

TRIBUNAL

By Alan Haehnel

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ISBN: 1-60003-576-0

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CHARACTERS

MR. CASTLE	Assistant Principal
CARMEN	A prisoner of the Tribunal
PETER	A prisoner of the Tribunal
EMILY	The leader of the Tribunal
LAURA	Emily's "lieutenant"
DON	A loyal Tribunal member
MARCUS	A loyal Tribunal member
KATHERINE	A loyal Tribunal member
TAYLOR	A loyal Tribunal member
ROBERT	The lead sceptic of the Tribunal
SAUNDRA	A Tribunal sceptic
DEIRDRE	A Tribunal sceptic
JACKSON	A Tribunal sceptic
DILLY	A Tribunal "enforcer"
NATE	A Tribunal "enforcer"

Note: 7 F, 8 M, genders flexible. A slightly smaller cast could be used by re-assigning lines.

SET

Scene One can be performed in Mr. Castle's office with three chairs and a desk, or it can be done more simply with Mr. Castle, Robert and Emily standing, conversing downstage of the main curtain.

Scene Two, the main setting for the play, consists of a semi-circle of chairs and desks for the Tribunal and a center chair for the prisoner. Pipes and other set features communicating that the Tribunal meets in the basement of the school could contribute to the atmosphere, but a bare stage would suffice.

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Curtain closed. Downstage of the main drape, lights up on a small area indicating Mr. Castle's office--a wooden desk, MR. CASTLE seated behind it, and two chairs in which EMILY and ROBERT sit.

MR. CASTLE: I know, I know. It's a frustrating situation. I really wish I could do something more, but...

EMILY: Why can't you?

MR. CASTLE: My hands are tied, Emily.

ROBERT: Mr. Castle, you're the assistant principal. How can your hands be tied?

MR. CASTLE: I think you'd be shocked to know how little latitude I have, Robert, when it comes to dealing with difficult students. I have to carefully build a case; I have to corroborate every accusation. It's a slow process.

EMILY: It's a ridiculous process. I'm telling you, they ruin every class we're in!

ROBERT: My parents are seriously thinking of transferring me to a private school.

EMILY: Lucky you. My parents can't afford that.

ROBERT: Do you think mine can? It'll be next to impossible, but they're ready to take out a second mortgage.

EMILY: Are you listening to this, Mr. Castle?

MR. CASTLE: I am listening, and believe me, it's very frustrating. Emily, Robert, between you and me, if this school could be attended solely by students like you--serious about education, caring to others--my job would be.... I'd be in heaven, let's put it that way.

EMILY: Why can't it be like that? Why can't we just kick out the ones who are ruining it?

MR. CASTLE: This is a public high school. We have to take all comers.

ROBERT: But the school is here to educate, not baby-sit!

MR. CASTLE: I couldn't have said it better myself. Look, we certainly don't want to lose students like you. All I can ask is that you just... just do your best to be leaders in the classroom, to exert positive peer pressure on those who...

EMILY: Mr. Castle, please. We have no power over kids like... Peter Cross or Shayla Glick. Absolutely none.

ROBERT: It's true. Positive peer pressure? They don't even see us as their peers. We're geeks from another planet.

MR. CASTLE: I'll do what I can.

EMILY: (*getting up to leave*) Yeah. What bank are your parents talking to for the tuition money, Rob? I can't stay here.

ROBERT: Thanks, Mr. Castle. I know you're trying. I wish your hands weren't so tied.

MR. CASTLE: So do I, Robert. I appreciate you coming in.

EMILY: Right.

(*ROBERT and EMILY walk a few feet from MR. CASTLE.*)

MR. CASTLE: Guys?

(*THEY turn to face him. HE pauses for a long moment.*)

EMILY: Mr. Castle?

MR. CASTLE: I'm sure you've heard of the saying "Desperate times call for desperate measures"? I... I wonder if we're not facing desperate times. Why don't you come sit back down?

(*As ROBERT and EMILY cross back over toward MR. CASTLE, the scene fades to black. The curtain opens to the interior of what looks like the basement of a large building—pipes, storage boxes, etc. Slowly, a light comes up on a hard wooden chair, downstage center. It is empty. After several seconds, TWO large BOYS come in, wearing masks. Between them is a third student, CARMEN, whose hands are tied behind her back; her head is covered with a solid black hood. SHE struggles to get free and makes muffled shouts. The BOYS roughly push her into the chair. ONE BOY removes CARMEN's hood. SHE squints against the glare of the light. Her mouth is gagged, though we can hear her shouting. When CARMEN tries to get up out of the chair, the BOYS move forward and push her back down. Suddenly, we hear five loud, slow beats, as if from a large bass drum. CARMEN sits still. Upstage of CARMEN, the light slowly builds, revealing TEN FIGURES seated behind desks forming a semi-circle. THEY are ALL wearing robes that hide their faces and allow them to use mechanical voice disguisers. THEY speak in unison, eerily. These TEN comprise THE TRIBUNAL.*)

THE TRIBUNAL: Silence!

(*Another five beats of the drum, louder this time. CARMEN tries to scream around the gag.*)

THE TRIBUNAL: Silence!

(*CARMEN tries to get up and run away. The BOYS grab her again. This time, THEY tie her to the chair as SHE desperately struggles to get*

free. The drum beats during her fight. When SHE sees SHE has no escape, CARMEN slumps in the chair, exhausted. MEMBERS of THE TRIBUNAL speak, each with a different mechanical voice alteration.)

THE TRIBUNAL: We are The Tribunal.

TRIBUNAL ONE: The longer you resist, the longer you will remain with us.

TRIBUNAL TWO: You will not struggle.

TRIBUNAL THREE: You will not speak unless requested to speak.

TRIBUNAL FOUR: You will sit quietly and face your accusations.

TRIBUNAL FIVE: Do you understand?

(CARMEN sits still.)

ALL: Do you understand?

(CARMEN nods her head and shouts "yes" from behind her gag.)

TRIBUNAL SIX: Carmen Rodriguez, The Tribunal summons you for crimes against your fellow classmates.

(CARMEN tries to reply.)

TRIBUNAL SEVEN: Do not speak!

TRIBUNAL EIGHT: Silence!

(CARMEN keeps shouting from behind the gag. ONE of the BOYS steps forward and pushes the back of her head with a club; CARMEN quiets, her eyes showing her fury.)

TRIBUNAL NINE: The longer you resist, the longer you will remain with us!

TRIBUNAL TEN: Carmen Rodriguez, you are cruel.

TRIBUNAL ONE: You threaten those weaker than yourself.

TRIBUNAL TWO: You disrespect your teachers.

TRIBUNAL THREE: You disrupt your classes.

TRIBUNAL FOUR: You are not fit to attend your school.

TRIBUNAL FIVE: Carmen Rodriguez, you are summoned before The Tribunal as a warning.

ALL TRIBUNAL MEMBERS: Change your ways! Change your ways!

(THE TRIBUNAL MEMBERS speak in a jumble, randomly repeating Carmen's name, the words "Change" and "Change Your Ways" and "You are not fit," along with the pounding drum, building in volume to create a cacophony of horrible, terrifying sound. The TWO BOYS swing clubs threateningly close to her head, though never making contact.

After a few seconds of intense noise, the lights go to complete blackness and all sound ends. Silence. The only sound is CARMEN crying. As soon as THE TRIBUNAL MEMBERS speak again, the lights begin to come back up.)

TRIBUNAL SIX: You will have one chance to speak.

TRIBUNAL SEVEN: You will say one thing and one thing alone.

TRIBUNAL EIGHT: Carmen Rodriguez, you will say you are sorry.

TRIBUNAL NINE: You will say you will change your ways.

TRIBUNAL TEN: If you do not, you will not leave.

ALL TRIBUNAL MEMBERS: Do you understand?

(CARMEN nods her head desperately.)

TRIBUNAL ONE: Allow her to speak.

(The BOYS remove CARMEN's gag.)

CARMEN: Why... why are you doing this? Who are you? You can't do this!

TRIBUNAL TWO: Gag her!

(The BOYS roughly put the gag back on CARMEN.)

TRIBUNAL THREE: You will say one thing and one thing alone.

TRIBUNAL FOUR: You will say you are sorry.

TRIBUNAL FIVE: You will say you will change your ways.

TRIBUNAL SIX: If you do not, you will not leave.

ALL MEMBERS: Do you understand?

(CARMEN nods her head, defeated.)

TRIBUNAL SEVEN: Allow her to speak.

TRIBUNAL EIGHT: Remember! One thing and one thing alone.

(CARMEN can't speak; SHE is crying too hard. SHE hangs her head and sobs.)

TRIBUNAL NINE: Speak! Speak or remain with The Tribunal!

(CARMEN shakes her head, still crying.)

TRIBUNAL TEN: Gag her again. She will remain with The Tribunal.

(Before the BOYS can put the gag back on, CARMEN screams.)

CARMEN: No! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I won't do it anymore! Get me out of here! I'll change! I'll change, I'll change, I'll change! Stop it! Just stop, please! Don't do this anymore. I'm sorry. Please! Please.

ALL TRIBUNAL MEMBERS: Silence!

TRIBUNAL ONE: Carmen Rodriguez, The Tribunal will be watching.

TRIBUNAL TWO: The Tribunal will be waiting.

TRIBUNAL THREE: You must now swear to two things.

TRIBUNAL FOUR: First, never to speak of The Tribunal.

TRIBUNAL FIVE: Second, never to return to your cruel and disrespectful ways. Swear!

ALL TRIBUNAL MEMBERS: Swear! Swear! Swear!

CARMEN: I swear it! I do! I swear! I promise! Please!

TRIBUNAL SIX: If you go back on either of these promises, The Tribunal will have you again.

TRIBUNAL SEVEN: The Tribunal will show you hell.

TRIBUNAL EIGHT: Carmen Rodriguez... The Tribunal is done with you now. But it never forgets.

ALL MEMBERS: The Tribunal never forgets!

(The BOYS put the hood back on CARMEN, untie her from the chair and lead her away. SHE cries and babbles as THEY do.)

CARMEN: Okay, okay, okay. I won't come back. I promise I won't. I won't say anything. Please, you don't have to... you don't have to... I swear! Just let me go home, please! Please!

(Once SHE is offstage, the lights come up full on the MEMBERS of THE TRIBUNAL. THEY take off their outfits, revealing themselves as ordinary-looking students, including ROBERT and EMILY.)

EMILY: Yes, that was a good one! Woo!

(EMILY high-fives LAURA, the girl next to her.)

LAURA: Beautiful!

MARCUS: Ladies and gentlemen, let me take this opportunity to say, in as public a way as I can: The Tribunal rocks!

EMILY: Hoo-ra!

DON: You've got that right! We are awesome!

TAYLOR: Except hold on, hold on a second. Who came up with *(speaking into the voice changer)* "The Tribunal will show you hell."

LAURA: Oh, yeah—who was that? That was cheesy.

DEIRDRE: Sorry, sorry.

TAYLOR: Dee? Are you kidding me?

DEIRDRE: I got carried away. I'm sorry.

KATHERINE: Whoa. Give the shy girl a voice changer and... watch out! "The Tribunal will show you hell, hell, hell!"

DEIRDRE: Shut up. I was just... you know. Shut up.

EMILY: You were just getting into it a little, Deirdre, and you know what? There's nothing wrong with that. Hoo. Ra. It's our turn, right? Huh?

DON: Yeah!

EMILY: Personally, I liked it. That's just what we're doing—we're showing them hell, and it serves them right. I say keep it.

JACKSON: Yeah, but we can't start getting away from the script all the time. We'll mess up.

EMILY: Fair enough. I'm just proposing we go ahead and add in Dee's line.

DEIRDRE: No, I don't have to say it.

EMILY: And then no more ad libs after that, though.

TAYLOR: Yeah. That could get bad: "The Tribunal will show you hell and fire and damnation. If you do not fall to your knees and repent, The Tribunal will roast your soul upon the devil's barbecue!"

DEIRDRE: I wasn't going to say all that! Come on!

EMILY: All those in favor of adding in Deirdre's *one* line, say aye.

(EMILY, DON, MARCUS, LAURA, and KATHERINE all say "aye.")

LAURA: Dee, vote for yourself.

DEIRDRE: I didn't think I could.

MARCUS: Well, naturally.

DEIRDRE: Okay, okay. Aye.

EMILY: All those opposed?

(NO ONE speaks.)

Okay, we have six "ayes" and four abstentions, which I'm not quite sure I understand, but the motion carries. "The Tribunal will bring you hell" is now a part of our script. Congratulations, Deirdre.

DEIRDRE: I... well... okay, sure. You didn't have to.

(The TWO BOYS who brought in CARMEN return, hoods off. THEY are DILLY and NATE.)

DON: Mission accomplished, men?

DILLY: Signed, sealed, delivered.

NATE: Blubbering the whole way back, too.

EMILY: How's the system working, Dilly?

DILLY: Perfect. Mr. C. brings them into his office, says he'll be right back, tells them to sit tight...

NATE: We come in, hit the lights, boom. We got 'em.

LAURA: Nobody sees you?

DILLY: When could they? Back door of Castle's office leads right to the stairs. Two flights down, here we are.

NATE: I didn't even know this place was a place until we started doing this. It's perfect. You could set off a bomb down here and nobody would hear it.

EMILY: Here we are, doing more good in ten minutes than the whole administration and the school board could do in a year. In case you hadn't noticed, people, The Tribunal works.

DON: Yeah, it does!

KATHERINE: I have my doubts about the "never speak of The Tribunal" bit. I'm hearing rumors.

EMILY: Perfect.

KATHERINE: Come again?

EMILY: That's just where we want The Tribunal to live, in the rumor mill.

MARCUS: Oh, I can certainly concur on that. That is a brilliant, a brilliant assessment. There is nothing more powerful than a half-suspected concept. Shadowy ideas feed the imagination. They grow in the dark.

DILLY: Dude, you're scaring me a little.

MARCUS: This is the most exciting thing I've done in high school. I absolutely appreciate being a part of this group; I just want to say that.

EMILY: You belong here, Marcus. You're the smartest kid in the school, but, if you don't mind me saying so, you've also been one of the most picked on.

MARCUS: As much as I'd like to disagree, I can't.

EMILY: But it's been getting better, hasn't it?

MARCUS: It has. Thankfully, it has.

DON: Anybody remember Dale Bozlick? He was, like, the worst to you, wasn't he, Marcus?

MARCUS: Since fourth grade.

DON: Do you know how many times Dale has been in school since he met The Tribunal a month ago? Zilch-o!

EMILY: As it should be. We belong here. We represent the types of students this school is supposed to serve and support, but instead we've been consistently punished for our dedication, if not by outright attack, then by having to suffer through classes made totally useless by students like Dale Bozlick. We are taking this place back!

ROBERT: What are you doing, Emily, running for office?

EMILY: No, Robert, I'm not running for office. I'm just expressing a little enthusiasm for what we're doing--is that a problem?

SAUNDRA: Listen, you guys, listen! We're all done, right?

NATE: No, we're bringing down Peter Cross in a little bit.

DEIRDRE: We're doing someone else? Today?

SAUNDRA: I can't miss chemistry, you guys. It's too hard to make up. When did we decide to do two in a day?

TAYLOR: It's a special--what's wrong with that? Tribunal-ize one delinquent, get another for free. One day only! They'll sell like hotcakes, I'm telling you.

EMILY: Listen, the idea was to keep our sessions random, right? We don't want the bad guys figuring out that The Tribunal is in business just every other Tuesday, fifth period. So I suggested to Mr. Castle that we shake things up by having more than one of our special guests.

LAURA: Yeah, they're special all right.

KATHERINE: Bring them on! Line them up! I wasn't in the mood for the rest of my classes, anyway.

SAUNDRA: I can't miss chemistry.

EMILY: When is chemistry, Sandra?

SAUNDRA: Seventh. I have to be there.

EMILY: We're still in fourth. We'll be done in plenty of time for chemistry, okay? Chill.

SAUNDRA: Easy for you to say; I'm the one taking the class. Nobody else will take thorough notes.

EMILY: I said we'll be done by then, okay?

ROBERT: What's the matter, Emily?

EMILY: What?

ROBERT: You seem pretty irritated that Sandra wants to get back to class, but isn't that supposed to be The Tribunal's exact purpose--to allow us to fully participate in school the way we want to?

EMILY: Do you have a point?

DILLY: (to NATE) Dude, we'd better get back upstairs.

NATE: Oh, yeah. (to EVERYONE) Listen, really hit this guy hard, right? He's a major jerk; he might be tough to break.

DILLY: Don't forget your hood.

ROBERT: And your clubs, right?

NATE: I got mine.

ROBERT: Since when did you start using those?

DILLY: Hey, intimidation is the name of the game. What's the issue?

JACKSON: You guys didn't have those before.

DON: I like them! Nice touch.

DILLY: Thanks, Donny. Look, they're for show. They help with the effect.

JACKSON: Well, Nate pushed Carmen with his. That wasn't just show.

NATE: I nudged her. What's the difference?

ROBERT: Yeah, what's the difference? Hand, club, knife, gun--what's the difference?

EMILY: Robert, shut up! Dilly, Nate, get upstairs. Call me when you're ready, as usual.

DILLY: Gotcha. Here we go. Robby, you don't want me using a club? (*DILLY tosses his club at ROBERT's feet.*) There. I won't use it. Why don't you stick it somewhere, if there's room.

(*DILLY and NATE exit. EVERYONE sits in silence for a moment.*)

DON: Hey, I have a question. What if somebody wants to join The Tribunal?

EMILY: What?

DON: Yeah. Like, do you think we have room for somebody else?

EMILY: Don, who have you been talking to?

DON: Well, I mean, nobody, really.

EMILY: "Nobody, really?" What does that mean?

DON: I mean, it's more like, somebody, you know, came to me. Are you mad?

EMILY: Am I...? (*SHE laughs bitterly for a moment.*) Would someone please explain to Don why I might be feeling just a tad bit of negative emotion right now.

LAURA: Don, you idiot!

DON: What?

LAURA: Why would somebody be talking to you about The Tribunal?

DON: Well...

LAURA: The Tribunal doesn't exist, Don. And you're certainly not a member of it, right?

DON: I...

LAURA: Right?

DON: Yes, right. I mean, what I mean is that somebody was just, you know, talking about it—the rumors, like we said—and they were just saying how they'd like to be a part of it. And I was there, that's all.

KATHERINE: Donald.

DON: What?

KATHERINE: Do not become a used car salesman or a politician.

DON: Why?

KATHERINE: Because you stink at lying.

DON: I'm not...! I didn't...!

EMILY: Don, this is serious. You screwed up; that's obvious. I want to know how bad it is. Who did you tell? How many? And what did you tell them?

DON: Look, I... it's not that big a deal.

ROBERT: I don't know about that, Don—seems to be a very big deal to some of us.

EMILY: Rob, I don't know what your problem is, but if you can't...

ROBERT: It's gotten out of hand, Emily! That's my problem. We're losing control! Can't you see that? Dilly and Nate are using clubs—weapons! Did you hear what Nate said? He said we should hit this next guy hard, that he might be tough to break. Is that what you had in mind when we started this, when we first had our conversation with Castle? Hitting people hard, breaking them? *(to EMILY)* And you, Miss “Yes, that was a good one!” What are we doing? What are we becoming down here, in the belly of the school?

LAURA: Hey, if...

EMILY: No, no—let him talk.

ROBERT: And this thing with Don—a leak in our secret society. Don't you suppose that was just about inevitable, especially when you've got us all feeling so proud, so impressed with ourselves?

DON: I only told one other kid. He swore he wouldn't say anything.

ROBERT: Well, Don, I'm sorry, but we're probably going to have to club you to death.

LAURA: Come on!

ROBERT: Come on, yourself. You don't know where this is going.

None of us does. We could end up being worse than the ones we bring down here.

(EMILY claps sarcastically.)

EMILY: Nice little speech, Rob. Very rhetorically effective, I must say.

So. What's your next move?

ROBERT: I don't know.

EMILY: Come again?

ROBERT: I don't know, Emily.

LAURA: You don't know? You just drop this bomb about...

EMILY: It's all right.

LAURA: No it isn't! He drops this bomb about how out of control The Tribunal is, how we're as bad as the losers we bring in here...

JACKSON: That's not what he said!

LAURA: How we're all just a bunch of thugs now who can't...

JACKSON: You weren't even listening to him!

EMILY: All right, all right, enough! Enough.

ROBERT: I'm expressing how I feel. I don't have a solution. I don't have a next step.

LAURA: Why don't you just quit!

TAYLOR: Now guys, it's okay. I think the doctor might want to increase your meds just a bit, but...

LAURA: Shut up, Taylor; this is serious.

TAYLOR: Whoa. Testy.

MARCUS: I must admit to being a bit shocked, here. I had assumed we had complete solidarity on this. Are others feeling the reluctance Robert has expressed?

EMILY: That's not a bad idea. Why don't we hold vote?

KATHERINE: What, are we supposed to take sides, for or against Rob? That should make us feel all warm and fuzzy.

EMILY: No. Let's just say, how many of you are having doubts about being involved with The Tribunal? Raise your hands.

(ROBERT and JACKSON raise their hands.)

Two. All right—how many of you are not feeling doubts about being involved?

(ALL but SAUNDRA and DEIRDRE raise their hands.)

Five, plus myself makes six.

DON: That math doesn't work. There are ten of us.

EMILY: Again with the abstentions. Saundra, I'm assuming if you didn't vote it means you are having doubts?

SAUNDRA: It's not so much doubts about what The Tribunal does. It's just... I don't know if being in it is worth my time away from classes.

LAURA: You've got to be kidding me. What, a 4.0 isn't good enough?

EMILY: Sh. Deirdre?

DEIRDRE: I...

KATHERINE: You got your line included in the script—what more do you want?

TAYLOR: She's after a monologue. She's got an agent.

DEIRDRE: This is going to sound weird, you guys.

ROBERT: Go ahead.

DEIRDRE: It's just that... that thing I said, "The Tribunal will show you hell," I don't know where that came from. It scared me. It really did. I don't want it to be part of the script.

KATHERINE: You voted for it.

ROBERT: You bullied her into voting for it.

LAURA: Bullied? Come on.

DEIRDRE: When you guys asked me to be a part of The Tribunal, I liked the idea. You know, that we could... we could do something about the kids who make things so hard for us. For everybody. I liked the concept, but, the way I feel when I put on the hood and we

say what we say--I'm not comfortable with the reality. It should have just stayed an idea, maybe. I want to quit.

JACKSON: So do I.

DON: No!

LAURA: We've got a whole routine! Dilly is going to call any minute to bring down Pete Cross. What are we supposed to do?

DEIRDRE: Well, I mean, after this time, I don't...

EMILY: No. No. Go now.

LAURA: Em!

EMILY: They shouldn't be here. They don't believe in The Tribunal, they shouldn't be part of it. We'll figure it out. Robert, Jackson, Sandra, Deirdre, just get out of here.

ROBERT: I didn't say I was quitting. I was just saying...

EMILY: No, I don't want you here. We don't want you here. If you're not dedicated to what we're trying to do, you're diminishing the cause. But let me just remind you of something before you go. Pete Cross, Rob—Pete Cross.

ROBERT: I know who he is.

EMILY: Good. You remember what he did to you last year?

ROBERT: Yes.

DON: What did he do?

(ROBERT hesitates, then tells the story, staring straight ahead.)

ROBERT: He pulled off my shorts in gym. And my underwear. He threw them onto the basketball hoop where I couldn't reach them while a couple of his friends kept me from running into the locker room.

(TAYLOR stifles a laugh.)

MARCUS: You might find such a thing humorous, Taylor, but those of us who have been through it...

TAYLOR: I'm sorry, I'm sorry! I know it's terrible, but... I'm juvenile, okay? The word "underwear" just gets me. I'm sorry, Robert, okay? Where was the teacher?

ROBERT: We had a sub that day. They locked her out for a few minutes.

EMILY: And why didn't the administration hear about it?

ROBERT: Because Pete threatened to kill me if I told anyone. Nobody told.

SAUNDRA: That's sick.

EMILY: I was there. Do you know how I felt? Powerless. The worst feeling in the world.

TAYLOR: Old Petey certainly hasn't turned over a new leaf since then, either.

EMILY: No, he hasn't. He laughs when he gets suspended. He doesn't care. He's here to do his drug deals and to get his jollies by persecuting people. Pete Cross is powerful. Do you think he understands reason? Do you? Does anybody here think that Pete Cross is going to be motivated by reason?

(EVERYONE shakes their head or mumbles a negative response.)

No. Anyone who's seen him operate knows that Peter Cross is not a reasonable person. He lives for excitement. He lives to laugh, to get high, to make a few bucks, to push other people around just because he can. And this school lets him do that. This school let him humiliate you, Robert, let him strip you half-naked and then keep you from even going somewhere where you could salvage a little bit of your dignity.

SAUNDRA: Geez, Em—maybe he doesn't want to remember it that well.

EMILY: He needs to! We all need to remember the humiliations and the irritations and the pains we've suffered because these thugs have power in this school! We need to remember so we'll have the courage to fight fire with fire!

JACKSON: But what right do we have to use intimidation ourselves?

EMILY: We're the good guys, Jackson! That's what gives us the right—being right gives us the right!

DON: Got that right.

(EMILY's cell phone signals that SHE's got a text. SHE glances at it.)

EMILY: They're about to bring him down.

LAURA: So what's the story, you guys—are you with us or what?

ROBERT: We just... what I'm saying is that we have to be careful about what we're becoming.

EMILY: Agreed.

DEIRDRE: I'll stay. At least for this one.

JACKSON: Me, too.

SAUNDRA: Okay, I'm in.

EMILY: Good, because we have to get ready; they're on the way.

Katherine, hit the lights. Chop, chop, let's go!

(KATHERINE puts the lights back to the level they were at the beginning of the scene. EVERYONE gets his or her disguise and voice changer in place and sits down in the semi-circle. In a moment, DILLY and NATE bring in PETE CROSS, his head covered. PETE shuffles,

very compliant. DILLY and NATE put him in the chair. NATE removes PETE's hood. During THE TRIBUNAL's chastising, PETE sits, head down, unmoving.)

THE TRIBUNAL: Silence! We are The Tribunal.

TRIBUNAL ONE: The longer you resist, the longer you will remain with us.

TRIBUNAL TWO: You will not struggle.

TRIBUNAL THREE: You will not speak unless requested to speak.

TRIBUNAL FOUR: You will sit quietly and face your accusations.

TRIBUNAL FIVE: Do you understand?

(PETE nods his head slightly.)

TRIBUNAL SIX: Peter Cross, The Tribunal summons you for crimes against your fellow classmates.

TRIBUNAL TEN: Peter Cross, you are cruel.

TRIBUNAL ONE: You threaten and abuse those weaker than yourself.

TRIBUNAL TWO: You disrespect your teachers.

TRIBUNAL THREE: You disrupt your classes.

TRIBUNAL FOUR: You sell drugs.

TRIBUNAL FIVE: You are not fit to attend your school.

TRIBUNAL SIX: Peter Cross, you are summoned before The Tribunal as a warning.

ALL TRIBUNAL MEMBERS: Change your ways! Change your ways!

(THE TRIBUNAL MEMBERS speak in a jumble, randomly repeating Pete's name, the words "Change" and "Change Your Ways" and "You are not fit," along with the pounding drum, building in volume to create a cacophony of horrible, terrifying sound. After a few seconds of intense noise, the lights go to complete blackness and all sound ends. Silence. Once THE TRIBUNAL starts to speak, the lights come back to their previous level.)

TRIBUNAL SEVEN: You will have one chance to speak.

TRIBUNAL EIGHT: You will say one thing and one thing alone.

TRIBUNAL NINE: Peter Cross, you will say you are sorry.

TRIBUNAL TEN: You will say you will change your ways.

TRIBUNAL ONE: If you do not, you will not leave.

ALL TRIBUNAL MEMBERS: Do you understand?

(PETE doesn't move.)

Do you understand?

(For a long moment, PETE doesn't move. Finally, HE raises his head, his eyes half-lidded. HE closes his eyes, sways, and falls heavily out of the chair to lie motionless on the floor.)

NATE: Get up. *(HE nudges PETE with his foot.)* Get up!

ROBERT: Stop! What did you guys do to him?

DILLY: Nothing! We didn't do a thing—he came without any struggle.

(THE TRIBUNAL MEMBERS get up from their chairs and come to gather around PETE on the floor.)

JACKSON: I was afraid of something like this.

DEIRDRE: Is he breathing? Check for a pulse.

DILLY: He's not dead; what're you thinking?

DEIRDRE: You should check.

DON: I can see him breathing.

EMILY: Somebody hit the lights.

KATHERINE: I've got them.

(SHE turns the lights on full. PETE still lies inert.)

TAYLOR: Do you think he fainted or something?

ROBERT: That's what it looked like.

MARCUS: Perhaps he had a low tolerance for decreased oxygen beneath the hood.

EMILY: I doubt it. He had the hood off when he went down.

SAUNDRA: So what're we going to do? I have to get back to class!

LAURA: Will you stop worrying about that!

SAUNDRA: Well, what are we going to do?

LAURA: We're trying to figure that out, okay?

NATE: *(kneeling next to PETE)* Here we thought he was going to give us the most trouble. *(pushing PETE's arm with the end of his club)* Wimp.

(Suddenly, PETE pulls his hands from behind his back, having untied the rope, and grabs the club from NATE. The room explodes into terrified sound as the CHARACTERS yell and scream in surprise. PETE quickly shoves NATE off his knees and flat on his back, then clubs him several times on the head. DILLY jumps on PETE's back, but PETE easily flips him off and throws him into the crowd of TRIBUNAL MEMBERS who have huddled back from the fight. PETE thrusts with the club, moving EVERYONE back. HE smiles maliciously.)

PETE: Amateurs. Amateurs! Sit down. On the floor, you bunch of amateurs.

(SEVERAL sit obediently, but OTHERS—particularly DILLY—hesitate.)

Okay, how do we want to do this? Oh, I have an idea.

(NATE has been groaning on the floor. PETE viciously clubs him on the leg. NATE howls.)

Natey-boy is down for the count, I'm thinking, but there's still some nice clubbing action I can do on him. Huh, Nate? You want to go clubbing, Bud?

NATE: No, no, please! Don't!

PETE: Who's the wimp now, by the way? But I'm hearing you. It's up to your pals, here, how many more bangs you get for your buck, though. What do you say, gang? You like seeing Natey get the stick, or are you going to do what I tell you?

EMILY: Come on, Dilly—sit down.

(Reluctantly, DILLY does.)

PETE: So this is it, huh, the all-powerful Tribunal? I had a thought you might be coming for me one of these days. In fact, you want to know something fun? I stepped up my game just to get your attention. Did you know that? Personally, I was thinking a couple months ago that I might want to get a little more serious, quit horsing around quite as much. But then I heard about this gig, about The Tribunal, and I thought, hey, I'm going to get me a date with that bunch! So I punched a few more freshmen, stole a couple laptops, stuff like that. And the victims have *you* to thank. How do you like that?

EMILY: That's bull.

PETE: Emily. Emily Pearson. Is this your little Mickey Mouse club? You in charge? I always thought you had a little bit of fire in the belly. It turned me on once or twice, I got to tell you.

KATHERINE: Shut up, Peter.

PETE: Ha! Would you look at this? Little Katy Kenison's joining in now, too, getting brave. Getting mouthy. What do you think of that, Nate, my boy? Your posse's getting all mouthy; guess they don't mind if I take another round or two out of you, huh?

(PETE raises the club to hit NATE again.)

NATE: No! Please.

ROBERT: You don't have to hit him. We'll be quiet.

PETE: Oh, looky here! Robby, Robby, Robert. How's it going, dude? You still a tidy whities kind of guy, or did you switch to boxers?

Man, that was a good time last year; wasn't that a good time, Robby?

ROBERT: Not really.

PETE: You didn't enjoy that, having everybody check you out? I thought you would enjoy that. Hmph. Just shows to go ya—you never know about some people. You just never know. Do you, Deirdre Nostrum?

DEIRDRE: What? I didn't do anything.

PETE: That surprise you, that I know you, Deirdre? I know all of you, first and last names. Could pick you right out of a line-up, if I needed to. Marcus Donnelly, Sandra Post, Taylor Hickman...

TAYLOR: Get lost.

(PETE turns quickly and clubs NATE on the arm. NATE screams.)

PETE: Oh, geez, sorry about that! It slipped! I mean, I wouldn't have done it if somebody's mouth hadn't distracted me! Sorry, Natey-boy. I do hate beating the crap out of you. *(to THE TRIBUNAL)* All right, enough fun and games. The question now is: What's next? See, I know all of you. Got you all *(pointing to his head)* right up here, ready to report. Where should I start? Police station? I mean, we are talking kidnapping, assault and battery, bullying—pretty interesting list for the po-po to get ahold of. Mr. Castle? I could talk to him, I suppose, but then... hmmm. It was Castle's office I went to when Nate and Dilly here snatched me, and you're all the upper-crust types of the school, so what does that mean? Could Castle be in on this? Say it ain't so! Wow! I mean, golly-gee, Batman, maybe we should just go right to the press with this one. Or maybe just Facebook—let the whole world know who The Tribunal is, see how it goes for them. Bottom line: Wherever I go with the information, life's going to get mighty messy for the people in this room, this... where are we, anyway? The dungeon? Nice.

EMILY: What do you want, Pete?

PETE: What do I want? What do I want? For cracking the case wide open on The Tribunal, I think I want... in.

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