

ENTRANCE EXAM

By Mark Bellusci

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ENTRANCE EXAM*A Ten Minute Comedy Skit***By Mark Bellusci**

SYNOPSIS: In this comedy about education and raising a family in competitive, harried times, Dan and Lori will have to be on their best behavior. Getting their son into this school will be difficult, with a grueling interview process that will examine everything -- everything -- about their family.

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(1 female, 1 male, 1 either; gender flexible)*

DAN (m) Father, 30s to early 40s. High strung and defensive. *(60 lines)*

LORI (f) Mother, 30s to early 40s. Forced cheerfulness and exuberance. *(35 lines)*

MS. GRAHAM (m/f) Academic supervisor, male or female, 40s to 60s. Superior and condescending. *(43 lines)*

TIME: Present day**SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**

SCENE 1: A bedroom

SCENE 2: A meticulous academic office

PROPS

- ☐ A mirror and/or vanity.
- ☐ A desk with three chairs.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Yes, this is a comedy with three distinct personalities, but it is important to not lose the humanity of each character. They each have their flaws: the defensive creative director father with a hot temper and a chip on his shoulder; the imperious academician who maintains an air of superiority; the desperate architect/mother who panders to get her son in the academic institution. Yet none of these people are malicious, they just see the world — and the need for education — in a different way. Ultimately, they will find common ground, after more than a few bumps in the road. And they will all learn something about each other along the way. So the audience must maintain a sense of empathy with each character as the play progresses.

Oh, and of course, it is important to use a bit of misdirection about the type of academic experience the family is applying for, which will enhance the surprise at the end.

Finally, have fun with this play. When it was performed as part of the Gettysburg College Short Play Festival, the director and actors brought much humor to the play through their physical actions, pacing, facial expressions and more. There is plenty of latitude with the physical actions and manifestations of these characters, so whatever gets people laughing is worth doing.

SCENE 1

AT RISE: *DAN struggles to put on a collared shirt and tie. He finally buttons the top button, but it's painfully tight. He tries to knot his tie without success. DAN then pulls on both sides of the tie in frustration, nearly choking himself.*

DAN: Relaxxxxxx. Breeeeeeeeathe.

DAN breathes deeply, forces an uncomfortable smile. He tries the tie again, struggles, and explodes once more. LORI enters.

DAN: The, uh, tie was, uh, a little—

LORI: Breathing exercise?

DAN: Like spitting into the wind.

LORI knots DAN'S tie.

LORI: This is crucial—

DAN: Just an interview.

LORI: Our son could get rejected.

DAN: A million other places would love our money—

LORI: You know how important—

DAN: No, I don't. Because we never went to an expensive, pompous, holier-than-thou—

LORI: Things are different today.

DAN: *(Imitating a running back's moves.)* Not the basics: hard work, determination, the right moves.

LORI: Please, no sports cliches on an empty stomach.

DAN: *(As a sports announcer.)* He could... go... all... the... way.

LORI: He needs to attend the right school or he won't even be looked at.

DAN: That's such a—and why'd we have to drop him off early?

LORI: They wanted to evaluate him independently.

DAN: A joke. Like this tie that's choking me.

LORI: Screw this up, and it won't be the only thing choking you.

SCENE 2

AT RISE: *MS. GRAHAM is seated, reviewing papers. Beat, then a knock on the door.*

MS. GRAHAM: You are deemed worthy to enter.

DAN and LORI enter. LORI effusively reaches to shake MS. GRAHAM'S hand.

LORI: We're honored to—

Before taking her hand, MS. GRAHAM sets an alarm on a watch or desk clock. She then limply and imperiously takes LORI'S hand, followed by DAN'S.

MS. GRAHAM: It is requested that interviewees assume positions of repose.

DAN looks questioningly at LORI.

LORI: *(Sotto voce, to DAN.)* She wants us to sit.

DAN: Why didn't she just say so?

LORI: *(Nervous as she sits.)* We greatly appreciate your—

MS. GRAHAM: It is the desire of this venerable institution to expediently ascertain the motives of all prospective students and kin.

DAN: What??

LORI: Well, your academic reputation is impeccable, so naturally you were our first choice.

MS. GRAHAM: A logical, if somewhat prosaic, response. Next, provide a pithy—

DAN: Pithy?

MS. GRAHAM: —explanation of the positive contributions this institution will garner from said prospective student.

DAN: Um, our checks?

LORI: (*Glares at DAN as she answers MS. GRAHAM.*) Johnny will contribute to the prestige of this venerable institution through his diligence, creativity, and perspicacity.

DAN looks at LORI, impressed with her answer.

MS. GRAHAM: Additional comments?

LORI and MS. GRAHAM look expectantly at DAN.

DAN: What she said.

MS. GRAHAM: (*Reading from her notes.*) In reviewing the prospective student's evaluations, the Wexler-Mendrake scores—

DAN: Who?

MS. GRAHAM: Are FTAA.

DAN: What?

LORI: (*Sotto voce to DAN.*) "Fair-to-above-average." (*To MS. GRAHAM.*) Yes, Johnny is gifted in—

MS. GRAHAM: On PPSAT testing, the prospective student achieved SITM status.

DAN: SITM? That's great! ...Right?

LORI: (*Sotto voce, to DAN.*) "Somewhere in the middle."

MS. GRAHAM: On the Connith Hawkins Combined, he scored in the WTS range.

DAN gives a concerned look to LORI.

LORI: (*Sotto voce, to DAN.*) The "Wow, that's something" range.

DAN: Cool!

MS. GRAHAM: At this precise moment in time, it is essential to explore the societal contributions of said student's lineage.

DAN: Huh?

LORI: They need to know what we do for a living.

DAN: What for? We're not enrolling.

LORI: I'm an architect. I love my job and—

MS. GRAHAM: Logical, analytical, acceptable. Mr. Vidra?

DAN: I'm a Word prostitute.

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