



**Daniel O'Donnell**

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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**BIG DOG PUBLISHING**

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## School Spirits

**FARCE.** Mr. Smite, a greedy school principal, has hatched a plan to get rich by cutting back on school expenses, pocketing the savings, and using the money to buy land to sell to the school district at inflated prices. The principal's outrageous cutbacks have made life miserable for the teachers and students at his school. To save money, the cooks have to serve pizza rolls every day in the cafeteria, and to reduce the electric bills, the students have to eat the pizza rolls frozen! Not to mention the fact there's no toilet paper, no pencils, and the textbooks are almost as old as the school itself, which has been around for 100 years! But a dedicated teacher, some students, a couple of lovable ghosts, and a nervous school secretary, have set out to save their beloved school and foil Mr. Smite's dreams of traveling the world in a gold Cadillac.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 90 minutes.

## Characters

(8 M, 6 F, opt. extras)

**ERNIE BUCK:** Loveable friendly ghost; has lived in the school for more than 100 years and has romantic feelings for Miss Quigley; wears white bib overalls with a white shirt and has white hair.

**FAIRY:** Ghost, and Ernie's obstinate, silent friend; a former student who always wanted to be a ballerina; wears an old-fashioned white frilly dress.

**MISS QUIGLEY:** A dedicated, prim-and-proper older teacher; secretly admires Ernie.

**JACOB SMITE:** Conniving, greedy principal who is out to make a fortune.

**MISS SPIGOT:** Nervous school secretary; wears cheap jewelry.

**DAVID:** Student who likes Colleen and stands up for the underdog.

**COLLEEN:** New student who isn't afraid of bullies or a challenge.

**JESSIE:** Talkative student.

**JOHN:** Lonely, quiet boy who lives in a foster home; yearns to be an actor and often quotes Shakespeare.

**BENNIE:** Wise-cracking student who enjoys bullying and thinks school is a joke.

**K.C.:** Bennie's friend and fellow bully.

**MR. REILLY:** Lazy school janitor and aspiring writer.

**NEWLY DECEASED 1:** Non-speaking; female.

**NEWLY DECEASED 2:** Wears a blue leisure suit; non-speaking; male.

**EXTRAS (OPTIONAL):** As Newly Deceased seated in the audience.

## Set

The set is divided into two rooms: a classroom and the principal's office. The school's basement can appear anywhere on or off the stage.

**Miss Quigley's Classroom:** Has one entrance, six student desks, a teacher's desk with chair, a small filing cabinet, a portable chalkboard, maps, etc. on the walls.

**Principal's Office:** A small area with one entrance, a desk with a chair, a chair beside the desk, a filing cabinet, and a paddle with a pistol grip inscribed with "Board of Education" on it hangs on the wall.

**Basement:** There are stacked boxes, a wastepaper basket, and a bucket.

## Synopsis of Scenes

### ACT I

**Scene 1:** Miss Quigley's classroom.

**Scene 2:** Mr. Smite's office, a short time later.

**Scene 3:** Miss Quigley's classroom.

**Scene 4:** The school's basement.

### ACT II

**Scene 1:** Mr. Smite's office, Monday morning.

**Scene 2:** Miss Quigley's classroom, a few minutes later.

**Scene 3:** Miss Quigley's classroom, after school.

**Scene 4:** Mr. Smite's office, Tuesday, just before the last bell of the day.

## Props

6 Student desks	Pencils
2 Teacher's desks	School petition
3 Chairs	Pens
Wall map	Portable chalkboard
2 File cabinets	Chalk
Feather duster	School books
2 Handkerchiefs	Cardboard boxes
Pocket watch	Notebook
Papers	Bucket
Thumbtack	Wads of paper
Wooden paddle with a pistol grip inscribed with "Board of Education" written on it	Wastebasket
Dust rag	Travel brochure
Trash bag	Checkbook
Picture album	Message
Desk phone	Tape recorder
	Janitorial supplies including a mop, broom, etc.

## Sound Effects

School bell	Buzzer
Cracks/whacks of a paddle	Screaming
Telephone ringing	Waltz music

**"The afterlife  
doesn't get any better than this."**

**-Ernie**

**ACT I****Scene I**

(AT RISE: Miss Quigley's classroom. Ernie enters and whistles while he dusts the furniture. In mid-whistle, he stops and starts several times, as if listening for a sound coming from the direction of the audience. Ernie is startled when he realizes "The Boss" and some "newly departed" have shown up unexpected, as usual. Ernie addresses the audience as if they are "The Boss" and the group of Newly Deceased. Only Ernie and Fairy can hear and see "The Boss" and the Newly Deceased. Ernie, as always, is nervous around "The Boss.")

ERNIE: Oh, Boss, you startled me. I uh, uh, umm wasn't expecting you...How are things, you know, up there?...Oh really. Good, good, glad to hear it. *(He hates doing what "The Boss" is about to ask. Points to the audience.)* I see you've brought some new arrivals. Have you filled everyone in about their new surroundings?...Just the bare necessities, okay. Does that mean they're here to watch so they can decide?...I'll have to explain things?...Aha, I kinda got that feeling...What? You can't stay? Oh, Boss, that's a shame, I always look forward to seeing you and having you stay around for awhile...What?...Yes, sir, I'll quit my lying and sucking up. Oh, don't worry, sir, I'll explain everything thoroughly. Yes siree Bob, why when you return, these fine folks will know the afterlife inside and out...What?...Yes, sir, I'm sucking up again. *(Stands straight and waves upward.)* Yes, sir, I'll do my best. It was good seeing you again. Give you-know-who my best. Goodbye, sir! Goodbye. *(Nervous, he wipes his brow and then realizes he forgot about the Newly Deceased. To Newly Deceased.)* Oh, hello there. *(Tries to act with authority.)* Ernie, Ernie Buck's the name; janitor is the game. This here is my school. It's where I've lived...well, not exactly *lived*. I guess you would say where I've existed



for over a hundred years. I'm what you might call a ghost, spirit, apparition... *(Thinks he is being funny and raises his hands spooky-like.)* Ewwwe! I'm a spooky guy. *(Laughs. Newly Deceased 1, 2, who are seated in the audience act scared and cry. To Newly Deceased 1, worried.)* Ma'am, ma'am, there's no reason to cry, please don't do that. Aw, I knew that would happen. See, now you've got the rest of them started. *(Other Newly Deceased who are seated in the audience act scared and cry.)* Folks, folks, can I please have your attention? *(Shouts.)* Yoo-hoo, folks! *(Newly Deceased become quiet.)* There, that's much better. *(Points to Newly Deceased 2.)* Sir, ah, sir...yes, you in the blue leisure suit. Could you please give that woman next to you a handkerchief? *(Newly Deceased 2 gives Newly Deceased 1 the handkerchief.)* Thank you. *(To Newly Deceased 1.)* Ma'am, you must try to get hold of yourself, or you'll dehydrate. Thank you. Like the Boss has probably already explained, you've, ah, passed into the next world... *(Newly Deceased 1 starts to cry again.)* Ah, ah, ah, now don't start, ma'am, don't, no, no, noo, that's better. See, you'll get used to it. *(Looks up.)* Thanks, Boss. Now, the reason you're here is, you get a choice. You can either go to, you know...up there when the Boss gets back, or you can be like me and stay at your favorite place before your unfortunate—now, ma'am, I'm going to say it, so don't get hysterical—demise. Very good, ma'am! One thing to remember...you only stay at your place as long as it exists, but once torn down you must leave and go up to the Big Place. Now, the reason you're here is to watch how things are done and to give you time to choose. You're going to be here for a few days, so I suggest you make yourselves comfortable and observe. You're a fine group, probably the best I've ever seen...What?...No, I'm not sucking up again. Geez, a guy can't even be nice... *(Fairy enters. She is barefoot and dressed in an old-fashioned white frilly dress and ballet dances around the classroom.)* What? *(Turns and sees Fairy.)* Oh, that's Mary. She likes to be called Fairy. There's a long

story behind that...let's just say she watched one—and I mean one too many—ballets...Yes, she's one of us. Fairy, say hello to the nice people. (*Fairy smiles and waves.*) Fairy doesn't speak... (*Looks at Fairy accusingly.*) ...although she probably could if she wanted to. She speaks to me through her thoughts, and don't ask how it works, 'cause I have no idea. (*Impatient, Fairy pulls on Ernie's arm.*) Yes, Fairy, we'll go to the auditorium later so you can dance. Just let me finish talking to these nice people. (*Fairy stomps her feet and dances to the back of the classroom.*) So impatient. Look, I've got to go, so why don't you just watch, listen, and learn. Oh, one more thing, if I want... (*Looks up.*) ...but I don't usually, I can make myself visible to anyone I wish just by snapping my fingers. Sometimes it can be a real hoot. (*Looks at his pocket watch.*) Look at the time. Miss Sarah's, I mean Miss Quigley's, study hall is about to start. Just follow along and I'll pretend you're not even here, although occasionally I will stop to describe and instruct. Tootles!

(*School bell rings, Fairy dances and stretches. Ernie goes to Miss Quigley's chair and dusts it lovingly. Students enter and take their seats, followed by Miss Quigley, who goes to her chair. Bennie is horsing around.*)

MISS QUIGLEY: Bennie, that will be quite enough, thank you.  
ERNIE: (*To Newly Deceased.*) What a teacher! Ain't she the cat's meow? Gee willikers, what a...what a friend she would make. Yeah, I've seen a lot of teachers come and go, but none could ever fill her boots—I mean high tops, clogs, flats...oh, whatever they're wearing these days.

(*Bennie throws a piece of paper at John.*)

MISS QUIGLEY: (*Without looking up.*) One more time, Bennie, and you'll never see the outside of detention hall.

**School Spirits**

II

ERNIE: Ya know, Fairy, most of these kids are good, but this one here... (*Indicates Bennie.*) ...he's got a problem that needs solving...Yeah, right, Bennie the butthead. (*Goes to Colleen.*) This is the new girl, Colleen. I got some good feelings about her.

MISS QUIGLEY: Okay, let's see if everyone's here today. Jessica?

JESSICA: Here as always, Miss Quigley. I'd never miss one of your classes. You're my favorite—

MISS QUIGLEY: Thank you, Jessica, a "here" or "present" will do. John?

BENNIE: Actor boy is here, ready for another acting adventure. (*Laughs and high-fives K.C.*)

MISS QUIGLEY: That will be enough, Bennie. One more word out of you, and it's off to Mr. Smite. Do you understand?

BENNIE: (*Afraid.*) Ah, yeah, okay.

ERNIE: Fairy, that boy needs a good taste of the hickory switch.

MISS QUIGLEY: I'll try one more time. John?

JOHN: Present.

MISS QUIGLEY: K.C.?

K.C.: Yo!

MISS QUIGLEY: David?

DAVID: Here.

MISS QUIGLEY: Colleen?

COLLEEN: Here, Miss Quigley.

MISS QUIGLEY: Colleen, that was a very nice piece you wrote for history class yesterday. It will be a pleasure to have you in our school.

COLLEEN: (*Embarrassed.*) Thank you, Miss Quigley.

MISS QUIGLEY: I think we all know Bennie is present.

(*Bennie puts his hands together and clasps them over his head.*)

MISS QUIGLEY: Class, this is a study hall, so please study. I have to run some papers to the office, so I'm leaving you on your best behavior. And, Bennie, yours had better be the best behaved. *(Exits.)*

BENNIE: *(To John.)* Hey, actor man, got any good acting quotes? *(Laughs.)*

*(Fairy, upset with Bennie, tries to kick him. Ernie stops her.)*

ERNIE: Whoa, Fairy! *(Looks at audience and smiles nervously.)* Now, you know you can't do that. That's not nice. You like this boy, don't you? *(Fairy nods.)* I thought so. He is a lot like you, but you just can't kick people, understand? *(Fairy nods.)* Good. *(Bennie flicks John in the head. Fairy flicks Bennie in the head.)* Ohhh!

*(Surprised, Bennie spins around.)*

BENNIE: Hey, who did that?

K.C.: Did what?

BENNIE: Flicked me in the head!

K.C.: Nobody, you dork. What are you? Crazy?

BENNIE: Yeah, well I felt something. *(To John.)* I'll see you later. *(Bennie shoves John. Fairy shoves Bennie back. Bennie spins around angrily.)* That's it. Who did it?

K.C.: What are you talking about now?

*(Bennie looks around and is a little embarrassed.)*

BENNIE: Ah, nothing. Never mind.

ERNIE: *(To audience, apologetic.)* This really isn't the way to act. I'm afraid Fairy let her emotions get the best of her.

BENNIE: *(Mocks Colleen.)* "Nice piece you wrote for history class, Colleen."

COLLEEN: Get lost, you creep!

BENNIE: Whoa, new girl with an attitude.

DAVID: Beat it, Bennie.

BENNIE: *(Afraid of David.)* Hey, I was only kidding. *(Sits in Quigley's seat.)* Class! Class! Hey, K.C., look at me. I'm Quigley. *(Laughs.)*

*(Angry, Ernie starts toward Bennie.)*

ERNIE: Why you...

K.C.: Yeah, but not as ugly.

*(Ernie then turns to K.C.)*

ERNIE: That's it!

BENNIE: Or as stupid.

*(Ernie turns back to Bennie.)*

ERNIE: Don't say another word. Get out of that seat you, you, butthead.

*(Bennie takes a thumbtack from the desk and stands.)*

BENNIE: K.C., you wanna see the old bag jump?

*(Bennie places a tack on Miss Quigley's seat and slowly walks to his desk.)*

ERNIE: *(Gasps.)* Why, you little juvenile delinquent. I'll...I'll fix your wagon. *(He picks up the tack and goes to Bennie's seat. To audience.)* Do not try this at home. This is allowed only by a trained professional. *(He puts the tack on Bennie's seat.)*

BENNIE: I can't wait to see the look on her face when she... *(He sits on the tack, jumps up, screams, and holds his behind.)* Ah tack! Ah tack! Ah tack...

*(K.C. thinks Bennie is fooling around so K.C. claps his hands and stomps his feet to the beat. Miss Quigley enters.)*

MISS QUIGLEY: What is going on here?

BENNIE: *(Points to his behind and cries.)* Ah tack! Ah tack! Ah tack!

MISS QUIGLEY: Why are you pointing to your buttocks? What do you think you're doing?

BENNIE: No! Ah tack!

MISS QUIGLEY: Someone attacked your buttocks? Explain yourself immediately!

BENNIE: No, no, not, not...

*(Bennie looks at Colleen. Colleen signals him not to tell about the tack in his butt, or she will tell Miss Quigley the truth.)*

MISS QUIGLEY: I'm waiting, young man.

BENNIE: *(In tears, he slowly says.)* Ah tack. Ah tack.

MISS QUIGLEY: I have had just about enough of you two. *(She grabs Bennie and K.C. by the ears and starts to exit.)* If a visit to Principal Smite is what you both want, then that is what you shall have. Shaking your behind at a teacher—really!

K.C.: Come on, I didn't do nuttin'!

BENNIE: Ah tack. Ah tack.

*(They exit.)*

ERNIE: *(Laughing proudly.)* Did you see him jump, Fairy? *(With arms folded, Fairy gives a sarcastic smile and reminds him of the visiting Newly Departed.)* Oh. *(To Newly Deceased.)* Ah, friends, this is a perfect example of what not to do. I'm here to show you the good and the bad. Now that was the bad, so don't do it. And one more thing, we don't have to tell the Boss, he, ah, doesn't like to be bothered with minor details.

JESSIE: Colleen, I can't believe you threatened Bennie. Boy, are they going to be mad.

COLLEEN: They'll get over it, and besides it was funny.

JESSIE: Yeah, it was, but—

DAVID: Don't worry, Jessie, they won't do anything. (*Smiles at Colleen.*) I'll make sure of that.

COLLEEN: Thank you, David. And, John, you shouldn't let them pick on you like that. They're just a couple of bullies who would jump if you said "boo" to them.

JOHN: I know. "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Thank you, Colleen. (*Returns to his homework.*)

COLLEEN: (*To Jessie.*) Why is he quoting Shakespeare?

DAVID: Is that what it was?

JESSIE: He always does that, or he quotes lines from movies. (*Whispers.*) I think he has a lot of personal problems.

(*Offstage Mr. Smite is heard scolding K.C. and Bennie. Everyone in classroom listens and reacts.*)

SMITE: (*Offstage.*) You two have been warned over and over—now it's time for justice. Ha, ha, ha! Bend over, K.C.

(*There are three whacks.*)

K.C.: (*After each whack.*) Ow! Ow! Ow!

SMITE: Now you, Bennie. Bend over!

(*There are three whacks.*)

BENNIE: (*After each whack.*) Ah tack! Ah tack! Ah tack!

JESSIE: Who put the tack on Bennie's seat?

COLLEEN: I don't know. I thought it was K.C.

DAVID: It wasn't him I was watching.

COLLEEN: That's weird, but whoever it was, I'd like to shake their hand.

JESSIE: Me too.

*(Ernie whistles and acts like nothing happened. Miss Quigley enters with K.C. and Bennie.)*

MISS QUIGLEY: *(Sounding sorry.)* Now, I hope you two have learned your lesson. Please be seated and begin your studies.

BENNIE: *(Almost in tears and rubbing his behind.)* Miss Quigley, could I please go to the restroom? Please!

MISS QUIGLEY: Very well, but considering the latest events, I'll escort you there.

*(Miss Quigley and Bennie exit.)*

K.C.: *(To Colleen.)* Hey, new girl, you're gonna pay for your little trick.

DAVID: She's not gonna pay for anything.

K.C.: Yeah...well, maybe she's not, but he sure is. *(Points to John.)* I don't know how you put that tack there, but you're the closest, and you'll pay big time.

DAVID: Wrong again, birdbrain. He didn't put it there. We don't know who did.

K.C.: Well...when I find out, they're gonna pay.

COLLEEN: David, thanks for sticking up for me again.

DAVID: It's a habit I could get used to. Besides, I'm just tired of those two always picking on people. *(Nods, indicating John.)* Especially you-know-who.

COLLEEN: I know what you mean. He's really down.

DAVID: More so than usual, and it's starting to worry me.

COLLEEN: Maybe we can talk to him after school and sort of cheer him up.

DAVID: Okay by me.

JESSIE: Hey, can I help, too? Ya know, I really like to cheer people up. I'm really good at it. Some people say I should do that for a living, then again, some people say I talk too



much. Do you think I talk too much? I don't think I talk too much.

COLLEEN: You talk just fine, and, sure, you can help.

JESSIE: Sweet! I get to help.

ERNIE: See, Fairy, he'll be all right. These nice kids will help him.

DAVID: Hey, John.

JOHN: Yes?

DAVID: We were wondering, would you like to join us after school? You know, just hang out and talk and maybe stop for pizza, or something.

JOHN: Gee, I don't know, guys, I've got a lot to do.

ERNIE: Go with them John, go on!

JESSIE: Come on, John, it will be fun.

JOHN: I don't know.

ERNIE: Come on John boy, go for it.

COLLEEN: Please...I'm new in school and don't have any friends.

JOHN: *(Looks at KC.)* Well...

DAVID: Don't worry about the jerks. I'll handle them.

JOHN: Okay, I guess so.

ERNIE: Yes!

COLLEEN: Great! We'll meet you at the front entrance.

*(Miss Quigley enters with Bennie, and as soon as Bennie carefully sits down, the bell sounds.)*

MISS QUIGLEY: I hope some lessons have been learned here today and that there will be no further interruptions in the future. And, Bennie, that especially means you and your behind. You are all excused.

*(Students exit. Bennie exits slowly. Fairy follows John. Ernie sits at a desk and stares at Miss Quigley, who is still sitting at her desk. Miss Quigley senses someone and looks around, sees no one, smiles, and goes back to work.)*

ERNIE: *(To Newly Deceased.)* What?...Impossible, she can't know I'm here...I don't care what you think you saw in her eyes, it's impossible...Look, I'm the resident ghost here, and I think I know a little more than you. After all, you've only been deceased a short time and— *(Newly Deceased 1 wails once. Worried.)* No, lady, please don't start crying again. I'm sorry for saying that word...Yes, I promise I won't say it again. Look, at the risk of sounding mean, I must ask you not to bring up personal questions...Well, I thought it was personal...No, I am not touchy when it comes to Miss Quigley. Really! You've been de—I mean dea—I mean pass—Oh, heck, you're new here, and I think I know better. *(Reilly enters, carrying a dust rag and trash bag.)* That's a better question. That is Mr. Reilly, the so-called janitor, but between you and me, he wouldn't know a cobweb if it covered his face. Look at that, he walked right past that piece of paper.

MISS QUIGLEY: Hello, Mr. Reilly.

REILLY: Hello, Miss Quigley. Just straightening up a little—a janitor's job is never done.

ERNIE: Ha! In your case, a job is never started.

REILLY: Yup! Busy, busy, busy.

MISS QUIGLEY: I imagine this place gives you much to do.

ERNIE: Ha!

REILLY: *(Pulls up his pants.)* Yup, that it does. Why, as soon as I'm finished here, I gotta put the big ladder up and repair a second story window.

ERNIE: *(Shivers.)* I hate ladders.

MISS QUIGLEY: Mr. Reilly, please be very careful on that ladder. They're dangerous. This school once had a very nice janitor who...who fell from a ladder and suffered an untimely demise.

REILLY: You must mean that Ernie Buck character that fell along time ago. Everyone knows the story about that clumsy oaf.

MISS QUIGLEY: (*Upset.*) Mr. Reilly, I see no need to talk ill of the departed.

REILLY: Come on, Miss Quigley, the old fool has been gone for more than 100 years. And unless the stories of his haunting this place are true, I don't think he'll mind how I talk about him.

ERNIE: Why you!

MISS QUIGLEY: (*Very upset.*) That will be enough, Mr. Reilly. It just so happens that Mr. Ernest Buck was a veteran of the Civil War and a very hard-working man's man.

ERNIE: (*Stunned.*) How does she know?

REILLY: I'm sorry Miss Quigley, I didn't mean to —

MISS QUIGLEY: Please leave if you're finished, Mr. Reilly.

REILLY: Yes, ma'am. (*Reilly bends down to pick up a piece of paper. Ernie kicks him in the rear. He jumps up.*) Ow!

MISS QUIGLEY: Did you say something?

(*Reilly looks around.*)

REILLY: Ah, I was just saying I'll be leaving now.

(*Reilly exits quickly. Miss Quigley takes out a picture album from her desk drawer and looks at it lovingly. She then returns it to the drawer and readies to exit.*)

ERNIE: (*To Newly Deceased.*) How does she know so much about me?...No, I told you she can't know I'm here...She does not have a thing for me. Please mind your own business. (*Miss Quigley starts to exit. Ernie follows her.*) Miss Sarah, how do you know so much about me? Oh, I wish you could tell me.

(*Blackout.*)

## Scene 2

(AT RISE: Mr. Smite's office, a short time later. Mr. Smite is talking on the phone and sucking up to a member of the school board.)

SMITE: Let me speak to Bob Shield. Jacob Smite calling...Yes, I'll hold. (*Puts his hand over the receiver. Mean.*) Hurry up, you twit. Give little people some authority, and they think they have rights. (*Smarmy.*) Hello, Bob. Jacob Smite, here, just calling to confirm our golf date...Aha, aha, yes, all the members are going to be there...Of course it's my treat. I wouldn't have it any other way...Bob, what are friends for? (*Makes a disagreeable face.*) Hey, it's my pleasure. Oh, one more thing before you go, have you given any more thought to my proposal?...Aha, aha, aha. (*Gives phone a dirty look.*) Of course I understand it's difficult to convince the others, but, Bob, if anyone can do it, you can. (*Without thinking.*) Moron...What?...No, I didn't say "moron," I was about to say, the more and more I think on it, the better it sounds. Believe me, Bob, it will be the best decision this school has ever made...Well, thank you, Bob, I've always tried to put the children first, that's always been my motto...Okay fine. I'll see you Saturday. Bye, bye. (*Hangs up.*) Moron! School boards drive me crazy. (*Checks the door to see if anyone is there and then dials a number.*) C'mon, c'mon, answer the phone...Yeah, give me room 23...Uncle Jim, it's Jacob. Listen everything is going as planned. Did you talk to the Realtor?...Good, good...What do you mean you don't feel right doing this?...You feel dirty?...Listen, you bum, you are dirty. Until I tracked you down, you didn't know what soap was, so don't give me a hard time...Just do as I tell you, you blithering dolt... (*Worried.*) What? No! No! Don't leave town. (*Smarmy.*) Uncle Jim, remember, we're family. Think about all the family picnics and Christmases we

shared...Huh?...Well, if you weren't in that home all that time, we could have had those Kodak moments...No, no, I didn't mean "blithering" I was just upset...No, I'm sorry, Uncle Jim, the dolt part has to stay. Look, I'll send you enough money for next week's supply of Happy Meals. Will that make you feel better?...Yes, you can keep the prizes...Okay, Uncle Jim, I'll let you go...No, I wouldn't want you to miss the "Three Stooges Film Festival"...Okay, I'll call you later...Yes, Uncle Jim, I'm sending the Happy Meal money as we speak. Goodbye. *(Hangs up.)* Why me? Why am I surrounded by idiots? Speaking of idiots... *(Pushes intercom button.)* Miss Spigot, get in here right away, and this time bring your notepad.

*(Spigot enters, carrying a notepad and has a pencil behind her ear.)*

SPIGOT: Yes, Mr. Smite. What can I do for you, Mr. Smite?  
 SMITE: Sit down, Miss Spigot.  
 SPIGOT: Yes, Mr. Smite, thank you, Mr. Smite.  
 SMITE: Miss Spigot, you're nervous around me, aren't you?  
 SPIGOT: Yes, I am, Mr. Smite.  
 SMITE: That must mean you're afraid of me, doesn't it?  
 SPIGOT: Yes...yes sir, Mr. Smite.  
 SMITE: Good, let's keep it that way. I like fear in a person. It keeps them honest, don't you think?  
 SPIGOT: Oh, yes sir, I agree. Why every time I come in here, I just shake all over. Look. *(Holds out her shaking hand, which is covered with cheap jewelry.)* Eeew, how's that for nervous?  
 SMITE: Good, good, that's what I like to see. Don't ever stop shaking them bones girl, because if you do, I'll know you can't be trusted. Understand?  
 SPIGOT: Yes sir, Mr. Smite. I'll do my best to shake harder, Mr. Smite.  
 SMITE: Good. Now tell me, how long have you worked for me?

SPIGOT: Going on five years sir, ever since I graduated from Madam Take-a-Notes Secretarial School for the Nervous and Pitiful. You see, sir, I've been nervous all my life—my father says it's a family trait on my mother's side and I tend to—

SMITE: Miss Spigot! Would you mind turning off the faucet and shutting up?

SPIGOT: Yes, sir.

SMITE: Now where was I?

SPIGOT: You were telling me to shut up.

SMITE: I know that, you...look, just answer me this: Do you know what "confidentially" means?

SPIGOT: Yes, sir.

SMITE: Well?

SPIGOT: Well what, sir?

SMITE: (*Loud and angry.*) Well, what does it mean?

SPIGOT: (*Jumps and is nervous.*) What does what mean?

SMITE: "Confidentiality," you idiot!

SPIGOT: Umm, umm, umm, ah, to keep a secret?

SMITE: Finally! Yes, to keep a secret, Miss Spigot. Thank you, Miss Spigot. (*Takes out a handkerchief and wipes his brow.*) The reason I ask, Miss Spigot, is that we have some very confidential material in this office about students and, ah, school matters and such. (*Turns his back.*) And I wanted to remind you that what goes on in this office must not leave this office... (*Miss Spigot slowly reaches for papers on his desk. Mr. Smite turns and slaps her hand.*) Do you understand?

SPIGOT: Yes, sir.

SMITE: Why doesn't that make me feel better? All right, take down this letter and be sure it gets out today. (*Spigot has a pencil behind her ear, but doesn't realize it. She looks around and tries to sneak one from his desk.*) To Harper and Harper, building consultants. "Dear Sirs: All is going as scheduled. Am looking forward to our next meeting and..." (*Sees Spigot reaching for a pencil. Aggravated, he rips the pencil from her ear and hands it to her.*) To Harper and Harper, building consultants. "Dear Sirs: All is going as scheduled. I am

looking forward to our next meeting and to a very prosperous future." Sincerely, Jacob Smite, blah, blah, blah. That will be all. You may leave.

*(Spigot trips and drops her notebook as she exits.)*

SPIGOT: Sorry, sir! It won't happen again, sir. I promise, sir.

SMITE: Remember, Miss Spigot, *confidentiality*.

SPIGOT: Yes, sir, I'll remember, sir. *(Exits and then returns.)*

SMITE: Did you forget already?

SPIGOT: Forget what, sir?

SMITE: *(Frustrated.)* Never mind! What did you want?

SPIGOT: Miss Quigley would like to see you, sir, if that's all right?

*(Smite quickly hides some papers on his desk.)*

SMITE: No, it isn't all right, but send her in anyway. And, Miss Spigot, my golf clubs are in the office closet, clean them good, and this time, don't oil the grips. I'm still paying for Father Murphy's dental work from the last fiasco.

SPIGOT: Yes, sir, no grip oiling, sir.

*(Spigot exits. Miss Quigley enters, holding a petition. Ernie follows.)*

MISS QUIGLEY: I hope I'm not bothering you, Mr. Smite.

SMITE: Yes, well, you are, but that doesn't seem to stop anyone around here from doing so. What is it that you need? *(Excited.)* Do you have more students that need to be punished?

MISS QUIGLEY: *(Offended.)* No, Mr. Smite, I don't.

SMITE: Oh, too bad.

ERNIE: *(To Newly Departed.)* Now this guy, I really dislike.

MISS QUIGLEY: That's not why I'm here, but since you brought it up, I think paddling my two students was uncalled for. Detention would have been sufficient.

SMITE: Yeah, yeah, Quigley, and that's why I'm principal and you're not. Now what do you want?

ERNIE: (*Angry.*) That's Miss Quigley to you, Smite!

MISS QUIGLEY: Well, sir, some of the faculty and students have asked me to speak to you on their behalf.

SMITE: Not another one of those petitions, Quigley?

MISS QUIGLEY: Yes, sir, in a way. I've taken the liberty of listing some of their complaints, and if I may say so, I believe they have legitimate concerns.

SMITE: (*Mockingly.*) "I believe they have legitimate concerns." Let me see that! (*Rips the paper from her hand.*)

ERNIE: Hey, buster, you better start showing some respect. This is a lady you're talking to. Any more of your insolence, and I'll have to set you straight! (*To Newly Deceased.*) I'm sorry you have to witness this, but sometimes a little helpful guidance is needed. Once again, there will be no need to bother the Boss with such trivial matters.

(*Ernie kicks Smite's chair. Smite looks around surprised.*)

SMITE: What the — ?

MISS QUIGLEY: Something wrong, Mr. Smite?

SMITE: Ah, no...it says here you want better food in the cafeteria.

MISS QUIGLEY: Yes, sir, everyone seems to agree that Big Daddy's Frozen Pizza Rolls are a bit much four days a week, especially when uncooked.

SMITE: Miss Quigley, does not pizza have all the major food groups in it?

MISS QUIGLEY: Well, yes, but —

SMITE: And on Fridays, don't we serve genuine Big Daddy's Frozen Pizza Burgers?

MISS QUIGLEY: Yes, but —



SMITE: As for not cooking them sometimes, the price of natural gas these days is outrageous. We all must learn to cut back on certain luxuries. *(With pen checks it off.)* Denied!

*(Ernie flicks Smite on both ears. Smite jumps up and looks around confused.)*

MISS QUIGLEY: Don't you think cutting back on gas is a little harsh?

*(Smite cautiously sits and looks at the petition.)*

SMITE: What do they mean "up-to-date books"?

MISS QUIGLEY: Sir, we haven't had any new books for years. The world has changed a lot, and we must keep up with the times.

*(Smite gives a quick look around.)*

SMITE: Look, Quigley, if those books were good enough for my grandfather, my father, and for me, I see no need to change them. *(Checks it off.)* Denied!

*(Ernie shoves Smite from behind.)*

SMITE: Ahh!

MISS QUIGLEY: What's wrong, Mr. Smite?

*(Smite stands up and looks around.)*

SMITE: Nothing is wrong. Ah, it says here you want more toilet paper.

MISS QUIGLEY: Yes, sir, it seems by Tuesday of every week we run out, and there is no more until Monday. *(She notices he looks strange.)* Are you sure you're all right?

SMITE: Haven't you heard there's a paper shortage going on?  
It's the schools way of helping out. (*Looks around.*) Denied.  
(*Smite spins around. Ernie waits a moment, and then pinches  
Smite's nose.*) Ow! Who did that?

MISS QUIGLEY: Did what? Are you all right?

(*Confused, Smite tries to act composed.*)

SMITE: Yes, yes, I'm all right! I'm getting a little tired of you  
coming in here with your complaints. If you ask me, I think  
you're still angry because I got the principal job and you  
didn't. You're just an old, frustrated, vindictive spinster  
who wants my job!

ERNIE: (*Angry.*) Oh, that's it!

(*Ernie stalks slowly around Smite.*)

MISS QUIGLEY: Mr. Smite, I assure you, I have no hard  
feelings, and as for—

SMITE: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's what you say, but I know  
different. Here, do you want to know what I think of your  
petition? (*Whenever Smite denies something, Ernie pinches,  
pulls, slaps, and kicks him. When this starts, Smite runs around  
the room yelling and Ernie chases him.*) Pencils denied! Paper  
denied! Water denied! Chalk denied! Stop it! Stop it! Stop  
it! Get away! Get away!

MISS QUIGLEY: What's wrong?

(*Spigot enters.*)

SPIGOT: Was that oil the grips, or don't oil the grips? (*Sees  
what's going on.*) Whoops! (*Exits cautiously.*)

SMITE: Don't touch me! Don't touch me! (*Sits in his chair*)  
No more! No more! No more!

(*Smite covers his head and Ernie stops.*)

MISS QUIGLEY: Mr. Smite, are you okay?

SMITE: Beat it, Quigley! *(Ernie raises Smite's arms over his head and shakes them.)* Aaaahhhh! Help! Help! Help!

*(Ernie drops Smite's arms.)*

ERNIE: That should fix your wagon, buddy boy.

SMITE: *(Shaken up.)* Miss Quigley, maybe you're right—I don't feel so good. Would you please leave now? Thank you.

MISS QUIGLEY: Yes, sir, if you're sure you're all right?

SMITE: *(Waves her toward door.)* Yes, I-I think so. *(Miss Quigley starts to exit. Ernie blows in Smite's ear.)* Aaaahh! *(Quickly looks at Quigley.)* I'm okay. I'm okay. Ha, ha.

*(Miss Quigley exits.)*

ERNIE: *(To audience.)* Now that's what I call a little guidance.

*(Ernie pushes something off the desk and exits. Smite jumps back.)*

SMITE: Ahh!

*(Blackout.)*

**[End of Freeview]**