

THE AGONY AND THE HILARITY: THE LIFE OF TEENS

By Edith Weiss

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The Agony and the Hilarity: The Life of Teens
Full-Length Scenes for the Teenaged Actor
By Edith Weiss

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Two Girls Wearing the Same Prom Dress

Kendra A teenaged girl, very excited to be at the Prom
Meg More sarcastic than Kendra, but as excited

The Guidance Unit

Ann A freshman, very nervous, easily intimidated
Al A freshman, tougher than Ann
Units 1, 2, and 3 a parody of the guidance counselors who spout aphorisms and clichés. They are three heads in the same costume

The Grape Nuts Bake Sale

Emily* an overachieving teenager, highly stressed
Robert* loves volunteering, more laid back than Emily

The Nerd Test

Tom A very smart, unathletic teenager
Alice His best friend, not a 'cool' kid

The School Desk Horror: Monologue

Rick a funny teenager who's had a hideously embarrassing experience

Teens Helping Teens

Shannon: a warm, gregarious girl who thinks she is more nurturing than she actually is, a bit self important

Sean* nice kid, follows Shannon's lead

Taylor* a kid often called a 'boy scout' or 'girl scout'—optimistic, hard working

Andie a typical teenager mortified by really bad hair

Sabine a nice kid, concerned that she's too short

Alex* a very shy boy who is forced to 'share'

Michael* passionate, would root for the underdog

Hayley unintentionally insensitive, a 'cool' kid

Torey a kid with an inferiority complex and victim of sibling rivalry

Isaiah typical teenage kid, likes girls a lot

Vienna a dramatic, rather self involved girl

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Dumped for the Lack of a Car

Pete a nice kid, not a great student
Todd* practical, down to earth, supportive
Jarrod feels very 'put upon' by his life

Resturant of Too Many Choices

Randy* a nice kid who gets very frustrated
Hostess/Host* takes the job so seriously she's (he's) almost a robotic

Politically Correct Pre-School Story Telling

Elizabeth* Preschool teacher, politically correct and sweet
Uncle Buster A nice middle aged man who loves telling stories to kids
Kira* a precocious preschooler
Grant* a precocious preschooler
Carrie* a precocious preschooler
Colby* a precocious preschooler
Allie a precocious preschooler

Irma "I Hate My Name" Monologue

Irma an earnest young woman who hates her name

Artificial Sweetners commercial

Allison parody of a busy working mother
Jessie parody of a busy working mother

Lifestyle Feud

Richard the host of the show, energetic, plastic smile
Vapida the Vanna White girl
Solstice Mew the very New Age Mother
Lotus Loop her New Age hating daughter
Bummer* Solstice's son, (or daughter) laid back and a bit goofy
Huntingdon The father of the Overachievers
Blair his overachieving, efficient wife
Brittany the 'perfect' kid: straight A's, athlete, wound a bit too tight
Vanessa younger sister, hyperactive
Attila The father Hun, a ferocious barbarian
Hogsnot The mother Hun, also ferocious
Killer* one of the Hun kids

Flathead*	a Hun kid
Beefneck*	A Hun kid

*Asterisk indicates Either Gender

PROPS

Lipstick or blush for 'Prom Dress'

Notebooks, books, school stuff for Al and Ann, 'Guidance Unit'

Lots of awful looking brown pastries in different shapes for 'Grape Nuts'

Plate of brown pastries for 'Grape Nuts'

Calculator for Tom in 'Nerd Test'

Book "A Tale of Two Cities" for 'Dumped for the Lack of'

Seating chart for the Host/Hostess in 'Restaurant'

Book of Fairy Tales for Uncle Buster, 'Politically Correct'

Applause Sign for Feud

Richard's game cards with questions and answers for Feud

Clubs for the barbarian Huns in Feud

COSTUMES

Only 3 sketches demand costumes that probably won't be found in the student's own closet. In "Wearing the Same Prom Dress", obviously, it has to be the same-but it can also be constructed out of paper, or look like a cut-out doll with tabs going over the girl's shoulders. In "Guidance Unit" a costume that houses three actors must be built so you can see 3 heads and four hands, one pair on each end. The Huns should look as savage and uncivilized as possible—old, awful wigs would work well here. Jarrod in "Dumped for the Lack of A Car" needs a hoodie.

SET PIECES

2 chairs to be used in "Teens Helping Teens" and the "Politically Correct Storytelling Hour".

A podium-like piece for the restaurant scene and the game show.

A folding table such as is used in school cafeterias can be used in "Prom Dress" and "Grape Nuts"

SOUND

School Bell for Guidance Unit. This can also be used to end any sketch that takes place in a school: 'Nerd Test', 'Irma' monologue, 'Unfortunate Chair Noise', 'Teens Helping Teens', and 'Politically Correct Storytelling Hour'

Aerobics Music for 'Artificial Sweeteners'

Music for Opening of Game Show

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

This show can be done by as few as 14 students to as many as 52. A good number is between 20-40 actors, so no one is overloaded, and no one has too little to do. Many of the roles are flexible as to gender.

The sketches work independently of each other, so you can pick and choose if you don't wish to do all of them.

One of the important things about sketch comedy is that the show moves quickly from sketch to sketch. For that reason, I suggest the simplest sets, or representational sets: for example, a podium or music stand can be used for "Restaurant", a set piece that will work both as the counter in a girl's bathroom, and a table for pastry. The entire show could be done with blocks of varying sizes as well.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Stage Eleven and Young Actor's Theatre, Denver. "Guidance Unit" was performed at and won "audience favorite" at the student acted Summer Shorts Festival in North Dakota summer of 2007.

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Two Girls Wearing the Same Prom Dress

Two girls, Kendra and Meg, meet in the bathroom and see that they're wearing the same dress to their High School Prom.

AT RISE: KENDRA enters STAGE RIGHT, goes to table CENTER STAGE, and starts refreshing her makeup. Enter MEG STAGE RIGHT.

KENDRA: (*seeing MEG*) Oh no. This can't be happening.

MEG: I don't believe it.

KENDRA: You're wearing my dress.

MEG: No, you're wearing my dress.

KENDRA: The saleslady told me no one else from North High bought this dress.

MEG: She told me the same thing. (*bitterly*) I will never trust a saleslady again.

KENDRA: What are we going to do?

MEG: I don't know.

KENDRA: I don't suppose you'd leave?

MEG: Leave? Leave the High School Prom? I've been waiting for this all my life.

KENDRA: So have I! I've been saving my babysitting money all year to buy the coolest dress in the store.

MEG: Hey, I know. Why don't we tear yours?

KENDRA: What?

MEG: Make it shorter, tear the sleeves off. It would look totally different then.

KENDRA: Are you crazy? Do you know how much this cost?

MEG: Yes, I know exactly how much it cost. Probably the same as mine.

KENDRA: Maybe we could just avoid each other.

MEG: Oh, that'll be fun. A Prom where I need a strategy and a map. Too bad I'm not equipped with GPS!

KENDRA: Sarcasm isn't going to help. This is a disaster. What a way to end my High School career.

MEG: What a way to begin my new life as an adult.

KENDRA: Okay wait. When I get into a tough situation, I always ask myself, WWGSD?

MEG: WWGSD?

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KENDRA: What would Gwen Stefani do? She's my hero.

MEG: I love her! What do you think she'd do?

KENDRA: She just might stay at the Prom, and have a great time anyway.

MEG: You mean, like, rise above it?

KENDRA: Yeah. I mean, what choice do we have?

MEG: You know, if we can rise above this obstacle, it might make us stronger people. Like when they say suffering builds character.

KENDRA: That's what I'm saying. Let's go. Like we did it on purpose!

(Taking a deep breath, both exit STAGE RIGHT.)

END OF PLAY

Do Not Copy

The Guidance Unit

AT RISE: A school bell rings. ANN and AL, two freshman, enter, UPSTAGE RIGHT and LEFT, looking at their schedules. They meet CENTER STAGE, speak at the same time.

AL and ANN: Excuse me, do you know where- Oh-sorry-I'm late for-
Oh.

Al: You go.

ANN: I wondered if you knew where Room 34-A was.

AL: I was going to ask you the same thing. I have no idea. It's my first day.

ANN: Mine too.

(From offstage we hear: Hurry, hurry, hurry! Enter 3 people in one costume. This is the three-headed Guidance Unit. UNIT enters STAGE LEFT.)

UNIT 1: We're late.

UNIT 2: Hurry hurry hurry.

UNIT 1, 2, 3: Hello hello hello.

UNIT 1: We are the Guidance Counselor Unit.

UNIT 2: We are here to guide.

UNIT 3: Ask questions. We will answer.

ANN: Great. We need to know where room 34-A is.

AL: And we're late.

UNIT 1: They're lost.

UNIT 2: Wonderful!

UNIT 3: We're here to help the lost and confused.

UNIT 1: Ask. We will answer.

AL: We're looking for room 34-A.

UNIT 1: Name.

ANN: I think the teacher is- *(checks schedule)* Mr. Bravinger.

UNIT 2: Your name.

ANN: Oh. I'm Ann.

UNIT 3: Your name.

AL: Al.

UNIT 2: Age.

AL: 15.

ANN: 14.

UNIT 3: Sex.

AL: Yes! I mean, male.

ANN: Female.

UNIT 1: The male Unit is confused.

UNIT 2: Lucky for him we came.

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UNIT 3: Of course it's confused. Look at them. Every teenager is confused. It's like the blond leading the blond.

ANN: Hey! That's not nice.

AL: Don't argue with them. We're really late. We have to go.

(Starts to exit RIGHT.)

UNIT 1: Do not go. We're here to help you.

UNIT 2: Give directions and guidance.

UNIT 3: Answer any and all questions.

AL: We need to know where room 34-A is!

UNIT 1: Sit.

UNIT 2: Down.

UNIT 3: Him/Her.

ANN: There's no place to sit! We're in the hall!

UNIT 3: The female Unit is speaking.

UNIT 1: How can you learn if you don't listen?

UNIT 2: They think they know everything!

UNIT 1, 2, 3: Detention!

ANN: Sorry.

AL: Hey, that's kinda rude-

UNIT 1: What are you doing with the rest of your life?

UNIT 2: What do you wanna be?

UNIT 3: What are you gonna do?

UNIT 1: Have you picked a college?

UNIT 2: Have you picked a major?

UNIT 3: Have you decided how to handle the multiple demands of career, motherhood, and wifedom?

ANN: I'm only 14 years old! I don't know!

UNIT 1, 2, 3: *(a bit scornful)* She doesn't know!

UNIT 2: Do you think you have your whole life ahead of you?

UNIT 1: Go for it. Just do it.

AL: Go for what? Do what? What are you talking about?

UNIT 1: When things get tough, the tough get going!

UNIT 3: There's only one numero uno.

AL: I don't know what I want to do! I'm only 15! I don't need this kind of pressure!

UNIT 1: It's a dog-eat-dog world.

UNIT 2: Watch out for number one!

UNIT 3: You can pick your friends, you can pick your nose, but you can't wipe your friends under the couch.

(UNIT laughs.)

UNIT 1: Good one Unit 3.

UNIT 2: Funny. Humor is good.

AL: What? What does that have to do with anything?

ANN: Look; we're just taking things one day at a time.

UNIT 1: Well today is the first day of the rest of your life!

UNIT 2: It only gets worse from here!

UNIT 1, 2, 3: Hahahahahahahahahahaha!

UNIT 3: Good one Unit 2.

UNIT 2: High heads. (*touch heads together*)

AL: High heads?

UNIT 3: As you see, we're hip and cool and use your lingo.

UNIT 2: We are awesome! We rule! We are radial.

UNIT 1: Perhaps you mean radical.

UNIT 2: Yes! We are radical! (*very happy and excited with itself*) High heads!

ANN: It isn't high heads. I think you mean high five.

UNIT 1: Hang 3! (*they hang heads, shake them as if head banging low*)

AL: Hang 3?

UNIT 3: Look at them. They are stupefied. They want their empty V.

AL and ANN: Empty V?

UNIT 1, 2, 3: (*singing*) They want their empty V.

ANN: It's MTV. Not empty V.

UNIT 1: Oh my fellow guidance counselor units!

UNIT 2 and 3: What, Unit 1?

UNIT 1: We have an appointment with a liberal arts major named Morgan Mullen, and we're almost late for our meeting with him/her.

UNIT 2: Liberal arts! (*all groan*)

UNIT 3: Another future wait person.

UNIT 1: Maybe we're not too late to change his/her mind. Let's go.

UNIT 1, 2, 3: Goodbye him/her!

(*They rush off EXIT STAGE RIGHT.*)

AL: Wait! Where's Room 34 A?

ANN: Let them go! I'm sure we'll find it eventually.

AL: You're right. We're better off figuring it out for ourselves.

(*Exit AL and ANN STAGE LEFT.*)

END OF PLAY

The Grape Nuts Bake Sale

Emily has been given the responsibility to handle a bake sale as part of a benefit for a children's hospital. The night before the sale, she asked Robert to do the baking. All he has in the house is Grape Nut cereal, which is a big hit at the Rest Home where he volunteers.

AT RISE: Two actors enter STAGE RIGHT, carrying table, followed by EMILY. ACTORS EXIT SR, EMILY stares with distaste at the brown baked goods. SHE tentatively bites into a piece.)

EMILY: Ow!

(Enter ROBERT, STAGE RIGHT, with a plate of more brown baked goods.)

EMILY: Oh, Robert, there you are. Where's the rest of the stuff for the bake sale?

ROBERT: It's all here. This is the last of it. *(puts it on table)* There.

EMILY: Oh. These are the baked goods you made for the bake sale? I'm just asking because everything here is brown and crunchy looking.

ROBERT: Yeah. It's all made with Grape Nuts.

EMILY: Grape Nuts?

ROBERT: Sure. There's Grape Nut cupcakes, Grape Nut balls, Grape Nut Loaf and Grape Nut bars.

EMILY: Why? Why did you make everything out of Grape Nuts?

ROBERT: Well, you asked me just last night to bake this stuff. It's all we had in the house. And I had exams to study for!

EMILY: This is a disaster. This looks like a meadow full of cow pies.

ROBERT: Look, these are good recipes. The people at the Rest Home love them. My volunteer coordinator said they were great, because they promote regularity. Hey, we could advertise them that way!

BY EDITH WEISS

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