

A SEA OF TROUBLES

by PAUL MALEY

GENRE: Drama

SYNOPSIS: To show the struggle of someone who is lost.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: Larry is not a stereotypical "drunk," he's just had a little to drink and he's depressed as well. He occasionally switches on his sense of humor to avoid his feelings of loneliness and hurt. He delivers much of his monologue to a teddy bear—the only thing that will listen to him. The audience must sympathize with Larry, not be turned off by him or dismiss him as a "drunk." Remember that the audience must see truth in Larry's character that they can apply to their own lives. Work with the actor to determine what that truth is and to make it come alive for the audience.

TIME: Under 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 1M

TOPIC: Depression, Loneliness

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Romans 8:26-27

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Christmas, Worship Service

CHARACTERS:

Larry—He is depressed and has been drinking

PROPS: Teddy bear, glass of wine, bottle of prescription pills, sofa (or chairs set together), phone

COSTUMES: Larry is wearing sweatpants, a T-shirt, a bathrobe, and slippers.

SOUND: One wireless mic

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: Larry's living room

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LARRY ENTERS, carrying a teddy bear and a glass of wine. He has had a little to drink. He is lonely and hurt and doesn't know where to turn.

LARRY:

(Holding up the teddy bear, addressing it overly dramatically) "To be or not to be ... that is the question. Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or ... *(He can't remember the rest. To the bear, as if the bear had just auditioned for him:)* Very nice. We'll call you. *(He tosses bear on sofa, looks out window, watches a moment, sighs, drinks. He turns and sees the bear.)*

Take a letter. To ... myself. *(He paces, dictates like a pompous boss:)* How could you be such an idiot? ... I shouldn't ask. I guess it just comes naturally. I understand you moved your family halfway across the country so you could take a Big New Job ... *(His own voice again:)* a big, new, stupid, ridiculous, disappointing job. You don't know the guy you're working for. You think you do, but then he pulls stunts like today. *(The pompous boss again:)* Didn't I tell you that when you interviewed? Oh, I'm sure I did. We expect everyone in our "corporate family" to work extra when things get hectic. *(Himself again:)* Never mind that that's every week. *(He sighs, sits next to the bear, stares around the room, listens to the silence.)*

This house is really quiet at night ... nice, new, quiet house. In a nice, new, quiet neighborhood. *(Stands, crosses to window and stares out.)* Full of nice, new, quiet strangers. *(Shouts:)* It's 11:00! Do you know where your children are?! *(To teddy bear:)* I do. They're with Mommy, all the way across the Bay at Auntie's house. I guess that's best. At least she has someone to talk to there ... unlike here. *(To bear:)* Nothing personal.

(Reaching for phone) I wonder if ... *(stops)* no. It's awfully late to call over there. *(To bear:)* Don't you think? *(Pause)* Why am I asking you? *(Picks up phone)* I could always "reach out and touch" someone else. Of course, it's the middle of the night back home. "Hi! Did I wake you?" ... And there's certainly no one in my "corporate family" that I could spill my-*(stops)*

I suppose I should just go back to bed. Maybe I'll meet someone tomorrow I can talk to. *(Fishes in his robe pocket, takes out a small prescription bottle.)* Thank you, Dr. Barnes, for the gift of sleep. *(To the bear, as if in session with the doctor:)* Dr. Barnes, what would happen if I took this whole thing at once? Would it take away my problems? *(To himself:)* No. It would just take away me. Maybe I'm the problem. Yes, you. *(Looking at the label on the bottle)* That's your name, right there.

To be ... *(rattles the bottle)* or not to be. That's the question all right. Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune ... *(remembers the rest)* or, to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them. *(Looks at pills again)*