

NOTES

A Year in the Life of Jasmine Spinner chronicles a young girl's freshman year of high school. Searching for her niche, Jasmine joins the high school Forensics Team. This narrative poem should be performed by a female and should be entered in Poetry Interpretation. Let's be honest, competitive forensics is one of the most addictive activities in education today. All of the nuances and universalities found in forensics are embodied throughout this poem. Play those common denominators for their humor. Those in-the-know should get the jokes. Jasmine possesses the innocence and naiveté of all novices entering new territory; however, she is also a competitive person. She wants to succeed, but she always accepts her defeats with the graciousness of a true champion. The drama mask icons are simply visible to show the performer where to turn the pages in the manuscript.

My name is Jasmine Spinner, and it's my freshman year.
At my parents' request, I'm taking speech as my elective in school.
It's cool, but I'm not sure why Mom and Dad
Fear I lack good communication skills.
It's ridiculous, of course.
Still, I know how to talk.
If they don't believe me,
They should look at our Family Talk phone plan.
They'll see. I talk 24/7 as often as I can.



My speech teacher, Mr. Stovall, also coaches debate.
I waited after school one day
And asked him how to join the Forensics Team.
It seems practices are after school three days a week,
And for those who seek a challenge,
Mr. Stovall has tryouts for new team members every Monday at four.
The more he tells me, the more overwhelmed I become.
He says there are lots of events to try,
And if I don't win at first—he begs me to not cry.
Obviously, that's been a problem for some newbies in the past.
He tells me the last thing the team needs is a cry baby.

It suddenly occurs to me; Mr. Stovall may be mean.
Maybe he *makes* kids cry.
I tell him I'll try my best,
And for the rest of the week, I practice.



Monday's tryouts are packed with team hopefuls.
Mr. Stovall breaks us up into groups of three
And has us draw topics out of an improvisation jar.
As far as I can tell, improvisation is kind of weird.
My group picks out a topic that reads,
'*A Group of People Who All Have Beards.*'
We huddle for five minutes, and then it's time to perform.
Since I'm a girl, I decide to portray a bearded lady.
She has run away from the circus in search of a new life.
Filled with strife,
She travels through Pennsylvania and stops in Amish country.
No one shuns her there, and a man named Luke asks her to be his wife.
They live happily ever after and have lots of bearded children.

Mr. Stovall says I am a hoot!
Not to toot my own horn, but I think I did an okay job.
Mr. Stovall invites seven of us to join the team!
I beam all the way home.



Because we have such a large team,
All of the new members have to begin by entering Poetry or Prose.
After that, Mr. Stovall says, "We'll see how it goes."
He tells us to pick out a selection to read and place it in a black folder.

Dad says you can always learn from someone older,
So I ask a few veteran team members for help
In finding the perfect, competitive piece.
At least they don't make fun of me.
They suggest I read tried and true works.
They suggest that I read Dorothy Parker and Sylvia Plath,
Some Shakespeare sonnets and even Edgar Alan Poe.
I ask them, "Which one has a better chance to win?"
They glance at me and say,
"When you find the right one, you'll know."