



**Sample Pages from**  
**Constantly, Incessantly, All The Time**

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# A BOX OF PUPPIES

Constantly, Incessantly, All The Time  
Huge Hands  
Diatom  
One Beer Too Many

FOUR ONE ACT PLAYS BY  
*Billy Houck*



## **A Box of Puppies**

Four One Act Plays by Billy Houck

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## **Set**

All you need is a bare stage.

## **Welcome!**

Welcome to *A Box of Puppies*, a diverse and exciting collection of One Act Plays. Each play can be performed independently or the four plays can be performed together in the above order for an outstanding competition piece.

— Enjoy! —

# Constantly, Incessantly, All the Time

## Characters

Rikki

## Setting

Bare Stage

*RIKKI, a teenager, walks on stage carrying an incredibly huge backpack and a bathroom scale. She puts the scale on the floor, and the backpack right next to it downstage center.*

RIKKI: Take a look at this.

*RIKKI stands on the scale and looks down.*

RIKKI: A hundred and twelve pounds. (*adjust to a realistic weight for the actor playing RIKKI.*) A buck twelve. That's all she wrote. That's all I got. There ain't no more. I'm a skinny kid, waddya want? Now check this out.

*RIKKI steps off the scale and puts on the backpack, then steps back on the scale.*

RIKKI: Um. Uh. Here. There. Now. Here you go. One hundred and seventy three pounds. That's the real deal. This backpack (*takes it off*) weighs...um...hold on, I've got it...one seven three minus one one two...that's...um sixty-one? Sixty-one pounds.

That can't be right. A sixty-one pound backpack. A sixty-one pound backpack? Come on. Seriously. Did I do the math right? Let's take a look inside this thing and see what's gonna give me teenage scoliosis. (*starts taking things out of the backpack's various pockets and compartments.*) Three-ring binder, complete with colour-coded dividers and tons of college-ruled paper. And a notebook. I know what you're thinking. If I have a three ring binder, all full of college ruled paper, what's the notebook for? Hey, it's a real cool notebook. If I ever wanted to take notes, I'm set. I'm down. Locked and Loaded.

Here's a calculator. Hey, I coulda used this thing back when I was trying to figure out how much it all weighed. Rubik's Cube. Red Bull. Twinkie. Math book! (*pulls out a HUGE math book. It takes two hands.*) Look at the size of this sucker! The tome. There is

so much math in here that they had to make up extra numbers to cover it all. You know how good I would be at math if I ever opened it up? I'll tell you. Good. Very good. Incredibly good. You know. A math master. A Math-ter. Never mind. That makes me sound like I lisp. I mean lisp.

OK, what else is there in here? An English Literature Anthology! Look. It's even bigger than the math monster. And here's why. Take a look at the table of contents. *Romeo and Juliet* without the nurse's dirty jokes, (*flipping through the book*) a fully illustrated *Beowulf* excerpt, a fraction of *The Canterbury Tales*, no sex, no politics, just a medieval travelogue, *Huck Finn* without any references to race, *Oliver Twist* without child abuse, some Robert Frost without regrets, some Edna St. Vincent Millay reduced to clever greeting cards, it's actually amazing how big this book is, considering how much stuff they took out. Oh, but here. You'll love this. To show how hip the editors are? The complete lyric to the Carpenters' *Close to You*... words & music by Burt Bacharach and Hal David. Uncut!

*She starts to sing but stops suddenly.*

RIKKI: OK, I'll stop.

No way is that a full seventy...what was it? That's right. Sixty-one pounds. The sixty-one pound backpack. All right, what else is there? Mechanical pencils. Sharpies. Smarties. A can of spray paint. Don't ask. A broken iPod, except you know what? A broken iPod is better than an iPod that works, because it still does the job. All you have to do is put the ear-buds in, and boom...automatic cone of silence. Everyone leaves you alone, as long as you keep bopping your head up and down. You're insulated from the outside world. And then if you accidentally attract the wrong types and someone jacks your iPod HA! They stole a broken iPod. So keep one handy.

OK, dirty PE clothes, sneakers, a copy of *Green Eggs and Ham*, just to keep it real, a padlock for my bike, a party hat, toothbrush, a tuning fork, sunglasses, a towel, sweatshirt, wait a minute. This isn't my sweatshirt. How did that get in there?

OK, check this out: a Physics textbook!

*She holds up an impressive looking Physics textbook, smiles, poses with it as though she's the official spokesperson for Physics, then suddenly stops.*

RIKKI: Let's face it kids, if I'm not opening the math book you KNOW I'm not reading Physics. I'll just do the worksheets, the extra

credit and take the tests. How can I do the tests without reading the book? Simple. The tests are multiple choice. And you don't have to find the right answer for that. Just figure out which answers are wrong. There are four answers, right? The teacher can't resist putting in at least one joke answer, like "five billion point two-oh-seven." Right. So now it's only one in three. The odds are getting better. There are going to be two answers that are close together. Unless your Physics teacher is really mean, these two are probably wrong, too, because they aren't going to give you the right answer and another answer that's one degree different. So now you have the right answer! But if your Physics teacher is mean, then the answer is one of those two close answers, so you can just flip a coin, because one out of two is much better odds than one out of four. Right? Isn't it? I think it is. If you can get it all down to fifty-fifty, and you do the extra credit clean-up-the-creek project, you've got at least a C. Maybe a B minus. Not too shabby.

I know what you're thinking. If you aren't going to read the books, why carry them around? Simple. Some teachers give points for bringing the book to class. And you know my extra credit policy. Do it to it. Not only that, some teachers will even give you extra credit for returning your book in good condition, so it's in your best interest to keep 'em with you, but keep 'em closed.

There must be more stuff in here...oh yeah, flute, sunscreen, gum, another notebook, not as cool as the first one, though...a sandwich...I wondered where that went to. *(takes a bite.)* Not bad. A little smooshed, but isn't that the destiny of all food?

Highlighter, sketchpad, comic book, snickers, a water bottle, and... Yes, in answer to the question you didn't ask, I do play the flute. I like the way it sounds. It's soothing. I took lessons back in Elementary School before the program was cut. I'm not in the marching band though. It's too hard. I just like the flute. What else is there?

OH! History. *(pulls out a history book.)* Here's what you need to know about history: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." History teachers love this quote because they think that by doing their job, they're keeping future generations from having to live through the horrors of say, Dachau, the Spanish Inquisition, the Black Plague, or movie sequels. The problem is they aren't reading the quote right. It's not about history teachers. It's about history. Here's the deal: History DOES repeat itself. People DON'T remember the horrors of the past. Who would want to? They're horrors!

Anybody who's teaching history that can't see the repeating patterns must be reading something else. And another thing. The reverse of that stupid "remember the past" quote is "Children are our future." Wrong. Children are here in the present, just like everyone else. People who aren't born yet, THEY'RE the future.

OK, that's enough of that. What else is in here? Oh look, a smaller backpack inside the larger backpack. What's in there?

*RIKKI looks inside the smaller backpack.*

RIKKI: Oh. That's right. Never mind. We don't have to look in there right now, do we? OK. Fine.

*Puts the smaller backpack aside. Looks at the stuff all around.*

RIKKI: Wow. Look at all this stuff. Amazing. No wonder I can't stand up straight any more.

*Pulls out a series of self-help and idiot's guide books, stacking them in a neat pile.*

RIKKI:

*Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul. Part 3!*

*Where There's a Will There's an A.*

*How to Succeed in High School.*

*The Idiot's Guide to Algebra.*

*A sock. Clean? (sniffs the sock) No.*

*She tosses the dirty sock into the audience*

*Ten Minutes to a More Powerful Vocabulary.*

*Ballroom Dancing for Idiots.*

*In Case of Zombie Attack.*

*In Case of Vampires.*

*In Case of Werewolves.*

*Study your way to a Perfect SAT Score. (tosses that one away) Yeah, like that works.*

Look, I'm not trying to make you feel sorry for me or anything. Life is good with a giant backpack. Unless you fall over backwards and get stuck like an upside-down turtle.

That happened to me once.

I wasn't stuck too long. I was back up before lunchtime.



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