The Curse of the Bard

By Stephen Murray

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STORY OF THE PLAY

The students of Hilltop High are excited! They're going to put on a performance of "Romeo and Juliet." But the school's drama director, Miss Peggy Donahue, pressed into service by a principal eager to please his superintendent, is horrified. Twenty years before when she was a student at Hilltop High, she starred in a disastrous musical version of Shakespeare's "Scottish play," and she believes the curse lingers on. Sure enough, everything that can go wrong does. The set for the balcony scene collapses, Juliet breaks her leg in a freak accident, her understudy develops laryngitis, and the semi-deaf costumer arrives with cowboy outfits – she thought the show was called "Rodeo and Lariat." Add a hysterical playwright, a stage mom from hell, and a mysterious cult of techies who pledge allegiance to their favorite "tool" – duct tape – and you've got one performance of playful pandemonium, quicker than you can say, "Macbeth" – oops!

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: The day before auditions.
Scene 2: Audition day.
Scene 3: Monday afternoon.

ACT II

Scene 1: One week to go.
Scene 2: Dress rehearsal.
Scene 3: Opening night.
Scene 4: After the show.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(8 m, 14 w, extras)

MISS PEGGY DONAHUE: Chorus director.
PRINCIPAL SANDERS: A distinguished yet bombastic high school principal.
MALLORY WATSON: Ambitious student.
MARGE WATSON: Mallory's mom; nightmarish stage mother.
WINIFRED BURNSIDE: Superintendent's wife and amateur playwright. She is artsy, flamboyant, and pretentious.
DENISE ADAMS: Lovely, talented, and less-than-brilliant student.
PATRICK EMERSON: Handsome star-football quarterback.
WENDELL: A nerdish and awkward student.
CARLOS: Student, football teammate of Patrick's.
LINDSEY: Stage manager; brilliant, shy student.
COACH BUTKUS: Athletic director and football coach. He wears a ball cap, thick glasses, sweat suit, and a whistle around his neck.
MINDY: Yearbook editor.
DONNA TERRANOVA: Stage crew. Mysterious, spooky Gothic-type figure dressed in black jeans and a black T-shirt. She has her initials made of duct tape on her shirt, one letter over the other.
URIAH ANDERSON: Stage crew. Mysterious, spooky Gothic-type figure dressed in black jeans and a black T-shirt. He has his initials made of duct tape on his shirt, one letter over the other. He is very spooky.
CASSIE PUCHALSKI: Stage crew. Mysterious, spooky Gothic-type figure dressed in black jeans and a black T-shirt. She has her initials made of duct tape on her shirt, one letter over the other.
TOM EISENSON: Stage crew. Mysterious, spooky Gothic-type figure dressed in black jeans and a black T-shirt. He has his initials made of duct tape on his shirt, one letter over the other.
EDNA PHELPS: Hearing-impaired school secretary, pianist and costume designer. Elderly yet energetic.
AMY: An annoying freshman.
SARAH: Student.
KATRINA: Student.
MONISHA: Student.
SAM: Student, football teammate of Patrick's.
EXTRAS: Additional Hilltop High students.

PROPS

Audition flyers
Clipboard with blank papers (sign-up sheet)
Large musical score
Envelope containing Mallory's headshot, resume and video
Whistle (Coach)
Poster: "Auditions Today"
Scripts
3-ring binder
Camera with flash (Marge)
Supermarket tabloid (Edna)
Folder with papers (Peggy)
Tape measures
Yearbook
Rehearsal schedules
(3) Broken mirrors
Sword
Box marked "Good Luck Charms"
Good luck charms: rabbit's foot, four-leaf clover, sliver dollar, lucky socks, necklace of garlic, and box of Lucky Charms cereal
Horseshoes
Witch doctor masks
Hack saw and wrench
Bundles of tickets (Marge)
New scene for play (papers)
Rolls of duct tape
(4) T-shirts with letters spelling "D-U-C-T T-A-P-E"
Cowboy hats and bandannas
Planks of wood for splint
Swivel chair on rollers
Balcony duct taped together on rolling platform
Bongos (Monisha)
Leg cast and crutches (Denise)

SOUND EFFECTS

Offstage light instrument crash and offstage balcony crash.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: The auditorium of Hilltop High School, a bare stage. PRINCIPAL SANDERS ENTERS putting up signs on the walls saying, "Play Auditions." STUDENTS ENTER, and upon seeing the signs, become excited about the chance to perform in a play. Some are carrying copies of the audition flyer.)

SARAH: Look at this! *(Reading.)* Play auditions tomorrow at 3 o'clock. Can you believe it?!
KATRINA: Wow! A play. Wouldn't it be fun to be in a play?
MONISHA: Why don't we go to the auditions?

(PATRICK ENTERS and is curious about the girls' conversation.)

SARAH: I'll go if you go.
KATRINA: I'll go if you go.
MONISHA: Then I guess we'll all go!
PATRICK: Where are you going?

(SARAH, KATRINA, and MONISHA are startled and scream.)

KATRINA: Patrick, you scared us.
PATRICK: What's all the fuss about?
SARAH: The play auditions tomorrow.
MONISHA: I don't suppose a big shot football player like you would want to be in a play.
PATRICK: Why not? Sounds like fun. I'll see you at the auditions, girls. *(PATRICK grabs a flyer off the wall and EXITS.)*
MONISHA: *(In awe.)* Our star quarterback is trying out for the play!
SARAH: I am definitely going to the audition now.
KATRINA: Me too!

(MISS PEGGY DONAHUE, the school chorus director, ENTERS. She seems to be in a hurry.)

MONISHA: Hi, Miss Donahue!
SARAH, KATRINA, and MONISHA: See you at the auditions!

(SARAH, KATRINA, and MONISHA EXIT.)

PEGGY: Auditions? What for?

(MALLORY, DENISE, CARLOS, MINDY, AMY, SAM, and additional extras ENTER excitedly. They all speak in rapid succession to PEGGY. Peggy is confused and uncertain how to respond. EXTRAS may improvise an appropriate line similar to the others. LINDSEY ENTERS but lags behind the others without immediately speaking to Peggy.)

MALLORY: I'm looking forward to the auditions, Miss Donahue.
DENISE: Wow! A play will be totally cool!
CARLOS: Will there be swords in this play? That would be awesome!
MINDY: I don't want a big part. Just something.
AMY: Can freshman audition? I want to audition!
SAM: I can do my own stunts!

(ALL STUDENTS except LINDSEY EXIT excitedly. Lindsey approaches PEGGY shyly.)

LINDSEY: Hello, Miss Donahue.
PEGGY: What? Oh, yes, hello, Lindsey.

(LINDSEY pauses as if to speak, then EXITS timidly. WENDELL ENTERS.)

WENDELL: Miss Donahue?
PEGGY: Yes, Wendell.
WENDELL: I just wanted to inform you that I will indeed be attending the auditions tomorrow afternoon.

End of Freeview

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