FINAL EXAM

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By Burton Bumgarner

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STORY OF THE PLAY

As Tammy Davis goes about her volunteer work in a nursing home, she runs across Florence Furtney, the woman who taught senior English at Central High School for 40 years. It has been 25 years since her retirement, and since Tammy's class graduated. Miss Furtney is in declining health and does not speak. Tammy decides it would be a nice gesture to have a reception for Miss Furtney prior to the reunion festivities her class is planning, so she plans a party for her old teacher and sends out invitations. Tammy is very naive and always looks for the good in everyone. What she refuses to see is that none of Miss Furtney's former students can stand her. Only a few show up for the party and then only to see if time has really rendered the dreaded teacher harmless. Some want to tell her off, some want to ignore her, and one wants to kill her!

One by one, as the former students sit in an old desk, Miss Furtney comes to life and tells them why she acted as she did. All come away with an entirely different view of Florence Furtney, and the understanding that they spent years blaming an old woman for their own personal problems.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(5 M, 6 W)

TAMMY EGAN DAVIS: Housewife, married to Eddie.
FLORENCE FURTNEY: Retired high school teacher.
EDDIE DAVIS: Exterminator, married to Tammy.
HEIDI DUTY: Former teacher, married to Maynard.
MAYNARD DUTY: Businessman, married to Heidi.
BILL BAILEY: Mysterious government agent.
RICHARD SMITH: Race car driver.
SALLY JENKINS: A cheerleader who never grew up.
CHAD MORRELL: A priest.
JANE MAHONNEY: An actress and ex-flower child.
NURSE: Nurse for Miss Furtney.

SCENERY NOTES

The set can be very simple utilizing the Davis' kitchen table for the refreshment table at the nursing home. After that, all that is needed are chairs, set decorations, and a podium.

PROPS

FLORENCE: Wheelchair.
EDDIE: Newspaper, bathrobe, sprayer of insecticide, old school desk.
TAMMY: Bathrobe, coffee cup, pad and pen, tray of cookies, box of name tags, cup of punch.
CHAD: Coat, clerical collar.
MAYNARD: Cup of punch.
BILL: Piano wire.
SALLY: Cell phone.
HEIDI: Piece of cake.
MISCELLANEOUS: Balloons, flowers, banners, punch bowl, cookies on a tray.

SOUND EFFECTS: Storm sounds.

Scene 1: January

(AT RISE: FLORENCE is sitting in a wheelchair, unresponsive. TAMMY kneels beside her and speaks. DSR EDDIE is seated at a breakfast table in a bathrobe reading a newspaper. Another bathrobe is draped over a second chair.)

TAMMY: I was so surprised to find you here in this nursing home, Miss Furtney. That's why I love my volunteer work. Just never know who you'll see. I hope you don't mind if I visit with you for a few minutes. The nurse said you don't get a whole lot of visitors, and I bet it gets kind of lonely just sitting here day after day. You probably don't remember me, do you? I'm Tammy Davis...well, I was Tammy Egan back then. I was in your English class at Central High School about 25 years ago. That was about your last year of teaching. I remember the school gave you a big retirement party and all. I'm afraid I didn't do too good in your class. Of course, I didn't do too good in anybody else's class, either. But after graduation I went to college...and I didn't do too good there. You always told me I was just a dumb, air-headed cheerleader, and you know what? You were right! *(Wistfully)* I just loved high school! You know, my mama and papa were in your English class. And when I got to be a senior and you were my English teacher they told me the same thing: They said, "Tammy, that woman's gonna eat you alive." I remember you yelled at me a lot, but then you yelled at everybody. I never took it personal or anything. You just wanted us to do our best. I think I learned a lot even though my grades never showed it.

(NURSE enters and stands behind the wheelchair.)

NURSE: I need to take Miss Furtney to supper.
TAMMY: I'll come back and visit you, Miss Furtney. Bye-bye.

(FLORENCE waves weakly. NURSE wheels Florence off stage. TAMMY watches, then goes USR, puts on the bathrobe and sits opposite EDDIE. She sips from the coffee cup and picks up a section of newspaper and begins reading.)

TAMMY: It says here they're gonna tear down old Central High School. Oh, that's a shame. Did you hear that, Eddie? They're gonna tear down our old school.

EDDIE: Hmmm.

TAMMY: Well, I think it's sad. I loved that old building. On Monday mornings it always smelled like floor wax and furniture polish because the custodians had cleaned all weekend. I loved my teachers, and I had so many friends. And my senior year was so exciting! I was vice president of the pep club and the secretary of the student council, until they found out I couldn't take shorthand...and I wasn't too good at longhand, either. I was almost elected homecoming queen, you know. Then I was runner-up for most popular. And I almost got to be head cheerleader. What a year that was. *(Stands up and does a high school cheer)* Of course, we had a terrible football season. And I got in-school suspension for laughing when Maynard Duty started a food fight in the cafeteria. I also got green Jell-O in my bra. And I almost failed everything, and my parents were always yelling at me all the time, and I ran a stop sign and wrecked Daddy's brand new Ford Country Squire. *(Wistfully)* And I dated Howard Duckwall, who was kind of boring and his breath wasn't always that fresh. It was the most wonderful year of my life. Remember how great high school was, Eddie?

EDDIE: Hmmm.

TAMMY: I guess it wasn't so great for you, with the war and all. Anyway, you know our twenty-fifth class reunion is coming up. I can't wait to see everybody. I guess Sally Jenkins will organize everything. She did the fifth reunion, and the tenth reunion. She had a bladder infection at the fifteenth reunion, but she did the twentieth reunion and it was such fun. Remember, Eddie?

End of Freeview

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