

UPPER SIXTH.

Line up that goal and let it fly

MISS GIVINGS.

Tackle hard to gain possession

UPPER SIXTH.

Huh! Huh!

MISS GIVINGS.

Fight fiercely if you must

UPPER SIXTH.

Do or die

MISS GIVINGS.

Release your feminine aggression

MISS GIVINGS/UPPER SIXTH.

(And) then move in for the final thrust

MISS GIVINGS.

We know the way to win

UPPER SIXTH.

We know the way to win and how

MISS GIVINGS.

So let the game begin

UPPER SIXTH.

Let's begin right now

MISS GIVINGS.

One two three

MISS GIVINGS/UPPER SIXTH.

Bully off

MISS GIVINGS.

One two three

MISS GIVINGS/UPPER SIXTH.

Bully off

MISS GIVINGS.

One two three

27  
MISS

Bleacher

MISS AUSTIN

+ BLEACHER

MISS GIVINGS/UPPER SIXTH.

Bully off bully off bully off

MISS GIVINGS.

And here we go

MISS GIVINGS/UPPER SIXTH.

Here we go

Put on your navy knicks

Pick up your hockey sticks

One two three bully off - huh, huh, huh!

One two three bully off - huh, huh, huh!

One two three bully off bully off

And here we go.

All exit, hockey sticks held high.

Music 5a. Navy Knicks - play-off

Scene Four

The Head's study.

MISS BLEACHER is at her desk, gazing at an antique photo

frame.

Knock at door.

She hides the frame in her desk drawer.

MISS BLEACHER. Come!

MISS AUSTIN enters, carrying a large stack of files.

MISS AUSTIN. The complete and unabridged personal files of

the Upper Sixth, as requested.

MISS BLEACHER. Thank you, Miss Austin.

MISS AUSTIN sets them down on the edge of the desk.

MISS AUSTIN. But if I may venture an opinion, Headmistress?

About the incident in the art room?

MISS BLEACHER. Venture forth.

MISS AUSTIN. Regrettable though it was, don't you think the sensitivities of the domestic staff would best be mollified by a large tin of Cadbury's Milk Chocolate Assortment?

MISS BLEACHER. What?

MISS AUSTIN. Surely no offence was intended by the two senior girls involved? And is it not the hallowed function of the art room to provide a sanctuary for self-expression?

MISS BLEACHER. Indeed, Miss Austin. That's why I'm eliminating art from the curriculum.

MISS AUSTIN *reals*.

MISS AUSTIN. Eliminating art? But, Headmistress -

*Knock at the door.*

MISS BLEACHER. Come!

BRENDA *enters*.

Ah, Brenda.

BRENDA. I've got important information about you-know-what, Miss!

MISS BLEACHER. Already? Then divulge it immediately, girl.

BRENDA *is nervous of* MISS AUSTIN.

BRENDA. Um...?

MISS BLEACHER. In complete confidence, Brenda. Miss Austin and I are equally resolved to close this matter down - are we not, Miss Austin?

MISS AUSTIN *(sighs)*. Yes, Headmistress.

MISS BLEACHER. So, Brenda -?

BRENDA. Well, this time it was going on in the locker room during assembly, Miss.

MISS BLEACHER. For the avoidance of doubt, what was 'going on', Brenda?

BRENDA. Indecent and Unnatural Behaviour, Miss.

MISS BLEACHER. You mean you actually saw it with your own eyes?

BRENDA. Well no, Miss, not exactly. But I definitely heard it with my own ears.

MISS BLEACHER. What? What did you hear?

BRENDA. Kissing, Miss.

MISS BLEACHER. Kissing?

BRENDA. Well, you know, Miss - like this, Miss...

BRENDA *imitates slurry kissing noises, much to* MISS BLEACHER *'s disgust*.

MISS BLEACHER. Thank you, Brenda. Would you call that evidence, Miss Austin?

MISS AUSTIN. Evidence of something, perhaps - but how can you be sure it was kissing, Brenda?

BRENDA. Because I made a logical deduction, Miss.

MISS AUSTIN. Surely the sounds you have imitated could equally be consistent with the consumption of a cream bun?

MISS BLEACHER. What?

MISS AUSTIN. Which albeit irregular before break would hardly warrant an inquisition?

BRENDA. But I heard words as well, Miss. And I don't think they were about cream buns.

MISS BLEACHER. What words?

BRENDA *(referring to notebook)*. 'Oh darling please forgive me you know I love you with all my heart', Miss.

MISS BLEACHER. Well, Miss Austin. I think that's chips for the cream-bun hypothesis, don't you?

MISS AUSTIN. But, Headmistress, some of our girls do use a rather exotic vocabulary.

MISS BLEACHER. Hmm. Are you sure you didn't see anything, Brenda?

BRENDA. I saw enough to recognise who one of them was, Miss.

MISS BLEACHER. Then stop being mysterious. Name her!

BRENDA. Susan Smart, Miss.

MISS BLEACHER. Are you certain?

BRENDA. Oh yes, Miss. I'd swear it on the Bible, Miss.

MISS BLEACHER. Then what about the other girl?

BRENDA. Well, I couldn't swear about *her*, Miss, but I could have a jolly good guess.

MISS AUSTIN. Ahem. I don't think the suppositions of the witness can be counted as evidence, Headmistress.

MISS BLEACHER. Are you absolutely sure you can't be sure, Brenda?

BRENDA. I'm sorry, Miss.

MISS BLEACHER. Very well. Leave this with us and hurry along with your other task.

BRENDA. I came in early to clear out the art room, Miss. And I've compiled a tabulated inventory of all equipment in transit, so I can cross-check each item on and off my trolley, Miss.

MISS BLEACHER. Very diligent, Brenda. If you fail to find a husband, I'm sure you'll be a great asset to the Inland Revenue.

BRENDA. Yes, Miss. Thank you, Miss!

*She exits.*

MISS BLEACHER *groans*.

MISS BLEACHER. So — we have a hint!

MISS AUSTIN. But Susan Smart is one of our shining lights, Headmistress. To be nurtured and cherished.

MISS BLEACHER. Oh really, Miss Austin, you don't seem to grasp the moral exigency here. Two reports in as many days, in separate locations? If we don't root out this vile canker it could spread round the whole school.

MISS AUSTIN (*resigned nod*). Yes, Headmistress, you're quite right...

MISS BLEACHER. Then let us wield the scalpel!

MISS AUSTIN. No, I mean you're quite right I don't grasp your point. And forgive me, but did we not fight the last war to defeat fascism?

*A beat. MISS BLEACHER ponders this challenge.*

MISS BLEACHER. What are you saying, Miss Austin? That we shouldn't teach our girls to become good wives and mothers?

MISS AUSTIN. Not at all, Headmistress, if they so aspire. Indeed I once hoped to become one myself. But my family were thankful when my fiancé was killed in action — because they couldn't bear *their* daughter to be the first GI bride in Dorking.

MISS BLEACHER *grimaces*.

A fact I only disclose, Headmistress, by way of broadening the argument —

*But by way of her expansive gesture, the pile of files is sent flying.*

Oops!

MISS BLEACHER *ends all further argument*.

MISS BLEACHER. Kindly clear up your mess before I return, Miss Austin. I have an urgent letter to dictate.

MISS AUSTIN. Yes, Headmistress.

MISS BLEACHER *exits, leaving MISS AUSTIN to pick up the pieces*.

Oh dear, poor Susan. How many more battles have we yet to win?

JUDITH (sighs). We'll have to try another tack.

They exit.

Music 8a. 'Snot Fair - play-off'

MISS Bleacher  
Brenda

Scene Seven

The Headmistress's study.

It's empty and the desk is clear.

Knock at the door.

Then another knock.

Then BRENDA puts her head round the door.

BRENDA. Miss?

*She sidles in, and within seconds is compulsively taking a snoop in the desk drawer - to find the photo frame and to puzzle... And she only just covers her tracks before MISS BLEACHER enters, carrying an envelope.*

MISS BLEACHER. Ah, Brenda. Mission accomplished?

BRENDA. Yes, Miss. The art room's now fully equipped in science room two and all the art equipment's in the cellar awaiting shipment to the poor primitive children in Africa.

MISS BLEACHER. Excellent.

BRENDA. But it wasn't easy or enjoyable, Miss. I did have to escape an ambush and defend my integrity.

MISS BLEACHER. Well, don't bleat about it, girl. (Sipponitlen is the engine of endeavour.

BRENDA. Yes, Miss.

MISS BLEACHER. So here's your next task, Brenda... If I can entrust it to your utmost stealth and secrecy?

BRENDA. On my honour or hope to die, Miss!

MISS BLEACHER. Then take this to the post office straight after school and have it sent 'special delivery'.

MISS BLEACHER gives her the envelope - and BRENDA glints as she reads the address.

BRENDA. To Susan Smart's parents?

MISS BLEACHER. Thanks to your dogged fieldwork, Brenda, as of tomorrow morning I shall truly turn the tide in this school. And you will be rewarded with the honour of being my Head Girl!

BRENDA. Gosh, Miss... Jubilate!

*She scurries out.*

MISS BLEACHER retrieves the photo frame from the desk drawer and gazes at it with messianic zeal.

MISS BLEACHER. Thy will will be done...

Music 8b. Future Mothers - reprise

We strive to educate  
So you may better procreate  
And that henceforth shall be --  
The function of this school  
The function of this school...

*She exits.*

*Transition to next morning:*

LAVINIA. Each and every girl in this school.

ANNABEL. Cos when the chips are down we are all the other girl!

*They present the petition - and MISS BLEACHER takes stock of it and them.*

MISS BLEACHER. Well! You have been busy little bees, haven't you? But I still fail to see what you hope to achieve.

*She tosses the petition aside.*

Whole-school detention. Assembly hall. Now!

MISS AUSTIN sighs.

MISS AUSTIN. A short course in dramatic structure would so assist your interpretive skills. But if I have to spell it out - this is when we turn the tables, so now it's chips for you.

UPPER SIXTH. Boo!

MISS AUSTIN. And all that's left to do is tie up the loose ends.

*Enter DIANA and DORIAN, as themselves.*

DIANA. Which is where we come in, Miss Bleacher.

MISS BLEACHER. And you are who?

DIANA. I am Diana Dosserdale and this is my brother Dorian.

MISS BLEACHER. Just a minute -

DORIAN. Yes, you know us better as Benny the Bag -

DIANA. And Miss Givings, the temporary games mistress.

MISS BLEACHER. Then what - ?

DIANA. As I'm sure you're aware, Miss Bleacher, our uncle's recent death has left the governorship of the school in a state of hiatus, since my brother and I can only inherit when we're both of legal age.

DORIAN. Which you've no doubt calculated gives you a clear run for another two years till my twenty-first birthday.

MISS BLEACHER. So I repeat, then what - ?

MS

BLEACHER + DIANA

DIANA. Then our lawyers informed us that Sub-clause Twenty-three of the School Constitution allows me to act as sole governor pro tem in 'Exceptional Circumstances' -

DORIAN. Viz. your flouting virtually every precept this school stands for -

DIANA. With the unanimous disapproval of your pupils -

DORIAN. Proof of which we went undercover to obtain -

DIANA. As now conclusively verified by our lawyers in this telegram. Which - with the constitutionally required quorum of prefects present - gives me the right to demand your immediate resignation, Miss Bleacher.

*She hands telegram to MISS BLEACHER, who studies it.*

MISS BLEACHER. I see... How very unfortunate... that I must crush your hopes once again.

*She rips up the telegram.*

MISS AUSTIN sighs.

MISS AUSTIN. Really, you can't just keep on throwing your toys out of the pram, you know.

MISS BLEACHER (*ferce*). I never had a pram!

*(Composes herself.)* But I do have this...

*She produces a parchment scroll.*

A codicil to Sir Digby Dosserdale's will, signed and witnessed on his deathbed, as per Sub-clause Twenty-four - guaranteeing me, Beatrix Bleacher, lifetime tenure in this Headship, no matter what.

EVERYONE ELSE. Gasp!

MISS BLEACHER hands the scroll to DIANA.

MISS BLEACHER. Please do run it past your lawyers. I'm sure they'll agree it trumps your telegram.

DIANA and DORIAN unravel the scroll and stare at it in shock, watched by MISS AUSTIN and the GIRLS.

MISS BLEACHER gloats.