

Death by Shakespeare
by Dan Fiorella

Dan Fiorella
daf118@aol.com
www.danfiorella.com

Death by Shakespeare

By Dan Fiorella

FADE IN:

EXT. OAK ISLAND PIT -- EVENING

It's a rural construction site; drilling machines, earth movers, and water pumps are chugging way. A rope from a winch leads down into a deep pit. TODD AINSWORTH, a dashing adventurer, early 30s, carries a clipboard and talks with a stuff-shirt, 3-piece suit BACKER.

TODD

Today's the day. I can feel it.
(rubs fingers together)
It's tangible.

BACKER

You'll excuse me if I hold onto my confetti just yet. You're down over 200 feet. It's not a pit any more, it's a mine.

They walk over to a table set up with a chart of the pit.

BACKER (CONT'D)

The partners are getting nervous.

TODD

Nervous? I'm the one putting up the bulk of the money.

BACKER

Because you like this cockamamie stuff. They just want a return on their capital. No pirate has ever buried a treasure this deep.

TODD

Ah, but maybe they never had anything this valuable to bury this deep before. Look at this pit. It's not just a hole in the ground. Thick oak planks every ten feet. Rock cistern to flood the pit if someone gets down to the 100 foot mark. Layers of stone slabs. Iron bars. Some kind of primitive cement. Oh, there's something down there, all right. People have been excavating this pit for 200 years and dug up nothing but failure. I'm reaching the bottom, mate.

BACKER

Well, you had better reach it soon.
Before you wind up with a tunnel to
China.

Suddenly, everything comes to a dead halt.

WORKER (O.S.)

Mr. Ainsworth! We hit something!

Todd and Backer come over to the pit site.

There's an intercom rigged up on the table. Todd gets on
it.

TODD

Toby, you there?

TOBY (O.S.)

That I am, boss.

TODD

What do you have?

TOBY (O.S.)

There's a bloody hatch down here.
Looks like oak. There's a cruifix
where the knob would be. And a heavy-
duty padlock.

TODD

You have the bolt cutters?

TOBY (O.S.)

I have.

TODD

Use em. Any Mason symbols?

BACKER

The treasure of the Knights of
Templar?

TODD

Sh! Toby you there?

TOBY (O.S.)

Just snapping through the chains.
No, no Mason symbology. But it's a
Christian door. Crosses carved into
the entire door.

TODD

Get the video snake down there!

The Crew unspools a fiber optic video camera device down
the pit.

TODD (CONT'D)
 Toby, hold on, we're sending down
 the snake eye. I want to see this.

TOBY (O.S.)
 Okay. Padlocks off. I'm
 testing...the door opens.

A monitor by Todd flickers to life. A fuzzy picture of TOBY in the pit comes on. Toby, a rugged-looking Scotsman, is before a small wooden door.

INTERCUT:

INT. PIT -- CONTINUOUS

There's a small wooden door in the side of the pit. There's a cruifix where the knob would be. There's a heavy, ancient padlock and chain cut away.

TOBY
 You receiving?

TODD
 That's what you wore?

TOBY
 You're a funny one, Todd.

Toby pushes the door open and looks in.

TODD
 What is it?

TOBY
 Dark.

TODD
 Let the robo-cam go in first with
 the lights.

TOBY
 It's going in now.

The monitor shows nothing.

TODD
 Lights, please.

The monitor comes alive, showing a cave.

TODD (CONT'D)
 A cave! The pit leads to a cave!

There in the cave is a old wooden crate, chained closed.
 Then a shadow rushes by.

TODD (CONT'D)
What was that?

TOBY (O.S.)
What was what?

TODD
I thought I saw something run by.

TOBY (O.S.)
No treasure that I can see.

TODD
There's a chest.

TOBY (O.S.)
I see it.

TODD
Can it come up?

TOBY (O.S.)
The chain looks ready to give way.
I'm going to open it.

TODD
Steady, man.

Toby comes into the frame as he reaches the crate. The chains push easily away. He pulls at the lid and it opens.

There's a flash of energy.

The monitor goes to static. Then a face. The face of a Shakespearian-era WITCH, an old hag, fills the screen. Toby screams.

The monitor and the intercom go out.

TODD (CONT'D)
Toby? Toby? What's going on?
Where's the video?

TECHIE
We're working on it, sir. We don't
know what's causing it.

Suddenly the monitor goes on. There's Toby's body, lifeless by the crate. The picture moves in closer and closer. There's something in Toby's hand. It's a manuscript, a 17th century script in perfect condition.

The robo-cam goes in closer until you can see the cover. In Old English handwriting it reads: "Macbeth by William Shakespeare."

INT. BART & MAX'S DORM -- DAY

MAX FEDERMAN, a bookish, bespectacled scruffy student is packing. BART AVON, a good-looking college jock in his jersey carrying a football looks on. He's with his friend, JULIE QUILL, a perky, school-spirit kind of junior.

MAX

Shakespeare????

JULIE

What?

MAX

It's Shakespeare. You want him to do Shakespeare?

BART

I can't do Shakespeare.

JULIE

You're in performing arts. Of course you're going to do Shakespeare. It's a Shakepearian festival for God's sake.

BART

So we're staying for spring break?

JULIE

We have to rehearse. We have to prepare if we want this on its feet when classes resume.

MAX

That sounds exciting...in an opposite kind of way.

JULIE

Bart, what did you enroll in acting class for?

MAX

Because there are a ton of girls and the only competition is gay guys.

BART

Don't say that! Out loud!

JULIE

Very noble.

BART

Since when do you take Max seriously? Can you believe I'd do that to meet girls?

JULIE
That's how you met me!

MAX
Mission accomplished.

BART
Shut up, Max.

MAX
Look, Julie, don't get upset. I'm joking. Bart met you and that's as far as it went. So, of course he'll be there for your Shakepearian festival. Because it means so much to you.

JULIE
Why don't you stay and help?

MAX
You mean nothing to me.

BART
I mean, they could always use more help.

MAX
For a Shakespearean festival? I'm a writer. What could I possibly contribute?

BART
Sets to be built. Lights to be hung. Things to be fetched.

MAX
There's spring to be broken.

JULIE
I have to get going. Finals.

BART
So, I'll be seeing you?

JULIE
Will you? Will you really?

She leaves.

Max pulls some socks out of his case.

MAX
Not mine.

He tosses them to Bart's dresser, knocking into a mirror. It topples over and Bart grabs it before it falls.

BART

Watch it. You break it and it's seven years bad luck.

Bart pulls out a rabbit's foot and rubs it.

MAX

You know, I broke the rearview mirror on my car. That must mean bad luck for seven years or seven thousand miles, whichever comes first.

BART

Come on, man. Stay. It'll be great.

Max slams the suitcase closed.

MAX

Your mouth says "yes," but my ears hear "no."

BART

Well, it would be awful if while you were gone it came out.

MAX

What came out?

BART

How a successful student was running a term paper mill on campus.

MAX

I did no such thing! And you bought five of them!

BART

Hate to see you expelled over that.

MAX

Dirty, miserable jock.

INT. SUV -- DAY

Todd, driving, is on the hands-free cell phone.

BACKER (O.S.)

Where are you now?

TODD

At Wexler College. There's a gent here who can authenticate the manuscript.

BACKER (O.S.)

None of us are too thrilled with you
running around with a priceless
artifact.

TODD

Fret not, my liege, fret not.

EXT. COLLEGE THEATER -- DAY

Max and Bart walk toward the theater, tossing a football
around. It's an old building, far removed from the main
campus. Attached to it is Wilkes hall, holding offices and
classrooms of the drama department. Max lets one fly. Bart
chases after it and makes an amazing flying catch, rolling
into the ground with it.

MAX

Lucky catch.

A shiny SUV pulls up. Todd gets out, carrying a secured
briefcase.

TODD

Excuse me---

MAX

Yeah?

TODD

I'm looking for Professor Frankel.

BART

Yes, his office is upstairs above
the theater. You enter through Wilkes
Hall.

TODD

Thanks.

Todd trots off.

Bart gets up and throws the ball.

BART

Go long!

Max has to chase after it.

MAX

Stupid jock.

INT. PROFESSOR FRANKEL'S OFFICE -- DAY

Todd knocks and pokes his head in.

TODD
Professor Frankel?

FRANKEL
Yes?

Todd looks up to see professor TRENT FRANKEL at the top of a ladder at his vast shelves of books. He's an older, lanky, disheveled, slightly crazed-looking soul.

The office is a disarrangement of papers, scripts, books and theater props. There's a desk with a PC and, over in the corner, a printer.

FRANKEL (CONT'D)
Up here.

TODD
Prof. Frankel. I'm Todd Ainsworth.
We spoke.

FRANKEL
Ah, yes, come in. Come in. You're
the adventurer who wanted to
authenticate a manuscript.

TODD
That's right. I'm told you're the
local expert.

FRANKEL
Well, people talk.

Frankel comes down and shakes Todd's hand. He sees the case.

FRANKEL (CONT'D)
Is that it?

TODD
Yes.

FRANKEL
I'm betting you think it's for real.

TODD
Oh, yes.

FRANKEL
So, what do you know about it?

TODD
You've heard of the Oak Island Pit?

FRANKEL
Oak Island? Just north of here?
Sure! There's buried treasure there
the stories say.

TODD

My team and I were able to reach the bottom of the pit. There we found an ancient vault. Inside that vault; this.

He opens the case to Frankel, and unfolds some waxed protective wrapping. Inside is "Macbeth."

FRANKEL

This? Was at the bottom of a pit?

TODD

It was.

Frankel starts looking it over.

FRANKEL

I can't believe it. It can't be.

TODD

Can't be what?

FRANKEL

Shakespeare's original manuscript. This is amazing. This is astounding. Ye gods!

TODD

Good, eh?

FRANKEL

Good? This is freakin' fantastic! Let's talk.

Frankel clears some clutter off a chair and offers it to Todd.

INT. LAB -- DAY

Frankel and Todd wait as a very intense professor of science, DR. GOUGH, studies some monitors and a print-out. The crate from the cave is there as well.

They study the manuscript under a microscope.

They carefully go over the pages.

They study the crate and chain.

Frankel has a text book of Shakespeare's signature and writing and compares it to the manuscript.

The portfolio is under a scanning device.

GOUGH

Extraordinary! Now I'm glad you kept me around for this.

FRANKEL

Then it's authentic?

GOUGH

The chest, the wood all typical 17th century workmanship, so the manuscript has to be that old, at least. Analysis of the paper and ink all point to the same conclusion; What you have there is a really old book. I'd like to run one other test. Pollen.

TOBY

Pollen?

GOUGH

We check the parchments for pollens. That can help us place the book in England. This is a tremendous find if you can prove that's Shakespeare's scribbling.

TODD

I'm sure of it. Thank you, Doctor.

GOUGH

When are you going to announce?

FRANKEL

Mr. Ainsworth has left that to me. I run the drama program, so I know a thing or two about timing.

TODD

This'll set the academic world on its ear. It's huge!

FRANKEL

"When the hurlyburly's done, When the battle's lost and won. That will be ere the set of sun. Upon the heath. There to meet with...*Macbeth*."

The monitors and print-out register activity ever so briefly.

INT. THEATER -- DAY

A group of students seated in the audience.

SALLY, a comely blond, and TOM, a regular looking serious actor (both 20), enter, and take their seats.

(Everyone entering carries a book bag or backpack or laptop case or tote bag or some such thing).

SALLY

---I asked him, am I too tall for the role? Too short? Too young? Too old? He looks me straight in the eye and says "Yes." I really hate auditions.

TOM

Sally, that was two weeks ago. I know mobsters who give up vendettas in less time.

SALLY

And what's that supposed to mean?

Tom shrugs as a couple of seniors enter: GLENN, a pushy, intense guy and LYLE, a slick stand-up comic wanna-be.

GLENN

---I'm telling you, Lyle, I march into their offices in a gorilla suit holding my script and they'll read it. How could they not read a script from a guy in a gorilla suit?

LYLE

So you're actually going to rent a gorilla suit?

GLENN

Rent? I own!

They grab seats near Tom and Sally.

DONNA hurries in, out of breath and joins the group. She's a brassy, New York-type, another senior.

DONNA

Hey, guys. What are we talking about?

LYLE

The usual.

DONNA

The gorilla suit?

GLENN

You're late. She's late, isn't she, Tom?

TOM

You're late.

DONNA

My second audition ran way late.
But it was worth it. I think the
casting director liked me.

TOM

Why? He asked you back?

DONNA

After I finished, he said "next,
please." They never say please.

LYLE

Sounds like you're a shoo-in, Donna.

GLENN

Is that what you wore? That? Man,
I've told you a million times, Donna,
you gotta flash them some skin.

DONNA

Glenn, it was an audition for "The
Sound of Music." I was up for the
part of a nun.

GLENN

Well, you can kiss that part good-
bye.

SALLY

What "Sound of Music" audition? I
didn't see that.

DONNA

Neither did I but someone from my
first audition mentioned it, so I
ran over.

SALLY

You just ran over without preparing?
Without warming up? Just cold, like
that?

DONNA

Uh-huh.

SALLY

You're allowed to do that?

LYLE

Tom, Tom, okay, so how's this--
(comic persona)

Ever notice the sign on the way to
the airport? The one that says
"Caution, low flying planes?" What's
the deal with that? What?

(MORE)

LYLE (CONT'D)

If a plane flies over, I'm supposed to duck? I don't get it.

TOM

Lyle, would you please come up with your own style?

LYLE

I'm working on it, I'm working hard. And I'll know my own style as soon as I see it.

DONNA

Try harder.

LYLE

I don't get no respect. No respect at all.

SALLY

I'll be right back. I have to freshen up.

LYLE

Me, too.

Donna pulls him down.

DONNA

You're fresh enough.

Sally goes up onstage and heads to the backstage area.

INT. BACKSTAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Bart and Max enter. There's a ladder up against a wall. Bart steers them out from under it.

MAX

Ah, the theater! The smell of the greasepaint, the roar of the crowd.

BART

That's not greasepaint.

MAX

Then, seriously, you need to get some scented candles going in here.

BART

Stop being so negative.

MAX

Why?

BART

Look at it as a chance to meet some nice girl. There are a lot of nice ones here. And the bulk of the student population is gone.

MAX

Off on spring break.

BART

Less competition for you.

Julie comes over, clipboard in hand, harried and frizzled.

BART (CONT'D)

Julie! Hi! I brought Max.

JULIE

Oh, great. We can use the help. Help.

BART

You okay?

JULIE

I'm thinking I bit off more than I can chew.

Bart starts massaging Julie's shoulders.

BART

Don't worry.

MAX

We're all here to help you regurgitate.

JULIE

Professor Frankel told me what we're doing.

BART

Henry the Fifth?

MAX

Oh, too bad. I hear it's not as good as Henry the Fourth. But, sequels rarely are.

JULIE

No, we have to put on...the Scottish play.

BART

Why?

JULIE

Didn't say. Something about a surprise.

BART

Really? It's a 500 year old play. How many surprises are left?

MAX

Okay, I'm not the biggest Shakespeare-phile here, but what's the Scottish Play?

JULIE

The Comedy of Glamis.

MAX

Sorry.

JULIE

Scottish general and his Lady, Macduff and King Duncan, the Scottish business.

MAX

Oh, Mac---

Bart covers Max's mouth.

BART

Sh!

MAX

What?

BART

You can't say it.

MAX

I can't say Mac---

Bart silences him again.

JULIE

No, please.

MAX

What? I was just saying---

BART

Don't!

MAX

Why not?

JULIE

The curse.

MAX

Curse? What curse?

JULIE

You can't say the name of the play.

MAX

What play? Mac---

Bart covers Max's mouth again and they drag him out the rear exit. Julie follows.

EXT. THEATER -- CONTINUOUS

Bart releases Max.

MAX

Will you stop doing that!

BART

Calm down.

JULIE

He was doing it because you were going to say Macbeth.

MAX

You just said it!

JULIE

We're not in the theater now.

BART

It's bad luck to say the play's name in a theater.

MAX

That's the stupidest thing I ever heard! I can say Macbeth here...

He steps inside the door.

MAX (CONT'D)

But not here?

BART

Right.

MAX

Is it me?

He steps back outside.

JULIE

Legend has it that the play is jinxed. Has been from the beginning.

(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)

Every performance has met with problems or worse. From Shakespeare's own production on down.

MAX

So nobody ever calls "Macbeth" Macbeth?

BART

Right.

MAX

And if you do say it?

BART

Bad things.

MAX

Bad things? How bad?

JULIE

It varies. Maybe an actor gets hurt. Maybe the theater burns down.

MAX

And once said, everyone is doomed?

BART

There's a counter-curse to break the spell.

JULIE

Oh, right. Frankel mentioned it in class when we were studying theater lore.

MAX

Lore?

BART

Lore.

MAX

And you believe this?

BART

No, of course not. No. Yeah.

JULIE

It's a theater tradition. And you don't mess with theater tradition. Actors are a superstitious bunch.

MAX

Athletes are worse.

BART

What?

MAX

Who wore the same underwear for 10 games straight?

BART

Point taken.

MAX

This is like that whole "break a leg" thing where you can't say "good luck."

BART

Exactly. So just don't say it.

MAX

I bet you can say "Florida" when you're in Florida.

BART

Max.

MAX

Fine, fine, it's "The McPlay" from here on in.

JULIE

Great! Let's hit those floorboards!

INT. LAB -- NIGHT

Gough is alone, working on an electronic scanner device. He's got a monitor on, displaying a highly magnified portion of the folio. He sees some pollen.

GOUGH

There we are, my little piece of pollen.

He extracts it and places it under a microscope.

A cackle is heard. Gough looks up but dismisses it. He turns to a reference book. Finding the sample listed, it's a flower indigenous to England.

GOUGH (CONT'D)

Broom. Spartium scoparium. Genista scoparius. Sarothamnus scoparius. Habitat; The densely-growing Broom, a shrub indigenous to England, grows wild all over temperate Europe and northern Asia, being found in abundance on sandy pastures and heaths. Bingo.

The cackling again. The electronic equipment comes to life on its own. Confused, Gough goes to turn things off. Nothing happens. He goes to the main over ride switch. A beaker falls over, spilling liquid all over the floor by the switch. Gough steps in it as he throws the switch and is electrocuted.

INT. THEATER -- DAY

The actors are moving around on the stage.

INT. BACKSTAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Max is sweeping up some saw dust from a carpentry project in progress. He's trying to stay out of the sight of the actors.

MAX

(muttering)

What? And give up show business?

He fills a dust bin and looks around to dump it. He heads off to a hallway to find a garbage can.

He finds a door labeled "waste" and goes in. He finds a trash can and dumps his sweepings. Then the door slams shut.

There's a moment, then the knob clicks and tries to turn.

MAX (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hello?

More shaking of the knob and knocking.

MAX (CONT'D)

Ding-dong, Stafford-on-Avon calling.

ANNETTE comes walking by the door. She's a tiny, frizzy Bohemian, cheerfully stressed, carrying all manner of paper and scripts and a clipboard.

ANNETTE

Hello?

MAX

In here.

She opens the door.

ANNETTE

Hello. This isn't the entrance.

MAX

20/20 hindsight. I'm here helping with the festival. Max.

ANNETTE

Annette.

(MORE)

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

I'm Professor Frankel's intern. I'm assisting with him on the festival.

She's staring at Max.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

Wow, your aura's really in conflict. It shouldn't be. You're really helping us. Not everyone showed. Stupid spring break. I mean, people make commitments to do hard work then skip out to have fun. Fun's fun but it's not very satisfying.

MAX

Okay, great. I have to get back to work now.

He steps back into the closet and closes the door. Annette blinks, shrugs and moves on.

Sally comes down and enters the bathroom. A beat later, Max peeks out of the closet. He goes back in. A moment later, he peeks out again. He decides to chance it. As he steps out, Sally comes out, swinging the door out into Max. Max is down. Sally bends down to help him up. During the fussing, Max sees Sally and is instantly smitten.

SALLY

Oh, I'm sorry. Are you all right?

MAX

That's all right. Nothing folded or mutilated.

SALLY

You're new here? I didn't see you come in.

MAX

Yes, yes. I am. I'm with Bart. Bart Avon. This is my first time. I was in the closet for a while but I figured it was safe to come out now.

SALLY

Good for you. I'm Sally. I know how difficult that can be---

MAX

Max. It was a little embarrassing, I wasn't sure if I should stay in or not. I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings.

SALLY

You really can't worry about anyone but yourself.

MAX

I know! I keep saying that but everyone keeps throwing a guilt trip at me, so here I am. It's happened to you?

SALLY

No, but to a lot of my friends. So live and let live, I say. After all, what do you expect in the drama department? They're not called drama queens for nothing.

Sally chuckles, as does Max, though he doesn't know why, exactly. Except that Sally's cute.

SALLY (CONT'D)

Well, if you're here for the Shakespeare festival, we'd better get going. Come out, meet everyone else. You're part of the team now. We're running some scenes now. And waiting for the big announcement. I'm sure Bart is wondering where you are.

MAX

Lead on, McDuff.

SALLY

That's it, get right into the spirit of things. Come on.

Sally takes Max's hand and leads him into the theater.

INT. THEATER -- CONTINUOUS

Max and Sally enter. The group is up and about, including Bart and Julia.

ANNETTE

Oh, you're back. Everyone, this is Max. He's new.

LYLE

Ah, fresh meat.

MAX

I'm sort of indentured volunteer. I'm really a writer. Not an actor.

DONNA

A writer, eh? So, you write any women's roles?

MAX

Ah, no. Not as a rule.

SALLY

I'm surprised. I thought you'd be more in touch with your feminine side. You really should work on female roles.

DONNA

Really. If I see one more no-name waitress part, I think I'll scream.

SALLY

Exactly. Or the girl friend in peril. There's a stretch.

GLENN

Don't worry, girls. I got it covered. I'm working on a piece about a hooker with a heart of gold!

DONNA

Gosh, things are looking up.

MAX

You're a writer?

GLENN

Writer-slash-actor.

LYLE

Slash idiot.

GLENN

Why I oughta---

LYLE

Nyuk, nyuk, nyuk.

MAX

You're right. I should write more women parts...

He gazes a bit at Sally. Max then realizes Donna is looking at him, as if waiting.

MAX (CONT'D)

Not this second.

DONNA

When you make it big, remember your friends.

MAX

I will...

Donna goes to her seat.

MAX (CONT'D)

Who was that?

SALLY

This is all exciting.

MAX

Eh, Shakespeare's not so great.

SALLY

What?

MAX

If he was really good, he'd have a theme song.

LYLE

I like that. Can I use it?

MAX

Knock yourself out. You do stand-up?

LYLE

Oh yeah.

GLENN

Not only him. When he's onstage, everyone stands up...and leaves.

LYLE

Okay, I need a lot more stage time.

GLENN

He froze last time.

TOM

Like an Eskimo Pie.

LYLE

I need more stage time.

MAX

Can't me get up there. I'd freeze up, too.

Frankel and Todd enter and make their way to the stage.
Todd is carrying a large case.

FRANKEL

Halt, everyone, halt!
(MORE)

FRANKEL (CONT'D)

If we had presses, I'd demand that they be stopped. Please take your seats!

The group grabs some seats.

FRANKEL (CONT'D)

I have some incredibly wonderful news, brought to us by my new best friend, Mr. Todd Ainsworth, patron of the arts.

The girls look suitably impressed with the hunky Todd, who tips his hat to them.

FRANKEL (CONT'D)

As you are aware, we are opening the spring semester term with a fund raiser. A Shakespeare orgy of high drama.

Glenn's hand goes up.

FRANKEL (CONT'D)

A metaphorical orgy, Mr. Tazmont.

Glenn's hand goes back down.

FRANKEL (CONT'D)

And we will cap the festival with our production of Shakespeare's Unmentionable play.

Max leans over to Sally.

MAX

The "M" play?

Sally nods. Max turns to look at Bart and with a "I knew that" grin.

FRANKEL

And that play will feature this as the cornerstone of our fund raiser.

Todd opens the case for all to see. The portfolio is in there. He sets it on a table.

FRANKEL (CONT'D)

This recently unearthed manuscript. It is the Scottish play, the original draft. In Shakespeare's own hand.

The crowd looks appropriately impressed.

JULIE

Professor, you can't be serious.

FRANKEL

Serious as sword fight. Come, come and gaze upon it.

ANNETTE

Is that what Professor Gough was working on when he---?

FRANKEL

Alas, yes. It was his testing that confirmed the authenticity of this script.

ANNETTE

Poor Professor Gough.

The group hustles up.

INT. STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

TOM

How?

FRANKEL

Mr. Ainsworth will be happy to regale us with his tale. But foremost, he is to be thanked for allowing us to use this venue as the first public display of the play.

GLENN

Paying customers will flock in to see this. That's what I call stunt-casting.

JULIE

This is going to be some fund-raiser.

DONNA

Well, ain't you the little Indiana Jones.

TODD

You flatter me.

DONNA

I'm just getting warmed up, honey.

TODD

Can't let my alma mater down, can I?

Todd begins to tell the story of the digging of the pit. Glenn and Sally confer at one end of the group.

GLENN
So, the new guy, is he with anyone?

SALLY
He's with Bart.

GLENN
Bart? I didn't think Bart was a member of the club.

SALLY
That's what Max told me. Look at them, they're thick as thieves. They are so a couple.

At the other end of the group, Bart is conferring with Max.

BART
(a bit loud)
Max, I could kiss you.

MAX
This is what my life has come to.

BART
That whole bit about the Scottish play; golden. Julia and I have been sharing quite the laugh at your expense.

MAX
Glad I could help.

BART
We've really bonded over it. I don't want to talk about it too much---

MAX
Right. You don't want to jinx it.

Meanwhile, off to another side of the group, Lyle and Annette are whispering. Annette is staring at the manuscript.

ANNETTE
Something's not right.

LYLE
What?

ANNETTE
This book has an aura. Never saw a book with an aura before.

LYLE
It's just an old, moldy book.

ANNETTE

With an aura?

Lyle's at a lost.

Max looks over to see Glenn and Sally head to head, deep in discussion.

MAX

So, what's Sally's story? She's a cutie.

BART

Why?

MAX

Why? You promised me women.

BART

I really don't know her. She's in the advance classes. Looks like her and Glenn are an item, though.

MAX

Figures.

Todd finishes his tale. Apparently, Donna's the only one really paying attention.

FRANKEL

Come now, let us imbibe! Tarry not, underlings, tarry not!

Donna takes Todd's arm as the group exits the auditorium. But Max hangs back. Sally does as well. They stare at the folio.

SALLY

Is it me, or is there something there?

MAX

I feel it, too.

SALLY

What is it?

MAX

I don't know. I think...this is speaking to me.

SALLY

How?

MAX

I'm a writer. For as long as I can remember, I've wanted to write.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

And this is Shakespeare, *the* writer. Not the icon. Not the legend. Not the high school class. He sweated over this. Look, you can see where things are crossed out and changed. This is amazing. This is history. This is immortality. It's a testament to him that after all this time, we care.

SALLY

That's so poetic. Bart is one lucky man.

MAX

Sure, with all his lucky charms why wouldn't he be?

Sally smiles.

Glenn pokes his head into the auditorium.

GLENN

Hey, Sally, c'mon! You too, newbie!

SALLY

Coming?

MAX

In a minute. You go. I know you don't want to keep him waiting.

SALLY

He does get fussy and cranky if he has to wait. You'll catch up?

MAX

I'll catch up.

Sally leaves.

MAX (CONT'D)

How did she know about Bart's lucky charms? Oh, well.

Max looks around. He's about to touch the manuscript when...

BANQUO (O.S.)

Thou dost invite danger with thy actions.

Max pulls back and spins to see BANQUO, a pale, older man, in clothes and manner of the 16th century, at odds with these modern times.

MAX

What? Who are you? Security?

BANQUO

In a matter of speech. I am here to tell thou it is unwise to dally with that accursed play.

MAX

Sorry. I just wanted to touch...immortality.

BANQUO

Nay, not immortality but damnation. T'were fools for bringing it aground.

MAX

Look, sir, maybe you need to talk to Professor Frankel. He's sort of in charge---

TODD (O.S.)

Everything okay?

Max turns to see Todd coming in. He runs up to the stage and gets the case.

TODD (CONT'D)

Can't just leave this laying around.

Max looks. Banquo is gone. That's odd. Todd heads out with the case.

INT. THEATER -- DAY

The group is working on sets for the play.

INT. BART & MAX'S DORM -- NIGHT

Max is typing on his laptop.

INT. STAGE -- NIGHT

The actors run lines.

INT. STAGE -- DAY

Tom is on the stage. Lyle mans a switch in the wing. Tom signals Lyle. Lyle hits the switch. Nothing happens. Tom stamps on the stage floor. Still nothing.

INT. THEATER -- DAY

Frankel paces the aisle as Annette watches from a seat.

ANNETTE

What if we set the play as a 1930s
gangster tale?

Frankel flips through his clipboard.

FRANKEL

Been done. London, 1969.

ANNETTE

How about a 1950s setting in an
Eastern Bloc nation?

He checks again.

FRANKEL

Been done.

INT. STAGE -- DAY

Max is painting a stage flat of a house, with a cut-out window. Sally walks by. Max smiles and watches her pass. Bart appears in the window holding a hammer and gets painted by Max.

INT. STAGE -- DAY

Lyle is at the switch. He throws it. A trap door on stage opens up. Tom pokes his head up. He holds a screwdriver and gives Lyle a "thumbs up."

INT. SUB STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

As Tom comes down the ladder, Glenn is positioning a rack of various spears near the opening.

GLENN

When I was told I was going to be a
spear holder in the play, I didn't
know they meant all of them.

TOM

You put the spear in Shakespeare.

EXT. THEATER -- DAY

Donna and Todd are having a lovely picnic on the grounds out
outside the theater.

DONNA

You were in Tut's tomb?

TODD

Indeed.

DONNA

Is there any part of the world you haven't visited?

TODD

I find myself avoiding the Arctic. Don't care much for the cold.

DONNA

But it's a dry cold. Man, I'm lucky to get out of Queens.

TODD

It works for you.

DONNA

Thanks. So, what's next?

TODD

Difficult to say. I've been approached for financing an expedition into Peru.

DONNA

Sure, looking for El Dorado.

TODD

More or less. And I've got some people very excited about some satellite imagery of Mt. Ararat.

DONNA

Mt. Ararat...Noah's ark?

TODD

That's the place.

DONNA

That's very far off.

TODD

Or I might just hang about here for awhile. Brush up on my Shakespeare.

They kiss.

INT. THEATER -- DAY

Everyone seated in the auditorium seats, eating lunch. Bart is cozy with Julie as Max and Sally talk with others. Glenn glances at Bart and Julie, then gives Sally a look. Sally shrugs.

Frankel pacing as Annette observes.

ANNETTE

We do the play in a futuristic,
Orwellian world!

Checks clipboard.

FRANKEL

San Francisco, 2002.

ANNETTE

Man, this is a tough nut to crack.

Max wonders over, pushing his broom.

MAX

Why don't you do it set in ancient
Scotland?

FRANKEL

That's very "Rob Roy." Very
"Braveheart." I like it!

EXT. WILKES HALL HALLWAY -- DAY

Glenn, Lyle and Donna are in a hallway in an upper floor of
the building. They approach the door to the utility room.

LYLE

Hey, hey, I got a new joke. Knock-
knock.

DONNA

You're kidding, right?

Donna and Glenn pull the door open and go into the utility
room.

LYLE

What?

Lyle follows.

INT. UTILITY ROOM -- DAY

Glenn, Lyle and Donna come into this musty, mid-sized storage
bunker in Wilkes Hall. Shelves and boxes hold many stage
props and larger props, sets and flats are stacked to the
side as well.

There is a garbage chute and slop sink in there as well,
with cleaning products and implements.

GLENN

Swords! We must have swords!

DONNA

Who thought of storing props up here?

LYLE

They got this stuff stashed all over the place.

DONNA

Frankel's got to get more organized.

Donna finds an umbrella stand filled with all types of swords.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Got 'em!

LYLE

Shakespeare without swords is like a day without sunshine.

Lyle grabs a staff from the corner.

LYLE (CONT'D)

I like this.

DONNA

Lyle, what are you doing?

LYLE

This is my staff. I'm having a staff meeting.

Glenn pulls out a box labeled "box o'bones." Opening it, he finds a un-assembled human skeleton, including the skull. Glenn picks up the skull.

GLENN

Ah, poor Yorick, I knew him well.

DONNA

From where?

GLENN

Weight Watchers. He was the head of the class.

LYLE

Wrong play, Hammy.

GLENN

That's Hamlet.

LYLE

That's for the theater critics to decide.

DONNA

Costumes. I don't see any costumes.

LYLE

Costumes aren't here. There's a cedar closet downstairs. They keep them there.

DONNA

It'll be a miracle if we pull this off.

Suddenly the door slams shut.

LYLE

Hey.

Glenn goes to the door. It's stuck.

DONNA

Won't it open?

GLENN

No. It's stuck.

LYLE

Locked?

GLENN

The knob's turning. Get me something to pry it open with.

Donna reaches for a sword and they wedge it into the door jam. Donna's hand slips and she cuts herself on the blade.

DONNA

Ow! Dammit!

GLENN

What?

DONNA

I cut myself on the stupid sword. I thought these were prop swords.

Glenn pulls out a hanky to wrap around her hand.

GLENN

You can still get hurt. Lyle, see if there's a first aid kit. I saw one in back.

Lyle finds a box labeled "1st Aid."

LYLE

Here. Some peroxide. Clean it out.

They pour it on Donna's wound.

DONNA
Stings! Stings!

GLENN
Any gauze?

Lyle pulls out a box of Espon salt.

LYLE
Epson salt.

GLENN
Don't need it.

Lyle tosses the box, it hits the door and spills. The door suddenly opens. *

DONNA
Finally!

LYLE
Let's out of here and get that looked at.

INT. THEATER -- DAY

Julie is seated in the auditorium. The curtain is down on stage. There's activity behind the curtain and shushing and hushing. Then Max comes stumbling out.

He makes his way to Julie.

MAX
Excuse me, Julie---

JULIE
Yes, Max?

MAX
One of the nights, I know you were looking to do selected scenes. I was wondering; have you considered parody?

JULIE
What do you mean?

MAX
Well, hanging around with you guys, I've gotten my Bard on and I wrote this sketch. Maybe you could include it.

JULIE
Maybe. I'd have to see it.

MAX
 (to stage)
 Hit it, guys!

Sally steps out as host, wearing glasses and looking very PBS.

SALLY
 Good evening and welcome to
 "Shakespeare, the Lost Episodes."
 Tonight we are presenting a recently
 unearthed play written by young
 Shakespeare for his high school senior
 day assembly. High school was a
 very special time for Shakespeare
 and it was there he was voted most
 likely to be confused with Francis
 Bacon. Now, with no further ado, we
 present "Abbot and Othello," by Willy
 Shakespeare, homeroom 302.

Sally steps off. The curtain rises. There stands Lyle,
 dressed as Shakespeare's Othello.

LYLE
 'Tis now in this time of misery I
 hath summoned my holy man to advise
 me.
 I await his arrival from the field
 of battle so that on our godless foe
 he may tattle. Hey, Abbot!

Glenn enters, dressed in a monk's robe.

GLENN
 Your majesty.

LYLE
 So now, relate to me my castle's
 readiness, for my enemies advance
 with steadiness.
 Have we the forces and the power to
 protect our regal tower?

GLENN
 Weary though our forces be, Their
 strength is fired by champions three.
 The noblest knights within your real-
 lum
 Lead our men with skill seen sel-
 lum.

LYLE
 Who be these knights of such bravery?
 Their names shall be ever free of
 knavery.

GLENN

Speak I of men from provinces far
and abroad.
Cross seas and deserts they journeyed,
milord.
So their surnames might seem odd to
thine ear.

LYLE

Nonetheless, speak, so that I might
hear!

GLENN

Who is in yon tower, What is at thy
moat, and I Know Not works ye
catapult.

LYLE

Knowest not the monikers of these
three?

GLENN

Undisputedly, your majesty.

LYLE

They relate them to thine king,
forthwith.

GLENN

Who is in yon tower, What is at thy
moat, and I Know Not works ye
catapult.

LYLE

Haveth we or haveth we not a man in
yon tower
To sling our arrows, my Abbot?

GLENN

Absolutely, sire.

LYLE

And what sayeth thou his name to be?

GLENN

Who.

LYLE

The man in yon tower.

GLENN

Who.

LYLE

The tower guard.

GLENN
Who is in yon tower.

LYLE
Why asketh this of me? I know not!

GLENN
Nay, my liege, he is at ye catapult.
We have yet to speak of him.

LYLE
We're at the catapult? How?
By thy whim?

INT. THEATER LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

As the skit continues, Frankel is overseeing the installation of the "Macbeth" display, a pedestal with the manuscript in a glass display case in the center of the lobby. The school HANDYMAN finishes it off, giving the glass a good wipe. Frankel sends him on his way.

GLENN (O.S.)
Thou spake his name, my grace.

LYLE (O.S.)
Me thinks I am confused! Who sayeth
I is at ye catapult place?

GLENN (O.S.)
To that, my king, I say no way.
Who labors at you tower this day.

LYLE (O.S.)
Then I asketh anon, what is the name
of the man in yon tower?

GLENN (O.S.)
Nay, What is the name of the man at
thy moat.

LYLE (O.S.)
Who is at my moat?

GLENN (O.S.)
Who is at yon tower.

LYLE (O.S.)
I know not.

GLENN (O.S.)
Ye catapult.

LYLE (O.S.)
My Abbot, all I wish to learn at
this hour is who is the man defending
yon tower?

GLENN (O.S.)
Aye, milord.

LYLE (O.S.)
Thou doth?

GLENN (O.S.)
Nay, milord, not I!

Frankel looks over the book. He exhales on the glass and gives it a wipe. Satisfied, he goes into the theater.

The glass display begins to fog up on its own. Then an invisible finger writes "thou shall perish."

INT. THEATER -- CONTINUOUS

The skit continues to the group's amusement.

LYLE
Then who doth?

GLENN
Absolutely, sire. And a fine job he maketh of it.

LYLE
Who doth?

GLENN
Absolutely.

LYLE
Absolutely is in yon tower?

GLENN
Nay! Who is in yon tower!

LYLE
I know not!

GLENN & LYLE
Ye catapult!

GLENN
At last, sire, you are now enlightened as to the knights that count.

LYLE
Alas, I don't even know what I'm talking about!

Sally re-enters in front of the still-arguing duo.

SALLY
I believe you get the gist of it.
(MORE)

SALLY (CONT'D)

Tune in next time for "Shakespeare; the Lost Episodes" when we present a trilogy he knocked off for his fraternity rush week. We will stage "Three Stooges of Verona," "The Nutty Merchant of Venice," and "Abbot and Othello Meet Frankenstein." We hope you join us anyway. Good night.

Curtain drops.

In the audience, Julie is laughing and applauding.

JULIE

Well, that was out of the ordinary.

MAX

Might be a nice change of pace. Mix it up a bit.

JULIE

Could be.

MAX

I have others.

JULIE

Let me think it over. We might have a spot for you. We'll talk it over at Amy's Pub. And that's a wrap, people!

MAX

Thanks.

INT. BACKSTAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Max runs up and comes behind the curtain as Annette breaks some props down, Glenn, Lyle and Sally take off their costumes. He thanks the guys and goes over to Sally and Annette.

Glenn and Lyle raise the curtain. The theater's empty now. They place the safety light in place. They're off.

SALLY

That was wonderful, Max. I really enjoyed it.

ANNETTE

Nice job.

MAX

Thanks for helping. I glad I'm not amongst Shakespeare-snobs

SALLY
So, Amy's; you in?

MAX
Most definitely.

SALLY
Great. Can I ask you something?

MAX
Of course.

SALLY
I see Bart and Julie are spending a lot of time together.

MAX
Oh, yeah. All part of his plan.

SALLY
His plan?

MAX
Oh, he's been pursuing Julie in his own persistent yet clumsy manner.

SALLY
And you?

MAX
Truth be known, he's using me to get Julie. Apparently, it worked. Not to sound too crude, but Bart said if I helped him, he'd hook me up with one of his classmates.

SALLY
Oh. So, then, you're unattached?

MAX
As a matter of fact, I am uncoupled at the moment. Why do you have something in mind?

SALLY
I just may.

She packs up and heads out, flashing Max a 100 watt smile.

SALLY (CONT'D)
See you later.

MAX
Excellent.

Sally's off as Annette comes over.

MAX (CONT'D)

Well, it's all coming together.

ANNETTE

That was great, Max. I haven't laughed that hard since my appendectomy.

MAX

Your appendectomy was funny?

ANNETTE

You hadda be there. But look at you! Your aura is crackling tonight!

MAX

I never get tired of hearing that. So, Annette, are Glenn and Sally seeing each other?

ANNETTE

I suppose. Their vision is excellent.

MAX

No, I mean are they a couple?

ANNETTE

A couple of what?

MAX

Dating?

ANNETTE

Who? Sally and Glenn?

MAX

Yes, are they?

ANNETTE

Hardly.

MAX

Okay, good. Then I can make a move and not step on any toes.

ANNETTE

Between you, me and the backdrop, we're all wondering why you haven't already.

MAX

Is it that obvious?

ANNETTE

Very much. I think you two are on the same plane.

(MORE)

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

And everyone was very impressed with your work. This might be the time to act, while your aura is so brilliant.

MAX

You're right. I just have to do it. I have to step up. Thanks for the advice.

ANNETTE

Great, then. See you at Amy's.

And she's off.

MAX

Zounds. This is working out okay. Thank you, Macbeth.

Max walks off stage, whistling. He exits the theater. The stage light flashes and pops.

INT. THEATER LOBBY -- NIGHT

The book begins to radiate energy. The pages ruffle. The book's pages flip to the scene of the three witches.

EXT. OAK ISLAND PIT -- NIGHT

The excavation site is quiet these days. Most of the earth-moving equipment is gone. The rest, idle. A LONE WATCHMAN sits outside a small trailer, smoking.

There are ropes and barriers around the hole. There is a slight rumbling. The Watchman notices this.

WATCHMAN

Who's there, eh?

No response, except for further rumbling. Hmmm, it appears to be coming from the pit. The Watchman makes his way over.

The earth begins to quake. The rumble echoes out of the pit. Then fire shoots forth into the sky. The Watchman can't look away.

The fire settles down into a steady eerie glow from the belly of the pit.

The Watchman turns away, his eyeballs gone and he lets out a scream.

EXT. AMY'S - NIGHT

An older neighborhood bar and grill, featuring burgers and such.

The group enters. Sally and Glenn are talking.

SALLY

No, he said it. It's Bart and Julie.

GLENN

I knew it. My straight-dar's never wrong. Max?

SALLY

Available and looking.

INT. AMY'S - NIGHT

Bar is off to the back. Many tables of various sizes, styles and origins are set up, with a large rectangular set-up with benches in the alcove in the front window. The group enters. Donna's hand is bandaged.

GLENN

Barkeep! Mead for all! Fair maiden, fetch me an ale and tarry not!

TOM

Down, King Leery.

They all pile into the window seat. WAITRESS brings them a pitcher and glasses and leaves some menus. They hand them back.

ALL

Fries.

TOM

Eight orders. Two with cheese, three ketchup, one with gravy, one order chili fries and one with mayo.

MAX

Mayo?

ANNETTE

What can I say? I love mayo.

Julie and Bart canoodle to the side.

MAX

So, why do you guys do this, the acting? I mean nobody thinks it's possible to succeed in this business, why bother?

GLENN

Are you kidding? There are actors in Hollywood earning ten, twenty million dollars a pop. And for what?

(MORE)

GLENN (CONT'D)

Playing make-believe. I want a piece of that!

TOM

And the streets are paved with gold.

DONNA

It ain't easy, that's for sure.

SALLY

And no guarantees.

MAX

I don't know if I can deal with it.

TOM

If you think you're good at it you have to try. You won't know if you're good unless you get a reaction.

ANNETTE

And you certainly did okay tonight.

MAX

Yeah, I did, didn't I?

GLENN

Brilliant.

SALLY

Wonderful.

MAX

Thanks.

DONNA

(to Julie)

Hey, love birds, we're not being too loud for you, are we?

JULIE

Hey, don't get all up in our business because your boyfriend's off gallivanting around the world.

DONNA

Todd does not gallivant.

TOM

Where in the world is Waldo, anyway?

DONNA

He's headed back to Oak Island. Something came up.

Max looks over to the bar area and catches a glimpse of the ghost of Banquo.

Sally is egging Glenn on to talk to Max as Max suddenly gets up.

MAX

Excuse me.

Max hurries over to the bar, but no Banquo to be seen.

INT. PROFESSOR FRANKEL'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

It's just Frankel at his desk with the lamp on. He's hunched over some forgotten volume of yore.

The lamp dims.

In the distance, a witch's cackle echoes down the hall.

FRANKEL

Hello? Annette? Julie?

The light returns to full wattage. He ponders this a moment, then returns to his reading.

INT. BART & MAX'S DORM -- NIGHT

Bart and Max are asleep.

Bart is having a restless time of it. He's dreaming, that's for sure. Suddenly, he sits upright.

EXT. DREAM THEATER -- NIGHT

Bart is walking to the stage in full Shakespearean garb.

INT. DREAM BACKSTAGE -- NIGHT

People racing about, getting ready to go on. Sounds like a full house. The curtain is down.

JULIE

Hurry, hurry. You're on.

She shoves Bart out onto center stage.

INT. DREAM STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Bart stumbles out to his mark, a big "X".

BART

Wait, wait; what play are we doing?

The curtains go up.

Bart is blinded by the stage lights. He can't see the audience, but he can hear them laughing and laughing hard.

Suddenly, he realizes he's on stage in front of a full house in his underpants.

Then the witch's cackling resumes.

FRANKEL (V.O.)

Mr. Avon?

Bart turns. There's Frankel, driving a dagger into his shoulder.

INT. STAGE -- DAY

Bart is standing on the empty stage in his underwear. Frankel is there, gently prodding Bart in the shoulder.

FRANKEL

Mr. Avon?

Bart snaps to.

BART

What? Where am I?

FRANKEL

In the theater. It appears you are sleep walking. Or in your case, sleep-trodding.

Frankel leads him to the auditorium seats.

INT. THEATER -- CONTINUOUS

They sit.

BART

I dreamt I was onstage in my underwear in a play I didn't know.

FRANKEL

That's a very common dream among actors.

BART

Do they wind up onstage in their underwear?

FRANKEL

No, you've made that interpretation uniquely your own.

BART

The dream was so vivid. Something was calling me here.

FRANKEL

Theaters often have their share of
the supernatural.

BART

This theater isn't old enough to
have old haunts.

FRANKEL

No, but it was built over an ancient
Indian graveyard.

BART

What?

FRANKEL

I'm kidding. True, the structure
itself isn't old but the works we
perform bring their own history with
them.

BART

Professor, I really do enjoy acting
but it's not my calling. I'm here
playing ball and getting my credits
so I can join the police force.
This is an elective credit for me.
Why would I be down here?

FRANKEL

You're not the first student to be
bitten by the acting bug. Now, off
to bed with you. We have much work
on the morrow.

INT. THEATER -- NIGHT

The troupe is on stage rehearsing. Sally, Donna and Julie
in witch costume are onstage. Frankel is directing from the
audience seats.

INT. STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Enter Tom and GLENN as Macbeth and Banquo.

TOM

So foul and fair a day I have not
seen.

GLENN

How far is't call'd to Forres?
(indicting witches)
What are these
So wither'd and so wild in their
attire,
That look not like the inhabitants
(MORE)

GLENN (CONT'D)

o' the earth,
 And yet are on't? Live you? Or are
 you aught
 That man may question? You seem to
 understand me,
 By each at once her choppy finger
 laying
 Upon her skinny lips. You should be
 women,
 And yet your beards forbid me to
 interpret
 That you are so.

TOM

Speak, if you can. What are you?

DONNA

All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee,
 Thane of Glamis!

SALLY

All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee,
 Thane of Cawdor!

As the scene is in progress, a rope holding a counter weight
 begins to unravel.

JULIE

All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be
 King hereafter!

Tom (as Macbeth) looks concerned.

GLENN

Good sir, why do you start, and seem
 to fear
 Things that do sound so fair?
 I' the name of truth,
 Are ye fantastical or that indeed
 Which outwardly ye show?
 My noble partner
 You greet with present grace and
 great prediction
 Of noble having and of royal hope,
 That he seems rapt withal.
 To me you speak not.
 If you can look into the seeds of
 time,
 And say which grain will grow and
 which will not,
 Speak then to me, who neither beg
 nor fear
 Your favors nor your hate.

DONNA

Hail!

SALLY

Hail!

JULIE

Hail!

The counter weight bag is definitely over the actors.

DONNA

Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

SALLY

Not so happy, yet much happier.

JULIE

Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.

So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

DONNA

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

TOM

Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more.

By Sinel's death I know I am Thane of Glamis;

But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives,

A prosperous gentleman; and to be King

Stands not within the prospect of belief,

No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence

You owe this strange intelligence, or why

Upon this blasted heath you stop our way

With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you.

A flash of smoke and Witches vanish into the trap door.

INT. SUB STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

The girls neatly come down through the trap door and assemble. The trap door tries to close but is stuck open.

GLENN (O.S.)

The earth hath bubbles as the water has,

And these are of them.

Whither are they vanish'd?

INT. STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

TOM

Into the air, and what seem'd corporal
melted
As breath into the wind. Would they
had stay'd!

Frankel steps onstage.

FRANKEL

Okay, better. Tom, I need to see
more confusion. Your character is
confident, yes, in the natural world
but now we're talking about the
supernatural. You're battle weary,
on sensory overload at this point---

The rope comes undone yet the bag remains in place for a
moment then suddenly, it releases.

The squeaky pulley is heard. Everyone looks up.

GLENN

Heads up!

The bag lands drops through the trap door with a thud. Donna
screams.

EXT. THEATER -- DAY

An ambulance is there. Donna is taken out on a stretcher by
the EMS WORKER.

JULIE

Will she be okay?

EMS WORKER

Just a simple fracture. Missed the
femur. But she'll be fine in six
weeks. That's just a guess on my
part.

DONNA

(groggy)
Don't you recast!

She's in the ambulance and it drives off.

MAX

Wow. I always heard actors say "break
a leg" but I never saw one actually
do it.

EXT. BAY -- NIGHT

Todd Ainsworth's private boat motors across the waters.

INT. CABIN -- NIGHT

Todd reading up on Shakespeare. The lights flicker.

Todd looks up. It's Banquo, seated across from him.

TODD

What? Who are you?

BANQUO

Go to your lady. She is in danger.
They are all in danger. The play is
the thing the holds the evil. It
must be hidden from daylight again.

The lights flicker again. Banquo is gone. Todd looks around,
blankly. Then he gets on the intercom.

TODD

It's Ainsworth. Captain, can you
turn us around?

INT. AMY'S -- NIGHT

The gang is at their table.

TOM

That damn play is haunted.

MAX

What does that even mean? How does
a play get cursed?

TOM

Legend has it that while writing the
play, Shakespeare needed to do some
research for the witches roles...

EXT. STONEHEDGE -- NIGHT

SHAKESPEARE is crouching behind some bushes. He carries a
lantern, paper and quills.

TOM (V.O.)

He heard of some witches who lived
out in the country and decided to
investigate.

The full moon comes out from some clouds.

The area of Stonehedge is bathed in a ghostly white moon
glow. Suddenly, a bonfire rises up at the center of the
Stonehedge circle.

There a gnarly, gnarly WITCH begins tossing items into the
blaze and making incantations.

Shakespeare grabs his lantern, paper and quills and moves in closer.

TOM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And he found what he was looking for. He snuck in closer and copied the witches incantations down.

Witch dances wildly about the flames.

Shakespeare, behind one of the monoliths, is taking it all down. When he thinks he has enough, he gets up to leave and stumbles over a black cat. The cat screeches.

The Witch turns to look.

Shakespeare blows out the lantern and hurries off.

The Witch comes over to the spot. She waves her hand and Shakespeare's footprints begin to glow. She nods and follows.

EXT. GLOBE THEATER -- DAY

A sign in front of the theater announces that next week "Macbeth: a tale of treachery, corruption and witchcraft" will be premiering.

The Witch steps up to read the sign.

INT. GLOBE THEATER -- CONTINUOUS

A GROUP OF ELIZABETHAN PLAYERS are in rehearsal. Three Men don wigs and begin a scene as the witches.

The Witch walks in. She watches a moment. She's none too pleased.

TOM (V.O.)

The Witch discovered what Shakespeare had done. Angered by this violation of her blackest magical secrets, she cast a spell, a powerful spell, on the play itself, cursing it and all who perform it. Since that day, ill luck has plagued every performance ever staged.

Shakespeare's copy of the script drops to the ground. Then the quill. The script glows an unnatural green.

TOM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And to say the name of the play is to awaken the sorceress herself.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THEATER LOBBY -- NIGHT

That very script, under the glass, now pulsing with a magical glow.

EXT. DREAM THEATER -- NIGHT

Sally, in full Elizabethan splendor, crosses the campus to the theater.

INT. DREAM THEATER -- NIGHT

She glides down the aisle of a packed house to great applause.

INT. DREAM STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

She regally hits her mark onstage.

She strikes a pose and starts to speak but no words come out.

The audience gets ugly fast. They howl and boo.

Sally gets panicked. She tries to speak louder but nothing comes out.

The audience is throwing vegetables now.

The curtain drops.

Frankel, looking sinister, comes over.

SALLY

I don't understand. My voice, I couldn't talk.

FRANKEL

That happens to many, my dear. Many. Perhaps you were not truly bitten by the acting bug.

SALLY

Do you think?

FRANKEL

Would you like to be?

SALLY

I would! I would!

Frankel stamps his feet. Beetle-like bugs comes crawling out of the stage's floor boards. They are nasty, hungry looking creatures.

SALLY (CONT'D)

What is that?

FRANKEL

Acting bugs. Hold still. It won't
take but a moment.

The bugs crawl all over Sally. She screams as they cover
her.

INT. GIRL'S DORM -- NIGHT

Sally is backed all the way into the corner of her bed,
screaming.

A light comes on. Annette is in the top bunk leaning down.

ANNETTE

Sally!

She climbs down to comfort her.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

Sally, wake up. You're having a
nightmare. It's okay. It's okay.

Sally starts to come around.

SALLY

Oh my god, oh my god. What the hell
was that?

ANNETTE

It was a dream, just a dream.

INT. PROFESSOR FRANKEL'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Frankel's up on the ladder, looking for a book.

He hears the cackling again. More annoyed now than
frightened, he goes into the hallway.

FRANKEL

Who's there?

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Frankel steps out. He hits the light switch. Nothing
happens. Irked, he moves on.

FRANKEL

Hello?

The cackling echoes up and down the hallway. Frankel glimpses
a shrouded figure turning a corner.

FRANKEL (CONT'D)

Who's there? Stop!

Frankel's off.

INT. STAIRWELL -- CONTINUOUS

Frankel enters the stairwell. The emergency lights suddenly come on. He looks down and is certain he sees someone running down. He follows.

INT. THEATER -- NIGHT

Frankel pushes through the doors.

He looks up and sees the stage curtain ruffle. He heads up to the stage.

INT. STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

He comes up onstage. He finds the part in the curtain and steps through.

The cackling is louder and happier now.

There's a scream.

BLACK OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. THEATER -- EVENING

The group is sitting around, each is holding a candy or snack wrapper.

BART

Six grams.

JULIE

I got eight.

GLENN

Five. Five grams.

LYLE

I'll see your five, but counter with 16 grams total fat.

SALLY

I'm out.

TOM

I fold.

Max comes in.

MAX

What's up? What are you doing?

JULIE

Snack food poker. Grams of fat.

MAX

Oh. Total or saturated?

JULIE

Saturated.

LYLE

What is up with putting nutritional information on candy wrappers? Doesn't the term "junk food" pretty much sum it up?

MAX

Shouldn't you guys be deep in rehearsals by now?

TOM

Waiting for Frankel.

SALLY

Almost as bad as waiting for Godot.

LYLE

(mimicking PA system)

Godot, party of one, your table is ready. Godot, please, your table is ready.

ANNETTE

He should have been here hours ago.

TOM

Well, let's have at it then, shall we? Let's run some lines until he shows.

SALLY

Sure.

Annette runs up to open the curtains.

The group gathers up its things and scripts and heads for the stage.

The curtains part. There is Frankel's body, hanging from ropes from the rafters, rope around his neck, a look of horror on his face.

Sally and Julie scream. Annette steps out onstage.

ANNETTE

What?

They point up. Annette looks up then faints.

Tom, Glenn, Max and Lyle dash up to the wings and begin lowering the body. Bart gets Annette.

They gather at the foot of the stage.

JULIE
Someone call 911.

Bart takes out his cell phone and then just stares at it.

JULIE (CONT'D)
Bart? Bart, dial!

He snaps to and dials.

Annette comes around.

ANNETTE
What happened?

JULIE
First Donna, now this. The curse.

MAX
Oh, come on. This isn't a curse.
It's an accident.

GLENN
What was he doing up there?

MAX
Didn't he say he was coming early to
check the riggings after Donna's
accident?

JULIE
To have one of his own?

BART
I can't get a signal.

JULIE
Let me try.

Julia gets her phone.

LYLE
Come on, we're not into the curse
thing for real, are we? I just
thought it was a running gag.

MAX
Of course it is. Unless we've just
come out in favor of the existence
of witchcraft.

SALLY
"There are more things in heaven and
earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of
in your philosophy."

TOM

"The fault lies not in the stars but
in ourselves."

GLENN

Great Elizabethan point/counterpoint,
guys.

LYLE

It's just a silly superstition.

BART

Of course it is...But, did anyone
actually say the play's name?

MAX

What? Macbeth?

GLENN

Don't say Macbeth!

LYLE

You said Macbeth!

GLENN

Oh my God! I did! I did say Macbeth!

BART

Stop saying Macbeth!

JULIE

I can't get a signal.

SALLY

That's crazy! I thought this whole
campus was a hot zone.

Max pulls out his laptop and gets it up.

MAX

Let me try something.

The provider comes up. An I.M. message pops up from
Witch1606. Then the message "By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes." Then "Something wicked
this way comes" begins typing over and over.

MAX (CONT'D)

Guys...I may have let the "M" word
slip the other day.

GLENN

What?

BART

When?

MAX

After you guys did my sketch. I wasn't thinking. I had someone else, I mean, something else on my mind.

There's a clap of thunder. The lights flicker.

LYLE

We are so screwed.

BART

Let's just get out of here and call the cops.

ANNETTE

Please, please call someone!

They all rush off to the lobby.

INT. THEATER LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

As the portfolio lays there innocently, the group goes running to the exit doors. They run into them but the doors won't open. They smash into the doors. They start banging on them.

ANNETTE

They're locked!

JULIE

They don't lock from the inside!

ANNETTE

How do we get out? How? Somebody do something!

Julie grabs her to comfort her.

TOM

Let's check the other doors. Fire exits. Come on, people. Think practical.

BART

Split up?

TOM

Good, good. Lyle, Glenn, check the fire exits. Julie, Sally, Annette and Bart, see if the hallway to Wilkes Hall is open. Check the class room windows if you have to. Max, we can go upstairs. I think there's a hatch to the roof.

ANNETTE

I can't. I can't.

TOM
 Okay, don't worry. You don't have
 to. We'll do it. Want to wait here?

Annette nods weepily.

TOM (CONT'D)
 Okay. You have a cell phone?

She shakes her head no.

ANNETTE
 I hate cell phones.

Tom takes out his phone.

TOM
 Take mine. Keep trying to call out.
 Try to attract attention.

ANNETTE
 The campus is deserted.

TOM
 There are always people around,
 Annette, always. Okay, we good? We
 meet back here in 20 minutes.

They all split up and head off.

Annette starts dialing.

INT. STAIRWELL -- NIGHT

Tom and Max push against the door at the top of the stairwell.
 It won't budge. They just collapse.

TOM
 This is nuts. Whoever heard of curses
 in this day and age?

MAX
 I thought all you actors did...Wait
 a second, wait a second...Bart said
 there was a counter-curse. Something
 Frankel taught in class.

TOM
 That's right, he did. The person
 had to leave, quote some Shakespeare
 and something else.

MAX
 Don't you remember it?

TOM
Frankly, no one pays much attention
when Frankel talks.

MAX
No?

TOM
Unless he said it was going to be on
the test.

MAX
No notes? No one has the lesson
plan?

TOM
Let's check Frankel's office. His
lesson plans are there.

INT. UPSTAIRS CLASSROOM -- NIGHT

Bart and Julie are trying the windows. They won't budge.
Sally comes in.

SALLY
Anything?

BART
Nothing. Sealed tight.

SALLY
This is crazy. This is insane. I
mean, a few accidents, okay, a curse.
Ha-ha. A nice little actor joke.
This can't be happening.

JULIE
Come on, Sally. Stay with us here.
Don't panic. We can't lose it now.

BART
We're trapped. Something evil is
happening.

JULIE
Let's get back to the lobby. Maybe
the others found a way out.

SALLY
I hope so. I hope so.

They leave the class.

INT. CLASS HALLWAY -- NIGHT

The hallway is now filled with fog. The trio is terrified.

JULIE

We have to get back to the others.

BART

We're not going to make it.

SALLY

Hurry, hurry.

They pass a fire hose station. The handle on the door twists open.

The hose comes leaping out. It grabs Julie and begins wrapping around her like a boa constrictor.

Bart is frozen in fear.

SALLY (CONT'D)

Bart! Help her! Help her!

Julie is being crushed and strangled but Bart remains paralyzed. Sally runs over and tries to pull the hose off but it's fruitless. Julie is dead.

The hose goes limp.

Bart is curled up in a corner. Sally is screaming hysterically.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Tom and Max come down the hall, headed to Frankel's office. Slowly, they go in.

INT. PROFESSOR FRANKEL'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Tom and Max creep in. Tom finds the light switch. Now it works.

They approach Frankel's desk. All the lines on Frankel's phone are flashing, as if on hold.

Max and Tom look at each other. Slowly, Tom picks up the phone.

TOM

Hello?

The Witch's cackling is heard. Tom punches up the other lines, the cackling continues. Tom slams down the phone.

TOM (CONT'D)

We'd better make this quick.

Max sits at the desk and opens up the PC.

MAX
Oh no. Password.

TOM
2-b not 2-b.

MAX
You're kidding.

Tom shrugs. Max types it in and Frankel's desktop appears.

TOM
Now what?

MAX
Search his hard drive. I'll need
some key words.

TOM
Lore.

MAX
Lore?

TOM
Lore. Try curse. That should bring
up the lesson.

Max goes to it. The computer is working...working. There's
a creaking noise.

TOM (CONT'D)
What was that?

MAX
Old hard drive?

More creakage. Tom paces while Max waits. Tom's by the
book case. A book drops. They jump.

MAX (CONT'D)
A book!

The computer stops and beeps. Max checks.

MAX (CONT'D)
Got it!

Max opens the file labeled "Theater lore and legends."

The notes open. Max starts scrolling.

Max finds a spot and leans in to read. He's peering in
closely. Suddenly a spooky face pops up and laughs.

Startled, Max flies backwards out of the chair and Tom
stumbles and falls.

They look at the monitor; the face is bobbing up and down laughing.

TOM
It's that stupid screen saver of his.

Max gets up and jiggles the mouse a bit. The notes re-appear.

MAX
Here, here got it. One of the classic theater superstitious surrounds Shakespeare's play "Macbeth." Bad luck plagues this play---

TOM
That's it, print it! Print that out.

Max does so.

MAX
We're back to square one, though.

TOM
Getting outside.

The creak creaks again.

MAX
What is that?

The book case tears away from the wall.

TOM
Look out!

The wall of books falls on the desk and PC as Tom dives away. Max gets clobbered.

INT. THEATER LOBBY -- NIGHT

Frustrated with the phone, Annette goes to the doors. Now a note about the doors: The outer doors are glass and open inward. They are hung in pairs, with each pair opening butterfly-ed to the other.

Annette takes the phone and dials up 911 but still can't get a signal. She hears a noise. Outside the door is a black cat, which hisses at her.

Annette bangs on the door.

ANNETTE
Shoo! Scat! Get out of here!

She's between the levered doors. The locks on each side of her magically unlock.

Suddenly, the doors swing open, catching Annette between. The doors then squeeze her, crushing the life out of her. She struggles but loses.

The blood-smearred doors shut and lock. Annette's body slumps to the floor.

INT. DREAM STAGE -- NIGHT

The curtain goes up. On stage is an old manual typewriter on a stand with a candelabra beside it, and a piano stool in front. The chair is over the X spot, which is on the trap door.

Max steps out, dressed like Shakespeare. He sits at the typewriter and begins to type.

There is thunderous applause.

Max stops to crack his knuckles to more applause.

Suddenly, the trap door opens and Max drops.

INT. PIT -- NIGHT

Max is falling inside the Oak Island pit. He passes ghosts of Banquo, Frankel, Annette, Julie and OTHERS FROM DIFFERENT ERAS.

At the bottom, the crypt opens, waiting for him to fall in.

INT. PROFESSOR FRANKEL'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Max is laid out on Frankel's couch.

Tom is holding a jar of cleaning ammonia under Max's nose.

Max snaps to.

MAX

What? What happened?

TOM

I thought I lost you there. You got clocked pretty good by the shelf. You okay?

MAX

Nothing a couple dozen aspirin can't handle.

A few sparks fly out of the smashed computer.

MAX (CONT'D)

Hey! Frankel's notes! Did it print okay?

TOM

I didn't even check.

Tom helps Max up. They look around.

MAX

Where's the printer?

They scramble over to the printer stand in the corner. No paper. Max finds a ream of paper and loads some in. The printer stirs to life and stops. The "no toner" light begins flashing.

MAX (CONT'D)

Toner? Does he have a toner cartridge here?

TOM

I don't know. Start looking.

They start checking closets and drawers.

INT. BASEMENT -- NIGHT

The bowels of the building containing the furnace, climate controls and vents galore. Glenn and Lyle make their way in.

LYLE

Things are looking bad.

GLENN

How. Bad. Are. They?

LYLE

Things are so bad I just saw the Grim Reaper looking for an exit.

GLENN

That's bad.

Some cackling is heard.

LYLE

Damn. It wasn't that funny.

Suddenly the furnace flames up. The door opens and flames belch forth.

Glenn and Lyle manage to dodge it. The flames are growing.

GLENN

We have to shut the door.

Lyle grabs a mop and works his way toward the door. Finally Lyle is able to swing the door closed with the mop and locks it down.

Lyle puts the now flaming mop into the mop bucket and they go.

INT. PROFESSOR FRANKEL'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

The office has been tossed pretty well. Drawers and cabinets are open, papers and office supplies scattered.

TOM

Anything?

MAX

Nothing! Where does all my tuition money go if these people don't have supplies? Is there a supply closet in this place?

Tom heads into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Tom checks the doors, opening up classrooms, janitor closets, bathrooms. Tom stops at another office.

TOM

Here!

Max runs over.

MAX

What?

INT. OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

They run into the office and go right to the printer.

TOM

We'll take the cartridge from this one and put it in the other one.

MAX

Of course!

Tom and Max remove the cartridge from the printer. The light bulbs in the room start popping.

INT. CELLAR -- NIGHT

Glenn and Lyle push open a door into a forgotten part of the building.

LYLE

What's the plan? Tunnel out?

GLENN

If need be.

They come to an utility door marked "Ventilation; Authorized Personnel Only."

LYLE

What do you make of it?

GLENN

I hereby authorize you to enter.

They open the door.

INT. VENTILATION ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

It's a large vent going up. A ladder leads up.

LYLE

Air vent.

GLENN

Goes up.

LYLE

Ready?

GLENN

After you.

INT. VENT -- CONTINUOUS

Lyle is climbing up, Glenn behind.

LYLE

So, anyway, this famous TV actor decides he has to expand his range. He gets his agent to get him in a play---

A flue below them suddenly shuts.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Um, yeah. A play. Something classy. The agent manages to get him a lead in a Shakespeare play. Hamlet. To be staged in London, no less. He joins the cast but it's pretty apparent he isn't up to the part---

Another vent flue closes below. A breeze starts up inside the vent.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Finally, it's opening night. Full house. The actor comes out.

(MORE)

LYLE (CONT'D)
He's stinking up the stage. No sense
of poetry, no sense of drama.

GLENN
Yeah.

Above, a large exhaust fan starts up.

LYLE
So the crowd starts booing him. And
then the catcalls start. The crowd
is getting ugly. So, finally, the
actor breaks character, steps to the
footlights and says to the audience,
"What do you want from me, I didn't
writer this crap."

GLENN
Ha!

The fan kicks into high. Lyle and Glenn can't hold on.
They drop. One of the flues directs them into a side going
down and they slide away.

INT. THEATER -- CONTINUOUS

They come crashing through a grating and they land in the
theater. They manage to get up. They seem okay for the
most part.

INT. PROFESSOR FRANKEL'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Tom and Max return. They begin to fuss with the printer to
get the cartridge in.

TOM
It doesn't fit. It's a different
model.

MAX
Gimme the old one.

Max grabs it and shakes it up.

MAX (CONT'D)
Old writer's trick. We might have
just enough.

Max loads in the original cartridge.

There are still sparks from the PC and monitor. One of the
sparks lands in the trash pail. Suddenly, flames erupt.

The printer is set and begins to whirl to life. Tom and Max
are pleased.

The flames in the pail climb higher and higher.

The paper in the printer begins to feed through.

The flames lap against the ceiling. Max finally notices.

MAX (CONT'D)

Fire! Do something, before it
spreads! We can't let it burn the
printer!

The sprinkler in the office goes off. Everything gets
drenched.

The paper comes out of the printer a soggy, illegible mess.

The flames die out as the printer gives up the ghost, throws
some sparks and dies.

Tom can only bang his fist on it.

INT. THEATER -- NIGHT

The wet Max and Tom are heading back to the lobby.

TOM

I hope one of the others found
something.

MAX

Man, I should be in Florida right
now. At least there I stood half a
chance.

They hear the girls scream from the lobby. They hurry to
it.

INT. THEATER LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Bart, Glenn and Lyle stand over Annette as Sally sobs nearby.

TOM

Annette! Is she---?

Bart nods.

Glenn runs over to the doors, still locked.

GLENN

How?

No one can answer.

SALLY

This can't be happening. It can't.

TOM

No exits?

Again, listless shakes of heads.

TOM (CONT'D)

Where's Julie?

Bart can't bring himself to talk. Sally resumes sobbing.

TOM (CONT'D)

Look, we still have a shot. There's the counter curse.

SALLY

Counter-curse? From Frankel's class?

MAX

Yes. Did anyone here take notes?

BART

I did.

MAX

Of course you did.

LYLE

Where are your notes?

BART

In the dorm, where else?

TOM

Great.

BART

What? You think I'm going to walk around with them on me?

MAX

Why not? You carry around a rabbit's foot, a four-leaf clover and a lucky penny. I'm surprised you didn't have it printed, laminated into a handy card you could put in your wallet.

BART

Just shut up. You're so perfect. You got us into this!

MAX

Me? You begged me to be here! I didn't want to come. I had a chance for some fun and sun! But no, I get to hang out here with your stupid play actors so you could hit on Julie---

SALLY
Stupid play actors??

MAX
I didn't mean it like that---

SALLY
Well, take a second pass at it.
I'll wait.

TOM
This isn't helping, people.

SALLY
Really. You hold us in such contempt?

MAX
No, I don't. Look, I don't belong
here. I'm not supposed to be here.
I'm sorry...Sally, Bart, all of you.
I'm just sorry about...everything.

Max simply wonders back into the theater.

INT. THEATER -- CONTINUOUS

Max plops down in one of the empty seats.

Slowly, the figure of Banquo materializes in the seat behind
him.

BANQUO
It continues anon.

MAX
Who are you?

BANQUO
I am Adam Weathers.

MAX
What are you doing here? Are you a
ghost?

BANQUO
A spirit I am. I was the first actor
cast to play the part of Banquo.

MAX
Why are you here?

BANQUO
T'was the witch's curse that killed
me. The show had but begun rehearsals
when I was trampled by a run-away
wagon. It was a slow and painful
death.

MAX

Bummer.

BANQUO

As its first victim, my spirit has
been bound to this damnable script
since.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE; 1610 -- DAY

The Witch is tied to a stake for burning. The VILLAGERS
seemed relieved. Shakespeare is in the crowd, looking
apprehensive. The Witch is staring daggers at Shakespeare.

BANQUO (V.O.)

The witch was captured and tried.
And convicted. And punished. But
even then, William became convinced
that part of her lived on in the
cursed manuscript.

Shakespeare tosses the manuscript into the fire.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE; 1610 -- LATER

As the OFFICIALS clear away the debris of the fire,
Shakespeare is the only one left watching. There, in the
ashes is the manuscript, unharmed.

BANQUO (V.O.)

As accidents continued, William sought
to protect the populace from further
horrors.

MAX (V.O.)

By burying it?

BANQUO (V.O.)

Aye.

INT. PUB -- NIGHT

Shakespeare sits, nursing an ale. His arm is bandaged and
in a sling and he's got an eye patch now. Beside him sits a
small crate.

Enter FRANCIS DRAKE, noble adventurer. Shakespeare speaks
with him, hands him money and Drake takes the crate.

BANQUO (V.O.)

Determined to rid his company, his
theater, his life, of the bewitched
tome and upon learning of Francis
Drake's travels to the New World, he
fashioned a notion. It was William's
hope to banish the script to the new
wilderness, far from civilization.

EXT. OCEAN -- DAY

Elizabethian ship under sail.

BANQUO (V.O.)
Off to the Americas. But not just
banish it, but to bury it as well.

EXT. OAK ISLAND SHORE; 1610 -- DAY

CREW MEMBERS row ashore with the crate and digging tools.

BANQUO (V.O.)
Not just to bury it, but to entomb
it.

EXT. OAK ISLAND PIT; 1610 -- DAY

Crew digging. A PRIEST stands at the edge of the pit,
blessing it and sprinkling it with holy water. The CAPTAIN
takes out a salt container and dumps it all in.

BANQUO (V.O.)
And there it laid. Until that bloody
fool dug it up.

INT. THEATER -- DAY

Banquo and Max seated.

MAX
And Ainsworth brought it here. You
wouldn't know a way out, perchance?

BANQUO
Alas, I am but ignorant to such
things.

MAX
Figures.

Tom and Glenn walk in. Banquo is gone.

TOM
Max!

GLENN
Were you just talking to someone?

MAX
A ghost from Shakespeare's time.

Glenn and Tom share a look. Bart, Lyle and Sally come in.

GLENN
Okay, yeah.

TOM

Why not?

MAX

It's the play. It's cursed.
Seriously cursed. Shakespeare's
witch is here.

TOM

Kinda assumed that. Look, Max, we're
all in this together.

GLENN

Tempers are a little short.

SALLY

And we're a little on edge.

BART

It's cool, man.

MAX

Well, good, considering you're the
one who talked me into staying.

BART

Hey!

SALLY

Excuse me, we're supposed to be
finding out about this counter spell.

GLENN

Max, we just remembered about the
computer lounge.

MAX

What about it?

GLENN

There's one here, in Wilkes Hall.
If we can get in there, maybe we can
find something on the web.

BART

All of us?

SALLY

We have to stay together.

LYLE

We just present a bigger target.

SALLY

You prefer being picked off one at a
time?

TOM

What if---

GLENN

What if what?

TOM

Do you think we can distract it?

BART

Distract the curse?

TOM

What if we...do some scenes from "Macbeth" here and one or two of us slip out. Maybe the stage activity might focus this, this malevolence onstage. Keep it here in the theater.

LYLE

Wow. That is such a stupid idea.

TOM

Hey, feel free to pitch your concept, Shecky.

BART

You want to bring this wrath down on us all? Are you nuts? We're trying to get away from it!

SALLY

Stop it! What did we just finish saying about being in this together.

The group falls into a silence.

GLENN

Maybe one of the witch scenes?

TOM

That sounds like good bait. Say you, me and Lyle. We handle the cauldron scenes while Max goes to the lab and gets a download of the counter-curse.

The actors just stare at each other, thinking it over. The fear is palpable. Max, finally jumps in.

MAX

I love this plan. It's almost like it wrote itself.

INT. STAGE -- NIGHT

The stage is dim. The cauldron is center stage. Tom, Glenn and Lyle are dressed as the hags.

INT. BACKSTAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Sally is at the lighting board and turns up the stage lights.

INT. STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

TRIO

Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

INT. THEATER -- CONTINUOUS

Max is at a side exit leading to a hall. Bart hands Max his lucky rabbit's foot. Max shakes his hand and slips off.

TOM

Fillet of a fenny snake;
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Max reaches the computer lab room. It's a comfortable lounge with a series of desks and computers for use by students.

INT. STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

TRIO

Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

LYLE

Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witch's mummy, maw and gulf
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digg'd I' the dark,
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat and slips of yew
Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab.
Add thereto a tiger's chawdron,
For the ingredients of our cawdron.

INT. COMPUTER LAB -- CONTINUOUS

Max slips into one of the computer stations and logs on to the PC.

MAX

Okay, you're all over the ethernet,
let's see if you've infected the
land lines yet.

INT. STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

TRIO

Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

GLENN

Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

INT. COMPUTER LAB -- CONTINUOUS

The Google screen comes up. Max types in "Macbeth" + curse.

The list comes up. Max scans it and sees "The Macbeth Curse" by Prof. Martin Frankel. He clicks on it. It's the same, on a site labeled "Term papers for sale!"

MAX

Eureka!

Screen comes up "Download?"

Max clicks on "Yes."

Screen comes up to accept credit card payment.

Max pulls out his credit card and fills it in.

INT. STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

As the scene winds down, Tom steps back a bit. Suddenly, the trap door opens and Tom falls into it.

INT. SUB STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

The rack of spears is under the trap door. Tom lands on them, getting impaled on most of them.

The others run to the trap door and look down. They scream some more.

INT. THEATER -- CONTINUOUS

Max comes running in, waving papers.

MAX

I got it! I got it! And you each
owe me five dollars.

He realizes everyone is on stage, peering into the trap door.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT

Donna is in a bed, leg up and in a cast.

Todd enters.

TODD

Donna, I just found out. I came as
quickly as I could.

DONNA

Oh, Todd, how about this? Man, I
really wanted to be in a cast but
not like this.

TODD

I heard you were nearly killed. And
after what happened at the excavation
site---

DONNA

What happened?

TODD

There was some sort of explosion.
The watchman was blinded. I was up
there when I heard about you. We've
shut the site down completely.
Everyone's off the island.

DONNA

Sounds like the curse is working
overtime.

TODD

The curse. Of course. It's
unthinkable but what else could it
be? It's that damn manuscript! It
was buried there for a reason. The
salt water. It wasn't to keep people
out. It was to keep it in. What
have I unleashed?

DONNA

Todd, honey, calm down. It's just
an old actor superstition.

TODD

I'm afraid not, Donna. I think
everyone is in grave danger.

DONNA
You can't be serious.

TODD
Very.

DONNA
What makes you so sure?

TODD
Let's just say I met with a ghost
who knows. You were lucky, Donna.

DONNA
That's me, Lucky Donna.

TODD
It's getting worse, it's getting
stronger. The others won't be so
lucky.

Donna grabs her cell phone and dials.

DONNA
No answer.

She dials again.

DONNA (CONT'D)
Come on, Sally. Voice mail. Again.
(redialing)
No one's picking up---wait.

Phone connects. The cackling is heard.

DONNA (CONT'D)
What was that?

TODD
Where are they supposed to be?

DONNA
They're at the theater. You have to
save them, Todd, save them.

Todd hurries out.

DONNA (CONT'D)
Be careful, Todd!

INT. THEATER -- NIGHT

The group sits. They're reading the papers. Tom's body is
now onstage with the others.

BART
This is it. This is it, definitely.

MAX

I got it off an internet term paper site.

SALLY

"Hamlet." The quote was from
"Hamlet." I should have remembered that.

LYLE

Now what?

GLENN

We have to get Max outside.

LYLE

Aye, there's the rub.

BART

Doors won't open. Windows won't open. The glass won't break.

Glenn crumbles up the paper and tosses it away. He then considers his piece of litter.

GLENN

Wait a second. I think I know a way.

SALLY

What?

GLENN

The garbage chute. Wilkes' upper floors have chutes.

LYLE

That's right. We were there.

GLENN

Looking for props. Maybe you can slide down it.

MAX

Oh, goody.

They stare at Max. Max grabs a copy of the counter-spell.

MAX (CONT'D)

Let's do this.

GLENN

You guys wait by the lobby. You'll have to invite him back in.

BART

Should we do that distraction stuff
again?

LYLE

Do we really want to try that again?

Sally gets on stage and begins one of Lady Macbeth's speeches.

SALLY

We fail?
But screw your courage to the sticking-
place
And we'll not fail.

She waves Glenn and Max off. They hustle off. As Sally continues bulbs and kelig lights pop and burst above her but Sally shoulders on.

SALLY (CONT'D)

When Duncan is asleep-Whereto the
rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him--his two
chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so
convince
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume and the receipt of
reason
A limbeck only. When in swinish
sleep
Their drenched natures lie as in a
death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan?
What not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear
the guilt Of our great quell?

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Glenn and Max make their way down the hall to the storage room. Max pushes on the door. It won't open. Max pushes harder.

MAX

No! This can't be happening! Damn
you!

Glenn comes over and pulls the door open.

MAX (CONT'D)

Oh. That's better.

GLENN

If I could, you know I would do this.

MAX

And I'd let you. But it has to be me. It's all my fault.

GLENN

No it's not.

MAX

I wasn't even supposed to be here, Glenn. If I never came, this never would have happened.

GLENN

There's no way anyone could have foreseen this, Max. No one

MAX

I mocked your traditions. I was callous about your craft. I brought this on.

GLENN

This thing, it's evil, it's beyond some actor's good or bad luck charm. And it's up to us to save everyone. It's a long shot but I have faith in you, Max.

Glenn then kisses Max on the lips.

MAX

What was that?

GLENN

I thought we were having a moment.

MAX

Moment? There was no moment. How is this a moment?

GLENN

It seemed moment-ish.

MAX

Wait, you're gay?

GLENN

Yeah.

MAX

Does Sally know?

GLENN

Sure, why?

MAX

I thought you were a couple.

GLENN
No.

MAX
No? Is Sally gay?

GLENN
No.

MAX
So, I could ask her out?

GLENN
Not if you're gay.

MAX
Who said I was gay?

GLENN
Sally did.

MAX
How would she know that I'm gay?

GLENN
So, you are gay?

MAX
No, I'm not gay.

GLENN
Were you ever gay?

MAX
No.

GLENN
Man, I thought you were playing hard
to get.

MAX
I wasn't.

GLENN
It was very arousing.

MAX
Again, not my intent.

GLENN
Like they say, all the good ones are
married or straight.

They go in.

INT. UTILITY ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

They step in.

The box of bones starts to rattle and shake. It drops to the floor and the bones spill out. The skeleton forms and comes to life.

GLENN
Gad zooks!

MAX
Holy crap!

The skeleton gets its bearings, then grabs a sword. Glenn pushes Max toward the chute. Then he grabs a sword.

MAX (CONT'D)
Glenn!

GLENN
You go!

MAX
But---

GLENN
Go on, go on. I've taken stage combat classes.

The sword fight begins between Glenn and the Skeleton. Max makes his way to the chute. The door is jammed and he tugs on it.

Back and forth, Glenn and the Skeleton dual. It's a furious fight. Flats fly and props and cleaning products drop to the floor.

Each time the Skeleton tries to make toward Max, Glenn is able to beat it back.

The fight leaves the room and spills into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Glenn and the Skeleton fight on. Finally, Glenn grabs the advantage and lunges, running his sword through the Skeleton's rib cage, pinning the Skeleton to the wall. But the Skeleton doesn't die.

As Glenn yells "Ah-ha!", the Skeleton swings its sword around and takes off Glenn's head.

INT. UTILITY ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Glenn's head rolls into the room and stops. Glenn blinks twice then is gone.

Max screams and hustles into the chute and slides away.

INT. CHUTE -- CONTINUOUS

As Max slides down the long, winding chute horrible images flash about him: Banquo getting run over by the wagon, the Witch burning at the stake, Sally eaten by bugs. Rats, black cats and boiling cauldrons surround him. It seems like the longest garbage chute in the world.

Suddenly, he's out.

EXT. REAR ENTRANCE OF THEATER -- NIGHT

A rear wall with a large trash compactor installed. A lot of banging and tumbling is heard, then Max comes crashing out of the chute and he plops into the trash compactor.

INT. TRASH COMPACTOR -- CONTINUOUS

Stunned and confused, Max tries to steady himself upon the pile of trash.

EXT. TRASH COMPACTOR -- CONTINUOUS

The trash compactor comes to life.

INT. TRASH COMPACTOR -- CONTINUOUS

The walls start closing in on Max.

EXT. TRASH COMPACTOR -- CONTINUOUS

Max scrambles out of the hatch and falls to the ground.

He lies there a moment, then snaps to and looks around.

MAX

I'm out. I made it. I'm out!

The wind begins to howl and lightening flashes. The weather is worsening, a mighty storm abrewin'. Max gets up and hurries to the front.

INT. THEATER -- NIGHT

The theater is quiet. The group listens for any sound.

Suddenly, a banging comes from the lobby. They look terrified. Lyle runs up the auditorium and peeks out.

LYLE

It's Max! He made it!

Everyone runs to the lobby.

EXT. THEATER -- NIGHT

With a storm raging, Todd pulls up in his car. He runs over to Max.

TODD
Max! You're alive!

MAX
So far.

TODD
The play! It's cursed!

MAX
Duh. We're trying to break the curse
now. Step back.

Max turns around three times. The others are pressed against the glass doors, waiting, watching. Max spits over each shoulder. He takes out the paper and the wind blows it away. Max attempts a grab but it's gone. He panics a moment, then turns to face the door.

MAX (CONT'D)
"Thrice around the circle bound---
Line!

SALLY
(reading)
"Evil sink into the ground!"

MAX
Right, right. "Evil sink into the
ground!"

He approaches the door and knocks.

MAX (CONT'D)
May I enter?

INT. THEATER LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Sally goes to the latch. It gives. Max hesitates---what is he getting himself back into?--but he pushes on; the door opens and he steps in.

MAX
I'm in.

SALLY
"Angels and Ministers of Grace defend
us."

LYLE

"Be thou a spirit of health or goblin
damn'd, Being with thee airs from
heaven or blasts from hell---"

BART

(reading)

"Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou comest in such a questionable
shape that I will speak to thee."

Suddenly, all the doors burst open and the storm rages in.

Sally is blown against the display case. It goes over, and the book splays open. Sally lands face down in the book and broken glass.

The book glows anew.

Sally gets up. Her face drips blood. Her eyes aglow, she is possessed by the spirit of Shakespeare's Witch.

MAX

Sally?

Sally gets up, getting acclimated with this body.

LYLE

Okay, Sally, honey, baby, you okay?

Sally looks at Lyle, then waves her arms.

Lyle freezes up, goes completely stiff. Sally then walks over to him

Bart and Max start to edge away to the front doors, as Todd steps up to Max.

TODD

(whisper)

We have to get the book away from
here. It has to go back to the pit.

Sally pushes Lyle over. He falls to the floor and shatters into a thousand pieces.

Satisfied, she turns toward the group, as she raises her hands again.

Banquo appears.

BANQUO

At last, we meet again, you hag!

Banquo charges Sally and swirls around her, stunning and confusing her.

TODD

Now!

Max runs up and grabs the book. They all run outside.

EXT. THEATER -- CONTINUOUS

They get to Todd's car.

BART

Where to?

TODD

The harbor. My boat's there. We have to get back to Oak Island.

They peel out.

INT. THEATER LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Banquo fades away and Sally realizes she's alone. She looks out the door and sees the taillights in the distance. She waves her arms and the tire tracks glow in the mud.

EXT. STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Sally comes to the stage. She steps over the bodies without missing a beat. She heads to a supply closet. She pulls out a couple of swords and tosses them aside. A spear. She tosses that again. Finally, she gets what she needs, the cauldron and drags it to centerstage.

EXT. HARBOR -- NIGHT

The rain continues.

Todd's car pulls up. They get out, Max clinging to the book. They are all on alert. Todd leads them to his mooring.

TODD

Cast off those lines while I start it up!

Max and Bart free the boat and jump onboard. Todd gets the engines going.

TODD (CONT'D)

Hurry!

INT. STAGE -- NIGHT

Sally has the cauldron up and running, buckets of water are nearby. She has a severed hand and drips some of the blood into the brew and it starts to bubble.

An image of the boat on the water materializes.

She takes the spear and jabs it into the water.

EXT. BAY -- NIGHT

The boat is running along pretty well. Suddenly lightening bolts come down around them.

INT. CABIN -- NIGHT

Bart is strapped in and fingering his lucky penny like he's going to wear it to nothing.

INT. STAGE -- NIGHT

Sally stirs the cauldron with the spear end.

EXT. BAY -- NIGHT

The water gets rougher and the waves crash over the side of the boat.

INT. HELM -- CONTINUOUS

Todd is holding the wheel steady as he can as Max hangs on tight, clutching the book.

More lightening, more waves.

EXT. OAK ISLAND BEACH -- NIGHT

Suddenly the boat appears and heads toward the island.

INT. HELM -- CONTINUOUS

Todd is cutting power and fighting the controls.

TODD

I'm going to have to beach her.
Hang on!

Max braces himself.

EXT. OAK ISLAND SHORE -- NIGHT

The boat runs aground in some shallow water.

EXT. BOAT -- CONTINUOUS

Todd, Max and Bart grab life vests and jump off the boat and head for shore.

EXT. OAK ISLAND SHORE -- NIGHT

The group and the book make their way to the shore. There are woods just off the shoreline. Todd stops to get his bearings.

TODD

Damn. We're on the wrong side of
the island.

BART

What?

MAX

But you know where we are, right?
You can get us there?

TODD

Come on.

Todd runs into the woods.

MAX

That really wasn't an answer.

Bart and Max follow.

INT. WOODS -- CONTINUOUS

The trio are running. The tree branches start to grab at them. One of them tries to grab the book from Max. He's able to get it back.

Bart is barely able to stay up. Max grabs him and pulls him along.

MAX

Come on, roomie, you can do this.
Don't give up now!

As they run, the dirt gets loose under them, the turns into a thick liquid, like they're running in molasses.

TODD

We're almost there.

BART

We're not going to make it.

MAX

With a little luck we will.

Bart pulls out a small horse shoe from his back pocket and kisses it, then tosses it over his shoulder.

Their feet suddenly free up and they are able to reach the clearing leading to the pit.

EXT. CLEARING -- CONTINUOUS

They get to the clearing and there's a brilliant flash of light. There stands Sally.

She raises an arm and Todd suddenly lifts into the air.

Max clings to the book.

She lifts her other arm and Bart suddenly lifts up. Todd and Bart hover there, suspended above the beach.

Max doesn't move.

Sally clenches her fists. Todd and Bart begin to writhe in pain as they drift in the air.

Sally just glares at Max. Max holds the book out toward Sally. Still holding Bart and Todd in the air, she steps toward Max as Max approaches her then stops.

Max drops the book. Sally advances a few steps, then stops.

She gives Max a look and clenches her fist tighter. Bart and Todd scream out in pain.

Max looks up, then at the book. Max slowly bends down.

MAX

Sorry, Sally.

He bolts upright giving Sally a tremendous uppercut with the book. She staggers back. He whacks her again with the book. She's down. Some pages slip out. Todd and Bart drop to the ground.

Max runs toward the pit with the book.

EXT. OAK ISLAND PIT -- NIGHT

The pit is still glowing as Max reaches it. Max looks into the pit. It's not pleasant.

Max tosses the book. It goes up then stops, suspended in the air. A cruel laugh and Max turns to see Sally standing there, controlling the book by magic. Slowly the book comes down and begins to head to Sally.

Max grabs the book and tries to pull it away. Some pages fall out and blow away. One blows into the pit and disintegrates.

Todd and Bart come up to the pit and watch the tug of war between Sally and Max.

Bart gets his resolve, takes out his four-leaf clover and swallows it. Then he charges.

TODD

Hey, what are you doing!

Max loses his grip on the book. It floats toward Sally who looks victorious when suddenly...

Bart comes barreling through, takes a flying leap and grabs the book mid-air. Bart and the book go down into the pit.

MAX

Bart!

The pit's hellfires vomit forth anew.

Todd runs over to the large valves and begins opening them up.

Sally screams, then she begins convulsing and drops to the ground.

The pit is filling with sea water.

Todd runs over to an earth-mover now and begins pushing dirt into the pit.

The spirit of the Witch is torn away from the shaking body of Sally and sucked down into the pit. Then Sally goes very still. Max runs over to her.

Sally transforms back to normal.

MAX (CONT'D)

Sally? Sally? Are you all right?

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. OAK ISLAND PIT -- MORNING

The sky is clear and bright. Todd is finishing up with his bulldozer and gets out. The pit is filled in. Max is patting down the top layer of dirt with a shovel.

TODD

Your pal saved our lives.

MAX

He just wanted to help people. I'm sorry about everything. All those people gone.

TODD

It could have been so much worse. Thanks for helping me correct my mistake.

Sally stirs and wakes. Max runs over to her.

MAX

Sally? You okay? How do you feel?

SALLY

I think I'm changing my major.

TODD

We should head to the beach to signal
a boat.

Todd heads off.

SALLY

It's all a blur. I just remember
you fought it...you saved me.

Sally grabs hold of Max and hugs him for all he's worth.
They kiss, long and hard. Then Sally pulls away.

SALLY (CONT'D)

Wait. You're straight?

Max helps Sally up, who is happy for the assistance. They
follow Todd.

Sally stops and looks around and shakes her head.

SALLY (CONT'D)

Now the play is done:
All is well ended, if this suit be
won,
That you express content; which we
will pay,
With strife to please you, day
exceeding day:
Ours be your patience then, and yours
our parts;
Your gentle hands lend us, and take
our hearts.

MAX

What's that from?

SALLY

"All's Well That Ends Well."

MAX

I hope so.

They leave.

A breeze blows in. Some papers blow around. There is a
loose page of parchment, the title page of the Macbeth script.
It blows onto the top of the filled-in pit.

The ink upon the page begins to glow.

BLACK OUT.

The end