Acting Edition

Faculty Portrait

by Sean David DeMers

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SAMUEL FRENCH

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FACULTY PORTRAIT was first produced in 2015 at the University of Iowa's MFA New Play Festival in Iowa City, Iowa. The play was directed by Ariel Francoeur assisted by Caitlin Dorsett, with set design by Cassie Malmquist, lighting design by Ray Ockenfels, costume design by Nicole Ooi and Morgan Meier, original music by Justin Comer, and dramaturgy by Lukas Brasherfons. The production stage manager was Rachel Winfield, and the assistant stage manager was Nic Steffes. The cast was as follows:

CLAIRE . . . . . Haley Courter
JAMIE J. . . . . Sasha Hildebrand
MR. Y . . . . . Tim Budd
KYLE . . . . . Adam Phillips
HELEN . . . . . Rubina Vidal
AMY. . . . . Taylor Edelle Stuart

FACULTY PORTRAIT was subsequently produced in 2018 and 2019 by Larkin Fine Arts Department at Larkin High School and at the Illinois High School Theater Festival. The play was directed by Frank Rose, with set design by Frank Rose, lighting design by Rebecca Peterson, costumes by Jeremiah Hubbard and Delaney Newman, and original music by Justin Comer. The production stage manager was Ivanna Kurywczak. The cast was as follows:

CLAIRE . . . . . Allie Dulabaum
JAMIE J. . . . . Marteena Duckins
MR. Y . . . . . Zachary Bohrer
KYLE . . . . . Juwan Lockhart
HELEN . . . . . Hannah Weber
AMY. . . . . Reagan Sanchez
VOICE . . . . . Jordan Kosin

FACULTY PORTRAIT was produced in 2020 by Prime Number Productions at IRT Theatre in New York, NY. The play was directed by Ariel Francoeur, with set design by Molly C. Carroll, lighting and projection design by Heather Crocker, costumes by Margaret Gorrell, and dramaturgy by Fiona Kyle. The production stage manager was Shay Thomas. The cast was as follows:

CLAIRE . . . . . Phoebe Holden
JAMIE J . . . . . Julie Thaxter-Gourlay
MR. Y . . . . . Russ Cusick
KYLE . . . . . Shammah "Speed" Waller
HELEN . . . . . Molly Schenkenberger
AMY . . . . . Jessica Nesi
VOICE . . . . . Haley Courter
UNDERSTUDY . . . . . Rubina Vidal

CHARACTERS

CLAIRE – Female, Student, 18
JAMIE J – Female, Custodian, Mid 30s
MR. Y – Male, Teacher, Late 40s
KYLE – Male, Student, 18
HELEN – Female, Student, 18
AMY – Female, Student, 18
VOICE – Female

SETTING

A High School building.

TIME

The day before, the day of, and a year later.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Because of the heavy events and themes of the play there can be a tendency to go toward the darkness and traumatic stress inherent in the characters. Please remember that the ultimate final goal of the play is to be uplifting and optimistic. Keep in mind the strength that it takes these characters to stay in a place surrounded by horrible memories and the desire they have to replace the terrible with the beautiful.

An intermission if required should go after Scene Six.

There is a decent amount of cursing in the show and if you happen to be a company that has to omit these, please consider replacements instead of cuts. This could be in the form of "softer" curse words (but NEVER anything derogatory or aimed at a group of people – amongst others the "b" word and SOB are just not acceptable to me) or perhaps "bleeping" out the curses so we know they are there.

NOTES ON TEXT

(/) – The next character's line starts and overlaps after this symbol.

Scene Number/Time Designation – In previous productions, projecting these for the audience worked well. Feel free to experiment.

for:

Christoph, Robert, Linhua, Dwight, T. Anne, Rachel, Daniel, William, Kyle, Steven, Cassie, Isaiah, Matthew, Lauren, John, Kelly, Daniel, Corey, Emily, Ryan, Ross, Jamie, Brian, Austin, Jocelyn, Daniel, Kevin, Matthew, Caitlin, Jeremy, Rachael, Matthew, Jarrett, Henry, Liviu, G.V., Partahi, Lauren, Daniel, Juan, Minal, Erin, Michael, Julia, Mary, Reema, Waleed, Leslie, Maxine, Nicole, Dawn, Mary, Lauren, Rachel, Jesse, Victoria, Anne Marie, Dylan, Charlotte, Daniel, Olivia, Josephine, Ana, Chase, Catherine, Madeline, James, Grace, Noah, Jack, Emilie, Jessica, Avielle, Alison, Caroline, Benjamin, Araceli, Randy, Mike, Rosie, Robert, Clarence, Scott, Faye, Randall, Kelly, James, Heather, Chester, Damon, Tomeka, Karen, Ron, Alejandro, Howard, John, Margaret, Robert, Judy, Jason, Beamon, Galen, Nacunan, Deanna, Marvin, Dale, Joseph, Neal, Richard, Robin, Pete, Joey, Carolyn, Diane, Arnold, Manuel, Leona, Chen, Constantinos, O. Preston, Stephen, Melanie, Josh, Ron, Mary, Lydia, Christina, Johnpierre, Nicole, Jessica, Kayce, Natalie, Paige, Stephanie, Britthney, Shannon, John, Robert, William, Faith, Ben, Mikael, Andrzej, Kayla, Barry, Bryan, Randy, Neal, Robin, Cheryl, Barbara, Eugene, Norman, Seth, Aaron, Daryl, Michelle, Derrick, Neva, Alicia, Thurlene, Chanelle, Chase, Dewayne, Jeffrey, Gary, Linda, Mary, Emily, John, Naomi, Marian, Anna Mae, Lena, Mary, Samnang, Karsheika, Taniesha, Larry, Catalina, Julianna, Ryanne, Daniel, Gayle, Omero, Christopher, Ryan, Chavares, Amanda, Justin, Todd, Gopi, Maria, Adriel, Jose, Vicki, Sam, Ruben, Tremaine, Daniel, Russell, Demetrius, Tshering, Doris, Sonam, Grace, Katleen, Judith, Lydia, Gil, Kristopher, Taylor, Tyrone, Samir, Christopher, Carlos, Marcela, Margarita, Roderick, Michael, Claire, Andrew, Darryl, Cheng, George, David, Katherine, Veronika, Christopher, Kim, Mark, Ken, Genevieve, Helene, Nathalie, Barbara, Anne-Marie, Maud, Maryse, Sonia, Michele, Anne-Marie, Maryse, Annie, Barbara, Annie, Michael, Jaan, Phoivos, Matthew, Jason, Aysegul, Anastasia, Paul, et al.

1

The day of

(Exterior of a school building, a window ledge large enough to sit on. Two floors up. Brick. Tall windows. The suggestion of a roof with eaves that overhang the tops of the windows.)

*(***CLAIRE** *sits and smokes a cigarette. She seems to be contemplating the meaning of it all when a ladder rises from below to the side of the ledge. She is interested, but not particularly impressed. She continues to smoke.)*

(Up the ladder comes a custodian, **JAMIE J.** *She doesn't really seem to be paying* **CLAIRE** *much attention.)*

CLAIRE. Hi Jamie J.

JAMIE J. Oh. Hey there.

CLAIRE. Have you come to rescue me?

JAMIE J. Do you need to be rescued?

CLAIRE. I do. I need to be.

JAMIE J. You could climb down the ladder here.

CLAIRE. Is this some kind of reverse psychology?

JAMIE J. What do you mean?

CLAIRE. Maybe someone ratted me out and you're here to get me down and when I get to the bottom of the ladder, Principal Mays will be there with a suspension form. Is that right?

JAMIE J. I don't think so.

CLAIRE. I'll leave by the window, but thanks for the offer.

JAMIE J. Sure.

(She is trying to ignore **CLAIRE.** *She's looking at the eaves.)*

CLAIRE. Guess how long I've been doin' this.

JAMIE J. Well I looked up here ten minutes ago, so I'd say less than that.

CLAIRE. I mean overall. Cumulatively. Guess how long cumulatively I've been sneakin' out here.

JAMIE J. Listen, I don't like guessing and I get the feeling you're gonna tell me anyway.

CLAIRE. Sophomore year. Two years. Only ever seen one other person. Have you seen me up here before?

JAMIE J. Nope.

CLAIRE. Nope. HERE I AM WORLD!

Okay, I give up. What are you up here for if not to get me down?

JAMIE J. Gotta get the hornet's nest.

CLAIRE. What hornet's nest?

(She follows **JAMIE J***'s gaze.)*

Oh. *That* hornet's nest.

JAMIE J. Yup.

CLAIRE. I never noticed it.

JAMIE J. Easy to miss. Only been here a couple weeks. Look, it's not even done yet.

CLAIRE. Where's your equipment?

JAMIE J. What do you mean?

CLAIRE. Do you have a stick, or a hose, or a gun?

JAMIE J. A gun?

CLAIRE. Like a water hose with a spray gun. Or maybe you can poison them, or fog them out?

JAMIE J. I'm just weighing my options.

CLAIRE. Oh. You want a cig?

*(***JAMIE J** *surreptitiously looks around.)*

JAMIE J. I don't know. Whatya got?

CLAIRE. The cheapest I can get.

(She hands **JAMIE J** *a cigarette and a lighter.* **JAMIE J** *inhales.)*

JAMIE J. Mmm. These really suck.

CLAIRE. Yeah, but cheap.

*(***JAMIE J** *takes in the scenery.)*

JAMIE J. It's nice up here. We gonna get busted?

CLAIRE. Room's empty this period.

JAMIE J. Mr. Y's classroom?

CLAIRE. Yeah. He's nice.

JAMIE J. One of the few teachers that talk to me.

CLAIRE. Cool. I found out yesterday he used to be a smoker.

JAMIE J. You don't say. They don't bother you?

CLAIRE. At first I thought this was the perfect spot and maybe someone would see me and I would be known as the cool smoker, but actually it's a little lame to sit on a ledge outside the window of a classroom. Turns out no one wants to bother me.

JAMIE J. I was talking about the hornets.

CLAIRE. Include them as part of "no one."

JAMIE J. Ah.

CLAIRE. Are you gonna knock the nest down when I go in?

JAMIE J. Haven't decided what to do. Probably try from inside. I don't want that thing landing on me out here. Whatever it is, it's gotta be clean. One fell swoop. You don't want to go around poking nests. That just gets 'em angry and then they're all over the place swarming and nasty. You gotta take it out in one shot so the whole thing falls to the ground, explodes, and they run off to find a new home. I'm thinking I could just get a long stick and lean out this window.

CLAIRE. Nope. Gotta do that window.

JAMIE J. Wouldn't work, this one's the only angle.

CLAIRE. Yeah, but it sticks. I always gotta use the other one.

JAMIE J. Since when does it stick?

*(***JAMIE J** *gets up and tries it out. It sure does stick.)*

CLAIRE. At least since I was a sophomore.

JAMIE J. You shoulda told someone. We could fix it.

CLAIRE. Jamie J?

JAMIE J. Yeah?

CLAIRE. This window sticks. Could you fix it?

JAMIE J. Alright smartass, I'll put it on the list.

CLAIRE. The list?

JAMIE J. There's a lot of priorities, we gotta rank 'em.

CLAIRE. Where would this rank?

JAMIE J. Probably dead last.

CLAIRE. Great.

*(**CLAIRE** gets up and goes to the window.)*

Jamie –

JAMIE J. Hm?

CLAIRE. Have you ever told someone the truth about something and you thought it would make everything better, but you felt worse?

JAMIE J. ...

CLAIRE. Nevermind. You should do this after school when no one's around.

JAMIE J. Hey, thanks for the smoke – and the new smoking section. You don't mind if I use it?

CLAIRE. Nope. I got another one on the roof.

(She is gone.)

2

A year later

(The interior of Mr. Y's classroom. Afterschool. **MR. Y** *is sitting behind a desk grading papers.* **KYLE** *sits at a desk reading a book.)*

KYLE. Hey, Mr. Y?

(No response.)

Mr. Y? Since there's like, no one else here, could we cancel detention?

MR. Y. No.

KYLE. But I'm missing practice. What if I make it up like, tomorrow or something?

MR. Y. I'm not coming in here on a Saturday.

KYLE. Why do we have to be in *this* room?

MR. Y. It's my classroom – just go back to reading quietly.

KYLE. Mr. Y, have you seriously read the *Iliad*?

MR. Y. Multiple times.

KYLE. No offense, but I find that hard to believe. I can't read this anymore.

MR. Y. You should've thought of that before you pulled Maria's bra strap.

KYLE. I couldn't resist.

MR. Y. You have to learn to resist, Kyle. That's why you're here.

KYLE. I thought I was here 'cause I'm a pervert.

MR. Y. No.

KYLE. You don't think I'm a pervert? Maria called me a pervert in front of everybody! Actually it was awesome – they all laughed – I'm totally a pervert.

MR. Y. You're not a pervert, you're a teenager.

KYLE. Same diff.

MR. Y. No, Kyle. You don't respect people – in this case it was Maria, but in general you've developed a troubling disdain for the world this past year.

KYLE. Haven't we all?

MR. Y. No. You don't have to be a jerk / to everyone.

KYLE. Hey!

MR. Y. I've noticed this pattern escalate and the Maria incident / takes the cake.

KYLE. "Maria incident."

MR. Y. You don't understand how your actions affect other people. Impulses start in your brain and then fire up into ideas, but they don't need to be actions. You have to think before crossing the impulse point.

KYLE. Oh my god, Mr. Y, you didn't see it, it was like all lumpy under her sweater and your lecture was so fucking / boring and –

MR. Y. Don't swear, Kyle.

KYLE. It was *frigging* boring Mr. Y, like even Stewart was asleep and he never falls asleep in your class. He wants to be you – or something.

MR. Y. I didn't notice.

KYLE. Are you fuuu *(A look from* **MR. Y**.*)* kidding me, you didn't notice? He's like usually asking tons of questions and always has the answers to the quizzes. He's like a mini Mr. Y.

MR. Y. Maybe he's genuinely interested.

KYLE. That's what I'm saying! He usually is, but this time he was asleep and you were saying some shit / about Achilles at the ships –

MR. Y. Kyle seriously, I'll bring you afterschool again.

KYLE. Okay, but you know it's afterschool hours and I hold the swear words in all day. I mean, have you ever heard me say fuck before?

MR. Y. No.

KYLE. Exactly. I'm an afternoon swearer, 'cause I can't do it at home either, but when it's like three p.m. I'm like f-this and f-that and you're an m-er f-er, you f, so f-u! Like that, so really if I swear right now it's your fault for keeping me after.

MR. Y. You swear like this around your coach?

KYLE. He's worse than me! He's taught me some swear words, I mean, my brain can't even comprehend the insult you know? You want to hear a couple?

MR. Y. What do you think?

KYLE. Probably not?

MR. Y. Correct. Read.

KYLE. I just thought this EPIC story about WAR and BATTLES would keep my attention, you know?

MR. Y. *(Lecture mode.)* Homer's characters spanned a range from gods to humans. The mythological to the historical. The author credited with writing two of the finest epic works in the recorded history of the Western world did so / around three thousand years ago –

KYLE. Alright! Shh. I'm reading already.

(After a moment, **MR. Y** *goes to the window. He pulls a sock out of his pocket and contemplates it.)*

(This puzzles **KYLE** *who sneaks an iPhone out and surreptitiously takes* **MR. Y***'s picture – for good measure, he also takes a selfie with* **MR. Y** *in the background. He puts the phone away.)*

You know Mr. Y, this is usually the point in the movie where the teacher feels bad for keeping a healthy student inside on a beautiful day and lets him go early.

MR. Y. It's been twenty minutes.

KYLE. Oh my god, it's forever.

MR. Y. What do you know about forever? Forever is in the eye of the beholder. For you twenty minutes is torture, but what of twenty minutes in the life of a person for whom time has no measure, who is constantly searching – always looking, never finding – traveling through shimmering heat haze and torrential rain. Faces change so often they blur, and names known for ages no longer have meaning to the point he's forgotten his own. Do you know what he's looking for?

KYLE. His name?

MR. Y. Revenge. Cold-blooded revenge so pure even the very emotions are irrelevant, consumed – the blood is clean and strong that pours through the veins and feeds the furnace of the heart.

Dazzling. Diamond studded and razor sharp from the top of the head to the heel, to the soul – the body becomes a weapon. But you see, when the drive for revenge is gone so is that focus, "he that fights fares no better than he that does not;" there is nothing to live for.

KYLE. Are you talking about Achilles?

MR. Y. Yes. Achilles, the greatest soldier in the history of Greece. Why doesn't he leave?

KYLE. It would be a huge f-u to the rest of the army.

MR. Y. Who have only surrounded him with bad memories. He could start over, leave the war behind – I mean, he's on the shore with the ships – he could easily shove off and forget about everything.

KYLE. It's giving up. He wouldn't be a hero.

MR. Y. Achilles believes "coward and hero are held in equal honor" – he doesn't think of himself as a hero.

KYLE. Of course he does! He knows he's the best fighter. They're doomed without him.

MR. Y. But he's still playing with the lives of others. It's a fine line between selfless and selfish.

KYLE. He's making a point. Maybe he stays not just to be a hero, but for everyone – all of the Greeks.

MR. Y. What if he thinks it's for everyone, but it's really only for himself?

(Beat. A bang on the door. They jump noticeably. It's **JAMIE J.***)*

Yes?

JAMIE J. Gotta poke a hive.

MR. Y. Does it have to be right now, Jamie?

JAMIE J. It's top of the list, right outside your window. Won't take a minute.

MR. Y. Fine. Come in.

*(***JAMIE J** *enters with a long pole, maybe a broom handle.)*

KYLE. Yo! Jamie J! What a surprise!

JAMIE J. Hey Kyle.

KYLE. Nice stick!

JAMIE J. Gotta / poke a hive.

MR. Y. Kyle, leave her alone.

*(**HELEN** enters.)*

HELEN. Mr. Y, is this a bad time for the faculty portrait?

MR. Y. What? Oh. Right. The yearbook thing.

HELEN. Did you forget?

MR. Y. / Not entirely.

KYLE. He forgot. And he's busy, so beat it.

HELEN. Mind your own business, Kyle.

MR. Y. I have detention for another thirty minutes, it's a little inconvenient now –

HELEN. It's not my fault Kyle got in trouble, why should I be punished?

MR. Y. You really can't come back?

HELEN. The faculty portrait has to be in by Monday morning at the latest. And honestly, you've been kinda blowing me off so – sorry, not sorry.

*(**HELEN** sits behind Mr. Y's desk.)*

MR. Y. Alright –

*(**AMY** enters with a camera. They all look at her.)*

KYLE. Amy too?! This party just got super awkward Mr. Y.

HELEN. Kyle, / grow up!

MR. Y. Just pretend we're not here Kyle.

KYLE. So impossible Mr. Y. Maybe I should just come back.

*(**KYLE** begins packing up.)*

MR. Y. Nice try. Sit.

*(**KYLE** sits.)*

MR. Y. Helen, I thought this was just an interview.

HELEN. Oh, Amy's just gonna shoot – take some pictures.

MR. Y. Can we just do the interview? Maybe use my yearbook photo?

HELEN. It's a bigger spread! We need some candids, it's how we always do it.

MR. Y. We could take them somewhere else. It doesn't have to be in my room. Amy, you don't have to be in here.

HELEN. It's key, Mr. Y. Plus, she wants to.

MR. Y. Amy, you're alright with this?

(She nods with only the barest commitment.)

You don't have to do this for any reason. You can walk away. We'll do it another time, somewhere else.

HELEN. She told me that every room is like every other room.

*(***MR. Y** *looks at* **AMY**. *She nods again.)*

MR. Y. Let's get it over with.

*(***AMY** *places the tape recorder on the desk.)*

HELEN. Oh! I almost forgot, Amy found the tape recorder –

(She stops as **AMY** *flips the tape over and then goes somewhere to set up the camera.)*

Do you mind if I record this?

MR. Y. No. **KYLE.** Yes!

MR. Y. Kyle –

KYLE. Seriously, Mr. Y? You never know where a recording's gonna end up now, you know?

HELEN. This recording is just for my reference. I'm not gonna post it online or anything.

KYLE. So she says.

MR. Y. Kyle. Read.

KYLE. Sheesh, I'm just trying to protect you. Remember when they posted that stuff you said on that blog? And that depressing picture? They took everything out of context and it could happen again.

MR. Y. Kyle –

KYLE. This is the same thing.

HELEN. It's not the same thing! You were digging that stuff up online, you were obsessed!

KYLE. Right, because someone had to be. You shouldn't trust anyone, Mr. Y – not even Helen.

MR. Y. / Kyle, stop it.

HELEN. Please.

KYLE. Especially not Helen.

HELEN. You're a real piece of work.

KYLE. This is not about me; I'm trying to stop Mr. Y from his impulses. We talked about it earlier.

MR. Y. You're trying to get out of detention. I'm adding ten minutes to this afternoon.

KYLE. Oh, come on!

MR. Y. If you don't shut it, I'll make it more.

*(***KYLE** *goes back to reading in a huff.)*

HELEN. I won't use this recording except as a reference when I write the yearbook section, I promise.

MR. Y. I don't care what you do with it. Can we just get started?

HELEN. *(Writing.)* Yes. Mr. Y. Could you spell your last name?

MR. Y. No.

HELEN. Even *you* can't spell it?

MR. Y. I want to be Mr. Y in the yearbook. Like every year.

HELEN. I could just look it up.

MR. Y. I'd rather you didn't.

HELEN. Noted. I've got eight questions. First question: When did you start here?

MR. Y. Twenty years ago.

HELEN. Cool. I wasn't born yet.

MR. Y. None of you were.

HELEN. Well, except for Jamie J.

MR. Y. No, I was talking / about –

JAMIE J. What?!

HELEN. Nothing Jamie.

JAMIE J. Alrighty.

*(**JAMIE J** goes back to working with her headphones in.)*

*(This exchange interests **AMY** and she begins taking pictures of **JAMIE J** at the window.)*

MR. Y. I was referring to the students.

HELEN. I mean, she never actually graduated, so technically JJ's like an eternal / student –

JAMIE J. What?!

HELEN. Nothing Jamie.

JAMIE J. Alrighty.

MR. Y. She has her GED.

HELEN. She does?

KYLE. She does? Really?

MR. Y. Yes, she does.

HELEN. Cool. I didn't know that.

KYLE. Awesome Jamie!

JAMIE J. What?!

KYLE. Sorry, JJ, nothing. Just, congrats on getting your GED!

(Awkward pause as everyone looks at **JAMIE J** *and* **AMY** *snaps a picture.)*

*(***JAMIE J** *looks to* **MR. Y** *and he shrugs.)*

JAMIE J. Gotta get that damn stuck window open first anyway.

(She leaves.)

MR. Y. So, I've been here a while.

*(***AMY** *continues taking pictures of the window.)*

HELEN. Cool. Question Two: What was your first day like?

MR. Y. Like any other day.

HELEN. Details Mr. Y, details.

MR. Y. I don't know, I guess it was what you might expect. I was nervous, right out of college. The faculty lounge was quiet. The coffee was terrible, but I had some anyway. The other teachers sat there, contemplating their last moments of freedom. At first, no one said a word to me. And then Mr. Daugherty walked in and made a beeline for me. Fresh blood, I guess.

HELEN. Mr. Doc has been an awesome replacement principal; I interviewed him last year for the portrait.

MR. Y. Of course. I forgot. Last year was supposed to be his final –

HELEN. He even had a retirement party –

KYLE. Helen!

MR. Y. Yeah. He did.

(Pause.)

HELEN. Anyway, Mr. Doc came into the lounge?

MR. Y. What?

HELEN. On your first day?

MR. Y. Oh. Right. Came right at me and I swear the room brightened – he has that effect as you know. He had his own coffee, plopped down next to me and said "Didn't someone warn you not to drink that *(Looks at* **KYLE**.*)* crap."

KYLE. There's no way Principal Doc said "crap"!

MR. Y. It's for the yearbook Kyle.

KYLE. / Jeez.

*(***MR. Y** *points at the book, á la: "back to reading.")*

HELEN. *(Ignoring* **KYLE**.*)* What did you say?

MR. Y. Just introduced myself. Doc told me the story of his first day.

HELEN. I can't imagine Principal Doc as a young teacher.

MR. Y. Oh, he was never young. He was born an old man.

KYLE. I'll never get that image out of my head.

*(***MR. Y** *points at the book again.)*

MR. Y. On his first day here, he met his future wife.

HELEN. What?! He told me last year he couldn't remember.

MR. Y. They met in this very room. It used to be his.

HELEN. This is so great! His wife worked here like Mrs. Y!

(Pause.)

Ugh. Sorry. What happened?

MR. Y. It's really his story, I couldn't –

HELEN. Please, Mr. Y? Just tell it. I won't use it on your portrait.

(Pause.)

*(***AMY** *takes a picture.)*

MR. Y. Well, Mr. Doc walked in and the students were all sitting quietly, facing the front – I guess it truly was a different time then –

KYLE. Very funny.

HELEN. Shush!

MR. Y. So Doc said "It smells chalky in here, dontcha think?" A couple of chuckles and as one of the students leaned out the window to clap erasers, a secretary from the office came in with morning announcements. She put them on his desk and when he looked up at her she said: "I'm Paula from the office, here are the school announcements for you to share. If you need anything just let me know." Doc was taken immediately. He couldn't respond. He smiled. She smiled, turned away, and when she got to the doorway turned back and said: "It smells chalky in here, dontcha think?"

(They all turn to the doorway. Silence.)

*(***JAMIE J** *bursts through the door loudly with a metal toolbox and drops a crowbar, they all jump and gasp, perhaps a brief scream from* **HELEN**.*)*

*(**AMY** settles into a crouch near the door.)*

*(**JAMIE J** freezes and then realizes her carelessness.)*

JAMIE J. Sorry. Just. Sorry.

(She heads to the window and eventually goes out to the ledge.)

HELEN. That's a nice story.

MR. Y. They're still together. He could've taught anywhere but he never left and, in fact, is probably the only thing holding this building up.

HELEN. Well, you and him.

MR. Y. Everyone who stayed.

HELEN. Did his story make you feel less nervous on your first day?

MR. Y. All day I was waiting for a secretary from the office to come in and sweep me off my feet. Maybe that's why –

HELEN. Why what?

MR. Y. Nothing.

HELEN. Okay. To be continued.

(She jots a final note down.)

Question Three: What's your favorite song?

KYLE. Time for the fluff questions. Favorite song, favorite movie, favorite book –

MR. Y. The fluff questions are the best questions.

3

The day of

(The window ledge.)

(The ladder is there and **JAMIE J** *is on the ledge with a stick. She wears headphones, maybe we only hear what she hears and the scene below is a dumbshow or muted.)*

(She looks up at the nest and tries to measure the angle before poking it down.)

(The faint sound of gunshots, two, very muffled.)

*(***JAMIE J** *gets a sting on the back of her neck. She thinks of swatting, but instead waves away the hornet. She places the stick on the ledge and takes off a glove to rub the sting.)*

(Another shot, closer.)

CLAIRE. *(Offstage.)* Mrs. Y!

*(***JAMIE J** *looks in the classroom.)*

JAMIE J. Claire?

*(***CLAIRE** *runs to the closed window and tries to raise it, but it's stuck.* **CLAIRE** *turns.)*

CLAIRE. Don't do this, please…

(Loud gunshot.)

*(***CLAIRE** *falls.)*

JAMIE J. No!

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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