

Excerpt terms and conditions



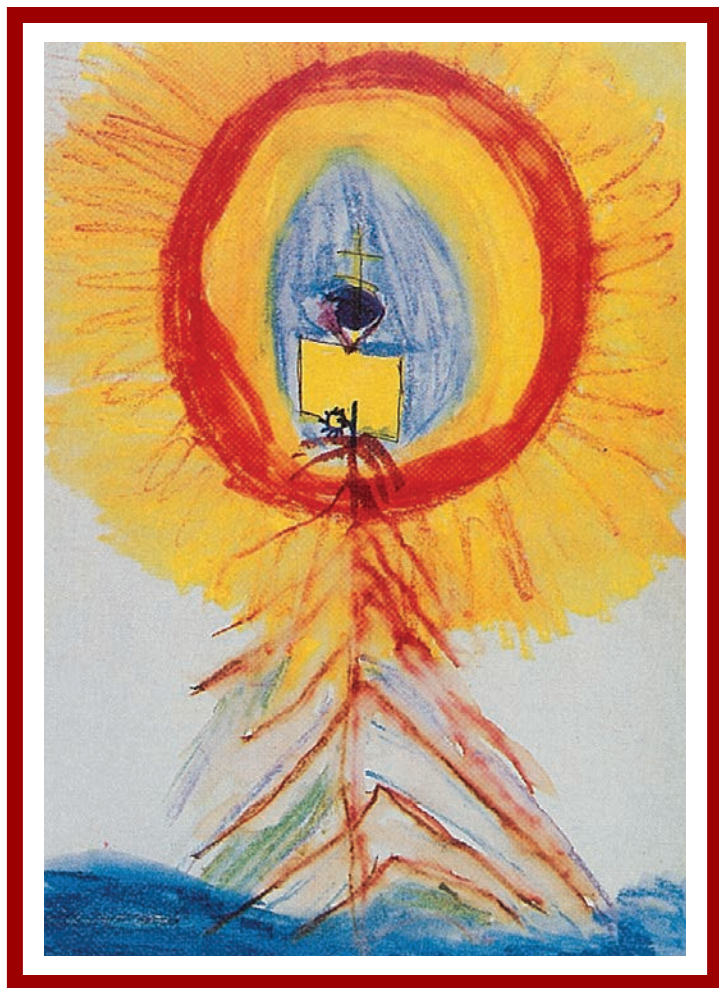
This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing



The Yellow Boat

Competition Version

Drama by
David Saar

The Yellow Boat

Authorized shortened version for performance in competitions.

The story of *The Yellow Boat* is a glorious affirmation of a child's life and the strength and courage of all children.

Drama. By David Saar. *Cast: 3m., 2w., plus 4 ensemble. (The number of actors in the ensemble may be increased or reduced.)* *The Yellow Boat* is based on the true story of David and Sonja Saar's son, Benjamin, who was born with congenital hemophilia and died in 1987 at the age of 8 of AIDS-related complications. A uniquely gifted visual artist, Benjamin's buoyant imagination transformed his physical and emotional pain into a blaze of colors and shapes in his fanciful drawings and paintings. A Scandinavian folksong tells of three little boats: "One was blue, one was red and one was yellow as the sun. They sailed far out to sea. The blue one returned to the harbor. The red one sailed home, too. But the yellow boat sailed up to the sun." Benjamin always concluded his bedtime ritual by saying, "Mom, you can be the red boat or the blue boat, but I am the yellow boat." Benjamin's remarkable voyage continues to touch audiences around the world. *Recommended for children age 8 and older, parents, families and adults. Open stage with simple set pieces. Contemporary costumes. Approximate running time: 40 minutes. Music in book. No additional cutting is allowed. Code: Y31.*

(Artwork: Benjamin Saar.)

ISBN-10 1-58342-709-0
ISBN-13 978-1-58342-709-5



9 781583 427095 >

The Yellow Boat
(competition version)



Dramatic Publishing

311 Washington St.
Woodstock, IL 60098-3308
Phone: (800) 448-7469

www.dramaticpublishing.com

THE YELLOW BOAT

(COMPETITION VERSION)

by
DAVID SAAR

Adapted for Park Center High School and the Minnesota
State High School League One-act Play Competition
by Melanie Spewock, January 2002



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website: www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, 311 Washington St., Woodstock IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

©MMXIII by
DAVID SAAR

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(THE YELLOW BOAT - Competition Version)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-709-5

(Cover art by Benjamin Saar)

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author(s) of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author(s) *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author(s), if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY
of Woodstock, Illinois

For SONJA and BENJAMIN

More information about *The Yellow Boat* and Benjamin Saar may be obtained from Kathy Krzys. She is the curator of the child drama collection at ASU in Tempe, Ariz.

Please contact her by e-mail: kathy.krzys@asu.edu

Cast of Characters

Benjamin
Mother
Father
Joy
Eddy
Chorus 1
Chorus 2
Chorus 3
Chorus 4

Chorus may be expanded as needed

(Soft light, sound swirl. The time is past, present, future. Lights come up on Joy as she steps forward and hands a drawing to Mother and Father.)

MOTHER, FATHER, JOY: Always... *(exit, fade)*

BOY: It began . . . 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1: Blast off! *(vocalized sounds of rocket launching)*

CHORUS 1, 2, 3, MOTHER, FATHER: It began before the beginning.

(The boy's play holds stage alone for a moment, and then others, the characters who will become the parents, the doctors, the community, become part of the playing space. Their voices overlap and build.)

#1: This is a story about. . .

#3: This story is about. . .

MOTHER: Not an ordinary story. . .

#2: It happened. . .

#4: Did it happen?

FATHER: How could it happen?

ALL: It happened.

(The Boy looks around at this gathering for the first time.)

BOY: This is a story about. . . me.

(From the perimeter of the playing space the other characters begin to call/sing out different parental labels: a vocalized time swirl.)

BOY: It began before the beginning with a sort of choosing. . .

MOTHER: Mother. . .

FATHER: Father. . .

#3: Momma. . .

#1: Pappa. . .

#2: Mommy. . .

#4: Daddy. . .

(Boy shifts his focus to Father and Mother. The scene "shifts" to a more realistic style.)

FATHER: You're what!?! This is great! It is really great, isn't it?

MOTHER: I've never felt so happy. . .

FATHER: Can you feel him yet?

MOTHER: No, but I know he's there.

FATHER: "He." We both said "he!"

MOTHER: I know.

FATHER: What does. . . he feel like?

MOTHER: He feels like. . . himself.

BOY: *(The boy points to Mother and Father.)* You will be my Mom. And you, my Dad. This is a story about us. And it takes. . .

#1: Forty-eight years, sixty-seven years, fourteen years. . .

#2: Ninety-six years, seventy-nine years, sixty-seven years. . .

#3: Fourteen days, four days, twenty-three days. . .

BOY: *(stopping the time swirl with his announcement)* It takes: eight years, four months, twenty-nine days. . . That's enough!

(This launches a "birth dance" with Mother, Father, and Benjamin. As Benjamin names each color, chorus members swirl colored silks into the air, transforming the playing space into a swirl of color.)

I see. . . red
 I hear. . . blue.
 I feel. . . purple.
 I taste. . . green.
 I . . . choose. . . yellow.

(Mother gives birth to a small yellow doll that "becomes" the baby Benjamin. Mother and Father use the doll as baby while the actor playing Benjamin voices and reacts for him.)

FATHER: It's a boy!

MOTHER: A beautiful boy.

BENJAMIN: My birthday. April 19, 1979.

MOTHER: The nurse says he's the most beautiful child she's ever seen.

FATHER: She says that to everyone!

MOTHER and FATHER: She's right.

MOTHER: He's small, and wise, and. . . mine.

FATHER: And mine.

(Mom gives baby to Dad, who doesn't quite know what to do with him.)

MOTHER: That's it!

FATHER: What?

MOTHER: His name. "Benjamin." It works in lots of languages. Translate: Ben. . .

FATHER: "Son."

MOTHER: Ja. . .

FATHER: "Yes."

MOTHER: Min. . .

FATHER: "Mine." *(Father cuddles his son and parents simultaneously translate his new name.)*

MOTHER:
Son. Yes, he's mine!

FATHER:
Ben. Ja. Min.!

(Benjamin begins to cry.)

MOTHER: This is a story about boats, and sails, and. . . it takes place in a harbor. . .

FATHER: . . . far, far away. . .

MOTHER: Now inside this harbor there were three boats. A red one. A blue one. . . and a yellow one. They all sailed far out to sea, and the red one came back, and the blue one came back; but the yellow boat? The yellow boat sailed straight up to the sun. *(Sings)*

Busen lull, cook the kettle full,
There sailed three boats from the harbor,
The first was so blue,
The second so red,
The third was the color of the sun.

MOTHER and FATHER: Busen lull, cook the kettle full,
 There sailed three boats from the harbor,
 The blue carried hope,
 The red carried faith,
 The yellow filled itself with love.

FATHER: I sail the blue boat.

MOTHER: The red one's for me. . .

BENJAMIN: (*The lullaby has almost put him to sleep.*) I am the yellow boat.

MOTHER: I'll weave you a sail.

FATHER: I'll write you a world.

MOTHER and FATHER: Worktime!

(The Father and Mother separate to their individual "work space." The Mother weaves some of the colored silk ribbons, the Father works on a new story. The chorus is used to help create these work environments or assist in the creation of the work itself--they are "transformational potential." Each works to rhythms which weave together and separate. The intention of this movement/music beat is to show the parents at work and the baby Benjamin discovering that he has the power to interrupt that world. Use the following choral litany to underscore the scene--or figure out another way to do it!)

#2 & #3: Shuttle, Beat. Shuttle, Beat. Shuttle, Beat. Shuttle Beat.
 (*Repeat*)

#1 & 4: Comma, Dot. Comma, Word. Comma, Dot. Comma, Word.
 (*Repeat*)

(Benjamin starts to cry.)

BENJAMIN: One day she sees something funny.

MOTHER: Look at this bruise. It seems to hurt him if I touch it.

FATHER: It's just a bruise. Stop worrying.

BENJAMIN: I cry. (*He does.*) Loud. Lots! They worry! (*He cries more.*)

MOTHER and FATHER: Call the Doctor! (*The boat piece becomes the ambulance. Benjamin draws as he tells.*)

BENJAMIN: I'm going to the hospital in an ambulance. Big siren! Fast. Neat! Then. . .
 Doctors!

(Doctors enter with clip boards and whisk the baby away from the parents. They are robotic, clinical; the parents are left waiting outside, overhearing what is being said.)

DOCTOR #1: Hematocrit every two hours.

MOTHER: What? What does that mean?

DOCTOR #2: Two pints whole blood. . .

FATHER: What's wrong?

DOCTOR #3: . . . and a CAT Scan.

FATHER: What are you testing?

DOCTOR #4: Wait here, please. Just a few more tests. . .

DOCTOR #1: I don't understand all this bleeding. *(The doctors cross to Benjamin, who hands them a piece of drawing paper. Each "reads" the test result, says "HmMMM" and passes it to the next, until it reaches Doctor #1.)*

BENJAMIN: Then they figure it out.

DOCTOR #1: Blood tests confirm that your son has. . . Classic hemophilia, Type A.

BENJAMIN: It means my blood isn't like everyone else's. It's missing the "Stop Bleeding Stuff." So, when I get a cut or bump inside, it doesn't stop bleeding. It just keeps dribbling and drabbling. . . like a leaky faucet.

MOTHER: What do we do?

DOCTOR #1: We'll begin the infusion procedure immediately.

DOCTOR #4: Order up. . . one hundred and sixty units of Factor 8.

FATHER: What does that do?

(#2 and #3 swirl red ribbons into the air, the separate blood sources that are then "mixed" to create the factor.)

BENJAMIN: *(To audience)* It's this really great stuff that works like a bunch of plugs to stop the bleeding. It's really strong because lots of people's blood gets mixed up to make it.

MOTHER: Where does it come from?

DOCTOR #4: From thousands of blood donors. Excuse me. We have to inject him with the factor!

(The infusion process is set up with a long length of knotted ribbons. This is the Factor 8 which is infused into the doll's body. Two chorus members control the ribbon's movement in such a way that it looks like the stream of red is being infused into the doll's body. One doctor holds the doll, another holds the syringe and guides the blood line into the doll.)

BENJAMIN: *(As he draws it.)* The first time they poke me, I cry. Poke! *(The doctor with the syringe "pokes" the doll, searching for a vein.)*
Owww. . .

DOCTOR #4: Once more.

BENJAMIN: Poke! Owww. . .

DOCTOR #4: Bullseye! *(The infusion process begins.)*

MOTHER: He's stopped crying.

DOCTOR #4: Everything is under control.

FATHER: How often will he need to go through this?

DOCTOR #4: Whenever he has a bleed.

MOTHER: Is it safe? That. . . Factor?

DOCTOR #4: Factor 8 is completely safe. Almost finished. Done.

FATHER: Are you sure he'll be okay?

DOCTOR #4: He can do anything any other child can, with just a few precautions. Trust me. He'll have a normal life. *(The "baby" is returned to the parents. All except the family exit. Benjamin transitions from babyhood to young boyhood.)*

(Benjamin awakes, and watches the surrounding activity, perhaps joining in, or getting in the way, and then, tired of no one paying attention to him, starts to cry.)

MOTHER: *(Not wanting to interrupt her weaving.)* Mamma's right here. *(To Father)* Can you see what he needs?

FATHER: Yeah, sure. *(He tries to ignore the crying for a beat, so Benjamin intensifies his efforts.)* Okay, here's the scoop. I'll write the story, and you color it! *(Father puts down assorted crayons, and returns to writing. Benjamin selects one crayon.)*

BENJAMIN: Blue!

(A bluesy kind of music is heard and the chorus illustrates the color in movement as Benjamin colors.)

CHORUS: Cool, cooler, coolest blue. Smooth, soothing, blues. . . *(Exploration of blue is interrupted by:)*

BENJAMIN: *(Holding up another crayon.)* Green. *(Change in sound as he colors and the chorus explores "a mean kind of green" in movement.)*

CHORUS: It's a mean kind of green,
Like a scream in a dream,
Like a . . .

BENJAMIN: Ghost. . . on Halloween. . . *(The chorus becomes a drawing on the wall. At this point Mother sees what he's doing and rushes over.)*

MOTHER: Oh Benjamin, not on the walls! *(Then looks more closely at the wall, assessing. . .)* Oh. . . ! *(Father joins her.)*

FATHER: Oh. . . ?

FATHER and MOTHER: *(Appreciative)* Oh. . . Benjamin. . .

MOTHER: That's a very nice drawing. . . . but it would be so much nicer on a piece of paper. . . *(She hands him a sheet of paper. With her finger she defines the space of the paper. The Chorus drawing dissolves.)* Here. Draw here. *(Mother helps Benjamin draw a long line on the paper.)* You can draw a nice, long line that connects from here to here, and from here to here.

BENJAMIN: Line?

MOTHER: Line. *(Benjamin takes the crayon and draws a line.)* Lovely! *(Mother returns to her work. Benjamin begins to explore the concept.)*

BENJAMIN: Line! Line here. Here; line, Here; line, Here; line, Here; line!
(Benjamin suddenly draws a long line right off the paper. Suddenly discovering another dimension, he abandons the paper and moves into the third and fourth dimension, moving through space as he explores "line." The chorus illustrates his "line exploration" with colored elastics which they manipulate to create visible lines and shapes in space.)

#3: S-p-i-r-a-l.

BENJAMIN: Line!

- #2: Straight!
- BENJAMIN: Line.
- #1: An-gle?
- BENJAMIN: Line!
- #4: Squiggle!
- BENJAMIN: Line! *(Benjamin is delighted by his line drawings and his explorations grow bolder and bolder. Finally Father notices.)*
- FATHER: *(To Mother)* Look, look what he's doing!
- MOTHER: Those aren't just scribbles, those are shapes!
- MOTHER: Lines and shapes for a . . .
- MOTHER and FATHER: Picture!
- BENJAMIN: Picture of . . . a tree! *(Chorus uses elastics to make an evergreen.)* A heart. *(Chorus makes a heart shape that "beats.")* A bow and arrow. *(Chorus makes a bow and arrow which is "shot" through the heart.)* A boat...a yellow boat, sailing up to the sun.
- BENJAMIN: Mom, Dad, look at me! Let's play. . . on the boat. . . *(The boat is moved center stage and they all come on board.)* Come on Dad! Let's go explore. All aboard the yellow boat. Destination. . . to Flower Island! Hoist the sails!
- FATHER: Aye, aye, Captain.
- BENJAMIN: Hoist the anchor!
- MOTHER: Aye, aye, Captain.
- BENJAMIN: Set sail for Flower Island. Okay, We're there. *(He accidentally falls and bumps his knee.)*
- FATHER: Are you all right?
- MOTHER: I think it's swelling.
- BENJAMIN: Darn. I think I need a shot!
- MOTHER and FATHER: Hospital time.

(They move to the hospital and the infusion procedure is set up.)

BENJAMIN: It hurts, but I don't cry. Much. *(It takes numerous attempts before they find a vein. Doctor #4 attempts a "poke.")* Owwww!

DOCTOR #4: Now remember, watch this tube. When it fills with blood we'll stop all this poking! *(Poke.)*

BENJAMIN: Owwwwwww!

FATHER: *(Giving him crayons as a diversion.)* Look! Crayons!

DOCTOR #4: One more try. *(Poke.)*

BENJAMIN: Owwww!

MOTHER: Use the crayon, color what you feel!

BENJAMIN: *(He begins to use the crayon as a vehicle for "escape.")* Red. Red. Red. . . !

CHORUS: Poke, poke, poke!

DOCTOR #4: Bull's eye!

(With the "bull's eye," Benjamin pulls away from the infusion action and launches into the story, drawing it three-dimensionally in the space around the continuing infusion scene.)

BENJAMIN: My drawing. The Factor 8 Train. *(The infusion ends.)*

DOCTOR #4: Good job, partner. You held still just the way you should.

BENJAMIN: I know. But next time you should do better than four pokes!

(The doctor gives him a big sucker and the medical staff exits.)

BENJAMIN: Time for school.

TEACHER #3: Come and join us. Class, this is Benjamin. *(The kids immediately react to the newcomer, checking him out. The teacher sees this and adopts a strategy to help break the ice.)* Today's assignment is "Me Drawings." Drawings of you! And you, and you. . . *(pointing to each child)*

KIDS #1, #2, #3, BENJAMIN: And you and you and you!

KIDS #3: I'm pink.

BENJAMIN: I'm yellow.

EDDY: I'm green.

BENJAMIN: That's cool!

(The kids draw.)

BENJAMIN: Any shape we want?

TEACHER: Any shape you are.

EDDY: Any color we like?

TEACHER: Any color you feel.

BENJAMIN: I feel purple. I see red. I hear blue. I taste green. I am. . .
having a good time here.

TEACHER: Benjamin, will you share your drawing with us?

BENJAMIN: This is my blue stomach and my yellow hat, and these are my bones,
and they're dancing inside my body. And this is my knee where I
had a bleed, and. . .

KID #3: I don't see any blood.

BENJAMIN: No, it's on the inside. See, it bleeds on the inside, here and here,
and gets all red and hot and squishy. . .

EDDY: Cool!

BENJAMIN: Then I go to the doctor. I get a shot of Factor 8, and the bleed stops, and
then I get a sucker. *(The kids voice approval. Time shift, playtime.)*

BENJAMIN, EDDY, KID #1, KID #3: Recess!

KID #3: So what do you want to do?

BENJAMIN: I have an idea. We can go on the Yellow Boat.

KID #3: Boats are boring.

BENJAMIN: This is a Yellow Boat!

EDDY: And it can fly!

KID #3: Cool.

BENJAMIN: Here, I'll draw it for you.

KID #3: Drawing? Drawing's boring.

BENJAMIN: C'mon aboard. Okay, hoist the sails, hoist the anchor. (*He draws.*) You're supposed to say, "Aye, aye, Captain."

KID #1: Storm up ahead!

BENJAMIN: We can fly! Start special hydraulic-powered flyers. (*He draws as the kids become a flying boat, complete with sound effects. They begin to fly. Kid #3 grabs the crayon and draws in the air.*)

KID #3: Land ho.

(Benjamin climbs off boat, but falls.)

EDDY: Benjamin, you all right?

BENJAMIN: I'm fine.

EDDY: Safe! (*The boat vanishes as the game ends.*)

KID #3: That was fun. Let's do it again tomorrow.

(Mother enters.)

MOTHER: What are you doing?

BENJAMIN: I'm drawing.

MOTHER: How's your knee?

BENJAMIN: Oh. . . fine.

MOTHER: Can you straighten it? (*She examines his knee. It hurts.*) I'll call the hospital.

BENJAMIN: I don't have time for that; I'm working on this map. . .

MOTHER: You can take it along.

BENJAMIN: Oh. Okay. (*Mother and Benjamin shift location and the infusion procedure begins. He draws throughout. During this infusion we see the red "blood" tinged with another colored contaminant: the HIV virus. Benjamin continues his monologue as he draws.*) When you open this door, the skeleton is waiting with buckets of poison. . . lemonade. Drink it, you turn into. . . a ghost! So don't drink it! Ahhhhhhhhhh!

MOTHER: They're all done. You can finish that up at home. *(They return home. Time shift.)*

BENJAMIN: New drawing. Benjamin's Body. Everything looks the same. Outside.

(Chorus becomes "The Media." There is a sense of their "information" invading the personal space of the family. The parents do not react directly to the announcements, but are affected by their presence.)

#1: Doctors alarmed by mystery illness.

MOTHER: I've just got this feeling. . .

FATHER: You worry too much.

#2: Immune deficiency linked to infant deaths.

MOTHER: Doctor says his weight is down, and he's a little anemic.

FATHER: Maybe it's a growth spurt?

#3: Transmitted by the exchange of body fluids. . .

FATHER: Maybe it's the flu, everybody in his class has an upset stomach and diarrhea.

MOTHER: But he's had it over a week.

#4: Officials insist blood supply is 100% safe!

#1: Eighty-three year old grandmother dies of AIDS?

#2: Cause of infection unknown.

BENJAMIN: And my head turns tired. And my legs turn tired. And my fingers. . . even my drawing is tired.

#3: Cases of AIDS reported in California.

MOTHER: Something's wrong, I just know it. It's like a spark has gone out of him. . . Don't you think he should be tested?

#2: New York.

FATHER: Tested for what?

#1: Pennsylvania. Arizona. Texas.

MOTHER: Tested for everything!

- DOCTOR #1: Your son. . . has tested. . . positive for the AIDS virus. I'm very sorry. We'll do everything that we can. (*He exits.*)
- MOTHER: How do we tell him?
- FATHER: The right words will come. (*They move to Benjamin.*) Uh, Benjamin, we need to talk.
- BENJAMIN: About your meeting with the doctor, yesterday?
- MOTHER: Yes. He did a couple of special tests. And he found something in your blood that shouldn't be there.
- FATHER: A kind of bug--a virus.
- BENJAMIN: AIDS?
- FATHER: How do you know. . . ?
- BENJAMIN: TV.
- MOTHER: No. Not AIDS. Not AIDS. . . But they found a little bit of the virus that can lead to the disease.
- BENJAMIN: How did I get it?
- FATHER: Some of the blood that makes the factor must have had some of the virus in it.
- BENJAMIN: Will I be all right?
- FATHER: Yes.
- MOTHER: I promise you.
- FATHER: We're right here. (*Benjamin moves away from his parents to assimilate the news.*) We're going to get some answers! (*The parents move to Doctor #4. The following scenes should swirl around the space as the parents try to get some control of the situation, but it doesn't happen.*)