

2018 YOUNG PEOPLE'S
Creative Writing Contest
FOR AGES 10-16

"Parental Control" by Joshua Acree
1st Place, Short Play 13-15

Poems ● Essays ● Comix
Short Plays ● Short Stories

CASH PRIZES!

Entries Accepted Feb. 1-March 3

Enter online at

<http://teens.tulsalibrary.org/ypcwc> or pick up an entry
brochure at any library location.

Tulsa City-County
LIBRARY

Tulsa
LIBRARY TRUST

Parental Control

Characters:

Jake—*Wild Dad*—Rooting for team A—obnoxious and arrogant and thinks his son, Wyatt, is the best on the team, and is not beyond criticizing the other team to make his kid look good. He has a country accent and is a little on the heavy side. He is also very loud.

Mr. Edenbrook—very smart looking gentleman with glasses. A little absent minded at times. Chair of the Accountants Against Violence Board. When he's not talking, he is scribbling in his notebook.

Stuart—*Calm Dad*— Rooting for team B— reasonable and logical, politically correct, thinks that everybody is a winner and that everybody should just get along, dad of Jimmy.

Silvia—*Calm Mom*— Rooting for team B— Echoes Calm Dad, agrees with him on everything, opposed to contact or violence, mom of Jimmy.

Samantha—*Helicopter Mom*— Rooting for team A and talks quickly—Overly protective of son and wants to know if he has had enough water, if he took his vitamins, and is concerned if he gets too over heated.

Setting: The whole play takes place on bleachers with two rows which are centered in the middle of the stage, facing the audience. After each character walk on the stage, he or she will face the audience as if the audience were the basketball court and will sit in this order --Jake will sit on the top row, stage right; Stuart and Silvia will sit together on the bottom row, stage left; Mr. Edenbrook will sit on the bottom row, stage right; Samantha will sit on the bottom row, middle stage; stage left, not directly behind Stuart and Silvia, but just to the stage right of them.

When the characters are not speaking, they should be looking forward watching the game and making appropriate reactions to the plays made by the teams.

Scene 1:

Stuart and Silvia walk onto the stage from stage left. Stuart is very sharply dressed in a suit and tie and he is carrying a box of popcorn; Silvia, who is also sharply dressed, has on a nice dress. The two walk over to the bleachers. Stuart pulls a handkerchief out of his pocket and dusts off his seat; the two then sit down on the bottom row with Silvia sitting to the stage left of Stuart.

Stuart: (somewhat formally—almost in a snooty fashion) I just love coming to see Jimmy play basketball; it's such great entertainment.

Silvia: (very agreeable) And, it is also a great way for little Jimmy to stretch his legs.

Stuart: (nodding to Silvia) This league also isn't too competitive, just some fun-loving boys running around and having a great time...

Jake enters the stage from stage right. He walks with shoulders rounded and with a wider stance

Jake: (loudly and proudly) Whoo! Go Wyatt! Knock 'em all dead! Show 'em how a real winner plays!

Stuart and Silvia look at each other and shake their heads in displeasure. Jake goes and sits on the top row of the bleachers on stage right. Stuart looks at stage right.

Stuart: (*hopeful*) Look over there, Silvia; it's Mr. Edenbrook, the chair of the Accountants Against Violence board that I've been trying to get onto. This might be my chance to really impress him—to remind him what an asset I would be to the board.

Silvia: Okay, honey, but don't come on too strong.

Stuart: (*in a mild rebuke*) Me? Come on strong...(then, he gently laughs).

Mr. Edenbrook walks in from stage right; he is holding a notebook and a pencil. Stuart stands up, straightens his collar, and walks toward Mr. Edenbrook.

Stuart: Why Mr. Edenbrook, so nice to see you! How have you been?

Mr. Edenbrook: Oh, hello Mr. Stanton, our board just voted...

Stuart: Stuart, sir

Mr. Edenbrook: (*confused*) Padon?

Stuart: It's... It's Stuart. My name, it's Stuart.

Stuart smiles.

Mr. Edenbrook: Oh yes, Mr. Stewardt.

Stuart furrows his brow at the mispronunciation of his name and then regains his composure.

Stuart: You were about to say something about the Accounts Against Violence board voting about something.

Mr. Edenbrook: Huh, oh yes, well we just voted on whether we should wear marine blue suits or navy-blue suits to our annual conference.

Stuart: Fascinating, it's great that you guys contemplate refined thoughts.

Jake stands up and claps.

Jake: *(yells)* Come on, Wyatt! Shove 'em around. Yea, that's what I'm talk'in about!

Make 'em cry!

Stuart and Mr. Edenbrook turn around and are obviously disturbed by the brashness of Jake.

Stuart: Unlike some people, I wish that we could just all get along.

Mr. Edenbrook: Stewdirt...where did I hear that name today. Hmm. Oh, I remember. You applied to be on our board, did you not?

Stuart: Yes, I did. I feel that your message of nonviolence should be heard, and I always abide by that principle.

Mr. Edenbrook: Hmm, that's very nice. Yes, very nice indeed. Hmm, I'll have to remember that one. Well, Mr. Strudel.

Stuart: Stuart.

Mr. Edenbrook: Ah, Mr. Stewdirt, it was nice to see you, I hope to see you again soon.

Mr. Edenbrook sits down on the bleachers, bottom row, stage right. Stuart turns around, smiles at Silvia, and goes and sits down with her. Samantha enters from stage right. She walks to the edge of the stage.

Samantha: Have fun, Owen! Tell your teammates that they can look forward to the snack that I brought for them—Asparagus and Humus *(she rubs her stomach and smiles. Jake furrows his brow and tilts his head)* yum! *(She turns a bit to speak to the coach that is on the basketball court)* Now, coach, you make sure that Owen gets his vitamins, I left them in his bag, and make sure that he can sit down during each timeout, and be sure for him to have at least

three cups of water (*she pauses to reconsider*) if not four cups every seven minutes because he can get overheated and pass out.

Convinced that the coach heard her, Samantha then goes and sits on the bleachers, bottom row, middle. A goal has just been made, so Stuart and Silvia smile at each other and lightly clap; Samantha grimaces a little.

Jake: (yelling at the top of his lungs, stands up and beats his chest and sits back down)
Oh Yeah! That's what I'm talkin' about, Wyatt!

Stuart and Silvia look at each other and shake their heads.

Silvia: (*disapprovingly but still calm*) It's a shame that some parents are so competitive; sometimes, the parents are more competitive than their children who are actually playing the sport!

Jake: (*talking to himself*) What's that number 13 doin' out there? A sack 'o potatoes would play better man to man than him.

Silvia gasps and turns to Stuart.

Silvia: (*horrified and somewhat indignant*) Stuart, did you hear him talk about Jimmy that way? What are you going to do about it?

Stuart: Now Silvia, I'm sure he didn't mean it, and besides, you know my rule about confronting people. Confrontation always leads to violence.

Samantha: (*frightened*) Coach...Coach! Do you see Owen? (*she pauses as if the coach is responding. Stuart looks at her as if concerned*) He... He's getting red! (*Stuart exaggeratedly rolls his eyes*) Oh coach, please pull him out! (*She pauses again*) What do you mean that its natural? It's not natural for a seven-year-old to look like a giant strawberry!

A referee whistle plays over the sound system. Jake jumps up and stomps toward center stage and stares in angry disbelief at the game in front of him.

Jake: *(loudly and angrily)* What! That wasn't a foul! Ref are you blind? He barely touched that bad luck kid, that number 13!

Stuart begins to clench his jaw and fists and furrows his brow.

Stuart: *(trying to show up Jake)* Well called, Referee, that was a fair and balanced decision. *(He nods his head and approvingly gives the ref a golf clap.)*

Jake moves off of center stage and stands about six feet in front of Stuart and Silvia. Silvia acts like she is trying to see around him.

Silvia: Stuart, honey, I can't seem to be able to see Jimmy play.

Stuart stands up and taps Jake on the shoulder.

Stuart: Excuse me, sir, but you seem to be standing in front of my wife.

Jake turns to face Stuart.

Jake: *(very loudly, almost shouting)* What was that?

Stuart: You are blocking my wife's view of the game.

Jake: *(falsely sympathetic)* Oh now am I?

Stuart: Sir, I usually prefer to avoid confrontation, but quite frankly, you are getting on my nerves.

Mr. Edenbrook looks up from his notepad to watch the building spectacle in front of him.

Jake rolls his eyes and moves from Stuart and walks to stage right.

Jake: *(loudly while clapping)* Come on, Wyatt! Take that puny 13 punk a part *(he turns back at Stuart and Silvia, smirks, and slyly urges)*—piece by piece, if you have to.

Stuart: *(walking over to Jake)* Now look here, mister.

A referee whistle sounds, and Jake leans back and lets out the biggest roar of delight.

Stuart's eyes widen and have a crazed look on them. All of a sudden, Stuart races forward and tackles Jake.

Stuart: *(screaming)* You can't say that about my Jimmy.

Stuart jumps on Jake's back, forcing Jake to the floor. Stuart continues his crazed attack on Jake. Samantha screams; Silvia jumps up and has a surprised look on her face; and Mr. Edenbrook shakes his head and makes a mark with a pencil on his notepad as if he is crossing a name off.

In this last scene, all the characters hold their position and posture while each character says out loud the thoughts they are having at this moment:

Stuart: *(With his hands around Jake's throat)* Oh my goodness what am I doing? I abhor violence and now look at me—the whole gym is watching me. I wonder if Mr. Edenbrook is watching? I wonder if Jimmy is watching? My life is over. I even bet my cheese and wine party I planned this weekend is ruined.

Silvia: *(Silvia has her face cupped in her hands and is very emotional)* What is my husband doing? He's out of his gourd. Oh great now I'm going to have to pay for psychiatric care. My life is over. *(Next line with no emotion)* I wonder how my hair looks.

Samantha: *(putting up her hands, motioning for her son to stop in place)* No honey don't look at the bad men fighting. You'll get upset and you know what happens then. Think pleasant thoughts and take a gummy vitamin. I think cherry is your favorite.

Jake: *(down on the ground, struggling against Stuart)* What is this man doing on top of me? I hate violence. I couldn't even kill a fly. Why just last week I protested with PETA. Mommy help me. All I wanted was a nice pleasant evening watching my youngster indulge in exercise.

Mr. Edenbrook: *(crossing off a word in his notebook)* Strudel definite no for board nomination.

Everything goes dark.