

THIS DREAM

By Chris Stiles

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CHARACTERS

UNDERWEAR BOY	An average high school male
LEAD ARM GIRL	An average high school female
SLACKER GIRL	Another average high school female
TEACHER	An average female high school teacher
ALARM RINGER STUDENTS	Four to ten extra students, either gender (optional)

SETTING

A typical high school classroom. The desks of the three main students and the teacher are downstage, in front of the others. The desks of Underwear Boy, Lead Arm Girl, Slacker Girl and Teacher go right to left, in that order. The desks of the other students are behind these four desks; on each of these desks sets a ringer type alarm clock. A small stand, with a pencil sharpener attached, sets to the left of the Teacher's desk.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The particular underwear worn by Underwear Boy is not important, as long as it is unusual and funny. The only reason for using the Vote For Pedro underwear in this script is that it was what was available at the local Wal-Mart. The director should feel free to select underwear to suit the particular production. Simply change Underwear Boy's lines to reflect what he is wearing.

For alarm clocks, the good old fashioned wind up clocks work best, because they look great and they're easy to set off. However, any alarm clock will do. The trick is to train the actors to set them off simultaneously at the end of each scene.

Though the teacher is written as female, it could easily be changed to a male character.

The extra students in the play are entirely optional. Their main purpose is to set off the alarm clocks at the end of each scene, so if these actors are not used, then this job will need to be filled by the other actors.

If no lighting is used, the actors should allow the alarm clocks to ring for the duration of the transition. It would work best if the actors moved as though sleepwalking during this transition.

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SCENE ONE

AT RISE: ALL of the STUDENTS appear to be busy taking a test. The TEACHER is occupied with her own work. None of the CHARACTERS notice the ACTORS who are speaking, unless it is indicated in the script.

UNDERWEAR BOY: (*speaking to audience*) I have this dream, this recurring dream. I'm at school, taking a test, and suddenly my pencil lead snaps... and I get up to sharpen my pencil... (*HE rises, moves in front of desk. HE is wearing nothing but a shirt and boxer shorts.*) And I have no pants. That's right, no pants, just underwear. It's always the most ridiculous underwear. Today, I see, it's Napoleon Dynamite. Vote For Pedro. Anyway, I have no pants, and there's nothing I can do. It's not like I can ask the teacher for help. Inevitably, the teacher will ask...

TEACHER: (*looking up*) So what happened to your pants, anyway?

UNDERWEAR BOY: And I'll say, "I don't know. The dream started like this." And I run to the pencil sharpener. (*HE crosses left to pencil sharpener, begins sharpening pencil.*) Because it has this magic power to it. As long as I'm standing here, I'm safe. There's some sort of invisible shield to protect me. Nobody can notice my lack of pants. It's stupid, I know, but in the dream it makes perfect sense. Of course, now I'm afraid to leave the pencil sharpener, and I stand there, sharpening and sharpening, willing to spend the eternity of this dream at the sharpener, if I have to. But eventually the teacher says...

TEACHER: Isn't that thing sharp yet?

UNDERWEAR BOY: And I tell her, "It just won't sharpen." And she says...

TEACHER: Maybe that's because it's a mechanical pencil.

UNDERWEAR BOY: And she glares at me. Glares and stares because she knows, knows that behind the magical shield of the pencil sharpener, I'm standing there with no pants. She can't wait until I walk away from the magic pencil sharpener so she can point out to the class, point out to the school, point out to the world that I have no pants and I'm a failure and I deserve this humiliation. And the only way out of this horrible embarrassing situation is for...

(All of the alarm clocks on the desks go off simultaneously, then blackout.)

SCENE TWO

AT RISE: Everything looks exactly as it did at the beginning of the first scene.

LEAD ARM GIRL: I have this dream, this recurring dream. I'm at school, taking a test... And I'm looking at the test, and nothing looks familiar. I don't know the material... I don't know the subject. Surely I'm in the wrong class. Am I supposed to be here?

(The UNDERWEAR BOY rises, crosses to pencil sharpener.)

And why doesn't that guy have any pants? I need to check my schedule, to see if I belong here... but if I look in my backpack, the teacher will think I'm cheating, and I'll be banned from the class, banned from school, banned from the college of my choice! I'll raise my hand, ask for permission. *(SHE attempts to raise her hand, but her arm won't move.)* But I can't raise my hand. It won't move. My whole arm won't move. It's paralyzed, or filled with lead, unable to move more than a couple inches. *(SHE continues the desperate attempt to move her arm.)* I cry out: "Can somebody help me? My arm is filled with lead!" But nobody notices, not even the teacher, who does nothing but look at Underwear Boy and say...

TEACHER: Isn't that thing sharp, yet?

LEAD ARM GIRL: And Underwear Boy says....

UNDERWEAR BOY: It just won't sharpen.

LEAD ARM GIRL: And the teacher says...

TEACHER: Maybe that's because it's a mechanical pencil.

LEAD ARM GIRL: And Underwear Boy keeps sharpening, like he thinks nobody will notice that he has no pants as long as he's at the pencil sharpener. But we know, and the teacher won't take her eyes off him, and I'm trying to get the teacher to notice me, because class is almost over, and I haven't started the test! If only I could raise my lead filled arm. *(Again attempts to raise her arm, but it remains paralyzed.)* But I can't, and the only way to get out of this horrible embarrassing situation is for...

(Alarm clocks go off. Blackout.)

SCENE THREE

AT RISE: *The same as the previous scenes.*

SLACKER GIRL: *(rising, walking downstage, addressing the audience)* I have this dream, this recurring dream, where I'm at school, taking a test. It all seems normal, until this guy gets up to sharpen his pencil – and he's not wearing pants.

(UNDERWEAR BOY rises, crosses to pencil sharpener.)

Who would walk around school in their underwear? Unless it was for a play or something... and that's when something clicks. A play? I tried out for the school play weeks ago... and I got a part. But I never went to rehearsals! I kept meaning to go, but I put it off, and I never learned my lines. And as I'm thinking this, I look out and... oh my gosh! There's an audience! I'm onstage! It's opening night, and I don't know my lines... I'm not even sure what the play is about, except that it takes place in a classroom and students are taking a test and some guy is walking around in his underwear... maybe if I hear the first line, I think, maybe it will come back to me and I'll know what to do. I look around at everyone onstage... *(SHE crosses left, towards the pencil sharpener.)* The Underwear Boy, who keeps sharpening his pencil... *(SHE crosses right, towards the TEACHER.)* This teacher character, who won't stop staring at the kid in his underwear... *(SHE crosses right, towards LEAD ARM GIRL, who is struggling with her arm.)* Then this girl over here, who seems to have a problem with her arm. Maybe she'll help me, I think. I ask her, "Do I have a line coming up?" And she says...

LEAD ARM GIRL: Can somebody help me? My arm is filled with lead!

SLACKER GIRL: Oh, that's a lot of help. But then again, maybe that's the plot of the play! A play with a girl with a lead filled arm! And if I can remember the plot, I can remember my lines! But then the teacher character confuses things when she says...

TEACHER: Isn't that thing sharp yet?

SLACKER GIRL: And the kid in his underwear says...

UNDERWEAR BOY: It just won't sharpen...

SLACKER GIRL: Wait... it's coming back! If I had another line...

TEACHER: Maybe that's because it's a mechanical pencil.

SLACKER GIRL: *(crossing to SR)* It all makes sense! It's a play about a boy in his underwear, who thinks the pencil sharpener has a shield to keep people from noticing, and he's in conflict with the teacher who knows he has no pants, and if she can only get him away from the pencil sharpener, she can prove it. Meanwhile, there's the subplot of

the girl whose arms are filled with lead and she's paralyzed and helpless. It's all coming back! I do know this play! And I have a very important line coming up! I stand before the audience and say, "The lawnmower is of no use to the water buffalo."

(EVERYONE onstage, including the extras, look at SLACKER GIRL with surprised and horrified expressions.)

It's the wrong line! It's not even a line, it's nonsense! But I've said it, and the cast stares at me, knowing I've ruined the play. And the audience stares, dead silent. The eyes of the universe stare, judging me for not going to rehearsals and not studying my lines and not showing any commitment whatsoever. And the only way out of this horrible embarrassing situation is for...

(Alarm clocks go off. Blackout.)

SCENE FOUR

AT RISE: The same as the previous scenes.

TEACHER: *(rising, moving downstage and addressing audience)* I have this dream, this recurring dream, where I'm at school, giving a test. But something's not right. It doesn't quite feel like a normal school day. Of course, the first clue should be when a student gets up to sharpen his pencil and he's wearing no pants. A student in his underwear! That's rich. It reminds me of this play I read once... Wait a minute. I don't read plays. Why would I read a play? Wait. Some months ago, I was asked to direct the spring play, and I said yes, even though I've never directed and... could this be the play? To confirm my nightmare, one of the students says...

SLACKER GIRL: Do I have a line coming up?

TEACHER: *(crossing R towards SLACKER GIRL)* And I realize this is the play and we're performing. It's opening night and my leading lady doesn't know her lines. And one of the supporting characters says...

LEAD ARM GIRL: Can somebody help me? My arm is filled with lead!

TEACHER: Which is part of the play, but not this act! The play is a disaster and I'm not backstage like a director is supposed to be. But then again, since I'm onstage and one actor doesn't know her lines and the other is in the wrong act, I might as well save the day and say the right lines. *(SHE crosses L towards the pencil sharpener.)* So I say, "Isn't that thing sharp yet?" and my underwear actor says...

UNDERWEAR BOY: It just won't sharpen.

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