

THE HARSHER

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A Play of Suspense in One Act

by

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# THE HARSHER

## CHARACTERS

### STUDENTS

MAYA (f)  
BAILEY (f)  
CAM (m)  
SCRUB (m)  
KIKI (f)  
JACE(m)  
MICKEY (m)  
ELLE(f)  
DEEKA (f)  
NADINE (f)  
RUNE (n)  
E.J. (n)  
FRANKLIN (m)  
KLIMPY (m)

VOICE OVER P.A. SYSTEM (n)

THE HARSHER (n)

### SETTING

|         |   |               |
|---------|---|---------------|
| SCENE 1 | Ms. Wanda's classroom<br>in Chippewa High School          | Present       |
| SCENE 2 | Ms. Wanda's classroom                                     | Weeks later   |
| SCENE 3 | Ms. Wanda's classroom<br>later                            | A week or so  |
| SCENE 4 | Ms. Wanda's classroom                                     | Hours later   |
| SCENE 5 | The halls and engineering<br>room of Chippewa High School | Moments later |
| SCENE 6 | The theatre in Chippewa<br>High School                    | Moments later |

## THE HARSHER

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- (iv) Times and dates of performances.

A fee will be charged for this licence which must be paid prior to the first performance otherwise the licence is automatically cancelled and the performance becomes illegal.

# THE HARSHER

## Scene One

(SETTING: Ms. Wanda's chemistry lab classroom in Chippewa High School prior to the start of the school day. A door leads to the hallway, and a clock hangs on the wall. There are four lab tables with stools so that the characters may stand or sit and still be at relatively the same height. There should be a Periodic Table of Elements on the wall along with shelves of chemistry books and/or chemistry related models, etc. There's a door leading to the supply closet of unseen chemicals, flasks, Bunsen burners, etc. The white board should have miscellaneous information written on it including the sign of Ophiuchus, which is a U with a flattened sine wave through the middle of it.

AT RISE: It's preferred that a curtain be used to begin and end the play. SCRUB is alone with his breakfast at a lab table. SCRUB is the only character who wears shorts, and he always wears them. KLIMPY is alone at another table. His head is down on the table and remains there. ALL STUDENTS whose entrances are not specifically mentioned in this scene should enter and silently interact in the background. ALL STUDENTS entering should have school supplies.)

## THE HARSHER

BAILEY

(Enters, stylishly dressed.)  
Don't play with your food.

SCRUB

I'm not playing; I'm dissecting.

BAILEY

It's chem, Scrub, not biology.

SCRUB

Observe, Bailey. Independently, the bacon, the egg, the cheese, and the biscuit are tasty components. But once combined...

(Takes a large bite.)

It's pure synergy - all parts greater than the whole!

BAILEY

I hate when we're the first two here.

(JACE enters.)

BAILEY

Hey, Jace.

JACE

Bailey.

BAILEY

Scrub is dissecting his bacon, egg, and cheese biscuit.

SCRUB

It's comprised of bacon, egg, cheese, and a biscuit.

JACE

(Opening his laptop computer.)

Genius.

SCRUB

Jealous!

(Takes another bite of sandwich.)

And scrumptious!

JACE

Did you guys solve the balancing equations on the back of the worksheet?

BAILEY

Ummmm, back?

JACE

(He bounces back and forth from writing on his homework to typing on his laptop.)

It's down as covalent bonding. The only way to transfer the sodium atom to chlorine is through ionic bonding.

## THE HARSHER

BAILEY

We didn't have to do the back.

JACE

Then the sodium ion and the chlorine ion could combine.

BAILEY

I,uhh... No... I don't think... Scrub, did we have to do the back?

JACE

2,8,1. 2,8,7. 2,8. 2,8,8.

BAILEY

Jace, did we have to do the back?

JACE

I don't know. It's there. So, I did it.

(CAM enters. As always, he wears the red and white of the Chippewa Totems.)

BAILEY

(Relieved to finally see someone who might be able to help her.)

Good. Did we have to do the back, Cam?

CAM

Back of what?

SCRUB

Of the homework, man! It's a crisis!

CAM

Nah. Ms. Wanda said there were mistakes or something on it.

BAILEY

Did you hear that, Jace?

JACE

(Taps keyboard.)

Control-Z.

BAILEY

What's control-Z?

SCRUB

A drug that treats narcolepsy.

JACE

It's the hot key for undo.

SCRUB

Jace - master of hot keys! Control-Z! Undo!

## THE HARSHER

CAM

Have you guys seen Maya?

BAILEY

Nah. What's up?

CAM

Did you see SmackGab?

(BAILEY and SCRUB work their phones.)

It's pretty nasty.

BAILEY

(Reading her phone's screen.)

No, way. What the fire truck?

SCRUB

Whoa.

JACE

Let me.

(Puts hand out for phone. SCRUB gives his phone to him.)

Your screen is all shattered.

(He sets it down on the table and takes BAILEY's when she offers her phone to him.)

CAM

(Picks up SCRUB's phone from table.)

What a happened to your phone, Scrub?

BAILEY

Selfie.

(SCRUB reclaims his phone from CAM.)

JACE

(Hands phone back to BAILEY.)

That's bitter. Who composed it?

BAILEY

SmackGab is anonymous.

JACE

Did she do these things?

BAILEY

Jace! Don't say that in front of her.

JACE

Someone wouldn't just make that up, right?

BAILEY

She didn't do it.

## THE HARSHER

CAM

No way.

KIKI

(Enters.)

Have you guys seen SmackGab?

CAM

The stuff about Maya?

BAILEY

We're looking at it now.

KIKI

It's terrible.

BAILEY

We should text her.

CAM

I've been.

JACE

Should we look for her?

MAYA

(Enters. O.K. now, but previous tears are evident.)

Hey, guys.

BAILEY

Are you O.K.?

MAYA

No. That crap is messed up. Do you know who posted it?

CAM

I don't.

KIKI

None of us do.

MAYA

(To Jace.)

Can you figure it out?

JACE

Like, through the app?

(Removes his phone from pocket.)

I can't do that. I don't know.

(He ineffectively taps on his phone.)

CAM

We'll figure it out.



THE HARSHER

KIKI

What difference does it make?

SCRUB

(To KIKI.)

Was it you?

KIKI

(Punches him in the arm.)

Shut up, you momo.

BAILEY

(To SCRUB.)

What is wrong with you?

MAYA

It's O.K.

(KIKI punches SCRUB in the arm again for good measure.)

MAYA

What difference does it make? It's there now.

KIKI

It wasn't me.

MAYA

I know, Kiki.

CAM

Is it too late to do something?

SCRUB

Undo! Control-Z! Right, Jace?

JACE

Not on something like this. I mean, it's already posted, you know? We didn't type it; we can't undo it. I'm sorry, Maya.

MAYA

It's fine. It's fine. I'll be fine. Everyone knows that SmackGab is just all gossip, right? No one believes it.

BAILEY

What did Mickey say?

MAYA

It wasn't him.

BAILEY

Oh, I know, but, like... He's your boyfriend.

## THE HARSHER

CAM

I'd be infected with all kinds of rage if I were him.

SCRUB

Yeah, I'd hate to have to deal with kind that of stuff.  
That's why I don't date.

BAILEY

Yeah, that's why.

MAYA

Mickey's coming by before class.

JACE

People are jerks. Last week someone tried to put a virus  
onto my laptop.

(Without being obvious, he points in the  
direction of NADINE's table.)

I think it was Nadine.

KIKI

What are you talking about?

JACE

I viewed the event log on my diagnostics software and  
could see that someone using the school's Wi-Fi tried to  
hack into my email to open an anonymous message that was  
definitely infected. It was right after the test.

KIKI

So?

JACE

I set the curve on that one. Ms. Wanda adjusted the total  
possible points according my score.

SCRUB

Come on, guys. If we all worked together, we could do  
terribly individually on every test and still do well as  
a class. Teamwork! When will anyone listen?

BAILEY

(In reference to SCRUB.)

Ignore the reject.

(To JACE.)

But, like, why Nadine?

KIKI

Yeah Jace, if you don't score the highest, she does.

JACE

Exactly! She told me, "I set the curve - not you. Don't  
do it again."

## THE HARSHER

BAILEY

Really?

KIKI

You're kidding.

CAM

I didn't even know she talked.

SCRUB

Right? She just sits over there with her backpack. I think it's stuffed with tiny plush bunnies and sodium chloride.

JACE

It was her, but the point is that someone tried to sabotage my computer. And, for what? Why, really?

MAYA

People can be evil. It's getting ridiculous.