

PARTY OF FIVE

"Forgiveness"

Teleplay by
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Property of:
Philip Kassel

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT GRANT HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY DAY

BAILEY walks towards a classroom with MR. DINMEYER, a teacher, fortyish.

BAILEY

And this is the only way... why?

MR. DINMEYER

I got nothing else to offer right now in the extra credit world.

BAILEY

I never realized it was such a small world.

DINMEYER

You do this, you don't fail. And the paper I want with it might even get you up to a B for the term.

BAILEY

But community service?

MR. DINMEYER

Hey, you're the one talking scholarship. I'm just trying to help.

Bailey is doubtful. Dinmeyer notices, amused.

MR. DINMEYER

Look, this program has worked like gangbusters since First Community Church asked Grant High to get involved. Been about a year now.

BAILEY

(skeptical)

Church?

CONTINUED:

MR. DINMEYER
(good natured)
Just get on in there.

Bailey reluctantly enters the classroom followed by Mr. Dinmeyer.

INT GRANT HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM DAY

BAILEY takes an aisle seat. MR. DINMEYER leans against the wall next to him. Other STUDENTS and two TEACHERS are already seated. DAVE CLARY, late twenties, very cool, passes out information sheets.

DAVE
Glad you all could make it. I'm
Dave Clary. I head up the college
group over at First Community.
And... you'll be helping out at our
downtown homeless shelter.

Bailey shifts nervously in his seat. Dinmeyer notices, amused.

DAVE (cont'd)
The handout describes some of the
programs you'll be involved in.
The school's requirement has you
with us twice a week for four
weeks. Of course, you're welcome
to stay involved as long as you
like.

BAILEY
(whispering)
Yeah. You can plan on that.

Dinmeyer taps Bailey on the shoulder, indicating he should pay attention.

DAVE
You'll notice a permission slip
attached to your handouts.

Bailey finds the page and begins to scan it.

CONTINUED:

DAVE (cont'd)

Because of the area you'll be working in, not only do we need your parent or guardian's signature... a parent or guardian must attend your first two service sessions at the shelter.

Dismayed, Bailey can't believe he heard right. He gets Dinmeyer's attention and the teacher leans over.

BAILEY

(softly but intense)

I don't get that. I mean, why?

MR. DINMEYER

(whispering)

It's a liability thing, the schools requirement, mainly.

BAILEY

But...

DAVE

Sorry, guys. I know parents are busy but no signature and no warm body, no shelter work.

Bailey is truly bummed. Dinmeyer notices.

MR. DINMEYER

This isn't going to be a problem for you. Is it, Bailey?

BAILEY

No... no.

Off Bailey, it's obviously a big problem.

FADE OUT

END OF TEASE

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT CHARLIE'S BEDROOM DAY

Early morning. CHARLIE awakens and gazes at KIRSTEN, still sleeping. He can't believe his good fortune. He gently strokes her hair. Kirsten stirs. Still half asleep, she rolls into his arms. They snuggle.

CHARLIE

Is this unbelievable, or what?

KIRSTEN

(sleepily)

Unbelievable...?

CHARLIE

This. Us.

KIRSTEN

Oh. You mean my spending the night with the guy who walked out on our wedding six months ago? On the same night I walk out on my wedding to another guy?

CHARLIE

Maybe unbelievable isn't the word.

What are the odds? They LAUGH softly and snuggle closer.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

It's great having you here, Kirsten, really. I mean, in a way it feels like you've never been gone.

KIRSTEN

Mmm?

CHARLIE

The first couple of months... after you moved out... I'd wake up in the morning and expect to see you here. But it got to where somehow I always felt... a connection or something.

CONTINUED:

KIRSTEN

Maybe we both needed the distance.

Charlie sure didn't.

CHARLIE

To...?

KIRSTEN

To discover what we really wanted.
What we were really feeling.

CHARLIE

I know it's gonna be great. That's
all I'm trying to say. It's gonna
be great having you back in the
house.

She's caught off guard. It's a move she hasn't thought about
yet.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

So, we ought to talk about it. Do
some planning.

KIRSTEN

(hesitantly)

There's plenty of time.

CHARLIE

So, what's next? What's next for
us?

It's a thin line of escape but she takes it. Kirsten abruptly
rolls out of bed and grabs a robe.

KIRSTEN

Breakfast.

She quickly exits. Off Charlie, wondering what might be wrong.

INT SALINGER LIVING ROOM DAY

JULIA, melancholy, is sitting on the edge of the couch looking
as if she isn't quite sure where she belongs. CHARLIE descends
the stairs heading for the kitchen. He notices her, detours and
tentatively enters the living room.

CONTINUED:

Seen through the open flap, CLAUDIA sits in her tent getting some things together for school. Julia doesn't notice Claudia. Claudia's getting used to it. She watches with detached interest as Charlie approaches Julia.

CHARLIE

Jul?

She doesn't acknowledge him.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Jul? Everything okay?

Julia pulls herself out of it.

JULIA

Mmm? Oh, yeah. Yeah, I'm fine.

CHARLIE

(not buying it)

So, you're just sitting in here?

From the tent, Claudia watches with more interest.

JULIA

Uh, mmm, no. No, I was just... I was just trying to remember where I left something I need for, for school.

It's just an excuse but Charlie doesn't get it.

CHARLIE

So give me a clue. I'll help you look.

JULIA

No, it's okay. I'll find it.

CHARLIE

I've got some time.

She takes it as pressure.

JULIA

(harshly)

No, Charlie!

CONTINUED:

Charlie stops, surprised by her tone. Julia painfully pulls herself together.

JULIA (cont'd)
(calmer)

No. I just want to sit here a minute. I'll find it.

Charlie doesn't know what else to say. He nods and exits, leaving Julia, so fragile, wrapped up in her sadness and confusion.

Off Claudia, concerned and frustrated by the distance.

INT SALINGER KITCHEN DAY

KIRSTEN slices a banana while reading the church info sheet and permission slip spread out on the counter. BAILEY stands at the sink wolfing down a bowl of cereal. OWEN sits in his high chair more playing with than eating the same brand.

KIRSTEN

I'm sorry, Bay. I just can't right now.

Kirsten scatters the banana slices into Owen's bowl.

KIRSTEN (cont'd)
(to Owen)

There ya' go. Now will you actually put some in your mouth?

Owen takes the suggestion and sloppily spoons in a mouthful.

BAILEY

(between mouthfuls)

I just thought, with your background and everything, you'd be perfect.

KIRSTEN

With work and class, I just don't have the time.

(meaning it)

It sounds great, though. Sorry.

CONTINUED:

Bailey hears Charlie approaching OC. He's not quick enough and CHARLIE notices Bailey trying to conceal the permission papers.

CHARLIE

Sorry for what?

KIRSTEN

Bailey wanted me to help with—

BAILEY

(interrupting)

Nothing, really. Wow! I just noticed the time. Gotta go.

Bailey starts to gather up his school stuff, slipping the papers into his pack. Kirsten is puzzled by Bailey's sudden attempt to retreat.

CHARLIE

You need help with something, Bay?

Charlie approaches Bailey holding out his hand for the papers.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Let me take a look.

Bailey stares coldly at Charlie. Kirsten notices, and puzzled by Bailey's hesitation --

KIRSTEN

What's the problem, Bailey? It sounds like a great program.

CHARLIE

Let's see. Come on.

Bailey reluctantly pulls the papers from the pack and tosses them to Charlie. Charlie quickly reads the slip.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

No problem.

Charlie reaches for a pen on the counter. As he signs --

CHARLIE (cont'd)

This is, I mean... this is kind of a new thing for you, isn't it?

CONTINUED:

Bailey shrugs. Kirsten looks over Charlie's shoulder and points.

KIRSTEN

It's not just the permission slip.
See, look here. You need to go.

Kirsten points to the pertinent paragraph.

CHARLIE

(reading)

Two sessions...

BAILEY

(thinking quickly)

But it's okay, really. I mean
you're busy with the restaurant and
everything. I can just—

CHARLIE

(interrupting)

No. I can do it. Sounds great.

Bailey nails Charlie with a merciless stare.

BAILEY

(uncertain)

It's not fair... to, to take up
your time and everything.

Charlie's dying inside but he holds his ground. He hands the signed permission papers to Bailey.

CHARLIE

I'm there. It's not a problem.

It is for Bailey. He stuffs the papers in his pack and heads for the door.

BAILEY

Great. Thanks.

CHARLEY

(wanting it to be okay)

Hey, Bay.

Bailey hits Charlie with one last hard, cold glare.

CONTINUED:

BAILEY

Gotta go.

Bailey exits. Kirsten, trying to figure it all out, watches Charlie as he sinks guiltily into one of the kitchen chairs.

EXT GRANT HIGH SCHOOL QUAD AREA DAY

BAILEY, morose, leans against a tree watching other STUDENTS head towards class. SARAH spots him and tentatively approaches, trying to assess his mood.

SARAH

Hey.

BAILEY

Hey.

She kisses him, sits down beside him.

SARAH

You've got a class now, don't you?

BAILEY

English. I'm working up to it.

SARAH

So, what's wrong?

BAILEY

Nothing.

SARAH

(doubtful)

Uh, huh.

BAILEY

Everything's just... normal.

SARAH

Normal.

BAILEY

Normal.

Sarah knows her next question is touchy.

CONTINUED:

SARAH

Is this about the college thing,
Bailey?

He remains silent.

SARAH (cont'd)

I mean, because if it is, maybe I
can help.

BAILEY

I don't see how.

SARAH

Well, you haven't told me why you
decided you aren't going. Start
there, maybe.

Off his irritating silence --

SARAH (cont'd)

Look, remember all that stuff about
talking things out. Trusting each
other.

He knows she's right and he doesn't want to blow it.

BAILEY

I didn't decide not to go.

SARAH

But you said that—

BAILEY

(interrupting)

I know. I know. It's about
Charlie almost losing Salinger's.
But you can't say anything to
anybody, okay?

SARAH

I don't get it, but okay.

BAILEY

I guess it started when Charlie
went to Jake for help.

Sarah moves closer to him, all attention.

INT SALINGER LIVING ROOM DAY

CHARLIE is moving furniture. KIRSTEN appears in the doorway, hurriedly tying back her hair and adjusting her clothing.

KIRSTEN

I'll call you when I get a break.

CHARLIE

Hey, wait a minute.

KIRSTEN

I'm already late.

CHARLIE

Whatta you think?

KIRSTEN

About... ?

Kirsten steps into the room for a closer look.

CHARLIE

I'm making room for that little hutch of yours. We had it right there. It looked a little weird after you moved out so we rearranged stuff.

Kirsten prefers to stay away from the homemaking subject.

KIRSTEN

Can we talk about it later?

CHARLIE

I was hoping you could tell me where you'd like everything. I've missed your touch around here.

Kirsten really doesn't want to be on this subject. She plants a quick kiss on Charlie's lips and hurries towards the front door.

KIRSTEN

Can't now. Bye.

CHARLIE

Hey, Kirsten. Just a...

Kirsten exits the house. This time Charlie gets it – something is wrong.

INT GRANT HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY DAY

JULIA makes her way through the other STUDENTS. She stops, something catching her eye OC.

JUSTIN pulls a book out of his locker, slams it shut and turns. He spots Julia OC.

Julia watches Justin OC, hoping for some kind of connection.

Justin manages a sympathetic smile and nods a greeting.

Julia begins to move towards Justin OC.

Justin turns and walks off down the hallway.

Confused and unhappy, Julia gathers herself together and heads towards class.

EXT WALT WHITMAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LUNCH AREA DAY

CLAUDIA, lunch sack in hand, roams through the area littered with STUDENTS looking for a place to sit. Something catches her attention OC.

JODY and her JIM are looking for a place to sit. Jody spots Claudia OC.

Claudia gives a tentative wave.

Jody begins to respond but Jim finds a place to sit and leads her away.

Claudia sits down by herself and unenthusiastically rummages through her lunch sack.

EXT HOMELESS SHELTER REAR ENTRANCE DAY

A well-kept facility in a gritty, downtown area. CHARLIE sorts thrift clothing with other VOLUNTEERS at one of several tables. He watches BAILEY and DAVE unloading canned goods from the rear of a small truck.

Bailey and Dave take boxes from the truck and stack them on a hand cart.

CONTINUED:

DAVE

The building was empty for something like three years. We got hold of it about two years ago.

BAILEY

Seems like a pretty nice place. I mean for the area and everything.

DAVE

It wasn't like this when we got it. Took four months to clean it up, meet city codes, all that stuff.

BAILEY

Looks like you've really got it going now.

DAVE

Yeah, well, we feed about a hundred people a day. Sleep about fifty. And we get hold of as much clothing as we can. Anything useful. All run by volunteers.

Bailey is impressed and kind of enjoying his involvement. Dave watches as another truck pulls up the driveway, heads for the wrong parking space.

DAVE (cont'd)

(to himself)

Oh, man. Not there.

(to Bailey)

Just get a couple of more cases and you can take them inside. I'll be back in a minute.

BAILEY

You got it.

Dave hurries away towards the truck as Charlie approaches.

DAVE

(calling out to driver)

No, no. Back it up over near the door.

Charlie helps Bailey load a couple more cases on the cart.

CONTINUED:

BAILEY

It's okay. I've got it.

CHARLEY

I know.

Bailey wheels the cart towards the building's rear door. Charlie walks along, steadying the cases, trying to ignore Bailey's coldness.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

I had no idea what this was gonna be like. But I think it's all pretty cool, really.

BAILEY

Yeah.

They reach the door. Bailey begins to push the cart through but the wheels catch on the door jam. Charlie moves to help.

CHARLIE

Here. I'll get hold of—

BAILEY

(interrupting)

I don't need any help.

Bailey begins backing the cart away from the door, readying for another push. Charlie takes hold of the front of the cart.

CHARLIE

I'll just lift up the front.

Bailey's chill turns to anger. He yanks the cart back, out of Charlie's hands, almost throwing him off-balance.

BAILEY

I said I can do it. I don't need any of your help, Charlie.

Bailey pushes the cart forward, bounces the wheels over the door jam and disappears inside the building. Charlie looks up to see Dave silently watching him. Off Charlie's pain and frustration.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE