



New Girl

Characters: Li Bin, Emily, Iris, Daisy, Anita, Miss Perkins

Scene 1 Classroom

(SFX: Noise of students chattering in the classroom, waiting for the teacher to come.)

Miss P: Good morning everybody.

All: Good morning miss Perkins

Miss P: Good morning class. Um... where's Yoko... and Winnie?

Anita: They've left Miss,

Miss P: Have they? When?

Anita: Last week.

Miss P: (Miffed) Hmm.... no one tells me. (ironic) Oh well... I'm just the teacher that's all... why should I be told?... Okay, to-day we're going to practice talking in English.... you can only learn to speak English by actually speaking it... so I'm going to, put you in groups and give you some discussion topics for you to talk about. Oh, urn, I almost forgot... before we do that I want you all to welcome a new member of the class... umm.... (trying to find and then read the name from her register. To herself)... it's here somewhere.... ummm... oh yes... (clumsily) Ng Chun Yung....

(SFX: All class giggle)

Emily: I'm not new Miss.

Miss P: Oh, Iris... that's you is it... oh well... let's see.... um... (clumsily) Law Tin Man.

Iris: That's me Miss... I'm not new!

Miss P: Oh Iris... that's you is it... oh well... there is a new girl.... um... could the new girl please put up her hand, (she looks around but no hands go up. With exaggerated over enunciation)) Put your

hand up if you are a new girl... (no one puts their hand up) No?
That's odd... there's a note here saying that there is a new girl in
the class.

(Iris puts her hand up)

Miss P: Yes Iris?

Iris: Please Miss... I think SHE'S the new girl.

Miss P: Who?

Iris: That one over there... sitting in the corner.

Miss P: Oh yes.... yes... I haven't seen you before have I. (silence) Thank
you Iris. Well why didn't you put your hand up? (silence) What's
your name? (silence) You have got a name haven't you?

(SFX: Class giggles at what Miss Perkins said.)

Miss P: Well? What is it?

Li Bin: (Low voice, barely audible) Li Bin.

Miss P: Linda?

Li Bin: (Low voice) Li Bin.

Miss P: (Irritated) I can't hear what's she's saying! Speak u p please.

Li Bin: (She coughs then again, in a low voice) Li Bin.

Miss P: Oh for goodness sakes... Can anybody hear what's she's
saying?

Emily: Li Bin.

Miss P: Thank you Emily... thank goodness someone can speak up.

Emily: I think she's from the mainland Miss.

Miss P: That's no excuse for not projecting your voice... Li Bin... you must
learn to (over enunciating) SPEAK UP and SPEAK CLEAJRLY.
Well you'll have plenty of chance to practice in to-day's class.
Now as I said I want to put you in groups and I want you ALL to
speak... do you understand... no speaking in Cantonese... and
no sitting back and letting all the others do the talking... I want
you ALL to practice your spoken English. Is that clear.

All: (Gloomily) Yes Miss.

Miss P: Good. Now get into groups of five.... (getting her name wrong)
Lin Bai.... you go with Iris, Emily, Anita and Daisy... Good, now
are you all in groups of five?

All: Yes Miss.

Miss P: Now I'm going to give you out some worksheets... on each worksheet is a list of controversial statements. Iris... what does "controversial" mean?

Iris: Please Miss it means when someone says something and some people strongly agree and some people strongly disagree.

Miss P: Yes Iris... well done, (getting her name back to front) Bin Li....

All: (Giggle)

Miss P: Give me an example of a controversial statement, (silence) Bin Li... did you hear me?

Li Bin: (Very quietly) Yes Miss.

Miss P: (Irritated) Speak up... what did you say?

Li Bin: Yes Miss.

Miss P: What did she say?

Iris: She said 'yes' Miss.

Miss P: Thank you Iris. Well Bin Li.

Li Bin: (Quiet voice) My name is Li Bin Miss.

Miss P: (Irritated) What did she say Iris?

Iris: She said her name was Li Bin Miss.

Miss P: (Annoyed) I KNOW what her name is... I want her to answer my question now can she or can she not give me an example of a controversial statement?!

Iris: I don't know Miss.

Miss P: Well ASK her Iris... ASK her... I haven't got all day!

Iris: But Miss.

Miss P: Yes.

Iris: I can't speak Mandarin.

Miss P: Oh for goodness sake! (exhales in noisy annoyance) Can anybody speak Mandarin.

Iris: Emily can Miss.

Emily: No I can't Miss.

Iris: She can speak a little Miss.

Miss P: Emily... can you ask the new girl if she can give me an example of a controversial statement.

Emily: Miss, I don't know how to say 'controversial' in Mandarin.

Miss P: (Exhaling noisily) I don't believe it!

Li Bin: (Low voice) It is wrong to kill animals for food.

Miss P: Can anybody help?

Iris: Miss, I think she said something.
Miss P: What Iris? What did she say?
Iris: I don't know Miss.
Li Bin: (Shy voice) It is wrong to eat animals for food,
Miss P: I STILL can't hear what she's talking about. Iris? Did YOU hear?
Iris: Miss, I think she said you should eat animals for food.
Miss P: What?
Li Bin: (Shy voice) It is wrong to eat animals for food.
Miss P: I give up. Daisy... you give me a controversial statement.
Daisy: Um... to-day is a sunny day.
Miss P: Daisy... how is that controversial?
Daisy: I don't know Miss.
Miss P: Today IS a sunny day Daisy... there is NO doubt about it... LOOK, everybody can see that the sun is shining... that is NOT a controversial statement at all!
Daisy: No Miss.
Miss P: So why did you say it?
Daisy: I thought it was a nice thing to say Miss... I like sunny days.
Miss P: I'm not interested in what you do or do not like Daisy... just give me a controversial statement... something that will divide us... something that SOME of us will strongly agree with and something that some of s will strongly Disagree with. Anita?
Anita: Um... this is an interesting lesson.
All: (Giggle nastily)
Miss P: That is NOT a controversial statement Anita.
Daisy: (Whispering a 'controversial statement) Miss Perkins is pretty.
Anita: (Giggling nastily) That's not controversial..., NO ONE would agree with that.!
Daisy: (Giggling nastily with Anita)
Miss P: Perhaps you'd like to share your little joke with us Daisy.
Daisy: It's no joke Miss.
Miss P: Really? Then why are you laughing?
Daisy: The sun is shining, it's a lovely day and so... I'm laughing.
All: (Giggle)
Miss P: Okay it looks like I'M going to have to give you a controversial statement. Okay... um... let me see..... Ah yes... "We should all refuse to accept plastic bags at supermarkets.' Okay? I repeat., 'We should all refuse to accept plastic bags at supermarkets.'

What do you think of that statement Emily?

Emily: It's nice Miss.

Miss P: I don't want to know if it's nice or not Emily... I want to know if you strongly agree or strongly disagree with it.

Emily: I don't mind Miss.

Miss P: But what about pollution? Hong Kong is drowning under an avalanche of plastic bags... don't you think, if we ALL REFUSED to take plastic bags... then we could help Hong Kong become a cleaner place?

Emily: Maybe Miss.

Miss P: (Exhaling noisily) Maybe?! that all you can say Emily?... 'Maybe?'

Emily: Yes Miss.

Miss P: Anyone else? (silence) Iris? What do you think?

Iris: About what Miss?

Miss P: ABOUT NOT USING PLASTIC BAGS.

Iris: Same as Emily Miss.

Miss P: I see... well.... carry on in your groups and TRY to have a strong opinion about some of the statements on the list in front of you.

Break

Scene 2

(SFX: The classroom. Students are discussing Miss Perkins statements in groups. A general buzz, a mix of English and Cantonese.)

Daisy: (In Cantonese) Who's your new boyfriend Iris?

Miss P: (Monitoring) Daisy... speak in English?

Daisy: Yes Miss.

Emily: Come on... let's look at the first sentence.

Daisy: (In Cantonese) It's boring.

Miss P: (Voice from a distance) Daisy!

Daisy: Yes Miss. (Under her voice) How can she hear me when she's on the other side of the room?

Emily: The first sentence is.... 'Boys should do the washing up and help with the housework.'

All: (Bored voices. Li Bin doesn't speak) Yes.

Emily: Okay... next one....

Daisy: Who IS your new boyfriend Iris? (giggling) Is it Ted?
Iris: No.
Anita: I bet it is... now that Yoko has gone Iris has moved in and grabbed Him.
Iris: Yoko stopped going out with Ted before she left.
Daisy: Really? How do you know
Emily: Look... let's get on with these sentences shall we?
Daisy: Boring.
Emily: The next one is....' Too many cooks spoil the broth.'
Iris: What? Say it again?
Emily: ' Too many cooks spoil the broth.'
Anita: What does it mean?
Emily: I don't know... Look, just tell me if you agree or not.
All: (Bored voice) Yes.
Li Bin: (Clearing throat) Um.. sometimes.... it is GOOD to have many people doing something together.

(Short silence)

Emily: So?
Li Bin: That is my opinion.
Daisy: What's she talking about?
Anita: I don't know
Iris: What's the next one?
Emily: 'Too many cooks...'. no we've already done that one... um....
'Every cloud has a silver lining.'
Anita: Stupid!
Emily: Is it? Why?
Anita: How can a cloud have a lining?!
Daisy: Yes, it's stupid!
Emily: Do we all agree it's stupid?
All: (Except Li Bin. Bored voice) Yes.
Li Bin: (Clearing voice) But.... but sometimes.... when things are bad.... something good will happen.
Anita: So what?
Li Bin: So... to a certain extent.... I can agree.
Daisy: It's stupid!
Anita: She doesn't think so.

Daisy: She's stupid.
Anita: Where do you come from?
Li Bin: My father comes from Shanghai... my Mother comes from Hangzhoo.
Daisy: Huh! Shanghai people think they're so smart, but they're not.
Anita: Hangzhou is a village isn't it.
Li Bin: No, it is a town, a beautiful town on the lake.
Daisy: Listen to the way she speaks... It's funny.
Anita: She says it's a town but it isn't, it's a village... that's where they come from mainlanders... villages.
Daisy: (Aggressive) Why have you come to Hong Kong?
Li Bin: Because my Father is working here.
Anita: Legally or illegally? (they all giggle nastily)
Li Bin: Legally.... of course... why do you ask this question?
Daisy: They all come to Hong Kong for the money... that's all... they're poor and they want to come here and get rich.
Emily: We've got some move into our estate... But why should they move into our estate when there are Hong Kong people waiting for flats... why should they come and take our flats.
Iris: My mum says they should all go back to where they came from.
Li Bin: My father is working here...when he finishes, maybe we will go back.
Daisy: Yes, go back and good riddance.
Miss P: (Suddenly appearing) Well girls... how are you getting on?
Emily: Oh, fine Miss.
Miss P: Which number are you on?
Emily: Um, number four.
Miss P: Is that all?! You should have nearly finished by now! Or have you been disagreeing a lot? Some of those statement are pretty controversial.
Emily: Yes Miss... we've been discussing them.
Miss P: Good... good.... but hurry up... we're finishing soon.
Emily: We will Miss.
Iris: Quick... what's the next one?
Daisy: So Iris... if you're not going out with Ted.... WHO ARE you going out with?
Iris: None of your business.
Daisy: (Giggling) John?

Iris: No! Look shut up Daisy.
Daisy: Don't you tell me to shut up!
Emily: ' We should all give half our pocket money to charity.'
Daisy: (In Cantonese) Stupid!
Emily: That's what it says here.
Daisy: I'M not giving half my pocket money to some stupid charity,
Anita: Neither am I!
Emily: I only get fifty dollars a week.
Iris: Is that all!
Emily: How much do you get then Iris?
Iris: My dad gives me a hundred and my mum fifty.
Emily: A hundred and fifty dollars a week?!
Daisy: I get whatever I want.
Iris: Really Daisy?!
Daisy: Yeah, from my dad... I just ask and he gives.
Li Bin: (Clearing throat) Um... I think....
Daisy: Who cares what YOU think.
Emily: Come on... let her speak. Yes?
Li Bin: When there was the big earthquake in Taiwan I gave all my pocket money... it is not much... twenty dollars only...
Daisy: Only twenty dollars? Huh! That's nothing! Not worth giving.
Li Bin: And I had some money saved up for some books I wanted to buy... but I gave that too... I think....
Daisy: Alright, alright, stop preaching to us Miss Goody Goody.
Anita: I bet she didn't really give any money to the earthquake victims.
Daisy: She's just making it up.
Li Bin: No...no I did.
Daisy: Who cares what you did or didn't do anyway... You should just go back to the mainland where you belong!
Miss P: (More distant projected voice from front of class. Buzz of chatter) Okay everybody.... stop now.... (Chatter continues) I said STOP TALKING! (Silence) That's better... now I don't know why I have to raise my voice.... Now let's go through the controversial statements and see what people said about them... (fade as she is speaking).

Scene 3 The playground

(SFX: Nasty giggling)

Daisy: Look at her hair!

Anita: So rough.

Daisy: I bet she had it cut with an agricultural implement.

(All giggle nastily)

Anita: Li Bin the peasant girl.

Iris: Look at her shoes.

Emily: I bet they were second hand-

Iris: Yes, I bet they used to belong to her grand mother.

Anita: They probably still do... they're SHARING them!

(All giggle nastily)

Iris: Li Bin sharing the same pair of shoes with her grandmother.

(All giggle nastily)

Anita: I bet her grandmother is waiting at home right now...

Daisy: With no shoes on....

(They all giggle nastily)

Emily: Waiting for Li Bin to come home so she can take her shoes back
and go out!

(All giggle nastily)

Daisy: Is it true Li Bin? I bet it is.

Li Bin: No, no it isn't... my grandmother has her own shoes.

Daisy: Really?

Anita: I bet her grandmother wears clogs!

(They giggle nastily)

Daisy: Wooden clogs.

Iris: Does she?
Li Bin: No, no she doesn't.
Iris: I bet she does.
Li Bin: This is a nice school.
Daisy: (Contemptuously) Nice school! Huh! It's a dump.
Emily: Why did she say it was a nice school?
Iris: I don't know... probably because from where she comes from they don't have proper schools.
Anita: They have huts,

(All giggle nastily)

Iris: With pigs and chickens in them.

(All giggle nastily)

Daisy: Nice school! Huh! What a stupid thing to say.
Li Bin: The teacher is nice.
Daisy: Miss Perkins... huh! she's an idiot.
Anita: Her lessons are really boring.
Iris: I can hardly keep my eyes open in Miss Perkin's classes.
Daisy: And Li Bin says she's nice.
Anita: Miss Perkins is nice. Huh! What rubbish.
Emily: Why did she say that?
Daisy: Probably because in her country they don't have proper teachers.
Iris: So who teaches the lessons where she comes from.
Emily: The chickens.
Iris: (Laughing) What?! The chickens?! How can chickens teach?
Emily: Like this...(She starts clucking like a chicken. The others burst into uncontrollable laughter as Emily clucks and clucks and clucks away.)
Li Bin: I live in Yau Ma Dei... where do you live?
Daisy: Yau Ma Dai? I bet she lives in a squatter's hut in Diamond Hill.

(All giggle nastily)

Iris: Why does she want to know where we live?

Emily: Maybe she wants to visit us.
Daisy: Ugh! No way! I'm not having someone from over there in MY home,
Anita: Ugh! Nor me.
Daisy: They're dirty.
Iris: And rude.
Emily: No manners.
Iris: Impolite.
Anita: No education.
Li Bin: Would you like to play chess.
Daisy: What did she say?!
Anita: She wants to know if we want to play CHESS!
Daisy: She's mad!
Iris: Is she trying to be funny?
Emily: Maybe.
Daisy: If she gets sarcastic with me I'll hit her.
Anita: She wants to show us up.
Daisy: Make us look fools.
Iris: How dare she?!
Emily: How dare she ask us to play chess.
Daisy: Yes... take that back Li Bin... take it back or else!
Li Bin: I like playing chess... I have my own board.
Iris: She's still on about it.
Emily: She won't shut up.
Anita: So rude.
Iris: No manners.
Emily: We told her to stop.
Iris: But she just carried on
Daisy: Who wants to play chess?!
Anita: It's a stupid game.
Li Bin: Do you like to read books?
Daisy: Books!!
Anita: How DARE SHE!
Li Bin: I like Charles Dickens... it's hard sometimes but I love to read him... Great Expectations and Oliver Twist.
Anita: (Almost speechless with rage) Did you hear that Daisy?! Did you hear what she said?!
Daisy: Hit her. She deserves it.

Li Bin: Oh, I must go now. Very nice talking to you. I am very happy to be your class mate. Good bye.

Brief pause

Anita: (Almost speechless with fury) Well! Who DOES she think she IS?

Iris: What do you expect. They're all like that. Ignorant!

Emily: Stupid.

Iris: Oh Emily... do that thing again.

Emily: What thing Iris?

Iris: You know... when you go like the chicken... that really makes me laugh.

Anita: Yes, do it Emily.

Daisy: It's funny.

Emily: What you mean like her teachers go?

All: Yes.

Emily: Okay. (She makes chicken clucking noises. They all laugh. She continues to make chicken clucking noises)

Fade on the clucking and laughing

The End