

*Paper Candles: How Courage and Goodness Triumphed  
in an American Town*

SCENE SEVEN

*A school lunchroom. Isaac and Teresa are having lunch.*

TERESA: I heard what happened at the town hall. Mom and Dad were there.

ISAAC: Things are even worse than you think.

TERESA: Whatd'ya mean?

ISAAC: Nothing. It's just ... It's not fair ...

TERESA: I know. None of this is fair!

ISAAC: Yeah, I know ... It's crazy. There are all these skinheads who hate me who don't even know me. (*he's silent for a moment or two, and then blurts out*) Do you ever think about ... you know ... that I'm Jewish?

TERESA: Nah. You ever think about me being Christian?

ISAAC (*shakes his head*): Uh-uh. But being Christian doesn't matter ... No one's throwing rocks through *your* window.

TERESA (*angrily*): I'm so mad at those creeps! If I knew who they were I'd...I'd...well, I don't know what I'd do. But I'd make them sorry.

ISAAC (*sarcastically*): Yeah, right. You just don't *get* it, Teresa! Those people are *dangerous*! Look what happened last night!

TERESA: That's why we have to *do* something.

ISAAC (*heatedly*): How do you know, so much? I don't want you to do something stupid. You'd get in trouble ... or hurt ... or ... or something else.

TERESA: But Isaac...

ISAAC: I *mean* it.

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*A voice offstage:* Isaac, we need you over here.

ISAAC (*reluctantly leaves*): I have to go. We'll talk later. (*He walks away, then turns around.*) Just remember what I said.

*Teresa stares after him. The audience then becomes aware of two children who have apparently been listening to Isaac and Teresa, and snickering. When Isaac leaves, they walk towards Teresa.*

CHILD #1 (*with an attitude*): Hey, Teresa.

TERESA (*preoccupied*): Hey Andy<sup>1</sup>.

CHILD #2 (*tauntingly*): So how's your friend?

TERESA (*still preoccupied*): Not great.

CHILD #1 (*sarcastically*): Poor Isaac and his poor little *menorah*. *His little cow manure-ah.*

*They laugh.*

TERESA (*looks up and says sharply*): Stop it!

CHILD #2: Oh, lighten up, what's the big deal? O.K., so maybe they shouldn'ta thrown the rock. But face it, he's *weird*.

TERESA: Weird? What are you talking about?

CHILD #2: I'm saying he's weird – with his “cow manure-ah” and his Jewish stars...

CHILD #1 (*chimes in*): And a show off, too, with all those “A”s. If I wanted to, I could get an “A”. I could get a *dozen* “A”s.

CHILD #2 (*rolls his or her eyes and snickers*): Sure you could...

CHILD #1 (*indignant*): Well I *could*. But Mrs. Brody's always holding *his* stuff up.

CHILD #2: Yeah, it's like he's better than us. Well, he's *not*. He's not even as *good* as us. My uncle says Jews and Blacks – they always bring trouble.

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<sup>1</sup> *May be played by a male or female.*

TERESA (*she jumps up from her seat*): That's crazy.

CHILD #2: How do *you* know? Maybe he *did* do something. My uncle says those people do stuff.

TERESA (*getting angrier*): What do you mean, "stuff"?

CHILD #2: Just, you know, stuff. Like Black people do in their church...Maybe skinheads go there to find out what's going on. What's so bad about that? My uncle says people are making *way* too much of a fuss.

TERESA: You know what, Andy? Your uncle's a jerk!

CHILD #2: You're a jerk! My uncle's not the only one who thinks that. Maybe those skinheads have more friends in town than you think. And they're gonna be watching for those cow manure-ahs – and they're *not* gonna like it.

TERESA: Are you trying to scare me?

CHILD #2: Just saying, you better be careful who your friends are.

TERESA: And so should you!

### **Song – If I Wanted**

**Child 1:**

**Just look at her go off  
She thinks she's so smart**

**Child 2:**

**She's such a big show off  
Always acting the part  
Of a goodie goodie, teacher's pet**

**Child 1:**

**Little Miss Perfect, what'd'ya bet  
If I wanted I could be a whiz kid too**

**Child 2 (*spoken*):**

**So could I. But she and that Isaac she likes so much are always messing things up for the rest of us. It's always *their* stories that get read out loud. And *their* stuff gets**

hung on the board.

**Child 1 (*spoken*):**

Yeah, and the other kids are always picking *them* to be team captains and all that, but I'm just as good...know what, I'm *better* and I could prove it!

**Child 2:**

If they didn't always wave their hands in the air  
The teacher would call on me  
I'd come up with the answer – it just isn't fair  
I'd be top of the class, you'd see

**Child 1:**

If there weren't so much homework, I'd get it all done  
If they asked the right questions, I'd be number one  
If the other kids knew what a winner I'd be  
When they needed a leader, they'd only ask me

**Child 2:**

If I wanted to I know I could get nothing but A's

**Child 1:**

If I wanted I could be on top in so many ways

**Together:**

If everyone would stop their messing 'round with me  
There's absolutely nothing I couldn't be

**Child 2 (*spoken*):**

It's just like my uncle said...that Isaac and his kind, and all those *other* kids – you know, the ones who aren't like *us*. They think they should get all the attention!

**Child 1 (*spoken*):**

Yeah!

**Child 2:**

If I wanted I could be a model of perfection

**Child 1:**

If you want a kid who's cool  
I should be your first selection

**Child 2:**  
**I could be good**

**Child 1:**  
**I could be great**

**Together:**  
**I could be what you would call first rate**

**Child 2 (*mockingly*):**  
**Watch your manners, look at minerahs**  
**Everyone's making a fuss**

**Child 1:**  
**And the thing that drives me crazy is**

**Together:**  
**They're not like us**

*[Note: for a non-musical version this song can be deleted]*

*Blackout.*