

*The Future Is In
Your Tiny Hands*

a play by Jonathan Rand

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Cast of Characters

KAITLYN, elementary school student presidential candidate

BOBBY, elementary school student presidential candidate

SOPHIA, moderator

AUDIENCE MEMBERS (*can all be played by one actor*)

BRIAN

PAIGE

COLIN

EMILIO

FELICIA

LARRY

EDIE

RYAN

Production Notes

The original concept called for one actor playing all eight town hall audience members. For a bigger cast, assign as many actors as you wish in those roles.

Ideally each audience member character delivers their question from a different seat among the real audience. You may instead prefer that all audience member characters speak from the same spot in the aisle, or appear on stage.

Except for Bobby and Colin (who should be male) and Kaitlyn (who should be female), all other characters can be any gender. Change first names as necessary.

There are some suggested visual aids; feel free to add more wherever effective.

(A school auditorium stage with two stools for the candidates and a chair and table for SOPHIA, the debate moderator.)

SOPHIA. *(To the audience:)* Greetings and welcome to the Crazytown Elementary School presidential debate. I'm Sophia from Miss Brady's class and will serve as moderator. Today's debate will be structured in a town hall format, with questions posed by you, the students. Now please join me in welcoming... the candidates for *your* student president... Bobby Grantwood and Kaitlyn Parker.

(BOBBY and KAITLYN enter to applause sound effect. They wave and give thumbs-up to the audience, shake hands with each other, and move to separate stools. Throughout the debate, they mostly walk the stage when delivering a speech, and otherwise sit.)

Welcome to you both. Let's get right to it with questions from your fellow students, who have pre-submitted their name, and a little something about themselves. The first question comes from Brian Dexter, who has a robot costume that totally looks real.

BRIAN. If you could describe your candidacy in three words, what would those three words be?

KAITLYN. Before we get started, I'd like to thank the Crazytown Elementary Election Commission, the entire student body, and my opponent for what I'm confident will be a constructive conversation. And if I could describe my candidacy in three words, I would do so as follows: For too long our student body has been divided into factions of the haves and have-nots, and under my leadership, *all* students will have an equal opportunity to achieve their dreams.

BOBBY. Before we get started, I'd like to thank the Crazytown Elementary Election Commission, the entire student body, and my opponent for what I'm confident will be a constructive conversation. I would also like to thank the Tooth Fairy, someone my opponent did *not* thank, presumably because she isn't a true believer. Finally, unlike my opponent, I will comply with Brian's three-word limit and describe my candidacy as follows: *(Counting on his fingers one by one:)* My. Goals. Include.

(A brief pause as it's clear BOBBY didn't think ahead and realizes he's stuck.)

Shoot...

SOPHIA. The second question comes from Paige Francisco, who this one time saw a PG-13 movie while her parents weren't home.

PAIGE. I love tater tots. What is your stance on tater tots? To reiterate, I love tater tots.

KAITLYN. An excellent question, Paige.

(KAITLYN displays a poster or projects a slide that uses real tots or images of tots.)

As you can see, over the last decade, school lunches have seen a disturbing decline in overall quantity of tot. I pledge to reinstate the legislation known as A Lotta Tots, which requires by law that all lunch trays adhere to my P.P.P.P.P. plan.

(She shows a poster or slide that reads "Perpetually Plentiful Piles of Petite Potatoed Perfection.")

Ladies and gentlemen, these are difficult times, but make no mistake: I *will* win the War on Taterism.

BOBBY. Look, I'm not going to beat around the potato bush: Tater tots poll at 99.4%. That's a higher approval rating than ice cream trucks. In other words: if you hate tots, you hate America. And I don't hate America. Unless it's Opposite Day. Wait, *is* it Opposite Day?

SOPHIA. It is not Opposite Day.

BOBBY. Then I love America. My point is: the more tots, the better — of *course* — but do we need more cafeteria bureaucracy? Under my administration, it's *your* decision as to exactly what garbage you pour down your face holes. Want to bring in your own bag of 300 tots, and your own king-size bucket of KFC, and then wash it all down with your own gallon of liquid cheese? Do it. That's what freedom looks like.

SOPHIA. The next question comes from Colin Slattery, whose career goals include Batman.

(COLIN pauses, looks down at note cards, then looks up.)

COLIN. Girls are gross.

(He looks back to his note cards, then back up to the candidates, innocently telegraphing that this was the entirety of his question.)

BOBBY. Thank you, Colin. Gender issues are a critical part of this election, and as a fellow boy, I thank you not only for bringing it up, but also for not being a stupid girl. Girls are indeed gross, and that will always be the case, despite what my big brother Jim says. Which is why on *day one* of my administration, I will repeal the student council's shortsighted verdict in Awesome Girls v. Silly Boys.

KAITLYN. Yet again, my opponent is on the wrong side of history. Awesome Girls v. Silly Boys is our generation's most influential ruling, which is why I will throw my full support behind it, *and* ensure the CDC eradicates every strain of cootie, *and* call for punitive damages pursuant to the yanking of pigtails.

BOBBY. You take away our pigtail-yanking rights, what next? Our water balloons? I'll give you my water balloons when you pry them from my cold, wet hands.

SOPHIA. We'll need to move on.

BOBBY. Sophia, before we do, I'd like to point out that my opponent is a girl and is therefore, by the transitive property of gender, totally gross.

KAITLYN. And I'd like to point out that my opponent is a boy and in a few years he'll do a total one-eighty and try and impress me with cheap cologne while I reject him for someone with a driver's license and stubble.

SOPHIA. I'm sorry, but we need to move on. Our next question comes from Emilio Brixton, who recently got mustard on his shirt.

EMILIO. I've heard that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. What about the dark?

BOBBY. Emilio, I'm man enough to admit that I, too, am deathly afraid of the dark. This threat we face is all too real. But I do believe that I speak for both candidates when I say that we fully support our night lights.

KAITLYN. The two of us don't agree often, but on this we must reach across the aisle and together finally defeat this pure evil. Every evening – coincidentally right around sundown – we are viciously and brutally attacked. But know *this*... twelve hours later, we *always* overcome. That's hope we can *all* believe in.

(BOBBY and KAITLYN warmly shake hands and possibly hug.)

SOPHIA. Our next question comes from Felicia Buck, who drew this picture all by herself. *(Holds up a child's drawing.)*

FELICIA. In recent months there has been some debate as to the veracity of the holiday icon known as Santa Claus. Where do you stand?

KAITLYN. Thank you for that question, Felicia. First, let's be clear: Santa is real – *irrefutably* real. He forms the very bedrock of both our belief system and our gift-based economy. Nevertheless, it is time for serious reform for all things Kringle.

(For some of the following points KAITLYN uses visual aids.)

His jolly demeanor notwithstanding, Mr. Claus outsources good, American jobs overseas to his North Pole sweat shops that violate our full compendium of elven labor laws. This is a man whose reindeer-powered aerial transport is both unsanctioned and blatantly PETA-noncompliant. And given the growing obesity epidemic, should we ignore his impudent disregard of the Food Pyramid? With milk and cookies alone, he exceeds the Recommended Daily Value of saturated fat by *five thousand* percent. In summary, Santa is real, yes, but not immune to regulatory scrutiny. Mr. Claus is not, and has never been, "Too Big to Fail."

(BOBBY takes his time walking to his spot on the stage. A pause.)

BOBBY. A vote for Kaitlyn is a vote against free toys.

(He turns and walks back to his stool.)

SOPHIA. The next question comes from Larry Hartwell, whose favorite candy is all candy.

LARRY. We live in difficult times with difficult challenges. With that in mind: How many jumbo marshmallows can you fit in your mouth?

BOBBY. A *vital* question, Larry.

KAITLYN. I couldn't agree more.

(As if such a request is completely normal, BOBBY and KAITLYN place marshmallows in their own mouths, up to capacity. At the end, there is no celebration; it's all quite professional, as they deposit their used marshmallows somewhere inconspicuous and resume the debate.)

KAITLYN. Three.

BOBBY. Four.

SOPHIA. The next question comes from Edie Richards, who really really really loves horsies.

EDIE. I am always picked last for kickball. Under your administration, will I ever be picked not last?

KAITLYN. Edie, you raise a critical point. How can we as a recess community flourish if we don't lend a helping hand to the Edie? That is why under my administration, kickball rosters will be automatically selected by a sophisticated computer algorithm — a.k.a. *science* — ensuring that everyone gets a chance to be picked first. *Everyone.*

BOBBY. Well where I come from, we call that way of thinking “stupid-stupid-dumb-dumb-pants.” The fact is: some folks are just plain bad at kickball. And maybe things would be different if we were in *Russia* playing *communismball*. But we're playing *kickball*, in *America*. And in *America*, do we pick LeBron *last* in the NBA draft? No, because that would be stupid-stupid-dumb-dumb-pants. We pick LeBron first in basketball, just like we pick Jenny Friedman first in kickball. Why? Because Jenny Friedman is the best at *kicking...the ball.*

(He reveals two signs, one that says “KICKING” and the other that says “BALL.” He moves the latter in front of the former, obscuring the “ING” so it says “KICKBALL.” He does this a few times.)

SOPHIA. The next question comes from Ryan Granderson, who hasn't wet the bed since Thursday.

RYAN. How would you describe your school spirit? The reason I ask is because: *(Simply:)* I've got spirit, yes I do, I've got spirit, how about you.

BOBBY. That's a fine question, Ryan. If anyone has school pride, it's me. As you know, our mascot is the Northern Elephant Seal, which I always proudly display here on this lapel pin. You may notice that my opponent wears no such pin. Well I suppose school pride isn't for everyone.

KAITLYN. It's a real shame that my opponent must overcompensate with outward appearance because of his inner lack of school spirit. I don't flaunt my school pride on the outside; it's what's *inside* that counts. (*Taps her heart.*) And by inside I'm of course referring to this Elephant Seal handkerchief in my pocket. (*She shows it.*) As you can see, it is noticeably larger than his pin.

BOBBY. Folks, we all know spirit isn't just about size, but about quantity. Which is why I wear another twelve pins right here.

(*He casually opens his jacket to show the crowd.*)

KAITLYN. I have so much school pride, "Northern Elephant Seals" is my middle name. And I mean that literally, as my name has been legally changed to Kaitlyn Northern Elephant Seals Parker. (*Holds up an official ID card that's perhaps she's had blown up to a larger size, or it's screen-projected.*)

BOBBY. Ladies and gentlemen: my ringtone.

(*He holds his phone above his head and we briefly hear an elephant seal barking.*)

KAITLYN. Alas, my opponent just played the call of the Western Elephant Seal. The Northern Elephant Seal actually sounds like *this*.

(*KAITLYN delivers some loud elephant seal barks. BOBBY competes by speaking loudly over KAITLYN's barks.*)

BOBBY. If my opponent had *true* school pride, she would bark with the traditional craned neck and sand flipping motion, like *this!*

(*BOBBY and KAITLYN are now each doing elephant seal impressions with their voices and bodies. After a few seconds of this, they stop, and then calmly and simply return to their stools. A brief pause.*)

SOPHIA. Ladies and gentlemen, we have now reached the end of today's debate, which means it's time for closing statements. Kaitlyn, the floor is yours.

KAITLYN. Thank you, Sophia. My fellow Elephant Seals, when you sit down and really *think* – what qualities do you want in a president? Do you want a Me-First megalomaniac? Do you want a candidate who shamelessly commits Free Cupcake voter fraud? And do you want the kind of person who drinks from the water fountain in that weird way where they stick their entire mouth on the fountain? Or... *or...* Do you want a *leader*, who *leads*, using *leadership*? The choice is in your hands – your tiny, underdeveloped hands.

SOPHIA. Bobby, your closing statement.

(With each word, BOBBY emphatically pounds his fist into his other open hand.)

BOBBY. Yes. We. Can. Have. More. Pizza. Parties.

SOPHIA. And with that, we've reached the end of today's debate. On behalf of the entire student body, I'd like to thank both candidates for a highly informative conversation. May the best candidate win. That being said, since all past elections were decided by who fit more marshmallows in their mouth, congratulations to our presumptive new president, Bobby Grantwood.

(Applause sound effect.)

End of Play

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