The School Spirit

By Scott Haan

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Dedication

To Dean and Sandy Johnson,
for turning tragedy into triumph
by helping to make our roads safer.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Faith and Ivy are best friends for life…and beyond. On the surface, they don't have much in common. One is respectful, the other sarcastic. One is studious, the other a troublemaker. One is a friendly actress, the other a reclusive poet. And, oh yeah, one is alive, the other, not so much. Ivy has been dead for weeks, and only Faith can still see or hear her. How can a ghost help Faith achieve her goal of landing the lead in the school play? And for that matter, why is Ivy still hanging around, anyway?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Flexible cast. Approx. 2 m, 7 w, 2 flexible.)

FAITH FREEMAN: A well-mannered and respectful high school girl.

IVY: The ghost of a sarcastic and sullen student.

GWEN: Self-centered and elitist, complete with her own fawning entourage.

ROSS: Gwen's handsome and popular boyfriend.

MS. (or MR.) RILEY: *(Flexible.)* Likable high school drama teacher and play director.

SANDY: Part of Gwen's entourage.

MANDY: Part of Gwen's entourage.

CANDY: Part of Gwen's entourage.

DANIEL FREEMAN: Faith's father.

JOANNE FREEMAN: Faith's mother.

LADY (or MAN) IN WHITE: *(Flexible.)* A ghostly apparition. *(Could also be played offstage as a disembodied voice.)*

FLEXIBLE CASTING

Eleven actors are required to cast a unique actor in every role. To perform the show with only 9 or 10 actors, Mr. and Mrs. Freeman could also double as the Lady in White and Mr. Riley. To perform the show with even fewer actors, you could also combine Gwen's three followers into one character, with that person delivering all of Sandy, Mandy, and Candy's lines.

To expand the cast to include more than 11 actors, you could include extras as drama students trying out for the school play in Scenes 2 and 4. You could also expand Gwen's entourage with additional followers in those same scenes.

SETTING

This story takes place in a few different locations, such as Faith's bedroom, a high school stage, and the outside of the school building. No sets are required. Each location could be suggested with just a few items or pieces of furniture. If doors are available, one could be used for the door to Faith's bedroom.

SCENES

Scene 1: Faith's bedroom, on a Sunday.
Scene 2: School auditorium, the next evening.
Scene 3: Behind the school, two days later at lunch time.
Scene 4: School auditorium, later after school.

PROPERTIES

Scene 1:
Paper, pencil, and a textbook (pre-set on a desk or table)

Scene 2:
A notebook (carried on by MS. RILEY)

Scene 3:
Textbooks and a lunch bag containing an apple and a wrapped sandwich (carried on by FAITH)
Optional: Trash strewn on the stage

Scene 4:
Several scripts and a casting sheet (carried on by MS. RILEY)
Car keys (carried on by FAITH)

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Faith's bedroom, on a Sunday. FAITH sits at a desk or table DS, working intently on her homework. She has paper, a pencil, and an open textbook. Faith is wearing bright and colorful clothing. IVY, by contrast, is dressed all in black. For several seconds, Ivy silently paces back and forth behind Faith, impatiently. Soon Ivy begins making popping noises with her mouth. At first, Faith tries to shut them out, but after a while, she can't take it anymore.)

FAITH: You know, that's VERY distracting.
IVY: Sorry, but I'm bored.
FAITH: That's not MY fault. You're the one who hangs out here, ALL THE TIME. Whether I invite you or not.
IVY: Sheesh. You're my best friend. I didn't think I needed an invitation. Sorry for being such a pest.
FAITH: *(Regretting her tone.)* Look, just let me finish my homework. I'm almost done. Then I'll pay attention to you. Okay?
IVY: Fine.

(FAITH gets back to work, and IVY resumes pacing. After another period of silence, IVY walks right up to FAITH and watches over her shoulder.)

FAITH: *(Impatiently.)* Yes?
IVY: How much longer?
FAITH: It will be 10 minutes from the moment you stop distracting me and let me focus here.
IVY: Okay, okay! *(Pause.)* Ooooooooooorrr…I could share the new poem I wrote. Wanna hear it?
FAITH: *(Sigh.)* Do I have a choice?
IVY: No, you don't.
FAITH: *(With mock enthusiasm.)* Then YES, by all means, I would LOVE to hear it!

IVY: Cool. It's called "Life Is an Empty, Meaningless Onslaught of Loneliness, Pain and Suffering, and Even When You Die, the Misery Still Continues." *(Beat.)* Part One.

FAITH: Sounds delightful.

IVY: *(Clears her throat, then recites.)* "Curtains of black rubber scrape, scrape together, squeaking in the relentless sandstorm. A red dirt carpet rises, falls, rises, dies. I struggle through the tar as it pours into my nose, my ears, my wounds. Fate makes me a dinosaur, my fossilized bones waiting to be discovered, like a calcium time capsule. Time, sad, mourns for me. My end."

FAITH: *(Lets this sink in.)* Wow. That was good. You know, depressing, but good.

IVY: "Depressing but good." I'll take it.

FAITH: *(Getting back to work, SHE basically ignores Ivy, not looking up at her as they talk.)* All right, let me finish this up now.

IVY: Sure. You try to focus. Don't even THINK about the intense jealousy you feel, since I'm a creative genius with my poetry, and you, alas, are a mere "AC-tor." *(Actor)*

FAITH: *(Still not looking up.)* Drop dead.

IVY: I did that a few weeks ago, remember?

FAITH: *(Realizing what she said, mortified. SHE looks up at IVY.)* Oh, I'm…Ivy, I'm sorry, I didn't mean…

IVY: Nah, it's okay. I'm over it. So I'm DEAD. Hey. Life goes on.

FAITH: *(Sadly.)* Yeah.

(Awkward silence.)

IVY: Besides, I didn't really DROP dead. It was more of a splat.

FAITH: Ivy!

IVY: *(Defensive.)* What? If a girl can't laugh at her own grisly demise, what CAN she laugh at?

FAITH: I still can't wrap my head around it. That you're really gone, but somehow, I'm talking to your ghost.

End of Freeview

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