

CHANCELLORS: A HIP-HOPPORTUNITY

by Alan Haehnel

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CHANCELLORS: A HIP-HOPPORTUNITY

A Full Length Hip-Hop Play

by Alan Hachnel

SYNOPSIS: In this cosmic hip-hop play, we get a rare look into the world of The Chancellors—Lucky, Whimsy and Chuck. These three oversee the games of chance that determine what will happen on Earth. After giving us a general tour of their realm, The Chancellors introduce four specific people, all high school seniors, only three of whom will graduate. Who will be left behind? While The Chancellors and their helpers, The Shufflers, find the question highly entertaining, one in their midst has a secret that drives him to take desperate measures. Against a cardinal rule of the realm, Chancellor Chuck has fallen in love with one of the humans, and he cannot let fate play out unhindered. He sacrifices all to alter his love's future, and the universe will never be the same. Full of rhythm, rhyme, dance, drama and laughter, *The Chancellors* tells a story larger than the world itself.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 females, 5 males, 3-37 either, 0-20 extras)

CARLY (f)..... A popular, “All American” high school senior. This is the “real” Carly who appears as a separate character from Carly SSI, one of the Shufflers. *(33 lines)*

TRAVIS (m)..... A drug-dealing teenager. *(26 lines)*

THE CHANCELLORS: A group of three—Lucky, Whimsy, and Chuck—who supervise the gambling that determines what happens to the people on Earth.

LUCKY (m/f) One of the Chancellors—very cynical. *(165 lines)*

WHIMSY (m/f) One of the Chancellors—also cynical, but more open to new ideas than is Lucky. *(145 lines)*

CHUCK (m) One of the Chancellors—too hopeful for his own good.
(123 lines)

THE SHUFFLERS: A hip-hop group of approximately 20 people who serve as dancers, as chorus, as a versatile group who play a variety of small roles. From The Shufflers we get the following characters (SSI stands for “Shuffler Stand-In”):

LEO SSI (m) A slacker of a high school senior. (28 lines)

BREE SSI (f) An over-achieving high school senior. (20 lines)

CARLY SSI (f) A popular, “All American” high school senior. (38 lines)

LISA SSI (f) A wall-flower of a high school senior. (21 lines)

INTERROGATOR 1 (m/f) Challengers of the Chancellors’ purpose (4 lines)

INTERROGATOR 2 (m/f) Challengers of the Chancellors’ purpose (4 lines)

ANNOUNCER SHUFFLER (m/f) (1 line)

AUDIENCE SHUFFLERS 1-5 (m/f) Stand-ins for audience members. (1 line each)

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 1 (m/f) Stand-ins for Guidance Counselors. (10 lines)

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 2 (m/f) Stand-ins for Guidance Counselors. (8 lines)

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 3 (m/f) Stand-ins for Guidance Counselors. (12 lines)

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 4 (m/f) Stand-ins for Guidance Counselors. (9 lines)

BEATBOXERS (m/f) A group of 4-5 who establish the rhythms during the raps

BEATBOXER 1 (m/f) The leader of the Beatboxers. (2 lines)

BREE’S MOTHER SSI (f) The helicopter parent of Bree. (5 lines)

ZOMBIE SHUFFLER (m)	Part of Leo SSI's presentation of himself. (<i>Non-Speaking</i>)
GERTRUDE SHUFFLER (f)	A representative of an audience opinion. (<i>1 line</i>)
LEO'S GRANDFATHER SHUFFLER (m)	A negative influence in Leo's life. (<i>1 line</i>)
HELENA SHUFFLER (f)	A representative of an audience opinion. (<i>1 line</i>)
LAUGHING SHUFFLER 1 (m/f)	Part of the group who introduces the concept that Chuck is in love. (<i>5 lines</i>)
LAUGHING SHUFFLER 2 (m/f)	Part of the group who introduces the concept that Chuck is in love. (<i>3 lines</i>)
LAUGHING SHUFFLER 2 (m/f)	Part of the group who introduces the concept that Chuck is in love. (<i>1 line</i>)
LEON (m).....	(<i>2 lines</i>)
DON (m).....	(<i>2 lines</i>)
MIMI (f)	(<i>4 lines</i>)
MUNK SHUFFLER (m/f).....	(<i>Non-Speaking</i>)
IMPATIENT SHUFFLER (m/f).....	(<i>1 line</i>)

CASTING NOTE: While I have designated some characters as male or female, directors may change any genders and alter names accordingly. Also, the number of Shufflers can be reduced by combining lines and doubling parts. For instance, the lines assigned to Shuffler 1 and Shuffler 4 might both be spoken by the same actor.

DURATION: 90 minutes.

SET

A few simple tables strung with lights would get the job done, but the closer you get to creating a miniature Vegas, the better. Setting up small spaces for the scenes in the guidance offices should just be a matter of pulling out two chairs. The biggest challenge will be shifting between the realm of the Chancellors and the scene with Carly on Earth. A picnic table for Carly's scene would be optimal. If space does not allow, however, that small scene could take place without a set.

PROPS

- ☐ Gambling paraphernalia—decks of cards, dice, balls for roulette wheels, chips, etc.
- ☐ Tombstone
- ☐ Cell phone
- ☐ Plastic bag with pills in it
- ☐ Finger cymbal
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Journal

COSTUMES

The Chancellors should be flashy and matching. The Shufflers should be uniform but not as flashy as the Chancellors. When the Shufflers take on their bit parts to move the story along, any costume changes should be minimal and quick. They should mainly achieve their characterizations through acting, not costume changes. Again, as with the musical aspects of The Chancellors, the costumes can be as elaborate or as simple as time and talent allow.

AUTHOR NOTES

As with many of my plays, assigning specific cast numbers and genders is difficult. The script is very flexible in these regards. If a director assigned one actor to every named character, the play would require 34 actors, which would be a fine number. However, I would be disappointed if a potential producer of *The Chancellors* decided against the show because it required 34 actors, and 34 actors were not available. The truth is, *The Chancellors* could successfully be performed with as few as 15 actors. This would require some consolidation of lines and much doubling, but those are both possible with this script. Likewise, I would be disappointed if a producer passed on *The Chancellors* because it only required 34 actors, and the producer was hoping to cast at least 50. *The Chancellors* could accommodate 50 actors because the troupe of Shufflers could be expanded. Additionally, almost every part is gender-flexible, even those designated as male or female. So, with all of that in mind, I present to you this set of numbers and genders for *The Chancellors*, but please see them as only a guideline rather than as a hard-and-fast requirement.

PRODUCTION NOTES

I designed *The Chancellors* to be a highly-flexible, highly-accessible musical. The hip-hop style presents a great opportunity to infuse this production with as much music and dance as your time and talents allow. And no need to hire an orchestra! How many times a day do students spontaneously start beatboxing to back up some classmates' rap? Having taught high school for the past 25 years, even in the rural states of Vermont and New Hampshire, I have seen these sorts of performances pop up all the time. *The Chancellors* provides a chance to harness that trend and the energy found in it. Turn the kids loose. Give them a number from the show, and I guarantee they will start to improvise the rhythm and movement almost immediately. Not everyone will be an expert at the art, but most will have fun at least getting started.

One caution about the rhythms for the various raps: Don't rush. I had a beat in my head as I wrote the rhymes, but that original cadence may not always come through. You'll have to invent a rhythm that works. As you decide on delivery, allow for pauses. There's nothing wrong with letting the focus shift

from the words to the beat and/or the dance for a few seconds, then back to the words again.

The only song calling for an actual melody is the final number of the show: “Go Down and Be Angels.” While accompaniment is possible, I envision this as an a cappella number that builds in harmony and volume as it goes along. If your troupe is small, you might want to augment this song with some recorded music to give it the needed build.

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

The Chancellors was first produced by Pope John XXIII High School in Katy, Texas. The production was directed by Betsy Barry and featured the following cast:

CHUCK	Pedro Barquin
WHIMSY	Isi Imoisi
LUCKY	Cameron Echevarria
LEO	Riley O’Sullivan
LISA	Rachel Roy
BREE	Madison Valdecanas
CARLY	Nicole Valdecanas
TRAVIS	Korbin Podolak

THE COMPANY – Multiple Roles:

Trevor O’Sullivan
 Christian Costello
 Hailey Kelley
 Katherine Crockett
 Klarissa Lopez

ACT ONE**Rap 1: Introduction**

AT RISE: *Darkness. One by one, the lights of various gambling machines come up—a slot machine, a roulette wheel, etc.—until we have a miniature Vegas at night. More lights come up to illuminate the entrance of the SHUFFLERS. Some of the SHUFFLERS establish a beatbox rhythm to which the others start to dance, often interacting with the set pieces. The number builds in energy and sound, all in preparation for the entrance of the CHANCELLORS, three stylish characters who saunter in. They clearly own the place.*

WHIMSY: Yo, yo!

ALL CHANCELLORS: We are the Chancellors!

WHIMSY: I'm Whimsy!

LUCKY: I'm Lucky!

CHUCK: And I'm Chuck! *(The beat stops for a beat for everyone to look at CHUCK—what kind of a name is Chuck?)* What?

The beat resumes.

LUCKY: We bring a story...

CHUCK: Old as time and filled with rhyme...

WHIMSY: And what's more, we...

CHUCK: Speak and sing important things...

LUCKY: Spout philosophy....

CHUCK: Thoughts of depth and height and breadth...

WHIMSY: Make our delivery...

ALL CHANCELLORS: Just so much more than dope!

LUCKY: Now our glory...

CHUCK: Besides the way we move and groove...

WHIMSY: We're not boring...

CHUCK: Because we strain to entertain...

LUCKY: At our core we...

CHUCK: Always like to keep things light...

WHIMSY: Our main quarry...

ALL CHANCELLORS: Is to be as slick as soap!

WHIMSY: The scope and reach...

LUCKY: From each to each...

ALL CHANCELLORS: Won't stop!

The beat ends. The characters speak the dialogue until the next rap.

CHUCK: Now before we get specific...

WHIMSY: With a particular path of traffic...

LUCKY: Let's get a bit more graphic about us.

WHIMSY: Just as you've got Chancellors...

LUCKY: You've also got the lore of chance.

CHUCK: And the Shufflers who just love to dance!

The beat picks up and the SHUFFLERS start dancing quickly.

WHIMSY: Not now!

The beat stops; the SHUFFLERS retreat.

LUCKY: You see, throughout history, we've often been mislabeled.

WHIMSY: Brought to the table
and put down in fable
with names like this—

The SHUFFLERS congregate and stare wonderingly at the sky.

SHUFFLER 1: It's Destiny!

SHUFFLER 2: It's Fate!

SHUFFLER 3: It's the All-Seeing Eye!

SHUFFLER 4: It's Karma!

SHUFFLER 5: Kismet!

SHUFFLER 6: Providence!

SHUFFLER 7: The Guy up in the Sky!

SHUFFLER 8: Well, Jupiter's in retrograde...

SHUFFLER 9: And Mercury has pull...

SHUFFLER 10: Everything is pointing straight...

ALL SHUFFLERS: To the sign of the bull!

WHIMSY: Don't get us wrong.
We're not singing a song
to degrade anybody's beliefs.

LUCKY: Pul-lease, no. We just want to dispel what history tells about us.

CHUCK: Dusty and musty, encrusted with rumor—dude, it's humorous!

Two Shufflers come out and start to interrogate the Chancellors.

INTERROGATOR 1: Do you have plan?

WHIMSY: Come on, man.

INTERROGATOR 2: Are you on a quest?

LUCKY: Oh, give it a rest.

INTERROGATOR 1: Should I call you Your Highness, adhering to Aquinas?

INTERROGATOR 2: Is your eye on the sparrow, your path straight and narrow?

INTERROGATOR 1: Your will like an arrow, shooting through antiquity on into modernity and straight into eternity?

INTERROGATOR 2: Seeing all, knowing all, doing all?

INTERROGATOR 1: Every river, every lake, every heart, every mind?

INTERROGATOR 2: Every single flake of snow, every stop, every go?

CHUCK: Dude.

ALL CHANCELLORS: No.

LUCKY: No matter what you hope or believe or intuit...

ALL CHANCELLORS: That's not how we Chancellors do it.

WHIMSY: Hit it!

Rap 2: We Are The Chancellors

LUCKY: Look around! Our playground!

WHIMSY: These tables and these slots;
this is where we call the shots.

CHUCK: We rule with the roll of the dice!

CHUCK rolls the dice—The CHANCELLORS watch, then shout.

ALL CHANCELLORS: Nice!

LUCKY: Deal the cards, spin the ball,
pick a number on the wall...

WHIMSY: We don't listen to no heavenly advice!

ALL CHANCELLORS: Vice!

CHUCK: Now, what is the purpose?

LUCKY: What is the point?

WHIMSY: Just what are we up to in this God-forsaken joint?

CHUCK: Are we trying to make money?

LUCKY: Are we here to feed a need?

WHIMSY: Is this some sort of ego-building
monument to greed?

ALL CHANCELLORS and SHUFFLERS: No! No! A million times no!

CHUCK: To come to that conclusion
you completely miss our flow!

ALL CHANCELLORS and SHUFFLERS: Nay! Nay! A billion times
we say it!

LUCKY: Your ignorance you hide real well
until you thus display it!

WHIMSY: The current and currency
that keep this den in business...

CHUCK: Are the lives of the people on Earth,
no less.

ALL CHANCELLORS: The chips, when they fall,
The chips, when they rise...

LUCKY: The dips and flips convert
into your triumph or demise.

WHIMSY: To understand our function,
you have to emphasize
that we're...

ALL CHANCELLORS: CHANCE-ellors!
CHANCE-ellors!

CHUCK: We toss and we throw
and we spin and we roll
to control the Earth's concerns.

ALL CHANCELLORS: We're CHANCE-ellors!

CHANCE-ellors!

LUCKY: The pulls and the pushes
And the moves of our tushes
decide how your lives turn.

During the following section, the CHANCELLORS move to various parts of the set where the SHUFFLERS are manning the gambling devices.

WHIMSY: Now over here, for instance,
the dice came up on seven.
What does that decide?

SHUFFLER 10: A certain guy named Clive
will die in a mine cave-in.
Eighteen others will walk out fine,
but Clive dies in the mine.

WHIMSY: Because of the way the dice read,
Clive dies in the mine?

SHUFFLER 10: Precisely. The dice say,
Clive dies in the mine.

CHUCK: So what have we got here?
What's the basic story?

SHUFFLER 11: The spin of the wheel
has just determined
great wealth for Dory.

CHUCK: Dory of Wisconsin,
Dory with the cleft lip?

SHUFFLER 11: That's the Dory,
morning glory,
and she's got the winning slip.
From poor to rich
like the flipping of a switch,
Old Dory's sitting pretty.

LUCKY: Did Clive deserve to die?
Did Dory deserve to be rich?

SHUFFLER 12: By all accounts,
Clive's a hell of a guy
and Dory is a witch.

DO NOT COPY

LUCKY: Which

takes us to another sector
where something else is brewing—
what do you say,
what game's afoot,
what have you guys got going?

SHUFFLER 13: We're working on a cat named Owen.

In a second we'll have an answer.
We throw this down and turn it over—
and oh! Our Owen's got cancer.

LUCKY: Owen? With cancer?

But Owen was a rower!
Every morning out on the river.
In tip-top shape;
he was doing great!

SHUFFLER 13: That's cancer, right in the liver.

SHUFFLER 14: Hey, Cecil made the bus!

SHUFFLER 15: Jeanine just broke her toe!

SHUFFLER 16: The weather broke

and the plane took off,
but look, wouldn't you know,
the ice on the wing
is causing the thing
to smash to the ground below.

ALL CHANCELLORS and SHUFFLERS: We're CHANCE-ellors!

CHANCE-ellors!

WHIMSY: We crow,

we throw,
and so,
so goes
your life!

SHUFFLER 17: Now, here's a situation
unfolding double quick.
We've got two kids,
identical twins,
and both of them are sick.
Stay tune while we do our thing.
We'll let you know in a bit.
Maybe one recovers
or both or neither—
we'll have news in a sec.

SHUFFLER 18: Jo-Jo scored a goal!

SHUFFLER 19: Jack just got deported!

SHUFFLER 20: A third tornado
has hit the town
with record damage reported!

SHUFFLER 1: Sina's making bank!

SHUFFLER 2: Mabel's disappointed.

SHUFFLER 3: The 15th entry
just got the nod—
he is the new anointed.

SHUFFLER 17: The news on the twins is in.
Gigi will get well.
But Didi will spend
the rest of her life
in a hospital bed
like a cell.

ALL CHANCELLORS and SHUFFLERS: Random numbers,
random throws,
random moves and misses—
what we do
determines if...

SHUFFLER 4: You get jabs or kisses.

SHUFFLER 5: You get hugs or punches.

SHUFFLER 6: You get starved or lunches.

SHUFFLER 7: You get skipped or mauled.

SHUFFLER 8: You're loved or appalled.

ALL CHANCELLORS and SHUFFLERS: We're CHANCE-ellors!
CHANCE-ellors!

SHUFFLER 9: You make your shot or miss it.

SHUFFLER 10: You show respect or diss it.

SHUFFLER 11: You trip or you sidestep it.

SHUFFLER 12: You're healthy or decrepit.

SHUFFLER 13: You fall on your face

in ultimate disgrace

or you end up

monarch of the place...

ALL CHANCELLORS and SHUFFLERS: We're CHANCE-ellors!

CHANCE-ellors!

CHANCE-ellors!

CHANCE-ellors!

We crow

and we throw

and so,

so goes,

and so,

so goes,

and so,

so goes...

your life!

Spoken.

CHUCK: Oh dear, we've caused a kerfuffle.

LUCKY: I can hear the feathers
ruffling from here.

WHIMSY: Predictable.

LUCKY: Pitiful.

CHUCK: Understandable.

LUCKY: Still pitiful.

WHIMSY: We know. We get it.

CHUCK: How it grates against some of your sensibilities to consider
the possibility that life...

LUCKY: Don't run on Dunkin'.

CHUCK: No. It chills the human soul to know that life runs willy-nilly.

Some of the SHUFFLERS run downstage to act as if they are calling from the audience.

AUDIENCE SHUFFLER 1: What about fairness?

AUDIENCE SHUFFLER 2: What about equity?

AUDIENCE SHUFFLER 3: What about balance?

AUDIENCE SHUFFLER 4: And mercy?

AUDIENCE SHUFFLER 5: To say we have none of that
is to say we are accursed!

WHIMSY: Hold the phone!

We will have none
of that specious reasoning here.

LUCKY: Does existence seem
ruthless, relentless,
seeming not to care less? Yes.
But learn this, chapter and verse:
the universe is not perverse.
There is no curse
waiting to reverse
your plans.

CHUCK: Man's need
to be seen
every scene's center
does not alter meaning
or truth.

LUCKY: Do you think they got it?

WHIMSY: I doubt it.

CHUCK: All right, at the risk of stagnation,
one more attempt at explanation.

LUCKY: And then, wouldn't it be splendid
if we could get to our true agenda?

WHIMSY: We're not here to send a message.

We're here to entertain
with a presentation
of a particular situation,
not go on and on,
et cetera,
about our *raison d'être*.

CHUCK: I getcha.

But maybe if we go less global,
give them an actual,
relatable example,
something they saw in the headlines,
they'll get better aligned with our signage,
so to speak.

LUCKY: You're weak
when it comes to them.

CHUCK: Listen, I just think their condition is complex.
They get easily vexed,
And the next thing you know
They're going down a wrong road.

LUCKY: Oh, what a load of...
You get too involved!
We're not here to solve anything.
We're here to play!

WHIMSY: Hey!
Time's a-wasting. What do you say?

LUCKY: Okay, okay.

*The BEATBOXERS start behind the reporter-like voice of
ANNOUNCER SHUFFLER.*

Rap 3: Hero on the Screen

ANNOUNCER SHUFFLER: Aurora, Colorado. July 20, 2012. At a showing of *The Dark Knight Rises*, James Eagan Holmes entered a Century 16 Movie Theater. Dressed in tactical gear, he threw tear gas grenades, then opened fire on the audience. He injured 70 people. He killed 12.

CHUCK: Sitting at a movie,
Smooth Christian Bale playing Batman.

ALL SHUFFLERS: Batman!

CHUCK: Hero on the screen but zero in the house.
Watching Batman.

ALL SHUFFLERS: Batman!

CHUCK: Bullets start streaming, people start screaming—
Where is Batman?

ALL SHUFFLERS: Batman.

CHUCK: Hero on the screen but zero in the house.
You're needing Batman.

ALL SHUFFLERS: Batman.

CHUCK: They're pleading. They're bleeding. For real.
Zero with a mask and teargas.
Shotgun and a Glock, he's not even taking aim,
bullet in the ceiling, bullet in the brain,
three through the wall, seventy-six in all,
and you walk out.
And you walk out.

ALL SHUFFLERS: Why do you walk out?

CHUCK: Seventy hurting, twelve lie still,
killer so close you could practically smell
the color of his camo and the shape of the yells,
the heat of his insanity;
his cool, incessant cruelty,
yet you walked out.

ALL SHUFFLERS: Why did you walk out?

WHIMSY: Were you somehow more righteous?
Did your life shine a light just
so bright that some high being
looked down and said, Oh, gee,
he's the one that I've just got to save?

LUCKY: Or were all of the victims
needing to be convicted
because they were hidden sinners
who simply hadn't been pinned yet
so they got what the killer gave?

WHIMSY: Can you work out a purpose?
Divine some destiny?
Create a defense
so it all makes sense
through the lens you choose through to see?

LUCKY: Do yourself a favor.

Put your mind at ease.

The reason that you're standing here

Is we rolled one of these.

WHIMSY: Or we spun one of those.

LUCKY: Or this coin showed up heads.

WHIMSY: And that is why you're still alive

And not one of the dead.

LUCKY: No more should be said.

ALL SHUFFLERS and CHANCELLORS: (*Whispered.*)

We are the CHANCE-ellors

The CHANCE-ellors.

The CHANCE-ellors.

LUCKY: Nothing more need be said.

Spoken.

WHIMSY: And now, after that (*To CHUCK.*) over-long introduction,

We get to the main attraction,

The action we're actually here for.

CHUCK: Let us zoom in

To the space, the room in

which our scenario

Takes place.

LUCKY: The Galaxy of the Milky Way,

The spinning orbs,

Cousins of similar birth,

Absorbing the warmth

Of the mother sun.

WHIMSY: Our focus is on Earth.

Continent: North America.

Country: States United.

Ohio, in particular,

Gets our attention undivided.

CHUCK: Articulating more particulars—

The precise name of the place, for instance—

Would be ridiculous.

As a rule, a certain lack of specificity

Creates greater universality,

Which we want.

LUCKY: A typical school of the high variety,

No particular notoriety.

The usual hormones and soaring anxiety.

Forms and reports sorted,

Everything falls in the norm.

WHIMSY: Spitballs, pitfalls, pratfalls,

All the respective jobs.

Teachers preaching,

Students reaching for phones,

Seeking unauthorized loans

To answers on questions to tests.

CHUCK: Angst and hanky-panky,

Phalanxes of the swanky and the slobs.

Your basic yada-yada

From Vermont to Nevada

Or, in this case, in Ohio on a hill.

You know the drill.

LUCKY: So, so far, in summary,

From universe to galaxy

To planet, continent,

Country, state and town

And furthered narrowed down

To a single institution.

WHIMSY: The usual confusion of 800 humans

Subsumed into a box,

Teeming and toxic

As rancid gym socks.

CHUCK: Time—tick-tock—first of October.

A sober time for seniors,
The oldest of the youngsters.
And of the five score and seventy-six
Of this auspicious twelfth-grade mix
We narrow once more...

ALL CHANCELLORS: To four.

LUCKY: Leo, Carly, Lisa and Bree.

On this gang we'll be stopping.
We'll meet them
Via eavesdropping.

WHIMSY: We'll be the hidden audience

For their first year's encounter
In the office of guidance.

CHUCK: Quick note to the squeamish:

In the following scenes
Shufflers are stand-ins
For the kiddos we mention.
No actual humans are used
Or harmed in the course
Of this production.
Thank-you.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 1: So. Leo.

LEO SSI: Yo.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 1: I see,
based on your previous years,
we might have a problem coming up.

LEO SSI: Yup.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 1: If we double up
your math,
add a half
a gym credit,
you could be okay.

LEO SSI: Yay.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 1: Don't be mistaken.

This isn't a given.

These courses are on top of your regular schedule.

LEO SSI: Cool.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 1: I guess my main question
at this point in the discussion
is do you care?

LEO SSI: Who does your hair?

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 1: We're done here.

LEO SSI: Clear.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 1: No exaggeration
graduation will not happen
with the patterns
of your behavior that you've shown.
Constant contention with your teachers,
numerous detentions,
no retention of your learning.
Pay attention!

LEO SSI: Huh?

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 1: Do you have any intention
of changing?

LEO SSI: Uh, well, that depends, you know...

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 1: You can go.

LEO SSI: If you say so.

LEO SSI exits back to the group.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 1: Twit.

CHUCK: So, that's it.

Leo the disenfranchised.
Eyes apparently
On no prize.

LUCKY: Notorious for floating
And gloating about it.
Hence the title,
Not a bit of endearment to it,
Twit.

WHIMSY: Next!

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 2: So, Carly, how're things going?

CARLY SSI: I think they're going good.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 2: You shouldn't be so modest.

To be honest,
you're on top of your game.
Rumor has it
you scored a hat trick last night.
You're on the road to record-breaking.
You should embrace your fame!

CARLY SSI: Well, it takes a team.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 2: That team needs a leader, like they
have in you.

CARLY SSI: Thank you.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 2: Both on and off the field, too.

Look at this resume.
I'd have to say
Your ducks are in a perfect row.
You can go
anywhere.
It's almost not fair.
One kid has it all:
talent with the soccer ball,
standing tall academically,
socially,
volunteers in the community.

CARLY SSI: I've had a lot of opportunity.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 2: Where do you hide your halo?

CARLY SSI: Thanks for saying so.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 2: Colleges beating down your door?

I tell you, every time you score,
you probably get ten times more mail.
You make us proud.
Sorry. I'm gushing;
I can see you're blushing,
but listen, don't rush on your decisions.
You're in a position
to let them come to you,
you hearing me?

CARLY SSI: Thanks for steering me.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 2: My pleasure. I mean that.

I tip my hat to you
and all you have accomplished.
You're established as a top pick,
and the year has just begun.

CARLY SSI: I should probably run,
back to calculus.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 2: You should, you son of a gun.

You are the best of us.

Keep in touch.

CARLY SSI: Thanks very much.

WHIMSY: Such a study in contrasts.

While Leo is a pain in the...
Ask any adult in the building—he is.
Carly, however, is a whiz
At whatever she's after.
Grades, sports, friends, relations—
An endless supply of success and patience.
Everybody's darling, Carly.

CHUCK: And she's a beautiful person, too.

CARLY SSI: Why, Chancellor, thank-you.

CHUCK: Not you.

CARLY SSI: Oh.

CHUCK: I mean, you're fine,
But the Carly I have in mind
Is the actual one
You're standing in for?
She's quite amazing, to the core.
I mean, she, she soars...

LUCKY: Uh, Chuck? How 'bout it?

They get it. Carly's coolest in the school.
And you're drooling.

CHUCK: Oh, don't be foolish.

WHIMSY: And now, for our next spied-on conference,
Someone with somewhat less confidence,
Lisa.

LISA SSI: My dad and mom,
thought I should come, um,
to see you.
They were thinking, um,
I should be taking some
harder classes.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 3: That's a good idea, dear,
but it's senior year, here,
and it's not quite clear, dear,
just what you're after.

LISA SSI: Oh.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 3: Are you thinking college?
Or vocational?
Your grades so far are
not sensational.
But you've earned
your credits just fine.
If you keep on toeing the line
you'll graduate on time
so that is good.

LISA SSI: My dad and mom, um,
said I should come, um...

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 3: To see me. I heard.
A little bird
told me.
Tell me, what are your goals?

LISA SSI: Goals?

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 3: Yes. Your desires?
What do you aspire to?
What lights the fire
inside of you?

LISA SSI: Well...

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 3: Hobbies? Interests? A job, perhaps?

LISA SSI: Yeah. I work weekends at the Sugar Shack.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 3: The Sugar Shack, good.
Could that be a career?

LISA SSI: I don't think so.

He's tearing it down
in less than a year.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 3: Oh, dear.

LISA SSI: So you don't think

I should take harder courses?

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 3: Of course, that's fine,
if you're interested.

LISA SSI: I'm not super invested.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 3: All right, then, I guess

It's about time for my next guest.

Please come back again,
perhaps with more of a plan.

LISA SSI: Okay. How soon?

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 3: Sometime in May? No later than June.

LISA SSI: All right.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 3: Maybe I'll see you
at the Sugar Spoon.

LISA SSI: Shack.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 3: Shack. Yes, that.

See you when you come back.

CHUCK: Lisa. A piece of work? Not really.

More like a piece of...chalk.

Regrettably, awfully forgettable.

But not our next contestant, Bree.

Hang on for a ride—wheel!

BREE SSI: I'm concerned about my recommendations.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 4: I'm sure your teachers will have no
hesitations

since every one gave you an A.

No letter grade less than an A...

BREE SSI: Since fifth grade.

And every report that
I got before that
was the equivalent.
All excellent.
In those days they didn't give A's.
I regret that
I couldn't get
them back then.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 4: You are a go-getter.

BREE SSI: Which teacher writes the best letter?

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 4: Well, they all...

BREE SSI: The better the letter
the better my chances of getting in
where I'm supposed to.
I don't have a reach school.
Harvard and Princeton and Dartmouth and Yale—
they're all feasible,
all on a scale of one to ten
the least of them is an eight.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 4: That's great, but...

BREE SSI: I'm on the cusp, but...

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 4: You have to consider...

BREE SSI: I have so much more to do!

So what I need from you,
is a break-down,
state and town
and institution,
of which teachers' recommendations
correlate to the greatest rate of collegiate invitations.
If you have the raw data,
my daddy can do the analysis.
Do you have that now?

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 4: I don't see how...

BREE SSI: This afternoon at the latest, please.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 4: I'll see if tomorrow...

BREE SSI: To borrow from Shakespeare,
such a petty pace is just not good for me.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 4: So...

BREE SSI: I have to go. Violin lessons, you know.

BREE SSI exits the scene.

COUNSELOR SHUFFLER 4: Whoa.

LUCKY: Whoa is right.

Strung tight like an E string
on a fiddle. Thing is
there is no middle
For Bree. There's one extreme
that is her scene:
Tippity-top or nothing.

WHIMSY: So, that's our four,
Only in the nuttiest of nutshells, of course;
We've only just begun to crack them.
We lack the time to get
The whole stack of facts and feelings
That comprise them.

CHUCK: But at least you get a sketch,
The start of a connection.
Short of perfection,
But better than nothing.

LUCKY: So what's the deal with this quartet?
What do we get by settling these guys
In your minds?

The BEATBOXERS begin. CHUCK looks around, puzzled, as everyone starts to dance.

Rap 4: One of Them's Going Down

WHIMSY: We're setting up for the ending.
We're building up the suspense.
See, the dice have determined
That one of these four
Won't get across the fence.

LUCKY: One won't march in June.

One gets left behind.

One won't cross the finish line

Come graduation time.

WHIMSY: Which one are you betting on?

Carly, Leo, Lisa or Bree?

Chance has chosen one to stay

While the other three get free.

WHIMSY, LUCKY, and ALL SHUFFLERS: One of them's going down!

One of them's going down!

LUCKY: Three go on to lives beyond

While one looks like a clown!

WHIMSY, LUCKY, and ALL SHUFFLERS: One of them's going down!

One of them's going down!

One of them's going down!

One of them's going do...

Spoken.

CHUCK: Wait, wait, wait, wait!

LUCKY: What?

CHUCK: What are we doing?

(Referring to the audience.)

I think these people

Would be qualified

In questioning

Our justification

For this celebration.

LUCKY: And what is your justification

For your constipation, Chuck?

CHUCK: Why are we acting cruel?

LUCKY: Why are you off your gruel?

WHIMSY: Cool it, you two.

All right, all right, look.

Since we're stopped, or seem to be

Let's take the opportunity

To hear some more

From each of the four.

CHUCK: Fine with me.

LUCKY: Sure, sure, great.

But sooner or later

No matter how much we hesitate,

One of these kids will not graduate.

That's a done deal,

Established by a little ball

Rolling on our wheel.

Not to be changed

Or rearranged.

CHUCK: I'm no stranger to this.

I know how we operate.

LUCKY: Then cooperate!

WHIMSY: I swear I will defenestrate

The both of you.

(To the BEATBOXERS.)

Lay something down.

Bree, go to town.

The BEATBOXER SHUFFLERS lay down a rhythm. BREE SSI steps forward.

BREE SSI: That cadence is too tame for me.

BEATBOXER 1: Say what?

BREE SSI: Give me a faster beat. Please.

Dig-a-dut, dig-a-dut, digga-digga dut-dut.

Like a train.

(Faster.)

Dig-a-dut, dig-a-dut, digga-digga dut-dut.

Dig-a-dut, dig-a-dut, digga-digga dut-dut.

Get it?

BEATBOXER 1: Got it. Dig-a-dut, dig-a-dut, digga-digga dut-dut.

The BEATBOXERS pick up this faster rhythm.

Rap 5: Bree's Solo

BREE SSI: A constant refrain runs through my brain
like a freight train on an open plain
just dig-a-dut, dig-a-dut, digga-digga dut-dut.
Dig-a-dut, dig-a-dut, digga-digga dut-dut.
A thousand similes I could use for this path,
from literature,
from history,
from science and from math.
Like the focus of Odysseus trying to get home,
in Homer.
Like rough-riding Roosevelt charging up the hill
in San Juan.
Like god-making protons
that fly through the Hadron Collider
or the vector's one direction
in a line going on and on.
Dig-a-dut, dig-a-dut, digga-digga dut-dut.
I'm smart, that's a start,
but it's not worth a fart
in an oxygen tank
if I don't make bank
with the colleges.
Universities.
Prestige is what I seek.
And senior year is the season.
The reason for the high school scene.
I could scream.
Gimme the green light!
My future is in sight!
I'll fight the good fight
and do it with a grin
just let me get in,

let me get in,
show me the way
to get in!

BREE'S MOTHER SSI: But don't forget

your wellness training.

This is your mother.

I worry that you're straining.

Breathe. Breathe. Breathe.

That's good now—breathe, breathe, breathe.

BREE SSI: Enough of that.

Dig-a-dut, dig-a-dut, digga-digga dut-dut.

AP Lit and AP Lang,

the ACT weren't no big thang—

aced it as a sophomore,

SAT took twice more,

just had to get the hang

of the questions.

Testing, testing—is this thing on?

From microphones to microscopes,

oscilloscopes to telescopes

to Scopes of the monkey trial.

All you've got to do is dial in

to the style in

which the questions

are framed then

you make a flow chart

to get a head start

and hire a tutor

and maybe two more

and then you get down

to practice.

And you practice

and you practice

and you practice

till your academic thinking

is like instinct.

You can fill in

the bubbles

without troubling to read
the whole passage.
The college process
like sausage.
They want the product
Not how you make it.
What it takes, it's
the blood and the bones,
the endless reminders,
what you've left behind
in the constant grind.
You grind and you grind and you grind,
and then you stuff it,
you dump it,
into one neat piece of meat,
perfect for consumption.
One lump sum you're hoping
will look whole.
Will look holy,
the freaking Second Coming,
God Himself applying,
vying for a spot in the Ivys.
Water into wine? Why,
I did that in AP Chemistry.
Try me. Take me.
Tell me what you need;
I'll re-make me!

BREE'S MOTHER SSI: Honey, don't hyperventilate.

This is your mother.

I don't want to be a bother,
but breathe? Breathe. Breathe.

Do you need your inhaler?

BREE SSI: No, I'll be fine.

BREE'S MOTHER SSI: You remember what happened
those other times.

BREE SSI: That was when I was five.

Next year I'll be leaving.

But right now I'm breathing.

Breathing, breathing, breathing.

Go along now.

Breathing, breathing, breathing.

BREE'S MOTHER SSI, placated, backs off.

BREE SSI: Hey, you beatbox rhythm clowns!

Don't be trying to slow things down.

Dig-a-dut, dig-a-dut, digga-digga dut-dut!

If anything, we've got to pick it up!

Dig-a-dut, dig-a-dut, digga-digga dut-dut!

The rhythm gets faster.

The bullet train now,
200 miles an hour,
doing everything beyond our power,
shoving 64 minutes into every hour,
scouring and scouting;
we'll even take to pouting.

Scout, scout,
what's the best route?

Who's got the clout
to get me out
of this town

and into the towers?

Dig into the coffers,
shower me with offers,

scholarships,
acceptance slips,
research trips,
tips for the slickest
internships.

No blips, no dips, no slip-ups now,
just power, power, power

on through.

Doing whatever I got to do
to get into the coolest schools!

BREE'S MOTHER SSI: Now sweetheart...

BREE SSI breaks rhythm on the next line, stopping the beat. She screams the rest of the rap without accompaniment, until the very last line when everyone joins in.

BREE SSI: Don't! Now, Mother, just don't!

Don't tell me how
to release my fears
to lower my level
of deep anxiety
with sleep or with breathing,
some crystals
made for healing...
I can't do any of that
when my insides are seething,
needing,
bleeding,
I'm dyspeptic from expectation.
I cannot breathe! I cannot breathe!
Not now!
Don't you get this?
I'll breathe when I'm accepted!
Dig-a-dut, dig-a-dut...

ALL: Digga-digga dut-dut-dut!

Spoken.

BREE'S MOTHER SSI: Well, all right then, Missy.

No need to throw a hissy.

BREE SSI exits the scene. Before taking her place center stage, CARLY SSI speaks to the backup BEATBOXERS.

CARLY SSI: Listen,
to back me,
could you maybe
whistle? Or hum?
Something mellow.
You follow?

CHUCK: So like Carly. So kind.

WHIMSY: Do you freaking mind?

CHUCK: I just...

WHIMSY: Shut it.

The BEATBOXERS oblige CARLY SSI'S request with a laid-back beat.

Rap 6: Carly's Solo

CARLY SSI: I don't want to say this
too loudly,
with a crowd of seniors
all around me
stressed out to a crazy degree.
But I am basically happy.
I'm blessed. I know that.
And my success, quite frankly,
has come to me pretty cheaply,
compared to other people.
I mean, look:
My parents are still together.
They seem to love each other.
I get along fine with my brother.
My life at home is good.
Perfect? Of course not.
We have our little squabbles and whatnot.
But nothing to get uptight about.
It's all good. What a cliché.
It's true, though; what can I say?
I suppose I should mention soccer.
I love it.

Talk about a perfect fit.
I get out on the field
and feel...
accepted.
Connected. Everything falls into place.
The lines, the ball, the goal,
my role, the team, it seems
like everyone and everything
has gathered to support me.
I feel like the sport is me.
They say I'm good,
that I have talent,
and scouts are coming 'round
and pitching a tent
to court me.
They want me.
It's great.
Don't get me wrong.
It's great.
But...
After the game,
from out of the crowd
people ask me
if I am proud.
Of what?
Of playing the game that I love?
Of having the genes and opportunities
to somehow come out above?
No. I'm not proud. I'm grateful.
To God or fate
or whatever sets the plate
for me.
I'm grateful to be
so blessed.
But I'm pissed, a bit,
that I feel like
I need to apologize
because my life is so good.

I sometimes see in others' eyes
this look like they think
I'm a fake.
Like somehow I'm taking
something from them
by not admitting
that I'm a failure.
Like they need
to billow their sails
with the wind of my demise.
Surprise!
What you see is what I am.
Sorry to disappoint you
by not making my life
some point you
think you have to make.
Look, come to one of my games.
This isn't something I've perfected.
A lot of moves I make get rejected.
Last week I took
a wicked sick kick
and it ended up
smack in the back
of the head
of one of my own defenders.
My best friend, too!
Can we discuss this?
I almost gave her a concussion!
That's how perfect I am.
The game's exact trajectory
is at least three-quarters mystery
but somehow it
usually works for me
and we end up
with the win.
I'll be damned
if that's a sin!
So, bottom line,

hope you don't hate me
'cause my life is fine.
And if you do, well,
that's on you.
If I've gotta be in the gutter
so you can like me better,
don't hold your breath to be friends.
I guess that's where I end.
Thanks.

CARLY SSI walks off, but not before seeing LISA SSI.

CARLY SSI: Hey, I think you're on.

LISA SSI: Oh, darn. *(Comes to center reluctantly.)*

Oh, wow. That light is bright.
I don't like the spotlight.
I know you want
to set a rhythm for me,
but you see,
I just don't have one.
I'm kind of inconsistent.
But if you insist, then,
go ahead and do one.

The BEATBOXING SHUFFLERS set up a moderate cadence. LISA SSI begins rapping, very hesitantly.

Rap 7: Lisa's Solo

LISA SSI: Hello, I'm Lisa.

I like pizza.
Just like everybody else,
I like pizza.
And sometimes sausage.
Or whatever else you have.
I'm not real picky.

This situation,
attention's center,
is really not my sort of thing;
I mean, just more than anything
I kind of like to fade.
Not fade away. Not suicide!
I had an uncle once that did that.
That was the way he died.
But that's not me.
I want to survive.
But I'd rather be
inside the hive.
Like honey bees, know what I mean?
Some fly out to all the flowers,
just buzz around for hours and hours
collecting nectar, all that stuff
then buzzing back and out again,
flying as fast and as far as they can.
But those kinds of bees
I don't admire.
I'd rather stay home
and mind the fire
inside the hive, you know?
Where's it's safe. And comfy.
Where a honey bee
can just be.
Tending to the queen
making up a honey mix
or flipping up a screen
and seeing what's on Netflix,
you know? Just hanging out.
Without some shining light in your eyes.
Without some beatboxing bunch of guys
insisting you have a meter.
Look, I get my jobs done!
And I have a few people who call me hon.
I sit up and take my nourishment;
if I do wrong, I take my punishment.

I'm all right, as a worker bee.
As all right as all right
requires of me.
And sometimes I just don't really see
why I have to be any more.
Here's the door.
Here's the door.
Here's the door to opportunity—
choose one and go!
everybody screams.
But what if I'm all right here?
Alive.
In the hive.
Keep your door.
I'll sweep the floor.
Go visit your blossoms.
I think that's awesome,
but I'm doing fine right here.
I'm not angry. Or anything.
My life's alright without the bling.
And so I guess I'm done.
Done.
(*To the SHUFFLERS.*) Done!

The BEATBOXERS end. LISA SSI exits. LEO SSI yells from offstage.

LEO SSI: You wanna beat?
Check this out.

LEO SSI comes walking out like a zombie, slowly dragging his feet in rhythm with his slow beat.

Rap 8: Leo's Solo

LEO SSI: Shhboom, shhboom, shhboom, shhboom.

Zombie feet,

shuffling on the street.

Shhboom, shhboom.

Eyes straight ahead,

vacant and dead.

Shhboom, shhboom.

Not a thought

going through the head.

Shhboom, shhboom.

Hollow as a drum;

twice as dumb.

Shhboom, shhboom.

The name of this number is deadbeat.

Boom.

Deadbeat.

Boom.

I am a deadbeat.

The Beatboxers pick up the pace.

LEO SSI: My grandfather has names for me.

ALL SHUFFLERS: Shhboom, shhboom.

LEO SSI: And one of them is dead zombie.

ALL SHUFFLERS: Shhboom, shhboom.

LEO SSI: That is a bit redundant but

ALL SHUFFLERS: Shhboom, shhboom.

LEO SSI: I've learned to keep my mouth shut.

ALL SHUFFLERS: Shhboom, shhboom.

LEO SSI: The other name he loves to say

ALL SHUFFLERS: Shhboom, shhboom.

LEO SSI: Is one you've already heard today.

ALL SHUFFLERS: Shhboom, shhboom.

LEO SSI: My grandpa, in a voice so sweet,

ALL SHUFFLERS: Shhboom, shhboom.

LEO SSI: Says I'm a freaking deadbeat!

ALL SHUFFLERS: Shhboom, boom!

ZOMBIE SHUFFLER comes out—Exhibit A for LEO SSI.

LEO SSI: Let's take this dude here.

Imagine that it's me.

It's got that empty stare—
your typical zombie.

You know what they say:
he doesn't give a care.

His mind is in decay.

He don't even comb his hair.

He's a worthless piece of flesh,
his grandpa says to him,
his mouth is way too fresh
and his wallet's way too slim.

What a waste, a throwaway,
what a crying shame—
his grandpa says he wishes that
they didn't share a name.

Zombie.

Deadbeat.

That's me.

Burned meat. Yeah.

Except...

Except...

Except...

Except!

As the BEATBOXERS and SHUFFLERS continue with shh-boom, LEO SSI and the ZOMBIE SHUFFLER start to do a hand jive together, slow and simple at first, but then, after each of the four times LEO SSI says "Except," the shh-booms get faster and the hand jive gets more complex until, during the last set, the hand jive has turned into an elaborate, exciting duet.

LEO SSI: This dude who's me ain't no zombie
and I ain't one, not neither.
His mind's so hopping with ideas
he feels like he's got a fever!
He draws, he reads, he listens;
his mind's in a constant whirl;
it turns and churns so hotly,
it's like a burning wheel.
So how come he don't show it?
Why's he so lowly scored?
The answer is quite simple.
The guy's completely bored!
At home, at school, around the town,
This dude gets no respect.
When it comes to slacking acts,
he's the number one suspect!
They've got him pegged and labeled
they've got his future told.
He's practically disabled;
he's a loaf all covered in mold.
But you see this one-time zombie?
See him getting down like a king?
I've got potential you can't see.
And one day I'll wear the ring!
I'm pretty fed up; I'm pretty disgusted;
I'm pretty much done being put down.
I'm ready to show this whole damned place,
I'm ready to put my foot down!

The dance goes back to the slow "shh-boom," but this time the SHUFFLERS perform it with power, like an army marching to victory.

LEO SSI and ALL SHUFFLERS: I'm putting my foot...down!
I'm putting my foot...down!
I'm putting my foot...down!

At the end of LEO SSI'S Solo Rap, everyone onstage strikes a pose. Part-way through the applause, CHUCK and LUCKY enter, arguing.

CHUCK: Note this.

You said, and I'm quoting,
"The universe is not perverse.
There is no curse
Waiting to reverse..."

LUCKY: I know what I said!

Now, get out of your head
And stop being so boring!

CHUCK: Oh, Chance forbid,

The ultimate sin!
That's the core of it, isn't it?
Your precious fear of boredom!

WHIMSY: (*Entering.*) Enough of that!

Enough of that!
Go get a room
And work out your
lovers' spat,
You two.

CHUCK and LUCKY exit arguing.

CHUCK: And what are you willing to sacrifice
On the altar of your tedium?

LUCKY: Oh, that's so clever; that's so nice,
But bottom line, you're just being dumb!

WHIMSY: Well, we're still experiencing some
Technical...relational...philosophical difficulties.

Why don't we take a break?

An intermission!

You know—eat, drink, use the facilities—

And when you return

We'll do the reveal!

Find out who wins,

Who gets the raw deal.

Okay? Okay.

Uh, rap, dance, send them out happy!
I'm going to go slap some sense
Into those two crappy...
See you in a few!

The BEATBOXERS take over and end the act with some dancing and rapping.

Rap 9: We Are the Chancellors Reprise

ALL SHUFFLERS: We are CHANCE-ellors!
CHANCE-ellors!

ACT ENDER 1: We toss and we throw
and we spin and we roll
to control the Earth's concerns.

ALL SHUFFLERS: We're CHANCE-ellors!
CHANCE-ellors!

ACT ENDER 2: The pulls and the pushes
And the moves of our tushes
decide how your lives turn.

ALL SHUFFLERS: We're CHANCE-ellors!
CHANCE-ellors!

ACT ENDER 3: We crow,
we throw,
and so,
so goes
your life!

ACT ENDER 4: Random numbers,
random throws,
random moves and misses—
what we do
determines if
you get jabs or kisses.

ACT ENDER 5: You get hugs or punches.

ACT ENDER 6: You get starved or lunches.

ACT ENDER 7: You get skipped or mauled.

ACT ENDER 8: You're loved or you're appalled.

ALL SHUFFLERS: We're CHANCE-ellors!

CHANCE-ellors!

ACT ENDER 1: You make your shot or miss it.

ACT ENDER 2: You show respect or diss it.

ACT ENDER 3: You trip or you sidestep it.

ACT ENDER 4: You're healthy or decrepit.

ACT ENDER 5: You fall on your face

in ultimate disgrace

or you end up

monarch of the place...

ALL SHUFFLERS: We're CHANCE-ellors!

CHANCE-ellors!

CHANCE-ellors!

CHANCE-ellors!

ACT ENDER 6: We crow

and we throw...

ALL SHUFFLERS: And so,

so goes,

and so,

so goes,

and so,

so goes...

your life!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

AT RISE: *Lights up to the same set as for Act One. Offstage, we hear the SHUFFLERS da-da-ing their way through “Pomp and Circumstance.” In a few seconds, they enter in two rows. At first, they sing the notes of “Pomp and Circumstance” at the traditional, stately pace, marching ceremoniously and solemnly. LUCKY marches in also, wearing a fancier robe. She comes in separate from the two lines, upstage of them. After half the group has come onstage in the slow way, one SHUFFLER calls out.*

IMPATIENT SHUFFLER: Bo-ring!

Rap 10: Pomp and Circumstance

They double-time the pace of “Pomp and Circumstance” and the marching, turning it into a dance. Once the group has reached center stage, all the SHUFFLERS turn upstage, backs to the audience, stop singing, and sit, leaving only LUCKY to address them. During LUCKY’S speech, the SHUFFLERS dance in place, moving shoulders, arms, caps, etc. The BEATBOX gang, part of the robed group, backs up the affair.

LUCKY: *(Not in rhythm.)* Officials, parents, families and guests,
From wherever you are from,
Typical High School, Ohio,
Gives you a hearty welcome!

ALL SHUFFLERS: Yo, yo, hello!

LUCKY continues, in rhythm.

LUCKY: Welcome to graduation,
Welcome to the night of nights.
Like schools all across the nation,
We're here to administer rites.
We join you in deep adulation
Of the growth these students have made,
And share in the sense of elation
That all of them got the grade.

ALL SHUFFLERS: All of 'em, all of 'em, all of 'em, all of 'em
All of 'em got the grade.

LUCKY: We're assured of the certain purpose
These students before you share.
They sure weren't listed with the listless,
Or they certainly wouldn't be here.
I think of the story of the porpoise
Who swims with all his power—
If we were waves, he'd ignore us
And forge on, hour by hour!

ALL SHUFFLERS: Forge on, forge on, forge on, forge on,
Forge on, Porpoise Power!

LUCKY: Swim on then, dear graduates!
Graduates of High Ohio!
Swim past whatever fad you hit,
Make your future fit just like a...

WHIMSY enters quickly. The song ends.

WHIMSY: Wait!

LUCKY: Oh!

WHIMSY runs over and whispers in LUCKY'S ear.

LUCKY: Oh. Oh! Oh!!

It seems we have with us a fraud.
Class of '16 [*for current year*], you must all stand.
There is someone here we cannot laud.
Someone who got out of hand.
Each of you earned a diploma.
Each of you earned it but one.
One, this grievous melanoma,
That surgically must be undone.
On three, the innocent descend
Leaving the guilty alone.
On three, we will see an end
To this wound cutting us to the bone.
One, two, three.

EVERYONE sits but four of the SHUFFLERS.

LUCKY: One should be left. What's the deal?

I laid out a clear, easy path.
There's four of you still, now get real!
That's four, even with the new math!

EVERYONE goes into a soft freeze. CHUCK enters.

CHUCK: So, there you go, where we left off.

That was our clever segue, hey?
We're ready to make some headway.
We're done getting in each other's way.

LUCKY: Or else there will be hell to pay.

CHUCK: So, what do you say—let's get this mystery solved!

WHIMSY: Four left standing. Four erect.

Leo, Carly, Bree and Lisa—check, check, check, check!

At WHIMSY'S "checks," the four turn around.

LEO SSI: Yo.

CARLY SSI: Hello.

BREE SSI: Present.

LISA SSI waves silently.

LUCKY: During intermission, we did some crowd sourcing,
Of course using social media—twitter feeds, texts, e-mails.

WHIMSY: Epic fails. (*Responding to odd looks around her.*)
I was watching them on YouTube
while you two
were fighting.

CHUCK: Exciting, yes. Anyway, we'd like to read out,
In your voices, your choices.

LUCKY: Our first opinion comes
from one Gertrude Hollerin.

The GERTRUDE SHUFFLER reads as a very old woman.

GERTRUDE SHUFFLER: Just for the record,
I object to all this rap stuff.
Bunch of racket. Enough already.
Anyway, I have a prime suspect
For the reject.
I think it's the Leo fellow.
He's a frequent flyer
On the juvenile delinquent plane,
And we all understand
Where that lands.
Right in the dirt,
I tell ya,
The yellow-bellied jerk.

CHUCK: Step forward, Leo, our first nominee.
Is Gertrude a first-degree seer,
A prophet whose sight is alight with rightness?

LEO SSI: Don't get too excited. I'm not your guy.
They'll say my name, and I'll cross this stage,
And then no turning back.
Leo, Ohio, graduate—
That's the plaque I get.

WHIMSY: You seemed to start the year
In reverse gear, your ability to overcome
Quite doubted by some.

LEO SSI: By most, I would say,
But hey, Grandpa died one day
last November. His last words to me?

LEO'S GRANDFATHER SHUFFLER: "Remember, you're a failure."

LEO SSI: Very inspirational.
I took the situation to decide
To change my aspirations.
I put my foot down.
Stopped playing the clown,
Stopped messing around,
Now I'm here in this gown.
Grandpa, if you hear me,
See what I can do?
And by the way, Screw you!

LUCKY: Now, for your viewing pleasure,
Something we treasure
Up here when, at our leisure,
We'd like to know whatever
Might transpire due to the requirements
Of chance.

WHIMSY: This enhancement,
This perk of our work,
Gives us a peek
Into the future!

ALL SHUFFLERS: The future!

CHUCK: Come, come, Leo Shuffler Stand-in,
Don't be frightened.
Walk into this light
So we can see what will be!

Other-worldly music from the SHUFFLERS. This is one convention of the future light—the other-worldly, no-words song from the SHUFFLERS. The other is that the future is revealed as a printout from the front of the one of the machines onstage. One or more of the CHANCELLORS retrieves and reads the printout.

LUCKY: Ten years from this moment,
Leo will be in court.

WHIMSY: But not consorting with criminals—no!
But in his capacity as a legal eagle
Of great tenacity.

CHUCK: He will be chief proponent
Fomenting change,
Bringing equity
To those in direst need...

ALL CHANCELLORS: As Leo the Lawyer!

Applause from the SHUFFLERS.

LEO SSI: Just so you know,
It's Leonardo now.

LEO SSI leaves the light.

WHIMSY: And so, for our next audience
intermission contributor,
With her proposed solution to the question
Of who fails to graduate...

CHUCK: Helena Pace posts this on Facebook—

HELENA SHUFFLER: Bree is like an annoying flea
On my guinea pig.
She bites!
She's so uptight I bet she, like,
Explodes from her anxiety.
She so high-needs
she doesn't deserve a degree.
Signed, me.

LUCKY: Well, Bree Baby,
Maybe this observer,
Filled with fervor
over what you deserve,
Maybe she's right,
Choosing you as our loser?

BREE SSI: Miss Pace is a definite snoozer,
building her palace
Of malice
With bricks of jealousy.
No matter to me.
Rather than exploding
Before the ceremony,
I was on the podium
Delivering the valedictory.
Of the 23 places I applied to,
Not one of them was I denied to,
And five I got a full ride to,
So I guess I'm sitting quite pretty,
Thank-you.

CHUCK: We congratulate you,
And invite you,
On this night of commencement,
To enter into the glare
Of your future
So that some light may be shed
On your promising days ahead.

BREE SSI walks into the future light, accompanied by the conventional song from the SHUFFLERS and her printout, which WHIMSY grabs.

WHIMSY: Ah, now who would have thunk it—
on a school-sponsored junket
Bree met a monk; it
was love at first sight.

MONK SHUFFLER comes into the light in a monk's robe. At "sight," he removes his hood and smiles sweetly at BREE SSI. He takes out a finger cymbal and dings it, once.

WHIMSY: He left his order;
she left her order.
Now they're on the border
of complete delight.
(*Ding!*)
And every morning
soon after rising,
they practice trying
to learn to breathe, breathe, breathe.

ALL applaud as BREE SSI and the MONK SHUFFLER leave the future light.

LUCKY: The future is nothing
If not surprising,
And who makes that so,
Do you suppose?
Oh, that's right!
I'm such a dumb cuss.
It's us.

CHUCK: And now, we are down
To just two candidates—Lisa and Carly.
One graduates and one is left
At the gate, who will it be?

CHUCK stares at the two. Obviously, something else is going on for him besides the game everyone is blithely playing.

CHUCK: Who, who, who will it be?
Perhaps we could stop here.
Not let things transpire.
Just snuff out the fire
On the burning fuse.
No one need lose
If we call time out on time now.
Draw a line now
And say from this point
We refuse to move.

LUCKY: That's funny, Chuck. Hilarious.

WHIMSY: We're practically delirious

With laughter, as you can tell.

But no, we're going to keep going,

As I'm sure you know we must, Chuck.

CHUCK: Following protocol.

LUCKY: Also called

Reality.

WHIMSY: Right! Then onward!

To our final audience comment.

This tweet from little Pete Newton,

He's a cute one.

Seems he just turned six.

Pete Shuffler: I pick the girl

Named Lisa to not make it.

She just seems too meek.

I learned that word last week.

Meek. It means shy. Lisa's meek

And shy like the sky will fall

Like Chicken Little

And she'll crawl into a ball

And she just won't make it.

At all.

LUCKY: Well, that's great,

Getting the youngsters involved.

Do you suppose what Pete proposed

Solved our puzzle?

Chuck? Care to muster a thought,

Or are you still too befuddled?

CHUCK: Huh? Oh, I, uh, yes,

Thank you, Pete.

That was neat

That you gave us that note

And sent us your vote.

LUCKY: It was a tweet.

CHUCK: A tweet.

That was sweet, on Pete's part,
To impart his wisdom
Via bird sound.

LUCKY: I am going to pound him so bad.

WHIMSY: Chuck, for crying out loud,
What is the matter?
You're a Chancellor, remember?
Do us proud!

CHUCK: Okay, okay, yeah.
I hear what you're saying.

WHIMSY: So, then, Lisa,
Did a first grader nail it?
He claims that you bailed,
That your meekness prevailed.

LISA SSI: Well, Pete better hope,
If I get called to babysit,
It's not for him, the little sh...ining
Example of smartness.
No, I made it through just fine,
Walked in the line,
Got my certificate,
Didn't trip a bit,
No attention called to me,
Just the way I like to be.
Now I'm free.

CHUCK: So, clearly, what's done is done.
Thank-you for coming, everyone.
No more mystery.
Lisa, Leo and Bree, here—
Good for you three.
Nothing left to see here.

WHIMSY: What are you doing?
This isn't over.

CHUCK: There's nothing left to cover.
By process of elimination...

LUCKY: I have totally lost my patience with you!

WHIMSY: Wait, wait! We don't need mayhem...

LISA SSI: Ahem! Ahem! I do believe
If we follow the previous pattern,
That's it's my turn
To walk into my future light.
Please do, Lisa.
Thank-you. I am delighted
Not to be spited
By being de-lighted.

The SHUFFLERS make the future light otherworldly sound as LISA walks in.

WHIMSY: Chuck, be a sport.
Here's her future report.
The ball is in your court.

LUCKY: He can't be depended upon.
He's got some hornet in his bonnet.

CHUCK: I'm on it.

(Reading.)

One decade from now,
Lisa the meek
will have made her name
In an arena far different
From this.
Careening on wheels
In skin-tight teal outfits,
Pads at her knees and elbows,
Lisa will be known as Queen Bee
Of her champion roller-derby team,
The Raucous Raiding Buzzcuts.

LISA SSI: *(Striking an aggressive pose.)*

Imma be
A "B" of the first degree.
Grrr!

LISA SSI leaves the future light to applause.

CHUCK: So there. All right?

Her future read. Another surprise
Before our eyes,
From shy to death-dealing
Derbyite. Great.
Now, time to close up shop,
Stop our exposition of lives
And just let things lie. Move along.
Maybe we should finish
With a cutesy song.
“We are CHANCE-ellors!
CHANCE-ellors!
We toss and we throw
and we spin and we roll
to control the Earth’s concerns.
We’re CHANCE...”

(Looking around.) Come on, join me!

LUCKY: What is your problem?

WHIMSY: You know we’re not done.

CARLY SSI: We’ve narrowed it down to the one. *(CARLY SSI points to herself.)*

CHUCK: Exactly. No suspense now.

Just wow, right? Carly.
Least likely not to succeed,
We all agreed,
But such is the greed
Of Chance.
So anyway, no need
To keep going!

WHIMSY: And leave everyone
Not knowing what happened?

LUCKY: Are you on crack, man?

CHUCK: Don’t say that!

WHIMSY: Chuck, if you need a break for a bit,
Go for it. Come back when you’re ready.
You’re just not steady.

CHUCK: Why should we humiliate her?

LUCKY: What, put out the bait

Then not shut the trap?

That's half the point

And three quarters of the laugh track!

CARLY SSI: I'm just her Shuffler stand-in, sir.

Thank-you for your concern,

But none of this really hurts.

CHUCK: I do have to leave for a while.

Something about our style and approach...

It's atrocious.

LUCKY: Be our guest. Clear the stage.

We'll get by for at least an age

Without you.

CHUCK exits.

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