

ABANDON ALL HOPE, YE WHO ENTER HERE: THE STORY OF A PROM

By Bradley Walton

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CHARACTERS

16 roles: 5 males, 8 females, 3 either

SETH (M)	A guy who gets lots of first dates, but not many seconds.
MARCELLA (F)	Seemingly normal, possibly psychotic, and currently dating Seth.
DROOLER (M)	A nerd with a monstrously tall kid sibling.
EMMA (F)	A formerly popular girl who's working on a social studies project with Drooler and is starting to think that she might like him.
KEITH (M)	A jock working with Drooler and Emma on their social studies project.
PRINCIPAL WALTERS (M or F)	Probably not the world's most competent or caring Principal.
MS./MR. ZUBILLIGA (M or F)	The new junior class sponsor, and not happy about it.
GOR (F)	Geraldine Ophelia Rogers, an antisocial goth who gets put in charge of the prom.
MUFFIN (F)	The junior class secretary, upbeat and sweet, but not too bright.
CHELSEY (F)	A jock who recently transferred from another school.
REX (M)	An overweight carnivore who loves saturated fat and hates exercise.

TORA (F)	A very strange girl who speaks in poetry and has a crush on Drooler.
MRS. ZIMMERMAN (F)	The library secretary. Hard-headed, snotty, condescending, and hated by just about everybody.
ALLISON (F)	The girl Seth winds up taking to prom.
LAUREL/LIONEL (M or F)	Drooler's six-year-old sibling.
MR. ZIMMERMAN (M)	A social studies teacher and Mrs. Zimmerman's husband.

DOUBLING/TRIPLING

If necessary, the play can be performed with as few as 12 actors (4 males, 6 females, and 2 either).

SETH can double as either MR. ZIMMERMAN or REX. PRINCIPAL WALTERS can double or triple as MUFFIN and LAUREL/LIONEL. MRS. ZIMMERMAN or TORA can also double as LAUREL/LIONEL. If not already doubled, MRS. ZIMMERMAN can double as ALLISON.

SETTING

Most of the play takes place in Cooper High School, a medium-sized high school in a medium-sized American town, one spring. This is, in fact, the same high school where *The Bloody Attack of the Evil, Demonic Giraffe Puppet* was set, with the events in this play occurring two years later. Although *Giraffe Puppet* is briefly referenced here, and the character Mrs. Zimmerman appears in both shows, no knowledge of *Giraffe Puppet* is required to perform or enjoy *Abandon All Hope, Ye Who Enter Here: The Story of a Prom*.

STAGING

Staging is very simple. The major set pieces (mostly tables, desks, and chairs) are items that can easily be found in most high schools and homes. Some “prom” decorations (actually, Halloween decorations), a large banner, and, if possible, pillars or an archway, are needed for Act II.

ACT I

SCENE 1: A restaurant – Seth, Marcella

SCENE 2: Keith's home – Drooler, Emma, Keith

SCENE 3: Zubilliga's classroom – Principal Walters, Zubilliga, Gor

SCENE 4: The hall at school – Muffin, Seth, Marcella, Emma

SCENE 5: The cafeteria – Keith, Chelsey, Rex, Drooler

SCENE 6: Zubilliga's classroom – Gor, Muffin

SCENE 7: The school library – Drooler, Tora, Mrs. Zimmerman, Muffin, Emma

SCENE 8: The hall at school – Seth, Marcella, Drooler, Chelsey, Emma

SCENE 9: Zubilliga's classroom – Zubilliga, Gor

ACT 2

Scene: Prom night, the school cafeteria, just outside the gym in which the dance is being held. The following “sections” are provided to break Act 2 into chunks that may assist the director in managing casting and rehearsals. They do NOT indicate any breaks in the action.

Section 1 – Gor, Zubillia, Walters

Section 2 – Gor, Zubilliga, Allison, Seth, Marcella

Section 3 – Gor, Zubilliga, Drooler, Emma, Laurel, Marcella

Section 4 – Gor, Zubilliga, Drooler, Emma, Mr. Zimmerman, Mrs. Zimmerman, Chelsey, Keith, Walters

Section 5 – Gor, Drooler, Emma, Tora, Rex, Muffin

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Abandon All Hope, Ye Who Enter Here: The Story of a Prom was originally performed May 2 and 3, 2008 at Harrisonburg High School in Harrisonburg, Virginia. It was produced by Stanley Swartz, directed by Bradley Walton, and stage managed by Krystle Henninger, with the following cast:

Seth – CORY LAWRENCE
Marcella – SARA ROZMUS
Drooler – JOSH MITRI
Emma – JESSICA YOUNG
Keith – GREGG JEFFRIES
Principal Walters – MELINDA MARJAN
Mrs. Zubilliga – AMANDA RAY
Gor – KAIT ARTHUR
Muffin – JOZ DONAHUE
Chelsey – KATE HALLING
Rex – CHRIS PYLE
Tora – KELSI PORTER
Mrs. Zimmerman – KRYSTLE HENNINGER
Allison – ROSA PENALOZA
Laurel – KAITEE CRITTENDEN
Mr. Zimmerman – ZACH McDONNELL

PROPERTIES

Personal properties

Rorschach cards – Marcella, Act 1, Scene 1
purse – Marcella – Act 1, Scene 1
wallet – Drooler – Act 1, Scene 2
test and pencil – Gor – Act 1, Scene 3
school books or book bags – Muffin, Emma, Marcella and Seth – Act 1, Scene 4
two lunches (one a salad) – Keith and Chelsey – Act 1, Scene 5

books by Richard Peck and Robert Newton Peck – Muffin – Act 1, Scene 6

school work – Drooler – Act 1, Scene 7

school books or book bags – Marcella, Seth, Chelsey – Act 1, Scene 8

large pile of school books – Drooler – Act 1, Scene 8

Onstage properties

small table and two chairs – Act 1, Scene 1

napkins and silverware – Act 1, Scene 1

jumble of papers, chair, end table, and lamp – Act 1, Scene 2

three student desks with chairs – Act 1, Scenes 3, 6, 9

teacher desk with chair – Act 1, Scenes 3, 6, 9

small trash can – Act 1, Scenes 3, 6, 9

cafeteria table with chairs – Act 1, Scene 5

catalogs – Act 1, Scene 6

two library tables with chairs – Act 1, Scene 7

computer with monitor and mouse – Act 1, Scene 7

pillars or archway with “Abandon All Hope, Ye Who Enter Here” banner – Act 2

cafeteria tables covered with black and red fabric – Act 2

cafeteria chairs – Act 2

dungeon or Halloween-themed table decorations – Act 2

grocery bag with potato chips – Act 2

COSTUMES

SETH – upscale and trendy teenage guy attire in Act 1. A tuxedo in Act 2.

MARCELLA – preppy teenage attire in Act 1. A prom dress in Act 2.

DROOLER – nerd wear in Act 1: a button-up shirt, black shoes, white socks, rolled-up pants, taped glasses, and maybe a bow tie. A tuxedo in Act 2.

EMMA – preppy teenage attire in Act 1. A prom dress in Act 2.

KEITH – an athletic jacket, jeans, and sneakers in Act 1. A tuxedo in Act 2.

PRINCIPAL WALTERS – a suit or professional dress. Can wear the same in Act 2.

MS./MR. ZUBILLIGA – professional attire in Act 1, and more formal dress in Act 2.

GOR – something gothic and black in Act 1. In Act 2, a gothic, black dress and combat boots.

MUFFIN – something pink in Act 1, with a pink prom dress in Act 2.

CHELSEY – preppy jock wear in Act 1. A prom dress in Act 2.

REX – sloppy-looking t-shirt and jeans in Act 1. A tuxedo (also sloppy-looking) in Act 2.

TORA – something simultaneously eccentric and nerdy in Act 1. A prom dress in Act 2.

MRS. ZIMMERMAN – a tie-dyed dress with a black sweater in Act 1. A more formal dress in Act 2.

ALLISON – a prom dress.

LAUREL/LIONEL – jeans, sneakers, and a shirt which says “I will crush your first grader” on the front, and “Godzilla is my homeboy” on the back.

MR. ZIMMERMAN – a tuxedo or suit

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ACT I

SCENE 1 – A RESTAURANT

AT RISE: SETH and MARCELLA are seated at a small table with silverware and napkins, waiting for their food. MARCELLA has a purse and set of Rorschach cards, one of which she is holding up for SETH to examine.

SETH: I don't get it.

MARCELLA: Just tell me what you see, Seth.

SETH: But . . . Marcella . . . I don't get it.

MARCELLA: You're not supposed to get it.

SETH: Then what's the point of looking at it?

MARCELLA: There's no right or wrong answer. Just tell me what you see.

SETH: Are these based on that guy in *Watchmen*?

MARCELLA: No. He was based on these. His mask was, anyway. I think.

SETH: Rorschach?

MARCELLA: Yeah. They're called Rorschach cards.

SETH: No. The guy in *Watchmen*. His name was Rorschach?

MARCELLA: Yeah. I think so.

SETH: What was his power? Did he bore people to death?

MARCELLA: This is pointless, isn't it?

SETH: That's what I've been saying all along.

MARCELLA: Different people see different things when they look at the cards . . . your experiences and personality and all the stuff inside of you factors into it. I just thought it'd be neat to know what you saw.

SETH: This is supposed to be some kind of psychological test, isn't it?

MARCELLA: It can be.

SETH: Are you trying to find out if I'm an axe murderer or something?

MARCELLA: No.

SETH: You're giving me a psych test on a first date. Do you have any idea what that says about you?

MARCELLA: I just think it's interesting. That's all.

SETH: You don't get many second dates, do you?

MARCELLA: Pencil.

SETH: What?

MARCELLA: Not an axe. A pencil. I was trying to figure out if you were a pencil murderer.

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SETH: You can't kill somebody with a pencil.

MARCELLA: Sure you can. It just takes a lot more skill than using an axe.

An axe murderer wouldn't concern me that much.

SETH: I think I'd be plenty concerned if I was dating an axe murderer.

MARCELLA: Well, I mean, I would be, sure. Serial killers are just freaky.

But I'd be a lot more scared of a person who habitually kills people with a pencil than somebody who uses an axe. A pencil is just like, this common object, you know? There's nothing threatening about it.

SETH: Depends on how sharp it is.

MARCELLA: Well, yeah. But even a sharp pencil . . . you can carry it around with you in plain sight and nobody's going to think anything of it.

Somebody comes at you with an axe, you know you've got a problem.

Somebody comes at you with a pencil, you can see them coming and not know you've got a problem. And if the pencil killer can actually kill you with it, then that takes some skill. Somebody who does that, they'd be smart and they'd really know what they were doing. And they'd still be totally off their rocker.

SETH: Do you consider yourself to be paranoid?

MARCELLA: Not especially. Why?

SETH: Just curious.

MARCELLA: Do you think I'm paranoid?

SETH: Nah.

MARCELLA: You're messing with me, aren't you?

SETH: I take you out to dinner and you give me a psych test? I figure that gives me little leeway to have a cheap laugh at your expense.

MARCELLA: I don't like to be laughed at.

SETH: I don't like to have my head examined.

MARCELLA: You go on a date with somebody, you don't try to figure them out?

SETH: I go on a date with somebody, I try to have a good time. If I have a good time, then I ask them on a second date. Someday, if I'm lucky, maybe I'll find the right person and we just keep going on dates until they're not really dates anymore and then we get married and we die.

MARCELLA: Now that's really romantic.

SETH: It was a joke.

MARCELLA: You think life ends at marriage?

SETH: All right. Fine. My life as I know it right now would end with marriage. That's got to count as a death of some kind, right?

MARCELLA: You don't get many second dates, either, do you?

SETH: Not many. Why is it, though, that one thing has to end before something else can begin?

MARCELLA: Can't fit two DVDs in the player at the same time.

SETH: But, you know . . . change. Why does stuff have to change?

MARCELLA: You want to keep watching the same movie over and over?

SETH: But people tend to fear the unknown. Life is one big unknown. We try to surround ourselves with familiar stuff. Keep things recognizable.

Organized. Try to keep things the same as possible.

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MARCELLA: Makes the change more bearable when it comes?

SETH: I mean, I go out with a different girl every month—

MARCELLA: That supposed to impress me?

SETH: No. I'm just saying.

MARCELLA: Probably shouldn't have said it.

SETH: Can I finish?

MARCELLA: Sure. Go ahead. You're the one digging yourself into a hole.

SETH: There's a point to this.

MARCELLA: There better be, or else you're going to end up looking like a real jerk.

SETH: I go out with a different girl every month, but I always bring them here. To the same place. How pathetic is that?

MARCELLA: It complements your arrogance very nicely.

SETH: I'm trying to open up to you here.

MARCELLA: By bragging about what a stud you are and then admitting to a major shortcoming all in the same breath?

SETH: I've never told any of my dates that before.

MARCELLA: What makes me so special?

SETH: You're the one giving the psych exam.

MARCELLA: Thought you resented the psych exam.

SETH: I do. But no one's ever flipped Rorschach cards at me on a date before. I'll give you points for originality if you give me points for openness.

MARCELLA: You're saying that you think I'm a paranoid neurotic, but you're willing to overlook it?

SETH: No way I can overlook that. But I'm willing to look at the whole picture instead of writing this evening off as a loss because you scare the heck out of me.

MARCELLA: If I scare the heck out of you, shouldn't you just pay the bill and leave?

SETH: Well, I've only ever dated girls who didn't scare the heck out of me, and obviously that hasn't been working out. So. Try something different?

MARCELLA: That would involve change.

SETH: Sometimes, it gets pretty obvious that change is necessary.

(BLACKOUT.)

SCENE 2 – KEITH'S HOUSE

KEITH, DROOLER, and EMMA are sitting on the stage, looking at a jumble of papers on the floor. There are a chair, an end table, and a lamp nearby. KEITH is a jock . . .not quite the super-popular type, but generally liked and well-known. EMMA is very preppy and looks like a popular member of the "in" crowd. DROOLER is a flat-out nerd.

KEITH: Something's gotta change here.

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EMMA: I'm open to ideas.

DROOLER: Why? What's wrong with what we've got?

KEITH: It's stupid is what's wrong.

DROOLER: It's not stupid.

KEITH: Only a stupid person would think that this isn't stupid.

DROOLER: I'm not stupid.

KEITH: You think this isn't stupid, Drooler?

DROOLER: No, Keith, I don't think it's stupid!

KEITH: Then you're stupid.

DROOLER: If I'm stupid, then you're a nasty-faced poopy head.

KEITH: I'm a what?

DROOLER: Oh crud. I can't believe I just said that.

KEITH: A nasty . . .faced . . .poopy head?

DROOLER: I'm sorry.

KEITH: A nasty . . .

DROOLER: I'm sorry.

KEITH: . . .faced . . .

DROOLER: I'm sorry.

KEITH: . . .poopy . . .

DROOLER: I'm sorry.

KEITH: . . .head.

DROOLER: Please don't tell anyone.

KEITH: As in . . .someone with a nasty face . . .and a poopy head?

EMMA: Yes! He called you a nasty-faced poopy head! Those were his exact words! What part of nasty-faced poopy head don't you understand?

KEITH: I got the words just fine, Emma. It's the part where they came out of the mouth of a seventeen year-old guy that I'm having trouble wrapping my brain around.

DROOLER: I'm sorry.

KEITH: What's wrong with you?

DROOLER: It's my little sister.

EMMA: Your sister?

DROOLER: I think she's having a bad influence on me.

KEITH: You think?

DROOLER: She's six! She's six and she talks in child-speak! The day she was born, it was like someone started rewiring my parents' vocabulary. I've tried not to let it get to me. I've tried. But I'm slipping. I'm being assimilated and I can't help it. Resistance is futile. I'm just not strong enough.

KEITH: You're such a freaking nerd.

DROOLER: No—listen. Let me give you an example. This child—this very young person—she's virtually eradicated the word "bathroom" from our vocabulary. No one in my house goes to the bathroom anymore. You know where we go?

KEITH: The place south of heaven?

DROOLER: We all go to the potty! The POTTY!

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KEITH: The potty.

DROOLER: Not the toilet. Not the john. Not the porcelain throne, the reading room, the loo, the water closet, or even the happy swirly water bowl. No! We go to the potty!

KEITH: Calm down, dude.

DROOLER: And to add to the indignity of it all, we've dropped the words "to" and "the" from our declarations of intent. We don't say "I've got to go to the potty." Oh, no. We say, "I've got to go potty." It's like I can feel my vocabulary melting in my brain and dribbling out of my mouth through the fillings in my teeth, and there's nothing I can do about it. I go potty. My mom goes potty. My dad goes potty. My sister . . . you better believe she goes potty. We all go potty. Every last stinking one of us. WE ALL GO FREAKING POTTY!

KEITH: Whoa. I had no idea. I'm sorry.

DROOLER: S'okay.

KEITH: I'm going to go get something to drink. Hey, um, listen. I'd kind of prefer if you didn't tell anybody you were here today, okay?

DROOLER: Yeah. Sure. Since Zimmerman didn't give us any class time. I understand. No problem.

EMMA: Yeah. Will do.

DROOLER: But . . . wait a minute. I thought you guys were friends.

KEITH: Well, yeah. We are. But . . . you know.

EMMA: Yeah. I know. It's okay.

KEITH: Right. Thanks. (*exits*)

DROOLER: That was awkward.

EMMA: That was a nice save.

DROOLER: Huh?

EMMA: About your sister. If he put the word out that you said the poop thing, you'd never live it down.

DROOLER: Tell me about it. I've been stuck with the nickname "Drooler" since 3rd grade. Makes me glad we're just a couple months off from graduation.

EMMA: Yeah. I know about nicknames.

DROOLER: You mean the thing that happened at homecoming?

EMMA: Were you there?

DROOLER: No. But I heard about it.

EMMA: Who told you?

DROOLER: Nobody, I don't think. I just heard. That's what that thing was about with Keith just now, wasn't it?

EMMA: Aargh. This is so embarrassing.

DROOLER: Don't worry about it. Stuff happens and sometimes you can't help it.

EMMA: Thanks. That's nice. I . . . thanks. What's her name . . . your sister?

DROOLER: Laurel.

EMMA: That's a pretty name.

DROOLER: She's a miniature Amazon (*or "Hagrid" if male*).

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EMMA: I don't follow.

DROOLER: She's huge for a six-year-old.

EMMA: What, tall?

DROOLER: You could say that. Her first grade class was singing at her school's Christmas music program, and they had the kids standing on two rows of risers. She was in the front row. Not only was she the tallest kid there, not only was she taller than everyone else standing in her row, but the top of her head was level with the tops of the heads of the kids standing on the higher riser behind her. She was completely blocking the little boy she was standing in front of. Kid's parents couldn't have been happy about that. She looked like she'd failed at least four years of school.

EMMA: Wow.

DROOLER: Made shopping for her Christmas present easy, though.

EMMA: It did?

DROOLER: Yeah. I had a custom t-shirt made for her. On the front it says "I will crush your first grader" and on the back it says "Godzilla is my homeboy." I'm going to offer to take her out for ice cream if she wears it the next time she sings in a school music program.

EMMA: There's no way your parents would ever possibly go for that.

DROOLER: Nah. Laurel'd have to wear a sweater or something and yank it off when she got on stage.

EMMA: So you've got her stripping and then flashing a logo threatening all of her classmates. You're going to start a riot and get her expelled. She'll wind up in jail and it'll be your fault.

DROOLER: Eh. Okay, maybe not. She's a sweet kid, even if she does drive me nuts.

EMMA: I'll have to meet her sometime.

DROOLER: Actually, I got a picture of her. *(pulls out his wallet)*

EMMA: You have a picture of your little sister in your wallet? That's so sweet. *(looking at the picture)* Wow. She is big.

DROOLER: And this was two years ago.

EMMA: *(pointing to another picture in the wallet)* Is this your dog?

DROOLER: Yeah.

EMMA: Aw, he's cute. What's his name?

DROOLER: Floater.

EMMA: Floater? He...swims?

DROOLER: Nah.

EMMA: Floater, like . . . a dead body that's been found floating in the water?

DROOLER: Nah. That'd be gross. Floater like a stubborn little piece of poo that won't go down the toilet even after you flush two or three times. He was a stray and he wouldn't leave. So we adopted him and named him Floater. He's great.

EMMA: That's cool that you took in a stray. I used to volunteer at the SPCA some.

DROOLER: Yeah?

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EMMA: Yeah. I had to quit because I wanted to adopt all the animals and I couldn't.

KEITH: (*enters*) All right. You guys figured out what we're going to do?

DROOLER: Not a clue.

KEITH: You're a self-professed nerd, Drooler. Nerds are supposed to be smart. Even the stupid ones.

DROOLER: If being nerds meant that my kind would know the solution to every difficulty and obstacle, be they academic, political, or most importantly, social—then we wouldn't be nerds, now, would we?

KEITH: This is an academic problem, not a social one. Should be right up your alley.

DROOLER: Yes, but it's taking academics and applying them to a social setting.

KEITH: It's a medieval social setting. We're inventing a product that could have been sold in the middle ages.

DROOLER: And that in and of itself doesn't daunt me too terribly. It's the marketing campaign that concerns me.

KEITH: The teacher didn't say anything about a marketing campaign.

DROOLER: You can't have a product without a marketing campaign.

EMMA: Did they even have marketing campaigns in the middle ages?

DROOLER: Did they have commercial products as we know them? That's the catch. That's why this is a trick assignment. I think Mr. Zimmerman wants us to filter 13th century culture through 21st century eyes.

EMMA: He wants us to think in terms of 13th century technology.

DROOLER: That's too easy. It's a trap. It has to be.

EMMA: He wouldn't try to trap us.

DROOLER: He's a nut job.

EMMA: No he isn't.

DROOLER: He's married to the crazy librarian.

EMMA: Mrs. Zimmerman is the library secretary.

DROOLER: Same difference. Have you ever tried to carry on a conversation with her?

EMMA: Sure. I've checked lots of stuff out from the library.

DROOLER: No. I mean have you actually tried talking to her?

EMMA: About what?

DROOLER: Anything in the library. Books. Databases. Video editing. Especially video editing.

EMMA: Well, no. I kind of got the impression she didn't want to be bothered.

DROOLER: Did you ever get the impression that it was okay to bother her?

EMMA: Um. No. Not really.

DROOLER: Exactly. And did you ever try to talk to one of the actual librarians?

KEITH: I've never really seen one up close.

EMMA: They're always back in their offices. I've only ever seen them through their windows—behind the glass.

KEITH: Kind of like an exhibit of poisonous animals at the zoo.

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DROOLER: (*as if telling a ghost story*) There was this kid two years ago who wanted to edit a movie on the library's computers. Wanted to enter it in a film contest that the secretary told him about. But after Zimmerman dangled the thing in front of him, she wouldn't help him or give him any pointers, and she refused to let him see an actual librarian.

KEITH: What happened with the film contest?

DROOLER: From what I heard, the kid was left dangling and made the biggest pile of garbage of a movie ever.

KEITH: So Zimmerman tells him about the film contest, then leaves him hanging and he loses and gets publicly humiliated?

DROOLER: Actually, he won. But I think he still got publicly humiliated.

KEITH: These library people . . .they feed on our pain, don't they?

DROOLER: Library people are vicious. I'm telling you. And our dear teacher is married to one of them. What does that say about him? What does that tell you about his psyche? He'd have to be one seriously messed up dude. I mean, sure, he seems pretty normal on the outside, but deep down—I bet the scars run clear to his soul.

KEITH: They'd have to. Being married to a librarian secretary thing. Be a fate worse than death.

DROOLER: No telling the type of stuff running through Mr. Zimmerman's head. I mean, I don't blame him for secretly being a freaky psycho—it's not his fault. I'm assuming here that he married his wife before she worked in the library—and then she got hired at the school and mutated on him later. But I don't trust the guy. He's playing head games with us.

EMMA: How can you be sure?

DROOLER: If I was married to Mrs. Zimmerman, I'd be playing head games with people to try to rebuild what was left of my shattered ego.

KEITH: Never thought of it like that.

EMMA: Maybe you're right.

DROOLER: That's why I think it's a mistake to take the assignment at face value. He's messing with us. The only way to come out of this with a decent grade is to think like him and try to second-guess him. So I say that we stick with our original product.

EMMA: Feudal Pepsi?

DROOLER: Feudal Pepsi.

KEITH: You'd better be right about this.

EMMA: I don't know. I just don't think this is what he had in mind.

DROOLER: It's what he doesn't want us to think he had in mind. Head games, Emma. Head games.

EMMA: But just the idea of a medieval soft drink, it seems so . . .so . . .

KEITH: They didn't even have the stuff to make soft drinks in the 13th century, Drooler.

DROOLER: We can deal with that. That's an academic problem. I can wrap my head around that. And I can market a soft drink. Now, if we do a bucket of straw or something lame like that . . .I have no clue how to sell it.

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KEITH: Okay. Fine. Caramel color. What's your solution to that? I'm pretty sure they didn't have caramel color in the 13th century.

DROOLER: Sure they did. They just called it "dirt."

EMMA: What about the carbonated water?

DROOLER: Water's easy. Carbonation . . . eh, just put some instructions on the can—

EMMA: (*cutting him off*) They didn't have cans.

DROOLER: Shoot. You're right. What did they have?

EMMA: Bladders.

KEITH: I have a bladder.

EMMA: No. They drank out of bladders.

KEITH: That's disgusting.

EMMA: No. Animal bladders. I saw it in a movie.

KEITH: That's even worse.

EMMA: Dead animals.

KEITH: How do you drink from the bladder of a dead animal?

EMMA: You take it out first. And clean it. Use it like a canteen. I think.

KEITH: Oh.

DROOLER: Okay. Shake the bladder really good to work some air into it before drinking.

EMMA: Water and dirt. In a bladder. Doesn't sound terribly appealing.

DROOLER: We need sweetener. I don't think they had sugar...honey! We can use honey.

EMMA: Water, honey, and dirt. In a bladder.

DROOLER: And salt. All soda's got salt. I'm pretty sure they had salt in the 13th century. Probably not a lot, but what the heck. The peasants weren't cool enough to drink Feudal Pepsi anyways.

KEITH: And lard!

EMMA: Lard?

KEITH: They used lard in everything.

EMMA: I thought you had serious misgivings about this.

KEITH: I do. But they used lard in everything. If they had Pepsi in the 13th century, they would've put lard in it.

DROOLER: That's a surprisingly insightful observation, Keith. Disgusting, but insightful. We'll add lard to the ingredient list.

KEITH: If they had Feudal Pepsi, would they have had Diet Feudal Pepsi?

DROOLER: They'd have wished they had Diet Feudal Pepsi. But artificial sweetener would have been a problem.

KEITH: You could half the honey and replace it with more salt.

DROOLER: Now you're talking!

EMMA: Water, honey, dirt, salt, lard, and instructions to shake the bladder well. That's it?

DROOLER: That's it.

EMMA: And you seriously think you can market it?

DROOLER: Marketing is not about revealing ingredients. It's all about image. About creating a vibe . . . a lifestyle . . . manufacturing a void that this product could fill.

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KEITH: My dad would say this stuff would put hair on your chest.

DROOLER: It was cold in the middle ages. At least in the winter. No heat pumps or furnaces . . . just fireplaces. People would have benefited from extra hair to keep them warm. It's got possibilities.

KEITH: My granddad would say drinking stuff like this would make you a man.

DROOLER: Hyper-efficient puberty? That could be a real selling point.

(The director may cut the following four lines and skip directly to EMMA saying "That's pretty funny.")

EMMA: *(jokingly)* What if you're a girl? Would it still make you a man?

DROOLER: Whoa! Now that would make a great TV spot . . . a head and shoulders shot of a woman stepping out of the shower . . . and she looks down at herself and screams . . . and then we cut to the product logo and this deep voiceover says, "Feudal Pepsi . . . it'll make you a man."

KEITH: Too bad they didn't have TV in the 13 century.

DROOLER: Backwards agrarian peasants.

EMMA: *(looking at DROOLER admiringly)* You know, the shower thing, that's pretty funny.

DROOLER: Thanks. Hey, if you want to see something funny, I've got this really cool comic book with me. You might like it. Wanna borrow it?

EMMA: Sure.

KEITH: Where are we gonna get a bladder?

(BLACKOUT.)

SCENE 3 – ZUBILLIGA'S CLASSROOM

MR. ZUBILLIGA and PRINCIPAL WALTERS are talking in the hall outside of ZUBILLIGA's classroom. Inside the classroom are three student desks along with a teacher's desk and chair. GOR sits at one of the students desks, finishing a test after school.

WALTERS: You look like you're about to experience bladder failure, Mr. Zubilliga. Pull yourself together. It's not that bad.

ZUBILLIGA: But . . . Principal Walters, I don't want to be junior class sponsor.

WALTERS: I'm afraid what you want has nothing to do with it. Mrs. Cushing is going on maternity leave and someone will need to take over for her as junior class sponsor.

ZUBILLIGA: Can't you find someone else to do it?

WALTERS: No one else wants to do it.

ZUBILLIGA: But why me?

WALTERS: We held a lottery and you lost.

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ZUBILLIGA: With all due respect, Principal Walters . . . it's April. The junior class sponsor is responsible for the prom. That's next month. You've known since the beginning of the year that Mrs. Cushing would be taking leave . . . don't you think you should have sorted this out before now?

WALTERS: I'm a busy person, Mr. Zubilliga.

ZUBILLIGA: So now that we're down to the wire, this is finally enough of a priority to justify your time?

WALTERS: Exactly.

ZUBILLIGA: Can't you get Mrs. Cushing's substitute to do it?

WALTERS: No.

ZUBILLIGA: This hardly seems fair.

WALTERS: It isn't. Good luck with your new responsibilities.

(WALTERS exits. ZUBILLIGA crosses to the teacher's desk and slumps into the chair.)

GOR: If I asked you what was wrong, would you be willing to take it as a sign of simple curiosity, as opposed to thinking that I actually care?

ZUBILLIGA: What?

GOR: You just had a conversation with the principal. You're obviously distressed. I'm curious as to why, but I wouldn't want you to think that I'm remotely interested in you as a person.

ZUBILLIGA: No. Of course not, Gor. Heaven forbid you should think of your math teacher as a human being.

GOR: Actually, I do think of you as a human being. I understand that you have feelings, problems, and a whole life outside of school. I just don't care about any of that.

ZUBILLIGA: And yet, you're pumping me for information.

GOR: I don't know that I'd consider "pumping" to be an accurate term. It was more of a simple inquiry.

ZUBILLIGA: What do you care about? Besides yourself, of course?

GOR: I wouldn't say that I particularly care about myself. I mean, I do. But I think you mean to imply that as a teenager, I'm obsessed with my own immediate gratification, and that's not really the case. My one constant goal is to make it through the day without having to deal with idiots any more than I have to.

ZUBILLIGA: That's not much of a goal.

GOR: Life is like this test I'm making up—it's difficult. But life is more difficult with idiots. Life with idiots is like trying to take this test after someone—let's say, an idiot—has spilled a soda on it. It's possible, but it's messy, it requires a certain amount of cleanup, and it's unpleasant. Judging from the looks of you, I'd say that you've just been handed an unpleasant and messy job requiring a certain amount of cleanup.

ZUBILLIGA: That would be a reasonably accurate summary, yes.

GOR: Who's the idiot?

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ZUBILLIGA: It would be unprofessional to talk about something like that with a student.

GOR: Principal Walters. I see.

ZUBILLIGA: I didn't say that!

GOR: It's Principal Walters. If it wasn't Principal Walters, you would have said, "It's not Principal Walters," instead of "I didn't say that."

ZUBILLIGA: The tone you're taking with me is getting dangerously close to disrespectful.

GOR: Now you sound like Mrs. Zimmerman in the library. The way I see it, I'm holding all the cards here. If you send me to the principal, I'll tell her you said she was an idiot.

ZUBILLIGA: You don't like people very much, do you?

GOR: I hate people.

ZUBILLIGA: Have you been in any school clubs?

GOR: What do you think?

ZUBILLIGA: I'm guessing not.

GOR: You're guessing right.

ZUBILLIGA: Going to college?

GOR: (*sighs*) Four more years of concentrated contact with idiots in order to minimize my contact with idiots for the rest of my life.

ZUBILLIGA: I'm not sure I follow you.

GOR: College: dumb jocks, dorm parties, frats, sororities, and the list goes on. But if I put up with it for four years, I don't have to work in fast food or a department store for the rest of my life. It's not an attractive deal, but yeah...looking at four years of life, I'll take the four years.

ZUBILLIGA: Any particular college?

GOR: I haven't been able to work up the enthusiasm to put much thought into it.

ZUBILLIGA: But you want to have options, right?

GOR: If options mean me having the power to choose which idiots I'm dealing with for four years, then yeah, I guess so.

ZUBILLIGA: What's your GPA?

GOR: 4.0.

ZUBILLIGA: Not bad. But even with good SAT scores, if you don't have some co-curricular activities on your applications, you're not going to get accepted at too many schools. Going to limit your options.

GOR: You're talking sense and I hate you for it.

ZUBILLIGA: I can help you.

GOR: This has something to do with the crummy day you're having, doesn't it?

ZUBILLIGA: It has everything to do with my crummy day.

GOR: You're going to try and shovel your stale, disgusting crumbs onto my lap, aren't you?

ZUBILLIGA: Your empty lap is my opportunity.

GOR: And you're looking to bury it.

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ZUBILLIGA: You set yourself up for this. Remember that. If you'd planned the course of your high school career a little better, you wouldn't be in this position now.

GOR: I haven't agreed to anything yet.

ZUBILLIGA: No, but you're going to. Because I'm talking sense and you hate me for it.

GOR: You're a sadistic devil.

ZUBILLIGA: Maybe. But I'm not an idiot.

GOR: And thus you have my attention. Speak.

ZUBILLIGA: At this very late point in the year, I have been handed the job of completing the responsibilities of junior class sponsor, while the previous sponsor takes her maternity leave.

GOR: I have avoided contact with boys religiously. For that matter, I've avoided contact with anyone religiously. And yet it's going to be a baby that's ultimately responsible for derailing the relative peace of my junior year, isn't it?

ZUBILLIGA: Babies screw up everything.

GOR: I'm going to rip out my ovaries when I get home.

ZUBILLIGA: Wait until summer. I need you ambulatory.

GOR: Maybe I can find a way to kill all the men on the planet instead.

ZUBILLIGA: Only half as many idiots to deal with that way. Eventually the human race would die out, and then there wouldn't be any.

GOR: If I just went ahead and killed everyone, it would save time.

ZUBILLIGA: Global genocide of the human race is the sort of thing that would require an extensive background in either politics or science, and you're going to need a college education to get into either of those fields, so you're back to square one.

GOR: Have I mentioned lately how much I hate you?

ZUBILLIGA: As the new junior class sponsor, I have to oversee the prom.

GOR: You're going to drag me into organizing prom?

ZUBILLIGA: No. I am going to drop the prom squarely and irrevocably into your lap. I am going to wash my hands of it and leave you gasping and drowning in an ocean of confetti and vastly overpriced cardboard decorations.

GOR: You're insane.

ZUBILLIGA: Maybe. But I'm not an idiot.

GOR: I'm thinking you might have to start convincing me. Consider: I have never done anything like this in my life. Much less something of this magnitude. And as opposed to being merely uninterested in this job, I would consider my learnings to be firmly rooted in the hard and barren grounds of antipathy rather than the middling and spastically grassed plains of apathy.

ZUBILLIGA: I know.

GOR: You know nothing.

ZUBILLIGA: You'll organize it just fine. You're smart. You're competent. You'll figure it out and you'll get the job done. You'll also color the event to your own particular sensibilities.

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GOR: You may be shoveling your crumbs onto my lap, but you're also digging yourself a nice, comfy grave.

ZUBILLIGA: Principal Walters wants a prom. We'll give her a prom. Make it a prom no one will ever forget. Nothing dirty. Nothing offensive. Nothing that will get me fired. But beyond that, use your imagination. We'll make Walters plan a little bit better next time, you get something to slap on your college application, and I'll write you some glowing recommendations. Do we have a deal?

GOR: Aren't there class officers who should be helping with this?

ZUBILLIGA: Yes. And if I trusted them, we wouldn't be having this conversation.

GOR: They're idiots, aren't they? They're idiots, and I'm going to have to deal with them.

(BLACKOUT.)

SCENE 4 – THE HALL AT SCHOOL

MUFFIN, SETH, and MARCELLA are talking between classes. THEY are all carrying school books or book bags. MUFFIN is very preppy and dressed in a lot of pink.

MUFFIN: I wear Chapstick to bed every night because I'm scared I'm going to wake up in the morning and I'm not going to have Chapstick on.

SETH: That's...um...that's very profound, Muffin.

MUFFIN: Yeah, it is, isn't it? See you, Seth. Bye, Marcella. *(exits)*

MARCELLA: I can't believe you used to date her.

SETH: I thought you and her were friends.

MARCELLA: We are friends. But there's a difference between being friends with someone and dating them.

SETH: I can't believe she's junior class secretary.

MARCELLA: Nobody else ran for the position.

SETH: Did you ever pull your Rorschach cards on her?

MARCELLA: You're kidding, right? She'd have broken them. The ink blots would have shuddered, cracked, slid off the cards, and hidden in a corner.

EMMA: *(enters, carrying a few school books or a book bag.)* Hey, Marcella?

MARCELLA: Hey Emma.

EMMA: Can I ask you a question?

MARCELLA: Sure.

EMMA: In private?

MARCELLA: You want privacy, the hall at school is the wrong place.

EMMA: Just . . .come over here.

MARCELLA: *(to SETH)* I'll see you later.

SETH: Sure. *(exits)*

MARCELLA: What?

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EMMA: I want to ask you something, and I want you to be completely honest.

MARCELLA: That means you're going to ask me something that you already know is a bad idea and you want me to say it's a good idea because you're going to do it anyway and when it goes up in flames, you'll have someone to share the blame with.

EMMA: I haven't even said it yet.

MARCELLA: You asked me to be honest.

EMMA: But you don't even know what it is.

MARCELLA: I don't need to know what it is. It's a bad idea and you shouldn't do it.

EMMA: Crud.

MARCELLA: So what was it?

EMMA: I was thinking about asking Drooler to prom.

MARCELLA: I was better off not knowing what it was.

EMMA: So you don't think it's a good idea?

MARCELLA: I can feel scars developing on my brain tissue.

EMMA: That means you think it's a bad idea?

MARCELLA: I think the eggs I had for breakfast aren't going to taste nearly as good the second time around.

EMMA: You're exaggerating.

MARCELLA: If it takes me barfing all over you in a school hallway to convince you this is a bad idea, then I'm willing to sacrifice my breakfast to do it.

EMMA: Come on. It wouldn't be that big of a deal.

MARCELLA: We're talking public sacrifice of a perfectly good breakfast here. It's the modern day equivalent of a public hanging in the old west. I would do this for you if I thought it would do any good. That's the kind of friend I am to you. Think about this.

EMMA: Drooler's funny.

MARCELLA: Drooler's a nerd.

EMMA: I know that.

MARCELLA: Plus that girl, Tora . . . everybody knows she likes Drooler.

EMMA: They're not dating.

MARCELLA: That doesn't mean she won't ask him.

EMMA: So maybe I should ask first.

MARCELLA: Emma, Drooler himself notwithstanding, Tora's really, really weird. If you set your mind on the same guy as the really, really weird chick . . . can you conceive of the amount of damage it would do to your reputation if you asked him to prom?

EMMA: My reputation is already damaged. Or did you forget what happened at homecoming?

MARCELLA: This would damage your reputation more. You'd become a social pariah, and no one would ever go out with you for the rest of high school. You'd have to go to college somewhere far, far away to restart your social life.

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EMMA: No one's going out with me now. And I am planning on going to college somewhere far, far away. What would this change?

MARCELLA: People would laugh at you at prom.

EMMA: People laughed at me at homecoming.

MARCELLA: They would keep laughing at you long after prom was over.

EMMA: They kept laughing at me long after homecoming was over. And I know they still do when I'm not looking. I know people call me "cole slaw" behind my back.

MARCELLA: Look, Emma, as your friend, I'm telling you, no matter how bad things get, they can always get worse. No matter how low you think you've sunk, you can always sink lower. No matter how desperate you become, you can always become more desperate. When the stuff hits the fan, you can bet there's an elephant with a bowel disorder standing right around the corner. When—

EMMA: You can stop, okay? I get it.

MARCELLA: Are you sure about that?

EMMA: Yes.

MARCELLA: So you're going to drop this?

EMMA: I'm going to ask Drooler to prom.

MARCELLA: Why?

EMMA: Because I kind of like him.

MARCELLA: You need to have a better reason than that.

EMMA: And there was something he was showing me in a comic book . . .

MARCELLA: You were reading comic books with Drooler?

EMMA: It was when we were working on our group history project. It was something he had with him.

MARCELLA: Even if I ask you not to tell me what comic book, you're going to do it anyway, aren't you?

EMMA: It was called *Flaming Carrot*.

MARCELLA: Flaming. Carrot.

EMMA: *Flaming Carrot*.

MARCELLA: Of all the things I was afraid that you might say, I think that's actually worse.

EMMA: There was this line in the book that . . . I dunno . . . it kind of struck a chord with me.

MARCELLA: You're going to commit social seppuku because of something you read in a comic book?

EMMA: "Fortune favors the bold."

MARCELLA: Wisdom from comic books. There's something wrong with this picture, Emma.

EMMA: I'm going to be bold.

MARCELLA: You're going to regret it.

EMMA: (*exiting*) Fortune favors the bold!

(BLACKOUT.)

SCENE 5 – THE CAFETERIA

CHELSEY and KEITH are sitting at table and eating lunch. CHELSEY is preppy and athletic. SHE is eating a salad.

CHELSEY: That's about as bold as watered-down generic store brand decaffeinated coffee with skim milk and artificial sweetener.

KEITH: Bold?

CHELSEY: Yeah, bold. Or lack thereof.

KEITH: Huh. I never really thought of "bold" as a word that should be used to describe a school mascot. Fierce, maybe. Tough. Scary. But never bold.

CHELSEY: When did you move here?

KEITH: Two years ago.

CHELSEY: And how did you feel before then, being one of the Butts Road High School Chipmunks?

KEITH: To be honest, I never really thought about it that much.

CHELSEY: It never bothered you, going up against teams named after animals so much bigger than yours?

KEITH: Well, let me think. In our district, we had the Chipmunks, the Squirrels, the Groundhogs, the Beavers, the Rabbits, the Field Mice, and the Platypuses. So no, the subject never came up. Except the year they made it to regionals and got ripped apart by the Timber Wolves.

CHELSEY: There is no creature so weak, so awkward, so pathetic, that some high school somewhere won't try to use it as their mascot. You know what my school called us?

KEITH: What?

CHELSEY: The Ducklings.

KEITH: The Ducklings?

CHELSEY: Yeah. Not the Ducks. Not the Mighty Ducklings. Just ...the Ducklings. The Ducklings vs. the Lions. The Ducklings vs. the Bears. It was embarrassing. I was so excited when I found out that my family was moving. I was finally going to get to play basketball on a team with a real name. And then I get here and find out I'm going to spend what's left of my senior year playing with a bunch of complete strangers as one of the Cooper High School Octopi. I hate this place. I've been here three months and I still don't know anyone.

KEITH: It could be worse.

CHELSEY: At the souvenir stands, they sell teddy bears in little octopus costumes! How can it get any worse than that?

KEITH: Well, this isn't sports, but if you're talking about stuff that impacts the self-image of your students, just saying that you attend a place called Butts Road High School doesn't exactly make you swell with pride. On top of that, the school was located just off the same interstate exit as two prisons. Riding into school every day, we'd all see the signs . . ."This exit:

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Butts Road High School, Butts Road Penitentiary, Norman Gallows County Jail.” It’s like they were trying to tell us something.

CHELSEY: Wow. That really sucks.

REX: (*enters, slovenly and overweight*) Hey, Keith. Hey, uh ...Chelsey, right?

CHELSEY: Yeah.

REX: What’s for lunch?

CHELSEY: It’s called salad.

REX: Huh. I’ve heard of that. Never tried it.

CHELSEY: Maybe you should. You look like you could stand to lose some weight.

REX: Happily, I am able to accept my body on its own terms. I love myself, and I wish everyone could be as lucky as me.

CHELSEY: If I was as lucky as you, I think I’d have to torture and kill myself.

REX: Somehow I think that wouldn’t be too far removed from your daily routine.

CHELSEY: Excuse me?

REX: You work out, right?

CHELSEY: Of course I work out. I’m an athlete. So’s he.

REX: Working out is just a euphemism for torture.

CHELSEY: It’s torture with a purpose.

REX: Torture always has a purpose.

KEITH: What about torture for the sake of torture?

REX: Then the purpose is to cause pain. Tell me something, how much time do you spend working out every day?

CHELSEY: At least an hour.

KEITH: About the same.

CHELSEY: Sometimes more.

REX: Think of what you could do with that time. You could play video games. Watch TV. Eat.

CHELSEY: We could get fat.

REX: Most people are fat. People like myself. We’re a majority. People like you—you’re the minority.

CHELSEY: That doesn’t bother me.

REX: Oh, I know. You think you’re better than everybody else.

CHELSEY: It’s hard to look at you and your bulging gut of doom and not feel vaguely superior.

REX: Because you torture yourself every day. Do you have any idea how messed up that is?

CHELSEY: You’re fat. You’re not healthy. And not only do you not care, you act like it’s a good thing. Do you have any idea how messed up *that* is?

REX: You’re a vegetarian, aren’t you?

CHELSEY: No.

REX: Really?

CHELSEY: Really.

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REX: You?

KEITH: No.

REX: Well, color me pleasantly surprised.

CHELSEY: Would it bother you if we were vegetarians?

REX: Or vegans. Vegans are the worst. Yeah, that would bug me.

Vegetarians are self-absorbed masochists to the 10th degree, but vegans are a hundred times worse. I meet a vegan and I just want to strap them to a gurney and give them an I.V. feed of beef stock just for spite.

Humans were made to eat meat. It's what we do. It's a crime against nature to deny that.

CHELSEY: Humans were also made to eat vegetables. How is it not a crime against nature to deny that?

REX: Because vegetables taste like something that came out of the ground.

CHELSEY: Vegetables do come out of the ground.

REX: I rest my case.

CHELSEY: I think I'm going to become a vegetarian.

KEITH: Me too.

REX: If you do, I'm going to make it my cause to save you both.

CHELSEY: Save us from what?

REX: From becoming even bigger self-absorbed jerks than you already are.

CHELSEY: That's funny. I could have sworn you were the self-absorbed jerk here.

REX: I am. But in a good way.

CHELSEY: Because you eat meat.

REX: And lard.

CHELSEY: Lard?

REX: I love lard.

CHELSEY: That's disgusting.

REX: No. You know what's disgusting? Vegetable oil. Not only does it come from vegetables, but they do unspeakably weird stuff with it. Lard is natural. It's good for you.

CHELSEY: You eat hot dogs? Boloney? Any kind of processed meat?

REX: Sure. Can't get enough.

CHELSEY: They do unspeakably weird things to all of those. There's nothing natural about them.

REX: But they're meat, so it's okay.

CHELSEY: Hamburgers.

REX: What?

CHELSEY: At the beginning of this conversation, you asked what was for lunch. The cafeteria is serving hamburgers. Go. Run along. Get one. Get a stack. Be fat and happy. Just leave.

REX: Hamburgers? Cafeteria hamburgers?

CHELSEY: It stands to reason that the cafeteria would be serving cafeteria hamburgers, yes.

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REX: Cafeteria hamburgers are like . . .one of the most artificial tasting food-type substances on the planet. They're great. I love them.

CHELSEY: I think I hear them calling your name.

REX: Me too. By the way, are you going to prom with anybody?

CHELSEY: What?

REX: Prom. You got a date?

CHELSEY: Why?

REX: 'Cause I'm looking for one.

CHELSEY: You want to go to prom with me?

REX: Sure. Why not?

CHELSEY: For one thing, we've been arguing for the past five minutes.

You've insulted and belittled me and made a complete jerk out of yourself.

REX: Well, yeah. I was flirting with you.

CHELSEY: Flirting? You call that flirting?

REX: Yeah. Chit-chat. Sort of getting to know you.

CHELSEY: I got the impression that you didn't like me. You know, seeing as how we're complete opposites.

REX: Opposites attract.

CHELSEY: You're attracted to me?

REX: Well, not yet. But we're opposites, so I'm figuring any second now the attraction is bound to kick in. How about it?

CHELSEY: No.

REX: You have a date already?

CHELSEY: I . . .yeah. I have a date.

REX: Really? Who?

CHELSEY: It's . . .um. Keith—you tell him. Tell him who I'm going to prom with.

KEITH: I have no idea who—

(CHELSEY kicks KEITH under the table. DROOLER enters and crosses the stage.)

KEITH: Oh. Right. Um. Um. That's right . . .you're going with . . .uh . . .

DROOLER: Hey, Keith. *(exits)*

KEITH: Drooler.

REX: *(surprised)* Drooler?

KEITH: Drooler.

CHELSEY: *(having no clue who "Drooler" is, but concerned by the name, and speaking it slowly as if to make sure SHE understood correctly)*
Drooler.

KEITH: *(to CHELSEY, realizing HE may have made a mistake)* Drooler.

REX: *(to CHELSEY, somewhat appalled)* Drooler?

CHELSEY: *(her head turned towards REX, her eyes on KEITH, nodding her head, and very fearful)* Drooler.

REX: *(incredulous, pointing his thumb back over his shoulder in the direction DROOLER exited)* Drooler?

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KEITH: (*trying to sound confident*) Drooler.

CHELSEY: (*pointing in the direction DROOLER exited, looking at KEITH in deep alarm, and trying to speak nonchalantly through clenched teeth*)
Drooler.

REX: Whatever. (*exits*)

CHELSEY: Drooler. That guy? Who was just here? That was...

KEITH: Drooler.

CHELSEY: You idiot! You were supposed to say I was going with you!

KEITH: I was?

CHELSEY: Yes!

KEITH: But I haven't asked you to prom.

CHELSEY: Have you asked anyone to prom?

KEITH: No.

CHELSEY: Would you like to go to prom with me?

KEITH: Sure.

CHELSEY: Well, I just gave you an opportunity, and you blew it!

KEITH: Why didn't *you* say I was going to be *your* date?

CHELSEY: Because I didn't know if you already had one!

KEITH: Well forgive me for not being able to read your mind, Chelsey, but you kind of put me on the spot.

CHELSEY: And I learned the hard way that you don't think well under pressure.

KEITH: I could have told you that without you actually putting it to the test.

CHELSEY: Drooler?

KEITH: My brain froze up. It was all I could think of.

CHELSEY: Oh. My. Gosh.

KEITH: What are you going to do?

CHELSEY: Nothing.

KEITH: But what if Rex goes to prom and you're not there with Drooler?

CHELSEY: Rex doesn't strike me as the type who's going to get a date for prom, and even if he does, I can say I broke it off.

KEITH: But Rex is going to tell people you're going with Drooler.

CHELSEY: Rex also doesn't strike me as someone that many people would even talk to, much less consider a credible source.

KEITH: If people think you're going with Drooler, it could damage your reputation.

CHELSEY: Well, whose fault is that?

KEITH: Yours.

CHELSEY: (*sighs*) Look. I haven't been here long enough to have a reputation, and I'll be graduating before anyone gets to know me, and then I'll be going far, far away to college. I doubt anyone will hear about this, but if there's social fallout, let's face it, it's not going to be that big of a deal.

(BLACKOUT.)

SCENE 6 – ZUBILLIGA’S CLASSROOM, AFTER SCHOOL

MUFFIN and GOR are sitting side by side in two desks, looking at prom supply catalogs.

MUFFIN: Prom is so totally the social event of the year. It’s such a big deal. We have to make sure we get everything perfect.

GOR: Just out of curiosity, where are the rest of junior class officers?

MUFFIN: Soccer practice, spring play, golf team, and the president went shopping.

GOR: Shopping?

MUFFIN: Sure.

GOR: The class president prioritized shopping over being here, and you’re okay with that?

MUFFIN: Oh, I totally understand.

GOR: Uh huh.

MUFFIN: So why are you here?

GOR: Mr. Zubilliga wanted . . .extra hands.

MUFFIN: Many hands make the lights work?

GOR: Something like that.

MUFFIN: Well thanks for being here. We can’t have a prom without lights.

GOR: What exactly has Mr. Zubilliga told you about my involvement with the prom committee?

MUFFIN: He just said you were helping.

GOR: And that’s all he said?

MUFFIN: Uh huh.

GOR: I see. He and I are going to have to have a talk.

MUFFIN: Okay. So. I’ve been through all these catalogs and I’ve found the perfect prom theme and decorations.

GOR: Um . . .yeah. What have you got?

MUFFIN: It’s called “Pretty as a Princess in Pink.”

GOR: I see. And would I be correct in assuming that this theme would involve tiaras, sparkly castles, and lots of pink?

MUFFIN: Yep! Doesn’t it sound great?

GOR: Excuse me a second.

(GOR stands, picks up a small trash can from beside ZUBILLIGA’s desk, and exits. There are coughing and gagging sounds from offstage. GOR enters, puts the trash can back down, and sits beside MUFFIN.)

MUFFIN: Are you okay?

GOR: Not particularly. Something violently disagreed with me.

MUFFIN: What’d you eat?

GOR: Nothing.

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MUFFIN: Oh. So what do you think of the prom theme?

GOR: I need information. Does this prom theme involve evil stepmothers in any way, shape or form?

MUFFIN: No.

GOR: Evil witches that dress in black?

MUFFIN: No.

GOR: Dragons?

MUFFIN: No.

GOR: Enslavement, torture, or forced servitude of the princesses?

MUFFIN: What?

GOR: I'll take that as a no.

MUFFIN: It's all pink and happy!

GOR: Right, then. I think it sucks.

MUFFIN: You think it . . .sucks?

GOR: Princesses are nothing without some kind of evil witch mother figure to offset their goodness. Villains are always way more interesting. Personally, I could have just done without all the Briar Rose stuff in *Sleeping Beauty* and watched an hour and a half Maleficent movie. If you're going to have a princess theme, then at the very least, you need to have a dark castle off in the corner—no, better still, you need to have a dark castle right smack in the middle of the dance floor.

MUFFIN: But . . .the prom kit doesn't come with a dark castle.

GOR: We can spray paint it black. And there needs to be a dragon. And a princess chained to a slab as a human sacrifice to the dragon.

MUFFIN: But that isn't happy.

GOR: I'm not a happy person.

MUFFIN: Do you need a hug?

GOR: No.

MUFFIN: Here, let me give you a mental hug. (*closes her eyes and squints for a second*) There. All done. Feel better?

GOR: Muffin, life isn't happy.

MUFFIN: Sure it is. You just have to try, is all.

GOR: You think there aren't atrocities going on in third world countries—heck, in our own country—right now while we're having this conversation? No matter how hard those people try, their lives will not be happy! We put the sacrificial princess right smack in the middle of the dance floor, people can't ignore that. It's totally symbolic of all the crap (*or "awful stuff"*) going on in the world that we just ignore while we go about our day to day lives. It'll be brilliant.

MUFFIN: But that . . .that . . .

GOR: Look. I hate your idea, but I'm trying to compromise. So work with me here.

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