

THE TROUBLE WITH CHEWING GUM, OR TESTED, TRIED AND TRUE

By Conrad E. Davidson

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ISBN: 1-60003-322-9

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CHARACTERS

TAMMY TRUELOVE	High school student. In love with TOMMY.
TOMMY TRUESPIRIT	High school student. In love with TAMMY.
STANLEY STANDFAST	High school student. A true friend.
DEAN MEAN	High school student. The villain.
STICKY SALLY	High school student. In love with DEAN MEAN.
MRS. MOREBORE	High school English teacher.
MRS. HEARTWORTHY	Superintendent.
CASTING NOTE: Morebore and Heartworthy could be played by either a male or female.	

TIME

The present.

SCENE

A high school classroom and hallway.

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SCENE 1

SETTING: A high school English classroom, with six student desks, a teacher's desk, and chair. A doorway to the side leads to the hallway, which can be downstage of the classroom. An imaginary wall separates the hallway from the classroom.

AT RISE: Lights up. Cast is caught unawares by the presence of the audience. Someone motions for STANLEY STANDFAST to stand and address the audience.

STANLEY: Hello. My name is Stanley Standfast and I'm supposed to introduce this here story you're about to see. It's a story about true love, tribulation, love reunited. And evil. But most important, it's about the downfall of evil. The characters: First, there's Mrs. Heartworthy.

(HEARTWORTHY enters from wings.)

She's got a heart as big as, as big as, as big. . . oh, forget it. She's a good soul, the superintendent of these hallowed halls.

(HEARTWORTHY exits.)

Next, there's Mrs. Morebore, one of our teachers. She tries hard, but well, you know. She's a good soul, too. Then, there's Tommy Truespirit, my bosom buddy and pal. He kinda likes Tammy Truelove and she kinda likes him. Tammy Truelove, the very picture of femininity. Then Sticky Sally, who's nice and all, but she's kinda sticky. And most definitely least, Dean Mean, the meanest, lowest, vilest, contemptible creature to ever try to grad-i-ate from this institution. He's bad, and someone ought to do something about that. And I'm Stanley Standfast. I'm trustworthy, noble, and faithful. I hate to brag, but that's the way I am. The scene opens in Heap-a-Junk High School. Rumor has it that the walls are held together by chewing gum. Just the other day I was walking down the hall when I

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felt a tug on my shirtsleeve. Turned around. There I was stuck to the wall. Hank, the janitor, pried me loose with an ice pick. You won't mind if every so often I talk a bit, sort of fill you in. The scene opens in the classroom of Mrs. Morebore and we're being model students.

(STANLEY sits. Outburst from students, DEAN the most vocal.)

MOREBORE: Students, students, students. Please be quiet.

DEAN: I wasn't saying nothing, Ma'am.

MOREBORE: I know, Dean. Keep it that way. Now you all know prom is coming up in one day. But before you can go, you have to finish this assignment. Read the epic *Illiad* and write a ten-page analysis. Understood?

TAMMY, TOMMY, and STANLEY: Yes, Mrs. Morebore.

MOREBORE: Dean, is that understood?

DEAN: Yes, Ma'am.

MOREBORE: You have several minutes to get started.

DEAN: *(aside)* I'll never finish. I haven't even read the book. But I've got a plan to finish my work and still go to the prom with Tammy Truelove. She's a real beauty. Hahahahaha.

MOREBORE: Something the matter, Dean?

DEAN: No, Ma'am, just have a cold. *(coughs)*

MOREBORE: Please keep it down.

DEAN: *(aside)* Phase one of my plan. *(snaps lead off pencil and drops it. TOMMY picks it up.)* Tommy Truespirit, you creep.

MOREBORE: What is the trouble, Dean?

DEAN: Tommy broke the lead off my pencil.

MOREBORE: Is that true, Tommy?

TOMMY: Of course not, Mrs. Morebore.

DEAN: Oh yes, it is. See the pencil. See the lead. See whose hand it's in. The hand of Tommy Truespirit, the lowdown creep. *(sits)*

TOMMY: But I—

MOREBORE: That's enough, Tommy.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

STANLEY: *(stands)* But, Mrs. Morebore. I'm Stanley Standfast. Never told a lie in my life. Tommy's not the guilty one. I saw—

(DEAN jabs STANLEY in the stomach, unobserved by the others.)

MOREBORE: Is something wrong, Stanley?

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DEAN: It's nothing. Stanley gets stomach cramps all the time. Just needs to sit a while. (*DEAN assists STANLEY to his desk.*) I'll sharpen my pencil. What a thing to do to a fellow student.

MOREBORE: You will kindly be more courteous in the future, Tommy.

TOMMY: But I—

MOREBORE: That's enough.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

DEAN: (*aside*) Phase one worked. Tommy Truespirit is falling out of the teacher's graces. Now to knock another chip off his pedestal. I will place this tack on my chair and sit on it. Watch. Ohhhhhhh. Ohhhhhhh. Ohhhhhhh.

MOREBORE: Something the matter again, Dean?

DEAN: Ohhhhh. Is something the matter? Ohhhhhhhhh.

MOREBORE: What is it this time?

DEAN: I feel a sharp protuberance in my posterior. Ohhh. And Tommy Truespirit is to blame.

MOREBORE: (*pulls out tack*) Yes, it definitely is a sharp protuberance with a somewhat curved, circular base, commonly called a tack.

STICKY SALLY: Oh, Mrs. Morebore, you're so smart.

DEAN: Shut your trap, Sticky Sally.

MOREBORE: Who is the guilty one for inflicting this extreme anguish to Dean Mean's. . . posterior?

DEAN: Tommy Truespirit, the creep.

MOREBORE: Is that true, Tommy?

TOMMY: I—

DEAN: (*grabbing TOMMY's chin*) Look at the guilty look on his face, and he sits right next to me. You wouldn't expect me to put a tack on my own chair, would you, honorable Mrs. Morebore. . . (*aside*) . . .you dummy.

MOREBORE: Of course not, Dean. Now Tommy.

TOMMY: But I—

MOREBORE: That's enough.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

MOREBORE: If there is one more incident, I shall report you to Mrs. Heartworthy, who has a big heart, a heart as big as, as big as, ah forget it. She's nice, but she will not take kindly to this behavior, especially from you, Tommy Truespirit, one of our star pupils. I can't imagine what has gotten into you.

DEAN: (*aside*) I can. Hahahahaha.

MOREBORE: Cough again, Dean?

DEAN: Yes, your most respected Mrs. Morebore.

MOREBORE: Step outside and get a drink of water.

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DEAN: (*aside*) What an idea. Just what I need to make a super colossal spit ball and clinch the deal. Then for sure I'll get Tammy Truelove to go to the prom with me. (*to MOREBORE*) Yes, Ma'am, just what I need. Thank you. (*exits*)

TAMMY: How could you do such a thing, Tommy?

TOMMY: I didn't, my most lovely Tammy.

TAMMY: But you've got to be careful, or we won't be able to go to the prom. I can't tell you how much I like you.

TOMMY: Tell me.

TAMMY: I can't.

TOMMY: Tell me.

TAMMY: I can't.

TOMMY: Tell me.

TAMMY: I can't. Promise me there'll be no more trouble.

TOMMY: I can't.

TAMMY: Why not?

TOMMY: I can't.

TAMMY: Cause why?

TOMMY: I can't. I don't know who's causing it.

STANLEY: But I know, 'cause I'm Stanley Standfast, a truthful student. You can trust old Stan.

TOMMY: Who's causing the trouble?

STANLEY: Dean Mean.

STICKY SALLY: Oh, love him, love him.

STANLEY: Yes, Dean Mean. I saw him. He's out to get you, Tommy Truespirit.

TAMMY: But why?

STANLEY: I heard him talking to himself. He wants to get Tommy into cahoots with the superintendent, Mrs. Heartworthy. Then Tommy won't be able to go to the prom and he'll be able to take you, Tammy Truelove. He's got his eye on you.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

TOMMY: Oh, Tammy.

TAMMY: What can we do?

STANLEY: Never fear. Stanley Standfast is here. We'll watch our step.

MOREBORE: Students, keep quiet while I step down to the office.

STUDENTS: Yes, Ma'am.

MOREBORE: Tommy, no more trouble. (*exits*)

STUDENTS: No, Ma'am.

TOMMY: (*very angry*) If I get my hands on that Dean Mean, I don't know what I'll do.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

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STANLEY: Keep your head, Tommy. Don't cause any trouble. You heard what Mrs. Morebore said.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy, please control your temper. Promise me that, won't you?

TOMMY: I can't.

TAMMY: Why not?

TOMMY: I can't.

TAMMY: Why not?

TOMMY: Because I can't let anything come between us. We've planned on the prom for so long. I can't let it come to this.

(DEAN enters.)

STANLEY: Here he comes. Dean Mean.

TOMMY: You're back.

(DEAN mumbles.)

Why can't you speak?

(DEAN mumbles.)

You said enough before. What's the matter? Afraid because Mrs. Morebore's not here?

STANLEY: Be careful, Tommy.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

TOMMY: I didn't break the lead on your pencil and you know it.

(DEAN mumbles.)

And I didn't put that tack on your chair.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

TOMMY: If I had any respect, I'd punch you in the tummy.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

STANLEY: Take it easy, Tommy.

TOMMY: In fact, that's what I'm going to do. So stand there like a man and take it.

(As TOMMY punches DEAN in the stomach, MOREBORE enters. DEAN spits water on MOREBORE. This action can be done in slow motion for comic effect.)

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

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MOREBORE: This is the last straw. I'm reporting you to Mrs. Heartworthy, young man. Hope she is merciful.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

STANLEY: Oh, Tommy.

STICKY SALLY: Oh, Deanie.

DEAN: Get away from me, Sticky Sally. I don't want to see your face.

STICKY SALLY: Oh, Deanie.

DEAN: Sticky Sally, I'm going to bust your face.

STICKY SALLY: But Deanie, I love you so.

DEAN: Oh no.

MOREBORE: Now, students, work quietly the remainder of the period.

No tomfoolery, Tommy Truespirit. Are you all right, Dean? Maybe

Sally should help you to the school nurse.

DEAN: Not Sticky Sally.

MOREBORE: What's that, Dean?

DEAN: I'm sure she'd gladly.

MOREBORE: I'm sure.

STANLEY: But Mrs. Morebore —

(DEAN punches STANLEY in the stomach, unobserved by the others.)

MOREBORE: Stomach cramps again, Stanley Standfast? I'll escort you to the nurse myself.

(MOREBORE and STANLEY exit, followed by STICKY SALLY and DEAN, who laughs his way off.)

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

TOMMY: Oh, Tammy.

(Blackout)

(End of Scene)

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SCENE 2

AT RISE: *The hallway. STANLEY runs on.*

STANLEY: Well, things are standing how they're standing. Tommy's in a pickle, all the fault of that low-down sneak, Dean Mean. Someone ought to pull out his toenails. If I weren't so kind, I'd do it myself. This is a hallway in the hallowed halls of our beloved high school. Who's that I see coming down the hall? Tammy Truelove and Tommy Truespirit, a finer couple I've never seen. And who is that I see coming from the other direction? It's that vulgar Dean Mean. Who's that tagging along? It's Sticky Sally. Whatever can she be following Dean Mean for? I'll step back and see what happens.

DEAN: *(entering, with STICKY SALLY following)* Sticky Sally, leave me alone or I don't know what I'll do.

STICKY SALLY: Deanie, ask me to the prom.

DEAN: Quit following me.

STICKY SALLY: Oh, Deanie, you sound so forceful.

DEAN: Sticky Sally, I'm warning you.

STICKY SALLY: I adore you.

DEAN: I told you, Sticky Sally, and you won't listen. So I'm going to stick you to the walls. Let the gum do its work. See how you like that.

STANLEY: *(aside)* Why, the rascal.

DEAN: Who's that?

STANLEY: *(stepping forward)* It is I, Stanley Standfast, here to help a dame in distress. Ungum that girl.

DEAN: I will not ungum that girl.

STANLEY: Ungum.

DEAN: No.

STANLEY: I challenge you to a fight. It's against all I been brought up to be, but honor's honor. Dean Mean, this is your last trick.

(DEAN and STANLEY square off. DEAN points to STANLEY's shoe. STANLEY stoops to tie it. DEAN knocks him on the head, which knocks him silly. Then DEAN sticks STANLEY to the wall. This can be done in slow motion for comic effect.)

DEAN: Hahahahahaha. Who is that I see coming down the hall? It's Tammy Truelove, my precious, my adorable. I must get that no good Tommy Truespirit away from her, then I can have her all to myself. *(TOMMY and TAMMY enter)* We meet.

TOMMY: So.

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TAMMY: Oh, Tommy. Dean Mean.

DEAN: It's good to see you again, my lovely.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

DEAN: Well, must be getting on home. Lots of homework. See you tomorrow, my adorable.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

TOMMY: Get going, Dean Mean, or I'll hamburger you.

DEAN: *(fakes a trip as HE walks past)* Now that was nasty, Tommy Truespirit. That was a dirty trick.

TOMMY: You faked that fall, just to get me into trouble, but it failed. Mrs. Morebore is not here. Take that, Dean Mean.

(TOMMY swings at DEAN, who ducks, grabs TOMMY from behind, and shoves him against the wall)

DEAN: Now, I've got you by yourself, Tammy Truelove.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy.

DEAN: You are going to the prom with me, Tammy Truelove, whether you like it or not.

TAMMY: I like it not. I'm not going.

DEAN: Oh yes, you are.

TAMMY: Oh no, I'm not.

DEAN: Oh yes, you are. If you don't, I'll tell Tommy.

TAMMY: Tell him what?

DEAN: A secret.

TAMMY: Tommy knows all.

DEAN: Does he?

TAMMY: Yes.

DEAN: Does he know you've ever kissed another boy?

TAMMY: But, I haven't.

DEAN: Yes, you have. Remember in the second grade, the game with the blindfolds? That was me you kissed, not Tommy.

TAMMY: You dirty sneak. You didn't play fair.

DEAN: You don't want Tommy to know, do you?

TAMMY: I—

DEAN: Think about it.

(DEAN exits, laughing. TAMMY cries. STANLEY, TOMMY, and STICKY SALLY are still stuck to the walls. Tableau.)

(Blackout)

(End of Scene)

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SCENE 3

AT RISE: STANLEY runs on, slides to the center of the stage, and addresses the audience.

STANLEY: It took a while getting ourselves ungummed from the walls. Boy, are they sticky. I was knocked silly for a while there, but back to normal, because I'm Stanley Standfast and you can't keep a good man down. It's the next morning and we slaved all night getting that ten-page report done for Mrs. Morebore. Or else we can't go to the prom. Got mine in my pocket. Won't let anybody touch it. It's not everyday I read a monumental epic like Homer's *Iliad* and do a fantastic, ten-page analysis, typed, single-spaced even. And it's good. Hate to brag. That's just the way it is. As you know, Dean Mean played a couple of dirty tricks on Tommy Truespirit. I'm not going to let any more of that happen, or my name's not Stanley Standfast. I mean I'm dependable, reliable, and trustworthy. I'm a real help when the pinch is tight. It's just about time for Mrs. Morebore's class. I hope Tommy Truespirit has his paper done, or he'll be baking bread without any yeast. Here he comes now. (TOMMY enters.) Hello, Tommy, old buddy, old pal.

TOMMY: It's good to see you, Stanley, old friend, old comrade.

STANLEY: Do you have your paper done, old chum, old classmate?

TOMMY: Sure do, old compatriot, and it's a good one. Worked all night. Didn't sleep a wink.

STANLEY: Glad to hear it. You need a good paper to get on the good side of Mrs. Morebore. We'll watch that Dean Mean today so he doesn't play none of his sneaky tricks.

TOMMY: Have faith, Stanley. We're good, honest students, and you can't keep good, honest students down.

STANLEY: Well said, my man.

TAMMY: (entering) Good morning, my. . . oh, shall I say it? . . . my beloved.

TOMMY: Good morning, my lovely.

TAMMY: It's good to see you.

TOMMY: And it's good to see you.

TAMMY: Do you have your paper done?

TOMMY: Yes, and it's a good one. Worked all night.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy, you're so smart.

TOMMY: I know. Can't help it.

TAMMY: Oh, Tommy, and I've got my paper done, too.

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STANLEY: That's us, model students. There's never been a finer bunch of students to grace the halls of this institution. Hate to brag—that's just the way we are.

MOREBORE: *(entering)* Good morning, students.

STUDENTS: Good morning, Mrs. Morebore.

MOREBORE: Class will start in a few minutes. No dilly-dallying in the halls.

STUDENTS: Yes, Mrs. Morebore.

MOREBORE: What's that?

STUDENTS: No, Mrs. Morebore.

MOREBORE: No, what?

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