

# ALL THE WORLD'S... BACKSTAGE!

## By Greg Cummings

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# ALL THE WORLD'S... BACKSTAGE!

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**SYNOPSIS:** Shakespeare wrote, “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players.” But where in the world do teenagers go to prepare for their everyday roles? Why, backstage, of course! From deciphering the meaning of a hallway glance, planning on how to cut gym class, or practicing yoga to recover from New Student Orientation Day, this play presents seven short comedies showing where students go to rehearse for life.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(3-8 females, 3-7 males, 0-3 either, 0-2 extras)*

### PROLOGUE:

FULL COMPANY

**SCENE 1: MOUNTAIN POSE** – Two students try to cope with the pressures of New Student Orientation Day.

HEIDI (f) ..... Teen. New student. Calm. *(28 lines)*

SAM (m/f) ..... Teen. New student. Anger management issues, then calm. *(30 lines)*

**SCENE 2: ANTHONY DELMUNDO SAID “HI”** – Classes pass. A boy looks at a girl. Their friends figure out what it all means, and what to do next.

BELLA (f) ..... Teen. Easygoing, then increasingly tense. *(20 lines)*

HOPE (f) ..... Teen. Queen bee. *(18 lines)*

FAITH (f) ..... Teen. Hope’s toady. *(18 lines)*

ANTHONY (m) ..... Teen. Easygoing. *(2 lines)*

EVAN (m) ..... Teen. Easygoing. *(2 lines)*

KEN (m) ..... Teen. Easygoing. *(4 lines)*

**SCENE 3: WHAT’S YOUR EXCUSE?** – Two boys compete to see who will skip gym class. The lovesick boy wins.

BEN (m) ..... Self-proclaimed master at avoiding gym class. *(35 lines)*

ETHAN (m) ..... Novice at avoiding gym class. *(39 lines)*

**SCENE 4: ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS** – Two students find that their new friendship is more important than being teacher’s pet.

TIFFANY (f).....Scheming. (40 lines)

AMBER (f).....Strong. (40 lines)

**SCENE 5: REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR VITAMIN D** – Initially dismissive, two students soon realize that they should instead celebrate their last year of school together.

CRYSTAL (f).....Senior. Involved in theatre. (49 lines)

KEITH (m).....Senior. Science enthusiast. (49 lines)

**SCENE 6: MUSIC HATH CHARMS** – A brother and sister cope with family issues backstage before their classical violin recital.

DOUG (m) .....Violinist. Anxious. (45 lines)

ALLEGRA (f).....Violinist. Doug’s older sister. (47 lines)

**SCENE 7: ROMEO, JULIET, THE STAGE MANAGER, AND THE ROPE PULLER** – An avant-garde presentation of the *Romeo and Juliet* party scene. The leads, who had been dating, have just broken up and aren’t speaking to each other. The harried stage manager and the mischievous curtain rope puller try to help.

JOE (m/f).....Late teens. Laid-back, mischievous. (19 lines)

TRACY (m/f).....Late teens. Harried stage manager. (28 lines)

RICK (m).....Late teens. Dim. (Non-speaking)

NICKI (f).....Late teens. Dim. (Non-speaking)

### CASTING NOTES

With minor changes in nouns and pronouns, all roles can be either female or male, except in *Anthony Delmundo Said “Hi”* (although it might be fun to reverse the genders). Also, cross-gender casting RICK (ROMEO) and NICKI (JULIET) could be interesting.

## SOUND EFFECTS

- Eerie Halloween music (Scene 5)
- Avant-garde hip-hop Elizabethan music (Scene 7)

## COSTUMES

HEIDI and SAM – End-of-summer clothes and nametags.

BELLA, HOPE, FAITH, ANTHONY, EVAN, and KEN – Everyday school clothes.

BEN and ETHAN – Regular school clothes. Ethan wears a blood-spattered shirt and has his arm in a homemade sling.

TIFFANY – Regular school clothes.

AMBER – Business casual.

CRYSTAL – Belle costume from next week's production of *Beauty and the Beast*.

KEITH – White science lab coat.

ALLEGRA – Traditional classical concert attire (black dress or black pants and muted shirt).

DOUG – Winter coat over traditional classical concert attire (white shirt, black pants); also: black cape, long black wig, and ripped t-shirt.

## PROPS

### SCENE 1: MOUNTAIN POSE

- Two backpacks
- Packet of snacks
- Pile of books
- Several large three-ring binders

### SCENE 3: WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?

- Red magic marker
- Plastic vomit

**SCENE 4: ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS**

- Two shopping bags
- Two vases of flowers
- Plastic apple

**SCENE 6: MUSIC HATH CHARMS**

- Violin cases

***DEDICATION***

*For Mr. Terry Sandler and his talented students at Peekskill  
High School*

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## PROLOGUE

**SETTING:** *A bare stage.*

**AT RISE:** *School passing bell. FULL COMPANY enters variously from all about the stage. They are individually costumed for their respective roles. They stand shoulder-to-shoulder across mid-stage.*

**FULL COMPANY:** *(In unison.) All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players,  
They have their exits and their entrances,  
And each one, in time, plays many parts.*

But ere we play our parts tonight, my friends,  
We'll show how we prepare our roles... backstage!

*School bell. COMPANY exits. Fade to black.*

## SCENE 1

### MOUNTAIN POSE

**SETTING:** *Near the vending machines near the school cafeteria on New Student Orientation Day.*

**AT START:** *School passing bell. HEIDI stands upstage, staring straight ahead. Although she looks like she is just standing there, she is engaged in the yoga position known as Mountain Pose. She is peaceful. Next to her are a very neat pile of books, her backpack, and a packet of snacks. She wears a "Hi My Name is Heidi" nametag. SAM, a whirlwind, rushes in stage right, carrying an armful of binders. He crosses left. He wears a "Hi My Name is Sam" nametag. He doesn't yet notice Heidi.*

**SAM:** *(Crossing left to right, angrily.) New Student Orientation Day!  
And my ride's late! Great! (His binders fall to the floor, he screams.)  
What? No! No! That's it! That is the last straw!*

*SAM drops to the floor and starts gathering the very large binders and putting them in his backpack. He fumes.*

**SAM:** What's this?! (*Angrily.*) The new block schedule? (*Opens it, reads.*) "Every second Wednesday of every other month is the same as every third Thursday of that same month, except in reverse, and with no study hall." What the...? (*Flips a page, reads.*) "Tip for New Students: be sure to check to see who shares your schedule of classes! Making new friends in your new school is all part of the game!" (*Standing, then sarcastically.*) "New friends! Part of the game"? I don't need any new friends! I don't even like my old friends! And: I hate games! Who are these people?!

*His gyrations cause the binders in his backpack to fall back to the floor again. Again, he screams. Again, he fumes.*

**SAM:** (*Enraged.*) What? Are you kidding me! (*Drops to the floor and again begins replacing the binders in his backpack, mumbling.*) And to top it all off, just because I overslept today—not my fault—I missed new student orientation lunch! (*Sarcastically.*) Yeah, and I bet that was delicious! (*To his stomach.*) Shut! Up! You're just my stomach. You mean nothing to me. You are not hungry. (*Reaches for a book, mistakenly grabs HEIDI'S foot, screams.*) Whoa!

**HEIDI:** (*Calmly smiling.*) And that's just my foot, Sam.

**SAM:** (*Stands.*) Where'd you come from? Stop sneaking around like that! (*Finishes re-stuffing the binders in his backpack.*) Whatever! (*Sarcastically.*) Hey, have a good afternoon, statue girl! (*Turns to exit right.*)

**HEIDI:** (*Calmly.*) Thanks. You too, Sam.

**SAM:** Hey! (*Stops, turns to face her.*) How do you know my name?

**HEIDI:** (*Calmly.*) It's on your nametag... Sam.

**SAM:** (*Sarcastically.*) What do you know, well right you are... (*Reads her nametag.*) Heidi! Well, ta-ta, Heidi! I'm out of here! (*Turns to exit, turns back.*) Stop it! Stop it right now!

**HEIDI:** (*Calmly.*) Stop what, Sam?

**SAM:** Stop standing there! Move around or something!

**HEIDI:** (*Calmly.*) I can't, Sam. This... is yoga.

**SAM:** What?

**HEIDI:** *(Calmly.)* In yoga, we call this... Mountain Pose.

**SAM:** *(Sarcastically.)* Yoga has a name for “just standing there”?  
*(Pause.)* Genius!

**HEIDI:** *(Calmly.)* It seems simple but actually it’s quite complicated.

**SAM:** *(Sarcastically.)* Oh, yeah, it looks like rocket science!

**HEIDI:** *(Calmly.)* I use it to relieve the stress of the day and rejuvenate my body.

**SAM:** *(Stressed.)* Stress? From what?

**HEIDI:** *(Calmly.)* New Student Orientation Day. New school. New books. New block schedule. Trying to make new friends.

**SAM:** Again with the “make new friends” garbage! *(Disgusted.)* That’s it! Ta-ta, Heidi! I’m out of here! *(Turns to leave.)*

**HEIDI:** *(Calmly.)* You should try it.

**SAM:** *(Stops, turns to her.)* Try what?

**HEIDI:** *(Calmly.)* Mountain Pose. I could... teach you.

**SAM:** *(Mockingly.)* Oh, you could teach me? To what? Stand still? To relieve my stress? Let me give you a clue, “Heidi”: Old Sammy boy here doesn’t have any stress! Old Sammy boy here doesn’t even know the meaning of the word!

*SAM starts to exit, but, again, his gyrations cause the binders in his backpack to fall back to the floor again.*

**SAM:** *(Screaming.)* Thanks, “Heidi”! I hope you’re happy now! Look what you made me do!

*SAM drops to the floor and begins replacing the binders in his backpack.*

**HEIDI:** *(Calmly.)* Would you like some help with that, Sam?

**SAM:** No! *(Mocking.)* “I don’t want some help with that, Sam”!  
*(Gathering his binders, noticing her snacks.)* Hey, what are those?

**HEIDI:** *(Calmly.)* Roasted seaweed chips. *(Pause.)* Try one.

**SAM:** *(Scoffing.)* Roasted seaweed chips? Are you kidding me!?

**HEIDI:** *(Calmly.)* You missed new student orientation lunch. You said you were starving.

**SAM:** Not starving enough to eat kelp!

**HEIDI:** *(Calmly.)* Roasted seaweed chips.

**SAM:** Whatever! (*His binders are in his backpack.*) Adios, Heidi! I'm out of here! (*Turns to go.*)

**HEIDI:** (*Calmly.*) Wait. Sam. What was that?

**SAM:** (*Turns to her.*) What?

**HEIDI:** (*Calmly.*) That... sound

**SAM:** What sound? Oh my God! That was my stomach! (*To his stomach.*) I thought I told you to shut up! (*To HEIDI.*) You heard that?

**HEIDI:** (*Calmly.*) In yoga, one achieves a state of active relaxation... all of the senses become heightened.

**SAM:** Well, tell your senses to stop eavesdropping on my stomach!

**HEIDI:** (*Smiling, calmly interrupting.*) Oh, Sam... just try one.

**SAM:** (*Back to his enraged self.*) Fine! You win! I'll try one! But just one! And not because you asked me to! Because I am actually starving to death and I don't want this school to be my final resting place! (*Reads bag, reads sarcastically.*) "Roasted seaweed chips"! (*Pause.*) Seaweed! (*Reads the bag.*) What's in this stuff? Jellyfish eyeballs?

**HEIDI:** (*Calmly.*) Don't worry, Sam... it's totally organic.

**SAM:** (*Sarcastically.*) Yeah, that was my main concern! (*Opens the bag and tastes one.*) Too salty. (*Finishes it, eats another.*) Hmm... (*Eats another, calms down a bit.*) OK... not that salty. (*Eats another, calms down some more, closes his eyes.*)

**HEIDI:** (*Calmly.*) Sam?

*SAM, quite blissed out now, instinctively sits in Lotus position.*

**HEIDI:** Sam?

*SAM hums to himself.*

**HEIDI:** (*Calmly.*) Sam?

**SAM:** (*Eyes closed, serene.*) Yes, Heidi?

**HEIDI:** (*Serene.*) Do me a favor?

**SAM:** (*Eyes closed, serene.*) Sure. Anything...

**HEIDI:** (*Serene.*) Check our schedules?

**SAM:** (*Eyes closed, serene.*) Hmmmm?

**HEIDI:** To see if we have any classes together?

**SAM:** *(Eyes closed, serene.)* Mmmm. Sure. Great idea, Heidi...  
*(Doesn't move.)*

**HEIDI:** *(Serene.)* Um. Sam?

**SAM:** *(Eyes closed, enjoying his bliss.)* Mm? *(Pause.)* Oh yeah.  
*(Pause.)* Give me a minute...

**HEIDI:** *(Serene, smiling.)* Sure thing, Sam. *(Pause.)* Sure thing.

*Fade to black.*

**THE END**

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## SCENE 2

## ANTHONY DELMUNDO SAID "HI," PART ONE

**SETTING:** *In front of the mirrors in the girls' restroom.*

**AT RISE:** *School passing bell. FAITH and HOPE stand facing the audience. The audience is their mirror. They primp. BELLA enters stage left and stands between FAITH and HOPE. ALL primp.*

**BELLA:** Faith. Hope. (*Primps.*)

**FAITH and HOPE:** Bella. (*Primping.*)

**BELLA:** (*Matter-of-factly.*) Oh. Anthony said "hi."

**FAITH and HOPE:** (*Impressed, slowly turns to her.*) What?

**BELLA:** (*Primping.*) In the hall. Just now. Anthony. He said "hi."

**FAITH and HOPE:** (*Doubly impressed.*) Anthony Delmundo?

**BELLA:** Yeah...

**FAITH and HOPE:** Anthony Delmundo? Said "hi"?

**BELLA:** Um. Yeah.

**FAITH:** To you?

**BELLA:** Yeah... maybe...

**FAITH:** Wait. Maybe?

**BELLA:** I mean, maybe it was, "hello," or "hi," or...

**FAITH:** You don't remember?! This is Anthony Delmundo we're talking about!

**HOPE:** OK! (*To BELLA.*) Think back: did he look at you?

**BELLA:** Um... yes.

**HOPE:** Good! So: he looked at you! Wait: was it a glance? Or was it a full-on, his-eyes-lock-your-eyes moment?

**BELLA:** I think... more of just a glance.

**FAITH:** (*Disappointed.*) Oh.

**HOPE:** No! It's OK! (*To BELLA.*) Did he nod, or shrug, or anything?

**BELLA:** Yes! I think he... nodded!

**FAITH:** (*Impressed.*) He nodded? Oh. My. God.

**BELLA:** Yeah, he nodded. He definitely nodded!

**FAITH:** (*Overcome.*) Anthony Delmundo? Nodded? At you?

**HOPE:** That's what she said!

**FAITH:** (*Swooning.*) I may die! I may die right here on the floor of the girls' restroom! (*Lies down.*)

**HOPE:** OK: (*Recapping.*) So Anthony Delmundo might have said “hello” or “hi.” But he definitely glanced at you? And then he... nodded?

**BELLA:** Yes!

**HOPE:** OK. (*Pause.*) Did... he... smile?

**BELLA:** I... don't remember.

**FAITH:** (*Sits up.*) !! May! Die! (*Lies down.*)

**HOPE:** (*To BELLA.*) It's OK! (*Pause.*) This is very important, Bella!

**BELLA:** I know, I know!

**HOPE:** Just close your eyes, and try to remember!

*BELLA closes her eyes.*

**HOPE:** (*Slowly.*) Did he smile at you?

**FAITH:** (*Still on the floor, crosses her fingers.*) Smile, Anthony, smile!

**BELLA:** Yes! He smiled!

**HOPE:** Are you sure?

**BELLA:** (*Opens her eyes.*) He definitely smiled!

**FAITH:** (*Stands.*) Yes! (*Swooning.*) I see rainbows! I see butterflies! I'm dancing with them! (*Pause.*) I'm dancing with Anthony Delmundo!

**HOPE:** (*To FAITH.*) Quiet! (*To BELLA.*) OK! Last question. Hair: dry or product?

**BELLA:** (*Pause.*) Product!

**FAITH:** Product?

**HOPE:** Are... you... sure?

**BELLA:** Yes! The fluorescent lights made it glisten!

**FAITH:** (*Swooning.*) Hold me! Someone hold me! (*Closes eyes, swoons.*)

*School bell.*

**HOPE:** Come on!

**BELLA:** Wait! No! I can't! I'll see Anthony on the way to math! What will I say?

**FAITH:** (*Eyes closed, lost, swooning.*) Anthony... (*Running her hands through her hair.*) Glistening...

**BELLA:** What do I do?

**HOPE:** You've got this! (*Takes BELLA'S arm.*) Listen very carefully...

*HOPE leaves with BELLA.*

**FAITH:** (*Eyes closed, swooning.*) Anthony... glistening... (*Opens eyes, looks around.*) Anthony? Anthony, wait for me!

*FAITH exits after HOPE and BELLA. Blackout. Lights up in front of the mirrors in the boys' restroom. School bell. EVAN and KEN stand shoulder-to-shoulder, facing the audience. Slowly, they primp. ANTHONY enters, stage right. EVAN and KEN continue primping. ANTHONY stands shoulder- to-shoulder with EVAN and KEN. ALL slowly primp.*

**ANTHONY:** Evan. Ken.

**EVAN and KEN:** Anthony Delmundo

**KEN:** (*Pause.*) You see Bella today?

**ANTHONY:** (*Pause.*) Bella? (*Pause, then sincerely.*) I don't remember.

**EVAN and KEN:** (*Pause.*) Cool.

*School passing bell. They regard themselves in the mirror, pause, then exit. Fade to black.*

**THE END**

**SCENE 3**  
*WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?*

**SETTING:** *Two chairs face the audience. Outside the coach's office before gym class.*

**AT START:** *School passing bell. BEN sits in a chair. He is calm. Checking to see that he's not being observed, he rolls up his sleeve and draws red dots on his arm with a marker.*

**ETHAN:** *(Off right, clearly fake sneezing.)* Achoo!

*Nervous, BEN quickly stops drawing, puts the marker away, and rolls down his sleeve. Enter ETHAN, stage right. ETHAN'S left arm is in a homemade sling. He acts disoriented. (He's not a good actor.) His right sleeve is splattered with fake blood. ETHAN moans, and acts like he has a limp. As he limps past BEN, he wheezes.*

**BEN:** *(To himself.)* Ethan? *(Pause.)* No. No, I don't think so...

**ETHAN:** *(Acts sick to his stomach.)* Whuah! *(Tosses a wad of plastic vomit to the floor.)*

**BEN:** *(Chiding.)* Ethan, Ethan, Ethan, Ethan.

*BEN yanks ETHAN into the chair next to him.*

**ETHAN:** What?

**BEN:** *(Takes fake vomit from the floor.)* Plastic vomit? Plastic vomit? What are you? Seven?

**ETHAN:** You're right, Ben, you're right, you're right, you're right. Fake vomit is childish! But look at this! *(Exhibits his left arm in a sling, and acts in pain.)* Agh!

*BEN tosses the fake vomit onto ETHAN'S blood-spattered right sleeve.*

**ETHAN:** *(Acting pain.)* Ow!

**BEN:** "Ow"? *(Pause.)* "Ow"? *(Chiding.)* Ethan! That arm is clearly not broken! And this is clearly ketchup! Wait. *(Tastes his sleeve.)* That's not ketchup.

**ETHAN:** (*Sheepishly.*) It's... salsa...

**BEN:** Salsa?!

**ETHAN:** (*Sheepishly.*) I thought salsa looked more... scabby...

**BEN:** "More scabby"? "More scabby"? Ethan, this is embarrassing. Aren't you embarrassed? I'm embarrassed for you right now.

**ETHAN:** OK, OK, watch this: (*Loudly, acting disoriented.*) Coach? Coach? Is that you? (*Pause.*) Well, what do you think?

**BEN:** Worst. Acting. Since. Adam. Sandler!

**ETHAN:** But Adam Sandler is amazing!

**BEN:** Adam Sandler IS amazing! But he's a horrible actor! That's what makes him so amazing!

**ETHAN:** You're right, you're right, you're right! (*Pause.*) OK, how about this: (*Regarding his left arm in the sling.*) "I can't make it to gym class today, coach, I busted my arm because I was working so hard and intensely with my personal trainer whom my mom hired to help me get into great physical condition because I know what you always say, 'A healthy mind and a healthy body' is true, coach, so true, so true." (*Pause.*) Well?

**BEN:** (*Flatly.*) That would be a no. That would be a hard no.

**ETHAN:** OK, OK, OK. Time to bring out the big guns! (*Stands, steps on his fake bad leg.*) Ow! (*Falls to floor, acts hurt.*) "Coach! I broke my leg! Again! I heard my femur crack this time! But I don't care, I just don't care anymore, coach, I'll crawl to gym class! That's how much I love it!" (*Starts to crawl stage left.*) "That's how much your gym class means to me, coach! It means more than life itself!"

*ETHAN continues to crawl stage left. BEN grabs ETHAN'S foot, and holds him.*

**ETHAN:** (*Lost in his acting.*) "I don't care what the topic of the day is, coach! Dodge ball? I love it! Climb the rope? You betcha! Wellness? Sure, why not? (*To BEN, regarding his foot.*) Hey, what are you doing?"

**BEN:** (*Sarcastically.*) Wellness?

**ETHAN:** I don't know, don't we have a "Wellness" unit coming up!

**BEN:** Ethan, Ethan, Ethan. (*Drops ETHAN'S foot.*)

**ETHAN:** (*Defeated, slowly.*) I know, I know, I know! (*Pause.*) They're the worst gym excuses in the world! (*Remains on the floor.*)

**BEN:** (*Comforting.*) No, no, no. That's not it. They're not that bad. Really.

**ETHAN:** You mean it?

**BEN:** Sure! Plus, you chose a great day. Coach is out and we've got a substitute, so that was smart of you. Very smart. It's just that...

**ETHAN:** (*Defeated.*) I know, I know, I know: you were here first.

**BEN:** And early bird gets the worm (*Pause.*) I don't make the rules, Ethan.

**ETHAN:** (*Defeated.*) I know.

**BEN:** Let me show you a little secret. (*Looks around to see he's not being observed, then unbuttons his sleeve to show the red dots on his arm.*)

**ETHAN:** Yikes! Ben! Nasty rash! Go to the nurse! (*Recoiling.*) Are you contagious?

**BEN:** (*Smiles.*) Relax. (*Proudly exhibits the marker.*)

**ETHAN:** (*Stunned.*) Magic marker?

**BEN:** Ssh! (*Showing the marker.*) I got it from the art room.

**ETHAN:** (*Impressed.*) But... won't it smudge?

**BEN:** (*Proudly.*) Indelible ink. It's waterproof. Won't wash off for days.

**ETHAN:** (*Impressed.*) That is one perfect rash. Ben, you're a genius.

**BEN:** (*Modestly.*) Well, I'll let others decide that. (*Puts the marker away.*)

**ETHAN:** No, Ben! Really! You're a gym excuse artist!

**BEN:** (*Modestly.*) Aw, shucks....

**ETHAN:** (*Wailing.*) Plastic vomit? What was I thinking?

**BEN:** (*Comforting.*) Rookie mistake.

**ETHAN:** (*Wailing.*) And: salsa for blood? "More scabby"? What's wrong with me?

**BEN:** (*Comforting.*) Oh, you'll learn. Give it time.

**ETHAN:** I can't! (*Wailing.*) Joanie!

**BEN:** (*Startled.*) What? (*Looking around.*)

**ETHAN:** (*Wailing.*) Joanie!

**BEN:** Excuse me?

**ETHAN:** (*Wailing.*) Joanie!

**BEN:** The new girl?

**ETHAN:** (*Wailing.*) Yeah!

**BEN:** The one with the Doctor Strange backpack?

**ETHAN:** (*Wailing.*) Yeah!

**BEN:** And the spiderweb fingernail decals?

**ETHAN:** (*Wailing.*) I'm in love!

**BEN:** (*Increasingly concerned.*) OK...

**ETHAN:** (*Wailing.*) We are so much alike: I eat lunch! Joanie eats lunch! Joanie texts! I text! Joanie sits in the back of the room in history class! I sit in the back of the room in history class!

**BEN:** (*Sarcastically.*) Sounds like a match made in heaven.

**ETHAN:** (*Not understanding sarcasm.*) I know, right? (*Writhes, wails.*)

**BEN:** (*Trying to get rid of him.*) Listen, Ethan, buddy, I can see you've got a lot on your mind there, what with Joanie and all... and drooling all over the floor there, so maybe you should just go get ready for gym class. You know, take your mind off...

**ETHAN:** Joanie! (*Wailing, writhing.*) I only wanted to skip gym class today so I could get sent to the nurse's office so I could write some more love poems about her, but now... well, look at me! (*Wails.*)

**BEN:** Ethan? (*No response.*) Ethan? (*Realizing.*) Nuts.

**ETHAN:** (*Wailing.*) What?

**BEN:** (*Defeated.*) Nothing. (*Reluctantly rolls down his sleeve to hide his rash.*)

**ETHAN:** (*Wailing.*) Ben? Ben? What are you doing?

*School bell. BEN stands to go.*

**ETHAN:** (*Wailing.*) Ben? Ben? Where are you going?

**BEN:** (*Sighs.*) To get ready for gym class. (*Turns right.*)

**ETHAN:** (*Wailing.*) But what about me?

**BEN:** (*Stops.*) You? You, Ethan? Let me see: oh, right: You'll be excused from gym class today. You'll spend the period, in the nurse's office, writing love poems to Joanie!

**ETHAN:** (*Wailing.*) But, Ben... I'm not even sick!

**BEN:** (*Shaking his head.*) Yes you are, Ethan. Yes, yes you are.

*BEN exits. ETHAN, lovesick, remains on the floor, writhing and wailing. Fade to black.*

**THE END**

**SCENE 4***ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS*

**SETTING:** *Dr. Morris's homeroom, before class.*

**AT START:** *School passing bell. Enter TIFFANY left carrying a shopping bag and a vase of freshly cut flowers. She looks around for a place to put them. She chews gum. Enter AMBER left. She also carries a vase of freshly cut flowers.*

**AMBER:** Tiffany?

**TIFFANY:** Oh, hi Amber.

**AMBER:** What are you doing?

**TIFFANY:** Dr. Morris will be here any minute. Tell me, would these look better on her desk, or over by her bookshelf?

**AMBER:** I don't understand. What are you doing?

**TIFFANY:** Well, new girl, I'm merely brightening Dr. Morris's Monday morning with some freshly cut flowers.

**AMBER:** But...

**TIFFANY:** But what? I can't do that? Because why? Because being teacher's pet is your job?

**AMBER:** I didn't say that.

**TIFFANY:** But you meant it! Listen: putting freshly cut flowers on Dr. Morris's desk was your job only because you made it your job! Anyway, you were absent on Friday, Amber dear, so I decided to make your job, my job!

**AMBER:** But... I had a dentist appointment on Friday.

**TIFFANY:** *(Smiling.)* I assumed you died.

**AMBER:** I needed a filling!

**TIFFANY:** *(Smiling.)* And that, being dead, you wouldn't be able to provide your regular freshly cut flowers for Dr. Morris's desk today. *(Motioning to her shopping bag.)* Amber, be a dear, will you, and pass me an apple from my bag?

**AMBER:** An apple for the teacher's desk? Isn't that a little...

**TIFFANY:** ...a little cliché? Maybe here. Maybe today. But not back in the day. *(Pause.)* Not in Walnut Grove.

**AMBER:** What do you mean?

**TIFFANY:** *Little House on the Prairie*. Gee, she quotes from it all the time.

**AMBER:** I know that! I loved *Little House* when I was a kid. I was... waiting for the right time... to talk with her about it.

**TIFFANY:** (*Sarcastically.*) Aw. Well, too late now!

*From her bag, TIFFANY removes an apple and places it on Dr. Morris's desk.*

**AMBER:** (*Reading TIFFANY'S bag.*) The *Little House on the Prairie* Online Museum and Gift Shop? (*Looking in bag.*) The Official *Little House on the Prairie* Organic Soap? The Official *Little House on the Prairie* Gourmet Coffee? (*Pause.*) Have you even read any of the *Little House* books?

**TIFFANY:** No!

**AMBER:** Well, then, what are you doing?

**TIFFANY:** Trying to increase my GPA, what do you think?

**AMBER:** You could study, you know.

**TIFFANY:** You're just mad because I'm teacher's pet now, not you! (*Turns to leave.*)

**AMBER:** I'm not teacher's pet!

**TIFFANY:** (*Stops, turns to her.*) Really? Then why does everybody say you are?

**AMBER:** I don't know! Everybody's wrong!

**TIFFANY:** Really? Then explain something! You're brand new! How else do you get straight As?

**AMBER:** I study!

**TIFFANY:** (*Sarcastically.*) Oh right! So you want to study European history! Why would anybody want to study...

**AMBER:** Why would anybody want to study European history?

**TIFFANY:** Right!

**AMBER:** And why would anybody want to study world history?

**TIFFANY:** Right!

**AMBER:** And world geography? And why would anybody read two newspapers every morning before school? (*Pause.*) Maybe because she's an army brat!

**TIFFANY:** A what?

**AMBER:** An army brat, OK? I'm an army brat! My dad's a career soldier! And that means that my mom and I move around a lot! That's why I'm always the new kid in school! And that's why I read a lot! Because I need to have a sense of where I am! And where I've been! And where I'm going! I need that! But mainly... I always need to know *(Pause.)* where my dad is... at all times!

**TIFFANY:** *(Pause.)* Wow, Amber. Um... I'm sorry.

**AMBER:** *(Calmly, sincerely.)* No. Don't be. I'm not. *(Pause.)* I'm sorry I yelled.

**TIFFANY:** *(Sincerely.)* I... don't know what to say. *(Pause.)* Is it... tough?

**AMBER:** Not really. Sometimes. I don't know. Moving in the middle of the year, like this year, that's tough. But current research says that, "Army brats can be successful if they can develop good relationships with teachers in their new schools..."

**TIFFANY:** *(Realizing.)* That's why you bring... Dr. Morris... the flowers.

**AMBER:** *(Pause.)* Research also shows that, "Army brats need to quickly develop good... peer relationships."

**TIFFANY:** Oh.

**AMBER:** Which... clearly... I'm not very good at. *(Turns to go, stops, hands TIFFANY her flowers.)* Here.

**TIFFANY:** What?

**AMBER:** If you add them to yours, it'll make an amazing bouquet! Dr. Morris will love it. Trust me. *(Puts them on the chair, turns to go.)*

**TIFFANY:** But...

**AMBER:** *(Stops, turns to her, sincerely.)* Tiffany. You clearly put a lot of effort into this, and I respect that. I do, really. The apple. Everything from *(Smiles.)* "The Little House on the Prairie Online Museum and Gift Shop."

**TIFFANY:** *(Smiles along with her.)* Thanks.

**AMBER:** *(Gently.)* But you know, Tiffany, if you ever put as much effort into actually studying as you put into all of this, you could be a good student. Maybe even a great student. And you might even like it. *(Pause.)* I'm not trying to be a jerk. Well... *(Turns to go.)*

**TIFFANY:** Wait. Amber?

*AMBER stops.*

**TIFFANY:** Do you really think so?

**AMBER:** *(Turns to her.)* Do I really think so what?

**TIFFANY:** That I could... be a good student?

**AMBER:** My mom and dad always say, "You'll never know until you try."

**TIFFANY:** *(Smiles.)* I like that. *(Pause.)* Um... Amber?

**AMBER:** *(Smiles.)* Yeah?

**TIFFANY:** *(Tentatively.)* Can I ask you another question?

**AMBER:** *(Smiles.)* Sure.

**TIFFANY:** What do you know about—*(Sits at her desk.)*—oh I don't know... *(Opens her history book.)* Luxembourg, for example? Just in case we have a scheduled quiz on Luxembourg first period?

**AMBER:** *(Smiles.)* Well... *(Sits at her desk.)* I know that it borders Belgium.

**TIFFANY:** *(Smiling, referring to the book.)* Correct! *(Quizzing her.)* And...?

**AMBER:** *(Smiling.)* ...that it has an oceanic climate.

**TIFFANY:** *(Smiling, referring to the book.)* Correct again! *(Quizzing her.)* And... ?

**AMBER:** *(Smiling.)* And... that my dad is currently stationed there.

**TIFFANY:** Seriously?

**AMBER:** *(Smiling.)* Seriously! And that my mom and I Skyped him last night! It looks like a really cool place!

**TIFFANY:** *(Smiling.)* Can I ask you another question?

**AMBER:** *(Smiling, beating her to the punch.)* Want to study?

**TIFFANY:** *(Smiling.)* I could really use the help!

**AMBER:** *(Smiling.)* Sure!

*They both open their books to the same page.*

**TIFFANY:** *(Reading.)* Belgium Today.

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