

# The Patron Saint of Geeks

by

Michael Bettencourt

347-564-9998 [mobile] • michaelbettencourt@outlook.com  
http://www.m-bettencourt.com  
http://www.blockandtackleproductions.com  
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## DESCRIPTION

Bobby and Chad are close friends in the fifth grade. Classified as "geeks" in the school's social structure, they are harassed by Rad and his gang (a year older and members of the Boys Club football team) and the Pearls (a group of girls whose "clique" is very exclusive). Pushed by their bullying to the edge of their patience, Bobby and Chad contemplate using a gun to equalize the imbalance in power. The play not only examines the consequences of social stereotyping but also the choices the weak make when continually oppressed by the strong.

## CHARACTERS

- BOBBY, in the fifth grade -- plain kind of guy.
- MOM AND DAD, BOBBY's parents; referred to as "Mrs. D." and "Mr. D."
- CHAD, BOBBY's close friend, equally plain kind of guy.
- MUSCLE MAN, a spirit -- played by an experienced body builder, reminiscent of Charles Atlas.
- RAD, a bully at school -- in the sixth grade; on the Boys Club football team.
- RAD'S GANG, a group of four who follow RAD around; on the Boys Club football team as well. Though they dress individually, they all wear something that indicates their sports status, e.g., a jacket, sweater, tee-shirt.
- THE PEARLS, four girls in the sixth grade who hang together; while dressed individually, they wear some article that signifies their group: a jacket with the name on it, Che berets, or anything that would be current in their culture.
- DICK POWERS, coach of the Boys Club football team.

## SETTING

- Various locations in a small town in western Massachusetts: BOBBY's bedroom; the school; the football field; the Boys Club weight room

## TIME

Presentish

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Current music -- director's and actors' choices
- Four chairs, two used as twin beds in BOBBY's bedroom

- Several muscle magazines
- A set of weights and a weight bench
- Football equipment for RAD and BOBBY: helmets, shoulder pads, jerseys, pants, sneakers
- A small wooden box, large enough to hold a .25-caliber gun; also, key to the box
- Backpacks

**NOTE:** Actors are onstage for the entire play and assist with set changes, etc.

**NOTE:race/ethnicity** -- The characters can be played by any race/ethnicity. But the director should pay close attention to subtle messages in his or her choices. For instance, if DICK POWERS is played by a black man, the role will have a very different feel than if played by a white man. If BOBBY is the son of an "integrated" couple, or if CHAD is a different "race" than BOBBY, it sets up resonances that need to be addressed. Making these choices should add spice to the production, not a distraction.

\* \* \* \* \*

Single light, down stage center. Music as if coming from a radio or boombox. BOBBY and CHAD stand in the light, in gym shorts and tee-shirts, barefoot; the feel should be that they're getting ready for bed. They make body poses, as if they were body-builders at a competition, though they are clearly not body-builders.

On the floor near them are several body-builder magazines. The four chairs sit upstage; the two middle chairs have sheets folded on them. At first, BOBBY and CHAD work through their individual routines, with color commentary. Then they will do a synchronized routine together. As they do these initial moves, MUSCLE MAN comes on, upstage of them and slightly in shadow.

BOBBY

(posing)

And, yes, the crowd cheers as he works his way through his routine.

CHAD

He's got 'em on the run now. Especially the women -- he's got 'em going crazy in the aisles!

BOBBY

Look at those lats. Look at 'em! Look at 'em!

CHAD

The biceps are bulgin', buckoos.

BOBBY

I got a twelve-pack of abs.

CHAD

I got a whole case.

They begin a synchronized series of movements, a choreographed routine, that they've obviously worked out together over time. MUSCLE MAN also does it with them. At each move, BOBBY and CHAD make some kind of sound -- an exhalation, a slight grunt, etc. -- which punctuates the move. Even though they're geeks, there should be some grace to the movement.

At one point, BOBBY does one thing and CHAD does another. It breaks the flow. Music out.

BOBBY

No, man, you do this -- this, then over to this.

CHAD

Nope -- this, then this.

BOBBY

No --

CHAD

Yes -- that's how we worked it.

BOBBY

(to MUSCLE MAN)

Which is it?

MUSCLE MAN

Chad's right -- this, then this.

CHAD

Score!

BOBBY

I still like doing this.

CHAD

But that ain't it. This, then this --

Does it more slowly, to mock him -- gently.

CHAD

See, this, then this --

BOBBY

Fine.

BOBBY drops to the floor and tries to do a one-handed push-up.

MUSCLE MAN

The muscle boys had 'em going there, though, for a minute.

BOBBY

Muscle men, if you don't mind.

BOBBY can't do the push-up, so he starts doing sit-ups. CHAD starts doing them, too, and it becomes a race to do them as fast as possible. They collapse after about half a dozen or so. They both get to their knees and do a few more poses from there.

BOBBY

Yeah, once you got it, you got it, and ain't nobody going to take it away.

MOM appears.

MUSCLE MAN flexes his arms in a classic "biceps" pose; BOBBY and CHAD hang from his arms.

MOM

Bobby, are you getting ready for bed?

BOBBY

(shouting back)

I was born ready for bed.

MOM

No smart-mouth. Chad?

CHAD

Ready, Mrs. D.

MUSCLE MAN puts them down. They plant their feet against his and, holding each of their hands, MUSCLE MAN lets them lean out from either side. They sway.

MOM

Teeth?

BOBBY

Whiter than Chad's, Mom.

MOM

Hands?

CHAD

Fine, Mrs. D.

MOM

Then ready for bed.

BOBBY

You just said that.

MOM

We'll be up in a minute to say good night.

BOBBY

Why do grown-ups repeat themselves so much?

MUSCLE MAN pulls BOBBY and CHAD upright. BOBBY stands as if he's in front of a mirror; CHAD sits on the floor and leafs through one of the magazines. BOBBY slaps his guts and sucks it in, pinches the fat on his arms, etc.

BOBBY

What'd'ya think?

MUSCLE MAN

It's a body.

BOBBY

Yeah, but what kind?

CHAD

Geek body.

MUSCLE MAN

The kind that works -- it's healthy --

BOBBY

(distracted)

Stomach seems a little harder --

CHAD

Yeah, right.

MUSCLE MAN

It's well-fed.

BOBBY

(distracted)

Not really harder at all.

MUSCLE MAN

And handsome.

BOBBY

These arms -- pathetic!

CHAD

Quit looking, then.

BOBBY

(to MUSCLE MAN)

Huh?

MUSCLE MAN

Handsome.

BOBBY  
Handsome? Man, you gotta get some eyes!

MUSCLE MAN  
It gets good grades in school.

BOBBY  
(still distracted)  
Quadriceps -- lame!

MUSCLE MAN  
Parents who love you.

BOBBY takes CHAD's magazine. CHAD picks up another one.

BOBBY  
Look at this.

MUSCLE MAN  
Don't believe the magazines.

BOBBY  
(ignoring him)  
Man, these guys are great!

MUSCLE MAN  
Don't.

BOBBY  
And this! Look at her!

BOBBY hands the magazine to MUSCLE MAN to have him hold it open, then tries to imitate what he sees.

BOBBY  
See, if I could just push this a little --  
(gives up)  
I'll never look like that.

MUSCLE MAN  
Why do you want to?

BOBBY stands and looks at MUSCLE MAN as if MUSCLE MAN is the most complete idiot in the world.

BOBBY  
Huh? Are you kidding? If I had a body like that, those -- those --

CHAD  
Go ahead, say it.

BOBBY  
Assholes at school, Rad and his rat pack,  
wouldn't bother me.

CHAD  
Us --

BOBBY  
Us.

CHAD  
That's a fact.

MUSCLE MAN  
Better watch your language.

BOBBY  
That's what they are.

MOM  
Bobby, Chad.

BOBBY  
(yelling back)  
Yeah, Mom. We're jumping under the covers right  
now.

(to MUSCLE MAN)  
You don't know how it is, what Rad is like.

CHAD  
Rad and his rat pack.

BOBBY  
Sometimes -- sometimes --

MUSCLE MAN  
You want to hurt them, right?

BOBBY  
Yeah! Oh yeah! Bad!

BOBBY picks up another magazine and moves toward the beds.

CHAD  
Me -- I want to stay away.

MUSCLE MAN  
Make them feel what you feel.

They get into bed.

CHAD  
I like my teeth to stay in my mouth.

BOBBY

Yeah! Exactly! I want a body like this so that Rad pees in his pants when he sees me. I want to do a one-hand dumb-bell press with him and his thugs.

MUSCLE MAN

Thugs --

CHAD

The geek speaks.

MUSCLE MAN

Impressive word.

BOBBY

Slam them on the ground. Soccer kick his head. Drop-knee to his nose.

CHAD

Lips flapping.

BOBBY

I want my foot on his neck, laughing at him, spit coming out of my mouth, and saying, "You're never gonna do that again."

MUSCLE MAN

That would feel good to you?

BOBBY

Oh, yeah -- to me and about fifty million other people at school.

(to CHAD)

Right?

(making fake crowd sounds)

"Rad is dead. Long live Bobby!"

(jumps at MUSCLE MAN, who catches him)

Up on their shoulders; I'd be a hero.

MUSCLE MAN

(hoists BOBBY on his shoulder)

Long live Bobby!

BOBBY

Make him bleed.

MUSCLE MAN

And you'd be happy.



BOBBY  
Just once, man. Just once.

MUSCLE MAN  
And you'd be happy.

BOBBY  
Put me down.

MUSCLE MAN puts him down. BOBBY looks in the mirror one more time.

BOBBY  
This body sucks.

MUSCLE MAN  
No, it doesn't.

BOBBY  
I want to be like you.

MUSCLE MAN  
I'm just a dream. I'm just a wish of yours.

CHAD  
He's not real.

BOBBY  
But you know what I mean when I tell you these things.

MUSCLE MAN  
But I can't do anything about them --

CHAD  
See?

BOBBY  
You can't just, like, abracadabra me into looking like you?

MUSCLE MAN  
Longer and more messy than that.

BOBBY  
Will you help me?

CHAD  
Not-real -- can't help.

MUSCLE MAN  
I will try.

MOM enters. MUSCLE MAN retreats into the half-shadows.

MOM  
(to BOBBY)

C'mon, young man, into bed.

BOBBY is momentarily confused, having to switch realities. MOM picks up the magazines.

MOM  
And let's try to keep the room at least semi-  
straight for a moment.

BOBBY  
I'll take 'em.

DAD appears.

MOM  
I don't see what you see in those magazines.

DAD  
It's a "guy" thing, mother dearest --

(to the boys)  
-- isn't it?

(to MOM)  
They have your magazines -- we have ours.

By this time, BOBBY has placed the magazines under the chair, which is his "bed," and is seated, putting the sheet over his legs. MOM sits in the chair next to the "bed."

MOM  
Well, I don't think it's beautiful at all.

DAD  
(making mock poses)  
It's not about beauty, mon cher -- though I would argue with you about the beauty thing.

MOM  
Why would they go and -- inflate themselves like that?

DAD  
Power. Right, bucko?

BOBBY  
The hour of power.

CHAD  
The music of muscle.

DAD

Right!

MOM

They get so tight they can hardly walk -- or scratch their armpits.

BOBBY

That's not true, Mom.

(to CHAD)

They're so lame.

MOM

Then explain it to me

BOBBY

They're athletes just like everyone else, Mom. They train, they gotta eat right, they compete. Some of them make a lot of money --

DAD

The babe's got a point.

BOBBY

-- and nobody messes with them. Nobody. That's the coolest thing.

MOM

I could outrun them --

BOBBY

It's how they look. They just have to walk into a room --

DAD

Occupy space.

BOBBY

-- and everyone sees them --

(makes a muscle pose)

-- sees them -- and no one's even going to bother them to begin with because they see how big they are, and I think that's cool because then you don't have to do anything and people leave you alone.

DAD

A Ph.D. in the making.

MOM

It just seems -- weird, that's all.

BOBBY

It's not weird, Mom.

MOM

Chad, doesn't it seem weird to you?

DAD

(to CHAD and MOM)

No weirder, heh, than 25 ways to groovier toenails or "16 ways you can thin your thighs and earn money at the same time."

CHAD

(laughs)

I see those magazines at the store.

MOM

I don't read those --

DAD

They zero in on your weak spots, like Dracula breaking into the blood bank.

CHAD

Ughhh!

MOM

You're saying Mr. Muscle Magic magazine is about weak spots?

In the shadow, MUSCLE MAN goes through his routine as an underscore to the story of Charles Atlas.

DAD

Always. Remember Charles Atlas? Do you know who Charles Atlas was?

BOBBY

Real name Angelo Siciliano.

CHAD

Born 1894, came to the United States in 1903.

DAD

(to MOM)

See, they learn from those magazines. Then you know about his system, "Dynamic-Tension."

CHAD

Invented while watching lions stretch at the zoo.

BOBBY

Declared the "Most Perfectly Developed Man" in 1922.

DAD

Supposedly the story was real: Some bully kicked sand in his face at the beach, and he vowed to never to let that happen again. So he bulked himself up and promised the same for other men with his patented "Dynamic-Tension" system.

(to MOM)

Let me use your chair.

MOM

What are you doing?

DAD moves the chairs away downstage and prepares to do a "dipping exercise": a push-up done with the hands on the chairs and legs straight back, so that the body is angled; then down and up.

DAD

This was called the "dipping" exercise.

MOM

Where did you learn this?

BOBBY

Dad!

DAD

(ignoring both of them)

You go like this -- and then like this --

DAD tries it twice more, and then collapses.

DAD

To be done faithfully every morning and night.

BOBBY

I got his genes --

DAD

I'll start tomorrow, hey? The Charles Atlas system for men who felt weak and tiny and insignificant. Like most men feel most of the time, I might add.

MOM

Oh, please!

DAD  
(sitting down)

It's true.

MOM  
Men don't feel weak and tiny and insignificant.

DAD  
Wrong.

MOM  
(to BOBBY)  
Don't believe him.

DAD  
(to BOBBY)  
For guys like us, Mr. Atlas knew, because he became the patron saint of geeks. What was his motto?

BOBBY  
"No one picks on a strong man."

DAD  
People would send away for his books, and keep sending away for them. Your grandfather did that, when he was about your age.

BOBBY  
Grandpa?

CHAD  
Did it work?

DAD  
I don't know, to tell you the truth.

DAD walks over to MOM. He starts massaging her shoulders.

DAD  
He looked pretty skinny all his life. I only learned that he did it because I found the instruction books in the attic.

MOM  
Remember the gangs -- ooh, that feels good --

BOBBY  
Grandpa was in a gang?

MOM  
No -- bullied by gangs -- a little softer --

DAD  
Don't know my own strength.

MOM  
They'd steal his money and pull his pants down.

BOBBY  
Really?

DAD  
When he was about your age. Pretty regular, it was -- kind of a dance. It seemed that no matter which route he took, the bullies would be waiting. Beat him up if he didn't have money --

MOM  
Right there -- ah --

DAD  
Beat him up if he had money -- they just wanted to beat people up. But there was Charles Atlas in the magazines.

(to MOM)  
That okay?

MOM  
Thanks.

DAD  
Promising salvation.

BOBBY  
I can understand that.

DAD  
Yeah?

BOBBY  
Yeah. I can completely, completely, completely understand that.

CHAD  
Yeah.

MOM and DAD look at each other, hearing something in their words.

MOM  
Is everything okay?

BOBBY  
Yeah.

MOM  
Chad?

CHAD  
Yes.

DAD  
Everything all right at school?

BOBBY  
Yeah, no sweat.

DAD  
Sure?

BOBBY  
Yeah.

DAD  
Chad?

CHAD  
Everything's fine.

MOM  
You know, you can tell us anything --

BOBBY  
Everything's fine, Mom.

(shows his teeth)  
See, clean.

(shows hands)  
See, clean, too.

BOBBY elbows CHAD, who holds out his hands as well.

MOM  
You guys got hot dates?

BOBBY  
Mom --

MOM  
I don't know -- they are getting kind of handsome.

DAD  
Kind of handsome?

(to the boys)  
Sheesh, it's hard to get a compliment out of her.



MOM

Don't want to spoil the goods.

DAD

Took me years to get one. I think they've got all the right ingredients.

Kisses BOBBY good night. ruffles CHAD's hair.

DAD

I do.

MOM

I do, too.

(kisses BOBBY and CHAD)

Good night.

DAD

Buenas noches, señores. And sweet dreams of Charles Atlas.

As they leave, MOM turns back.

MOM

Are you sure everything's okay?

BOBBY

It's fine, Mom.

MOM

All right -- just checking. You are both handsome, you know.

BOBBY

And Dad is Charles Atlas.

CHAD laughs.

MOM

(laughing)

You wait -- I'll bet you he starts his "dips" tomorrow! Sweet dreams.

MOM leaves. MUSCLE MAN comes and sits down by the bed.

MUSCLE MAN

They mean well. They do pretty well, too.

BOBBY

They're clueless.

CHAD

I like your folks.

MUSCLE MAN

They're not clueless -- they just have different clues.

BOBBY

Yeah? I wish they had a clue for me.

MUSCLE MAN

They can only read the clues you give them.

CHAD

Give 'em a break.

BOBBY

(tightens his bicep)

What'd'ya think?

But BOBBY lets it go and doesn't even wait for an answer.

BOBBY

Monday -- Rad -- My grandfather -- I don't think I want to go to school.

MUSCLE MAN

Unless you have the plague, Mom will call you at 7 AM.

BOBBY

The time of doom.

MUSCLE MAN

I wish I could help you more.

BOBBY and CHAD close their eyes. Lights fade out. MUSCLE MAN exits. Transition music.

\* \* \* \* \*

A dream sequence, with appropriate music and lighting. RAD and his boys stand upstage left. POWERS stands behind CHAD and BOBBY, in dim light. The PEARLS stand downstage center and about two arms lengths apart. During BOBBY's and CHAD's lines, they primp themselves in a choreographed way.

The music is a heavy rhythm, pulsing. As it starts, BOBBY wakes up, a confused look on this face. He stands on his chair. Music goes to underscoring.

BOBBY

Chad, what the -- the -- hell is going on here?

CHAD  
(gets on chair)  
Don't ask me -- I was in a nice dream, and then  
I'm dragged over here!

BOBBY  
I don't like this.

CHAD  
Look, the Pearls!

BOBBY  
Them, here? They treat us like toxic waste.

CHAD  
And that's when they're treating us nice!

Music comes up to full. The following lines should be choreographed with simple but coordinated movements.

PEARL 1  
We are the Pearls.

PEARL 2  
The stand-up girls.

PEARL 3  
Everyone likes us.

PEARL 4  
In the whole wide world.

PEARL 1  
We got the grace.

PEARL 2  
To make our case.

PEARL 3  
And if you don't like us.

PEARL 4  
Then we're in your face.

Music stops. The PEARLS gather together downstage center in a posed group. Lights come up on RAD and his boys: cool and cruel but handsome.

The PEARLS slowly turn their heads upstage to look and speak as if tasting a good food.

PEARLS  
Um, um, um.

Music begins again, underscoring.

CHAD

Oh, man, you can really ruin a dream! Rad and his apes.

BOBBY

I didn't invite them!

CHAD

But they're here. My butt hurts, and they haven't even kicked it yet!

PEARL 1

Look at Rad.

PEARL 2

He is fine, fine, fine.

PEARL 4

(to PEARL 3)

She needs to get her eyes checked.

PEARL 3

Nothing wrong with her eyes.

A light comes up on POWERS.

POWERS

(heavy voice)

You better respect my players.

CHAD

Oh great -- Coach Powers.

POWERS

Because you two can't cut it.

CHAD

The ex-Marine nut case.

POWERS

(laughing)

Look at those arms!

RAD

(to PEARL 1)

You like what you see?

CHAD

All the mean people together.

POWERS

I wouldn't even use you as waterboys.

CHAD  
Shoulda made popcorn.

BOBBY  
Will you shut up?

RAD  
You got good eyes.

Similar heavy musical beat.

RAD  
My name is Rad.

BOYS  
We are his gang.

ALL  
Wherever we want to.

RAD  
We do a hang.

RAD  
We don't like goths.

BOY 1  
We don't like geeks.

BOY 2  
We don't like anyone.

RAD  
Who's soft and weak.

Music stops. Both the PEARLS and RAD and the gang point at CHAD and BOBBY.

ALL  
Like you!

Then RAD's boys look at the PEARLS.

THE BOYS  
(as if tasting a good food)  
Um, um, um.

RAD's GANG and the PEARLS join each other downstage, in dim light, pairing up. RAD goes up to CHAD and BOBBY and, pulling them off the chairs, hauls them downstage center. The pairs move so that they circle behind RAD, CHAD, and BOBBY. POWERS stands on the chair that was BOBBY's "bed," arms folded, tough. Throughout the next lines, the PEARLS and RAD's GANG will strike poses that show their cruelty. They strike their first pose.

RAD  
Here are the geeks. What do you say?

ALL  
Geek salute!

They all give BOBBY and CHAD the geek salute -- director's discretion to create this salute with the actors.

RAD  
What should we do with them?

PEARL 1  
Hog feed.

RAD 1  
Death wedgies.

PEARL 4  
Tattoo on the forehead.

RAD 3  
Clean the toilet bowl with their tongues.

Second pose.

PEARL 2  
Bang their teeth on the water fountains.

RAD 2  
Make 'em kiss -- naw, they probably already do that.

PEARL 3  
Suck my snots.

RAD 4  
Drown 'em.

Third pose.

RAD  
What'd'ya got to say for yourselves?

POWERS  
Come on!

RAD  
Come on -- I don't hear the magic words.

Smacks CHAD on the back of the head. Fourth pose.

CHAD  
(to BOBBY)  
You have the suckiest dreams.

RAD  
Shut up. Answer me. What are the magic words?

POWERS  
Come on!

CHAD  
I don't know. May the farts be with you?

Smacks CHAD again. Fifth pose.

CHAD  
Don't be a smart-ass.

BOBBY  
Don't hit him.

Smacks BOBBY.

RAD  
I'm equal opportunity. Maybe you know the answer.

BOBBY  
Stop it, and I'll say what you want us to say.

RAD  
(to everyone)  
He knows his lines!

Sixth and last pose.

RAD  
Coach?

POWERS  
Yeah?

RAD  
I wouldn't even let 'em pick up the jock straps.

POWERS  
Too low even for that.

RAD  
(to BOBBY)  
Well?

Music begins, low, percussive, but not as driven as before. BOBBY looks at everyone around him, turning to do so. They can respond to

him as they see fit: a smirk, a dismissal, etc. When he returns to his original position, he speaks.

BOBBY  
(to CHAD)

Sorry about this --

(to RAD)

I'm sorry --

RAD

Nope, nope, not right.

(points to the ground)

Knees.

BOBBY

Come on.

RAD

Knees.

The PEARLS and RAD's GANG begin chanting "Knees! Knees!", not loud but insistently.

POWERS  
(with a shout)

Knees!

BOBBY gets on his knees. CHAD also gets on his knees.

RAD

Better. Now -- begin.

BOBBY

I apologize --

CHAD

I apologize --

BOBBY

For being a geek --

CHAD

For being a geek --

BOBBY

And less than perfect --

CHAD

And less than perfect --

BOBBY

That I'm not cool --



CHAD  
That I'm not handsome --

BOBBY  
That I'm not like you.

CHAD  
That I'm not like you.

Music stops. Beat.

RAD  
(to everyone)  
I don't know about you, but that made me feel  
better.

Music begins: good strong dance music. The PEARLS, RAD, and RAD's GANG start dancing while BOBBY and CHAD keep kneeling and POWERS looks over everything with arms folded, as if he were a cruel king. RAD walks up and stands on the chair next to him and folds his arms. Lights fade out while the music continues during the scene transition.

\* \* \* \* \*

During the scene transition, several things happen. RAD and RAD's GANG get dressed in gym clothes, and a weight set and a weight bench is brought on. There should be two bars, one on the bench and one on the floor, and assorted weights and dumb-bells. These weight don't necessarily need to be real weights -- they could be weights made out of cardboard, for a touch of surreality, or even mimed, with sound effects for the metallic sounds. Music could be playing.

The boys are there, with POWERS, working out. CHAD and BOBBY, also in gym clothes, walk up to what would be the door of the weight room. The GANG can ad lib lines, but they should not interfere with the lines being said between CHAD and BOBBY. As they're talking, MUSCLE MAN enters behind them.

CHAD  
Let go of me! You have no brains left. I'm not  
going in there.

BOBBY  
I am.

MUSCLE MAN  
Bobby --

CHAD  
Membership dues doesn't cover broken bones.

BOBBY  
I'm in.

MUSCLE MAN

I understand why you're doing this.

CHAD

Go later. When they're not here. You could do that.

BOBBY

Now.

MUSCLE MAN

But you have to be careful.

CHAD

An hour won't make any diff --

BOBBY

(turning on him)

You pansy!

CHAD

What?

BOBBY

You geek! You wuss!

MUSCLE MAN

Be careful.

BOBBY

You like that?

CHAD

No.

BOBBY

Do you?

CHAD

No.

BOBBY

I'm sick of it. It makes me sick.

(facing the weight room)

I'm Charles Atlas.

CHAD

You're whacked.

BOBBY

I'm Charles Atlas.

CHAD

Bobby --

BOBBY

The patron saint of geeks.

BOBBY takes a step toward the weight room.

CHAD

Don't!

MUSCLE MAN catches BOBBY in mid-stride and escorts him into a separate light. Lights dim on everyone else, and everyone stops what he is doing and pays attention to the conversation between MUSCLE MAN and BOBBY.

MUSCLE MAN

It's one thing for you to do this. It's another thing to shame your best friend.

BOBBY

He's a coward.

MUSCLE MAN

Stop that. Anger makes you stupid.

BOBBY

Always be strong, right?

MUSCLE MAN

Always act strong. It's not just muscles.

BOBBY

Well, I don't feel strong right now. In fact, I'm about to mess my shorts walking into that room.

MUSCLE MAN

If you're scared, tell Chad. Don't pull a "Rad" on him -- don't morph into the thing you hate. Be strong? Be honest.

BOBBY

You won't leave?

MUSCLE MAN

You know I can't do anything -- I'm just a thought of yours, a hope.

BOBBY

But hopes can help?

MUSCLE MAN

Yes.

BOBBY

So don't leave.

MUSCLE MAN

As long as you need me.

They walk back to CHAD. The action resumes.

CHAD

Where'd you go? Just staring off into space.

BOBBY

I told you -- Charles Atlas. Hey, old buddy, old pal --

CHAD

(warily)

What?

BOBBY

Stupid award for sticking you with the names.

CHAD

Good. Now -- home? Home?

BOBBY

I'm scared.

CHAD

Then home.

BOBBY

Don't really want to -- but I have to.

CHAD

Home is this way.

BOBBY

I called you names because I was scared. You don't have to come. Making my own mess.

CHAD

Brown outs in the underwear?

BOBBY

Level 5 brown outs.

CHAD

That bad, huh?

BOBBY

Yeah.

CHAD  
And you're gonna?

BOBBY  
"Dynamic-Tension."

CHAD claps his hands together once, then gestures with his right hand to go into the weight room. BOBBY enters.

CHAD  
Kitty litter for brains.

Everyone in the room turns to them. MUSCLE MAN retreats upstage.

RAD  
Sound the geek alert.

BOBBY  
(points to the sign)  
Weight room's open.

RAD  
For them who know what they're doing. Coach --

POWERS  
It's reserved, boys.

BOBBY  
I'm gonna work out.

CHAD  
Me, too.

POWERS  
We have the room till five.

BOBBY  
It's five-thirty. We're members. An adult's in the room. So, we're gonna start.

RAD  
Next thing you know, Coach, he's gonna want to join the team.

POWERS  
Let him pay his dues.

RAD makes an extravagant gesture towards the weight bench. BOBBY, knowing exactly what to do from reading all this magazines, goes to it, indicating for CHAD to follow him. Everyone else in the room gathers around to watch, ringing them in.

BOBBY  
We're going to do some bench presses.

CHAD

We?

BOBBY

Me.

The bar has more weight on it than BOBBY wants, so BOBBY and CHAD start taking off the weights. They know how to do this from reading, but they've never really handled the weights, so it is a combination of awkward and knowledgeable, compounded by everyone watching. They leave two 25-pound weights on. BOBBY gets on the bench.

BOBBY

Now, spot me.

CHAD

Spot you -- right.

BOBBY lifts the weights off the rack and does one press.

RAD

That's one.

BOBBY does one more.

RAD

That's two.

(to everyone)

Breaking the record, huh?

BOBBY does one more.

RAD

Three!

As BOBBY goes for his fourth, RAD gestures to two of his GANG, and when BOBBY has the bar on his chest, they move in and hold it there, so that he can't push it up. CHAD can't do a thing. They start to press it into this chest, making it difficult for him to breathe.

RAD

You're really stupid.

BOBBY

You're cr[azy] --

RAD

Go buy a weight set and do it in your bedroom -- the way you do a lot of things alone in your bedroom.

BOBBY

I can't br[eathe] --

CHAD  
(to POWERS)

Come on!

POWERS  
You're spotting him -- you do something.

CHAD actually makes a rush toward one of the GANG holding the bar, but he gets smacked and falls to the ground. He's up almost instantly.

BOBBY  
Don't --

POWERS  
Hard to get a good spotter.

CHAD grabs a 5- or 10-pound weight and holds it as if to throw it or hit someone with it.

CHAD  
Let him go!

Everyone laughs.

POWERS  
Rad -- enough.

The boys release their grip. The bar rests on BOBBY's chest -- he does not have the strength to move it. CHAD puts the weight down and goes to help BOBBY raise the bar to the rack. Then he kneels beside BOBBY.

CHAD  
You okay?

BOBBY  
(sitting up)  
I feel great.

CHAD  
Yeah?

BOBBY nods yes.

CHAD  
Yeah, me too. Great.

BOBBY  
Great workout.

CHAD  
Sweating like a pig.

BOBBY

Yeah, good start.

BOBBY stands, painfully but also proud.

BOBBY

Same time tomorrow, right, Chad?

CHAD

Yeah. We'll be back.

BOBBY

Curls tomorrow.

CHAD

Dips, too.

BOBBY

Let's go.

The move out of the weight room. The GANG continues to lift weights, and their lines intersperse with BOBBY and CHAD. MUSCLE MAN follows them. BOBBY is in a little bit of pain.

BOBBY

I hate them.

MUSCLE MAN

Be careful.

CHAD

Don't want to go back.

MUSCLE MAN

What do you want to do, Bobby?

BOBBY

I hate them.

CHAD

I don't want to go back.

BOBBY

I hate them.

CHAD

Don't say it again.

MUSCLE MAN

"Don't say it again" is right.

BOBBY rubs his chest.



BOBBY  
(to MUSCLE MAN)

What do you know?

(to CHAD)  
Nothing to our parents.

CHAD  
Right.

MUSCLE MAN  
What do you want to do?

Looks back at the weight room, then decides.

BOBBY  
I want to go home.

CHAD  
I want to go home, too.

CHAD starts to move away. BOBBY winces in pain as takes the classic Charles Atlas stance.

BOBBY  
Look at me -- Charles Atlas. Useless.

BOBBY joins CHAD.

BOBBY  
Dinner?

CHAD  
Deal.

BOBBY  
Thanks.

CHAD  
(sniffing)  
Level 5 brownout, man!

BOBBY walks bow-legged, pulling on his shorts.

BOBBY  
Level 6.

They exit. MUSCLE MAN watches them until the lights are out.  
Transition music.

\* \* \* \* \*

During the transition, the weight set is moved off and BOBBY's bedroom is set up. BOBBY is in bed; his MOM and DAD sit on either side. Even

before the lights comes up, DAD is talking, so that we catch him mid-sentence.

DAD

-- this stupid joke about Gandhi at work today.

(to BOBBY)

Wanna hear it?

BOBBY

Huh?

DAD

Gandhi. This joke.

MOM

You were awful quiet at dinner.

BOBBY

Yeah, Dad. Who is Gandhi?

DAD

(to MOM)

Who is Gandhi?

MOM

Different generation.

DAD

Gandhi. Gandhi lived in India, and he helped his country get independence from England. A long time ago England went to India and stole everything, and Gandhi was the guy that helped people get it back. He was a strange man. He never wore shoes, so he built up these enormous callouses on his feet. He was also skinny because he didn't eat a lot, which also gave him bad breath. And he liked to pray a lot. So --

MOM

Sooo -- The joke?

DAD

Sooo -- Gandhi was known as the super-calloused fragile mystic expelling halitosis. Eh? Eh? Get it?

MOM

Barely registers on the Laughometer.

BOBBY

No.

DAD  
Not pretty lame?

BOBBY  
No, I don't get it.

DAD  
Mary Poppins?

(begins to sing)  
"Supercallifragilistic -- "

MOM  
Save us all!

BOBBY  
Yeah, Dad.

DAD  
Well, it's clear that my attempt to raise your  
spirits has failed completely. And Chad didn't  
eat much tonight.

MOM  
He just picked.

DAD  
In fact, Chatterbox Chad didn't say much, either.  
You both looked like a funeral. Everything okay?

BOBBY  
Great.

MOM  
I don't know --

(feeling his forehead)  
Honey --

BOBBY  
(pulling away)  
Mom!

MOM  
You don't feel warm.

DAD  
Maybe we should let him get to sleep.

(to MOM)  
Just a mood.

(to BOBBY)  
I'll try to get some better jokes.

They kiss him goodnight and start to leave.

BOBBY

Charles Atlas is a fake, you know.

DAD

What?

BOBBY

Charles Atlas is a fake.

DAD sits back down by the bed.

DAD

A "fake."

BOBBY

A liar. He's weak.

DAD

Well, weak, yeah -- he's been dead for quite a while.

MOM

(sotto voce)

No jokes --

BOBBY

Dead. Yeah.

DAD

Well, okay -- you're right, he's dead.

BOBBY

Since 1972.

MOM

Bobby --

BOBBY

Goodnight, Mom.

DAD kisses BOBBY.

DAD

Definitely better jokes. Sleep tight.

MOM

Don't let the bedbugs bite.

DAD

And if they do --

MOM

Take a shoe --

They wait.

DAD

Hey, pardner, you're supposed to chime in!

BOBBY

(reluctantly)

And whack 'em till they're black and blue.

MOM

Sweet dreams.

They exit.

BOBBY

Till they're black and blue.

BOBBY, as before, pulls the covers up over his head. Lights change, music starts -- new dream sequence. RAD comes out dressed in a football outfit: shoulder pads, jersey, pants, sneakers. He carries his helmet. He is also dragging another set of equipment. The PEARLS comes on as well, dressed as cheerleaders with pom-poms, and are joined by POWERS. When not speaking, The PEARLS will do a simple, silent, choreographed cheerleading routine. POWERS mimes coaching from the sidelines of the action, though he never talks directly to RAD.

RAD

Bobby! The skunk! The jerk! Get your rear-end out here!

BOBBY comes out from under his cover.

PEARLS

2, 4, 6, 8 / Isn't Rad just lookin' great!

RAD

(pointing to the equipment)

Put it on!

BOBBY starts getting dressed.

PEARLS

Rah, rah, la di dah!

RAD

What was that stunt all about? Me looking stupid in front of my friends and the coach? You are going to pay. Pay. Pay.

PEARLS  
No pain, no gain / That's our / refrain.

RAD  
Come on, hurry up!

PEARLS  
Rad'll drive Bobby / So insane.

RAD  
You think you can go head to head with me, you  
think you're better than me. You need a lesson.

BOBBY is dressed in full gear except for helmet.

BOBBY  
I don't want to do this.

RAD  
No choice. Get down!

They put their helmets on. BOBBY awkwardly gets down in a three-point  
football stance. RAD breaks down into a linebacker's stance.

PEARLS  
(in a loud whisper)  
Hit 'em / Hit 'em low.

RAD  
Come on.

PEARLS  
(in a loud whisper)  
Hit 'em where / Their cherries grow.

BOBBY  
(stands up, takes off his helmet)  
I don't want to --

RAD  
(takes off helmet)  
Your mother sucks!

BOBBY  
Stop it.

RAD  
She sucks a big, long --

PEARLS  
Suck, sucks!

BOBBY  
Stop it --

RAD & PEARLS  
Mama sucks! Mama sucks!

BOBBY  
Just stop it!

RAD  
And your father -- heh. A jerk, just like you.

PEARLS  
Bobby's dad / Has got no class.

RAD & PEARLS  
He's just a little / Pansy-ass.

BOBBY  
Not real, none of this is real --

RAD  
This is your life, dog-butt. Get used to it.

RAD puts on his helmet.

PEARLS  
Hut, hut, hut / Bobby's just a dog butt.

RAD  
Do it!

PEARLS  
Look at Bobby dance / He's peeing in his pants.

RAD  
Do it, butt-wipe!

PEARLS  
Bobby's gonna cry / Bobby's gonna die.

RAD  
(screaming)  
Do it!

The following needs to be carefully choreographed. The PEARLS continue their choreography. In a fit of rage, BOBBY puts on his helmet and charges RAD, who, with one forearm, deftly throws him to the ground. BOBBY does it again, and so does RAD. On the third charge, RAD hits BOBBY under the chin and knocks him down flat. RAD stands over him. While RAD speaks, BOBBY pulls himself up.

RAD  
(grabbing his own crotch)  
You don't have it here, man, where it counts.  
You're nothing, you're less than nothing. Slime.

PEARLS  
(in a very low whisper)  
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

RAD  
(slaps BOBBY's helmet)

Crap.

(slaps him again)  
Slug.

Goes to slap him a third time, but BOBBY ducks, causing RAD to miss.

RAD  
Oh, man, you die now!

PEARLS  
(in a very low whisper)  
Die, die, die.

RAD  
Get down.

When BOBBY doesn't obey, RAD pounds him on the shoulder pads, forcing BOBBY down.

RAD  
Assume the position, dead man.

BOBBY gets into a four-point stance, visibly shaken. RAD gets into his linebacker stance. The PEARLS stop and watch the action.

RAD  
One more time, meatball.

BOBBY attacks, and instead of hitting him, RAD grabs his face mask and leads him, twisting his neck until RAD throws BOBBY to the ground like a roped cow. BOBBY lay there, unmoving; RAD puts his foot on BOBBY, pounds his chest, and shouts like a gorilla.

RAD  
Ahhhhhh!!!!

PEARLS  
Two stars, four stars, six stars, a comet / When  
I look at Bobby --

RAD & PEARLS  
I just want to vomit!

(a finger or two in their mouths)  
Aggghhhh!



If possible, the PEARLS should pick up RAD and carry him off. If not, they surround him, in both situations chanting "Rad, Rad / He's so bad / He's the worst mutha gangsta / We ever had" in a loud stage whisper as he walks off in triumph. As he exits, RAD turns to BOBBY; POWERS stands behind him.

RAD

Worthless. Worm food. You got nothing. Might as well die right now and save us the trouble of putting up with your miserable little life.

PEARLS

(in a loud whisper)

Yeah!

They exit. BOBBY gets up slowly, takes off his helmet.

BOBBY

Where are you? Where are you?!

MUSCLE MAN enters. BOBBY starts getting out of the equipment.

MUSCLE MAN

Right here.

BOBBY

You're worthless.

MUSCLE MAN

I told you that --

BOBBY

Hope is worthless.

MUSCLE MAN

Hope doesn't always work.

BOBBY

You made me a promise.

MUSCLE MAN

Hope doesn't always work when you want it to work.

BOBBY

No more hope.

MUSCLE MAN

Don't say that.

BOBBY

No more hope. No more you. All on my own. I am all alone.

(makes a flicking motion)  
You, gone.

MUSCLE MAN  
You have Chad.

BOBBY  
Worse than nothing. I might as well drop 'em and  
bend over now.

MUSCLE MAN  
You are not alone.

BOBBY  
I will be when you leave.

BOBBY moves the equipment toward MUSCLE MAN. He makes the flicking motion again.

BOBBY  
Gone.

BOBBY goes back to his "bed."

BOBBY  
In here all on my own.

BOBBY pulls the covers up over his head. Lights out. Transition music. MUSCLE MAN takes off the football equipment.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAD's house. Music changes into something quietly ominous. In the darkness, a small table is brought on and on it is placed a wooden box about the size of a cigar box. In the box is a .25-caliber pistol: the Raven MP-25; however, the gun is never shown. A single light comes up on the box. If possible, the lighting here should be spooky without being hokey -- something to establish danger without overdoing it.

BOBBY and CHAD appear in the dimness, now fully dressed and carrying school backpacks, and look at the box. CHAD looks at BOBBY, and BOBBY at CHAD. They then walk to the box but do not touch it. They drop their backpacks. Music out.

BOBBY  
Open it.

CHAD  
No.

BOBBY  
Open it.

CHAD  
I don't want to.

BOBBY  
Open it.

CHAD  
It's my mother's.

BOBBY  
I don't care -- you said --

CHAD  
It was stupid.

BOBBY  
But you said it, and you can't take it back.

CHAD  
I can.

BOBBY  
You can't. You promised it, and now it's there,  
and you have to do what you said. What you  
promised. Or else --

CHAD  
Or else what? Or what?

BOBBY  
I will hate you. I will hate you forever.

CHAD  
Hate me?

BOBBY  
Yeah.

CHAD  
You wouldn't do that.

BOBBY begins to circle CHAD.

BOBBY  
I would.

CHAD  
You can't hate me.

BOBBY  
Then show me.

CHAD  
I'm your best friend.

BOBBY  
Best friends help each other out.

CHAD  
You can't hate me. I'm your best friend.

BOBBY  
Then show me. Do it.

CHAD  
I can't.

BOBBY  
Then you're not my best friend.

CHAD  
I am your best friend! But I can't do this.

BOBBY  
Then why did you tell me? Why did you tell me?

CHAD  
I don't know!

BOBBY  
Because you hate him, too.

CHAD  
Don't hate anybody.

BOBBY  
Liar.

BOBBY stops circling.

BOBBY  
Hate, hate, hate --

CHAD  
Stop it!

BOBBY  
Don't you? Huh?

CHAD  
(hesitating)  
Yes.

BOBBY  
Him. All of 'em. Right?

CHAD  
Yes.

The guys. BOBBY

The guys. CHAD

They hate us, too. BOBBY

The guys hate us. CHAD

And they will never leave us alone. BOBBY

Because they're guys. CHAD

And we aren't. And the girls hate us, too. BOBBY

They hate us, too. CHAD

They like guys. BOBBY

And we're not guys. CHAD

We're jerks -- BOBBY

Wusses -- CHAD

Morons -- BOBBY

Retards -- CHAD

Geeks -- BOBBY

Losers -- CHAD

Nerds -- BOBBY

Wimps -- CHAD

BOBBY

But not guys. So --

CHAD digs into his pocket and pulls out a key, holds it up in the light.

CHAD

My mother doesn't know. She doesn't know I know where this is.

BOBBY

So --

CHAD goes to the box and unlocks it, but he doesn't open it. He steps away from it. BOBBY goes up to the box and opens it, stares at the contents, then circles the box.

CHAD

It's not big.

BOBBY

Doesn't have to be.

CHAD

She bought it for protection.

BOBBY

It's beautiful.

CHAD

But she got scared of it.

BOBBY

It can talk.

CHAD

I remember when her and my father brought it home.

BOBBY

It's not big, but it can talk loud. It can talk louder than me, or you.

CHAD

It made me scared.

BOBBY

Did she ever use it?

CHAD

No. She wanted to get rid of it, but my father wouldn't let her. He wanted her to be protected, he said.

BOBBY stops circling.

BOBBY

Where are the bullets?

CHAD

In another box.

BOBBY

Do you have that key? Do you?

CHAD

Yeah.

BOBBY moves away from the box.

BOBBY

You could hide that in your pocket. Right here.

CHAD

Stop it.

BOBBY

Or here. And the next time Rad mouths off --

CHAD

Don't, okay?

BOBBY

Why not?

CHAD

(goes to close the box)

Let's get it out of here.

BOBBY

Don't!

CHAD stops.

BOBBY

Why did you get the keys?

CHAD

What?

BOBBY

Why did you get the keys?

CHAD

I want to get it out of --

BOBBY

Why?

CHAD

Why?

BOBBY

Why don't you tell your mom and dad you know?

During the "interrogation," CHAD gets increasingly irritated as BOBBY gets closer to CHAD's true feelings.

CHAD

About the keys?

BOBBY

Yeah.

CHAD

I don't know.

BOBBY

You could've told them.

CHAD

Yeah.

BOBBY

And they'd hide the keys, and you wouldn't get scared again.

CHAD

Yeah.

BOBBY

Because you're pretty scared right now, right?

CHAD

Yeah.

BOBBY

But you didn't tell them.

CHAD

No.

BOBBY

You're keeping a secret.

CHAD

Yeah.

BOBBY

From them.

CHAD

Yeah.



BOBBY  
You know where her gun is.

CHAD  
Yeah.

BOBBY  
And they don't know you know.

CHAD  
No.

BOBBY  
It's a big secret. You're keeping a big secret  
from your parents.

CHAD  
Yeah.

BOBBY  
Bigger than Charles Atlas.

CHAD  
What?

BOBBY  
Bigger than hope.

CHAD  
I don't understand -- Leave me alone.

BOBBY  
Why?

CHAD  
Leave me alone.

BOBBY  
(imitating the PEARLS, in a heavy whisper)  
"Rad, Rad / He's so bad -- "

CHAD  
Shut up!

BOBBY  
(in the same whisper)  
"He's the worst mutha gangsta / We ever had."

CHAD  
You're going weird!

BOBBY  
Why don't you tell them you where the keys are?  
Why?

CHAD  
(hesitating, indicating the box)  
That --

BOBBY  
What?

CHAD  
That --

BOBBY  
Yeah? That --

CHAD  
That doesn't make me feel --

BOBBY  
Yeah?

CHAD  
It doesn't make me feel as scared as some other  
things make me feel -- scared.

BOBBY  
Yeah. Yeah. Exactly. Exactly.

BOBBY walks to the open box. He indicates for CHAD to come closer. CHAD hesitates; BOBBY encourages him. CHAD comes forward, and BOBBY puts CHAD's hand on the gun inside the box. They stand there with their hands on the gun.

BOBBY  
(in a whisper)  
"Rad, Rad / He makes you mad -- "

(pause)  
"Someone needs / To hurt him bad."

CHAD  
Yeah.

BOBBY  
All of them.

CHAD  
All of them.

BOBBY  
The guys.

CHAD  
Clean things up.

I hate them. BOBBY

I hate them, too. CHAD

They look at each other. They take their hands off the gun.

Well? CHAD

Yeah? BOBBY

Do you want? CHAD

Do you want? BOBBY

Yeah. And no. CHAD

We do it together -- or we don't. BOBBY

Right -- together, or not. How? CHAD

What? BOBBY

I mean, how? You know -- how? CHAD

You mean -- BOBBY

Yeah -- you know. Like, who carries it? CHAD

Carries it? BOBBY

Yeah. CHAD

I don't know. BOBBY

You? CHAD

I don't know. BOBBY

Me? CHAD

You don't want to. BOBBY

Right. CHAD

You can't. BOBBY

I don't think I can. So then it'd be you. CHAD  
Right?

I guess. BOBBY

You'd have to carry it. CHAD

We gotta decide that. BOBBY

Yeah -- CHAD

That's important. BOBBY

Yeah -- especially if it's done together, like we CHAD  
said.

Yeah. And when. BOBBY

Yeah -- and when, too, right. CHAD

When -- I didn't think of that. BOBBY

So we can be there together. Like we said. CHAD

Like we said. BOBBY

CHAD  
This is harder --

BOBBY  
Really harder.

CHAD  
Are you thinking?

BOBBY  
Yeah, I'm thinking.

CHAD  
Me, too. That's good, right?

BOBBY  
What?

CHAD  
That we're thinking. About all this.

BOBBY  
My mom and dad always told me to think first.

CHAD  
Mine, too. So it's good --

BOBBY  
Yeah.

CHAD  
Yeah.

CHAD touches the gun, and then takes his hand away.

CHAD  
I get pictures --

BOBBY  
What kind?

BOBBY does the same.

CHAD  
You, too?

BOBBY  
What kind?

CHAD  
I don't know -- bad. I don't only get 'em in my head.

(hand on his stomach)  
Here. All -- jumpy.

BOBBY  
Like lifting weights, huh?

CHAD  
(laughing softly)  
Yeah!

(taking a muscle pose)  
Spot Man!

BOBBY  
Yeah! And Rad like a ten-pounder dumbbell. Me,  
too. Bad pictures. All over.

CHAD  
That means something, right?

BOBBY  
I think so.

CHAD  
I think so, too.

BOBBY closes the lid. CHAD locks it.

BOBBY  
We know.

CHAD  
Yeah.

BOBBY  
We know what we coulda done.

CHAD  
Yeah.

BOBBY  
We coulda done it.

CHAD  
It's right there.

BOBBY  
And we know what we're not gonna do.

CHAD  
We know what we're not gonna do. Yeah. "Rad,  
Rad, he's so bad -- "

BOBBY

Um, um -- "He don't know / The good luck he's had." Hey, not bad, huh?

CHAD

For off the top of your tongue.

BOBBY

You should put it away.

CHAD

Yeah. Should I tell them about the keys?

BOBBY

That's up to you.

CHAD

It would be good, wouldn't it?

BOBBY

I guess so --

CHAD

I guess so, too. No more secrets, huh?

BOBBY

Yeah -- no more secrets.

CHAD

I don't think my head can take any more secrets.

BOBBY

Or my stomach.

BOBBY and CHAD pick up their backpacks and come downstage, right or left. The lights dim on the box. MUSCLE MAN walks to the box and stands by it, watching the two of them.

BOBBY and CHAD stand for a moment, awkward in each other's presence, not sure what to do next. Slowly, tentatively, CHAD punches BOBBY in the arm, softly, more of a nudge. BOBBY, looking at CHAD, does the same, lightly, playfully.

BOBBY

Jerk --

CHAD

Wuss --

After the first two terms, they start to go through their muscle routine again but without the verve they had before. They say the words as they make the movements.

Moron -- BOBBY

Retard -- CHAD

Geek -- BOBBY

Loser -- CHAD

Nerd -- BOBBY

Wimp -- CHAD

They drop the routine.

Do you hate me? CHAD

No. BOBBY

I don't hate you, either. CHAD

My mom and dad woulda been real disappointed. BOBBY

Mine, too. I like your parents. CHAD

I like your parents, too. BOBBY

What're we gonna do? CHAD

School tomorrow. BOBBY

No different. CHAD

Rad -- BOBBY

Bad -- CHAD



BOBBY  
Scared --

CHAD  
Yeah.

BOBBY  
It makes me sick, sometimes.

CHAD  
Sometimes I don't know whether to breathe or  
puke.

BOBBY  
Puke or breathe.

CHAD  
Well, if we could puke on them, they maybe they'd  
let us alone.

BOBBY  
Yeah! Yeah! A whole "puke brigade," get all the  
geeks in a line --

CHAD  
And when Rad and the rats walk by --

BOBBY  
And the Pearls in their big hair --

CHAD  
We all just --

BOBBY  
On the count of three --

They make exaggerated puke sounds and motions.

BOBBY  
Man, top to toe.

CHAD  
Get out the hoses!

BOBBY  
Dripping off their ears!

CHAD  
All up their noses!

A few more puke sounds and motions.

BOBBY  
Yeah!

CHAD

Yeah!

Finish laughing.

BOBBY

You know --

CHAD

You think?

BOBBY

My stomach feels a whole lot better thinking about it.

CHAD

Can't wait to see the movie!

BOBBY holds out his fist; CHAD takes his fist and touches the top of BOBBY's with it; they reverse, and BOBBY does the same to CHAD. Then they lightly bang their knuckles together, put their arms around each other and walk off making puke sounds. MUSCLE MAN watches them, then picks up the table and box. Lights out.

\* \* \* \* \*

BOBBY's bedroom; CHAD is sleeping over. CHAD is on the floor, on his back, while BOBBY stands over him, one foot on CHAD's stomach. CHAD is faking as if he's pinned to the floor by BOBBY's foot.

BOBBY

(in a mock announcer's voice)

And Chick Chimichanga, that bad-ass bandito from Baja, has got Buck Buff pinned to the floor with his patented "foot of death," patent number 56933

--

CHAD

(same announcer's voice, interrupting)

But Buff ain't beaten yet. He executes his patented California Roll

CHAD rolls so that he's between BOBBY's feet.

CHAD

-- and executes his "Elevator Shaft" move.

CHAD moves his body into a triangle so that his butt is against BOBBY's crotch.

BOBBY

(same voice)

And Chick is chucked to the floor, writhing --

CHAD  
Writhing --

BOBBY  
Writhing in pain!

CHAD  
And defeat!

CHAD walks around the room in a victory walk, pumping his arms, etc.  
BOBBY's DAD walks in with a muscle magazine in his hand.

BOBBY  
Dad -- knock, all right?

DAD  
A thousand pardons, my thrice potent master.

CHAD  
Buck Buff scores! Hi, Mr. D.

DAD  
Buck Buff, huh?

CHAD  
(pointing to his butt)  
Got the tightest glutes this side of Hell and  
Armageddon.

DAD  
You guys make this stuff up?

BOBBY  
Dad!

DAD  
Sorry -- don't want to interrupt the world cham-  
peen-ship here. Got you the newest Pump It Up.

BOBBY and CHAD start circling one another.

BOBBY  
Not doing that any more.

DAD  
Really? Since when?

CHAD  
(to BOBBY)  
2, 4, 6, 8

BOBBY  
(to CHAD)  
It's your bones I'm gonna break, ol' Buck-A-Luck.

CHAD  
(to BOBBY)

No, you ain't, you chimichanga chimpanzee.

They grapple in mock battle.

DAD  
So you don't want the magazine?

BOBBY  
(in a struggle)  
No thanks, Dad.

DAD  
Chad?

CHAD  
(in a struggle)  
No thanks, Mr. D.

DAD  
Hmmm.

MOM enters.

DAD  
He doesn't want the magazine.

MOM  
Thank God for small favors. Come on you two steaming hunks of junk, time for bed.

BOBBY  
I'm going to take you down.

CHAD  
I'm gonna take the whole universe with me.

MOM  
Bobby! Chad!

They mock wrestle -- it should be very funny because they're just goofing. They finally end up on the floor. MOM goes over, kneels, and slams her hand three times on the floor.

MOM  
One -- two -- three! And the winner is -- I can't tell! They both win! Now, into bed, both of you.

MOM hauls up BOBBY, DAD hauls up CHAD.

BOBBY  
Cosmic Wrestling Federation rules!

DAD  
And the winner is --  
  
(raises CHAD's hand)  
Buff Butt.

CHAD  
Buck Buff.

DAD  
Easy to get the names mixed up.

MOM  
Into bed.

BOBBY and CHAD get into bed.

MOM  
It's nice to see you two guys smiling again.  
Settle down!

They pretend to settle down, lying stiff, their eyes closed, snoring,  
pretending that they're asleep.

DAD  
The beasts are asleep. Do you think we can leave  
them alone?

MOM  
I don't know. They're pretty dangerous.

DAD  
Naw. I think they're pretty tame on the inside.

MOM  
(tickles BOBBY)  
But they're oh so ferocious on the outside!

BOBBY  
(trying to maintain his posture)  
We're sleeping!

CHAD  
We're trying to sleep!

DAD  
Better let sleeping dogs lie.

MOM and DAD get up.

DAD  
Good night, sweet princes.

MOM  
And may flights of angels sing thee to thy rests.

BOBBY  
(eyes still closed)  
Ssshh!

MOM and DAD exit. There are several beats.

BOBBY  
(opens one eye)  
They gone?

CHAD  
Yeah.

BOBBY  
Good. Ready?

CHAD  
Yeah.

Lights change. BOBBY gets the magazine from DAD's chair and stands up on his bed. He rips the magazine in half. As he does so, MUSCLE MAN comes out.

MUSCLE MAN  
You won't need me any more.

BOBBY  
Not like you are.

CHAD  
But you come in a lot of different flavors --

BOBBY  
So we'll see you around.

BOBBY hands MUSCLE MAN the magazine. The rest of the crew come out, in pairs, the GANG with the PEARLS and RAD with COACH POWERS. They form a semi-circle around the beds, each pair in its own light.

BOBBY  
(in his announcer's voice)  
And now --

CHAD  
(in his announcer's voice)  
Ladies and germs --

BOBBY  
The final round --

CHAD  
Of the Cosmic Wrestling Federation's --

BOTH  
Tag Team Tornado!

BOBBY  
And the winners are --

In the next sequence, BOBBY and CHAD will snap their fingers; at each snap, a light goes out on one of the pairs and on MUSCLE MAN. RAD and COACH POWERS are the last pair. This will leave BOBBY and CHAD the only people lighted.

CHAD  
2 --  
Snap fingers, light out.

BOBBY  
4 --  
Snap fingers, light out.

CHAD  
6 --  
Snap fingers, light out.

BOBBY  
8 --  
Snap fingers, light out.

CHAD  
Who do we --

BOBBY  
Appreciate?

Snap fingers, light out on RAD and COACH POWERS.

CHAD  
(to MUSCLE MAN)  
Sorry.

BOBBY  
Me, too.

They snap their fingers, and MUSCLE MAN is in darkness.

BOTH  
2, 4, 6, 8 / Who do we appreciate?

They both strike the same muscle pose: arms to the side, 90 degrees, tightening their biceps. As they tighten their muscles, they exhale with a big grunt at the same time. All the time, they have big smiles on their faces.

BOTH

Hunh!!

Blackout.