



Mollie and the Last Bookworm

A Family Musical
by Michael Lancy



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MOLLIE AND THE LAST BOOKWORM

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CHARACTERS

MOLLIE: A precocious, and somewhat sarcastic sixth-grader who hates to read. A born skeptic, she discovers adventure and learns to care about others. She also plays Alice, Dorothy, Gretel, a ghost, and a workhouse orphan.

MR. MORAN: The Captain Bligh of the classroom. He never gets the respect he thinks he deserves. He can also play Bumble or the King.

MR. MILLER: A powerless little man with a strange sense of humor.

KIDS ONE thru EIGHT: Your basic motley assortment of sixth-graders. **KID TWO** is probably the most obnoxious.

BOOKWORM: A pleasant, but panic-stricken fellow of any age. Intelligent, but not high-brow. A very caring individual who, unfortunately is the last of his kind.

PLAGARIA: Although we never see her we know that she is definitely NOT a nice person. Ruthless, cold, and possessive.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND CHARACTERS

MAD HATTER: Perhaps the most loveable lunatic in literature. He (or she) jumps between emotions at...the drop of a hat.

MARCH HARE: Also crazy, the perfect companion for the Hatter.

DORMOUSE: A cute little critter who is always falling asleep.

QUEEN OF HEARTS: An imposing figure, who, if she doesn't get her way, is likely to have your head removed.

KING OF HEARTS: A hen-pecked monarch who gets a weekly allowance of power from the Queen.

WHITE RABBIT: A furry efficiency expert with a big mouth.

KNAVE: The court pig who steals the Queen's cherry tarts.

JURY: A weird bunch with the combined I.Q. of a door-knob.

EXECUTIONER: Literally, the Queen's hooded hatchet-man.

TOM SAWYER CHARACTERS

TOM: A fun-loving kid with a mild streak of the devil in him.

HUCK: A free-spirited country boy who can really spin a yarn.

THE GANG: Tom and Huck are their role models. Including: Ben Rogers, Joe Harper, and Billy Fisher, who are basically normal; and Johnny Miller (a practical joker) and Tommy Barnes (a crybaby who's a specialist in silent hysterics.)

GHOSTS: Various shrouded historical types who love playing pranks on Tom and Huck's Gang.

OLIVER TWIST CHARACTERS

OLIVER: A spirited orphan who longs to be free.

MR. BUMBLE: A cruel, portly man of middle-age who fancies himself a person of importance and distinction.

MRS. BUMBLE: A harsh woman who probably hates all kids.

LIMBKINS: The dim-witted workhouse assistant.

MR. SOWERBERRY: Tall and gaunt. Looks like death, warmed-over.

MRS. SOWERBERRY: A pushy, take-charge individual who bosses her husband around and sometimes completes his sentences.

ORPHANS: Tired, hungry waifs who rally to support Oliver's escape.

WIZARD OF OZ and HANSEL & GRETEL CHARACTERS

SCARECROW: A thoughtful and kind young straw man.

TINMAN: A helpless romantic who is filled with love for all.

COWARDLY LION: Your basic pussy-cat with a loud roar.

WICKED WITCHES (Oz and H & G): Twin partners in nastiness.

HANSEL: A good natured boy who is about to be baked.

SCENES AND SONGS

- SCENE ONE** Mr. MORAN'S CLASSROOM
"She's the One" ... Moran and Class
"She's the One" (*Reprise*) ... Moran, Mollie and Class
- SCENE TWO** THE SCHOOL LIBRARY
"Get Us Back" ... Characters
- SCENE THREE** THE MAD TEA PARTY
"Tea 1" ... Hatter, Hare, Dormouse
"Tea 1" (*Reprise*) ... Same
"Tea 1" (*Sting*) ... Same
- THE GRAVEYARD
"Nothin' Scarey 'bout a Graveyard" ...
Tom, Huck, Gang, Ghosts
- VICTORIA'S ORPHAN WORKHOUSE
"Work" ... Bumble, Limbkins, Orphans
"Takin' Care of the Dead" ... Sowerberrys & Orphans
- ON THE ROAD TO THE EMERALD CITY
"Without Courage" ...
Lion, Tinman, Scarecrow, and Dorothy
- SCENE FOUR** BACK IN THE LIBRARY
"I'm the One" (*Finale*) ... Mollie and Bookworm

SCENE ONE

The lights come up on Mr. Moran's sixth grade reading class. It is a very wild and merry scene: kids are chasing each other, flying paper airplanes, etc. On the chalkboard, up center, is written: "Mr. Moran, Reading Appreciation" and "Assignment: read first four chapters of Alice In Wonderland." One of the kids crosses up to the chalkboard and changes "Mr. Moran" to "Mr. Moron." The rest of the class notices this and roars with laughter.)

KID ONE: *(shouting at kid at chalkboard)* Hey! Moran'll kill you if he sees that.

KID TWO: *(at chalkboard)* Oh yeah? Well, how's he gonna know it was me who did it?

KID THREE: He'll probably check for fingerprints again.

KID TWO: No he won't. He's so dense, he probably won't even notice.

(others laugh)

Kid One: Oh I don't know, You know how he hates *(imitating Moran)*
....That....word!!!!

(others laugh)

KID FOUR: *(pointing to chalkboard)* Hey, did anyone read the assignment today?

KID SIX: Are you kidding?

KID FIVE: Not me. I got a new video game last night.

KID SEVEN: Oh yeah? Which one?

KID FIVE: It's called "Nuke the Nerds".

KID SIX: "Nuke the Nerds"?

KID FIVE: Yeah, it's really neat. Ya see, all these little nerd guys fun around

and you have to try to nuke them before find they their glasses.

KID THREE: Wow, that sounds like fun.

KID TWO: Speaking of nerds, I wonder if Mollie read the assignment.

KID EIGHT: No way. The last thing she read was the eye test chart in the nurse's office.

(all the kids laugh)

Kid One: *(laughing)* I wonder how long it took her?

KID EIGHT: I don't know. But I'll bet the nurse had to help her with some of the longer letters.

(they all laugh again)

KID SIX: *(who has been keeping lookout by the door)* Hey! Here comes Mister Moran!!!!

(they all run for their seats and pose like little angels just as Mr. Moran enters.)

MORAN: *(crossing quickly to his desk and setting down his briefcase, without look up)* Good afternoon class. I'm sorry I'm late.

ENTIRE CLASS: Good afternoon, Mister Moran.

(they all smile innocently. Moran just stares at them.... he knows something is up)

MORAN: *(suspiciously)* Alright, what are you up to? Is it the old frog in the drawer trick? *(he whips open the desk drawer but finds nothing)* Hmmmm... The thumbtacks on the chair routine? *(he examines the chair, no luck again)* Hmmmm... *(he crosses over by the chalkboard, but doesn't see his name, he looks around)* Hmmmm... *(the class is trying to keep from bursting into laughter as he is standing only a few inches from "Mr. Moron" on the chalkboard. He finally catches on)* If anyone has messed with my name on the chalkboard again... they're going to be in big trouble!!

(the class gets dead quite)

MORAN: *(cont'd)* That's it isn't it? *(he still hasn't looked to see)* If it's that...word again, I promise I'll get the little animal that did it!!

(Kid Two starts to look very worried. Moran starts to move toward the group of kids. Kid Two sneaks behind Moran as he passes and tries to get to the chalkboard to erase the word.)

MORAN: *(cont'd)* If it's the... word that I think it is.. .someone is going to die!! Anyone want to tell me who did it? *(Kid Two raises his hand to erase "Moron," just then Moran notices him)* And what exactly, are you doing?

KID TWO: *(thinking fast)* Uhh... volunteering?

MORAN: For what?

KID TWO: Uh, for whatever it is you just asked for volunteers for?

MORAN: I asked, if anyone wanted to tell me who wrote that... word on the chalkboard.

KID TWO: Ah.

MORAN: *(crossing to kid two, menacingly)* Well, do you know who did this?

KID TWO: *(panicked)* Uh...sure.

MORAN: Who?!!

(the other kids prompt Kid Two to Say "Mollie")

KID TWO: UH... Mollie. Yeah Mollie did it. Didn't she guys? *(the class all agrees)* ...yeah, and then she ran outside, uh, right before you came in, Mister Moran.

MORAN: I should have known it was her!

(Kid Two breathes a sigh of relief and quickly takes his seat)

MORAN: *(cont'd)* She's always the one! She gets into more trouble than any ten kids I know. Never does her homework... always late... never pays attention to a word I say. I should have known she was the one!!

SONG: "She's the One"

MORAN: In each and every school,
There's one kid who plays the fool,

And ends up duncing on the stool,
She's the one!

CLASS: She's the one!

MORAN: And no matter what you teach her,
It's impossible to reach her,
Such a simple minded creature,
She's the one!

CLASS: She's the one!

MORAN: She's the one who always disobeys the rules.

KID A: She's the one who always thinks that she's so cool.

KID B: She's the one who always fakes it.

KID C: Knocks it off the shelf and breaks it.

MORAN: If there's no trouble then she makes it.

ALL: She's the one!

MORAN: Oh, Lord. Why me?

KIDS: He always tries to do his very best.

ALL: Someday, she'll see,
That all of us think that she's a pest!
Mollie, Mollie, Mollie, Mollie
Mollie is a pest!

DANCE BREAK

MORAN: Who's the one who never get her homework done?

KIDS: Mollie!

MORAN: And, who's the one who always spoils the fun?

ALL: Yes, all of us today
are here to say that Mollie...is the one!
Mollie is the one! Yeah!

(as the song ends, Mollie enters in a rush. She stops just inside the doorway)

MOLLIE: *(out of breath)* Did I hear someone say my name?

(all the kids giggle and quickly take their seats as Moran begins his angry tirade)

MORAN: You!!!

MOLLIE: *(not aware of what's happening)* Uh... right.

MORAN: *(closing in on her)* You!!!!

MOLLIE: Uh, gee Mister Moran, I'm sorry if I'm a little late, but you, see, uh, I got stuck in the elevator.

MORAN: You can't pull that one on me, Mollie. I know there's no elevator in this entire school.

MOLLIE: Hmmm, then that was some weird closet.

MORAN: *(crossing behind her)* Don't trifle with me. You know very well that I'm not angry with you for being late.

MOLLIE: Ah, good.

(she starts to her seat but he grabs her by the arm)

MORAN: You weren't late. You were early for a change. Early enough to do this! *(he points dramatically to the chalkboard)*

MOLLIE: Do what?

MORAN: Don't tell me that you don't know anything about that...word there on the chalkboard.

MOLLIE: *(looking at the word)* Oh, sure I do. That word is "moron". It means dumb...really dumb...the dumbest!!!

MORAN: And I suppose you don't have any idea who wrote it there: *(he reads)* "Mister Moron, Reading Appreciation".

MOLLIE: Nope, no idea. *(she looks around and sees the kids grinning at her)* What is this, a contest or something?

MORAN: (*evil*) Yes, a contest. And you just lost!!!

SONG: "She's the One" (Reprise)

MORAN: You're the one who never does what you are told.

KIDS: You're the one he always has to scold.

KIDS & MORAN: Your grades are at the bottom,
Talk about problems, boy she's gottem,
You're the one, you're the autom-atic one!

MOLLIE: Oh, Lord wy me?

MORAN & KIDS: Why she?

MOLLIE: I always try to do my very best,

MORAN & KIDS: Ha, ha!

MOLLIE: Someday, you'll see.

MORAN & KIDS: We'll see.

MOLLIE: I'll be the one above the rest.

MORAN & KIDS: Mollie, Mollie, Mollie, Mollie.
She's above the rest!

MOLLIE: Then my friends will want to see me,
Even wish that they could be me,
And, I'll always be the center of the fun.

ALL: And it's all because that Mollie is the one.
Mollie is the one! Yeah!

(After the song everyone takes their seats and Mister Moran crosses to Mollie and takes her by the arm)

MORAN: Now, then young lady, let's talk about today's assignment, shall we?

MOLLIE: (*not excited by the idea*) Sure, great idea.

MORAN: I knew you'd think so.

KID THREE: I'll bet she didn't read it.

KID FOUR: She never does.

MORAN: Well, we'll soon find out. *(he marches her up to the front of the class)* Now then, Mollie... what do you think Carroll's symbolism with the Mad Tea Party is, as it relates to 19th century England?

MOLLIE: Huh?

MORAN: What was Carroll's symbolism?

MOLLIE: Carol who?

MORAN: *(barely controlling his rage, crossing to the chalkboard)* Lewis Carroll, the author... the world famous author. Someone you should know about!

MOLLIE: Oh yeah, he's the guy that wrote *(sneaking a peak at the chalkboard)*... "Alice in Wonderland."

MORAN: Correct.

MOLLIE: What a dumb story. Really dumb!!

MORAN: Perhaps you'd like to explain to all of us, just exactly what it is that you don't like about it!!!!

MOLLIE: *(hedging)* Uh, well...hum, you see, I didn't really get a chance to read all of it.

MORAN: Then tell us about the part you did read.

MOLLIE: Uh, well you see, I.....

MORAN: *(smiling, speaks in a very relaxed manner)* You didn't read any of it, did you Mollie? *(she shakes her head "no")* And, why not? *(she shrugs her shoulders "i don'T know")* You did know about the assignment, didn't you? *(she nods her head "yes" -- Moran suddenly screams loudly)* Then why didn't you read it!!!???

MOLLIE: *(exploding)* I hate reading! It's dumb reading things some guy wrote a hundred years ago. It's dumb reading anything!! All those words, and

sentences, and paragraphs, and page after page of the dumbest things. Besides, it makes my eyes hurt... It makes my whole head hurt. I have a lot better things to do with my time than reading dumb books written by dumb guys about dumb things!!!

(Moran is really seething. His eyes are bugged out and he looks like a balloon about to pop, but he doesn't move or say anything)

KID SEVEN: *(crossing to Moran)* I think he's angry.

KID EIGHT: Look, his face is turning red.

KID SIX: And his eyes are all bugged out!

(several more kids go up to look at Moran, who begins to vibrate)

KID FOUR: Look he's starting to vibrate.

KID THREE: Maybe he's possessed by an alien or something.

(all of a sudden Moran just sort of freezes)

KID ONE: Uh, oh. I don't think he's breathing.

KID FIVE: Maybe he's dead.

KID TWO: *(to Mollie)* Hey, Mollie. I think you killed him!!

MORAN: *(suddenly coming out of it)* Killed me? Never!!! *(begins stalking Mollie who slowly backs away)* But, I'm going to kill you, Mollie!!!

MOLLIE: Uh, Mister Moran, I didn't mean to...

MORAN: No, I've got a better idea... I'll torture you...slowly, very slowly. *(he grabs her by the arm)* You're coming with me, you little... non-reader you!!

MOLLIE: *(struggling)* Where are we going?

MORAN: To the school torture chamber. You'll really hate it!!!

MOLLIE: I didn't know the school had a torture chamber!!

MORAN: Oh sure. I'm surprised you didn't see it. It's right next to the elevator. It's just for kids who think that reading is dumb. Lots of kids go

in... but very few ever come out! Ha, ha.

(he starts dragging her toward the exit)

MOLLIE: *(ad lib screaming)* Oh, no. Please don't take me, etc.

KIDS: *(as Moran is dragging her out)* Bye, Mollie. See ya. etc.

MOLLIE: HEEELLLLLLPP!!

MORAN: *(stopping in the doorway, reeling on the class)* And as for the rest of you...finish your reading assignment!!! And I'd better not hear a single peep.

(he exits with Mollie)

KIDS: *(after a beat)* Peeeeeep!!!

(all the kids resume their chaos from the opening scene. The lights fade to black)

SCENE TWO

Within seconds we are in the school library, a quiet peaceful place. There is a library table at center, and several shelves of books. The off-beat librarian is peacefully shelving some books. Suddenly we hear Mollie's screams for help.

MOLLIE: *(offstage)* Heelllllp!! Heelllllp!!!

(Moran enters dragging mollie behind. She has covered her eyes with her hands so that she can't see this horrible place)

MORAN: Ha, ha, ha... *(still doing the evil routine)* Here we are, Mollie!! The dungeon for dunces like you!!

(the librarian can't figure out what's happening)

MOLLIE: *(still covering her eyes)* Is this the...torture chamber?

MORAN: *(delightfully evil)* Yeeesssss! Ha, ha, ha.

MOLLIE: *(covering her eyes tighter)* I don't want to look!

LIBRARIAN: What is all this?

MOLLIE: *(shocked at the librarian's voice, she gasps)* Wh..wh..who's that?

MORAN: The executioner my dear. He's been waiting for you.

LIBRARIAN: *(perplexed)* I have?

MORAN: *(signaling the librarian to hush)* He has selected some particularly gruesome punishments for you, Mollie...The snake pit of symbolism, the penitentiary of prose, the mental rack!!! Open your eyes and behold... the idiot's room of doom!!

(She slowly takes her hands down. Her eyes are still closed tight. She quickly opens both eyes wide, gets one look at the librarian and screams bloody murder. The librarian grabs his heart in shock)

MOLLIE: Ahhheeeiii. *(suddenly realizing where she is)* Hey, this is the library.

MORAN: *(back to normal, for him)* I'm surprised you even recognized the place.

LIBRARIAN: *(still recovering)* What is all this Mister Moran?

MORAN: Oh, nothing to be concerned about Mister Miller. Just a little punishment.

LIBRARIAN: Well, what did I do? *(moran gives him a puzzled look)* Why am I being punished?

MORAN: You're not... she is. *(he points dramatically to Mollie and the librarian stares at her)*

MOLLIE: *(simply)* Hi.

MORAN: Mollie will be required to stay here until she reads something... *(he marches her over to the table and sits her down)* Finis...even if it takes an entire month.

MOLLIE: You're kidding. A whole book? That's unconstitutional. I could die in here!

(moran crosses to the shelves and begins collecting books)

LIBRARIAN: *(to Mollie)* Oh, no dear. You can't do that. Why, no one has ever died in MY library *(thinks for a moment)* Well, not since 1993 anyway. *(Mollie looks shocked)* Just kidding. Ha ha?

MORAN: *(crossing over with an armful of books)* Ah, yes. These should get you started. *(as he reads the title he plops them in front of her on the table)* "Oliver Twist"... you'll really hate that one. "Hansel and Gretel," "Tom Sawyer," "Wizard of Oz," and Oh... your favorite... "Alice in Wonderland"!!

LIBRARIAN: That's my favorite, too.

MOLLIE: I don't have to read all of these, do I?

MORAN: Oh, no, no, no, my dear... just one. Any one your little heart desires.

MOLLIE: Don't you have any stories that are thinner?

MORAN: Oh, no. We only have big fat ones for you Mollie.

MOLLIE: (*sarcastic*) Terrific.

MORAN: (*crossing to the librarian*) Keep an eye on her. She's a non-reader. In fact, she's an anti-reader. (*librarian looks shocked -- Moran whispers*) She thinks reading is dumb.

(*the librarian glares at Mollie who is drumming her fingers on the table, angrily*)

MOLLIE: (*seeing him, simply*) Hi.

LIBRARIAN: Don't worry. I can handle this.

MORAN: Good. (*he starts to exit and glances at his watch*) Hmm, it's almost time for last hour. I'll check back with you after class. Oh, and don't let her get away...she's a desperate character.

LIBRARIAN: (*trying to be hip*) No problemo.

(*Moran takes at this, but then leaves. The librarian watches Mollie for a moment. She notices this and smiles at him. He gives her a suspicious scowl. She opens a book reluctantly and starts to read. The librarian crosses cautiously to her.*)

LIBRARIAN: That's better. (*she nods*) What's your name again?

MOLLIE: (*thinking quickly*) Uh, Evelyn Woods. (*she quickly flips through the entire book like the world's fastest speed reader. She closes the book, in a satisfied tone*) Ah, what a good book. I'll have to read another one someday. (*standing up*) Well, I'm all through. Thanks a lot... (*trying to make a quick exit*)... Bye! (*the librarian grabs her by the scruff of the neck*)

LIBRARIAN: Oh, no you don't (*knowingly*)... Mollie. You're staying right here until you finish one of these stories. (*he leads her back to the table and sits her down*) And don't you try to sneak out. I'll be sitting at my desk right by the front door.

MOLLIE: Okay. Okay. (*he glares at her and she opens another book*) Look, I'm reading...I'm really reading!!

LIBRARIAN: You'd better be. (*he exits*)

(*as soon as the librarian is out of sight, Mollie slams the book shut and stands up. She paces angrily*)

MOLLIE: Oooooo, am I mad! They can't make me do something I don't want to, and I don't want to read any of these dumb books. Why do they always pick on me? So, I don't like to read.. is that a crime or something? Reading is dumb. Dumb, dumb, dumb!! *(she crosses back to the table and looks at the stack of books)* Well, I won't do it! And they can't make me! *(she picks up the stack of books)* Here's what I think of all their precious books!!!

(She heaves the books straight up into the air and pages comes flying out everywhere. Suddenly the lights flash and flicker and there is a strange collage of moaning sounds as the pages begin to flutter down in a great mess. The moans die away as the last page falls. Mollie stands in the center of all this. She is puzzled by what has just happened. There is a moment of silence and then suddenly a loud, somewhat funny sounding scream is heard from offstage)

BOOKWORM: *(offstage)* AAAhhheeeoiiiiiaaoo!!!

MOLLIE: *(frightened)* What in the...

(suddenly the Bookworm enters in a complete panic, still screaming his peculiar little scream. He walks upright but definitely looks like a big, chubby worm. He dashes around quickly trying to pick up all the pages)

BOOKWORM: Oh, no...Oh, no!!! *(he looks at some of the pages)* They're all out of order!! *(to Mollie)* Look at what you've done you foolish girl. I may never get them back together! *(he frantically picks up more pages)* Oh dear...Oh, dear!!! *(to Mollie)* Well, don't just stand there, help me pick them up. They'll be here soon!!!!

MOLLIE: *(not believing what she sees)* Hey...is this a joke? Are you gonna do a singing telegram or something? This isn't my birthday you know?

BOOKWORM: This is no joke...this is serious!!!! Now, help me, they'll all be here soon. *(picking up more)*

MOLLIE: Who? Who's gonna be here?

BOOKWORM: *(showing her the pages)* Them... the characters. They've all probably heard by now. And they're going to be angry, very, very angry.

MOLLIE: Why?

BOOKWORM: *(angry)* Because you threw them out of their stories and now we only have one hour to get them all back! *(he does his scream again)*

MOLLIE: *(not catching on)* What? What are you talking about?

BOOKWORM: Help me!!!

MOLLIE: Now this is really dumb!

BOOKWORM: *(reacting suddenly)* Don't ever say that word around me! A Bookworm hates the word "dumb", and we've been known to become violent!

MOLLIE: *(giving a puzzled laugh)* Bookworm?

(all of a sudden there is a great commotion from offstage)

BOOKWORM: Oh, no. Here they come!!

(Characters from all the stories that Mollie threw begin whirling in from every corner of the stage. They are all complaining loudly as they converge on the Bookworm and Mollie at center. They are all very angry. The Bookworm tries to quiet them down, but they keep on yelling at him)

BOOKWORM: *(stands up on the table and yells)* Quiiiiiieett!! *(they all get quiet)* Now, if we all just stay calm, I'm sure we can get things straightened out in a jiffy.

OZ WITCH: Well, you'd better hurry Bookworm, we only have one hour!

<End of excerpt>