

The Election

by
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The Election

- 2 -

Dedication

To my wonderful parents, Mr. & Mrs. J.E. & Juanda Ruth Smith, and grandparents, Mr. & Mrs. A.W. Turner, who loved and supported my artistic endeavors unconditionally.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Eight diverse candidates who are running for student body president have two minutes to present their platform and to convince fellow Roosevelt High students to vote for them. From the narcissistic varsity cheerleader, to the disdainful brainiac, and from the star quarterback to the tongue-tied farm boy, every candidate is unique. Their speeches veer from the serious to the hilarious and, with several mimed action scenes, even reach the absurd! During the question-and-answer segment of the forum, however, one student asks the candidates to do something about those students who do not qualify for the free lunch program, many of whom are homeless as well. Learning that fellow students are suffering shocks the candidates so much they all decide to do something about it, uniting them in one cause. As they think of ways to help, they begin to truly listen to one another and realize that working together to end hunger and homelessness -- at least in their school -- is far more important than winning an election.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 9 w, and ensemble of 10, doubling possible)

CATHERINE GRAYSON: Student body president and moderator.

BRAD MAYFIELD: Football player, good-looking. Full of himself.

MARGARET LAYTON: Extremely intelligent; very serious.

BUBBA HURKEL: Not the sharpest tool in the shed, but a math whiz.

TAYLOR CONNORS: Head cheerleader, narcissistic, but there is more to Taylor than meets the eye.

RHONDA CASWELL: Captain of girls' weightlifting club. No-nonsense.

CLAY BISHOP: Cowboy 100%. Just a good ole boy.

JANICE MURPHY: Yoga enthusiast, calm.

LUCINDA GUTIERREZ: Member of student council.

KEVIN MCNEELEY: Transfer student. Shy, but sincere.

LETICIA MARTIN: A student who asks a question.

CANDACE POPE: A student who asks a question.

DWAYNE COATES: Very intelligent. Asks a question.

MARK TURNER: Average high schooler.

LINDA OGLETREE: Junior class president. Opposes the candidates concerning the prom.

ENSEMBLE: These roles can be played by the same actors who play Leticia, Candace, Dwayne, Mark, and Linda.

MRS/MR. BROWNFIELD: Very authoritarian teacher. Never seen, only heard from off stage. Could be played by a crew member.

FOOTBALL PLAYERS 1 & 2

ROMEO: Skinny high school kid.

ACTOR: Plays the goat

FEMALE WEIGHTLIFTER

MALE WEIGHTLIFTERS 1, 2, & 3

CLAY'S MOTHER

SETTING

Present day. The play takes place on the stage of the Roosevelt High School auditorium.

SET AND PROPS

Eight podiums or music stands placed in a semi-circle down center stage. Each podium has the name of one of the candidates. They should be placed/taped where the audience can see them. There is one small desk and chair placed downstage left and a microphone and stand placed downstage right.

Football and football helmet

White veil

All candidates and Catherine have their cellphones

Heavy barbell (fake)

Large serving tray with lid dome covering a plastic pig with apple in its mouth

Large crown

SUGGESTED WARDROBE

Brad Mayfield: Letterman's jacket, football jersey

Taylor Connors: Cheerleading uniform

Margaret Layton: Business suit

Clay Bishop: Cowboy boots, jeans, cowboy shirt with large belt buckle, cowboy hat

Janice Murphy: Yoga clothes

Football Players: Football uniforms

Clay's Mom: Dress and apron

Female Weightlifter: Workout clothes

Male Weightlifters: Workout clothes, weight belt, workout gloves

Romeo: White shirt, sweatpants, slippers

Goat: Goat costume or goat mask

The Election

(AT RISE: CATHERINE GRAYSON enters stage right and walks to the small desk. She faces the audience.)

CATHERINE: Okay, everyone... If we could have it quiet, we can get started. Welcome to this year's student body presidential election forum and debate. Thank you for spending your lunchtime listening to the candidates. As you know, I am Catherine Grayson, this year's student body president, and it is my pleasure to introduce the candidates and moderate the forum/debate. Without further ado, here are the candidates. First, Brad Mayfield, captain of the varsity football team.

(BRAD MAYFIELD enters stage left shouting and displaying the universal sign for "victory." He goes to the podium with his name on it.)

BRAD: Go Wolverines! Let's do this! You know I'm the—

CATHERINE: *(Interrupting and trying to get Brad's attention.)*
Brad... uh, Brad?

BRAD: I'm the best candidate and the only—

CATHERINE: *(Yelling.)* BRAD!

BRAD: *(Obviously annoyed.)* What?

CATHERINE: Everyone will be given a chance to speak. Right now, I'm just introducing all the candidates.

BRAD: Hey, I'm just telling everybody that I'm the best man for the job and that I am the only one that can lead our school on the football field and in student council. Go Wolverines!

CATHERINE: Fine. I'm docking 30 seconds from your introductory speech.

BRAD: Whatever.

CATHERINE: *(Composing herself.)* Next is Margaret Layton. Margaret is president of the International Thespian Society and was named Best Actress at this year's regional one-act play competition.

The Election

- 6 -

(MARGARET LAYTON enters stage right. She goes to the podium with her name on it.)

BRAD: There's a club for lesbians?

MARGARET: It's thespian, not lesbian.

CATHERINE: *(Ignoring them both.)* Next is Bubba Hurkel. Bubba is on the varsity wrestling team and... *(Reading the next part as if she can hardly believe what she is reading.)* ... likes to head butt with his pet goat, Gordy?

(BUBBA HURKEL enters stage left. As he enters and looks at the audience, he stops and just stares, his mouth opened wide in stunned silence.)

CATHERINE: *(Cont'd.)* Uh, Bubba... *(BUBBA stays glued to where he is standing.)* Bubba... Bubba... Earth to Bubba... *(Still no reaction from Bubba.)* Oh, come on! *(Goes to Bubba and leads him to the podium with his name on it.)* See your name? This is your podium. Okay?

(CATHERINE returns to her desk as BUBBA continues to stand in front of his podium. As she sits behind her desk, she sees Bubba has not moved to behind his podium. Shaking her head in disbelief, Catherine goes to Bubba and deposits him behind his podium.)

CATHERINE: *(Cont'd.)* Stay! *(BUBBA continues to stare straight ahead as she returns to her desk.)* Okay, where was I? Oh, yes... *(With obvious disdain.)* Our next candidate is Taylor Connors. Taylor will be head cheerleader next year and has been a cheerleader for three years.

(TAYLOR CONNORS, jumping up and down as if she were cheering at a football game, enters stage right, and goes to the podium with her name on it.)

TAYLOR: *(Shouting.)* Let's go Wolverines!

The Election
- 7 -

CATHERINE: (*Practically to herself.*) How being a cheerleader qualifies you for running for office, I'll never know.

TAYLOR: Excuse me.

CATHERINE: Sorry. Just thinking out loud.

MARGARET: (*To TAYLOR.*) You should try it sometime... thinking that is.

TAYLOR: Maybe you should try not being a thesbian.

MARGARET: A thespian with a "p" is an actor.

TAYLOR: Hey, whatever rocks your boat.

MARGARET: Oh, good grief.

CATHERINE: Excuse me, may I continue?

RHONDA: (*Offstage.*) Yeah, can we get on with it.

CATHERINE: The next candidate is Rhonda Caswell. Rhonda is on the debate team and is captain of the girls' weightlifting team.

(*RHONDA CASWELL enters stage left.*)

BRAD: Girls' weightlifting team?... Talk about lesbians.

(*As RHONDA passes behind BRAD to go to her podium, she slaps him on the back of the head.*)

BRAD: (*Cont'd.*) Ow! Hey, did you see that? She hit me.

CATHERINE: (*Just smiles.*) Clay Bishop is next. Clay is vice-president of the Future Farmers Club and his prized pig won 1st place at both the county and state fairs this year.

(*CLAY BISHOP enters stage right and finds the podium with his name on it.*)

CLAY: (*To the audience.*) Howdy.

CATHERINE: Next is Janice Murphy. Janice is president of the yoga club and volunteers teaching meditation after school.

(*JANICE MURPHY enters stage left and bows to the audience.*)

The Election

- 8 -

JANICE: Namaste. *(Stands behind her podium.)*

CATHERINE: Thank you, Janice. Our next and last candidate is Lucinda Gutierrez who is a junior class representative and president of the Spanish club.

(LUCINDA GUTIERREZ enters stage right and finds her podium.)

LUCINDA: Hola.

CATHERINE: Okay. As we begin our debate, each candidate will have two minutes to introduce him or herself and present their platform. We will begin with Mr. Mayfield, who has only one and a half minutes as you already used 30 seconds of your time.

BRAD: I don't need two minutes, because everyone already knows I'm the best candidate up here. As the quarterback for our varsity football team, I've led our school to two state championships.

(The STAGE LIGHTS dim, and EVERYONE freezes, except BRAD. Brad removes his letterman's jacket, revealing his football jersey. He picks up a football and football helmet from behind his podium. He puts the helmet on and walks to downstage center. As BLUE LIGHTS come up, the following scene is in slow motion. FOOTBALL PLAYERS 1 & 2, wearing the same jerseys, but different than Brad's, enter stage right. Brad, football tucked under his arm, runs toward them. Brad pushes away Football Player 1 and knocks Football Player 2 to the ground. Both players freeze where they fall. BRAD crosses an imaginary goal line. He turns toward the audience and, again all in slow motion, puts the football down and takes off his helmet. As if he is yelling, he mouths "Go Wolverines." He freezes. As the BLUE LIGHTS begin to fade and the STAGE LIGHTS come back on, Football Players exit stage right and Brad returns to the podium, takes off his helmet and puts his letterman's jacket back on. When he is in place, EVERYONE unfreezes.)

The Election

- 9 -

BRAD: *(Cont'd.)* If winning two state championships isn't proof that I can lead the student council, then I don't know what is. GO WOLVERINES!

CATHERINE: Margaret, you're our next candidate.

MARGARET: Thank you, madame president. Distinguished faculty, staff, and students, the role of student body president should not be taken lightly. Winning best actress last year for portraying the starring role of Juliet in "Romeo and Juliet," proves that I am not only qualified to step into the lead role of president of the student council, but that I am capable of meeting any problem head on.

(EVERYONE freezes as the STAGE LIGHTS dim, and the BLUE LIGHTS come up. MARGARET takes a white veil from her podium, puts it on, and walks to center stage.)

MARGARET: *(Cont'd. Very dramatic.)* Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name. Or...

(ROMEO enters stage right.)

ROMEO: *(In a Texas drawl and not exactly enthusiastic.)* I hear more, or shall I speak...

(MARGARET obviously horrified, tries to signal to ROMEO that he is not supposed to be on stage yet.)

ROMEO: *(Cont'd.)* What?

MARGARET: *(Whispering loudly and frantically gesturing to HIM.)* Not yet, get off the stage. *(As ROMEO exits the stage, MARGARET continues her soliloquy.)* Or thou wilt not, be sworn my love, and I'll no longer be a Capulet. *(Waits for Romeo to enter. When he does not enter... loudly.)* I'll no longer be a Capulet... *(Still no Romeo. Shouting.)* I'll no longer be a Capulet... *(After a brief moment.)* Good grief, Romeo! *(She looks at the audience, not sure what to do, then...)* Oh, Romeo, Romeo, Getteth your buttuth outteth here!

The Election
- 10 -

(As the BLUE LIGHTS fade and the STAGE LIGHTS come up, MARGARET returns to her podium and removes her veil. EVERYONE unfreezes.)

MARGARET: *(Cont'd.)* And being on a sports team does not qualify one to be a student body officer. It is a position that requires and demands a great deal of time, energy, and intelligence, which several of my opponents seem to lack.

(EVERYONE looks at BRAD, BUBBA, and TAYLOR.)

BRAD: Don't look at me... look at Bubba and Taylor.

BUBBA: Huh?

TAYLOR: People are always looking at me. I'm used to it.

MARGARET: ...And finally, if elected I promise to make sure that our school starts spending as much on academics as they spend on sports. We definitely need more advanced placement courses.

TAYLOR: OMG! I was going to say the same thing.

MARGARET: *(Sarcastically.)* Yeah right... I'm sure...

TAYLOR: No, really... I've always said how we need advanced cheerleading.

MARGARET: Uh... that's what varsity is, Taylor.

TAYLOR: Yeah... I mean no... I mean like an advanced varsity... like super varsity.

MARGARET: *(Ignoring TAYLOR.)* In conclusion, there is really only one candidate who can lead Roosevelt to become the greatest high school in Texas...

BRAD: You got that right.

MARGARET: ...And that is me, Margaret Layton, your next student body president.

CATHERINE: Thank you, Margaret. Next, Bubba Hurkel, you have two minutes to present your platform.

BUBBA: Uh... I'm runnin'...well...I'm not really runnin'...I mean I'm not on the football field or track, or nothing like that. I'm not even outside... And I'd never run inside... I'd never run in the halls. No sir... don't want to go to no detention.

The Election
- 11 -

(BUBBA pauses and stares into space with mouth wide open. He looks at CATHERINE.)

BUBBA: *(Cont'd.)* Uh... What am I doing?

CATHERINE: You're running for student body president, remember?

BUBBA: Oh yeah... I'm running for... well... I'm not really running. I mean I'm not on the football field or track, or nothing like that. I'm not even outside—

CATHERINE: *(Cutting him off.)* And thank you, Bubba, for that... uh...informative... whatever that was.

MARGARET: *(To BUBBA.)* You might want to re-think that “head-butting with your goat” thing.

(As the STAGE LIGHTS dim and the BLUE LIGHTS come up, EVERYONE freezes except BUBBA. Bubba walks to downstage left as an ACTOR in a goat costume or just a goat mask enters stage right. The Goat and Bubba look at each other. The Goat stamps his feet in preparation to charge.)

BUBBA: Ready?

(The GOAT bleats loudly. The rest of the scene is in slow motion. Both BUBBA and the goat run toward one another and collide center stage. Bubba is thrown backwards and falls on the ground. Bubba is out for no more than a couple of seconds. As he comes to and shakes his head, he gets up and faces his pet goat.)

BUBBA: *(Obviously having a great deal of fun.)* Great headbutt, Gordy. Again!

(BUBBA and the GOAT freeze. As the BLUE LIGHTS dim and the STAGE LIGHTS come on, the Goat exits stage right and Bubba returns to his podium. When he is in place, EVERYONE unfreezes.)

CATHERINE: Next is Taylor Connors. Taylor, you have two minutes.

The Election
- 12 -

(TAYLOR steps out in front of her podium and immediately goes into a choreographed cheer.)

TAYLOR: Okay... Hit it... Don't be sad and don't be mad. Just be glad and vote...Taylor...Taylor, Taylor! You're the one, you're the one...you're the one to get things done. So at the poll...make your goal... to vote for who? Give me a "T." Give me an "A." Give me a "Y." Give me an "L." Give me an "O." Give me an "R." What does it spell? TAYLOR! *(As TAYLOR completes her cheer, she goes back behind the podium, grabs her cell phone, and quickly goes to where CATHERINE is sitting. Taylor bends down to where her face is nearly touching Catherine's.)* Selfie. *(Catherine is taken aback, but before she can react, Taylor takes the photo.)* So cool... The old, you, and the new, me. *(Taylor goes back to her podium and looks intently at the photo she took.)* My hair is so on fleek! This is definitely going on Snapchat and TikTok.

CATHERINE: God help us all if you win.

TAYLOR: Wow, Catherine. Thanks for praying for me.

CATHERINE: *(Shakes her head.)* Moving right along... Rhonda Caswell.

RHONDA: Thank you, Ms. President. As a master debater—

CLAY: Whoa! You can't say that!

TAYLOR: What did she say?

RHONDA: For crying out loud... Grow up! Master space debater. Two words. I'm the number one debater in the district. That makes me a master de... ba... ter!

TAYLOR: That is so gross! Shame on you!

CLAY: Yeah.

TAYLOR: *(Winking at CLAY.)* Thank you, Clay.

(CLAY smiles shyly.)

CATHERINE: Just shoot me!

RHONDA: As I was saying... as the top deba... speaker in the district I know how to persuade people to get things done.

RHONDA: *(Cont'd.)* And as captain of the girls' weightlifting team, I will lift this school to a new high by pressing the school board to give the student council more say in the making decisions concerning school policy. Lift... press.... weightlifting. Get it?

(There is dead silence. The STAGE LIGHTS dim, and the BLUE LIGHTS come up, EVERYONE freezes, except RHONDA. Rhonda goes downstage left. Another FEMALE STUDENT enters stage left and she and Rhonda jog one lap around the stage. As they are jogging, THREE MALE STUDENTS enter stage right carrying an extremely heavy-looking barbell. They place the barbell downstage center. The male students begin stretching. Rhonda and the female student stop jogging and stand in front of the barbell. The male students are flexing and eying both girls.)

MALE STUDENT 1: *(Obviously flirting.)* Hey, ladies. Need some help?

MALE STUDENT 2: *(Pushing MALE STUDENT 1 out of the way.)* Yeah, let me move this barbell out of your way.

RHONDA: No need. We've got it.

(All three BOYS laugh.)

MALE STUDENT 2: *(As HE starts to pick up the barbell.)* Yeah right. No worries. I got this. *(He tries to lift the barbell off the ground. He can't even budge it. Obviously embarrassed and laughing nervously.)* Uh, must be glued to the floor.

MALE STUDENT 3: *(Pushes MALE STUDENT 2 out of the way.)* I got this.

(HE tries again as he grunts loudly in his effort to pick up the barbell. Again, he cannot budge it. MALE STUDENT 1 tries to help him lift the barbell to no avail.)

RHONDA: *(Pushing the MALE STUDENTS out of the way.)* Here. Let me help you.

The Election
- 14 -

(RHONDA, with very little effort, picks up the barbell and proceeds to carry it off stage with the FEMALE STUDENT, laughing as they go. The three MALE STUDENTS just stand there with their mouths wide open. As the BLUE LIGHT dims and the STAGE LIGHTS come on, the Male Students exit stage left and Rhonda returns to her podium. EVERYONE unfreezes.)

RHONDA: *(Cont'd.)* Okay then... vote for Rhonda Caswell for student body president.

CATHERINE: Thank you, Rhonda. Next is Clay Bishop.

CLAY: *(Takes a folded piece of paper out of his pocket and unfolds it. He then clears his throat. Obviously reading.)* My name is Clay Bishop. I am running for student body president of Roosevelt High School. I am running because I want to make Roosevelt High School the best high school in our town.

CATHERINE: It's the only high school in town, Clay.

CLAY: I know, but that still doesn't mean it can't be the best!

CATHERINE: Whatever... continue please.

CLAY: My pigs and cows have all been blue-ribbon winners and if I can raise pigs and cows to be winners, I know I can make people winners too. I'll also make sure we have one day where all the students get out of class so we can have one big birthday party for all the Future Farmer animals. That way we can have one big cake instead of a bunch of little ones. So make my day and vote for Clay. *(Laughing to himself.)* That rhymes!

MARGARET: You do know what they do with your precious chickens, pigs, and cows once you've sold them to market, right?

CLAY: *(Laughing.)* We don't show chickens. Everybody knows that.

MARGARET: Whatever. Pigs and cows then.

CLAY: Sure do. They go to a farm and make new animal friends.

MARGARET: Uh, actually no... they end up being someone's Christmas dinner.

The Election
- 15 -

CLAY: *(Laughing hysterically.)* That's just silly. Nobody invites their farm animals for Christmas dinner!!!

CATHERINE: Margaret...

MARGARET: No, you misunderstand me. The animals are not invited for Christmas dinner. They ARE Christmas dinner.

TAYLOR: Ewwwww.

CLAY: No way. That's not true!

MARGARET: Do you ever see the animals again once they're sold?

CLAY: Uh...no, but...

MARGARET: I rest my case.

JANICE: This is exactly why I'm vegan. The use of animals for food is cruel and inhumane.

CLAY: *(In total disbelief.)* No! No! No! NO!

(As the STAGE LIGHTS dim and the BLUE LIGHTS come up, EVERYONE freezes except CLAY. He moves to downstage center, as his MOTHER enters stage right. She is carrying a large serving tray covered with a silver dome.)

MOTHER: Merry Christmas, sweetheart. Are you ready for Christmas dinner?

CLAY: Oh yeah, Mom. I'm starving. *(CLAY removes the dome to reveal a large pig with the proverbial apple in its mouth. Clay is horrified.)* WILBUR?

(CLAY drops the lid and runs back to his podium crying. His MOTHER picks up the dome, places it back on the tray and exits stage left. The BLUE LIGHTS fade, and the STAGE LIGHTS come up. EVERYONE unfreezes.)

CATHERINE: *(To MARGARET.)* Now look what you've done.

MARGARET: The truth is often a bitter pill to swallow.

CATHERINE: Clay... Clay... CLAY!!!! *(CLAY stops crying and looks at her.)* Stop crying! Put your big boy pants on and man up. Good grief!!!!

End of Freeview

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