

THE PACT

A two-act play based on the Jodi Picoult novel

**by
Jeannette Angell**

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*But suicides have a special language
Like carpenters they always want to know which tools
They never ask why build.*

*Anne Sexton
Wanting To Die*

For J. Stephen Brantley

© 2009 by Jeannette Cézanne. This play was commissioned by and written for Yellow Taxi Productions of Nashua, New Hampshire. Its world première was on April 11, 2009.

For help in its construction I am indebted most especially to Suzanne Delle, the director of the play première and also artistic director of Yellow Taxi, and also to the contributions of many actors who worked out the kinks with me.

Cast of Characters

Chris Harte: *seventeen years old, a senior at Bainbridge High School. He is unsure about his future professionally, but has always known that it would include Emily Gold, his closest friend since childhood. Chris believes that putting Emily first in all things is what makes him a good person.*

Emily Gold: *sixteen years old, grew up next door to Chris and began dating him once both were in high school. She is confused about her feelings for Chris and feels that his for her restrict her own future plans too much. It doesn't take long for her to slide into depression between her sophomore and junior years.*

Gus Harte: *Chris' mother, owns a small home-based business. She sometimes has a hard time communicating with her husband, and relies instead on her friendship with her next-door neighbor, Melanie Gold.*

James Harte: *Chris' father, ophthalmologist at Memorial Hospital in Bainbridge. James fought to get through medical school and is unable to see any future for his son that doesn't include following in his footsteps. James wants to do the right thing, the proper thing, but isn't always able to see what that is.*

Melanie Gold: *Emily's mother, very involved in volunteer work in the community, seems concerned about people's perceptions of her and her family. Her own chaotic childhood means that she seeks order and control in all things; that's how she keeps the world safe.*

Judge: *Only a voice from offstage, never seen*

Barrie Delaney: *Prosecutor for the State of New Hampshire*

Jordan McAfee: *Defense attorney hired by Harte family*

Jennifer Pasquale: *Rape crisis hotline volunteer*

Elaine Ross: *Guidance counselor at Bainbridge High School*

Sam Taylor: *Art teacher at Bainbridge High School*

Susan Phillips: *Classmate/friend of Emily's at Bainbridge High School*

Teresa Christiansen: *Registered nurse at Family Planning Services*

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

CHRIS and EMILY (and then both) are spotlighted as they speak. They're sitting on stools on either side of the stage.

CHRIS

(speaking to audience)

So here's the thing. You think you know someone, because you grew up with her and your parents were all best friends and you played in the sandbox together. And you go through your whole life knowing that she's there, that she's another part of you, and you see your future unwinding out in front of you with her in it, her always in it, and that feels all safe and secure. But it's not, not really, because you can never really know anyone else. And I'm starting to think that you can't even know yourself, either.

EMILY

(speaking to audience)

See, what I finally figured out, what's disappointing about life, is it's so ordinary. I could take it if there were some sort of drama, you know? Sometimes I tried to put the drama in: I'd slam doors, I'd cry, I'd pout. I even used to tell my parents that they were ruining my life--and I felt that, too, you know, I really did: you can make yourself believe anything.

But behind it all is this feeling that life's like a town at twilight when the lights haven't been put on yet, but the sun is gone, and everything is this weird sort of flat gray, you know that time? ... then you realize that that's the real part of life, that going to the supermarket and work and figuring out where to go to lunch and when to schedule the dentist appointment — that that's what's real. And you look around you and everyone else seems to find that it's enough. And so you start wondering what it is that's wrong with you.

CHRIS

(speaking to audience)

And all that time I'm thinking, the world is opening up, you know what I'm saying? Like there's something special waiting, and I know what it is, it's there in front of me: my future, mine and hers, together. I'm seeing everything getting better and better all the time, her and me going to Little League games and cutting down the Christmas tree with the grandchildren, and I think about —

EMILY
(directly to him)

Wait!

CHRIS

What?

EMILY

Where am I supposed to fit in?

CHRIS

What do you mean? Didn't you hear what I was saying? You're in the center of it all! It's all about you!

EMILY
(sadly)

Is it?

SCENE 2

Courtroom. BARRIE DELANEY, the prosecutor, and JORDAN McAFEE, defense attorney, address the audience as if it were the jury.

BARRIE

So here's what we have to figure out, you and me, together. The question isn't whether Christopher Harte killed Emily Gold. Yes, that's right—there's no question about it: he killed her.

But that's all we know, because no one was there besides Christopher Harte and Emily Gold. So we do have a few things to figure out here.

Here's what we know: On the evening of November 8th of last year, Christopher Harte removed a 38-caliber pistol from his father's gun cabinet. He took it with him when he went to meet Emily at the merry-go-round in Putnam Park, a place they frequented often. It was just another date.

What happened next? We don't know! That's the God's honest truth, ladies and gentlemen: we just don't know. As I said, the only two witnesses are Christopher Harte and Emily herself, and Emily is dead. No one else can tell us what happened.

What we do know is that a gun went off. What we do know is that both young people were rushed to Memorial Hospital. What we do know is that Emily Gold was pronounced dead on arrival there. What we do know is that there was gunshot residue on Christopher Harte's hands and none on Emily's.

So the question before you is not whether Christopher Harte shot Emily, because we know that he did. The question is whether he did so intending to kill her. Intending to commit murder.

pause for effect

And the people of the State of New Hampshire plan to show you that he did just that.

JORDAN

What we have here, ladies and gentlemen, isn't some nefarious murder plot, as the prosecution would have you believe. What we have here is a tragedy, pure and simple, the kind of tragedy we all like to think doesn't happen in nice towns like ours, to nice people like us. But it does; and it did.

What we have here, in short, is a double suicide gone wrong. Christopher Harte and Emily Gold went to that merry-go-round because they had both — misguided

as it may seem to us — decided that they didn't want to go on living. They decided that they wanted to die the way they did everything else in life: together.

They had planned it carefully, together. But there was a problem. Something happened, and Chris fainted before he could administer his own lethal shot. The suicide pact was derailed.

It's sad, yes. Tragic, even. Two healthy, happy young people deciding to take their own lives. We, who have the advantage of having lived in the world a little longer than them: we don't understand it. We want it to make sense. But the reality, ladies and gentlemen, is that we'll never understand their motivations for wanting to die. We'll never know what would have happened if they hadn't gone to the carousel that night.

All we can go on is what the witnesses will tell you. What are the truths that are behind the facts. And then, ladies and gentlemen, I know that you'll do the right thing: see this for the tragedy that it is, and acquit Chris Harte.

SCENE 3

Lights go down over the courtroom and come up to illuminate GUS and MELANIE sitting at a table together, shelling peas.

GUS

The thing is, no one's going to appreciate this. The kids will just say, "yuck, I hate peas!" and Michael and James will hardly notice they didn't come out of a can.

MELANIE

I don't care. When we first moved to New Hampshire, I promised myself everything would be perfect. We'd have the perfect country home. I'd have the perfect garden. I promised myself I'd grow peas. *(pause)* You really think the kids won't eat them?

GUS *(cheerfully)*

Not a chance.

MELANIE

Oh.

(they go on shelling the peas)

GUS

So have you picked out a dress for Emily's Bat Mitzvah?

MELANIE

She's growing so fast, I want to wait until it's closer, make sure I get the right size. Anyway, she couldn't care less about clothes. That's not normal, is it? At her age, it was all I could think about. I thought girls were supposed to care about clothes.

GUS

Be grateful she doesn't. Clothes are expensive!

MELANIE

Half the time she's wearing something of Chris', anyway. Remember his red sweatshirt?

GUS

The one we got at Hampton Beach? He lost it, ages ago.

MELANIE

Yeah, I thought you'd say that. Emily sleeps in it on cold nights.

GUS (*affectionately*)

Hmm. I'll have to buy him something pink with unicorns on it. Then maybe she won't want to wear it!

(They laugh together.)

MELANIE

I went up the other night to make sure she had her light out — you know how they'll stay awake all night if you let them, and then they're bears to get up for school the next day — and she was signaling across to your house with a flashlight.

GUS

To my house?

MELANIE

Well, to Chris. I looked across and there he was, with a flashlight, signaling back. Who knows what they were saying? Imagine it: I can't get her to concentrate on her Hav'Torah for her Bat Mitzvah, but she can learn Morse Code for Chris!

GUS

Morse Code? I don't think *I* could learn that! Amazing. (*they go on shelling the peas, she adds thoughtfully*) Maybe I'm amazed because they'd do anything for each other. Maybe it's just that I'm a little jealous.

MELANIE

Jealous? Of who?

GUS

Of them. Chris and Emily. Seriously, Melanie: Have you ever been that close to anybody? Is there anyone in your life you would have learned Morse Code for? I can't think of anyone! It sounds too much like work to me. But they do it and they don't even brag to us about it. They just do it for each other.

MELANIE

Sometimes I wish —

GUS

What?

MELANIE

I don't know ... that they had other friends? More friends? Not just each other? I want Emily to be popular, you know? I want her to have a wonderful life.

GUS

Don't look now, Mel: I think she does.

SCENE 4

Lights fade off them and come back on in the courtroom where the prosecutor is questioning SUSAN PHILLIPS, a classmate of EMILY'S

BARRIE

So, Ms Phillips — or may I call you Susan?

SUSAN

Sure.

BARRIE

Good. Now, Susan, you've been friends with Emily Gold and Christopher Harte for a long time, haven't you? For how long, exactly?

SUSAN

We've been in school together, like, forever. It's — um — it's not a big school, you know? And Emily and me, we're in most of the same classes.

BARRIE

I see. Although you're not in the same classes at the moment, are you — since Emily is now dead?

JORDAN

Objection, Your Honor. We all know why we're here. Don't need it underlined by Ms Delaney.

JUDGE

Overruled. The witness may answer.

SUSAN (*perplexed*)

No, of course we're not in the same classes anymore. Neither of them is in school anymore.

BARRIE

And I'm sure that Emily, at least, is missed by all of her friends. Susan, can you tell us a little about Christopher Harte and his relationship with Emily Gold?

SUSAN

I don't understand the question ... they were together, you know? Like, even when they weren't actually in the same room, you could almost feel the other one there too. Sometimes you didn't feel like Emily—or either of them, really— was a real person. Like, all by themselves, you know? Like they were both only half of something else. It felt like together they were one person. Not apart.

BARRIE

How did people respond to that? How did you respond to that?

SUSAN

I never thought much about it, you know? It'd always been that way with them. It was always Chris-and-Emily, like you never thought of one of them without thinking of the other. I don't think there was ever a time when they weren't best friends.

SCENE 5

The courtroom fades out. Lights come up over CHRIS and EMILY kissing on a sofa.

CHRIS

Hockey game Saturday.

EMILY

Oh, cool. You know what they say about hockey? "I went to a fight, and a hockey game broke out!" *(pause)* I'm sorry. That was uncalled for. I'll go with you, of course I will. We can egg them on. It'll be fun!

CHRIS

You don't have to.

EMILY

Sure I do. What else would I do, just be at home alone without you? *(pause)* Anyway, I don't have to like sports. You don't have to like art. We make up for each other, that way. *(She snuggles up to him)* We're a perfect fit.

CHRIS

Wow. That's exactly what I was telling someone the other day.

EMILY

What?

CHRIS

That your hand fits in mine. Perfectly. Same idea.

EMILY

Yeah, I know. Like I sometimes don't have to finish a sentence, you —

CHRIS

— finish it for you?

(They laugh together.)

EMILY

Okay, so it's a little hokey. But I like it.

CHRIS

Yeah. Me, too.

EMILY

I want life to always be like this. Wonderful. Wonderful in every way.

CHRIS

Me, too. And it's always gonna be. It's just going to keep getting better and better, you know? We'll go to college and we'll get married and —

EMILY

Hey! Slow down! Okay, okay, I get your point. We'll live happily ever after.

CHRIS

Exactly! Happily ever after. I love you, Em.

EMILY

I love you too.

SCENE 6

lights go down over them and up again in the courtroom.

BARRIE

Okay, Susan, aside from that, would you say that you know Emily Gold pretty well?

SUSAN

As much as anybody knows — knew — Emily, I guess so.

BARRIE

That's an interesting statement, Susan. As much as anybody knows her. What does that mean?

SUSAN

Well, it's just that, for most of the time, Emily was all about Chris, you know? That's what I'm trying to tell you. Like, whenever anybody wanted to do something with her, she'd have to check it out with him first.

BARRIE

Check it out with him ... that sounds like he had her on a pretty tight leash.

JORDAN

Objection. Your Honor, is there a question here for the witness?

BARRIE

Withdrawn. Susan, were you surprised when you heard that Christopher Harte had shot Emily Gold?

SUSAN

Um. Maybe. But you never know, you know?

BARRIE

You'll need to be a little clearer than that for the jury, Susan. What do you mean?

SUSAN

It's just ... stuff like that can go either way, can't it? Like when people are obsessed with each other? And don't see anything but each other?

JORDAN

Your Honor, is the witness testifying or writing a romance novel?

JUDGE

Ms Delaney?

BARRIE

Sorry, Your Honor. Susan, did you ever think that there was anything unhealthy about the relationship between Christopher Harte and Emily Gold?

JORDAN

Your Honor, I was unaware that Ms Phillips is being questioned as an expert witness. I have yet to see her credentials.

JUDGE

Ms Delaney?

BARRIE

Yes, Your Honor. Susan, I'll ask you again: did it surprise you that Christopher Harte killed Emily?

SUSAN

Not really. It was either that or live happily ever after, wasn't it? Those were the only two options.

SCENE 7

The lights go down, and EMILY is lit up again. She's pouring amber liquid from a bottle into a glass, glancing around her as if expecting to be caught. CHRIS steps into the light.

CHRIS

Hey, where'd you go? I thought you were just using the bathroom —What is that? What are you doing?

EMILY

This is Scotch, right?

CHRIS

Yeah, no shit. It's my dad's single-malt.

EMILY

(teasingly)

Thought we could have a drinking game.

CHRIS

It's not a game. Good grief, you should see Dad with this stuff. It's like — a ritual, or something. Like a performance. No ice, not ever. Just an inch of Scotch in the glass. Mozart in the background.

EMILY

My dad drinks beer in the kitchen. He drinks wine in the dining-room. I don't know what he drinks with Mozart.

CHRIS

You're making fun of me.

EMILY

(with affection)

Only a little.

CHRIS

I keep wondering, why Mozart? Why not Schumann? Why not Bach? But it's always Mozart. The Italian overtures, of course. Not the operas.

EMILY

So here we are, with no Mozart in the background, just us and your dad's single-malt.

CHRIS

You're not gonna drink it. You wouldn't.

EMILY

Are you kidding? You dare me?

CHRIS

Okay, sure! Yeah. Oh, even better: I ultimate-dare you! You'll never do it. You like to think you're some sort of daredevil, but—

EMILY

I was gonna drink it, and not even tell you, not tell anybody. What do you think I was doing when I sneaked in here? *(She raises the glass and sniffs it.)* Jeez, it smells bad.

CHRIS

That's an excuse. You're just looking for an excuse not to drink it.

EMILY

Yeah, like you'd ever do it!

CHRIS

I will if you do.

EMILY

Really? *(She pours another glass and hands it to him)* We can do it together. We'll do it both at once.

CHRIS

It does smell bad.

EMILY

Now who's chickening out? *(She throws her head back and tips the liquid down her throat, immediately coughing and spluttering)* There!

CHRIS

Wow, you did that fast! That's so not fair! All right ... here I go! *(He drinks it down, too, and coughs a little, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand.)* Damn. Maybe you are a daredevil, after all.

SCENE 8

Lights dim and go up on the other side of the stage, where the trial is progressing MISS ROSS, elderly and nervous, is in the witness box.

BARRIE

State your name and occupation for the record, please.

MISS ROSS

Elaine Ross. I mean, my name is Elaine Ross. I prefer to be called Miss Ross, please. I don't like these modern conventions. *(She seems to remember where she is)* Oh. Yes. I work — I'm a guidance counselor. The interim guidance counselor. Acting guidance counselor, really.

BARRIE

You are the guidance counselor at Bainbridge High School?

MISS ROSS

Yes. Yes, I am. Right now. The position is open, you see. They're looking for candidates. I'm just filling in.

BARRIE

But it is your current position.

MISS ROSS

Well, yes. Yes, it is.

BARRIE

And that's at the school that both Christopher Harte and Emily Gold attended?

MISS ROSS

That's right. Bainbridge High School. Yes.

BARRIE

Miss Ross, in your capacity as guidance counselor at Bainbridge High School, did you have the opportunity to work with Christopher Harte?

MISS ROSS

Acting guidance counselor. I'm retired, really. They asked me to fill in.

BARRIE

As acting guidance counselor, then, you had the opportunity to meet and work with Christopher Harte?

MISS ROSS

Yes. Yes, that's right. Chris Harte.

BARRIE

In what way?

MISS ROSS

Excuse me?

BARRIE

In what way did you work with Christopher Harte?

MISS ROSS

Um, I don't know how to answer the question. I — um — counseled him.

BARRIE

What I mean is, did you talk with Christopher Harte about his private life?

MISS ROSS

No. Not really. Well, a little. Mostly we talked about what colleges he should be applying to.

BARRIE

I have here Christopher Harte's report card for last fall. I'd like to mark it as People's Exhibit Four. Here it is, Miss Ross, you can take a look, refresh your memory.

MISS ROSS

Thank you.

BARRIE

Now, Miss Ross, can you tell us what Christopher Harte's grades were?

MISS ROSS (*looking at the card*)

Mostly A's. A very good student. A B in chemistry. His father — Dr. Harte wanted Chris to do well in science, I know that. I'm not sure that Chris wanted it as much, though, or he'd have had an A in chemistry too. He can perform when he wants to.

BARRIE

So, with mostly A's, is it safe to assume that Christopher Harte was applying to Ivy League schools? Going into law or medicine, perhaps?

MISS ROSS

I believe that Dr. Harte was anxious for Chris to go into medicine. He's an ophthalmologist, don't you know. Follow in his footsteps. Yes. Medicine.

BARRIE

But that wasn't what Christopher Harte wanted, was it?

MISS ROSS

Well, no. Not exactly.

BARRIE

Not exactly? Exactly what did Christopher Harte want, Miss Ross?

MISS ROSS

He told me he wanted to attend a liberal arts school. Someplace where he could study, of course, but a school that also had a good visual arts program. I suggested SUNY/Purchase. Or perhaps UC Berkeley.

BARRIE

Oh? Is Christopher Harte an artist?

MISS ROSS

No. No, he's not. Not really. Well. Not at all, actually.

BARRIE

So who is the artist?

MISS ROSS

Emily Gold.

SCENE 9

Lights go down and then they come up on the other side of the stage again, at the kitchen table where CHRIS, GUS, and JAMES are seated, talking.

GUS

Here's one. Look at this one, honey. It's so close! If you go to Dartmouth, you can come home weekends!

CHRIS

(with affection)

If I go to Dartmouth it won't be like going away to college. You'll be showing up at the dorm every week with something you think I need.

GUS

(laughing)

Only if it's something you really need!

CHRIS

(laughing with her)

Yeah, well, according to you, that'll be, like, everything!

JAMES

(clears throat)

Let's stick to the subject, okay? If you two could stop fooling around for a moment. Now ... Let's get rid of some of these printouts. We've narrowed it down to —

CHRIS

No, Dad, you've narrowed it down. I'm still stuck. I just don't know what I want to do.

JAMES

I thought we'd agreed —

CHRIS

No, Dad, you agreed. I haven't agreed to anything.

GUS

(places a hand on JAMES' arm)

Honey, it's normal for him to be a little confused —

JAMES
(frustrated)

I don't understand why you're not seeing this. You do pre-med for your undergraduate work, then you go on to medical school. Like I did. That's a career that'll give you a good living.

CHRIS

I don't see how being a doctor is the only way to do that.

JAMES
(picks up a newspaper, waves it)

You have to get a grip on what's important. You come from a good family, things are expected of you. Look here in the paper. Jeff Wilson just got a grant from the CDC, did you see that? Isn't his brother in school with you?

CHRIS

He's in my grade, yeah. So what?

JAMES

Well, he's accomplishing important things. Jeff Wilson. See, Chris, that's what I want for you — I want your life to be significant. To be meaningful. I don't ever want you to settle for second-best.

GUS

I don't think he's saying anything about second-best, James.

JAMES

We've worked hard for you to have everything, and this is our pay-off, to see you successful, son. Your mother — you should have seen how hard she worked to get me through medical school —

CHRIS

Yeah, Dad, I know that story. You've told me about a million times. You lived in a third-floor walk-up in Somerville with no hot water. See? Do I get an A for that one, Dad?

GUS
(to CHRIS)

Honey, he's just trying to make a point.

JAMES

And that point is, we can take care of you. You don't have to go through what we did.

CHRIS

Sure. As long as I do what you want me to do.

JAMES

I wish I could understand you, Chris. All I want is for you to have a life that's meaningful. I came from nothing, and I've worked hard to make something of my life. I have a position in the community now. We have a beautiful house. I want you to have all that without working as hard for it as we did.

CHRIS

And what if that isn't what I want?

JAMES

(baffled)

What else could anybody want? *(pause)* Your grandfather never got to go to college. You've got opportunities in front of you that most kids your age would give anything for. You should seize the moment, seize the opportunity.

CHRIS

Dad, I don't even want to —

JAMES

So what I'm thinking—where's that printout?—is MIT for pre-med. Then maybe Johns Hopkins for medical school. You can choose your own specialization, of course. But those schools will give you everything you need for a satisfying career no matter what you decide to do. Doesn't have to be ophthalmology, you know. You don't have to follow exactly in your old man's footsteps!

CHRIS

You're not listening to me, are you? I don't know where I want to go yet. Emily and me, we haven't really decided yet. She needs to go somewhere with an art program —

JAMES

I don't believe I'm hearing this. Where Emily goes to school has nothing to do with you.

GUS

Anyway, that's what Emily says now, isn't it, that she'll want to study art? There's plenty of time for her to make a decision. After all, people don't make a living doing art, do they? Melanie thinks it's just a phase she's going through, anyway.

CHRIS

I don't care what Emily's mom thinks. Emily doesn't think it's just a phase she's going through.

JAMES (*stands up, agitated*)

Okay. Enough! Once and for all: this isn't about Emily, Chris. This is about you. About your future. This is a Harte family discussion. It has nothing to do with anyone else.

CHRIS

You don't get it, do you? You never get it. Me and Emily, that's ... that's sacred, okay? It's holy. It's a done deal. (*pause*) Whatever I do, I have to think about her, too. I have to include her.

GUS

It's just that college is so important, Chris, and —

CHRIS

What's going on here, anyway? You're the ones that always wanted us together. When we were little, you put us in the same bathtub, for Chrissakes —

GUS and **JAMES** *say the following simultaneously:*

GUS

Chris —

JAMES

Watch your language!

CHRIS

My point is, all our lives, everyone knew we'd be together, and don't say you didn't want us together, Mom, 'cause Emily's mother told me how you used to talk about it, you and her, planning from when we were babies. So now we're together, and you want us apart. I don't think I'm the one here who's confused.

GUS

It's not that we want you apart, darling. But maybe a little time on your own ... each of you ... wouldn't be a bad thing.

JAMES

This is ridiculous. This stops now! I don't even want to talk about you and Emily. That's your mother's issue. What we're doing here is we're talking about school. About your future. Not about your girlfriend. You don't plan your life around a girl!

CHRIS

(softly)

When the girl's Emily, I do.

SCENE 10

Lower lights and raise them again on the courtroom.

BARRIE

So you're telling us that Christopher Harte was making college choices —life choices — based on what his girlfriend was going to do?

MISS ROSS

Er — well ... yes.

BARRIE

Hmm. Sounds a lot like stalking to me.

JORDAN

Objection. Your Honor, we don't really need to know what it sounds like to Ms Delaney.

JUDGE

Objection sustained. No personal opinions, Ms Delaney.

BARRIE

Yes, Your Honor. So, Miss Ross, while all this was going on with Christopher Harte, did you have any opportunities to work with Emily Gold?

MISS ROSS

She came in a few times, yes. Last year, mostly. Not this year as much. We talked about schools ... art schools, don't you know. Like RSDI. RSDI seemed appropriate. This year she didn't talk about colleges as much. She didn't seem interested. *(pause)* But, before — last year — we talked about the Sorbonne, too. That was exciting to her, I think. Emily thought she might like to go away. To Paris. She used to talk about just flying away from here, being free, not having anything that held her to New Hampshire.

BARRIE

Seems that Miss Gold was aiming higher than her boyfriend was.

JORDAN

Objection!

JUDGE

Sustained. Move along, Ms Delaney.

BARRIE

Just one more thing, Miss Ross. The defense would have us believe that what happened here was a double suicide pact that went wrong. In your experience, are adolescents who commit suicide depressed?

MISS ROSS

Generally, yes, yes, I'd say that's true.

BARRIE

Hmm. And did Christopher Harte seem depressed to you?

MISS ROSS

Er, well ... No.

BARRIE

I see. And did Emily Gold seem depressed to you?

MISS ROSS

No. Not that I could see.

BARRIE

Thank you. No more questions.

JUDGE

Mr. McAfee?

JORDAN

Thank you, Your Honor. *(He stands up and approaches the witness as BARRIE sits.)* Miss Ross, your degree is in what, exactly?

MISS ROSS

I have a master's in education. In counseling. But that was a long time ago, you understand — I'm retired now.

JORDAN

And before you retired? What did you do?

MISS ROSS

I was a guidance counselor. Over in Concord. At a bigger school. One of many counselors there, you see. But it was a long time ago, too.

JORDAN

And as a guidance counselor, that's what you do, isn't it? You guide? You provide guidance — for kids applying to college, deciding what to major in, things like that?

MISS ROSS

That's right, basically, yes, I'd say that's right.

JORDAN

Okay. Good. But — let's see — you don't have a degree in — oh, psychiatry, for example?

MISS ROSS

Dear me. No. No, of course not.

JORDAN

Or psychology, even?

MISS ROSS

No. No, I don't. I'm just the acting —

JORDAN

(interrupting her)

So it's probably fair to say that you haven't been trained to see when a student has experienced a traumatic event? Or even to recognize the symptoms of depression in adolescents?

MISS ROSS

Well, actually, there's a brochure —

JORDAN

(chuckling)

Ah, yes. A brochure. No more questions, Your Honor!