

I Was a Teenage Nobody

A Play with Alternate Endings

By Paul Holte

From the LCMS Youth Ministry Archives

Cast:

Nobody

Somebody

Them

Setting:

Somewhere, sometime, everywhere, every time. Nowhere is really now.

Notes:

There are two speaking parts. According to the script, we do not hear from Them. However, there are some staging options to integrate Them into the script. This group may be represented by a silent ensemble onstage, the audience might represent Them, or you could designate a group of actors as both Them and Nobody by dividing up Nobody's lines among the group and having individuals break off from Them when they begin to speak.

This play has three possible endings. These are, essentially, teaching situations. Choose one, some, or all of them. It is, of course, possible to pause after each one for some reflection.

Overall delivery should be sprightly and fast-paced. Have fun with costume choices and staging. This play can be as simple or as elaborate as you wish.

(The play opens with Nobody center stage, possibly with back to audience, to underscore the words and make them seem more disembodied. At Somebody's entrance, Nobody turns around and enters into the dialog.)

Nobody: I was a real Nobody.
If that sounds like the opening line of a story,
Well, I guess it is.
But my story was going nowhere.
I didn't belong ...
I wasn't accepted ...
I felt unloved and unlovely ...
None of Them would have a thing to do with me.

It wasn't as if they didn't like me ...
It wasn't as if they avoided me ...
It was like they didn't even know I was there.
I was rejected ...
I was neglected.
To Them, I was simply Nobody.

I felt more dead than alive ...
A vapor in the land of shadows.
I longed to be recognized.
"I'm here!" I shouted.
"Look at me!" I screamed.
But nobody heard me.
Nobody saw me.
It was like I wasn't even there.

I started worrying about myself.
After all, I was always on the outside.
Never inside, never included.
I was on the edge of their conversation,
Refused,
Not even considered.
If they couldn't see me,

Then maybe I really wasn't there.
Maybe I didn't belong because
Maybe I didn't really exist.

But deep inside, I felt I had so much to give,
So much to live for.
If only they would welcome me.
I'm my anguish, I wrote poems for Them.
I sat for hours and wrote terrible, burning poetry.
*"I am the voice in your darkness
I am the child in your womb
I am the boxer with the shadows
A dry well
An empty tomb."*
I became more depressed.
I was too embarrassed to show it to any of Them.

I longed for a friend,
Somebody who would understand.
After all, all of Them belonged.
They didn't know what it was to be alone.
It was Me on the outside, a mere Nobody,
And Them on the inside.
But if I had Somebody,
Then it would no longer be Me versus Them.
Then it would be Us.
Us versus Them.
I had it all figured out.

Then Somebody surprised me.
Somebody read my poem.

Somebody: *"I am the voice in your darkness
I am the child in your womb
I am the boxer with the shadows
A dry well
An empty tomb."*

Nobody: You spoke those words
As if you had written them yourself.

Somebody: Those are my lines, too.

Nobody: I don't know what to say.

Somebody: All that you have felt,
I have felt it too.

Nobody: Like a nobody?

Somebody: Like people don't even
Believe that I'm here.

(Ending One)

Nobody: Then Somebody started to teach ...

Somebody Listen ...
We throw up language barriers.
We say Me versus Them,

Nobody versus Somebody.
We use words to keep Us apart.
And, you know, we assume that
All of Them are together.
The funny thing is,
Many of Them feel like Nobodies too.

Nobody: But if they felt that way, why didn't they say anything?

Somebody: Why didn't you?
Don't you think
You might be one of Them too?

Let's not talk of Me versus Them.
Let's talk of Us.
Let's not talk of Nobody versus Somebody.
Let's talk of Everybody.
For too long, there have been too many
Hard words between us.

Nobody: But I've hardly spoken to Them.
They've hardly spoken to Me.

Somebody: Yes. Those are the hardest words of all.

(Ending Two)

Nobody: Then Somebody started to teach ...

Somebody: Look ...
We are continually counting people out.
That's what makes us Nobodies.
But we all count.
We all figure into the whole picture.
Everybody is part of the total, you see.

Nobody: I can't see that.
Because some of us feel like we don't belong.
That doesn't compute.

Somebody: For too long, you've been subtracting and dividing.
Subtracting makes us Nobodies.
This is a matter of simple addition.
Everybody is welcome.
When you get that all figured out,
You'll see that it all adds up.

(Ending Three)

Nobody: Then Somebody started to teach ...

Somebody: Think ...
The world makes for a lot of Nobodies.

Nobody: The world? But I thought you loved the world!

Somebody: For too long, the world has been teaching
People the wrong language,
The wrong divisions.
It teaches people to say "Them" as if they were cursing.

It teaches people to cut others out of the picture
For all the wrong reasons.
The world makes people deaf,
It makes them blind.
It makes them dead.

I love my people.
When they love me, they are Mine.
I am with Them.
They are like a body,
Each performing his own part.
Losing one, cutting one out of the body,
Hurts.

Come on, you have that written down somewhere.

Nobody: We, here, in this place,
We who love you,
Are the Body of Christ.
We are defined by you because
We are a part of you.

Somebody: Yes, and?

Nobody: Because You love Us,
We are all Some Body!
Together!
Whole!
And we never have to be alone!

Somebody: And nobody can take that away from you.
I promise.

*"...for all of you who were baptized into Christ
have clothed yourselves with Christ.
There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free,
male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."(Gal. 3:27-28)*

thESource is published on the Web by LCMS District & Congregational Services-Youth Ministry. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1333 South Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; 1-800-248-1930; www.lcms.org. Editor: Gretchen M. Jameson; Assistant Editor: Dawn Cornelius-Gaunt; Layout: Gretchen M. Jameson. VOL. 1 NO. 6 March 2004.