



**drama by george**

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# Jerry's Kids

**Synopsis:** Jerry, a mentally handicapped high school student, takes pictures of Greg, who is trying to befriend him. Greg gets so frustrated with Jerry's social ineptness that he mocks Jerry behind his back. Kim (who is listening to Greg vent) discovers that Jerry has been watching their whole exchange--and is very hurt.

**Themes:** Loving the unlovely, handicaps, insults/ verbal bullying, gossip.

**Characters:** 2 males (Greg, Jerry), 1 female (Kim).

**Running Time:** 6 minutes.

**Staging Needs:** 2 lunch tables (one for Kim; one for the guys). No special lighting effects. Sound effect: school bell ringing. Jerry has a very sloppy lunch tray (and two drinking straws) along with a disposable camera; Greg has a neater tray and a book or two for English class. Kim carries a pile of books and papers.

**Acting Difficulty:** Moderate.

**Tone:** Dramatic dialogue with some humor.

**Can It Stand Alone?:** No.

**Author's Comments:** It's a dilemma for many thoughtful teenagers: They want to treat social "outcasts" with some degree of respect and compassion, but those students are so *annoying!* (Never mind that hanging out with them can be social suicide.)

**Performance Tips:** Even though Jerry isn't the protagonist, it may not be a bad idea to cast your strongest actor here. He must be convincing as a mentally handicapped student. Have him observe some people with Down's Syndrome, perhaps on video, and adopt their mannerisms and speech patterns. Don't let him play a stereotypical "retard"--that's demeaning to some of God's children and ineffective acting. Don't demonize Greg. He's truly a nice guy who's had as much as he can take; we need to relate to his struggle.

# Jerry's Kids

*By George Halitzka*

(GREG is sitting at a table in the school cafeteria with JERRY. From the way he talks, JERRY is obviously mentally handicapped. At the moment, he has a straw sticking out of each nostril. GREG shows distinctive signs of wanting to escape. JERRY is holding a cheap disposable camera.)

JERRY

Take my picture, Greg!

GREG

I already did--

JERRY

But this is funny! Isn't it funny, Greg?

GREG

Jerry, it's almost your whole roll--

JERRY

I wanna show my Mom!

GREG

I don't know, buddy . . .

JERRY

You're my friend, right, Greg?

GREG

Sure . . .

JERRY

We can do a picture! Me and my best friend Greg.

GREG

Sure--

JERRY

Come on; I'll take our picture! To show my Mom.

(By GREG's reluctance, it appears that perhaps JERRY did not shower this morning.)

GREG  
I can hold it--

JERRY  
It's my camera!

GREG  
Okay, you hold--

JERRY  
Say "fuzzy bunnies"!

(GREG smiles.)

You didn't say it.

GREG  
(through gritted teeth)  
Fuzzy bunnies.

(Flash. The bell rings. JERRY sets down the camera and pulls the straws out of his nostrils as he gathers up his books.)

JERRY  
Where are you going, Greg?

GREG  
Science. Seeya later, Jerry.

JERRY  
Can you take up my tray? I hafta talk to Mrs. Atwater.

GREG  
Jerry, it's your--

JERRY  
Please? I'll see you later!

GREG  
I think you better--

JERRY  
Bye, Greg!

(With a look of resignation, GREG gathers up JERRY's messy tray, along with his own. He picks up the nostril straws very gingerly using a napkin. Meanwhile, KIM enters. She sits down at an empty table and opens a book to finish an assignment. As GREG is about to walk over to the garbage can, he notices the camera still there. He picks it up, then sneaks up behind KIM.)

GREG

Say "fuzzy bunnies"!

(He pops off a picture, startling her.)

KIM

You freak--what is that?

GREG

(as if to a slow child)

It's a camera.

KIM

No . . .

(imitating GREG'S slow child imitation)

Where'd you get it?

GREG

It's Jerry Herman's.

KIM

And you have it *why*?

GREG

A trade. His camera for his life.

KIM

You *threatened* him?

GREG

The retard left it on his table. While *I* took his tray up.

KIM

(giving GREG "The Look")

So you stole it!

I'll give it back--

GREG

With the film gone!

KIM

I'm a horrible person. Take my picture.

GREG

Why'd he have a camera at school?

KIM

Shots of his best friend.

GREG

His best . . .

KIM

(GREG looks downcast; the air of a martyr.)

You poor boy.

You have no idea. Take my picture!

GREG

(GREG stuffs his jacket under his shirt, making a huge stomach. He squints his eyes, then raises his hand and waves with a goofy grin.)

What are you doing?

KIM

(laughing)

I'm Jerry!

GREG

Is it ready? What do I push?

KIM

If Jerry can use it--I believe in you.

GREG

Happy?

KIM

(She snaps the picture.)

GREG

Check it out--Jerry doing homework.

(He picks up KIM'S book and puts his eyes very close to it, almost touching the book with his nose. He reads slowly and haltingly--)

"See Dick. See Dick run. Jerry is a--"

KIM

(laughing; snapping a picture)

I can't believe you--

GREG

I'm unbelievable.

(JERRY reenters. He is about to go back to his table for his camera, when he sees GREG and KIM. He stops, frozen.)

KIM

You're *nice* to Jerry! You sat with him at lunch--

GREG

(darkly--referring to the "privilege" of dining with Jerry)

Yeah; life sucks and then you die.

KIM

Pictures can be developed--

GREG

He'll forget by tomorrow.

KIM

It's mean--

GREG

Right. Check this--

(GREG runs offstage.)

KIM

What's Jerry doing now?

GREG

Running with Kim's homework!

KIM

You retard! That's due next period! Give it back, retard!

(KIM dashes off after him, only to encounter JERRY. He looks at her reproachfully for a moment, and snatches his camera from her hand. KIM looks around wildly for GREG--he's gone. A long beat.)

JERRY

Tell Greg he ain't my best friend no more.

(JERRY walks offstage, clearly hurt.)

KIM

Jerry, he didn't . . . I mean, we just . . . Jerry! Greg!

(Blackout.)

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