may be as complex as a living room with a couch, seating for nine, and a coffee table. Minimally, the same effect can be accomplished with a bench for three decorated with a coverlet, a trunk, and throw pillows.

LIGHTING AND SOUND

Lighting is basic. The play does need a doorbell sound.

PROPS

Bowl of Chips

Cell phone

Loosely wovenicker basket

Shoe Box-Sized Box

Ring box with ring

Eight matching stationary envelopes

Two letters in legal sized envelopes, one a "will," and the other a final letter to Mandy and Suze

Videotape in manila envelope

COSTUMES

Eve must wear a black, flowing garment that includes a sash and a black lace veil that covers her eyes.

PRODUCTION NOTES

When working with students/actresses it may be helpful to color code the “will.” That way each actress is able to quickly find her portion of the letter to read aloud.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Special thanks to West Morris Mendham High School of Mendham, NJ for pre-publication experimentation of KYRA'S LEGACY.

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AT RISE: *As the lights come up, MANDY is placing a bowl of chips on the living room table when the doorbell rings. The set has a couch or at least seating for nine. Minimally, it must also include a coffee table and a loosely woven waste basket. MANDY hurries to open the front door.*

SUZE: Hi Squirt.

MANDY: Hey there Lug Nut.

SUZE: (**awkwardly peeking inside**) Am I the first to arrive?

MANDY: Yeah. Come on in.

SUZE: (**entering as though SHE is familiar with the surroundings**)

The folks home?

MANDY: No.

SUZE: You're kidding.

MANDY: They got one, too. Kyra asked them to trust me.

SUZE: And they're okay with this?

MANDY: I guess so.

SUZE: Even Uncle Frank?

MANDY: Listen Suze, I'm getting a stiff neck staring up at you like this. Come in and have a seat.

SUZE: Real cute, Mandy. (**SHE picks up MANDY like a rag doll and then heads for the couch.**)

MANDY: (**kicking and squealing playfully**) Hey! Let me down, you Amazon!

SUZE: Well, you told me to come in, didn't you, Cousin?

MANDY: Put me down!

SUZE: (**plops MANDY on the couch and sits down next to her**) Your wish is my command.

MANDY: (**teasing**) Geez, is this how you pick up guys at college?

SUZE: Hey, I have no problem with the gentlemen, little cousin.

MANDY: (**eagerly**) Yeah? New man in your life? Tell me everything!

SUZE: Let's just say that one cannot live by work alone.

MANDY: I thought so! What's his name?

SUZE: Hold on there, li'l cuz; let's get focused. Who else are you expecting?

MANDY: Well. . . um. . . there were ten letters. . . that I know of anyway. I got my letter of instructions first. Then there was the one that asked Mom and Dad to give us some space. The others I found out about when Kyra's friends R.S.V.P.'d.

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SUZE: You make it sound like a party, Mandy.

MANDY: Sorry.

SUZE: No, I'm sorry, Squirt. It's just too weird.

MANDY: I know.

SUZE: How many?

MANDY: Friends?

SUZE: Yeah.

MANDY: Seven, I think.

SUZE: All from school?

MANDY: Umhm.

SUZE: So, why me? I don't really know anybody in the high school any more, unless you're talking about a few younger siblings of some of my friends. I never hung out with Kyra's crowd.

MANDY: Yeah, but you're our cousin, Suze.

SUZE: I know but--

MANDY: **(interrupting)** --And Kyra really loved you.

(Awkward, sad pause.)

SUZE: **(quietly)** How are *you* doing, Squirt?

MANDY: Okay.

SUZE: If you ever need. . .

MANDY: I know.

(The doorbell rings.)

SUZE: Want me to--

MANDY: --No, I'll get it.

(SARAH, CASSIE, ANNETTE, and HELENE are at the front door. They pile in familiarly. SARAH has her cell phone to her ear.)

SARAH: Hey Mandy, my mom's a little freaked out that I told her that we need to be alone for a while. She wants me to be sure that your parents are home.

MANDY: Tell her Mom's at the market. . . but that. . . um. . . **(looks guiltily at SUZE)** Dad is upstairs.

SUZE: Tell her I'm here, Sarah.

SARAH: **(into the phone)** Yes Mom, her dad and her older cousin. No Mom, not a boy cousin. It's Suze. You met her at the funeral, remember?

CASSIE: What does she think, that we're having a wild party or something?

SARAH: Shhh! No, Mom, Cassie was just kidding. I'll call you when we need a ride home. Okay? Love you. Bye.

ANNETTE: Man, I thought *my* parents were overprotective.

HELENE: Yours? Before you picked me up, my mother kept asking me over and over if everything was okay, and then she reminded me that drugs are the Devil's candy!

CASSIE: I swear, ever since the Guidance Department started sending home those memos about "Warning Signs in Teens," my parents need to know what I'm doing every single minute.

ANNETTE: (**like a television announcer**) Do you know where *your* teen is?

HELENE: Is she with a (**spelling**) B-O-Y?

SUZE: They're just worried about you guys.

CASSIE: (**teasing**) Oh yeah, Suze, now that you're a college girl, you've turned into one of them!

SUZE: One of what, Missy? You'd better be careful, or I'll hobble over there and hit you with my walker!

(All giggle.)

SARAH: Hey guys, should we really be doing this?

ANNETTE: Doing what, Sarah? We're just having a little fun.

SARAH: I know. I just feel guilty.

HELENE: Why?

SARAH: Because it's too soon after. . .

(Awkward silence.)

SUZE: (**quietly**) We have to stop crying sometime, girls.

SARAH: But how do you know when it's the right time?

MANDY: Kyra wouldn't want us to stop having fun just because. . .

SUZE: (**playfully**) See? Out of the mouths of babes!

MANDY: Hey Grandma, I'm only a couple of years younger than these guys!

SUZE: Come here, Squirt!

(They start slapping and poking each other like little kids. The doorbell rings.)

HELENE: Mandy! (**MANDY is oblivious while playing with SUZE.**) Mandy, the door! Okay, I'll get it!

(MEG is at the door. Awkward pause. MANDY and SUZE stop wrestling.)

HELENE: Hello?

MEG: Hi, Helene.

HELENE: Can I help you?

MEG: Yes. . . um. . . Wasn't I supposed to. . . ?

MANDY: Oh hi, Meg. Come on in! Helene, this is Meg. Meg Marshall?
She's in your grade!

HELENE: Omigosh, I'm sorry, Meg. That's how you knew my name!
Aren't you in my Chorus class?

MEG: Yes, I. . . stand behind you. You have the most beautiful voice I
have ever heard.

HELENE: Aw!

MEG: No, really. When I shut my eyes and focus on your voice, I feel
like I'm in the middle of an opera!

HELENE: **(pleased but embarrassed)** I didn't know you were friends
with Kyra! Here, have a seat.

MEG: Thanks.

HELENE: Have you met Suze, Kyra's cousin?

MEG: Hi. **(SUZE smiles back)**

HELENE: And Cassie?

MEG: Mr. Easterling's English class.

(It is becoming apparent that the girls aren't consciously mean; they just travel on a totally different path than the demure MEG.)

CASSIE: Oh, I'm sorry. It took me a minute. Would you like a chip?

MEG: Thanks.

ANNETTE: Meg, you look awfully familiar. I'm Annette.

MEG: Hi, Annette. You. . . um. . . dated my brother last summer.

ANNETTE: Phil? Phil Marshall? I'm so embarrassed. Of course!

MEG: That's okay, Annette. It's so overwhelming to meet a whole family
at a family barbecue.

ANNETTE: All I could think about was "Please, please God don't let me
say anything stupid!"

MEG: **(empathetically)** I know just how that feels.

ANNETTE: Well, nice to meet you Meg...again, I mean.

HELENE: How is it that we've never...you know...hung out with you
before? You must have been close to Kyra, or you wouldn't be here,
right? I mean, did you get--

MEG: **(pulling out her envelope)**--A letter? Yes, here it is... I got to
know Kyra when we took the same SAT Prep night-class. It's a lot
less tedious when you have somebody to giggle with. And then,
when Kyra couldn't come to class anymore, we kept studying here
just in case she got...

SARAH: Better.

MEG: Yeah.

SARAH: I'm Sarah, Meg. Kyra was my best. . . my best. . .

MEG: I know. She talked about you all the time.

(Awkward, sad pause. The doorbell rings. MANDY runs to answer the door. EVE is in a black, flowing garment and wears a veil obscuring her eyes. MANDY gives a little gasp at EVE's appearance.)

MANDY: Oh, I'm sorry. It's just that you startled me. You didn't have to... I mean. . . you didn't have to wear. . .

HELENE: ***(rushing to MANDY's rescue)*** Hey, Eve. It's just Eve, Mandy. She always dresses like. . . well. . .

ANNETTE: Hi Eve, come on in. Eve's the dramatic one of the group, Mandy.

CASSIE: ***(giggling)*** Every click needs an eccentric element! Well, Eve's ours! Eve, you've already given Mandy a heart attack, now meet Suze the cousin and Meg--

EVE: --The secret friend. Charmed.

MEG: ***(surprised but pleased at the acknowledgement)***
Oh...yes...likewise.

SUZE: You can take the veil off now, Eve. You're out of the sunlight.

EVE: Oh. Does it bother you?

SUZE: Um. . . no!. . . Uh. . . I didn't mean to. . .

(The doorbell rings.)

SARAH: My turn! ***(stops short, surprised to see it is ELISE at the door)*** Elise! What are you...?

ELISE: Nice, Sarah. What am I doing here? Beats the heck out of me!

HELENE: Elise, I thought Kyra--

ELISE: --Hated me? Couldn't stand to be in the same room with me?

HELENE: --That's not what I--

ELISE: --Maybe this was a bad idea after all.

MANDY: No Elise, please don't go. Hi, I'm Kyra's younger sister, Mandy. Please. Kyra wouldn't have sent you a letter if she didn't have a good reason. Don't mind Sarah. She's just upset about the whole thing. You know.

EVE: Ah. The empathy of soul sisters.

ELISE: Oh great. Eve from Oz is here, too? ***(heading for the door)***
Look, I had a great time. Now, it'd better--

SUZE: ***(intercepting her)*** Look at you. If Kyra wanted you here, you need to be here. Understand?

ELISE: Who are you? The Bouncer? The Body Guard? The FBI?

SUZE: I'm the cousin. Sit! (**ELISE does. Awkward silence,**)

MEG: Um. . . excuse me, but does anybody know why we've all been invited?

EVE: It seems as though we've all been summoned by the Ghost of Kyra Past. (**looking at her envelope**) Lovely stationary, really.

(The friends all pull out their envelopes.)

ANNETTE: Don't you think it's all a little. . . creepy? I don't want to sound negative. . . Don't get me wrong. But--

CASSIE: No, I know what you mean. Why us? Why did Kyra ask us all to meet, and how did she know when she was going to die? It gives me the shivers.

HELENE: Well, we all knew she was nearing the end.

ELISE: But the letters were mailed after Kyra passed away.

SARAH: What are you talking about, Elise?

ELISE: I'm serious. Look at the post marks!

(The girls all scrutinize their envelopes)

MEG: That means someone else had to have mailed the letters.

ELISE: Well, that was a brilliant insight!

EVE: Leave her alone, Elise. Meg only verbalized what we were all thinking.

MANDY: Excuse me? My letter sort of clears things up a bit. I feel a little pushy, but. . . um. . . Kyra asked me to organize this meeting...if you don't mind.

ELISE: Mind? It's refreshing to hear that this love fest might actually have a point.

CASSIE: What does your letter say, Mandy?

MANDY: Well, if you could all gather a little closer, I have something to show you. (**The girls reposition themselves, clustering around Mandy.**) My letter told me where to find a box hidden in Kyra's room.

(SHE reaches under the coffee table to pull it out. The actresses should improvise a few seconds of interested exclamations.)

SUZE: Open it up already, Squirt!

MANDY: Inside is a will, this fat envelope and this little box.

SARAH: If I knew I was dying, I'm not sure I'd be able to be this...

MEG: Organized?

SARAH: Yes. Kyra was so together. Sometimes I feel like I could never measure up to the kind of person she was.

ELISE: Me, too.

EVE: You could never measure up? I thought you were Miss Perfect.

ELISE: You know what, Eve? You're so into broadcasting your problems by wearing your bizarre outfits and by pretending your freaky behavior that you don't have a clue about anyone else's feelings.

(Awkward pause.)

ANNETTE: Mandy, is your box the reason why Kyra brought us all together?

SUZE: Go ahead, Mandy. It's okay.

MANDY: Well, maybe I should just start with Kyra's own words. **(opens the will and takes a deep breath.)**

Hi Guys,

I'm sorry that you are all feeling so confused and awkward. Just when you thought you could begin healing, I stir up your emotions again by bringing you here.

(MANDY is overcome and puts her face in her hands.)

ANNETTE: Here Honey, I'll read for you if you want. **(MANDY nods and ANNETTE continues)** *You girls have had the biggest impact on my life outside of my parents, and have helped to mold me into who I am. Yes, Elise, even you.*

ELISE: **(amazed, as though Kyra has read her mind)** Oh my gosh!

ANNETTE: *And for this I will be eternally grateful – if there IS such a thing as eternity – which I desperately believe is true.*

SARAH: **(breaking down)** Oh Kyra!

ANNETTE: *I wish that I had some substantial gifts to give you as a way to thank each one of you, but what teen really has anything of major worth?*

HELENE: I can't believe that she was thinking of us at a time like this.

ANNETTE: *So, since I don't have a million dollars which I'd gladly give to you my dear friends, I need to be, well, creative. Let me start with you, Cassie.*

CASSIE: Omigosh – me?

ANNETTE: *Cassie, you know I promised to keep your secret 'till the day I die, but--*

CASSIE: --No Kyra!

ANNETTE: *But that day has passed, and you need to stop feeling guilty.*

CASSIE: No, Annette, stop!

ANNETTE: *You have always blamed yourself for what happened with Mr. Handel, and it's time to set you free.*

CASSIE: (*jumping up, crying, and fumbling toward the door*) No, I can't. I have to go. I have to --

ANNETTE: (*interrupts, drops the will, and follows CASSIE*) Cassie? What happened with Mr. Handel?

CASSIE: Why? Why? So that you can tell everybody how gullible I am? So that everyone can know what a conceited idiot I am?

ANNETTE: Cassie, did he touch you?

CASSIE: Don't worry about it, Annette.

ANNETTE: (*grabbing CASSIE's arms*) Did he?

CASSIE: What's it to you if he did?

ANNETTE: (*screaming through tears*) Because he did it to me!

(Awkward pause.)

CASSIE: (*quietly*) He what?

ANNETTE: He said that I was the prettiest girl he had ever seen. He told me that I was so much more mature than all of the other girls in class.

SUZE: Who's Mr. Handel?

CASSIE: (*heading back to the group*) He. . . he's the student teacher in the History Department.

EVE: I always found him so handsome, but so arrogant.

ANNETTE: I felt so special when he singled me out.

CASSIE: Did he tell you that, that he thought he might be falling --

ANNETTE: --In love with me?

CASSIE: He said that to you, too?

ANNETTE: I feel like such a fool. It's just that he was looking at me like a woman --

CASSIE: --Not like some little girl.

ANNETTE: Yes! And he spoke so beautifully that--

CASSIE: --That I trusted him. He said that nobody would ever find out and that--

ANNETTE: --He'd treat you like a princess?

CASSIE: Yes.

ELISE: Isn't Mr. Handel, the student teacher, the nephew of Mr. Handel the principal?

CASSIE: That's how he had the keys to the school. He told me to meet him one night. I told my parents that the cheerleaders were cheering for a basketball game, but really, I was secretly meeting Mr. Handel.

ANNETTE: Did he tell you to wear your cheerleading outfit?

CASSIE: Mmmhmm. He said it made me even more exciting.

ANNETTE: Me, too, Cassie. Oh, I think I'm going to be sick.

CASSIE: But when he started to touch me, I got scared. I told him I wanted to go home!

ANNETTE: So did I, Cassie! And then he got mean!

CASSIE: It was as though something evil took over him!

ANNETTE: Something ugly!

CASSIE: He said if I didn't do what he wanted he'd see to it that I failed history.

ANNETTE: He said that nobody would believe a blonde, superficial teenager.

CASSIE: Nobody would believe somebody whose grades were as mediocre as mine.

ANNETTE: Whose word would they take – a student teacher with college honors?

CASSIE: Or a cheap, little high school cheerleader?

ANNETTE: The nephew of the principal?

CASSIE: Or a flirt in a short skirt?

ANNETTE: I can't believe this!

CASSIE: So I ran. I pushed him out of the way, and I ran!

ANNETTE: I never told my parents because then they'd know I lied to them.

CASSIE: And who would have believed me anyway?

ANNETTE: It's not like there were any witnesses. It's not like anyone even knew I was there!

CASSIE: Oh, Annette, I'm so sorry. I wish I had known.

(They hug for a moment.)

MEG: ***(quietly)*** I knew.

HELENE: What?

MEG: I knew what he had done.

ELISE: What are you talking about, Meg?

MEG: I know what happened. I was too scared to tell anybody. I know you must hate me. I don't blame you.

SARAH: Meg, how could you have known?

MEG: This is why I don't have any friends. I'm such a coward. I should have told you. I know I should have!

EVE: Meg, calm down. There's no way anyone could have known. They were at the school at night.

MEG: So was I!

HELENE: ***(putting an arm around MEG comfortingly)*** How, Meg? How could this be?

MEG: It . . . it's part of my work-study program. Two nights a week I clean the test tubes in the science labs, clean the animal cages...you know. . . all the things the science teachers don't want to do but don't trust to the custodians.

MANDY: How much did you see, Meg?

MEG: Well, I didn't really see anything, but I heard a lot. The first time, when Cassie ran out screaming, Mr. Handel saw me in the hallway. He told me that nothing happened, and that if I wanted to keep my job, I'd better keep my mouth shut. I'm so sorry, Cassie. I feel so ashamed.

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