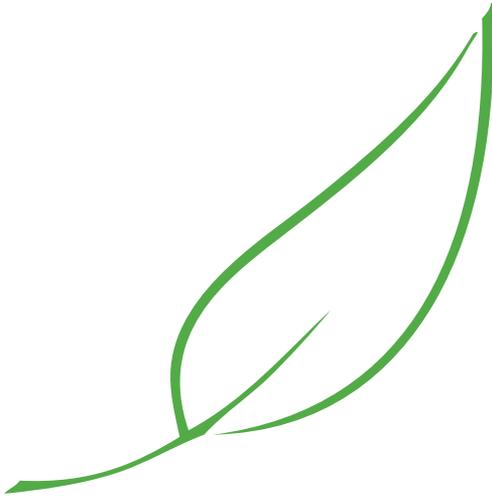


Invisible Boy

By Robert Frankel



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THE INVISIBLE BOY**By Robert Frankel**

SYNOPSIS: Larry Herman reads this ad in a rock music magazine and decides that he's been an outcast from his school long enough. He is tired of feeling awkward and definitely tired of being embarrassed by Morry the Maniac every day! Despite his annoying little sister's skepticism, he orders Chen's potion. It arrives with ominous instructions informing him that with one drink "INVISIBLE YOU BECOME, BUT THE SECOND IS FOREVER DONE." And with one swig, it works, he's invisible! Larry enjoys his invisibility for awhile, but when he turns visible in gym class, Morry is there to embarrass him again! Larry, feeling more humiliated than ever, takes a second swallow, and ends the first act "INVISIBLE FOREVER!" After a soul-searching conversation with his best friend, Larry finally decides that he should come back to the real world. But how? Enter Mrs. Omnicker, a zany "spiritual medium" that eventually conjures up the supreme spirit, Zorn, who convinces Larry that self-confidence is all it takes to return to the real world. A super play with a funny yet warm message about self-esteem. Split stage set.

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(3 male, 7 female, 5 either)*

LARRY HERMAN (m)An intelligent, sensitive boy with a sharp sense of humor who wears glasses and is into rap and rock music. His lack of self-confidence alienates him from the "in" crowd. He also has a crush on Jennifer Leeland. *(132 lines)*

MORRY GELTZ (m).....The school bully, a boy everyone is afraid of to "mess with". He is cocky, brash, athletic, and unsympathetic to anyone who is different than he is. He is Larry's archenemy. *(34 lines)*

MRS. HERMAN (f).....Larry's mother, divorced and in her late forties or fifties. She is a strict, caring

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- mom with a fun sense of humor when someone helps her re-discover it. (65 lines)
- SUZIE HERMAN (f).....Larry's pesky, precocious, younger sister. She tries hard to be just like her mother. (65 lines)
- COACH (f).....A disciplined athletic woman in her thirties, with a wry sense of humor and a sense of fairness. (40 lines)
- ANDREW KELLER (m)A good-natured, self-confident friend of Larry's. He is Larry's loyal confidante and shares Larry's interest in music. (85 lines)
- BLESU (m/f).....An elf-like ghost creature that can be either male or female. It speaks very quickly, is very impatient when it comes to humans, and is always in a huff about something. (11 lines)
- ZORN (m/f)A ghostly creature who is capable of taking any form, male or female. It has a keen sense of humor, a strong insight into human nature, and takes a laid back, modern approach to giving advice and council to Larry. (37 lines)
- JENNIFER LEELAND (f).....A bright, charming peer of Larry's who has always felt badly about the razzing Larry gets from Morry. (11 lines)
- MARIE SCHNEIDER (f)Jennifer's good-natured friend and the object of Andrew's interest. (5 lines)
- MRS. OMNICKER (f).....A quirky, humorous spiritual medium in her fifties. She always finds a way to take her job seriously and still preserve her bizarre sense of humor. (48 lines)
- ANDREA (f).....A student at the school, very friendly and good at basketball. (5 lines)

OBSERVERS 1,2,3 (m/f)Three students at the school in the gym class. They may be male or female, and help cheer on Morry and Larry during two-foot races they run. (*OBSERVER 1: 9 lines; OBSERVER 2: 9 lines; OBSERVER 3: 9 lines*)

DESCRIPTION OF STAGE SET AND PROPERTIES

Action takes place on a split stage (*or can be preformed with two complete sets as budget allows*). The right side of the stage contains Larry's bedroom for scenes I-1, II-2, II-2. The left side contains a piece of the school gymnasium for scenes I-2 and II-3. Up center in Larry's bedroom is his rumpled bed. To it's right on the back wall is a window. To it's left on the sidewall is a door leading off to the rest of the house. Down left against the wall is a dresser. It contains various high school paraphernalia. Next to it is a stack of rock magazines (*e.g. Rolling Stone*). The bedroom walls are covered with various rock star posters. And the floors are strewn with clothes and miscellaneous debris.

The gymnasium shares a common door up right with the bedroom. Down right from it is a stack of gym mats. Opposite the mats on the down left wall I a door leading outside through the locker rooms to the school baseball field. Up left of the door is a basketball hoop.

PLACE

Larry's bedroom on the right for scenes I-1, II-1, and II-2. The high school gymnasium on the left for scenes I-2 and II-3. The action takes place in a middle-sized town somewhere in America. Once the stage is set, no change of scenery is required. Light can be used to alternately darken and lighten half the stage to highlight the particular half of the set in use,

TIME

Act I – Scene 1- Seven p.m on a school night.

Act I – Scene 2- Ten a.m. the next day.

Act II- Scene 1- Two weeks later on a Sunday afternoon.

Act II- Scene 2- same day, 11:30 p.m.

Act III- Scene 3- The Following Monday at 10a.m.

PROPS

Rock music magazine (*e.g. Rolling Stone*)

Cassette tape player with headset

Eyeglasses

Bottle of green liquid (*potion*) in brown paper package

Portable radio

Geometry book

Stopwatch

Several gym mats

Two basketballs

Backpack for schoolbooks

Tube of toothpaste

Chess book

“Boom box” (*Large radio*)

ACT ONE, SCENE I**SETTING:**

We are in Larry's bedroom at 7:00 p.m. on a school night. It is a jungle of rock star posters, Rolling Stone magazines, and dirty clothes. There is a dresser DSR and a closet door DSL. Upstage is a rumpled bed with the bedroom door to one side and the window to the other.

AT RISE:

As LIGHTS come up, LARRY is lying on his stomach trying to study a geometry book while listening to a "rap song" on his cassette player. This should be turned up loudly, and can be any rap song, which is not well known. As the rap song proceeds for thirty seconds or so, LARRY gets more and more into the beat. He lays down his book and thumbs through the Rolling Stone magazine under his pillow. He begins drumming his hands on it. Then he stands up and struts to the music. Finally, overcome by the beat, he begins drumming loudly on the wall while strutting back and forth.

MOTHER: *(knocking on Larry's door and calling from offstage above the din of the music.)* Larry!...Larry? Are you okay in there? *(LARRY ignores this and continues drumming.)* ...Larry Herman, you answer me this minute!

LARRY: *(He reluctantly stops drumming and crawls back onto the bed to turn his cassette player off.)* Yeah, Mom. I'm fine.

MOTHER: *(Offstage.)* What are you doing in there all this time anyway?

LARRY: *(Grabbing a magazine again and flipping through it.)* Nothing, Mom. I was just doing my math homework. Got a big geometry test tomorrow. I was just...*(His mom opens the door abruptly. He quickly shoves the magazine under his pillow and grabs his geometry book.)*

LARRY: *(continued.)* *(As if he has just solved a difficult problem.)* That makes...Twenty-eight degrees. That's it! This stuff is tough. Did they have geometry in your day's mom?

MOTHER: *(Not buying any of it.)* Larry. I assume you will study

hard enough so that you will do a good job tomorrow on that test. In the meantime, your friend Andrew is here, waiting downstairs.

LARRY: He is?

MOTHER: Yes, he is. Now I'm not letting him up here unless you promise to clean the dishes when he leaves.

LARRY: But Mom, Suzie said she was...

MOTHER: Don't you "but Mom" me. Your sister is busy. Besides, it's your turn tonight and I don't see any broken arms to keep you from it. Promise?

LARRY: Yes Mom.

MOTHER: *(Looking at wristwatch.)* It's five after seven. I expect him gone by seven fifteen so you can finish your homework too. *(Exiting and calling offstage.)* Andrew. You may come up now. *(LARRY turns rap music back on. Andrew Enters)*

ANDREW: *(Stops and listens to the music. LARRY turns and shoots him a look of "Well?". ANDREW smiles.)* You got the latest Rappin' Ray Fire album? Excellent!

LARRY: *(smiling proudly)* yeah, It's awesome. It's like *(He tries to imitate the rapper.)*

He's really good,
Like I knew he would,
Be, 'cause I can tell,
When he rings my bell!

ANDREW: Good thing you don't have to make a living at it!

LARRY: *(Over Reacting.)* Yeah, yeah, I know I'm not Rappin' Ray Fire. I know I'm not Jessie Lee Jenson. I'm just Larry Herman-alias The Nerd, The Geezer, Larry the Loser, Geek breath, Pee Wee Herman...

ANDREW: Hey, now what did I tell you about those guys calling you that?

LARRY: Right, right. *(Reciting unconvincingly)* They're the ones with the problems. You know what the problem is with that, though? All those names- they're all true. I am a nerd and a nobody and...

ANDREW: Aw, come on...

LARRY: No, no, it's true. Andy, who else would have all these rock posters around? I mean, do you know any other idiot who

worships Rappin' Ray Fire?

ANDREW: (*Irritated.*) Well, for one, I do! (*Punches LARRY semi-playfully in the arm.*)

LARRY: (*Rubbing his arm, He suddenly gets a thought.*) Hey. Hey! Let's do that new Fire jive. How's it go?

ANDREW: (*He begins the rap, and LARRY joins in. Both and in full voice and can use whatever dance motions seem appropriate.*) You mean "Gotcha"? I'm

gonna getcha

Then I gotcha

When I gotcha

Gonna freeze

Gonna hold ya

Gonna mold ya

Gonna kiss you in the breeze

MOTHER: (*Calling from offstage.*) Larry! I'm on the phone. Keep it down, please!

LARRY: (*Immediately stopping and calling back.*) Okay, Mom! (*Flopping back down on the bed.*) I'm depressed.

ANDREW: Me too!

LARRY: What are you depressed about?

ANDREW: (*Grabbing an old rock magazine from the stack by the dresser and sitting on the bed to browse it.*) I don't know. I thought it would make you feel better.

LARRY: Yeah, well, thanks. But it's not gonna help me tomorrow when Morry the Maniac swoops down and attacks.

ANDREW: I swear that guy's a lunatic!

LARRY: If he pulls my gym shorts down one more time in gym class while we're jogging in front of the girls' softball team, I'll...I promise I'll...I'll probably die from embarrassment. (*He takes off his glasses and rubs his eyes. He stops and looks at his glasses.*) "Four eyes and no brain". How about two eyes and can't see. (*He flings them toward the window.*)

ANDREW: Hey, take it easy. (*Retrieving the glasses.*) A lot of guys wear glasses. (*As he grabs the glasses, he spots a shoebox size brown paper package under the bed.*) What's this?...(*he puts the glasses on the bed, and reaches for the box.*)...An early Christmas present for me?

LARRY: Hey, leave that alone! *(He desperately tries to keep ANDREW away from the box but it is too late. ANDREW holds it up and away from him.)* Come on, it's nothing. *(Trying to grab the box.)* I'll show it to you tomorrow, I promise.

ANDREW: *(Keeping the box out of Larry's reach, he reads the package label aloud.)* To: Larry Edward Herman. From..." *(He looks up, puzzled.)* "Al's Dog Supplies"? You don't even have a dog!!

LARRY: *(Startled, then a little scared.)* Al's Dog...what? Lemme see that. *(He reaches for the box and Andrew keeps it away.)* No really. Come on. This is important. *(Andrew hesitates, then gives it to him. Reading it to himself.)* "Al's...Dog...Supplies" ...But...? *(He turns it over, searching it.)*

ANDREW: Great act, great act. Look, I gotta go. What the heck is that? A gift for you next girlfriend? *(He laughs.)*

LARRY: *(Stuffing it back under the bed.)* Funny, funny...no, it's just something I.... it's a flashlight, okay? I ordered it from a magazine.

ANDREW: A flashlight? From a dog shop?

LARRY: Well it... was a fancy one...you know, to take your dog on walks with and stuff.

ANDREW: Why do you need a flashlight to walk a dog you don't have?

LARRY: *(Flustered.)* If I want to have a...

MOTHER: *(Calling from offstage.)* Larry! Ten minutes is up! I think it's time for your friend to go home now.

LARRY: *(calling back to her.)* Okay, Mom! *(To Andrew.)* Guess I'll see you tomorrow.

ANDREW: *(Walking to the door.)* Guess so. A flashlight? You better come up with a better story than that! *(He smiles and Exits.)*

LARRY: *(Turns, and apprehensively takes the package out from under the bed. Reads the label aloud again.)* "To: Larry Edward Herman, from..." *(Pause.)* "Willie Chen's...House of Magic"...? *(He flips the box over, looking for another label but finds none.)* Where in the heck...? *(The window blows open. It is dark outside. He sets the box on his bed, goes to the dresser, and rummages through the stack of magazines. He finally finds the*

one he wants, flips through it quickly, and stops on one of the pages. Reading aloud.) “ Willie Chen’s House of Magic presents the potion of invisibility. You are alone. You are a worshipper of heroes. You feel rejected and useless, and nobody sees you as you really are. Get rid of your problems. Chen’s Potion of Invisibility will give you what you really want—invisibility. Complete confidentiality guaranteed. Send \$ 19.95 to...” *(He cautiously takes the box again, and sits on the bed.)* Willie Chen’s House of Magic...Well, you better be worth five weeks of allowance. *(He opens the package gingerly and removes a clear bottle with dark green liquid inside. He tosses the packaging on the floor and holds bottle up to examine it. Then he reads the label excitedly.)* “Potion of Invisibility!” This is going to be excellent! *(He starts laughing. There is a sharp knock on the door that makes him jump.)* Who is it?

SUZIE: *(Offstage.)* It’s me, nerdo. Do you still want my help or not? Otherwise I have homework to do.

LARRY: *(Putting the bottle on the dresser.)* Come on in, Suzie-Q.

SUZIE: *(Opens the door and Enters. She is LARRY’S younger sister- intelligent, precocious, and a bit of a brat. She is pretending to be a tour guide.)* And this, ladies and gentlemen, is the home of a typical geek. Notice the piles of dirty clothes, the great mass of rock hero magazines, and the posters that are a rare example...

LARRY: All right already. Geez! I can’t be anywhere without having my life examined! Maybe I don’t need help from a lowly little sixth grader!

SUZIE: Oh yeah? Who’s doing better in math, oh great math marvel?

LARRY: Who’s doing better in English, oh, wondrous reader of rubbish?

SUZIE: Well, who was the one...

MOTHER: *(Offstage.)* Larry! Suzie! I hope that’s the sound of doing homework I hear up there. I’ll be up in a few minutes to see all the wonderful work you’re doing!

SUZIE and LARRY: *(Calling back in unison.)* Okay, Mom!

LARRY: Now, are you going to shut up and listen for a change? We’ve gotta hurry!

SUZIE: Okay, oh, great Big Brother! I am all ears.

LARRY: *(Nervously.)* I bought this stuff and...I just wanted someone to be there when I...if something happened, you know, and...

SUZIE: What are you babbling about?

LARRY: I...Look, you gotta promise not to tell Mom okay? *(Ashenods. He grabs the bottle from the dresser, and hands it to her.)* Here.

SUZIE: *(Taking the bottle from him.)* What's this?

LARRY: Read!

SUZIE: "Willie...Potion of invisibility"?! It looks like shampoo! What's it really do? *(Her eyes light up.)* I know! This is one of those practical jokes where you put this in someone's milk and their teeth turn green, right? *(Laughing with glee.)* Who're you going to pull it on? I want to see!

LARRY: This isn't a practical joke. This is...magic. It's a magic potion that makes you invisible. I found it in a magazine and...

SUZIE: Get out! Is this for real? How much did you pay for this?

LARRY: Twenty bucks.

SUZIE: Twenty bucks! You wasted twenty dollars on green goop? You must be nuts. What'd you blow your money on this for?

LARRY: *(Angrily pushes her toward the door.)* Forget it, just forget it!

SUZIE: But...

LARRY: Out little twerp. I don't need your help! I don't need anyone's help! *(Pushes her out the door and slams it shut. Angry and close to tears, he sits on his bed holding the potion bottle and talking to himself.)* What do you know anyway? You're just a dumb sister. And this stuff's gonna do the trick, alright. *(Holds up the bottle.)* Yep, it sure is. *(Yells defiantly at the door where Suzie left.)* It sure is! *(Puts the bottle back in his lap, dejected.)* Yeah, right, Pee Wee. You just blew twenty bucks. Didn't anyone ever tell you there's no such thing as magic? *(Pause. He looks at the bottle and reads the directions.)* "Two times from the bottle you may drink.

Two times invisible you may become.

One you'll try with no good-bye,

But the second is forever done."

(He

looks at the bottle for a moment, and then slowly unscrews the cap.) You can't make me do the dishes if you can't see me. Ha! You can't make me get F's on homework if I'm invisible! *(Holds the bottle up, preparing to drink it.)* You don't like me, and I don't need you. Any of you! *(He brings the bottle to his lips, pauses, closes his eyes, and then takes a gulp. The lights immediately dim, flicker, and return. The sound of wind chimes, or a band triangle is heard briefly offstage. Larry is now invisible, though he doesn't know it. Blue or green spotlight on him can be used to highlight his invisibility. He opens his eyes and looks slowly down at himself.)* I'm still here. *(Louder.)* I'm still here! Twenty bucks and I'm still here. It's just not fair. It was guaranteed. They promised...What'd you expect, dummy? Magic? *(He goes back to the bed and plops down on his back, staring up at the bottle in his hand. Pause.)*

MOTHER: *(Knocking on door and immediately entering.)* Larry! There are still dishes to be...*(Looks around room.)* Larry? Don't you hide from me, Larry Herman. You have chores to do. *(LARRY watches her scout the room. He grows slowly incredulous.)*...Larry? *(Looks under the bed. He sits up and watches her. She stands, and then goes to open the window calling out.)* Larry? I hope that boy hasn't shimmied down the drainpipe again. Last time he almost broke his leg. *(Calling.)* Larry! Larry! *(Waits and listens. Worried, she turns and sees the bottle "floating" in Larry's invisible hand.)* What ...floating in...? *(Starts for the door, scared.)* How is that poss..? *(She turns back toward Larry once more, lets out a gasp, and races out of the room closing the door. Calling offstage.)* Suzie! Suzie! Come here right now...

LARRY: *(Slowly smiling and looking at the bottle.)* Thank you, Mr. Chen. It looks like I am gonna get my money's worth.

END OF SCENE

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO**SETTING:**

We are in the school gym- some mats and basketballs, and a basketball hoop at which several girls are playing "21".

AT RISE:

The ladies gym coach enters the gym wearing a nylon jacket, shorts, and a stopwatch around her neck. As she glances at her stopwatch, Andrew jogs in and immediately stoops over with hands on knees, panting.

COACH: Nine minutes, 45 seconds. Not bad, Keller.

ANDREW: *(Gasp.)* Thank you, Coach.

COACH: If you were running two miles. Well, last one in puts away the equipment. Usually that's Mr. Herman. Where did he disappear to today?

ANDREW: I don't know coach.

COACH: Well, you're it then. Go to it, Keller.

ANDREW: But Coach Grant always has everyone help...

COACH: Coach Grant is in the hospital and won't be back for six weeks, Keller. And I am not him! Now get busy. *(She walks to the girls and helps them with their basketball shots.)*

ANDREW: *(Beginning to pick up a mat.)* Great- not only am I the last one in, but now I've got to be the maid too. *(Glances toward the girls.)* Geez, and Marie Schneider is watching. *(Marie runs to retrieve a ball and sees Andrew. He smiles, she grimaces and runs back to the game.)* Won-der-ful. *(Looking up.)* You can let me die now. *(Continues folding the mat. Larry enters, preceded by sound of wind chimes. He is still invisible. He walks behind Andrew.)*

LARRY: Are we playing "The Incredible Janitor" today, Keller?

ANDREW: *(Jumps.)* Geez Herman, where have you been? *(He turns, and jumps again, dropping the mat, because he sees no one. Whispering.)* LARRY? *(Pause, Starts chuckling.)* This is a good one! How'd you do this?

LARRY: *(Right in front of Andrew.)* Easy as pie, guy! And you're the only one that can hear me, sly!

ANDREW: (*Jumps again, looking around, shakily.*) Hey Herman, this is definitely not funny! (*Coach begins walking over to Andrew without him knowing.*) If there's a microphone here, I don't see it. Hey, this is spooky!

COACH: (*Right behind him. Andrew is now sandwiched between the Coach and Larry.*) What's really spooky, Keller... (*He's startled and turns to her.*) ...is that I asked you to clean up five minutes ago, and all I see is a half-folded mat on the ground. What have you got to say for your-self?

LARRY: You're in trouble now Andy.

ANDREW: (*Startled and turns to Larry.*) Will you cut that out?

COACH: Pardon me, Mr. Keller? Did I hear you right?

ANDREW: (*Startled and turns back to Coach.*) No Coach, what I meant to say was...

LARRY: What if I pulled your shorts down in front of the coach?

ANDREW: (*turning to Larry.*) You better not mess with me!

COACH: All right Keller. I won't "mess with you". But when you're done cleaning up this mess, I want to see one hundred sit-ups. Is that clear, Mr. Keller?

ANDREW: Yes, Coach.

LARRY: ANDY!

ANDREW: Ssshh!

COACH: I didn't catch that. Yes what?

ANDREW: Yes Coach.

LARRY: Andy!

ANDREW: Ssshh!

COACH: (*Putting the back of her hand to Andrew's forehead.*) Do you have a cold, son?

ANDREW: No Coach.

LARRY: Andy!

ANDREW: Ssshh!

COACH: Well, you sure are sneezing a lot! (*She walks back to the girls.*)

ANDREW: (*Whispering into space.*) What is going on?

LARRY: I've been trying to tell you. That stuff I got from Chen- it works!

ANDREW: What stuff? You mean that magic mouthwash you called me about last night? Come off it! No one... (*Looking*

around him.) ...Can be...*(Sees Marie looking at him strangely. He pretends to spot what he was looking for, smiles, and picks "it" up off the ground.)* ...Invisible Is this for real?

LARRY: *(Yanking Andy's gym socks down.)* Does that feel real?!

ANDREW: *(Quickly pulling socks up and taking a step away. Thinking.)* So...you're invisible. Just like the movies! Excellent! You can go around...and do whatever you want... and nobody knows you're- Wow! This is awesome! Hey, what did your folks say about this?

LARRY: Well, Mom didn't call Dad about it yet. But she had a fit last night when she couldn't find me. She's scared something happened to me. Even Suzie-Q was crying. As if they really miss me!

ANDREW: *(Stacking mats.)* Man, of course they miss you! I know my parents would go nuts if I were missing all of a sudden.

LARRY: *(Leaning against the wall.)* Yeah, but you're not a nobody. You're not Wormy Hermy. *(In Dracula voice.)* You're not the Invisible Boy! *(He laughs sinisterly.)*

ANDREW: Don't do that, will ya? It's kinda creepy.

LARRY: Well anyway, this stuff wears off sometime. So it's just for fun. But if I take another swallow, it's good-bye world, hello invisibility. And if I ever-

ANDREW: Wait a minute. What do you mean? If you take another swallow, that's it? You never come back?

LARRY: You got it.

ANDREW: Are you crazy? Get rid of this stuff now. It's dangerous! You wanna be invisible for the rest of your life?

LARRY: It's not bad, actually. This morning I made Suzie's toothpaste float, and then I turned the water faucet to cold when she was taking a shower! I didn't know she could run that fast! *(Laughs.)* Besides Andy, I was already invisible without this potion.

ANDREW: *(Finishing stacking, fills arms with volleyballs and starts walking to the locker room. Larry follows.)* Says you! You're just down 'cause Jennifer Leeland doesn't know you exist.

Basketball escapes from the game toward Larry. Jennifer starts after it. Larry chuckles and kicks it back to her. She grabs it wide-

eyed, looks at Andrew, and then she runs back to the other girls to tell them about it.

LARRY: (*In Dracula voice.*) The Invisible Boy strikes again!

ANDREW: Will you cut that out? This is not- uh-oh. (*Stops. Morry enters from the locker room and stops to tie gym shoes.*) Here comes Morry the Maniac, the man who makes Godzilla look like a college graduate.

LARRY: Great. This is a real day brightener. What do you say we turn around and- wait a minute! Why am I worried? I'm invisible! Ha ha! This is excellent! Just like the movies- "Morry the Maniac meets the Invisible Boy"! At last- this is gonna be fun!

ANDREW: I hope so.

MORRY: (*Spots Andrew and swaggers his way.*) Hey Keller. I hear you're throwing a party.

ANDREW: (*Puzzled.*) No. Where'd you hear that?

MORRY: Well it looks like your having a ball! (*Knocks balls out of Andy's hands. He laughs. Coach looks over and frowns.*) Looks like you'd better pick those up quick before Coach makes you run another lap. (*Andrew bends to pick up a ball and Morry snaps his shorts.*) Fire one! (*Salutes.*) A direct hit to the rear, sir! (*Laughs.*)

ANDREW: Look, I don't want any trouble. I've got to get to math, so I'll see you later. (*Begins walking toward other balls.*)

MORRY: (*Grabs the back of Andy's shirt to keep him from going.*) Hey, where's your friend today? Larry lead pants- runner of the two-hour mile! Ha! Is he still walking to school? (*Morry imitates an old lady walking.*)

ANDREW: He's... around somewhere.

MORRY: Well tell him I'm looking for him. Tell him the girls can't wait to see him standing in his jock strap again! (*He laughs and sees Marie playing basketball and calls to her.*) Hey Marie! Got a second? I wanna show you something. (*She smiles, hesitates, and then comes over.*)

ANDREW: (*Whispers.*) Great big help you were.

LARRY: I'm just getting into it, that's all. I'm ready now. (*As Marie approaches, Morry confidently moves toward her. Larry grabs Morry's shorts and gives them a snap. Morry lets out a startled*

grunt and looks around. Marie lets out an embarrassed giggle.)

MARIE: Hi. What'd you want to show me? I have to get back to the game.

MORRY: Well actually... *(Larry is behind him and starts tugging his shorts down which force Morry to struggle with his shorts to keep them up.)* I wanted to... show you...

MARIE: *(Staring at his struggling hands.)* You're weird. I have to go! *(MARIE runs back to the group.)*

MORRY: *(He looks around to see who's doing it. Only sees Andrew some distance away collecting basketballs.)* Hey Keller, have you got a death wish?

ANDREW: *(pretending not to have seen, and holding back a laugh.)* No, why do you ask?

MORRY: *(Starting toward Andy.)* "No, why do you ask?" Real cute, Andy.

As he nears Andy, Larry steps between them and casually sticks out a foot. Morry trips over his foot and crashes into the stacked mats. Coach sees this and heads over. Morry gets up facing Andrew. Larry, behind Morry, kneels preparing to bowl him over. Suddenly the wind chimes sound, the gym lights flicker, the green light vanishes, and Larry is visible again. He doesn't know and is laughing. Andrew, who suddenly can see him begins waving "no" frantically. Morry sees this, turns, and finds Larry kneeling behind him.

LARRY: *(Looking up and laughing.)* Ha ha! Not even Morry the Maniac can touch the invisible boy! You are silly putty in my hands- ha ha! *(As he reaches to yank Morry's knees, Morry grabs him roughly and pulls him, startled, to a stand.)*

MORRY: So, it was Larry the Loser all along.

LARRY: *(Stunned.)* Uh...actually...I dropped my glasses and was just looking for them. *(Touches glasses already on his nose.)* Yep, there they are. Gotta get to class now. Bye!

MORRY: Not funny, Pee Wee. Looks like you need to attend Morry's school for manners...now! *(He puts Larry in a full nelson.)*

COACH: all right, that's enough! *(Morry reluctantly lets go of Larry,*

and pushes him away.) Whenever I see you, Morry, I'm reminded that some of us have evolved farther from the apes than others. *(Larry chuckles. She glares at him.)* And others of us have lost what little brains they had! Did I or did I not see you, Mr. Herman, preparing to rip Mr. Geltz here?

LARRY: *(Squirming.)* I just dropped my glasses, Coach, honest, and then he grabbed-

COACH: Mr. Herman, wake up. This is the real world. And in the real world honesty counts. *(Morry chuckles. She turns to him.)* And did I or did I not see you, Mr. Geltz, preparing to beat up on someone half your size?

MORRY: Yeah, but he-

COACH: I don't wanna hear it Geltz. Now, gentlemen, we seem to have a disagreement to settle between two soon-to-be adults. *(Girls from the basketball game begin to walk over to find out what's happening.)* Real adults have these kinds of things happen all the time. And what do you suppose they do about it? Hmm?

MORRY: Well, I saw Billy Martin argue with an umpire and kick dirt all over his shoes. Boy, you should have seen-

COACH: I'm talking about real adults. Larry, any idea?

LARRY: I guess...well, Ozzy Osborne's wild when he gets mad. His face kinda puffs up...*(Does his best to initiate Ozzy Osborne. The name may be changed to suit the "rock star du jour.")* ...And he usually tries to eat a snake or something...*(crowd laughs.)*

COACH: Well, I see we have two students of humanity here. No, gentlemen, a disagreement can be settled in one of two civilized ways. *(Everyone in the gym is now gathered around.)* The two parties can debate the issue, or they can compete in athletic combat against each other, since neither of you seem capable of intelligent discussion, and since this was gym class before you two disrupted it, athletic combat it will be! *(Morry begins grinning maniacally and staring at Larry. Begins to squirm and looks to Andrew for help. Andrew can only shrug helplessly.)* And what will the combat be? *(Thinks a moment. Then.)* A race!

MORRY: *(Rubbing his hands together.)* Sounds great!

LARRY: You're kidding.

COACH: 500 yards- out the door, to the baseball field, around the water fountain, and back.

MORRY: (*doing knee bends and flexing.*) Sounds great!

LARRY: (*Still staring in disbelief.*) You're kidding.

COACH: (*Looking at her stopwatch.*) You have thirty seconds to get ready. 29...28...

LARRY: You're kidding.

ANDREW: (*Going to Larry.*) Larry, she's not kidding.

COACH: ...23...22...21

LARRY: This is stupid. I'll be massacred! I can't run! I'm a turtle out there. I'll get killed! I'll...I'll be embarrassed!

COACH: ...14...13...12

ANDREW: Look, you gotta do it. Everyone is watching.

LARRY: Okay, okay. This is bogus...(*Begins shaking his hands and half-heartedly jogging in place.*)

COACH: ...4...3...2...1...GO! (*Both boys run out SL door. Everyone crowds around in a general din.*)

OBSERVER 1: Morry's running backwards! Look! (*Laughs.*)

OBSERVER 2: Man, is Larry slow! (*Yelling.*) Hey, Larry- get the lead out!

ANDREA: Morry is starting to pull ahead.

OBSERVER 3: Oh, look- Pee Wee fell! He tripped on his shoelaces. Man, that guy's a case. (*Crowd runs to face the audience watching the race proceed.*)

MARIE: (*To Jennifer.*) That Morry's wild- but he's fast!

JENNIFER: Hey, Larry looks like he's giving up

OBSERVER 1: He's not even trying. (*Yelling.*) Come on Herman- at least try!

OBSERVER 2: He's just walking now. Morry's got this made in the shade! (*He "high fives" with observer 3.*) (*Crowd moves to SR, anticipating the finish through SR door.*)

OBSERVER 3: (*Imitating a horse-race caller with hands cupped.*) Here he comes, spinning out of the turn, into the homestretch. Morry, the Maniac, in the lead and...holy cow, ladies and gentlemen, you can't even see the Geezer anymore! (*Everyone laughs.*) (*Coach holds a stopwatch and hits the button as Morry enters through the door smiling and stops to catch his breath.*)

OBSERVER 1: *Way to go Morry!*

OBSERVER 2: *Knew you could do it!*

OBSERVER 3: Faster than a speeding bullet!

COACH: One ten. Not bad, Geltz, not bad.

MORRY: Thanks, coach. Hey, Marie, pretty fast, huh?

MARIE: *(She rolls her eyes.)* It was ok.

ANDREW: *(Yelling out to Larry.)* Come on Larry- run! Show'em what you got!

COACH: *(To Andrew.)* I think he just doesn't care. You've gotta have some pride in yourself.

ANDREW: Come on Herman- almost there! *(Larry enters walking, and heads to his backpack. The crowd follows him.)* Hey, what gives, Larry? I know you're not that slow.

COACH: *(To Larry.)* One fifty-four. You're no speed demon, but you've run faster, son. Didn't look like you tried much out there. Didn't give it your best shot.

LARRY: *(Opening backpack.)* Lay off, just lay off, will you!

OBSERVER 1: Even sissies don't give up, Pee Wee! *(All laugh.)*

COACH: All right, cool it. I want you and Morry to shake hands now. He won fair and square

MORRY: *(Walking to Larry, hand extended.)* Yeah, come on, Pee-*(Looking at Coach.)* I mean, "Lar—ry." Shake hands like a man. *(All have formed a semi-circle around Larry now.)*

LARRY: *(Ignoring Morry's hand and holding his backpack with one hand, digging in it.)* Leave me alone, will you? You creamed me, Okay? Happy? *(Voice rising.)* I walked most of the way. You killed me! You're faster than me! You embarrassed me!*(He pulls out the potion bottle and opens it.)*

COACH: Now, son, settle down.

OBSERVER 3: What's that Larry- Alka Seltzer?

OBSERVER 2: You want it on the rocks? We got stones outside!

ANDREW: *(Approaching Larry.)* Don't do it Larry! Come on- it's not so bad.

LARRY: I don't have to live with all of you! I don't do anything good, huh? I don't live up to your standards, huh? Well, can any of you do this? *(Before Andrew can grab him, Larry gulps down the remaining liquid. Wind chimes sound, lights go totally off, and then flicker back on with green light on Larry.)*

Everybody stares, blinking unbelievably. Pause.)

COACH: *(Looking around.)* Larry? Son? Are you okay?

MORRY: Hey, Pee Wee- nice trick. Does this mean we don't have to mess with you any more?! *(All laugh. Then silent. Passing bell rings. Pause.)*

JENNIFER: This is weird.

OBSERVER 1: *(Uneasily.)* Hey, I gotta go to class.

OBSERVER 3: Yeah, me too. See ya! *(Larry begins to walk slowly off.)*

ANDREW: *(Yelling.)* Larry? Don't do this!

COACH: Do what Andy?

ANDREW: Don't disappear forever, Coach. *(Andrew takes Larry's backpack.) (Lights fade as everyone except Coach and Andrew wander off uneasily.)*

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO, SCENE 1**SETTING:**

Two weeks later on a Saturday afternoon. Lights up on Act I, Scene I bedroom. The bedroom is now completely straightened up.

AT RISE:

As lights come up, Larry is lying on his back with his cassette player going and a headset on. He is flipping through a Rolling Stone magazine. His mom enters and Larry immediately drops the magazine on the bed and whips off his headset.

MOTHER: *(Looking around the room sadly. To herself.)* Fifteen days...fifteen...Larry, why? *(Stroking items on his dresser.)* Something terrible has happened to you. I just know it. You would have called otherwise. *(Larry moves to the window ledge. She opens the closet door and stares.)* You'll come back...Larry...*(Sits on bed.)* Won't you? *(She smooths his blanket, and suddenly stops as she notices the magazine and headset for the first time. She promptly stands up, still staring, and calls out.)* Suzie! Suzie come here...please...

SUZIE: *(Arrives at the door.)* What Mom? Is the brat back? I knew he...*(She stops when she sees her Mom's expression.)*

MOTHER: The fourth time, Suzie...

SUZIE: *(Looking at the magazine.)*...Fifth Mom...I think it's the fifth...Mom, I keep telling you. Things are moving around lately, and I know there was another barbecued chicken leg left in the fridge Monday...Mom, this place...

MOTHER: ...is haunted – I know what you've said, Suzie. And maybe...I guess it's the only thing that makes sense anymore...fifteen days and not a word...I guess-

SUZIE: Mom, please, let's try Mrs. Omnicker, please? I know she's kinda strange, but Mom, she can talk to the spirits! Myra Townsend says that she once talked to Elvis Presley six years after he was dead! And he autographed her Ouija board!

MOTHER: *(Absent mindedly.)* Honey, everyone's talked to Elvis after he was dead.

SUZIE: But Mom, Myra says Mrs. Omnicker is an...

(Concentrating.) Ex-er-cist. Myra says she can do exercise or something and get rid of ghosts. And Mom, I think we've got 'em – and they do real nasty things. And Mom? I didn't tell you this but...this morning? I started to put on my blue jeans? And this huge brown frog jumps right out of the legs! *(Larry, who has been listening to all of this, laughs.)* And not only that Mom? Someone- or something- used a magic marker on the label and crossed out the "C" in "Calvin" and changed the "KL" to "ST". Alvin Stein! *(Shaking her head.)*

MOTHER: *(Pause. Uncomprehendingly.)* So?

SUZIE: So-oo? He's only the coolest thing in the school! And only Larry knew I had a crush on him. *(Silence. Then.)* Mom, I think we should get Mrs. Omnicker to exercise with our ghosts. That's what I think.

MOTHER: *(Shaking her head.)* Sometimes I wish your father were here. He'd have some ideas- even if they were crazy.

SUZIE: I saw Daddy on TV yesterday.

MOTHER: How'd he do?

SUZIE: 217. He still can't make his darn spares!

MOTHER: Suzie!

SUZIE: Well, it's true Mom! I liked him better when he wanted to be a jockey. The announcer on TV kept saying, *(Adopting deep announcer's voice and pretending to have a microphone in hand.)* "I just don't see how you can do it, Al. At 6 foot 3 inches and 230 pounds, I just don't see how a horse can carry you!" *(Mother starts chuckling, which spurs Suzie on.)* And Daddy kept saying, *(Adopting a Southern twang.)* "Well, Brent, you gotta know how to hunch over, that's fer dang sherr!" *(Both are laughing now.)* "Cause if you kain't hunch over right, sherr as shootin' yer gonna have one tired little filly suckin sweat at the end!" *(Both are in hysterics, and Larry joins in with laughter. Pause.)*

MOTHER: *(With somber face now.)* Remember the first time we heard him on the radio? *(Both crack up again. Adopting a Southern drawl.)* "Hello y'all! This is WQXA with country all the way! Playin' 'em night and day- that's weird Al Herman's way! Now I'm gonna spin an oldie but a...*(She makes the sound of*



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