

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Copyright Protection. This play (the “Play”) is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, and the Berne Convention.

Reservation of Rights. All rights to this Play are strictly reserved, including, without limitation, professional and amateur stage performance rights; motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video, and sound recording rights; rights to all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction now known or yet to be invented, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, photocopying, and information storage and retrieval systems; and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments. Amateur and stock performance rights to this Play are controlled exclusively by Playscripts, Inc. (“Playscripts”). No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this Play without obtaining advance written permission from Playscripts. Required royalty fees for performing this Play are specified online at the Playscripts website (www.playscripts.com). Such royalty fees may be subject to change without notice. Although this book may have been obtained for a particular licensed performance, such performance rights, if any, are not transferable. Required royalties must be paid every time the Play is performed before any audience, whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. All licensing requests and inquiries concerning amateur and stock performance rights should be addressed to Playscripts (see contact information on opposite page).

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to Playscripts, as well; such inquiries will be communicated to the author and the author's agent, as applicable.

Restriction of Alterations. There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the Play, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, or the alteration of objectionable language, unless directly authorized by Playscripts. The title of the Play shall not be altered.

Author Credit. Any individual or group receiving permission to produce this Play is required to give credit to the author as the sole and exclusive author of the Play. This obligation applies to the title page of every program distributed in connection with performances of the Play, and in any instance that the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing, or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and of a font size at least 50% as large as the largest letter used in the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the author. The name of the author may not be abbreviated or otherwise altered from the form in which it appears in this Play.

Publisher Attribution. All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with the amateur or stock production of the Play shall include the following notice:

**Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.
(www.playscripts.com)**

Prohibition of Unauthorized Copying. Any unauthorized copying of this book or excerpts from this book is strictly forbidden by law. Except as otherwise permitted by applicable law, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including, without limitation, photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Playscripts.

Statement of Non-affiliation. This Play may include references to brand names and trademarks owned by third parties, and may include references to public figures. Playscripts is not necessarily affiliated with these public figures, or with the owners of such trademarks and brand names. Such references are included solely for parody, political comment, or other permitted purposes.

Permissions for Sound Recordings and Musical Works. This Play may contain directions calling for the performance of a portion, or all, of a musical work, or performance of a sound recording of a musical work. Playscripts has not obtained permissions to perform such works. The producer of this Play is advised to obtain such permissions, if required in the context of the production. The producer is directed to the websites of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov), ASCAP (www.ascap.com), BMI (www.bmi.com), and NMPA (www.nmpa.org) for further information on the need to obtain permissions, and on procedures for obtaining such permissions.

The Rules in Brief

- 1) Do NOT perform this Play without obtaining prior permission from Playscripts, and without paying the required royalty.
- 2) Do NOT photocopy, scan, or otherwise duplicate any part of this book.
- 3) Do NOT alter the text of the Play, change a character's gender, delete any dialogue, or alter any objectionable language, unless explicitly authorized by Playscripts.
- 4) DO provide the required credit to the author and the required attribution to Playscripts in all programs and promotional literature associated with any performance of this Play.

For more details on these and other rules, see the opposite page.

Copyright Basics

This Play is protected by United States and international copyright law. These laws ensure that playwrights are rewarded for creating new and vital dramatic work, and protect them against theft and abuse of their work.

A play is a piece of property, fully owned by the playwright, just like a house or car. You must obtain permission to use this property, and must pay a royalty fee for the privilege—*whether or not you charge an admission fee*. Playscripts collects these required payments on behalf of the author.

Anyone who violates an author's copyright is liable as a copyright infringer under United States and international law. Playscripts and the author are entitled to institute legal action for any such infringement, which can subject the infringer to actual damages, statutory damages, and attorneys' fees. A court may impose statutory damages of up to \$150,000 for willful copyright infringements. U.S. copyright law also provides for possible criminal sanctions. Visit the website of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov) for more information.

THE BOTTOM LINE: If you break copyright law, you are robbing a playwright and opening yourself to expensive legal action. Follow the rules, and when in doubt, ask us.

Playscripts, Inc.
450 Seventh Ave, Suite 809
New York, NY 10123

Phone: 1-866-NEW-PLAY (639-7529)
Email: info@playscripts.com
Web: www.playscripts.com

Cast of Characters

(principals in order of appearance)

SALLY

REUBENON RYEBREAD

THE CENSOR

URSA MALAISE

ED MOLAR

DAVE

HARMONICA

PROFESSOR SHIFTIA SHAPE

PROFESSOR ALBATROSS UNDERDRAWERS

LORD MURDERDEATH (can be played by the same actor as Ed Molar, and should not appear in the playbill)

Roles played by the Chorus:

SALLY'S MOTHER (voice)

STUDENTS

A CANADIAN MOUNTIE (or another unusual costume)

THE BEETLES

LETTER PEOPLE

Setting

Frogbull Academy of Sorcery, as it appears in Sally's dream. Modern day.

Production Notes

The set will represent many places over the course of the play, created by bringing on a few small pieces, but the general location is Frogbull Academy of Sorcery, which should look ancient and magical.

Author's Note

This play is a loving parody. The tone is that of *Mad Magazine*, or Mel Brooks. A production of it should be silly, irreverent, and fast enough to keep the audience from realizing that the plot doesn't make much sense.

Because the humor is gag- and satire-based, there is plenty of room for a cast to add its own jokes or bits of business. Similarly, if a moment in the script doesn't quite work for your needs, you are welcome to modify it. A handful of jokes make reference to popular culture. These references may become dated in years to come, and can be updated easily. Keep in mind whom you're performing for. While this is a G-rated play, there are some jokes that are targeted at an adult audience (for example, the Censor's explanation of why the play has a Christmas scene and Sally's response to it). It's up to you to decide what's right for your audience.

Enjoy!

Dean O'Carroll

January, 2009

SALLY COTTER AND THE CENSORED STONE

a parody by Dean O'Carroll

ACT I

(Lighting special on SALLY in bed, reading. She is a young lady of tween or early teen years.)

(Her MOTHER is heard from off-stage.)

MOTHER. *(Off-stage:)* Sally! About time for lights out, don't you think?

SALLY. Oh, sure, Mom... I just can't put this book down. It's just so...

(Yawns.)

Maybe I am tired...maybe I should...

(SALLY drifts off to sleep.)

(Blackout.)

(Lights up on the Great Hall of Frogbull Academy of Sorcery. STUDENTS bustle in and out, in a first-day-of-school frenzy. SALLY enters. She is dressed, like the other students, in school robes.)

SALLY. Where in the world am I?

(REUBENON RYEBREAD enters. He is a large, bearded man with something somewhat like a West Country English accent.)

RYEBREAD. Ah, there yeh are, Sally Cotter. Got away from me fer a second, there.

SALLY. Oh! I get it! I'm dreaming!

RYEBREAD. Seems like a dream, don't it? Yer first day at Frogbull.

SALLY. Frogbull? Don't you mean—

RYEBREAD. *(Interrupting:)* Frogbull Academy of Sorcery and Sorcerousness.

SALLY. So, I'm not really at the school from the books?

(The CENSOR enters, a grating, artificial seeming man or woman in an impeccable suit.)

CENSOR. No, Sally, I'm sorry, this is Frogbull Academy. You'll find that everything you encounter here will have funny, parody versions of names you know. Because satire is covered by the First Amendment and is completely protected against any claims of copyright infringement.

(CENSOR gives the audience a smile and a thumbs-up and exits.)

SALLY. Who was that?

RYEBREAD. I have no idea.

SALLY. So I'm a student here at Frogbull Academy of...

RYEBREAD. ...Sorcery and Sorcerocity...

SALLY. And you are?

RYEBREAD. Surely you haven't forgotten me, Master of Magical Animals and provider of comic relief? Me? Reubenon Ryebread!

SALLY. Ryebread? Okay. And who am I again?

RYEBREAD. Why, yer only Sally Cotter, the daughter of two of the greatest sorcerers who ever lived!

SALLY. But, my parents aren't sorcerers.

RYEBREAD. Oh, yeah, about that, I've been meaning ter give yeh this. Letter from the people yeh thought were yer parents.

(RYEBREAD hands SALLY a letter.)

SALLY. "Thought were my parents"?

(Reads:)

"Dear Sally, We never knew how to tell you this, but we're not your real parents. We've just been raising you as our own ever since your real parents were killed by an evil sorcerer. You're secretly a sorceress yourself. Sorry your whole life has been a lie. Good luck at school. Sincerely yours, Mr. and Mrs. Cotter." ...Well, I'd be very

upset about this but I'm pretty sure this is all a dream, so I'm just going to roll with the punches.

RYEBREAD. 'At's a girl. You sound just like yer real parents.

SALLY. It says here my real parents were killed by an evil sorcerer. Who was he?

RYEBREAD. I'd Rather Not Say.

SALLY. Well, I think I deserve to know.

RYEBREAD. No, that's what we call him—we don't like ter say his name, so we call him "I'd Rather Not Say."

SALLY. Come on, Ryebread, you can tell me.

RYEBREAD. All right, all right. He called himself...Lord Murder-death.

SALLY. Lord Murderdeath?

RYEBREAD. Not so loud! Yeah, that's his name. Yeh figure, if yer going ter be a supervillain, yeh might as well go the whole nine yards.

SALLY. And he killed my parents?

RYEBREAD. Well, he killed a lot o' people, Sal. When you was just a baby, he came pretty close ter taking over the world, till he met you, that is.

SALLY. Me? When I was a baby?

RYEBREAD. That's right. Nobody knows quite why, but I'd Rather Not Say tried ter kill yeh when you was a wee thing, killed your parents, but something about you made him go poof, and he's never been seen again.

SALLY. I'd be shocked if this weren't all so very familiar.

RYEBREAD. Well, I'll leave yeh ter meet some o' yer classmates. I've got ter make sure me pet manticore ain't been trying ter eat me pet ogre-bear.

SALLY. But I have so many questions... I guess I'll just ask you the most pressing one...the way you talk—just exactly what kind of accent is it supposed to be? Welsh or something?

RYEBREAD. I have no idea! It's the bane of me bloomin' existence.

(RYEBREAD exits.)

SALLY. Shouldn't he be taller?

(URSA MALAISE, a sneering girl Sally's age, and ED MOLAR, a slick boy of the same age enter from the other side.)

URSA. So, you're the famous Sally Cotter. Look Ed, it's the most famous sorcerer every to be raised by Monkeysunkles.

SALLY. Monkeysunkles?

URSA. Monkeysunkles. Non-magical people?

SALLY. Well I'll be a monkey's uncle.

URSA. I'm Ursa. Ursa Malaise and this is Ed Molar. We're both from prominent families, like you, so we'll be seeing a lot of each other, assuming you get assigned to the right dormitory.

SALLY. If this works out the way it looks like it's going to work out, I'm pretty sure you and I are going to hate each other and I'm going to spend my time hanging out with a kid from a big family and a really smart girl.

URSA. Well, no accounting for taste, Cotter.

(URSA goes.)

ED. Listen, Sally, Ursa comes on a little strong, but she's not so bad. Even if we do wind up in different dorms, we can be friends, I'm sure.

SALLY. Since I'm not entirely sure which character you're a parody of, I'm going to take your word for it.

ED. Excellent. See you around.

(ED smiles and goes.)

(DAVE and HARMONICA enter, both about Sally's age.)

DAVE. Excuse me. You're Sally Cotter, aren't you? Why were you talking to those Slymythings?

HARMONICA. Now Dave, nobody's been assigned yet. They might not go into Slymything Hall. They could be Goodydrops or Huggermugs or Raymenburrs.

SALLY. Let me guess. You're one of the youngest kids in a big family and all your big brothers have done really well at Frogbull. And you, your parents are Monkeysunkles, you just found out you're a sorceress and you're really excited to learn all about magic and anything else you can find in a book.

DAVE. Wow! You really are a powerful sorceress! I'm Dave.

HARMONICA. And I'm Harmonica.

SALLY. Of course. Well, Dave, Harmonica, I get the feeling we're going to be the best of friends.

(PROFESSOR SHIFTIA SHAPE enters. She is a young woman, somberly dressed in black robes.)

SHAPE. All right children. Gather in the Hall for the Assigning Ceremony. Oh, Cotter...what's the matter? Too good to join the rest of us?

SALLY. I was wondering when I would meet you, Professor...

SHAPE. Shape. Shiftia Shape. I went to this school with your parents, Cotter. And I didn't like them. They never invited me to parties and they wouldn't sign my yearbook. So I'm taking it all out on you.

SALLY. That seems like a very immature, unprofessional attitude for a professor, Professor.

SHAPE. My therapist told me I'm going through a selfish phase and I should indulge in it.

SALLY. Well, I just found out a few minutes ago that my parents died horribly. Seems a little tacky for you to insult them the minute you meet me.

SHAPE. Yes, unpleasant behavior. Makes me seem quite...villainous, doesn't it?

HARMONICA. Are you saying you're a villain?

SHAPE. Maybe I am, maybe I'm not. You won't find out until the end of your adventures. Ha!

(SHAPE exits. RYEBREAD enters.)

RYEBREAD. Ah, see yeh've met Professor Shape, Sally.

SALLY. She seems really mean.

RYEBREAD. Mean? No, she's pretty free with her money.

SALLY. What?

RYEBREAD. Oh, I see, yeh're using the American version of the word "mean." But in Britain, that word means cheap or stingy.

(CENSOR enters.)

CENSOR. Hi, Mr. Ryebread, can we talk? Look, I think you're doing just a super job. But we are trying to sell this to an American audience, so we're gonna just cut down a little bit on the British stuff. No need to confuse the kiddies.

HARMONICA. It's not *that* confusing, is it?

CENSOR. Hi over there. Grown-ups talking, okay?

RYEBREAD. So, no British words, then? Can I keep me accent? Whatever it is.

CENSOR. Oh, sure the whole Scottish Chimney Sweep thing, we love that. It tests great. Just remember, potato crisps are called chips, chips are called French Fries, and David Beckham is called Derek Jeter. Okay? Don't mind me, I'll just be over here.

RYEBREAD. Uh...all right, then. Anyway, Sally, don't worry about Professor Shape. She's not so bad once yeh get ter know her.

HARMONICA. But I was reading about her. In a book. Because I like to read.

(Beat.)

DAVE. And...

HARMONICA. And it said that she used to be a Dark Sorcerer, allied with I'd Rather Not Say.

RYEBREAD. Oh, yeah, well that's all in the past, long, long ago...way back in the mid 1990s. I mean, people were still listening to Hootie and the Blowfish. We all did things we regret.

(Feel free to update and change the reference should it become dated.)

Anyway, Professor Shape has changed her ways. Professor Underdrawers trusts her, so we should, too.

SALLY. Who trusts her?

(PROFESSOR ALBATROSS UNDERDRAWERS enters, looking every bit the old, gray-bearded sorcerer.)

UNDERDRAWERS. That would be me, Professor Albatross Underdrawers, Headmaster of Frogbull Academy of Sorcery and Secretarial Skills. And you must be Sally Cotter.

SALLY. It's a pleasure to meet you Professor... *(Giggles.)* Underdrawers.

UNDERDRAWERS. Ah yes, my name. Here I am, perhaps the most powerful sorcerer on Earth, but assuredly, the one with the silliest name. So, tell me, Sally, read any good books lately?

SALLY. Yes, actually...in the one I'm reading now, there's a character I think you might like a lot.

UNDERDRAWERS. I'm sure he's a charming fellow. Love to meet him sometime. Now, Ryebread, have you brought that item I wanted you to bring?

RYEBREAD. Ah, yeah, the Ancient Stone of the Elders. Got it right here.

CENSOR. I'm sorry, what was that?

RYEBREAD. The, er, Ancient Stone of the Elders.

CENSOR. Ooh...yeah, that's just not going to play. See, all our market research shows that kids don't like words that make things seem old.

DAVE. Kids don't like old things? You mean like dinosaurs or fairy tale princesses? Yeah, no kids on earth like those.

CENSOR. Yes, exactly. So I think we're going to need a new name for this whole "Ancient, Elder, Old Person Stone" thing here.

UNDERDRAWERS. And what name do you suggest we use for it?

CENSOR. How about "The Magic Rock"? Simple, straightforward. It's perfect.

UNDERDRAWERS. Very well, Ryebread, did you bring me the...
(It pains him to say this:) Magic Rock?

RYEBREAD. Yeah, I've got the...Magic Rock right here.

CENSOR. Perfect. See? Censorship isn't so bad. I'm going to go to the cafeteria now and relabel all the jelly so it says "jell-o."

(CENSOR goes.)

SALLY. I don't suppose you could turn that guy into a toad or something.

RYEBREAD. Well, there's yer Magic Rock, Professor. I'll be in me hut trying ter figure out what dialect I'm speaking.

UNDERDRAWERS. Have you considered that you might be an Australian pirate with a speech impediment?

RYEBREAD. Ooh, that's a good one.

(RYEBREAD goes.)

HARMONICA. I want to learn more about this Magic Rock, Professor Underdrawers. There was nothing about it in any of the books I read. Because I read a lot of books.

UNDERDRAWERS. I am afraid we have already said too much about the...Magic Rock. Suffice it to say that it is a magical item of great power and I have brought it here to make sure it doesn't fall into the wrong hands. Frogbull Academy is the safest place on Earth, except every June when there is invariably an attack on it by one Dark Sorcerer or another. But July through May, it's a veritable fortress. But now, let us all gather.

(SHAPE, URSA, and the STUDENTS enter. ED is not there.)

Welcome, students all, to your first year at Frogbull Academy of Sorcery and Shiatsu. Every year, we commence by assigning students into houses with this magical item. Bring out the Tea Cozy of Assignment.

(Two STUDENTS wheel on a cart with an ornate and magical looking tea cozy on it.)

This is the Tea Cozy of Assignment. Since the founding of Frogbull, it has assigned students to live in one of our four dormitories, because it was their firm belief, as it is the belief of every English person, that all good things can be found underneath a tea cozy.

(CENSOR enters, ready to complain about this.)

CENSOR. Um...

UNDERDRAWERS. (Not quite threatening, but almost:) Do you have something to add?

CENSOR. Um, no, no...tea cozy, local flavor...wonderful.

UNDERDRAWERS. The cozy also has a remarkably way of showing up just when students need it for help.

(Aside to SALLY:)

Did I mention that I got an A in Dramatic Foreshadowing 101?

(To all:)

I shall now call students alphabetically. Aaron A. Aardvarkovitch.

(STUDENT 1 steps forward and lifts the cozy. Under it he finds a piece of paper.)

STUDENT 1. It says...Huggermug House!

(Cheers.)

CENSOR. And so, one by one, every student was sorted into one of four houses—Goodydrops House, known for students who are brave and noble, Slymything House, known for students who are sneaky and devious, or one of the other two houses that don't have much bearing on the plot.

SALLY. Excuse me, do you narrate this dream, too?

CENSOR. Only when we need to telescope time. Or do you want to hang around while Weirdbear there reads the phone book?

(DAVE and HARMONICA come forward, while CENSOR exits. The STUDENTS break into groups and start to go.)

DAVE. Good news, Sal! We all got assigned to Goodydrops House!

SALLY. Hey, that is great, Dave.

HARMONICA. No surprise that that Ursa Malaise wound up in Slymything House.

(URSA and ED walk by.)

URSA. Look, Ed, it's the latest batch of Goodydrops Geeks. Seems they're letting anyone in...Monkeysunkle-borns...even Dave there. Hey Ed, did you know Dave here has parents who actually use the same fork for their salad and their entree? How terribly gauche. Good luck hanging around with these two, Cotter.

(URSA goes.)

ED. I am sorry you won't be living with us, Sally. But I'm sure we'll be seeing a lot of you, anyway.

(ED goes.)

DAVE. There's something very creepy about him.

SALLY. Hey, Dave, I was wondering. Your family are all sorcerers, right? So how come you and all your brothers and sisters have normal names like Dave? I mean, Harmonica here was raised by normal humans but she's got a weird name.

HARMONICA. Well my parents chose the name Harmonica from a book.

DAVE. What book?

HARMONICA. *The...Big Book of Musical Instruments.* You should meet my sister Viola and my brother Sousaphoney.

DAVE. Come on, we should go get settled into our dorm rooms.

SALLY. Yeah, you guys go ahead, I...I want to check on something.

(DAVE and HARMONICA ad-lib "okays" and go. SALLY crosses to UNDERDRAWERS, who is puttering around.)

(During Sally and Underdrawers' conversation, perhaps covered by a curtain close or light special, a classroom scene is set up elsewhere onstage.)

SALLY. Professor Underdrawers?

UNDERDRAWERS. Yes, Sally?

SALLY. You seem to be the smartest person here, maybe the only person who really understands what's going on, so let me ask you—this is just a dream, right? I fell asleep reading these books, so I'm having a weird dream about them.

UNDERDRAWERS. Ah, and when the material that inspires them is so rich and involving...what dreams may come.

SALLY. I knew it! Okay, so I'm dreaming but...why do I care so much? I know this isn't real but...I really feel like Dave and Harmonica are my friends, like Ursa is really my arch rival, like Ryebread is my...favorite big, goofy uncle. How can I feel this way about something that I know is just pretend?

UNDERDRAWERS. Is that not the power of a truly marvelous book? To make the impossible seem not only possible, but immediately real, to transport the reader to a world unknown, but imminently knowable? To make you care, against all rationality, for the creations of the author's mind?

SALLY. I guess it is. I mean, that's why I like those books so much.

UNDERDRAWERS. I must be off now, but fear not. I'm sure I will return for several pages of exposition at the end of the story.

SALLY. Professor, I'm going to have to fight Lord Murderdeath, aren't it?

UNDERDRAWERS. Well it wouldn't be much of a story if you didn't, would it? But how do you think I feel? Being a wise old man with a gray beard in these types of stories? It's like wearing a sign on your back that says "kill me for dramatic effect."

(UNDERDRAWERS goes.)

(As the lights shift or curtains open, STUDENTS, URSA, and SHAPE [but not ED] fill up the classroom scene. DAVE and HARMONICA rush on.)

DAVE. Hurry up, Sally, or we'll be late for Professor Shape's class in Witches' Brews.

(The three of them dash into the classroom set.)

SHAPE. So, once again, the Tremendous Trio from Goodydrops feels no obligation to be on time to my class. I'm deducting five points from Goodydrops House, taking away one of your gold stars, and moving you from the Blue Birds group back down to Sparrows.

HARMONICA. Now you're just being vindictive and venomous.

SHAPE. Oh, thank you for reminding me. I need to pick up more vindictiveness venom from the apothecary. Now, shall we begin? Today we shall brew a substance so magical that, when applied to the hair, will cleanse it of all dirt and built-up oils. Truly a miraculous creation. Monkeysunkles would give their right arms for it.

SALLY. Um, but Monkeysunkles do have that. It's called shampoo.

SHAPE. Oh, well do they have brews that will make your skin soft and supple, or protect it from the sun's rays? How about this brew that magically freshens breath, or this one that has the amazing power to suppress a cough?

SALLY. Yes, you can buy all those things at your local Walgreens!

SHAPE. Thirty points away from Goodydrops! And I'm taking away that scratch and sniff sticker that says "Grape Job" and replacing it with a banana-scented one that says "You Slipped Up!" Now, who can tell me the active ingredient in the Partada Solution?

(HARMONICA thrusts her hand in the air.)

SHAPE. (Ignoring her, she points elsewhere:) You!

STUDENT 2. Um...eye of newt?

SHAPE. Wrong! You?

STUDENT 3. Wing of bat?

SHAPE. Wrong! You?

STUDENT 4. Honeysuckle knuckle?

SHAPE. Don't make me laugh. Ursa...do you have any ideas?

URSA. Well, I wasn't able to study last night, professor, because I was too busy feeling superior to everyone else.

SHAPE. Excellent use of your time. Ten points, two gold stars, and a little peppermint candy to Slymything House.

DAVE. Well this is just barmy and daft!

(CENSOR enters.)

CENSOR. Ah, ah, Dave, what did we say about using too much British slang?

DAVE. I mean...this, like, totally stinks, dude.

CENSOR. Much better.

SHAPE. You there! What are you doing interrupting my class?

CENSOR. I was just passing through.

SHAPE. Surely if it's so important for you to interrupt my lesson, then you should stay and try to learn something.

CENSOR. ...All right.

(CENSOR sits.)

SHAPE. Active ingredient in Partada Solution. Anyone? Well, if nobody knows the answer...

HARMONICA. I do! I do! I've had my hand up for ages! Validate me! Validate me!

SHAPE. Fine. Harmonica, what is the active ingredient in the Partada Solution?

HARMONICA. The root of the bubblebutt bulb plant.

SHAPE. And how long do you brew it for?

HARMONICA. Forty minutes over a medium flame, or until the foam starts to look like the cast of “Everybody Loves Raymond.”

SHAPE. And why do you call it Partada Solution?

HARMONICA. Because if you're not Partada Solution, you're Partada Problem.

SHAPE. *(Under duress:)* ...Very well...five points awarded to Goodydrops...and Harmonica can be the milk monitor for snack time all next month. Is there anything you don't know?

HARMONICA. Yes! I want to know more about the Ancient Stone of the Elders!

CENSOR. Ah, ah, ah!

HARMONICA. I mean...the Magic Rock.

CENSOR. Very good.

SHAPE. Who told you about the...Magic Rock?

DAVE. We saw Ryebread give it to Professor Underdrawers for safe keeping.

SALLY. But they wouldn't tell us what it does.

HARMONICA. So we've looked everywhere in the library for information about it, but found nothing.

SHAPE. Children, information about the Magic Rock is off-limits to students. So I demand that you cease being curious about this fascinating and incredibly important magical object that could fulfill your heart's desire. Class dismissed!

(Bell rings. The classroom set is quickly cleared away and everyone but DAVE, HARMONICA, and SALLY exits.)

DAVE. C'mon Sally, it's time for the big Quizzicalish match against the Slymythings.

SALLY. Quizzi-what?

HARMONICA. You know, the popular Sorcery Sport, played on broomsticks!

(STUDENTS enter and give them broomsticks, a soccer ball, a dodgeball, a football, and a cucumber sandwich.)

DAVE. Let's go!

(Music. STUDENTS swarm in, all pretending to ride broomsticks. One STUDENT rides by on a vacuum cleaner.)

(RYEBREAD stands to the side and blows a whistle.)

(Everybody is dodging and swooping, creating an air of chaos that everyone takes very seriously.)

HARMONICA. Come on Sally, throw the Flunch through the Spoodle!

SALLY. The what through the what?

DAVE. Hurry!

(Some STUDENTS are walking by, holding up hula hoops. Panicked, SALLY, who is holding the football and the soccer ball, throws the football through one of them.)

No! Don't throw the Lumpo! Throw the Flunch!

SALLY. Why are you eating a cucumber sandwich?

DAVE. If I finish it before the Slymythings find the Vuzzle, we get 237 points!

(CENSOR enters.)

CENSOR. Could we maybe change that cucumber sandwich to a meatball sub?

DAVE. Throw the flunch!

(SALLY bounces the soccer ball off the CENSOR's head and through the hoop. CENSOR staggers off, dazed.)

RYEBREAD. (Blowing whistle:) Twelve points for Goodydrops!

(URSA comes by on a broom.)

URSA. So, Cotter, looks like you're quite the Quizzicalish champion. Well, wait'll you see this!

HARMONICA. Oh no, the Slymythings team has found the stuffed animal cache!

(Slymythings STUDENTS from start to bombard the Goodydrops players with stuffed animals.)

RYEBREAD. *(Blows whistle.)* Hold it! Foul! Pogo stick on the field.

(A STUDENT hops by on a pogo stick.)

That's a thirty second backwards penalty for everyone!

(Everyone begins to run around backwards.)

Pattycake Showdown!

(HARMONICA and URSA play a frantic game of pattycake. Somehow, HARMONICA wins.)

HARMONICA. Yes!

RYEBREAD. That's 412 points to Goodydrops!

SALLY. This game makes no sense! I don't understand the scoring, and...why is there a Canadian Mountie on a tricycle throwing candy at the audience?

(A CANADIAN MOUNTIE [feel free to substitute any other silly costume you have available] rides by on a tricycle, throwing candy at the audience.)

DAVE. Oh, that's because we're playing a zone defense, instead of man on man.

SALLY. Oh, look, someone dropped a penny.

(SALLY picks up the penny.)

RYEBREAD. *(Blows whistle.)* Goodydrops player has found the penny. That's four thousand points and the game ter Goodydrops.

HARMONICA. Sally! You did it! We won!

SALLY. Oh... Good...?

(The Goodydrops STUDENTS celebrate and cheer. URSA comes up to SALLY. STUDENTS clear away the stuffed animals and other props littering the stage.)

URSA. So, another victory for the great Sally Cotter. Well, we'll see who has the last laugh. Come on, Slymythings!

(URSA and the Slymything STUDENTS exit.)

SALLY. I still have no idea how I won. But, man, beating her feels really good.

HARMONICA. Come on you two. We have a lot of studying to do.

(There are now a table with three chairs set up. HARMONICA sits in one chair with a thick book while DAVE and SALLY play what seems to be Scrabble.)

SALLY. I mean, if finding the coin is worth that many points, what's the point of the rest of the game?

HARMONICA. Could you please be quiet, Sally? I think I found something interesting.

DAVE. Or you could concentrate on our game. I have beaten you at fourteen straight games of Sorcerer's Scrabble.

SALLY. I still don't see how this game is different from regular Scrabble. I think this is just an excuse for you to use made up words like "Flunch" and "Spoodle" and "Irregardless."

HARMONICA. Quiet you two! Look! Here it is. It says here that in ancient times there was a group of sorcerers called the Elders. One of them, the Dark Sorcerer Plotpointius, rebelled and was punished by having his powers taken away. But he got them back through the use of a stone of unknown origin.

SALLY. Wait, Ancient Times, Elders, Stone that sounds like...

DAVE. The Ancient Stone of the...! ...I mean...The Magic Rock.

SALLY. Okay, this is just ridiculous that we have to keep calling it the Magic Rock.

(CENSOR enters, crossing the stage, counting money.)

CENSOR. Sorry, it's a simpler name. Kids will like it better.

SALLY. Why do you think kids are stupid?

CENSOR. Nobody ever went to the poorhouse underestimating the intelligence of American children. You'll thank me when you're sitting by the pool at your house in Malibu.

(CENSOR is gone.)

HARMONICA. So if this...Magic Rock...could restore a powerless sorcerer to power...can't we all think of a certain powerless evil sorcerer who might want to get his hands on it?

SALLY. Lord Murderdeath!

(DAVE and HARMONICA both react worriedly to SALLY saying the name out loud.)

Oh come on, you two. Do you really think saying his name out loud is going to visit great evil down on us?

(ED enters.)

ED. Hi guys. I saw you over here and I thought I'd pay a visit.

SALLY. Oh. Hi, Ed.

ED. Congrats again on winning the game of Quizzicalish.

DAVE. Yeah, we beat the pants off of you Slymythings.

ED. That you did. That you certainly did. I've never seen anyone play the game quite like that.

SALLY. You know, neither have I.

ED. So what are you three up to?

HARMONICA. Nothing, Ed, just studying.

ED. Ah, trying to please old Professor Shape, eh?

SALLY. Something like that. Hey, Ed, how come we never see you in Professor Shape's class? Don't all Slymythings take their classes at the same time?

ED. I'd love to stay and chat, but I'm supposed to meet Ursa. She's going to help me find something. Bye.

(ED goes.)

DAVE. I don't like that guy.

HARMONICA. You just hate everyone from Slymything House. He's not that bad.

SALLY. I just don't know if we can trust him. I have no idea which character he's supposed to be!

(RYEBREAD enters.)

RYEBREAD. Hey you lot. Got a minute? I got summat ter show yeh.

SALLY. Oh, sure thing, Ryebread!

(They get up to follow RYEBREAD.)

HARMONICA. Say, Ryebread, I don't suppose you could tell us a little bit about the Magic Rock.

RYEBREAD. Oh, no, no. Professor Underdrawers thinks you lot already know a bit too much about that as it is.

DAVE. Well, it's really powerful, right? That's why Underdrawers wanted to hide it in...

RYEBREAD. In the Antechamber of Antecedents, yeah, but...oh! Sneaky!

HARMONICA. The Antechamber of Antecedents? I've never heard of that.

RYEBREAD. Well, yeh won't hear any more about it from me. Not that it would do yeh any good, seeing as yeh'd have to get through a series of cleverly designed obstacles ter get there.

DAVE. What kinds of obstacles?

RYEBREAD. Oh, well the first one is... Will yeh knock that off? No more about the Magic Stone or the Antechamber of Antecedents. Those are both serious Dark Sorcery and yeh shouldn't be thinkin' about 'em. Anyway, here we are, now I can show yeh what I wanted ter show yeh.

HARMONICA. What is it?

RYEBREAD. Well, I've been workin' with animals all me life, but lately I've been really interested in insects. And I've found that some bugs can be trained ter sing and play musical instruments. I'll show yeh. Ladies and gentlemen...The Beetles!

(Several chorus members enter dressed as large beetles. They carry toy instruments and begin to lip-synch to an appropriately lively British Invasion Type Song.)

(After a few moments, the CENSOR enters.)

CENSOR. Stop it! Stop the music!

RYEBREAD. What? What is it!

CENSOR. Did you get clearance for the rights to that music? Are you trying to get us sued?

RYEBREAD. Uh, well, yeh see, I meant ter, but...

CENSOR. Let's just move along. Thank you, bugs. Don't call us. We'll call you.

(RYEBREAD and the BEETLES leave.)

Okay, kids, it's time for the big Christmas scene.

SALLY. You mean it's already Christmas time?

CENSOR. It doesn't matter. We're obligated to have a Christmas scene. You see, some people get a little antsy about all the talk of Sorcery and Witchcraft, so we throw in a nice holiday scene to assure them that we're all good Christians.

SALLY. But I'm Jewish.

CENSOR. Hmm...well, that'll really only play on the coasts. So, for the sake of everywhere else...

(Pulls a Santa hat from inside his or her jacket and plops it on SALLY's head.)

'Tis the season!

(CENSOR goes. Christmas music plays and STUDENTS bring on some presents. DAVE, HARMONICA, and SALLY shrug and play along.)

DAVE. Merry Christmas, Sally! Look, I got you a present! It's some Sorcerer's Candy! They're bears made out of a strange gummy substance. I bet you don't have anything like that in Monkeysunkle candy stores.

SALLY. Well, actually, we do. They're called Gummy Bears.

DAVE. Oh...worms?

SALLY. Yep.

DAVE. Little rocks that explode in your mouth?

SALLY. Sorry.

HARMONICA. Hey, you two, do you think we should ask Professor Shape about the Antechamber of Antecedents?

SALLY. Why would we do that?

HARMONICA. Well, Ryebread said it's a place of Dark Sorcery and she's supposed to know all about Dark Sorcery.

DAVE. Yeah, because she's a Dark Sorceress working for I'd Rather Not Say!

HARMONICA. But Underdrawers trusts her, so she must be good!

DAVE. What do you think, Sal? Is Shape good or evil?

SALLY. It's tough to say. She's ambiguous.

DAVE. You mean she can breathe under water?

(SHAPE enters, unseen by the trio.)

SALLY. No, ambiguous. I can't tell if Shiftia Shape is good or evil. But to be safe, we shouldn't say anything to her about the Magic Rock being in the Antechamber of Antecedents.

SHAPE. Probably a good idea.

HARMONICA. Professor Shape.

DAVE. We were just...er...

SALLY. What can I do for you, Professor?

SHAPE. Every year, one member of staff gets chosen to be the... Secret Santa, and has to pass out secret gifts from faculty to students. This year...lucky me. Here you go, Cotter.

(SHAPE hands SALLY a package and starts to go.)

Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go drink about five gallons of eggnog.

(SHAPE exits.)

HARMONICA. Sally, she heard us say where the Magic Rock is!

SALLY. Well, maybe that's okay...Underdrawers trusts her, right?

DAVE. Will one of you just open the present already?

HARMONICA. Who's it from?

SALLY. It doesn't say.

(Opens the package.)

It's a cape.

DAVE. Hey! That's an invisibility inaudibility intangibility unsmellibility cape!

SALLY. A what?

DAVE. When you wear it, people can't see you, can't hear you, feel you, or smell you!

SALLY. What about taste? Could they taste me?

DAVE. Do you go around licking people?

SALLY. Fair enough.

(A bell rings. URSA and STUDENTS enter to set up the classroom again. SHAPE stands at the front.)

HARMONICA. Oh no, we'll be late for class!

SALLY. Class? Isn't it still Christmas? Or have we jumped ahead in time again?

(HARMONICA pulls off Sally's Santa hat and throws it offstage.)

HARMONICA. Hurry!

(The three of them hustle into class.)

SHAPE. Ah, late again, you three. That's ten points apiece from Goodydrops and we'll draw another leg on your hangman.

SALLY. Oh, come on Professor, this is just absurd!

SHAPE. I beg your pardon, Miss Cotter.

SALLY. You always punish Goodydrops students so harshly. You never punish Ursa or the other Slymythings at all. And what about Ed? He's never even come to class! How come that hasn't affected Slymythings?

SHAPE. Ed who?

DAVE. Ursa's friend, Ed Molar.

SHAPE. Ursa, do you have a friend named Ed Molar?

URSA. Why, no, professor. I don't know anyone by that name.

DAVE. You're lying! We always see you palling around with him.

SHAPE. There has not been a student named Ed Molar at Frogbull Academy of Sorcery and Sashimi for...many years. Fifty points from Goodydrops! Class dismissed!

(DAVE, HARMONICA, and SALLY come forward while the STUDENTS clear away the classroom set.)

DAVE. What was that all about?

SALLY. Apparently there isn't a student here by that name.

HARMONICA. But we've all seen him.

SALLY. And Shape seems to think there used to be an Ed Molar here.

HARMONICA. There's only one way we can get to the bottom of this.

DAVE. Oh no. Here it comes.

HARMONICA. To the library!

(HARMONICA runs offstage, dragging DAVE.)

SALLY. Some people dream about a Hawaiian vacation... I dream about going to library. Tell you what. While we're at the library, why don't you take a little break. Hey, it's my dream, if I want to put an intermission in it, I will. Come back in fifteen minutes and see if we can solve this mystery!

(Music. SALLY runs off after DAVE and HARMONICA.)

(Lights out.)

End of Act I

ACT II

(Lights up.)

(A table and three chairs are set up. DAVE, HARMONICA, and SALLY are seated there. HARMONICA is deep in a book while DAVE and SALLY play Scrabble.)

HARMONICA. These old yearbooks are fascinating. Look, this one's from when Ryebread was a student here. Look at him in the Drama Club's production of *Guys and Dolls*. He was Rusty Charlie.

SALLY. No sign of Ed Molar, though?

HARMONICA. Not yet...wait! Here he is!

DAVE. Where?

HARMONICA. Playing Benny Southstreet, the caption says "Ed Molar Herdturd."

SALLY and DAVE. Herdturd?

HARMONICA. Molar wasn't his last name; it was his middle name!

DAVE. Well, I'd go by my middle name, too, if my last name was Herdturd.

SALLY. I'm not sure Molar is that much better...wait!

(SALLY tips over the Scrabble board and starts arranging letters.)

DAVE. You are such a sore loser at Sorcerer's Scrabble.

HARMONICA. No, you're rearranging the letters in Ed Molar Herturd, aren't you?

SALLY. Yes, and look what they spell now...Lord Murderdeath.

(DAVE and HARMONICA gasp.)

HARMONICA. Do you think that Ed Molar grew up to change his name to...I'd Rather Not Say?

SALLY. This dream has ripped off enough plot elements from the books, why not this one? But who is the Ed Molar we keep seeing around school? He can't be the real Murderdeath, right? How can he be our age?

DAVE. I bet Ursa knows.

HARMONICA. But she'd never tell us the truth if we asked her.

SALLY. I think this is a job for the invisibility inaudibility intangibility unsmellibility cape. Come on.

(The three of them get under the cape.)

(To audience:) Yes, I know you guys can see us, but all the other characters can't, okay?

(Sneaking Music as they sneak around.)

(The lights dim as URSA enters, looking like she's waiting for something. The trio, under the cape, sneak behind her.)

URSA. Why do I get the feeling someone's following me? I don't see anything. And I can't hear, feel, or smell anything... There's just one thing to do.

(URSA sticks out her tongue and starts to use it to probe around. Under the cape, the trio dodges. There are several close calls.)

(ED enters during this.)

ED. What on Earth are you doing?

URSA. Oh, Ed. I was just, well...

ED. Never mind. What have you learned?

URSA. Well, I think Cotter and her stupid friends might have learned where the Magic Rock is. But they'd never tell me.

ED. Then you're useless to me.

URSA. Professor Shape might know.

ED. I'm not sure if I could trust Professor Shape. She's somewhat ambiguous.

URSA. You mean she's both right handed and left handed?

ED. Get out of my sight, fool! I'll never find that rock unless someone helps me. Perhaps Professor Shape is my...hmm...

URSA. What? What?

ED. Sorry, to keep the ending a surprise, I'm going to remain amphibious...I mean ambidextrous...I mean...shut up.

(ED and URSA go. DAVE, HARMONICA, and SALLY remove the cape.)

DAVE. So they are working together.

SALLY. And they do want the Magic Rock.

HARMONICA. And the Magic Rock could restore I'd Rather Not Say to power!

DAVE. What do we do?

SALLY. We do the one thing the characters in these books never do, even though doing it would fix everything. We're going to talk to the headmaster! Professor Underdrawers!

(DAVE and HARMONICA join in, yelling for UNDERDRAWERS. He appears on the other side of the stage.)

UNDERDRAWERS. Yes?

SALLY. There's someone here in the school named Ed Molar. I don't know if it's the real Murderdeath or just someone using his name. But he wants to find the Magic Rock! Couldn't he do something really awful with that?

UNDERDRAWERS. You seem highly distressed about something that's only a silly dream.

SALLY. Right now, things don't seem quite so silly!

(THE CANADIAN MOUNTIE skips across the stage, blowing bubbles.)

DAVE. Well that sort of tips the scales.

HARMONICA. What do we do, Professor? We think Ursa was trying to help Ed Molar, and maybe she still is, but we also think Professor Shape might be helping.

UNDERDRAWERS. If someone in this school is attempting to aid a Dark Sorcerer, we must gather everyone in the school and find out who it is. Everyone!

(SHAPE, URSA, and the STUDENTS enter. Much hubbub.)

UNDERDRAWERS. Silence everyone, silence! It has come to my attention that someone here has been aiding an outsider in an attempt to obtain an object that does not belong to them.

STUDENT 5. Well I didn't do it!

STUDENT 6. Me either!

UNDERDRAWERS. I understand that most of you are innocent. That is why we shall determine which of you, be it student...

(Looks at a nervous URSA.)

Or teacher...

(Looks at an ambiguous-looking SHAPE.)

...is the guilty party in the most logical way possible. Yes, we shall address this with logic. Nothing silly or ridiculous will get in the way.

(RYEBREAD comes running on.)

RYEBREAD. Somebody let out the Beetles!

STUDENTS. The what?

RYEBREAD. The Beetles!

(More music plays as the BEETLES run on. Panic. Everyone scatters.)

(Some merry chasing ensues, like something out of a sixties musical.)

(After the madness subsides, DAVE, HARMONICA, and SALLY are alone on stage.)

DAVE. I think Ed Molar released those Beetles to cause a distraction!

SALLY. ...Yeah, there's a slim chance that's it.

HARMONICA. We've got to assume he's learned the Magic Rock is in the Antechamber of Antecedents, and he's trying to get inside now!

DAVE. But who told him? Who knows except us, Underdrawers, and Ryebread?

SALLY. Only Shape. She must still be on Murderdeath's side.

HARMONICA. Then we've got to get to the Antechamber of Antecedents before they do.

SALLY. But we don't know where it is!

DAVE. I don't even know what an antecedent is.

HARMONICA. An antecedent means something that came before, like your grandfather was an antecedent to you, or World War I was an antecedent to World War II. But in logic, an antecedent is a conditional phrase that starts with the word "if." For example, in the phrase "If we knew where the Antechamber of Antecedents was, we could go there" the antecedent is the phrase "If we knew where the Chamber of Antecedents was." Do you follow?

SALLY. Yes.

DAVE. No.

HARMONICA. So...the very fact that our ability to find the Antechamber of Antecedents is conditional means that we already have an antecedent...so...

(Music. Two STUDENTS carry out a door or archway that is labeled "Welcome to the Antechamber of Antecedents.")

HARMONICA. We've found it! Come on!

(She goes through the portal.)

DAVE. Did any of that make any sense to you?

SALLY. No. Do you care?

DAVE. No. Let's go!

(They dash through the portal, too.)

(Lights shift and eerie music plays. The portal is moved offstage and set elements are brought on to suggest a dusty hidden antechamber. Some rocks are about, and behind one of them, unseen to the audience, is the Tea Cozy of Assignment.)

(DAVE, HARMONICA, and SALLY gather together.)

SALLY. Stay close. Remember, Ryebread said this place is guarded by a series of obstacles. With any luck, each obstacle will, through great coincidence, be exactly suited to one of our special abilities.

HARMONICA. Well, finding the place was a logic puzzle. That must be the first obstacle, and it was perfect for me.

DAVE. But what kind of trap could be right for me? The only thing I'm good at is Sorcerer's Scrabble.

(Chorus members enter, each one holding up letters. The letters are E-E-H-I-I-K-L-M-N-O-O-S-S-U-T-T-Y-Y.)

SALLY. Of course.

HARMONICA. These letters are blocking our way.

DAVE. You won't let us pass, right?

(The LETTER PEOPLE nod their heads.)

So we have to figure out how to get past.

(The LETTER PEOPLE nod again.)

So...

(The LETTER PEOPLE arrange their letters to spell "So intuit my keyholes.")

HARMONICA. "So intuit my keyholes"? What does that mean.

DAVE. I think it means I have to rearrange the letters to find the key to get past them. All right...I'll give it a shot.

(Music. DAVE directs the letters to rearrange. They now spell "I knit toy mousy heels." DAVE appeals to the others to see if they think it's good.)

SALLY. Um...no.

(DAVE rearranges again. Now they spell "Inky oily sumos teeth." Again, DAVE appeals.)

HARMONICA. I don't think that's it.

DAVE. Wait! I've got it!

(One last rearranging. Now it's "My solution is the key.")

SALLY. My solution is the key! That's it!

(Sound effect. The LETTER PEOPLE exit.)

HARMONICA. Dave, you did it!

SALLY. Now we can get the Magic Rock!

(ED enters, applauding sarcastically.)

ED. Well done, children. But I'm afraid my assistant has already uncovered the Magic Rock.

SALLY. Where is she? Where is Professor Shape, that traitor?

ED. Oh, it's not Professor Shape who betrayed you.

SALLY. Then who did?

(CENSOR enters, holding the Magic Rock.)

CENSOR. Hi there. Neat twist, huh? Bet you didn't see this coming. Look! I've got the Magic Rock!

SALLY. You? But...but why?

CENSOR. Because I liked it better when everything made sense! There are certain rules that people in my business live by and you break all of them. We always knew that kids wouldn't read a 700 page book. You proved us wrong. We always knew that kids are basically stupid and don't want to read books full of Latin words, and complicated issues of life and death and moral decisions. You proved us wrong. We always knew that books for kids can never outsell books for grown-ups, and grown-ups could never read kids' books. But once again, you proved us wrong. Well guess what...I don't like being wrong. Suddenly, everybody in my business is bending over backwards to figure out what kids like. Why should I have to care what kids like? But now they're the most powerful audience we have. And I hate that! So I figured I'd let the bad guy win this time. Kids will cry, boo hoo, and they'll stop reading and things will go back to normal, to a world where kids don't have any power. Hey, Ed, catch!

SALLY. No!

(CENSOR throws ED the Rock. ED catches it.)

ED. Now it's my turn for a lengthy bad guy monologue. I was quite lucky to meet our Censoring friend here. We share a lot in common. We both hate children.

DAVE. But you are a kid!

ED. Not quite. I'm actually an adult. At least, I was until I first met young Miss Sally Cotter.

SALLY. So you didn't just name yourself after him. You really are Lord Murderdeath.

ED. That's right! And in my adult body, I had power! I had enough power to conquer the whole world! But then I met Sally Cotter and somehow...she turned me into...this.

SALLY. That's what happened when you tried to kill me when I was a baby? You got turned into a kid?

ED. Exactly! A powerless, short little child! But then I heard they were moving the...Magic Rock...here to Frogbull. And suddenly, being a child gave me the advantage. I could disguise myself as a student and find out where it was. I tried getting it out of Ursa Malaise, but she was useless, just like all children are. And Professor Shape was no better. But now that I have it, Murderdeath shall live again!

(DAVE, HARMONICA, and SALLY ad-lib shrieks of "no, stop!" etc. Lights and music as ED lifts up the Rock. He vanishes behind a piece of scenery and rises again as LORD MURDERDEATH, now an adult in a long black cloak.)

MURDERDEATH. It worked! It worked! The Magic Rock has restored all my powers. I'm an adult again! An adult, free to start wars, and destroy the environment, and oppress people who are different from me! Ah! The glory of adulthood!

SALLY. We'll stop you, Murderdeath. Somehow, some way, we'll stop you.

MURDERDEATH. Oh I don't think you will. You know, I didn't choose the name Murderdeath because I like arranging flowers.

And guess who's first on my hit list. Come here, Cotter, and meet your doom.

(Music. MURDERDEATH starts slowly stalking SALLY across the stage. She moves backwards, trying to avoid him.)

SALLY. Guys! What do we do? What do we do?

DAVE. Wait, didn't Underdrawers say something about some... thing that helps Frogbull students when they're in trouble?

HARMONICA. Yes! Yes! The Tea Cozy of Assignment! It's supposed to show up and help!

SALLY. Well where is it?

(SALLY trips over the bit of scenery hiding the Cozy. She gets up and has it in her hands.)

SALLY. Oh! Here it is!

DAVE. Well use it!

SALLY. I don't know how to use a tea cozy! I'm American!

MURDERDEATH. Foolish child! Do you really think some common household item like that is going to defeat me?

HARMONICA. Maybe it's not the cozy itself! Maybe it's what's inside it.

DAVE. Well what's inside it?

SALLY. This!

(She reaches into the cozy and pulls out the book she was reading at the beginning of the play.)

DAVE. What's that?

SALLY. It's...the book I was reading when I fell asleep.

MURDERDEATH. A book? How are you going to use that against me?

SALLY. Um...like...this?

(She opens the book and thrusts it, open pages first, towards MURDERDEATH.)

MURDERDEATH. What are you trying to...what's this?

(MURDERDEATH takes the book and begins to read it. Music stops.)

This is...oh my...hmm...oh, that's funny...wow! How are they going to get out of this? Wait...what's happening to me? No! No! Argh!

(MURDERDEATH shrieks and collapses behind scenery again. When he rises, he has turned back into ED.)

ED. No! You did it again! How did you! Argh! I'm a child again! A weak little child with no power! I'll get you yet Sally Cotter! You haven't heard the last of me!

(ED runs away.)

DAVE. Sally! You beat...I'd Rather Not Say!

HARMONICA. But...how?

(UNDERDRAWERS enters.)

UNDERDRAWERS. I believe we have an appointment for some end-of-the-story exposition.

SALLY. Professor Underdrawers, you know how the book was able to beat Lord Murderdeath?

UNDERDRAWERS. Well, Sally, you are the one who loves these books so very much. I think perhaps you might already know the answer.

SALLY. Well...I know a lot of grown-ups who read the books, too, and they always said that reading them made them feel like...like a kid again.

UNDERDRAWERS. Exactly. The power of the books, and of your passion for them was so great that even Lord Murderdeath enjoyed them. He enjoyed them so much that he became the one thing he most didn't want to be.

HARMONICA. But won't he try to come back again?

UNDERDRAWERS. Oh, yes, probably six or seven more times. Welcome to the pitfalls of serial fiction.

(SALLY picks up the Rock.)

SALLY. But at least we can be sure he won't use this again. Professor, can you destroy the Ancient Stone of the Elders?

CENSOR. Um...remember that we decided to call it...

(Sees that everyone is shooting dirty looks.)

I'll just stand quietly over here.

UNDERDRAWERS. I can destroy it. But surely you should be given the chance to use it yourself. After all, it can grant you your heart's desire.

SALLY. Well, let's see...I've got my friends. I survived my battle with Murderdeath. There's really just one thing I would want the Stone to take care of.

UNDERDRAWERS. And what is that?

DAVE, SALLY, and HARMONICA. *(Pointing to the CENSOR:)* Him! *(Or "Her" if a woman is playing the Censor.)*

SALLY. Oh...Beetles!

(Music. The BEETLES come running on and grab and carry off the CENSOR.)

CENSOR. No! Please! Don't! I love children! I was just—

(CENSOR screams and is gone. Music fades.)

UNDERDRAWERS. Students of Frogbull Academy of Sorcery and Celebrations, gather!

(RYEBREAD, SHAPE, URSA, and the STUDENTS enter amid hubbub.)

Today, our school faced a great danger, but it was averted, thanks to the courage and quick thinking of Dave, Harmonica, and Sally, the Heroes of Frogbull!

(Cheers from everyone except SHAPE, URSA, and the SLYMY-THINGS.)

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com