

TRUST

by Megan Moore

(At rise, CHLOE, a young teenager, is standing alone on one half of the stage. The lighting is dim. She's holding a cellphone and an orange pill bottle. She has been crying. After staring at them for a few seconds, she presses a button on her phone. An automated message begins to play.)

ROBOT

You have reached the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. If you are in emotional distress or suicidal crisis or are concerned about someone who might be, we're here to help. Please remain on the line while we route your call to the nearest crisis center in our network.

(Music plays softly. The other half of the stage lights up, revealing DANA, a middle aged woman, sitting at a desk with a computer and a landline. The phone rings once. DANA picks it up.)

DANA

Hello, you've reached your local Lifeline. This is Dana speaking. May I have your name?

CHLOE

(CHLOE takes a deep breath. Her voice is shaky.)

Chloe.

DANA

Hello, Chloe. How are you doing this evening?

CHLOE

(laughs bitterly)

How do you think? I'm calling you guys, aren't I?

(She pauses)

No, I'm sorry, that was rude. I wasn't expecting to get through on the first ring.

DANA

(smiles)

That's okay. We normally have quite a hold, don't we?

CHLOE

Yeah, you guys really do.

(She laughs, then pauses)

I've never actually reached a person before.

DANA

Well, I'm glad you've decided to stay on the line long enough today. You said that you've tried to call us before?

CHLOE

(shyly)

Yeah. Last month. I tried the online chat thing, but I chickened out when the little red queue number changed to '3'.

(CHLOE traces a '3' in the air)

DANA

That's okay. You're here now, and that's what matters. Now, what seems to be the problem this evening?

CHLOE

(She struggles to find the words, pausing and stumbling over her speech)

I don't know. I just don't feel good, I guess. Everything just feels so impossible right now. Like, living is impossible.

DANA

I'm really sorry to hear that Chloe. Before we continue, I do need to ask a few questions. Firstly, do you feel like you're in danger of hurting yourself? Do you have a plan?

CHLOE

(She holds the bottle up and the pills rattle loudly)

I've got some pills here.

DANA

(She keeps her voice calm and friendly, but writes something on her computer. They keys clack loudly.)

Okay. What kind of pills?

CHLOE

(reading the bottle slowly)

Hydro-Hyd-Hydromorphone. They're my mom's. From years ago.

DANA

But you haven't taken any?

CHLOE

No. Not yet.

DANA

(DANA makes another note on her computer)

That's very good to hear, Chloe. Are you holding the pills right now?

CHLOE

Yeah.

DANA

Could you do me a favour then?

CHLOE

What?

DANA

Could you put them down on the ground? For me?

CHLOE

(pauses, unsure of what to do. Then she nods.)

Yeah.

(She puts the pills back on the ground)

I put them down.

DANA

(visibly relieved, but hides it from her voice)

Thank you, Chloe. That was very brave of you.

CHLOE

(She stares at the pill bottle)

Not really. I still want to pick them back up.

DANA

That's why it was so brave of you. Now, is there any reason why you want to pick them back up?

CHLOE

I dunno. No reason in particular.

DANA

Any reason in general?

CHLOE

I guess.

(DANA waits for CHLOE to continue talking, which she does after a few moments.)

I dunno. I guess, like school and stuff. That's hard.

DANA

I'm very sorry to hear that, Chloe. Are you having trouble with your grades then?

CHLOE

I don't know; I don't check them. Please don't make me check them.

DANA

(quickly)

It's okay, Chloe. I won't. Are you in highschool then? Or college?

CHLOE

I'm in highschool.

DANA

How old are you then, Chloe?

CHLOE

Sixteen, in

(she pauses to count on her fingers, mouthing something)

four months.

DANA

(Her face becomes worried. Her tone remains friendly)

I see. Do your parents know that you've been feeling like this?

CHLOE

No. I mean, yeah, I guess. I told my mom once. Like a year ago.

DANA

And how did she respond?

CHLOE

She just told me to eat more broccoli. 'Cause, you know, it has B vitamins and stuff. And then she hid all the knives.

DANA

(frowns and her tone becomes less cheery)

I see.

(CHLOE falls silent for a moment, noticing the change)

CHLOE

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that. I just - I just don't know what else to talk about.

DANA

(DANA winces, annoyed at herself, and resumes the friendly tone)

That's okay. I can help you with that.

(She looks at her computer, scrolling down the page)

Why don't you start with telling me-

CHLOE

(CHLOE, who has clearly not been listening, interrupts)

I dunno though.

(CHLOE paces across her half of the stage. Her voice

is slow, and gradually becomes more and more shaky.)

I should have a real reason for all of this, right? But I just don't. Like, there's no, like, one event that made me think I should go this. There's always one in movies. I mean, you know, there's lots of times where I said something stupid to a friend, or I made a stupid mistake on a test, and all of those things are why I know I don't deserve to live. It's stupid though, there's just no, like, actual reason I can name. I dunno though. I don't think that makes sense.

DANA

That's okay, Chloe. I think I can understand.

CHLOE

(in a whisper)

Why do people always say that?

DANA

I'm sorry; I didn't catch that. Could you please repeat what you said?

CHLOE



I'm sorry. I...dropped my phone. Sorry.

DANA

That's okay, Chloe.

CHLOE

(distracted)

I'm sorry.

DANA

It's okay. Chloe, I just want to ask you something. Is that okay?

CHLOE

I guess.

DANA

Is there a reason you decided to call me tonight?

CHLOE

I dunno.

DANA

Are you sure?

(CHLOE stays silent)

Chloe?

CHLOE

I'm scared.

DANA

(DANA leans forward)

Of what?

CHLOE

(rushed)

What if it hurts? I read on the internet about a girl who took a bunch of Tylenol and changed her mind, but it was too late and she died anyway. What if that happens? Or what if they don't work and I end up sick for life? What then? I'm just so scared.

DANA

I can see that, Chloe.

CHLOE

But I don't have any other choice. I wish I had a choice.

DANA

Chloe, you do have a choice.

CHLOE

No I don't.

DANA

Chloe, of course you have a choice. Everybody has a choice.

CHLOE

You don't get it. I don't.

DANA

Chloe-

CHLOE

I'm sorry, this was a mistake.

DANA

No, Chloe. No it wasn't.

(CHLOE doesn't respond. She puts down the phone and picks up the pill bottle. She rubs tears away from her cheeks)

DANA

Chloe? Chloe, are you still there?

(CHLOE picks the phone back up and hangs up)

Chloe?

(DANA looks at the phone, then drops it. She rushes to type something into her computer, and shouts to somebody off stage. Meanwhile, CHLOE tosses the phone away angrily. She punches herself in the leg twice, screwing up her face to suppress tears. She slumps down even further against the wall, looking across the stage towards DANA, although she can't see her. DANA looks up too. Her face is tight and worried, and she looks across at CHLOE, though also unaware of the girl's presence. The lights go to black. )