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THE CAST

COMEDY. When the teacher who writes and directs the school play suddenly quits, the drama students are left to figure out how to save drama. With no play to perform, the club's prima donna locks everyone in the school overnight until they come up with a play. As the night wears on, egos and personalities clash. There's a tech guy no one can understand; an obsessive-compulsive stage manager; a videogame nerd; a student with superior Shakespearean acting skills; and a student obsessed with musicals. How many actors does it take to write a play? One to write the play while the others just sit around and say they could have done a better job! After "traversing the bleakest depths of the abyss," the drama students come up with a play about drama students writing a play! Audiences will love this sidesplitting comedy. Easy to stage.

Performance Time: Approximately 75 minutes.

CHARACTERS (2 M, 6 F, 1 flexible)

- MIA:** Prima donna drama student; appeared in a diaper commercial as a baby and as a movie extra; female.
- VIVIAN:** Vacuous, elitist drama student and one of Mia's followers; female.
- HEATHER:** Drama student obsessed with doing a musical but is not a good singer; one of Mia's followers; female.
- CATHERINE:** A talented new actor from a private school; female.
- ISLAND:** Goth drama student named after her father's band "The Island of Misfit Toys"; female.
- SKYE:** Stage manager who is obsessive-compulsive about props; trains new drama students like they are Pavlov's dog; good singer but hides it because she doesn't want to perform; female.
- WESLIE:** Videogame nerd who only joined drama club so he could put it on his college application; becomes one of Skye's followers; male.
- TODD:** Drama club tech guy who speaks mostly in "tech"; used to date Skye; male.
- MR./MRS. KEYES:** Teacher who usually writes and directs the school play; quits when he finds out his play is being made into a movie; flexible.

Note: For flexible role, change script accordingly.

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SETTING

High school auditorium.

SET

High school auditorium. The stage is cluttered with assorted set pieces and props from past shows. There are some chairs and a rack of costumes.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I: High school auditorium.

Intermission, opt.

ACT II: High school auditorium.

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PROPS

Rack of assorted costumes
Sword (plastic)
Clipboard, for Skye
Shovel
Cell phone, for Vivian
Assorted candy
Sunglasses, for Keyes
Lanyard with a set of keys attached
Toilet plunger
2 Headsets

SPECIAL EFFECT

Toilet flushing

THE ^{cast}_f

“CUES are INFLEXIBLE,
PROPS are LIFE,
AND ACTORS are IDIOTS.”

—WESLIE

ACT I

(AT RISE: High school auditorium. Stage is dark. Mia is sitting in the front of the house.)

MIA: *(Calls.)* Todd!

(Mia heads to backstage SL. Lights up. Vivian and Heather are sitting on the front of the stage. Island is lounging in a chair SR. Weslie is examining a rack of costumes.)

HEATHER: *(To Vivian.)* What time did Keyes say to be here?
It's 3:30.

VIVIAN: The meeting is at 3:45, but you know Keyes, 3:45 means 4:15, 4:25.

HEATHER: *(Nods, points to Island.)* Island's back again.
(Shakes her head.)

VIVIAN: I know, right? *(Stage whisper.)* She's soooo weird.

HEATHER: Every play, every year, we get Island creeping up the stage.

VIVIAN: *(Points to Weslie.)* Who's that?

HEATHER: *(Shrugs.)* New fish? I don't know. I was just about to ask you.

VIVIAN: *(Haughtily.)* Well, they better not go after the big roles. Those belong to me and Mia.

HEATHER: And me?

VIVIAN: Well, yeah. Of course, I mean, in supporting roles.

HEATHER: *(Crestfallen.)* Right, right. *(Pause.)* Hey, Vivian.

VIVIAN: Yeah?

HEATHER: Do you think that this year you could talk to Mia...get her to push Keyes into possibly, maybe...?

VIVIAN: *(Sighs.)* Oh, come on, Heather, not this again.

HEATHER: *(Begging.)* Please, Vivian...one little musical. Heck, I'll settle for just one song. Think we could talk Keyes into a play with a song?

VIVIAN: No, Heather.

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HEATHER: (*Sings.*) "The sun'll come out—"

VIVIAN: No! No! No! No singing!

HEATHER: (*Whining.*) Vivian, please. Just this once?

VIVIAN: Absolutely not. You know how Mia feels about singing. I don't want to get on her bad side.

HEATHER: Okay, okay, but Keyes is the director—

VIVIAN: Who pretty much does whatever the star wants.

(*Island wanders over.*)

ISLAND: Only because Mia's mom bankrolls the production.

VIVIAN: Nobody asked you. Besides, my parents also contribute a sizable amount.

ISLAND: Which only furthers my point.

VIVIAN: Look, Island, if you like to argue so much, why don't you just join the speech and debate team?

ISLAND: Those freaks and nerds? I don't think so.

VIVIAN: As the pot calls the kettle black...

ISLAND: Oh, shut it, Vivian. You're so busy sucking up to Mia that you can't think for yourself. I swear, if your and Heather's noses got any browner, they'd have to invent a whole new color of butt kisser.

(*Weslie laughs.*)

HEATHER: (*To Weslie.*) What's so funny?

WESLIE: That was pretty funny. (*Vivian and Heather glare at him. Sarcastically.*) Sorry.

VIVIAN: Who *are* you, anyway?

WESLIE: I'm Weslie. This is drama club, right?

ISLAND: Can't you tell?

WESLIE: Ha-ha! (*Slaps knee.*) Guess I'm in the right place, then.

VIVIAN: Looking to audition, huh?

WESLIE: Not really? I guess? Maybe?

VIVIAN: Guess?! You don't want to act?

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WESLIE: Act? Psssh! No, not really.

HEATHER: So you're wanting to join the tech crew, then.

WESLIE: Uhhhhh, no.

ISLAND: So you're wanting to help out with props and sets...doing painting and all that?

WESLIE: Iccccck, no! That sounds like work. Why would I want to do that?

ISLAND: Most kids do it for the volunteer hours.

VIVIAN: (*Snarky.*) The ones who don't make the cut, anyway. (*To Weslie.*) So, you don't want to act, you're not interested in tech or set construction, why *are* you here?

WESLIE: I have to get in a club for my college application. My mom used to be big into drama, so she's making me do this. I don't know...it could be okay. I mean, you guys are pretty funny and there's lots of cool stuff. (*Picks up a prop sword.*)

HEATHER: (*Indicating prop sword.*) I wouldn't touch that, if I were you.

WESLIE: (*Wielding sword.*) Why not? (*Stabs at the air with prop sword.*)

ISLAND: Our stage manager, Skye...she's pretty high-strung about the props.

(*Vivian and Heather nod.*)

WESLIE: How high-strung?

(*Skye, Todd, and Catherine enter SL.*)

SKYE: (*To Catherine.*) Sorry, I didn't realize the side stage entrance was locked. It wasn't supposed to— (*Sees Weslie and drops her clipboard. Approaches Weslie. To Weslie, shouts.*) Drop that prop before I literally eat the skin off of your face!

(*Weslie lets out a high-pitched squeak and lets the sword drop from his fingers. He is frozen with terror.*)

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ISLAND: *(To Weslie, aside.) That high-strung.*

(Skye puts the sword back where it had been. Skye approaches Weslie.)

SKYE: *(To Weslie, shaking his hand, friendly.)* Hi, so nice to see new people. I'm Skye, the stage manager. I make sure everything and everyone is where they are supposed to be. I just get a little triggered when I see people messing with things that aren't supposed to be messed with. It trips my OCD.

ISLAND: *(To Weslie, aside.)* And her Tourettes.

SKYE: *(To Weslie.)* We're always happy to have new people join the production. *(Accusingly.)* You *are* here for drama, right?

WESLIE: *(Timidly.)* I think so?

SKYE: Good, because I was going to have to bury you in the Ag pasture if you weren't.

WESLIE: *(Nervous laugh. To Island, aside.)* She *is* kidding, right?

ISLAND: *(Shrugs.)* We never know, but it would explain why those fields are so green...

(Holding up his hands, Weslie backs away from Skye.)

SKYE: *(To Weslie.)* Good luck with your audition.

CATHERINE: So does that happen a lot?

SKYE: What?

CATHERINE: People messing with props.

(Skye approaches a rack and begins to straighten the costumes.)

SKYE: More than you know. Like, already once this year, we had some kids from another club get into the prop room.

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They posted pictures of themselves groping the props on Instagram.

CATHERINE: Oh, geez. What'd you do?

SKYE: *(Shrugs.)* Ag field. *(To Todd.)* What were you thinking this year?

TODD: Six by 9 or a 19 degree will work on that front truss. You just have to be sure that the focus is sharp and the fade time is point 2. When the principal hits her spike, go cue 45 and fly out the batten to high trim. That's when the stage ninjas move the wagons and flip the ground rows.

(Skye heads upstage with Todd.)

SKYE: Gotcha. My crew will make that happen.

TODD: So the latest tech rider that they sent us is insane. They want us to convert all our DMX to AMX. Can you believe that? I mean, who even uses AMX anymore?! I told them we are living in the 21st century and they need to leave the 60s and come join us.

SKYE: Exactly!

CATHERINE: *(To others, referring to Todd and Skye.)* Were they just speaking English?

HEATHER: Catherine, are you trying out?

CATHERINE: Hi, Heather! I'm hoping to.

VIVIAN: Heather... *(Indicating Catherine.)* ...you know this person?

HEATHER: Yes, had physics with her last semester. She's from the Cliffside Academy.

CATHERINE: *(Correcting.)* Hillside.

HEATHER: Whatever. *(To Vivian.)* Anyway, she's super smart.

(Mia enters SL.)

MIA: *(To others.)* The question is... *(Indicating Catherine.)* ...can she act?

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VIVIAN/HEATHER: Mia!

MIA: *(To others.)* Yes, we can begin now. I have arrived.

HEATHER: Keyes hasn't yet.

MIA: Like *he* matters. *(To Catherine.)* So do you have any acting experience, or can we just count on you being a tree?

CATHERINE: *(Taken aback.)* Hillside Academy has a robust drama department.

MIA: Academy-schmademy. Have you actually been in anything?

CATHERINE: I was in their productions of "Hamlet" and "Les Mis."

MIA: I'm sure your role as Spear Carrier 2 was quite riveting.

VIVIAN: *(To Catherine.)* Or Townsperson 2.

MIA: Please don't try to follow up when I say something. You're not as funny as I am.

VIVIAN: Sorry, Mia.

ISLAND: *(To Catherine.)* Don't listen to them. They think they're all that *and* a bag of chips.

MIA: *(To others.)* I see Island's still attempting to be relevant.

CATHERINE: Hey, I don't know who you are, but you don't have to be so mean.

MIA: *(Taken aback.)* Excuse me?

VIVIAN: *(To Catherine, indicating Mia.)* Wait. You don't know who *she* is?

MIA: *(To Catherine, haughtily.)* Ever heard of "The Turning Place"?

CATHERINE: Wasn't Cameron Diaz in that movie?

VIVIAN: Yes, and so was Mia.

CATHERINE: *(To Mia.)* You were in that movie? Wait. I don't remember you.

HEATHER: She's in the crowd shot...on the street.

MIA: *(To Catherine, proudly.)* I was standing next to the girl who handed her the water.

VIVIAN: *(To Catherine.)* Have you done any commercial work?

CATHERINE: Commercial work?

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VIVIAN: *(Slowly.)* Have you ever appeared in a commercial?

CATHERINE: Not to my knowledge.

ISLAND: *(Sighs.)* This again...

VIVIAN: *(To Catherine.)* Ever heard of Snugz diapers?

ISLAND: *(Sighs.)* Here we go...

CATHERINE: *(Shrugs.)* Sure.

VIVIAN: Mia was in two commercials that ran nationwide.

CATHERINE: They ran commercials for teen mothers? That's pretty dang progressive.

(Island and Weslie laugh.)

MIA: Not *now*, nimrod. I was in them when I was a baby.

CATHERINE: Diapers? I would hope so!

ISLAND: *(To others, indicating Catherine.)* I like this one. Can we keep her?

CATHERINE: *(To Vivian, indicating Mia.)* So I'm supposed to know who she is because she was in commercials as a baby and was a background extra in a film? Obscure much? *(To Mia.)* I bet the royalties on those are literally in the tens of dollars.

(Weslie approaches and stands between Vivian and Heather.)

WESLIE: *(Laughing.)* Roasted! We're going to be a doing a comedy, right? This is so funny, am I right? Right? *(Holds up his hand for a high-five but the others ignore him.)*

MIA: Heather, I thought you said she was smart. *(Approaches Catherine.)* Let's get something straight, new fish. This is my auditorium, my stage, and my play. Stay out of my way, or get run over. *(Sweetly.)* Understand?

CATHERINE: *(To Island.)* What's with all the fish references?

ISLAND: It's a drama thing. The vets try to look tougher than they are so they use a prison term and call all newcomers "fish." They've been doing that for years and years.

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CATHERINE: And that's supposed to make the program seem inviting to new people?

MIA: It is what it is, Fishy. If you don't think you can handle it, please exit stage left. *(Points SL.)*

CATHERINE: *(Defiantly.)* Oh, I've got this.

MIA: We'll see about that. *(Approaches Todd and Skye.)* Hey, Todd, what are we doing about the spot this year? You're not going to make me look all bleached out like you did last year?

TODD: It's a follow spot. It just illuminates you. It doesn't—

MIA: Fix it.

TODD: *(Sighs.)* Well, I guess I could plug the R-FU in and bring up all the R-56—they are on group subs 8, 6, 7, 5, 30, and 9. Then we focus them on the upstage drops portal. When that's done, we can start the cue-to-cue as soon as you... *(Points at Mia.)* ...show up.

MIA: *(Threatening.)* You know I don't speak techie. *(Through clinched teeth.)* Just...fix...it.

TODD: Fine, fine. I suppose I could diffuse the light a little.

MIA: Good. Vivian, Heather, come here and run the audition lines with me. I want to be perfect by the time Keyes gets here.

VIVIAN: Coming, Mia.

HEATHER: Yes, Mia.

(Mia, Vivian, and Heather go USL.)

ISLAND: *(To Catherine.)* Hey, sorry. Welcome to drama. *(Points to herself.)* I'm Island.

CATHERINE: *(Points to herself.)* Catherine. "Island"?

ISLAND: Yeah, weird name, I know. My dad had a band called "The Island of Misfit Toys." He liked the name so much he gave it to his firstborn. My full name is "The Island of Misfit Toys Walker." I still can't believe my mom went along with it.

CATHERINE: So you were named after a band?

ISLAND: Yuppers, a punk band.

CATHERINE: *(Impressed.)* Wooooow!

WESLIE: *(To Island.)* That's actually pretty cool name!

ISLAND: Not if you don't want to be teased your whole life.

(To Catherine.) Everybody pretty much just calls me "Island."

TODD: It makes more sense than calling her "The Walker"...

(Snickers.) ...or "Texas Ranger."

ISLAND: *(Annoyed.)* Don't you have some technical difficulties that you need to attend to?

TODD: *(Shrugs.)* Not really, no.

SKYE: *(Calls.)* Todd!

TODD: *(Holds up finger.)* Belay that last. *(Runs over to Skye, shouts.)* What?!

(Skye points off.)

SKYE: *(Angry.)* I've got no signal on the sub!
What...did...you...do?!

TODD: Oh, calm down, Skye. If we use the quarter inch to Speakon, and then run that to a barrel, then use the Speakon to banana plug, we can get the sub to work.

SKYE: *(Growls.)* It better...

WESLIE: *(To Island, pointing at Skye.)* She scares me.

ISLAND: You don't know the half of it. She's pleasant now.
Just wait until production week.

WESLIE: What happens during production week? *(Backs up and accidentally bumps into a set piece. Part of it falls onto the floor. Looks around, sheepishly.)* Whoops, my bad.

ISLAND: Uh-oh.

WESLIE: *(Scared.)* Uh-oh, what?

(With a shovel in hand, Skye approaches Weslie.)

SKYE: *(Handing the shovel to Weslie.)* Here.

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WESLIE: (*Indicating shovel, confused.*) What am I supposed to do with this?

SKYE: Pick the spot.

WESLIE: What spot?

SKYE: (*Enraged, shouts.*) The spot where I'm going to bury your dismembered body, New Fish! (*Weslie lets out a high-pitched scream and runs off USR. Pointing SL, shouts.*) The Ag fields are that way, dead boy! (*To others, pleasantly.*) Please excuse me for just one second. I have to go have some words with the New Fish.

TODD: Play nice, Skye. We might need him in the booth.

SKYE: (*Sweetly.*) No promises. (*Starts to exit USR, shouts.*) Hereeeee, Fishy, Fishy! (*Exits.*)

CATHERINE: (*To Island, concerned.*) Is he going to be okay?

ISLAND: (*Dismissively.*) He'll be fine. Skye's just going to lay some ground rules. Like I said, pleasant.

CATHERINE: That's pleasant?

ISLAND: Oh, yeah. During production week, you don't even speak to Skye or Todd unless you're wearing class III ballistic armor.

CATHERINE: Geez.

ISLAND: Don't let that worry you. I need somebody sane in here so that I can stomach doing another production with Mia, Vivian, and Heather.

CATHERINE: I'll do my best.

ISLAND: You memorize the script?

CATHERINE: Yeah, like five minutes after we got it.

ISLAND: (*Impressed.*) Really?

CATHERINE: It was really short.

ISLAND: But it's Shakespeare! I swear, I don't know why Keyes has us audition with Shakespeare every year, but he does. We never actually do a Shakespeare play, but every...single...year...without fail, we audition with him.

MIA: (*To Vivian and Heather, loudly.*) Okay, tell me what you think. (*As Lady Macbeth, horribly/melodramatically.*)

"Come, you spirits

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That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here!"

(Breaks character.) I can't believe Keyes! "Unsex me here"? Oh, my gosh! This is not appropriate for high school students!

CATHERINE: *(Correcting.)* She's not talking about *that*. Lady Macbeth, in that speech, is asking to remove her fragile femininity so that she can commit violence just as a man would.

MIA: *(Sarcastically.)* Thanks, professor, that'll be all. *(Waves dismissively. Vivian and Heather laugh. As Lady Macbeth.)*
"And fill me from the crown to the toe topful
Of direst cruelty!"

ISLAND: *(Under her breath.)* That's shouldn't be hard.

MIA: *(Glares at Island. As Lady Macbeth.)*

"Make thick my blood,
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
Th' effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall..."

(Breaks character.) Ummm, eeeew!

"...you [murth'ring] ministers, [or "murd'ring"]

Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunest smoke of hell—"

(Breaks character.) —lloo, cursing! *(Continues melodramatically, struggling to remember at points.)*

"That my keen...knife see not...the wound it makes,
Nor heaven...peep through...the blanket of the...dark,
To cry...'Hold, hold!'" *(Vivian and Heather clap enthusiastically.)* Thank you, thank you! That's such a lame audition piece, though.

VIVIAN: I know, right?

CATHERINE: I don't think it's so bad. I kind of like it.

VIVIAN: You would.

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MIA: Well, enjoy giving it at the audition because that's the last time you'll be speaking in this production.

CATHERINE: Whatever.

ISLAND: (*Gesturing for Catherine to follow.*) Come on, Catherine, we'll run lines in the wings until Keyes gets here.

MIA: No, I'd like to see what New Fish brings to the table.

CATHERINE: You want me to do it now?

MIA: Sure. We can give you some tips on your performance.

VIVIAN/HEATHER: Yeah.

ISLAND: Forget it, Mia, you can see it when she does it in front of Keyes.

MIA: (*To Catherine.*) Figured as much. Can't take criticism, eh? It's the sign of a weak character.

CATHERINE: No, I can run it for you.

ISLAND: Catherine, you don't have to.

CATHERINE: No, it's okay.

MIA: Yeah, let's see you do it.

(*Catherine takes a few seconds to get into character while Mia, Vivian, and Heather make faces and roll their eyes. For the following, Catherine performs Lady Macbeth's soliloquy expertly.*)

CATHERINE: (*As Lady Macbeth.*)

"Come, you spirits

That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,

(*Mia, Vivian, and Heather snicker. Continues unfazed.*)

And fill me from the crown to the toe topful

Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood,

Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,

That no compunctious visitings of nature

Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between

Th' effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,

And take my milk for gall, you [murth'ring] ministers,

Wherever in your sightless substances

You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,

And pall thee in the dunkest smoke of hell,

That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry, 'Hold, hold!'"

(Silence. Everyone is stunned by her performance. Todd, Island, and Vivian begin clapping softly and then loudly. Heather smacks Vivian's hands to stop her.)

ISLAND: Yeah! That's what I'm talking about! *(To Catherine.)*

That was so good!

CATHERINE: *(Shyly.)* Thanks. You really think so?

ISLAND: Heck, yes, I do! *(To Mia.)* What now? Bring it!

MIA: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Whatever.

VIVIAN: I've seen better.

ISLAND: *(Pointing at Mia.)* Not from her, though. Can't wait for Keyes to get here. There's going to be a new sheriff in town.

MIA: Oh, shut it, Island, and get yourself a real name. Keyes knows who his leads are. He's not going to betray my stage just because some "flash in the pan" new fish has a good read.

CATHERINE: What does that even mean?

MIA: "Flash in the pan"? I have no idea, but my mom says it a lot.

VIVIAN: See... *(Indicating Catherine.)* ...she's not that smart.

MIA: *(To Catherine.)* Anyway, you were okay, but I wouldn't hold my breath.

ISLAND: *(Shocked.)* You just said she had a good read?

MIA: I guess I was overstating her performance.

ISLAND: That's not the only performance you overstate.

MIA: Bite me, Island.

(Weslie runs on USR.)

WESLIE: *(Screams.)* She's crazy! Save me, save me!

VIVIAN: Not my job, dead boy.

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WESLIE: (*Panicked.*) Seriously, You have to help me! She's going to kill me!

HEATHER: (*Patronizingly.*) She's not going to kill you, silly.

WESLIE: Yes, she is! She's psychotic! She has a *shovel!* (*Grabs Catherine, sobbing.*) Please, fellow new person, save a life!

CATHERINE: (*Sympathetically.*) I'd double back... (*Points DSR.*) ... and go that way. Don't worry, I'll cover for you.

WESLIE: Oh, thank you, thank you!

SKYE: (*Offstage, calls.*) Fiiiiishy!

TODD: (*To Weslie.*) She's coming! I'd run if I were you!

(*Weslie runs off DSR, screaming. Skye rushes on USR.*)

SKYE: (*To others, sweetly.*) Have any of you seen a screaming fish running through here?

CATHERINE: I think he went that way. (*Points USL.*)

TODD/ISLAND: (*Nods.*) Yeah, that way. (*Points USL.*)

ISLAND: Uh-huh. (*Points USL.*)

(*Skye heads USL.*)

MIA: No, Skye, he definitely went that way. (*Points DSR.*)

(*Skye looks at Catherine, Todd, and Island suspiciously.*)

SKYE: (*Smiling.*) Thank you, sweetie. (*Glares at Todd, Island, and Catherine, threateningly.*) Don't think I won't remember this.

CATHERINE: Why do you believe her... (*Points at Mia.*) ...over us?

SKYE: She knows the number-one rule of theater is to take care of the stage manger. Plus, I think she likes watching me work.

MIA: How is that coming, by the way?

SKYE: (*Shrugs.*) He's a slippery l'il fish, but I'll have him broke in before auditions start. Keyes still not here?

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VIVIAN/HEATHER: Not yet.

SKYE: Good, plenty of time. Kids these days...you know how they are.

VIVIAN/HEATHER/MIA: Pssssshhhh! Freshmen!

MIA: *(To Skye.)* Good luck!

SKYE: Awwww, thank you. *(Starts to exit DSR, calls.)* Come here, dead boy! We ain't done yet! *(Exits.)*

CATHERINE: *(To Mia.)* That was so mean!

MIA: That's drama. New fish pay their dues. It's the circle of life. *(To Todd.)* Why were you helping them?

TODD: I've been on the other side of that. It ain't pretty. New fish or not, I was trying to help a brother out.

MIA: Whatever, traitor. Don't you have some buttons to push in some booth somewhere? It's not like you're important.

TODD: *(Insulted.)* It's not like I'm important? It's not like I'm important?! Remember, without me "pushing buttons in a booth," you are just a bunch of people standing on the stage, trying to emote in the dark.

VIVIAN: Oh, come on! It's flipping a switch! How hard can it be?

TODD: Okay, well, I was going to put a gobo in the 19-degree, but the beam angle is all wrong. Then the LD thinks he is the PM and that I am just a box pusher instead of the TD. They came up with some crazy plan to change all the 3-pins to twist locks and paint all the Edisons blue. And, really, all I wanted was to drop some R 23 in the liptoes, but, noooo, now all we can use is GAM. They won't even buy any Lee. Ever try to convert GAM to LEE in your head just so you get a Rosco that is close? Have you?! *(Confused, the others just shake their head no. Smugly.)* Thought so.

VIVIAN: Wait, what? I didn't understand a word of that.

TODD: *(Shouts.)* Exactly! Being a squint ain't easy! Now, if you'll excuse me, I have some "buttons to push in a booth." *(Exits SR, strutting.)*

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CATHERINE: Another rule of stage we learned at Hillside Academy was that you take care of your technical crew as well.

MIA: (*Mockingly.*) "Another rule of stage at Hillside Academy," blah, blah, blah. (*To Vivian, indicating Catherine.*) Can you believe this girl?

VIVIAN: Total fish bait.

ISLAND: (*To Catherine.*) Come on, let's run lines over here.

(*Island and Catherine go USSR. Heather hesitantly approaches Mia.*)

HEATHER: Hey, Mia, I have a crazy idea. I know how we can stick it to the new fish.

MIA: All right, I'm listening.

HEATHER: Okay, and hear me out here. We actually do "Macbeth" ...as a musical.

MIA: Absolutely.

HEATHER: Wait, wait! Can't you see it?! (*Sings.*) "Die, die, die, my Duncan. Die, die, die!"

MIA: (*Shouts.*) No! No, no, no, no, no! No! Not while I still draw breath.

HEATHER: (*Disappointed.*) Awwwww.

VIVIAN: I don't get it, Heather. Why are you so obsessed with doing a musical?

HEATHER: Duh! Because musicals are awesome!

MIA: No, they're not.

(*Vivian pulls out her phone.*)

VIVIAN: (*To Heather.*) All they do is sing about all the stuff they could just be saying anyway.

HEATHER: (*Enthusiastically.*) That's why they're awesome! They're so happy, and you can make a song out of any situation!

VIVIAN: (*Messing with her phone, not really paying attention.*) Wow, right, any situation. Yeah, Heather, sure.

HEATHER: Like, for instance, what are you doing right now?

VIVIAN: Jenny sent me a message that Stephanie put something on Twitter last night about how Brad was going to ask me out, but I can't find it.

HEATHER: *(Excitedly.)* Like that! Exactly like that!

MIA: *(Unconvinced.)* You can make a song about her trying to find a message on her phone?

(Heather ponders this.)

HEATHER: Yes, yes, I can.

MIA: Yeah, right.

(Heather grabs Vivian's phone.)

VIVIAN: Hey!

HEATHER: *(To the tune of the Sesame Street theme song, "Can You Tell Me How to Get to Sesame Street," sings.)*

"There's no way,
I can find my message today.
I have to know if Brad is sweet.
Can you tell me how to get,
How to get to Stephanie's tweet.
How to get to Stephanie's tweeeeeeet."

MIA: I can't believe I just witnessed that happen.

HEATHER: So you liked it? Was it cool?

(Mia takes Vivian's phone and throws it.)

MIA: No.

VIVIAN: Hey! *(Runs after her phone.)*

MIA: It's not like there's a signal in here, anyway. *(To Heather.)* Let me put this as plainly as I can: No musicals. Do you understand me, Heather?

HEATHER: *(Deflated.)* Yes, Mia.

MIA: A little louder...I didn't quite hear you.

HEATHER: *(On the verge of tears.)* I said, "Yes, Mia!"
(Vivian recovers her phone.)

VIVIAN: *(To Heather.)* See! I told you so.

MIA: Good, glad that's settled. *(Goes to DCS. To herself, practicing.)* "You murdering ministers." "You murdering ministers." *(Coughs.)* "You murdering Ministers...Ministers"! *(Lights flicker for a moment and then everything goes dark. Everybody screams. Shouts.)* Todd!

(Lights up. All have gravitated toward CS. Todd enters SR.)

TODD: Sorry about that. Just shaking the "rust" off the board. We might run into a couple more of those unexpected blackouts. The DMX is being temperamental today.

VIVIAN: So speak your mumbo-jumbo magic words at it and fix it.

TODD: DMX is magic, all right. Voodoo magic. I've considered sacrificing a chicken to the board on many a performance night. Turns out, school rules don't allow it.

ISLAND: Also, the theater ghost might be vegan.

TODD: That'd actually explain a lot.

CATHERINE: Theater ghost?

ISLAND: All theaters are haunted, or so I've been told.

CATHERINE: We didn't have one at Hillside.

TODD: Of course, you did. You just never had to deal with it.

HEATHER: If only our theater ghost was a handsome mask-wearing musical genius singing to me about being his angel of music. *(Sighs. Sings softly.)* "My angel of musiiiiic."

VIVIAN: Heather!

HEATHER: Sorry.

MIA: Sacrificing chickens to magic light boards and theater ghosts, no wonder everybody thinks drama kids are weird.

(Weslie falls out from the DSR curtain with his legs still behind the curtain. Everybody looks.)

WESLIE: *(High-pitched scream. To others, shouts.)* Save me!

(Weslie holds out his arms as he is dragged back behind the curtains. Nobody reacts except Catherine.)

CATHERINE: I'm sure *that* has nothing to do with it, either.

ISLAND: That? No, that's normal.

CATHERINE: And you're *sure* he's all right?

ISLAND: He'll be fine.... *(High-pitched screaming is heard backstage.)* ...probably.

TODD: I'll check on him, make sure she's not going overboard. When it comes to new fish, Skye's the limit. *(Laughs.)* Get it? I kill me! *(No one laughs.)* My humor is lost on you people. *(Exits DSR.)*

CATHERINE: I seriously worry about all of you.

ISLAND: You mean you didn't have anything like our new fish program at Hillside?

CATHERINE: No, nothing like *that*. *(Points USR.)* I mean, of course, we had our people with inflated egos... *(Looks at Mia and Vivian.)* ...but like your theater ghost, I think every program has those.

MIA: Why did you look at us when you said that?

ISLAND: Oh, come on, Mia. Deny it.

VIVIAN: Ego? I don't even like waffles. *(Laughs. Everybody just stares at her. Vacuously.)* What?

MIA: *(A long-suffering sigh.)* Vivian, what have I said about speaking when you have no clue what you're talking about?

VIVIAN: *(Whines.)* But then I wouldn't ever say anything.

MIA: *(Sternly.)* Vivian!

VIVIAN: Yes, Mia.

CATHERINE: That's exactly what I'm talking about. It's why I looked at you specifically. You're a bully, Mia. There was a girl just like you at Hillside Academy. Her name was

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Margaret, and she thought that she was queen of all existence. She was all buddy-buddy with the theater director, Dr. Vaughn. She got the leads in everything she was in. She ordered everyone around, just like you. *(To Island.)* I was looking forward to doing drama, and I thought I could ignore her, but I'm not sure that I can deal with... *(Points to Mia.)* ...another Margaret through an entire production.

ISLAND: *(Grabs Catherine's arm.)* Stay, please stay.

CATHERINE: Why?

ISLAND: Because if you leave, then they win. The Mias and the Margarets of the world get away with everything.

CATHERINE: *(Hesitantly.)* I don't know. *(Starts to exit.)*

MIA: *(Mocking.)* Awwwww, we'll miss you. Bye, Felicia. *(Waves.)*

VIVIAN: *(Laughing.)* Felicia! *(Scratches head.)* Who's Felicia?

CATHERINE: *(To Island.)* You know what? You're right.

ISLAND: So you'll stay to audition?

CATHERINE: Can't let them get us down.

ISLAND: Besides, you're so good. Keyes will have to cast you as a lead.

CATHERINE: Thanks, we'll see.

(Todd, Skye, and Weslie enter SR.)

SKYE: *(To Weslie.)* So stage right is where we keep the second set of cans.

WESLIE: So you're saying I could be in charge of this whole side of the stage? *(Evil laugh, wrings hands.)* Think of the power...

SKYE: *(Scolding.)* No maniacal laughter in front of the actors. It makes them nervous.

WESLIE: *(Submissively.)* Yes, Skye.

ISLAND: Skye, I think you've broken him in.

SKYE: *(Patting Weslie's back, proudly.)* He's not too bad for a new fish. I think I've got a stage manager in-training.

WESLIE: Really?! You think so?! I could be a stage...
(*Relishing the word.*) ...manager?

SKYE: Maybe...if you play your cards right, learn from the
best, i.e. me... (*Points to herself and then glares at Weslie.*)
...and don't do anything stupid!

WESLIE: Yes, Skye.

SKYE: (*Nodding.*) Now, what have we learned?

(*Note: For the following, Skye and Weslie's interaction should be
reminiscent of a drill sergeant and recruit with Weslie reciting his
lines with a military cadence.*)

WESLIE: (*Reciting.*) "Cues are inflexible, props are life, and
actors are idiots."

ACTORS: Hey!

WESLIE: (*Reciting.*) "Skye's word is the law, and her law is
the word."

SKYE: What happens if somebody messes with the props or
set?

WESLIE: (*Reciting.*) "We bury them in the deepest, darkest,
blackest, hole we can find, where they will remain for
timeless eternity contemplating their utter idiocy."

(*Skye pulls out a piece of candy and gives it to Weslie.*)

SKYE: Good boy.

(*Weslie happily munches on the candy.*)

ISLAND: (*To others, shocked.*) Oh my gosh, she's cloned
herself.

SKYE: I've found that Pavlov's methodology works best when
training new fish.

CATHERINE: That's terrifying.

[END OF FREEVIEW]