

Characters:

MAX
MISS STARK

DAD
KID

GRANDMA
10 KIDS (NON-SPEAKING ROLES)

ACT 1, SCENE 1

- 1 *{When the curtain opens, the audience sees twelve kids and one teacher in a classroom. Most of the students are leaning across the aisles and talking to one another. Some kids are flying paper airplanes across the room. Max is standing on a chair, shooting a wad of paper into the garbage can. He misses the garbage can, so he crumples up another wad of paper and tries again. Miss Stark is facing the chalkboard, writing her name on the board. She turns around and tries to talk over the commotion.}*
- 2 **MISS STARK:** *(shouting)* Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Miss Stark, and I will be your substitute teacher today. I need everyone to sit down so that we can get to work.
- 3 *{Max sits down and crosses his arms across his chest. Another boy stands up and begins walking down the aisle. When he gets close to Max, Max puts out his leg and tries to trip the boy. The boy stumbles, and everyone laughs.}*
- 4 **MAX:** Miss Shark *(everyone laughs again)*, we're not really in the mood to learn today.
- 5 **MISS STARK:** My name is Miss Stark, and I'm afraid you don't really have a say in the matter.
- 6 **MAX:** *(smiling mischievously)* What did you say your name was? Miss Bark?
- 7 **MISS STARK:** *(muttering to herself)* Forget this! They are not paying me enough to deal with this rude behavior.
- 8 *{Miss Stark leaves the room and the students cheer and give each other high fives. The curtain closes.}*

ACT 1, SCENE 2

- 9 *{When the curtain opens, the audience now sees a living room. Dad is talking on the phone. Max enters the room, sits on the sofa, and picks up the TV remote and points it at the TV.}*
- 10 **DAD:** I will certainly talk to my son about this, Principal Wilson.
- 11 *{Dad hangs up the phone.}*
- 12 **DAD:** I assume you already know why your principal called me, Max.
- 13 **MAX:** *(defensively)* Yeah... I'm getting *all* of the blame for making that substitute teacher walk out of the classroom, aren't I? It's not fair. There were other kids acting rude, too!
- 14 **DAD:** First of all, Mr. Wilson said that since your teacher started her maternity leave three days ago, your class has gone through *six* substitute teachers!
- 15 **MAX:** *(shrugging his shoulders)* I wonder why no one likes us.
- 16 **DAD:** *(losing his patience)* It's obviously because you guys are being rude to them! This has got to stop, Max. Tomorrow I expect you to be on your best behavior.

17 **MAX:** I just don't understand why *I'm* getting all of the blame.

18 **DAD:** According to Mr. Wilson, the substitutes keep mentioning *your* name when they leave. Mr. Wilson seems to think that *you're* the ringleader, and if *your* behavior improves, then everyone else's behavior will improve, as well.

19 {*Max puts his feet up on the coffee table and rests his arms behind his head.*}

20 **MAX:** I guess I can try.

21 {*Max's dad looks at him and shakes his head. He picks up his phone and dials a number. As he's walking out of the room, Max and the audience hear Max's dad say the following line.*}

22 **DAD:** Hello again, Mr. Wilson. This is Ron Montgomery- Max's father. I think I just came up with an idea of how we might be able to solve the problem you're having with my son's class.

23 {*Max jumps to his feet and looks nervous.*}

24 **MAX:** What is *that* all about?!

25 {*The curtain closes.*}

ACT 2, SCENE 1

26 {*When the curtain opens, the audience sees the classroom once again. The classroom is empty except for a grey-haired lady who is writing the schedule on the chalkboard. A bell rings, and the students file noisily into their classroom. Max is blowing bubbles with his gum as he passes out sticks of gum to his classmates. They don't pay attention to the teacher writing on the board.*}

27 **GRANDMA:** Take a seat, everyone.

28 {*Kids begin to sit down at their desks. Max is the only one still standing when the grey-haired lady turns around to face the students. When Max realizes that his grandma is standing at the front of the room, his jaw drops open and his gum falls out of his mouth.*}

29 **GRANDMA:** You look surprised to see me, Pooky Bear. Didn't your dad tell you that I was going to substitute for your class today?

30 {*Everyone begins laughing.*}

31 **KID:** Pooky Bear?! That's hilarious!

32 **MAX:** (*stammering*) N-n-no. He didn't tell me you'd be here, Grandma.

33 **KID:** (*surprised*) This is your *grandmother*?

34 **MAX:** (*embarrassed*) Yes.

35 **GRANDMA:** (*proudly*) I'm Max's grandmother, but I'm also a retired school teacher. And in 1989, I was chosen to be the Kansas Teacher of the Year!

36 {*Max picks up his gum and throws it in the garbage. He approaches his grandma.*}

37 **MAX:** (*whispering and begging*) Grandma, *please* don't embarrass me by calling me Pooky Bear!

38 **GRANDMA:** How about we strike a deal? I promise to be on my best behavior and not embarrass *you*, if you promise to be on *your* best behavior and not embarrass me.

39 **MAX:** It's a deal!

40 {*Max sits down at his desk and stares straight ahead. The other students stare at him, wondering what he'll do next. Eventually, they turn around and face the teacher.*}

41 **GRANDMA:** Our first item of business to attend to is taking attendance. When I call your name, please say "present".

42 {*The curtain closes.*}

ACT 2, SCENE 2

43 {*When the curtain reopens, the audience sees the living room once again. Max is playing a video game when Dad enters the room.*}

44 **DAD:** I just talked to Grandma. She said that you were a perfect gentleman today. I *knew* you could do it.

45 **MAX:** Why did you do that to me, Dad? It's horrible having Grandma as my substitute teacher!

46 **DAD:** Drastic times call for drastic measures. I could tell that you were not going to change your behavior on your own.

47 **MAX:** I *definitely* learned my lesson. How long is Grandma going to be there?

48 **DAD:** She agreed to stay there until Mrs. Webster returns from maternity leave. She said she actually really enjoyed being back in the classroom again.

49 **MAX:** (*groaning*) Oh no! That means she's going to be my teacher until December.

50 **DAD:** (*smiling mischievously*) Don't worry, Pooky Bear. You'll somehow survive.

51 {*The curtain closes.*}

- Which of the following differences exist between the two scenes in the first act?
 - Max is in the first scene, but he's not present in the second scene.
 - The first scene is set in a house, while the second scene is set in a classroom.
 - The first scene is set in a classroom, while the second scene is set in a house.
 - The principal appears in the second scene, but not in the first scene.
- What is the playwright's main purpose for including such detailed stage directions at the beginning of the play?
 - The playwright wants the director and actors to understand how the stage should be set when the curtain opens.
 - The playwright wants a narrator to read these sentences to the audience.
 - The playwright is trying to win an award for detail.
 - The playwright wants to provide a list of characters.

3. In the first scene, the playwright uses a _____ tone for the lines that are spoken by Max.

- A. defensive
- B. formal
- C. bossy
- D. disrespectful

4. Which character is already standing on the stage when the curtain opens for Act I Scene 2?

- A. Max's dad
- B. Max
- C. Principal Wilson
- D. Both A and C are correct.

5. *Max's dad looks at him and shakes his head.*

These stage directions are important to help the audience understand that-

- A. Max regrets his behavior.
- B. Max's dad does not believe that Max will try to improve his behavior.
- C. Max's dad is telling Max "no" without talking.
- D. Max's dad is feeling proud that Max is going to try to set a good example for his classmates.

6. At what point in the play does the *audience* learn that Max's grandma is the substitute teacher?

- A. when Grandma says line 27
- B. when Grandma says line 29
- C. when Max says line 32
- D. when the kid says line 33

7. Which stage direction shows that Max was shocked to see his grandma in his classroom?

- A. Line 28- *(His jaw drops open and his gum falls out of his mouth.)*
- B. Line 34- *(embarrassed)*
- C. Line 37- *(whispering and begging)*
- D. Line 40- *(Max sits down at his desk and stares straight ahead.)*

8. **35 GRANDMA:** *(proudly)* I'm Max's grandmother, but I'm also a retired school teacher. And in 1989, I was chosen to be the Kansas Teacher of the Year!

41 GRANDMA: Our first item of business to attend to is taking attendance. When I call your name, please say "present".

What is the main purpose for the above lines?

- A. The playwright wants the audience to feel sorry for Max.
- B. The playwright wants to establish Grandma's authority in the classroom.
- C. The playwright wants the audience to know how short Grandma is.
- D. The playwright wants to impress the audience.

9. What is the theme of this play?

- A. Show respect for your parents.
- B. Set goals and work to achieve them.
- C. Rude behavior can result in negative consequences.
- D. It is important to have a sense of humor.

10. During which part of this play does the climax take place?

- A. Act I Scene 1
- B. Act I Scene 2
- C. Act 2 Scene 1
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ANSWER KEY