Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing

Story by
Judy Blume

Adaptation by
Bruce Mason

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing was first presented by Seattle Children’s Theatre for the 1986-1987 season. All Rights Reserved.

The license issued in connection with PYA perusal scripts is a limited license, and is issued for the sole purpose of reviewing the script for a potential future performance. All other rights regarding perusal scripts are expressly reserved by Plays for Young Audiences, including, but not limited to, the rights to distribute, perform, copy or alter scripts. This limited license does not convey any performance rights of any kind with this material. By accepting any perusal script(s), Licensee agrees to and is bound by these terms.
CAST LIST

(In order of appearance)
PETER
MOM
DAD
FUDGE
MR. YARBY
MRS. YARBY
JIMMY FARGO
SHEILA TUBMAN
JENNIE
RALPH
SAM
NURSE
DR. BROWN
MR. BERMAN
JANET
SECRETARY
FIRST MOTHER
SECOND MOTHER
MURRAY
MR. VINCENT
MR. DENBERG
CAMERAMAN
VOICES
FIRST AMBULANCE DRIVER
SECOND AMBULANCE DRIVER
DR. CONE

Characters can be Doubled in the following:
- Sam
- Mrs. Hatcher/Sally's Mom
- Mrs. Yarby/Nurse/Jane/Dr. Cone
- Ralph/Murray
- Jennie/Sally
- Fudge Hatcher
- Peter Hatcher
- Jimmy Fargo/Mr. Denberg
- Mr. Yarby/Dr. Brown/Mr. Vincent
- Sheila Tubman/Murray's Mom
- Mr. Hatcher/Mr. Berman

SETTING:

The play takes place in various New York City locales and in the Hatcher family apartment, which is near Central Park.

TIME:

The present.
ACT I

SCENE I – Meet My Family

(At rise: PETER sits at the desk in his bedroom. Before him is an open notebook and a turtle bowl. He is writing. He stops abruptly.)

PETER
No, that’s not it. (He paces the room for a moment, then) I’ve got it! I’ve got it! (PETER begins writing quickly in his notebook. He stops.) No – that’s not it either.

(To audience)
You see, Mrs. Haver, our fourth grade teacher, gave us an end-of-the-year essay assignment today. The essay is supposed to be on the most important thing that happened to us this year. It’s turning out to be harder than I thought. I mean, so much has happened to me what with Fudge and Dribble and ….well, first things first. My name is Peter Warrant Hatcher, and before I can even begin this story, you better meet my family.

(Lights up on the kitchen area of the Hatcher’s New York City apartment. MOM is sitting at the kitchen table. Many books are in front of her. She is studying.)

PETER
(Walking over to her) This is my mom. Sometimes we get along and sometimes we don’t. Most of the time I think she’s okay. She’s studying now for her class in art history. When she gets her degree she wants to work in an art gallery or a museum.

(Lights up on the living room area. DAD sits in front of the TV, engrossed.)

PETER
This is my dad. He watches a lot of TV. Not because he likes it. He says most of the shows will fry your brain. He only watches the commercials because he’s an advertising executive. Commercials are his business.

(Lights up on FUDGE in the hallway, banging on pots and pans.)

PETER
(Continuing) And this is my little brother, Farley Drexel Hatcher. Everybody calls him Fudge. I feel sorry for him if he’s going to grow up with a name like Fudge, but I don’t say a word. It’s none of my business. Fudge is always in my way. He messes up everything he sees. And when he’s mad, he throws himself flat on the floor and he screams. And he kicks. And he bangs his fists. The only time I really like him is when he’s sleeping. He sucks four fingers on his left hand and makes a slurping noise. He wasn’t even three on the day I brought Dribble home. And that’s when it all began…

(Lights up on the apartment. MOM is in the kitchen busily cooking. FUDGE is on the floor banging pots and pans together. PETER enters from the front door, carrying a turtle bowl with turtle.)

PETER
Hey, Mom. Look what I won at Jimmy Fargo’s birthday party.
(Too busy to notice) What's that?

Well, look.

Honey, I'm really busy. Dad will be home with the Yarbys in less than an hour, and I'm still not ready. (MOM pauses and looks at FUDGE.) Peter, do something with Fudgie, please. That racket is giving me such a headache.

(Taking the pots and pans away from FUDGE) Give those to me.

No …

Do what Peter says, Fudgie. (FUDGE releases the pots and pans. MOM notices the turtle bowl for the first time.) Peter – what is that?

(During the following exchange, while MOM is distracted with PETER, FUDGE will crawl over to a large bowl filled with flowers floating on water and snatch two of the blossoms. One of the flowers FUDGE pops into his mouth and begins chewing on, the other he hides in his hand.)

Isn't he amazing? Everybody else got a goldfish in a plastic bag. But I won the grand prize. I guessed how many jelly beans were in the jar. I won the turtle. I've already named him. Dribble! Isn't that a great name for a turtle?

(Making a face) I don't like the way he smells.

(Sniffing the bowl) What do you mean? So he smells like a turtle. He's supposed to, that's what he is.

I'm not going to take care of him.

Oh course you're not, he's my turtle. I'm the one who's going to take care of him.

You're going to change his water and clean his bowl and feed him and all of that?

Yes. And even more, I'm going to see that he's happy.

Fudgie…what's in your mouth? Show mommy…
No!

FUDGE

MOM

Fudge! He ate a flower, Peter, watch him while I call Dr. Cone.

(MOM crosses to the phone in the living room and beings dialing. FUDGE crawls over to PETER and looks in the turtle bowl.)

FUDGE

Ooooohhhhh…let me see!

PETER

That's my turtle, get it? Mine. You don’t touch him, Fudge.

FUDGE

(Laughing) Don’t touch him, Fudge.

MOM

(PETER looks over at FUDGE; PETER points at FUDGE; FUDGE smiles and holds up his empty hands in an “all gone” gesture.)

SCENE II – Mr. and Mrs. Juicy-O

PETER

(To audience)

Dr. Cone said Mom shouldn’t worry about the flowers. She told her to give Fudge a spoon of that yucky pink stuff I get when I have a stomachache. By the time Dad came home with the Yarbys, Mom was all cleaned up. You’d never have guessed that Fudge ate some flowers, either. Mr. Yarby is the President of the Juicy-O Company, one of Dad’s biggest clients. We always had plenty of Juicy-O around the house. Mr. Yarby sent us crates of it at Christmas. I wouldn’t want to insult Dad’s client, but between you and me, Juicy-O is gross. Anyway, the Yarbys were coming to New York for a visit and Dad invited them to stay with us. Mom wanted to know why they couldn’t stay in a hotel like most of the people who come to New York. Dad said they could, but he thought they’d be more comfortable staying here. Mom said that was the silliest thing she had ever heard.

(Lights up on the living room. DAD enters with the YARBY and MRS. YARBY immediately goes to FUDGE.)

DAD

Well, here they are…the Yarbys. Howard, I’d like you to meet my wife, Anne. Darling, Mr. and Mrs. Yarby.

MOM

Hello, nice to meet you. Welcome.
MRS. YARBY
(With eyes only for FUDGE) Ohhhhh…..isn’t’ he the cutest little boy?  I just love babies.

DAD
And this is our older son, Peter.

PETER
Hi, I’m nine and I’m in the fourth grade.

MR. YARBY
How do you do, Peter?

(MRS. YARBY just gives PETER a nod.)

MRS. YARBY
I have a surprise for this dear little baby.  It’s in my suitcase.  Should I go get it now?

Yes!  Go get it!

FUDGE

(PETER To audience) I kept waiting for someone to tell her that Fudge was no baby.  But no one did.

(MRS. YARBY opens her suitcase and takes out a box tied with a red ribbon.  FUDGE claps his hands.)

FUDGE
Ohhhhh!  Goody!

MRS. YARBY
Why don’t you sit up here with me.  I’ll help you unwrap the pretty box.

(FUDGE begins untying the ribbon.)

MOM
Really, Mrs. Yarby, this is very nice of you.

MRS. YARBY
I just love babies.  And Fudge is so adorable.

(FUDGE has the box unwrapped.  He pulls out a wind-up train.)

MRS. YARBY
See?  You just turn the key a couple of times…and then…

(FUDGE does so.  The train careens about the floor and makes much noise. Every time the train bumps into something, it turns around.  FUDGE is delighted with his gift; because of the noise it makes, MRS. YARBY is less delighted.)

PETER
That’s a nice train.
MRS. YARBY
Oh, I have something for you, too, uh…..uh….

PETER
Peter, my name is Peter.

MRS. YARBY
Yes. *(She rummages around through her suitcase.)* Well, it’s here somewhere…

*(MRS. YARBY looks at MOM.)*

MOM
Fudge, give Mommy the train.

FUDGE
No.

MOM
Fudge, let’s see what Peter got.

* (FUDGE reluctantly gives the train to MOM. She puts it in her lap.)*

PETER
*(To audience)* I unwrapped my gift carefully in case Mom wanted to save the paper – and to show Mrs. Yarby that I’m more careful with my things than my brother. She didn’t even notice.

*(The present is a picture book dictionary. PETER holds the book up. FUDGE watches, then exits.)*

MRS. YARBY
I don’t know much about big boys. So the lady in the store said a nice book would be a good idea.

PETER
*(To audience)* A nice book would have been a good idea. But a picture dictionary! That’s for babies! I’ve had my own Webster’s Merriam Collegiate dictionary since I was eight. And besides, I had one of these when I was four. It’s in Fudge’s bookcase now.

PETER
Thank you very much. It’s just what I always wanted.

MRS. YARBY
*(Sighing)* I’m so glad.

DAD
Well, would you folks like a drink?

MR. YARBY
Good idea…good idea.
What’ll it be?

DAD

What’ll it be? What do you think, Hatcher? It’ll be Juicy-O, that’s all we ever drink. Good for your health!

(MR. YARBY pounds his chest.)

DAD

Of course, Juicy-O for everybody. I’ll take your bags into your bedroom first.

(DAD exits and then enters to the kitchen to fix the drinks.)

MR. YARBY

(To Mom) Hatcher tells me that you’re taking classes.

MOM

Yes, I am. I’m studying art history.

MRS. YARBY

My! And with two growing boys.

(FUDGE enters. He is carrying a beat-up copy of the same dictionary that Mrs. Yarby gave Peter.)

See?

FUDGE

(To audience) I wanted to vanish.

See the book?

FUDGE

PETER

That’s okay, I can use another one. I really can, that old one is falling apart.

FUDGE

MINE! (He holds the book close to his chest.) It’s MINE! It’s MINE!

MOM

It’s the thought that counts, Mrs. Yarby. It was so nice of you to think of our boys. Put the book away now, Fudgie.

MRS. YARBY

(Insulted) It’s returnable. Really, it’s silly to keep it if you already have one. Let me have it back.

PETER

No. I’ll keep it. (To audience) Like it was my fault she brought me something I already had.
(DAD brings the drinks in.)

DAD

Isn’t it Fudge’s bedtime?

MOM

Oh yes, I think it is. Say goodnight, Fudge.

FUDGE

Goodnight Fudge.

(MOM exits with FUDGE in tow. FUDGE waves goodbye. Lights down on the living room except for on PETER.)

PETER

(To audience) Fudge was supposed to fall asleep before we sat down to dinner. But just in case, Mom put a lot of toys in his crib. I don’t know who she thought she was fooling. We all knew that Fudge could climb out of his crib anytime he wanted. He stayed away until the middle of the roast beef.

(Lights up on the dining area. FUDGE enters carrying Dribble’s bowl.)

FUDGE

(To Mrs. Yarby) See Dribble?

MRS. YARBY

(Shrieking) Oh! I can’t stand reptiles! Get that thing away from me.

(FUGE looks disappointed, he shows Dribble to MR. YARBY.)

MR. YARBY

HATCHER! Make him get that thing out of here.

PETER

Give Dribble to me! (He takes the bowl away from Fudge.) You know you’re not allowed to touch my turtle.

MRS. YARBY

Please, please, remove the reptile. I can’t eat.

DAD

Go put Dribble back in your room, son, and then come back and finish your dinner.

MOM

And I’ll put Fudge back in his crib. Excuse me a moment.

(PETER and MOM exit.)

MRS. YARBY

It must be interesting to have children. We never had any ourselves.
MR. YARBY
But if we did, we’d teach them some manners. I’m a firm believer in old-fashioned good manners.

DAD
(Weakly) So are we, Howard, so are we.

(Lights dim on the dining area. Lights up on PETER in his bedroom. He is still holding the turtle bowl.)

PETER
(To audience) I think Mr. Yarby had a lot of nerve to suggest we had no manners. Didn’t I pretend to like their dumb old picture dictionary? If that isn’t good manners, I don’t know what is…Well, anyway, Mom got Fudge back into his crib. Things were fine until dessert…

(Lights back up on the dining area. PETER remains where he is and watches the scene. FUDGE runs in, wearing a realistic gorilla mask. MOM is pouring coffee. FUDGE so startles MRS. YARBY that her screaming startles MOM. MOM pours coffee all over the table and onto the floor. DAD grabs FUDGE and pulls the gorilla mask off.)

DAD
That’s not funny, Fudge!

FUDGE
(Laughing) Funny!

MRS. YARBY
This is more than I can handle.

MR. YARBY
There, there dear.

(MOM and DAD begin cleaning up the mess.)

MOM
We’re so sorry, Mrs. Yarby.

DAD
I just don’t know what’s got into Fudge this evening. Ah, excuse me a moment.

DAD exits with FUDGE.

MRS. YARBY
Howard, could I see you in the other room, please?

(MR. and MRS. YARBY cross to the living room. They confer silently.)

MOM
(To herself) Oh dear.
PETER
(To audience)...By that time, I'm sure Dad wished the Yarbys had stayed in a hotel.

(DAD enters and helps MOM. MRS. YARBY exits to the off-stage bedroom area.)

MR. YARBY
Hatcher, my wife is a delicate woman, so we've decided...

DAD
I understand, Howard.

MR. YARBY
...That we should stay in a hotel after all. If you'd call us a cab.

MRS. YARBY
(Off) Oh! Howard! (She enters carrying her suitcase. FUDGE, smiling, toddles in behind her. He is carrying something behind his back.) Just look at what that little...just look at what he did to my suitcase.

(MRS. YARBY’S suitcase is covered in green trading stamps.)

FUDGE
Pretty....

(FUDGE laughs. No one else does. He licks a final trading stamp and sticks it on the suitcase.)

All gone!

MRS. YARBY
Howard!

MR. YARBY
(To Dad) Yes sir! Old-fashioned MANNERS!

(Lights out except for on PETER.)

PETER
(To audience) The next week Dad came home from the office...

(Lights up on the kitchen area. DAD is collecting every can of Juicy-O he can find and dumping them in the trash.)

PETER
...and collected all the Juicy-O cans.

MOM
I'm sorry you lost such an important account.
DAD
Don’t worry. The stuff’s not selling that well. Nobody seems to like the combination of oranges, grapefruits, pineapples, pears and bananas.

PETER
(In scene) You know, Dad, I just drank the stuff to be polite. But really…I thought it was gross.

DAD
You know something Peter…I thought it was pretty gross myself.

SCENE III – The Family Dog

PETER
(To audience) Nobody ever came right out and said that Fudge was the reason Dad lost the Juicy-O account. But I sure thought about it. Dad said he was glad to be rid of Mr. Yarby. Now he could spend more time on his other clients – like the Toddle-Bike Company. Dad was in charge of their new commercial. I thought maybe he could use me in it since I know how to stand on my head. But he said he wasn’t planning on having any head standers in this commercial. I can stay up for as long as three minutes. I learned how in gym class. Mom and Dad were really impressed – so was Fudge. I don’t know if my head standing had anything to do with it, but right after I learned how, Fudge stopped eating. By the third day, Mom was pretty worried.

(Lights up on the kitchen. FUDGE is in his highchair and DAD is in front of him juggling oranges.)

MOM
You’ve got to eat, Fudgie. You want to grow up to be big and strong, don’t you?

FUDGE
No!

MOM
(To Dad) What are we going to do?

DAD
The juggling doesn’t seem to work.

MOM
I’ve got it. Peter? Would you stand on your head?

FUDGE
Yes! Yes!

PETER
Come on, Mom. The kitchen floor is hard.
Please, honey.                  MOM
You can use my sweater to cushion yourself.             DAD
Ahh...                      PETER
It's very important for Fudge to eat. Please help us, Peter.   MOM
Oh, all right.          PETER
Good boy, Peter.             DAD

(PETER places the sweater on the kitchen floor, positions his head on top of it, then lifts his legs into the air. FUDGE laughs and slaps his hands. MOM shoves some baked potato into FUDGE'S mouth.)

Thatta boy!            DAD
Now doesn't that taste good?             MOM

(FUDGE is laughing and clapping. PETER begins to wobble.)

(Continued) C'mon Fudgie. Just a little more.       MOM

(Laughing as PETER topples over.)

Just one more bite now.              MOM

No! (PETER sits on the floor and looks at his parents.)

Peter, please?               MOM

The floor’s too hard.             PETER

Peter...                     DAD
I don’t want to stand on my head in the kitchen or anywhere else.

Don’t you care if your brother starves?

No.

Peter, you don’t mean that!

He’ll eat when he gets hungry. Why don’t you two just leave him alone?

(To audience) If I decided not to eat, they’d probably never even notice. Nobody worries about me the way they worry about Fudge.

(PETER sits down at the table. FUDGE slips from his red booster chair onto the floor.)

Woof, woof. I’m a doggie. Woof…woof…woof…woof.

(FUDGE crawls about the floor. MOM sighs. PETER looks to DAD, but DAD says nothing.)

(Jumping up) I know! If Fudgie’s a dog, he wants to eat on the floor, right?

(FUDGE barks and nods his head. MOM scrapes his plate into a bowl and sets it under the table. FUDGE crawls over to the bowl and sniffs at it. He barks and wiggles his behind.)

Nice doggie. (She gives FUDGE a pat.) Good Fudgie. Eat the nice dinner all up.

Woof…woof…

Don’t you think we’re carrying this too far?

(FUDGE eats two bites of food.)

He’s eating something.

Now we have a real family dog. Just what I’ve always wanted.

Peter…
PETER
Maybe we could trade him in for a cocker spaniel. I’d walk him and feed him and play with him. He could even sleep on the edge of my bed.

DAD
That’s enough.

FUDGE
Woof…woof…

PETER
(To audience) Well, this went on for about a week. Finally, Mom dragged Fudge to see Dr. Cone. And that night…

MOM
Dr. Cone said to fix Fudge his favorite foods. So I made him some lamb chops.

I love lamb chops.

MOM
The rest of us are having stew.

PETER
Stew?

MOM
Please try and cooperate, Peter.

FUDGE
(Under the table) Woof…woof…

DAD
Enough is enough. Fudge get up off the floor and sit in your seat. This is not a kennel and you are NOT a doggie!

(FUDGE gets into his chair. MOM serves dinner. Lamb chops for FUDGE and stew for everybody else.)

PETER
Those chops smell good.

FUDGE
(Pushing his plate away) No Chops!

MOM
Fudgie, you’ll starve. You must eat!

FUDGE
I want corn flakes.
I'll get the corn flakes.               DAD

Peter, you can have the chops.            MOM

(PETER takes the plate and starts eating the chops. FUDGE slips from his chair and sits at PETER'S feet, staring at him. MOM places a bowl of corn flakes in FUDGE'S lap. FUDGE still doesn't eat.)

EAT YOUR CEREAL!                     DAD

No! NO CEREAL!                     FUDGE

Fudge! You will eat that cereal or you will wear it!             DAD

(To audience) This was turning out to be fun after all.         PETER

No....No....No....

(DAD dumps the bowl of cereal over FUDGE'S head. FUDGE hollers and exits.)

Boy! He sure can scream loud!                      PETER

(They sit at the table and resume eating. FUDGE continues hollering. In a moment FUDGE enters. He takes his place at the table. MOM puts a new plate of food in front of him. FUDGE starts eating. Silence.)

(To audience) Fudge really shaped up at the dinner table after that. I was glad. And for a long time his favorite expression was –

(Quietly, then happily) Eat it or wear it! Eat it or wear it!

SCEN IV – My Brother the Bird

(To audience) Well, a couple of weeks later this next thing happened. And, as usual, Fudge was in the middle of it all. We live near Central Park. On nice days I like to play there after school. I’m allowed to walk over by myself as long as I’m going to be with friends. My mother
doesn’t want me hanging around the park alone. My favorite place in the park is this pile of rocks in the playground. My best friend Jimmy Fargo and I play secret agent there. Sometimes Sheila Tubman shows up.

   PETER

Hey! Sheila! Those are our rocks.

   SHEILA

Says who?

   JIMMY

(Claiming up the rocks) Come on, Sheila. You know me and Peter hang out here.

   SHEILA

Too bad for you.

   PETER

(Shouting) Sheila. Go find yourself another rock.

   JIMMY

Yeah, and crawl under it.

   SHEILA

I like this one. So why don’t you two go find another rock?

(FUDGE enters running.)

   FUDGE

Here birdies! Come here…

(FUDGE capers about chasing pigeons, flapping his arms.)

   MOM

(Off) Fudge…Fudge…

   MOM

(Entering) Wait for Mommy.

   PETER

Hi, Mom.

   MOM

Peter! Am I glad to see you. I can’t keep up with Fudge today.

   SHEILA

(Scrambling down from the rocks) Mrs. Hatcher! Mrs. Hatcher! I’ll watch Fudge for you. I’ll take real good care of him. Can I, Mrs. Hatcher? Can I please?

(SHEILA is jumping up and down. JIMMY winks at PETER and elbows him in the ribs.)
Come back bird...come back to Fudgie...

**FUDGE**

(Whispering) If your mom lets Sheila baby-sit Fudge, we’ll get rid of her.

**JIMMY**

Yeah. Then we can play secret agent.

**PETER**

MOM

(Checking her watch) Well, you know...I do have to run back to the apartment. I forgot my book. Do you really think you can keep an eye on Fudge for just a few minutes Sheila?

**SHEILA**

Of course I can, Mrs. Hatcher! I know all about babysitting.

**MOM**

(Thinking it over – hesitation) Peter...will you and Jimmy help Sheila watch Fudge while I run home?

**PETER**

Ah! Mom! Do we have to?

**MOM**

Please, Peter. I'll be right back, I'd feel a lot better knowing that all three of you were watching him.

**PETER**

(To Jimmy) What do you say?

**JIMMY**

Sure, why not.

**SHEILA**

But I'm in charge, right...

**MOM**

Well, I guess so...but stay right here.

(To FUDGE)

You be a good boy for ten minutes. Mommy will be right back. Okay?

**FUDGE**

Good boy!

**SHEILA**

Don't worry, Mrs. Hatcher. Fudgie will be just fine.

(MOM exits. FUDGE takes off.)

**FUDGE**

(Laughing) Can't catch me! Can't catch Fudge.
Go get him, Sheila. You’re in charge. Remember?

(SHEILA runs after FUDGE, ineptly trying to catch him. At first, PETER and JIMMY watch SHEILA impassively; then they horse around mimicking Sheila. FUDGE scrambles up the jungle gym.)

Well, I guess he’ll be okay up there. At least he can’t get lost. (Turning to Peter) Peter’s got the cooties! (She chases him.) Peter’s got the cooties.

Cut it out.

(JIMMY)

You started it.

(Performance continues as above.)

(From atop the jungle gym) Peeta….Peeta!

What?

(FUDGE flaps his arms.) Fudgie’s a bird!

(PETER runs to the jungle gym.)

That crazy kid.

(FUDGE jumps off the jungle gym, flapping his arms like wings. He falls to the ground behind some shrubs. The older kids stop in their tracks. Pause. FUDGE starts wailing and stands up from behind the rocks. His face is bloody. The KIDS rush to him. JIMMY hands PETER a handkerchief. PETER mops the blood off FUDGE’S face.)
SHEILA
It wasn’t my fault. Honest, it wasn’t.

JIMMY
He’s really a mess. And his teeth are gone, too.

PETER
What are you talking about?

JIMMY
Look in his mouth – while he’s screaming. See?

SHEILA
Oh no! He’s right! Fudgie’s front teeth are gone.

PETER
Open your mouth wide.

(FUDGE opens his mouth wide.)

(Continued) It’s true! My Mom’s going to kill you, Sheila.

SHEILA
(Whimpering) But it was an accident. He...he...(crying)...he did it himself... (wailing)... himself...

(Hearing SHEILA, FUDGE starts crying too.)

PETER
You’d better find his teeth.

SHEILA
Where should I look?

PETER
On the ground.

(SHEILA crawls around looking for the missing teeth. PETER tries to clean up FUDGE some more.)

FUDGE
(Pointing to his knees, elbows, etc.) See? Boo-boo here...and here...more boo-boo here...

JIMMY
I’m gonna get your mother.

PETER
Good idea. She’s probably already on her way back.
(JIMMY exits.)

I can’t find them.  

Keep looking.  

Honestly, Peter, there aren’t any teeth here anywhere.

All gone?  

Not all. Just two.

(Screaming) I want my teeth! I want my teeth!

(MOM enters. She picks up FUDGE.)

Oh, my baby! Oh honey! (MOM kisses FUDGE all over.) Show Mommy where it hurts.

(FUDGE points out his various scrapes and bruises. Then he points to his mouth.)

All gone!

What’s all gone?

His two front teeth.

Oh no! Oh, my poor little angel.

(Sniffing) I’ve looked everywhere, Mrs. Hatcher, but I just can’t find them.

He must have swallowed them.

(MOM looks into FUDGE’S mouth.)

Oh, Mrs. Hatcher! How awful. I’m sorry…I’m sorry…what will happen to him?
He'll be all right, Sheila. I'm sure it was an accident. Nobody's blaming you.

(SHEILA starts bawling again.)

(Continued) Why don't you kids go on home now.

See ya, Peter.

(JIMMY and SHEILA exit.)

Peter Warren Hatcher! I'm so sorry that I can't trust you for just ten minutes!

Me? Trust me? What's this got to do with me?

I left your brother with you for ten minutes and just look at what happened. I'm disgusted with you.

It was Sheila's fault. You said Sheila was in charge. So how come you're mad at me and not at Sheila?

I just am!

(He crosses to his bedroom and sits on the edge of the bed. To Dribble.) Mom doesn't love me anymore. She doesn't even like me. Maybe I'm not her real son. Maybe somebody left me in a basket on her doorstep. My real mother's probably a beautiful princess or a movie star or a famous politician. I'll bet she'd like to have me back.

(Lighting change to indicate early morning. MOM is at the door to PETER'S room.)

Peter? May I come in?

(No answer from Peter. MOM enters the bedroom.)

Peter, I said some things earlier that I really didn't mean.

What?

I was very upset over Fudge's accident and I had to blame somebody. So I picked on you.
Yeah. You sure did.

PETER

It wasn’t your fault though. I know that. It was an accident. It could have happened even if I had been in the playground myself.

MOM

He wanted to fly. He thought he was a bird.

PETER

I don’t think he’ll try to fly again.

MOM

Me neither.

(They both laugh.)

PETER

(Continued) I knew she was my real mom after all.

SCENE V – The Birthday Bash

(The apartment. The living room. Afternoon.)
(Lights up on Peter.)

PETER

(To audience) I’m getting used to the way Fudge looks without his front teeth.

(Behind PETER a large drawing of FUDGE smiling appears. His two front teeth are gone.)

PETER

(To audience) The dentist said that Fudge’ll have to wait until he’s six or seven to get his grown-up teeth. I call him fang because when he smiles all you can see are the top side teeth next to this big black hole. So it looks like he has fangs.

MOM

(Off) Peter Warren Hatcher, I want you to stop calling him Fang!

PETER

What should I call him? Farley Drexel?

MOM

(Off) Just plain Fudge will be fine.

PETER

What’s wrong with Farley Drexel? How come you named him that if you don’t like it?
(MOM now appears, but only from the waist up. PETER and she may or may not address each other directly.)

MOM
I like it fine. But right now we call him Fudge. Not Farley…not Drexel…and not Fang!

PETER
What’s wrong with Fang? I think it sounds great!

MOM
Fang is an insult.

PETER
Oh come on, Mom. He doesn’t even know what a fang is.

MOM
But I know, Peter. And I don’t like it.

PETER
Okay…okay…

MOM
Okay, what?

PETER
I promise I’ll never call him Fang again.

(To audience) But secretly, whenever I see Fudge, I think: there goes my brother, Fang, Fang Hatcher. Nobody can stop me from thinking. My mind’s my own. So I’m not really breaking my promise to Mom…

Well, Fudge was going to be three years old. My mother said he should have a birthday party with some of his friends. I wanted to go to Jimmy Fargo’s but my mother said she needed me to supervise the games. My father couldn’t make it. He had a Saturday business appointment. Anyway, Fudge plays with three other little kids who live in our building. My mother invited them to his party.

(Lights up on the kitchen area. It is decorated for a kid’s birthday party. RALPH, JENNIE, and SAM are seated at the table in the tableau: RALPH is stuffing a huge candy bar into his mouth, JENNIE is biting his arm and SAM, apart from the others, is a paroxysm of tears. The kids have on party hats, etc. FUDGE’S seat is vacant. During the following speech, PETER walks from child to child.)

This is Jennie. Her mother apologized in advance because she bites. I wanted to know what, thinking about things like furniture or toys and stuff. But no, her mom said that Jennie likes to bite people. I was kind of surprised. I mean she looked so innocent. It was hard to believe that she’s a vampire. This is Ralph. He’s really fat. And he isn’t even four years old yet. He doesn’t say much, either. he grunts and grabs a lot, though. Usually his mouth is stuffed full of something…and this is Sam. He cries a lot. His mom said that it’s just a stage he’s going through. Everything scares him. Especially birthday parties. He kept on screaming: (PETER gives SAM slap on the back as if to start him up.)
SAM
(Screaming)TAKE ME HOME! TAKE ME HOME! TAKE ME HOME!

PETER
Okay, that’s enough. (SAM resumes his tableau posture) But before we start the party I want you to see this…

(Lights down on the kitchen and up on the living room. FUDGE comes running in with his party suit half on and half off. He is wearing his bunny bedroom slippers. He is struggling to get out of it. MOM enters, running after him.)

FUDGE
I don’t like it.

(FUDGE throws himself down on the living room floor.)

MOM
It’s your birthday, Fudgie. All your friends are coming. You want to look like a big boy, don’t you?

(MOM manages to get his shirttails tucked in and his pants halfway zipped up. He struggles furiously, kicking and screaming.)

PETER
What can I do?

MOM
Hold him while I get his shoes on.

(PETER holds FUDGE.)

FUDGE
No…no…no…no…NO SHOES!

MOM
Okay! Your bedroom slippers will just have to do.

(Lights down on living room.)

PETER
(To audience) Well, let’s start the party. (Lights up on the kitchen. Tableau postures still.) Remember: A biter, an eater and a crier.

(The party action starts immediately: pandemonium.)

SAM
(Indicating his party hat) Get it off! Get it off!
(Camera in hand) Okay kids: SMILE!

PETER

Doesn’t Fudge have any normal friends?

MOM

All small children are like that. Go bring in the birthday cake. I’ll turn out the lights.

(PETER lights the candles on the birthday cake and brings it on. MOM dims the lights. SAM starts crying.)

SAM

Too dark, too dark.

PETER

(Singing) Happy birthday to you…(etc.)

(Rest of the CHILDREN join in except for SAM whose wailing can be heard above the song. MOM turns the lights back on. SAM stops crying and joins in the song. FUDGE blows out the candles and then snatches a rose off the cake. He shoves the rose into his mouth.)

PETER

Mom, look at what he did.

MOM

It’s his birthday. He can do whatever he wants.

(FUDGE grabs a second rose.)

PETER

There he goes again.

(RALPH grabs a rose too. By now the cake is pretty messy. MOM retrieves the cake and slices it up. PETER brings on four Dixie cups and four plates. MOM holds out the cake.)

JENNIE

Where’s my rose? I want one too.

MOM

I’m sorry Jennie. There aren’t enough roses to go around. They’re only decorations anyway.

JENNIE

…de…cor…a…shuns…

MOM

(Patting JENNIE on the head.) That’s a good girl.

(RALPH has devoured his piece. He holds up his empty plate.)
More cake…more cake…

RALPH

I don’t think you should give him any more. Look at how fat he is now.

PETER

MORE! MORE! MORE!

RALPH

Oh, Peter…This is a birthday party. Let him eat whatever he wants.

(MOM gives RALPH another slice. He stuffs it into his mouth.)

MOM

Mom! She bit me!

PETER

Did it break the skin?

MOM

(Examining his wound) No, I don’t think so.

PETER

Good. Then there’s nothing to worry about. But I’ll get some iodine just in case.

(MOM exits. RALPHS has a sour look on his face. He turns away from the audience and throws up.)

MOM

Oh, what a mess. Peter, take the kids into the living room and get them started on Fudge’s presents. I’ll clean this up.

PETER

Come on everybody. Let’s see what you all brought Fudge.

(The CHILDRENS leave the table and follow PETER into the living room. PETER brings over the presents.)

MOM

Everybody sit down. (THEY do.)

PETER

(Pointing to the gift she brought.) Mine first! Mine first!
(PETER hands JENNIE’S gift to FUDGE. FUDGE unwraps it. It is a jack-in-the-box. FUDGE looks at it curiously.)

It’s a jack-in-the-box.

(PETER turns the crank. The music sounds. JENNIE slaps her hands; RALPH looks around for food. The puppet pops up. JENNIE and RALPH squeal with delight. SAM screams in terror.)

No! No more! Take it away!

It’s only a toy. It won’t hurt you.

Take it away!

No! Take it away!

Peter, put the jack-in-the-box in the kitchen and out of sight.

Okay. (PETER takes the toy into the kitchen.)

Mine next! Mine next.

Okay, Ralph.

(MOM hands RALPH’S present to FUDGE. It’s a little wind-up car. FUDGE is delighted. FUDGE lets it run all over the floor.)

Do you like, Fudgie?

Yes.

Say “thank-you” to Ralph.

I like it. (RALPH grabs the car from FUDGE.) MINE!

(The two BOYS fight over the toy.)

Now, Ralph, you brought the car to Fudge as a present, because it’s his birthday.
RALPH
My car! My car!

PETER
You’d better let him play with it for a while. He might throw up again if you don’t.

MOM
Not on my living room rug! Peter, quick! Get Sam’s present. (To FUDGE) Let’s see what Sam brought you, Fudgie.

(PETER hands the last gift to FUDGE. FUDGE releases the car – RALPHS takes it.)

Here.

PETER
(FUDGE quiets down. So does SAM.)

MOM
There you go.

(FUDGE unwraps the gift. It is a book. A dictionary, in fact, like the one the Yarbys brought and like the one Fudge already has in his bookshelf.)

PETER
That’s the same dictionary the Yarbys brought me.

FUDGE
NO! Not this book. (FUDGE hurls the book across the room.)

PETER
Oh boy!

SAM
(Crying) He doesn’t like it! He doesn’t like my present. I want to go home…I want to go home!

MOM
Oh course Fudgie likes the book. It’s a very nice book.

SAM
I want to go home.

MOM
(To Peter) Peter…let’s start the games now!

PETER
Which one?

MOM
(Putting on the music) The balloon dance.
PETER
Oh brother. Okay everybody. Stand up. (The CHILDREN stand up.) Everybody gets a balloon. (PETER hands each child a balloon.) Now dance. (The CHILDREN stare dumbly at him.)

MOM
Show them how, Peter. Take a balloon yourself and demonstrate.

PETER
Come on, Mom!

MOM
Please.

PETER
Mom…

MOM
Pete…

PETER
Okay.

(PETER begins sheepishly to dance around.)

I feel like the world’s greatest living fool.

(The CHILDREN, delighted, join in immediately. MOM cleans up the wrapping paper. The more the CHILDREN dance, the wilder they get. PETER stops dancing and watches.)

PETER
What a bunch of monkeys.

(FUDGE starts jumping on the furniture. The rest of the CHILDREN join in. Soon they are running from room to room, dancing, yelling, screaming.)

MOM
Peter, get them to stop.

PETER
How?

MOM
Figure it out.

PETER
Okay you guys, enough’s enough.

MOM
(On the phone) Hello?…Yes, Mrs. Rudman…no your ceiling’s not caving in…no, we’re not excavating up here. I’m having a little birthday party for my three-year-old…I’ll quiet them down.
'MOM hangs up the phone. JENNIE, who is next to SAM, pops her balloon in his face. SAM starts hollering. The rest of the CHILDREN stop dancing and bouncing and start laughing at SAM."

Peter, why don’t you show them Dribble?

MOM

Mom, Dribble’s my pet. You don’t go around using a pet to entertain a bunch of little kids.

PETER

Peter, please. We’ve still got half an hour left. I don’t know what to do with them anymore.

MOM

Dribble! Dribble! Dribble! Dribble!

FUDGE

(The CHILDREN take up the chant.)

Please…

MOM

Oh, all right. (To the CHILDREN.) I’ll show you Dribble, but you’ve got to promise to be very quiet.

PETER exits.

MOM

That’s right. You have to be very quiet or you might scare Dribble. Okay?

(The CHILDREN quiet down.)

MOM

Now everybody sit down. (The CHILDREN sit.) Shhh…

CHILDREN

Shhhhh…

(PETER enters with the turtle in its bowl. He puts his fingers over his lips to remind the children to be quiet. The CHILDREN mimic him. PETER places the bowl before them. MOM exits to the kitchen to begin cleaning up.)

JENNIE

Oh…turtle!

PETER

(softly) Yes. Dribble’s a turtle. My turtle.

FUDGE

See…
They can all see.

(Not afraid) Nice turtle.

What does Dribble do?

Do? He doesn’t do anything special. He’s a turtle. He does turtle things.

Like what?

(To JENNIE) Well, he swims around a little and he sleeps on his rock and he eats.

Does he make?

Make?

Make a tinkle.

Oh, that. Well, sure. I guess so.

(JENNIE laughs. So do FUDGE and RALPH.)

I make tinkles, too. Want to see?

No.

(JENNIE goes behind the couch and squats out of the audience’s view. FUDGE follows her. He starts laughing and pointing.)

Look…look…

Mom! Come quick!

What is it now, Peter?
(Pointing at the puddle) Just look at what Jennie did.

What’s that?

She peed on the floor, and on purpose.

Did too.

That was very naughty. You come with me to the bathroom.

(MOM scoops JENNIE up and exits. Lights down on the party scene.)

(To audience) Well, the party was pretty much over with by that time anyway. Mom read them some stories but Jennie kept complaining that she had heard them all before. When Jennie’s mom came to pick her up, my mom gave her mom Jennie’s wet pants in a plastic baggie. (Poster of a hand holding a plastic baggie.) Her mom was plenty embarrassed. (Poster out.) Ralph fell asleep on the floor. (Poster of RALPH asleep on the floor.) He’s so fat…(Poster of RALPH’S mom trying to pick him up)…that when his mom came even she couldn’t pick him up. (Poster out.) And when Sam’s mom came…(Poster of SAM crying)…he started hollering…

(Off) More party! More party! Don’t want to go!

You get the idea.

(To audience) After we got done cleaning the mess up, Mom flopped down on the couch.

(Lights up on MOM sitting on the couch.)

Peter.

Yeah, Mom?

Thanks for helping today…I couldn’t have done it without you.

I guess three is kind of young for a party.

(Slowly) Peter Warren Hatcher…
Yeah…

You are absolutely right!

(DAD enters – picks up a leftover noisemaker.)

Well, how did Fudge’s party go?

(DAD blows the noisemaker – PETER and MOM look at each other – they laugh with great affection.)

SCENE VI – Fang Hits Town

(Spot up on Peter. He is holding the turtle bowl.)

(To audience) Saturday has always been the best day of my week. Every Saturday morning I cleaned out Dribble’s bowl. Sometimes if Fudge was very good I let him watch. But this Saturday I wasn't looking forward to my day.

(Off) Hurry up. We'll be late.

(To Dribble) Why do I have to go to the dentist with Mom and Fudge?

(Off) I thought we'd make a day of it.

I'd rather go play with Jimmy Fargo.

(Entering Peter’s Room) We'll have such a good time. The three of us will go get new shoes for both of you, and then we'll go out for lunch.

I've been out to lunch with Fudge before. Remember?

He’s growing up, Peter. He knows how to behave now.

I'd still rather go to Jimmy's.
MOM
Maybe next week. Now let’s get going or we’ll be late for Fudge’s appointment with Dr. Brown.

PETER
(To audience) Dr. Brown is our family dentist. He’s an okay guy. He went to school with Dad, so whenever he sees me he’s always telling me what a “chip off the old block” I am.

(Lights up on Dr. Brown’s office.)

NURSE
(To Fudge) How’s my favorite patient?

(NURSE gives FUDGE a kiss and a hug.)

PETER
(To audience) It burns me up the way people treat Fudge. He’s not so special. He’s just little that’s’ all. Some day he’s going to be nine years old, too. I can’t wait until he is. Then he’ll see there’s nothing so great about him after all.

NURSE
Fudge, Dr. Brown is ready for you now.

(NURSE leads FUDGE into the examining room.)

PETER
(To audience) Dr. Brown has this rule about mothers in the examining room: they’re not allowed. Dr. Brown told me once that mothers are a big problem. I agree sometimes!

(NURSE enters and whispers something to MOM.)

NURSE
Anne.

PETER
What’s the big secret.

MOM
Peter, Dr. Brown needs you to help him with Fudge.

PETER
Help him? I’m no dentist!

NURSE
Peter, dear…if you’ll just come with me, I’m sure everything will work out just fine.

PETER
What do I have to do?

NURSE
Oh, not much. Dr. Brown just wants to show Fudge how you open your mouth and how he checks your teeth.
PETER
What do I have to do that for? I don’t need a check-up. I just had one.

NURSE
(Whispering) Your brother won’t open his mouth this morning.

(Whispering) He won’t?

PETER
No, he won’t.

NURSE
(To audience) I’d never considered refusing to open my mouth at the dentist’s office. When he says “open”, I open!

(PETER enters the examining room. FUDGE is sitting in the dentist’s chair, a towel wrapped around his neck. DR. BROWN is showing him various tools and explaining their function, but FUDGE still refuses to open his mouth.)

DR. BROWN
Ah, Peter. Would you open your mouth so I can count your teeth?

PETER
(To audience) That’s what he tells little kids he’s doing – counting their teeth. Little kids will believe anything. (To Dr. Brown) Okay, Dr. Brown.

(PETER opens his mouth very wide. DR. BROWN puts his mirror in.)

DR. BROWN
Wonderful teeth. Just beautiful. Ah...uh-huh...hmmm...a regular chip off the old block. Such a shame your brother can’t open his mouth the way you do.

Can so.

FUDGE

BROWN
No. Sorry. You can’t open your mouth nearly so well as Peter.

FUDGE
I can so...see! (FUDGE opens his mouth.)

DR. BROWN
No, I’m sorry Fudge. It’s still not as good as Peter.

(FUDGE opens his mouth very wide.)

FUDGE
Count my teeth...count Fudge’s teeth. Doctor, Doctor, count my teeth.
DR. BROWN
Well…(*He scratches his head.*) I guess as long as you’re here, I might as well count your teeth.

PETER
Couldn’t you make Fudge some false teeth? Until his real ones come in.

DR. BROWN
No. He’ll just have to wait.

PETER
But he looks like he has fangs.

DR. BROWN
You’d better not say that in front of your mother.

PETER
I know. She’s not too big on fangs.

DR. BROWN
Okay, Fudge. That’ll be it.

FUDGE
See, just like Peter.

DR. BROWN
Yes, I can see that. You’re just like Peter. Hop on down now Fudge, you’re done.

(*FUDGE exits – Peter starts to follow.*)

DR. BROWN
Peter – I’m not quite done with you yet.

(*The sound of a dentist’s drill, then lights down on examining room and office.*)

PETER
(*To audience*) Mom made another appointment for Fudge, and the nurse kissed him goodbye, while Dr. Brown filled my cavity. Great. Then mom said to me…

MOM
That wasn’t too bad was it?

PETER
It couldn’t have been worse.

(*To audience*) Anyway, we headed to Bloomingdale’s where we get our shoes. There are five salesmen in the children’s department. Two of them my mother doesn’t like. She thinks they don’t measure feet carefully. That all they care about is selling shoes, even if they don’t have the right sizes in stock. The other ones my mother thinks are okay. There’s one she likes a lot. His name is Mr. Berman. I like him too – because he’s funny. He usually makes believe that the right shoe goes on the left foot or that Fudge’s shoes are really for me. Anyway, when Mr. Berman waits on us, buying shoes is almost fun.
(Lights up on Bloomingdale’s shoe department.)

Well, if it isn’t the Hatcher boys.

In the flesh.

(Opening his mouth) See.

His teeth. He knocked them out.

Well! Congratulations! That calls for a celebration.

(BERMAN reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out two lollipops. He hands one to PETER and the other to FUDGE.)

Ohhhh! Lolly!

(FUDGE rips off the wrapper and starts sucking right away.)

(Looks at his flavor; to audience) Root Beer! I hate root beer.

(To MR. Berman) Thank you, but I just had a tooth filled – I’ll save this for tomorrow.

(PETER hands the sucker to MOM who puts it in her purse.)

Now then. What’ll it be, boys?

Brown-and-white saddles for Fudge and loafers for Peter.

Okay, Peter. Let’s see how those dogs have grown.

(PETER slips out of his old shoes and stands up. MR. Berman carefully measures each foot.)

(To audience) This is why my mom likes Mr. Berman so much. He’s so careful. She says:

Feet can be different sizes. Even on the same person.
MR. BERMAN
That’s for sure. That’s why it’s important to make sure the size fits the biggest foot. Now: what color loafer, Peter?

PETER
Brown, same as my old ones.

MR. BERMAN
Okay, you’re the boss.

(MR. BERMAN exits to the stockroom.)

MOM
Peter!

PETER
What mom?

MOM
Why didn’t you tell me you had a hole in your sock?

PETER
I didn’t know I had one.

MOM
I’m so embarrassed.

PETER
It’s my sock, Mom. Why should you be embarrassed?

MOM
It looks terrible. I mean, to come shopping for shoes with a hole in your sock. That’s just awful. Can’t you hide it a little?

PETER
How do you hide a hole?

MOM
Try to get it between your toes, so it doesn’t show.

(PETER wiggles his sock around. MR. BERMAN enters carrying two boxes. He tries a pair of shoes on PETER.)

PETER
These are too tight. (PETER tries on the other pair.)

These fit fine.

MR. BERMAN
Wear or wrap?
Wrap please. We’ll wear the old ones home.

(To audience) I’ve never been allowed to wear the new ones home from the store. Don’t ask me why. But my mother always has the new shoes wrapped up and I can’t wear them until the next day.

Here we are.

(MR. BERMAN opens the box and takes out the shoes. Shows the shoes to FUDGE.)

No!

No what?

(Kicking his feet) No shoes!

Don’t be silly, Fudge. You need new shoes.

NO! NO! NO!

Here’s the perfect size. Wait till you see how nice these new shoes feel.

(FUDGE kicks and screams. It is impossible for MR. BERMAN to get the new shoes on him.)

No shoes. NO! NO! NO!

(MOM grabs a hold of FUDGE. FUDGE kicks MR. BERMAN.)

Now look Fudge. You need new shoes. Your old ones are too small. So what kind do you want?

(To audience) I don’t know why mom bothered talking to Fudge like he was a regular person. When he gets himself into a temper tantrum, he doesn’t listen to anybody.

(FUDGE throws himself onto the floor. He beats his fists against the rug.)

What kind do you want, Fudge. Because we’re not leaving here until you have new shoes.
PETER
We could be here the rest of the day…or the week.

MOM
Peter.

PETER
Well, I don’t see why you made such a big thing out of a little hole in my sock and now you’re letting Fudge flop on the floor acting like a baby.

MOM
All right, Fudge. I’m going to count to three. And I want you to tell me which shoes you want. Ready? One…Two…Three...

FUDGE
(Sitting up) Like Peeta’s?

PETER
(To audience) I guess the little guy looks up to me.

MR. BERMAN
Loafers don’t come in your size.

FUDGE
YES!

(MR. BERMAN holds up his hands in a gesture of despair. EVERYONE looks at MOM. Pause.)

MOM
I have an idea. (MOM gestures for MR. BERMAN and PETER to come closer.)

I’m not going to like this.

PETER
I think we’ll have to play a little joke on Fudge.

MOM
What do you mean?

PETER
Well, suppose Mr. Berman brings out a pair of saddle shoes in your size and...

MOM
Oh, no! You’re not going to get me to wear saddle shoes!

PETER
Let me finish. Mr. Berman can bring them out and you can try them on and then Fudge will think that’s what you’re getting. But when we leave, we’ll take the loafers.
That’s mean. You’re taking advantage of him.

Since when do you worry about that?

Since now.

(Checking her watch) Look, Peter. It’s one-thirty. I’m starved.

Me, too.

If you ever want to get out of here, try my idea.

Okay, okay. (MR. BERMAN exits.)

(Suspiciously) Like Peeta’s?

Yeah, sure Fudge.

(MR. BERMAN enters with another box. PETER tries the saddle shoes on.)

(Ugh!) Shhh. See Peter’s nice saddle shoes? Now Fudgie tries on his nice saddle shoes.

(Holding up his foot) Like Peeta’s.

That’s right, Fudge. Just like mine.

(To audience) You sure can fool little kids easily.

Wear or wrap?

Wrap of course.
(To audience) Mr. Berman gave Fudge a striped balloon. He offered me one, too. But I refused. How could he think a person in the fourth grade might want a striped balloon?

(SHEILA crosses.)

Oh no!

Hi Pet…

(She notices his shoes – points and laughs. PETER, humiliated, looks at his mom. SHEILA finishes her cross.)

That wasn’t so terrible was it, Peter?

It wasn’t?

It could have been worse.

(To audience) It got worse! We went to Hamburger Heaven for lunch. I couldn’t even chew my food. And you can imagine what Fudge did there…

(Spot on FUDGE in a restaurant booster chair. Various dishes of food are before him.)

(Chanting) Eat it or wear it! Eat it or wear it!

(FUDGE dumps the plate of food over his own head.)

Oh Fudge!

(Then, sheepishly, to PETER) Our day hasn’t been that bad has it, Peter?

I didn’t answer. But after the surprise cavity, and Sheila seeing me in those dumb shoes, and the lunch disaster, I just knew I’d never spend another day with Farley Drexel Hatcher again!

INTERMISSION