

NOTES

Ribbons is a short story and should be performed by a female and entered in either Prose Interpretation; however, since it is written in first person, the performer may also choose to consider entering this selection in Dramatic Interpretation. The performer should play this character with 100% honesty. This is a young girl dealing with a very real issue, breast cancer. There is humor throughout this selection. Play that humor. Make the character likeable. All performers benefit from the rapport with an audience. Always remember, in order for an audience to feel sorry for a character, they must first *like* the character. Play the moments. Never play the 'ending' of a selection at the 'beginning.' Remember, there is an art to the building of suspense. Above all, the audience must get a strong sense of how much this young girl loves her mother. If used in Prose Interpretation, the drama mask icons are simply visible to show performers where to turn the pages in the manuscript.

I was always the one who saw to it that every kid in the school wore a red ribbon during Drug Awareness Week. Yes, I was in Student Council and Vice-President of my class. I was determined, as *Chairman* of Drug Awareness Week, that every single student, teacher, administrator, and staff member wear a red ribbon for the *entire* week. I had a table set up right inside the front door to the school. As soon as someone stepped inside, one of my committee members would immediately offer the person a red ribbon... with a straight pin. *Get behind our cause! Show you care!* There were, of course, a few practical jokers. Some of the self-proclaimed 'stoners' asked for *extra* ribbons. Each morning they would ask for as *many red ribbons* as we would allow them to take. They thought it was funny. I have to admit that I laughed, too. Secretly, though, I hoped that one of them—just *one* of them—would *change*. I think it would have been really cool to know that all of that *effort*—all of that *hard work* had paid off. That *that* red ribbon...saved a person's life.



My mother has always been my number one fan. Who needs a cheerleader when you have *Team Mom* behind you every step of the way, right? She *loved* helping me organize all of the ribbons for Drug Awareness Week. She said that ribbons were a great way to show *solidarity* among people. She also said that ribbons were a great way to bring attention to a problem—a *cause*. Take AIDS, for example. Everyone wore red ribbons to show support for those affected by the disease. She told me to notice how many celebrities wore red ribbons on various televised award shows. I did, and it was a lot. Mother said that ribbons were a great way to say a lot about what a person might be *going through*... without having to actually *say it* all the time. By wearing a red ribbon, a person might be saying, “*I have AIDS.*” “*My relative has AIDS.*” “*One of my friends or co-workers has AIDS.*” Who knows? But by *wearing* the ribbon, the person is essentially saying, “*Hey, show a little respect. This is something no one should have to go through in this lifetime.*” With ribbons explained to me that way, I think it’s easier to see *why* I was so *intent* on making sure everyone at my school wore a red ribbon during Drug Awareness Week.



To celebrate the success of Red Ribbon Week, Mom made a huge dinner for us that night. I mean, it was like... *Thanksgiving*—but in *March*! She must have spent at least *six hours* in the kitchen that day!

After dinner, Mom told us she had *presents* for us. Dad immediately looked nervous. If Mom ever gives anyone an *unexpected* present, it usually means someone forgot to get *her* an *expected* present. Like a birthday, or anniversary or something. The *very second* Mom left the room, Dad asked me and my two, younger brothers if he had... *forgotten* anything recently. We just looked at him and shook our heads ‘no.’ Just then, Mom returned with four beautifully wrapped packages. Attached to each bow was a tag that read, “Wear it proudly!” Nicholas, my youngest brother, to whom I had *just* finished reading *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, began shaking the small box wildly and shouted, “Wear it proudly? You got us *invisible clothes!*” We all laughed. Especially *Mom*. Especially her. She was laughing so hard, in fact, that she had tears in her eyes. One by one, we opened our presents. We each looked inside our little box, paused, then looked confused. Inside each box, wrapped in pink tissue paper, Mom had placed a pink ribbon. Mom told us to take the ribbons out and put them on. She handed each of us a straight pin, and as we pinned the pink ribbons onto our shirts,