

CURSE THE DARKNESS

By Patrick Gabridge

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CURSE THE DARKNESS

A Ten Minute Comedy Skit

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SYNOPSIS: Sometimes the toughest part of any play in a festival is getting ready for the next show. Four stagehands give it their best shot in this hilarious stealth comedy about a coffee table, a candle, love, breakups, theater folk, and set changes. No festival lineup is complete without *Curse the Darkness*.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 either; gender flexible)

MEAGAN	16 lines
BOB.....	14 lines
ED.....	10 lines
LISA	4 lines

**Though this is written for two men and two women, these roles can be played by actors of any gender, any age.*

SETTING: Bare stage in semi-darkness

TIME: The Present

PRODUCTION NOTES

Obviously, the fun of having a play like this in a festival is the element of surprise. I suggest making sure these stagehands are dressed just like your other stagehands. You'll want to make sure there is no obvious break between clearing the stage from the previous play and the start of this play. It goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway) that this play really only works if it's in the middle of the line-up for the evening.

Also, you might want to consider a fake cast list for the show in your program, i.e. "Curse the Darkness: Miranda -- Kelly Lawton, Masha--Fiona Tuttwiler. Bill--Fred Whittaker, Jake--Mike Sherman." Or anagrams of your actors' names. Anything to be tricky.

Thanks: Special thanks to Rhombus and the fabulous four actors for whom these characters are named; Bob Murphy, Ed Hoopman, Lisa Tucker, and Meagan Hawkes.

PROPERTY LIST

- Table
- Armchair
- 2 Chairs
- Couch
- Table settings (dishes, silverware, cups, tablecloth, napkins)
- A candle
- Matches
- A lighter
- A laundry basket full of clothes.
- A bunch of cans
- A coffee table
- Lamp

CURSE THE DARKNESS

Music plays--something peppy and upbeat and recognizable. Set change music.

AT RISE: *In the semi-darkness, two stagehands, BOB and MEAGAN, enter carrying a large table from offstage to downstage right. Set it. BOB finds the marks on the stage. Adjusts the table slightly. BOB and MEAGAN exit stage right.*

LISA, another stagehand, enters quickly carrying a large box of props. She takes it over to the table, places a cloth over the table, and sets the table with four complete place settings--napkins, plates, glasses, double forks and spoons. She does this speedily and with great skill.

ED, another stagehand, enters quickly carrying two chairs that he sets at the table. He exits stage left. BOB and MEAGAN enter carrying a heavy couch and place it upstage left. BOB finds the marks, adjusts the couch slightly. He never passes any item on stage without adjusting it slightly. This annoys MEAGAN--she's anxious to get the scene set so the next play can begin. They exit stage right.

LISA pulls a candle out of the box and places in the center of the table. Adjusts it. Tries to light it with a match. Match won't light. Tries again. Match won't light.

ED enters from stage left carrying a small coffee table and places it stage left of the couch and exits. LISA is still trying to light the candle. None of the matches will light.

BOB and MEAGAN enter carrying an armchair, which they place stage right of the couch. BOB adjusts the chair by an inch, then moves the coffee table back to the other side of the couch. MEAGAN isn't so sure that's where it goes. BOB adjusts it. LISA still can't get the candle to light.

LISA: *(Loud stage whisper.)* Meagan. Help!

MEAGAN goes to help LISA. She produces a lighter from her pocket. It only sparks. BOB adjusts the coffee table by another inch. BOB exits.

The song finishes. Pause. Then restarts from the beginning.

ED enters carrying a large box full of cans and a lamp. He sets down the box and moves the coffee table back to the stage left side of the couch. Then he takes the cans downstage and quickly starts making a pyramid. LISA and MEAGAN still can't get the candle lit.

MEAGAN: Screw it.

LISA: It has to be lit.

MEAGAN: Let's go! Let's go!

LISA starts trying matches again. And again. And again.

LISA: Ed!

ED leaves the pyramid of cans to help LISA and MEAGAN. He puts a hand on MEAGAN'S hip. LISA notices. ED tries the matches and the lighter. No luck. BOB enters carrying a laundry basket full of clothes. He sees the coffee table, moves it back to the other side of the couch. BOB notices how close MEAGAN and ED are standing next to each other. ED and MEAGAN notice BOB. MEAGAN backs half a step away from ED. BOB shrugs and starts to toss the laundry around the couch and floor. He throws it quickly, but then adjusts each item of clothing so that it's just so. ED leaves the table.

MEAGAN: (To LISA.) Just forget it. Let's go!

ED moves the coffee table back to the other side of the couch. MEAGAN sees him.

MEAGAN: Ed!

LISA continues trying frantically to light the candle. She's getting increasingly worked up about it. BOB watches ED.

BOB: It doesn't go there.

ED: Yes, it does.

ED goes back to constructing the pyramid of cans. BOB moves the coffee table back to the other side.

MEAGAN: Come on.

BOB adjusts the coffee table by an inch, then goes back to spreading clothes. ED leaves the cans and moves the coffee table again.

MEAGAN: Tick tock.

LISA: *(Still trying the candle.)* I can't do it. I can't do it.

BOB goes over to ED and the coffee table. MEAGAN joins them, close to ED.

MEAGAN: Bob.

BOB: Don't take his side in this.

ED: You get it wrong every night.

BOB: Don't talk to me.

MEAGAN: Let's go.

BOB picks up the coffee table and places it emphatically on the stage right side of the couch.

BOB: It goes here.

ED: You're wrong.

MEAGAN: Bob.

BOB: Of course you'd take his side.

MEAGAN: Don't.

BOB: I'm not blind, you know.

ED: Move the table, Bob.

BOB: How could you?

MEAGAN: Don't do this. Not now.

The music stops. Then restarts from the beginning.

LISA is still trying to light the candle. She is hysterical with frustration. Her reactions range from tears, gnashing of teeth, to abject weeping and moaning. The pile of wasted matches grows larger and larger, but there seems to be an unending supply in the prop box.

ED picks up the table. BOB blocks his way.

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