

TALK BACK!

1. What annoying things do your parents do and what are their reasons for doing them? Are they right or wrong?
2. Are chores necessary? Why or why not? What can you learn from doing chores, if anything?
3. What chore seems most like a punishment to you?
4. If you were in danger, who would you try to protect?
5. Is it good or bad to be suspicious of adults?
6. Do you ever feel unheard because you're a kid? Why?
7. If you told adults one thing about kids you think they should know, what would it be?

BEEES!

3F, 4M

WHO

FEMALES


Andrea
Lydia
Jolie


MALES

Brian
Anthony
Matt
Neil

WHERE Scene 1: Behind an auditorium; Scene 2: Outside.

WHEN Present day.

 Scene 1: Make the brainy kids as quirky and super-smart as you'd like, but don't make fun of them. Act like you think they really would.
Scene 2: Read the scene carefully and see what you can figure out about your character from the lines they say and what's said about him or her.

 In Scene 2, I used a monologue I previously wrote for *The Ultimate Monologue Book for Middle School Actors, Volume 1*. Try using a monologue from another source and building your own unique scene around it.

Pronunciation Key for Scene 1

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Chlorophyll: KLOR-uh-fil | 4 Prospicience: pro-SPISH-ee-ens |
| 2 Photosynthetic: fo-to-sin-THEH-tik | 5 Quokka: KWAH-kuh |
| 3 Chiaroscurist: kee-are-uh-SKUR-ist | 6 Quodlibet: KWAHD-li-bet |

Scene 1: Queen Bee

ANDREA: I can't do this! I can't do this! I don't know anyone or anything. I can't remember my name. I want to go home. I can't take this!

BRIAN: Snap out of it! We've been practicing for this since birth. You'll be fine. Spell chlorophyll.¹

ANDREA: That's an easy one. You know it's an easy one!

BRIAN: So spell it.

ANDREA: C-H-L-O-R-O-P-H-Y-L-L. Wait! Is this a trick? You did say chlorophyll, right? As in the green photosynthetic² pigment found chiefly in the chloroplasts of plants?

BRIAN: Well, duh. So you got it right!

ANDREA: Give me a hard one.

BRIAN: I'm not sure you can handle it.

ANDREA: I can handle it! Give it to me!

BRIAN: Chiaroscurist.³

ANDREA: The National Spelling Bee final word in 1998. Simple. Too obvious. But I'll spell it anyway. C-H-I-A-R-O-S-C-U-R-I-S-T.

BRIAN: You're fine. So stop worrying.

ANDREA: But I need to win!

BRIAN: I'm going to win. So you can stop worrying.

(LYDIA enters.)

LYDIA: I'm afraid I'm going to win, kids.

ANDREA: Oh my God, Lydia Hortzhoffer, winner of last year's National Spelling Bee! Oh my God, I love it when you spell. You're, like, amazing to watch. I remember when you were spelling prospicience⁴—

LYDIA: P-R-O-S-P-I-C-I-E-N-C-E. Meaning foresight.

ANDREA: —and there was this kid before you who used an extra “e”—

LYDIA: Please, like there should be another “e” in prospicience.

ANDREA: I know! And so, he was crying while you were trying to spell, and I was thinking, “She can't do it! There are too many distractions! She's getting confused!”

LYDIA: It was all an act.

ANDREA: And then you got it right and I was like, “Oh my God, she got it right!” Then that kid started crying even more—

LYDIA: It's the pressure. You have to be able to handle the pressure.

ANDREA: And I was like, “I'm going to *be* Lydia Hortzhoffer next year.”

LYDIA: You can't be me. I'm me.

ANDREA: Well, I didn't mean it. I just mean, well . . . I was impressed.

LYDIA: You love me. You want to be me.

ANDREA: No, I don't!

BRIAN: Well, Lydia, I'm afraid no one wins twice in a row.

LYDIA: Well, there's no one else like me. I'm an original. I'm the quintessential speller.

BRIAN: You're a quokka.⁵

LYDIA: A reddish-brown short-tailed wallaby?

BRIAN: You heard me. Need me to spell it?

ANDREA: Come on, you guys. Who's the best speller is a quodlibet⁶ we could argue about all day.

LYDIA: Is not. We'll find out soon enough.

BRIAN: We need to get in place. It's about to start.

ANDREA: *What if I suddenly get sick?*

LYDIA: This is going to be televised on national television.

BRIAN: Televised implies that it's going to be on television. That was redundant.

ANDREA: *I don't want to be a laughingstock. A fool. An ignoramus. A buffoon. A harebrain. A nincom-*

poop. A horse's behind. A dingaling. A simpleton. An imbecile—

BRIAN: Andrea, stop! Control yourself!

ANDREA: *I don't want to be any of those things on TV. I've seen those people. They cry. I don't want to cry! I don't know if I'm strong enough for this. I know I'm smart enough. I can spell anything. But with the pressure on, I don't know. I don't want pity. I don't want parents saying, "Awww." I hate the "awww." It's the worst thing ever. You know you're a pathetic neonate then. "Neonate⁷: N-E-O-N-A-T-E. A newborn child." I can do this. I find spelling relaxing. I do! I find people staring at me terrifying, but I find spelling relaxing. I can do this. I can do this. I am a virtuoso: V-I-R-T-U-O-S-O.*

BRIAN: That's right, Andrea. You can do this.

LYDIA: Why are you so nice to her?

BRIAN: She's my friend.

LYDIA: She's your competition.

BRIAN: And she's my friend.

LYDIA: That doesn't make any sense.

BRIAN: Sure it does. I don't have to hate her to compete against her.

LYDIA: Sure you do. What if it comes down to you or her?

ANDREA: I hope you win.

BRIAN: I hope we both win.

LYDIA: You can't both win. Who do you really want to win? I bet *you* want to win yourself.

BRIAN: Well, maybe I do. And I bet deep down Andrea wants to win, too.

ANDREA: No, I don't. I don't want my picture in the papers.

BRIAN: Sure you do.

ANDREA: No, actually. I'm terrified of having my picture taken.

BRIAN: Seriously? It's just a little flash. It's not going to hurt you.

ANDREA: It's not that. It's just that I have no control over my facial expressions, it seems. I always look, well, drunk.

BRIAN: But you're not.

ANDREA: Of course not. It's just that my face seems to go crazy when someone says, "Say cheese!" I start to think, "Why not please? Why do I have to smile anyway? Plus, I don't like cheese; I'm lactose intolerant. I hope I don't look stupid." And somehow between all these thoughts, I get a very stupid and embarrassing look on my face. So I would rather not have my picture in the paper. I prefer to be mysterious than embarrassed.

BRIAN: Yeah, but don't you want to tell people forever that you were the National Spelling Bee winner?

LYDIA: And aren't your parents going to kill you if you blow it?

ANDREA: Maybe. My parents really want this for me. They want me to succeed. I wonder sometimes if it would be easier if I failed or succeeded. If I fail, maybe they'll give me a break and I can watch TV or play a video game every once in a while. And if I succeed, they'll be so proud—I know they do this because they want the best for me. Why is nothing easy?

BRIAN: I know. But you're right. Sometimes it would be nice just to be a dumb, old kid.

LYDIA: "Old kid" is an oxymoron. The words contradict each other.

BRIAN: Yeah? So?

LYDIA: So? I just thought you should know.

BRIAN: I know. But that's just it! Wouldn't it be nice if I didn't know and I could just say whatever popped into my head? After all, we're only kids. We don't need all this pressure.

LYDIA: You don't want to win! You're going to lose, lose, lose!

BRIAN: Whatever. I'm going to mop the floor with you.

LYDIA: If it comes down to you or her, you'll feel bad for her and you'll lose. See? Friends just make you weak.

BRIAN: That is so sad.

LYDIA: It's the truth! You don't want to face it.

BRIAN: Well, I'd rather have friends than be angry and alone all the time.

LYDIA: I guess that's the difference between you and me.

BRIAN: I guess so.

ANDREA: I forget how to spell "spell"!

BRIAN: You're going to be fine, Andrea.

LYDIA: You're going to lose.

BRIAN: *(To LYDIA.)* You're going to go away now. And you're going to be fine, Andrea. Don't let her get to you. You can spell anything.

ANDREA: Thanks, Brian. Thanks a lot.

LYDIA: Good luck. Don't wet your pants or anything.

BRIAN: Ditto.

Scene 2: Two Bees or Not Two Bees

NEIL: *Guys*, I'm really sorry. There was this bee in my eye. Right in my eye! And I couldn't see the ball. I thought it would sting me in the eye! You can imagine. I could be blind now. But I smacked that bee. I think I killed it. I'm OK now. Is anybody listening? *Guys*, really, I'm sorry I let you down. It was just that bee—

JOLIE: You were daydreaming. That's why you missed the ball.

NEIL: I wasn't daydreaming! I was paying attention! Ready to go! Ready for action! And then that bee—

MATT: Shut up, Neil.

NEIL: I won't shut up! You gotta understand that I was in danger.

ANTHONY: You let us down. You lost us the game.

NEIL: No, I didn't!

JOLIE: Yes, you did.

NEIL: Well, I didn't mean to.

MATT: But you did.

ANTHONY: Thanks a lot.

NEIL: Well, no one actually hits balls into the outfield usually! That's why I'm *in* the outfield, stupids!

Everyone knows the outfield never has to do anything. Can I help it if some baseball genius—

MATT: There's no such thing as a baseball genius.

NEIL: Well, if some really good kid baseball player hits the ball into the outfield?

JOLIE: You can't help what he does, but you can help what you do.

NEIL: OK, fine. I stink! Is that what you want to hear? I stink!

ANTHONY: Yeah, you do. Tell us something we don't know.

(JOLIE, MATT, and ANTHONY exit.)

NEIL: Stupid jerks. I can't help that a baseball came at me at the same time a bee did and that I can't even play baseball really. Who can catch a fly ball? I hate sports. I hate everyone. Stupid jerks.

(Beat. JOLIE, MATT, and ANTHONY reenter, running and swatting their arms madly.)

MATT: Beeeeees!

NEIL: What?

ANTHONY: Attacking!

NEIL: Stop it. You're not funny.

JOLIE: Not trying to be funny!

MATT: Trying to escape the bees!

NEIL: Seriously. Stop.

ANTHONY: Help!

(JOLIE, MATT, and ANTHONY roll on the ground.)

MATT: Oh thank God!

JOLIE: Free at last!

ANTHONY: I thought we were goners!

(JOLIE, MATT, and ANTHONY become still and act normal again.)

NEIL: Very funny.

JOLIE: What?

NEIL: The bee thing.

MATT: I've never been attacked like that before.

ANTHONY: Those were mad bees. Crazy!

JOLIE: Killer bees.

MATT: We're lucky to be alive.

(Beat.)

NEIL: Well ha, ha, ha. I hope you had fun. You made your point. I'm a liar. I'm a loser. I made up the bee thing. Happy now? I'm just a terrible, terrible

baseball player who can't even catch a ball. Worse than that, I can't even play attention. Truth is, I don't even like baseball. It's stupid. And baseball players, even when they're professional, don't even look like athletes. It's pathetic. They look like my dad. So why is this sport such a big deal? It's stupid. We're trying to hit a little ball then run around in circles. How stupid is that when you think about it? It's sad. Isn't there something better we could do with our time? Of course! But other kids and my dad expect me to do this and do it well. So I try. And this is what happens. I stink. And I get made fun of for even trying. This is just great. I don't know why I even bother. And now I'm going to be forced to keep going with all this even though all you guys hate me, *plus* I bet my dad will make me practice even *more* in the backyard on the weekends. This is horrible. This is like hell. Only instead of there being flames and devils with big forks, we have baseball. Which is even worse. I'd rather get my eye poked with a fork instead of this. This is not even funny.

ANTHONY: Who's being funny?

JOLIE: What are you talking about?

NEIL: I'm talking about baseball.

JOLIE: I got that, but what are you talking about?

NEIL: Are you going to make me spell it out for you? I stink. I S-T-I-N-K. And, fine, I lied about the bee thing. I L-I-E-D. There. Happy now?

ANTHONY: Dude, we were totally just attacked by bees.

MATT: Are you making a joke or something? 'Cause I don't get it.

JOLIE: We believe you. You can stop now.

MATT: It's scary and awful to be attacked by bees. I would have missed a fly ball, too.

ANTHONY: I can't believe how calm you were when they attacked you, Neil.

MATT: Yeah, you were pretty amazing.

JOLIE: How did you do it?

NEIL: How did I do it?

JOLIE: Yeah!

(Beat.)

NEIL: Well, it took a lot of concentration.

ANTHONY: Amazing.

NEIL: I *wanted* to catch the ball and win the game.

MATT: Oh my God.

NEIL: Right. So I thought maybe if I averted my eyes from the field and turned away from the bees, I might stand a better chance.

ANTHONY: Of course! So you faced away from the incoming ball.

MATT: It makes perfect sense now!

NEIL: I was looking out of the corner of my eye.

JOLIE: So it just *looked* like you weren't looking.

MATT: Brilliant!

NEIL: I just couldn't let those bees get my eyeballs. I was going to need them if there was any chance of catching that ball.

JOLIE: It's so tragic. That ball was yours.

NEIL: I know. I really thought I could do it. I just had to try to keep track of the ball and the attacking bees at the same time.

ANTHONY: That must have been hard.

NEIL: Hard? Please. I'm lucky to be alive.

JOLIE: Shhh!

NEIL: What?

JOLIE: I think . . .

MATT: I hear . . .

ANTHONY: Bees!

NEIL: Aaaaaah!

(NEIL runs away.)

ANTHONY: That kid is seriously weird.

MATT: Did he really think we'd fall for that?

JOLIE: I do feel a little sorry for him.

MATT: Well, yeah.

ANTHONY: Why?

JOLIE: Well, he really shouldn't be playing baseball.

MATT: He stinks.

ANTHONY: Did you see how that ball just plopped down *right* in front of him?

JOLIE: Pathetic.

MATT: Sad. But he's right about one thing. Nobody really expects the outfield to do anything.

ANTHONY: True . . . We should try to get that other guy on our team, the one who hit that ball into the outfield . . .

(JOLIE, ANTHONY, and MATT exit as they talk. NEIL reenters.)

NEIL: Guys? Where are you? I don't actually see the bees anymore. Maybe I scared them off. Want to go get some pizza? Guys?