

# THE FACULTY MEETING

## By Michael Soetaert

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ISBN: 1-60003-520-5

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## CHARACTERS

*(28 Cast members: 11 men and 17 women, but with minor changes it could be 28 of either. Also, with minor changes, some of the roles could be eliminated.)*

**Note:** For each character's first line, she or he will be introduced with her or his title. After that, each character will be listed by her or his last name only.

**COACH ARNT:** Freshman PE; track – younger, wears a sweat suit. Definitely on the outside of the coaches' group, whom he (or she) will sit with.

**COACH CRAWFORD:** Volleyball & *possibly* gym classes; no one's really sure – female-esque, say... 30, stocky, vaguely pretty, wears gym clothes. Has all the confidence a winning coach would need, and then some. Could be played by a guy (as a girl) with very little effort.

**MRS. CRUZ:** Social Studies. Getting close to retirement. Wears the same dress every day, or maybe she just has several copies of the same one. She teaches the same class all day long, and has for the past 14 years, which was the last time she wrote a new lesson plan. But, hey, if it works, why change it? She is the Senior Class Sponsor (and has always been) and is correct in assuming that as long as the seniors graduate on time, then nobody really cares if she does anything else; she is totally on her own planet.

**MRS. DEEDLEMEYER:** Health. Extremely obese. Coughs a lot. Uses a cane. Wears a brightly colored moo-moo. Likes to pride herself on being an authority on... well... whatever happens to be the current discussion.

**MRS. DONALDSON-CLARK-ROGERS-NORTON-GREEN:** Business. 40ish. Dresses extremely well. High heels, pearls. Always is prim and proper, and doesn't understand why everybody else isn't as well. In a word, she's a prude that no one else can stand.

**MRS. DORFMANN:** The secretary. Hateful. 40 ish. Dresses in a business suit. She runs the school and she knows it. Why others don't realize that is a source of constant aggravation.

**DR. EDWARDS:** Superintendent. Getting near retirement. Dresses in a nice, three piece suit. He's a large man. He knows he's the boss and he knows he does his job well, regardless of what evidence there

might be to the contrary. People know better than to disagree with him, and he takes that as proof there is nothing to disagree with.

**EUGENE FASTNER:** The maintenance man. Play the stereotype. 40ish. Wears coveralls with his name on it, as well as a baseball cap. That whole rule about hats? That's only for the students. He knows if it weren't for him the whole school would cease to be, and if it weren't for all those kids, he could actually get some work done. In fact, if everybody else would just do their jobs like they're supposed to, then maybe he could actually finish a cup of coffee now and then.

**MRS. FENSTER:** English. 30ish. Disheveled. A great word. Intelligent and keenly aware that, for the most part, her co-workers are not. As such, she feels it her duty to correct them, and everybody else as far as that goes, every opportunity she can. You know, there's just a thin line between order and anarchy, and someone has to hold that line. She finds great pleasure in routine, and panics at the thought of not having one.

**MR. GRUNDY:** Special Ed. Middle-aged. Dresses appropriately, but really should use an iron, or at least tuck his shirt in... or button the buttons correctly. Likes to wear his bi-focals on the end of his nose because it's easier to look down on others that way. He understands just how important his job is, and as such, realizes how unimportant everybody else's job truly is. Therefore, why waste a lot of time talking to anybody?

**MR. HARMON:** Principal. 50ish. Wears a white shirt with a conservative tie and dark pants and shoes, but no suit jacket. Really hates his job, but it does pay a lot more than teaching, and this close to retirement, who wants to change? Besides, he can't really remember what he used to teach.

**MISS HOOPER:** Drama. Late 20s. Dresses nicely, but dresses to work. She works under the belief that nobody really knows what she does or cares, unless, of course, whatever she's supposed to be doing doesn't get done. I mean, after all... it's just drama, right?

**MRS. LEECH:** The lunch lady. Play the stereotype. Middle age, large. Wears and ankle length dress with an apron over it. Hair up, more or less, with a hair net only covering about half of it. If you can get away with it, have her smoking a cigarette that she'll never take out of her mouth.

**MS. LLOYD:** Home Ec. 50ish. Dresses nicely, but there's a definite look of last year's styles... if last year were 1968. Nervous. Wants everything to be in the right order. It's more important to have your papers properly labeled than anything that actually might be written in the paper.

**MR. LOPEZ:** Shop. He's a happy guy... and why not? He gets to play with power tools all day long. What he lacks in intelligence he makes up for in enthusiasm. 40 something. Dresses more for a construction site than school.

**MISS LOWRY:** Art. Pretty much is passed out. Mid 20s. Looks like she probably should've gone home after being at the clubs the night before, and then come to school...or maybe just phoned in again. She has about half her hair in curlers. Teaching is good a profession as any, but getting up so early really does cut into her night life.

**MR. NAGNEL:** Driver's Ed. Wears very thick glasses. Paranoid and angry – a good combination. Pushing 50. Wears an old tweed jacket all the time. The thing he dislikes the most about having to teach all day long is that it takes away from his time being able to listen to conspiracy radio talk shows. But you can do both! He's the kind of guy who gives a good argument to those in favor of gun control.

**COACH NELSON:** Basketball, maybe nothing else – male, say...34, football defensive tackle large, buzzed hair, would've made a good Marine drill instructor; wears gym clothes and a whistle.

**MRS. OLSEN:** The janitor. Olsen and Olsenn should be played pretty much the same. Middle-aged, disheveled, both wearing coveralls. They both know that everybody sees them as "just the janitor," and they're good with that. They probably could do a more efficient job if they actually split up, but it's really hard to carry both a broom and a dustpan. Mrs. Olsen has the broom...

**MRS. OLSENN:** The other janitor. ...and Mrs. Olsenn has the dustpan. Other than that, they're pretty much the same. They could easily be combined.

**MR. PITNEY:** History. Mid-thirties. He has given up, both with teaching and personal hygiene. After all, why even try? Nobody cares about history, so they're all doomed to repeat it. And, of course, there's pleasure in knowing that he told them so. Sarcastic.

**MRS. RICHARDS:** History. Let's face it: The lady's an idiot. It takes her a long time to understand *anything* new, which is why she doesn't teach Current Events. 40 something. Dresses professionally, but no flair... except for those idiot pins teachers like to wear. She owns a knit sweater with snowmen and Christmas trees on it. And she wears it. It doesn't matter what season it is. It's a good sweater.

**MR. ROTHCHILD:** Math. A young, first year teacher. He's been thrown into the classroom and forgotten. He doesn't have a clue what he's doing and is completely overwhelmed. He could probably break down crying at any moment, except he realizes that once he does, what little credibility he might actually have will be gone.

**MRS. SPAWN:** Librarian. Early 30s. Dresses nicely. Takes her job very seriously, and her job is to keep the books on the shelves. And that's easier to do if you can keep the students out of the library. If she is ever on a tower with a high powered rifle, nobody should be surprised.

**MRS. THOMPSON:** Music teacher, but also certified in Special Ed. Old, deaf, and a bit loopy, all of which make her eternally happy. Knits constantly.

**MR. YORKSHIRE:** Band. 30ish. Dresses from the discount rack, where matching is less important than covering. This is what you do with a degree in music if you are just not quite good enough to make money playing music. Luckily, though, he did get his teaching certification, because his father was right: You can always teach. Especially since nobody seems to care if you can do it well or not.

**MRS. ZANE:** English. She's been around for a while, but her intelligence hasn't diminished with age. She knows that the students don't give a rip about Beowulf, and that's why they're failing. As they should be. Dresses well. Speaks with perfect diction, as one should if one wishes to do better than just average.

**MRS. ZIMBOSKI:** Spanish teacher. Has no accent whatsoever and probably couldn't speak it well enough to even get across the border. Has a pleasant veneer, but really should not be left alone with sharp objects. 40 something. Dresses professionally, but with no flair.

**MRS. ZOLTZ:** Science. 40 something. Dresses in a lab coat because she loves science. Loves the theory. Loves the practice. Hates the kids. Somewhere between deficiencies in ambition and talent, this is all there's left to do with her science degree.

## SEATING ORDER

*There will be six folding tables on stage, all set up facing Left. They will be in three rows, but the actors should be able to walk completely around any given table.*

### UL

History: Mrs. Richards  
History: Mr. Pitney  
Soc. Studies: Mrs. Cruz  
Business: Mrs. Donaldson-Clark-Rogers-Norton-Green

### DL

English: Miss Zane  
English: Mrs. Fenster  
Librarian: Mrs. Spawn  
Special Ed: Mrs. Grundy

### UC

Math: Mr. Rothchild  
Science: Mrs. Zoltz  
Drivers Ed.: Mr. Nagnel  
Health: Mrs. Deedlemeyer

### DC

Music: Mrs. Thompson  
Band: Mr. Yorkshire  
Drama: Miss Hooper

### UR

PE: Nelson  
Crawford  
Arnt

### DR

Shop: Mr. Lopez  
Art: Mrs. Lowry  
Spanish : Mrs. Zimboski

# SET

**Time:** 3:30 on a Tuesday afternoon.

**Place:** The Home Ec room of the Wilber P. Putty Man of Excellence High School (formerly the Roosevelt High School).

One set, fairly simple. The idea is to make the stage look like a classroom.

Running the entire length Right is a counter. There are cabinets below the counter and above, but they don't need to be functional. There is a metal cylinder style coffee pot toward the downstage end of the counter. There needs to be coffee (or some other brownish coloured liquid) in it, along with grounds, but it should not be hot, not full. Somewhere near the coffeepot is a trashcan. Among the trash, toward the top, needs to be a discarded coffee cup. There also needs to be a live plug in near DR for Mr. Lopez to plug his sander in to.

There should also be an old cardboard box or two on the upstage end of the counter filled with student journals. On the backstage wall are a couple of sets of windows covered with shades. They need not be functional.

Centered, more or less, on the Left wall is a large teacher's desk with a wooden chair behind it. There should be the usual stacks of papers and books on the desk. Inside one of the desk drawers there needs to be a stack of note cards and a black marker. Behind the desk is a blackboard (it need not be functional). There is a bookshelf UL, and the door to the room is DL. There is also a podium DL.

In the middle of the room are the tables. There will be six folding tables on stage, all set up facing Left. They will be in three rows (UR, DR, UC, DC, UR, DR), but the actors should be able to walk completely around any given table. Any kind of chair will work. There should be three chairs facing left on all of the tables. On the three upstage tables, there will be an additional chair on the upstage end.

Everything else is frou frou – pencil sharpener, flag, file cabinets... whatever. However... do not have a clock on the wall. There needs to be a loud bell set to go off on cue at what will be 4:00 o'clock. The play is set to start at 3:30 and end at 4:00, and it will be really close, but I wouldn't want to try to make it come out exact.

## **PROPS**

*(In Alphabetical Order)*

MRS. CRUZ

A hard bound journal type of book  
Watch

MRS. DORFMANN

Notepad

EUGENE FASTNER

Large, water logged, dead rat  
(it would probably be best if it weren't real)

MRS. FENSTER

Planner  
Flask

MR. HARMON

Watch  
Notes  
Pencil

MRS. LLOYD

Cleaning rag

MR. LOPEZ

Short board  
Electric sander (the noisier, the better)  
Safety goggles  
Extension cord (if necessary)

MRS. LOWRY

Curlers (in her hair)  
Large purse  
Cigarettes  
Lighter  
Résumé  
Pen

MR. NAGNEL

Driver's License

COACH NELSON

Stat book  
Clipboard  
Whistle  
Paper bag (to pop)

MR. PITNEY

Comic book

MRS. RICHARDS

Notes  
Pen

MR. ROTHCHILD

A huge stack of papers

MRS. THOMPSON

Knitting bag  
Yarn  
Whatever else it takes to knit

MR. YORKSHIRE

Newspaper

MRS. ZIMBOSKI

Piñata (one that won't break)  
Small club

EVERYBODY ELSE

Papers to grade or planners to work on

## THE FACULTY MEETING

by

Michael Soetaert

*At open, ALL of the TEACHERS are more or less in their seats (see notes for seating order), some may be milling about. COACHES NELSON and CRAWFORD are going over a stat book while COACH ARNT is trying to act like HE doesn't mind being left out. From time to time HE'll try to get involved, only to be snubbed out, in whatever sense you wish to take that. MISS LOWRY is asleep with her head down on the desk, and next to her is MRS. ZIMBOSKI, who is patiently waiting for the meeting to begin, sitting bolt upright with her hands folded across her lap. SHE has a piñata and a small club sitting on the table next to her. Among the others, MR. YORKSHIRE will be reading a newspaper. MR. PITNEY will be reading a comic book. MRS. THOMPSON will be knitting. MR. ROTHCHILD has a huge stack of papers HE's trying to grade, all of which HE will continually be knocking on the floor. MRS. LLOYD is standing near the front, not really knowing what to do with herself. After all, it's her room, but SHE can't sit in her desk, and SHE doesn't want to sit in a student's desk, so SHE will simply stand. And EVERYBODY ELSE will be grading stacks of papers or working on their planners. MR. HARMON is standing at the podium waiting until it's exactly 3:30.*

MR. HARMON: *(looking at his watch)* Alright. It's 3:30. If we could get started, we can be finished by four. *(HE then checks his notes)*

MR. NAGNEL: *(an aside to anyone willing to listen)* When that four o'clock bell rings, I'm finished, whether this meeting is or not!

*(There are a few assenting nods.)*

HARMON: *(ignoring NAGNEL)* I'm sure everybody will be pleased to hear that Mrs. Teasdale is making wonderful progress. She's written a thank you note that's posted in the teachers' lounge. She apologizes for having to write it in crayon.

*(MR. LOPEZ enters with a board and an electric sander.)*

MR. LOPEZ: Sorry I'm late, Mr. Harmon. I locked myself out of the shop. Luckily I had my hammer. Did you know the classroom doors are solid?

HARMON: *(as MR. LOPEZ is heading to the coffeepot)* Mr. Lopez, aren't you supposed to be doing after school detention?

LOPEZ: I am. *(HE sets the board and sander on the counter by the coffee pot and starts looking around for a coffee cup)*

HARMON: Right now?

LOPEZ: *(matter of fact)* Yes. *(HE takes an empty coffee cup out of the trashcan next to the pot)*

HARMON: How can you be doing that if you're here, Mr. Lopez?

LOPEZ: They're fine. *(HE realizes the coffeepot is all but out of coffee, so he tries tipping it forward)*

HARMON: They're fine?

LOPEZ: Oh, yeah. *(HE has taken the lid off the coffeepot, taken out the grounds, and is now trying to pick up the entire thing and pour what's left out the top)*

HARMON: You left them... unwatched?

LOPEZ: *(HE manages to pour coffee all over the counter, getting very little in his cup)* Yeah. So?

HARMON: How do you know they won't leave?

LOPEZ: *(HE is now holding his cup on the edge of the counter and with the other hand is trying to push coffee off the edge into his cup)*  
Because I make them sign out.

HARMON: How do you know they won't leave early?

LOPEZ: *(HE looks around for somewhere to wipe off his hand, shrugs and wipes it on his pants; as HE's headed to his seat)* Because I make them write the time down when they leave.

*(LOPEZ will push himself into the table DL, between MRS. ZIMBOSKI and MISS LOWRY. In the process, MISS LOWRY will fall out of her chair.)*

MISS LOWRY: *(waking up)* Is it time to go home yet?

*(LOPEZ helps her back in her seat, where SHE will lay her head back down. In the meanwhile, MS. LLOYD has scurried to the back and is doing her best to show how aggravated SHE is to have to be cleaning up the mess that LOPEZ left; HE's oblivious.)*

MS. LLOYD: *(handing him the board and sander; tersely)* Here. This is yours.

*(MRS. RICHARDS raises her hand, but HARMON ignores her. SHE will slowly lower it over the next line. From time to time over the next several pages, before SHE actually gets called on, SHE will periodically raise her hand, be ignored, and then lower it.)*

HARMON: Just a few quick things before we get on with the real business. First, we're going to need somebody to watch the trashcans during lunch to make sure the students stop throwing their forks away.

MRS. SPAWN: I thought we were using plastic forks.

HARMON: We are.

NELSON: (*indicating COACH CRAWFORD*) Her and me can.

MRS. FENSTER: Her and me?

NELSON: Her and I?

FENSTER: It's "She and I"!

NELSON: What difference does it make?

FENSTER: One's right and one's wrong!

NELSON: So? I don't teach English, Mrs. Fenster. How am I supposed to know that stuff?

FENSTER: You went to college, didn't you Mr. Nelson? (*more to EVERYONE ELSE in general*) If we expect the students to know everything, shouldn't we?

NELSON: Alright, why don't you come down to the gym and do some pull-ups?

FENSTER: Are you serious? I'd hurt myself.

HARMON: (*to NELSON*) But you and her will do it, right?

(*COACH CRAWFORD just shrugs. HARMON writes their names down. During the above lines, LOPEZ has gotten up and plugged in his sander and put on safety goggles. After HARMON's line, while still standing, HE will turn on the sander and start sanding the board on the table in front of him. ZIMBOSKI will put her hands over her ears and try to move as far away as possible without actually getting up, but LOWRY will continue to sleep.*)

HARMON: (*loudly*) Mr. Lopez! (*HE doesn't respond*) Mr. Lopez! (*HE still doesn't respond*)

EVERYBODY: (*shouting*) Lopez!

(*LOPEZ looks up and notices that EVERYBODY is looking at him, so HE turns off the sander.*)

LOPEZ: What?

HARMON: What are you doing?

LOPEZ: I'm working on my lesson plans.

HARMON: You know better than to be working on your lesson plans during a staff development meeting!

LOPEZ: (*taking off the goggles and sitting back down; with no conviction whatsoever*) Sorry.

MRS. DEEDLEMEYER: I didn't know this was a staff development meeting.

HARMON: If we call it a staff development meeting, then we can count it as part of the District Action Plan.

MR. ROTHCHILD: *(as always, knocking papers to the floor)* We have a District Action Plan?

HARMON: OK. One final announcement. The assembly next week with Officer Harris and his dog, Kilo, has been canceled. Officer Harris has left some flyers in the teachers' lounge and would appreciate it if you'd keep an eye out for his dog.

ROTHCHILD: *(knocking papers to the floor)* We have a teachers' lounge?

MR. PITNEY: *(while checking his planner)* Does that mean we're back to a full day schedule, or are we still on the half day schedule?

MR. GRUNDY: Were we on A half or B half?

LOPEZ: A half is where we have the even numbered classes before lunch and the odd ones after... except on Tuesdays... right?

DEEDLEMEYER: No. That's the B schedule.

NAGNEL: Then what's the A schedule?

DEEDLEMEYER: I'll be darned if I know. I just wait to see what students show up.

PITNEY: It makes no difference whether it's on A schedule or a B schedule if it's a full day schedule. May I remind you that Tuesday is a Red Day.

HARMON: So?

PITNEY: So, since it is a Red Day, if we were on a half day schedule – whether it's an A schedule or a B schedule, then it means that I do not have to teach 4<sup>th</sup> hour.

HARMON: I guess now you do.

PITNEY: But I don't have anything planned.

HARMON: Well, then, Mr. Pitney... plan something.

PITNEY: I can't do that.

HARMON: Why not?

PITNEY: I teach two sections of Modern Democracy. You, Mr. Harmon, of all people should know that. And, may I remind you, Modern Democracy is a School Board requirement for graduation from the Wilber P. Putty Man of Excellence High School.

MRS. ZIMBOSKI: Oh? When did they change the name of the school?

ROTHCHILD: *(as always, knocking papers on the floor)* They changed the name of the school?

LOPEZ: I think it was at the last board meeting.

ROTHCHILD: They can change the name of the school?

LOPEZ: They're the school board. They can do whatever they want.

PITNEY: I doesn't matter what the name of the school is. Modern Democracy is still a requirement for graduation.

HARMON: Yes, Mr. Pitney, I am aware of that.

PITNEY: Well, then?

HARMON: (*trying very well to keep calm*) Well then, *what?* Mr. Pitney?

PITNEY: Well, then, if I now have to teach my fourth hour class, then my two sections will be off. It'll be like having to plan for a whole other class. And you know, School Board regulations strictly forbid forcing teachers to have to plan more than six classes a day.

HARMON: I don't believe the word "strictly" is in the actual rule, but... (*a small epiphany*) What's your other class doing on Tuesday?

PITNEY: They're watching a movie.

HARMON: Why are they watching a movie?

PITNEY: I had to have something for them to do while the other class wasn't there.

NELSON: Couldn't your 4<sup>th</sup> hour class watch the movie, too?

PITNEY: That means they'll have to finish it. That means your little scheduling error has cost me two days in each of my classes. Do you know what that means?

HARMON: Should I?

PITNEY: If you're not going to read our lesson plans, then why are we required to turn them in? As it is, we'll never get to the Holocaust, much less its denial. (*while sitting*) Don't be surprised if I make a formal complaint to the union.

ROTHCHILD: We have a union?

HARMON: We don't have a union.

PITNEY: That's not going to stop me from complaining.

NELSON: (*after a beat; standing, reading off his clipboard*) The boys' basketball team is playing in Chatoba Falls tomorrow evening, so all the boys will need to be let out at 2:10... managers, too.

DEEDLEMEYER: The cheerleaders, too.

MISS HOOPER: And the Pep Squad.

MR. YORKSHIRE: And the band.

HARMON: And anybody who rides Dale's bus, number 217, will need to go home after 3<sup>rd</sup> hour so we can get the bus back on time.

(*MRS. RICHARDS once again raises her hand.*)

HARMON: (*with a sigh of resignation*) Yes, Mrs. Richards?

MRS. RICHARDS: (*SHE gets ready to speak, and then stops, perplexed; after a beat*) I'm sorry, I forgot.

HARMON: OK, then. I'd like to get down to the real business this afternoon...

NAGNEL: (*interrupting; standing*) I want to know what you're going to do about the tardies.

HARMON: We're not here to discuss that right now, Mr. Nagnel.

NAGNEL: Then why the heck are we here? We got tardies, I say!

Tardies! Why, the next thing you know, they'll be taking their clothes off! All social order... It's just going to unravel! We let them start roaming the halls and where will it stop?

HARMON: We have a committee....

NAGNEL: Committee? What good's a committee going to do when they start burning the school down!

HARMON: The committee is trying to reach a solution to that problem.

NAGNEL: Solution? Why! We got rules haven't we?

HARMON: Yes. Yes, we do.

NAGNEL: Then enforce them! That's what I say. What's the use in rules if we're not going to follow them? That's the whole problem with the world today. We make rules and then nobody follows them. Why do you think there's crime? Because we've got the death penalty, but we won't execute anybody. Execute them on the spot! That's what I say! You see a kid in the hall after the bell rings, you shoot him! After a couple of weeks, tardies would be a thing of the past!

(*There are several assenting nods from around the room.*)

HARMON: Mr. Nagnel! We're not going to shoot anybody.

NAGNEL: Fine! Fine! (*a bit wild-eyed*) But if you ever change your mind... (*HE pats his coat and nods*)

HARMON: (*a bit scared*) Thank you. (*beat*) Now. I'd like to move on to the reason why I called this faculty meeting this afternoon. We all know that times are hard. Our district is facing a 15% decline in revenue next year. We appreciate the efforts you've all made by not using paper and bringing your own water, but Dr. Edwards says it's not going to be enough. Therefore, he's asked all building principals to evaluate their staffing needs. You know, to see where we might (*trying to hide the next two words with a cough*) eliminate positions, or combine classes, or even look seriously at those classes with few students in them. You know, to see how we can best spend our money.

(*After a moment of shocked silence by ALL.*)

MRS. ZOLTZ: What?!

FENSTER: You're talking about cutting positions!

*(There are assenting grunts and moans.)*

HARMON: Listen, you shouldn't take it personally.

MRS. THOMPSON: If I lose my job, I'd say it's pretty darn personal.

HARMON: Now, nobody's said anything about losing jobs.

PITNEY: Yes you did! Isn't that what "eliminating positions" means?

HARMON: *(ignoring him)* What Dr. Edwards has asked each of you to do is to write a... a short description of what it is you do around here. You know... classes you teach... clubs you sponsor. That sort of thing. He'd like numbers, too. You know, if you sponsor a club, how many kids regularly show up.

HOOPER: Shouldn't you already know that?

NELSON: So, you want me counting all the boys on the basketball team?

HARMON: We already have those numbers.

HOOPER: Do you already have the numbers for the Debate Squad?

HARMON: We have a Debate Squad?

HOOPER: We took first in State last year!

*(MRS. ZIMBOSKI suddenly gets up and begins furiously smashing her piñata with the club SHE brought. A look of sheer lunacy would be in vogue. If possible, the piñata should not break. Me? I'd empty it out and fill it with paper. The more it doesn't break, the more furiously SHE'll whack it. After a few moments SHE will notice that the entire room is looking at her.)*

ZIMBOSKI: *(smiling as if nothing out of the ordinary has happened as SHE sits back down)* Oh. Pardon me.

DEEDLEMEYER: *(after a moment; to HARMON)* Pardon me, but if I may... how many positions are they needing to ... eliminate.

HARMON: *(carefully studying his notes before answering; finally)* One.

ROTHCHILD: *(panicked)* Just one?

PITNEY: *(sarcastic)* Well, you can go ahead and make it me. I can't teach history without text books, anyway.

HARMON: Well, thank you, Mr. Pitney. I'm sure everybody appreciates your gesture.

PITNEY: I'm not quitting! I was being sarcastic!

HARMON: Listen, everybody. It's only one position district wide. It might not even be from the high school.

LLOYD: You know it will be!

HARMON: No, Mrs. Lloyd.

LLOYD: It's me!

HARMON: Ms. Lloyd...

LLOYD: You never liked me asserting my feminism, did you?

HARMON: That has nothing to do with anything.

LLOYD: (*immediately offended*) You think my being a woman has nothing to do with anything?

HARMON: That's not what I meant...

ROTHCHILD: Oh dear Lord! This is just like Star Trek! It's me, isn't it?! Every time they beam down to a planet, it was always the new guy that was killed! I don't want to die!

HARMON: Nobody's going to kill you.

ROTHCHILD: That's what they always told the new guy! They didn't even give him a name. (*standing, pointing at CRAWFORD*) Quick! What's my name?!

COACH CRAWFORD: Ah... Bill?

ROTHCHILD: Ahhh!

CRAWFORD: Larry?

ROTHCHILD: No-o-o-o!

CRAWFORD: (*aside, to NELSON*) I didn't even know the guy worked here.

ROTHCHILD: (*pointing at HARMON*) You! What's my name!

HARMON: You're Mr. Rutherford.

ROTHCHILD: It's Rothchild! I bet you don't even know what I teach!

HARMON: Of course I do. You teach... (*quickly thumbing through some papers HE has*) ...you teach... Um... Math! (*with confidence*) You're our freshmen math teacher.

(*ROTHCHILD, totally defeated, will slump back down in his chair. After a few despondent moments, HE will return to grading.*)

NELSON: (*standing*) Coach Crawford and me would like to volunteer Coach Arnt to lose his job. (*HE sits*)

COACH ARNT: (*standing*) What!

CRAWFORD: We didn't think you would mind.

ARNT: Of course I mind! Why don't one of you two volunteer?

NELSON: I couldn't quit. Who would teach basketball?

CRAWFORD: I've got volleyball.

ARNT: What? Because I coach track I'm expendable?

NELSON: Well... it is track...

ARNT: I've got more kids on the track team than both of you combined.

CRAWFORD and NELSON: (*after a beat*) So?

(*ARNT will sit back down as EUGENE enters holding up a large, dead, water-logged rat that needs to be still dripping water. I wouldn't use a real one.*)

EUGENE: I got the toilet unclogged. What do you want me to do with this?

HARMON: My goodness, Eugene! Throw it away!

EUGENE: That's not my job.

HARMON: How could it not be your job to throw something away?  
You're the janitor!

EUGENE: I am *not* the janitor. I am the maintenance man. Mrs. Olsen and Mrs. Olsenn (*HE'll drag out the "N"*) are the janitors.

HARMON: Then have *them* throw it away.

EUGENE: It's not my job to have to run them down every time I need to throw something away. (*holding up the rat*) Here.

HARMON: I don't want that here!

EUGENE: (*as HE's leaving*) Well, fine. I'll leave it on your desk.

*(MRS. RICHARDS has raised her hand while MR. HARMON was talking with EUGENE. HE will try to ignore her, so SHE'll start waving. HE will look around the room for somebody to talk to.)*

RICHARDS: (*standing*) Mr. Harmon...

HARMON: (*reluctantly*) Yes, Ms. Richards?

*(EVERYBODY ELSE in the room will show their frustration, SOME by putting their heads down in disgust, OTHERS by turning around. It should be very obvious to EVERYBODY but MRS. RICHARDS that EVERYBODY ELSE in the room thinks SHE's an idiot who is wasting their time. And THEY're right.)*

RICHARDS: It's Mrs...

HARMON: Mrs. Richards...

RICHARDS: Yes. I'm confused...

*(More general reaction, including moans.)*

RICHARDS: (*oblivious*) It just doesn't make sense. If one of us isn't here next year, wouldn't they just end up spending a whole lot of money on substitutes? I mean, it doesn't seem like they'd end up saving any money at all. Not really.

HARMON: (*trying to keep his patience, as HE will during the entire exchange*) Ummm... we wouldn't be paying for substitutes, Mrs. Richards.

RICHARDS: Well, then, who's going to watch the classes? I mean, I'm pretty certain they wouldn't do it for free.

HARMON: No, Mrs. Richards. The students would go to other teachers' classrooms.

RICHARDS: Every day? Won't that be confusing?

HARMON: They'll be scheduled.

RICHARDS: Oh.

*(MRS. RICHARDS sits back down, after which there is a hopeful pause. Just as HARMON is ready to speak, MRS. RICHARDS stands back up. There are audible moans throughout the room.)*

RICHARDS: But... but... Why don't we just keep the children where they're at? I mean, without students the teacher won't be doing anything anyway.

HARMON: *(valiantly keeping calm)* That teacher will no longer be here.

RICHARDS: *(sitting)* Oh.

HARMON: *(after a beat; hopeful to move on)* OK...

*(MRS. RICHARDS' hand shoots back up. MR. NAGNEL will start banging his head on the desk. As always, MRS. RICHARDS will be oblivious to it.)*

RICHARDS: *(SHE remains seated)* So... will I still be teaching English next year?

HARMON: *(patience truly running thin)* I'm not certain, Mrs. Richards. I'm working on the schedule right now.

RICHARDS: Here?

HARMON: No... I meant...

RICHARDS: *(with a giggle, or sorts)* Oh! Oh! I understand.

HARMON: *(HE will wait a beat, hopeful to move on)* OK...

*(MRS. RICHARDS' hand shoots back up. ZIMBOSKI gets up with her club and starts to move toward RICHARDS, but NELSON and CRAWFORD will intercept her and usher her back to her chair. MRS. ZOLTZ will take the club from ZIMBOSKI and start going for RICHARDS, but SHE will be restrained by NAGNEL and DEEDLEMEYER. THEY will usher her back to her chair as well. All the while, ROTHCHILD's papers are going everywhere. RICHARDS will be oblivious to it all.)*

RICHARDS: *(not waiting to be called on)* When will you know?

HARMON: *(a pencil that HE has been holding snaps in two; through clenched teeth; terse)* Soon.

RICHARDS: *(perky)* OK.

HARMON: *(still through clenched teeth)* Is that all, Mrs. Richards?

RICHARDS: *(checking her notes)* Um.... yes.

*(EVERYBODY in the room reacts with relief. MISS LOWRY, who's been asleep with her head on the table, has been slowly waking up and stretching during the last of MRS. RICHARDS' lines. SHE rummages through her oversized purse and fishes out a cigarette, which need not be real. SHE puts the cigarette in her mouth and will then fish around in her purse for a lighter, which does need to be real. It is while SHE is searching for the lighter that HARMON will notice what SHE is doing. SHE will find the lighter, take it out, hold it up, and light it, but not light the cigarette.)*

HARMON: *(alarmed)* Miss Lowry!

*(LOWRY stops, lets the flame go out, and looks around, noticing that EVERYBODY is looking at her.)*

LOWRY: *(finally; put out)* What? *(SHE sparks the lighter up again)*

HARMON: Miss Lowry!

LOWRY: *(letting the fire go out once again)* What?

HARMON: Miss Lowry, there is no smoking in the school!

LOWRY: Well, why not?

HARMON: It's a School Board regulation, Miss Lowry.

LOWRY: When did they pass that stupid rule?

HARMON: 1996.

LOWRY: Why wasn't I ever told about it?

HARMON: It's in the Teacher Handbook, Miss Lowry.

LOWRY: Well, you'd think somebody would've told me if it was so darned important.

HARMON: Mrs. Lowry, did you teach all day with curlers in your hair?

LOWRY: Show me anywhere in the Teacher Handbook where it says I can't. Besides, I've only had them in since fourth hour.

*(LOWRY leans back in her chair and crosses her arms across her chest in defiance.)*

MRS. DONALDSON-CLARK-ROGERS-NORTON-GREEN: Ms. Lowry, would you please watch your language? You're setting a bad example for the children.

LOWRY: You're putting me on?

DONALDSON-CLARK-ROGERS-NORTON-GREEN: Most certainly not. The children look up to us. We need to set the example. After all, it is we who they model.

LOWRY: *(incredulous)* You think the children want to be like us?

DONALDSON-CLARK-ROGERS-NORTON-GREEN: Certainly. Well, maybe not *all* of us. Some of us need to strive harder to set a better example.

HARMON: (*uncertain*) Um... Mrs. Donaldson-Clark-Rogers-Norton...

DONALDSON-CLARK-ROGERS-NORTON-GREEN: It's Mrs. Donaldson-Clark-Rogers-Norton-Green. Remember? I remarried this past summer.

LOWRY: Why in heaven's name do you have to keep all the old names every time you remarry?

DONALDSON-CLARK-ROGERS-NORTON-GREEN: Because it is who I am. They are all a part of me.

LOWRY: Why can't we just call you Neva? Or did you hyphenate that, too?

DONALDSON-CLARK-ROGERS-NORTON-GREEN: Because that wouldn't be professional. (*to HARMON*) Did you wish to ask a question?

HARMON: I'll be darned if I can remember what.

*(MRS. CRUZ has been staring off into the distance, just smiling this whole time, holding a book tightly to her chest. SHE will glance down at her watch, then stand, open the book gallantly in front of her, and begin talking, referring to the book only slightly. While holding the book with one hand, SHE will offer sweeping gestures with the other.)*

MRS. CRUZ: As you all know, the senior class play is a tradition here at Roosevelt High School.

ROTHCHILD: I thought they changed the name!

CRUZ: (*as if there were no interruption*) As the Senior Class Sponsor, I'd like to invite you all to this year's production, a daring remake of *Clockwork Orange*, which will be next Thursday night in the auditorium.

DEEDLEMEYER: What?

CRUZ: You can buy tickets in advance or at the door.

ZOLTZ: What does that have to do with... with anything?

CRUZ: I would recommend getting your tickets in advance, so you're sure to have a seat. And you can get a discount, too. Thank you.

*(SHE closes the book, does a curtsy, and then will sit, resuming her smile of yore. After a beat of EVERYBODY... well, almost EVERYBODY... looking at her like "What the...")*

HARMON: Umm... Thank you Mrs. Cruz.

*(SHE stands and does a quick curtsy, and then sits again. MRS. DORFMANN, the secretary, opens the door and sticks her head in.)*

DORFMANN: I'm sorry to interrupt, but...

HARMON: Yes?

DORFMANN: Mrs. Grummond is on the phone. She says she'll need a substitute for tomorrow.

HARMON: Well... then call a substitute.

DORFMANN: But she *is* the substitute.

HARMON: Well... call another.

DORFMANN: She wants to talk to you.

HARMON: Can't it wait? Can't I call her back later?

DORFMANN: She says they're only allowing her one phone call.

HARMON: Oh! Good grief!

*(HE will exit with MRS. DORFMANN. MOST of the TEACHERS will look nervously at each other.)*

SPAWN: *(after a beat; wild-eyed; accusatorily)* Well, I suppose you're all thinking that we could just get along fine without a librarian.

ROTHCHILD: We have a librarian? I didn't even know we had a library!

NAGNEL: Well, now that you mention it, Mrs. Spawn, why *do* we have a librarian?

SPAWN: *(becoming increasingly defensive)* What? What? What would we do without one? Who would... who would... who would open the library up in the morning? Who would close it up at night? Who would reshell the books? Do any of you know the Dewey Decimal system? *(half pause)* I didn't think so. There'd be chaos! Nothing but chaos! Why! It would be anarchy! If there's no librarian, then there's no library. And if there's no library, then where are you going to get your books? And how can you have a school without books?

CRAWFORD: I've got a book... somewhere. How many do I need?

*(The OTHER TWO COACHES just look at her and shrug and then return to their stats.)*

SPAWN: Well, Mr. Nagnel, I suppose if we're going to get rid of somebody, it would be you.

NAGNEL: That would be just fine. You go right ahead and do that. But I've got my CDL. *(HE takes his driver's license out of his coat pocket and holds it up as proof, and then puts it back)* How many of you have a CDL? *(HE waits a beat, with a chuckle)* I thought so!

ROTHCHILD: I don't even know what a CDL is!

NAGNEL: *(just a slight bit condescending)* It's a Commercial Drivers License, son. And it means that I can teach drivers' ed. *(with another chuckle)* And drivers' ed is mandated by the school board of this here district. Ha! *(HE sits)*

*(MR. HARMON returns, HE crosses to the podium.)*

HARMON: OK.

RICHARDS: *(standing up)* Um... Mr. Harmon?

HARMON: Not now.

RICHARDS: Oh. *(SHE sits, and almost immediately stands back up)* Do you know when?

HARMON: I'll let you know.

RICHARDS: Oh. OK. *(SHE sits)*

HARMON: As I was saying...

*(MRS. DORFMANN enters.)*

DORFMANN: *(reading from a notepad)* There's a Mr. Broyles on the phone.

HARMON: Who's he?

MRS. DORFMANN: He's a realtor.

HARMON: So?

DORFMANN: He says he has someone who wants to make an offer on the school.

HARMON: Oh, good grief! Tell him the for sale sign in front of the school was a prank.

DORFMANN: He says the school's been multi-listed.

HARMON: What?

DORFMANN: Apparently, it's listed on the Internet.

HARMON: Well, I'm sure that's a prank, too.

DORFMANN: I think you'd better talk to him.

HARMON: Why don't you?

DORFMANN: Because that's not my job.

*(SHE turns around and leaves. MR. HARMON hesitates for a moment.)*

HARMON: Good grief!

*(HARMON then follows MRS. DORFMANN out the door. MOST of the TEACHERS will once again look nervously at each other. MR. YORKSHIRE will take out the newspaper HE was looking at earlier and start looking through it again.)*

NELSON: *(off hand to MR. YORKSHIRE)* I hear Horton's is hiring.

*(YORKSHIRE turns to NELSON. The following conversation starts out just between them, but several OTHERS should be actively listening and even taking notes.)*

YORKSHIRE: No kiddin'? What do they pay?

NELSON: \$12.00 an hour to start. *(or whatever is about \$4.00 above minimum wage)*

SPAWN: Do they have benefits?

NELSON: Only accidental death.

LOPEZ: What do you have to do?

NELSON: Does it matter?

*(After a beat, MR. GRUNDY will lean back in his chair and cross his arms across his chest, smiling as wide as you can get.)*

SPAWN: *(after a beat)* What are you looking so smug about?

MR. GRUNDY: Because I can't be fired.

DEEDLEMEYER: It's not fired. It's laid off.

FENSTER: Forever.

ROTHCHILD: And there's a difference?

ZOLTZ: So what makes you think it can't be you?

GRUNDY: Because I'm the only Special Ed teacher, and they have to have Special Ed.

LOPEZ: Why do we have to have Special Ed?

GRUNDY: State law.

LOPEZ: Oh.

DEEDLEMEYER: Isn't Mrs. Thompson certified in Special Ed?

ZOLTZ: I think she has a life-time certificate.

DEEDLEMEYER: Mrs. Thompson...

*(MRS. THOMPSON, who has been knitting, doesn't hear.)*

DEEDLEMEYER: *(louder)* Mrs. Thompson!

*(SHE still doesn't hear.)*

EVERYBODY: Mrs. Thompson!

THOMPSON: *(startled)* Yes?

ZOLTZ: Are you certified in Special Ed?

THOMPSON: Why would I need to be certified to wrestle Zed? And who is Zed?

ZOLTZ: *(even louder)* Special Ed!

THOMPSON: Oh! Special Ed. What about Special Ed?

ZOLTZ: (*all but shouting*) Are you certified in Special Ed?

THOMPSON: Yes.

(*THOMPSON returns to her knitting.*)

GRUNDY: But she's the music teacher! She can't be the Special Ed teacher, too.

DEEDLEMEYER: Who says we need a music teacher?

ZOLTZ: If they get rid of the music teacher, she'd get first shot at Special Ed.

GRUNDY: You're kidding me!

ZOLTZ: Nope. Seniority.

DEEDLEMEYER: What else can you teach?

GRUNDY: I'm certified in History.

ZOLTZ: How long have you been here?

GRUNDY: (*nervous*) Four years.

DEEDLEMEYER: How long's Mr. Pitney been here?

PITNEY: (*hearing his name*) What?

DEEDLEMEYER: How long you been here?

PITNEY: Three years.

ZOLTZ: There you go. You can bump him.

PITNEY: (*still not certain what's going on*) What?

ZOLTZ: (*to PITNEY*) Are you certified in anything else?

PITNEY: (*looking up from the comic book HE's reading*) English. Why?

ZOLTZ: Hey, Fenster... how long you been here?

FENSTER: Two years. Why?

ZOLTZ: (*to PITNEY*) It's OK. You're safe.

PITNEY: From what?

ZOLTZ: Never mind.

PITNEY: Never mind? Never mind *what*?

ZOLTZ: Really. Really. It doesn't matter. If Mrs. Thompson's position gets eliminated, then she can bump Grundy and he can bump you and you can bump Fenster.

PITNEY: (*returning to his comic book*) Oh.

FENSTER: (*suddenly alarmed*) Who can I bump?

ROTHCHILD: I bet it's me!

DEEDLEMEYER: That depends. What are you certified in?

FENSTER: I'm only certified in English, Speech, Drama, Debate, Journalism, and Yearbook. And I already do all those things!

ZOLTZ: Let's see... That means you're only certified to teach English.

The only other English teacher is Miss Zane... (*SHE will not respond*) and she taught Moses. I guess there's nobody you can bump.

FENSTER: (*totally dejected*) Then... then it's me!

*(FENSTER takes a flask out of her purse and takes a drink just as HARMON enters the room.)*

HARMON: Mrs. Fenster! What are you doing?

FENSTER: Apparently anything I want.

*(HARMON notices MISS LOWRY, who has several papers out in front of her.)*

HARMON: *(to FENSTER)* Put that away. And Miss Lowry? Are you grading papers?

*(SEVERAL TEACHERS quickly shuffle the papers THEY were grading, trying to hide them.)*

HARMON: Miss Lowry, are you grading papers?

LOWRY: Are you kidding? I'm updating my résumé.

*(MRS. LEECH, pushes open the door and takes a half step into the room.)*

MRS. LEECH: *(wiping her hands on her apron)* I need for you to tell me what you want me to do.

HARMON: About what?

LEECH: About lunch.

HARMON: What about lunch?

LEECH: The truck didn't come today.

HARMON: So?

LEECH: So, the only thing we got for lunch tomorrow is pickled beets and cream of broccoli soup.

HARMON: What?

LEECH: State regulations. We can't feed the students the same thing two days in a row.

HARMON: What do you want me to do?

LEECH: You need to call the distributor.

HARMON: Why can't you?

LEECH: *(as SHE's leaving)* Because it's not my job.

HARMON: Well, it will just have to wait.

LEECH: Fine, but I go home at 4:30, and if you haven't figured it out by then... well, then, don't come complaining to me when there's nothing for lunch tomorrow. *(SHE turns and leaves in a huff.)*

HARMON: *(as HE follows her out)* Mrs. Leech!

NAGNEL: *(after a beat)* First it was having us work an extra day without pay, and now this!

ZIMBOSKI: Are you still going on about having to work that extra day?

NAGNEL: We're still having to work it aren't we. And we're still not getting paid.

FENSTER: *(taking another drink)* At least you still have a job.

YORKSHIRE: Maybe.

ZIMBOSKI: I don't see what the big deal is.

NAGNEL: What's the big deal? The big deal is that we're not getting paid for the work we're doing! That's a whole day's pay!

ZIMBOSKI: It's only 29 dollars.

NAGNEL: It's not the money. It's the principle of the thing.

CRAWFORD: Oh, Mr. Harmon couldn't help it. He was just doing what the Superintendent told him to do.

YORKSHIRE: Not that kind of principal.

*(HARMON enters on YORKSHIRE's line.)*

CRAWFORD: Oh.

HARMON: Pardon me?

CRAWFORD and YORKSHIRE: Nothing.

DONALDSON-CLARK-ROGERS-NORTON-GREEN: Listen to you all! We didn't get into teaching for the money.

*(EVERYBODY, including HARMON, will noisily, but quickly, turn their chairs and look at her like SHE's an idiot. It should be absolutely quiet once THEY get turned.)*

*(after a beat; self-righteous)* Well, I didn't get in it for the money.

ZIMBOSKI: That's because your husband's rich.

DONALDSON-CLARK-ROGERS-NORTON-GREEN: They all weren't.

HARMON: Now, nobody's suggesting anybody take a cut in pay.

FENSTER: *(saluting with her flask)* Anybody but one!

NAGNEL: Before fifteen minutes ago nobody was talking about laying anybody off.

*(MRS. OLSEN and MRS. OLSENN appear at the door, each subtly trying to elbow the other so SHE doesn't have to be the one to peak around the other.)*

MRS. OLSEN: Umm... Mr. Harmon...

HARMON: Yes, Mrs. Olsen?

MRS. OLSENN: I'm not Mrs. Olsen.

OLSEN: I am.

HARMON: But aren't your names the same?

OLSEN: Her's gots two "N's" at the end. Mine don't.

OLSENN: Mine's Olsenn (*SHE stretches out the final N*)

OLSEN: And mine's just Olsen.

HARMON: What can I do for you ladies?

BOTH: Who?

HARMON: For you.

BOTH: Oh.

OLSEN: We need to know what you want us to do with them goats.

HARMON: What goat?

OLSENN: Them goats.

OLSEN: There's twelve of 'em.

OLSENN: An even dozen.

HARMON: There are twelve goats... Where?

OLSEN: In the lunchroom.

HARMON: Why are there twelve goats in the lunchroom?

OLSENN: Because the auditorium was locked.

HOOPER: You can't put goats in the auditorium!

OLSEN: Why not?

HOOPER: Because we're having our talent show in there. It's already set up!

NELSON: (*off hand*) No it's not.

HOOPER: (*standing*) What?!

NELSON: We took it down.

HOOPER: What?!

CRAWFORD: We had to take it down for the basketball game.

HOOPER: (*livid*) There wasn't a basketball game scheduled!

CRAWFORD: We just added it last week. It's tonight.

MRS. HOOPER: The talent show is tonight!

NELSON: I guess you'll have to have to reschedule it.

HOOPER: We can't reschedule a talent show! Why don't you reschedule your basketball game? Why did you even schedule it at all!

NELSON: Well... it's basketball...

HOOPER: (*turning on HARMON*) You! You let them!

HARMON: Well... I... um...

(*HOOPER stands there, getting increasingly more tense and shaking until SHE finally lets out a loud...*)

HOOPER: Augggghhhhhh!!! (*SHE will return to her seat and gently pound her head on the table before putting her hands over her head, resigned*)

OLSEN: Mr. Harmon...

HARMON: (*thankful to have an out*) Yes Mrs. Olsen-n-n-n

OLSEN: I'm Olsen.

HARMON: Oh.

OLSENN: *(to HARMON)* You probably better come and do somethin'.

Mrs. Leech is pretty angry about having them goats in her lunchroom. They already done ate the pickled beets and they've started in on the cream of broccoli soup.

NELSON: *(aside)* That should take care of 'em.

HARMON: Oh, good grief! Well... tell her I'll be down there in just a minute.

OLSEN: OK, but she ain't gonna like it.

*(THEY exit.)*

PITNEY: *(having a sudden panic attack)* I can't take it! I just can't take it!

HOOPER: *(lifting her head)* You're preaching to the choir.

FENSTER: *(trying to comfort him with as little enthusiasm as possible)*

It's OK. *(SHE offers him the flask, which HE won't take, so SHE just shrugs and takes another drink)*

PITNEY: All I wanted to do was teach! I can't do anything else! What else is a teacher qualified to do?

NELSON: Well, Horton's is hiring...

PITNEY: I don't want to gut chickens! I want to do something meaningful, like teach sophomores about the Peloponnesian War!

YORKSHIRE: *(to HARMON)* If he cracks... well... wouldn't that be the one?

PITNEY: I'm not cracking up! I'm not losing it!

HARMON: Nobody said anything about replacing you, Mr. Pitney.

*(During the next line or so, YORKSHIRE will sneak up on PITNEY and make a sudden face at him to try and scare him. PITNEY will shield his face with his arms and then move away. YORKSHIRE will then follow PITNEY around the room, trying to spook him.)*

OLSEN: *(sticking her head in the room)* Mrs. Leech says not to worry about them goats anymore.

OLSENN: *(shoving in around OLSEN)* And she says you don't need to worry about lunch tomorrow.

EUGENE: *(sticking his head in as well)* And she says you don't need to worry about that rat, either.

*(MR. HARMON rubs his face with his hands as THEY leave.)*

NELSON: *(getting up; HE has a paper bag in his hand that HE's holding in preparation for blowing up and popping, only we don't know that yet)* But that's true, ain't it?

HARMON: *(after a beat; looks up over his hands)* What?

NELSON: If one of us were to go crazy... then that would be the one... Right?

*(YORKSHIRE will spook PITNEY right now, and HE will jump especially creatively.)*

NELSON: None of us would have to worry about losing our job, then, would we?

PITNEY: *(near hysterical)* I'm not going crazy!

HARMON: Nobody's saying that anybody's crazy, Mr. Pitney.

PITNEY: *(pointing at YORKSHIRE)* Tell him that!

NELSON: *(HE has moved behind MRS. THOMPSON)* Or maybe if one of us were to suddenly... have a heart attack and die?

*(NELSON quickly blows up the sack and pops it behind MRS. THOMPSON. SHE lifts her head up slightly from her knitting and looks around.)*

THOMPSON: *(noticing NELSON)* Yes?

HARMON: Mr. Nelson! Stop that! And Mr. Pitney, for crying out loud! Be a man!

DONALDSON-CLARK-ROGERS-NORTON-GREEN: I beg your pardon, Mr. Harmon, but some of the ladies here take exception to such blatantly sexist comments.

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