

THE STEPFORD STUDENTS

By Rob Frankel

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DEDICATION

To Tank and Susan, my mother and father of 11 years whom I "aDOOR."

Rob Frankel, the playwright

STORY OF THE PLAY

Teachers, wouldn't it be great to have your students behave like model citizens? To get competing requests for more homework?!

Well it's not a dream - just join us at Stepford University. Like its movie namesake, "The Stepford Wives," things aren't exactly as they appear. You see the resident know-it-all, Greg, has created the de-agitator, a futuristic gizmo that zaps students into line! In exchange for cushy semesters, he's given it to Ms. Holcroft, the feisty economy teacher; Ms. Graham, as old as the dinosaurs; and Ms. Yearling who is a bit wet under the collar.

When student Ralph thinks he's on to it, nobody wants to believe him ... until he ends up with a de-agitator! You see, they look an awful lot like TV remotes! Now Ralph, along with his buddy Barry, are out to rule Stepford University. Meanwhile, the resident nerd, Arnie, and two very bright math and science students, Linda and Megan, are off on a science experiment of their own. They believe they can create a radar-like device that will deflect signals back to their senders.

Nobody else is much interested in this idea until there's a showdown at the OK Student Lounge. Ralph, Greg, Arnie, and the professors face each other in a cowboy showdown with de-agitators blazing away and Arnie, Linda, and Megan save the day!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 7/8 w, with extras possible)

PAT: A scraggly-haired college student who likes to pull all-nighters to cram for tests.

LINDA: Science whiz and older sister of Megan.

MEGAN: Math whiz and younger sister of Linda.

TRISH: College student and first to get zapped by the de-agitator.

ARNOLD: A classic geeky-but-bright student who helps foil the teachers' plot.

MS. GRAHAM: A cranky, older professor from the "old school" of thought.

MS. HOLCROFT: A sharp-as-a-tack disciplinarian professor.

MS. YEARLING: A novice professor with a genuine sympathy for her students.

RALPH CRENSHAW: A typical student who becomes a power-monger when he finds the de-agitator.

BARRY COLBY: A college student, jock, and friend of Ralph's.

GREG: A know-it-all student who invented the de-agitator.

SHIRLEY: The not-too-bright campus security guard who gets the last laugh.

EXTRAS: Laid-back college students out for a good time.

**(Doubling possible: Trish can double as Shirley.)*

SYNOPSIS OF PLAY

ACT I

Scene 1: Wednesday morning.

ACT II

Scene 1: The following Saturday afternoon.

Scene 2: Midnight that same evening.

PROPERTIES

Variety of college books, paper, and pens

1 TV remote control

5 de-agitators - should look just like TV remote control
except for a red underbelly

Purses for Holcroft and Graham

Waist pack for Yearling

Wallet, watch, and backpack for Barry

Glasses and breath spray for Arnold

Watches for Pat and Ralph

4 small batteries with gold foil around them

3 contract-like sets of documents

Apple for Greg

Boom box with special-looking antennae on top

3 welder's-looking helmets

3 silver chest protectors (like breast plates worn by knights)

Chess set in cabinet

3 Coke cans

Several different handkerchiefs for students, teachers

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: LIGHTS come up on the DSR classroom scene, while the rest of the stage remains dark for now. It is five minutes to 10 a.m. on a Wednesday. MS. HOLCROFT'S Economics 101 class is winding down. Various STUDENTS fill the rows of chairs, some playing with their hair, some chewing gum, some trying to understand, some in the back reading comic books. BARRY and RALPH sit in the front row whispering and joking with one another, while TRISH sits next to them with a defiant attitude toward the class. DSR is Ms. Holcroft, a middle-aged battle-ax of a woman, teaching and trying to get the classes' attention. She stands next to a chair, or behind a desk, with a purse visibly handy to her.)

HOLCROFT: *(Close to HER end of patience.)* Your parents are paying good money for you to be here, do you realize that! There are kids who would give anything to be able to afford to go to Stepford University. Now didn't anyone read the article on capitalism I assigned Tuesday? *(There is a moment of silence, as the STUDENTS awkwardly look around at each other. Then TRISH pipes up.)*

TRISH: Hey, Ms. Holcroft.

HOLCROFT: *(Hopefully.)* Yes, Patricia?

TRISH: You know, I didn't exactly read the assignment. But if we're talking economics here, I got a whole set of plastic credit that says I know everything there is to know about mon-ey! *(STUDENTS crack up.)*

HOLCROFT: Oh you do, do you? Suppose you tell us about the supply-demand curves that determine a price in a free market, hmm?

TRISH: *(Defiantly amused and winging it.)* Well, you got these two curves see and ... and they're called ...

STUDENT #1: *(Pipes in mock-child tones.)* Supply and demand! *(Laughter.)*

HOLCROFT: Settle down!

The Stepford Students

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TRISH: *(Smiling defiantly.)* Yeah, supply and demand. Now "supply" is like ... you know, when the store's got something or they ain't. And "demand" is like ...

STUDENT #2: ... your Dad calling and demanding to know how that dent got in his car! *(Laughter.)*

HOLCROFT: That's enough! *(Laughter continues as HOLCROFT hesitates, then slowly gets her purse and begins opening it a crack.)*

TRISH: Yeah, that's it! See? Told ya I know everything about this economics garbage! *(More laughter. HOLCROFT reaches in to purse and very obviously to the audience, "aims" the purse at TRISH.)*

HOLCROFT: *(In an angry voice barely under control.)* Patricia?

TRISH: *(In mock respect.)* Yes ... Ms. ... Holcroft.

HOLCROFT: I want you to reconsider. Do you really know everything about economics?

(In a motion that's obvious to the audience, HOLCROFT pushes a button and, in effect, "fires" something in her purse at TRISH. Trish suddenly sits up straight, a blank expression on her face, eyes wide open and attentive.)

TRISH: *(In slow, zombie-like monotone.)* No ... Ms. ... Holcroft. *(There is snickering as the other STUDENTS think she's kidding around.)*

HOLCROFT: *(Smiling satisfied.)* That's right, Trish. In fact, you don't know much about anything, do you? *(Some "ooohs" from the STUDENTS as if they just watched a "low blow" at a boxing match.)*

TRISH: That's right, Ms. Holcroft.

STUDENT #1: *(Cheering for TRISH.)* C'mon Trish ... give 'er one back!

(Some laughter. HOLCROFT wheels on STUDENT #1 with purse and "fires." Instantly, the STUDENT'S back straightens, eyes wide, just like TRISH.)

HOLCROFT: Did you have something to say?

End of Freeview

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