

THE BIG PICTURE

**CHARACTERS**

SKY BLUE: 9 to 15 years old; female, kind.  
BURNT SIENNA: 9 to 15 years old; male or female, shorter.  
LEMON YELLOW: 9 to 15 years old; female, skittish.  
COPPER: 9 to 15 years old; male, a bully.  
OLIVE GREEN: 9 to 15 years old; female, grumpy.  
PEACH: 9 to 15 years old; female or male, skittish.

**TIME**

*The present.*

**SETTING**

*A desk in kindergarten.*

*Lights up on six actors grouped in two rows. Each wears a different color shirt: SKY BLUE, BURNT SIENNA, LEMON YELLOW, COPPER, OLIVE GREEN, PEACH. They are crayons. They stand frozen for a moment, just looking around.*

PEACH: We're being taken out!

OLIVE GREEN: Oh, great.

SKY BLUE: How are you, Burnt Sienna?

BURNT SIENNA: [Short, his/her shirt is torn at the neck, like paper ripped from a crayon.]

Man, I'm fried.

COPPER: [A bit of a bully.] You're lookin' a little used-up there, friend.

SKY BLUE: [Holding BURNT SIENNA.] Don't say that! [Pause. They stare out the fourth wall, trying to see.]

LEMON YELLOW: [Sweet, but a little flighty.] So what's going on?

PEACH: Is it a picture?

ALL: A picture! Oh no! Help!

OLIVE GREEN: Maybe it's not a picture. Maybe it's just a little doodle.

COPPER: Maybe she's making a candle. [A horrified half pause.]

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PEACH: We're all gonna die!  
LEMON YELLOW: Copper! Don't say that.  
SKY BLUE: Paper! I see paper!  
COPPER: We have paper. I repeat, we have paper.  
OLIVE GREEN: [As in, "Oh, dear God."] Oh, dear Debbie.  
BURNT SIENNA: Please don't use me. Please don't use me.  
PEACH: I don't want to die! Don't draw anything me-colored . . .  
OLIVE GREEN: Or olive green. Who likes olive green? It's not a pretty color, I'll be the first to admit.  
ALL: Oh right. Don't want to use me. Me, neither. Nope. Not me.  
COPPER: What's the paper situation?  
PEACH: Yeah, how much paper are we talking? [They all strain to see.]  
SKY BLUE: It's . . . hard to see from this angle . . . but . . . Oh, no . . .  
LEMON YELLOW: What?  
BURNT SIENNA: It's butcher paper.  
SKY BLUE: It's a mural!  
PEACH: We're all gonna die!  
COPPER: [ ] Be quiet!  
PEACH: You [ ] be quiet.  
COPPER: [Making a grab for PEACH.] You're a sickly little shade, Peach!  
PEACH: [Hiding behind another crayon.] You'll never take me alive, Copper!  
SKY BLUE: Guys! Guys!  
OLIVE GREEN: Has she started drawing?  
LEMON YELLOW: Something's taking shape.  
COPPER: Is that an elephant?  
SKY BLUE: I think it's a dog.  
LEMON YELLOW: The hand of Debbie is subtle.

[They nod. BURNT SIENNA begins to be dragged off by an unseen hand.]

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BURNT SIENNA: Here I go again. [He exits.]  
PEACH: Burnt Sienna hasn't been looking too good.  
LEMON YELLOW: He's [Or "She's"], just a little smaller, that's all.  
SKY BLUE: Debbie's wearing a pretty dress today.  
PEACH: She spilled juice on it, though.  
LEMON YELLOW: The way of Debbie is messy.  
[They all nod knowingly.]  
COPPER: You're changing the subject, Sky Blue.  
SKY BLUE: Well, what do you want me to say?  
LEMON YELLOW: Burnt Sienna's going to be fine.  
[They notice something.]  
OLIVE GREEN: Oy, Gevalt.  
LEMON YELLOW: What?  
OLIVE GREEN: Ground.  
PEACH: What?  
OLIVE GREEN: She's drawing the ground.  
COPPER: With Burnt Sienna.  
SKY BLUE: I can't watch.  
LEMON YELLOW: The whole ground?  
COPPER: All the way across.  
OLIVE GREEN: This is gonna be bad.  
PEACH: No! Take me! Take me!  
COPPER: [Holding PEACH back, very war movie.] Don't be a fool, soldier! You can't have a pink ground!  
PEACH: Hey! I'm Peach! Peach! Peach!  
COPPER: Yeah, whatever.  
SKY BLUE: Look!  
OLIVE GREEN: Here comes another kid . . .  
[Pause. They listen, then . . .]

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LEMON YELLOW: Well, that wasn't very nice.

PEACH: He shouldn't have said that to Debbie.

OLIVE GREEN: Everyone's a critic.

[Pause.]

LEMON YELLOW: [Quietly:] Debbie's crying.

[Pause. PEACH puts an umbrella up. BURNT SIENNA comes back, staggers, and collapses. SKY BLUE rushes over to BURNT SIENNA.]

BURNT SIENNA: That took a lot out of me.

[COPPER gets dragged away quickly.]

COPPER: Woah!

[The other crayons give SKY BLUE and BURNT SIENNA a little space and watch the picture being drawn.]

PEACH: Now she's drawing a big, angry stick in the ground.

BURNT SIENNA: [Away from the others, to SKY BLUE.] I don't think I'm going to make it.

SKY BLUE: Of course you are, you've got plenty of life left . . .

OLIVE GREEN: [Re: the picture.] I still don't get it.

PEACH: What's to get? It's a dog, and a house.

LEMON YELLOW: And a big angry stick.

OLIVE GREEN: I guess I just don't understand art. [COPPER is tossed onstage. He rolls for a bit. OLIVE GREEN is dragged off quickly.] Vey is meev. [As in, "Woe is me!"]

BURNT SIENNA: I feel . . . broken. Inside.

SKY BLUE: Shhh . . . don't say anything.

PEACH: Ohhhh . . . it's a big angry tree in the ground.

BURNT SIENNA: I think I'm broken inside my paper.

[OLIVE GREEN is tossed onstage. LEMON YELLOW is dragged off quickly.]

LEMON YELLOW: Here I go!

OLIVE GREEN: Boy, is she upset!

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PEACH: We've got to do something.

OLIVE GREEN: She's gonna kill us all!

[LEMON YELLOW is tossed back in. They all brace themselves, but no other crayon is taken.]

SKY BLUE: She stopped.

BURNT SIENNA: Is she finished?

LEMON YELLOW: I don't think so.

PEACH: It feels like there's something missing.

OLIVE GREEN: She's still crying.

BURNT SIENNA: Listen . . . if I . . . get used up . . . go away . . . completely . . .

SKY BLUE: But you'll never go away. Don't you see? You're there in everything that's your color—all the candy bars Debbie has drawn, in monkeys, in root beer . . . in the very ground!

LEMON YELLOW: Yeah!

OLIVE GREEN: It's a kind of . . . immortality.

SKY BLUE: You're part of the picture. She couldn't have made it without you!

PEACH: What's the point of being a crayon if you can't be in the picture?

LEMON YELLOW: Without us, the world would be colorless and flat.

OLIVE GREEN: Butcher paper.

PEACH: She's right.

COPPER: Hey! I'm ready, coach! Put me in!

LEMON YELLOW: Don't cry, Debbie! Use me!

COPPER: Come on! I'm shiny!

PEACH: [Throwing down the umbrella.] Pick me!

OLIVE GREEN: Pick me! Make another tree!

LEMON YELLOW: Make the sun! [Suddenly, SKY BLUE is dragged offstage by an unseen hand.]

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SKY BLUE: She picked me! [They cheer, but the cheers slowly change to increasingly horrified expressions.]

LEMON YELLOW: Oh. Oh my.

[BURNT SIENNA sits up weakly.]

BURNT SIENNA: What? What?

COPPER: She's making the sky.

BURNT SIENNA: Sky? What sky? You just leave it blank, there's nothing there.

COPPER: You don't get it, do you, kid?

OLIVE GREEN: [Gently.] It's butcher paper. It's brown.

COPPER: And the sky's gotta be blue.

BURNT SIENNA: [Struggling to his feet.] No! She'll never last!

LEMON YELLOW: We have to think of the big picture, honey.

BURNT SIENNA: What about clouds? Shouldn't there be some white clouds? How about some fluffy clouds?

COPPER: [Quietly.] Looks like it's gonna be a nice clear day.

[They are suddenly grouped together, by the unseen hand.]

PEACH: Woah . . . back in the box.

COPPER: Cardboard falls again.

[They stand in two rows again, like a box of crayons. There is a space for SKY BLUE, the missing crayon. As crayons will, the one next to the space, in this case LEMON YELLOW, leans diagonally into the space. LEMON YELLOW puts her head on the shoulder of the crayon she's leaning against, BURNT SIENNA.]

OLIVE GREEN: It's gonna be a great picture.

LEMON YELLOW: She'll always be up there . . . part of the sky . . .

BURNT SIENNA: Hey, do you guys think . . . ?

PEACH: You know it.

OLIVE GREEN: This picture? No doubt.

[As the lights fade.]

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COPPER: Oh yeah. [Calling out to SKY BLUE.] That's going up on the fridge, baby! That's going on the refrigerator! Up on the fridge!

[They all join in.]

ALL: [Except SKY BLUE.] Up on the fridge! Up on the fridge! Up on the fridge!!!

[Lights out.]

END OF PLAY