The Rest of the Story: A Reflection on Extracurriculars During Intern Teaching

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The title of the paper is:

"The Rest of the Story: A Reflection on Extracurriculars During Intern Teaching"

Dr. Jennifer Fager  
Education and Professional Development

Dr. Allison Young  
Education and Professional Development

Mrs. Lyla Fox  
Loy Norrix High School
In the Beginning

Okay, where exactly do I start this thing? It has taken four years, and literally hundreds of ideas and modifications, to come up with a topic. Now that I finally settled on one, it is hard to know where to begin. Ever since I enrolled in the Lee Honors College at Western Michigan University, I have had the thesis in the back of my mind. I originally considered writing a book of poetry, decided to write a play, went to submitting a performance (during my stint as a theatre major), and changed my idea almost weekly. I put a lot more time and effort into my job as a RA, and later on as an AD, than I did for my thesis. This led me to seek out ways to incorporate those jobs into my thesis. Nothing came of that either. Finally I began my senior (4th) year. This meant that graduation was slowly approaching and I had to settle on a thesis. I decided to take my 12 years of martial arts experience and combine it with my education studies and design a curriculum for my martial arts class. I did some reading, gathered up my research from past years, and put it all together. At that point the process took an abrupt halt. January was here, and my internship had begun.

Starting my internship was exiting and nervous all at the same time. I dove in headfirst and did all that I could to get involved at Loy Norrix. This included taking on the assistant coach position for the forensics team and the assistant director position for the spring play. This left me with little time to work on my thesis. When spring break rolled around I sat down to work on my thesis and discovered that it just did not seem right. Every time I sat down to work I thought of something that I should be doing for my class at Norrix, for forensics, or for the play. Those things just seemed so much more
important to me than traditional research. The interaction with the students, the thrill of seeing their eyes light up when they finally got the point of the lesson, even the constant struggle to get “Dolph” and “Bink” to admit that there are works of literature taught in the public schools that do not “suck”, held more meaning for me than the ever present thesis. I was seeing so many important things going on in my internship that I could not ignore. I had to find a way to incorporate them into my thesis. It just made sense. After all, the thesis is supposed to represent what I learned during my time at WMU. The internship is exactly that for all those in the education curriculum. As luck would have it, opportunity knocked, or called as the case may be.

Dr. Fager called to invite me to speak at a S.U.P.T. (School/University Partnership Team) conference at Western in March. This presentation was on action research, a method of research that is based in observation, active participation, and classroom inquiry. I was to give a short spiel on how I used this method in my intern class. While I was preparing my presentation it occurred to me that this would be the perfect method of research to use for my thesis. It allowed me to incorporate my experiences and observations during my internship into my thesis as valid resources. As a matter of fact, these observations and personal reflections/reactions could be the basis of my thesis.

I had been the assistant director for the spring play with my mentor teacher at Norrix, Lyla Fox, from the beginning of the semester. I was involved in every aspect of the play but was mostly in charge of blocking. This is an extracurricular that had me working numerous extra hours each week. Through this activity I came to know many of the students involved on a more personal basis. I noticed that as my relationship with the
students grew in the extracurricular area it also grew in the classroom. Those students that had me as a teacher were more likely to perform in class and to come to me for help if they needed it. This was the type of stuff that I wanted in my thesis. My internship experience and my life were greatly enhanced because of the time I spent working with students outside of the classroom in extracurricular activities.

I decided to title my thesis The Rest of the Story, because of the radio personality Paul Harvey. His radio show “The Rest of the Story” is a commentary that reflects on many current issues as well as past occurrences and public personalities. In one of his most famous segments he will tell a story about a person’s life and not reveal who the individual is until the end. This tidbit of little known information is what the rest of the story actually is. It is the inside scoop, that little extra that is often difficult to find. That is why The Rest of the Story is the perfect title for my thesis. Through my extracurricular activities I was able to learn my students’ stories.
The Process

All Aboard!

It is common knowledge that directing a play takes up a lot of time, but what exactly is that time spent doing? The best place to start is to explain what the process of putting a play together involves. I will refer to pages in the back of my thesis portfolio by the code in the upper right corner of each page. These pages are samples of materials that were used throughout the production.

The first thing that had to be done was play selection. This was something that Lyla had been considering throughout the first semester. By the time I entered the picture in January she had it pretty narrowed down. She was considering Baby in the Bath Water and Fools. She was leaning toward Fools, and after reading both scripts I agreed with her. Neil Simon's Fools would be our spring show. Seems fairly easy, right? Not really, it actually involves a bit more than like or dislike though that does play a role.

Some things to be considered when choosing a piece to perform are quality of literature, audience, talent pool, budget, location, and time frame. As far as quality of literature is concerned it was fairly simple. The name Neil Simon was a pretty good indicator of that. The audience was going to consist of parents, students, and members of the community, so we knew that it had to be a piece that had little or no swearing and was not too controversial. The talent pool we had to work with was the student body at Loy Norrix. Even then that pool was limited to those who auditioned. We knew we had the talent available to do the show, and we had a good guess as to who would be auditioning.
With that information we could select a piece that would interest the student body and promote a high turn out for auditions. We knew we had a low budget to work with so a show that required a simple set would best suit our needs in that department. We also knew that we would not be able to use the stage for a large amount of rehearsals. Thus it would have to be a show that could be rehearsed in our classroom after school. Last we had to look at the time frame. We knew that we had several months to rehearse and that we had the stage reserved for April 30th and May 1st. This meant that we needed a show that we could complete within that time frame. Taking all of these things into consideration we selected Fools.

Now that we had a show the next step was casting. This meant that we had to spread the word about the play. This is what is often called post-production advertising. At this point Lyla and I talked about auditions to anyone who would listen and made the script available to read ahead of time. We also developed a flyer that gave out the information for the audition (A1). We posted various signs around the school advertising the audition dates and times, and had them announced during the school bulletin each day. With the play in the public eye it was time to prepare for the auditions.

The first thing we had to do for this is come up with some means to obtain basic information essential to casting. The easiest way to do this is through an audition sheet (A2). This is similar to a job application for the show. It allows the students to highlight their experience and qualifications for a given role. It also leaves some space for us to make comments on the sheet during the audition. By listing the criteria on the bottom of the tryout sheet under the “directors comments” section, the students know what we are paying attention to (bottom A2). In order for us to be able to make a fair comparison
between performers we need to have a standardized means of testing abilities. This means that we need to see what they can do on our terms as well as what they can do in their area of expertise. That is why the audition consisted of both a prepared monologue and a round of improvisational theatre. Lyla and I came up with the idea of having students show varying degrees of an emotion from subtle to blatant. This consisted of having students portray characters in situations where they became increasingly dumb, or foolish, and increasingly evil. The situations used for these scenes are listed on page A3. Those that are marked are the ones that were used during auditions.

During the auditions there were four of us making notes on the students performances. This was to prevent any biases and to gain a well rounded perspective of the auditions. Because there were four of us, three people had to make their notes on separate pieces of paper. Pages A4 and A5 are my notes. A4 contains the title of the piece and anything that really stood out. I wrote just enough to jog my memory when we went back to make final decisions on casting. A5 contains my notes for casting. Some of these were accurate choices, others were not. We met at Bilbo's after the second set of auditions to compare notes and make final casting decisions.
Full Steam Ahead

The first rehearsal was only a week away. This was when my primary role came into play. Every person has strengths and weaknesses. By pure luck, it turned out that Lyla’s weak points were my strong points and vice versa. This meant that I did the preliminary blocking. I decided who moved where when. This is not as simple as it sounds. It is important to consider the shape of the way people are standing and sitting. There needs to be a variance in levels. Up and down and front and back. It needs to be planned, yet natural. If a person exits left toward their house, ten any one going to their house has to exit that same direction. This brings up another important factor, the set. In order to block there has to be a set to play off of. I can not have people crossing up left if there is a house there. So Lyla and I sat down and made a rough sketch of what we pictured the set as (G1). After this I reread the script making notes about movement, props, facial expressions, etc. in the sidelines.

The advantage of working with a Neil Simon piece is that he uses a lot of general stage directions in his scripts. This gives me a skeletal idea of what it is designed to look like, so that I can expand on that. The one thing about blocking is that you need to see it in action before you can make the final call. It all depends on changes in the final set design, and weather the picture in the director’s head looks good on stage or not. Due to my 12 years of martial arts experience and many years of theatre, I usually have a pretty accurate idea of what will look good and what will not as far as body mechanics are concerned, but changes always happen. My copy of the script is included with notes in the margins for blocking.
As seen by the rehearsal schedule on pages B1 through B3 blocking and memorization were the focus of February and March. It is my belief that before an actor can really get into his character he needs to be off script. This is because once the part is memorized it is inside you and the character is part of you. That is part of the fun of theatre, being someone else for a while. For this reason I pushed memorization. Not only of lines, but of blocking as well. I know some people who prefer to memorize lines first and then go to blocking. In the course of my studies at WMU I have found that doing both things at the same time is faster and benefits all styles of learning. Kinesthetic learners are aided by associating their lines with the movements they are doing, where as visual learners connect with their spoken lines through a visual movement, and audio learners hear their cues so they memorize them faster.

The rehearsal period is one of the busiest and most crucial times before a performance. This is the time where the cast should be beginning to come together, the advertising needs to be done, the costumes and the props need to be assigned, and the set should be started. In an ideal world this would all happen, but this is high school and not quite ideal. The cast was doing well, having memorized Act I, but they were slow to pick up Act II. Our leads needed lots of work on the romantic and kissing scenes, even though they seemed to be getting plenty of practice off stage. The advertising was going well we had released one press release (E3), and a student in one of Norrix’s art classes designed a show logo for us. This logo was used for the poster (D2), the tickets (C2), and the program (F6). We used checklists from The Play Director’s Survival Kit by James W. Rodgers and Wanda C. Rodgers to determine what information was needed on each of these items and to be sure we did not miss anything important. We used this same text as
a resource when arranging the props (K1-K3), makeup (J1), and costumes (I1). Several actors used worksheets in the book to help themselves develop their characters (H1-H6). Pages I2 and I3 are the final list that we came up with for the costumes. The actors notified us as to what they could supply themselves. We used the same method for obtaining props as well. We did this because the Drama department at Norrix does not have a lot of funds to work with. Thus we encouraged the students to ask family members and friends for donations and/or loans in the form of needed costumes and props. With everything else under control (as controlled as it ever gets in theatre), the biggest concern was the set.

With three weeks to go until open we were without a set. We had our rough designs (G1 & G2), and had talked to the Technical Director about building dimensions, lighting and sound, but we could not finalize any of these because we were not on stage yet. This was one of the hardest things for me to get used to. Where I went to high school the Drama Club had priority over the stage and we had a huge workshop and storeroom to build sets and store them. Norrix does not have a separate workshop, and has little if any storage. This meant that we could not start building the set until we could get onto the stage and that we would only have a few rehearsals on stage with a set. Regretfully, I was not able to be a large part of set building because of my assistant coach position with the forensics team. This meant that my weekends were booked and that is when most of the set building took place. The last weekend before the play I was busy graduating from WMU, so I was unable to make that as well. I came in after graduation for the last few rehearsals before opening night. It was the beginning of the end.
The End of the Line

The first performance of Fools was on April 30, 1999. I have always been a bit nervous before I performed in a show. Even though I was not performing I was still a bit nervous. I'd almost be willing to say more nervous than when I had to be on stage. Maybe it is because it all rests on them now and I can not stop them and have them run the scene again. Releasing something that I had such a large part in creating to the public is a new experience to me. It is a very different perspective to be a director and not an actor. All of my worries were unfounded though. The show went fine, even better than I could have hoped for. The next evening, with my parents in the audience, the same feelings were there. I may have been 21, but they were still my parents. Again the show went well. I went to the cast party that night, and as simple as that, it was over. Months of work had culminated in two nights of nerves, relief, pride, joy at success, and sadness that it all had to end. It is impossible for something to take up that much of your life and not affect you. This show will definitely stick with me for a long time to come.

I was no longer an intern teacher, forensics season was over, as was the play. I had moved down a level into the realms of substitute teaching. It seems a bit of a downer when you stop to think about it. I had been demoted in a sense. Granted that I was now being paid to come to school each day, I was viewed as less of an authority figure. At least that is how it was before. A bit to my surprise, this was not the case.
One More Stop

My first day subbing at Norrix went extremely well. Better than any other sub job I had ever had. Perhaps it was the semester of teaching experience, but I think it was much more. I discovered that no matter whom I subbed for I had at least one student that I knew, or knew me, in the class. This student gave me the respect that most fulltime teachers and coaches receive and the other students followed suit. I was able to call students by name and refer to their interests because I knew who they were. In short I was able to establish that personal/professional relationship that most subs are unable to build in the hour that they have a student. This relationship made classroom management as a sub much easier. I have always had a strong belief that extracurricular involvement, and a genuine interest in students as individuals, made the student/teacher relationship more positive. My experience subbing re-enforced my belief. My involvement in extracurricular activities had helped make my intern teaching experience a success, and continued to help me even after the internship.
The Rest of the Story

The Whole Student

I know that the teachers I remember the most, and had the best relationships with in high school, were the ones that I worked with in extracurricular activities as well as in the classroom. This is something that I drew on in my internship. I was a coach for the forensics team as well as a director for the spring play. Through these activities I got to know many of my students on a more individual/personal level. In some cases this lead to an improvement in the students' behavior and/or grades in class. Extracurricular activities are an invaluable learning experience in the school environment and had a positive influence on my intern experience. This is one reason why I decided to submit the spring play I co-directed as my undergraduate thesis.

One thing I found important during my internship was taking the whole student into consideration. What I mean by this is that all students have baggage, stuff from their home life that they can't just forget about. The whole student in all simplicity is just viewing the student as a normal human being. Extracurricular activities can give the students a break from this baggage, and provide a positive outlet for energies that could be misplaced otherwise. Not that they would misbehave if they were not involved, but that it gives the student another group to turn to in times of need and times of joy.

I am a firm believer that children are basically intelligent, and that this intelligence can be exhibited in many forms. This view of children allows for students to
excel in several areas while maybe performing minimally in others. It also allows that every student is intelligent in some way.

I have a solid belief that all people deserve, and are capable of, autonomy and free choice. I believe that students' individual personalities play a large part in their behavior in class. Each individual has different goals and is motivated by many forces, both external and internal. It is the responsibility of the teacher to try to foster internal commitment, to motivate students in many diverse ways so as to reach as many students as possible. It is important to let the students know that I care, and that their thoughts and ideas matter.

Considering the whole student is a very important aspect of teaching. Knowing what goes on in the students' everyday lives can be a big help when making lessons. If I know that the band has a competition on a certain Friday then I will know not to make any major projects due on that day. This lets the students know that you are paying attention to what goes on in their lives and shows that you respect them. Participating in extracurricular activities reinforces this in the minds of the students. It also shows the students that my interest is genuine. By being available to the students on a personal level they are more likely to come to me with their concerns. This also makes it easier to deal with parent concerns, because if you have a positive relationship with the student, then the parents are reassured that you will do your best to help.

Parents, other teachers, and members of the community are the people who teachers can go to in order to discover what students' "baggage" may be. These are also the people who are our resources for finding ways to incorporate the students' personal lives and outside interests into their schoolwork. One thing that occurred this semester
that made me realize the importance of these connections was parent teacher conferences. My mentor teacher was unable to attend the last day of parent teacher conferences, due to illness. This meant that I had to do them solo. That was a big learning experience for me, because I was the teacher in the eyes of the parents. Lyla always treated me as a fellow teacher, but often parents tended to view me as a “college kid”. By being the only person available for the parents to talk to it forced them to discuss issues with me rather than with Lyla. The sets of parents that never avoided talking to me, even with Lyla there, were those who had kids in the play or in forensics. My involvement in their children’s extracurricular activities made me more credible as a teacher in their eyes. This helped me to feel more confident in dealing with parent concerns and gave me insight into some of my students’ home lives. It was a positive and defining moment in my internship.

Diversity

Another benefit of my extracurricular involvement was the ability to experience true diversity in education. The problem is that anybody can claim to be diverse because they taught at a diverse school, in a diverse environment, or have a strong cultural background. Not that this is necessarily a bad thing, but at times I feel playing it up cheapens it. I consider myself a diverse individual not because of these things, though all apply, but because I am a person with many interests. This is the meaning of this word that is often overlooked. Diversity does not equal racial, religious, and cultural heritage. Diversity means that there is a well- mixed group. This group can be people, but it can also be hobbies, type of music, friends, etc.
I have many different interests and therefore many different ways in which I can relate to students, and people, in general. I enjoy, and work, with the theatre, but I also enjoy, and work, with the martial arts. This has affected my outlook on life and is a definite influence on my teaching style and philosophy. Most people do not place these two in the same category; thus I get a lot of surprised looks when I mention that I do both. The connections that I make between these two interests and the rest of my life are unique to me. For this reason, other people will not relate to things in life exactly the same as I do. The same applies to the students in the classroom. None of them are the same therefore none of them are going to relate to what I am teaching in exactly the same way. This means that I must make a conscious effort to be sure that everyone in the class has an opportunity to understand and make connections.

My involvement in the direction of Fools added to my connection sources and to the connection sources of those involved. This meant that all of the students that were involved and I had a common base to start off of. This was also the case for students in my drama class. I found that several students that were not participating in the class were from rather tough neighborhoods. I looked for a connection and found one in my martial arts interests. I decided to teach a lesson in stage combat and use skits about gang initiation and barroom brawls, as well as scenes from various movies. I used the movie The Princess Bride as my introduction to the unit because it has many different elements of theatre that I wanted to examine from accents to combat.
Touching Lives

The lesson I selected reflected aspects of myself that I wanted to share with the students. My lesson in stage combat was an extension of my personal interest and involvement in martial arts. I made it a point to let the students know this too. I have found that if I am willing to share a bit of myself then they are more likely to share with me. This helps to build a trust between student and teacher. The teacher is no longer the dictator, or the enemy, but a person with a personal life outside of school. When I look at my lesson for stage combat, I remember individual performances that were well done, students participating that had never done a thing in class before that, connections to growing up in a tough neighborhood, and being able to share my hobbies with my students for their benefit.

Putting in the extra effort to get these kids involved not only paid off in the classroom but in my personal life as well. It turns out that the reluctant students I mentioned earlier were all involved in auto shop as well. I began using car metaphors in my teaching every now and then and made sure there was at least one skit topic to do with cars when we did improvisation. I also made it point to ask how their various project cars were doing. This reinforced their participation in class, but it also showed them, as had stage combat, that you can still be a “man’s man” and have an interest in theatre. The fact that I had made a real impression on these students came about a week and a half before spring break when the breaks went out on my truck in the school parking lot. These students heard about what happened and volunteered to fix it for me if I bought the parts. They checked with the auto shop teacher, got me the necessary papers, and gave me a list of parts I needed to get. Once I gave them the parts, they fixed
the whole thing for me in the school shop, and kept checking in to make sure that
everything was working fine. These students saved me at least $400 during my
internship, a time when that much money might as well have been $4000. That meant a
lot to me, but it also meant a lot to the students. Many other people would not have
trusted them enough to let them work on their car. This show of trust and faith in their
abilities meant as much, or more, to them as any grade they could ever receive from me.
Though this incident was not directly a result of my extracurricular involvement, it was
still a result of being able to relate to the students on an individual/personal level.

There are many stories I could tell you from my internship experience, but they
would be just that stories. The meaning behind them would not be the same for some one
else as they would for me. It all goes back to what I said earlier about making
connections. I feel . . . I know that I made a difference in the lives of some of the
students I met in the course of my internship. I credit a large part of this to the fact that I
was available to the students. Except on rare occasions, I stayed after school at least a
half-hour. The students knew this, and they took advantage of it. They knew that I
would take the time for them if they made the time for me. The students in the play saw
that I was there when they had to be there. I even stopped by before I had to go to my
seminar for internship on Wednesdays. When students needed a piece for forensics, or
for an audition, I helped them find one. I was there for forensics tournaments all day
Saturdays, and scheduled meetings to practice during my plan, and before and after
school and play rehearsal. The times when I questioned whether it was worth it or not, a
student would do, or say, something to renew my faith.
Those words of reassurance are still with me today as I approach a new teaching job in the fall. I not only carry these words in my heart and head, but also in a book put together by my mentor teacher containing advice for the future and memories from my students. I have placed several of these on the next few pages. After all who better to tell you their thoughts than the students themselves. In essence that is the rest of the story. This is how what goes on after the last bell has rung plays a role. Does it make a difference? I think so. It made a difference to me.
FROM  

jessica beesby


Thanks. I'll always remember
the way you always took into consideration the lives of the students. You seemed to know that we did other activities - not just English.

My best advice to any teacher is

Kids like to take advantage of the inexperienced - so make sure you let them know who's really in control. I'm sure you are aware of that, but it is very crucial.
Thanks. I'll always remember
the way you comf your hair...
I went wrong person. I guess it would have
to be the first impression of you we thought
you were a dork but I guess we were wrong.

My best advice to any teacher is
stay cool and get a new
touch you are to it small. O you
way to go with the girl!! if you
ever break up and tell ol.

(342-5926)
FROM Khadijah Sutherland

Thanks. I'll always remember

you in general you took the time to

trust yet my problems and had an

abundance of teaching time left after

helping me work out my problems.

My best advice to any teacher is

to stay true to yourself, stay sweet,

be patient, empathetic, accepting, compassionate

and help elevate one's standards. (This

spells PEACE. Peace out, Mr. Pung.)
Thanks. I'll always remember

I have one word for you... "Shana."
Anyway, I'll always remember your
wacky way of teaching and hilarious
personality. And, you'll always be my big brother. (mentally)

My best advice to any teacher is

"You may be just one person in this world,
but to one person, you may be the
world."

Remember to consider everyone and be
open with their problems. Their problems
may affect their school work.
FROM Milan

Thanks. I'll always remember the story you told of the time you were bounded by a cow and you hit him in the head! That was hilarious, dude.

My best advice to any teacher is...
FROM: Bonnie Spencer

Thanks. I'll always remember your personality. You always seem to know how to lighten a room with your smile. You can tell you love teachin' & we all love you.

My best advice to any teacher is to pay attention to your students. Be I aware of your students' feelings.
Spring Play Information

1. Dates: April 30th and May 1.
2. It's fun but it's work. There's a reason they call it rehearsal. Play takes on a whole other meaning.
3. Tryouts will be the first Wednesday and Thursday of February.
4. Don't try out unless you are willing to take any part.
5. For tryouts, be prepared to perform a 2 minute monologue from memory, as well as to participate in improvisational scenes. You must have your monologue memorized in order to try out. We have monologues available if you don't have one you like.
6. We will need your help backstage as well as on stage.
7. The director is boss. If you like to fool around—don't come around.
8. Lines are to be memorized by deadlines. There will be severe reprimands and threat of loss of part if this isn't so.
9. We will rehearse three weeks in February from 2:30 to 4 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, in J11.
10. We will rehearse every week in March and April (with the exception of Spring vacation) M-Th from 2:30 to 4:30. You may not be needed Every day if we decide to concentrate on a special act, but be prepared. You will be notified at least a week in advance of your schedule.
11. Grades are important to me. If your GPA is in jeopardy, you might want to think twice about trying out. Commitment to the classroom carries over into commitment to everything else. I don't want to hurt your chances of graduating.
12. We have Mr. Pung helping us with the play. He, too, is to be treated as your director and with respect.
13. You will be asked to sell ten tickets to the play.
14. The Ensemble Troupe has a code and you will be asked to adhere to it. I don't want to see our actors smoking by the 7-11 or hear about a great deal of partying. You'll need rest and focus to build FOOLS into the funny and entertaining play it is meant to be.

After reading all of the above, if you are interested, we are interested in you. Sign the paper leaving your name, phone number and homeroom teacher and room number.

Thank you.
Fools' Tryout Sheet

Name_________________ Height________ Year in School____
Address______________ Sex (M/F) ________________
Phone________________ Hair Color ________________

Special Talents (sing, dance, play musical instrument, juggle, etc)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Check What You Would Like To Work On: ( )
______costumes ________ make up_________ publicity
______Director's Assistant__ Prompter _____ Stage Manager
______Lighting and Sound ______ Props

On Back of This Page Please List:

1. Previous Acting Experience (include play, role, place)
2. Hours when you can rehearse
3. Other commitments (orchestra, sports, etc)

Director's Comments:

Appearance___________ Ability to Take Direction
Voice_____________ Speech____________
Interpretation___________ Possible for Role_________
Voice
_________ Speech_________ Personality________ Movement________
Interpretation___________ Possible for Role of ____________
Scenes - Dumb, Dumber, Dumbest and Evil, More Evil, Most Evil.

-♦- Put up a tent

-♦- Trying to get ready for prom

-♦- Getting ready to go hunting

-♦- Cleaning house
  ♦- Planning to become president
  ♦- Planning to take over the school

-♦- Fixing dinner

-♦- Training a dog

-♦- Playing in the sandbox

-♦- Lost in the woods at night
  ♦- Waiting for the bus

-♦- Sitting outside of the principals office waiting to be disciplined
  ♦- On the porch at the old folks home
J. - (Puck's Closely, Apology)

amessa - (Lost Coke) — good!! Lord!

madhurake - (Pottergeist) — Nice Voice, Jester

Erran — (Shangri-La)

isly Connor - (Love?)

isba (acts) — Serious, good emotion,

rah Benke — quiet — not memorized

+Braken — (Lion King) — Active

orga — (Learn Goals) — I'm going ok — good pressure, not flustered

Teresa — (Fear Love)

Jenny — Fast, wedding

ichelle — Peg Kaulig — Mano in Hair — good Voice + body

Inky — Alcoholic

Rosette — Dadin Hospital

Kisha — (Killer House Fly) — Killer House Fly

Pharr — (Housewife, Actress)

dra — Bye birdie

Pham Martinez — (New Song)

Tea Levi — (Bending, Whispers)

Jodi, camera — photo, Justin
Leads
Morgan Leon
Chuck Dr. Z
Brishen
Jake
TJ Count

Girls
1. Erin 
2. Xandie
3. Alex
4. Jannessa
5. Rose
6. Migita
7. Samantha
8. Michelle
9. Schnecks
10. Stephanie

Characters
Ben - Stupid musician
Terrence
Stephen - Vladimir

Sandy - Mother
Ferrar - Brandi
Stephen - Candle

Jannessa - Yvonne (first)
Sandra - Sophia
Alex - mom
Erin - mailman
Xandie - butcher
Samantha - Magistrate

Morgan - Leon
TJ - Count
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Printed by Calendar Creator for Windows on 2/6/1999
# March 1999

## Monthly Planner

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Printed by Calendar Creator for Windows on 2/7/1999
# April 1999

## Monthly Planner

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- **April 1**
  - Spring Vacation
- **April 2**
  - Spring Vacation
- **April 3**
  - Spring Vacation
- **April 4**
  - Spring Vacation
- **April 5**
  - FOOLS Practice
- **April 6**
  - FOOLS Practice
- **April 7**
  - FOOLS Practice
- **April 8**
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- **April 9**
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- **April 10**
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  - FOOLS Practice
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  - FOOLS Practice
- **April 22**
  - SHOW TIME!
- **April 23**
  - SHOW TIME!
- **April 24**
  - SHOW TIME!
- **April 25**
  - SHOW TIME!
- **April 26**
  - SHOW TIME!
- **April 27**
  - SHOW TIME!
- **April 28**
  - SHOW TIME!
- **April 29**
  - SHOW TIME!
- **April 30**
  - SHOW TIME!

Printed by Calendar Creator for Windows on 2/7/1999
23.1

CHECKLIST FOR WHAT TO PRINT ON TICKETS

Use this form to help you decide how you want your ticket to look. Use it when you negotiate with your printer.

Name of presenting school or organization:

Name of production:

Place of performance:

Check one: Reserved Seating: _______ General Admission: _______

Reserved Seating:

Price of tickets: _____; Area: _______; Rows: _______
Price of tickets: _____; Area: _______; Rows: _______
Price of tickets: _____; Area: _______; Rows: _______

Date and Day of Performance and Color of Ticket:

1st performance: Date: _______; Day: _______; Color: _______
2nd performance: Date: _______; Day: _______; Color: _______
3rd performance: Date: _______; Day: _______; Color: _______
4th performance: Date: _______; Day: _______; Color: _______
5th performance: Date: _______; Day: _______; Color: _______
6th performance: Date: _______; Day: _______; Color: _______
7th performance: Date: _______; Day: _______; Color: _______
8th performance: Date: _______; Day: _______; Color: _______
Ticket Good For
Saturday, May 1

LOY NORRIX
Drama Department
presents
"Neil Simon's"

FOOLS
APRIL 30, MAY 1, 8 P.M.
KASDORF AUDITORIUM

Adults - $4.00
Students - $3.00

Ticket Good For
Friday, April 30

LOY NORRIX
Drama Department
presents
"Neil Simon's"

FOOLS
APRIL 30, MAY 1, 8 P.M.
KASDORF AUDITORIUM

Adults - $4.00
Students - $3.00
CHECKLIST FOR WHAT TO PRINT ON POSTERS

Use this form to help you decide what information you need to include on your poster.

Name of presenting school or organization:

The title of your play or musical:

All authors (in musicals: book, music, and lyrics):
Check the copyright page of your script for the complete and full information that must be included. You might note that in some instances, the publisher will even insist on type size (e.g., 50 percent, which means that the authors’ names must be set in type that is one-half the size of the title).

The name of your theater and its location:

The dates of the production:

The times of performance:

Ticket prices:

A telephone number to reserve tickets (optional):

Use the back of this page to sketch your graphic ideas: images, colors, font types and sizes, etc.
THE LOY NORRIE
Drama Department
presents
NEIL SIMON'S
"FOOLS"
APRIL 30, MAY 1, 8 pm
KASDORF AUDITORIUM
Deal with the media cautiously; as the song title states, "You've Got to Be Carefully Taught." Entertainment editors and staff have deadlines you must meet, procedures they want you to follow, and unique ways they like to work. You want to keep them interested in what you are doing but not get on their nerves. You have to realize that you are only one very small news item; they must deal with literally hundreds weekly.

THE PRESS

You can get your production mentioned in the local newspaper in several different ways: as a feature story, a paragraph or two in an editor's daily or weekly column, a citing in a "calendar of events," a picture with a caption, a free public service space, a review, or a paid advertisement. You might feel that your production deserves all seven; in reality, the paper will only guarantee one, a paid advertisement. To be successful with the press, you must start early, think big, make personal contact, be alert, write fast, and be very resourceful.

Press Release

Regardless of what kind of coverage you expect, your first step is to prepare a press release. Each newspaper will tell you what it wants to know about your production and your organization. In general, the following information is requested:

- Name of the organization
- Name and author(s) of the play or musical
- Director
- Designers (set, lighting, and costume)
- Date, time and place of the performances
- Ticket prices
- Box office location and telephone
- Brief synopsis of the play
- Brief background of previous professional productions
- Complete cast list
- Contact person and telephone number

A checklist for press releases has been provided at the end of this chapter (Figure 25.1).

Feature Story

You must have an "angle" and be able to convince an editor that your story will have general public appeal before you can expect a major newspaper to give your organization
Checklist for Preparing a Press Release

Use this page as either a checklist or a worksheet when preparing a press release for your production.

Name of the organization:

Name and author(s) of the play or musical:

Director:

Designers (set, lighting, and costume):

Date, time, and place of the performances:

Ticket prices:

Box office location and telephone:

Brief synopsis of the play:

Brief background of previous professional productions:

Complete cast list:

Contact person and telephone number:
understand amortization schedules, use statistics, and recognize patterns — to name just a few applications.

Mathematics has always been one of the three major academic disciplines taught in public schools. Today, however, we are not only continuing the tradition, but we are also improving the way we teach math. Math is being integrated throughout the curriculum so that children may be taught advanced as well as basic applications. Teachers are taking the anxiety out of learning as they show students the many practical applications of math.

1. Use all of the components of the Everyday Math program.
2. Using several new instructional strategies.
3. Increasing the amount of critical thinking and problem solving in the curriculum.
4. Incorporating new active learning strategies.

All of the strategies are used across the content areas. These methods are directly responsible for an increase in our scores on national achievement tests. Last year at Chime we saw a 21-point increase in the number of students scoring at or above grade level.

In today's information age, our children must achieve math mastery, or they will not be prepared for college or career. Mathematics provides students with the ability to develop, prove, and evaluate a theory or solution to virtually any type of problem.

In today's information age, our children must achieve math mastery, or they will not be prepared for college or career. Mathematics provides students with the ability to develop, prove, and evaluate a theory or solution to virtually any type of problem.

Loy Norrix Drama Troupe to Present Simon's Fools

The much-loved play, *Fools*, under the direction of Lyla Fox and Barnaby Pung, will be performed Friday and Saturday, April 30th and May 1st, at 8 p.m. in Kasdorf Auditorium. Tickets are $4 for adults, $3 for students and $2 for students in the performing arts.

*Fools* is the story of a young school teacher named Leon who is thrilled to arrive in the small Ukrainian village of Kulyenchikov until he finds that all those he had such high hopes of teaching were struck with stupidity generations ago. Instead of Latin and Greek, Leon tries to help his beloved village learn the difference between standing and sitting, while also working to rid the village of the cursed curse.

The cast is as follows:

Narrator — Samantha Duke
Leon Tolchinsky — Morgan Patchell
Lenya Zubritsky — Alix Amparanpino
Dr. Zubritsky — Brishen Miller
Sophia Zubritsky — Sandra Kelpin
Count Gregor Yousekevitch — T.J. Ryder
Mishkin the Mailman — Erin Crain
Slovitch the Butcher — Xandie Gold
The Magistrate — Jenessa Lansdale
Yenchna the Fish Woman — Nikita Lanier
Snetsky — Sara Behnke
The first Sophia — Rose Swartz

The Father of the First Sophia — Terrance Foster
The Mother of the First Sophia — Christina Adams
Casimir — Jake Rinker
Casimir’s Father — Steve Martinez
Quirky Villagers:
Ferrare Fuller
Mysti Keown
Brandi Washington
Sara Behnke
Chuck Wynne
Martha Curtis
Stephanie Hinman
Ben Hooper

Free programs every day of spring for children, teens and families.

Call 553-7804 for children or 553-7...
26.1

CHECKLIST FOR PROGRAM COPY

Use this page as a checklist when you are preparing the program for your production.

Cover Page

Sponsoring organization

Title of the play

Authors (Check the copyright page of the script or your contract for complete and correct listing and point size.)

Dates of all performances (optional)

Time of performance (optional)

Name of auditorium (optional)

Inside and Back Pages

List of Director(s):
Stage Director

Music Director

Choreographer

Orchestra Director
(Note: Sometimes the Orchestra Director is listed under Production Staff.)

List of Designers:
Setting

Lighting

Costume
(Note: Sound, Makeup, Special Effects, Stage Manager, and the Technical Director are usually listed under Production Staff but, on occasion, have been listed in this section.)
Place and Time (Example: A country road; evening.)

Musical Numbers:

Information regarding Intermission(s): (Example: “Intermission will be fifteen minutes long.”)

Cast (List either in order of appearance, or in an order that the audience will comprehend quickly. Note: Triple-check the spelling of names.)

Orchestra:

Production Crew:
Production Stage Manager
Director of Audience Development and Services
Stage Manager
26.1 continued

Sound Designer ____________________________

Makeup Designer/Supervisor ____________________________

Hair/Wig Designer ____________________________

Special Effects Designer ____________________________

Technical Director ____________________________

Vocal Coach ____________________________

Movement Coach ____________________________

Dramaturg ____________________________

Assistant Designers (Set, Lights, Costume) ____________________________

Assistant Technical Director ____________________________

Assistant Stage Manager(s) ____________________________

Assistant to the Director ____________________________

Light Board Operator ____________________________

Sound Board Operator ____________________________

Master Carpenter ____________________________

Properties Master/Mistress ____________________________

House Manager ____________________________

Box Office Manager ____________________________

Master Electrician ____________________________

Consultants: (Makeup, Audio, Movement, Dance) ____________________________

Head Flyman ____________________________
Advertising

Program Design and Layout

Poster Design

Crews (Running Crews and Construction Crews)

Administrative Staff

Acknowledgments (Note: Make sure that you list everyone who helps in any capacity. This fosters goodwill and is invaluable in building your program.)

Sponsors/Patrons

Special Arrangements (Example: “This play is presented through special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.”)

House Rules (Example: “No smoking, food, or beverages permitted in the theater. The use of cameras or recording devices is strictly prohibited.”)
26.1 continued

Additional Program Material

If you add more pages, you can give your audience more production information that makes for interesting reading before the play begins and during intermission. Here are some suggestions for items you might want to include:

Profiles (Brief biographies of actors, directors and designers: a "Who’s Who")

Program Notes (Information about the play)

Director’s Notes (Information about the concept you have used)

Notes About the Author

Notes About the Producing Organization

List of Upcoming Events
FOOLS* takes place in the remote Ukrainian village of Kalyenchikov, about 1890.

(In order of appearance)

Narrator..........................................................Samantha Duke
Leon Tolchinsky........................................Morgan Patchell
Snetsky..........................................................Sarii Behnke
Magistrate......................................................Jenessa Lansdale
Slovitch..........................................................Xandie Gold
Mishkin..........................................................Erin Crain
Yenchna..........................................................Nikita Lanier
Dr. Zubritsky..................................................Brishen Miller
Lenya Zubritsky..............................................Alixandria Amparano
Sophia Zubritsky..............................................Sandra Kelpin
Sophia the First..............................................Jenessa Lansdale
Casimir Yousekvitch........................................Samantha Duke
Sophia the First's Father...............................Erin Crain
Young Student...............................................Ben Hooper
Casimir's Father.............................................Steve Martinez
Count Gregor.................................................TJ Ryder
The Cow..........................................................Sue Lansdale

The Quirky Villagers:
  Jugglers: Katie Calvert Ben Hooper
  Evan Birch James Stander
  Painter: Stephanie Hinman
  Yo-Yo Guy: Steve “Yo-Yo Man” Haddock
  Reader: Ferrare Fuller

A special thanks to Rachel Crampton of Ms. Kendall’s Art Class for the cover and poster design.
Another thanks to Barnaby Pung and Alix Amparano for t-shirt logo and design.

*Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Director: ...............................................................Lyla Fox
Assistant Director: ..............................................Barnaby Pung
Technical Director: .............................................Shannon Clemens
Stage Manager: ..................................................Siobhan “Bob” Skinner
Light Board Operator: .........................................Jenny Shutty
Sound Board Operator: ........................................Hilary Spiess-Malmstrom
Publicity: ............................................................D&D Printing
  The Ensemble Troupe
Set Design: .........................................................Lyla Fox, Bill Fox
  Barney Martlew and Shannon Clemens
Set Building: ......................................................James Stander, Barb Patterson
  Judy Sherrod, Barnaby Pung
  Katie Calvert, Molly Hooper
  Sue Lansdale, Alix Amparano
  Sandra Kelpin, Morgan Patchell
  Erin Crain, Samantha Duke
  Mark Marciniak, Jerry Starrett
  Ben Ramsey and Katie Pylman
Costumes: ..........................................................Sue Lansdale, Lyla Fox
  Natalie Patchell, Laura Kelpin
  Flo Rac, Margaret Crain
  Jon Crain and Erin Crain
Make-Up: ............................................................Desiree Keown
  Angela Sugden and Val Diamon
General All-Round Help: ........................................Katie Pylman
A Huge Thanks to the Following
Friends of Drama

ANN AND JOLLIE ALLEN
SUZIE AND BOB FOX
DOROTHEA WARREN FOX
TERRY URQUHART
LEE MILLER
MARIE KERSTETTER
WILLIAM C. FOX
BILL AND JUDY SHERROD
BARB AND DICK LEY
JANE AND BILL RYAN
BARBARA PATTERSON
JOHN AND GINGER SNYDER
LINDA AND CHARLES HALL
GEORGE AND VALERIE OPDYKE
CARL ILL
JIM ROACH
DR. MERRY CARSON
SUZANNE JOHNSON
SHANNON CLEMENS
DOREEN AND ED THOMAS
BRUCE AND JEANNE GRUBB
KATE HUNTER
VIRGIL AND LAURA KELPIN
BLANCHE PATTERSON - ALWAYS-
MARY GODFREY
JANET JONES
JOHN AND PAT DEKOFF
ROSS AND NORMA STANCATI
DON STAMM
DAVE AND DEB DUNSTONE
KIM DYSINGER
LOY NORRIX BOOSTER CLUB

Drama Mamas
SUE LANSDALE
JUDY SHERROD
NATALIE PATCHELL
MARGARET DUKE
LAURA KELPIN

Drama Grandma
FLO RAC

A huge thank you to the following for their extraordinary generosity:

BARNEY MARTLEW
LISSA AND RUSTY SMITH
CHRIS PATCHELL
BILL SHERROD

And Barnaby Pung wants to thank Melissa Easley for all of her help, patience, and understanding.
Lyla Fox wants to thank Shannon Clemens for going above and beyond in sharing her gifts with the Troupe, and a huge thanks to Bill for being the best decision she ever made.

APRIL 30, MAY 1, 8 pm
KASDORF AUDITORIUM
18.1

CHARACTER PROFILE

Who Am I?
Rounding Out Your Character Exercise

Answer all the questions from your character’s point of view. Base all of your answers on the Given Circumstances.

What is your full name?
What else are you called? (nicknames)
Where do you live? (city, state, country)
Where were you born?
Date of birth (Day, Month, and Year)
Do you have any brothers and sisters? How many older and younger?

What do you remember about the house you grew up in?

What do you remember about the neighborhood you grew up in?

What were some of the special occasions in your family? (holidays, reunions, picnics, vacations, etc.)

Name some of the special homemade foods you ate as a child.

Name and describe some of the games you played as a child.

What is your favorite childhood memory?

What is your worst childhood memory?
18.1 continued

What was/is your relationship with your family?

What year in college are you?

What subjects do you excel in?

What was your overall grade point average?

What do you like best about this college?

Are you now a member of any clubs, organizations, or religious congregations?

Did you ever smoke? (when, why, and how much?)

What is your favorite drink, alcoholic and nonalcoholic?

What kind of limits do you put on your alcoholic drinking?

What section of the newspaper do you read?

What do you enjoy doing most in your free time?

What kind of music do you enjoy listening to?

What have you read recently? (book, magazine)
How do you feel about your age?

What do you do for exercise?

What is your best feature?

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

What is your favorite meal?

What are your favorite foods?

List three of your favorite films.

Who are your favorite movie stars?

In what other forms of entertainment/recreation do you enjoy and/or take part?

What is your favorite sport? Do you follow it professionally?

What time do you usually get up in the mornings?

What time do you usually retire?

What is your favorite time of day? Why?

What is your favorite season? Why?
18.1 continued

Which do you prefer: city or county living? Why?

Do you like intimate parties or large gatherings? Why?

What is your favorite color and why?

What is your greatest fear?

Who is your closest friend?

How would you like to spend your next vacation?

What type of clothing do you most like to wear?

What are your favorite TV programs?

What would you enjoy doing on an evening out?

What would you like to be when you grow up?

What is your favorite animal?

What are your prejudices?

Do you consider yourself an indoor or outdoor person?
What are your feelings or opinions about:

- sex?
- politics?
- war?
- old age?

What role does religion play in your everyday life?

Are you happy with your lot?

What do you feel the future holds?

How do you feel about each of the other people you meet in this play?
Encourage your actors to keep a daily journal to get in closer touch and in better tune with their character. The following is a list of basic questions they can use for this exercise.

What new information have I learned about my character today?

What questions do I still have about my character?

How does my character feel about the other characters in the play? (Let your character’s voice respond to this question.)

What one or two things do I plan to accomplish during the next rehearsal?
**11.1**

**DIRECTOR'S COSTUME NOTES**

You may use this form to keep organized notes about the following:

1. The number of costumes you feel each character in your play needs; and
2. What you feel the actor playing each role needs to be able to do in each costume.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Act/Scene</th>
<th>Description of Costume</th>
<th>Special Requirements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>
Costumes
(Try as hard as you can to find your own. This saves us greatly)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Costume Needs</th>
<th>Has/Can Get</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Leon</td>
<td>Brown vest, cream shirt</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dark or black trousers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dark shoes, round glasses</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Narrator</td>
<td>Plaid shirt, cream vest</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dark slacks, cap</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Bridge groom</td>
<td>Silky black shirt, pants</td>
<td>fez</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Doctor</td>
<td>Black suit coat or vest, white shirt, dark pants, shoes,</td>
<td>pocket watch (creative)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shirt, dark pants, shoes, jacket</td>
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<td>5. Lenya</td>
<td>Dress, apron, or vest, blouse</td>
<td>full skirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mishkin</td>
<td>Skirt, vest, blouse or shirt, full slacks</td>
<td>mailbag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Slovitch</td>
<td>Butcher's apron, brown (dirty) shirt, pants, butcher's</td>
<td>knife</td>
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<td></td>
<td>knife</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Yenchna</td>
<td>shirtwaist, apron, big, ugly shoes and socks</td>
<td>basket, flowers</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Snetsky</td>
<td>Vest, skirt or dress, sheep's horn</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sophia - Blues Pants Discovered
10. Magistrate
   Long shirt - vest
   Morning coat, top hat, vest, shirt

11. Count
    Cape, suitcoat and shirt, cane handlebar
    mustache

12. Count's Great Grandfather
    Same as count if possible

13. Quirky villagers—an array of black and brown pants, some brightly
    colored shirts, vests, etc

   All shoes should be black or brown. Boots work, especially if tucked into
   pants

   We're also looking for some wild ties, headscarves and caps of all sorts (no
   baseball caps, of course)

   cow - oh my!
12.1

DIRECTOR'S NOTES ON MAKEUP

Use this form to give specific directions regarding the makeup, hairstyle, and/or wigs all actors will wear in the production.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor/Character Name</th>
<th>List of Makeup Needed</th>
<th>Application</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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## Property List for Your Production

Use the following form to list all the properties needed in your production. Make sure you include all known Set, Hand, Personal, and Decor props.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Act/Scene</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
# 8.2

**PROPERTY INVENTORY LIST**

Use the following form to list all borrowed props.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Borrowed/Returned</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
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<tbody>
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8.3

PROPERTY CHECKLIST

This form can be used by both the Property Head and the Stage Manager to ensure that all properties are in their proper location during the production of the play.

ACT: _____

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Personal Prop</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On Stage</td>
<td>Right Stage</td>
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Fools
A COMIC FABLE
by Neil Simon
FOOLS was first presented by Emanuel Azenberg on April 6, 1981, at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre, New York City, with the following cast:

(In order of appearance)

LEON TOLCHINSKY .................. John Rubinstein  
SNETSKY  .................................. Gerald Hiken  
MAGISTRATE  ......................... Fred Stuthman  
SLOVITCH  .................................. David Lipman  
MISHKIN  .................................. Joseph Leon  
YENCHNA .................................. Florence Stanley  
DR. ZUBRITSKY  ......................... Harold Gould  
LENYA ZUBRITSKY ...................... Mary Louise Wilson  
SOPHIA ZUBRITSKY ..................... Pamela Reed  
GREGOR YOUSEKEVITCH ................. Richard B. Shull

Directed by Mike Nichols  
Scenery by John Lee Beatty  
Costumes by Patricia Zipprodt  
Lighting by Tharon Musser
Story - has to free and enter in losing the first round
Lenna - That would explain why the train
Jean - Step backward for the road
Leo - Lenna does is good - put on yellow
Han - Speed up with girl and girl

Jean: Uh, Yenchin (order on sub leader)
Lenna: (pitch)
Yenchin - then
Yenchin - then

Page 35

Turn-Head Wallace
Fools

Scene 1

Kulyenchikov, about 1890, a remote Ukrainian village. LEON TOLCHINSKY, about thirty, carrying a battered old suitcase and some books tied together, arrives over a small bridge in the town square. He looks around, seems pleased, then turns to the audience.

LEON. (Smiles.) Kulyenchikov, I like it! It's exactly as I pictured: a quiet, pleasant village, not too large . . . the perfect place for a new schoolteacher to begin his career . . . Well, to be honest, I did spend mornings for two years in a small children's school in Moscow teaching tiny tots rudimentary spelling and numbers, but this, this is my first bona-fide, professional appointment as a full-time schoolmaster. Actually, I never even heard of Kulyenchikov until I saw the advertisement that a Dr. Zubritsky placed in the college journal. Although the position was in a remote village in the Ukraine, I jumped at the chance, but I don't mind telling you that my heart is pounding with excitement. I have this passion for teaching . . . Greek, Latin, astronomy, classic literature. I get goose bumps just thinking about it . . . (He looks around.) I don't see anyone around . . . Maybe I arrived a little early—I'm one of those extremely eager and enthusiastic people who's up at the crack of dawn, ready to begin his work. This is a very, very auspicious day in my life. (We hear a ram's horn off-stage.) Oh! Excuse me.
FOOLS

(SNETSKY the shepherd enters, carrying a ram's horn and a staff.)

SNETSKY. Elenya! Lebidoff! Marushka! Olga! Where are you?

LEON. Good morning.

SNETSKY. Good morning. Did you happen to see two dozen sheep?

LEON. Two dozen sheep?

SNETSKY. Yes. There were fourteen of them. (He continues looking.)

LEON. No. I'm sorry.

SNETSKY. Well, if you see them, would you give them a message?

LEON. A message for the sheep?

SNETSKY. Yes, tell them the shepherd is looking for them and they should tell you where they are and I'll come and get them. Thank you. (He starts to walk off.)

LEON. Wait, wait. Excuse me—what is your name, please?

SNETSKY. (Stops.) Snetsky.

LEON. And your first name?

SNETSKY. (Thinks.) How soon do you need it?

LEON. Never mind. Forget your first name.

SNETSKY. I did.

LEON. I am Leon Steponovitch Tolchinsky and I am to be the new schoolteacher.

SNETSKY. Is that a fact? (He shakes Leon's hand vigorously.) I'm very honored to meet you, Leon Steponovitch Tolchinsky. I am Something Something Snetsky. Will you be staying the night?

LEON. You don't understand. Kulyenchikov will be my new home. I'm going to live here and teach here. I am, if I may say so, an excellent teacher.
FOOLS

SNETSKY. Oh, they all were. They came by the thousands, but not one of them lasted through the first night. (He blows the horn hard.) Oh, it's so hard to blow these, I don't know how the sheep do it.

LEON. You've had thousands of teachers?

SNETSKY. More. Hundreds! We're unteachable. We're all stupid in Kulyenchikov. There isn't a town or village more stupid in all of Mother Poland.

LEON. Russia.

SNETSKY. Whatever. All good people, mind you, but not a decent brain among them. (He blows the horn with difficulty.) Oh, that feels so good. I just opened up my ears. I thought you were whispering. What were you saying?

LEON. Are you telling me that every man, woman and child—

SNETSKY. All stupid. Including me. Talk to me another ten minutes and you'll begin to notice.

LEON. (Ignores it.) I was hired by Dr. Zubritsky to teach his young daughter.

SNETSKY. (Bursts out laughing.) Teach his daughter? Impossible. The girl is hopeless. Nineteen years old and she just recently learned to sit down... She's hopeless. She doesn't even know the difference between a cow and a duck. Not that it's an easy subject, mind you.

LEON. (To the audience.) Something is up here! (He takes the ad out of his pocket.) I thought nothing of it then, but when I first read it I did notice that every word in the advertisement was misspelled... I'm sure Dr. Zubritsky will explain it all to me. (He steps back and turns to Snetsky.) You've been most helpful, Citizen Snetsky. I enjoyed our chat.

SNETSKY. As did I, Master Tolchinsky. (He turns to
the audience.) He's not the only one who can have private thoughts. I can have private thoughts as well. (He tries to think.) The trouble is, I can never think of a thought to have in private. Oh, I must be on my way. Good day, schoolmaster.

Leon. I'm sure we'll meet again.

Snetsky. Oh, of course. Just mention my name to anyone. Snetsky the sheep loser. (He leaves. A Magistrate, ringing a bell, enters. Leon tries to stop him, but is ignored.)

Magistrate. Nine o'clock and all's well . . . Nine o'clock in the village of Kulyenchikov and all's well . . . Nine o'clock and all's well. (He is gone.)

Leon. (To the audience.) It may have been all well with him, but I was beginning to have my doubts. (He leaves. A butcher, Slovitch, comes out of his shop with a broom. He sweeps the dirt into a pile and then sweeps it into the shop. The postman, Mishkin, appears.)

Slovitch. Good morning, postman.
Mishkin. Good morning, butcher.
Slovitch. A beautiful, sunny day, isn't it?
Mishkin. Is it? I haven't looked up yet. (He looks up.) Oh, yes. Lovely. Very nice.
Slovitch. Do I have any mail?
Mishkin. No. I'm sorry. I'm the postman. I have all the mail.
Slovitch. My sister in Odessa hasn't been feeling well. I was hoping I would hear from her.
Mishkin. It's very hard to hear all the way from Odessa. Perhaps she wrote a letter. I'll look. (He starts
to look through the mail. We hear YENCHNA, a vendor, calling “Fish!” offstage before she appears.)

YENCHNA. (Calling out, selling her wares.) Fish! Fresh fish! Nice fresh flounder and halibut! A good piece of carp for lunch. (She has no fish, but bunches of flowers.)

SLOVITCH. Good morning, Yenchna.

YENCHNA. How about a nice piece of haddock? Is that a beautiful fish?

SLOVITCH. What do you mean fish? Those are flowers.

YENCHNA. They didn’t catch anything today. Why should I suffer because the fisherman had a bad day? Try the carp, it smells gorgeous.

MISHKIN. I don’t have any letters from your sister, Slovitch. But I have a nice letter from the shoemaker’s cousin. Would you like that?

SLOVITCH. Is she sick? I hate reading bad news.

MISHKIN. No, no. In perfect health. Take it. You’ll enjoy it.

YENCHNA. Can you believe my daughter hasn’t written to me in over a year?

MISHKIN. Doesn’t your daughter live with you?

YENCHNA. It’s a good thing. Otherwise I’d never hear from her. (LEON enters.)

LEON. (To the townspeople.) Good morning. My name is Leon Steponovitch Tolchinsky. I’m the new schoolmaster.

MISHKIN. (Bows.) Mishkin the postman.

SLOVITCH. (Bows.) Slovitch the butcher.

YENCHNA. Yenchna the vendor.

LEON. How do you do. I was just talking to a shepherd named Snetsky.

MISHKIN. Oh, yes. Something Something Snetsky. We know him well.
Leon. He was pleasant enough, although—and I hope I don't seem unkind—somewhat deficient in his mental alertness.

Yenchina. That's Snetsky, all right. (She taps her head.) He was kicked in the head by a horse.

Leon. Oh, well. What a pity. When was that?

Yenchina. Tuesday, Wednesday, twice on Friday and all day Saturday.

Leon. (Looks at Yenchina's flowers.) What lovely and fragrant wares you have to sell, madame. Perhaps I might buy some for my new employer. How much are they, please?

Yenchina. The flounder is two kopecks and the halibut is three.

Leon. I beg your pardon?

Yenchina. (Holds up a white flower.) If it's too much, I have a nice whitefish for one and a half. (She wraps it in a newspaper and hands it to him. He pays.)

Leon. (To the audience.) Perhaps the dialect is a little different in this part of the country. (To the group.) I'm very eager to begin my new duties. Will one of you be so kind as to direct me to the home of Dr. Zubrisky? (They all point in different directions.)

All Three. That way!

Leon. Thank you. Perhaps I'll go in the one direction you haven't pointed to. . . . A pleasure meeting you all. (Snetsky appears.) Oh, Hello again. Have you found your sheep?

Snetsky. Not yet. (Leon leaves.) Who was that?

Mishkin. The new schoolteacher.

Snetsky. Another one? I just met one a few minutes ago, they must be having a convention here.

Yenchina. Count Yousekevitch up on the hill isn't going to be very happy about this.
FOOLS

Slovitch. That’s right. Count Yousekevitch doesn’t like new schoolteachers.

Snetsky. Why?

Mishkin. He’s afraid they’ll break the curse.

Snetsky. What curse?

Slovitch. The one that made us stupid since the day we were born.

Snetsky. Oh, that one.

Mishkin. Yes. I’ve been stupid for fifty-one years . . .

What about you, Snetsky?

Snetsky. I’ll be dumb forty-three next July.

Mishkin. And you, Slovitch?

Slovitch. Forty-one for me. What about you, Yenchna?

Yenchna. I just turned the corner of twenty-six.

Slovitch. That corner must be about forty miles from here. (They all exit.)

SCENE 3

The home of Dr. Zubritsky. The Doctor is examining a patient, Magistrate Kupchik. The Doctor is administering an eye-chart test.


Doctor. I don’t know. It sounds good to me. (Listening to the Magistrate’s heart.) Yes . . . Yes . . . Very interesting.

Magistrate. Then I’m in good health?

Doctor. The best. The best of health. You’ll live to be eighty.

Magistrate. I’m seventy-nine now.
FOOLS

Doctor. Well, you've got a wonderful year ahead of you.

Magistrate. (Gets dressed.) Good. I must keep up my strength. I'm a magistrate. Law and order must be preserved.

Doctor. Did you want a prescription?

Magistrate. For what?

Doctor. I don't know. Some people like prescriptions. Here, take this to the druggist. Pick out something you like and take it three times a day with a little water. Goodbye, sir.

Magistrate. How much do I owe you, Doctor?

Doctor. Oh, forget it. Forget it. If I ever go to medical school you can send me a little something.

Magistrate. Oh, thank you. Goodbye.

(Lenya enters. She is exuberant and excited.)

Lenya. Nikolai! Nikolai! He's here. He's come! He arrived not two minutes ago. He's young. He looks strong, determined. Maybe he'll be the one, Nikolai. Maybe this one will finally be our salvation.

Doctor. Calm yourself, Lenya. Who's come? Who'll be our salvation?

Lenya. The new—er—The new—what do you call them? They come and they—er—The ones who—We had one once but no more.

Doctor. Oh, God. I know. I know who you mean.

Lenya. They have a place, and then you go to the place—

Doctor. And they point to you and they say—er—they ask you if you—er—

Lenya. And if you don't, they say, "Why didn't you? Next time I'll make you."
FOOLS

Doctor. And he's outside?
Lenya. He's just down the street.
Doctor. Well, show him in, Lenya. Show him in.
And pray God this is the one who will deliver us and all
of Kulyenchikov from this dreadful—er—this—er—Oh,
God, what is it we have again?
Lenya. I know. I know what you mean. It sounds like
nurse . . .
Doctor. Nurse.
Lenya. Or hearse . . .
Doctor. Hearse.
Lenya. Something like that.
Doctor. Or something like that. (There is a knock.)
Or is it a knock?
Lenya. We have a knock? (She goes to the door.)
Doctor. Yes, yes. Open the knock. (She pushes on
the door.) The other way, the other way. (She opens it.
Leon stands there.)
Lenya. Won't you come in, young man?
Leon. Dr. Zubritsky? Madame Zubritsky? I am
delighted to be in Kulyenchikov. I am Leon
Steponovitch Tolchinsky.
Doctor. So you are the new—the new—
Leon. Yes! I am he.
Doctor. It's he, Lenya, the new—the new—
Lenya. But you look so young to be a—to be a—
Leon. Not at all. I think in time you will find that I
am, if I may say so, one of the best young—well, I don't
want to seem immodest.
Doctor. No. Please. Be immodest. We love im-
modesty.
Lenya. The more immodest the better. The best
young what? What?
Leon. The best young teacher in all of Russia!
DOCTOR. (Excited.) A teacher!!! He's a teacher!! The new teacher is here.

LENYA. Thank God the teacher is here!!

LEON. Thank you. Thank you. I'm most gratified at this most warm and overwhelming reception.

DOCTOR. Make yourself at home, teacher. Take off your coat, teacher. Lenya, bring the teacher a cup of tea. Sit down, teacher.

LENYA. Would you like some tea, teacher? Or maybe some paper and pens, teacher? Perhaps you would like to start teaching right away, teacher?

LEON. Well, no one's more eager than I am. Madame Zubritsky, this is for you. (He hands her the flowers.)

LENYA. Oh, whitefish. I saw them on sale today. Thank you. (She takes them, Leon looks at the audience, bewildered.)

DOCTOR. How can we help you?

LEON. Well, there are a few questions I wanted to ask you first.

DOCTOR. Questions! That's what they ask. When they point to you and you don't know. He knows. He knows what questions are. I can tell this one's going to be a good teacher.

LENYA. Would you be so kind, Master Tolchinsky, to—to ask us a question. Any question at all.

DOCTOR. It means a lot to us. It's been so long since anyone has asked us a good "school" question ... Please! (They all sit.)

LEON. Well, there are questions and there are question. Do you want a question on mathematics or a question dealing with science or perhaps a philosophical question?

DOCTOR. The first one. The first one sounds good. The philosophical question. Ask us that one.
FOOLS

LEON. Very well, if you wish ... What is the purpose of man's existence?

DOCTOR. What a question ... Lenya, did you ever hear such a beautiful question?

LENYA. I'm speechless ... To think someone would ask us a question like that.

LEON. Are you interested in the answer?

DOCTOR. Not today, thank you. To be asked one question like that in a lifetime is more than we ever expected. The answer should be given to someone much more worthy than we are.

LEON. But it's your birthright. Knowledge is everyone's birthright.

DOCTOR. Everyone not born in Kulyenchikov.

LEON. I don't understand.

LENYA. You would if you knew about the nurse.

LEON. What nurse?

DOCTOR. Not the nurse, the hearse.

LEON. The hearse?

LENYA. He means the purse.

LEON. What kind of purse?

DOCTOR. The kind of purse that inflicts the wrath of God upon all those poor souls who were unfortunate enough to be born in this pitiful village.

LEON. Do you mean, perhaps, a curse?

DOCTOR. Curse!! That's what it is! I knew it sounded like that.

LENYA. We were so close. So close!

LEON. What is this curse you speak of, Dr. Zubritsky?

DOCTOR. Lenya, bolt the door. Draw the curtains.

LENYA. I can't draw curtains. I can draw a cat or a fish—

DOCTOR. Never mind. Lower your voice.
LENYA. **(Bends her knees, making herself shorter.)** How low do you want my voice?

Doctor. That's low enough. Bring the book, it's on the shelf. **(She goes over to the bookshelf, knees bent as she walks. To Leon.)** Young man—have you ever heard of the Curse of Kulyenchikov?

Leon. I can't say that I have.

Doctor. You can't say that? It's not hard. Even Lenya can say that.

Lenya. **(Standing by the bookshelf.)** "The Curse of Kulyenchikov."

Leon. What is this curse, Doctor?

Doctor. Two hundred years ago, a curse was put on this village that struck down every man, woman, child and domestic animal, including all their ancestors for generations to come, leaving each and every one of them—and this you'll find hard to believe—with no more intelligence than a bump on a log.

Leon. Doctor, I don't believe in curses. Curses are old wives' tales.

Doctor. You're thinking of Noychka. In Noychka all the old wives have tails. That was *their* curse. Ours is altogether different.

Leon. But where did the curse come from? And who would inflict such cruel punishment on such a peaceful and simple village?

(Lenya has returned with the book.)

Doctor. Who indeed? It's all documented in *The Book of Curses.* **(He blows dust off the cover into Leon's face. To Lenya.)** I thought you said you dusted this.
LENYA. I did. I put dust on it yesterday.

DOCTOR. (To Leon) Here. Read it for yourself. The page is marked.

LEON. (Opens the book. The page is sticky and gummy) It's all stuck together.

LENYA. We marked it with maple syrup. Read it to us.

(They all sit on the Doctor's sofa. We see two people approaching UC X to C)

LEON: (Reading) "On the morning of April 11, in the year 1691, in the village of Kulyenchikov, two young people fell hopelessly in love."

(We see young Casimir and Sophia the First ([C]) going through the motions of young and true love. They are hugging, holding hands and skipping over the stage—all this is, of course, exaggerated. As they do this, Lenya, the Doctor and Leon continue their conversation)

LENYA. I knew it. Whenever young people fall in love, you know a curse is coming.

LEON. But surely you've heard all this before?

DOCTOR. Many times. But we never understand it. It's a very well thought out curse.

LENYA. So what happens?

LEON. "The boy was a young, handsome but illiterate farmer named Casimir Yousekevitch."

CASIMIR. (C) Hi, I'm Casimir Yousekevitch.

LEON. "The girl was the daughter of the most learned man in the town, Mikhail Zubritsky."

SOPHIA THE FIRST. Hi, I'm the daughter of the most literate man in the town, Mikhail Zubritsky.

LENYA. Zubritsky! I've seen that name before!

DOCTOR. I've seen it! I've seen it! On a front door somewhere. In this neighborhood!

LEON. It's on your front door. Your name is Zubritsky.

DOCTOR. (With profound insight) Wait a minute! That means that the young man in the curse may possibly be related to our front door. (He and Lenya walk over to the door, open it and look out)

LEON. (To the audience) Mind you, I'm dealing with the intelligentsia now! I continue: "The young girl's name was Sophia Zubritsky." (To the Doctor.) May I ask the name of your young daughter.

DOCTOR. Sophia.

LEON. Sophia? Sophia Zubriskyl The identical name of the girl in the curse over two hundred years ago.

DOCTOR. I can't believe it. Unless our daughter has been lying about her age. (He and Lenya have come back. Each stands behind a chair)

LEON. "The match was doomed from the start. When Sophia's educated father learned that young Casimir was illiterate, he forbade Sophia ever to see Casimir again."

SOPHIA the FIRST'S FATHER: What do you mean he can't read? Not even a Wheaties box? Oh, my, what a stupidio. I forbid you ever, ever to see him again! Do you understand?

SOPHIA THE FIRST: (Wailing and wildly gesturing) "No, no, you can't mean that! Reading isn't everything. He can still bail hay! Please."

SOPHIA THE FIRST'S FATHER. You heard me—my word is law—and these are the days when the law still means something!

LEON. "Six months later Sophia married a young, and we mean young, student. (We see Sophia the First standing with the student and pledging their vows while her parents stand by happily congratulating each other and being congratulated by surrounding villagers.)"
LEON. "That winter a young Casimir distraught and despondent (We see Casimir wringing his hands and walking frantically back and forth—then wiping his nose on his sleeve and feigning crying) took his life by plowing his own grave and planting himself in it. (Here is a highly "camp" scene in which Casimir first pantomimes using a horse drawn plow to dig his grave. Then he walks slowly into it waving goodbye to the crowd while clutching flowers to his chest and holding a "REST IN PIECE" sign [remember he is illiterate].

LEON. "Upon hearing of his son's death, Casimir's father, Vladimir Yousekevitch—"

THE ZUBRITSKYS. (Shaking the chairs) Tremble, tremble, tremble, tremble.

LEON. "—Casimir's father, Vladimir Yousekevitch—"

THE ZUBRITSKYS. Tremble, tremble, tremble, tremble.

LEON. "—who caused people to tremble at the mention of his name—"

LEON. "—Casimir's father, Vladimir Yousekevitch—"

THE ZUBRITSKYS. Tremble, tremble, tremble, tremble.

LEON. "—And So-and-So, sometimes known as the Sorcerer because of his ability to summon the powers of the Devil himself, brought all his wrath and fury down upon Kulyenchikov—"

DOCTOR. Here it comes! Here it comes!

LEON. "A curse. A curse upon all who dwell in Kulyenchikov. May the daughter of Mikhail Zubritsky—murderer of my own son—be struck down by the ignorance that caused my son's death. May stupidity engulf her brain (Shows Sophia the First swirling around, confused and dazed) May incompetence encumber her faculties (Sophia the First tried to curtsy but keeps falling over) May common sense become uncommon and may reason become unreasonable. May her children be cursed as well and may their children be cursed for eternity. (Some of the quirky villagers appear and do their thing, i.e., leap frog backwards, hid and go seek with everyone blindfolded but the seeker, etc) May all who live in Kulyenchikov be born in ignorance and die in ignorance, (A REST IN PIECE SIGN with Piece circled in red is held up by a few quirky villagers) unable to leave this cursed village until my final vengeance has been satisfied. So there.
Mikhail Zubritsky, murderer of my only son, be struck down by the ignorance that caused my son's death! May stupidity engulf her brain! May incompetence enshroud her faculties! May common sense become uncommon and may reason become unreasonable! May her children be cursed as well. And may all their children be cursed for eternity! May all who live in Kulyenchikov be born in ignorance and die in ignorance, unable to leave this cursed village until my final vengeance has been satisfied!!"

LENYA. That would explain why the train doesn't stop here.

LEON. (To the audience.) My initial impulse was to panic, even my secondary impulse was to panic... To educate is one thing, to break curses is another.

DOCTOR. Excuse me, but are you all right, Master Tolchinsky?

LEON. Yes. I'm fine. I— I was just thinking.

DOCTOR. Lenya... he was thinking.

LENYA. He was thinking.

DOCTOR. (To Leon.) What's it like?

LEON. You mean you don't know what thinking is?

DOCTOR. I don't and she certainly doesn't.

LEON. Thinking? It's the thoughts that come to one's mind. It's the process which enables us to make decisions.

DOCTOR. Decisions? No. I don't think we're capable of that.

LEON. But surely you know what it is you want.

LENYA. Oh, dear God, yes. We desperately want someone to help us. Not so much for us, we've already lived our lives. But for your child, our sweet daughter, Sophia.

LEON. Did you hear what you just said?
LENYA. No, I wasn't listening.

LEON. It was a decision. You decided to help your daughter because you thought about it. You are capable of thought. You think.

LENYA. No, I don't think so. It just came out.

LEON. Yes. Out of your head where your brain is lodged. The center of thoughts. And if it's possible to have even one tiny infinitesimal insignificant thought, then it's possible to expand those thoughts to ideas—and ideas into comprehension—comprehension into creativity—and finally, supreme intelligence!!

DOCTOR. Would I be able to open up jars? I have terrible trouble opening up jars.

LEON. (Aside.) Be firm, Leon. Be staunch . . . (To the DOCTOR.) Patience! We will break this curse, I promise you! By the simple, everyday, painstaking work of education. We must begin at once. I should like to start by seeing your daughter, Sophia.

DOCTOR. Sophia?

LEON. Yes, it occurs to me that since the curse started with the young Sophia two hundred years ago, perhaps the key to ending it lies with her direct descendant. Can I see Sophia?

LENYA. Not from here. She's up in her room. We would have to send for her.

DOCTOR. Do what the schoolmaster asks.

LENYA. She may be taking her singing lesson now.

LEON. She takes singing lessons? From whom?

LENYA. A canary. He does the best he can.

DOCTOR. No words, mind you. Just the tunes.

LEON. I understand. The girl, madame. Please.

DOCTOR. (To LENYA.) Remember, sweetheart, upstairs and to the left. (She goes. To LEON.) You'll find her a most delicate and sensitive girl. Not like the...
others in the village. She has so many interests, always occupied.

Leon. Occupied with what?

Doctor. Oh, she likes to do interesting things . . . like touching things—wood, paper, metal. She likes drinking water.

(Lenya returns.)

Lenya. Master Tolchinsky. May I present our daughter . . . (She looks at piece of paper in her hand to remind her of Sophia's name.) Sophia Irena Elynya Zubritski. (Sophia enters.) Sophia, this is the new schoolmaster, Leon Tolchinsky.

Leon. Miss Zubritski! (He turns aside, dazed.) Is that my breath that has just been taken away? Is that vision before me human or have I too been cast under the spell? Never have I felt such a stirring beneath my breast . . . Watch yourself, Leon! She is your pupil, not the object of your dormant feelings of passion. (He turns back to them.) Excuse me.

Doctor. Do you know what he was just doing, Sophia? He was thinking! Isn't that wonderful?

Sophia. Yes, Mama.

Doctor. Papa! She is Mama and I am Papa.

Leon. Won't you please sit down, Miss Zubritsky? (She sits slowly, carefully, and when she is down, the Doctor embraces Lenya and says, "She did it! She did it!"); then turns to Leon.)

Doctor. Wasn't that a beautiful sit?

Leon. Yes. Very nice. Lovely. (To Sophia.) Miss Zubritsky—may I call you Sophia?

Sophia. Sophia?

Doctor. It's your name, sweetheart.
LENYA. Say “Yes,” darling. Say, “Yes, you may call me Sophia.”

LEON. Please, madame. We must allow the girl to speak for herself. (To SOPHIA.) I should like very much to be your friend. Would it please you if I called you Sophia? (SOPHIA looks puzzled.)

DOCTOR. It’s been so long since she’s taken a test.

LEON. I think she wants to say something.

SOPHIA. I—I would be very pleased to have you call me Sophia.

DOCTOR. There you are!

LENYA. I’m so proud. So proud!

LEON. Please. It’s very distracting to the girl’s concentration. (To SOPHIA.) I’ve come a very long way to help you with your education. I have every reason to believe that under ordinary circumstances, you have the capability of being an extremely bright and intelligent young woman, that deep inside you somewhere is an intellect just crying to be heard, that you have enormous powers of reason. But someone has put a cloud over these powers and it is my intention to remove this cloud so that enlightenment can once more shine through those unbelievably crystal-clear blue eyes once again . . . But I need your help, Sophia. Will you give me that help?

SOPHIA. Yes. You may call me Sophia.

DOCTOR. She did it again. That’s two in a row.

LEON. (Aside.) Get a grip, Leon. Nothing in life comes easy . . . (To SOPHIA.) I should like to ask you a few very simple questions. If we are to begin your education, it is important that I know at what point to begin. It won’t be taxing, I promise you. I would never want to be the cause of a furrow or frown on that fair face . . . Now, then—what is your favorite color?
FOOLS

SOPHIA. My favorite color?
LEON. Yes, is it red or blue or green or orange? Any color at all. Which one is your favorite?
DOCTOR. I used to know that one.
LEON. I'll ask you once again, Sophia. What-is-your-favorite-color?
LENYA. Why is he being so hard on her? This isn't a university.
SOPHIA. My favorite color—
LEON. Yes?
SOPHIA. —is yellow.
LEON. Yellow! Her favorite color is yellow! Why, Sophia? Why is yellow your favorite color?
SOPHIA. Because it doesn't stick to your fingers as much.

LENYA. (Aside, to the Doctor.) I think she's wrong. I think it's blue that doesn't stick to your fingers as much.

LEON. That's a very interesting answer, Sophia. There is a certain logic to her response. The fact that that logic escapes me completely doesn't alter the fact that she has something in mind. Sophia, I'm going to ask you something quite simple now. I'm going to ask you to make a wish. Do you know what a wish is?
SOPHIA. Yes. A wish is something you hope for that doesn't come true.
LEON. Well, perhaps we can change all that. If you could make a wish that did come true, anything at all, what would you wish for?
SOPHIA. What would I wish for?
LEON. Yes, Sophia, what would you wish for?
SOPHIA. I would wish that I could fly like a bird . . . to soar over buildings and trees . . . to float on the wind and be carried far away . . . over mountains and lakes
over forests and rivers, to meet people in other villages, to see what the world was like, to know all the things that I shall never know because I must always remain here in this place.

Leon. Sophia, that is the most beautiful wish I have ever heard. (To the Zubritskys.) Don't you see what her wish means? To fly like a bird means to sever the bonds that chain her to ignorance. She wants to soar, to grow, she wants knowledge! And with every fiber of my being, from the very depths of my soul, I shall gather all my strength and patience and dedication, and I make this promise that I, Leon Steponovitch Tolchinsky, shall make Sophia Zubritsky's wish come true.

Sophia. If you could do that, schoolmaster, I would be in your debt—forever.

Leon. She touches me so. Your daughter has such a sweet soul and such a pure heart. We must begin as soon as possible. Not another moment must be lost. I shall return in the morning at eight o'clock sharp. (To Sophia.) What subject shall we begin our studies with, Sophia?

Sophia. I should like to begin with—languages.

Leon. Languages! Of course! Even I should have thought of that. Languages it shall be, my dear, sweet Sophia. And what language shall we begin with first?

Sophia. (Thinks.) Rabbit, I think.

Leon. Rabbit?

Doctor. A very hard language, rabbit. Hardly anyone speaks it anymore.

Lenya. As long as she gets a few phrases, it's enough to begin with.

Sophia. Am I through for today?

Leon. Yes.

Sophia. Then I shall go to my room.
LENYA. Watch how she gets up from the chair. Watch! You didn't see it. Sophia, do it again.
LEON. It's not necessary. She's already past getting up from chairs.
DOCTOR. They're so much smarter than in our day.
SOPHIA. Until tomorrow, schoolmaster.
LEON. In all my life, I have never looked forward to a morning as much as tomorrow's.
SOPHIA. I think you are the most beautiful schoolteacher I have ever seen, Master Tolchinsky. I pray that you don't despair of Kulyenchikov . . . and that you will stay with us forever. (She leaves.)
LENYA. She found the door! She found the door!
DOCTOR. I've never seen Sophia so radiant . . . Lenya, are you thinking what I'm thinking?
LENYA. I'm not even thinking what *I'm* thinking. What are you talking about?
DOCTOR. I think our Sophia has taken a liking to the new schoolmaster.
LEON. If it is true, Dr. Zubritsky, then standing before you is the happiest man on the happiest planet in the universe. Tell me, is she spoken for?
DOCTOR. Spoken for?
LEON. Does she have any suitors? Any young men desperately in love with her?
DOCTOR. We—we don't talk of such things.
LEON. Why not?
DOCTOR. There is no one. No one at all. Not even *him*.
LEON. *Him*?
LENYA. He didn't mean him. He meant someone else who isn't him.
LEON. There is someone. Who is it? I must know. It's of the greatest concern to me.
Doctor. If I told you who him was, you must promise never to say it was I who told you it was him.
Leon. I promise.
Doctor. Have you ever heard of . . . Count Gregor of Kulyenchikov?
Leon. I can't say that I have.
Doctor. You can't say that? It's not that hard. Even Lenya can say that.
Lenya. Count Gregor of Kulyenchikov—
Leon. (Annoyed.) Yes! Yes! I can say it. Who is he?
Lenya. He's—he's one of them. The ones who put the purse on us.
Leon. You mean—a Yousekevitch?
Doctor. The last of his line.
Leon. Tell me about him and Sophia.
Doctor. He proposes marriage twice a day.
Leon. Twice a day?
Lenya. Six-fifteen in the mornings, seven-twenty at nights.
Leon. He cares for her that much?
Doctor. He cares only about avenging his ancestors. If a Zubritsky marries a Yousekevitch, they will be satisfied and the nurse will be over.
Leon. Does Sophia care for him?
Doctor. She has said no for many years, but she can't resist much longer. The poor girl wants to sleep late just one morning.
Leon. What kind of a man is this Count Yousekevitch?
Lenya. You know . . . like the rest of us.
Leon. You mean he is cursed as well?
Doctor. He still lives in Kulyenchikov. He's not permitted to leave here either.
Leon. I understand. If I have a rival, I am more
determined than ever to break this curse. God bless you both for your faith in me. Tomorrow the education of Sophia Zubritsky begins. In all my excitement, I forgot to ask. What about lodgings?

Doctor. Oh, don't worry about it. We'll be very comfortable right here.

Leon. Of course. I'll see you in the morning.

Lenya. Master Tolchinsky! Please! Ask us again! Ask us the question. It makes us feel . . . important.

Leon. Yes, certainly. What is the purpose of man's existence?

Lenya. I'm all choked up again. I'm sorry I asked.

Doctor. One moment! I—I think I know. I think I know the answer.

Leon. To the purpose of man's existence?

Lenya. What are you talking about?

Doctor. It's true. The first time I heard it I didn't understand. But now, suddenly something came to me. I know my limitations, but still, I think I really know the answer . . . Oh, my God, what if I'm right?

Leon. (Excitedly.) Tell me, Dr. Zubritsky. Tell me what you think the answer is.

Doctor. I think—it's twelve!

Leon. Twelve?

Doctor. It's wrong; I can tell by your face. Fourteen?

Leon. I think you missed the point.

Doctor. It's less than a hundred, I know that. Even I'm not that stupid. Eighty-three . . . forty-six.

Leon. (Moving on.) We'll discuss it when we get to philosophy. Don't think about it. Get some sleep. Good night. Until tomorrow. (He walks out to the street and screams.) TWELVE?

Lenya. Why didn't you leave well enough alone? Why must you have answers? Aren't questions beautiful enough?

Leon. (In the street.) TWELVE!
FOOLS

Doctor. But what if I am right? I could have sold the answer. We could have made a fortune. (They leave...the set goes off. Leon reappears.)

Leon. (To the audience.) That's it. I'm leaving now, so I'll say goodbye. I was going to stay and try to break the curse, but when he said "Twelve," I knew it was time to go... What I must do now is try to forget Sophia. I must!

Sophia's Voice. Schoolmaster!

Leon. Sophia? Where are you?

(She appears on the balcony.)

Sophia. Down here. I had to see you once more.

Leon. Without a wrap? In the cold night air, you'll come down with a chill.

Sophia. Oh, I never catch colds.

Leon. You don't.

Sophia. I've tried. I've just never learned how to do it.

Leon. Be grateful... Some things are not worth knowing.

Sophia. I know that something has happened a long time ago that prevents me from knowing what happened a long time ago. If only you knew me the way I might have been instead of the way I am.

Leon. But if you were not the way you are, then I would not have come here to help you to become the way you might have been. (Aside, quickly.) Careful! You're beginning to think like her.

Sophia. Could you—could you ever care for someone who never became the way I might have been?

SOUPHIA. Is that rabbit you’re speaking? It’s hard to follow.
LEON. If it sounds like gibberish it’s because you do that to me, Sophia. When thoughts come from the heart they sometimes trip over the tongue.
SOUPHIA. Then I must watch where I walk when you speak . . . I must go. Everything depends upon tomorrow.
LEON. And if not tomorrow, then the tomorrow after tomorrow. And all the tomorrows for the rest of my life, if that’s what it takes.
SOUPHIA. No. It all rests on tomorrow. If we fail, we shall never see each other again.
LEON. Never see each other? What do you mean?
SOUPHIA. I never know what I mean. I do have thoughts but they seem to disappear when they reach my lips.
LEON. If I ever reached your lips, I would never disappear.
SOUPHIA. Would you like to kiss me?
LEON. With all my heart.
SOUPHIA. No. I meant with your lips.
LEON. An even better suggestion.
SOUPHIA. Hurry. Hurry.

(He climbs up to the balcony.)

LEON. I’m climbing as fast as I can.

(She disappears.)

LEON. (Arrives on the balcony.) Where are you?
SOUPHIA. (Appears below.) Up here.
LEON. (To the audience.) If only she were ugly, I’d be halfway home by now. (To SOUPHIA.) Stay where you
Fools

are. I'll come to you.

Sophia. All right. (But he doesn't move.)

Leon. (To the audience.) After a while you get the
hang of it.

Sophia. (Reappears on the balcony.) Here I am.

Leon. My kiss, sweet Sophia. (They kiss.)

Sophia. As we kissed I felt a strange flutter in my
heart.

Leon. So did I.

Sophia. You felt a flutter in my heart as well? How
alike we are. And yet your hair is so much shorter . . . I
must go. I'm about to fall asleep and I want to get to bed
in time. (She leaves.)

Leon. (To the audience.) I know the dangers of lovin-
g such a simple soul. It would mean a lifetime of
sweet, blissful passion—and very short conversations at
breakfast. (There is a clap of thunder.) I'd best find
some comfortable lodgings. (He descends. There is
another clap of thunder.)

Scene 4

Snetsky. (Running onstage.) Was that you?

Leon. I beg your pardon?

Snetsky. Were you responsible for making that
dreadful noise?

Leon. Of course not. That was thunder and lightning.
It's caused by extreme atmospheric pressures in the skies
above us.

Snetsky. Well, whoever did it is going to get Count
Yousekevitch very angry at us.

Leon. Count Yousekevitch?

Snetsky. He's the one who lives in the big house on
FOOLS

top of the hill. Every time he hears someone make that noise, he throws water down on us.

LEON. No, no, Snetsky, that's rain. Rain!

(YENCHNA appears. She carries flowers.)

YENCHNA. Umbrellas! Umbrellas for sale! Get your umbrellas before he throws the water.

LEON. Yenchna, no one throws water. It's rain from the skies caused by a buildup of condensed moisture.

YENCHNA. You can tell that to these fools, but I used to be a substitute teacher . . . Umbrellas!

LEON. Excuse me, but would either one of you know of a place to stay?

(SLOVITCH appears with MISHKIN.)

SLOVITCH. What's going on? What's all the racket?

MISHKIN. I knew it. I knew he would throw water down on us today. Every time I wash my cow, you know he's going to throw water.

LEON. Mishkin, would you happen to know—

(Prelude chimes, which precede the actual ringing of the steeple bell.)

SLOVITCH. Oh-oh. It's time for Count Yousekevitch to propose again.

MISHKIN. This could be the day. One yes from her and we could all be smart again.

LEON. You mean you want Sophia to marry him?

SNETSKY. Not unless she wanted to. But it would be nice to remember my first name.

LEON. But that's a terrible sacrifice to ask of Sophia. Surely you wouldn't ask that of her.

YENCHNA. What kind of sacrifice? To live in a big
house up on the hill . . . To have little macaroons whenever you want . . . To have a maid brush your teeth in the morning . . .

LEON. But does she love him?
SNETSKY. I beg your pardon?
LEON. Does she love him?
SLOVITCH. We don't have any.
LEON. You don't have any what?
SLOVITCH. Love! It's part of the curse.
LEON. I don't understand.
MISHKIN. I hear him coming. You'd better leave, schoolmaster. He doesn't like people around.
(SLOVITCH, MISHKIN and SNETSKY leave.)
LEON. Yenchna! Is it true there is no love in Kulyenchikov?
YENCHNA. I wouldn't know. My late husband's been gone almost fourteen years.
LEON. I'm sorry.
YENCHNA. That's a long time to be late. I wish he was dead. (She leaves.)
LEON. I'm breaking out in a cold sweat. The possibility of losing Sophia terrifies me . . . I'm going to eavesdrop. (He hides behind a tree.)

GREGOR. (Offstage.) Sophia! (Strumming a balalaika, GREGOR YOUSEKEVITCH appears.) Sweet Sophia! Time to wake up, my pretty one . . . time to get proposed to. She's asleep! Perhaps a pebble will awaken her. (He picks up a pebble and tosses it up to the balcony. We hear a crash of glass. DR. ZUBRITSKY appears in a nightshirt, holding a candle.)

DOCTOR. Who did that?
GREGOR. It is I, Count Yousekevitch.
DOCTOR. Good evening, sir. (He bows and knocks his head on the railing.)
FOOLS

GREGOR. I've come to propose.
DOCTOR. Well, you're a little late. I'm married almost twenty-six years.
LENYA. (Offstage.) Nikolai! Nikolai!
DOCTOR. I'm out here, Lenya. What did you want?

(LENYA appears. She holds a lit candle.)

LENYA. Some bandages. My feet are bleeding... who are you talking to?
GREGOR. It is I, Madame Zubritsky. Count Yousekevitch. I've come to propose to Sophia.
LENYA. She's busy throwing water on the drapes. They're on fire.
DOCTOR. The drapes are on fire?
LENYA. I had to light something... I couldn't find my candle.

(SOPHIA comes out.)

SOPHIA. Papa, what's going on?
DOCTOR. Did we wake you, darling?
SOPHIA. No. I was reading by the light of the drapes.
GREGOR. I must be crazy marrying into this family.
DOCTOR. Count Yousekevitch wants to propose to you, darling. Go ahead, Count Yousekevitch.
GREGOR. Can't we be alone?
DOCTOR. No. No. I think Sophia should hear this, too.
GREGOR. Very well. Will you marry me, Sophia?
LENYA. Oh, my God, this is so romantic. I just wish my feet weren't bleeding.
SOPHIA. I'm sorry, Count Yousekevitch, but marriage is a very great step to take and I don't wish to make it
while I do not have the intelligence to know what I am stepping into. Good night, sir. Good night, Mama, good night, Papa.

LENYA. Good night, son. When you're through reading, darling, put out the drapes.

GREGOR. I do not give up easily. I'll be back in the morning.

DOCTOR. Good night, your grace.

LENYA. Good night, Grace. (They bow low.)

DOCTOR. Watch what you're doing, you're burning my mustache.

GREGOR. (Aside.) Having them for in-laws in a curse worse than the curse.

LEON. Pray God it never happens.

GREGOR. Who's that? Who's there? Come out, I say!

LEON. Forgive me, sir. I was just passing by. May I introduce myself. I am—

GREGOR. I know who you are. You're the new schoolmaster who has come here in a pathetic attempt to break the curse of Kulyenchikov.

LEON. As I have just witnessed your pathetic attempt to win Sophia.

GREGOR. Everyone's a critic. The curse can only be broken if you can educate her, which you can't... or if she marries me.

LEON. Which apparently she won't. Why don't you pursue some other girl?

GREGOR. Because Sophia is beautiful. Did you ever see the other girls in the village? They look like me!

LEON. For a man so powerful, you seem to have an inordinate lack of self-esteem. I am sorry for you. Good day, sir.

GREGOR. Not good day. One day.

LEON. I beg your pardon?
FOOLS

GREGOR. Were you not aware that if at the end of one brief day you have not succeeded to raise her intellect you must be gone from our village? To remain for even one second past the allotted time means you will fall victim to the curse yourself. (To the audience.) I love that part.

LEON. I cannot believe such nonsense. Threaten me all you want, sir, but I will never leave. To be quite honest, I love Sophia Zubritsky.

GREGOR. Love?? There is no love in Kulyenchikov. It's all part of the curse.

LEON. You mean Sophia cannot love me?

GREGOR. You have one day to find that out, sir. One single day. Twenty-five measly hours.

LEON. Twenty-four.

GREGOR. What?

LEON. There are twenty-four hours in a day.

GREGOR. I believe you are thinking of February, sir.

Good night. (He leaves.)

LEON. But is it true? If I cannot teach Sophia to think in twenty-four hours, she will never be able to love me?

(SOPHIA appears on the balcony.)

SOPHIA. Leon!

LEON. Sophia! Are you all right?

SOPHIA. I must talk to you. Someplace where we'll not be seen.

LEON. Wherever you say.

SOPHIA. Can you meet me here?

LEON. Yes. When?

SOPHIA. Now!

LEON. Now? Yes. Of course. That's where I am.

SOPHIA. Come up here. Hurry, Leon, hurry. It's of
the utmost importance. I overheard your conversation with the Count. *(He climbs up to the balcony.)* Leon, I cannot be taught. You must leave Kulyenchikov at once.

**Leon.** Never without you.

**Sophia.** Then take me with you. Tonight.

**Leon.** But the curse—

**Sophia.** It cannot be broken. But we can live in the swamp and eat brown roots and I will become old and ugly and more stupid and more ignorant and never love you but at least we'll be together.

**Leon.** Well, that wasn't exactly what I had in mind.

**Sophia.** Then we are lost.

**Leon.** No, no, Sophia. I will teach you. I will break this curse. Tomorrow, I promise you.

**Sophia.** Oh, Leon, I wish I could love you.

**Leon.** You will, Sophia. Tomorrow. I promise.

**Sophia.** Until tomorrow. *(She goes inside. He climbs down.)*

**Leon.** I wish she'd sleep in the kitchen.

*(Sophia reappears.)*

**Sophia.** Leon! Come back! Hurry, hurry.

*(He climbs back up.)*

**Leon.** What is it?

**Sophia.** I couldn't sleep. I'm so frightened.

**Leon.** Don't be frightened, Sophia.

**Sophia.** If I could know the feeling of loving you for just one day, I would endure a hundred thousand years of curses . . . Good night, Leon. God bless you and keep you. *(She leaves.)*
FOOLS

LEON. (To the audience.) She asks not to be loved but to know what it means to give her love to another. I think I have wandered into a very special place. I love Yenchna, I love Snetsky and Mishkin, and yes, even Coung Yousekevitch. All of them. God give me the strength to break this curse—and to get up and down this balcony. (He gets down.) By the way, I urge you to give the matter some thought yourselves. I have no wish to alarm you, but you are, after all, sitting within the bounds of Kulyenchikov. Therefore, I wish us both the best of luck. (He starts to leave.)

SOPHIA. (Reappears on the balcony.) Leon! I forgot to tell you something!

LEON. (Gasping.) Tomorrow, Sophia! I can't take any more news tonight! (He walks off, clutching his chest.)

CURTAIN
Act Two
Scene 1

The town square, early next morning. A rooster crows. Snetsky appears and yawns in unison with crowing. Slovitch comes out of his shop.

Snetsky. Slovitch, any news?
Slovitch. About what?
Snetsky. About what? About the curse, of course. Has it been lifted yet?
Slovitch. How would I know?
Snetsky. Let's see if there's anything in the newspaper.
Slovitch. Good idea. It rained during the night.
Snetsky. Where does it say that?
Slovitch. I can feel it. The paper's all damp.
Snetsky. Maybe your dog did that.
Slovitch. No, no. He's housebroken. He only does it inside. (Yenchna appears, pulling a cow that is upside down.) What's wrong with your cow?
Yenchna. He's tired. I've been milking him since four o'clock.
Slovitch. Upside down?
Yenchna. You get a little more cream that way? (She starts to leave.) Cream! Fresh cream right from the top. Drink it right from the spigot, two kopecks a mouthful! Fresh cream ... right from the udder. (She is gone. We move to the Doctor's house. He and Lenya appear, carrying lit candles.)

Doctor. Come. Let us pray, Lenya. Pray for deliverance. Dear Lord, who art in heaven. We are in Kulyenchikov, and we are in trouble. (They are on their knees in front of the sofa.)

45
LENYA. We are a simple people, dear Lord.
Doctor. But we're not so simple that we don't believe in you.
LENYA. Forgive us our sins, dear Lord.
Doctor. We know not what we do because we know not what we do.
Both. God bless us, God bless our daughter, God bless the schoolmaster and God bless yourself, whoever you are. Amen.

(There is a knock.)

Doctor. Was that the door?
LENYA. No, I think it was someone knocking.
Doctor. Well, open it, open it! It must be the schoolmaster. (He calls out.) Sophia! It's time. Wake up! Give yourself a nudge. (To LENYA, as LENYA pushes against the door.) The other way! The other way!

(Leon enters, breathless.)

Leon. Do you know what time it is?
Doctor. Ten to six?
LENYA. Eight-fifteen?
Doctor. A quarter to nine?
LENYA. We don't have a clock.
Doctor. Pick any one you want. Ten-twenty, eleven-forty. Is there something in there you like?
Leon. You don't understand. The Count said I had only twenty-four hours to break the curse after I arrived in Kulyenchikov. I arrived yesterday morning at exactly nine o'clock. It's eight o'clock now. That means I have only one hour. It doesn't even leave me one hour. I've just used up an entire minute telling you how much time
I haven't got left . . . Dear God, help me. Help me, dear Lord.

**DOCTOR.** What a shame. You just missed him. We finished services two minutes ago.

**LEON.** Get Sophia! We can't lose another moment. Hurry, I beg of you.

(We hear footsteps.)

**DOCTOR.** Listen! I hear footsteps coming down the stairs.

(SOPHIA rushes in.)

**SOPHIA.** Good morning, Mama. Good morning, Papa. Good morning, schoolmaster.

**DOCTOR.** She got all three right! This is going to be her day, I know it!

**LEON.** And looking more radiant than ever.

**LENYA.** Where shall we sit?

**LEON.** Doctor, with all due respect, I need Sophia's full concentration this morning. I must ask the parents to leave the room.

**DOCTOR.** By all means. We'll see that you're not disturbed. Goodbye, Sophia.

(LENYA and the DOCTOR walk over to the door.)

**LENYA.** Goodbye, my little angel.

**DOCTOR.** Do as the schoolmaster tells you.

**LENYA.** We'll be praying for you every minute.

**DOCTOR.** If you succeed, schoolmaster, give us the signal by rapping on the window three times, followed by too short ones—
LENYA. — followed by six long ones.
DOCTOR. If you fail, rap seven times quickly—
LENYA. — followed by three times slowly.
DOCTOR. If you want lunch—
LEON. Will you please leave? (He gently pushes them out.)

BOTH. We're going! We're going! (They are on the other side of the closed door.)
LENYA. Something's not right, I can feel it in my bones.
DOCTOR. He can hear you. Lower your voice.

(LENYA bends her knees, lowering herself.)

LENYA. I'm a mother. I know about these things. Why do you look taller to me lately? (They exit.)

LEON. Sophia . . . Last night I decided that the task before us is one step beyond impossible. I knew I would fail and that I had to leave Kulyenchikov, like all those who have failed before me, . . . but today, looking into your eyes, I know there is no life for me without you. Therefore, we must not think of failure, we cannot afford to despair. Only a miracle can save us, Sophia, but with a majestic, supreme effort, we must try to make that miracle happen.

SOPHIA. What is a miracle?

LEON. A miracle is a wish that God makes. You are a miracle, Sophia.

SOPHIA. You mean God wished for me?

LEON. In one of his most sublime moments . . . We must hurry, Sophia. (He picks up a book.) This is a primary book of mathematics. It's used to teach very small children very simple problems in arithmetic.

SOPHIA. Do you think it's too advanced for me?

LEON. I don't think so, Sophia. We can't go back any
further than this book. Now, let us begin . . . (*He opens
the book to the first page. A large number one fills up
the page.*) One is the figure, the word, the symbol for a
single item. One finger, one Sophia, one Leon, one
book . . . Now then, I am holding up one finger,
Sophia. Now I am holding up a second finger. One
plus one is two. Would you repeat that for me, Sophia.

Sophia. Which part?
Leon. One—
Sophia. One.
Leon. Plus one—
Sophia. Plus one.
Leon. Is Two!
Sophia. Is two!
Leon. Yes! Yes! Yes! Wonderful. We're making
headway. Slow, invisible headway . . . I'm very, very
proud of you, Sophia. Are we ready to go on?
Sophia. Yes. History, please. I hope I can master it as
well as I have mathematics.
Leon. Well, I honestly don't think we've conquered
mathematics yet. There are problems that could come
up. Let's continue. One plus two is three.
Sophia. Am I finished with one plus one?
Leon. You are if you remember the answer.
Sophia. I remembered it before. Is it necessary to
remember it again?
Leon. Of course it's necessary to remember it again.
It's necessary to remember if for always.
Sophia. You mean you will always be asking me what
one plus one is?
Leon. No! Once you tell me, we can move on to other
things. Like one plus two and one plus three, and so on.
But if you can't remember what one plus one is, then the
answer to one plus two is meaningless.
Sophia. Do you know how much one plus one is?
LEON. Certainly.

SOPHIA. Then why is it necessary for me to know? Certainly, if you have such esteem and affection for me, you will tell me the answer whenever I ask you.

LEON. But I won't always be around to tell you. You have to know for yourself. In case other people ask you.

SOPHIA. No one here ever asks questions like that. Even if I told them, they wouldn't know if it was the right answer.

LEON. Because they are cursed with ignorance. And we are trying to lift that debilitating affliction.

SOPHIA. You're getting angry with me. What's the point of being educated if you get angry? When you didn't ask me such questions, you always said the loveliest things to me. Is this what it's like to be intelligent?

LEON. No, Sophia. It is I who am not being intelligent. It's frustration and impatience that drives me to such crude behavior. Forgive me. We'll start from the beginning again. One plus one is two. Repeat.

SOPHIA. One plus one is two. Repeat.

LEON. No!! Don't repeat the word "repeat." Just repeat the part before I say "repeat" . . . Now watch me carefully: One plus one is two. Repeat!!

SOPHIA. What were you like as a little boy?

LEON. (Angrily.) What was I like as a little boy?

SOPHIA. You're shouting again.

LEON. (Tries to placate her.) I was inquisitive. Probing. Wondering why we were put on this earth and what the purpose of man's existence was.

SOPHIA. The purpose of man's existence . . . !

LEON. (Shouts.) I've had enough of that. Sophia, you must stop asking me questions. Our time is nearly gone.

SOPHIA. Then how am I to learn?
Leon. Sophia, you must answer what I ask, not what you want me to answer.

Sophia. Then I will learn only what you want me to know. Why can't I learn what I want to know?

Leon. Because what you want to know is of no practical value. What I want to teach is acceptable knowledge.

Sophia. Is knowing what you were like as a little boy not acceptable knowledge?

Leon. Of course not. It's of no significance at all.

Sophia. But it's much more interesting than that which is significant.

Leon. But I'm not trying to interest you. I'm trying to educate you.

Sophia. I know. But while you fail to educate me, you never fail to interest me. I find that very significant.

Leon. There is nothing like the logic of an illogical mind! Let's try one more time.

Doctor. She must be speaking rabbit like a bunny by now.

(Slovitch comes out of his shop.)

Slovitch. How much longer is this going to take? I haven't sold a sausage all morning.

(Mishkin appears.)

Mishkin. Good morning, Dr. Zubritsky.

Doctor. (To Lenya.) What's going on?
(Leon is on the floor banging his head in dismay.)

Lenya. I think he's teaching her gymnastics.
Mishkin. Dr. Zubritsky, I have an urgent letter for schoolmaster Tolchinsky.
Doctor. Quiet, please. This is a school zone.

(Yenchna and Snetsky appear.)

Mishkin. I have an important letter for him. It's marked urgent, so I only went to three wrong houses first.
Doctor. Can't you see he's busy? Bring it back later.
Lenya. I don't like the way it's going. I just don't like the way it's going.
Doctor. Let us pray. Let us all pray to the Lord that this young man will deliver us from bondage. Let us ask for his blessing. Very religious on this side, semireligious on the other... (Leon comes out.) Quiet! Quiet, everyone! The schoolmaster wants to speak...
Please, God, let this be the answer to our prayers.
Snetsky. Ah-men!
Lenya and Yenchna. Ah women!
Doctor. (To Leon.) Is my daughter—you know—empty or full?
Leon. She is the same as always. I have only moments and I must ask this quickly, because I may not have the intelligence to ask this later. Because of my deep and unbounded devotion for your daughter, Sophia, I would like to ask for her hand in marriage. I ask this of you now while I still love her. In a few minutes I may not know the meaning of the word. When the clock in the church steeple strikes nine, I hope you will have an answer for me. (He goes back inside.)
FOOLS

DOCTOR. He's a nice young man. I'll say that. Very ambitious. Lenya, what do you think?
LENYA. If the man can't break a simple curse, how's he going to put bread on the table?
MISHKIN. And what about Tremble?
DOCTOR. Who?
MISHKIN. Tremble Tremble. You know, up on the hill. The one who throws the water.
SNETSKY. Mishkin's right. It's his curse. He would never permit such a marriage.
MISHKIN. Wait! There is one chance. If a stranger marries a Kulyenchikovite before he becomes like us, then he is free to take her away from here.
DOCTOR. I didn't know that.
MISHKIN. It was added to the curse two years ago... to make it more exciting.
SLOVITCH. You would never see your daughter again, but you would know she was happy and getting smarter every day.
SNETSKY. Oh, give it, Doctor. Give her your permission.
YENCHNA. If you don't give it to her, give it to me.
DOCTOR. I don't know. It's a decision, and I can't make decisions. Let's leave it to God. Let God make the decision.

(They get on their knees and pray.)

SOPHIA. What are you doing, Leon?

(LEON sits, musing.)

LEON. Having my last thoughts. One final pleasurable moment of reason.
FOOLS

SOPHIA. Then I was right. A wish is something you hope for that doesn't come true.

LEON. I'm sorry. I cannot help you soar over mountains and lakes, Sophia. But I will not leave you. I will remain here for the rest of my days, not basking in the light of your beauty but cowering in the darkness of my own ignorance... for that is the measure of my esteem and affection for you.

SOPHIA. I would do anything to save you from this calamity... anything! (Prelude chimes.) Oh, run, Leon. Run for your life. There are ignorant girls in other villages you could learn to love.

LEON. Listen to me carefully and remember it forever. I love you with all my heart.

(The bells begin.)

SNETSKY. Listen! The church bell!

LEON. I may never say these words again. (Bell.)

SLOVITCH. The time is up!

LEON. Savor it, Sophia. Keep the memory of what I say. (Bell.)

YENCHNA. Her last chance to marry. I know the feeling.

LEON. The way I gaze lovingly into your eyes as I do now.

LENYA. Say it, husband. Give them permission to marry. Quickly. (Bell.)

LEON. All the love I would have given you in a lifetime must be compressed into a final instant. (Bell.)

DOCTOR. Yes. I'll give it. I'll go in there and give my permission right now.

LEON. Goodbye, sweet Sophia. I did not love you long, but I loved you well. (Bell.)
FOOLS

DOCTOR. I'll just wait to see what time it is first.

LEON. Tell everyone in Kulyenchikov that I—(Bell.

LEON freezes, a dumb look on his face.)

MAGISTRATE. (On the balcony.) Nine o'clock and all's well!

(They all rush into the house.)

DOCTOR. Wonderful news, Master Tolchinsky!

SOPHIA. Mama! Papa! Everyone! The schoolmaster has something to say. Let us all listen . . . Leon, didn't you want to say something?

LEON. (Bewildered, befuddled.) Yes, but you said we should all listen.

(The Magistrate has joined them.)

YENCHNA. Oh, oh!

SNETSKY. He's got a look on his face I've seen before.

SLOVITCH. It's the same one you've got on your face.

SOPHIA. (To Leon.) No, I meant that we will all listen while you tell us what you have to say.

LEON. Oh! I see . . . Thank you . . . Actually, I don't have much to say.

SNETSKY. There's no fool like a new fool.

DOCTOR. Young man, do you still want to marry my daughter?

LEON. Marry your daughter! Oh, no, sir, you do me too great an honor.

YENCHNA. I knew he'd never make it when he bought the whitefish from me.

MAGISTRATE. All right, move along. Break it up, you've all seen a ninny-poop before. Let's keep it moving. Come on.
MISHKIN. (To Leon.) If you ever want this urgent letter, let me know. Not that anything in your life is urgent anymore. (He puts the letter back in his pouch and leaves.)

LENYA. Sophia, darling, go in the garden and plant some vegetables. We'll have salad tonight for dinner. (She leaves.)

DOCTOR. So, young man—what are your plans now that everything has fallen apart at the top?

LEON. I'm not sure. This absense of thought will take some getting used to.

DOCTOR. Well, you might try politics. You sound very well suited for it.

LEON. Oh, this is an old suit. If I went into politics I would need all new clothes.

DOCTOR. This is really just one doctor's opinion, but when you catch a curse you really catch a curse. (To SOPHIA.) Don't stay up too long. I want you to go up on the roof later and take the canary for a walk. (He leaves.)

LEON. I'm sorry, Sophia. Weren't we in the middle of a lesson when the clock began to chime? What were we saying?

SOPHIA. You said that you loved me and that I should savor it and keep it as a memory because soon you would not love me ever again. Do you not love me now, Leon?

LEON. Love you? I'm not quite sure I know what the word means. Perhaps if you kissed me. Would you like to?

SOPHIA. With all my heart.
Leon. No, I meant—

Sophia. I know what you meant. *They kiss, warmly.* Oh, Leon! The less you know, the better you kiss!

Leon. And the better I kiss, the more brilliant I become! Oh, my dear sweet Sophia, look at me! Look at me and tell me what you see! *(He has jumped up on the Doctor's sofa.)*

Sophia. I see a very good kisser dirtying my father's sofa.

Leon. No, Sophia. You see a man of intellect inspired by love. I am not cursed, Sophia. I still have my intelligence. I only pretended to be stupid.

Sophia. You pretended to be stupid?

Leon. Yes.

Sophia. That doesn't sound very intelligent to me.

Leon. It will soon, I promise.

Sophia. But the curse . . .

Leon. It had no effect on me. Oh, I was plenty worried, I admit. Especially when the clock struck nine. But when nothing happened, I suddenly realized—you can't be cursed unless you permit yourself to be. Kulyenchikov's lack of intelligence is self-inflicted, caused by fear and guilt and the relinquishing of your own self-esteem to a tyrannical power. Do you understand what I'm saying?

Sophia. Everything but the explanation.

Leon. If a parent tells you you are a naughty child from the day you were born, you will grow up believing you are a worthless human being. And from the day you were born, you were told you were all stupid. Now do you understand?

Sophia. Not as well as before.

Leon. I know that telling it doesn't change it. You
must be shown. When I was standing there, I suddenly became inspired. I hit upon a plan that will break this curse and save you from Yousekevitch.

SOPHIA. What is it?
LEON. You must marry Yousekevitch.
SOPHIA. Are you still pretending to be stupid?
LEON. No, Sophia. I don't mean Count Gregor.
SOPHIA. Oh, thank goodness. You had me frightened half to death.
LEON. You will marry me, Sophia. I will be Yousekevitch. Do you understand?
SOPHIA. Don't ask me that question anymore.
LEON. Trust me, Sophia. The wedding will take place tomorrow. Tomorrow the curse will be over. Tomorrow you will be intelligent. Tomorrow you will love me, Sophia.
SOPHIA. Could I have a kiss just to tide me over?
LEON. Of course, my sweet. I must go set my plan in action.
SOPHIA. I'm so excited, Leon. Tonight I will clear all the nonsense out of my head to prepare for all the knowledge that will be coming in. I love rearranging things. (She leaves.)
LEON. (To the audience.) The plan begins. I must find Count Yousekevitch. (He leaves, YOUSEKEVITCH appears, and addresses the audience.)

GREGOR. Was he just talking about me? You like him, don't you? Better than me, right? Admit it . . . I would give up all my wealth and powers if I could be the hero. I wouldn't have to wear this dumb outfit . . . people would applaud when I come on. You're not even listening to me, are you? All you care about is getting those two kids together . . . I hope it's raining when you leave here. (He starts to leave. LEON rushes onstage.)
FOOLS

Leon. Oh, good day, Coung Yousekevitch. You remember me? Something Something Tolchinsky.

Gregor. (To the audience.) Listen to this conversation. What is it, Something?

Leon. I couldn't help overhearing what you just said. I want you to know that even though I've lost most of my intelligence—

Gregor. —all of it.

Leon. —all of it—I am not without some feelings. It pains me to know that being disliked makes you so unhappy.

Gregor. Oh, That's easy for you to say. You don't like me either, do you?

Leon. Well, I don't dislike you.

Gregor. But do you like me?


Gregor. You see!

Leon. Because you never do anything redeeming. Why not?

Gregor. I don't know. I was brought up that way, I guess. My father taught me since I was a little boy, if you want to hold your power over these people, you must never be nice to them. Always make them fear and tremble.

Leon. Did you like your father?

Gregor. Oh, he was all right, I guess.

Leon. You didn't like him, did you?

Gregor. Don't tell anyone. When I was nine months old I tried to crawl away from home.

Leon. There you are! Then, the answer to being liked is to do something redeeming. Isn't there something good you could do for the village?

Gregor. You mean like a barbecue?

Leon. Well, it's a start. But I was thinking of
something on a much grander scale. Like lifting the curse.

Gregor. How can I? It won't be lifted unless Sophia marries me.

Leon. Or another Yousekevitch.

Gregor. There is none. I'm the last of the line.

Leon. Unless you had a son.

Gregor. But I'm not even married. I may be a villain, but I don't fool around. Maybe that's why I'm so unhappy.

Leon. You don't have to be married. You can adopt a son.

Gregor. Adopt a son? Who?

Leon. Me!

Gregor. You?

Leon. I'm single, available, ready and willing. I'm not very intelligent but I will be once the curse is lifted.

Gregor. I've always wanted a son. Someone to take on fishing trips.

Leon. I never really had a father.


Leon. That's okay, Dad.

Gregor. And then people would like me, wouldn't they?

Leon. They do now. Look at their faces. They're smiling at you. Even up there. (*He points to the audience. Gregor looks out, pleased.*)

Gregor. (*To the audience.*) Yes! I see! Oh, God bless you. You don't know what this means to me.

Leon. Then, let us go and sign the adoption papers and notify Sophia's family. Are you ready, Dad?

Gregor. Let me just watch them smiling at me again. (*To the audience.*) Thank you. Thank you all of you. Maybe we can all have lunch together next week...
the meantime, you're all invited to my son's wedding!
(To Leon, as they exit.) The first thing I'm going to do is have your shoes bronzed!

(They are gone. Wedding decorations fly in as we hear bright, cheerful music. Snetsky, Slovitch, Mishkin and Yenchna are dancing. All dressed in their best. Gregor and Lenya approach from opposite sides of the stage. The music has slowed down to a processional.)

Scene 2

Mishkin. Doesn't Mrs. Zubritsky look beautiful?
Yenchna. Isn't it bad luck for the mother of the bride to see the postman before the wedding?
(He hides behind Yenchna.)

Snetsky. This is it, Slovitch—after two hundred years the curse will finally be gone.
Slovitch. I just had a terrible thought.
Snetsky. What's that?
Slovitch. Suppose they lift the curse and I find out I was really dumb in the first place?
Lenya. They're coming! They're coming! Quiet, everyone! I have a sponge cake in the oven.

(Leon appears.)

Leon. (To the audience.) Remember, if I still appear stupid, I'm only pretending. It's all part of the plan.
LENYA. (To GREGOR.) You must be very proud of him.

GREGOR. He's been my son for ten minutes and he's never given me a moment of trouble.

(The DOCTOR and SOPHIA, in bridal gown, appear.)

YENCHNA. There but for me goes her.
MISHKIN. I hope she remembers to give me her change of address.

(The MAGISTRATE appears.)

MAGISTRATE. We are gathered here today, dear friends, to witness the joining of two souls in holy matrimony. It is only the good will and generous benevolence of our dear friend the Count that makes this blessed union possible.

ALL. Thank you, Count.
MAGISTRATE. Will the groom step before me.
GREGOR. That's you, mein kind.

(LEON steps forward.)

MAGISTRATE. And will the bride step forward.

(SOPHIA steps out, but LENYA restrains her.)

LENYA. No, Sophia, the bride! The bride!
DOCTOR. (To LENYA.) What's the matter with you?
(He places SOPHIA next to LEON.)
SOPHIA. Leon, your plan was brilliant.
LEON. Thank you, Sophia.
MAGISTRATE. And who giveth away this bride?
Doctor. I giveth away this bride.
Magistrate. Why do you giveth away this bride?
Doctor. Because he asketh me for her. And I nod-deth my head. And he taketh her.
Magistrate. Do you, Leon, son of Count Gregor Mikhailovitch Breznofsky Fyodor Yousekevitch—
All. (Shaking.) Tremble, tremble, tremble, tremble . . .
Gregor. No, no. Not today! You don't have to do it today. It's a holiday.
All. Oh, thank you . . . Very kind . . . How nice of you . . .
Magistrate. Do you, Leon, take Sophia, to have and to hold from this day on?
Leon. I have.
Magistrate. No. I do.
Leon. You do?
Magistrate. No, you do.
Doctor. He will. He does, Say it.
Leon. "He will, he does." I said it.
Doctor. Don't say what I say. Say what he says.
Leon. What did he say?
Gregor. "I do." Just say "I do"!
Leon. My papa says I do!
Gregor. I'm beginning to hate this curse, I swear to God.
Magistrate. And do you, Sophia, take Leon, in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, for as long as you both shall live?
Sophia. I do.
Lenya. With a brain like that she could have gotten anyone.
Magistrate. The ring, please.
Gregor. I have it. The ring that Casimir
Yousekevitch was going to place on the young Sophia two hundred years ago. (He gives Leon a huge ring.)

— Lenya. What an onion!

Magistrate. Place the ring on her finger.

(Leon has great difficulty getting it on her finger.)

Lenya. He's not going to be very handy around the house.

Magistrate. Repeat after me, please: “With this ring, I thee wed.”

All. With this ring, I thee wed.

Magistrate. Just the bride and the groom, thank you.

Leon and Sophia. With this ring, I thee wed.

Magistrate. Before I pronounce this holy union, is there any among you who has just cause or reason why Leon and Sophia should not be joined in eternal wedlock? (Pause.) Then with the power invested in me as Chief Magistrate of the village of Kulyenchikov, I now pronounce thee—

Gregor. (Stepping forward.) Welllll, maybe there's one tiny little thing.

Magistrate. You have an objection to this marriage? Gregor. You bet I have! This boy is not my son . . .

Leon. What are you saying, Father?

Gregor. You think I'm crazy? Why should I give up a cute little bundle of noodle brains like her?

Leon. But the adoption papers . . .

Gregor. They're false. You trusted me so much you didn't even read them. Here are the documents as proof. I did not adopt him, I divorced him! According to these documents, we are not father and son, we are no longer husband and wife!
LENYA. Dear God, my daughter almost married a divorced woman. (*She faints in the Doctor's arms.*)

SOPHIA. Leon ... Is this part of the plan?

LEON. No, Sophia. I'm sorry.

GREGOR. But fear not, dear friends. I may be a venomously treacherous snake, but I'm not a wet blanket. There will be a wedding.

DOCTOR. My daughter will not marry an impostor.

GREGOR. An impostor, no. But a Yousekevitch, yes! You have pledged your daughter's hand in marriage, good doctor, to a Yousekevitch. And a pledge once given must be honored.

MAGISTRATE. That is the law. I helped write it myself.

DOCTOR. It's true. I even voted for it.

GREGOR. And I am the only true Yousekevitch here.

SOPHIA. Leon, will you not object to this marriage?

LEON. What can I do, Sophia? I am helpless.

MAGISTRATE. Come on. Come on. I haven't all day.

GREGOR. Say the words. Let's get it over with. There's been a hotel room booked for this honeymoon for two hundred years.

DOCTOR. I'm sorry, daughter. With all my heart, truly sorry. (*He places SOPHIA next to GREGOR.*)

LENYA. At least she'll get better dinners at his place.

MAGISTRATE. Dearly beloved—

GREGOR. We did that part. We heard that. I do. Ask her, she's the one.

MAGISTRATE. And do you, Sophia, take Count Gregor, for as long as you both shall live.

LENYA. Say it, darling. You'll be rich and smart. It's better than happiness.

SOPHIA. Goodbye, Leon ... goodbye forever. I do.

MAGISTRATE. Then with the power invested in me as chief magistrate of the village of Kulyenchikov—

LEON. You didn't say the other part.
66

FOOLS

Magistrate. What other part?
Leon. The part if anybody objects, and I object.
Gregor. What's that?
Magistrate. On what grounds?
Leon. On the grounds that I didn't receive my urgent letter yet.
Gregor. What kind of grounds is that?
Mishkin. I have an urgent letter for schoolmaster Tolchinsky.
Leon. For me? Whatever could it be?
Gregor. Finish the ceremony while he's reading the letter.
Magistrate. I can't do that. It's against the law.
Doctor. It's true. I even voted for it.

(Leon has taken letter from Mishkin. He sits down to read it. All except Gregor surround him and listen.)

Leon. It's bad news, I'm afraid. My uncle and sole remaining relative has just died in St. Petersburg leaving me nothing but all his debts.
Snetsky. When you're going downhill, it gets faster at the bottom.
Leon. Before he died, he said he blamed all his misfortunes on the selfish and vindictive character of his distant relatives and that even changing his name to Tolchinsky never helped him escape destiny's finger.
Doctor. What was his name before Tolchinsky?
Leon. Yousekevitch.
Yenchna. Oh-oh!
Gregor. Those distant relatives will haunt you every time!
Sophia. Leon! Do you realize what this means?
LEON. No. What?
DOCTOR. He'll know in a few minutes. Schoolmaster, take your place next to my daughter. This time she's going to marry the right one!
LEON. (To the audience.) It didn't say that at all. It's a bill from my former college saying I still owe them for last year's tuition.
SNETSKY. Hurry, Leon, hurry.
LEON. (To the audience.) I have planted the bomb in their minds. I now pray God—for the explosion! (He rushes to SOPHIA's side.)
MAGISTRATE. Hurry up. Places, everyone. I don't want to spend the rest of my life marrying this girl . . . Are we ready, everyone!
ALL. Ready!
MAGISTRATE. Do you, Leon—
LEON. I do.
MAGISTRATE. And do you, Sophia—
SOPHIA. I do.
MAGISTRATE. If there is anyone here who objects—
ALL. No one objects!
MAGISTRATE. Going once . . . Going twice . . . Going three times . . . That's it! I now pronounce you man and wife!

(There is a loud thunder clap. The stage darkens, then gets lighter. All have fallen to the ground except LEON, who watches them.)

SNETSKY. I have never heard a noise like that in all my life.
SLOVITCH. It felt as though my head had cracked open.
SNETSKY. Like What?
SLOVITCH. Like my—head had cracked open. (He and SNETSKY look at each other.) I'm afraid to ask it.
SNETSKY. Go ahead. Ask it.
SLOVITCH. But what if we're wrong?
SNETSKY. And what if we're right? . . . Ask it! . . . Ask it!
SLOVITCH. Cat?
SNETSKY. Cat. C-a-t, cat!
SLOVITCH. Dog!
SNETSKY. Dog. D-o-g, dog!
SLOVITCH. Oh, my God, it's a miracle!
SNETSKY. Miracle. M-i-r-a-c-l-e, miracle!
MISHKIN. Yenchna! . . . Yenchna—seven and five?
YENCHNA. Twelve.
MISHKIN. And twelve?
YENCHNA. Twenty-four.
MISHKIN. And forty-eight?
YENCHNA. Seventy-two! . . . Name five world capitals.
MISHKIN. Athens, Bucharest, Cairo, London, and—(He is stuck.)
LEON. You can do it!
MISHKIN. Constantinople!

(They all cheer.)

MAGISTRATE. (Rises.) The quality of mercy is not strained; it droppeth like the gentle rains from heaven.

(SLOVITCH and SNETSKY are up.)

SLOVITCH. That's beautiful. Did you make that up?
MAGISTRATE. I think so. Where else would it have come from?
LENYA. Nikolai! I—I feel funny. Weak in the knees.
FOOLS

A dizziness in my head.

(The Doctor helps her up.)

Doctor. It's all right, my dear. Your blood is just pulsating from the excitement. Sometimes that can cause the adrenal glands to oversecrete, resulting in a sudden rush to the head.

Lenya. I—I never knew you were such a brilliant doctor.

Doctor. I'm just an average doctor. I worry about you because—I love you, my dear.

Lenya. And I love you, Nikolai. Even when I couldn't say it, in my heart I knew I loved you.

Sophia. Leon... Are you now as you were before I became what I am?

Leon. I am more than I have ever been or dreamed could be possible.

Sophia. I love you, Leon.

Leon. I adore you, Sophia.

Gregor. You mean it's over? The curse is over?

Doctor. See for yourself, Count Gregor.

Yenchina. Land! I should have put my money in land. You can never go wrong with real estate.

(Snetsky and Slovitch leave.)

Mishkin. It depends, of course, on the political situation. With a czarist government, land reform is a very delicate issue.

(Yenchina and Mishkin leave.)

Gregor. Such brilliant conversation. All my power over them is gone.
DOCTOR. Power is a useless weapon over the enlightened, Count Gregor. We are all equal citizens here.

LENYA. You mean men are all equal citizens. Women have been subjugated long before there were any curses.

DOCTOR. Lenya, you know I love you, but that's a very radical point of view. (The DOCTOR and LENYA leave.)

SOPHIA. It was your faith and courage that won over ignorance.

LEON. No, it was your pure heart and trusting soul that gave me that faith and courage. It was love that destroyed the curse, Sophia, not my puny efforts.

SOPHIA. I don't wish to argue the point, Leon. I just think you should allow me room to express my own views.

LEON. I welcome your views, Sophia, but I think you should have all the facts before you become so adamant.

(SOPHIA leaves.)

GREGOR. Well, you got your wish, schoolmaster.

LEON. Yes . . . What about you, Count Yousekevitch? What are your plans now that you're intelligent?

GREGOR. Thanks to you, I'll probably have to work for a living now. Well, cousin, my congratulations. I wish you a long and happy marriage.

LEON. Thank you . . . any may I wish the same good fortune to you.

GREGOR. Please. I've been cursed once in my life, I know when I'm well off. (He leaves.)

LEON. (To the audience. During his speech, the cast
members appear as he mentions them.) When you think of it, it's not such a bizarre story, after all. Be honest. Haven't you all met someone in your life who came from a place like Kulyenchikov? An aunt, an uncle, a neighbor . . . your boss! Of course, once the curse was lifted, we became like any other small town or village in any other part of the world, susceptible to all the "ups and downs" of normal life—well, the magistrate, for example. (The Magistrate appears.) After two more years in office, greed got the better part of him and he was convicted for taking bribes for political favors. He served two years in jail and eventually sold his memoirs for a fortune. (Mishkin appears.) Mishkin gave up the postal service and became a writer. He wrote a six-hundred-page story about the Curse of Kulyenchikov and sent it off to a publisher. Unfortunately, it got lost in the mail. (Yenchna appears.) Yenchna, a shrewd business woman, put all her money in real estate and now owns seventeen houses in Kulyenchikov, including Count Gregor's. And as an investment for the future, she bought land in six other towns that had curses on them. (Slovitch appears.) Slovitch, with all his life savings, bought four more butcher shops in a village that really needed only one and went bankrupt in a month, confirming his greatest fears that with or without a curse, he didn't have much brains. (Snetsky appears. walks like a dandy) Snetsky, with his newly acquired intelligence, found his sheep, gathered his wool, and became a wealthy philanthropist. (Gregor appears in a monk's robe.) Count Yousekevitch became more and more lovable, studied theology, and is now the local monk. During the drought seasons he goes up on the hill and prays to God to throw water down on us. (Lenya appears, looking officious.) My dear mother-in-law,
Mrs. Zubritsky, suddenly found a voice of her own. She became the first woman mayor of Kulyenchikov and eventually consul governor of the Northern Ukraine Sector. Her husband sees her by appointment only. (The Doctor appears.) Dr. Zubritsky became one of the finest doctors in all of Russia. He became the personal physician to the royal family and was recently elected to the Academy of Sciences. However, he still has trouble opening jars. (Sophia appears, carrying a baby.) As for Sophia, she was—and still is—a miracle. Not that we don't have our differences, not that all our days are blissfully happy, but she has a wisdom that can never be found in books. She has, in turn, become my teacher, and I have learned there is no spirit on earth, evil or otherwise, that can destroy a pure heart of devoted love. As for myself, I remained a schoolmaster and dedicated my life to the education of the unenlightened . . . After all, there are so many Kulyenchikovs in this world.

CURTAIN

Sam- And they all lived happily ever after
FURNITURE AND PROPERTY PLOT

Furniture plot
Zubritsky house: two chairs, table, swivel chair
Built in: desk, armoire, cabinet

ACT I—Preset
S.R.
Leon's satchel w/ map, clipping, cardboard
Handkerchief
Pocket watch
Small book pack
Ram's horn
Shepherd's rod
Coins
Broom (or preset inside butcher's shop.)
Chicken (plump?)
Bucket & towel
Monocle
String bag

Onstage
Doctor's desk:
   papers
   pens
   prescription pad
Samovar—S.R. of armoire
Curse book (on cabinet w/ dust)

S.L.
Mailpouch w/ postcard & mail
Flower basket w/ newspaper & flowers (one white)
Stethoscope (or on doctor's desk)
Coins
String bag
Whistle

**ACT II—Preset**
S.R.
Chicken to pluck
Bucket
Ram's horn
Shepherd's rod
Mail pouch w/ urgent letter
Large book pack (5) including math book
Pocket watch
Small apple
Pocket knife
Whistle
Shopping bag (or inside butcher shop)
Ring in box
Legal papers
Broom
Lunch bag
Baby
Small book pack

O.S.
Newspaper (butcher shop door)

S.L.
Cow
Whistle
Brass candle holders w/ candles (2)
Matches
Monocle
Newspaper?
String bag
Prayer book (and pencil)
COSTUME PLOT

LEON
Brown Suit—aged
Sweater vest—grey
Shirt with Collar put on
Tie
Cap
Ankle boots
Tee Shirt
Underwear
Socks
Tights (allergic to wool)
Wedding—
   Embroidered wedding shirt
   Braided leather thong-belt
   Sash
Jewelry—watch in vest

SNETSKY
Russian Trousers
Shirt of two layer nets
Suspanders (unseen)
Stockings in leg wrappings
Shoes—woven
Backpack
Tee Shirt
Underwear
Socks
Brown Hat
Wedding—
   Red tie
   Broom with flowers
Coda—
   Sheepskin vest
   Designer Ram's horn case

75
MISHKIN
Britches
Uniform jacket—Act II and Coda
Vest
Shirt
Boots
Cap
Underwear
Tee shirt
Socks
Wedding—
  Embroidery shirt
  Sash
  Flowers on Mail Bag
Coda—Jacket

SLOVITCH
Britches
Apron
Embroidered Shirt
Boots
Straw Boater
Tee Shirts
Underwear
Socks
Wedding—
  Bow Tie
  Flowers on Hat
Coda—Remove flowers

SOPHIA
ACT I—
Lime green net blouse on green underbodice
Hair ribbons—blue
FOOLS

Blue (aqua) skirt
Aqua Kid shoes
Stockings
Undergarments
Change—nightgown and slippers

ACT II—
Blue Organza blouse
Blue silk strip skirt
White organza apron (pinafore)
Wedding—
   Wedding Dress
   Head piece with veil
   Satin Boots
   Coin necklace
   Gold braid in Hair
Coda—Replace Act II dress without pinafore add shawl

COUNT GREGOR
Riding Britches
Embroidered Vests
Baldrick
Shirts
Overcoat
Cap
Cravat
Tiepin
Watchchains
Boots
Wedding—
   remove cape
   add coat
   baldrick
   embroidered vest
Coda—
remove everything but pants vest and shirt
Benedictine Monk robe with Rope belt

YENCHNA
Head wrap
Dress (jumper)
Blouse
Apron
Petticoat
Stockings—colored
Shoes—half boots
Undergarments
Wedding—
Flowered Hat
Wedding overblouse
Gold slippers
Coda—
Hat
Glasses
Muff

MAGISTRATE
Underwear top
Shirt and Vest
Trousers
Overcoat with sash
Grey gloves
Top Hat
Tee Shirt
Underwear
Boots
Socks
FOOLS

Wedding —
Add flower to hat
Magistrate’s medallion

LENYA
ACT I —
Dress with flowered skirt
Stockings
Shoes — taupe kid
Undergarments
Wedding —
Wedding dress
Headpiece
Coin necklace
Gloves — white
Purse
Coda —
Hat
Pendant watch on chain
Medals pinned to original dress
Remove wedding hat and dress

DR. ZUBRITSKY
Trousers
Vest
Shirt
Bow Tie
Spats
Lab coat
Shoes
Underwear
Tee Shirt
Socks
Arm garters—mismatched
Wedding—
  Frock coat
  Bought shirts with embroidered collar and cuffs
  Flower on Lapel
Coda—
  Remove frock coat
  Add lab coat
References


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