



drama by george

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The Bully Game

Synopsis: It's the hottest game show at your school! Three bullies compete to see who can do the best job abusing their victim with words, blows, and even Your Mama jokes. But how will they respond when they find out their victim's terrible secret?

Themes: Bullying, compassion.

Characters: 1 male (Thor), 4 females (Brittany, Justine, Heidi, Theodora), 2 either gender (Announcer 1, Announcer 2).

Running Time: 15 minutes.

Staging Needs: Each Bully should stand behind some sort of "contestant's podium." If the Announcers hold up an Applause sign at key moments, it can be an extra source of irony. Some kind of game show theme music is definitely needed. The monologues by the Bullies should either take place in a tight spotlight, or perhaps be videotaped and shown on a screen. General area lighting is fine for the rest of the action.

Acting Difficulty: Moderate to difficult.

Tone: Comedic dialogue with dramatic moments.

Can It Stand Alone?: Yes.

Author's Comments: Bullying is *not* a normal part of growing up. Its victims grow into adults with low self-confidence, high rates of depression, and other emotional problems. Meanwhile, it's estimated that more than half of schoolyard bullies grow into adult criminals. Now, it's true that only a minority of kids are repeatedly bullied (though many more face this problem at some time in their lives). However, *all* kids should bear the responsibility to speak up for the victims, who are often too intimidated to speak for themselves.

Performance Tips: Your Theodora should be able to cry convincingly onstage. The Bullies must come across as fairly normal kids who just don't know when to quit--and suffer from some problems of their own.

The Bully Game

By George Halitzka

(A tight spotlight shines on BRITTANY, who is touching up her makeup in a compact.)

BRITTANY

It's all about the show. Put on a smile and give 'em what they want. Make 'em laugh; make 'em like you, whatever it takes.

Yeah, somebody might get hurt. Life sucks and then you die. It's you or them. Keep 'em laughing or you're gonna be the one who cries. Don't know what I mean? Stick around--you'll see.

(The lights come up to reveal BRITTANY motioning to someone behind her. ANNOUNCER 1 appears on the other side and calls to BRITTANY.)

BRITTANY

Come on, Theodora!

ANNOUNCER 1

Did you find her?

BRITTANY

Yeah, she's almost here--

ANNOUNCER 1

We're on in two--

BRITTANY

I told you; she's almost--Theo, come on!

THEODORA

I never heard of a video game tournament at school--

BRITTANY

You're gonna love it! I bet you can win it all--

THEODORA

Well, I'm okay, I guess--

BRITTANY
Just wait behind the wall--

THEODORA
Brittany, are you my friend?

BRITTANY
Sure--

THEODORA
I mean, my *real* friend?

BRITTANY
Of course!

THEODORA
'Cause once, this girl said she was my friend, then book-chucked me--

BRITTANY
I would never do that!

THEODORA
We might get in trouble--

BRITTANY
Look . . . I didn't wanna tell you this . . . if you stay here, it'll help your Mom.

THEODORA
Really? You swear?

BRITTANY
Swear.

(Pause.)

THEODORA
If it'll help Mom.

BRITTANY
Wait there. The show's about to start!

THEODORA
What show?

BRITTANY

Uh, the tournament! Stay there.

THEODORA

If it'll help Mom--

(BRITTANY shoves THEODORA hastily behind the wall, then runs offstage in the opposite direction. Theme music.)

ANNOUNCER 1

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to The Bully Game, where the meaner you are, the better you'll play! Let's meet today's bullies!

(Each BULLY enters as he or she is introduced.)

ANNOUNCER 2

Our first contestant enjoys tormenting cats, bench-pressing small cars, and stuffing sixth graders in lockers. His friends call him Thor Helgenschmidt, but you can just call him "cruel."

ANNOUNCER 1

Contestant number two is the class clown with a mean streak, Justine Hoogelmann. Justine loves to make kids laugh, especially at other people's expense!

ANNOUNCER 2

Finally, Heidi Stimple's specialties include writing burn books, starting rumors, and being two-faced. Don't tick her off, girls, or she'll make you cry yourself to sleep tonight!

ANNOUNCER 1

And now here is the host of the Bully Game, Brittany Smear!

BRITTANY

Thanks, guys. Well, bullies, you know how the game is played. You'll have three rounds to abuse today's victim. Whoever does the best job will officially be the biggest meany in [Your Town]. So, Bullies--are you ready to play?

HEIDI

Excuse me, Brittany? There's been a mistake. I'm not a bully; kids are just jealous. I can't help being popular.

JUSTINE

Yeah, I'm not a bully either. Some people can't take a joke.

THOR
Girls are such amateurs.

HEIDI
Say WHAT, musclehead?

THOR
You heard me, Barbie--

JUSTINE
Just 'cause we don't have to *dig* for our IQ--

THOR
Girls can't bully nobody.

JUSTINE
Well, maybe Miss Priss is too good for this, but--

HEIDI
Miss *Who*? Get lost--

JUSTINE
That's what all the boys tell you--

THOR
Cat fight!

(The BULLIES advance on each other. BRITTANY steps between them.)

BRITTANY
Whoa there, Speed Racers! Save it for your victim, Theodora McGillicutty.

JUSTINE
Theodora? The loser in Math class?

HEIDI
She's a freak.

BRITTANY
Each of you will have three chances to abuse our victim, so we can discover the biggest bully of all! Beth, tell us about today's sucker.

ANNOUNCER 1

Theodora McGillicutty is a seventh grader who enjoys wearing black, watching *Star Wars*, and writing poetry. She doesn't have many friends, and sometimes forgets her deodorant.

BRITTANY

All right, bullies . . . it's time for Round One! You have one minute, using only words, to make Theodora feel so low she needs a ladder to step over the curb. On your mark--

THEODORA

Brittany! This isn't what you said--

BRITTANY

Get set--

THEODORA

Where's the video games?

BRITTANY

GO!

JUSTINE

Theodora, who died?

THEODORA

Oh, black's just my favorite color--

JUSTINE

Love your hair! Does your Mommy do it for you?

THEODORA

Right now, my Mom isn't--

THOR

Does it stink in here--or is it just you?

THEODORA

(smelling her own armpits)

I don't smell!

THOR

Back off! You probably got bugs, too--

JUSTINE

What a reek! Did you take out the garbage--or are you just white trash?

HEIDI
Theodora, I'm sorry they're making fun of you.

THEODORA
Oh, all the kids do--

HEIDI
Do you like any boys?

THEODORA
Kind of . . .

HEIDI
You can tell me. I won't say anything--*promise*.

THEODORA
Do you swear?

HEIDI
Swear.

THEODORA
Well . . . I think Thor is *really* hot.

HEIDI
Hey Thor, White Trash likes you!

THEODORA
You swore!

THOR
That's nasty!

JUSTINE
GROSS!

THOR
I feel slimy all over!

BRITTANY
Time's up! Theodora, how do you feel?

THEODORA
Justine, that was a really mean what you said about White Trash.

BRITTANY

Can't you take a joke?

THEODORA

Thor, why did you say I smell?

BRITTANY

The truth hurts. Get some Teen Spirit@--

THEODORA

I can't believe you let Heidi tell everybody who I like! You're my friend--

BRITTANY

Only when people aren't watching. If you stopped being so annoying, kids would leave you alone.

THEODORA

Brittany--

BRITTANY

Heidi, that was a brilliant move--tricking Theodora into revealing her secret crush. You win round one!

(HEIDI steps forward into a spotlight.)

HEIDI

I'm not *trying* to be mean. I swear. But if you were up here, you'd try and win, too. With everybody watching . . . you know you would.

People say I'm "popular." But that can disappear. Tomorrow, if people see me making nice with a freak. I mean, I'm not *good* at anything. I'm not *failing* stuff, but it's straight Cs, okay? I don't play sports; I don't sing or anything . . .

So I gotta do something to get people to notice me. It's not my fault I'm popular. It's just the only thing I'm good at.

BRITTANY

Bullies, it's time for Round 2: Physical Bullying!

THEODORA

I'm leaving!

BRITTANY

Don't you wanna help your Mom?

THEODORA

How can this--

BRITTANY

Trust me, Theo! On your mark--get set--GO!

(During this round, BRITTANY acts as a sort of sports commentator, narrating the BULLIES' actions as they perform them.)

Looks like Thor is starting with a classic--knocking down Theodora's books in the hallway. She's trying to pick them up . . . wait; Justine offers to help! But not really--look at that book fly!

Now Heidi moves in. She's threatening to gossip about Theodora's crush unless Theo gives up her necklace . . . smooth move, Heidi! Threatening can be *much* more effective than real violence. Uh-oh, it's not working . . . so Heidi does a hair pull! Ouch, that hurt! And there's the necklace!

Justine comes in with a flanking move, tripping Theo as she walks away! And look at that laugh--great intimidation tactic.

Meanwhile, Thor is back for more. I think--yes, he's actually going to try and shove her in a locker. This guy knows all the classics! Time's up, bullies!

THEODORA

Thor, that hurt!

BRITTANY

Boys will be boys--

THOR

I'll teach you to tell people you like me.

HEIDI

Nice necklace! Thanks, loser.

THEODORA

Do I get that back after the game?

BRITTANY

This round goes to Thor for his brilliant use of the classic book-chuck and locker-stuffing moves!

THOR

I'm dedicating this win to my big brother, who taught me everything I know. Bluto, I hope you're watching this in prison.

BRITTANY

Thank you, Thor! We'll start round three in just a minute.

(THOR steps into the spotlight.)

THOR

Pretty soon, I'm gonna be able to do it. I'm tired of hearin' Mom cry when they fight. Tired of bein' his punching bag if I get in the way. Yeah, pretty soon I'm gonna be able to do it. Stop my Old Man.

But mean time, I gotta give it back somehow. He's too big. So when I get whapped, I whup on somebody too. Like you don't. Maybe nobody pounds on you, but when somebody makes you feel like a turd . . . you give it back. Don't tell me you don't. That's how it works.

I'm just bein' like Dad. Like you. Kids should learn to defend themselves; that's how it works.

BRITTANY

Now it's time for our final round! Heidi and Thor are tied at one win each, but Justine could still come from behind and send us into overtime. Here's everybody's favorite part of the game: the Your Mama round!

THEODORA

But they don't know my mother!

BRITTANY

Life sucks and then you die. On your mark--get set--GO!

HEIDI

Yo Mama's so ugly, she walked into the Haunted House and came out with a job application!

THEODORA

What does she have to do with this?

THOR

Yo Mama's so fat when she sits around the house, she sits around the house!

THEODORA

Would you stop? You never *met* her!

JUSTINE

Yo Mama's so stupid it took her two hours to watch *60 Minutes*.

THEODORA

Brittany, stop them!

BRITTANY

Everybody's laughing but you. Whose problem is *that*?

HEIDI

She's so poor I saw her kicking a box down the street, and when I asked what she was doing, she said "moving."

THOR

So poor she can't afford to pay attention.

JUSTINE

Yo Mama's so ugly, she went to the beauty parlor and it took six hours--for the estimate.

(THEODORA covers her face and begins to cry.)

BRITTANY

She's crying, bullies! Move in for the kill--

JUSTINE

Yo Mama's so stupid--

THEODORA

My mother has cancer, all right? She's going to die.

(A moment of silence as THEODORA cries.)

BRITTANY

No mercy, bullies! Do you want to win or not?

HEIDI

Um . . . Justine, why don't you move in for the kill?

JUSTINE

Maybe Thor should do it--

THOR

I can't . . .

BRITTANY

Are you bullies or losers?

HEIDI

Brittany, her Mom's *dying*--

JUSTINE

I told you, I just wanna make people laugh.

BRITTANY

Let's throw a pity party for the weirdo--

JUSTINE

Theo, come on.

THEODORA

You said this would help my Mom! You're not my friend. You're a liar.

(JUSTINE puts her arm around THEODORA and leads her offstage.)

THOR

You told her this would help her Mom?

BRITTANY

You don't think she did this for fun, do you?

HEIDI

Her Mom with *cancer*?

BRITTANY

That loser believes anything. Pitiful, huh?

HEIDI

I always said I wasn't a bully. But I'm changing my mind.

(THOR and HEIDI begin to move in on BRITTANY threateningly.)

BRITTANY

Whoa; I'm just the host--

HEIDI

Hey Brittany, that's a nice necklace.

BRITTANY

You know, bullying can scar people for life--

HEIDI

Somebody told me if you stopped being so annoying, people would leave you alone.

BRITTANY

Uh, the game's over--

THOR

No, I think there's one more round.

HEIDI

On your mark--get set--GO!

(The BULLIES all gather around BRITTANY and begin to chase her, getting in their shots as they go. They chase BRITTANY all the way offstage. JUSTINE is left alone in the spotlight.)

JUSTINE

I'm *funny*. That's all. When you're funny, people *like* you. I never saw anybody cry before, except . . .

Y'know those days when nobody knows you're alive? When the teacher only pays attention if you screw up? When kids you thought were your best friends ignore you? I *hate* those days. When I was falling asleep in my room and nobody could see me . . . I used to cry. Hard.

But I could make it *different*. "Justine, you're so funny. You make me laugh." "Justine, you should be on TV or something." I stopped crying then. People have to *notice* when I'm funny. I never wanted to make somebody *else* cry. I just wanted . . .

Y'know Theodora? She says she cries at night, too. And she's not so good at laughing right now. Her Mom might not be here for eighth grade graduation.

(A brief pause.)

JUSTINE (*cont'd*)

So I guess maybe I don't wanna be funny anymore. I mean . . .
not like that.

(Blackout.)

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