

Synopsis/Sample of The Patron Saint of Geeks

by

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DESCRIPTION

Bobby and Chad are close friends in the fifth grade. Classified as "geeks" in the school's social structure, they are harassed by Rad and his gang (a year older and members of the Boys Club football team) and the Pearls (a group of girls whose "clique" is very exclusive). Pushed by their bullying to the edge of their patience, Bobby and Chad contemplate using a gun to equalize the imbalance in power. The play not only examines the consequences of social stereotyping but also the choices the weak make when continually oppressed by the strong.

CHARACTERS

- BOBBY, in the fifth grade -- plain kind of guy.
- MOM and DAD, BOBBY's parents; referred to as "Mrs. D." and "Mr. D."
- CHAD, BOBBY's close friend, equally plain kind of guy.
- MUSCLE MAN, a spirit -- played by an experienced body builder, reminiscent of Charles Atlas.
- RAD, a bully at school -- in the sixth grade; on the Boys Club football team.
- RAD'S GANG, a group of four who follow RAD around; on the Boys Club football team as well. Though they dress individually, they all wear something that indicates their sports status, e.g., a jacket, sweater, tee-shirt.
- THE PEARLS, four girls in the sixth grade who hang together; while dressed individually, they wear some article that signifies their group: a jacket with the name on it, Che berets, or anything that would be current in their culture.
- DICK POWERS, coach of the Boys Club football team.

SETTING

- Various locations in a small town in western Massachusetts: BOBBY's bedroom; the school; the football field; the Boys Club weight room

TIME

- Present -- but music should be changed to keep it from being dated.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Current music -- director's and actors' choices
- Four chairs, two used as twin beds in BOBBY's bedroom
- Several muscle magazines
- A set of weights and a weight bench
- Football equipment for RAD and BOBBY: helmets, shoulder pads, jerseys, pants, sneakers

- A small wooden box, large enough to hold a .25-caliber gun; also, key to the box
- Backpacks

Note on race/ethnicity: The characters can be played by any race/ethnicity.

The Patron Saint Of Geeks

Scene 1

Single light, down stage center. Music as if coming from a radio or boombox. BOBBY and CHAD stand in the light, in gym shorts and tee-shirts, barefoot; the feel should be that they're getting ready for bed. They make body poses, as if they were body-builders at a competition. They are clearly not body-builders, so the poses can be funny and pathetic at the same time. On the floor near them are several body-builder magazines. The four chairs sit upstage; the two middle chairs have sheets folded on them. At first, BOBBY and CHAD work through their individual routines, with color commentary. Then they will do a synchronized routine together. As they do these initial moves, MUSCLE MAN comes on, upstage of them and slightly in shadow.

BOBBY

And, yes, the crowd cheers as he works his way through his routine.
(A few more poses)

CHAD

He's got 'em on the run now. Especially the women -- he's got 'em going crazy in the aisles!

BOBBY

Look at those lats. Look at 'em! Look at 'em!

CHAD

The biceps are bulgin', buckoos.

BOBBY

I got a *twelve-pack* of abs.

CHAD

I got a whole case.

They begin a synchronized series of movements, a choreographed routine, that they've obviously worked out together over time. MUSCLE MAN also does it with them. At each move, BOBBY and CHAD make some kind of sound -- an exhalation, a slight grunt, etc. -- which punctuates the move. Even though they're geeks, there should be some grace to the movement.

At one point, BOBBY does one thing and CHAD does another. It breaks the flow. Music out.

BOBBY

No, man, you do this -- this, then over to this.

CHAD

Nope -- this, then this.

BOBBY

No --

CHAD

Yes -- that's how we worked it.

BOBBY

(to MUSCLE MAN)

Which is it?

MUSCLE

Chad's right -- this, then this.

CHAD

Score!

CHAD makes a crowd sound and walks around in "victory."

BOBBY

I still like doing this.

CHAD

But that ain't it. This, then this --
(more slowly, to gently mock him)
-- see, this, then this --

BOBBY

Fine.

BOBBY drops to the floor and tries to do a one-handed push-up.

MUSCLE

The muscle boys had 'em going there, though, for
a minute.

BOBBY

Muscle *men*, if you don't mind.

BOBBY can't do the push-up, so he starts doing sit-ups. CHAD starts doing them, too, and it becomes a race to do them as fast as possible. They collapse after about half a dozen or so. They both get to their knees and do a few more poses from there.

BOBBY

Yeah, once you got it, you got it, and ain't
nobody going to take it away.

Voice from offstage: MOM. MUSCLE MAN flexes his arms in a classic "biceps" pose; BOBBY and CHAD hang from his arms.

MOM

Bobby, are you getting ready for bed?

BOBBY
(shouting back)
I was born ready for bed.

MOM
No smart-mouth. Chad?

CHAD
Ready, Mrs. D.

MUSCLE MAN puts them down. They plant their feet against his and, holding each of their hands, MUSCLE MAN lets them lean out from either side. They sway.

BOBBY
Teeth?

BOBBY
Whiter than Chad's, Mom.

MOM
Hands?

CHAD
Fine, Mrs. D.

MOM
Then ready for bed.

BOBBY
You just said that.

MOM
We'll be up in a minute to say good night.

BOBBY
Why do grown-ups repeat themselves so much?

MUSCLE MAN pulls BOBBY and CHAD upright. BOBBY stands as if he's in front of a mirror; CHAD sits on the floor and leafs through one of the magazines. BOBBY slaps his guts and sucks it in, pinches the fat on his arms, etc.

BOBBY
What'd'ya think?

MUSCLE
It's a body.

BOBBY
Yeah, but what *kind*.

CHAD
It's a geek body.

MUSCLE

The kind that works -- it's healthy --

BOBBY

(not really paying attention)

My stomach seems a little harder --

CHAD

Yeah, right.

MUSCLE

It's well-fed.

BOBBY

(still not paying attention)

Not really harder at all.

MUSCLE

And handsome.

BOBBY

These arms -- pathetic!

CHAD

Quit looking, then.

BOBBY

(to MUSCLE MAN)

Huh?

MUSCLE

Handsome.

BOBBY

Handsome? Man, you gotta get some eyes!

MUSCLE

It gets good grades in school.

BOBBY

(still not paying attention)

Quadriceps -- lame!

MUSCLE

Parents who love you.

MUSCLE takes CHAD's magazine out of his hands; CHAD picks up another one.

BOBBY

Look at this.

MUSCLE
Don't believe the magazines.

BOBBY
(ignoring him)
Man, these guys are great!

MUSCLE
Don't.

BOBBY
And this! Look at her!

BOBBY hands one of the magazines to the MUSCLE MAN to have him hold it open; he tries to imitate what he sees.

BOBBY
See, if I could just push this a little --

BOBBY gives up.

BOBBY
I'll never look like that.

MUSCLE
Why do you want to?

BOBBY stands and looks at MUSCLE MAN as if MUSCLE MAN is the most complete idiot in the world.

BOBBY
Huh? Are you kidding? If I had a body like that, those --

BOBBY looks around to see if anyone is listening.

BOBBY
-- assholes at school, Rad and his rat pack, wouldn't bother me.

CHAD
That's a fact.

MUSCLE
Better watch your language.

BOBBY
That's what they are.

MOM's voice again.

MOM
BOBBY, Chad.

BOBBY
(yelling back)
Yeah, Mom. We're jumping under the covers right now.
(to MUSCLE MAN)
You don't know how it is, what Rad is like.

CHAD
(Getting up) Rad and his rat pack.

BOBBY
Sometimes -- sometimes --

MUSCLE
You want to hurt them, right?

BOBBY
Yeah! Bad!

BOBBY picks up another magazine and moves toward the beds.

CHAD
Me -- stay away.

MUSCLE
Make them feel what you feel.

CHAD gets into bed, leafs through the magazine.

CHAD
I like my teeth to stay in my mouth.

BOBBY
Yeah! Exactly!
(opens the magazine)
I want a body like this so that Rad pees in his pants when he sees me.

BOBBY throws the magazine down and imitates his descriptions.

BOBBY
I want to do a one-hand dumb-bell press with him and his *thugs*.

CHAD
The geek speaks.

BOBBY
Slam them on the ground. Soccer kick his head. Drop-knee to his nose.

CHAD
Big talk.

BOBBY

I want my foot on his neck, laughing at him, spit coming out of my mouth, and say, "You're never gonna do that again. "

MUSCLE

That would feel good to you?

BOBBY

Oh, yeah -- to me and about fifty million other people at school.

(to CHAD)

Right?

(making fake crowd sounds)

"Rad is dead. Long live Bobby!"

BOBBY jumps at MUSCLE MAN, who catches him.

BOBBY

Up on their shoulders; I'd be a hero.

MUSCLE

(hoists BOBBY on his shoulder)

Long live Bobby!

BOBBY

Make him *bleed*.

MUSCLE

And you'd be happy.

BOBBY

Just once, man. Just once.

MUSCLE

And you'd be happy.

BOBBY

Put me down. This body sucks.

MUSCLE

No, it doesn't.

BOBBY

I want to be like you.

MUSCLE

I'm just a dream. I'm just a wish of yours.

CHAD

He's not real.

BOBBY

But you know what I mean when I tell you these things.

MUSCLE

But I can't do anything about them --

CHAD

See?

BOBBY

You can't just, like, abracadabra me into looking like you?

MUSCLE

Longer and more messy than that.

BOBBY

Will you help me?

CHAD

"Not-real" can't help.

MUSCLE

I will try.

MOM enters. MUSCLE MAN retreats into the half-shadows.

MOM

C'mon, young man, into bed.

BOBBY is momentarily confused, having to switch realities.

Scene continues with parents.

* * * * *

Scene 5

NOTE: This scene occurs after several incidents of hazing and harassment that BOBBY and CHAD endure. It is, in effect, the moral, revolutionary moment all oppressed people come to when they have to decide to do something to protect themselves.

CHAD's house. The music changes into something dark and quietly ominous. In the darkness, a small table is brought on and on it is placed a wooden box about the size of a cigar box. In the box is a .25-caliber pistol, similar in style to the Raven; however, the gun is never shown. A single light comes up on the box. If possible, the lighting here should be spooky without being hokey -- something to establish danger without overdoing it.

BOBBY and CHAD appear in the dimness, now fully dressed and carrying school backpacks, and look at the box. CHAD looks at BOBBY, and BOBBY

at CHAD. They then walk to the box but do not touch it. They drop their backpacks. Music underscores.

BOBBY
Open it.

CHAD
No.

BOBBY
Open it.

CHAD
I don't want to.

BOBBY
Open it.

CHAD
It's my mother's.

BOBBY
I don't care -- you said --

CHAD
It was stupid.

BOBBY
But you said it, and you can't take it back.

CHAD
I can.

BOBBY
You can't. You promised it, and now it's there, and you have to do what you said. What you *promised*. Or else --

CHAD
Or else what? Or what?

BOBBY
I will hate you. I will hate you forever.

Music out.

CHAD
Hate me?

BOBBY
Yeah.

CHAD
You wouldn't do that.

BOBBY begins to circle CHAD.

BOBBY
I would.

CHAD
You can't hate me.

BOBBY
Then show me.

CHAD
I'm your best friend.

BOBBY
Best friends help each other out.

CHAD
You can't hate me. I'm your best friend.

BOBBY
Then show me. Do it.

CHAD
I can't.

BOBBY
Then you're not my best friend.

CHAD
I am your best friend! But I can't do this.

BOBBY
Then why did you tell me? Why did you tell me?

CHAD
I don't know!

BOBBY
Because you hate him, too.

CHAD
Don't hate anybody.

BOBBY
Liar.

BOBBY stops circling.

BOBBY
Hate, hate, hate --

CHAD
Stop it!

BOBBY
Don't you? Huh?

CHAD
Yes.

BOBBY
Him. All of 'em. Right?

CHAD
Yes.

BOBBY
The *guys*.

CHAD
The *guys*.

BOBBY
They hate us, too.

CHAD
The *guys* hate us.

BOBBY
And they will never leave us alone.

CHAD
Because they're *guys*.

BOBBY
And we aren't. And the girls hate us, too.

CHAD
They hate us, too.

BOBBY
They like *guys*.

CHAD
And we're not *guys*.

BOBBY
We're wankers --

CHAD
Wusses --

BOBBY
Morons --

Retards -- CHAD

Geeks -- BOBBY

Losers -- CHAD

Nerds -- BOBBY

Wimps -- CHAD

But not *guys*. So -- BOBBY

CHAD digs into his pocket and pulls out a key, holds it up in the light.

CHAD
My mother doesn't know. She doesn't know I know where this is.

So -- BOBBY

CHAD goes to the box and unlocks it, but he doesn't open it. He steps away from it. BOBBY goes up to the box and opens it, stares at the contents, then circles the box.

It's not big. CHAD

Doesn't have to be. BOBBY

She bought it for protection. CHAD

It's beautiful. BOBBY

But she got scared of it. CHAD

It can talk. BOBBY

I remember when her and my father brought it home. CHAD

BOBBY
It's not big, but it can talk loud. It can talk
louder than me, or you.

CHAD
It made me scared.

BOBBY
Did she ever use it?

CHAD
No. She wanted to get rid of it, but my father
wouldn't let her. He wanted her to be protected,
he said.

Stops circling.

BOBBY
Where are the bullets?

CHAD
In another box.

BOBBY
Do you have that key? Do you?

Reluctantly, CHAD pats his pocket.

CHAD
Yeah.

BOBBY walks away from the box slowly.

BOBBY
You could hide that --
(pointing at the gun)
-- in your pocket. Right here.

CHAD
Stop it.

BOBBY
Or here. And the next time Rad mouths off --

CHAD
Don't, okay?

BOBBY
Why not?

CHAD
Let's get it out of here.

BOBBY

Don't!

CHAD stops.

BOBBY

Why did you get the keys?

CHAD

What?

BOBBY

Why did you get the keys?

CHAD

I want to get it out of --

BOBBY

Why?

CHAD

Why?

BOBBY

Why don't you tell your mom and dad you know?

During the "interrogation," CHAD gets increasingly irritated as BOBBY gets closer to CHAD's true feelings.

CHAD

About the keys?

BOBBY

Yeah.

CHAD

I don't know.

BOBBY

You could've told them.

CHAD

Yeah.

BOBBY

And they'd hide the keys, and you wouldn't get scared again.

CHAD

Yeah.

BOBBY

Because you're pretty scared right now, right?

CHAD
Yeah.

BOBBY
But you didn't tell them.

CHAD
No.

BOBBY
You're keeping a secret.

CHAD
Yeah.

BOBBY
From them.

CHAD
Yeah.

BOBBY
You know where her gun is.

CHAD
Yeah.

BOBBY
And they don't know you know.

CHAD
No.

BOBBY
It's a big secret. You're keeping a big secret
from your parents.

CHAD
Yeah.

BOBBY
Bigger than Charles Atlas.

CHAD
What?

BOBBY
Bigger than hope.

CHAD
I don't understand -- Leave me alone.

BOBBY
Why?

CHAD
Leave me alone.

BOBBY
(in a heavy whisper)
"Rad, Rad / He's so bad -- "

CHAD
Shut up!

BOBBY
(in the same whisper)
"He's the worst mutha gangsta / We ever had."

CHAD
You're going weird!

BOBBY
Why don't you tell them you where the keys are?
Why?

CHAD
(indicating the box)
That --

BOBBY
What?

CHAD
That --

BOBBY
Yeah? That --

CHAD
That doesn't make me feel --

BOBBY
Yeah?

CHAD
It doesn't make me feel as scared as some other
things.

BOBBY
Yeah. Yeah. Exactly. Exactly.

BOBBY walks to the open box. He indicates for CHAD to come closer. CHAD hesitates; BOBBY encourages him. CHAD comes forward, and BOBBY puts CHAD's hand on the gun inside the box. They stand there with their hands on the gun.

BOBBY

(in a whisper)

"Rad, Rad / He makes you mad -- Someone needs /
To hurt him bad."

CHAD

Yeah.

BOBBY

All of them.

CHAD

All of them.

BOBBY

The *guys*.

CHAD

Clean things up.

BOBBY

I hate them.

CHAD

I hate them, too.

They look at each other. They take their hands off the gun.

CHAD

Well?

BOBBY

Yeah?

CHAD

Do you want?

BOBBY

Do *you* want?

CHAD

Yeah. And no.

BOBBY

We do it together -- or we don't.

CHAD

Right -- together, or not. How?

BOBBY

What?

CHAD

I mean, how? You know -- how?

BOBBY
You mean --

CHAD
Yeah -- you know. Like, who carries it?

BOBBY
Carries it?

CHAD
Yeah.

BOBBY
I don't know.

CHAD
You?

BOBBY
I don't know.

CHAD
Me?

BOBBY
You don't want to.

CHAD
Right.

BOBBY
You can't.

CHAD
I don't think I can. So then it'd be you.
Right?

BOBBY
I guess.

CHAD
You'd have to carry it.

BOBBY
We gotta decide that.

CHAD
Yeah --

BOBBY
That's important.

CHAD
Yeah -- especially if it's done together, like we said.

BOBBY
Yeah. And when.

CHAD
Yeah -- and when, too, right.

BOBBY
When -- I didn't think of that.

CHAD
So we can be there together. Like we said.

BOBBY
Like we said.

CHAD
This is harder --

BOBBY
Really harder.

CHAD
Are you thinking?

BOBBY
Yeah, I'm thinking.

CHAD
Me, too. That's good, right?

BOBBY
What?

CHAD
That we're thinking. About all this.

BOBBY
My mom and dad always told me to think first.

CHAD
Mine, too. So it's good --

BOBBY
Yeah.

CHAD
Yeah.

CHAD touches the gun, and then takes his hand away.

CHAD
I get pictures --

BOBBY
What kind?

BOBBY does the same.

CHAD
You, too?

BOBBY
What kind?

CHAD
I don't know -- bad. I don't only get 'em in my head.
(hand on his stomach)
Here. All -- jumpy.

BOBBY
Like lifting weights, huh?

CHAD
(laughing softly)
Yeah!
(taking a muscle pose)
Spot Man!

BOBBY
Yeah! And Rad like a ten-pounder dumbbell. Me, too. Bad pictures. All over.

CHAD
That means something, right?

BOBBY
I think so.

CHAD
I think so, too.

BOBBY closes the lid. CHAD locks it.

BOBBY
We know.

CHAD
Yeah.

BOBBY
We know what we coulda done.

CHAD

Yeah.

BOBBY

We *coulda* done it.

CHAD

(pointing to the gun case)

It's right there.

BOBBY

And we know what we're not gonna do.

CHAD

We know what we're not gonna do. Yeah. "Rad, Rad, he's so bad -- "

BOBBY

Um, um -- "He don't know / The good luck he's had." Hey, not bad, huh?

CHAD

For off the top of your tongue.

BOBBY

You should put it away.

CHAD

Yeah.

(Pause) Should I tell them about the keys?

BOBBY

That's up to you.

CHAD

It would be good, wouldn't it?

BOBBY

I guess so --

CHAD

I guess so, too. No more secrets, huh?

BOBBY

Yeah -- no more secrets.

CHAD

I don't think my head can take any more secrets.

BOBBY

Or my stomach.

BOBBY and CHAD pick up their backpacks and come downstage, right or left. The lights dim on the box. MUSCLE MAN walks to the box and stands by it, watching the two of them.

BOBBY and CHAD stand for a moment, awkward in each other's presence, not sure what to do next. Slowly, tentatively, CHAD punches BOBBY in the arm, softly, more of a nudge. BOBBY, looking at CHAD, does the same, lightly, playfully.

Wanker -- BOBBY

Wuss -- CHAD

After the first two terms, they start to go through their muscle routine again but without the verve they had before. They say the words as they make the movements.

Moron -- BOBBY

Retard -- CHAD

Geek -- BOBBY

Loser -- CHAD

Nerd -- BOBBY

Wimp -- CHAD

They drop the routine.

Do you hate me? CHAD

No. BOBBY

I don't hate you, either. CHAD

My mom and dad woulda been *real* disappointed. BOBBY

Mine, too. I like your parents. CHAD

BOBBY
I like your parents, too.

CHAD
What're we gonna do?

BOBBY
School tomorrow.

CHAD
No different.

BOBBY
Rad --

CHAD
Bad --

BOBBY
Scared --

CHAD
Yeah.

BOBBY
It makes me sick, sometimes.

CHAD
Sometimes I don't know whether to breathe or
puke.

BOBBY
Puke or breathe.

CHAD
Well, if we could puke on them, they maybe they'd
let us alone.

BOBBY
Yeah! Yeah! A whole "puke brigade," get all the
geeks in a line --

CHAD
And when Rad and the rats walk by --

BOBBY
And the Pearls in their big boofoo hair --

CHAD
We all just --

BOBBY
On the count of three --

They make exaggerated puke sounds and motions.

BOBBY

Man, top to toe.

CHAD

Get out the hoses!

BOBBY

Dripping off their ears!

CHAD

All up their noses!

A few more puke sounds and motions.

BOBBY

Yeah!

CHAD

Yeah!

Finish laughing.

BOBBY

You know --

CHAD

You think?

BOBBY

My stomach feels a whole lot better thinking about it.

CHAD

Can't wait to see the movie!

BOBBY holds out his fist; CHAD takes his fist and touches the top of BOBBY's with it; they reverse, and BOBBY does the same to CHAD. Then they lightly bang their knuckles together, put their arms around each other and walk off making puke sounds. MUSCLE MAN watches them, then picks up the table and box. He looks at the audience for a beat. Lights out.

Play continues.