

Drama

1st Place

Dear Father Cooper

by *Geneva Rockeman*

During the scene, everyone except FATHER COOPER takes a seat a few moments after entrance. JULIE sits on the floor against the back wall, legs crossed, ALEX perches on the desk, TED and RUTH will both occupy chairs.

Scene opens to the inside of a hut. Thatched roof, wood seen inside, not full light, it's dim in the small-ish building. One rather dilapidated table that serves as a desk with a cardboard box on it, full of folders and random paper, about 4 assorted chairs, and a hammock. Large homemade broom propped up against the wall. Under the table, on the floor, is a white girl, JULIE (native skirt, tank top, bare feet, anklet), sleeping.

Door opens, admitting FATHER COOPER and ALEX. The former is taller, wearing a roman collar, looking sweaty, pompous and irritated (if possible, Queen's English Accent, and he Bellows frequently). The latter is wearing flip-flops, cut-off jeans about mid-calf, and a t-shirt, hair messy, obviously distressed.

ALEX: I'm really sorry Father, but I was never contacted.

COOPER: Just because you're too lazy to read any mail that shows up on your desk doesn't mean that I'm at fault for this. Of all the irresponsible...!

ALEX: No, I'm serious, I was not contacted, Father. We haven't received post in over two months.

COOPER: (Sputtering) well...I was waiting for over 12 hours! I sent four e-mails and tried to call numerous times.

ALEX: Sir, we don't *have* internet, let alone a phone line.

COOPER: But they were both listed on the card your former superior gave me!

ALEX: The phone line was cut last month and the computer that the lady at the bottle shop owned was shot.

COOPER: (suddenly lighter, confused.) Shot? Good heavens, boy, whatever do you mean, 'shot'?

ALEX: Skirmish nearby. Took out four crates of soda, the computer and the old lady's radio. (slightly sarcastic) Bottle shop's customers were devastated.

COOPER: (scoffs) I don't have any time for foolishness or stories!

ALEX: Sadly, father, I'm not kidding.

COOPER: Neither am I! I sat there with my poor daughter in that filthy place for...

ALEX: 12 hours, yes, father, you mentioned that several times on the way up.

COOPER: (Glares) Don't get cheeky with me, young man! I want to make it perfectly clear that I took this position because your

superior *begged* me to. I was promised the parish house.

ALEX: (snorts)

COOPER: What was THAT!?

ALEX: (coughs weakly) Nothing sir.

COOPER: No! You will explain to me what you mean by – (snorts loudly) is that a *Native* term?

ALEX: No, sir. (hiding a smile, stands ‘at ease’ hands clasped behind his back)

COOPER: I seem to remember that I was also promised a vehicle.

ALEX: Yes, well, father, there is a little something that I hesitate to mention.

COOPER: Ah? And what might that be? Are you using the vehicle to go on beer runs in the middle of the night or providing the village with a taxi service?

ALEX: (Tries to hide a grin) Nooo...it’s just that that there...is...um, there is no longer a vehicle of *any* description on base. (pulls a chair out from the wall) Won’t you sit down, Father?

COOPER: Why?

ALEX: What?

COOPER: No, *why*. I am asking you why you want me to sit down here, in this hovel.

ALEX: Hovel? This is the office, sir.

COOPER: The what?

ALEX: The office. Sign out front says so. Fresh paint too. Miriam, she’s one of the older children here, she painted that for me last week.

COOPER: The chicken scratches on that piece of junk lumber?

ALEX: (sighs faintly, but pretends not to notice the outburst, moseys around the office) Anyway, this is where we hold all financial records for our accountant in London.

COOPER: Is that so? And why is that young woman on the floor?

ALEX: (looks at the girl, unconcerned) Julie? Who knows. She had from three to six off today, though. Probably napping.

COOPER: Are you going to do anything about it?

ALEX: (confused) No, I think the sign’s alright.

COOPER: I was talking about *that* (pointing at Julie).

ALEX: Oh! (brushes it off, casual, pulls a mango out of the file box, sits behind the desk and props his feet up) No. She’ll be up before dinner. She’s sort of our unofficial accountant, too.

COOPER: HER?

ALEX: Yeah. Anyway, it’s usually once a year that Julie can get our stuff in order and have the mission accountant in London approve everything and get letters to support and what-not. (pulls a pen-knife out of his pocket)

COOPER: What do you think you’re doing?

ALEX: (begins to peel mango, taken aback) what?

COOPER: Where was that?

ALEX: Where was what?

COOPER: (his voice has gotten quiet in horror and disbelief) that Mango, just now...Did you pull that out of the ‘file’ box?

ALEX: (misunderstands) Yeah! (pulls out another one and tosses it to COOPER) This year has been awesome for mangoes. The kids at the village closer to Mulango have this bad habit of snitching the mangoes, but they all got ripe at once and so the kids couldn't take all of 'em. They're really good too...(notes COOPER's increasing rage) What?

COOPER: (sharply) It may not agree with my digestion.

ALEX: Huh? (Shrugs) Well, it's all there is until dinner.

COOPER: And when may I expect dinner to be served?

ALEX: (laughs) Heaven only provides and heaven only knows. Maybe 9 o'clock tonight; whenever the gas decides to work. (Offhand) You could ask Ruth though. I think there's goat tonight.

COOPER: (Begins to look dangerously close to popping a vein. Forcibly handing the mango back, he gathers together the last of his pride.) I want this 'Office', as you have decided to jokingly dub it, cleaned by dinner, which I expect to be at 7:00 sharp. Those files are to be organized and *properly filed* by that time as well... (Stands closer and glowers down at ALEX) Have I made myself perfectly clear?

ALEX: (Swallows, comfort and smiles gone) absolutely sir.

COOPER: (backs off slightly) Good...and get that young woman off of the floor! (Stalks out, slams door behind him)

ALEX: (Takes a slice of mango, beginning to look frustrated. Steadily recites, trying to breathe deeply) "The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride..." (he stops just short of stabbing the desk) Hey! Hey, Julie! (There is

no response, ALEX sighs and walks to her, bends over her, and shouts into her ear) *MULI BWANJI!*

JULIE: *INDILIBWINO!*...(gasps) oh!...holy...It's you! (looks disoriented, squints out the window.) It's not even supper yet, what'd you wake me up for?

ALEX: What are you sleeping on the floor of the office for?

JULIE: Nap. I've got the afternoon off, remember? First afternoon in four weeks? You've had two afternoons? Is any of this ringing a bell?

ALEX: (sighs) No, no, I know that, but why the office?

JULIE: Oh, coolest spot on the whole base. It's only about 90 degrees down here; fantastic floor. You should check it out sometime.

ALEX: Yeah, maybe later, we have a bit of a problem.

JULIE: (Alex pulls her to her feet) Is Mama Esther having her baby?

ALEX: No, nothing like that, it's more of a... (Sneaks a glance offstage) pest control problem.

JULIE: We've got termites?

ALEX: Worse...a priest.

JULIE: (relieved) Oh, just a...(Shock) A WHAT?

ALEX: Yeah, my reaction was kinda like that too.

JULIE: But, but we just got rid of one!

ALEX: Through no fault of our own, heaven knows...

JULIE: Heaven does. Fantastic, kudos to heaven.

ALEX: (knowingly) But back to our priest?

JULIE: Yes! What is he doing here?

ALEX: What the last one was doing.

JULIE: You're kidding.

ALEX: Just a guess.

JULIE: He's going to sit around and write Never-ending Sermons? So helpful.

ALEX: Mango?

JULIE: Sure. I'm becoming depressed, a mango should help.

ALEX: Depression?! (pats tabletop) Tell me about it.

JULIE: (sits on the table and starts peeling the mango) I had such high hopes that there wouldn't be any more of...you know...*those*.

ALEX: The butt-killers.

JULIE: Two hours on rough wooden pews?

ALEX: Father Davis never *stopped* talking, did he?

JULIE: His sermons were ridiculous.

ALEX: Well, It would have been cool, if we were allowed the sleep through them.

JULIE: No such good fortune. Do you think this one's...?

ALEX: (morose) definitely. Him and Father Davis are like two sour peas in an OCD pod.

JULIE: How long is he here for?

ALEX: I think he said something like 'indefinitely', which I hope means that he'll

be 'definitely' leaving 'in' the next bus that swings by.

JULIE: (thinks, focused, sits at table, picks up random paper and pulls a pencil out from behind her ear) Well...that's not good...let's see...two extra adults worth of food per day...for the next two weeks...that *is* the next bus right? (Continues to scribble, calculates)

ALEX: (looks miserable) Yeah. About two weeks.

JULIE: (scribbles a bit more, then stops, somber) Wow...that's not good. Hope he brought cash with him.

ALEX: Is it bad?

JULIE: Let's put it this way: at this rate someone's going to have to pick up another 10 lb bag of maize flour by Saturday.

ALEX: (sighs) I wish that was the only problem.

JULIE: How's that?

ALEX: I don't even know where we're going to put him.

JULIE: (thinks) Good point...If he's a collar we can't just tie him up an extra hammock.

ALEX: He said something about the parish house...

JULIE: And...you failed to mention the fact that the part that's still standing is now a chicken house...didn't you?

ALEX: Didn't want to mention the fire.

JULIE: It always sounds bad when you tell it.

ALEX: Well, that, and he was already looking so distressed...

JULIE: I understand.

(Door Opens to admit another young woman. Kerchief on her head, cooking spoon in her hand. No-nonsense skirt, button-up shirt, unbuttoned half-way with a tank top underneath. Sandals on her feet.)

RUTH: What in the world is going on?

ALEX: (guilty) That's a very good question... why do you ask?

RUTH: Because some collar, just fell from the sky!

ALEX: Ah, yes, that...

RUTH: *That?* No news? Right before dinner?

ALEX: I know you're fond of the whole 'righteous anger' thing, Ruth, but I promise you, I didn't know either.

RUTH: (huffs) I wouldn't be so irritated if he hadn't just shoved his head into every one of my cooking pots demanding to know what's for dinner!

JULIE: What did you tell him?

RUTH: That the children eat first!

ALEX: Please tell me you smacked his hand with your mighty spoon of justice.

JULIE: and read him his pot-scrubbing rights...

RUTH: Oh, don't be ridiculous! Where on earth did It come from?

ALEX: (deflates) If I knew, I'd take him back and get a different style.

JULIE: Wow, a department store analogy... I'm not even sure I remember what one looks like.

ALEX: An analogy?

JULIE: (wistfully) A department store.

RUTH: (scoffs) He had better get used to that idea right off.

ALEX: ...After he gets used to the thought of almost non-existent electricity.

JULIE: This could get interesting.

(Another fellow, jean shorts, tank top, dirty, no shoes, hammer in hand, enters)

TED: Who is that?

ALEX: Who?

TED: The thing in a suit blundering around the chicken house!

ALEX: Oh, that...

RUTH: Collar from the mother country... apparently...

TED: Well, can you get rid of him?

JULIE: Dunno.

RUTH: Why?

TED: Can't get any work done! Skulking about, muttering about how 'it's not the way he'd do it'... as if... lily hands... like he's ever touched a hammer before...

ALEX: Hey now! Let's not insult the Collar's Masculinity... poor fellow.

TED: not insulting, stating fact. (gruff)

JULIE: Stinging fact.

TED: And *someone* ought to have stated some other facts to him before he decided to come to base.

ALEX: What would I have done with him if he hadn't listened?

TED: What?

ALEX: (clarifying) I'm not directly responsible.

JULIE: He surprised our fearless leader.

RUTH: What did he do? Try calling?

ALEX: And he e-mailed.

RUTH: Ridiculous.

TED: (still flustered) You've got to get him out.

ALEX: We can't get rid of him until the next bus out...at the very least.

TED: (Glowers at ALEX, but then, overly casual) Ruth...?

RUTH: Yeah?

TED: How long has it been since you were in the capital?

RUTH: (thinks) 'bout 4 months. Mail run and medicine. Why?

TED: (pointedly, more or less in ALEX's direction) Have you ever noticed that large white compound about a mile farther towards city center from the Swiss Ambassador's residence?

RUTH: (thinking, hesitant) Sorry? Don't follow.

JULIE: (bouncing in her seat, hand raised) Oh!!! Oh, I know what it is!!!

TED: (lightly sarcastic) Yes, Julie!? Go ahead!

JULIE: Isn't that the Capital Hotel?

TED: (turns to ALEX, now dripping sarcasm) Oh...my! So it is! You could find the nearest fellow who looks like he's got heavy pockets, hawk the Collar's cuff links, and set him up in THE HOTEL... (pointedly) where Tourists *belong*.

(ALEX looks uncomfortable)

JULIE: (nodding) That could work.

ALEX: We can't just abandon him in the capital...

TED: Alex, the man's been here for less than an hour and he already needs to leave!

RUTH: (looks hesitant) well...

ALEX: yes?

RUTH: I hate to admit this, but I agree with Alex.

JULIE: That is odd.

RUTH: I don't really feel like it, but we ought to try and be mature about this, maybe.

JULIE: I do not agree.

RUTH: (annoyed) I mean, I'm irritated by anyone looking into my cooking pot...but maybe he has...good intentions?

ALEX: (hesitantly shakes his head)...huh-uh.

TED: How's that?

ALEX: Well...

JULIE: Aww, come on, Alex, give us motive.

ALEX: (sighs) Alright. I rode up with him and his daughter for...FOUR HOURS...

TED: Not enough motive for Ruthie yet (RUTH elbows him)

ALEX: Well, when he was done berating me for sucking at life he turned on the weather...

JULIE: Understandable...

ALEX: Then the place,

JULIE: Also understandable...

ALEX: then the people.

TED: You're kidding.

ALEX: If I am, it's not funny. He called the fellows at the sweets shop 'natives' in a nasty imperialist, British sort of way...

RUTH: Yuck...

TED: Enough motive yet?

RUTH: Getting closer.

ALEX: And there's the daughter.

JULIE: Wait, he has a daughter?

ALEX: Yeah, a dreadful little princess.

RUTH: How bad are we talking?

ALEX: The minute she catches sight of the beetles around here she'll freak.

JULIE: That sounds pretty normal.

ALEX: Or, she might fall into an epileptic fit.

TED: Won't care, of course, that they're harmless.

ALEX: Of course. But, listen to this, when we picked them up she had in her hand a Louis Vuitton handbag.

JULIE: (fascinated) Fake?

RUTH: (to JULIE) Had to be.

ALEX: No...I have sisters who taught me well. That was an honest-to-goodness money pit.

JULIE: She hasn't been robbed yet?

ALEX: *I* was thinking about it. I definitely salivated at the thought of 5 thousand dollars worth of carpentry done and paid for.

TED: (drops hammer) Don't toy with me, I'm feeling miserable just now.

RUTH: (looking out the window, worried) Speaking of which...

ALEX: You feeling miserable too?

RUTH: FLOOR!

(all four dive for cover under the table, lying flat on the floor, hands over their heads...they stay there for a few moments, silent)

JULIE: (whispers loudly) I don't hear gunfire...psst! Ruth! What's going on?

RUTH: (shushes her) quiet!

(PRINCESS calls from offstage; high, irritating voice.)

PRINCESS: Helloooooo! Missionaries! (mumbles) ewww...what is *that*? (voice raises again) I'm looking for someone to help me with my suitcases! Hello? (voice moves away)

RUTH: ...wait for it...(raises her head to peer out the window again) Alright, we're safe.

TED: (irritated) What in the world, Ruth?! Was that a drill or something?

RUTH: Worse...

ALEX: The princess.

JULIE: (cleans out her ear) Suitcases?

ALEX: Four of them...just for her.

TED: HO-LY...

(There is an enormous BANG and the door flies open to admit THE PRINCESS, dressed to the nines, HUGE sunglasses, PLATINUM BLOND hair done, small handbag, any large clunky jewelry that can

be conjured up. Walks like she owns the world)

PRINCESS: Hello! There you are!

JULIE: It's been nice knowing you, Alex.

ALEX: Quiet, I'm praying.

PRINCESS: What are you guys doing under the table?

RUTH: (as though in a trance, caught off guard) Trying to escape...

PRINCESS: (head leans to one side, confused) From what?

RUTH: A...large...beetle? (transfixed)

PRINCESS: (little jump and a shriek) EW! Where?!?!)

(RUTH does not respond, but continues to stare at THE PRINCESS while all under the table pull themselves out and stand up)

TED: (catching on) Don't worry about it (also impressed)...wow...(to JULIE) Those things are amazing...

JULIE: Look how it all catches the light...(She and TED squint, inspecting)

PRINCESS: (worried) but where's the bug?

ALEX: (impatient, irritated) it's gone.

PRINCESS: Oh? Really?

ALEX: Yeah...Look, why are you here?

PRINCESS: Huh? (slight pause) Oh! Right...um, I need someone to help me with my bags, I mean, if that's OK.

ALEX: (sighs, long-suffering) It's not really...

PRINCESS: It's not OK?

ALEX: (overly-innocent) What? Huh?

JULIE: (Interrupting. To the PRINCESS) How exactly did you get your hair that color?

PRINCESS: What?

TED: It's really quite strange...like that story about the leopard got its spots...

RUTH: Yeah...

JULIE: But the question is; has she been rolling about in Banana fields or drying maize flour?

TED: That really is the question.

ALEX: The problem is, you see, we don't really have anywhere set up for you yet.

PRINCESS: (looking even more confused) You don't have a place to put my suitcases?

ALEX: No...that's not the problem, exactly...(unwilling to explain) Ted?

TED: (picking up, steps in front of ALEX) Gladly...You see, your highness, we don't really have anywhere to put *You*...if you catch my meaning.

PRINCESS: What?

RUTH: Oh my! What was that?

PRINCESS: (Looking alarmed) What was what?

JULIE: (also nervous) Yeah...Ruth?

RUTH: (slightly irritated, low voice) - Follow along, Jules- (coughs) That *noise*? (pointedly) Didn't you hear that, Julie?

JULIE: (confused, but attempting to follow) Oh, yeah...*that* noise...

PRINCESS: What was it...? (clings to TED...who pulls away in annoyance. She seems to not have noticed) Do you think it was something...Dangerous? (Cling to

ALEX who jumps out of her reach and backs away to behind the desk. TED decides to hide behind RUTH)

RUTH: I think it was coming from outside...

PRINCESS: Do you think...? (she looks out the window) Oh!!! Bad little kids! No! Oh, God, don't touch that! Put that down! It's GUCCI!!!! (blasts her way out of the office at the speed of light)

(The room takes a relieved breath, ALEX and TED come out of hiding)

RUTH: (pensive) We really can't get rid of them...can we?

ALEX: (shakes his head, deeply morose) No, we really can't.

TED: Why not? We can pack up his Katundu, give him and the princess a holy kiss goodbye and send them off to Blantyre to shop.

JULIE: What do we do with him when he gets there?

TED: He can set himself up with *that* diocese.

ALEX: No dice.

TED: I would guess so. He probably disapproves of card playing too.

JULIE: So transpires...The Tragic End of Poker Night...

RUTH: I'm feeling distinctly depressed.

JULIE: You could join the club if we had one, but we can't afford jackets...

TED: Well, It's not like we ever had anything to gamble.

JULIE: (defensive) Mango pits count.

RUTH: Besides, it's the principle of the thing.

ALEX: You know what? (stands up, looking fiery and strikes a defiant pose) This is utterly ridiculous!

TED: (monotone) bravo for captain dramatic.

(all slow clap in unison)

ALEX: Oh, shut up! Listen, we've all been here for over two years.

RUTH: No! You don't say.

ALEX: No, no, no...look, what have we survived?

RUTH: Do we have to play this game again?

JULIE: (monotone) No phone.

TED: No electricity

RUTH: Near Starvation

JULIE: You had malaria last year...

(The group pauses to think)

TED: Termites?

RUTH: Snake nests?

JULIE: Murderous Militant Groups?

TED: Father Davis didn't survive that one...

JULIE: ...poor old fellow...never had a chance.

RUTH: Well, when you wander into zone 8...and can't speak the language...

TED: And insist on being rude in English...

ALEX: But *we've* all been OK!

(All nod vaguely)

JULIE: For the most part, yeah. We're not that stupid.

ALEX: My point is: if we can deal with all of that, I'm pretty sure we can deal with an Anglican Priest and a Princess.

TED: Funny...how you kind of made that rhyme...

ALEX: Things have gone, dare I say it, *smoothly* since Father Davis died.

RUTH: Six months of not having to pay upkeep on that ridiculous car.

JULIE: (scoffs) figuring out what I was going to pull the money out of.

TED: Haven't had to continuously stifle that irrepressible killjoy spirit of his.

RUTH: Less complaints about the food, for sure.

JULIE: Haven't had to apologize to a single tribe's chief...

TED: That has been nice.

ALEX: Exactly. We've proved ourselves.

JULIE: (to the others) Do you think there's a point to his speech?

TED: No way to know.

RUTH: There's always hope.

ALEX: (trying to ignore the group) *Maybe* The Boss is trying to teach us patience...

(TED, JULIE, RUTH look upward, pained expressions on their faces)

RUTH: Holy Father, there are days when I think you have a really awful sense of humor.

TED&JULIE: Amen.

ALEX: (not impressed) Very funny.

TED: Assuming that your statement is sarcastic...you're right, it's not funny...

(silence. Everyone looks depressed, tired, one or two of them swat at flies. ALEX sits at the desk and starts to shuffle through the box of files...he picks up maybe a fifth or sixth folder...pulls out another mango and a light goes on in his eyes. He thinks a minute, tossing the mango up and down before turning to the group, his voice dripping fake 'casual')

ALEX: You know; we should probably have a short orientation for Father Cooper...

JULIE: What?

RUTH: Hrm?

TED: Go away, Alex.

ALEX: (Continuing) well, you know, things are done a certain way around here...(everyone looks confused) We could explain about the whole Father Davis situation...maybe give him some attack drill practice...

RUTH: (starting to understand) We can show him how to tuck his mosquito net in just right...and tell him where he can buy malaria medicine...

TED:...we could give him tips on how to keep clean without actually washing during dry season...

JULIE: (starting to smile) and we can give him tips on how to avoid the *really* poisonous snakes...

RUTH: and what to do when the money runs out...

TED: And we just have to wait for a support check...

JULIE: How to properly cook goat

TED: Field mouse...

RUTH: And grasshoppers...

JULIE: And someone should explain the dangers of intestinal parasites to the poor princess...

(All look at each other, smiling widely, feeling much better, looking much more relaxed. ALEX Tosses TED the mango in his hands, and TED grins)

TED: Well, enough of this lazing about...I'm off to finish the last set of bunks.

ALEX: Have fun! Do have dear Father Cooper help out all he wants, and give him the good hammer...

TED: The good...? Ah, yes...the heavy one.

ALEX: Make sure the head's on tight. You know how it likes to fall off. (Ted exits, whistling)

RUTH: (stands, wielding spoon like a weapon) I'm going to make sure Miriam doesn't burn the Maize...And I think I shall teach dear Father Cooper how to scrub pots tonight

ALEX: A marvelous idea! Everyone must learn that useful skill. You are so helpful Ruth!

RUTH: (grinning) yeah, don't overdo it. (exits)

JULIE: (supposing herself to not be involved) I suppose I should go sweep the yard. I'm, um, finishing up the storeroom walls tomorrow, Alex, so if you need...

ALEX: (Interrupts, pretending not to have heard) Julie, I don't suppose you could have

our Dear Father Cooper assist you in mixing the...erm...*material* for the walls?

JULIE: (understanding) Of course! Mixing mud and cow dung does elevate the spirit so.

ALEX: Go to it then...

JULIE: What are you going to do?

ALEX: Sort files...

JULIE: By Date?

ALEX: By last name...I think I shall make sure the very important documents...

JULIE: (grinning) The ones in Chichewa?

ALEX: Those very ones...I think I shall make sure those are on top...(smiles)

(JULIE shakes her head, grabs her broom and exits. ALEX dumps all of the files out onto the table at once, some fall on the floor. He begins sorting through them, humming...After a moment or two, FATHER COOPER enters, looking even more disoriented and irritable than before.

COOPER: The staff around here are absolutely, fundamentally disrespectful! If I could get post out, I would –

ALEX: (interrupts, looks overly surprised to FATHER COOPER, greets him with seemingly oblivious geniality and exuberance) Why, Father Cooper! You caught me by surprise! I was in the middle of a very important task.

COOPER: Look here, young man...(suspicious)...what were they all doing in here?!

ALEX: Who, sir?

COOPER: (Tense, angry) The Staff!

ALEX: Oh them! I wouldn't worry about it, Father Cooper. Nothing important.

COOPER: Nothing important? They're wasting time, lying about when someone ought to be...

ALEX: (Interrupting, almost vaults over the table, looking much too pleased with himself) You know, Father Cooper, I just remembered...I still have to show you how to hang up your hammock!

COOPER: (Livid, sputtering) MY WHAT?

ALEX: Well, we knew you wanted a ground pallet, sir, but a man of your age should be out of reach of the larger centipedes.

COOPER: (deflating slightly, looking worried) A man of my...what?

ALEX: And it is much easier to hang the old mosquito nets from the beams in the tukul.

COOPER: Mosquito...

ALEX: (leading/pushing Father Cooper out the door) Don't worry about it, Father, I've got it all taken care of...(looks at the audience and winks).

THE END



Forging Ahead
Kimberly Souba

2nd Place

The Doctor is In

by *Crystal Hust*

Scene:

The scene is a small physician's office. A man is sitting, waiting for the doctor. He is in his late twenties early thirties. He is wearing black slacks and a blue button down shirt. He is talking on his cell phone.

Bruce: Yes, dear, but-*(pause as he listens)* Yes, dear, but- *(another pause)* yes, dear, but- I know that, *(tentatively)* I just don't understand why, I have to pay so much to give Fluffy a perm. *(Pause)* Well, she is a French Poodle; they're already kind of curly. *(Pulls phone away from ear, as he is being yelled at. Puts phone back to ear, tries to salvage her feelings.)* Yes, honey, I know, I'm sorry, I didn't mean it. You're right our main objective is to make Fluffy happy. *(The physician walks in, she is about the same age as the man. She too is wearing black slacks and a blue button down shirt along with the token white lab coat, stethoscope and clipboard. She sees him talking on the phone and waits.)* Yes, sweetheart. Yes, but the doctor's here now- *(listens)* Yes, sweetheart. Yes, sweetheart. *(Physician grabs cell phone and without even putting it to her ear, loudly says into it)*

Physician: No cell phones. *(She closes cell phone and puts it into her pocket.)*

Bruce: Sorry, that was my girlfriend.

Physician: *(Very blandly)* Fascinating. So, Mr. Campbell, how are we today?

Bruce: I'm fine thanks.

Physician: *(Pauses)* Well, obviously you're not otherwise, why would you be here?

Bruce: Oh, yeah, right, sorry. Um... actually, sorry, but where's Dr. Oldman, I've been seeing him for years.

Physician: Well, he was going to see you but his buddy got him a tee time at 2:00. So, what's our problem?

Bruce: Oh. Sorry, I have been having these migraines and sometimes I blackout and don't remember things that have happened.

Physician: *(Knowingly)* Uh-huh. Do you drink, Mr. Campbell.

Bruce: No, no I don't, actually.

Physician: Right. Ok. Let's get a few more background questions out of the way. Um, let's see here. *(Looks at clipboard)* Are you on any medication?

Bruce: Um, I'm sorry but I answered all these questions on the form I filled out—

Physician: Please, Mr. Campbell, who's the physician here, huh? *(Points and flails her lab coat)*

Bruce: Right, sorry. Um... no, I'm not on any medications.

Physician: OK, when was your last period?

Bruce: What!?

Physician: *(Looks at Bruce and then at clipboard. Grabs top sheet on clipboard, crumples and tosses it)* Woops, wrong sheet. Ok, no medications. Were you ever a woman?

Bruce: What? No, I'm sorry, I was never a woman.

Physician: Good, because, man you would have made an ugly ass chick. Ok, well, then drop your pants.

Bruce: Sorry?!

Physician: (*Starts laughing*) I'm just kidding, buddy.

Bruce: (*sigh of relief*) Oh.

Physician: No, seriously, drop your pants.

Bruce: But... uh... well, ok. (*Stands up, slowly begins to unbuckle his belt.*)

Physician: Oh, dude, you were really going to do it. (*Points and laughs.*)

Bruce: What?!

Physician: Oh, man. You are so easy. You should have seen the look on your face. You were all like (*imitates his shocked, almost sad expression, and then continues to laugh*).

Bruce: (*Looks somewhat upset but then begins to mildly laugh with her.*) Yeah, you got me.

Physician: Alright, let's get a listen to your heart. (*She takes her stethoscope and begins to examine him.*) You said you have migraines? Take a breath.

Bruce: (*Takes a breath*) Um, yeah, I have taken aspirin for it, but it doesn't seem to help.

Physician: Uh-huh. Take a breath. (*Bruce takes a breath, physician moves stethoscope to his back*) And you said- take a breath- that things happen that you don't remember? Take a breath. What kind of things? (*Takes off stethoscope and writes something on her clipboard.*)

Bruce: Well, my ex-girlfriend called me the other night and said that, and this is going to sound really strange, she said "You've made your point, you win, and I'll get the money to you by Friday." I have no idea what she was talking about so, I called her back and she said that I can stop bullying them.

Physician: Them?

Bruce: Oh, sorry, well, her and her new husband.

Physician: New husband, huh?

Bruce: Yeah. He's a really nice guy.

Physician: Sure he is. What kind of bullying?

Bruce: I don't know. That's the point, I tried calling her back to ask her what she meant but she wouldn't pick up.

Physician: What money?

Bruce: I don't know—well...

Physician: Well, what?

Bruce: Well, I did loan her some money once, but it wasn't very much and it's really no big deal.

Physician: Not very much, huh? Alright let's look in your ears.

Bruce: Ok.

Physician: (*Looks in one ear*) Ok, that looks good. (*Looks in the other ear, in a panicked voice*) Oh my God!

Bruce: (*Worried*) What? What? What is it?

Physician: When was the last time you cleaned your ears? I mean eww.

Bruce: Oh, well, Dr. Oldman said I'm not supposed to clean out my inner ear...

Physician: Ooh, Dr. Oldman, said, Dr. Oldman said, Dr. Oldman's a little bitch.

Bruce: Ok. I guess so.

Physician: What do you mean, you guess so? How could you say such a thing about

Dr. Oldman, he's a great man and a brilliant doctor.

Bruce: But, you said...

Physician: I don't believe it. You're a horrible human being. You should be euthanized immediately.

Bruce: What?

Physician: For shame, Bruce, for shame. *(Looks at him disapprovingly)*

Bruce: *(Looks very guilty)* I'm sorry.

Physician: Whatever. Well, Dr. Bruce, if you don't have any objection I'm going to check your blood pressure.

Bruce: No, please do.

Physician: Gee, thanks. *(She checks his blood pressure)* Wow, your pressure is very high.

Bruce: Really, how high?

Physician: Oh, wouldn't Mr. Know-It-All, like to know?

Bruce: Y... yes, I would.

Physician: It's 104 over 165. Tell me Bruce do you suffer from Anxiety Attacks or stress?

Bruce: *(quickly)* No, I live a very stress free life. I'm very happy and content.

Physician: REALLY BRUCE!! *(Getting really up close into his face, menacingly)* Are you happy and content??

Bruce: *(Swallows visibly, and in a high pitched voice says)* Yeah?

Physician: *(Relaxes, smacks him playfully on the shoulder)* Of course you're happy, but you're a very sick man.

Bruce: I am?

Physician: Of course, why else would you be in a doctor's office? *(Aside)* Dumb-ass!

Bruce: I'm sorry, what?

Physician: What?

Bruce: What did you say?

Physician: When?

Bruce: Just now.

Physician: When.

Bruce: Just now!

Physician: I told you, when. When you asked me what I said just now, just then I had said when.

Bruce: What?

Physician: Exactly. Well, that was fun.

Bruce: I think I feel worse, than when I came in here

Physician: Bruce how long have you been waiting to see me?

Bruce: Only about an hour.

Physician: Only an hour?

Bruce: Well an hour and twenty minutes. But it's okay; I have a lot of vacation time.

Physician: *(Testily)* Oh, and when was the last time you went on a vacation? Or is it that anytime you make plans for one your boss asks you to work, and you say *(mimics him)* Yes boss, whatever you say boss, and I'll just sit here typing at my computer, doing the work that you should be doing, while you're off enjoying my vacation, cavorting with your twenty year old trophy wife. *(The last is practically yelled as the physician had reached a crescendo of*

anger; she is possibly even standing on the desk).

Bruce: *(Rising)* I'm sorry, maybe I should leave.

Physician: YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE!!!

Bruce: *(Quickly sits)* Okay.

Physician: *(Takes a deep breath, calmly steps down off the desk).* Now, Bruce, you've been waiting to see the doctor, an hour and a half.

Bruce: An hour and twenty minutes.

Physician: Whatever!! Now, Bruce, don't you think you owe me an apology?

Bruce: I'm sorry.

Physician: For What? You haven't done anything? How many times have you said "sorry" since you've been here?

Bruce: I'm sorry, I have no idea.

Physician: Well, *that one* makes it *fourteen times.* *(She turns away from Bruce to the counter, has her back to him and the audience)*

Bruce: I'm sorry, I don't understand.

Physician: *(Yells)* Fifteen! *(Slams her clipboard on the counter, turns back towards Bruce)* That makes it fifteen times. *(Looks at him with disgust, begins to walk back towards him)* You have always said you're sorry. Even if you have done nothing wrong you say you're sorry.

Bruce: Sor—

Physician: *(very tensely, grabs fistfuls of his shirt)* -Don't say it or I'll pull your bottom lip over your head. *(Relaxes, smiles, let's go of his shirt, then straightens it)* Bruce,

buddy, pal, old chum,-*(she puts her arm around his shoulders)* you haven't been completely honest, have you?

Bruce: *(Sort of frightened)* About what?

Physician: *(Smiles, sort of laughs, but only to hide the anger, then in a sinister, loud whisper)* About everything.

Bruce: *(A little more frightened now)* You're not going to hurt me, are you?

Physician: *(Laughs)* No, Bruce, why would you say that?

Bruce: Because you're digging your nails into my shoulders.

Physician: *(Loosens her grip)* Oh, woops, *(lightly massages his shoulders)* There, better?

Bruce: *(Still sort of frightened but smiles)* Yeah.

Physician: Ok, Bruce, truth now.

Bruce: I- I'm sor--- uhhh, I don't know what you mean.

Physician: Well, first off, you didn't loan your *ex-girlfriend* just a little bit of money, did ya? It was a lot of money, wasn't it?

Bruce: No, no really, it wasn't-

Physician: -Bruce, how much was it, Bruce?

Bruce: *(takes a second then inaudibly mumbles)* tn- owsnd dllrs.

Physician: How much, I didn't catch that?

Bruce: *(Lets out a deep breath.)* Ten thousand dollars.

Physician: *(Like a hallelujah)* Ten thousand dollars. And how much has she paid back so far?

Bruce: None.

Physician: None. And tell me this Bruce, did you *not* loan her that money to pay for her wedding with the guy she cheated on you with?

Bruce: (*Looks up in shock.*) How did you know that?

Physician: (*Scoffs*) Brucey, I know everything about you. (*Moves back to counter, picks up clipboard.*) I see on your information sheet you work as a computer programmer and it also says here you got passed up for a promotion seven years in a row.

Bruce: It says that?!

Physician: Yep. And it also says that in college the frat boys hazed you until you were black and blue and you never did get in.

Bruce: But, how...?

Physician: Let's face it, Brucey, your whole life you have been nothing but a doormat.

Bruce: (*Tentatively*) No... I haven't.

Physician: Hah! Remember when you were ten years old and that bully Jones McAllister stole your favorite comic book in the park. What did you do? Nothing, that's what you did. In high school, you got the part of Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* and just because Becky Donaldson, whom you had this sickening infatuation with, wanted her boyfriend, Clark, to be in it so you stepped down.

Bruce: (*A little more upset and disturbed*) How do you know all this?!

Physician: I told you, Bruce, I know everything about you.

Bruce: But how?

Physician: I... am a psychic.

Bruce: (*Scoffs*)

(*The following dialogue is simultaneous between Physician and Bruce.*)

Bruce and Physician: No, you're not. Well, that was... coincidence. How did you...? Stop that. (*Gasp. Both mirror suspecting look at each other, pause, then*) MY LITTLE PONIES.

Bruce: Oh my God. You really *are* a psychic!

Physician: Oh, Bruce, I'm not a psychic.

Bruce: You're not?

Physician: No, of course not. That's stupid.

Bruce: Well, then how did you...?

Physician: You already know the answer to that, Bruce.

Bruce: No I... (*A realization comes over him*) No, that's impossible.

Physician: Well, apparently not.

Bruce: No, no, who are you, really?

Physician: Bruce, (*stands in front of him, puts her hands on his shoulders*) look at me. You know I'm here for a reason. You know the truth. It's time we address this.

Bruce: No, (*gets away from her*) I don't believe it. You can't be...--.

Physician: Think about it, kid. Come on, put it all together. How I know so much about you, intimate details, the migraines, the blackouts, things happening that you don't remember, reading your mind. Who am I, Brucey? Say it, "you are.."

Bruce: (*Hesitant, then quietly whispers*) Me. You're me.

Physician: It's like lookin' in a mirror, isn't it?

Bruce: But how? Why?

Physician: I'm a personality you created to deal with all of the crap in your life. When you're too timid, too scared and too wimpy to deal with it, I come out. I'm the one that's dealing with all this stuff, while you lay there and I take it. I'm your anger, Bruce. I'm everything that you're too damn afraid to be all in a nice little package. And, dude, you have got some issues.

Bruce: But... *(Goes up to her, begins to examine and poke her)*

Physician: *(Dryly says)* Stop that. *(He continues to poke her)* Stop that. *(Tickles her, she laughs, slaps his hand away)* Stop that.

Bruce: *(Cradles hand from the slap)* But, are you real?

Physician: To you, sure I am. But other people would just see you talking to yourself.

Bruce: Wow!

Physician: *(without any enthusiasm)* Yeah, it's amazing.

Bruce: Well, what do you – I... want from me?

Physician: To stop being such a pushover! I mean seriously, I made you wait over an hour before seeing you. I have said you would make an ugly woman, I almost made you pull your pants down, I've yelled at you, called you names, made fun of you and have basically browbeaten you since you've gotten here and you haven't said a word against me in fact you apologized for it, and I'm you, so, you're basically treating yourself that way. How screwed up is that?

Bruce: Well... wait, what?

Physician: I know it's complicated. But, it's time you told a few people off.

Bruce: Ugh, I don't know if I could. Can't we just continue to be, you know, like partners?

Physician: *(Looks at him, she is pissed)* What?! Partners? You think we're partners? I hate to break it to you, peaches. But this is how it works, you created me, so, I would end up doing all the dirty work, without *any* help from you, because you're too much of a wuss to take care of it yourself and I'm tired of being the bad guy, I'm tired of having to think of new ways to make sure you come out of things ok. So, so, no, we're not going to be partners.

Bruce: Gosh, I didn't know it was that hard on you?

Physician: *(Calmer now)* Yeah, well... you live, you learn. Or in your case you live, you create an alternate personality, and then you learn. *(They share a look, and then a small chuckle)*

Bruce: So, what do we do?

Physician: Well, that's up to you Brucey, I could use a vacation. *(Sits or lays down on the table)* Especially, after what we did to your ex-girlfriend.

Bruce: What did you-We do?

Physician: *(Shrugs and says calmly)* We explained that if we didn't get our money back that the whole world would get to see a tape of her Paris Hilton impression,

Bruce: *(Laughs)* So, how long... I mean, when did I... "make" you.

Physician: It was your 21st birthday. Remember, our old high school friend George?

Bruce: Yeah, I remember, I blacked out that night. I just thought I had too much to drink, so, I decided to never drink. Then I tried calling George the next day, to see what happened but he wouldn't talk to me anymore.

Physician: Yeah, that's because I spray painted his Harley bright pink and parked it in front of a biker bar. *(Laughing)* He was so pissed.

Bruce: What? Why did you do that? He was a nice guy.

Physician: Bruce! Don't you remember how he treated you? He stole your money-

Bruce: -Only a little bit-

Physician: - 900 dollars!-

Bruce: It's only money-

Physician: -he slept with your prom date-

Bruce: -they were in love-

Physician: -he dumped her the next day-

Bruce: - it was a 24 hour love-

Physician: - *he totaled your car!*-

Bruce: - that... that kinda sucked.

Physician: *(Sympathetic)* No kidding.

Bruce: Man, I didn't even, yell at him or anything. And I was so mad. But I was just so scared that-

Physician: -You'd be alone.

Bruce: Yeah. But I was alone, anyway, wasn't I?

Physician: Yeah. But, you're not anymore.

Bruce: You were probably pretty lonely too, huh?

Physician: *(Realizing)* Yeah. You know, I... I really was?

Bruce: I'm sorry for making you go through this all by yourself.

Physician: Awe, Brucey, I had some good times. I'm just sad you missed them.

Bruce: Yeah, me too. *(Both share a beat)*

(The real doctor enters the room. He is in his golf attire and has his golf clubs. He sets his clubs to the side. He has a clipboard)

Dr. Oldman: Hello, Brian. Sorry I'm late. I was... *(Looks at golf clubs, then back at Bruce)* in surgery.

Physician: Surgery, my ass! *(Gets up, walks towards Doctor)*

Bruce: *(Quietly)* It's, uhh, Bruce.

Dr. Oldman: Ok, Brian. What seems to be the problem?

Physician: *(Standing right next to Doctor)* This guy's been seeing us for four years and he *still* doesn't know our name. I mean its right there on the freaking chart!

Bruce: I know.

Dr. Oldman: What?

Bruce: What?

Dr. Oldman: You know what?

Bruce: *What?* Oh, nothing, never mind.

Dr. Oldman: *(Looks a bit confused)* Alrighty, then. Well, let's have a listen to your heart.

Bruce: That's ok, I did that already.

Dr. Oldman: What? Brian, are you alright?

Physician and Bruce: Bruce!

Dr. Oldman: Who?

Physician: Come on, Bruce, tell him off already.

Bruce: I'm getting there.

Dr. Oldman: Getting where?

Physician: Well, get there quicker.

Bruce: I will.

Dr. Oldman: Will what?

Physician: And stop talking to yourself.

Bruce: OK!

Dr. Oldman: OK?!

Bruce: (*A little brave*) Dr. Oldman. My name is Bruce.

Dr. Oldman: (*Chuckles, then pompously says*) Good one, Brian. But I've been seeing you for two years; I think I'd know your name by now.

Physician: *Four years!*

Bruce: (*Braver*) You've been seeing me for *four* years and you don't know my name by now because my name is *not* Brian, it's Bruce.

Physician: Yeah, look on the chart, dumb-ass.

Bruce: (*Braver still*) Look on the chart.

Dr. Oldman: (*Looks at chart*) Oh, hey, what do you know? How 'bout that? Oh, well, we all make mistakes.

(*Bruce and Physician drop their mouths in shock*)

Bruce: (*Bravely*) It's a mistake you've been making for four years.

Physician: Yeah!

Bruce: And it's a mistake that I've corrected you on every time I come in.

Physician: Right on, Brucey.

Bruce: And it's a mistake I've yet to hear you apologize for.

Physician; You're doin' good, kid.

Bruce: And, what, do you think I'm an idiot? I know damn well, you weren't in surgery; your buddy got you a tee time at 2:00.

Physician: Damn right.

Bruce: And I think you should begin to treat your patients a little better. Because, if you don't I'll, I'll--

Physician: Bring it home, baby.

Bruce: I'll burn your house down.

Physician: Ok, a little too much, let's bring it back a little bit.

Bruce: Ok, I won't burn your house down, but I'll sue.

Physician: Now you're talkin'.

Dr. Oldman: (*Looks a bit ashamed*) Well, um, *Bruce*, I'm sorry. I had no idea I was treating you so poorly. Umm, please, sit down and we'll continue with the examination, if you like?

Bruce: Thank you. But I, uh, I think I figured out why I've been ill.

Dr. Oldman: Oh, well, are you sure you don't want to continue with the examination?

Bruce: No, I realize now I've been doing something very unhealthy for a while and I've decided to stop.

Dr. Oldman: Ahh, it's the sauce isn't it?

Bruce: The what?

Dr. Oldman: The sauce, the hair of the dog, the booze, old... mistress in a bottle. Well, Bruce, the first step to recovery is admitting that you have a problem.

Bruce: What? Oh, no I'm not...

Physician: Just go with it, Bruce, the truth ain't much better.

Bruce: Right. You're right. I do have a problem and I'm going to get help right away. And, oh boy, the s..sauce is *bad*.

Dr. Oldman: (*Writes a number on a piece of paper*) Well, here's an address of an AA meeting. They meet Tuesdays and Thursdays. The coffee's horrible but the donuts aren't bad- so, I've heard. (*Nervous chuckle*) Have a good day. (*Leaves*)

Bruce: (*Turns to Physician, they are both elated, they run to each other, give each other a great big hug*) Did you see that? I feel great, I feel fantastic. Thank you. Thank you, so much.

Physician: Great job, kid. (*The cell phone in her pocket rings, she takes it out, looks at the caller id*) Oh, god, it's your girlfriend, again. I am gonna tell her to kiss my- (*Bruce snatches phone away from her*)

Bruce: (*He answers it*) Hello? (*Patronizingly*) Oh, hi, sweetheart. Listen, I've got something to tell you. (*Mirrors what physician did the first time and says*

loudly into the phone) I'm dumping you! Oh, yes I can because you're obnoxious, self-absorbed, conceited, horrible human being, without even enough personality to fill up a shot glass. Oh, and by the way, I've always *hated Fluffy!* (*He hangs up on her, the physician is impressed*)

Physician: Nice work, Brucey.

Bruce: Oh, man. This is great. (*Like an excited little boy*) Oh! I have an idea, let's confront my boss. That jerk's been passing me up for a promotion for seven years. And if he doesn't give me a promotion, like I rightly deserve, we can crank call him at 4 in the morning. Come on. (*Bruce gives the "let's go" gesture with his hand and begins to leave, Physician stays, Bruce is almost out the door when he sees that she is not following him.*) Well, come on.

Physician: (*Smiles to herself*) I, umm, can't do that, kid.

Bruce: What are you talking about? Why not?

Physician: Well, you finally stood up for yourself.

Bruce: Yeah, thanks to you.

Physician: No, Brucey. You did that one on your own. You, uhh, you don't need me anymore. This is, uhh, where we say goodbye.

Bruce: Goodbye? But I just found you.

Physician: (*A bit teary, but laughs to herself*) I know. But that was the point of this whole thing. You stand up for yourself and I... well, I don't know really. (*Jokingly*) See Bermuda.

Bruce: Is this really goodbye?

Physician: Yeah.

Bruce: *(Ponders for a second)* Is it weird, that I feel like I'm going to miss you?

Physician: *(Laughs)* It's weird. But I understand it.

(Bruce goes to her, gives her a parting hug)

Bruce: Goodbye.

Physician: Bye, Brucey.

(Bruce exits. Physician lets out a deep breath. Bruce enters.)

Bruce: How about we egg my boss's house then say goodbye.

Physician: You're on. *(Runs to the door. Both exit. Lights go down)*

Curtain



French Streets
Alicia Rohr

Searching for Glenda

by *Amanda Cameron*

Cooper: (As he comes onstage)
The movie was alright Maggie, but I still think it was a little girly for my taste.

Maggie: (Following Cooper in and closing the door) I thought it was good, but it would have been better if those kids hadn't been throwing Milk Duds. I think I still have a few in my hair (pulling hair forward and finger combing it, sure enough finding another melted candy in her hair) Ugh.

Cooper: (Laughing) Those weren't kids Mag, they were two old guys. They make it a habit to annoy people and then say they can because they're old. My mom works at the home that they go to, and she says that they raise hell around there.

Maggie: (As the phone rings) Really? I thought people in homes were supposed to be almost dead. I guess there are different homes for different types of old people.

Cooper: (Nodding as he picks up the phone) Hello? Oh, hey! Thanks for calling me back! But listen, I have to call you back, when is a good time to call you? You got a new number? Alright hang on, let me grab some paper. (Bends over to the piece of paper on the table and tears off a piece) Uh-huh, Uh-huh, 3497 alright. I'll call you. Talk to you then. Bye.

Maggie: Who was that?

Cooper: (Moving towards cage in the corner of the living room) Just a guy I know from class that wants to take some of my books for me, but I gotta take Glenda for a walk, have you seen his leash? (Puts the piece of paper in his back pocket)

Maggie: What's going on with this whole Glenda thing? I thought this was our special weekend. Even if you are pet sitting, it shouldn't take so much out of OUR time as it has been. You're seriously obsessed with that... thing! What is it anyway?

Cooper: HE is a gerbil and he is very sensitive. I'm watching HIM for Issac while ISSAC and Penny are skiing.

Maggie: Wait. A. Minute. It's a gerbil, and you're looking for its leash to take it for a walk.

Cooper: It's not an it, it's a HE.

Maggie: Let me finish. I was gonna to say that it's a he, and HIS name is Glenda. Wow. I didn't know you could take things so seriously.

Cooper: (As he's opening up the cage) I know, at first, I thought it was ridiculous, but Glenda is so friendly and nice, cuddly... and OHMYGOD he's gone!

Maggie: Calm down, just take a longer look. Look under the newspaper.

Cooper: I looked, and all there is some crap and his Beanie Baby. (Starts crawling around on the ground) we have to find him! Issac will kill me if I lose Glenda. Glenda is his BABY! We shouldn't have gone to the movie. Glenda's gone forever.

Maggie: (rolling her eyes)
Relax! I'll go outside and look.

(As Maggie opens the door, Javier, the garbage man pops in from outside and says)

Javier: Hola! I am here for the garbage senior! I see that you did not have it on the outside curb.

Cooper: Can you come back a little later Javier? I lost my friend's gerbil! We were going to take him for a walk and he wasn't in his cage!

Javier: Ay Yi Yi, what a shame! You could have had a wonderful dinner!!

Cooper: (looking for the right words)
Javier, we don't eat our gerbils. Listen if you see him...

Javier: Si! Si! Senor! I will cook him up with mi mama's recipe. You will love it! Si! Si!

Cooper: (Slow and articulating, as if talking to a child) Javier! I don't want you to cook him. I don't want you to kill him. If you find Glenda, I want you to bring him to me and bring him to me alive.

Javier: Your Glenda?! He's a man beast with a woman's name? Muy peculiar...

Cooper: (Cutting Javier off, frustrated)
Javier just go, Adios, talk to you later.

Javier: Si. Adios. (Javier exits.)

Maggie: Cooper, you're being absolutely ridiculous. He's a gerbil for chrissakes! Just... go buy another one!

Cooper: You don't understand. Any other gerbil just won't do! Glenda answers to his own name and he snuggles with his Beanie Baby! He eats his peas by throwing them up in the air and catching them in his mouth. He's scared of the dark and he sleeps next to his SpongeBob night light. Where am I going to find another gerbil like that?

Maggie: You know what? I'm leaving. I can't listen to you... or this, anymore. Call me later, when you're sane again.

Cooper: Okay, but Maggie? Can you drive really slow and look for Glenda running around on the street? Or in people's yards? He has three spots down his back. He's just a little gerbil; he's probably really scared right now!!!

Maggie: (Dryly) Yeah. I'll see what I can do. (Maggie leaves)

(Cooper crawls around on the floor for a few seconds calling out)

Cooper: Glenda! Glenda?!

(Sharp knock on a window, Cooper turns around to see Mr. Gerald, the mean old man from next door. Mr. Gerald is mostly blind and he makes people think he's very hard of hearing, and he hits everything with his cane. Cooper goes to the door and calls Mr. Gerald over to him.)

Cooper: Hey Mr. Gerald, what can I help you with? I have to make this quick though, I'm looking for something.

Mr. Gerald: (Hobbling over slowly but surely, hitting things in his way with his cane) I came over here to get my newspaper that you stole, you hooligan! I'm tired of you thinking you can come over to my doorstep and steal my paper just because you can run and I can't.

Cooper: I didn't steal your paper.

Mr. Gerald: Right! Where is it then? Where did my paper go?

Cooper: Mr. Gerald, I don't know okay? I have to go, I have to go look for my friend's gerbil.

Mr. Gerald: Herbal? Is that you kids are calling the marijuana weed these days? Isn't

that illegal? HA! Now I really do have something on you! Stealing my paper and smoking the doobie? How much does that crap run for these days anyway?

Cooper: Mr. Gerald, I said GERBIL, not herbal! A GERBIL is a small animal! Like a HAMSTER!

Mr. Gerald: (Yelling now) No, I don't want to CAMPING! I have to find my paper!!

Cooper: And I have to find my GERBIL!!

Mr. Gerald: (As he walks out the door) You kids better not get caught smoking that herbal!! I won't testify on your behalf!

Cooper: (Shutting the door and speaking under his breath) Yeah Yeah...

Mr. Gerald: (Turning around sharply and hitting the door open with his cane) Were you sassing me Young'un?

Cooper: (Clearly exasperated now, speaking slowly and sarcastically, but not with enough sarcasm for Mr. Gerald to catch on) No Sir, I would never think of doing that to you.

Mr. Gerald: That's what I thought. (Turning around and hobbling out, once again hitting things in his way with his cane)

Cooper: (Shouting) GLENDA!?!?

(A child's voice chimes in from the doorway)

Nathan: (Nathan is fast talker and he can have a wild imagination, tends to trail off from one subject to another very fast, his face and hands are very expressive when he speaks) Hey Coop?! How come you're crawling on the floor like that? Did you lose

an earring? Or a Nickel? I can help you find it, I'm a good money finder, just ask my mom, I find money in the couch all the time, but she never let me keep it. She says it's hers and dad's from when they clean the couch, but it sure looks funny when they clean the couch. Maybe they are just dancing. I don't think so. I think that an alien came and zapped their brains and now whenever they are together they act funny. I had a dream that this gorilla came and ate all our waffles from the freezer and then my mom told me that next time I ate a waffle I should ask and I told her it wasn't me. I don't think she believed me. Where do you want me to start looking for the money? Over there? How about in the fireplace?

Cooper: No, Nathan. I'm looking for my friend's gerbil, Glenda. He went skiing and asked me to babysit. I went to the movies with my girlfriend and we came back and I was supposed to take him for a walk. I went to go find his leash, but he was missing! Glenda is Issac's favorite thing in the world. See all the things he buys for him? This nightlight? The blanket and the Beanie Baby? All the years that Issac and I have been friends he doesn't even buy me gifts. Glenda means a lot to Issac, and if I don't find him, I'll feel terrible.

Miffy: (From offstage) Yoo-Hoo! Nathaniel! Are you in there? Yoo-Hoo! (Enters, when she speaks you can tell she is from Minnesota, her northern accent is very stereotypically Minnesotan) Nathan! I thought I told you to stay in the yard and not bother anyone while I cooked yer father's favorite hot dish! Then you disappear and scare me half to death!

Nathan: Awww, Mom, am I really in a lot of trouble?

Miffy: Ya, darn tootin' you betcha young man!

Nathan: But mom! I came over here and Cooper was crawling on the ground looking for money, and I asked if I could help him and then I told him about you and Dad and how funny you look when you clean the couch. And then he told me about his friend's gerbil Glenda! Mom, Glenda's a boy gerbil, but he has a girl name! Kind of like Uncle Sue! And then he told me he was going to take Glenda for a walk, but when he went to look for his leash, that Glenda was gone! He has to find him, 'cause he can't just give his friend back an empty cage with a nightlight and a Beanie Baby and a Blanket! Mom, he has a SpongeBob nightlight!

Miffy: Uff-da! What a story, now Nathan, I bet you that Cooper was just yankin' your chain! I don't think that could ever happen! You silly goose!

Nathan: No, Mom. He was telling the truth!

Miffy: What did I tell you about stretching the truth? It's not becoming on a young boy like you! Come on now!

Cooper: (Sighs) No ma'am, it's really true, I promise. My friend Issac is sort of obsessed with his gerbil. It is a male named Glenda and I did lose him.

Miffy: Well, Golly! I'm sorry about that predicament ya found yourself in!! Strange as your situation is, I hate to see anyone in a pickle like you are! Maybe I'll bring ya some hot dish later! Speaking of which, Nathan, we've got to skedaddle! We've got to finish your father's Tator Tot hot dish!! I'm trying a new recipe!

Cooper: Ma'am, if you don't mind, Nathan can stay here and look, it wouldn't bother me any, plus, it would keep him out of your

hair. And then maybe, you and your husband could spend some time together, um, cleaning out the couch.

Miffy: (Suddenly finding her fingernails very interesting) Well, you betcha, that would be super having him out from under my feet for a teeny bit! Why thank you Cooper!

Cooper: No problem, I'll send him back when it's suppertime.

Miffy: Oh! Darn Tootin'! I'll holler for Nathan later! (Miffy Exits, then sticks her head back in) Uff-da! I almost forgot! Cooper, would you like one or two helpings of my special hot dish?

Cooper: Whatever you can spare is fine, thanks.

Miffy: (Exiting) Okey-Dokey!

Cooper: Alright Nathan, just look in every nook and cranny. Gerbils are fast when they are scared. And if you find him, I'll take you to ice cream Joe's and buy you the largest sundae they have.

Nathan: My mom won't let me go there, she said that Joe is a dirty pervert who only sells ice cream to get thrills by looking down ladies blouses. (Does an imitation of his mother and her accent) Nathaniel James! I told you a million times! We will NOT go to that place with that HOOLIGAN old man. He looks down the ladies shirts, that's not polite. Tell me you will never be like that when you are older.

Cooper: That's interesting. I'm going to go look in the kitchen for Glenda maybe he went in there when he heard Mr. Gerald.

Nathan: I'll stay in here. I can speak gerbil. (Starts to click and squeak and crawl around, the clicking sound is made by snapping your tongue in your mouth.)

(Cooper walks out of the room shaking his head at Nathan.)

(For a few seconds you can hear Cooper calling out for Glenda and Nathan clicking and squeaking.)

Cooper and Nathan: (At the same time, Cooper is calling out, while Nathan makes the sounds) GLENDA!
(Click click EEK EEK)
Glenda!!
(Click click Squeak Squeak)

(Cooper hears a knock at the door and then Mr. Gerald's loud voice again, while he raps on the door with his cane. He sounds perturbed, more so than usual)

Mr. Gerald: Hey Kid! Your Hick of a mother, what's her name, Muffin? Know you're hanging out with potheads these days? What happened to those kids with the surfboards? I thought they were bad, eh, they're nothing compared to this pothead! I'm gonna have to talk to your mother. What are you doing over here? (Looking around and squinting, lowering his glasses as he does so)

Nathan: My mom knows I'm over here, and those weren't surfboards they were skateboards, and my mom said that I'm not supposed to hang out with them anymore cause my knees get to scratched up and then I bleed and it gets on the linoleum.

Mr. Gerald: Those kids being mean to you? You tell me next time, I'll hit 'em with my cane.

Cooper: (Walking back into the living room) Mr. Gerald, why is it you always pretend that you can't hear what I say, but then you talk to other folks like you can hear them clearly.

Mr. Gerald: (Very loudly and rudely) It's cause I don't like you! And don't tell me you love me dearly, I don't swing that way! Sucking up isn't gonna up you anywhere in the court room kid, don't you think that I'm not on to you!

Cooper: Listen, did you come over here to harass me or did you come over for a reason?

Mr. Gerald: I told you earlier kid, you don't hear too well do you? I'm looking for the paper you stole right from my doorstep, I got back all the way to my place, and I realized that I saw a paper in that's rat's cage when you made your confession to me earlier.

Cooper: (Starting to talk, but is cut off by the telephone ringing) Mr. Gerald... (Answering phone, it is Issac, his best friend and Glenda's owner He is calling to check up on Glenda. Cooper starts to speak to him, but Mr. Gerald keeps hollering things in the background and cutting in with things that make the conversation confusing and hard to follow. During this Nathan is still looking, while making clicking and chirping sounds.)

Cooper: Hello? Hey Issac? How's Skiing? Really? That's interesting? How is Penny? What? She left? How come? Oh, she thought you were going to propose and you didn't? I'm sorry man! What? She's gonna be home tomorrow? To pick up Glenda... (Voice drops) What? Nonono! Glenda's fine! The best gerbil ever!

Mr. Gerald: (Cutting in and hollering, sounds somewhat like he is thinking to himself, but he is speaking too loudly to be thinking out loud) Are you gonna tell him that you lost his herbal drugs? He's gonna be upset you smoked all that in one day sonny!

Cooper: What? No! Of course I know where Glenda is! Who was that? Oh, it was Mr. Gerald, you know who he is, the neighbor across the street. He lost his paper and came over to pet the gerbil! He loves the little critter.

Mr. Gerald: What! I ain't smoking that herbal crap! And I'm not petting it either! Keep it away or I'll use this cane on you. I had to use it on Javier! He was looking through my garbage and I know he was looking for some toilet paper!

Nathan: Guys can you keep it down, I'm still trying to call out to Glenda!
(Resumes clicking and squeaking)

Cooper: No, Glenda's here, I swear! What you want to talk to him? He's busy right now, what's he doing? He's... (Cooper looks around the room to come up with something to make up) He's... watching Elmo's world. He's getting a kick out of it too! Oh, he doesn't like Elmo? Oh, well. Oh, well I was just teasing man, he's actually stretching, yes, (Looking relieved) He does like to stretch a lot. And yes, you're right, he does look cute while he does it. What? Yes, I'm watching him stretch. (Rolls his eyes while he says this)

Mr. Gerald: He wants to talk to the pot? Tell him it isn't here, 'cause you and that trampy girl that was here earlier smoked it all. I never saw so many people so dependent on drugs!! I don't even have real hips and I'm not that dependent. That kid's away on vacation and he wants to talk to his

drugs, which you lost, or smoked. I'm guessing smoked.

Cooper: Hang on man, I'll put Glenda on for you. (Cooper holds phone to the air, moving around in circles frantically as if looking for something to hold the phone next to. He opts for holding the phone near Nathan, who is still clicking and squeaking.)

Nathan: (Clicking and squeaking rapidly) Click. Clickity clack. EEK. Click-Ekk .

Mr. Gerald: (While Nathan is on the phone) You must have the kid on drugs too, cause he's sitting there clucking into the phone. I gotta get out of here before the fumes get into my brain and I turn into one of you.

Cooper: (Under his breath)
That would be a huge improvement (Holding the phone back up to his ear) Hey you still there? Yeah, he really must miss you, nope I have never heard him be that talkative either. Now? Now, he's stretching. You're right, what was I thinking, it IS naptime. I'm going to go find his nightlight. Bye. (Hangs up fast.) What am I going to do? Penny is going to be here TOMORROW to get this, this thing, and I can't find him. For all I know, Javier really did find him, and serve him to his family of 12. (shaking his head) Crap!

(Mr. Gerald hits a chair with his cane loudly)

Mr. Gerald: That's it! I won't have you speaking horrible things in my presence. You have crossed the line. You speak like that? You do drugs? And now you have the neighbor kid smoking drugs too? No way, see if I ever invite you to tea and crumpets at my cottage again! (Hobbles out, mumbling to himself)

Cooper: We have to hurry up and find the rat! Penny is going to be here tomorrow and if we don't find it, then Issac will never talk to me again!

(From Offstage)

Miffy: Yoo-Hoo! Nathan! Time for supper!

Nathan: Gotta go Coop. Maybe Mom will let me come back and help look, I don't know though, I might have homework, I'm not sure if my robot will have finished it all for me yet.

Cooper: Don't worry about it kiddo. Enjoy your mom's new hot dish.

(Nathan exits)

Cooper: (To himself, while removing the couch cushions and pillows, rummaging through the living room. Making more of a mess than really looking for Glenda. After he looks for a while he starts to pace back and forth.) I have to find this thing. I can't believe this. All for a stupid hamster. No Coop, it's a gerbil. C'mon, who are you kidding the thing has a nightlight. And a Beanie Baby. Of all things, why couldn't Issac have a normal pet, something harder to misplace, or that would be content with staying put, a dog, or a miniature horse, even a llama. Yeah. A llama, I could live with that. In fact! What if I bought him a llama and surprised him with it, he would forget about the rodent. No, a llama spits... Hmm, maybe a bunny. That might remind him of Glenda. Think Cooper, just think. You know Issac! You've known him all your life, then again, you thought you knew him, and then he went off and fell in love with a rodent! So the key is, well, I'm just going to have to find another gerbil. Paint three dots on his back, and call it good. There's no way that he could notice? Could

he? I don't think so. Alright, that's what I'll do. (Louder) Glenda!? If you're anywhere in here, you better choose now to come out! I'm gonna go buy another gerbil just like you! And I'm gonna name him Glenda. He's going to sleep in your bed, and use YOUR night light! If you don't like the sound of that, then you better come out from wherever you are hiding! Just think, an imposter Glenda.

(As Cooper is speaking aloud to Glenda, a young woman enters quietly, so Cooper doesn't hear her. She listens to what Cooper is saying)

Cooper: Think about it Glenda, wouldn't that make you mad!? I would be so angry, knowing there was an imposter sleeping in MY cage with MY Beanie Baby! How DARE he! So, come out from wherever you're hiding. Uncle Cooper doesn't want to hurt you! But, if you come out after I buy imposter Glenda, I'm gonna sell you to Javier, and I think we both know what he wants to do to you Glenda!

Penny: Who is this Javier, and what does he want to do with Glenda?

Cooper: Oh! Penny! Hey! It's you! You just walked in on... Glenda and I, we were umm, practicing for the show we were gonna put on for Issac! (Pushing Penny lightly towards the door, trying not to seem suspicious) Come on now! Don't wanna ruin the surprise now do we? Wait! Weren't you supposed to be coming home like, late tomorrow.

Penny: I was supposed to, but I was tired of being cold, I paid like a hundred extra dollars to get an earlier flight out of there. I had to sit next to some lady who thought she could sing better than Whitney Houston, but quite honestly, I don't think she realized that

everyone else would have listened to hours of the Brady Bunch singing. But, it was worth it to get away from the most selfish man in the world. Speaking of which, where's the rabbit?

Cooper: It's a gerbil.

Penny: Whatever, where is she, him, it.

Cooper: Umm, he's not here right now! I can write down a message and let him know when he gets back that you were looking for him.

Penny: Weren't you just rehearsing theater with him? Or something? Sounded more like you were threatening him to me, why you would threaten a gerbil, I don't know. But, maybe I'm not supposed to ask questions. You know what, just give me his cage right now. I'll come back later and get the rest of his things.

Cooper: (Going into panic mode and trying to buy time, pacing himself trying to find Glenda's things while looking for him) No! You know what? Looking for his blanket and stuff is no problem. I have it all around here somewhere.

Penny: What's wrong with you? Did you kill Gruesome?

Cooper: Gruesome? It came with two? Oh dear God, don't tell me there were two! I only got one!

Penny: No, there's only one, Gruesome is just my name for the thing. There's gotta be something wrong. You keep jumping around like someone is out to get you.

Cooper: Leans in closer to Penny, I'll tell you, but you have to promise not to tell anyone! Promise?

Penny: YES. Now just tell me what the heck is going on!?!?!?

Cooper: Well, here's what happened. (Starts to slowly tell the story, as he does, Nathan walks back in, ready to help again)

Nathan: Hey Cooper. Did you find Glenda yet?

Penny: (Looking back and forth between Nathan and Cooper) Wha...! Find? As in did you find him because you lost him? WOW! Am I off the hook for leaving or what?!? (Ruffles Nathan's hair) thanks buddy, that's news I've been waiting to hear.

Cooper: Gee, Thanks. Listen we have to find him, When I talked to Issac on the phone he said that he misses Glenda so much that he may come home a day early! So as you're looking, come up with ideas just in case we can't find him, or we DO find him and he's...

(Trails off and then makes the cutting motion across his throat)

Nathan: DEAD!

Cooper: Listen, think positive! Keep looking.

(Meanwhile, as Cooper and Nathan are frantically looking, Penny has a gloating look on her face as she walks around the room, picking up pillows and things. She finally sits down and starts singing quietly the latest Britney song)

Gimme Gime more

Gimme more

Gimme Gimme more

Cooper: Um, excuse me, not to interrupt karaoke time, but what the hell are you doing? I can tell you what you're not doing, and that's helping us look for Glenda.

Penny: Well, I just want to sit in my glory for a while and gloat because I am out of the gravy and you, my dear friend, are deep in it! So, I'm going to sit and watch you scurry around. (Slapping her knee and laughing) Honestly, you look so ridiculous; I should tape it and send it into America's Funniest Home videos.

Cooper: (Sarcastically) Stop, Really. You're compassion is making me feel all fuzzy and warm inside.

Penny: Glad I could help.

(Mr. Gerald and Miffy come into the house at the same time, Mr. Gerald is actually hobbling in for once, awed by Miffy's hustle and bustle.)

Miffy: Nathaniel, you need to come home right this minute, your father said that you only swept the dirt under the rug and not into the dustpan like I told you.

Mr. Gerald: Sonny, you have to learn, when I was younger, I swept all the dirt down the stairs. Never sweep it under the rug that gets messy and obvious. Always, sweep it down the stairs.

Miffy: Oh, Cooper, I wanted to tell ya, I went the World Wide Web and I Googled "Ten Ways find a Runaway Gerbil"

Mr. Gerald: Who did you Google? What the heck is a Google? What nasty things did you do that herbal?

Penny: What. Is. Going. On?

Miffy: (Shrieking, very annoyed at Nathaniel and now Mr. Gerald as well) Google.com you Nincompoop! It's a search engine on the World Wide Web! And they aren't looking for Marijuana, they are looking for a GERBIL. Sort of like a little

furry RAT. (Speaking to Cooper) Cooper, this man is not a very nice person, and he can't hear very well! I betcha he doesn't clean his ears! Why, he probably has a potato farm growin' in them right now!!

Mr. Gerald: (Yelling) Well, at least it's natural!! Unlike that melon farm in your shirt! You tramp!

Cooper: ...Guys...

Miffy: (Yelling louder) Don't you call me a Tramp in front of my son, you dirty old geyser. You need a bath. (Miffy gets angry and rips off his toupee, and throws it)

Mr. Gerald: MUFFIN! Why'd you throw my GD toupee!!

(Nathan is looking back and forth between the two with his mouth hanging wide open)

Cooper: (By this time, everyone who is talking is yelling, except Penny, who is watching everyone with amusement.) GUYS!

(Over Miffy and Mr. Gerald yelling things at each other, and cooper trying to get them to stop, Javier walks in and the slamming of the door causes everyone to look)

Mr. Gerald: HICK!

Miffy: You Dust TOOTER!

(Javier walks in)

Javier: Excuse me senor, but I really need the garbage now! I have to get it and take it to the dump now. I have to hurry because all of the good stuff might be gone.

Cooper: (Walking into the kitchen and taking the bag out of the garbage can,

shaking the bag and rummaging through it, just making sure that Glenda is not in there) Here you go Javier. I don't have anything good for you this week though, I'm sorry.

Javier: It's okay senior. Especially now with your little problem. I have to go, because I have to get to the dump, then take these papers to mi casa and help my little one Juan with his reading!

(Starts to head out the door, when Mr. Gerald notices his papers.)

Mr. Gerald: MY PAPERS! You should be deported for stealing you thief! Give me those!

Miffy: (shrieking) Now, that's not very nice, he is TRYING to give his son an education you old BUM!

Javier: These are not your papers. These are mine. If they are on the stoop on garbage day, they are mine.

Mr. Gerald: The steps right in front of my house are NOT the stoop! Now give me my papers!

Javier: You are just jealous that you cannot clip the coupons fast enough and that you do not have a familia to read the local stories too!

Mr. Gerald: I wouldn't want a familia (pronounces this word wrong) if I had the mother you did! She looks like a monkey and a rat combined into one!

(Nathan chimes in, hearing the word rat)

Nathan: Shouldn't we be looking for Glenda? We can use the tips my mom found on Google to look!

Mr. Gerald: You are not going to find a cat, with tips from a dirty Porno site!

Miffy: It's a GERBIL! And only you would know what goes on in a dirty website! Don't think that the neighbors don't know! Sitting alone over there in that house of yours! HA!

Mr. Gerald: WELL, I NEVER!

(In the midst of all this, Javier trying to get away, Nathan starting to look for the gerbil again, Cooper trying to gain control and Miffy and Mr. Gerald yelling, Penny is watching the two argue, Maggie walks in and shouts)

Maggie: HEY HEY HEY!!!

(Everyone turns to look, then just continues to yell and look and be confused. Everything is so loud, that they do not see or hear the surprise guest come in after Maggie)

Issac: HONEY! I'm HOME!!

All: (startled!) AHHH!!

Nathan: Uh-oh....

(As Issac walks in, everyone follows them with their eyes and their heads)

Issac: Is there something wrong?

(Everyone stammers and stutters)

All: Nothing, nothing at all. No! No Way!

Issac: Are you sure? You all seem jumpy! Waaaait a second, you guys are throwing me a party!! A welcome home party, that's it. But you're surprised because I came home so early. (Looking around the room, slowly) but this isn't exactly the group of people I

would invited to a party. But thanks everyone for coming!! Now, let's get to the REAL reason I came home, (opens arms) Baby I missed you!

Mr. Gerald: (Disgusted) Ugh, there better not be any canoodling I can't stand that crap!

Miffy: Oh horse Puckey! You watch it on those dirty shows all the time!

Penny: (Stands up and opens her arms too, but as she speaks, she slows down and watches him pass by) Awww, baby, I. Missed. You. Too. (Turns to watch where he's going) What are you doing? I'm over here.

Issac: In a second Penny, I gotta give Glenda a hello handshake.

(Maggie walks over to Issac, getting ready to break it to him gently; that his gerbil has gone missing and that they did everything could to find him but Mr. Gerald breaks in and gets there first. And none too gently)

Mr. Gerald: Your herbal is gone kid, it's been smoked. And I think the foreign kid took some home to get his creepy looking mother baked. And this woman over here (indicated Miffy) probably put it in her hot dish and gave it to her kid; he keeps making this clacking and squawking noises. (Points to Cooper using his cane) and that kid is the one that's responsible!

Issac: (Confused) Uh-huh and where do you come in?

Mr. Gerald: Who? Oh, me well, I'm innocent, I just came looking for my paper!

Issac: I just want to know what's going on!

Cooper: Listen, Issac. Everything is all my fault. I didn't mean for it to happen. It all just got so outta hand. Glenda... Glenda's gone man. I don't know where he went. I've been looking all over for him. Called for him. Bribed him, threatened him. Even went as far as thinking of buying another gerbil. Still, no Glenda.

(All this time, Issac is shaking his head and smiling, starts to laugh towards the end of the conversation. When Cooper is done talking, Issac continues standing there smiling and shaking his head.)

Cooper: (Waiting for a reaction) Are you going to hit me? Because if you are, do it now, I have a low pain tolerance.

(Issac walks over to a decorative coffee cup perched higher on a shelf)

Issac: This the cup I bought you?

(Cooper nods slowly, confused.)

Thought so, I have the same one. But at MY place, Glenda likes to... (As he talks, Issac is grabbing the cup down from the shelf and looking inside as he finishes his sentence, he pulls Glenda out of the cup) ... hide inside. (Nonchalantly) Glenda's favorite game is hide and seek. He can unlock his cage, that's why I have the rubber band, an extra lock, if you wanna leave and come back without having to play hide and seek, then you have to put the rubber band on the cage.

(The rest of the casts all nods and looks at each other, pretending to think that this is the most normal thing they have ever heard.)
Ohhhh!
All right!
I see!

Cooper: (Angrily) WHAT!?!?!? You have got to be kidding me. Why the HELL wouldn't you tell me that?

Issac: I did, it's on the list I left you. 102 Ways to Take Care of Glenda the Wonder Gerbil. Didn't you read it?!?

Cooper: Of course I didn't! Not all of it. I thought it was easy. Feed gerbil, clean up gerbils' crap. Feed gerbil. Put gerbil in ball. I got to number 12 and it started telling me how to relax the gerbil and I thought you were giving me crap! I put the list by the phone.

Issac: Well, that's fine; you didn't get to number 102. I knew you had a short attention span. But that means you read number one.

Cooper: To be honest with you, just sort of set the list down and didn't really pay any attention to it. Why?

Issac: Because the first rule is the most important one on the list.

Cooper: Okay, let me go grab it. (Cooper walks over, picks up the list and starts to read.) They aren't numbered, are you sure that the first one on this list is...

Maggie: Coop! The phone call you got earlier! Remember? You tore off a piece of paper and wrote down that number! You put it in your pocket!

Cooper: You know what, you're right! (Pulls out the piece of paper and starts to read) No matter what, you have to read this rule and follow it. Glenda likes to get out of his cage, and play Hide and Go Seek. If you leave, you MUST tie the rubber band around his cage lock as an extra precaution.

(Issac starts to recite the rule by memory as Cooper finishes it up)

Cooper: Wow. You. Are. Insane. I mean really, I'm gonna be honest with you, a gerbil. All this over a gerbil. Man, you need to take it and go, after the day I had, I need a nap.

Issac: Yeah, I had a long flight back too; I waited a long time to see my baby!! (Lifts up Glenda to look him in the eye, then gives him a kiss.)

Cooper: (Has had enough) Alright, you gotta go. Now. I mean it. OUT!

(Issac, knowing that Cooper is serious, grabs up all the stuff and hurries out)

Miffy: (Scooting Nathan towards the door) Yes you too young man, we have to skoodle out of here, you still gotta take a bath!

Nathan: (Yawns) Mom! I'm not even tired!

Miffy: That's just too darn bad young man! Now March! (Points to the door)

Nathan: (Turning to leave) Goodnight everyone!

All: Goodnight

Mr. Gerald: Yep, I'm missin' Jerry Springer. It's a new one tonight!

Miffy: You sicko! (Leaves quickly)

Javier: Oh queso! All this time, I was so caught up with all this action that I forgot to go look for all the good stuff! And now that you have found our man beast, I have to go hunt something else down for dinner! I better hurry! Adios mis amigos!

(Leaves quickly)

(Mr. Gerald is leaving and as he is walking out the door, so is Penny)

Mr. Gerald: So all this time, they were talking about a gerbil then huh?

Penny: Yes sir.

Mr. Gerald: Huh, maybe it's time that I do look into those hearing aids then. This whole time, I thought you kids were looking for that marijuana weed!

Penny: Maybe that would be a good idea.

(They exit, shutting the door behind them. Only Cooper and Maggie remain. They look at each other, shake their heads and fall onto the couch)

Lights Dim, End Scene!



Best Gift Ever
Kymberly Stelter

Third Floor

by Alex Kelly

Cast of Characters

Kevin-bigger guy, plays on the football team, and can be rather a jerk

Sam-Is a Canadian gets made fun of a lot for only that fact

David-A hopeless romantic, spends more time on the phone with his girlfriend than anything else

Adam-The quiet smart ass of the group behind a computer and a surprise leader

Zack--Has no care what he says or does to anyone, only going to college for the experience has no real intention of going to class

Frank the RA –Very creepy RA with no name

The show opens in the third floor lounge in a regular boy's dorm room. On the back wall there is a table and in front of it a couch. On the stage left wall is another table and couch. In the center of the room is smaller table and a TV is in front of the stage.

The time is present day in the dead of winter around noon on a Friday afternoon around 3:15 after most of the kids are done with class.

Kevin, Adam and David walk into the lounge after a long Friday, they have winter gear on and have their backpacks with them.

Kevin – Thank God that classes are over and it's Friday.

David – It would be a lot nicer if there wasn't so much snow coming down. I've never had so much trouble walking back from class before.

Adam – The snow really came down all of the sudden and all of the ice out there made Kevin look like he was a one man icecapade when he slipped. So how you feeling after that fall?

Kevin – Not good. I don't care how many times you hit your head, it still hurts like no body's business.

Adam – Well, Sam thought that your slip was hilarious.

David – Speaking of Sam, what happened to him?

Kevin – You don't need to worry about that Canadian anymore.

David – What did you do?

(Sam walks into the lounge behind the group covered in snow)

Sam – You big jerk!

(Walks in more and begins to brush the snow off of him and walks in more)

Sam – What did I do? What did I do? Did you guys see what he did to me?

Adam – Not really. We tried to keep moving before the snow buried us.

(Adam sits down on the couch next to the right wall and starts to set up his computer)

Sam – Well, after he fell down, I started to laugh at him. But then I felt bad and tried to help him up. He pulled me down and slid me into a snow bank and then shoved more snow on top of if me. It was FREEZING!

Kevin – Well, you should have thought of that before you laughed at me for falling on the ice.

Sam – If I had slipped you would have laughed at me!

Kevin – This is very true.

(Zack walks in the lounge wearing really colorful pajama pants and a button up shirt)

Zack – Why are you guys making so much noise? It's hard for me to sleep.

David – It's like 3:15 in the afternoon.

Adam – And don't you have class right now?

Zack – No; I have class at 3:00.

David – Then why aren't you in class now?

Zack – Why, it started 15 minutes ago I don't want to walk in late.

Adam – Another week without going to a class.

Zack - Don't want to break the streak. I'm going back to bed; see you losers later.

(Zack leaves the lounge going back to his room)

Kevin– What's his major again?

Adam – Does it matter?

Sam – I'm going to my room to change out of my cold, wet underwear from all the snow that went down them. Thanks Kevin.

(Sam begins to leave and go back to his room)

Kevin – You're welcome.

David – I better start to pack so I can get out of here soon, before it gets any worse out there.

(Kevin looks out the window)

Kevin – I don't know if you want to try that, it's starting to get even worse out.

David – Why? Are you worried I won't make it in one piece?

Kevin – No I don't really care if you make it in one piece, I'm just letting you know what you're going to have to be driving in.

David – Thanks for your concern.

(David begins to leave)

Kevin – You're welcome. But if this weather keeps up we might not be able to make it to the party at James' tonight. That has been on my mind all week.

Adam – You plan on finding some random girl, making out with her, and never talk to her again?

Kevin – Oh, you know it!

Adam – You have a very one track mind Kevin.

Kevin – I know, but if this keeps up, we'll have to take a dog sled to get there.

Adam – You don't think he'll cancel it; do you?

Kevin – Not likely, but as long as we have internet we'll know what's going on.

Adam – Oh yes! The joy of the computer and internet! Without it we might have to go out and socialize with people. But thanks to these nice laptops the school gives out, we can just stay in the lounge and talk to anybody, anytime!

Kevin – Ya, who needs to socialize with people?

(Sam walking in the room with his bag, he has a hockey jersey on, without his winter coat. Moves into the room and begins to set up his computer)

Adam – So, David, all packed up yet or what?

Sam – No he wanted to call his girlfriend first to let her know he was on his way, but then they started talking about how she doesn't like one of her music classes and went on about other random things that made me lose interest.

Kevin – That boy is pathetic, talking on the phone to his girlfriend all the time at night till the free minutes run out. Seeing her every weekend and not with us, does he know what he's missing when he leaves?

(Adam and David type really loud on their computers for a few seconds)

Kevin – Well, I have fun and that's all that really matters.

Sam - And not everyone here has a girlfriend that goes to this school.

(Kevin and Sam look at Adam and looks surprised at them)

Adam – I can't help it that I found one here!

Sam – Speaking of her, is Melissa coming over or what?

(Kevin starts to act a little uneasy)

Adam – I'm talking with her online; she's not sure if she wants to come over with the weather the way it is plus she has a lot of homework. What? She just asked if Kevin was over here. (He looks at Kevin kind of puzzled) Why would she ask that?

Kevin – (Changing the subject) Well, David goes to class, unlike some people's roommate.

Adam – I can't be held responsible for my roommate being a lazy bum and not going to class, only to have his money wasted in the process!

(David walks in the room still talking on the phone)

David – It may look bad outside but there is no way that will keep me from coming to see you.

Kevin – Hey! I told you not to talk on the phone around me!

David – What? Yes that was Kevin; ok hold on. She says hello to you Kevin.

Kevin – I'm not going to respond to her.

David – He says hello, I know that was nice of him.

Kevin – Why does he have to do that in front of us?

Sam – You want to see something fun watch this. (In a girl's voice) David, who are you talking to, and why are you ignoring me?

(David looks at him kind of pissed)

David – What? No, that wasn't a girl; this is a guy's dorm.

Sam – (Still in a girl's voice) Are you talking to that tramp you see every weekend? I want to give her a piece of my mind!

David – No, that's no girl! You got to trust me! No, believe me.

Sam (Girl's voice) When will you stop seeing her and go to the real woman? When will you love me as much as I do you?

David – No! There is not another woman who loves me; you're the only one for me! The voice it was Andrew. Right the one I said was really girly. (David leaves the room)

Sam – I do that to him all the time when he talks to her over the phone, she freaks out every time.

Kevin – Wow, and you thought I was mean! This stupid Canadian does this to David and you still like him. Hi what are you doing Adam?

Adam – I've been talking to a lot of people online and not too many of them are going to make it to the party tonight. They're saying the roads are so bad that they can't even walk safe outside.

Kevin – That's not going to stop those who are dedicated like me from braving the elements.

Adam – I don't know, man; apparently it's bad now and only getting worse out there and it's not going to get any better until tomorrow.

Kevin – Can they tell that by looking outside?

Adam – They can't tell that by looking outside. I can tell that by looking on the school web page and looking at the weather report.

(Kevin walks over to Adams computer)

Kevin – Let me see that. You mean to tell me our computers could do that? (Looks at the computer) I had know clue about that.

Sam –You learn something new everyday.

Kevin – So that big green blob that is covering most of the state is snow, right?

Adam – Yes.

Kevin –It really has just started to hit us.

Adam – Yes.

Kevin – So that means...

(Sam looks out into the hallway)

Sam – We're screwed.

Adam – I don't know if I'd put it like that.

Sam – No, the RA is coming.

(Adam and Kevin look like they're in shock then Kevin dashes back to his computer)

Adam – Remember; just like we planned, heads down conversation to a minimum.

(The RA walks in the room very creepy kind of like a sidekick from an old monster movie and stands in the doorway; the group keeps their heads in their computers and keep on typing. There is an odd pause)

Kevin – Soooo, how have you been Adam?

Adam – Good, Good, and you.

Kevin – Good, Good, Sam.

Sam – Same here.

(There is a brief silence again.)

Adam – So, Sam, how's baseball going?

Sam – Good, Good; we're still in the gym.

Adam – Well, I would assume so.

Sam – So, Kevin, how's football been going?

Kevin – It's the dead of winter, you dumb Canadian. Were you dropped as a kid or just born that way? Maybe you play football in three feet of snow in Canada, eh? But here in America football season is over, (remembers what he has to do and calms down) I mean it's going good.

Sam – (Says this in French very angrily) Just you wait you stupid fat American pig dog, Canada and its people will have their revenge on you and your people for all the stupid Canada jokes, just you wait!

Kevin – Hey, I told you not speak any more Spanish in front of me.

Sam – (Still in French) O.k., shit for brains!

Kevin – What!

Sam – Nothing, friend.

(The RA lurks away. The group waits a few seconds to talk after he leaves)

Kevin – That guy creeps the hell out of me! Does he have any friends?

Sam – I don't think so, he always sits alone at lunch.

Adam – He has to have friends, right?

(Zack comes in the room holding his lap top, still wearing what he slept in)

Zack – Hey, losers; what's up? (Sits down on the stage left couch) That guy's stalking you again. He clearly has no friends.

Kevin – I know he just comes in and stands there, doesn't say a word, then leaves. Why can't he be like Matt or Eric on first and second floor?

Adam – I don't know, I just thought of something, does anyone know his name?

Zack – You know, now that you mentioned it, I don't know. I just called him the RA. Do you know his name?

Kevin – Do you think I care?

Zack – We should name him.

Adam – Name him? Name him what?

Sam – Frank.

Adam – What?

Sam – He looks like a Frank, you know, kind of average name but not used too much; I think it fits him.

Adam – Sometimes I wonder what goes on in that head of yours.

Sam – Sometimes it's best not to wonder.

(David comes in with a full bag and his backpack)

David – Well, I’m going to be heading out now.

Adam – What took you so long to get ready to leave?

David – My girlfriend was getting worried because of how bad the weather is outside and about the roads and that something bad might happen to me. She worries about me too much.

Zack – I think am going to be sick.

Kevin – Ditto.

David – You’re just jealous because I actually have a meaningful relationship with a girl, unlike you two.

Zack – Hey, it’s not my fault that I think all women are just for S squared.

David – What does “S squared” mean?

Zack – Sex and sandwiches, baby; sex and sandwiches, am I right? (he puts his hand up for a high-five but no one does it) You all suck.

David – Come on Adam, you have a girlfriend too, you should be on my side here.

Adam – He does kind of have a point; I’m dating Melissa after all.

(Kevin starts to feel a little uncomfortable again)

David – Why do you like having a girlfriend?

Adam – Well, it is nice to know that someone cares about you all the time and is always there to talk to when you want to.

(Kevin acts even more uncomfortable)

Adam – Also, it’s nice to know that I’m the only one for her and she would never cheat on me and that...

Kevin – (Kevin interrupts) So, Sam; how about that Canadian Football. Longer fields, more players what’s up with that?

(The group looks at him kind of weird)

Zack – I’m with him; why do your people play the game like that.

Sam – My people? You say it like we’re religions exiles or something like that.

Zack – Your people weren’t religions exiles?

Sam – No!

Zack – Then why do you play football like that?

Sam – Because our balls are bigger.

Kevin – Sooooo, when are we ever going to meet this girl you spend so much time talking to instead of us?

David – When will she meet you guys?

Kevin – Yes.

David – Never; I’ll see you all Sunday.

(David walks out of the door down the hallway but comes running in right away)

David – RA! Hide.

(David hides under the table, the group goes under as well to keep hidden. Frank lurks in the room and stands in the doorway, looks around for a second and lurks away. The group starts to stick their heads up and look around)

Adam – (Whispers) Is the coast clear?

Kevin – (Whispers) I think so.

David – (Whispers) I'm going to try to get out of here while I still have a chance; see you guys later. (David gets up, grabs his bag and then sneaks out the door)

Kevin – Godspeed!

(The group goes back into their spots)

Zack – That poor soul is whipped!

Sam – Well, at least he doesn't cry himself to sleep at night, like Frank, the RA.

Zack – Very true; it's hard to sleep at night when your room is next to his.

Adam – Maybe he should cuddle up next to the "Pooky Bear." that might make him feel better.

Zack – This is true everyone loves to cuddle next to the "Pooky Bear."

Adam – I have always wondered where you got that name.

Zack – My mommy used to call me that.

Sam – My mommy called me her "test from God."

(Everyone but Kevin looks up at him surprised)

Kevin – You know he's not going to make it.

Sam – Why do you say that?

Kevin – Because after finding the weather thing on the web dealy it's showing that it's very bad out.

(There is a brief pause to look at Kevin)

Adam – Did that make any sense to anyone in here?

All but Kevin – No!

Adam – The weather thing on the web dealy; it's not complex English; you found the weather link on the web page; any dumb middle school kid can get that right.

Sam – He's right. After looking at the weather thing on the web deal, it's looking pretty bad out.

Kevin – They better not cancel the party

Zack – But you're looking on the internet, that thing is never right. The other day I was looking at girls on a website and on the bottom it said find hot single women in your area, and we have all seen the freshman class, they are about as far from hot as a freezer.

Zack – This weather thingy on the computer dealy just shows us a big green dot, we have no clue what the roads are like outside.

Adam – We could check what the TV has to say.

Zack – Yes old snowy.

Kevin – It was grilled cheese and tomato soup day. Give me a break! What are we going to do for food? You can tell by the looks of me I'm a big eater.

David – How am I going to see my girlfriend? She's going to wonder what happened to me, and she's going to think I'm in a ditch somewhere!

Kevin – Well, if you were in a ditch somewhere it wouldn't be a total loss.

Zack – And what about the party? There's going to be a lot of disappointed ladies who are going to miss this piece of man meat!

Sam – I can't stand to be trapped in here! The walls are closing in. I'm going closer to the light; all hope is fading!

(Adam grabs Sam and slaps him across the face)

Adam – Get a hold of yourself, you stupid Canuck! All of you get a hold of yourselves! We need to calm down and think clearly. We may be trapped, and we can't get to the student center or to any party tonight, but that doesn't mean we have to act like a bunch of wild freshmen.

David – But we are wild freshmen.

Adam – Shut up! I'm trying to make a point here! Here's what we're going to do before the rest of the dorm goes crazy and anarchy takes over this place. Which, if I'm correct is about three minutes. Get all the food you have and bring it in here along with any hidden candles that you may have under your bed.

Zack – What fairy would have candles under their bed?

Adam – Looks like I'm in charge of that. David, you have a cell phone; we have all seen it and seen you talk on it, call your girlfriend and tell her you won't see her this weekend but will think about her every second.

David – Don't you want to call Melissa?

Kevin – No! (Acting weird again) I mean not necessary; she's still on campus here; no sense in bringing her here to see me, or you, I mean.

Adam – Ok, good idea, Sam. Don't freak out anymore. Kevin, if he freaks out beat him until he stops.

Kevin – You can count on me! (He says while still acting uneasy)

Adam – Like I said, bring everything in here; we can protect it in this room better than anywhere else in this hall. Alright everyone move....

Zack – What about me, what do I get to do?

(The group looks at him)

Adam – Ok, go to work.

(Everybody starts running around frantically except for David. He takes out a cell phone and calls his girlfriend)

David – Hello? Hi, honey; it's me. What? Yes of course I'm fine. No, nothing bad has happened; no; yes; I'm sure nothing bad has happened. No, nothing is bothering me.

(Sam enters with a box of food)

Sam – Oh, God; we're all doomed. (Sam leaves)

David – What? O, don't worry about that, their just joking around like I told you we do.

(Zack enters with a box of food)

Zack – I can't believe that no ladies are going to see Zack-O tonight. (He leaves the room)

David – What? No of course not; there are no girls here. You know I want to see you, but I really can't, things are kind of frantic over here.

(Sam enters saying random things in French rather fast and acting frantic and leaves the room)

David – What? Yes, that was French; like I said, things are getting pretty frantic over here. Well, I don't know how to say this.

(Kevin enters the room with a really big box sets it down and grabs the phone from David)

Kevin – He's trapped here, I'm trapped here were all trapped here and at this rate we'll be lucky if you ever see him again. There is no hope! Here you go, you were taking forever I thought I would break it to her calmly. (Gives phone to David and leaves the room)

David – You still there? Are you crying? No, all hope is not lost; no, we're not doomed, of course I'll see you again, you'll be lucky if you ever see Kevin again. What? No, I'm joking; of course I won't hurt him he's my friend, I think?

(Sam enters the room with a grin on his face)

Sam – (in a girl's voice) David I need you. I'm cold and wet and naked! I need you to come and warm me up.

(David looks at him and Sam runs out of the room)

David – No, that was not a girl, I promise! No, of course not, no one here is cold, and wet and naked!

Zack – (yells from off stage) Speak for yourself!

David – Of course that was not a girl! Did that even sound like a girl? Maybe a girl with a strange past, but that did not sound like any girl that goes to this college. Remind me not to talk to any girls at your school. What? What are you mad about? It was a joke ha, ha funny, funny, get it? You don't, of course you don't.

(Adam enters with candles)

Adam – I got the candles! I'm going to see if Frank the RA's around. (Adam leaves)

David – Yes, that was Adam; who's Frank? They named the RA. What? No I don't think it fits him too well; he seems more like a Steve or Scott something with a S in it would work better for him, (looks down the hall) Oh God. It's Steve, I mean Frank.

(Frank walks into the room and stares at David)

David - What ya, he said candles earlier; you're right; kind of girly, I'm not sure why, I'm pretty sure his girlfriend here has something to do with that. Me no, I'll never have candles in my room; I'm not whipped like he is.

(Frank leaves the room)

David – Oh thank God he left, he was looking at me weird, no not like that weird way your Mom looks at me, I'm pretty sure he's not undressing me with his eyes, I think at least. Yes I'm positive that is what she's doing; she even told me the time we picked her up that one night, Just because she had a few doesn't mean it did not happen.

(The group comes in all together, Kevin has another big box, and Sam and Zack have a bunch of blankets and pillows)

Adam – David did you do your part?

David – Hey, I wish I could talk to you longer and I wish I could be with you but I will be thinking of you every minute I'm here this weekend, but I need to go. Ok, alright I'll miss you and talk to you later, ok, Bye. (He hangs up the phone)

Adam – Good work.

Zack – Why didn't you tell her you loved her, lover boy?

Kevin – You are so whipped.

Adam – Well I checked Frank the RA's room and it was locked and I think he was crying in there.

Sam – Again?

Adam – Yes, again; how are we doing for food?

Kevin – We have enough pop tarts and Ramen noodles to last for the rest of the semester.

David – Plus plenty of Sam's mom's brownies.

Sam – My Mom loves me.

Adam – Zack what are all the pillows and blankets there for?

Zack – I figured that since we're going to be stuck in here, we could sleep in here and build a fort to sleep in.

David – Build a fort?

Zack – Yes a fort. It will be great. Put up some blankets across the room make some room for us, have a nice little porch for me to smoke. It will be great.

David – What do you need a porch to smoke on for?

Zack – Because I haven't had one a few hours and it's getting to me alright! But I'm still cool, still cool.

Kevin – When we were getting everything together many people are trapped all over the campuses, we're the only ones left on the floor and it's not like anyone could have made it out of town. Other floors are in trouble when it comes to food and all that stuff.

David – It's a good thing you were here Adam to help us keep our heads on.

Sam – I'm glad you slapped me.

Zack – I'm glad you slapped him to.

Kevin – Who would have thought the quiet little annoying smart ass in the corner in front of his computer had any leadership ability in you? I mean, me saying that is like Zack saying he went to class today.

Zack – That is for sure.

David – Hopefully things won't get any worse

(The lights go dim for a second)

David – We really have to stop saying that.

Sam – I think we still have power for a bit but I don't think for so much longer.

Zack – We better get started on the fort now before it gets dark.

Sam – If we don't, people from the other floors might steal our sheets and then it will get really cold.

Kevin – Really it gets cold at night, very nice logic there, it gets cold out, you stupid Canadian. But anyway I am surprised that you can actually take care of a situation. You would not believe how many times your girlfriend complains about you having that problem.

Adam – You talk to Melisa?

Kevin – Oh, yes; I do that all the time, we run into her at parties all the time she would go off about what you're doing wrong and how she thinks you have no self confidence.

Adam – She says all of that?

Kevin – That's just all the stuff that's polite to say in front of foreigners (makes a gesture to Sam) But I remember just last weekend I ran into her at a party at the West Hill and she was going off on you again and after a bit she stopped and we started to make out, (realizes what he just said)

(The whole group looks surprised)

Adam – (very mad) You made out with Melisa!?

Zack – Well I'm not feeling too comfortable right now.

David – Tell me about it.

Adam – When did you make out with her?

Kevin – Well, what time?

Adam – It was more than once?

Sam – And the plot thickens

Adam – How many times?

Kevin – It was only three, before you started dating.

Adam – I'm going to kill you. (He puts his hands around Kevin's neck and the group tries to stop him)

Kevin – Stop him quick; he's got a good grip!

David – You don't want to kill Kevin!

Zack – Right. Do you know how hard it will be to hide his body?

David – You're not helping!

Zack – I can't control what comes out of my mouth. I just open it and out comes whatever.

Sam – Then maybe you should shut up.

Zack – Don't tell me what to do, you stupid Canadian.

Sam – That's it. I've had it up to here with being called a stupid Canadian (he tackles Zack on the floor knocking down David in the process)

David – Why are you guys doing this to each other you're acting crazy?

Kevin – If you had been here on the weekends you would know why!

Adam – You quiet! You made out with Melisa more than once and still acted that everything was normal!

(The lights go out)

Kevin – Stop him quick! I'm losing sight

David – That's not your eyes; the power went out.

Zack – What the power? You mean no more power, lights, computers, nothing?

David – No, no more power at all.

(The group is quiet and not making any moves)

Sam – Hold me (the group runs and holds together, David finds a flash light and turns it on)

Kevin – I'm sorry I made out with Melisa; I mean you know how things happen at parties.

Adam – No, I don't, because she never invited me to come along.

Kevin – Well now you do.

Adam – I guess am sorry for trying to kill you.

Zack – And Sam I'm sorry you're Canadian it's not your fault.

Sam – What? What's wrong with being Canadian?

Zack – He's still in denial, but I'm sure things will get better for you.

Sam – I wish I had the chance to kill you.

David – And I'm sorry I'm never here on the weekends with you guys; if I knew we had this much fun I would have been here more on weekends.

(David's cell phone rings)

David – Hello. High honey how are you?

(The group looks at him annoyed)

David – You called why? Oh you were worried. Oh that's so sweet.

Kevin – I want to hurt you.

Zack – Me to.

David – You don't need to be worried everything has calmed down over here.

Kevin – Right now it's calm.

David – So is everything ok over there?

Zack – Do you think they're all crowded in the lounge like us in her dorm?

Sam – If I could be a fly on that wall.

Adam – That's kind of creepy.

Sam – At least if I did it that way I won't have to worry about being cheated on.

David – Yes we're just camped out in the lounge.

Kevin – Put the phone down now we were having a moment.

David – No it's just us guys here.

Kevin – (in a girl’s voice) and me a girl that’s naked and cold and stuff.

David – What? Yes that was Kevin. Ya I know he’s funny. What was that? Ok hold on. She says hello.

Kevin – I’m not talking to you.

David – He says hello too. What was that? Ok I’ll talk to you later. What was that? Why do I have to hang up first I always do.

Sam – Oh no this could go on for a long time.

David – No you do it for once. What? You’re funny you do it.

Kevin – I’m really losing my patience in this.

David – So what if you hung up first last time, I do it most of the time.

Kevin – You’re still talking?

David – Ok we’ll do it at the same time.

Kevin – End it, end it now.

David – Ok ready? What? You’re not, I thought you were. Oh you still want to hear my voice?

Kevin- That’s it (he takes the phone out of David’s hand) He’s having an affair. (He hangs up the phone) There. Was that so hard to do? (David looks shocked and pissed off at Kevin) You were talking forever and we need to get there soon, you’re mad aren’t you?

(David nods his head and then jumps on him)

Zack – Rumble in the lounge part two.

(The group tries to break them up)

Adam – Guys, guys quiet I hear something.

(They are quiet and look around and then suddenly there is a noise near the door and they put the flashlight on the door and see Frank the RA)

All but Frank –
AAAAAAGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHH
HHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!

Frank – Can I join you, I have no friends.

All but Frank –
AAAAAAAAGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHH
HHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!

(The lights go down)



When Video Games Collide
Digital Imaging
Scott Reiter

Rabble-Rousing in Rettonville

by *Jessica Fabre*

Character Bios:

Julie: A smart woman in her 30's whose life has been pretty much the same for the last couple of years. She sees the world cynically and has the attitude that it's "every man for himself."

Muffin Man: aka George. He's very optimistic and sees the world as a child. To him every day is an adventure waiting to happen. He also happens to be in love with Julie, although she thinks he's just being nice because they work together.

Bran Boy: An adolescent boy, in his mid-teens who idolizes Muffin Man. He's tall and gangly, and by his horrible screechy voice we can tell he's almost hitting puberty.

Road Rage: The villain. He tries a bit too hard to be evil, and isn't very clever. But what he lacks for intelligence he makes up for in enthusiasm.

Lackey: Just a lackey, there for the abuse and misuse of Road Rage.

Woman: A conveniently placed woman.

3 scene changes (aka poster changes)

(We see an open, empty office, everything in it is neat and organized with no clutter to be found, there are optimistic posters on the walls, one being a kitty on a branch with the words, "Hang in there!", the only personalization is a small picture on the desk of a small girl being held by a large man in a police uniform.

Suddenly a severe-looking woman enters, placing a newspaper and a cup of coffee on the desk before slumping herself into the chair behind it. The look on her face tells us that she desperately wishes to be anywhere but her current whereabouts. As she opens the newspaper and starts to scan the pages an older man bursts in, wearing a ridiculous outfit with a huge muffin imprinted on the front.)

Muffin Man: Good morning, Julie! You're looking wonderful this morning. The way the sun touches on your face like a hand, strong but gentle. Much like myself, if I do say so...myself! Anyways, care for a mulberry muffin on this magnificent Monday morning? (Laughs at himself)

Julie: (rolls her eyes) Hiya George, I'll pass on the sarcasm and the mulberry, got any blueberry?

Muffin Man: That's "Muffin Man," Julie! You may call me George outside of the business office, but only for you, the most beautiful secretary I've ever had the great fortune to work with. And there's no sarcasm there, it's all the God-spoken Truth! If you could only see how much your hard work and your...enthusiastic personality means to me! But on to your muffin! Let us break that fast post haste! (He cups his hands around his mouth and inhales loudly.)
BRAN BOY!

Julie: Ha! Look at this. Road Rage placed an ad in the paper for a sidekick. What moron would want to be seen with that imbecile?

(In walks a young, gangly teenager, bedecked in a matching outfit and holding a basket of muffins. The look on his face is pure adoration as he asks Muffin Man...)

Bran Boy: You called for me, sir?

Muffin Man: Blueberry muffin immediately Bran Boy! And make sure to pick a good one!

(Bran Boy nods enthusiastically as he fishes out a blueberry muffin and a napkin from the basket and places them on the desk next to Julie.)

Julie: Thanks guys, I had to skip breakfast again this morning. That idiot wannabe of a villain Road Rage was blocking traffic again. Why he always chooses this area of town to menace is beyond me.

Muffin Man: (striking his fist on the desk) That rogue! As to the “why” of the matter, I think I can answer that. You see, a few months ago Road Rage and I had a small run-in at the Annual Super Hero/Super Villain picnic.

Julie: What? How does that work? Wouldn't you all beat each other up or something at a picnic?

Muffin Man: Of course not Julie! There's a time-honored tradition that at the annual picnic nobody is allowed to pick on each other. I've gotten some great recipes from villains there for my muffins. They're baking masterminds! If only they'd use that brilliance for Justice...

Julie: So anyways, you and Road Rage had a “run-in”...

Muffin Man: Correct you are, Julie. He had a side-kick at the time, a brooding boy by the name of “Bumper Boy.” Well, he went up against me in the “Tallest Leap” competition trying to win some respect from the older villains. However, thanks to the bountiful balanced breakfast of baked goods I had that morning, I won the competition with no problem! The poor boy was so upset he quit! (Sighs) Road Rage has unjustly placed the blame square upon these

beautiful, broad shoulders of mine ever since.

Julie: I swear, you guys are such drama queens. I really can't believe you men sometimes.

Muffin Man: (makes a heroic pose) Now, now Julie. No need to insult us. It's a tough line of work with little pay and less respect! But some brave individuals have to stick up for the civilians, to keep the streets safe for the children, to ensure that everyone in this city, no, the entire world can sit down to a healthy breakfast each morning and look forward to their day, not skulking about worrying that their lives might be in danger!

Bran Boy: Y-y-yeah! (he bangs his fist on the desk, noticeably weaker than Muffin Man.)

(Julie and Muffin Man stare at Bran Boy as he gulps audibly and backs out the door with a weak wave.)

Muffin Man: As I was saying, I want to be the protector of the innocent, the defender of justice! Just like your father was as Chief of Pol-

Julie: (hurriedly) Anyways! Backing up a bit, luckily there were no fender benders earlier. Just a few pissed-off drivers. So anyhow, why are you so cheerful this morning Muffin Man? It's just another Monday, just like any other week.

Muffin Man: Besides knowing that I would be seeing you today, the greatest treasure of my life? Besides waking with the glory of the sun in my eyes and the song of our fine feathered friends to hearken me to the new day?

Julie: Oh shove off. The last bird that came near my window was taken out by a mysterious high-heel. (She smirks)

Muffin Man: (looking shocked) That poor bird. I hope whatever or whoever threw that shoe is happy with themselves!

Julie: Ooooh, I'm sure she is.

Muffin Man: Anyways, I have a job interview for the next town over to be their Resident Super Hero. (He puffs out his chest.) At last! A chance to show to the world that they can entrust me with their safety! Their very lives even! I knew it would only be a matter of time before some town or city realized they needed me.

Julie: (Smirks) Or it could be that nobody with any real talent has applied in ages.

(Suddenly a taller man and a small Igor-looking guy barges in, a large "RR" on the taller man's chest with the imagery of two cars crashing on front, with a wicked looking mustache on his face and grinning like a madman. The smaller man holds a bag of nuts and tries to look discreet.)

Muffin Man: Road Rage! You dastardly, villainous ...villain! What do you think you and your ... (he looks at Lackey) what's your name?

Lackey: Lackey, sir.

Muffin Man: Oh. Well! What do you think you and your...lackey are doing here?

(Road Rage walks toward Muffin Man slowly)

Road Rage: I'm here to take you hostage Muffin Man! I'll get back at you once and for all for doing away with my side-kick! (Road Rage tries to laugh maniacally, and chokes.)

Julie: Oh please, you storm in here at least once a week and make the same threat of kidnapping each time.

Road Rage:(obviously miffed) Well *this* time I'm going to do it, you brat!

Julie: Well that's not very mature of you. It's all well and good for you to do your villain-y bit, but *name-calling*?

Road Rage: Nonsense, I feel perfectly justified in my being rude. I am part of the Villain of Rettonville's Union after all, and it states right in our handbooks that we're entitled to be downright rude if we have to!

Julie: (Scoffs) You're the worst villain ever. There isn't any justification for *that*.

Muffin Man: No, no Julie. As part of the Hero/Villain Decree of 1923 he is allowed to be discourteous in the presence of a Super Hero!

Julie: Oh whatever. He makes a piss-poor villain either way.

(Lackey giggles, Road Rage glares at him)

Road Rage: (stamps his foot) I will not stand here and be put down by a lowly secretary!

Julie: Well nobody invited you here anyways! (She crosses her arms and glares at Road Rage.)

Road Rage: Gah! *As I was saying*, I'm going to kidnap you Muffin Man, and this time I will succeed! Hand me...THE BAG, LACKEY! (Lackey hands over the small bag and tries to blend in with the background.) I've discovered your only weakness Muffin Man! Chocolate CHIPS!

Lackey: Dun-dun-dunnnn!

(RR and Julie turn and stare at Lackey while Muffin Man jumps back, looking shocked.)

Muffin Man: No! Not Chocolate Chips! My Achilles' heel! My Kryptonite! Noooooo! (Muffin Man sinks to the floor, trying to

shield himself from the bag of chocolate chips which Rage Road holds in his hand, threateningly.)

Julie: (doubled over in laughter) HA! Your weakness is *chocolate chips*? How hilarious is that? I mean...Come on.
Chocolate...Chips?

Muffin Man: (overly dramatic) This...is no...laughing matter Julie!...Growing weak...faint even!...fading away...Must fight! Chocolate Chips...not..part of a balanced diet! Ack!

(Muffin Man passes out on the floor; Road Rage hurries over and ties up Muffin Man. Julie watches with an amused look on her face.)

Road Rage: Grab him Lackey! It's time for our get-away!

Lackey: Yes, sir.

Road Rage: Well *secretary* girl, I'll see you later!

Julie: Seriously, you guys are way too dramatic. Come on, George, get up already. You guys can play later.

(Muffin Man is still unconscious, there's no response as he's slowly being drug from the room.)

Road Rage: Did you think I was joking? Poor, pathetic girl! My plan is fool-proof! I'm sure you'll be hearing from me soon. Ta~ta! And don't even think about stopping me! If you do I'll shove this entire bag of chocolate chips down his throat! Ha-ha! Come, Lackey!

(Julie watches on, shocked, as Road Rage leaves, Lackey pulling Muffin Man along by his bound hands. The door slams shut and Julie jumps and starts for the door as she just realized what has happened.)

Julie: Oh no, George! I...I have to do something! But what? (She picks up the picture frame on the desk and stares at it.) Oooh Daddy, what should I do? George needs help! I mean...sure he's the dorkiest man I ever met...but I...I need him. I...love...

(She stands up suddenly, a look of determination on her face.)

Julie: I know! I'll call the police! Daddy would help if he were still alive and in charge of the RPD. Ugh! I can't do that. The police have been as bad as the villains ever since Daddy died. They'd rob me sooner than they would help me. I guess...I'll have to think of something else. Bran Boy!

(Bran Boy hops in tied from neck to feet with a gag in his mouth.)

Julie: Bran Boy! What happened?

(She pulls the gag from his mouth and starts untying him.)

Bran Boy: Sorry ma'am! I was hit from behind! What's going on here?

Julie: Well, to make a long story short, Road Rage actually managed to come in here and take Geo...Muffin Man. I think it's up to us to get him out of there.

Bran Boy: Just us two ma'am? How are we going to do that?

Julie: I'm not sure yet Bran boy...(Julie picks up the newspaper from the desk) but I think I might have an idea...

(Scene change: The room is basically the same, but instead of uplifting posters on the wall there are posters of evil things, such as a kitty hanging on a branch with the words "JUST GIVE UP NOW." Muffin Man is tied up in a chair with the bag of chocolate chips on his lap. Lackey is standing next to Muffin

Man while Road Rage sits behind the desk with his feet up.)

Road Rage : Y'know... that was almost *too* easy. Something doesn't feel right about this at all. Oh well, guess I'll just chalk it up to my *genius* mind. I am the most brilliant evil-doer to roam the streets of Rettonville, after all. Lackey!

Lackey: Yes sir?

Road Rage: Time to wake up Muffin Man! We're going to ransom him for all the money this city has! THE BAG, LACKEY!

Lackey: Yes sir.

(Lackey takes the chocolate chips off Muffin Man's lap and throws them off to the side. Muffin Man starts to wake up, groaning and mumbling to himself. Reality suddenly hits and he awakens fully, focusing on Road Rage Man.)

Muffin Man: You...you treacherous dog! What do you think you're doing? Untie me at once!

Road Rage: (tries to laugh evilly and coughs) Ahem! Anyways, why do you think I would untie you when I plan on holding you hostage until the city pays me millions?

Muffin Man: Because...you're really a softie at heart?

Road Rage: HA! I doubt that very much.

Muffin Man: Why are you doing this Road Rage? I understand you'd be a bit annoyed with me after defeating your sidekick. But this?

Road Rage: That's not the point! I'm doing this to let everyone on this rotten planet know that I mean business! But yes, now that you mention it, I am very miffed with

you for doing that. He was a boy for crying out loud! You could have let him win!

Muffin Man: Ha! Me? Let a *villain* win? A villain *sidekick* win? Do you realize if I had let him win I'd be the laughing stock of the Super Heroes/Super Villains picnic? They'd never let me live it down!

Road Rage: I guess you have a point, but you're still a jerk! (Road Rage sticks his tongue out at Muffin Man.) Anyways! Back to what I was doing. LACKEY! The phone please.

Lackey: Yes sir. (Lackey grabs the phone off of the desk and hands it to Road Rage.)

Road Rage: Now, to call the Mayor and name my price! Haha! (He picks up the receiver on the phone and dials a number.)

Road Rage: Hello? Operator? I need the Mayor, it's an emergency. Wait! Wha...NO! Blast you vile woman! Put ME on hold will you? Don't you realize who this is? Curses! AND I HATE YOUR HOLDING MUSIC! (Road Rage slams the phone down violently.) There must be an easier way to go about-

(Suddenly Julie walks in, dressed in dark clothes and with her hair down, covering part of her face, she speaks in a phony accent. Road Rage and Lackey stare at Julie as she walks in with an exaggerated walk.)

Julie: Hello? Is this place for villains? I read you need Side-kick in paper, I come to apply.

Road Rage Man: Who...who are you?

Julie: I...I..er..I am Sylvia. Please to meet you.

Road Rage: (smiling roguishly) Well, well. I think we could make arrangements for you,

my dear. Have you any qualifications?
Besides the...obvious ones?

Julie: Yes, follow me and I show you all my qualifications. I keep them hidden... in dress. Very good, yes?

Road Rage Man: Oh yes! Very good indeed! Lackey, you're dismissed!

(Lackey leaves the room as Julie leads Road Rage to the side of the room with his back to the door, after Lackey is gone Bran Boy sneaks in and throws the bag of chocolate chips off the stage, then unties Muffin Man.)

Julie: Yes, now I show you special weapon. But first you close your eyes hmm?

Road Rage: Anything you say...Sylvia.

(Road Rage closes his eyes, leaning forward expectantly. The whole time this is happening Muffin Man and Bran Boy are sneaking towards the pair with the rope in their hands.)

Julie: NOW!

(Muffin Man and Bran Boy leap at a startled Road Rage, catching him off guard. Road Rage wrestles with the pair of them.)

Muffin Man: Super..Hero..Lesson fifty-six Bran Boy!..Sound effects are key! Wham! (he throws a punch wildly.) Biff!

(The entire time this conversation takes place Muffin Man and Bran Boy are trying to tie up Road Rage.)

Bran Boy: Like this? (he throws a weak punch) Urf!

Muffin Man: Urf? No no, more like "Whack! Pow!"

(Finally they have Road Rage tied up and lean him on the chair.)

Road Rage Man: (in a daze) Wow...what a kiss! (He passes out with the stupefied look on his face.)

Muffin Man: Way to go Julie! That is you...right?

(Julie puts her hair back in a bun and puts her glasses back on)

Julie: Yes it's me. Ugh, I couldn't see anything without these on.

Muffin Man: But what happened to the er, lackey, Lackey?

Julie: Oh, him? You'll never believe it. Bran Boy caught him by surprise and knocked him out cold.

Bran Boy: Yeah! It was totally awesome!

(Julie and Muffin Man just stare at Bran Boy, his smile fades and he stares at the floor.)

Muffin Man: Still, that was extraordinary Julie! And Bran Boy. Simply brilliant! Magnificent! Glorious! I would expect nothing less from you though, my beautiful, no, brilliant colleague!

Julie: That's enough George. I have to admit though...that was kinda fun. Bran Boy! Bring this guy down to the car and lock him in the trunk. He'll be fine there for a few hours...maybe. Either way I really don't care.

(Bran Boy drags out Road Rage, obviously having a hard time. The door slams shut. Muffin Man turns to Julie, putting a hand on her shoulder.)

Muffin Man: That was very clever of you! Seriously Julie...you could be my second side-kick! Um...you could even...keep the dress if you'd like.

Julie: You like this? I haven't worn this in ages. It's so...*girly*.

Muffin Man: Well, fitting then, you being a girl and all. Oh! I mean, a woman. Definitely a woman! Heh, I mean...umm

Julie: Oh *really* George. Are you going to kiss me already? That is how all adventures end isn't it?

(They move in and kiss, the scene darkens and moves back to the first office. There are more pictures on the wall this time, showing various people and the largest a picture of Muffin Man, Bran Boy, and Julie at a wedding. Bran Boy sits at a desk, signing papers. He is in a suit and looks older and surer of himself. Suddenly the door flies open and in runs a woman in a panic.

Woman: Do you know the muffin man!?

Bran Boy: The Muffin Man?

Woman: The one who lives on Drury Avenue?

Bran Boy: Why yes! I do know the Muffin Man!

(Bran Boy and the woman pause here and look at the audience before resuming.)

Bran Boy: But Muffin Man he is no more.

Woman: (gasps) Oh no! Is he...?

Bran Boy: By the Ring of Green Lantern! Of course not! He's just quit doing the Super Hero thing any longer. He went off and got hitched to the new Chief of Police, Julie Fulkes, and started his own Bakery, "Muffin Man's Marvelous Menagerie of Meringues and More!"

Woman: That's quite a title. So who are you?

Bran Boy: (points at the name tag on his chest) Charles Lancaster, formerly known as Bran Boy, side-kick to Muffin Man ma'am. I'm here to help out aspiring super-heroes.

Woman: Well, I guess there's only one more thing I need to ask then.

Bran Boy: And what's that?

Woman: Can you point the way to this Menagerie of Meringues? I've a sudden craving for a muffin.

THE END.