

BULLY ISSUES

A short comedy by
Arthur M. Jolly

This script is for evaluation only. It may not be printed, photocopied or distributed digitally under any circumstances. Possession of this file does not grant the right to perform this play or any portion of it, or to use it for classroom study.

www.youthplays.com
info@youthplays.com
424-703-5315

Bully Issues © 2016 Arthur M. Jolly
All rights reserved. ISBN 978-1-62088-648-9.

Caution: This play is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, Canada, the British Commonwealth and all other countries of the copyright union and is subject to royalty for all performances including but not limited to professional, amateur, charity and classroom whether admission is charged or presented free of charge.

Reservation of Rights: This play is the property of the author and all rights for its use are strictly reserved and must be licensed by the author's representative, YouthPLAYS. This prohibition of unauthorized professional and amateur stage presentations extends also to motion pictures, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video and the rights of adaptation or translation into non-English languages.

Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments: Amateur and stock performance rights are administered exclusively by YouthPLAYS. No amateur, stock or educational theatre groups or individuals may perform this play without securing authorization and royalty arrangements in advance from YouthPLAYS. Required royalty fees for performing this play are available online at www.YouthPLAYS.com. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Required royalties must be paid each time this play is performed and may not be transferred to any other performance entity. All licensing requests and inquiries should be addressed to YouthPLAYS.

Author Credit: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisements and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line with no other accompanying written matter. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s) and the name of the author(s) may not be abbreviated or otherwise altered from the form in which it appears in this Play.

Publisher Attribution: All programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice:

Produced by special arrangement with YouthPLAYS (www.youthplays.com).

Prohibition of Unauthorized Copying: Any unauthorized copying of this book or excerpts from this book, whether by photocopying, scanning, video recording or any other means, is strictly prohibited by law. This book may only be copied by licensed productions with the purchase of a photocopy license, or with explicit permission from YouthPLAYS.

Trade Marks, Public Figures & Musical Works: This play may contain references to brand names or public figures. All references are intended only as parody or other legal means of expression. This play may also contain suggestions for the performance of a musical work (either in part or in whole). YouthPLAYS has not obtained performing rights of these works unless explicitly noted. The direction of such works is only a playwright's suggestion, and the play producer should obtain such permissions on their own. The website for the U.S. copyright office is <http://www.copyright.gov>.

COPYRIGHT RULES TO REMEMBER

1. To produce this play, you must receive prior written permission from YouthPLAYS and pay the required royalty.
2. You must pay a royalty each time the play is performed in the presence of audience members outside of the cast and crew. Royalties are due whether or not admission is charged, whether or not the play is presented for profit, for charity or for educational purposes, or whether or not anyone associated with the production is being paid.
3. No changes, including cuts or additions, are permitted to the script without written prior permission from YouthPLAYS.
4. Do not copy this book or any part of it without written permission from YouthPLAYS.
5. Credit to the author and YouthPLAYS is required on all programs and other promotional items associated with this play's performance.

When you pay royalties, you are recognizing the hard work that went into creating the play and making a statement that a play is something of value. We think this is important, and we hope that everyone will do the right thing, thus allowing playwrights to generate income and continue to create wonderful new works for the stage.

Plays are owned by the playwrights who wrote them. Violating a playwright's copyright is a very serious matter and violates both United States and international copyright law. Infringement is punishable by actual damages and attorneys' fees, statutory damages of up to \$150,000 per incident, and even possible criminal sanctions. **Infringement is theft. Don't do it.**

Have a question about copyright? Please contact us by email at info@youthplays.com or by phone at 424-703-5315. When in doubt, please ask.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

JAYSON, male.

NICK, male.

HAYLEY, female.

SETTING

Wherever. Just hanging out. The present.

(Lights up. Three bullies, JAYSON, HAYLEY and NICK, hang out.)

JAYSON: Sometimes I just ask myself—what am I doing? I started out poking—I'd just poke the guy, little hard finger jabs in his back, then stare him down when he looked back at me—like: What? What are you gonna do? The moment he turned back again—jab. He never did anything about it. All the time, my heart's racing. It's a rush, right?

(The other two murmur agreement, recognition.)

Is this the day he's gonna stand up, take a swing at me? Is the teacher finally gonna take her head out of her iPhone and see what's going on? But, eventually—this is after weeks—I come in, he's there, talking to her...and she says something to him, and he goes and sits down at a desk by the window. *(Beat.)* So I wait. That's it, he's moved...but she doesn't say anything to me. So...now I'm stuck—it's all long distance.

HAYLEY: Really?

JAYSON: But I'm staring—every chance I get, I'm staring at him like: "You're gonna get yours." Hallway after class, probably. I was thinking, maybe just push him into a locker or something?

NICK: Lame.

HAYLEY: So lame.

JAYSON: I don't want to hit the guy. You can get suspended for that. Expelled.

NICK: You are so elementary. At some point, maybe consider graduating to the next level.

JAYSON: This is what I'm feeling—have I peaked? Can I take this further—or is this like, as much as I'm gonna get out of this.

HAYLEY: Social is where it's at.

© Arthur M. Jolly

This is a perusal copy only.

Absolutely no printing, copying/distribution or performance permitted.

NICK: Social bullying might be a little advanced for you. I'm into the psychological bullying myself. I started out, like you, with physical, but it's— it's too easy to get caught. You can get away with it as a little kid, but now...no, man. Step up your game. I've started working with shame a lot.

JAYSON: Shame?

NICK: Yeah.

JAYSON: What is that, like, name-calling?

HAYLEY: Oh, please.

NICK: Name-calling? I am light years beyond name-calling. I mean— okay, I'm not gonna knock it, it's got a place— you go by someone in the hall, you can always throw a word at them as you pass—

HAYLEY: A well placed "skank" can reinforce a week of concentrated effort to make a girl feel like everyone judges her—

NICK: But I am *mining*, man. I'm fracking, I'm digging up the bedrock of the psyche.

HAYLEY: Who talks like that?

NICK: Okay— you're just reinforcing a stereotype. The big, dumb bully. You shouldn't have to hide being smart.

JAYSON: Unless you wear glasses like a freak.

NICK: Well, yeah. But psychological bullying— it's like deep sea diving, you grope around in the abyss— and every now and then you grab hold of someone's subconscious anglerfish, and you just drag that little sucker up into the sunlight and watch it explode. Perfect moment.

JAYSON: It was easier when I could just hit someone and run away.

HAYLEY: No one ever said this would be easy. I read that article on later life –

NICK: The victim experiences study – I saw that.

HAYLEY: Yeah, thirty years old, less chance of a healthy relationship, higher stress, drug use –

NICK: Fifty years old – victims of bullying at fifty, higher rates of divorce, medical issues. What we do now lasts a lifetime – you think that's gonna just happen? You have to be prepared to work at it.

HAYLEY: Do your research, put in some effort.

JAYSON: I just wanna poke that annoying little rat-face and get that same rush. Is that so much to ask?

HAYLEY: The rush fades.

NICK: The question you need to ask yourself is: What do I get out of it? What need am I trying to fill?

JAYSON: Well, it's a power thing –

HAYLEY: Duh.

JAYSON: Okay, so – maybe I'm, I'm what – I'm feeling no control in my own life. This is an outlet for my... *(Beat.)* I'm not sure.

HAYLEY: This is basic stuff. It's cliché by now – trouble at home, parents divorcing, financial issues they discuss in front of you – you feel powerless, you take it out on someone else.

JAYSON: I guess so. *(Beat.)* But if that's all it is, surely I woulda outgrown that by now.

NICK: You're trapped in that dynamic. You've self-defined your persona as a bully, so if you lose that...what are you?

HAYLEY: I think the key is in the heart race.

JAYSON: Huh?

HAYLEY: You said it—heart pounding, not knowing whether he was gonna retaliate. That's adrenaline. That's like a barley grind down the railing out front—yeah, there's a sense of satisfaction that comes from nailing it, but there's also just this rush—a huge rush that you could slam and eat pavement. It's the danger. That's addictive.

NICK: That's what no one ever talks about—bullying feels good. It feels great.

JAYSON: But I hate myself for it.

NICK: That too.

HAYLEY: You make someone cry, it's power misused, so you feel like crap. Part of you does. But it's still power.

JAYSON: I feel so bad afterwards.

NICK: No one appreciates how hard it is to bully someone, day in and day out.

HAYLEY: It was so much easier for our parents—they could just harass some kid at school, make him run home crying and take the rest of the day off. I'm up half the night trying to keep up. I got three girls I have to keep track of. If one of them posts something and gets away with it—no. You gotta be right there to knock'em back down, any time, twenty-four seven. It's exhausting.

NICK: Okay, you know you can just write a script for that, right? Make a bot that autoposts whenever—

HAYLEY: I'm not an idiot. They block'em too quick. I gotta make fake accounts, keep moving—it's a lot of work.

NICK: No one appreciates what goes into it.

HAYLEY: Yeah.

JAYSON: Yeah.

NICK: Like *you* would know, poke-boy. Physical bullying, that's so...Neanderthal.

JAYSON: Really?

NICK: Look, you're stupid. And that's— that's not your fault, man. I look at your work—you tripped up that kid from wherever-the-hellistan, the one that doesn't even speak English yet. I was watching that, and it was casual, and sloppy. And yeah, you got a laugh from some of the guys that hang out with you—

HAYLEY: They're losers, by the way—you should ditch them.

NICK: True—but the thing is: he was going *to* the cafeteria line. You could've waited until he was done, coming back with a full tray— then all his food goes everywhere—

JAYSON: If he comes back the same way—

HAYLEY: Then position yourself. Think. I mean, that was probably all he was going to get to eat that day—

NICK: Better believe it. And you missed that opportunity. You didn't wait, because you have impulse control issues, and you're dumb. (*Considers his word choice.*) Dumb? Idiot? (*Beat.*) Your mom was a teen in what—the nineties? You're a little...a total...a *total waste*. Right? That's the one.

JAYSON: What?

NICK: That's what your Mom calls you: "A total waste...just like your father."

(*A beat. Jayson suddenly realizes this is a set-up.*)

JAYSON: Wow! That's...yeah, that's it. That's just—

NICK: Gets you, right?

JAYSON: (*Excited:*) Yeah! I could feel that.

NICK: Psychological. It's finding the right word. The perfect word, that just unlocks their emotional sandbox and lets you start throwing cat crap in it.

JAYSON: You're big on metaphors.

NICK: So's your momma.

HAYLEY: (*My turn:*) Okay, ladies, hold on.

(*She preps – cracks her knuckles, stretches her neck, etc.*)

Those losers you hang out with? You gotta ditch them. Seriously. 'Cause listen—you know that we're—we're your friends. But I don't know if we can hang out in public.

JAYSON: Wait—are you being serious right now, or—

HAYLEY: Jayson—listen. We like you, but we don't want to be seen with you. And it's not you—we like you. You don't have to change you...but when you eat lunch at the loser table—it makes you look like a loser. And the way they talk about you behind your back, like the minute you're not around...it's just...I feel bad for you. And I'm only saying this as a friend.

A pause.

JAYSON: Do they...do they really talk about me—

NICK: (*To Hayley:*) You are *amazing*.

HAYLEY: I have my moments.

JAYSON: So they don't—

HAYLEY: I don't even know your stupid friends! I don't have lunch the same period as you, I don't know the first thing about what table you sit at. But I could isolate you from everyone you know quicker than snot. Social standing is everything. And it's all so fragile, so easy to start screwing with people's lives.

NICK: Instead of poking them in the back, you start poking their existence.

JAYSON: I guess so.

NICK: (*To Hayley:*) Look at him—he's still unsettled by that. Beautifully done.

HAYLEY: I've had a lot of practice.

JAYSON: So how do I start?

HAYLEY: Okay—what's your endgame?

JAYSON: I don't know.

NICK: The key to any project is to start out by looking at the end result. What does success look like?

JAYSON: I want to be... I like hitting people. But I'm not allowed.

NICK: You *like*...no, no. (*To Hayley:*) Help me out here.

HAYLEY: Okay—Choice A: this guy you've been poking, pushing around—he quits school, drops out, becomes a homeless nutcase. Total destruction of one particular victim.

JAYSON: Okay.

HAYLEY: Choice B: he—and all his friends—run from you. They avoid you—the school, everyone in school is scared of you. Give you money, get out of your way—bow down before you. You are the Alpha of the whole school. Two choices—what do you want? Destroy this kid, or rule the school?

JAYSON: I don't know.

HAYLEY: Those are not the same thing, this is not a hard decision.

NICK: The kid in the cafeteria, that's not the guy in class you—

JAYSON: Different guy.

NICK: So this isn't destroy the outsider, it's dominate the jungle.

HAYLEY: Exactly.

JAYSON: I don't know that it's either one.

NICK: This is what I mean about your need to bully. If you don't understand why, you're never gonna get it right.

JAYSON: If I knew why, maybe I wouldn't do it!

(A beat.)

NICK: Is that what you're scared of?

Want to read the entire script? Order a perusal copy today!