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Les Examables

A play in two parts by Don Zolidis

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Full length comedy with music
8-28 females, 5-25 males (15-40+ performers possible)

Tired of too much standardized testing in her high school, high achiever Anna Ullman stages a protest and finds herself crowned as the new principal. But ultimate power comes with its own problems (especially after death threats from the all-powerful State Board of Education), and soon Anna finds herself descending into madness and imposing even more standardized testing. It's up to her former best friend, Lola, to lead a rebellion to bring down this new tyrant. Soon Lola is manning the barricades and singing triumphantly awesome songs in this insane satire based on the mega-musical ***Les Misérables****.*

Cast of Characters

ANNA ULLMAN, president of student council, a revolutionary, later Principal
LOLA, her friend, later a revolutionary
BLAKE, another friend, later a vice-principal

MR. HELGESON (or MS. HELGESON), the AP Government teacher

MR. TOMASINO, the principal
MONDO the ENFORCER, a vice-principal
MS. SHEREEN, another vice-principal

JASMINE, a student
SPIVEY, a student
OTHER STUDENTS 1-5

TAD, leader of the ROTC
ROTC SOLDIERS 1-3

BARNEY, member of the State Board of Education
CHANDLER, member of the State Board of Education
MOFFIT, member of the State Board of Education

CHIPPY THE TESTING SQUIRREL, a person dressed up in a Squirrel suit

BRENT, a rep from Pearson Education
MELISSA, a rep from Pearson Education

MS. HAYNES, a teacher
MR. WILLIAMS, a teacher

YANN, a Swedish student

CAROLINE, a very smart student
BRIAN, a very smart student

LUNCH LADY MARGARET
LUNCH LADY BARB
LUNCH LADY MARY

Part 1: *The Resistable Rise of Anna Ullman*
Part 2: *Les Examables*

Setting: A high school near you. Present day.

Casting: Most roles can be double or triple-cast. Feel free to cast actors of any gender or ethnicity.

Note 2: If there are any pop culture references which no longer resonate, please feel free to update them.

Les Examables was first produced by John Paul II Catholic High School in Huntsville, Alabama on October 23-24, 2015. It was directed by Mari Adams, with technical direction by Vinny Paragone, and the original cast was as follows:

Student Director: Nic Kummer
Stage Manager: Maggie Matteson

ANNA ULLMAN: Hana Habchi
LOLA: Sarah Gullat
BLAKE: John-Michael White
MRS. HELGESON: Megan Thompson
MRS. TOMASINO: Abby Stone
MONDO THE ENFORCER: Brian Green
JASMINE: Alli Lambert
SPIVEY: Aniya Roper
STUDENT 1: Xery Johnson
STUDENT 2: Jasmine Wesser
STUDENT 3: Sophia Nieves
STUDENT 4: Kelly Kutsor
STUDENT 5: Emily Kucera
TAD: Joey Bonucchi
ROTC SOLDIER 1: Carter Zibas
ROTC SOLDIER 2: Xery Johnson
ROTC SOLDIER 3: Sophia Nieves
BARNEY: Walton Lake
CHANDLER: Kristen Hodgson
MOFFIT: Neven Crumley
CHIPPY THE TESTING SQUIRREL: Katie Sumera
BRENT: Dominic Ferrante
MELISSA: Rachel Harris
MS. HAYNES: Kelly Kutsor
MS. WILLIAMS: Emily Kucera
YANN: Carter Zibas
CAROLINE: Sydney Gross
BRIANNA: Jasmine Wesser
LUNCH LADY MARGARET: Becky Cannon
LUNCH LADY BARB: Aniya Ropper
LUNCH LADY MARY: Gwendolyn Adams

Part One

The Resistable Rise of Anna Ullman

(A classroom.)
(STUDENTS sit in desks.)

(MR. HELGESON, a rather radical young teacher, is finishing a lesson.)

MR. HELGESON
Ultimately, *Les Miserables* is a story of revolution in the face of tyranny -

STUDENT 1
Yes, why is it called less miserable, when it should be more miserable?

MR. HELGESON
It's *Les Miserables*. It's French.

STUDENT 1
Um… this is America. So they translated the whole book out of French, but not the title?

MR. HELGESON
Any other questions?
(A hand shoots up.)
Jasmine.

JASMINE
Is this going to be on the STAAR* test?
**(Use whatever standardized test is common in your area)*

MR. HELGESON
Some things are on tests, some things aren't.

JASMINE
But is that particular thing going to be on the test?

MR. HELGESON
The skills you're learning here will be useful on the test, but I don't think there'll be a section of the French Revolution.

JASMINE
Is it like a surprise?

MR. HELGESON

Yes. It's like a surprise.

ANNA

Just chill out Jasmine.

JASMINE

That's easy for you to say Anna. You get like a million percent on every test. Some of us are not naturally brilliant, okay?

MR. HELGESON

Guys. I've said this before and I'll say it again: None of you is any smarter than the rest of you. You're all equally stupid.

(Hubbub from the class – "What?!" "I know you didn't just call me stupid" "That's a fair assessment," etc…)

I'm kidding, I'm kidding. But let me tell you something: there's too much emphasis on tests in this school. Did the Founding Fathers have tests?

SPIVEY

No! And that point is entirely relevant!

MR. HELGESON

That was a rhetorical question.

SPIVEY

The answer is still no!

MR. HELGESON

Look, what are we learning about here? People who took history into their own hands. There isn't any test that prepared them for that. The moment struck, and they took action. And that's what made them important, and what changed history. If you want to change history, you're going to have to do more than do well on a test.

JASMINE

So is that going to be on the test? About how important people didn't take tests?

MR. HELGESON

Yes, that is on the test.

(Mr. TOMASINO's voice comes over the loudspeakers.)

MR. TOMASINO

All students. This is your principal speaking. Assemble in the courtyard for an extremely important announcement. Really important. Almost the most important thing you have ever heard in your life.

ANNA

Almost the most important thing?

MR. TOMASINO
Please do not respond to this message as I can't hear you.

ANNA
Fine.

MR. TOMASINO
And I'm certainly not watching you on video and recording who is being flip right now. Anna.

ANNA
What?

MR. TOMASINO
That is all.

MR. HELGESON
All right guys, you heard the dictator.

MR. TOMASINO
Comments from teachers are also being recorded.

(The Courtyard.)
(Two Vice-Principals, SHEREEN, and MONDO THE ENFORCER, are shuttling kids in.)

SHEREEN
All right quiet down. Quiet down everyone!

MONDO THE ENFORCER
Silence! Silence or I will activate my taser!
(the kids quiet down)
I've got twenty-two gigavolts of sweet electricity here for kids who run their mouths! Who wants a taste of it? Who wants a taste?!

MR. TOMASINO
Thank you, Mondo.

MONDO THE ENFORCER
Sit for your Principal! Sit or I shall unleash the hounds!
(The kids sit)

MR. TOMASINO
Thank you. Thank you. You're a credit to vice principals everywhere.

MONDO THE ENFORCER
I am pumped for this all school meeting! Woo! Who's pumped with me?!

SHEREEN

You told them to quiet down.

MONDO THE ENFORCER

Now I want a noise!

JASMINE

Yay.

MR. TOMASINO

All right, okay – fine – Welcome students. Now normally you know me as a fun-time Principal –

SPIVEY

No.

MONDO THE ENFORCER

Who said that?! Who said that?! Say hello the Steve the Taser Cannon!

MR. TOMASINO

That's all right. Calm down. That's why we have video cameras everywhere. We'll find you later and do terrible things to you. Okay, yes, fun time. Well – I'm afraid fun time is not so fun anymore. You see, I received our scores from the practice STAAR test.

(He brandishes a sheet of paper.)

How do you think we did? Anyone have a guess?

(JASMINE raises her hand.)

Put your hand down.

JASMINE

Weren't you asking?

MR. TOMASINO

That was a rhetorical question meant to inspire fear in you.

JASMINE

Dang it. I'm really bad at those.

MR. TOMASINO

Soooo… let's just say, if you just filled in B for all the answers, you would have done better.

STUDENT 2

So I could just filled in B for everything?! Man!

MR. TOMASINO

No! You could not have just filled in B for everything!

STUDENT 2

Then why did you say that?

MR. TOMASINO

Mondo.

(MONDO tases STUDENT 2.)

STUDENT 2

Aaaaah!

MR. TOMASINO

Any more stupid questions?

(JASMINE slowly raises her hand.)

No questions!

JASMINE

Sorry!

MR. TOMASINO

This is unacceptable. These scores are unacceptable! We have six weeks until the final STAAR test! We must score a passing rate! All classes will hereby suspend their normal activities and only focus on the test!

ANNA

What?

MR. TOMASINO

Who said that? Furthermore! There will be no after school activities! Choir is cancelled!

(Students go Awwww)

Band is cancelled!

(Students go Awww)

That little thing where you talk about books is cancelled!

SHEREEN

I believe that's called the Literary club.

MR. TOMASINO

I don't care what it is, it's cancelled!

STUDENT 3

What about the anime club?

MR. TOMASINO

Anime Club is cancelled!

JASMINE

Yay! What? I hate those people.

MR. TOMASINO

From now on, it is test test test! Remember kids, this is a school, and the focus of our school is education. Therefore, we will do nothing fun or interesting until we pass this test.

(ANNA stands up)

ANNA

But the test isn't even about education!

MONDO THE ENFORCER

Should I tase her now?

MR. TOMASINO

Hold on.

MONDO THE ENFORCER

What about now? Can I tase her now?

MR. TOMASINO

What's your name?

ANNA

I'm Anna Ullman. And I think –

MONDO THE ENFORCER

Ooh this would be a good time.

MR. TOMASINO

Maybe you think you could do a better job running this school?

ANNA

Maybe I could.

MR. TOMASINO

Okay now's a good time.

MONDO THE ENFORCER

What? Sorry I was day-dreaming. About tasing people.

MR. TOMASINO

Tase her now. For Educational Purposes.

MONDO THE ENFORCER

Oh. Sweet.

(He tases ANNA.)

ANNA

Aaaah!

MR. TOMASINO

Return to your classes.

SHEREEN

You heard your principal! Get back to your classes, rabble! Oh and have a nice day.

(Lights change.)

(Transitional music. Perhaps "On Parole" instrumental from Les Mis or something like it.)

(LOLA and BLAKE help ANNA back into MR. HELGESON's class.)

LOLA

Are you okay? I can't believe he did that!

BLAKE

That guy's crazy.

LOLA

I hear he used to be a prison guard before he was a vice principal.

BLAKE

He was. But they fired him for being too mean.

ANNA

I'll be all right. Just a few gigavolts of electricity.

LOLA

Would you like a lunchable? I have one.

ANNA

No that's okay –

LOLA

I stole it.

SPIVEY

Man, that was crazy. You're a total hero for standing up to them.

MR. HELGESON

All right guys. Have a seat.

(The class settles in.)

Well – here are my lesson plans. Anyone want to set them on fire?

(JASMINE raises her hand.)

JASMINE

Was that rhetorical?

MR. HELGESON

Mostly. You can rip them up though.

JASMINE

Awesome.

(JASMINE rips up his lesson plans.)

MR. HELGESON

So I guess now I'm supposed to focus on test-taking strategies because that's very important. All right then. Let's say you have four answers, and you know one of them is the wrong answer, is it in your best interest to make a guess? Anyone?

SPIVEY

Uh…

MR. HELGESON

Remember that a wrong answer counts as negative one fourth of a point and a blank answer counts as zero points. So… if you can eliminate one of the options, then…

ANNA

Mr. Helgeson?

MR. HELGESON

What?

ANNA

Is this going to have any application to our lives?

MR. HELGESON

No.

ANNA

Then why are we being forced to learn it?

MR. HELGESON

Sometimes you have to do things that the people in charge want you to do. Like, let's say you have to clean the bathrooms. This is like cleaning the bathrooms of education.

ANNA

But didn't we just learn about revolution? About people who rose up and overthrew repressive regimes?

Skipping Forward

ANNA

We're not terrorists. We're peacefully protesting –

JASMINE

BURN THE WITCH!

ANNA

Jasmine. Not now. We're negotiating.

SHEREEN

Look, I'm a child of the sixties. I love peaceful protesting. But I am about to knock some heads apart if you don't clear out of here immediately.

ANNA

You and what army?!

SHEREEN

I'm glad you asked.

(ROTC students, dressed in uniforms, enter.)

I'd like to introduce you to the ROTC students. They are trained to destroy.

(TAD, the commander, raises his hand.)

TAD

We just really like marching.

SHEREEN

They are heartless killing machines. Your blood will coat the courtyard if you resist them!

TAD

Not entirely accurate. Also, we don't have weapons. So, an FYI, there probably will not be rivers of blood or anything.

SHEREEN

You have two minutes to get out of here.

JASMINE

Run for it!

ANNA

Shut up Jasmine! The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots. And tyrants. Thomas Jefferson.

SPIVEY

Hey did you learn that in class?

ANNA

Yes. And I don't think it's on the STAAR test. We're not leaving! You'll have to kill us all first!

STUDENT

Um… wait –

LOLA

Don't worry about it, guys. There's no way they can kill us all. The bodies in front will form a protective barrier for the people in the back!

(STUDENTS in the front try to move to the back.)

Hold your ground!

ANNA

Link hands everyone!

JASMINE

I don't want Spivey to get the wrong idea.

ANNA

Link hands!

(The STUDENTS link hands.)

SHEREEN

ROTC! Atten-shun!

(They stand at attention.)

ANNA

WHAT DO WE WANT?

EVERYONE

NO MORE TESTING!

ANNA

WHEN DO WE WANT IT?

EVERYONE

SOMETIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE!

SHEREEN

CRUSH THE REBELS!

(They don't do anything.)

I said crush the rebels! This is when you crush the rebels!

TAD

I'm not comfortable with that kind of language. I don't feel like crushing.

ROTC 1

Can we like, *guide* them away?

TAD

Ooh I like guide. That's a good word.

ROTC 2

How about we escort them off?

TAD

Even better.

ANNA

WE WILL NOT BE ESCORTED OFF!
(the STUDENTS cheer and wave their flags.)

LOLA

YOU'LL HAVE TO KILL US FIRST!
(no one cheers)

STUDENT 2

Hey she doesn't speak for us, by the way.

ANNA

Lola, maybe you could tone down the "we're all gonna die" talk.

LOLA

Okay. YOU'LL HAVE TO BREAK OUR LEGS AND BURN US WITH TASERS AND SMASH OUR FACES IN FIRST!

ANNA

How about chant to yourself for a while?
WHAT DO WE WANT?!

EVERYONE

NO MORE TESTING!

ANNA

WHEN DO WE WANT IT?

EVERYONE

SOMETIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE!

ANNA

WHAT DO WE WANT?!

EVERYONE

NO MORE TESTING!

ANNA

WHEN DO WE WANT IT?!

EVERYONE

SOMETIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE!

JASMINE

So are we going to just keep repeating this then? I mean they already heard it.

BLAKE

It's a chant. That's what you do. You chant it!

JASMINE

It seems repetitive.

(MONDO THE ENFORCER and MR. TOMASINO enter)

MR. TOMASINO

What is the meaning of this?!

JASMINE

Do you need us to chant it again?

MR. TOMASINO

You should all be studying! Mondo!

MONDO THE ENFORCER

Ah man, this is like a video game I played once. Good thing I've got my Taser charged.

ANNA

Hold on! I'd like to exercise my right of free speech.

MR. TOMASINO

Fine. You can speak freely in one of our own specially designed free speech zones.

ANNA

Where are they?

MR. TOMASION

In the basement. In ISS. Mondo.

TAD

Wait a minute. I want to hear the pretty girl speak.

ANNA

Thank you, Tad. But I don't want to be judged on my looks here.

TAD

Then, like all men, I will not listen to you.

ANNA

All right fine, it's okay if you think I'm pretty.

TAD

Good.

ROTC 1

Can you do something different with your hair?

ROTC 2

Also, more makeup would be awesome.

ROTC 1

But not, like, a lot of makeup.

ROTC 2

You don't need a lot. Just some.

ROTC 1

Moderate amount of makeup.

ANNA

Fine. Everybody listen! I know what Mr. Tomasino is trying to do here. He thinks he's doing the right thing, doesn't he? He wants us to learn, right? He wants us to have an education

JASMINE

I'm totally lost.

ANNA

Oh sure, we could spend the next month of school slaving away over a test that means nothing, we could eliminate the arts, we could eliminate sports, we could eliminate the ROTC. I'm sure he has great reasons for that. I don't know what they are, but I bet he knows. And I bet he has a great reason for disbanding the ROTC and forcing them to work in mines. I mean, sure, some of them will die or come down with black lung, but they're willing to make that sacrifice for our school. They're heroes. And yes I'm sure the Principal thinks of them as expendable heroes and he won't really care if they all die, but that's part of the plan.

TAD

Um… wait a minute –

ANNA

So we could do all that, but you know what happens if we pass the STAAR Test?

JASMINE

No! I don't know that at all!

ANNA

WE GET ANOTHER TEST! And you know what, if we did well on the previous test, you know what we have to do?

JASMINE

Still no!

ANNA

WE HAVE TO DO BETTER ON THAT TEST! And then what do you think's gonna happen? We're gonna have to study longer, we're going to have to get rid of more stuff! Maybe we'll have to use the ROTC's blood or something, or cut up their heads and take out their sweet, sweet brains!

TAD

What?

ANNA

Well I say! No more tests!

EVERYONE

Yeah!

ANNA

I say, let's learn what we want to learn!

EVERYONE

YEAH!

ANNA

Rise up!

EVERYONE

RISE UP!

ANNA

RISE UP!

EVERYONE

RISE UP!

ANNA

YOU KNOW WHO THE REAL PRINCIPALS ARE?!

JASMINE

Those people over there?

ANNA

NO! WE'RE THE PRINCIPALS! WE'RE IN CHARGE NOW!

EVERYONE

WOOO!

MR. TOMASINO

Okay, I'm going to have interject here. Now is the time to crush the rebels. Let's crush them, please.

(The ROTC stands there.)

What are you waiting for?

TAD

You heard `em, guys. Get the rebels.

(The ROTC grabs the principals.)

You're not carving out my sweet, sweet brain!

MR. TOMASINO

We were only brainstorming that idea!

TAD

THE ROTC STANDS WITH THE STUDENTS!

EVERYONE

WOOO!

ANNA

TAKE THEM TO THE DUNGEONS!

(Pause.)

I mean ISS.

MR. TOMASINO

You'll regret this! Every revolution in history has led to disaster!

MONDO THE ENFORCER

Except for the United States.

MR. TOMASINO

Yeah, except for them.

MONDO THE ENFORCER

And some other ones.

MR. TOMASINO

Fine. But you'll rue this day, you hear me?! You'll rue this day!

(TAD and the ROTC squad escort them off.)

EVERYONE

Wooooo!

(EVERYONE cheers and waves their flags and signs.)

(EVERYONE quiets down.)

(Pause.)

ANNA

Um… so now what?

LOLA

I guess you're in charge.

(Lights down.)

(Transition music.
(Lights up. ANNA has made an office for herself. LOLA and BLAKE are near her.)
(BLAKE is taking notes as ANNA talks.)

ANNA

Day 2 of my reign. Peace reigns in the school.

(Happy music plays. Something like Pharrel's "Happy" or similar.)
(Groups of students gather in various spots.)

STUDENT 1

IT MIGHT SEEM CRAZY WHAT I'M BOUT TO SAY

STUDENT 2

SUNSHINE, SHE'S HERE, TAKE A BREAK

STUDENT 3

I'M A HOT AIR BALLON THAT COULD GO TO SPACE

STUDENT 4

WITH THE AIR, LIKE I DON'T CARE BABY BY THE WAY

(All the STUDENTS join in.)

STUDENTS

BECAUSE I'M HAPPY
CLAP ALONG IF YOU FEEL LIKE A ROOM WITHOUT A ROOF

BECAUSE I'M HAPPY
(BLAKE gets in the middle of them and shuts it down.)

BLAKE
Whoah! Whoah! Stop it! Stop! Stop!

JASMINE
BECAUSE I'M HAPPY

BLAKE
Stop! Stop! Guys. Didn't we learn anything from French literature? The only songs allowed are really sad or we're about do something crazy dramatic.

STUDENT 1
I'm pretty sure this is crazy dramatic.

BLAKE
Just chill out and go back to our utopia – without singing about it – okay?

JASMINE
Fine. I'm going to learn stuff about stuff on the internet then.

SPIVEY
I'm learning about video games.

STUDENT 1
I'm appreciating life. I never knew the sky was so blue before.

STUDENT 2
I'm so happy!
(He's about to sing, but then stops.)
In a non rhythmic way.

TAD
I'm going to be an artist now. I'm only painting kitties.

JASMINE
Oh my gosh there are so many videos about cats.

MR. HELGESON
If anyone wants to learn about post-revolutionary war France, I'm going to be giving an awesome lecture on it.
(no one)
Anyone?
So um… I can also talk about zombies.

Skipping Forward

ANNA

Look, the last principal was not very good –

CHANDLER

I speak for the State Board of Education.

ANNA

Awesome. Well, um… if I could give you some context –

CHANDLER

SILENCE! You are not the Principal here!

LOLA

Actually, she overthrew the last principal in a bloodless coup, so –

CHANDLER

SILENCE AGAIN! Foolish Mortal – you dare oppose the State Board of Education! Our armies are as numberless as the grains of sand! We will not waste one tear as your miserable corpses are thrown to our legions of dogs!

MOFFIT

For educational purposes.

BLAKE

Um. I actually don't know these people. In fact you could describe me as a prisoner.

ANNA

Empty threats don't frighten me, State Officials.

BARNEY

How about non-empty threats! We have three predator attack drones hovering overhead right now.

BLAKE

You have attack drones?

MOFFIT

For educational purposes.

BARNEY

Military surplus. They can't sell them to the police anymore, so they sell them to us.

ANNA

Look – I don't care if you have attack drones or –

BARNEY

Tanks. They're awesome.

ANNA

Or -

BARNEY

Nuclear weapons. Five of them.

MOFFIT

Four. We had that um… secret accident…

BARNEY

Oh yes… four.

ANNA

Listen to me: I'm principal because the students rose up. Our last principal was terrible – and we decided, as an angry mob, to install me to change things. So if you don't like me, you don't like the entire study body.

CHANDLER

You will be removed and a new principal will be installed. The tests scores will improve.

LOLA

You don't scare us! WE'RE CRAZY!

ANNA

Lola.

LOLA

WE'RE TOTALLY IRRATIONAL! NO ONE HERE FEARS DEATH!

ANNA

Lola, let me handle this.

MOFFIT

We care about education. The Federal Government cares about education. That's why they're spending so much of our former defense budget on schools.

CHANDLER

Fear is a great motivator. Which is why we are currently threatening you with hellfire and doom. Leave this place or we will reduce you to a smoking pile of ash.

ANNA

But there are innocent children here!

CHANDLER
We didn't say anything about them. We're talking about you. Personally.

BLAKE
Oh. So I'm in no danger then?

CHANDLER
Not yet.

BLAKE
Awesome.

ANNA
So you're just going to kill me?

CHANDLER
That was the plan, yes.

MOFFIT
There's no use running – we have the drones, remember?

BARNEY
You other people might want to stand back.

LOLA
No way! I'll die with her! Or if you are really precise, I'll be right next to her while she dies! WE ARE BFFS! Is nothing sacred to you people?

BLAKE
I'll stand back.
(LOLA grabs a hold of ANNA.)

LOLA
You'll have to kill me too!

CHANDLER
Hold on.
(They huddle for a brief second, then break.)
We're cool with that.

MOFFIT
Can I do the countdown?

BARNEY
You did the countdown for the last one we killed.

MOFFIT

But I'm good at it!

BARNEY

You think you're good at it.

CHANDLER

Silence! We'll all do the countdown. And three two –

BARNEY

Wait, is that the actual countdown or the countdown to the countdown?

CHANDLER

This will be the countdown to the countdown. Behold the ruthless efficiency of the State! Three Two One –

ALL THREE

Three Two –

ANNA

WAIT! You want to improve the test scores, right?

BARNEY

Don't listen to her, it's a trick!

CHANDLER

I'm listening.

ANNA

Well, okay – what if I told you that the best way to improve test scores was to create an environment of caring, independent learners?

MOFFIT

I'd say you were lying!

ANNA

And then what if I told you that having a Principal the students believe in will be so much better than having a cruel, terrible person that you appoint? What if – what if I stayed on as Principal, but our scores improved? What then?

BARNEY

Hold on. Let's huddle again. I love huddling.

(They huddle again.)

MOFFIT

I say we totally kill her. Like right now. Big surprise. She won't even see it coming.

(CHANDLER whispers something.)

CHANDLER

All right.

(They put their hands in like a sports team.)

Educate on three. One Two Three –

ALL THREE

EDUCATE.

CHANDLER

Very well. If you score the highest in the State, you will remain principal. If you do not, you will be incinerated from above.

BARNEY

Great motivation.

CHANDLER

For the other people. Your charred remains will serve as a reminder to them. Very well! We shall return in a fortnight! All right State Board of Education! To the Hovercraft!

ANNA

You have a hovercraft?

CHANDLER

Your tax dollars at work.

MOFFIT

You should see some of the stuff we have at HQ. It's sick. Like – we got robots and stuff. Awesome.

LOLA

How long is a fortnight?!

CHANDLER

You had best learn!

LOLA

Dang it.

ALL THREE

S.B.O.E AWAY!

(They exit.)

(BLAKE is checking his phone.)

BLAKE

A fortnight is fourteen days. According to Wikipedia.

LOLA

You weren't serious, right?

ANNA

About what?

LOLA

I thought we weren't going to take any more tests!

ANNA

That was before they threatened me with fiery death.

LOLA

But think of your principles!

ANNA

I'll be dead.

LOLA

And a martyr! Think about it: You're killed. Then, I give an inspirational speech. You might have killed our leader – her corpse might be sitting right over there barely recognizable, yes, it's horrible, yes, the flames have melted off most of her facial features. Yes she died in agony. More than any of us could possibly imagine. But she died believing in something. Our right not to take standardized tests. To learn for learning's sake. So let's all – um… this is the part where it gets a little hazy – Maybe we'll just go off and live in the forest.

ANNA

Lola –

LOLA

But you'll be a symbol! Whenever things get tough, we'll say, `Remember Anna. She died horribly so we could do this.' Or, let's say people are fighting. "Wait a minute! Did Anna die in a blast of fire so we could fight? No. She wouldn't want this."

ANNA

You're not really helping things.

LOLA

You're going to be so inspirational when they kill you.

ANNA

No. They're not going to kill me.

LOLA

So it's an elaborate trick then? We pretend to take the test, but really we all just put C for every answer?

ANNA

No. We just – take a little bit of time studying and the rest of the time we learn what we want to learn.

LOLA

Oh man.

BLAKE

Would you stop? She's doing what she needs to do!

LOLA

Give it a rest, Blake. Nobody likes you.

ANNA

Guys? Blake can you get everybody out for a school meeting?
(BLAKE takes out a conch shell.)
(He blows in it.)
Use the P.A.

BLAKE

Oh.
(He gets on the P.A.)
Attention happy students who are learning what they want to learn. Please report to the courtyard where our principal will explain to us how she's not selling out.

ANNA

A little less irony next time.

BLAKE *(into P.A.)*

Also, the site of our greatest triumph will now be the site of our greatest disappointment.
(Kids and teachers come out into the courtyard.)
Meet the new boss. Same as the old boss.

ANNA

Blake?

BLAKE *(into P.A.)*

This will not suck at all.

ANNA

Hey guys. As you may remember, I am your new leader.

STUDENT 1

I thought we had set up a socialist utopia!

STUDENT 2

Power comes from the consent of the masses!

ANNA

Yes, yes, and the decision of the angry mob was that I was going to be in charge. So – now… um… I have some great news! We're not getting a new principal!

BLAKE

Yay!

ANNA

If everyone could cheer that would be awesome. We're not getting a new principal!

(only BLAKE cheers.)

BLAKE

Yayyyy.

ANNA

I have found the keys to the vending machines. Free snacks for everyone!

EVERYONE

YAYYY!

ANNA

And also, you are the best students in the world!

EVERYONE

YAYYYY!

ANNA

You guys are really smart! And attractive! And super nice!

EVERYONE

YAYYYY!

ANNA

And you're going to do great on the STAAR test next month!

(Silence.)

That's all.

BLAKE

Back to work!

STUDENT 4

Um… wait a minute –

ANNA

All right I know the point of our utopia is not to take standardized tests anymore. But let's do this – we spend one hour each day, only one, that's it, one hour, studying for the test, and then the rest of the time you can spend learning interesting things. Just give me one hour a day! Doesn't that sound reasonable? I'm giving you free candy.

STUDENT 3

All right.

STUDENT 2

Can I keep writing my think pieces for the Huffington Post?

ANNA

Yes. Of course. We can keep doing all the wonderful things we were doing – just a little studying, that's all, that's all I'm asking for… Okay? Awesome. So let's start now!

(The students grumble and move off-stage.)

LOLA

This would have been so much cooler if you died.

(Lights change.)

(ANNA's office again. BLAKE is taking notes while ANNA talks.)
(Things are beginning to change. More flags. More aristocratic. ANNA wears a suit coat of some kind.)

ANNA

Day two. Our utopia remains at peace. Kids continue to learn what they want to learn.

STUDENT 1

I'm learning about cat videos!

STUDENT 2

I'm making my own cat videos! With real cats.

STUDENT 3

I'm starting a feminist blog.

STUDENT 4

I'm making rude comments on your feminist blog!

STUDENT 5

Who's up for a dance number?

MR. HELGESON

I'm going to continue the zombie lecture after a bit of time studying the American Revolution. It's on the test.

ANNA

The one hour of studying will easily prepare us for the STAAR test. Life is good. I have noticed a few challenges to my rule, though.

(LOLA enters.)

LOLA

Hey.

ANNA

Could you leave us for a moment?

STUDENT 6

Sure.

LOLA

So um –

ANNA

Lola, when I'm with someone, if you could call me Principal Ullman, that would be great.

LOLA

Oh.

ANNA

Just – you know, I'm trying to project an aura of authority and if you come in here, like, "what's up, b?" then it's kind of weird.

LOLA

I didn't say that. I said hey.

ANNA

Yeah, but it sounded like, "what's up, b?"

LOLA

Okay. Any-way, I've got the results of the sample test we did yesterday.

(She hands a piece of paper to ANNA.)

BLAKE

Can I see?

(ANNA hands it to BLAKE.)

Oh man you're dead.

ANNA

This isn't good.

(BLAKE makes a sound like a bomb dropping through the ceiling and landing on ANNA.)

BLAKE

Boom! Or maybe they could use a space laser. I bet they have a space laser. One minute you'll be sitting there, and the next minute it's going to be like – pfffft! Dead. I guess that will probably be painless, so that's a bonus. Unless they're off by a little bit or you move at the last second, then it would just burn off like half of your body. You'll be sitting there, like, oh man, we only scored 80 percent on the benchmark and then like – fffft! Half of your body is missing. You've got organs falling out. Like your intestines are dropping out of you like a rain of hot dogs. I hope I'm here to see that. It's going to be boss.

LOLA

No one says boss, loser.

BLAKE

I say boss. I'm bringing it back. Anna, you were an awesome principal. I meant that. I'm going to miss you a lot.

ANNA

This isn't the end of the world – we've got at least fifteen percent of kids passing – we can get up to ninety in –

LOLA

Less than a fortnight.

ANNA

Thirty days. Sure. We can do that.

(short pause)

How do we do that?

(enter CHIPPY, the TESTING SQUIRREL)

CHIPPY

Hi kids! I'm Chippy the Test-Taking Squirrel!

LOLA

If you're Chippy, shouldn't you be a chipmunk?

CHIPPY

SHUT UP! MY MOM NAMED ME THIS WAY! I'VE BEEN TEASED MY WHOLE LIFE!

(CHIPPY breaks down in sobs.)

THIS ALWAYS HAPPENS TO ME!

ANNA

Um… so… how do you help kids improve their test scores?

Skipping Forward

BRENT

Now as my main homegirl here hands out some crunk brochures, I will start getting jiggy wit it.

(MELISSA hands out crunk brochures and presses play on a boombox.)
(intro music to the tune of "Master of the House")

WELCOME MY FRIENDS
SIT YOURSELVES DOWN
AND MEET THE BEST TEST-MAKERS AROUND

AS FOR THE REST
ALL OF THEM POOR
SUCKING UP MONEY
AND ASKING FOR MORE

RARELY DO YOU SEE
A BRAVE COMPANY
SOPHISTICATED INNOVATIVE
AND CONTENT TO BE

MASTER OF THE TEST
DESIGNING THE EXAM
IF YOU THINK I'M WICKED
WELL YOU'RE RIGHT I AM

HELP YOU RAISE THE BAR
LIFTING UP YOUR MATH
YOUR READING COMPREHENSION WILL GET NICE AND FAT

GOT SOME PROBLEM POPULATIONS
WE'LL BE RAISING UP THEIR SCORES
BUT NOTHING GETS YOU NOTHING
ONLY YOU WILL PAY A LITTLE MORE

MASTER OF THE TEST
NOT A ONE TO GLOAT
RAKING IN THE MONEY
FOR THE TEST WE WROTE

IT'S A GROWING FIELD
QUITE A LOT OF ROOM
SOON THERE'LL BE EXAMINATIONS IN THE WOMB

GOT TO KEEP PACE WITH CHINA
AND THE KIDS IN SINGAPORE
BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY
MAYBE WE SHOULD TEST A LITTLE MORE

(everyone joins in.)

EVERYONE

MASTER OF THE TEST
WRITING THE EXAM
IF YOU THINK IT'S WICKED
WELL IT'S ALL OUR PLAN

GONNA TEST FOR THIS
TAKES A LITTLE TIME
BUT BABY NOT TO WORRY YOU CAN TEST ONLINE

POLITCIANS LOVE THE TESTING
THEY THINK IT'S AWFULLY NICE

BRENT

IT WINS THEM ALL ELECTIONS
BUT DON'T WE ALL JUST PAY A LITTLE PRICE?

ANNA

Wait. You wrote the test, and now you're offering help passing the test you wrote?

BRENT

Holla!

MELISSA

For a small fee.

LOLA

This is most of our budget.

BRENT

No worries, yo. We can put you on a payment plan. You just take all the money the state gives you for educating your students and funnel it directly to us, and then we'll "help" you pass the test that the state pays us for writing.

ANNA

No thank you.

MELISSA

Of course, if you score low enough the state just might sell your school off to a private corporation to run. Guess who has a side business?

BRENT

What-what!

ANNA

No thanks, guys.

BRENT

Are you sure? Because we can make life a lot easier for you if you just

BRENT and MELISSA

GIVE US ALL YOUR MONEY.

(They laugh again)

MELISSA

Whoah! We spoke at the same time. That was creepy.

LOLA

Get out of here.

(BRENT suddenly drops his happy personality.)

BRENT

Very well. Homegirl, collect the crunk brochures.

BLAKE

Actually, I was –

BRENT

COLLECT THE CRUNK BROCHURES!

(MELISSA collects the crunk brochures.)

Peace out.

(MELISSA and BRENT leave.)

BLAKE

I think we should've gone with them.

LOLA

Oh come on!

BLAKE

You're not helping, Lola! Chippy the stupid Squirrel isn't going to help!

(CHIPPY THE TESTING SQUIRREL enters)

CHIPPY

I was listening outside, okay? I was trying to gather my courage to come back in here. AND NOW I SEE WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT ME!

(CHIPPY breaks down again.)

DON'T EVEN TALK TO ME! I'M A FAILURE!

(CHIPPY storms off.)

ANNA

We're not going to sing a song or get chipmunks or whatever –

CHIPPY *(off-stage)*

SQUIRRELS!

(More crying from off-stage)

ANNA

There's only one way to get better at the test. Increase the amount of time studying.

LOLA

No!

ANNA

Lola, there's no other way –

LOLA

Let's ignore the test!

ANNA

They'll kill me from space!

LOLA

Oh come on, they won't do that!

ANNA

They're the Department of Education! They have no morals, they're a force of unlimited power! They will kill me from space!

BLAKE

You want me to make the announcement?

ANNA

Sure. How about four hours per day?

LOLA

Four hours?!

ANNA

Lola, you're either with me, or you're against me.

LOLA

Four hours is insane. That's worse than the last Principal! They'll be another demonstration in the courtyard! They'll kick you out!

ANNA

Yeah, you're right. Don't make an announcement about it. Secretly increase the time. And get the ROTC involved in keeping down the troublemakers. I'm not going to make the same mistake the last principal made.

LOLA

What! The mistake Mr. Tomasino made was making testing a priority!

ANNA

No it wasn't. It was letting us kick him out of power.

LOLA

I can't be a part of this.

ANNA

Lola. You're my BFF -

LOLA

Don't you think I know that?! Don't you think I know we're BFFS?

ANNA

I need you with me.

LOLA

I don't like this.

ANNA

Please help me. After the test is done we'll go back to the utopia.

LOLA

Fine.

(Lights down.)

(MR. HELGESON's classroom. He's teaching.)

MR. HELGESON

And that's why zombies are not actually real.

SPIVEY

Okay – so I have a question: Let's say my shotgun runs out of shells, do I go immediately to the baseball bat, or do I try for a flamethrower?

MR. HELGESON

Again, and this is the ninth time that I've said this, zombies are not real.

SPIVEY

Not real *now*, but when they become real – should I own a flamethrower?

MR. HELGESON

I really don't want to see you with a flamethrower.

SPIVEY

That's what the zombies want.

(LOLA enters.)

MR. HELGESON

Oop, sorry. Our overlords are here. Let's go back to studying for the STAAR test. Everyone open your test materials –

LOLA

Wait, um… can I talk to you for a second?

JASMINE

Is that rhetorical?

LOLA

No.

MR. HELGESON

What do you want?

LOLA

I'm worried about Anna. Oh um… does anyone have a piece of posterboard?

(JASMINE puts up a piece of posterboard.)

JASMINE

THIS ISN'T SUSPICIOUS AT ALL.

LOLA

She's like mutating into the last principal. How do we… change her back?

SPIVEY

I say we rise up and destroy her.

LOLA

No, just…

MR. HELGESON

All right. Here's what we do…

(He gets LOLA close)

Skipping Forward

LOLA

Ew. All right. So what's the plan?

JASMINE

THERE IS NO PLAN. SAID POOH BEAR.

(Lights change.)

(The office.)

ANNA

Day Eighteen. The student body is growing restless. I want to lead them, but will they follow?

BLAKE

So I've been reading this book called *The Prince*, by this dude named Machiavelli.

ANNA

Yeah, I'm familiar with it. What's it say?

BLAKE

I don't know it's like, really hard to understand.

ANNA

Then why are you reading it?

BLAKE

Fun.

ANNA

How is it fun?

BLAKE

It's not fun. It's so not fun. But – the part I did understand is that, it's better to be feared than loved.

ANNA

Okay.

BLAKE

So I say we put on a Haunted House. Terrifying.

ANNA

I don't think that's what it means.

BLAKE

I don't know. It's so hard. The sentences are really long.

ANNA

Thanks for the advice Blake, but there's only person I can talk to. One person who has the answers.

BLAKE

The Big Guy upstairs.

ANNA

No. I don't think prayer is going to help us.

BLAKE

I was referring to Big Jim the Janitor. He's huge. And he's really smart.

ANNA

No. The guy I need… is downstairs.

(Lights change.)

(Darkness.)
(ISS.)
(MR. TOMASINO, now sporting a long white beard, is chained to a wall.)

ANNA

There you are.

MR. TOMASINO

What do you want with me?

ANNA

Just a little chat. Mind if I sit?

MR. TOMASINO

I can't stop you, I'm chained to the wall.

ANNA

Yes. ISS is working a lot better these days. Nice beard, by the way.

MR. TOMASINO

You monster.

ANNA

I'm not a monster, but I do have a problem.

MR. TOMASINO

I'm not going to help you.

ANNA

I need to get the students to follow me.

MR. TOMASINO
I thought you were building a classless utopia.

ANNA
Yeah we did that. And now we're doing something else. And I need them doing what I tell them. Studying.
(MR. TOMASINO laughs.)

MR. TOMASINO
You're doomed.

ANNA
That's not an answer I'd like to hear.
(She takes out a portable chalkboard.)
I found this in your former office.

MR. TOMASINO
From when I was a student. We used to have them.

ANNA
Of course. And it's nice. But what would you say if I… ran my nails down it?

MR. TOMASINO
I'll talk! I'll talk!

ANNA
Good. How do I lead them? How do I lead them to better test scores?

MR. TOMASINO
I know a guy… they call him the fixer… he dresses up in a Squirrel costume – really entertains the kids –
(ANNA runs her nails down the chalkboard.)
Aaaaaah!

ANNA
I'm not in the mood for games.

MR. TOMASINO
You really want to know?

ANNA
Tell me.

MR. TOMASINO
Negative motivation. Punish the stragglers. Kill the leaders.

ANNA

Metaphorically?

MR. TOMASINO

Sure. I hope you enjoy being Principal and getting blamed for things that aren't your fault. Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

ANNA

Shakespeare.

MR. TOMASINO

You would've gotten such good test scores.

ANNA

They don't do applied knowledge on the test.

MR. TOMASINO

You still would've done well. You're one of the smart ones.

ANNA

Smarter than you.

MR. TOMASINO

Perhaps. But you'll never get those scores high enough. Not with the students at this school.

ANNA

Thanks. You've been very… helpful.

MR. TOMASINO

Let me out of here!

ANNA

Oh no. Your in-school suspension is going to last for a long, long time. But you've given me an idea. Perhaps you'd like some company, though?

MR. TOMASINO

If there's a way I could get Netflix down here that would help.

ANNA

No Netflix for you.

MR. TOMASINO

I'm really behind on my shows.

ANNA

Bring him in.

(TAD and ROTC 1 drag in MR. HELGESON)

MR. HELGESON

There's got to be some kind of mistake.

ANNA

Hello, Mr. Helgeson.

MR. HELGESON

I was teaching about zombies. And then I was talking about the test. We were really making improvements.

ANNA

Oh sure. You're a fantastic teacher. One of the best. Chain him up.

(They begin chaining him up.)

MR. HELGESON

What?

ANNA

I've instituted performance-based bonuses for teachers.

MR. HELGESON

I don't understand! You just said –

ANNA

Oh sure, you're terrific. It's just that your scores are a little low.

MR. HELGESON

I've got Jasmine in that class! She brings the average down.

ANNA

I'm sorry – I can only judge your performance based on an arbitrary test riddled with mistakes. Nothing personal. Besides, if some teachers are rewarded for positive performance, then others… have to be punished. It's great motivation. You can learn to think outside the box while you're chained up here in a box.

MR. HELGESON

This isn't fair!

ANNA

Sorry. Let's go, guys.

MR. HELGESON

I demand a fair trial!

ANNA

We haven't set up an independent judiciary yet. Marbury vs. Madison wasn't until 15 years after the Constitution was written, after all. I learned that from you. In AP Government. You know what else I learned? To maintain power requires a certain ruthlessness.

MR. HELGESON

You won't get away with this.

ANNA

Oh I will. As long as the test scores come up.

MR. HELGESON

They won't.

ANNA

I believe you're wrong about that. Blake?

(BLAKE enters)

BLAKE

Man it's dark and scary down here.

MR. TOMASINO

Hi Blake.

BLAKE

What's up?

MR. TOMASINO

Just hanging out.

ANNA

Blake. It's time to begin plan B.

MR. HELGESON

What's plan B?

ANNA

Cheating. Ah ha ha ha ha!

BLAKE

Ha ha ha ha ha ha!

ANNA

On one more thing – you know why you're really here, don't you? I don't want you helping anyone else plan any more… revolutions.

BLAKE

Ooh can we do the evil laugh again?

ANNA

Absolutely.

EVERYONE

Aha ha ha ha ha ha ha!

(Lights fade.)

(Musical flourish.)

(End of act one.)

Part Two

Les Examables

(There have been changes. Huge blue flags and banners hang from Anna's office.)

(The classroom. MONDO THE ENFORCER is now the teacher.
(Big powerful foreboding music. Song to the tune of Prologue: A Work from Les Miserables.)

(The students, including JASMINE, SPIVEY, and LOLA are in class in their desks.)

**Possible musical number if you'd like. (This may easily be cut)*

STUDENTS

AH AH
AH AH
AH AH AH AH AH AH

AH AH
AH AH
AH AH AH AH AH AH

LOOK DOWN
LOOK DOWN
LET'S FOCUS ON THE TEST

LOOK DOWN
LOOK DOWN
WE WILL NEVER REST

(MONDO reads from a test booklet.)

MONDO THE ENFORCER

Of the following choices, which best describes the main purpose of a thesis statement? A. Glaciers are shrinking. B. Penguins are not fun and should be avoided. C. Global Warming does not exist. Or D: The Polar Bear Club consists of hairy, overweight men.

JASMINE

Can you repeat the choices?

MONDO THE ENFORCER

NO I CANNOT REPEAT THE CHOICES! You have two seconds to record your answer by pressing a key on your keypad. Remember, a wrong answer will deliver a small electric shock to you.

SPIVEY

I'm feeling a lot of stress!

MONDO THE ENFORCER

Good! ANSWER THE QUESTION!

(The STUDENTS press a button.)

The answer was D.

(BUZZ!)

(JASMINE gets shocked.)

JASMINE

Aaaaaaah!

MONDO THE ENFORCER

Question 2: Which statement is the most accurate? A. The Author believes hairy fat men should not swim in cold water. B. The Author believes back hair assists in helping men float. C. The Author believes A and B. D. The Author believes neither A nor B. ANSWER NOW!

(The STUDENTS press a button.)

The Answer was C.

(BUZZ!

(JASMINE gets shocked again.)

JASMINE

AAAAAAAAH! Dang it. I tune out when back hair is mentioned!

LOLA

Don't shock her, she can't help it if she's stupid!

MONDO THE ENFORCER

The electric shocks will cure her of stupidity.

SPIVEY

No they won't!

MONDO THE ENFORCER

Question Three! Of the following choices, which best describes a possible outcome from this essay? A. Polar Bear swimming clubs will be arrested and sentenced to work in mines. B. Polar Bear swimming clubs will become less popular because of global warming and also because people will come to their senses. C. Real Polar Bears will eat the men. Or D. Women will join Polar Bear Clubs to get a look at these sensational man-beasts. ANSWER NOW!

(The STUDENTS press a button.)

The Answer was D.

(BUZZ!)
(All the STUDENTS except JASMINE are shocked.)

EVERYONE

AAAAAAAHHHHH!

JASMINE

I got it right! I got it right! Woo! I'm the smartest one here!

SPIVEY

The answer was D. Women are trying to get a look at sensational man-beasts.

STUDENT 1

It should have been B.

STUDENT 2

That's what I got!

LOLA

It should have been B!

MONDO THE ENFORCER

The answer key says D.

LOLA

What! That makes no sense.

MONDO THE ENFORCER

That is the answer given.

LOLA

But the answer is wrong!

MONDO THE ENFORCER

That's not my problem.

LOLA

How are we supposed to get them right if the test is wrong?!

MONDO THE ENFORER

Your job is not to figure out if it's right or wrong! Your job is to give the correct answer! It's called education! Now get back to work Student 24601.

LOLA

I am not a number! I have a name! Lola.

MONDO
I will refer to you by your student ID: 24601.

LOLA
We need to stop! These students need water. And food.

SPIVEY
And twizzlers.

LOLA
And twizzlers.

MONDO THE ENFORCER
There will be no twizzlers for you! Back to the test!
(Music continues)

STUDENTS
LOOK DOWN
LOOK DOWN
JUST FILL IN ALL THE BLANKS

LOOK DOWN
LOOK DOWN
WE'LL TAKE NO BATHROOM BREAKS
(Lights change to the office.)

BLAKE
Do you really think it's a good idea to put Mondo in charge of a class?

ANNA
He'll get results. If there's anything that inspires learning, it's the fear of terrible repercussions.

BLAKE
Wow.

ANNA
How's the report?

BLAKE
It's not good.

ANNA
Let me see the new numbers.
(BLAKE hands her a piece of paper.)
I see.

BLAKE
I've highlighted the teachers who aren't performing well.

ANNA
Yes, of course. Tad –
(TAD darts in.)

TAD
Yes, Principal.

ANNA
Let's bring in our guests. One at a time please.

TAD
Of course.
(TAD snaps to.)

ANNA
Oh and Tad?

TAD
Yes?

ANNA
Don't be gentle with them.

BLAKE
So um… I've given some thought to the cheating option, and I've brainstormed a few suggestions.
(He hands ANNA another piece of paper.)

ANNA
Some of these are good.

BLAKE
I really like brainstorming.

ANNA
You'll be vice principal for this.

BLAKE
Thank you so much!
(The ROTC soldiers bring in MS. HAYNES, who's terrified.)

MS. HAYNES
What's going on? Why was I pulled out of class?

ANNA

Miss Haynes. Nice to meet you.

MS. HAYNES

This is my first time in the Principal's office. I'm a first-year teacher so I'm scared most of the time. But I'm trying really hard! It's just, sometimes the kids – they take advantage of me.

ANNA

Oh sure.

MS. HAYNES

I didn't mean to let them use the photocopier! I'm so sorry! They just distracted me and -

ANNA

This is just an exploratory meeting. No pressure or anything.

MS. HAYNES

Oh thank goodness! I get a little nervous. Not a lot nervous because I didn't do anything wrong, but the kids trick me, and then they're photocopying their buttocks! I said, this is not a good use of school property! And you know what they did? They laughed! And they photocopied their buttocks again!

(BLAKE hands ANNA some photocopied pages.)

BLAKE

Here.

ANNA

Why do you have this?

BLAKE

I thought you might like to see them.

(ANNA looks at them.)

ANNA

Oh this one's nice.

BLAKE

Yeah.

(ANNA puts them away.)

ANNA

I didn't bring you in here to talk about the photocopier.

MS. HAYNES

Oh thank goodness!

(ANNA begins walking and circling.)

ANNA
Can I ask you a question? Are we in Disneyland?

MS. HAYNES
What?

ANNA
Are we in Disneyland?

MS. HAYNES
Um… no.

ANNA
So dreams really don't come true, do they?

MS. HAYNES
What?

ANNA
I have a dream. It's called your kids passing the test. You know why that's a dream?

MS. HAYNES
…I don't know.

ANNA
BECAUSE IT'S NOT REALITY! TWENTY-SIX PERCENT PASSING! TWENTY SIX?! You think we're idiots?! You think we want to die?! You think this is how a high school should be run?!

MS. HAYNES
I want my lawyer!

ANNA
SCUM LIKE YOU DOESN'T GET A LAWYER! Take her to the dungeons.

MS. HAYNES
What?

ANNA
Maybe your problem with teaching is that you can't hear very well. You're being sentenced to ISS.

MS. HAYNES
No! Please! I'll do better! I have children at home!

ANNA

You should have thought of that before twenty-six percent of your kids passed!

MS. HAYNES

Please! I'll stay after school! I'll make Power Point presentations! I'll update my website! Anything! I'll enforce discipline, I promise!

ANNA

You make me sick.

MS. HAYNES

Noooooo!

(Pause.)

ANNA

This is when you take her away.

ROTC 1

Oh. Sorry. I was waiting for the right moment.

ANNA

Now. Now is the right moment.

ROTC 1

Gotcha.

ANNA

Just remember: Ms. Haynes: Your only purpose in life might be to serve as a warning to others. I'm going to make an example of you to keep the other teachers in line.

(ROTC 1 takes MS. HAYNES away.)

Bring in the next teacher.

(ROTC 2 brings in MR. WILLIAMS, a really positive upbeat teacher.)

MR. WILLIAMS

Hi there! Oh – quick question: Why was Ms. Haynes screaming and crying and being led away in chains?

ANNA

Motivation.

MR. WILLIAMS

Oh man I am motivated! Yes I am! Love coming to work every day!

ANNA

I'm happy to hear that.

(She starts the walking and circling thing again)
Do you think we're in Disneyland here?

MR. WILLIAMS

Uh… yeah. Sure.

ANNA

We're in Disneyland?

MR. WILLIAMS

Well, kinda. I mean – I just loving to come work every day. It's so awesome to be able to help kids learn and see them just –

ANNA

How many of your kids are passing the test?

MR. WILLIAMS

Well, I don't teach to the test. So, you know –

ANNA

SHUT UP! TWENTY-THREE PERCENT!

MR. WILLIAMS

Oh, well – you know – some of my kids don't speak English and they just smile at me –

ANNA

Take him away!

MR. WILLIAMS

Do I get to go back to class now?

ANNA

Oh no. We've instituted a teacher evaluation system, you see. Teachers who don't perform will be removed. For the children.

MR. WILLIAMS

Removed to where?

ANNA

Well, I have a nice place for you in the dungeon set up.

MR. WILLIAMS

That's cool. I don't need sunlight. I'm just happy to be here every day.

ANNA

But now I think a better spot for you will be… The Cafeteria! Ha ha ha ha!

Skipping Forward

JASMINE

Okay thanks.

LOLA

No. You don't understand. Anna has become a tyrant. She's drunk with power.

SPIVEY

She's drunk?

LOLA

With power! You should see what she's doing now!

(Lights switch to ANNA in her office.)

ANNA

I want Chipotle every day for lunch!

BLAKE

You can't do it!

ANNA

Don't tell me what I can't do! I'm the Principal of the Universe!

ROTC 1

Where should we put the giant statue of you?

(Lights switch back to the dungeon.)

LOLA

See?

SPIVEY

I love Chipotle.

LOLA

Shut up. So how do we do it? How do we overthrow the tyrant?

MR. HELGESON

All right. Can you become a pawn of a foreign government?

LOLA

I don't think so.

MR. HELGESON

Can you assassinate her?

SPIVEY

Ooh.

LOLA

Can we do it, maybe, without killing her?

MR. HELGESON

Doubtful.

MR. TOMASINO

I know a way.

LOLA

Mr. Tomasino?

MR. TOMASINO

I *was* Mr. Tomasino. Now I'm known as the Mole.

SPIVEY

Really?

MR. TOMASINO

I think of nicknames to amuse myself. Sometimes I call myself Foggles. Just a funny word. Foggles. But the Principal of a school has a single weakness. Strike her there, and you will topple the regime.

(They move over to MR. TOMASINO)

MR. HELGESON

What the heck? I had some good advice!

JASMINE

We'll come back.

MR. TOMASINO

The Principal has a weak point on the underside of her stomach – a scale has fallen off – a single arrow in just that spot might fell her.

SPIVEY *(taking notes)*

Got it. Do we have any archers?

MR. HELGESON

What? A weak scale?! You're talking about the Hobbit!

MR. TOMASINO

You don't know! You don't anything about principals! All principals have scales!

MR. HELGESON

No they don't!

MR. TOMASINO

She is weak on her belly!

MR. HELGESON

Guys. Listen to me: He's gone insane.

MR. TOMASINO

You've gone insane.

(MS. HAYNES enters, chained to a wall, with a fake beard.)

MS. HAYNES

If you want to know how to overthrow the Principal, you need to talk to me.

MR. HELEGSON

Oh now everybody's doing it! The way to power is through a concerted revolution rising from the masses –

MR. TOMASINO

That'll never work! You need to strike her weak spot!

MS. HAYNES

She's allergic to nuts. Throw nuts at her! Like all kinds of them.

MR. HELGESON

You've been here twenty minutes! How can you be insane already!

MS. HAYNES

I'm an art teacher! I was already on the brink of insanity! If the nuts thing doesn't work – make her look at her reflection in the mirror. That will stop her.

SPIVEY

There are so many good ideas here!

LOLA

All right, this isn't working.

MR. HELGESON

Hey, can you free me at least?

LOLA

We didn't bring keys. But um… keep up your spirits.

JASMINE

I'll pray for you.

SPIVEY

I won't.

MR. TOMASINO

Remember one thing:
(pause)

LOLA

What?

MR. TOMASINO

Not sure. But I will tell you later.
(the kids leave.)

MS. HAYNES

I spy with my little eye… something dying.

MR. TOMASINO

Ooh!
(Lights up on the office.)

ANNA

I want motivational posters on every wall, you hear me?!

BLAKE

We're running out of tape!

ANNA

I DON'T CARE! Every wall! And the ceiling and the floors! There's no time to argue! Studies show that the color green helps learning, I want all the children painted green!

BLAKE

Green?

ANNA

Did I stutter?! And what happened to that squirrel?

BLAKE

Anna –

ANNA

Call me Principal Ullman, dang it!

BLAKE

Principal Ullman, I think the pressure is getting to you.

ANNA
Pressure. Helps. Me. Just like it helps everyone here.

BLAKE
But maybe you should take a break. Have a smoothie. Let someone else run things for a while.

ANNA
Like you?

BLAKE
What?

ANNA
Are you on planning on betraying me, Blake?

BLAKE
Not at all!
(LOLA enters.)

LOLA
Hi Anna. How are you doing?

ANNA
Fine. I'm just trying to figure out who the traitor is.

LOLA
Oh. Um… I'm gonna be outside then.
(She leaves.)

BLAKE
Have you noticed Lola hasn't been around much lately?

ANNA
Don't change the subject.

BLAKE
Can I show you what I have planned?

ANNA
Will it help us pass the test?

BLAKE
Yes!

ANNA

Fine.

BLAKE

Okay, so what's the biggest problem in education? The kids. You can't change them. You can't teach them stuff. You just have to accept that these people who walk through the door are holding your fate in their hands! It's totally not fair. Like, is it our fault that the kids are stupid? What if their parents are stupid? How are we responsible for stupid parents? So – I took a little page from our elected officials, you know, the people who are forcing this stuff down our throats – so, instead of the kids selecting the school, how about the school selects the kids? So…

(He takes out a map)

I've done the honor of gerrymandering the district boundaries – now, the rule is that the district has to be contiguous, so…

ANNA

Our boundary goes into the air?

BLAKE

I'm thinking in three dimensions while the other districts are thinking in two. Once we go into the air, our district can go anywhere – we set down here, and here, and here –

ANNA

What's this here?

BLAKE

That's a wormhole that goes to Sweden.

ANNA

You drew a wormhole in our district boundary?

BLAKE

It's contiguous. Theoretically. Non-Euclidean Geometry is a trip, I can tell you that much. So – meet our new students! Yann!

(YANN enters.)

Yann comes to us from Stockholm, where they don't take standardized tests, so the kids spend a lot more time being educated! He is a genius and also smells like Lingonberries.

YANN

Ya. Hello.

BLAKE

Next up, meet Caroline – Caroline is a product of the private school system, so she hasn't been forced to spend countless hours studying for pointless standardized tests either! She's a two-year letterwoman in field hockey, enjoys the humor of Louis C.K. and builds her own race cars!

CAROLINE

Where am I? I was just walking down the street and someone grabbed me –

BLAKE

And lastly, here's Brian. He's Asian.*

*(*Only use this joke if you have an actual Asian Actor. Otherwise, you can use the alternate lines below. Also, if this joke is too scandalous, you can use the safer joke too.)*

BRIAN

Let's do this.

BLAKE *(alternate line)*

And lastly, here's Brian. He's got hyperactive upper middle class helicopter parents. He's been getting extra tutors and twenty-five extra-curricular activities since the age of four.

BRIAN

Let's do this.

ANNA

Wow.

CAROLINE

Can I go home now?

BLAKE

Not yet. Now I want all of you to start stretching your hands – you're going to be filling in a lot of blanks!

(Lights down.)

(Music.)

(The Classroom. The Students are studying.)

STUDENTS

LOOK DOWN
AND SEE
THE SINGING ON THE STREETS

LOOK DOWN
LOOK DOWN

LOLA

Stop. The teachers aren't here. Tomorrow, my friends, is the day of the test. You know what that means?

STUDENT

Get a lot of sleep tonight?

LOLA

No. It's time. To make our stand.

STUDENT 2

But what if they force us?

LOLA

With what power? We. The People. We have the power.

STUDENT 3

Actually, the ROTC has the power. They have those rifles.

LOLA

The rifles aren't loaded. Probably. And if they shoot us then we can't answer questions on the test.

SPIVEY

Unless they shoot our legs. Then we could still answer questions. Just – you know, fight through the pain.

LOLA

You're not helping.

STUDENT 2

We're scared.

LOLA

Of course you're scared. We're all scared. How do you think George Washington's soldiers felt at Valley Forge?

JASMINE

I don't know I didn't take a test on it!

LOLA

How do you think the men and women in Paris felt before their Revolution?

STUDENT

There was a Revolution in France?

SPIVEY

Oh sure yeah. And then the people who took over started murdering people left and right and then they crowned Napoleon as Emperor and he fought like a hundred wars all over Europe, and hundreds of thousands of people died.

LOLA

Perhaps the French Revolution is not a good example.

STUDENT

Wait a minute! Did this happen in Europe?

LOLA

Yes. France is in Europe.

STUDENT 1

No wonder we don't know anything about it. This is America. European History is totally unimportant to us!

LOLA

Guys. We're missing the point. The point isn't to learn stuff here, it's to fight tyranny.

STUDENT 2

So, wait, were there socio-political reasons for the French Revolution too?

LOLA

Quite a number of them, but –

STUDENT 1

Why didn't anybody tell us this stuff!

LOLA

Look, we can learn all about the French Revolution after our revolution. And we won't even have to take a test! Don't you understand?

STUDENT 1

All right.

STUDENT 2

Hey can we make some flags for tomorrow?

STUDENT 4

Ooh! Craft time!

LOLA

Yes. Soon there will be craft time for all of us. And I want somebody writing a song! And banners! If we had a great slogan with three words that would be awesome too!

(She hands out markers and crafts as the Students begin working on their projects. They continue to work as the lights come up on ANNA in her office.)

ANNA

I want the P.A. system checked and doubled-checked! No surprises tomorrow!

BLAKE

Yes, Principal.

ANNA

Alert the ROTC!

BLAKE

Of course.

ANNA

I want all the troublemakers in ISS, you hear me!

BLAKE

Yes, Principal.

ANNA

They're plotting something, I can feel it.

BLAKE

We'll stop them. Don't worry. I've got one more ace up my sleeve. Come along.

ANNA

Where are we going?

BLAKE

You'll see. But this might be a good time to practice your evil laugh.
(They exit.)

LOLA

I want those banners finished! Get those markers working! Color, dang you! Color like you've never colored before!

JASMINE

This feels like work.

LOLA

Revolution is work.

SPIVEY

HAND CRAMP! HAND CRAMP! AAAAAH!
(SPIVEY falls out of his chair.)

LOLA

Help him!

SPIVEY

It's no use! Leave me behind! I'm a goner!

Skipping Forward

LUNCH LADY MARGARET

Ooh. Pretty pretty.

BLAKE

Don't touch it!

ANNA

What is that?

BLAKE

It's experimental high dosage Ritalin. I want you to grind it up and put it in the pancake batter for tomorrow's breakfast.

ANNA

Whoah. Can I talk to you for a second?

BLAKE

Here you go.

LUNCH LADY MARY

Can we take some for fun?

(BLAKE pulls ANNA aside.)

ANNA

What are the side effects of those pills?

BLAKE

I don't know. They haven't gone through commercial studies yet.

ANNA

Don't you think this is going a bit overboard?

BLAKE

Those Swedish kids can't take all the tests. Some of our kids are going to have to take the exam. This will focus them like laser beams.

ANNA

But what else will it do?

BLAKE

I don't know. Constipation. Night Terrors. Hallucinations. Normal stuff.

ANNA

I don't know –

BLAKE

But that will happen after the test!

ANNA

Blake. I'm not comfortable with drugging the entire student body.

BLAKE

Why not?

LUNCH LADY MARGARET

`Aving second thoughts, luv?

LUNCH LADY BARB

Cold feet, is it?

BLAKE

Listen to me: There comes a time in your life when you have to make a decision. Do you go half-way, or do you go all the way? Those predator drones circling overhead don't care if you made ethical choices, they care about results. Look, you've got ten teachers chained up in the dungeon, you've got spies everywhere – are you going to be a real villain, or are you just going to be an unpleasant person?

ANNA

I never thought of myself as a villain before. I thought I was the hero.

BLAKE

You were the hero. In act one. But now you're the villain. Embrace it. Lean in. Love it.

ANNA

When did it change?

BLAKE

Hey. Hey. Look at me. Remember when we had an evil laugh together?

ANNA

Yes.

BLAKE

It was already over then. There are two roads in front of you. One road says you don't drug the entire student body with experimental Ritalin, and the other road… the other road is immortality.
(ANNA decides.)

ANNA

All right lunch ladies. Let's grind up those pills. And double the dosage!
(The LUNCH LADIES cheer)

LUNCH LADIES

LUNCHING LAIDES
GRINDING UP THE MEDS
PUT `EM IN THEIR FACES AND DO WONDERS FOR THEIR HEADS

LUNCHING LADIES
DRUGGING ALL THE KIDS
GIVE `EM ALL SOME RITALIN AND WATCH `EM FLIP THEIR LIDS

EVEN THOUGH THE LAWYERS SAY IT CLEARLY IS FORBID

BLAKE

I love you.
(short pause)
As a henchman loves a super-villain.

ANNA

Good.
(They hug.)

BLAKE

This is special. What we have. I'm going to miss you if the scores don't come up high enough and you're incinerated from above.

ANNA

And I'm going to miss you if I have to push you in the way of the laser bombs.
(They exit.)

(Lights rise on the last day.)
(To the tune of "One Day More")

LOLA

ONE DAY MORE
PERHAPS I'LL LEAD THEM HERE TO VICTORY
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN A FREAKING VALKYRIE
THE PRINCIPAL IS COMING NOW
BUT WE WILL WIN I SWEAR SOMEHOW
ONE DAY MORE

ANNA

WE CANNOT GO BACK TO OUR HOMES
SO LET'S GET THE CHEATING STARTED

LOLA

ONE DAY MORE.

ANNA AND BLAKE
THEN WE'LL ESCAPE THE FLYING DRONES
AND WE'LL ACHIEVE THE SCORES UNCHARTED

JASMINE
ONE MORE DAY I DON'T FEEL SMART

ANNA AND BLAKE
WILL WE EVEN PASS THE TEST?

JASMINE
ONE MORE DAY WITH ME NOT KNOWING

ANNA AND BLAKE
HOPE THE DRUGS WILL FIX THEIR BRAINS

JASMINE
I THINK THAT FRANCE MIGHT BE IN EUROPE

ANNA AND BLAKE
AND IF NOT LOOK OUT FOR PLANES

JASMINE
BUT I NEVER LEARNED JUST WHERE

LOLA
ONE MORE DAY BEFORE THE FIGHT

STUDENTS
DO WE FOLLOW HER COMMAND?

LOLA
AT THE BARRICADE OF FREEDOM

STUDENTS
SHALL I JOIN THE MARCHING BAND?

LOLA
DO YOU WANT A SCHOOL THAT'S FREE?

STUDENTS
WE WANT THE CHOIR BACK IN SCHOOL

LOLA
WILL YOU TAKE YOUR PLACE WITH ME?

STUDENTS

THE TIME IS NOW
THE DAY IS HERE

LOLA

ONE DAY MORE

TAD

ONE MORE DAY TO FIGHT THE FIGHT
WE WILL CRUSH THESE REBELS TOO
I WILL TEACH THESE LITTLE STUDENTS
THEY WILL LEARN ABOUT KUNG FU

LOLA

ONE DAY MORE

LUNCH LADIES

PUTTING IN THE DRUGS
MASHING UP THE MEDS
GONNA DRUG `EM UP AND SUPERCHARGE THEIR HEADS
HAVE A LITTLE TASTE
EAT A LITTLE LUNCH
YOU SHOULD TRY THE PANCAKES WITH A SPECIAL BRUNCH

STUDENTS

ONE MORE DAY TO NO MORE TESTING
AIM YOUR SMARTPHONES TO THE SKY
HELP THE STUDENTS DO THEIR THING
LET THE SOUND OF FREEDOM RING
THERE'S A NEW SCHOOL BEGINNING
THERE'S A BATTLE TO BE WON
DO YOU HEAR THE STUDENTS SING?

SPIVEY

I HAVE NO PHONE
CAN I TAKE YOURS?

LOLA

ONE DAY MORE

ANNA

WE CANNOT GO BACK TO OUR HOMES

LUNCH LADIES

GONNA DRUG `EM UP AND SUPERCHARGE THEIR HEADS

ANNA
SO LET'S GET THE CHEATING STARTED

LOLA
ONE DAY MORE

ANNA
THEN WE'LL ESCAPE THE FLYING DRONES

LUNCH LADIES
YOU SHOULD TRY THE PANCAKES WITH A SPECIAL BRUNCH

ANNA
AND WE'LL ACHIEVE THE SCORES UNCHARTED

LOLA
TOMORROW IS THE JUDGEMENT DAY

STUDENTS
TOMORROW WE'LL DISCOVER WHAT THE CENTRAL ADMIN HAS IN STORE
ONE MORE TIME
ONE MORE DAY
ONE DAY MORE

MONDO THE ENFORCER*
STOP IT STOP IT STOP IT! What did I tell you about impressively coordinated musical numbers?!

*(*If you would like to cut off this song at any time, you can have Mondo enter earlier and cut the song off with this line at any point.)*

LOLA
Um…

MONDO THE ENFORCER
The test begins! To your seats!

(The STUDENTS sit.)

You will have three hours to complete the first section. AND YOU WILL COMPLETE IT OR I WILL GRIND YOUR SKULLS TO POWDER!
Put your phones in the bucket.

(The STUDENTS put their phones in the bucket.)

If you need to stand, tough. If you require the bathroom, tough. If your brain is about to explode, tough.

(LOLA raises her hand.)

I accept no questions.
Fine. What.

LOLA

Don't you have to shut off the videocameras for the test?

MONDO THE ENFORCER

Oh right.

ANNA (over the P.A.)

Students. I hope you enjoyed your free pancake breakfast this morning and none of you suffer terrible side-effects. I can't stress to you how important this test is to the school. It is more important than your lives. But I love each and every one of you. Just don't screw this up. No pressure, but there are lives on the line today. Life and Death. No pressure. If you screw up, people will die. And begin.

(Music begins.)

STUDENTS

AH AH
AH AH
AH AH AH AH AH AH AH

AH AH
AH AH
AH AH AH AH AH AH AH

MONDO THE ENFORCER

STOP THE CHANTING! SILENCE FOR THE TEST!

(They put their heads down.)

(LOLA makes a bird call.)

(STUDENT makes a bird call.)

(SPIVEY makes a bird call.)

(Pause.)

(Pause.)

JASMINE

Oh is that me?

MONDO THE ENFORCER

SILENCE!

(JASMINE makes a bird call.)

MONDO THE ENFORCER

What's with all the - ?
(The STUDENTS attack!)
(MONDO is overwhelmed and tied up.)

LOLA
Quick! Move the desks into the hallways! Like we practiced!

STUDENT 3
This is so awesome! Anarchy! Wooo!

LOLA
We're not doing anarchy.

STUDENT 3
Sorry.

LOLA
Let's go! Let's go!
(The STUDENTS form their desks into a barricade.)

ANNA
What's going on?

BLAKE
It's room 212! It's room 212! Our old room.

ANNA
No! Mobilize the ROTC at once! I want those rebels stopped, and I want them stopped now!
(As the STUDENTS set up the barricades, a drummer starts up.)
(Music to the tune of "Do you hear the people sing?")

LOLA
DO YOU HEAR THE STUDENTS SING
WITHOUT A PENCIL OR A PEN
IT IS THE MUSIC OF A PEOPLE
WHO WILL NOT TAKE TESTS AGAIN

WHEN THE POUNDING OF YOUR HEART
MATCHES THE POUNDING IN YOUR HEAD
THERE IS A WAR ABOUT TO START
SO REVOLT INSTEAD

SPIVEY
WILL YOU JOIN IN OUR CRUSADE
WHO WILL BE STRONG AND STAND WITH ME
OUT THERE BEYOND THE BARRICADE

IS THERE A SCHOOL YOU LONG TO SEE?

LOLA

THEN JOIN IN THE FIGHT
THAT WILL GIVE YOU THE RIGHT
TO BE FREE
Of tests.

EVERYONE

DO YOU HEAR THE STUDENTS SING
WITHOUT A PENCIL OR A PEN
IT IS THE MUSIC OF A PEOPLE
WHO WILL NOT TAKE TESTS AGAIN

WHEN THE POUNDING OF YOUR HEART
MATCHES THE POUNDING IN YOUR HEAD
THERE IS A WAR ABOUT TO START
SO REVOLT INSTEAD

JASMINE

Wait! I think we're about to do something historic guys!

EVERYONE

Yeah!

JASMINE

You know what that means!
(Everyone poses for selfies.)

STUDENT

Ooh my phone.
(flash)

STUDENT 2

Mine next!
(flash)

LOLA

Wait, stop! This is not the time for individual selfies!
(LOLA produces a selfie stick.)
Let's do this right.

EVERYONE

Yay!

LOLA

And don't forget to post to your instagrams!

SPIVEY

I don't have a phone.

EVERYONE

Awww…

(They pat him sadly. A few offer hugs.)

LOLA

Come on! Viva la Revolucion!

JASMINE

I thought this was French!

LOLA

Fraternite! Egalite! Something else!

(She snaps the photo.)

STUDENT 1

Wait. My eyes were closed.

STUDENT 2

I think I wasn't looking.

LOLA

All right hold on. Let's take another one. We're taking another one!

JASMINE

What?

LOLA

We're taking another revolutionary photo. One Two –

STUDENT 1

Oh no it's too late!

(The photo snaps.)

LOLA

Dang it!

STUDENT

They're here!

(She spots the ROTC, the Vice Principals, and the forces of ANNA.)

LOLA

Behind the barricade! Let's get the cannons ready!

JASMINE

Um…

LOLA

What?

SPIVEY

I don't think we have cannons.

LOLA

What were you doing during craft time?

JASMINE

We made these banners!

LOLA

You were supposed to be making cannons!

SPIVEY

How were we going to do that?!
(ANNA takes out a bullhorn.)

ANNA

Attention students. Return to your classroom.

EVERYONE

No!

STUDENT 1

Okay. Oh sorry. I mean no!

ANNA

Lola. I know you're in there. This is not cool. I'm supposed to be your BFF.

LOLA

You're not my BFF anymore!

ANNA

I think you are misunderstanding the term BFF. It means –

LOLA

I know what it means!

ANNA

Best Friends Forever. What part of Forever don't you understand?!

LOLA

Too bad!

ANNA

Very well. I tried.
(she turns off the bullhorn and turns to TAD.)
Crush the rebels. Bring me their heads when you're finished.

TAD

Their heads?

ANNA

For educational purposes. So they can take the test. Blake!

BLAKE

Yes, Principal.

ANNA

Institute Plan C.

BLAKE

Very well.
(ANNA exits.)

TAD

ATTEN-SHUN!
(All the ROTC members rush to form ranks. They have nerf gatling guns.)

LOLA

Get ready!

JASMINE

Does anyone need to go to the bathroom?
(a few students raise hands.)

LOLA

Shut up!

TAD

AIM!
(They aim.)
FIRE!
(They fire. The little nerf missiles hit the desks and bounce off harmlessly.)

STUDENTS

YAY!

TAD

RELOAD!

(The ROTC members run up, grab their nerf weapons, then reform ranks.)

AIM! FIRE!

(Almost all the ROTC members fire. One doesn't.)

LOLA

RETURN FIRE!

*(The students throw stuff – balls of paper, stuffed octopi, Barbie dolls, backpacks, anything they've got back there. *This should be funny.)*

(SPIVEY darts out from behind the barricade to throw a beanbag.)

(An ROTC MEMBER hits him with a nerf weapon. SPIVEY goes down.)

TAD

RUN AWAY! RUN AWAY!

(The ROTC guards flee.)

SPIVEY

I'm hit! Aaaarrrhghg!

(JASMINE runs out.)

JASMINE

Spivey!

SPIVEY

Arrrhghghg…

JASMINE

But how did they hurt you?

SPIVEY

I'm allergic… to nerf…

(He collapses.)

JASMINE

Nooooo! No! No!

(she cries piteously)

I love you!

SPIVEY

I'll probably have a little rash there…

JASMINE

Oh.

SPIVEY

Did you mean it? What you said?

JASMINE

I did.

SPIVEY

Cool.

(He collapses again.)

LOLA

Get back behind the barricades. They'll be back. With more than nerf next time.

(JASMINE and SPIVEY get behind the barricade.)

ANNA *(over the P.A.)*

We'll be back. With more than nerf next time.

LOLA

I just said that.

ANNA *(over the P.A.)*

Oh. Never mind then. Um… we're also going to be doing a fire drill.

LOLA

We're not falling for it!

ANNA *(over the P.A.)*

Free cookies in the cafeteria.

STUDENT

Ooh!

LOLA

Stop him. Anna – if you can hear me – we're not taking the standardized tests anymore!

STUDENT 2

Ooh let's chant again!

EVERYONE

DO YOU HEAR THE STUDENTS SING?
WITHOUT A PENCIL OR A PEN
IT IS THE MUSIC OF A PEOPLE
WHO WILL NOT TAKE TESTS AGAIN

WHEN THE POUNDING IN YOUR HEART
MATCHES THE POUNDING IN YOUR HEAD
THERE IS A WAR ABOUT TO START
SO REVOLT INSTEAD

(Everyone cheers.)

(Lights change.)

(Night. Perhaps a fire is burning for warmth.)

(JASMINE sits alone.)

(SPIVEY approaches.)

SPIVEY

What are you doing out here?

JASMINE

I couldn't sleep. I had a dream.

SPIVEY

Oh. What was it about?

*(*Optional song. If you have an excellent singer in the role of JASMINE, you may include this song. Otherwise, feel free to cut it.)*
(Music to "I dreamed a dream")

JASMINE

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN I WAS YOUNG
AND WE HAD RECESS
AND WE PLAYED
THERE WAS A TIME WHEN WE PLAYED TAG
WHEN WE LEARNED FOR LEARNING'S SAKE
AND THE LEARNING WAS EXCITING
THERE WAS A TIME
THEN IT ALL WENT WRONG

I DREAMED A DREAM OF LONG AGO
WHEN I WAS YOUNG AND STILL UNTESTED
I DREAMED OF LEARNING THINGS TO KNOW
AND IN OUR LESSONS WE'D INVESTED

AND WE WERE JOYFUL AND UNCHAINED
WHEN SCHOOL WAS FUN AND FULL OF WONDER
THERE WERE NO BENCHMARKS TO ATTAIN
NO FEARS THAT SCORES WERE GOING UNDER

BUT THE TESTING SOON BEGAN
WITH THE STRESS AS SHARP AS NEEDLES
AND YOUR SCORES ARE REALLY LOW
AND THEY TURN YOUR DREAM TO SHAME

FOCUSED ON OUR LEARNING PLANS
NO TIME FOR MUSIC, ART OR WEAVING
WE LOST OUR CHILDHOOD TO THEIR SCAMS
AND BEGAN AGAIN WHEN AUTUMN CAME

AND STILL I DREAM MY MIND WON'T BE
CONSIDERED DIFFERENT OR DEFECTIVE
WITH FOURTEEN ON MY A.C.T.S
MY COLLEGE MUST BE UNSELECTIVE

I HAD A DREAM MY SCHOOL WOULD BE
SO DIFFERENT FROM THIS PLACE I'M TESTED IN
SO DIFFERENT NOW FROM WHAT IT SEEMS
NOW SCHOOL HAS KILLED THE DREAM I DREAMED.

**Alternate lines if you don't have a singer here.*

JASMINE*

I dreamed a dream of time gone by.

SPIVEY*

That must have been nice.

JASMINE*

I dreamed that love would never die.

SPIVEY*

Well, you know – um…

JASMINE*

Hold on. Would you like to sing a duet with me?

SPIVEY*

Uh… I would… it just, you know – I'm still recovering from my injuries –

JASMINE*

Oh sure.

(ROTC SOLDIER 2 enters.)

ROTC SOLDIER 2

Excuse me?

SPIVEY

Ah! Alarm! Alarm!

(The other STUDENTS get up from behind the barricade.)

ROTC SOLDIER 2

I'm not here to fight!

LOLA

What do you want?

ROTC SOLDIER 2

I want to join you. I have dyslexia. I have a really hard time with standardized tests too.

JASMINE

Me too. But that's probably because I'm not very smart.

LOLA

Hey. The whole point is that we don't care if you're good or bad at them, the point is that they shouldn't be this important.

ROTC SOLDIER 2

Right. Which is why we're fighting. Because it shouldn't be important. And there are some things so important that you should die for, like the idea that some things shouldn't be so important. It's a life and death struggle to make things not life and death.

LOLA

…yeah. All right you can join us.

ROTC SOLDIER 2

Awesome.

LOLA

All right let's get some rest. For some reason I can't sleep I'm totally wired.

SPIVEY

Me too. It's like I've eaten a box of Ritalin or something.

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