

TALK BACK!

1. Where do you stand on eating eggs and meat?
2. Is Walt a chicken or a warrior?
3. Are there boys' chores and girls' chores? Why or why not?
4. What do you think of Marjorie? Is she bossy or smart or both?
5. Should you have to do things you don't like to get things you want (in Walt's case, collect eggs to get cake)?
6. How can an actor show pain without actually feeling it?

THE BASEMENT

2F, 2M

WHO

FEMALES



Mary
O'Reilly, a leprechaun

MALES

Mike
Stan

WHERE Scene 1: A living room; Scene 2: A basement.

WHEN Present day.

-  Pay attention to the relationships between Mike, Mary, and Stan. Who's related to whom? Who's in charge? Who does your character like or dislike? How can you make O'Reilly seem like a leprechaun?
-  In this play, I used a standard idea (what's in the basement?) and decided to twist it in a strange and unexpected way. Try the same thing. Write your own Scene 2 and have Mike, Mary, and Stan find something completely different in the basement.

Scene 1: The Dare

(MIKE and STAN enter the room.)

MIKE: I'm gonna beat you.

STAN: No way. I beat you the last three times.

MIKE: You got lucky.

STAN: You wish.

(MARY enters and pretends to turn on a TV.)

MIKE: What are you doing?

MARY: Watching TV.

STAN: Duh.

MIKE: Get out of here. We're playing video games in here.

MARY: No, you're not.

MIKE: That's because you're hogging the TV.

MARY: Be quiet, I'm trying to watch the TV.

STAN: Come on, Mary, get lost.

MARY: No way. You can't make me.

STAN: He can. Go on, Mike, get rid of her.

MIKE: Move it, Mary.

MARY: If you touch me, I'll tell Mom.

MIKE: You wouldn't dare.

MARY: Of course I would.

STAN: No, you wouldn't. You'll pay. Right, Mike?

MIKE: Right!

MARY: You don't scare me. Why don't you just go somewhere else?

STAN: *Because*, dummy, we're going to play video games.

MARY: No, you're not! Don't bully me, stupid Stan.

MIKE: Jeez, Mary, you always act like a baby.

MARY: You're always a bully!

MIKE: Come on, we can go to my room.

STAN: Not your room. It smells like socks.

MIKE: So does your room.

STAN: How about the basement?

MARY: We're not allowed in the basement.

STAN: Why not?

MIKE: I don't know. Dad just said we're never allowed to go down there.

STAN: What's down there?

MIKE: Dunno.

MARY: We're just not allowed. So you can't go down there.

STAN: I think we should. There's got to be something really good down there.

MARY: Like what?

STAN: I don't know, but we're going to find out—right, Mike?

MIKE: Well, maybe we should just go to my room. We could play a board game.

STAN: I hate board games. They're what your parents make you play when they don't want you to do something cool. It's like punishment.

MARY: I like board games. Especially Clue.

MIKE: You cheat at Clue.

MARY: I do not! I'm just smart.

STAN: Clue is for dorks.

MARY: So I bet you like it.

STAN: Ha, ha, ha. Very funny.

MIKE: Let's go play basketball.

STAN: No way. We already had gym class today.

MARY: Maybe you *should* go to the basement.

MIKE: You just want to have the TV to yourself.

MARY: Go to the basement, Mike. I dare you.

STAN: Maybe *you* should go to the basement.

MARY: Maybe not. Are you scared?

STAN: No.

MARY: So go to the basement.

STAN: Maybe I will.

MIKE: My dad's gonna get mad at you, just so you know.

STAN: Do you do everything your dad says?

MARY: Yes.

MIKE: No, I don't.

MARY: Yes, you do.

MIKE: No, I don't!

MARY: Yes, you do.

MIKE: I do whatever I want. I don't sit around and obey orders. I'm not a robot. *You are, Mary. Always a Goody Two-shoes.* Not me. I'm a rebel. So if I want to go into the basement, I go into the

basement. I don't care what Dad or anyone says. Know what? I bet I probably *can* go into the basement. Know why? Because Dad likes me best, Mary. So you can just sit up here and watch your stupid TV show like a baby. *(Beat.)* Don't get all teary, Mary. You're always crying. I swear that you're only pretending most of the time to get attention. It's not going to work. You're just going to have to grow up. And you're going to have to accept that I'm the boss here, not you. I'm older and wiser. I get to do things first. So I'm going to the basement with Stan. And we're going to have fun. And Dad will not get mad at me because I'm the favorite. So you have a really good time up here by yourself.

MARY: I want to go to the basement, too!

STAN: Well, you can't. You heard him. You have to stay up here.

MARY: You're stupid, Stan. You can't tell me what to do.

STAN: Can and did.

MARY: Mike!

MIKE: Uh, Stan? Don't tell Mary what to do. That's my job.

STAN: Whatever.

MIKE: So, let's go, I guess.

STAN: What do you think is down there?

MIKE: Don't know.

STAN: What could be so bad?

MARY: You're a chicken, Stan.

STAN: I am the least chicken person you'll ever meet. I'll take any dare. Just ask Mike. One time I kissed Susie "Monkeyface" Benefisi on a dare. It was gross, but I did it. Another time, I touched Mrs. Doppler's butt. I pretended I tripped and had to get my balance. That was seriously gross. And *another* time, I climbed the highest tree at school and jumped off when I got to the top. I broke my leg. It was awesome. Oh, and I licked Becky Fernhauer's locker when she was sick with chicken pox and told Mr. Tolbert his fly was down when it wasn't. I'm the bravest kid you know. So going down to your dumb old basement is no big deal. What could be so bad? It's probably just filled with power tools your dad doesn't want you to touch. Big deal. It's not like you could have demons or monsters down there waiting to grab your legs and eat your face off. Demons don't even work like that. They'd probably just freeze you, so you couldn't fight, then eat your face off. They wouldn't want a struggle. So where's the basement?

MIKE: Maybe this isn't a good idea. Maybe we should play basketball.

MARY: Monsters are going to eat your faces off.

MIKE: No, they won't! That's just silly.

MARY: Go play in the basement, Mike, if you're so brave.

MIKE: Let's go, Stan.

STAN: See ya later, little baby.

MARY: I am not a baby! If demons eat your faces off, I'm not even gonna call the police!

STAN: We don't need the police. Me and Mike can defeat demons.

MARY: Can not!

MIKE: Can too!

STAN: See ya, shrimp.

Scene 2: The Discovery

MIKE: My dad is going to kill me.

STAN: Maybe monsters will kill you first.

MIKE: Shut up, Stan.

STAN: Make me, Mike.

MIKE: I can't see a thing.

STAN: Where's the light?

MIKE: By the wall.

STAN: Duh. Which one?

MIKE: That one.

STAN: Which one? I can't see you point in the dark. What do you think is down here for real?

MIKE: I don't know. All I know is that my dad always says "Don't go down into the basement!"

STAN: So you never, ever did?

MIKE: Ow! You stepped on me. No, I never, ever did.

STAN: Didn't you ever want to come down here?

MIKE: Sort of.

STAN: But you were scared!

MIKE: No. Not exactly.

STAN: Found it!

(The lights go on.)

STAN: So this is the basement. Looks like a normal basement.

MIKE: Yeah. I wonder why we weren't allowed down here.

STAN: Not even a chain saw or anything. Pretty boring.

MIKE: Weird.

STAN: Maybe there's a dead body somewhere.

MIKE: There's not a dead body.

STAN: Maybe your dad killed someone and stashed the body down here.

MIKE: My dad didn't kill anyone.

STAN: Maybe he did.

MIKE: He didn't, OK?

STAN: Take it easy. I'm just saying there's got to be *some* reason he doesn't want you to come down here. Let's look around.

MIKE: OK.

(STAN and MIKE walk around, looking into boxes, etc.)

STAN: Junk.

MIKE: Books.

STAN: This one's empty.

MIKE: Old toys.

STAN: Any good ones?

MIKE: No.

STAN: Boring.

MIKE: Boring.

O'REILLY: *(Entering.)* I'll tell you what's boring.

STAN: *(Not looking at O'REILLY.)* What?

O'REILLY: You two!

(MIKE turns around to look at O'REILLY.)

MIKE: Stan?

STAN: What?

MIKE: Stan?

STAN: *(Turning around.)* What? *(To O'REILLY.)* What are you?

O'REILLY: What do you think I am?
MIKE: One of Mary's friends?
STAN: A troll?
O'REILLY: Thank you very much.
STAN: You're welcome.
O'REILLY: I'm a leprechaun, you pea-brains!
STAN: I bet my brain is bigger than your brain.
MIKE: Stan—
O'REILLY: (*Coming close to STAN.*) I bet it's not!
MIKE: Stan—
STAN: How much do you wanna bet?
MIKE: Stan—
O'REILLY: What do ya got?
STAN: Nothing.
O'REILLY: Then what's the use of betting, pea-brain!
STAN: Leprechauns are boys.
O'REILLY: How do you know?
STAN: Everyone knows.

O'REILLY: Don't ya think I'd know better than you, pea-brain, seeing as I'm a leprechaun?
MIKE: Stan—
STAN: What?
O'REILLY: Yeah, what?
MIKE: Um, hi.
O'REILLY: Hello. What are you doing in my home?
MIKE: Actually, this is my home.
O'REILLY: Actually, this is *my* home.
MIKE: No, see, I live here. Upstairs.
O'REILLY: Exactly. Upstairs. And I live down here.
STAN: Why?
O'REILLY: Because I do, pea-brain.
MIKE: Do you know my dad?
O'REILLY: Your dad? Big man? Brown hair?
MIKE: That's him.
O'REILLY: No.
STAN: But you said—
O'REILLY: I say a lot of things. Now get out of my house.

STAN: Or what?

MIKE: Stan!

O'REILLY: Or you don't want to know what.

STAN: Do you have a pot of gold?

O'REILLY: If I did, would I tell you?

(STAN starts opening boxes madly, looking for the gold.)

O'REILLY: Those are *my* things.

MIKE: Yeah, Stan, stop!

O'REILLY: Listen to your friend here.

STAN: Or what?

O'REILLY: Or I will go through all of your things.

STAN: Go ahead.

O'REILLY: Ah-ha! Look what I found!

(O'REILLY pulls a pair of underpants with ducks on them out of STAN's pocket.)

MIKE: What are those?

STAN: Hey!

(STAN tries to take the underpants back from O'REILLY and fails.)

O'REILLY: I believe these are Mr. Stan's ducky underpants.

MIKE: You wear underwear with—

STAN: Shut up!

O'REILLY: Maybe you should go home now, Stan.

MIKE: Does he have anything else?

STAN: No!

O'REILLY: Are you sure, Stan?

(Beat.)

STAN: Fine. We'll go.

MIKE: No, I wanna see!

STAN: Stop it! Stop humiliating me! It's not fair. You're a leprechaun; of course I'd be curious about your stuff. It's natural. I can't be blamed for being curious. It's *human*. People are like that. Maybe you can't understand that since you're a . . . what are you? A person? A creature? Whatever! Not a regular human being. So I can't really help that I want to know things. I'm going to be a scientist someday. I need to study things and figure them out. So I have every right to come to your home and check things out. Plus, this isn't *your* house; it's Mike's dad's house. You don't own it. So you can stop looking at me like that. If you do anything to me, I'll go get the police and you'll be arrested. You'll go to prison and everyone will be a lot bigger and a lot meaner than you. So . . . stop trying to

scare me. You don't scare me! I'm not scared of anything! Especially you. So . . . you can stop looking at me now! You're not scaring me!

O'REILLY: Curious, huh? Going to call the police, huh? And tell them there's a leprechaun *looking* at you? Go ahead, pea-brain.

STAN: Stop calling me that!

O'REILLY: Go home, Stan.

STAN: No!

O'REILLY: You're in love with Snow White.

STAN: No, I'm not!

O'REILLY: You kiss the poster in your room every night before you go to sleep!

STAN: No, I don't!

MIKE: Stan! That is sick!

STAN: It's not true! Listen, this is not cool. This is boring! Let's go play basketball. You're going to get in trouble if we stay down here, Mike. I don't want to get you in trouble.

O'REILLY: Now Stan is a good boy? Give me a break. I don't know why you think you can do whatever you want. You think just because you're human you're stronger than me. You're not! Hear that, little boy? You just pretend to have courage, Stan. I know what you really think. I know what you really feel.

You are only tough when you're the oldest and the biggest person in the room. But it's all a lie. When you're faced with something or someone bigger than you, you just crumble. Typical human! You step on a spider but you use a gun to face a bear. Courage is not having all the odds on your side. Courage is not kissing a girl you already like and you know likes you, too.

STAN: I do not like Susie Benefisi! And that's not my underwear! That is my baby brother's underwear. I guess my mom made a mistake when she put it away. I would never wear something with ducks on it, Mike. Let's just go now, Mike. This is seriously uncool.

O'REILLY: Good riddance.

MIKE: My dad will be home soon, I guess.

O'REILLY: And don't even think of coming back. You humans, besides being curious and weak, are also very pea-brained and silly. You all have a lot of secrets you don't want people to know. Think about that before you consider coming to the basement again! Everyone has things they don't want people to know or see. When something is forbidden, there is always a reason. Isn't that true, Stan?

STAN: Yeah. Sure. I guess.

O'REILLY: Would you like your underpants back?

STAN: They're not mine! So you can keep them. Whatever.

O'REILLY: Then I suggest you disappear.

STAN: Right! Let's go!

(STAN runs out.)

MIKE: So, sorry, I guess. I don't . . . We didn't mean . . .
I hope you don't . . .

O'REILLY: Go away.

MIKE: OK. Bye!

(MIKE exits.)

O'REILLY: Ah, another pair of underwear for my collection! What would I do without curious children?

TALK BACK!

1. Is Stan a bully?
2. Is O'Reilly a bully?
3. Where do you stand on snooping?
4. Is O'Reilly justified in humiliating Stan?
5. What would you do if you found a pot of gold?
6. How would you react if you saw a leprechaun?
7. Do you think Mike's father knows about O'Reilly?
8. Why is O'Reilly there?
9. Is Stan right about curiosity being a natural human trait?
10. Should curiosity be encouraged or discouraged?