

SNAKES IN A LUNCHBOX

A ten-minute dramedy by
Arthur M. Jolly

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

CARLY, a mousy girl, ready to finally strike back.

GEORGIA, her quirky best friend.

PEYTON, a bully dealing with personal issues. Physically imposing over the other two. Female, but could also be male.

PLACE

The playing field behind a Florida middle school.

TIME

The present.

(GEORGIA carefully puts an old fashioned lunchbox on the ground. CARLY enters.)

CARLY: Did you get it?

GEORGIA: It's in there.

CARLY: Sweet! Can I see?

GEORGIA: No.

CARLY: Why not?

GEORGIA: It bites, and if it bit you, you would die, and then I'd have to tell your mom you're all dead, and your mom scares the cheese whiz out of me.

CARLY: How did you catch it?

GEORGIA: It was basking on a rock. I put the box down, and chased it in with a broom.

CARLY: That was incredibly brave.

GEORGIA: I am an incredibly brave girl.

CARLY: I owe you.

GEORGIA: You do. You owe me huge. Like, if I'm dying and I need a kidney, you gotta give me one of yours.

CARLY: I will give you both of them. And my liver.

GEORGIA: Why would I need a liver?

CARLY: Why would you need a kidney?

GEORGIA: Maybe I got bitten by a coral snake and my kidney exploded.

CARLY: That's what it does?

GEORGIA: I don't know. Google said they were the most poisonous snake in all of North America.

CARLY: Do you think it will hurt?

GEORGIA: Donating a kidney?

CARLY: Peyton Jean Charles. Getting bit. Will it hurt her?

GEORGIA: You mean, if the plan works.

CARLY: The plan will work.

GEORGIA: Google didn't say. *(Beat.)* But I don't think that dying from a bite of the most poisonous snake in North America could possibly—even a little bit—*not* hurt more than anything. In fact if you ask me, I think it'd be like getting hit by a car on the inside.

(Beat.)

CARLY: Good.

(PEYTON enters.)

GEORGIA: Peyton!

(Carly spins.)

CARLY: Peyton.

PEYTON: Hey.

(A beat.)

CARLY: I...I brought it, so you don't have to hit me or anything. Just take it.

PEYTON: I'm not... *(Beat.)* I need to talk to you.

CARLY: You can just take it and go. It's in the box. Which you can keep.

PEYTON: I don't want your lunch.

CARLY: Yesterday, you said—

PEYTON: Yesterday...I'm sorry, okay?

CARLY: What?

PEYTON: I apologize. I'm sorry I hit you. I'm sorry I pulled your hair. And I'm sorry I called you a...I'm sorry for what I said.

(A pause.)

GEORGIA: Oh my gosh, her mom called you!

PEYTON: Her mom never –

GEORGIA: Hey, it's cool, I'm with you. Scary woman.

CARLY: *(To Georgia:)* Really?

GEORGIA: *(To Carly:)* I know you probably like her, but – oh yeah. I think it's her eyebrows.

PEYTON: Her mom didn't call me.

GEORGIA: *(Still to Carly:)* Most people have two of them. The Frida Kahlo thing – yeesh.

PEYTON: Who's Frida Kahlo?

CARLY: So why would you –

PEYTON: *(To Carly:)* Is she always like this?

CARLY: You get used to it.

PEYTON: Okay. Anyway, I'm sorry. So. That's it.

(Peyton turns to leave.)

CARLY: That's it?

PEYTON: It's over.

CARLY: You have been tormenting me –

PEYTON: Tormenting?

CARLY: –Since the fourth grade. You are the most...you are my nemesis.

PEYTON: I don't know what that is.

CARLY: You're a bully, Peyton. You have... *(Beat.)* Didn't you know? *(Beat.)* There are kids in this school who go to bed crying because they have to deal with you, because you're...because they know that the next morning, their mom's gonna drop them off in front of the school, and the moment they are out of sight of the car, there's nothing safe for them, there's nowhere they can go in the whole school that you and your evil, stupid, hateful gang of friends might not just be...just turn up, and hurt them or make them feel small and...and trapped. Nowhere safe. Do you have any idea what that's like? *(Beat.)* You're sorry? Now, you're sorry?

PEYTON: I'm...things are different. They just...I can't help it if my friends...I'm not gonna be like that. Not anymore. So, keep your lunch. And I'm sorry.

(Peyton starts to leave.)

GEORGIA: What happened?

PEYTON: I don't have to tell you –

GEORGIA: Well, no. But you might want to.

PEYTON: What?

GEORGIA: It sounds like you're about to lose the undying admiration of the gang of hate...which means, unless my math is off, you're gonna be out of friends in this place – not that I'm offering...but who else are you gonna tell? *(Beat.)* What happened?

(A pause.)

PEYTON: Last night, my dad left the halfway house, came over and punched my mom in the face a bunch until she picked up a knife out of the sink and stuck it in his arm. Which is...he's okay. I mean, he's not dead or anything, but the way she looked when...he's gonna be in the hospital for a

bit 'cause she hit an artery, and then he's going back inside. It's a violation of his condition of release or something, so there isn't even going to be a trial or nothing. The thing is...when she did it, I wasn't...I saw them fight, you know, before he—I mean, the first time. They fought a bunch, but she never...it was always them fighting. The two of them, it's how they were. Last night, I looked at her face—and I thought she was going to kill him. Stab him in the neck, or the heart. And I didn't feel bad about it. Not one bit. I just thought: took you long enough, Momma. *(Beat.)* Don't tell anyone. *(Beat.)* Never mind, say whatever. I figure everyone will know in a day or two anyway. They always do.

GEORGIA: Maybe. But they won't hear it from us.

PEYTON: Thanks. *(Beat.)* Cool lunchbox. Very retro.

(Peyton exits.)

GEORGIA: That was not what I was expecting.

CARLY: I don't...it's not fair.

GEORGIA: What part?

CARLY: Any part. Three years, and I—what? Have to just forgive her because her dad's a psycho criminal who stabbed her mom?

GEORGIA: Other way round.

CARLY: No! I have a snake in a lunchbox! I have the most poisonous snake in all of North America waiting—in a lunchbox! The ultimate revenge, the best turn-around revenge ever in the history of ever...

GEORGIA: Her mom stabbed her dad with a knife, you gotta—

CARLY: Why? Why do I have to, what—forgive her for everything?

(A beat.)

GEORGIA: Do you think they're gonna keep the knife? I mean, could you ever use it again?

CARLY: She just...ruined it. She ruined my whole plan.

GEORGIA: It'd be so weird—you'd be like, cutting a steak, and thinking—that's the one that was in Dad's arm. That's just gross. Then again, my mom used a knife to dig a bunch of hair and stuff out of the drain the other week, and we still use that one...

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