

SUDDEN DEATH DEBATING LEAGUE

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### Cast of Characters

LOUIE, male, a high school freshman debater  
MARIE, female, a high school senior debater

### Setting

A high school classroom.

(A classroom, generic but for a single lily on the teacher's desk, and a piece of paper on each of two student desks. LOUIS, a high school freshman, enters carrying a briefcase. If he's going for the geeky lawyer look, he's nailed it. Enter at the same time MARIE, a high school senior, competing with him to get through the door first.)

LOUIS

I'm undefeated.

MARIE

Me too.

LOUIS

They're calling me a freshman sensation.

MARIE

How lovely for you.

LOUIS

*The Freshman Sensation.*

MARIE

They call me the Senior Slaughterer. I wish they'd come up with something better than slaughterer--

LOUIS

It's pretty weak.

MARIE

Maybe I should be the Sensation Stopper.

LOUIS

Did I mention I'm undefeated?

MARIE

The Sensation Slayer.

LOUIS

Don't expect me to take it easy on you just because you're a girl.

MARIE

Why didn't anyone think of slayer before?

LOUIS

Maybe because they're not obsessed with death?

(Marie picks up one of the pieces of paper from the desk, gives it a cursory look and then signs it.)

MARIE

It *is* the sudden death round.  
(beat)  
Sign your will.

LOUIS

Ha ha. Save the intimidation tactics. Everybody knows that negative never wins on global warming unless the affirmative team totally tanks.

MARIE

That's not the topic.

LOUIS

It's the topic for the entire year. Resolved: In recognition of the significant threat posed by global warming, the government should pursue an aggressive policy to curtail emissions worldwide.

MARIE

Never done a sudden death round before, huh?

LOUIS

(lying)  
Sure--I've done plenty of them.

MARIE

Then you know they won't let you compete if you don't sign.

(Louis picks up his will and looks at it carefully. He suddenly looks ill. He goes to the door. It's locked--they're trapped.)

LOUIS

The door's locked.

MARIE

Of course it is.

LOUIS

But I...I need to go to the bathroom. How am I supposed to...uh debate if I have to go the--

MARIE

You should have gone before. You had an hour to go before you came to the prep room.

LOUIS

I didn't have to go then.

(Beat. He looks around for an alternate escape route.)

This is a joke, isn't it? I'm being set up. Who put you up to this? Bob? He's totally jealous of me ever since I got ranked first in the fall invitational.

MARIE

I don't know anyone named Bob.

LOUIS

You must know someone--

MARIE

I know a Robert.

LOUIS

That's the same as--

MARIE

He's not your Bob. He's not anybody's Bob!

LOUIS

Was it Ben?

MARIE

I don't know Bob, I don't know Ben. All I know is that in seven minutes, it's either you or me, and it's not going to be me.

(beat)

It's nothing personal. Once you take off your cocky hat, you seem like a pretty nice guy.

LOUIS

Why didn't my coach say--

MARIE

I thought you had done this before.

LOUIS

Yeah. Of course. Won lots of these. My coach just didn't say this one was a...

MARIE

(holds out her hand)

I'm Marie.

LOUIS

(American style: Lou-iss)

Louis. My friends call me Lou-E, you know, like I'm a rapper.

MARIE

Not the first thing that jumps into my head.

LOUIS

My name is Lou-E, the debating masta  
I blast my opponents with words  
Like a herd of cattle, ready to battle  
With argumentation--I am the rhyming, thinking nation,  
The freshman sensation.

MARIE

I don't get the herd of cattle line.

LOUIS

Yeah. I wanted to rhyme with battle.

MARIE

Maybe this:

My name is Lou-E, the debating masta,  
 Blastin my opponents like a stereo component.  
 My words stampeding like a herd of cattle,  
 Argumenting in a battle--  
 I'm a general in the army of eradication  
 With my rhymin, my rhythm--the freshman sensation,  
 Devastation incarnate--you can't take the weight  
 Of the logic that flows from my brain  
 Like a freight train--don't blink or you might miss me.  
 My name is Lou-E--now let me repeat it: my name is Lou-E,  
 and you can't defeat me.

LOUIS

I think I love you.

MARIE

You're just saying that.

LOUIS

No. I mean it.

MARIE

Thank you. But it would never work. I'm an older woman--

LOUIS

So you like me too?

MARIE

I didn't say that.

LOUIS

You said once I take off my cocky hat, I'm a pretty nice guy,  
 and then you said it would never work because you're older,  
 not because you didn't like me.

MARIE

Stop saying that.

LOUIS

You know it's true.

MARIE

I don't want to be beheaded either, but that's no reason to  
 get ridiculous about it!

Want to read the rest? Follow the directions to request a perusal copy!