

A script from



“The Substitute”

by
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- What** A family prepares to meet an honored guest, the young soldier who's life was spared at the expense of their son's life. When the young man and the family meet, the family is met with the disappointment and awareness of the contrast between his life and the life of his substitute. Parallels a holy God's sacrifice for an unworthy people. Themes: Sacrifice, Sin, Crucify, Easter, Good Friday, Jesus
- Who** Dad
Mom
Tyler – brother; probably 5th or 6th grade
Sara – sister; probably 9th or 10th grade;
Darren – soldier
- When** Present
- Wear (Props)** Soldier dressed in sloppy uniform or in civilian clothes
Wide, ugly tie
Headphones
Flower arrangement
Picture album & pictures
Cell phone
Living room set
- Why** Romans 5:6-8
- How** This is an analogy of the world's response to God's sacrifice. It is not meant to stand alone without a sermon or message following it. Make the dialogue conversational and not overly dramatic.
- * Optional: use another girl for the son– replace “tie” remarks with appropriate “dress” remarks*
- Time** Approximately 7 minutes; This script is 3½ pages long.

Tyler and Sara are onstage. **Sara** is sitting on a couch with her headphones on. **Tyler** is looking into an imaginary mirror and faces the audience.

Tyler: Mom! Mom! Do I have to wear this stupid tie? It's choking me! *(Pulling and tugging at his tie)*

Sara: *(Wearing headphones)* I'll choke you if you don't stop yelling. I can't even hear my music. Mom! Tell him to stop yelling! Mom!

Mom: *(Enters carrying a flower arrangement for the coffee table)* BOTH of you stop shouting. And yes, Tyler, you do have to wear a tie.

Tyler: But it's grandpa's old tie. This thing is wider than Sara's big head! Why do I have to wear one anyway? I look like an idiot.

Sara starts to chime in

Mom: No comment, young lady. And that tie will have to do. You should have thought about that before you tried to tie your sister's cat to the neighbors' new puppy with the nice one I bought you. Now this is a special evening and I want us all to look our best. He should be pulling up in the driveway any minute. *(Looks at her watch)* Don't you understand who's coming to our house tonight?

Tyler: Yeah, some dude that knew Jason. So? Jason had a ton of friends. *(Still yanking at his tie)* I've never had to put a tie on for one of them.

Dad starts to look up from the picture album he's been thumbing through

Sara: Yeah, mom. What makes this guy different? Anyway, I don't like visiting with Jason's old friends. It makes me miss him more.

Tyler: Not me. I like hearing all those stories about the big games and camping trips and stuff. Laughing about some of the things he used to do and say helps me feel like he's still around, you know? . . . But I still don't know why I have to wear this dumb tie.

Dad: You're wearing the tie. Kids, our honored guest tonight is not just one of your brother's old high school buddies. His name is Darren and he's a soldier, just like Jason was — except a different rank, I think. In fact, I was just thumbing through this picture album to see if I could guess which one he might be.

Sara: So you've never met him either? You've never seen him?

Mom: No, we haven't, though I've imagined many times what he might look like — exactly how old he is, how he wears his hair, does he *always* wear

a ball cap like your brother did, things like that. *(Smiles as she remembers; gets up to look out the window)* He should be here by now. I hope he could follow my directions.

Sara: I still don't understand. Was this one of J's best friends or something? I don't remember him ever writing about a guy named Darren.

Tyler: Yeah, how do you even know about this one guy? Why is he so special?

Dad: *(Points to a picture in the album)* Remember this boy here? The one in the Atlanta Braves T-shirt?

Sara: One of Jay's army friends?

Tyler: You remember, Sara. Jason wrote us about him. He's the one who was always playing those crazy practical jokes on everybody.

Sara: Oh, yeah. *(Laughs as she remembers)* Wasn't his name Bryan or Ryan or something like that?

Dad: Well, after your brother was killed, Ryan wrote us a letter. He explained to us who Darren was and that after he was injured he returned to the states and moved not too far away from here – living right on Lake Norman. So, we started checking around and found him. *(Looks at the clock)* I hope he's okay.

Tyler: But Dad, why would you go to all that trouble to find this guy and even invite him to dinner.

Dad looks over at **Mom** and they exchange knowing glances.

Mom: Kids, Darren is the one who...well, he's the soldier who...*(begins to get choked up)*

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ENDING:

Dad: *(Clears his throat and changes the focus of attention)* Darren, won't you have a seat. I've collected some photographs of our son. I thought you might want to see a little of what his life was like before you met him. Like this one? He was only . . .

Darren: *(Rolls his eyes, pushing the book away, and laughs)* That's okay, Pops. I really don't care anything about seeing little Jonny's 10th birthday, his yearbook or anything else.

Tyler: Jason. His name's Jason.

Darren: Whatever.

Mom: *(Trying to hide her hurt)* Maybe, I should check on dinner. *(Exits)*

Sara: I'll help. *(Disgusted; exits)*

Darren's cell phone rings

Darren: *(Answers his cell phone; oblivious to his hosts)* Yeah, talk to me . . . Me? Nothing important . . . Where? . . . I'm about 20 minutes from there. Well, I've got this thing *(interrupted)* . . . She is? . . . She did? . . . Cool, man. I'll see you in about a half hour. Later.

Dad: Everything okay?

Darren: Uh, yeah. Something came up, so I'm gonna have to skip the whole dinner thing. Sorry. You guys enjoy. See ya around. *(Exits)*

Tyler: *(Disgusted; staring at the door)* I wore a tie for him?

Dad: *(Staring at the door; places his hand on Tyler's shoulder; says very dryly, not overly emotional)* Yes. My son gave his life for him.

Blackout

OPTIONAL ENDINGS:

Voice during blackout reads Romans 5:6-8.

Song about the cross or God's sacrificial love