

DIARY OF A WIMPY KID

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BASED ON THE "DIARY OF A
WIMPY KID"
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SCRIPT PERUSAL

BROADWAY

LICENSING

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DIARY OF A WIMPY KID

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FIRST SEMESTER

PROLOGUE

On the scrim, in big bold lettering: DIARY OF A WIMPY KID. A big dramatic overture, crescendos to:

OFFSTAGE VOICES

DIARY! DIARY! DIARY! DIARY!
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID!!

A skinny, pre-pubescent 11-YEAR OLD in black shorts and a white T-shirt appears, unceremoniously cutting them off.

GREG

(running on)

Waiwaiwaiwaiwait STOP!

This is GREG HEFFLEY. HE holds up a book engraved with the word "DIARY" on the cover and addresses the audience.

GREG (CONT'D)

First of all, let me get something straight. This is a JOURNAL, not a diary. I know what it says on the cover, but when Mom went out to buy this thing I SPECIFICALLY told her to get one that didn't say "diary" on it.

HE sits down and begins to scribble in the diary.

GREG (CONT'D)

If she thinks I'm going to write down my "feelings" in here or whatever, she's crazy. Don't expect me to be all "dear diary" this and "dear diary" that. This journal is for way bigger things.

A CARTOON VERSION OF GREG'S LIFE begins to animate around him.

"STUCK IN THE MIDDLE"

GREG (CONT'D)

NOW MY LIFE'S A BIG BLANK PAGE.
NOW GREG HEFFLEY TAKES THE STAGE.
NOW I'VE FINALLY REACHED THE AGE
WHERE MIDDLE SCHOOL BEGINS.
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, BYE BYE.
I WON'T MISS YOU, I WON'T CRY.

BUCKLE UP. IT'S TIME TO FLY.
TODAY, GREG HEFFLEY WINS.

IN THIS BOOK, I'LL CHART MY RISE
FROM A KID OF WIMPY SIZE
TO THE HIGHEST OF THE HIGHS!
OH, I--

MOM
(interrupting)
C'mon, everybody!

SCENE 1 - HEFFLEY HOME - KITCHEN

Greg's MOM, DAD and 3-yr old brother MANNY are there. MOM is combing Manny's hair.

MOM (CONT'D)
Big day today!

DAD
(gleeful)
That's right! Summer is OVER! Let's get you back to school, pronto!

MOM
(with camera)
And let's get that first day of school picture!

DAD
Greg! Will you get over here next to Manny?

MANNY
(to Greg)
Bubby!

DAD
Where's Rodrick? (Shouting off) Rodrick!

RODRICK, a surly teenager appears behind Dad. He looks like a junior roadie for a heavy metal band.

RODRICK
Let's get this over with.

DAD
Are you wearing eyeliner?

RODRICK
(denying the obvious)
No.

GREG

(to the audience)

HERE'S THE THING WITH BEING ME:
I'M THE MIDDLE CHILD OF THREE.
HAVING THIS MUCH FAMILY
SHOULD BE AGAINST THE LAW.

RODRICK IS THE OLDER SON.
LIKES TO TORTURE ME FOR FUN.

RODRICK

(in Greg's ear)

You suck!

GREG

MANNY IS THE BABY ONE,
SO MOM AND DAD SAY--

MOM/DAD

AW!

MANNY

Bubby!

GREG

Mom! Please make him stop calling me that.

MOM

(fawning over Manny)

Aw, but that's what he calls his big brother and it's so
cute!

GREG

MANNY NEVER GETS THE BLAME.
RODRICK MAKES MY LIFE SO LAME.
EVERY YEAR IS JUST THE SAME,
'CAUSE I...

MOM

Smile, boys! 3! 2! 1!

*The BROTHERS pose, with GREG in
the middle. FLASH! MOM takes the
picture and everything freezes.
GREG turns to us.*

GREG

(to audience)

I'M STUCK IN THE MIDDLE.
STUCK IN THE MIDDLE
OF A MOM-DAD-MANNY-RODRICK HEFFLEY BRAWL.

MY BIG BROTHER TRICKS ME.
MY KID BROTHER LICKS ME.

BUT IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, I'LL STAND UP STRAIGHT AND TALL.
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL.

DAD

ALL RIGHT, KIDS, HUSTLE HUSTLE! PILE IN THE MINIVAN!

*THEY pile in the minivan and
travel...*

DAD (CONT'D)

GREG, WOULD YOU SIT UP STRAIGHT?

RODRICK

(whispered to GREG)

CAN YOU SAY "LOSER," GREG? I CAN.

MOM

RODRICK, DON'T TEASE YOUR BROTHER.
GREG, PLEASE MOP UP MANNY'S DROOL.
AND DON'T FORGET YOUR DIARY!

GREG

JOURNAL.

MOM/DAD

HERE WE GO, IT'S MIDDLE SCHOOL!

*THEY arrive at the school. GREG
hops out and approaches the
school entrance as the OTHERS
drive off.*

ENSEMBLE

AHHHH...

MIDDLE SCHOOL!

IT'S MIDDLE SCHOOL!

*Other STUDENTS join him, all of
them excited and nervous.*

GREG

I MAY NOT KNOW WHAT'S IN STORE...

GREG & STUDENTS

...BUT EVERYTHING I WAS BEFORE
CHANGES WHEN I REACH THAT DOOR.
OH, I...

WAS STUCK IN THE MIDDLE.

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE.

BUT IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, I'LL STAND UP, STRAIGHT AND TALL.

Suddenly, the hallway becomes a Press Conference of the Future and all the STUDENTS become REPORTERS. GREG stands at a podium fielding questions.

REPORTERS

(various, hubbub)

Greg! Greg!/Over here!/Look here, Greg!/Quick question, Greg!

REPORTER 1

GREG! GREG! LOOK OVER HERE!

ALL REPORTERS

GREG HEFFLEY!

REPORTER 2

GREG, WE ENVY YOUR CAREER!

ALL REPORTERS

GREG HEFFLEY!

REPORTER 3

HOW DID YOU GET SO COOL!?

ALL REPORTERS

GREG HEFFLEY!

REPORTER 4

DID IT START IN MIDDLE SCHOOL?

ALL REPORTERS

GREG HEFFLEY!

GREG HEFFLEY!

GREG HEFFLEY!

GREG HEFFLEY!

GREG holds up his hand, instantly silencing them all.

GREG

Please! I can't answer all of your stupid questions. I'm a very busy and famous man. But I will give you this.

HE holds up his diary.

REPORTERS

(GASP!)

GREG

My journal. Take it and learn.

REPORTERS

Ooooooooo...

THEY lean in to grab it, but GREG pulls it back again.

GREG

But! You must NEVER adapt it into a musical.

RING! The bell rings, Greg's press conference daydream instantly disappears, and we're into...

SCENE 1A - MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Students scramble to find desks. Two geeks, CHRIS HOSEY and LIONEL JAMES walk by Greg.

CHRIS HOSEY & LIONEL JAMES

Hi, Greg.

GREG

(to audience)

All elementary school I've had to sit next to these morons, Chris Hosey and Lionel James. But not anymore!

GREG finds a seat in the back row and settles in.

GREG (CONT'D)

STARTING NOW, MY LIFE'S ON TRACK.
ALL THE COOL KIDS SIT IN BACK.
TIME FOR ME TO JOIN THAT PACK.

The teacher, MR. HUFF, approaches him.

MR. HUFF

(pleasant)

Are you Greg Heffley?

GREG

(confident)

You know it!

MR. HUFF

(not so pleasant)

I remember your brother Rodrick. You'll be sitting up front where I can keep an eye on you, pal...

MR. HUFF leads GREG to the front of the class, forcing him to sit between Chris Hosey and Lionel James.

CHRIS HOSEY & LIONEL JAMES
Hi, Greg.

GREG
Nooooooooo!

*The bell RINGS and the class
scatters into...*

SCENE 1B - ANOTHER CLASSROOM

*MRS. CLAYTON, the teacher,
addresses the students.*

MRS. CLAYTON
Seating in this class is alphabetical.

STUDENTS find their seats.

GREG
Thank god. That means I'll wind up near Chirag Gupta.

*CHIRAG GUPTA [pronounced 'shi-
RAHG GOOP-ta], a short and slight
boy, sits in the desk next to
Greg.*

CHIRAG GUPTA
Hey, guys!

GREG
Me and Chirag have been friends since third grade. We used to
play a lot of pranks on each other, but we're much more
mature now.

CHIRAG GUPTA
Hey. Did you know that if your hand is bigger than your face
it's a sign of low intelligence?

GREG
Really?

*GREG holds his hand up to his
face to check. CHIRAG smacks it
(with a huge *WHAP!* SFX) causing
Greg to hit himself. Other KIDS
laugh.*

CHIRAG GUPTA
Gotcha! Ha ha! Oh, man! This is gonna be an awesome year!

GREG
(smiling, revenge on his mind)
Yeah. Bursting with surprises...

The bell RINGS.

GREG (CONT'D)
(to audience)
Finally. Lunchtime. But the quest for seating continues...

SCENE 1C - THE CAFETERIA

STUDENTS carry trays and lunch boxes, finding seats. A bunch of POPULAR GIRLS are at one table, a bunch of DORKS at the other.

(WHISTLING) POPULAR GIRLS

GREG attempts to sit with them.

GIRL
This entire table is saved.

GREG slinks off to the dork table.

(WHISTLING) GREG

BRYCE ANDERSON, a wealthy, fashionable, and cute-butted sixth-grader, enters carrying a lunch tray.

POPULAR GIRLS
(excitedly)
Bryce!/Bryce-y!/Come sit between us! Bryce!

GREG
(to a geeky kid at his table)
Bryce Anderson?! How did HE become so popular??

CHARLIE DAVIS
(lateral lisp)
He's got clothes, money and a cute butt. That's all women care about these days.

BRYCE ANDERSON
Hi, ladies.

GIRLS
(SIGHING DREAMILY)

GREG

If Bryce Anderson is number one in popularity...

BING! Bryce flips his tray to reveal his "popularity number" on the bottom of it: 1.

GREG (CONT'D)

...then where does that leave the rest of us?

BING! BING! BING! EVERYONE in the cafeteria freezes and tilts their trays and lunch boxes to reveal their "popularity number." 5, 28, 93 -- various numbers from 1 to 200.

GREG (CONT'D)

(to a kid next to him)

Aren't you getting braces next week, Charlie?

Sadly, CHARLIE DAVIS rips off his number "43" to reveal a "73" beneath it. A sad BING...

GREG (CONT'D)

And where do I fit in to all of this?

A coach's whistle blows! EVERYONE runs off.

SCENE 1D - PHYS ED CLASS - GYM

STUDENTS line up in the gym. A scoreboard looms above them. Their coach, MR. UNDERWOOD barks orders.

MR. UNDERWOOD

Toe the line, people! Side by side! Let's go!

GREG

(to audience)

If Bryce is at the top of the Popularity Meter, just how low does this thing go?

A creepy looking boy enters and stands next to Greg, smiling at him with an insane grin. He is FREGLEY.

FREGLEY

HEY, GREG.

BING! The scoreboard lights up, revealing Fregley's popularity number: 201.

GREG

Well, there's my answer. Hey, Fregley.

FREGLEY

HEY, GREG.
WANNA SEE MY SECRET FRECKLE?
IT'S NOT WHERE YOU'D EXPECT IT.
BUT THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT SPECIAL.

GREG

No, thank you!

UNDERWOOD presents the kids with a bag of basketballs.

MR. UNDERWOOD

Alright, people, grab a ball and hit the courts outside. Hustle, hustle! Let's go!

BIG KIDS push GREG and the littler kids out of the way, grab basketballs, and run off.

OVERGROWN KID 1

Out of the way, doofus!

GREG

There's nothing like Phys Ed class to really hammer home who hasn't hit their growth spurt yet.

SCENE 1E - OUTSIDE BASKETBALL COURTS - GYM

GREG and CHARLIE DAVIS find themselves alone on one of the outdoor courts.

CHARLIE DAVIS

(spying something unspeakably horrible on the ground)

What is that?

GREG

I don't know. It's square. And flat. And weirdly colored...

CHARLIE DAVIS

(terrified)

What IS IT?!!

GREG

Looks like a piece of old cheese that fell out of somebody's lunch.

*GREG makes his way over to it,
but suddenly--*

CLAIRE

Stop, boy!

*GREG and CHARLIE whip around to
see a gang of "Children of the
Corn"-like STUDENTS, staring at
them grimly. CLAIRE, the leader,
issues a dire warning:*

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

(gravely)

Back away from that cheese...

GREG

Why?

GANG KID

(to Claire)

Tell him.

CLAIRE

I shall.

*CLAIRE and the OTHERS
dramatically recount the legend.*

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

WAY, WAY BACK, BEFORE THIS YEAR,
BEGINS OUR TALE OF TERROR.
SOMEONE DROPPED THIS CHEESE RIGHT HERE.
A FATEFUL, FRIGHTFUL ERROR.

IT SAT AND SAT, UNTIL, AT LAST,
THE CHEESE BEGAN TO ROT.
THE DAIRY FROM THE PAST
THAT TIME FORGOT...

THEN, ONE DAY, CLARISSA RICE
DECIDED THERE TO LINGER.
HUNG AROUND THE MOLDY SLICE--
THEN TOUCHED IT WITH HER FINGER.

POOR GIRL! POOR FOOL! SHE HAD NO CLUE
OF WHAT THE CHEESE IMPARTED.
OR WHAT A HUGE TO-DO
HAD JUST BEEN STARTED:

CLAIRE & STUDENTS

SHE GOT THE CHEESE TOUCH!
SHE GOT THE CHEESE TOUCH!
WHOA-OH, OH-OH, OH-OH!

CLAIRE

TOUCH THE CHEESE, AND GET THE CURSE.
(+ SOME STUDENTS:) IT'S SORT OF COOTIES, BUT IT'S WORSE.
(+ MORE STUDENTS:) IT'S HERE FOR GOOD. YOU CAN'T REVERSE
THE SPREAD.

CLAIRE & STUDENTS

THE ONLY WAY OF GETTING RID
IS DOING WHAT CLARISSA DID:
YOU PASS IT TO ANOTHER KID
INSTEAD...
LOOK OUT!

CLAIRE

RICKY FISHER GOT THE TOUCH, AND MOVED TO CALIFORNIA.
TOOK THE CURSE ALONG WITH HIM,

CLAIRE & STUDENTS

BUT STILL WE HAVE TO WARN YA:

IF SOMEONE NEW --
PERHAPS

(*re: Greg*)

LIKE YOU --
SHOULD TOUCH THE CHEESE, WELL THEN,
YOU NEVER WILL BE POPULAR AGAIN...

GREG runs off, terrified.

CLAIRE & STUDENTS (CONT'D)

DON'T GET THE CHEESE TOUCH!
NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO.
DON'T GET THE CHEESE TOUCH!
THE CHEESE'LL COME FOR YOU.
DON'T GET THE CHEESE TOUCH!

SCENE 1F - HALLWAY LOCKERS - AFTER SCHOOL

*GREG reenters clutching his
DIARY. STUDENTS wander the halls.*

GREG

I WILL NOT GIVE UP HOPE, 'CAUSE IT'S JUST DAY ONE.
BUT BOY, OH BOY, I'M HAVING QUITE A GRAY ONE.
IF ONLY I COULD FIGURE OUT MY RANKING.
AND KEEP MY POPULARITY FROM TANKING.

He is approached by ROWLEY, a round child wearing a brightly colored poncho.

ROWLEY

Hola, Greg! Heh, heh! That means 'hi!' I'm speaking Espanyol, which is Spanish for "Spanish!" Neat, right?

GREG

(to audience)

This kid dressed in a blanket is Rowley. He moved into my neighborhood a couple years ago.

ROWLEY

(showing off his poncho)

This is called a "poncho!" I got it during my family vacation in the South of America.

BING! Three kids slam their lockers, revealing Rowley's three-digit popularity meter ranking: 157.

GREG

I kinda felt sorry for him and took him under my wing. It hasn't always been easy.

A GIRL walks by wearing a shirt with the sparkly picture of a teddy bear riding a rainbow on it.

ROWLEY

(happily, to the girl)

Hey! I've got that shirt, too!

GREG

STILL, FOR NOW, HE'S A-OKAY.

LEAST HE WON'T GET IN MY WAY.

WHAT'S THE WORST THING HE COULD SAY?

ROWLEY

Wanna come over and PLAYYY?

RECORD SCRATCH! His words ECHO through the halls as EVERYONE stops and stares at Greg and Rowley.

GREG

(overly loud for the others' benefit)

Ha ha! "HANG OUT?" Sure, I can "HANG OUT"! Let's "HANG OUT!"
(privately scolding him)

(MORE)

GREG (CONT'D)

Are you trying to make us targets? Don't you know that nobody "plays" in Middle School?

ROWLEY

Oh yeah, right. (*then, cheerful*) So, do you wanna?

GREG

(*sigh*) If I've got nothing better to do.

ROWLEY

Great! See you real soon! Adee-os, amee-go!

ROWLEY happily skips off. Several KIDS begin to swirl around Greg, taunting him, nightmarishly.

OVERGROWN KID 1

(*taunting*)

Adee-os, amee-go! Heh, heh!

OVERGROWN KID 2

Wanna come over and PLAAAAAY?

GIRL

YOU'LL GET THE CHEESE TOUCH!
WOAH OH OH OH OH!

FREGLEY

HEY, GREG! (*WEIRD GIGGLES*)

CHRIS HOSEY & LIONEL JAMES

HEY, GREG!

OVERGROWN KID 1

Isn't that the kid with the diary?

OVERGROWN KID 1 & 2

DIARY, DIARY!
GREG'S GOT A DIARY!

ALL KIDS

DIARY, DIARY!
GREG'S GOT A DIARY!

GREG

FROM THE MOMENT YOU ARRIVE,
MIDDLE SCHOOL EATS YOU ALIVE.
SIT BY DORKS AND YOU CAN'T WIN.
EVEN CHEESE COULD DO YOU IN.

BRYCE IS

(*gesture up*)

HERE AND FREGLEY'S

(*gesture down*)

THERE.
ROWLEY DOESN'T SEEM TO CARE.
SOMEONE TELL ME, WHERE OH WHERE
AM I?!

*A BIG KID walks by, slapping a
"kick me" sign on Greg's back.*

ENSEMBLE
AM I, AM I, AM I, AM I...?

*But when GREG turns around we see
-- BING! -- the sign doesn't say
"kick me," it has the number
"100" on it.*

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)
YOU'RE STUCK IN THE MIDDLE!
STUCK IN THE MIDDLE!
WITH YOUR BACKPACK AND YOUR BACK AGAINST THE WALL.

GREG
AND THAT'S WHAT'S THE MATTER!
THE WHOLE THING'S A LADDER!
YOU TAKE ONE FALSE STEP AND THEN YOU'RE BOUND TO FALL.

'CAUSE YOU'RE STUCK HERE IN THE MIDDLE...

*BING! BING! BING! -- one by one
the KIDS tilt their trays, lunch
boxes, books etc. to reveal their
"popularity numbers."*

ALL
WHEN YOU'RE STUCK HERE IN THE MIDDLE...

GREG
I AM STUCK HERE IN THE MIDDLE...

ENSEMBLE
IN THE MIDDLE.../IN THE MIDDLE...

ALL
THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL!
THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL!
THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL!

SCENE 2 - THE HEFFLEY HOME - KITCHEN

*GREG arrives home. His MOM is
there making a tray of snacks.*

MOM
Hey! There's the big middle-schooler! How was your first day?

GREG

Can I be home-schooled?

The muffled sound of guitar feedback and the drone of a loud electric bass can be heard.

GREG (CONT'D)

(looking for the sound)

What the heck is that?

MOM

(cheerful)

Rodrick is having his heavy-metal music rehearsal today.

RODRICK enters.

RODRICK

It's called "band practice." Don't demean it.

GREG sits down and begins to draw/write in his diary.

GREG

(to audience)

Rodrick's band is called "Löded Diper." And their music definitely lives up to the name.

RODRICK

Gettin' ready for our gig at the Winter Talent Show.

GREG

We have to put up with this until winter??

MOM

(to Rodrick)

Oo! Are you guys gonna do the one that goes... Bumm bumm bumm bumm bumm bumm...!

MOM hums some terrible tune and does a little mom dance, accented with snaps. RODRICK stares at her in horror.

RODRICK

Mom. Never do that.

RODRICK exits.

MOM

(calling after)

Well, I'm your number one fangirl!

DAD enters.

DAD

Why are there a bunch of teenagers loitering in front of the house? I'm calling 911.

(yelling out the window)

I'm calling 911!

MOM

You most certainly are not.

DAD

We have got a gang of creepy juveniles cluttering up our driveway!

MOM

They are not cluttering, Frank. They are appreciating Rodrick's artistic expression.

More terrible guitar squeals can be heard from the basement. RODRICK's voice can be heard singing into a heavily reverb'd microphone.

RODRICK (O.S.)

SOMEBODY FARTED...FARTED...FARTED...

DAD

What he's doing is a crime against music. And why does Rodrick have to practice in OUR basement?

MOM

You grounded him. Said he's not allowed to leave the house for a week.

DAD

Yeah. I should have worded that differently.

BILL WALTER, an aging rocker, enters.

BILL WALTER

Afternoon, Mr. Heffley.

DAD

Hi, Bill.

BILL WALTER

(to Mom)

Thanks for the string cheese and juice, Susan.

MOM

Oh! You're so welcome, Bill. I was just making up another tray for you boys.

BILL WALTER

Thanks. Bathroom this way? Gotta "drop the kids off at the pool."

(singing)

SOMEBODY FARTED...FARTED...FARTED!

BILL exits.

DAD

(to Mom)

"Boys?" That guy is 35 years old! He's only in the band because he was voted "Most Likely to be a Rock Star" in his High School yearbook twenty years ago. You don't find any of this disturbing?

RODRICK runs in again.

RODRICK

Mom, can I get some cash? Bill's short on gas money.

MOM

Nooooo. You can, however, cash out some of your Mom Bucks.

RODRICK

(not happy)

You gotta be kidding me.

DAD

"Mom Bucks?"

MOM

It's my new monetary system to teach the boys the value of saving.

GREG

(to Dad)

They're just a bunch of fake bills from an old board game that we get for doing chores.

MOM

And once you save enough, you can trade them in for REAL money.

RODRICK

I don't got any.

MOM

Then you'll just have to earn some.

RODRICK

Like how?

MOM

Well. You could take this tray of snacks down to the fellas in the basement for me.

RODRICK

(overly dramatic groan) Ughhhhhhhh. Fine. But I'm totally P.O.'d!

RODRICK takes the tray of snacks and exits.

DAD/MOM

Hey!/Woah!

DAD

Watch the abbreviations.

MOM goes off another way leaving Greg and Dad alone.

DAD (CONT'D)

Pff. Teenagers.

GREG

Pff. The worst.

GREG continues to write in his diary as DAD looks over his shoulder.

DAD

(to Greg)

So, what are your plans? Just gonna sit around the rest of the day doodling cartoons?

GREG

No. Probably play some football.

DAD

(pleasantly shocked)

You're kidding. Football? Really?

GREG

Yeah. It just came out last week. The graphics are awesome. *(Wiggling his thumbs)* I gotta get my thumbs warm so they don't cramp up.

DAD

Get out.

GREG

Huh?

DAD ushers Greg out the door.

DAD

You heard me. Get outside of this house and go be active!

GREG

But I--

DAD

And don't come back until you've worked up a sweat!

DAD slams the door shut. Then re-opens it.

DAD (CONT'D)

And if you just run through the sprinkler, I will know!

DAD slams the door again.

GREG

(to audience)

Whenever Dad kicks me out to "go be active" I head straight over to Rowley's. His video games are rated "E" for everyone, but beggars can't be choosers.

GREG walks by FREGLEY, who is sitting in his front yard, playing with a lobster and a spatula.

FREGLEY

Hey, Greg. I bet I can fit your whole foot in my mouth.

GREG

(shuddering)

Wughhhhh...

GREG continues on.

SCENE 3 - ROWLEY'S HOUSE

GREG arrives at Rowley's door and rings the doorbell.

GREG

(to audience)

Rowley's an only child, so he gets to have a TV in his room and everything. Sometimes I envy him.

ROWLEY answers the door reading from a book of jokes.

ROWLEY

(reading)

Knock knock!

GREG

Huh?

ROWLEY

Thermos!

GREG

What are you talking about?

ROWLEY

Thermos be SOME way to tickle your funny bone! Ha ha!

GREG

(to audience)

Other times, not so much.

ROWLEY

Right this way, muchacho!

GREG

Especially when he gets back from one of his family vacations. One year he called the bathroom a "loo" for six whole months.

ROWLEY leads GREG inside and they settle down in Rowley's room. Filled with stuffed animals and bright colors, the room looks decorated for a much younger child.

On the wall is a poster of a little German teen dressed in fashionable 80's clothing, giving a thumbs up. Above him it says "JOSHIE!" Below him it says "Wild Animal Heart."

ROWLEY

Surprise! My new Joshie poster came!

GREG

(to audience, re: the poster)

And then there's Joshie. As near as I can tell, this Joshie kid is some kind of pop singer who's like a huge star in Europe or something. Now he's Rowley's hero.

ROWLEY

Isn't it awesome?!

GREG

Rowley, Joshie is obviously supposed to be for 6-year-old girls.

ROWLEY

(that's ridiculous)

Oh, you're just peanut butter and jealous 'cause you didn't discover him!

*While ROWLEY happily bounces
around his room, GREG sits down
and plays a video game.*

"JOSHIE SAYS/VIDEO GAME"

ROWLEY (CONT'D)

JOSHIE SAYS THE MOST AMAZING THINGS.
JOSHIE DOESN'T JUST SAY IT: JOSHIE SINGS.
JOSHIE MAKES A BILLION EUROPEAN KIDS
GO WILD, AND SCREAM, AND FLIP THEIR LIDS.
HE TEACHES THEM THAT "NICE IS COOL."
HE'S KIDZ BOP, BUT, LIKE, TWICE AS COOL.

JOSHIE SAYS...

JOSHIE SAYS

"FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS.
AND RESPECT YOUR PARENTS."

GREG

There's got to be some way we can boost our popularity level at school. Something that makes us seem a little cooler.

ROWLEY

Hey! You wanna make a fort outta my bedsheets?

GREG

IN A VIDEO GAME,
THE SYSTEM CAN BE BEAT.
IN A VIDEO GAME,
YOU FIND YOURSELF A CHEAT.

A SECRET CODE, A HIDDEN BLOCK.
AVOID THE FIRE, OUTRACE THE CLOCK,
AND WIN IN NOTHING FLAT.
MAN, SCHOOL SHOULD BE LIKE THAT.

ROWLEY

JOSHIE SAYS...

GREG

(overlapping)

A VIDEO GAME...

ROWLEY

JOSHIE SAYS--

GREG (CONT'D)

IN A VIDEO GAME, YOU--

BOTH

FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS!

ROWLEY
AND PRACTICE PROPER TIME MANAGEMENT.

GREG
We don't have money, clothes, or cute butts. All we've got is three long years of misery if we don't figure something out.

ROWLEY
Well, Joshie says, "there's no sense in worrying, baby. Just wash your hands after you tinkle!"

GREG
Will you shut up about Joshie? I'm trying to save our lives, here.

ROWLEY
(*scoffing*)
I'm pretty sure a famous musician knows more about saving lives than you do, Greg.

GREG
You don't even know Joshie.

ROWLEY
So. I know other famous musicians.

GREG
Like who?

ROWLEY
I don't know. Bill Walter.

GREG
Bill Walter is not a famous musician.

ROWLEY
Yeah-huh. He's in your brother's band. Everybody thinks he's a rock star.

GREG
(*dismissive*)
They only think that because it said so in his yearbook.

Then -- LIGHTBULB! GREG drops his game controller, hit with an incredible idea.

GREG (CONT'D)
(*thunderstruck*)
They only think that because it said so in his yearbook...

ROWLEY
(pointing at the video game
screen)
Aww. You just died.

GREG turns to Rowley, excitedly.

GREG
Rowley...that's it.

ROWLEY
Huhh?

GREG
IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL GAME,
THERE'S ONE SUREFIRE BET.

ROWLEY
(cheerful)
What are you talking about?

GREG
IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL GAME,
YOU DO ONE THING, YOU'RE SET.

In the yearbook they always pick Class Favorites, like "Best Dressed" or "Most Likely to be a Rockstar."

ROWLEY
Yeah, and "Most School Spirit!" Woo!

GREG
Those people become famous at school!

ROWLEY
Yeah!

GREG
And they don't have money or cute butts.

ROWLEY
No!

GREG
But somehow they get known for one stupid thing!

ROWLEY
Yeah!

GREG
That's my ticket to popularity, Rowley! One stupid thing. All I need to succeed is ONE! STUPID! THING!

ROWLEY
(*ecstatically happy*)
Is this a great country, or what?!!

GREG
ROWLEY, THERE'S NO WAY I CAN FAIL THIS.

BOTH
GET A CLASS FAVORITE, THEN I'LL/YOU'LL NAIL THIS!

GREG
CAN'T YOU SEE THE GLORY THAT'S IN STORE?

ROWLEY
MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED!

GREG
FINALLY, I'LL TOP THE HIGHEST SCORE!

ROWLEY
ONE THING IS ALL YOU NEED!

GREG
SO ROWLEY,
FOLLOW ME! THIS GAMER'S CRACKED THE SECRET CODE.
I'M WARPING TO THE EASY ROAD.
I'LL BE ON TOP IN NOTHING FLAT.

ROWLEY
AND JOSHIE WOULD BE GOOD WITH THAT.
JOSHIE SAYS...

GREG
A VIDEO GAME...

ROWLEY
JOSHIE SAYS...

GREG
SCHOOL CAN BE A VIDEO GAME.

*ROWLEY happily puts his arm
around Greg.*

ROWLEY
JUST, FOLLOW YOUR DREAM, BEST FRIEND!

GREG
Don't push it, Rowley.

ROWLEY dutifully removes his arm.

ROWLEY
FOLLOW YOUR DREAM.

GREG
LIKE A VIDEO GAME...

Button.

SCENE 4 - THE HEFFLEY HOME

Morning. MOM bustles about getting ready for the day. DAD enters wearing a shirt, tie, and boxer shorts.

DAD
(shouting upstairs)
Roderick! Will you get out of the bathroom already?!

RODRICK (O.S.)
My body is on a schedule!

DAD
Why can't I find any pants in this house?

MOM
I'm guessing it's because you didn't stop by the cleaners after work last night. I reminded you!

DAD
You understand I can't go to work without pants, right?

MOM
Wear what you wore yesterday.

DAD
Pants with a mustard stain down the front? Are you serious? This is why I'm stuck in middle management.

GREG enters.

GREG
(to audience)
I was planning on tackling one of the easier Class Favorite categories today: "Best Hair." But it turns out someone put maple syrup in my shampoo.

RODRICK walks by in a bath robe, sniffing near Greg.

RODRICK
I got a weird craving for pancakes. Heh, heh, heh...

HE exits.

GREG

(to audience)

With no time to prep for anything else, I decide I'll try to pull off "Cutest Smile."

GREG flashes a forced grin at the audience, punctuated by a bright GLEAM sound! He looks more pained than smiling. MOM and DAD wince seeing him.

MOM/DAD

Ahh!

MOM

What's wrong with you?

GREG

Nothing.

GREG exits with his backpack.

DAD

They get weird at this age.

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE REPRISE

MOM

HURTING FEELINGS, HOARDING TOYS.

DAD

ENDLESS SULKING, ENDLESS NOISE.

BOTH

IF YOU'RE BORED, JUST HAVE THREE BOYS.
YOU'LL NEVER SLEEP AGAIN.

REFEREE, THEN TRAFFIC COP.
KISS A CHEEK, THEN HOP ON POP.

MOM

MAKE IT LAST--

DAD

--AND MAKE IT STOP!

BOTH

OH, I...
...I'M STUCK IN THE MIDDLE...

A school bell RINGS!

SCENE 4A - SCHOOL

GREG and other KIDS happily walk across the basketball courts on the way to school.

KIDS

(happily)

LA LA LA LA LA LA LA,
LA LA LA -- LAHH!!

The CHEESE TOUCH GIRL pulls GREG away from the Cheese.

CHEESE TOUCH GIRL

(to GREG, deathly serious)

DON'T GET THE CHEEEEESE TOUUUUUCH...

GREG

Thanks.

STUDENTS resume entering.

KIDS

(happy again)

LA LA LA LA LA LA LA...

The school bell rings.

SCENE 5 - CLASSROOM

GREG walks into class with other STUDENTS. MRS. CLAYTON, the history teacher, addresses them.

MRS. CLAYTON

Good morning, everybody!

GREG

Good morning, Mrs. Clayton!

GREG flashes his forced smile at her -- GLEAM! SHE winces.

MRS. CLAYTON

Yeesh! Do you need to go to the nurse?

GREG

No, I'm fine.

GREG heads back to the desk area and begins to stuffing bits of cardboard under the legs of the desk in front of his. ROWLEY runs up to him.

ROWLEY

Buey-nos dee-yas, Greg!

GREG

Rowley! Did you bring your extra fat pencils?

ROWLEY hands them to Greg.

ROWLEY

They're not fat. I use them 'cause I've got the finest motor skills. What are you doing?

GREG

I've been raising Chirag's desk up a little higher each day without him knowing.

ROWLEY

Why?

GREG

Same reason I switched out his hoodie for a bigger one from the lost and found.

ROWLEY

(clueless)

Oh. Great.

GREG

I can keep this up all year. Just follow my lead.

CHIRAG approaches them wearing a hoodie that's a little too large.

CHIRAG GUPTA

What's up, guys?

GREG

Hey, Chirag. Are you feeling alright?

CHIRAG GUPTA

(a little paranoid)

Why wouldn't I be?

GREG

I dunno. You just look a little...smaller. Isn't he looking smaller, Rowley?

ROWLEY

(GIGGLING WEIRDLY)

CHIRAG GUPTA

No way, dude. I grew half an inch over the summer.

CHIRAG sits in the desk. His feet don't reach the ground. KIDS around stifle giggles.

GREG

Something wrong?

CHIRAG GUPTA

My desk seems bigger.

GREG

Here, you dropped your pencil.

GREG hands him the extra fat pencil. CHIRAG looks at it, confused.

CHIRAG GUPTA

(freaking out)

I'm shrinking!!!

Other KIDS around start giggling.

MRS. CLAYTON

Okay, class. Let's see how much you've forgotten over the summer. Pop quiz on the state capitals! Put your books under your desks!

STUDENTS

(groaning)

Awwwww...

GREG

(to Rowley)

Luckily, I sit right next to the U.S. map on the class wall. I TOLD you seating is everything! I've got this test made in the shade.

PATTY FARRELL, a girl with pigtails, glasses, and an annoyingly righteous voice raises her hand.

PATTY FARRELL

Mrs. Clayton! Don't forget to cover up the map in the back of the room before we start!

MRS. CLAYTON

Good catch, Patty!

PATTY flashes a smile of death at Greg -- GLEAM! MRS. CLAYTON covers the map next to Greg.

GREG

(to Rowley)

Patty Farrell. Ever since I poured glitter glue down her back in 2nd Grade she's had it in for me.

Through the school intercom system, we hear VICE PRINCIPAL ROY'S voice.

VICE PRINCIPAL ROY (V.O.)

(droning on, incredibly monotone)

Attention, classes. Student government elections will be taking place this week. Sign-up sheets are outside the cafeteria.

The school bell RINGS. STUDENTS scatter.

SCENE 5A - CAFETERIA

ROWLEY catches up with Greg.

ROWLEY

Greg, where are you going?

GREG

Straight to the top, that's where I'm going.

ROWLEY

(cheerful)

Okay!

GREG arrives at a sign-up sheet. HE begins to fill it out.

GREG

Student government is just a big popularity contest, Rowley. And everybody wants to be Class President.

ROWLEY

Sure!

GREG

But not me. If I sign up for a position that NOBODY wants, something dumb like Treasurer, I'm most likely to succeed! They might just hand it to me. Instant popularity!

ROWLEY
(cheering)

Woo hoo!

*PATTY FARRELL and her little gang
of girls, YVETTE and PAULINE,
stop Greg in the halls.*

PATTY FARRELL
I see you signed up to run for Treasurer, Greg Heffley.

GREG
Yes, I did, Patty Farrell.

PATTY FARRELL
Well. I look forward to running a spirited campaign. May the
best Treasurer win!

PATTY and the GIRLS leave.

ROWLEY
Campaign? What's that mean?

GREG
That means this is war, Rowley! C'mon!

*The school bell rings and
STUDENTS scatter to lunch. GREG
leaps onto a cafeteria table to
address them. ROWLEY is nearby.*

"BETTER THAN YOU"

GREG (CONT'D)
I'M GREG HEFFLEY AND I WANNA BE
YOUR HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL TREASURY.

ROWLEY
HE'S GOT A LOT OF GREAT IDEAS, AND HE'LL SEE 'EM THROUGH,
SO WHEN YOU'RE GONNA VOTE, THINK, "WHAT WOULD HEFFLEY
DO?"

BRYCE ANDERSON
BOO!

ROWLEY
(to Greg)
I'M TRYING TO MAKE YOU FAMOUS, BUT THEY'RE MISSING THE
POINT.

GREG
WHAT DOES SOMEONE HAVE TO DO TO GET SUCCESS IN THIS
JOINT?

*PATTY, YVETTE and PAULINE appear
on a lunch table.*

PATTY FARRELL

HELLO, MY NAME IS PATTY FARRELL. I GET ALL STRAIGHT A'S.
I HAVE A HALF A MILLION FRIENDS WHO GIVE ME HEAPS OF
PRAISE.

PERFECT SHOES AND PERFECT DRESSES, PERFECT TEETH AND
HAIR.

DO I MAYBE SOUND CONCEITED? WELL, I'M NOT! I SWEAR!

OH, I PLAY BASKETBALL AND VOLLEYBALL AND WATER POLO.
I'M THE LEAD IN EVERY PLAY AND I SING EVERY SOLO.
I GO OUT AND FIND THE HOMELESS AND I FEED THEM DINNER.
WAS THAT BRAGGING? I CAN'T HELP IT! I'M A STONE-COLD
WINNER.

I DO EVERYTHING BETTER THAN YOU.
I DO EVERYTHING BETTER THAN YOU.
WHEN YOU'RE GONNA VOTE FOR TREASURER, YOU KNOW WHAT TO
DO.

WHA-WHA-WHATEVER I DO, I DO BETTER THAN YOU.

YVETTE & PAULINE

OH, SHE'S THE CUTEST AND THE BRIGHTEST AND THE BEST AND
SMARTEST.

SHE'S A BRILLIANT MATHEMATICIAN, AND A CHEF, AND ARTIST.

YVETTE

IF YOU WANT YOUR SWAG TO SPARKLE, THEN LET PATTY CRAFT
IT.

PAULINE

DO YOU LIKE THIS DANCE WE'RE DOING?
'CAUSE SHE CHOREOGRAPHED IT.

GREG

Choreography, Rowley! How can we beat that?!

ROWLEY

(eating a Twizzler)

I don't know, but Joshie says to keep yourself fortified with
nutrition. Wanna Twizzler?

GREG

Yes!

I'M GREG HEFFLEY AND THE BOY TO BEAT.

ROWLEY

A VOTE FOR GREG IS A VOTE THAT'S SWEET.

GREG

I COULD GET YOU ALL SOME CANDY FROM THE VENDING MACHINE,

GREG & ROWLEY

TO PROVE THAT I'M/HE'S THE GREATEST TREASURER YOU'VE EVER SEEN!

*YVETTE and PAULINE wheel in trays
of GOURMET CUPCAKES.*

PATTY FARRELL

I STARTED BAKING MONDAY MORNING, AND I COULDN'T STOP.
I THOUGHT, "I'VE GOT THESE EXTRA SPRINKLES. THEY SHOULD
GO ON TOP."

YVETTE & PAULINE

THESE ARE VEGAN, THESE ARE GLUTEN FREE, AND THESE HAVE NO
NUTS.

PATTY FARRELL

I MADE ENOUGH FOR EVERYBODY -

PATTY/YVETTE/PAULINE

PLUS A DOZEN DONUTS.

GREG

Grrrrr!!!!

PATTY FARRELL

I DO EVERYTHING BETTER THAN YOU. (+KIDS: WA, WA OO)
I DO EVERYTHING BETTER THAN YOU.

IT ISN'T VICIOUS OR MALICIOUS,
IT'S JUST TOTALLY TRUE:
WHA-WHA-WHATEVER I DO, I DO --

ALL KIDS

BETTER THAN YOU.

*ROWLEY is holding one of Patty's
cupcakes.*

GREG

Rowley? What are you doing with that cupcake?

ROWLEY

They're free!

GREG yanks it away from him.

GREG

Grrrrr!

(he thinks about it)

SHE DOES EVERYTHING BETTER THAN ME.
THE TRUTH IS THAT PATTY IS BETTER THAN ME.
BUT IF THE TRUTH IS PROBLEMATIC...

INSTEAD OF BEING DEMOCRATIC,
I'LL TAKE HER DOWN A PEG OR THREE!
(then, to EVERYONE)
HEY EVERYBODY LISTEN UP! PATTY FARRELL'S GOT LICE!
IT'S GONNA SPREAD TO EVERYBODY! MAYBE EVEN TO BRYCE!

KIDS

(GASP!)

GREG

SHE COULD CANCEL PIZZA FRIDAYS. SHE COULD MAKE US EAT
SALAD.

BRYCE ANDERSON

THAT KID IS RAISING SOME CONCERNS, AND LIKE, I THINK THEY
ARE VALID.

GREG

THAT'S RIGHT!
I HEARD SHE PICKS HER NOSE...

KID 1

AND WIPES IT ON HER CLOTHES...

GREG

THERE'S FUNGUS ON HER TOES.

ALL THREE

EWW-E-EWW!

OTHER KIDS

(starting to get swayed)

UH-HUH!

GREG

HER LOCKER SMELLS LIKE CHEESE.

OTHER KIDS

UH-HUH!

KID 2

MIXED UP WITH MUSHY PEAS.

OTHER KIDS

UH-HUH!

KID 3

SHE'S GOT A FART DISEASE.

ALL THREE

PYEW-P-U!

GREG
HER RUN'S A TOTAL JOKE!
SHE'S ONLY BLOWING SMOKE.
SHE HATES YOU COMMON FOLK!

ENSEMBLE
THAT'S SO TRUE!

GREG
SO, COME ELECTION DAY,
UNLESS YOU WANNA PAY,
VOTE--

KIDS
GREG!

GREG
VOTE--

KIDS
GREG!

GREG
ME!

KIDS
YOU! YOU! YOU!

GREG
HEY, PATTY FARRELL! I'M BETTER THAN YOU!
AND NOBODY'S CHEEKS'LL BE REDDER THAN YOU
WHEN I ANNOY YOU, THEN DESTROY YOU
WITH MY CAMPAIGNING COUP.

(aside, to ROWLEY)
YOU JUST MAKE UP A LITTLE LIE, AND PEOPLE THINK THAT IT'S
TRUE.

(then to Patty & co)

KIDS
HA HA,

GREG
PATTY FARRELL.

KIDS
NA NA,

GREG
PATTY FARRELL.

KIDS
TA TA,

GREG

I'M BETTER...THAN...

PATTY FARRELL

(in tears)

There he is, Mrs. Clayton! That's the brute who's been spreading awful rumors about me!

MRS. CLAYTON

GREG HEFFLEY. WHAT A DESPICABLE ACT.
SMEARING PATTY'S NAME WITH NO BASIS IN FACT.
I'LL SEE YOU ALL WEEK IN DETENTION. YOUR CAMPAIGNING IS THROUGH.

MRS. CLAYTON strides off. PATTY instantly turns off the waterworks.

PATTY FARRELL

HEY, HEFFLEY. 'MEMER BACK IN SECOND GRADE? YOU GOT ME WITH GLUE?

(strong again, revealing her true colors)

I'VE MADE IT MY MISSION
TO CRUSH YOUR AMBITION.
SO I'M DOING EVERYTHING BETTER THAN--

PATTY FARRELL & KIDS

BETTER THAN, BETTER THAN, BETTER THAN YOU!

Button.

GREG

Detention?!

CHRIS HOSEY

I hear it's exactly like jail. They have a steel toilet out in the open and everything.

CHARLIE runs up to him.

CHARLIE

Never mind that. We've got a situation. Look.

HE points over to CHIRAG, who is sitting next to ROWLEY and some other KIDS at a lunch table.

CHIRAG GUPTA

Rowley, am I really growing smaller?

GREG

Oh, man. I forgot all about Rowley. Chirag has definitely zeroed in on our weakness.

CHIRAG holds a cupcake near Rowley.

CHIRAG GUPTA

Rowley, if you tell me the truth, this cup of cake is all yours.

ROWLEY

(cracking under the pressure)

Guhh...! Mmmuhhh...! Aiiiii...!

CHARLIE

(to Greg)

Do something!

GREG quickly grabs a large serving spoon from the cart of Patty's cupcakes.

GREG

Hey, Chirag. Here's some silverware for your lunch.

CHIRAG takes it, looks at the giant spoon in his hand, then explodes.

CHIRAG GUPTA

Not cool, dudes! Not cool!

CHIRAG runs off. As the OTHERS around start to laugh.

BRYCE ANDERSON

Nice one, bro!

BRYCE holds out a fist-bump.

GREG

Thanks, Bryce!

GREG awkwardly high-fives Bryce's fist.

BRYCE ANDERSON

See you around the lunch tables, Henley.

BRYCE and his cool friends exit.

GREG

(to Rowley)

Did you hear that? Bryce almost knows my name! This "Shrinking Chirag" joke is blowing up!

ROWLEY

Yeah, if you keep it up, you might have a shot at "Class Clown!"

GREG turns to the audience and smiles an honest-to-goodness smile. GLEAM!

SCENE 6 - THE HEFFLEY HOME AGAIN

GREG arrives home. A magazine lies on the table.

GREG

(to audience)

It's been a couple weeks since I did my time in detention. My popularity ranking took a big hit and Mom and Dad took away my video game privileges. Luckily, I get them back today. And something else is happening that should cheer me up...

MOM (O.S.)

(calling, angry)

Rodrick!!

DAD wanders in.

DAD

What's going on?

GREG

Rodrick's getting punished!

DAD

Color me surprised.

GREG

Manny found one of Rodrick's heavy metal magazines and brought it to preschool for show and tell.

(picking up the magazine)

Why is this lady in a bikini lying on a truck?

DAD grabs the magazine away.

DAD

She's warming herself on the engine.

GREG

Now Mom's making Rodrick answer a bunch of questions she wrote out for him.

DAD exits perusing the magazine as MOM and RODRICK appear. THEY face the audience, MOM reciting her written questions, RODRICK reciting his written answers.

MOM

Did owning this magazine make you a better person?

RODRICK

(dutifully)

No.

MOM

Did it make you more popular in school?

RODRICK

No.

MOM

How do you feel about having owned this type of magazine now?

RODRICK

I feel ashamed.

MOM

Do you have anything you want to say to women for having owned this magazine?

RODRICK

I'm sorry, women.

RODRICK exits. MOM watches him go, satisfied. MANNY enters holding an Xbox video game console.

MANNY

Look, Bubby!

GREG grabs the Xbox away from him.

GREG

(calling to Mom)

Mom! Manny stuffed a cookie in my Xbox!

MOM

Okay. Calm down...

GREG

I just got to use it again and he totally broke it! And he's just gonna give the same excuse he always gives.

MANNY

I'm ownwey fwee.

MOM

(smiling)

I'm sure he didn't mean to do it.

MANNY presents Greg with a small gift.

MANNY

Sowwy, Bubby.

MOM

(touched)

Awwwwwww! You see?

GREG

What's this?

MOM

What does it look like?

GREG

It looks like a ball of tinfoil with toothpicks stuck in it.

MOM

(looking at Greg expectantly)

Mm-hm. *(Pause)* Don't you have anything to say?

GREG

Should I throw it away now?

MANNY

(bursting into tears)

WAAAAAAAAAH!

MOM

(utterly offended)

Gregory Heffley! Your brother MADE that for you out of the goodness of his little heart! It is a physical expression of his apology!

Irked, MOM hugs MANNY as DAD wanders in.

GREG

(mumbling to himself)

Where am I supposed to keep a tinfoil toothpick ball...?

GREG sits down, sulking.

MOM

(to Dad, re Greg)

Will you talk to him, please?

DAD

(Sigh) Really?

MOM

He's obviously struggling and needs a heart to heart with his dad. Rodrick never got one.

DAD

Okay. Point taken.

MOM exits as DAD tries to be an adult and converse with Greg.

DAD (CONT'D)

So. How's school going?

GREG

Fine.

DAD

Uh-huh. And how's...everything else in your entire life going?

GREG

Manny killed my Xbox.

DAD

Well, if you ask me, that kid did you a favor. You don't want to waste your days sitting around playing video games or doodling a bunch of stick figures, do you? Get out! Be active! Find a hobby that connects you with the world!

MOM briefly wanders by.

MOM

(gentle ribbing)

Like playing with dolls in the basement?

DAD

(to Mom)

They are Revolutionary War figurines and that is a noble pastime that you know nothing about!

MOM mouths "talk to him!" and exits. DAD looks at Greg.

"YOU'RE CHANGING"

DAD (CONT'D)

UH.
LOOK.

GREG, I CAN TELL YOU GOT--STUFF--GOING ON INSIDE.
DON'T STUFF IT DOWN. DON'T STUFF STUFF. NO, I MEAN --
CONFIDE.

GREG

Huh?

DAD

KID, WHAT I MEAN'S, LIKE--DON'T BACK AWAY.
LET'S, WHAT'S IT CALLED. LET'S--"DELVE."
NOTHING'S AS TOUGH AS BEING TWELVE.

GREG

I'm eleven.

DAD

Right.

LOOK, MOM SAID WE SHOULD HAVE A CONVERSATION.
THEN SHE UP AND DISAPPEARED.
WHY HAVE YOU BEEN ACTING WEIRD?
OH, NO. YOU'RE CHANGING.

Greg, it's time you and I had...a little talk.

GREG

(fearing the worst)

Little talk...?

DAD

PARTS OF YOUR BODY THAT USED TO BE SMOOTH HAVE HAIR.
THAT MEANS YOU'RE CHANGING.
SWEATIER ARMPITS AND STINKIER UNDERWEAR.
THAT MEANS YOU'RE CHANGING.

ALL OF THE HORMONES. ALL OF THE MOODS.
LOTIONS, AND CREAMS, AND GELS.
SO MANY QUESTIONS, RULES
AND SMELLS.

GREG

Dad, you don't need to do this.

DAD

OIL ON YOUR FOREHEAD.
PIMPLES ON YOUR BROW.
SPECIAL KINDS OF URGES
WE...WON'T GET INTO NOW.

LOOK AT ME! I'M HELPING!
LOOK AT YOU! YOU'RE PUMPED!
GREG, I HOPE I'M ON THE RIGHT TRACK, HERE.
OTHERWISE I'M STUMPED.

BOY, LIFE KEEPS CHANGING, EVEN FOR A GROWN-UP,
ONLY ON A BIGGER STAGE.
MIDDLE SCHOOL, TO MIDDLE AGE,

LIFE'S REALLY JUST A STRING OF DISAPPOINTMENTS,
LEAVING YOU WITH DIDDLY SQUAT.
SON, YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT. OR NOT.
GOOD LUCK
WITH CHANGING.

GREG

Thanks, Dad.

DAD

Good talk.

SCENE 7 - HEFFLEY HOME

GREG changes into a pirate costume.

GREG

(to audience)

I had no idea what Dad was talking about. But he was right about one thing, I am getting older. Which means my Trick or Treating days are numbered. This Halloween might be my last shot. So I told Rowley to put together his very best costume so we could rake in a lifetime supply of candy and go out with a bang!

ROWLEY enters, dressed in a Knight costume that has been child-proofed beyond recognition with reflective tape and glow sticks stuck all over it. His winter coat bulges out from underneath it. A big red siren light is stuck on his helmet.

ROWLEY

Trick or treat!!

GREG

(disappointed)

Rowley! You said you were gonna be a knight in shining armor.

ROWLEY

I'm even more shiny after my Mom made these safety improvements! I do miss my sword, though...

GREG

Ugh. Come on!

GREG pulls him outside.

SCENE 7A - NEIGHBORHOOD NIGHT

KIDS in halloween costumes roam the streets. GREG and ROWLEY are out in the neighborhood. They hold pillowcases as Trick or Treat bags -- Greg's is full, Rowley's a little less so.

GREG

(to audience)

Once we hit the streets, the candy was dropping like rain! We were cleaning them out like a Swiffer!

THEY come to a door and ring the doorbell. DING DONG! A NEIGHBOR answers the door with a bowl of candy in her hand.

GREG & ROWLEY

Trick or treat!!

NEIGHBOR

(unimpressed)

Aren't you two a little old to be Trick or Treating?

SHE drops treats into each of their pillowcases and shuts the door. THEY eagerly fish out the treat -- toothbrushes.

ROWLEY

Ooo! Toothbrushes!

GREG

(disappointed)

Ugh. Put them in the discard bag with the granola bars and pretzels.

HE hands the toothbrush to ROWLEY, who stuffs them in his bag.

ROWLEY

*(pointing to Greg's bag,
drooling)*

Wow! The candy bag is bursting! Let's go home and eat it all!

GREG

We've got one more stop: Bryce Anderson's halloween party!

ROWLEY

But we weren't invited.

GREG

You think so small, Rowley. This candy is our ticket inside. We'll hang out with all the cool kids and get a popularity upgrade!

ROWLEY

But I have to be home by nine. If we don't head back now, we won't make it in time.

GREG

We will if we take Snake Road.

ROWLEY

(nervous)

(GASP!) Snake road? Ooo. Too scary. No street lights.

GREG

Don't be such a scaredy-cat, Rowley. Relax. There's plenty of light from the full moon.

*A wolf HOWLS in the distance. The
BOYS freeze in their tracks.*

ROWLEY

(petrified)

Did you hear that?

GREG

It was probably just the wind.

ROWLEY

You're right. There's nothing to be afraid of.

*Sound of truck tires SQUEALING
around a corner. GREG and ROWLEY
find themselves confronted by a
couple of HIGH SCHOOL HOOLIGANS
in a pickup truck.*

TEEN HOOLIGAN 1

Well, well, well. If it isn't some stupid little kids Trick or Treating.

ROWLEY

Greg, I think those scary teenagers are talking about us.

TEEN HOOLIGAN 2

(to Greg)

Ahoy, matey. How 'bout you and that walking traffic cone give us all your candy?

TEEN HOOLIGAN 1

Or we'll open up a can of butt-kick on you!

GREG

Message received. Give them the bag, Rowley.

ROWLEY

But, Greg, my bag is the one with--

GREG

(quickly cutting him off)

--with aaaalllll of our candy. That's right.

ROWLEY hands them his bag.

TEEN HOOLIGAN 1

Pleasure doin' business with you little freaks! Har har!

The HOOLIGANS look through the bag as GREG and ROWLEY try to sneak away.

TEEN HOOLIGAN 2

Wait. Boxes of raisins? Apples? This is the discard bag!

THEY quickly surround Greg and Rowley.

TEEN HOOLIGAN 1

How dare you try to give us nutrition!

TEEN HOOLIGAN 2

It'll be the last trick you ever pull!

As the HOOLIGANS close in, ROWLEY hits the siren light on his helmet. A loud SIREN ALARM sounds and the red light spins, shining brightly!

ROWLEY

Alert! Alert! Stranger danger! Stranger danger!

In the chaos, GREG runs to the Hooligan's car, grabs their car keys, and tosses them.

TEEN HOOLIGAN 2

Hey! Jack Sparrow just threw our keys down the sewer drain!

GREG

Ruuuuunnn!

TEEN HOOLIGAN 1

Get 'em!!

*GREG and ROWLEY run off as the
HOOLIGANS give chase.*

SCENE 8 - OUTSIDE THE GUPTA RESIDENCE

*GREG and ROWLEY frantically
arrive at the doorway of Chirag's
house, ringing the doorbell -
DING DONG!*

ROWLEY

(winded)

They're gaining on us, Greg!

GREG

Don't worry! We'll be safe here!

*CHIRAG answers the door dressed
as a mummy.*

CHIRAG GUPTA

Sorry, we're all out of candy.

GREG

Chirag! You gotta let us in! We're about to be maimed by
couple of angry teenagers!

CHIRAG GUPTA

(faux dilemma)

Ohhh, I don't know... I think my house might be too SMALL for
you big guys. Everything here is really TINY and getting
SMALLER by the second. You HULKING GIANTS may not fit...

*ROWLEY breaks down in a frantic
apology.*

ROWLEY

(ugly crying)

We are SORRY, Chirag! We SHRUNK YOU! And friends should not
shrink their friends!

(falling to his knees)

All we can do is beg your forgiveness and give you all of our
candy!!

GREG

Rowley!!

*(then, reluctantly handing the
bag over)*

Here you go...

CHIRAG smiles and takes the bag.

CHIRAG GUPTA

Now, was that so hard? Come on. You wanna play a board game?

ROWLEY

Sure!

GREG and ROWLEY go inside.

SCENE 8A - INSIDE THE GUPTA RESIDENCE

*THEY sit on the ground, gathering
around a board game.*

GREG

(to audience)

I figured we'd stay with Chirag until the coast was clear. It was actually nice just hanging out without trying to shrink him.

*CHIRAG starts handing out fake
money from the game.*

CHIRAG GUPTA

Okay, now we all start with two-hundred dollars. For you, for you, and for me.

*GREG stares at his fake money,
shocked.*

GREG

Wait a minute.

(to Chirag)

These are Mom Bucks.

CHIRAG GUPTA

Mom Bucks?

GREG

This money. These are the exact kind of bills my mom gives us for chores.

ROWLEY

C'mon! Let's play! So, how do we play?

CHIRAG GUPTA

Hold on. You mean, your mother will exchange this FAKE MONEY money for REAL MONEY money?

GREG

(pointing to the box)

How much more of this do you have in there?

CHIRAG grabs a fistful of bills from the game box.

CHIRAG GUPTA

(profound realization)

About a hundred thousand dollars.

GREG

(thunderstruck)

O. M. God.

ROWLEY

(suddenly paying attention)

What are you guys talking about?

GREG

Do you have any idea what this means?!

ROWLEY

What?

GREG

We just became filthy rich!

ROWLEY

We did?

CHIRAG GUPTA

We are independently wealthy!

ROWLEY

We are?!

GREG & ROWLEY & CHIRAG

Awwwwwww, yeahhh!

THEY begin to dance around the room, acting like their ideas of wealthy rappers.

"ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS"

GREG

IF I HAD A LOT OF MOM BUCKS, I'D BE STRUTTIN'.
ALL YOU TEACHERS CAN'T TELL ME NUT'TIN'.
I'D BE DRIVIN' ALL AROUND IN AN ASTIN MARTIN,

GOT A DIAMOND BOWL FOR ME TO FART IN,
EATIN' ALL MY MEALS A LA CARTE, 'N'
A SUIT OF SOLID GOLD, WEARIN' AVIATORS,
SHOES MADE 'A' ALLIGATORS.
STEP OFF, HATERS,
'CAUSE I'M SIPPIN' A BELLINI.
I'M NO HALLOWEENY WEENIE.
ALL YOU ZOMBIES LOOKIN' PASTY.

ZOMBIES
MAN, HEFFLEY'S TASTY.

ROWLEY/CHIRAG
IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS.

GREG
DROPPING LIKE BOMBS --

ROWLEY/CHIRAG
ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS.

GREG
-- MONEY FROM YOUR MOMS.

ROWLEY/CHIRAG
ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS.

GREG
WALKIN' ON AIR
'CAUSE I'M A MILLIONAIRE.

CHIRAG
IF I HAD A LOT OF MOM BUCKS, I'D BE ROCKIN',
PEACOCKIN',
ALL THE MUMMIES TALKIN'
'BOUT MY ILL WRAPS.
WHILE I'M DROPPIN' CHILL RAPS.
PLATFORMS ON MY SHOES
TO SCARE AWAY MY BLUES. (GHOSTS: AHFFF!)

WHEN YOU ARE TINY YOU'RE HARD TO SEE.
NO ONE AT SCHOOL IS AS SMALL AS ME.
WHEN I GET MONEY, I WILL BE FREE.
I WILL BE TALLER THAN FRANKENSTEIN, EVEN WHEN I'M
UNSURE
I WILL
PUNCH YOUR
FEARS AWAY.
HERE'S THE WAY:
I'LL BE A DEFIANT, SELF-RELIANT, NON-COMPLIANT GIANT!

GREG & ROWLEY
OOOH, CHIRAG.

CHIRAG
VAMPIRES SAYIN':

VAMPIRES
OOOOOOH, CHIRAG.

CHIRAG
THEY'RE TRANSYLVANIAN.

GREG/ROWLEY/VAMPIRES
OOOH, CHIRAG.

CHIRAG
IF I HAD A LOT OF MOM BUCKS.
DROP THE MIC.

GREG
CRUISIN' 'ROUND THE BLOCK IN MY BOUGATTI.
THERE'S A HEADLESS HORSEMAN RIDING SHOTTIE.

HEADLESS HORSEMAN
(*the pumpkin:*)
Nya ha ha ha ha! Hi Greg!

GREG
'CAUSE WHEN I'VE GOT THAT FAME AND FORTUNE, IT'LL
ENSURE THAT I DON'T END UP IN THE MIDDLE...

ROWLEY
IF I HAD A LOT OF MOM BUCKS, I WOULD SHARE THEM.
I WOULD BUY US MATCHING JOSHIE SHIRTS. WE WOULD WEAR
THEM.
AND I'D MAYBE GET A BELL FOR MY BRAND NEW BIKE.
BUT I'M HAPPIEST WHEN I'M WITH FRIENDS I LIKE!
(*pause, then--*)

PSYCH!
IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS!

GREG/CHIRAG
ROWLEY! YES!

ROWLEY
ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS!

GREG
I CONFESS,
I THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE A FRAIDY-CAT AND TOTALLY SQUARE.

ROWLEY
NO, I'M A MILLIONAIRE!

*It's a full-on Thriller/Monster
Mash!*

ENSEMBLE
IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS.

GREG/ROWLEY/CHIRAG
SO SIGN US UP! FORMALIZED!

ENSEMBLE
ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS.

CHIRAG
AND FINALLY NORMAL-SIZED!

ENSEMBLE
ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS.

GREG/ROWLEY/CHIRAG
BULLIES BEWARE!

ENSEMBLE
*(in glorious a cappella
harmony)*
THAT KID'S A MILLIONAIRE! BOO!!!

GREG/ROWLEY/CHIRAG
CAUSE WE'RE ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS.
ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS.
ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS.
ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS.

THRILLER WOLF
Awoooo!!!

GREG/ROWLEY/CHIRAG
PEACE!

Button! Then the PLAYOFF begins:

ENSEMBLE
Yeah!!/Yahoo!/Let's go!/etc.
ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS!
ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS!
I SAID WE'RE ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS!
YOU KNOW WE'RE ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS!
ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS!

ALL ABOUT THE--
ALL ABOUT THE--
ALL ABOUT THE--
ALL ABOUT THE--
ALL ABOUT THE MOM BUCKS!
DROP THE MIC!

SCENE 9 - THE HEFFLEY HOME - HOLIDAY SEQUENCE

GREG is in his living room. It is decorated for Christmas. A giant cardboard box sits in the middle of the room.

GREG

(to audience)

I was all prepared to spend my Mom Bucks on something cool like a jet-pack or a flamethrower, but then I realized: if I cash in too much at once, Mom will know something's up. But if I cash them out little by little, I can make the money last forever. I may never have to get a real job!

GREG begins to open the box.

GREG (CONT'D)

But when December came along, I couldn't help myself. The town's Winter Talent show is happening at our school this year, and if I can win that, I'm sure to be crowned "Most Talented" in the yearbook. So I decided to spend some Mom Bucks on a professional grade Presto Change-o Magician's Box!

With a flourish, he finishes opening the cardboard box, revealing another box within it. It is a large purple and black box covered in silver moons and stars. The words "Presto Change-o" are printed on it in a magical font.

"WINTER TALENT SHOW"

GREG

IT SHOWED UP YESTERDAY. I ORDERED IT ON AMAZON. YOU PUT A PERSON IN, AND PRESTO CHANGE-O, THEN THEY'RE GONE. THEY'RE GONNA SEE ME ON THAT STAGE. THEY'RE GONNA BE LIKE, "WHOA!" I'LL BE IMMORTAL WHEN I WIN THE WINTER TALENT SHOW!

RODRICK enters dressed like a lost member of 'Mötley Crüe' with a studded collar, 'guy-liner,' and a "Löded Diper" T-shirt. HE sneaks up behind Greg.

RODRICK

Talent show?!

GREG

(startled)

AAAAH!

RODRICK

(grabbing Greg)

Listen up, ratface: no one's winning that talent show unless their name is me. You got that?

MOM and DAD enter, getting themselves dressed in holiday attire.

RODRICK (CONT'D)

(letting Greg go)

Besides, you don't stand a chance. Löded Diper's been prepping for this gig for months and tonight...we become LEGENDS!

WE'RE GONNA ROCK 'EM HARD. WE'RE GONNA ROCK THEIR FACES OFF.

THE ONES WITH BRACES GONNA EVEN ROCK THEIR BRACES OFF. WE'LL GET A RECORD DEAL AND MAKE OURSELVES A MIL OR SO JUST FROM THE GIG WE DID AT THIS YEAR'S WINTER TALENT SHOW!

MOM

(dancing)

I'll be cheering along!

RODRICK

(incensed)

Why are you always trying to ruin my life?!

RODRICK stomps away.

DAD

A musician and a magician. Every parent's dream.

A DOORBELL chimes.

MOM

Ooo! That must be the sitter for Manny. 'Date night' is off and running!

MOM runs off.

DAD

(calling after)

I'm pretty sure watching your kids in a school cafetorium is the opposite of 'date night.'

DAD wanders off as ROWLEY runs in.

ROWLEY

Hi!

GREG

Rowley where have you been? We have to rehearse! The show is tonight!

ROWLEY

Wow! The Presto Change-o Box!

GREG

Yeah yeah yeah. Listen. Here's how it's gonna go: You're my Magician's Assistant. Just do everything I say. You stand there. I appear in a cloud of smoke. The lights...change.
(practicing the act)

I'M GREG HEFFLEY. WELCOME TO MY WORLD OF ILLUSION.

ROWLEY

WORLD OF ILLUSION!

GREG

That's good.

EVERYTHING YOU KNOW WILL SOON BE THROWN INTO CONFUSION.

ROWLEY

CONFUSION!

GREG

YOU SEE BEFORE YOU A MAGICAL BOX.
SEALED UP TIGHT WITH MAGICAL LOCKS.
NO ONE CAN GET OUT. NO ONE CAN GET IN.
NOW WATCH THE MAGIC BEGIN!

Then you hop in the box and I make you disappear.

ROWLEY

(nervous)

What?!!

GREG

It's a trick, Rowley. There's a hidden compartment.

ROWLEY

Oh-ho-ho! Sneaky!

GREG

Not sneaky, Rowley. Most talented!

ROWLEY

Yeah!

THEY high-five. Transition to...

SCENE 9A - BACKSTAGE AT SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

The Winter Talent Show is about to start. MRS. CLAYTON welcomes the AUDIENCE as they arrive. MOM and DAD lug the Presto-Change-o box in.

MRS. CLAYTON

IT'S THE NIGHT OF THE YEAR WE ALL LOVE TO BE AT:
THE WINTER TALENT SHOW.
SO MUCH TALENT TO CHEER, SUCH WONDER TO SEE AT
THE WINTER TALENT SHOW.

BEFORE WE HEAR THE REINDEER HOOVES CLIP-CLOPPING,
PREPARE FOR ACTS ASTOUNDINGLY JAW-DROPPING...

MOM

I'M SO PROUD OF MY BOYS, I MIGHT SHED A TEAR AT
THE WINTER TALENT SHOW.

DAD

IT'S A HECK OF A SHAME YOU CAN'T BUY A BEER AT
THE WINTER TALENT SHOW.

BOTH

IT'S NICE TO BE
WITH YOU AND ME,
WATCHING OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN FOR ETERNITY
AT THE WINTER TALENT SHOW.

MRS. CLAYTON leads MOM and DAD off as GREG enters is dressed as a Street Magician in a leather jacket, mesh shirt and skinny black jeans. Cardboard scenery from the school play is nearby. GREG puts the finishing touches on his hair with a can of hairspray.

ROWLEY enters dressed in a sparkling, red lameé blouse.

ROWLEY

Let's make some magic!

GREG

Rowley! Why can't you ever wear something normal?

ROWLEY

You said dress magic-like.

GREG

So you dressed like a Golden Girl?

ROWLEY

(showing off the shirt)

It's my grandma's lucky bingo shirt. Trust me, it's magic. She wins all the time!

MRS. CLAYTON appears with a clipboard.

MRS. CLAYTON

The Great Hefflini?

GREG

At your service!

MRS. CLAYTON

You gentlemen ready?

GREG

We were born ready! Just need someone to move our magic box onto the stage.

MRS. CLAYTON

Sure thing.

(calling off)

Stagehands!

The TEEN HOOLIGANS from Halloween enter. As MRS. CLAYTON exits the HOOLIGANS surround Greg and Rowley, threateningly.

TEEN HOOLIGAN 1

WELL, WELL, WELL, LOOKIE HERE, THE LITTLE PUNKS FROM HALLOWEEN.

TEEN HOOLIGAN 2

WE'RE GONNA TEACH YOU FREAKS A LESSON LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN.

ROWLEY

Uhhh... What do we do now, Greg?

GREG

We...disappear!

GREG sprays his hairspray in the Hooligans' eyes as HE and ROWLEY race away.

TEEN HOOLIGANS
(grabbing their eyes)

Ahhhhh!

The HOOLIGANS scramble off after them just as MRS. CLAYTON reenters.

MRS. CLAYTON
Okay, Great Hefflini, you're--
(looking around)
Where did everybody go? Patty Farrell! You ready?

PATTY enters, takes her gum out of her mouth, and hands it to MRS. CLAYTON.

PATTY FARRELL
Always.

CHUNK! A spotlight hits her. PATTY sparks to life.

PATTY FARRELL (CONT'D)
HOLIDAYS. HOLIDAYS.
LOVE THEM IN A MILLION WAYS.
SNOW IS COLD, SUGAR'S SWEET!
MAKES ME WANT TO MOVE MY FEET!

SHE taps. An American Flag is lowered in. There are sparklers. She spins a flaming baton.

MEANWHILE...GREG and ROWLEY run through the school halls.

ROWLEY
We gotta get out of here!
GREG
No! If we leave, we'll never get to perform!

ROWLEY
And then you'll never be "Most Talented!"

GREG
We've just got to avoid them until it's our turn!

TEEN HOOLIGAN 1
There they are!

GREG & ROWLEY
Ahhhhhhh!

GREG and ROWLEY run off pursued by the HOOLIGANS. Simultaneously, back at the talent show, PATTY finishes.

MRS. CLAYTON

Next up, combining martial arts and the spirit of Hanukkah, here's Chris Hosey and Lionel James, doing Hapkido for the Holidays!

CHRIS HOSEY and LIONEL JAMES come out and bow. They are wearing karate uniforms with blue belts and yarmulkes. A GONG GONGS.

CHRIS HOSEY and LIONEL JAMES break boards to a hora as GREG and ROWLEY have several near misses avoiding the TEEN HOLIGANS.

CHRIS HOSEY & LIONEL JAMES

HEY!
HEY!
HEY!
HEY!

GREG and ROWLEY run to the backstage area.

ROWLEY

(freaking out)

They're coming! We're trapped! There's nowhere to go!

GREG

There is one way we can go... Across the stage!

GREG grabs the cardboard scenery of a GINGERBREAD MAN. ROWLEY grabs another flat of a GUMDROP TREE and THEY sneak off.

MEANWHILE, back at the show, RODRICK and LÖDED DIPER rock the house.

RODRICK

Happy Hell-idays, Diper-loaders! Who wants their chestnuts RRRROASTED?!

RODRICK & BAND

WE'RE LÖDED DIPER!
THE NAME OF OUR BAND IS LÖDED DIPER!

OUR CHRISTMAS STENCH IS GROWING RIPER.
OUR BUTTS WILL BITE YOU LIKE A VIPER. (HISS!)

As the BAND continues, the flats of the gingerbread man and the gumdrop tree begin to sneak their way across the stage (obviously with GREG and ROWLEY hidden behind them).

RODRICK & BAND (CONT'D)
WE'LL TAKE THE NAUGHTY LIST, AND USE IT TO WIPE.

RODRICK
'CAUSE WE'RE GONNA DELIVER A LOADED DIPE.

BAND
GONNA DELIVER A LOADED DIPE!

RODRICK notices the flats moving across.

RODRICK
(*incensed*)
What in the heck are you two doing?!

RODRICK & BAND
WE'LL SHOVE OUR UNDIES DOWN YOUR CHIM-A-NEE PIPE.
'CAUSE WE'RE GONNA DELIVER A LOADED DIPE!
GONNA DELIVER A LOADED DIPE--!

GREG and ROWLEY bump into speakers on the stage. Feedback squeals and chaos reigns. The plug gets pulled and the music comes to a screeching halt.

The curtain quickly comes down as RODRICK grabs Greg.

RODRICK
You ruined our set, turd-breath!

GREG
It's not my fault!

RODRICK
Well, you just signed your own funeral!

TEEN HOOLIGAN 1
Get them!

GREG and ROWLEY toss their scenery at the HOOLIGANS and race off. RODRICK and the BAND follow.

MEANWHILE, in front of the curtain, the talent show continues with FREGLEY entering carrying a small trunk.

FREGLEY

(to the audience)

And now, friends and family! A unique showing of talent!

FREGLEY pulls a ventriloquist doll and a glass of water out of his trunk.

FREGLEY (CONT'D)

Join me and Mr. Scampywinkle as we celebrate the joys of the season!

JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS,
JINGLE ALL THE WAY
I'M GONNA TAKE A DRINK RIGHT NOW.

(to his doll)

WHADDAYA HAVE TO SAY?

HE drinks from the glass, continuing to sing as he pours water down his face.

FREGLEY (CONT'D)

(gurgling)

GLUG GLUG GLUG, GLUG GLUG GLUG,
GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG...
GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG
GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG...

MR. SCAMPYWINKLE

(speaking in an incredibly deep voice)

Isn't he talented?

Behind the curtain, MRS. CLAYTON sets the Presto Change-o box center stage. The TEENS run by.

TEEN HOOLIGAN 1/TEEN

HOOLIGAN 2

They ran this way!/Where did they go?

The TEENS look in the Presto Change-o Box. Nothing.

TEEN HOOLIGAN 1

Not in here. C'mon!

RODRICK and his BAND MEMBERS run by.

BILL WALTER/BAND MEMBER

Where is that little turd!/I think they went this way!

*RODRICK looks in the box.
Nothing.*

RODRICK

Not in here. We're gonna get you freaks!

THEY run off as GREG and ROWLEY cautiously (and magically!) emerge from the box.

MRS. CLAYTON

Oh, there you are! You kids are just in time. You're the last act!

ROWLEY

It's a Christmas miracle!

MRS. CLAYTON exits as THEY get ready for their act.

GREG & ROWLEY

WE MADE IT.

GREG

THOUGHT WE WERE TOAST FOR A MINUTE THERE.

ROWLEY

THOSE TEENAGERS GAVE US QUITE A SCARE.

GREG & ROWLEY

BUT NOW WE'RE SAFE AND SOUND.

WE MADE IT.

GREG

I DON'T KNOW HOW WE MANAGED IT.

ROWLEY

I ONLY PEED A LITTLE BIT.

GREG & ROWLEY

I'M SURE GLAD YOU'RE AROUND.

ME AND YOU.

A COUPLE HOLIDAY CRUSADERS.

FACING THOSE ELEVENTH GRADERS
TO THE BITTER END.

MADE IT THROUGH...

GREG
'CAUSE YOU'RE MY PAL--

ROWLEY
--AND YOU'RE MY BUDDY.

GREG & ROWLEY
AND EVEN WHEN THE DAY GETS CRUDDY...

GREG
YOU'RE MY GOOD FRIEND...

ROWLEY
YOU'RE MY GREAT FRIEND...

GREG
YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND!

ROWLEY
(GASP!) I AM?!?!

*They hear an announcement
onstage.*

MRS. CLAYTON (V.O.)
(with great importance)
And now... Our final act of the evening...

ROWLEY
(elated, lost in a dream)
ALL YEAR LONG, I'D HOPED YOU'D SAY--

MRS. CLAYTON (V.O.)
...an amazing act of daring and wonder...

ROWLEY
--WHAT YOU'VE FINALLY SAID TODAY...

MRS. CLAYTON (V.O.)
...an act so impressive, it basically guarantees popularity
for eternity...

ROWLEY
NOW YOU'VE FINALLY SAID IT. YAY!

GREG
Rowley! Focus!

MRS. CLAYTON (V.O.)

Please welcome The Great Hefflini!

The curtain rises, revealing the audience. GREG launches into his act.

GREG

I'M GREG HEFFLEY. WELCOME TO MY WORLD OF ILLUSION.

ROWLEY

GREG IS MY BEST FRIEND!

GREG

(aside)

Rowley!

GREG (CONT'D)

(to audience)

EVERYTHING YOU KNOW WILL SOON BE THROWN INTO CONFUSION!

ROWLEY

MAGIC WITH MY BEST FRIEND!

GREG

(hotter)

Rowley!

(to audience)

And now, prepare to be spellbound, as my magical assistant--

ROWLEY

Your BEST magical assistant!

GREG

(shoving Rowley into the box)

--stops talking and gets into the Presto Change-o box!

ROWLEY

Anything for you, best--

GREG slams the door of the box.

GREG

WATCH ME WEAVE MY MAGICAL SPELL.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN? POOF! NO ONE CAN TELL.

FLIBITTY FLABBITY, WORDS THAT ARE WEIRD--

ROWLEY HAS DISAPPEARED!

POOF! The Presto Change-o Box flies open: ROWLEY is gone!

GREG (CONT'D)

Presto! My assistant is--

ROWLEY comes bursting out of the hidden compartment.

ROWLEY

Right here, amigo! I would never disappear on you! 'Cause that's the true meaning of friendship!!

ROWLEY begins to dance around the stage, deliriously fueled by his newfound status.

ROWLEY (CONT'D)

AND THE MOST MAGICAL TRICK OF ALL
IS GREG IS MY BEST FRIEND!

The AUDIENCE starts to laugh at them.

AUDIENCE KID 1

Ha ha ha haaa!

ROWLEY

ALLAKAZAM! ALLAKAWHAM!
EVERYTHING CHANGED IN A MOMENT.

AUDIENCE KID 2

This is hilarious!

ROWLEY

SANTA, THERE'S JUST ONE GIFT
I WANTED YOU TO SEND.
AND HERE IT IS...

AUDIENCE MEMBER 3

How embarrassing!

ROWLEY

YEAH, HERE IT IS...

AUDIENCE MEMBER 4

You have no talent!

ROWLEY

GREG HEFFLEY'S MY BEST FRIEND!
AND I WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW!

BRYCE ANDERSON

What a loser!

The AUDIENCE ERUPTS in laughter.

GREG

I'M STUCK IN THE MIDDLE!

ROWLEY

MY BEST FRIEND!

GREG

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE!

RODRICK

I'M GONNA THRASH YOU, MAGICAL DORK!

GREG

I CAN FEEL MY RANKING SLAM AGAINST A WALL.

TEEN HOOLIGANS

WE'RE GONNA GET OUR REVENGE!

GREG

I'M HUMILIATED,
AND ROWLEY'S ELATED,

EVERYONE ELSE

FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA!
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!

GREG (CONT'D)

SO I'M BEGGING, SOMEONE, LET THE CURTAIN FALL.

PATTY/YVETTE/PAULINE/KIDS

WE'RE NEVER GONNA LET YOU LIVE THIS DOWN!

GREG

'CAUSE I'M STUCK HERE IN THE MIDDLE...

EVERYONE ELSE

LIKE THE BOTTOM OF THE MIDDLE...

GREG

I AM STUCK HERE IN THE MIDDLE--

EVERYONE ELSE

IN THE MIDDLE-- (IN THE MIDDLE--)

Everything freezes in a tableau.

GREG suddenly has an epiphany:

GREG

(to the audience)

And that's the moment I realized exactly what's been holding me back this entire year...Rowley!

ALL

THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL!

*ROWLEY happily puts his arm
around Greg.*

GREG

(to audience)

I've got to get rid of this kid!

Curtain!

Broadway Licensing Perusal
NOT FOR PRODUCTION

SECOND SEMESTER

SCENE 1 - A CONCERT

Pulsing music. Suddenly, an ANNOUNCER with an unidentifiable European accent can be heard.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Ladies und Gentlemen! Und six-year-old girls! Live! From Europe! It's JOSHIE!

Sounds of screaming children as a CROWD rushes the stage. Then, JOSHIE hits the stage wearing lip gloss and some kind of flashy "Thriller"-era type outfit. HE gives the crowd a big thumbs up.

"ANIMAL HEART"

JOSHIE

DIS IS FOR ALL DE GIRLS
WHO WANTS TO BE NICE PEOPLE
NICE, NICE PEOPLE

JOSHIE & GIRLS

I'VE GOT AN ANIMAL HEART
I'VE GOT AN ANIMAL HEART
A WILD, WILD ANIMAL HEART

JOSHIE

MY HEART IS FULL OF LOVE.
AND PUNCTUALI-TAY.
I WILL ARRIVE ON TIME.
WHEN YOU ARRIVE WITH M-AY.

JOSHIE & GIRLS

ANIMAL HEART.
I'VE GOT AN ANIMAL HEART.
A WILD, WILD ANIMAL HEART.

JOSHIE

I'LL TAKE AN OLD LADY'S HAND
AND WALK HER ACROSS THE STREET.
OH, I AM SO POLITE
TO EVERYONE I MEET.

I WILL TAKE OUT THE TRASH
A-WHEN MY TRASH IS FULL.
AND I WILL WASH MY HANDS,
'CAUSE I'M AN ANIMAL.

JOSHIE GIRLS

ANIMAL HEART.

JOSHIE

AN ANIMAL HEART IS WHAT I GOT.

JOSHIE GIRLS

HE'S GOT AN ANIMAL HEART.

JOSHIE

I SHARE IT WITH YOU 'CAUSE WE'RE FRIENDS A LOT.

JOSHIE GIRLS

ANIMAL HEART.

A WILD, WILD ANIMAL HEART.

JOSHIE

MY BEST FRIEND!

JOSHIE & GIRLS

GREG IS MY BEST FRIEND!

SCENE 1A - GREG'S ROOM

GREG wakes in his bed with a start.

GREG

Gah! Joshie! No!

(he looks around)

I've been having the craziest dreams lately. And it's all because of Rowley. He's been calling me his "best friend" all. The. Time. It's obviously driving me nuts!

ROWLEY appears from nowhere. He is dressed like Joshie. It is terrifying.

ROWLEY

Hey, best friend!

GREG

Ahh! Rowley! What are you doing in my bedroom?

ROWLEY

C'mon! Let's dance!!!

GREG, DO YOU LIKE THIS JOSHIE SONG?
IF YOU LIKE IT, YOU SHOULD SING ALONG.
GREG IS THE COOLEST KID IN THE WORLD.
AND NOW WE LIKE THE SAME STUFF.

GOT AN ANIMAL HEART TO SHARE WITH YOU.
AND I'M GONNA GO EVERYWHERE WITH YOU.

AND I'M GONNA GO BUILD-A-BEAR WITH YOU.
'CAUSE THAT'S WHAT BESTEST FRIENDS SHOULD DO!!!

JOSHIE and the GIRLS appear.

JOSHIE & GIRLS

ANIMAL HEART!

ROWLEY

GOT AN ANIMAL HEART I'D LOVE TO SHARE!

JOSHIE & GIRLS

PLATONIC ANIMAL HEART FOR YOU!

GREG

What's going on?!

ROWLEY

I'LL SHARE MY ANIMAL HEART!

JOSHIE, GIRLS & ROWLEY

THAT'S HALF AN ANIMAL HEART FOR YOU, GREG!

*The COMPANY gradually joins
Rowley, it becomes a flashmob.*

MOM & DAD

ANIMAL HEART!

GREG

Mom and Dad! Oh no!

RODRICK & MANNY

I'VE GOT AN ANIMAL HEART FOR YOU!

GREG

Rodrick! Manny! Not you too!

CHIRAG GUPTA & FREGLEY

I'VE GOT AN ANIMAL HEART!

GREG

This is a nightmare!!!

PATTY/YVETTE/PAULINE

I'VE GOT AN ANIMAL HEART FOR YOU!

FULL COMPANY MINUS GREG

GREG!

WE'VE GOT AN ANIMAL HEART!

ROWLEY

MY BEST FRIEND!

FULL COMPANY MINUS GREG
WE'VE GOT AN ANIMAL HEART FOR YOU!

ROWLEY
GREG IS MY BEST FRIEND!

FULL COMPANY MINUS GREG
ANIMAL HEART!

ROWLEY
BFF FOREVER!

FULL COMPANY MINUS GREG
ANIMAL HEART FOR YOU!
GREG, FOR YOU!
FOR YOU!
ANIMAL HEART FOR YOU!
GREG!!!!!!
ANIMAL HEART!
FOR YOU!
GREG, ANIMAL HEART!
GREG!!!!!!
ANIMAL HEART FOR YOU!

GREG
It's still going.

FULL COMPANY MINUS GREG
ANIMAL HEART FOR YOU, GREG!
ANIMAL HEART!
YEAH!!!!!!!!!!
HEART!

SCENE 2 - SCHOOL HALLWAY

RING! The school bell rings and GREG snaps out of his Joshie nightmare. HE walks down the hallway as STUDENTS mill about.

GREG
(to audience)

It's the beginning of the second semester and sources tell me the yearbook committee is in full swing. That means, if I'm gonna be a Class Favorite, time is running out. So I decided to cash in a wad of Mom Bucks and buy myself the trendiest jacket I could Google.

GREG pulls a on a brightly colored, brazenly stylish jacket from his locker and puts it on. A KID walks by and compliments him.

KID

Sick jacket, Heffley.

GREG

Thanks.

(to himself)

If this doesn't make me "Best Dressed," nothing else will.

ROWLEY skips in. He is wearing the exact same style of jacket.

ROWLEY

Hey, best buddy!

GREG

Rowley, what in the name of heck are you doing?!

ROWLEY

Isn't it awesome! Now we're the best dressed kids in the whole school!

The OVERGROWN KIDS walk by.

OVERGROWN KID 1

Is there something wrong with my eyes? 'Cause I'm seeing double dorks!

OVERGROWN KID 1 & 2

(LAUGH)

THEY high-five and exit. GREG takes off his jacket and throws it into a nearby trash can.

GREG

And so, another dream dies.

ROWLEY

What's the matter? Don't you wanna be "matchies?"

GREG

No, Rowley! I don't want to be "matchies!" I don't want you copying me all the time!

ROWLEY

But we're best friends for life! B.F.F.Ls! Biffles! Ha ha!

PATTY FARRELL walks by holding a dodgeball and wearing professional-looking sport goggles.

PATTY FARRELL

Looks like dodgeball week has finally arrived. See you in gym class, Greg Heffley...

SHE slams the ball in her hands, threateningly, then continues off.

ROWLEY

Don't worry, my little biffle! I'll be your human shield! I'll never leave your side!

ROWLEY runs off.

GREG

(calling after him)

No! I don't want a human shield, Rowley! All I want is--

MR. WINSKY appears. He speaks like a former FBI agent.

MR. WINSKY

All you want is to be part of something bigger than yourself. To protect and serve your fellow man.

GREG

Huh?

MR. WINSKY

Ring ring.

GREG

(Awkward pause) Um... I'm not--

MR. WINSKY

Ring ring. That's destiny calling, Heffley. You gonna pick up? Or let it go to voice mail?

GREG

Mr. Winsky, I don't really understand--

MR. WINSKY

SAFETY PATROL!

GREG

Huh?

MR. WINSKY

SAFETY PATROL!

Got one spot left. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Escorting kindergarteners home from school. You in?

GREG

Uhh, thanks. But I don't think--

MR. WINSKY

There's free hot chocolate. And you get to miss gym.

GREG

(saluting)

I am at your service, Mr. Winsky!

(calling off)

Adios, Rowley!!

SCENE 3 - OUTSIDE MR. WINSKY'S OFFICE/STREETS

MR. WINSKY dresses Greg in a badge and sash. He hands him a mini stop sign and a long rope to lead a group of KINDERGARTENERS along behind him.

"SAFETY PATROL"

MR. WINSKY

A BRAND NEW SHERIFF JUST CAME TO TOWN!

ENSEMBLE

SAFETY PATROL! SAFETY PATROL!

MR. WINSKY

THEY RUN WITH SCISSORS, YOU RUN 'EM DOWN.

ENSEMBLE

SAFETY PATROL. SAFETY PATROL.

MR. WINSKY

YOU'LL GET THOSE KIDS HOME IN A FLASH.
AND WEAR THIS ROCKIN' SAFETY SASH.

ENSEMBLE

SAFETY PATROL!

MR. WINSKY

LET NO ONE SCRAPE THEIR KNEES.

ENSEMBLE

SAFETY PATROL!

MR. WINSKY

WATCH OUT FOR SUVs.

ENSEMBLE

SAFETY PATROL!

MR. WINSKY

"KEEP CHILDREN SAFE" IS YOUR GOAL.
(+GREG:) DON'T MESS WITH THE SAFETY PATROL!

(MORE)

MR. WINSKY (CONT'D)

And before you go on your first mission, young Heffley, allow me to introduce your Safety Patrol deputy.

GREG

Deputy?

ROWLEY enters.

ROWLEY

Look! It's me!!

HOORAY, THERE'S SAFETY WORK TO DO.

GREG

HOORAY, THERE'S NO ESCAPING YOU.

Even though they're just helping the toddlers across the street, ROWLEY behaves as though they are Special Ops on the most dangerous mission of their lives. GREG is underwhelmed.

ALL

HOLD HANDS!
SINGLE FILE!
LOOK LEFT!
LOOK RIGHT!
WAIT!

THERE'S A CAR.
HERE COMES THE CAR.

THE CAR HAS PASSED!

NOW WE WALK!
LET'S GO!

SAFETY PATROL!

ROWLEY

OBEY MY FRIEND, OKAY?

ALL

SAFETY PATROL!

GREG

ONCOMING TRAFFIC. YAY.

ALL

SAFETY PATROL!

GREG

HE'S GONNA SWALLOW ME WHOLE...

ALL
DON'T MESS WITH THE SAFETY...
DON'T MESS WITH THE SAFETY PATROL!

*Button! The BOYS make their way
back to the school lockers.*

SCENE 4 - SCHOOL HALLWAY

GREG
(to audience)
I know I had my doubts, but Safety Patrol is surprisingly okay. And the free hot chocolate is a nice perk. The only downside is...

*ROWLEY buddies up to him,
pointing to their mouths.*

ROWLEY
Look at us! Two buddies with hot cocoa mustaches! Ha ha!

GREG
I'm not your buddy, Rowley.

ROWLEY
That's right! You're my biffle!

GREG
Will you stop calling me your biffle? We are not biffles, you understand? We're not even biffs!

ROWLEY
(a little concerned)
What do you mean?

GREG
Think of it this way: I'm like a boat and you're the anchor, get it? And if I'm going to sail to Popularity Island, there's really no other way for me to get there unless...

*Through the school intercom
system, we hear FEEDBACK. Then
VICE PRINCIPAL ROY'S voice.*

VICE PRINCIPAL ROY (V.O.)
(droning on, monotone)
Attention, students. Mrs. Ira would like to announce that the school paper is looking for a new cartoonist.

GREG takes sudden interest.

GREG
It was like the voice of an angel.

VICE PRINCIPAL ROY (V.O.)

If you wish to be considered, please submit a sample comic strip to Mrs. Ira in room 304. Have a wonderful weekend, students.

STUDENTS exit and GREG makes his way home. ROWLEY follows.

GREG

(beaming, to Rowley)

A new cartoonist?! Other than video games, comics are what I was born to do!

ROWLEY

Yeah!

THEY make their way to Greg's house.

"DOIN' MY THING"

GREG

I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL YEAR LONG
FOR SOMETHING WORTH PURSUING.
SOMETHING DUMB, TO HELP ME RISE ABOVE THE REST.

MAYBE I'VE BEEN THINKING WRONG.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I LIKE DOING.
MAYBE I SHOULD DO WHAT I LIKE DOING BEST.

You remember Bryan Little? He was the last cartoonist for the school paper, and that kid was a celebrity.

ROWLEY

Yeah he was!

GREG

FORGET "BEST HAIR" AND "CUTEST SMILE."
THEY'LL NEVER MAKE ME SHINE.
CARTOONING'S NOT "ONE STUPID THING,"
IT ISN'T JUST "ONE STUPID THING"...
IT'S MINE...

SCENE 4A - THE HEFFLEY HOME - KITCHEN

ROWLEY and GREG gather around the kitchen table with notebooks and pencils.

GREG (CONT'D)

DOIN' MY THING.
HAVIN' MY SAY.
MAKIN' SURE NO ONE GETS IN MY WAY
EVER AGAIN.

I'LL PICK UP A PEN.

AND DOIN' MY THING,
MAKIN' MY ART,
FINALLY I'M FINDIN' ME A NEW START
I CAN SEE THROUGH.
I'LL FINALLY DO THE THING I LIKE TO DO.

ROWLEY

This is gonna be the best cartoon ever!

GREG

Shh. Let me concentrate.

THE HARDEST PART OF STARTING OUT
IS SPARKING INSPIRATION.
DOING SOMETHING NEW, THAT NO ONE EVER DID.

ONCE YOU'VE GOT THE FIRST IDEA,
THE REST IS JUST VACATION.
HOW ABOUT...WE HAVE ONE GUY WHO'S JUST A KID.

ROWLEY

Yeah! TWO guys who are just kids.

*As GREG starts sketching, two
CARTOON KIDS appear on the other
side of the stage. THEY look a
little like Greg and Rowley.*

GREG

Yeah, but really dumb looking guys.

ROWLEY

(giggling)

Yeah, super dumb looking!

GREG

And these idiots are doing something together.

ROWLEY

Yeah, something really dumb!

GREG

Yeah. But it needs to be really funny too.

ROWLEY

Yeah! Let's think of something really funny!

GREG

Yeah. Let me think of something really funny.

THEY sit in silence for a while.

ROWLEY

I can't think of anything.

GREG

This is gonna be harder than I thought. How about this.

GREG sketches something while his cartoon comes to life (on stage or projected), underscored by a cheesy bossa nova tune on a Wurlitzer-organ.

CARTOON KID 1

(pointing at the ground)

Step on a crack, break your mother's back.

CARTOON KID 2

Yeah, right.

CARTOON KID 2 stomps on the crack. A CARTOON DOCTOR enters and addresses CARTOON KID 2.

CARTOON DOCTOR

(officially)

Hey, Timmy, your mother slipped on a banana peel, and P.S. she is dead.

CARTOON KID 2 grabs the sides of his head, and looks at the audience with his eyes crossed.

CARTOON KID 2

ZOO-WEE MAMA!

This sends ROWLEY into hysterics.

ROWLEY

(laughing)

ZOO-WEE MAMA! Ha ha! That's funny! ZOO-WEE MAMAAA!

GREG

ZOO-WEE MAMAAA!

ROWLEY

ZOO-WEE MAMAAAAAAA!!!

GREG

THAT WAS SUPER EASY!

ROWLEY

YOU'VE GOT GREAT IDEAS TO BURN!

GREG

I'LL WRITE AND DRAW THIS NEXT ONE. WATCH AND LEARN.

DOIN' MY THING.

ROWLEY

WHAT ABOUT ME?

GREG

YOU CAN DRAW BOXES 'ROUND THE PICTURES.

ROWLEY

GEE, THAT'S ALL?

GREG

HEY, THAT ISN'T SMALL.

THAT IS YOUR *THING*.

THIS THING IS MINE.

BOTH ARE IMPORTANT.

ROWLEY

OKAY, FINE, FINE,

I'LL FOLLOW YOU.

...BUT GREG, I WANNA WRITE AND DRAW ONE TOO.

GREG

You can write the next one.

ROWLEY

I wanna write this one!

GREG

Fine. Knock yourself out.

ROWLEY

(giggling)

Okay!

ROWLEY starts to write. Cheesy funny music plays. A CARTOON KID come to life, waiting in line at a fast food restaurant. A CARTOON CASHIER is at the register. The same cheesy music underscores.

CARTOON KID 1

I have been waiting three hours to get a hamburger.

CARTOON CASHIER

Next.

CARTOON KID 1

One hamburger please.

CARTOON CASHIER
I'm sorry, sir, we are all sold out.

CARTOON KID 1
NOOOOO!

CARTOON KID 1 faints. The CASHIER looks at the audience with her eyes crossed and says...

CARTOON CASHIER
ZOO-WEE MAMA!

ROWLEY laughs hysterically.

ROWLEY
ZOO-WEE MAMA!

GREG
(not finding it as funny)
Zoo-wee mama.

ROWLEY
ZOO-WEE MAMAAAAAAA!

GREG
I'm gonna write something new.

ROWLEY
No, let's do another ZOO-WEE MAMAAAA!

GREG
I have a better idea. This one's going to be comic GOLD. The main character is a real idiot. I call him..."Creighton The Cretin."

GREG sketches and a new cartoon character appears -- CREIGHTON THE CRETIN. He is a ridiculous looking kid with huge buck teeth. CARTOON JINGLE SINGERS can be heard singing a kind of theme song.

CARTOON JINGLE SINGERS
(O.S.)
CREIGHTON THE CRETIN!
BY GREG HEFFLEY!

Silly, cheesy music. The CARTOON DOCTOR enters.

CREIGHTON THE CRETIN

Doctor, could I have a new butt? My old one has a crack in it.

CARTOON DOCTOR

Creighton, I told you a million times, everyone's butt has a crack in it.

CREIGHTON THE CRETIN

Oh yeah, I forgot.

CREIGHTON shrugs and smiles at the audience.

CARTOON JINGLE SINGERS
(O.S.)

CREIGHTON THE CRETIN!

ROWLEY is not amused.

ROWLEY

When does he say, "Zoo-wee Mama"?

GREG

He doesn't.

ROWLEY

Why not?

GREG

Because it's a different cartoon.

ROWLEY

But I like the old cartoons.

GREG

Then you do Zoo-wee Mama and I'll do mine.

ROWLEY

But I thought we were doing them together.

GREG

No, we're NOT doing them together.

ROWLEY

Why not?

"BETTER THAN YOU (REPRISE)"

GREG

STOP! JUST STOP IT! HOW MUCH CAN I TAKE?
I HAVEN'T HAD A BREAK FROM YOU SINCE...WINTER BREAK.
I DIDN'T WANNA SAY IT, BUT WE BOTH KNOW IT'S TRUE.
FACE IT, ROWLEY. I'M--

A painful beat.

ROWLEY

Okay, then I guess I'm just gonna go home then.

GREG

Okay, then I guess you are then.

ROWLEY

Okay, then. Well, bye-bye then.

GREG

Okay, bye then.

ROWLEY gathers his Zoo-wee Mama cartoons together and goes.

GREG (CONT'D)

THIS IS MY THING.

THIS IS NOT HIS.

MAYBE IT'S LOUSY, BUT, THAT'S SHOWBIZ.

NO ROOM FOR TWO.

DAD has wandered on and glances over Greg's Creighton cartoon.

DAD

"My butt has a crack in it." Ha ha! That's not bad.

DAD continues off.

GREG

I GOTTA DO THE THING I LIKE TO DO.

SCENE 5 - CLASSROOM

The school bell RINGS and GREG takes his seat among other STUDENTS. The place is decorated for Valentine's Day.

GREG

(to audience)

It's been a week since I turned in my comic. I don't want to jinx anything, but things are going pretty well for me. My popularity ranking seems to be holding in the mid-80's.

MRS. CLAYTON pulls the USA map down next to GREG and -- BING! The number "86" appears above his head.

GREG (CONT'D)

And this morning has the potential to get even better.

Through the school intercom system, we hear VICE PRINCIPAL ROY'S voice.

VICE PRINCIPAL ROY (V.O.)
(droning on, monotone)
...and finally, Mrs. Ira is happy to announce the new cartoonist for the school paper.

GREG
This is it. This is the moment for which I was born.

VICE PRINCIPAL ROY (V.O.)
The new cartoonist...for the school paper...is...

VP ROY begins to have a coughing fit.

VICE PRINCIPAL ROY (V.O.)
(COUGH, COUGH, COUGH) Excuse me. The new cartoo-- *(COUGH, COUGH, COUGH)*

GREG
(impatiently)
Spit it out!

VICE PRINCIPAL ROY (V.O.)
Excuse me. The new cartoonist is Greg Heffley.

STUDENTS
(GASP!)

Every STUDENT looks at GREG, whose mouth hangs open in shock and amazement.

GREG
EVER SINCE I REACHED THAT DOOR...
THIS IS WHAT I'VE WAITED FOR,
I'M NO LOSER ANYMORE.
JUST LOOK AT WHAT I MADE:

RING! The school bell rings. The STUDENTS all exit to their next class, grabbing copies of the school newspaper as they go.

GREG (CONT'D)
I MADE IT!
MY NEW CARTOON IS MY TICKET UP.
I'LL TAKE A SIP FROM THE COOL KID CUP.
SO DON'T THROW SHADE.

I MADE IT!

*Other KIDS fill his FANTASY
gospel-shout style, dancing
around with Valentine hearts and
school candygrams.*

KIDS

HE MADE IT!

GREG

I'M SUPER FLY AND I'M SUPER FINE.

KIDS

SUPER FINE!

GREG

THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD IS MY VALENTINE!

KIDS

VALENTINE!

GREG

SO WATCH ME SHINE.
I MADE IT THROUGH!

KIDS

MADE IT THROUGH...
OO...

GREG

I WASN'T SURE I KNEW THE WAY HERE.
BUT NOW I MADE IT, IMMA STAY HERE.
IN THE HIGHEST HIGHS.

KIDS

HE'S A MIDDLE SCHOOL GOD, YOU GUYS!

*GREG looks at his picture in the
school paper.*

GREG

ME AND YOU!

KIDS

ME AND YOUUUU...

GREG

I COULDN'T PICK A TRUER TRUE PAL.
AND SO THE ONLY THING TO DO, PAL,
IS TO RISE AND RISE...

KIDS

AND RISE AND RISE! AND RISE AND RISE!

SCENE 5A - SCHOOL HALLWAY

GREG walks through the hallway, watching all of the STUDENTS reading their papers.

SOME STUDENTS open their lockers near Greg, revealing his popularity number: "15". DING!!

ROWLEY approaches him, offering one of the many Valentine's Day cards he's handing out.

ROWLEY

Hey Greg. Congrats on being cartoonist. I'm real sorry about the whole...you know.

GREG

Forget it, Rowley. Everything's right with the world again!

KIDS

HE MADE IT! (HE MADE IT!)
NOW EVERY KID'S GONNA KNOW HIS NAME!
GREG HEFFLEY, KING OF CARTOONING FAME!
HE'S SUCH A BIG SUCCESS!

OVERGROWN KID

ARE YOU GREG HEFFLEY?

GREG

(proudly)

YES!

ALL

YESS!!!!!!!!!!

Everything suddenly stops as MR. WINSKY appears.

MR. WINSKY

(deadly serious)

Rowley Jefferson! Into my office, you cold-hearted weasel...

Confused, ROWLEY leaves and follows MR. WINSKY off.

PATTY and other KIDS eavesdrop at Winsky's office door.

GREG

(to Patty)

What's going on?

KIDS
(*shushing Greg*)

SHHH!

PATTY FARRELL
(*to the others*)
Mr. Winsky is kicking Rowley off the Safety Patrol!

ALL
(GASP!)

ROWLEY enters sadly.

GREG
What happened?

ROWLEY
(*sad and confused*)
He said somebody saw me push the kindergartners into a construction ditch.

GREG
What?

ROWLEY
He said he's gonna take my badge away if I don't confess. But I didn't do it! I didn't do it!

ROWLEY starts to cry as he walks away. The other STUDENTS disperse and exit.

GREG
(*to audience*)
Rowley seems genuinely shocked and confused by the whole thing. And that's not surprising because, just between you and me, here's what REALLY happened...

SCENE 6 - FLASHBACK

We hear a sad, minor version of the "Creighton the Cretin" jingle.

CARTOON JINGLE SINGERS
(O.S.)

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED
BY GREG HEFFLEY

THUNDER BOOMS! In flashback, GREG and ROWLEY prepare to go on Safety Patrol. The whole sequence plays out like a nursery rhyme for kids.

GREG

'Twas a day both grey and rainy,
or so the weatherman did report.

GREG & ROWLEY

But we of The Safety Patrol
had little children to escort!

GREG

Neither rain nor snow would stop us,
so we started on our mission...

ROWLEY

(realizing)

(Gasp!) I cannot go! I have a check-up
with my pediatrician!

GREG

Poor Rowley had to stay behind.
He had no other choice.

ROWLEY hands Greg his pancho.

ROWLEY

Here! Take my pancho! It will shield you
from the rain, so moist.

*GREG puts it on and heads out
into the rain as ROWLEY fades
off.*

GREG

And thus, alone, I braved the storm
without my trusty partner.
And, with a pancho, rope and sign,
I fetched each kindergartner.

KINDERGARTENERS

And, with a pancho, rope and sign,
He fetched each kindergartner.

*GREG leads the KINDERGARTNERS
down the street with his rope.*

GREG

I led them through the elements.
I showed no trace of fear.

ONE KINDERGARTNER

I had a accident in my pants.

GREG

I pretended not to hear.

(MORE)

GREG (CONT'D)

But a few blocks in,
I saw a sight that made me quake; for lo!
It was those post-pubescent teens
From the Winter Talent Show!

Sound of SQUEALING TIRES.

ONE KINDERGARTNER

It's High Schoolers!

ANOTHER KINDERGARTNER

They're dwivin' toward us!

GREG

They gave me quite a scare!
They'd kill me if they saw me,
so I hauled butt outta there!

KINDERGARTENERS

They'd kill him if they saw him,
So he hauled butt outta there!

*HE runs down the street, dragging
the Kindergartners behind him.
Tires SQUEAL.*

GREG

The teens were closing in on us
at such a fevered pitch,
So, naturally, I grabbed the tykes
and shoved them in a ditch.

*GREG pushes the KINDERGARTENERS,
sending them flying into the
ditch.*

KINDERGARTENERS

AAAAAH!

GREG

I leapt inside the hole with them.
We hid there, in that yard.

*The KINDERGARTNERS peek out from
the hole.*

YET ANOTHER KINDERGARTENER

The teens drove by while we all wept,
emotionally scarred.

GREG

And since I was dressed up
in this poncho at the time,
(MORE)

GREG (CONT'D)

Somebody must've seen and thought
'twas Rowley did the crime.

KINDERGARTENERS

Ohhhhhh.

ONE KINDERGARTENER

That makes a lot of sense actually.

*The KINDERGARTNERS fade off,
while Greg removes the pancho.*

SCENE 7 - HEFFLEY HOME - KITCHEN

*The flashback fades back to the
present, as GREG slumps at the
kitchen table.*

GREG

(to audience)

My rank of popularity
was finally on the rise.
It's bound to plummet down
for every kid I traumatized.

So now I've got this big dilemma
that's filling me with shame:
Should I tell everyone the truth?
Or let Rowley take the blame?

MOM enters.

MOM

Greg? Are you okay?

GREG

Yeah.

MOM

You sure nothing's bothering you?

GREG

Well... I kinda have a tough decision to make. And I'm not
really sure what to do.

MOM sits next to him.

MOM

Hm. Well, I don't know what happened, of course. But I do
know that the older you get, the more of these kinds of
decisions you're gonna have to face.

"DO THE RIGHT THING, GREG"

MOM (CONT'D)

I BET MIDDLE SCHOOL'S A CHALLENGE. JUST A GUESS, LOVE.
BET YOU TRY AND TRY, AND STILL, YOU END UP BURNED.
I'M A GROWNUP, BUT I'VE FACED MY SHARE OF MESS, LOVE.
AND I'VE LEARNED:

DO THE RIGHT THING, GREG.
MAKE A HARD CHOICE.
THEN YOU'LL TAKE WING, GREG.
THEN YOU'LL FIND VOICE.
OH, WHEN YOU ARE WANDERING,
WHEN YOU ARE LOST,
DO THE RIGHT THING, GREG,
DO THE RIGHT THING...
AT ANY COST.

GREG

But...what if you don't know what the right thing is?

MOM

Just look deep inside your heart. Once you find it, you'll know.

MOM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

OH, IT MAKES YOU STRONGER.
IT MAKES YOU YOU.
SO DO THE RIGHT THING, GREG.
THIS IS WHAT MATTERS.
AND AS LONG AS WE'RE TALKING,
THAT'S WHAT I'D DO.

GREG walks away in thought.

GREG

(to audience)

Well, I was up all night tossing and turning over this Rowley situation. But I looked inside. And finally made up my mind.

(beat, then happily)

I let Rowley take one for the team!

In another area of the stage, MR. WINSKY rips ROWLEY's Safety Patrol badge off of him.

ROWLEY

(crying)

I was fraaaaaamed!

GREG grabs two mugs of hot cocoa and returns to MOM. Greg's CONSCIENCE CHOIR appears out of the ether.

GREG

(to Mom)

I DID THE RIGHT THING, MOM!

CONSCIENCE CHOIR

RIGHT THING, MOM!

GREG

I WORKED IT ALL OUT.

CONSCIENCE CHOIR

'S'WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT!

GREG

AND THOUGH IT MIGHT STING, MOM,

CONSCIENCE CHOIR

MIGHT STING, MOM!

GREG

I KNOW BEYOND DOUBT...

GREG (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

OH, THAT I AM SERVING
A GREATER GOOD.

I DID THE RIGHT THING, MOM.
I GRABBED THE BRASS RING,
MOM.

CONSCIENCE CHOIR

OH! MM, SERVING!

(SOLO:) OH, HE'S DOIN' WHAT
HE SHOULD.

OOH, THING MOM.
OOH, RING MOM.

GREG (CONT'D)

AND I BROUGHT US HOT CHOCOLATE.

MOM

THANK YOU, HONEY...

GREG

I DID THE RIGHT THING, MOM.

MOM

I KNEW YOU WOULD.

GREG

(to the audience)

This is a beautiful moment.

*MOM and GREG clink their mugs of
cocoa together and take a sip.*

CONSCIENCE CHOIR

AAH...

*In another part of the stage,
ROWLEY appears, distraught.*

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