

J.C. ERHARDT MEMORIAL SCHOOL, MAKKOVIK

presents

I HATE MYSELF

CAST:

Nurse (Miss Hogan) - Lori McNeill  
Joline Lynn (Patient) - Carol Pottle  
Mother (Caroline Lynn) - Valerie Webb  
Dr. Adams - Jure Evans  
Beth (Caroline's sister) - Glenda Evans  
Amy Striker (another young diabetic) - Wanda Andersen  
Andy (Joline's boyfriend) - Neil Andersen

INTRODUCTION:

This play is based on the author's own experiences. She developed diabetes shortly after her 13th birthday, and, most of the events in the play happened to her. Most of the dialogue has actually been spoken. There were times in her diagnosis that are blank to her, so she has made up scenes to fill these spaces. To this day she still feels the same about her illness as when she first learned she had it. At times her feelings towards her disease are quite bitter, and it is her wish that a real cure can be found. The last scene occurs four years later.

SETTING FOR ALL BUT LAST SCENE: Hospital room with a bed, night table, I.V. and two chairs; FOR LAST SCENE: bench in centre stage, front.

SCENE I

(Nurse enters and checks the I.V. She writes down the results and turns to leave just as Mother enters.)

NURSE: Oh, hello, Mrs. Lynn, Joline is still asleep. I wasn't here yesterday when she was brought in, but I think she was unconscious. I have to go on my rounds now. When I pass the desk, I'll tell Dr. Adams that you're here, O.K.?

(Nurse moves towards the door.)

MOTHER: Oh, thank-you, nurse. Is it alright if I stay here with her? I won't wake her or anything.

NURSE (TURNING AS SHE REACHES THE DOOR): I guess it would be alright. Just don't touch the I.V. (Exit.)

(Mrs. Lynn sits in chair, turned part-way to the audience and part-way to the bed. Carefully takes Joline's hand and talks to her.)

MOTHER: I don't know if you can hear me, Joline, but I'll say this anyway. You've got to hang in there, Joline. If you let go, I'll have nothing. You're all I've got. Please pull through. I need you.

(Puts her hand down on bed and silently cries. At the sound of a knock, wipes her eyes and straightens her clothes.)

MOTHER: Come in!

DOCTOR (ENTERING): Mrs. Lynn? I'm Dr. Adams (shakes her hand. Then, gesturing her to sit down, he says the following, sitting in the other chair as he does so.) I would like to talk to you about Joline. As you know, she hasn't woke up since you brought her in. There's a reason for that, Mrs. Lynn. Your daughter has a serious disease.

MOTHER (PAUSE AS SHE LOOKS SHOCKED): What's the name of this disease?

DOCTOR: She has diabetes.

MOTHER: Diabetes? What does that mean?

DOCTOR: Well, her pancreas has stopped making a substance called insulin. Now, insulin is needed by all our bodies to break sugar down into energy so our bodies can use it. That, putting it simply, is diabetes. But that's not the worst part of it. The worst part is that, for the rest of her life, she has to give herself an injection every single day.

MOTHER: For the rest of her life? Oh my God!

DOCTOR: Mrs. Lynn, you'll have to learn to inject needles also.

MOTHER: Me!? Why me?

DOCTOR: Because you are her mother. If she gets sick or something, you're the one who will have to take care of her. It is very important that she NEVER misses an injection!

MOTHER: Oh, Doctor! I can't do that. I'm scared to death of needles. Why, just the sight of one and I feel faint! I'd never be able to do it.

DOCTOR: You must, Mrs. Lynn. Joline's life depends on it. You haven't grasped the reality of this situation, have you? (Mrs. Lynn looks away, picks up her coat, and starts to leave. She does not look back as Doctor continues.) Wake up, Mrs. Lynn! If you don't co-operate with us, Joline could die! (Mrs. Lynn exits.) God, not another hard case. I had enough of those last year. How can I get through to her?

## SCENE II

(Joline is sitting up reading pamphlets and waiting for the doctor.)

JOLINE: Gee, they must have better stuff for me to read besides this junk. (Puts down pamphlets, looks at arm.) Boy, I sure wish they'd take this needle out of my hand.

DOCTOR: That will have to stay in a few more days yet, young lady!

JOLINE: Oh, it's really sore. I never had one of these in before. It's gross!

DOCTOR: I'm sure it is, but it's for the best. Oh, I see you have read these pamphlets. What did you think of them?

JOLINE: It's sick! I'd hate to do that every day. And all those blood tests and the diet. Some people are so lucky, don't you think, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Yes, some people are lucky. (Pause.) Joline...(takes her hand) I have some bad news for you. (Another pause.) We gave you those pamphlets to read for a reason, Joline. You have developed Type I Diabetes.

JOLINE: You're kidding, aren't you, Dr. Adams? I mean, I have never been sick before and I don't take alot of sugar in my tea! (She looks at Dr. Adams' solemn face and quickly becomes hysterical.) No! No! You must have made a mistake. I don't want to go through life taking needles every day. I don't want to! Go away and leave me alone!

(She backs up, pulls the needle out of her hand, then tries to get out of bed. Still weak, she falls and passes out.)

DOCTOR: Nurse! NURSE! Get in here, quick! And bring an I.V. needle!

(She gets Joline back into bed and unbandages hand. Nurse enters and helps reconnect the I.V. They talk as they work.)

NURSE: What happened?

DOCTOR: I told her she has diabetes adn she panicked. Then she fell...and the rest is obvious.

NURSE: Oh, why do they have to take it so hard?

DOCTOR: Wouldn't you take it hard if you were told you had a disease like hers?

NURSE: I guess so, but, still...

DOCTOR: Now, you're not being paid to talk about the patients, Miss Hogan. Get this I.V. up and then give her another 8 units of insulin. We've got to get her blood sugar down, and soon! (Starts to leave, then turns.) Don't let her have any visitors, O.K. Miss Hogan? Not even her mother and aunt. She has to get over the shock first. I think her mother is still in shock herself. If she doesn't accept her daughter's condition, Joline is sure gonna have a hard time accepting it herself.

NURSE: You really care, don't you Doctor?

DOCTOR: Of course. I wouldn't be here if I didn't care.

(She exits. Nurse finishes with I.V., straightens Joline's blankets then leaves. After a few seconds, Aunt Beth enters, followed by mother, and approach the bed.)

BETH: Oh my God! What have they done to her?

MOTHER: That's only an I.V., dear. It does something for her, but, oh my God! What have they done to her?

SISTER: That's what I just asked you. Look, Caroline, I told you we could have done better if we kept her at home. Let's take her home.

NURSE (ENTERING ROOM): Excuse me, but I have to ask you to leave. The doctor-

MOTHER: Leave! You expect me to go and leave my daughter here with you..you.. beasts!? I'm taking her home now!

NURSE: Mrs. Lynn, Joline is very sick. Don't you understand? If you take her home now, she will die. Don't you want her to live long and healthy?

MOTHER: Of course I do! But look at what you're doing to her! She's full of blood...and she looks so pale!

NURSE: I know, but she is starting to get better. She was awake for about an hour and a half.

MOTHER: She was awake and you never called me? How could you? I was at home waiting by the phone, worried to death, and you never bothered to call?

NURSE: I am sorry, Mrs. Lynn, but..(interrupted by Dr. Adams)

DOCTOR: You can go on to your rounds now, Miss Hogan.

NURSE: O.K., thank-you, Doctor. I'll be at the desk if you need me. (Leaves.)

DOCTOR: Mrs. Lynn, Joline needs to stay here in the hospital for about 2 more weeks. She has to come to terms with her disease. But the only way that is possible is if you come to terms with it also.

MOTHER: I don't know if I can do that, Dr. Adams. Why did it have to be her: Of all the nice people...

DOCTOR: Niceness has nothing to do with it, Mrs. Lynn. Why, even the Queen of England can get it.

MOTHER: Well, why didn't she get it instead of Joline?

(Joline awakens with a moan.)

SISTER: Look, Doc, she's awake! Could I talk to her alone for a few minutes while you and Caroline talk about...oh, about whatever!?

DOCTOR: O.K. (Cut off my Mother, gives her dirty look.)

MOTHER: O.K., Beth, but don't be too long. I want to talk to her myself.

(Exit Mother and Doctor.)

JOLINE: I'm really glad you came to see me Aunt Beth. I s'pose by now you heard about me, right?

SISTER: Yes, I heard. Joline...you've got to do as the doctors say, O.K.? For me?

(Joline gives her Aunt a sour look.)

SISTER: I seen that, Joline. Look, do you know Amy Striker? (Joline looks puzzled.) Of course you do...Doug Striker's daughter. The one you say is too stuck-up to stay behind after school to play games and things. Well, she is a diabetic also.

JOLINE (LOOKS SURPRISED): She's a diabetic? So that's why she never makes friends. I wouldn't blame her. Now I'm gonna lose all my friends, too, I bet.

SISTER: No, Joline. You don't have to lose all your friends. If they are truly your friends, they'll be there to help you through your hard times. Believe me! (Looks at watch.) Listen, I've got to go. Remember what I said and think about it, O.K.? (Exit.)

### SCENE III

(Nurse enters carrying tray of food, tells Joline it's lunchtime and, placing the tray on Joline's lap, tells her the Dr. said to eat it all. Leaves.)

JOLINE: God, what ugly ol' food! I wouldn't let my dog look at it, talk about eat it! (Looks at food awhile, then throws it on the floor.) Why me? I don't deserve this. Isn't there anyone who can help me?

(Nurse rushes in.)

NURSE: Joline, what have you done!?

JOLINE: Leave me alone. Get out of here! I don't want to see you anymore!  
GET OUT!

(Nurse leaves in search of doctor. Both enter a moment later. Doctor calms Joline, then gives her a sedative needle, while making the following speech. Nurse picks up food at same time.)

DOCTOR: Joline...Joline! It's O.K. It's all over now. (Pause as Doctor calms Joline.) I'm going to give you a needle now to help you sleep. (Injects.) I'll come back and see you later on.

(Exit Dr. and Nurse.)

JOLINE: I wish I'd die. I hate myself. Who wants a friend who sticks herself with a needle every day for the rest of her life? God, if you're listening to me, I hate you for what you've done to me. You understand? I HATE YOU! (Cries herself to sleep.)

SCENE IV

(Joline is awake. She turns on her ghetto blaster and a song comes on. She listens for awhile, then a knock sounds on the door. Turns off music and calls out, "Come in...if you dare!".)

AMY (ENTERING): Hi. Are you Joline Lynn?

JOLINE: So? Who wants to know?

AMY: Me. Amy Striker. I was told to come and talk to you.

JOLINE: About what?

AMY: About your diabetes.

JOLINE: Oh, no! If you're going to sit there and try to knock all that "it's for your own good" stuff into my brain, then get out! I've heard enough of that from that stupid nurse and that good-for-nothing doctor! Now, will you please get out of my room before I kick you out?

AMY: Joline, if you don't stop behaving like a stupid 7-year-old, you are going to be in big trouble. I know. I've been through that myself.

JOLINE: Don't you tell me what to do. Get out!

AMY: Your attitude is all wrong. You've got to take responsibility for yourself, now. They told me your mother doesn't want to accept the responsibility either.

JOLINE: My mother! You leave my mother out of this! I didn't say anything to you about your mother, did I? No, I didn't, so you say one more thing about my mother and I'll give it to you right between the eyes!

AMY: Joline, you are not thinking about your disease in the way you should be. You're making things more complicated for everyone.

JOLINE: Ah, go and stick yourself!

AMY: Well, I guess I had better go. You're not in the mood for talking seriously, I see. Don't worry. I'll be back.

JOLINE: Who's worried? You don't have to come back. Stay away. It's better for your health.

AMY: Bye for now, Joline. You're a hard case, girl. (Exit.)

JOLINE: Who gives her the right to tell me about diabetes? I hope she doesn't come back. (Silent pause.) But, on the other hand, she has already been through this. She knows more about it than I do. She could be valuable. (Turns on music for a minute, then turns it off.) Boy, am I sick. Yesterday, I was telling my Aunt how I wasn't going to have any friends. Here someone tries to be a friend and I attack her. Do I ever feel bad! I wonder if... (Thoughts wander for awhile; then a decision is reached.) Nurse! NURSE! Come here a minute, please! (Nurse enters.) Could you tell Amy Striker that I'd like to speak with her, please? Thanks. (Exit nurse. A moment later, Amy enters.) Amy, I'm sorry for the way I acted just now. I guess you're right about what I'm doing.

AMY: That's alright. I went through the exact same thing. It's awful, isn't it?

JOLINE: Sure is. Hey, what are you in here for, anyway?

AMY: I'm having X-rays done. I should be almost ready to go now.

JOLINE: How long have you been a diabetic?

AMY: Let's see...I developed it a few months after my 10th birthday...about 3 years now, I guess. Too much cake and ice cream, hey?

JOLINE: No, according to these pamphlets the doctor gave me, the amount of sugar you take in has nothing to do with getting diabetes.

AMY: Congratulations! You are picking up some stuff. The doctors told me to say things to see what you'd say. And, boy, am I glad I did. Now you may be able to go home sooner!

JOLINE: You serious? Oh, I can't wait. As soon as I get home I'll run straight to the ol' cookie jar. You know they don't even give me cake and ice cream here? Boy, that is sick!

AMY: They didn't tell you yet, huh?

JOLINE: Tell me what?

AMY: You're not allowed to have cookies, cake, candy, bars, donuts...almost anything we teens love to eat.

JOLINE: You can't be serious! No more junk? Boy, that takes the cake.

AMY: Better than you taking the cake, though.

(Small laugh between them. Nurse enters.)

NURSE: Ah, there you are. The doctor said you could go now.

AMY: O.K., Nurse. (Nurse steps out. Amy turns to Joline.) Just remember, I had your troubles too, but, I got over them. And that's what you've got to do. Accept reality and start to live again. You're the same

Joline, except now you must depend on insulin for the rest of your life. I know it's hard, but you'll survive. I'll talk to you later.

JOLINE: Bye, Amy. Thanks for staying.

(Exit Amy. Joline thinks for a minute.)

JOLINE: Oh, it's not so bad. It could be worse. (Pause.) I should start co-operating with Dr. Adams. I'll probably get out of here sooner if I do. (Calls out.) Nurse! NURSE! Could you come here a minute, please?

NURSE (ENTERS): Yes, Joline?

JOLINE: Could you tell Dr. Adams I want to see her, please? As soon as possible?

NURSE: So you have finally decided to co-operate with us, have you? That's great. Dr. Adams will be so proud of you! (Exit.)

JOLINE: Oh, my. What have I done now? But, if Amy Striker can do it, so can I.

(Enter Dr. Adams, carrying small tray holding oranges, a needle, some alcohol swabs and a vial.)

DOCTOR: I'm so glad you changed your mind, Joline. Now, you see this orange? You're gonna learn to give needles by torturing it. (Joline laughs.) Really, that's how I learned. I stuck an orange so many times, it actually started sprouting water.

(Dr. Adams gives explanation and demonstration on proper injection technique. Then, as Joline tries, music comes on, and lights slowly fade out.)

#### SCENE V

(Four years later. Lights come up to reveal Joline and Andy with diet drinks entering stage.)

JOLINE: Andy, when I met you last year, what did you think of me? I want the God's honest truth, now.

ANDY: Well, I thought you were very beautiful and you had a wonderful sense of humor. When I first saw you, I knew I had to get to know you. I started a conversation with you over at Lisa's, remember?

JOLINE: Of course I remember. Andy, why didn't you walk away like all the others when I told you I was a diabetic?

ANDY: Because, Joline, I knew about diabetes. You made it sound like I'd get diabetes too if I stayed around. You still haven't accepted the fact that you're still human, have you? You can do everything you ever did before, and now more besides.



JOLINE: I know, but some of my friends still say things that hurt. They don't understand.

ANDY: That's just it. They don't understand. And when people don't understand something, they tend to look at it in a negative way. But, Joline...Joline, look at me. I do understand. And that's all that matters, right?

(They hug.)

JOLINE: Here's to me, and here's to you. And here's to all those who don't understand. Who cares what they think?

(They smile, drink and walk offstage with their arms around one another.)

THE END