

Help! I'm Trapped in a Musical!

A shamelessly derivative musical

by Stephen Murray

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Help! I'm Trapped in a Musical!

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DEDICATION

To my summer family at StarFun Theater Camp in Framingham, MA!

STORY OF THE MUSICAL

There's something strange going on at Sondheim High School. New transfer student, Norma LaBelle, is having trouble getting accustomed to the school's unusual traditions. At any given moment, students and teachers burst into song for no apparent reason. Each time they sing, it sounds almost like a famous Broadway musical. The math teacher sings a lesson on the Pythagorean theorem. The history teacher delivers a rap-filled class on Alexander Graham Bell. Mrs. Lovett, the Lunch Lady, delivers a menu filled with Broadway-themed meals. The students sing a celebration of Mondays and even the 'bad' kids perform the "Detention Tango." Principal Lloyd Webber is hiding a secret and enforces strict rules to keep the truth hidden from the students. This show is full of fun surprises and is a delight for fans of Broadway musicals as well as for those new to the genre.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 16 w, 1 flexible, extras)

Students:

NORMA: A high school student transferring to Sondheim High. She is puzzled by all the singing and dancing that goes on in the school and community.

JENNY: A friendly Sondheim High student who befriends Norma on her first day.

PATTI, BETTE, BERNADETTE, LIZA, ETHEL, AUDRA, CHITA: Sondheim students named for famous Broadway divas (*Patti Lupone, Bette Midler, Bernadette Peters, Liza Minelli, Ethel Merman, Audra McDonald, and Chita Rivera*). It can be fun to have them take on some characteristics of these stars and give some great educational research for your cast.

SUTTON, IDINA, KRISTIN, FRANCINE: The 'bad' girls. These girls meet Norma in detention. (*As in Sutton Foster, Idina Menzel, and Kristin Chenoweth. Francine is the odd one out in many ways.*)

MANDY, HARVEY, and HUNTER: The boys of Sondheim High. (*As in Mandy Patinkin, Harvey Fierstein, and Hunter Foster.*)

CHORUS of STUDENTS: As many as you like.

Adults:

MR. LLOYD WEBBER: (*Or Ms. Andrea Lloyd-Webber.*) The principal. He/She runs a tight ship and expects rules to be followed.

MR. WISE: The History teacher, has a bit of a Lin-Manuel Miranda vibe.

MISS HART: (*I suspect her first name is Roxanne, Roxie for short.*) The Math teacher.

MRS. LOVETT: The cafeteria lady.

THE AV CLUB: Mysterious figures, dressed in black, always carrying cameras and microphones.

CHORUS of SINGING MAMAS: As many as you like. They can even be boys comically dressed as Mamas.

NORMA'S MAMA: Hovering and overly protective.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

- 1 – It's Monday That I Love
- 2 – State Song
- 3 – Hunter Song 1
- 4 – The Jock and the Band Geek
- 4a – Scene Change Music
- 5 – The Pythagorean Theorem
- 5a – Scene Change Music
- 6 – Hunter Song 2
- 6a – Scene Change Music
- 7 – The Telephone
- 7a – Scene Change Music
- 8 – The Principal

ACT II

- 9 – Entr'acte
- 10 – The Detention Tango
- 11 – The Circle of Food
- 12 – Hunter Song 3
- 13 – Please Don't Make the Students Sing
- 14 – Mama, You Bore Me
- 15 – Hunter Song 4
- 16 – Let Me Be Me
- 17 – Curtain Call

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ACT I

(STUDENTS enter and bustle about as in a regular high school. The AV CLUB, dressed in black and holding microphones and cameras, mill about capturing the action. Suddenly, the students start singing and dancing. SUTTON, IDINA, KRISTIN, and FRANCINE, also known as the Bad Girls, are off to one side, not doing much dancing or singing.)

SONG #1 – IT'S MONDAY THAT I LOVE

STUDENTS:

DAY ONE, TIME TO GET THINGS DONE
TIME TO GET BACK TO THE OLD ROUTINE.
LET'S GO! TIME TO START THE SHOW.
TIME TO GET BACK TO THE STUDYING SCENE.
I'VE GOT MY BOOKS AND MY LOCKER COMBINATION.
THIS WEEK IS GONNA BE A SENSATION.
I AM READY FOR ANYTHING!
IT'S MONDAY THAT I LOVE!

(As the song continues, NORMA enters with NORMA'S MAMA. Norma seems a bit confused to see all the singing and dancing. Norma's Mama takes a picture of Norma before being shooed to exit by Norma. PRINCIPAL LLOYD WEBBER enters and discovers the non-dancing BAD GIRLS. He glares at them with a threatening look. They reluctantly start dancing along with the other students. Satisfied with their response, the Principal inspects other students, offering some praise, cautioning others. When the Principal's back is turned, the Bad Girls cast mocking looks at him.)

STUDENTS:

LET'S CHEER, ALL MY FRIENDS ARE HERE.
EVERYBODY'S LOOKING HAPPY AND BRIGHT.
OH, WOW! BETTER HAVE FUN NOW
'CAUSE WE'RE GONNA HAVE SOME HOMEWORK TONIGHT!
GONNA MAKE SURE EVERY TEST IS PASSED.
THIS WEEK IS GONNA BE A BLAST!
I AM READY FOR ANYTHING!
IT'S MONDAY THAT I LOVE!

STUDENTS: *(Cont'd.)*

MONDAY'S MY FUN DAY.
IT'S THE DAY WHEN EVERYTHING BEGINS.
FRIDAY'S MY CRY DAY.
IT'S THE LAST DAY OF THE WEEK WITH MY FRIENDS.
I HATE TO SLEEP LATE.
I DON'T WANT TO MISS A SINGLE THING.
CAN'T WAIT, 'CAUSE MONDAY'S FIRST RATE.
IT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE AND SING!

(PRINCIPAL LLOYD WEBBER approaches NORMA as students dance in the background.)

PRINCIPAL WEBBER: Ah, you must be Norma LaBelle!

NORMA: Yes! How did you know?

PRINCIPAL WEBBER: I can spot a new student a mile away.

I'm Principal Lloyd Webber.

NORMA: Nice to meet you Mr. Webber!

PRINCIPAL WEBBER: Welcome to Sondheim High School!

We have some pretty strict rules around here so be sure to pay close attention!

NORMA: Thanks, I'll be sure to do that.

PRINCIPAL WEBBER: I'll be watching you, Norma. *(Exits.)*

GROUP ONE:

DAY ONE, TIME TO
GET THINGS DONE
TIME TO GET BACK TO THE
OLD ROUTINE.

LET'S GO, TIME TO
START THE SHOW.
TIME TO GET BACK TO THE
STUDYING SCENE.

GROUP TWO:

DAY ONE, TIME TO
GET THINGS DONE
TIME TO GET BACK TO THE
OLD ROUTINE.

LET'S GO, TIME TO
START THE SHOW

ALL:

I'VE GOT MY BOOKS AND MY LOCKER COMBINATION
THIS WEEK IS GONNA BE A SENSATION.
I AM READY FOR ANYTHING!
IT'S MONDAY THAT I LOVE!
I AM READY FOR ANYTHING!
IT'S MONDAY THAT I LOVE!

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(After the conclusion of the song, the STUDENTS and PRINCIPAL exit, leaving NORMA alone on stage.)

NORMA: Mom, my spidey-senses are tingling. I know you are hiding, watching me. Come out!

NORMA'S MAMA: *(Entering sheepishly.)* OK, you got me.

NORMA: Mom, this is high school. Why are you stalking me as if I were a Kindergartener on her first day?

NORMA'S MAMA: It's your first day here at Sondheim High! I just want to remember the occasion. *(SHE takes a picture with her phone.)*

NORMA: Why am I even here? I was perfectly happy at Central High, I liked it there. Why did we have to move?

NORMA'S MAMA: This school offers special opportunities for you, Norma.

NORMA: I'm old enough to create my own 'special opportunities,' Mom.

NORMA'S MAMA: Your father and I sacrificed in order for you to be here. The least you can do is give it a try on your first day!

NORMA: But I'm already freaked out by this place. A bunch of kids just sang a song about loving Monday and not wanting to sleep in. What kind of weird teenagers are they?

NORMA'S MAMA: They are your future friends, and your father and I expect you to attend this school and do your best.

NORMA: Alright, fine. Just stop stalking me. It's really creepy. Heck, you may as well get a remote drone and follow me around with that.

NORMA'S MAMA: A remote drone? That's ridiculous. *(Clearly, she thinks this is a great idea.)* Fine, I'll leave you alone. I think I'll go home and shop on Amazon.

(STUDENTS and AV CLUB members gradually start re-entering.)

NORMA: Goodbye, Mother. I'll see you this afternoon.

NORMA'S MAMA: Goodbye, Norma dear. *(SHE exits.)*

JENNY: *(Calling to NORMA.)* Hey, new girl! What's up!

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NORMA: Hi. I'm Norma.

JENNY: Hi, Norma, I'm Jenny. What brings you to Sondheim High?

NORMA: Well, right now, my mom 'cause I don't have my license yet. Plus, she wanted me to enroll here. She seems to think it's the perfect school for me.

JENNY: Yeah, my mom is the same. She's really into this place. PTA president and everything.

NORMA: You know, my mom was very excited about joining the PTA.

JENNY: Really? (*Pensively.*) Interesting...

NORMA: What do you mean, "interesting"?

JENNY: Oh, nothing. Parents. Can't live with 'em, can't pay for your cell phone without 'em.

NORMA: You got that right. Tell me what's up with this school. What was that crazy flash mob a few minutes ago?

JENNY: (*A bit anxiously, trying to deflect.*) Oh, that was nothing. We're a regular old high school. Yes, we are. You'll notice we have several social circles people travel in. Jocks, nerds, band geeks, cosplayers ... we've got it all. And of course, most important of all, the drammies.

NORMA: The drammies?

JENNY: You know, the drama club kids. The big shots. The popular kids. The most important kids in school.

NORMA: (*In disbelief.*) The drama kids are the popular kids in this school?

JENNY: Of course! You have to meet some people! Hey, everyone, come meet Norma.

(GROUPS of students very enthusiastically approach NORMA. JENNY starts introducing students. SUTTON, IDINA, KRISTIN, CHITA, and FRANCINE stay at a distance.)

JENNY: This is Ethel. She's the head of our pep squad.

ETHEL: (*Very loudly.*) Hellooo, Norma!

NORMA: Wow! You are the pep squad!

ETHEL: I also run the gardening club where (*Loudly singing.*) everything's coming up roses!

PATTI: Oh, that song? I can sing it better.

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ETHEL: No, you can't!

PATTI: Yes, I can!

ETHEL: No, you can't!

PATTI: Yes, I can!

JENNY: Girls, please!

PATTI: Hello, I'm Patti. Wonderful to meet you, Norma. What a wonderful name! Norma!

NORMA: Thanks.

LIZA: (*Approaching NORMA excitedly.*) Hi, Norma. My name is Liza. That's Liza with a 'Z'!

NORMA: Hi, Liza.

JENNY: And this is Audra. She's student council president, National Honor Society president, captain of the speech and debate club, captain of...

AUDRA: Hi! You are very glad to meet me!

NORMA: Yeah, hi.

AUDRA: I've won more awards than anyone else in the school!

CHITA: (*From afar.*) You didn't deserve all those awards!

JENNY: Chita! No!

AUDRA: Chita, Chita, Chita ... Still feeling bitter?

CHITA: Bitter? Why is it every time they open the envelope they say, "The winner is Audra. The winner is Audra. The winner is Audra." When will they say, "The winner is Chita!"?

AUDRA: Never! Because Chitas never win.

(A minor scuffle nearly starts, but the crowd subdues them. SUTTON, IDINA, KRISTIN, and FRANCINE approach.)

SUTTON: Oo. Anger. Violence. Mayhem. You've got our attention.

JENNY: So, Norma, there's one group of students I forgot to tell you about. They're kind of bad. They like to break the rules.

SUTTON: I'm Sutton. And yes, I like to break unjust and unfair rules! I'm ok with some rules, like looking both ways before crossing the street. But this place is messed up!

IDINA: Hi, I'm Idina. Trust no one, look at no one, talk to no one, we never had this conversation.

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KRISTIN: I'm Kristin. Stay clear of Principal Webber. He's totally coo-coo for Cocoa Puffs. His rules are insane!

FRANCINE: (*Somewhat spacy.*) Hello, I'm Francine. I am more of a conscientious objector. I object to the rules here, and I'm conscious. I think that's how it works.

BETTE: No! We have to follow the rules. Rules are divine!

BERNADETTE: Right, Bette!

BETTE: Thanks, Bernadette!

IDINA: I think we've been hospitable enough for now.

SUTTON: Yeah, let's leave this nest of rule-following dweebs.

(The BAD GIRLS cross to a remote part of the stage and do not participate in the next song.)

NORMA: They're a fun bunch.

JENNY: You know, we've told you who we are. Why don't you tell us a little about yourself, Norma?

NORMA: Well, my family just moved in. We have a house on Sunset Boulevard.

PATTI: Nice! Where did you live before?

(MUSIC starts.)

NORMA: Well, my family has moved around a lot. I was born in California.

SONG #2 – STATE SONG

ALL: CAL—IFORNIA WHERE THE EARTHQUAKES RUMBLE
ALL THE TIME.

A STATE SO GRAND. IT'S GOT DISNEYLAND.

C – A – L – I – F – O – R – N – I A!

NORMA: Hey, that's cool, you guys like to sing. Well, from there we moved to New Hampshire.

ALL:

NEW HAMPSHIRE! NEW HAMPSHIRE!

MOUNTAINS THAT ARE WHITE AND A TEENY, TINY COAST.

TOO BAD THE OLD MAN CRUMBLER,

'CAUSE WE REALLY LOVE TO BOAST.

NEW HAMPSHIRE!

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NORMA: Yeah, right. Then we spent about 8 months living in Oklahoma. *(There is silence and no reaction from the STUDENTS.)* Nothing? Really? Well just before we moved here, we lived in Rhode Island.

ALL:

RHODE ISLAND! RHODE ISLAND!
NOTHING HAPPENS IN RHODE ISLAND.
IT'S SO SMALL IT'S HARDLY THERE AT ALL!

NORMA: Do you have a song for everything?

BETTE: Yes! Yes, we do!

(A MUSICAL introduction starts and HUNTER approaches NORMA. This gets the attention of the BAD GIRLS, who approach.)

SONG #3 – HUNTER SONG 1

HUNTER:

OH, NORMA.
MY NAME IS HUNTER.
I'M SO HAPPY TO MEET YOU.
YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL.

NORMA: OK, that was weird.

LIZA: I think he likes you.

CHITA: Hunter, leave her alone. A girl like that, she'd call your mother. Forget that girl and find another.

SUTTON: He's my brother, and he's a little weird. But if you make him sad, I will hurt you.

(A sinister chord of MUSIC plays. PRINCIPAL WEBBER enters carrying a very large book.)

ALL: *(Except Norma.)* It's Principal Webber!

PRINCIPAL WEBBER: Well, good morning, students! I see you have met our new student, Normal.

NORMA: That's Norma.

PRINCIPAL WEBBER: Right, Norma.

BERNADETTE: We've been giving Norma a Sondheim High welcome, Principal Webber.

PRINCIPAL WEBBER: Good, good. As you should. I'm here to present Norma with the first copy of the new Sondheim High rule book.

(HE hands the very large book to NORMA.)

NORMA: That's a pretty big book!

PRINCIPAL WEBBER: It certainly is! And soon, *(Speaks directly to audience, as if in a television commercial.)* thanks to Stinko's Copy Center, *(Speaking to STUDENTS.)* I will have copies made for each and every student in this school. *(Speaking to audience again.)* That's Stinko's Copy Center, for those big copy jobs.

(A low grumble from the STUDENTS.)

NORMA: That seems a bit inefficient.

(The STUDENTS gasp.)

PRINCIPAL WEBBER: I beg your pardon, Miss LaBelle?

NORMA: It would make a lot more sense to have a document this size made into a pdf and distributed electronically to every student. You'd save trees and save the school a lot of money.

STUDENTS: Ooo.

PRINCIPAL WEBBER: How dare you make such a ... reasonable ... and practical suggestion? *(Takes back book.)* Give me that. *(Starts exiting, calling offstage.)* Miss Bird? Cancel the Stinko's order! I have a scanning job for you. *(To NORMA, as he exits.)* I'll be watching you, Miss LaBelle!

IDINA: That was awesome!

KRISTIN: You're a real rebel!

NORMA: I'm no rebel. I just made a comment. No big deal.

PATTI: No big deal? I've never seen anybody stand up to Principal Webber like that.

SUTTON: I approve.

ETHEL: That was fabulous!

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CHITA: We should give you an award for that.

BETTE: Maybe you should run for student council president.

AUDRA: Let's not get crazy here! We already have a student council president.

STUDENTS: *(In a deflated manner.)* Oh.

AUDRA: But we'd sure like to see you involved in our school, Norma!

(STUDENTS murmur in agreement.)

ETHEL: You should join a club or something.

(More STUDENT murmurs of agreement.)

BERNADETTE: Do you know how to play an instrument?

NORMA: I play a little clarinet.

AUDRA: Perfect, you should join the band!

ETHEL: We could use another clarinet for our halftime show.

FRANCINE: Wait a minute! I think she should join the soccer team!

MANDY: Or run with the track team.

ETHEL: Are you serious? Track? Come on.

(An argument erupts.)

NORMA: Whoa! Hold it, everybody! Can't you just get along?

STUDENTS: Get along?

NORMA: Be friends. It shouldn't matter if you are a jock or a band geek.

(MUSIC starts.)

ETHEL: You're right, Norma!

NORMA: Wait a minute! It's happening again. Where's that music coming from?

SONG #4 – THE JOCK AND THE BAND GEEK

STUDENTS:

THE JOCK AND THE BAND GEEK SHOULD BE FRIENDS.
THE JOCK AND THE BAND GEEK SHOULD BE FRIENDS.
ONE LIKES TO THROW A PASS.
THE OTHER PLAYS WOODWIND AND BRASS.
BUT THAT'S NO REASON WHY THEY CAN'T BE FRIENDS.

THE BAND GEEK AND THE JOCK SHOULD BE PALS.
THE BAND GEEK AND THE JOCK SHOULD BE PALS.
ONE KNOWS HOW TO CATCH AND THROW.
THE OTHER HAS A HALFTIME SHOW.
BUT THAT'S NO REASON WHY THEY CAN'T BE PALS.
WE SHOULD RESPECT EACH OTHER LIKE A SISTER OR A BROTHER.

JOCKS:

PLEASE DON'T EMPTY OUT YOUR SPIT VALVE ON MY FEET.

GEEKS: (*Spoken.*) Sorry.

STUDENTS:

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER. WE'RE ALL BIRDS OF A FEATHER.

GEEKS:

WE'LL CHEER FOR YOU IN VICTORY OR DEFEAT.
(*Spoken.*) Rah! Rah! Rah!

NORMA: (*Speaking.*) Oh no! Not another dance break!
AHHHH!

[DANCE BREAK]

STUDENTS:

THE JOCK AND THE BAND GEEK SHOULD BE FRIENDS.
THE JOCK AND THE BAND GEEK SHOULD BE FRIENDS.
ONE CAN SCORE A GOAL WITH EASE.
THE OTHER PLAYS IN MANY KEYS.
BUT THAT'S NO REASON WHY THEY CAN'T BE FRIENDS.
BUT THAT'S NO REASON WHY THEY CAN'T BE FRIENDS.
THAT'S NO REASON WHY THEY CAN'T BE FRIENDS!

NORMA: This place is really strange.

JENNY: It's just our school spirit!

NORMA: (*Noticing the AV CLUB.*) Hey, what about those people over there? What group are they in?

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JENNY: *(Somewhat nervously.)* That's just the AV club. They love their toys. Cameras, wires, microphones...

NORMA: *(Noticing cameraman with a beard.)* That one there looks a little old to be in high school...

JENNY: Oh, yeah, I guess he stayed back a year or two. Poor guy.

NORMA: You know, I'm interested in television and film. Maybe I should join the AV Club.

JENNY: *(Suddenly frantic.)* NO!! You should never join the AV Club!!

(SFX: The class bell rings. STUDENTS start moving about with purpose.)

JENNY: *(Cont'd.)* Ooops! There you go. The bell!

HUNTER: *(Approaching NORMA.)* See you later, Norma.

(HE exits to class. SUTTON exiting, silently but overtly indicates that she is keeping an eye on NORMA.)

JENNY: It's time for class. Let me see your schedule, Norma.

(Looks at paper.) History, English, Glee Club...

NORMA: Glee Club? I didn't sign up for Glee Club.

HARVEY: Everybody's in Glee Club.

FRANCINE: It's mandatory.

NORMA: Mandatory?

IDINA: Yeah, that's one of Principal Webber's 'rules.'

NORMA: That Principal Webber, he's an interesting guy.

BERNADETTE: Interesting? Yeah, interesting!

(STUDENTS murmur in agreement.)

AUDRA: Just be sure to follow the rules and he'll be fine with you.

JENNY: Oh, you've got Geometry! Me, too! Let's go, you don't want to be late!

MUSIC #4a – SCENE CHANGE MUSIC

End of Freeview

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