



**Sample Pages from
Football Romeo**

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FOOTBALL ROMEO

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS BY
Lindsay Price



Football Romeo

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Printed in the USA

Characters

The “Have Nots”

Danny Dinning

17. An aspiring actor with a huge inferiority complex.

Laurel Stout

17. Laurel guards herself behind a sarcastic attitude. Because of an accident, she is in a wheelchair.

Murray Dinning

15. Younger brother to Danny. Obnoxiously brilliant.

Agnes Tidwell

14. Murray’s research assistant. In love with Murray.

The “Haves”

Rick Sittler

17. Football player. Nicola’s boyfriend.

Nicola Calabretta

17. Self-proclaimed “star” of the school. Believes the world would fall into her lap with proper preparation.

Brittany and Felicity

Both are 16. Cheerleaders. Followers of Nicola.

April Calabretta

17. A girl with an attitude.

The Teacher

Ms. Grace Kavendish

20’s. New drama teacher at Verona Beach High School.

Set Description

A non-realistic set of benches, risers and platforms. Keep blackouts and set changes to the absolute minimum. For example, there should be one “bedroom” platform where Danny, Nicola, and Laurel (Rick always seems to be sleeping in a chair) have their dreams, instead of four individual bedroom sets.

For the end of Act One there should be a tropical backdrop.

Music

Sheet music and recordings for both songs can be found online at: <http://tfolk.me/p53>

The melody that Murray sings in Act One Scene Six is merely a guideline as Murray should sing badly and off-key.

The number at the end of Act One takes place during Danny’s dream. The rhythm is regimental and should be reminiscent of pre-pubescent boys singing in a choir. As the song takes place in a dream, I encourage you to add absurd harmonies and accompany the singing with percussion instruments such as tambourines and maracas.

ACT ONE**PROLOGUE**

DANNY DINNING, NICOLA CALABRETTA, RICK SITTLER and LAUREL STOUT are onstage. LAUREL is in a wheelchair. The others stand but are asleep. Their eyes are closed and their heads are tilted to the side. They speak dreamily as they quote from Romeo and Juliet.

DANNY: "I dreamt a dream to-night."

NICOLA: "And so did I."

RICK: "Well what was yours?"

LAUREL: "That dreamers often lie."

DANNY: "In bed asleep while they do dream things true."

LAUREL: "Oh then I see Queen Mab hath been with you."

NICOLA: "Oh blessed, blessed night! I am afeard being in night all this is but a dream, too flattering-sweet to be substantial."

RICK: "If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep, my dreams foretell some joyful news at hand."

DANNY: "I dreamt my lady came and found me dead. Strange dream that gives a dead man leave to think."

LAUREL: "True I talk of dreams; which are the children of an idle brain begot of nothing but vain fantasy which is as thin of substance as the air and more inconstant than the wind who woos."

MURRAY pops up from behind LAUREL. He addresses the audience. The others remain in their sleep state.

MURRAY: Wind who woos? Wind who woos? What kind of poetry is that? Shakespeare must have had an off day. (*as Shakespeare*) Let me think, what does the wind do? It blows! No. It whistles! No, no, no, I got it! It woosoooo, it woosoooo, it woos! That's it, it woos! (*he shakes his head*) Unbelievable. Let's see if I can do any better.

MURRAY rolls up his sleeves and begins speaking in iambic pentameter.

MURRAY: Good even' one and all, I am the fool. It is my job to mock and ridicule. Two sides therein Verona Beach exist – Not two

families herein lies the twist. *(he pauses with a grin)* Not bad huh? Behold our two parties.

The rest of the characters join those onstage. They take up their “sides” in two formal group poses.

MURRAY: Not a pretty sight. Two sides where never the twain shall meet. A moat of ill-will strewn between their feet. *(he breaks rhythm again)* More than a moat really. A ravine. A gorge. A huge trench with jagged spiky rocks.

ALL OTHERS: Get on with it!

MURRAY: I’m just trying to paint a picture.

BRITTANY and FELICITY point at the other group and laugh.

BRITTANY: Look at those losers.

FELICITY: They really shouldn’t stand all together like that.

LAUREL: Who are you calling a loser?

NICOLA: *(to BRITTANY and FELICITY)* Do you see any other losers in the room?

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Uh uh.

APRIL: Then it must be you.

LAUREL: It’s official. Hairspray kills brain cells.

NICOLA: You can’t say that!

RICK: Did you just insult my girlfriend?

LAUREL: Back off Cro-Magnon.

They all fall to arguing. MURRAY has to jump between the groups.

MURRAY: Hey! No violence, this is a family show.

Everyone goes back to holding their pose with grumbling resentment.

MURRAY: On this side we have – “The Haves” – The popular people. The cream of the crop. The people for whom everything goes gravy.

LAUREL: I resent that.

MURRAY: Shush! This group contains the football players, the cheerleaders, the Student Council Presidents, the school play leads etc, etc, etc. And then there are the “Have-Nots.” For them the gravy train ain’t so gravy. It’s lumpy, cold and congealed. Yummy. The “Have-Nots” basically try to get through day by day without making any waves. A truly depressing and trying situation which can only be reversed by becoming a leader of industry and squashing your former classmates flat.

LAUREL: I resent that! You can’t describe my life as a “have not.” I am not a “have not!”

DANNY: Yeah!

NICOLA: Shut up.

DANNY: OK.

RICK: Get on with it. I’m not holding this pose forever.

MURRAY: These two sides will never see eye to eye. Not even eye to foot unless there were some situation which would force them together. I wonder if something like that is going to happen in this play. I wonder, wonder, wonder. Makes sense, seeing as we’re here and all. (*speaking in iambic pentameter*) Hmm Hmm I wonder what that plight would be? I guess we will just have to wait and see. OK you guys buzz off and disappear. The first scene of our wondrous tale draws near.

Everyone breaks their pose and exits.

MURRAY: To another part of town we must leap. Up to a suburban house two friends creep. Danny and Laurel act a bit short-sighted. In crashing a party; they weren’t invited. We join our heroes’ quest on tippy-toe. Our story thus unfolds called *Football Romeo*. (*he makes a face*) Tippy-toe/Romeo. OK, so they’re not all gems. See how you do without a rhyming dictionary.

MURRAY bows and exits.

SCENE ONE

The lights change. DANNY and LAUREL enter. DANNY is carrying two half-masks. They are outside NICOLA's house. Offstage there is the dulled sound of dance music.

DANNY: Why are we doing this again?

LAUREL: We are tired of a certain group talking endlessly about their certain parties and excluding certain others.

DANNY: But we don't even like a certain group.

LAUREL: So?

DANNY: Or their parties.

LAUREL: It's the principle of the thing.

DANNY: We can't crash.

LAUREL: We can.

DANNY: We can't.

LAUREL: We will.

DANNY: But they'll –

LAUREL: They'll never know. It's a theme party, everyone's wearing masks. No one will even recognize us.

DANNY: Laurel. How many girls at our school are in wheelchairs? One! You!

LAUREL: You're overestimating their intelligence. Let's go.

DANNY: I can't.

LAUREL: Danny...

DANNY: Something bad's going to happen. I can feel it. I had a dream last night.

LAUREL: So did I.

DANNY: Oh yeah? What was yours?

LAUREL: That you're a pathetic idiot.

DANNY: I dreamed that I was a star in the sky and this rocket came at me from out of nowhere. It hit me right in the centre and I exploded into a million pieces. If that's not a bad omen, what is?

LAUREL: We're going to prove that cliques and group boundaries are meaningless. What's the difference between them and us?

DANNY: They're popular, we're not. They get all the good things in school. They have everything. We have nothing.

LAUREL: You're splitting hairs. Underneath a mask we can fit in just as well as any of them. We're going to show how shallow and superficial they are. Give me a mask.

DANNY: Oh is that all.

LAUREL: Now put on the bunny ears and let's go. With all your whining the party will be over before we get in the door. (*she exits*)

DANNY: This is not a good idea. I know this is not a good idea.

LAUREL: (*offstage*) DANNY!

DANNY gives a big sigh and follows off.

The music gets louder and the lights dim into party lighting. This is now inside NICOLA's house. NICOLA, and RICK make up one group. BRITTANY enters on the opposite side of the stage looking around. FELICITY enters behind her and as she is also looking around, bumps into BRITTANY. Both FELICITY and BRITTANY wear costumes and masks.

BRITTANY: Felicity?

FELICITY: Brittany?

Both girls squeal.

FELICITY: I didn't recognize you at all!

BRITTANY: Isn't this a great party?

FELICITY: Have you seen Nicola yet?

BRITTANY: Not yet.

BOTH: Let's go!

LAUREL and DANNY enter. DANNY stumbles and accidentally bumps the girls.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Hey!

DANNY: Oh, I'm sorry, *(changes his voice, makes it lower)* I'm dreadfully sorry.

The girls cross to NICOLA giving DANNY weird looks.

DANNY: *(calling out)* Forgive me. *(he turns to LAUREL who is staring at him)* What?

LAUREL: You're about as subtle as a plaid tie on a fish in a bowling alley.

DANNY: I can't help it. I'm nervous.

LAUREL: Relax. If you draw attention to yourself like that they'll know you don't belong.

DANNY: I don't belong.

LAUREL: Sure you do.

The focus shifts to NICOLA, RICK and the girls.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Hey Nicola!

NICOLA: Hi girls! Great costumes.

BRITTANY: Thanks.

FELICITY: Great party.

NICOLA: I think we have reason to celebrate. 6 and 0!

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Rah Rah Red and Gold! We're mighty strong and mighty bold! *(they both cheer and give cheerleading kicks)*
Yaaaaaaaay Rick!

RICK: What?

NICOLA: We're celebrating 6 and 0.

RICK: What?

NICOLA: The teams won all their games this season.

RICK: Who?

NICOLA: You.

RICK: Oh yeah. Great party Niki. *(he wanders away)*

APRIL enters during the above. She crosses by DANNY and LAUREL and gives them a hard look.

DANNY: So we're here. What do we do now?

LAUREL: We mingle.

DANNY: OK. Go ahead. Knock yourself out. Let me know when you're finished. *(LAUREL looks at him)* What?

NICOLA: There's April. *(calling out)* April! *(back to the girls)* My cousin's just moved to town. *(to APRIL)* Hey! Nice costume.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Hi April.

APRIL: *(ignoring the girls)* Nicola. There are crashers at this party. There are people here who do not belong.

NICOLA: What?

BRITTANY: Who?

FELICITY: Where?

APRIL: Over there. The girl in the wheelchair and the guy in the bunny mask.

BRITTANY and FELICITY gasp.

BRITTANY: How can you tell? Everyone's in costume.

APRIL: I can tell. I can smell it. They're not one of us.

NICOLA: The wheelchair does kind of give it away.

BRITTANY: This is a private party.

FELICITY: Who let them in?

APRIL: They're polluting the party!

FELICITY: We can't let them do that.

NICOLA: Hang on, hang on. What do you want me to do? Throw them out?

APRIL, BRITTANY, FELICITY: Yes!

NICOLA: I can't throw out a girl in a wheelchair.

APRIL: Why not?

BRITTANY: What about the guy beside the wheelchair?

APRIL: I'll get rid of them. They'll be begging to leave.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Wow!

APRIL: What?

FELICITY: You're super intense.

NICOLA: It's my party. I'll talk to them.

NICOLA continues to speak silently to the girls while the focus shifts back to LAUREL and DANNY.

DANNY: I think we're fooling them. No one's even tried to throw us out yet.

LAUREL: Look at that group of princesses. It's so ironic that the princesses dressed up as princesses.

DANNY: I bet the butterfly is Nicola Calabretta.

LAUREL: Who knew a butterfly could look like such a nightmare snob. Go talk to her.

DANNY: What?

LAUREL: Just pretend you're talking to a brick wall, you'll be fine.

DANNY: Why don't you go?

LAUREL: Cause I might accidentally spit on her.

DANNY: How is that blending in?

LAUREL: You're nicer than me. Remember, you've got a mask on. She doesn't know who you are.

DANNY: You didn't tell me I would have to do all the talking.

LAUREL: Go!

She pushes DANNY who stumbles towards NICOLA. The two meet centre stage.

DANNY: Hi! Hi. Great party. Love the guacamole.

NICOLA: You and your friend have to leave.

DANNY: What?

NICOLA: I know you weren't invited and it would be best for everyone if you left.

DANNY: The wheelchair gave us away didn't it.

NICOLA: It's hard to hide.

DANNY: OK. OK. We don't want to cause any trouble. (*he pushes his mask off his face*) You probably don't remember me, do you. We've been in the same class since grade three.

NICOLA: Sure I remember you. Donny.

DANNY: Danny.

NICOLA: Right. You're really into... theatre.

DANNY: That's right. Well I would be if Mr. Sullivan did anything that resembled anything close to theatre. Who wants to see a musical version of *Lord of the Flies*?

NICOLA: Uh huh. So you're going to leave now right?

DANNY: Who knows what monstrosity he's going to come up with this year. An all-tap version of *The Count of Monte Cristo*?

NICOLA: I think he had to go to Guam.

DANNY: Who? The Count of Monte Cristo?

NICOLA: Mr. Sullivan.

DANNY: Mr. Sullivan's left? He's left town? He won't be at school on Monday?

NICOLA: Are you going or not?

DANNY: He's left, like gone, like not coming back? There's not going to be an all tap version of *The Count of Monte Cristo* cause I was only half joking about that, in fact I really wasn't joking at all, that is just the sort of thing he would come up with and – (*he grabs NICOLA by the shoulders*) Are you sure about this? Are you positively sure? Are you so sure you'd bet your life on it or you'd stick a needle in your eye or your grandmother's grave or step on a crack or –

NICOLA: Let go of me!

BRITTANY: Fleecy, look!

BRITTANY & FELICITY: (*calling offstage*) Rick! Rick! Come quick!

BRITTANY: A nerd is shaking Nicola!

APRIL: He's not going to get away with this!

LAUREL: Oh boy.

DANNY lets go of NICOLA and lets out a whoop. BRITTANY and FELICITY rush over to NICOLA.

DANNY: Yahooo!

BRITTANY: (to NICOLA) Are you OK?

APRIL: Do you need a shower?

DANNY dances and careens offstage. The girls stare at LAUREL.

LAUREL: OK. Thanks for the party. Great guacamole. Gotta go!

LAUREL wheels herself offstage. The others surround NICOLA and take her off in the opposite direction.

INTERLUDE

A spotlight comes up on MURRAY.

MURRAY: You are standing on the edge of a high cliff. What type of cliff person are you? Do you jump off into the abyss without thinking? Do you weigh the pros and cons and then jump? Do you weigh the pros and cons and do nothing? Do you run backwards to the road as fast as your feet'll take you? Romeo and Juliet were jump into the abyss folks: "Hi, nice to meet you. Marry me! OK! She's dead. I'm dead. He's dead. Where's my dagger?" Risky critters. Danny's a run to the road type. He's never seen a cliff edge in his life. What about you? Do you risk big? Dream big? Ah dreams. "We are such stuff as dreams are made on." Dreams say a lot about a person. Our players have been having some whacked-out dreams recently. We should see them, don't you think? Don't worry. I won't be popping up like this all the time. In fact it's time for me to get involved. I hate being on the sidelines. (*speaking in iambic pentameter*) From here on in I'll take a human role. Don't let it bother you or... or... worry you. No! Take a toll. Take a toll. Ugh, my kingdom for a rhyming dictionary.

MURRAY storms off.

SCENE TWO

The lights change. There is the sound of applause that starts off quietly and grows. DANNY enters very dramatically. He is at the end of an award-winning performance. DANNY bows dramatically. DANNY has a blanket wrapped around him in a noble fashion.

DANNY: Thank you. Thank you, you are too kind.

The applause gets louder and there are shouts of encore.

DANNY: I can't believe it! They love me! I'm a star!

He takes another bow. A voice calls out.

RICK: (offstage) Hey! That guy's in his pyjamas!

DANNY looks up suddenly, and then down at himself. He opens the blanket and indeed, he is in his pyjamas.

DANNY: What? How did that happen?

He tries to keep bowing. The voice calls out again, getting closer.

RICK: (offstage) He's wearing pyjama's onstage. What a loser!

DANNY squints into the audience. The applause dies out.

DANNY: Who is that?

RICK: (offstage) Hey! You're not a real actor!

DANNY: Shhh! Shut up!

RICK enters.

RICK: I know you. You're that drama geek.

DANNY: This can't be happening.

RICK: (to audience) This guy isn't an actor, he goes to my school.

DANNY: Why are you doing this!

RICK: (pushing DANNY) Cause I hate drama geeks. You're no good; you're never going to be any good.

DANNY: This has to be a dream.

RICK: (*grabbing DANNY by the collar*) You better hope you're dreaming.

Blackout. An annoying alarm clock beeps loudly. The lights come up and DANNY is in bed. DANNY sits up with a start and a scream. He gives an even louder scream when he sees MURRAY sitting at the foot of his bed staring at him.

DANNY: What the hell are you doing?

MURRAY: Trying to freak you out.

DANNY: (*lying back down with a flop*) Congratulations.

MURRAY: I don't think so brother dear. I am merely the icing on the cake. You're the one doing all the work. You are the master at freaking out. You look terrible.

DANNY: Thanks.

MURRAY: Your sleep is about as restful as an ant farm in a pair of khakis.

DANNY: How long have you been sitting there?

MURRAY: Long enough. I thought you were supposed to be all slappy cause Mr. Sullivan took the last train to Guam.

DANNY: I was. But then I started thinking.

MURRAY: Always a bad sign.

DANNY: What if the new drama teacher turns out like Mr. Sullivan? What if the new teacher has the same bizarre sense of theatrical captitude and I get stuck, again, in the back row holding a spear? What if nothing changes? What if, what if, what if?

DANNY sighs and throws his pillow over his head.

MURRAY: Danny you are a glass half empty man. You're a bundle of nerves. You jump at your own shadow. You jump at other people's shadows. You could crack at any moment. You're volcanic. Mount Vesuvius ready to blow! It's perfect.

DANNY: Perfect for what?

MURRAY: You're going to get me an A at the science fair this year. A close-up in-depth examination of the high school mind – on the edge.

DANNY: Don't you have frogs to dissect or farm animals to torture?

MURRAY: Better hurry up. You're gonna miss the bus.

DANNY: (*leaping out of bed*) What? What time is it? Why didn't you say anything! I swear Murray if I'm late and I... (*he stops suddenly*) Wait a minute. I don't take the bus. (*he looks at his watch*) It's 6:15? Why did my alarm go off at 6:15?

MURRAY takes out a handheld tape recorder and talks into it.

MURRAY: Subject reacts with great hostility to changes in his daily routine.

DANNY: You changed my alarm?

DANNY moves slowly toward MURRAY.

MURRAY: This scientist will be observant for further signs of collapse as the experiment progresses.

DANNY: Get out.

MURRAY: Maybe I can ask you some questions later?

DANNY: Get out!

DANNY chases MURRAY off.

SCENE THREE

On the other side of the stage NICOLA enters. She is also in a dream state. Unlike DANNY she doesn't have a care in the world; she seems perfectly content.

There is the sound of applause again. NICOLA smiles and waves at the audience. APRIL enters and addresses the audience. BRITTANY and FELICITY stand in the background with their pompoms at the ready.

APRIL: (*pleasantly*) We are here today to pay tribute to one of Verona Beach High's most spectacular students.

BRITTANY and FELICITY cheer and wave their pompoms.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Nicola, Nicola, she's the one! She knows how to get it done!

APRIL: Not only has Nicola been voted head cheerleader, and Student Council President and head of the debate team; she also has the

highest marks of any student in the entire school district and has become the youngest person ever to be accepted into law school. As if that weren't enough, I have just found out she is receiving the key to the city for single-handedly saving a busload of small children from drowning last week. Is there anything she can't do?

There is the sound of applause. BRITTANY and FELICITY wave their pompoms.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Nicola, Nicola! She's the best! Million times better than the rest! Go Nicola! Yay!

APRIL: Now without further ado, ladies and gentleman I introduce to you, the one and only, Nicola Calabretta!

BRITTANY and FELICITY jump and cheer. NICOLA steps forward.

NICOLA: Thank you, thank you all. This is absolutely wonderful. Of course I do deserve every accolade I receive and more. (*everyone laughs appreciatively*) But before we go any further, I must have by my side the most magnificent boyfriend in the entire world. Rick Sittler. Rick, come on out here.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Shake it to the left! Shake it to the right! Rick Sittler is out of sight! Yay Rick!

An animated and intelligent "dream" RICK comes out to stand beside NICOLA.

RICK: I just wanted to say that Nicola is the best thing that has ever happened to me. She has made me the star football player/brain surgeon I am today.

Everyone cheers.

NICOLA: Rick, you're making me blush.

RICK: I couldn't have done it without you, Niki.

RICK hugs NICOLA. There is another roar of applause and a cheer from BRITTANY and FELICITY. A pretty sounding bell starts to go off.

NICOLA: What's that?

RICK: That's your alarm, Nik. We have to go. (*he exits*)

NICOLA: So soon? Isn't there supposed to be a party. There's gonna be cake!

APRIL: Sorry Nicola. You'll have to get the key to the city in another dream. *(she exits)*

NICOLA: Brittany? Felicity?

BRITTANY & FELICITY: *(as they push NICOLA out of the light)* Nicola, Nicola, time to wake! If you don't you might be late! Nicola, Nicola, time to wake! If you don't you might be late!

Blackout. Lights come up on NICOLA waking up in bed. She stretches contentedly.

NICOLA: What a great dream!

She pulls out a small notebook and begins writing in it.

NICOLA: Note to self: speak to Rick about becoming a brain surgeon. *(she closes the book with a self-satisfied sigh)* Today is going to be another perfect day.

Blackout.

SCENE FOUR

A school bell rings. Lights up on DANNY and LAUREL; they are moving down a school hall.

LAUREL: It could have been worse you know – you could have been naked.

DANNY: How is that supposed to make me feel better?

LAUREL: You don't think being naked onstage is worse than wearing pyjamas?

DANNY: I think you're missing the point.

MS. KAVENDISH enters. During the following DANNY almost cowers behind LAUREL.

MS. KAVENDISH: Hey Laurel. Laurel!

LAUREL: *(not entirely happy)* Oh. Hi Ms. Kavendish.

MS. KAVENDISH: *(to DANNY)* Hi! *(to LAUREL)* How do you find your way around here? I've been lost twice already this morning. Maybe I should leave a trail of breadcrumbs from the staff room to the theatre.

LAUREL: Sounds like a plan.

MS. KAVENDISH: Is your mom going to yoga tonight?

LAUREL: I don't know.

MS. KAVENDISH: Alright, Quad 2 hallway C. Wish me luck!

MS. KAVENDISH continues on her way. DANNY grabs LAUREL by the arm.

LAUREL: Yeow! Let go!

DANNY: Is that her? Is that her?

LAUREL: Who?

DANNY: The new drama teacher! Ms. Kavendish!

LAUREL: Since I called her by that name, feel free to make that assumption.

DANNY: Why didn't you tell me you knew her! You should have told me.

LAUREL: I don't know her. My mom does. They do yoga.

DANNY: *(like a little prayer to himself)* Please, please don't be like Mr. Sullivan. Please, please, please.

LAUREL: She can't be any worse.

DANNY: Don't say that. You say she can't be worse than Mr. Sullivan and then we'll find out how worse, worse than Mr. Sullivan can be. There is worse and then there is the worse you never knew was worse and that's so much worse than Mr. Sullivan worse.

LAUREL: What could be worse than *Fly Boys*?

DANNY: Laurel, I swear, you'll jinx it!

LAUREL: What could be worse than 20 pasty, sweaty, shirtless, teen boys murdering a cockney accent?

DANNY: Shut up! Shut up! I'm not listening!

LAUREL: Why do you get so worked up over these things?

DANNY: I don't get worked up.

LAUREL: She's announcing the play today on the morning announcements.

DANNY: What? Who? Ms. Kavendish?

LAUREL: No the tooth fairy.

DANNY: Today? She's been here for five minutes! She can't have a play already!

LAUREL: What's the big deal?

DANNY: Big deal? Big deal? You have to ask me about the bigness of the deal?

LAUREL: No you don't get worked up at all.

MURRAY who has been skulking around during the previous, talks into his handheld tape recorder.

MURRAY: Subject is raising his voice and hopping around in quite an agitated manner even though it's not even nine o'clock in the morning. Must find a way to check his blood pressure; maybe this scientist can knock him out or tranquilize him.

DANNY: I am not worked up!

LAUREL: You're the one who insisted on telling me every single solitary aspect of your insecurity dream.

DANNY: I am not insecure.

MURRAY: Subject is hallucinating.

DANNY: Go away Murray!

MURRAY: Hey, I'm just recording my observations.

LAUREL: (to MURRAY) Do you want me to run you over?

MURRAY: You're interfering with the scientific process!

LAUREL moves toward MURRAY, who flees.

DANNY: What is it? Is it another musical? Do you know? Please say it's not another musical. No wait! Don't say anything, because if it's another musical I don't think I'm going to be able to take it and I've got that calculus test this afternoon. But if she's going to announce it on the announcements how am I going to avoid hearing, unless I sit there humming with my hands over my ears, which will make me look like a complete idiot, so you might as well tell me. Go ahead; tell me, I can take it. **NO DON'T!** No, you better. The more time I have to get over the crushing disappointment of another musical, the better. Tell me. (pause) Go ahead. (pause) Well?

LAUREL: I don't think you can save yourself from looking like a complete idiot.

DANNY: Laurel!

LAUREL: Do I look like I know or care about the play?

DANNY: But you do the announcements!

LAUREL: So?

DANNY: So, don't you know?

LAUREL: So, there's a secret society of announcement readers who congregate in the parking lot at midnight to get the jump on the day? Whooo look the chess club is meeting tomorrow, how exciting to be privy to that nugget of information.

DANNY: You are a very bitter girl.

LAUREL: Get used to it.

DANNY: For three years I have been pushed to the side because I can't sing. I have been a spear carrier way in the back while the pretty boys are belting out the *Let's Get Ralphie Rag*. This is my last shot. My last year. If it's a musical I'm dead meat. I'll never get into a theatre program anywhere. "Do you have any experience onstage Mr. Dinning?" Well, I was third chimney sweep from the left in *Turn that Frown Upside Down Mr. Scrooge*. "Thank you Mr. Dinning, don't let the door hit you on your way out."

LAUREL: She doesn't look like the musical type.

DANNY: And every year Mr. Sullivan promised he'd do something different and every year he'd make that proclamation: "Ladies and Gentlemen, young ones, the muse has hit me. And if I have learned anything over my many years in the biz, it is this: you cannot deny the muse." I don't know about denying the muse but I'd sure like to kick it down some stairs.

LAUREL: I always thought Mr. Sullivan's muse was tone deaf, blind in one eye and wore too much spandex.

DANNY: Maybe it'll be a straight play. Oh please, please, please let it be a straight play. A drama. A sweeping epic. A period piece maybe and I'll get to wear a cloak and be very noble and majestic.

The lights change as DANNY steps downstage, caught in the image of himself in his daydream.

DANNY: And I will stand nobly and majestically as smoke swirls and eddies around my feet. And the audience will be on the edge of their seats for all of my speeches. Maybe they'll even weep. I could make an audience weep, given the chance. And at the end of the play I'll have the final word and everyone will erupt into spontaneous applause, a standing ovation, they'll shout encore from the rafters! (*quoting the final line from A Tale of Two Cities*) "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known." (*he starts to bow*)

DANNY's daydream is rudely interrupted by RICK, NICOLA, APRIL, BRITTANY and FELICITY. RICK shoves DANNY.

RICK: Get out of the way!

BRITTANY: (*to FELICITY*) What is he doing? (*they both giggle*)

APRIL: Loser.

The lights change back. DANNY ends up on the floor and RICK, NICOLA et al continue on their way and don't even look back. LAUREL shouts after them.

LAUREL: You can't just push people around like that you know! You don't own the hallway! It's disgusting. They didn't even apologize. You don't own the school! You can't do whatever you want!

DANNY: Shh!

LAUREL: Why?

DANNY: He might come back.

LAUREL: What's he going to do, beat up the girl in the wheelchair?

DANNY: No he's going to beat up the boy beside the girl in the wheelchair.

LAUREL: My hero.

LAUREL exits. DANNY scrambles after her. NICOLA and RICK are on the other side of the stage. APRIL, BRITTANY and FELICITY have exited.

RICK: How can I be a football player and a brain surgeon?

NICOLA: I'm just telling you about the dream I had.

RICK: But I don't want to be a brain surgeon.

NICOLA: You don't have to be a brain surgeon! I just want you to examine your options.

RICK: I saw a cow brain once. Someone was actually eating it, which is totally disgusting.

NICOLA: Rick.

RICK: Only it wasn't called cow brains it was called sweetbreads only it didn't look like bread and if it's really cow brains why don't they just call it cow brains?

NICOLA: I don't think sweetbreads are cow brains.

RICK: If you're gonna eat something disgusting you should call it by its name instead of giving it some other one cause to call cow brains sweetbreads doesn't make it any less disgusting.

NICOLA: Forget about the brains! I just want you to think about the possibility of an alternative career.

RICK: I'm not smart enough to be a brain surgeon.

NICOLA: That's not true! Look Rick, I could be dating the quarterback.

RICK: Paulo's had a girlfriend for two years.

NICOLA: That's not the point. I could date him.

RICK: But he's got a –

NICOLA: I'm not dating him! I'm dating you. I see the potential in you. I want to date you.

RICK: Oh yeah?

NICOLA: Of course I do. Do you think I would go to all this trouble if I wasn't absolutely serious?

RICK thinks.

NICOLA: (*turning to go*) Never mind.

RICK: It's yes, right? The answer is yes!

Morning announcement music plays. On stage right NICOLA, RICK, APRIL and DANNY sit in chairs as if in class. On stage left, BRITTANY and FELICITY stand in front of a microphone. This is the morning announcements area. LAUREL and MS. KAVENDISH are off to the side behind BRITTANY and FELICITY.

During the following RICK desperately tries to stay awake. NICOLA listens to the announcements with her notebook in front of her, ready to take notes at a moment's notice. APRIL is doing her nails and throwing menacing looks at DANNY. DANNY desperately tries to contain his distress.

BRITTANY: So we want everyone to wear red and gold on Friday.

FELICITY: To celebrate their school spirit before the big game.

BRITTANY: Let's show our football team we're behind them one hundred percent!

BRITTANY & FELICITY: (*singing*) Rah, Rah, red and gold, We're mighty strong and mighty bold! We're tigers, hear us roar, when we see the final score! (*now more cheer-like*) Go Tigers! Go Tigers! We'll rip the other team to shreds! Go Tigers! Go Tigers! (*they both grrrrrrrr and then break out into a cheer with appropriate jumps and kicks*)

NICOLA: (*to APRIL*) They did really well didn't they?

APRIL: I can't believe I have to wait a whole year to try out for cheerleading. That sucks!

RICK: (*jolted awake*) What?

NICOLA: (*writing in her book*) Note to self: Compliment Brittany and Felicity on their announcement cheer.

BRITTANY and FELICITY hand the microphone over to LAUREL who looks unimpressed.

LAUREL: Well. Go school spirit. After that display let me tell you I'll be red and gold from head to toe on Friday. I may dress up all week. Back to the announcements. Congratulations to Tina Pomerantz for raising the most money in the "Fun in the Sun: Buy a Fruit, Raise Some Loot" competition for the band trip to Bermuda. So far the band's raised enough funds for the wind instruments and half of the brass; keep up the good work. Tonight's basketball team practice has been cancelled. Someone deflated all the basketballs and Mr. Nox is not going to rest until he finds the culprit and makes them suck air and re-inflate the balls manually. That's a direct quote folks. Last but not least we have an announcement from our new drama teacher, Ms. Kavendish.

LAUREL hands the microphone to MS. KAVENDISH.

DANNY: Please, please, please, no musicals. No musicals!!!

APRIL: Shut up!

RICK: Hey Niki, wake me up when the announcements are over.

MS. KAVENDISH: First of all, I wanted to thank everyone who's made me feel so welcome at the school. I know it's been a sudden and unexpected change but we'll muddle through. And there's no better way than plunging into some theatre! I am here to let you know about our upcoming auditions. I understand Mr. Sullivan was quite fond of the musical theatre genre and he had a... a... a talent for writing. *(she clears her throat)* This year we will be veering into a slightly different direction.

DANNY: *(he jumps up)* Yes! Yes! Yes!

NICOLA: Shhhhhh!

APRIL: Shut up!

DANNY: Sorry.

MS. KAVENDISH: While a fan of musicals, I can't carry a tune. This year we will be tackling a different animal in the form of Shakespeare.

Everyone reacts to MS. KAVENDISH's announcement.

NICOLA: Shakespeare?

RICK lets out a loud snore.

DANNY: Did she say Shakespeare?

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Shakespeare?

LAUREL: Shakespeare ugh.

RICK lets out another snore.

DANNY: This is great, this is really great!

NICOLA: Hmmmmm.

APRIL: Nobody who's anybody likes Shakespeare. Not voluntarily.

DANNY: I love Shakespeare!

NICOLA: *(to herself)* A Shakespeare play would look really good on my resume.

DANNY: Finally something I can sink my teeth into.

NICOLA: Make me look more well-rounded than I already am.

LAUREL: I hate Shakespeare.

APRIL: Shakespeare is for losers.

DANNY: Maybe it's one of the histories.

NICOLA: That's what I need...

DANNY: With lots of fighting.

NICOLA: ...a little literature under my belt.

DANNY: And no singing!

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Who's Shakespeare?

NICOLA: How hard could it be to get a part?

DANNY: Finally something's going my way!

MS. KAVENDISH: And while there are so many to choose from, we're going to do my personal favourite: *Romeo and Juliet*.

DANNY: What?

NICOLA: (*giving RICK a poke*) Rick did you hear that?

RICK: (*waking up*) Huh?

DANNY: *Romeo and Juliet*?

MS. KAVENDISH: Auditions will be held in two weeks time in the auditorium after school. You can sign up outside the English office. Feel free to come and chat with me about monologue selection. I think that's it. Thanks! Go Tigers!

She hands the microphone back to LAUREL.

LAUREL: That's it folks. Have a good day.

DANNY: This is a nightmare! An absolute nightmare!

NICOLA: This is perfect! Absolutely perfect!

RICK: What'd I miss?

APRIL: Shakespeare.

A school bells rings. BRITTANY and FELICITY talk to each other. DANNY sits with his head in his hands. LAUREL and MS. KAVENDISH move across the stage.

NICOLA: (to RICK) I need you to tell Mrs. House I'm going to be a few minutes late.

RICK: You're never late for class.

APRIL: (with horror) You're not considering Shakespeare are you?

NICOLA: Just go! Go!

APRIL: What is she doing?

RICK shrugs and exits with APRIL. NICOLA turns and prepares to approach MS. KAVENDISH.

MS. KAVENDISH: So, how did I do there?

LAUREL: Fine.

MS. KAVENDISH: Do you think the school is ready for Shakespeare?

LAUREL: I think the school is ready for anything that doesn't involve the box step in a loincloth.

MS. KAVENDISH: Are you going to try out?

LAUREL: I don't think so.

NICOLA interrupts their conversation.

NICOLA: Ms. Kavendish? Allow me to introduce myself. (she sticks out her hand) Nicola Calabretta, I'm sure you've heard about me.

LAUREL gives a choking cough at that statement.

NICOLA: I just wanted to tell you how excited I am about *Romeo and Juliet*. It's absolutely my favourite play.

LAUREL: It is? Since when?

NICOLA: (ignoring LAUREL) I am really looking forward to trying out.

LAUREL: You are?

NICOLA: Do you mind, I'm trying to have a conversation here.

LAUREL: I don't mind. I'm fascinated. I may sell tickets.

NICOLA: As I was saying, of all the Shakespeares, I think *Romeo and Juliet* is an excellent choice.

MS. KAVENDISH: Isn't it wonderful? What's your favourite part?

NICOLA: (*caught a bit off guard*) Well, it's been a while... ah... all the parts with Romeo and Juliet of course.

LAUREL coughs loudly as if trying to hide a laugh.

MS. KAVENDISH: Are you alright?

LAUREL: Oh yeah, I just got something caught in my throat.

NICOLA: Maybe you should go and get some water.

LAUREL: Maybe I should. See ya.

LAUREL coughs a couple of times as she makes her way over to where DANNY sits.

DANNY: (*suddenly standing*) I have to talk to Ms. Kavendish. *Romeo and Juliet*. Of all the ones she could have picked! This just isn't fair! I – ohhhhhh (*his courage runs out and he sits down again*)

MS. KAVENDISH: It's nice to meet someone who's so enthusiastic about Shakespeare.

NICOLA: I am very well rounded. I have to be if I'm going to go to a good school and I have to go to a good school if I'm going to become a lawyer.

MS. KAVENDISH: Is that right?

NICOLA: Oh yes. I have it all worked out. I'm going to start off in my father's firm strictly for the experience where I will work my way up and determine the area I wish to concentrate on. Then I will open up my own firm and have children. Just one perhaps two depending on the type of law I end up in.

LAUREL: (*to DANNY*) Hey! You got what you wanted. *Romeo and Juliet*.

DANNY groans.

LAUREL: Now what's the matter?

MS. KAVENDISH: You seem very determined Nicola.

NICOLA: Oh I am. I know life requires extra effort. And when I put in extra effort, everything always works out exactly the way I want it.

MS. KAVENDISH: It's amazing how you have your whole life planned out... in so much detail.

NICOLA: Don't you?

MS. KAVENDISH: (*with a laugh*) Oh no. I'm a little more haphazard.

NICOLA: You mean it hasn't been your lifelong dream to teach drama and positively influence the many students you'll come in contact with over the years to the point where they gush about you when they win their Oscars?

MS. KAVENDISH: Ah...

DANNY: (*to LAUREL*) I was right! She is worse than Mr. Sullivan! She's a wolf in sheep's clothing. She's a Mr. Sullivan in Ms. Kavendish clothing. Before we know it, *Romeo and Juliet* is going to become a musical.

LAUREL: What are you talking about?

DANNY: This is worse than a musical!

LAUREL: In what way?

DANNY: Isn't it obvious?

LAUREL: Surprisingly, no.

DANNY: *Romeo and Juliet* are pretty people characters. I'm not pretty. Would you call me a pretty person?

LAUREL: I'm not going to answer that question on the grounds that it may incriminate me.

DANNY: How am I going to get a good part if I don't look the part?

LAUREL: Call me crazy but maybe talent has something to do with it?

DANNY: Have you seen any of the plays here recently? Have you seen anything resembling talent?

LAUREL: Good point.

DANNY groans again.

LAUREL: So tell her how you feel.

DANNY: I will. I most definitely will.

NICOLA: See you at auditions Ms. Kavendish! (*she walks away, writing in her notebook*) Note to self: Find an audition piece. I will be Juliet and... (*as if the thought has just come to her*) and Rick will be a perfect Romeo!

She exits. MS. KAVENDISH crosses the stage. DANNY moves nervously towards her. LAUREL follows behind.

DANNY: Ms. Kavendish! Uh (*he clears his throat*) Ms. Kavendish. Can I uh talk to you? If you have a moment.

MS. KAVENDISH: Sure.

MURRAY enters to watch as well, lurking in the background. With him is AGNES, a young, very serious girl in a lab coat. She takes notes as MURRAY talks.

MURRAY: Subject is approaching an authority figure with a sense of purpose that is unknown to this scientist. At the same time the subject looks extremely nervous, like an accident of an incontinent nature might be imminent.

MS. KAVENDISH: What's up?

DANNY: My name is Danny Dinning. I... I... I have something... I want to tell you something... I have something I wish to express... (*to LAUREL*) Can't you tell her?

LAUREL: Uh uh.

MS. KAVENDISH: What is it?

DANNY: OK. Here it goes.

MURRAY: This scientist wishes he had the foresight to bring extra towels.

DANNY: I... uh... I uh... well what I really want to say is... uh... thanks for not doing a musical.

MS. KAVENDISH: You're welcome. Was there something else?

DANNY: Yes! No. Uh... No. That's all.

MS. KAVENDISH: Are you sure?

DANNY: Sure.

MS. KAVENDISH: OK. See you at auditions then. Bye Laurel! (*she exits*)

MURRAY: That was close.

LAUREL: You chickened out.

DANNY: I have a headache. I don't think I can handle school for the rest of the day.

LAUREL: You are a big ole chicken.

DANNY: You could have helped; you knew what I wanted to say.

LAUREL: You're the one who feels like he's getting ripped off. You should talk to her.

DANNY: What's the point? Why should I tell her my woes? She's not going to cast me. At best I'll get second bottle washer to the cook. It's going to be the same thing all over again.

MURRAY: Subject has sunk into a dizzying spiral of despair. A tornado-like spiral of despair. No – a typhoon of dis – where's a thesaurus when you need one?

LAUREL: I think you should try for Romeo.

DANNY: Is my day to day humiliation not enough for you?

MURRAY: Subject has a look of wild-eyed terror. What will he do next?

DANNY: Murray! I'm gonna ram that tape recorder down your throat.

MURRAY: Subject becomes hostile. This scientist will have to tread cautiously.

LAUREL: Don't you have a class right now?

MURRAY: Just science. But I don't have to go.

DANNY: Why not?

MURRAY: I've received special permission to follow you around.

DANNY: What?

MURRAY: In fact I'm exempt from all my classes. Not that it really matters; it would take years for me to fall behind.

DANNY sighs.

LAUREL: Who's your new shadow?

MURRAY: This is Agnes. She's my research assistant.

DANNY: You have a research assistant?

MURRAY: Of course I do. This is a big project. She's compiling the data for me.

AGNES: I'll meet you back at the lab Dr. Dinning. I'm almost finished the pie charts.

MURRAY: I'll be right there Agnes.

AGNES exits. LAUREL and DANNY stare at MURRAY.

LAUREL & DANNY: Dr. Dinning?

MURRAY: Can I help it if she looks up to me?

DANNY gives a groan and slams his hand against his forehead. DANNY exits followed by LAUREL.

MURRAY: I wonder if it's possible to get higher than 100% on a project.

SCENE FIVE

The lights change. RICK sits on a couch with his head thrown back. He is sleeping. Offstage voices are heard.

OFFSTAGE VOICES: *(calling out dreamily)* Rick... Rick... Rick...

RICK gives a snort.

OFFSTAGE VOICES: Rick... Rick...

RICK looks up with a start. He is still in his dream.

RICK: Huh? What? Who's there?

BRITTANY and FELICITY enter.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: It's us Rick.

RICK: Who are you?

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Don't you recognize us?

RICK: No.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: We're cow brains.

RICK: No you're not! You're girls. You look like girls.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: We're cow brains Rick.

RICK: Shut up, you are not!

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Why are you afraid of us?

RICK: I'm not afraid of nothing.

NICOLA enters.

NICOLA: Anything, Rick. I'm not afraid of anything. If you're going to be a brain surgeon you have to speak properly.

RICK: I don't want to be a brain surgeon.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: You're afraid to be a brain surgeon.

RICK: No I'm not! I'm not afraid of nothing. Anything. Leave me alone!

NICOLA: (*sing-songy*) Ricky is afraid.

RICK: I am not!

BRITTANY & FELICITY: (*sing-songy*) Ricky is afraid.

RICK: I'm a football player. I bash guys heads in.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: (*sing-songy*) Ricky is afraid of everything. (*they exit*)

RICK: Shut up!

NICOLA: So, what did you think of my speech?

RICK: Huh?

NICOLA: What did you think of my speech? My audition piece. You were listening weren't you?

The lights change. RICK sits up with a start. He is now awake. He and NICOLA are in her living room.

RICK: Huh? What? Yes!

NICOLA: Do you want to go over yours?

RICK: Huh? What? No.

NICOLA: Don't worry about it. You're perfect for the part. I'm sure Ms. Kavendish will take one look at you and cast you on the spot. Romeo should be handsome and dashing, just as Juliet should be sweet and pretty. It's a lock. Who else would she cast? I'm sure Brittany and Felicity and April will get great parts too. Now. (*she hands a book to RICK*) I want to go over some of this in case we have to do a reading.

RICK: (*not really paying attention – he's falling back asleep*) OK.

NICOLA: We're going to make such a stunning couple onstage. Ready?

RICK: (*with his eyes closed*) Uh huh.

NICOLA: Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name,
Or if thou wilt not be but sworn my love
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

NICOLA holds a pose of longing. She waits. And waits. She looks back at RICK who has fallen asleep again. NICOLA keeps up her pose hoping he will come to. When he doesn't, she swats him with her script.

NICOLA: It's your line!

RICK: (*waking up*) Huh?

NICOLA: It's your line!

She shows him his place and gets right back into her pose.

RICK: (*speaking in a completely deadpan voice – like someone who doesn't do much reading*) Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

NICOLA turns to RICK in disgust over his acting.

NICOLA: Rick!!!

RICK: What?

NICOLA: You need to put more feeling into it. More oomph!

RICK: But –

NICOLA: Let's pick it up a little further down.

RICK: But –

NICOLA: What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other word would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo doff thy name,
And for thy name which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

RICK reads his line like a footballer running downfield – lots of oomph. He also mangles the text as much as it can be mangled.

RICK: I take thee at thy word.
Call me but love and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Raymeo.

NICOLA: What man art thou, that thus bescreened in night
So stumblest on my counsel?

RICK: By a name

I know not how to tell thee who I am.
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee.
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

RICK gives a linebacker growl as if he is tearing apart the word. NICOLA looks on helplessly.

NICOLA: Never mind. *(she takes in a deep breath)* I know I'm going to get this part. *(she starts to gather her things)* So, you're going to meet me at the audition tomorrow at four o'clock. Can you remember that or should I write it down?

RICK: Four o'clock. I got it.

NICOLA: Good. *(she gives RICK a peck on the cheek)*

RICK: Why?

NICOLA: Why what?

RICK: Why do I have to meet you at the audition? *(a thought comes to him)* Oh I get it! You want moral support. You want me to cheer you on. Maybe I should borrow a set of pompoms from Brittany – “Go Niki!” *(He laughs to himself at his own cleverness. Then he notices NICOLA staring at him.)* What?

NICOLA: Rick. We've been practicing speeches for days now.

RICK: You're great Nik. I know you're going to get the part.

NICOLA: We're both going to get the part.

RICK: I'm going to be Juliet?

NICOLA: Try to stay with me. We've talked about this. Planned this. We've been practicing so we can audition together and get parts together and be on stage together.

RICK: On stage?

NICOLA: You – Romeo. Me – Juliet.

RICK: On stage?

NICOLA: Yes.

RICK: In front of people?

NICOLA: That's how it's usually done.

RICK: You never told me that!!!

NICOLA: Rick...

RICK: Uh uh, no way, no can do. It's fine behind closed doors where no one can see us but there's no way I would ever stand... *(he becomes lost in thought – it almost looks like his brain has closed down)*

NICOLA: Rick?

RICK: Tights...

NICOLA: Rick, what's the matter?

RICK: *(holding up the script)* This guy, this Ray –

NICOLA: Romeo.

RICK: He wears tights! Shakespeare's always done in tights.

NICOLA: No it's not.

RICK: Niki, you want me to embarrass myself in front of the entire football team looking like a ballerina?

NICOLA: Don't football players wear tights?

RICK: Don't you even joke about that! It's not the same thing. Not the same thing at all.

NICOLA: There aren't going to be any kind of tights in the show. Ms. Kavendish is doing a modern version. No tights.

RICK: No?

NICOLA: Jeans and t-shirts.

RICK: I still can't do it.

NICOLA: Ricky...

RICK: I play football. I take other football players by the head and slam them to the ground.

NICOLA: And you're very good at that. But don't you want to be more than a football player?

RICK: No.

NICOLA: Don't you want to be something else?

RICK: No.

NICOLA: Don't you want to fully experience the wonder, the thrill, the excitement that is William Shakespeare?

RICK: *(like he's eaten a bug)* No!

NICOLA: Fine. I see. *(she picks up the script and moves away)*

RICK: You're mad.

NICOLA: No. Not at all. I'm perfectly – *(RICK moves in to hug her)*
Don't touch me!!

RICK: I'm sorry Niki. It's just not going to work.

NICOLA: I understand.

RICK: Good.

NICOLA: So I guess you'll be OK with the kissing scenes.

RICK: What?

NICOLA: You've been reading the play Rick; surely you noticed there are at least two kissing scenes.

RICK: I wasn't really paying attention.

NICOLA: If you're not playing Romeo that means I'll be kissing somebody else.

RICK: Give me that! *(he takes the book from NICOLA and frantically flips pages)*

NICOLA: I'm impressed Rick. I never thought you would be so open about this. You are really growing as a human being.

RICK: *(whining like a baby)* I can't read this. I hate this guy! Why can't he write English like everybody else. Where is it? Where is it?

He hands the book to NICOLA, who finds her page and acts out the scene between Romeo and Juliet at Capulet's masked ball. She plays each part with utter seriousness.

JULIET: Saints do not move though grant for prayers' sake.

ROMEO: Then move not while my prayer's effect I take.
Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purged.

JULIET: Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

ROMEO: Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urged!
Give me my sin again.

Pause. RICK looks very confused.

RICK: Is that Shakespeare for kissing scene?

NICOLA: Big time.

RICK: When did you say the auditions were?

NICOLA: *(with a big smile)* Four o'clock.

They exit.

SCENE SIX

The lights change. This is DANNY's bedroom. DANNY is lying face down on his bed. MURRAY and LAUREL enter. AGNES is taking DANNY's pulse.

MURRAY: See? What did I tell you?

AGNES: His pulse is normal Dr. Dinning.

MURRAY: Like a bump on a log.

AGNES: But his forehead is clammy.

MURRAY: Like a dead frog on a bump on a log. Like a –

LAUREL: Danny what's the matter?

DANNY: Go away.

MURRAY: I even tried singing to him. *(singing off-key)* "We're English boys on an island. Five minutes ago we were flying. Now we're here, oh my dear, what will we doooooooo. Has anybody got some tea? Where am I supposed to pee? This is our worst nightmare come truuuuuuuuue."

DANNY groans and puts his head under his pillow.

MURRAY: See, that usually gets a laugh out of him. You have to do something; this inactivity is messing up my analysis. My figures are headed right for the toilet. I want him to crack, not get depressed. Depression is not going to land me on the cover of Science Fair Weekly.

AGNES: I still say electroshock therapy isn't out of the question.

LAUREL: If this is about the stupid play I'm going to punch you in the head.

MURRAY: No! Don't damage the merchandise!

AGNES throws herself between LAUREL and DANNY.

LAUREL: (to MURRAY) Alright, I'm here, go blow up something.

MURRAY: If there's any change, please let me know right away. We'll be in the basement.

MURRAY exits, shaking his head. AGNES follows, also shaking her head.

DANNY: Should I be upset that he cares about me more as a science experiment than as a brother?

LAUREL: So what's going on?

DANNY: Nothing.

LAUREL: You look terrible.

DANNY: Thanks.

LAUREL: Is this about the play?

DANNY: Are you going to punch me in the head?

MURRAY calls out from offstage.

MURRAY: Don't damage the merchandise!

LAUREL: (calling out to MURRAY) Don't eavesdrop or I'll punch you in the head!

DANNY: That won't stop him.

LAUREL: So you're upset because you finally went to Ms. Kavendish today, like you said you would, told her your feelings and she reamed you out.

DANNY: No.

LAUREL: You didn't talk to her.

DANNY: I tried.

A separate light comes up on MS. KAVENDISH. DANNY moves to talk to her.

MS. KAVENDISH: Hi Danny. What's up?

DANNY: Well. You see... It's about the play.

MS. KAVENDISH: Do you want help selecting an audition piece?

DANNY: NO! I mean, thank you very much but I don't need any help. Not that your help wouldn't be appreciated I'm sure you know a lot about audition pieces. I'm sure you have a ton of pieces at the ready and I'm sure they're great. Why wouldn't they be? I'm sure you're very smart. Not that you're not. I mean... do you see?

MS. KAVENDISH: Not quite.

DANNY: Me either. I think my brain is hemorrhaging.

A bell rings.

MS. KAVENDISH: Why don't you come talk to me after class – OK?

MS. KAVENDISH exits and DANNY goes back to sit on his bed.

LAUREL: I don't understand why you can't talk to her about this. It doesn't make any sense.

DANNY: Last year when I tried to talk to Mr. Sullivan about his "casting practices" I was the only person who got a C in drama. A C in drama. Even Sam the Stoner who showed up twice and read song lyrics for his final exam got a B plus.

LAUREL: Why don't you do your audition piece for me?

DANNY: I'm not auditioning.

LAUREL: WHAT?

DANNY: I'm not auditioning. I'm not interested in the theatre anymore. I'm going to become a dentist. I'm going to make a lot of money and stare into people's mouths for years and years and years and years and everyone will say, "He looks just like a dentist" and when I go insane everyone will say, "We knew it was coming, he had that look in his eye. That crazy dentist look."

LAUREL: You don't want to be a dentist.

DANNY: But that's what I'm gonna do.

LAUREL: You're going to audition tomorrow and you're going to get a part.

DANNY: I am not going to play second bottle washer to the cook.

LAUREL: You're not going to get second bottle washer to the cook.

DANNY: She's just like Mr. Sullivan.

LAUREL: How do you know? If you don't audition how will you know?
Maybe, just maybe you might blow her away with your amazing talent.

DANNY: I put hours and hours into my audition and it always turns out the same.

LAUREL: It's not a musical, and she's not Mr. Sullivan.

DANNY: What about you?

LAUREL: What about me?

DANNY: Are you going to audition?

LAUREL: This isn't about me, you can't –

DANNY: As much as you pretend otherwise, you like theatre too.

LAUREL: I'm not auditioning.

DANNY: Why not? You're a great actress, you're totally fearless, you're—

LAUREL: People in wheelchairs did not exist in Shakespeare's time.

DANNY: Ms. Kavendish is doing it modern. Jeans and T-shirts.

LAUREL: I'm not auditioning.

DANNY: Why not? We'll do it together. Take them by storm.

LAUREL: No.

DANNY: Why not?

LAUREL: This is not about me. This is about you. You're just trying to change the subject.

DANNY: If you audition, I'll audition.

LAUREL: You know what? If you want to act like a big baby about this, that's your business. I can't audition. You know I can't. You know why I can't and it's disgusting that you would try and even suggest—

DANNY: I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I didn't mean –

LAUREL: You think three years in the back row is tough? Well poor you. If you want to be an actor you better thicken that skin. You think everything is going to go your way? You think you deserve

to have a fair life? I thought I did. I thought I deserved to have that drunk asshole go to jail for the rest of his life. Did he? No. Cause life isn't fair. You better start coming to grips with that.

She starts to exit. MURRAY enters.

MURRAY: Is he all better?

LAUREL grunts at MURRAY and exits. DANNY flops back on the bed. MURRAY moves downstage.

MURRAY: *(to the audience)* I love the smell of conflict in the mid-afternoon. In Shakespeare's day actors would wear a stuffed pig bladder under their costume so when they got skewered in a fight, blood would go shooting out over the audience. Now that's conflict. Maybe that's what this show needs. I should get Danny and Laurel to duel! Maybe *Fly Boys* wouldn't have been so terrible if it had spurting blood. Did you see it? *(the audience says no)* Count your blessings, your lucky stars, your rabbit's foot, your pig's foot, and your own foot. Where was I? Oh right, the show! One more dream before intermission. Danny's fight with Laurel has left him open to all kinds of hallucinations. See you in Act Two!

MURRAY exits and the lights darken. DANNY tosses and turns in bed. Offstage voices call out his name.

OFFSTAGE VOICES: Danny... Danny... Danny...

DANNY: *(in his sleep)* No. I don't want to do the box step anymore.

OFFSTAGE VOICES: Wake up Danny. The show's starting.

DANNY: What?

OFFSTAGE VOICES: The show's starting!

DANNY: What? When?

OFFSTAGE VOICES: Now!

DANNY sits up with a start. Lights come up as a tropical backdrop comes down behind DANNY. NICOLA and APRIL enter.

NICOLA: Hurry up Danny. We need you for the tribal dance.

DANNY: What?

NICOLA: The tribal dance. We killed a pig and we're very happy about it. Listen.

There is offstage singing.

OFFSTAGE VOICES: If you're afraid of something big
Polish off a pig.
If there is something in the fog
Hack into a hog.

DANNY: That's from *Fly Boys*. That's not real.

APRIL: Are you saying we're not real?

DANNY: I don't know.

NICOLA: We're celebrating our pig killing joy with a re-enactment in dance. You're going to be the pig. (*she hands DANNY bunny ears*)

DANNY: These are bunny ears.

APRIL: What's the difference. Put them on!

DANNY: (*putting on the ears*) I don't want to be the pig.

APRIL: If we want you to be the pig, you'll be the pig. If we want you to do our homework, you'll do our homework. If we want you to eat our vegetables, you'll eat our vegetables, is that clear?

DANNY: No.

APRIL: Good.

NICOLA: We'll be back. Start working on your solo.

DANNY: My what? Solo?

NICOLA: Every dance has a solo. Get working on it.

APRIL: Or else I'm coming back with broccoli.

They exit and MS. KAVENDISH enters. The offstage voices sing again.

OFFSTAGE VOICES: We know it's not very PC
And animal rights will come after me
But when fear has you by the throat
It's not enough to exterminate a goat

MS. KAVENDISH: Danny I have very exciting news. I'm taking *Romeo and Juliet* to a whole new level. One Man Show. Isn't that wonderful?

DANNY: I don't know.

MS. KAVENDISH: Are you up for it?

DANNY: What? Me? No.

MS. KAVENDISH: You'll be great. You won't have any trouble memorizing the whole script will you?

DANNY: But I have to work on my solo. Or they'll make me eat vegetables.

MS. KAVENDISH: Do both at the same time. Come on Danny, the show's about to start!

DANNY gets out of bed.

MS. KAVENDISH: The bunny ears are perfect. It'll add a quirky existential je ne sais quois to the piece. I love it!

There is the sound of offstage singing. LAUREL enters.

OFFSTAGE VOICES: We know that pigs aren't weevils
In the battle of good and evil
We know that killing's not so nice
Sometimes you have to sacrifice

LAUREL: Danny stop! You have to listen to me.

DANNY: Finally the voice of reason. Laurel, I'm so glad you're here. Tell me what to do.

LAUREL: Oh I certainly will. That box step is terrible!

DANNY: What?

LAUREL: And add a grapevine! *(to MS. KAVENDISH)* Don't you think a grapevine would be divine here?

MS. KAVENDISH: Oh I do. I just had an idea. Dancing Shakespeare!

LAUREL: So high concept!

MS. KAVENDISH: I love it!

DANNY: But I don't think –

LAUREL: Come on Danny. Grapevine, box step and give all you got! 5, 6, 7, 8!

DANNY: *(he dances as he quotes Shakespeare)* "Do you bite your thumb at us sir? I do bite my thumb sir. Do you bite your thumb at us sir?"

LAUREL: Jazz hands Danny! Jazz hands.

NICOLA enters.

DANNY: “No sir, I do not bite my thumb at you sir, but I do bite my thumb.”

NICOLA: It’s time, are you ready?

LAUREL: His box step is terrible.

MS. KAVENDISH: The show’s about to start.

NICOLA: Let’s go everyone! Spears in the air!

Everyone dances onstage singing as they go. AGNES carries a pole with a pig head on it.

EVERYONE: We know it’s not very British
 And oh it’s not very wittish
 But hey when you’re feeling skittish
 Make that pig swim with the fishes
 If you’re afraid of something big.
 Polish off a pig
 If there is something in the fog
 Hack into a hog.

During the following, everyone keeps moving in a low key manner. AGNES brings the pig head close to DANNY.

DANNY: Agh! What’s that?

AGNES: Fear is the prison of the heart.

DANNY: Huh. It’s a talking pig.

AGNES: Fear is just a four letter word.

DANNY: Now I’ve seen everything. Do you do any other tricks?

AGNES: Fear is only as deep as the mind allows.

DANNY: You could get a lot of money for a talking pig.

AGNES: You’re supposed to listen to the pig you moron! No wonder you’re such a mess.

NICOLA: He’s such a mess.

LAUREL: He never listens.

MS. KAVENDISH: The show's starting!

LAUREL: Jazz hands everyone!

*Everyone dances around the stage and around
DANNY.*

EVERYONE: We know it's not very British
And oh it's not very wittish
But hey when you're feeling skittish
Make that pig swim with the fishes.
If you're afraid of something big.
Polish off a pig.
If there is something in the fog
Hack into a hog
Hack into a hog
Hack into a hog
JAZZ HANDS!

Everyone poses.

Blackout.

End of ACT ONE

ACT TWO**PROLOGUE**

There is the sound of applause. Lights come up on NICOLA. She is in a dream state. She bows to the audience, much as DANNY did in his dream sequence.

NICOLA: Thank you. Thank you. You're too kind. As a special encore I will now perform the balcony scene with my partner, in life and onstage, Rick Sittler.

The animated dream RICK enters.

RICK: Nicola is the best lawyer/Shakespearean actor I know. You're all in for a treat.

The two take a pose. NICOLA suddenly gets a look of horror on her face. She doesn't remember the words. She struggles to think of the start of her speech.

NICOLA: Ah... ah...

RICK: Go Niki.

NICOLA: I don't know it.

RICK: What?

NICOLA: I don't remember.

RICK: (*very matter-of-factly*) "Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name, or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love and I'll no longer be a Capulet." Go!

NICOLA: Ah... Ah... I can't!

RICK: Say anything.

NICOLA: "Parting is such sweet sorrow that I shall say good night till it be morrow."

RICK: That's the end of the scene. You skipped over the whole thing.

NICOLA: I don't remember anything else.

During the above BRITTANY and FELICITY enter.

BRITTANY: We could do a much better job than that.

FELICITY: What's so great about her?

BRITTANY: Nothing.

NICOLA: Wait! I got it. “Parting is such sweet sorrow that I shall say good night till it be morrow.”

FELICITY: That’s the end.

BRITTANY: She’s such a fraud.

APRIL enters.

APRIL: I’ll do the scene. I’m a much better actress than her. “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet.”

FELICITY: I want to do the scene with Rick.

BRITTANY: I want to be Juliet.

APRIL: I’m going to be Juliet.

BRITTANY: No I am.

NICOLA: Wait! I got it. “Parting is such sweet sorrow that I shall say good night till it be morrow.”

APRIL, FELICITY, BRITTANY: Looooooser.

RICK: Keep working on it Niki. Let me know when you remember.

RICK, APRIL, BRITTANY and FELICITY exit.

NICOLA: Wait. Wait. Wait!

The lights change. NICOLA wakes up in bed with a scream.

NICOLA: What was that? (*she pulls out her notebook*) Note to self: What was that? Was that an insecurity dream? I had an insecurity dream? About the audition? That’s impossible. I’m not nervous. (*looking at her palms*) What is that? Is that sweat? Am I sweating? This can’t be. I don’t like this. This is not the way things are supposed to go at all.

She picks up a phone and calls RICK. Lights come up on RICK on another part of the stage. He is fast asleep. The phone rings a couple of times before RICK hears it and jolts awake.

RICK: (*picking up phone*) Wha-ha? Huh? Arghaha?

NICOLA: Rick! Are you practicing?

RICK: What?

NICOLA: Are you practicing? Are you practicing your audition piece?

RICK: No.

NICOLA: Why not?

RICK: I'm sleeping.

NICOLA: Why?

RICK: It's the middle of the night.

NICOLA: Excuses, excuses. You can sleep tomorrow. Do your speech for me.

RICK: Now?

NICOLA: Yes, now!

SCENE ONE

The lights change. RICK and NICOLA freeze. MURRAY pops up with AGNES following.

MURRAY: (to audience) Well, Well, Well. Three wells make a river. And this river is called de-nial. Everyone has worked themselves into quite a state: Danny's sure he's not going to audition. Laurel's not speaking to Danny. Nicola's nervous for the first time in her life and Rick is... well we're not quite sure what Rick is thinking.

He makes a sharp turn, but because AGNES is following so closely behind, he bumps right into her.

MURRAY: You don't have to follow me around in these bits.

AGNES: I like to be prepared. You never know when you'll need a bar graph.

MURRAY: Right. (calling out) Lights!

The lights change. Everyone enters and mills about. It's the hall outside the school theatre, right before the audition.

MURRAY: The audition! You can smell the fear and it's not like roses. The auditorium is abuzz with excitement and anticipation. Look at all these fresh young faces. They look like they could puke at any moment. A sea of faces in a lovely shade of green. Except for Rick of course. But there's a lot of vacant brain matter there. I wonder what it's like to have a parking lot for a brain.

RICK: (*suddenly close to MURRAY*) Are you talking about me?

MURRAY: Wouldn't dream of it. (*speaking in iambic pentameter*) One and all welcome: Here begins Act Two. What new twists and turns lie in store for you? Welcome all and one whether friends or foe. Our next chapter of Football Romeo. (*breaking out of the rhythm*) Foe/Romeo. That one's not bad. I quite like that.

ALL OTHERS: Get off the stage!

MURRAY: On with the show!

The focus shifts to NICOLA, RICK, BRITTANY, FELICITY and APRIL.

NICOLA: Is everyone ready?

BRITTANY: Why are we doing this again?

NICOLA: It's important to be well-rounded.

FELICITY: I thought cheering was helping us be well-rounded.

APRIL: Except for those of us who can't cheer.

NICOLA: It does and so will this. Besides, Rick and I –

RICK: Huh? Did I miss something?

NICOLA: No, you're fine.

RICK: OK.

NICOLA: Besides, Rick and I are going to be in the play. Won't it be fun to hang out together?

BRITTANY: But Shakespeare is so hard.

NICOLA: I'm sure we can convince Ms. Kavendish to make it easier. Have you all got your pieces? Rick?

RICK: Huh?

NICOLA: Never mind. Girls?

FELICITY: We're doing a cheer.

NICOLA: You are?

BRITTANY: Ms. K said we could.

NICOLA: April?

APRIL: Can't we hang out at the mall? Do we really have to hang out in a Shakespeare play? It goes against every fibre of my being to be standing here, breathing the same air as those drama geeks who actually want to audition!

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Wow!

APRIL: What?

BRITTANY: You're fierce!

NICOLA: What speech are you doing?

APRIL: (*pouting*) Juliet's from Act three scene two.

NICOLA: But I'm doing Juliet from Act three scene two.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: You're doing the same thing!

NICOLA: We can't do the same speech.

APRIL: Why not?

NICOLA: Why not?

APRIL: Who cares?

NICOLA: Who cares? (*she looks like she might fly off the handle, but takes a couple of breaths and calms down*) You're right. Why not? Who cares? It's fine. It's not like we're in competition or anything right? (*she gives an unconvincing laugh*) Alright. I'm just going to go over there and prepare or something. Warm up I guess.

BRITTANY: Should we do warm-ups too?

NICOLA: Whatever.

BRITTANY, FELICITY and APRIL move off to the side and do cheerleading warm-ups.

NICOLA: (*to herself*) I am Juliet. (*taking in a deep breath*) I am Juliet. I am Juliet.

RICK: Hey Niki after this do you want to –

NICOLA: Don't talk to me! (*she turns away*)

RICK wanders away flipping through the script, not really reading it. He sees DANNY preparing to audition. RICK walks over to DANNY and grabs him by the shoulder.

RICK: Hey. What part are you trying out for?

DANNY: (*somewhat off balance*) I don't know. What part are you trying out for?

RICK: (*with pride, not realizing he's saying it wrong*) Raymeo.

DANNY: Romeo? Then I'm definitely not trying out for him.

RICK: (*letting go of DANNY*) Good. I don't want anyone kissing Nicola but me. You pass that along to your dramoid geek friends.

DANNY: If she gets the part.

RICK: (*he re-grabs DANNY*) Are you saying Nicola isn't good enough?

DANNY: I'm sure she's perfect.

RICK: (*letting go*) Of course she is.

RICK wanders away and DANNY tries to collect himself. LAUREL enters and prepares to wheel by DANNY without saying anything. DANNY intercepts her.

DANNY: Laurel. Laurel. Come on; stop a sec. Do we have to fight? I'm here.

LAUREL: Are you going to do a good job? You're not going to suck on purpose?

DANNY: I'll do my best.

LAUREL: What are you doing?

DANNY: The end speech from *A Tale of Two Cities*. I figured everyone would be doing Shakespeare so I wanted to be unique. (*looking around*) It's really a different turn out this time. None of the *Fly Boys* leads are here.

LAUREL: I heard they were boycotting.

DANNY: "Shakespeare sucks! Shakespeare sucks!"

LAUREL: "Give us a crappy musical or give us death!"

They both laugh.

DANNY: Are we still fighting?

LAUREL: Yes.

DANNY: Laurel!

LAUREL: Are you here because you want to be in the play, or because you don't want me to be mad with you.

DANNY: Of course it's because of you. I hate it when you're mad at me. (LAUREL looks at him a moment and then starts to move away without saying anything) Clearly that was the wrong answer.

MURRAY and AGNES move forward.

MURRAY: What do you think?

AGNES: Fascinating. Fascinating. (to DANNY) Hold still.

DANNY: Why?

AGNES: I want to get a blood sample.

DANNY: (*dancing away from her*) I'm not giving you any blood!

AGNES: It's for your own good. You want us to provide a complete objective assessment don't you?

DANNY: You're trying to make me look like a cuckoo. I don't see anybody being objective.

MURRAY: He's definitely cracking isn't he?

AGNES: I think he's going to lose it any day now. We're going to have to stay close so we don't miss a millisecond. I would suggest getting a video camera.

MURRAY: Brilliant. I never thought of that.

AGNES: Anything I can do to help. Dr. Dinning.

DANNY gives a huge groan and slams his hand against his forehead.

AGNES: He's going to bruise his brain if he keeps doing that.

LAUREL turns on MURRAY and AGNES.

LAUREL: You two leave him alone. If you and your Igor don't get out of here right now and stay away, I'm going to sick the girls' field hockey team on you. Ever been banged on the shin with a field hockey stick?

MURRAY: You wouldn't dare.

LAUREL: Try me.

MURRAY: Fine. Come on Agnes. We'll observe from a distance.
(LAUREL moves threateningly towards him) A FAR distance.

AGNES: She called me Igor.

MURRAY: She's a bitter girl.

AGNES and MURRAY exit.

DANNY: That was great! I'm glad you didn't threaten him with the staff bathroom. He knows how to pick the lock.

LAUREL: You better get a part or I'll have the girls bang on your shins too. *(she exits)*

DANNY: I guess we're still fighting.

MS. KAVENDISH enters.

MS. KAVENDISH: Alright everyone. Welcome to the *Romeo and Juliet* auditions! Let's get started. *(consulting her clipboard)* Rick Sittler.

RICK: Yo.

He struts towards MS. KAVENDISH.

NICOLA: Break a leg!

RICK: Niki! I got a game on Saturday.

NICOLA: No it's a... never mind.

MS. KAVENDISH: *(to RICK)* Are you ready?

RICK does a wrestling pose and gives a large grrrr. He exits. MS. KAVENDISH follows a little uncertainly. NICOLA follows but remains onstage. She strains to hear how RICK's audition is going. DANNY sees NICOLA. He thinks about not going over to her and then changes his mind.

DANNY: Hi again. *(points to himself)* Danny. This is your first time huh?

NICOLA: Huh?

DANNY: Your first time trying out for the school play.

NICOLA: Uh huh.

DANNY: You must really like Shakespeare. I do too. I especially like –

NICOLA: *(quite rudely)* Do you mind? I'm trying to hear.

DANNY: Sorry. Sorry. (*turning away and muttering*) I'll just go over here and bang my head against the wall. No problem.

The lights change and RICK, DANNY, NICOLA, APRIL, BRITTANY & FELICITY move to the front of the stage. They are each in their own space doing their auditions.

MS. KAVENDISH's voice comes out of the darkness.

MS. KAVENDISH: Alright. Whenever you're ready.

DANNY: "I see a beautiful city and brilliant people rising from this abyss."

RICK: (*staring straight out with total stage fright*) Ah...

DANNY: "I see the lives for which I lay down my life,"

NICOLA: "Come night, come Romeo, come thou day in night,"

APRIL: "For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night,"

DANNY: "...peaceful, useful, prosperous and happy, in that England which I shall see no more."

NICOLA: "Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back."

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Give me an S! Give me an H! Give me an A-K-E!

RICK: Ah...

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Give me an S! Give me a P! Give me an E-E-R!
(*they are spelling his name incorrectly*)

DANNY: "I see that I hold a sanctuary in their hearts,"

NICOLA: "Come gentle night, come love black browed night,"

RICK: Ah... Ah

DANNY: "And in the hearts of their descendants."

APRIL: "Give me my Romeo, and when he shall die,"

DANNY: "I see that child, winning his way in that path of life which once was mine,"

NICOLA & APRIL: "Take him and cut him out in little stars, and he will make the face of heaven so fine,"

BRITTANY & FELICITY: What does it spell? Shake! What does it spell?
Spear!

RICK: Ah... ah...

DANNY: "I see him winning it so well, that my name is my illustrious there by light of his."

NICOLA: "That all the world will be in love with night,"

RICK: Ah...

APRIL: "And pay no worship to the garish sun."

DANNY: "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; It is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Shake that Spear! Spear that Shake! Yay! Shakespeare!

Blackout.

SCENE TWO

Lights come up on LAUREL in bed. She tosses and turns. She sits up but is in the middle of a dream. MURRAY and AGNES stand above her. LAUREL is surprised to see them.

LAUREL: What are you doing in my bedroom?

AGNES: Research.

LAUREL: I'm not your guinea pig. Go torture Danny.

MURRAY: I guess they didn't tell you.

LAUREL: Who didn't tell me what?

MURRAY: Your parents.

LAUREL: What about my parents?

MURRAY: They sold you.

LAUREL: THEY WHAT?

AGNES: Hold still. I need to get a blood sample.

LAUREL: Stay away from me.

MURRAY: It's been a few years since the accident and you're not walking.

LAUREL: I can't walk.

MURRAY: Yeah, I know. That's what you keep saying.

AGNES: Stick out your tongue please.

LAUREL: I can't walk!

MURRAY: The doctor said you could walk.

LAUREL: The doctor didn't get rammed in the side by a drunk.

AGNES: Your parents think you're not trying hard enough.

MURRAY: They sold you to me for science.

LAUREL: That's not true.

MURRAY: Sorry sister. You better rest up; tomorrow I'll be drilling into your brain.

AGNES: It won't be too much trouble to shave her head.

LAUREL: I'm getting out of here. Where's my chair?

MURRAY: Relax Laurel.

AGNES: You won't feel a thing.

LAUREL: You little turd, where's my chair!

MURRAY: There is only one way out of here. Walk.

LAUREL: I can't.

MURRAY: Come on Laurel. Walk.

LAUREL: No. I'll fall.

MURRAY: Then say goodbye to your brain.

AGNES: I'll get the razor.

LAUREL: Don't touch me!

MURRAY: I have an idea. How about on the count of three you swing your legs out and go. Just go. Why don't we try that, alright?

LAUREL: Alright.

MURRAY: OK. One...

AGNES: Two... (*MURRAY and AGNES exit*)

The lights change quickly.

LAUREL: THREE!

LAUREL thinks for an instant she can get out of bed and walk but realizes she cannot. She is awake and not in the dream anymore.

LAUREL: Man that sucks. That really sucks. I hate reality.

Blackout.

SCENE THREE

Lights come up on a hallway outside of MS. KAVENDISH's office. DANNY sits waiting for her. He has his head in his arms like his trying to block out the world. MS. KAVENDISH enters with a folder in her hand.

MS. KAVENDISH: Hi Danny.

DANNY looks up.

DANNY: What? Huh? Hi Ms. Kavendish. *(he stands and speaks boldly)*
Ms. Kavendish, I need to speak to you.

DANNY starts to pace, not looking at MS. KAVENDISH at all.

MS. KAVENDISH: Sure.

DANNY: *(back to complete insecurity)* Alright? It's OK? OK. *(he takes a deep breath)* And I just want you to know I'm keeping a close eye on my drama mark. Any downward shift will be duly noted.

MS. KAVENDISH: I don't see why your mark would go down just because we're talking.

DANNY: Exactly. Exactly! One would think that. Whew! That's great. That's great, that takes a great weight off my mind. See, last time I got up the nerve to talk to a teacher, my mark took a *(he makes a noise to simulate a nosedive)* so I've been apprehensive to say the least. But I just can't stand it anymore. There's only so much a guy can take. And Mr. Sullivan made promises he didn't keep and I gotta know, I just gotta know. *(he takes a deep breath in and out)* Would you cast pretty people or popular people in the play if they didn't have any talent?

MS. KAVENDISH: No.

DANNY: All I want to know is: Am I getting a fair shot? Is the playing field level? I want you to look me in the eye and tell me there's a level playing field for this show.

MS. KAVENDISH: Mr. Sullivan didn't believe in a level playing field?

DANNY: The field was Mount Everest and I was in the foothills. If I don't have a shot I want to know so I can get on with my life and concentrate on being a dentist.

MS. KAVENDISH: The playing field is level. You have my word on it.

DANNY: Honest?

MS. KAVENDISH: I swear on my mother's grave.

DANNY: Is she really dead? Cause some people say that but their mothers aren't dead which totally negates the whole power of the –

MS. KAVENDISH: Danny!

DANNY: Right. Sorry. So. (*he takes a deep breath*) I feel better already. I can't believe I didn't talk to you about this sooner! OK. I'm gonna go now. Good luck with your decisions. When do you think the list will go up, in a week?

MS. KAVENDISH: The play is cast.

DANNY: What?

MS. KAVENDISH: I have the list right here.

DANNY: But it's only been a day!

MS. KAVENDISH: I said I'd post it at one.

DANNY: But Mr. Sullivan would say the same thing and take weeks leaving everyone in agony and – you're not going to post that right now are you?

MS. KAVENDISH: I am. Do you want to see?

DANNY: NO! I can't! I'm not prepared!

MS. KAVENDISH: You don't want to know?

DANNY: Yes! No! I – AGH!!!

DANNY screams and runs offstage.

MS. KAVENDISH: (*calling after him*) The readthrough's on Thursday!

MS. KAVENDISH puts up the cast list and begins to exit. BRITTANY, FELICITY and APRIL enter.

APRIL: Is that the cast list Ms. Kavendish?

MS. KAVENDISH: Yes it is. Readthrough's on Thursday.

MS. KAVENDISH exits, the girls gather around the board.

APRIL: What'd we get?

BRITTANY: Look Fleecy. Ladies in Waiting.

The two squeal in excitement.

FELICITY: Awesome!

The two high five each other – APRIL looks puzzled.

APRIL: Why are you excited about being Ladies in Waiting? I don't think *Romeo and Juliet* even has Ladies in Waiting.

BRITTANY: They do now.

FELICITY: They're perfect parts.

BRITTANY: We won't have to speak any Shakespeare.

FELICITY: And we probably get to wear cute outfits!

BRITTANY: Oooh I didn't even think of that.

FELICITY: How 'bout you April?

APRIL: (*reading the list*) Benvolio. Who's Benvolio? I don't remember any girls named Benvolio.

BRITTANY and FELICITY both gasp.

APRIL: What?

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Nothing.

APRIL: What's wrong with the part?

BRITTANY: Well uh... Benvolio's a boy.

APRIL: (*with total disgust and horror*) Uh uh.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: Uh huh.

APRIL: She gave me a boy's part? No she didn't.

FELICITY: I think she did.

APRIL: Why did she do that? I don't want to play a boy. Do I look like a boy? Do you think I look like someone who looks like a boy? Does she think I'm boyish?

BRITTANY: What about Nicola?

APRIL: I don't look anything like a boy.

FELICITY: She got Juliet!

BRITTANY: Awesome!

APRIL: This sucks.

BRITTANY: And Rick got Romeo right?

FELICITY: I don't see his name.

BRITTANY: He's playing Romeo.

FELICITY: No he's not.

BRITTANY: Sure he is. That's the plan.

FELICITY: Did someone tell Ms. Kavendish about the plan?

BRITTANY: Let me see. Danny Dinning.

APRIL: Who's Danny Dinning?

BRITTANY: No.

FELICITY: It can't be.

BRITTANY: Not that.

NICOLA enters.

NICOLA: Hey girls.

BRITTANY & FELICITY: *(running over to NICOLA)* Nicola!

NICOLA: Is that the cast list?

BRITTANY and FELICITY block NICOLA from going up to the list.

BRITTANY: You better sit down.

FELICITY: We have something to tell you.

NICOLA: Let me see the list.

NICOLA tries to go around the girls and they block her again.

BRITTANY: It's better if it comes from us.

FELICITY: Do you want some water?

NICOLA: I didn't make it? I didn't get a part?

FELICITY: Don't get upset.

BRITTANY: Just calm down and let us explain.

NICOLA: (*getting upset*) I nailed that audition. She had to cast me.

BRITTANY: She did.

NICOLA: Oh. Ohhhhh. So I got a part but it's a bad part and you're trying to break it to me gently.

APRIL: Not by half. There is so not a worse part than the one I got.

BRITTANY: You got a great part.

FELICITY: You're Juliet.

NICOLA: I'm Juliet. I'm Juliet. Yes! I knew I'd get it.

BRITTANY: Sit down Nicola.

NICOLA: So, what's the matter? Why do you look so sad?

BRITTANY: It's... It's... I can't do it. You do it Fleecy.

FELICITY: I can't do it Britty. April, you tell her.

NICOLA: Someone tell me.

APRIL: Really, this is not half as bad as being cast as a boy like some people... It's about Rick.

NICOLA: Rick is Romeo.

APRIL: Not exactly.

NICOLA: How is he not exactly Romeo? Either he is or he isn't. He is, right?

APRIL: He isn't. He didn't get a part.

NICOLA: You must have read it wrong. Rick is Romeo.

APRIL: He's not.

NICOLA: So who is?

APRIL: Some guy named Danny Dinning.

NICOLA: Danny Dinning!

During the above DANNY enters. MURRAY and AGNES follow behind.

DANNY: Hey, who's shouting my name?

The girls all turn menacingly towards DANNY.

DANNY: Whoa.

MURRAY: Stay alert. Subject could be attacked at any moment.

DANNY: So. What's up?

BRITTANY: You.

FELICITY: You.

DANNY: What?

APRIL: Who's he?

BRITTANY: Danny Dinning.

APRIL: You!

DANNY: Is there something the matter?

BRITTANY: How dare you!

FELICITY: You scum!

APRIL: You slime!

BRITTANY: You lower than low!

DANNY: What did I do?

FELICITY: You know what you did.

NICOLA: *(still in a daze)* Rick is Romeo. Rick is Romeo.

APRIL: We better get her some water. Come on girls.

DANNY: What did I do?

BRITTANY: Have you checked the cast list yet?

DANNY: I was... I was just getting up the nerve to...

APRIL: You'll need a lot of nerve alright. A lot of nerve. You better watch your back. We're not happy, Nicola's not happy and I'm sure Rick won't be happy at all.

The girls escort the dazed NICOLA offstage.

DANNY: What did that mean? OK. Here we go. (*he takes a deep breath*) I have to do it quickly like ripping off a Band-Aid. (*he starts jumping up and down on the spot*)

AGNES: Interesting technique.

MURRAY: It won't help.

DANNY: Here we go, here we go, and here we go! (*he runs up to the list, and runs away*) Can't do it, can't do it, I'm not ready. Nope, no can do.

MURRAY: See? Textbook Danny.

AGNES: (*with love*) You are so perspicacious.

MURRAY: (*not completely understanding what the word means*) Of course I am.

DANNY: This is ridiculous. It's just a piece of paper. It's just names on a piece of paper. All I'm doing is looking at names on a piece of paper. Do it Danny. Do it. Do it!

AGNES: Do it!

MURRAY: Agnes.

AGNES: Sorry doctor.

DANNY: Go, go, gooooooooooooo. (*he runs to the list*) I got Romeo! I got Romeo! (*he celebrates for a second but then something dawns on him and he returns to the list*) Romeo? Oh no. Oh no. This is a disaster! (*he collapses to the floor*)

MURRAY: This may be the moment he cracks. Do you have the restraints ready?

AGNES: Ready.

DANNY: Romeo, Romeo, why did it have to be Romeo? She could have given me Mercutio or Tybalt or the Friar or Benvolio or the Prince or one of the dads but Romeo?

AGNES: Is he frothing at the mouth?

MURRAY: Not yet. Watch for any twitching.

LAUREL enters.

LAUREL: (to MURRAY) Did he get a part?

MURRAY: Romeo.

LAUREL: He did? That's great! So why's he lying on the floor?

MURRAY: He's not happy about it.

LAUREL: Why?

MURRAY: Have you met Danny? He has the extraordinary ability to make himself miserable under every situation. That's going to be our thesis.

LAUREL: (*she wheels over to DANNY*) Get up. Get up you pathetic loser.

DANNY: Hey! Not so close.

LAUREL: What is your problem?

DANNY: She gave me Romeo. Don't you get it?

LAUREL: You got exactly what you wanted! You wanted a serious play. You wanted a good part.

MS. KAVENDISH enters.

DANNY: I have to talk to Ms. Kavendish. Ms. Kavendish!

MS. KAVENDISH: Hi Danny. Congratulations!

DANNY: You have to take it back.

MS. KAVENDISH: What?

DANNY: The part. You have to take the part back.

MS. KAVENDISH: Why?

DANNY: Rick Sittler would make a much better Romeo than me.

MS. KAVENDISH: Why?

DANNY: Because he's good looking. Because he's Nicola Calabretta's boyfriend. Because after he beats me to a pulp I won't be good for much of anything!

MS. KAVENDISH: He won't do that.

DANNY: How do you know?

MS. KAVENDISH: I'll ask him not to.

DANNY: (*as if explaining to a child*) Rick Sittler's specialty is taking football players by the head and smashing them to the ground. He does it without even thinking. Subconsciously. BAM! Ms. Kavendish. I don't have a helmet. My head is very precious to me.

MS. KAVENDISH: Then I'll talk to Nicola.

DANNY: That's even worse. She wants my head smashed. She wants me out of the picture. Goodbye!

MS. KAVENDISH: She wants Rick to be Romeo.

DANNY: Exactly. You see what I'm saying.

MS. KAVENDISH: Well, she'll have to live with the decision.

DANNY: She won't do that. She doesn't like me.

MS. KAVENDISH: I'm sure that's not true.

DANNY: She's not going to say, "Romeo, Romeo wherefore art thou Romeo?" to me.

MS. KAVENDISH: Danny. I want you to have the part. You deserve it. But I won't force you. What do you want?

DANNY: Me? I have to decide?

MS. KAVENDISH: Yep.

DANNY: You're an adult you have to force me. I don't know what I want!

MURRAY: What will our subject do? Will he cave like the spineless jellyfish we know him to be? Or will he find strength from somewhere deep inside and make the pivotal decision that will change his life forever (*he echoes*) ever...ever...ever.

MS. KAVENDISH: Murray, don't you have class?

MURRAY: Oh no Ms. Kavendish. I've been excused from all classes to work on my science project.

MS. KAVENDISH: Maybe you can work on it elsewhere.

MURRAY: But Danny is my science project. I have to be here when he cracks!

MS. KAVENDISH: Now Murray!

MURRAY: I can't believe how hard we have to work for this.



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