

BROADWAY BLUES

A Play

by

BRIAN McGUIRE

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

www.schoolplayproductions.co.uk

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THE CAST

Michael Woggle	<i>New Teacher</i>
Kate Dale	<i>New Teacher</i>
Mrs. King	<i>Head Teacher</i>
Brigette Thompson	<i>Head of English Department, Senior Teacher</i>
Gwen Bond	<i>Art Teacher</i>
Bill Leech	<i>English Teacher</i>

Duane Unsworth
Barry
Trevor
Jason
Tracy
Sonia
Rachel
Mrs. Unsworth

CHARACTER NOTES

Michael Woggle: About twenty two years old.

Kate Dale: About twenty two years old, very attractive looking.

Mrs. King: Early fifties.

Brigette Thompson: Late forties.

Gwen Bond: Can be played at anything between thirty and forty years old, pleasant disposition.

Bill Leech: A good looking man in his early thirties.

Duane Unsworth: Menacing, sixteen years old, does not wear much of a school uniform. Resents being at school.

Barry: Sixteen years old. Friend and admirer of Duane.

Trevor: Sixteen years old.

Jason: A gormless looking boy. Sellotape holds on one of the arms of his spectacles. He wears full school uniform but always has the front right hand side of his shirt hanging out.

Tracy: Sixteen years old, pretty and pleasant but can be tough.

Sonia and Rachel: Tracy's friends.

Mrs. Unsworth: Mother of Duane.

The ages of the pupils can be changed to suit the available cast. It is also possible that the part of Mrs. King can be changed to Mr. King.

PRODUCTION NOTES

There are two main levels. Centre stage, steps lead from one stage to another. At the top of the steps is an archway which represents the entrance to the school. On the archway is the school's name. To the left and right of the archway is a brick wall. A gate is further stage right. This represents the back entrance to the school. There is a set of steps on level one, stage right, which allows actors to gain access to level two and the back gate. The part of the rosta, immediately stage left of these steps, will represent the school apron. The smokers will climb out of this area.

The downstage area on level one is used for the classroom, staffroom, school grounds and hall. For the classroom a desk is added. Other chairs could be used. For the staffroom five chairs are set out. The headteacher's office is stage left and can be left as a permanent fixture. Entrance to this office is made by going up the centre stage steps and turning right.

The doors to the staffroom and headteacher's office can be imagined or humour can be added by using pupils to represent the doors. For the headteachers's office actors would hold a sign that read "Engaged" on one side and "Receiving" on the other. The archway is particularly useful as an exit and entrance. For example, Bill Leech and Gwen Bond enter through the archway and down the steps when they begin their duty patrol. Brigitte can enter through the archway from upstage when she addresses the pupils about her production in the school hall. The back gate is another very useful entrance and exit.

The school motto *Omnes dies in scientia ego* can be written on the vertical part of the school steps. Music is essential. It should set and reflect the mood. It is suggested that the music is all "blues" instrumental.

The production can staged equally well in the round.

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Music plays. PUPILS enter a few at a time. They are noisy and lively. TEACHERS enter. ACTORS face upstage. Music stops. As the ACTORS speak they turn and face the AUDIENCE.

Brigette: I've been here 27 years. I think I know my business. I think I know pupils. I've directed 18 school productions.

Sonia: (*indicating BRIGETTE*) Brigitte Thompson, Head of English, Senior Teacher. She taught my dad and my aunty Kathleen.

Duane: I hate this school. The teachers cause me nothing but trouble. I don't want to learn. I don't want to be here.

Rachel: Duane Unsworth. The biggest pain in the backside the school's ever had. Obnoxious, aggressive, selfish, stupid....

Tracy: And they are his best qualities. I'm Tracy.

Sonia: I'm Sonia, these are my best friends.

Tracy: She's in love with Mr. Leech.

Sonia: The first time I saw him I knew English was going to be my favourite subject.

Kate: I'm excited about this teaching post.

Michael: The first time I saw Kate I knew she was really special.

Rachel: (*indicating*) Michael Woggle, new teacher to Broadway Comprehensive.

Sonia: (*indicating*) Kate Dale, new teacher to Broadway Comprehensive.

Bill: (*looking at KATE*) Now that's what I call a new teacher.

Gwen: Yes, I thought you would be impressed.

Mrs. King: This is my school and I think that over the years I've created a warm, caring and friendly atmosphere. (*Music plays. BRIGETTE fights her way through to KATE and MICHAEL. MRS. KING moves to her office. Music stops. EVERYONE stops.*)

Brigette: Miss Dale and Mr. Woggle. Very pleasant to see you both again.

Kate: Please call me Kate.

Brigette: Kate. Well there's nothing to worry about today. We like our teachers to settle in without any sort of rush. That's why we ask you to come in at the end of the morning. The school is ticking over nicely and you're not caught in the hurly-burly. (*DUANE bumps into her*) Excuse me! (*To MICHAEL and KATE*) Come this way, the head is waiting for you. (*Music plays as they walk round. The music stops. EVERYONE stops.*)

Brigette: This afternoon you'll get the feel of the school, meet some of the staff

again, and of course there will be opportunities to ask any questions you may wish to ask. *(The music begins again. EVERYONE moves. KATE, MICHAEL and BRIGETTE arrive a few yards from the HEADTEACHER's desk, MRS. KING is writing. Music stops. EVERYONE stops).*

Brigette: Engaged. So it's teaching for you both, eh? Are you looking forward to it?

Michael: Yes. It will be good to be on the factory floor....

Brigette:so to speak. But you are right. This is where you'll learn the job. Put the theory into practice. It will be tiring at first but you'll soon get used to the pace. *(She looks at the sign again).* Still engaged. Are you both settled in the area?

Michael: Yes, Mortimer Road, above Harpers', the paint suppliers.

Brigette: I taught Tom and Sidney Harper. Actually they supply the paint for our school productions. It's the only place you can buy black emulsion. And there's quite a reasonable reduction. I was there yesterday. Perhaps when my order is ready one of you could bring it in. *(Pause).* Fine. *(To KATE)* And you?

Kate: I live with my father.

Brigette: Hm, hm. *(Searching for something to say)* That's a very interesting picture. It was painted by an ex-pupil. *(KATE moves downstage to look).* Yes look if you like, dear. *(To MICHAEL)* She's very pretty.

Michael: Yes, I know.

Brigette: And you went to the same college. Do you know each other well?

Michael: We were quite friendly. *(KATE returns).*

Brigette: Do you think you will be able to inspire someone to create something as good as that during your time here?

Kate: I'll do my best.

Brigette: Fine. *(Pause).* I call in on my mother before I come to school. I like to make sure she's all right. I'm sure Kate will understand that, if she lives with her father. *(MRS. KING puts down her pen. BRIGETTE notices that the sign has changed).* In you go then. *(Following them in)* Our new teachers, Mrs. King.

Mrs. King: Thank you Brigitte. I'll be five minutes. A bit of a pep talk that's all. Perhaps you could come back when the bell rings and take Miss Dale and Mr. em.... em....

Michael: Woggle.

Mrs. King: *(nodding)* And Mr. Woggle to the dining hall.

Brigette: But I have a meeting.

Mrs. King: *(glaring)* Five minutes.

Brigette: Fine. Five minutes then. *(She exits).*

Mrs. King: I hope you found your previous visit helpful. *(She takes out a pack of sandwiches).* Mrs. Thompson will have overall responsibility for you but obviously you will be assigned to subject teachers. Bill Leech will be looking after you, Mr. Woggle, and Gwen Bond will look after you, Miss Dale. They will be the teachers who will be important to you. *(She looks at the sandwiches which are still in her hand and puts them on her desk. She sits back).* There are a few points I want to make. You're here to teach but you're also here to learn. *(PUPILS outside the office are talking. The noise gets louder).* The curriculum changes from minister to minister but it is still our job to make the child a better person for the time they spend with us. Teaching is part personality but it is also a skill that has to be learned. A good teacher will be well organised, alert.... *(Finding the noise too distracting she pushes open the door and yells at the PUPILS)* Quiet! *(The noise ceases. She returns)*and patient. We owe it to the children. *(Tapping her fingers on the sandwiches)* After all they are our bread and butter. The pupils here can be boisterous but basically they're pleasant enough to teach. *(The bell rings. MRS. KING opens the wrapping of her sandwiches).* Over these next few weeks I want you to feel that you can come to me or any other member of staff if you need advice or have any problems. The staff here are supportive, patient and dependable. Good teaching qualities. *(She looks at her watch, taps her fingers on the desk and sits back).* I wonder where Brigette is? *(She goes to the door, opens it and looks out).* No sign of her. *(She turns).* Is there anything you want to ask me?

Kate and Michael: No.

Mrs. King: Well I'm sure Brigette will be able to answer any questions *(irritated)* when she returns. *(She looks at her watch).* Never mind, I'll show you to the dining room myself. *(Music plays as MRS. KING leads the way. PUPILS walk round. A PUPIL holds a notice. It reads "SCHOOL PRODUCTION MEETING, at 12.05 pm, TODAY, SCHOOL HALL". MRS. KING points at the Notice. Music stops. EVERYONE stops).* That's where she'll be. *(Music begins. EVERYONE moves. MRS. KING exits. MICHAEL and KATE take a few more steps. The music stops. EVERYONE stops).*

Michael: I was thinking we could go to Brewsters on Friday, if you like, celebrate the end of the first week. You'll enjoy yourself.

Kate: I can't think about the weekend at the moment.

Michael: You've never been before.

Kate: Ask me again on Friday.

Michael: So there's a chance you'll go?

Kate: We'll see who's going.

Michael: I meant you and me. (*Music begins. They exit. Music stops. EVERYONE stops*).

Sonia: What are we doing here?

Tracy: I want a part in this production.

Sonia & Rachel: We don't.

Tracy: But you're my best friends. (*Music begins. The PUPILS sit. TREVOR, TRACY, BARRY, JASON and DUANE stand. DUANE positions himself downstage. The music fades. BRIGETTE is upstairs*).

Brigette: Listen! Listen! Look this way. I'm waiting. Fine, fine.

Duane: (*to the AUDIENCE*) Listen. Listen. Look this way. I'm waiting. Fine, fine, fine, fine, fine, fine.

Brigette: I know it is dinner time but you did choose to come here.

Duane: (*to the AUDIENCE*) Out of the cold.

Brigette: First of all let me say how pleased I am that so many of you have turned up.

Duane: (*to the AUDIENCE*) They're all here. Trevor says he's going for the main part. Tracy's got lovely parts, that's probably the reason why Trevor's here. Barry is with me and Jason's flaming crackers.

Brigette: Will you sit down! Some of you will know that this year's production is going to be "THE KING'S RETURN". Like previous productions it should be a lot of fun for those involved and it is possible to give most pupils a part. (*DUANE is talking to BARRY. BRIGETTE looks in DUANE's direction*). That is those of you who are prepared to listen. (*DUANE continues to talk*). Look Duane, if you don't want to listen, nobody is forcing you to. You can leave. I don't care if you're in this production or not! (*She acknowledges that DUANE has stopped talking*). Thank you. I want to say some very important things so listen carefully. (*She looks in the direction of DUANE again*). Duane! Duane! (*Again she acknowledges that he has stopped talking*). If you commit yourself to this production you turn up on time for all rehearsals and you know your lines by the required dates. I will prepare for rehearsals, I expect you to be prepared when you arrive. I am not interested in any one who is going to let me, other people or themselves down. We have fourteen weeks to put this production together. Fourteen weeks to practice. (*DUANE is talking again*). Right! Duane, off you go. Off you go! There won't be time for everyone to stand around and wait for you to finish conversations. Go on! Push off! (*BRIGETTE and PUPILS freeze*).

Duane: (*to the AUDIENCE*) I don't want to be in the play. After listening to her whining on I'm happy to go back outside to the cold. (*EVERYONE comes out of the freeze*).

Brigette: Hurry up! Stop mumbling about it! (*Continuing with her address*) This

production will require a lot of practice. If you're in a production I've organised you'll remember it for the rest of your life. Right, off you go. (*Music plays. Exit BRIGETTE. The PUPILS take up new positions. They eat sandwiches etc. BARRY and JASON huddle together for a cigarette. BILL LEECH and GWEN BOND enter through the archway. They are patrolling the school grounds. Music fades.*)

Bill: It's quiet today, Gwen.

Gwen: Half the kids are in the hall. The important meeting.

Bill: Of course, it's production time.

Gwen: Budding little thespians directed by an even bigger one.

Bill: Her mother sitting on the front row every night. The lights are up on Broadway and Brigitte Thompson.

Gwen: Whilst Gwen Bond sews up fifty odd costumes in her own time.

Bill: But you're not a senior teacher. We do the menial tasks. Painting the scenery, setting out chairs and seeing to the box office. It's Brigitte who gets the pat on the head.

Gwen: Why do we do it?

Bill: For the kids.

Gwen: (*noticing a PUPIL dropping litter. She points to it.*) And some of them don't deserve it. Next time use the bin, Helen.

Bill: (*pointing to BARRY and JASON*) I don't think we were expected.

Gwen: The change in the duty routine has confused them.

Bill: A change of underpants confuses those two. Barry! Jason! Come here. Don't disappear in a cloud of smoke. Bring everything to me. (*BARRY and JASON approach*).

Jason: How did you know it was us sir?

Bill: We could see you. We come this way now. The duty routine has changed. (*He puts out his hand for the cigarettes and matches. BARRY hands them over*). Every Monday Mrs. Bond and I will be walking round here. From now onwards we won't catch any smokers, will we lads? (*As this is happening another group of PUPILS are handing round cigarettes*).

Jason: No sir.

Gwen: Go and get some fresh air in your lungs.

Bill: Spread the word about the Monday duty routine. (*They begin to run off*). Barry! (*They turn*).

Barry: Yes sir.

Bill: Orally, not by smoke signals, and Jason, tuck your shirt in. (*He obliges. They go off trying to make sense of the word 'orally'*). No doubt they'll find somewhere else to go.

Gwen: Kate and Michael start today.

Bill: Do you want to swap?

Gwen: Kate's attractive, isn't she?

Bill: Those looks will help.

Gwen: She seems willing enough to listen and I'm sure Michael will benefit from your experience.

Bill: I'd rather be giving it to Kate. *(He smiles. GWEN is not amused).*

Gwen: Well don't forget it's Michael you have to look out for. He'll have Duane Unsworth in one of his classes. What are you going to do about that?

Bill: He'll have to learn how to handle him.

Gwen: And put up with the confrontations and filthy language?

Bill: I'll keep an eye on him.

Gwen: Don't leave it to Brigitte. All her thoughts will be on the production. *(They exit).*

Duane: Stupid rules, that's all school is. They never consider that we might need a cig. Who wants a cig? *(Various PUPILS surround him).*

Barry: Where did you get all those?

Duane: *(throwing the cigarettes in the air)* Swiped them. *(Music plays. PUPILS grab at the cigarettes. They hold a freeze. A bell rings. PUPILS exit. RACHEL, SONIA and TRACY move left. KATE, followed by BILL, comes through the archway. Music fades).*

Bill: How was your first day? Any problems?

Kate: No, everything went O.K.

Bill: Can I give you a lift?

Kate: I'm waiting for Michael.

Bill: Is something...

Kate: *(cutting in)* No, no. We travel together, that's all.

Bill: See you tomorrow then.

Kate: Yes. Thanks for the offer of a lift.

Bill: Maybe another night. *(Pleased with himself, BILL passes TRACY and SONIA).*

Tracy: She's good looking, isn't she, sir?

Bill: You think I fancy her, don't you?

Tracy: You were chatting her up.

Sonia: You deserve someone nice, Mr. Leech.

Bill: Thank you Sonia. *(BILL exits).*

Rachel: You're still stuck on him, aren't you?

Sonia: Come on. *(MICHAEL comes through the archway. KATE is in deep thought. She is startled when MICHAEL begins talking to her).*

Tracy: Hold on a minute, she's going with him.

Rachel: That's Mr. Woggle. They're both new.

Sonia: Do you think something is going on there?

Tracy: (*mimicking SONIA's earlier comment "You're still stuck on him"*) Do you think you fancy him?

Sonia: Come on. (*They exit*).

Michael: You were in a world of your own there.

Kate: I was thinking about the day.

Michael: Have you thought any more about Friday?

Kate: I'm not so sure it's a good idea. (*Trying to cheer him up*) Let's go home. (*As they exit*) I think the year ten art class is going to be superb. (*Music plays. Fade to black out. As the lights come up conversations begin. They can overlap and ad libs can be used. TRACY, SONIA, RACHEL, JASON, BARRY and DUANE are first to enter. Music fades*).

Teacher 1: I've got a lousey timetable today

Teacher 2: I bet mine's worse. I've got 3x, followed by 3z, followed by 4z, followed by 5z and I'm on break duty.

Teacher 1: Don't forget the curriculum meeting at lunch time.

Pupil 1: Are you still selling cigs?

Pupil 2: See me at dinner time.

Pupil 1: Where will you be?

Pupil 2: The usual place.

Pupil 3: Where did you go last night?

Pupil 4: Brewsters.

Pupil 3: Did they let you in?

Pupil 4: I said I went, didn't I?

Pupil 5: If I tell you. You're sworn to secrecy.

Pupil 6: So who was she with?

Pupil 5: No, I can't tell you.

Pupil 6: Go on.

Pupil 5: Desmond.

Pupil 6: I already knew that

Pupil 5: It's still a secret.

Pupil 6: No it isn't, everybody knows.

Teacher 3: What happened in your maths lesson, yesterday?

Teacher 4: I asked Barry Owen to take some books to Sheila. He said he couldn't be bothered, so I asked him what he could be bothered to do. He stood up and tipped over the desk. Then he walked out.

Teacher 3: No doubt Duane's influence.

Teacher 4: Definitely.

Teacher 3: So what's happening about it?

Teacher 4: His parents have been contacted but they refuse to come up.

Pupil 7: Have you brought your games kit?

Pupil 8: Oh! I forgot. That's two weeks in a row. He'll kill me.

Pupil 7: I've got a spare pair of trainers.

Pupil 8: I don't think they'd fit.

Pupil 7: What will you do then?

Pupil 8: I'll have to write a note again.

Pupil 9: Did you do those experiments yesterday?

Pupil 10: No, we had a supply teacher.

Pupil 9: You always seem to have a supply teacher.

Pupil 10: Yes, she's on my Christmas card list. (*BILL enters. He looks around.*)

Pupil 11: What's your first lesson?

Pupil 12: Maths. Have you done your homework?

Pupil 11: I'm not in your set. (*GWEN enters. She notices BILL.*)

Gwen: Who are you looking for?

Bill: No-one in particular.

Gwen: (*making for the Archway*) Jason, tuck your shirt in. (*She enters the Archway.*)

Duane: Leave it. (*JASON obeys. MRS. KING enters, she looks at her watch, she looks at the BOYS.*)

Mrs. King: You boys are early.

Barry: We're keen.

Mrs. King: Keen on what? (*She enters the Archway. TREVOR runs in.*)

Duane: (*blocking TREVOR's way*) Are you late for rehearsals?

Trevor: We don't have rehearsals in the morning.

Duane: Go on, piss off. (*TREVOR runs into school. TRACY and SONIA come up behind BILL LEECH.*)

Tracy: Morning, Mr. Leech.

Bill: (*startled*) Good morning, Tracy.

Rachel: Are you waiting for someone?

Bill: I was checking for smokers.

Sonia: (*pointing to the BOYS*) They're there.

Bill: Thank you, Sonia. (*He enters the Archway.*)

Sonia: Any time, sir.

Barry: She's coming.

Jason: *(looking at his watch)* Twenty five to nine. Same time again.

Barry: *(to DUANE)* He's dreamt about her every night since she started. *(Enter KATE. She passes the BOYS. JASON stares and gawks).*

Kate: Good morning, boys. *(BARRY replies, DUANE grunts but JASON is only capable of mouthing like a goldfish. KATE makes her way into school. DUANE slaps JASON on the head).*

Duane: You'll go blind if you keep staring like that. *(JASON catches his glasses).*

Jason: You could have broken them. *(Enter MICHAEL).*

Duane: Here he comes. Morning.... morning.

Michael: *(continuing to make his way to the Archway)* Good morning, Duane.

Duane: Lets me do what I like in his lessons, don't you?

Michael: Don't be ridiculous.

Duane: Haven't got a clue, have you?

Michael: *(moving towards DUANE)* I'll see you in lesson time.

Duane: You still won't be able to do anything.

Michael: What's the point in saying things like that?

Duane: It passes the time.

Michael: *(taking hold of DUANE's arm)* Well I've got more important things to do.

Duane: *(brushing aside MICHAEL's hand)* Don't touch me. *(KATE appears at the Archway).*

Kate: Michael. Here are those notes you wanted. Is everything all right?

Michael: *(to DUANE)* I'll see you later. *(As MICHAEL turns DUANE spits at him. MICHAEL turns back to face DUANE. He takes a handkerchief from his pocket, wipes the saliva from his trouser leg and puts the handkerchief in a bin. He enters the Archway).*

Tracy: Why do you want to give him a hard time?

Duane: They're not allowed to get hold of us.

Tracy: You gave him a reason.

Duane: *(aggressive)* Watch what you're saying.

Tracy: You're a waste of time. I wonder who you think you're impressing?

Sonia: *(exiting)* Close your mouth, Jason.

Tracy: *(following)* And tuck your shirt in. It's the nearest you'll get to a thrill. *(SONIA and TRACY enter the Archway).*

Duane: Come on.

Barry: Her mouth's getting too big.

Duane: It's Woggle I'm interested in at the moment. *(They exit L. Music plays. Chairs are set out downstage for the staff room. Music fades. BRIGETTE paces. Throughout the dialogue BILL looks at KATE).*

Brigette: I wanted four sets of fifty. I need those scripts for the production. And what happens? It's the same old story. They can't be done at the moment. How can I organise a production without scripts? The whole reprographic procedure needs looking into.

Bill: (*having fun at BRIGETTE's expense*) Is everything running smoothly?

Brigette: I'm behind schedule. I explained to Eileen that those scripts were urgent.

Bill: And illegal.

Brigette: They are bits to link the scenes. It would take ten minutes to see to them. I ask for help and no one offers.

Bill: What's the next job?

Brigette: I would appreciate your assistance with the apron. It will take the best part of a week to put together.

Bill: We'll help.

Brigette: I know I can rely on you and Gwen but I'm finding I need all the help I can get. I need every hour in the day and more. I'm running rehearsals every lunch time and night, I'm preparing lessons, teaching, running a department, implementing national curriculum, organising, testing.... Something will have to go!

Gwen: Don't worry, Kate, she's not frantic yet.

Brigette: This is definitely the last time. There were fourteen pupils missing from the rehearsal last night. Some of them don't know the meaning of commitment!

Gwen: I thought that's one of the qualities the production taught them.

Brigette: Well some of them are a long time learning about it.

Bill: (*enjoying the remark*) It's a good job you can cope.

Brigette: I have to! (*MICHAEL sighs. BRIGETTE glares at him*).

Gwen: How are you two managing?

Michael: Is Duane Unsworth always so rude?

Bill: What's he done?

Michael: He was insolent and when I checked him all I got was more abuse.

Brigette: What exactly did you say to him?

Michael: Does it matter what I said? It finished up with him spitting at me.

Brigette: You have to be careful how you treat some pupils. The Unsworths are a strange family, particularly dad when he's around.

Michael: That doesn't give his son the right to say what he likes.

Brigette: (*irritated*) Concentrate on setting your discipline from the beginning. No-one can do it for you. It starts from the moment you walk into the classroom. Children send out signals to each other. If one of them drops a ruler, pick on him. It doesn't matter whether it seems like an accident or not. The rest of the class is waiting to see what your reaction is going to be. That's

good advice.

Michael: I wiped saliva off my trouser leg. What do I do about Duane Unsworth?

Bill: Sort him out in your lesson.

Michael: I told him I would do that.

Brigitte: Then do it. (*The bell rings. MICHAEL exits. BRIGETTE follows*). No thank you, no nothing.

Gwen: You could have been more helpful, Bill.

Bill: It's not a great incident, particularly in Duane Unsworth's history.

Gwen: He's supposed to be under your guidance but you seem to be taking more interest in Kate.

Bill: I offer her advice as well.

Gwen: (*leaning over BILL's shoulder before she exits*) I wonder how much of that advice you would like to be offering her back in your little flat. (*She exits*).

Bill: What's the matter with everyone this morning?

Kate: She's being protective, that's all. You must have some sort of reputation with women.

Bill: There's no reputation at all. I could be a saint.

Kate: I find that difficult to believe.

Bill: Come back to my flat and I'll prove it.

Kate: (*smiling*) We'll see. (*Enter MICHAEL*).

Michael: Oh Kate. (*He looks at BILL and KATE together*). It doesn't matter. (*He exits*).

Bill: He looked disappointed.

Kate: He'll be all right. How far do you live from the school?

Bill: Three miles. I could give you a lift every day.

Kate: You offered before.

Bill: I'm offering again.

Kate: We should be on our way to our lessons.

Bill: (*as they exit*) See you later then. (*Music plays. The chairs of the staffroom are removed. A desk and chair are set up Downstage Centre. PUPILS enter. DUANE enters through the Archway. GWEN follows. Music fades*).

Gwen: Duane, can I speak to you a moment, please?

Duane: What have I done?

Gwen: No-one is accusing you of anything.

Duane: What do you want then?

Gwen: It would be nice if you spoke to me in a less off-handed way. (*DUANE looks away*). Have you ever thought that some of the things you do hurt people?

Duane: What are you talking about?

Gwen: Animals spit. (*She exits through the Archway. DUANE stands on the desk*).

Music plays. PUPILS address the AUDIENCE).

Pupil 1: He spat at Mr. Woggle.

Pupil 2: He swore at Mr. Greenhalgh.

Pupil 3: And Mr. Brown.

Pupil 4: And Mrs. Todd.

Pupil 5: He took my trainers.

Pupil 6: He stole my money from the changing room.

Pupil 7: Set off the fire alarm.

Pupil 8: He stuck a nail in my leg.

Pupil 9: Disrupts every class he's in.

Pupil 10: The only writing he does is scratching his name on the stinking toilet wall.

Pupil 11: He wags.

Pupil 12: He whines.

Pupil 13: He pokes.

Pupil 14: He pushes.

Pupil 15: He grabs.

Pupil 16: He kicks.

Pupil 17: Steals,

Pupil 18: Smokes,

Pupil 19: Swears,

Pupil 20: Spits. (*As the music builds to a climax other PUPILS can join in with the comments from PUPIL 14 onwards*).

Sonia/Rachel: They should do something about him. (*Music stops*).

Tracy: I don't think they can. (*DUANE calls out his name. He sits at the desk. PUPILS face Upstage. BILL LEECH enters*).

Bill: I don't expect homework from you, Duane. In fact I don't expect much. Reasonable behaviour, that's all, but you had to spend the lesson being a smart arse, didn't you? I don't know why you have that blank expression on your face. (*More forceful*) I'm talking about the constant mumbling and the various other noises you seem to enjoy making whilst I'm trying to teach the class.

Duane: I wasn't mumbling.

Bill: Unfortunately some of your verbage was quite clear.

Duane: Eh?

Bill: I don't like your attitude. You seem incapable of stringing a sentence together without some sort of expletive.

Duane: What you on about?

Bill : You did nothing in the lesson again so you can do some work now. There's no-one to show off to so I'm taking the opportunity to improve your choice

vocabulary. I don't feel I would be doing my job if I didn't teach you something.

Duane: What about me paper round?

Bill: You don't have a paper round. I have a special worksheet for you. (*He hands DUANE the worksheet*). Can you see the words GET and GOT? They're underlined. Your task is to replace the words GET or GOT with one of the words from the bottom of the worksheet. For instance, number one, "He got a present for his birthday." You would write, "He received a present for his birthday." Do you understand? When you're finished you can go home. (*BILL turns away*).

Duane: I don't have a pen. (*BILL turns and holds out a pen. DUANE takes it. He speaks aggressively*). Why is it always me who's in detention?

Bill: On with it.

Duane: This pen's not working. (*BILL takes the pen and writes on the worksheet*).

Bill: There's nothing wrong with it. I've written your name on the worksheet.

Duane: Do I have to write out the whole sentence?

Bill: Yes.

Duane: It's boring this. GET and GOT. Huh. Why do I have to do stuff like this?

Bill: (*leaning over the desk*) Because you're a little get so you've got to do it! (*Exit BILL. DUANE moves Downstage*).

Duane: Thinks he's cool. Thought he was a comedian there.... GET and GOT. But he flipped for a moment. He'll get some more tomorrow.

Pupil: And will it be from you again?

Duane: (*grabbing hold of PUPIL*) That's what they deserve. They didn't tell me dad what to do and they're not telling me! (*Releases the PUPIL. To PUPILS*) What you looking at? Do you want some as well? I've been here for an extra twenty minutes so I'll disrupt the school for twenty minutes tomorrow.

Pupils: Bully, thug, liar, cheat, bighead, coward, show-off, thief, selfish, vandal, maniac, poser, sly.... (*Music builds to a climax. PUPILS scream*). Trouble maker! (*Black out. Desk and chair are moved. PUPILS exit. Music plays again. As the lights come up SONIA, TRACY and RACHEL sit Upstage. They watch MICHAEL and KATE*).

Michael: Where were you this morning? You weren't at the bus stop.

Kate: I needed to call in at the newsagents.

Michael: You were picked up by Bill Leech.

Kate: If you know that why are you asking me?

Michael: He didn't offer me a lift.

Kate: I'll ask him if you can come as well.

Michael: I don't want to spoil anything.

Kate: There's nothing to spoil. I'm going to the staffroom.

Michael: To see Bill Leech.

Kate: Yes I am. I like him, he's good looking and he has a sense of humour. I'm not your girlfriend. *(She exits).*

Sonia: She'll come round sir.

Tracy: Mr. Leech has had a lot of girlfriends. They generally become fed up.

Michael: Were you listening?

Rachel: We didn't mean to.

Tracy: I think she likes you sir. I could tell by the way she was looking at you and there was her body language.

Sonia: Tracy takes drama.

Tracy: If she wasn't interested in you she wouldn't have said she cared. It's only at the moment she's going out with someone else. She could have you but because she knows that she wants to play around first. Young women can be like that. Mr. Leech won't turn out to be what she expects then it will be your turn.

Rachel: I think you're good looking sir. If Miss Dale had any sense she would go with you now.

Michael: Thanks for the encouragement.

Tracy: It's only a question of time.

Sonia: Don't give up, sir. *(Enter DUANE, followed by JASON and some other BOYS).*

Jason: You shouldn't light up there.

Duane: Why not?

Jason: There's whatshisname.

Michael: Duane. *(DUANE turns his back on MICHAEL).*

Michael: *(annoyed)* Duane!

Duane: *(walking away)* Can't stop. Don't want to be late for Leech. Kept me in last night. Got to annoy him again.

Michael: You're smoking. Don't walk away from me! Don't ignore me! I will report this!

Tracy: They won't do anything.

Sonia: Duane does what he likes. *(MICHAEL enters the Archway. The BOYS are amused).*

Tracy: *(cracking JASON across the top of the head)* And what are you grinning at you little pervert? *(The GIRLS turn Upstage following MICHAEL. In a flamboyant way JASON attempts to stick up a finger to TRACY. As if knowing this would happen she turns, grabs his finger and squeezes hard. JASON howls with pain. The GIRLS exit. JASON shakes his finger. He is in pain. The BOYS laugh. BRIGETTE and BILL enter. BRIGETTE carries a file. She thinks JASON is demonstrating a rather elaborate rude gesture).*

Brigette: Jason!

Jason: What Miss?

Brigette: Stop that and get to my room! Now!

Bill: Jason. Shirt. (*JASON attempts to tuck in the shirt with his right hand. He squeals with pain again. He turns towards BRIGETTE.*)

Brigette: My room!

Jason: I'm going. (*He enters the Archway.*)

Bill: Is that Kate's file?

Brigette: Yes, it's impressive. Her lessons are very well thought out.

Bill: She has some good classes, and she has a pleasant personality that appeals to the kids.

Brigette: Yes, I've seen you looking at it.

Bill: Do you want me to return that file to her?

Brigette: I can give it to her in the staffroom.

Bill: I don't mind taking it. I'm going there.

Brigette: So am I.

Bill: (*grabbing at the file*) It's no trouble.

Brigette: (*yanking it back*) I said I was going there. (*BRIGETTE exits. BILL exits. Music plays. The Staffroom is set up. PUPILS exit. KATE and BRIGETTE sit in the Staffroom. MICHAEL and GWEN enter. MICHAEL is talking to GWEN. BILL enters.*)

Bill: How did the first two lessons go?

Michael: Not so good.

Bill: Were they giving you a tough time?

Michael: They don't want to listen. They don't show one bit of respect.

Brigette: (*looking up from the file she is reading*) Respect has to be earned. It isn't an automatic right.

Michael: If they would shut up long enough then maybe I could earn it. I'm trying, I really am.

Gwen: He's had another incident with Duane Unsworth.

Michael: He was smoking. When I tried to speak to him about it, he walked away.

Brigette: Did you call him back?

Michael: Of course I did.

Brigette: Then you'll have to be firmer. You shouldn't let him get away with it. Learn how to deal with pupils like Duane. (*To KATE*) This file is excellent, Kate. (*She hands it to KATE*). What about these costumes, Gwen? Should I send all the Roundheads to you tomorrow dinner time?

Gwen: How many are there?

Brigette: Oh, eighteen or so.

Gwen: That makes fifty eight costumes altogether.

Kate: I'll help you.

Brigette: And Michael could help Bill with the scenery. Michael?

Michael: What should I do about my next lesson? Duane's in that class.

Brigette: Will you help with the scenery?

Michael: Yes.

Brigette: It's a small remedial group isn't it? There's your chance to establish your discipline with him. If there are any problems, keep him behind at the end of the lesson.

Bill: Let me know and I'll try and sort it out for you. *(Bell sounds. Exit MICHAEL).*

Kate: *(exiting)* I would appreciate it if you would have a word with Michael. He could do with some advice.

Bill: *(following KATE)* I'll walk down the corridor with you. *(They exit).*

Gwen: Michael is really struggling.

Brigette: Then he'll learn how to survive. *(Music plays. GWEN and BRIGETTE exit. Staffroom is struck. DUANE sits at a desk. He looks away from MICHAEL. Music fades).*

Michael: Why do I get all this trouble from you? I ask you to do a simple exercise and it finishes up with you swearing at me. Telling me what to do with myself.

Duane: *(turning)* You swore as well.

Michael: All I said was, "and if I don't want to piss off".

Duane: You're a teacher, you should know better.

Michael: All right, I made a mistake. I shouldn't have repeated your foul language, but I'm trying to find your level and maybe.... I don't know.... I'm trying to understand you.

Duane: *(standing)* It's easy I don't want to be here.

Michael: *(taking DUANE by the arm)* Sit down. *(DUANE immediately shrugs MICHAEL off).* Don't touch me again.

Michael: I'm trying to communicate with you.

Duane: I don't want to be here.

Michael: You need an education.

Duane: I don't.

Michael: Tell me why.

Duane: Can I go?

Michael: Look sit down, I want to talk to you.

Duane: *(pushing past MICHAEL)* Get out of my way. *(Music plays. MICHAEL exits. The desk and chair are removed. BRIGETTE is taking a rehearsal. There is a line of 'SOLDIERS' Upstage. There are LADIES-IN-WAITING Stage L. and R. TRACY stands Stage R. TREVOR arrives. Music fades).*

Brigette: Three weeks to go and you're late, Trevor. I'm keeping a register of attendance. I was about to put an absence down for you. You need to be here on time. When you're late you're letting everyone down. Right, let's get on with it. *(To TREVOR and TRACY)* Remember you're a king and you're a queen so let's walk like a king and queen. Everyone to positions. *(TREVOR stands next to TRACY. They begin talking. The SOLDIERS in a line face Downstage. LADIES-IN-WAITING are Stage R. and L.)* Trevor, you should be offstage. *(TREVOR exits. JASON stands Stage L.)* Jason, stage right. Right! Right! *(JASON looks bewildered)*. Right! You're still standing there! Are you stupid? You're on the left hand side. Move! *(JASON crosses to stage R.)*

Tracy: Miss Thompson, how do I say it again?

Brigette: *(very theatrical)* The king returns. *(TRACY attempts the line. BRIGETTE repeats the line. TRACY tries again. BRIGETTE is not impressed but smiles falsely)*. Very nice dear. *(She notices JASON who has moved out of position)*. What are you doing there? Right! Stage right! *(JASON moves half way along the line of soldiers)*. That will do. Get in there. Thank you. Well done. Positions again. Cue Tracy.

Tracy: The king returns. *(Music as LADIES-IN-WAITING dash about calling "The King is coming" - ad lib as necessary. The KING enters the play. EVERYONE kneels. The KING raises his hand. EVERYONE stands)*.

Ladies-in-Waiting: Your troops, my Lord. *(To awe-inspiring music the SOLDIERS assume various battle positions. They are an aggressive lot. As they move forward with ferocity JASON is revealed, oblivious to the rehearsal, staring into space. All eyes look at him. BRIGETTE steps towards him)*.

Brigette: Jason! What do you spend your time thinking about? *(A Bell rings)*. That's the bell for second sittings. *(BRIGETTE raises her hands towards Heaven. PUPILS drift off. TREVOR calls after TRACY as she exits. JASON remains. Enter KATE carrying props)*.

Kate: I managed to find these at my dad's school. *(Two PUPILS pushing past knock the props out of her hands. The PUPILS apologise but keep on going. JASON is standing with his mouth open)*.

Brigette: Don't stand there gawping, help Miss Dale.

Jason: Eh?

Kate: Will you help me? *(JASON tries to answer)*. Yes? *(He kneels down and begins picking up the props. BILL and GWEN enter. GWEN carries a costume)*.

Gwen: Have I missed Trevor?

Brigette: He left chasing Tracy.

Gwen: I want him to try this on. Jason will you run and find him.

Brigette: Give the props back to Miss Dale. (*JASON returns the props. He stares at Kate*).

Kate: Thank you.

Brigette: You're gawping again.

Bill: How big does the stage apron need to be?

Brigette: The same as last year.

Bill: I'll start it tomorrow night. Do you fancy stopping behind and helping me, Kate?

Gwen: We're fitting costumes on the Ladies-in-Waiting tomorrow night.

Bill: We could go for a drink afterwards.

Kate: I don't mind. It will take us a couple of hours then I'll probably need a drink.

Jason: You can try the costumes on me, Miss.

Bill: They're girls' costumes.

Jason: I don't mind.

Bill: Go and find Trevor for Mrs. Bond.

Kate: There are some more props in Bill's car, if you want to look at them. Can I borrow your keys, Bill?

Brigette: We'll take them to the staffroom.

Jason: (*to KATE*) I'll help, Miss.

Brigette: Go and find Trevor. (*BRIGETTE and KATE pick up the props and exit. JASON follows them*).

Gwen: Michael needs more support. Brigette seems to be oblivious to his problems.

Bill: I'm helping him.

Gwen: You're too busy chasing Kate.

Bill: He needs some basic techniques.

Gwen: Then show him some. (*Music plays. DUANE stands in the HEADTEACHER's office. Music fades*).

Mrs. King: I don't like what I've been hearing, Duane. You are a trouble to me. I have important documents here that require my attention. I don't have time to deal with you. Where should you be now?

Duane: Assembly.

Mrs. King: Mrs. King.

Duane: Mrs. King.

Mrs. King: And who is taking the assembly?

Duane: Mr. Blackmore.

Mrs. King: Mrs. King.

Duane: Mr. Blackmore, Mrs. King.

Mrs. King: That's correct. And this morning's theme is 'Think before you speak'.

Very appropriate for you, isn't it? Now what exactly did you say to Mr. Blackmore? Out with it. Nothing shocks me these days.

Duane: I told him to piss off.

Mrs. King: (*shocked*) There's no need to say it.

Duane: You told me to.

Mrs. King: Mrs. King.

Duane: You told me to, Mrs. King.

Mrs. King: I don't want you to swear.

Duane: But I swore at Mr. Blackmore.

Mrs. King: Mrs. King!

Duane: Mrs. King!

Mrs. King: So that's Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Blackmore. Is there anyone else?

Duane: Mr. Woggle.

Mrs. King: Who?

Duane: Mr. Woggle.

Mrs. King: And what happened there?

Duane: I told him to piss off.

Mrs. King: You said it again.

Duane: Then he said it.

Mrs. King: What?

Duane: Then he said, "And if I don't want to...."

Mrs. King: (*standing*) There's no need to repeat it.

Duane: I'm only saying what Woggle said.

Mrs. King: Mr. Woggle.

Duane: Mr. Woggle! Mrs. King!

Mrs. King: You are not allowed to abuse members of staff. It will not happen again. Do you understand? Do you? (*DUANE mumbles*). Next time the consequences will be dire. Even expulsion.

Duane: That won't bother me.

Mrs. King: Get out! (*Lights out on MRS. KING. DUANE exits from Mrs. King's office. He meets with friends. TREVOR enters. He is followed by TRACY, SONIA and RACHEL. He carries a pack of sandwiches*).

Barry: Here's Trevor.

Duane: Still in the play?

Trevor: Yeah.

Duane: Still after Tracy?

Barry: He's no time. He's always rehearsing.

Trevor: I'm getting somewhere.

Duane: With a schoolgirl. I'm looking elsewhere.

Trevor: Well you won't get much further than looking.

A Boy: Rehearsing all dinner-time, are you?

Trevor: Yeah.

Duane: (*grabbing the sandwiches*) Then you won't need these, will you? (*The sandwiches are thrown to BARRY, then around the GANG. Still intact they are thrown back to DUANE. He holds them out for TREVOR.*) Here. (*He squashes them.*)

Trevor: I can't eat them now. There was no need for that. (*To TRACY*) Look what he's done to my lunch.

Duane: They're only squashed.

Trevor: You think you can do what you like.

Barry: (*pulling TREVOR round*) Hey! (*TREVOR turns quickly to face BARRY.*)

Duane: Here are your sandwiches. *As TREVOR turns DUANE pushes the sandwiches in his face.*

Trevor: That hurt.

Duane: Tracy will rub it better for you and when she's finished with you I've got something for her to rub. (*DUANE begins to walk away. TRACY quickly walks up to him and grabs him, she hurts him.*)

Tracy: I don't know what's wrong with you, they're only squashed. (*DUANE and FRIENDS exit.*) (*To TREVOR*) See you in rehearsals.

Trevor: (*in awe*) Yeah. (*He runs off. Enter BILL and KATE, followed by MICHAEL.*)

Michael: Do you want to go to the pub?

Kate: I said I would go with Bill.

Bill: Tag along if you like.

Michael: It's okay, I have some books to mark.

Kate: (*as they exit*) See you after lunch.

Sonia: You should have gone with them, sir.

Rachel: You should be fighting for her.

Tracy: You wait, Mr. Woggle, she'll soon see sense. A little patience is all you need.

Sonia: Do you want to come for lunch with us?

Rachel: We're only going to the canteen.

Michael: I don't see why not. (*MRS. KING arrives.*)

Mrs. King: If I could have a brief word with you before you go to lunch.

Tracy: Should we wait for you, sir?

Mrs. King: Mr. Woggle will be a while. (*The GIRLS exit.*) Duane Unsworth tells me you swore.

Michael: (*surprised*) What?

Mrs. King: I know what he said and he was wrong but I can't do very much about it if you repeat what he says, can I? That's all. Think next time. please.

(They exit. Music plays. Fade to Blackout. Music fades. BRIGETTE is shouting at TREVOR, BARRY, DUANE and JASON).

Brigette: Line up there. *(Pointing to four places)* One, two, three, four. Get in line! *(She points to the four places again).* There, there, there and there! *(The PUPILS line up. TREVOR in Place One, BARRY in Place Two, DUANE in Place Three and JASON in Place Four).* Let's see if we can get to the bottom of this. *(DUANE mumbles).* Did you say something? *(She glares at DUANE).* Don't speak until I ask you a question. *(To JASON)* Will you stand still! *(She surveys all the PUPILS).* I think that's the order. *(To JASON)* You're still fidgeting. Put your arms by your sides. *(To all PUPILS)* Let's try and sort this out logically. *(She paces up and down then addresses all PUPILS).* Whose sandwiches were they? *(She looks at TREVOR).*

Trevor: Mine, Miss.

Brigette: Your sandwiches, eh? Your sandwiches. *(To all PUPILS).* And who took the sandwiches?

Barry: Me, Miss.

Brigette: *(to TREVOR)* He took your sandwiches. You didn't give them to him. He stole them. Is that right?

Trevor: Yes, Miss.

Brigette: I thought so. Fine. So you're blameless in all this, Trevor? *(TREVOR nods).* Fine.

Trevor: Can I go then, Miss?

Brigette: No. *(She moves between BARRY and TREVOR).* Why did you take the sandwiches?

Barry: I don't know, Miss.

Brigette: What do you mean, you don't know? Were you hungry?

Barry: No, Miss.

Brigette: Then why did you take the sandwiches?

Barry: For a joke.

Brigette: And that's funny to you. I'm pleased you're so easily entertained. You're going to find life one big joy ride, as long as no-one takes your sandwiches. *(To TREVOR)* And what was in the sandwiches?

Trevor: Chutney, Miss.

Brigette: Ugh! *(To BARRY)* It's a pity you've nothing better to do than steal chutney sandwiches. *(She looks at ALL PUPILS).* And who put the spider in the sandwich? *(She waits).* Nobody. So a dead spider of it's own volition crawled in between two slices of bread and lumps of chutney. *(DUANE mumbles).* What did you say?

Duane: It wasn't a whole spider.

Brigette: Presumably you can impart that information because you dismembered the poor little arachnid. Is that right? Look at me. Is that right? (*DUANE nods*). I thought so. (*She pauses, then speaks to JASON*). And you ate the sandwich? (*To DUANE*) What are you smirking at? Look at him, he still looks ill. It's a miracle he hasn't thrown up all over the corridors. It would serve you right if he vomited all over you. What a stupid trick. Look at him he's turning green! (*BARRY mumbles*). No, smart alec, it isn't the chutney. Perhaps I should make you eat an insect sandwich. Would you like that? (*To TREVOR*) How about you? Do you fancy colorado beetle and mint sauce? No, it doesn't sound very nice does it? (*To DUANE*) And what about you? Wood lice and spam. Does that appeal to you? Would you like that? (*To ALL PUPILS*) No, none of you would! (*To DUANE*) Yet you've taken a spider, plucked some of it's limbs, no doubt enjoying the spectacle of juices shooting out, squashed it in a sandwich and you've given it to him! (*She points at JASON who puts his hand over his mouth and runs off*). Well I can't stand here all day, I'm on dinner duty. (*BRIGETTE exits. BARRY and DUANE laugh*).

Duane: She was really wound up.

Barry: I thought she was going to explode. (*TRACY, SONIA and RACHEL enter*).

Tracy: Little tricks and little boys. Why don't you grow up?

Barry: Shut up Tracy.

Tracy: Or?

Duane: Or your big mouth is going to hurt. I'm still thinking about what you did to me last time.

Tracy: I never think about anything to do with you.... (*She advances to DUANE*). Do you know why? Because you're nothing but filthy scum. (*TRACY pushes DUANE. He punches her in the stomach. She falls to the ground. He kicks her and spits on her*).

Barry: There was no need for that.

Duane: (*grabbing hold of BARRY*) There was. (*DUANE pushes BARRY away. BARRY runs off. TREVOR squares up to DUANE. SONIA holds him back. TREVOR thinks better of it. TRACY is helped S.R. by SONIA, RACHEL and TREVOR. DUANE moves Downstage R. KATE and BILL enter. They are followed by MICHAEL*).

Michael: Kate, can I talk to you for a moment?

Kate: We were off to lunch.

Michael: It's important.

Bill: I'll wait for you in the car.

Michael: I know I'm struggling with some of my classes but there wasn't any need for you to persuade Bill to help me.

Kate: I was trying to help. You have some awkward classes. I think you deserve more support.

Michael: I can ask for help myself.

Kate: I was concerned about you.

Michael: There's no need for you to be.

Kate: You're important to me.

Michael: Not as important as Bill.

Kate: *(beginning to exit)* I have to go.

Michael: It would be nice to see you over the weekend.

Kate: Too much schoolwork.

Michael: *(running after her)* Are you saying that if you didn't have too much schoolwork you would go out?

Kate: *(as she exits)* Bill's waiting.

Duane: *(remaining Downstage)* She'll never be interested in you. Anyone can see Leech is the man. You're dead as far as she's concerned. *(MICHAEL notices TRACY and FRIENDS).*

Michael: I bet you have advice for me as well. *(TRACY shakes her head).* Are you all right?

Tracy: I've got a pain in my stomach.

Michael: You look as if you've been crying.

Tracy: I'll be O.K.

Michael: Are you sure?

Tracy: Yes. *(MICHAEL exits).*

Sonia: Why didn't you tell him?

Tracy: What could he do? That would have just made more trouble for him.

Rachel: He could report him. *(DUANE moves towards TRACY).*

Duane: It's a good job you didn't say anything.

Tracy: Are you worried I might do?

Duane: You say nothing. *(As TRACY, RACHEL and SONIA exit OTHER PUPILS enter. DUANE stands Centre Stage. They call out names. Music builds to a climax).*

Pupils: Bully, thug, liar, cheat, stupid, bighead, coward, show-off, thief, selfish, vandal, maniac, scum, poser, sly, troublemaker. *(DUANE turns and pushes his way through the crowd. Fade to Blackout. Music plays. Some PUPILS enter. RACHEL, SONIA and TRACY stand Downstage R. DUANE stands Upstage. JASON, BARRY and another BOY stand Downstage. JASON looks at his watch. He sees KATE approaching. He watches her passing. MRS. KING passes. She notices the stupefied look on JASON's face. She stops and looks at him. Music fades).*

Mrs. King: What's wrong with you?

Barry: He's got the blues, Miss.

Mrs. King: Can't he answer for himself?

Jason: I'm in love, Miss.

Mrs. King: Stupid creature. (*MRS. KING enters the Archway*).

Barry: Hey!

Pupil: What?

Barry: Come here. (*He puts out his hand*). Give.

Pupil: I don't have any money this morning.

Barry: Then you better go home and get some.

Pupil: I can't do that. (*BARRY grabs hold of the PUPIL*).

Barry: You'll do what I tell you. (*Pushing the PUPIL back*) Tomorrow! Don't forget! (*Another BOY grabs the victimised PUPIL from behind and pulls him to the ground. BARRY moves away. MICHAEL WOGGLE enters. He speaks to the BOY who has pulled the PUPIL to the ground*).

Michael: Nothing better to do? Perhaps one day you'll pick on someone your own size. Go on clear off. (*He looks at BARRY*). Have you had anything to do with this?

Barry: No.

Michael: Are you sure?

Barry: (*sneering*) I don't tell lies. (*MICHAEL takes a few steps towards the Archway. DUANE walks across to BARRY*).

Rachel: Have you marked my essay, sir?

Michael: It's in my bag. (*Opening bag*) Do you want it now? There you are. Those notes at the bottom of the page should help you. It's a good attempt.

Sonia: There's half a page of comments.

Michael: They're useful hints.

Rachel: Thank you sir.

Michael: Good morning Tracy.

Tracy: Good morning sir. (*MICHAEL continues towards the Archway*).

Duane: Oi! You've upset my mate.

Michael: I'm sure I have. (*Music plays. MICHAEL enters the Archway. The staffroom is set up. GWEN and KATE are sewing costumes. BILL is marking books. Music fades*).

Gwen: So all the soldiers will have red tunics. What about the trousers?

Bill: That would be a good idea.

Gwen: What colour?

Brigette: What do you think?

Gwen: I'll find out how many of them have black trousers. It will be the cheapest and the quickest way. How many ladies-in-waiting are there? (*To BILL*) No jokes please.

Brigette: About a dozen.

Gwen: You said there were ten last week.

Brigette: It's only another two.

Gwen: Can you tell me the exact number?

Brigette: I'll get my register.

Bill: Don't forget you're on duty today.

Brigette: Marvellous. I'll have to cancel the rehearsal. *(Beginning to exit)* It's Monday, I'm not on duty.

Bill: April fool.

Brigette: *(exiting)* Idiot.

Bill: Humour helps me survive.

Gwen: April the First, that means two weeks left. I need more time for these costumes.

Bill: Kate's helping you.

Kate: She'll still need more time.

Bill: Miss your duty today. Michael can come with me. *(Music plays. The staffroom is struck. MICHAEL approaches MRS. KING'S office. The "Receiving" sign is shown. MRS. KING is drinking tea. MICHAEL enters. Music fades).*

Michael: Mrs. King....

Mrs. King: *(looking at her watch)* Morning break commences at 10.35. It's ten thirty. Shouldn't you be with a class?

Michael: I'm on duty. Bill Leech told me that duty teachers were allowed to finish lessons five minutes early.

Mrs. King: So you wish to speak to me?

Michael: I need advice. I'm having a lot of trouble with Duane Unsworth. I don't know how to handle the situation.

Mrs. King: Have you talked to Miss Thompson or Bill Leech?

Michael: Yes.

Mrs. King: And?

Michael: I don't think they realise how serious it is.

Mrs. King: They are supposed to be looking after you. Talk to them again.

Michael: But Miss Thompson is busy with the school production.

Mrs. King: In a couple of weeks the production will be over. She should have more time then.

Michael: That may be too late.

Mrs. King: I don't think it's as desperate as you make it sound. What about Bill Leech?

Michael: I have tried to explain the problem but I find him difficult to talk to sometimes.

Mrs. King: Nonsense. Everyone gets on with Bill. *(She looks at her tea).* Well, why are you still waiting?

Michael: Advice Mrs. King. Everyone else seems pushed for time.

Mrs King: Not as pushed as me! Presumably you are on duty with Bill perhaps now is the time to talk to him. *(MICHAEL exits. MRS. KING sips the tea. She puts it down).* Cold! *(Music plays. Some PUPILS enter. JASON sees GWEN and KATE. He tucks in his shirt. Music fades).*

Jason: Hiya miss.

Kate: Hello Darren.

Jason: Jason, miss. It's Jason.

Kate: Oh yes, sorry.

Jason: *(sadly)* It's O.K. Miss. *(BARRY and DUANE have entered).*

Duane: Have you got a light, miss? *(KATE puts her hand into her handbag. She nods then quickly grabs DUANE's cigarette out of his mouth. She shreds the cigarette).* What did you do that for?

Kate: No smoking on school premises.

Duane: She's got no right to do that.

Gwen: I thought she handled the situation rather well.

Duane: It was my cigarette.

Gwen: Go away, Duane.

Duane: *(menacingly to KATE)* I'll remember this. *(To BARRY)* Come on, we're wagging off.

Gwen: *(calling after them)* I'll check to make sure you're in your next lesson.

Kate: He's evil.

Gwen: A law unto himself. Let's collect that material before break is over. *(GWEN and KATE exit. Other PUPILS enter and set up a stall. A notice above it reads "SINGLE CIGS").*

Pupil 1: What should I do when I see someone?

Pupil 2: Cough. Cigarettes! Get your Cigarettes! Only 15p each!

Pupil 3: They were fourteen pence last week.

Pupil 2: Well they're fifteen pence this week.

Pupil 4: It's a rip off.

Pupil 2: It's inflation. It's not my fault. Blame the government. Form a queue please! No pushing in! Don't take the risk of carrying a packet! Matches, two for a penny! *(BILL and MICHAEL enter. PUPIL 1 coughs loudly. The notice is reversed. It reads "Cancer Research". A cuddly toy is produced).*

Pupil 2: Raffle tickets anyone? Help cancer research. First prize this cute cuddly toy. Tickets 15 pence each. *(Stressing)* Don't lose your ticket.

Bill: Not a sign of a smoker. Word gets round when I'm on duty.

Pupil 2: You're against smoking sir. Do you want to buy a raffle ticket for cancer

research?

Bill: How much?

Pupil 2: Fifteen pence.

Bill: That's an odd amount.

Pupil 5: That's how much they are.

Bill: There's thirty pence, one for me and one for Mr. Woggle.

Michael: When are you making the draw?

Pupil 5: Thursday

Pupil 2: Friday. (*PUPIL 6 links with BILL. She leads him away from the stall.*)

Pupil 6: Sir, you know that homework you set us - could I discuss my opening paragraph with you?

Bill: Can you come at lunch time today?

Pupil 6: Thank you, sir. (*She returns to the stall.*)

Bill: Have you been to see the head?

Michael: Yes.

Bill: Is something wrong?

Michael: I went to see her about Duane Unsworth.

Bill: Why didn't you come to me first?

Michael: I needed advice.

Bill: You could have asked me.

Michael: I have asked you and Miss Thompson

Bill: You were very off-hand with Brigitte.

Michael: I'm having problems and all I've been told is set my discipline. If I could do that with all the pupils I wouldn't be asking for help.

Bill: Maybe you need to understand more about the background of the kids. Some of them are rough because of what happens when they're at home. How would you like to live on the Hollywell Estate?

Michael: I lived on a similar one. My parents still do. It is possible for kids to better themselves. A lot of them don't cause trouble. It's only when they're affected by the out and out bad ones.

Bill: You're taking a few difficult classes; perhaps a few tricks of the trade might help.

Michael: I'll listen to anything.

Bill: Organise yourself and materials, get the kids' attention and keep a sense of humour. That's it in a nutshell.

Michael: I could do with ideas to make some of the kids pay attention from the beginning of the lesson. They don't always listen when I start talking.

Bill: Try this one. Stand in front of the class, looking at them. Don't say anything. Wait. When they begin to quieten down hold up a pin. Tell them you want to hear that pin when when you drop it on the floor. I guarantee there will be

total silence. (*Music as scene changes to the staffroom. GWEN is outside the staffroom door. She is trying a costume against TREVOR. Music fades*).

Gwen: Are you enjoying being in the production?

Trevor: Yes miss.

Gwen: You've taken the main role. You should be proud. I'll need to take this in here. It's going to take some work, this one. We'll be trying some of the other costumes out tonight.

Trevor: Will Tracy be wearing hers?

Gwen: You seem to be showing a lot of interest in Tracy.

Trevor: She's all right.

Gwen: It doesn't seem to fit here either. (*She lifts up the pants. It forces TREVOR to his tiptoes. It's painful and seems an age for TREVOR*). O.K., off you go.

Trevor: (*staggering off*) See you later miss. (*JASON approaches. He laughs at TREVOR*).

Jason: Is Miss Thompson in the Staffroom?

Gwen: I'll look. (*She enters the staffroom*). Brigitte. Jason wishes to speak to you.

Brigitte: Come in Jason. How can I help you dear?

Jason: Mrs. em.... Mrs. em.... (*remembering*)Mrs. King wants to see you. She said it was urgent.

Brigitte: I was going to take this requisition to Miss Dale. It's for the paint. If I don't do it now I'll forget.

Jason: I'll take it miss.

Brigitte: I don't want you to be late for your lesson dear.

Jason: I'll run. I'll be really quick. I don't mind. Honest.

Brigitte: (*holding out the requisition note*) Well.... (*JASON takes it from her hand*).

Jason: You can count on me miss. Thank you, thank you very much.

Gwen: Jason. Wait a moment. (*To BRIGETTE*) Don't you think the paint will be rather heavy for Kate? What about sending the note to Michael?

Brigitte: Perhaps you're right.

Jason: I think Miss Dale is strong.

Brigitte: Mrs. Bond is right. Take it to Mr. Woggle.

Jason: Are you sure, miss?

Brigitte: Yes dear, off you go, thank you. (*JASON exits. Staffroom is struck. Music plays and fades. In her office MRS. KING is opening the drawers of her desk. She is looking for her sandwiches. She addresses BRIGETTE at the same time*).

Mrs. King: I don't know what I've done with them. I'll swear I brought them this morning. Ham and cheese. I thought I put them in my briefcase.

Brigette: Have you left them in your car?

Mrs. King: *(thinking)* No, I'm sure I brought them into school. *(She continues her search).*

Brigette: You wanted to see me. The pupil was under the impression that it was urgent.

Mrs. King: No, it's nothing really. The Hall floor will need to be polished for the play. It's a time when we need the school to look its best. I've spoken to the site manager and there seems to be a problem about the staging you've built. Is it possible to take it down?

Brigette: Why can't the caretaker polish round it?

Mrs. King: He says that the dust from under the staging will waft out onto the polish and spoil the overall effect.

Brigette: It's taken Bill Leech almost a week to build that apron. It's nailed together.

Mrs. King: But I can see the site manager's point of view. Can it be taken down?

Brigette: I don't have the time.

Mrs. King: What about Mr. Leech?

Brigette: Could you chat with the caretaker again?

Mrs. King: The site manager.

Brigette: The site manager.

Mrs. King: Leave it with me then.

Brigette: Thank you. *(BRIGETTE turns to exit).*

Mrs. King: Are our new teachers settled in?

Brigette: Yes, no great problems.

Mrs. King: Good. *(Searching for her sandwiches again).* It's just that.... *(She opens the drawers of her desk again)* Never mind. *(She closes the drawers and looks puzzled).*

Brigette: Why don't you have a school dinner, Mrs. King? *(A look of horror comes on MRS. KING'S face).*

Mrs. King: Not one of your more sensible suggestions, Brigette. *(Music plays. MICHAEL WOGGLE and his class take up freeze positions Centre Stage. Music fades. GWEN meets JASON in front of the classroom).*

Gwen: Jason.

Jason: Yes, miss.

Gwen: Don't forget to bring your costume tonight.

Jason: What for, miss?

Gwen: The rehearsal.

Jason: Oh.

Gwen: *(exiting)* Did you give the requisition note to Mr. Woggle? *(JASON searches his pockets. He cannot find the note. He enters the area*

representing MICHAEL's Classroom. MICHAEL holds up a pin).

Michael: Be quiet now. Watch this. You'll find it interesting. When I drop this pin I want to hear it when it hits the floor. *(There is silence. JASON raises his hand and attempts to speak. Other PUPILS "sh" him. They force him to sit down. After further "sh's" there is silence again. MICHAEL drops the pin. There is a loud cheer followed by laughing and shouting. MICHAEL can almost be heard calling, "O.K., right, quiet...." ad lib.... as he unsuccessfully attempts to get silence. Lights fade. Music plays. The staffroom is set up. BRIGETTE stands Upstage. Music fades).*

Bill: What time is the dress rehearsal tonight?

Gwen: Don't call it that. You'll give Brigitte a heart attack. There are still another two weeks to the dress rehearsal.

Brigitte: Everything is under control. The rehearsal begins at six thirty. *(GWEN moves to pick up a costume).*

Gwen: I'll have to alter the king's costume before I come back to school. I suppose I could do it whilst I'm peeling the potatoes.

Brigitte: You've had a lot of trouble with Trevor's costume. I thought you were organising it after the last rehearsal. *(BRIGETTE sits).*

Gwen: I was but he had the runs.

Bill: The king needed the throne.

Gwen: By the time he came out of the loo it was too late. *(She sits. MICHAEL enters. He sits next to BILL. He sighs audibly).*

Bill: What's the matter?

Michael: You made me look a right idiot.

Gwen: What's he done?

Michael: I did what he said. I held up a pin. Eventually there was silence. I dropped it. They cheered, then shouted and carried on shouting until the end of the lesson.

Brigitte: You either control them or you take what comes.

Michael: I don't want to take it. I'm beginning to realise that I haven't quite got the hang of it but nobody seems to be offering any reasonable advice. I think some of you are oblivious to what happens in this school.

Brigitte: *(annoyed)* I do know what happens but I don't always have the time to deal with everything. It's difficult for us all.

Gwen: It's not an easy job.

Michael: That doesn't help me deal with someone like Duane Unsworth.

Brigitte: In three months he will have left this school.

Bill: With a few years experience you'll be able to handle pupils like Duane.

Michael: But what about now? Surely something can be done about him?

Brigitte: We have to try and educate him.

Michael: So we take what he dishes out.

Bill: It's part of the game.

Michael: And if I don't want to take it?

Brigette: Then you'll have to find another occupation.

Michael: *(exiting)* Thanks for the advice.

Bill: Don't blame us, we haven't created the system.

Michael: You could try and do something about it.

Brigette: We don't have the power. *(MICHAEL exits).*

Gwen: There are some ways in which he can be helped.

Bill: It's obviously not the right job for him.

Kate: I think it is. All he needs is the right guidance.

Brigette: Then maybe that's a job for you. *(Music plays. The staffroom is struck. STAFF exit. MICHAEL stands Downstage L. DUANE approaches. Music fades).*

Duane: I've heard about the pin.... and the prick. *(He turns towards the archway. BRIGETTE comes out of the back entrance).*

Brigette: Shouldn't you be in a lesson?

Duane: So should you. *(He walks to the Archway. He exits with BRIGETTE calling after him).*

Brigette: One moment young man. I'd like a word with you. You can't speak to me in that way. Don't walk away from me. I am not going to walk down the corridor after you. *(She goes through the Archway. KATE comes out of the back entrance).*

Kate: Michael, I want to help.

Michael: And how can you?

Kate: I could listen to you. We could discuss what happens at school. That could be a help. What if we start this Friday night?

Michael: What about Bill?

Kate: It doesn't matter about Bill.

Michael: Do you mean that? *(KATE nods. KATE and MICHAEL remain Downstage L. They converse. PUPILS enter. BILL and GWEN enter).*

Gwen: There's Trevor.

Bill: And the lottery organiser. *(BILL and GWEN approach the LOTTERY ORGANISER, PUPIL 2).* When is the draw for the raffle?

Pupil 2: It was yesterday, sir.

Bill: And who was the lucky winner?

Pupil 2: It was me, sir. It was on the level.

Bill: Can we have a chat about this?

Pupil 2: It's lunchtime.

Bill: It won't take long. *(GWEN moves to TREVOR).*

Gwen: I need to see you about your costume before the rehearsal.

Trevor: Should I come when I've finished my sandwiches?

Gwen: Come to the Staffroom at twelve thirty.

Trevor: O.K. *(As he enters the Archway a smashing of glass is heard. TREVOR darts straight back)*. It wasn't me.

Gwen: Then who was it?

Pupil: *(entering)* It was me, miss.

Gwen: *(to BILL)* That's the third window he's broken this week.

Pupil: It was an accident.

Gwen: It's time your parents were sent for.

Pupil: My dad will be in school next week.

Gwen: And what's the reason for that?

Pupil: He's the school glazier.

Gwen: Smashing.

Pupil: Was that a joke, miss?

Gwen: No, it wasn't.

Bill: Let's clear up the mess.

Gwen: *(spotting KATE and MICHAEL)* There's someone you didn't notice. *(BILL steps towards them. GWEN takes hold of his arm)*. Window.

Bill: I didn't break it.

Gwen: Leave them. *(BILL, GWEN and the PUPIL exit through the archway. TREVOR approaches TRACY)*.

Trevor: Can I talk to you?

Tracy: Of course you can.

Trevor: In private.

Rachel: We won't listen.

Trevor: I want to ask.... *(He looks at RACHEL and SONIA who are listening. He takes TRACY by the hand and moves Downstage Centre)*. I want to go out with you.

Tracy: Then ask me.

Trevor: That's what I've just done.

Tracy: I'll have to think about it.

Trevor: How long will that take?

Tracy: I'll tell you tomorrow.

Trevor: Tomorrow!

Tracy: *(winking, then crossing to her friends)* Tomorrow.

Sonia: Was he asking you out?

Tracy: Yes.

Rachel: And?

Tracy: Keep them sweating. *(RACHEL sniffs and shrugs her shoulders)*.

BRIGETTE enters from the Archway).

Brigette: Mr. Woggle. What's the news on my paint?

Michael: What paint?

Brigette: Jason did bring you a requisition?

Michael: Not that I can remember.

Brigette: Jason! Come and stand next to me, dear. The note you were supposed to give to Mr. Woggle.

Jason: The note?

Brigette: Where is it?

Jason: Where is it?

Brigette: The note?

Jason: The note?

Brigette: Stop repeating everything I'm saying and tell me what you've done with it.

Jason: I've lost it.

Brigette: You've lost it!

Jason: Yes, miss.

Brigette: Yes, miss! Is that all you can say?

Jason: Sorry, miss.

Brigette: Sorry, miss, isn't good enough. I have a schedule to keep to. I need that paint today. What is everyone looking at? Am I the cabaret?

Michael: I'll go tonight.

Brigette: Too late Mr. Woggle.

Michael: I don't mind.

Brigette: I will organise it myself. Why is everyone round here? There are other areas in the school. Miss Dale, your file is ready for collection from my office. I don't seem to have seen yours this time, Mr. Woggle. *(PUPILS exit. KATE exits. As BRIGETTE begins to exit DUANE comes through the Archway).*

Brigette: I want to speak to you. *(DUANE ignores her. BRIGETTE is annoyed but still exits).*

Duane: Lost your classroom?

Michael: Leave me alone.

Duane: You're staring into space.

Michael: Go away! *(Almost forehead to forehead DUANE stares into MICHAEL's eyes).*

Duane: I can go where I like.

Michael: I said go away!

Duane: Get stuffed. *(MICHAEL raises his hand. Quickly DUANE takes out a knife).* I've warned you before. Don't try that with me. Wait and see what

happens next time. *(He points the knife at MICHAEL, gives a short laugh and moves to the Archway).*

Michael: Get.... back.... here! *(DUANE exits. Music plays. Lights out. BARRY, JASON and another BOY climb under the open Rostra. Stage R. Lights up. The BOYS are laughing and arguing over cigarettes. Enter MRS. KING. Music fades).*

Mrs. King: Who's in there?

Barry: Sh.

Mrs. King: Get out. *(They climb out).* What are you doing under there?

Barry: Testing the structure of the stage for Miss Thompson.

Mrs. King: Testing out cigarettes is what I think you were doing. Hand them over. *(She puts out her hand).*

Barry: I don't have any, miss..

Mrs. King: Don't make matters worse for yourself by lying. *(BARRY hands over his cigarettes).* Any more contributions? *(The other BOYS hand over cigarettes and matches).* There's enough here to open a tobacconist's. Do you know you could have burnt the school to the ground? *(To BARRY)* Don't you dare grin. What's that in your hand?

Barry: Sandwiches, miss.

Mrs. King; Oh, picnic as well.

Jason: We weren't going to eat them, miss. They're for a joke.

Barry: Shut up.

Mrs. King: Hand them over.

Barry: These?

Mrs. King: Yes.

Barry: They're my lunch.

Mrs. King: And I'm confiscating it.

Barry: I've had nothing to eat.

Mrs. King: That's because you've been too busy smoking.

Smoker: They're only chutney, miss.

Mrs. King: I like chutney sandwiches.

Barry: You won't like those.

Mrs. King: I'll give you my opinion tomorrow night when you come to my office for a detention.

Jason: I have a rehearsal, miss.

Mrs. King: Had, a rehearsal. *(Music plays. MRS. KING enters her Office. Lights fade out on her. The BOYS exit. MICHAEL and a number of PUPILS take up places in the area representing Michael's classroom. Music fades).*

Pupil 2: Where's Duane, sir?

Michael: He won't be in this class any more.

Pupil 3: Has he been promoted?

Michael: No, removed.

Pupil 4: That's good news for all of us.

Pupil 5: He shouldn't be allowed in an ordinary school.

Michael: Well, he's still here.

Pupil 6: I thought you said he's been removed.

Michael: From this class.

Pupil 1: He beat up a year eight boy last night.

Michael: I don't want to hear about it.

Pupil 2: Loads of people saw it.

Michael: Can we begin the lesson now? (*He looks at the PUPILS. They settle.*)
Good. We're going to look at a book by Leon Garfield.

Pupil 3: Is it just reading we're going to do?

Michael: We'll read, we'll design a boardgame based on part of the book and we'll complete some written work of different points of view.

Pupil 4: I don't mind the boardgame.

Michael: And I don't mind the work on point of view. So that means we're all catered for. Angela, would you like to begin reading?

Pupil 5: Have you got this on a tape?

Michael: No. By looking at words we learn to read them, spell them and use our imaginations.

Pupil 5: I still think a tape is a good idea.

Michael: Well, you've got me thinking there. Perhaps we should make one. We could even dramatise extracts. Add sound effects if you like. (*The PUPILS like this idea.*)

Pupil 6: I'll read first if you want, sir.

Michael: Thank you, Sharon. (*Lights fade. Music plays. Exit of MICHAEL and CLASS. Lights on MRS. KING's office. Music fades.*)

Brigette: Everything is under control. Duane will sit with Bill when he should be in Michael Woggle's lesson.

Mrs. King: It's good to know you've taken the trouble to help him. He's new and still learning the ropes. (*She taps some sandwiches.*) Do you think this wrapping will have kept these sandwiches fresh? I confiscated them yesterday. I've forgotten mine again.

Brigette: They should be all right.

Mrs. King: I hear Kate is doing well. Now there is a good reason for employing as many probationers as possible. She seems a very capable young lady.

Brigette: She still needs a certain amount of experience.

Mrs. King: Still, she's made a good start.

Brigette: Yes. Probationary teachers are cheaper but you don't buy experience.

Mrs. King: I am aware of that. Hm. *(She looks at the sandwiches).*

Brigette: I'm sure they'll be all right. *(MRS. KING nods).*

Mrs. King: How is the school production shaping up?

Brigette: There have been a few minor hiccups but everything is running smoothly.
Oh and thank you for convincing our site manager that it was unnecessary to dismantle the staging.

Mrs. King: I'm here to help. We'll toast your expected success. *(She produces a bottle of sherry and two glasses. She pours).* You'll have a sherry?

Brigette: Thank you very much. *(She drinks it in one go. MRS. KING raises her head after pouring her own drink and lifts the glass).*

Mrs. King: To the.... oh.... another glass, Brigette?

Brigette: Well.... *(MRS. KING pours then toasts).*

Mrs. King: To next Monday, your first night. *(Again BRIGETTE knocks back the drink in one go).*

Brigette: *(indicating the sandwiches)* I'll leave you to your lunch then.

Mrs. King: Yes.

Brigette: Fine. *(She exits. MRS. KING unwraps the sandwiches. She holds one up then takes a bite. It tastes extremely unpleasant. She scowls. She lifts a slice to inspect the contents of the sandwich. She groans at what she sees. She drops the sandwich on the desk. Music plays. Music fades as lights come up. PUPILS stand around. DUANE sits on the steps. MICHAEL walks towards the Archway. He stops when he sees DUANE).*

Duane: I've been keeping out of your way. Leech said I have to go easy on you. I have to sit in his lessons when I'm supposed to be with you. *(MICHAEL walks forward. DUANE stands).* I don't know why he's protecting you. You haven't done him any favours, have you? You and Miss Dale. Everything is turning out all right for you.

Michael: I don't want to listen to you.

Duane: I don't want to stay with Leech. Tell him you'll teach me.

Michael: Excuse me but I need to go into school. *(DUANE blocks MICHAEL's way). Move out of my way! (With his arm he tries to move DUANE. DUANE immediately responds by pushing MICHAEL Downstage. The scene is of great interest to the other PUPILS).*

Duane: *(pushing)* I've told you about that!

(pushing) I've told you, haven't I?

(pushing) You can't touch me.

Michael: *(forcefully pushing DUANE to one side)* Excuse me! *(DUANE runs to the top of the steps and blocks MICHAEL's way again. He brandishes a knife).*

Duane: You don't listen to me do you? *(MICHAEL grabs DUANE by the arm and*

pulls him down the steps. The knife falls from DUANE's hand. DUANE lies at the bottom of the steps. MICHAEL lifts DUANE's head by the hair. All PUPILS are silent).

Michael: Why is this all you understand? *(MICHAEL turns and walks up the steps. DUANE gets up. Blood is on his hand. MICHAEL turns and faces DUANE as he speaks).*

Duane: You've cut my hand. *(Exiting)* You can all see what he's done. You're my witnesses. *(SONIA picks up the knife and hands it to MICHAEL).*

Sonia: *(quietly)* You've won, sir. *(Lights fade. Music plays. ALL exit. Music fades. Lights up on MICHAEL. He stands in MRS. KING'S Office).*

Mrs. King: He will be suspended for seven days but you must realise you have created a difficult situation for us. I hear a different story from every child I interview. I cannot begin to think what these children are telling their parents. This could finish up in the press and that's something we don't want. You assaulted him.

Michael: He was holding a knife.

Mrs. King: Can you be one hundred percent certain he meant to harm you?

Michael: He was threatening me.

Mrs. King: There have been a number of incidents between the two of you.

Michael: He breaks rule after rule.

Mrs. King: He can, but I'm afraid you can't. Hopefully the suspension will spell out to his parents the seriousness of his actions. Knives are not allowed in school. I asked his parents to come to school this morning, his father is in jail again, his mother refused. Maybe that is the matter closed.

Michael: What happens when he returns after suspension?

Mrs. King: We will deal with him in the best way we can. I will do everything I can to support you. *(Lights out. Music used for the SOLDIERS in the school production scene is played. The school cast take their bows. MRS. KING and staff stand Downstage L. & R. They clap. MRS. KING steps in front of the school cast).*

Mrs. King: *(clapping)* I want to add my own applause to what has been a marvellous production. The cast has worked extremely hard, they're tired after their long week but I think I can say they have enjoyed creating another triumph. Of course, they did have some help. I must mention Mr. Leech, Mrs. Bond and Miss Thompson, who directed the production. *(TRACY steps forward and whispers to MRS. KING).* The cast have some flowers they wish to present to Miss Thompson. *(Flowers are passed to TRACY).*

Tracy: *(to BRIGETTE)* These are to say thankyou for organising the production and being a good teacher. *(EVERYONE claps).*

Brigette: Thank you everyone. It was a smashing production, I was proud of you

all. There is one more celebration I want to share with you. It's my mother's seventy-fifth birthday, and she's here tonight. With your permission I would like to give these flowers to her and say, Happy Birthday, mother. (*As BRIGETTE presents the flowers and the cast are applauding, MRS. UNSWORTH is forcing her way in through one of the school hall entrances*).

Mrs. Unsworth: I know what's happening. That's why I'm here. Try and stop me. (*She enters*). Get off me. (*She walks towards the school stage*). Me damned shoe's come off. (*She stops and puts on her shoe*). Keep looking at me because I'm going up there, then you'll hear something.

Mrs. King: (*to BRIGETTE*) What is going on? (*By now MRS. UNSWORTH is on the school stage*).

Brigette: Come along Mrs. Unsworth. We'll deal with you in my office.

Mrs. Unsworth: It's Mrs. King I want to see.

Brigette: She'll be along in a moment.

Mrs. Unsworth: I want everybody to hear what I have to say.

Mrs. King: This is hardly the place.

Mrs. Unsworth: This is exactly where I want to do it. Where is he? (*She spots MICHAEL*). Is that him? Is that the teacher who maims school children?

Mrs. King: That is a very strong accusation.

Mrs. Unsworth: (*ignoring MRS. KING*) This teacher threw my son down some steps, pulled his hair and cut his hand with a knife.

Mrs. King: Your son attacked Mr. Woggle. It was a case of self-defence. Now I would be obliged if we could continue this dialogue in private.

Mrs. Unsworth: I want everybody to know what this school's like. (*To MICHAEL*) If my husband was here, you'd be in bits by now.

Mrs. King: Mr. Leech, please.

Mr. Leech: (*putting his arm round MRS. UNSWORTH*) Come on, Mrs. Unsworth, you've had your say.

Mrs. Unsworth: Get your arm off me, I'm not finished.

Brigette: I think you've made your comments, quite clearly.

Mrs. Unsworth: My son was injured and he's off school....

Mrs. King: He is suspended.

Mrs. Unsworth: I want to know what is going to happen about that teacher?

Mrs. King: That teacher was confronted by your son brandishing a knife. Mr. Woggle acted to protect himself. There has been incident after incident since your son began attending this school. We had hoped that maybe we could make something of him but we failed and consequently a member of my staff has been attacked.

Tracy: So was I.

Mrs. King: I'm sorry.

Tracy: He beat me up. I have witnesses. We are prepared to take it to a court of law.

Mrs. King: Why have I not been informed of this?

Tracy: It would have caused more trouble for Mr. Woggle.

Mrs. Unsworth: I don't know anything about this.

Mrs. King: I'll make enquiries.

Mrs. Unsworth: It's probably a lie.

Pupil: He beat up a boy last week. (*PUPILS agree*).

Mrs. Unsworth: That's another lie!

Mrs. King: I'm not prepared to discuss this any further in public. Evidence mounts against your lot of a son. I suggest you remove yourself from these premises before I ring for the police. (*To the PARENTS and FRIENDS*) I must apologise for this. I hope it hasn't spoiled your evening. Thank you for coming.

Mrs. Unsworth: (*exiting*) You won't hear the end of this.

Tracy: (*to MRS. KING*) I think we have, miss. (*Music plays. The CAST face Upstage. As they turn to face the AUDIENCE they speak. The music fades*).

Cast: In my day you got a clip across the ear.

Teachers are not tough enough.

They can't lay a finger on them now.

It's the government's fault.

I blame the parents.

There's all that violence on television.

Aggression is encouraged in society.

The older teachers should help the younger teachers.

There are sanctions they can apply in schools.

They don't have to put up with bad behaviour.

There have always been difficult kids.

Some of them grow out of it.

One bad apple.

We can't keep turning away from it.

The police deal with far worse.

It's not all gloom and doom.

Gwen: I try my best.

Bill: In five years time it will be five times as bad.

Mrs. King: This is my school and I think that over the years I have created a warm, caring and friendly atmosphere. (*Music plays. CAST walk round. MRS. KING returns to her office. BRIGETTE calls across Stage to two young TEACHERS. Music stops. Everyone stands still*).

Brigette: Miss Lockwood and Mr. Harrison. Very pleasant to see you both again.

Miss Lockwood: Please call me Helen.

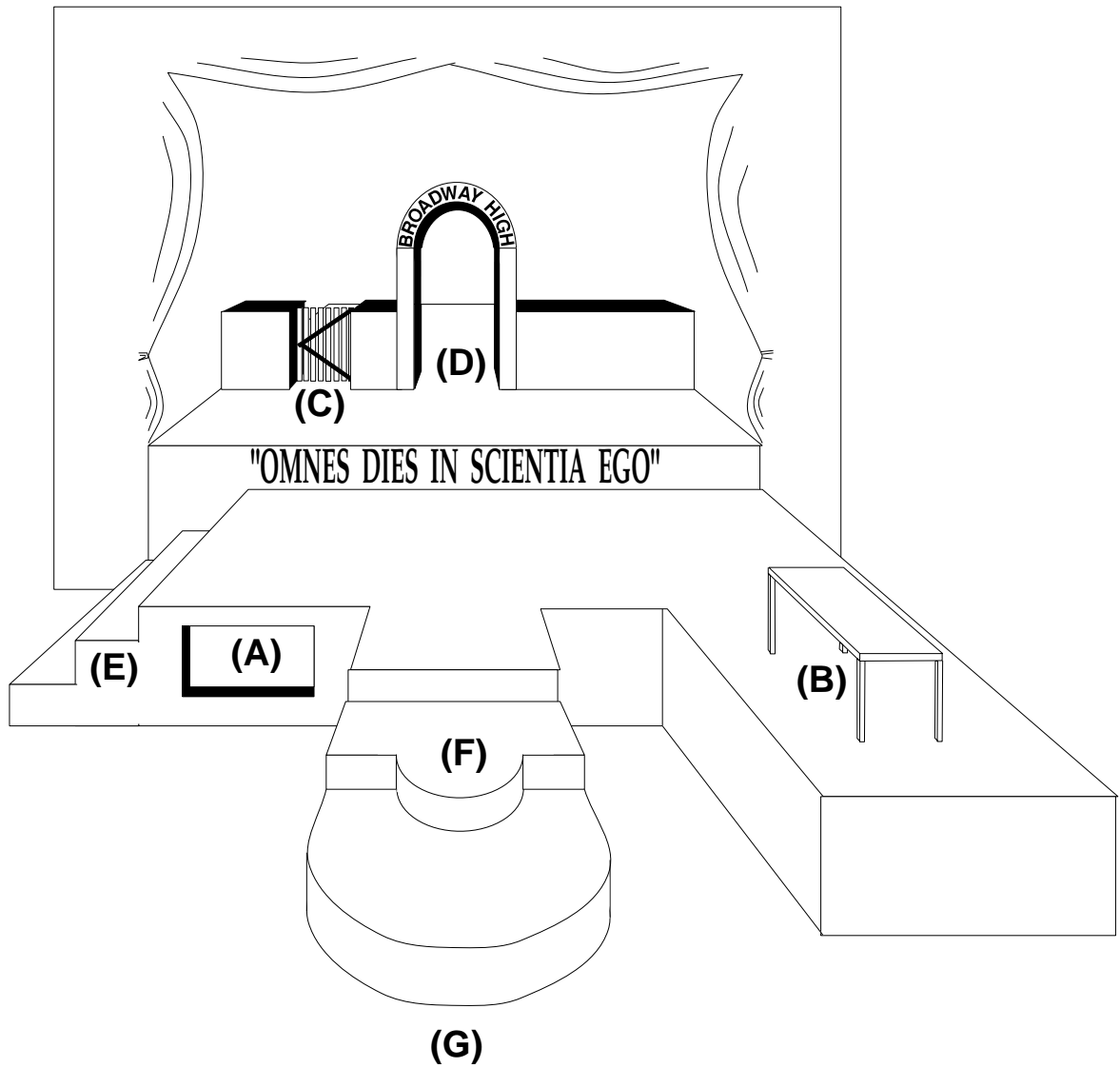
Brigette: Helen. Well there's nothing to worry about today. We like our teachers to settle in without any sort of rush. That's why we ask you to come at the end of the morning. The school is ticking over nicely and you're not caught in the hurly-burly. (*A PUPIL bumps into her*). Excuse me! What is your name?

Pupil: Shaun.

Brigette: Shaun who?

Pupil: Shaun Unsworth.

THE END



- (A) Smokers' hideout
- (B) Headteacher's office
- (C) Back gate
- (D) Archway
- (E) Back steps
- (F) Main steps
- (G) Floor level