

THE WORST PLAY IN THE WORLD

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

By Jeff Lovett

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SYNOPSIS: Here's the first big problem: Mrs. Watson produces Shakespeare every year. She has a love-love-LOVE relationship with Shakespeare. *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*...over and over again, year after year. This year, she chooses another bloody tragedy: *Macbeth*. Not surprisingly, the kids have decided to hijack the show and destroy *Macbeth* with sinister glee. They completely re-write the play and hold secret rehearsals in anticipation of presenting one glorious night of rebellious mayhem. Shakespeare no more! Just as they are ready to take the stage, the drama teacher announces that scholarships will be announced by the local college theatre department after the show tonight. Errrrrr, say what?! Don't miss this rare chance to see what happens when Shakespeare's darkest tragedy gets hacked by a group of determined (and talented) drama students.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 females, 4 males)

- RYAN (m) Leader of the drama club. He is handsome and liked by all in the class. *(164 lines)*
- RACHEL (f) A very serious actress, loves musical theatre. *(121 lines)*
- ABIGAIL (f) Obsessed with musical theatre. *(67 lines)*
- SHELBY (f) A student in charge of the group's hair and makeup. *(111 lines)*
- JORDAN (m) A student who loves musical theatre. Abigail's boyfriend. *(80 lines)*
- JENNA (f) A student who refuses to speak. *(1 line)*
- SPARKY (m) Theatre techie. Lights, sound and special effects designer. *(100 lines)*
- MRS. WATSON (f) Drama instructor. *(86 lines)*
- PROFESSOR DUNCAN (m) Professor of Drama at the state college. *(23 lines)*

(ALL LINE COUNTS ARE APPROXIMATE)

COSTUMES

ABIGAIL – wears a Phantom of the Opera t-shirt.

JENNA – wears a sweatshirt emblazoned with a large, smiling photo of the pop singer, Justin Bieber or current-day ‘bubble gum’ pop artist.

SPARKY – wears a heavy metal t-shirt and has thick glasses that ride low on his nose.

MRS. WATSON – wears a modest grey skirt and white blouse.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN – wears a distinguished-looking sweater and tweed jacket.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

SCENE 1: School drama room

SCENE 2: School drama room

SCENE 3: School drama room

ACT TWO

SCENE 1: Backstage which transitions to center stage of the school play

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PROPS

- 6 – \$10 bills
- 1 – \$5 bill
- 3 – \$1 bill
- Change for \$2 dollars (pennies, dimes, nickels, quarters)
- Step ladder
- Comb
- Notepad and pen with cord attached
- Table
- Lighting fixture
- Tools
- 14 “scripts”
- Small note pad and pen
- 2 - metal buckets filled with red confetti
- Rope attached to pole
- Large make-up kit
- White pancake make-up
- Briefcase
- Thermos and cup
- Box full of props
- Large pink cowboy hat
- Rubber chicken
- Bowling shoes
- 2 cans of Silly String
- Waffle iron
- Pirate Costume
- Large piece of fur fabric/gorilla suit
- Corndogs
- Fire extinguisher

- 6 posters each reading:
 - WHEN THE HURLY-BURLY'S DONE, WHEN THE BATTLE'S LOST AND WON
 - THAT WILL BE ERE THE SET OF SUN
 - ALL HAIL, MACBETH
 - THRICE, THE BRINDED CAT HATH MEW'D
 - THRICE AND ONE THE HEDGE-PIG WHINED
 - HARPIER CRIES, 'TIS TIME, 'TIS TIME. ROUND ABOUT THE CAULDRON GO
- Thick reading glasses
- 3 women's wigs
- Handbag
- Bubbles (with wand)
- Pogo stick
- A tennis shoe
- Pole with a mirrored ball attached
- Boom box
- Flashlight
- Lip stick
- Napkin
- 2 microphones
- Bedsheet
- Large pot of steaming liquid (dry ice)
- Hairspray
- Knotted Christmas lights
- Mop and bucket
- Inflatable mattress

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ACT ONE, SCENE 1

SETTING:

The drama room at Millard Fillmore High School. (Or your local high school.)

AT RISE:

A group of students are in the classroom, awaiting the arrival of their drama instructor, Mrs. Watson. STAGE RIGHT are RYAN and RACHEL. LEFT of RACHEL is ABIGAIL who is quietly singing the theme song to a musical as the curtain rises. Her male counterpart is JORDAN who is leaning against a step ladder placed UPSTAGE. He is also obsessed with musicals and hums along with ABIGAIL as she sings. JORDAN and ABIGAIL are in love and dream of appearing on Broadway together. DOWN CENTER is SHELBY. She is busily teasing the hair of JENNA, who is seated in a chair. JENNA has a cord with a notepad hanging around her neck which she uses to communicate as she has taken a vow of silence and refuses to speak aloud until Bieber is inducted into the Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame. SPARKY is sits at a small table STAGE LEFT working on a lighting fixture which has been broken down into multiple parts.

RYAN: Okay...the bet is \$10. Who's in?

RACHEL: Betting is illegal.

The group moans.

RYAN: It's a simple wager.

RACHEL: Well, in that case, Ten dollars on *Hamlet*. I love *Hamlet*, you guys.

SHELBY: "Frailty, thy name's woman!"

The group moans again as RACHEL pulls a bill from her purse and hands it to RYAN who makes a note on a small pad.

RYAN: Abby?

ABIGAIL: *(She climbs a few steps up the ladder and sings her answer.)* O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?

JORDAN: *(He gets down on one knee and sings a response.)* Here I am, baby. Here I am...

RYAN shakes his head and collects their money. He turns to SHELBY who is now applying eye shadow to JENNA.

RYAN: Shelby?

SHELBY: Well, after careful consideration of the merits of each of William Shakespeare's plays, I think I shall choose...

ALL: *A Midsummer Night's Dream...*

SHELBY: Duh...have you seen the costumes and makeup?

She reaches into her shirt pocket and pulls out a bill and hands it over to RYAN as he makes a note on his pad.

RYAN: And you, Jenna? Doth thou dare speak your selection?

JENNA looks up at RYAN and frowns, then writes on the pad hanging around her neck. She shows it to SHELBY who reads the answer.

SHELBY: Has Justin Bieber been inducted into the Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame yet?

RYAN: No...

JENNA writes again and shows it to SHELBY.

SHELBY: Then I shall not speak until he is.

RYAN: Well, are you in? Give me a hand signal or something.

JENNA writes on her pad and shows it to RYAN.

RYAN: Ten dollars on *Macbeth*.

JENNA hands over the cash and RYAN takes it.

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RYAN: Would you like a receipt?

JENNA opens her mouth to speak but catches herself and shakes her head no. Ryan laughs.

RYAN: Almost got you that time.

RYAN walks over to SPARKY who is busy soldering a cable.

RYAN: What do you say, Sparky? Want to get in on the action?

SPARKY looks up, adjusts his glasses and then speaks.

SPARKY: Any of them Shakespeare plays have blood?

RACHEL: Lots of Shakespeare's works were violent...Hamlet stabs Claudius, Edmund is mortally wounded in King Lear. Macduff chops off Macbeth's head. Elizabethan theater-goers loved violence so there's tons of blood in Othello, Richard III and Julius Caesar...and don't forget the suicides...Brutus, Cleopatra and the most famous of them all, Romeo and Juliet...

SPARKY: I don't like the kissing stuff. I'll take that Othello fellow...he sounds like the kind of guy who would carry around a bucket of blood with him everywhere...

RYAN holds out his hand and SPARKY pulls four dog-eared bills from his pocket and hands them over. RYAN counts it quickly.

RYAN: That's not but eight.

SPARKY sighs and digs into his pocket. He pulls out a handful of change and hands it to RYAN.

RYAN: Close enough.

SHELBY: Why does Mrs. Watson put us through this torture every year?

RACHEL: Torture? Shakespeare wrote some of the most beautiful tragedies in literary history. And his comedies...

SPARKY: I heard he didn't even write them. Didn't you see that *Anonymous* movie? Some dude named Edward de Vergo wrote them.

RACHEL rushes over to SPARKY, livid.

RACHEL: You take that back.

RYAN: Rachel!

SHELBY: I saw it too...they said Shakespeare was illiterate.

RACHEL: (*Turning on Shelby.*) That's not true. Shakespeare was the greatest playwright who ever lived. Who ever will live. He wrote every single word in every one of his glorious plays.

SPARKY: How do you know? They were written like a thousand years ago. Were you there?

RACHEL: No.

SPARKY: Then how do you know...I mean, this Vergo might have been shy or something...maybe he didn't like crowds or had a phobia about shaking hands.

SHELBY: Chiraptophobia.

SPARKY: Huh?

SHELBY: That's what you call it. Chiraptophobia.

SPARKY: Yeah...maybe that Vergo fellow had...crapaphobia or something. That's probably where the word vertigo comes from.

RACHEL: Verti... (*She turns red with anger*) ...you are such an idiot.

RYAN: Rachel...get a hold of yourself.

ABIGAIL: Yeah, Rach...chill why don't you?

JORDAN: (*Sings.*) Chill...

ABIGAIL joins him and they harmonize the word "chill" several times between them.

RACHEL: Chill? What Leonard is saying is slanderous.

SPARKY jumps to his feet, furious.

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SPARKY: Don't call me that... nobody calls me by that...other name.

RACHEL: Then don't say that William Shakespeare was a fraud because he was not.

RYAN: Everybody just calm down. It's just a stupid contest. We have it every semester. Sparks, say you're sorry.

SPARKY: Me? Why me? She was the one that called me a name.

RACHEL: 'Cause that is your name, Leonard!

SPARKY: She did it again.

RYAN: Just say you're sorry. The both of you, okay?

SPARKY sulks a little then holds out his hand to RACHEL. She shakes it hesitantly.

SPARKY: I'm sorry, I just thought it was a good movie. Especially the lighting.

SHELBY: What about Vanessa Redgrave's hair. Her stylist is a God!

RACHEL: I'm sorry...Sparky.

SPARKY: No harm, no foul. You know, maybe we should come up with a nickname for you. Something like uptight.

RYAN interrupts.

RYAN: Leonard!

SPARKY: Sorry.

ABIGAIL: Why can't we do a musical this year?

JORDAN: Yeah...something like... *(He tucks his thumbs into the waist of his jeans and starts to sing a tune from Oklahoma! Mixing up the lyrics.)* "Trucks and ducks and geeks better scurry...when I take you out for some curry."

ABIGAIL bows to him and they join together singing and dancing through the next phrase.

ABIGAIL/JORDAN: "When I take me out for some curry and we never stop!"

RACHEL: That's not from *Oklahoma!*

ABIGAIL: Sure it is. We were in it last year at the Four Oaks Senior Citizens Center's Salute to Rodgers and Hammerstein.

JORDAN: Abby and I were the only ones who weren't in wheelchairs.
(*They high-five.*)

RYAN: Well, Mrs. Watson is not going to let us do *Oklahoma!* or *Singing in the Rain* or *Rent*... it's Shakespeare or nothing. That's the way it's always been.

SPARKY: You think she might have been dropped on her head as a baby?

SHELBY: Maybe she had electro shock therapy and thinks she's living in the 17th Century...that might explain her obsession with Shakespeare.

RACHEL: Well, this year I hope it's *Hamlet*...there is such grace and lyrical beauty in *Hamlet*.

SPARKY: Any blood?

SHELBY: There's blood in every Shakespeare play. The man was twisted.

RYAN: Well, we'll find out soon enough... Abby? Jordan?

ABIGAIL and JORDAN sing their answer. She climbs a few steps up the ladder.

ABIGAIL: Romeo.

JORDAN: Juliet?

ABIGAIL: Oh, Romeo...wherefore art thou Romeo?

JORDAN: Down here my love.

SPARKY: If that Juliet chick had gotten herself some glasses then maybe the two of them wouldn't have had to kill themselves.

RYAN: Shelby?

SHELBY: Keep my ten on Midsummer. I'm ready to do some big hair and sew some goat costumes.

RYAN: Jenna?

The group chants: "Speak, speak, speak" while Jenna writes on her notepad. She holds it up to SHELBY who reads it aloud.

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SHELBY: Justin would make a great Macbeth. He's dreamy.

The group gags.

RYAN: Alright, the pot stands at seventy bucks...may the best man...

RACHEL: Or woman...

RYAN: Or woman...win...

As if on cue, MRS. WATSON enters from STAGE RIGHT holding a stack of scripts in her hand.

MRS. WATSON: Did you call role, Ryan?

RYAN: Yes, ma'am. We're all here just waiting to see what glorious theatrical work you have chosen for this semester.

MRS. WATSON: Well, this year it's going to be...

JORDAN starts to sing and ABIGAIL joins him.

JORDAN: Oklahoma...

ABIGAIL/JORDAN: "Where the wind come sweeping down the plains."

They do a quick two-step and stop in front of MRS. WATSON in an exaggerated pose.

MRS. WATSON: I'm sorry, Abby and Jordan, but it's not *Oklahoma*.

The two sulk for a moment, then break into a melody from Chicago.

ABIGAIL/JORDAN: "Come on Gabe, we're gonna' paint the clown.

Let's do the razzmatazz! (*They stop in front of MRS. WATSON with exaggerated jazz hands.*)

RACHEL: Is that supposed to be Chicago?

MRS. WATSON cuts them off.

MRS. WATSON: We're not doing that either.

ABIGAIL and JORDAN sigh heavily and then return to the ladder.

SPARKY: Mrs. Watson. I was thinking...

MRS. WATSON: Yes, Leonard. Thinking is a good start.

SPARKY begins to get angry but then forces himself to keep control.

SPARKY: I was thinking that we could do *Carrie* this semester. You know, that show by Stephen King.

MRS. WATSON: Leonard, I have told you time and time again that we cannot use blood on stage.

SPARKY: But it won't be human blood. My dad is a vet and I can get my hands on plenty of...

MRS. WATSON stops him from finishing.

MRS. WATSON: Sparky, we're not using blood on stage...human or...

SPARKY: Pig.

MRS. WATSON approaches JENNA. She has been trying to get the girl to speak all year without success.

MRS. WATSON: Jenna, how are you today?

JENNA writes on her pad and holds it up to SHELBY to read.

SHELBY: In pain.

MRS. WATSON: I'm sorry, dear. Do you need to go see the school nurse?

JENNA writes on her pad again.

SHELBY: No. I need to go to Columbus, Ohio and picket in front of the Hall of Fame.

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MRS. WATSON: I see. I tell you what might make you feel better. I have decided that I am going to let you pick the play for our spring production.

JENNA holds her hand to her chest in a gesture that says "Me?"

MRS. WATSON: That's right. It can be anything you want. All you have to do is speak it.

JENNA looks around the room as her classmates chant and call out encouragements for her to speak. Everyone leans in as she opens her mouth to speak. With a wry smile, she closes her mouth loudly and then writes on her pad.

SHELBY: Nice try. No thank you.

MRS. WATSON sighs and shakes her head.

MRS. WATSON: Oh well... Jenna could have saved you but alas, she has decided to throw you under the Shakespearean bus. Ryan? Help me hand these out?

RYAN: Yes ma'am.

RYAN takes a few of the scripts and passes them around the room. The students tear open the booklets in anticipation. Together they groan and speak the title of the play.

ALL: Macbeth!

RYAN: And the winner is... *(He pulls out his pad and reads the name.)*
...Jenna.

The rest of the students groan as RYAN hands JENNA her winnings. She smiles broadly as he counts the bills into her hands.

MRS. WATSON: I know you all want to do something modern and contemporary, but I feel that if you truly want to be great actors then you must immerse yourself in the master.

RACHEL: I love Shakespeare.

SPARKY: Suck up.

RACHEL: Although I had been hoping for *Hamlet*. I have always wanted to play Gertrude... *(She suddenly does a dramatic reading from the play.)* 'No, not the drink, the drink! O my dear Hamlet! The drink, the drink! I am poison'd!

RACHEL grasps her throat, makes a dramatic choking noise and falls to the stage, dead.

SHELBY: Stay strong, girl!

MRS. WATSON: I shall consider that your audition. *(To the class.)* Now, I have clearly marked each person's role. The play is far too long for us to attempt the work in its entirety so I have marked through the lines that we shall skip. Rehearsal will start tomorrow immediately after school. Any questions?

ABIGAIL suddenly holds out their arms and breaks into a tune from Wicked.

ABIGAIL: "It's time I tried to fly so I can see. The world below spread out ahead of me...."

JORDAN: I don't think that's right. Isn't it supposed to say something about gravity?

ABIGAIL: I'm getting to that part. *(She continues to sing.)* Just take my hand and fly away with me... *(ABIGAIL takes JORDAN's hand and they simulate soaring above the clouds.)*

MRS. WATSON cuts them off.

MRS. WATSON: We are NOT doing *Wicked*.

RACHEL: That's not *Wicked*. I've seen *Wicked* and that's not it.

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ABIGAIL: Well, that's the way I sang it last year in the Best of Broadway dinner show at Bernie's House of Gyro's.

JORDAN: They loved it so much, Bernie gave us free refills.

They high-five again.

MRS. WATSON: Just stop singing and start learning your lines. I'll see you tomorrow.

MRS. WATSON exits. The class sits for a moment and flips through the scripts. Finally, RACHEL speaks.

RACHEL: Well, I for one look forward to doing something challenging. Come on guys...this is going to be fun.

ABIGAIL: *(As she reads the script.)* What does sooth mean?

Suddenly, JORDAN bursts out.

JORDAN: This is bogus, man...

ABIGAIL: Jordan! We made a promise to only sing in drama class as a show of solidarity with our brothers and sisters in musical theatre.

JORDAN: I don't care about the brothers or the sisters anymore, Abby. I cannot. I will not be in another play by the Elizabethan windbag.

RACHEL: Shakespeare was not a windbag

RYAN: Jordan's right. I can't do it anymore. I've played King Lear, Richard the Third, Henry the 6th, Henry the 8th. Heck, I've even played two of the Merry Wives of Windsor. I can't do it anymore, Rachel. I just can't.

There is a moment of silence as they each shake their head in agreement.

JORDAN: So, what are we going to do?

RYAN: I don't know. What can we do?

SPARKY: We can screw it up.

RYAN: What?

SPARKY: We can screw it up. Haven't you ever been asked to do something by your dad, like paint the garage, and you screwed it up so badly that he never asked you to paint again?

SHELBY: We hired painters when we remodeled our house.

ABIGAIL: Ooo... what color?

SHELBY: My dad wanted green. My mother wanted blue. So they compromised and went with eggshell.

JORDAN: Isn't that just white?

SHELBY: No... white is white. Eggshell is...

JORDAN: White.

SHELBY: No, it's... off-white. If you were a true artist, you would know the difference.

SPARKY: Who cares? This isn't about paint. It's about butchering *Macbeth* so badly that Mrs. Watson will burn the entire *Collected Works of William Shakespeare*

RYAN: Hey, you might be on to something.

ABIGAIL: You know, that might work.

SPARKY: It will work. Instead of a stellar production of *Macbeth*, the Millard Fillmore High Drama Club will present...

RYAN: *The Worst Play in the World*...we can play whatever characters we like...

JORDAN: I could be a cowboy?

SHELBY: I've always wanted to play the first stylist in space.

RYAN: Sparks? What do you want to be?

SPARKY: Rich...

ABIGAIL: We can do a musical.

JORDAN: With cowboys.

SHELBY: And astronaut barbers.

RYAN: Why not?

ABIGAIL and JORDAN look at each other and start to rehearse a tap-dancing routine.

RACHEL: Wait a minute! We can't do this. We'll be laughed out of school.

SPARKY: So what?

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RYAN: Yeah, so what? If it means Mrs. Watson swears off Shakespeare for the rest of her life, it will be worth it.

RACHEL: But my parents come to the shows. And my nana, too.

SHELBY: Then, we'll give ole nana something that will make her dentures fall out. Count the makeup and costume department in.

ABIGAIL/JORDAN: (*Singing.*) The music theater department is in.

RYAN: Jenna?

JENNA writes on her pad and SHELBY reads it.

SHELBY: Sounds like something Justin would do.

RYAN: Sparky? Can you whip us up some special effects to put a little icing on the cake?

SPARKY: I'm thinking barrels of hot tar being sprayed on the audience while a wall of flames consumes the stage.

RYAN: How about just a couple of colored lights?

SPARKY: I'm on it, chief.

RYAN: Rachel?

RACHEL: But my nana will be here. What will I say to her?

SHELBY: Just tell her that after all these years, she's going to finally see something worth staying awake for.

RACHEL: Okay...if everyone else is going to play dress-up, I guess I will, too. I'm in.

RYAN: Good...we can't let Mrs. Watson know. Come to rehearsals and learn your lines, but on the night of the show...

SPARKY: Mayhem...

ALL: Mayhem.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

SETTING:

The drama room at Millard Fillmore High School. The next day.

AT RISE:

MRS. WATSON is standing CENTER STAGE. RYAN is standing to her right, studying his script. RACHEL is standing on MRS. WATSON's left, no script in hand. (She is already off-book!) ABIGAIL and JORDAN are DOWN STAGE RIGHT silently working on a dance routine. The ladder is still UPSTAGE RIGHT but now there is a light fixture clipped to it and SPARKY is making adjustments to the fixture with a large wrench. JENNA is sitting at the table, UP STAGE LEFT, while SHELBY busily applies various shades of eye shadow to her face. MRS. WATSON is explaining the context of the scene the group is rehearsing but it is apparent that the only one listening is RACHEL, who hangs on her every word.

MRS. WATSON: Okay, in this scene, Macbeth... *(She notices RYAN daydreaming.)* ...that's you, Ryan!

RYAN: Yes, ma'am.

MRS. WATSON: You don't want to kill Duncan but your wife, Lady Macbeth... *(She points to RACHEL who curtsies.)* ...Rachel...she has just called you a coward and told you how she is going to frame Duncan's guards for the murder.

SHELBY: Now which one is Duncan? He's the general, right?

MRS. WATSON: No... that's Banquo... Duncan is the king.

SPARKY: I thought Duncan was Thane of Fife.

MRS. WATSON: No, that's Macduff.

SPARKY: Macduff. I thought Ryan was playing a guy named Macbeth.

MRS. WATSON: He is...Ryan is Macbeth. Jordan is Macduff.

SHELBY: Who's Macduff?

MRS. WATSON: Jordan.

SHELBY: No, *who* is Macduff?

MRS. WATSON: He's the one who kills Macbeth.

SPARKY: So, Macduff and Macbeth aren't the same guy?

MRS. WATSON: No...Macduff is a general.

RACHEL: And Macbeth is a general, too.

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MRS. WATSON: Just not the same general.

SHELBY: I'm confused. Who is Banquo?

RACHEL: He's a general.

SPARKY: I thought Macbeth was a general.

SHELBY: No, that's Macduff.

RACHEL: They're all three generals. (*Exasperated.*) Mrs. Watson?

MRS. WATSON: I know it's a little confusing. Let's just take it from page 40, where Macbeth enters.

RYAN: I come in from?

MRS. WATSON: Up stage. (*She points.*) Leonard, would you please move that ladder.

SPARKY: I'm just about done, Mrs. Watson. And can you please not call me that.

MRS. WATSON: What?

SPARKY: Leonard. I hate that name. Can't you just call me Sparky like everyone else?

MRS. WATSON: But I think Leonard is a fine name.

SPARKY: Yeah... well, it was fine for my grandfather. Not so much for me. Just Sparky, okay?

MRS. WATSON: I'm sorry. When you finish, please move the ladder, Sparky.

SPARKY: Yes, ma'am.

MRS. WATSON: Okay, Ryan, you enter from there and approach Lady Macbeth. You're torn with guilt after having stabbed your king.

MRS. WATSON steps to left as RYAN moves off stage.

Okay, Macbeth enters.

RYAN enters and approaches RACHEL.

RYAN: I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

RACHEL: (*She puts on a thick English accent, attempting to get into character.*) I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry. Did not you speak?

RYAN: When?

RACHEL: Now.

RYAN: As I descended?

RACHEL: Ay.

RYAN: Hark!

MRS. WATSON claps her hands and crosses to CENTER.

MRS. WATSON: Good; very good.

RACHEL raises her hand to ask a question.

MRS. WATSON: Yes, Rachel?

RACHEL: I was wondering how you wanted me to play Lady Macbeth. Some see her as this evil monster but I think she is more, I don't know, vulnerable—not evil, but just flawed.

MRS. WATSON: Well, I suppose Lady Macbeth could be considered vulnerable. Flawed, definitely. *(She puts her arm around RACHEL and pulls her close.)* Very good, Rachel. *(To class.)* Class, see how wonderful and deep Shakespeare can be? There are so many emotions... so many...

RYAN: Lines.

MRS. WATSON: Yes, Ryan...there are lots of lines. And I suggest you start working on yours and ditch that script as soon as possible. *(To class.)* Okay, everyone...that was a good start. I expect you to take home your scripts and work on them tonight. We'll pick up there tomorrow. I'll see you then.

The students look at each other but nobody moves. MRS. WATSON is confused.

MRS. WATSON: I said, rehearsal is over for today. You can go home now.

RYAN: We heard you. It's just that, well...we know how important this show is to you and all, so we thought that we might just stay late and work on our lines some more. If that's okay with you.

MRS. WATSON: You want to stay late and work on your own?

SHELBY: Yes ma'am. We are very committed to making this the most memorable play every produced at Fillmore. Aren't we, Jenna?

THE WORST PLAY IN THE WORLD

JENNA writes a quick note on her pad and holds it up for MRS. WATSON to read.

MRS. WATSON: (*Reads from JENNA's notepad.*) I'm pumped. (*To class*) Well, I think that is very admirable, wanting to put in extra work on your own time. I cannot wait for our audience to see how truly special this performance is going to be.

RYAN: Oh, it's going to be special alright. I guarantee it.

MRS. WATSON: Well, I've got to get home and check on Mr. Watson. His gout has been acting up and I've got to help him soak his feet. I'll see you all tomorrow afternoon.

The students moan as MRS. WATSON exits STAGE LEFT. SHELBY follows, checks to make sure she is really gone, comes back on stage and gives RYAN a thumbs-up.

RYAN: Okay, everybody get out the real script.

The students pull another script from their pockets and backpacks.

RACHEL: Ryan, do you really think this is a good idea? I mean, you saw how excited Mrs. Watson was when she was talking about Lady Macbeth. If we screw this up, she will be devastated.

RYAN: You want to keep doing Shakespeare, semester after semester, until you die?

RACHEL: I don't mind. I like Shakespeare.

SPARKY: Well, we don't.

RYAN: That's right, the rest of us are sick of wearing tights and butchering English accents.

RACHEL: But—

ABIGAIL: Rachel, wouldn't you like to do something different?

JORDAN: Yeah, something like *Annie!*

ABIGAIL smiles and starts singing.

ABIGAIL: "It's fun to go out and borrow."

RACHEL: Stop butchering *Annie!*

JORDAN: Or maybe... *Grease.*

ABIGAIL changes her song, mid-sentence. JORDAN joins her singing.

ABIGAIL: “Let’s eat a buttered croissant.... oo, oo, oo, honey – until our bellies get taunt - oo, oo, oo, honey...”

RACHEL: That’s not from *Grease*! Ryan, make them stop!

Ryan just laughs as they continue to sing and dance quietly as the other students chime in.

SPARKY: It’ll be fun, Rach...instead of dressing in one of those drab Shakespeary dresses, you can be a...

RACHEL: A robot?

SPARKY: What?

RACHEL: I want to be a robot. I’ve always wanted to play a character that is emotionless. Doing Shakespeare is...exciting...but when we’re through with the show, I feel so drained...you know, emotionally. For once, I’d like to play a character who doesn’t follow me home at night.

RYAN: Okay, you can be a robot. Shelby, what are you going to be?

SHELBY: I can be anything or anyone?

RYAN: Anything you can imagine.

SHELBY: I want to be a lion. No, I want to be a tiger. But not a scary tiger who eats his castmates. A big cuddly tiger who loves to be scratched on her belly.

SPARKY: Tigger.

SHELBY: What?

SPARKY: You want to be Tigger. From Winnie the Pooh? T-I- Double ‘guh’...remember?

JENNA reaches over and scratches SHELBY’s stomach. She laughs and growls like a tiger.

RYAN: Okay...that’s weird, but whatever. Jenna? Any thoughts on a character you can play and still maintain your code of silence?

JENNA thinks for a minute and then writes something on her pad. She holds it up to SHELBY.

THE WORST PLAY IN THE WORLD

SHELBY: (*Reading.*) Lady Gaga. (*Or current-day pop culture reference.*) Perfect! I'll do the makeup.

RYAN: And who knows, maybe Justin will get a wild card bid into the Hall of Fame and you'll actually get to speak your lines.

SHELBY: I wouldn't count on it.

JENNA looks up at her, angrily.

SHELBY: Sorry, you're right, it could happen.

JENNA nods her head in agreement.

RYAN: Abby? Jordan? Any thoughts on the characters you'll be morphing into during this particularly nasty portrayal of *Macbeth*?

ABIGAIL and JORDAN stop their dance routine and look at each other.

JORDAN: Teyve and Golde from *Fiddler on the Roof*? (*He sings and dances.*) "If I have the right plan, Scooby, dubby, dubby, dubby, dubby, doo..."

ABIGAIL: You could grow a beard!

RACHEL: Stop it!

JORDAN: Or, Maria and Captain Von Trapp.

ABIGAIL claps her hands with glee, spreads her arms and whirls around the room.

ABIGAIL: "The hills come alive when I play my music..."

RACHEL: Don't you know the words to anything?

JORDAN: We'd have to get a bunch of kids to make it work—anybody got brothers or sisters?

The group shakes their heads.

ABIGAIL: Oh, I got it...this would be perfect for us: Tony and Maria from...

JORDAN joins her to finish the line and they both squeal.

ABIGAIL/JORDAN: *West Side Story!*

RACHEL: *(Attempting to help.)* I feel...

JORDAN: Gritty!

They do a stylized dance and sing.

ABIGAIL/JORDAN: “She feels gritty...”

RACHEL: And witty!

ABIGAIL/JORDAN: She’s so gritty, and she’s witty. Rachel’s gritty and witty and...

ALL: Gay.

ABIGAIL: I was thinking joyous.

JORDAN: No, more like gregarious.

Everyone laughs except for RACHEL. ABIGAIL and JORDAN continue to dance silently as RYAN approaches SPARKY.

RYAN: What about you, Sparks? You want to be in on this?

SPARKY puts down his wrench and steps forward, looking at ABIBAIL and JORDAN.

SPARKY: Do I have to do any of that?

RYAN: No.

SPARKY: What about makeup? Do I have to wear makeup?

RYAN: No.

SPARKY: Do I get to do special effects?

RYAN: Yes.

SPARKY: I’m in.

RYAN: Perfect. *(To class.)* Now, everyone needs to study their lines.

RACHEL: Which lines? The real Shakespeare or... *(Holds up the script RYAN handed her and reads the title.)*... or Mac...blech?

THE WORST PLAY IN THE WORLD

RYAN: It's Mac-Blech (*He says the title dramatically with a heavy accent.*) You're going to have to learn them both. But, feel free to ad-lib and change things up. Remember, if we're going to cure Mrs. Watson from ever wanting to see another man in tights, we've got to make sure this is the worst play she has ever seen, the worst play *anyone* has ever seen.

SPARKY: Mac-Belch... I like that. Sounds like I'm trying to clear a big wad of phlegm out of my throat.

SHELBY: That's Shakespeare alright.

RYAN: I'm going to tell Mrs. Watson that we're staying late after every rehearsal to run scenes so everybody needs to plan on staying late. Okay?

Everyone nods their agreement.

RYAN: Alright, let's get to work. We've got theatrical history to make. Open your scripts to page one. Jenna, you're playing all three witches, so you better bring a lot of paper...

JENNA gives him a thumbs-up.

RYAN: Okay, let's take it from the top...there's thunder and lightning as the lights come up on the three...

The lights fade as he continues to describe the first scene and his voice fades.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

SETTING:

The drama room at Millard Fillmore High School.

AT RISE:

There is a small table and two chairs UP STAGE LEFT. The ladder has been moved DOWN STAGE RIGHT. SPARKY is standing near the top of the ladder holding a metal bucket on a length of rope. RYAN enters from STAGE LEFT. MRS. WATSON'S briefcase needs to be onstage from top of curtain.

RYAN: Hey Sparks.

SPARKY: Hey, Ryan. I'll be done here in a minute.

RYAN walks over to the ladder and watches SPARKY as he lifts up the bucket towards the ceiling and then starts measuring out rope.

RYAN: What's that for?

SPARKY: I already told you, man. The bucket of blood.

RYAN: I said okay, but NOT from the ceiling.

SPARKY: But that's how it HAS to be done, Ryan. Didn't you ever watch *Carrie*?

RYAN: Yeah, my sister has it on DVD. That Chloe Moretz was hot!

SPARKY: Not that *Carrie*. That one was garbage. I'm talking about the original *Carrie*. The one with Sissy Spacek.

RYAN: Who's that?

SPARKY: Sissy Spacek, man. *Coal Miner's Daughter*?

RYAN: They made a movie about the daughter of a coal miner? Who would watch that?

SPARKY: No, it was about Loretta Lynn.

RYAN: Who?

SPARKY: Listen man, all you need to know is that the original *Carrie* was awesome. Near the end, they dump a bucket of blood on Carrie and that girl goes crazy...blowing up stuff, setting things on fire...I was thinking that for the finale of our show, we could dump a bucket of blood on...I don't know...maybe Jenna since she won't say anything...and then I could set off some pyro.

THE WORST PLAY IN THE WORLD

RYAN: Some what?

SPARKY: Some pyro...pyrotechnics...you know...squibs, fire cannons, flash bombs, ignitor cord, Class B composite solid propellants.

RYAN: Wait a minute? You want to have real fire on stage?

SPARKY: Yeah man, I thought you said you watched *Carrie*?

RYAN: I did.

SPARKY: Then you know what I'm talking about. They drop that bucket of blood on Carrie's head and she just goes berserk...man it's going to be glorious!

RYAN: No it's not!

SPARKY: Yeah it is, man... flames going up the walls, flash bombs under the seats, imagine a curtain of sparks coming out of the ceiling.

RYAN: We are not having flames up the walls.

SPARKY: Flash bombs?

RYAN: No flash bombs!

SPARKY: No curtain of sparks?

RYAN: No curtain of sparks!

SPARKY: But I thought you said you wanted something spectacular...?

RYAN: I do, but you'll have to do it without fireworks... or buckets of blood hanging from the ceiling.

SPARKY: Oh man... I can't hang my bucket?

RYAN: Nope. Get down from there, and maybe if you're good, I'll let you light a sparkler.

SPARKY sighs heavily and starts down the ladder. He slowly cleans up and moves the ladder back UP STAGE over the next several minutes. SHELBY enters from STAGE LEFT. She is carrying a large make-up kit under her arm.

RYAN: Is she gone?

SHELBY: Yep. I stood by those big windows in the library and watched her pull out of the parking lot.

RYAN: Good.

SHELBY: Hey, come over here and let me show you what kind of makeup I had in mind for Macbeth.

SHELBY and RYAN cross to the table and sit. SHELBY opens her makeup case and starts to pull out her materials.

SHELBY: Okay...so I've been reading *Macbeth for Dummies* and the guy who wrote it said that by the end of the play, Macbeth is hollowed out. Like his soul has left body because of all the evil stuff his wife makes him do, right?

RYAN: I guess.

SHELBY: So I started to think...when someone's soul leaves their body, what are they?

RYAN: Dead?

SHELBY: No, not dead.

SPARKY has been listening to the conversation and chimes in.

SPARKY: Yeah, I'm pretty sure that he's dead. Your soul just doesn't take a little stroll down to coffee shop and then come back. When it leaves, you are pretty much toast.

RYAN: Yeah, toast.

SHELBY: No, you guys aren't thinking like Shakespeare. Macbeth was hollowed out from all the guilt he was carrying around with him. His life was meaningless. He didn't have any purpose. What does that sound like to you?

SPARKY: Mr. Folsom, the chemistry teacher? *(Or insert name of current teacher.)*

The two boys laugh and high-five each other.

RYAN: Yeah, that dude is D-U-L-L...dull!

SHELBY: No, it means that Macbeth is like a ghost. So I figured you should wear heavy white make up. You know like a ghost.

RYAN: Ghosts wear makeup.

SPARKY: The ugly ones do.

They laugh and high-five each other again.

THE WORST PLAY IN THE WORLD

SHELBY: No, ghosts are white. The blood has left their bodies and they're pale.

SPARKY: That's vampires.

RYAN: Yeah, we're not doing Twilight.

SHELBY: No, not like a vampire. Here, let me show you.

SHELBY pulls out a small box of white 'pancake' makeup and starts to smear it all over Ryan's face while SPARKY watches.

SPARKY: Shouldn't he be wearing a dress?

RYAN: What?

SPARKY: You know...since the play is set in Scotland and all.

SHELBY: Those are not dresses. Those are kilts. And Macbeth was a general, so he would be wearing a military uniform. Tilt your head back.

RYAN lifts his chin as SHELBY starts applying the white makeup on his neck.

SPARKY: I'm just saying, those guys in 300 were soldiers and they wore dresses. It looked really manly to me so I think Ryan should wear a dress.

RYAN: I am not wearing a dress, okay?

SPARKY: *(He holds up his hands in defeat.)* Okay, okay. *(He pauses.)* What about just a skirt? You would look good in a skirt.

RYAN starts to get up and chase SPARKY but SHELBY grabs him and pulls him back.

SHELBY: Hey, be careful. I spent my entire allowance on this white stuff. I don't want you smearing it.

SPARKY crosses back to his ladder and materials, mumbling to himself.

SPARKY: I'm not suggesting you wear a pencil skirt. That wouldn't look good on you anyway. I was thinking maybe something with pleats.

RYAN: I am not wearing a dress or a skirt!

SPARKY: Okay...okay.

RACHEL enters. She is running her lines out loud as she walks and doesn't seem to notice the others. She immediately goes CENTER STAGE and starts to recite a soliloquy very dramatically.

RACHEL: Come, thick night, and pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell, That my keen knife see not the wound it makes, not heaven peep through the blanket of the dark, to cry, "Hold, Hold!!"

While she is speaking, RYAN sneaks up behind her. When she finishes, he adds the next lines from the play.

RYAN: Great Glamis!

RACHEL jumps back from fright and screams. RYAN bows low before her.

RYAN: Good evening, my lady.

RACHEL: You frightened me. I thought you were a ghost.

SHELBY: Told you!

RYAN: I'm sorry. Shelby is trying out her interpretation of Macbeth's makeup. What do you think?

RACHEL reaches out and dabs the makeup while frowning.

RACHEL: It's a little thick. But overall, I think it is an interesting concept.

SHELBY: Told you!

RACHEL: I mean, by the end of the play, Macbeth is...

RACHEL/SHELBY: *(They speak together.)* Soul-less...

The two look at each other, surprised. RACHEL continues.

RACHEL: Macbeth has been forced by Lady Macbeth to do things that are purely evil... he's... I don't know.

The two speak together again.

RACHEL/SHELBY: Hollow!

RACHEL crosses towards SHELBY who is packing up her makeup case.

RACHEL: I didn't know you were such a fan of Shakespeare.

SHELBY: I'm a fan of any play that lets me stretch my creative legs and do something a little crazy.

SPARKY: Rachel, what do you think about Ryan wearing a dress in the play?

RACHEL: What?

SPARKY: Or maybe a skirt. Maybe a nice A-line?

RYAN turns and chases SPARKY off stage.

RYAN: I'm going to give you an A-line!

RACHEL: What was that all about?

SHELBY: Oh, nothing. Just Sparks trying to help Ryan connect with his feminine side.

RACHEL: So, you're into Shakespeare, huh?

SHELBY: I wouldn't exactly say I'm 'into' him, but the dude wrote some pretty twisted characters, that's for sure.

RACHEL: Which one is your favorite?

SHELBY: Which Shakespeare character?

RACHEL is excited now to discover someone who seems to love Shakespeare as much as she does. She sits at the table and reaches across grabs SHELBY's hands.

RACHEL: Yes, the character that just... (*Dramatically.*) reaches down into your soul and speaks to you.

SHELBY: Well, I guess...

RACHEL interrupts her.

RACHEL: Mine is Viola from *Twelfth Night*. After the twin sister of Sebastian is washed up on the shores of Illyria, she does something absolutely unheard of for that time. Do you know what it is?

SHELBY: Wonders if her cell phone is ruined?

RACHEL: No, she puts on a man's clothing and pretends she is Cesario. She pretends to be a man. Can you believe that?

SHELBY: Well, I guess. I mean, I drew a moustache on myself one time just to see what it looked like.

RACHEL: Sebastian...that's her twin brother... he says that she bore a mind that envy could not but call fair.

RACHEL releases SHELBY's hands and gets up, clasping her hands tightly in front of her chest

RACHEL: Oh, Shelby...doesn't that just speak to you?

SHELBY: What? Dressing up as a dude?

RACHEL: No, the way that she was so strong and willful. I think that she is the most captivating of all Shakespeare's heroines. Don't you?

SHELBY: Sure...captivating.

RACHEL rushes over and gives SHELBY a big hug.

RACHEL: Oh, I knew that we shared a love of Shakespeare. For years, I've been able to see it in your eyes.

SHELBY: Uh... those are colored contacts.

RACHEL: You know what we should do? We should have a sleep over. I've got *Twelfth Night* on DVD...the one starring Imogen Stubbs as Viola... I could pop a big bowl of fat free, vegan popcorn and we could watch it all night, over and over again...

SHELBY: Sorry...I'm busy that night.

RACHEL: I haven't even said what night yet.

SHELBY: Okay...what night?

RACHEL: This Saturday.

SHELBY: I'm busy.

ABIGAIL and JORDAN enter from STAGE LEFT. It is obvious that they are fighting.

ABIGAIL: I can't believe you just said that!

JORDAN: I'm sorry, but it's just the way I feel.

RACHEL: What's the matter?

ABIGAIL: Tell her Jordan. Tell her what you just said.

JORDAN: Well, City Theater is doing *Porgy and Bess* in May and and we've been talking about auditions...and... I said...

ABIGAIL: Tell her, Jordan. Tell her the vile thing that you just said to me in the hall.

SHELBY: Was it how Abby always wears too much blush on stage.

ABIGAIL: (To *SHELBY*.) I've told you a hundred times. I have asymmetrical cheekbones. Just like Liza Minelli.

RACHEL: I think you're makeup looks fine, Abby.

SHELBY: Says the girl who refuses to wear false eyelashes.

RACHEL: I have very sensitive eyelid skin... I brought you a note from my dermatologist.

SHELBY: It said you were mildly sensitive to glue, Rachel. Mildly.

RACHEL: You're not the one who has to pry their eyelids apart after every show.

ABIGAIL: Who cares about your stupid eyelid glue.

SHELBY: I care. I make that glue myself. It's all natural and hypoallergenic.

RACHEL: Do you know what it feels like to have to use a pair of tweezers to pull apart your eyelids?

SHELBY: Do you know what it feels like to watch you up there on stage with no eyelashes?

ABIGAIL: This is not about you. (Points to *RACHEL*.) Or you! (Points to *Jordan*.) This is about me and the horrible thing that Jordan just said to me out in the hall. Tell them, Jordan.

JORDAN: Well, I just said that...

ABIGAIL: (Interrupting.) He said that I shouldn't audition for the part of Clara because she has to sing "Summertime"...he said...he said... (She starts to sob.)

JORDAN: I said it's too high for her.

ABIGAIL: (She screams.) It's not too high for me!

JORDAN: It goes up to a high B at the end, Abby. You know your voice starts to get a little breathy past F#-5.

ABIGAIL: My voice does not get breathy after F#-5...you're just jealous because Stage West cast me in *Carousel* in April and you're just an understudy.

JORDAN: I don't care about that. The Hillside Players cast me as Professor Harold Hill in *The Music Man*, so there...

ABIGAIL: That's in June! You know we agreed to be in *My Fair Lady* together at the Yellow Rose Theatre in June.

JORDAN: That's what I thought until I found this tucked in the cover of your calculus book.

JORDAN reaches into his back pocket and pulls out a flyer. ABIGAIL tries to take it from him but JORDAN pushes her away.

JORDAN: (*Reading from the flyer.*) The MidTown Players present Open Auditions for *Little Shop of Horrors*... performances to be held June 12th-23rd.

ABIGAIL: I can do both!

JORDAN: Not if you can't hit a high B, you can't!

They glare at each other for a moment and then cross to opposite corners of the stage.

SHELBY: Wait a minute. You guys audition for shows every week?

ABIGAIL: Not every week.

JORDAN: Sometimes we just go to workshops so we can work on things like...I don't know...like Abby not sounding so breathy after F#-5.

ABIGAIL: Or Jordan learning how pick up his big flat feet in the dance numbers.

JORDAN: I told you I have fallen arches—at least I can hit a high B.

ABIGAIL: You want to hear me hit a high B? I'll show you I can hit a high B!

RYAN and SPARKY enter from STAGE RIGHT. SPARKY is carrying his bucket of blood and sets it down upon entering. They are still arguing about the dress.

THE WORST PLAY IN THE WORLD

SPARKY: Okay, maybe you could just wear skorts. They're shorts that just kind of look like a skirt.

RYAN: I'm not wearing skorts to play Macbeth.

JORDAN: Breathy!

ABIGAIL: You try it then, flat feet.

JORDAN: Okay... *(He clears his throat and starts to sing. He also starts the song too high.)* Summer... summer...

ABIGAIL: Ha! It's not so easy, now is it?

Meanwhile, RYAN and SPARKY continue to argue as RACHEL and SHELBY jump back into the argument about eyelash glue.

SPARKY: Nobody will care if you're wearing a skirt on stage.

RYAN: I'll care.

SPARKY: Rachel, do you think Ryan wearing a skirt makes him look less masculine?

RACHEL: I don't know. Does me not wearing false eyelashes make me look less feminine?

SHELBY: I didn't say that not wearing them makes you look less feminine. I just can't see your eyes and that makes me look like I don't know what I'm doing with costumes and makeup.

RACHEL: You don't know what you're doing, Shelby. Your eyelash glue is made from turnips.

SHELBY: A great source of starch which is the primary ingredient in glue.

RACHEL: It smells like wet socks.

SPARKY has pulled out a tape measure and is measuring RYAN for a skirt. RYAN pushes him away.

SPARKY: Hold still so I can get your inseam.

RYAN: Get off me, man!

SHELBY: My glue does not stink!

ABIGAIL: Summertime... *(Voice cracks.)*

SPARKY: We can make it out of leather.

RACHEL: No, it reeks... *(To SHELBY.)* ...like turnips!

JORDAN: All I hear is breathy, breathy, breathy, breathy...

The scene devolves heavy arguing between the six students. JENNA enters from STAGE LEFT. She is wearing a t-shirt that says FREE JUSTIN. She stands and watches the scene for a moment and then crosses to where SPARKY set down his bucket. She picks it up and crosses to the group. As the arguments reach a crescendo, she dumps the bucket of blood (actually shredded red confetti) onto the heads of her classmates. They scream.

RACHEL: What is this?

SHELBY: It's blood!

The girls scream and furiously wipe the 'blood' from their clothes.

SPARKY: Not really. Just corn syrup and red dye. I asked my mom if I could bleed the cat but she said no. *(He licks his fingers.)* It's quite tasty, don't you think?

RYAN: Jenna, what are you doing?

JENNA writes a note on the large pad around her neck and holds it up for them to read.

SHELBY: The play is in three days.

JENNA writes again.

SHELBY: We've worked too hard to start fighting now.

The group looks at each other, ashamed.

RYAN: You're right, Jenna. I'm sorry, Sparks. If you think I'd look good in a part of skorts, then measure away.

SPARKY smiles and kneels down and starts to measure RYAN's hemline.

RACHEL: I'm sorry, Shelby. Your eyelash glue doesn't smell like turnips.

SHELBY: What does it smell like?

THE WORST PLAY IN THE WORLD

RACHEL: Kale.

SHELBY: Kale. Very chill. I can live with that.

RACHEL and SHELBY hug. RYAN turns to ABIGAIL and JORDAN.

RYAN: Abby? Jordan? We can't do this play without you guys.

ABIGAIL and JORDAN look at each other, still a little angry.

ABIGAIL: Am I really too breathy above F#-5?

JORDAN: Not for me. I like it when you breathe.

ABIGAIL: Oh, Jordan.

The two embrace.

RYAN: Okay... we've got a lot of work to do if we're going to pull this off. Shelby, are the costumes ready?

SHELBY: Which ones? The real Macbeth costumes or the worst costumes in the history of the theater?

RYAN: Both.

SHELBY: Just got to finish hemming your skirt and we'll be ready to go.

SHELBY and SPARKY high-five each other.

RYAN: So, the whole skirt thing was Shelby's idea.

SPARKY: She thought it would be easier coming from a guy. (*To SHELBY.*) Make it 18 inches and go long on the hem just in case he hikes it up during the show.

RYAN: Abby and Jordan? Do you have your big musical number ready?

ABIGAIL: Doing the final choreography tonight.

JORDAN: (*He salutes RYAN.*) Flat feet and all.

RYAN: Jenna, are you going to be ready with your lines?

JENNA writes on her pad and holds it up for SHELBY to read.

SHELBY: As Justin says, "Never Let You Go."

RYAN: Okay... everybody go home and review your script.

JORDAN: Which one?

RYAN: The bad one.

JORDAN: They're both bad.

RYAN: The one I wrote.

JORDAN: Oh... the *really* bad one.

The class snickers and RYAN blushes.

RYAN: Just go home and work on your lines, okay. We don't want to butcher the play.

SPARKY: I thought that was exactly what we wanted to do?

RYAN: Just go home, okay. See you tomorrow.

The students laugh and make small talk as they exit STAGE RIGHT. RYAN turns back to Rachel.

RYAN: You need a ride home, Rachel?

RACHEL: Yeah, I'll be there in a minute. I just want to run over my lines a little while it's quiet.

RYAN: Okay...don't be long. It's meatloaf night.

RYAN exits as RACHEL stands CENTER STAGE and does a few vocal warm-ups. Suddenly, MRS. WATSON enters from STAGE LEFT.

MRS. WATSON: Oh, Rachel. I didn't know you were still here.

RACHEL: Just running over my lines before the show tomorrow night.

MRS. WATSON: That's why you're my star. And why I am sure you're going to get that scholarship at State you applied for.

RACHEL: You think so?

MRS. WATSON: When they hear about this show, the offers will start pouring in. I guarantee it. *(Sees her briefcase across the room and crosses to it.)* There's my bag. I knew I left it in here.

MRS. WATSON grabs her briefcase and starts to leave.

MRS. WATSON: Well, goodnight dear. Keep up the good work. You were born to play Lady Macbeth.

RACHEL: Good night. Ah... Mrs. Watson?

MRS. WATSON stops just before exiting and turns back to RACHEL.

MRS. WATSON: Yes, Rachel.

RACHEL: Can I ask you a question?

MRS. WATSON: Of course you can, dear. You're my little star. The one I can always count on to give 100% to make every show great.

RACHEL: Yeah, well that's kind of what I need to talk to you about.

MRS. WATSON: What do you mean, dear?

RACHEL: Well.. it's just that...well...if you knew someone, or someones... were about to do something really.. ah, terrible.... would you tell someone about it.

MRS. WATSON: Is someone you know going to hurt themselves? Is it Jenna? You know, you really have to keep your eye on the quiet ones. Has she said something to you that makes you think she wants to hurt herself.

RACHEL: No, ma'am. She hasn't said anything to anybody in seven months. It's not Jenna.

MRS. WATSON: Oh... well, what is it dear?

RACHEL: Well... it's just that... well, I know a secret... a secret that... well... something bad is about to happen but I promised not to say anything about it.

MRS. WATSON: Are people going to be hurt if you don't keep their secret?

RACHEL: Hurt?

MRS. WATSON: You know...will people be injured if you don't do something to stop it?

RACHEL: No, I don't think so.

MRS. WATSON: Well, dear, then it probably best if you just keep it to yourself, whatever this little secret. You know, Shakespeare said, 'This above all: to thine own self be true. And it must follow, as night follows day. Thou canst not then be false to any man.' In other words, the way we keep the confidence of other speaks volumes about our own trustworthiness.

RACHEL: Shakespeare wrote that?

MRS. WATSON: Yes, Polonius said it in *Hamlet*. It is one of my favorite lines from all of Shakespeare's plays. And it is kind of my life's mantra. I cannot control what other's do, whether they have integrity or not, but I am in full control of what I do. I think it is a good ideal to live by, don't you, dear?

RACHEL: Yes, ma'am. To thine own self be true.

MRS. WATSON lightly taps RACHEL's heart.

MRS. WATSON: To thine own self be true. *(She smiles warmly.)* Was there anything else, dear?

RACHEL: No, ma'am. I guess I'll see you tomorrow night.

MRS. WATSON: Tomorrow night. It's going to be a great show. I can feel it. One of my best.

RACHEL: Yes, ma'am. One of your best.

RYAN: *(Calling from offstage.)* Rachel, are you coming?

RACHEL: Be right there.

MRS. WATSON: I believe you're about to miss your ride.

RACHEL: Yes, ma'am.

RYAN calls from offstage.

RYAN: Rachel, let's go!

RACHEL: Okay...I'm coming. *(To MRS. WATSON.)* Goodnight, Mrs. Watson.

MRS. WATSON: Goodnight, dear. *(She exits.)*

INTERMISSION

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