Director's Nightmare

By Wade Bradford

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DEDICATION

To Nancy, Natalie, and Meredith- the editors at Eldridge who were the first to publish my work.

STORY OF THE PLAY

It's five days before the premiere of the non-musical version of *Les Misérables*, and high school drama director, Chris, has actors who are still on script, cast members absent from rehearsal, a sick stage manager, an unbuilt set and only twelve dollars left in the budget. Oh, and the principal is bringing the superintendent on opening night to see if funding for the drama program for the district should be cut. It's a director's nightmare, but Chris tells the cast and crew about a pocket watch from her great-grandfather that is known to help turn everything around. As the rehearsal progresses, it seems as if even the watch can't fix this mess. Dante keeps alternating between a French, British, and Southern accent; Gina decides to pretend to be a door; Lily begins to speak for the baby doll; and Ed, the set designer, brings on a volleyball net and tells Chris to think of it as the barricade. Will the nightmare ever end? About 40 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 5 w, 1 flexible, possible extras)

CHRIS (flex): Director of the high school drama club.

DANTE (m): Loves improv and accents, hates to follow the script.

GINA (f): Actor who knows all the gossip.

CHESTER (m): Mild mannered, in his first play production.

LILY (f): Eager to fill in roles, dating Jamie.

JAMIE (m): The lighting designer, dating Lily.

BEATRIX (f): Dramatic and committed actor.

MINDY (f): Easily distracted, still wants to be involved.

ED (m): Set designer, still surprised by the requirements.

LOLA (f): Intern to the set designer, more like an Igor character.

EXTRAS: Optional crew members.

(Enjoy the characters Dante, Beatrix, and Chester in Wade Bradford's full-length comedy, *Promedy.*)

SETTING

Very simple stage, mostly bare with the exception of a table and two wooden chairs. There is also a director's chair off to the side along with a desk or table for taking notes.

PROPS

Lipstick, flashlight, pocket watch on a chain, cellphone, script, silly beard, clipboard, two pieces of mustache, popsicle sticks glued together, tape measure, volleyball net, gym mat, doll, long red scarf, large bulky bags with dodge balls inside, hammer, hat, and briefcase with about a dozen pocket watches.

Director's Nightmare

(AT RISE: DANTE, GINA, CHESTER, LILY, BEATRIX, and MINDY on a mostly empty stage. CHRIS enters. If the production does not have traditional lights, then JAMIE is on stage as well.)

CHRIS: Attention! Cast and crew! Let's gather. Gather, gather, gather! Form a circle. Better yet, a semi-circle. Just don't form a straight line; you know how much I hate that. Are we all here?

(The CAST and CREW have gathered around their DIRECTOR.)

CHRIS: *(Cont'd.)* Good. All right. Okay. First thing. Unfortunately, Doris, our stage manager will not be attending tonight's rehearsal.
DANTE: Why not?
CHRIS: She's not feeling well— I won't go into specifics.
GINA: *(Putting on lipstick.)* She has mono.
CHESTER: *(Quiet, shocked.)* The kissing disease.
GINA: She got it from Trevor.
CHRIS: It doesn't matter— Moving on to item number two. Since tech week begins today, we'll be working with our lighting designer. Jamie is up in the booth manning the controls, so make sure you find your light.
LILY: Don't forget to shine the spotlight extra bright on me. *(The LIGHTS flash in acknowledgment.)* It pays to date the lighting designer.

(Optional: If the production does not have traditional lights / spotlights, then feel free to do the following insert.)

JAMIE: Uh, Chris, I can't seem to find the spotlight.
CHRIS: We can't afford one.
JAMIE: Or a lighting board.
CHRIS: We don't have the budget.

JAMIE: Then what am I supposed to—
CHRIS: Here's a flashlight; make it work.
JAMIE: I'll try. Hi, Lily.
LILY: Hi, Jamie. Don't forget to shine the spotlight extra bright on me.
JAMIE: I won't! *(Flashes flashlight off and on.)*
LILY: *(Blows kiss.)* It pays to date the lighting designer.

(End of optional insert.)

CHRIS: All right, back on track, people. The main reason I wanted to talk to you before we begin: well, it's a little bit sentimental, a little bit superstitious, so please just indulge me.
BEATRIX: Listen up. Important announcement from our director. Let's bend a knee.

(The CAST and CREW take a knee.)

BEATRIX: *(Cont'd.)* We're all ears, Miss Chris.
CHRIS: Thank you, Beatrix. As I was saying, we have five more rehearsals until opening night. And as you know, I've expressed several concerns regarding how many of you do not have all of your lines memorized, and some of you have been absent far too often, and that the costumes are still forthcoming, and the set has not yet been constructed, and the principal will be bringing the superintendent to opening night, and if things don't go well, there's a good chance that funding for theater will be cut throughout the entire school district, so there's an insane amount of pressure. However, none of this worries me. In spite of the fact that everything that could go wrong has gone wrong during these rehearsals, I have complete faith that everything will work out fine. Why? Because I have this.

(SHE holds up a pocket watch that dangles on a chain. The CAST and CREW stand up and gaze at the shiny watch.)

CAST and CREW: Oooh.

End of Freeview

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