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Dramatic Publishing

A Play in Three Acts

GET WITCH QUICK

by

DAVID ROGERS



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(GET WITCH QUICK)

ISBN 0-87129-922-4

GET WITCH QUICK

A Play in Three Acts

For Six Men and Fourteen Women

CHARACTERS

MRS. MARJORIE BLACKWELL..... *Dean of Craft College*

MOTHER HECATE }
MISS WISK } *members of the faculty*
MISS HURLEY }
JUNELLE KEMP }
LUCINDA FRYE }
UNDINE GRANDSBACKER }
CECILY SMITH-SMYTHE }
IVY (VOODOO) CHARPENTIER } ... *students at Craft College*
KAY CLINTON }
BELLA RUSSEL }
DONNA RUSSEL }
MONA DABNEY }
LIZA YOUNG }
STEVE WHARTON..... *an instructor*

MILO ALDEN }
HANK } *students at Oz Academy*
FRANK }
CALEB..... *a gardener*
MT. ATWATER..... *a government official*

PLACE: *Craft College, outside Salem, Massachusetts.*

TIME: *The present.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE: *The Student Lounge, late in May.*

ACT TWO: *The same, a month later.*

ACT THREE: *The same, a few minutes later.*

ACT ONE

SCENE: The Student Lounge at Craft College, near Salem, Massachusetts. There are doors UR and DR, and an archway DL. There is a picture window UC, with a window seat beneath it. The room has a fireplace in the center of the wall R; desk and chair at RC, a loveseat and table at LC. There are also a refectory table and a birdcage on a stand. (For further details see Production Notes.)

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: It is late afternoon in May. JUNELLE KEMP, an attractive girl of about twenty, is seated at the desk, typing, as her friend, KAY CLINTON, nineteen and pretty, stands behind her attempting to trim Junelle's hair with a pair of small scissors. Seated at the refectory table, CECILY SMITH-SMYTHE, a horsy English exchange student, also about twenty, with a heavy English accent, peers into a large bowl. There is an arrangement of false flowers on the table near her. IVY (VOODOO) CHARPENTIER, a tall, dark, slinky, attractive girl in her late teens, is seated in the visitor's chair beside the desk, sewing a small rag doll. MONA DABNEY, another late teen-ager, is on the love seat surrounded by several books, copying from them into a note book. BELLA and DONNA RUSSEL, sisters, also in their late teens, are seated on the window seat, playing jacks. After a moment:)

MONA (staring at a textbook, passionately). I don't

understand this assignment! I hate you! I hate you! I hate you! (She throws the book through the archway.) I'll try something else for a while. It may calm my nerves. (She turns a page in her notebook and picks up another text.)

CECILY (rising and moving her hands in the air over the bowl, intoning).

Spirit, spirit of black water,
Show some sign to me, your daughter.

(She sits again and peers intently into the bowl.)

KAY. Hold still, Junelle!

JUNELLE (typing). I have to finish this for Mrs. Blackwell.

KAY. You'll have ragged ends.

CECILY (rising in disgust). Nothing! No vision, no message, absolutely nothing! I simply can't get it cracking, don't you see?

VOODOO. You working on black water divining?

BELLA. Oh, that's difficult! Mornings before we have black water divining class, I get so nervous I can't eat breakfast. Go on, Donna, you're on sevensies.

KAY. Are you sure you're using the right spell, Cecily?

CECILY. I can try another. Mona, do you have your speller?

MONA. I just threw it into the hall. I'll get it for you. (She rises.)

CECILY. Oh, don't bother.

MONA. No trouble. (Facing the archway, she turns in a circle, reciting:)

Book of spells, it's you we need.
Please come back at double speed.

(She finishes, facing the archway, hands outstretched. The book comes flying through the air to her from outside the archway. It seems to leap into her hands. /For explanation of this

and subsequent witch-magic tricks, see Production Notes at back.) MONA hands the book to CECILY. None of the girls react as though anything unusual has happened.)

CECILY. Thanks, awfully.

MONA. Nothing. (She sits down with her notebook again as CECILY returns to the refectory table.)

BELLA (continuing a story as she and DONNA play jacks). So, I'm sitting on the bench with him and he tries to put his arm around me. So I said to him, "Listen, even if you did pick me up in the drug store, does that give you the right to think I'm the kind of a girl you can pick up in a drug store?"

DONNA. Cute.

(LIZA, another classmate, enters at L.)

LIZA. Has she come yet? The new English teacher?

KAY. No, Liza. We're waiting to see her.

VOODOO. I don't know why. You always have these high hopes about a new teacher. Then you see them. (She squints over her sewing.) This light is terrible for sewing. (She makes a firm hand gesture toward the window shade, which immediately goes up.) That's better. (She resumes sewing.)

BELLA. Do you know what the new teacher's like, Junelle?

JUNELLE (not wanting to answer). Uh . . . no . . . not exactly, Bella. Mrs. Blackwell did the hiring by mail.

LIZA. Well, why all the mystery? Why hasn't she told us about her yet?

JUNELLE. She . . . uh . . . wants to make a general announcement.

MONA (looking up). Has anyone done the economics

homework yet?

KAY. Yes.

MONA. I don't understand this, Kay. What does it mean? (She reads:) "It is the code of our craft never to make too much money to disturb the national economy." Does that mean we have to limit our fees because of taxes?

CECILY. Oh, no! We've got that home in England, too. They don't care how much we earn, don't you see? It's a question of actual making.

JUNELLE. If every one of us created any amount of money they wanted, it would result in economic disaster for the whole world.

KAY. We've functioned under the "fund limitation rule" ever since the days of alchemy.

MONA. Oh. (She returns to her notebook. VOODOO rises and stretches.)

VOODOO. There. That's done.

LIZA. Were you making another doll, Voodoo? You must have hundreds.

VOODOO. I do. That's why they call me Voodoo. Actually, this is not for me. It's a Hallowe'en gift for my grandmother. I decided to make my presents this year.

(MRS. BLACKWELL, the dean, comes out of her office UR. She is an attractive, middle-aged widow, in most respects a typical, overworked educator: efficient, harassed, fond of her students, devoted to her school. Her conversation tends to be a bit distracted.)

MRS. BLACKWELL. Have you finished that letter to the trustees, Junelle?

JUNELLE (a burst of typing speed). One minute, Mrs. Blackwell.

MRS. BLACKWELL. I don't know why they want to

change the graduation exercises just this year, when I'm so overworked. Miss Graymalkin in the hospital . . . a new teacher coming to finish the term . . .

KAY. Why change the graduation? I thought last year's was lovely.

MRS. BLACKWELL. Yes. And traditional. I've written them it will have to be the same as always. June 21st at midnight on the blasted heath out back. That's final. (To JUNELLE, as she picks up a box of bird seed from the desk.) Did you give Medusa her bird seed today?

JUNELLE. Yes, Mrs. Blackwell.

MRS. BLACKWELL (going to bird cage). Hello, Medusa, sweetheart. Tweet, tweet, tweet. (She pokes at the cage. The bird barks like a happy dog.) Poor darling, I haven't had time to go out and dig her a worm for weeks.

JUNELLE (pulling letter from typewriter). It's finished.

MRS. BLACKWELL (going to JUNELLE and taking it). I thought I'd show it to Mother Hecate before I mail it. If she approves, they won't argue. She's so distinguished, the star in our faculty crown, so to speak. I think the trustees are a little frightened of her.

JUNELLE. She's in the unnatural science lab. Working on her speech for the Boston Hex and Hoodoo Society on Tuesday.

MRS. BLACKWELL. Well, I'll just have to disturb her. (KAY goes back to clipping Junelle's hair as MRS. BLACKWELL starts for door D R.) Don't leave any hair clippings around, dear. You know how dangerous they can be if they fall into the wrong hands.

CECILY (making passes over the bowl with one hand as she reads a new incantation from the speller).

Hail all hail,
Tarnier and Rael.
Bring me a vision.
Please don't fail!

(She peers into the bowl.)

MRS. BLACKWELL (turning at door). What *are* you doing, Cecily?

CECILY. Black water divining. I've simply got to get it before finals.

MRS. BLACKWELL. Oh, well, that's all right. But don't raise any devils, dear. With the substitute teacher coming any minute, I don't want the place a mess. And you know how devils can get out of hand.

MONA. What's the substitute like, Mrs. Blackwell?

MRS. BLACKWELL (sighing sadly). You girls will just have to realize, everyone in the world simply has to make some compromises. A witch's life is not always a happy one. (She exits D.R.)

VOODOO. What's the matter with her? She's been saying things like that for weeks.

KAY. Ever since Miss Graymalkin had that freak accident.

BELLA. And Miss Graymalkin was so good at making herself invisible. Imagine a woman with her experience getting stuck half-way back to being visible.

DONNA. It's lucky the half that materialized is the half that eats.

JUNELLE. The hospital says she'll be back together again for next term.

(UNDINE GRANDSBACKER enters L, escorted by MILO ALDEN. UNDINE is perhaps the youngest of the girls, pretty, but neither too bright nor too talented. MILO, a young man of twenty-one, is her boy friend, a student at the brother school.)

UNDINE. Hello, girls. (The girls say "Hello" . . . "Hi, Undine" . . . "Lo, Milo," etc.) Well, thanks for bringing me home, Milo. I had a perfectly wonderful time. (She bursts into tears.)

MILO (embracing her). Oh, now, Undine . . .

JUNELLE. What's the matter?

CECILY. Come on, old chap, stiff upper.

MILO. I had to tell her some bad news.

UNDINE (crying). It's his mother.

KAY. What's the matter with her?

UNDINE. She won't let us get married.

CECILY. Bad luck!

MONA. Oh, Undine, that's awful!

LIZA. She's an old witch! Oh, excuse me, Milo.

MILO. No. That's just the problem. She is such an old witch . . . and so talented.

UNDINE. And she checked with Mrs. Blackwell and found out about my marks being so low . . . and now . . . she doesn't think I'm good enough for Milo.

MILO. It's not that.

UNDINE. Then what is it?

MILO (admitting). It's that.

UNDINE. You see? (A fresh burst of tears.)

MILO. Well, Undine, you must try to understand Mater's side. She's thinking of the family's good name. After all, one of her ancestors was burned right after the Mayflower landed.

KAY. Pilgrim stock, eh?

MILO. They'd've burned her on board but it was a wooden ship.

BELLA. But Undine's family is just as good as yours.

JUNELLE. Mrs. Grandsbacker's the editor of "Harpey's Monthly" and she's on every important committee in the profession.

CECILY. Internationally famous! I heard her lecture at Stonehenge Academy before I came here under

the exchange student program.

UNDINE. She'd probably let him marry my mother, but not me! Let's face it, girls, I'm flunking out and everyone knows it.

JUNELLE. Well, your marks are low, but if you do well in the finals, Undine . . .

UNDINE. I can't mix a potion that would enchant a fly. In the spelling bees I'm always the first one out. And in gym class I can't even get my broom off the ground.

MILO. And it's worse because I'm at the head of my class. (Defensively.) I try to do poorly, but I can't help being good.

VOODOO. Couldn't you just fly away and get married?

UNDINE. Without her permission? With her power? We'd both wind up swans on the lake in Boston common.

MILO. Undine, if you could just pull yourself together and graduate, I'm sure I could convince Mater.

UNDINE. If I could . . . if you could . . . Oh, Milo, I'll try. I don't want to lose you. (She embraces him.)

(LUCINDA FRYE dramatically zooms in from L. She is more sophisticated and glamorous than the others and seems a trifle older. She wears a smart dress, a bright scarf tied around her throat. She is followed at a little distance by two escorts, HANK and FRANK.)

LUCINDA. Hello, hello, hello, darlings! What are you all standing about for? What's brewing?

KAY. Hello, Lucinda.

VOODOO. We're waiting to see the new teacher.

LUCINDA (with an airy wave at her escorts). You all know Hank and Frank, aren't they darling? Hello, Milo . . . I haven't seen you for weeks.

(Flirtatiously.) You've been avoiding me!

UNDINE (pointedly). He's been busy. (But LUCINDA is still wandering around the room. Now, she notices the bowl of black water.)

LUCINDA. Oh, divine! Black water. Whose is it?

CECILY. Mine.

LUCINDA. Do you mind, darling? I can't find my compact. The one with the Magic Mirror in it. I'm lost without it. (She makes a pass in the air over the bowl and recites:)

Answer, spirits, when I quiz.

Tell me where my compact is?

(She peers into the bowl.) Silly me! I left it on the window seat! (She crosses to the window seat. Making DONNA rise, she finds the compact. Meanwhile CECILY crosses to the bowl and peers at the vision there.)

CECILY. I could scream! I could actually scream.

LUCINDA (opening compact and looking at mirror, reciting:)

Mirror, mirror, in my hand,

Who is the fairest in the land?

(Her smile fades as she obviously sees the wrong answer. In a temper, she snaps:) You're lying! (Closing the compact and crossing to HANK and FRANK.) It's obviously out of order. Well, thanks for seeing me home, boys. I'll see you both Saturday for the dance?

FRANK. Look, Lucinda, couldn't you just see one of us?

HANK. Do we always have to go out in a group?

LUCINDA. But, darlings, a girl walking into a room without a man on each arm looks positively lopsided. You wouldn't want that, would you? (She waits a beat. They don't answer.) Of course, if it disturbs you, sweethearts, I'm sure I could find two others . . . (She dangles that as a threat.)

FRANK (discouraged). No. It's okay.

HANK (depressed). We'll pick you up at seven.

LUCINDA (all smiles and charm). Well, 'by, 'by, 'by till then!

FRANK (as they go). Look at it this way, Hank, at least we split the cost of our dates and that keeps expenses down. (They exit L.)

LUCINDA (looking after them). Aren't they sweet? Both seventh sons, you know.

KAY (going back to desk). Shall I finish your hair, Junelle?

JUNELLE. Please, Kay. (She goes back to KAY, who resumes cutting her hair.)

LUCINDA (to VOODOO). Do you think this scarf is too much? The color came out wilder than I expected.

VOODOO. I'd like green better.

LUCINDA (taking it off). Maybe. (Holding it up, she intones:)

Spirits, would you please arrange

For a little color change.

(She passes her hand over the scarf, changing its color, then ties it back on as she crosses to MILO.)

MILO, darling. I've been working up a theory in lab, I know you'd be fascinated by. I feel we don't have to stick to the old-fashioned methods. Modern technology can be helpful, helpful, helpful in witchcraft, don't you think?

MILO. I don't know. How do you mean?

UNDINE (anxious to get him away from LUCINDA).

Milo, don't you have a class at two?

MILO. Oh. Yes.

LUCINDA. Take potions. Why use a mortar and pestle in the space age? I get just as good results with the same old ingredients mixing them in an electric blender.

MILO (interested). That's rather clever . . .

LUCINDA. Darling, come into the lab for a moment and let me show you.

UNDINE. Milo, you're going to be late.

MILO (realizing what's bothering her). Oh. Of course. Some other time, Lucinda. Good afternoon, girls. (They all say "Good-by"! . . . "So long" . . . etc.) Don't fret, Undine, the formula will work out in the end, I know.

UNDINE. I'll try, Milo, I really will. (MILO exits L.)

LUCINDA (sitting on sofa). Isn't he a clever boy! And so good-looking, too!

UNDINE. You leave him alone, Lucinda Frye!

LUCINDA. Why, darling, that sounds a teensy, teeny, teensy bit like jealousy.

UNDINE (furious, starting toward her). I'll scratch your eyes out!

LUCINDA. Temper, temper! (She casually waves her hands in the air and UNDINE freezes in position.)

UNDINE. Let me go!

LUCINDA (innocently). What?

UNDINE. I said, let me go. Stop showing off.

LUCINDA (sweet reason). But, darling, anyone who wants to marry a boy like Milo should be able to break a simple spell like that.

UNDINE. Junelle, help me! (JUNELLE turns and sees what's happened. She rises.)

JUNELLE (waving her hand, releasing UNDINE). You know that's against the rules, Lucinda. I should report you!

LUCINDA. It was an accident, Junelle. Oh, sometimes I don't know the power of my own fingers.

CECILY (annoyed). Enchantment dropper!

JUNELLE. All right, Cecily.

CECILY. Well, it's just a bit thick, don't you see? Finding her mirror with my black water. I'm

going to make that bowl work or my name isn't Cecily Smyth-Smith. (Furious, she turns to the bowl and recites:)

Spirits one and two and three,
Show some sign to Cecily!

(She peers into the bowl. The telephone rings.)

LUCINDA (sarcastic). Well, at least you got the phone to ring.

JUNELLE (answering telephone). Craft College. . . .

Mrs. Blackwell? One moment, please. (She pushes the buttons on the telephone, then says:) Mrs. Blackwell, you're wanted on five. (She hangs up. Suddenly a low, mysterious, male VOICE is heard.)

VOICE. Water's bright first . . .

CECILY (excited). A message! I'm getting a message!

UNDINE. Cecily! How do you do that?

CECILY (dashing around). Where's a pad? Somebody take it down! Take it down! Get a pad!

JUNELLE (picking up pad and pencil). I've got one.

CECILY. It said "Water's bright first."

VOICE. Then ashes out cursed . . .

CECILY. "Then ashes out cursed". . . isn't this corking? Black water divining at last!

LUCINDA. You can't hear black water, darling.
Black water is video.

MONA. She's right!

CECILY. Then what is it?

LUCINDA. It's audio. You've bungled it again, Cecily.

VOICE. The little month becomes reversed.

CECILY (frantic). Where is it coming from? What did I do?

JUNELLE (taking notes). ". . . becomes reversed . . ."

UNDINE. It's Medusa!