

Sixteen Shambles

By Bradley Hayward

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DEDICATION

For Mrs. Rutledge, whose encouragement continues to inspire me far beyond the footlights.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Janet is about to celebrate her sweet sixteenth birthday, but little does she know it's going to be the worst day of her life. Things start spiraling downward from the moment she wakes up and gets toothpaste all over her shirt. This sets off a chain reaction of misfortune as she faces a variety of kooky characters insistent on ruining her big day. From her manic-depressive English teacher and a hot-headed driving instructor, to an overly sensitive drama coach and a super-creepy mortician, Janet is up to her ears in craziness. She's determined to put an end to the pandemonium, but that's one enormous wish for only sixteen candles. Is it time for her to go to bed and hide under the covers? Or is it time to wake up?

PREMIERE

The play was first presented under the title SPAZ! in 2003 by the McIntosh High School Drama Department in Peachtree City, Georgia. It was directed by Michelle Stone with the following cast: Cody Beasinger (Roger), Jason Beever (Herman), Jaye Bell (Tracy), Mitch Dean (Jimmy), Laurie Jones (Miss Harper), Rebecca Kling (Janet), Jessica Lawrence (Paula), Ashley Maner (Kim), Patrick Munson (Zeke), Sheehan O'Heron (Warren), Ben Parten (Stuart), Amy Plauche (Lorna), and Elizabeth Turner (Maxine).

This production took first place at the Georgia High School Association Region 4 One-Act Competition. It also won awards for Best Actress (Rebecca Kling) and All-Region Cast (Jason Beever and Mitch Dean).

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 4 w, 7 flexible)

JANET: A spaz turning 16.

WARREN: Her boyfriend, 17.

PAULA: Her mother.

ROGER: Her father.

JIMMY/JEANNIE: Her kid brother, 10.

KIM/KYLE: Her friend, 16.

TRACY/TROY: Another friend, 16.

MISS HARPER: Janet's teacher.

ZEKE/ZELDA: Janet's driving instructor.

LORNA/LORNE: Janet's coach.

MAXINE: Janet's director.

STUART/STACY: Janet's co-star, 16.

HERMAN/HARRIET: A mortician.

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TIME

The present. Janet's sweet sixteenth birthday.

SETTING

The stage is separated into seven distinct locations on various levels; a bedroom, a kitchen, a classroom, a funeral home, a car, a basketball court, and a theater stage. Ideally, each area has its own lighting, plus a spotlight on center; however, it has been done very well and creatively without. As for the design, the more colorful the better.

PROPS

Container of fish food, plate of bacon, sponge, notebooks, silver nail polish, rose, stack of exams, bottle of glass cleaner, paper towels, 2 ice cream cones, basketball, snack food, gold ring, apple.

SIXTEEN SHAMBLES

(AT RISE: LIGHTS up on CS. WARREN stands there and speaks directly to the audience.)

WARREN: Have you ever had one of those days? You know the kind I'm talking about. The one where you climb into bed after it's all over and it seems like it was all a dream ... a dream you wish you never had. These days always start with the best of intentions. You decide you're really going to go all out and put on your nicest clothes. Then you're about to brush your teeth and decide this is the day you're going to start flossing regularly. But you dig for the floss, and it's been mysteriously swallowed by the medicine cabinet. So you decide to start "tomorrow." Then you actually brush your teeth, only the toothpaste gets all over your shirt. You're still optimistic at this point, so you lean over the sink and try to rinse out the white gunk. This never goes well. Now you not only have toothpaste on your shirt, but it looks like you've peed your pants. You stretch the shirt down and hope nobody notices, but they always do. At this point, you know things are not going to go your way. Well, this is a story about Janet. Janet the spaz.

(LIGHTS up on JANET'S bedroom. Janet is fast asleep.)

WARREN: *(Continued.)* She's about to have one of those days. Unfortunately, she's just waking up and has no idea everything that's in store. If she only knew, she would stay in bed and have a real dream. But soon her alarm clock will go off and she'll find herself covered in toothpaste.

(LIGHTS out on CS. SFX: Janet's alarm clock blares. SHE quickly pops out of bed and turns it off. Even at this stage of the morning, she's very pretty and her enthusiasm is quite alarming. She goes to a fishbowl on her dresser and feeds her goldfish.)

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JANET: Good morning, Percy! Here's some breakfast for the cutest little goldfish in the whole wide world. You must be hungry. I know I am. But I'm sure Mom will have a great birthday meal ready for me. A bowl of cinnamon oatmeal with strawberries on top. Nothing but the sweetest for my sweet sixteen. I can hardly wait!

(LIGHTS out on bedroom. LIGHTS up on kitchen. PAULA is a mess in her bathrobe. She's already in a frenzy and has no time for good humor. JIMMY is at the table.)

JIMMY: Mom, what's for breakfast?

PAULA: *(Slams a plate in front of HIM.)* Meatloaf.

JIMMY: But I want pancakes.

PAULA: Too bad. You're having meatloaf and that's that.

JIMMY: Leftovers for breakfast?

PAULA: Yes, and you'll eat it cold. I just cleaned the microwave, so you can't use it.

JIMMY: For how long?

PAULA: Forever. I hate cleaning that thing.

JIMMY: *(Takes a bite.)* This is gross.

PAULA: So's your bedroom. Go clean it.

JIMMY: Now?

PAULA: Yes, and wake up your sister while you're at it. You're both going to miss the bus.

JIMMY: What about breakfast?

PAULA: You'll probably find some food under your bed. Peel the mold off and eat that.

JIMMY: Anything but meatloaf.

(LIGHTS out on kitchen. LIGHTS up on bedroom. JANET holds up a shirt to the fishbowl.)

JANET: What do you say, Percy? This shirt with my blue pants? *(SHE listens.)* I think so, too. I want to look my best today. Now don't swim too much, Percy. You just ate.

(SHE heads out of her bedroom and bumps into JIMMY as he ENTERS.)

End of Freeview

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