

(4 Characters enter the stage when their dialogue begins with the other characters. 1 & 2: play different parts as need. D: is Deb the Narrator, a lesbian social worker and B: is Blue a lesbian runaway youth living on the streets.)

N: Hi, my name is Deb. I am a social worker in New York City working with homeless youth living on the streets. My partner & I have been together for 10 years but I can't talk about her at work especially with the runaway kids, I need to be able to talk to all them. They are pretty scared of labels and don't want to stand out to others. They have had enough bullying in their lives. The way they remain safe on the streets is to go unnoticed. I know it would really help some of the lesbian & gay kids but I need my job and can't risk losing it. Most of the kids are a pretty hardened bunch but they all seem to have similar stories. Most of them are runaways from a troubled home. The gay & lesbian runaways are kicked out of their homes when they come out and have nowhere else to go but the streets. In a major large city there are more services for them than the small towns they left. Most of them end up as sex-workers to get some money to live on. Life on the street is a hard life and most don't survive for long. My job is to get them to safety and off the streets into shelters. We try to reach them and encourage them to finish school. We help them get training so they can find jobs. Most of my cases are pretty routine, except for Blue. She said her parents called her "Ms. Trouble" and her step-dad tried to rape her when she came out to them. I never knew if Blue was her real name or just a street name. She was a happy kid most of the time and so it could not have been chosen to describe a depressed state. May be it was her way of commenting on her old family home life and how it made her feel.

1: My name is Joe Malhoney. I am a Police Officer and sometimes work with Deb and the street people. I was dispatched to a high rise office building to evict a homeless kid that was living on the roof. Her name was Blue the report says. She lives in a large packing box with the word "Courage" written on each side. The landlord has been getting complaints from the office staff who go to the roof to smoke.

B: After living on the streets for almost a year, I had to find a new place away from the drunks & the constant smell of urine. I was literally "moving on up to the deluxe apartment in the sky!" Others saw a packing crate...for me it was the Ritz Carlton. Who wouldn't want to live in a penthouse with the stars for your ceiling and the noise of the city drifting up to you like piped in music in an elevator? Why "Courage"? I had to see something every day to inspire me. Each and every day I need to get my ass out on the street to earn a living or die in self-pity & hunger, not an option for me. I'm too much of a fighter to give up now that I am on my own. I never tell anyone my real name, cause no way in hell am I going back home, I would rather die being truly alive and living on the streets. I am living in New York City with all its new sights, sounds & smells it's my chosen home now. It was quite a culture shock from the family farm in Wisconsin. "Courage" reminds me to toughen up, hold my head high and look above the obstacles I might find that day. Deb became my friend after a couple of months. She seems to really care about me. For some unknown reason she seems to relate with what I am going through. She doesn't just tell me to do stuff like an order my parents would give me but she really listens to me. I must be saying something important because it seems to make a difference for her.

1: Now see here, Deb I have a court eviction notice to physically remove this kid Blue from the roof. The landlord says she has to go today!

D: Can you give me just one more day to see if I can get her off the streets and into a shelter? Even though most have long waiting lists, I may be able to call in a few favors. I think I can get her moved into one tomorrow if you can hold off today.

1: All right. One more day, Deb, but that is it! You are too good to these kids Deb, as if they even care or say thank you to you!

D: Something about Blue was different from the others, I can't put my finger on it yet. But I knew she is special and could make it off the streets given the chance. I wanted to help her find a new & better life, to start over from that life she left in Wisconsin.

B: Sometimes people call me crazy to my face. They want me to go to a psych ward. I tell them I am just high on life and glad to have one more day to enjoy it. So who cares if I see colors in the grey of the city and music in the constant street noise and confusion. It hurts nobody else and sure makes my life more interesting. Maybe it is my special gift. Every day is a new adventure for me to embrace! Sure I have to live hand-to-mouth but it is the life I have chosen. If I am lucky I have extra and share it. When you are on the street you have to find friends to watch your back and you do the same for them. Maybe it is building good karma!

D: I thought if I could get Blue in for a psych evaluation, maybe there were other health services we could tap into. Maybe she is bi-polar, manic depressive or has a chemical imbalance. It would not hurt to know for sure. Maybe it is treatable & will stabilize her life. Then I could get her training and a regular job, before it's too late. Of course Blue would not hear of it. Her response was a cry of "Courage!" and a smile. She lives for a better tomorrow.

2: I guess you would say that I am Blue's girl. Living on the streets it's next to impossible to find anyone & anywhere safe to make love together. So we mostly kiss and hold hands in private when it is safe. There are gangs roaming the streets who like to go around & bash us Pride Kids any chance they can find it. So we try to keep it normal so we won't stick out too much. Most girls on the streets rather be with another girl anyway. The men tricks are for money only. I close my eyes and imagine that is Blue touching me and before you know it, it's over. Easy money! Blue doesn't trick. She dumpster dives. She fixes up really cool stuff she finds and sells it on the street. Easy money for her!

D: The frost is in the air now. Winters in New York City are deadly for the homeless, especially streets kids who are afraid of going into many normal shelters. They get picked on & harassed by other street people so they want to stay safe with their own kind on the streets. I was able to get Blue set up in a crisis shelter for young women before they evict her from her glorious penthouse. The day she was moving as I was heading over to help her get settled into the shelter. Before I left I got a call from a nurse friend.

2: Hey Deb, you better get down here fast. A homeless kid named Blue wanted me to call you and let you know she is here. She got hit a couple of hours ago by a limo on Broadway, something about pushing her friend out of the way. She is in pretty bad shape. Doctors are afraid that pneumonia will set in.

D: As soon as I got to Blue's room I was stopped by one of these junior intern doctors.

1: Sorry can't let you in! We think it was an embolism but we couldn't bring her back. The homeless must have it rough, bad food, booze & drugs! A bad crowd they hang out with. It takes a toll on the body.

D: Maybe other homeless, (pause) but not Blue.