

**A FUNNY THING
HAPPENED
ON THE WAY TO
FIFTH PERIOD**

A SHORT COMEDY BY
Jason Pizzarello

Cast of Characters

TOMMY, bookworm

BURP, head bully

BUGS, aspiring bully

STEVE, friendly jock

CORA, his girlfriend

VERONICA, a nerd with anger issues, Steve's sister

STEPHANIE, lead actress

CHAD, lead actor, Stephanie's boyfriend

KIA, math dork

SHELLY, the costume shop girl

MUSICAL THEATER ACTRESSES

MATH GEEKS

OTHER STUDENTS

Set Up

- All the action of the play takes place in a school hallway in front of 3 sets of lockers.
- The play is organized by class periods.
- Every time the bell rings, marking the end of class, students start to fill the hallway.
- After first bell, students start to make their way to class.
- By second bell, only a few late students are left. And as soon as they hear the second bell, they run off.

Scenes

- Before school
- After 1st period
- After 2nd period
- After 3rd period
- After 4th period / Before 5th period

Author Notes

Feel free to change the references to “high school” to “middle school” and the “prom” to the “dance” or “school dance.” Whatever works for your school or group. Also, any casting decisions that require characters to change gender are fine by me.

Production Notes

Since the play is a farce, the pace of action should be quick and almost frantic. The dialogue should be delivered with snap and without any pauses or moments between lines.

Although the action takes place in a busy hallway, and students can/should be mingling and moving in a natural way, be careful that none of the “stage business” becomes too distracting. For example, the character of Bugs occasionally picks things out of his hair and eats them, or Burp...burps. Although these can be funny bits, they are susceptible to *over hamming*. Just make sure they don't distract from the main action of the scene.

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO FIFTH PERIOD

by Jason Pizzarello

Before School

(3 sets of lockers.

On the left is a gaggle of musical theater ACTRESSES. They are putting on makeup, costumes, wigs, reading Shakespeare...

On the right is a friendly-looking jock, STEVE, arguing with his twin sister, VERONICA, who won't stop yo-yoing. Finally STEVE grabs the yo-yo and throws it down the hall. She looks like she's gonna cry but instead punches him in the stomach or knocks the books out his hands and runs away. After recovering, he follows her.

In the middle locker, is TOMMY, a bookish lower-classman. He gets picked on but one day he will come into his own and that bit of underdeveloped confidence is beginning to brew.

As TOMMY reorganizes his trapper keeper, a large bull of a kid, BURP, comes up behind him and politely taps him on the shoulder. TOMMY turns around and the bull lets a burp rip so loud and foul, you can almost smell yesterday's lunch. But this isn't the first time, and TOMMY handles it with grace. BURP smiles.)

TOMMY. Lovely.

(Another bully, BUGS, not quite as menacing as BURP, but still with great potential, stands next to him and claps. BURP takes a bow.)

BURP. Too kind too kind.

TOMMY. Let me guess, you had a burrito and a slurpee for breakfast.

BURP. Cherry slurpee. That counts as a fruit. I like to cover the entire food pyramid. Don't you?

TOMMY. Eating a balanced meal is—

(BURP burps.)

BURP. Well, enough chit chat. Where's my homework for first period?

TOMMY. *Your* homework? I don't know, where did you put it?

BURP. Where did *you* put it? I didn't do it.

TOMMY. If you didn't do it—

BURP. You did.

TOMMY. I did *my* homework.

BURP. You did *my* homework.

TOMMY. No...I didn't.

BURP. You did *both* of our homework? Tommy, you didn't have to do that. You're too much. You only had to do mine and here you went and did both of ours. I feel bad. That must have taken awhile.

TOMMY. I only did my homework.

BURP. Why would you do that? (To BUGS:) Why would he do that?

(BUGS, who has been picking things out of his hair and tasting them...shrugs)

BURP. Let me see it. I don't believe you.

(TOMMY takes out the homework.)

TOMMY. See.

BURP. (He snatches it away.) So you *did* do my homework.

TOMMY. No, that is mine.

BURP. No, this is mine.

TOMMY. C'mon, Burp.

(BURP burps.)

BURP. If it's yours, why am I holding it?

TOMMY. Give it back.

BURP. You want *my* homework to copy? Don't you think that's a little unathletic?

TOMMY. You mean unethical?

BURP. I know what I mean. Don't tell me what I mean. You don't know anything about mean. I know mean. I am mean.

TOMMY. When you're right, you're right.

BURP. Nice chattin' with you, Tommy. See ya in class.

(As he exits, BURP burps while holding his fist in the air.)

(BUGS is about to follow, but TOMMY stops him.)

TOMMY. Hey Bugs, can you wait a second?

BUGS. For you? Three.

TOMMY. Next year, right, I was thinking... He's your mentor, everyone knows you're bound to follow in his footsteps. It's called destiny.

BUGS. It's called Burp. Maybe if you learned his name he wouldn't be so hard on you.

TOMMY. Right. What I'm trying to say is, next year, when you take over this hallway as lead bully, and—

BUGS. Schucks, you're making me blush.

TOMMY. —You don't have to be a bully like him. You can be your own bully.

BUGS. Why would I bully myself?

TOMMY. No I mean you can be a nice bully.

BUGS. I don't think you understand the concept of bullying.

TOMMY. This is your chance to revolutionize the field of bullying. You can be a pioneer.

BUGS. Like Davy Crocket?

TOMMY. Well...sure.

BUGS. I *do* like to kill animals. The other night my dad caught a raccoon under our porch and—

TOMMY. —Bugs, Bugs. I'm sure it was a lovely family dinner, but we're getting off topic.

(First Bell rings.)

BUGS. That's first bell. Don't want to be late. If there's one thing I hate, it's tardiness. And pie. I hate pie. Pie makes me so angry—just be cake already!

TOMMY. Okay, okay. Just think about what I'm saying. Let's work together. There's gotta be something I can do for you to break this viscous cycle of bullying.

(BUGS picks something out of TOMMY's hair and eats it.)

(The group of musical theater ACTRESSES walk by, half dancing, singing a little show tune. STEPHANIE is clearly the lead actress as all the other girls almost move around her.)

(STEPHANIE stops as she's passing TOMMY.)

STEPHANIE. Hey Tommy. Great job working the spotlight in last night's performance. You really knew how to keep it right on me.

TOMMY. Sure, of course. You're the lead.

STEPHANIE. Keep the spotlight on me after the third scene tonight, okay? I have a little extra number choreographed.

TOMMY. I thought the choreographer was handling the...choreography.

STEPHANIE. Trust me, it's gonna bring down the house. You're a peach of a techie, Tommy.

(STEPHANIE and her entourage head off.)

(BUGS is enamored with her. TOMMY watches BUGS watching STEPHANIE.)

TOMMY. Bugs, Bugs, you all right?

(TOMMY shakes BUGS out of a trance.)

BUGS. Stephanie Mezaluna. She's quite a fox. She could make a grown man cry. She could make a sheep throw himself to the wolves. She could make a shark swim backwards.

TOMMY. You like her huh? You wanna marry her? You wanna have little bug children?

BUGS. No, I just wanna take her to the prom.

TOMMY. The prom?

BUGS. I know—you're surprised I don't already have a date. Actually I asked Alice the lunch lady. But apparently she doesn't leave the cafeteria.

TOMMY. Too bad you already need your tickets to the prom. Today's the deadline.

BUGS. *When* today?

TOMMY. End of lunch. By fifth period.

BUGS. So that's our deadline.

TOMMY. Our deadline?

BUGS. (Dramatic beat.) If you don't get me a date for the prom with Stephanie Mezaluna by fifth period I will make your life next year—the rest of your pathetic high school career—a living nerd hell. You don't even know what a bully is.

TOMMY. Gulp.

BUGS. You don't need to say gulp, Tommy. Just gulp.

TOMMY. That seems fair.

(Second bell rings.)

BUGS. Shoot! I'm late for Home Ec!

(BUGS runs out. TOMMY gulps.)

After 1st Period

(A bell rings. Classes let out and kids flood the hallway. [this can also be accomplished with sound.])

(Some of the kids clear, and TOMMY is back at his locker, switching out some books. BUGS approaches him.)

BUGS. So did ya get me a date yet?

TOMMY. I was just in class with you.

BUGS. But with technology today...thought you woulda texted her by now or something.

TOMMY. No I didn't.

BUGS. Well you better get on it. I heard you need your tickets by fifth period.

TOMMY. You heard that from me.

BUGS. I knew I heard it somewhere.

TOMMY. Here's your problem. You can't date Stephanie Mezaluna.

BUGS. Sure I can.

TOMMY. She only dates actors. *Lead actors*. Are you a lead actor?

BUGS. Just make it happen. Your future alive self depends on it.

TOMMY. You mean "my life depends on it"?

(STEPHANIE and her entourage are at their lockers.)

BUGS. She's right there.

TOMMY. It will never work. How am I—

BUGS. Simple.

(BUGS pushes TOMMY into the gaggle of theater ACTRESSES at their lockers. TOMMY bumps into STEPHANIE.)

TOMMY. Ha...ha... Hi.

(TOMMY begins talking to STEPHANIE, but we switch over to:)

(STEVE and his girlfriend, CORA, back at their lockers.)

CORA. Is your mom seriously going to make you take Veronica to the prom? I mean, she's like practically your sister.

STEVE. She *is* my sister.

CORA. That's what I mean. Isn't that outlawed?

STEVE. I don't know. Probably should be. But my mom doesn't think it's right for her to miss it.

CORA. Then tell her to take someone.

STEVE. It's not that simple. She'll only go with Chad Glamorville and he'll never take her. But once we're there, we can be together.

CORA. I don't care, you're supposed to take *me*. As your girlfriend, I have certain inalienable rights. One is a date to the prom.

STEVE. What are the others?

CORA. Do I need to write them down again?

STEVE. You better just make me a copy of the whole contract.

(VERONICA has snuck up behind them. She an aggressive nerd in overalls. She still carries a yo-yo and uses it menacingly.)

VERONICA. Break it up. Break it up. No fraternizing with the help.

STEVE. Uh...okay.

CORA. Was that a joke or an insult or what?

VERONICA. Oh, hello Cora, I didn't see you there. Did you just get here or have you been here the whole time? (She starts snort laughing.)

CORA. Why can't you just go to prom with one of these other dorks?

VERONICA. Because I will ONLY go with the love of my life, the dreamiest of all walking dreamings...Chad Glamorville. Lead actor in 4 out of the 5 school plays. He would have been lead in all five, but he had to drop out of *Annie* when he got mono. Would you like me to recite the rest of his theatrical resume?

(CORA stops a MATH GEEK in the hallway. He yelps.)

CORA. Listen, kid, I want you to go to the prom with Veronica. Okay?

(VERONICA silently threatens him with her yo-yo.)

MATH GEEK. She, um...scares me.

(VERONICA yo-yo's at him. He runs away.)

VERONICA. Chad Glamorville or death.

CORA. Ugh. I give up.

(CORA storms off.)

STEVE. (To VERONICA:) Thanks. Thanks, alot.

(STEVE follows after CORA.)

(Back to STEPHANIE and TOMMY. BUGS watches, and pretends to busy himself.)

STEPHANIE. You want me to go to the prom with Bugs?

(They look over at BUGS and catch him eating something from his hair.)

STEPHANIE. Why would I do that? Unless you know something I don't, like the world is ending. Or he's a famous actor or something.

TOMMY. That's exactly right. Actually.

ACTRESS 1. Oh my god the world is ending? How do I look?

ACTRESS 2. Totally ready.

ACTRESS 1. Thanks, you're sweet.

TOMMY. No...he's... (Pulling STEPHANIE aside:) I shouldn't really be saying this...but he's...a professional actor.

STEPHANIE. Yeah right. How could he be? He's not even in any of the school plays.

TOMMY. He...only acts in New York.

STEPHANIE. What part?

TOMMY. Uh... The city part.

STEPHANIE. Cool.

TOMMY. His agent won't let him act in school plays. It might...hurt his career. He has a reputation to uphold.

STEPHANIE. Yeah, I understand that.

TOMMY. His agent is very strict when it comes to parts.

STEPHANIE. I'm strict about my parts too. Who's his agent?

TOMMY. His agent's name? Uh...Kris...tooff...Baba...balooch. Kristoff Bababalooch.

STEPHANIE. Huh.

TOMMY. You've probably heard of him.

STEPHANIE. Yeah, totally. His supposed to be...really strict.

TOMMY. Yeah, that's him. He's Croatian. That's how they are. From an island there. An international talent and entertainment island.

STEPHANIE. Cool. Think he'd ever come here to the school? Like as a talent scout?

TOMMY. I don't know. Probably not. He's very busy.

STEPHANIE. Oh. That's a shame.

TOMMY. But who knows. It wouldn't hurt to ask.

STEPHANIE. Wow, great. Oh my God I'm so nervous. I hope I don't forget to go to the bathroom. How terrible would that be to have an "accident" on stage.

TOMMY. Does that happen?

STEPHANIE. Sometimes. A few of the girls wear diapers. Right girls?

ACTRESS. It's called being a prepared actress.

(First bell rings.)

(The theater ACTRESSES scatter.)

(SHELLY, the costume shop girl, is walking to class. She wears several layers of clothes and has various needles in her hair.)

SHELLY. Tommy, can I ask you something?

TOMMY. Shelly, you're the costume expert — do actresses wear diapers on stage?

SHELLY. The prepared ones do.

TOMMY. Huh. Never heard of that.

(SHELLY is about to ask TOMMY a question when BUGS pulls TOMMY aside. SHELLY wanders away.)

BUGS. So are we set?

TOMMY. Not yet. But I think she's warming to the idea. One thing though...and this *isn't* a big deal at all...I kinda told her you were a professional actor.

BUGS. You told her I'm what?

TOMMY. An actor.

BUGS. An actor?! Ugh. I'd rather be anybody else. I'd rather be a jock.

TOMMY. I didn't have a choice. She only dates actors. *Lead* actors.

BUGS. But I'm not a lead actor.

TOMMY. You are now. So brush up on your Shakespeare.

BUGS. Shakespeare I know. Shakespeare is not a problem. To not be, or to not be... is the same question.

TOMMY. Brilliant...she'll never believe this.

BUGS. How dare you insult my training.

(Second Bell rings. The rest of the students go their separate ways.)

After 2nd Period

(Bell rings, students flood the hallway.)

(TOMMY and BUGS enter mid-conversation from the end of class.)

TOMMY. So just be yourself. But be a professional actor from New York.

BUGS. New York? What part?

TOMMY. The city part.

(TOMMY pulls out a fedora hat.)

TOMMY. Here. Wear this.

BUGS. Am I an actor working for the mob?

TOMMY. Just wear it. It will add a little persona, a little mystique.

(TOMMY approaches STEPHANIE and she pretends not to notice him coming over. Real suave-like, BUGS leans against her locker without saying anything.)

STEPHANIE. Oh. Hi...Bugs.

(BUGS tips his hat up.)

BUGS. Hiya, sweetheart.

STEPHANIE. I like your hat.

BUGS. Oh this. It's from a show I did last fall.

STEPHANIE. I had no idea you were an actor.

BUGS. I'm many things.

STEPHANIE. That's cool. I like many things.

BUGS. Then you like me.

STEPHANIE. Tommy mentioned Kristoff Bababalooch might be able to make it to our school play.

BUGS. Chrissy Baba-who?

STEPHANIE. Kristoff Bababalooch. Your agent.

BUGS. Oh...right, that guy. Outta sight outta mind you know? Oh sure, he'll come. If you want him to. He loves that kinda junk. I mean he loves theater. School theater. Eats it up.

STEPHANIE. Really? Wow. That would be amazing, Bugs.

BUGS. No problem. I could probably get him to come today. I mean the guy is at my beck and call. You know?

STEPHANIE. Today?

BUGS. Sure why not.

STEPHANIE. I'm not even wearing the right clothes or makeup or anything.

BUGS. Are you kidding me? You look so hot right now...like the sun on fire.

STEPHANIE. Think so? Thanks. Oh great, am I totally blushing?

BUGS. A little. You have a great blush. Your kinda blush works great on film, too.

STEPHANIE. (Laughs nervously.) I should go tell the rest of the cast. This is so amazing.

BUGS. Sure, whatever.

(STEPHANIE runs over to the other ACTRESSES who proceed to squeal in delight.)

(BUGS, as cool as he can, runs over to TOMMY.)

BUGS. I need an agent!

TOMMY. Shhhh.

BUGS. (In a desperate whisper:) I need an agent.

TOMMY. You have one. Kristoff Bababalooch.

BUGS. Right. I need him. To come to school. Today. I told her he could and now she thinks he's coming here and I need him to come here and seal this deal and this is all your fault and I can't believe I just talked to Stephanie Mezaluna for as long as I did and the hat worked perfectly.

TOMMY. Okay – just calm down. Bugs, calm down. We're gonna figure this out.

BUGS. We're running out of time!

TOMMY. I know. Okay, go find me a suit. The nicest suit you can find.

BUGS. A suit. For your funeral?

TOMMY. Maybe. Find Shelly in the costume shop, tell her I sent you. C'mon – go!

(BUGS nods and runs off.)

(SHELLY enters.)

TOMMY. Shelly, what are you doing here? I sent someone down to the costume shop.

(SHELLY sighs and exits.)

(TOMMY stops STEVE at his locker.)

TOMMY. Steve, I need a favor.

STEVE. I already told you I can't make you cool. It's just impossible.

TOMMY. Forget about that. This is something else. Here's what I need you to do.

(TOMMY whispers in his ear a very elaborate plan. STEVE nods as if he's understanding. TOMMY finishes.)

TOMMY. Okay?

STEVE. All I heard was whispers.

TOMMY. Ugh. Okay, I need you to pretend like you're a talent agent from New York named Kristoff Bababalooch who represents Bugs the thug who is pretending to be a professional actor so he can get a date for the prom and you're the only person that looks over 20 in our school, so I need you to dress as Kristoff so I can win my freedom from bully tyranny next year. Okay?

STEVE. Yeah, what's in it for me?

TOMMY. And in exchange I will continue to tutor you free of charge.

STEVE. Yeah but you continue to tutor me free of charge now.

TOMMY. Good point.

STEVE. I'll do it under one condition. You get a date for my sister Veronica for the prom. If she doesn't have a date, my mom is making me take her.

TOMMY. I asked her last month and she turned me down.

STEVE. She wants to go with Chad Glamorville. And only Chad Glamorville.

TOMMY. But he's dating Stephanie Mezaluna.

STEVE. That's the deal.

TOMMY. ...Actually this may work out.

(They shake.)

(First bell.)

(CHAD is walking down the hall, holding a script, rehearsing his lines with himself, even acting out the part a little bit.)

STEVE. Here he comes. Good luck.

(STEVE takes off.)

CHAD. (To himself, in a Southern accent:) And that is why, Mama, I ain't ever gonna let nothin' happen to our hogs. Nothin'!

TOMMY. Hey, I need to talk to you about something very important.

CHAD. I have rehearsal.

TOMMY. Just a quick something important. You need to take Veronica Jettlebaum to prom.

CHAD. Veronica Jettlebaum? Steve's sister? She's going with Steve. Their mother's making them. I don't know why. It's sick if you ask me.

TOMMY. Actually, it is sick. *She* is sick. It's Veronica's dying wish to go to the prom. But no one would go with her. So their mother is making Steve take her.

CHAD. What do you mean her dying wish?

TOMMY. Let's just hope she makes it.

CHAD. Is she really sick?

TOMMY. No she has a rare disease.

CHAD. What kind of disease? It must be fatal.

TOMMY. No no.

CHAD. But you said she's going to die.

TOMMY. Yes well, we all are eventually.

CHAD. True. And depressing. So what is it then?

TOMMY. It's her...her muscles...are turning inside out.

CHAD. I didn't know they could do that.

TOMMY. They're not supposed to. Like I said it's a very rare condition. She only has 3 weeks to live.

CHAD. I thought you said it's not fatal?

TOMMY. It's not.

CHAD. Then why is she going to die?

TOMMY. I'm not sure. But it seems serious.

CHAD. I'd say!

TOMMY. You don't have to. The doctors said everything that could be said.

CHAD. How sad.

TOMMY. Tragic. It's a tragedy. A Shakespearean tragedy. You're know all about those I'm sure.

CHAD. I have a background in the classics, yes.

TOMMY. Then you're the only one who understands this situation. You're the only one who can play this heroic role. It's only for lead actors.

CHAD. Like me.

TOMMY. Every great actor has their great charity. Brad Pitt, Sean Penn, Keanu Reeves... Have you found yours yet?

CHAD. No...I haven't. Shoot! I need a charity.

TOMMY. Make Veronica Jettlebaum your charity. Take her to the prom.

(Second bell rings.)

CHAD. ...Okay, I'll do it. I'm sure Stephanie will understand. It's for our craft.

(TOMMY and CHAD shake and head their separate ways.)

(The hallway clears.)

After 3rd Period

(Bell rings, students flood the hallway.)

(TOMMY is looking for STEVE.)

(BUGS runs up to TOMMY.)

BUGS. Tommy! Where is he?

TOMMY. Where is who?

BUGS. Kristoff Bababalooch! My agent!

TOMMY. I'm working on it.

BUGS. Well work faster. It's almost fifth period!

(BUGS punches a locker.)

BUGS. Don't forget I'm a bully!

(TOMMY sees STEVE.)

TOMMY. Got it.

(As soon as TOMMY leaves to talk to STEVE, BUGS drops the tough guy persona and nurses his hand.)

BUGS. Owsie.

(TOMMY and STEVE.)

TOMMY. We're all set. Veronica has a date to go to the prom with Chad Glamorville.

STEVE. Well that was easy.

TOMMY. Not as easy as you think. I still need you to look and act like a believable talent agent from New York. He's from a Croatian island, okay? Now, Shelly is waiting for you in the costume shop. I need you as Kristoff Bababalooch in this hallway by next period. Can you do it?

STEVE. Sure, sure. Chad's really going to take my sister to the prom?

TOMMY. Yes!

STEVE. Why?

TOMMY. I made it a matter of life or death. Now please just go!

(STEVE hurries off. On his way out, he runs past CORA. STEVE stops and kisses her on the cheek.)

STEVE. We can go to the prom after all.

CORA. What? How?

STEVE. Kristoff Bababalooch.

CORA. Who?

STEVE. You'll see.

(STEVE is on his way out again. Now he runs into VERONICA.)

STEVE. Veronica! Good news. We don't have to go to the prom together.

VERONICA. What? Why?

STEVE. Kristoff Bababalooch.

VERONICA. Who?

STEVE. You'll see.

VERONICA. I told you I'd only go with Chad Glamorville.

STEVE. And you are. Will be. Talk to Tommy. I gotta go.

(STEVE runs out. VERONICA approaches TOMMY.)

TOMMY. I know you're gonna ask how and why and who but don't worry about those pesky questions, the bell is gonna ring any minute.

VERONICA. What bell?

TOMMY. And no "what's" either.

VERONICA. Steve said—

TOMMY. Yes, Chad Glamorville. And you. And the prom. There's only one catch.

VERONICA. Chad is the catch.

TOMMY. No, well yes, he is a catch but the other catch is that you're dying.

VERONICA. That's quite a catch.

TOMMY. Not really dying. Just fake dying. You said he was worth dying for and now you are.

VERONICA. When did I say that?

TOMMY. I'm sure you thought it. At some point.

VERONICA. What am I dying of?

TOMMY. Here I made a list.

(He hands her several sheets of paper. She flips through it.)

VERONICA. And if I'm dying of all these things he agreed to go with me?

TOMMY. He has a very big heart. Now go read through it. You gotta play that part.

VERONICA. Okay, if it's for Chad Glamorville, it's worth it.

(VERONICA heads off.)

(BUGS confronts TOMMY.)

BUGS. What was that all about?

TOMMY. It's all part of the plan.

(STEPHANIE confronts BUGS and TOMMY.)

STEPHANIE. I thought you said your agent was coming.

BUGS. Yeah I did. And he is.

STEPHANIE. So then where is he?

BUGS. I just talked to him. He happened to be in town. He's on his way. I'll go try his cell again.

(BUGS leaves.)

STEPHANIE. Why would he be in town?

TOMMY. He's a talent scout. He's scouting...for talent.

STEPHANIE. I don't believe you.

TOMMY. If he comes here next period, will you go with Bugs to the prom?

STEPHANIE. I'm already going with Chad Glamorville, lead actor, and I'm not going to just break up with him for nothing.

TOMMY. Bugs' agent will be here.

STEPHANIE. If a New York agent walks down this hall next period, I will go to the prom with Bugs.

(They shake.)

TOMMY. Next period. Promise.

STEPHANIE. And if he doesn't I'll make sure you never get a date in this school again.

TOMMY. I don't get any now, so...I mean...it's a deal.

(They shake again.)

(CHAD approaches STEPHANIE.)

CHAD. Hey.

STEPHANIE. Hey.

CHAD. We need to talk.

STEPHANIE. We need to talk.

(First Bell rings.)

CHAD. After class.

STEPHANIE. After class.

(CHAD and STEPHANIE go their separate ways.)

(BUGS finds TOMMY.)

BUGS. Tommy.

TOMMY. Bugs. Be patient. I've got it all figured out.

BUGS. No I got it figured out.

TOMMY. I really don't think you do.

BUGS. This is Kia.

(KIA comes out from behind BUGS. She's a puny math geek.)

BUGS. She's a math geek.

TOMMY. I can see that.

KIA. Actually, I'm a math dork.

BUGS. She represents a team of dorks.

KIA. A club to be precise.

BUGS. And they've agreed to be my fans. I figure every famous actor has fans, rights? And I'm a famous actor now, right? So where are my fans?

KIA. *(With unbridled enthusiasm:)* We're right here!

BUGS. See watch this... Go ahead, Kia.

KIA. Oh, my God it's Bugs Lowery! Bugs can I have your autograph?!

BUGS. (A little too rehearsed:) Of course you can, fan. (Then, normal back to TOMMY:) See that? Once Stephanie sees I have fans, it should really seal the deal, don't you think?

TOMMY. And what do they get out of it?

BUGS. They win their bully freedom just like you.

TOMMY. Some deal.

BUGS. All right, fan, see you next period.

(BUGS leaves.)

KIA. Also, we want dates for the prom.

TOMMY. Well you should have thought about that earlier.

KIA. No you should have thought about that earlier. It's all right, I know how to get us dates.

(Second bell rings.)

TOMMY. Yeah how's that?

KIA. We want to be famous, too.

(KIA and the rest of the hallway students clear out.)

(TOMMY puts his head in his hands.)

After 4th Period / Before 5th Period

(Bell rings, students flood the hallway.)

(SHELLY finds TOMMY. She's covered in even more random pieces of clothing, pins, and accessories.)

SHELLY. Okay, you need to stop sending desperate people to me.

TOMMY. Shelly, you're a life saver. Is everything set?

SHELLY. Of course. I'm a professional.

TOMMY. How do they look?

SHELLY. You'll see soon enough. (TOMMY looks worried.) They look great. You owe me. I mean you owe me big. You owe me a night on the town.

TOMMY. Next you're gonna say I should take you to the prom.

SHELLY. Maybe you should.

TOMMY. Okay.

SHELLY. Really?

TOMMY. Sure.

SHELLY. Wow, great. I have to figure out what I'm gonna wear.

TOMMY. Wear one of the five outfits you have on. Or go see Shelly in the costume department. She'll fix you right up.

SHELLY. I bet you say that to all the girls.

TOMMY. Actually I do. But this is the first time I meant it.

SHELLY. Aw, Tommy, that's sweet. I'm not sure what it meant, but you're sweet. It's even sweeter of you to offer to buy our tickets.

(Before TOMMY can protest, CHAD pulls him aside and SHELLY leaves.)

CHAD. Tommy, I was thinking. The gown Veronica wears to the prom isn't going to be like a hospital gown is it? Because I already rented my tux and we have to match.

TOMMY. Of course not. It's not like she wears a hospital gown to school.

(VERONICA enters in a hospital gown. She has a ton of pale makeup on and dark circles under her eyes. She coughs dramatically and does an exaggerated limping walk.)

(CHAD looks to TOMMY.)

TOMMY. You're a swell guy, Chad. Go talk to her.

CHAD. Is it contagious?

TOMMY. Not more than anything else around here.

(CHAD goes over to talk to VERONICA.)

CHAD. Uh...hi...Veronica.

VERONICA. (Feigning surprise:) Oh, hi, Chad. What are you doing here?

CHAD. At school?

VERONICA. Yeah...talking to me.

CHAD. Sorry to hear you're sick. Where's your yo-yo?

VERONICA. Oh...I musta left it at the hospital. When I was there...being treated...for sickness...and stuff.

CHAD. Are you going to be okay?

VERONICA. In heaven?

CHAD. No, now.

VERONICA. Ha, ha. You're sweet. All I ever wanted was to be treated... (cough, cough) ...like a normal teenager.

CHAD. Maybe I can help with that...

(BUGS enters and finds TOMMY.)

BUGS. Where's Stephanie? I got my fans on standby.

TOMMY. She should be here.

(STEPHANIE enters.)

BUGS. Stephanie.

STEPHANIE. So guys, where's Kristoff?

ACTRESS 1. Yeah, where's this hot-shot agent?

ACTRESS 2. Is he even gonna show?

(STEVE enters as Kristoff Bababalooch, the sleazy New York super agent. He wears an expensive-looking suit and a swanky mustache that keeps falling off. His hair is slicked back and he speaks with a slightly ambiguous European accent.)

STEVE. Bugs, baby! Be wit you in a hot minute.

BUGS. (Aside to TOMMY:) Who's that?

TOMMY. (Aside:) That's your agent, you nitwit.

(STEVE walks by VERONICA.)

STEVE. Who are you? You've got a great look. Sick is very "in" right now. Here's my card.

(STEVE throws her a card, then approaches BUGS.)

STEVE. There he is. You bug-eater-you.

BUGS. (Immediately playing the part:) Kristoff! So good of you to come.

(STEVE air kisses BUGS on both cheeks.)

TOMMY. (To STEPHANIE:) Whatta I tell ya?

BUGS. Kristoff, I'd like you to meet a very talented actress. No, Tommy, I'm not talking about you, ha, ha... Kristoff, this is Stephanie Mezaluna.

STEPHANIE. It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Bababalooch.

(STEVE air kisses her on both cheeks.)

STEVE. I've heard wonderful things about your work.

STEPHANIE. Wow, really?

STEVE. And these must be the other actresses.

BUGS. Yes, of course. Let me introduce you. Kristoff, these are...the other actresses.

TOMMY. Stephanie and Bugs are going to the prom together, isn't that, right, Stephanie?

STEPHANIE. Oh...right. That's...right.

STEVE. That's great, great. Crazy kids. I remember my prom. It was inside a volcano. Because I'm from an island or something. We used to play futbol with rotten pineapples coated in pig grease.

(TOMMY is trying to signal him to stop talking.)

STEVE. Well...I gotta get going.

STEPHANIE. Already?

ACTRESS 1. Don't you want to see our show?

ACTRESS 2. Or at least sit in on a rehearsal or something?

STEVE. No, no, I can't stay. But send me your headshots.

BUGS. (Feigning disappointment:) Are you sure you can't stay, Kristoff?

(CORA enters and approaches STEVE. She looks at him strangely.)

STEVE. Bugs, why is this strange girl staring at me? Please ask her to leave.

TOMMY. Cora, get out of here.

CORA. Steve is that you?

STEVE. I am Kristoff Bababalooch. And you must be another actress looking for attention.

CORA. What?

TOMMY. Haha. Excuse us.

(TOMMY pulls CORA aside.)

(Meanwhile, STEVE starts handing out fake business cards.)

TOMMY. Cora, what are you doing? You're gonna ruin the whole thing.

CORA. Is that Steve?

TOMMY. Of course it is.

CORA. Why is he dressed like that?

TOMMY. (Takes a deep breath.) He's playing a talent agent, who represents Bugs who's pretending to be a famous actor to impress Stephanie in exchange for my freedom from his bullying, in exchange for me getting a date with Chad Glamorville, for Veronica who's pretending to be sick, so Steve is free to go the prom with you.

CORA. (Beat.) Aw, that's sweet.

(STEPHANIE comes over to them.)

STEPHANIE. Cora, why did you call Kristoff, Steve?

TOMMY. That's his middle name. It's Croatian.

STEPHANIE. The name Steve is Croatian?

TOMMY. Steve is short for Steve-oph-ittle. Steveophittle.

(STEPHANIE is still confused.)

CORA. Who are they?

(She points to KIA and the MATH GEEKS who are posed to swarm BUGS.)

(TOMMY waves at BUGS to get the fans to rush over.)

(BUGS gives them the nod and they come rushing over.)

KIA. Hey Bugs. Are you really Bugs Lowery, the actor? He's, um...you're...amazing.

MATH GEEK 1. We're really big fans of your work. We've followed your career rather closely.

MATH GEEK 2. Do you think we can have your autograph?

MATH GEEK 3. And a picture with you?

KIA. It'd mean so much to us. And the Bugs fanclub we've formed. It's just a local chapter, but hey, it's just great to be a small part of what you do.

BUGS. Well, sure, I suppose I have a little time for that. Excuse me Stephanie, I'll be right back.

STEPHANIE. You have fans? And a fan club?

BUGS. It's just a local chapter.

STEPHANIE. That's...wow. I didn't realize you were that famous.

BUGS. I try not to let it go to my head.

(BUGS starts signing autographs and taking pictures with the MATH GEEKS. STEPHANIE stands by his side.)

(Meanwhile TOMMY has ushered STEVE away from STEPHANIE and the other students.)

ACTRESS 1. To think we were going to school with him this whole time.

ACTRESS 2. It's just a bunch of math geeks. Hey, Tommy where did Kristoff go? I have to give him my reel.

TOMMY. (Ignoring her question:) Actually, those aren't your average math geeks. You're looking at future reality TV stars. They're in the biz. That's probably how they know about Bugs.

ACTRESS 1. Reality TV stars of what?

TOMMY. The show is...about this competitive math team. It's called "Calculate This." It's like a thinking man's "Jersey Shore."

ACTRESS 2. That sounds awesome.

TOMMY. Supposed to be huge. When it gets here. It's only airing in Japan right now, but they're practically celebrities over there.

ACTRESS 2. Oh really...

ACTRESS 1. We should go talk to them.

TOMMY. Better yet, take them to the prom. If you date them now that will be so much more...meaningful...down the road. You know, the TV viewers really respond to that sort of thing. Actually there have been some talks to make "Calculate This" into a movie and then naturally into a Broadway musical. That's what happening with all mediocre movies now. You know how Hollywood is...

ACTresses. Oh sure...right...Hollywood...of course...totally...

(The ACTRESSES all go mingle with the MATH GEEKS. KIA gives TOMMY a thumbs up behind their back.)

(STEVE secretly sneaks off with CORA.)

(SHELLY enters and approaches TOMMY.)

SHELLY. Well?

TOMMY. It worked. I think. The mustache was a nice touch. Maybe a little more glue next time.

(STEPHANIE and CHAD approach each other.)

STEPHANIE. Chad. I'm sorry we didn't get to talk last period. But alot has happened since then.

CHAD. I know what you mean. It's like the whole earth rotates every class. And I just think it'd be better if we—

STEPHANIE. —If we maybe, for the prom—

CHAD. —Went with other people.

STEPHANIE. Yes! I mean, I think, I understand.

CHAD. Oh, good. Just out of curiosity, who are you going with?

STEPHANIE. Um...well...Bugs.

CHAD. Oh. Bugs. The wanna-be bully who eats things from his hair?

STEPHANIE. That's just a character he plays. And who are you taking?

CHAD. Veronica.

STEPHANIE. The yo-yo-ing nerd with anger management issues?

CHAD. She's dying, so...

STEPHANIE. A charity case, no, that makes sense.

(Everyone is paired off with their respective others. STEPHANIE and BUGS, VERONICA, and CHAD, STEVE, and CORA, TOMMY and SHELLY, and MATH GEEKS and THEATER NERDS.)

BUGS. So, you did it, Tommy. You're free and clear from my bullying next year.

SHELLY. And you have a really hot date for the prom.

TOMMY. Looks like things may finally be looking up for me.

(BURP enters with a vulgar burp.)

BURP. Everyone if I could have your attention. I have some exciting news for all of you. Due to my extraordinary lack of academic efforts, you will be delighted to know that I will be gracing you with my presence again next year.

TOMMY. You're staying back...again?

BUGS. Looks like things are finally looking up for you.

(TOMMY approaches BURP.)

TOMMY. Burp, maybe we can work something out. I've done wonders for the people around here.

(TOMMY puts his arm around BURP and they walk out in negotiations.)

(The Bell rings.)

(Everyone makes their way out of the hallway.)

(From the other side of the now empty hallway, we hear:)

OFF STAGE VOICE. Last chance for prom tickets! Last chance!

(Everyone runs back on and through the hallway to get their tickets.)

End of Play