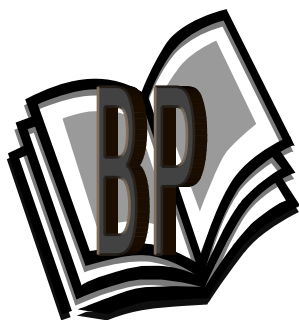


BETTER FOOTBALL THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL CHEMISTRY

Full-Length Comedy

by
Murray Austin



Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

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BETTER FOOTBALL THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL CHEMISTRY

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ACT I

Scene 1

AT RISE: * Played in front of curtain.* Chicaloo High School; Lights up on CRYSTAL and JANE, each carrying pen and notepad.

CRYSTAL: *(stares out, broadly gestures with hand)* I can see it. . . headlines swallowing the entire front page. "Chicaloo Football Team in Hunt for Championship." Maybe we could, like, double bold the headlines. . . so people will look.

JANE: Oh, they'll look. Then they'll double over laughing. Our team is *not* in some great quest for a championship. They're the worst team in the district. . . always have been.

CRYSTAL: So negative, girl. They've only lost one game all year.

JANE: *(sarcastically)* They play their second game Friday.

CRYSTAL: *(beat)* Oh.

JANE: Our school's whole tradition is built around bad football teams. All during WWI and WWII, we weren't only winless. . . and scoreless. . . we never gained a single yard.

CRYSTAL: Ah, but ten years later, during the Korean War, we finally made a first down. *(dramatically, pointing like a referee would do)* First and ten!

JANE: *(beat)* Other team was offside.

CRYSTAL: *(deflated)* Still counts.

JANE: Barely.

CRYSTAL: We got better.

JANE: Oh sure. During JFK's presidency, we actually completed a forward pass.

CRYSTAL: *(dramatically again)* First and ten!

JANE: *(shakes head, rolls eyes)* During two wars and half of Vietnam, we never reached the other team's end zone.

CRYSTAL: Then in the 70's, *(triumphantly)*, we scored!

JANE: Who didn't? *(beat)* Hello?! That's ten seasons for one score. Besides, wasn't that a scrimmage against the girl's volleyball team?

CRYSTAL: *(pauses, looks out dreamily)* We're not that same miserable team, Jane. It's different now. This year we have spirit. We have drive. We have attitude. We have. . .

CRYSTAL and JANE: *(look at each other, CRYSTAL gives in)* No reasonable chance whatsoever.

(Both stroll toward exit, SL. ASHLEY and MELANIE enter, SL, pantomiming conversation.)

CRYSTAL: We still have to write an article on Chicaloo's football team.

JANE: I'll write it. I lie better than you. *(unexcited, hands pumping air mockingly)* Rah, rah, rah. . . go Chicaloo Chickens.

(CRYSTAL laughs. CRYSTAL and JANE now break into mimed conversation as they continue to exit. After a short pause, ASHLEY and MELANIE break from pantomime and begin to speak.)

ASHLEY: Ms. Kasey is furious. . . says she didn't go to college all those years just to teach nursery school.

MELANIE: Is the football team really *that* dumb?

ASHLEY: Honey, they have the collective IQ's of a potted plant. Everyone knows the cheerleaders do all their homework for them, and they still barely pass.

MELANIE: Is that why we're reading *A Tale of Two Cities* while the football jocks read *Hank the Cowdog*?

ASHLEY: Sure. Ms. Kasey knows she has to pass them somehow. Otherwise, all of Coach Murphy's best players will be off the team.

MELANIE: *(confused)* Huh? I don't get it.

ASHLEY: Exactly! Good impersonation of our glorious star quarterback, *(makes throwing stance)* Tommy Don Wallace.

MELANIE: Born with a golden arm.

ASHLEY: And an empty head.

MELANIE: But totally cool.

ASHLEY: Oh, totally. But Tommy Don is limited in plays he can remember.

(ASHLEY and MELANIE stroll toward exit, SR, as LAURA, HANNAH, and CHERYL enter, SR, miming conversation. CHERYL is carrying a notepad and pen, looking down at it as SHE walks.)

MELANIE: Can't someone in the huddle help him remember plays? Can't Mo help him?

ASHLEY: Mo? Motown Rivers? Chicaloo's dynamic but dimwitted running back? He just has *one* play to remember.

MELANIE: Yeah.

ASHLEY and MELANIE: (*imitates*) Run, Forrest, run!

(*Both laugh, then exit, miming conversation as others begin their dialogue.*)

CHERYL: (*reading from notepad*) "List three examples of irony in the book *Hank the Cowdog*."

HANNAH: This is crazy. We should be doing our own homework.

LAURA: Instead, we're reading about dirty, stinky cowdogs so our boyfriends can pass English class.

HANNAH: Wait'll next quarter. We have to read *Madame Bovary*, and they get to read *Spider-Man*.

LAURA: The comic book!?!

HANNAH: How's that for irony?

CHERYL: (*still reading*) "Who is the antagonist in *Hank the Cowdog*? What is his relationship to the protagonist?"

LAURA: (*overlapping CHERYL's last sentence*) Who cares? I can't concentrate on cowdogs right now. We need some fresh cheers for Friday's game.

CHERYL: If the boys fail, Chicaloo will have to forfeit the whole season. There'll be no more games.

HANNAH: And then. . . I'll have no one to cheer for but my mother. (*slowly moves to edge of stage; staring out, as if reliving a nightmare*) If she can't watch me at the game, she makes me cheer in the kitchen, directly in front of the huge bay window. Then she starts cheering with me. And . . . (*beat*) . . . she goes crazy. This nice, quiet mom, she just loses it. She starts cheering for the Chickens, and pretty soon, all the neighbors are creeping toward the window to peek inside. And the neighbors. . . they just stand there and laugh, making fun of us. (*beat*) And does she mind? Oh, no. Mom, she *loves* the attention. . . every minute of it. (*pauses, sniffles, like SHE's ready to cry*) And the neighbors, they all make chicken sounds. (*hands under arms, imitates chicken*) They squawk around everywhere, through the yard, through our house. And they call me. . . (*breaks down*) . . . chicken girl! (*beat*) And in the morning, every cat in town is at our doorstep.

LAURA: (*gives HANNAH a tissue*) Cat, you say?

HANNAH: (*sniffles, wipes eyes*) Yes. . . because people leave boxes and boxes of . . . (*beat, then cries again*) . . . Churches Fried Chicken . . . for chicken girl.

LAURA and CHERYL: Like, weird!

LAURA: Don't complain. Free chicken sounds cool.

HANNAH: It's not cool at all. Any chicken that's *not* eaten has cat hair.

LAURA: So . . . you can still eat it.

HANNAH: If you're hungry for hairballs. And now the cats won't leave. We have four hundred hungry felines living in our yard, just waiting for the next big feed.

LAURA: (*hands another tissue*) Well, that's *your* crazy neighborhood. They're not laughing at you from the stands.

CHERYL: Yeah, Hannah. You should be proud.

LAURA: We're the Chicaloo Fighting Chicks. We're loved. . .

CHERYL: . . .feared.

LAURA: . . .adored. We're like totally respected.

CHERYL: Oh, totally.

LAURA: No matter what everyone says.

HANNAH: Thanks, guys. It's just tough being a chicken.

LAURA: A Chick, Hannah. A Fighting Chick. A Fighting Chick representing the proud Fighting Chickens!!

(*LAURA and CHERYL get into cheering stance, and HANNAH rushes to join them. LAURA is in the middle. CHERYL still holds her pad.*)

LAURA: Okay, let's go!

ALL: Chicky chicky Chicaloo . . .

HANNAH: We don't oink,

CHERYL: And we don't moo.

ALL: We show our spirit with our clucks,

LAURA: We cheer real loud,

ALL: (*points toward audience*) To bring you luck.

CHERYL: We're a killer football team,

LAURA: (*sounds and looks tough*) Our boys are tough,

HANNAH: (*sounds and looks tough*) Our boys are mean.

CHERYL: For them we'll always gladly cheer,

ALL CHICKS: 'Cuz our team almost scored last year.

(*ALL jump a bit, ad lib "Go team, go," etc., then CHERYL stops.*)

CHERYL: (*reading again*) Try this one, guys. "Explain the climax of *Hank the Cowdog*."

(*All shrug as lights go down.*)

ACT 1, SCENE 2

AT RISE: MS. KASEY's classroom. Curtain opens. *Lights up on MS. KASEY, standing in front of class, with a small table, desk or chair behind her, stacked with paper. Students are seated in chairs or desks or the floor; in back are TOMMY DON, with LAURA directly in front of him; MO, with HANNAH directly in front of him; CHUCK, with CHERYL in front of him. Other seats, filled up in front area by LOUIS, CRYSTAL, JANE, ASHLEY, and MELANIE. Extras may be used.*

MS. KASEY: Class, today we're going to talk about symbolism in *A Tale of Two Cities*. . .uh. . . and boys, we'll discuss *Hank the Cowdog* as well.

TOMMY DON: (*high fives MO*) Cool! Are we ever going to see the movie, Ms Kasey? I wanna see them cowdogs.

MO: Glance in the mirror, Tommy Don.

TOMMY DON: Don't need no mirror, Motown. I see you just fine.

MS. KASEY: (*correcting*) Tommy Don, Mo. . . We always finish reading the book first. Then, and only then, can we watch the film for fun.

TOMMY DON: Why can't we watch the flick first. . . catch all that knowledge? Then we can read the *book* for fun.

LOUIS: Cowdogs would fly if you ever read a book, Tommy Don.

MO: (*to LOUIS*) Who wants to read all the whoppin' big books you carry around, Louis? So you get your assignments done. Whoop-te-doo!

CHUCK: Ought'a be illegal to read them big books. (*throws paper wad at LOUIS*)

MS. KASEY: (*threatening*) Chuck!

TOMMY DON: So whadd'a you say, Miss? Can we watch that there movie? We could make it a double feature and see "Spider-Man."

MS. KASEY: Finish the book.

LOUIS: (*stands*) You tell them, Ms. Kasey.

MO: (*in mocking, falsetto voice*) You tell them, Ms. Kasey.

(*All laugh.*)

MS. KASEY: Settle down, class. (*annoyed*) Sit down, Louis. (*HE does*) All right. We're having a pop quiz. We'll see how much everyone knows. (*Everyone murmurs, ad-libs, "Aw," "Not again," "Give us a break," etc. Students pull pens out. MS. KASEY passes out the quizzes.*) You can thank our cheerleaders, the Chicks, for not bothering to do their homework last night.

ALL: (*sarcastically*) Thanks, Chicks.

LOUIS: Thank you, chicken legs.

MS. KASEY: (*beat*) Louis! Be quiet.

(*Immediately all three PLAYERS come forward, turn in paper, take a seat.*)

MS. KASEY: Boys, you only had enough time to write your names. (*pause*) Well?

TOMMY DON: Don't remember nothin'.

MO: Me neither.

CHUCK: Quizzes ought'a be illegal.

TOMMY DON: When did you say we're gonna see that movie?

MS. KASEY: (*angrily*) Enough already! You boys haven't been fooling anyone. . . making "A's" on every homework paper, but failing every classroom assignment. I'm going to talk with Coach Murphy this afternoon. If I were you, boys, I would enjoy your last few days of football. You're not going to pass this class. When grades come out next week, you'll no longer be members of the Fighting Chickens.

LOUIS: (*uncomfortable pause*) That's okay, Ms. Kasey. They look more like the Fighting Chicks, anyway.

(LOUIS laughs obnoxiously, but no one else laughs. MS. KASEY stares somberly at the shocked PLAYERS, who look back. Lights down. End of scene.)

ACT 1, SCENE 3

AT RISE: Broadcast studio of Radio TFC; Spot on JORDAN. In all of JORDAN's broadcasts, a spot may be used, or the right side of the stage may be lit. If desired, the apron could be a permanent set-up for Jordan.

JORDAN: Good evening, and welcome again to our broadcast of Chicaloo football on Radio TFC, home of the Chickens. I'm your feisty, fun, and fashionable hostess, Jordan J Jawbreaker. As we reach the closing minutes of the game, it's been another long, long, long, evening for our beloved Fighting Chickens. The score right now is Gators 103, Chickens nothing. But ladies and gentlemen, the score doesn't always tell the entire story. Our fine, feathered football friends, as usual, have played with heart. Tommy Don Wallace has thrown for over 500 yards tonight. Sure, 450 of those yards were to our opponents, the big bad, biting Gators. But hey, he has to throw to *someone*. If things stay as they are now, our fabulous fighting fowl will fall to zero wins and two losses for the season. The chance of a miraculous comeback seems unlikely, but there's still a minute and fifty-eight seconds left, so anything can happen. *(beat)* It's 103 – nothing, Gators in the lead.

(Spot off; Lights up, Enter COACH MURPHY and TANNER, from SR. COACHES should seem to really watch the play, as the action moves on a play, or the eyes follow a thrown ball, etc. They should use the entire stage at times, pacing together, pacing opposite ways and then suddenly staring out at a focal point when action occurs. For the first five seconds, each COACH should yell instructions or encouraging comments, overlapping each other. This should be ad-libbed, but realistic. Then they should flow into the written dialogue.)

MURPHY: *(toward field)* Come on, Mo. Ram it down their throats! *(to TANNER)* This is ridiculous. The Gators have their fourth string playing. Their middle linebacker is a *girl* ... a girl, for crying out loud. Can you believe the league allowed this travesty?

TANNER: Didn't you vote for it, Coach?

MURPHY: How did I know she'd have long blonde curls flowing everywhere? They're distracting our players.

TANNER: Not as much as those high heels.

MURPHY: *(pause, to field)* Make her wear some cleats, ref!

TANNER: *(beat)* Here's the play. *(claps)*

MURPHY: *(pauses, watching; this line and TANNER's next line should be spoken simultaneously)* Watch your blind side, Tommy Don. Someone keep an eye on that middle linebacker. Let's hustle, hustle, hustle!

TANNER: *(pauses, watching; this line and MURPHY's previous line should be spoken simultaneously)* We ain't at no picnic. Get out there and fight. Let's play some ball. Come on...let's go!

MURPHY: *(pauses, watching)* Get that first down. *(beat)* That's it. Go Motown.

TANNER: Go!

MURPHY: Drive it. Get around that end.

TANNER: Good. You've got it. Now follow your blockers. Follow your blockers.

MURPHY: *(beat)* Good. Now break back. Break back. . . *(beat)* . . .the *other* way.

TANNER: You're almost to open field.

MURPHY: You see it!

TANNER: You've got it!

MURPHY: You're right there!

TANNER: All yours, baby!

MURPHY: Go!

TANNER: Go!

MURPHY and TANNER: *(jumping up and down)* Go. . . go! Yes. . . yes. It's...*(beat)*...it's...*(both cringe)* Eeee!

TANNER: Tackled.

MURPHY: For a loss.

MURPHY and TANNER: *(beat)* By the girl. *(both drop heads)*

MURPHY: *(pause, shakes head)* The refs should remove her. This game isn't safe for females. She could get hurt.

TANNER: She's doing most of the hurting out there, Coach.

MURPHY: *(to field)* Show-off!

TANNER: Man, I'd give anything if Tommy Don could just connect for one big play.

MURPHY: Yeah, good luck with that. Last time one of our players danced in the end zone was the year they held the school prom outdoors.

MURPHY: *(pause, as they watch)* They're lined up again. Tommy Don is going back to pass.

TANNER: The line is blocking for him.

MURPHY: He's showing a lot of poise back there. . . a lot of poise.

TANNER: He's set up in the pocket.

MURPHY: Look down field, Tommy Don. Look down field.

TANNER: The receiver is wide open.

MURPHY: He's wide, wide open.

TANNER: Nobody near him.

MURPHY: By his lonesome.

TANNER: Put it up.

MURPHY: Heave it, man.

TANNER: *(pause to watch)* He's raring back, Coach.

MURPHY: He sees the receiver.

TANNER: Has him in his sites.

MURPHY: Tommy Don has a bead on him.

TANNER: *(both jumping up and down)* Go Tommy Don.

MURPHY: Go Tommy Don.

MURPHY and TANNER: Go. . . go. . . go!

MURPHY: Pass that ball!

TANNER: Throw it now!

MURPHY: Put it up!

TANNER: You've got it, baby. You've got it!

MURPHY: This is it.

TANNER: The big six.

MURPHY and TANNER: It's...it's...*(stop jumping)* Eeee!

MURPHY: Sacked.

TANNER: For a loss.

MURPHY and TANNER: *(beat. . . heads drop)* By the girl.

MURPHY: *(beat)* I hate her.

TANNER: Probably on steroids.

MURPHY: *(deadpan)* Doubt it. She weighs 90 pounds. . . in full pads.

TANNER: I'm glad she's a senior this year. We'll never have to face her again.

MURPHY: Don't get too excited. *(makes quote marks in the air)* "Little sister" starts high school next year.

TANNER: And...?

MURPHY: Her hair is blonder, her heels are higher, and her attitude is grumpier.

TANNER: *(pause, as they watch)* It's 3rd down and 25.

MURPHY: Wait. . . the play's starting. *(beat)* Tommy Don's going back to pass.

TANNER: Hope he actually throws it this time.

MURPHY: Tommy Don! Don't hold the ball. Don't hold it. Pass that ball. Pass it!

TANNER: He looks like he's really going to throw it this time.

MURPHY: His arm is back.

TANNER: He's setting his feet.

MURPHY: He has a target.

TANNER: Throw it.

MURPHY: Throw it.

MURPHY and TANNER: Pass that ball!

TANNER: *(pause)* Oh no! That girl is breaking through the line.

MURPHY: *(beat)* Block her! Somebody block the girl! *(beat)* Not you, Tommy Don! You throw the ball. *(beat)* Stop flirting with her. *(pause, throws hat down in anger)* She's the enemy! *(beat)* I don't care if you like curly blonde hair. Throw the football, Tommy Don!

TANNER: *(beat)* Look! He's ready now.

MURPHY: He's set!

TANNER: Tommy Don sees him. . . a wide open receiver!

MURPHY: Pass that ball!

TANNER: *(jumping up and down)* This is it!

MURPHY: He's throwing it! He's throwing it!

TANNER: I smell six on the scoreboard!

MURPHY and TANNER: *(beat)* Go Tommy Don! Go Tommy Don! Go!

MURPHY: *(beat)* Duck! *(both duck and cover heads. Ball is thrown from offstage, falling close to the coaches. . . turns back)* Oh, for the love of Pete. *(yells)* You're not supposed to throw it to me. *(deflated)* Aw, Tommy Don.

TANNER: *(deflated also)* Game's over. They gave it a good effort.

MURPHY: *(without enthusiasm)* Yeah, I guess they did. Well, let's pack it in. *(tosses football back off, or can pick up and hold it. . . toward field, gestures)* Boys. . . This way, boys. This way. We're over here. *(beat)* You're going toward the Gator's side. *(pauses, listening)* I don't care if she *is* cute, Tommy Don. Was she cute when she body-slammed you. . .

MURPHY and TANNER: *(beat)* For a loss?! *(both shake heads)*

(CHICKS, LAURA, HANNAH, CHERYL, enter, still jumping up and down, cheering, oblivious to the loss.)

LAURA: Let's do one for Coach, girls.

CHICKS: *(they line up, count off)* Who's the best Chicken coach of them all? He coaches and he fights and he *(put hands under arms and imitate chickens)* squawk, squawk, squawks! Who's the chickenest coach? *(bends down, raises arms to sky)* Coooooach Murphy. And Coooooach Tanner. *(all jumping around, ad-libbing. "Get excited," "Woo-Hoo," "Go Chickens," etc.)*

MURPHY: Game is over, girls. We laid a big fat chicken egg. You can kindly stop cheering now.

LAURA: *(too excited)* We may have lost, but that fighting spirit is never beat.

HANNAH: Woo-Hoo! Go Chickens!

MURPHY: *(ignoring them, to TANNER)* This could be our final ball game, Tanner. If those boys fail. . . *(shakes head, thinking; beat)* . . . I certainly hope Ms. Kasey won't flunk our guys like she's saying.

HANNAH: *(drops to knees in front of MURPHY)* Don't let her, Coach. Don't let her fail them. We don't have enough players. We'll have to forfeit the season.

Then. . . *(rises, looks out, horror on face)* . . . every Friday night. . . *(beat)* . . . the real nightmare begins. Mommy cheerleader! *(beat)* Oh, the horror! The inhumanity! The. . .

LAURA and CHERYL: *(others are bored with the comments and say it that way, rolling their eyes)* . . . Neighbors.

HANNAH: The. . .

LAURA and CHERYL: Churches Fried Chicken.

HANNAH: The. . .

LAURA and CHERYL: Chicken Cha-Cha.

MURPHY: Why do your neighbors leave Churches Fried Chicken in your yard?

LAURA: *(shrugs)* She lives in a religious part of town. . . nothing but Churches.

HANNAH: *(pause, then desperately)* You have to stop Ms. Kasey, Coach. My mom has already dusted off her 1992 cheerleading outfit for the next time. It's three sizes too small. I can't handle the embarrassment. I'll be scarred for life. Millions in psychiatrist fees. My life will be over.

MURPHY: *(hand on shoulder)* Chill out, Hannah. Just relax. I'll do my best. But it's all up to Ms. Kasey now. Hopefully she'll be fair.

CHICKS: *(cheering)* Ms. Kasey, please be fair. . . please be fair. . . please be fair. What's that grey stuff in your hair. . . in your hair. . . in your hair! *(jump and ad-lib cheer)*

MURPHY: *(overlaps ad-lib cheering)* Stop it! Stop it, girls. Stop it! *(chicks stop. MURPHY smiles and waves toward unseen person offstage, smiles)* Ha ha. Just a little joke, Ms. Kasey. *(beat)* No, you look very young. . . very young indeed. *(beat, listening)* No, they didn't mean it. Yes. . . yes. You have a good night too, Ms. Kasey. *(waving, smiling. . . to girls)* What are you trying to do... make the lady mad? For crying out loud!

(PLAYERS, TOMMY DON, MO, CHUCK enter, jerseys, faces dirty, looking disheveled. Each CHICK dances around, holding hands with her boyfriend. LOUIS enters behind, carrying various pieces of equipment.)

TOMMY DON: *(takes LAURA's hand)* Hey, Coach. Sorry about losing.

MO: We did better than last week, huh?

MURPHY: I'm proud of you guys.

TOMMY DON: We did good then?

MURPHY: I wouldn't exactly say that.

LOUIS: You lost 103 – zip. What's good about that?

TOMMY DON: Shut up, weasel!

HANNAH: You did great, Motown.

LAURA: You too, Tommy Don.

CHERYL: You were wonderful, Chuck.

(All exit; CHICKS cheer on their way out.)

CHICKS: The Chickens are the best. The Chickens are the best. Gooo team! Woo-Hoo! The Chickens are the best.

ACT 1, SCENE 4

AT RISE: Common athletic area; All CHICKS and PLAYERS: Chairs or a bench may be used to sit on, upturned buckets would work. There may be chairs for all, or three chairs for PLAYERS, with each CHICK sitting on the ground. All look depressed.

MO: That wasn't a very good practice today.

TOMMY DON: Go figure. We've probably played our last game. On Friday, we'll forfeit the season.

CHUCK: And I think I'm comin' down with that there Bird Flu disease.

TOMMY DON: You ain't got no Bird Flu, Chuck.

CHUCK: How would you know?

TOMMY DON: I'm your quarterback. You ain't caught nothin' all year.

(LOUIS enters with a canister, something looking a bit mystical or scientific. Others are downcast and ignore him.)

LOUIS: I just saw Ms. Kasey in her room, making out tomorrow's big test. Looks like it will be easy. . . *(laughs)* . . . for some people, that is.

MO: Want your head flushed in the toilet?

LOUIS: *(still laughing a bit, then serious)* No.

LAURA: What are you doing here, Louis?

LOUIS: Coach Murphy sent me to spray for bugs.

LAURA: You sprayed last week. . . and the week before. The place is still infested. Can't you do your job right?

LOUIS: It's that spray I've been using. Great for the environment. . . lousy for bug control. *(excited)* But not anymore.

Coach let me into the science lab after practice. Thirty minutes alone with those chemicals, and I concocted the perfect bug spray. *(shakes the canister)*

TOMMY DON: Well, spray already, then scam!

LOUIS: Uh-uh. You'll all have to leave. This is strong stuff. I even have a timer for it so I can get out. It's kind of a bug bomb.

TOMMY DON: *We're* not getting out. Fighting Chickens don't run from a little bug spray.

LAURA: Maybe we'd better leave. I don't want to smell like bug poison.

TOMMY DON: You girls go on. We'd better hang back and figure out a plan.

LAURA: We'll see you later, guys. *(girls exit, boys are seated, depressed)*

LOUIS: I'm telling you, you'd better leave. *(handles container)* I'm setting the timer as I speak.

TOMMY DON: Fix it and go!

MO: Get out!

LOUIS: *(sets bug formula on ground)* Bug bomb is set. I wouldn't hang around if I were you. *(exits)*

MO: Bug bomb. . . whoop-te-doo!

(Boys sit, heads down. Using sound effects, a loud explosion should be heard. Simultaneously, boys should fall to floor, and different lights, perhaps red, should be used. Dry ice could be used, but any mystic lighting will be effective. After a few seconds, boys slowly sit up. After a few more seconds the girls and LOUIS enter, helping them up. After the explosion sound effect, it would be good to have a loud, constant irritating sound effect that continues to play, and slowly diminishes as girls help boys into a seat, and ending as dialogue begins.)

LAURA: *(slapping TOMMY DON's face lightly, as HE recovers)* Do I need to call 9-1-1? Wake up! Oh, please be okay.

HANNAH: *(shaking MO)* Can you hear me, Mo? Do you know who I am? Wake up! Wake up!

LOUIS: Wow! That's my best chemistry experiment ever.

LAURA: *(upset)* Great. They're dying. You've killed our boyfriends.

ALL CHICKS: Thanks, Louis.

LOUIS: Don't worry. If they're hurt, I'll take all three of you to the school dance.

CHERYL: As if!

LAURA: Look, they're coming around. Tommy?

TOMMY DON: Oh, hi Laura. What happened?

LAURA: You're okay, honey.

(Lights should revert to normal about this time, and CHERYL should step off stage, get a cup of water, and give CHUCK a sip. Girls help the guys to their feet.)

Can you stand up? Do you feel okay?

TOMMY DON: Yeah, I think so.

MO: *(standing)* I'm okay.

CHUCK: *(standing)* Me too.

LAURA: It was just Louis and his adolescent chemistry experiment. He almost killed you, but I doubt he hurt a single bug.

TOMMY DON: *(speaking intelligently)* The whole thing was inevitable, I suppose. You see, for every action there's an equal and opposite reaction.

LAURA: *(concerned)* Tommy Don, you don't sound like yourself at all.

TOMMY DON: Actually, I feel great. My mind doesn't feel all cloudy like it usually does.

MO: Same here. It's like neurons are firing off in my brain, sending signals everywhere. For the first time, I feel awake. . . alert.

CHUCK: My cerebral cortex has never felt clearer.

(MO and TOMMY DON nod, knowingly)

HANNAH: Whoa! Louis, what did you put in that bug concoction of yours?

LOUIS: Search me? I didn't keep track. . . a little bit of this, a little bit of that. Lots of sulfur. Heavy on the hydrochloric acid.

Amy Robb left her retainer on the desk, so I tossed that in for some extra kick.

HANNAH: Well, something is wrong with them. . . way wrong.

TOMMY DON: Quite the antithesis.

LAURA: *(unbelieving)* Antithesis? What's going on, Louis? What have you done to my Tommy Don?

HANNAH: To my Motown?

CHERYL: To my Chuck?

LOUIS: Wow! If I figure out what I put in that spray, I'll win the Nobel Prize for Science.

HANNAH: *(grabs LOUIS by the shirt)* You'll win the heel of my shoe upside your head if you don't get them back to normal. *(lets him go)* And hurry. Mo has to get home and eat dinner. This is the night he watches wrestling on TV.

MO: Wrestling? Count me out, babe. That stuff is fake.

LOUIS: Wow! He *has* changed.

TOMMY DON: Let's go, guys. We can't be messing around here. We have school work to do.

MO: That's right. I'm ready to crack those books.

CHUCK: *(high fives)* Let's get at it!

TOMMY DON: Can't believe it never occurred to me to simply read the book. What an idiot I was.

MO: You sure were.

(All guys laugh, slap each other on back.)

TOMMY DON: See you tomorrow, girls. We'll be pulling a late-night study session.

LAURA: This is wonderful. If you boys study and pass that test tomorrow, you'll save the season for our Chickens.

HANNAH: Boy, will Ms. Kasey be surprised.

ALL CHICKS: *(PLAYERS exit happily to the cheers of CHICKS)* You can do it. Pass that test. Save our Chickens. They're the best. Pass that, pass that, mighty test. *(CHICKS hug, ad-lib, then see LOUIS, and stop)*

LAURA: Louis, I don't know what you did or how you did it, but you may have saved the entire season for our Fighting Chickens.

(All CHICKS rush to LOUIS, hug him, tussle his hair, then quickly exit, leaving LOUIS shocked and staggering a bit.)

LOUIS: *(pulls himself together, fixes hair, and smiles; calls off to girls)* Well, since those guys are studying. . . uh. . . *(clears throat)* I may be free tonight, girls. *(rushes off after CHICKS)*

ACT 1, SCENE 5

AT RISE: Coach's office. This quick scene can be played at edge of stage, with spot or directed lights, or in front of curtain. Both pace as THEY speak.

MURPHY: *(looks at watch)* Five minutes. Five minutes until Ms. Kasey gives her test. Five minutes until our season officially ends.

TANNER: *(both off in own world)* Such promise.

MURPHY: It could have been a great year.

TANNER: One of the best.
MURPHY: I'll miss those beautiful 80 yard runs from scrimmage.
TANNER: The last second touchdown passes.
MURPHY: Those two minute drills.
TANNER: Hail Mary's.
MURPHY: Endzone dances.
TANNER: Uh, Coach.
MURPHY: Leading the league.
TANNER: Coach!
MURPHY: Then. . . *(hands over heart, proudly)* A Chicken Championship.
TANNER: *(taps on shoulder)* Coach, we're 0-2. We probably would have lost all the rest. . . like we always do.
MURPHY: *(sadly)* I know. But we weren't out of it yet. *(sighs)* Such dreams.
TANNER: It's okay. Our Chickens will be back next year.
MURPHY: Will you read me some of that *Chicken Soup for the Coach?*
TANNER: *(patting MURPHY on the back)* Sure coach. It'll be okay. It'll be okay.

ACT 1, SCENE 6

AT RISE: Lights come up or curtain opens on MS. KASEY's classroom. All students are seated and MS. KASEY is passing out tests as SHE talks.

MS. KASEY: Don't turn your test over until I say to begin. The season is on the line, boys. I hope you'll give it your best shot. *(sighs, pauses)* I'm sorry it had to come down to this. *(to all)* You may turn over the test and begin.

(Boys write furiously as MS. KASEY paces in front. One by one, the others start turning and watching the PLAYERS. After a few seconds, the CHICKS stand halfway up, and in a stage whisper, start cheering.)

ALL CHICKS: *(in stage whisper)* Chicken boys, Chicken boys, you are the best. We know you can pass that test. *(repeats two or three times, getting progressively louder, with everyone eventually joining in, standing, pumping fists in the air, etc. Finally MS. KASEY comes to her senses, claps hands for attention. . . finally gets it. PLAYERS write furiously, never looking up. Others should not block the audience's view of PLAYERS.)*

MS. KASEY: Class! Class! Sit down, students! This is a classroom and you're taking a test. This is not a pep rally! *(students sit)*

LAURA: Sorry, Ms. Kasey. We got caught up in the excitement.

MS. KASEY: *(clears throat, collects herself)* Proceed with the test, please.

(All three PLAYERS rise together and hand papers to a shocked MS. KASEY, returning to seats.)

Is this it? You're turning them in already? Are you not even going to try? Boys, you've put me in no-win situation. *(waving the papers, threatening)* Couldn't you have worked a little longer? Couldn't you have made a teeny tiny effort?! *(TOMMY DON raises hand; annoyed)* What, Tommy Don?!

TOMMY DON: Can you grade them?

MS. KASEY: What?

TOMMY DON: Can you grade our tests? I'd like to know how we fared on this fine evaluation of our literary skills.

MS. KASEY: *(looks at him, confused)* Huh? *(looks down, glances at one paper for two seconds, scans second paper, then third, mouth opens in astonishment. . . looks up at PLAYERS, confused. . . pause. . . suddenly becomes angry)* How did you do it?

TOMMY DON: Excuse me?

MS. KASEY: How did you cheat? Who did you copy from?

LOUIS: They can't copy from anyone. They're the only ones taking the cowdog test.

MS. KASEY: Quiet, Louis. I want to know, boys. What did you do? Steal the answer sheet? Louis, *you're sneaky*. Did you help them?

TOMMY DON: *(raises hand)* Ms. Kasey? For a simple book, I thought the story contained some terrific irony.

MO: I saw Hank as a perfect symbol of modern man.

CHUCK: I quite agree. It's a wonderful parody of human behavior.

TOMMY DON: The symbolism is unnerving.

MO: But effective.

TOMMY DON: True. . . true.

MS. KASEY: (*confused*) How could you know all of this? Are you saying you actually. . .

TOMMY DON: Read the book? Every word of it. We all did. I hope we passed, Ms. Kasey. And I apologize for our poor efforts in the past.

MS. KASEY: (*looks at each paper a couple of seconds, then holds them in air*) Perfect score. . . all of them. You're all passing my class. Woo-hoo!

(*Students ad-lib; "The season is saved," "They passed," "Chickens rule," etc. . . lots of high fives, hugs, handshakes, including MS. KASEY. Students throw their papers up in celebration. A couple of students could clasp arms and skip round and round, then changing arms and directions. Some could flap arms and cluck. Be creative. CHICKS should lead all toward exit, SR. PLAYERS might hoist LOUIS onto shoulders and carry him out.*)

ALL CHICKS: Chickens, chickens, you're the best. You just passed that big ole' test. (*jump and celebrate on first cheer, then repeat the cheer a couple more times until all have reached exit*)

ACT 1, SCENE 7

(*Lights up, SL, on GIRL 1 and BOY.*)

GIRL 1: Hey! Are you new in town?

BOY: My family just moved here last week.

GIRL 1: Great. . . maybe I could show you around.

BOY: Sounds totally cool.

GIRL 1: Do you like movies?

BOY: Love 'em. Especially scary ones.

GIRL 1: Me too.

BOY: I *really* love skating though.

GIRL 1: Unbelievable. . . it's my favorite.

BOY: You like video games?

GIRL 1: I have the new Playstation (*or an updated brand*).

BOY: Dude! You like Facebook (*or use another social website*)?

GIRL 1: Live on it!

BOY: What's your favorite color? Mine is. . .

BOY and GIRL 1: Blue.

GIRL 1: What's your favorite ice cream? Mine is. . .

BOY and GIRL 1: Vanilla.

BOY: What's your favorite rapper? Mine is. . .

BOY and GIRL 1: Jay-Z (*or substitute another rapper*)

BOY: Dude!

GIRL 1: This has never happened to me before.

BOY: And so quickly.

GIRL 1: (*they move toward each other, clasping hands*) It's meant to be.

BOY: Until now, I've never found the right girl.

GIRL 1: (*move closer, like they're going to kiss*) It's right. I can feel it.

BOY: (*closer*) My heart is beating a hundred miles a minute. I think I. . . I. . .

GIRL 2: (*enters, with large handbag*) Hey guys! (*shocks them and they part a little. SHE walks between them, breaking the hand clasp*) You must be the new boy.

BOY: Uh. . . yes.

GIRL 2: I've heard sooo much about you.

GIRL 1: (*moves back in-between them*) Don't you have other people to bother? We've made a connection here. . . so go away.

GIRL 2: (*flirty, shakes his hand*) Why, I'm just trying to be neighborly. What's wrong with that?

GIRL 1: (*pulls their hands apart*) Plenty. Look. . . we have the same interests.

BOY: . . .the same likes.

GIRL 1: . . .the same dislikes.

BOY: . . .the same passions.

GIRL 1: . . .the same dreams.

BOY and GIRL 1: *(clasp hands again)* We're soul-mates.

GIRL 1: We'll be together always.

GIRL 2: Oh, well. . . cool. I understand. I just thought since you were new in town, the two of us could go on a picnic together.

GIRL 1: *(laughs)* A picnic. . . get real.

GIRL 2: *(takes box of TFC out of handbag)* Oh, and did I mention. . . we'll be eating TFC. . . Texas Fried Chicken . . . extra greasy.

BOY: *(releases GIRL 1's hand)* Extra greasy?

GIRL 2: With the Lieutenant's famous TFC biscuits. They're nose-licken' good.

BOY: *(goes to GIRL 2 and grabs her hand)* What are we waiting for?

GIRL 1: You're kidding! What about me? *(to BOY)* How can you do this?

BOY: *(takes DVD from pocket)* Watch a scary movie. You'll feel better.

GIRL 2: *(to audience, and imaginary camera. . . holds up box)* Eat TFC for every meal, and you'll always get the guy.

BOY: Eat anything else, and you'll be alone.

BOY and GIRL 2: *(points)* Like her.

(Laugh as they exit, SL, hand-in-hand. GIRL 1, open-mouthed, stares at them, and out at audience.)

ACT 1, SCENE 8

Spot up, SR. for JORDAN.

JORDAN: Welcome back. This is Jordan J Jawbreaker here at Radio TFC, your home for all the exciting action of this year's Chicaloo Chickens. If you're just joining us, sports fans, hold on to your hats. Scoreless for many years, tonight our miraculous Chicaloo Chickens have not only scored, they've put up 21 huge, huge points. Our very own Tommy Don Wallace has connected all night with Motown Rivers and Chuck Pace. All three team captains are playing inspired football, with an uncanny awareness of what the defense is doing. The Wily Wolves came in here expecting once again to break into our chicken coop, grab a couple of fat, juicy hens, and enjoy a feast. Instead, our restless roosters have pecked and scratched those wolves at every turn. But even with that great performance, it looks like our Chickens will once again go down in defeat. We're under two minutes left in the game, and the Wolves hold a three point lead, 24-21. Unfortunately, the Wolves have the ball and are running down the clock. But no matter what happens, this is a proud night in Chicken-land.

(Spot off JORDAN, who exits, and lights up on COACH MURPHY and COACH TANNER.)

MURPHY: *(clapping)* Come on. You gotta stop them. Stop those wolves.

TANNER: Make the tackle. Get in there and hit 'em.

MURPHY: *(beat)* You got 'em. Wrap him up. *(both clap)* Good tackle. That's the way to do it, Mo. *(to TANNER)* It's a shame to see our boys play this well and still lose.

TANNER: I don't know what Louis put in that bug spray, but Tommy Don has been calling all the plays we gave up trying to teach him *last year*.

MURPHY: It's like everything just suddenly snapped together for him.

TANNER: Like someone flipped the "on" switch in his brain.

MURPHY: Same with Mo and Chuck. I can't believe Chuck actually caught two touchdown passes.

TANNER: *(laughing)* As Chuck used to say. . .

MURPHY and TANNER: *(dumb jock voice)* Ought'a be illegal. *(both laugh)*

MURPHY: *(pause, watching play. . . disappointed)* Wolves just made a first down. No way to stop them now.

(A whistle is heard. Enter TOMMY DON, MO and CHUCK, disheveled from the game. Both COACHES clap.)

Good job, boys. Way to hang in there. We were close. We'll get 'em next week.

TOMMY DON: *(excited)* Coach, we're going to *win* this game!

MO: We can't give up now.

MURPHY: That's the attitude.

TOMMY DON: It's not attitude, Coach. We've got a plan. . . a good plan. We can get the ball back. . . guaranteed.

CHUCK: We discussed it on the way back to the sidelines.

TOMMY DON: Mo has been studying the footwork of the opposing running back. Each time he runs off tackle, the fourth finger on his left hand separates from his third finger an extra 2.2 centimeters just prior to the moment he cuts back.
MO: You see what that means? We know the exact moment he'll be cutting back.
TOMMY DON: Next time he runs off tackle, the three of us will be right there, waiting for him.
ALL PLAYERS: A regular chicken reunion. *(PLAYERS high five; exit)*
MURPHY: *(shakes head)* Poor boys. It looks so easy to them.
TANNER: *(pause)* Okay, here's the play. Look, it's going to be a run. Their running back has the ball.
MURPHY: *(beat)* He takes a stutter-step. Wait. . . he's running left. *(beat)* No, he's running right.
TANNER: *(excited)* He's running off tackle. He's running off tackle, Coach!
MURPHY: Look, he's cutting back. He's cutting back!
TANNER: *(both throw arms up)* They're waiting for him.
MURPHY: Beautiful! Right into the arms of Motown.
TANNER: Tommy Don and Chuck are there, too. They have him trapped.
MURPHY: Nowhere to go.
TANNER: Pinned to the wall.
MURPHY and TANNER: Chicken reunion! Woo-hoo!
TANNER: *(points)* Did you see that? Mo knocked the ball out!
MURPHY: He stripped the ball right out of that Wolf player's hand.
TANNER: *(excited)* It's on the ground! It's on the ground!
MURPHY: Free ball. . . free ball!
TANNER: Fall on it, Tommy Don!
MURPHY: Fall on it, Chuck!
MURPHY and TANNER: Recover that ball!
MURPHY: *(softly at first, and building from there)* I think he's got it. I think he's got it. *(beat)* Tanner, do you see that?
(arms up) He's got it! He's got it!
MURPHY and TANNER: Mo recovered the ball! Woo-hoo! We've got the ball! *(in a mocking, sing-song voice)*. We've got the ball! We've got the ball!

(COACHES jump up and down, hug, or one could lift the other; TOMMY DON, MO and CHUCK enter.)

TOMMY DON: We did it, Coach. We did it!
MURPHY: Great job, guys. But we're still behind. We have time for one play. Let's win this game.
TANNER: Might as well just throw it up, Tommy Don, and hope we get lucky.
ALL PLAYERS: *(disgusted)* Get lucky?
TOMMY DON: No such thing as luck.
MO: *(HE will recite several of these quotes. Each time, HE should look far off, strike a pose, and put hand to chest, statesman – like)* "Luck is no friend of the man of action. . . the man who stands in the trenches, fights the enemy, and protects our every freedom."
TOMMY DON: Abraham Lincoln, right?
MO: *(always points finger back at him, indicating correct answer)* Right.
TOMMY DON: Okay, let's try this. I'll send the fullback in motion to get a better angle on sealing the tackle. Chuck, I want you to seal off the cornerback. Mo, I'll fake the handoff. The safety will cover the other receiver, and you'll be all alone for six. Piece of cake. On one.

(All clap once.)

MURPHY: Uh. . . Tommy Don?
TOMMY DON: Trust me, Coach.

(PLAYERS exit; LOUIS and CHICKS enter, cheering for PLAYERS.)

MURPHY: *(rubbing hands, nervous)* Okay, here we go.
TANNER: There's the snap. He's going back to pass.
MURPHY: *(beat. . . horrified)* He fumbled! Tommy Don fumbled!
TANNER: Oh no! *(beat)* Wait! He scooped the ball up. He's got it, Coach. He's scrambling.
MURPHY: Mo's breaking away. He's wide open.
TANNER: Throw the ball, Tommy Don. Throw the ball.
MURPHY: And not to us.
TANNER: *(beat, gives MURPHY a look, looks back to game)* You have him wide open.
MURPHY: Free as a bird.

TANNER: Crank it up.
MURPHY: Let'er fly.
TANNER: Oooh! *(to MURPHY)* Beautiful block by Chuck.
MURPHY and TANNER: *(to field)* All right, Chuckie!
MURPHY: Tommy Don is set. He's found his man.
TANNER: Ready to throw.
MURPHY: He's zoned in on Mo.
TANNER: Bombs away!
MURPHY: Throw that ball.
TANNER: Throw that ball.
MURPHY and TANNER: Pass that ball! Pass that ball!
MURPHY: *(pause)* It's up!
TANNER: And away.
MURPHY: A genuine beauty.
TANNER: Wait. . . It's gonna fall short. It's gonna fall short!
MURPHY: *(beat)* No. It's too far out. It's over his head!
TANNER: *(beat)* He's catching up. Mo's got his man beat.
MURPHY: He's streaking into the endzone!
TANNER: He's reaching.
MURPHY: He's grabbing.
TANNER: He's got it.
MURPHY and TANNER: *(beat. . . arms up)* Touchdown! Woo-hoo!

(All celebrate, jumping up and down, making noise. As things escalate, suddenly a long and loud whistle is heard. A yellow flag should be tossed on stage from the wings. The celebration should progressively turn to despair. After a few seconds of despair, MURPHY should start ad-libbing protests at the refs, like "What are ya', blind, ref?" before LAURA begins the dialogue.)

LAURA: What? What is it?
MURPHY: *(mortified)* Penalty.
TANNER: *(also mortified)* At the line of scrimmage.
MURPHY: Oh no.
TANNER: How can it be?
MURPHY: My life is over. *(long pause, looking glum)*
TANNER: *(points)* Look! There's six different flags. But none of them are from the ref. Wait! *(beat...reads the back of the flag)* The flags were thrown from a company advertising their theme park.
MURPHY: So it's not a penalty against us? It's an advertisement for five flags?
TANNER: Six Flags.
MURPHY and TANNER: It's not a penalty! It's not a penalty!
MURPHY: Touchdown Chickens!
TANNER: Touchdown Chickens!
MURPHY and TANNER: Touchdown Chickens! *(both with arms extended, wiggling fingers, running in circles)*
MURPHY: No more time on the clock. We win! We win! *(sing-songy)* We finally won a football game! We finally won a football game!

(Everyone celebrates again, culminating with one coach jumping into the other's arms for a few seconds. PLAYERS enter and are mobbed. Other excited students may enter as well. CHICKS lead everyone off stage as all exit, SL and they cheer until all are off.)

CHICKS: Chicaloo Chickens, that's our name. We belong in the Hall of Fame. *(repeat)*

(Lights out, and spot on JORDAN, SR.)

JORDAN: This is Jordan J Jawbreaker, here at the final gun. It's a mob scene on the field. There's plenty of laughing, crying, hugging and triumphant cheers, as tonight, our beloved Chickens earned their first victory since 1996. This evening, our birds refused to be plucked, refused to be fricasseed, refused to be beaten. What's more, unlike the '96 victory, this time, the opponent's bus did *not*- I repeat, did *not* break down on the interstate. No forfeit here, baby! We earned this victory, fair and square. Good night and congratulations, Chickens. We're proud of each and every one of you. Until next time, this is the feisty, fun, and fashionable Jordan J Jawbreaker, at Radio TFC. Enjoy the sweet taste of victory, folks.

ACT 1, SCENE 9

Lights come up again on SR, as GIRL 1 and BOY enter.

GIRL 1: *(holding a large handbag)* Hey! Whatch'a doin'?

BOY: Nothing much. Just hanging out.

GIRL 1: Well, I wasn't doing anything, and I thought, if you weren't busy, we could have. . . *(pulls out box of TFC)* . . . dinner!

BOY: *(eyes light up)* Hey! TFC! Now you're talking my language.

GIRL 1: Extra greasy. . . six whole pieces. . . and those biscuits you like so much.

BOY: Oh boy! I'm ready. My place or yours?

GIRL 1: Either is fine by me. How about skating afterward?

BOY: Count me in!

GIRL 1: I've got the new Jay-Z CD.

BOY: Awesome. Let's jam!

GIRL 2: *(enters)* Hey guys. *(to BOY)* What are we doing tonight, babe?

GIRL 1: *We're eating with the Lieutenant tonight. (shows box. . . in mock sympathy)* Six whole pieces. Guess you'll be dining alone for the evening. Poor, poor girl.

GIRL 2: *(as SHE walks back to exit and grabs something)* Yes, I'll be all alone . . . *(brings out large bucket, with TFC painted in bold letters)* . . . with my 80 piece bucket of TFC. . . 40 original recipe and 40 extra greasy. . .

GIRL 1: *(in disbelief)* An 80 piece meal?!

GIRL 2: With about 75 hot, delicious biscuits. . . each one a nose-licken' treat.

GIRL 1: But that costs 100 bucks!

GIRL 2: Money well spent. *(BOY moves over to GIRL 2)* At least I won't be alone for the evening.

BOY: *(takes bucket and toward audience)* Introducing the new TFC 80 piece meal, for only 99 bucks. Who needs a college fund?! Use it to buy more chicken.

GIRL 2: And try our delicious chicken milkshake. Mmm...mmm. With TFC, your love life will thrive.

BOY: *(taking GIRL 2's hand)* I know mine has.

(Both exit, as GIRL 1 stares open-mouthed at them and back at audience, shocked. Lights down.)

ACT 1, SCENE 10

AT RISE: MS. KASEY stands in front of class. The boys sit at the very front, with each girlfriend in the seat behind. The rest of the students fill out other spots in the classroom.

TOMMY DON: Ms. Kasey, I'm curious to know. When Thoreau writes of Walden Pond, there's an almost mystic quality of peace and reflection. Did he just write about these things, or were they mirrored in his life?

MS. KASEY: That's an excellent question, Tommy Don. I'm always glad to discuss literature.

(COACH MURPHY and COACH TANNER enter.)

Hello Coach Murphy. . . Coach Tanner. What can I do for you gentlemen?

MURPHY: We were just coming by to check up on our players. We want to make sure they are doing their work and not backsliding.

MS. KASEY: *(laughs)* I see your point. You don't have to worry, Coach. These last few weeks, your boys have become some of my finest students. But I do appreciate your coming by, and I want to thank you for encouraging them to take their academics seriously.

TOMMY DON: Coach, we've decided to read some additional books for extra credit. Kind'a make up for the work we *didn't* do before.

MO: It's fun. I never knew there was such adventure in reading. *(stands, hand on heart)* "I have not the time nor fortune for world-wide travel. I do have roughly the equivalent, however, in the world of books."

TOMMY DON: *<Name of a teacher at your school>*, right?

MO: Right.

MS. KASEY: *(pauses, a bit confused. . . then)* That's good, boys. That's good. It's fun having students who thirst after knowledge.

TOMMY DON: In that case, just call me a thirsty Chicken.

(All laugh.)

LAURA: I think it's cool to date a smart jock rather than a dumb one. The guys took us to a poetry reading after the game Friday. It was sooo romantic.

TOMMY DON: We figured the girls deserved a real date for once.

HANNAH: A week ago, I wouldn't have thought it was possible.

MO: *(holds HANNAH's hand)* Why shouldn't you be treated like a princess? You're possessed of a delicate beauty and charm, all your own.

HANNAH: *(blown away)* Wow! Who are you quoting?

MO: No one. Those are *my* words.

HANNAH: *(smiles lovingly)* Oh, Mo. You're wonderful.

CHUCK: *(takes CHERYL's hand, looks into eyes)* I look into your eyes, and it's as though they could penetrate the very depths of my soul.

CHERYL: Chuck, it's a whole new you. *(beat, happily)* And I like it.

CHUCK: *(embarrassed)* Well. . .

TOMMY DON: *(takes LAURA's hand, stands)* "I am a random breeze on the ocean waves, and you're my ship . . . my anchor in life." It's a silly metaphor, but what I'm trying to say is, I care for you deeply, Laura.

(All applaud.)

CHUCK: *(waves hand)* Such hyperbole!

(All laugh.)

TOMMY DON: Coach, I couldn't be happier.

MO: Me, too.

CHUCK: Definitely.

LAURA: I can speak for us girls. We've never been treated this well.

MS. KASEY: I've never enjoyed teaching this much.

MURPHY: I wouldn't want to be anywhere else but here, coaching the best chickens in the world.

ALL PLAYERS: Hear, hear.

LOUIS: *(beat; stands, in a sarcastic tone, making fun of sugary speeches)* And little Tiny Tim has learned to walk, and he is going to live happily ever after.

(Pause at first, then all grin; ad-lib, different ones comment, "Aw, Louis," "You're really asking for it," etc, all happily grinning. Some throw paper at LOUIS, perhaps tussle his hair. It needs to have the look of playfully razzing him. Lights Down. Spot on Jordan, SR.)

JORDAN: *(sound effect of referee's gun)* And now we end another Friday together as the final gun sounds. Chicaloo has soundly defeated the Hanover Hippos by a lopsided score of 42-7. As of tonight's victory, the Chickens have won three-count 'em, three games in a row. Defenses can't find a way to stop the dynamic trio of Tommy Don Wallace, Mo Rivers, and Chuck Pace. And best of all, our beloved Chickens are only two games away from their first-ever district championship. *(beat)* Can they do it? You bet they can. And you can catch every play with me, your feisty, fun, and fashionable hostess, Jordan J Jawbreaker, here at Radio TFC, home of the soon-to-be champion Chicaloo Chickens. Stay with us for the second act of this year's amazing football season.

END OF ACT 1

ACT II

SCENE 1

AT RISE: *Played in front of curtain.* **CRYSTAL and JANE enter. SL, each carrying a pad of paper in each hand.**

CRYSTAL: We need to finish all these articles so we can go to press. What do you have so far?

JANE: *(stops, looks at pad)* Let's see. "Chickens only two wins away from first-ever championship." And. . . *(looks at other pad)* . . . "Football captains suddenly join chess club, physics club, French club, debate team, and Future Nuclear Physicists of America."

CRYSTAL: *(looks at pad)* I have, "Coach Murphy expected to win Coach of the Year award." *(looks up)* Now I'm trying to come up with an article for our gossip section.

JANE: How about this? Tommy Don Wallace steals Mo Rivers' girlfriend. Mo gets even and dates Tommy's girl.

CRYSTAL: *(confused)* Wait a minute. I saw Tommy Don and Laura together this morning.

JANE: *(as both exit, SR)* Silly! It's a gossip column. It doesn't have to be true.

CRYSTAL: *(still confused)* Oh. *(pause, finally understanding)* Oh!

(ASHLEY and MELANIE enter, SR, passing other girls, talking as they walk.)

ASHLEY: Did you get a ticket for the game yet?

MELANIE: Of course. The whole town will be there.

ASHLEY: *(stops walking, pondering)* Melanie, do you think Tommy Don has changed?

MELANIE: Oh, definitely. . . Mo and Chuck, too. They're all acting weird . . . for guys, I mean. In homeroom this morning, Chuck asked if he could do a sculpture. . . of my hand. My hand, of all things. He said it had *(mocks a guy's voice)* many subtle nuances of form and texture.

ASHLEY: Like, crazy. He must be completely "losing it." All those guys have been acting bizarre the last few weeks.

MELANIE: Just hope we can win the championship before the men with the butterfly nets arrive!

ASHLEY: You can say *that* again. *(both laugh)*

ACT II, SCENE 2

JORDAN: For years, opponents have plucked our chickens. But now these invincible roosters are crowing in the face of the enemy. Never in history has a small group of chickens been so tough, so rugged, so filled with championship spirit. The Chickens are holding onto a small lead against last year's district champs, the Eaton Eagles. Our lead could have been extended, but Chuck Pace, who is a wide receiver *and* our place kicker, has missed every field goal tonight by hitting the very same spot on the goal post. . . almost like he was aiming there. So though they missed on all those scoring opportunities, our boys, with only minutes left in this game, are still clinging to a small lead against last year's champs.

(Spot out on JORDAN. Curtain rises on COACH MURPHY and COACH TANNER.)

MURPHY: *(clapping)* Let's go, guys. Show some attitude out there.

TANNER: Keep it up, Mo. Great run, man.

MURPHY: *(to TANNER)* Now explain what you were saying again.

TANNER: Well, the school psychiatrist gave the boys an IQ test, and all were genius level. And that's great. But she's given more tests, and it seems like their intelligence level is growing at an astounding rate. . . and they're already off the charts.

MURPHY: I don't see the problem. They keep getting smarter. So what?

TANNER: The psychological ramifications could be devastating for the boys.

MURPHY: Ah, phooey. That's all psychological mumbo jumbo. All I know is the boys are having fun, we're headed for a championship, and I'm soon to be crowned Coach of the Year.

(Whistle sounds from offstage. MURPHY turns back to field)

What happened?

TANNER: Other team called a time out.

MURPHY: Grab it. Fall on it.

TANNER: Fall on it, guys.

MURPHY and TANNER: Get that ball! Recover that ball!

MURPHY: *(beat)* Mo, put that pen and paper away. Go for the ball. *(desperately)* It's right at your feet! *(to TANNER, excitedly, pointing)* Mo sees the ball. He's bending down to pick it up!

TANNER: *(beat)* He's got the ball...he's up...he's looking...he's...he's...

MURPHY: *(beat)* ...tossing the ball away so he can write something.

TANNER: *(pause)* Look! One of the Eaton Eagles has the ball. *(beat)* He's getting up. *(beat)* He's racing toward the end zone.

MURPHY: No one's running after him. They still look confused out there. *(pause)* Ah, for crying out loud! Touchdown, Eaton Eagles. *(both shake heads)* My dreams are slipping down the toilet. Oh my stars! Now we're behind by two points, and we only have a few seconds left.

TANNER: Defeated because our quarterback wouldn't speak English.

MURPHY and TANNER: *(shake heads)* Only in America.

(PLAYERS enter.)

TOMMY DON: *(waving)* Como esta, Señor.

MURPHY: Como esta? *(looks up in disbelief)* Are you off your rocker?!

TOMMY DON: *(defensive gesture)* What? *(explaining)* You don't like me speaking *French*, so I thought . . .

MURPHY: *(yelling)* I don't want you speaking French or Spanish! This is *American* football!

TOMMY DON: Calm down. I'm just trying to introduce some diversity to this team.

MURPHY: Diversity? I want to know why you're speaking French. . . *(yells)* . . .in the huddle!?!

TOMMY DON: *(beat)* I thought about German at first.

MURPHY: *(throws hat on the ground in anger)* Well, think about English. . . your native tongue!

TOMMY DON: Too passé.

MURPHY: *(about to explode)* Too...too...*(exasperated grunt)* Our season is going right off a cliff. We're now behind two points because you can't speak English in the huddle, Tommy Don, and you Mo, can't be bothered to pick up a fumble . . . *(yells)* . . .because you're *writing a poem!*

MO: *(beat)* Excuse me, Coach.

MURPHY: *(still angry)* What?

MO: I've finished the poem. I'm writing a screenplay now. . . thought you might like to be a character in it. . . perhaps the high school coach. You like movies, don't you?

MURPHY: *(stunned; to TANNER)* I'll be right back. *(runs off stage)*

(TOMMY DON and MO quickly get on either side of TANNER. As THEY teach TANNER, MO squeezes his mouth to help him purse his lips)

TOMMY DON: We'll give you a crash course in French.

MO: It's the language of love, Coach.

TOMMY DON: Let's start with a proper accent. Say *poseur*.

TANNER: *(confused, going along with it...in American accent)* Poser?

TOMMY DON: *(gestures)* *Poseur...poseur*. Purse the lips a little. *Poseur*.

TANNER: *(not good, but better; gestures also)* *Poseur*.

MO: You're getting there. Purse those lips. *(helps him)* *Poseur*.

TOMMY DON: This should help. *(pulls out a French beret or any small, funny-looking hat and places on TANNER's head in place of ball cap)* *Poseur*.

TANNER: *Poseur*.

(MURPHY enters. TOMMY DON and MO back off)

TANNER: *(still practicing)* *Poseur*. Coach, you are a *poseur*.

MURPHY: TANNER!

(TANNER comes to himself and fumbles with, then tosses the hat away)

MURPHY: *(stares for a second, throws arms up in defeat, and paces as HE rants)* I can't believe it. Our season is over.

My dreams are crushed. We'll need a miracle to win this game. No championship, no coach of the year. We're doomed.

MO: If it's a miracle you want, it's a miracle you've got. Right guys?

TOMMY DON: We're up to the challenge, Coach. We're here to make it happen.

CHUCK: And that's not hyperbole.

MURPHY: Good. That's the spirit. Now let's do something simple and dependable. . . maybe the triple stretch play. Yeah, that's a good one.

TOMMY DON: *(to PLAYERS)* The way I see it, we need a big play. . . something unexpected. *(beat)* I'll take the angle that is formed when the sun strikes the moon, and divide by the shadows from clouds over the earth. That should form the perfect angle. Mo, you should make your turn just inside the 20 yard line, and the ball will be waiting for you. *(beat)* On one. *(all PLAYERS do single clap and exit)*

MURPHY: *(as they exit)* Wait a minute. *(glances up)* I can't even see the moon.

TOMMY DON: *(from offstage)* You're not concentrating. Trust me.

MURPHY: My life is over. It's literally over.

TANNER: *(pause, looks at field)* They're lining up now. This is it. Cross your fingers.

MURPHY: *(beat, yells)* Call the play in English, Tommy Don! *(beat)* No, I don't care if it's the language of barbarians. It's *your* language! *(to TANNER)* I'm going to choke him!

TANNER: It's okay. He's calling the play in English now. *(pause)* There he goes . . . he's back. . . he's looking. . . he's firing.

MURPHY: *(pause, watching)* Mo caught it. . . at the Eagles' 20 yard line! Just like Tommy Don said. *(pumped up)* Yes!

TANNER: *(claps, nods head)* That's what I'm talking about.

MURPHY: *(makes signal with hand)* Call a time out, Tommy Don.

(Whistle sound from offstage; beat)

Good boy. Exactly three seconds left on the clock. Just enough time for Chuck to kick a field goal and win this game.

(CHUCK enters.)

This is it. Chuck, are you ready to kick the field goal?

CHUCK: *(shrugs, looking bored)* I don't know.

MURPHY: You don't know? The biggest moment in Chicaloo history, and you don't know!?

CHUCK: *(shrugs again)* I already nailed the goal post five times tonight. There's nothing else to prove.

MURPHY: You *meant* to hit the goal post?!

CHUCK: Of course. It's definitely not a challenge kicking *between* the goal posts. My mind and body are perfectly aligned.

Even *hitting* the goal post is too easy now. I'll just sit this one out! *(starts to walk away)* Maybe I'll split the atom.

MURPHY: *(pleading)* You can't sit it out. We're depending on you.

(Whistle is heard offstage.)

TANNER: There it is. . . penalty for delay of game. . . five yards.

MURPHY: Chuck, you've got to do this for me. . . for us. . . for your teammates!

CHUCK: *(shrugs)* Mmmm. . . *(then suddenly excited)* I know. *(pulls out pencil and paper)* Stand still, Coach.

MURPHY: What?

CHUCK: I'll sketch you. You can put it up in your office. That place is totally devoid of culture.

MURPHY: *(points to field)* Get out there, Chuck!

CHUCK: You're moving. How can I be expected to draw you when you're moving?

(Whistle blows.)

TANNER: Another delay of game penalty. . . five more yards.

CHUCK: I'll draw you next, Coach Tanner. *(motions him to move)* Could you wait over there until I'm done, please?

MURPHY: Enough! I don't have time to argue with you, Chuck. *(pulls TANNER over)* You see this man. . . Coach Tanner?

I'm sending him into the end zone stands, in the upper deck, right between the goal posts. Do you think you could kick that ball and nail him right in the center of the forehead? *(takes a marker or pen and draws an "X" on TANNER's forehead)*

CHUCK: *(excited)* Dude! Now that's a challenge.

MURPHY: Good boy. Off you go. *(CHUCK exits)* Tanner, you know where to go.

(TANNER nods, gives thumbs up, and exits. CHUCK then returns, bends over like HE's in pain.)

What's wrong, Chuck? Are you hurt?

CHUCK: No, Coach.

MURPHY: What's wrong, then?

CHUCK: (*straightens up, like HE's about to cry*) There's a homeless problem in America, and no one's paying attention.
MURPHY: (*almost speechless*) Are you kidding? (*yells*) Get out there and make that kick.
CHUCK: But Coach, they're not getting funded properly.
MURPHY: Sure they are. This is "kick a field goal for the homeless" week. Now go!

(*CHUCKS exits.*)

CHUCK: (*enters again, giving MURPHY the paper*) We'll finish drawing your portrait after the game. I'll bill you for it later.
MURPHY: (*looks at paper, wads and tosses it behind him, shaking head*) Coach of the Year surely can't be worth all this.

(*Light down, spot on JORDAN, SR.*)

JORDAN: The kick is up, and it's. . . (*beat*) GOOD! (*sound effect of referee's gun*) As the gun sounds to end the game, our Fighting Chickens have come out on top once again. They've just won the game and defeated last year's district champions, as Chuck Pace kicked a picture perfect field goal. (*beat*) Wait, they seem to be taking an injured man off the field. . . some guy from the end zone bleachers.

(*Optionally, someone can push TANNER across the stage in a wheelchair or rolling chair. TANNER should be wearing a huge bandage on his head.*)

This is an exciting moment for Chicken fans everywhere, so hug someone and savor the moment, folks. After all these years, you deserve it. (*beat*) We'll be back next week for the season finale in our quest for a Chicken championship. Good night from Radio TFC. Go celebrate and have some delicious chicken at TFC tonight. (*Big smile; Spot off*)

ACT II, SCENE 3

AT RISE: Lights up on MS. KASEY's class. MS KASEY stands in front, looking upset.

MS. KASEY: Students, Tommy Don, Mo, and Chuck have just formally complained that I'm not challenging this class with quality reading material. So I'll be adding half a dozen books to your reading list this quarter.

(*PLAYERS are happy; others groan, improvising; "Aw," "Come on," "Give us a break," etc.*)

LOUIS: Knock it off already! Just because you guys got smart doesn't mean you have to pile more work on us.

MO: We're trying to get a quality education, *Elmer*. Just try to keep up.

TOMMY DON: If you *can*. I'll be happy to tutor you, Louis. . . (*beat*) . . . for your lunch money. (*PLAYERS laugh*)

LOUIS: (*raises hand*) Did you hear that, Ms Kasey? They're making fun of me.

MS. KASEY: Boys. . . boys. . . settle down. We all want to learn and do our best. And I intend to make sure everyone reaches his or her potential.

MO: Did you hear that, Louis? She means she'll go slowly so even *you* can learn something. (*all laugh*)

LOUIS: (*angrily*) Hey! She never has to go slow for me.

TOMMY DON: (*in a sarcastic stage whisper*) Oh, Louis. The word is "slowly," not "slow."

MO: "Slowly" is used as an adverb in that sentence, modifying the verb "go."

TOMMY DON: Which means you don't even understand simple grammar. (*laughs*)

LOUIS: (*stands*) You don't know what you're talking about.

MO: (*points at LOUIS, making fun of him*) You just ended that sentence with a preposition.

TOMMY DON: And you split your infinitives *all* the time.

MS. KASEY: Tommy Don! (*beat*) Louis, sit down. (*HE sits*)

TOMMY DON: We just care about our education, Ms. Kasey. We're all applying to West Point.

LAURA: And we intend to go with them. . . and eventually marry them. (*to TOMMY DON as SHE takes his hand*) Right, babe?

TOMMY DON: About that. . .

MO: You're all great girlfriends. But nothing is forever.

TOMMY DON: I plan to run for congress someday, Laura. You have no money and no intellect. You're a regular brain drain, honey.

LAURA: (*pulls hand away*) Are you serious?

TOMMY DON: You've got one good quality. You're nice looking. But your beauty is already fading.

MO: The fourth law of thermodynamics tells us that all things deteriorate . . . (to HANNAH) . . .and you're already well on your way.

CHUCK: (to CHERYL) And that's no hyperbole.

HANNAH: (outraged) Mo!

LAURA: Wait a minute. What are you saying?

TOMMY DON: That you lack mental prowess. Let's see, shall we? Have you ever read *War and Peace*?

LAURA: (hasn't, but wanting to hide it) Well. . . uh. . . maybe.

TOMMY DON: What's it about?

LAURA: Well, it's about. . . war. . .

TOMMY DON: (throws hands up; sarcastically) And peace. I was wrong, guys. She's read it all right.

CHUCK: Ever heard of Nietzsche?

CHERYL: Who?

ALL PLAYERS: (gasp) Hasn't heard of Nietzsche! (all shake heads)

MO: You know what they say, (quotes) "Cute young chicks become fat old hens."

TOMMY DON: (pauses, thinking) Big Bird, right?

MO: Right.

HANNAH: Why, you . . . you. . .

MS. KASEY: Settle down, now. Boys, I won't have you talking to the girls like this. You apologize.

LOUIS: (laughing) Yeah. Kiss and make up.

TOMMY DON: I'll be the big man here. I apologize, Laura.

LAURA: (hurt) I don't understand why you said those awful things.

TOMMY DON: I'm sorry. You know how I feel about you.

LAURA: Well. . .

TOMMY DON: (dramatically) Laura, you're the antithesis of feminine pulchritude.

LAURA: (fluffs hair, feeling complimented) Oh. . . well. . . thank you, Tommy Don.

MO: (stands, mocks her in falsetto voice) "Oh, well, thank you, Tommy Don." (laughing, regular voice) You just thanked him for calling you ugly, and your vocabulary is so poor, you don't even know it.

(PLAYERS laugh uproariously; others are horrified, mouths open. LAURA suddenly breaks down and runs off stage.)

LOUIS: (stands) Now look what you did.

MS. KASEY: Sit down, Louis! (HE sits. . . to PLAYERS) Now stop it, right now! I won't have this, boys. I'll be talking to your coach today. Aren't any of you genetically capable of sitting quiet for two minutes? (TOMMY DON raises hand.) What is it, Tommy Don?

TOMMY DON: I'm sorry, Ms. Kasey, but I thought you'd like to know.

MS. KASEY: (still annoyed) Know what?

TOMMY DON: (stands) The correct way is "Aren't you capable of sitting quietly", not "Aren't you capable of sitting quiet." (MS KASEY stomps foot, stiffens, shakes head, and stares furiously at TOMMY DON as lights slowly fade on the quiet room.)

ACT II, SCENE 4

AT RISE: COACH MURPHY and TANNER are talking in the empty halls, SR.

MURPHY: Things are going down hill fast, Tanner. Ms. Kasey is threatening to kick our boys out of class, the principal wants to expel them because someone spray painted calculus equations on the bathroom walls, and now, some idiot has started a nasty rumor that you and I are getting demoted.

TANNER: Demoted? How can that be? We defeated last year's champs, and a win tonight against those sorry Snakes will give us the championship. . . Chicaloo's first ever championship.

MURPHY: They'll probably have a parade for us. Give us the keys to the city.

TANNER: You don't demote the Coach of the Year. . . or his assistant.

(CRYSTAL and JANE enter, SR, and walk as they talk. Both carry a pad of paper.)

CRYSTAL: Are you finished with your article?

JANE: I just finished. (reading) "Chicaloo will lose championship tonight. Snakes will feast on chicken ala king."

CRYSTAL: That's good. Mine is finished too. *(stops and reads)* "Chicken coaches to be demoted. Will teach square dancing next year."

MURPHY: *(snatches CRYSTAL's paper)* Square dancing! Why are you writing articles like that? You're supposed to be on *our* side.

JANE: *(snatches paper back from MURPHY)* Your quarterback, Tommy Don Wallace, came up to me this morning, playing with my beautiful, silky hair. Instead of a compliment, he informed the entire class that my hair contains exactly 218 split ends. *(beat)* No one-- I mean, *no one* talks about *my* hair and gets away with it.

(Both exit, snobbily, SL, as ASHLEY and MELANIE enter, SL, passing them. ASHLEY carries a piece of paper in her hand.)

ASHLEY: How much money do you have in your athletic fund right now?

MURPHY: *(shrugs)* I don't know. . . about \$10,000, probably. Why would you want to know?

ASHLEY: Because that's the exact amount I'm suing your athletic department for.

MURPHY: Suing. . . us?

ASHLEY: On the loud speaker this morning, your running back, Mo Rivers, announced that I had regressive cerebral atrophy.

MURPHY: *(confused)* Cerebral what?

MELANIE: Means she's really, really dumb.

ASHLEY: It's a libel suit. *(hands MURPHY paper)* See you in court, Coach.

(ASHLEY and MELANIE exit, SR.)

MURPHY: *(pause, both stare out, sadly)* What happened? It used to be so easy.

TANNER: We were loved. We were the lovable losers.

MURPHY: Everyone liked us, whether we ever won a game or not.

(beat) Where did all the good times go? *(has paper in one hand, but pulls another from pocket)*

TANNER: What's that?

MURPHY: I don't know. Chuck slipped it to me this morning. *(unfolds, reads, drops hand, depressed)* Great, It's a bill from Chuck for that portrait he drew of me. *(beat)* Four thousand dollars. *(disgusted sigh, nods)* Perfect. . . just perfect. *(Lights Down)*

ACT II, SCENE 5

AT RISE: Football game; Spot up on JORDAN, SR.

JORDAN: Good evening, sports fans. Tonight our proud Chickens play for their first ever district championship, a feat deemed impossible only a few short weeks ago. *(beat)* If you were with us earlier, I conducted a pre-game interview with Chicken's star receiver, Chuck *(makes quote sign with hands)* "The Bird" Pace. *(During her rant, SHE increasingly becomes more upset, but always wears a fake smile)* During the interview, did Chuck answer my questions? No. Did he give us his prediction for tonight's big game? No. Instead, Chuck "The Bird" Pace told me I repeat myself, that I use the same tired old phrases over and over again. *(beat)* So I repeat myself, do I? Well, let me tell you something, Chuck "The Bird" Pace. And I won't *repeat* myself. I would *never* repeat myself . . . wouldn't want to do that. Oh, no, not me. . . not I! You won't hear me repeating myself. It's not in my nature. It's not in my genes. *(really angry now)* I'm the feisty, fun, and fashionable Jordan J Jawbreaker, sweetheart of the airwaves. And I'll tell *you* something, Chuck "The Birdbrain" Pace, and I won't repeat myself. Oh no. I'll say it once. . . just once. . . one tiny time and no more. *(beat)* I hate the Chickens. I hope you lose. I've dubbed you guys Chicaloo roadkill. That's right. . . roadkill! *(smiling, sing-song voice as SHE says this)* But I'll pretend like I'm rooting for you, because I'm a professional. . . *(beat)* . . .and the money's good. So as they say in drama class, "Break a leg, Chuck". . . *(drops the fake smile)* . . . and in your case, break 'em both!

(Spot off. Lights up on MURPHY and TANNER. Hidden behind the bench is a bag containing an iPod, a suit coat, and a conductor's stick for MO..)

MURPHY: We're doing good so far, Tanner. It's only the first quarter, and we're already in the lead. *(claps)* Nice job, guys. Good tackle. . . way to get through that line. *(to TANNER)* This is a big night for me. . . for all of us. These Slimyville Snakes are awful. We should murder them. Then, the two of us will be famous...the only championship-winning coaches in Chicaloo history.

(PLAYERS enter stealthily and pick up Gatorade bucket, come up behind MURPHY and attempt to dump contents on his head. HE sees at the last moment, covers head and yells out. PLAYERS look confused as nothing comes out.)

It's empty, thank goodness. Guess Louis hasn't filled it up yet.
TOMMY DON: Louis . . . I should have known. How typical.
MO: *(shakes head)* Kids these days.
MURPHY: Why are you trying to douse me with Gatorade now? That's for *after* we win the championship.
MO: Why wait? Those guys don't stand a chance.
TOMMY DON: I know every move they're going to make. Have you noticed their quarterback's voice goes one octave higher when he calls for a pass? *(in a high-pitched voice, mimes receiving the ball)* Hut-hut.
MURPHY: Get out there! *(snatches bucket and returns it)* Use those high intellects to win this game.

(TOMMY DON concentrates and puts fingers to each side of forehead; soon, MO and CHUCK follow.)

TOMMY DON: And so we shall. And so we shall.
MURPHY: What kind of nonsense is this?
TOMMY DON: *(still concentrating)* Mind control.
MURPHY: Yeah, right! Knock off the jokes.
TOMMY DON: It works, Coach...if your mind is strong enough. For example, let's say I willed both you and Coach Tanner to scratch your heads.
MURPHY: *(chuckles)* Mind control. I thought you guys were smart.

(Unknowingly, MURPHY and TANNER begin scratching heads. MURPHY finally notices TANNER, and surprised and annoyed, jerks TANNER's hand down. TANNER points to MURPHY's scratching hand, and embarrassed, HE stops)

TOMMY DON: This is the answer to all our problems. We'll turn the Slimeyville side of the stadium into slobbering, mind-controlled zombies.

(THEY concentrate. Use as many EXTRAS as you wish, or at least MS. KASEY, who doesn't reappear. MS. KASEY and/or EXTRAS should be made to look like zombies. Go crazy with the make-up. THEY will enter, staggering forward, with low growls, arms reaching outward. Some good zombie-sounding music could accompany their appearance.)

MURPHY: *(alarmed)* That's not the team. That's the fans. In fact, that's *OUR* fans!

(PLAYERS start to back off as ZOMBIES stagger forward and try to grab them. ZOMBIES ignore COACHES.)

TOMMY DON: Oops! Maybe we should have practiced some more. *(backs away, holding his head)* Stay away from our brains! *(still backing)* Stay away from our beautiful brains!!

(PLAYERS turn and run to exit, with ZOMBIES in close pursuit. COACHES shake heads, shrug.)

TANNER: That was certainly different.

(As COACHES watch the game, MO enters and puts on suit jacket/sport coat over his uniform. HE puts on headphones of an iPod, faces audience, and begins conducting an unseen orchestra. Finally, TANNER sees him and taps MURPHY on the shoulder.)

MURPHY: Why are you wearing that? *(MO doesn't hear)* Mo! Mo! *(taps MO)*
MO: *(turns slightly toward COACHES, still conducting fervently)* Waz-up?
MURPHY: The music. . . Why are you listening to music? *(beat, pointing)* And what's that crazy get-up? You have a funeral to go to, maybe?
MO: Don't be silly. Music is my life. *(focusing again, and doesn't look at MURPHY as HE conducts)* I'm learning from all the great masters; Chopin, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky.
MURPHY: This is football. . . not the Philharmonic orchestra. Put that thing up and get out there. . . now!
MO: But coach. It's Rachmaninov's 2nd concerto.
MURPHY: *(shaking head, to himself)* I don't believe this. I simply don't believe it. *(to MO)* Would you get out there?!
MO: *(runs toward exit, stops, listens, then returns to previous position)* Wait. *(listens)* Just a minute. *(beat)* It's Rachmaninov's final movement. . . beautiful. *(sniffles, obviously touched)* I think I'm going to cry. You want to listen, Coach? It'll break your heart. *(tries to hug MURPHY)*

MURPHY: *(as pushes MO towards exit)* NO! You're already breaking my heart. Get out there. *(MO exits, still conducting)*
Wait! Mo! Come back! *(beat)* You can't wear an headphones and a suit coat out there!

(Enter CHICKS. During the game, THEY may do cheers in the audience if desired. Since THEY are cheering against the CHICKENS this time, CHICKS may want to taunt the audience as THEY exit with chants like "bunch of losers," etc.)

CHICKS: Sorry we're not smart enough,
(point to brains) I guess we're not that deep.
Though you may be as wise as kings,
You're dirty, rotten creeps.

MURPHY: *(after CHICKS exit)* What's wrong with them?

TANNER: I think the Chicks are still mad at the guys for insulting them. Lately, Tommy Don has been calling our Chicks the "scrambled eggs." *(pause, both shake heads)* I don't think they're cheering for us tonight.

(TOMMY DON enters, drinks from water bottle.)

MURPHY: Doesn't sound like it. *(to TOMMY DON)* Is everything okay out there?

TOMMY DON: You bet. Why wouldn't it be?

MURPHY: I don't know. I just don't want you guys getting weird on me. We need to win.

TOMMY DON: No problem, Coach. It's all under control.

MURPHY: *(taking water bottle)* Okay, Tommy Don. You've had a drink. Get back out there.

TOMMY DON: Hold on, Coach. I have to figure out my motivation for this scene.

MURPHY and TANNER: This scene?!

MURPHY: What do you think. . . you're in a play or something?

(TOMMY DON and MURPHY both look at audience and slowly shrug)

TOMMY DON: *(beat)* Coach, I'm serious. I need to figure out my exact motivation.

MURPHY: *(upset)* Your motivation? You're our quarterback. We're playing for the championship. *That's* your motivation!

TOMMY DON: *(shakes head, shrugs)* Doesn't work for me. I meant, like, my motivation as a stage performer. I'm preparing myself to become a method actor.

MURPHY: Actor? I thought you were running for congress.

TOMMY DON: I can do both.

MURPHY: Get out there, Tommy Don. *(points to field)* Go!

TOMMY DON: *(shakes head)* Sorry, Coach. It's no use. I just can't right now. Maybe later.

MURPHY: *(desperate)* Later!?! The game will be over later! *(pause, hands pulling own hair, pacing, grasping for a solution)*

Okay. . . What can we do to help. . . to help you find your character. . . your motivation? *(to himself)* I can't believe this!

TOMMY DON: Cool. You can perform my exercises with me. That'd be great.

MURPHY: *(lines up beside him)* Okay, just hurry. *(beat; sees TANNER watching)* Tanner! Get over here.

TANNER: But Coach.

MURPHY: Just do it! Let's go. Let's go.

(All line up, get into position, palms together and elbows out.)

TOMMY DON: *(closes eyes)* Just relax. . . purify the iniquities. Purify the iniquities.

MURPHY and TANNER: Purify the iniquities. Purify the iniquities.

(TOMMY DON begins dancing, ballet-like, leaping as gracefully as possible, leaping, turning, up on toes at times, going all over the stage.)

TOMMY DON: *(runs and leaps in air, turning and such)* Free yourself. Free yourself from inhibition. You're dancing. . . dancing. . . dancing to freedom. I'm dancing, as I shed my old skin. . . dancing my cares away. . . dancing as I break through the metamorphosis of my mind.

MURPHY and TANNER: *(shake heads)* Oh brother. *(TOMMY DON stops suddenly and gives them a look.)*

MURPHY: *(quickly begins to ballet dance)* I'm dancing. . . dancing toward freedom. *(shoves TANNER, and HE dances too)*

TOMMY DON: *(smiles and dances again)* Trying to find myself. Purify those iniquities, Coach.

MURPHY: Trying to find myself.

TOMMY DON: Run. . . jump. . . leap!
MURPHY: Run. . . jump. . . leap!
TANNER: *(deadpan, with no enthusiasm)* Run. . . jump. . . leap!

(CHICKS enter, look.)

TOMMY DON: I can fly. I can fly. I can fly.
MURPHY: I can fly. I can fly. I can fly.
TANNER: *(deadpan, barely going through the motions)* I can fly. I can fly. *(beat...shakes head)* I can't fly.
CHICKS: Like, weird!
CHERYL: As if!

(CHICKS shake heads and exit. All stop dancing, embarrassed.)

TOMMY DON: Well, I think I'm motivated now.
MURPHY: Finally!
TANNER: About time. It's turning into a massacre out there.
TOMMY DON: Thanks, Coach Murphy. . . Coach Tanner. *(shakes their hands; starts to exit.)*
MURPHY: It's okay, son. But you've got to win this game. Our season is riding on you.
TANNER: I'm glad you didn't want to perform a soliloquy from Shakespeare.
TOMMY DON: *(turns around)* What a great idea. *(as HE starts quoting, COACHES push him to exit)* "To be or not to be, that is the question."
MURPHY: *(As COACHES literally throw him off.)* And this is the answer!
TANNER: *(COACHES recovering from excitement)* I can't believe it. Is this a football team or a nut farm?

(TOMMY DON enters again.)

MURPHY: What? What is it? What now?
TOMMY DON: I'm worried, Coach. Climate change. *(beat)* It's killing our planet.
MURPHY: *(pushes him off stage again)* The glaciers will make it through the end of the game. *(throws hands in air, like HE's had enough)* I just hope I make it through the game. . . without killing someone.

(MO enters, SL, looking at business section of newspaper. CHUCK follows, trying to get a peek at paper. Both walk across stage and finally exit. COACHES watch, stunned and open-mouthed.)

CHUCK: Come on. Let me look.
MO: Get lost. This is *my* paper.
CHUCK: I have to see the financial page. *(whining)* Mo?!
MO: Forget it. Find someone who cares.
CHUCK: But this could upset my stock portfolio. Give me that paper, Mo!

(Both exit, SR)

MURPHY: *(confused)* What in the world. . . ?

(CRYSTAL and JANE enter, SL, each carrying pad and paper.)

CRYSTAL: If you have a minute, we'd like an exclusive interview.
JANE: Can you explain why your players are losing to an awful team like the Snakes?
MURPHY: *(incredulous)* We're in the middle of a football game here. Would you please get out of my. . . *(suddenly remembers MO and CHUCK, and yells toward SR)* . . . Mo! Chuck! Get over here. . . now!
CRYSTAL and JANE: *(ala "Terminator")* I'll be back. *(both turn and exit, SL)*
MO: *(enters, SR, still holding paper and CHUCK following)* Stay away! It's not my fault you didn't bring a newspaper to the game.
CHUCK: Stop hogging it. I just want to look.
MO: *(stops and turns)* You touch my paper, I'll break your face.

(CHUCK reaches out and snatches paper, tearing off a section and looking at it. MO is deeply offended.)

You tore my paper! You tore my paper!!

CHUCK: (*disappointed*) Great. I got the New York Stock Exchange.

MO: I got the Nasdaq.

CHUCK: (*this and next line are simultaneous*) I need the Nasdaq.

MO: I need the stock exchange.

MURPHY: (*points to field, angrily*) You need to get out there and help the Chickens!

CHUCK: (*scans paper*) Chickens. . . chickens. Nope. No chickens on the stock exchange.

MO: (*scans*) Nothing on the Nasdaq either. Ah! Here's pork bellies. . . (*excited*). . . and they're up thirty points.

CHUCK and MO: (*look at each other*) Thirty points!?! (*both walk toward exit, SL; in amazement*) Pork bellies!

MO: It's brilliant.

CHUCK: Inspired.

MO: We just needed someone to point us toward the animal section.

CHUCK: Thanks for the tip, Coach.

MO: Sometimes it takes a simple mind to know these things.

CHUCK: Can't get more simple-minded than a football coach.

(*MO and CHUCK exit.*)

TOMMY DON: (*enters in the audience and stands beside a female in the front row, preferably an adult woman. . . waves to get Murphy's attention*) Hey Coach, spare a minute?

MURPHY: (*surprised*) Why are you in the stands, Tommy Don? We've got a championship to win.

TOMMY DON: (*introducing*) Thought you'd like to meet my new agent, Ms. Mildred M. Moneymama. (*Have her wave to coaches*)

MURPHY: (*beat; stunned*) An agent!?! No one gets paid for playing high school football!

TOMMY DON: Ah, but there always has to be a first. (*proudly*) I'll be a legend. . . a pioneer of high school sports. Besides, I'll be happy with a brand new sports car and \$1,000 gas money.

MURPHY: You'll play for nothing – like every other kid in America. Now get back in the game!

TOMMY DON: (*hands up, defensively*) Okay. We can discuss my signing bonus later. (*as backs toward side exit*) Gotta run, Ms. Moneymama. (*gives the "OK" sign*) Negotiations are moving right along. (*while backing toward exit; phone gesture;*) Call me. (*exits*)

CHICKS: (*enter, cheering as before; MO and CHUCK enter and sit at edge of stage*)

If you win this game tonight,

You'll gain a trophy cup.

We hereby tell you super brains,

That we are breaking up. (*exit, cheering*)

MURPHY: (*to TANNER*) Can you do something about those cheerleaders?

(*MURPHY notices CHUCK and MO and moves to them.*)

MURPHY: What are you guys doing back?

MO: (*points*) Did you notice the owl sitting way up in the rafters?

CHUCK: An owl? Big deal. There's also a colony of bats up there, Coach. Bats are cool. (*points*) See, they're up *there*.

MURPHY: And there's a game down here. Did you notice?

MO: Who cares about bats. Owls prey on bats, so that makes them higher on the food chain. (*turns and points to opposite side of field . . . nonchalantly*) Say, was that a touchdown?

MURPHY and TANNER: (*COACHES look, horrified, hands on head*) Aaaaah . . . touchdown, Snakes.

MURPHY: They scored! I hope you know we're losing to the worst team in the district.

MO: Please don't change the subject.

CHUCK: Which do you like more, Coach. . . owls or bats?

MURPHY: (*beat*) Are you *trying* to lose this game? Do you want me to blow my top?

MO: (*quoting*) "Let us forget our anger, and such words as hatred, greed, and intolerance, so all can be free of selfish strife."

CHUCK: <Name of a teacher or principal>, right?

MO: Right.

MURPHY and TANNER: <Name of a teacher or principal>!?!

MO: (*shrugs*) Hey. Even <Name of a teacher or principal> can have *one* smart saying.

MURPHY: (*points to field*) Get out of here before I strangle every bat and owl on the premises.

MO: Of course, in that case, we'd have to report you to animal services.

(*MURPHY moves toward them menacingly, and they back toward exit.*)

We're going, Coach. We're going. (*PLAYERS exit*)

CHICKS: (*enter, cheering*)

We cheered you Chickens all year long,

When you were such a joke.

But now that you're too smart for us,

We hope you losers choke. (*exit, cheering*)

MURPHY: (*calling off*) Would you girls stop cheering against us! (*sighs*) This is ridiculous.

(*Enter TOMMY DON, MO, and CHUCK.*)

What is it now?

TOMMY DON: We just need a moment. Coach Tanner promised to go with us to tonight's poetry reading, and we still need to prepare something for him to read.

MURPHY: (*to TANNER, angrily*) Thanks a heap!

TANNER: I didn't know. Really. . . I mean. . .

MURPHY: (*to PLAYERS*) This is the big game. That's a lousy poetry reading.

ALL PLAYERS: Lousy!?!

MO: It's great, Coach. . . really moves me.

MURPHY: I'll move you, Motown! (*starts angrily toward MO, but TANNER steps between them*) This is your fault, Tanner.

Can't you do nothing right?!

ALL PLAYERS: *Anything*. . . Can't you do *anything* right.

MURPHY: (*ready to explode*) TANNER!

TANNER: (*pauses, shaking his finger like an idea has emerged*) I think I have it, Coach. (*to PLAYERS*) Mo, you said you wanted to get into West Point?

MO: (*comes to attention and salutes; loudly*) Yes sir, Coach, sir!

TANNER: (*points and walks along the DS area, PLAYERS following behind*) There's a battle out there. It's life and death.

The enemy must be attacked and conquered. We're depending on you lads.

MO: Atten-hut!

(*All PLAYERS come to attention and salute. . . TANNER returns salute.*)

ALL PLAYERS: Yes sir, Coach, sir.

MO: We won't let you down, General. We'll look for you on the battlefield. (*to others; hand over heart*) The fate of the free world could rest in our hands.

(*All salute TANNER, then MURPHY, both salutes returned. All move into formation and march off.*)

One, two, three, four, one, two, three, four.

(*All PLAYERS exit.*)

MURPHY: (*beat, surprised*) You did it. Tanner, you actually did it. Beautiful! You may have just saved our championship.

TANNER: Obviously, we've learned how to handle these guys and their high intellect.

MURPHY: It wouldn't be the first time in history that a little military discipline paid off. (*high five*)

TANNER: (*watching field, taps MURPHY for him to notice*) Look, Coach. Our soldiers are attacking, all right.

MURPHY: Wow! They're a regular wrecking crew.

TANNER: They're knocking everyone to the ground. That's great. (*puts hand up for high five*)

MURPHY: (*ignores hand*) That's terrible! (*yelling*) We're on offense! (*pause, watching*) Tommy Don. . . stop hitting people.

(*jumps up and down in anger*) Stop hitting people. (*beat*) You have the ball!

TANNER: (*pause, watching*) Not anymore. He threw it down so he can fight better.

MURPHY: (*slaps hand to forehead; pauses, watching*) Pick it up. Pick up the ball!

TANNER: (*points*) Look. Mo's scooping up the ball.

MURPHY: Atta boy, Motown.

TANNER: Mo has the ball. He's up. . . he's looking. . . he's turning. . . he's. . .

MURPHY: (*beat*) . . .throwing the ball at another player!

TANNER: (*both coaches shake heads*) I'm impressed. At least he knocked the player down.

MURPHY: (*yelling, throws hat down*) But it's *our* player!!

TANNER: (*pause*) Wow! They're knocking all the players on the ground . . . theirs and ours.

MURPHY: Everyone but that Snake player that just grabbed the ball. (*beat*) They're letting him get away. (*to field*) Go after the ball. . . the guy with the ball! Aaagh!

MURPHY and TANNER: Touchdown, Snakes.

TANNER: *(sadly)* Gotta give them credit. Every player is lying on the ground.

MURPHY: Yeah. . . except the one Snake dancing in our endzone.

MO: *(PLAYERS enter)* That was way cool, Coach Tanner.

TOMMY DON: Let's play war again. We wiped out the whole battlefield.

MURPHY: Did you have to tackle our cheerleaders, too. They're mad enough already.

MO: *(pauses, thinking)*. I'm having an internal struggle – there's way too much violence in football. We shouldn't be tackling our fellow human beings.

TOMMY DON: *(nods)* You said a mouthful.

MO: Football should be a game of peace. . .

CHUCK: . . . cooperation. . .

TOMMY DON: . . . social conscience.

MO: From now on, we'll refuse to play until our opponents voluntarily let us win. No need for violence.

(All PLAYERS sit, legs crossed, in lotus position)

TOMMY DON: It worked for Ghandi, it should work for us.

MO: *(beat)* By this time tomorrow, those Slimeyville Snakes will be begging for mercy.

(PLAYERS close eyes, rock side-to-side and begin chanting, "Mmmm... mmm." MURPHY and TANNER look at each other, then MURPHY jumps up and down with rage, as in a temper tantrum; PLAYERS quit chanting when interrupted)

MURPHY: Stop It! Stop It! Stop It! *(stomps feet quickly, full tantrum mode)* N—O—O—O! *(almost in tears)*

TOMMY DON: *(rising, along with other PLAYERS)* Have it your way Coach. Football was fun. . . for awhile. But it's no longer challenging.

MURPHY: Boys, you *have* to get in there. We don't have enough players without you. We'll forfeit the game.

TANNER: Where's your loyalty? Where's your school pride?

TOMMY DON: Sorry, Coach. We're quitting the team. I can't see how winning a silly football game will solve the world's problems.

MO: Now if you were talking about saving the humpback whales, I'd be down with that. *(PLAYERS nod, then begin to exit)*

MURPHY: But our championship. . . my Coach of the Year award.

MO: I feel you, Coach, but ...

MURPHY: But?

TOMMY DON: It's hard to take you seriously when you're wearing a black shirt with blue shorts.

MO: No color coordination.

CHUCK: And white socks after Labor Day.

(PLAYERS shake heads.)

MO: Have you ever ironed those clothes?

MURPHY: *(glances at his clothes for a moment; drops to his knees)* What about me? It's my one chance for football immortality. Show some mercy for your poor old coach.

MO: *(quoting)* The quality of mercy is not strained. It dropeth like the gentle rain.

TOMMY DON: William Shakespeare, right?

MO: No.

TOMMY DON: No?

MO: No. . . <Name of a teacher or popular student, or if desired, a celebrity>.

TOMMY DON: Ah. . . I didn't know that. *(as PLAYERS exit)* Deep thinker, that <Name of a teacher or popular student or celebrity>. *(others nod)*

MURPHY: *(COACHES are stunned; MURPHY rises)* We don't have enough players. *(points)* Look. They're about to call the game. We just blew the championship.

TANNER: Unbelievable.

(Both stare out sadly.)

MURPHY: *(long pause, sighs)* Well, our team has been completely humiliated. We lost our one chance to become heroes in Chicaloo. And our players walked out of the championship game. You and me will never be champions.

MO and CHUCK: *(step briefly onstage, correcting them)* You and I . . . you and I will never be champions.

MURPHY and TANNER: *(angrily, both throwing hats down)* DOE!

(ASHLEY and MELANIE enter, SR.)

ASHLEY: Coach, you can add an extra dollar to that lawsuit. I want my dollar back that I paid for this game. I'm now suing you for \$10,001.

MELANIE: You guys didn't even last one quarter. What a rip-off.

(BOTH exit, SL)

TOMMY DON: *(enters from side audience area; waves to get MURPHY's attention)* Yo, Coach, don't forget to look over contracts with Ms. Moneymama before you leave. I helped win several games for the Chickens. I deserve compensation. *(backs out, and to Ms. Moneymama, makes "phone" gesture)* Call me. *(exits)*

(CRYSTAL and JANE enter, SR; CRYSTAL carries a photograph.)

CRYSTAL: One bit of *good* news tonight. We got a great picture of you coaches ballet dancing on the sidelines during the game. *(shows them photo; both COACHES slap hand to forehead)*

JANE: Someone got the video as well. You should be a big hit on YouTube.

CRYSTAL and JANE: Good luck teaching square dance. *(laugh, point, & exit)*

CHICKS: *(enter and cheer, as coaches are still stunned)*

We thought you guys were different,

But men are all the same.

I hope you see us smiling *(big smile)*,

'Cuz you just lost the game. *(exit)*

MURPHY and TANNER: *(Both nod, defeated)* Perfect. . . *(beat)* Just perfect.

(Immediately, the music for any typical square dance song should play, low at first, and quickly gain volume. Both coaches slowly turn heads and look at each other, then slowly turn back, just barely, subtly shaking their heads. Music then changes to ZOMBIE music. ZOMBIES enter; if there are several, some should be eating messy food, chicken legs, spaghetti, etc. ZOMBIES come toward COACHES, who look and move in different directions for an escape, as THEY back away. One could jump in the other's arms for a moment, before exiting, with ZOMBIES in pursuit. Music should play until ZOMBIES are off. Spot up on JORDAN, SR.)

JORDAN: Jordan J Jawbreakers back with you, as this game has ended in defeat for the Chickens. . . and it ended three quarters early. It's official, ladies and gentlemen. The game is a forfeit, and the Snakes are victorious. Our Chickens have been basted. They've been fricasseed. They've been burned to a crisp. *(pause)* . . . Wait. What's going on down there? Who is that lady running onto the field? She's wearing an old 1992 Chicaloo Chicks uniform. Oh, my goodness. Look at that cheer, will you? How about that!

(Optionally, HANNAH's MOTHER, dressed older, with a ridiculous looking 1992 CHICKS uniform, enters, pulling a reluctant HANNAH onto the field. Both should simply do what JORDAN announces. Ham it up. HANNAH's MOTHER prods HANNAH, who reluctantly cheers. If you wish, JORDAN can simply announce the scene without visuals.)

Hold on a minute. It looks like. . . she's pulling one of our own Chicks out on the field. *(beat)* It looks like. . . *Hannah Humphries*. Funny, Hannah doesn't seem to want to go. *(beat)* Wait. *(beat)* I'm being told that the '92 cheerleader is Hannah's very own mother. *(claps)* All right! You go, girl! Mom is pulling her daughter out to the 50 yard line. *(beat)* Oh, great. They're going to do a cheer together. How wonderful is that?! This is true mother and daughter bonding, folks, and Radio TFC will stay on the air and give you play-by-play, cheer-by-cheer coverage of this fantastic mother-daughter extravaganza. People here haven't seen cheers like this in twenty years. . . and they're loving it. Classics like the rooster rumba and the chicken cha-cha never go out of style. They're eating this up. People are laughing, flapping their arms and squawking like chickens, just having the best time. *(beat)* The crowd seems to be chanting "Chicken girl, chicken girl, chicken girl." Big crocodile tears are rolling down Hannah's cheeks for some reason. But peeps, what could be better than cheering with your mom? So in this announcer's opinion, those *must* be tears of joy.

ACT II, SCENE 6

Lights up on commercial, with BOY and GIRL 2, SL.

GIRL 2: Our relationship has really blossomed over the last few weeks.

BOY: I'll say. At first, I thought it was all about the chicken and the delicious biscuits. But since we've met, I now know that TFC offers mashed potatoes, cole slaw, and corn on the cob.

GIRL 2: *(blushes)* Oh, honey. You make me feel so special.

BOY: I've never met anyone like you. You've opened my eyes to a whole new world of chicken accessories.

GIRL 1: *(enters just as BOY and GIRL 2 are moving closer for a kiss. GIRL 1 clears her throat loudly, and they notice her, moving apart)* Hi, you two.

GIRL 2: Haven't you had enough yet? Do you thrive on abuse? I have the guy. The romance. . . a date every night. What do you have? . . . crushed hopes, empty dreams, and a valentine's card from your little brother.

GIRL 1: *(as SHE moves back toward exit and grabs a huge TFC bucket)* I'll admit it. I've been beaten. . . trampled under your dainty feet. . . kicked to the curb of love. . . *(as SHE proudly displays her bucket with TFC written on it)* . . .until *this very moment!*

GIRL 2: *(gasps, horrified)* Noooo! It can't be!

GIRL 1: Oh yes it can. I'm hefting the brand new 250 piece dinner. I had to sell my computer to buy it.

GIRL 2: *(desperate)* Please don't do this to me. How can I compete against 250 pieces of the Lieutenant's tender chicken?

GIRL 1: *(happily)* Sorry. Eat 'em and weep. Ha ha ha.

BOY: *(moves over the GIRL 1)* Did I ever mention that you have the most beautiful eyes?

GIRL 1: *(blushing, waving arm in modest way)* Aw, shucks!

BOY: Two hundred and fifty pieces. My heart is suddenly beating faster in my chest. Something strange is happening inside me. I think. . . I'm falling. . . falling. . .

GIRL 1: . . . in love?

Boy: Yes!

GIRL 1: Oh, darling. I'm so happy.

BOY: Me too. *(to audience)* After all, each and every piece is nose lickin' good.

GIRL 2: *(grabs bucket)* Here, let me see. Are you sure it's 250 pieces?

GIRL 1: Absolutely.

GIRL 2: I didn't think TFC offered a dinner size that big.

GIRL 1: Think again, *(sing-song, making fun of her)* lonely girl!

GIRL 2: *(looks inside)* Wait a minute. There's no extra greasy here. *(beat)* And this doesn't look like original recipe either.

GIRL 1: *(nervous)* You're crazy.

GIRL 2: Am I? This isn't even the Lieutenant's chicken. It's Churches Fried Chicken. *(confused look, then knowing look)* Hey, I know. You stole it off the porch of that dumb cheerleader's house. . . the one where all the cats hang out.

GIRL 1: *(caught)* I. . . I did not!

GIRL 2: *(pretends to pull out something microscopic and examine it against the light)* Eeew! Cat hair.

BOY and GIRL 2: Eeew! Cat hair. . . nasty!

GIRL 2: *(gives bucket to GIRL 1)* Enjoy your chicken and hairball dinner.

BOY: *(offering GIRL2 his arm; to GIRL 1)* Thanks, but I don't eat off-brands. Sorry about that. *(to GIRL 2)* Are you ready?

GIRL 1: Oh, sure. . . like TFC is so special. Any chicken joint with the motto "Nose-lickin' good" can't be too sanitary.

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