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the misfits

adapted for the stage by Brian Guehring from the novel by James Howe
a play for a minimum of 5m/2f

Draft #3.21 Tech Week draft

Bobby Goodspeed is a soft-spoken 7th grader who survives his mixed-up preadolescent life with the unwavering support of his three best friends: the outspoken Addie, the flamboyant Joe, and the tough Skeezie. Everything changes when Addie decides that the four of them should run against more popular peers in the upcoming student council election. But her lofty ideals and rabble-rousing speeches make the wrong kind of waves, offending fellow classmates, teachers and the principal. It is not until softer-spoken Bobby says what's in his heart about nicknames and taunts that people begin to listen and take notice, granting their respect for them.

In 2004, the book inspired GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network) and Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing created a national No-Name Calling Week. The project seeks to focus national attention on the problem of name-calling in schools, and to provide students and educators with the tools and inspiration to launch an on-going dialogue about ways to eliminate name-calling in their communities

The Misfits will be produced by the Omaha Theater Company for school groups and public audiences in February of 2011 and will run 75 minutes. The original cast and production team were:

HOPEFULLY THE ROSE WILL ALSO GET A GRANT TO DO POST SHOW WORKSHOPS WITH KIDS TO HELP THEM PROCESS and DEAL WITH THE ISSUES IN THIS PLAY

CAST

BOBBY: Josh Mullady	ADDIE: Patricia Lilyhorn
JOE: Chris Stewart	SKEEZIE: Andrew Saladino
DUSHAWN: Kelcey Watson	DAD/MR. KELLERMAN: Ryle Smith
COLIN/KEVIN: Brian Guehring	PAM/KELSEY/MS WYMAN: Amanda Waldron

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director: Stephanie Jacobson	Set Designer: Christopher S. Depriest
Costume Designer: Callyann Casteel	Light Designer: Carson Gross
Stage Manager: Amanda Kibler	Development Dramaturg: Michael Miller

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Character List

The 7th Graders

BOBBY	a softspoken, thoughtful, overweight 12 year old who wears baggy clothes and lives alone with his dad
ADDIE	a tall, outspoken, intelligent girl who is strident in her liberal beliefs
JOE	a creative, flamboyant, and confident boy who currently has a streak of pink in his hair
SKEEZIE	a tough rebel from a lower income family who is a sloppy eater, is often dirty, has slicked back hair
DUSHAWN	a popular African American athlete
KEVIN	a troublemaking bully
COLIN	a smart, nice, popular student
KELSEY	a shy, quiet artist

**I AM CURRENTLY WORKING ON A NEW DRAFT
WITH MORE STUDENT CHARACTERS FOR A LARGER CAST**

The Adults:

MS WYMAN	a seventh grade math teacher who promotes self esteem
DAD	Bobby's father, a widower
MR KELLERMAN	The strict principal, and war veteran
PAM	Joe's supportive aunt who works at the Candy Kitchen

For a cast of 8, the parts can be split:

ACTOR 1	BOBBY	ACTRESS 1: ADDIE
ACTOR 2	JOE	ACTRESS 2: KELSEY, MS WYMAN, PAM
ACTOR 3	SKEEZIE	ACTOR 4: DUSHAWN, ADAM
ACTOR 5: KEVIN, COLIN,		ACTOR 6: DAD, MR. KELLERMAN

For a cast of 7, the parts for Actor 5 and 6 can be combined.

Settings

The Candy Kitchen ice cream shop
Bobby's Trailer Home
Paintbrush Falls middle school: Ms. Wyman's Homeroom, Hallway with Lockers
& The Lunch Room

Time

The beginning of the school year

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TUESDAY scene 7: *What Adults Really Mean, Part 3*
(Scene opens in the hallway of the middle school.
BOBBY, a quiet overweight boy and ADDIE a loud
outspoken and very tall girl are hanging up posters
for upcoming school election)

BOBBY (to the audience)

The next morning we arrived early to school to hang up posters. And while Addie is all hopped up about a school government election I don't care a Fig Newton about, what's agitating my brain is whether I should ask this cute, artistic, and terminally shy girl who kind of smiled at me one time for a nanosecond (I think)(maybe) if she wants to help us make more posters. And before I could work up the nerve to ask her, I will catch myself sniffing my armpits and calling myself an incurable geek.

I take no pride in mentioning these things. But if I am going to bother with telling you what happened at our middle school, it may as well be the truth.

ADDIE

Our Freedom Party is exactly what this middle school needs.

(MR. KELLERMAN, principal, enters)

MR. KELLERMAN

Miss Carle, Mr. Goodspeed, what are you doing?

ADDIE

Mr. Kellerman, we created a third party to represent minority students. The Freedom Party. We are putting up our posters for the election.

MR KELLERMAN

Miss Carle, both parties state in their platforms that they represent *all* students, which include minority students. A third party claiming to represent minorities is redundant at the very least and might justifiably be seen as promoting special rights.

ADDIE

I hardly think that giving minority students a voice is the same as asking for special rights.

MR KELLERMAN

Look, Addie, you're a bright girl and you have strong feelings about right and wrong. That's good. But there is a system in place and it works. If you want to make changes, get involved in the parties that already exist.

ADDIE

Right, like they'll even listen to us.

MR KELLERMAN

The decision has been made.

(MR KELLERMAN opens his hands wide, palm up, fingers splayed)

BOBBY (to the audience)

Do you see that gesture? The open palms? Another classic adult pose and Mr. Kellerman's favorite. He think it means,

MR. KELLERMAN

Look how honest and open I'm being. I just feel rotten about it, but I'm absolutely helpless to do anything more than I've already done.

BOBBY *(to audience)*

What it really means is:

MR. KELLERMAN

This conversation is over.

(Scene turns back to reality)

MR. KELLERMAN

The Freedom Party will not be allowed to run for student government.

(MR. KELLERMAN takes down the posters and exits.)

ADDIE

That is so unfair. We aren't asking for special rights.

BOBBY

You're right. But what can you do? Wyman and Kellerman have power and we don't.

ADDIE

And that's another thing. Why do adults get to have all the power? Mr. Kellerman and Ms. Wyman both say work within the system. But it is their system. Kids should have power, too.

BOBBY

Since the student government doesn't have any power anyway, I guess it's not so bad that the Freedom Party's out of business.

ADDIE

Who said we're out of business? We just have to come up with another *raison d'être*.
(JOE and SKEEZIE walk up)

BOBBY

Morning.

ADDIE

Joe! Skeezie! Mr. Kellerman is trying to shut down the Freedom Party.

JOE

That sucks as bad as Katy Perry's last single.

(JOE opens his locker. A note falls out.)

(JOE sees his locker now)

JOE

Don't they teach spelling in this school?

ADDIE

What are you talking about, Scorpio?

BOBBY

Look at his locker.

(BOBBY and ADDIE see the word FAGOT painted on the locker)

ADDIE

That's awful.

JOE (yelling down at KEVIN)

There are two g's in faggot, you numbskull.

KEVIN

I didn't do it. Not this time, anyways.

JOE

Yeah, well tell your illiterate friends that if they're going to call names, they should at least know how to spell them.

KEVIN

Okay, f-a-i-r-y.

JOE (folding the note)

I'm sorry. We were talking about the tragic demise of The Freedom Party.

ADDIE

Not demise, just restructuring. We need to come up with a new platform. Something Mr. Kellerman can't dispute.

(KEVIN walks by and addresses Bobby)

KEVIN

Yo, Blubber! Go ahead and kiss the Freak!

(KEVIN pushes ADDIE into BOBBY)

It's probably the only way to shut her big mouth up.

(KEVIN laughs and shakes his rear at them as he exits down the hall)

ADDIE

He is such an idiot.

BOBBY

That's our raison d'être. NO MORE names.

ADDIE

What?

BOBBY

That's our platform and that's our party. The No-Name Party.

SKEEZIE

I don't get it.

BOBBY

We've been defining minority too narrowly. The point is that being a minority isn't only about the color of your skin or your religion. It's about not fitting in, being on the outside.

Like us. ADDIE

Think of all the names we've been called over the years. BOBBY

Fruit, girly-boy, Josephine, homo, faggot JOE

Freakazoid, giant, dork, nerd, beanpole, show-off. ADDIE

White trash, hooligan, greaseball, dummy, poor boy. SKEEZIE

Fluff, fatso, dough boy, lardo, pork chop. BOBBY

I've got some more: Sissy, tinkerbelle, fairy, fruitcake. JOE

Here's what we gotta do. We take all these words and write each one on its own sheet of paper. BOBBY
Then we put a circle around it and a line through it and then we put them up all over school.

And what do we say about the Freedom-I mean, the No-Name Party? ADDIE

We don't say anything. Not at first. That's the beauty of it, see? Mr. Kellerman won't even BOBBY
know there's another party in the running. Nobody will know. We'll keep the suspense going all day, and then we'll hit the walls with posters for the No-Name Party the day of the election.

How could they stop us then? JOE

We'll need a new slogan. ADDIE

(all consider)

I've got it. Sticks and Stones can break our bones, but names will break our spirit. BOBBY

It's brilliant, Bobby. JOE

Let's tell Dushawn! ADDIE

(ADDIE waves to DUSHAWN)

DuShawn!

(DUSHAWN strolls over)

What's up? DUSHAWN

ADDIE

DuShawn, guess what? We've come up with a whole new approach to the Freedom Party.

DUSHAWN

Cool.

ADDIE

It's called the No-Name Party. We need is a list of all the names you've ever been called.

DUSHAWN

Names? Uh-huh. You're thinking because I'm black I've been called names.

ADDIE

Haven't you?

DUSHAWN

No. I mean, I know there are bigots out there, and maybe I'm just lucky, but I've never had to deal with it.

ADDIE

Well, but will you still run for president on our ticket?

DUSHAWN

Why do you want me to run, Addie?

ADDIE

I told you. You're smart and...

DUSHAWN

Black.

ADDIE

I guess so, but that's not....

DUSHAWN

That's not what? You got no end to that sentence. And you got eyes that see no further than the color of my skin.

(DUSHAWN turns to leave)

ADDIE

Where are you going, DuShawn?

DUSHAWN

I'm going to think it over.

ADDIE

Well, but, you won't let us down, will you?

DUSHAWN

Who's lettin' who down, Addie? There's somethin for *you* to think over.

(DUSHAWN leaves)

ADDIE

We can all make the no-name circles tonight and put them up on Wednesday.

JOE
If Dushawn drops, you should run for president, Bobby!

SKEEZIE
Yes, it was your idea.

BOBBY (*adamantly*)
No! Not me.

ADDIE
DuShawn will not back out.
(*JOE, ADDIE and SKEEZIE start planning and exit*)

BOBBY (*to audience*)
There was no way I was getting up in front of the whole school and giving a speech. Essentially putting a target on my head: Ready, Aim, Laugh. My dad says it is just better to not make waves. I'm more of a behind the scenes kind of guy.

Brian Guehring is the Playwright in Residence of the Omaha Theater Company, one of the nation's largest professional theaters for young people. Brian has adapted the world premiere scripts of the Newberry Award winning novel **Julie of the Wolves** (directed by Everett Quinton), **Miss Bindergarten, If You Give a Cat a Cupcake, The Misfits, Holidays Around the World** and **Sacagawea: Discovering History**. Brian's scripts have won several national and regional awards. His adaptations of **Where the Red Fern Grows** and **Old Yeller** and his original Theater in Education play **The Super Adventures of Pyramid Man and Dr. Nutrition** won AATE (American Alliance for Theater and Education) Unpublished Play Project Awards. His script **The Bully Show** was selected for the 2002 New Visions/New Voices new play development workshop at the Kennedy Center. Brian received a playwriting fellowship from the Nebraska Arts Council in 2002. His new adaptation of the Newberry Award winning novel **The Giver** was honored as one of the best theater productions of 2008 in Omaha by the Omaha World Herald. His original script **King Chemo** won the Southwest Theater Association's 1997 Best New Play for Children, and his original play **Creating Haley's World** was selected in 2003 for development in the inaugural Playwrights in Our Schools program. His plays have been produced by Imagination Stage in Washington, D.C., Lexington Children's Theater, Walnut Street Theater in Philadelphia, Barter Theater of Virginia, South Carolina Children's Theater, A. D. Players in Houston, Apple Tree Theater for Young Audiences in Chicago, Town Hall Theater in Dayton, and other schools and theaters. **King Chemo** and **The Bully Show** are published by Dramatic Publishing Company. He also contributed to Dramatic Publishing's **The Bully Plays**, an anthology of 10 minute plays about bullying for teen performers.

Brian is also the Education Director of the Omaha Theater Company which does drama and dance education outreach for every single child in over 80 local schools each year. His teen theater troupe **Pride Players** (which uses improvisation to explore issues facing gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and straight allied teens) won a Human and Civil Rights Award from the National Education Association in 2006. In 2010, Brian was elected to the Board of Theater For Young Audiences/USA. Brian earned his MFA in Children's Theater and Creative Drama from the University of Texas at Austin.