

Packing for College

by Curtis Chang and the drama track

Characters: student, father, mother, younger brother, and best friend from high school.

Opening scene: student is stage center putting items into a fairly full bag.

Dad: Son, aren't you packed yet? We've got to leave now. You're going to miss your flight.

Craig: But, dad, it's only noon, and the flight isn't until 3.

Dad: Well, son, you've got to plan ahead. According to new FAA regulations, you have to get there at least an hour before your flight. It's a peak flying time; so the lines will probably be long. It takes 45 minutes to get there, and we have to leave an extra 20 minutes in case of a traffic jam. You're going to be a college student now, son; you've got to get your act together. Oh, don't forget to put your ticket in an easily accessible place.

Craig: *(rolling his eyes a little)* Yeah, dad, I've got it all figured out.

Dad leaves. Craig then checks to see that the ticket is indeed there.

Craig: Shoot, where did I put that ticket?

Craig goes to side to look for ticket. Mom comes in. Shakes her head and sighs. Mom re-folds something.

Craig: Mom, what are you doing?

Mom: I'm just trying to help. You've never packed for yourself before. Just let me show you. See how much room you save by doing it this way. Plus, it eliminates wrinkles.

Craig: I can figure out how to pack clothes for myself. See, everything fits fine the way it is.

Mom: Actually, I was trying to make room for these. You've never done your own laundry before; so I thought you could bring these postage pre-paid boxes for you to FedEx your dirty clothes to me, and I'll send them back the next day.

Craig: I can do my laundry myself too.

Mom: Just let me do this one thing for you.

Craig: OK. I'll bring them.

Mom: Actually, there's one more thing I'd like you to take. Those cafeteria people don't know what kind of food you like; so I've prepared just a few of your favorites. And remember to eat plenty of vegetables. And don't forget to take your vitamins with milk at breakfast.

Craig: Mom, stop it! I'm nineteen years old. I can feed myself.

Mom: *(starts to take bags back)* Ok. I'm sorry. I was just trying to help.

Craig: You're right, mom. I'm sorry. I'll take them.

Mom leaves. Craig has a hard time fitting all the stuff in. Dad peeks his head in.

Dad: Son, hurry up. It's time to go. What is all that stuff, anyway?--Oh, by the way, that friend of yours Billy is here. But don't let him take too much of your time. We've got to go.

Friend and dad bump into one another on the way in and out.

Billy: So, you're really leaving, huh?

Craig: Yeah. It's almost time to go.

Billy: It must be pretty exciting going out East, huh?

Craig: Yeah.

Billy: It sounds so much more exciting than staying with us schmoes here at the community college.

Student: It's not so bad.

Billy: You'll be meeting lots of interesting people. And I bet you'll be really busy with all sorts of things.

Craig: Sure I guess I'll be busy.

Billy: Probably too busy to call or write.

Craig: No, man. I'll never forget you. I'll call you, and I'll be coming out for breaks. And you can come and visit me. Or, . . . I'm sure we'll figure something out.

Billy: Yeah?

Craig: Yeah!

Billy: Yeah?

Craig: Yeah.

Awkward guy hug

Billy: *(While still hugging)*.Uh, Craig?

Craig: Yeah, Billy.

Billy: How come you're not bringing that picture I gave you, the one of us on last year's hiking trip?

Craig: Oh, yeah. I really want to--it is a little big.

Billy: D'you think? It's not that big. *(Pulls out a huge picture.)* I think it would look great on your desk.

Craig: Yeah, sure, sure. You're absolutely right. *(tries to fit it in bag but realizes it's too big)* Why don't I save it for last.

Father enters.

Dad: Oh, Billy. You're still here. Craig and I are about to leave.

Billy: Oh, yeah, of course. See ya.

Billy leaves.

Dad: Oh, I noticed you nearly forgot the course catalog. Last night, I was skimming through it, and I had a few thoughts.

Craig: A few thoughts, huh?

Dad: I marked the courses that you really should consider taking first semester. Calculus, physics. I took the liberty of calling the school and asking who the best teachers are. The notes are in the back of the book. If you take these classes right away, it should put you right on track to complete a double major in computer science and engineering. With the following adjustments, you could finish a master's in five years. *(Father gets stiffly emotional)* And, son, there's one more thing I'd like you to have. This slide rule has been in the family for three generations. It always brought me good luck in my classes.

Craig: Well, actually, Dad, I was thinking I might explore some other possibilities.

Dad: What other possibilities?

Craig: I've heard the drama department is supposed to be really good.

Dad: Drama department!? Do you want to be one of those starving actors? Besides, what good will a lucky slide rule do you in acting class?

Craig: Yeah, I was just thinking. I haven't made any decisions yet. I'll definitely make sure I bring this with me. Thanks, dad.

Dad: Well, enough of this sentimentality. We've really got to get moving.

Father exits. Another scene of Craig furiously rearranging his packing. Little brother comes in.

Brother: So, when do you finally get out of here so I can move into my new room.

Craig: As soon as I figure out how to pack all of this stuff mom and dad just gave me.

Brother: Oh yeah, that reminds me. I borrowed your New Kids on the Block CDs and left them in my room. I thought you might want to take them with you.

Craig disdainfully regards the CDs.

Craig: Please. Why don't you just keep them.

Brother: Since when don't you like the New Kids?

Craig: They're so high school.

Brother: Well, excuse me. (*Notices a strange-looking poster on the floor*)--Where'd you get this new poster?

Craig: Oh, shoot. I forgot to pack that. Give it to me.

Little Brother: (*continues to look at the poster*) Lollapalooza? You were never there.

Craig: Would you just stop pestering me! I've got to get going.

Little Brother: Sorry I'm not cool enough for you, Mr. College Student.

Brother leaves angrily.

Craig: No, I didn't mean to . . . You just don't understand. Oh, well.

Frustratedly tries to finish packing.

Offstage voices:

Mom: Just let me do this for you.

Billy: Probably too busy to call or write, huh?

Father: This slide rule has been in the family for three generations.

Brother: Sorry I'm not cool enough for you, Mr. College Student.

Craig gives up packing.

Craig: How am I ever going to carry all of this stuff?