

# UNICORN RAINBOW'S HAPPYLAND

## ADVENTURE... OR NOT

by Michael Soetaert

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## UNICORN RAINBOW'S HAPPYLAND ADVENTURE... OR NOT

*A Comedic Duet*

**by Michael Soetaert**

**SYNOPSIS:** Andrew Jackson High School's Annual Spring Play is this Saturday night, but it's not too late for the principal to suggest that the director make a few... minor... changes to the script... and to the cast.

**TIME:** Modern day; after school

**SETTING:** Mr. Gloucester's classroom.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(2 either)*

MRS. LYNETTE NAYLOR (f)..... The 40ish something high school principal at the Andrew Jackson High School. She loves having her job more than actually doing it, but that still doesn't make her a bad administrator. Only average. She has short, efficient hair, and makes the best of the cheap pant suits that she can afford. There is nothing unexpected about her. A good word to describe her with would be "congenial."

MR. BILL GLOUCESTER (m)..... It's pronounced: glough-ster – kinda like "plow" with a "g." Just like the cities in Connecticut and England (and I'm sure elsewhere), and the character in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. And that has doomed Mr. Gloucester to a lifetime of having to spell

his name and constantly having to tell everybody how to pronounce it, which, after 35 years, has gotten to be a bit tiresome. After all, it's a common name... well, not at Andrew Jackson High School, but it ought to be by now. He's been at Andrew Jackson High for seven years. Mr. Gloucester teaches freshmen and junior English, journalism (which means he is responsible for the high school newspaper and the yearbook), and drama. And that means he's also responsible for the school play. He dresses a bit slouchy, a product of not having a whole lot of money in his budget to spend on clothes, and not really caring if he did.

**CASTING NOTE:** The play was originally written for one male and one female but could easily be any combination possible.

### PROPS

MR. GLOUCESTER – Papers on his desk that he's grading, a red pen to grade them with, and a cellphone. Or nothing. He could mime it all.

MRS. NAYLOR – A playbook for *Unicorn Rainbow's Happyland Adventure*; pad with notes on it, and a cellphone. Or, like Mr. Gloucester, nothing.

**SET:** High school classroom. And you know what a high school classroom looks like. The set can be very minimalist. It could be done with just a table and a couple of chairs if necessary – perfect for contest.

**DIRECTOR'S NOTES:** This play is designed for contests, where there are no props, no lighting, and no costuming. All you have are a couple of chairs and (maybe) a small table. It does require some minor miming, but shouldn't be a challenge, even for novice students. If I were staging the play, I would use a tight spot on the last part where the two characters are on their phones at different times.

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**AT START:** *School has just ended and all the students are gone. MR. GLOUCESTER is sitting behind his desk in his classroom grading papers. A lot of papers. After a beat, MRS. NAYLOR enters, but stays just inside the door.*

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Excuse me, Mr. Glah...chess...es...ter.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** *(Trying to hide his annoyance.)* It's Gloucester.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** I'm sorry. I can never remember how to pronounce your name. I hope I'm not disturbing you.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** No more than usual. Just trying to keep up with the grading. As you know, grades are due tomorrow. How can I help you, Mrs. Naylor?

*MRS. NAYLOR fully enters and then pulls up a chair that is near the desk so she can sit across from MR. GLOUCESTER.*

**MRS. NAYLOR:** *(Once seated.)* As you know, the School Board has asked me, the high school principal, to review all student publications and performances before they are made available to the public.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** Yes.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** So, as part of my job, as you know, they asked me to read all the plays your high school drama students are putting on.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** Yes.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Well, I'm happy to say I just finished reviewing this year's selection for the Spring Play... *(Takes out the copy to get the title correct.)* ...*Unicorn Rainbow's Happyland Adventure.*

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** Wonderful! Let's see... you've had it since August... and now it's March. But that's OK. I know you must be busy. We've been busy, too. We've been rehearsing now for six weeks, because opening night is scheduled for this Friday.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Yes. I have been quite busy, what with teacher evaluations. But, like I said, I was finally able to finish reviewing the play.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** *(With less enthusiasm than if he truly meant it.)*

Isn't that just... just a delightful play? Absolutely wonderful. At first, I was a bit worried that the material might be a bit too young for high school students, but it's such a wonderful play. It has such a wonderful message. The little girl, Sunshine, who befriends the lost unicorn, Sweetles – how she has to protect him from the hunter. Don't you just love it in the end when the hunter helps the unicorn escape to Rainbow Land, and everybody is holding hands singing "Kumbaya" as the unicorn joins his family? It just shows that when everybody works together, then all things are possible.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** It is a nice play. But there are a few places where the Committee and I were... a bit concerned that we may be putting across the wrong image.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** Committee?

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Certainly. Such decisions shouldn't be left to just one person. We call ourselves the Committee Ensuring National Standards Of Reliability. It's composed of School Board members, Administration – me. But mostly it's concerned citizens. You know, people from the community who otherwise might not have a voice.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** *Our* community?

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Certainly. We try to listen to the voices of everybody so no one will be offended.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** So, you're letting decisions about education be made by people who are not educated?

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Exactly. We try to leave nobody out. *(Beat.)* As I was saying, the Committee... we're concerned with some of the dialogue...

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** *(Waiting for more; finally.)* Such as?

**MRS. NAYLOR:** *(Looking at her notes.)* On page 34, the little girl... Sunshine... refers to the character "Sweetles"...

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** That's the unicorn.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Yes. She refers to the unicorn as "silly."

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** *(Beat.)* And?

**MRS. NAYLOR:** We just don't think that's a... nice thing for her to do.

We try to encourage our students to have respect for one another, not to call each other names. Having a student doing that onstage... Well... we just think that sends a conflicting message about what our school stands for.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** Wow. I don't know where to start. First, it's not a "student" on stage. Not really. It's a student playing a role. It's pretend.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** That may be a difficult distinction for some people to make.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** What? That somebody dressed in bunny ears and holding a six-foot-tall lollipop isn't real? If they think that's real, then we've got a far bigger problem, and changing a couple of words won't make a whole lot of difference. Besides, Sunshine doesn't call Sweetles "silly." She says, "Don't be silly." It's a common phrase. It's a cliché.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Regardless, we still don't think it sends the proper message to the community, no matter where it takes place, to hear one student calling another student "stupid."

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** She didn't call her "stupid"! She didn't call her anything.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** You and I know there *might* be a slight difference between "silly" and "stupid." (*Beat.*) But it's the students I'm concerned with.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** Oh, c'mon. That's just stupid!

**MRS. NAYLOR:** See what I mean?

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** You and I both know that this is crazy.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Please, Mr. Glow-ceh-cester. Let's all remember our sensitivity training. It's "reality challenged," not "crazy." We need to be sensitive to those people who are sanity deprived.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** Call it what you want, but it comes out just the same. It's nuts.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Oh, don't say "nuts." Don't ever say nuts, even when you're talking about nuts. People with peanut allergies might find that offensive. *(Beat.)* This doesn't have to be that hard, Mr. Glack-ah-ter. All we're talking about here is a minor change. You could just change the script to... well... I'm sure you can think of something, but just make a little change, and everybody's happy.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** Technically, we're not supposed to change *anything* in a play unless we get permission from the author. Like that's going to happen in just three days.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** You do what you need to do, but I seriously doubt anybody's going to know, much less care, if you make one or two minor changes.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** Two?

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Or three. *(Checking her notes.)* Maybe four. But let's not get bogged down with numbers. *(Beat.)* First, well, technically second, there's the part when the boy, Jason, comments that Sunshine wasn't thinking well because she was a blonde.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** The blonde joke.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Yes. The blonde joke. You see, Mr. Glowter, blonde jokes are offensive... well, to everybody. At least, they should be. To assume a physical trait is responsible for poor decisions and a lower intelligence is prejudicial, to say the least. Why, there are some who might even say it's sexist, and where you have sexism, you have sex. And we definitely can't have that. Especially on stage. That's just not a message we want to send.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** I agree. And that's why I already cut it from the script. It didn't add to the overall message, so it's gone. I even blacked those lines out of all the playbooks. The students never saw it.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** The Committee will be pleased to hear that. Thank you. They'll be pleased to hear you're committed to teaching our children the most valuable lesson there is to learn.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** *(Beat.)* Which is?

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Don't offend anybody. That's why we can't have them learning that anybody they could possibly be related to, which is pretty much everybody, could've ever done anything wrong. That could make them feel bad. And we can't let them believe our country has ever done anything wrong, either, because we haven't.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** So, make it all rosy, huh?

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Not roses. There are a lot of people who have rose allergies. I'd completely avoid plants if I were you. Unless you're talking about a green salad. Even so, it would probably be best to leave out vegetables altogether. There are a lot of people who are offended by vegetarians. But, then, we wouldn't want to offend the vegetarians, either. Would we?

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** I can assure you. There are no salads in our play.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Good. It's not a problem, then. And that's a good thing.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** *(Beat.)* Is that all?

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Unfortunately, no. We – the Committee – have some very serious concerns about the character called... *(Once more checking her notes.)* ...Hunter.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** *(Beat.)* And?

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Well... he has a gun.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** Of course, he has a gun. He's a *hunter*.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Nevertheless, having a gun anywhere in our school, even pretend, is a bit concerning, to say the least. We feel it's just a bit too... violent.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** That's how guns are supposed to feel. Guns are meant to do violent things.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** But having a gun on stage might make some students feel threatened.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** OK. I can see that. And I can change that. *(Beat, while he thinks.)* What if he didn't have a gun at all?

**MRS. NAYLOR:** That would be wonderful.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** I could make him a trapper.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** With one of those bear traps that snaps on a leg?

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** I suppose.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Don't you think that's still awfully violent?

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** It would never snap on anybody's leg. It would be a prop.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** But still...

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** (*Letting his frustration show.*) Fine! I could give him a net... a big butterfly net. And every time he waves it, glitter falls down. Would that make everybody happy? Does anybody get offended by glitter?

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Actually... yes. Janitors, for one. But we're missing the bigger problem.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** I don't doubt that at all.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** The Committee has a problem with the hunter altogether. You see, a lot of students' fathers like to go hunting. As do many of the students. We don't want to give them the message that hunting is bad.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** It *is* bad if you're poaching.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** That's asking our students to differentiate between what could easily be a rather gray area of the law.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** Students need to know that there are gray areas of the law. Life isn't black and white.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Let's not even get into race.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** Mrs. Naylor, these are high school students. Some of them are graduating at the end of the year. They are perfectly capable of understanding the difference between poaching and legally hunting. They are perfectly capable of understanding lots of things.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** We're not just concerned with the students, Mr. Glupter. We're also concerned with their parents.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** I honestly don't know how we can change the part of the hunter. He's a central character in the play. Without the hunter, nothing makes sense. There's no point in having a unicorn if there is no hunter.

**MRS. NAYLOR:** I'm glad you brought up the unicorn.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** What?!

**MRS. NAYLOR:** Well, as you know, unicorns are mythological.

**MR. GLOUCESTER:** (*Beat.*) So?

**MRS. NAYLOR:** So that means we're presenting a myth as if it were true.

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