

A FUNNY WAY OF SHOWING IT

by Jerry Rabushka



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CHARACTERS

MICHELLE, a high school girl, aged 16

TASHA, a friend of hers

RYAN, a star player on the football team

STEVE, a friend of his, who's not on the football team

Ryan's COACH

Mrs. Jones, a school COUNSELOR

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

This play is an expanded version of a piece written to help start a dialogue about teen dating violence. It was originally produced by the Los Angeles Jewish Family Service and sponsored by the cities of West Hollywood and Beverly Hills, along with other groups dealing in domestic violence prevention. One of the reasons behind writing and producing the play was to help people involved become more comfortable in discussing and dealing with a difficult topic.

This is a play that can be set just about anywhere: on the school grounds, at a small eatery, outside on the street, or simply on a bare stage. Therefore, scene changes can be done quickly, and the play can keep a fast pace. The play, with its relatively small cast, can be done on a small budget and low key set to facilitate touring to various schools interested in the topic.

An important part of this play is to make sure each character understands his or her point of view, rather than portraying everyone as "good or bad." The more the players can understand why their characters think and feel the way they do, the more they can bring to the piece. People obviously like Ryan and he must play his character in a way that shows some likeable qualities.

This play has a lot of important issues but raises them in a way that doesn't preach. The script has plenty of opportunities for humor, for well rounded characters, and for people to show how they relate to people their own age as opposed to authority figures or the "younger generation."

Let the emotions fly, because the characters are very set in what they believe. Ryan and the coach feel just as strongly as Michelle and the Counselor. Then, the audience can determine for themselves what they think the issues are.

SETTING: *Just about anywhere, a coffee shoppe, on the school grounds, walking along the street. This can be done on a bare stage or with just a few props. Scenes one through four take place in the same location, but very close together time wise, as if we're jumping back and forth between two simultaneous conversations. Scene 5 is immediately after; therefore, transitions should be made quickly.*

SCENE 1

TASHA: *(upbeat, like SHE's getting gossip)* Ryan?

MICHELLE: *(excited)* Ryan!

TASHA: I can't believe you're going out with Ryan! Football Ryan! *(happily)* You have got to keep me better informed, Michelle!

MICHELLE: *(a bit embarrassed SHE didn't say anything)* Well, yeah, for awhile now! I didn't want to tell you until I knew it was for real.

TASHA: And is it?

MICHELLE: Straight up, Tasha! He says he doesn't want me to see anyone else, and he's real protective of me.

TASHA: Well, congratulations!

MICHELLE: *(still excited)* Yeah, like you know, when I don't go out with him, he gets real mad and such until I do. He really wants to be with me.

TASHA: Well, *(not quite as sure this time)* congratulations.

MICHELLE: Yeah, I'm even sharing my biology notes with him. And you know how I am about my biology notes.

TASHA: I know. You take them; you keep them. It's like a diary with you. But biology? With Ryan?

MICHELLE: Oh, the notes. Just the notes!

TASHA: Well, I know Ryan, though. He wants a lot more than notes when it comes to biology.

MICHELLE: *(her tone of voice leads us to realize something is wrong)* No, Tasha. He just needs a little help studying, that's all.

TASHA: Right. I didn't know Ryan even studied. I thought he just whizzed through school on his football prowess.

MICHELLE: No, he wants those notes. He gets kinda mad if I don't hand them over.

TASHA: How mad?

MICHELLE: Oh, it's nothing. *(blowing it off)* Well, Ryan is so cool, you know. I mean, he's *football* Ryan! He wants what he wants.

(trying to laugh it off) I told him he won't learn anything if he just copies off me. We sorta had a fight about it in front of his friends.

TASHA: What happened?

MICHELLE: Well, you know Ryan. He likes to be in charge. He... **(embarrassed)** well, he hit me.

TASHA: **(shocked)** He did? And you're still going out with him?

MICHELLE: Well, sometimes he does it when I don't do what he wants. I'm just trying to figure it out. Then it'll stop. Well, that's what he says.

TASHA: Michelle, you fell for that? That's the oldest trick in the book!

MICHELLE: This is the first real boyfriend I've had! He's football Ryan! I'm... **(as if SHE's no big deal)** Michelle... I'm like... nobody. I have to prove-

TASHA: If he really cares for you-

MICHELLE: I know. **(reciting what SHE's read in advice columns, being silly)** If he really cares for me he'll respect me. **(back to normal)** Right, Tasha. It's Ryan. We have some good times together. Well, okay, so he did want to do biology. If you know what I mean.

TASHA: **(in disbelief)** And did you? You don't seem like the type.

MICHELLE: When I said I wanted to wait, he just hauled off and slugged me. It still hurts a bit. But it's only because he wants me so much.

TASHA: He hit you? He just can't hit you! You've got to tell-

MICHELLE: Tell? Who? I can't tell anyone. You're the only one who knows. Look, Tasha, I don't like it, but I don't want to be alone!

TASHA: You can't just let this go!

MICHELLE: No. My mom'll blame me for it. She blames me for everything.

TASHA: Well, I'll talk to Ryan. He's good friends with my boyfriend. I'm sure we can get through to him.

MICHELLE: **(trying to get out of the conversation)** He can't know we're talking. He gets jealous.

TASHA: I'm a girl.

MICHELLE: He gets jealous. Don't ask me. He wants all my attention. It's nice, in a way. I feel loved. And in another way, I feel afraid. But if my mother finds out I'm seeing him, she's going to assume I *am* doing the biology thing. No one can know! I shouldn't have told you either.

TASHA: **(trying to understand)** Well, we all think Ryan's a good guy. He's on the football team, so it makes him a good guy.

MICHELLE: He's strong. But I don't know what I'd do without him. I don't want to be alone again. **(dismissing her concerns)** So he has a temper. He says I make him angry sometimes, and he just loses control. It's no big deal, if he loves me. That's more important.

TASHA: I've been seeing Steve for a year. He never hits me. If I say no on something, he respects me. He pouts, but no means no. No matter what. **(in confidence)** Well, I get kind of bossy sometimes.

MICHELLE: **(can't believe her)** And he stays with you?

TASHA: **(matter of fact)** I'm worth it. I've heard about this stuff. About guys beating up their girlfriends and stuff.

MICHELLE: Yeah. You always think it's going to happen to someone else. I can't – let anyone know. I feel so stupid. I'm afraid of him, but I'm more afraid to be without him.

(Blackout, then lights up on STEVE and RYAN, most probably in the same general location.)

SCENE 2

STEVE: **(dismayed)** You *hit* her?

RYAN: **(so what?)** Yeah, I hit her! Grow up.

STEVE: Ryan! You shouldn't hit anyone! Guy, girl... **(joking just a bit)** ever heard of conflict resolution?

RYAN: She aggravates me. She doesn't see it my way. Hey, when I'm in the mood, I'm in the mood. **(makes a swinging motion)** I just let my hands do the talkin' for me.

STEVE: Tasha would waltz off my dance floor in a minute if I hit her.

RYAN: **(playfully pushing STEVE around)** That's because you let her waltz all over you. I can't believe you even waltz.

STEVE: Tasha's the deal! I don't wanna lose her. Besides, she'd tell my mom.

RYAN: **(almost too proud of it)** Michelle's keeping quiet.

STEVE: Still...

RYAN: Hey, maybe you're some kinda wuss that lets yourself be pushed around by a girl. But look. We were at the party, and all the guys are like – "Ryan, Ry-boy, how long you been with her, and you let her boss you around?" Well, you know, they make you feel stupid. I'm a leader to them! I'm the leader of the pack! I gotta stay alpha male.

STEVE: You gave in to peer pressure? And you're the leader of the pack? You can't have it both ways. You're a mess, Ry-boy.

RYAN: It's my right as her boyfriend-

STEVE: You can't force her into anything. You talk to her. You don't always get your way. **(joking)** I never get mine.

RYAN: I just put it to her in a way she'd understand. It's my way or the highway.

STEVE: Oh, that's original.

RYAN: When you're *on* the highway, it makes a point. Look, we had a talk. She didn't see it my way – yet – and I just got a bit angry. I'm ok now. But I really hate biology. It's better when she does it for me.

STEVE: I'm not sure your talk was a *talk*.

RYAN: Whose side are you on, Steve? No wonder you didn't make the team. (*again, playfully pushing him around*) You've got no fight in you.

STEVE: (*pushing RYAN off*) I don't have to fight with girls.

RYAN: We don't fight. But if I let her loose, she runs off. Who knows what she does? If I keep her close by me, I stay in control. (*smiling*) I gotta practice for when I get married, you know. Alpha male!

STEVE: Ryan, I knew you were kinda hotheaded, but you're way over the cliff on this!

RYAN: (*as if this excuses everything; condescending*) You know the guys talk about you. They say Tasha's got you whipped. I'm not gonna have them say that about me.

STEVE: She'll tell someone eventually.

RYAN: She better not. I've told her, what we do is just between us.

STEVE: (*gets an idea*) Then you think it's wrong! You *know* it's wrong, or you wouldn't try to hide it.

RYAN: (*shoves STEVE and brushes past him*) I can't talk to you about anything.

(Blackout, and back to MICHELLE and TASHA)

SCENE 3

MICHELLE: I can't talk to her about anything. She'll accuse me of starting it. You know my mom. "What did you do to make him so mad?"

TASHA: Well... talk to *my* mom. She's understanding and helpful. (*joking*) Really!

MICHELLE: (*in disbelief*) I didn't think anyone's mom was understanding and helpful.

TASHA: Look, I know that's unusual, but... she is. It's almost embarrassing.

MICHELLE: Nobody wants to hear about my problems. Look at the world, Tasha. Who am I? I'm insignificant little Michelle. Ryan likes me, and now I'm someone special. I like that. I've never had it before.

TASHA: I like you.

MICHELLE: You're a girl.

TASHA: You say that with such disdain. I'm a girl.

MICHELLE: Ryan's romantic. No, really. He only does this because he loves me. (*joking a bit*) And because he needs the help in biology. And- I mean, you might think it's-

TASHA: Cruel?

MICHELLE: I like it. It makes me feel wanted.

TASHA: How about scared?

MICHELLE: That too. Look, Tasha, I'm going to do what Ryan wants.

That's what people in love do. They do what the other one wants.

That's what he says, and... he's right. Besides, if I tell my mother-

TASHA: Ryan's only 16 years old. You can do something about it.

There's people in authority. (*joking again*) The dreaded parental authority. Sometimes it comes in handy. Hey, my mom got Lanie Ryland in *deep* doo-doo after that locker incident.

MICHELLE: Ryan says my mom's an idiot. (*angry at herself, her mother, and her situation, lashing out*) And I can't talk to her about anything. You can talk to your mom, so great. So you're the only lucky teenager in the world. I have to do this on my own. He'll change. I like him! Why is that so hard for you to understand?

(Blackout, and lights up on RYAN and STEVE)

SCENE 4

RYAN: Yeah, why is that so hard for you to understand? She digs it! I tell her, "Baby, you're all mine. You're only mine!" She gets this look.

STEVE: She's scared. Hey, call me what you want to call me-

RYAN: We're friends, bro. You know that.

STEVE: I like having a girlfriend that's with me because she wants to be. I don't have to force her. I don't have to threaten her.

RYAN: You don't *get* nothin' from her either.

STEVE: I'm 16. I don't need that from her.

RYAN: See? I'm different. In our relationship, I expect things. I guess I'm more mature. (*cocky*) If she doesn't like it, there's plenty of other girls out there who'll take what I got to offer.

STEVE: Not when word gets around that you beat them up.

RYAN: You think so? You think Brad's never laid a hand on Suzanne? Chicks go for that kind of thing. They like it. (*like it's a secret*) They'll tell you they don't like it, but they like it. Hey. I'm the man. She's the woman. She does for *me*. (*defensive, as STEVE isn't convinced*) I don't do it *all* the time. She just makes me mad sometimes. I don't even mean to sometimes. But she makes me mad, you know. It's like I stop liking her. I just lose

control. **(STEVE walks off in disgust; RYAN grabs him, insistent)** It's no big deal.

STEVE: **(straight into his eyes)** You scare me, dude.

RYAN: You gonna go blabbing to the principal or something?

STEVE: I could. He's my father.

RYAN: I know that. Hey, if we're friends, you stand with me. **(a bit more threatening)** You will, won't ya bro? **(STEVE won't agree to it.)** Dude! Don't make me have to hurt you.

STEVE: Would you?

RYAN: Well... I made the team, you didn't.

STEVE: So you're gonna kill all the witnesses.

RYAN: You're getting on my last nerve... **(threatening, grabbing his arm)** bro.

STEVE: **(shakes RYAN off)** Fine, go take it out on Michelle. If I hear one more thing, I'm telling my dad.

(exits; RYAN is frustrated that HE couldn't get through to STEVE; MICHELLE enters)

SCENE 5

RYAN: **(HE's already upset)** Where've you been?

MICHELLE: **(afraid, and said it quickly)** Just with Tasha.

RYAN: **(sarcastic)** Oh, the angel. What trouble's she starting?

MICHELLE: Nothing. We were just talking.

RYAN: What about?

MICHELLE: About you.

RYAN: **(scared himself)** What about me?

MICHELLE: That I love you.

RYAN: **(more a threat than a question)** Do you love me?

MICHELLE: I love you.

(During this conversation, we see STEVE and TASHA come in together, contrasting by being affectionate, or just having fun together, silently.)

RYAN: You better.

MICHELLE: You know I do.

RYAN: **(a bit scared himself)** You do like me, don't you? I mean. I'm good to you and all.

MICHELLE: Yeah, you're always good to me. Of course I like you!

RYAN: **(starting trouble when HE doesn't have to, mainly due to insecurity)** You don't act like it sometimes.

MICHELLE: Sometimes...

RYAN: What?

MICHELLE: Sometimes...

RYAN: What? Now what?

MICHELLE: **(turning away)** Sometimes you act like what I think doesn't matter to you.

RYAN: **(turning her back)** Sometimes, you're so stupid. You say things like that, and that's why I get mad at you. That's why-

MICHELLE: Ryan, please don't. I didn't mean it.

RYAN: Tasha told you to say it, didn't she? She's so granola. New age this, organic that. She's just some giant wimpy bar of cherry granola. **(imitating TASHA)** "Oh, men have to be in touch with themselves" **(letting it fly)** Look, I don't want you hanging around with Tasha, okay?

MICHELLE: She's the only friend I have left.

RYAN: I don't want you hanging around with Tasha. You love me, right?

MICHELLE: Right.

RYAN: So, you do things for the guy you love. I mean, that's what love is, isn't it? **(kinder and gentler, but still in control)** It makes me feel good when you say yes. Makes me feel important. You're the only one that makes me feel that way.

MICHELLE: Ryan... It's so special to be with you.

RYAN: **(holds her close)** Yeah. And I don't want you to ever leave.

(MICHELLE looks over to TASHA, afraid; TASHA looks past STEVE and shows a look of concern, but SHE's not quite sure what to do, so SHE hugs STEVE as the lights slowly go down.)

SCENE 6

(On campus, STEVE and TASHA are talking with Ryan's Football Coach)

COACH: **(HE's burly and standoffish and not taking them seriously. Perhaps HE has something else to do, like work on a playbook, and HE's considering them a distraction.)** So what did you want me to do about it?

TASHA: **(fighting against hope that SHE'll get through to COACH)** Talk to him. He respects you. **(knowing RYAN is too full of himself)** He might listen to you.

STEVE: He doesn't really respect anyone else. He's too busy being king of the hill.

COACH: **(like it's no big deal that RYAN is a spoiled brat, still otherwise occupied)** He deserves to be king of the hill.

TASHA: He's beating up-

COACH: (**smiling, looking right at her and cutting her off**) The opposition! He's taking our team to a nice big fat winning season. He's got a lot on his shoulders already, and he doesn't need the extra stress of people following him around (**accusing TASHA of being in the wrong**) ratting on him.

STEVE: Sounds like *you* don't want the stress.

COACH: Someone has a big mouth.

STEVE: (**not terribly afraid of COACH, since HE has nothing to lose**) Now I see where Ryan learned it from.

TASHA: (**trying to calm things down, but standing firm**) We thought if *you* could talk to him, we could stop it now. We won't have to involve anybody's parents. (**HE's still not terribly interested.**) Or any other important people.

COACH: I smell a bit of a threat from a little girl who wants to bring down a football team.

STEVE: We just want to do what's right.

TASHA: You should see Michelle. You should talk to *her*.

COACH: Ryan's just being a kid. That's all. He's just finding his way, just like the rest of us.

TASHA: He hit her, he's making her do his homework, and-

COACH: (**accusing TASHA of starting trouble**) So you believe her? What if she's just some poor lovelorn girl crying out for attention? We've had that happen here before. Some girl makes up some story and gets the whole school turned on its head, and then some boy or some teacher has to go through all sorts of trouble to get his reputation back. Then we find out she just wanted to be in the limelight. I don't really want to go through that here again.

STEVE: He told me he did it. He bragged about it.

COACH: Of course he told you he did it. He's 16 years old, and everyone looks up to him. He's got to make everyone *think* he has his way with the girls whether he has or not. Makes him feel like one of the gang. I'm sure he's had his way with several anyway. It's no big deal. I did at that age.

TASHA: (**walks off disgusted**) Ew.

COACH: Pardon?

TASHA: (**turns back around**) I said, ew. Like ew, gross. Like who needs to know? Look, Ryan's whole life is football. I thought perhaps-

COACH: That we'd take it away from him? Well, think again.

TASHA: No, that football could help set him straight instead of making it worse! (**turns to STEVE**) Well, I guess they're right, Steve. We need to go to a *responsible* adult.

- COACH: You leave Ryan alone. He's had his problems, sure. But being our star player makes him feel good about himself. **(to STEVE)** It's just like you to tear him down at the top of his game. You're jealous because you didn't make the team, Steve. **(trying to rub it in)** Because you're not good enough.
- STEVE: **(won't be belittled)** What are you going to do? Flunk me in gym? Am I less of a human being because I can't punt?
- COACH: **(sarcastic, and not very nice)** You're taking the side of the girls?
- TASHA: **(once again, trying to mollify everyone)** Ok, let's stop this. Please talk to him. We know he did it.
- STEVE: I could go to the principal. I was keeping quiet because Ryan was my friend and I thought I should be loyal. But he only likes people who see everything his way. **(trying to annoy COACH)** See, Coach, I'm not good in sports, so I don't have to subscribe to the belief that sports are the only important thing in school, or in the world. **(more to TASHA)** I'm really not sure what to do with my loyalty. I don't think Ryan deserves it.
- TASHA: You're doing what's right Steve. It *is* loyalty. Just a little different than you thought.
- COACH: **(trying to buddy up to STEVE)** You shouldn't let a girl come between you two. It won't outlast your friendship. He'll get tired of Michelle soon enough and move on to the next. So he gets a little hotheaded. He's that way with the guys, too. Just tell her to wait it out.

SCENE 7

(MICHELLE, TASHA, and Mrs. Jones, a school COUNSELOR, in her office)

MICHELLE: I told you I wanted to wait it out!

COUNSELOR: You went to the coach?

TASHA: It seemed like the best idea, Mrs. Jones.

COUNSELOR: And he took Ryan's side.

TASHA: Totally.

COUNSELOR: That's Coach!

MICHELLE: I can't believe you tricked me into going to the counselor, Tasha! I told you not to say anything. Now it's just going to get worse.

COUNSELOR: Actually, that's where you're wrong, Michelle. It's if you *don't* say anything that it gets worse. How long, exactly, were you planning to put up with this?

TASHA: Don't you start in on her, too!

COUNSELOR: (**gentle, but firm**) Tasha, I don't think she realizes what's going on.

MICHELLE: I love him! Why can't anyone understand that instead of getting all in my business? And don't talk about me like I'm not here. "I don't think she realizes what's going on."

COUNSELOR: (**to TASHA, trying to get MICHELLE to understand**) Well, I don't think she does.

TASHA: Nope. She doesn't want to hear the truth.

MICHELLE: Stop that!

COUNSELOR: Then wake up! (**MICHELLE is a little more cooperative, but not much.**) Does he hit you?

MICHELLE: No! He doesn't do anything to me.

COUNSELOR: (**trying to get MICHELLE to cooperate**) Then I guess we're done here. Next time, don't waste my afternoon with this nonsense.

TASHA: Michelle!

MICHELLE: Tasha! Why did you all have to start this! Ryan's the best thing in my life.

COUNSELOR: Okay, let's try again. It's safe here, Michelle. No one will hurt you. (**pause**) Is he pressuring you to have sex? (**pause, MICHELLE is embarrassed**) It's okay, I've heard of sex too, you know.

MICHELLE: (**laughs a bit**) Well...

COUNSELOR: You don't have to be embarrassed. That's what I'm here for.

MICHELLE: (**SHE's embarrassed anyway**) Well he says... If I love him, I'll do it.

COUNSELOR: We've had trouble with Ryan before, but the coach got in on it and we gave him another chance. He wins games. In some schools that's more important.

MICHELLE: That's not fair.

COUNSELOR: Don't worry about fair. Worry about protecting yourself.

MICHELLE: No, I mean, I do everything for him. I do everything he wants me to. And he always...

COUNSELOR: (**gentle, seeing that SHE's making progress**) What, Michelle...

MICHELLE: He tells me I'm not good enough. Then he'll hit me. But after that, he says he's sorry, and we try it all over again. So one day I guess I'll get it right.

TASHA: I'm trying to tell her it doesn't have to be like that. (**to MICHELLE**) You were never like this before you went out with Ryan.

MICHELLE: I never had a boyfriend before. I was surprised he asked me out. And even more surprised when he asked me out again. I didn't know how it was supposed to be.

COUNSELOR: Not like this, that's for sure.

MICHELLE: Please! Don't tell anyone. My mom! She'll go nuts. And she'll blame me for the whole thing.

COUNSELOR: Does your mom-

MICHELLE: No, she doesn't hit me. She just blames me for everything. Ryan blames me for everything. And now even the coach thinks it's all my fault and I'm trying to cut down the team. I didn't *do* anything! How can this be all my fault?

COUNSELOR: None of it's your fault.

MICHELLE: (**disturbed**) Then how come everyone keeps telling me that it is? And the people that are supposed to love me? They tell me the most.

TASHA: Michelle... you're going to have to face some things you don't want to. And tell people some things that you don't want to say.

COUNSELOR: We can help you.

MICHELLE: And lose Ryan? (**gets scared**) What are you going to do to him? What if he comes after me later? He'll know I said it.

TASHA: He told Steve. He was kind of proud of it.

MICHELLE: Great. I don't mean anything to him then.

TASHA: If you *mean* something to someone, he doesn't hit you. He doesn't force you to do... *it*! He doesn't call you names. Sometimes that takes awhile to learn.

MICHELLE: How did you learn it?

TASHA: My mother.

MICHELLE: I don't want to hear about your perfect mother!

TASHA: (**joking a bit**) Good parents are possible. Your mother could learn from my mother! Sounds like someone needs to talk to her, too!

MICHELLE: It can't be done. I tried for years. I just gave up. I thought maybe Ryan could love me instead. (**turns away from everyone**) Don't bother with it. I'm not worth it.

TASHA: Michelle! Stop that!

MICHELLE: No, you stop it! Just be lucky, and stay that way. We can't all have it. (**SHE tries to leave and TASHA grabs her.**) Let go of me!

(TASHA does, startled. MICHELLE comes to her senses. COUNSELOR steps in a little to provide a comforting presence.)

COUNSELOR: Michelle, it's going to be okay. But you can't handle this on your own. And you don't have to. We're here to listen to you.

MICHELLE: **(giving in a bit)** To me? Wow. I guess there's a first for everything.

SCENE 8

(COACH is with RYAN, perhaps playing with a football; RYAN can wear a jersey or uniform; COACH is similarly dressed)

COACH: You get all those pushups in?

RYAN: Fifty! I guess there's a first for everything! Wanna see?

COACH: Sure. Show me a few. **(RYAN drops to the ground to do a few pushups.)** Atta boy. **(a pause, as RYAN continues)** I hear you're having trouble with some girl?

RYAN: **(stops, sits on the ground)** No.

COACH: Someone told me about you and Michelle.

RYAN: Steve. **(amused with himself)** He just took the bench in Morality Court. And I'm not having any trouble.

COACH: Perhaps. I know a kid like you has a way with the ladies.

RYAN: **(hops up)** Yes sir!

COACH: Don't let it mess up my team.

RYAN: What do you mean?

COACH: Dump her. If she makes you mad, if she makes you want to hit, dump her. Find a girl who will see things your way. I don't want to lose State over some chick.

COUNSELOR: **(enters on the previous line)** And we trust you to turn boys into men.

COACH: What are you doing here?

COUNSELOR: Ryan, you need to go.

RYAN: What? Is this about me and Michelle?

COUNSELOR: Exactly.

RYAN: **(full of himself)** Then I think I should stay.

COUNSELOR: Well... **(changes her mind)** Okay. It's certainly not news to you. Michelle says... and there's no delicate way to put this... that you've been pretty aggressive with her.

RYAN: Oh, she wants it. She needs it.

COACH: **(to COUNSELOR)** See? It's just a cry for attention. Just like I said.

COUNSELOR: **(to RYAN)** She said you call her names-

COACH: **(breaking in)** It's high school. Everyone calls people names.

RYAN: **(laughs)** See? Yeah! Heck they call me stuff too.

COUNSELOR: They call you "doodad."

RYAN: How do you know?

COUNSELOR: Because I deal with everyone that has a complex because of you.

RYAN: Cool! I'm good. *(the tone of his voice suggests otherwise)* Hey, you can't prove I did it.

COUNSELOR: Steve says you told him. And *(to COACH)* Tasha says Steve told you, and you blew him off.

COACH: Well, we were just talking about it now.

COUNSELOR: *For the sake of the team?* What about for the sake of Ryan and Michelle? Sounds like it's perfectly okay to hit someone as long as it doesn't get in your way of going to State.

COACH: It's psychology. *(sarcastic and biting)* But what would you know about that? You're a counselor.

RYAN: *(laughs again)* Yeah.

COUNSELOR: Do you realize how serious this is? You could go to detention, Ryan. I don't mean after school, I mean juvenile.

RYAN: Yeah, right.

COUNSELOR: For beating up Michelle? You sure as heck could. She's not a scoreboard. You can't just rack up points and brag about it the next day.

RYAN: Michelle and I have something special going on. I'll bet she didn't tell you that.

COUNSELOR: Well, if it's so special, then here are some rules to keep it that way. If she says no, it means no. It means you don't put pressure on her, you don't hit her, and you don't call her names. Thanks to you, she feels worthless. And she thinks it's love.

RYAN: Oh yeah, right.

COUNSELOR: Do you?

RYAN: What?

COUNSELOR: Think that's love?

RYAN: Hey, look lady, if I had to love every chick that dug me, I wouldn't have time for football, you know what I mean?

COUNSELOR: We'll be watching you. *(to COACH)* And you too.

COACH: You can watch us win the championship.

COUNSELOR: I'm going to see about having Ryan pulled from the team.

COACH: Good luck.

COUNSELOR: Thanks! I'm glad you see it my way.

RYAN: Aw, lady!

COUNSELOR: Mrs. Jones, to you.

RYAN: Whatever, lady. You're just a loser wannabe-

COUNSELOR: *(to COACH, and enjoying herself)* Well, there you have it. He's still name calling. *(flippant)* Off the team!



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