

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO HIGH

By Michael Druce

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(12 Females, 6 Males, Extras, Flexible casting)

JOHNNY HERRERA	Billy's best friend
MISS VAN PELTON	Cranky Monte Cristo teacher
MARCY HERRERA	Johnny's sister and student reporter
BILLY MILBURN	Later Eddie Dantes
GIRL 1	Monte Cristo student
GIRL 2	Monte Cristo student
LAUREL FLYNN	News reporter for K.L.I.X.
CAMERAMAN	Assistant to Laurel Flynn
SUE DANGLARS	Monte Cristo cheerleader
FREDDY MONDEGO	Spoiled rich kid
WILL	Friend to Freddy and Sue
DR. MONTROSE	Monte Cristo principal
FREDERICK MONDEGO	Freddy's father and wealthy businessman
MISS GILLESPIE	Monte Cristo teacher
BECKY	Monte Cristo student
TIFFANY	Monte Cristo student
RHYME	Monte Cristo student
CANDY	Monte Cristo student

The major roles are gender specific, but the minor roles may be changed to fit the needs of your cast with minimal text changes.

SCENES

SETTING: *Monte Cristo High School commons.*

TIME: *The Present*

ACT I - SOPHOMORE YEAR

SCENE 1 – Lunch time

SCENE 2 – The next day

ACT II - SENIOR YEAR

SCENE 1 – Two years later

SCENE 2–A few days later

SCENE 3–Wednesday of the next week

SCENE 4–The next day

SCENE 5–A week later

SCENE 6–A few days later

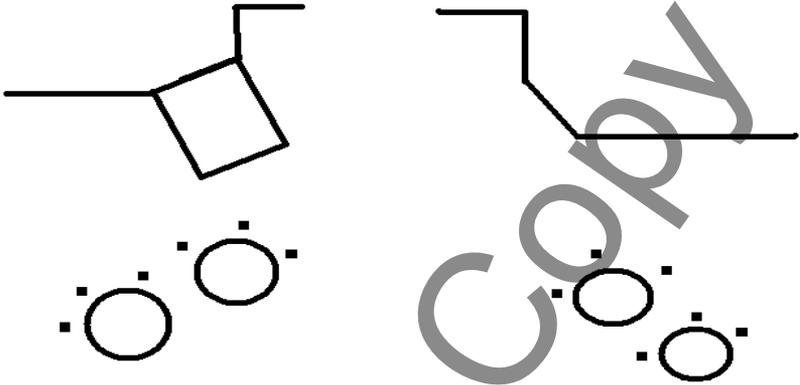
SCENE 7–A week later

PRODUCTION NOTES

The setting for *The Count of Monte Cristo High* is a high school commons. The set consists of four lunch tables, two on each side of the stage, each with the appropriate number of chairs.

At right center is a small stage with a podium and a couple of chairs. Entrances to the commons are left and right and up center. Lockers and additional seats or benches may be added. Any number of extras may be used in the production. Scene transitions are best accomplished with music instead of blackouts. Until Billy has his moment of victory, he and his friends will sit at the center right table and Freddy his friends center left. Afterwards, the two groups exchange places. When Billy returns as Eddie, he should look quite different. In the first act he might wear a wig, awkward glasses, and odd clothes. In the second act his hair should be stylish, no glasses, and stylish clothes. He has gone from being timid and gawky to self-assured. In order to remind the audience there is a two year difference between acts one and two, you might put a sign on stage that reads “Senior Class of ____” for the first act and then change it to the “Senior Class of ____” for the current year.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO HIGH - SET DESIGN



Tables and chairs left and right.
Small stage with podium and chairs upper right.
Entrances left, right, up center.
Additional seating and lockers may be added.

PROPERTIES

ACT I

Scene1

MISS VAN PELTON -- Skateboarding helmet, wheelchair, sling, and leg cast

STUDENTS -- Various lunch items, book, notebooks

MARCY – Mobile phone

LAUREL FLYNN – Microphone

CAMERAMAN – Video camera

ACT II

Scene 1

TIFFANY and CANDY – Campaign posters
MARCY – Notepad and pencil
EDDIE – Two business cards

Scene 3

FREDDY – Mobile phone

Scene 4

FREDDY – Slip of paper
EDDIE – Test
JOHNNY – Mobile phone

Scene 5

MARCY – Mobile phone

Scene 6

MARCY – Mobile phone

Scene 7

DR. MONTROSE – Sealed bid
JOHNNY – Sealed bid
MONDEGO – Mobile phone
LAUREL FLYNN – Microphone
CAMERAMAN – Video camera

Since mobile phones are so much a part of today's culture, most of the characters and extras will have mobile phones.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO HIGH

Written by
Michael Druce

ACT I

SETTING: Monte Cristo High School

TIME: Fall, sophomore year.

SCENE 1 – LUNCH TIME—MONTE CRISTO COMMONS

(STUDENTS are gathered for lunch, some seated, some standing around talking. When the PRINCIPAL PLAYERS enter, the background noises should no longer be heard. Seated at the center left table are FREDDY and WILL. At the far left table are CANDY, TIFFANY, and BECKY. MISS VAN PELTON enters in a wheelchair. SHE is assisted by an AIDE. VAN PELTON has an arm in a sling, a cast on her leg, and SHE is wearing a skateboarding helmet. STUDENTS are glad to see MISS VAN PELTON. We hear “Hey look, it’s Miss Van Pelton.” “Hi, Miss Van Pelton.” “Welcome back!” “Good to see you.” “We missed you.” JOHNNY is seated at the center right table with his sister MARCY. HE stands and crosses Center to MISS VAN PELTON.)

JOHNNY: Hi, Miss Van Pelton. How’s it going? How you doing?

MISS VAN PELTON: How do you think I’m doing, Johnny?

JOHNNY: Right. I just mean you look great.

MISS VAN PELTON: I look great? I’ve got a fractured skull. I’ve got a broken leg and a broken arm. I don’t feel great and I don’t look great.

JOHNNY: I’m sorry, you’re right. You look terrible and you probably feel as bad as you look.

MISS VAN PELTON: Finally, some honesty. *(To her AIDE.)* Let’s go.

(MISS VAN PELTON and her AIDE exit. JOHNNY returns to his previous spot by MARCY. BILLY enters UC. HE should look every bit the stereotype of what we imagine a geek would look like. Despite his appearance, HE is not foolish.)

JOHNNY: Billy, over here! Where have you been? Did you get my text?

(BILLY joins JOHNNY and MARCY at the center right table.)

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BILLY: I had a short Honor Society meeting. Was that Miss Van Pelton I just saw?

JOHNNY: Yeah, they just released her from the hospital.

BILLY: *(Sitting at the table.)* Hi, Marcy. *(HE begins to unpack his lunch.)*

(It should be obvious BILLY is attracted to MARCY, but HE lacks the self-confidence to ask her for a date.)

MARCY: *(Hardly noticing him.)* Hi, Billy.

JOHNNY: So what's the vice-president of the Honor Society eating today? You want to trade sandwiches?

BILLY: You first. What have you got?

JOHNNY: *(Opening his sandwich.)* P.B. and J.

BILLY: *(Opening his sandwich.)* Tuna.

JOHNNY: *(Repelled by the thought.)* Vomit inducing! *(To MARCY.)* What did mom pack for you?

MARCY: Rice cakes.

JOHNNY: Those things are like eating Styrofoam cups. I'll pass.

MARCY: How many Styrofoam cups have you eaten?

JOHNNY: Funny! *(Indicating the center left table.)* Look, over there, there's Mondego. What do you think he's got?

BILLY: Who, Freddy?

JOHNNY: Yeah, what do you think he's having for lunch?

BILLY: Probably something from gourmet meals on wheels.

JOHNNY: What do you think, filet mignon? London broil?

BILLY: Yeah, maybe.

MARCY: *(To BILLY.)* The way you talk about Freddy, you'd never know the two of you used to be friends once.

JOHNNY: Strike me down as I live and breathe. I am not believing my lying ears. *(To BILLY.)* You and Freddy Mondego used to be friends?

BILLY: A long time ago. Before you moved here.

JOHNNY: No way.

BILLY: Way! *(To MARCY.)* How did you know about Freddy and me?

MARCY: Freddy told me.

JOHNNY: When?

MARCY: One day in class.

JOHNNY: *(To BILLY.)* No, I mean when were you and Freddy friends?

BILLY: In grade school. That was before he was old enough to know his father's money made him better than everyone else.

JOHNNY: Don't I know that! *(HE stands and does an impression of FREDDY.)* Hi, I'm Freddy Mondego. I'm rich, I'm popular, and yes,

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I'm arrogant. *(As HE turns, he almost bumps into TWO GIRLS who are crossing through the commons.)*

GIRL 1: Trust me, you're no Freddy Mondego.

JOHNNY: What's he got that I haven't got?

GIRL 2: Besides money?

JOHNNY: Yeah.

GIRL 1: Personality.

JOHNNY: *(To the GIRLS.)* If you'd take time to get to know me, you'd love me.

GIRL 2: We don't have that much time.

(Both GIRLS exit laughing.)

MARCY: You two make such a big deal about being rich and popular.

JOHNNY: Hello! *(Indicating the TWO GIRLS.)* Did you see that?

Being rich and popular is a big deal. It's the biggest deal. It's the only deal.

MARCY: For you two.

BILLY: For everyone. Freddy doesn't do anything except drive around in his new BMW, and the student body worships him because his dad practically owns half the town. He gets elected student body president his freshman year, prom king, everything. Am I leaving anything out?

JOHNNY: All the girls want to go out with him. Money is a chick magnet.

BILLY: I rest my case.

MARCY: So who has the problem, you two or him? What's Freddy supposed to do? Apologize for being rich and popular? Pass up all offices and awards because he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth?

BILLY: I'm just saying, if I had his money—

MARCY: If you had his money, what?

BILLY: *(Unable to think of a good answer.)* I don't know.

MARCY: Exactly! How would you be a bit different? Designer clothes, nice car. Come on, tell me. Would you donate to charity, spend your money on important social causes? *(Before BILLY can answer.)* I thought so.

BILLY: *(To JOHNNY.)* Does she always have to be so practical?

JOHNNY: Ever since I've known her, which is from birth.

MARCY: For your information, not every girl in this school is as impressed with Freddy as you two think.

JOHNNY: Really? Name one.

MARCY: Me.

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JOHNNY: You don't count. Name another one. (*MARCY can't produce a name.*) Zing!

BILLY: (*Fishing for hope.*) Is there someone you are impressed with?

MARCY: Maybe.

(*Suddenly there is the SOUND of multiple text message chimes. From all over the room we hear "Me!" The only exception is BILLY.*)

(*Glances at her phone.*) Freddy's ears must be burning. It's him. It's an all-school invite to the annual Mondego cookout and pool party. RSVP.

JOHNNY: Oh, yes! Be there or be somewhere else. (*To BILLY.*) Are we going?

(*BILLY looks at his phone and sees HE has no message.*)

MARCY: The guy you have been trashing for five minutes?

JOHNNY: Just because I don't like Freddy Mondego doesn't mean I don't like free food and a pool party at his parents' mansion. I'm in.

BILLY: I guess not.

JOHNNY: You didn't go last year.

BILLY: I wasn't invited.

JOHNNY: Come anyway. It was a blast. It's a tradition. Freddy's dad has been hosting this gig for years.

BILLY: Except the year a Mondego kid wasn't running for student body president.

JOHNNY: And your point is?

BILLY: That tradition started with Freddy's older brother. A Mondego has always been student body president. The year there was no Mondego kid here, no pool party.

JOHNNY: You mean it's like he's bribing the student body?

BILLY: He is bribing the student body. Think about it. Who are you voting for? Freddy or Tiffany J?

JOHNNY: You've got to admit handing out wrist bands that read "What would Tiffany do?" is pretty lame.

BILLY: That's my point. Your vote isn't based on the issues, it's based on the bribe.

MARCY: Bribe? You are being petty.

BILLY: Am I? Remember last year? Everyone thought Tiffany would win the election. And what happened? Freddy's dad hosts a pool party and cookout at the Mondego mansion and bye, bye Tiffany. Freddy will be elected again this year and as a junior and again his senior year.

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MARCY: If it bothers you so much, why don't you run for class president?

BILLY: (*Shaking his head.*) No. (*Changing subjects.*) Listen, Marcy, a while ago when you said, "Maybe--"

MARCY: Maybe what?

BILLY: Well, when you said--(*Losing his nerve.*) My tuna sandwich is seriously ripe. I've got to get rid of it. I'll be back. (*Exits R.*)

JOHNNY: (*To BILLY.*) Hey, bring me a soda. (*To MARCY.*) What is wrong with you?

MARCY: What are you talking about?

JOHNNY: Ding, ding, ding! He was about to ask you out.

MARCY: Billy?

JOHNNY: Yes, Billy. You don't see how he looks at you? How he gets all embarrassed when he's about to ask you out!

MARCY: You're just imagining things.

JOHNNY: Why can't you admit you like him? Encourage him.

MARCY: Encourage him? Billy and I are friends.

JOHNNY: Friends? No. Billy and I are friends, you and he are—

MARCY: Friends, Johnny, just friends.

JOHNNY: That's it?

MARCY: Billy's a nice guy.

JOHNNY: But?

MARCY: But what? What else do you want me to say? He's—

JOHNNY: Geeky?

MARCY: I don't think that. Billy's just not my type.

JOHNNY: You have a type?

MARCY: Why are you making such a big deal out of this?

JOHNNY: Because Billy is my best friend, and in case you haven't noticed, he really likes you.

MARCY: What are you, High School Date.com? I don't need my brother trying to organize my social life. If Billy wants to ask me out, he can ask me.

JOHNNY: And if he does?

MARCY: Then I'll tell him--

JOHNNY: What, he's not your type?

MARCY: (*Thinking.*) I'll tell him I have other plans.

JOHNNY: I don't understand why girls practically throw themselves at Freddy, but a smart guy like Billy is ignored. I thought you were sharper than that. What's Freddy got going for him that Billy doesn't?

MARCY: You're the one who said it's because Freddy is rich and popular.

JOHNNY: Other than that.

MARCY: You really want to know?

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JOHNNY: Yes, I really want to know.

MARCY: Freddy is--interesting.

JOHNNY: Oh. (*Shaking his head.*) One minute you're not impressed with Freddy and now you think he's interesting.

MARCY: He's interesting in a bad boy sort of way.

JOHNNY: (*Directly to the audience.*) What is it with girls and bad boys? I really don't understand your species.

MARCY: You've answered your own question. You don't understand girls, so give up. Just drop it.

(*DR. MONTROSE UC enters with LAUREL FLYNN and a CAMERAMAN. After pointing out the commons area, DR. MONTROSE exits.*)

JOHNNY: Hey, who's that? Is that who I think it is?

MARCY: Who do you think it is?

JOHNNY: The girl of my dreams. What's her name?

MARCY: If you don't know the name of the girl of your dreams, I am not seeing this working out.

JOHNNY: C'mon, tell me. Who is it? I'm in love.

(*LAUREL FLYNN and CAMERAMAN cross to JOHNNY and MARCY.*)

LAUREL: Hello, I'm Laurel Flynn from K.L.I.X. I'm looking for some students to interview.

MARCY: *We're* students.

JOHNNY: Of course! You're Laurel Flynn from K.L.I.X.

LAUREL: Didn't I just say that?

JOHNNY: I've never seen a live television reporter before.

CAMERAMAN: What, you've only seen a dead one?

JOHNNY: Huh?

CAMERAMAN: That was a joke.

JOHNNY: Sorry, my laugh meter must be broken. (*To LAUREL.*) I'm Johnny Herrera. This is my sister, Marcy.

LAUREL: What grade?

JOHNNY: Is this going to be on T.V.?

MARCY: We're both sophomores.

LAUREL: Are you twins?

JOHNNY: No, I'm a year older, but I was held back.

MARCY: In kindergarten.

JOHNNY: I didn't apply myself.

LAUREL: Oh, that's too bad.

JOHNNY: It's okay, I'm over it. I'm doing a lot better now.

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LAUREL: Okay, well, anyway, we're here to do a story on the cave-in last week.

JOHNNY: The cave-in?

LAUREL: You know, after the heavy rains and the ceiling tiles fell and hit a teacher on the head.

JOHNNY: Oh, Miss Van Pelton.

LAUREL: Right, Miss Van Pelton. Do you mind if we film this?

JOHNNY: Are you kidding? This could lead to my own reality T.V. show.

(The CAMERAMAN films the interview.)

LAUREL: Marcy, how do you feel about what happened?

MARCY: Well—

(Before MARCY can answer, JOHNNY breaks in.)

JOHNNY: I was there when it happened. You should have seen it, it was awesome. One moment Miss Van Pelton was boring us to death with something about the French revolution and then—Blam!—she was buried under about a hundred pounds of ceiling tiles.

LAUREL: I see. That must have been very scary. So, do you feel safe attending Monte Cristo High School?

JOHNNY: I live in fear, constant fear, heart breaking, nagging, all-consuming fear.

MARCY: Ignore him, he's a drama student.

LAUREL: Marcy, do you feel safe attending classes here?

MARCY: Monte Cristo is old and needs a lot of repairs, but, yes, I feel safe.

LAUREL: There's some talk on the city council about condemning Monte Cristo. How do you feel about that?

MARCY: I don't feel good about that at all.

LAUREL: Why?

MARCY: Because there's another side to the story.

LAUREL: Another story?

MARCY: There's another group, one that's trying to save the building, but they don't ever get any publicity.

LAUREL: What group is that?

MARCY: *Citizens to Save Monte Cristo High!* They're trying to get this building on the national registry. There's a lot of history here. It just needs some fixing up, that's all. Razing this building would be a tragedy.

LAUREL: You seem to have some pretty strong opinions.

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JOHNNY: She's on the debate team, and she's a reporter for the school paper. She's got so many opinions, her opinions have opinions.

MARCY: There's a lot of tradition here, Miss Flynn. The parents and grandparents of a lot of Monte Cristo students went to school here themselves.

LAUREL: Thank you. (*Gesturing to the CAMERAMAN that it's a wrap.*) Maybe you could show me to Miss Van Pelton's room.

MARCY: Sure, I can show you. It's this way.

JOHNNY: Careful, Miss Van Pelton doesn't have a sense of humor.

(*MARCY, LAUREL, and the CAMERAMAN exit L. SUE enters UC and crosses to JOHNNY.*)

SUE: Don't tell me that was that Laurel Flynn talking to Marcy?

JOHNNY: Okay.

SUE: Well, was it?

JOHNNY: I can't tell you.

SUE: Why not?

JOHNNY: You said not to tell you. I'm a man of my word.

SUE: Tell me before I twist your head off.

JOHNNY: Yes, it was Laurel Flynn. Everyone knows who Laurel Flynn is.

SUE: What's she doing here?

JOHNNY: Interviewing students about Miss Van Pelton's accident.

SUE: That is so rude! Why didn't she interview me?

JOHNNY: She's interviewing *scholars* Sue.

SUE: Shoot! My uniform would have looked great on camera. See how it matches my eyes?

JOHNNY: I did notice that.

SUE: (*Flattered.*) Really? (*A beat.*) Oh, I knew there was a reason I must be talking to you.

JOHNNY: Let me just say right up front, I'm kind of busy, but not real busy. So we can go out any evening Monday through Friday, or anytime Saturday or Sunday.

SUE: What? What are you talking about?

JOHNNY: A date, isn't that why you want to talk to me?

SUE: Are you crazy? I'm a cheerleader.

JOHNNY: I'm not a bigot. I won't hold that against you.

SUE: And even if I wasn't a cheerleader, I still wouldn't go out with you.

JOHNNY: Gosh, Sue, that's harsh.

SUE: We're in totally different cliques. I mean, come on, Jimmy. Don't take it personally.

JOHNNY: It's Johnny.

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SUE: Whatever!

JOHNNY: Now that you've crushed my schoolboy fantasies, what do you want to ask me?

SUE: It's about Mr. Brown's test. Do you have any notes I can use?

JOHNNY: (*Pointing to his head.*) Sorry, Sue, I keep all my notes up here.

SUE: You keep your notes in your hair?

JOHNNY: No, Sue, I keep my notes in my head. I study, I retain, I excel. There's nothing to copy, unless you can do some sort of Vulcan mind meld.

SUE: What? Oh, forget you and the kangaroo you rode in on.

(*BILLY returns with a soda cup for JOHNNY.*)

BILLY: Hi, Sue.

SUE: Oh, hi, Billy. You like my new uniform?

(*JOHNNY, who is standing behind SUE, points to SUE and then to his eyes.*)

BILLY: (*Unsure what JOHNNY is trying to say.*) Oh, yeah, it matches Johnny's eyes.

SUE: What?

JOHNNY: *Her eyes, dufus!*

SUE: I was wondering if you could help me with a really big problem. I would just be so grateful. I lost my notes for Mr. Brown's test, and I was wondering if you could let me copy yours.

BILLY: Wouldn't that be cheating?

SUE: Mr. Brown said whatever notes we made, we could use on the test.

BILLY: But if I gave you my notes, wouldn't you be using someone else's notes?

SUE: He wouldn't know, not if I copied them out. Billy, this is a big test. If I fail, I'm off the cheerleading squad.

BILLY: Sue, I'm vice-president of the Honor Society.

SUE: So?

BILLY: Doesn't that put me in a compromising position?

SUE: Does it?

BILLY: Scholarship? Honor? Trust?

SUE: As if anyone takes that stuff seriously.

JOHNNY: Billy does. Not so much me.

SUE: Yeah, well, you're a dork, and he's a geek.

JOHNNY: Bye, Sue.

SUE: Oh, shut up. (*Crosses L and sits with FREDDY and WILL.*)

(During the following conversation between JOHNNY and BILLY, there should be an animated conversation between SUE, FREDDY and WILL. SUE will exit. FREDDY should say something to WILL, who crosses to the far left table and whispers something to BECKY. BECKY crosses to FREDDY and whispers something to him, who nods his agreement. BECKY exits, followed a moment later by WILL. SUE will return and rejoin FREDDY at the table before the conversation between JOHNNY and BILLY ends.)

JOHNNY: Do you think Sue is playing hard to get?

BILLY: With whom?

JOHNNY: With me.

BILLY: You have about as much chance of getting a date with Sue as I have of getting Marcy to notice I'm alive.

JOHNNY: I'm working on it.

BILLY: You said something to Marcy?

JOHNNY: *(Quickly.)* No.

BILLY: You did. Good grief. She already thinks I'm a geek.

JOHNNY: She does not.

BILLY: How do you know?

JOHNNY: I asked her.

BILLY: Then she definitely thinks I'm one now. What's wrong with you?

That's what geeks do. They ask their best friends if someone likes them. To her I'm just some geeky video game freak.

JOHNNY: Not every video game freak has created his own game. If you could get a development deal for *Galaxy Ninjas*, you'd be the most popular guy at school, and rich.

BILLY: What planet are you from? How is something like that going to happen?

JOHNNY: What about that rich uncle of yours?

BILLY: The rich Italian uncle I've never met?

JOHNNY: Yeah, that guy.

BILLY: He's not my uncle. He's my mom's cousin. And he's not in the gaming business. He's a venture capitalist or something.

JOHNNY: Alright, now we're getting somewhere. *Galaxy Ninjas* is an adventure.

BILLY: Not adventure, venture, like venturing into something. He finances stuff. You know, like new things that might hit big.

JOHNNY: Hello! *Galaxy Ninjas*! Give this guy a call.

BILLY: I've never even met him and my mom hasn't seen him since she was a kid. We don't even exchange Christmas cards.

JOHNNY: *(Taking a sip of his drink.)* This tastes like water. What is it?

BILLY: Water.

JOHNNY: I said to bring me a soda.

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BILLY: The vending machine wouldn't take my dollars bills.

JOHNNY: We'll use mine. I printed some new ones last night. *(Exit R.)*

(FREDDY crosses R to talk to BILLY, but BILLY and JOHNNY exit before FREDDY reaches them. MARCY returns L looking for JOHNNY and BILLY. FREDDY crosses to MARCY.)

FREDDY: Looking for me?

MARCY: No. I'm looking for Billy and my brother.

FREDDY: Yeah, I am, too. They're probably playing one of those role playing games where they wear hoods and pretend to fight with light sabers.

MARCY: You know, Freddy, I don't get you.

FREDDY: You could. I can be all yours for the asking.

MARCY: I'm talking about how you treat Billy. What's up with you two? You used to be friends.

FREDDY: That was a long, long time ago in a galaxy far, far away.

MARCY: What happened?

FREDDY: We just ended up hanging with different crowds. He went on to be a geek and I didn't.

MARCY: Just because he reads comics and plays around with computers, that doesn't make him a geek.

FREDDY: Are you kidding? That's exactly why he's a geek. That's the definition of geekiness. Instead of talking about Billy, why don't we talk about us?

MARCY: There isn't anything to talk about.

FREDDY: Sure there is. Why don't you and me go out sometime? Like tomorrow night.

MARCY: I can't.

FREDDY: What, studying? C'mon, it's a Friday night. You can take a break.

MARCY: *(Making up an excuse.)* No, I'm not studying. I've got plans.

FREDDY: A date?

MARCY: Yes, I've—I've already got a date.

(BILLY and JOHNNY enter R and catch the end of MARCY's conversation with FREDDY.)

JOHNNY: You've got a date? Who with?

FREDDY: I guess with super geek here.

MARCY: *(Suddenly on the spot.)* Yes, that's right, Billy and I are going to the show tomorrow night.

BILLY: *(Shocked.)* We are?

MARCY: *(To BILLY.)* You are so funny. If I don't see you later, I'll see you tomorrow, okay? I've got to run. *(Exits R.)*

BILLY: *(Looking confused.)* Okay.

FREDDY: So, buddy boy.

JOHNNY: Me?

FREDDY: Not you, him. *(Indicating BILLY.)* We need a few minutes alone. So beat it.

JOHNNY: Catch you later. *(Exits UC.)*

BILLY: We're not buddies, Freddy, and I'm not your boy.

FREDDY: Hey, that hurts my feelings. What happened to us? We used to be pals. Was it something I bought?

BILLY: What do you want, Freddy?

(FREDDY waves SUE over.)

FREDDY: Sue says you weren't very nice to her when she asked you nicely to help her with Mr. Brown's test.

BILLY: It would have been cheating.

FREDDY: What's that to you?

SUE: It's like he's the test police or something.

BILLY: I'm vice-president of the Honor Society. You know I can't do that.

(FREDDY and SUE strike a mocking pose.)

FREDDY: Ooooooh, Vice-president of the Honor Society. You are a major disappointment, my friend. I thought maybe we could be buddies again.

BILLY: I don't think so, not like this.

FREDDY: Okay, then we go to Plan B.

SUE: We have a plan B?

BILLY: What's plan B?

FREDDY: Nothing for you to worry about. *(As BILLY is about to leave.)* Hey, have you really got a date with Marcy?

BILLY: *(Hesitantly.)* Yeah—sure.

FREDDY: What does a girl like her see in a guy like you?

BILLY: Maybe she thinks I'm--interesting. *(BILLY exits R.)*

FREDDY: *(To SUE.)* What you do think?

SUE: About what?

FREDDY: What does a chick like Marcy see in a creep like him?

SUE: Why are you asking me? I don't like either of them. What am I going to do? If I flunk that test, I'm finished. Do you really have a plan B?

(Looking L, FREDDY sees BECKY enter.)

FREDDY: I think Plan B is coming now. We may not need Billy's notes.
We may have something better.

(BECKY enters with a manila envelope.)

FREDDY: Becky, tell me you have good news.

BECKY: You owe me big for this.

FREDDY: Jackpot!

BECKY: I can't believe I let you talk me into this.

FREDDY: Honesty, I didn't think you'd do it.

BECKY: I almost didn't. As Mr. Brown's aide, I am betraying his trust.

FREDDY: You did put the original back?

BECKY: No, I left that up to Will. I've taken enough chances for one day. Don't forget your promise. *(Exit UC.)*

FREDDY: I won't. *(To SUE.)* Can you say, "Ace the test"?

SUE: You've got a copy of Mr. Brown's test?

FREDDY: Becky grabbed it while Mr. Brown was getting his afternoon cup of coffee. Snagged it right out of his desk draw.

SUE: Are you crazy?

FREDDY: He'll never know. A couple of copies for ourselves, Will slips the original back in the draw, it's all good.

SUE: What did you have to promise Becky?

FREDDY: I can't tell. I'm sworn to secrecy.

SUE: I hope you know what you're doing. If something goes wrong—

FREDDY: What can go wrong? Trust me. Look, here comes Will.

(THEY BOTH look L.)

SUE: With a look of panic on his face.

(WILL enters L.)

WILL: We are in deep, deep, deepness.

FREDDY: Why? What happened?

WILL: Mr. Brown spilled coffee on his shirt, so he went back to his room. There is no way I can put the original back.

SUE: *(Mimicking FREDDY.)* What can go wrong? As soon as Mr. Brown discovers his test is missing, this place will be on lock down.

Now he'll change the exam. My mother will die if I fail and get kicked off the squad. She lives victoriously through me.

WILL: Don't you mean vicariously?

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SUE: Yes, that too. (*To FREDDY.*) You shouldn't have said anything to Billy.

WILL: What's this got to do with Billy?

SUE: Freddy gave him a hard time about not sharing his study notes with us.

FREDDY: I didn't think Becky wasn't going to do it.

SUE: You shouldn't have said anything about Plan B. Billy isn't stupid, if he puts one and three together.

WILL: Two and two.

SUE: Whatever!

WILL: If Milburn rats us out, we'll be kicked out of everything. I don't even think your dad can make stealing a test go away.

FREDDY: We don't need my dad for this. Everything is going to work out fine.

SUE: Don't you get it? We can't put the test back into Mr. Brown's desk. Everyone will be given the fourth degree.

WILL: Third.

SUE: Shut up, Will! All I know is if we can't get that test back into Mr. Brown's desk by last period, our chicken is cooked.

WILL: Goose.

(SUE screams and runs off UC.)

WILL: She's right. There is no way we can get that test back into the file.

FREDDY: We don't need to put it back. I've got a better plan.

(THEY exit UC.)

END OF SCENE I

SCENE II – THE NEXT DAY—THE COMMONS

(JOHNNY enters L. MARCY enters from UC. The commons is deserted.)

MARCY: What are you doing out of class?

JOHNNY: Hall pass. I need to wander the halls aimlessly. Miss Van Pelton has discovered a new dimension for boredom. Why are you out of class?

MARCY: I'm an aide. I'm running errands.

JOHNNY: Have you seen Billy? I've been looking for him all morning.

MARCY: He's been in the principal's office since first hour. His mom and dad are there and some guy in a suit.

JOHNNY: He must be getting an award or something.

MARCY: I don't think so. Freddy is also there, as well as his dad, Sue and her parents, and Will and his parents. I just walked by, it looks like the meeting is about to break up.

JOHNNY: What do think it's about?

MARCY: I'm not a mind reader, Johnny.

JOHNNY: You're a school reporter, you're supposed to know these things. Don't you have sources?

MARCY: That's called spying. I don't have spies. All I know is Mr. Brown is in the meeting as well.

JOHNNY: Oh, that doesn't sound good.

(BILLY enters UC.)

JOHNNY: Hey, here he is now. Billy, what's going on? You look like death warmed over.

MARCY: Billy, are you okay?

BILLY: I've been expelled.

JOHNNY: You what?

BILLY: I've been expelled.

JOHNNY: You mean suspended. You've been suspended.

BILLY: I'm not suspended, I've been expelled. Dr. Montrose said I can't come back to Monte Cristo--ever.

JOHNNY: Monstrous said that?

MARCY: Billy, what happened?

BILLY: They said I stole a test from Mr. Brown's desk.

JOHNNY: That's crazy. You're the vice-president of the Honor Society. You are totally squeaky clean.

BILLY: The test was found in my locker.

JOHNNY: You really stole the test?

MARCY: Johnny! Of course he didn't do that. *(To BILLY.)* You didn't, did you?

BILLY: Thanks for the vote of confidence.

MARCY: Why were Freddy and Sue and Will there? What did they have to do with this?

BILLY: I can't talk about it.

JOHNNY: Yeah, you can. Just tell us.

BILLY: No, I can't say anything. Freddy's dad showed up with a lawyer. There's all these privacy rules. Anyway, it doesn't matter.

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It's over. I'm finished here. I've got to get my stuff and be off campus right away. *(HE starts to exit.)*

MARCY: What about tonight?

BILLY: What?

MARCY: Our date.

BILLY: I know that was just a big joke. Forget it.

MARCY: I'm sorry, that was unfair. But we could go out, if you want to.

BILLY: Just forget it, okay? I don't need your charity. *(Exits UC.)*

JOHNNY: Billy, wait. I'll help you. *(Exits UC.)*

(As BILLY and JOHNNY exit, FREDDY enters UC. Unseen by MARCY, FREDDY pumps his fist victoriously.)

MARCY: *(Noticing FREDDY.)* Freddy, what happened in there?

FREDDY: Didn't your boyfriend tell you?

MARCY: Billy is not my boyfriend. And, no, he didn't say anything.

Would you please tell me what happened?

FREDDY: Mr. Brown reported that a test was stolen from his desk. It was found in Billy's locker.

MARCY: Billy would never do something like that.

FREDDY: That's what I thought. But, hey, it is what it is.

MARCY: Why were you there?

FREDDY: Well, we're really not supposed to talk about this.

MARCY: Just tell me.

FREDDY: He tried to blame me and Sue and Will. He said it was payback for not sharing his study notes. He said one of us must have put the test in his locker.

MARCY: Did you?

FREDDY: Would I do something like that?

MARCY: Why would Billy say that?

FREDDY: I don't know. My dad is so upset about it, he's threatening to sue. That's why we're not supposed to say anything.

MARCY: And now Billy's expelled.

FREDDY: Yeah, I tried to get Dr. Montrose to change her mind, but she wouldn't.

MARCY: You tried to defend Billy?

FREDDY: Well, yeah, sure. I mean we're not good friends, but he's a decent guy. I don't know, maybe he's under a lot of stress and went crazy.

MARCY: You really stood up for him?

FREDDY: *(Trying to seem sincere.)* Yes, I did. Really!

MARCY: I can't believe Billy would do something like that. It just doesn't sound like him.

FREDDY: That's what I thought.

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MARCY: Thank you for standing up for him.

FREDDY: I did what I could. Don't forget, we're having our cookout and pool party on Sunday. Are you going to be there? I'd like for you to come.

(MARCY shakes her head.)

Don't say no. Say you'll think about it.

MARCY: *(A pause.)* I'll think about it. *(Exits R.)*

(FREDDY looks very pleased with himself. WILL and SUE enter UC.)

FREDDY: Who's the man?

(HE and WILL high five.)

WILL: Oh, yeah.

SUE: Oh, really? I'm probably still going to flunk the test.

FREDDY: No, because Mr. Brown is going to give the same test.

WILL: Why would he do that?

FREDDY: Because he thinks Billy had the only copy. I made another copy before I put it in Billy's locker.

WILL: Brilliant!

SUE: That means I'm still on the cheer squad. My mom will be so proud.

FREDDY: Come on, let's celebrate. *(Exit UC.)*

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SETTING: Monte Cristo High School – Fall, senior year – Two years later

SCENE I—COMMONS--DAY

(TIFFANY, CANDY, and RHYME enter UC with campaign poster. JOHNNY enters L.)

JOHNNY: Hi, Tiffany, how's the campaign going? The big election is a week from next Monday.

TIFFANY: Don't ask!

JOHNNY: Didn't say a word. *(Exits UC.)*

TIFFANY: Why do I bother? There is no way I can compete with Freddy Mondego's pool party. My freshman year it was lollipops, the next year wrist bands, last year it was energy drinks, and now that I am senior, I'm having a smores party in my back yard. I need to face the fact that I will always be the student body nobody.

CANDY: You know we're going to vote for you.

TIFFANY: Thanks, that really means a lot to me. Does that mean you're coming to my party on Sunday?

CANDY: No.

TIFFANY: Candy!

CANDY: I'm sorry, but the Mondegos always have a lot of great food and entertainment.

TIFFANY: Rhyme, you're coming, aren't you?

RHYME: I can't.

TIFFANY: Why not?

RHYME: Well—I— Oh, I can't even think of an excuse.

TIFFANY: You're going to Freddy's?

RHYME: Yes. Don't hate me, I'm weak.

TIFFANY: I don't hate you. To tell you the truth, I'd rather be at his party than mine. It'll be a lot more fun. Everybody will there except me.

RHYME: Do you think the new guy will be there?

CANDY: The new guy from Italy?

RHYME: He is so dreamy.

TIFFANY: Oh, you mean Eddie Dantes? He sits right next to me in AP Government.

CANDY: No!

TIFFANY: Yes. He even talked to me.

RHYME: No!

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TIFFANY: Yes! Like I say, we sit next to each other. So the other day he leans over and asks me why Miss Van Pelton always wears a skateboarding helmet. I tell him it's a long story, but that basically she had two major accidents in two years.

CANDY: You'd think she'd be over it.

RHYME: I see her point. The ceiling falling in was bad enough, but after the toilet fell through the floor in the women's restroom, wouldn't you have a lot of anxiety?

CANDY: Yeah, I guess. It's like she's cursed. Anyway, what else did Eddie say? Was that it?

TIFFANY: No. This is what I'm getting to. And then he says, "How's the campaign going?"

CANDY: No! He said that?

RHYME: Weren't you speechless? What did you say?

TIFFANY: Nothing, I was speechless.

CANDY: Oh, come on, you must have said something.

TIFFANY: I made a lot of blubbering sounds. He was so nice. He smiled and said, 'I'd like to help you with your campaign. Can I call you to talk about it?' And I'm like 'Oh, my gosh!' He is speaking to me. He knows who I am. He wants to help out with my totally lame campaign.

RHYME: What did you do? What did you say?

TIFFANY: I didn't say anything, I just passed gas. I am so embarrassed.

CANDY and RHYME: You didn't!

TIFFANY: I did. I had a total body control meltdown.

CANDY: Did you give him your number?

TIFFANY: Did you hear me? I passed gas. Of course I didn't give him my number.

RHYME: Maybe he'll call anyway.

TIFFANY: Would you?

CANDY and RHYME: No!

CANDY: Do you think it's true what they say about him?

TIFFANY: What do they say?

CANDY: That he's a count?

TIFFANY: I don't even know what a count is.

CANDY: A count is like a duke, only a count.

RHYME: Maybe Marcy can find out something. She's interviewing him today for the paper.

TIFFANY: All I know is he must be a gazillionaire. Did you see the car he drove today?

CANDY: No, what kind is it?

TIFFANY: It's something foreign. I can't pronounce its name. Lamb something. I can't tell you how embarrassed I am.

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CANDY: Not knowing the name of a car is no big deal.

TIFFANY: That's not why I'm embarrassed, okay?

CANDY: Oh, that's right, I forgot.

RHYME: Don't be too hard on yourself, maybe he'll come to your smores party.

TIFFANY: No, it'll just be my mom and dad, my little sister, and me, and about two hundred smores.

CANDY: You are making me feel so guilty. I feel so superficial.

TIFFANY: Don't worry about it. I'm over it. *(To BOTH.)* Can you help me put up more posters next hour?

RHYME: I can't, I've got to go listen to Freddy's dad. He's giving a talk on investing to the business classes next period.

CANDY: I'd like to, but I've got a lot of networking to do if I'm going to have a chance of beating Sue for homecoming queen.

TIFFANY: We're going to vote for you.

CANDY: That makes three votes. You two, and me.

(MARCY and EDDIE (formerly BILLY) enter UC. HE is very changed. No glasses, different hair, stylish clothing, and very assured. CANDY, TIFFANY, and RHYME, say hi, wave, giggle, and exit L. EDDIE smiles and waves back.)

MARCY: You seem to have a made quite the impression.

EDDIE: Am I supposed to say something to that?

MARCY: *(Referring to her note pad.)* No, it's just an observation.

There's still a lot I don't know about you. I don't think there's enough here for a feature article.

EDDIE: It's enough for now. A little mystery is important.

MARCY: Why the mystery? Have you got some deep, dark secret you don't want anyone to know about?

EDDIE: Like I said, it's enough for now.

MARCY: You know, you remind me of someone.

EDDIE: I get that a lot.

MARCY: No, I mean someone who went here a couple of years ago.

EDDIE: Someone you liked?

MARCY: A friend!

EDDIE: Maybe we could—

(FREDDY enters UC.)

FREDDY: Hey, new guy!

MARCY: His name is Eddie, and he's not new, he's--

FREDDY: Yeah, I know, he's been here a month already, but not long enough to know his place.

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EDDIE: What place is that?

FREDDY: That would be your parking place. Is that your Lamborghini parked outside?

EDDIE: Is it black?

FREDDY: (*In a mocking voice.*) Is it black? (*Serious now.*) It's the only Lamborghini out there.

EDDIE: Then I guess it's mine. I got it yesterday. You like it?

FREDDY: Yeah, it's very nice, but you need to move it.

EDDIE: Why? It's a great spot, right up front where everyone can see it, close to the school. It really showcases a car like that.

FREDDY: Yeah, well, that parking spot is mine.

EDDIE: Nobody told me there's assigned parking here.

FREDDY: There's not, but that's my place. That's where I've parked ever since I've been at this school. So you need to move your car.

MARCY: C'mon, Freddy, he didn't know. It's no big deal.

EDDIE: (*To MARCY.*) It's alright, you don't have to stick up for me.

FREDDY: See, he's a reasonable guy.

EDDIE: You're missing the point—I don't care. So here's the deal—Freddy—if I get here before you in the mornings, that's where I'll be parking.

FREDDY: Hey, hey, we're getting off on the wrong foot here. Was it something I said, something I did?

EDDIE: No, it's just you. I don't like you.

FREDDY: Are you serious? You're kidding, right?

EDDIE: No, I really don't like you.

FREDDY: Well, that's too bad. I was going to invite you to my pool party and cookout. Too bad for you. (*To MARCY.*) When you're finished talking to this clown, you might want to interview my dad.

MARCY: It's on my to do list.

(*FREDDY exits UC.*)

MARCY: (*To EDDIE.*) You're either stupid or gutsy. I don't know which.

EDDIE: Is Freddy your boyfriend?

MARCY: You don't want to make an enemy of Freddy. His dad is the richest man in town.

EDDIE: Is that why you defend him? Because he's your boyfriend, or because his dad is the richest man in town?

MARCY: We see each other, but it's not serious. (*Changing the subject.*) Before Freddy came up you were about to ask me something.

EDDIE: Was I?

MARCY: (*Turning on the charm.*) Yes, you said, "Maybe we could," and then stopped. Maybe we could what?

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EDDIE: I changed my mind.

MARCY: Oh! (*Taken aback, SHE changes the subject.*) You never did say why you came to Monte Cristo.

EDDIE: Why not? It's as good a place as any, I guess.

MARCY: Well, for one thing, the school is going broke. Tuition is barely keeping up with the costs of running the place. The building needs a lot of renovation. The city planning commission wants to tear down the school and build a multiplex movie theater here. We've been having fund raisers for the past couple of years, but we can't raise enough. Our next project is Saturday morning in the park. We're getting an old car and charging kids a dollar to hit it with a sledge hammer, but that'll only raise a few hundred bucks.

BILLY: Why doesn't the richest man in town help out?

(*MONDEGO enters UC with DR. MONTROSE.*)

MARCY: That's him there. You can ask him yourself. I've got to go.

(*MARCY crosses to MONDEGO and DR. MONTROSE. EDDIE sits on the platform steps.*)

MARCY: Mr. Mondego. Hi, have you got a second?

MONTROSE: Mr. Mondego is getting ready to speak to a class.

MARCY: Just a moment of your time.

MONTROSE: This is Marcy Herrera. She's a reporter for the school paper.

MONDEGO: I know Marcy. She's a friend of Freddy.

MONTROSE: And this is Eddie Dantes, our newest student. Marcy's interviewing him for the paper. He's from Italy.

MONDEGO: (*A nod toward EDDIE.*) A busy young lady.

MARCY: I wonder if I could get a few brief comments about your presentation today? Maybe just a highlight of what you're going to be talking about?

MONTROSE: Mr. Mondego has a tight schedule.

MARCY: I've got a deadline by the end of class.

MONDEGO: Fair enough. I hope you write fast.

MARCY: Fire away.

(*EDDIE pretends to be reading, but HE is actually listening carefully to MONDEGO.*)

MONDEGO: I call it three easy lessons for financial success. One: Invest smart. Invest in something only if there is going to be a return on your investment. In other words, don't invest in air

conditioners for igloos. Two: Information is power. Find out everything you can about an investment and the person you are bidding against. That means research. Do your homework. The more you find out, the more you know. I know to the dollar what my competition can afford. Three: Invest in things you care about. If you believe in something, then you have passion. That's the short version.

MARCY: Thank you, I really appreciate it.

MONDEGO: My pleasure.

(HE and MONTROSE exit L.)

MARCY: *(To EDDIE.)* Hey, think about coming to the park on Saturday morning and donating a buck. *(Exits L.)*

EDDIE: I'll think about it.

(WILL and SUE enter UC. THEY ignore EDDIE.)

SUE: Who does she think she is?

WILL: Have you seen her posters? "Vote for a sweetie! Vote Candy for homecoming queen!!" How lame is that?

SUE: Every time I see one of those posters, I take it down. I'm like, hello, don't even bother.

(JOHNNY enters UC.)

JOHNNY: Hi, Sue.

SUE: Oh, hi--Jimmy.

JOHNNY: It's Johnny.

SUE: Whatever! As you know, I am running for homecoming queen. I can count on your vote for homecoming queen, can't I?

JOHNNY: How do I benefit, Sue?

SUE: I'll be nice to you. I'll even get your name right next time.

JOHNNY: Swell!

WILL: And don't forget, moi—that's French for *me*. Vote me for senior class president and homecoming king.

JOHNNY: Let me see if I can remember all of this, Sue for homecoming queen, Will for senior class president and homecoming king, and Freddy student body president.

SUE: Ta-da! The dynamic trio.

JOHNNY: Dynamic goes with duo, it's an alliteration thing.

(SUE is clueless.)

Never mind.

WILL: Remember, a vote for Will is a vote for change.

JOHNNY: But you've always been class president.

SUE: He's never been *senior* class president before. It's a new year, okay? Jimmy!

(*SUE and WILL exit L. As JOHNNY is about to exit, EDDIE calls to him.*)

EDDIE: Hey, Johnny!

JOHNNY: Who, me?

EDDIE: Yes, you, come over here.

JOHNNY: Are you sure you've got the right person?

EDDIE: Yes, Johnny Herrera.

JOHNNY: You know my name?

EDDIE: Of course I do, I've known you since the fifth grade.

JOHNNY: What? You've only been here a month.

EDDIE: I've known you a lot longer than that. Look into my eyes.

JOHNNY: Say what?

EDDIE: Look into my eyes.

JOHNNY: What's going on here? This is kind of creepy.

EDDIE: Do it. Look at me real good. Do you know me?

JOHNNY: Yeah, you're Eddie Dantes, the new guy from Italy. It's like you're a count or something.

EDDIE: No. Try again.

JOHNNY: Okay, you're a duke. A prince? A king?

EDDIE: Forget the title. My name, tell me my name.

JOHNNY: Eddie Dantes.

EDDIE: Again.

JOHNNY: Eddie Smith—Brown—Jones— tell me when I'm getting close. There's a lot of last names. We could be here a long time.

EDDIE: It's me, Billy.

JOHNNY: Billy?

EDDIE: *Risk* on Saturday nights. *Vampires from Outer Space* marathons.

JOHNNY: Hey, wait a minute. How do you know about that? That was Billy Milburn. He used to go here.

EDDIE: What happened to him?

JOHNNY: He got into some trouble and went away. Nobody's seen him since he left.

EDDIE: You're looking at him.

JOHNNY: (*Glancing around.*) Oh, really? Where?

EDDIE: Like I said, you're looking at him.

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JOHNNY: You? If you're Billy Milburn, what happened to your teeth?
They're perfect. You can't be Billy. Billy had bad teeth and wore dorky glasses.

EDDIE: Forget about the glasses and the teeth. It's me.

JOHNNY: No way. Billy was a—geek. You're cool and worth millions.

EDDIE: Trust me, it's me, Billy.

JOHNNY: Am I being pranked? Is this some sort of gag? Where's the camera?

EDDIE: You want proof? Remember that night you stole one of your sister's dresses and—

JOHNNY: Whoa—stop! Stop right there. No one was supposed to know about that.

EDDIE: Right, it was our secret.

JOHNNY: How can you be Billy? I don't even recognize you. You're so not nerdy looking. You're sophisticated and rich. And you're a count. What happened?

EDDIE: I've been living in Italy for the last couple of years. My mom has this cousin—

JOHNNY: Oh, yeah, I remember you telling me about this, the adventure capitalist.

EDDIE: Venture capitalist. I showed him my idea for *Galaxy Ninjas*, and he said he thought he could do something with it. Anyway, long story short, it's now called *Galactic Battlestorm*.

JOHNNY: Dude, I kept telling everyone *Galactic Battlestorm* was just like the game you invented. And now you're back? Why? What have you been doing?

EDDIE: I spent a couple of years in Italy going to a fancy private school. I learned some stuff and I made a lot of money.

JOHNNY: How much is a lot?

EDDIE: A lot.

JOHNNY: That is so awesome. But what are you doing here? I thought you couldn't come back? Ever.

EDDIE: That's the reason for the new name.

JOHNNY: Why? Why come back here? You lived in Italy and made a boat load of money.

EDDIE: I was accused of something I didn't do. My parents were embarrassed. I was humiliated in front of my friends. My reputation was ruined, and my dignity was taken away.

JOHNNY: Yeah, but now you're rich. Who cares?

EDDIE: I care. It matters to me. I have some unfinished business.

JOHNNY: Unfinished business? You're here for revenge?

EDDIE: I wouldn't say revenge. That's a little extreme. I saw what went on just now with Sue and Will. Why do you let them push you around like that?

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JOHNNY: They don't push me around.

EDDIE: Yes, they do. They push everyone around, just like the year I got kicked out. They run this school.

JOHNNY: Okay, so what are you doing about it?

EDDIE: Do you want to do something about it?

JOHNNY: Well, yes, but what?

EDDIE: I've got some ideas, but I need a vasallo.

JOHNNY: Man, I wouldn't have a clue where to get one of those. What is it, anyway?

EDDIE: It's an Italian word. It means *man servant*.

JOHNNY: Like I said, I don't know. This is America, man. We're not into servants.

EDDIE: You! I want you to be my vasallo, someone who will work for me and keep my identity secret.

JOHNNY: Are you for real?

EDDIE: I need a partner, someone I can trust. Can I trust you?

JOHNNY: Getting even with Freddy, Sue, and Will? I can do that.

EDDIE: Alright, we've got a lot of work to do. Homecoming is a week from Saturday, Freddy's pool party on Sunday, and elections on Monday.

JOHNNY: Yeah, it's the big weekend everyone looks forward to each year so we can celebrate Sue, Will, and Freddy.

EDDIE: If you were homecoming king—

JOHNNY: What? Are you crazy? I wouldn't subject myself that torture.

EDDIE: Hear me out. If you were, who would you want to be your queen?

JOHNNY: (*Instantaneously.*) Sue!

EDDIE: Really?

JOHNNY: Yes. (*A beat.*) Okay, so she's phony and stuck up. But she is the number one girl in school.

EDDIE: It's not that she doesn't know your name, she doesn't care. What does that say about you?

JOHNNY: I admit it I have no integrity, no convictions. I'm just a hollow shell. (*A beat.*) Alright, fine! Candy! She's a sweet girl.

(*Considering the ban pun.*) Did I just say that?

EDDIE: Candy it is. (*Reaches into his pocket for a card.*) Take this card. This is the address of a tailor I know. Give him a call and set up an appointment to get measured for a tux. He's expecting you.

JOHNNY: What do I need a tux for?

EDDIE: You've got to look nice for the homecoming dance.

JOHNNY: I never said I was going to the homecoming dance.

EDDIE: You said you would be my vasallo. There's a lot of things I'm going to be asking you do. Can I trust you or not?

JOHNNY: I don't even know how to dance.

EDDIE: (*Pulling out another card.*) Lessons tomorrow night at *Lorna's Dance Studio!*

JOHNNY: Oh, boy. I won't be dancing with you, will I?

EDDIE: You'll be dancing with Candy.

JOHNNY: What makes you think she'll be there?

EDDIE: Trust me, she'll be there.

JOHNNY: I hope you know what you're doing.

EDDIE: I've had a lot of time to think things out.

JOHNNY: It's really weird that no one recognized you. You're like Clark Kent. Now that I know who you are, the resemblance is so obvious.

EDDIE: Our secret, okay?

JOHNNY: Yeah, but—

EDDIE: When the time is right, I'll tell.

JOHNNY: I can't tell Marcy?

EDDIE: Especially not Marcy. Not yet.

JOHNNY: Billy—

EDDIE: The name is Eddie, don't forget that.

JOHNNY: Eddie. That thing about the dress, that's still our secret, right?

EDDIE: Our secret! Oh, one more thing I need you to do for me. I want you to buy Freddy's car.

JOHNNY: Freddy's Bimmer? Is it for sale?

EDDIE: It will be when you make him an offer he can't refuse.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 2 – COMMONS—A FEW DAYS LATER

(*TIFFANY and RHYME enter UC. CANDY enters R. STUDENTS are seated throughout the commons.*)

TIFFANY: Hey, I tried to call you. Where were you last night?

CANDY: Dance lessons.

TIFFANY: What?

CANDY: I'm taking dance lessons, but it's kind of a secret. If I expect to get any votes at the homecoming dance, I've got to look good out there on the dance floor.

RHYME: You're getting your hopes up. You'll be crushed.

CANDY: I can dream, can't I?

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TIFFANY: Then you wake up and find out it's a nightmare starring Sue Dangler.

CANDY: I am not giving up. Are you giving up?

TIFFANY: No, especially not now! I've got a big surprise.

RHYME: You do? What?

TIFFANY: I can't talk about it, not yet.

(FREDDY enters UC.)

TIFFANY: Hi, Freddy.

FREDDY: Oh, hi—Terry.

TIFFANY: It's Tiffany. I'm the one you're running against for student body president.

FREDDY: Oh, right.

CANDY: And I'm Candy.

RHYME: Don't forget me, I'm Rhyme.

TIFFANY: Anyway, I just wanted to say that even though we're competitors, I really respect you for you what you did this weekend. It was awesome.

CANDY: The most awesome thing I have ever seen. Even though Tiffany is my best friend, it was so cool I'm thinking about voting for you as student body president.

RHYME: Me three!

FREDDY: What are you talking about?

TIFFANY: You know, helping raise money at the car bash. I mean, letting people smash up your BMW was just amazing.

CANDY: See you Sunday at the pool party.

(Exits with TIFFANY and RHYME L. FREDDY is in total disbelief. JOHNNY enters UC.)

FREDDY: *(Crossing to JOHNNY.)* I thought you bought my BMW for yourself. You donated it to the car bash? People took sledgehammers and smashed my car to pieces?

JOHNNY: You sold it, why do you care?

FREDDY: I loved that car.

JOHNNY: Then you shouldn't have sold it. *(Exits L.)*

END OF SCENE

SCENE 3 – COMMONS—WEDNESDAY OF THE FOLLOWING WEEK

(SUE enters L wearing dark glasses. SHE is met C by FREDDY and WILL. OTHER STUDENTS walking by stare and chuckle.)

WILL: Where have you been for the last two days? You haven't been taking calls, haven't been returning texts.

FREDDY: Have you been sick?

SUE: No, I've been humiliated. I've been in bed since Saturday night.

FREDDY: Why?

SUE: Are you kidding? How can I show my face around here? I was beat out by a nobody for homecoming queen.

WILL: Well, you've got to admit Candy and Johnny Herrera did look pretty good out there on the dance floor. They took lessons.

SUE: Everyone is so superficial. My mother practically had a nervous breakdown. I'm sorry I didn't come to your pool party, I was just too distressed.

FREDDY: Yeah, well, nobody came except Will.

SUE: What do you mean nobody came?

WILL: Nada, zip, zilch!

SUE: What about the election on Monday?

WILL: You haven't heard?

SUE: I've been in bed for three days, incognito.

WILL: You mean incommunicado.

SUE: Okay, that too.

WILL: Freddy lost the election.

SUE: What? How? Where did everyone go?

WILL: Everyone went to Tiffany's gig.

SUE: A smores party? How lame is that?

FREDDY: It wasn't a smores party. It was a last minute flash invite to Adventure Land.

SUE: She rented an amusement park?

WILL: It's get worse. Not only did we lose for prom king and queen, I lost for class president. The goober who won gave everyone free pizzas and video rental cards.

SUE: This is like the Thanksgiving Day Massacre.

WILL: St. Valentine's Day.

SUE: Whatever! How did this happen? Aren't we popular anymore?

FREDDY: I got this text after the election results were announced.

(Shows SUE and WILL his cell phone.)

SUE: What does it say, I can't read it.

FREDDY: Chi la fa, l'aspetti. It's Italian. I looked it up on the internet. It means, "If you do something bad, expect something bad in return."

SUE: Who would send you something in Italian?

WILL: Think about it!

SUE: The Godfather?

WILL: Eddie Dantes. He's the only one rich enough to rent an amusement park and buy pizzas and video cards for everyone.

FREDDY: Who else could afford to buy my BMW and then have it smashed to pieces?

SUE: Why? Why would he do that?

FREDDY: I guess because of that argument we had about parking places.

SUE: I don't know what it's like not to be popular.

WILL: What are we going to do?

FREDDY: Have you heard of the old saying, "Keep your friends close, but keep your enemies closer?"

SUE and WILL: No!

FREDDY: It means I've got a plan. It worked once before, I think it can work again.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 4 -- COMMONS-- LUNCH TIME --THE NEXT DAY

(The commons is filled with STUDENTS. EDDIE is sitting with MARCY and JOHNNY at the center left table. WILL is sitting at the center right table. FREDDY enters R and crosses C.)

FREDDY: Hey, Dantes, how about you and me make a truce?

EDDIE: *(Crosses to FREDDY.)* Why would I want to do that?

FREDDY: I like you—No, I respect you, even if you did smash my car.

EDDIE: You got twice what it was worth.

FREDDY: Which is why I respect you, you got principles. Time to bury the hatchet, what do you say?

EDDIE: What's in it for me?

FREDDY: A man after my old man's heart. I hear you're going down in flames in government. If you're man enough, I can tell you how to get a copy of the test.

EDDIE: What have I got to do?

FREDDY: See this? *(Pulling a slip of paper from his pocket.)* This is the combination to Miss Gillespie's file cabinet. She's at lunch. You slip in, grab the test, we make a photocopy, and nobody's the wiser.

EDDIE: How'd you get the combination?

FREDDY: Whenever she starts spinning that dial, I take a picture with my cell phone. It's taken a few times, but I finally got the sequence. 34 left, 36 right, 7 left.

EDDIE: And I just walk into her room and get it.

FREDDY: Sure, why not? She's at lunch for another fifteen or twenty minutes. She always leaves her door unlocked.

EDDIE: Why should I trust you? I heard what you did to that kid a couple of years ago.

FREDDY: You and him are different. This could be good for all of us, you, me, Sue, and Will.

EDDIE: What's to stop Gillespie from coming back early?

FREDDY: She won't. Sue is having all sorts of emotional problems today. She'll keep Gillespie busy until the bell rings. You could stop off for a latte and still have time.

MARCY: (*Crossing to EDDIE and FREDDY.*) Eddie, don't do it.

FREDDY: Scared?

EDDIE: No.

FREDDY: Then show us what you're made of. You want to be the big shot around here. Show us you've got the gravitas to be the bad boy.

EDDIE: Okay, I'll do it. I'm tired of hanging out with losers anyway.

(*MARCY appears stunned.*)

I'll be back in a few minutes. Keep an eye out for Gillespie. (*Exits UC.*)

FREDDY: Yeah, sure. You can *count* on it.

WILL: (*Crossing to FREDDY.*) Did he go for it?

FREDDY: Hook, line, and sinker!

MARCY: So, it really was you that planted that test in Billy Milburn's locker our sophomore year.

FREDDY: What do you care?

MARCY: Billy was my friend, and I trusted you more than I trusted him. You are despicable.

(*JOHNNY crosses C.*)

JOHNNY: Hey, listen to this. I just got a text from my friend at the city newspaper. The school board just declared bankruptcy.

MARCY: What?

JOHNNY: They're out of money. They're looking for an investor to keep it afloat.

MARCY: This is awful.

FREDDY: Yeah, it's a real shame.

(EDDIE enters UC with a piece of paper in his hand.)

FREDDY: *(Seeing EDDIE.)* Look, here comes lover boy.

MARCY: Eddie, take it back. You know this isn't right.

(MISS GILLESPIE enters UC followed by SUE.)

FREDDY: *(Faking his surprise.)* Uh oh, look, here comes Miss Gillespie.

GILLESPIE: Is everything alright, Freddy? Sue said you needed to see me right away.

FREDDY: You know, Miss Gillespie, I'm not one to snitch, but as a member of the Honor Society, I think it's my duty to report when cheating goes on.

GILLESPIE: What kind of cheating?

FREDDY: Your chapter final! The one we're going to be taking tomorrow. Someone has a copy.

GILLESPIE: That's impossible. It's locked in my filing cabinet.

FREDDY: I've seen it. I didn't see it all, and I don't have a copy, but I saw just enough to know it's your test. It says test seven, form B, and the first question is about the tenth amendment.

GILLESPIE: If you don't have the test, who does?

FREDDY: *(Pointing to EDDIE.)* That's it, there in his hand.

GILLESPIE: May I see that, please?

(EDDIE gives GILLESPIE the paper. SHE opens the paper and looks it over.)

GILLESPIE: *(To EDDIE.)* How did you get this?

FREDDY: He said he had your combination. He tried to give it to me. He said it was 36—no, 34 left, 36 right, 7 left. When I said no, I wouldn't do it, he said, "Fine, I'll do myself."

GILLESPIE: And this is what he brought back?

FREDDY: Yes, test 7, form B. Once I saw that, I had Sue come and tell you right away.

GILLESPIE: *(Shows the paper to FREDDY.)* This is a campaign poster, Freddy.

FREDDY: What? *(Snatches the paper away from GILLESPIE.)* He must have switched it.

GILLESPIE: *(To EDDIE.)* Did you go into my room?

EDDIE: No.

GILLESPIE: You can prove that?

EDDIE: I was in Dr. Montrose's office. I told her she should be expecting to see you and Freddy right about now.

FREDDY: It's a lie, he's lying.

GILLESPIE: You're the one who told me the combination to my filing cabinet and what is written on my test. It sounds as if you're the liar, Freddy. I'll see you in Dr. Montrose's office. *(Exits UC.)*

FREDDY: *(To EDDIE.)* This is war.

EDDIE: I don't think so. It's defeat. A little variation of that Italian phrase I texted you. "What goes around comes around."

FREDDY: Is that supposed to mean something to me?

EDDIE: Two years ago you did the same thing to a kid named Billy Milburn and got him kicked out of school.

FREDDY: So what? What do you care? What's he to you?

EDDIE: That kid was me. I'm Billy Milburn.

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