

THE BOYS, THE BED, AND THE BALSA

A one-act comedy by
Will Boersma

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

GEOFFREY, 14, male, a preppy, hopeless romantic, who has a passion for the finer things in life.

SAM, 14, male, a young, envious roughneck.

AL, 14, male, a book smart kid, passionate about his research.

(10:30. Evening. Present. The setting is a small, undesirable motel room. There isn't much to live in, but still enough to move around. There is one single bed in this room with a night table to its side. On this night table are brochures and small restaurant guides for tourists. There is another table not too far away from the bed. This table has a balsa wood tower standing proud atop it. The tower is not constructed precisely but somehow still holds together. On the floor are three overnight bags with street clothes thrown on to them.)

(When the lights come up it is revealed that three teenaged boys are surrounding the bed. The one checking his cuticles is GEOFFREY, 14, a preppy, hopeless romantic, who has a passion for the finer things in life. He is the type of person who pronounces all "W" words with a "Wh-" sound. Standing next to him is SAM, also 14, a young, envious, roughneck who is currently looking at some photos in his wallet with his back turned to the other boys. And the third boy is AL [short for Albert], 14, a book smart kid, who is currently studying the bed. All three of the boys are dressed for bed. The sound of light passing traffic is barely heard outside.)

AL: Where are we?

GEOFFREY: (Rubbing the top of the night table with his finger and checking for dust:) A hideous motel room.

AL: But where from a geographical standpoint?

GEOFFREY: (Picking up one the brochures and reading:) "Welcome to Dulls-ville: Where Fun Comes to Die!"

AL: It doesn't say that.

GEOFFREY: (Handing the brochure to Al:) Well it should. It's true.

AL: (Putting brochure down:) Way to be cheap, Mrs. Brian.

GEOFFREY: Ugh. Look at this bed.

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AL: How are we going to sleep in this?

GEOFFREY: How do people sleep in any bed?

SAM: (*Turning and quickly throwing the wallet on the ground so no one sees it:*) Why do we even need to sleep tonight? Let's pull an all-nighter. That's what the team would do.

GEOFFREY: I don't have dirt under my nails, Sam. How can I be on the team?

SAM: Julie liked having a boyfriend who was on the team.

AL: (*Covering his ears:*) Don't mention—

GEOFFREY: That's because Julie wasn't developed then.

SAM: Oh she was developed.

GEOFFREY: I mean as an intellectual, you pig.

AL: (*To Sam, in order to distract:*) What was your plan again?

SAM: I said we should pull an all-nighter.

AL: All-nighter, that's good. Mess with our biological clocks so we're in no state to present the tower tomorrow.

SAM: Then you better not be up reading books all night.

AL: At least I go into books for information, not people's private lockers.

GEOFFREY: Well, I'm not staying awake in a room with you two all night. A well cultivated person, such as myself, requires all the rest they can get. We used to sleep just fine at sleepovers.

SAM: That was before.

AL: (*Gesturing at the tower:*) I want to be awake when we present the tower. The probability of it winning is like 3.52 percent but we could still get that extra credit from Mrs. Brian.

SAM: I need that. Coach says I need to pass this class or I'm off the team.

AL: You're not the only one; I need to pass this class if I ever want to get back to my own research.

GEOFFREY: And I'll get back to Julie.

AL: But if we pull an all-nighter we'll just crash, and our odds of getting that extra credit will be a ratio of zero to zero.

SAM: Why did we even build a tower? We should've built a wall like I said. Everyone else did.

GEOFFREY: You idiot, if we had built a wall, we wouldn't be here competing at the National Balsa Wood Tower Building Competition. Mrs. Brian thought ours was the best in the class so now we're here.

SAM: Still, a wall would've been better.

AL: How are we going to get any sleep tonight?

SAM: We'll just get in the bed and sleep. Duh.

AL: It's more complicated than breaking and entering. When Mrs. Brian booked the room she only booked this one bed.

SAM: Three people, one bed?

AL: It was probably part of a bargain discount.

GEOFFREY: Al, we're not that childish. I'm sure we can fit onto a bed.

AL: Think about it; you guys couldn't even sit on the bus together without bringing up...her.

GEOFFREY: How dare you refer to my Julie as a "her"!

SAM: How dare you refer to her as *your* Julie!

GEOFFREY: Because she is *my* Julie. Finders keepers, losers weepers.

AL: And when one of you does bring Julie up, Sam gets angry and Geoffrey gets annoying.

GEOFFREY: Well what about you? Mister I need a steel lock everywhere I go.

AL: By breaking into my locker he could've potentially altered the results of my experiment.

SAM: What experiment?

AL: The one in my locker!

SAM: Your ant farm?

AL: Ant compound.

SAM: I can't believe you two are even talking without belts on.

GEOFFREY: (*Turning to Al:*) That's right, you little weasel. You pantsed me while I was wearing my newly fitted Italian trousers! How can I ever get over that?

(Sam and Al laugh.)

Stop that. It was a horrendous experience.

SAM: I thought it was funny.

AL: We'll never get any sleep.

SAM: So then let's pull an all-nighter.

AL: No.

GEOFFREY: We'll sleep.

AL: If we get in that bed, then we won't sleep and our hopes of getting that extra credit are gone. It's my hypothesis and I fear it will come true.

SAM: (*Confused:*) But if we're in the bed we can sleep in it.

AL: (*To Geoffrey:*) Does he just not listen to anyone?

GEOFFREY: It's probably why she broke up with him.

SAM: Well, as long as I don't sleep next to Geoff I'll be ok. He'll probably call Julie in the middle of the night.

GEOFFREY: I'd only call her if I had to. My cell phone is my only way of communicating with my darling while I'm stuck in this bumble-town with you.

SAM: Just leave your phone on the table so I don't feel it vibrating in the middle of the night.

(Geoffrey takes his cell phone out of his pocket and puts it on the night table.)

AL: *(To Sam:)* Well fine, but I don't want you sleeping next to me.

GEOFFREY: *(To Al:)* But I'm not sleeping next to you. Who knows what you'll do.

AL: My hypothesis is confirmed.

GEOFFREY: *(Looking at the bed:)* It's so much smaller than my bed at home.

(Al goes to his bag and takes a calculator out. He looks at the bed and begins calculating.)

SAM: Yes, we get it, your parents are rich. Stop shoving it down our throats.

GEOFFREY: You didn't say anything when you played "Commando Bots 2K3" on their big screen TV.

SAM: That's when I was young and stupid.

GEOFFREY: Julie thinks you still are.

SAM: *(Grabs Geoffrey by his collar:)* Say one more thing about Julie and I'll punch you square in the teeth.

AL: *(Still on the calculator:)* Will you guys knock it off? I'm trying to figure out the best possible sleeping arrangement for

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this tiny bed.

SAM: (*Dropping Geoffrey:*) Who cares about the bed size? Let's just get some sleep!

(Al puts the calculator back in his bag.)

GEOFFREY: Fine, I'll just make a decision and sleep right here.

(Geoffrey crawls to one side of the bed.)

AL: And I'll sleep here.

(Al crawls next to Geoffrey.)

GEOFFREY: Oh, no you don't. You get to the other side of this bed.

AL: Why can't I sleep here?

GEOFFREY: You know why, you little immature toad.

AL: It wasn't immature, you deserved it.

GEOFFREY: Yes I deserved getting pantsed in front of the whole school. What could I possibly have done to you to be deserving of that?

AL: Fine.

(Al crawls to the other side.)

SAM: (*To Al:*) And I'll sleep next to you.

(Sam crawls in the middle of Al and Geoffrey.)

AL: No! How do I know you won't break into my head and steal my dreams?

SAM: Because that's stupid!

AL: It would be stupid if I didn't have a legitimate reason for thinking you would.

GEOFFREY: Are you two going to bicker all night? I need my sleep if I'm going to wake up tomorrow fully rejuvenated.

SAM: Great, I'm stuck between a prissy snob and a paranoid nerd.

GEOFFREY: (*To Sam:*) Just promise not to steal his dreams.

SAM: But how could I—

GEOFFREY: (*Aggravated:*) We're all doing things we don't want to do tonight. The least you could do is promise Al you won't break into his head and steal his dreams!

SAM: (*Giving up – to Al:*) I promise not to steal your dreams.

AL: Thank you.

GEOFFREY: (*Feigning happiness:*) Told you it wouldn't be so bad.

SAM: Yeah it's ok.

AL: Perhaps I will get sleep tonight.

(Al gets up and turns off the lights. The stage is dark. Quickly heard is an uncomfortable sound from Al.)

SAM: What was that?

AL: Sorry. That bacon dog I had at the rest stop is digesting.

GEOFFREY: Ugh, how you can eat those vomit-dogs I'll never understand. Good night.

(Silence. Until it is broken by the sound of heavy, rhythmic breathing. Al gets up and turns the lights on.)

AL: Who is that?

GEOFFREY: What?

AL: Who was breathing like that?

GEOFFREY: Oh. Sorry—that was me. It's an exercise I learned at camp to help relax and purify the body before drifting off to sleep. "Relaxed and Pure is the Cultured Cure."

AL: Oh good, they taught poetry at that camp too.

SAM: *(To Geoffrey:)* What does she see in you?

GEOFFREY: Well if she keeps up her exercises, Julie's doing the same thing.

AL: Well are you going to be doing that all night? I keep thinking you're choking or something.

GEOFFREY: I only do it until I fall asleep.

SAM: Great. So we get to listen to that.

GEOFFREY: What happened to when you used to fall asleep right away at sleep overs?

SAM: I was tired from running around. I could've slept through anything.

GEOFFREY: Well then do some push-ups or just ignore it.

SAM: Good idea.

(Sam gets out of bed and begins doing push-ups. Geoffrey continues with his breathing exercises.)

AL: Where is my book when I need it?

(Sam finishes, turns off the lights, and crawls back into bed over an annoyed Al. The sound of deep breathing continues. And now the sound of loud, obnoxious, snoring is heard. Al gets out of the bed and turns the lights on. Geoffrey sits up.)

That's not even normal.

SAM: *(Waking up:)* What?

AL: That snoring.

SAM: What snoring?

GEOFFREY: You didn't hear that dreadful noise?

SAM: No.

AL: That's because it was you. You can't hear yourself when you sleep.

SAM: Oh. Sorry. I guess.

AL: How can you even fall asleep that fast?

SAM: I was tired from the push-ups, and I realized that the sooner I go to bed the sooner I can wake up and shave.

AL: Shave what? Your leg hair?

SAM: Why would I shave my leg hair?

(Pause.)

AL: *(To Geoffrey:)* Do you want to sleep in the middle? I fear his stupidity is contagious.

GEOFFREY: So I can sleep next to little immature you? No thank you. I'd rather you got a little dumber. It would justify your behavior.

AL: It was funny.

GEOFFREY: It wasn't. It's been a long day so can we please just sleep?

AL: Don't be mad at me. Sam's the one snoring.

GEOFFREY: *(To Sam:)* Sleep on your side.

SAM: Facing which way?

GEOFFREY: *(Really frustrated:)* The right! Who cares?

(Everyone does so. Al turns out the light and climbs into bed. This way everyone is on their side facing Al's back. The room is filled with the sound of deep breathing and snoring now. Until the sound of Al giving a sigh of relief is heard. After a moment Geoffrey gasps and Sam begins to sniff.)

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SAM: Oh man!

GEOFFREY: I can't breathe!

SAM: It smells awful!

GEOFFREY: Al, what's the matter with you?

AL: It was a big bacon dog. And a very long bus ride.

(Sam and Geoffrey scramble out of bed. Sam turns the lights on. Everyone except Al is holding their nose, or has their shirt covering their nose.)

It's a bodily function!

GEOFFREY: So is breathing.

SAM: So is snoring.

AL: Well, I'm sorry. I had no control over it.

GEOFFREY: There is no way I'm getting back into that bed.

AL: What about your precious beauty sleep?

GEOFFREY: I'd rather have no sleep, than be enveloped in that scent!

AL: *(Spreading out on the bed:)* So I guess then... I get the bed to myself?

SAM: What?

GEOFFREY: That's not fair!

AL: Well then climb back in.

(Geoffrey and Sam both make a move to get back into the bed but hesitate and stop.)

GEOFFREY: I'd rather sleep on the ground. It only smells like urine down there.

AL: Be my guest.

GEOFFREY: *(Looks at the ground:)* I was joking!

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SAM: It's not fair. Why does he get the bed?

GEOFFREY: Because like an animal, he has tainted it with his smell.

AL: Hey lover boy, go sleep in urine.

GEOFFREY: You think you're so funny, don't you?

AL: (*Contently:*) As a matter of fact I do.

SAM: He does. I've seen proof. I could show you.

(Sam begins to look around.)

AL: What proof?

SAM: When I was looking in your locker I found your journal.

AL: (*Standing on the bed:*) My journal!

SAM: He writes everything funny he did that day, and follows it with a "Pause for Laughs."

(Geoffrey laughs.)

AL: That is private property, you villain.

SAM: Where is it?

AL: It's in my bag, but if you go in there I will make you pay.

SAM: (*Stops looking:*) What are you going to do; fart on me?

AL: Just try me.

GEOFFREY: Can we focus please? We can't sleep in this bed now that it's a biohazard.

AL: Why don't you guys just sleep on the ground?

GEOFFREY: I told you it smells like urine. Plus if I'm going to get a decent night's sleep I need to be comfortable. We have to find a bed we can share and that doesn't smell like a decaying skunk.

SAM: What are we going to do? We can't break the bed up.

GEOFFREY: I wonder. (*As if struck by inspiration goes and checks where the mattress and the box spring meet:*) Maybe we can.

AL: What?

GEOFFREY: You know at camp I had this very same problem.

SAM: You and that stupid camp. The whole bus ride you wouldn't stop talking about that stupid camp.

GEOFFREY: You're just jealous because it was at "The Camp for the Finer Things" where I met Julie, and she left you for me, the finer thing.

AL: (*Getting back to the point:*) So what'd you guys do with the bed?

GEOFFREY: Well we found that the box spring isn't entirely uncomfortable. So we removed the mattress from the box spring and someone slept on there while someone else slept on the mattress.

SAM: That makes sense.

AL: Only problem is who sleeps where?

GEOFFREY: Well I should sleep on the mattress, since it was my idea. And that leaves you two with the box spring.

SAM: What?

AL: Oh come on.

GEOFFREY: Hey I know it's not everyone's favorite plan. But it's the way it has to be if we want sleep. (*Walking to the tower:*) Presenting this tower is our ticket. My ticket back to Julie, (*To Al:*) your ticket back to your ants, (*To Sam:*) and your ticket back to the team. Who cares where we sleep tonight so long as we do. Ok?

AL: Alright.

SAM: Whatever.

GEOFFREY: Let's move this mattress.

(The three move the mattress off the box spring and distribute the covers and pillows evenly. They quietly squabble and bicker about this. After they're done they go to their respective sleeping places and Sam turns out the lights.)

AL: It's really firm.

SAM: Suck it up.

AL: *(Sitting up:)* Can you even try to not be such a jerk?

SAM: I can try.

AL: Congratulations, Sam – you've now proven yourself to be an idiot, a thief, and a jerk. Well done, you are the world's only pile of dung that can walk and talk.

SAM: *(Sitting up:)* I don't know what "dung" means, but I'm not going to stay up and listen to you call me names all night. You know, I once thought you were cool being so smart, but now I see that you're just another dweeb.

(There is a pause, while Sam lies back down.)

AL: *(Hurt:)* Why did you break into my locker?

SAM: *(Turning away from Al:)* I needed a book.

AL: But you could've broken into anyone's locker for a book. Why mine?

SAM: Because.

AL: Why?

SAM: I wanted a book. I knew you'd have one. You're smart. You have books.

AL: Fine, but then why did you go snooping around?

SAM: I was curious.

AL: About what?

SAM: Don't worry about it.

AL: Just tell me!

SAM: (*Sarcastically:*) I wanted to know more about your ant house.

AL: Compound! Ant compound! You know that's what it's called!

(Al begins to beat up Sam, and the random "Ows" and "Stops" are heard until Sam throws Al off the box spring onto the ground.)

GEOFFREY: Yes that's right. Rough house and forget about the tower. Who cares if it ever held together at all? By the end of tonight it will be broken into smithereens and we will have been forced to stay here together for nothing.

AL: (*On the ground. Picking up something:*) What's this?

SAM: What?

AL: It's a wallet.

(Sam gets up and turns on the light.)

GEOFFREY: Great. Now how am I going to sleep?

SAM: (*Seeing the wallet:*) Hey, that's mine! It must've fallen out of my pocket earlier. Give it to me!

AL: (*Studying the wallet:*) You still have this?

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