

PERUSAL SCRIPT

BUMPS

by
Eric Samuelson



Newport, Maine

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BUMPS

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BUMPS by Eric Samuelsen was commissioned by Theatre Arts Conservatory received its world premiere November 5, 2009 in a Plan-B Theatre/Theatre Arts Conservatory co-production, directed by Mark Fossen with the following cast:

Sheridan Underwood: Jackie
Yarden Zamir: Toby
Noelani Blueford: Kelli
Hannah Lobell: Terri
Bria White: New Kid
Sarah Eckstein: First
Zoey Riches: Second
Gabriela Taras: Third
Grace Fojtik: Fourth
Lauren Livingston: Teddy
Matt Groy: Crittenden
Alexis Schmid: Chess One
Megan Librizzi: Chess Two
Emily Harris: Dani
Emma Munson: Davi
Claire Wilson: Mom

CAST OF CHARACTERS — 6th Graders (5m, 3f, 8either)

NOTE: All the characters in the play, except for MOM, TEDDY & CRITTENDEN could be played by male or female actors. KELLI could be KELLY, TERRI could be TERRY, and so on. Doubling may be possible, but is not recommended

YOGI and JOE (3m 2f)

Jackie - M
Toby - M
Kelli - F
Terri - F
New Kid (Matt) - M

FOURSQUARE (4either, 2m)

First
Second
Third
Fourth
Teddy - M
Crittenden — a bully - M

CLUBHOUSE (4 either, 1f, 2m)

Chess One
Chess Two
Dani
Davi
Crittenden — a bully - M
New Kid (Matt) - M
Mom - F

BUMPS a play by Eric Samuelsen. TYA. 4m, 3f, 9either. Modern costumes. About the social order of a playground, along with the attendant bullying, BUMPS presents a microcosmic view of elementary school life. Baseball(YOGI and JOE), Foursquare(FOURSQUARE), and Chess(CLUBHOUSE) are groups focused on, along with their attendant participants and their interactions with those inside and outside of their circles. The wonderful twist at the end that ties all the groups and the action together is a wonderful reveal and will delight school-ages actors and audiences. The roles can be played by any aged actor from 5th grade through young adults, even college-aged actors could tour this to young audiences. Commissioned by Theatre Arts Conservatory, it received its world premiere in 2009 in a Plan-B Theatre/Theatre Arts Conservatory co-production **ORDER # 3279**

Eric Samuelsen taught at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio before joining the faculty at Brigham Young University in 1992. He became head of the Playwriting program at BYU in 1999. He has also taught as an adjunct faculty member in the Religion department. He retired from BYU in 2012.

As a playwright, Samuelsen has had twenty-seven plays professionally produced in Utah, Indiana, Louisiana, New York, and California. Some of his plays include *Gadianton*, which has seen three professional productions across the country, *A Love Affair with Electrons*, *Family*, *The Plan*, and *The Way We're Wired*. He is resident playwright at Plan-B Theatre Company in Salt Lake City, who designated their 2013-14 season a 'Season of Eric, including productions of six of his plays.

He is a member of the Playwrights' Circle, and the Dramatists Guild. He is three-time winner of the Annual Award in Playwriting offered by the Association for Mormon Letters (AML) and he became president of AML in 2007. In 2013 the organization awarded him the Smith Pettit Award for his lifetime work as a playwright.

He has been a staff writer for the on-line satirical magazine *The Sugarbeet*. He was also featured in the book *Conversations with Mormon Authors*, edited by Chris Bigelow. He is a noted Ibsen translator, and has also published scholarly articles on 19th and 20th century Scandanavian Theatre, and more recently, on LDS drama and film. He blogged at Mormoniconoclast.com. Eric died in September of 2019 after a long battle with polymyositis. This has left a huge hole in the Theatre Community within, and outside of, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

BUMPS

ACT ONE

Open space, which begins the play serving as a baseball field. Enter the actors playing JACKIE, TOBY, KELLI, TERRI.

ALL: Yogi and Joe. Act One.

(They assume their roles. They look around the field, assessing its possibilities. They're carrying baseball gloves, bats, JACKIE tosses a ball up and down and catches it, a reflex.)

JACKIE: So okay.

TOBY: Like I told you.

JACKIE: Definite possibilities.

TERRI: Are we even supposed to be here?

JACKIE: Don't see anything says we can't.

TERRI: That doesn't mean crap.

JACKIE: I think it's cool. I think someone built us a ballpark.

TERRI: Nobody just builds kids a ballpark.

KELLI: How did you hear about this place?

TOBY: I just found it.

TERRI: You found it?

TOBY: Yes, Terri. I was riding my bike, saw this path...

KELLI: Cool.

TOBY: Rode down it, and found, you know, this.

KELLI: A ball field. It's really very cool.

JACKIE: Man, they even mowed the grass.

TERRI: Someone's gonna show up any second now—

TOBY: It's got a backstop. It's got basepaths. Check it out, it's got bases.

KELLI: I don't see bases.

TOBY: In that storage shed.

TERRI: You looked in the storage shed.

TOBY: How else would I know what's in it?

TERRI: Look, we don't have permission to be here. We don't.

TOBY: Well, they set out all this stuff, so I think...

JACKIE: I think they probably want us to play ball.

TERRI: Or they want to.

TOBY: I don't see anyone here.

TERRI: I can't believe you guys. This place belongs to someone.

TOBY: So?

TERRI: So what are we doing here?

JACKIE: It's a ball field. We play ball.

TERRI: No parents, no ump's, no league, no supervision.

JACKIE: Just baseball.

TOBY: Like Yogi Berra.

KELLI: Who?

JACKIE: Tell 'em.

TOBY: I read this book. Yogi Berra, he's in the Hall of Fame, he was a catcher for the Yankees.

KELLI: When?

JACKIE: I don't know, a long time ago.

KELLI: So we're supposed to care because...?

JACKIE: Not that long ago, he's still alive and all.

TOBY: He has an Aflac commercial.

KELLI: Caveman or duck?

TOBY: Duck. Cavemen are Geiko.

KELLI: Right, right.

TERRI: If somebody gets hurt, we're gonna need insurance, there's going to be all kinds of—

KELLI: So Yogi bear...?

TOBY: Berra. Anyway, I was reading this thing, he grew up in like St. Louis? And he says he basically just played baseball all day, every summer. There were like a ton of kids in this neighborhood, and they had

a ball field and all, and they just played. His best friend was this guy, Joe something, starts with a G, long name, no idea how to pronounce it—

KELLI: Yeah, who cares. So this Yogi...?

TOBY: Well, they played. Him and Joe whoever. Said they'd play 8, 10 full games a day, sometimes. And he said he knew he'd make it to the majors 'cause he saw some of the older guys he'd played with, and they made it, and he knew he was better than them.

KELLI: Eight, ten games a day?

TOBY: Yeah. In this book I read.

KELLI: Big deal. You and me, we play more'n that. We've played fifty games a day, sometimes.

TOBY: Sure, Playstation. But this was like real baseball.

KELLI: Same thing.

JACKIE: No way.

KELLI: It's a game, what does format have to do with...?

TOBY: It's not just format, it's like

KELLI: Is too, it's baseball either way.

TOBY: No way, it's like watching a movie about space aliens and actually, you know, going up in a space ship and all.

KELLI: Which doesn't exist.

TOBY: Well, baseball exists.

KELLI: In several formats, and it doesn't matter which one you...

JACKIE: It matters.

(Pause.)

KELLI: Well, you say that, but what I think is...

JACKIE: If a ball hits you in real baseball, it can break your arm. Hits you in the head, like a line drive or a fastball, it can kill you.

KELLI: Well, that would suck.

TERRI: And if it's really that dangerous, then I can't see why we should have anything to do...

JACKIE: We play *because* it's dangerous. We play because it's real.

TERRI: And I'm saying, I'm not sure we should be doing something....

JACKIE: Terri. Last month, right? You hit that flare to right. And it was going to be a close play at second, and you slid.

TERRI: Okay...

JACKIE: Barely safe.

TERRI: I was safe. No way was that throw gonna get me.

JACKIE: How did that feel?

TERRI: Well, it hurt. I skinned my knee.

JACKIE: Yeah. Blood and grass stains on your knee. And your Mom started to walk out on the field.

TOBY: And you waved her off.

TERRI: Yeah.

JACKIE: And you walked it off. Then what happened?

TERRI: You singled, and I scored that run, and we had the lead, and we almost won.

JACKIE: How'd that feel?

TERRI: Okay. I get what you're saying.

JACKIE: Anything else we do match that?

TOBY: No way.

KELLI: Guess not.

TERRI: No.

JACKIE: Which is what I'm saying. Which is why this is so perfect.

KELLI: Why?

JACKIE: My point is, we got all that. A league and a team and everything. And we suck.

TERRI: Which is why I'm saying we don't need—

JACKIE: We're terrible. We're in last place. We're the worst team in the—

TOBY: We beat Oak Park. Technically, they're the worst team.

JACKIE: So one win. Next to last place. We're bad.

KELLI: We are kind of bad.

JACKIE: We can't hit. We can't field. We can't pitch, except when I'm pitching. And we're terrible baserunners.

TERRI: Except me.

JACKIE: Except you.

KELLI: I know who you're going to blame for this.

TERRI: Nobody's blaming anyone.

KELLI: My dad does the very best he can. He's really busy, they've got him working all kinds of extra hours at work, and still he's there whenever he can, for most of the games, plus he really cares, enough to buy all those instructional videos—

TERRI: We know, Kelli. He's a really good coach.

TOBY: And the instructional videos are great.

JACKIE: But you don't learn to play baseball from...we sit around a-a-a computer monitor, and

TOBY: We don't actually play that much actual baseball.

JACKIE: Yeah! I wanna play ball! I want to hit and field and pitch and slide into second. There's enough kids in our neighborhood to make teams; we just need a field, and this, Toby, man, it's great.

TOBY: I thought so.

KELLI: Well, look, I've got my piano lesson at three and dance at four thirty, so...

JACKIE: So let's do this.

TERRI: No. No no no.

JACKIE: Why not?

TERRI: With no adults? No supervision?

TOBY: Don't see any.

TERRI: With real bats? And real balls? You said it, people can get killed.

TOBY: Pretty unlikely.

TERRI: Well, hurt, anyway. Broken arm you said.

TOBY: I don't think any of us actually throw the ball hard enough to...

TERRI: My point is, what if someone gets hurt, we could have a serious situation. We're swinging aluminum bats, a line drive to the head or something. How do we get help? What do we do?

(They all stare at TERRI like s/he's a dweeb. They all pull out their cell phones and show him/her. S/he backs down.)

Okay okay.

JACKIE: So you're with us.

TERRI: I guess.

JACKIE: Awesome. Terr, you won't regret it.

TERRI: I'm already regretting...

JACKIE: *(Taking charge.)* Okay, Toby, get the bases out of the shed, see what else is there.

TOBY: Catcher's gear'd be great.

JACKIE: Sure would. Kell, go see where the others are. We need more players; we could make five per side work if we had to. Terr, check out that gate by the fence. Someone hits a home run, we could lose our ball, unless they let us in their yard.

TERRI: Okay, fine.

(She and KELLI exit.)

TOBY: Jackie. There is one thing.

JACKIE: What?

TOBY: Look, this is an awesome field. I mean, I found it, I'm all about this ballfield.

JACKIE: Sure.

TOBY: But Terri has a point. Somebody had to make it.

JACKIE: Sure.

TOBY: What do we do if they show up?

JACKIE: We talk to 'em.

TOBY: They're not gonna be kids, Jackie. They're gonna be grownups.

JACKIE: Yeah.

TOBY: They're not gonna want us using their stuff. We're just kids. They're gonna get pissed, they might even call our parents.

JACKIE: Maybe. Or maybe they just go, 'hey, someone's using our ballfield, awesome.'

TOBY: Yeah.

JACKIE: They built it, right? They have to want people to use it.

TOBY: With permission. Which we don't have.

JACKIE: I'll talk to 'em.

TOBY: You'll talk to 'em?

JACKIE: It's gonna be fine.

TOBY: It's just there's kids and there's grownups. And they don't see things the same way.

JACKIE: I'll explain it to 'em.

7 more pages to the end of ACT ONE:

NEW KID: *(And we can see something new in him, something less formal and nerdy, a toughness.)* First ups.

JACKIE: Play ball.

(Blackout, exuent. Music.)

ACT TWO

(Enter FIRST SQUARE, SECOND SQUARE, THIRD SQUARE, FOURTH SQUARE. The actors playing those roles face the audience in semi-darkness.)

ALL: Foursquare. Second act.

(Lights up. They stand in a square, milling about, looking around.)

FOURTH: Okay. Let's be very careful people. What are we seeing?

SECOND: Three groups that are maybe a little scary: gym, bike rack, over by the library door.

FOURTH: Okay.

THIRD: Shop. Not really looking our way.

FOURTH: What about Crittenden, Eads, those guys?

FIRST: I think they're having some sort of turf war with Los Zetas.

FOURTH: Where?

FIRST: They were giving each other those looks in Health class.

THIRD: That's just posturing, they always do that.

FIRST: And sometimes it turns into a thing.

SECOND: But that'd be good, right?

THIRD: Could be.

FIRST: No, sorry, not to worry, I see Crittenden, he's got a new victim.

THIRD: Who?

FIRST: That new kid?

THIRD: In biology?

FIRST: He was wearing like a jacket. Like, Army/Navy surplus?

SECOND: The kid in camos. Big mistake.

THIRD: It's a cold day.

SECOND: I don't care how cold it is. You don't wear a camo jacket into class. That's just asking for it.

THIRD: No, I know.

SECOND: Head down, quiet, anonymous.

THIRD: I can still feel bad for him.

FIRST: Crit and Eads have him down by the tetherball courts, wrapping his mamma's boy's skinny butt up to the tetherball pole.

THIRD: I hate that.

FIRST: Do we call a teacher?

FOURTH: We do not.

THIRD: Do we see any teachers?

SECOND: McGinnis having a smoke. Alvaraz and Thompson gossiping by the east door. Feeney in a love fest with the jocks.

FOURTH: We're clear.

(They each pull out a huge piece of chalk. They look around, one last time. Then on a single from FOURTH SQUARE, they move. With practiced efficiency, they each draw, on the floor, their part of a four-square playing square.)

THIRD: You have the ball, right?

FOURTH: Right here.

(Pulls a playground ball out of a backpack.)

SECOND: Okay, score.

(Points to each in turn.)

First, Second, Third, Fourth.

(To FOURTH.)

J, you're leading, eight hundred forty three points.

(To THIRD.)

K, six hundred twelve.

(To FIRST.)

L, Three hundred seventy seven.

FIRST: I'm never gonna catch you guys.

THIRD: You can't say that.

FIRST: I'm like five hundred behind.

THIRD: That's 'cause you suck.

FIRST: I don't suck as much as you.

THIRD: Hi, I'm only two hundred behind. I'm three hundred some ahead of you.

FIRST: I think we should start over.

FOURTH: We're not starting over.

FIRST: I call for a vote. All in favor of starting over.

(They all stare. FIRST: raises his/her hand, nobody joins him/her.)

H, come on. You're almost as bad as me. You should want to start over.

THIRD: You always do this. It's getting annoying.

FIRST: I just think it's less fun playing a game where you have no chance to win.

FOURTH: The point isn't to win. The point is to continue.

THIRD: Got it?

FIRST: Well, that's nicely Zen-like and everything, but it doesn't really address the issue of competitive balance, now, does it?

SECOND: We don't have competitive balance.

FIRST: I know.

THIRD: Then shut up.

FIRST: If we started at zero, someone could get lucky. Or go on a hot streak. Or maybe one of the better players gets hurt...

(Sees how they're looking at him/her.)

Not seriously. A minor injury. Not debilitating or anything. Enough to slow them down a little, give someone else a shot. You know. A pulled muscle perhaps. Jammed finger. Bruises and contusions.

THIRD: I'll give you contusions.

FOURTH: Serving.

(They all take their places, each to a numbered square. FOURTH serves.)

Here's how you play Foursquare: the server serves by bouncing the ball once, then hitting it with his/her hand or wrist so that it bounces into the FIRST square. Serves are, by rule, soft and easily returnable. Subsequent hits can be as hard as possible. The idea is to hit the ball into an opponent's square so it's unreturnable. If you do, then all players move to higher squares,

depending on who got knocked out. So SECOND: is trying to knock out THIRD or FOURTH, THIRD's trying to knock out FOURTH; actually everyone's trying to knock out FOURTH. Only FOURTH: can score; gets one point for every point won with him/her serving. When a player is knocked out, everyone moves up as earned, and the knocked out player goes to FIRST.

As FOURTH serves, the others respond. The serve is an easy one, as required, and FIRST smashes it right back to FOURTH. FOURTH easily knocks it back to THIRD, who smashes a winner past second.)

FIRST: All right then! Sweet! Movin' up, movin' up, time to get something going, here we go, baby, yes, feelin' it now, yes indeed.

(The others exchange a glance, two parts affection and one part annoyance. FIRST moves to SECOND square, and SECOND to FIRST.)

SECOND: Point to Fourth.

FOURTH: Serving.

(And the game resumes. At this point, the players should ad lib four or five serves; don't choreograph it, but actually play the game, within these character parameters:

FIRST keeps up a constant chatter, i.e.:

Here-we-go-baby-here-we-go-baby-here-we-go-baby,

let's-go-let's-go-let's-go

can't-get-it-by-me-can't-get-it-by-me

win-this-point-baby-win-this-point-baby-win-this-point-baby.

And so on. When not chattering, FIRST is an abysmal player, clumsy and uncoordinated, but completely undaunted for all his/her ineptitude. The other players regard FIRST with a kind of exasperated annoyance. If the actor playing FIRST can find other ways to make the character annoying, this should be encouraged.

SECOND is very legalistic, cites official rules, keeps score, calls line faults. If the ball hits interior lines, it's called out, but if it hits an outside line, it's good. SECOND is the judge of this, known for fairness and accuracy, even when making calls against him/herself. SECOND is not much of an athlete, makes the routine plays, stays within his/herself. Rather quiet, occasionally saying 'darn it' when missing a point.

THIRD, on the other hand, is very competitive, fiery, constantly diving and hustling even for points s/he can't quite reach, then berating him/herself for missing points. When s/he speaks, it's to her/himself, "come on!"

FOURTH is a terrific player, a natural athlete, with the grace and coordination of someone who would be good at any sport, and just happens to have chosen this one. Even the hardest smashes from the other players, FOURTH parries almost effortlessly. FOURTH never speaks, except to say "Serving" before each serve.

After they play their third point, TEDDY enters, not quite crying, at the snuffling and sniffing stage just after crying. S/he isn't wearing a camo jacket anymore, and bears signs of having been roughed up. S/he watches a little. A point finishes; the server, probably FOURTH, gets ready serve. SECOND stops him/her.)

SECOND: Hold on a second.

(TEDDY looks startled, starts to shy away.)

You okay?

TEDDY: *(After a moment.)* Yeah.

FIRST: You don't look okay. You look like crap.

TEDDY: *(The following exchange has no real animosity in it, essentially pro forma.)* Your face looks like crap.

FIRST: Your mamma looks like crap.

TEDDY: Your mamma's face looks like crap.

FIRST: Your face looks like someone took a crap on a piece of crap.

TEDDY: Your face looks like someone wiped it out of their butt crack.

FIRST: Your face looks like the paper they wiped it out with.

TEDDY: Your face looks like a bird pooped on a place where a dog pooped on a piece of elephant poop.

FIRST: Takes one to know one.

TEDDY: You wanna make something of it?

FIRST: I wouldn't waste my time.

FOURTH: Hey. Chill, both of you.

(They instantly do.)

SECOND: Look, it's just Crittenden. Okay. He got your jacket, that's all he really wants. He'll probably leave you alone now.

TEDDY: He didn't get my jacket.

THIRD: Yeah, he did.

TEDDY: He didn't either.

SECOND: Fine. He didn't get your jacket.

TEDDY: I just took it off. Is all.

THIRD: Sure.

TEDDY: It was too hot.

THIRD: It's forty degrees.

SECOND: Well, however it happened, Crittenden has your jacket now. And it's pretty cold out here. But there's good news, and the good news is if you stay clear of him, he'll probably leave you more or less alone for a few days.

TEDDY: I'm not afraid of him.

FIRST: No, him or Eads, right? Of course you're not.

(Pause.)

TEDDY: Is Eads the kid with the moustache?

FIRST: Hmm, not sure. You mean the vicious troglodyte sociopath with the moustache?

(Slight smile from TEDDY.)

SECOND: That's Eads. He's Crittenden's enforcer.

TEDDY: How old is that guy?

FIRST: Too old to be in this school.

SECOND: We're pretty sure he may have repeated a grade or two, yes.

TEDDY: Why do they have a tetherball pole?

SECOND: I know.

TEDDY: Nobody plays tetherball.

FIRST: There was like this one gym teacher who really liked tetherball, really thought it was a good sport to teach hand-eye coordination and he got them to put in the two tetherball poles, then he got fired for like gettin' nasty with a cheerleader and went to jail and crap, but the tetherball poles remain, his haunted legacy. Eads loves 'em. Wrap a kid up in the rope and bounce the ball off his head fifty times. Major pain, and hardly leaves a mark.

TEDDY: Tetherball sucks.

SECOND: We know. We've been there.

TEDDY: You guys have any money?

THIRD: Why?

TEDDY: My Mom sent me with lunch money.

THIRD: Sorry, man.

SECOND: It's better to bring your lunch.

TEDDY: I don't like sandwiches.

6 more pages to the end of ACT TWO

SECOND: You're one of us now.

(Smiles, takes his/her place.)

Welcome.

FOURTH: Serving.

(Serves, blackout, exeunt.)

ACT THREE

(Enter actors playing CHESS ONE, CHESS TWO, and DAVI. They all face the audience.)

ALL: The Clubhouse. Act Three.

(CHESS ONE and CHESS TWO are playing chess. They play with a clock, tournament style, silently; we should sense that they're very very good. DAVI sits at a laptop, entering some sort of data. Enter DANI.)

DANI: Hey.

DAVI: Hey.

(Pause. Keyboarding sounds, chess pieces moving, the sound of players slamming the clock.)

DANI: So I got your post.

DAVI: Okay.

DANI: Yeah.

DAVI: I sent it to the whole facebook group, so...

DANI: Yeah, there's already been some discussion.

DAVI: Well, that was what I was hoping for.

DANI: Well, if you were trying to stir things up.

DAVI: I was.

DANI: Well. You did.

(Pause.)

I gotta say, I've got a real problem with it.

DAVI: Yeah?

DANI: A real problem with it.

DAVI: Okay.

DANI: I don't know what you think this whole thing's about, but...

DAVI: I think there's been a certain amount of mission creep, and I think addressing that directly....

DANI: I read the post. It's not how we do things.

DAVI: You don't think there's value in directness.

DANI: A straightforward facing of facts. As you put it.

DAVI: We pussyfoot around, we avoid issues, we prevaricate.

DANI: No. I don't. I think we get into trouble every time we...

DAVI: Yeah. Okay.

CHESS ONE: Your clock's running.

CHESS TWO: I know my clock's running.

CHESS ONE: I'm just saying...

CHESS TWO: I get it, I get it.

CHESS ONE: It's a different game. With the clock. You could be up, you know, like a bishop or something, and still be in big trouble because of clock pressure.

CHESS TWO: *(Teeth clenched.)* I'm not up a bishop.

CHESS ONE: Well, no. You're actually down two pawns and a knight. But the clock, see, it's the clock that's really...

(With a growl, CHESS TWO moves a piece, slams his hand down on the clock. Utterly unruffled, CHESS ONE takes a piece, hits the clock.)

I don't really see how that helped things much.

CHESS TWO: Damn it. Damn it damn it damn it. (or other appropriate curse)

DAVI: Look. I made three points, frankly I think unarguable points, I don't think I wrote anything in my post that you and I haven't said, right here, a hundred times, so I wrote them down, sent them off, in an effort to advance a discussion that we honestly need to have.

DANI: A discussion we're not having.

DAVI: Also my point.

DANI: And yes, in casual conversation...

DAVI: So why not...

DANI: In casual conversation...you know why not.

DAVI: Tell me. When certain ideas are floating around, unacknowledged, whispered in corners...

DANI: It feels

DAVI: Yes?

DANI: Unsafe. It feels unsafe.

DAVI: Quite so. I'm moving us past safety. I'm tired of safety.

DANI: We think of

DAVI: Yes....?

DANI: This, the clubhouse, here.

DAVI: I know what you mean.

DANI: As a refuge. Asylum.

DAVI: And we're trapped here. And we're not progressing.

(Goes back to the computer. CHESS TWO: suddenly loses it.)

CHESS TWO: ARRGGHHMMMMNNNGGGGFFLLLLLLRRRRRRRLLLLLLLLL!

(Grabs the chessboard, flings it into the air, chess pieces scatter.)

I don't freakin' believe it! Gosh damnit, stupid good for nothing miserable rotten stinking filthy crummy sorry excuse for a game!

CHESS ONE: I told you, playing with a clock...

CHESS TWO: Shut up shut up shut up shut up!

CHESS ONE: I asked if you were sure you were ready for...

CHESS TWO: Repugnant, repulsive, horrible, despicable! Odious, malodorous, maleficent, horrid barbaric, fiendish, diabolical, nefarious! Grody! Foul!

CHESS ONE: So, I take it you resign.

CHESS TWO: I. Do not. Resign.

CHESS ONE: You think you remember the board, then, I suppose.

CHESS TWO: I remember the board. Don't talk to me about remembering the board.

CHESS ONE: All right. Fine. I rather think I remember it too. So if you'd like to continue.

CHESS TWO: We're finishing.

CHESS ONE: Fine. I'm not picking that up, though.

CHESS TWO: I'm not picking it up.

CHESS ONE: Well, since you're the one who flung it...

CHESS TWO: Oh, oh, so this is my fault. The board and the pieces everywhere, you're saying I'm to blame for

CHESS ONE: You did, actually, fling the...

CHESS TWO: No way, no way, not a chance, I did nothing except, like react the way any normal, reasonable human being would react if if if subjected to the most egregious...

CHESS ONE: I forked your queen.

CHESS TWO: You! Forked! My queen!!!!

CHESS ONE: Perfectly normal endgame strategy.

CHESS TWO: You are a vile, contemptible little wretch and I hate you, and I am not picking up those pieces.

DAVI: See?

DANI: Yeah, okay.

DAVI: We're seeing a lot more of this too.

DANI: And you think your post

DAVI: Outlines an approach worth trying.

DANI: Mom's not gonna like it.

DAVI: Well, we'll see.

CHESS ONE: So you resign.

CHESS TWO: No! No way.

CHESS ONE: You really can't have it both ways.

CHESS TWO: King to king's bishop four!

(And CHESS TWO hits the clock.)

CHESS ONE: It's really better with the pieces and the board. That way we can't disagree about where a piece was.

CHESS TWO: I remember the board.

CHESS ONE: Well I think I do too. But if we happen to remember it differently...

CHESS TWO: Clock's running, what's your move?

CHES ONE: Fine. I take your queen with my knight.

(Clock.)

CHES TWO: Take your knight with my king.

(Clock.)

CHES ONE: Right. So queen's rook to queen's rook five and check.

(CHES TWO howls in agony.)

CHES TWO: Arrggggggghhhhhh!

CHES ONE: Well, you had to know once I forked your queen...

CHES TWO: I'm not done yet! King's bishop to Queen's knight six!

CHES ONE: Queen to queen's rook six and checkmate.

CHES TWO: NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

(And flies into a huge tantrum, screaming, howling, flinging him/herself onto the floor; pounding the floor with his/her fists. DAVI, CHES ONE and DANI watch slightly amused, but mostly impassive. After a very long time, CHES TWO subsides.)

CHES ONE: Play again?

CHES TWO: Sure, okay.

(And picks up the chess pieces from the floor, and sets up the board again.)

DANI: Home schooling.

DAVI: Funny.

DANI: Anyway.

DAVI: We'll see what Mom thinks this afternoon.

DANI: Wait. She's coming here?

DAVI: Didn't you get that?

DANI: This afternoon? We gotta clean this place up.

DAVI: I already did the kitchen.

DANI: Right, of course, the easiest job of them all...

DAVI: Well, I'd just eaten, so

DANI: *(To Chess players.)* Guys, Mom's coming.

CHESS TWO: Yeah, okay, fine.

DANI: We need to pick up.

CHESS TWO: In a second!

DANI: Fine.

(Enter the NEW KID (MATT), from the first scene. He's dressed to play baseball, carrying a bat with his glove hanging from the knob. He sits heavily at the computer.)

Hey.

NEW KID: Hey.

DAVI: So how goes the baseball?

NEW KID: We are not very skilled at the game of baseball.

DANI: It doesn't so much matter if you lose, you know.

NEW KID: Oh, we did. Seventeen to two this time.

DAVI: So you're getting worse?

NEW KID: Oh, not at all. We're definitely improving. It's just that our opponents are improving at an exponentially faster rate.

DAVI: That's interesting.

NEW KID: Not while you're in the middle of it.

(Entering data.)

It's quite an unfair game, you know. The ball's too small, or the bat's too round, or there's some other factor that makes striking the ball quite improbably difficult.

DANI: It doesn't look that hard on TV.

NEW KID: No, well, TV's perspective is two dimensional. Which is of no value when you're actually faced with, for example, a pop up.

DANI: That's sort of a routine play, isn't it?

NEW KID: *(Laughs bitterly.)* Ha. You'd think so, from watching professionals deal with them. But when you're faced with this towering fly ball, against the background of a blue sky, wind currents imparting all manner of wicked randomness on the ball, and then it descends, and you realize, as it plummets at an appalling velocity, the size of the dent on your skull

DANI: It's harder than it looks.

NEW KID: You could say that. Yes, you could absolutely say that.

DAVI: Well, we're not meant to catch baseballs. We were home schooled.

NEW KID: Yes, we certainly were.

DANI: Are you making friends? That's the point.

NEW KID: Define friendship.

DAVI: Friends. Pals, companions.

NEW KID: We're ballplayers. We play ball.

DANI: And that's not a basis for friendship?

NEW KID: For the sharing of feelings?

(Chuckles bitterly.)

DANI: Another thing Mom's not gonna like.

NEW KID: Look, it's fine. We're home schooled, we're supposed to be socially retarded. Read my report: ball-playing is progress.

DAVI: But if you haven't made friends.

NEW KID: Jackie, the best player on their team, after we were done, said to me, 'tomorrow, man.' And I said, 'sure.'

DANI: Okay.

NEW KID: Do we have a wind tunnel?

DAVI: I have no idea.

NEW KID: Jackie has a way of imparting spin on the ball sufficient to radically change its trajectory. He calls it a curve ball.

DAVI: That hardly seems possible.

DANI: Surely some kind of optical illusion.

NEW KID: *(Another bitter laugh.)* You try and hit it.
(Starts to head off, stops at the chess board.)
Checkmate in six moves.

CHESS TWO: No way!

CHESS ONE: I had eight moves.

NEW KID: Six.

CHESS TWO: Hi, I'm here! Right? This is my game we're talking about!

CHESS ONE: Just assessing your position.

CHESS TWO: You're talking about me! Like I'm not even here! Don't talk about me like I'm not here!

NEW KID: So we're saying chess is more volatile than baseball?

CHESS ONE: When I'm done here, I'll help you rig up a wind tunnel.

NEW KID: So I'll sit and kibbitz?

CHESS TWO: No! Absolutely not!

CHESS ONE: Sure.

NEW KID: Something about spinning it off his fingertips...

(Enter CRITTENDEN, from second scene.)

Hey, Crit.

CRITTENDEN: Hey.

(Goes up to DAVI.)

Hey, listen, my Eads malfunctioned.

DAVI: I heard. Sorry about that.

DANI: What happened?

CRITTENDEN: Okay, so I set my Eads on this one kid. Sort of the ringleader of a group of four that was pretty tough to crack, frankly, had an unusual group cohesiveness.

DANI: Happens sometimes.

CRITTENDEN: So that's what Eads is supposed to do. Impose, disrupt, dismantle.

DAVI: It went too far.

CRITTENDEN: It sure as hell did. The kid said something and its like he took it personally.

DANI: He?

CRITTENDEN: You work with 'em long enough, you anthropomorphize, sorry.

DANI: So what happened?

7 more pages to the end of ACT THREE

(She beams at them. Blackout, exuent. Then, in dim light, the entire cast enters, face the audience.)

ALL: Act Four. Among us, now.

(The entire cast stands staring at the audience. They all have notebooks and pencils. They stare at the audience, making notes. They move around a little, find some audience behaviors or oddities of dress and appearance, and make careful note of them. This should last a good thirty seconds or so. Slow final blackout.)