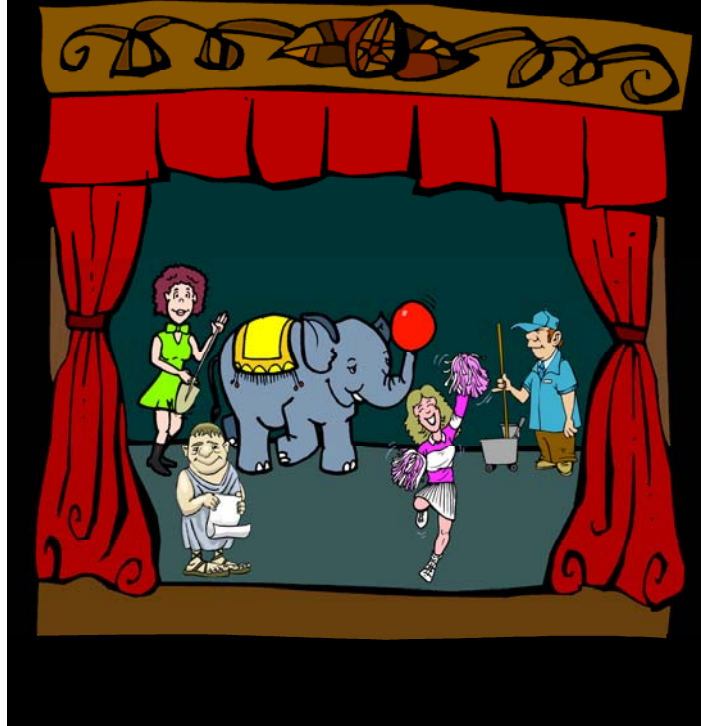


Career day



Art Shulman

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Career Day

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Career Day was developed at the Lonny Chapman Group Repertory Theatre in North Hollywood, CA, and was first presented May 2007: Stan Mazin, director.

Mark Atha
Bix Barnaba
Victoria Blackburn
Cynthia Bryant
Lynne Conner
Disraeli Ellison
Doug Engalla
Cindy Fancher
Lana Ford
Diane Frank
Karen Knotts
Edgar Mastin
Christina Morris
Lillian Robinson
Matt Ryan

Career Day

FARCE. Hilarity abounds when ten wacky guest speakers arrive at Greenwood High's Career Day to educate students about the "thrilling" job opportunities that await them. There's a plastic surgeon, a garbage man, an historian, a homemaker, a French dry cleaner, a philosopher, a lifeguard, an orthodontist, a hangman, and a circus worker. And to add to the Career Day excitement, the assistant principal performs her own unusual brand of stand-up comedy, and the school's ditzy cheer coach demonstrates with zeal her cheerleading skills. This series of monologues is easy to produce and requires only chairs for staging.

Performance Time: Approximately 75 minutes.

Characters

(5 M, 3 F, 6 flexible, opt. extras)

SUZETTE CREP: Assistant principal.

SHERRY APPLEBY: Ditzzy and energetic cheer coach; wears a cheerleader's uniform and carries pompons.

STEVE SWEEPER: Narcoleptic assistant custodian; wears a janitor's uniform and carries a broom.

HAROLD FURBISH: School principal; wears a sports jacket or suit.

DR. SYL A. COHEN: Plastic surgeon; flexible.

PHIL O'DURRETT: Sanitation worker/poet; male.

PROFESSOR ARIEL GIBBON: Historian; flexible. [If male, Carlyle.]

BETTY WINNEBAKOFF: Homemaker and Jimmy's mom.

ANTOINETTE SANSAGRIME: French dry cleaner; wears unfashionable clothes; flexible. [If male, Pierre Sansagrime.]

ANN RIND: Philosopher; wears a pair of eyeglasses; flexible. [If male, Emmanuel Caan.]

BIFF SANDS: Lifeguard and former student; male.

IMA BRACER: Orthodontist; flexible. [If male, Harvey Bracer.]

JAKE STRINGER: Unemployed hangman; male.

TWINKLES BAILEY: Circus worker and high school dropout; carries a shovel and dustpan; flexible.

JIMMY(Optional): Student in audience; non-speaking.

SEYMOUR KOFSKI (Optional): School music teacher; plays piano; non-speaking.

EXTRAS (Optional): As students.

Set

School auditorium stage or classroom. Eleven chairs are lined up at the back of the stage. There is a banner overhead that reads "Career Day."

Props

Banner that reads "Career Day"
Shovel
Dustpan
Can of black spray paint

Sound Effects

School music
Fly buzzing
Fire alarm
"The Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy"
Whoopee cushion

Working the seasons without fanfare,
In winter, snow is splatted in his hair.
In summer, sweat drips from brow into eyes,
And in his ears are the carcasses of flies.

Career Day

(AT RISE: School auditorium stage or classroom. Ten chairs are lined up at the back of the stage. Speakers are standing in front of the chairs. There is a banner overhead that reads "Career Day." Sy Kofski, a school music teacher, is seated at a piano onstage. He plays school-type music. NOTE: The character of Sy Kofski is optional. Recordings can replace live music. Ms. Crep enters.)

CREP: *(To audience.)* Attention, attention! Hello, boys and girls. Or should I say, "Hello, young men and young women"? Yes, I shall say "young men" and "young women" because here at Greenwood High School, people, such as yourselves, are growing into young adults. Some people know from the time they are very little what career they want. But, unfortunately, many people, who at one time were young adults, such as yourselves, now wander through life gadding about in this job and that job because they never decided early on a career for themselves, such as they are. It's never too late for young adults, such as yourselves, to learn what some of the options are. And it's never too late for a concerned educator, such as myself, your assistant principal, to educate you on what might be *out there* for you. So, as is our tradition at Greenwood High, we are holding our annual Career Day, where you will learn about different careers from people, such as their selves, who have them. So today, I've arranged for an esteemed group from a variety of professions to address you.

(Sherry Appleby, the school's cheer coach, enters. She is dressed in a cheerleader uniform and carries pompons.)

CHEER COACH: *(Cheers.)* C-A-R-E-E-R-D-A-Y. Career Day!
Yay!

CREP: For those of you who don't recognize her, this is Sherry Appleby, our school cheer coach. *(To Cheer Coach.)* Thanks for being here today, Miss Appleby. *(To audience.)* Isn't she great?

CHEER COACH: *(Cheers.)*

I've got spirit,

Yes, I do.

I've got spirit!

How 'bout you?

Yay!

CREP: And for choosing the musical accompaniment that accompanies our program today, I would like to thank our music teacher, Seymour Kofski, known to most of us as Sy Kofski. *(Points.)* Sy Kofski, everyone. *(He plays the piano or music is heard.)* Thank you again, Sy Kofski. That is, Mister Kofski to you students. And here are our Career Day speakers. *(Career Day Speakers enter and stand in a line in front of the chairs.)*

But to start, I'd like us to sing our school song led by Sherry Appleby.

(Sy Kofski starts to play, or music is heard.)

CHEER COACH: *(Sings.)*

"Raise our banner to the sky

Hold Greenwood's banner high.

Set the blue and gold a flashing.

It's glory ne'er will die.

Rah-rah-rah.

Truth and courage never will fail.

Never will our brightness pale.

Hail, hail, the gang's all here,

So let's for Greenwood cheer.

Bluuuuuuuuuuuuue.

Gooooooold.

Greenwood, Greenwood, Greenwood, Greenwood High."

Yay!

(Cheer Coach exits. Speakers sit down on chairs. Principal Furbish enters, wearing a sport jacket or suit. He looks upset.)

FURBISH: Attention, please.

CREP: Principal Furbish.

FURBISH: Ms. Crep, pardon the interruption. *(To all. Serious.)*

New graffiti has just been found on the wall outside my office.

It is suspected that the tagger is currently on the school premises. If you notice anyone with a can of spray paint, report that person immediately. They will be prosecuted. The police were notified about our problem some time ago but don't seem to be able to do anything about it. We'll just have to find the evil graffiti artist ourselves. That is all. *(Furbish exits.)*

CREP: Now, without further ado—and I do tend to do too much sometimes, I suppose—here is our first speaker. And the first speaker is...me. I, Ms. Crep...Suzette Crep to those of you unaware of my first name. I, Ms. Suzette Crep, am, of course, your assistant principal. My task here is to guide students so they are given correct direction. For example, on the first day of class each year, I go out of my way to direct new students on how to get to the cafeteria. Sometimes I must escort—personally guide—some of the less astute ones who find it difficult to comprehend simple verbal directions such as when I simply tell them, "Take two lefts, a right, a left, two rights, go around the big bush, and take another right. *(Pause.)* Now you're at the school library. Make two more lefts, a right, a left, and there you are at the cafeteria." *(Pause. Aside.)* These are trying times! *(To audience.)* I love my job... as assistant principal! And now, our next speaker, whom I hope you will find equally informative as myself, such as I am. Our next speaker has unique skills which some of you might want to take advantage of, if not now, then later in life. Young men and young women, here is Dr. Syl A. Cohen.

(Plastic Surgeon enters. Ms. Crep exits. [Or Ms. Crep can remain on stage and sit near the guest speakers instead of exiting after each speaker's introduction.]

PLASTIC SURGEON: There is a very good reason why I was asked to be a speaker here on Career Day at Greenwood High School. You see, it has been demonstrated conclusively that it is important for career success that one look attractive. Statistics show that attractive people make significantly more money over a lifetime than unattractive messes. And I, Dr. Syl A. Cohen, am a plastic surgeon. Just taking a quick glance across the room... *(Glances about.)* ...many of you are candidates to use the services of someone like me one day...even now. Actually, I don't really like being called a "plastic surgeon." We haven't used plastic in years. I'd rather be called a "transformational rejuvenist." Through structural modification, I transform my clients. I turn old dogs into frisky puppies, queen mothers into princesses. To give you some idea of how I might make you more attractive for when you go out on interviews, I offer my clients a variety of transformations from which to choose: nose jobs, ear pins, face lifts. I also work with an electric pen to permanently color women's eyelids. That is what I call real cosmetic surgery, and over time, my clients can save a fortune on eyeliner. In my initial consultations, I avail myself of a computerized technique that enables me to construct a picture of what the client will look like when I move her features around. So she can choose her look, although my trademark nose is programmed in and she has no choice about that. I also show her what she'll look like after her checkup if she doesn't pay her bill. Lately, we've treated obesity by making a little incision, injecting a synthetic protein to liquefy the client's fat, then sucking out the fat juice. My assistant takes care of the suction. I've never quite gotten used to the taste. *(Pause.)* My father was my inspiration for getting into this profession. Once a month, he'd take a day off from his upholstery business, and we'd drive to a spectacular

meadow. The brilliant wildflowers served as landing spots for the graceful butterflies we came to see. Butterflies were my father's favorites, and because he studied highly technical books about them, he was an expert at identifying different varieties. "There's an orange and black one." Or "Oh! There's a big yellow one." While part of my father wanted me to join him in his upholstery business, another part wanted me to become a doctor. I'm sure if he knew what I do today he'd be so happy my work has combined both his wishes. Naturally, I pay a good deal of attention to the way my office looks. As my father used to say, "The quality of fabric is important, and workmanship is something to take pride in. But appearance is substance." When they first visit my office, most clients comment favorably on the butterfly décor, ranging from the pattern on the sofa and chairs, to the preserved creatures mounted in frames on the wall. Both my clients and I know the high quality décor is a front. But, hey, that's the business I'm in. There are no lovelier creatures than those delicate, colorful butterflies. And so metaphorically suited to my profession—altering the ugly caterpillars that come in and releasing the inner majestic butterfly within them. And when I inform them how the surgery I do is actually quite painless, I often jokingly say that all they'll be wearing when they leave my office is a butterfly bandage. Of course I don't tell them that the lifespan of an average butterfly is about ten days...

(Cheer Coach enters.)

CHEER COACH: *(Cheers.)*

Ear pin, new skin,
Liposuction!
Chin enhancement,
And nose reduction!
2-4-6-8!
This surgeon makes you look
Real great!

Yay!

(Cheer Coach exits. Ms. Crep enters. Plastic Surgeon takes his seat.)

CREP: *(To Plastic Surgeon.)* That was a beautiful talk. *(To audience.)* Thank goodness for people like Dr. Cohen. *(Proud.)* But I thank my lucky stars that I don't have the need to go in for something like that.

(Furbish enters.)

FURBISH: Attention, everyone! To help prevent dangerous collisions, students must always walk on the right side of the corridors and may not cross the double white line except to enter their classroom. That is all.

(Furbish exits. Steve Sweeper enters carrying a broom and approaches Ms. Crep.)

SWEEPER: *(To Ms. Crep.)* Hi, sugar. I'm Steve Sweeper, the new assistant school custodian. Ready to clean this room. *(Looks around. Confused.)* What's going on?

CREP: I'm afraid, Mr. Sweeper, that today is Career Day, so you'll have to wait till later before you sweep.

SWEEPER: And mop. Don't forget mop.

CREP: I won't forget. *(Sweeper closes his eyes, as if asleep. Ms. Crep nudges him awake.)* Mr. Sweeper?

SWEEPER: Sorry. I like to keep things neat and clean, but sometimes it's hard because I have narcolepsy, and occasionally, totally out of the blue, I just fall asleep. I never know when it'll happen. There I am, sweeping a floor, or putting in a light bulb and—boom! I'm fast asleep. Once I was fixing a toilet and I suddenly went into dreamland. My face fell into the toilet bowl and I almost drowned.

CREP: Thanks for sharing, but we need to get on with Career Day.

SWEEPER: Hey, do you mind if I tell the kids about my career?

It's an important job, you know.

CREP: Certainly, Mr. Sweeper. Why don't you just join the others, and I'll call on you to present.

SWEEPER: Sure, sugar.

CREP: Sugar?

SWEEPER: *(Flirtatious.)* You seem kinda sweet to me...

CREP: *(Blushes.)* Thanks.

(Sweeper joins the other speakers. He sits down, falls asleep, and starts snoring. Furbish enters.)

FURBISH: Attention, everyone. I forgot to tell our students something very important. We are all aware of our overcrowded classrooms here at Greenwood High School. Therefore, we are encouraging all you students who are thinking of dropping out to do so as soon as possible. So, pick up those easy-to-fill-out dropout forms from Ms. Crep at her office. Isn't that right, Ms. Crep?

CREP: That's right, Principal Furbish. We do need smaller classrooms.

CHEER COACH: *(Confused.)* I don't really understand why we need smaller classrooms. Students are already crammed in. Why have all those carpenters come in to make smaller classrooms? Doesn't it make more sense to get rid of some of the students, like Mr. Furbish says, than make smaller rooms?

FURBISH: Good point, Miss Appleby. Why don't you come to my office shortly to discuss this matter further.

CHEER COACH: Love to.

CREP: *(To audience.)* Not all you students will go on to college. In fact, not all you students will graduate from Greenwood High. And because you too need to plan your vocational futures, it is for you that we have our next speaker at Career Day...Phil O'Durret.

(Sanitation Worker stands and goes CS. Ms. Crep exits.)

SANITATION WORKER: Pleased to see ya, kids. If there's any piece of career advice I could give you, it's do something meaningful, where you help our society that we live in...even if it's only you who realizes you are doing a necessary job, and others don't appreciate how important you are. So, I'm proud to speak here today on Career Day at Greenwood High School to let you guys know what it's like to be a sanitation worker. What would happen if there wasn't people like me? There'd be a world rotting with maggots. Everywhere there'd be stuff that stinks. And it would be very unsightly. Sanitation workers are often misunderstood. We are not as stupid as we sometimes look...descended from a race of hairy morons. Some of our parents were even civil service clerks. How do you think it is going through life knowing people think of you as dumb just because you handle garbage? They don't know some of us are poetry mavens, and in our free time, we generate verse...that rhymes. People think we're messy-type people 'cause we wear old clothes with stains. Would you wear your new outfit if you had my job? I personally wouldn't want to be a white-collar worker. If I did wear a white collar to work one day, think how long it would stay white! Do you know what a sickening place it would be without us doing our job? We should be thanked every day, not used as the standard of mindless labor, like when hoity-toity teachers arguing for a raise say, "Your offer sucks. Even a garbage man gets that." Who do those teachers think they are? Just because they graduated high school! We sanitation workers deserve all the money we get paid. And more. How much is it worth to smell that putrid garbage day after day, house after house? And how much is it worth for my wife to smell me when I come home every night? And the worst is them flies! You go pick up a barrel of garbage in the summer and hundreds of them with shiny green bodies are buzzing around, nipping at your face, even getting into your ears. And most times when you slap your ear to kill a fly, he's gone by the time your hand gets there. But sometimes you do manage to get them before

they leave your ear... *(Fly buzzing noise. He slaps his ear. Buzzing stops. He removes the fly carcass from his ear and holds it between two fingers.)* ...and you feel a great satisfaction. *(Not knowing what to do with the fly, he places it back into his ear.)* I hate flies, I can't stand 'em. Sometimes when I try to sleep at night, I stay up thinking of the flies I have to deal with day in and day out. It drives me nuts. It's at times like this, to keep up my morale, I recite to myself a verse I once wrote.

"Through wind, rain, sleet, and hail
The garbage man hefts the garbage pail,
Meeting his appointed rounds
Disposing junk, refuse, and coffee grounds,
Ridding the barrels of used cans and bones.
The stoic garbage man never moans.
Reliably toiling to fill his truck,
Lifting and tossing to earn his buck,
His body may be filthy but his mind is neat,
As he handles vermin so his family can eat.
His aches and fatigue he does not mention,
As he awaits the day he can collect his pension.
Through heat, cold and high humidity
The garbage man keeps his virility *(Proud.)*
Growing muscles lifting trash,
Then dropping the barrels with a loud crash.
Working the seasons without fanfare,
In winter, snow is splatted in his hair.
In summer, sweat drips from brow into eyes,
And in his ears are the carcasses of flies."

I hope that now that you understand us better you'll give us the respect we deserve, and maybe even sign up to be one of us.

(Cheer Coach enters.)

CHEER COACH: *(Cheers.)*

Lift that barrel,

Empty that can.
A job well done
By the sanitation man!
He gets rid of garbage,
Tosses the trash.
He's got hair on his chest
And sometimes a mustache.
Yay!

(Cheer Coach exits. Ms. Crep enters. Sanitation Worker takes his seat.)

CREP: Thank you, Phil O'Durret, for your inspiring and cultured presentation, which didn't have a single *dirty* word in it. *(Laughs.)* People like you certainly aren't found at the *bottom of the barrel*. *(Laughs.)*

(Furbish enters.)

FURBISH: Attention, everyone! A very important announcement: Melissa Foster, your mother called. You will need to share your peanut butter and jelly sandwich with your younger sister. That is all! *(As he exits, he suspiciously checks out some of the Speakers as possible graffiti suspects.)* Just checking things out...

CREP: And now a speaker who I think will supply a valuable perspective for you. Here is Professor [Ariel] Gibbon. *[Carlyle if male.]*

(Historian stands and goes CS. Ms. Crep exits.)

HISTORIAN: Students of Greenwood High School, you are our future. And here at Career Day, I know many of you are keeping up with technology and developments in your particular areas of interest. This is important. But remember, in order to accurately predict the future in whatever area you

are involved in, you must understand the past. And so, on this historic occasion, I am pleased to tell you about my profession. I am an historian. Which is one reason why it's an historic occasion. We are very important, which is why some of you should consider studying to become an historian like me, Professor [Ariel] Gibbon. Why are we important? The image of the typical historian as a dull, tweedy professor with thick glasses and a capacity for memorizing trivia and a penchant for spouting it at the least opportunity, leads people to think of us as less harmless than a librarian. But remember, no event is actually history until an historian writes it. So we actually shape history, perhaps even more so than those we write about. We can turn visionaries into fools, drunkards into heroes, heroes into drunkards, conquerors into paranoids, and dictators into benevolent rulers. Frankly, some of my revisionist colleagues have gone so far that their books should be in the fiction section of bookstores. It's not surprising to learn many presidents of public relations firms were history majors. Historians document events, chronicle lives, record how civilizations evolve, and then often explain it with a catchy theme: "The Renaissance," "The Age of Reason," "The Era of Good Feeling," "The Roaring Twenties." Historians can be very creative. The study of history has become increasingly important. It wasn't long ago that people thought it of little value to record what happened in Pakistan, Mexico, or anywhere in Idaho. Now, it's important to be in touch with events in all parts of the globe, and it's impossible for any one historian to keep up with all of it. To be successful these days, an historian must specialize in a particular area. My own specialty is the Great Noodle Famine in early 16th-century Mongolia. Sometimes I wish the world would stand still so I could go on vacation for a couple of weeks without fear of missing something important. So, while historians are dependent on change, I can appreciate constancy as well. It's a relief when I don't have to worry about new developments so I can spend my time reinterpreting the historical events that

most interest me. Moreover, constancy is becoming so rare in our world it is to be admired when found...and so I really prize cockroaches. My colleagues specializing in biological history tell us cockroaches have been around for millions of years, exemplifying the adage that one creature's garbage is another's feast. They're older than not only recorded history, but religion. You won't find them written about in any religion's bible. But you can imagine the Wise Men crunching the buggers as they cleansed the stable in Bethlehem. You can visualize overwrought rabbis cursing as the creatures carried off morsels of matzah when the Passover Seder was over. Mohammed, no doubt, squished a few of them he noticed crawling toward the East. Yes, history tells us that cockroaches were among the earliest victims of religious persecution. On a more personal level—I have no way of proving it now...any evidence having been long buried—but I strongly suspect a large band of famished cockroaches were responsible for the Great Noodle Famine. I leave you with the rallying cry of historians, "Remember the past!"

(Cheer Coach enters.)

CHEER COACH: Life is less a mystery
Because we study history.
Historian, historian,
Who studies the past.
A profession that will ever last!
Go historian,
Go go go!
So the past we can know.
Yay!

(Cheer Coach exits. Ms. Crep enters. Historian takes her seat.)

CREP: Thank you very much, Professor Gibbon. *(To audience.)*
Some of you may remember last year when Professor Gibbon

addressed us at Career Day. She gave the exact same talk. I suppose that today she was illustrating for us that history does repeat itself. (*Laughs at her own joke.*) Not all of the people working at this school are educators, such as myself. Others hold positions which help this school keep running. And so, for the benefit of you who might be thinking of a career in the realm of maintenance, here to speak today I give you Steve Sweeper. (*Someone nudges Sweeper, but he remains asleep.*) Perhaps Mr. Sweeper will speak later... And now, a very unique individual who is actually the mom of one of you students, Jimmy Winnebakoff. Young men and young women, may I present Betty Winnebakoff.

HOMEMAKER: Hi, kids. Many of you are probably thinking of careers where you leave your home and go every day to an office or other place of business and you do your work and make money. But here at Career Day at Greenwood High, I'd like to present to you an alternative career—homemaking. Though you may not make any money per se, money isn't everything. Homemaking is a very rewarding career in other ways, and recently, because of my homemaking skills, I'm very happy to tell you that I got another job, which does have a financial stipend, and which does take me out of the home. I'm the only one in the world this year to have this position, since a few months ago I was honored by being awarded the title of Mrs. Homemaker [insert current year]! (*She looks out into audience and waves to her son.*) Hi, Jimmy. (*To audience.*) I'm having the best time of my life, traveling around the country, meeting so many wonderful people. Oh, I know some people call me foolish, claiming such pride in being a homemaker while careers are out there to be forged. But homemaking is a career, especially when you have 12 children. I love all my kids. I miss them so much. I guess the only regret I have about being Mrs. Homemaker is that, as I tour the country, I'm so rarely at home, and I don't see them as often as I'd like. It's been six months. I e-mail a note to at least one of them every day, don't I, Jimmy? (*She waves to Jimmy.*) So each

child receives a message from me just about every two weeks. I declare, it's difficult for me to remember each child's personal endearment: Sweets, Babe, Honey Lamb... (*Points to Jimmy.*) ...Big Snoot... (*To Jimmy.*) Don't pout, Jimmy. You're so special. How many other kids in the whole country have a nose that big? Your father is so proud that you take after his side of the family. (*To audience.*) I'm so thankful to have a supportive husband, who, while I'm gallivanting about the country, is content to remain at home taking care of the kids with only Ingrid, our 19-year-old au pair from Sweden, to assist him. The competition for the title of Mrs. Homemaker was really close. I'd piled up points in the economy-shopping competition, and did well in the table-setting competition. I have my brood of a dozen to thank for my strong performance in the stretch mark contest, where they give a point for each inch. Well, got to go now. I'm on to a county fair on the other side of the state. (*To Jimmy.*) See you in a few weeks, Jimmy... (*Harsh tone. Jimmy sobs.*) Stop sobbing, Jimmy! I said, stop sobbing! Jimmy, stop it! You're a teenager. Shut up, you little crybaby! (*Nice.*) Bye bye, kids.

CHEER COACH: Homemaker, homemaker.

Maker of the home.
One day like you
We hope to become!
Cook and sew,
Dust and scrub.
Homemaker, homemaker,
She's no schlub.
Yay! (*Exits.*)

MS. CREP: She was really *cooking*, wasn't she? She's obviously very busy, with a *laundry* list of things to do so she must *budget* her time. (*Laughs.*)

[END OF FREEVIEW]