

BYSTANDER EFFECT SCENARIO

Character List

Name	Description
Josh	He's delivering an important presentation as part of a final project for a psychology class. The class is on a tight schedule, and he's the first student to present. He's very shy and feeling anxious.
Ms. Jackson	She's in a rush to have the class complete their presentations. She means well, but sometimes doesn't understand how some of her students are feeling in high-pressure situations. She needs to speak to the principal in the hallway for a few minutes and tells Josh that he needs to have everything ready by the time she returns, unknowingly placing even more pressure on him.
Ethan	He thinks it's funny that Josh is panicking, and things are going wrong.
Matthew	Best friend of Ethan and also finds the situation hilarious.
Maria	Feeling eager to help out, but not sure what to do. She assumes someone else will probably help out.
Alicia	Best friend of Maria. Discusses the situation with Maria, and admits she feels similarly, but doesn't want to help out. She worries Ethan or Matthew might make fun of her.
Madison	She understands how Josh feels, but worries that if she helps, she might make things worse.
Jayden	Friend of Madison. He also feels bad for Josh, but he feels he doesn't know enough about the tech issue and assumes that someone else who knows more than him will step in.
Cho	She silently looks back and forth, listening closely to the discussions around her. She realizes that no one else is going to do anything, and it's important for her to take action.

Setting: A classroom in an Oklahoma high school. Students in a psychology class are about to present their final projects. Each student has put together some slides on a different topic relating to psychology, and they must each present in front of the class. Josh is feeling very anxious about his presentation.

Ms. Jackson: Alright. I'm going to pick a name randomly from a hat, and the person I pick will be the first student presenting.

Ms. Jackson reaches into the hat and pulls out Josh's name.

Ms. Jackson: (pointing to Josh) It looks like you'll be first. Come up front and tell us what you know about operant conditioning!

Josh: (trying to hide his anxiety) Can I go later? I just want a little more time to think about what I want to say.

Ms. Jackson: Nope. It's your time to shine! Don't worry. We're all here to support you.

Josh nervously moves in front of the class.

Ms. Jackson: Just remember. We only have a couple of days to do these presentations, so I need us to stay on a tight schedule. Once we get the laptop set up, it's five minutes per presentation tops. Is that clear?

The students nod. Some of them also feel rushed and don't like the time constraints Ms. Jackson has set for the presentations, but they don't want to say anything. They worry they might get in trouble, and they don't see anyone else complaining. Suddenly, there's a knock at the door.

Ms. Jackson: Oh, that's the principal. I have to speak with him about something. I'll just be a couple of minutes. Josh, you know how to set up your PowerPoint slides on that laptop, right?

Josh: Sure.

Josh isn't sure.

Ms. Jackson: Great. Make sure you're all set to go when I get back. Thanks!

The door closes. Josh nervously eyes the laptop and attempts to open PowerPoint. Suddenly, the screen turns blue, and an error message appears on the screen for all to see! Everyone in the class laughs. Most of the students aren't laughing at Josh. They just find the situation humorous and secretly feel bad for him, but Josh doesn't know that. But a couple of the students are laughing at him as they notice he is starting to sweat and breathe heavily.

Ethan: Come on! Didn't you hear Ms. Jackson? We need to get moving!

Josh stares straight ahead, distracted by the comment.

Matthew: (laughing) Oh my God! Haven't you ever had that error on your laptop before? It's so easy to fix! You're going to make Ms. Jackson really mad at us if you don't fix it before she comes back in.

Josh: I'm sorry. I'll try.

Josh starts pressing a bunch of keys, but nothing is working. As his panic attack worsens, he starts breathing more loudly and trembling. In the back of the class, Cho begins to look concerned and glances around at others in the class. She wants to help him right away, but since she sees that no one else is helping, she decides to wait.

Matthew: (whispering to Ethan, loudly enough for Josh to hear) Can you believe him? How hard is it to use a computer?

Ethan: (also loudly whispering) I know, right? Somebody's gonna get an F if they don't get it together.

Matthew: (continuing to loudly whisper) I'm getting my phone ready. I think he's about to have a freakout. This could go viral.

Matthew puts his phone in a position where he can begin filming if necessary. Ethan takes his phone out too. Ethan and Matthew laugh as they glare at Josh. Cho is shaking her head, unsure of what to do. Meanwhile, in the seats behind Ethan and Matthew, Maria and Alicia look concerned.

Maria: (whispering to Alicia) I feel so bad for him. I remember that happened to me when I gave my presentation last semester. Do you think we should go up there and help him?

Alicia: (whispering to Maria) Nah! There are like 20 people in this class. There's definitely someone more tech savvy than us who can help him out. Besides, look at those two in front of us. *(She points at Ethan and Matthew.)* They're being so annoying! I don't want to have to deal with their sarcasm, again.

Maria: You're right. Someone else will go up in just a sec. I'm sure of it.

Josh continues to hyperventilate and tremble.

Ethan: (shouting angrily) Hurry up!!!

Sitting behind Maria and Alicia, Madison and Jayden are also troubled by what they see.

Madison: (whispering) Oh my God. Those two are being so awful. I wish I could do something.

Jayden: (whispering) Me too. I don't think I remember how to fix that error though. And I don't want those two laughing at me.

Madison: Me neither. I think I remember what to do, but sometimes, I haven't been able to get that error screen to go away. I don't want to make the problem worse.

Josh isn't having any luck fixing the problem. If he wasn't in front of the class, he'd remember what to do. But his panic keeps worsening, and he can't think straight. Suddenly, the door opens. It's only been a couple of minutes, but to Josh, it feels like an eternity. Ms. Jackson looks baffled.

Ms. Jackson: What's going on here? I've told you how to fix that error screen before. Don't you remember?

Josh: (starts rambling incoherently) N-No. But-But- No- I- I can't.

Matthew: (laughing) I think he's trying to stall so we don't finish our presentations on time!

Angered by the comment, Cho looks around again. Seeing that no one is going to help, Cho finally decides to move to the front of the classroom. She approaches Josh, who is fighting back tears.

Cho: It's okay. I've been here before, too. I think I remember what to do.

Josh steps aside as Cho begins typing some keys. The error screen isn't disappearing at first.

Ethan: I guess you're not too bright, either!

Cho: (raising her voice and glaring at Ethan and Matthew) Why don't you two come up here and fix it then?!

Ethan and Matthew look flustered and remain seated.

Ms. Jackson: (speaking sternly to Ethan) I don't want to hear you talk like that again. Understood?

Ethan rolls his eyes. Matthew laughs. Cho quickly looks over at Ms. Jackson and doesn't say anything, but she knows that she will speak to Ms. Jackson after class to let her know how Ethan and Matthew acted while she was talking to the principal.

Cho begins to type again, and the computer restarts.

Cho: There you go.

Josh breathes a huge sigh of relief and feels a sense of calm as the panic begins to go away. He looks at Cho.

Josh: Thank you so much.

Cho: Of course. I was watching what was going on, and I realized, I just couldn't keep sitting there. I had to do something.