



## EXTRACT 1

Adapted from *Not So Dumb* by John Lazarus

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

*Not So Dumb* by Canadian playwright, John Lazarus, was first performed in Vancouver, Canada, in September 1984.

It is set in a 'Learning Assistance Classroom' full of teaching and learning materials; two of the three characters have a learning disability (LD). In the absence of their teacher they open a filing cabinet containing confidential information about pupils in the school.

The extract is from the first part of the play.

## CHARACTERS

ROCKY, sloppily dressed boy, aged 10

BINNIE, bright, energetic, joker, athletic, aged 10

VICTOR, seen by others as the class wimp, aged 10

BINNIE:	[ <i>off</i> ] Mrs. Smith! Mrs. Smi-i-ith! I finished my composition!	
	[ <i>She enters, carrying her books and chattering happily.</i> ]	
	My parents said it was great an' even my sister likes it, an'–	
	[ <i>Beat. It's clear Mrs. Smith is not here. BINNIE looks around.</i> ]	
	Where is she? Mrs. Smith?	5
	[BINNIE <i>goes to the door, opens it – it opens outwards – and slams ROCKY in the face.</i> ]	
ROCKY:	Oowww! [ <i>holds onto his face, seeming genuinely hurt.</i> ]	
BINNIE:	Rocky! Are you okay?	
ROCKY:	[ <i>emerges from behind his hand, honking</i> ] Ar! Ar! Ar! ...	10
BINNIE:	Rock-ee! Mrs. Smith isn't here.	
ROCKY:	I can see that, thanks.	
	[ <i>They survey the room.</i> ]	
BINNIE:	Whole room looks different without Mrs. Smith here.	
ROCKY:	So where is she, anyways?	15
BINNIE:	I dunno. That's weird that she's not here. An' I got my composition finished an' everything. You think maybe something's wrong?	
ROCKY:	Well, are we s'posed to have a class here, or what?	
BINNIE:	I dunno. Uh – today's – what's today?	
ROCKY:	Friday?	20
BINNIE:	Yeah, right. An' classes are Fridays. Right?	
ROCKY:	Right.	
BINNIE:	So we're here the right day.	
ROCKY:	Right.	
BINNIE:	This doesn't make sense. We must be getting something wrong. Why isn't she here!	25
ROCKY:	I dunno.	
BINNIE:	I hate that! I hate when people change things!	
ROCKY:	I know. Don't get so nervous about it.	
BINNIE:	Okay, check the schedule.	30
ROCKY:	Aw, what for?	
BINNIE:	Just to make sure she hasn't changed it. Like, put us on a different day.	
ROCKY:	They never change our day.	
BINNIE:	Well, just to make sure! I mean <i>something</i> isn't making sense.	35
ROCKY:	Okay, then, <i>you</i> check it.	
BINNIE:	No, it's your job! Beginning of every Learning Assistance class, Rocky checks the schedule.	
ROCKY:	I can't read it.	
BINNIE:	You can read it.	40
ROCKY:	If I could read I wouldn't be taking these classes, would I!	
BINNIE:	Rocky ... Don' act any stupider than you have to, okay?	
ROCKY:	I don't have to read the schedule! I hate the schedule! You read the schedule!	
BINNIE:	Okay, Rocky.	45
ROCKY:	All right.	

*[She crosses to the board and peers abnormally closely at it, trying to find their own listing.]*

- BINNIE: Okay, got it, Rock. The schedule says: 'Fridays: Arnold Schwarzenegger an' Roseanne.' *[or whoever is current.]* 50
- ROCKY: It does not!
- BINNIE: Does so!
- ROCKY: Does not.
- BINNIE: Does so.
- ROCKY: It doesn't! It says 'Fridays: Rocky an' Binnie!' 55
- BINNIE: Ha ha, ha ha! Made ya read it!
- ROCKY: No you didn't! I didn't even read it! I just remembered it.
- BINNIE: I knew that! You didn't fool me! 'Cause it doesn't say 'Rocky an' Binnie,' it says 'Binnie Garvey and Rupert Keefer.'
- ROCKY: 'Rupert'?' 60
- BINNIE: Yeah.
- ROCKY: Aw, no! I wish she wouldn't do that. Nobody calls me 'Rupert' 'cept Mrs. Smith. How come she can call you 'Binnie,' but she can't call me 'Rocky'?
- BINNIE: Binnie's my official name. 65
- ROCKY: Lucky you didn't start out with a stupid name like 'Rupert.'
- BINNIE: Yeah, Rocky, it would be very weird if I was named 'Rupert.'
- ROCKY: I'm gonna change it.
- BINNIE: What?
- ROCKY: On the board. I'm gonna change it. I'm gonna put my real name. 70
- BINNIE: Great! Go for it!
- [ROCKY crosses to the blackboard. Finds his name, glances at BINNIE, who nods confirmation. Rubs it out and begins to draw a clumsy letter R.]* 75
- BINNIE: Not like that –
- ROCKY: Don't tell me!
- BINNIE: I wasn't!
- ROCKY: Don't tell me nothin'! I know how to write my own name, 'kay.
- [He continues tracing and muttering. BINNIE, annoyed by this and bored, picks up the Sponge Beast puppet and puts it on. She begins to breathe wetly, as the Sponge Beast. She sneaks up on ROCKY and suddenly attacks him with the puppet.]* 80
- BINNIE: *[as Sponge Beast]* Mashter! ... I am your Shponge Beasht! ... Mashter! 85
- ROCKY: *[yelps, brushes it away]* Argh! Get that thing offa me!
- BINNIE: Yesch, Mashter ...
- ROCKY: Ya shouldn't *spring* that thing on a guy, ya know.
- BINNIE: It's only a puppet. The Intergalactic Sponge Beast. *[makes schlurping noises.]* 90
- ROCKY: Well, it's the grossest puppet I ever seen. 'S got fleas.
- BINNIE: It does not! Where? Oh.
- [She pretends to find a flea in the puppet's fur. Feeds it to the Sponge Beast. The Sponge Beast swallows it down and belches.]*
- Not any more! 95

*[She cuddles the Sponge Beast. Meanwhile, ROCKY has laboriously finished his name.]*

- ROCKY: Hey, I finished it. In case anybody cares or anything.
- [They admire the handiwork: a loosely scrawled 'Rocky' sprawling amid the neatly written teacher's notes on the board.]* 100
- BINNIE: You think she'll be mad?
- ROCKY: Who cares? It's my name, not hers. Ya know, I'm not taking her name an' changing it into 'Mrs. Rocky' or nothin'.
- BINNIE: *[chortles]* 'Mrs. Rocky.'
- ROCKY: Anyway, she oughta be happy. This's the firs' thing I've written on the board in like months. So? Whaddaya think? 105
- BINNIE: *[moves in close behind him, as if to get a good look.]* Wait a second – Lemme see – *[attacks him with the Sponge Beast]* Schlurp schlurp schlurp schlurp schlurp!
- ROCKY: *Bin-nee!* 110
- [But the Sponge Beast will not let up, so ROCKY makes a grab for the Lion puppet, and it suddenly turns on BINNIE, growling ferociously. BINNIE screams in delighted terror, and ROCKY chases her around the room. She and the Sponge Beast hide behind the blocks, and ROCKY and the Lion stalk them.]* 115
- BINNIE: I hear ya sneakin' up ...
- [ROCKY's Lion comes at BINNIE over the top of the blocks. She squeals and runs across the room. Cornered, she pets the Sponge Beast to comfort it. Parodying her, ROCKY pets his Lion.]*
- Aw, that's not scary. 120
- [In response the Lion roars ferociously; BINNIE screams some more. Soon the Lion has the Sponge Beast cornered. It grabs the Sponge Beast in its jaws and yanks it off BINNIE's hand. It slams the Sponge Beast into the filing cabinet a few times – as BINNIE supplies Dying-Sponge-Beast noises – then drops it, dead, on top of the cabinet. It sniffs at the corpse for a moment, and then, satisfied that the Beast is dead, turns its attention to BINNIE. The Lion stalks BINNIE for a moment, and then attacks. But BINNIE responds by embracing the Lion in a maternal hug.]*
- Ooohhh ... I just love baby lion cubs ... 130
- [She hugs and kisses it. Disgusted, ROCKY pulls it away.]*
- ROCKY: 'Ooh, I jus' love baby lion cubs ... An' little puppy dogs and little baby kittens ...' You're such a sucker for babies, Binnie, it's disgusting.
- BINNIE: *[cheerfully]* Yeah, I know. I'm gonna have a dozen kids when I grow up. 135
- ROCKY: Yeah, right, a dozen little baby Binnies boppin' around in their diapers ...
- BINNIE: That's it. Of course. That's it, Rocky!
- ROCKY: What?
- BINNIE: She's having her baby! 140

ROCKY: Oh!

BINNIE: Yeah! That's what it is! She's having her baby, Mrs. Smith's having her baby!

ROCKY: Is it time yet?

BINNIE: Are you kidding? She's so pregnant she could hardly get in the door last time! She's having her baby! 145

ROCKY: Or else she got lost on the way to the classroom.

BINNIE: No no no no, she's having her baby! Yay, Mrs. *Smith!*

ROCKY: She coulda got lost.

BINNIE: She's having her baby! 150

ROCKY: She got lost!

BINNIE: [*dancing*] She's having her baby, she's having her baby, yay Mrs. Smith, she's having her baby – [*etc.*]

ROCKY: [*dumps the waste-basket over BINNIE's head.*] She got lost!

BINNIE: [*from within waste-basket*] Will you stop it? How could she get lost from the office to the classroom? The office is like two doors down! 155

ROCKY: Well, she's L-D too, you know.

BINNIE: No she's not.

ROCKY: Sure she is. She told me. She nearly flunked out of school herself, she was learning disabled. She was like me. 160

BINNIE: Really?

ROCKY: Yeah!

BINNIE: [*peeking out of waste-basket*] That bad, huh? [*pulls it back over her head, but ROCKY takes no offence.*]

ROCKY: Yeah! That's why she started to teach learning disabled. She told me. 165

BINNIE: You're kidding.

ROCKY: So I figure she got lost on the way to the classroom.

BINNIE: [*emerging from waste-basket*] Rocky, she's been coming here every day for the last two hundred years. She's not gonna get lost now. I mean she may be L-D, but she's not stupid. 170

ROCKY: Go check.

BINNIE: What? Go check if she's stupid?

ROCKY: Go check if she's in the hall. Go outside an' give 'er a shout.

[*Beat. Then BINNIE exits and yells into the hall.*]

BINNIE: Mrs. *Smi-i-i-i-i* – [*pause. Speaking to someone, off*] Oh. Hi, Mr. Powers. 175

[*ROCKY frantically hides behind the door.*]

No, sir, I was just looking for Mrs. Smith. I finished a composition, and I want her to – Yessir. I mean, no sir. I know. I won't, sir, I'll be quiet, sir, sorry, Mr. Powers sir. [*comes back into the classroom, humorously stifling herself*] Boy, am I in trouble now. 180

ROCKY: What'd he say?

BINNIE: What do you think? He told me there's a rule against screaming your head off in the halls. Surprise surprise.

ROCKY: No, I mean about Mzz Smith. 185

BINNIE: [*puzzled*] He didn't! He just went back in the Principal's Office.

ROCKY: Well, he doesn't seem worried about her.

BINNIE: Guess not. [*beat*] So let's do something!

ROCKY: Like what?

BINNIE: I dunno. I've never been here without a teacher before. 190

ROCKY: Me neither.

*[Pause, as they try to think up some mischief. They cross to the teacher's desk, open it, look at the contents for a moment.]*

ROCKY: So what? Pens an' papers, big deal. We're allowed to look in here anyways. 195

*[Pause. He looks meaningfully to the filing cabinet.]*

BINNIE: Rocky ...  
 ROCKY: Dare ya.  
 BINNIE: Eee, Rockeee ...  
 ROCKY: Dare ya! 200  
 BINNIE: You couldn't get in there anyway.  
 ROCKY: I bet I could.

*[He gives the drawer handle a casual yank; it slides open. Startled, he slams it shut.]*

*[whispering a secret]* 'S not even locked! 205

*[Pause. They stare at it, frightened.]*

BINNIE: Sometimes she leaves it unlocked. It's the honour system. She trusts us not to look.  
 ROCKY: *[laughs]* Too bad for her, eh?  
 BINNIE: That's not funny, Rocky! That stuff is top secret! 210  
 ROCKY: Yeah, ya know why? Ya know what Mrs. Smith keeps in here?  
 BINNIE: Yeah. They got files in there.  
 ROCKY: Yeah. And those files say things about what's *wrong* with us. All our teachers decide whether they *like* us or not, by reading in here!

BINNIE: It doesn't tell them to *like* us or not. 215  
 ROCKY: It says whether we're gonna pass or flunk!  
 BINNIE: So what?  
 ROCKY: So I'm gonna open it.  
 BINNIE: No! She could come in any minute.  
 ROCKY: I thought she was s'posed to be havin' her baby. 220  
 BINNIE: Well, Mr. Powers could come in. Anybody could come in.

*[They both look to the door for a nervous moment.]*

ROCKY: Nah. I'm gonna do it.  
*[He turns back with BINNIE to the filing cabinet. The door opens – on cue, as it were. We cannot yet see the intruder.]* 225

BINNIE: I'm gonna open it.  
 I'm not gonna watch.

*[She turns her back on ROCKY, and finds herself face to face with VICTOR, who has come in the door. He carries a tape recorder.]*

ROCKY: *[his attention on the filing cabinet]* 'Kay, here goes, I'm opening it now. 230  
 BINNIE: Victor!

*[ROCKY whirls.]*

VICTOR: Hi, Binnie.  
ROCKY: Victor, Victor, Boa Constrictor. Whaddayou doin' here? 235  
VICTOR: I'm bringing a message from the Principal's Office.  
ROCKY: Why can't he bring his own messages?  
VICTOR: It's my job today. I'm the Day Monitor.  
ROCKY: *[playing deeply impressed]* Are ya!  
BINNIE: *[playing profound awe]* The real Day Monitor? Really? *Thee* Day  
Monitor? 240

*[She gets down on her knees and worships. ROCKY thinks this is quite funny.]*

VICTOR: All right, stop it.  
ROCKY: Hey, that's an important job, Day Vomiter.  
VICTOR: Monitor! 245  
BINNIE: That's what he said. Vomiter.  
VICTOR: No he didn't, he said 'vom' – Yeah, that's right. But it's 'monitor'!  
BINNIE: Oh! Well! I'm glad we got that straightened out, eh?

*[She and ROCKY do a poor job of stifling their amusement. VICTOR is not amused.]* 250

VICTOR: My message is, Mrs. Smith can't come today.  
BINNIE: What? I gotta show her my composition!  
VICTOR: She's in the hospital.  
BINNIE: Her baby! She's having her baby!  
VICTOR: Yeah, that was it. 255  
BINNIE: Yay, it's true, we were right, Mrs. Smith's having a little Smith!  
VICTOR: So anyway, today's class is cancelled. What were you two doing in here?

BINNIE: Having a baby.  
ROCKY: Bin-*neee*!! 260  
VICTOR: Very funny.  
ROCKY: We were waiting for Mrs. Smith, 'cause we're s'posed to have –  
BINNIE: *[to ROCKY]* Don't tell him!  
ROCKY: Why not?  
BINNIE: *[to VICTOR]* None of your business what we're doing in here. This is 265  
our room. This is our special room for the special learning disabled kids and their special teacher who's having a baby –

VICTOR: It's my business if you were trying to get into that filing cabinet.  
BINNIE: We were pretending! Is it open? We were pretending!  
VICTOR: Well, pretending or not, you might have had enough brains to lock the 270  
door.

ROCKY: What?  
VICTOR: And leave the light off.  
ROCKY: Whaddayou mean, 'nough brains?  
VICTOR: Well, it kills me seeing guys like you trying to break the rules – 275  
ROCKY: 'Guys like you' –  
VICTOR: – and not even being able to do it right.  
ROCKY: You said I had no brains.  
VICTOR: Well, and all that hollering and screaming wasn't the smartest thing in 280  
the world either –

*[ROCKY spins the swivel chair VICTOR is sitting on.]*

Stop it! Stop it! Don't hit me! Ow! Ow! Don't hit me!

ROCKY:	[ <i>stops suddenly. Silence.</i> ] Whatcha scared of?	
VICTOR:	Nothing.	
ROCKY:	Scareda the dummy, Victor? Scareda the L-D?	285
VICTOR:	No.	
ROCKY:	No? Oh. Then you must be ascarda the other L-D, you must be ascarda Binnie.	
BINNIE:	Boo.	
VICTOR:	I am not!	290
ROCKY:	Well, those're the only dummies here. Me and Binnie. Everybody else here's <i>real</i> smart.	
VICTOR:	[ <i>frightened</i> ] I'm not scared of either of you. All I have to do is tell the Principal that –	
ROCKY:	<i>Squealer!</i> Gonna tell him I gave you a little <i>push!</i>	295
VICTOR:	– that I heard you planning to break into the filing cabinet, [ <i>brief pause</i> ] I don't squeal for hitting. Guys hit me alla time, I don't tell. But getting into that thing is serious. That's school business. And I'm the Day Monitor.	
	[ROCKY <i>grabs</i> VICTOR's <i>tape recorder.</i> ]	300
	Doon't!	
ROCKY:	You tell on us I'll break your tape recorder!	
VICTOR:	You're too late! A bunch of Grade Sevens broke it this morning.	
ROCKY:	[ <i>turns the tape recorder on and shakes it</i> ] Oh. Yeah. Nothin'.	
VICTOR:	What do you wanna get in there for, anyway?	305
ROCKY:	I wanna find out if I'm flunking.	
VICTOR:	Those files are just for the teachers.	
BINNIE:	We know that. That's the problem! Don't you think it's weird how everybody's allowed to read them except –	
VICTOR:	Aaghh! What're you doing!	310
	[ROCKY <i>has delicately taken a strand of</i> VICTOR's <i>hair.</i> ]	
ROCKY:	Hold still. Don' move.	
VICTOR:	What is it!	
ROCKY:	Spider.	
VICTOR:	Eeeuuuggghhh!	315
ROCKY:	Big one. Biig one.	
VICTOR:	Take it out take it out take it out!	
	[ROCKY <i>pretends to remove it from</i> VICTOR's <i>hair; meanwhile, he takes a toy rubber spider from his pocket.</i> ]	
ROCKY:	I got it. It's still alive. I think it's a tarantula. You wanna see?	320
VICTOR:	No, thanks!	
ROCKY:	[ <i>shoving the rubber spider into</i> VICTOR's <i>peripheral vision</i> ] C'mon, it's big an' furry.	
VICTOR:	No!	
BINNIE:	Well, ya better hold still, it seems to like you. It keeps wiggling at you.	325
	[ROCKY <i>backs up to the filing cabinet.</i> ]	
VICTOR:	Don't let it near me.	
BINNIE:	Inky dinky spider Got stepped on by a moose.	

	Victor looked inside 'er: Eeugg! Spider juice!	330
VICTOR:	Okay, Binnie, it's your fault if I throw up.	
BINNIE:	[to ROCKY] Victor throws up easily.	
ROCKY:	Yeah? That's 'cause he's the Day Vomiter, eh?	
	[They laugh.]	335
VICTOR:	Well, then, you don't wanna look at what I'm doing, Victor. I sure don't.	
	[ROCKY opens the drawer. He peers in. BINNIE joins him, stifling her amusement – for it has now become a joke on VICTOR – and they gaze in at the files. VICTOR becomes suspicious and turns around.]	340
VICTOR:	Oooh, no you don't.	
ROCKY:	[wiggling the rubber spider in his direction] Spider! Spider!	
VICTOR:	No you don't. You don't fool me. Look what you did! You broke into the filing cabinet!	
BINNIE:	We didn't break in, it wasn't even locked.	345
	[Hears herself rationalising, exchanges guilty glance with ROCKY.]	
ROCKY:	Whatcha gonna do about it, Victor?	
VICTOR:	You'll see. You'll see. Just try taking those files out of there, and you'll just see.	
	[Beat. ROCKY, of course, starts taking the files out of the cabinet and looking at them. The file folders are of different colours, including red, blue, yellow and green.]	350
	All right, wait a minute. Look. Uh – you're not gonna be able to understand these files, anyway, Rocky. These files are put together by experts, and – and, uh –	355
ROCKY:	[continues looking through files, and tossing them on the floor] So? I can try. You said I have no brains, but I know the difference between a rubber spider. I can try.	
VICTOR:	Look. You want to find out if you're gonna pass? There's a really good way. It's called a report card. You ever heard of a report card? The reason for report cards is to tell you how you're doing, you know.	360
BINNIE:	Yeah, well, it's easy for you, you know. You always know how you're doing. You write those long book reports that're longer than the books, an' you're the teacher's pet an' everything, an' you get all A's!	
VICTOR:	Well, I can't help it if I'm smart!	365
BINNIE:	[doing her VICTOR imitation] 'Well, I can't help it if I'm the biggest genius in the whole –'	
VICTOR:	And I wouldn't if I could! 'Cause I am!	
ROCKY:	What?	
VICTOR:	Smart!	370
ROCKY:	Oh. Okay. So?	
VICTOR:	So I may be a <i>nerd</i> and a <i>wimp</i> and everything, but at least I got one thing that's mine. I'm smarter than anybody else in this whole school. I know it may not be much, but it's mine!	
ROCKY:	Okay. Well. We're smarter'n you think we are, anyways.	375
VICTOR:	Oh, yeah? And this is how you're showing it?	

- ROCKY: Maybe I'll show you when I find this dumb file. [*tosses files all over the floor, making quite a mess.*]
- VICTOR: Have you two gone crazy? This is serious! You could get expelled for this! You could get the strap! 380
- BINNIE: Oh, Victor, they haven't had the strap for years.
- VICTOR: Well, they should! For stuff like this! You have to go turn yourself in.
- ROCKY: Whaddaya mean?
- VICTOR: You have to go to the Principal's Office, and tell Mr. Powers what you did. 385
- BINNIE: Are you crazy?
- VICTOR: If you don't, you'll only get in worse trouble.
- ROCKY: Only if you tell.
- VICTOR: You're so right I'm gonna tell! I have to tell!
- ROCKY: [*making fists, threatening*] Then I have to stop you. 390
- VICTOR: Rocky, I can't cover up for you.
- ROCKY: Why not?
- VICTOR: 'Cause I'm the Day Vom – *Monitor!* I mean, look, you wouldn't cover up for me, would you? I *have* to tell the Principal! Or else *you* do. 395
- ROCKY: I'm not tellin' no Principal!
- VICTOR: [*though terrified*] Then I have to.
- BINNIE: Wait. Wait. You guys calm down a second. Look. [*to VICTOR*] What if we just clean it all up an' put everything back exactly the way it was? So there won't be any harm done, right? So then you don't have to tell the Principal. [*to ROCKY*] And you won't have to stop him. 'Cause everything will be like it was, right? 400
- VICTOR: But everything *won't* be like it was, because Rocky's read his file! Or else he's gonna.
- ROCKY: I can't, fool! You're tellin' me to turn myself in for readin' a file, an' I can't even read the file! 405
- VICTOR: You can't?
- ROCKY: I can't even find it.
- VICTOR: What? [*starts to laugh*] You broke into this thing just to look for a file you can't even read?
- BINNIE: It's not funny, Victor. 410
- VICTOR: [*laughing*] What a dummy! I've seen some dummies before, but you – you just –
- [ROCKY *threatens him.*]
- ROCKY: Don't! Don't! Ow! Ow! Don't hit me! Don't hit me! 415  
Aaaaaarrggghhhh!
- [ROCKY *grabs VICTOR's tape recorder, holds it up in the air, ready to smash it, possibly over VICTOR's head. BINNIE gets on her hands and knees, bounds over to ROCKY, barking, and yanks his shoelaces undone with her teeth. Distracted, he turns and glares at her as she bounds back, still on hands and knees. She is imitating a large, sloppy dog.*]
- BINNIE: Woof! Woof! Grrr-uff! [*sits up and pants.*]
- ROCKY: Whaddayou doin'!
- BINNIE: I'm doing Snowy, my dog. Haven't you ever seen my Snowy imitation?
- ROCKY: Whatcha open my shoelaces for? 425
- BINNIE: To stop you beating up on Victor.
- ROCKY: Opening my shoelaces an' barking like your dog isn't gonna make me stop beating up on Victor!

BINNIE: Well, it did ...

[*Pause.*] 430

ROCKY: [*lamely*] Oh. Yeah. It did. [*beat*] Okay, Victor. Tie 'em back up, then.  
 VICTOR: Me? She untied them!  
 ROCKY: You started all this, you tie 'em up.  
 VICTOR: What started all this was you not being able to read your files. I can't help it if it made me laugh. 435

[*ROCKY again wields the tape recorder.*]

All right I'll do it don't hit me! [*kneels to tie the shoes.*]

BINNIE: Ya know the hardest thing about having a learning disability, Victor?  
 VICTOR: What?  
 BINNIE: Putting up with guys like you! 440  
 VICTOR: Oh. Well. [*brief silence*] I'm sorry I laughed, okay?

[*ROCKY and BINNIE look at each other.*]

BINNIE: Okay.  
 ROCKY: [*not angry*] Ya know somethin'? I wish it was you, Victor. Jus' for like one class, so you'd know what it's like. Sittin' in class and hoping she won't ask you. 'Cause ya know you'll do it wrong an' everybody'll laugh. Sometimes I see you get up to read or something, an' you do it so perfect, an' I just wish you knew what it was like to be me an' Binnie. 445

VICTOR: [*finishes tying, stands*] Well, you know, everything isn't exactly perfect for me either. Getting beaten up by guys at recess all the time – 450  
 BINNIE: Well, at least you got all the grownups on your side. The teachers and stuff.  
 VICTOR: Well, so what, when you don't have any friends?  
 ROCKY: We don't have any friends either. 455  
 VICTOR: Sure you do, you've got – never mind.  
 BINNIE: You don't know what it's like, Victor. People calling you names all the time.  
 VICTOR: Are you *kidding*? Are you *kidding*? I'm the world's greatest expert on being called names! 460  
 ROCKY: Nobody ever called you stupid.  
 VICTOR: No! Instead they call me a '*braaaaayn*'!  
 ROCKY: They call me slow.  
 VICTOR: They call me a nerd.  
 ROCKY: You called me a dummy! 465  
 VICTOR: Oh yeah? Well, I'm a wimp!  
 ROCKY: [*pointing to himself*] Feeb!  
 VICTOR: [*ditto*] Weirdo!  
 ROCKY: Idiot!  
 VICTOR: *Boffin!* 470  
 ROCKY: *Loser!*  
 VICTOR: *Egghead!*  
 ROCKY: *Airhead!*  
 BINNIE: Hold it!

[*BINNIE freezes, ROCKY and VICTOR freeze as well, in response to her.*] 475

[*whispering*] Principal coming.

[*All remain frozen, listening. Then they all hear it. Immediate action: BINNIE and ROCKY dive behind the desk. VICTOR stands there for a moment, as if petrified with fear – but then he suddenly starts shouting.*] 480

VICTOR: *Stupid! Brain! Loser! Nerd! Wimp!*

[*As he shouts, ignoring ROCKY and BINNIE's attempts to gesture him back to safety behind the desk, he quickly puts on two of the puppets: the Sponge Beast puppet and the Professor puppet, one on each hand. Then he opens the door.*] 485

*Feeb! Weirdo! Idiot! Loser! Egghead! Airhead – Oh, hi, Mr. Powers. [pause] Playing. [pause] Binnie and Rocky? They've left. [pause] Oh, that was me. This puppet is Binnie, and this puppet is, uh, Rocky. And I'm having a big fight between them. I'm releasing my feelings through creative play.* 490

[*Pause, as Mr. Powers presumably absorbs this one.*]

Oh. Okay. Bye, Mr. Powers.

[*Mr. Powers apparently leaves. VICTOR closes the door.*]

We gotta be quieter, he's staying in his office for a while. 495

[*ROCKY slowly stands up from behind the desk, staring wildly at VICTOR. Slightly alarmed.*]

I'm sorry. I wasn't out to make fun of you or anything. Don't hit me.  
ROCKY: That was – that was great. That was absolutely fantastic!  
BINNIE: [*getting up*] Not so dumb, Victor! 500  
ROCKY: That was *fantastic!*

[*VICTOR blushes and shrugs.*]

BINNIE: What didja tell him? Releasing your what?  
VICTOR: 'Releasing my feelings through creative play.' [*giggles*] I don't even know what it means. I read it in a book. 505

ROCKY: You read that? In a book?

VICTOR: A comic! I read it in a comic. Listen, we gotta clean up now.

ROCKY: Aw, *Victor* –

VICTOR: No, really! What if he comes back!

ROCKY: [*alarmed, to BINNIE*] Hey, right. 510

BINNIE: [*shrewdly*] Yeah, right, but then what? Ya still on him to turn himself in?

VICTOR: Well, if he can't read his file, I guess there's nothing to tell the Principal.

[*Brief pause.*]

ROCKY: Well. Okay. Let's clean up. 515

[*VICTOR has put away the Sponge Beast but retained the Professor puppet. He sits admiring it, as BINNIE and ROCKY start work.*]

BINNIE: Victor, aren't you gonna help?  
VICTOR: [*as Dr Brainstorm*] Yes! You want me to help too?  
ROCKY: Oh, great. All we need. 520  
VICTOR: [*as Dr Brainstorm*] Yes! You do need me! I am Doctor Brainstorm. I know all about important papers. Important papers are my business! Big deal.  
ROCKY: Big deal.  
VICTOR: [*as Dr Brainstorm*] Here, let me help you with this. Wait just a moment – [*takes some filing folders, tries to rearrange them. Puzzled, dropping the characterisation*] Wait a second. These are all in different grades. And you've got them all mixed together. 525  
BINNIE: Oh, just put 'em away.  
VICTOR: But they have to go back in the same order, or she'll know.  
BINNIE: [*stops, looks*] Yeah, you're right. 530  
VICTOR: We have to go through every file and figure out what grade the kid is in! Oh, no, this is gonna take hours. [*opens one*] Well – I know this guy. He's in Grade Six.  
BINNIE: And this kid's in Grade Four.  
VICTOR: So's this one. Grade Four. 535  
ROCKY: That's why those are both yellow.  
VICTOR: Rocky, just – Here's another Grade Six.  
ROCKY: An' that one's green. Hey, wouldn't it be neat if that was how it worked? Green for Grade Six, yellow for Grade Four –  
BINNIE: Rocky, will you stop horsing around? Here's a Grade Five. 540  
ROCKY: An' then these other colours would all be for different grades. [*beat*] Wait a minute ... [*suddenly starts re-checking the files*] Wait a minute. Wait a minute! I'm right! Yellow is Four, red is Five, green is Six and – Hey, look, you guys! Look!  
BINNIE: Rocky – 545  
ROCKY: I bet you blue is Grade Seven!  
VICTOR: Rocky, you're wasting time.  
ROCKY: I betcha! I betcha! Blue is Grade Seven!  
BINNIE: [*checks*] Hey, just a second. You know what, he's right!  
VICTOR: [*checks*] Hey, yeah! How'd you figure that out? 550  
ROCKY: 'Ts obvious.  
VICTOR: No it's not!  
ROCKY: 'Ts obvious to me.  
  
[ROCKY and VICTOR stare at each other for a moment.]  
  
Okay, anyways, let's do it. 555  
  
[ROCKY grabs up a batch of yellow folders and shoves them into the filing cabinet drawer in random order.]  
  
VICTOR: Wait, you can't do it like that.  
ROCKY: Says who?  
VICTOR: Once the colours are together, they have to go in alphabetical order. 560  
ROCKY: Oh. [*to BINNIE*] Alphabetical order.  
VICTOR: So what's the problem?  
ROCKY: Nothin'.  
VICTOR: You don't know your alphabet?  
ROCKY: I know my alphabet! I just mix it up. 565  
VICTOR: What?  
BINNIE: He knows the letters, he just forgets what order they go in.  
ROCKY: Don' worry about it. You guys clean up. I'll watch.

*[He sits and watches, making a good effort not to be sullen. VICTOR returns to picking up files. BINNIE joins in. So now we have VICTOR and BINNIE putting the files away.]* 570

BINNIE: Hey, ya know what we oughta do? We oughta put a big congratulations message on the blackboard for Mrs. Smith having her baby! Eh, Rocky?

ROCKY: *[shrugs]* I don' care. 575

BINNIE: You do it, Victor.

VICTOR: *[preoccupied with files]* She's not my teacher.

VICTOR: You do it, Bin.

BINNIE: Yeah?

ROCKY: Sure. 580

BINNIE: All right!

*[Enthusiastically, she jumps up and begins to write on the blackboard. After a moment, VICTOR glances up, sees what she's writing, and freezes in amazement. BINNIE is writing the words 'Congratulations – Love, Binnie and Rocky' clearly, fluently, in respectable handwriting but backwards, in a mirror image.]* 585

VICTOR: How did you do that?

BINNIE: What?

VICTOR: How do you write like that? That is bizarre!

BINNIE: Did I do it again? *[traces the letters with her finger]* Yeah. Did it again. 590

VICTOR: You mean you can't even tell? If it's forward or backward?

*[BINNIE, embarrassed, doesn't answer.]*

ROCKY: Yeah, you gotta hold a mirror up to it, eh.

VICTOR: *[hesitantly]* 'Con – gratulations – Love, Binnie and Rocky.'

ROCKY: Don't put 'love'! 595

VICTOR: Binnie, that is absolutely weird.

ROCKY: Take out the 'love' part.

BINNIE: Sure.

*[BINNIE erases the word 'love' and then continues, angrily rubbing out the rest of it.]* 600

VICTOR: *[blocks her from finishing]* No! Don't! Don't rub it all out! It's neat!

BINNIE: It is not neat! It is backwards!

VICTOR: I didn't know you were able to do this!

BINNIE: I'm not able! I'm disabled! I can't tell the difference.

## EXTRACT 2

Adapted from *1984* by Robert Icke and Duncan Macmillan

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

*1984* is Robert Icke and Duncan Macmillan's stage adaptation of George Orwell's novel, *Nineteen-Eighty Four*.

It was first performed in Nottingham, UK, in September 2013.

Set in a dystopian future, the play is a dramatic warning against totalitarianism. The world has been divided into three large areas, one always at war with another. An organisation called The Party runs everything, every detail of people's lives. It's headed by a never-seen Big Brother, origin of the phrase 'Big Brother is watching you.'

The edited extract is taken from the middle sections of the play featuring WINSTON and JULIA's brief, forbidden relationship.

## CHARACTERS

WINSTON SMITH, a minor Party functionary

O'BRIEN, a senior Party official

JULIA, Winston's illicit lover

MARTIN, a minor Party official

SYME, a minor Party official

CHARRINGTON, antique shopkeeper

PARSONS, a minor Party official

VOICE

MEN IN UNIFORM

[A klaxon sounds. People pour into the canteen.]

MARTIN: Victory gin!  
 SYME: You don't really appreciate Newspeak, Winston. Do you? Not really.  
 You don't have to be an expert to know that Newspeak is the only  
 language in the world whose vocabulary gets smaller every year. 5  
 It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words.  
 PARSONS: My kid made sure he was some kind of enemy agent. Might have  
 been parachuted in or something. But this is the bit that's really  
 brilliant. What put her onto him in the first place?  
 SYME: Shoes. 10  
 PARSONS: He was wearing a funny pair of shoes!  
 SYME: He told me before.

[JULIA walks along the corridor as before. WINSTON watches her.]

PARSONS: So chances are he was an enemy agent. Pretty smart, right? Pretty  
 smart for a seven year old. 15

[JULIA enters the canteen.]

Absolutely bursting with pride. You know what she did this weekend?  
 Absolutely brilliant. Pleased as punch. Her troop are on a patrol  
 North West, heading towards Willesden. And they hear something.  
 Whistling! Young man and woman from the Ministry of Plenty, holding  
 hands! Stopped when they saw the kids of course. 20  
 But it was too late. That kind of behaviour. Brazen.  
 SYME: Good.  
 PARSONS: I mean, there is a war on.

[JULIA comes closer, sits at the other end of the table. WINSTON,  
 suddenly reckless, nudges the tray off the table downstage towards  
 her – everyone else in the room stops as if there's been a gunshot.] 25

Be careful, comrade. Be careful.

[JULIA moves in to help him clear it up. They're on the floor.]

JULIA: Sunday afternoon? 30  
 WINSTON: Yes.  
 JULIA: At fifteen, get the train.

[JULIA's voice seems to echo, and the canteen vanishes.]

Get off at the third station. Turn left, follow the path – wait at the  
 biggest tree, the one covered in moss. Wait for me. 35

[A sudden, two-second blackout – then a train whistle. The lights  
 come up. We are in the countryside.]

WINSTON: We're all right here.  
 We're all right here?  
 JULIA: Yes. We're miles from anywhere. Look at the trees! Just don't go too  
 far into the open. 40  
 I'm Julia.  
 'Hello Julia, I'm Winston Smith.'

WINSTON: How did you know that's –  
 JULIA: I'm careful. I'd be dead if I wasn't. 45  
 WINSTON: You've done this before?  
 JULIA: I've got a surprise.

*[She pulls out a slab of chocolate wrapped in silver paper.]*

WINSTON: Chocolate! I remember –  
 JULIA: It's real. Not like that crap the Party rations out. This is the stuff they 50  
 keep for themselves.  
 WINSTON: I feel like this has happened already. I mean –  
 I've dreamt you.  
 I've dreamt this.  
 JULIA: How do you know you're not dreaming now? 55  
 WINSTON: Being with you the world feels solid. Real. I know who I am. I have  
 memories. A past.  
 The chocolate. It reminds me of – something.  
 I can't remember.  
 JULIA: You thought I was an agent of the Thought Police. 60  
 WINSTON: Yes. I hated the sight of you. I wanted to murder you – I wanted to  
 attack you.  
 JULIA: I'm a good liar. It's the only way to be safe.  
 WINSTON: Hardly safe to approach strangers –  
 JULIA: I detect the people who don't belong. 65  
 There's something in your eyes that betrays you. I knew you were  
 against them. I know everything about you.  
 WINSTON: You'd be useful to the Thought Police.  
 They'll kill us just for being here together. It's inevitable.  
 JULIA: Nothing's inevitable. 70  
 WINSTON: Do you think they can be overthrown?  
 That we can bring down the Party?  
 JULIA: We are.  
 WINSTON: I mean it.  
 JULIA: So do I. Being here. It's a threat to them. No love except love of 75  
 Big Brother. No loyalty except to the Party. They keep everyone too  
 miserable to notice what's going on. But it's all made up. Fictional.  
 The hardest thing during the Two Minutes Hate is not to laugh.  
 WINSTON: But during the Hate you were screaming and shouting?  
 JULIA: What you say or do doesn't matter. Only feelings matter. 80  
 WINSTON: The Party is invincible. We can't defeat them. They always get you in  
 the end. We're dead. We are the dead.  
 JULIA: We're not dead yet. This is ME. This is my hand.  
 This is my neck. This is my head. And leg. And cheek. I'm alive. I'm  
 REAL. I EXIST. Right now. 85  
 We destroy the Party with tiny, secret acts of disobedience. Secret  
 pleasures. It's possible to think something, to feel something that's  
 just yours, that has nothing to do with them, even just for a second.  
 Look.

*[She kisses him.]* 90

WINSTON: Simple as that. I just killed Big Brother.  
 Kill him again.

*[They look at each other.]*

JULIA:	My train leaves in five minutes. Take the one after.	
WINSTON:	Oh.	95
JULIA:	If you see me in the city don't stare. Don't smile. I won't acknowledge you. I can't protect you. This never happened.	
WINSTON:	This never happened.	
JULIA:	We may as well say goodbye.	
WINSTON:	Yes.	100
	<i>[JULIA holds out her hand.</i>	
	<i>WINSTON shakes it but doesn't let go.]</i>	
	This is how it ends.	
JULIA:	We can't come here again. Not twice. It's too dangerous.	
WINSTON:	And to be together in the city ... it's madness. We can't.	105
JULIA:	We could...	
WINSTON:	It's suicide.	
	<i>[They stare into each other's eyes. A silence as they make a decision.]</i>	
JULIA:	We are the dead.	
	<i>[She moves to leave. Stops. Turns to him.]</i>	110
	Find somewhere.	
	<i>[She exits.</i>	
	<i>We're in the antique shop. CHARRINGTON moves to the cord and pulls it: the lights illuminate.]</i>	
CHARRINGTON:	The one place in the world where the past still exists. My shop. Antiques. As was, anyway: no-one wants old things any more. There's another room in the back. Not even a telescreen in there: never bothered.	115
WINSTON:	No telescreen?	
CHARRINGTON:	It's just for storage, now, after all.	120
WINSTON:	Yes. I've / been here before.	
CHARRINGTON:	You've been here before. Bought the / diary. I'll rent it to you for very little. The room. If you need somewhere. Everyone needs a bit of privacy sometimes.	
	<i>[WINSTON looks around.]</i>	125
WINSTON:	Yes. Yes I'd like that. Thank you.	
CHARRINGTON:	Follow me then and we'll settle up. No paperwork. No need to leave records.	
	<i>[CHARRINGTON gestures to the cupboard as before.]</i>	
	You'll do with a light.	130
	It's just through there. Along the corridor.	
	It's the only door.	
	<i>[WINSTON opens the cupboard door, which now opens onto a corridor. He walks through the door. CHARRINGTON calls after him.]</i>	

Keep hold of that key and you can come and go as it suits you. 135

*[WINSTON enters a small room full of beautiful antiques. Old furniture, a threadbare carpet, peeling walls. A bed.]*

WINSTON: Thank you.

*[He looks out of the window. He jumps on the bed.]*

No mics. No telescreen! 140

*[He look up and sees JULIA, smiling.]*

JULIA: I've got a surprise. Here.

*[She unloads a toolbox. Concealed in the base of it are various tins and paper packets which she throws to WINSTON.]*

WINSTON: Fresh bread. Jam. Milk. Real sugar! 145

JULIA: How did you –

Tea. There's been a lot of it about lately. They've captured India or something.

*[He tickles her, she laughs and wriggles free.]*

And this is the one I'm most proud of! 150

*[She holds a package to WINSTON's face.]*

Real coffee from the Inner Party! TWO bags of –

*[She holds up a second bag, and coffee grains pour out.]*

They've chewed right through the paper! The city's swarming with rats. They're everywhere. 155

WINSTON: *[Quietly.]* Stop it.

JULIA: When hungry or agitated, rats can strip all the flesh from a human face in a matter of minutes. They show astonishing intelligence in knowing when someone is helpless.

WINSTON: *[Louder.]* Stop it stop it can you please stop it please please stop! 160

*[WINSTON is breathing heavily. He's trying not to vomit.]*

JULIA: What? Winston, what?

WINSTON: Anything but rats. Anything.

*[JULIA moves towards him and he flinches.]*

JULIA: Winston. You're shaking. 165

*[She puts her arms around him, cradling his head.]*

WINSTON: Anything. Anything but rats. Anything but rats. Please. Please. Anything.

JULIA: Look at me. They won't come in here. I'll plaster up every crack if necessary. We're alright here. We're alone. We're safe. 170

*[She sings to him, softly.]*

*'Oranges and lemons', say the bells of St. Clement's.  
'You owe me three farthings' say the bells of St Martins.  
'When will you pay me?' say the bells of Old Bailey.*

WINSTON: That song ... 175  
 JULIA: I've seen oranges. They're a kind of fruit with a thick skin.  
 I wonder what a lemon was.  
 WINSTON: How do you know that song?  
 JULIA: I've always known it.  
 WINSTON: But I didn't show you did I? The object, the – you weren't with me 180  
 when –  
 JULIA: My grandfather sang it to me.  
 WINSTON: Your grandfather?  
 JULIA: Winston –  
 WINSTON: Julia. 185  
 JULIA: I love you.

*[He looks into her eyes. Everything is utterly silent.]*

WINSTON *smiles.*

WINSTON: We are the dead.  
 JULIA: We are the dead. 190  
 VOICE: YOU ARE THE DEAD.

*[WINSTON and JULIA spring apart. All blood rushes from their faces. The voice is metallic, unreal, terrifying, WINSTON and JULIA freeze.]*

JULIA: YOU ARE THE DEAD. 195  
 VOICE: They can see us.  
 WE CAN SEE YOU.  
 REMAIN EXACTLY WHERE YOU ARE. MAKE NO MOVEMENT  
 UNTIL YOU ARE ORDERED.  
 WINSTON: It's starting. It's starting at last.  
 VOICE: IT'S STARTING. 200  
 JULIA: I suppose we may as well say goodbye.  
 VOICE: YOU MAY AS WELL SAY GOODBYE.

*[Suddenly there is an almighty crash and countless MEN IN UNIFORM flood into the room and set about dismantling it. It is terrifying and completely disorientating; the whole world changes.]* 205

*A bag is put over JULIA's head and she is taken swiftly from the room.]*

WINSTON: JULIA!

*[WINSTON is restrained.]*

*Into the chaos walks CHARRINGTON, calmly. The MEN IN UNIFORM acknowledge his presence, becoming more subdued.* 210

*CHARRINGTON removes his glasses, then his white hair, revealing black hair beneath. He adjusts his posture, standing up straight. He is some twenty years younger than he has previously appeared.]*

CHARRINGTON:	And by the way, while we're on the subject, 'here comes a candle to light you to bed, here comes a chopper to chop off your head.'	215
	[PARSONS emerges from the darkness. He also has a bag over his head and his hands tied. He has been beaten.]	
PARSONS:	Winston? Winston is that you?	
	[WINSTON turns towards the man.]	220
VOICE:	REMAIN STILL.	
PARSONS:	It's me. Parsons.	
	[PARSONS shuffles towards WINSTON.]	
WINSTON:	Parsons? What are you here for?	
PARSONS:	Thoughtcrime.	225
	[The word reverberates in the amplified room.]	
	I never knew I had a bad thought in my head! I was sleeping! I was talking in my sleep! Shouting. DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER! DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER! DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER! DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER! DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER!	230
	[Several MEN IN UNIFORM emerge from the darkness and stand nearby. They wear helmets which mask their faces.]	235
WINSTON:	How did they know?	
PARSONS:	How do you think? My little girl! Listened through the keyhole. Went right to the patrols first thing in the morning. Pretty smart for a seven year old. I'm so proud of her. She'll be right at the front when they shoot me. You know what I'm going to say right at the end? Last words? 'Thank you for saving me before it was too late.' 'Thank you.'	240
O'BRIEN:	[Unseen.] Room 101.	
	[The amplified voice becomes a piercing scream of feedback, PARSONS is suddenly terrified. The MEN IN UNIFORM restrain PARSONS and take him away, PARSONS struggles.]	245
PARSONS:	NO! PLEASE NO! ANYTHING BUT THAT! I'LL DO ANYTHING! I'LL CONFESS TO ANYTHING! SHOOT ME! ANYTHING BUT ROOM 101!	250
	[The words howl around the room, PARSONS has gone.]	
WINSTON:	What's in Room 101?	



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