

There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom



Written by
Louis Sachar

"If I was someone else I wouldn't make fun of me."
-Bradley Chalkers, 5th grade

Study Guide written and designed by: Brian C. Fahey and Talleri McRae

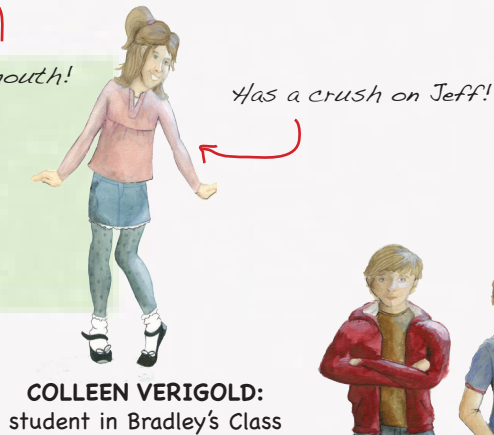
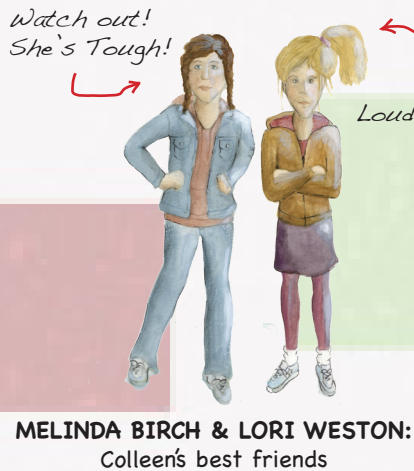
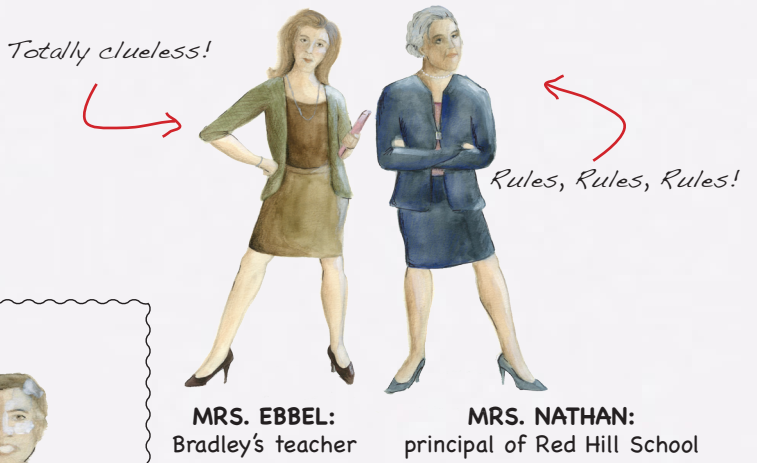
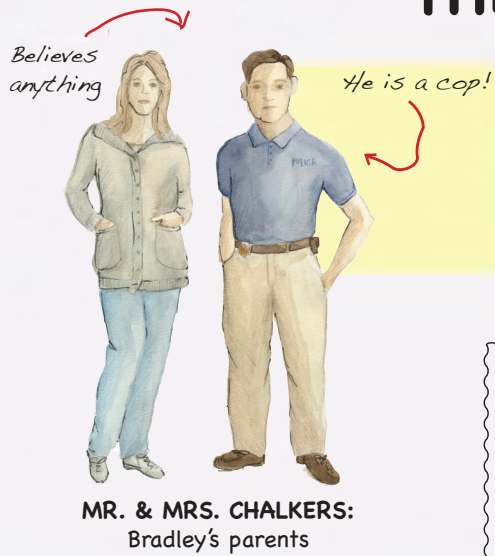
Directed by
Brian C. Fahey

Oscar G. Brockett Theatre
Winship Drama Building

October 2, 3, 7, 8, 9
at 8:00 p.m.

October 3, 4, 11
at 2:00 p.m.

THE CHARACTERS



Spotlight on the Design Process for *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*

Every production of a play has a team of artists working alongside the director and actors in creating the world of the play. These artists are called designers. Here is a peak into the design process for two of our designers and how they took details from the novel and brought them to the stage.

Costumes:

Designed by Alee Franklin-Wills

Ms. Franklin-Wills is responsible for deciding what each character wears. Here is her costume rendering for the character of Mr. Chalkers.

In the novel Mr. Chalkers is a retired police officer who was shot on the job by a robber. Although this detail from the novel is not included in the play, Ms. Franklin-Wills decided that it said a lot about who Mr. Chalkers is. In her design she has decided to dress Mr. Chalkers in a collared shirt that has a police emblem embroidered on it. This way we can reference Mr. Chalkers profession in a subtle way.

What do you think? Does Mr. Chalkers's profession help you to understand who the character is and why he acts the way he does?



Puppets:

Designed by Ilana Marks

Ms. Marks is responsible for designing the four puppets used in the show, which were then built by the properties shop at UT.

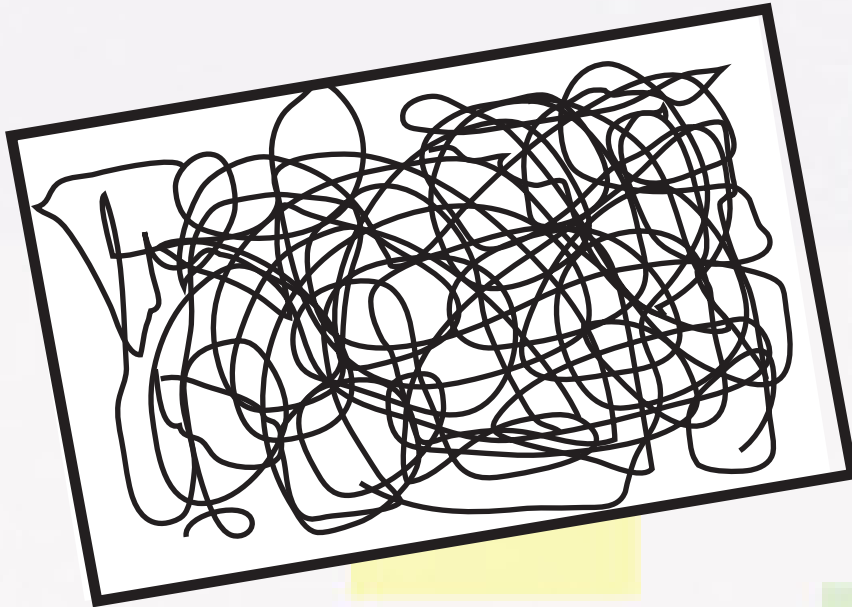


In the novel Ronnie, the rabbit, is one of several toy figurines that come to life in Bradley's imagination. In the play these figurines have been changed into stuffed animals that come to life as puppets. In designing the puppet of Ronnie, Ms. Marks paid attention to the fact that Ronnie is Bradley's favorite. Because of this, Ms. Marks decided that Bradley has probably owned Ronnie the longest. Therefore, the toy appears worn from being well loved.

What other animals from Bradley's collection of figurines would you like to see as a puppet in the play? What design choices would you make in bringing this animal to life?

EXPRESS YOURSELF USING ART

Initially Bradley doesn't have many friends other than his stuffed animals. He learns to express himself creatively. One way he does this is through his drawings. While visiting Carla, he draws the following:



Bradley's Drawing is:

1. Nighttime
2. The floor of a barber shop after someone with black curly hair got his hair cut.
3. _____
(fill in the blank with your own idea)

Bradley's drawing is called abstract art because it uses shapes in space that can have a number of different meanings.

Your Turn!

In the space to the right, draw a picture. Then with a friend, think of three different interpretations of the lines, shapes and spaces you have created.

My Drawing is:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____



EXPRESS YOURSELF USING WORDS

49. Things that smell bad
- 50. Things you like about yourself
51. Things nobody likes about yourself
52. Things you don't like about anyone else
53. Gold stars
54. Does my head look like a chili bowl?
55. When will I be able to grow a beard?
- 56. I wish I could fly
57. Kids with glasses
58. Glasses you drink from
59. What happens when you grow old?
60. What happens when you die?
61. What if you were never born?
62. Can someone else be you?
63. Can you be someone else?
- 16. If I was someone else, I wouldn't make fun of me
17. Monsters from outer space

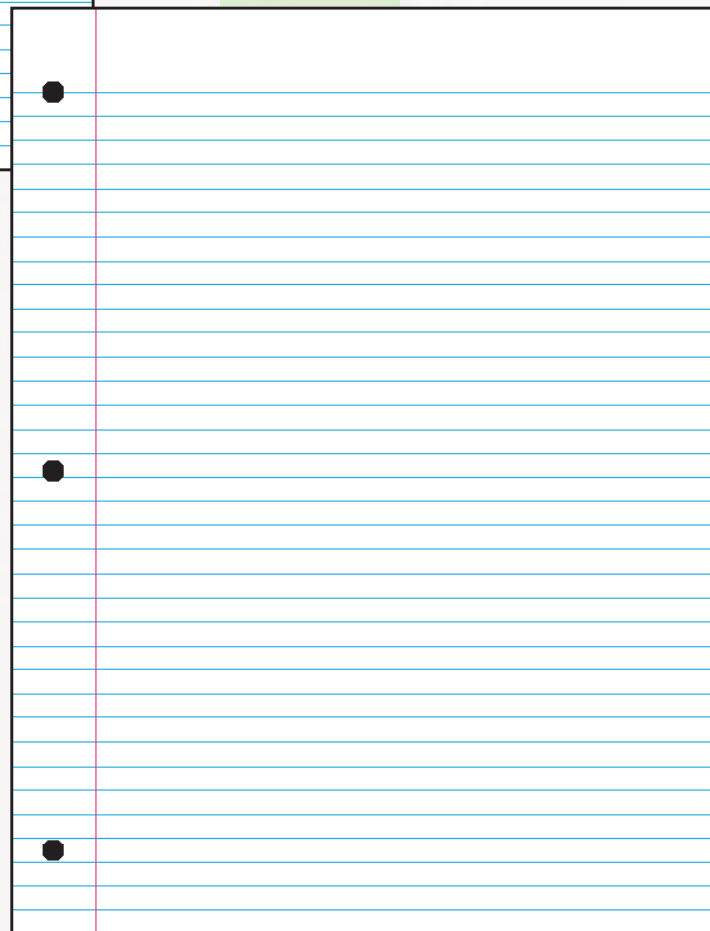
Bradley's List:

Bradley is curious about many things. In the story, he creates a list of topics to discuss with Carla. Some topics are on the list because he is interested in them; others are questions he has about the world.

Your Turn!

In the space to the right, create your own list of interests, curiosities and questions. You might share these topics with your family or friends!

Don't worry, it's not homework. You don't even have to put your name at the top of the paper!



LABELS

WHAT DO THESE LABELS MEAN?

"FRIENDS"

Many of the characters in the story are friends. Lori, Melinda and Colleen are best friends, while Jeff spends time trying to be friends with Brian and Robby. Carla considers the students she counsels to be her friends. Bradley's friends are his stuffed animals.

What does it mean to be a friend? What do friends do? What qualities do you look for in a friend?

"ENEMIES"

While many of the characters are friends, several also have enemies. Melinda fights with both Bradley and Jeff; Bradley teases Lori, Melinda, and Colleen. At the same time, Brian and Robby taunt Bradley. Several characters who begin as enemies grow to become friends.

What is an "enemy"? Why are people enemies? How can someone go from being to an enemy to being a friend?

"BULLIES"

Bradley is labeled as the school bully. Yet, at the same time, he is often bullied by other characters.

What does the word "bully" mean? Why might someone be called a bully? What can someone do to rid themselves of this label?

ADVICE

Carla spends her time offering advice. She doesn't tell people what to do, instead she helps them make their own decisions. Bradley also gets advice from his stuffed animals. When the play ends, many characters have changed. They might need advice about what to do next!

With a friend, discuss advice you might give to the characters below.

At the end of the story...



CARLA has left Red Hill School. In the novel, she becomes a teacher. Carla needs advice on how to adjust to her new job.

- *What should her room look like?*
- *What kinds of activities should she do with her students on her first day of school?*
- *What should her students call her? Carla or Miss Davis, and why?*



BRADLEY has several new friends. He has been invited to Robby's birthday party.

- *What should Bradley get Robby for a present?*
- *What game might Bradley play at the party?*



JEFF and Colleen have become good friends. He would like to spend time with Colleen outside of school.

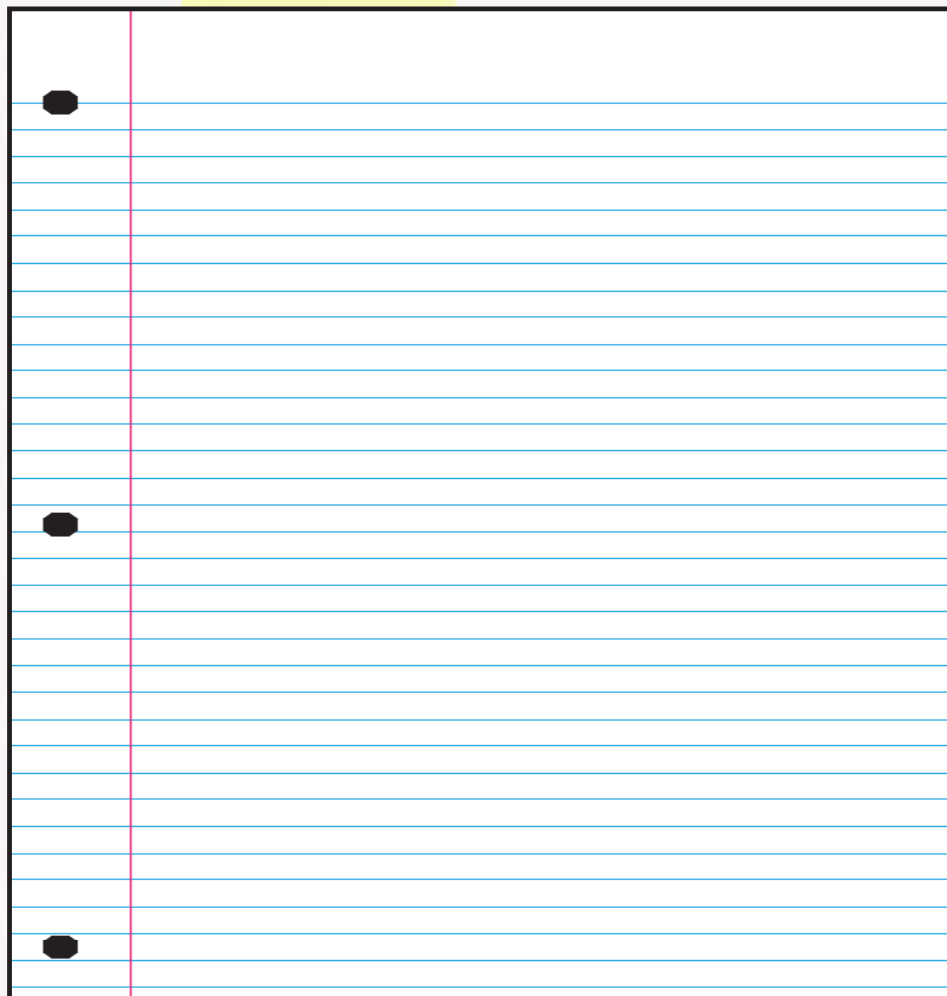
- *As new friends, where should Jeff and Colleen hang out?*
- *Whom should they invite to join them?*

LETTERS TO THE CAST AND CREW

Now that you have seen our production of *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*, we have questions for you. Choose one of the following questions and write a letter to us. After you write your letter, turn it into your teacher, so he or she may mail it to us. We look forward to hearing from you!

1. How are the characters different at the end of the play than at the beginning? To get started, consider Bradley, Mr. Chalkers, and Melinda. How have these characters changed?

2. After seeing the production, how do you view your relationships at school? The same? Differently? What relationships would you like to change? What ideas do you have about how you can change them?



**TO: Brian Fahey, c/o *There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom*
Department of Theatre & Dance, The University of Texas At Austin
1 University Station D3900
Austin, TX 78712-0362**