

***The Revealers* first chapter performance script**

Presented at an all-school assembly.

Opening message (read by a teacher or administrator):

Good afternoon and welcome to our kickoff assembly for our school's first community reading project. The book we are going to read together is Doug Wilhelm's novel, *The Revealers*. Each faculty member has a copy of this book, which will be shared in homerooms during reading time on Wednesdays, then discussed during the week. Our library also has several copies.

You might be wondering why we're doing this. A community reading project is a great way to give a group of people – like the students and staff of [school name] – a common experience that leads to discussion, awareness, and changes that can benefit our community.

We chose the novel, *The Revealers*, for several reasons. First, it deals with a troublesome issue that we've all experienced in one way or another – bullying. *The Revealers* is a particularly good book for looking at this problem because the author spent a good deal of time researching with local middle school students. As a result, Mr. Wilhelm's writing, although fictional, is very realistic.

Stage performance

Characters:

Narrator, a boy

Russell, a boy

Richie, a boy who is larger and stronger than Russell

optional: One or two girls may say the lines quoted in the second paragraph of the narrator's first passage.

Narrator: When I was in seventh grade I did not understand the things that came out of my mouth. Of course I'm a year older now, and a *lot* happened last year – and that's what this story is about – but sometimes I think back and I just cringe.

I wanted people to say, "Hey Russell! Sit with us!" But when I'd open my mouth, what would come out would be loud and clanky and wrong. And they would give me that flat, puzzled stare that is the stock weapon of the cool seventh grader and seems to ask, "What species *are* you, exactly?" And I would go away thinking I was hopeless.

It was like everyone else took a secret summer course in how to act, what to say, and what groups to be in, and I never found out about it. Maybe they didn't tell me on purpose. Maybe they thought it'd be fun to see how out of it I could get. See how you could start to think?

Anyway, one day after school I was riding my bike when this thing occurred that pretty much captures what I'm talking about — my having had this talent, just then in my life, for saying an incredibly wrong thing to exactly the person I should never, ever have said it to.

Russell enters, riding a bike. He stops the bike, gets off, parks it, and walks off stage.

Narrator: I rode my bike from school to Convenience Farms, that day. I always went to Convenience Farms because it has all kinds of good junky food. I leaned my bike against the side of the building, and went in to get a root beer. That's what I always got after school back then, a root beer.

(Russell walks off stage. Richie walks on stage. He walks up to the bike and slowly, deliberately, flings it so that it lies on the stage.)

Narrator: When I came out of the store with my bottle, this eighth grader, Richie Tucker, was leaning against the side of the building, and my bike was lying sprawled on the pavement.

(As narrator speaks, Russell comes on stage, sees his bike and stops, close to Richie.)

Narrator: Richie Tucker. *Whoa.* Now he was someone you stayed away from. If you were going somewhere and Richie Tucker was hanging around and he tried to catch your eye, you just didn't look at him. Even I knew that. But now Richie turned his head and looked at me.

Richie: Is that thing yours?

Russell: Well ... yeah.

Richie: It was in my way."

Russell: Huh?

Richie: *(gets in Russell's face)* That piece of crap you left there. It was in *my* way. What are you going to do about it? Hmm?"

Narrator: So I bent over, picked up my bike, and – okay, this was a mistake – shook my finger at it.

Russell: *(Shaking his finger at the bike)* "Bad bike. Bad bike! Don't ever do that *again!*"

Narrator: See what I mean? Was that *stupid?* Richie jerked forward like he was coming at me. I hopped on my bike and started pedaling.

Russell rides off as Richie watches. Richie stays on stage.

Narrator: Two days after that, I was walking downtown after school when suddenly there was Richie. He moved to block my way, and smiled.

Russell walks on stage, and Richie steps out to block his way. Russell stops.

Narrator: A prickling crackled in the back of my neck. I saw his fist pull back and I wanted to say *NO — please! I didn't mean to!* But I just watched his fist drive into my stomach.

In slow motion, Richie punches Russell in the stomach. Returning to regular-speed action, Russell doubles over and struggles to breathe. Richie grabs his chin and yanks his face up.

Richie: Nobody mocks me, you understand? *Nobody!* I guess you are nobody. I guess that's you, huh?

Richie looks closely at Russell's face, and smiles.

Richie: Aw – you got to *cry*, little boy? Are you a little *crying* nobody?

Let me tell you how it is, little *boy*. This is not over, okay? This is never over. Every time you turn around – every time you think the coast is clear – you better be watching for me. Okay, little boy? Because you're mine now. You are *mine*. And every time you think you're not ...

Richie draws back his fist; Russell doubles over again, in fear.

Richie: Yeah. Just like that."

Richie smiles, and walks off stage.

Narrator: And then he was gone.