

QUESTIONS ABOUT CANDID (T.J.'s Monologue)

- How does T.J., through his story about Rico, show how the importance of friendship can get him through tough emotional problems?
- How does not talking about his mother's leaving only create more emotional tension for T.J.?
- What is T.J.'s relationship to Rico? What is it that makes them friends?
- How does T.J.'s fear about his family situation force him to communicate through pictures rather than words?
- What images does T.J. use to reinforce his ideas and feelings?

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VOICES FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL by Peter Dee

JIMMY is a teenager. Not untypical of teens in America today. Here, he recounts how he attempted suicide. The monologue's power comes from its objective point of view, in other words, not melodramatic but emotionally powerful and honest.

JIMMY

First thing I did was clean up my room. Hung up all the shirts on the floor. Put my socks and underwear and two T-shirts in a pile by the door. Made my bed. Sheets good and tight. Not a wrinkle in the spread. Looked at all my posters. Stopped seeing them. Rubbed my autographed baseball. Went out into the hall. Stopped. Went back and got the dirty pile of clothes I left by the door. Took them to the bathroom and dropped them in the hamper. Went into my brother's bedroom. Came out of that empty room into all the other empty rooms upstairs. No one home in the kitchen or rest of the house. There were some dirty glasses in the kitchen sink and three plates with egg stains. I scrubbed them all clean and laid them in the dishrack. I tried to look out the window over the kitchen sink but there was too much light. I opened the cellar door before I opened the cellar door. I mean I could see myself doing it. I went down the stairs. It was like going down into darkness ... water ... fog ... my mind had nothing to do with it any more. I could see the axe on the wall. The hammer. The saw. I found a piece of rope near the washing machine. And got up on a box and tied it to a pipe. Then I tied it around my neck, I stood on the box and looked out the window but there was no one in the street. Couldn't see any legs passing by. I kept one leg on the box and lowered the other one into the free air. I don't remember kicking over the box but they tell me I did. My brother said something felt weird when he came into the house. If he hadn't found me

when he did I'd have been a vegetable or dead. So I'm glad he cut me down. And though it's a little embarrassing to tell you all this ... I'm real glad I can.

QUESTIONS ABOUT VOICES FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL (Jimmy's Monologue)

- How does JIMMY's recreation of the events of his suicide come across? Is he highly emotional? Rational?
- What details in his story become important to him?
- How are these details reinforced as important enough things to live for?
- Why does JIMMY contemplate suicide in the first place?
- What events, people and things make his life worth saving?
- Has JIMMY come to any decisions that will let him understand his actions and move on with his life?
- How does the monologue's objectivity and rationality create even more intense emotions than if the monologue were melodramatic?