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Cast of Characters

STEVEN LAVATSCH: He's a seventeen-year-old student at The High School

SALLY JENNINGS BRYON: She's a classmate of Steve's, and personifies the typical over-achiever.

LAURA SMITH: She is the only one of the group content to be at high school.

KEVIN BERKOWITCH: He is the slacker who wants to defeat the system, yet has no clue how to go about it.

THE GIRL IN THE GREEN SOCKS: She is a senior who is a genius, and is the only one who appears to have everything figured out.

MS. R: She is a counselor at The High School and views herself as a kind of mother hen to all the lost seniors.

LAWRENCE: He is a recruiting officer for The University. He knows full well the power he holds over these kids' lives.

Setting

This takes place at The High School during the students' senior year. In general the stage represents the Library of The High School.

THE MILLENNIALS

by Jessica Vaughan

(The stage has a semi-circle of chairs on one side and a bookcase, table, and chairs on the other. The setting suggests a normal high school. The lights come up on MS. R, a high school guidance counselor who is sitting at the table busily searching in piles of papers and books. There is a stack of hats on the corner of her desk.)

MS. R. I's, J's, K's, L's, Lavatsch, Steven Lavatsch. Fifteen interviews today and Lawrence comes tomorrow and seventy days 'til graduation. I'll never make it.

(She drops a pen behind the desk and goes searching for it as STEVE LAVATSCH enters. STEVE is a senior at The High School, representing the regular guy.)

'Course that doesn't include Spring Break or Memorial Day does it?

STEVE. Ms. R, you wanted to talk to me?

MS. R. Steven, welcome to your Senior Review.

(MS. R makes a great show of collecting herself.)

It is Steven, yes? Welcome to your Senior Review.

(MS. R takes a sheet of paper from a stack and examines it as STEVEN sits opposite her.)

So, you've got enough classes to graduate. You show good standing in all of them. Well, sort of... Next question, what are your college plans? Of course, you'll be applying to The University. What's your second choice?

STEVE. I actually hadn't considered...

MS. R. You haven't thought of a second choice?

STEVE. I haven't thought of a first choice!

MS. R. Mr. Lavatsch, your grades are fabulous, and I'm guessing your extracurriculars are above reproach...

STEVE. I guess.

MS. R. But even the best students sometimes don't get their dreams fulfilled.

STEVE. I don't need to be told...

MS. R. If you really have your little heart set on The University, you could go to a fine institution right here in town...

STEVE. I don't have my heart set!

MS. R. And then you could transfer there. They have an exemplary graduate program in... What are you studying?

STEVE. Undecided.

MS. R. That's a popular choice.

(MS. R. stares at him for a second.)

STEVE. Is that all?

MS. R. Hmm, yes. Oh wait, no it isn't!

(She takes a hat from the pile on her desk.)

I'm sorry I didn't get it to you your freshman year. It's your thinking cap.

STEVE. I wondered when you were handing these out. Thanks.

(MS. R. scans the paper once more.)

MS. R. I'm sorry, I didn't write it down, what's your second choice?

STEVE. Haven't we been through this? I don't have a second choice. I don't even have...

MS. R. Mr. Lavatsch, welcome to your Senior Review, your grades are fabulous, and your extracurriculars are doubtlessly above reproach, but even the best of students sometimes don't have their dreams fulfilled...

STEVE. I really have to get back to class.

(STEVE walks to downstage center, speaking directly to the audience, as if reading his college essay. MS. R collects most of the papers on the table and exits.)

The Generation Next, the Millennials, halfway between Gen-X and Kindergarten. We are the children of the hippies, the baby boomers who wanted to shatter the world. And now, the older generations speak with hope of the world-shakers tomorrow, while they wave their AARP cards around for the chance at discount life insurance. Who are they to talk of shaking up the world?

(He exits. SALLY enters holding a jingling coffee can.)

SALLY. One, two, three, go! Funding's reached a real low! Four, five, six, wow! Come on save the spotted cows!

(KEVIN, a grungy-looking senior, enters.)

(Holding out the coffee can:) Save the spotted cows?

KEVIN. What are you doing?

SALLY. I joined the Radioactive Protective Service! We protect harmless animals in the face of a nuclear disaster.

KEVIN. What are you doing?

SALLY. I started filling out applications, and I only have 14 extracurriculars. There are six more blanks.

KEVIN. It's not like I'm going to fill these things out, but I doubt you have to fill in all the blanks.

SALLY. Well, I don't think He would be very impressed if he opened mine up and saw blanks.

KEVIN. Who?

SALLY. *Lawrence!* The college admissions counselor!

KEVIN. You don't care about spotted giraffes! I doubt Lawrence does either.

SALLY. They're cows!

KEVIN. Sally, what are you doing?

SALLY. Do you think Lawrence can tell I'm just faking it? I mean, I picked something that sounded really intelligent.

(MS. R enters.)

Ms. R, help save the Spotted Cows?

MS. R. Excuse me? Sally, my father is a cattle rancher.

SALLY. What?

MS. R. He kills cows for a living.

SALLY. Oh, no!

(SALLY sees as THE GIRL IN THE GREEN SOCKS enters and runs over to her. MS. R turns to KEVIN.)

MS. R. Dare I even ask where you're supposed to be?

KEVIN. It's my off period. I'm taking second period off.

MS. R. And should I ask about college, or is that...

KEVIN. I'm not planning for college! I will not have my life run by Lawrence.

MS. R. Do you think that's all he does? Run lives? He's there to...

KEVIN. ...to run my life? Stifle my imagination? Decide my place in the order of things forever by fifteen pages of application that I filled out the weekend I broke up with my girlfriend and forgot my social security number, and that in no way measures my...

MS. R. Down, Kevin! Is there any chance you could go to Math because you want to learn Math?

KEVIN. I've taken twelve years of Math, and not once have they said one thing about the stock market, which has numbers I could use! I guarantee that graphing vector addition will not help me survive in today's society.

MS. R. But Lawrence...

KEVIN. ...has never had Mr. Jacobs!

(MS. R sits down at the group of chairs where she looks through a book of colleges as KEVIN stalks off. THE GIRL IN THE GREEN SOCKS shakes her head as SALLY, who has solicited her throughout KEVIN's diatribe, turns to leave.)

GREEN SOCKS. Most nuclear tests happen at tropical latitudes, so you should be more concerned with spotted fish.

(SALLY spins around.)

SALLY. Oh, come on! Fish are already spotted!

GREEN SOCKS. So are cows.

(THE GIRL IN THE GREEN SOCKS exits quietly as SALLY looks at the audience.)

SALLY. Some people have no idea how dangerous nuclear fall-out can be! It's true cows are already spotted! What galls me is that she probably knows down to the exact detail what happens when a bomb lands. She's like that. She stole Valedictorian from me and she doesn't even care! She's definitely going to The University. I could be a psychic, and say right now that she is going there and graduating two years early with a Ph.D. Then she'll invent

Perpetual Motion or Cold Fusion or something! That's the kind of thing you can do at The University.

(SALLY exits shaking her can and STEVE enters with a ridiculous load of papers.)

STEVE. Ms. R? I have the application Ms. R. I know it's a month late, but you have to let me turn it in! I'm really sorry.

MS. R. Steve, of course you can turn it in late. I always bend the rules for people who are really sorry.

(LAWRENCE enters. He is the college admissions counselor from The University. He's newly graduated and way too excited about his job.)

LAWRENCE. Are you Ms. R? I'm here from The University.

MS. R. Oh, is that today? I have most of the applications done, but if you ask me, most of them won't get in.

LAWRENCE. I'm sure we will be able to determine that for ourselves.

STEVE. See you later Ms. R.

(LAWRENCE sees STEVE and his jaw drops.)

LAWRENCE. *(To STEVE:)* Oh my God!

STEVE. What?

LAWRENCE. What is your name, sir?

MS. R. This is Steve Lavatsch!

LAWRENCE. Lavatsch, no! Perhaps your mother's name was Smith?

STEVE. No, sir, it's Ivanovichovna. It's Russian.

LAWRENCE. We're German, actually some of us are Irish, and we have a little blood from Iceland as well.

STEVE. *(Confused:)* Really.

LAWRENCE. Really! The resemblance is amazing! You look exactly like my cousin, Andrew.

STEVE. Really?

LAWRENCE. You are his mirror image! It's as if he has come back to life! What's your name again?

STEVE. It's Steve Lavatsch. Who are you again?

LAWRENCE. Lawrence, from The University.

(MS. R hands him the application.)

Steve Lavatsch.

(LAWRENCE flips through it.)

A C-minus in English?

STEVE. The teacher hates me and my dog eats my homework every night.

LAWRENCE. You would be surprised, that happens all the time!

(He flips it closed.)

Steve...Lavatsch. Well, you'll be hearing from us.

(LAWRENCE exits with MS. R as STEVE turns and addresses the audience.)

STEVE. It isn't as if I don't want to go. Are you kidding? It's The University! It's what everybody wants! And, when I'm forty-five, I'll have three credit cards, two kids, and fourteen college loans at fifty thousand a year.

(STEVE sits down at a desk reading a book. LAURA, a senior friend, enters and sits across from him.)

LAURA. I can't believe it! She let me go! I was supposed to do the English paper but I just told Ms. Kennedy that my computer crashed and...

STEVE. She believed you?

LAURA. I made it sound good. I even flashed around a disk.

STEVE. I'm not even going to English today, I haven't even started the damn thing. What was yours on?

LAURA. You know how that guy looked like that other guy in the one book, and then the wrong guy died at the end? I said Dickens had a genius for coincidence. I copied from the Girl in the Green Socks.

(SALLY enters with a clipboard.)

SALLY. Hi, would you sign this petition?

STEVE. Let me guess, Lawrence said...

SALLY. The application to The University asked for an essay on my political conscience.

STEVE. You don't have a political conscience.

SALLY. Exactly! I joined Student Congress. We're lobbying to get coffee served in the cafeteria with lunch.

LAURA. Cool!

(LAURA signs the clipboard.)

STEVE. Do you think it will actually pass?

SALLY. Why not?

STEVE. What's your platform?

(SALLY looks at him blankly.)

How are you going to convince them it's a good idea?

SALLY. Well, we're saying since studies show a teenager's biological clock is set later, we have to counteract that!

STEVE. With caffeine?

SALLY. Please sign? The person who gets the most signatures gets to present it to the faculty!

STEVE. Oh goody.

(The bell rings as LAURA and SALLY get up to go to lunch.)

LAURA. So how do you join this student body thing?

(LAURA and SALLY exit. STEVE shakes his head and gets paper and pencil out of his bag. He begins to write.)

STEVE. *(While writing:)* The novel displays a certain...

(He looks through the book he has been reading before finding a word.)

...charisma. Yuck! It's a piece of crap! It displays certain repetitiveness, with sentences over a page long, because Dickens was paid by the word! The book displays a certain genius for coincidence, thank you Laura, bringing things together that could never happen to form a long, rambling, idiotic, serial novel.

(He erases the last part slowly.)

The book displays a certain genius for coincidence, which is the main plot device.

(KEVIN enters and sits by him.)

KEVIN. Wasn't that due yesterday?

STEVE. If I'm lucky I'll finish the introduction by midnight.

KEVIN. Can I ask you something?

STEVE. No. (*While writing:*) The fact that the main characters...

(KEVIN puts a college brochure from The University on the table.)

KEVIN. The University sent me a letter inviting me there for a visit.

STEVE. So?

KEVIN. Don't you understand? I've done everything I can to keep away from college!

STEVE. Kevin! This is due today! I have to write it, type it, edit it, and turn it in! Don't go to college!

KEVIN. I'm not!

STEVE. Good!

KEVIN. Then why did The University send me a letter telling me I'm perfect for the rigorous academic standards they set?

STEVE. Kevin, they say that to everybody!

KEVIN. But Lawrence signed it. He signed it at the bottom!

STEVE. Kevin, Lawrence signed mine too! Do you believe, with your record, any school would want you?

KEVIN. But they sent the letter!

STEVE. They send it to an address with a grade point average.

KEVIN. I don't have a grade point average.

STEVE. That isn't the point! You're a number in Lawrence's computer on the way to making the world a better place.

KEVIN. So this doesn't mean I have to go.

STEVE. *(While writing:)* The fact that the main characters look exactly like one another is cleverly introduced in the first few chapters of the book. It makes absolutely no difference at all until they are both much older and wiser at the end.

KEVIN. Okay, good.

STEVE. Okay, good.

(STEVE exits angrily as KEVIN addresses the audience.)

KEVIN. Unfortunately my plan to become a Professional Bum must be delayed a few years. I have to get the funds. So I did fill out an application this year. I was hired at the Main Street McDonald's. I am the assistant of the Assistant Junior Service Manager. But the important thing is I made my own decisions in this. I am totally free. I work seven days a week at 7:30 am for eight hours, and I'm paid almost double minimum wage.

(LAURA, THE GIRL IN THE GREEN SOCKS, and SALLY all enter. SALLY has an incredibly heavy backpack on. She stops, but the other two continue. Suddenly she begins to topple over and there is a loud crash as she hits the ground. KEVIN runs to join the other two in examining her.)

GREEN SOCKS. Let's sit her up.

(There's a loud crack and SALLY groans.)

I'll go get Ms. R.

(She exits at a run.)

KEVIN. I don't think that helped.

LAURA. No, I think it made it worse.

SALLY. I can't feel my legs!

KEVIN. That definitely made it worse. Sally? Sally, are you sure...

SALLY. Don't talk to me like a big baby! Suddenly I'm flat on my back and I'm incompetent! Why do doctors automatically assume we're incompetent?

LAURA. We aren't exactly doctors!

KEVIN. Isn't there a school nurse here?

LAURA. There were too many budget cuts! It was either the nurse or the disciplinary secretary. We had to keep him.

KEVIN. *(To LAURA:)* Of course. *(To SALLY:)* Now where does it hurt?

SALLY. You idiot! It doesn't hurt! I can't feel my legs!

KEVIN. What did you do?

SALLY. I was in Biology and didn't have time to put my book away before Physics, so I put them both in my backpack, and I fell down, and now I can't move my legs!

KEVIN. Just wait here! We'll call 911 or something!

(SALLY sits there on the ground moaning as KEVIN and LAURA cross the stage a few more times looking for an ambulance before giving up and exiting. SALLY eventually pulls herself around to face the audience.)

SALLY. The ambulance did come. There was acute gastrulation of the blasto disc at my dorsal lip. Translated roughly, it means that I can't move my legs. I did take Biology; we did learn about nerves. I'm paralyzed from the waist down, and will likely remain so, at least until the girl in the green socks gets to med-school and invents a way to fix nerve death. Needless to say, I'm stuck here for a while.

(MS. R runs on stage and meets STEVE, who is running from the other direction.)

STEVE. What's wrong? I heard you page me and Sally over the intercom!

MS. R. Steve! I'm so proud of you! Where's Sally?

SALLY. *(From the floor:)* Are you blind? I'm right here!

MS. R. You got in!

STEVE. I know, isn't it great? I have lines, too! I'm the merchant!

MS. R. What?

STEVE. What?

MS. R. You want to be a merchant?

STEVE. Well, the director casts the play. You are talking about the play, right? We're doing some Shakespeare thing.

MS. R. Steve! The University!

STEVE. *(Reading from her sheet:)* Congratulations! These students have been accepted to The University. Oh my God! They took me!

MS. R. Congratulations!

SALLY. I'm in? I'm in!

(STEVE spins around before grabbing the sheet again.)

STEVE. Wait, who's this other one?

MS. R. You know her; she's that girl who always wears the green socks. I paged her! I wonder where she is.

STEVE. We have Science next period together, I'll go tell her!

(STEVE goes skipping off as KEVIN enters.)

KEVIN. I think the Math Hall didn't hear you, my God, it's like you just won a million bucks or something!

SALLY. Kevin, I'm going to The University!

KEVIN. Wow, that's... Um, wow.

MS. R. Kevin makes a rare visit to his high school!

KEVIN. You think I'm gonna die a horrible death because I'm missing the rise of Social Darwinism!

SALLY. I can't listen to this.

MS. R. I don't think I can either.

KEVIN. I want to ask you something serious.

MS. R. Try me.

KEVIN. I want to drop out of school.

SALLY. He was wrong, that wasn't serious. It wasn't serious, Kevin.

KEVIN. I'm not joking. I'm going to drop out.

MS. R. Well, we'll have to talk about it. You're sixteen right?

KEVIN. I voted in the last election.

SALLY. You have three months left! What are you trying to prove?

KEVIN. That Lawrence has no control over me!

SALLY. That certainly is an admirable goal!

(SALLY spins around as MS. R leads KEVIN to the table, busily throwing sheets of paper at him.)

MS. R. You have to fill this form out in triplicate. It's the document officially placing all blame on your parents. And this as well, the petition for special treatment due to a horrible upbringing.

KEVIN. And what are those?

(She dumps the rest of the forms in his lap.)

MS. R. The rest are pretty self-explanatory.

(KEVIN gets up to leave and MS. R stands up.)

Good Luck.

KEVIN. Good Luck?

MS. R. Yes, at Burger King or wherever you're working.

(KEVIN looks at her for a second.)

Look, I'm not good at the Incredibly Profound Speech so I'll just be blunt and say you're a real idiot, but I guess that's allowed as a teenager.

KEVIN. Because I'm not going to college?

MS. R. Because you think you've won the fight. You think Lawrence is the bad guy, and you have to screw over your entire life by not accepting his offer! He's offered you The University as long as you play a few simple games to show him you're serious. And you wouldn't do it! He doesn't want people like you at The University!

KEVIN. I have just one question before I get the hell out of here. Where did you go to college, Ms. R? 'Cause it seems to me Lawrence wouldn't take either of us!

(KEVIN exits in a rush and after a moment MS. R follows him slowly. STEVE enters and addresses the audience.)

STEVE. It's finally over. Four years of stupid games, and I'm going to The University. We have a flight scheduled for tomorrow, me, and Sally, and that girl with the green socks. It doesn't seem real.

(SALLY waves to him.)

SALLY. Steve, I need to talk to you.

STEVE. How are you doing?

SALLY. Well, as it turns out I'm...I tried; you have to give me that.

STEVE. What's the matter?

SALLY. You remember the contracts we signed at the beginning of the year?

STEVE. Of course, Kevin made such of fuss they threw him out of the office.

SALLY. We made a deal with Lawrence. We give him this much of our life, and he'll let us go to The University. I played all his stupid games, because one day all the things you learn playing will be used when you enter the Real World. The last clause: Guaranteed success at real life if you play Games A, B, and C.

STEVE. You didn't sign the contract?

SALLY. Damn the contract! Lawrence doesn't run me anymore. I went to the Doctor. He said it would be better to stay in town, where we have Insurance. I signed that contract this morning. It nullifies all previous agreements. You know what this one guarantees? It says, we make no guarantees as to the quality of life at the termination of your time with us. If you play Games A, B, and C, a doctor with no experience and little time will determine if success is a remote possibility.

STEVE. You're not going?

SALLY. No!

STEVE. What are you going to do?

SALLY. I told you, I signed with The Insurance Company. If I stay with their doctors they think there's a chance... It's cheaper if I stay here, that's what they didn't say.

(STEVE stares at her, unable to say anything.)

I'll see you later, well, I won't see you, but...

STEVE. I'll be back for Winter Break.

SALLY. I'll be here.

(SALLY starts to exit and STEVE sits down, in shock. THE GIRL IN THE GREEN SOCKS enters with a suitcase and addresses the audience.)

GREEN SOCKS. I know what they call me. Don't you think I don't. The Girl in the Green Socks, as if my entire life can be defined by my footwear. That Girl who Saves Spotted Cows is convinced my life is perfect! And the Guy that Dropped Out, I don't think he's thought of anything except my feet once in the whole school year! And then there's the Guy in the Third Chair on the Left in Science Class. Steve. Now he becomes the Only Person I Know on Earth as everyone I knew gets left behind. I never gave him a second thought...

(THE GIRL IN THE GREEN SOCKS sits down next to STEVE. She drops the suitcase at her feet and looks through it.)

STEVE. Hi! My name's Steve, I have Science...

GREEN SOCKS. I know who you are.

STEVE. Right.

GREEN SOCKS. Here, you didn't pick yours up yesterday.

(She offers him a package from her suitcase.)

STEVE. What is it?

GREEN SOCKS. It's your life. Lawrence had it packaged and brought out to you. You're having doubts.

STEVE. This takes away doubts?

GREEN SOCKS. Not quite. Doubts will catch up to you and a mid-life crisis will follow, but I guarantee that by seventy you'll be fine. You'd better take it.

(STEVE takes the box carefully.)

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