

BUMBLING BEA

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

At rise, Beatrice, Jerri and Peter are grouped on one side of the stage. Michiko, dressed as a Kabuki character, is on the other. She strikes a pose.

BEATRICE:

(to audience)  
There was this girl named Michiko. She was---

JERRI:

--different. And smart, and teeny and pretty--

BEATRICE:

Okay, Jerri. That's enough.

PETER:

And...she was super talented.

JERRI:

Right Peter.

BEATRICE:

You guys, this is MY story. Not yours.

JERRI:

Right. And she wore cat ears all the time.

PETER:

Right.

Bumbling Bea enters the stage and stands beside Beatrice. She is dressed identically to Beatrice (same jeans, same "I heart Sarcasm" shirt, same shoes) but a little unkempt. She stands to one side of Beatrice.

BEATRICE:

Thank you.

BUMBLING BEA:

Anyway, there was this girl named Michiko who came from Japan and ruined my life.

JERRI:

Really? Ruined your life?

PETER:

Well, sort of.

JERRI:

She just beat you at something you really wanted.

PETER:

Right. Jerri's right.

Michiko changes her pose to another

JERRI:

Thanks, Peter.

BEATRICE:

Some friends you are. (to audience) Anyway, as I said there was this girl named Michiko and she came from Japan with her parents and attended our middle school. And yes, she was talented, and smart, very petite, pretty and ....

Jerri and Peter cross to Michiko, greeting her. She gestures for them to imitate her movements. They do. Bumbling Bea nudges Beatrice.

BEATRICE:

(to Bumbling Bea) Go on, tell them.

BUMBLING BEA:

(to Bumbling Bea) I will.

BEATRICE:

It will be easier for us if you do. You know, we got past this road block a long time ago.

BUMBLING BEA:

I know.....YOU don't have to tell ME.

BUMBLING BEA:

Right. Then do it.

BEATRICE

All right!

BEATRICE AND BUMBLING BEA:

Michiko changed my life.

BUMBLING BEA:

(prodding) How?

BEATRICE:

For the better. She changed my life....for the better. You happy now?

BUMBLING BEA:

Yup. Are you going to tell them about me?

BEATRICE:

Well....maybe.

BUMBLING BEA:

You need to tell them about me. (to audience) She needs to tell you about me.

BEATRICE:

(to audience) Sorry about her being here. (to BB) Sometime. I'll share about you--sometime.

BUMBLING BEA:

Now is a good time. It's the beginning of the story.

BB EXITS SLOWLY.

BEATRICE:

I suppose you are wondering who that was--(calling to BB)- who interrupts me all the time. (to audience) I've discovered I have an alter ego who I call Bumbling Bea. Sarcastic thoughts fly out of my mouth and I blame them on Bumbling Bea. They don't even sound like something I'd think or say! Bumbling Bea hadn't been around for a long time, but when she did rear her scary head, it was at the worst times.

Jerri, Michiko and Peter exit the stage.

THE CURTAIN OPENS TO REVEAL A  
CHOIR IN TABLEAU WITH MR. OATES  
CONDUCTING THEM.

BEATRICE:

Like when we gave Mr. Oates, our choir director, a tennis racket as a going away present. He was getting married and leaving our school. He was obsessed with tennis and was a pretty decent player even if he had knobby knees and skinny, hairy, Minnie Mouse legs that looked kinda' weird in his way too short tennis shorts.

Choir takes a deep breath and strikes a melodic chord in pantomime.

BEATRICE:

I was class secretary for Mr. Oates which made me feel really important even though he had a class secretary for every other class too. I thought I was powerful. Kids listened to me, too. Bumbling Bea liked that!

Choir takes a deep breath and strikes another melodic chord in pantomime.

BEATRICE:

Since I was boss of the choir class, I thought it would be a great idea to get a present for Mr. Oates since he was leaving and all. I collected the money for it.

THE LIGHTS CROSS FADE TO  
DOWNSTAGE.

BEATRICE:

I was so excited! I checked out tennis racket prices on the internet, Dave's Discount and the hardware supply stores. Dave's had the best price. My dad told me--

Mr. Brace enters and crosses to Beatrice.

MR. BRACE:

Dave's Discount buys up all the things that other businesses can't sell. Sometimes their stuff falls apart after one use, but their prices are awesome! And besides, they'll give you a free box.

BEATRICE:

Right. Their prices are awesome.

Mr. Brace exits. Cashier enters with a rolling table. Clothes are stacked on it and a tennis racket, too.

BEATRICE:

I shopped for the tennis racket all by myself. And since I had a little time before Dad picked me up, I looked around at the girls' clothes.

LIGHTS CHANGE TO STORE AREA.

Beatrice crosses to the store. She picks up the tennis racket. Bumbling Bea has entered joining Beatrice, picks up some girls clothes from the table, inspecting them. Lastly, she picks up a bikini swimming suit, flip flops and a pile of panties. She hands them to the cashier.

CASHIER:

You want me to put that in a Dave's Discount box, honey?

BEATRICE:

Sure. (to audience) I'd heard about the Dave's Discount boxes before. People used them to store just about anything in them: extra cat litter, broken toys, a bed for a puppy and other stuff.

BUMBLING BEA:

(to cashier) I'd like a second one if I could, please. My Dad said you'd give me one.

CASHIER:

Sure, honey. They're free. Can't have enough of Dave's Discount boxes.

BEATRICE:

I took my boxes with the tennis racket and the other filled the bikini swimming suit, flip flops AND a package of panties. None of these were really my style, but I was, you

know, branching out.

LIGHTS CHANGE TO CENTER STAGE  
AGAIN.

Mrs. Brace enters dressed for work with  
a satchel carrying art materials.

BEATRICE:  
Mom, we got a deal! The racket only cost thirty-six dollars!

MRS. BRACE:  
That's wonderful, Beatrice. Don't forget to take off the  
price tag before you wrap it.

BUMBLING BEA:  
Jeez, Mom of course, I'll take the price tag off the racket.  
I'm not a baby....

Enter Edmund with a huge wrapped box.  
Exit Mrs. Brace

BEATRICE:  
(to audience) My brother, Edmund helped me wrap the box. We  
put the box into another box which went in another box.

EDMUND:  
I love presents wrapped like this. It's so awesome!  
(laughing) Remember Beatrice? I always love this trick!

Edmund exits.

BEATRICE:  
Right.

BUMBLING BEA:  
This is so awesome. When I tell Mr. Oates I chose the  
present, he will think I'm one of his coolest students for  
doing this for him.

BEATRICE:  
That's Bumbling Bea talking. You see?

LIGHTS BRIGHTEN ON CHOIR AREA

Choir stands and begins singing a song.  
Beatrice crosses to choir and stands by  
Bumbling Bea who has joined them,  
singing very loudly and dramatically.

BEATRICE:  
It was finally time to give the present. It was the last day  
of classes before summer vacation. That was the second time  
Bumbling Bea appeared.

MR. OATES:  
Class, Beatrice asked to have a few minutes of your time

before our class is over. Beatrice?

The students sit on the risers.

BEATRICE:

Thank you, Mr. Oates. We are sad that you are leaving Oak Grove Middle School. We wanted to give you something to remember us when you travel off in your new life. Here.

Beatrice hands the gift to Mr. Oates.  
The choir applauds.

BUMBLING BEA:

So, here is a little something to use to take out your frustrations on your new wife.

Everyone reacts.

BEATRICE:

Huh? What did I just say?

BUMBLING BEA:

I meant, here's a little something to use to take out your frustrations in your new life.

Everyone reacts.

BEATRICE:

(to audience) Oh man! That wasn't right either. I tried one more time.

BUMBLING BEA:

(to Mr. Oates) Oh, you know when you have a bad day at your new school and want to strangle your students, you can use this instead.

BEATRICE:

(to audience) I cringed.

She does so. Mr. Oates opens the present.

BEATRICE:

I felt really different on the inside of myself. Kinda smart alecky, but I didn't know why. Maybe I was way too excited or nervous or awkward. Sometimes I do dumb things to cover. That was how I felt that day. I wanted to sound grown up and cool and in charge, but I said three really dumb things to my teacher. Unfortunately, I did more than say three dumb things. Way more.

LIGHTS CHANGE TO CENTER. DAVE'S  
DISCOUNT BOX IS PLACED ON STAGE.

Edmund enters screaming and running  
after a ferret, trying to catch it as  
he runs. Bumbling Bea enters running

after Edmund, absent mindedly kicks the box offstage and continues following Edmund.

BEATRICE:

When Edmund and I were wrapping up the tennis racket, Edmund's pet ferret, Bernie, got loose from Edmund. We were so busy screaming at Bernie while trying to catch him, my big fat foot accidentally pushed the box with the tennis racket under my bed. Oops.

LIGHTS CHANGE TO CHOIR

JERRI:

Beatrice, you left the price tag on the box and....

STUDENT #1:

Embarassing.

BEATRICE:

(to Bumbling Bea) There's the price tag.

BUMBLING BEA:

(overconfidently)That shows you how much we like you and I wanted you to know that every one had chipped in for it.

Mr. Oates opens the final box and first pulls out the bikini.

STUDENT #1:

It's a bikini!

Mr. Oates pulls out the flip flops.

STUDENT #2:

And flip flops?

Mr. Oates pulls out the panties.

STUDENT #3:

And pink panties!!

Choir laughs uproariously.

BEATRICE:

(to audience) Yes, that's right folks. It was the box containing my bikini swimming suit, matching flip flops and the new panties.

Beatrice picks up the left over wrapping paper, not noticing the commotion.

STUDENTS:

(ad libs.)New panties! Oh, my gosh. How embarrassing. New panties!

BEATRICE:  
What? How did those get in there?

LIGHTS CHANGE.

Beatrice crosses down of curtain as the curtain closes.

BEATRICE:  
Mr. Oates said something to me, but the whole class was laughing was so loudly I couldn't hear him. I grabbed back the box and ran out of class and hid in the girls' bathroom.

Students enter and cross the stage.  
When they see Beatrice, they stop and giggle. Bumbling Bea enters after them, crossing as well.

BOYS:  
Hey Panties! How ya doing, Panties?

BEATRICE:  
People called me that for days.

Mrs. Brace enters with phone.

MRS. BRACE:  
Hello, Mrs. Shepherd? (she listens) Yes, I understand your son has been calling my daughter Panties.....

Mrs. Brace exits.

BEATRICE:  
Until my mother heard me complain about it one too many times and called some of their parents. Yup. Bumbling Bea steps into my skin right at the wrong time. In fact, lately, she has appeared more times than I have.

Michiko re-enters dressed as a school girl. She crosses to Beatrice.

MICHIKO:  
(waves) Hello, Betty.

Michiko exits.

BEATRICE:  
A girl visiting from Japan made me see what I was doing by taking on my Bumbling-Bea-ness herself! It's all a little scary when you think about it.

Blackout.

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