

MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE FAIR

by Kamron Klitgaard

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MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE FAIR

A One Act Comedy

by Kamron Klitgaard

SYNOPSIS: Ah, the middle school science fair; a place for intelligent, scientific exploration, discovery, engineering, and of course, papier-mâché, baking soda and vinegar volcanoes. But in the “Annual Tri-County Middle School Science Fair,” students are forbidden to create vinegar volcanoes for their science projects. Instead, their teacher, Mrs. Archibald, mandates that they come up with “a problem” and present a potential solution as their project. Sounds reasonable. But Mrs. Archibald has forgotten to be specific when indicating what kind of problems. So, the students find problems from their middle school world, which include, name calling, tattletales, baggy clothes and secret crushes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(21 either)

MRS. ARCHIBALD (m/f)..... The teacher. *(56 lines)*
 BRIAR (m/f) It can't be done. *(23 lines)*
 BLAKE (m/f) Kiss up. *(23 lines)*
 CAMPBELL (m/f) Attention hog. *(20 lines)*
 CHARLIE (m/f) Stage freight. *(18 lines)*
 DARYL (m/f)..... Name caller. *(25 lines)*
 DALLAS (m/f)..... Mathematical genius. *(25 lines)*
 EMERSON (m/f) Tattletale. *(35 lines)*
 ELVIN (m/f) Mechanical genius. *(33 lines)*
 FINELY (m/f) Exaggerator. *(26 lines)*
 FORTUNE (m/f) Logical and scientific. *(23 lines)*
 HAYDEN (m/f) Over-dramatic. *(23 lines)*
 HEDWIG (m/f) Laidback. *(26 lines)*
 KALE (m/f)..... Wear's super-baggy clothes and huge shoes. *(28 lines)*
 KACEY (m/f)..... Wear's super-baggy clothes and huge shoes. *(28 lines)*
 LARK (m/f) Below average intelligence. *(31 lines)*
 LANDRY (m/f)..... Has a crush. *(26 lines)*

RIVER (m/f)Loves Mountain Dew. (24 lines)
RAINE (m/f)Loves the planet Pluto. (24 lines)
BICYCLE (m/f)Procrastinator. (29 lines)
TIRE (m/f)Procrastinator. (30 lines)

DURATION: 50 minutes.

SETTING: A middle school cafetornasium.

TIME: Present day.

FLEXIBLE CASTING: Every role can be cast as male or female, requiring only a few minor pronoun changes. Doubling is possible by having actors exit after their scene, make quick costume changes and return as a different student.

DOUBLING SUGGESTIONS: Obviously, the actor playing ARCHIBALD cannot double as another character. All other actors can have multiple roles but they cannot double as a character who presents their projects back to back. In other words, as the characters take turns presenting their projects, they must skip a project before they come on as another character. Also, the actors playing Kale and Kacey can only double as characters that present their projects before Kale and Kacey

CASTING NOTE: When RAINE and RIVER conduct their science experiment, RIVER will grab various students to stand in for objects in orbit around Pluto. These can be any of the other students, and the group will be referred to as BLOB OF STUDENTS.

SET

The school cafetornasium triples as a cafeteria, auditorium, and gymnasium. Otherwise, it looks like an empty space.

LIGHTING

Flashing or dimming lights for time machine.

COSTUMING

Actors should dress in typical school student and teacher attire. KACEY & KALE wear clothes that are ridiculously too big. Later, they change into clown costumes. These can be simple or extravagant as long as it shows that they've become clowns in the future.

SOUND EFFECTS

- ☐ futuristic time machine sounds (optional)
- ☐ explosion
- ☐ crashing

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

An important note is to make sure the entrances and exits go smoothly. Since all the students are sitting "on stage" during the presentation of the science projects, the actors should all be aware of who is next to present so that they can get off stage, if necessary, even when the teacher doesn't announce when they should go.

PROPS

- ☐ clipboard (ARCHIBALD)
- ☐ two blue ribbons (ARCHIBALD)
- ☐ envelope (ARCHIBALD)
- ☐ gift certificate (ARCHIBALD)
- ☐ two backpacks with several metal objects stuck on them (BLAKE & BRIAR)
- ☐ three paper bags, two with pre-cut eye and tongue holes (CHARLIE & CAMPBELL)
- ☐ marker (CHARLIE & CAMPBELL)
- ☐ Easel (DALLAS & DARYL)
- ☐ name calling chart (DALLAS & DARYL)
- ☐ pointing stick (DALLAS & DARYL)
- ☐ towel (DALLAS & DARYL)

- ☐ a box labeled *Hyperbolimator* with a 4'-6' hose (FINELY & FORTUNE)
- ☐ time machine made from cardboard, labeled "Clothes Size Modifier" (KALE & KACEY)
- ☐ clown applications (KALE & KACEY)
- ☐ paper with plans drawn on it (ELVIN & EMERSON)
- ☐ small table (ELVIN & EMERSON)
- ☐ bag of cookies (ELVIN & EMERSON)
- ☐ spray bottle (ELVIN & EMERSON)
- ☐ papier-mâché Archibald (HAYDEN, HEDWIG)
- ☐ small table (HAYDEN, HEDWIG)
- ☐ vinegar (HAYDEN, HEDWIG)
- ☐ baking soda (HAYDEN, HEDWIG)
- ☐ Popsicle sticks (HAYDEN, HEDWIG)
- ☐ aerosol can labeled "Invisospray" (LARK & LANDRY)
- ☐ pointing stick (LARK & LANDRY)
- ☐ yellow balloon (RIVER & RAINE)
- ☐ can of Mountain Dew (RIVER & RAINE)
- ☐ easel (BICYCLE & TIRE)
- ☐ two poster boards (BICYCLE & TIRE)
- ☐ two Snickers bars (BICYCLE & TIRE)

MAGNETIC BACKPACKS

Stuff a couple of old backpacks with newspaper or material just to make it look like they are full of magnets. Then glue some metal objects to the outside. Any metal objects will do. It's just to make it look like they got stuck to the backpacks as they brought them to the science fair.

PAPER BAGS

The paper bags should be just large enough to fit over the actors' heads. The two bags with a tongue and eye holes should be cut a head of time and hidden from the audience at first. Pulling the bag down and sticking the tongues through the eyes holes is a very funny visual effect.

NAME CALLER ALGORITHM

On a poster board, simple recreate this table. Use dark thick marker or paint to make sure it shows up from out in the audience.

NAME CALLER ALGORITHM

<u>ADJECTIVE</u>	<u>MORE DESCRIPTIVE ADJECTIVE</u>	<u>NOUN</u>
Delicious	Sweet-scented	Snuggly Wuggly
Adorable	Good-looking	Sugar booger
Delightful	Kind-hearted	Angel Drawers
Huggable	Heaven-sent	Smootchie poo
Angelical	Well-mannered	Sugar-blossom Lips

CLOTHES SIZE MODIFIER

Actually, a time machine labeled “Clothes Size Modifier.” It should be built from cardboard boxes and must be big enough for two actors to fit inside. A refrigerator box would do, or it could be a bunch of cardboard duct-taped together, which gives a comical affect. It also must have a secret back door so that when the time machine is pushed out of the way and by the curtain, the actors can sneak out the back to make their costume change off stage and then sneak back in for the ending. It also needs buttons and controls. These could be painted on.

PAPIER-MÂCHÉ, VINEGAR AND BAKING SODA MRS. ARCHIBALD

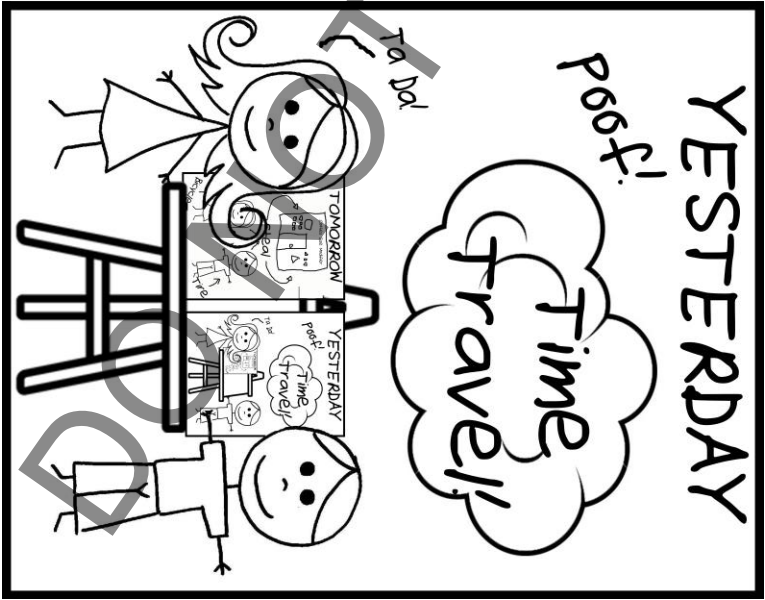
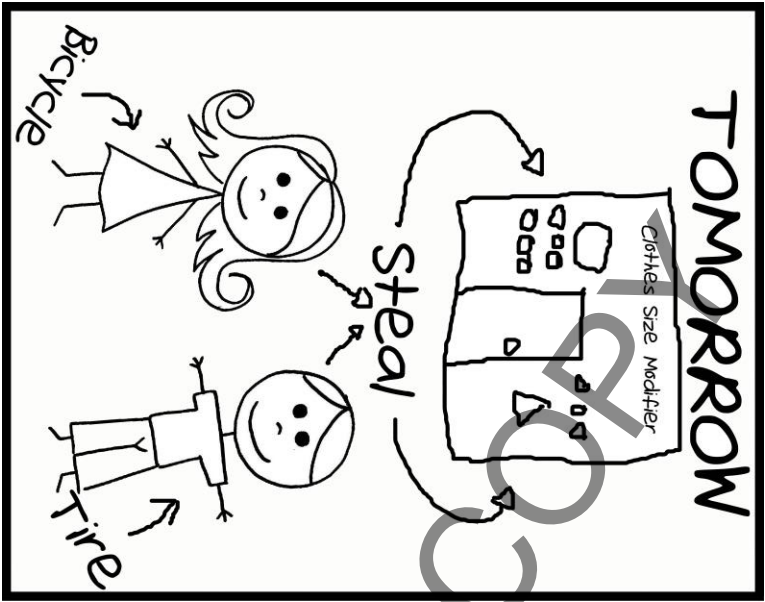
Most of us have made a papier-mâché vinegar and baking soda volcano at some point. If you are unfamiliar with how to construct one, there are plenty of resource online. It’s actually fairly simple, however, this volcano must be the face of Mrs. Archibald. It does not need to look just like the actress. It just needs to have a face in it. The sillier it looks the more comic affect it will have.

INVISOSPRAY

Simply an aerosol can with a paper taped around it labeled, “Invisospray.” An air freshener works best because it doesn’t cause a film to form on what every it hits like hairspray does.

PROCRASTINATION PLAN

The Procrastination Plan is made up of two poster boards that can sit on an easel. The plan is already drawn on one side of each poster board. When the posters are put together, the blank sides go on the outside and the drawn-on sides go on the inside, so it looks like they are both blank. Then when the time comes, the actors open the poster boards like a book, revealing the plan written on the inside. The Procrastination Plan could look something like this:



AT RISE: *An empty middle school cafetornasium. ARCHIBALD, carrying a clipboard, leads ALL STUDENTS into the cafetornasium. STUDENTS are boisterous and energetic.*

ARCHIBALD: Alright, class, settle down. Class. Class?! Class!!
(Screams.) Class!!!

STUDENTS go quiet.

BLAKE: I told them to be quiet, Mrs. Archibald.

ARCHIBALD: Thank you, Blake. Everyone have a seat.

BRIAR: There aren't any chairs.

ARCHIBALD: On the floor.

STUDENTS sit on the floor surrounding ARCHIBALD. CAMPBELL raises hand.

ARCHIBALD: Yes, Campbell?

CAMPBELL: When there weren't any chairs, I was gonna suggest that we sit on the floor.

ARCHIBALD: Thank you, Campbell.

CHARLIE: Why are we in the Auditorium?

DARYL: We're not, we're in the cafeteria, you doofus. This is where we eat lunch.

FINELY: No, it's the gym. I have gym in here. This is totally where we have gym.

ARCHIBALD: It's all three in one. Officially, it's called the cafetornasium.

DALLAS: Then why are we in the cafetornasium?

ELVIN: Yeah, we're not eating lunch, having an assembly, or playing dodgeball. This is science class.

ARCHIBALD: I'm glad you asked.

EMERSON: (Raises hand.) Mrs. Archibald?

ARCHIBALD: Yes, Emerson?

EMERSON: Daryl called Charlie a doofus.

ARCHIBALD: Yes, I heard.

EMERSON: I just thought you would want to know.

DARYL: Tattletale.

EMERSON: I am not a tattletale! (*Raises hand.*) Mrs. Archibald, Daryl called me a tattletale. (*Puts hand down when he sees everyone staring.*) I just thought you would... want to know.

ARCHIBALD: Now, the reason we are in the cafetornasium is that this is where our school will be hosting the Annual Tri-County Middle School Science Fair!

LARK: (*Raises hand.*) Will there be rides?

ARCHIBALD: I need a new job. No, Lark, there won't be any rides, this is a science fair, not a county fair. But thank you so much for asking. This is a where you will be presenting your science projects.

STUDENTS groan and complain.

ARCHIBALD: Or you could write a ten-page science paper.

ALL STUDENTS: (*In agreement, ad lib.*) Science project sounds good. Yeah, I like science projects. Science projects are awesome, [etc.]

ARCHIBALD: I'm glad we're in agreeance.

BLAKE raises hand.

ARCHIBALD: Yes, Blake?

BLAKE: Can't we do both? I, for one, would love to write a ten-page paper in addition to our projects.

STUDENTS boo and groan at BLAKE.

ARCHIBALD: Now, for your science project there are two guidelines. One, you must present a problem. For example, several years ago, a volcano erupted in South America and destroyed an entire village. One science project was a papier-mâché volcano which showed the path of the lava and a replica of the village.

HAYDEN: Did the papier-mâché volcano erupt?! I made one of those in fourth grade.

ARCHIBALD: Yes, it did.

HEDWIG: It's vinegar and baking soda. The volcano is papier-mâché and then you put vinegar and baking soda inside.

RIVER: Like Mountain Dew?!

FORTUNE: Baking soda, not soda pop.

HEDWIG: The vinegar reacts with the baking soda, causing an eruption. It's a papier-mâché, vinegar and baking soda volcano.

ARCHIBALD: Thank you. And the second guideline is that your project must present a solution to the problem. For example, the solution to the volcano problem is that the students built barricades out of popsicle sticks to direct the lava around the village.

KALE: Popsicle sticks aren't gonna stop lava!

RAINE: They probably represented something bigger, like concrete roadblocks.

ARCHIBALD: That's right.

KACEY: Concrete roadblocks wouldn't stop lava either.

LARK: Yeah, that's not realistic. They should've just put a giant cork in the top of the volcano.

ARCHIBALD: Thank you, Lark. Your solution doesn't have to be guaranteed to solve the problem. It's just something you come up with; it may work, it may not. The purpose is to get you thinking about the problem.

LANDRY: I get it. We're supposed to make a papier-mâché, baking soda and vinegar volcano.

ARCHIBALD: No. I just used the papier-mâché, baking soda and vinegar volcano as an example. And I used it because I don't want you to make that. Papier-mâché, baking soda and vinegar volcanos are over-done. They are a cliché of the middle school science fair.

ELVIN: I get it. Our science project has to be about a problem and then we try to solve the problem. A papier-mâché, vinegar and baking soda volcano is just one option.

ARCHIBALD: No! The papier-mâché, vinegar and baking soda volcano is not an option! Does everyone understand?! No papier-mâché, vinegar and baking soda volcanos! Do not make one!

LARK: One what?

CAMPBELL: *(Raises hand.)* Excuse me?! Everyone, please pay attention; right here! I would just like to point out that it's been a long time since I've gotten to say anything.

ARCHIBALD: Now, each of you will be working with a partner.

ALL STUDENTS: *(Excited.)* Alright! Yes! I know who I want! [Etc.]

ARCHIBALD: But I will assign the partners.

ALL STUDENTS: Ah, man! Dang! Boo! Nuts! [Etc.]

ARCHIBALD: (*Looking at clipboard.*) Alright, let's see. Who shall I put with whom? This class is full of weird names.

BRIAR: Weird names? Who has a weird name?

ARCHIBALD: You, for one. Briar? And there's Elvin. What, are you an elf? And there's Finely, Fortune, Kale, Lark, and Hedwig. Hedwig? I hope you get even with your parents for that someday.

HEDWIG: They're big Harry Potter fans.

TIRE: My name's not weird.

ARCHIBALD: Tire. Your name is Tire.

TIRE: It's pronounced Tee-Ray.

ARCHIBALD: Well, it's spelled Tire. T-I-R-E. Tire.

TIRE: Well, It's pronounced Tee-Ray.

ARCHIBALD: Alright, we'll start with you, Tee-Ray. Your partner will be Bicycle.

BICYCLE: Uh, it's spelled "Bicycle," but it's pronounced Quinn.

ARCHIBALD: Quinn. I can see this is somewhere I don't want to go, so, never mind. Everyone, just pick a partner.

ALL STUDENTS stand and pair up. At this point, if doubling on any parts, it doesn't matter who they pair up with. It just needs to look like everyone has a partner.

ARCHIBALD: Okay, we'll go with that. In three weeks, you'll be presenting your science projects right here. So, the first thing you'll want to do is get with your partner after school and come up with a problem. Good luck and class dismissed.

ALL STUDENTS and ARCHIBALD exit, talking about possible problems. Lighting change. BRIAR and BLAKE enter.

BRIAR: Why do we have to do this at your house? My house has free Wi-Fi.

BLAKE: So does mine. So does everyone you know, Briar. But that doesn't matter right now. We need to come up with a good problem so we can get a good grade.

BRIAR: (*Mocks.*) Good grade, good grade! That's all you care about. Let me tell you something, Blake. We're never gonna get a good grade. It's impossible.

BLAKE: Nice attitude. (*Mocks.*) “It’s impossible!” “It can’t be done.” “My elbow is not supposed to bend that way!” You’re such a downer.

BRIAR: At least I’m not a kiss up, like you!

BLAKE: I’m not a—

BRIAR makes kissing noises.

BLAKE: That’s not—

BRIAR makes kissing noises.

BRIAR: (*Mocks.*) “I, for one, would love to write a ten-page paper in addition to our projects.”

BLAKE: Alright, I admit that sometimes I just want to make sure that I do everything my teachers want, so that I can get a good grade.

BRIAR: It’s more than just getting a good grade. For some reason you need to be the teacher’s pet.

BLAKE: (*Angry.*) I do not! You could be the teacher’s pet if you didn’t think it was impossible!

BRIAR: (*Angry.*) It is impossible, with you always cutting in with your snide comments, always trying to make yourself look better than everyone else! Besides, I don’t want to be the teacher’s pet!

BLAKE: (*Angrier.*) Well, I don’t want to be your partner!!

BRIAR: Well, I don’t wanna be your partner!!

BRIAR and BLAKE get in each other’s faces and scream. They sit on the floor facing away from each other.

BLAKE: I don’t like you!

BRIAR: I don’t like you!

BLAKE: (*Calm.*) You know, we fight like this all the time, and we always hug it out in the end.

BRIAR: That’s true. But this time, I don’t feel like hugging it out.

BLAKE: Me either.

BRIAR: Great. I don’t wanna be your partner and you don’t wanna be my partner. But we’re partners.

BLAKE: Well, that’s a problem!

BRIAR: It sure is; a big problem!

An idea forms on their faces.

BRIAR and BLAKE: I have an idea!

BRIAR and BLAKE get up and exit together. CAMPBELL and CHARLIE enter.

CAMPBELL: This is gonna be awesome!

CHARLIE: No! This is terrible! This is horrible! This is stupid...ible!
(*Hyperventilates.*) I'm hyperventilating!

CAMPBELL: Why are you freaking out? You don't have the need for attention like I do!

CHARLIE: (*Pulls out a paper bag and breathes into it.*) Sure I do. It's just to a way lesser extent. But that's not why I'm freaking out! We're gonna have to stand up in front of everyone and present our project! I can't do that! I get terrible stage fright!

CAMPBELL: Stage fright?! Only babies get that. This science project is the perfect time for me to be in the spotlight. I'm good at science, so, whatever we come up with, the judges are gonna love it, and then they're gonna praise me, and stand me up in front of everyone and pin a medal on me! Then everyone will chant, "All hail Campbell! All hail Campbell!" And I will become the ruler of the entire tri-county area!!!

CHARLIE: (*Breathes in and out of the bag.*) The ruler?! Anyone can do that! It's having to actually do something on a stage that's horrifying! Everyone will be watching us!

CAMPBELL: That's the awesome part! Where did you get that bag?

CHARLIE: I always carry a paper bag with me in case I ventilate too much oxygen.

CAMPBELL: Ventilate?

CHARLIE: Breathe.

CAMPBELL: Aren't we supposed to breathe oxygen?

CHARLIE: Well yeah, we breathe in O^2 and breathe out carbon dioxide. When I get nervous, I start breathing too fast, which causes me to take in too much O^2 , which in turn makes me light-headed, dizzy, and susceptible to a nasty fall. By breathing out CO^2 into a bag, then breathing it back in, I keep my O^2 at a desired level, and my feet planted firmly beneath me. (*Hands over the bag.*) Wanna try?

CAMPBELL: (*Takes bag.*) Alright. (*Violently takes about ten short, fast breaths, then staggers.*) Whoa, this is how not famous people must feel. I think I'm gonna throw up. This is not radical!

CHARLIE: Now, breathe into the bag.

CAMPBELL: (*Breathes into the bag a couple times.*) Wow. That's better! (*Pulls the bag from mouth and studies it.*) I can't believe that worked.

CHARLIE: It's science.

CAMPBELL: (*Studies the bag more.*) That's brilliant! I think we've got our project for the science fair! This will be my first time performing on a real live stage. And my biggest attention grabber yet! All hail Campbell! All hail Campbell!!!

CAMPBELL exits with the bag.

CHARLIE: What?

CHARLIE exits, running in CAMPBELL'S direction. DARYL and DALLAS enter.

DARYL: Any ideas what we can do for our science project?

DALLAS: I think we should do something that we're good at.

DARYL: I'm good at name-calling.

DALLAS: No, you're not.

DARYL: Doofus.

DALLAS: See, that's what I mean. You've already used "Doofus" today. Remember Charlie?

DARYL: It's not the name you call someone that's important, it's the timing. You have to know exactly when to say it. Timing's everything. For example, you're a mathematical genius, right?

DALLAS: Pretty much.

DARYL: Doofus.

DALLAS: Okay, I will concede that timing is important. But what if you could call someone the perfect name with your impeccable timing?

DARYL: The perfect name?

DALLAS: What are some of your favorite names to call people?

DARYL: Doofus.

DALLAS: We know that one. Any others?

DARYL: There's goofus. And roofus. Oh! And doofus, did I say doofus already?

DALLAS: You're stuck on all the "oofus" names.

DARYL: Like I said, it's mostly about the timing.

DALLAS: And like I said, if you mix it up, your name calling will improve dramatically. How do you determine the best time to throw out a name?

DARYL: When it can help you win an argument!

DALLAS: Name calling helps you win arguments?

DARYL: Observe: Two plus two equals five.

DALLAS: No, it doesn't, it equals four.

DARYL: Doofus.

DALLAS: I don't think I like that way of winning an argument.

DARYL: It doesn't matter. You just got owned.

DALLAS: You know, by using applied algorithmic calculus in some kind of scientific undertaking, I think I could help you.

DARYL: Never mind that now. We gotta figure out what we're gonna do for our science project... Doofus! (*Exits.*)

DALLAS: (*Throws up hands and exits, following and calling out to DARYL.*) You know, what goes around comes around!

FINELY and FORTUNE enter.

FINELY: Oh man, this is the worst thing that's ever happened!

FORTUNE: Relax. It's not that bad.

FINELY: Are you kidding me?! We'll never come up with a problem! There are no problems! How can we come up with a problem if there are no problems?!

FORTUNE: Yeah, that's a problem.

FINELY: I'm serious! What are we gonna do?!

FORTUNE: I know a problem; how about hyperbole?

FINELY: Hyper-what? What's that mean?

FORTUNE: Hyperbole. Remember last week, there was a spider in the corner of the science room?

FINELY: It was a hyper-bowl spider? That thing was ginormous! It almost bit three... seven people! That's a fantastic idea! Killer spiders in school!

FORTUNE: The spider wasn't the problem. It was just an average little garden spider, eliminated with a tissue. The problem was exaggeration for exaggeration's sake. That's hyperbole.

FINELY: Every single word that comes out of your mouth sounds like every teacher in the world.

FORTUNE: Really? Every single word? Every teacher in the world?

FINELY: Maybe more.

FORTUNE: See? That's the problem right there. Maybe it's just our age, but for some reason we like to exaggerate.

FINELY: There's no freakin' possible way that's even remotely true.

FORTUNE: Remember, yesterday, when it barely started to snow, and everyone rushed to the windows and squealed with delight, as if they'd never seen snow before? Or how about when Jason got a splinter? Easily taken care of with a pair of tweezers but the paramedics came because four boys called 911. Or when Kortney came to school crying? It turned out she just got some dust in her eye, but it became a ten-girl, horror movie-style freak out of the most important event in human history.

FINELY: You know, you may have something here. What's it called again?

FORTUNE: Hyperbole.

FINELY: Hyperbole. That's got to be the weirdest, most freakish word ever invented.

FORTUNE and FINELY exit. KALE and KACEY enter.

KALE: Well, I can't think of any problems.

KACEY: Me either. Wait a minute! What about pollution?!

KALE: Can't we worry about that later? We gotta come up with a problem for our science project.

KACEY: Yeah, you're right. Hey, can I ask you a question? Why do you always wear extremely baggy clothes?

KALE: I was gonna ask you the same thing!

KACEY: My mom says that she buys my clothes for me to grow into.

KALE: Me too! I grow, like, five inches every day. So, I guess this is her way of making my clothes last longer.

KACEY: Look on the bright side, someday, in the future, our clothes will fit just right.

KALE: Yeah, but the problem is that by the time we get to that future, our clothes will be out of style.

KACEY: I see your point. We're fashionable now, but our clothes are too big. In the future, our clothes will fit fine, but they'll be unfashionable. Either way we get teased.

KALE: You know what else? My shoes are three and a half sizes too big, right?

KACEY: Yep. Just like mine. Do your toes drag too?

KALE: Yes! By the time I grow into them, they'll be worn out!

KACEY: We're cursed!

KALE: Not only that, but when your shoes are four sizes too big, your job opportunities are severely handicapped.

KACEY: Maybe we could become scuba divers?

KALE: I can't swim. The only other option is that we join the circus and become clowns.

KACEY: You're right. Our future looks mighty bleak.

KALE: *(Pulls out papers.)* I have the clown applications right here. We just need to fill them out.

KACEY: Do we have to become clowns right now? Or can it wait for the future?

KALE: *(Uses air quotes for the word "future.")* There's that word again. "Future." We'll be clowns in the "future." Our clothes will be out of style in the "future." Everything is bleak in the "future!" Don't you see?! That's the answer!

KACEY: The "future?" What, are we gonna become fortune-cookie bakers?

KALE: No! The future is our problem for our science project! *(Grabs Kacey and pulls off.)* Come on!

KACEY and KALE exit. EMERSON and ELVIN enter. ELVIN is carrying a bag of cookies.

ELVIN: (*Hands EMERSON a cookie.*) Here, wanna cookie?

EMERSON: (*Eats the cookie.*) Wow! This is the best cookie in the world!

ELVIN: I know. I already solved that problem. Now, I've got the perfect problem for our science project. You ready for this? The starving nations of the world!

EMERSON: We're going to solve world hunger?

ELVIN: Yep. And we're gonna do it by building a machine that extracts all the salt from sea water. (*Pulls out a paper and shows EMERSON.*) Look. I've already drawn up the plans. I call it a De-salt-inator.

EMERSON: Cool. A machine that takes the salt out of sea water! The starving nations of the world would have enough salt to last them forever!

ELVIN: Uh, I guess. I was thinking more about all the water that could now be used for drinking and watering crops.

EMERSON: I'm telling my mom.

ELVIN: Why?

EMERSON: Because you didn't like my idea.

ELVIN: Emerson, you can't just tell on people whenever something happens that you don't like.

EMERSON: Mom! Elvin said I can't tell on people!

ELVIN: And where is your mom?

EMERSON: Upstairs, probably.

ELVIN: And what do you expect her to do about the fact that I think water is more important than salt?

EMERSON: Come down here and get you in trouble.

ELVIN: So, where is she? How come she isn't rushing down the stairs to get me in trouble?

EMERSON: Maybe she didn't hear me. Mom!!! Elvin is... what was it again?

ELVIN: Cares about water more than salt.

EMERSON: Elvin cares about water more than salt!!!

ELVIN: Well? Where is she?

EMERSON: She's trying this new "ignore unwanted behavior" strategy.

ELVIN: Emerson, you have got to stop being a tattletale. You're in middle school now. Tatting isn't cool anymore.

EMERSON: (*Tears up.*) I know. Everyone hates me for it. I just can't help myself. I have to tattle. It's like tattling runs through my bloodstream. What am I gonna do?

ELVIN: (*Takes up the plans for the Desaltinator.*) That's it! Forget the starving nations of the world! Instead, we are gonna come up with a plan to de-tattle you.

EMERSON: Do you really think it could work?

ELVIN: Trust me! By the time we're finished with our presentation at the science fair, you won't know a tattle from a tattle.

ELVIN throws the ripped-up plans into the air and lets them float to the ground. EMERSON looks down at the pieces.

EMERSON: I'm telling my mom.

EMERSON and ELVIN exit. HAYDEN and HEDWIG enter.

HAYDEN: (*Over-dramatic.*) Oh! Woe is us! I can't believe we have to come up with a science project! I think I'm gonna barf!

HEDWIG: Relax. Let's just make a papier-mâché, vinegar and baking soda volcano.

HAYDEN: Didn't you hear Mrs. Archibald?! No papier-mâché, vinegar and baking soda volcanos!

HEDWIG: That's not what I heard at all. I heard that there was a volcano that destroyed an entire village in South America. Our problem will be completely different. Our problem will be a volcano that destroys an entire village in London.

HAYDEN: London? There aren't any villages in London.

HEDWIG: Berlin then.

HAYDEN: Berlin is a city just like London. There aren't villages inside cities. And besides, there aren't any volcanos in either place.

HEDWIG: Fine. Hogwarts. The point is that the volcano is somewhere else other than South America. Different location, different problem.

HAYDEN: Sounds good to me. But Mrs. Archibald is gonna think that it's still a papier-mâché, vinegar and baking soda volcano.

HEDWIG: Fine. Let's call it something else.

HAYDEN: Like what?

HEDWIG: A volcano of baking soda, vinegar, mâché and papier.

HAYDEN: It's still the same thing.

HEDWIG: What if we said it with French accent?

HAYDEN: Or maybe we could use the same basic eruption principle and apply it to something similar to a volcano.

HEDWIG: What is similar to a volcanic eruption?

HAYDEN: Hmm. A sneeze?

HEDWIG: A sneeze. You want to make a papier-mâché, vinegar and baking soda sneeze?

HAYDEN: It's the same type of explosion. It builds from underneath the surface until it can't be contained anymore and then... Aaachoooo!

HEDWIG: Your sneezes are a big problem, are they?

HAYDEN: I see your point. Well, what else builds up pressure underneath the surface until it explodes into a spewing fountain, which is also a problem.

HEDWIG: Hmm... Acne?

HAYDEN: You want to make a papier-mâché, vinegar and baking soda zit?

HEDWIG: I think it's a problem we can all relate to.

HAYDEN: It's gross. Besides, Mrs. Archibald would be so mad she'd blow her top.

HEDWIG: *(Defeated.)* You're right. *(Excited.)* Wait a minute! You're a genius!

HAYDEN: I am? You know, I always thought I had higher than average intel—

HEDWIG: *(Grabs HAYDEN.)* Come on! We gotta find some vinegar!

HEDWIG and HAYDEN exit. LARK and LANDRY enter.

LARK: Duh, hey Landry. I'm glad you're my partner. You're probably the smartest person in the class.

LANDRY: Thanks, Lark. Do you have any ideas for a problem we can solve?

LARK: Duh, yeah. I was thinking that since you're the smartest person in the class, I would wait for you to tell me what my idea is.

LANDRY: Hey, if you're gonna be my partner, you have to pull your own weight.

LARK: Duh, pull my own weight? Duh, okay, I'm waiting.

LANDRY: Listen Lark, why do you always start your sentences with “Duh?”

LARK: Because Mrs. Archibald taught us that we’re supposed to start each sentence with a capital letter.

LANDRY: I see. But “Duh” isn’t a letter.

LARK: Yes, it is. What do you think Duh-kota starts with?

LANDRY: (*Nervous and fast.*) Dakota? Why did you mention Dakota? I don’t like Dakota! I don’t even know Dakota. I definitely don’t have a crush on Dakota! Why did you mention Dakota?! Dakota who?! Do we even have a Dakota in this school?! I don’t know what you’re talking about!

LARK: Uh-oh. You like Dakota.

LANDRY: No, I don’t!... Okay, fine! I like Dakota. There, I said it! Ahhhh!

LARK: Don’t worry, your secret is safe with me.

LANDRY: She probably already knows. I act so stupid around her. Like the other day in class, she looked over at me, so I fell out of my chair. Then I offered her my shoe.

LARK: Did she accept your offer?

LANDRY: Sometimes I just wish I could be invisible.

LARK: Oh, I see where you’re going with this! The problem is that Dakota sees you do stupid stuff. But if she didn’t see you, then you could do stupid stuff all day, and she would never know.

LANDRY: Something like that.

LARK: Duh, that’s it then! When do we start?

LANDRY: Start what?

LARK: Making our science fair project. The invisibility spray! Whatever you spray it on becomes invisible. You make the spray and I’ll demonstrate it.

LANDRY: Invisibility, huh? I might be able to come up with something.

LARK: Good. We’ll call it Invisospray. And if we win the science fair, we can sell it. And we’ll make an Invisomercial.

LANDRY: Let’s not get a head of our selves. I don’t know if we’ll make it that far, but Mrs. Archibald did say that it didn’t have to really work. Maybe we could make a poster that shows how you can bend light.

LARK: It sure would solve a lot of problems. You know what I would do if I was invisible? I would pretend to be a ghost and haunt Mrs. Archibald.

LANDRY: Or a 3-D model explaining how it could theoretically work.

LARK: Invisibility, here we come!

LARK and LANDRY exit. RIVER and RAINE enter.

RAINE: Man, we've gotta huge problem.

RIVER: I know, my mom won't let me drink Mountain Dew because she says, it makes me wired.

RAINE: Not that! Pluto!

RIVER: What about Pluto?

RAINE: It's not a planet anymore!

RIVER: Oh, thank goodness! I thought you were gonna say Pluto wasn't a dog anymore.

RAINE: What?

RIVER: It would make more sense if Goofy wasn't a dog anymore. I'm not sure he's a dog anyway. I mean, he talks, but Pluto doesn't.

RAINE: Not that! I'm talking about Pluto the planet! Well, not a planet, now!

RIVER: Oh, no way! If it's not a planet, then what is it?

RAINE: It's a dwarf planet!

RIVER: Dwarf?! So now there are eight?!

RAINE: Yes, since 2006.

RIVER: Holy cow! I think I can still name them. (*Quickly.*) Sleepy, Sneezy, Happy, Bashful, Dopey, Grumpy, Doc and now Pluto.

RAINE: Get off of the cartoons! I'm talking about the planets. Pluto, the planet, is now no longer a planet, it's only a dwarf planet.

RIVER: Oh, Pluto the planet. I thought you were talking about Pluto, the Roman god.

RAINE: I really want Pluto to be a planet again.

RIVER: Don't we all. This sounds like a good scientific problem that could be solved by a one-of-a-kind science project to be entered into the science fair.

RAINE: And just how is our science project going to make Pluto a full-fledged planet again?

RIVER: Well, how was it made not a planet in the first place?

RAINE: They decided that, in order to be a planet, it has to have cleared its orbit of other objects. Which means it must pull the objects into its own orbit or throw them clear of the orbit.

RIVER: Okay, so our science project could be all about waiting for that to happen.

RAINE: Waiting? That could take hundreds of millions of years!

RIVER: You're right, the bell will probably ring. I know! We could figure out how to make Pluto a full-fledged planet again by using a case of Mountain Dew. You buy.

RAINE: How will Mountain Dew help reinstate Pluto's planet status?!

RIVER: Well, if we're gonna stay up all night to figure it out, we're gonna need a case of Mountain Dew.

RAINE slaps forehead as RAINE and RIVER exit. BICYCLE and TIRE enter.

BICYCLE: So, what do you want to do, Tee-ray?

TIRE: Let's procrastinate.

BICYCLE: Can't we procrastinate tomorrow?

TIRE: Of course, we can.

BICYCLE: Good, because I don't feel like it right now.

TIRE: Wait, now I'm confused. Do you know what "procrastinate" means?

BICYCLE: Sure. It's the opposite of "anti-crastinate."

TIRE: No, Quinn. It means to postpone something that you should be doing right now; like our science project.

BICYCLE: I like the sound of that!

TIRE: So, you can't really procrastinate procrastination.

BICYCLE: Oh, I can procrastinate anything.

TIRE: Yes, but if we were to procrastinate procrastinating doing our science project, then that would mean we'd have to do our science project right now.

BICYCLE: I don't like the sound of that!

TIRE: Me either. So, let's just start the procrastination of our science project right now.

BICYCLE: Agreed!

BICYCLE and TIRE shake hands.

BICYCLE: But we can procrastinate tomorrow too, right?

TIRE: Absolutely. Procrastination has no limits.

BICYCLE: Excellent. So, we can procrastinate the next day too?

TIRE: Sure. We can procrastinate forever, if we want.

BICYCLE: Oh, I want. But... what if we procrastinate until the day after the science fair?

TIRE: Well, procrastination does have its downside. If we procrastinate too long, then we would miss the science fair and get a bad grade, causing our parents to ground us, which would result in us missing all after school activities, triggering us to develop an eating disorder.

BICYCLE: Dang it! I hate being grounded! I wish there was a way to procrastinate our science project until after the science fair.

TIRE: Unfortunately, that would be just a little too much procrastination.... Unless! What if our science project was all about procrastination?!

BICYCLE: You're talking crazy talk!

TIRE: No, listen, Quinn! If we could somehow develop a way to put off, 'til some future date, doing what we should be doing right now, but develop it in a scientific way that could be presented at the science fair...

BICYCLE: We'd have our science project and we'd be able to procrastinate at the same time!

TIRE: Completely avoiding an eating disorder.

BICYCLE: Tee-ray, you're a genius! When should we start?

TIRE: Right this instant! Let's go!

BICYCLE: All right, I guess we are procrastinating our procrastination.

TIRE and BICYCLE exit. MRS. ARCHIBALD enters and stands center. ALL STUDENTS enter with excitement, chatting about their projects, and sit on the floor as before.

ARCHIBALD: Alright, students, settle down. Students. Students?! Students!! (Screams.) Students!!!

STUDENTS go quiet.

BLAKE: I told them to be quiet, Mrs. Archibald.

ARCHIBALD: Thank you, Blake. Now, I would like to welcome all our visitors to our school and welcome everyone to this year's Annual Tri-County Middle School Science Fair!

CAMPBELL: All the visitors should know that this is a cafetornasium, and not just a cafeteria or an auditorium or a gymnasium.

ARCHIBALD: Thank you, Campbell. Now, the procedure will be as follows. Each partnership will remain here to watch each science project presentation. When I call your name, if needed, you will retrieve your science project from the staging area. (*Motions off stage.*) If you need the table, just pull it forward and make your presentation right here... (*Motions to the audience.*) ...for the judges.

LARK: (*Raises hand.*) Mrs. Archibald?

ARCHIBALD: There are no rides, Lark.

LARK lowers hand.

ARCHIBALD: Alright, first up are Briar and Blake.

BRIAR and BLAKE stand up center.

ARCHIBALD: Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the Middle School Science Fair!

ARCHIBALD stands to the side while BRIAR and BLAKE step up and face the audience.

BRIAR: Good afternoon! For our science project, we present the problem of not getting along with your partner.

BLAKE: I don't like her.

BRIAR: And I don't like her.

BLAKE: We fight like this all the time.

BRIAR: And we usually hug it out.

BLAKE: But not this time.

BRIAR: That's right. We've both had it with each other.

BLAKE: There will be no hugging. Thus, our problem is presented.

BRIAR: You can't create a good science project without being able to hug out your disagreements.

BLAKE: *(Points off stage.)* Half of the solution to this problem lies off stage over there.

BRIAR: *(Points off stage the other way.)* The other half lies over there.

BLAKE and BRIAR head off stage in opposite directions. BLAKE steps just onto stage wearing a full, heavy, backpack.

BLAKE: I have filled this backpack with hundreds of powerful magnets.

BLAKE turns to show the backpack. There are several spoons, keys and a stapler stuck to the outside. BRIAR steps just onto the other side of the stage wearing a full, heavy, backpack.

BRIAR: And I have filled this backpack with hundreds of powerful magnets.

BRIAR turns to show the backpack. There is a metal whisk and several other metal objects stuck to the outside.

BLAKE: By wearing the backpacks, the magnetic force should bring two partners, who do not like each other, together, to hug it out.

BLAKE and BRIAR face each other. The packs nudge them closer together. The actors pretend to resist the magnetic force.

BRIAR: As you can see, the magnets are drawing us closer. No! I don't want to hug you!

BLAKE and BRIAR are pulled closer together.

BLAKE: I... don't... want... to... hug... you!

The magnets pull them so that they are only three feet away from each other, their arms stretched out, looking like a forced hug is inevitable. Then, suddenly they both are spun around by the magnets, to face away from each other, and the backpacks connect. They are stuck together, back to back.

BRIAR: Uh... maybe we should've studied the effects of magnetism.

CAMPBELL: My braces!

CAMPBELL is drawn up by the mouth and his face attaches to the backpacks. CHARLIE is pulled up too.

CHARLIE: Mine too!

Several other students with braces are pulled up to them, their faces all stuck to the backpacks.

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