

JUST KIDDING!

By Robert Frankel

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DEDICATION

This play is dedicated to my wife, Amalie, whose support and love have kept me strong, and, my son, Andrew, whose good-spirited nature has kept my belief in childhood alive.

The playwright, Robert Frankel

STORY OF THE PLAY

Brian and Sarah are making life miserable for the other students with their constant kidding, everything from switched homework to joy buzzers and mousetraps. Carefree, Brian and Sarah apologize with a flippant, "Just kidding," but their jokes are fast becoming not funny.

Frustrated, the students don't know what to do next until their science teacher, Mrs. Keller, offers to arrange a little sting operation, the "Real Steal Snake Take." By playing upon the competitive spirit between Brian and Sarah to be the best practical joker, the students, all wearing sunglasses, get the two to come into the science room after school and move a "poisonous" snake from a tank into a desk drawer.

Little do Brian and Sarah know all the following funny complications, including threats from a (squirt) gun-wielding thief and a "fatal" snake bite to the principal, are compliments of the other students. But the final practical joke is Mrs. Keller's alone!

After reforming Brian and Sarah, the kids, now wearing Joke Buster T-shirts, finish the play with an upbeat rap song.

Three self-contained sections of optional dialogue among the class president contenders, (the Nerd, the Babe and the Winner), along with accompanying reporters and admirers, add 10 or more characters and lots of humor.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(4m, 5w, 10 or more optional)

SARAH WARD: Loves to kid people.

JENNIFER WESTERHOUSE: A student who's suffered from Sarah's jokes.

MAGGIE GRAYSON/MAID: Another.

BRIAN CORSON: Loves to kid people.

MARK WHEATON: Students who's suffered from Brian's jokes.

TOMMY GARBER/JANITOR: Another.

DR. LIVINGSTON: School principal tired of the jokes.

MRS. KELLER/THIEF: Science teacher who likes to play a joke herself now and then.

SHARON: Latest joke victim.

NOTE

There are three optional sections of dialogue which add ten more characters to this play. The sections are completely self-contained and can be used or deleted according to the director's wishes. In addition, extra students may be added to populate the hallway and the classroom scenes.

REPORTERS 1, 2, and 3: Take scribbled notes.

ADMIRERS 1, 2, 3, and 4: Impressionable students.

RAYMOND BOWER: Nerd running for class president; wears loud sports jacket and bow tie.

SUSAN JOHNSON: A babe running for class president; wears trendy jeans and jewelry.

RACHEL MEDIAN: Wins presidency.

PLAYING TIME: About an hour. (50 minutes without optional dialogue.)

TIME: The present, at a junior high school.

SETTING

A typical junior high school. Two thirds of the stage is taken up by the science classroom. It is a typical classroom, with a teacher's desk and desks for students. There are bunsen burners and several aquarium-like tanks setting on tables which contain "animals." A window connects the classroom to the "outdoors" (stage wing).

The other third of the stage is occupied by several lockers which must open. This portion of the stage, as well as downstage of the classroom, are used to suggest the school's hallway. Above the lockers, we see posters for the school presidential election. Raymond Bower has signs reading "Bower Power" and "Raymond Bower: Man of the Hour," and showing a picture of his grinning face and neck in bow tie. Susan Johnson, the other candidate, has signs reading "Susan Johnson: Too Cool to Lose" and "Cruisin' Susan - She'll tell you what's in and what's not," along with a full-length picture of her decked out in the latest blue jean and jewelry fads.

COSTUMES

All wear school clothes appropriate to their character. In the snake stealing scene, Brian and Sarah wear dark clothes and tennis shoes. Thief wears dark clothes, wig, hat, and mask. Maid wears thick glasses, baggy work clothes, and scarf over her hair. Janitor also wears work clothes and a baseball cap.

SOUND EFFECTS

Passing bell, breaking glass.

Please see end of script for prop listing.

ACT I

(AT RISE: As LIGHTS come up, the BELL rings signifying the beginning of passing period. SARAH enters and goes to her locker. After a moment, JENNIFER enters and goes to her locker, next to Sarah's.)

SARAH: Hi Jennifer!

JENNIFER: Oh, hi Sarah.

SARAH: Well, I survived history class again today.

JENNIFER: I don't mind history; it's algebra that gets me.

SARAH: Well, I'm like just not interested in 300 year old men wearing wigs! Pretty nasty rip in that sweater. *(Points to JENNIFER's sweater.)*

JENNIFER: *(Looking down.)* Where?

SARAH: *(Pokes JENNIFER in nose and laughs.)* Just kidding! *(JENNIFER grimaces.)* Hey, who are you voting for in the school election for president?

JENNIFER: I don't know. Like Raymond Bower's such a nerd. If he's elected, he'll probably make us all wear suits and ties to school!

SARAH: Yeah! And Susan Johnson is just ...

TOGETHER: *(BOTH snapping fingers.)* " ... too cool!" *(THEY laugh.)*

SARAH: Hey, did you do that bio assignment for science class today?

JENNIFER: Yep, got it right here in my notebook. *(Points to a 3-ring notebook in a stack of books SHE has placed on the floor by her locker.)*

SARAH: *(Spots MAGGIE.)* Hey Maggie, you coming to class for a change?

MAGGIE: *(Enters, walking to THEM.)* What do you mean? I'm always there! *(SHE goes to her locker.)*

SARAH: Just kidding! Did you get your bio homework done?

MAGGIE: No ... I'm going to do it during study hall.

SARAH: *(Thinking devious thoughts.)* Oh. Hey, Jennifer, isn't that my book in your locker?

JENNIFER: *(Looking on shelf in locker.)* Where?

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SARAH: *(Steals bio homework from JENNIFER.)* Oh, guess not! *(SHE purposefully knocks into MAGGIE who spills her books.)* Oops! Sorry! *(SHE secretly deposits JENNIFER'S homework in MAGGIE'S books. The homework should be in a distinctive folder, identifiable to the audience.)*

MAGGIE: *(Picking up HER books.)* Forget to eat your Wheaties today?

(The passing BELL rings.)

SARAH: There's the two minute warning! See you in science class! *(Giggling, SHE exits.)*

MAGGIE and JENNIFER: See ya! Bye!

JENNIFER: *(Turning to MAGGIE, imitating SARAH.)* Sorry, I like dropped that bomb on your house today, Maggie.

MAGGIE: *(Cheerfully playing along.)* It's okay, Sarah. I know you were just kidding!

Section1-OPTIONAL DIALOGUE

(BOTH laugh, then hear CROWD sounds coming closer.)

JENNIFER: Bower Power?

MAGGIE: It's got to be! *(JENNIFER and MAGGIE exit giggling.)*

(RAYMOND BOWER, wearing loud sports jacket and bow tie, enters surrounded by REPORTERS from the "Junior Journal" as well as ADMIRERS - also in oddly formal clothing.)

RAYMOND: *(Talking as HE enters.)* I'm simply saying that fundamental principles and morally sound ethical values have a role to play in this institution.

REPORTER 1: *(Turning to REPORTER 2, both with pads and pencils blazing.)* How do you spell "eth-i-cal?"

End of Freeview

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