

THE SWING *by Scott Crain*

GENRE: Dramatic Monologue

SYNOPSIS: A father grapples with lost expectations in raising a handicapped son.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: Hurt tends to make us selfish, as we throw up the walls and turn our gaze inward to 'inspect the damage'. While this kind of self-pity is certainly present, Dan is really hurting and just being honest, so be careful that his raw emotion doesn't come across as mere self-indulgence.

TIME: 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 1M

THEME: Prayer, Doubt, Faith, Children, Handicaps

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Philippians 4:6-7

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Sermon Starter, Worship Service

CHARACTERS:

DAN

PROPS: None

COSTUMES: Contemporary

SOUND: One wireless microphones

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: A home office

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Lights up on DAN, hands thrust in his pockets, expression faintly bemused.

DAN: *(Nods toward a window that we can't see)* The swing's going back and forth outside my office window. That creak of the chains has kinda become the constant background noise while I work.

Leslie and I put the swing set out there in the back yard when she was just a few months pregnant—silly, but we were pretty excited, and I guess it was my version of “nesting”. Bought the biggest swing set I could find—dug out the post holes and poured the concrete, making sure everything was safe and sound. Put it right outside the window by my desk so I could look out and watch him while he played.

Beat.

We named him Cody. I picked that name because I thought it'd be easy to yell from the sidelines: *(Grins, calling out)* Run, Cody! Swing, Cody! Slide, Cody!

He smiles and sighs.

He was born so perfect, too. Ten little fingers, ten little toes, bright blue eyes. But it wasn't long before we knew something wasn't right.

Pauses, his expression clouded now.

Turns out, Cody's never gonna be playing sports or swinging on that swing set. Cody's never gonna walk at all.

Beat.

People say to me, ‘The Lord only gives burdens like that to people who can handle it’. *(Tears flood his eyes)* I wish they'd stop saying that. Because the divorce rate for the parents of special needs kids is 85 percent, so we're not handling it. *(Adds quietly)* I'm not handling it.

I think my little boy is in a lot of pain. I think he's miserable. I think we're all miserable. We just want him to be whole. To be able to run and play in the back yard like every other kid on this block, and I keep crying out to Jesus—the same Jesus who healed lame children all the time in the Gospels with just a word—but for some reason, my little boy's still lying in bed with crooked legs.

Pauses, fighting the tears.