

Class Clown

Written By

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FADE IN

INT. HALLWAY

The scene opens on a calm, quiet, and empty hallway. Suddenly there is a sound of someone running and quickly approaching. MR. CASHMAN comes racing around the corner and stops at the bathroom door.

He frantically tries to open it then notices that there is an "Out of Order" sign.

He yells in agony as he runs down the hallway to the next bathroom. He finds the same result and runs to the next one. When he sees the same sign once again, he furiously tries to open it and his anger and frustration slowly turn to sobbing as he breaks down in front of the bathroom.

The school bell rings and he wipes his tears and tries to compose himself.

Two boys walk up to him. One boy is dressed in jeans and a t-shirt. This is JAKE. The other has on a baggy sweatshirt and holds a bag of chips. This is ACE.

ACE

What up C-Money? How's it going?

JAKE

Hey, Mr. Cashman.

MR. CASHMAN

Oh um hello boys...you wouldn't happen to know of any bathrooms that are open, would you?

ACE

Oh man, I heard about that bathroom problem...honestly, some boys are starting to use the girls' room when no one's looking.

MR. CASHMAN

Aw screw it, I've got a class to teach. See you later boys, have a nice day!

Mr. Cashman walks away and Ace takes the sign off the door, crumples up the paper and throws it over his shoulder, then he walks into the bathroom and Earl follows.

INT. BATHROOM

JAKE

Dude, that was you?!

ACE

Of course, it was me, man, who the hell else would do it?

JAKE

I should have guessed. Aren't you the least bit worried that you could get caught?

ACE

Caught? Who cares about being caught? I'm in it for the thrill and for the satisfaction of knowing that Cashman's about to use the girls' room.

JAKE

You don't seriously believe that he would be that desperate, do you?

INT. HALLWAY

Cashman stands in front of the ladies' room bouncing around nervously and glancing left and right down the hallway. He slowly steps towards the door and grabs the handle. He takes one last glance down the hall, then he carefully begins to pull down the handle.

MS. CONLEY

Hey, Mr. Cashman!

Cashman turns around in a panic while still holding the handle behind his back. Ms. Conley walks by and continues down the hall as Cashman responds.

MR. CASHMAN

(trying to act casual)

Oh hey, up good to see you! Just hanging out in the hallway here, don't mind me! Just leaning up against this door! Alright I'll uh see you later.

She turns around and ways goodbye as she walks away.

Cashman sighs with relief that she is gone, takes a fast glance down the hall, then quickly slips into the bathroom and closes the door behind him.

EXT. BATHROOM, IN THE HALL IN FRONT OF THE OTHER BATHROOM

The bathroom door opens and Ace and Jake walk out. They talk as they walk down the hallway.

JAKE

So you want to go to the game next week?

ACE

(not paying attention)

Yeah, man, totally! See you there.

They go in separate directions. As Ace walks down the hallway, people shout out his name and he nods his head and high-fives kids. He stops to do a special handshake with someone and then continues walking as more people obsess over him.

In the midst of his popularity, a hand taps him on the shoulder. Ace turns around and sees a well groomed kid with a sweater vest and a stack of books. This is EARL.

EARL

Hello, Ace, how are you doing?

ACE

Oh hey Earl, I—

EARL

I finished my half of the project last night and I thought I would check in with you to see how far along you are...so how far along are you?

ACE

Well um you see, Earl...the other night I was sitting there, studying hard and planning out everything, when I remembered that I had to TP Imbusch's house that night, so obviously that took priority and I uh...never really got around to starting my half of the project...

EARL

Are you serious? Ace, you have got to be kidding me. I'm not carrying your weight this time. If you don't do your share, then your grade will show it.

ACE

Alright, alright. I understand, man. I'll do the project I swear.

EARL

Good. Now here is the outline incase you lose it, which I expect you did. It's due tomorrow, I'll see you then.

ACE

Okay, see you there man.

Earl walks away and Ace breaks from his serious facade as he crumples up the paper and throws over his shoulder, hitting a near-by freshman. He keeps walking down the hallway and sees a girl talking to someone and leaning against a locker and holding some books. He runs up to her, calling her name.

ACE

Caitlyn! Caitlyn, hey!

CAITLYN

Hey Ace!

ACE

(gesturing to the books)
Have you been getting some serious studying done?

CAITLYN

Yeah, I think I'm ready for a break.

ACE

Good, 'cause I want you to be free all weekend, I have big plans!

CAITLYN

(smiling a little)
Well I made plans with Sarah, but I'll try and find some time. What do you have in mind?

ACE

On Saturday night, we are going to saran wrap all the doors of the school!

CAITLYN

(disappointed)
Oh...well okay then. I was hoping
(MORE)

CAITLYN (CONT'D)

you would say that we would be getting Chinese since it's my favorite...and after all it'll be my birthday.

ACE

Oh crap. I totally knew that, it just slipped my mind.

CAITLYN

It's fine, happens to the best of us.

ACE

Alright, we'll get Chinese and eat it at my place, and then we can saran wrap the doors, sound like a plan?

CAITLYN

Not really...Ace, don't you think that it would be a lot of work for the janitors to clean up? I don't really want to spend my Saturday nights making sure that other people's Monday morning are even worse than they usually are.

ACE

Whatever, fun-sponge. We'll just sit on your couch and watch Netflix 'til our eyes bleed, just like we do every other Saturday night.

CAITLYN

Hey, I find our dates just as boring as you do, but I don't think that ruining other people's days is the way to improve them. It'll be my birthday and you can't even think of a single thing to do that's better than pulling a prank.

ACE

Because there is nothing better than pulling a prank!

CAITLYN

Whatever! I'm sick of having this conversation. I need to get to class.

She turns angrily to her locker and opens it. Out flies a huge pile of fake spiders and Caitlyn gets simultaneously sprayed with water. Ace laughs.

CAITLYN (CONT'D)

You know what, Ace? That's it. I can't be around this anymore. Why don't you call when you find some entertainment that doesn't involve screwing people over. Until then, I want nothing to do with you.

Caitlyn slams her locker door and walks away. Ace stands there a little astonished as his laugh fades, then shakes it off and turns a KID standing with his locker door open a few feet away.

ACE

Pssh, what's her problem? Haha women, am I right?

The kid looks up from his locker and shakes his head in disapproval.

Ace feels a little awkward/guilty about the joke and looks down uncomfortably.

The kid continues staring and Ace looks back up at him and the kid begins to shake his head "no" again.

Ace backs away, then turns and hurries off, looking back again after every few seconds.

The kid watches as Ace exits and he continues to shake his head until Ace is completely out of sight, then he returns to looking at his locker.

INT. ACE'S ROOM

Ace lays on his bed eating Cheetos and jamming out to heavy metal music. He hears a notification on his computer and he turns the music down and goes to check it out.

ACE

(mumbling to himself)
"Caitlyn is now single. Click here to update your relationship status." Ugh.

Another notification sound is heard.

ACE

Earl: "Ace, please work on the
(MORE)

ACE (CONT'D)

project. I do not want your grade to suffer. I know that you are already barely passing the class." Ugh yeah, yeah, yeah. I'll start the dumb project.

Ace googles "Historical things." and scrolls through a little bit, then clicks on a video. It's people falling and crashing into things. He laughs as the video plays and continues eating his Cheetos.

Then his eye catches a picture sitting on his desk of him and Caitlyn. His laugh dulls, he turns the picture around, then he keeps watching the video and laughing a little.

INT. MR. GIBSON'S CLASSROOM

A group of students stand at the front of the room presenting.

STUDENT

Eventually, the Americans decided that they only wanted to drink organic herbal teas, so they threw the rest overboard to show the Europeans who's boss. USA, USA, USA!

The students presenting run around chanting and fist pumping. Everyone is unphased, then the kids sit down.

MR. GIBSON

Well okay then. That was um...horribly inaccurate. Then next one to present will be...Earl! And it looks like you're flying solo today, good luck.

Earl rolls his eyes and walks to the front of the room.

Earl begins his power point and the title slide reads "World War One, by Earl and Ace."

EARL

Our project was on World War One. As with any war, this was a very tragic time, and practically the whole world suffered from it, hence the name.

Earl flips to the next slide and it is filled with pictures of cats.

EARL

Oh um oops, I'm not sure how that got in there.

Earl flips to the next slide and it is full of pictures of fruit.

The class laughs as he continues flipping and he gets more and more nervous as random pictures fill the screen. He lands on the last slide, which is full of selfies of Ace.

Earl stands there shaking his head and putting his hands on his temples. Suddenly, Ace walks in with his fists raised in the air. The whole class starts to cheer and gives him a standing ovation.

Mr. Gibson sits in his seat and golf claps.

Earl grows more and more frustrated. The class starts chanting his name, and Ace fist-pumps along as the bell rings and they file out of the room, still chanting.

Ace puts his arm down and smiles in triumph. Earl approaches Ace in anger.

EARL

I can't believe you would do this to me! How could you?

ACE

(with little remorse)

Aw I'm sorry man, I was feeling kinda bummed about my ex and needed a little pick-me-up. I didn't mean to ruin the project completely. We can have a redo, right, Mr. Gibson?

MR. GIBSON

Nope. Sorry boys, that was it. Great execution though, Ace.

ACE

(shrugging)

Well what can you do?

EARL

What can you do?! You can drop to the ground and beg for forgiveness. Ace, we would have gotten an A+ on this project. I pulled an all-nighter trying to perfect this and you've completely ruined it!

MR. GIBSON

Well on the bright side, Ace got a standing ovation! Those are hard to come by now a days.

Ace thanks Mr. Gibson and they agree through ad-lib that he gave a great performance. They high-five and Earl watches in disbelief at their apathy.

EARL

That. Is. It. Ace, from this moment on, you are hear-by dead to me. Good luck graduating with no one to help you maintain your C average. I don't want to see you ever again!

Earl storms out of the room and Ace feels a little bad, but doesn't really care. He whistles as to say "ouch" in a joking way.

ACE

That seemed pretty legit.

MR. GIBSON

Yeah, yeah that was tough. Listen, Ace, the problem here is that you need to enhance your jokes so that they play to all audiences.

ACE

How the hell am I supposed to do that?

MR. GIBSON

You need someone who has been in your position...someone who had to reinvent himself and rise up like you're going to rise up.

ACE

Balkus!

MR. GIBSON

What? No! It's me! When I first started at this school, I couldn't crack a joke if my life depended on it, but all of that changed when the 12th annual History Wing Talent Show rolled around...tell me that you've heard of the 12th Annual History Wing Comedy Show.

ACE

No?

MR. GIBSON

Well...you sure are in for a treat.

INT. ADUITORIUM-ON STAGE - FLASHBACK

Flashback to Walpole High School in the early 2000's. The history teachers sit in the audience.

MR. GIBSON (V.O.)

All the teachers brought their best material.

Angry Balkus dressed in a beret a la Sam Kinison paces around on stage with a microphone on a stand.

MR. GIBSON (V.O.)

For his act, Balkus was doing "An Angry Man's Outlook on Elections. Pure genius.

BALKUS

I can't BELIEVE that pansy George BUSH is going to win. Kerry is the CLEAR winner here! Aaaaaarggggh!!!!

Jean a la Richard Lewis wears a black sports coat and nervously paces around the stage.

MR. GIBSON (V.O.)

Of course, Mr. Jean had the paranoid, there-out-to-get-us routine down pat.

JEAN

I feel like school's have become a prison, man. Like one day I am going to walk in and Imbusch will be there handing out orange prison suits to each kid.

Mr. Erker is on stage in a loose fitting suit, a la Rodney Dangerfield.

MR. GIBSON (V.O.)

And Erker, had his nobody respects-me routine perfected by years of practice.

MR. ERKER

I tell ya, I don't get no respect
(MORE)

MR. ERKER (CONT'D)

around here. The other day I was teaching my class and student asked what was it like living through the first ice age?

Mr. Gibson stands off stage waiting his turn looking at his note cards.

MR. GIBSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

No one expected much from me, I wasn't even supposed to have an act, but I convinced them to let me do stand up comedy, even though they had their doubts.

Mr. Gibson makes his way onto the stage.

MR. GIBSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I was so nervous. The only person to ever tell me "you're funny" was my grandmother, and it came after an "at least."

Mr. Gibson takes a deep breath, then looks up.

MR. GIBSON (CONT'D)

You know, before teaching I used to work in a fire hydrant factory. I quit because you couldn't park anywhere near the place.

The teachers erupt in laughter.

MR. GIBSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I was a hit! The crowd loved me and from then on I was seen as a legend among history comedians.

BACK TO SCENE

Mr. Gibson sits at his desk smiling as he stares off into space remembering the past. We see Ace sitting at his desk eating Chipotle.

MR. GIBSON

(noticing Ace)

Did you seriously go get food in the middle of my story?

ACE

Umm...yeah?

MR. GIBSON

Ace, I'm trying to tell you that I will mentor you. I want to help you reinvent yourself to make you funny *and* nice, but all you care about is your burrito bowl!

ACE

Listen Mr. G, I don't need to "develop a sense of humor" I already have a great one! I make awesome jokes and my pranks are incomparable. I don't need to change anything.

MR. GIBSON

We'll see about that. How about you come to my room after school and I'll put you to the test?

ACE

Alright Mr. Gibson, I'll go, but it will only be to prove how funny I already am!

MR. GIBSON

See you after school, Ace.

Ace grabs his bag and walks out of the room, leaving his burrito bowl behind. Mr. Gibson looks at it, looks at the door for Ace, looks at it again, shrugs, and then starts eating it.

INT. CAFETERIA-DURING LUNCH

Caitlyn sits at the lunch table eating her sandwich and having a conversation with her friend SARAH.

CAITLYN

I'm just so sick of having to study so much. I can't even eat lunch without the constant fear of SATs running through my mind.

SARAH

You're working waaay too hard. I don't even think I'm going to study. Why bother? I'll get into college just fine, and so will you! You've got to take some time to relax. You said that you don't have plans on Saturday anymore, right?

CAITLYN

Right.

SARAH

And it's your birthday, so please tell me that you're not going to sit at home and study.

CAITLYN

No, no I won't.

SARAH

Good! You're making improvements already. How about we go to that talent show thing going on this Saturday night, and then afterwards we can go get Chinese food, I know it's your fav!

CAITLYN

Yes I would love to! Sarah, you're the best. Thanks so much, this Saturday will be great.

They continue talking, laughing, and eating lunch. Ace is across the cafeteria sitting with a nerd, MEGHAN, who is tutoring him as he watches Caitlyn.

Meghan has a book open and is trying to explain chemistry to Ace.

MEGHAN

So if you divide the speed, which should be three point zero zero E eight, by the frequency, then you'll find the w--Ace are you even paying attention?

ACE

(still looking at Caitlyn)

You know what? I think that I'm actually starting to miss Caitlyn as a person and not just as someone to chill with on Friday nights.

MEGHAN

What? Who is Caitlyn? Ace can you please just focus? You have a test next period and you're not prepared at all!

ACE

She's just such a kind-hearted person, and I've never really noticed it before. She actually cares about people. I only started dating her because I was the funniest guy in school and she was the smartest girl, so it only made sense that we date, but like I think that she's more than just an ideal girlfriend or something...man I may have screwed this up big time.

MEGHAN

You're going to screw this test up big time if you don't learn how to find the amount of photons making up the energy in an atom. Can you please pay attention to that right now?

ACE

You know what, can you please just get off my back about this? Before I was dead to Earl, he never tried to actually tutor me, he just told me all of the answers, since we planned our schedules so that he had all of his classes right before mine. Why can't everyone be as awesome as Earl?

MEGHAN

Are you telling me that you cheated on tests? That's completely against school policy.

ACE

Yeah yeah, whatever. You really are a buzz-kill, you know that?

MEGHAN

I'm just a tutor, not a therapist, you know that? Why don't you go talk to someone else about your problems, because the only ones that I can help you with are about math and science. I don't need to be giving up my time for this. See you later, Ace, have fun failing.

Meghan takes her books and storms away.

Ace sighs as he sits alone at the table. He pokes at his sandwich a little then looks over at Caitlyn as the chatter in the room becomes muffled.

Across the cafeteria, Caitlyn catches Ace's glance. She looks at him longingly for a second as Sarah's chatter is also muffled.

They maintain this connection for a moment, then it goes back to normal volume and Caitlyn shakes her head then snaps back into conversation.

Ace looks at her sadly for one last moment, then looks down at his food before getting up and walking out of the cafeteria.

Caitlyn watches him exit, then carries on conversation.

INT. MR. GIBSON'S CLASSROOM-AFTER SCHOOL

Ace casually strolls into Mr. Gibson's room, and it is pitch black. He turns on the lights and is shocked when he sees "training" equipment set up all over the room, for example: pies for throwing, rubber chickens, ventriloquist dummies, etc.

Mr. Gibson stands in the middle of the room, surrounded by these objects. He has on glasses with the eyes popping out and he stands with his arms crossed. A small, small skinny freshman wearing suspenders, a bow tie, and big glasses stands next to him. This is RALPH.

ACE

Whooooaaa Mr. Gibson, what's up with all this?

He picks up a rubber chicken with one hand and slowly examines it for a moment, then puts it down.

MR. GIBSON

Ace, sit down. It's time you get put to the ultimate test.

Ace sits down in the middle of the front row.

Mr. Gibson moves the glasses to the top of his head.

MR. GIBSON

Now Ace, as you have been learning, good comedy shouldn't rely on anyone else. You can't put others

(MORE)

MR. GIBSON (CONT'D)

down for the sake of a joke. With a little assistance from Ralph here; say hi, Ralph.

RALPH

Hi, Ralph!

Ralph literally slaps his knee, then breaks out into hysterical laughter and falls to the ground as Mr. Gibson continues.

MR. GIBSON

So as I was saying, with some assistance from Ralph, I'm going to assess your sense of humor.

ACE

Sounds good, Mr. G. Bring it on.

MONTAGE-MR. GIBSON TESTS ACE

--Ralph stands at the front of the room with a big grin, suddenly a pie comes flying at him. Ralph gets continuously hit with pies, but does not stop standing perfectly still and grinning. Ace is laughing furiously and Mr. Gibson shakes his head at him then puts a big red X next to the word "Pies" that's written at the top of a check list on the board.

--Ralph's face is shown close up with another big grin, but no glasses. A blind fold comes over his eyes as Mr. Gibson ties it around his head. Mr. Gibson then spins him around for a few seconds before letting him go. Ralph stumbles around the room and crashes into things. Ace tries to contain his laughter, but then Ralph walks into a door and falls over, and Ace can't help himself. He laughs hysterically, and Mr. Gibson again disapproves before writing an X next to "Blind Fold."

--Mr. Gibson sits on a chair in the front of the room with a dummy on his lap. Ralph sits in a smaller chair next to him, still grinning. Mr. Gibson uses a dummy voice to say "So I think we all know who the real dummy is here, huh" then he gestures the dummy's body towards Ralph and the dummy starts to laugh. Ralph looks confused for a moment, still smiling though, then he realizes what a hurtful joke it was and his grin breaks as he begins to sob. Ace laughs a little, then tries to cover it up with a cough. Mr. Gibson looks at him with raised eyebrows and shakes his head, then gets up and writes another X next to "Dummies."

--Mr. Gibson shakes Ralph's hand then high-fives him. Ralph

is grinning and begins to walk out of the room, full of confidence. As he passes by Mr. Gibson, Mr. Gibson sticks out his foot and Ralph trips over it and begins to sob again. Ace lets out a sudden burst of laughter and Mr. Gibson puts an X next to the final item on the list, which is "Have a Nice Trip"

INT. MR. GIBSON'S CLASSROOM

Ace, Mr. Gibson, and Ralph all stand across from the board, examining it. Ace has his hand on his chin, Mr. Gibson stands with crossed arms, and Ralph holds a bag of ice to his head.

MR. GIBSON

Well, Ace, it looks like you failed.

ACE

So what'll I do now?

MR. GIBSON

The way I see it is you have only two options: Option 1, you go to clown school in hopes of one day being able to join the circus, or, Option two, you act in the talent show and somehow redeem yourself.

RALPH

I want option one! I wanna run away to the circus!

MR. GIBSON

Quiet, Ralph! So Ace, what will it be?

ACE

You know what, Mr. Gibson? I don't have to pick either of those options! I'm going to choose option three, which is to be true to myself. I'm not going to change a thing! In fact, I'm going to be more Ace than ever! See you later, Gibson. I'm off to be the Ace-iest Ace there ever was!

Ace passionately exits as Mr. Gibson and Ralph look at the door that he leaves from.

MR. GIBSON

He'll be back. They always come back.

RALPH

Um Mr. Gibson, you don't think that I could have a concussion, do you? It was a pretty hard fall, you know.

MR. GIBSON

Quiet, Ralph.

Ralph passes out and falls over as Mr. Gibson continues to look off in the direction that Ace exited.

EXT. SCHOOL-NIGHT TIME

Ace stands out side the school with Jake and they both hold two rolls of toilet paper.

ACE

Alright, Jake, are you ready to go down in Walpole High History? This is going to be the Best. Prank. Ever.

JAKE

Okay Ace, as long as I'm home before 9:30, Thursday is family game night!

They start throwing rolls of toilet paper at trees.

EXT. SCHOOL-DAY TIME

Students walk into the front doors of the school and they all look at and talk about the trees. Jake and Ace walk in together.

JAKE

Wow, man. Look at that. It's even more beautiful in the day light.

ACE

Yeah, totally...hey, what are those janitors doing?

The janitors stand around the trees looking like they hate their jobs.

JAKE

I dunno, dude. They probably have
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

to clean all that up or something.
Hey, you wanna try and flood the
bathroom before school starts?

ACE

(Looking at the janitors)
Uh...I think I have to get to
class.

As Ace and Jake walk into school, Ace watches the janitors
and feels guilty.

INT. MR. GIBSON'S CLASSROOM-AFTER SCHOOL

Ace storms into Mr. Gibson's room.

ACE

You were right, Mr. Gibson, that
was an awful idea! I can't believe
I would do something like that!

Mr. Gibson sits with the back of his chair turned, then he
spins around to face Ace.

MR. GIBSON

Hello, Ace. I knew you would come
back. Now, it's time for you to
start training.

ACE

Alright, Gibson, I'll let you train
me on one condition...I win the
school talent show this Saturday. I
want to be the official funniest
kid in school. That'll win back
Caitlyn for sure.

MR. GIBSON

(smiling)
You got it.

Mr. Gibson puts his hand on Ace's shoulder as they walk out
of the room.

INT. AUDITORIUM-ON STAGE

Mr. Gibson stands on stage along with Ace and Ralph.

MR. GIBSON

Ace, I brought you here because if
you're going to win, then you'll
need a home field advantage. Ralph
is here again because he's scared

(MORE)

MR. GIBSON (CONT'D)

of taking the bus and his mom can't pick him up until 4:30.

RALPH

(intensely with great fear)

I've seen things on that bus. Things that no freshman should ever see.

Ralph is wide-eyed and stares off into space, then shutters. Ace and Mr. Gibson look at him, then back at each other.

MR. GIBSON

Anyway...Ace, are you ready for your training?

ACE

Ready as ever!

MR. GIBSON

Great. Ralph and I will sit in the front row and critique as you do stand-up. Got it?

ACE

Got it!

Mr. Gibson and Ralph walk off stage and Ace moves to the center of the stage with a microphone.

MR. GIBSON

Begin whenever you want.

Ace nods his head and clears his throat.

ACE

So, the other day I was in my kitchen and then I thought to myself "wait a minute, I shouldn't be in here, I'm a man!"

Suddenly a tomato comes out of no where and hits Ace in the face.

RALPH

(throwing another tomato)

Boo!

ACE

(dodging tomatoes)

What? What did I do?

MR. GIBSON
 (shaking his head)
 Jokes about women aren't funny,
 Ace.

RALPH
 (continuously throwing
 tomatoes)
 Don't you love your mother?!

MR. GIBSON
 Honestly Ace, it's no wonder why
 Caitlyn broke up with you.

RALPH
 (still throwing tomatoes)
 I sure would have!

MR. GIBSON
 That's enough tomato, Ralph.

RALPH
 Sorry.

MR. GIBSON
 Ace, the whole point of this is to
 teach you to be funny without
 hurting other people's feelings.
 Why don't you try again?

ACE
 Alright Mr. G, sorry.

Ralph and Mr. Gibson take a seat and Ace wipes tomato off of
 him then prepares to try again.

ACE
 Okay...so what's the difference
 between a nicely dressed man on a
 tricycle and a poorly dressed man
 on a bicycle? ...A tire!

Another tomato hits Ace.

ACE
 Aw come on! What did I do this
 time?

MR. GIBSON
 Puns, Ace. Puns.

ACE
 So if I can't make puns, and I
 (MORE)

ACE (CONT'D)

can't offend people, then what am I supposed to do?!

MR. GIBSON

Good Humor doesn't just have to come from within, jokes are all around you all the time. Try to just tell a story.

ACE

Ugh, okay I will try again I guess, but only if you promise that there will be no more tomatoes.

MR. GIBSON

Okay, I promise.

ACE

Ralph?

RALPH

(sighing reluctantly)

I promise.

ACE

Good. I'll do this one more time.

He repositions himself and takes a deep breath.

ACE

Once when I was taking driver's ed, the teacher asked a student, "what's the difference between a flashing red traffic light and a flashing yellow traffic light?" So the kid looks at him and says "the color."

Ace covers his head with his arms in preparation for a tomato, but instead he is hit gently with a flower and Ralph and Mr. Gibson are heard laughing at his joke. More flowers are thrown at him and he stops cringing and smiles.

ACE

I did well?!

MR. GIBSON

You did well, Ace. You keep that up and you'll be ready for the talent show in no time!

Ace smiles and then starts to take bows as Ralph throws more flowers at him and Mr. Gibson applauds.

INT. CAFETERIA-DURING LUNCH

Ace sits with Jake at lunch.

JAKE

So this weekend, how about we spray paint our names into the football field before the big game?

ACE

Yeah...that sounds like a terrible idea. Absolutely awful.

JAKE

Well sorry man, I've been the brains of this operation lately and you know that I don't have many brains!

ACE

Oh man there's Caitlyn!

Ace gets up and runs towards her.

JAKE

Wait, man, could you get me some salad dressing while your up?

Ace runs up behind Caitlyn, who is talking to a friend.

ACE

Hey! Caitlyn! Caitlyn, hey!

She glances at him and sighs.

CAITLYN

(to her friend)

I'll meet you at the table in a minute.

ACE

Caitlyn, hey! What's up?

CAITLYN

What is it, Ace?

ACE

So I just wanted to apologize for everything. I was a real jerk and I just wanted to say that I'm sorry, and I've changed, really.

CAITLYN

(sarcastically)

You know, that's really great, Ace.
I'm sure that you've completely
turned yourself around. A whole new
person, right?

ACE

Well no, I'm still me...I'm just a
better version of me now, really.

CAITLYN

Well I would like to believe you,
but I'd have to see some proof
first. I've got to go to class now,
but if you can show me that you've
actually changed, then maybe we can
talk sometime. See you later, Ace.

She starts walking away and Ace calls after her.

ACE

Wait! Caitlyn! Go see the talent
show on Saturday night!

She looks back at him as she walks and he nods then turns
around and walks away. He grins.

Ace walks out of the cafeteria looking happy. He passes by
Jake. Jake tries to get his attention, but Ace is lost in
his happiness. Jake gives up and sadly returns to eating his
sandwich alone. Ralph slides onto the lunch table next to
Jake.

RALPH

Is this seat occupied?

Jake gives Ralph a disturbed look and then gets up and backs
away. Ralph begins eating his lunch with a grin.

INT. BACKSTAGE-THE NIGHT OF THE TALENT SHOW

Ace stands backstage doing vocal stretches and stretching
out his arms. Mr. Gibson and Ralph walk over to him.

MR. GIBSON

You ready, Ace?

ACE

A little nervous, but I'll be fine.

MR. GIBSON

You'll do great out there. Just

(MORE)

MR. GIBSON (CONT'D)
remember what I've taught you,
alright?

ACE
I will do my best.

MR. GIBSON
Good luck!

Ralph gives Ace a thumbs up and Ace returns it. Ralph and Mr. Gibson walk away, and Ace continues his vocal stretches then peers out of the curtain, looking for Earl and Caitlyn. He spots each of them sitting down, then he hears someone call for him to go on stage.

INT. ADUITORIUM-ON STAGE

Ace takes center stage and taps the mic as the audience quiets.

ACE
How are you all doing tonight?

No response.

ACE
Hm okay well, I will just start then...As you all know, I'm doing stand up comedy, so as I was sitting in my room trying to think of some quality jokes, I sat there thinking to myself "what is the biggest joke of all?" and the only thing that could come to mind was my ex-girlfriend, Caitlyn.

INT. AUDIENCE

Caitlyn is shocked and angered to hear her name. She turns to Sarah.

CAITLYN
What the hell?

SARAH
Let's leave, you don't need this.

Caitlyn and Sarah start to get up and exit.

INT. ADUITORIUM-ON STAGE

ACE
I mean, this girl could not
(MORE)

ACE (CONT'D)

possibly have had her head screwed on straight...honestly, she was dating ME. I was so terrible to her that I forgot her birthday, I forgot her favorite food, and I forgot the fact that she doesn't enjoy spending her weekends making people's lives miserable.

Caitlyn stops in the middle of the aisle, turns around and stares at the stage confused.

ACE

Seriously, there must have been something really wrong with this girl to put up with a guy like me for so long. I even made her tie my shoes for me because I never learned how.

Ace takes a step then trips over his untied shoe lace, and the audience laughs. He stands up and brushes himself off.

ACE

You know, the reason why I never learned anything was because of my tutor, Earl. The kid spent the better half of his high school career doing my work on every project just so that I wouldn't fail. With the amount of work that he's done, he should have graduated two years ago...but don't trust that math, I still don't know simple addition thanks to him.

Earl sits in his seat, thankful for finally getting some recognition.

ACE

These two people have been there for me and helped me for so long, and I took them for granted. I wanted to use this opportunity to publicly apologize to them for being such a jerk. I hope you guys can forgive me.

The audience all applauds and Earl nods his head. Caitlyn looks torn, but thankful for his apology.

ACE

And the second biggest joke that I could think of was the cafeteria food, I mean what is in those meat patties, am I right? I was told not to make jokes that would offend anyone, but who could I offend here, the chickens? Probably not because who even knows where that mystery meat comes from? Michelle Obama needs to get on that.

The audience laughs and applauds. Mr. Gibson claps proudly and Ralph furiously applauds, then wipes away tears. Ace bows on stage, then walks off waving.

INT. AUDITORIUM-PIT AFTER THE SHOW

Ace stands around and people walk up to him and shake his hand. Mr. Gibson and Ralph come up to him and Ralph rushes at him and hugs him tightly. He pats Ralph on the back and shakes Mr. Gibson's hand.

MR. GIBSON

Nice job, Ace.

RALPH

Oh Ace it was wonderful! An incredible performance!

ACE

Thank you, Mr. Gibson. Thanks, Ralph...but do you think that that it will be enough for Caitlyn to like me again?

MR. GIBSON

Of course it will, Ace! Just because you didn't win, it doesn't make you a loser. You proved something here and you did well.

ACE

Thanks Mr. Gibson, now I've got to go find them and see what they say.

Ace runs off.

MR. GIBSON

Goodbye, Ace.

RALPH
Goodbye, Ace!

MR. GIBSON
Quiet, Ralph!

Ace walks around shaking more hands when he sees people he knows, then he sees Earl.

ACE
Earl! Hey Earl. I just wanted to say that I'm sorry about the project, and all the other projects that you've done for me.

EARL
It's quite alright, Ace. You are completely forgiven. I will be happy to tutor you whenever you need it. Notice how I didn't say "do your work for you," though.

ACE
I noticed. Thanks, bro.

They shake hands and Earl walks away, and Ace goes off to find Caitlyn, which he does. She is turned around talking to someone and he taps her on the shoulder.

ACE
Um hey Caitlyn...what did you think?

CAITLYN
Ace....thank you so much! It means a lot to me. I can see that you've really changed.

ACE
I have! Oh and before I forget, again, happy birthday!

He hands her two tickets.

ACE
Uhh they're for laser tagging incase maybe you would want to spruce up some boring dates or something?

CAITLYN
Are you asking me to ask you out? Because I would love to. So long as

(MORE)

CAITLYN (CONT'D)

you have not changed completely.

ACE

Don't worry, I'm the same person,
just reinvented for the better.

CAITLYN

Good, I'm glad, I mean I can't risk
losing someone who's willing to
fake his own death just so I can
sneak food into the movie theatre.

They laugh and walk off holding hands and they exit the
auditorium. They walk down to the lobby.

INT. SCIENCE LOBBY

They walk out of the auditorium and see a mob of boys
standing near the bathrooms, so they walk over to see what
is going on and they notice an "Out of Order" sign on the
bathroom door.

ACE

Oops, I must have missed one.

He rips it off the door and all the boys file into the
bathroom. Caitlyn smiles and they walk off still holding
hands, and they go down the stairs. Back at the bathrooms,
the doors are quietly closed, until the girls' bathroom
slightly opens and Mr. Cashman's head peers out. He makes
sure the coast is clear, then sneaks out and runs away.

FADE OUT