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Family Plays

THE FRANKENSTEINS ARE BACK IN TOWN

Comedy by
TIM KELLY



THE FRANKENSTEINS ARE BACK IN TOWN

Commissioned by Robert Redford's celebrated Sundance Theatre and acclaimed as "a play destined to become family theatre's favorite around the country," here is a charming musical version of best-loved fairy tales.

"Not only was *The Franksteins Are Back in Town* one of the most talked about shows that we have ever presented and the most exciting, it was great fun for the cast and staff as well." (Director, Youth Education on Stage, Williston, N. D.)

Comedy. By Tim Kelly. *Cast: 8m., 14w., extras.* "Laughing Room Only" is the best way to describe this insanely funny farce. The Frankenstein monster and his bride had two children—a boy and a girl—who look just like mom and pop. Their aunt decides to enroll them in an American school and brings them to the little town of Withering Heights over the objections of her gypsy servants who fear the villagers will attack. However, the baroness has brought along the gruesome Igor for protection. The football coach wants Shelley on the team, Vic is running for president of the student senate, Igor is chasing the biology teacher and the local sheriff is threatening to raid the high school because students will not pay their traffic citations! To add to the confusion, the Frankensteins have gotten their knowledge of American conversation by studying television commercials! The plot threatens to explode when the editor of the student paper discovers x-rays that prove the new arrivals aren't all that human, and a theatrical agent smells big money. Biker Bozo Barnes and his gang are threatening a total wipeout, and a mob of irate citizens storm the Monster Stomp. Toss in a couple of scenes straight out of a Frankenstein film, and you've got some idea of the hilarity. The Frankensteins are back in town—and you'll want to meet them, even if Withering Heights will never be the same. From the moment Vic and Shelley become part of the student "body" until pandemonium breaks loose at the musical Monster Stomp, the cast and audience are assured of a wild, side-splitting time. *With fast-moving, funny dialog, the play is designed for simple production and rehearsal scheduling. Several of the roles may be played by men or women. Some parts can be handled with only one or two run-throughs. Approximate running time: 100 minutes. Video available. Code: FD7.*

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The Frankensteins
Are Back In Town

The Frankensteins Are Back In Town

A Comedy in Three Acts

by

TIM KELLY

A *'Stage Magic'* Play

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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TIM KELLY

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“Produced by special arrangement with
Family Plays of Woodstock, Illinois”

STORY OF THE PLAY

“Laffing Room Only” is the best way to describe this insanely funny farce. Old Barnaby Frankenstein, who lived on the hill in the terrifying house, has passed on. His relative, Baroness Frankenstein, comes to the small town of Withering Heights to settle the estate—and test a scientific theory.

You see, Doctor Frankenstein’s ancient monster did, indeed, marry his bride. That was a long time back and, now, their direct descendants, Shelley and Victor, teenagers, are ready to embrace the world. The Baroness wants them to get an American education and enrolls them in the local high school over the objections of her gypsy servants, who fear the “villagers” will attack. However, the Baroness has brought along the gruesome Igor for protection. From the moment Vic and Shel become part of the student “body” until pandemonium breaks loose at a musical Monster Stomp, the cast and audience are assured of a wild, side-splitting time.

The football coach wants Shelley on the team, Vic is running for president of the student senate, Igor is chasing the biology teacher, the local sheriff is threatening to raid the high school because students will not pay their traffic citations! To add to the confusion, the Frankensteins have gotten their knowledge of American conversation by studying television commercials! The plot threatens to explode when the editor of the student paper discovers X-rays that prove the new arrivals aren’t all that human and a theatrical agent smells big money.

For further menace biker Bozo Barnes (he carries a blackjack in his pencil box) and his gang are threatening a total wipe-out, and a mob of irate citizens, with pitchforks and torches, storm the Stomp. Toss in a couple of scenes straight out of a Frankenstein film and you’ve got some idea of the hilarity. With fast-moving, funny dialog, the play is designed for simple production and rehearsal scheduling. Several of the roles may be played by males or females. Some parts can be handled with only one or two run-throughs.

The Frankensteins are back in town—and you’ll want to meet them, even if Withering Heights High will never be the same.

SYNOPSIS

PROLOG

Principal's Office. Withering
Heights High School. The present.

ACT I

Scene 1: The same. The following morning.
Scene 2: A few days later.

ACT II

Scene 1: Office of the school paper and Miss
Glittertooth's classroom. The
following week.
Scene 2: The same. The next day.

ACT III

Frankenstein's Mouldy Manor. Night.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Appearance)

MARIA, a gypsy, servant of Baroness Frankenstein

HANS, another gypsy, Maria's husband

BARONESS FRANKENSTEIN, aristocratic, scientific

IGOR, a monster in human (sort of) form, henchman to the Baroness

CLAUDETTÉ SPOCK, a student, attractive

MISS LAZZARONI, assistant principal, capable

* **STUDENT 1 (JACKIE)**, victim of anxiety attacks

MISS GLITTERTOOTH, biology teacher

* **STUDENT 2 (ROBIN)**, designs posters

SILVIA, edits school paper, ambitious

* **STUDENT 3 (BILLIE)**, a "sensitive" sophomore

MISS BARRYMORE, school principal, slightly befuddled

PHILO, photographer on school paper

GLADYS, another student, Veronica's friend

GIRL STUDENT, excitable

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN, direct descendant of the famous Frankenstein "creature"

SHELLEY FRANKENSTEIN, his "creature" sister

MISS BELLE, school nurse

SHAMBLES, football player with a glass jaw

COACH NEMO, a desperate faculty member

SHERIFF MCGINTY, high school students frustrate him

BOZO BARNES, a mean biker

VERONICA, Bozo's girlfriend

FLORA RAGLAND, aggressive theatrical agent

AGNES HONEYWORTH, a menace

* **STUDENTS, TOWNSPEOPLE**

* May be male or female

PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES

Set Props. Prolog & Act I: chair, table with school announcements, faculty messages, file cabinet, small bench, desk with two chairs, phone (the telephone cord is cut apart and lightly taped together), pad, pencils, miscellaneous papers on desk.

Act II: Newspaper Office—desk, chair, typewriter, wastebasket. Classroom—teacher's desk and chair, 8 or 9 student chairs, pull-apart chair (previously taken apart and loosely put back together).

Act III:- table with sheet, chair, small sofa or armchair or 2 chairs placed together with afghan covering, chemical lab apparatus.

The sets are so designed that many of the same set pieces can be used in all acts (school furniture always has a tendency to look alike). Additional set and trim props may be used as the director desires.

Hand Props. Prolog and Act I: flashlight (Hans), cookie shaped like a dog biscuit (Baroness), folder and pencil (Miss Lazzaroni), glasses (Miss Glittertooth), "VOTE" poster (Claudette), large envelope supposedly containing X-rays (Miss Belle), school newspaper (Silvia), football helmet (Shambles), whistle (Nemo), traffic citation pad (McGinty), large envelope (Philo), carton with papers for filing (Victor)

Act II: camera (Philo), books (Students), mirror and lipstick (Veronica), food basket or hamper with tablecloth, wine glasses, sandwich on plate, bottle of pop, candles (Maria), towel (Philo), "VOTE" poster (Student 2), newspaper (Flora), business card (Flora), shopping bag (Agnes), notebook and pencil (Silvia), whistle (McGinty)

Act III: medical smock and surgical mask (Baroness), candle and candlesticks, table decoration (Hans and Maria), contract (Flora), whip (Igor), envelope supposedly containing X-rays (Silvia), notebook, pencil (Silvia), notebook that belongs to Silvia (Bozo), traffic citation pad (McGinty), money (Shambles, Students), pitchforks, shovels, hoes or clubs (Mob), suitcase (Agnes)

COSTUMES

Modern costumes for all characters, except as noted. Hans and Maria wear colorful gypsy outfits. Igor wears rags and pelts. Other special costumes include: track suit (Nemo), sheriff's or police uniform (McGinty), leather jacket (Bozo), chic outfit (Flora), funny hat and cloth coat with ratty fur collar (Agnes), bandaging and long nightgown (Shelley in Act III as "Bride of Frankenstein"), assorted monster costumes (optional, for Students in Act III), nurse's uniform (Miss Belle). McGinty's uniform may be padded to make him look huge.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

Monster makeup: The makeup for Victor and Shelley can be left to the resources and imagination of the individual production. Shelley's hair should be swept back and piled high with streaks of white on each side. Actually, the hairstyle in the classic "Bride of Frankenstein" film was based on that of Egypt's famed Queen Nefertiti. The eyebrows should be pencil-thin slashes and the lips very red, painted "Cupid's bow" fashion. Victor, for the best effect, should have a flattish head, with perhaps a bolt or electrodes at his neck. His lips might be black, like his fingernails; his skin should be "greenish." Like Shelley, he should have stitches on the neck, wrist, and forehead. The sleeves of his jacket should be too

short so that his arms will look long and dangling. To make him appear monstrously tall and super strong, give him shoes with 6" to 10" soles (carved from soft wood or plastic and glued to regular shoes), and pad his shoulders to an almost ridiculous width (modify a pair of football shoulder pads).

Bozo should reflect the outlaw biker image, so he should wear motorcycle boots, cap, leather jacket, etc. Veronica and Gladys might dress like biker "mamas." Also, one or two additional biker students might be employed, now and again, when Bozo is around to give the effect of a "gang."

Students. Director can re-assign the Student dialogue, giving some of the lines to additional students if desired. The Director may wish to give each student a specific name for program purposes, as suggested in the Cast of Characters. The students may be male or female or any mixture.

Lobby Display. Your production might carry out a monster theme, with a lobby display of pictures and posters from various Frankenstein and other horror films

Students accept the Frankensteins. The students (except for the Bozo gang) accept Victor and Shelley easily. The faculty has a slight problem, but for the students, having classmates like these two odd visitors is no "big deal."

Shelley, Victor, and Igor are, naturally, the most fascinating characters to the audience, so the performers should work on characterization, and if something amusing develops in rehearsals—use it. The TV commercials spoken by the Frankensteins in this text may be replaced by currently popular commercials. When the commercials are delivered in Victor's slow plodding voice and Shelley's electric, lightning-like voice, the result is bound to be funny.

Creation of the Bride of Frankenstein. The director may wish to elaborate on this sequence. For example, Igor might keep handing Baroness Frankenstein "items." She might call out, "Brain!"—he hands her a large, wet sponge. "Hand!"—he gives her a fake joke-store hand. "Eyes!"—he hands her two peeled grapes.

The Stomp. This is an excellent opportunity for dancers. A "specialty" dance act might be worth considering. However, even your most awkward actor can do the stiff-legged dance suggested in the text.

LIGHTING

Flashing the lights at appropriate points to suggest "lightning" (popping camera flashcubes produces realistic lightning) is the only lighting effect required in this play. The director, of course, is at liberty to use additional lighting and special effects where desired.

STYLE AND TEMPO

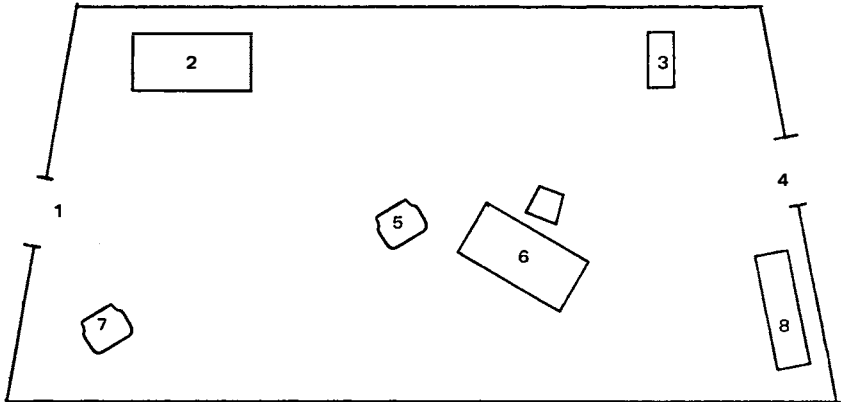
Remember with any play that is as "off-the-wall" as THE FRANKENSTEINS ARE BACK IN TOWN, subtlety is no virtue. Keep it broad, loud, fast. The characters are not three-dimensional—they are, mostly, farcical and must be played that way. The cast must not "break up," for that will cheapen the effect. The play must be performed sincerely. Keep the show inventive, but there must be no dead spots—no moment when nothing is happening. In Act III, the stage will contain many people, so keep the blocking as uncluttered as possible. Make sure the audience can see—and hear—everything that's going on.

This is a show to have fun with. Enjoy.

T. K.

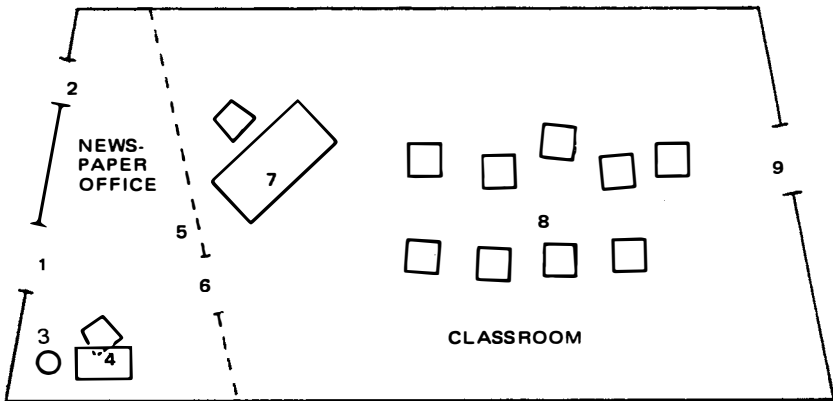
SET

Entrances, exits, and most of the furniture are the same for all acts, making set changes easy and quick.

Prolog, Act I: School Office

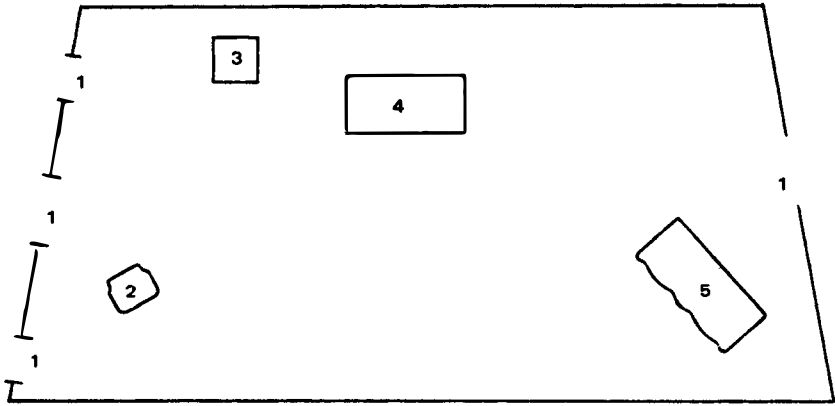
Scale: 1/8"=1'

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1—Exit to corridor | 5—Chair |
| 2—Mail table | 6—Desk and chair |
| 3—One or more filing cabinets | 7—Chair |
| 4—Entrance to Principal's Office | 8—Bench |

Act II: Newspaper Office/Classroom

Scale: 1/8"=1'

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|---|---------------------------|
| 1—Entrance (entrances and exits may remain the same for all acts) | 5—Imaginary wall |
| 2—To darkroom | 6—Imaginary door |
| 3—Wastebasket | 7—Teacher's desk & chair |
| 4—Editor's desk & chair | 8—Student desks or chairs |
| | 9—To corridor |

Act III: Frankenstein's Mouldy Manor*Scale: 1/8"=1'*

1—Entrances (more or less may be used, as desired)

2—Chair

3—Lab equipment

4—Table (desk from previous scene)

5—Small sofa

Additional set decoration and props may be used in all instances, as desired



Headed for the Monster Stomp

THE FRANKENSTEINS ARE BACK IN TOWN

PROLOG

[The setting is the principal's office in Withering Heights High School. Down Right is a chair; Right is an exit that leads into a hallway or corridor. Up Right Center is a long table where teachers pick up their mail, messages, school announcements, magazines, etc. Up Left Center there is a file cabinet or two. Down Left, against the "wall," is a small bench. Entrance into the principal's private office is Stage Left. The assistant principal's desk is approximately Left Center. There's a chair behind this desk, another in front. A phone is on the desk. To these basics can be added anything that will add atmosphere; for example, an American flag, a globe, bulletin board, a table with books.]

AT RISE: Midnight. At first—nothing. Then, we hear the voices of MARIA and HANS approaching from Off Right. The beam of a flashlight cuts into the darkness of the room. They are gypsies, and they speak with a slight middle European accent]

MARIA. I do not think coming here at this hour is wise.

HANS. The Baroness says she must see for herself.

MARIA. If the villagers discover us, they may turn into a howling mob.

HANS. You worry too much.

MARIA. One of us has to.

[By now, they've entered. In the dimness we can barely make them out]

HANS. Is this the office of the headmaster?

MARIA. In America the headmaster is called the principal.

HANS. *[Moves the beam about, the ray of light hitting the desk, the file cabinet, the bench. He steps Down Center]* There's no window.

MARIA. Good. No one will know we're in here. Find a light.

HANS. *[Waves flashlight]* I'm holding one.

MARIA. *[Exasperated]* Not your flashlight! Do not be stupid, Hans.

HANS. That is what my mother used to call me—Stupid Hans.

[MARIA moves Down Right to some "light switch" and supposedly snaps it on. Lighting gives us a look at the office and the intruders.]

NOTE: The effect here should suggest that Maria has snapped on some of the room lights, but not all. The office has a gloomy or dimly lighted aura. HANS and MARIA are dressed in gypsy costumes. They look about the office as if they expected a ghost to jump from the shadows]

MARIA. [*Steps beside Hans*] Not a friendly sort of chamber.

HANS. [*Scanning room*] Looks like the police headquarters back home. The place you come to before they put you away.

MARIA. This isn't a jail or a prison, Hans. It is called a high school.

HANS. They can call it a low school for all it matters to me. [*Worried*] We never should have come here to America. Our sort is at home in Europe, safe and snug in the castle of Baroness— [*Hand up for emphasis*] Frankenstein! [*THUNDER. (NOTE: Whenever a character speaks the name "Frankenstein" with dramatic intensity and holds up a hand for emphasis, it will be followed by a CRASH OF THUNDER)*]

MARIA. It's too late to worry about it now.

HANS. We belong to the past. We should stay there.

MARIA. You may be right.

BARONESS FRANKENSTEIN. Rubbish! [*BARONESS FRANKENSTEIN has entered in time to overhear the last couple of lines. She is a strikingly handsome woman in a floor-length gown, sweeping cape, and jewels, authoritative and assured, a true aristocrat. She too, has a slight accent. She crosses to them*]

HANS. I did not mean what I said for your ears, Baroness.

BARONESS. Obviously.

MARIA. We are afraid there will be trouble with the villagers when you attempt to enroll Victor and his sister in this high school.

HANS. Many people are still prejudiced when it comes to the name of Frankenstein.

BARONESS. Many people are prejudiced when it comes to *any* person who is different.

MARIA. Victor and his sister *are* direct descendants of the monster and his bride, the creatures your ancestor brought into being. Some people are not fond of monsters.

BARONESS. [*Angry*] Never refer to them as monsters! Never call them creatures!

MARIA. [*Apologetic*] Forgive me, Baroness. I forgot.

BARONESS. They've been brought up to consider themselves as normal as— [*searches for the "right" comparison*] —as Sara Lee All-Butter Coffee Cake.

HANS. "All-Butter"?

MARIA. Who is this Sara Lee?

BARONESS. Victor and Shelley cannot spend their entire lives sheltered behind the walls of my ancestral castle.

HANS. Why not?

BARONESS. Because they must learn to adjust to the age in which they live.

MARIA. That won't be easy. Not for them.

BARONESS. I have bought them American clothes and taught them American expressions, so they will know what to say when it comes to conversation.

HANS. Where did you learn these American expressions, Baroness?

BARONESS. Watching American television.

MARIA. What is television?

BARONESS. I especially like the commercials. That is how I know of Sara Lee.

MARIA. Commercials?

HANS. What are commercials?

BARONESS. [*Sings or recites*] "For energy that comes in bunches, eat a bowl of Crunchie Munchies."—"Drink Burpsie Cola for youthful bounce; only 50 calories in every ounce."—"Wash Away Your Wrinkles With Oil of Turtle"—

MARIA. You mean Americans talk like that?

BARONESS. Of course they do. Every day on television. Victor and Shelley have become enthusiastic pupils.

MARIA. But, Baroness, will they be accepted?

BARONESS. Why not?

HANS. They look so . . . "unusual."

BARONESS. So would you if your great-great-great-great-great-grandparents were stitched together and given life by the power of electricity.

HANS. That's what I mean, Baroness, they might not fit in.

MARIA. [*Philosophical*] They might fit into a wall socket or an electric plug, but a school?

HANS. You're flirting with trouble, Baroness.

BARONESS. Let that be my concern. I tell you it is time they embrace the world. Having to come to this village on family matters is the ideal opportunity to test my theory.

MARIA. What theory, Baroness?

BARONESS. That in America, once the initial shock of meeting an "unusual character" has been breached, acceptance is bound to follow.

MARIA. What if your theory is wrong and these American villagers attack Victor and his sister? They could come from nowhere with pitchforks and clubs . . . just like in Europe.

BARONESS. That's why I brought *him* along. For protection.

[*MARIA and HANS exchange a worried look. They have a good idea who the Baroness means and they don't like it at all!*]

HANS and MARIA. Him? Who?

BARONESS. Who else? *[Calls Right]* Igor! *[HANS and MARIA jump back, alarmed]*

HANS and MARIA. Igor!

BARONESS. Igor will see that there is no trouble.

MARIA. Oh, Baroness, why did you send for him? He will only make difficulties. Besides, he never bathes.

HANS. He's arrogant and rude, mean and nasty. He can be vicious. Most people use a file on their nails. He uses one on his teeth!

BARONESS. Nonsense. Igor is a pussycat.

[Horrible SOUNDS from Offstage Right. Grunts, groans, chain rattling, hideous cackles. HANS and MARIA cling to each other for protection. IGOR enters. What a sight! He has unkempt hair and a matted beard. His costume is comprised of rags and pelts. His neck is twisted to one side as if it were broken. He wears great clumsy boots and he has a hump. His knuckles practically drag the floor. A chain dangles from his clothing giving the impression he's just torn himself free from a wall. His voice is dark and menacing. He steps beside the Baroness, cackling]

IGOR. If there be trouble, Igor . . . kill. Igor like to kill. Harnk! Harnk! Harnk! *[That's the way IGOR laughs]*

BARONESS. There will be no trouble, Igor. You are only here for added protection.

MARIA. There will be trouble if the villagers see Igor. People do not like to see nightmares in the daytime. *[IGOR growls. MARIA reacts]*

HANS. *[Cautiously]* What did the airplane stewardess say when Igor took a seat?

BARONESS. He did not take a seat. I had him shipped over in a crate.

IGOR. *[The chain]* Igor broke free. Chains cannot hold Igor.

BARONESS. I have seen enough. The classrooms and the gymnasium, the dining hall and chemistry laboratory. This school is ideal for my purposes. In the morning I will enroll Victor and Shelley. They don't know what's in store for them.

HANS. Neither do the students!

MARIA. Nor the teachers!

HANS. Nor the village!

BARONESS. Silence! *[Calmly]* I tell you nothing will go wrong. *[Suddenly, IGOR begins to salivate like a mad dog. He holds his hands like paws, his tongue hangs out]*

HANS. *[Concerned]* Better give him a dog biscuit, Baroness. He's hungry.

MARIA. It's not a good idea to let Igor get *too* hungry.

BARONESS. Nice Igor. Good boy, good boy. [*Sings TV jingle:*] "A Puppy Pop a day keeps the vet away." [*She takes a dog biscuit from her frock and pops it into IGOR's mouth, pats him on the head as if he were a beagle pup*]

IGOR. [*Chewing*] Biscuit good. Igor like. Igor like America, too.

BARONESS. Tomorrow the experiment begins. Long live the genius of Frankenstein! [*She holds up a hand for emphasis. THUNDER. IGOR cackles insanely. MARIA and HANS, resigned, applaud dutifully*]

BLACKOUT

ACT I
Scene 1

[The next morning. The office is a beehive of activity. This opening scene action is fast and nearly overlapping. The effect we're striving for is that the office is the school's "nerve center." CLAUDETTE, a Junior, attractive and popular, is seated in the chair in front of the desk. The phone rings. She answers]

CLAUDETTE. Withering Heights High School, Claudette Spöck, student secretary, speaking . . . You want to leave a message for Coach Nemo? . . . Yes, yes, I'll see that he gets it. No trouble at all. *[She takes pad and pencil, writes. MISS LAZZARONI, the assistant principal, enters from the principal's private office, talking over one shoulder to the principal, MISS BARRYMORE, who is within. MISS LAZZARONI is a likeable woman with a pencil stuck behind her ear. She has a manila file folder in her hand]*

MISS LAZZARONI. You can count on me, Miss Barrymore. I'll make the new students welcome.

MISS BARRYMORE. *[Offstage, from office]* Thank you, Miss Lazzaroni .

MISS LAZZARONI. You're welcome, Miss Barrymore. *[She crosses to her desk, puts down the manila folder, sits. STUDENT 1 enters right]*

STUDENT 1. I'd like a pass to be excused, please. The nurse says I can't have one unless you approve it, Miss Lazzaroni.

MISS LAZZARONI. What's the matter with you today?

STUDENT 1. I think I'm having an anxiety attack.

MISS LAZZARONI. You had an anxiety attack yesterday.

STUDENT 1. Yes, ma'am. I'm prone to them. Runs in my family. Incurable.

MISS LAZZARONI. Sit down and we'll talk about it later.

STUDENT 1. Later may be too late. I want to go home. I'm a sick student.

MISS LAZZARONI. *[A command]* Sit!

STUDENT 1. *[Defeated]* Yes, ma'am. *[STUDENT 1 sits Down Right. MISS LAZZARONI checks some paperwork. CLAUDETTE finishes with the phone message]*

CLAUDETTE. . . . Yes, yes, I have it all . . . yes, yes, I'll see that he gets it. I don't think he'll like it, though. *[Hangs up]*

MISS LAZZARONI. What was that about, Claudette?

CLAUDETTE. An alumnus.

[MISS GLITTERTOOTH, a biology teacher, enters Right. She's dressed like something from another era, wears glasses, weird hairstyle, and garments that don't match]

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. Anything for Glittertooth?

MISS LAZZARONI. I don't think so, but if there is, it'll be on the faculty message table.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. Glittertooth will check. *[She crosses to table and "checks"]*

STUDENT 1. People have been known to die from anxiety attacks. *[Hand to throat as if he/she were about to choke]* I think I'm going to hyphenate.

MISS LAZZARONI. You mean hyperventilate.

STUDENT 1. I'm probably going to do that, too.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. How disappointing. No mail, no messages. Not even a copy of this week's cafeteria menu.

CLAUDETTE. Count your blessings, Miss Glittertooth.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. I like to read the menu after I've had lunch. Then I know what I've eaten.

MISS LAZZARONI. Who was the alumnus?

CLAUDETTE. Wouldn't leave his name. Said the same thing as all the others—Since Coach Nemo hasn't won a game in two seasons it's time for him to resign.

MISS LAZZARONI. That's cruel. He's such a nice man. Emotional but nice.

STUDENT 1. You could be describing me!

[STUDENT 2 enters from Left, carrying a poster]

STUDENT 2. Miss Barrymore likes my poster. Says it's okay for the print shop to reproduce it. After that, we can plaster it all over the school.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. Let's have a look. *[STUDENT 2 flips the poster around for all to see. In bold lettering is the single word—VOTE!]*

MISS LAZZARONI. That's impressive. Simple but effective.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. Vote!

STUDENT 1. I'm not feeling well at all. Does anyone have a paper sack? *[No one pays Student 1 any attention. MISS GLITTERTOOTH moves right of Claudette. STUDENT 2 moves left of desk]*

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. The student senate election is the most important event of the year. I know you'll be elected president, Claudette.

CLAUDETTE. Unless Bozo Barnes wins.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. Bozo Barnes? Don't be absurd. He doesn't have a chance.

STUDENT 1. If I were you I wouldn't let Bozo hear me say that, Miss Glittertooth. He's positive he's going to win.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. He has great faith in fools.

STUDENT 2. I can tell the print shop to go ahead, Miss Lazzaroni?

MISS LAZZARONI. Yes. If they have any questions tell them to call me. [*Hand over her heart*] I'm here to serve.

[*STUDENT 2 exits Right as SILVIA PRICE, editor of the school paper—"Withering Heights High Lowdown"—enters Right. She's alert and clever*]

SILVIA. Hi, Miss Lazzaroni. Two new students coming in today?

MISS LAZZARONI. News travels fast.

SILVIA. Since they're coming from Europe I thought I'd interview them for the school paper.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. Splendid idea, Silvia. Nothing slips by you. You're the best editor the "Withering Heights High Lowdown" has ever had. When you graduate, Glittertooth expects big things from you in the world of communication.

SILVIA. Thanks, Miss Glittertooth. I appreciate your support. I'm aiming for a career in television, where I can report news the minute it happens. That's my kind of action.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. You *are* going to cover the student senate election?

SILVIA. With pictures.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. I wonder if I'll get the new students in my biology or science class? What are their names?

MISS LAZZARONI. [*Taps folder*] I've got it in here. They're brother and sister.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. How nice. Almost as nice as sister and brother.

CLAUDETTE. Twins?

MISS LAZZARONI. I don't know.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. What is their family name?

MISS LAZZARONI. Franklin or Stein—something like that. I only glanced at their enrollment papers. Let me check. [*Opens folder*] Victor and Shelley— [*She stops, eyes wide*]

CLAUDETTE. Victor and Shelley what, Miss Lazzaroni?

MISS LAZZARONI. [*Hand up*] Frankenstein! [*THUNDER. Others react*]

STUDENT 1. Frankenstein!

SILVIA. You've got to be kidding.

MISS LAZZARONI. They arrived in town with their aunt. From Switzerland.

SILVIA. Are they exchange students?

MISS LAZZARONI. No. The aunt is a . . . [*checks folder again*]
Baroness.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. A Baroness?

STUDENT 1. What's a Baroness?

SILVIA. That sounds fabulous. [*Envisions*] I can see the headline now—"Royalty Visits Withering Heights High."

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. They must be related to old Barnaby Frankenstein—that strange man who lived on the hill in that terrifying house with the gingerbread decoration and the iron gates.

STUDENT 1. The house everyone calls—Frankenstein's Mouldy Manor!

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. That's the place. The Baroness is taking possession of family property, I suspect.

CLAUDETTE. She can have that creepy place. No one's ever dared go in there.

MISS LAZZARONI. Old Barnaby Frankenstein had a housekeeper.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. Agnes Honeyworth. She was a student of mine years ago. An unpopular sort of girl. She ate nothing but tuna fish so cats would play with her. She once threw an ink well at me.

STUDENT 1. That's heavy.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. So was the ink well.

STUDENT 1. [*Jokes*] They say no one showed up for Barnaby's funeral but two werewolves and an Egyptian mummy. [*Laughs*]

MISS LAZZARONI. That's not the least bit amusing.

STUDENT 1. Everyone says old Barnaby Frankenstein was related to mad Doctor Frankenstein, the one who made the monster! [*Others laugh*] I can see the monster now. [*He imitates the famed film version of the monster. He sucks in his cheeks, walks stiffly like a mechanical toy, arms straight out, eyes wide, utters grunts*]

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. Someone make him stop.

MISS LAZZARONI. Cease! [*STUDENT 1 calms down*]

CLAUDETTE. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, acting like a little kid.

STUDENT 1. [*Contrite*] It's because I'm not well.

MISS LAZZARONI. Many people are named Frankenstein.

SILVIA. Not in this town.

STUDENT 1. Not since old man Barnaby kicked off.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. Don't be crass.

MISS LAZZARONI. You seem to have recovered your health.

STUDENT 1. [*Shaking*] Oh! Oh! My anxiety attack is getting worse.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. You're too emotional. That's your problem.

STUDENT 1. That's what I've been telling Miss Lazzaroni, but she won't give me permission to go home.

MISS LAZZARONI. Sit.

STUDENT 1. [*Cowed, sits*] Yes, ma'am.

SILVIA. Hmmmmm. Students named Frankenstein. That's another angle.

MISS LAZZARONI. Don't write anything that might offend them.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. As Shakespeare has writ—"What's in a name?"

STUDENT 1. Shakespeare who?

MISS LAZZARONI. I can assure you, the Frankensteins will be as ordinary as anyone else in this town. We mustn't judge personalities by their family name.

[*From Off Right—a SCREAM*]

AD LIBS. What's that! Who screamed? What's happening? [*All look Right as STUDENT 3 runs in*]

STUDENT 3. [*Near hysteria; running around stage or running in place all the while she/he is on stage*] Somebody better do something! Wait 'til you see them! I'm a sensitive sophomore! I can only stand so much!

MISS LAZZARONI. What are you talking about!? [*Another SCREAM from Off Right*]

STUDENT 3. Run! Don't walk! [*STUDENT 3 runs out Right as MISS BARRYMORE, the principal, enters Left*]

MISS BARRYMORE. What's going on out here? Who's screaming?

STUDENT 1. It wasn't me, Miss Barrymore. I'm very quiet when I scream.

SILVIA. Just another crazy student. Probably a fraternity prank.

MISS BARRYMORE. I don't approve of students screaming during school hours. If students wish to scream they must do it on their own time. Take a memo on that, Miss Lazzaroni.

MISS LAZZARONI. I'll attend to it. [*MISS BARRYMORE is a confused type. She, like Miss Glittertooth, belongs to some other time. The modern world with its new breed of student is too much for her. Without Miss Lazzaroni to keep things on course, the school principal would be lost*]

SILVIA. Is it true, Miss Barrymore?

MISS BARRYMORE. I'm sure it is. [*Thinks*] Is what true?

CLAUDETTE. Two new students named Frankenstein.

MISS BARRYMORE. Yes, quite true. I want all of you to make them feel at home. It isn't every day Withering Heights High has visitors from China.

MISS LAZZARONI. They're not from China, Miss Barrymore. They're from Switzerland.

MISS BARRYMORE. Where the chocolate comes from?

MISS LAZZARONI. According to this file they lived on the shores of Lake Geneva.

SILVIA. Their aunt is a real Baroness?

BARONESS. *[Entering Right]* Allow me to answer that. I am Baroness— *[Hand up]* Frankenstein! *[THUNDER]*

STUDENT 1. *[Holds out palms, checking for rain]* How come I hear thunder? *[He slaps at the side of his head. Others are impressed by the Baroness's entrance]*

CLAUDETTE. Won't you sit here, Baroness Frankenstein?

BARONESS. You are most kind. *[CLAUDETTE stands and steps upstage a bit as the BARONESS sits in front of the desk]*

STUDENT 1. I don't know why I have to come to school to be sick. I can be sick at home.

MISS LAZZARONI. *[Scribbles an okay]* I have no time to argue. Here's your permission to leave. *[She stands, moves behind desk and steps Right. STUDENT 1 leaps to his feet and grabs the paper]*

STUDENT 1. Thanks, Miss Lazzaroni! *[Runs out Right]*

MISS LAZZARONI. *[Yells after him]* I'll want to see you first thing in the morning! Your parents, too!

BARONESS. Was that a pupil?

MISS LAZZARONI. I'm afraid so. Please don't judge the school by him. He's not typical.

BARONESS. But I want him to meet my niece and nephew. *[Dramatically]* They both brush with Gleem. No cavities. I want all the students to meet them.

MISS BARRYMORE. They will in time.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. *[Steps to Baroness, shakes hands]* I never thought that one day I'd be meeting a genuine Baroness.

BARONESS. And you are?

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. Glittertooth. Phebe Glittertooth. I teach in this school.

BARONESS. What is your subject?

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. Biology and general electronics.

BARONESS. My favorite topics. I, too, am a scientist.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. *[Delighted]* Isn't that cozy!

BARONESS. I shall be most anxious to see how my niece and nephew perform for you.

MISS GLITTERTOOTH. They'll be unusual students, I'm sure.

BARONESS. So am I.