

# FOR A PAIR OF PROM SHOES

By Jerry Rabushka

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## CHARACTERS

*(9F, 10M, 17e, many doubling/tripling possibilities plus silent roles.)*

### FEMALE

SADIE BENSON	A high school senior
CARLA	Her sister, about age 13 or 14.
HER MOM	Colleen
WIFE	At the international grocery
MRS. BARTON	Head of airport shipping
ANNIE	A high school student, studious
JESS	A high school student, not so studious
MARCH 15	An entry in Sadie's diary
APRIL 15	

### MALE

SADIE'S DAD	Barney
HUSBAND	At the international grocery
MATT	A trucker
HOYT	A trucker
JADEN	A high school student
ISAAC	A high school student
MAX	A high school student
JIM	A prison warden in Microbia
TWO POLICE OFFICERS	

**EITHER**

CUSTOMER	At the grocery
CLERK	At the grocery
BAGGAGE HANDER	At the Airport shipping service
TICKETING AGENT	At the airport
MARCH 23	From the diary
MARCH 26	
RAX	A citizen of Microbia
JAX	
TRAX	
SHOE ADMINISTRATOR	
SOLDIER 1	
SOLDIER 2	
SOLDIER 3	
MR./MISS HARMON	A U.S. Government official
YAX	A Police Officer
AMBASSADOR	To Microbia
RILEY CASTER	A TV news reporter
CITIZENS	Of Microbia (small speaking roles)
PROTESTERS	(speaking roles, act 2)
TWO PRISON GUARDS	(non speaking, can be doubled)

*\*Non speaking roles, can be played by cast members not speaking in a particular scene, or others: Passengers at the airport, citizens of Microbia, camera operator, friends of Sadie and Carla in the final scene.*

## PROPS

Boxes for shoes at the grocery store

Luggage

Sandwich

A large “to-go” cup

Hardback “Readers Digest” book (any thick hardback will do)

Lots of shoes

School supplies and backpacks for the students

Plate of food in prison

Bullhorn

Stacks of papers, other office paraphernalia, for the government officials

Equipment for the TV reporter... for example microphone, etc...

## COSTUME NOTES

The citizens of Microbia can have colorful and mismatched costumes, as if someone went thrift store shopping and didn't care if anything matched.

The police and military characters should have some sort of uniform.

The students can dress according to their personality, but “street” clothes should do fine for them.

This play provides an opportunity for many of the smaller roles to stand out in how they dress, behave, and do their hair; roles like Mrs. Barton, the ticket agent, and Matt & Hoyt, while they have limited stage time, can certainly have their appearance played up – it's important that the many characters Sadie and her friends run into have distinct looks and personalities.

## NOTES ON THE SET

This play is set in many different locations, but many of these different locations are based on some players talking to others behind a desk or table. Therefore these scenes can use much of the same set pieces with small modifications... the author will suggest posters to put up for each of these scenes as a way of noting the location, plus it gives artistic students a chance to create. Since the play has a variety of locations, it may be best to “suggest” a location rather than building a large set, and let the audience fill in the rest with it’s imagination. Costuming, hair, and attitude will help convey a lot as well. (see costuming notes) Microbia can be a colorful and imaginative “foreign country,” with interesting plants and decorations, but also something that looks like a patchwork of leftovers.

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### SCENE 1

**SADIE is at home frantically running around looking for something; running from one side of the stage to the other, even off and back on again.**

SADIE: *(to whomever cares to listen)* Where are they? Where are they? People need to stop taking my stuff! *(shouts off stage)* Carla, what did you do with them?

CARLA: *(enters, a bit shaken up after all this yelling)* With what?

SADIE: You know exactly what! *(in her tizzy, THEY run into each other)*

CARLA: *(miffed)* Not really. What are you blaming me for this time?

SADIE: And why *would* you know? You've "borrowed" so much of my stuff how could you know at any given time exactly what missing item I'm referring to? *(SHE continues to stomp around and look for things)*

CARLA: *(following her, having fun with SADIE's distress)* Your sweater?

SADIE: No.

CARLA: Your Hillary Duff DVD collection? As if-

SADIE: Quiet! The neighbors will hear.

CARLA: Your diary!

SADIE: *(horrified, stops in her tracks to confront CARLA)* What? You're not even supposed to know I have that.

CARLA: *(quoting the diary, mocking)* February 15, I wonder if Jaden really likes me....

SADIE: Carla! You're not supposed to be reading that.

CARLA: Why are you so bonkers? I haven't seen you this worked up since the dog ate your diorama. Which was your fault for making it out of Alpo.

SADIE: My prom shoes!

CARLA: I can't borrow your shoes.

SADIE: You can, and you did.

CARLA: You're two sizes smaller than me.

SADIE: Then what, Bigfoot? You're gonna get it!

*(SHE starts to chase after CARLA who fends her off)*

CARLA: *(quoting as THEY scuffle; CARLA thinks it's funny that SHE can recite SADIE's diary)* February 26. I hope Carla never finds out I'm the one who scratched her Rihanna CD before she ripped it!

For a Pair of Prom Shoes – Page 7

SADIE: (*calling off stage, by now holding CARLA gruffly*) Mom! Carla's reading my diary!

MOM: (*enters, as if in a poetry recital, separating the two girls*) February 27, I hope my mother never finds out about that incident in intermediate algebra.

CARLA: February 28. I wonder how little algebra homework I can actually do before Mrs. Eason calls my mother about it.

SADIE: (*looks back and forth between MOM and CARLA, and realizing SHE's been caught, says loudly*) Where are my shoes?

MOTHER: What shoes? You have 40 pair.

SADIE: (*still aggravated and over-the-top high energy*) Thirty nine, thanks to someone stealing them. The shoes I wanted to wear to the prom.

MOTHER: You mean that one pair with the open toes and the flowers on it?

SADIE: (*exasperated, up to the front of the stage, and pouting*) Yes, that one pair with the open toes and the flowers on it.

MOM: (*full of conviction, after a short pause approaches SAIDE*) I put them in the shoe drop at the international grocery. They're going overseas to Microbia, for poor people who need them.

SADIE: You what? I wanted them for prom! You must have missed that passage when you were snooping in my diary.

MOM: Oh, there's plenty of passages I've discussed with your father already.

SADIE: (*storming away*) Shoes! Shoes!

MOM: (*following her*) You haven't worn them in two years.

SADIE: That's because I was saving them for the prom.

MOM: After two years, they're out of style.

SADIE: And discontinued by the manufacturer. I was going retro. I specifically told you not to touch my shoes!

MOM: The poor people of Microbia need them more than you do. I'll help you find another pair.

SADIE: I want *that* pair! They fit me perfectly! Why don't you ever listen to me?

CARLA: (*comes into the middle of them*) This should be good!

(*Both MOM and SADIE give CARLA a stern look and SHE backs off.*)

MOM: Why don't *you* ever listen to *me*? Sadie take out the trash, Sadie do the dishes. Sadie, do your intermediate algebra homework so you don't flunk it three times like your father did.

SADIE: "Mom, *don't* mess with my shoes. Mom, *don't* come in to my room. Mom *don't* read my diary!" While you are piling the work on, I am

specifically and systematically relieving you of responsibility. I'm making less work for you, yet you choose to do it anyway.

MOM: You have entirely too much stuff. It's time to help those in need.

SADIE: No one *needs* my shoes. They don't have prom in Microbia. All the girls are married at 15. Here I'm an adolescent, there I'm an old maid.

MOM: (*SHE's over this!*) I said I'll get you a new pair. What kind of weirdo's going to be looking at your feet anyway?

SADIE: I want *those* shoes. (*thinks quickly*) Well, there's no time to waste.

CARLA: Now I'm scared.

SADIE: We've got to get them back. I need to go to the store.

MOM: Sadie, you are not going to embarrass me like that.

SADIE: Those are my shoes, and yet...

MOM: And yet, I'm your mother...

SADIE: How is you being my mother at all applicable to the fact that those are my shoes?

MOM: Because I've obviously spoiled you. I need to undo the damage of overindulgent parenting. Hence, I'm going to donate items you never use to people who need it. You haven't missed that red skirt, the purple jeans, or the Hillary Duff DVD.

CARLA: Nobody misses the Hillary Duff DVD.

SADIE: I'm going to donate your romance novel collection. I haven't seen you kiss dad in years.

MOM: Some things are private.

SADIE: Like my diary.

MOM: "February 28. Everyone keeps borrowing my stuff. I don't know if I have a closet or a library." Now you know.

SADIE: Come on Carla, let's go undo this damage. (pulls CARLA along with her; CARLA isn't thrilled about this)

**SCENE 2**

***The entrance to the international grocery store. There are a few boxes full of shoes and perhaps clothing. If you don't have enough shoes, fill up the parts of the box no one sees with something else and put the shoes on top. Non speaking characters may, at the director's discretion, enter and exit the store and watching the goings on. A poster or banner can say something such as "Microbia Shoe Drop" or "International Grocery." Feel free to use your city name in the poster.***

SADIE: *(enters, while CARLA is a bit nervous and holding back)* Okay this can't be hard. We act like we're putting something in when we're actually taking something out.

CARLA: It sounds like you, on a date.

SADIE: *(moves CARLA towards the shoes)* Carla! Just do it.

CARLA: *(runs away)* You do it. You never wanted me to tag along but now I'm the senior hench-girl.

SADIE: Because if you get caught, I'm going to run.

HUSBAND: *(HE's not from America, HE and his WIFE wear colorful clothing that would signify THEY are from another country and THEY speak with a bit of an accent)* Excuse me miss, can you tell me where you keep your hummus?

CARLA: *(doesn't know what hummus is, and SHE's offended)* My what? That's personal.

WIFE: Your hummus.

CARLA: That is so offensive!

SADIE: We don't work here. And I don't know.

HUSBAND: I won't tolerate such insult because we come from another country.

SADIE: Then maybe I don't speak your language. *(loud, and in his face)* Me don't work here!

*(A CUSTOMER walks in and stands over SADIE and CARLA.)*

CARLA: What's hummus? It sounds disgusting.

HUSBAND: If you don't work here, then what are you doing sorting through the Microbia shoe dump? *(shouting and pulling SADIE away from the shoes.)* Thief! Thief!

SADIE: *(quieting up HUSBAND, pushing him off)* I'm not sorting, I'm searching.

CUSTOMER: *(cloying, putting some shoes into a box and feeling all too good about it)* I always bring my old shoes here knowing some poor person in Microbia can wear and enjoy then.

For a Pair of Prom Shoes – Page 10

HUSBAND: So you let other people wear your ratty old shoes. (*mocking CUSTOMER*) They're not good enough for me, so let the poor deal with it.

WIFE: And you wonder why people hate America.

(*SHE starts examining the shoes, CUSTOMER takes them away angrily and puts them back in the box.*)

CARLA: Who hates America?

HUSBAND: People. People who know nothing about America hate America.

WIFE: (*snippy*) But if you give people ratty shoes, they hate America even more.

HUSBAND: (*grandiose*) You give people new shoes, America is beloved!

WIFE: (*tossing CUSTOMER's shoes away so CUSTOMER, over the next lines, has to retrieve them, and put them back underneath the shoes already there so no one can get them*) Ratty shoes, not so much.

SADIE: My mother gave away my prom shoes and I want them back.

HUSBAND: Americans are spoiled and selfish.

WIFE: Acquisitive. You should know what we went through before we came to your country.

HUSBAND: Waiting in line for butter. Rancid.

WIFE: Clothes. With holes.

HUSBAND: Milk. Sour.

WIFE: Stockings. With runs.

HUSBAND: Wives. Look what I wound up with.

SADIE: Once I waited in line for some after-Thanksgiving sales, and they were all out of X-Boxes.

CARLA: If you don't like America why are you here?

HUSBAND: Lots of stuff, no line.

SADIE: (*looking frantically in the box*) Where are my shoes? They just got here yesterday. (*calls to a CLERK, who enters, costumed in a grocery store uniform with a name tag*) Pardon me! Did you just happen to see a certain pair of open-toed flowered shoes come in here yesterday?

CLERK: I believe the pickup went out this morning. These are the *new* old shoes.

SADIE: That's a lot of shoes.

CUSTOMER: (*rhapsodizing*) I was sad because I had no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet.

SADIE: (*had enough of this CUSTOMER, rifles through to the shoes and tosses them away again during her speech*) If he doesn't have any

For a Pair of Prom Shoes – Page 11

feet then he doesn't need any shoes and anyway your philosophizing does not help me one iota!

WIFE: (*grabs SADIE*) Where is the hummus, young lady?

SADIE: (*breaking free*) I don't know. I still don't work here. And I haven't been hired in the past three minutes.

WIFE: Still you should know where the hummus is.

SADIE: I don't even know *what* it is, let alone *where* it is. (*Addresses the CLERK, finds this situation, and world politics in general, annoying*)

Maybe you can help. Where do the shoes go?

CLERK: Microbia, I hope. I hope their government doesn't steal them and give them to their friends.

SADIE: Where did the truck go? Why is this so hard for everyone?

CUSTOMER: Because no one can believe you care so much.

SADIE: (*severe*) Did you go to your senior prom?

CUSTOMER: No, I must say, no.

SADIE: Then your perspective becomes irrelevant, immediately.

CLERK: I believe the shoes went to the depot.

SADIE: What depot?

CLERK: The truck depot. Wherever trucks go when they leave here. I don't know. Once the shoes go walkin'...

SADIE: You're so unhelpful.

WIFE: (*grabs a shoe from the box and starts to hit the CLERK with it*) Why is it so hard to get help with the hummus!

CLERK: (*fending her off, HUSBAND stops her as well*) Do you want it from Lebanon, Israel, Greece, or Cyprus? We keep it all in different aisles to avoid an international incident. People who get it from one country don't want to chance meeting up with people who get it from another. You wouldn't think that selling hummus could be so risky. (*whispers, to HUSBAND*) We have the same problem with jelly.

SADIE: (*taking attention back to her, loudly*) There's going to be an international incident right here right now if you don't tell me where the truck depot is!

HUSBAND: Third and Harrison.

SADIE: How would you know?

HUSBAND: I own it.

SADIE: Come on, Carla., We've got to get those shoes.

WIFE: I have shoes for every day of the month, every time of the day. Morning, afternoon, evening, and fourthmeal. We love America!

(*looking over the shoes in the box, disdainful*) Those are crap.

CLERK: I think you'll want the hummus in aisle five.

WIFE: Where's it from?

CLERK: Brazil. (*THEY look at him quizzically.*) Brazil, Indiana.

**SCENE 3**

***At the Truck Depot. MATT and HOYT are seated behind a desk. THEY wear ratty clothes... holes in t-shirts, etc. Possibly THEY haven't showered in awhile. A poster or sign behind can identify this as a truck depot with a slogan such as "Going Your Way," or something funnier.***

MATT: *(HE's got a giant plastic cup and HE's slurping up the bottom of it loudly.)* So I says to her... Hoyt, git this, I says to her...

HOYT: *(HE's eating a sub sandwich, noisily)* You says? Matt, you says?

MATT: What of it? I says. I says to her...

HOYT: It's "I said to her." I said.

MATT: Are you making fun of the way I talks?

HOYT: I'm correcting you so you learn. Just because you drive a truck doesn't mean you have to talk like an idiot.

MATT: Hoyt, do you wantsa hear my story or dontcha?

HOYT: I can't stand your grammar!

MATT: What's wrong with my grammar! I loves my grammar. My auntie, now she's kind of cantankerous. So that's what I says to her... *(notices CARLA and SADIE, who have not come on stage yet)* whoa! Look! Women. Young women. She looks like about 8<sup>th</sup> grade! *(long slurp in the bottom of his cup)*

HOYT: *(pulls the cup away from him)* You should be in 8<sup>th</sup> grade!

*(The GIRLS enter, a bit nervous, SADIE pushing CARLA along.)*

MATT: I already was. Three times. *(sweetly, to CARLA and SADIE)* May I help you ladies?

CARLA: I don't like this.

SADIE: Buck up, Carla, and don't be a sissy.

CARLA: I *am* a sissy. Mom would have a conniption.

MATT: I had a conniption once. Then we gots'd a poodle. Did your conniption pee on the carpet?

HOYT: Matt, stop being stupid!

MATT: *You're* stupid!

HOYT: *You're* stupid.

MATT: You're stupider.

HOYT: You're stupidest.

MATT: You put the truck in reverse in the fast line.

HOYT: So I got from Utah to West Virginia without turning around.

SADIE: What did you do with the shoes you took yesterday?

HOYT: What shoes?

For a Pair of Prom Shoes – Page 13

SADIE: The shoes you picked up from the international grocery to go to Microbia?

HOYT: Well, young lady, I would suppose they're on their way to Microbia. Or do you think they got "tied up" on the way? *(starts to laugh)*

SADIE: That's not funny.

CARLA: Yes it is.

SADIE: Carla!

CARLA: Okay, so it's not. Who made you goddess of humor?

MATT: Tied up... hee hee.

HOYT: He's slow.

MATT: Tied up... hee hee. We took 'em to the depot and then they walks themselves to the airport. They're shoes after all. Here, it's Coke and Dr. Pepper. *(hands his cup to CARLA, who is disgusted and puts it back on the desk)*

HOYT: Be that as it may, your shoes are no longer available at this depot. You'll have to talk to the shipping department at the airport. Those Microbians. They hate America but they sure like our shoes.

HUSBAND: *(the man from the international grocery enters)* Matt, have you done your reading?

MATT: *(suddenly HE's nice)* Yes, sir.

HUSBAND: Good. Tonight we review chapter six. Proper use of pronouns. *(to the GIRLS)* I'm teaching him English.

CARLA: But... you're not from here. And he is.

HUSBAND: In my country, we learn English. In your country, you learn disrespect. *(looks them over, shakes his head.)* You girls show up in the strangest places. *(exit)*

SADIE: Let's go, Carla. We've got to hit the airport.

CARLA: I'd rather stay here. These guys are funny.

SADIE: Carla!

CARLA: And they make me feel smart.

SADIE: Now!

CARLA: I already have a mom to yell at me. All right.

MATT: *(another long loud slurp)* I've been wearing the same shoes for six years.

HOYT: No wonder you can't get a date. You're uncouth. *(takes a big bite of his sandwich as the scene blacks out)*

**SCENE 4**

***At the airport shipping department. This can use the same set as the Depot. A poster can say “airport shipping” with a drawing of an airplane or some other logo. Again feel free to use your city name as part of the poster.***

MRS. BARTON: *(a crusty old woman who’s been there for about 40 years and kept the same hairstyle and mode of dress as when SHE was hired. SHE speaks in a condescending monotone. SHE’s reading a very old hardback and a bit annoyed that SHE has to put it down.)*

May I help you? I’m Mrs. Barton, head of the shipping department. Are you sure you’re in the right place?

SADIE: I wanted to check on the shipment of shoes to Microbia.

CARLA: Specifically, did you see a pair of prom shoes go by?

SADIE: Open toed and flowered.

MRS. BARTON: Yes, I did, ma’am. Thanks to our x-ray machines, we see everything. *(laughs a bit) Everything!*

SADIE: Oh, thank you!

MRS. BARTON: *(sighs, the GIRLS are put off by her) Everything.*

Underwear, dirty underwear, disgusting underwear... lots and lots of underwear. This job used to be so refreshing before people started wearing underwear. *(goes back to reading)*

SADIE: *(with growing impatience... CARLA tries to escape but SADIE pulls her back)* The shoes!

MRS. BARTON: *(puts her book down)* Yes, I did see shoes. Open toed and flowered. I thought, what a hideous pair of shoes, and I pity, yes pity whoever gets them in Microbia. You only get one pair over there, you know. *(almost admonishing them)* And you had better hope the shoe fits, because you have to wear it either way. A size nine girl in size 8 shoes will grow up hating America. Forever. Not to mention the bunions.

SADIE: Please spare me the social studies class and get my shoes.

MRS. BARTON: *(quietly provocative)* You already have a pair.

SADIE: I have 39, but what of it?

MRS. BARTON: Then you don’t need *those!* Now, please let me continue reading my 1956 edition of *Reader’s Digest Condensed Mystery Novels*.

CARLA: You don’t understand my sister.

MRS. BARTON: *(gets up from her chair, frightening the GIRLS)* I do.

Spoiled and unwilling to share. *(THEY back away, and SHE sits down again)* Now, if you’ll excuse me, *(shows her book to them, slowly licks her finger and turns a page, which grosses CARLA out)* but the plot is thickening, while your presence is growing very... very... thin.

For a Pair of Prom Shoes – Page 15

SADIE: (*up to the desk, pleading*) I have 20 pair they can have if you can get my prom shoes. (*to CARLA*) And don't you dare tell Mother I said that.

MRS. BARTON: Well... right about now, the plane is taking off.

(*SHE turns and THEY all watch out a window, following it in the sky.*)

Wave!

(*THEY don't, MRS. BARTON gets belligerent.*)

I said wave!!!

(*THEY do, meekly.*)

SADIE: Now what do I do?

MRS. BARTON: You rejoice. That a young lady is a foreign country is far enough away that she doesn't know who forced her innocent feet into those very guilty shoes.

SADIE: (*almost in tears after all SHE's been through*) Those are my prom shoes! What am I supposed to do now?

MRS. BARTON: (*SHE puts a bookmark in the book, slams it shut, and plops it on her desk, and gets up again, approaching SADIE uncomfortably*) And what dress are you wearing with it? Pray tell me you won't donate that as well. Sometimes you have to consider fashion over charity.

CARLA: She didn't donate. Her mother did.

MRS. BARTON: Your mother is thoughtless. No wonder they hate us in Microbia.

SADIE: Do they really?

MRS. BARTON: We keep sending leftovers. Like a garbage dump. You don't want it, send it to Microbia!

HANDLER: (*enters*) Well, we got that batch on in time. That one pair of shoes? Ugggleeeee! The x-ray machine just about broke.

MRS. BARTON: (*with disgust*) They're hers.

HANDLER: (*walking around SADIE with disapproval*) They're *not* hers any more. I can see why you wanted to get rid of them. (*lightly pushes SADIE back*) But why inflict such misery on a foreign land?

SADIE: Let's go home. I need to pout.

CARLA: Can't you just wear the Naturalizers?

SADIE: And what, dance to Lawrence Welk?

CARLA: Let's go. (*to the OTHERS*) You're all creepy.

(*SADIE and CARLA exit hurriedly.*)

MRS. BARTON: *(SHE sits back down and opens the book)* This chapter is really scary. *(SHE shrieks in terror, then goes right back to normal)*  
See what I mean?

HANDLER: Can I borrow that when you're done!

### SCENE 5

**Three boys, JADEN, ISAAC, and MAX are “hanging out” at high school. JADEN is the “cool guy,” more up to date and put together; ISAAC sports the “tough guy” look but HE can’t quite pull it off, and isn’t really tough at all; MAX is more a “math geek.” His clothes don’t necessarily fit or match and his hair isn’t anywhere near in place. This scene can be exterior, such as on a flight of steps, or interior, in a study hall or cafeteria/snack area. As it starts out, THEY’re all a bit downcast.**

JADEN: Three CDs, my winter coat...

MAX: My poster collection...

ISAAC: My underwear and socks...

JADEN: Ew!

ISAAC: *(sigh)* Unbleached.

MAX: Soon everything I own is going to be donated to Microbia.

ISAAC: My mother just decides I’m done using something, and off it goes.

JADEN: *(this is all hearsay, but HE likes to repeat it)* Do you know what they eat there? Raw fish heads. With eyes in.

ISAAC: And octopus tentacles.

MAX: I like octopus tentacles.

*(The OTHERS scoot away.)*

JADEN: *(after a pause HE takes a few steps and thinks)* Do you think Sadie would go with me to the prom?

ISAAC: Sure

MAX: Sure.

*(Pause, MAX and ISAAC share a glance and shake their heads.)*

ISAAC: Nope.

MAX: Nope.

ISAAC: Ask her.

MAX: We need the laugh. *(HE starts to giggle, a look from JADEN stops that quickly.)*

For a Pair of Prom Shoes – Page 17

JADEN: *(throws up his hands)* Our parents are thieves. They give only to take away.

*(JESS and ANNIE, two students, enter. From their behavior and mode of dress, we can see that JESS is more “social” and ANNIE is more studious. JESS moves around a lot more, whereas ANNIE is more still, JESS might wear jeans while Annie prefers a skirt or dress. Still, ANNIE has a style about her and people enjoy her company.)*

ANNIE: Why so glum?

ISAAC: Jaden wants to ask Sadie to the prom.

ANNIE: *(thinking over all the ramifications)* Jaden wants to ask Sadie to the prom.

JESS: *(thinks this is ridiculous)* Jaden wants to ask Sadie to the prom.

ANNIE and JESS: *(THEY both laugh and repeat it)* Jaden wants to ask Sadie to the prom!

JADEN: *(a bit embarrassed)* Well, if you're gonna lose, lose big.

ISAAC: *(approaches ANNIE)* Annie, will you go with me?

ANNIE: *(walks away, with a laugh)* Me, with you? Annie... with Isaac...

*(ISAAC is disappointed and walks away.)*

JESS: Isaac! *(runs up to ISAAC)* I will!

ANNIE: *(turns back around on JESS)* I didn't have a chance to answer, thank you.

JESS: You'll just say no. You always say no. *(SHE gives ANNIE a “talk to the hand” gesture and walks away, saying flippantly)* Then you stay at home on prom night saying you don't have a date.

ANNIE: Jess! I was going to say yes!

JESS: Yeah, Annie, whatever.

ISAAC: *(hopeful)* You were?

ANNIE: *(smiling)* Ha! *(serious)* No.

ISAAC: Well, Jess, if you don't mind being second choice...

JESS: My understanding is you've already asked 14 different girls, but, ok, I'll go. *(to ANNIE)* Your loss.

ANNIE: My loss is now *your* loss. *(a bit self absorbed)* I'm waiting for Bobby Bland.

MAX: Bobby Bland isn't going. His mom donated his prom tux to Microbia.

ANNIE: Then I'm not going either. Unlike all of you, I won't settle.

JESS: You'd better. You're about to graduate high school without ever having had a date.

MAX: Join the club.

JESS: Never?

For a Pair of Prom Shoes – Page 18

MAX: There's plenty of us in this school who don't date, but the rest of the class either doesn't notice, or makes fun of us for thinking we deserve it. So, yes... prom without Max. Like you care. (*holds up his math book*) Anyway, math problems are much easier to solve than girl problems.

(*SADIE enters, on her way to a class.*)

So, Jaden, here you go. Perhaps *you* can have one date before graduation. (*still annoyed with JESS*) Tell you what, just leave your cell phone on and I'll experience it vicariously.

ANNIE: You're bitter.

JADEN: Well... it's now or... later. Sadie... (*HE goes up to her, too nervous, accidentally running into her and throwing her off balance; SHE falls to the floor and some of her books go flying.*) Sadie, would you like to go to the prom?

(*Blackout, except for a dim light on SADIE, still on the ground, and a voice over of her MARCH 15 diary entry.*)

MARCH 15: "March 15—I would give anything if Jaden asked me to the prom. Of course, I can't let him know I like him, and I can't let him know I'm interested. If I say yes too quickly, he'll think I like him. If I say no, he'll think I don't like him. I wish there was a way my feelings weren't part of this at all."

SADIE: (*to the VOICE*) Sure, I'll go.

MARCH 15: What if I say yes and he says no? What if he says no in front of a whole bunch of people? What if I get too tongue tied and I can't say yes and he asks someone else right before I say yes and she says yes and then I say yes too late and then he knows I like him but now I can't go with him anyway and... and...

JADEN: (*shakes her lightly*) Sadie... wake up.

SADIE: (*getting up, THEY both pick up her books*) Oh... what?

JADEN: I said, and this is the last time I'll ever ask this question in my life: would you like to go to the prom with me?

(*Long pause, and SADIE takes her books, sits down in a chair or on the steps and starts to cry.*)

ISAAC: That looks like a no.

SADIE: No...

ISAAC: Like I said.

SADIE: No, it's not a no.

JADEN: Is it a yes?

For a Pair of Prom Shoes – Page 19

JESS: (*jumping in front of JADEN*) I'll go with you!

ANNIE: You already have a date!

JESS: You know how boys are. You need three prom dates. (*goes to JADEN*) One will cancel at the last minute, (*goes to ISAAC*) and one will say he's on his way but never show up, and (*goes to MAX*) hopefully the third will make it worth your while. But (*leaves all the BOYS in the lurch*) you never know who's going to do what until the day of. (*goes to SADIE*) Sadie, what's wrong?

SADIE: I mean... I can't go to the prom. My mother gave my prom shoes to the poor people in Microbia and now I can't go.

ANNIE: But why? The poor people in Microbia don't even go to prom!

MAX: Exactly. They can't afford a prom, so what do they need shoes for? What kind of backwards country is this?

ISAAC: It's like wearing leather to a vegan restaurant.

SADIE: My life is horrible. Has anyone ever endured suffering like I have?

JESS: Well... When I was seven my favorite aunt died of pancreatic cancer, but that's nothing in comparison to this.

ANNIE: My favorite aunt was in a coma for 15 years after a car accident, and then she died. I never even knew her.

MAX: Then how was she your favorite aunt?

ANNIE: Because my aunt who was conscious? She was horrible. But all I'm saying is...

SADIE: Well again, none of those people needed prom shoes. I keep hearing stories about people who don't need shoes. Frankly, I can't relate.

JADEN: I had a cousin who got a shoelace caught in an airplane hatch right when they were closing the door.

SADIE: Finally! Relevance.

JADEN: He flew from Jacksonville to Charlotte hanging from the outside of the plane. If he didn't have the shoes, he'd have been better off.

ANNIE: Don't you think you're over-reacting. Just slightly? I mean, I'm materialistic and all, but, if your mom gives away your shoes, you just nag her to get you a new pair.

JESS: It's like when a girl steals your boyfriend, you get a better looking one. Out of spite.

MAX: Out of spite?

JESS: I find spite to be a great motivator. My mother called me a good student so I started flunking just to prove her wrong. Then she called me a dunce, so now I get A's just to aggravate her.

ISAAC: I really need to think twice about this prom date.

SADIE: (*resolute*) I'm going to get them back!

JADEN: You are?

For a Pair of Prom Shoes – Page 20

SADIE: (*getting hold of herself*) Jaden, I'm going to the prom with you, and in my chosen pair of shoes. I have a valid passport from the class spring break trip to Tijuana last year, so... I'm going to Microbia. If anyone wants to come with me, then I suggest we call to make some reservations.

MAX: I suggest you book online, it's cheaper.

SADIE: I can't. My mom checks my computer, but she has yet to check my cell phone.

ANNIE: Ah, parents. They try to protect us, but they give us too much technology.

JESS: In the old days all you had was a diary people could read. Who does that anymore?

(*Blackout or freeze and MARCH 15 talks.*)

MARCH 15: I feel so old fashioned. I'm not electronic. What Sadie writes in me stays with me. And her nosy, snoopy mother. (*happily*) And when Sadie gets older, she won't have to worry that her blogs or photos will be an embarrassment to her, her family, or her employer.

JADEN: Sadie, you can't just pick up and go to Microbia.

SADIE: Jaden, do you want to go to the prom or not?

JADEN: I wanted to go with *you*, not your shoes.

SADIE: Too bad. I won't. I can't!... go without them. We're a pair.

MAX: Actually, the shoes are a pair. So together, you're a trio.

ISAAC: You'll have to leave a shoe at home.

SADIE: (*taking center stage*) My dream is to go to the prom in those shoes. My mother – whom I love dearly – has just donated my dream to Microbia. I need to follow my dream, grab it, and... (*dances a short bit*) boogie down.

JESS: (*following her*) Sadie, you're nuts!

SADIE: (*with a burst of energy, running back to the group*) Who's in?

ANNIE: In?

SADIE: Yes, in. Who wants to go with me to Microbia?

JESS: Not me. Women there have no rights.

MAX: Not me. I have a math test.

SADIE: Isaac?

ISAAC: Sorry. My dog has to poop.

JADEN: I'll go. It's my prom date after all.

ANNIE: I'll go too. Since I *don't* have a prom date – even though I have several offers to sift through on a daily basis – I'll just do an extra credit report for social studies!

JADEN: How do we tell our parents?

SADIE: We don't. We use the credit card our mothers trust us with and we go. But hurry! Once the shoes are passed out we'll have to go door to door like Cinderella's prince.

MAX: Can't you just get a pair on e-bay?

SADIE: My mind is made up!

ANNIE: I hear Microbia is a very tiny country. It shouldn't be hard to find.

ISAAC: Does prom really mean that much to you?

JESS: Do you even *go* to school here? Prom is everything!

MAX: What about homework?

JESS: Don't be ridiculous. (*goes to ISAAC*) Isaac *never* does homework, does he? That's what makes him so romantic!

ISAAC: (*pushing his book bag out of the way*) Yep. Who needs a future? There's no life after prom.

JESS: Exactly! When you turn 18 it's over! We need to have fun now!

SADIE: I couldn't agree more. And I don't want to live my life with the memory of prom in flip flops. (*grandly*) We're going to Microbia!

(*JADEN, SADIE and ANNIE high five as the scene blacks out.*)

## SCENE 6

***At SADIE's house, CARLA is quietly sneaking towards the door with a suitcase that's much bigger than SHE can handle conveniently. MOM is coming the other way, and THEY "conveniently" run into each other. CARLA's momentarily freaked out.***

MOM: Carla, where are you going?

CARLA: (*scared so that SHE jumps and drops or kicks over the suitcase*) To school.

MOM: You must have a lot of homework.

CARLA: I have a very long test today. And I have to take a diorama.

MOM: (*doesn't believe this*) You never did a diorama.

CARLA: I did it last night. It's hard to find a suitcase big enough to hold the Acropolis.

MOM: (*tries to get to the suitcase, CARLA keeps getting in the way*) What are you up to?

CARLA: My neck, in trouble, apparently. Um... Sadie and I are donating more of our stuff to Microbia.

MOTHER: (*suspicious*) Like what?

CARLA: Like all the stuff we don't use. And a few things *you* don't use either.

MOM: (*aggravated*) That's sweet, but...

SADIE: (*enters*) Mom!

MOM: *(goes to the suitcase)* Open the suitcase.

SADIE: *(grabs it away)* I don't think so. *(SADIE and MOM fight over possession of the suitcase)* You donate *my* stuff without asking. So you'll just have to take your chances. Carla, let's go. I don't want to be late for intermediate algebra.

MOM: Intermediate algebra is fourth period. *(calls to her husband)* Barney, come here and talk to our daughter.

DAD: *(enters, sarcastic)* Why? She never listens!

SADIE: *(not in the mood for a lecture)* Mom, Dad... I'm changing. I'm going to become more studious, giving, loving, and understanding. *(threatening)* I'm going to become a better daughter whether you like it or not. Let's go, Carla.

MOM: I don't think we like it.

CARLA: What about a better sister? I can't believe I let you talk me into this! *(immediately SHE realizes SHE spoke too much)*

DAD: Into what?

SADIE: *(moving towards CARLA and keeping her quiet)* Into... donating. Let's go.

*(SHE practically pushes CARLA out the door, but THEY fall over the suitcase... finally SHE gets CARLA and the suitcase out and follows them. Her parents look on in disapproval.)*

DAD: *(to MOM)* You couldn't be happy with a dog. You had to have children.

## SCENE 7

**SADIE, CARLA, JADEN, and ANNIE are at the ticket counter at the airport. Other (increasingly impatient) passengers can be in line if desired. The AGENT wears an airline uniform and the STUDENTS find him/her a bit intimidating. AGENT attempts to look and act professional, but it's all a veneer. A poster behind the AGENT can show an international destination, an airline logo, or show some arrivals and departures. Or perhaps a list of flights with the word "canceled" or "delayed" and "really delayed" after them all. All the kids have too much luggage.**

SADIE: *(approaches the TICKET AGENT)* Uh... we'd like to buy a ticket to Microbia.

AGENT: Did you say Microbia? Really?

SADIE: Let's take a poll... everyone who thinks I said Microbia, raise their hands.

(THEY all do, including any OTHER people in line.)

Looks like it.

ANNIE: She definitely said Microbia.

AGENT: Are you sure?

SADIE: (*proud of herself*) Surer than I've ever been about anything in my life.

CARLA: And she's pretty headstrong. This is serious.

AGENT: Microbia.

JADEN: Microbia.

AGENT: (*serious, after a frightening pause*) No one goes to Microbia.

JADEN: What do you mean?

AGENT: It's not a popular destination. With all the stuff we donate there, it's kind of like a giant thrift store.

CARLA: We know. Half our stuff is there.

SADIE: But... we want to go.

AGENT: (*resigned to selling the tickets*) They have two major airports.

Did you want to fly into Secondhandia or Handmedownia?

JADEN: What's the difference?

AGENT: Secondhandia is cheaper. But you're lucky! Tickets are at a discount. No one goes to Microbia after the...

ANNIE: After the what?

AGENT: Never mind.

ANNIE: What is it?

AGENT: Never mind. I shouldn't have said anything.

ANNIE: But you did, so now you have to tell us.

AGENT: Since the rebel army of Donatia overthrew the American-backed Salvation Army of Discountia. It's just not the same. So be careful. That's all I have to say.

SADIE: (*leaning over the counter*) What do you mean?

AGENT: (*staring her down*) Didn't I just say that was all I had to say?

SADIE: (*backs away*) I guess so.

AGENT: Then why are you asking me follow-up questions?

CARLA: Wow Sadie. S/he's like you. But worse.

JADEN: (*taking control*) Nonetheless... four tickets.

AGENT: Yep. Everyone who flies there goes second class. (*this is important!!!*) And we only issue paper tickets to Microbia. Nothing electronic. Their system isn't up to date. So don't lose them. That's \$200.

SADIE: That's it?

AGENT: Yep. Everyone who flies there goes second class.

JADEN: That's cheaper than new shoes!

AGENT: Perhaps, but as I said...

SADIE: (*cutting AGENT off*) Uh, you already said all you have to say, remember? So at the risk of repeating yourself and boring us, maybe you should just be quiet. Now. Four tickets please.

AGENT: (*after a short pause, mad at SADIE*) Of course. Middle seats for everyone!

## SCENE 8

### ***Back at home, early evening.***

MOM: (*looking out windows, out the front door, walking around, a bit perturbed*) They're late. Do you think something happened? If we don't eat dinner right out of the microwave it gets soggy.

DAD: (*standing in one place watching MOM go all over*) Maybe they're studying after school in the library.

MOM: Ha ha ha.

DAD: Well, okay. Did she call?

MOM: No.

DAD: Text?

MOM: No.

DAD: E-mail?

MOM: Nope. No contact at all.

DAD: Then (*stops HER*) I wouldn't worry.

MOM: (*Giving up, sits down*) You're probably right.

MARCH 26: (*Enters and runs right up to THEM, frenzied. The calendar dates can have interesting costumes, perhaps with a very large number on them to signify their date.*) Mr. and Mrs. Benson!

DAD: Yes?

MARCH 26: Hurry! It's an emergency!

MOM: (*backing off*) Who are you? How did you get here? (*assertive*) Get out of my house!

DAD: Wait a minute. Let's hear him/her out.

MARCH 26: I'm from your daughter's bedroom!

DAD: Then get out of my house!

MARCH 26: I'm March 26. I need your help!

MOM: March 26! That's yesterday!

MARCH 26: In her diary. You know my cousins. (*motions off stage*) March 23.

MARCH 23: (*enters, quoting a diary entry*) "I can't believe my mother donated my shoes."

MARCH 26: And March 15. (*again, introducing...*)

MARCH 15: (*enters, quoting*) "My father is such a dweeb."

For a Pair of Prom Shoes – Page 25

MARCH 26: But I have the most important news of all. (*full of pride*) I'm more important than any of my older relatives.

MARCH 23: See if you're invited to the reunion.

MARCH 15: I can't go. I don't have a date. Get it?

MARCH 26: (*panicking*) You better read me. Your kids have gone to Microbia.

MOM: Oh, no!

MARCH 26: Oh, yes.

DAD: Don't just sit there. See if she can get my Metallica T-shirt and my Kiss CD collection back. (*to MOM*) Colleen, you just give stuff away willy-nilly.

MARCH 15: Sadie's right... Barney. You *are* a dweeb. See, we only get her point of view. (*poking DAD*) But apparently it's correct!

DAD: (*chasing after MARCH 15*) I'm gonna close the book on you! (*grabs MARCH 15*) I'll rip you out, crumple you up, and...

MOM: (*separating them*) No! I think we need to open it. Just this once, I have a right to snoop.

MARCH 23: What about the other times?

MOM: Executive privilege. But now? Now I have to do something!

MARCH 26: Just don't say I told you.

MARCH 23: We hate being a blabbermouth.

DAD: Didn't I ask you to leave her stuff alone?

MOM: We're well off enough. I want this family to learn the joy of giving.

DAD: Well-off or not, that was for her to decide. You buy things we don't need, then take them away because you say we don't need them. Why not just order online and ship it straight overseas? You're using Sadie's closet as a bus depot.

MOM: The people in Microbia don't understand the concept of new. If you don't wear it a few times first, they don't want it. Either way, we'd better go find her! (*exit MOM and DAD*)

MARCH 15: Do you think they'll get her back?

MARCH 26: I don't know. This is a real page turner! I can't wait to see what happens. (*Hustles the OTHERS out.*) Let's go!

MARCH 23: Be careful. She spilled a Diet Coke on me. I'm brittle.

**ACT 2**

**SCENE 1**

***MOM approaches the AGENT at the airport. DAD is with MOM, but she's calling the shots. If there's a schedule, the flights can have notices like "not going anywhere," or "in your dreams."***

MOM: *(aggressive and demanding, AGENT isn't really paying attention)*

Did you sell my daughters a ticket to Microbia? Did you? Did you have permission? My children are just that! Children! They can't be trusted with making that kind of decision. What gives you the right to put my children on a plane overseas? What gives you the right? I demand to talk to your supervisor, or there's going to be one very big lawsuit coming around the corner the next time you see me! Is that clear? I said is that clear?

AGENT: *(after a pause, letting MOM calm down)* Can I help you?

MOM: Did you not hear anything I just said?

AGENT: *(putting her off)* I heard it but I *know* you weren't talking to me like that.

MOM: I was speaking to you directly.

AGENT: That was not speaking, that was lecturing. Save that tone of voice for your children and husband.

MOM: I'll have you fired if you don't give me some answers.

AGENT: Do you want to work this job?

*(No answer from MOM)*

I didn't think so. Now, I performed my duties to the utmost of my ability, finding your children discounted seats and putting them in the middle of the row so they'd neither fall out the windows nor run unsupervised in the aisles. If you can't control your own children, don't pass that responsibility on to the airlines.

DAD: *Why my wife means is, perhaps-*

MOM: What his wife means is you'd better get those children back into the states before I count to three.

AGENT: I'd love to help, but... there's only one flight out per week. You can count all the up to four for all I care. *(slams some paperwork on the desk and looks right into MOM)* Numbers don't frighten me.

DAD: Colleen, I told you not to come here and start trouble.

MOM: Fine. Then we'll go home, Barney. Alone. And I'll start plenty of trouble then. *(SHE pulls him off stage)*

**SCENE 2**

**SADIE, ANNIE, JADEN, and CARLA are looking around, THEY're on a busy street in a new country. Other people pass by, wearing odd and mismatched assortments of "second hand" clothing.**

SADIE: Well here we are. In the city of Secondhandia, in the country of Microbia.

ANNIE: It's like a mall. But everything's been worn.

JADEN: Even the airport. That "Welcome to Philadelphia" sign is right out of the 30s.

CARLA: And this isn't Philadelphia. But I'm beginning to wish it was.

*(THEY watch people go by, either real or imaginary.)*

ANNIE: Wait a minute! That's my sweater. She's wearing my sweater!

SADIE: So get it back!

ANNIE: *(ANNIE starts to chase after it, then turns back)* I forgot. It has a grape stain on it.

JADEN: *(sees someone else)* And he's got my favorite jacket. Mom said it shrank in the dryer. Hey you! Come back here! *(starts to run off, the OTHERS hold him back)*

SADIE: Shhh! We're in a foreign country. So don't act foreign. *(shouts at two passersby, RAX and JAX)* Hey! We're from America. Where's the shoe donation pickup depot?

RAX: I don't speak English.

SADIE: *(approaching RAX, speaking louder and slower)* I said, where is the shoe drop depot? Shoe... drop... depot...

RAX: I said, I don't speak English.

SADIE: And I said...

RAX: It doesn't matter what you say, or how loudly, if I can't understand it.

SADIE: Then you won't understand me saying you're a stupid niblepuss who doesn't know which end is-

JADEN: *(comes up to SADIE and taps her gently)* Sadie... I think s/he's speaking English.

RAX: I love that trick. You Americans are so stupid.

ANNIE: Look who's wearing clothes we all threw out.

RAX: Don't remind me. We're stuck in a fashion halfway house. Too new to be vintage. Too bland to be retro. Too old to be trendy.

SADIE: Now, the shoe depot.

RAX: *(looks down at her shoes)* You already have a pair. *(to JAX)* Can you believe this, Jax? She has shoes, yet she wants more. Americans are so selfish.

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