

PRANKING THE TEACHER

By Bradley Walton

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CHARACTERS

(10-16 roles; all parts gender neutral)

A class of middle or high school students:

DENNIS	BEVERLY	REGAN	GRETCHEN
TANNER	BRAD	RACHEL	GERALD
NEAL	BETH	RAYMOND	GINNY
ADELE	EDWARD	CHARLIE	

MRS. / MR. ROADCAP – their teacher

NOTE: Characters whose names begin with the same letter may be combined. The genders of all characters may be switched and their names may be changed. The director is welcome to use the real names of the actors in the production. (BRAD and CHARLIE do need to be the same gender, although they can be switched to females with appropriate name changes.)

STAGING

The play is set in a high school classroom. There should be desks for the students and the teacher. There is also a small trash can and a blackboard or dry erase board with chalk or dry erase markers. The items on the teacher's desk should include a bottle of water and glue.

If the number of students calls for more desks than can reasonably be accommodated onstage, there is an optional line of dialogue about a desk shortage to due to budget cuts, and some of the students (or even most of the students) can sit on the floor when class finally begins.

SOUND EFFECTS

School bell

COSTUMES

The STUDENTS are dressed like normal teenagers and MRS. ROADCAP is dressed like a teacher.

PROPS

2 Bottles of Drinking Water

Lots of Salt Packets

Small Trash Can

Recycling Bin

Lighter

Whoopee Cushion

Shoulder Bag

Humane Mouse Trap

Canned or Bottled Coffee Beverage

Chalk or Dry Erase Markers

Pencils, Notebooks, Textbooks, Etc.

AUTHOR NOTES

This was a hard play to write. Harder than I expected. The idea was rich with amusing possibilities: An entire class plots together to pull a prank on their teacher, but then the teacher doesn't show up, and the class starts to wonder if the joke is on them. It's a teenage conspiracy comedy. Loads of fun, right? Well, for the cast and the audience, sure. But for the playwright who's trying to script as many as fifteen characters onstage for the *whole show*... man, it was tough for me to keep track of everybody when I was working on the first draft. And I wanted the cast size to be *flexible*. If I'd known how crazy this script was going to make me, I sort of wonder if I still would have plunged into the deep end with it like I did. (Yeah... I probably would've.)

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AT RISE: A classroom full of students, who are sitting and standing throughout the room. ADELE stands by an imaginary doorway at the edge of the stage, watching the hallway for MRS. ROADCAP, the teacher. Everyone looks fairly serious: the class is planning something.

There should be desks for the students (although not necessarily a desk for every student) and the teacher. There is also a trash can, a recycling bin, and a blackboard or dry erase board with chalk or dry erase markers. The items on the teacher's desk should include a bottle of drinking water and glue.

BEVERLY: Is Mrs. Roadcap coming?

ADELE: Not yet.

TANNER: What do we do?

DENNIS: I dunno. What do you think we should do, Tanner?

TANNER: It wasn't my idea that we should do something. It was your idea.

DENNIS: It was my idea to do something, but we left it up to you to figure out what the something was going to be. You were *supposed* to come up with something.

TANNER: Yeah, well...

CHARLIE: You didn't come up with something, did you?

TANNER: I was busy.

REGAN: Doing what?

TANNER: Stuff.

GRETCHEN: What kind of stuff?

TANNER: Homework.

DENNIS: Well, yeah. That's the point. Mrs. Roadcap gives too much homework. Way too much. My Playstation (*update reference as necessary*) is practically rotting, I haven't used it in so long.

BETH: Wow. That's a long time.

EDWARD: I feel your pain, Dennis. Totally.

DENNIS: My games are composting. Do you know how sad that is?

BRAD: It's pretty sad.

DENNIS: Darn right it is. So I would think that if somebody was given the job of figuring out a way to get even with the teacher for giving us too much homework, but they couldn't do it because they had too much homework, then maybe that would fuel the fire.

TANNER: My family has a heat pump.

DENNIS: It's a figure of speech.

Pranking the Teacher – Page 5

CHARLIE: We could start a fire.

REGAN: Here?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

REGAN: In this room?

CHARLIE: Sure. There's paper in the recycling bin and I've got a lighter
(pulls out a lighter) from a concert last weekend. *(Crosses to recycling bin and extends the lighter towards the papers.)* I'll just—

(GRETCHEN grabs CHARLIE and yanks him away from the bin.)

GRETCHEN: What are you doing?! We're trying to prank the teacher.
Not kill ourselves.

CHARLIE: I was going to kick it into the hall.

GRETCHEN: Are you crazy? You could burn down the school!

CHARLIE: *(Genuinely considering the thought for the first time.)* You think? Okay. Yeah. Sorry. Bad idea. I'll just go and pull the fire alarm instead. Same result, no danger.

(Starts to exit. ADELE stops him.)

ADELE: Whoa! No! No way!

CHARIE: What?

RAYMOND: Charlie, what's the matter with you? Even if you don't burn down the school, starting fires and pulling false fire alarms—you can get expelled and go to jail for that stuff if you get caught.

CHARLIE: I thought we weren't going to get caught.

DENNIS: We're not planning to get caught. But if we do, there's a difference between detention and jail. Jail is worse.

CHARLIE: Celebrities go to jail all the time.

RAYMOND: We're not celebrities. Be glad.

CHARLIE: Because we're not in jail?

RAYMOND: That and other things.

BETH: What kind of other things?

RAYMOND: Like you have an operation to make your nose look better and the doctor attaches a kneecap to your face by mistake. That kind of thing. Happens to famous people all the time.

BRAD: How would you be able to smell?

RACHEL: You wouldn't.

BETH: That's terrible.

RAYMOND: Fame has a price.

(NEAL, losing interest in the rest of the group, pulls out some salt packets, opens them, dumps their contents onto his desk, and begins playing in the salt with his fingers.)

Pranking the Teacher – Page 6

CHARLIE: Do you think if Mrs. Roadcap fell asleep that we could glue her knee to her nose, and then when she woke up, she'd think she was famous?

GINNY: I doubt that if someone woke up with their knee stuck to their nose, their first thought would be that they were famous... but even if they did, wouldn't that be a happy thought?

CHARLIE: No. Because then they'd think they were going to jail.

EDWARD: Guys, I think there's a flaw in this plan.

CHARLIE: What?

EDWARD: Trust me, okay?

CHARLIE: I thought it was a good plan.

BETH: There's some glue on Mrs. Roadcap's desk.

DENNIS: And we might use it. But not for this.

BETH: Bummer.

DENNIS: Neal?

NEAL: Yeah?

DENNIS: Can I ask what you're doing?

NEAL: Sure. *(Pause.)* Well?

DENNIS: Well what?

NEAL: Are you gonna ask?

DENNIS: What are you doing?

NEAL: Just messing around.

DENNIS: With what?

NEAL: Salt.

DENNIS: Why?

NEAL: I dunno. Just am.

DENNIS: Where did you get salt?

NEAL: Restaurant my family eats at.

RAYMOND: You stole salt packets from a restaurant? Why?

NEAL: It's not stealing. They're just sitting there for people to take.

GERALD: Yeah, but you're supposed to use them in the restaurant. Not take them home.

NEAL: Really?

GERALD: Yeah.

NEAL: Huh. I thought it was just free salt.

RACHEL: Is the teacher coming yet?

ADELE: Not yet.

(NEAL resumes playing with the salt.)

DENNIS: Okay, since Tanner didn't come up with any ideas because he was too busy with homework—

TANNER: Why me? We've got a whole class full of people here. Why did it have to be me?

Pranking the Teacher – Page 7

DENNIS: Because when Mrs. Roadcap went to the copy room and we took the vote yesterday, you were in the bathroom.

TANNER: Why not have everybody come up with a plan, and then we'd have choices?

BEVERLY: I knew I was gonna be busy.

REGAN: Me too.

GERALD: Yeah.

TANNER: Doing what?

BRAD: Homework.

ADELE: Ditto.

TANNER: And you thought I wouldn't be doing homework, too?

GINNY: We didn't figure you actually did yours.

TANNER: Why me? Why not Charlie? (*Points at CHARLIE.*) Charlie doesn't exactly seem like the homework-doing type.

CHARLIE: Hey, thanks. I work hard on my image.

BETH: Tanner, we figured you weren't doing any homework because you're failing the class.

TANNER: How do you know?

RAYMOND: You were bragging about it last week.

TANNER: I wasn't bragging. I was complaining.

RACHEL: You sounded proud of it.

TANNER: I was proud of my nonconformity, not of the fact that I was failing the class.

RAYMOND: Explain how that works.

TANNER: All the rest of you are passing. It's like you're afraid that if you don't pass, you won't fit in. All of you want to be just like everybody else. But not me. I'm different and I'm not ashamed. I'm a nonconformist, and I'm proud.

REGAN: So you're deliberately failing the class just so you can make a statement?

TANNER: Not intentionally, no. It's the teacher's fault. There's too much work. That's why I was complaining. But I was also trying to make the best of a bad situation by embracing my nonconformity.

REGAN: But you're not *trying* to be a nonconformist.

TANNER: Greatness has been thrust upon me. What can I say?

RAYMOND: Failing class is not greatness.

TANNER: It's all in how you look at it.

RACHEL: You're full of baloney.

TANNER: Maybe. But at least my Playstation isn't rotting.

RAYMOND: So you *don't* do your homework.

TANNER: I wasn't. I am now. The teacher called my mom.

REGAN: But you said you were a nonconformist.

TANNER: Anybody else's parents get a call from the teacher?

GRETCHEN: No.

Pranking the Teacher – Page 8

ADELE: Nope.

BRAD: Definitely not.

TANNER: Then you got nothing on me.

DENNIS: If you're going to be so unlike everybody else here, how about you actually hatch a plan to prank Ms. Roadcap?

TANNER: Because now I'm too busy trying to conform.

RACHEL: Is the teacher coming yet?

ADELE: Not yet.

REGAN: She's running kind of late this morning, isn't she?

GRETCHEN: It's not time for school to start.

BETH: No, but she's usually early.

DENNIS: Hey, I'm not complaining. Especially since, y'know... we don't have any kind of plan.

GINNY: Does it have to be a plan? Could it just be an idea?

CHARLIE: My dad says that if you're going to do something, then you should do it well.

TANNER: Like me failing this class.

RAYMOND: You said you were trying to drag your grades up.

TANNER: Yeah, but I was failing so well that there's no way it's gonna happen.

DENNIS: Do you go out and randomly stop people on the street to try and get affirmation from them? Did you parents not get you a puppy when you were little or something?

TANNER: No. Why?

DENNIS: Never mind. What were we talking about?

ADELE: Plan vs. idea.

DENNIS: Right. That. A plan is just more impressive than an idea. It's got more thought behind it. It implies more ambition. Higher aspirations.

TANNER: We're trying to pull a prank on the teacher. That doesn't qualify as a high aspiration.

DENNIS: Don't you go and try to be mature. We all agreed to this.

TANNER: I didn't.

DENNIS: You agreed by being in the bathroom.

GINNY: Okay. A plan is preferable. I got that. But if we don't have a plan, would we settle for an idea?

DENNIS: Do you have an idea?

GINNY: Yeah.

DENNIS: All right. Shoot.

GINNY: Whoopee cushion.

DENNIS: That's such a cliché.

CHARLIE: I think it's a great idea.

DENNIS: You would.

CHARLIE: Okay, how about we put glue on the teacher's chair?

Pranking the Teacher – Page 9

REGAN: She'd see it.

CHARLIE: We could use the stuff that dries clear.

REGAN: Then it would be dry and she wouldn't stick to the chair.

CHARLIE: We could go out and buy a glue trap.

RAYMOND: She'd see that on the chair, too.

CHARLIE: What about a mouse trap under her desk?

RAYMOND: It might break her toes. It's not funny if she has to go to the hospital.

CHARLIE: We could get a humane mouse trap. You know... one of those little box things.

RACHEL: And this would prank her... how?

CHARLIE: Oh. Um...

RACHEL: She wouldn't fit in it. Not unless we could shrink her. And that would be a prank of such great awesomeness that there wouldn't be any point bothering with the mouse trap.

CHARLIE: We could put it under her desk. And she could just stare at it and wonder what it was doing there.

RACHEL: As pranks go, that's pretty lame.

CHARLIE: She might think that the custodians put it there. And that there were mice in the school.

GERALD: Would that freak her out?

BEVERLY: Maybe.

DENNIS: A prank, guys. We're looking to pull a prank. Not engage in psychological warfare.

EDWARD: I dunno. I think all the homework she gives pretty well qualifies as psychological warfare.

GERALD: Teachers don't give homework to wage psychological warfare on their students.

EDWARD: What planet did you spend your childhood on?

BRAD: (to EDWARD) Don't tell me you seriously believe that?

EDWARD: Most of the trauma in my life has been inflicted on me by teachers.

BRAD: Then you've lived a pretty darn good life, Edward.

EDWARD: I have spent hours—days—weeks—heck, maybe months once you add it all up—doing homework. I could've spent that time playing video games, or basketball, or reading comics, watching TV... I could've been living my life. But no. I was stuck to the dining room table doing math problems, and studying for social studies tests and dumb stuff like that. I'm never gonna get those hours back. That kind of thing takes a toll on you. I'm only in 10th grade (*grade may be changed as necessary*), and I've already felt my life slipping away through my fingers. I've already started facing my own mortality. I'm growing up too fast. I'm losing my innocence here. If that's not war, I don't know what is.

Pranking the Teacher – Page 10

BETH: I don't think you're meant to take it that way.

EDWARD: But that's just it. We're *not* meant to take it that way.

There's no guns. No tanks. No open declaration of war. So nobody realizes that there's one going on. It's a secret war, and we don't even know we're fighting it, much less that we're losing. We're like stupid monkeys running on one of those stationary wheel things or going through a maze. We just accept it and go along with the game, not even knowing that it is a game, and that the deck is stacked against us so that we'll never win.

GRETCHEN: I think you mean mice, not monkeys.

EDWARD: Did you completely miss the point of everything I just said?

GRETCHEN: If you can't tell a mouse from a monkey, I think it probably discredits everything that comes out of your mouth. Makes us think that you're, y'know... maybe not too bright.

EDWARD: But it doesn't matter if it's a mouse or monkey—the kind of animal, it doesn't have anything to do with anything!

GRETCHEN: We're talking millions of years of evolution here.

ADELE: Assuming evolution is true.

GRETCHEN: Assuming, yeah. You don't just brush evolution aside by saying the difference between a mouse and a monkey is negligible.

EDWARD: I don't believe you!

GRETCHEN: That's okay. I believe you less than you believe me.

EDWARD: But—but—

GRETCHEN: I'm sorry. You shot your own argument in the foot. Or paw. Or whatever. You weren't planning on becoming a lawyer were you?

EDWARD: No. I don't know. I hadn't thought about it.

GRETCHEN: Don't do it. You'd be bad at it.

EDWARD: Look—just—homework is war, okay?

GRETCHEN: If you say so.

EDWARD: And if it's not war, then it's at least really bad.

BETH: Maybe the teacher assigns it for our own good.

EDWARD: Maybe, but it's still mean. Have you ever heard the expression "to kill with kindness?"

GINNY: No.

EDWARD: Well, that's what teachers do. They speed us along on our way to the grave by trying to make us productive members of society.

GERALD: Would it be better to grow up to be unproductive members of society?

DENNIS: Probably not. But at least you'd have time for video games.

EDWARD: Whoa—wait. You mean to tell me that you think video games aren't productive?

Pranking the Teacher – Page 11

DENNIS: No. I mean, I love video games, but it's not like you're accomplishing anything worthwhile by playing them.

EDWARD: Oh no. No no no no.

DENNIS: Maybe you're developing your reflexes or hand-eye coordination a little, but I don't think that counts as accomplishing something.

EDWARD: Maybe that's what you think, but over the summer I made it through a hundred levels of *Danger Pit 2*, rescued a princess, and I saved an entire alien race from extinction. I think that counts as accomplishing something.

GERALD: But none of that stuff is real.

EDWARD: Sure it's real! I played through it all myself.

BEVERLY: The game is real, but the stuff in it isn't.

EDWARD: It was right there on the screen. It's computer pixels and programming, but they're real pixels and it was programmed by real people and getting through it took real skill and real time played with a real controller by a real person, who would be me. So give it some respect, huh? Just because I rescued a video game princess and not a flesh and blood one doesn't mean I didn't accomplish something.

BRAD: This is getting too metaphysical for me.

CHARLIE: What if we pranked the teacher metaphysically?

BRAD: Do you even know what you're talking about?

CHARLIE: Seriously. What if we do something that's real, but not really real?

REGAN: Um, isn't that kind of what a prank already is? A fake, ridiculous situation that's not really real even though it's real?

CHALIE: Oh. Yeah. I guess so.

GRETCHEN: Any sign of the teacher?

ADELE: Nope.

BETH: Man, this is so weird.

GINNY: It's almost time for class to start.

(There is the sound of a bell ringing.)

BETH: It is time for class to start.

CHARLIE: Nuts! We're out of time.

DENNIS: No, we're not. She's not here yet.

RAYMOND: But she'll be here any second.

DENNIS: She should've been here any second for the past ten minutes. Nothing's changed.

RACHEL: Yeah, but we're definitely closer to when she *will* be here than we were ten minutes ago.

DENNIS: But we could still have plenty of time.

GERALD: We probably don't.

Pranking the Teacher – Page 12

DENNIS: You might be right, but we're going to feel like a bunch of idiots if we all sit here for the next hour with no teacher and we don't make good use of the time to plan this prank.

BEVERLY: The teacher wouldn't not show for an hour. Not unless something was really wrong.

EDWARD: Or unless she was pulling a prank on us.

(Pause.)

CHARLIE: You don't think...

RAYMOND: No.

GERALD: She wouldn't.

BRAD: Why would she?

EDWARD: Well, that's what we're doing.

CHARLIE: How would she know we're doing it?

EDWARD: She's a teacher.

CHARLIE: And?

EDWARD: Teachers know everything.

GRETCHEN: No, that's librarians.

CHARLIE: Maybe the librarian knows and told the teacher.

BRAD: That's stretching it.

EDWARD: Maybe one of us told the teacher. Maybe we've got a traitor in the class.

BETH: That's stretching it even more.

EDWARD: Is it?

DENNIS: It's pretty far-fetched. Think about it: One of us tells the teacher we're planning a prank, so the teacher decides to be late to mess with our heads?

EDWARD: But by being late, the teacher tipped us off to the fact that one of us is a traitor.

GRETCHEN: Unless there's not really a traitor and the teacher just wants us to think there is.

BETH: Then how'd the teacher find out?

GRETCHEN: I don't know. Go ask the librarian.

REGAN: Does it matter? If the teacher knows, then the teacher knows.

BEVERLY: But maybe the teacher doesn't know. We don't know.

ADELE: I'm getting confused. What is it we don't know?

REGAN: If the teacher knows or doesn't know.

EDWARD: You know what this is? Psychological warfare.

DENNIS: What, the teacher is late and somehow that's psychological warfare?

EDWARD: It's what teachers do.

RAYMOND: Maybe her car just broke down.

Pranking the Teacher – Page 13

EDWARD: If that was the case, she'd have called the school on her cell phone and there'd be an assistant or a substitute or somebody in here right now.

GINNY: Maybe her cell died.

BRAD: Maybe it was a bad accident.

ADELE: But she lives in the subdivision right behind the school. She walks to work.

EDWARD: How do you know, Adele?

ADELE: I live right next door to her.

EDWARD: You... what?

ADELE: She's my neighbor.

EDWARD: You're admitting that your house is right beside hers?

ADELE: I kinda thought it was public knowledge.

EDWARD: Who here knew that? Show of hands.

(Nobody raises any hands.)

Obviously you were mistaken.

ADELE: No, I mean, I didn't think that everybody actually knew that. I meant that it wasn't a secret. That if anybody wanted to find out, they could without any problem.

EDWARD: You're back peddling.

ADELE: I'm clarifying.

EDWARD: If you'd been straight with us in the first place, you wouldn't have to be clarifying now, would you?

ADELE: Are you implying something?

EDWARD: Is there something that I need to imply?

ADELE: Of course there isn't.

EDWARD: Because that's not what I'm inferring.

ADELE: What are you inferring?

EDWARD: That you've just proven my point.

ADELE: I didn't hear you make a point.

EDWARD: I've been implying it.

ADELE: And we were all supposed to infer it?

EDWARD: If you were paying any attention.

BRAD: I have been paying complete attention and I have no idea what the heck you two are talking about.

ADELE: He thinks I'm your traitor.

EDWARD: So you admit it.

ADELE: I admit that you think it.

EDWARD: And am I right?

ADELE: No! I didn't rat the class out to the teacher!

EDWARD: But you had every opportunity!

ADELE: Every opportunity? She's my neighbor. That means she lives in the house next to me and we see each other walking in and out

Pranking the Teacher – Page 14

our doors sometimes. It's not like we hang out or knit sweaters together.

EDWARD: What about socks? Do you knit socks together?

ADELE: No, we don't knit socks together!

EDWARD: Are you sure about that?

ADELE: Yes, I'm sure! Will you please back off?

EDWARD: You're looking bad here.

ADELE: Why?

EDWARD: Because if you were innocent, you wouldn't be cracking so easily under the scrutiny of my questioning.

ADELE: You're not questioning me, you're annoying me.

DENNIS: Come on, leave it alone.

EDWARD: But she lives next to the teacher!

DENNIS: It doesn't prove anything.

EDWARD: Of course it doesn't! And the fact that it doesn't prove it proves it! Because there's no proof in psychological warfare!

RACHEL: I can't believe this. You're being so... so...

EDWARD: Paranoid?

RACHEL: So juvenile!

EDWARD: Juvenile? I'm trying to think strategically!

DENNIS: Guys! Hey! Let's stop! We're all in this together. We shouldn't be fighting each other.

TANNER: Dennis is right. This is probably what the teacher wants to happen. Mistrust. Dissension.

DENNIS: I think that's kind of a stretch, Tanner.

EDWARD: I dunno. I think Tanner might have a point.

ADELE: Does this mean you finally realize I'm not a traitor?

EDWARD: It means I realize that you might not be the traitor. The teacher might want us to know that she's making us distrust each other so that we trust each other. We can't have that.

GINNY: Question.

DENNIS: What, Ginny?

GINNY: Edward said he was thinking strategically. Have we moved from needing a plan to needing a strategy?

EDWARD: We have definitely moved from needing a plan to needing a strategy. Why, do you have one?

GINNY: No.

CHARLIE: Bummer.

DENNIS: So we have no plan, no strategy, and no ideas.

GINNY: Whoopee cushion.

DENNIS: No good ideas.

CHARLIE: It's a classic!

DENNIS: We can do better than that!

EDWARD: Yeah, well, we're not having much luck.

CHARLIE: We could put a thumbtack on the teacher's chair.

DENNIS: That's almost as bad as the whoopee cushion.

BEVERLY: I disagree.

DENNIS: You're kidding.

BEVERLY: No.

DENNIS: You think putting a thumbtack on the teacher's chair is a good idea?

BEVERLY: No, I think it's a terrible idea.

DENNIS: But you just said you disagreed.

BEVERLY: I do. I think it's an even worse idea than the whoopee cushion.

DENNIS: That's what I said.

BEVERLY: No, you said you thought it was almost as bad an idea. You're wrong. It's worse.

DENNIS: Does it matter?

BEVERLY: Of course it matters.

DENNIS: If we both agree that it's a bad idea, what difference does it make?

BEVERLY: Sometimes when people can't agree on what they like, they're forced to agree on what they don't like. It happens at my house at dinner all the time. I don't want to see that happen here.

DENNIS: So you feel compelled to disagree about something we might have otherwise agreed on?

BEVERLY: Exactly. If we're eventually forced to agree on something nobody likes and we settle for the thumbtack, the teacher might get an infection and die, then we'd all go to jail like a bunch of celebrities. So we're better off with the whoopee cushion. It's dumb, but it's harmless.

DENNIS: We don't even have a whoopee cushion!

BEVERLY: I'm just saying.

CHARLIE: Actually, I've got one right here.

DENNIS: You've got to be kidding.

CHARLIE: Dude, whoopee cushions rock.

BEVERLY: If he's got one, I say we just do the whoopee cushion and be done with it.

GINNY: I agree!

CHARLIE: Awesome! *(Starts blowing up the whoopee cushion.)*

DENNIS: Don't you dare! *(Grabs the whoopee cushion.)*

CHARLIE: Gimme back my whoopee cushion, Dennis.

DENNIS: We can come up with something better.

CHARLIE: Give it back. This is not cool.

DENNIS: *(indicating the whoopee cushion in his hand)* This is not cool.

CHARLIE: Get a life.

DENNIS: Grow up.

CHARLIE: Make me.

DENNIS: Are you seriously looking to get in a fight with me over a whoopee cushion?

CHARLIE: I'm seriously looking to get in a fight with you because you're acting like a holier-than-thou jerk. You wanna turn a prank into high art, that's great. Do it on your own time. Some of us enjoy the simple things. Don't go forcing me to eat steak if all I want is a burger. You know what I mean?

DENNIS: I know what you mean, and I think it's really sad.

CHARLIE: Yeah, well I think it's sad that you can't appreciate this.

(Grabs DENNIS's hand holding the whoopee cushion so that noise is made.)

BRAD: *(stepping between CHARLIE and DENNIS)* Come on, guys.

Knock it off. You said it yourself, Dennis—we shouldn't be fighting each other. Why don't you two cool off and we'll do the prank another day when we've had more time to think about it?

DENNIS: No. It has to be today.

BRAD: Why?

DENNIS: Because this is driving me nuts and I don't think I can survive dragging it out for another day. This is getting ridiculous! We're talking about a class prank! A joke! Not a run for political office. Okay, no. Maybe that's not the right comparison, but anyway, this shouldn't be so hard.

CHARLIE: How about this—we're in social studies, right?

DENNIS: Yeah.

CHARLIE: Why don't we write math problems on the board? Maybe she'll think she walked into the wrong room.

REGAN: But the right students would still be in the room. And she might just think the math club had an after-school meeting in here or something.

CHARLIE: We could rearrange the desks.

REGAN: She'd just make us move them back.

CHARLIE: We could get a bunch of mulch from the flower bed out front and pile it on her desk.

DENNIS: That's actually a pretty good idea, but the flower bed is right in front of the principal's window.

CHARLIE: Somebody could distract the principal.

RAYMOND: We don't have time. The teacher could be here any second.

DENNIS: Which was pointed out quite a few seconds ago, and she's still not here. Maybe we should try the mulch thing. Someone could distract the principal while a couple of other people get the mulch. Everyone else stays here and if Mrs. Roadcap shows up, then we tell her those people went to the bathroom.

Pranking the Teacher – Page 17

BRAD: What would we do with the mulch if that happens?

CHARLIE: Get rid of the evidence. Flush it down the toilet.

BRAD: That might clog up the toilet.

CHARLIE: These are school toilets we're talking about. They're meant to handle big loads.

BETH: That's disgusting.

CHARLIE: I'm not talking about cafeteria-induced indigestion. I'm talking stuff. Objects. This is a school, for crying out loud. They expect the students to try to clog up the pipes, so they make the pipes extra big.

BETH: How do you know?

CHARLIE: It's just common sense.

BETH: But you haven't actually tested the theory?

CHARLIE: Sure I have. I tore all the pages out of a science book and flushed them.

BEVERLY: And it worked?

CHARLIE: Yeah. Went right down. Third stall in the boys' (or girls') bathroom across from the art room last April.

BRAD: That was you?

CHARLIE: What do you mean, was that me?

BRAD: That bathroom was closed for two weeks last spring! I had to walk all the way to the English hall when I wanted to use my cell phone during art class!

CHARLIE: Really?

BRAD: How could you not know?

CHARLIE: I never go down that hallway.

BRAD: Then why'd you use it?

CHARLIE: Because I never go down that hallway. I figured if I was going to try something risky, then I should try it somewhere I never went so nobody would think it was me if it backfired.

BRAD: The pages may have gone down, but they didn't go far.

CHARLIE: Huh. That's surprising.

GERALD: I guess this means we can't count on being able to flush the mulch?

BRAD: Not unless we want to close down the bathroom for two weeks.

CHARLIE: Could that be our prank? Closing down the bathroom?

RACHEL: The teachers use the restrooms in the faculty lounges.

CHARLIE: Oh.

REGAN: Mrs. Roadcap is really late. Do you think we should call the office and tell them?

DENNIS: Are you crazy?

REGAN: I'm just getting worried.

DENNIS: That's nice of you. But we still have no prank.

Pranking the Teacher – Page 18

EDWARD: Unless the teacher is pranking us by not showing up and making us squirm as we fail to plan our own prank, in which case we definitely have a prank here. Just not the one we want.

TANNER: If we do come up with a prank but we don't have a teacher, then our prank does us no good.

DENNIS: And if we're not pranking the right teacher, our prank does us no good. Whatever we come up with, I don't want to waste it on a substitute or an assistant or something.

ADELE: The longer this goes on, the less and less it looks like that's going to be a problem.

GRETCHEN: If the teacher doesn't show up at all, then we might get in trouble if we don't call the office.

DENNIS: Crud. You're probably right. Okay, we need to figure out something and we need to do it now. And it needs to be something that can carry over until tomorrow and not go to waste if we wind up with an adult in the room who's not the teacher.

BRAD: Hey, I know!

DENNIS: What?

BRAD: Mrs. Roadcap's bottle of water on her desk—we could do something with that. Nobody else would drink out of it.

DENNIS: Okay... that's got potential. What could we do to it?

CHARLIE: We could all spit in it.

GRETCHEN: That's disgusting!

BETH: I don't hate her that much!

CHARLIE: Okay... okay... it was just a thought. Don't be so touchy.

DENNIS: Let's hear some more ideas.

GINNY: Are we back to ideas now?

DENNIS: Yes, we're actively soliciting ideas.

GINNY: Not strategies or plans?

DENNIS: Do you have a strategy?

GINNY: No.

DENNIS: Do you have a plan?

GINNY: No.

DENNIS: Do you have any ideas?

GINNY: Whoopee cushion.

DENNIS: Besides that.

GINNY: No.

CHARLIE: (*looking at NEAL's desk*) Hey, what about salt?

DENNIS: Salt?

CHARLIE: Yeah. We could put salt in Mrs. Roadcap's water. The look on her face would be hilarious. She might even spit it out all over the board or something.

GERALD: Or on one of us.

Pranking the Teacher – Page 19

DENNIS: That would be priceless. Definitely worth the risk of being spit on.

GERALD: You don't sit in the front row.

DENNIS: How about this... if somebody gets spit on, then everybody in the class gives that person a dollar. How's that?

GERALD: Not bad. I can live with that.

DENNIS: Neal, you don't happen to have any more of that, do you?

(NEAL pulls out several handfuls of salt packets from his pockets or bookbag and dumps them on his desk. There should be a LOT of them.)

DENNIS: That's... that's a lot of salt.

NEAL: We eat out a lot.

DENNIS: And you just carry them around with you?

NEAL: You never know when you're gonna need stuff.

DENNIS: Okay. Well, today your foresight has paid off.

NEAL: I got some sporks and drink lids, too.

DENNIS: Um. I think we're good with the salt.

NEAL: Okay.

BRAD: *(handing the bottle of water to DENNIS)* Here's the bottle.

DENNIS: Thanks. *(Tries to twist the cap off the bottle and can't.)* Holy cow, that's tight.

TANNER: Want me to try?

DENNIS: Sure. Here.

TANNER: Ugh. *(Tries to twist the cap off the bottle. Contorts body into several ridiculous positions to gain leverage, then bangs the bottle on the teacher's desk several times and tries again, but is still unsuccessful.)*

BETH: Careful, you're going to hurt yourself.

TANNER: Is this thing glued on?

GERALD: Why would it be glued on?

EDWARD: She's pranking us. I'm telling you. The glue's right there on her desk.

RAYMOND: She's a teacher. Just because there's a bottle of glue on her desk doesn't mean she used it to glue the bottle of water shut.

DENNIS: Does somebody have a bottle of water we could switch with this one?

GERALD: Yeah, I do. It came out of one of the school vending machines, so it's the same brand as hers.

DENNIS: Okay. Thanks. *(Twists the cap off the new bottle.)* Got it. Let's open some salt packets.

(The STUDENTS begin tearing open salt packets.)

Any sign of Mrs. Roadcap in the hall?

Pranking the Teacher – Page 20

ADELE: Nope.

DENNIS: Okay, let's do this. *(Still standing at NEAL's desk, DENNIS dumps salt into the bottle.)* More.

(The STUDENTS hand DENNIS more salt, which HE dumps into the bottle. Quite a bit of it spills onto NEAL's desk. NEAL is pleased by this.)

NEAL: Cool. Salt. *(Begins to play with the new salt.)*

RACHEL: You're making a mess, Dennis.

DENNIS: Yeah, I know, but we're at a critical stage and we may not have a lot of time.

GINNY: You are actually getting some of that into the bottle, aren't you?

DENNIS: Yes, I'm getting some of it into the bottle.

ADELE: There's somebody at the end of the hall down there!

BEVERLY: Is it Mrs. Roadcap?

ADELE: Maybe, I can't tell.

DENNIS: *(screwing the lid back onto the bottle)* Quick, grab the trash can and sweep the salt off Neal's desk.

(CHARLIE grabs the trash can and several of the STUDENTS begin to brush salt into it from off of NEAL's desk.)

NEAL: Hey, I was having fun with that.

DENNIS: We don't want the teacher to think it was you.

NEAL: Oh. Do you think I can play with it tomorrow?

DENNIS: I don't think I'd go breaking out the salt packets for a while, Neal. At least not in this class.

NEAL: Bummer.

DENNIS: Look at the bright side. You've got five other classes besides this one.

NEAL: Hey, yeah. I hadn't thought of that. Cool.

(The trash can is returned to its original position.)

ADELE: It's her!

DENNIS: *(putting the water bottle on the teacher's desk)* Did she see you?

ADELE: Maybe, I don't know.

DENNIS: Just sit down.

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