

HOW TO IMPROVISE A PLAY IN 30 MINUTES OR LESS

By Murray Austin

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CHARACTERS

(10-50 roles: 1 male, 1 female, 8-48 either)

2ND PERIOD DRAMA CLASS

JANET: Stage manager for Ms. Smitherman's 2nd Period Drama Class

ASHLEY	MARY	BRENDA	SUMMER	LAURIE	KIM
ANDY	NICK	BOB	JOE	CHRIS	GREG
SHASTA	GLORIA	JULES	TESS	GINA	DUSTY
CODY	JOY	LYNN	SALLY	HALLEY	CHASE

6TH PERIOD THEATRE ARTS

ROSS: Stage manager for Ms. Smitherman's 6th Period Theatre Arts Class

TONYA	LIZ	CASSIE	CHARON	TINA	BARB
JORDAN	CAM	DEE	PERRI	PAT	LES
TRACY	OPIE	TERRY	RAE	SHELBY	SEAN
BROCK	SHANE	ROCKY	MARK	TREVOR	VIC

Characters in each horizontal line may be combined. The genders of all characters except for ROSS and JANET may be switched and their names changed accordingly (which includes using their real names, if desired). Only the name of ROSS must stay the same.

STAGING

Staging is completely flexible. The stage may be bare or the sets may be as elaborate as desired.

COSTUMES

All characters are teens, so normal teen attire may be worn. Some may wish to match outfits to indicate 2nd period drama students and 6th period theatre arts students, but all costuming is flexible.

PROPERTIES

One tennis ball

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by
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ROSS: Faculty and staff members of this great school, we would like to welcome you to a special presentation of our spring production, a show that turned more than a few heads here on campus.

JANET: That is, *he* would like to welcome you to *his* production – I mean, his classes' production of a sloppy, over-the-top performance of an unintelligible script written by a man still serving time for 1st degree plagiarism.

ROSS: As mature adults, I'm sure you won't hold it against my colleague for her rambling monologues. They didn't work for her classes' production, so why should they in real life.

ASHLEY: Easy, guys. We have an audience.

ROSS: Great. And would you mind telling them what in the world we're going to show them.

ASHLEY: (*to audience*) You see, we're from different classes. Some of us are from Ms. Smitherman's 2nd period drama class.

ANDY: (*waving*) Hey, how ya' doing, folks?

TONYA: But the rest of us are from Ms. Smitherman's 6th period theatre arts program.

ANDY: Where good drama goes to die.

JORDAN: Each of our programs produced a short play, one that we performed for the English classes.

SHASTA: Until a few moments ago, Ms. Smitherman's 2nd period drama class was prepared to present a delightful comedy...one I'm sure would have tickled you from the tip of your toes to the top of your head.

CODY: You would have even felt it in your hair piece, Mr. Bowen.

BROCK: And Ms. Smitherman's 6th period theatre arts class was poised to rock you with a stunning drama, a show that leaves the audience suspended between shock and tears.

CODY: I'd vote for tears, myself. Mine started the moment their curtain opened.

SHASTA: I guess the bottom line is, both classes thought we were performing our play for you...

ROSS: Our amazing faculty and staff.

JANET: (*annoyed*) You already said that.

TRACY: Naturally, each class came prepared to perform their particular show.

SHASTA: (*nods toward TRACY and OTHERS*) We had no idea *they* were going to be here.

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TRACY: (*points in SHASTA's direction*) When I saw *them* here, I assumed you teachers needed some flunkies to serve you coffee and doughnuts.

SHASTA: You wish.

TRACY: Actually, I do. I'm starving. Do you think if there are any extras...?

SHASTA: (*interrupting*) Would you pay attention?

TRACY: Fine, but if they don't feed me, they'll have to listen to my growling stomach.

SHASTA: We'll all have to live dangerously.

CODY: Could someone just bring a doughnut so we don't have to hear this babbling bozo? (*to audience*) Mr. Crowley, you have three or four, and you just slipped a couple into your vest pocket. Any chance you could spare one?

TONYA: (*frantic stage whisper; to OTHERS*) Let's go! Let's go! Theatre is brand new at this school, and Ms. Smitherman has requested money to fund a real after-school drama program. This is our one chance to showcase our talent and prove we deserve the funds. So start the show already!

ASHLEY: (*to TONYA*) What show? (*to audience*) Actually, we...and I refer to Ms. Smitherman's 2nd period drama class...would love to perform our magnificent play for you, but Principal Pettijohn informed us...

ANDY: ...Just seconds ago...

ASHLEY: Yes, just seconds ago, that both classes have been invited to perform for you simultaneously.

TONYA: Of course, considering time constraints will only allow the performance of one play, I wisely suggested that each of us perform the first half of our respective plays.

BROCK: I proposed that we simply each perform in double time, completing the entire play in half the normal period.

TONYA: It would sound a little like that Chimpunks cartoon, but at least you'd get the general drift.

BROCK: If you watched fast.

ASHLEY: And listened faster.

TONYA: But somehow, Principal Pettijohn had the idea that the two classes were carrying grudges...

ASHLEY: ...that we didn't exactly get along well.

JORDAN: I'll grant you, on performance day, the costumes for their show all ended up a few sizes too small. But to blame us for a few shrinking costumes? (*waves hand away*) Ridiculous.

ANDY: I almost died in mine. You can only hold your breath for so long, dude.

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CODY: I could barely move. Whenever I walked, I felt like Frankenstein's monster.

JORDAN: You should've seen how you looked.

CODY: (*moves to JORDAN, angrily; OTHERS hold him back*) Wanna see how I look now!?! Huh!?! Huh!?!

ASHLEY: Let's chill, guys. Come on. This isn't constructive.

BROCK: Was it constructive to replace my walking stick with a garden snake?

JORDAN: Your scream was heard down every corridor of this school.

ANDY: Not that *our* class had anything to do with it.

SHASTA: Naturally...we wouldn't dirty our hands with a common garden snake.

ANDY: Yeah, dude. I'd have, like, captured this huge South American Boa Constrictor and set it backstage so it could eat Ms. Smitherman's entire 6th period theatre arts class. We could have re-named the show, "Goodbye to Ms. Smitherman's 6th Period Theatre Arts Class."

ASHLEY: (*embarrassed; sarcastically*) That's a great idea. Maybe next semester, huh?

ANDY: I'll drop it in the suggestion box.

ASHLEY: You do that.

ROSS: You see, as stage manager for our 2nd period class, I normally would be running things backstage. And with *her* on stage... (*gestures toward JANET*)...I wish I were backstage now. She's a one-girl catastrophe.

JANET: I'm stage manager for 6th period, but I certainly can't get along with *him*. (*points to ROSS*)

ROSS: Yet Principal Johnson, in all his infinite wisdom, decided we should work together up here.

JANET: Like that could ever happen.

MARY: (*to JANET and ROSS*) We don't have a choice. You heard what the principal said. She figures if the two classes hate each other this much, how will we ever be able to get along in an after-school drama program. Our chance to bring live theatre to this school is at stake, and you guys are going to blow it.

GLORIA: This is our opportunity to show how much we've learned this year, and how effective we'll be as a real drama troupe.

LIZ: (*gestures*) In case you haven't noticed, we have an audience out there. (*to JANET and ROSS*) You two are our stage managers. You have to join forces if we're going to pull this off.

ROSS: (*crosses arms*) Never!

JANET: (*crosses arms*) Hardly!

MARY: Would the two of you grow up? Why do you hate each other so much anyway?

JANET: (*spoken simultaneously with ROSS' next line*) Ask him!

ROSS: (*spoken simultaneously with JANET's next line*) Ask her!

JANET: His ego is the size of this stage.

ROSS: (*sarcastically*) Oh, and of course, she's ego-free.

JANET: (*to ROSS*) You're the one who kept asking me to dance at Homecoming. Imagine the nerve...thinking I wanted to dance every dance with you.

ROSS: You didn't exactly say no. We danced all evening.

JANET: (*turns away and crosses arms*) Only because I was taught not to hurt people's feelings by rejecting them.

ROSS: It was no picnic for me either!

JANET: Obviously! I didn't receive as much as a simple phone call the next day.

ROSS: Uh...yeah...well...uh...neither did I.

JOY: (*to audience*) You see, even as they argue, each of our stage managers gives us an important example relating to what we've learned this year.

CAM: Which is, neither class can get along. It's absolutely hopeless. We can't possibly work together...case closed!

JOY: I was referring to the importance of conflict in a play.

CAM: Oh...conflict...right!

JOY: In order to interest an audience, tensions must somehow mount.

LIZ: Conflict will often exist between characters. Our stage managers have graciously provided that illustration.

CAM: It's called *man versus man*, but man refers to mankind. Either gender may experience conflict.

MARY: A character may also struggle against him or herself...a deep inner struggle that drives the character. *Man versus himself* would be the technical term.

CAM: That inner battle makes for an interesting game of tug-of-war.

NICK: You should see the one-person dodge ball tournaments.

OPIE: A solo arm-wrestling event simply is not to be missed. (*clasps both arms together and mimes arm-wrestling; holds left arm up like a sock puppet, speaking like an evil witch*) Come to me, little right hand. You're totally under my control. (*cackles; switches to right hand, holding it up and pretending to speak with it; using a deep, taunting voice*) Your fingers will be threads of spaghetti... your thumb like boiled zucchini! Triumph awaits in the form of this awesome, powerful, and dominating beast referred to as...right hand! (*hands clasp again and struggle for a few more seconds, then one hand wins, waves to the crowd*)

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MARY: (*shakes head, rolls eyes*) This inner struggle of *man versus himself* is usually represented as an *internal* battle rather than an external one.

GLORIA: Don't forget to mention *man versus society*.

NICK: It's never a pretty thing when one character or a group of characters is pitted against an entire society.

OPIE: It's like me with junk food. I can't get enough chips, and a grape cola is pure nirvana. But as society dictates a healthier lifestyle, I battle for greasier nachos and more sugary colas.

GLORIA: How's the battle going?

OPIE: Not so good. I get a little light-headed from all the sugar.

NICK: I prefer *man versus the supernatural*. You know...witches, magic spells, vampires.

LIZ: (*as a vampire*) I want to drink your blood...at twilight!

SHANE: If you lived at my house, you'd already be familiar with *man versus technology*. This type of conflict is represented daily by my mom's futile attempts to use the internet. (*beat*) You think we could do a play about my mom next year? I could play her offspring. I already know all the lines.

JOY: Of course, it's very possible to have multiple types of conflict in the same play...even within the same character.

SHANE: It's like when I played a devastating Samurai warrior. (*demonstrates a couple of Samurai moves, pantomimed sword in hand*) Not only was I forced to battle and defeat a legion of lesser warriors, but I struggled with my kinder, gentler inner-warrior just yearning to emerge.

JOY: Uh-huh. In 4th grade, we produced a play that showcased Samurai warriors, but if I remember right, you played a tree.

SHANE: Hey now! Tree #5 was a complex and intricate role. I became locked in a bitter conflict of *man versus nature* when one of the cast members walked by and shook me. (*beat*) Every one of my leaves fell off.

BRENDA: (*beat, to audience*) I can't wait to get the go-ahead from Principal Pettijohn to form one big acting troupe. As much as I enjoy our small classroom productions, most of us aspire to produce something big...

CASSIE: Something stupendous!

BOB: A show with a real "wow" factor!

DEE: A production worthy of friends and family.

BRENDA: We can produce comedies...

CASSIE: ...dramas...

BOB: ...parodies...

DEE: ...murder mysteries...

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CASSIE: I'd like to do a musical...something with a few good dance numbers.

BRENDA: (to JANET and ROSS) Which is exactly why the two of you have to grow up and pull together. We don't like each other either, but at least we're trying.

JANET: I want our own drama troupe as much as you do, but I just can't see us getting along. He gets on my first and last nerve.

ROSS: Maybe if I'm anointed stage manager for the entire troupe, and she's put in charge of emptying trash cans after the show...yeah...I could work under that scenario.

JANET: See what I mean? He's impossible!

ROSS: Me? Don't you think I know the tricks *you* play to get under my skin. (to OTHERS) She's on Yearbook Committee, and I can hardly turn a corner at school without her snapping my picture.

JANET: (defensively...knows SHE does) I...I...I do not!

ROSS: Oh, yes you do. You must have clicked my photo over 100 times. I know you're just taking as many pics as you can, hoping to find one where I'm wearing a stupid expression.

JANET: Do you wear another kind?

BRENDA: This constant bickering is counter-productive coming from the two people who will actually be in charge backstage.

CASSIE: (to audience) Having an effective stage manager is vital to running a smooth show.

LYNN: They're second in command after the director.

ROCKY: The stage manager literally keeps everything moving, maintains a strong pace, and ensures the actors arrive on cue.

BOB: Which means our after-school drama troupe is toast, dude!

BRENDA: Must you always be so negative? I'm excited about the possibilities of a drama program. (beat; to audience) A true thespian lives for possibilities. It's all about chasing our dreams...on stage and in real life. For an actor, it starts with the simple, yet complicated task of play auditions.

CASSIE: Trying out for a part in a play is not for the faint of heart.

JULES: It's good to bring your own audition piece...one that you've practiced and feel comfortable performing. A two minute part is usually about right.

CASSIE: Sometimes the director will ask you to give a cold reading.

JULES: A cold reading is an audition piece you're seeing for the very first time.

TERRY: You can always wear a huge parka to the audition, just to emphasize the "cold" aspect.

LYNN: It's not easy, but if you stay calm and focused, you'll blow the director away.

ROCKY: Which usually means you get a part in the play.

LYNN: Woo-hoo! Too cool!

TERRY: In an audition, it never hurts to be familiar with the works of William Shakespeare.

JULES: *(takes a step or two downstage; recites)* Hark! The land bids me tread no more upon 't; It is asham'd to bear me. Friends come hither. I am so lated in the world that I have lost my way forever. I have a ship laden with gold. Take that, divide it; fly, and make your peace with Caesar.

BRENDA: Hey, not too shabby!

JULES: Antony and Cleopatra, Act III, Scene XI.

LYNN: I must say, for once, you've impressed me.

BOB: Same here!

JULES: So...did I get the part?

BRENDA, BOB, and REN: Nope!

JULES: No? I didn't get the part?

LYNN: Not yet. But we'll give you a callback. *(to audience)* That's where an actor is asked to audition a second time.

PERRI: I love the works of Shakespeare. Can I write a play too? I've always wanted to become a playwright? *(stares out, dreamily)* To have total control over a group of actors on stage, as they're forced to speak *my* words and follow *my* stage directions. The power of life and death will rest in these hands. *(getting too involved)* I'll be a king-maker! *(beat)* Oh, how the high and mighty at this school will fall! Only one obstacle stands between me and total creative control.

SUMMER: Would that be talent?

ROSS: *(chuckles derisively)* Oh, yeah? And what would a 2nd period drama student know about talent?

JANET: *(crosses to ROSS)* All right, smart guy. Check out the little musical jingle our class placed on Youtube in honor of recruitment week. I don't imagine you'll be enlisting any new members next semester after folks hear this. *(looks around)* Okay, guys. Hit it!

All 6TH PERIOD THEATRE ARTS STUDENTS: *(The following verse should be sung, any tune; 6th PERIOD THEATRE ARTS STUDENTS are identified in the cast list at the front of the play)*

BEWARE, BEWARE...DON'T SIGN UP,
FOR SECOND PERIOD DRAMA.
THE CLASS IS RESERVED FOR FREAKS AND GEEKS
AND THOSE WHO CRY FOR THEIR MAMA.

COME, COME TODAY,
JOIN 6TH PERIOD THEATRE ARTS.
DON'T DELAY. YOU'LL BE IN A PLAY.
YOU MIGHT IMPRESS YOUR SWEETHEART.

SUMMER: (*pause, as 2nd PERIOD DRAMA STUDENTS shake their heads, disgusted; to JANET*) That's just great...real mature, for someone who's supposed to be dedicated to helping us bring live theatre to this school. You're some awesome stage manager, aren't you?

JANET: (*embarrassed, looks at ROSS*) I...well...I mean, I wasn't really trying to...(*stops, not knowing what to say; head sinks in shame*)...

JOE: Since you're obviously at a loss for words, sit back and listen to the little ditty *our* stage manager wrote about you guys. (*some pat ROSS on the back*). Let's do it! One-two-three.

ALL 2ND PERIOD DRAMA STUDENTS: (*The following verse should be sung, any tune; 2nd PERIOD DRAMA STUDENTS are identified in the cast list at the front of the play*)

THEY MISS THEIR CUES,
THEY'LL DROP THEIR LINES,
YOU'LL FALL ASLEEP BEFORE IT STARTS.
YOUR DAY WILL TURN GREY
WHEN YOU SEE THE PLAY...
(*beat, with a flourish*)...OF 6TH PERIOD THEATRE ARTS.

JANET: (*pause, stunned*) You posted that piece of garbage on the web?

ROSS: Yep! Same as you posted yours.

JANET: Well...you see...I didn't *really* post mine.

ROSS: You didn't?

JANET: No.

ROSS: No?

JANET: No.

ROSS: (*scratching head*) Why not? I don't get it...especially after what we posted about you.

JANET: Maybe I didn't think it was true...you know...that you guys were so bad. Perhaps I felt like you and I should...I mean you and me should...oh, never mind.

ROSS: (*moves to GIRL*) What is it?

JANET: (*moves away from BOY*) Nothing...just...(beat)...nothing.

PERRI: (*has an idea; indicating BOY and GIRL*) That's it! I'll write a play about a psychologically unhinged couple!

ROSS and JANET : HEY!!!

JANET: Who are you calling psychologically unhinged?!

ROSS: Who are you calling a couple?!

PERRI: (*gestures*) Better yet, I'll write about all of you. You'll exist to do my bidding; you'll speak when my written dialogue allows. (*looks out, imagining it all*) You won't move a muscle unless I grant permission. (*arms in air*) I will be the all-powerful...PLAYWRIGHT!

SUMMER: (*pause; looks strangely at PERRI*) Does anyone know the number for 911? I think she (*HE*) is having a stroke.

TESS: Relax. It's just delusions of grandeur. My little brother used to think he was Brittney Spears (*or another celebrity may be used*).

ALL: Brittney Spears?

TESS: Hey...my little brother was three at the time. What did he know?

PERRI: (*to TESS*) When I come into power, you won't have a little brother. I think I'll write your character as a 17th century orphan child, begging in the streets for food. Of course, it won't matter much. Early in scene one, you'll be trampled to death by a stampeding herd of Llamas...(*beat*)...you and all your 2nd period cohorts.

SALLY: You must be trippin', fool! Playwriting is just a small cog in the great wheel of theatre. That's why I'm signing up to student *direct* a show myself. The playwright may write the words, but the director must cast the right actor for each part, interpret the script, and generally oversee all aspects of the production. As a playwright, your role would be over before anyone steps on stage.

MARK: Oh, yeah? Without a script, exactly WHAT are you going to direct?

PERRI: Darned tootin'. Playwrights rule!

ALL 2ND PERIOD STUDENTS: Playwrights rule!

ALL 6TH PERIOD STUDENTS: Directors dominate!

ALL 2ND PERIOD STUDENTS: Playwrights rule!

ALL 6TH PERIOD STUDENTS: Directors dominate!

TESS: Guys... (*looks out...in a stage whisper*)...Principal Pettijohn doesn't look amused. Could we possibly do any more to prove we're incapable of successfully joining forces and launching a drama program?

CHARON: Why does this always happen? Somehow, we get caught up in these insignificant personal battles, and before long, people choose sides and bingo...it's...

ALL: (*bored, as THEY know it's true*)...2nd period drama versus 6th period theatre arts.

RAE: We're in the throes of an uncontrollable force...like a time-warp that dooms the victim to a life of complete repetition. And whatever the person does, whatever he doesn't do, the results are always the same. Our two classes are hopelessly caught in a force greater than mere mortals can comprehend. *(to audience)* You folks have seen this all...heard this all...hundreds...possibly thousands of times prior to this very moment. Mr. Crowley, your total doughnut consumption could be more than the entire NYPD night shift for an entire year.

PERRI: How many times are you going to watch that *Groundhog Day* movie? You've completely worn out six discs already. For you, each day truly *is* the very same.

JOE: Dude! This is downright bizarro! That means Chris *(if you're using the actor's real name, use that)* is living the same day over and over while watching a movie over and over where the same events occur over and over. *(sways a bit)* Dude! I'm getting dizzy. *(pause, while one or two OTHERS help him or her maintain balance)* I'd like to do the math on this. The numbers must be staggering! *(beat)* Wish I had paid attention in math this year instead of staring at Mr. Bowen's hair piece. But dude...I swear that thing actually waved at me... *(puts up three fingers)*...like, twice.

RAE: *(pauses, shaking head)* Let's face it. We'll never get along. It's hopeless.

SALLY: You're hopeless!

RAE: See what I mean? We've literally defeated ourselves.

CHARON: Must we be so combative on every single issue? I would never abandon my beliefs, but I'm at least capable of flipping sides for a moment to see the opposing point of view.

JOE: Dude! You'd be like, debating yourself, huh?

CHARON: For example, while I may not agree with the premise of an all-powerful playwright, I do believe an author demonstrates power and mastery of the art form when characters are given depth and insight.

TESS: I'm willing to concede that without a director's sharp focus, a show lacks the same impact on the audience.

SALLY: Neither the playwright nor the director is capable of breathing life into a character onstage. I declare the *ACTOR* as the real force in live theatre!

MARK: *(sarcastically)* Thanks! That's exactly what we need...*(puts up two fingers)*...a third argumentative point of view.

LAURIE: These meaningless feuds between our two classes remind me of politicians. For all the progress we've made, we might as well be the Democrats and Republicans.

CHRIS: Dude! You just inspired a delicious idea! Democrats and Republicans! We'll have our very own niche. Our drama troupe will produce only political theatre. I can see it now! The Democrats can sit on the left and the Republicans on the right.

GINA: What about Independent voters?

CHRIS: Throw 'em in the balcony.

TREVOR: *(beat)* I'd like to throw *you* in the balcony...maybe *off* the balcony!

HALLEY: Who are you threatening, anyway? It's a better idea than any *you've* had.

CHRIS: It'll be like professional hockey. The best show will be out in the crowd.

TREVOR: Literature classes will have to teach a new type of conflict... *(gestures)*...audience versus audience!

PAT: You taking their side?

TREVOR: Do I have to take a side? Can't I independently like an idea for its merits?

PAT: NO!

TREVOR: Well, I don't care. It's a cool idea, no matter who thought of it.

PAT: Turncoat! Traitor! Eggs Benedict!!!

ALL: Eggs benedict?

TREVOR: *(beat...unsure, but posturing)* I think my point was made.

TINA: Our classes remind me of a story I heard about a world summit meeting for peace. At the end of the five-day summit, they made no headway whatsoever. Then, right at the last moment, a momentous break-through was forged. It was decided which world leaders would get seats next to the restroom at the next summit.

CHRIS: Hope they all flushed.

PAT: Are you lobbying to secure the dressing rooms closest to the *loo*?

TINA: No...No! I just don't want to fight anymore.

CHRIS: So much for political theatre.

TREVOR: What's wrong with political theatre? I wouldn't want it for every show, but it's certainly a good start. If we can dwell on utilizing ideas from both classes instead of opposing everything, there's no reason we can't produce some powerhouse theatre at this school.

JANET: How can we? You've all seen the way we behave: We're like a couple of backward feuding families from somewhere up in the mountains.

GINA: We spend all our time and energy battling each other...and for what? Only to lose the very thing both classes want most.

SHELBY: Our two classes are like my favorite foods, mustard and tator tots. Each tastes good by itself, but neither truly comes into its own until those delicious mustard tots merge victoriously in my mouth.

ALL: Eeew!

SHELBY: I didn't mention the third ingredient.

JANET: And please don't! *(beat)* Before anyone will ever buy into the other's ideas, we have to introduce the concept of "OUR theatrical drama troupe."

LAURIE: The other way certainly hasn't worked. *(shrugs)* It may be too late, but hey, it's worth a try. *(beat)* Whoa! Check it out! I'm agreeing with a member of 6th period theatre arts. *(remembers)* Oops! I mean...our theatrical drama troupe.

TINA: I can't remember why our two classes became enemies in the first place.

CHRIS: It might have been because you kept calling my cell phone during our cave man production last year. It sort of killed the prehistoric mood.

SHELBY: You had your cell phone with you onstage?

CHRIS: *(shrugs)* Wouldn't want to miss a call.

LAURIE: Doesn't matter how our feud started...just that it ends.

HALLEY: Look! *(shakes head around wildly...OTHERS back off and stare)*

GINA: What on earth are you doing?

HALLEY: I'm shaking up my brain. I can hardly remember my own cell phone number, but as an unselfish sacrifice for my love of theatre, I'm scrambling my brains so I won't know members of one class from another. *(shakes head some more)* That way I'll be forced to treat everyone the same.

LAURIE: *(to OTHERS)* Is it possible to scramble something that doesn't exist?

SHELBY: Dude! That's the other ingredient I was talking about...goes great with mustard and tator tots!

ALL: Eeeew!

SHELBY: I meant scrambled eggs, not scrambled brains.

CHRIS: *(to HALLEY)* Can you pay the ten bucks you owe me before you scramble any more?

HALLEY: What ten bucks? *(happily)* Hey...it's working!

LAURIE: *(excited)* I feel like...like a light bulb finally clicked on! All along, we've been fighting the very people we needed in order to pull this off...to attain a real drama program!

PAT: Who's that?

LAURIE: Us...each other. Don't you see? The scrambled brain idea is brilliant!

HALLEY: Told you!

TINA: Now you've lost me.

LAURIE: We're no longer two separate entities. From now on, we form a single, united front. We're the Kennedy High Theatrical Drama Troupe.

(OTHERS nod and verbalize in agreement; "that's right." You tell 'em!")

LES: No more us and them.

DUSTY: No more we and they.

SEAN: No more spreading 30 tubes of Stick-em on the stage floor half an hour before you guys perform.

CHASE: No more giving your colonial wigs Mohawk haircuts prior to your production of 1776.

VIC: That was you?! I knew it! (*angrily moving toward CHASE*) No more allowing you to co-exist on *our* stage!

KIM: (*moving between them*) Chill a minute! One unified front... Kennedy High Theatrical Drama Troupe...remember?

VIC: (*slowly releases CHASE; still angry, shakes head, then laughs, sees the humor*) Well...I guess because of you, we *did* showcase the most trendy founding fathers in American history. (*short pause; extends hand to CHASE, who shakes it*) Welcome aboard, fellow drama trouper.

(*ALL applaud*)

BARB: I'm afraid this new spirit of cooperation won't get us far if we don't receive some funding. Since we're together in this fiasco, shouldn't we at least present a show.

SEAN: I can juggle.

BARB: They don't want to see you juggle.

SEAN: Why not?

BARB: When you toss only one ball, it's not technically juggling.

DUSTY: We need to perform a scene.

CHASE: Something classic.

GREG: Maybe a sword fight.

LES: Or a tragic love scene.

JANET: Love unrequited...that's suitable. What about a short, abridged version of the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet*?

BARB: Perfect...it's all yours...Juliet.

LES: We need someone to play the part of Romeo.

KIM: I'll choose someone. (*looking around*) Perhaps it could b-e-e-e...

ROSS: (*steps up, a little too eager*) I'll do it! (*embarrassed, controls enthusiasm*) I mean...um...if no one else wants to...that is...I mean...I don't mind.

VIC: Take your best shot, dawg. (*pats ROSS on the shoulder*) Go for it!

ROSS: *(on one knee; as Romeo)* But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

JANET: Ay, me.

ROSS: *She speaks: O, speak again, bright angel!*

JANET: O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name! Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love, and I'll no longer be a Capulet.

(OTHERS clap.)

(to BOY, shyly) Thanks. You were a very believable Romeo.

ROSS: Oh, no problem. I mean...that is...if we're going to become one big drama troupe, shouldn't you and I sort of get together and work out some of the details?

JANET: I suppose we could. What about meeting before school?

ROSS: *(shrugs, shakes head)* I'm not really a morning person.

JANET: How does after school sound?

ROSS: Wouldn't we be a bit rushed? Besides, our new drama troupe will meet then.

JANET: We could always connect outside of school...*(pauses; tries to sound casual)*...if you want.

ROSS: That might not be such a bad idea...considering our school day is so full.

JANET: What do you have in mind?

ROSS: We could always have dinner together...sometime...maybe.

JANET: When do you consider sometime...maybe?

ROSS: How does tonight sound? We can catch a movie after dinner.

JANET: Works for me!

GREG: *(pause)* Now that we've emerged as a lean cuisine piece of drama machine, how do we conclude here?

LES: With a big finish, of course.

GREG: And how, exactly, do we emerge with a big finish?

SEAN: I'm still offering my juggling services.

VIC: When you work up to two tennis balls, I'll pencil you in.

LES: Let's close with a big musical number!

CHASE: Are you kidding?

LES: A small musical number?

SEAN: You sure you wouldn't like me to juggle? I hardly ever drop the ball.

BARB: If we can't do a musical number, I just won't feel right.

VIC: Do you ever feel right...about anything?

BARB: Not about this, I don't.

DUSTY: But certainly we need a grand finale.

KIM: I agree. Think about it, guys. We came here without a clue. We worked through our conflicts...

DUSTY: We emerged as one cohesive team...

CHASE: Our feuding stage managers even came together...

VIC: In the end, they proved that love really is triumphant.

GREG: That could be the title of our first play: *Love at Center Stage*.

BARB: I still want to close with a musical number. (*paces the stage*) No one can stop me from singing. (*dramatically*) I was born to sing!

KIM: You're a singer?

BARB: Uh...no. Why do you ask?

SEAN: Did I mention I can sing and juggle simultaneously?

BARB: When you're here on stage, the possibilities are endless. (*dramatically*) I'm ready for my moment in the sun! Is the orchestra ready?

KIM: We have no orchestra?

BARB: The band?

KIM: Nope.

BARB: (*pauses, looks flustered for a moment, then...*) Doesn't matter.

(*BARB paces the stage, singing from here on out...any tune will work. Feel free to jazz things up with choreographed movement, dance, etc. Have fun.*)

I'M SETTING THE PACE,
JUST CHECK OUT MY GRACE,
I'M MOVING ALONG ON THE STAGE.
(*crosses to ROSS*) LET'S SAY THAT I MOVE,
(*gestures*) TO MY BROTHER ROSS,
IN THEATRE WE CALL THAT A CROSS.

GREG, LES, DUSTY, and CHASE: (*echoing, bobbing heads*)
CROSS-CROSS-CROSS.

ALL:
SHE'S (*HE'S*) MAKING A CROSS,
TO HER (*HIS*) BROTHER ROSS,

(*BARB crosses again to ROSS*)

SHE'S (*HE's*) LITERALLY CROSSING THE STAGE.

GREG, LES, DUSTY, and CHASE: (*echoing, bobbing heads*)
CROSS-CROSS-CROSS.
(*BARB and as many as desired, move to original position, then cross again.*)

ALL:
WE STARTED RIGHT THERE,
AND WOUND UP RIGHT HERE,
WE'RE LITERALLY CROSSING THE STAGE.

ASHLEY:
OH, LOOK WHERE I STAND,

TONYA:
GO STRIKE UP THE BAND,

ANDY:
I KNOW THAT I'LL BE ALL THE RAGE.

JORDAN:
I MUST SAY I'M PROUD,

SHASTA:
AS I SING ALOUD,

TRACY: (*stands CS, as OTHERS back off*)
YOU'LL SEE I CONTROL CENTER STAGE.

ALL: (*Chorus; their body language pleads with the audience*)
HEY PRINCIPAL, SIR,
WE HOPE YOU CONCUR,
THAT OUR DRAMA TROUPE'S QUITE A SMASH.
WE'LL PUT ON A SHOW,
MAYBE DICKENS OR POE.
SO PLEASE FUND OUR PROGRAM WITH CASH.

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