

# PLEASE DON'T BE MY DRAMA TEACHER

By Bradley Walton

Copyright © 2011 by Bradley Walton, All rights reserved.

ISBN 1-60003-627-9

**CAUTION:** Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

**RIGHTS RESERVED:** All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

**PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS:** All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

**AUTHOR CREDIT:** All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

**PUBLISHER CREDIT:** Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice:

*Produced by special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC*

**COPYING:** Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

## CHARACTERS

*14 roles either gender; with doubling, the play can be performed with as few as 4 actors. Titles and pronouns should be changed as necessary.*

MICHELLE / MICHAEL	Co-president of the school drama club, a junior
PAULA / PAUL	Co-president of the school drama club, also a junior
MR. / MRS. NEWMAN	An English teacher with a thing for Shakespeare
MR. / MRS. WALLIS	A computer science teacher perplexed by Internet filters
MR. / MRS. CARLIN	A math teacher with a busy schedule
MR. / MRS. KEATON	A PE teacher who recently bought a foosball table
MR. / MRS. LEWIS	A keyboarding teacher who feels her subject is very important
MR. / MRS. LAKE	A Latin teacher who wants to make Latin cool
MR. / MRS. GERSON	A custodian looking for extra help
MR. / MRS. DOOLEY	A chemistry teacher who wants to put on a musical about the Periodic Table of Elements
MR. / MRS. LORIN	A cafeteria staff member who seems a little...off
MR. / MRS. BRADLEY	The school library secretary
MR. / MRS FOGELMAN	A history teacher with an unusual wardrobe
MR. / MRS. HUNT	A chemistry teacher who wants to put on a musical about cat litter

## **DOUBLING**

NEWMAN, CARLIN, LEWIS, GERSON, LORIN and FOGELMAN can be played by the same actor. (LORIN to FOGELMAN would require a *very* quick costume change.)

WALLIS, KEATON, LAKE, DOOLEY, BRADLEY, and HUNT can be played by the same actor.

## **STAGING**

At stage right are a table, two chairs, and a shelf of books which includes a Shakespeare volume. These represent a high school library reference room. At stage left are a table with at least two chairs and one or more computers. These represent the computer lab of the same school library. The action alternates back and forth between the reference room and the computer lab in scenes 2-13 with a simple lighting shift. Scenes 1 and 14 take place center stage.

## **OPTIONAL DIALOGUE**

In scene 1, PAULA's sentence about bicycles with no seats may be omitted, in which case HUNT's entire last line in scene 13 should be omitted, as well.

## **PROPERTIES**

A large Shakespeare book

## **COSTUMES**

PAULA and MICHELLE are dressed in contemporary teenage clothing. PAULA wears a sweater.

The other characters are dressed according to their jobs at the school... classroom teacher, PE teacher, custodian, cafeteria, etc. The two exceptions are FOGELMAN and HUNT. FOGELMAN wears a leather jacket with a dog collar and pink pajama bottoms. HUNT wears a sweater with bike shorts and "rhinestone-encrusted" flip-flops.

## AUTHOR NOTES

Having worked in education for a while, I've noticed how things can get... *interesting* whenever there's a position that needs to be filled during the school year. And while "interesting" generally means that somebody's life just got difficult, it also means there's something going on that would probably make a good play. I've never experienced a mid-year position vacancy in a drama department. I hope I never do. But if it does ever happen... I hope it doesn't go *anything* like this.

Originally, the Puccoon Playhouse (the fictional community theatre mentioned in the script) didn't have a name. It was simply referred to as "the community theatre." I decided to change this because I didn't want anyone to think I was ragging on community theatres in general. Nope. Not at all. Many community theatres are quite good. Paula and Michelle's town just happens to have one that leaves something to be desired.

Do Not Copy

## PLEASE DON'T BE MY DRAMA TEACHER

by  
Bradley Walton

### SCENE 1

***AT RISE: At stage right are a table, two chairs, and shelf of books which includes a Shakespeare volume. These represent a school library reference room. At stage left are a table with at least two chairs and one or more computers. These represent the school library computer lab. MICHELLE and PAULA, the co-presidents of the school drama club, stand at center.***

MICHELLE: Are you nervous?

PAULA: I'm terrified.

MICHELLE: You look terrified.

PAULA: That's because I am terrified.

MICHELLE: You said that already.

PAULA: Yeah, well, I'm so terrified that I couldn't properly express the terror in a single statement of how terrified I am.

MICHELLE: You shouldn't be terrified, Paula.

PAULA: You mean you're not?

MICHELLE: I didn't say I wasn't.

PAULA: But are you?

MICHELLE: Not really. And to be honest, I have more reason to be terrified than you.

PAULA: Why?

MICHELLE: The teachers like you better.

PAULA: The teachers like you, Michelle.

MICHELLE: Yeah, they like me, but they like you more.

PAULA: How do you know?

MICHELLE: You wear sweaters to school.

PAULA: What does that have to do with anything?

MICHELLE: Sweaters are soft and non-threatening. People feel comfortable around people wearing sweaters.

PAULA: That's ridiculous.

MICHELLE: Think about it. If you had a choice between hanging out in a crowd of people wearing sweaters or a crowd of people wearing leather jackets and dog collars, which would you pick?

PAULA: It depends on their pants.

MICHELLE: Their pants?

PAULA: Yeah. If the people wearing the dog collars and leather jackets have got on pink pajama bottoms—

MICHELLE: That's disgusting.

PAULA: Not really. I think it'd be cute in a deconstructionist heavy metal biker slumber party stereotype kind of way.

MICHELLE: That would totally freak me out.

PAULA: Now, if the people wearing the sweaters are also wearing bike shorts, then that's kind of creepy. Especially if they've got on rhinestone-encrusted flip-flops.

MICHELLE: What have you got against rhinestone-encrusted flip-flops?

PAULA: There are certain things that just don't go together. Peanut butter and jellyfish. *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*. Cat litter and vegetable soup. People in thong underwear and bicycles with no seats. Rhinestones and flip-flops.

MICHELLE: Does cat litter go with any kind of soup?

PAULA: It was a hypothetical example.

MICHELLE: I'm really glad.

PAULA: Flip-flops are casual. Rhinestones are gaudy. Gaudy casual does not compute.

MICHELLE: Are you feeling better now?

PAULA: Better about what?

MICHELLE: The interviews we're about to conduct. Now that you've had a minute to get your mind off of them.

PAULA: I was doing great until you had to go and remind me.

MICHELLE: Suck up and deal with it. We're co-presidents of the drama club. We're responsible for something important here.

PAULA: I really wish Mr. Hanover hadn't left.

MICHELLE: He got an opportunity to direct a Broadway show. How could he pass on something like that?

PAULA: I know. But he's a really good drama teacher. Even the shows he's directed for the Puccoon Playhouse have been mind-blowing.

MICHELLE: Which is kind of amazing given that everything else they do sucks.

PAULA: The Puccoon Playhouse isn't exactly high-quality community theatre, but they're all we've got around here, and they *try*.

MICHELLE: They fail. Spectacularly. That "bold re-imagining" of *Dracula* they did...

PAULA: I know. I saw it with you.

MICHELLE: The guy playing *Dracula* must've been at least 80 years old.

PAULA: Yeah... the oxygen tank he was pulling around onstage sort of killed my willing suspension of disbelief. At least he had a microphone.

MICHELLE: I'm not going near the Puccoon Playhouse now that Mr. Hanover is gone.

PAULA: We should probably count our blessings that he was able to finish the semester here at school. I just wish they'd been able to find a replacement for him.

MICHELLE: Yeah, well. It's the middle of the school year. The principal said good teachers are hard to find in the middle of the school year.

PAULA: You don't think it's that they're too cheap to hire a replacement? I mean, they didn't even *try* to find anybody.

MICHELLE: They're coughing up money to pay one of the other teachers to take over as sponsor of the drama club for the rest of the year, aren't they?

PAULA: Yeah, but that's just to keep the club running. It's not like they're hiring a whole new teacher.

MICHELLE: The interim drama club sponsor will be directing the musical and the spring play. For all intents and purposes, they will *be* the drama teacher. They just won't be teaching drama in a classroom.

PAULA: Do you think any of the other teachers know anything at all about drama?

MICHELLE: Teachers get up and act in front of audiences of students every day.

PAULA: Math teachers don't act.

MICHELLE: Sure they do.

PAULA: Then I want you to know that I saw *Quadratic Equation: The Musical* yesterday and it sucked. It also didn't have any music.

MICHELLE: And that's why we're doing this today. Mr. Hanover felt that we, as co-presidents of the drama club, should be the ones to pick his interim successor from the interested members of the school faculty.

PAULA: I can't believe that the principal would let a couple of juniors make this kind of decision.

MICHELLE: I think Mr. Hanover felt guilty about jumping ship on us and slipped the principal a bribe.

PAULA: I really think we should do these interviews together.

MICHELLE: I know you're scared, but look at it this way... you can add the terror to your personal bank of experiences and emotions and draw on it in your performances for years to come.

PAULA: You sound like Mr. Hanover.

MICHELLE: Look, I know some of these teachers. You know some of these teachers. But we don't both know all of them. And I think if we each interview teachers that we don't know, then we'll be able to evaluate them more objectively. I don't want us to pick a teacher just because one of us likes him and then he turns out to not have a clue.

PAULA: That's almost starting to make sense.

MICHELLE: Good. Because I think it's the seventh time I've explained it to you. So... you go in the library reference room and do your interviews there, and I'll do mine in the library computer lab.

PAULA: I'd rather everything was in the main library.

MICHELLE: Trust me, there'll be a lot fewer distractions if we use the side rooms.

## **SCENE 2**

***The reference room at stage R. MICHELLE is seated at the table. MR. NEWMAN, an English teacher, stands at the bookshelf. HE is engrossed in a large Shakespeare reference book and is completely ignoring MICHELLE.***

MICHELLE: So, Mr. Newman, what interests you about taking over as sponsor of the drama club?

*(NEWMAN ignores her.)*

MICHELLE: Mr. Newman? Sir?

NEWMAN: *(annoyed)* What?

MICHELLE: Um... drama?

NEWMAN: The Bard, yes.

MICHELLE: Shakespeare?

NEWMAN: Who else?

MICHELLE: You um... you like Shakespeare, huh?

NEWMAN: If you'd taken one of my English classes, you'd know.

MICHELLE: The guidance department never scheduled me to be in one of your classes, sir.

NEWMAN: You could've asked for a schedule change. Ever think of that?

MICHELLE: I've been happy with the classes they enrolled me in.

NEWMAN: What are you, a sheep? A lemming? Some kind of mindless animal?

MICHELLE: Well sir, I'm—

NEWMAN: Of course you are. You're a teenager. That's why you're in high school. To grow a mind. Tell me something, young lady... don't you think you'd be better prepared to interview me if you'd actually taken one of my classes, first?

MICHELLE: You see sir, we thought—

NEWMAN: Did you, now? Really?

MICHELLE: Really.

NEWMAN: That seems hard to believe.

MICHELLE: Does it?

NEWMAN: Have you ever performed Shakespeare?

MICHELLE: Actually, yes. Mr. Hanover staged a one-act version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* last year and we—

NEWMAN: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? Don't make me laugh. That's so overdone it doesn't even count as real Shakespeare. And did you say... a one-act version?

MICHELLE: Yes sir.

NEWMAN: The very idea is an insult to the spirit of William Shakespeare!

MICHELLE: Actually, the script did a really good job of maintaining the themes and major plot points.

NEWMAN: In order to truly appreciate Shakespeare, you have to suffer for it. To sit, patiently, with aching buttocks through hours of language that has all but died from our vulgar, common usage.

MICHELLE: Well, kind of, I guess.

NEWMAN: You guess? This is the truth, dear girl. Pure truth.

MICHELLE: So if you took over the drama club, I assume we'd be doing Shakespeare?

NEWMAN: We would delve into Shakespeare like you've never imagined, and you would be happy for it.

MICHELLE: I would?

NEWMAN: I will make you suffer, and when you're older, you will thank me.

MICHELLE: What is it about Shakespeare that appeals to you?

NEWMAN: The suffering.

MICHELLE: Right. Got that.

NEWMAN: And the language.

MICHELLE: Which has all but died from our vulgar, common usage.

NEWMAN: Shakespeare's plays might as well be written in East Bostonian hieroglyphics for all anyone these days can make of them.

MICHELLE: East... what?

NEWMAN: Bostonian. Eastern Boston.

MICHELLE: I didn't know they had hieroglyphics there.

NEWMAN: They don't. That's the point. They don't exist, so no one would be able to understand them.

MICHELLE: Would you be able to understand them?

NEWMAN: Of course not.

MICHELLE: Then how can you compare them to the language in Shakespeare's plays? I mean, you teach the plays. You understand them, right?

NEWMAN: I would never be so presumptuous. We can only *think* we truly understand Shakespeare.

MICHELLE: Could you give me a specific example?

NEWMAN: *Romeo and Juliet*.

MICHELLE: Which is about a doomed romance... right?

NEWMAN: So they say. But based on my analysis of the play's first three lines, I believe the play may actually be about the manufacture of woolen shampoo bottles in Croatia during the papacy of Sixtus V.

MICHELLE: What's your analysis of the rest of the play?

NEWMAN: Silly girl. I haven't gotten past the third line. These things take time.

MICHELLE: Doesn't your class read *Romeo and Juliet*?

NEWMAN: Indeed they do.

MICHELLE: So you must have an opinion about the rest of the play?

NEWMAN: Indeed not. There isn't enough time. We spend an entire week on the first three lines, and then it's time to move on.

MICHELLE: But not to the fourth line?

NEWMAN: To *King Lear*.

MICHELLE: Of which you've made it through...

NEWMAN: Five lines.

MICHELLE: But you've seen both plays performed.

NEWMAN: Indeed. But to even attempt to understand them, they must be read.

MICHELLE: Which takes time.

NEWMAN: Correct.

MICHELLE: And based on your analysis of the first five lines, *King Lear* is about...

NEWMAN: An apocalyptic future in which chewing gum has been diluted with marmoset bladders.

MICHELLE: So it's not about an old king who gets played for a fool by his kids and loses his mind?

NEWMAN: I very seriously doubt it.

MICHELLE: That's... very interesting.

NEWMAN: The Puccoon Playhouse is having auditions this week for a production of *King Lear* they're putting on in March. It'll be terrible, of course, but I'll be curious to see it.

MICHELLE: Mr. Newman... you do realize... if you were to direct a Shakespeare play for the school, we'd only have about six weeks for rehearsals...

NEWMAN: Under your current production schedule, yes. Obviously, we'd have to change that.

MICHELLE: What kind of schedule did you have in mind?

NEWMAN: We'd begin rehearsals immediately and perform the play five years from this weekend.

MICHELLE: None of the current students would still be here.

NEWMAN: You'd all have to sign an agreement that you'd go to the local community college and not seek further education beyond that until after the show was done.

**SCENE 3**

***In the computer lab at stage L, MR. WALLIS, a computer science teacher, is focused intently on a computer screen as PAULA tries to interview him.***

PAULA: What would you do if you were in charge of the drama program?

(WALLIS ignores PAULA.)

Mr. Wallis? Sir?

WALLIS: (*annoyed*) What?

PAULA: I'm sorry. Am I bothering you? Would you like to come back another time?

WALLIS: No. Let's get this over with.

PAULA: Okay. Sure. Do you feel that your background in computer science would be a benefit to the drama program? Would your shows be technologically state-of-the-art?

WALLIS: How do you work these things?

PAULA: The computers?

WALLIS: The filters.

PAULA: The... filters?

WALLIS: Yes, the filters. The ones the school uses to block websites they don't want the students to see. How do you get around them?

PAULA: I wouldn't know.

WALLIS: Of course you'd know. You're a student. That's what students do. Get around Internet filters.

PAULA: I've honestly never tried.

WALLIS: Well, why don't you try now? The kids in my classes do it all the time. Something about the teenage brain and computers.

PAULA: Could we get back to the interview?

WALLIS: I *really* need to check my email.

PAULA: Sure. Go ahead.

WALLIS: I can't. It's blocked. All non-school email sites are blocked.

PAULA: That's not something I can help you with. Sorry.

WALLIS: I pulled my email up on my phone earlier, but then the battery died. There's a message I need to delete before my wife sees it.

PAULA: You seem tense...

WALLIS: Of course I'm tense! If my wife sees this email and finds out what I really did with the twist tie that was wrapped around her laptop cord, I'm going to be word processing on my cell phone for a month!

PAULA: So I'm thinking that's a "probably not" with respect to the use of technology in any shows you might direct?

WALLIS: I hate technology.

**SCENE 4**

***CARLIN is a math teacher. HE is focused on MICHELLE, but is clearly not happy to be here.***

CARLIN: Was it really necessary for you to make me stay after school?

Couldn't we have done this during my planning period?

MICHELLE: I have class during your planning period, Mr. Carlin.

CARLIN: What about the other girl doing these interviews?

MICHELLE: She has a class then, too.

CARLIN: What about your lunch period?

MICHELLE: They're both different from yours.

CARLIN: Staying after school is extremely inconvenient for me. I have an evening job teaching math at the community college.

MICHELLE: You realize that if you were to take over as sponsor for the drama club, you'd be staying after school to direct the musical and the spring play?

CARLIN: It was my intention to conduct rehearsals during my planning period.

MICHELLE: But... that's during the school day.

CARLIN: Correct.

MICHELLE: I'm not even sure any of the drama kids have a study hall during that period.

CARLIN: I didn't create the students' schedules, so don't blame me. If no one shows up for rehearsals, that's hardly my fault.

MICHELLE: But you can't have plays if you don't have any students to be in them!

CARLIN: Your thinking is too rigid. Theatre is art, and art can be abstract.

MICHELLE: I'm not following you.

CARLIN: You open the curtains on an empty stage for two hours. Simple. Who needs actors or a stage crew?

**SCENE 5**

***KEATON is a PE teacher.***

PAULA: Did you participate in drama when you were in high school, Mr. Keaton?

KEATON: Oh, no way.

PAULA: Did the idea of getting up on a stage in front of an audience intimidate you?

KEATON: Of course not.

PAULA: How come you never got involved?

KEATON: I thought plays were stupid. I figured, why go watch a play when I had a TV at home? And if I was going to leave the house and pay money to watch something, then I would've gone to see a movie. They have bigger budgets with special effects and changing cameras angles—way more interesting than actors on some dumb stage.

PAULA: What was it that changed your thinking about all that?

KEATON: Nothing.

PAULA: Nothing?

KEATON: Nope.

PAULA: You just came around to appreciating live theatre on your own?

KEATON: No.

PAULA: Did you see a play that moved you in some profound and unexpected way?

KEATON: No.

PAULA: Have you ever actually been to a play?

KEATON: My wife dragged me out to a production of *Oklahoma!* that our niece was in a few weeks ago.

PAULA: What did you think of the performance?

KEATON: I didn't watch it. I surfed the Internet on my cell phone instead. Found a really good deal on a used foosball table on eBay (*update reference as necessary*).

PAULA: So how is it that you went from thinking plays were stupid to liking them now?

KEATON: I still think plays are stupid. I can't imagine why anyone would want to see one. I mean, if you're out of the house and you're that desperate to be entertained, download a movie to your cell phone!

PAULA: Mr. Keaton, tell me if I'm wrong here, but I sort of get the impression that sponsoring the drama club isn't something that you'd enjoy.

KEATON: Oh, I'd hate it. Definitely.

PAULA: Then why did you ask to be considered for it?

KEATON: For the money. Why else?

PAULA: The money?

KEATON: Yeah. The foosball table was cheap, but the cost of overnight shipping from Denmark was killer.

## **SCENE 6**

***LEWIS is a keyboarding teacher.***

LEWIS: You simply can't underestimate the importance of keyboarding as a skill these days. I can't believe that it's still an elective and not a required course. If you want to use a computer with any kind of

speed and proficiency, you've got to be able to type. People need to understand this, otherwise our future generations are doomed.

MICHELLE: And you see becoming the drama sponsor as a way to help you get your message out there?

LEWIS: Definitely. Mr. Hanover built up a really strong audience base for this school. The crowds that show up for the plays here are enormous. Way bigger than the audiences they get at the Puccoon Playhouse. As long as we don't make a big deal out of the fact that Mr. Hanover isn't here anymore, it'll take a couple of shows before people realize that there's someone else in charge. So it's very important that I act on this now. Will you let me do it?

MICHELLE: Well, we have quite a few faculty members interested in taking over as drama sponsor. What exactly did you have in mind?

LEWIS: An original play about a student who doesn't take a keyboarding class.

MICHELLE: And I assume something bad happens to him?

LEWIS: He fails school and gets stuck working at a fast food restaurant in a bad neighborhood for the rest of his life.

MICHELLE: No offense, Mrs. Lewis, but the plot sounds just a little on the thin side.

LEWIS: Oh, there's more.

MICHELLE: Such as?

LEWIS: He develops acne. And his goldfish dies. Someone lets all the air out of his tires. He goes on a reality TV game show and is the first one eliminated. Then he wrecks his bicycle, loses his health insurance, fractures his collar bone, gets arrested for jaywalking, forgets to change his clock for daylight savings time, breaks up with his girlfriend, gets rejected by space aliens who consider him too pathetic to be worth abducting, watches helplessly as his pet rattlesnake is killed by an asteroid, and steps in dog poop.

MICHELLE: Really?

LEWIS: Yup.

MICHELLE: What happens in the end?

LEWIS: The sun goes supernova and destroys the Earth.

MICHELLE: All because he didn't take a keyboarding class?

LEWIS: I think we really need to drive home the point.

## **SCENE 7**

***LAKE is a Latin teacher.***

LAKE: Enrollment in my Latin classes has taken a nose dive the past few years. People think it's a dead language, and I want to prove to everyone that it's still alive and well.

PAULA: You want to take over the drama program so you can put on a play about Latin?

LAKE: No, I want to put on a play *in* Latin.

PAULA: But nobody would be able to understand it, Mr. Lake.

LAKE: They could if they spoke Latin.

PAULA: I don't think people would enroll in a Latin class just so they could understand the spring play. And even if they did, I don't think they'd learn enough in the space of three or four months to be able to... fully appreciate the show.

LAKE: Very true. But that's not the idea.

PAULA: It's not?

LAKE: No. The idea is that they will be so frustrated and ashamed by their inability to understand the play that they'll take Latin classes to prevent it from ever happening again.

PAULA: I definitely agree with you that they'd be frustrated, but I think they'd be more likely to ask for their money back than enroll in a Latin class. Especially the parents and community members.

LAKE: Hm. Good point. But still, we could show them that Latin is cool.

PAULA: I'm not sure how we could do that.

LAKE: We could take a really popular show that people already know and understand, like (*insert name of a current famous play or musical*), and perform it in Latin! I could translate the script myself!

PAULA: (*name of famous play or musical*)... in Latin?

LAKE: Sure! We could even project the English translation onto a screen behind the actors so as to not alienate anyone!

PAULA: Then why not just do the play in English in the first place?

LAKE: Because then it wouldn't be... (*with gusto*) in Latin!

PAULA: Oh. Right.

LAKE: All of the shows could be in Latin from now on! The drama club's motto could be "Carpe fabulam!"

PAULA: Meaning what?

LAKE: Seize the play!

(*PAULA groans.*)

## SCENE 8

***GERSON is a member of the school custodial staff.***

MICHELLE: I was surprised to see your name on the list, Mrs. Gerson. Custodians don't usually sponsor school activities.

GERSON: Yeah, well, I know a good opportunity when I see one.

MICHELLE: Do you enjoy interacting with the students in this school?

GERSON: I can't really say. You're the first student to actually speak to me in at least a couple of years. The kids mostly just ignore me, except for the messes they leave for me to clean up.

MICHELLE: I'm sorry. They probably don't think about it.

GERSON: I think about it. I think about it all the time.

MICHELLE: I suppose you'd like to do a play to raise awareness of the student body's role in keeping the school clean?

GERSON: Not really, no.

MICHELLE: Oh. Okay. Well, please, tell me your vision for the drama program.

GERSON: How many students are involved?

MICHELLE: We have about twenty really active members who participate in everything. More for the musical.

GERSON: Twenty. That's not bad.

MICHELLE: What do you think you could effectively do with twenty students?

GERSON: Dust the toilets.

MICHELLE: I beg your pardon?

GERSON: If we had that many custodial assistants, we could make this place sparkle.

MICHELLE: The um... point of the drama program is... drama. We put on plays.

GERSON: But you don't have to put on plays. You could just meet and talk about plays. And clean the school while you're at it.

MICHELLE: I don't think that would appeal to the members of the drama club. Um. Sorry.

GERSON: Okay... could we do a play that's got custodians in it?

MICHELLE: Are we back to doing a play about promoting a clean school?

GERSON: We could, I guess. But I was figuring if the kids were playing custodians in a show, they could research their parts by helping me out for a couple of months.

## SCENE 9

***DOOLEY is chemistry teacher.***

DOOLEY: I've found that chemistry is a very challenging subject for most students, and I want to do something to frame the content in terms they can more easily relate to.

PAULA: So you'd like to put on a play about chemistry?

DOOLEY: A chemistry musical.

PAULA: A musical. About chemistry?

DOOLEY: The periodic table of elements, to be exact.

PAULA: Mr. Dooley... do they even publish any musicals like that?

DOOLEY: I have no idea, but if they don't, we can write our own! I'm envisioning Hydrogen and Helium as the two main characters, with all of the other elements playing supporting roles, and a chorus of electrons and protons.

PAULA: That's... there's like, over 100 elements, right?

DOOLEY: 118. *(This number may be updated as necessary.)*

PAULA: Plus protons and electrons for the chorus?

DOOLEY: And neutrons.

PAULA: So we're talking what... 200-250 people on stage?

DOOLEY: At least.

PAULA: And they'll be singing and dancing?

DOOLEY: Most definitely.

PAULA: Is there going to be a set?

DOOLEY: Yes! A laboratory filled with equipment!

PAULA: With all due respect, I'm not sure we can make that all fit.

DOOLEY: Of course we can.

PAULA: How?

DOOLEY: You're the drama expert, here. You figure it out.

PAULA: But you're the one looking to take things over for the rest of the year...

DOOLEY: I'll decide what we do, and it'll be up to you to do it.

PAULA: Who's going to write the script? And the music?

DOOLEY: I don't see why we can't make it up as we go.

PAULA: What?

DOOLEY: You art types are very creative.

PAULA: You're going to stick 250 people onstage and expect them to improvise something?

DOOLEY: Mr. Hanover's room was right across the hall from mine. He did improvisational exercises with his students all the time. I remember seeing you in there. Didn't you learn anything?

PAULA: Um... given the ambition of what you have in mind... maybe it would work better if it had more adult involvement. Maybe the community theatre?

DOOLEY: The Puccoon Playhouse? No way! I want this to be good!

### **SCENE 10**

***LORIN is part of the cafeteria staff. There is something not quite right about her.***

LORIN: S'all about the food. Nobody gets it, 'cept I get it. The food.

That's what s'all about. No food, no life. No life, no people. No people, no students, no teachers, no school, no nothing. Can't have school without the food. All 'bout the food. Everything.

MICHELLE: That's a fascinating perspective.

LORIN: Cafeteria staff gets no respect. People insult the food. But no food, no life. The life they owe to ME! Gotta teach 'em. Gotta learn 'em good. Gotta show 'em. You an' me, we show 'em.

MICHELLE: Uh...

LORIN: Show 'em big. Make 'em come. Rope 'em in. So they can't resist. Make it good. Shakespeare. *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

MICHELLE: Actually, we just did a one-act version of that last year.

LORIN: No, this'll be different! Do the full thing, wit' one lil' change.

MICHELLE: What do you want to change about *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

LORIN: Make it 'bout broccoli!

MICHELLE: You want to do *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but make it about... broccoli?

LORIN: S'right.

MICHELLE: How?

LORIN: You stupid?

MICHELLE: I don't think so.

LORIN: Then how you not know how t'make *Midsummer Night's Dream* 'bout broccoli?

MICHELLE: Uh...

LORIN: Use broccoli costumes!

MICHELLE: So... same script... everything the same... just have everybody in broccoli costumes?

LORIN: S'right. Smarter'n you look.

MICHELLE: Um... when Bottom turns in the donkey, then, how does that work?

LORIN: He's a broccoli donkey!

MICHELLE: Right. Sorry. I guess that should've been obvious.

### SCENE 11

***BRADLEY is the school library secretary.***

PAULA: As the school library secretary, do you have any special talents or perspectives that you feel would be an asset to the drama program, Mr. Bradley?

(Pause.)

BRADLEY: No.

**SCENE 12**

***MR. / MRS. FOGELMAN, a history teacher, is wearing a leather jacket with a dog collar and pink pajama bottoms. MICHELLE is very, very alarmed.***

FOGELMAN: I think I'd really enjoy working with the drama program. I get up in front of my students and act like a nut every day.

MICHELLE: I've heard that you're a very dramatic history teacher.

FOGELMAN: I love to act out whole battles in front of my students.

MICHELLE: All by yourself?

FOGELMAN: Yep. And I have props. A pair of replica Greek and Roman shields that I bought as graduation presents for myself when I finished grad school. And an inflatable mace and a foam sword. I'm really into my subject area.

MICHELLE: It sounds like it.

FOGELMAN: I even have history and mythology-based tattoos. I've got a Roman centurion, the Venus of Willendorf, the Greek goddess Athena, and a Spartan spear running down the middle of my back. I use them as springboards for my lessons sometimes.

MICHELLE: You have a reputation as being one of the more eccentric members of the faculty.

FOGELMAN: I'll take that as a compliment. Thank you.

MICHELLE: Now, I know I've never taken your class, but I don't think I've seen you in this outfit before. Do you mind if I ask...?

FOGELMAN: Oh, this? It's my anniversary, so I put this on to surprise my husband (*or wife*) when I get home from work. He's really into the deconstructionist heavy metal biker slumber party stereotype look. (*Beat.*) Do you like it?

**SCENE 13**

***HUNT is wearing a sweater, bike shorts, and rhinestone-encrusted flip-flops. PAULA is trying not to freak out.***

HUNT: You look a little frazzled. One of those days?

PAULA: Yup.

HUNT: Nice sweater.

PAULA: Thank you.

HUNT: I own a bunch, myself.

PAULA: Are those bike shorts?

HUNT: Yeah. I bike home after work. When we're done here, I'll put on some tennis shoes, but for now I'm nice and comfy in my rhinestone-encrusted flip-flops.

PAULA: You have rhinestone-encrusted flip-flops.

HUNT: That's what I just said.

PAULA: Good. That's good. Good for you.

HUNT: Let's get down to business. I realize that between me and Mr. Dooley, you've got two chemistry teachers to choose from, but with all due respect, I don't think you want Mr. Dooley.

PAULA: Why is that?

HUNT: He has some pretty crazy ideas. He wants to do a musical about the periodic table of elements.

PAULA: He mentioned that.

HUNT: But I don't think he's put any thought into who would even write the thing. It'd be a disaster. I mean, don't get me wrong. Dooley's a good teacher and colleague, but he's not cut out for this.

PAULA: What would you bring to the drama program that he wouldn't?

HUNT: A way better idea for a musical.

PAULA: Like what?

HUNT: Something that the average person can relate to. I love the periodic table of elements as much as the next chemistry teacher, but it's hard for the man on the street to get excited about it. So I intend to draw inspiration from everyday life.

PAULA: Sure.

HUNT: What I want to do is a musical about the clumping properties of cat litter.

PAULA: Cat litter?

HUNT: Now obviously, we can't have anyone peeing onstage—we can't... can we?

***Thank you for reading this free excerpt from PLEASE DON'T BE MY DRAMA TEACHER by Bradley Walton. For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:***

**Brooklyn Publishers, LLC**

**P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406**

**Toll Free: 1-888-473-8521 • Fax (319) 368-8011**

**[www.brookpub.com](http://www.brookpub.com)**