

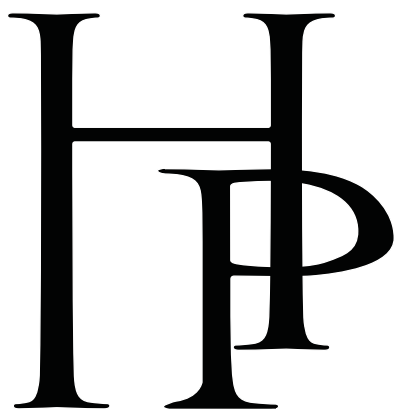
# MIDDLE SCHOOL DATING GAME

BY  
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# THE MIDDLE SCHOOL DATING GAME

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By Jennifer McVetty

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## THE MIDDLE SCHOOL DATING GAME

By Jennifer McVetty

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 MEN, 6 WOMEN, 3 EITHER)

\*JANIE (m/f) ..... Girl in early teens, announcer for The Middle School Dating Game. (44 lines)

\*LIZ (m/f) ..... Girl in early teens, the voice of reason in this show. (34 lines)

\*BARB (m/f) ..... Girl in early teens, host of The Middle School Dating Game. (78 lines)

CUE CARD GIRL (f) ..... Girl who keeps the cue cards for the Game, doesn't speak but often gets into the action. (Non-Speaking)

SALLY (f) ..... Girl in early teens, contestant on The Middle School Dating Game. (45 lines)

FRED (m) ..... Boy in early teens, contestant on The Middle School Dating Game. (37 lines)

CONNIE (f) ..... Sally's best friend. (10 lines)

FRANK (m) ..... Fred's friend, slimy, constantly hitting on girls. (11 lines)

NANA WHITE (f) ..... An elderly, has-been game show girl. (11 lines)

JUDY (f) ..... Fred's loud, obnoxious ex-girlfriend. (17 lines)

ANNA (f).....Sally's friend who has a bad case of  
stage fright. (5 lines)

*\*These characters could be played by boys with very few script changes. In which case, the character names could be changed to JOHNNY, KYLE and BOB. For a different spin on things, even NANA WHITE could be played by a boy in drag. Also, at the director's discretion, additional actors could be used to round out the studio audience.*

## THE MIDDLE SCHOOL DATING GAME

### SETTING:

*Lights come up on a bare stage except for a few stage blocks, which are in the upstage center area and an easel, which is in the downstage left corner.*

### AT RISE:

*A few seconds pass until JANIE enters and nonchalantly crosses the stage, humming softly. As JANIE reaches center stage, she freezes, and the humming comes to an abrupt stop. JANIE pauses a moment then slowly turns her head toward the audience as though just realizing that they are there. Upon seeing the audience, JANIE gives a little jump backward in surprise. She pauses another moment then gives the audience a very broad, fake smile. Panicked, she suddenly turns to look offstage.*

**JANIE:** *(In a loud whisper.) Psst! (She turns back to the audience and gives another feeble smile then turns back and whispers more loudly.) PSSSSTT! (She turns again to the audience and gives an unconvincing little chuckle. Then back to offstage.)* HEY!

**LIZ:** *(Entering and crossing to JANIE.)* What is it? What's the matter? Why do you keep "psst-ing" me? *(JANIE takes LIZ'S face in her hands and turns it toward the audience as LIZ is still talking.)* After all, it's not as if - - *(LIZ sees the audience.)* Oh . . .

**JANIE:** Yes, oh.

**LIZ:** *(Turning to JANIE.)* An audience!

**JANIE:** Yes, an audience. How very observant of you.

**LIZ:** *(Turning back to the audience, panicking.)* Who - - who invited them?

**JANIE:** I didn't invite them! **You** must have done it!

**LIZ:** It wasn't me! It must have been you!

**JANIE:** Don't give me that! You know very well that - -

**LIZ:** You're always accusing me! *(They get into an argument.)*

**JANIE:** Oh, yeah?

**LIZ:** Yeah!

**BARB:** *(Enters and crosses to JANIE and LIZ, breaking up the fight.)* Hey, hey, HEY! *(She has them apart.)* Look! *(They all peer out into the audience.)* You're boring them!

**JANIE:** Hey, you're right! Look! (*Pointing.*) That guy over there is almost asleep!

**LIZ:** Doesn't he look so cute when he's sleeping?

**BARB:** And that guy over there! (*Pointing.*) He's so bored he's - - ugh, really, sir! Please, don't pick your nose! There are other people present, you know!

**JANIE:** Well, only one thing to do then. (*She motions to someone offstage to come on. CUE CARD GIRL enters with a flashy coat and pretend microphone. She hands the microphone to BARB. CUE CARD GIRL and JANIE help BARB on with her coat as she begins the "Dating Game" lines.*)

**LIZ:** Do we have to?

**JANIE:** Let's do it then.

**BARB:** Here we go . . .

*CUE CARD GIRL crosses to the opposite side of the stage where her cue cards await her on an easel. She displays a "Middle School Dating Game" sign.*

**BARB:** (*In game show announcer voice.*) It's the Middle School Dating Game! Where dating's all brand new and the stakes are high! Pick the right person, and you could be on your way to middle school dating paradise! But, pick the wrong one, and you could be headed for misery, heartbreak, and worst of all - - complete humiliation in front of all of your friends! So - - are you ready to play? Come on, let's go!

**JANIE:** We'd like to start off today with a little history of how we got here. (*CUE CARD GIRL flips to "History" card.*) After all, it wasn't too long ago that most of our encounters with members of the opposite sex went something like this.

*FRED and SALLY enter carrying sandbox toys. CC GIRL displays a "Kindergarten" card. Their costume and/or manner should indicate something of kindergartners. They sit on the floor and begin playing. Their area remains lit while the lights fade on LIZ, BARB and JANIE. They play peacefully until FRED moves to SALLY'S area and begins digging.*

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**SALLY:** Hey! (*Pushing him away.*) This is **my** dirt. You go play in **your** dirt over there!

**FRED:** Nuh-uh! (*Pushing her back.*) You're not the boss of me. I can play in this dirt if I want!

*They now begin pushing each other with more force each time they speak.*

**SALLY:** Cannot.

**FRED:** Can, too.

**SALLY:** Cannot.

**FRED:** Can, too.

*JANIE crosses to them.*

**JANIE:** Hey, guys? Hate to interrupt this brilliant conversation, but that guy in the audience? (*She points.*) Yeah, him. He's picking his nose again. Let's get on with this, shall we?

**SALLY:** Okay.

**FRED:** Sorry.

**JANIE:** Quite all right. (*She moves back to the unlit portion of the stage.*)

**SALLY:** Anyways, **you** can't play over here 'cause you'll get your icky **boy** germs (*Pushing him again.*) in my nice **clean** dirt!

**FRED:** (*Pushing back.*) I don't have germs!

*The pushing match resumes with even more force.*

**SALLY:** Do too!

**FRED:** Do not!

**SALLY:** Do too!

**JANIE:** (*Stepping out of the dark.*) Guys! The nose picker?

**FRED:** Oops.

**SALLY:** Sorry!

**FRED:** (*Back to SALLY.*) Oh yeah? (*Standing.*) Well, **you** can't play in **my** dirt 'cause I don't want all your yucky **girl** cooties!

**SALLY:** (*Standing.*) Cooties! Girls don't got cooties! (*This time they push even harder until they get into an out-and-out brawl.*)

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**FRED:** Uh huh!

**SALLY:** Nuh uh!

**FRED:** Uh huh!

**SALLY:** Nuh uh!

*LIZ, BARB and JANIE enter into the light. CC GIRL and LIZ pull SALLY and FRED apart and offstage while they still try to get at each other.*

**JANIE:** Geez, that guy in the audience is going to run out if we keep up with this!

**BARB:** So, we'll move on to the next stage that occurs. In this stage, the young male searches for ways to express his affection for the female.

*CC GIRL reenters and displays a "Second Grade" card. BARB and JANIE cross to the unlit portion of the stage. SALLY enters first humming to herself. FRED sneaks up behind her and shoves her, pushing her to the ground. FRED and SALLY'S costume and/or manner should suggest second graders.*

**FRED:** Ha, ha!

**SALLY:** I'm telling! You're gonna be in **trouble**!

**FRED:** No, no! Don't tell! Look, I've got something for you!

**SALLY:** For me?

**FRED:** Yeah! *(He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a rubber snake, which he dangles in front of her face.)* Here you go!

**SALLY:** *(Screams and scrambles away from him. She is teary-eyed.)* Why do you always have to be so mean to me?

**FRED:** I wasn't being mean! This is my pet, Harvey. *(He pulls the snake towards him and pats him.)* Isn't that right, Harvey? I wanted to introduce him to you because I keep telling him about you.

**SALLY:** Really?

**FRED:** Yup, I keep on telling him how pretty you are.

**SALLY:** Me? Pretty?

**FRED:** Yeah - - pretty ugly! *(He cracks up.)*

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**SALLY:** *(In tears again.)* You are **such** a jerk! I **am** telling on you!  
*(She shoves past him.)*

**FRED:** *(Looking after her then to the audience.)* Was it something I said? *(He shrugs and exits.)*

**JANIE:** *(Steps into light.)* Yes, well, not a lot of progress there.

**BARB:** No, of course not because, as always, if any real progress is going to be made, it's going to have to be made by the girls.  
*(\*This line can be cut if this role is played by a boy.)* So, the next significant stage is when girls start to notice boys.

*JANIE and BARB cross to the unlit portion of the stage as CC GIRL flips to the "Fourth Grade" card. FRED and FRANK enter with toy trucks followed by SALLY and CONNIE. Their costume and/or manner suggest fourth grade. The boys immediately crouch on the ground and play, while the girls stand behind them and watch.*

**SALLY:** Isn't he **cute**?

**CONNIE:** Which one?

**SALLY:** Ummm - - **Fred**. *(She points to FRED as he pretends to spit.)*

**CONNIE:** Well, if you like Fred, then I like **Frank**. *(She points to FRANK as he wipes his nose on his sleeve.)*

**SALLY:** Okay. Then he'll *(Pointing to FRED.)* be my boyfriend, and he *(Pointing to FRANK.)* can be your boyfriend.

**CONNIE:** Okay. And when we grow up, we can all get married in one big wedding!

*FRANK picks up a worm and dangles it in front of FRED'S face.*

**SALLY:** Yeah, and we can live in houses right next to each other so our kids can play together.

**CONNIE:** Yeah, and - - *(She pauses as FRED grabs and eats the worm. Both girls react in disgust.)*

**SALLY:** Ewww! I changed my mind. I don't like Fred. I like Frank!

*FRANK picks up another worm.*

**CONNIE:** You can't like Frank. He's **my** boyfriend!

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**SALLY:** You can have Fred! Frank is mine!

**CONNIE:** Nuh uh! I don't want a worm eater! **He** is - - *(She points to FRANK and begins to point to herself as he too gobbles up a worm. She ends up pointing at SALLY.)* yours! Uck, you can have them **both!**

**SALLY:** *(Disgusted.)* You know what? I think there are some sixth grade boys over on the other end of the playground.

**CONNIE:** Yeah, I've always preferred *(Tossing her hair.)* older men, anyway. Let's go. *(They exit followed by the boys who are shoving each other as they exit. Lights come up on JANIE and BARB.)*

**JANIE:** So much for women in action!

**BARB:** Yes, well, not a lot to choose from at that age, is there? But sixth grade - - sixth grade is where it all begins! *(CC GIRL flips to "Sixth Grade" card.)*

**JANIE:** And in sixth grade, your friends become a very important part of the process!

*All actors, except NANA WHITE, enter and clump into small groups, quietly discussing the latest gossip. JANIE and BARB join a group. SALLY and CONNIE stand on one side of the stage, and FRED and FRANK stand on the other.*

**CONNIE:** Guess what, Sally? I heard that Fred likes you!

**SALLY:** Really? Oh, Connie, I think I like Fred, too. Tell him I like him, and see if he'll go out with me!

*CONNIE turns to the actor next to her and whispers into her ear. Each actor whispers into the next actor's ear as CC GIRL flips cards that say things like "Sally likes Ned," "Sally likes to wear Keds," "Sally likes the color red," "Sally shouldn't eat lead," "Know what Sally said?" "Sally's got a fat head." FRANK finally whispers the message to FRED.*

**FRED:** *(Bewildered.)* Sally thinks I'm dead?

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*FRANK shrugs while FRED looks down the line at SALLY. She makes a frustrated noise and storms offstage. FRED shrugs and exits.*

**JANIE:** *(Stepping forward.)* Hmm, well now we're **almost** in high school, so we're a bit more mature about all this boy-girl stuff than we have been in the past.

**LIZ:** *(Stepping forward.)* We are?

**BARB:** *(Stepping forward.)* Of course we are! 'Cause now we play The Middle School Dating Game! *(CC GIRL flashes the "Applause" sign at CONNIE, FRANK, ANNA and JUDY as they sit on stage blocks to become the studio audience. She gets no response, so she holds up another sign that reads, "I said, applause!" The audience applauds and cheers wildly.)*

**LIZ:** No, not that! Anything but that!

**BARB:** *(Ignoring LIZ.)* So, enough of the preliminaries. Let's get on with it! Hey, Janie, tell us who our lucky contestants are today!

**LIZ:** No! No lucky contestants!

**JANIE:** Okay, Barb. *(She crosses to the side of the stage and puts a hand to her ear in game show announcer style.)* Well, they've come a long way since sixth grade - - and they still think they like each other! Let's have a warm round of applause for Saaaaallly and Frrreeeedd!!!

*SALLY and FRED enter from opposite sides of the stage looking bewildered. CC GIRL holds up "Applause" sign and gets no response once again, so she holds up a "Please?" sign. Audience nudges each other and once again, yells and applauds wildly.*

**LIZ:** Sally! Fred! Get out while you still can!

**JANIE:** But before we play, we need to introduce one other very important person. She's been co-host of the Middle School Dating Game for fifty years. Give it up for Nana White!

**LIZ:** No, not Nana! I draw the line at Nana White!

*NANA WHITE enters. She is an elderly has-been game show girl. She waves grumpily at the audience and shuffles over to join BARB. LIZ buries her head in her hands. NANA looks around, sees CC GIRL and calls her over with a very loud whistle. CC GIRL grabs her cards, rushes over to NANA and holds the cards up for her.*

**NANA:** *(Squinting to see the cards, she reads with no expression.)*  
*Hello, everybody. It's great to be here.*

**BARB:** Welcome, Nana, welcome. You look - - er - - lovely today.

**LIZ:** Yeah, about as lovely as an ingrown toenail!

**NANA:** *(She whacks LIZ in the stomach with her handbag then smiles hideously at BARB. She continues reading her cue card.)*  
Thank you, Bob - - uh - - Barb.

**BARB:** Now, Nana, could you show our two contestants today what they could win on the Middle School Dating Game?

**NANA:** *(As though still reading a cue card.)* Sure can, Bub - - er - - Barb!

**BARB:** That's your cue, Janie!

**JANIE:** Right you are, Bub, uh, Barb! *(She shoots an apologetic glance at BARB.)* Sally, today is your lucky day because today on the Middle School Dating Game, you could win - - Fred! *(CC GIRL gives NANA a push, and she crosses over and "presents" FRED, who looks a little frightened of her.)* That's right! He could be your dreamboat, your main man, your hunka hunka burnin' love **if** you can win the Middle School Dating Game. And Fred, we hope we won't be sending you home empty-handed! 'Cause today you could win our grand prize at the Middle School Dating Game! That's right! You could win Sally!

*NANA looks a little put out and having to cross all the way over to SALLY, but she does and "presents" her as SALLY tries to "shoo" her away.*

**JANIE:** Yessiree! She's pretty; she's smart, and she could be **all yours** if you can win at the Middle School Dating Game! Now, back to you, Bob! Uh, Barb!

**LIZ:** *(Now recovered from the whack in the stomach.)* Look, couldn't we just - -

**BARB:** Thank you - - (*Deliberately.*) Johnny! Oops! I mean, Janie! (*Glares at JANIE, who shrugs and mouths "Sorry!" BARB goes back to her host persona.*) Now, those of you who have seen our little game here before know it takes place in several segments, and our first segment, of course, is "The Time Is Right!" (*CC Girl flips "The Time Is Right" card.*) All you regular viewers know that in this part of our game, we need to make sure that *The Time Is Right* for these two lovebirds to get together! To do this, we ask some of their friends to come forward from our studio audience, so we can interview them to find out if The Time Is Right!

**LIZ:** Wait, wait, wait! (*She finally gets their attention.*) Why don't we just let Sally and Fred figure out if now is a good time for them to start dating? I mean, what a novel concept!

**BARB:** Now look here. I've had just about enough of you. I've been trying to ignore your little **comments** up until now, but if you can't control yourself, I'm going to sic Nana White on you. (*She points at NANA, who growls menacingly.*) Now, if you can't be helpful, just go sit in the studio audience, and be quiet. (*LIZ sighs and begrudgingly sits down.*) Good, now where were we? Oh yes - - (*Resumes host persona.*) We were going to pick some volunteers from our studio audience to see if **The Time Is Right!** Now, let's see - - (*Wanders amongst the audience as they all vie for her attention.*) Who to pick? Who to pick? How about you. (*Chooses JUDY.*) And you. (*Chooses FRANK.*) and you! (*Chooses ANNA.*) Now, come right up here, and let's play "The Time Is Right!" But first, could you please introduce yourselves to our studio audience?

**JUDY:** (*Grabs the microphone forcefully and smacks her gum loudly before beginning.*) Yeah, my name is Judy, Judy Schlotz, and I just want to say - -

**BARB:** Whoa! (*Grabs "mike" back.*) Hang on there, Judy! We need to introduce our other studio audience members. (*To FRANK.*) And your name is?

**FRANK:** My name's Frank. And I'd like to let all you ladies out there know that I am a-vail-able. (*All the girls in the audience react in disgust.*)

**BARB:** That's great. Thanks for that, Frank. (*To ANNA.*) And how about you?

*BARB thrusts the microphone in front of her. ANNA starts to answer the questions then looks out at the audience and becomes frozen with stage fright. Her mouth opens, but she can only emit a whimpering sound.*

**BARB:** *(Waving her hand in front of ANNA'S stony face.)* Uh, anybody in there? Helllloooo?

**ANNA:** *(She turns to BARB, seemingly noticing her for the first time. She responds vaguely.)* Oh hello.

**BARB:** *(Chuckling insincerely, sweating it a bit in front of the audience.)* So, what is it?

**ANNA:** What's what?

**BARB:** *(Through clenched teeth.)* **Your name?**

**ANNA:** Oh it's *(Looks back at audience and becomes frozen with fear again, in a stage whisper.)* I - - I dunno.

**FRANK:** I'd say her name is Gorgeous. *(Moves toward ANNA.)* Hello, Gorgeous!

**BARB:** Take it easy there, Frank. You're scaring the girl. *(Aside.)* Not to mention every other woman within a five-mile radius.

**JUDY:** *(Pops the large bubble she was blowing with her gum and grabs microphone back in exasperation.)* It's Anna. Her name's Anna Johnson. Gawd! What is **her** problem?

**BARB:** *(Gives a false chuckle.)* Well, if I didn't know better, I'd say Anna has a little *(Shoves her to break her trance.)* stage fright!

**FRANK:** *(Moving toward ANNA with arms outstretched.)* I think what Anna needs is a big hug!

**BARB:** *(Stopping his progress towards ANNA.)* No. No, she doesn't. Thanks anyway. *(If a boy plays this character, JUDY can have this line, and FRANK's next line can be addressed to her.)*

**FRANK:** Oh, I get it! You're jealous. *(Arms outstretched again.)* Well, c'mere, and I'll give you a big hug, too.

**BARB:** *(Stops him with a finger.)* Frank, I hope your arms are flexible. 'Cause they're going to need to be **really** flexible for where I'm going to put them if you hug me. *(If played by a boy, the word "me" can be changed to "her" in this line.)* Are your arms that flexible, Frank?

**FRANK:** (*Putting his arms immediately to his sides.*) Um, I don't think so.

**JUDY:** Yeah, well, whatever. So, anyway, like I was saying - -

**BARB:** (*Snatches "mike" back from JUDY.*) One thing at a time there, Judy. I am still host after all. (*Pauses to regain composure.*) Now then, Judy, at this point in our little game show, we need you to tell us if "The Time Is Right" for Fred to go out with Sally. In other words, we need to make sure that he isn't dating anyone else, that he doesn't have a crush on anyone else, that he's not wanted by the police - -

**JUDY:** (*Grabs microphone back.*) Yeah, yeah, I get the idea. And I can tell you a thing or two about Fred. He sure isn't going out with anyone else now, and he sure as heck doesn't like anyone else but that stupid Sally girl. Know how I know, Barb? Huh? I'll tell you how I know. I **know** because he **was** going out with me! And I know because he dumped me for her! (*Points to SALLY.*) Said I was **too loud**! Wanted someone **quieter** and nicer! Now I ask you, do you think that little bimchette over there is quieter and nicer than me?

**BARB:** Well, thank you, Judy for answering our question. (*Motions to JANIE and NANA who pull JUDY offstage as she ad-libs lines such as "Hey, you didn't answer my question! Who could possibly be quieter and nicer than me?" NANA and JANIE reenter.*) Now, moving right along. Anna, is it? (*ANNA is still staring straight ahead.*) I assume that you are here to speak for Sally. (*Pause.*) I'm going to take your silence as agreement, Anna, okay? (*No response.*) Okay! Now, I need to ask you a terribly important question, Anna. Is **The Time Right** for Sally to go out with Fred? (*Pause.*) A simple nod will do, hon. (*Silence. She pinches ANNA on the arm. ANNA starts, rubs her arm then nods vigorously.*) That's great, Anna. Ladies and gentlemen, let's give Anna a big round of applause. (*She motions for JANIE and NANA who push the still frozen ANNA offstage. They reenter.*) Isn't she great? Just great! Now, Frank. You are here to speak for - - ?

**FRANK:** I'm not here to speak for anyone, Barb-baby. I'm just here to check out the babes!



**BARB:** Charming, Frank. I'm sure you'll get a lot of **babes** with that winning personality of yours. Why don't you check out Nana White as she shows you the exit, hmmm? Oh, Nana! *(NANA approaches him with enthusiasm.)*

**FRANK:** Ew! Not Nana! She's not a babe! I'll show myself out, thanks! *(He exits.)*

**NANA:** Poop! Lost another one!

**BARB:** Okay, Janie! Sally and Fred have made it through our first round. Tell them what's next!

*FRANK sneaks back into the studio audience while BARB and JANIE are talking. He tries to sit next to CONNIE and put his arm around her. She shoves him away, and he is forced to find his own seat.*

**JANIE:** You've got it, Barb! Sally and Fred, you've made it through **The Time Is Right!** But don't relax yet. This next segment of The Middle School Dating Game is to make sure that Sally's friends approve of her choice of boyfriends, so Sally, get ready for Dating Survivor! *(CC GIRL displays "Dating Survivor" card.)*

**LIZ:** *(Standing in audience.)* Now come on! This is just stupid! What does it matter what her friends think as long as **she** likes him?

**JANIE:** Liz, Liz, Liz! You are **such** an idiot! **Of course**, she can't date him if her **friends** don't like him! Now sit down. (*NANA moves threateningly toward LIZ, and she sits down.*) Now, our contestants today on Dating Survivor are Sally's three best friends. And they are - - (*She looks over to CC GIRL who flips to the "CONNIE" card.*) Connie! Come on down! (*CONNIE stands, jumps up and down and crosses to BARB. CC GIRL holds up "APPLAUSE" sign. When FRANK doesn't applaud, she crosses over to him and hits him over the head with the card then points to it vigorously. FRANK starts clapping fearfully. Meanwhile, NANA crosses to CONNIE and "shows" her.*) And our next contestant on Dating Survivor is (*CC GIRL goes back to her easel and flips "ANNA" card.*) Anna! Come on - - oh no, not Anna again. (*ANNA doesn't appear. JANIE motions to NANA to go get her as they all grin at the audience. NANA reappears pulling a very unwilling ANNA over to BARB and CONNIE. NANA gets ANNA in place and "shows" her. Meanwhile CC GIRL only has to throw a glance at FRANK to make him applaud.*) Hey, there, Anna! Great to have you back on the show! And our final contestant - - (*CC GIRL flips "JUDY" card.*) Judy? (*CC GIRL shrugs apologetically.*) Hey, how did Judy get on here? She's not Sally's friend! (*JUDY enters and pushes CONNIE, NANA and ANNA out of the way so that she can stand next to BARB. She smacks her gum loudly.*)

**LIZ:** It's rigged! It's rigged! (*NANA smiles brightly at the audience, crosses over to LIZ and whacks her on the head with her purse. Then she pushes JUDY away from BARB, so she can stand there to "show" her.*)

**JANIE:** Well, er, back to you, Barb!

**BARB:** (*Through clenched teeth.*) Thanks, Janie! (*Regaining composure.*) Now, you regular viewers know how this goes! We'll interview each of Sally's, er, friends and find out if she should date Fred or hate Fred! And we'll start with - -

**JUDY:** (*Grabbing BARB'S microphone.*) I'll start.

**BARB:** I thought you might.

**JUDY:** Well, I don't think that Sally is right for Fred at all!

**BARB:** Uh, Judy. You're supposed to tell us whether you think **Fred** is right for **Sally**.

**JUDY:** Whatever! Sally's totally wrong for Fred 'cause she's not as pretty as me, and she's no fun. She's just a little bookworm, and -

**BARB:** Judy, I think you're missing the point of this game. How about you just give me your vote? Okie dokie? (*Aside.*) Although, I think we all know what it is.

**JUDY:** Fine. **Hate him!**

**LIZ:** There's a big surprise! (*NANA looks over at her.*) I'm shuttin' up!

**BARB:** Okay, moving right along to - - Connie! Tell us what you think, Connie. Should Sally date or hate Fred?

**CONNIE:** Well, I've been Sally's best friend since sixth grade. And Sally's liked Fred since then, and I think he's liked her all that time, too. They seem to have a lot in common. They're both really smart and like to play sports and read a lot. So I'm going to say - - date him.

**BARB:** Thank you, Connie. And now we come to (*Without enthusiasm.*) Anna. What do you think, Anna, (*Dropping her voice.*) she asks with great hesitation.

**ANNA:** (*Staring straight ahead frozen in terror.*) I - - I - -

**BARB:** Well, how about this Anna? How long have you and Sally been friends? (*Pause.*) Come on, Anna, any form of communication will do. (*ANNA stomps her foot three times.*) Three years? (*ANNA nods.*) Good! Good girl, Anna. Okay, Anna. Now, how about once for date him and twice for hate him. (*ANNA stomps once.*) Good! Ladies and gentlemen, let's have a round of applause for all Sally's friends! (*CC GIRL holds "Applause" sign. FRANK applauds while NANA shows the friends then gives ANNA a dog biscuit and pats her on the head. She then pushes all three girls back to the studio audience.*) So, Janie, let's tell our audience the results of that part of our game.

**JANIE:** Sure thing, Barb! It seems that our young Fred has survived the round of Dating Survivor getting two “date him” votes and only one “hate him” vote. So our two lovebirds are well on their way. But before they start buying soda and roses, we have one more game for Fred and then one for Sally, so they can prove they are dating material! We’ll start with Fred. *(NANA crosses to FRED and forces him to center stage and “shows” him.)* Hold onto your love letters, Fred, and get ready to play Perfect Match! *(CC GIRL puts up “Perfect Match” card. NANA brings out a black flat to place between FRED and the girls. She exhausts herself in the effort.)* In this game, we’ll be choosing three lucky dating potentials for Fred to put to the test to see if he can find his **Perfect Match!**

**BARB:** Thank you, Janie! Now let’s get rid of Fred for a minute - - *(NANA hauls him unwillingly offstage and returns smiling.)* - - and bring down our three lovely contestants. Our first contestant is, of course, *(CC GIRL flips “SALLY” card.)* Sally!

*CC Girl shows “Applause” as NANA pushes FRANK off his seat and brings it down for SALLY to sit in. SALLY, looking confused, sits down as NANA “shows” her.*

**BARB:** *(Pulls out a card to read SALLY’s description.)* She’s a smart, athletic little bookworm whose hobbies include doing smart stuff, being athletic and being a - - bookworm. *(She throws her cards.)* Who writes this stuff? *(Sighs.)* Our next contestant is *(CC GIRL apologetically flips “JUDY” card. She gets out the “Applause” sign, thinks better of it, then puts it away.)* No, no, no! Not Judy! C’mon! Anyone but Judy!

*NANA goes to JUDY who holds up a hand to stop her and takes her own chair up and sits it next to SALLY smugly.*

**BARB:** *(Without reading her bio card.)* Yeah, great, Judy. She’s an obnoxious little loudmouth who enjoys stalking Fred, chewing gum like a cow and being generally annoying. *(To CC GIRL.)* Do I dare ask who our third contestant is?

CC GIRL flips to the next card revealing ANNA'S name with an "N" added before it and the name "White" after it forming NANA WHITE'S name. It is obvious that NANA has written the card herself. NANA gazes upward and whistles innocently.

**BARB:** Nana White?

**LIZ:** *(Standing.)* Now that's just sick! She's older than the moldy cheese sandwich in my locker! And she smells just as bad!

*NANA leaps at LIZ, but BARB catches her in midair.*

**BARB:** *(Still holding NANA.)* Now Nana, for once I have to agree with Liz - - *(NANA looks up at her angrily.)* Well, except for the smelling like moldy cheese part. *(NANA looks away, pacified as BARB indicates with a gesture that NANA does, in fact, smell like the offending sandwich.)* Nana, I just think that you're - - too much woman for Fred to handle. Now, I'm sorry, but that's just the way it is. *(BARB lets NANA go. She crosses to the side of the stage, dejected.)* Now, who are we going to get as our third contestant? *(CC GIRL covers up the "N" and the "White" with her hands and points to ANNA'S name.)* Anna? Forget it! Things are bad enough as it is. *(Thinks for a moment.)* Cue Card Girl! *(CC GIRL points to herself questioningly.)* Yeah, you. Get over here. You're gonna be our third contestant.

*CC GIRL grabs a few cue cards and heads over to join the other girls. NANA approaches CONNIE, who gives up her seat for CC GIRL before NANA can push her out of it.*

**JANIE:** All right then, Barb. Let's bring Fred back to the stage. *(NANA pulls him back on.)* Okay, Fred, get ready! Barb has some questions for you to ask each of our lucky ladies. When the questioning's all through, you know what to do. You've got to pick which one you want to date. Will it be Sally or will it be *(Looking distastefully at the other contestants.)* yick, somebody else?

**BARB:** Okay, Fred, here are your questions. *(Hands him three cards.)* And here we go!

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**FRED:** Okay. Dating Potential Number One, *(Reading card.)* if I were lime Jell-O and you were an anchovy, what is the capital of Mississippi?

**SALLY:** *(Unflustered.)* Jackson.

**FRED:** Good answer. Dating Potential Number Two. Could I have your answer, please?

**JUDY:** I don't like Jell-O and anchovies.

**FRED:** Uh huh. And Dating Potential Number Three?

**BARB:** I'm going to have to translate for Number Three, Fred. And she says - -

*CC GIRL smiles vacantly as she holds up a card that reads, "Yes!"*

**BARB:** "Yes"?

**FRED:** I see.

**BARB:** All right, Fred. Question number two. Let's get on with it.

**FRED:** Okay. Question number two. We'll start with you this time, Dating Potential Number Two.

**JUDY:** *(Excited.)* Okay!

**FRED:** Here goes. If I bought you chocolates at \$5.99 a pound and bought thirteen pounds of them, what color are your eyes?

**JUDY:** Thirteen pounds of chocolate! What are you trying to do, make me fat?

**FRED:** Dating Potential Number Three?

**BARB:** I'll translate. She says - -

*CC GIRL proudly holds up a card with a long algebraic equation on it.*

**BARB:** Never mind. *(CC GIRL puts down her card, disappointed.)*

**FRED:** And Sal - - I mean, Dating Potential Number One?

**SALLY:** They're - - *(She states her eye color)*

**FRED:** I know. *(He smiles dreamily until BARB speaks.)*

**BARB:** All right, all right. Question number three, Fred. Chop chop.

**FRED:** *(Breaking out of his daze.)* Oh, right. Question number three: *(Reading.)* Wouldn't you rather go out with Nana White than any of these bimbos? *(NANA smiles broadly.)*

**BARB:** What? Let me see that. (*Grabs card.*) How did that get in there? (*Accusingly.*) **Nana!** (*NANA smiles and shrugs.*) That is **quite enough** of this game. Janie, what's next?

*CC GIRL takes off the black flat. JUDY goes back to the studio audience in a huff. SALLY takes her seat back to FRANK who spreads his arms to give her a big hug. She gives him a quizzical look and goes back to BARB. FRANK, disappointed, drops his arms and plunks into his seat.*

**JANIE:** Well, Barb. We're down to our final segment here on The Middle School Dating Game.

**BARB:** Thank God.

**JANIE:** And this one's for Sally, so we need to say goodbye to Fred for a while. (*NANA pulls a very unwilling FRED off as he ad-libs lines like "No, I don't want to go with NANA WHITE." NANA reenters smiling.*)

**BARB:** (*Doing all she can to muster her host personality.*) Tell us about it, Janie!

**JANIE:** You've got it, Barb! Well, we've got to know if Sally knows enough about the more important aspects of dating before we let her go out with Fred.

**LIZ:** Let her? Let her? (*Standing on her stage block.*) Doesn't anyone else see a problem with this? Sally can date Fred if she wants! She doesn't need you to tell her if she can or if she can't! Who do you think you are?

**BARB:** (*Sighs.*) Nana? (*NANA turns to BARB eagerly.*) Get her.

*NANA grins evilly and advances on LIZ. LIZ jumps off the stage block and backs away from her.*

**LIZ:** Oh no! You stay away from me, you old Granny, you. You should have retired while you still had some of your own teeth!

**BARB:** Now you shouldn't have done that. You shouldn't have gone and insulted Nana White! Sic her, Nana!

*NANA lets out a high-pitched karate yell and chases LIZ around the studio audience. They say these lines during the pursuit.*

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**NANA:** I'll show you, you snotty little whippersnapper!

**LIZ:** Now, come on, Nana. I didn't really mean it. Your dentures are dazzling, really. And I love those beautiful streaks of blue in your hair. And wait. *(They stop the chase.)* What is that lovely scent you're wearing? *(The flattery is working on NANA.)* Why I do believe that's eau de Bengay! *(NANA gives a yell of rage and continues chasing LIZ through the studio audience and offstage.)*

**BARB:** *(As though nothing has happened.)* Ah, I think, Janie, that you were about to tell us about our next game.

**JANIE:** *(Still looking after NANA and LIZ.)* What? *(Shakes herself back to the present moment.)* Uhhh, right you are, Barb! Sally, we are going to put your dating knowledge to the test in our next segment . . . "Who Wants to Be a Girlfriend?"

*CC GIRL flips to "Who Wants to Be a Girlfriend" card and holds up "Applause" sign. The studio audience is still looking after NANA and LIZ. CC GIRL whistles loudly to get their attention then jerks her head to the sign. The studio audience claps politely but is still looking after NANA and LIZ.*

**JANIE:** Nana White! Bring in the hot seat, please! *(JANIE gestures offstage grandly for NANA'S entrance, but she doesn't appear.)* Ahem. I said, Nana White! Bring in the hot seat, please! *(JANIE gestures again. Still no NANA. She yells offstage.)* NANA! HOT SEAT!

*NANA enters looking very bedraggled. She puffs and pants as she pushes and pulls a small red chair. She makes a long production of getting it to center stage then "shows" it as well as she can in her exhausted state.*

**BARB:** Thank you, Nana! *(She drops her voice.)* And you, uh, took care of the - - other little matter, did you? *(NANA gives her the okay sign and gives the audience a big wink.)* All right then, Nana, if you would please be so kind as to help Sally into our hot seat - - *(NANA pushes SALLY forcefully into the chair.)* Very good. And now we'll begin "Who Wants to Be a Girlfriend?"

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**NANA:** (*Giving a dramatic rendition of the “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire” theme music.*) Dum, dum, dum!

**BARB:** Thank you, Nana. (*NANA stands there grinning.*) You’ve been very helpful. (*She tries to shoo her away, but NANA doesn’t get the hint.*) Now, how about you go shuffle your cue cards or something? (*NANA gives BARB a very dirty look then crosses to CC GIRL.*) Now then, Sally. Are you ready to play “Who Wants to Be a Girlfriend?”

**NANA:** (*Can’t help herself.*) Dum, dum, dum! (*BARB glares at her, and she smiles apologetically.*)

**SALLY:** I guess so.

**BARB:** Then let’s play (*She glances over at NANA.*) that game.

**SALLY:** Which game?

**BARB:** You know. The one I just mentioned.

**SALLY:** Oh, you mean Who Wants to Be a Girlfriend?

**NANA:** Dum, dum, dum!

**BARB:** (*Sighs.*) Janie, could you *please* get Nana her medication. (*JANIE pulls an unwilling NANA off the stage.*) Now let’s play - - aw, let’s just get on with it. Now, Sally, you must successfully answer these important questions about dating in order to win Fred. Are you ready?

**SALLY:** Maybe?

**BARB:** Good girl. Now here we go. Question number one: (*CC GIRL puts the question up.*) The best way to get Fred to ask you out would be A) giggling a lot B) pretending to be stupid C) wearing really skimpy clothing or D) all of the above.

*LIZ reenters taking tiny steps because NANA has tied her feet together. Her hands are also bound in front of her, and she is gagged. She brings both hands to her mouth and puts one finger on her lips as she reenters and quietly hobbles over to her place in the audience. She crosses to CONNIE and convinces her to remove the gag.*

**SALLY:** What?

**BARB:** It’s very simple, Sally. A, B, C or D. Which will it be?

**SALLY:** But I wouldn’t do any of those - -

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**BARB:** *(Interrupting.)* You need to ask the audience? Okay! *(She turns to the audience, and LIZ quickly ducks behind CONNIE.)*  
Audience, what do you think? A, B, C, or D?

*The studio audience yells out all different letters including E, F, and G, but most of them yell "D!" until NANA reenters and says:*

**NANA:** Dum, dum, dum!

**BARB:** *(Glares at NANA and audience.)* Okay, Sally, you've heard from the audience, now what will it be? A, B, C or D?

**SALLY:** Well, the audience is saying "D," but - -

**BARB:** And they are correct! That gives you one correct answer, Sal! May I call you Sal? *(Doesn't wait for her response.)* You've got just two more questions to go before you win - - Fred!

**SALLY:** But . . .

**BARB:** Question number two: *(CC girl flips to second question.)*  
When going on a date, the most important thing to remember is A) to make sure all your friends see you out with a guy B) the guy should always pay C) to put on enough eye shadow or D) all of the above.

**SALLY:** I don't think any of those things.

**BARB:** You're not very good at this, are you, Sally? All right, let's ask a friend. Do we have a friend here in the studio audience who could help Sally?

**LIZ:** *(Popping up from her hiding place.)* Yeah, I can! Sally, run! Go find Fred and get yourselves out!

**SALLY:** Okay!

*SALLY runs offstage.*

**BARB:** We need her! How else are we going to entertain all of these people? Janie! Go get her!

*JANIE runs off after SALLY.*

**BARB:** *(To LIZ.)* And you! I'm going to get you!

*LIZ runs offstage, taking baby steps all the way since her feet are still tied. BARB follows her and finds the hot seat in her way thus allowing time for LIZ to escape. BARB makes a frustrated noise and pushes the hot seat into the studio audience.*

**FRANK:** *(Approaching CC GIRL.)* I thought they'd never leave.  
Hey, Beautiful. Have I ever told you I really go for the strong,  
silent type?

*CC GIRL flips a card that says, "I'm outta here" and exits with FRANK chasing after her.*

**FRANK:** Hey, come back! We can make beautiful cue cards  
together!

*He exits. NANA looks around at the now empty stage, smiles weakly at the audience and breaks into a pathetic tap dance until the studio audience gets sick of it.*

**JUDY:** That's the worst dancing I've ever seen! Let's get her!

*CONNIE murmurs in agreement. She and JUDY chase NANA off, leaving ANNA alone onstage. She looks around her frightened to be alone onstage. We then see a change come over her face, and she wears an expression of confidence. She crosses to center and starts singing show tunes at the top of her lungs making huge gestures and thoroughly enjoying herself. CONNIE finally enters and drags ANNA off.*

**ANNA:** No, no! They love me! My public! I **must** have my public!

*As soon as ANNA is off, CC GIRL runs by with a card that reads "Chase Scene." She is followed by FRANK.*

**FRANK:** Hey, Cue Card Girl! What's your sign? *(He stops and cracks up.)* Get it? Cue cards? Sign? *(He resumes the chase.)*  
Hey, don't you want a man who can make you laugh?

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*As they exit, SALLY and FRED come racing on, pursued by JANIE.*

**JANIE:** Come back! Come back! How can we entertain all these people without humiliating you in front of them? Come on! What's your problem?

*They exit as LIZ bounces on, still bound at the ankles, pursued by BARB.*

**BARB:** I have had enough of your high-mindedness and values! These people need to be entertained and that leaves no room for any of your stupid morals!

*They exit as NANA with top hat and cane sashays across the stage. She gets to about center stage before JUDY enters.*

**JUDY:** You dance like my grandmother!

**NANA:** *(Stops chase, cups her hands over her mouth and breathes deeply, Darth Vader style, then in her best James Earl Jones voice.)* Judy, I **am** your grandmother.

**JUDY:** Grandma?

**NANA:** *(Cracking up.)* Ha, ha! Had you there for a second! *(She dances quickly off stage.)*

**JUDY:** Oooh! You miserable old woman! Come back here! *(She chases her off. ANNA enters still singing at the top of her lungs. CONNIE enters and chases ANNA off.)*

**CONNIE:** I **told** you everyone liked you better when you were quiet!

*As they exit, FRED and SALLY come from one side of the stage pursued by JANIE as LIZ bounces from the other side pursued by BARB. As they cross, JANIE and BARB collide and fall to the ground as FRED, SALLY and LIZ escape.*

**LIZ:** Follow me! We'll find a safe place for you to untie me. *(They exit together.)*

**BARB:** You idiot! What was that?

**JANIE:** If you had watched where you were going!

**BARB:** If I had watched? What about you? And why couldn't you catch those two? What are we supposed to do now, huh?

**JANIE:** Why couldn't I catch those two? Well, at least the people I was chasing weren't tied up already! **That** is really pathetic.

**BARB:** *(Pause as she looks JANIE in the eye.)* I never liked you.

**JANIE:** What?

**BARB:** *(Standing.)* You're really annoying. You know that? All that "Right you are, Barb" and "Back to you, Barb!"

**JANIE:** Oh, and you think it's easy to be second banana to you? Always having to cover up for your little mistakes!

**BARB:** Covering up for - - ? Do you want to take this outside?

**JANIE:** Yeah! Yeah, I think I do.

**BARB:** Well, good. Let's settle this once and for all.

**JANIE:** Good. Let's go! I can't wait! I'm going to stick that microphone of yours up your nose. *(She starts to exit with BARB following her. Upon hearing her threat, BARB thinks better of it and runs off in the opposite direction, but JANIE sees her and gives chase.)* Hey! Where are you going! Come back! Let's play "Put the Game Show Host in Jeopardy!" *(They exit as LIZ, FRED and SALLY reenter.)*

**LIZ:** Come on. I think we can get out this way.

*They get to center stage as CC GIRL enters and is pursued in circles around them by FRANK. NANA dances on and then is pursued in circles going in the opposite direction by JUDY. ANNA enters singing loudly and then is pursued by CONNIE in circles going in the same direction as CC GIRL and FRANK. Finally, BARB reenters pursued by JANIE. They run in a fourth circle around FRED, SALLY and LIZ, going in the same direction as NANA and JUDY. All shout ad-libbed lines at one another, NANA still dancing and ANNA still singing. Finally, LIZ steps out of the circle.*

**LIZ:** Hey, guys? I think we need to talk about this. Hey? Anybody listening? I said CUT IT OUT! *(They all stop and stare at LIZ in stunned silence except NANA who is still dancing.)* I've had enough. I'm taking over this ridiculous production, and I'll tell you how it's going to end. But first, you are all going to sit down. *(They all do, some sitting two to a block, except NANA, who is still dancing and FRANK, who is heading for the only vacant block. LIZ addresses NANA.)* Hey, Twinkle Toes! Set your support hose down over there. *(NANA slinks into the seat FRANK is headed for. He tries to sit with CC GIRL. When she refuses, he is forced to sit in the hot seat.)* Now listen up! All of you! Dating is **not** a game! It's not a big show. It's not even a spectator sport. It's something personal and private. It's up to each individual person whether or not they want to date, and it's up to that person to choose who they want to date. It's not up to their friends, or an audience, and it certainly isn't up to Nana White. *(NANA looks down.)* Dating shouldn't be about hiding things from people and seeking other people's approval, or trying to be something you're not. Dating should be two people who like each other and want to spend time together. That's it. No bells and whistles, no theme music and no cue cards. *(CC GIRL hangs her head.)* Now, we're all just going to get out of here and leave Fred and Sally alone so that **they** can decide what they want to do. Understood? So go on. Get out of here. *(She "shoos" out CONNIE and ANNA.)* All right. Go on, Judy, Frank.

**JUDY:** *(Sweetly to FRANK as she exits.)* So, what are you doing now that the show's over?

**FRANK:** Whatever you're doing.

**JUDY:** *(Back to her obnoxious self.)* Good! You can do my math homework.

*They exit. CC GIRL holds up a sign that says "Bye" as she exits sadly.*

**BARB:** *(Crossing to LIZ.)* Maybe you're right.

**JANIE:** We just thought it would be entertaining for all these people. *(She indicates the audience.)*

**LIZ:** Well, you thought wrong.

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**BARB:** *(Holding out her hand to JANIE.)* Friends?

**JANIE:** *(Taking BARB'S hand and shaking it.)* Friends.

**BARB:** *(As they exit.)* I do think I would have kicked your butt.

**JANIE:** Really, is that why you were running away from me?

**BARB:** I wasn't running away.

**JANIE:** Were too.

**BARB:** Was not.

**JANIE:** Were too. *(They exit.)*

**LIZ:** Okay, that about does it. Sally and Fred, come on down here.

*(They cross down center followed eagerly by NANA who stands waiting expectantly to hear FRED and SALLY'S conversation. LIZ looks at her and simply points offstage. NANA hangs her head and trudges off.)* Well, there. That about does it. Now I think you're ready to have a private conversation. *(She stands waiting expectantly.)*

**FRED:** Um . . . Liz?

**LIZ:** Oh, right! Of course! *(She backs away from them embarrassed.)* Well, I'll, uh, just be leaving now. 'Cause I don't want to intrude. I mean. Well, so - - I'll - - just - - leave. *(She exits then reenters quickly and speaks directly to the audience.)* And I don't want any of you to listen to them either! Just, um, plug your ears or hum really loud or talk to the person next to you, okay? I mean it!

**SALLY:** Liz?

**LIZ:** Yeah, Sally. I was just . . .

**SALLY:** It's okay, Liz. They're fine.

**LIZ:** Okay! 'Cause if they're intruding, I'll just . . .

**FRED:** No, they're fine. Really.

**LIZ:** Okay. I'll . . . uh . . . be going then. Okay?

**SALLY:** Okay. Bye.

**FRED:** Bye.

**LIZ:** *(Taking a deep breath, satisfied.)* Okay. *(To audience.)* Bye.  
*(She exits.)*

**FRED:** Boy, I thought she'd never leave.

**SALLY:** Me either.

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*There is a long pause. Finally, FRED speaks. During the next few lines, the entire cast sneaks back through the audience and tries to eavesdrop on FRED and SALLY'S conversation.*

**FRED:** I, um, watched your basketball game last Tuesday. You know, while I was waiting for ours to start? You're, uh, pretty good.

**SALLY:** Thanks. I watched yours after ours. You're not bad either.

**FRED:** Thanks. *(Long pause.)*

**SALLY AND FRED:** You know maybe - -

**SALLY:** Sorry. Go ahead.

**FRED:** No, you.

**SALLY:** Okay. I was wondering if maybe after Friday's game you might like to, um, do something? Go somewhere?

*FRED turns away from SALLY as though pondering the proposal. She turns away from him, puts her hands together, looks up and mouths the word, "Please?" FRED pulls his arms down toward his body in the typical "Yes!" gesture. They both turn nonchalantly back to one another.*

**FRED:** *(Enthusiastically.)* Yeah! How about pizza?

**SALLY:** Sounds good.

*They start to exit. The cast starts to exit also, making plans to go out for pizza Friday night after the game.*

**CURTAIN.**

## THE END



BY JENNIFER MCVETTY

## NOTES

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## **NOTES**

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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