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Friday Night Sprites

A Comedy in One-Act

By Don Zolidis

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One-Act Comedy

5w, 5m, 12 any gender

It's tough when you're the football coach in Texas. You don't have any money for helmets, your kids have to paint the field themselves, and you can never get enough boys to try out. Meanwhile, the theater department is building a $22 million amphitheater for their new show and used four live elephants in their production of Dumbo. When the star quarterback leaves the team to take a role as Peaseblossom in A Midsummer Night's Dream, what's a coach to do except try to find a cursed Monkey's Paw to make a wish and change the world? Except someone might have beaten him to it...

Cast of Characters

The Coaches:
COACH BURNSIDE: The down on his luck football coach at Lemoine High School
MS. DAVIDSON: The English teacher forced to be assistant football coach

The Football Players:
ARLO
RAJIV
BRENT – a wide receiver
SKYLER

Parents
ARLO'S MOM
RAJIV'S DAD
BRENT'S MOM
SKYLER'S MOM

PRINCIPAL ADAMS
JANITOR
RADIO HOST 1
RADIO HOST 2

KRYSTAL
DANNY
KIDS

The Theater Kids
MS. GARBER – the director, a queen ruling by divine right.

IMOGENE
DAVIN
ROSE

Double-casting: Most of the roles except the two main coaches can be double-cast. Since the show happens at a rapid fire pace, don't allow any costume or set changes to slow you down, a single piece of a costume might be enough to show a different character.

Suggested Doubling: Other options are certainly possible.
ARLO's MOM – RADIO HOST 1
RAJIV's DAD – DANNY
BRENT'S MOM – KRYSTAL
SKYLER'S MOM – KID 1
JANITOR – RADIO HOST 2 - KID 2

Gender of characters: Coach Burnside and the football players (except Krystal) should be played as male. Actors of any gender may play those characters, however. Essentially, every other character may be any gender – please change pronouns accordingly (and change names if it makes sense).

Lemoine High School.
Somewhere in Texas.
Lights up on the tiny, closet-sized office of COACH BURNSIDE. There are a lot of mops.
He stares out at the audience, wearing a windbreaker. His whistle probably doesn't work and he doesn't have enough money to buy a new one.

COACH BURNSIDE *(to the audience)*
You know how it is. It's the first thing they cut when there's a budget issue in the school. You don't have enough money to buy equipment and they move your office into a mop closet. The town barely knows you exist and you're going up and down the hallways begging kids to try out. I try not to complain. It's just… it's hard.
In Texas.*
To be the football coach.
BRENT, a football player, knocks on the door to the office and tries to fit himself into it.
**Feel free to change this state to whatever football-crazy state you're in.*

BRENT
Hey coach?

COACH BURNSIDE
Yeah?

BRENT
Um… me and some of the other guys were talking, and they totally think I would be the best quarterback.

COACH BURNSIDE
Brent, we've talked about this – Wide Receiver is an important position on the field –

BRENT
Yeah but like half the time I'm not even doing anything. The quarterback's the only one with actual lines I just run around.

COACH BURNSIDE
The quarterback calls the plays -

BRENT
I could call plays.

COACH BURNSIDE
Okay but remember when you played quarterback in the scrimmage and you ran the other direction screaming?

BRENT

Everyone was trying to hit me, so I just reacted. That's a natural reaction.

COACH BURNSIDE *(to the audience)*
I don't mean to throw Brent under the bus here. He's a good kid –

BRENT
I've been on the team four years I think I should get more lines.

COACH BURNSIDE *(to the audience)*
It's just – when you're the football coach – sometimes you're not treated with a lot of respect.
His phone rings.
Lights up on Arlo's Mom.

ARLO'S MOM
Would it be okay if parents come to the rehearsals?

COACH BURNSIDE
They're called practices and no it would not be okay.

ARLO'S MOM
Why not?

COACH BURNSIDE
Because I would hate it.

ARLO'S MOM
I watched a lot of football in college and I could totally tell you what to do from the sidelines.

COACH BURNSIDE
No that's okay thank you. Hold on.
RAJIV'S DAD enters on the phone.

RAJIV'S DAD
Are you a real coach?

COACH BURNSIDE
Yes I am.

RAJIV'S DAD
Do you have a degree in coaching?

COACH BURNSIDE
I don't know that they give out degrees in coaching.

RAJIV'S DAD

Well you better find out.

Rajiv's Dad hangs up the phone.

ARLO'S MOM

I have some ideas for plays that I want to run by you. They involve giving the ball to my son.

COACH BURNSIDE

That's not how we do things here –

ARLO'S MOM

Other kids get the ball, my son should get the ball too.

COACH BURNSIDE

Ma'am, I need to go.

BRENT'S MOM enters, on the phone.

BRENT'S MOM

Is Brent there?

COACH BURNSIDE

Yes Brent is here –

BRENT'S MOM

Tell him to answer his phone and he needs to miss rehearsal today because I need someone to cat-sit.

COACH BURNSIDE

Okay, they're practices, not rehearsals, and I need him today because –

BRENT'S MOM

You do not understand about our cat. Are you going to come over and cat-sit?

COACH BURNSIDE

No.

BRENT'S MOM

She is in a delicate place emotionally. Cats are prone to depression because they're cats. Brent needs to support her in this difficult time.

Brent's Mom hangs up.

BRENT

So I get to be quarterback then? Oh and I'm gonna miss the next game cause it's my birthday and we're going to Dave and Buster's.

Coach Burnside steps out to talk to the audience.

COACH BURNSIDE *(to the audience)*
That's a pretty typical day. When you're the only person running the football program, a lot of things fall on you. Especially when the parents use the Freedom of Information act to get your phone number so they can call you when they have ideas.

RAJIV'S DAD
Have you even *heard* of the West Coast Offense?

ARLO'S MOM
The last coach distributed the ball *fairly*.

BRENT'S MOM
I am really upset for no reason whatsoever and I wanted to call and let you know!

COACH BURNSIDE
It's three o' clock in the morning, Ma'am.

BRENT'S MOM *(sarcastic)*
Oh okay. *Sor-ry.* I guess the emotional health of our beloved Checkers isn't of interest to you! Fine. Let it be on your head. I'm charging you for the cost of cloning her.

COACH BURNSIDE *(to the audience)*
The real problem is money. Schools in Texas just have other priorities than sports. But you do what you can. So I talked to the principal.
PRINCIPAL ADAMS enters, on the opposite side of the stage.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS
There's my favorite coach! How are the old footballers doing this season? That's what we call them, right, footballers? Are you footballing up and down the lawn?

COACH BURNSIDE
It's a field.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS
What is?

COACH BURNSIDE
What we play on. It's a football field.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS
Gosh I love these little terms you have. Adorable. How can I help you?

COACH BURNSIDE
I was actually wondering if I could have some money.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

For what?

COACH BURNSIDE

For football.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

It costs money to have kids run around on a lawn? My children do that for free. I can't even stop `em.

COACH BURNSIDE

Right, but we need uniforms, and helmets, and lights and -

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

Oh *man.* The budget is a nightmare right now. I don't think we can spare anything honestly.

Principal Adams takes out their empty wallet and opens it.

Look. There's just like dust in here. You gotta think outside the box. Fund-raisers. You could sell buttons or knickknacks. Lots of people in this town like knickknacks.

COACH BURNSIDE

I just don't think we're funding programs equally.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

I have no idea what you're talking about.

COACH BURNSIDE

The… theater program?

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

What about the theater program?

COACH BURNSIDE

You gotta be kidding me, right? What is their budget?

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

It's a floating slush fund. But they need it.

COACH BURNSIDE

Last year they had four real elephants in their production of *Dumbo!* How much did that cost?!

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

You would not believe how much four elephants eat. A *lot*. What are you gonna do, not feed `em? So then just have skinny elephants? Who wants skinny elephants in their show? The reviews would be terrible.

COACH BURNSIDE

And then there's this!

Coach Burnside takes out a newspaper and hands it to Principal Adams.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

So?

COACH BURNSIDE

You're building a $22 million amphitheater for the theater program?

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

Yeah?

COACH BURNSIDE

And then you're imploding it immediately after the final performance of the fall show?!

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

I sense you're getting upset.

COACH BURNSIDE

How is that not an incredible waste of money?!

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

You're not understanding Ms. Garber's concept. It's a post-apocalyptic Midsummer Night's Dream. Shakespeare. With mutant fairies. It's absolutely phenomenal. And yeah, that's going to require spectacle, like the controlled demolition of the entire theater on the final night, but that is absolutely necessary for the execution of her artistic vision. Which reminds me, we're going to have to move all those heavy things out of that smelly place where you exercise.

COACH BURNSIDE

Weights out of the weight room?

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

Whatever they're called. The theater needs more costume storage.

COACH BURNSIDE

Where are we gonna work out?

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

Oh my gosh there are heavy things all over the place. Pick them up and set them down again. Look.

She picks up something and sets it down.

See? I'm exercising. Wow.

Tell you what? How would you like an assistant coach?

Lights change.

Skipping Forward

MS. DAVIDSON

That's another idea. We could find a witch.

ARLO, a football player enters.

ARLO

Hey um… Coach, can I talk to you about something? Oh hey Ms. Davidson.

MS. DAVIDSON

Hi.

COACH BURNSIDE

Come on in, Arlo.

Arlo tries to squeeze into the mop closet.
Ms. Davidson has to stand to get out of the way maybe.
They all hold mops now.

ARLO

So uh… I gotta quit the team.

COACH BURNSIDE

What?!

ARLO

I got offered the role of Peaseblossom in Midsummer.

COACH BURNSIDE

Oh come on! Peaseblossom?!

ARLO

It's a pretty sweet part. I'm a mutant fairy and I get to dance a little bit. I never get to dance in football.

MS. DAVIDSON

We could add some dancing in.

COACH BURNSIDE

You're our best player on offense and defense! Who's gonna be quarterback? Who's gonna make all the interceptions?!

ARLO

There's a lot of college scouts coming to the show so I gotta think of my future. And being a dancing mutant fairy is really critical. Sorry.

He hands a mop back to Ms. Davidson.

I gotta go. Rehearsal is starting and I gotta learn my line.

He practices his line
`I'm called Peaseblossom!'
Almost got it.
He exits.

COACH BURNSIDE
Great. Now we don't even have enough boys to field a team.

MS. DAVIDSON
I'll ask some of the more aggressive girls.

COACH BURNSIDE
They're all playing soccer.

MS. DAVIDSON
I'm sure one or two of them have been kicked off the team for disciplinary issues. I'll ask around.

COACH BURNSIDE
And I gotta find a new quarterback.
His phone rings.
SKYLER'S MOM enters.

SKYLER'S MOM
I just heard that Arlo quit to be Peaseblossom. This is Skyler's chance to be quarterback.

COACH BURNSIDE
Okay but –

SKYLER'S MOM
But Skyler can't rehearse on Tuesdays or Thursdays because he needs mental health days so you'll have to work around his schedule.

COACH BURNSIDE
I don't know that he can be quarterback if –

SKYLER'S MOM
Okay fine. Sure. Whatever. I guess it's all about *you* then, isn't it? Wow.
She hangs up as SKYLER enters.

SKYLER
Arlo said I could be quarterback now?

COACH BURNSIDE
No! Arlo doesn't get to decide that!

SKYLER
He also said we shouldn't do wildcat formation because that sounds scary.

MS. DAVIDSON *(to Coach)*
I'll handle this.
To Skyler
Get out!
She shoves him out with a mop.
All right. We need money, we need kids, and we need to be cool. I've got an idea.
Lights up on two radio hosts.

RADIO HOST
All right welcome back to High School Theater Weekly, the weekly radio show where grown adults discuss all things high school theater!

RADIO HOST 2
Woo! Lemoine High School is looking strong this year! I'm really looking forward to the humorous antics of the Rude Mechanicals in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Gonna knock it outta the park. I love those antics.

RADIO HOST
And the big news this week: PBS's rankings of the top 100 awkward character actors are out and Davin McDuffy lands at number 29.

RADIO HOST 2
Wow. That is big. That is huge. He's been putting in the work capering and whatnot.

RADIO HOST
He's outta control this season.

RADIO HOST 2
Getting a lot of interest from D-1 theater schools.

RADIO HOST
He's gonna take it to the next level. I can't wait to see him tackle some Restoration comedy. Oliver Goldsmith.

RADIO HOST 2
Oliver Goldsmith is fire.

RADIO HOST
How do you feel about the matchup with Central?

RADIO HOST 2

They got no depth. It's Brittany Jones and no one. I mean don't get me wrong, she is a talent, her belt slays, but I just don't see them able to bring the amount of spectacle we've got at Lemoine. Their show loses steam in the third act and I think we take `em in the fifth.

RADIO HOST

Of course we do not condone gambling on high school theater –

RADIO HOST 2

But if you want to do a parlay, I've got Lemoine's Midsummer beating the reviews on Central's Drowsy Chaperone by 1 star, and then I've got Memorial's Little Shop obliterating Jefferson's Seussical by three stars.

RADIO HOST

Seussical is a dog.

RADIO HOST 2

Yeah it's a rebuilding year. Absolute trash. I feel sad for them. But I'm making a lot of money betting on them getting savage reviews.

Ms. Davidson enters.

MS. DAVIDSON

Hey there –

RADIO HOST

Oh that's right we agreed to have a special guest today! Ms. Davidson, English teacher at Lemoine, is sitting in with us today. Welcome to Theater Talk!

RADIO HOST 2

What do you think about Miss Garber's vision for Midsummer? Fire, right? Fire.

MS. DAVIDSON

Yeah I –

RADIO HOST 2

The rumor is she's actually setting the stage on fire at the end of the show.

MS. DAVDISON

I'm sure it's great.

RADIO HOST 2

Absolutely sick what's going on over there.

MS. DAVIDSON

Actually I came on here to talk about football.

The Radio Hosts are perplexed.

RADIO HOST

Why.

MS. DAVIDSON

We've got a fantastic team this year and I think everyone should come out and support us on Friday night -

RADIO HOST 2

Let me stop you right there. Is your show –

MS. DAVIDSON

It's a game.

RADIO HOST 2

A game, then, is your game able to transport me to a poetic world filled with magic and wonder?

MS. DAVIDSON

Possibly.

RADIO HOST

Are there musical numbers?

MS. DAVIDSON

Not normally.

RADIO HOST 2

I gotta be honest with you – I don't get it. The whole thing. When are football skills ever going to be useful in real life? I mean the costumes are colorful, but people are just running around throwing a spherical object.

MS. DAVIDSON

It's actually an oblong object. Kind of pointed at both ends.

RADIO HOST

That makes even less sense.

MS. DAVIDSON

So you can throw it in a tight spiral. But there are actually a lot of storylines in a football game… And… um… We're going to have some theater kids do some monologues at halftime –

RADIO HOST

Wow! I am there. Which monologues?

MS. DAVIDSON

Not sure yet –

RADIO HOST

Lysander, do Lysander.

MS. DAVDISON

Sure, probably, yeah.

RADIO HOST 2

You heard it here folks. Intermission of the sports thing! We got live theater monologues!

MS. DAVIDSON

Maybe some improv too.

RADIO HOST 2

Improv too! Be there!

Lights change.

COACH BURNSIDE *(to the audience)*

Meanwhile, I tried finding some new recruits.

Coach Burnside stands in the middle of the hallway. He has a sign that says "Join Football. It's fun!"

Kids pass by.

Hey does anyone want to join football?

Kids keep walking by.

Football is really fun!

Kids keep walking by.

You get a lot of fresh air.

KRYSTAL enters.

KRYSTAL

What's this about football?

COACH BURNSIDE

Yes! Awesome! It's super fun.

KRYSTAL

Do you kick a ball?

COACH BURNSIDE

Sometimes.

KRYSTAL

I don't like kicking things.

COACH BURNSIDE
Then you don't have to! You can have a smaller role on the offensive line.

KRYSTAL
I don't want to do anything offensive.

COACH BURNSIDE
There's defense. You can play defense.

KRYSTAL
What does the defense do?

COACH BURNSIDE
It tries to stop the other team from scoring.

KRYSTAL
There's another team?

COACH BURNSIDE
Yeah.

KRYSTAL
No thanks.
She walks off.
Ms. Davidson enters.

COACH BURNSIDE
How did the radio show go?

MS. DAVIDSON
I told a bunch of lies.

COACH BURNSIDE
Nice.

MS. DAVIDSON
How's the football recruiting going?
DANNY, another kid, walks by and stops.

DANNY
Hey is this for American football or football football?

COACH BURNSIDE
American football.

DANNY

Oh.

He laughs as if this was the dumbest response ever and walks on.

COACH BURNSIDE

Not great.

MS. DAVIDSON *(to the audience)*

So we got the idea that we would demonstrate football during lunch in the cafeteria to raise awareness of our team.

Lights change to the cafeteria. A group of kids is eating lunch.
Skyler, Brent, and Rajiv enter.
They've made their own jerseys. They're the same color, at least.
They start stretching.

SKYLER

Where did you get that helmet?

BRENT

My Mom knitted it.

RAJIV

Nice. My Mom just told me not to get hit by anything.

Coach Burnside steps up.

COACH BURNSIDE

Okay can I have everyone's attention please?

None of the kids eating lunch are paying attention to him.

This Friday our football team is going to play a game of football against another football team.

KID 1

Why would they do that?

COACH BURNSIDE

Just to um… that's what you do. And they have been working hard on their football and would appreciate your support. So right now we are going to run a play for you.

The kids all perk up.

KID 2

It's a play?

COACH BURNSIDE

No we run a play inside the game.

KID 1

Skipping Forward

I am fangirling so hard right now cause like I saw you in Little Women two years ago and I was like dying the entire time – the way you brought all those emotions and I am so stupid I am embarrassing myself right now OMG I'll shut up I'm sorry.

Kid 1 sits down in shame.

COACH BURNSIDE

I'm glad you're here I –

Kid 2 runs up to take a selfie with Davin. Davin strikes an amazing pose on cue.

KID 2

I love you.

DAVIN

Okay.

Kid 2 continues to stare at Davin.

KID 2

Dumbo changed my life.

DAVIN

Cool.

Short pause. Kid 2 continues to stare.

KID 2

Is it awkward now?

DAVIN

Yes.

KID 2

I'm so sorry.

Kid 2 runs back to their table.

MS. DAVIDSON

We were meaning to ask you guys. There's a football game this Friday and it would be so cool if you could just make an appearance –

ROSE

Let me check my calendar.

Rose takes out their phone.
Looks at it.
Scrolls.
Scrolls.
Scrolls.

MS. DAVIDSON

It doesn't have to be a long appearance maybe 15 minutes –

Rose holds up one finger.

Ms. Davidson stops.

Rose scrolls.

ROSE

I'm busy.

MS. DAVIDSON

Oh. Darn. How about the rest of you?

IMOGENE *(offended)*

The *rest* of us?

DAVIN

Do you know who I am?

IMOGENE

Davin is the number 29 character actor prospect in the country.

DAVIN

28. There was a terrible miming accident in West Virginia and Luther O'Donnell suffocated in his imaginary box.

IMOGENE

That is so tragic and yet so impressive.

DAVIN

I know. But it does open a spot at Michigan.

KID 2

I would die if you went to Michigan!

COACH BURNSIDE

It would just be really nice if you –

IMOGENE

If I lent my star power to your little game? As if I am some mere sprite to be summoned from the fairy realm to enchant your festivities? Mortal, I am Titania, Queen of the Fairies. I do not hop to your command.

She finishes with a flourish

Kids 1 and 2 and probably the football kids applaud.

Thank you.

KID 1

You are an inspiration.

IMOGENE

I know. Besides, Friday night I'm going to be doing motion capture for the new version of Patti LuPone's College Musical Theater 2025* game. I signed an NIL deal with them last week.

**Or whichever year is next*

ROSE

Shut UP!

IMOGENE

I know!

DAVIN

Slay!

Perhaps a tinkling noise alerts them to a presence and they fall silent.

Maybe a kid runs out with a red carpet and rolls it out. Maybe there is someone strewing rose petals in front of

MS. GARBER, the theater director, who makes a grand entrance.

The musical noise comes from the dozens of tiny bells she's attached to herself (think belly-dancer).

She is, in short, The Queen.

MS. GARBER

Yes. I have arrived.

KID 2

I am so excited for Midsummer I can't even sleep at night I just –

Ms. Garber holds up a hand to stop Kid 2.

I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry

To Kid 1, in a whisper

I think she acknowledged my presence!

KID 1

You're definitely getting a part in the next show!

COACH BURNSIDE

I'm so glad you're here Debbie.

MS. GARBER

Debbie is dead. I will now be known as The Director.

COACH BURNSIDE

Right. We were just thinking it would be pretty cool if we could borrow some theater kids for the football game on Friday.

MS. GARBER

Borrow them for what.

MS. DAVIDSON

Just like a cameo, just to drive some interest in the students.

MS. GARBER

Oh. As if my theater "kids" are pawns to be moved about on your chess board?

COACH BURNSIDE

I'm not sure that's really what we're talking about –

MS. GARBER

It is what we are talking about. No, I will not have my stars sullied by an association with your little game. We have standards. Shakespeare. Moliere. Disney. To me, my thespians. We must away.

Rose, Imogene, and Davin fly to her.

ROSE *(exiting)*

Are we going to do Moana next year?

MS. GARBER *(exiting)*

Now is not the time to speak of such things.

IMOGENE *(exiting)*

Oh my gosh I'm dying!

MS. GARBER *(exiting)*

We are not *not* doing Moana next year.

Rose starts to lose it.

But there are also rumors… of Hadestown.

The theater kids squeal with joy

DAVIN *(exiting)*

I am so upset I'm graduating!

They're off.

Lights change.

Coach Burnside and Ms. Davidson step out and return to their mop closet.

COACH BURNSIDE *(to the audience)*

I tried not to feel bad about it. Even though we had to mow the field ourselves and paint the numbers on it. But there are some things you can't change in a Texas high school.

MS. DAVIDSON

On the bright side, candy sales have been pretty strong.

Brent enters.

BRENT

Is it cool if I buy all the candy bars myself?

MS. DAVIDSON

Sure, Brent.

Brent exits.

COACH BURNSIDE

I just want people to care. These kids work really hard, they deserve to have people show up to watch them.

MS. DAVIDSON

We'll figure something out.

To the audience

Rehearsals weren't much better.

COACH BURNSIDE

They're called practices!

The football players, (Brent, Skyler, Rajiv and Krystal) enter. They are trying to stretch.

MS. DAVIDSON

All right team I don't know a lot about football but neither does anyone else! But I watched a few videos on YouTube and I think I got it.

Krystal raises her hand.

Krystal?

KRYSTAL

I don't want to play offense.

MS. DAVIDSON

That's fine, no problem, we will fit you in where we can.

KRYSTAL

But I want a bunch of lines.

MS. DAVIDSON

We don't really have lines in football.

KRYSTAL

You said there's an offensive line and a defensive line.

MS. DAVIDSON

Right.

KRYSTAL

I want a defensive line. Like "Look out!" or "Duck!"

MS. DAVIDSON

Let's focus on blocking.

KRYSTAL

Oh I know what that is! Memorized movement on the stage.

MS. DAVIDSON

Blocking is where you run into people.

RAJIV

My Mom said I'm not supposed to get hit by anything.

SKYLER

I'm a quarterback I don't do blocking.

MS. DAVIDSON

Now a pancake block is where you hit someone so hard that you flatten them like a pancake.

BRENT

When do we get pancakes?

MS. DAVIDSON

After practice.

She steps out to talk to the audience

It took two hours, but they finally started getting it.

BRENT

So I just run into people?

They start bumping into each other upstage.

MS. DAVIDSON *(to the audience)*

Maybe they were even liking it. In regular life, you're not allowed to slam into people, even though as a teacher you might feel like it ten or fifteen times a day.
And then we got pancakes.

Lights change to the radio show

RADIO HOST

And we are bringing you eight hours of coverage of theater signing day!

RADIO HOST 2

I have had my coffee, I am wearing an adult diaper, and I'm ready to go.

RADIO HOST

TMI, Jim.

RADIO HOST 2

I don't want to miss a second of the action.

RADIO HOST

All right let's go live to Lemoine High School!

Ms. Garber enters with Davin.

DAVIN

After careful consideration with my family, my Director, my advisors, my legal team, my social media team, my fans, and some randos on TikTok, I have come to a decision regarding my future. I will pause to allow the suspense to build.

RADIO HOST 2

Let's wildly speculate on this.

RADIO HOST

My money's on Alabama – they recruited him hard, sixteen visits from their theater director –

RADIO HOST 2

I don't see Davin vibing with their postmodern aesthetic though. I'm thinking Big Ten – Ohio State almost won the national theater championship last year –

RADIO HOST

Yeah but Ohio State has a lot of turnover with their tech director taking a spot at the American Drama Conservatory.

DAVIN

My choice is…

Davin puts on a Wisconsin hat.

I will be a dramatic Badger next year!

RADIO HOST 2

Whoa! I DID NOT SEE THAT COMING!

RADIO HOST

I am stunned over here. Stunned. Who are his advisors?! What are they telling him?!

RADIO HOST 2

It's gotta be the cheese. I don't get it. Why would anyone go there?

RADIO HOST

Isn't he lactose intolerant?

RADIO HOST 2

They're paying him. That's the only explanation. His parents were driving a new Escalade last time I saw them.

RADIO HOST

That immediately catapults Wisconsin into the top thirty recruiting classes of the year. Gigantic coup for the new director over there.

RADIO HOST 2

The day starts with a bang. But stay tuned, we have seven and a half more hours of in-depth analysis and speculation because we have nothing better to do. So buckle up out there!

Lights change on them.
Coach Burnside talks to the audience.

COACH BURNSIDE *(to the audience)*

The first home game of the year was rough. We had about thirty people in the stands. All of them parents.

Parents enter, with phones, recording everything that's happening.

BRENT'S MOM

Throw it to my baby! WHERE IS MY BABY?! HEY! HEY THAT KID JUST HIT MY BABY!

SKYLER'S MOM

You don't have to do anything you don't want to do out there, sweetie!

COACH BURNSIDE

Their cheering got highly specific.

SKYLER'S MOM

We can go to Arby's after this, don't hurt yourself!

BRENT'S MOM

DON'T GO NEAR THOSE OTHER KIDS THEY'RE NOT NICE!

SKYLER'S MOM

Remember to have fun!

COACH BURNSIDE

We were down by forty points at halftime.

Rajiv's Dad approaches him as the players enter, a little despondent.

KRYSTAL

The thing is, if everyone else stopped running fast, then we wouldn't need to run fast, you know what I'm saying? If we all just stopped and relaxed this game would be so much more fun. Some people are taking it way too seriously.

RAJIV'S DAD

All right team, huddle up.

COACH BURNSIDE

Parents aren't allowed to be in the locker room.

RAJIV'S DAD

It's all right. I'll take it from here.

COACH BURNSIDE

Take what?

RAJIV'S DAD

The inspirational speech. That's what happens at halftime when you're losing so badly and no one has any hope.

COACH BURNSIDE

But –

RAJIV'S DAD

All right kids, listen. You might not think there's any hope. The other team is stronger. They're faster. They're smarter. They're coached by a person who knows what they're doing. A person who understands the intricacies of the West Coast Offense and listens to well-informed parents. I'm not gonna lie to you: it looks bad. And you might think there's no point in trying because your coach is an idiot.

COACH BURNSIDE

Hey –

RAJIV'S DAD

I'm building to something here! But life is about *struggle*. Football is about *struggle.* It's about trying your hardest even though your coach is actively ruining your experience by being a complete and total moron.

COACH BURNSIDE

All right that's enough.

RAJIV'S DAD

This is *inspirational, come on!* Let me cook! I want you to go out there in the second half and listen to the football in your hearts. Listen to your hearts – and do the opposite of what this brainless chowderhead is telling you.

COACH BURNSIDE *(to the audience)*

The speech went on for twenty-two minutes. It got a little hurtful, actually. We ended up losing by seventy three. And I got a note from the principal to see her.

Principal Adams enters.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

There he is! How is the football team doing? Lots of footballing?

COACH BURNSIDE

You didn't come to the game?

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

There was a really cool podcast I was interested in.

COACH BURNSIDE

Can't you just… pause those?

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

That totally ruins the momentum. Anyhoo, the reason I wanted to talk to you today is that I have something for you! And it pertains to *(sing-song)* mon-ey…

COACH BURNSIDE

Great!

Principal Adams passes over a sheet of paper to him.

This is an electricity bill.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

Yes. That stadium of yours just sucks up the electricity like a big vacuum cleaner, doesn't it?

COACH BURNSIDE

The school isn't paying for our electricity?

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

Wow. Someone's feeling a little entitled.

COACH BURNSIDE

We don't – we don't have the money to pay for this.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

Uh oh. Sad face. Tell you what, we can lend you some exercise bikes and hook them up to the power grid. That way, when your players aren't on the field, they can be on the bikes keeping the place operating. It's green power!

COACH BURNSIDE

My kids are on the field! I don't even have eleven kids! We're having to use puppets for two of our players!

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

What are the coaches doing during the game?

COACH BURNSIDE

Coaching?!

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

There's two of you. One of you can be on the bike, and one of you can be coaching. It's perfect.

COACH BURNSIDE

Can't we just get a little more money?

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

You know who you sound like? Bob Cratchit. Or Tiny Tim. `Please, sir, may I have a biscuit?' Which reminds me, this year's Christmas Carol is going to be a banger. The theater is building an entirely realistic London street from 1867.

COACH BURNSIDE

This is so unfair!

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

I don't make the budget. Ms. Garber makes the budget.

COACH BURNSIDE

She makes the budget?!

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

This is the way the world works. If you want to change things, find a star and make a wish.

Lights change

End of Excerpt.
To purchase this play, visit www.concordtheatricals.com