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Product Code YA012-FC

LUNCH MONEY

A Classroom Comedy for Teens

by

Jack Neary

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Lunch Money

by Jack Neary

CHARACTERS

3 F / 5 M / 2 Either

All characters are played by actors of middle or high school age

Bailiff

Guard

Harlan Parmenter

Brandon Whistle

Suzanne Sharpy

Mikey McDougald

Judge Cynthia Chemise

Timmy Timmons

Phillip Raymond

Melissa Adrenalin

SETTING

A classroom, organized as a "courtroom"

LUNCH MONEY
by Jack Neary

SETTING: *A classroom, organized as a “courtroom.”
The teacher’s desk is center, and serves as the
Judge’s bench. Next to the desk is a chair which
serves as the witness chair. A table to the right of
the desk is set up facing the audience/students,
with two chairs behind it. A table to the left of
the desk has the same set up.*

AT RISE: *The BAILIFF, enters and steps to the center,
addressing the AUDIENCE. All Characters are
portrayed by middle school (or high school)
students.*

BAILIFF

All rise!

*The AUDIENCE will rise. A GUARD enters,
escorting the defendant, HARLAN
PARMENTER, into the room. HARLAN is a big,
good-looking lad who manages a wide- eyed,
innocent look most of the time, although his
mean side presents itself when necessary. With
HARLAN is his attorney, BRANDON WHISTLE;
small, wiry and a smooth talker. Next comes
prosecuting attorney SUZANNE SHARPY who
looks and acts like her name, And her client, the
plaintiff, MIKEY McDOUGALD, who looks and
acts like somebody just stole his dog.*

*Finally, Judge CYNTHIA CHEMISE enters and
takes her place behind the desk. CYNTHIA is
elegant and seems to want to be someplace else.*

BAILIFF (Cont'd)

The trial of Mrs. Delfina's class versus Harlan Parmenter. The honorable Cynthia Chemise presiding.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Be seated, I guess...whatever... (Slams gavel)

BAILIFF

(To AUDIENCE)

You heard her!

The AUDIENCE members take their seats, as do the LAWYERS, the DEFENDANT and the PLAINTIFF. The BAILIFF and the GUARD stand to either side of the proceedings.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

So, you guys know I really don't want to be the Judge, but Mrs. Delfina said I have to because I need to learn how to be a leader because so many of you look up to me, so here I am. The Judge. Like it's my fault you look up to me. Anyway, this is the trial of Harlan Parmenter. Hi, Harlan.

HARLAN

Cyndi. *(Winks)*

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(Giggles)

Harlan! Stop it!

(To AUDIENCE)

Harlan is accused of stealing lunch money from Mikey McDougald, who never says anything...

(To MIKEY)

Right, Mikey? *(MIKEY says nothing)* See?

(To AUDIENCE)

And you are going to be the jury. Get it? You are the jury. Okay? And it is going to be your duty as jurists to determine the guilt or innocence of Harlan...Hi, Harlan...

HARLAN

Cyndi... *(Winks again)*

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(Giggles)

Which, you know, is a no-brainer...

SUZANNE

I object!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

I mean, why would Harlan need to steal anybody's lunch money...?

SUZANNE

I object again!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Look at him!

SUZANNE

I SAID I OBJECT!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

\ Do I care?

SUZANNE

Yes! You have to care! You're the Judge!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(To BAILIFF)

Is that true?

BAILIFF

Oh, yeah!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(Reluctantly)

Oh. All right. *(To BAILIFF)* What do I say when it's okay to object?

BAILIFF

Sustained.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Sustained! There. *(To SUZANNE)* You feel better?

SUZANNE

I feel vindicated!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

That means you feel better, right?

SUZANNE

Something like that.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

So sit. *(SUZANNE sits.)* All right...let's see...what do I have to do now?...

*BAILIFF slaps a piece of paper in front of the
The JUDGE.*

BAILIFF

Read the writ!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Read the what?

BAILIFF

The writ. The charge. The reason we're all here. Harlan is charged with a crime. You have to read the writ to the court so we'll know what this is all about.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Who made you the king?

BAILIFF

I'm not the king. I'm the Bailiff.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Who made you the Bailiff?

BAILIFF

Mrs. Delfina.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

So I read this?

BAILIFF

Yes.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(Picks up paper)

Uh...let's see... *(Clears throat and reads)* "Mrs. Delfina's classroom versus Harlan Parmenter. It is the contention of the plaintiff..." *(To BAILIFF')* It is the *what* of the *who*?

BAILIFF

The contention of the plaintiff. It means this is what the plaintiff is accusing Harlan of doing.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Yeah? Who's the plaintiff?

BAILIFF

Mikey.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Says who?

BAILIFF

Says him.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

He never says anything.

BAILIFF

Trust me. He's the plaintiff. Read.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(Reads)

"It is the contention of the plaintiff... *(With an attitude)* MIKEY...that on Friday, September 21st, at 11:31 a.m., the defendant, Harlan Parmenter, did willfully and with premeditation, jimmy open the third floor personal locker of the plaintiff... *(Same attitude)* MIKEY...and remove a sealed envelope which contained two dollars and fifty-four cents, an amount which constituted the plaintiff's lunch money for said date."

(To MIKEY)

You keep your lunch money in an envelope?

SUZANNE

His mother thought it'd be safer that way.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

What...ever...

SUZANNE

(To AUDIENCE; dramatically)

Little did she know...

BAILIFF

Hey!

SUZANNE

Sorry. Got carried away.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(To BAILIFF)

Now what happens?

BAILIFF

Now you ask the prosecutor to call her first witness.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Okay.

BAILIFF

Okay.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Okay. *(Beat)* Who's the prosecutor?

SUZANNE

That would be me, Your Honor!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

So call your first witness!

BAILIFF

(To JUDGE)

Very good!

SUZANNE

The Prosecution calls Timmy Timmons!

BAILIFF

(Shouting) TIMMY TIMMONS TAKE THE STAND!

TIMMY is an officious little guy, whose main purpose in life is to do everything precisely and correctly. He walks in and points to the witness chair.

TIMMY

Uh...Here?...Should I sit here?

BAILIFF

Yes! *(TIMMY starts to sit.)* NOT YET! *(TIMMY freezes.)* You have to swear first.

TIMMY

Oh. I never swear. My mother would ground me. I...

BAILIFF

No. No. Not that kind of swear. Raise your right hand. *(He does.)*

TIMMY

Like this?

BAILIFF

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

TIMMY

\ So...let me get this straight...I'm swearing...without really swearing?

Yes. Say "I do." BAILIFF

I do? TIMMY

Yes. BAILIFF

Yes what? TIMMY

You say "I do." BAILIFF

I do? TIMMY

Yes. BAILIFF

Yes what? TIMMY

(Loudly) JUST SAY "I DO!" BAILIFF

I DO! TIMMY

SIT! (TIMMY sits.) State your full name for the jury, please. BAILIFF

Timothy Thomas Timmons. TIMMY

Her witness. BAILIFF
(To JUDGE, indicating SUZANNE)

Your witness! JUDGE CYNTHIA
(To SUZANNE)

Hey, I'm getting good at this! JUDGE CYNTHIA, (Cont.)
(To BAILIFF; smiles)

SUZANNE

(Approaching TIMMY)

Thank you. Mr. Timmons, would you please tell the court where you were at 11:31 in the morning on September 21st of this year?

TIMMY

Yes.

SUZANNE

Yes, what?

TIMMY

Yes, I will tell the court where I was at 11:31 in the morning on Septem...

JUDGE CYNTHIA

So tell!

TIMMY

Well...I was walking on the third floor of the school, past the lockers, on my way to History class.

SUZANNE

But...Mr. Timmons...11:31...doesn't that mean you were...late for History class?

TIMMY

Yes, it does. But I had a hall pass and...

SUZANNE

And doesn't that also mean that the hall was...empty at that time?

TIMMY

Yes, it does. Except for me. And one other person. But I had a hall pass and...

SUZANNE

One other person. Did you say, one other person, Mr. Timmons?

TIMMY

Yes. One other person. Plus me. Two of us. Me and one other person. Total of two. Persons.

SUZANNE

And would you describe that one other person for the court, Mr. Timmons?

TIMMY

Yes.

SUZANNE

Yes, what?

TIMMY

Yes, I will describe that one other person for the court...

JUDGE CYNTHIA

So describe!

TIMMY

It was Harlan Parmenter.

SUZANNE

Oh. That's...your description?

TIMMY

Yes. I figured the best way to describe him would be to tell you who he was and then you could just look at him sitting over there. (*Points*)

SUZANNE

And what was Mr. Parmenter doing on the third floor hallway by the lockers at 11:31 in the morning of September 21st of this year when he was supposed to be in class and the hallway was supposed to be completely empty?

TIMMY

Except for me.

SUZANNE

Mr. Timmons...

TIMMY

Because I had a hall pass...

SUZANNE

What was Harlan doing, Mr. Timmons?

TIMMY

(Elaborately illustrating as he describes)

Oh. He was prying open Mikey McDougald's locker and ripping open an envelope and taking money out of the envelope and putting the money in his pocket and putting the ripped envelope back in the locker and then shutting the locker and then walking away.

SUZANNE

And did Mr. Parmenter acknowledge your presence?

TIMMY

Excuse me?

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Excuse me?

SUZANNE

Did Mr. Parmenter...see you in the hallway?

TIMMY

Oh. Yes.

SUZANNE

And did he say anything to you?

TIMMY

Yes. He said, "If you tell anybody I did this, I will stuff you in a large Hefty bag and put you up for auction on eBay."

SUZANNE

(Smiles)

Thank you, Mr. Timmons.

(To BRANDON)

Your witness!

BRANDON

(Approaching TIMMY)

State your full name again, please.

TIMMY

Timothy Thomas Timmons.

BRANDON

So tell me, Timmy Tommy Timmons, what it feels like to have a name that sounds like an actor's vocal warm-up exercise.

SUZANNE

I object! How is this question relevant, Your Honor?

JUDGE CYNTHIA

I don't know. *(Refers to BRANDON)* Ask him.

BRANDON

The question is relevant because the Defense contends that Mr. Timmy Tommy Timmons is lying to this jury! He is jealous of Harlan Parmenter because Mr. Parmenter's name is so much cooler than his...is!

SUZANNE

That is...really stupid.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

It is kinda stupid, Brandon.

HARLAN

Told you it was stupid.

BRANDON

(Dramatically; to TIMMY)

Admit it! Admit you are jealous of Harlan, and ashamed of your name!!!

TIMMY

(Simply)

I'm not ashamed of my name. I was named after my grandfather Timothy, and my other grandfather Thomas. And the first Timmons in this country was my great, great, great, great, great, great grandfather. His name was Timothy, too. And he came over on the Mayflower. I am totally proud of my name.

BRANDON

Hmm. Maybe it was a little stupid, then.

TIMMY

That'd be my vote.

BRANDON

No further questions. *(To HARLAN)* So far, so good. *(Sits)*

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(To BAILIFF)

Is it my turn again?

BAILIFF

Tell the witness to step down.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

How can he step down? He's already on the floor.

BAILIFF

Just tell him to step down. It's protocol.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

It's what?

BAILIFF

Tell him!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(To TIMMY)

The witness may step down!

TIMMY

How can I step down? I'm already on the floor.

BAILIFF

Just get outa here, Timmy, willya!!

TIMMY

Okay!

TIMMY scurries officiously away.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(To BAILIFF)

Now what?

BAILIFF

The Prosecution calls its next witness.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Call your next witness, Prosecution.

SUZANNE

The Prosecution rests!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Why, are you tired?

BAILIFF

You rest? You're not gonna call any more witnesses?

SUZANNE

No.

BAILIFF

Not even your client?

SUZANNE

Mikey? He never says anything. What's the point?

BAILIFF

You're calling nobody else?

SUZANNE

Why should I? Timmy saw Harlan steal the money. I have an eye witness and the Defense didn't refute his testimony...

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Wait...they didn't what?

SUZANNE

Refute his testimony. They didn't prove Timmy was lying.

BRANDON

Yeah, but I made fun of his name!

SUZANNE

And we all agreed that was stupid of you! See! I got this nailed! I rest my case!

SUZANNE sits, happily.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Cool. Does that mean we can go to the mall now?

BAILIFF

No! Now the Defense presents its own case!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

You mean Brandon?

BAILIFF

Yes! He calls his own witnesses to prove that Harlan is not guilty.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

But Timmy saw Harlan take the money out of the locker and...

BAILIFF

It doesn't make any difference! We have to follow protocol!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Follow who?

BAILIFF

The rules! The Prosecution presents its case, then the Defense presents its case! Then the jury supplies its verdict. THEN we all go to the mall! Get it now?

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Well, you don't have to get snippy.

BAILIFF

Call the Defense!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

DEFENSE! (To BAILIFF) Happy? (Under her breath) You are so rude.

BRANDON

(Reading from paper)

The Defense calls Raymond Phillip!

HARLAN takes the paper from BRANDON, turns it upside down and gives it back to him.

BRANDON (Cont'd)

(Reads again)

Phillip Raymond!

PHILLIP sticks his head into the courtroom, carefully. He is scared out of his mind.

PHILLIP

(Speaks rapidly)

Oh, come on, guys, do I really have to do this? I mean, I am so not into this, you wouldn't believe it. I mean, I will do anything you want me to do if I don't have to do this, I mean I will...

BAILIFF

Take the stand!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

TAKE THE STAND! (Whiny; to BAILIFF) Let me do it!

PHILLIP approaches the witness stand with great trepidation. The BAILIFF encourages him, step by step.

BAILIFF

Come on...come on, Phil, you can do it...come on...there you go...there you go, Philly... (PHILLIP is finally there) Now...raise your right hand...

PHILLIP

(Quietly and quickly to BAILIFF)

Don't make me do this! I'll do anything to get outa this! I'll do your homework for a month! I'll clean out your locker! I'll wash your gym socks three times a day...

BAILIFF

Raise your right hand! *(PHILLIP does)* Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

PHILLIP

Do you know what happens to me if I do?

BAILIFF

Just answer the question! Do you or don't you?

HARLAN

(Rises, threateningly)

HE DOES!

PHILLIP

What he said.

BAILIFF

Take a seat! *(PHILLIP does)* State your full name.

PHILLIP

Phillip James Raymond.

BAILIFF

(To BRANDON)

Counselor!

BRANDON approaches PHILLIP. He carries the piece of paper he read from previously.

BRANDON

(Looks at paper)

Raymond?

The BAILIFF jumps in and turns the paper upside down.

Phillip?

PHILLIP

Yes?

BRANDON

Phillip, are you acquainted with the defendant, Harlan Parmenter?

PHILLIP

Acquainted? Whatdya mean acquainted?

BRANDON

I mean...do you know him?

PHILLIP

(With great hesitation)

Well...I guess...I suppose you could say I...in a way you might be able to...maybe...

HARLAN

(Threateningly)

HE KNOWS ME!

PHILLIP

I know him. Yes. I know him. Boy, do I know him!

SUZANNE

I object! The defendant shouldn't be allowed to answer for the witness!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(To BAILIFF)

That's probably good protocol, huh?

BAILIFF

Great protocol.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(Slams gavel)

Sustained! *(Then, sweetly)* Harlan, from now on, try not to answer for Phillip, okay?

HARLAN

(Winks)

Whatever you say, Cyndi!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(Giggling)

Thanks, Harlan!

BRANDON

Now... *(Looks at paper; braces)* Phillip?

PHILLIP

(Hesitantly)

Yes?

BRANDON

Phillip. Tell the court where you were at 11:31 on the morning of September 21 of this year.

PHILLIP

(Still scared)

Tell 'em...?

BRANDON

Yes.

PHILLIP

Where I was?

BRANDON

Yes.

PHILLIP

I'm...not quite sure...what you mean...

HARLAN

(Stands; tough guy; roughly)

Tell the court...where you were...at 11:31...on the morning...of September 21...of this year!

PHILLIP

Well, I...

HARLAN

TELL 'EM! NOW!

PHILLIP

But I just don't think I...

HARLAN

TELL 'EM!!! JUST LIKE YOU TOLD ME!!!

PHILLIP

Now?

HARLAN

NOW!!!

PHILLIP

(A rote recitation, very fast, no punctuation)

I was in the school in the hallway on the third floor where I could see Mikey's locker and everything that was going on and I didn't see Harlan anywhere near the hallway or the locker or stealing anything because Harlan is the kind of guy who would never in a million years do anything like that never ever never.

HARLAN

(Politely; to JUDGE)

I apologize, Cyndi, for my outburst.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

No prob, Harlan.

BRANDON

Thank you, Mr. Phillip. Raymond. Whatever. *(Sits)*

BAILIFF

(To JUDGE)

Cross?

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Huh? No. A little bored, but not really cross.

BAILIFF

Cross examination! Ask the Prosecution if she wants to CROSS examine the witness!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Oh. *(To SUZANNE)* Do you? Wanna do the cross thing?

SUZANNE

I absolutely do!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Oh. Good. Glad I asked.

SUZANNE

(To PHILLIP)

Phillip, do you know what perjury means?

PHILLIP

No.

SUZANNE

It means lying on the witness stand. And do you know what happens when you commit perjury?

PHILLIP

No.

SUZANNE

It means you can get into big trouble!

PHILLIP

Ah. Okay. Do you know what INjury means?

SUZANNE

Yes.

PHILLIP

Good. So if I have a choice between PERjury and INjury. I pick PERjury!

SUZANNE

Phillip, I can't believe you're gonna let these guys get away with this!

HARLAN

(Nudges BRANDON)

Object.

BRANDON

I object! *(To HARLAN)* Why?

HARLAN

(Whispers)

The prosecutor is badgering the witness...

BRANDON

(Loudly)

The prosecutor is badgering the witness!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

She is?

SUZANNE

I am not!

PHILLIP

Yes, you are! *(To JUDGE)* Your Honor, I'm being badgered!

SUZANNE

(In his face)

How? How am I badgering you, Phillip? Go ahead! Tell me! How! How! HOW!
HOW IS THIS BADGERING!

PHILLIP

(Weeps)

See! See! She's badgering me! *(Points to HARLAN)* And he's gonna injure me!
(Bawls openly) I JUST WANNA GO HOME!

SUZANNE

OH...GET OUTA HERE!

PHILLIP runs out of the room, wailing.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Hmm. Let's recap. Timmy says he saw Harlan take the lunch money from the locker. But Phillip says that Harlan wasn't anywhere near the locker. One guy's word against another guy's word. Well, nothin' we can do about that! Let's go to the mall! *(Starts to rise)*

BRANDON

(As HARLAN prompts him to his feet)

But, Your Honor! I have another witness to call.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

You do?

BRANDON

I do. A character witness!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Oh! *(To BAILIFF)* What's a character witness?

BAILIFF

A witness who tells us something about the character of the defendant. In this case, Brandon obviously is going to call somebody to the stand to tell us all how wonderful Harlan is.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Oh. And we have to know this, why?

BAILIFF

Because if this witness convinces the jury that Harlan is not the kind of guy who could steal the lunch money, then perhaps they will acquit him.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Acquit?

BAILIFF

Yes. Let him go. Set him free.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Oh. And if the jury acquits, we can a-leave?

BAILIFF

Yes.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Good! Call the witness!

BRANDON

The Defense calls Melissa Adrenalin!

BAILIFF

Melissa Adrenalin!

MELISSA appears. She is a bundle of energy.

MELISSA

Hi. Hi, everybody! Hi, kids. Hi, Harlan. Hi, Mikey. Hi, Brandon. Hi, Suzanne. Hi, Mrs. Delfina! *(Reaches BAILIFF)*

BAILIFF

Stop saying hi and raise your right hand!

MELISSA

(Raises hand; quietly)

Hi. *(Apologetically)* I can't help it. When my hand goes up, I say hi!

BAILIFF

(Exasperated)

Just...Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MELISSA

Well, like, what else would I do?

BAILIFF

Take a seat!

MELISSA

(To JUDGE)

Hi, Cyndi.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Don't. *(Refers to BAILIFF)* He gets mad. *(To BRANDON)* Go Brandon.

BRANDON

Melissa, you are acquainted with the defendant, are you not?

MELISSA

Well, I mean, like yeah. Like, that's why I'm here, right? Like, isn't that the whole thing of me being here, because, like, I know Harlan?

BRANDON

Yes. Yes. Please...tell the court how you know the defendant.

MELISSA

Oh. Well...like, Harlan and me, like, we went to kindergarten together, like, you know and, like, he lives like two houses down from me and, like, we, like, know all the same people and go to the same, you know, like, stores, and, like, church and, like, him and me, we've, like, known each other, like, forever.

BRANDON

And how long is forever?

MELISSA

Well...like...forever? I mean, like, nobody really knows how long forever is, do they?

BRANDON

I mean...how long have you known Harlan?

MELISSA

Like in years?

BRANDON

Yes.

MELISSA

Well...like...I've known him since we were in kindergarten so, like, what were we then, like, four? And now, like, we're like, thirteen, so, like...that's like, what, in years, like, thirteen minus four.

BRANDON

And how many years would that be?

MELISSA

(Beat; thinks)

Since kindergarten.

BRANDON

Okay. Anyway, Melissa...as a character witness for Harlan, what would you like to say about Harlan's...uh...character?

MELISSA

Oh, like, well, Harlan is, like, you know, a really, really cool character. And, like, he's, you know, like, really cute. I mean REALLY cute. He's so cute, like, when, you know, you walk into the cafeteria and there's, like, a hundred boys there eating lunch, Harlan is like the only boy you really see, like, because, you know, he's, like, so, so cute.

BRANDON

So you would say that Harlan is...?

MELISSA

Cute. Really, really cute.

BRANDON

And he has a good character?

MELISSA

Oh, like, yes. He has a good, good...cute...character. Yes.

BRANDON

That's all. Thank you.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Thank you!

BAILIFF

No.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(To MELISSA)

No thank you.

BAILIFF

No! Suzanne gets to redirect.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Redirect? Does Suzanne know what that means?

SUZANNE

I do.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

So do it, then! *(Exasperated)* Boy!

SUZANNE

(Approaches MELISSA)

Melissa, would you do me a favor?

MELISSA

Sure, Suzie! Like, of course!

SUZANNE

Okay, first of all, don't call me Suzie.

MELISSA

Like, okay.

SUZANNE

And now, would you describe Harlan's character again...

MELISSA

Okay. Like, sure. Well, like, he...

SUZANNE

Except...this time...if you want us to believe that Harlan is really a good guy, I want you to convince us by not using the word "like." At all. Go.

MELISSA

Well, I... *(She tries to speak but can't)*

SUZANNE

Melissa? Can you do it?

MELISSA

Sure, I...I...

She can't; no more words will come out of her mouth.

SUZANNE

Melissa? *(Nothing; to JUDGE)* This witness is completely discredited, Your Honor!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Oh, yeah?

SUZANNE

Yeah.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

What does "discredited" mean?

SUZANNE

It means she can't really know Harlan because she can't even put an English sentence together about him without using the word "like!"

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(To BAILIFF)

Does that make any sense?

BAILIFF

No.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Should I allow it?

BAILIFF

Sure. I'm kinda sick of people who use the word "like" all the time, too. I'd allow it.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

It's allowed! Step down!

MELISSA

That is, like, so unfair!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Like, live with it! Step, step, step! *(MELISSA leaves; to BAILIFF)* Well, that's it, I guess. Time to see what the jury...

BRANDON

Uh....Judge?

HARLAN is whispering to him.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

What is it, Brandon?

BRANDON

Uh...I think...

HARLAN continues to whisper to him.

I think...I would like to call one more witness.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Oh, that figures. Who?

HARLAN

Me.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(Points to HARLAN)

Him?

BRANDON

Yeah.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(To BAILIFF)

Can he do that?

BAILIFF

That he can!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Well, hurry up and call him, then!

BRANDON

I call the defendant, Harlan Parmenter, to the stand!

HARLAN rises and approaches the stand. The BAILIFF greets him.

BAILIFF

(Officiously)

Raise your right hand!

HARLAN

Hey...you gonna talk to me, you talk to me nice.

BAILIFF

(Beat; then nicely)

Raise your right hand. Please.

HARLAN

That's better. *(He does)*

BAILIFF

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

HARLAN

In my whole life, the truth is what I live by. Daily. Hourly. Minute-ly.

BAILIFF

Fine.

HARLAN

And that's the truth.

BAILIFF

Take the stand.

HARLAN

Take it where? *(Beat; nobody laughs)* That was a joke.

BRANDON laughs; nobody else.

BAILIFF

(After a look to BRANDON)

Sit down. Please.

HARLAN

Don't mind if I do. *(Sits)*

BAILIFF

State your full name. *(Starts to walk away)*

HARLAN

Harlan Harlan Parmenter.

BAILIFF

(Stops)

Harlan...Harlan?

HARLAN

Yes. My first name is so good, my parents couldn't find a better one for my middle name. Is there a problem?

BAILIFF

Uh...no. No. *(Walks away, bewildered)*

BRANDON

(Approaching)

Harlan, do you have any idea why you are being accused of this crime?

HARLAN

I must admit. I am perplexed.

BRANDON

You are perplexed?

HARLAN

I am perplexed. And I looked up that word, so I know what I'm talking about. Let me explain. It is my goal in life...no, let me rephrase that...it is my...duty in life to do good for my fellow human beings on the planet. Why Mikey has choosed to make me the target of this investigation is...perplexing to me.

SUZANNE

(To MIKEY)

"Has choosed?" Did he say "has choosed?"

HARLAN

Perhaps if Mikey would say something sometime we would know what his motivation is. However, he never says anything, does he?

HARLAN looks threatening at MIKEY. MIKEY stands, and opens his mouth to speak. HARLAN stands and glares at MIKEY. MIKEY backs down and sits.

HARLAN *(Cont'd)*

(To BRANDON)

Please. Continue.

BRANDON

So you deny this allegation?

HARLAN

Not only do I deny it, I say to you that I never done it.

BRANDON

And that is the truth?

HARLAN

That is truthfully the closest to the truth you will ever get outa me.

BRANDON

Wow. What a guy. *(To SUZANNE)* Redirect?

SUZANNE

(Approaching)

Harlan, how stupid do you think I am?

HARLAN

It doesn't really matter how stupid I think you are... *(Indicates AUDIENCE)* It's how stupid I think they are that matters.

SUZANNE

Your Honor, I demand you hold the defendant in contempt!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

You do?

SUZANNE

Yes! I demand it!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Okay. Well...lemme run this past my little buddy, here... *(To BAILIFF)* You know anything about this contempt deal?

BAILIFF

Yeah. When someone in the courtroom acts disrespectfully to you or the jury, you can hold that person in contempt. Fine 'em. Throw 'em in jail. Stuff like that.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Sounds like a lot of work for me.

BAILIFF

A little bit of a hassle, yeah. Paperwork. It'd be a while before you could get to the mall.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Okay! *(Slams gavel)* Never mind! No contempt!

SUZANNE

But Your Honor...

JUDGE CYNTHIA

You heard me! Now are you finished redirecting Harlan?

SUZANNE

I...I guess so...

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Good. *(To BAILIFF)* So...now what do I have to do to move this thing along?

BAILIFF

Call for the summations.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(Stands and hollers)

SUMMATIONS!

BAILIFF

Not so loud! Just...call on the lawyers one at a time and ask them to sum up their cases for the jury.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Oh.

BAILIFF

I have no idea why people look up to you.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Have you seen me, like...really dressed up?

BAILIFF

Oh. Yeah. Never mind. Summations. Suzie first.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Suzanne! Your summation, please!

SUZANNE

(Rises; aside to BAILIFF)

You call me Suzie again and you are in big...big...

BAILIFF

Just...do your summation.

SUZANNE

(Clears throat)

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury...have you ever in your brief but adolescently tumultuous lives seen a court case in which the defendant is more clearly guilty than this one? Have you? Of course you haven't! Harlan Parmenter brazenly broke into Mikey McDougald's locker and took his lunch money. Mikey says so. Even though he never says anything. And our eye witness Timmy says so. And Harlan...Harlan threatened the life and reputation of poor Phillip to get him to commit perjury on the witness stand, and then Harlan himself practically admitted on the stand that he believes the jury can be duped into believing he is innocent! Did you pick up on that? The duping? Did you? Did you see how much contempt he has for you!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Hey, I said negative on the contempt thing!

SUZANNE

It's so very, very clear, ladies and gentlemen. Harlan Parmenter is guilty. Guilty, guilty, guilty! I'm almost...almost looking forward to the summation of the Counsel for the Defense. I just cannot imagine what he's going to come up with that would in any way sway you from believing anything other than the unarguable fact that Harlan Parmenter is guilty. Guilty, guilty, guilty!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

You done?

SUZANNE

Yes, Your Honor.

SUZANNE sits, then whispers energetically towards HARLAN.

SUZANNE (Cont.)

Guiltyguiltyguilty!

BAILIFF

(To SUZANNE)

Hey!

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Brandon. Must be your turn now.

BRANDON

Thank you, Cyndi.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Hey, you know, go with the Your Honor thing. I kinda like that Your Honor.

BRANDON

Thank you, Your Honor.

JUDGE CYNTHIA

Cool!

BRANDON

(To AUDIENCE)

Guys...GUYS! It's Harlan! You know Harlan! Has he ever lied to you? Has he ever sent you off in the wrong direction? On anything? Ever? (*Quickly*) Don't answer that! Let me answer for you! No! Of course he hasn't. You know why? Because he's Harlan. Harlan "Mr. Trustworthy" Parmenter. He is Harlan and he is one standup guy.

(*Specifies somebody in AUDIENCE*)

Terry! Terry, you remember that time you lost your bicycle and you couldn't find it for three days? Who was it who brought that bicycle back to you, rode it right up to your door and presented it to you? Harlan! That's who!

SUZANNE

That's because Harlan stole it in the first place!

BRANDON

Doesn't matter! I'm talkin' about who brought it back to Terry. And it was Harlan! Harlan brought it back to him! (*Chooses somebody else*) Brittany! Brittany, when you misplaced your science homework a month or so ago, who found it...

SUZANNE

And made copies of it for all his friends...

BRANDON

Who found it and gave it back to you only three days late for you to hand it in?

SUZANNE

(Offended)

Brandon!

BRANDON

No! Harlan!

SUZANNE

Your Honor, are you going to allow this?

JUDGE CYNTHIA

(To BAILIFF)

Am I going to allow this?

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes