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Smarty Pants**

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SMARTY PANTS

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT BY
Bradley Hayward



Smarty Pants

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Printed in the USA

CHARACTERS

MISS ELIOT *Teacher*
DALLAS.....*Studious senior*
ALEX..... *Grump*
TAYLOR..... *Very shy*
CASEY*Precocious*
BLAIR..... *Giddy and giggly*
LOREN..... *Giddier and gigglier*
KELLY *Troublemaker*

CASTING NOTES

All of the roles are gender flexible. MISS ELIOT would simply become MR. ELIOT and the other characters have unisex names that do not need to be altered. Change the pronouns at your discretion.

SET

A classroom.

There are seven desks for the students that are staggered on stage, facing the audience. Alternately, it is possible to use oblong tables that seat two or three students each. There is also a desk for the teacher.

Whatever else you wish to add to the classroom is up to you, but it should not in any way appear to be a kindergarten classroom.

AT RISE: All of the desks are unoccupied as DALLAS enters. He's a high school senior, in a preppy sweater and khakis. He carries a stack of books, which he studiously sets down at a desk in front.

MISS ELIOT enters. She's very kind and pretty. She arranges her books and attendance register on her desk.

DALLAS quickly jumps up and approaches her, with a number of papers in hand. He's extremely chipper, trying to make a strong first impression.

DALLAS: Good morning, Miss Eliot!

MISS ELIOT: (*kindly*) How do you know my name?

DALLAS: I know a lot about you.

MISS ELIOT: You do, do you?

DALLAS: Indeed. When I found out I was accepted to this program for gifted students, I was beside myself. At my old school, the faculty just didn't know what to do with my bright young mind. Sure, not everyone can read *Hamlet* in half an hour and understand every word, but I can! So when I got the chance to transfer to a class taught by an Ivy League scholar, I knew my senior year was going to be a fruitful one. Speaking of fruit, I brought you an apple.

He pulls an apple out from behind his back, polishes it on his shirt, and sets it on her desk.

MISS ELIOT: Thank you –

DALLAS: Dallas.

MISS ELIOT: Dallas.

DALLAS: That's right. Forgive me for not introducing myself earlier, but I'm so excited, I could burst!

MISS ELIOT: I think you may have already.

DALLAS: Forgive me. I get a little excited at the prospect of mental stimulation. But you must understand where I'm coming from, having graduated from such a prestigious college. Many's the day I sat in class, wondering when my mind would be shaped by a great scholar such as yourself.

MISS ELIOT: You mustn't get too excited, Dallas. You haven't seen my lesson plan as yet.

DALLAS: That's why I took the initiative of creating several of my own syllabi for the semester. You see, I always come prepared. (*He hands her a sheet of paper as he goes over the details of each schedule.*) In case you were planning a scientific approach to your teachings, this is my proposed lesson plan for biology, chemistry and physics. If you are more interested in the humanities, here is a sample program of sociology, psychology and ethics. And as not to forget how the body often conquers the mind, I've also made several periods of study available for gymnastics, volleyball and yoga.

MISS ELIOT: Forgive me for interrupting –

DALLAS: No problem!

MISS ELIOT: Although the word “interrupt” hardly qualifies, since it seems the only way to take part in this dialogue.

DALLAS: I'm sorry to run at the mouth. It's just that I'm so –

MISS ELIOT: Excited. Yes, I know.

DALLAS: (*buries his face in his hands*) Oh my. I've embarrassed myself. I shouldn't have brought the apple. It was too much. You can tell me.

MISS ELIOT: Perhaps a smidgen.

DALLAS: I always laugh when I see other students bring an apple to the teacher. I should have known not to be so forward, but I just couldn't help myself. I'm so –

MISS ELIOT: Excited?

DALLAS: That's right! Excited!

MISS ELIOT: You have no reason to be embarrassed. I truly appreciate the gesture. I just think you misunderstood the program I've been teaching.

DALLAS: What do you mean?

MISS ELIOT: As soon as the other students arrive, my purpose will become clear to you.

DALLAS: But I already know, Miss Eliot! You are here to give exceptionally gifted students, however few they may be, a chance to study more than arithmetic. The ability to read between the lines in English. And the opportunity to dissect the human condition, rather than helpless little amphibians.

MISS ELIOT: Like I said, you'll catch on when your classmates arrive.

DALLAS: That sounds fair. But if I may, I'd like to ask one more question.

MISS ELIOT: Go ahead.

DALLAS: Are any of my previous classmates taking part in this special program? Because I've seen the transcripts of my peers, and very few come close to my academic excellence.

MISS ELIOT: You've seen their transcripts?

DALLAS: Of course, Miss Eliot. One must have eyes in every room. That's what my grandfather always said.

MISS ELIOT: He did?

DALLAS: Every night. He would tuck me in, then kiss me on the forehead and say, "Keep one eye open. You mustn't miss a thing."

MISS ELIOT: Your grandfather said that to you?

DALLAS: Every night.

MISS ELIOT: And you took his advice?

DALLAS: Of course! I often wake a little groggy, but that's a small price to pay for superior intelligence.

MISS ELIOT: I am happy to report that you are the only one from your class that was chosen to be here. I've been working with the rest of the students for a couple of semesters now.

DALLAS: I can't wait to meet them!

MISS ELIOT: There may be some catch-up involved, but I'm sure you can handle it.

DALLAS: I know I can! Now that I've taken up more than my share of your time, I will take my appointed seat.

He returns to his desk and sits.

MISS ELIOT: I think this class will do you a world of good, young man.

DALLAS: As do I!

They both return to reading over their books. The bell rings. Just then, ALEX clomps in. Her backpack hangs open and books spill out left and right.

ALEX: Oh, crap.

She starts to pick up her books and DALLAS immediately jumps to the rescue.

DALLAS: Here, let me help you gather your things. My name is Dallas, by the way. You must be part of the class for gifted students.

ALEX: Get away from me, doody head!

DALLAS: Pardon me?

ALEX: I said get away, snot face!

DALLAS: Snot face? Doody head?

ALEX: I don't like you! You're icky and gross! So get away from me, doofus!

DALLAS takes a moment, then starts to laugh.

DALLAS: Oh, I get it. You're playing a joke on me. I, too, have a capacity for humour.

ALEX: I mean it! Get lost or I'll spit in your eye and tell the principal you're a meanie! And she'll believe me, because you're dumb and I'm not!

DALLAS: I was just trying to be nice.

ALEX: Tell that to my butt!

She picks up her books and slams them down on her desk. DALLAS approaches MISS ELIOT.

DALLAS: Forgive me for interrupting, but I think this girl is in the wrong classroom.

MISS ELIOT: Don't be silly. She's one of my top students. Her name is Alex.

ALEX: That's my name. Don't wear it out.

DALLAS: Wait a second. She's a senior?

MISS ELIOT: Yes, sir.

DALLAS: And she's really supposed to be here?

MISS ELIOT: Has been for the past two semesters.

DALLAS: Then check for my name on your register. I must be in the wrong room.

MISS ELIOT: (*looking over her register*) Dallas Jones?

DALLAS: That's me.

MISS ELIOT: You're in the right room.

DALLAS: I am?

MISS ELIOT: According to my list. But don't worry. It will all become crystal clear to you in a moment.

DALLAS: If you say so.

He once again takes his seat as TAYLOR enters. He's exceptionally shy.

DALLAS: Hi! Are you in this class, too? (*TAYLOR nods, afraid to speak.*)
Would you like to sit next to me? (*TAYLOR shrugs his shoulders.*)
It's okay. I'm not going to bite. (*TAYLOR nods and sits next to him.*)
So what's your name?

TAYLOR: (*whispers*) Taylor.

DALLAS: Sorry, I didn't hear you.

TAYLOR: (*even quieter*) Taylor.

DALLAS: Speak up. It's the only way to be heard.

TAYLOR: Taylor.

DALLAS: I'm Dallas. Are you excited to be here? (*TAYLOR shrugs.*) Me too! Even though you're quiet, I can tell you must be really smart. The silent ones always are. You're an observer, taking in your surroundings with an eagle eye.

TAYLOR: Can you keep a secret?

DALLAS: Of course. It's important that like minds share their innermost thoughts.

All of a sudden, TAYLOR burst into tears.

TAYLOR: I miss my mommy!

DALLAS: Uh... don't cry.

TAYLOR: I want my mommy! (*He continues to weep, sucking back hiccups.*)

DALLAS: Are you okay?

TAYLOR: Mommy! (*He sucks his thumb as he sniffles.*)

ALEX: Teacher, teacher! Dallas made him cry! Dallas made him cry!

DALLAS: I did not.

ALEX: Of course you did. You're a doody head.

DALLAS: Will you stop calling me a doody head?

ALEX: I will when you stop being a doody head. Which will be never.
Once a doody head, always a doody head.

MISS ELIOT: (*stands up*) That's enough, kids. Class hasn't even begun and already you're misbehaving.

DALLAS: Miss Eliot –

MISS ELIOT: That means you too, Dallas. I don't want to see you getting into any trouble.

DALLAS: But I didn't do anything.

MISS ELIOT: Then you needn't get involved.

DALLAS: But –

MISS ELIOT: No buts. Or else you won't be allowed to stay in this class.

DALLAS: As you wish. (*He scowls at ALEX.*) I can't believe you got me in trouble. (*She sticks her tongue out at him.*) Very mature.

ALEX: I am mature, so shut up!

CASEY enters. She crosses the stage, pretending to walk on a balance beam. She takes careful steps, her arms outstretched, and speaks a rhyme.

CASEY:

First grade babies.

Second grade tots.

Third grade angels.

Fourth grade snots.

Fifth grade peaches.

Sixth grade plums.

Seventh grade ladies.

Eighth grade bums!

She bows to nobody in particular and takes a seat.

DALLAS: Hi, my name is Dallas. What's yours?

CASEY: Casey. I'm a big girl.

DALLAS: I see that. But aren't you too big to speak in rhyme?

CASEY: My daddy says I'm a big girl.

DALLAS: I'm sure he does, but you're in high school now. Maybe it's time to grow up.

CASEY: I'm a grown up and I'm a big girl and I'm smarty, smart, smart, smart, smart.

DALLAS: That's a run-on sentence. Didn't anyone teach you about grammar?

CASEY: I have good manners.

DALLAS: Manners and grammar are not the same thing.

CASEY: I'm all done listening to you. (*She plugs her ears and starts another rhyme.*) Raspberry, strawberry, apple jam tart. Tell me the name of your sweet heart.

DALLAS: (*raises his hand*) Miss Eliot, I'm confused. Why is everyone acting like a baby?

MISS ELIOT: You ask an awful lot of questions.

DALLAS: Yes, but –

MISS ELIOT: Just observe. Class will begin shortly.

All of a sudden, BLAIR and LOREN burst into the room together, playing tag. They are bursting with energy and giggle at almost everything.

BLAIR: You're it!

LOREN: No, you're it!

BLAIR: No, you're it!

LOREN: No, you're it!

BLAIR: No, you're it!

LOREN: You're it!

BLAIR: You're it!

They tap each other at the same time and flip out, giggling big time.

BLAIR/LOREN: We're both it!

They collapse on the floor, out of breath from running and laughing so hard.

MISS ELIOT: Okay, Blair and Loren. Up and at 'em.

LOREN: Beat ya to my favourite seat!

BLAIR: Okey dokey. On three.

BLAIR/LOREN: One. Two. Three!

They jump up and race to the same seat. Only DALLAS is already in it.

BLAIR: (*angry*) Hey.

LOREN: (*angrier*) You're in our favourite seat.

DALLAS: (*frightened*) I'm... uh... sorry. I didn't know.

BLAIR and LOREN burst into the giggles again.

BLAIR: We're just kidding.

LOREN: Like, how could a seat be our favourite?

They laugh and laugh as they sit down. MISS ELIOT claps her hands.

MISS ELIOT: Listen up, please. It's time to begin our lesson.

DALLAS: Finally.

CASEY: Okay.

TAYLOR: (*whispers*) Sure.

ALEX: Crap.

BLAIR and LOREN just giggle. MISS ELIOT stands behind the one desk that is still vacant.

MISS ELIOT: Oh dear, it looks like Kelly is late.

STUDENTS: (*except DALLAS*) Again.

MISS ELIOT: Has anyone seen him this morning?

CASEY: I bet he's at the principal's office.

STUDENTS: (*except DALLAS*) Again.

MISS ELIOT: That boy better get his act together.

DALLAS: Why, what's wrong with him?

MISS ELIOT: Kelly's a bit of a troublemaker.

ALEX: He spit in my eye, so I spit in his eye. But he got in trouble and not me, cause he's dumb and I'm not.

DALLAS: You covered that.

ALEX: Worth repeating, doofus.

MISS ELIOT: Now now, Alex. Be kind.

ALEX: I will if I can, and I won't if I don't.

MISS ELIOT: I suppose that's progress. (*BLAIR and LOREN giggle.*) I'm sure Kelly will show up in due time, so let's begin our first lesson.

DALLAS: Fantastic! I can only imagine what it's going to be. An analysis of Einstein's theory of relativity, perhaps? A study of Pavlov's conditioning reflex? Or Freud's concept of Ego and Id? Lay it on me. I can take it.

MISS ELIOT: (*holds up a crayon*) Colouring.

DALLAS: (*jaw gaping wide open*) I'm sorry. I must have some waxy build-up in my ear. Did I just hear you say "colouring?"

BLAIR: I love colouring.

LOREN: Me too! Colouring's my favourite.

DALLAS: What does colouring have to do with anything?

ALEX: Zip it.

DALLAS: (*to TAYLOR*) Is it always like this in here?

TAYLOR nods, still with his thumb in his mouth. MISS ELIOT hands a single crayon and piece of paper to each student.

MISS ELIOT: I want you each to take these crayons and colour the picture I have assigned to you.

ALEX: (*examines her paper*) I don't wanna colour a car. Cars are dumb.

MISS ELIOT: Not everything is dumb, Alex.

ALEX: Yeah it is.

CASEY: Yay! I got a flower!

BLAIR: What did you get, Loren?

LOREN: An elephant.

BLAIR: I got a mouse.

BLAIR/LOREN: Eeeeeek!

They giggle uproariously.

MISS ELIOT: Taylor, tell the class what you'll be colouring. (*TAYLOR shakes his head.*) Come on. We're not going to bite.

DALLAS: Alex might.

ALEX: Hey!

MISS ELIOT: You've been making so much progress. Last class you even recited one of your poems.

DALLAS: You write poems?

TAYLOR nods.

MISS ELIOT: Very good ones, too.

DALLAS: Can I hear one?

TAYLOR shakes his head.

MISS ELIOT: Maybe later. Now what's on your picture?

TAYLOR: A puppy.

MISS ELIOT: Very good.

DALLAS: I don't mean to be rude, but there's just a circle on my page.

MISS ELIOT: I didn't want to overwhelm you on your first day.

DALLAS: I'm pretty sure I can colour a circle.

MISS ELIOT: It's harder than it looks. Okay, everyone. Begin. (*They all start colouring, except CASEY. She raises her hand.*) Yes, Casey?

CASEY: My crayon is blue.

MISS ELIOT: Blue is a beautiful colour.

CASEY: But I want pink.

MISS ELIOT: It's important to use all the colours of the rainbow.
Diversity is key in life.

CASEY gets out of her desk and has a temper tantrum. She jumps up and down in place.

CASEY: I want pink! I want pink! I want pink!

MISS ELIOT: You will use the colour I gave you.

BLAIR: Play the hand that's dealt.

MISS ELIOT: Very good, Blair.

BLAIR: Thank you! I'm so smart.

She and LOREN giggle some more. CASEY sits back down and pouts.

CASEY: You're mean.

MISS ELIOT: Yes, I'm a real barbarian.

DALLAS: I don't think this class could get any weirder.

Just then, KELLY barges in. He's a brat with an attitude.

KELLY: Kelly is here.

MISS ELIOT: How nice of you to finally show up.

KELLY: Kelly does not want to hear it.

MISS ELIOT: Hey now. That's exactly the attitude that keeps getting you in trouble.

KELLY: Whatever. Kelly wants to know what we're doing.

DALLAS: (*unimpressed*) Colouring. For some reason.

KELLY: Who are you?

DALLAS: I'm Dallas.

KELLY: Kelly is not your friend.

He steals DALLAS' crayon and snaps it in half.

DALLAS: Hey, he just broke my crayon!

MISS ELIOT: Nobody likes a tattler tale.

DALLAS: But I didn't do anything wrong.

KELLY: You tattled. That's wrong.

DALLAS: You can't get away with this.

KELLY: Yes I can. Watch.

One by one, he steals everybody's crayon and snaps them in half.

ALEX: Hey!

BLAIR: Give that back.

LOREN: Look what you've done.

TAYLOR: Just don't hurt me.

CASEY: Take it. I hate blue.

DALLAS: Miss Eliot, why aren't you doing anything?

MISS ELIOT: Fight your own battles.

KELLY: Told ya. Kelly can get away with anything.

He sits proudly in his seat.

MISS ELIOT: Except speaking in third person. That's rude.

KELLY: Fine. Kelly will stop.

MISS ELIOT: So let's take a look at your pictures.

They all hold up their pictures, except DALLAS. Each is covered with messy scribbles in one colour. The original drawings can barely be seen through the crayon marks.

STUDENTS: (except DALLAS) Ta da!

MISS ELIOT: Very good, everyone.

CASEY: Yeah right. Who ever heard of a blue flower?

MISS ELIOT: There are lots of blue flowers.

CASEY: Maybe. But nobody likes them.

LOREN: I do.

CASEY: Suck up.

BLAIR: Me too.

CASEY: Brown noser.

MISS ELIOT: That's enough.

DALLAS: All I see are a bunch of scribbles.

MISS ELIOT: What's wrong with that?

DALLAS: Everything.

MISS ELIOT: Is that so? Then why don't you show us your picture.

DALLAS holds up his picture. It's a circle, perfectly filled in with orange crayon. Everyone laughs.

KELLY: You call that colouring? Kelly calls it stupid.

ALEX: Yeah. It's all neat and tidy and stuff.

DALLAS: That's the way it's supposed to be. Right?

MISS ELIOT: Blair, help Dallas out. What's the lesson here?

BLAIR: Always colour outside the lines.

LOREN: That's how you find out who you really are.

MISS ELIOT: Exactly!

DALLAS: But that's not what I learned in kindergarten.

MISS ELIOT: Ah ha! That's exactly why you were transferred.

DALLAS: Really?

MISS ELIOT: To re-learn all the things you were taught in kindergarten.

DALLAS: But why?

STUDENTS: (*except DALLAS*) They had it all wrong.

DALLAS: They did?

MISS ELIOT: Completely. All they taught you was the straight and narrow. I'm here to show you the crooked and wide.

DALLAS: That's what this "advanced" class is all about?

MISS ELIOT: Yes, sir. And just look at the progress we've made.

KELLY pokes ALEX repeatedly.

ALEX: Stop poking me!

KELLY: I'm not poking you.

ALEX: Yes you are!

KELLY: No I'm not.

MISS ELIOT: Kelly, stop poking Alex.

KELLY: Okay.

He starts poking CASEY.

CASEY: Stop poking me!

KELLY: I'm not poking you.

MISS ELIOT: Kelly!

KELLY: Yes, ma'am.

He stops poking CASEY.

MISS ELIOT: See! You'll pick it up in no time.

DALLAS: This is far too confusing.

MISS ELIOT: Not really. Before you can graduate, you just have to start back at the beginning.

DALLAS: But why?

MISS ELIOT: That's for you to find out.

DALLAS: And this is supposed to make me a better person?

MISS ELIOT: I can't give you all the answers. Just pay attention and participate whenever possible.

KELLY: Yeah. Then you'll be as smart as Kelly.

MISS ELIOT: So let's move on to our next lesson. Play-Doh.

The STUDENTS clap and get excited.

DALLAS: Finally, something of substance. Last semester, my thesis focused on Greek philosophy. Are we studying Plato's early dialogues or the more controversial dialogues from late in his life?

MISS ELIOT: No, no. Not Plato. *(She holds up a container of Play-Doh.)*
Play-Doh.

DALLAS: You gotta be kidding, right?

MISS ELIOT puts a container of Play-Doh on each desk.

MISS ELIOT: Not at all. I would like you to make a sculpture of the drawing you coloured in lesson one.

KELLY: But I didn't colour nothing.

MISS ELIOT: You didn't colour *anything*.

KELLY: That's what I said. Nothing.

MISS ELIOT: You can pair up with Dallas and make a circle.

KELLY: Fine. (to DALLAS) But I'm still not your friend.

They begin to make sculptures of their drawings. As they do, they begin to recite a rhyme. One by one, they all join in.

CASEY:

Miss Susie had a baby.
She named him Tiny Tim.

She continues as ALEX joins in.

ALEX:

She put him in the bathtub
To see if he could swim.

BLAIR joins the fray.

BLAIR:

He drank up all the water.
He ate up all the soap.

LOREN rhymes along.

LOREN:

He tried to eat the bathtub,
But it wouldn't go down his throat.

Even TAYLOR joins in, quietly.

TAYLOR:

Miss Susie called the doctor.
Miss Susie called the nurse.

KELLY breaks down and joins the chorus.

KELLY:

Miss Susie called the lady
With the alligator purse.

The STUDENTS get faster as they keep sculpting their Play-Doh.

STUDENTS: (except DALLAS)
 In came the doctor,
 In came the nurse,
 In came the lady
 With the alligator purse.
 Mumps said the doctor.
 Measles said the nurse.
 Hiccups said the lady
 With the alligator purse.

MISS ELIOT cannot help herself and joins in.

MISS ELIOT:
 Miss Susie punched the doctor.
 Miss Susie kicked the nurse.
 Miss Susie thanked the lady
 With the alligator purse.

As one, they proudly hold up their completed sculptures.

STUDENTS: (except DALLAS) Ta da!

DALLAS: (embarrassed) I guess I don't know that poem.

MISS ELIOT: That's okay. You'll learn. Now let's take a look at your sculptures. (*She walks around the desks, surveying each sculpture.*)
 Very nice car, Alex. Vroom vroom! Really good puppy, Taylor. I love your flower, Casey. (to BLAIR and LOREN) I bet your elephant is real scared of that mouse!

LOREN: Eeeeeeeek!

They giggle. MISS ELIOT examines KELLY and DALLAS' circle. It's a perfect ball, without any dents at all.

MISS ELIOT: Wow. That's a perfect circle.

DALLAS: (*getting into it*) Thanks! I worked real hard making it nice and smooth.

KELLY: Me too!

DALLAS: No you didn't. I did all the work.

KELLY: Kelly helped.

DALLAS: Don't take credit for something you didn't do. It was me, Miss Eliot. Dallas made the circle!

KELLY: Oh yeah?

DALLAS: Yeah!

KELLY: Then how do you like this?

*He grabs the dough ball and squishes it in his fingers.
DALLAS is horrified.*

DALLAS: What did you do that for? It was perfect! Miss Eliot even said so! Now we're going to get a bad grade! I can't have any F's on my transcript if I want to get into college.

MISS ELIOT: Don't get so worked up. Kelly was just showing you what this lesson is all about.

DALLAS: What's that?

KELLY: Everything is temporary.

*In unison, all the STUDENTS mush their sculptures
into messy balls and smash them on their desks.*

STUDENTS: (except DALLAS) No matter how perfect it is.

DALLAS: This is all too much for me. (*Frustrated, he pops some gum into his mouth.*)

MISS ELIOT: What do you have there?

DALLAS: Just some gum. It helps me relax.

MISS ELIOT: Did you bring enough for the whole class?

DALLAS: No.

MISS ELIOT: Then spit it out. (*She holds out her hand.*)

DALLAS: Really?

MISS ELIOT: Really. (*Hesitantly, he spits the gum into her hand. She puts it on top of her desk.*) You can have it back after class.

DALLAS: Just toss it.

TAYLOR: Waste not, want not.

DALLAS: Oh sure, now you speak up.

MISS ELIOT: Don't get so discouraged. You're already making a heap of progress.

DALLAS: Progress? You've turned these students into a bunch of sniveling idiots.

MISS ELIOT: Be patient, young man. You'll reach their level of knowledge in no time at all.

DALLAS: How much knowledge does it take to colour a flower blue? Or sing a stupid song? Or make an elephant out of clay?

MISS ELIOT: If you must know, Casey is the captain of the debate team. Taylor had his poems published in the newspaper. And Blair has some brilliant observations to share with the class. (*BLAIR raises her hand.*) Yes, Blair?

BLAIR: I have to go potty.

MISS ELIOT: You're excused.

BLAIR giggles and exits.

DALLAS: (*rolls his eyes*) Yeah, she's real brilliant.

MISS ELIOT: You needn't be embarrassed. Not everyone can handle advanced placement. If you like, I can see about having you transferred back to your old school.

DALLAS: Just because I don't understand what's going on does not mean I'm a quitter. I promise I will try harder.

CASEY: Try harder... try harder. (*She thinks for a moment.*) That's lesson number three, isn't it?

MISS ELIOT: Good memory! "Try harder." No matter what you're doing, this is always good advice.

DALLAS: (*gets excited*) You mean I knew that lesson all on my own?

MISS ELIOT: (*nods*) I knew you were here for good reason.

DALLAS: But that's a life lesson.

MISS ELIOT: Exactly.

DALLAS: Wait. So that's why I'm here? Life lessons?

MISS ELIOT: Ta da.

DALLAS: Oh. That I can probably do.

CASEY: Does that mean we can skip over the “try harder” lesson today? I’m pooped.

MISS ELIOT: Fair enough. We can get out the parachute tomorrow.

DALLAS: “Try harder” requires a parachute?

ALEX: Of course it does, dummy.

DALLAS: I don’t even want to know.

MISS ELIOT: Who wants to help me get ready for our next lesson?
(LOREN and ALEX raise their hands.) Very good. You two can get the jump rope.

LOREN and ALEX dig out a long jump rope from MISS ELIOT’s desk.

KELLY: Wicked. I get to go first!

CASEY: No, I do!

KELLY: No, I do!

MISS ELIOT: It’s Taylor’s turn to go first.

TAYLOR: That’s okay. They can go first.

MISS ELIOT: No it’s not. We have to take turns.

LOREN and ALEX stretch out and start twirling the rope around and around in big circles.

LOREN/ALEX:

Down by the river.
Down by the sea.
Taylor broke a bottle
And blamed it on me.

CASEY and KELLY join in.

CASEY/KELLY:

I told ma.
Ma told pa.
Taylor got a spanking.
So ha ha ha.

MISS ELIOT: How many spankings did Taylor get?

TAYLOR hops into the rope and starts jumping.

STUDENTS: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 –

TAYLOR trips on the rope.

STUDENTS: Awwwww.

TAYLOR: I hate that thing. It's like a booby trap.

KELLY: (*laughs*) Ha ha! You said booby!

MISS ELIOT: Seven is pretty good.

KELLY: I can do a hundred!

CASEY: No you can't.

KELLY: Yes I can!

MISS ELIOT: That's enough. You'll get your turn. Dallas, would you like to try?

DALLAS: Jump rope is for babies.

ALEX: Are you calling us babies?

DALLAS: No.

ALEX: Good. Cause you're a doody head!

CASEY: My turn! My turn! My turn!

KELLY: My turn! My turn! My turn!

MISS ELIOT: Why don't you try it together?

KELLY: No way. Casey has cooties.

CASEY: I do not.

KELLY: Casey has cooties! Casey has cooties!

MISS ELIOT: Then you will too, because you're trying it together.

CASEY/KELLY: Fine.

LOREN and ALEX start twirling the rope again.

LOREN/ALEX:

Red hot pepper

In the pot.

Gotta get over

What the leader's got.

CASEY and KELLY both hop into the rope and jump together.

STUDENTS: 1, 2, 3, 4 –

CASEY: Betcha you can't last to a hundred.

KELLY: Not with you in here!

BLAIR returns.

BLAIR: Oh, cool! Jump rope!

She immediately rushes to the rope and hops in. Now all three of them are jumping.

STUDENTS: 8, 9, 10 –

KELLY: Hey, wait your turn!

BLAIR: I'm the best at jump rope. And I just peed, so I can hop forever and ever! *(She giggles as they keep on jumping.)*

STUDENTS: 13, 14, 15 –

DALLAS: I don't get the point of all this.

STUDENTS: *(except DALLAS)* Teamwork! 18, 19, 20 –

MISS ELIOT: Exactly. It's not always all about you, you know. So why don't you give it a shot?

STUDENTS: 22, 23, 24 –

DALLAS: I've never jumped rope before.

STUDENTS: 28, 29, 30 –

MISS ELIOT: There's always a first time.

TAYLOR: If I did it, so can you.

STUDENTS: 34, 35, 36 –

MISS ELIOT: And your grade depends on it.

DALLAS: Okay, okay.

He tentatively approaches the rope. They start to spin it faster.

STUDENTS: 40, 41, 42, 43 –

DALLAS: Here goes.

He jumps in and immediately hits the rope. ALEX and LOREN let go and they get tangled in it immediately.



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