

MUCH ADO ABOUT MIDDLE SCHOOL

LOVE IS BLIND, UNTIL SOMEONE OPENS YOUR EYES

By **Chris Burruto**

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By Chris Burruto

SYNOPSIS: Monica likes Jason, Jason likes Erika, Andrea likes Reilly, Reilly is clueless, and they're all overwhelmed by too much homework, too many tests, pop quizzes, and teachers with nothing better to do than assign essays. And, unless they have good grades, the principal is going to cancel the Sixteenth Annual Super Sweetheart's Dance Extravapalooza - the biggest social event of the year!

The students decide that if they can just get their single teachers to fall in love, they will end up with less homework, their grades will improve, and everyone will get to attend the Dance-a-palooza! Unfortunately, it's one disaster after another until the students realize that love is not something that can be manufactured and manipulated with love letters, poems, potions, or any other magic except the genuine magic that comes from the heart.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(APPROXIMATELY 11 MEN AND 13 WOMEN, PLUS EXTRAS)

Jason Henshaw (m).....Thirteen or fourteen years-old with a serious crush on Monica, but he is too shy (and unaware) to do anything about it. *(146 lines)*

Reilly (m).....Jason's best friend. He has a love/hate relationship with Andrea. He is sly, wise, irreverent and the anchor for humor in the play. *(227 lines)*

Monica (f)Thirteen or fourteen years-old. Interested in Jason. Andrea's best friend. *(47 lines)*

Andrea (f).....Monica's best friend. She has a love/hate relationship with Reilly. She, like Reilly, understands things a little more deeply than most, and sees things as they truly are. *(71 lines)*

Ms. Jones (f).....English teacher and play director. She has a love/hate relationship with Coach Williams. She

is the director of the school play, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. (47 lines)

Coach Williams (m).....Basketball coach in a love/hate relationship with Ms. Jones. (47 lines)

Mr. McTwigggle (m).....The nerdy science teacher with a crush on Miss Crump, too shy to act on his feelings. (17 lines)

Miss Gladys Crump (f).....The math teacher with a crush on Mr. McTwigggle, too shy to act on her feelings. (10 lines)

Principal Hart (m or f).....Wants students to get along, or he'll cancel the dance. (44 lines)

Mrs. Hauser (f).....The principal's secretary. They know everything. (They really do.) (12 lines)

Alexa Henshaw (f).....Jason's twin sister. (28 lines)

Mrs. Henshaw (f).....Jason and Alexa's parents. (8 lines)

Mr. Henshaw (m).....(9 lines)

Mrs. Kinkaid (m or f).....The librarian. The library is a sacred place and Mrs. Kinkaid is the gatekeeper! (13 lines)

Moe (m).....The leader of the Disciples of Doom (26 lines)

Wreckx (m or f).....Member DOD

Skid (m or f).....Member DOD

Roxie (f).....Leader of the Kitty Katt Grrrlz (10 lines)

Girl (f).....Member KKG

Girl (f).....Member KKG

Wallace (m).....Wallace Albert Armstrong. Classic science nerd. The Disciples of Doom and Kitty Kat Grrrlz want Wallace to do their homework. Erika Summers has a (surprisingly) secret crush on Wallace. In *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, he is a male Fairy at the end of the play. (15 lines)

MUCH ADO ABOUT MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Erika Summers (f).....The most beautiful and popular girl in school. All the boys love her. In DREAM, she is a Fairy. (11 lines)
- Drew Martino (m).....The new boy from California. He has a “surf’s up” attitude. The girls like him because he’s new and from some place remotely exotic - California. Cast as “Bottom” in the school play and plays basketball for Coach Williams. (6 lines)
- Anxious Student (f).....Her name is Helena, named for one of the characters in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer-Night’s Dream*.
- Kid (m or f).....Sixth grader. (12 lines)
- Student extras.....There are plenty of opportunities for students to fill the hallways and as basketball players. Cast as many student extras as you are comfortable with!

AUTHOR NOTES

Much Ado About Middle School premiered March 2008 in front of two sold-out shows. **Note:** Line counts above are approximate.

The play is based loosely upon *Much Ado About Nothing* and *A Midsummer-Night’s Dream*. In *Much Ado About Middle School*, the students are performing DREAM, and we also have the pairing of similar characters - those who are too shy to act on their love, and those who are blinded - for whatever reason - to true love. Reilly is the Puck character, the mover of action. He is capricious and funny, and the play is, ostensibly, about him and his feelings - hidden and otherwise - for Andrea.

There is an element of fantasy about the play . . . the Dream Scene being one, and like DREAM, often traverses the line between fantasy and reality. The scene at the end, during the play within a play, Reilly breaks the barrier between what is illusion and what is real. He has the knowledge that this is a play within a play, and that all of life is but a dream.

But, love overcomes the fantasy, and all philosophical angles. This is, after all, a play about love and its many guises. At the end, Reilly is unmasked, and allows himself to feel untethered by anything other than his true feelings for Andrea.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Most of the play can be contained within a single set piece: a set piece containing painted lockers, and one or two benches against a back wall. This is the place where students may go between bells to socialize with friends and catch up on the latest gossip . . .

For the Library Scene, a simple desk and bookcase would do. If there is space, a flat of painted on books would do nicely.

For Hart's Office, a desk is sufficient.

Jason's Bedroom can be a living room if space is an issue. Simple couch, chair, and floor lamp will do.

During the Jason's Bedroom Scene, Monica and Andrea could be in the school library, studying, as Jason, Reilly, and Alexa discuss Jason's girl problems.

Voice overs can be done "live" or pre-recorded using tape, or Garage Band, or something similar.

COSTUMES

Most of the students will wear what they usually wear to school.

- Disciples of Doom wear black, maybe leather, or goth gear.
- Kitty Kat Grrrlz wear identical outfits. Pink and black is good.
- Hart wears a long-sleeve shirt and tie, suit coat is fine.
- Ms. Jones wears contemporary clothing.
- Coach Williams wears shorts, sneakers, cap, whistle around his neck, and stop watch.
- Miss Crump wears "nerdy" teacher clothes. Hair either in a bun, or disheveled. Thick glasses, odd, unmatched clothes.
- Mr. McTwiggle wears a white lab coat. The kookier he looks, the better.
- Mrs. Kinkaid, hair in bun, older looking, severe-looking clothes. Likes books more than people.
- Jason's parents dress in daily work clothes.
- Students in gym class should wear gym shorts and pinnies.
- Girls who play fairies in DREAM wear tutus made of colorful fabric, black leggings; boys wear garlands of vine and green togas.

PROPERTY LIST

- Papers for “bad grades”
- Props for “play rehearsal” - can use actual props for this play or past plays
- Donkey head for Bottom.
- Clipboard for Coach Williams
- Baseball cap for Coach, clipboard, stop watch, regular basketball, and later, one with Shakespeare’s picture painted on it and a card
- Phone in Hart’s Office
- Scroll of misdeeds
- Small suitcase; Hello Kitty bag or similar
- Portable phone
- Snacks for sleepover
- Bust of Shakespeare
- Globe for Kinkaid’s desk
- Turkey baster for library thermometer
- Flowers for Crump and a card
- Paper maché Klaatu Nebulae or wire-based sculpture with lots of color
- Bench for Locker Room scene.
- Chalkboard or white board.
- Letter for Erika Summers
- Large volume of Shakespeare
- Paper and pen for Reilly to write his letter
- Money (a quarter and \$2.00) for Reilly to give girl
- Letter that Andrea reads aloud
- Students should carry around books, book bags, etc. - things they would carry with them on a typical school day

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

ACT ONE, SCENE 1: Too Much Homework
ACT ONE, SCENE 2: Rehearsing Shakespeare
ACT ONE, SCENE 3: School Hallway
ACT ONE, SCENE 4: School Hallway
ACT ONE, SCENE 5: School Hallway
ACT ONE, SCENE 6: Hart’s Office
ACT ONE, SCENE 7: Jason’s Bedroom
ACT ONE, SCENE 8: School Hallway
ACT ONE, SCENE 9: The Library

ACT TWO

ACT TWO, SCENE 10: School Hallway
ACT TWO, SCENE 11: School Hallway
ACT TWO, SCENE 12: School Hallway
ACT TWO, SCENE 13: Locker Room
ACT TWO, SCENE 14: Play Rehearsal
ACT TWO, SCENE 15: School Hallway
ACT TWO, SCENE 16: School Hallway
ACT TWO, SCENE 17: The Library
ACT TWO, SCENE 18: School Hallway
ACT TWO, SCENE 19: Short Stage
ACT TWO, SCENE 20: Hart’s Office
ACT TWO, SCENE 21: The Play
ACT TWO, SCENE 22: School Hallway

ACT ONE, SCENE 1: TOO MUCH HOMEWORK

School hallway. Lockers, maybe a couple of classroom doors. This is a hallway/lobby/meeting area for students.

STUDENT 1: *(Down center, grouped with students.)* Look at this science test grade! D-plus. I really studied, too.

STUDENT 2: C-double minus. I really thought I knew this. My parents are going to ground me. Forever.

STUDENT 1: There goes my eligibility for the volleyball team.

STUDENT 2: It's the basketball team for me.

STUDENT 3: No more . . . MATH OLYMPIAD *(Cries on student shoulder.)* And we have only have competitions every four years!

STUDENT 4: *(Awe.)* F-double minus! *(Pause.)* They're right . . . *(Happy.)* Studying DOES pay off! Yippee! *(They disperse.)*

JASON: *(Down right.)* Reilly. Look at this paper! I feel like I've been run over by . . . by an elephant.

REILLY: Jason, listen, I've been run over by an elephant; it's not as bad as this.

MONICA: *(Down left.)* How did you do Andrea?

ANDREA: Let's just say, if my parents don't ground me, they're not doing their job. *(Disperse to locker or to talk to others.)*

JASON: Our teachers have been burying us alive with all this work and these tests.

REILLY: Listen Jason, I've been buried alive, and it's not as bad as this . . .

JASON: We spend so much time doing our homework, there's no time for - anything else . . . *(Meaning Monica. She has crossed.)*

MCTWIGGLE: *(Crosses to Jason. Nervous.)* Ah, Jason. Henshaw. A word if you will.

JASON: *(Exasperated.)* Mr. McTwiggie . . . I cannot believe my science grade!

MCTWIGGLE: Ah, yes, Jason, either can I. I know it was mathematically possible to score that low, but, humanly possible. No.

JASON: Thanks. It stinks. I know.

REILLY: *(Helpful.)* - - like sulfur burning in a test tube . . . stinks. Bad.

JASON: What am I supposed to do?

REILLY: How about your homework?

JASON: Hey, Reilly, you're really not helping here.

MCTWIGGLE: You know, Jason, maybe you haven't made a deep and abiding commitment to science. (*Jason distracted as girls walk across stage.*) Maybe you're distracted by, um, other concerns . . .

REILLY: Like girls. By way of example.

MCTWIGGLE: Maybe if (*Sees miss crump, on stage.*) Maybe if you engaged your mind, you could fall in love with the wonders of the whole universe . . . gravity, etropy, particles, quanta. And electrons. That seek each another out. For the sole purpose of bonding. It's all so very - - attractive - -

CRUMP: (*Walks by. Shyly.*) Hello . . . (*She quickly exits. Boys look at one another, then at McTwiggle. McTwiggle stares at her.*)

MCTWIGGLE: - - science, I mean . . .

REILLY: Uh, Mr. McTwiggle . . . you okay?

MCTWIGGLE: (*Enraptured.*) The breaking of shared covalent bonding (*Slow.*) is such sweet sorrow - - (*Notices everyone looking at him.*) oh, I'm fine. See you in the morning. (*Jason/Reilly react.*)

JASON: If I don't raise my grades, my parents aren't going to let me go to the Sixteenth Annual Super Sweetheart's Dance Extrav - - a - - Palooza. And . . . I'm the Class President. I'm supposed to be dressing up as Cupid. My mom's already bought me the wings and everything.

REILLY: Sorry old chum.

JASON: It's the biggest event in all of middle school!

Shakes head. Erika Summers enters, crosses stage and passes boys. All boys on stage come downstage and ogle.

WALLACE: Did you see . . .

BOYS: Yeah.

REILLY: She is so . . . (*Gulps.*)

BOYS: (*Lovesick.*) Uh huh . . .

MOE: All I can say is . . .

BOYS: (*Lovesick.*) Wow . . .

WALLACE: Super wow . . .

JASON: *(Monica and Andrea cross. Jason is a little embarrassed.)*

Oh, hi Monica. Andrea. How's it going . . . What, no one says hi anymore?

MONICA: *(Miffed at Jason's ogling of Erika Summers.)* Save your hellos - if that's what you call it - for Erika Summers. *(Imitates boys.)* Have you ever seen.

ANDREA: *(And other girls.)* No . . .

MONICA: I mean boys are sooooo . . .

ANDREA/MONICA: *(Together.)* Shallow!

ANDREA: - like the kiddie pool . . . *(They exit in a huff.)*

JASON: Why does it have to be so difficult? Why can't they give us a break?

REILLY: Wait a minute. Are you talking girls? Or teachers?

JASON: *(Sighs.)* Both. The biggest event in middle school: The Dance Extrava-Palooza, and it's going to pass me by. *(Looks at Monica.)* Like everything else.

REILLY: I hear you! Why does school always have to get in the way of the really important stuff?

JASON: Don't you wish sometimes, that you could wave a magic wand and have everything be exactly as it should be?

REILLY: Ooh, ooh! I had a magic wand once, but, one of the Disciples of Doom stole it from me. *(Philosophically.)* Come on, we've got play practice.

Exit stage. Lights down.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2: REHEARSING SHAKESPEARE

This can be staged by closing the main curtain and having the students "rehearse" in front of it. Monica and Andrea paired on one side of stage, Jones miming conversation with students on other.

MONICA: Four pages of algebra homework from Miss Crump!

ANDREA: How about Mr. Marini? He assigned a new ten-page history paper this week. That's on top of the one we got last week.

MONICA: All this homework is cutting into my social life, big time.

ANDREA: Speaking of which, has -

MONICA: (*Disappointed.*) Why do you do this to me? No . . . Jason hasn't asked me to the dance. (*A little sad.*) Seems all he has eyes for is Erika Summers. I don't want to talk about it. (*Thinks.*) What about - ?

ANDREA: HA! (*Disgusted.*) Reilly? I'll just leave it at that. HA! (*Drew Martino enters.*) Shhh. Wait wait . . . (*Swooning.*) The new kid. (*Girls gather.*)

GIRL: What's his name?

MONICA: Drew. Martino. Don't you just love the poetry of his name?

ANDREA: I hear he's from Venice. Or Verona. (*Draws out the word Verona. Girls sigh, lovesick.*)

GIRL: A foreigner!

MONICA: (*Pause.*) Have you ever seen?

GIRLS: (*Lovesick.*) No . . .

ANDREA: Isn't he so . . .

GIRLS: (*Lovesick.*) Uh, huh.

MONICA: Did you see his eyes?

GIRLS: (*Lovesick.*) Yeah, his eyes.

ANDREA: They're green. And so perfectly shaped, like eyes should be!

GIRLS: (*Lovesick.*) Just like they should be.

ANDREA: He's got the best hair, too.

GIRLS: (*Lovesick.*) Hair . . .

MONICA: He plays basketball.

ANDREA: And got a lead in the play. (*Bitter.*) With Reilly.

MONICA: Let's get back to Drew, shall we? And his fantastic hair. Girls? (*They exit just as Jason and Reilly enter with props.*)

JASON: We brought the (*Names props.*) you wanted for the play, Ms. Jones . . .

JONES: Thanks boys . . .

JASON: Hey Reilly, have you seen that new kid? And, just look at the way he's looking at Monica! (*Drew is looking at the group of girls from across the stage and gives flirty waves.*)

REILLY: (*Pauses. Stares.*) Look at the way Monica's looking at him!

JASON: (*Stutters.*) W-w-what did you say?

REILLY: (*Confidently.*) Oh . . . it's probably nothing. (*Crosses.*)

JASON: What are you talking about?

REILLY: Well, ever since that new kid got here from California, everyone's been kind of looking at him. Even Andrea. *(Catches himself.)* I mean, Monica. Well, all the girls. You know, he's got that surf's up haircut and that tropical tan, and he plays basketball, not to mention the play - - *(Jason grabs arm to stop his chatter.)*

JASON: Et tu Reilly? *(Shakes head.)*

JONES: *(Ready to rehearse.)* Okay everyone, *(Reilly and Jason cross right.)* Let's remember: Bottom has been turned into a donkey, his friends have abandoned him, and the Faerie Queen who has the love potion in her eyes, is going to wake up, and fall in love with the first person she sees.

GIRLS: Drew . . .

JONES: Shakespeare is going to employ eye rhymes. *(Has donkey head.)* words that rhyme only if you look at them . . .

MONICA: Like ground and wound.

JONES: Very good Monica . . .

REILLY: Love potion. Love at first sight. That Shakespeare! What a maroon . . .

JONES: Reilly! I hope you're ready with your lines.

REILLY: Puck, at your service. As always!

JONES: Good. Now, action! *(Students get in position: Reilly as Puck, Monica lays on ground as Titania, Drew in ass-head.)*

REILLY: *(As Puck, hamming it up.)* "What hempen homespuns have we swaggering here / So near the cradle of the Fairy Queen?"

JONES: Now, Drew.

DREW: *(As Bottom.)* "Why do they run away? This is a knavery of them to make me afeared . . ."

ERIKA: *(As Titania, waking up in dramatic fashion.)* "What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?"

WILLIAMS: *(Enters from center stage. Loud, coach-like. Blows whistle.)* Has anyone seen Drew Martino?

DREW: *(In the donkey head.)* Coach? Is that you? I'm here . In the donkey head.

WILLIAMS: You've got be kidding. My best PLAYER, playing a donkey on stage . . . No! Stop that. Get over here.

JONES: *(Upset.)* Excuse me! Coach? Williams? What are you doing on my stage? This is a closed rehearsal!

WILLIAMS: Let's go, Martino. Game time.

JONES: (*Upset.*) We have 30 minutes of rehearsal left . . .

WILLIAMS: No. You don't. We've got a game.

JONES: He's got rehearsal. We need him here. (*Students in the middle of this, watching like a tennis match.*)

WILLIAMS: He should be with the team, but, I allowed him to come here to and get this "thing" out of his system.

JONES: Shakespeare? Out of his system? You let him come here?

WILLIAMS: Let him. Allowed him. Gave him permission . . . Against my better judgment. (*To Drew.*) Come on Martino. (*Martino makes move to be with coach.*)

DREW: Sorry Miss Jones.

JONES: You wait right there . . . and, it's Ms . . . Jones.

WILLIAMS: Ms . . . Jones. Ha. Look, Martino put in his practice for you, now it's time for him to play basketball.

JONES: Where he can show how good he is (*Thick.*) with a ball?

STUDENTS react with an "oohh."

WILLIAMS: You see Ms. Jones, on my basketball team, the boys don't play a character, they build it.

JONES: Maybe you should be playing the jackass . . . instead of Martino - let's talk to Principal Hart.

WILLIAMS: Okay, after you . . .

JONES: Don't patronize me!

WILLIAMS: Suit yourself! Then follow me . . .

JONES: I wouldn't follow you anywhere . . . cheek by jowl or nothing!

Exit side by side scowling at one another.

GIRLS: (*Forlornly.*) Bye Drew

JASON/REILLY: Oh, brother . . . (*Lights down to end scene.*)

STUDENT: I'm not missing this! This will be epic! (*Ad-libs of agreement. All run off stage.*)

ACT ONE, SCENE 3: SCHOOL HALLWAY

Hart between Jones and Williams who are squared off. Students at lockers, listening, as the two teachers battle. Students from previous scene enter after a couple of lines.

JONES: Mr. Hart, this . . . this “basketball coach” is stealing one of my best actors.

WILLIAMS: And this woman is keeping one of my best players from an important game because he has to play a DONKEY in the school play . . .

JONES: (*Forcefully.*) I say better to play a jackass than to be one. (*Crowd goes “ooohh.”*)

HART: Doesn’t anyone have class?

STUDENTS: No . . .

HART: What play is this, Ms. Jones?

WILLIAMS: (*Sarcastically.*) That’s MZzzzzz Jones!

JONES: Shakespeare’s **A *Midsummer-Night’s Dream***. We’re performing it before the Sixteenth Annual Super Sweetheart’s Dance Extrava-Palooza. It’s a play about love: love between friends, family. (*Pauses coldly.*) And romantic love.

WILLIAMS: Ha.

JONES: It’s a comedy.

WILLIAMS: Thinly disguised as a tragedy. (*Basketball players snicker. Split dialogue scene.*)

JONES: Just because certain people have trouble with the opposite sex.

WILLIAMS: Trouble? I don’t have any trouble getting dates . . . (*Pause.*) like you. (*Students “oooh” and “awww.”*)

JONES: Your ego certainly has made you blind.

WILLIAMS: Truthfully, women do find me quite charming - - (*Students laugh.*)

JONES: I must be the lone exception!

WILLIAMS: Lone exception? Or a-lone? (*Students react.*) I find though, that it’s better to avoid women and their entanglements altogether.

JONES: And, on behalf of womankind, everywhere, I thank you. We’re all grateful you try to avoid us. It saves us the labor of ignoring you. (*Female students approve. To Hart.*) If Mr. Williams won’t allow Martino to participate in our play then . . . maybe there won’t be any bands during the pep assemblies . . . (*One group shocked, says “no.”*)

WILLIAMS: Oh, yeah? Well, maybe my players will refuse to participate in all those musical concoctions you put on every year!
(*Another group says "no."*)

JONES: No more marching band during half time!

WILLIAMS: The booster club will boycott the musicals!

JONES: You wouldn't dare.

WILLIAMS: I would dare! (*Williams angrily shakes the basketball.*)

JONES: Mr. Williams don't shake that sphere (*Note pun on Shakespeare.*) at me!

HART: (*Intervenes.*) Wait wait wait . . . what about Drew Martino? What does he want to do?

ALL: Who cares?

JONES/WILLIAMS: Mr. Hart! You'd better. Do something.

WILLIAMS: We're not finished here!

JONES: We've only just begun.

WILLIAMS: (*Crossing.*) Artsy (*Beat.*) fartsy . . .

JONES: Neanderthal . . . that by the way, is a caveman . . .

WILLIAMS: I know that! (*To players with him.*) That's a bad thing, right? (*Players shrug, not sure, and exit.*)

ALL: Whoah . . .

HART/JASON: Did you see?

ALL: Uh-uh . . .

HAUSER: That was

ALL: Impressive

HAUSER: Homeric.

MONICA: They got it.

MONICA/HAUSER: Bad.

HART: Got . . . what?

MONICA/HAUSER: You know . . .

ALL: Oh . . . (*Both groups look at one another, feel self conscious, kids gather things, exit, ad-lib until they get offstage.*)

Hart stares after students. Exits alone.

ACT ONE, SCENE 4: SCHOOL HALLWAY

Students exit classrooms as earlier. Jason and Reilly are on opposite sides of the stage as are the Disciples of Doom.

- MOE:** Did you believe that? Old man McTwigggle gave us homework.
- DOD:** Add that to the math work Old Lady Crump gave us . . .
- DOD:** What are we going to do, Moe?
- MOE:** Not our homework, that's for sure . . . (*Wallace walks passed.*)
I know, little Wallace Albert Armstrong, the original homework machine. (*Grabs Wallace.*) Wallace Wallace Wallace . . .
- WALLACE:** Uh, hello boys.
- MOE:** Can you believe all the homework work all them teachers have been dumping on us lately?
- WALLACE:** Yes, I have taken careful and copious notes of its continued accumulation . . .
- DOD:** Huh? What?
- WALLACE:** It's really piling up! Like Lake Effect snow.
- DOD:** Yup, really piling up . . .
- DOD:** It takes hours and hours to get through it all..
- WALLACE:** I know! (*Pause.*) It's magnificent, isn't it? Page after page of equations, mixtures, solutions. Beautiful problems -
- MOE:** Well, see, (*Grabs Wallace.*) we've got a problem, that needs a little solution . . . we ain't going to do our homework . . .
- WALLACE:** I believe the correct English term is "aren't" it's a contraction. But, if you don't do your homework, you'll do poorly on your weekly and yearly assessments, not to mention, you'll miss out on the magnificence of how everything in math and science just goes together so perfectly. If I may ask . . . why won't you do your homework?
- MOE:** Because we've got someone to do it for us?
- WALLACE:** Oh, excellent! A homework proxy! Who is it? (*The Kitty Kat Grlz enter unseen.*)
- MOE/DOD:** You!
- MOE:** You understand Wallace? Either you do our science homework, or - -
- ROXIE:** He can't do your homework!
- MOE:** Oh, the Kitty Kat Grlz . . . meoww! Tell me, why can't my buddy Wallace here do his homework?
- GRLZ:** Because he's already working -
- GRLZ:** For us . . .
- GRLZ:** Get your own homework machine . . . we had dibs on the nerd way before you guys. (*Bell rings.*)

MCTWIGGLE: *(Crossing. Notices the DOD and KKG facing off. Stops to hurry them to class.)* The bell rang. I believe you are now tardy to class.

MOE: Well, what are you going to do about it? Huh?

DOD: Give us retention?

MOE: We'll go to class - when we're good and ready. But first, we're going to roam the halls.

GRLZ: *(To Crump.)* We're going to write on the bathroom walls

DOD: We're going to pull the fire alarm.

GRLZ: We're going to steal stuff out of the faculty room's candy machine.

BOTH: We've got a full agenda,

GRLZ/DOD: Is there something you're going to do about it? *(Kitty Katt Grrrlz do an elaborate snap thing.)*

MCTWIGGLE: Um . . . not really . . .

Lights down. End of scene.

ACT ONE, SCENE 5: SCHOOL HALLWAY

Jason and Reilly are on stage. Erika crosses - she drops something. Or sitting on a bench, she gets up and leaves her cell phone or an object behind.

JASON: *(Sees Erika.)* Reilly, there she is! Just look at her: Erika Summers. *(Sighs.)* The first time I noticed her, I was in third grade.

REILLY: Jason, what about? *(Reilly has seen Monica and Andrea in the lobby/hallway and doesn't want Jason to embarrass himself.)* She left her phone behind . . . *(Picks up object.)* Now's my chance. Here goes nothing.

REILLY: Jason . . . wait . . . *(Tries to verbally stop him. Jason ignores him.)*

JASON: Hey, Erika! You left this, over there. By itself. It looked a little lonely . . . ha-ha. *(Uncomfortable. Of course, every student in the hallway is watching this debacle - including Monica and Andrea.)* I brought it to you. Reunited at last! Ha . . . um. We're um . . . we're in the play. Together. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream.*

Together. Well, not together-together. I'm playing the King. (*Proudly.*) Oberon. You know . . . the King of the um . . . Fairies . . . (*Realizes it doesn't sound good. She takes object and exits. Jason has just made a fool out of himself.*) Good talking to you . . . (*He ends lamely. Andrea comforts Monica with a hand on the shoulder.*)

JASON: I . . . I . . . just made a fool out of myself in front of everyone, didn't I?

REILLY: No, not everyone . . . just the girl who matters. (*Reilly puts arm around Jason and leads him offstage.*)

ANDREA: (*Disgust.*) I don't believe my eyes. Come on, we've got to go to class. (*Jones enters with Hart and Hauser miming conversation.*) Hi Ms. Jones, we were just on our way to class.

JONES: Hi girls, how are - - (*Williams crosses in front of Jones. Stops, harrumphs, and moves on.*) Upon my word/I wish for a sword/to punish a man/who so degrades a woman.

MONICA: (*Glum.*) Nice eye rhymes. (*Jones exits haughtily. Monica and Andrea exit also.*)

HELENA: (*Crying excessively.*) Mr. Hart!

Crowd is a little noisy. Hart asks for quiet.

HART: Everyone, please, please, quiet down. Now (*To Helen.*)
How can I -

HELENA: I need to talk to you -

HART: About? What is it? What's your name?

HELENA: Helena.

HART: What can I do for you?

HELENA: Well, it's about the 16th Annual Super Sweetheart's Dance Extrava-palooza . . .

HART: I see . . .

HELENA: See, there's this boy. And he's a really great kid and . . .

HART: And?

HELENA: And, my parents don't want me to go to the dance with him.

HART: What grade is he in?

HELENA: Eighth grade.

HART: Is he a trouble maker? A hooligan?

HELENA: No, he's on the math team! And he wrestles. He gets straight A's and everything.

HART: Why would your parents have a problem with you going to the dance with him?

HELENA: - - because! *(Pause.)* He goes to the OTHER middle school! *(Or another rival school.)*

ALL: *(Gasp.)* No . . . not the other middle school. *(She runs off crying.)*

HART: Hey . . . hey, everyone, you get back to school right now. I mean it. I'm not joking. Right now . . . *(Students reluctantly exit, grumbling exits.)* Mrs. Hauser, they are acting like - -

HAUSER: Neanderthals?

HART: And not just the students . . . seems everyone is losing their grip on - Mrs. Hauser, first thing tomorrow morning, I want to see Jason Henshaw, and that *(Beat, searches for right word.)* Reilly pest in my office.

HAUSER: Yes, Mr. Hart. *(They part. Hauser stops and turns around.)* If they ask, what should I say is the reason?

HART: *(Pause.)* Say *(Pause.)* nothing!

Lights down.

ACT ONE, SCENE 6: HART'S OFFICE

Lights up, Jason and Reilly in chairs on either side of Hart's desk, staring ahead. A simple desk with two chairs could do for this scene. Reilly is on Hart's phone when lights go up.

REILLY: Seven eggrolls, yeah, that's what I said - seven. Beef with snowpeas . . . yes, steamed rice, as usual . . . 1:30 in the main office. Gotcha!

JASON: Reilly, get off the phone!

REILLY: Gotta go . . . see you then!

JASON: *(Worried.)* Reilly, why are we here?

REILLY: *(Shakes head.)* No idea. You?

JASON: No. What did you do? It was bad, wasn't it? They think I'm an accomplice!

REILLY: *(Indignant.)* NO! I didn't do a - wait. *(Thinks.)* There's no way they could know about that yet. I officially don't recall.

JASON: (*Disappointed. Sarcastic.*) I don't recall. Who are you, Alberto Gonzales? (*Or other well known dissembler of facts. Hart enters.*) Think man, think!

JASON/REILLY: (*Sweetly.*) Hello Principal Hart.

JASON: May I say, sir, that's a sporty tie you're wearing this morning.

REILLY: Who's been working out? You have! (*Mimes buff.*) You're really bluff. Buff. I mean.

HART: (*Not un-nicely.*) Save it boys.

BOTH: Saving it, sir.

HART: Jason. Reilly. Let's talk about why you're here, this morning, shall we?

JASON: (*Gulps.*) It's that pie incident from last Thursday? Isn't it?

REILLY: Or (*Thinks he's nailed it.*) is it the green Jell-O? In the pool! If you'll allow us to explain, sir. Jason and I -

HART: What? When was that?

JASON: (*Under breath.*) Good one, Reilly . . .

HART: Never mind. Boys, I want to show you something. I have here (*Produces a scroll.*) a list of all the infractions, large and small, committed by you both since you were 6th graders. Your entire middle-school career. Right here.

JASON/REILLY: (*Gulp.*) Entire?

HART: Entire. (*It rolls across the stage.*)

BOYS: Wow . . . (*Exchange looks, prideful. Impressed.*)

JASON: It looks like a lot when you put it all on one page like that . . .

HART: (*Reilly and Jason ad-lib reactions.*) Every late book, every tardy. Every missed assignment. Every insubordination. Every prank, act of vandalism, or practical joke you've ever pulled, uttered, committed or contemplated has been carefully and copiously compiled here.

JASON/REILLY: (*Impressed.*) Whoah . . . nice alliteration.

JASON: It occurs to me that you (*Uncomfortable laugh.*) You . . . you must have had us under constant surveillance for quite some time . . .

HART: We did. (*Beat. Looks serious.*) We do.

REILLY: Even? Even in the little boy's room? Even there?

HART: A record like this could get certain people into a lot of trouble if it was shown to the wrong people. A record like this could follow someone around for a long, long time. Kapeesh?

BOYS: Kapeesh..

JASON: What . . . what do you want us to do?

HART: There's been a little too much "chaos" in the building. Conflict. Turbulence. I don't like it. I want . . . peace, harmony. It will make my life happier. Yours, too. I want you to find a way to get people to like each other. Otherwise . . .

JASON/REILLY: Otherwise?

HART: I cancel the dance. Simple as that.

BOTH: Cancel? The dance!

REILLY: By dance, I assume you mean the 16th Annual Super Sweetheart's Dance Extrava-Palooza.

HART: Cancelled. Gone. Done. No more.

JASON: And, you want us to - to find a way to get people to - -

HART: Get along. Harmonize.

JASON: Listen, Mr. Hart, we're good -

REILLY: - we're good - -

JASON: But, not that good. Nobody's that good. Nobody. (*Indignant.*) You're asking the impossible.

HART: You might be right. Maybe this is too much . . . even for you - I had just hoped with your . . . reputation and all . . .

JASON: Well, reputation be danged.

REILLY: Jason! Henshaw! I'm aghast. (*To Hart.*) Excuse us Jim - uh, Mr. Hart. Would you give us a second . . . (*To Jason.*) Son. In my office. Now. (*Brings him downstage.*) What's gotten into you? Huh? You're giving up? Before you try? Think man, think. This is the 16th Annual Super Sweetheart's Dance Extrava-Palooza. This is the Mac Daddy of all social events. And you . . . you just want to throw it all away. Not to mention that scroll of misdeeds. You . . . giver upper. (*Aghast.*) Did . . . Did . . . Washington give up before he crossed the Great Mississippi? Huh. Did Dr. Jonas Salk give up before he invented . . . the Vaccine? For Botox? (*Indignant.*) Did Al Gore give up before he invented Global Warming? (*Teary.*) how about that little choo choo train. Huh? I think I can, I think I can, I think I can . . . No! They. Did. Not. And we're not giving up either . . . (*Turns*

dramatically.) Alright Jim. You had me at “Save it boys.” What’s in it for us?

HART: You do this for me, no, (*Prideful.*) not just for me, but for the entire school, this (*Scroll.*) lengthy record of your deviancy . . . might simply . . . disappear . . .

JASON/REILLY: (*Pushing him.*) Might?

HART: Will. Forever. I’ll use the shredder.

JASON/REILLY: (*Draw in breath.*) The Shredder!

HART: The Shredder. Gone. No more. Do we have a deal?

JASON/REILLY: Deal. Pinky promise. (*They do.*)

HART: Now, if you’ll excuse me. (*He exits.*)

Jason and Reilly sit back down at desk.

REILLY: Wow.

JASON: You can say that again . . .

REILLY: Wow. We’re dead aren’t we?

JASON: Way dead.

HART: (*Re-enters.*) Sorry guys. I almost forgot - this is my office. If you don’t mind, I’ve got work to do. You’ve got class. You still go to class, don’t you?

JASON: Yeah, but all our homework, it’s eating us alive.

REILLY: You see, I’ve been eaten alive, and it’s not as bad as this . . . (*Boys exit ad-libbing “yes,” “sorry,” etc. Hauser enters and passes boys.*)

HAUSER: Don’t tell me . . . you didn’t.

HART: I did.

HAUSER: (*Hart shows scroll.*) They fell? For that?

HART: Uh, huh. Hook, line, and sinker . . . (*Kisses scroll.*)

ACT ONE, SCENE 7: JASON’S BEDROOM

Reilly and Jason in Jason’s bedroom. Or, it could be the family room of Jason’s house. A couch or a chair and a floor lamp will do.

MOM: (*Enters with Mr. Henshaw.*) Hi boys.

REILLY: Mr. and Mrs Henshaw! Always a pleasure!

MOM: You guys working on something for school?

JASON: Yeah, the play we're in.

REILLY: *A Midsummer-Night's Dream.*

JASON: I'm helping Reilly with his lines -

REILLY: - we're putting on the play as part of the 16th Annual Super Sweet DAY Dance Extrava - - palooza.

DAD: Wow! I hear you're playing Puck, Reilly, is that true?

REILLY: Posilutely.

MOM: Kind of like type casting isn't it?

REILLY: That's why I'm bunkered down here for the weekend. To BECOME my character of Puck. (*Holds up hand.*) Just so that you are apprised: My parents have been notified. I have teddy. My inhaler. Huggies - extra starchy, just how I like 'em - and a suitcase full of meds. (*Has a little Hello Kitty suitcase.*) Here is the health care proxy relieving you or your agents of liability should-

MOM: Thanks Reilly. A simple sleeping bag and pillow should suffice. How do you like *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*?

JASON: It's a little confusing: remembering who loves who -

REILLY: - and all that love at first sight BALONEY. Shakespeare. What a buffoon, a hack!

MOM/DAD: (*Laugh, ad-lib lines.*) "Oh really." "So, you don't think Shakespeare knew what he was talking about, huh?"

DAD: No such thing as love at first sight, hmmm? Well, let me tell you, from experience: There is such a thing.

JASON: Obviously, seeing me on the day I was born . . .

MOM: Ahhh, true, but it happened to us.

DAD: And it definitely involved a fall.

Jason and Reilly ad-lib "no."

DAD: We were playing in a college ultimate frisbee tournament.

MOM: Against each other. We both went up for the frisbee. At the exact same time. And we collided. Hard.

DAD: And your mom hit the ground, flat on her back. Out cold. But I knew. At once. That she was the one.

REILLY: The one? The one what?

DAD: What do you mean, the one what?

JASON: That he was going to marry. Doofus.

REILLY: Oh . . .

JASON: And what about you, Mom?

MOM: I may have been unconscious at the time. When I came to, all I saw was this cute guy, standing over me, staring deeply into my eyes . . . I don't remember much else. He could have said he was Harry Potter and I would have believed him.

DAD: She was *(Pause.)* dizzy with love . . .

MOM: That may have been the concussion . . . But, when you know, you know. So, it's true, we literally fell in love at first sight. *(Stage whisper.)* Or so I'm told.

DAD: Score one for Shakespeare. See you later boys. Good luck on your play. *(They exit.)*

REILLY: Your parents played ultimate frisbee? They went to college?

ALEXA: *(Enters.)* Jason, do you have the phone?

REILLY: Alexa Henshaw! The beautiful, older sister - my evening is complete!

ALEXA: Jason, phone. I need it. I've got to call Stephanie.

REILLY: *(Curious. Nosey.)* Stephanie? Who is this Stephanie?

ALEXA: *(A look.)* Stephanie is a *(Spells out.)* G-I-R-L. Like it's any of your business.

REILLY: *(Spells out.)* Gee-I-R-L . . . I wonder what that spells.

ALEXA: Reilly, I want you to listen to me when I tell you this: I have no doubt that you still don't know what a girl is. Furthermore . . . ? *(Slowly, so it sinks in.)* I'm sure girls have no idea who you are either . . . *(Pauses, while the insult hits home.)*

JASON: Oh . . . dude. She sunk your battle ship . . .

REILLY: You are so in love with me . . . pathetic - it's kind of hard to watch.

JASON: Alexa, do you have a minute? We're kind of in a little jam.

ALEXA: *(Suspicious.)* I knew it! What scheme are you up to now?

JASON: You see, Principal Hart brought us into his office.

REILLY: It's kind of nice - - some wood paneling, little fake plastic plants. It's very feng shui.

ALEXA: Did you tell Mom and Dad?

JASON: We're not in trouble - -

REILLY: - - technically.

ALEXA: That's a first . . .

JASON: *(Pause.)* He's going to cancel the dance.

ALEXA: The Extrava-Palooza?

JASON: Yeah.

ALEXA: Wow. Must be pretty serious.

REILLY: It is. He wants us to make people get along better.

ALEXA: *(Laughs.)* He asked you two? *(Pause.)* Does he even know you? Has he seen your track record?

REILLY: Seen it. He owns it!

JASON: Alexa, you've got to help us! Reilly and I have never been in a hole like this.

REILLY: See, I've lived in a hole, and it wasn't as bad as this.

ALEXA: I don't know . . .

JASON/REILLY: Alexa, pleaeaeaease! *(They prostrate themselves at her feet. They are icky and obsequious.)*

ALEXA: *(Reacting.)* Ewww. You're making my stomach turn . . . *(They grovel some more.)* Okay . . . okay . . . just stop doing that! Thank you!

JASON: We need some advice. Girl advice. Your advice.

ALEXA: *(Surprised.)* Really? *(Suspicious.)*

JASON: Alexa, what do girls want?

REILLY: From guys?

JASON: Huh?

REILLY: *(Guessing.)* Is it money? Candy? *(Snaps fingers, thinks he's got the answer.)* Jewelry? Expensive and tasty pies, like the chocolate cream pies you get at Pie in the Skies Deli! - so chocolate-y - so creamy-liscious - so - well, that's what I'd want.

ALEXA: *(Makes a disgusted sound.)* Can you hear what you're saying? This is why you are zeros with the girls . . .

Jason and Reilly short ad-lib of disappointment.

REILLY: What are you talking about? Girls worship me!

ALEXA: Not the right girls - your mother doesn't count.

REILLY: Oh.

ALEXA: You guys are clueless. *(To Jason.)* You have a great girl, who's smart, and nice, and fun, who even likes you, and you have no idea . . .

JASON: Well, who is it?

REILLY: Duh! The woman who was just here: Your mother. (*Looks to Alexa for support.*)

ALEXA: (*A little exasperated.*) Reilly! I'm talking about Monica! Jason, she likes you!

On other side of stage, huddled together, sitting in chairs, in library.

ANDREA: Are you going to ask Jason to the dance or what?

MONICA: No, I lost my nerve this morning during English class, somewhere between "hello," and "does the grilled cheese sandwich come with tater tots today?"

ANDREA: That's some really sparkling dialogue . . .

JASON: How do you know?

ALEXA: The way she asks for you on the phone. The way she looks at you. Gets all nervous around you. How she can't help smiling when she's around you . . .

ANDREA: You've got it bad girlfriend . . .

REILLY: Ah, L'amour. (*To Alexa.*) Just the way you are around me, eh, my little kitten?

ALEXA: Stow it, Reilly! (*He stows it.*)

JASON: (*Baffled.*) Monica? Likes me?

MONICA: I do. (*Pauses. Slower than usual.*) He thinks he likes Erika Summers though. Just because she's blond and beautiful.

ANDREA: Then he's a fool. Like Reilly.

REILLY: Of course. It's so obvious. You, my friend, should be (*Like an expert.*) more open to the subtle messages of fevered love being emitted all through the love-o-sphere! Like me.

ALEXA/MONICA: (*To Reilly.*) Please! You don't get off that easily!

REILLY/ANDREA: What? Huh? Me?

ALEXA: You. And Andrea . . .

REILLY/ANDREA: (*Losing nerve.*) What do you mean?

ALEXA: You know what the longest river in the world is?

REILLY: Should I answer in the form of a question?

ALEXA: (*Pause.*) It's Denial!

REILLY/ANDREA: (*Uncomfortable.*) I have no idea what you're talking about . . . we have been, and will always remain, arch enemies . . .

MONICA: “Methinks she doth protest too much!” Look, you’ve been “arch enemies” -

ALEXA: - as you call it, for as long as you can remember? Right?

JASON/REILLY: Right.

ALEXA: You and Andrea are both sustaining this relationship - - because - - it’s mutually beneficial. I watch a lot of Dr. Phil!

MONICA: See, you’re both getting something out of it.

REILLY: No. It’s not a relationship. It’s the OPPOSITE of relationship.

ANDREA: It’s the negative space around which a relationship would be.

REILLY: It’s the black hole left when you get rid of a relationship . . .

JASON: *(To Alexa.)* No, no. Alexa! You’re right!

JASON/MONICA: - that’s a relationship!

ALEXA/JASON/MONICA: You two “complete” each other . . .

REILLY/ANDREA: Ugh, wrong. *(Ad-lib disgust.)*

ALEXA: I’ve got to go. Look. There’s no short cut in getting people to like each other. But, I’ll tell you what I would do: Listen. Observe. Keep your eyes open. Good luck. *(She exits then pops her head back in.)* You’re going to need it . . .

JASON: Okay. Reilly. This is it! Our greatest challenge to date. We have to put our whole cognitive and mental acumen to the task . . .

REILLY: Got it! *(Yawns.)*

JASON: You’re tired. It’s only - *(Looks at clock and tells time.)*

REILLY: This is how I get ready to think.

JASON: Okay. On the count of three, we think. Ready?

REILLY: Ready!

JASON: One . . . two . . .

REILLY: Wait. Do we think on three, or after three? *(Jason gives him the look.)*

REILLY: Okay, okay . . . *(Lights go down very slowly. When fully down, the boys are in a different configuration. Lights up.)*

JASON: Anything?

REILLY: Nope. Nothing.

Lights go down very slowly. When fully down, the boys are in a different configuration. Lights up.

JASON: (Yawns.) Anything?

REILLY: Bone dry. Dust.

Lights go down very slowly. When fully down, the boys are in a different configuration. Lights up. Both snoring. Reilly shifts. Begins to shudder and have a nightmare . . . voices and actors in front of curtain . . . dream sequence. Voice overs.

VO JONES: Love potion in her eyes . . .

VO MCTWIGGLE: They seek each another out. For the sole purpose of bonding.

VO WILLIAMS: Most women find me attractive . . .

VO JONES: Your ego certainly has blinded you to the truth - Coach Williams!

VO MCTWIGGLE: Parting is such sweet sorrow.

VO GIRL: Did you see his eyes?

VO HART: I just want peace, harmony.

REILLY: Love at first sight. What a joke. And that Shakespeare, what a hack!

VO CHORUS: Love at first sight . . . love at first sight . . . love at first sight.

VO REILLY: You have but slumbered here whilst these visions did appear . . . did appear . . . did appear . . .

Everything fades down except a single spot on Andrea. Then on Monica. Andrea "ahems." The spot goes back to her.

REILLY: (Wakes startled.) Jason! Jason! Are you awake?

JASON: But, I don't want to be a pirate.

REILLY: Jason. Wake up. I've had the strangest dream . . . if dream it was . . . nothing but a dream. (I've got it.) I've got it!

JASON: What? What's wrong?

REILLY: Nothing! It's what's RIGHT! It's as plain as the eyes on my face! Let's call the girls.

JASON: Now? It's 4 in the morning . . .

REILLY: Call them! Tell them to meet us in front of the library first thing Monday morning. It's so easy, I wonder why I didn't see this before.

ACT ONE, SCENE 8: SCHOOL HALLWAY

MONICA: Wait, you're saying that Mr. Hart put you two in charge?

ANDREA: Does Hart even know you? Has he seen your track record?

JASON: Yes, he's seen it.

REILLY: He OWNS it!

ANDREA: Impossible. You can't get an entire school to fall in love . . .

REILLY: IN like with each other.

ANDREA: I don't care how important this dance is . . . impossible.

REILLY: Are you kidding? We DO the impossible. Did Washington think it was impossible when he crossed the great Mississippi? Huh? Was it impossible when Al Gore -

ANDREA: *(To Andrea.)* See, I told you, not enough oxygen is getting to the top floor - that's why he's like that . . .

MONICA: Wait, wait, you're right. If the teachers were to LIKE each other - even fall in serious *like-age*.

REILLY: Like I was telling you.

JASON: McTwiggle and Crump, Jones and Williams, you know, because they're always fighting with one another.

ANDREA: *(Idea dawning on her.)* Once they fall in love, they'll be so preoccupied -

REILLY: *(Slow. Triumphant.)* They'll give us less work.

ALL: Less work?

MONICA: *(Admiringly.)* You guys . . . that's genius. How did you . . .

REILLY: A mixture of Ranch Flavored Doritos, a generous dollop of Mountain Dew and Yoohoo, with a little gas and Shazam: a horrible dream - with a Shakespearean theme . . .

ANDREA: Problem.

JASON: Problem? What problem?

MONICA: HOW? How are you going to get the teachers to fall in like, or in love, or whatever . . .

JASON/REILLY: Love potion . . .

ANDREA: Love potion? What are you going to do? Call up the neighborhood witch doctor - -

REILLY: - - Shakespeare's love potion. Like in ***A Midsummer-Night's Dream!*** Come on Jason. *(Begins to exit.)*

ANDREA: Where? Where are we going? Huh?

JASON: The library . . .

GIRLS: (*Stop.*) The . . . what?

JASON: (*Dramatically.*) You heard me. The library! You know, the place with books . . . and the other stuff you read.

MONICA: (*A little sarcastically.*) Do you even know how to get there?

REILLY: Of course we do . . .

JASON: How tough could it be?

REILLY: We just go down the hallways that look totally unfamiliar -

JASON: - and we'll end up in the place, we've never been!

MONICA: It's hard to argue with logic like that. (*Lights down.*)

ACT ONE, SCENE 9: THE LIBRARY

Mrs. Kinkaid, the librarian, a little nerdy, sits behind a desk. Chain on glasses. Dead flowers on desk. Hair in bun. Sweater. Tinkering with books, maybe dusting a bust of Shakespeare. Enter Reilly and Jason.

KINKAID: (*Suspicious.*) Boys? Can I help you?

JASON: Mrs. Kinkaid. You look lovely today. And what you've done with this facility is nothing short of spectacular.

REILLY: Exactly! This has the making of a super swell library!

KINKAID: (*Suspiciously.*) What do you boys want?

REILLY: Can't guys just walk into a library and - -

KINKAID: - - Not guys like you.

JASON: Mrs. Kinkaid. (*Takes deep breath.*) We are here. To take out books. On Shakespeare . . .

REILLY: We're here for some **Shakes-ploration**, if you will.

JASON: You see, Billy Shakes, he feeds the soul . . .

KINKAID: (*She grabs her chest in shock as though she's nearly having a heart attack.*) Come here . . . (*She checks face and his cheek.*) you don't feel warm . . . no sign of fever . . . maybe, the library thermometer . . . just in case

JASON: Can't a guy just come in here and ask for a little (*Sees huge turkey baster.*) Whoah . . . ? Not in my . . .

MUCH ADO ABOUT MIDDLE SCHOOL

REILLY: *(To a sixth grader.)* - bottom. That's the name of the character I turn into a donkey . . .

KINKAID: You're serious aren't you? *(She takes picture with her cell phone.)* Come here - - I just want to commemorate this day . . . *(Weepy.)* Go forth boys. Go forth and take out books. *(She dances around the desk and helps them out.)* Here, let's start with these . . .

REILLY: Thanks Mrs. Kinkaid.

JASON: Thanks. We'll see you later, okay?

KINKAID: Yes, yes. *(Waves a white hanky.)* Adieu, Adieu parting is such sweet sorrow. *(She knocks globe off the desk; it rolls onto floor.)*

REILLY: Hey, look! All the world's on stage!

JASON: So, Reilly, we use Shakespeare's words as inspiration . . . the teachers get along, everyone gets along, and they're too busy thinking of each other. To think about us . . . ta-da: less homework.

REILLY: This could be the best thing we've ever done . . .

JASON: We're like captains of our own ship of destiny.

REILLY: This is legendary! Our children's children will be proud of us . . . what could possibly go wrong? *(As they exit, Reilly drops a book.)*

Lights down. End of ACT ONE.

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