

PUBERTY

the musical

BOOK
Coleman Peterson

MUSIC & LYRICS
Janice Gilbert & Coleman Peterson

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

- **Harper:** A mild-mannered, likable know-it-all. Super quirky, but not weird. Reluctant to accept the fact that there are some things she *hasn't* learned yet.
- **Alexis:** Harper's best friend. Speaks with a lateral lisp, very odd, and typically cares way too much.
- **Jessie:** A stressed out seventh-grader who feels extreme pressure to maintain her reputation. Sassy and charismatic, she reigns in and focuses her often distracting friends, Katie and Heather.
- **Katie:** Aggressive, quick-thinking, and excitable. Probably wears one of those tee shirts with a cute bunny on it but a really mean phrase written below it.
- **Heather:** Ditz, but knows how to work people over. The type of girl who gets tons of likes on social media, but also eats cold hot dogs with no shame.
- **Patrick:** Your average artsy boy, extremely upset at the fact that he can't sing like he used to.
- **Nate:** Patrick's helpful best friend. Awkward around those of the opposite sex, easily worked up and overwhelmed.
- **Joe:** A very short, slowly developing boy. Despite a fierce yearning for a growth spurt, his hormones just can't seem to get the memo. Written to be played by a female.
- **Melanie:** Joe's good friend. A talented piano player. Friendly and pleasant, but extremely defensive.
- **Vanessa:** President (and likely dictator?) of the student council. Orderly, strict, and no-nonsense. Drill sergeant in a middle schooler's body.
- **Sam:** Vanessa's assistant. Extremely loyal to Vanessa, regardless of how demanding she is of her. Somehow simultaneously flustered and organized.
- **Aaron:** Jock with a good heart. A little dumb, but he makes up for it in charm.
- **Will:** Aaron's lady-crazy friend.
- **Nick:** Mean, sweaty, and insensitive. That's pretty much it.
- **Ms. Lemon:** Science teacher with likely possession of a dull personal life.
- **Mr. Michaels:** PE teacher. Hates working, likes to party.
- **Janitor:** Went to prison once. Female.
- **Principal:** Walk on role from school administrator or local celebrity.
- **Mikey:** a held-back student with the body hair to prove it (also member of ensemble)
- **Quinn:** a sunny-looking, computer-hacking enigma of a student with a passion for Christ (also member of ensemble)
- **Ensemble:** The pubescent students of Woodrow Wilson Middle School. Horse Girl, Theatre Geek, Scene Kid, Athlete, etc. Also appear as teachers in "Teacher Avenue."

Note: These characters are written to be able to be played by actors of any race or ethnicity, and the creators encourage your cast to be as diverse and as representative of your school or community as possible. Explore implementing a cast of all different shapes, sizes, colors, and backgrounds, because despite our differences, growing up is something we all have to do together.

ACT I

SCENE 1

0. OPENING begins as the stage fills with exciting, concert-like lighting effects.

OFFSTAGE VOICES:

*Dah! Dah, dah, dah...
Dah, dah, dah...
Da, da, da, da,
Da, da, da, da,
Ooh...*

Crescendo as music segues to 1A. PUBERTY PART 1. Lights up on a stage split into four individual areas: the four houses/bedrooms of our main characters. Patrick enters. We follow his morning routine as he sings in a campy, introductory vignette.

PATRICK:

*Puberty,
The perfect form of cruelty.
You start to get uncomfortable with nudity.
Can someone tell me how to get immunity to puberty?*

(Speaking to audience) Uh, hi. My name's Patrick, and you know, so far, this whole "becoming a man" thing hasn't really been going too well for me. I mean, every day you wake up different than you were the day before, and I'm not really sure how to deal with that kind of inconsistency. My face is changing, my height is changing, but I think the biggest change that's plagued me in the recent months is... my voice. **(Lights shift to Jessie's room, where she stands, looking at herself in a mirror)**

JESSIE:

*Oh my gosh.
Is that a zit? I even used my acne wash.
(Typing on her phone) Last... minute... acne... solutions...
They say "apply a beauty mask made out of... tartar sauce?"*

Hi, I'm Jessie, and I'd really like to sit and chat about this whole "puberty" thing, but I'm sort of in the middle of a crisis right now. **(in re: the zit)** I gotta get *this* sucker taken care of before the dance tomorrow. **(Shouting to offstage, urgently)** Mom, do we have any tartar sauce?!

*My body's changing, every day there's something new.
(Patrick comes back into view)*

PATRICK:

Reflections in the mirror always seem askew.

JESSIE:

Through all the zits and hair, I barely see myself.

JESSIE & PATRICK:

Wouldn't it be wonderful if somebody could help? (Jessie & Patrick exit, lights shift to an entering Harper)

HARPER:

I'm Harper, and unlike the majority of the vacuous dorks in my grade, I know what I'm in for with this whole puberty thing. Yeah, yeah, I get it. Hair grows, pits stink... big whoop! To be honest, I've known everything I need to know about puberty ever since my mom bought me a book about it in the fourth grade. Sure, growing up sucks sometimes, but don't act like you didn't know it was going to happen.

*My body's changing but no need to be alarmed,
A couple years, it'll all be done, and we'll all emerge unharmed.
I can't believe that kids my age could be so uninformed.
Calm down, give it some time, I swear, you won't turn out deformed!*

Well, looks like I'm off to school. Wouldn't want a tardy to show up on my permanent record!
(She scurries out, music segues to 1B. PUBERTY PART 2, lights up on Joe)

JOE:

Hi, um. I'm Joe. And... well... there's really only one thing I want at this point in my life. And it's not really that much to ask. It's just... well...

*Puberty.
I wish I could hit puberty.
Just like the rest of the entire school community.
I want to have the beautiful opportunity...
To hit puberty... (music builds as the company enters and we are swept into the chaotic hallway of Wilson Middle School)*

ALL:

*Puberty,
Our lives just suck and you'd agree,
We miss the days when we were cheerful and carefree.
Our lives were simply Ollie Ollie Oxen Free 'til puberty.*

*Now life's hard.
Our middle school's a barnyard.
Now everybody's hairy as a Saint Bernard.
These aren't just things you try to hide, or shrug aside, or disregard.*

*Everyone's changing, and it's driving us insane.
Surprises every day; it's simply not humane!
We're sick and tired of this puberty roulette.
Stuck in a freak show and it makes us so upset.*

*Puberty,
We go to sleep and wake up with a huge goatee.
You laugh, but adolescence ain't no jubilee.
Can someone tell us...*

GROUP 1:

*How to get immunity, to
Help me turn out beautifully, to
Be the best that I can be, to
Better my reality and*

GROUP 2:

*How...
To rid myself of scrutiny, to
Have the opportunity, to
Get people to notice me, to
Rescue us and*

ALL:

*Free us from this tragedy!
Save us from puber-*

BOYS (MINUS JOE):

(voices crack) -ty!

ALL:

-ty! Puberty!
Save us from puberty!

(Bell rings, 1C. PUBERTY PLAYOFF begins. Students disperse, chatting, as they fiddle with their book bags and lockers. Another miserable beginning to another awkward day.)

SAM:

Attention Woodrow Wilson Middle School Students! An important announcement regarding tomorrow's Middle School Dance.

VANESSA:

Greetings, all. As student council president, I, Vanessa M. LeDuke, would like to formally announce that tickets will be available for purchase in the cafeteria today for a *bargain* price of 3.99 plus tax. And also, be sure to remember to bring all three required forms of ID with you tomorrow, or you will not, under any circumstances, be admitted to the dance. Sam—the list?

SAM:

(flipping through notes) Acceptable forms of ID include school identification cards, passports, birth certificates, drivers licenses—

STUDENT:

We're not even *old* enough to drive...

VANESSA:

(suddenly vicious, her head snaps in the direction of Mikey, an unsuspecting student) Mikey. Have you or have you not been detained in the 8th grade for three consecutive years?

MIKEY:
(obviously lying) No...

VANESSA:
Your full mustache tells a different story. Now, given these unfortunate and— unsightly— circumstances, one could assume that you are, indeed, 17 years old, and thus, legally of age to operate a motor vehicle in this great state of Michigan?

MIKEY:
(a beat, then dejectedly) Yeah...

VANESSA:
Point proven. **(aside)** My parents are lawyers. **(back to normal)** Sam, continue.

SAM:
Social Security Cards, 5th grade graduation diplomas, military discharge papers— again, Mikey— aaaand library cards.

VANESSA:
Thank you. If anybody has any questions, you may call and set up an appointment with Sam here and we'll try to squeeze you in. I'm a very busy lady, but I try to make time for the little people. Thank you for your time. We'll see you all tomorrow at seven! *No late entries.* Sam— music please. **(Sam quickly pulls a clarinet or similar instrument from... out of nowhere? and begins playing “Hail to the Chief,” she and Vanessa exit.)**

HARPER:
(to Alexis) Sheesh, who would put that much effort into going to a middle school dance?

ALEXIS:
(Speaking with her lateral lisp. Think Stacey Dillsen from Zoey 101) Well “sheesh” Harper, maybe because Vanessa’s dances are.. I don’t know... *LEGENDARY.*

HARPER:
Oh come on, Alexis, they can’t be that good.

ALEXIS:
Harper... Sweetie... You may have the highest test scores in all of seventh grade, but sometimes, I swear you’re an idiot.

HARPER:
What! It’s middle school. it’s not like gonna be some red carpet gala with fondue fountains and—

ALEXIS:
(makes a face hinting that that's exactly what it is, then raising her phone) Swipe.

HARPER:

(swiping through pictures on Alexis's phone) Oh, so, it's like a red carpet gala with fondue fountains.

ALEXIS:

Yeah. My sister went last year and said that the week full of fondue-induced stomach cramps following the dance was totally worth it. Not something to miss out on.

HARPER:

Well, I'm not really much for the whole socializing-with-other-middle-schoolers thing, but... you're going, right?

ALEXIS:

Well, I guess it depends if my rash flares up again but, yeah, I'd planned to.

HARPER:

Okay, perfect. I'd better go get a ticket today then.

ALEXIS:

Yeah, I'll need one too. (to herself) And maybe some ointment just in case... Well come on, we're gonna be late for science. (Bell rings, students scurry to class, cue 1D. Late for Science!)

SCENE 2

Harper, Alexis, and the rest of the students enter Ms. Lemon's science classroom, chatting. They sit together at several tables, poorly constructed science projects in front of them.

WILL:

(Approaching Katie's table, smoothly) Hey, ah... Katie.

KATIE:

(obviously not interested) What do you want, Will?

WILL:

Will I, ah, see you at the dance tomorrow?

KATIE:

Duh. Isn't everybody going?

WILL:

(seductively) You're mean... I like that. See ya there, I guess. (he sits down)

KATIE:

Yeah. See ya.

HEATHER:

(prodding) What's up with that? You and Will?

KATIE:

Ugh. Just an old flame that refuses to *die*.

HEATHER:

Ooh, I don't know if I'd *extinguish* that too quickly. Get it? Like... fire?

KATIE:

(unamused) Cool it, Heather. When Will and I were together it was the sixth grade. So young, so careless... I'm much more mature now. Seventh grade changes a girl quite a bit. And plus, I've got you and Jessie to keep me busy.

HEATHER:

Where's she at anyway? (**Jessie enters, wearing a hat that covers her forehead**)

KATIE:

Jess, hey! What's up with the hat?

HEATHER:

Ooh! Going for the edgy dress-code-violation look today, huh?

JESSIE:

Not exactly. Just, shh. If you don't say anything maybe people won't notice—

MS. LEMON:

Jessie, you're late. That's the second time this week.

JESSIE:

I know, I'm sorry.

MS. LEMON:

One more attendance violation and you'll have some detention to serve, young lady. And, you know the rules; hat off please.

JESSIE:

But Ms. Lemon—

MS. LEMON:

Ah ah ah— If I can't wear my fedora here, you can't wear anything on your head either.

HEATHER:

(erupts in laughter) Oh. Sorry. I'm just... I don't know, fedoras really get me.

MS. LEMON:

I can assure you, Heather, that my fedora is very fashionable. It's rhinestoned. Actually, my current Tinder (**or other popular dating/matching network**) profile picture is me in my fedora and my replies have been off the charts lately.

KATIE:

Gross.

MS LEMON:

Rude. But I digress. All right class, get with your groups. We're going to be finishing up our projects today. Remember, they're due on Monday, so don't get too distracted this weekend with the dance and all. Jessie. Hat. (**Jessie slowly pulls her hat off, covering her face with her hair to hide whatever may be underneath.**)

KATIE:

(to Jessie) Okay seriously, what's with you today?

JESSIE:

Too much. It's actually kind of a personal issue.

HEATHER:

Oh my God, it happened.

JESSIE:

No, not—that!

HEATHER:

Well, what then! Tell us.

KATIE:

Jessie, we've been friends since the third grade. We deserve to know. We're here for you.

(**Jessie shamefully pulls her hair up so Heather and Katie can see... the zit!**)

HEATHER:

Agh!

KATIE:

(hits Heather) Uh! Okay this is nothing we can't handle, Jess. All we need to do is look up some remedies on the internet and we'll get it taken care of before anybody else can see.

JESSIE:

I already spent all morning doing that! Nothing will work!

KATIE:

(stealthily researching on her phone) Look, it says right here. Tartar sauce.

JESSIE:

Tried it.

HEATHER:

I thought I smelled mayonnaise...

KATIE:

(beat) You know, I noticed that too, but I just assumed it was Heather's natural scent.

HEATHER:

Uh!

JESSIE:

Ladies, focus! This is serious.

KATIE:

(going back to her phone) Well how about this. Sal-i-cyclic acid... A little obscure, but people on this website are swearing by it.

JESSIE:

We're 13 years old. Where are we gonna find salicylic ac-

NATE:

(at Ms. Lemon's desk) Hey, Ms. Lemon, do you happen to have any salicylic acid? (**Heather, Katie, and Jessie quickly turn their heads**)

MS. LEMON:

Yeah, sure. Here. (**Ms. Lemon just happens to have a beaker full of it sitting right next to her, and gives it to Nate carelessly.**) Wear your goggles. (**Nate goes to his seat, where he and Patrick are working on a model of a volcano.**)

HEATHER:

I got this. Okay ladies, breeze me. (**Jessie and Katie each blow a puff of air toward Heather, who shakes her hair out.**) I'm goin' in. (**She walks to Nate, seductively, bringing along an empty beaker. She flirts.**) Hey... Nate... (looks to Patrick, a giggle) Patrick. So... you guys going to the dance tomorrow?

NATE:

(attempting to speak) Dur... ng... na-a-a

HEATHER:

Haha... sooooo true...

PATRICK:

I think he's trying to say yes.

NATE:

Flergn. (**while Patrick looks over, quietly scolding his embarrassing friend, Heather quickly swaps her empty beaker for their beaker full of acid**)

PATRICK:

Well, I'm not really sure what he means by "flern," but I know I'm going. Vanessa actually hired me to sing a couple songs.

HEATHER:

Oh, awesome! We all love it when you sing. Well, I guess I'll see you guys there then. (**looking to Nate**) Maybe. By the way, cute volcano. (**Stroking their project**) Totally original. (**She moves away, and signals for Jessie and Katie to come closer as she walks to Ms. Lemon's desk**) Ms. Lemon can we use your bathroom pass?

MS. LEMON:

(**a smile slowly creeps across her face, she can't wait to reply**) I don't know... can yo-

HEATHER & KATIE:

MAY we use your bathroom pass?

MS. LEMON:

(**smile quickly leaving**) Yeah sure, but remember: one person per pass. (**She hands Heather the pass**)

KATIE:

Gimme that. (**Katie grabs the pass and rips it into 3 pieces, which she distributes to Jessie and Heather**) There we go. (**They leave with the acid, hurriedly, focus moves to Patrick and Nate**)

PATRICK:

Okay, why all of a sudden are you speaking in an Oompa Loompa language?

NATE:

You know girls make me uncomfortable, dude. Just chill, you don't have to flame me for it.

PATRICK:

Number one, stop trying to be cool by saying things like "chill" and "flame" because I literally just heard you say the word "flergn". And two, you were best friends with Heather for like *all* of elementary school. Why is it any different in seventh grade?

NATE:

Because Heather is hot now! I mean have you seen her- (**you-know-whats**)

PATRICK:

(bluntly) Yes. I know.

NATE:

And plus, she's best friends with Katie Hanson.

PATRICK:

Remember when Katie beat you up last year?

NATE:

Lower your voice. That girl is raging with hormones. (**switching subjects**) And apparently so am I. (**hushed and embarrassed**) I found an armpit hair this morning! What kind of crazy pubescent torture is that? It itches!

PATRICK:

Oh please, don't even act like you've got the worst of it. Hormones are ruining my life too. I can't sing above an A anymore! An A! Do you know how important that is to a youth vocalist!?

NATE:

Well... maybe you should just... take a break for a little bit. Let your body settle into itself.

PATRICK:

(offended) Ha. Good one. Just tell 3-time Elementary Honor Choir participant Patrick Farley not to sing? How about you try not *breathing!* (**Cue: 2A. HORMONES RUIN EVERYTHING**) Ugh, life could be running so smoothly right now if these hormones weren't screwing everything up.

*It's like every day's a torture chamber, shredding up my vocal cords.
My high A has worn away, my falsetto's gone overboard.
I've lost control, my facial hole sounds like a dying rooster everytime I open my mouth to sing.
I told you...
Hormones ruin everything.*

NATE:

Can't you just sing songs with lower notes then?

PATRICK:

I should, it's just that I already told Vanessa what song I was gonna sing at the dance before I lost the ability to sing the high notes in it. And there's no way in the world that I'm going to change things up on *her* the day before her big event. I can't even sing *now*, I'd hate to see what's left after *she's* through with me.

NATE:

Yeah, she's one vicious 8th grader. Wait... what if you just faked singing the high notes?

PATRICK:

That's cheating.

NATE:

Not if you don't get caught. I have an idea.

PATRICK:

Elaborate...

NATE:

Look, all you have to do is find somebody who can sing the A.

PATRICK:

So sing a duet? Nate, Vanessa's not gonna like that at all-

NATE:

No!

Sneak them in as you drop out, and all your problems fade away.

PATRICK:

Hmm... Okay, but who's gonna do it?

NATE:

There's gotta be, to some degree, a person in this school who's capable of letting that high A ring.

Don't worry...

Hormones won't ruin anything!

PATRICK:

Except for your interactions with females.

NATE:

That was uncalled for. Now come on, open up your ears. Listen for the A! (**they move around the room, listening in on other student's conversations**)

GUY 1:

(laughing to his friend) *Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.*

PATRICK:

A major seventh too low.

GUY 1 & 2:

(laughing again) *Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.*

PATRICK:

Still not high enough...

GUY 1, 2, & 3:

(laughing again, again) *Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.*

NATE:

Listen harder!

CLASS:

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha, ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!

PATRICK:

Okay, maybe we're listening too hard.

NATE:

Right. Just keep your ears open. Hormones might not have ruined *everybody*.

PATRICK:

Train your ear and you might hear the high A that we're searching for.

CLASS:

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.

NATE:

Find the kid and put them in and you won't worry anymore.

CLASS:

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.

NATE & PATRICK:

*We'll find that voice and we'll rejoice
And everyone will talk about how crazy
and amazing my/your voice is!*

CLASS:

Ha...

NATE:

'Cause sometimes...

CLASS:

Ha...

PATRICK:

Oh sometimes...

CLASS:

Ha...

NATE & PATRICK:

'Cause sometimes...

CLASS:

Ha ha ha ha ha.

NATE & PATRICK:

Hormones can be avoided!

STUDENTS:

Ha! (Bell rings, students begin to collect their things)

MS. LEMON:

Alright students, make sure you finish those projects. I might suggest taking them home tonight and getting a little work done before the big dance tomorrow.

STUDENTS (MINUS HARPER):

Nah. (They pack up their things and leave as Harper attempts to pick up and carry her enormous project across the room and out the door.)

MS. LEMON:

Have a nice day, Harper.

HARPER:

(struggling) You... too... (She exits)

MS. LEMON:

Hallelujah, planning period. (She pulls out a rhinestoned fedora from her desk drawer and reclines in her chair) (Blackout, 2A. HORMONES SCENE SHIFT plays as we transition to hallway)

SCENE 3

In the hallway, students head to their next classes with their things.

WILL:

Joseph! My man!

JOE:

Hey guys! What's up?

AARON:

No muchacho, amigo. Learned that in Spanish last week.

JOE:

Actually I think it's "no mucho."

NICK:

Hey, up top, Joe. (He lifts his hand high in the air. Joe tries to high five, but isn't tall enough.)

JOE:

(sighs) Funny.

WILL:

(attempting to comfort) It's okay, little man. Yoda was short too and he was still cool.

NICK:

Hey... Can we call you Joe-da? Get it, 'cause it's like Yoda... and Joe... and you're like... short?

AARON:

Ignore him Joe. He's just mad cause he sweats ten times more than the average 7th grader. (He turns to leave, Will follows)

NICK:

Okay it's not even that bad...

WILL:

Yeah, it kinda is...

AARON:

Come on, pit stains, we're gonna be late.

WILL:

See ya, Joe!

AARON:

Yeah, uh, Adi-los.

JOE:

(Correcting him) Adios.

NICK:

(leaving) Oh, how's this one, I got it. No-Grow Joe! (they exit, Joe is left alone)

JOE:

(to himself) No-Grow Joe? (He sighs and heads to class, the opposite direction. In the shuffle of the hallway, we see Harper carrying her enormous project through the crowd)

HARPER:

Excuse me! Sorry. Coming through.

AARON:

(from offstage) Aw crap, I forgot my math book! (He runs on in an effort to beat the bell)
Whoa! (Bam! In dramatic slow motion, he crashes right into Harper and her project.)

HARPER:

Oh my gosh! (The two stand and stare at the demolished project as the remaining students walk offstage)

AARON:

I am so, sorry.

HARPER:

Ugh. (to herself, as she kneels down to assess the damage) People in this school need to watch where the heck they're going.

AARON:

Uh, here let me help. (Aaron helps Harper gather the strewn project pieces) Sorry. Again. I just— needed to get my math book before the bell rings— (The bell rings.) ...rang.

HARPER:

Well, now we're both late.

AARON:

Great.

HARPER:

(frustrated and wanting Aaron to leave) Here, do you have Mrs. Anderson for math?

AARON:

Yeah.

HARPER:

Then just, (pulling her math book out of her stack of textbooks) take my math book. I can get this on my own. I don't need it to be more screwed up than it already is.

AARON:

No, no. I'm already late, I might as well just stay and help out. It was my fault anyway.

HARPER:

Okay, well, I guess you could grab this piece and put it in my locker. The combination is 23-42-15.

AARON:

(unlocking) 23-42-15... got it.

HARPER:

And don't go sharing that with any of your burglarizing friends.

AARON:

Oh no, don't worry. Usually *I'm* the burglar. (Harper whips around, defending herself with her fists.) Kidding. (going about doing what she instructed) Again. I'm really sorry. It looks like you spent a lot of time on this...

HARPER:

Yeah, I guess. It's not like I have much going on outside of school though. Mostly just, studying. Reading. And then maybe if I'm feeling wild I'll like, eat a banana or something. (beat) Potassium, right?

AARON:

(He laughs a little. She's interesting.) What'd you say your name was?

HARPER:

Oh, sorry. Harper.

AARON:

Aaron. (they finish cleaning up) So, are you planning on going to the dance tomorrow?

HARPER:

Uh... Yeah. Actually. I'd planned to.

AARON:

Sweet. I'll see you there. Again, ah, los pimientos.

HARPER:

...Do you mean "lo siento?"

AARON:

...Probably, I don't know, to be honest.

HARPER:

Well, I'd better get to class.

AARON:

Yeah me too. See you tomorrow. (**He walks off as Harper heads in the opposite direction, looking over her shoulder. Once he is offstage, she gives a sigh and a slight smile, then, realizing what she is doing, quickly shakes it off, and exits with her things. Cue: 2B, BREAKING OUT SCENE SHIFT. Transition to bathroom.**)

SCENE 4

School bathroom. Jessie sits on a counter, with Heather and Katie nearby, ready with the salicylic acid.

KATIE:

Okay. Ready?

JESSIE:

Yes, just get it over with.

HEATHER:

I really hope your face doesn't melt off.

JESSIE:

(sarcastically) Thanks, Heather.

KATIE:

K. Here we go. (she prepares to put the acid on Jessie's face) Three... Two... (The Janitor enters, and begins noisily emptying the trash. The girls freeze and stare at her.)

JANITOR:

Oh, I'm sorry. Am I interrupting something?

KATIE:

GET OUTTA HERE!

JANITOR:

(legitimately frightened) Geez! (**she leaves**)

KATIE:

Three... Two...

HEATHER:

I can't watch! (**she turns away and covers her eyes**)

KATIE:

One! (**Katie quickly applies the acid to Jessie's face and waits to see what will happen.**)
Well? Feel anything?

JESSIE:

(slowly coming out of her wince, realizing she's fine) No. Nothing.

KATIE:

That's weird.

HEATHER:

Did her face melt off?

KATIE:

No, it's still there.

HEATHER:

(turning back around and uncovering her eyes) Oh. Lame.

JESSIE:

Well, I'm sorry that I couldn't entertain you with my face melting off, Heather.

HEATHER:

...Me too.

KATIE:

(beat, then turning to Jessie) I worry about that one.

JESSIE:

(to Katie) Yeah, well, she's got a date for tomorrow and I don't.

KATIE:

What she lacks in brains, she makes up for in pheromones. That's all I'm gonna say.

HEATHER:

Hey, I'm standing right here. (**beat**) And what's a pheromone?

KATIE:

You shouldn't be worrying about not having a date, Jess. It's a middle school dance, not the senior prom.

JESSIE:

Still! I mean, it would be nice! How am I supposed to enter high school with a good reputation if I'm not even good enough to be noticed by anybody? This week is not turning out like I wanted it to.

HEATHER:

Aww... Don't worry. We'll get through it together. (**Heather comes over to Jessie and hugs her from the side. She stares at her forehead for a second.**) Wow, that zit is monstrous.

JESSIE:

Uh! Well squeeze it! Help me out a little bit here!

KATIE:

I wanna do it!

HEATHER:

No! I wanna! (**the two girls argue for a few seconds, but Katie, as usual, wins.**)

KATIE:

Hold still. (**She positions her fingers around the zit, they inhale together. Blackout. 2C. LATER THAT DAY 1 begins, ensemble fills the stage and transitions the set to the school cafeteria.**)

STUDENTS:

*Later that day
Later, later, later that day
Later that day
Later, later that day.
Later that day
Later, later, later that day.
Lay- la- lay- lay- la- later that day*

SCENE 5

Cafeteria at lunchtime. Hungry students chat, and begin to line up for their food. Sam and Vanessa sit at an elaborate ticket booth.

SAM:

Tickets! Get your tickets here!

VANESSA:

Louder, Sam.

SAM:

(whipping out a bullhorn) TICKETS! GET YOUR DANCE TICKETS!

VANESSA:

That's better.

PATRICK:

(entering with Nate) Alright. Here we are. The cafeteria. The loudest, most chaotic place in the entire building.

NATE:

Right. Play the A again. (**Patrick plays it on a pitch pipe**) Keep your ears... peeled.

PATRICK:

Yeah, that's not a phrase.

MELANIE:

Hey, Pat! We still on for a quick rehearsal before the dance tomorrow?

PATRICK:

Melanie! Yes! Thank you for reminding me. I'm getting the sheet music all printed out for you tonight. Sorry I asked you so last minute. Things have been really crazy.

MELANIE:

Oh, it's no problem. I totally get it. And you know me, if there's anything around here that has anything to do with ivory tickling, I'm all over it. How are you, Nate?

NATE:

(again, flustered) Duhhh...

PATRICK:

Really?

NATE:

...Flergn?

PATRICK:

(Leading Nate away) Welp, we'll see you around, Melanie.

MELANIE:

(she laughs a little, confused) Bye!

NATE:

Thank you for saving me.

PATRICK:

Anytime, lady-killer. Let's go get you some mini corn dogs.

NATE:

Yesssss... (they join the line)

MELANIE:

(noticing Joe entering from across the cafeteria) Joe! Hey!

JOE:

(a little glum) Oh hey, Melanie.

MELANIE:

I haven't seen you all day! (Joe is silent) Something wrong?

JOE:

Nah... It's just— It's nothing.

MELANIE:

Oh. Okay. Hey... It's your favorite lunch today! M-C-D's.

JOE:

(a glimmer of hope) Mini corn dogs?

MELANIE:

Yeah. You can even have a couple of mine if you want. I want to have as much room for fondue as possible.

JOE:

Deal.

MELANIE:

(laughs) Come on. (they join the lunch line)

SAM:

(through bullhorn) ATTENTION STUDENTS! (the students jump, startled from the blaring noise, one might even shriek) I'M SORRY FOR THAT SLIGHT SPOOK. FOR THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES ONLY, GET YOUR DANCE TICKETS AT A 5% REDUCED PRICE OF THREE DOLLARS AND EIGHTY CENTS.

VANESSA:

Plus tax.

SAM:

PLUS TAX. NO REFUNDS OR EXCHANGES AVAILABLE. HAVE A NICE DAY. (Alexis approaches and buys a ticket)

KATIE:

(entering and meeting with Heather) Heather! Have you seen Jessie anywhere?

HEATHER:

No, have you?

KATIE:

No. That's weird. I hope everything's okay with the whole... situation.

HEATHER:

I'll text her quick.

KATIE:

Wanna go get some corn dogs?

HEATHER:

(not looking up from her screen, walking toward the lunch line, in a low and powerful voice) YUP. (Katie follows, focus shifts to Alexis at the ticket booth)

ALEXIS:

(nervously looking) Harper... Where are you, Harper... (Harper enters) Harper! There you are. Hurry, hurry! There's a discount!

HARPER:

A what?

ALEXIS:

A discount! On the tickets!

HARPER:

Oh. Okay. (she approaches the booth) Um, hello. I'd like to buy a ticket.

VANESSA:

Name please.

HARPER:

Harper.

VANESSA:

(looking up) ...Just Harper?

HARPER:

Er— Harper Ann Marie McGuffin?

VANESSA:

Hm. McGuffin... What a name. Here, is your waiver. (pulls out a comically long sheet of paper, full of text) Just sign at the bottom, and you are all set.

HARPER:

It's gonna take me forever to read this thing. (to Alexis) Who in the world has time to rea—

ALEXIS:

Just— (She grabs Harper's arm and wildly forces her to write her name. She takes the waiver to Vanessa.) Sorry. She's new to this whole process.

VANESSA:

(putting document away) Figured. Alright, that will be four dollars and three cents, please. (Aaron enters the scene and crosses the stage with his friends, Harper distractedly follows him with her eyes)

WILL:

(looking at a returned Spanish test) Wait, so Aaron, why did I get counted wrong on this? Isn't "please" "gracias"?

AARON:

Nah man, that's like the easiest one. It's floor pavor.

NICK:

Dude! (painfully oblivious) Aaron, you're pretty much like *fluent* in speaking Mexican! (they join the line)

VANESSA:

(bringing back the focus) Ahem.

HARPER:

Oh. Uh, here you go. (She hands Vanessa a \$5 bill, Vanessa pulls out a cash register from under the table and uses it to get Harper's change. To Alexis) She has a cash register? (Alexis nods)

VANESSA:

Alright, here you are. 97 cents is your change, and here is your ticket. Make sure to grab an information sheet at the end of the table before you leave. Thank you for your business! (Harper and Alexis leave, Vanessa rolls her eyes) First timers, am I right, Sam?

SAM:

(through bullhorn) YES MA'AM.

VANESSA:

You don't have to shout anymore, Sam.

SAM:

Oh. (quieter) Yes ma'am. (focus shifts to Alexis & Harper)

ALEXIS:

Were you just staring at that boy?

HARPER:

No, I—

ALEXIS:

(singing) Harper's got a crush, Harper's got a crush!

HARPER:

(interrupting) No, I don't. I just literally ran into him in the hallway is all.

ALEXIS:

Sure... You know, crushes are common during this time in our lives. With the puberty and all.

HARPER:

I know, Alexis. But, trust me. It's not a crush. I would know if it was.

ALEXIS:

Okay... now come on, I gotta go get my corn dog on. (**Harper glances over at Aaron once more. Alexis looks back after taking a few steps toward the lunch line, which is getting unusually long.**) Harper! MCD's?!

HARPER:

Right. (**They join the lunch line, full of hungry, grumbling students**) What's going on? Why isn't the line moving? (**Janitor enters, assuming the role of a Lunch Lady**)

LUNCH LADY:

Attention students. Attention. Unfortunately due to some kitchen issues today, we will not be serving mini corn dogs. Sloppy Joes will be served instead. We apologize for the inconvenience.

NATE & PATRICK:

What.

HEATHER, KATIE, MELANIE, & JOE:

What.

ALEXIS:

WHAAAAAAAAT?!?! You listen up! There is a whole mob of starving children here waiting to taste the sweet, slightly-soggy batter of mass produced mini corn dogs, and we've got a whole lot of pent up rage inside us that you do not want to trigger!

LUNCH LADY:

Yeah, okay, I'll see you at home, Alexis.

ALEXIS:

Bye, mom. (**Lunch Lady waddles out**)

HEATHER:

You heard the lisper! Give us the freakin' corn dogs or you're gonna feel the wrath of 50 hormonal tweens. M-C-D's! (**3. DISPLACED ANGER begins**)

STUDENTS:

M-C-D's! M-C-D's! M-C-Deeeeeee's!

KATIE:

*Don't ever stick your finger in a tiger's cage,
Especially if the tiger's young and full of rage
Today the Wilson faculty is goin' down*

+ HEATHER:

They're gonna feel our tween rampage.

*They never ever think about the damage they do
Or the aches and pains and all the strains we're goin' through,*

+ ALEXIS & MELANIE:

*Then they go and take away our MCDs!
Revenge is very overdue.*

ALL STUDENTS:

*Oh, oh, oh, we're about to blow,
All the stress is too immense.
Oh oh, oh, oh, turn it to turbo!
Flipped a switch, now everybody's intense...*

*Displaced anger...
Displaced anger...*

HEATHER & KATIE:

*We're sorry but we really just can't help ourselves
with our spirits always damaged by school personnel.*

+ ALEXIS, MELANIE, JOE, NATE, & PATRICK:

*They just trip our triggers and we go insane
At every ring of every bell.*

+ ALL STUDENTS

Oh, and it makes us wanna yell!

*Oh, oh, oh, we're about to blow,
All the stress is too immense.
Oh oh, oh, oh, turn it to turbo!
Flipped a switch, now everybody's intense...
With displaced anger!
Ohh... Huh!*

(They riot! The cafeteria quickly turns into a warzone as the students freak out in a spectacular rage dance.)

*Oh, oh, oh, we're about to blow,
(suddenly innocent) We don't know why we're so mad.*

(back to angry) *Oh oh, oh, turn it to turbo!
Flipped a switch, and now we're actin' bad*

*Oh, oh, oh, don't want no sloppy joes!
Give us the corn dogs like you said.
Oh oh, oh, oh, the "joe" has gotta go!*

KATIE:

Or else somebody's gonna end up dead!

STUDENTS:

(ad libbing) Whoa! / No... / That's not right. / Too far, girl.

KATIE:

Sorry. Mood swing. It was just a little bit of...

Displaced anger...

STUDENTS:

*Displaced anger...
Displaced anger...
Displaced anger...*

ALEXIS:

Displaced anger!

ALL:

Displaced anger... (the students return to their initial positions, as if nothing had happened at all)

MS. LEMON:

(beat) Well that was weird.

MR. MICHAELS:

You know middle schoolers and their moods. Especially that Katie Hanson over there. She is one scary girl. **(Jessie enters behind the conversing teachers, hands over her face)**

KATIE:

JESSIE! **(She sprints across the cafeteria, in their direction. Mr. Michaels screams and flinches. Katie looks at him, confused, then pulls Jessie out from behind him)** There you are! What's going on? **(Jessie removes her hands, revealing... a bright red face, burned by the acid from earlier!)** Oh my gosh!

HEATHER:

(joining them) Geez, Jess. your face is bright red! You must be really heated about the whole mini corn dog situation, huh?

KATIE:

No, Heather. It's from that acid stuff! Does it hurt?

JESSIE:

Not really. But now I look even worse than I did before.

KATIE:

You said it, not me.

JESSIE:

How is looking like a tomato gonna get me a date for tomorrow night?

HEATHER:

I mean you never know, Jess, some guys might really be into girls who... look like... vegetables. Or is it a fruit now?

KATIE:

Heather, I am this close with you. Listen, we'll deal with your date situation later, but for right now, I think we should just get you out of here before anybody else can see.

JESSIE:

Good idea. I'll just tell somebody I'm sick and go home for the day.

KATIE:

Good luck!

HEATHER:

Text us later! (**Jessie exits**) I really hope that clears up by tomorrow.

KATIE:

Me too. Red totally doesn't go with her dress. (**Cue: 3A. DISPLACED ANGER SCENE SHIFT**)
SCENE 6

Jessie's house. A computer sits at a desk.

JESSIE:

(from offstage) Hello? Beefy, I'm home! Beefy? Here kitty... (**a cat meows**) Aww... there you are big guy. Come here and give Jessie some lov— (**cat meows angrily**) Jeez! (**Jessie enters, and moves to the computer**) Jerk. Alright... Research time. (**Cue: 4. ARE YOU KIDDING ME**, she types) Red... face... acid... burn... remedy. Search.

*A red faced, disgraced seventh grader
Do me a favor,
come on, please, computer work with me!*

*This issue cannot wait 'till later.
Change my face's shade
because I look like a strawberry!*

*Thank God the internet can help me
Make my skin look healthy
Just in time for tomorrow night*

If only this would work correctly.

Ugh! I'm getting sweaty.

Why is this thing not working right?

*Time keeps ticking and I'm sitting clicking,
Not even getting close...
I'm not kidding! Armpits are dripping.
Great. The computer froze.*

*Are you kidding?
Ah- are you really kidding?
Are you kidding me?*

*Please be fibbing?
Someone be tricking me!
Are you kidding me?*

(She moves to a cabinet and digs through its contents) Looks like I'll just have to do some hands-on research. Nothing more scientific than your mom's cabinet, huh? Hmm... moisturizer with algae extract? Why not. Ooh! Revitalizing soybean scrub. Yes. Umm... Extra Strength Feminine Itch Relief? **(beat)** Jackpot! **(another)** Who knew my mom's cabinet was so full of great facial products! **(She puts all of the products on her face and begins to rub them in)**

*As a stressed out middle schooler
It would be cooler if I
didn't have to worry 'bout...*

*Red faces, or who in the heck my date is.
I might just have to drop out...*

*Why now does everything start changing?
Puberty is draining!
And I can't take much more of it.*

*So many problems come with aging.
I can't help complaining!
I'm so mad at this tiny zit!
Stress keeps coming, phone is always buzzing.
Look, if even buzzed just now.*

From Heather: "There's something I'd better tell you..."

HEATHER (from offstage):

"Um... Jessie? You probably don't wanna hear this right now, but... You must've forgotten to go tell the office you were leaving or something, because... you just got counted absent again. Isn't that a detention?"

JESSIE:

Yep. (**sarcastically**) Ha. Life is so good right now. Thanks for the great news, Heather.

*Are you kidding?
Ah- are you really kidding?
Are you kidding me?*

*Please, just put me out of my misery.
Are you kidding me?*

(**Noticing her face**) Oh my gosh. Wait, I think this is actually starting to work! Ha! Thanks Feminine Itch Relief!

*You've
got to be kidding!
Ah- are you freakin' kidding?!
Are you kidding me?*

*By persisting, I'm might just end up winning!
Are you kidding me?
Are you kidding me?
Are you... kidding me!? (Lights shift. Cue: **4A. ARE YOU KIDDING ME PLAYOFF/LATER THAT DAY 2.** Transition to Ms. Lemon's room while students throw confetti and rearrange the set)*

GROUP 1:

*Later that day
Later, later, later that day
Later that day
Later, later that day.
Later that day
Later, later, later that day.
Lay- la- lay- lay- la- later that day.*

GROUP 2:

*Later that day
Later that day
Later that day
That day.
Later that day....
Lay- lay- lay... -ater that day.*

JANITOR:

(pushing a broom across the stage, angrily sweeping up confetti) My life sucks.

SCENE 7

Back in Ms. Lemon's room

MS. LEMON:

(attempting to quiet down her chatty classroom) Alright class, let's settle down. (class continues to talk) I'll wait. (class gradually quiets down, Ms. Lemon inhales to speak, class begins to talk again) OKAY, SHUT YOUR PIEHOLES. (silence) Thank you. Now, today for homeroom, I have a very fun activity planned, but before that, we have a special guest. Everybody please welcome President Vanessa from Ms. Hargens' room.

VANESSA:

Thanks, but it's actually pronounced (literally no different from how Ms. Lemon just said it) "Vanessa."

MS. LEMON:

Vanessa.

VANESSA:

No, no. Va-

MS. LEMON:

Va-

VANESSA:

Nessa.

MS. LEMON:

Nessa.

VANESSA:

Now put it together.

MS. LEMON:

Vanessa.

VANESSA:

There you go.

MS. LEMON:

(beat) What?

VANESSA:

Anyway, as she was *trying* to say, I'm Vanessa from Ms. Hargens' homeroom, and as President of Wilson Middle School Student Council, I am in charge of tomorrow's dance. I just wanted to clear up a couple of rules before the big night. My unpaid assistant, Sam, is distributing a rules contract that legally binds you to behaving, and outlines the consequences should you choose to act otherwise. Once you have your sheet, please follow along with the presentation Sam and I have put together at the front of the room. And, girls in the corner, stop writing song lyrics all over your jeans with permanent marker. (**Cue: 5. KEEP IT CLASSY**) Let's keep it classy while I'm here, please.

*Before coming to the dance, read the rules contract.
 It'll teach you how to speak and how to look and act.
 The rules are pretty simple if you think them through.
 It's basically a list of things not to do. Like
 never wear a polo (they are so fifth grade)
 and don't ever wear an outfit that is WalMart made.
 They're very unprofessional, so I wouldn't dare,
 and if you really can't afford it, I've got cash to spare.
 Don't worry 'bout the loan, you can pay me back.*

SAM:

She really is so generous!

VANESSA:

Let's get back on track.

I hope you're all paying attention. There will be a quiz later.

MS. LEMON:

No there won't.

VANESSA:

Anyway.

*The dance is really fancy, so you've gotta dress the part.
 Don't come in and look like anything less than art.*

SAM:

Photographers are everywhere!

VANESSA:

*So look your best
 And you all should aspire to be best dressed.*

SAM:

And the winner is Vanessa!

VANESSA:

Who me? Who me?

SAM:

Vanessa is the best-a!

VANESSA:

*Yippee! You see?
 Tomorrow night at seven when the big dance comes,
 You've gotta keep it classy or you'll look real dumb.*

SAM:

(obviously scripted) But Vanessa, why do they need to be classy in the first place?

VANESSA:

Oh Sam, you young, naive little dimwit, I'd be happy to elaborate. Listen carefully.

*When you get to the dance and take a step indoors,
gone will be the bleachers and the slick gym floors.
Instead, what you will see is a grand new view:
Red carpets, chandeliers, and a fountain of fondue.*

STUDENTS:

Whoo!

STUDENT:

Vanessa, go Vanessa!

ALEXIS:

You are my queen!

SAM:

So much better than the rest-a!

VANESSA:

*And I'm only fourteen!
Tomorrow night at seven, if you follow my rules,
you'll get to fill your stomachs and be fondue fools.*

STUDENTS:

Yeah! / Fondué! / My favorite! / Yes!

VANESSA:

(interrupting their glee) On a few conditions!

STUDENTS:

Awww.

VANESSA:

Listen up everybody, *this* is where it gets good.

*Everybody at the dance must stand up straight,
No slouching and no crouching, and no showing up late.
No shouting and no pouting and no hoarding the fondue,
Yes it happened, so just know we've*

+ **SAM**

got our eyes on you.

VANESSA:

*No yelling,
smelling,
Or being impolite,
And no kissing,
whistling,
or messing up my night!*

SAM:

*Fighting!
Biting!
Burping!
Twerking!*

BOTH:

Tomorrow night at seven, you can have no doubt, that you've gotta keep it classy, or you'll get kicked out.

VANESSA:

Do you hear that, fellow middle schoolers? If anybody violates this contract, the result will be immediate removal from the dance. Now, we'd hate to have that happen after all that preparation, but we will do it if we must. I will not stand for these kinds of behaviors and nor should you. (**imitating a military drill sergeant**) Now stand up. And fall in line.

Are we gonna mess around?

STUDENTS:

No, ma'am no.

VANESSA:

Are we gonna keep it down?

STUDENTS:

Yes, real low.

VANESSA:

Are we going to whine?

STUDENTS:

No!

VANESSA:

Not at a dance of mine.

STUDENTS:

So, yes we promise, we'll be honest, we won't cross the line.

VANESSA:

Fine!

*Now that we all know the kinds of rules I've set,
I'll introduce a consequence you won't forget.
Never underestimate the power I wield
Or you'll find yourself inside a legal battlefield.*

*My father is a lawyer and my mother is one too,
You have no idea the things I have access to.
So tomorrow night at seven could be your farewell,
'Cause if you don't keep it classy, I'll get you expelled.*

STUDENTS:

She'll get you expelled?

SAM:

She'll get you expelled!

STUDENT:

Can she really do that?

VANESSA:

Yes! (She poses. Applause. Sam applauds for much longer than anyone else.)

MS. LEMON:

Alright Miss Vanessa, thank you very much for that wonderful, very thorough, very long presentation. (**Glancing frantically at the clock, she really wants to finish her activity**) Now we do seem to have just a couple more minutes before school lets out, so quickly, everybody take out a pencil and a piece of- (**Bell rings**) Really? (**the students get up and begin leaving**)

MELANIE:

Hey Joe, do you have basketball practice today?

JOE:

Yeah.

MELANIE:

Are you sure you're alright? I can tell something's wrong.

JOE:

Yeah, I'm fine. Don't worry about it.

MELANIE:

Well, do you wanna come over and hang out later? I'm done with my piano lesson at 5.

JOE:

Nah, that's okay, Mel. I have a whole bunch of homework.

MELANIE:

Well, we could work on it togethe—

JOE:

Gotta go.

MELANIE:

Oh. (**5A. SCHOOL'S OUT SCENE SHIFT** begins, transition to Scene 8)

SCENE 8

In the rush of students exiting the school, we see Harper (with her project) almost collide again with Aaron. They share a quick moment, and are soon on their way. Patrick enters and meets Nate in the hallway.

PATRICK:

Hey, Nate! I was gonna show you this!

NATE:

What?

PATRICK:

Okay, so you know that riot thing that happened in the lunchroom today?

NATE:

Yeah?

PATRICK:

(giddy) Somebody posted it on YouTube, and uh! Just, wait until you see this.

NATE:

Why? What?

PATRICK:

Right.... here. (He hits play a few times, the video won't load. In a menacing tone:) ...it's buffering...

NATE:

Look look look, it stopped loading!

PATRICK:

Oh, here.

JANITOR (AS OFFSTAGE ADVERTISEMENT):

Did you know that your moderate to severe plaque psoriasis can be treated in a few easy doses of Dumira? (onstage dialogue continues as remainder of ad trails in the background) Our specially designed, FDA approved formula allows for even the most on-the-go go-getters to achieve the comfort they deserve. Talk to your doctor before taking Dumira if you've experienced trouble with other medications, or if there's a chance you may be pregnant. Side effects may include temporary loss of vision, recurring loss of vision, permanent loss of vision, and dry mouth.

PATRICK:

Ohhh myyy goshhh...

NATE:

Here, skip it.

PATRICK:

The button isn't there yet!

NATE:

What do you mean the-

PATRICK:

Just, it's on a timer.

NATE:

Well just try touching it. (they bicker a little bit about this all too familiar problem— “I can’t touch it yet!” “Just try!” “I’m trying. How’s that working? Great, huh?” etc.)

PATRICK:

There! Finally. Geez, what kind of a world is this?

NATE:

I know, right?

PATRICK:

Okay, it's right... here. Listen. (a recording of 5B. JOE SINGS THE A begins to play) It's the A!

NATE:

Oh my gosh! Who's singing it? Do you know who it is?

PATRICK:

Just wait, they show him in a few seconds. Right... there!

NATE:

Joe?! That short kid in our gym class?

PATRICK:

Yeah, who knew he could sing like that?!

NATE:

Well that's... that's great! We can talk to him in PE tomorrow!

PATRICK:

I feel like that's too long to wait. We should try to track him down soon so we can get some time to rehearse. I would've tried to find to him now but Melanie told me he had basketball practice after school and I'm afraid of athletes.

NATE:

I feel that. Oh! I'll just have my friend print us out his class schedule so we can track him down early tomorrow.

PATRICK:

Perfect.

NATE:

(exiting) Wait, Joe plays basketball?

PATRICK:

I know isn't that funny. He's barely taller than the ball. (**Cue: 5C. LATER THAT DAY 3, transition to locker room**)

STUDENTS:

Later that day

Later, later, later that day

Later that day

Later, later that day...

SCENE 9

Joe sits against a locker room wall, basketball and jersey in hand.

JOE:

No-grow Joe. Ha. (**beat**) No-grow Joe. (**Cue: 6. PUBESCENT ADOLESCENT**)

Take a look at this kid.

Tiny little Joe.

I'd like to know what I did

To leave me so "no-grow."

Growing up's required,

But growing up's not fun.

And it'll leave you tired

When some get all and you get none

Oh...

I'm not a pubescent adolescent.

They're winning the race and I'm left behind lonely.

They're all tied for first, and I'm stuck in second...

Without a trophy.

Their legs are all longer,

Their biceps are stronger.

It's clear to see.

So I guess,

*I'll avoid this mess,
And get the heck off this basketball team.*

(Joe begins to pack up his basketball equipment, then throws it in a nearby trash can.
Will, Nick, and Aaron enter to put their things away, grab their gym bags, etc.)

*All my motivation
Is hanging by a string.
So I'll take a small vacation
To maybe find my thing.*

NICK:

Ha! Joe can't find his *thing*!

JOE:

No, not like that-

NICK:

Haha!

WILL:

Chill. Some parts just grow faster than others. (to Joe, quieter) I got the same problem, dude.
(they exit)

JOE:

Ugh!

*I might as well feel happy.
I might as well feel free.
And it might sound sappy,
But I think I'll take me for me.
Oh...*

*I'm not a pubescent adolescent,
And chances are that I never will be.
So I think I'll stop and take a second
To find the real me.*

*It'll take perseverance
But I'm more than appearance.
I'll make them see.
I won't cry,
I'm gonna try
To just keep lookin' at the bright side!
No random zits,
Which I guess is a plus,
Considering I'm not a huge fan of pus.
No crazy mood swings or odors,*

I just wish I could start my pubescent motor...

*Take a look at this face.
No zits, no fuzz.
But starting from this moment,
I won't be who I was.
Still something reminds me,
Relentlessly...
I'm not a pubescent adolescent,
Because puberty forgot me!
Yeah, puberty forgot me...
Puberty forgot me...*

(lights fade on Joe, transition to Scene 10)

SCENE 10

Jessie, Heather, Katie, Harper, and Alexis sit around their individual homes, unaware of each other's presence on stage. They each hold a device (tablet, phone, laptop). Throughout the next scene, they communicate via instant message. Jessie sits in a swiveling chair, back to the audience.

HEATHER, KATIE, & ALEXIS:

Oh. My. Gosh.

KATIE:

Spill it, Jessie. (underlined portions said at the same time) What's going on?

ALEXIS:

What's going on, Harper, come on tell me about the boy!

HEATHER:

Boy, do I hope you got that face situation figured out.

ALEXIS:

Figured out what his name is... Aaron Smith! Aaron and Harper sittin' in a tree!

KATIE:

Treatment for chemical burns is really simple, Jess.

KATIE (cont.)

(almost in $\frac{3}{4}$ time)

All you need to do is
Read a list of things I
Found and copy / pasted-

ALEXIS:

All you need to do is
Tell me how you're feeling!

HEATHER:

All you need to do is-

JESSIE & HARPER:

Stop!

HEATHER, KATIE, & ALEXIS:

Sorry.

KATIE:

But seriously, Jessie. Tell us what's up.

JESSIE:

Well (**a pause**) dot dot dot...

KATIE:

Don't dot dot dot us! Tell us!

JESSIE:

We have a slight emergency.

HEATHER:

Oh no. Don't tell me they found out that stained pair of underwear in the bathroom was mine!

KATIE:

Heather, we all knew those were yours a long time ago.

JESSIE:

No. That is not the emergency.

HEATHER:

What is it then?

JESSIE:

Okay, well, after some experimenting this afternoon, I got all the redness to go away.

HEATHER:

Well hallelujah, problem solved!

JESSIE:

Not exactly. I think my cream combination must've caused the zit to multiply or something because... (**she turns to face the audience, revealing her breakout**) They're everywhere.

KATIE:

Send a pic. (**Jessie takes a selfie and sends it to Heather and Katie**)

KATIE & HEATHER:

(we hear their phones receive the picture) AAGH! (focus shifts to Alexis & Harper's conversation)

ALEXIS:

(to Harper) Alllrighty Miss McGuffin, spill the tea. Did you and Aaron talk today or what?

HARPER:

(bashfully) Yeah... I talked to him after school for a little bit.

ALEXIS:

And? Are you in love? Did he kiss you?

HARPER:

No.

ALEXIS:

With tongue? (**a pause**) Oh sorry, didn't see your last message.

HARPER:

(defensively) No, we didn't kiss, and no, we are not in love! How many times do I have to tell you, Alexis?

ALEXIS:

You can tell me all you want, but I'm not gonna listen. My mom says I have irregular attentional control. Hey did you know my toenail fell off today?

HARPER:

No— what? What happened to your spiel about my love life?

ALEXIS:

Oh, right. I'm telling you, Harper. Puberty is changing you. It's making you... feel things. You're falling in love.

HARPER:

Alexis, I've read everything there is to read about puberty, and never did it once mention anything about that. Hair growth, yes; falling in love, no!

ALEXIS:

Well did you ever think that you might have missed a chapter in that book of yours?

HARPER:

Look, I know hormones are running rampant at this time in my life, but I'm prepared. I know how to control myself, and I know what I feel. Which is nothing.

ALEXIS:

Whatever you say... dot dot dot.

HARPER:

Don't dot dot dot me! Trust me. Don't worry about this.

ALEXIS:

(dropping it and suddenly becoming honest) Say what you will, but one thing's for sure. You would've never talked to anybody at school other than me and the faculty a month ago. You've really broken out of your shell lately.

HARPER:

I guess I have, haven't I? (Cue: 7. BREAKING OUT)

HEATHER:

Oh my gosh, Jess. This is serious.

KATIE:

You're breaking out.

ALEXIS:

You're breaking out!

JESSIE & HARPER:

I'm breaking out...

JESSIE:

*Who knew the smallest little blemish could stop my world
Instead of seeing me, that's all they see when they look at this girl
I thought just one was bad, but apparently my face
Is a launching pad...*

*I think we'd all agree, I better quickly find plan D,
'Cause so far everything went wrong with plans A through C.*

*My pus-filled fixation caused a zit multiplication,
I really thought the sauce would work...
I need a miracle, or to turn invisible.
Oh, puberty, you can be such a jerk!*

JESSIE:

I'm breaking out...

*But I won't let puberty win.
I'm breaking out...*

*I won't let it get under my
skin!*

KATIE:

She's breaking out...

She's breaking out...

HEATHER:

She's breaking out...

She's breaking out...

JESSIE:

*Of all the curses of puberty, why does mine have to be acne?
A little armpit hair, would give me quite a scare but at least people wouldn't see...*

JESSIE:*that I'm breaking out...***KATIE:***She's breaking out...***HEATHER:***She's breaking out...***ALEXIS:**

Okay Harper. It's time. Tell me everything. Preferably in song form.

HARPER:*How many times had I passed him in that hall?**Never gave him the time of day, not a passing thought at all.**Maybe there's more to him than vulgar, sweaty friends and basketball...**Girls with crushes always drove me nuts, they're so naive.**Now what's this feeling? Could I really have misperceived?**I guess it's a cliche, who knew we'd meet this way, he ran to get his book.**Didn't feel like this before my project hit the floor, one look is all it took.***HARPER:***Now I'm breaking out...**I've always kept to myself.**I'm breaking out...**I've never needed anyone else.***ALEXIS:****(dancing with a ribbon from out of nowhere?)***She's breaking out...**Always kept to herself.**Breaking out...**Needed anyone else...***HARPER:***That stupid book I read, never ever said, anything about attraction.**And there's no algorithm, to change my heart's new rhythm, or slow its rate of reaction.***HARPER:***I'm breaking out...***ALEXIS:***She's breaking out...***JESSIE:***These zits won't go away,**Gotta get vitamin A.**Google says it'll clear my skin.***HEATHER, KATIE, ALEXIS:***Ooh...*

HARPER:
*Why do I feel this way?
 Didn't feel like this yesterday.
 My whole world is starting to spin.*

HEATHER, KATIE, ALEXIS:
Ooh...

JOE (entering):
*I'm giving up my fight
 With my body's lack of height.
 How'd I ever think I'd win?*

Ooh...

PATRICK (entering):
Will this turn out alright

+ **JOE:**
By this time tomorrow night

+ **JESSIE & HARPER:**
When my entire future begins!

Ooh...

ENSEMBLE:

*Ah...
 See the teenage stress we're in!*

JESSIE (or HARPER) & PATRICK:
We're breaking out...

HARPER (or JESSIE) & JOE:

ENSEMBLE:

*Ah...
 (We're breaking out...)*

But I won't let puberty win...

We're breaking out...

(We're breaking out...)

Won't let puberty win, no...

Breaking out!

*Ah...
 (We're breaking out...)*

A big change starting within...

A big change starting within.

(We're breaking out...)

JESSIE, HARPER, PATRICK, JOE:
*With all the curses of puberty,
 There's no way this can turn out well.
 So many changes now,
 I start wonder how
 I barely recognize myself...*

ENSEMBLE:

*Ha, ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
 Ooh... Whoa!
 Ooh...*

Mmm...

JESSIE (or HARPER):
We're breaking out!

HARPER (or JESSIE):
We're breaking out!

PATRICK:
We're breaking out!

JOE:
We're breaking out!

**JESSIE (or HARPER)
& PATRICK:**
We're breaking out...

**HARPER (or JESSIE)
& JOE:**
We're breaking out...

ENSEMBLE:
Ah...

ALL:
Breaking out!
(In a swirl of teenage hope, anxiety, and emotion, their voices crescendo. Blackout. End of Act I.)

ACT II

SCENE 11

8. ENTR'ACTE/TONIGHT begins. It is the morning of the next day. Harper, Jessie, Patrick, and Joe get ready in their individual homes and head off to school, just as they did in the opening number.

HARPER:

*Oh my gosh, tonight is the dance.
My first shot at my first romance.
Finally ready to take that chance.
It's all happening tonight at the dance.*

JESSIE:

*Here it comes, but I'm not really ready.
My face looks like a female Freddy.
I should prob'lly stay in my beddy
But I can't miss out tonight at the dance.*

HARPER:

*Him and I dancing through the night
Under lights all burning bright.
Everything's gonna feel so right
When I'm finally with him at the dance tonight.*

JESSIE:

*What are they gonna think of this?
Popular girl all full of zits.
It'd be pretty hard to miss
If I show my face at the dance...*

HARPER & JESSIE:

*Tonight.
So much happening tonight,
And everything's gotta go right
Or else my life is pretty much over
Tonight!
So many things at stake,
And tonight it's make or break,
So I'm gonna put my best foot forward
Tonight. (They exit as the focus shifts to Joe and Patrick)*

HARPER:

Tonight...

JOE:

*Tonight's my chance to be a new person.
 A don't care, won't care, cool kind of person.
 Life might suck, but it's not gonna worsen
 When I let it all loose tonight at the dance.*

PATRICK:

*Got a good plan, and I plan on it working.
 Can't believe I spent all a' that time searching.
 I'll get Joe and soon be rehearsing for my
 Big performance tonight at the dance.*

JOE:

*Not gonna care what people say,
 I'm gonna be a whole new Joe today.
 I'll find a new hobby along the way
 But I'm not gonna worry cause the dance is tonight.*

PATRICK:

*When they see how I perform
 I'm gonna take the middle school by storm
 Patrick Farley now reborn
 As a school-wide star at the dance...*

PATRICK & JOE:

*Tonight.
 So much happening tonight
 And everything's gotta go right
 Or else my life is pretty much over*

HARPER, JESSIE, JOE, & PATRICK:

*Tonight.
 So many things at stake
 And tonight it's make or break
 So I'm gonna put my best foot forward
 Tonight.*

PATRICK:

Tonight...

HARPER:

*I'll wear a dress to catch his eye
 Cause looking good is what boys care about, right?*

JESSIE:

*I'll find a way to hide my face
 So they can't see my breakout.*

JOE:

*I'll show them that I'm strong enough to be
Good at something brand new.*

PATRICK:

*And if this plan doesn't work out
I don't know what the heck I'll do.*

HARPER, JESSIE, JOE, & PATRICK:

I hope that I can pull through... (The company enters the stage on their way(s) to school)

ALL:

*Tonight.
It's all happening tonight
And everything's gotta go right
Or else our lives are pretty much over
Tonight.
So many things at stake,
And tonight it's make or break
So we're gonna put our best foot forward...*

JESSIE:

My best foot forward....

ALL:

*My best foot forward...
Tonight!
Tonight!
At the dance tonight. (Immediate transition to Scene 12)*

SCENE 12

School hallway. Students mingle and disperse.

PATRICK:

How long 'til class starts, Nate?

NATE:

(checking his watch or cell phone) Um, about 5 minutes it looks like.

PATRICK:

Alright, if I were Joe, where would I be? Over by... Mr. Burnette's room, right?

NATE:

Um, yeah. (Referencing a paper in his hands) That's what his schedule says. First Period History, Room 322.

PATRICK:

Sweet. Tell your friend thanks for getting all of this info for us. I can't believe she got into the counselor's computer system so easily.

NATE:

I know. Hey, there she is now. (**Quinn enters, sweetly and pleasantly moving about the hallway**)

PATRICK:

Hey, she's kinda cute. Why don't you start something up with her?

NATE:

Eh... her brain works a little differently than most people. Great with computers, bad with any form of social interaction.

PATRICK:

What do you mean?

NATE:

Watch. Hey Quinn, thanks again for the help.

QUINN:

(snapping in their direction) Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it. (suddenly sweet again) Malachi: Chapter 2, verse 3. (**she skips away**)

PATRICK:

(a long beat) Okay well, I'm gonna go try and find Joe.

NATE:

See ya. (**they exit, focus shifts to another area of the hallway**)

HEATHER:

(sneaking in like a spy) Okay, Jess, you're all clear. (**Jessie shuffles in, shielded by Katie who will protect people from seeing Jessie's face at any cost. Heather opens her locker and pulls out a ski mask.**) Alright, option one? (**They wrestles the mask onto Jessie's face.**)

KATIE:

How's it hangin' in there, Jess?

JESSIE:

Pretty itchy.

KATIE:

(helping Jessie remove the mask and covering Jessie's face with her hands once it's off)
Got anything else, Heather?

HEATHER:

(digging even deeper into her locker) Umm... ooh! (she wrestles something onto her head, still bent over in her locker)

JESSIE:

What is it? (Heather stands up and spins around, revealing a terrifying Halloween mask)

HEATHER:

(shimmying her arms back and forth in a “what do you think” motion) Eh? Eh?

JESSIE:

...I'm not even gonna ask.

KATIE:

Here, let me look. (she digs through the locker and pulls out a scarf) Here! How about this. (she messily styles the scarf around Jessie's face, successfully covering her breakout) There, perfect.

HEATHER:

Hm. Very... scarf-ey.

JESSIE:

Heather, do you know *any* adjectives?

KATIE:

It's actually not that bad. Could be a trendsetter. Got any more scarves in there Heather?

HEATHER:

I think so. (They dig through the locker, find two scarves, and recreate the look on each other) Here, help me out.

JESSIE:

What are you guys doing? We're gonna have all three of us look like a mess?

KATIE:

No, Jess, really. Grunge is very *in* these days.

HEATHER:

Yeah, just look at the janitor over there. She looks good. (focus is drawn to the Janitor, who is in the corner itching her butt or doing something else equally as grungy)

KATIE:

Here! (they finish creating the look) See?

JESSIE:

Hm. I guess you're right. (they strut off the stage, to many gazes from the nearby students)

NICK:

Daaaang, check out Jessie and the girls.

WILL:

Ooh! I never thought I could be attracted to somebody who looks so... homeless.

NICK:

Yeah, I just wanna walk right up to one of 'em, get real close, and... and *hold her hand*.

WILL:

Too far, dude.

NICK:

I know, I know.

AARON:

Do you two have eyes?

NICK:

What? You're tellin' me you don't think Jessie and her friends are hot?

AARON:

Well, why can't they just look normal? Like regular human beings? They always look like they're trying so hard.

WILL:

Yeah... But that's what makes them hot.

AARON:

Eh.

WILL:

Somebody get this kid to a doctor. (**Joe enters**) Joey! What's up?

JOE:

Hey.

NICK:

Missed ya at practice, *little guy*.

JOE:

(he takes a deep breath) Okay. Look, Nick. You can stop all of this. I've accepted the fact that I'll never be good at basketball because chances are I'm never going to hit puberty. I'm done. I'm over it. I'm ready to move on to bigger and better things.

NICK:

Ha! Bigger and better?! What do you know about bigger?

AARON:

(to Nick) Dude. (to Joe) Sorry, Joe. Look- (**Melanie enters and watches from afar**)

JOE:

No, it's okay. I know that Nick's just too uncomfortable with the fact that his armpits are leakier than the locker room urinal, so he has to look for ways to make other people feel bad.

NICK:

It's a medical condition.

WILL:

Called what? Being out of shape? (**he laughs with Aaron**)

NICK:

Shut up.

JOE:

And so *what* if I stay like this forever? What's the big deal? I'm short? My voice is high? I don't have to worry about growing hair in weird places? That's not even bad. I'm one hundred percent fine like this. I can do plenty of things that you can't.

NICK:

Like what?

JOE:

(caught off guard, realizing that he can't really do as much as he thought) Like... Um...

NICK:

"Uh- um- uh-" Yeah, that's what I thought. (**Cue: 8A. HORMONES REPRISE**)

MELANIE:

(emerging from behind them) Like not smell like a bag of onions. (**musical sting**)

AARON & WILL:

Ooooooh...

AARON:

Yeah, and not have to retake sixth grade math because you "forgot how to add". (**sting**)

NICK:

Does the whole school know about that?

MELANIE:

HEY EVERYBODY, NICK HAS TO RETAKE SIXTH GRADE MATH BECAUSE HE FORGOT HOW TO ADD! (**sting**) Now they do. (**final sting, the students in the hallway erupt in laughter**)

JOE & STUDENTS:

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

MELANIE & AARON:

Nick's an idiot.

JOE & STUDENTS:

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

AARON, WILL, & MELANIE:

A smelly idiot!

STUDENTS:

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

MELANIE:

He's math illiterate!

JOE:

(“laughing” the A) Haaaaaaaa!

+ **STUDENTS**

Ha ha ha ha, ha ha ha ha!

PATRICK:

(walking in, having heard Joe’s A) Oh. My. Gosh. **(He runs up to the laughing crowd)** Hey, um, Joe. Can I talk to you for a minute?

JOE:

Hang on one second. **(the group quiets down, Joe turns around then quickly moves toward Nick, who comically flinches. The group laughs again. Joe smiles and turns back to face Patrick)** What’s up, Patrick? **(Patrick places a hand on his shoulder and leads him away. Bell rings. Cue: 8B. LATER THAT DAY 4)**

STUDENTS:

Later that day

Later, later, later-

RANDOM STUDENT:

(suddenly losing enthusiasm) Yeah, you get it.

SCENE 13

Nate, Joe, and Patrick walk down the hallway to the gym.

NATE:

It'll be really simple.

PATRICK:

All you have to do is sing the notes I can't.

JOE:

I don't know, I've never really tried... *singing* before.

PATRICK:

Do you know that you can belt a high A?

JOE:

How would you know that?

NATE:

We heard you do it.

JOE:

When?

NATE:

Yesterday during the riot in the cafeteria.

PATRICK:

And again this morning in the hallway. We've been following you.

JOE:

What?

NATE:

Don't worry, it's not as creepy as it seems.

PATRICK:

Yeah, all we did was have some girl to go in and sorta "hack the computer system" and "print us off all your personal information."

JOE:

Um... Yeah, that's as creepy as it seems.

PATRICK:

Listen, we really need you. If I don't pull this off tonight, Vanessa's gonna kill me and I'll be the laughing stock of the entire school. Please?

JOE:

I've been looking forward to this dance for a long time. I don't know if I really want to spend my one *finally* fun night being stressed out about some... performance.

PATRICK:

Literally, you'll only have to sing for like 15 seconds. Only the notes I can't hit.

NATE:

Yeah, and plus, you'll be hidden from everybody. Nobody will even know it's you singing.

PATRICK:

Exactly. Think of it as a free-trial-offer.

NATE:

If you mess up, Patrick will take all the heat.

PATRICK:

Ha. (**uneasy**) Yeah. But, you won't- he won't mess up though.

JOE:

Hm... what's in it for me?

NATE:

(exchanging looks with Patrick) Satisfaction?

PATRICK:

(an unsuccessful beat, then giving in) How about 20 bucks.

JOE:

That's it?

PATRICK:

Look at it this way. If you discover tonight that you like performing, then maybe you'll have a new hobby. (**holding up Joe's information sheet**) I mean, it says right here on the sheet that you quit basketball last night.

JOE:

What kind of sheet is this?

NATE:

Yeah, that's actually a good point. It's almost like somebody just listed bunch of information on it that was necessary to a plotline of a story just to conveniently have a way to tie loose ends together and give us the leverage we need to make sure things work out in our favor.

PATRICK:

Hey, shut up, it was working. What do you say, Joe? Aren't you looking for another activity to be involved in?

JOE:

I mean... (**Patrick and Nick make dramatic puppy dog faces**) This better be worth it. Deal.

PATRICK:

Perfect. Um, rehearsal tonight! 5:00! Melanie will be there too.

JOE:

And my 20 bucks?

PATRICK:

Oh. Um. Nate, pay the boy. (Nate scoffs in surprise. Cue: 8C. GYM CLASS SCENE SHIFT. Patrick and Joe round the corner into the locker room, Nate follows.)

SCENE 14

Gym class.

JOE:

Geez, this locker room always smells so bad.

PATRICK:

Right? I blame Nate.

NATE:

Okay, Joe's your new best friend now, cool. (a boy walks by, stretching and exposing his hairy armpit, Nate, Patrick, and Joe make a disgusted look. Cue: 9. MY PITS)

JOE:

I think I found the source of the stinking.

PATRICK:

Ding ding ding. And look, here comes some more. (Aaron, Nick, and Will come into view, followed by a group of boys, all stretching and exposing their very hairy pits)

SOLO 1:

Everybody check it out.

SOLO 2:

See what all the hype's about.

BOYS:

Look at our masculine pits.

SOLO 3:

The way it glistens in the light...

SOLO 4:

My armpit hair is dynamite!

BOYS:

Check out my glorious pits.

*It's okay to be jealous, jealous
of my underarm crevice, crevice.*

Believe us when we tell you that this is as good as it gets.

You've gotta love our pits.

JOE:

Okay I'm gagging.

NATE:

Yeah, guys are disgusting.

PATRICK:

Makes you wonder what goes on in the *girls* locker room.

JOE, NATE, & PATRICK:

Hm... (focus transitions to the girls locker room, where they walk around in a fantasy scene with even hairier underarms)

GIRL:

Whoo! Am I rank today!

SECOND GIRL:

Ooh, girl. That is one stanky pit.

SOLO 1:

Mine is stinky.

SOLO 2:

Mine is long.

SOLO 3:

I'm as hairy as King Kong!

GIRLS:

Look at our feminine pits. (they do a girly giggle)

SOLO 4:

We braid the hair at sleepovers. (one girl braids another's armpit hair)

SOLO 5:

Pretend like we have monkey fur! (one girl eats bugs out of another girl's armpit hair à la a chimpanzee)

GIRLS:

Look at our beautiful pits.

It's okay that we're hairy, hairy.

Shaving's unnecessary -sary.

Our underarms are full of glam, and glitter, and glitz!

You've gotta love our pits. (The fantasy scene dissipates, the girls exit, and focus returns to Patrick, Joe, and Nate)

PATRICK:

Mmmmm no. I don't think I love those pits.

NATE:

We've gotta get our minds out of the gutter.

JOE:

That's the nastiest thing I've ever imagined. And for a 13 year old boy, that's saying something.

PATRICK:

In spite of all the awkwardness, let's keep things cool.

NATE:

Puberty has taken over middle school.

PATRICK, NATE & JOE:

*But that's not gonna slow down
Pat, Joe, and Nate!
We'll ignore it.*

NATE:

Now hurry or we're gonna be late... (They run out of the locker room to the gym, where students stand wearing gym clothes, stretching. Mr. Michaels approaches)

MR. MICHAELS:

Alrighty kids, thanks for getting changed so quickly. Now, I have some unfortunate news for all of us. Due to the fact that I took my lesson plans from the internet and didn't look at them until after they had already been approved, today marks the beginning of our ballroom dance unit. Yes, you heard me correctly, you will be making body to body contact with your peers, as we all attempt to learn the tango. So um, partner up and, ah, for the sake of my eyeballs try to suppress your urges.

(They warily begin to tango as Mr. Michaels fumbles with his instructions, attempting to lead. Some students begin to take initiative...)

MALE SOLO 1:

Check out these wonderful pits. (He twirls his partner, showcasing his armpit)

MALE SOLO 2:

Check out my super cool pits. (Not to be outdone, he does the same)

FEMALE SOLO:

Are you impressed with my pits? (She reveals a very real tuft of hair— to the horror of Patrick, Joe, and Nate— and dips her partner. Music grows in intensity, then out.)

MR. MICHAELS:

Wow, you guys are really catching on quickly. **(Music resumes as the students explode into an intense tango sequence.)**

STUDENTS:

Wah!

MALE SOLO 1:

Check out these wonderful pits.

STUDENTS:

Dap, da da da wah!

MALE SOLO 2:

Check out my super cool pits.

STUDENTS:

Dap, da da da ooh...

La la la, la la, la, la, la da da ooh...

FEMALE SOLO:

Are you impressed with my pits?

STUDENTS:

Dap, da da da ooh...

La la la, la la, la, la, la da da ooh...

SOLOISTS:

Look at my beautiful...

+ ENSEMBLE

Aren't they wonderful...

ALL EXCEPT JOE, PATRICK, & NATE:

What do you think of these pits? Hey!

(Cue: 9A. VANESSA'S ENTRANCE)

SAM:

(over the music) Ladies and gentleman, teens and tweens... your president, Vanessa M. LeDuke! **(all sans Mr. Michaels salute)**

VANESSA:

(enters) Ahem. **(Michaels salutes)** At ease. **(they drop their salute)** Hello all, I'd like to make an announcement— good GOD what is that stench?

SAM:

That would be puberty, ma'am.

VANESSA:

Well it's wretched. **(sticking her nose up in the air, and then plugging it. She speaks with a nasally voice)** Attention. I'd like to reiterate the importance of arriving to tonight's dance on

time. Being fashionably late is not fashionable in this instance, so I hope you all are planning to arrive at seven o'clock... sharp. We have lots of things to get in order, so we appreciate your timeliness. And please remember to keep things classy.

NATE:

(to Patrick) How could we forget?

VANESSA:

Thank you. We'll see you tonight. (**Bell rings, transition to hallway, cue: 9B. IN THE HALLWAY**)

STUDENTS:

*In the hallway,
In the hallway, in the hallway...
In the hallway at the end of that day.
"Fin'ly Friday," is what all the teachers say. They
Just can't wait till they can get away.*

SCENE 15

Hallway, end of the day. Janitor, Ms. Lemon, and Mr. Michaels stand, chatting.

JANITOR:

(in re: the song) Just when I thought I knew the lyrics to that one.

MS. LEMON:

Ugh. Well, I was excited for this weekend, until I remembered that I'm marked down to chaperone at the dance tonight.

MR. MICHAELS:

I know what you're sayin' Jen. I'm signed up for tonight too and I'm not all that excited to find out how crazy those kids can get with a little fondue in their system.

JANITOR:

And the best part is going to be afterwards, when I'm the only one left, staying there until one in the morning scrubbing scuffs off the floor with a tennis ball on a stick. Who invented that anyway? How is that a cleaning instrument?! Why do I get paid to do that?!

MS. LEMON:

These kids don't realize that their little hormonal ritual wreaks havoc on our lives.

MR. MICHAELS:

Exactly. I already experienced my puberty-pumped middle school days *once*. I don't need to be put through this all again.

MS. LEMON:

You know what we need?

JANITOR:

A pay raise?

MS. LEMON:

Well yeah. But I was thinking more along the lines of... a party.

MR. MICHAELS:

A party?

MS. LEMON:

Yeah. Like, a quick little getaway before we get steamrolled by a crowd of sweaty middle schoolers.

MR. MICHAELS:

I can dig it.

JANITOR:

A teacher party. Me likey. Ooh! We can have it in my janitor closet! It has the perfect party lighting. The bulbs flicker on and off like a strobe light.

MS. LEMON:

Why don't you fix that? You're a janitor.

JANITOR:

I never said I was a good one.

MS. LEMON:

Touché.

MR. MICHAELS:

So, are we gonna get this party started or what?

MS. LEMON:

Now?

MR. MICHAELS:

Now!

MS. LEMON:

Okay! I'll go get the coffee started!

MR. MICHAELS:

I'll head down the hall and spread the word.

JANITOR:

I'll go start cleaning up the closet.

MR. MICHAELS & MS. LEMON:

Really?

JANITOR:

No.

MS. LEMON:

Alright we don't have long. Meet back in the closet in 10 minutes? (**They split up and move to accomplish their tasks.**) Oh and Jim? (**Mr. Michaels freezes**) Take a look in my top right desk drawer. I've got somethin' that might liven up the party a little.

MR. MICHAELS:

Oh, ho, ho... TEACHERS GETTIN' CRUNK! (**They go. Harper enters and approaches her locker.**)

HARPER:

(**to herself**) I'm pretty sure you're the only student who stays after school on a Friday. But, you know, it's okay, Harper. You are gonna be the most prepared, come Monday. And your science project is gonna be so— (**she opens her locker, balloons and streamers spill out, everywhere**) Ugh! I hate vandalism!

AARON:

(**entering, smoothly**) Hey, what's up Harper?

HARPER:

Oh, hey Aaron. Some jerk just broke into my locker and shoved a bunch of trash in it.

AARON:

Oh, I, um... I'm sorry to hear that.

HARPER:

Yeah, me too. What kind of person does that? It's pretty sick if you ask me. Did you happen to see anybody around my locker in the past half hour?

AARON:

Nope. I uh, was just. Walking. Around. Didn't see anything.

HARPER:

Ugh. When I find out who did this I'm gonna—

AARON:

Well, maybe it was supposed to be... nice or something.

HARPER:

Oh please. You think cracking the code to someone's locker and piling it full of junk is nice? It's a mess! I even had all of my magnets alphabetized!

AARON:

Well...

HARPER:

(finding a card) Oh. What's this? Maybe I can get it fingerprinted.

AARON:

(reaching to grab it) Oh, it's probably just some more garbage, I'll just—

HARPER:

(pulling away and reading aloud from the card) "Harper, I think you're muy bean." (beat) Do you think they mean *bien*? "I hope we get a chance to talk to each other a little bit at the dance tonight. I think you're like, really pretty." Yeah, pretty... pretty P-O'ed! (meekly) Sorry, I don't usually swear. "Saying all this is making me a little, as the *Mexiconians* say, *embarazada*." What? It's making them... *pregnant*? Woof! Proofread, people, proofread! "See you tonight... Aaron." (a beat) Oh...

AARON:

This is uncomfortable. (he makes finger guns, slowly backs away a few steps, then turns and runs)

HARPER:

(she waits for a few seconds, processing what just happened) Awww... He thinks I'm muy bean. (she grabs her things, closes her locker, and goes off the opposite direction.)

SCENE 16

Janitor's closet. Mr. Michaels, Ms. Lemon, and the Janitor have gathered the ensemble, now appearing as the Wilson Middle School faculty, to join in their Teacher Party Cue: 10.

TEACHER AVENUE.

JANITOR:

Alrighty teachers, let's get freakers! It's after hours, so you know what that means... Party time! Grab a mug, eat an apple, and step right onto *Teacher Avenue*.

TEACHERS:

Wilson teachers in the house!

MICHAELS & LEMON:

And by house, we mean school...

JANITOR:

And by school we mean janitor's closet!

TEACHERS:

Man, do teachers rule!

*We spend our days with “F”s and “A”s
and coffee in our mugs.*

*But after hours school is ours and
Teachers become thugs! Unh!*

*Teacher party, teacher party,
gonna blow the speakers! Are we
gonna set this closet on fire?
You know we are! And
if this helps us forget that our
lives are pretty boring, then
we’re doing what we meant to do
on Teacher Avenue.*

JANITOR:

Yes! This is awesome! (**Janitor funkily scrubs the floor with the tennis ball stick**)

MR. MICHAELS:

Oh, Jen! I looked for your, ah... “special somethin” in your desk drawer, but all I could find was this. (**He holds out the fedora**)

MS. LEMON:

Yes! You found it! The fedora! (**She puts it on!**)

TEACHERS:

Dear God, not the fedora.

MS. LEMON:

*Can’t believe I get the chance to fin’ly let it loose!
Those tiny whiny students make me contemplate abuse.
But now I’m free and get to be the person that I am.
I haven’t been this happy since I last gave an exam!
Damn!*

MR. MICHAELS:

I know you all wanna see the P.E. teacher get down.

TEACHERS:

Yeah...

MR. MICHAELS

I know you know that I’m the best breakdancer in town.

TEACHERS:

Yeah...

MR. MICHAELS:

So watch me closely as I execute my sick moves.

TEACHERS:

Okay! Okay!

MR. MICHAELS:

So here I go, even the principal approves! (music pauses as focus is drawn to a special audience member, the “principal”)

PRINCIPAL:

Oh yeah! (Focus returns to stage. Music resumes. Mr. Michaels dances alone in the middle of the group and is cheered on by the rest of the teachers. His dancing can actually be really good or [probably] really, really bad.)

TEACHERS:

*Teacher party, teacher party,
gonna blow the speakers! Are we
gonna set this closet on fire?
You know we are! And
if this helps us forget that our
lives are pretty boring, then
we’re doing what we meant to do
on Teacher Avenue.*

MS. LEMON:

This is so liberating!

MR. MICHAELS:

Whoo! Teachers really know how to par-tay. Am I right Principal last name of “principal”?

JANITOR:

I've got something to add!

*Yo...
I come from the city and I know all the streets.
Teacher Avenue drops the baddest beats. Teachers
spit better bars than I saw in prison.
They can dance and they can rap and they can—*

TEACHERS:

Do addition!

JANITOR:

*Teachers are the preachers of thinkin’ religion
Finishin’ their mission of givin’ you knowledge ‘fore they
send you off to college.
Respect us don’t subject us to no
insubordination...
or we’re all takin’ vacations!*

TEACHERS:

*Teacher party, teacher party,
gonna blow the speakers! Are we
gonna set this closet on fire?
You know we are! And
if this helps us forget that our
lives are pretty boring, then
we're doing what we meant to do...
on Teacher Avenue.*

MR. MICHAELS:

Geez! It's five o'clock already.

MS. LEMON:

Oh! Only two hours 'til the dance, people. Move it or lose it! I gotta go home and take a shower.

JANITOR:

Can I watch?

MS. LEMON:

(beat) No. (The janitor turns to the audience and winks, cueing: 10A. TEACHER AVENUE SCENE SHIFT. Blackout.)

SCENE 17

Various locations. Harper and Alexis are at Alexis' home. Heather, Katie, and Jessie are in Jessie's room. Patrick, Joe, Melanie, and Nate rehearse at Patrick's house. Vanessa, Sam, and the decorating crew are setting up in the gym. The remaining students are getting ready for the dance in various spaces. As in "Puberty" and "Tonight", focus shifts between several areas of the stage. Cue: 11. TONIGHT REPRISE.

HARPER:

*Here it comes tonight is the dance.
My one shot at a teen romance.
Sure he's dumb, but I'll take the chance.
Only two hours till I get to the dance.*

ALEXIS:

You are interested! I knew it. (**music out**)

HARPER:

You heard that?

ALEXIS:

Yeah... that little song?

HARPER:

I thought that was a soliloquy sort of thing.

ALEXIS:

A what?

HARPER:

A soliloquy. You know, like, an internal dialogue. Thoughts, feelings said out loud.

ALEXIS:

Yeah, nope.

HARPER:

(giving a stressful growl) Yeah, I like him, okay? But I think I might have screwed everything up today. He gave me this nice letter, (**aside**) full of errors, (**back to Alexis**) but sweet nonetheless, and I reacted a tad harshly.

ALEXIS:

Well why would you do that?

HARPER:

I don't know, it was all a big misunderstanding, that's all. I just need to make it up to him tonight.

ALEXIS:

Then I've got just the thing. My older sister spent an entire two weeks at cosmetology school. She's on her way over right now! Just um... (**with heavy lisp**) sit over there.

HARPER:

You want me to do what over there?

ALEXIS:

Sit.

HARPER:

Um. I don't really know if I'm comforta-

ALEXIS:

Oh... no, no, no, no. Sit. S, I, T.

HARPER:

Oh... Cause, you know, it sounded like you sa-

ALEXIS:

I know what it sounded like! (lights quickly shift to Heather, Katie, and Jessie on the opposite side of the stage, music resumes)

JESSIE:

*Here it comes and I'm not at all ready.
Still full of zits, still looking like Freddy.
Why can't they go away already?
Gotta disappear before tonight at the dance.*

HEATHER:

I don't know Jess. Maybe you should just not go.

JESSIE:

Heather, this is the most important night in all of middle school. I have to make at least some sort of appearance. And what we did at school today isn't gonna fly.

KATIE:

Wait. (**music out**) Oh my gosh. I have an idea.

JESSIE:

What?

KATIE:

Jessie, where does your mom get ready in the morning?

JESSIE:

The bathroom around the corner. Why?

KATIE:

Perfect. Why didn't I think of this before? (**she exits around the corner, music resumes**)

JESSIE:

What's going on?

HEATHER:

You never really know with her. It's not like she ever tells me anything.

JESSIE:

Probably because you're a big huge blabbermouth.

HEATHER:

No I am not. (**secretly**) Oh, by the way, did I tell you what she told me this afternoon? You can't tell anybody.

KATIE:

(from offstage) Shut your piehole, Heather.

JESSIE:

I rest my case.

KATIE:

Jackpot!

HEATHER:

What is it?

KATIE:

(entering) Behold! (dramatically revealing her discovery) Makeup. (Lights snap to Patrick, Joe, Nate, and Melanie)

PATRICK:

*Got the song and got the A,
Nothin's gonna slow me down today.
Joe and Patrick on our way
to a great performance at the dance tonight.*

Alright, Melanie, here's the copy of the song.

MELANIE:

"Dancing on a Friday Night"? I love this song! This is the one you sang at the talent show, right?

PATRICK:

Yeah! Here's your copy, Joe.

MELANIE:

Wait, I have a question.

PATRICK:

Hang on one second, Mel. Joe, on yours, I highlighted the notes I'll need you to sing, so you know exactly when to come in. Just follow along with the music and jump in when you're supposed to. K?

JOE:

Awesome.

PATRICK:

Nate's gonna work on setting up the microphones for us while we practice. Okay, Melanie, sorry, what was your question? (**music out**)

MELANIE:

Yeah, um, why don't you just transpose the song down a step or two so you can sing all the notes?

PATRICK:

Come again?

MELANIE:

I mean, you can just change the song so it sits in a lower key, can't you? Then you can sing the whole thing, no problem.

PATRICK:

(a long pause) Well, it's too late now! Let's start at measure 9.

(if music is live)

PATRICK (cont.):

One, two, ready, and!

(music resumes, lights narrow on Joe as Patrick, Nate, and Melanie rehearse)

JOE:

Can't believe I'm gonna do this thing.

Didn't even know that I could sing.

*Maybe this will fin'ly bring me
where I'm meant to be at the dance*

JESSIE, HARPER, JOE, & PATRICK:

Tonight.

It's all happening tonight.

And everything's gonna go right

We're sure our lives aren't gonna be over...

+ **KATIE, HEATHER, ALEXIS, NATE, MELANIE**

Tonight.

So many things at stake,

and tonight we'll take the cake

when we all put our best foot forward

Tonight. (they exit, transition to Vanessa, Sam, and decorating crew in the gym)

VANESSA:

How are we on time, Sam?

SAM:

Doing great, Vanessa. Roughly twenty minutes until the ice sculptures arrive.

VANESSA:

Perfect. No, no, no, no decorating crew, you're doing it all wrong!

*Put the streamers over there,
you're blocking the entire view.
The tablecloths are also wrong.
They're pink and I asked for blue.
And where is my red carpet, it was
s'posed to be here at 5.*

Let's hurry! Come on, now. Chop chop! Just one hour 'til they arrive!

SAM, CREW, OFFSTAGE VOICES:

We'll never get out alive...

+ **VANESSA**

Tonight!

(students appear getting ready for and heading to the dance)

**SAM, CREW,
VOICES, VAN.:**

Tonight!

Tonight!

Tonight!

*Fifteen minutes to
the dance...*

GROUP 1:

*Find a nice dress and
curl all my hair,
Can't decide what I'm
going to wear,
When I walk in I
want them to stare,
Can't believe I'm
going to the
dance tonight.*

Find a dress and

*curl my hair
Don't know what I'm
gonna wear.
I want ever
one to stare
Fifteen minutes to the
dance...*

GROUP 2:

*Shine myself up and
make me look pretty
Gotta be the best in the
whole dang city.
If I don't look good
it'll be a pity.*

*Gonna be
ready for the
dance tonight.*

*Gotta look pretty.
Gotta be the best in the
whole dang city
If I don't look good
it'll be a pity.
Fifteen minutes to the
dance...*

GROUP 3:

*This is my chance, gotta
make a statement.
Or my crush might
find a replacement.
Then I'll end up*

living in a basement!

*Everything depends
on the
dance tonight.
Dance tonight,
Dance tonight,
Dance tonight,
Dance tonight,
Dance tonight,
Fifteen minutes to the
dance...*

ALL:

*Tonight!
It is finally the night.
And everything feels oh so right
How could we think our lives'd be over?
Tonight. (Joe, Harper, & Patrick enter)
But still so many things at stake.
'Cause tonight it's make or break,
so we're gonna put our best foot forward...*

JOE, HARPER, & PATRICK:

Best foot forward.

ALL:

*Our best foot forward...
Tonight!*

*Tonight!
At the dance tonight!*

SCENE 18

The dance. Vanessa sits at a table with stacks of papers. Sam stands on a small stage, addressing the students—all dressed in their Friday night best.

SAM:

Welcome, guests, to the Second Annual Wilson Middle School Red Carpet Gala. Please enter in an orderly fashion, as our security crew pats you down. Do not hesitate. You signed all of your rights away. Once you are cleared, you may check in with Vanessa at the ticket table. Thank you, and enjoy your night!

MELANIE:

(entering with Joe, joining the check-in line) This is amazing! Everything looks so elegant!

JOE:

I know! (the students gasp and murmur as a beautiful, glistening fountain of cheese fondue is brought in)

MELANIE:

Ooh, look, they're bringing in the fondue! I know where I'm going after this.

JOE:

I wish I could eat.

MELANIE:

Nerves?

JOE:

Mhm.

MELANIE:

Joe, you have nothing to be nervous about. You sounded great in rehearsals, and you know I wouldn't say that if it wasn't true. Plus, nobody's even gonna know it's you singing. Nate knows exactly how he's going to hide you.

JOE:

Yeah, I guess you're right. (they step up to the check-in table)

VANESSA:

Papers, please.

MELANIE:

I gotta tell you, Vanessa. This place looks awesome. I really can't believe it.

VANESSA:

(processing, stamping, and signing the papers) Thank you very much. Although, I'm a little offended that you're so surprised.

MELANIE:

Oh, no, no offense intended.

VANESSA:

Hm. Well, well you should've considered that earlier before you decided to be so rude.

MELANIE:

Uh!

VANESSA:

Next.

MELANIE:

(Walking away from the table) Geez, she really is evil.

JOE:

Yeah. Usually it's best to just let her do her thing.

MELANIE:

And let her walk all over you? What kind of attitude is that?

JOE:

I don't know. It's not worth picking fights.

MELANIE:

I'll pick a fight. I mean you saw me this morning with Nick. That girl better watch it. It's one thing to be a jerk to me. But if she tries it on one of my friends I'm gonna-

JOE:

Melanie, haha, chill out. You can't let her get to you like that.

MELANIE:

I know, I know, you're a lover, I'm a fighter. But sometimes, isn't it just really satisfying to see people get a little bit of their own medicine?

JOE:

(up to something) ...We'll see.

MELANIE:

What's that supposed to mean? "We'll see?"

JOE:

Nothing...

MELANIE:

What are you up to...

JOE:

You'll find out! Now come on, let's go get some fond.

MELANIE:

What's fond?

JOE:

I don't know, I tried to come up with a cool nickname for fondue but it didn't really work.

MELANIE:

Nice. (**focus shifts to Vanessa and Patrick**)

VANESSA:

Ah, Mr. Farley. I hope you're prepared for your performance tonight.

PATRICK:

Yep. Should be all set.

VANESSA:

Great. I'm expecting nothing short of wonderful from that voice of yours. You know, a lot of the girls in here go crazy for a boy who sings.

PATRICK:

Well, that's good to hear, I guess.

VANESSA:

And I, of course, am not one of them. I would never stoop to that level.

PATRICK:

Okay.

VANESSA:

(she scoffs) Patrick, are- are you hitting on me?

PATRICK:

No?

VANESSA:

Because if you're trying to get me to fall for you, it's not going to work.

PATRICK:

Vanessa...

VANESSA:

Don't "Vanessa" me. I know that *you know* that I am much too busy and goal-oriented for a relationship at this point in my life. I mean, I—I know that I am very powerful, and attractive, and kind, and everything a boy could possibly want, but this just isn't going to work out.

PATRICK:

(attempting to clarify) Vanessa, I really think you're—

VANESSA:

I'm what? (**beat**) Pretty?

PATRICK:

Um. I—

VANESSA:

I knew it. You do like me.

PATRICK:

Are you...

VANESSA:

Yes?

PATRICK:

Done with those forms?

VANESSA:

(she's crushed) Mhm. (she hands him the papers)

PATRICK:

Thanks. (he leaves the table)

VANESSA:

Have a nice evening! (she makes a "rats!" motion, focus shifts to Harper and Alexis)

ALEXIS:

Well, do you see him Harper?

HARPER:

No, not yet.

ALEXIS:

Yeah, me either.

HARPER:

It's probably hopeless. I ruined everything when I tore his love note apart right in front of him.

ALEXIS:

You tore it up?

HARPER:

Well, figuratively.

ALEXIS:

You never know, Harper. Maybe this is just a coincidence. I'm sure he'll show up sooner or later.

HARPER:

I hope so. (focus shifts to Sam and Patrick)

SAM:

Alright, Patrick, are you all set to get started in about two minutes? I mean, it's not like you have the option with Vanessa in charge, but is everything good to go if it were up to you?

PATRICK:

Um, yeah, Nate?

NATE:

Just let me finish hooking up a few cords and we should be all set.

SAM:

Splendid.

NATE:

(trying to hide his true intentions) Joe, can you, ah, come back here for a sec and *help me with these cords?*

JOE:

(turning to Melanie) Showtime. (he heads back with Nate to a "hidden" area, where he will sing his portion of the song. The audience can see him but the students at the dance cannot. Focus moves to Harper and Alexis)

HARPER:

Still nothin'.

ALEXIS:

Harper, look on the bright side. *I'm* here. I mean, can't we still have some fun even if he never shows up?

HARPER:

If he never shows up?!

ALEXIS:

Just forget I said that. Let's just think positive. (thinking positively) Fondu... Fondu...

SAM:

Ladies and gentleman, the hour has arrived! Please make your way to the dance floor, and put your hands together for Wilson's very own, 3-time Michigan Elementary Honor Choir Participant, Patrick Parsley.

PATRICK:

Uh, it's actually Patrick Farley-

SAM:

Oh! My sincerest apologies! It's a tad dark down here. (**to herself**) Ugh, Vanessa's gonna kill me!

VANESSA:

(overhearing) Uh huh. (**Sam is startled and might even flee in fear**)

PATRICK:

Alright, Wilson Middle Schoolers! How are we doin' tonight? (**the crowd cheers a little**) Alexis! How's the fondue over there? (**focus shifts to Alexis, who is pretty much bathing in the fondue**)

ALEXIS:

Delish!

PATRICK:

Great, haha. Well I thought we'd kick it off with something I think we all know a little bit about. Something middle schoolers like to do on a Friday night more than anything else...

STUDENT:

Video Games?

PATRICK:

No...

STUDENT:

Sleepovers?

PATRICK:

No...

QUINN:

Sacrificing small animals?

PATRICK:

Oh my God, no. Dancing.

STUDENTS:

Oh...

PATRICK:

Melanie?

(Melanie, at the piano, nods, “plays” Patrick’s cue, and “accompanies” him during the song, cue: **12A. DANCING ON A FRIDAY NIGHT PART 1**)

*The beautiful thing about dancin’
Is that it can go all night,
All week and all year, if you plan it.
The mood is never not right.
And if the sky drops,
And happiness stops,
Dancin’ can still live on.
You can’t keep the beat
From movin’ your feet
As long as the stereo’s on...*

(the music gets more lively, funky, the students begin to feel the groove)

*Everybody in the room is feeling good
Yeah, you know it’s gonna be alright.
Never could this feeling be misunderstood,
‘Cause we’re dancin’ on a Friday night.
Dancin’ is the greatest way to spend the end
Of the heavy and depressing days.
So if you wanna shake it off and let it loose
Then all you gotta do is say...*

*That it’s alright, alright,
‘Cause we’re dancin’ on a Friday night.
Until the morning light,
D-d-dancin’ on a Friday night.*

VANESSA:

That’s my boyfriend!

PATRICK:

No, it’s not.

JESSIE:

(from offstage) This way girls. (Heather, Katie, and Jessie enter, flaunting horrendous, middle school makeup jobs with big blue eyeshadow, bright lips, and tons of blush. The students take note of how good the three girls look. Katie drops their stack of papers on Vanessa’s table and rejoins the group.)

HEATHER:

(to a boy, very sultry) Which way to the... fondue? (she winks as he points in that direction. They move to the fondue fountain and enjoy the music.)

PATRICK:

*The craziest thing about dancin'
Is that you don't gotta stop.
You've got not point in standin',
when you can shimmy, hop, and bop.*

PATRICK:

*So get on your feet as we
take to the street,
and dance til those feet fall off.

Get into the groove
As you get up and move,
And keep dancin' 'til the music stops!*

ENSEMBLE:

*Ooh...
Ooh...
Ooh...
Da, da, da, da, da, da
Dah, ooh...
Wah, ooh!
Ah!*

ALL:

*Yeah it's alright, alright!
'Cause we're dancin' on a Friday night.
Don't see an end in sight,
D-d-dancin' on a Friday night.*

PATRICK:

We see you there in the doorway. Come on in, boys. (**focus shifts to Aaron, Nick, and Will, who have just entered.**)

HARPER:

(to Alexis) He came!

PATRICK:

Get down here and show us how you dance on a Friday night. (**the boys shyly refuse**) Will? Come on I know you want to... (**Will does want to, he comes down onto the dance floor and dances while the students sing**)

ALL:

*It's alright, alright.
Cause we're dancin' on a Friday night.
Until the morning light.
D-d-dancin' on a Friday night.*

PATRICK:

Eh, not bad. What do you guys think? (**students cheer**) Nice work Will, but I know Aaron can show you up!

WILL:

Bring it on! (**Aaron moves down onto the dance floor and dances while the students sing**)

PATRICK:

1, 2, 3...

ALL:

*Yeah it's alright, alright
Cause we're dancin' on a Friday night.
Don't see an end in sight.
D-d-dancin' on a Friday night.*
(they cheer for Aaron)

JOE:

(Speaking from his hidden location) And what about Nick?

PATRICK:

Yeah... And what *about* Nick! Get on down here *buddy!* (Nick approaches and gets ready to dance, but the music suddenly changes, leaving Nick out to dry.)

JOE:

(Speaking, but being badly lip synced by Patrick, in an attempt to not blow their cover)
Hold on, sorry Nick. Only people who aren't jerks get to dance! Better luck next time. (Nick is mad, and moves to the back. Then— before Patrick can register that Joe is still speaking...) You're right, Melanie. That was satisfying.

MELANIE:

What?

PATRICK:

...What?

MELANIE:

What was satisfying?

PATRICK:

Oh, um... (he gives her a “cut it out” motion)

SAM:

Yeah, who said that?

PATRICK:

Um. Me.

STUDENT:

Your mouth didn't move.

PATRICK:

Oh... oh, that. Must be some, uh...

NATE:

Overlapping sig—

PATRICK:

Overlapping signals.

VANESSA:

Ugh! Sam! You were responsible for sound.

SAM:

Ah! Sorry, Vanessa. I'll get it fixed. Um, (**to two decorating crew members**) could you two maybe follow these cords and see what's going on back there?

NATE, PATRICK, MELANIE:

No!

SAM:

Problem?

PATRICK:

...No? (he gives an uncomfortable smile, the coughs, loudly) INCOMING, JOE!-Allllright, everybody now! (cue: 12B. DANCING ON A FRIDAY NIGHT PART 2. In a splashy dance break, the students go wild! We see the legendary dance take its true form, with a dramatic twist. While the students have the time of their lives dancing with friends and love interests, Vanessa's henchmen attempt to find the source of the mysterious voice. Joe utilizes his size and speed to avoid them. Finally the dance break ends, and in preparation of the oh-so-important A...) 1, 2, 1, 2, 3...

STUDENTS:

*Yeah it's alright, alright.
Cause we're dancin' on a Friday night.
Until the morning light.
D-d-dancin' on a Friday night.*

JOE (PATRICK LIP SYNCING):

*Yeah it's alright!
Dancin' on a Friday night!
Hey..
Hey! Yeah!*

PATRICK:

*Yeah it's alright, alright.
'Cause we're dancin' on a Friday night.
Don't see an end in sight.*

*Yeah, it's alright...
'Cause we're dancin' on a Friday night!
Yeah!*

MEN:

D-d-dancin' on a Friday...

WOMEN:

Dancin' on a Friday...

ALL:

Dancin' on a Friday night! (Joe is grabbed by Vanessa's henchmen!)

HARPER:

Hey, Patrick! Can I have that mic?

PATRICK:

Um, sure. (**Harper hoists herself onstage**)

HARPER:

(**winded and honest, almost “drunk” on fun**) Hey. Everyone. Um, my name's Harper, and up until now I've been kind of, I guess, shy and focused on myself and my grades and school, but after this week, and coming to this amazing dance, and dancing with the most amazing guy...

AARON:

(waving) Ebola!

HARPER:

(**affectionately**) He means "hola". I've realized that I've finally come out of my shell and learned to live a little bit. I—I learned things I thought I already knew the answers to. And that's cool. And so, I just want to tell everybody out there, who might be a little shy, or—or hesitant, or apprehensive about trying something new, to just do it! Because you've only got one life and one specific moment where everything is going to line up, and if you're always afraid to take the chance because you think you already know everything there is to know, then you're just gonna end up missing it. (**a beat**) So yeah. (**Aaron cheers, and the rest of the students join in**)

PATRICK:

Alright, anybody else wanna share something?

VANESSA:

Um, this isn't in the schedule.

PATRICK:

Vanessa, come on.

VANESSA:

No.

PATRICK:

(**an idea, he plays to her weakness**) For me?

VANESSA:

Carry on.

PATRICK:

Anybody else?

JESSIE:

Yeah! (**she crawls up**) I just wanna say, that um, puberty sucks. (**the students agree**) I mean, for the past 48 hours, puberty has been pretty much terrorizing my body, and that sounds very weird when I say it out loud and I'm sorry you all had to hear that. (**beat**) BUT: thankfully, I've had my two very best friends, Katie and Heather, by my side this entire time, and with their help,

I think I'm prepared for whatever growing up is going to throw my way next. My body is ready.
(the students cringe at the last sentence)

KATIE:

Jessie, stop talking about your body, you're making us all very uncomfortable.

JESSIE:

Got it. Sorry. So just, shout out to Katie and Heather, and anybody else who is a loyal friend to somebody. I mean, do you really need a date when you're already here with your favorite people? **(the crowd awwws)** And also, big shout out to make up. Girls, you have GOT to try this; it can cover up *anything*. **(the students cheer for Jessie's statement)**

PATRICK:

Haha, awesome. Anyone else?

SAM:

Me!

VANESSA:

Samantha!

SAM:

(mimicking her) "Vanessa!" I'd just like to take this moment to promote my campaign. Everybody, next week, please take the time to acknowledge the girl who does all of the real work around here. Vote Sam for Freshman Representative!

VANESSA:

That's what I'm running for!

SAM:

I know! And now I'm running for it too. Because you're a crazy bit—

PATRICK:

(quickly yanking away the mic) Bit of honey! She's one crazy bit of honey... Alright, any last words from people who aren't gonna get carried away with a microphone?

JOE:

(entering, struggling against the decorating crew) Get off me! Let me go!

VANESSA:

What's going on here?

DECORATING CREW 1:

We found him hiding in the janitor's closet around the corner.

VANESSA:

What? That area is strictly off limits!

DECORATING CREW 2:

He had all these cables and stuff hooked up. We don't really know what he was doing.

VANESSA:

I KNEW there was something going on around here. This is sabotage!

JOE:

No, really, I—

VANESSA:

An attempt to ruin MY moment! My dance! And you're all in on it, aren't you? (**beat**) Who all has something to do with this? (**silence**) Accomplices step forward NOW and face your expulsions like the delinquents you are. (**beat**) Just you, is it Joseph? Well, I guess you'll make a great example for the rest of them. Wilson Middle Schoolers, I warned you all. (**She pulls out a contract and a pen**) Say goodbye to your rule-breaking, contract-violating, prepubescent classmate. *You are expelled, mister!* (**The students murmur**)

PATRICK:

Vanessa, wait.

VANESSA:

Patrick Farley, don't you dare call me "baby"!

PATRICK:

...I wasn't going to.

VANESSA:

Well... don't.

PATRICK:

Okay.

VANESSA:

...Okay. (**pause**) Joseph, you are officially—

PATRICK:

Vanessa, it's not his fault. It was my idea.

VANESSA:

What do you mean?

PATRICK:

He— I— Joe was the one singing the high notes. (**The students gasp**)

VANESSA:

Say it's not so.

PATRICK:

No, it's true. I couldn't hit the A, so Joe did it for me. I—I begged him to, and he did it as a favor. He shouldn't be in trouble.

VANESSA:

Oh, Patrick. Well, I guess you leave me no choice. You broke the rules, you pay the consequences. What do you have to say for yourself?

PATRICK:

Nothing. Only... this. (**He moves to her, and... holds her hand! Vanessa is frozen in awe, the students are flabbergasted.**)

STUDENT 1:

Oh my gosh. It's... It's a...

STUDENT 2:

It's a public hand-hold! (**they audibly react**)

PATRICK:

So... does this change your mind at all?

VANESSA:

(she thinks) I guess we can let this one slide. (**Success. Patrick and the other students sigh in relief.**) But you're still a filthy rule-breaker.

PATRICK:

Hey, sue me.

SAM:

That's a bad idea, she'll literally sue you.

PATRICK:

Scratch that.

JOE:

Hey, um, Patrick? Is that mic still on?

PATRICK:

Oh... Yeah. (**Joe takes the mic**)

JOE:

Hey... Everybody. I'm Joe. You might know me as Joe the Gnome, No-Grow Joe...

NICK:

(from the back) Joe-da!

MELANIE:

Get outta here, Nick! (he leaves, frightened)

JOE:

Anyway, yeah. As you can tell, I haven't hit puberty yet, and it's probably not gonna happen for a long time. Or ever. I'm short, and my voice is high, and I'm not very... hairy.

HAIRY ARMPIT GIRL:

Consider yourself lucky!

JOE:

I will, thanks. But even though there are some things that I wish were different about myself, and it makes me feel a little awkward sometimes, I've decided that I'm not gonna let those things stop me from doing what I like. And thanks to some new friends, I've discovered that I really like to sing. So I just want to take a moment and share a little song I put together today after our rehearsal. (He pulls out a piece of paper, song lyrics scrawled across the page) Melanie? (she takes the keyboard, 13. EMBRACE THE AWKWARDNESS begins)

There comes a point in every life when everything feels like it's nothing like what it was before.

That may sound just a bit confusing but how else do you describe it without saying much more?

The constant changing and the straining rearranging make you feel like you don't know who you are.

See your reflection, no detection of yourself and you just sit there feeling weird and bizarre.

But if you open up your eyes, you'll see a new day dawning.

Open up your eyes, you'll see the sun in the sky.

This could be a chance to get the things you've been wanting,

And here's your moment to try, (He waves over Harper, who approaches and looks off his sheet)

'cause

HARPER & JOE:

Changing can be good

JOE:

When you're comfortable with changing.

HARPER & JOE:

Learning how to grow

HARPER:

Is the only way to start.

HARPER & JOE:

Even though it may

JOE:

Seem to be a little crazy,

HARPER & JOE:

Make the change and

JOE:

Embrace the awkwardness. (He waves Patrick over)

HARPER:

Embrace the awkwardness...

PATRICK:

You may be feeling like your world is always changing and like every day brings on a new you.

I hate to tell you, but this crazy thought you're thinking isn't actually that crazy; it's true! (Jessie is waved over)

+ JESSIE:

Don't be discouraged, you can flourish if you keep an open mind and think of how you can grow.

You may find talents and new challenges and hobbies and new things you didn't know you could know.

MELANIE & NATE:

Cause if you open up your eyes,

PATRICK:

You'll see a new day dawning.

HEATHER & KATIE:

Open up your eyes,

JESSIE:

You'll see the sun in the sky.

ALEXIS & SAM:

This could be a chance.

HARPER:

To get the things you've been wanting.

JOE & VANESSA:

(Joe grabs Vanessa and encourages her to join in, albeit begrudgingly) ...and here's your moment to try! (the students begin to move to the music)

ALL:

Changing can be good,

PATRICK:

When you're comfortable with changing.

ALL:

Learning how to grow,

JESSIE:

Is the only way to start.

ALL:

Even though it may...

HARPER:

Seem to be a little crazy,

ALL:

Make the change and...

HARPER, JOE, PATRICK, JESSIE:

Embrace the awkwardness!

JOE:

Embrace the awkwardness!

OTHERS:

Embrace the awkwardness!

+ **HARPER, PATRICK, JESSIE:**

Embrace the awkwardness!

ALL:

*Just know that if you feel weird it's just part of the deal.
 Just shake it off 'cause puberty is less than ideal.
 But we all have to deal with it, so you're not alone.
 Just laugh it off and smile because everyone knows that
 Changing can be good
 When you're comfortable with changing.
 Learning how to grow
 Is the only way to start.
 Even though it may
 Seem to be a little crazy,
 Make the change and*

PART 1:

Embrace the awkwardness!

Embrace the awkwardness!

'Cause you're going through...

PART 2:

Embrace the awkwardness!

Embrace it 'cause you're going through...

ALL:

*Puberty,
The perfect form of cruelty.
And everyone's uncomfortable with nudity,*

JANITOR:

Not me!

ALL:

But there's no way that...

GROUP 1:

*I can get immunity, or
Know I'll turn out beautifully, or
Be something I cannot be, or
Predict my reality but*

GROUP 2:

*I... can hide from the community,
Escape all the crudity, or
Know what people think of me, but
Oh I know that*

ALL:

*You'll be fine, we guarantee.
It's only puber-*

JOE:

(voice cracks) -ty! (everybody gasps)

ALL:

-ty!
Only puberty...

Ah...

JOE:

Aw, come on!

PATRICK, HARPER, & JESSIE:

(moving to comfort Joe) It's only puberty!

ALL:

Puberty! (Blackout. Cue: 14. BOWS)

END OF PLAY