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The Rehearsal

A play in one act

By Don Zolidis

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One-act comedy/drama
14F 7M, flexible

A young teacher tries to pull off a production of Guys and Dolls, but putting a musical together is never easy, especially with a megalomaniacal stage manager, a lead who is convinced that Wicked is a much better show, and a girl who is clinically incapable of following directions (she has a doctor's note to prove it). And to make matters worse, there aren't nearly enough guys to be the Guys. A hilarious and poignant look behind the scenes of a drama club production filled with lots of drama.

Cast of Characters

The Leaders *(any of the leaders may be either gender)*

MR. HENDERSON	The teacher/director
JULIE	The Stage Manager – maybe a little drunk with power – maybe a lot drunk with power
DEB	Assistant Stage Manager/slave

The Actors

ANGELA	One of the leads – shy
MORGAN (f)	One of the leads – not shy – not at all shy
GUY	A guy, (male lead) can't sing
BARRY	Theatre nerd – usually a lead in every show
SAVANNAH	Theatre nerd – usually a lead in every show
Other GIRLS	
JESSIE	
JIM	a guy
DARREL	drafted boy
MIKE	drafted boy
TYLER	drafted boy

Girl 1-4: Currently I have four girls numbered. Feel free to split these lines any way you see fit.

Cross-Casting: Mr. Henderson, Julie, and Deb may be any gender. You may add additional boys if you have additional boys. You can probably use as many girls as you like.

Notes: Singing: There is some singing in this show, but it isn't a musical. The singing should be done A Cappella and not be entire songs. Morgan needs to be able to sing well, but everyone else can probably fake it.

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I. You can't touch the scripts

(Lights up on a nearly empty stage. Setpieces for a production of Guys and Dolls are under construction, in various stages of completion.)

(JULIE, the stage manager, enters carrying a clipboard, followed closed by DEB, the assistant stage manager/slave carrying a heavy load of scripts. She can barely carry them.)

JULIE

Careful.

DEB

Sorry.

JULIE

I said careful. Put them over here.

DEB

Okay Julie.

JULIE

What did I say about using my real name?

DEB

Only when we weren't in rehearsal?

JULIE

Thank you. So what do you do say?

DEB

Okay Stage Manager?

JULIE

There you go.

(DEB struggles to put the scripts down in an orderly way.)

Can those be any sloppier?

DEB

Sorry stage manager.

JULIE

Don't be sorry. Improve. I didn't get to be where I am today by doing thing sloppily, you got it? Details, details, details. Are the water bottles chilled?

DEB

I think so.

JULIE

You think so? Don't you know?

DEB

I put them in the fridge like an hour ago.

JULIE

Like an hour ago? Could it have been forty-five minutes ago?

DEB

I guess.

JULIE

You see this face? This is my disappointed face.

(MR. HENDERSON enters in huff, clapping for no apparent reason.)

MR. HENDERSON

Okay people! Let's get this thing started!

JULIE

Hi Mr. Henderson. Can I just say that I am so happy to be in –

MR. HENDERSON *(cutting her off, calling out)*

All right come on in come on in come on in!

(The CAST enters, mid-conversation with each other. Present are all the girls in the show, plus JIM, GUY and BARRY. They are the only boys.)

Find a seat.

GIRL 1

Do we have any chairs?

MR. HENDERSON

I don't believe in chairs! Just a find a spot on the ground.

GIRL 2

Could I have a carpet square at least?

GIRL 3

Has this floor been cleaned lately?

GIRL 4

It doesn't make any sense that we have to sit on the floor!

GIRL 1

Do you want us to sit in order of importance?

MR. HENDERSON

Hey! Hey! It's sitting. Okay? If we can't sit, how are we gonna do a show? I should just be able to say `sit' and you just voom! Actually, you know what, let's try that again. Everybody stand up!

GIRL 2

What?

GIRL 3

I just managed to sit.

JULIE *(bursting)*

He said stand up! How hard is it?!

MR. HENDERSON

Easy Julie. Okay now – eyes up here… wait for it wait for it… SIT!
(Everyone sits quickly.)
Nope. Not good enough.

GIRL 4

Oh come on!

JULIE

That's it! You will be destroyed!

MR. HENDERSON

Let's try that again. Everyone stand.
(They stand.)
And… Keep standing!
(Someone sits.)

JULIE

What is your problem?!

MR. HENDERSON

Julie please.
(GIRL 4 raises her hand.)
We're not raising hands now.
(GIRL 4 keeps her hand raised.)
Fine. What?

GIRL 4

I have a medical condition where I'm not good at following directions.

MR. HENDERSON

What?

GIRL 4

I have a note.
(She hands a note.)

MR. HENDERSON

You can't follow directions.

GIRL 4

I'm missing an enzyme.

MR. HENDERSON

All right. Tell you what: you stand over there.
(GIRL 4 doesn't move.)

GIRL 3

How come she gets to not follow directions? I don't want to follow directions either!

MR. HENDERSON

SIT!
(Everyone sits quickly.)
Okay. Now that we've managed sitting – we're ready to move on.

GIRL 1

I don't feel like I got the point of the sitting exercise.

GIRL 2

He just wants to break us down so he can build us up. It's like the army. I have a boyfriend in the army.

JULIE

All right maggots! Listen up!

MR. HENDERSON

No! Julie! Stop!

JULIE

These pukes make me sick, sir.

MR. HENDERSON

We're not in the army. We're doing a musical.

JULIE

Which requires exact precision… or people die.

Skipping Forward

GIRL 1

Why?

GIRL 2

This doesn't make any sense.

MR. HENDERSON

That's how it works in musicals. You rent the books. Then you give them back.

GIRL 4

I want to keep mine.

MR. HENDERSON

You can't!

JULIE

The oils from your fingertips will eat away the cover, so I want you to wear these gloves when you touch the scripts, okay?

MR. HENDERSON

Write softly in pencil, or better yet, don't write anything –

JULIE

We are watching you! We will know what you have done to the books!

MR. HENDERSON

If you have a small part – you don't get a book.

GIRL 3

I want a book!

MR. HENDERSON

Tough. So let's take the time to introduce the leads. This is Barry. Barry will be taking the role of Sky Masterson.

BARRY

Hi everyone. You probably remember me from last year's production of The Pirates of Penzance. I was the third pirate on the left, and I was tremendous. All the reviews kind of glossed over my performance, but I think that if you really looked into the heart of that show –

MR. HENDERSON

Thank you Barry.

BARRY

Can I just say that I'm a quadruple threat? Acting. Check. Singing.

(he sings a note)

I think we can say check there, thank you very much. Dancing.

(he does a little dance move)

Check. And puppetry. I don't have any puppets on me right now, but trust me, I'm pretty awesome at puppetry. Okay, fine, I'll give you a little taste.

(He forms his hands into two puppets. He begins with his left hand.)

`Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo.'

(right hand)

`But soft! What light through yonder window breaks!'

(left hand)

`Romeo. Deny thy name and… give me a smooch.'

(the hands kiss.)

`oooh. Now let's go down some stairs.'

(they go down stairs.)

Thank you. I think we can all agree that taste was delectable.

MR. HENDERSON

Thank you for that, Barry. And other male lead – Guy.

(GUY stands up.)

Guy will be playing Nathan Detroit.

GUY

Hey.

GIRL 2

Wait a minute – your name is Guy?

GUY

Yeah. I figured I kinda had to audition for this show. Since it's got my name on it.

MR. HENDERSON

This is Guy's first musical. He's super excited. Talk to the people a little bit.

GUY

Um… I'm super excited.

MR. HENDERSON

Great. Have a seat, Guy. And our female leads -

(MORGAN leaps up.)

MORGAN

Hi everyone! You know me! I'm Morgan Hill, and I'll be playing the part of Miss Sarah Brown, which is the second most fun part in the play, next to the other lead, Adelaide. I don't mind, though, because I really like wearing starchy costumes and having my hair in a bun. And also awesome! I get to kiss Barry in this show, which I've really been looking forward to for a while because that's totally what I thought I'd be doing with my life at this point! Not that I'm bitter! I'm not bitter! I love my part! I love singing really high and showing no emotion on stage! By

the way, I wanted to do Wicked, which is an incredibly awesome show and I would have made the best Elphaba ever – can I just do a little bit of my audition song?

(she starts in on her audition song. MR. HENDERON tries to cut her off, but she won't let him. She finishes.)

But that's cool. Apparently, we don't have the right to do that show or something – so instead we're doing this show, which is just great, which is awesome, cause instead of flying and singing amazing songs, I get to be Miss Sarah Brown – who is working for the Salvation Army, can you believe that?! How much fun is it to work for the Salvation Army and ring that bell! Much more fun than flying and using magic, I can tell you that much! And I think this is the year that Barry learned what deodorant was, so that's a bonus! And it looks like some of his pimples are clearing up, double bonus! I can't wait to do this show!!!!

(she takes a deep breath.)

I am a team player.

GIRL 4

Can we do Wicked?

MR. HENDERSON

The rights to Wicked are not available.

GIRL 1

What if we just changed a word or two and called it, "Mean"?

GIRL 2

Or "Unpleasant!"

GIRL 3

That's a stupid name for a musical!

GIRL 2

You're a stupid name for a musical!

MR. HENDERSON

We are doing Guys and Dolls! It's a famous show! They made a movie with Marlon Brando and Frank Sinatra, okay? Marlon Brando and Frank Sinatra?

GIRL 4

Were they on the Sopranos?

MR. HENDERSON

Moving on – the last of our leads is Angela, who's playing the part of Adelaide.

MORGAN

The most fun part in the play!

MR. HENDERSON

This is her first show.

ANGELA

Hey everybody. I'm really excited and I hope that I can do a good job.

(SAVANNAH raises her hand.)

SAVANNAH

Can I say something here?

ANGELA

Okay.

SAVANNAH

On behalf of the cast, I really want to welcome you to the musical theatre family.

ANGELA

Thanks!

SAVANNAH

And if you need anything, or need any help, don't hesitate to ask. Because Adelaide is a really big part, I mean, it's a pretty scary part to be honest – if you don't go a great job, the entire show will go up in flames, no pressure or anything.

ANGELA

Oh.

SAVANNAH

And if you feel like the pressure is too much, I would be happy to take your part. I mean, I've done it before – not your part – but I've been in three shows before this so I kinda think it's my turn to do the lead now. And since you're only, what, a sophomore, then you get lots of chances to be the lead after this, but I don't have any chances after this. So if you want to step down right now, I will take your part for you.

ANGELA

I don't want to step down.

SAVANNAH

Can we vote on this maybe?

MR. HENDERSON

No we're not voting!

SAVANNAH

But I just think the rest of the cast should decide who gets to play the part of Adelaide. That would be the fair thing.

MR. HENDERSON

Theatre isn't fair, Savannah, and –

SAVANNAH

My Mom is actually on the school board –

MR. HENDERSON

That's great, but –

SAVANNAH

They pay your salary. Okay, show of hands, who wants me to replace Angelica?

ANGELA

Angela.

SAVANNAH

Whatever-her-name-is.

JULIE

Raise your hands and I will crush you like bugs!

(no raises their hand. Except Girl 4. Who then puts it down.)

Mr. Henderson decides the cast, okay? No one else gets a say! You think this is a democracy?! Ha! This is a dictatorship and we should all respect our fearless leader and never question him! You want freedom of speech? I have a gulag set up in the girls' locker room and you can have all the freedom of speech you want chained up in there –

(BARRY is about to raise his hand)

You're not going there, Barry. Don't even think about it.

MR. HENDERSON

We're not going to make any casting changes at this point, okay everyone?

SAVANNAH

Fine. Don't blame me if the show is terrible.

GIRL 1

Is the show going to be terrible?!

GIRL 2

I don't want the show to be terrible!

GIRL 3

The people who graduated last year were so good!

MR. HENDERSON

Hey! Stop. We're going to have a great show, okay? There's a lot of really fun dancing numbers and the audience is going to love it! Trust me. Guys and Dolls is famous. All right, take five.

Skipping Forward

GIRL 2

Ask them!

GIRL 3

Beg them!

GIRL 4

Pay them!

GUY

I kinda already did ask them.

(Lights change as TYLER, DARREL, and MIKE enter off to the side.)

TYLER

The musical?!

DARREL

Are you kidding me?!

MIKE

Dude. I have a life. Almost.

TYLER

I'm not wearing tights!

DARREL

I'll do that for Halloween sure, but not for anything else!

MIKE

Why won't you leave me alone?!

(They exit as one.)

(Lights change. JIM speaks to the audience.)

JIM

Why am I in the musical? I've been told I'm not a very good singer. I mean, I think it's pretty rare to be told flat-out that you can't sing. Most people say things like –

GIRL 1

You need more breath.

GIRL 2

From your diaphragm.

GIRL 3

You just need confidence.

GIRL 4

Pitch.

GIRL 1

Tone.

GIRL 2

Confidence, pitch, and tone. Mostly.

JIM

Maybe if I had pitch and tone I'd have confidence. But it's hard to have confidence when you're at a party and you hear things like this.

(JIM stands near BARRY, SAVANNAH, and GIRL 2. There's a screeching noise.)

BARRY

What was that? Sounds like Jim trying to sing.

JIM

I'm standing right here.

BARRY

Oh.

JIM

I mean I'm standing right here and you're talking about me.

BARRY

Sorry. I didn't know you were there.

JIM

I am. I'm here. Just cause you don't notice me doesn't mean I'm not here.

SAVANNAH

Lay off, Jim. He already apologized. Jeez. Some people can be so rude.

BARRY

At least I'm not talking about you behind your back.

JIM *(to the audience)*

So I guess I have a tone, pitch, and confidence problem. And another problem where I can't sing. And I seem to run out of breath all the time. Like, when I talk, I can talk fine, but then when I start to sing, I can last like four seconds before I'm gasping for air like a dying fish. And I'd like to add that I'm not exactly a spectacular dancer either. Yeah, it's not pretty. So why am I in the musical?

(He looks over to a group of girls. One of them, JESSIE, is LAUGHING. The other two leave.)

Now some people might tell you that the best reason to be in a musical is that there are at least two girls for every guy. At worst. Usually it's three. But I didn't really care about numbers, I cared about –

(She laughs again. She looks over.)

JESSIE

Hey Jim.

JIM

Hey Jessie.

JESSIE

See ya.

(She leaves.)

JIM *(to the audience)*

Did you see that? She talked to me! And do you know what else? She knows my name, which means she's aware of my existence. I'm already halfway to marriage and kids and retirement. Maybe not quite halfway. Maybe a third of the way.

(takes a moment)

I realize that sounds a little obsessive and insane. But I guess that's love, right? She works in the childen's section of the library. I got a job in the other section. I know that sounds stalkerish, but here's the thing: I feel better on days that I see Jessica. I'm not even kidding, I feel lighter and sunnier, and all-around happier even if I just see her for a second. So I thought: I want to maximize the days that I get to see her. So… so I'm gonna try and sing and dance. And make a complete fool out of myself. And maybe, who knows, she feels better on days that she sees me. So I'm spreading happiness.

(short pause)

Before the show ends I'm gonna tell her how I feel. I'm terrified even thinking about it. I imagine if she says no I won't get to see her as much anymore. And that would be pretty awful.

(we hear GUY on the announcements.)

GUY

Hey there everyone. The school musical, Guys and Dolls, is just starting rehearsals and we have a few places out there for some more guys. So if you're sure you're a guy, and you want to sing and dance – well you don't even really have to sing and dance much in this show – you just wear a suit and look like a gangster – and kinda act like you're shaking dice, so if you are not petrified about being on the stage and are a live body, we need you. So come by the auditorium today after school. By the way, about half the show takes place in a nightclub where girls dance in skimpy outfits. Thanks.

(TYLER, DARREL, and MIKE enter.)

4. Fugue for Skimpy Outfits

TYLER

I'm here for the show.

DARREL

Where are the skimpy outfits?

MIKE

I was told there would be skimpy outfits.

TYLER *(overlapping)*

I'm a little embarrassed to be here –

DARREL *(overlapping)*

I'm not wearing tights.

MIKE *(overlapping)*

This better not be embarrassing

DARREL *(overlapping)*

No sir I'm not wearing tights! I'm not wearing, not wearing, not wearing tights!

TYLER

Does anyone mind if I bring my X-Box?

MIKE

Can I have a different name on the program?

ALL THREE

Where are the skimpy outfits?

BARRY

Greetings, gentlemen, I am Barry – I'll be playing the role of Sky Masterson. That means I am the lead gangster and I am much, much cooler than you. The theatre is a harsh mistress, my friends, one day she rewards you with fame and notoriety, the next day you injure your foot and have to replaced by someone.

(GIRL 3 trips.)

GIRL 3

Ow!

BARRY

Case in point.

GIRL 3

I can still do the show! Don't worry!

BARRY

Follow my lead, boys, and you'll have no trouble.

(MR. HENDERSON and JULIE enter.)

JULIE

All right girls! Let's get ready for the first dance sequence!

TYLER

Can we stay and watch this?

JULIE

No!

TYLER

You're not the boss of me.

JULIE

Let's get one thing straight – I am the boss of you. You don't look like theatre people to me, and if you so much as breathe the wrong way I will personally cut you from the show. Don't think I can't do it? As stage manager I have limitless power! Limitless! So don't cross me. Now get out of here and go memorize lines.

MIKE

Yes, Ma'am.

(They exit as GIRLS enter. MR. HENDERSON enters.)

MR. HENDERSON

Hey Barry, can I talk to you for a minute?

BARRY

Sure, Mr. Henderson – I was going to help out in some of the choreography of the dance sequences –

MR. HENDERSON

I'll think we'll let Julie handle that.

BARRY

No offense sir, but Julie is drunk with power.

MR. HENDERSON

You know, she gets that way, but she gets the job done. But um… come over here –

(The girls are stretching. GIRL 3 gets on crutches.)

BARRY

What is it?

MR. HENDERSON

Let's talk about A.P. History.

(BARRY is silent. MR. HENDERSON has a piece of paper.)

You didn't turn in your research project?

(BARRY doesn't say anything.)

What happened to your research project?

BARRY

…I don't know.

MR. HENDERSON

What do you mean you don't know?

(BARRY doesn't say anything.)

This was two weeks ago, Barry, you couldn't tell me? The final grades are in.

BARRY

I don't know what happened I got so busy and then it was late and then I didn't know how to start it and then –

MR. HENDERSON

I could've helped you with that. Angela's in that class, she could've helped you.

BARRY

…I know.

MR. HENDERSON

You're one of the leads.

BARRY

…I know.

MR. HENDERSON

I don't have any control over this, you know You're not going to be eligible for the performance.

(BARRY doesn't say anything.)

Are you just in denial about this? Now I gotta go and find a guy who can do that part – I don't have that guy – you're really putting us in a difficult spot here – if you just would've told us at auditions that you messed up then we'd be –

(BARRY has his head in his hands.)

Hey. It's all right. I want you to turn that project in, okay? That's more important than the show.

(BARRY still has his head in his hands.)

BARRY

…can I still come to the rehearsals?

MR. HENDERSON

You can't participate –

BARRY

Just to watch?

MR. HENDERSON

Sure.

BARRY

Thank you. Can I go now?

MR. HENDERSON

Yeah.

(BARRY exits. Lights shift over to the girls.)

5. Anything you can do I can do more loudly.

JULIE

All right, my assistant Deb is going to help a few of you with the moves here. She's an incredible mover.

DEB

I'm a good dancer too.

JULIE

You're more of a mover.

DEB

I'm not quite sure what that means.

SAVANNAH

Don't we have a real choreographer?

(MORGAN approaches.)

MORGAN

Never fear! I am ready to step in –

JULIE

I'm the choreographer!

SAVANNAH

I thought you were the stage manager?

JULIE

I am the stage manager slash choreographer slash dramaturg.

ANGELA

What is that?

JULIE

Whatever I say it is, okay? You just do the moves and keep your mouth shut. Morgan, you're not in this number.

MORGAN

I know, but I've been in dance classes since I was four.

JULIE

Great.

MORGAN

My part doesn't really get a chance to dance. Because it's that awesome!

JULIE

Super.

MORGAN

So I thought maybe I'd help out.

JULIE

You know what you can do to help out? Go outside and sit in the grass. Okay?

MORGAN

You're so fun!

JULIE

Are you calling me fun?

ANGELA

Can we just learn the dance?

JULIE

All right. Deb, begin the routine.

DEB

All right – this came to me in a dream – we all dress up like chickens. With like feathers and stuff – and then we make a bunch of high-pitched squeals like this – "eeeeeee!" and then we do some clucking. And then it's like –

(she starts a very strange version of the chicken dance while singing a few lines from "A Bushel and a Peck")

Strut strut strut peck peck peck there's birdseed over her right? Like we just spread birdseed all over the stage – and we're just like eating it, right? That's part of the dance. And then it's like `oh no! Here comes the farmer! Run for your lives!' And then we all run around with another

one of the "eeeeees"! And then we gather ourselves, right? Kill the Farmer. Kill the Farmer. So Adelaide sings –

(she sings another line from "A Bushel and a Peck")

We're just like – death to the farmer! And I want you, you, and you – just grab him, right? And now we're peck peck pecking out his eyes – And then when he's dead we feast on his innards.

(short pause.)

It's a metaphor for love.

(They all look at her.)

It's a director's concept.

JULIE

Um… That's not really what we talked about earlier.

DEB

I know. I got inspired.

JULIE

Stop.

MORGAN

You know what, I am such a team player that I would be willing to lend my fourteen years of dance training –

JULIE

Sit! Go away!

MORGAN

It's so wonderful that you have such a great attitude and I get to –

JULIE

We worked on some moves at the arcade playing Dance Dance Revolution. They rock. Angela you're right here.

MORGAN

Out front where you're supposed to be cause you have the most fun part! Good thing you've had all that dance training!

ANGELA

I haven't really had much dance training.

MORGAN

Oh wow! What a crazy decision to give you that part and give me the part of Sarah then!

JULIE

Everybody else you're the back. Like in a fan thing. Like a triangle.

GIRL 1

Like a fan or like a triangle?

JULIE

Like an open-ended triangle!

GIRL 2

That's just two lines.

JULIE

Fine! Two lines!

GIRL 4

Are they intersecting lines or parallel lines?

(JULIE starts forcibly moving people into position.)

You here. You here. You here. Crutches girl right here.

GIRL (3) WITH CRUTCHES

Could I sit this one out?

JULIE

Did you just say that to me? Could you sit this one out? This is a musical. This isn't pre-school. I don't care that your tummy hurts –

GIRL (3) WITH CRUTCHES

Actually I sprained my ankle –

JULIE

I don't care that your head hurts or that you have deep emotional issues or some kind of genetic condition where you can't follow directions –

GIRL 4

I have a note.

JULIE

You do this. You got it! You do this now!

GIRL (3) WITH CRUTCHES

Okay.

JULIE

All right now try to keep up.

(She takes a center position in front of the girls and begins a routine largely inspired by Dance Dance Revolution. Mostly it involves standing in one place and moving feet to the right, left, back, and forward, with some flung arms for fun. The Chorus girls do their best to follow along. GIRL 4 does her own thing.)

Left Left Right Back Back Left and Right Left and Right Front and Back Front and Back Right Left Left Left Spin Spin Up Left Right Front and Back Right and Left Front Front Shimmy a little Shimmy a little Spin Spin Back Front Back Front!

(She turns to look at them for a moment.)

Got it? Now let's try increasing the speed.

(She does the whole thing again much faster – the chorus girls struggle to keep up.)

Left Left Right Back Back Left and Right Left and Right Front and Back Front and Back Right Left Left Left Spin Spin Up Left Right Front and Back Right and Left Front Front Shimmy a little Shimmy a little Spin Spin Back Front Back Front!

(If she had a microphone, she would drop it and start to walk off the stage.)

Done.

(She leaves. The other girls disperse.)

(ANGELA just stands there. She approaches MORGAN.)

ANGELA

What am I supposed to be doing?

MORGAN

I don't know. You're the star. You figure it out.

(Lights change.)

7. The Replacement

MR. HENDERSON *(calling out)*

Can I have everyone out here please!

(JULIE swoops in, with a loudspeaker.)

JULIE

Actors on stage NOW! Actors on stage NOW!

(the Actors enter.)

MR. HENDERSON

SIT!

(they sit suddenly and quietly. Except GIRL 4.)

Wow.

JULIE

I've got them whipped into shape, sir.

MR. HENDERSON

I'm sure some of you have heard about Barry –

GIRL 1

He's Dead?! It's just like Spiderman all over again!

Skipping Forward

GUY

I'm sure it will be great.

ANGELA

Yeah.

GUY

Probably.

ANGELA

Probably.

GUY

Unless we screw up.

ANGELA

Right. But what are the odds of that happening since neither of us have ever had a big part before?

GUY

I've never even been in a show before.

ANGELA

I've never even smelled the stage before.

GUY

Why would you smell the stage?

ANGELA

It's an expression. Kind of.

GUY

Okay – well – talk to you later.

ANGELA

Yeah – don't screw up.

(GUY and ANGELA separate to opposite sides of the stage. They speak directly to the audience.)

GUY *(to the audience)*

To be honest, I don't know why I'm in the show. It was kind of a freak decision.

ANGELA *(to the audience)*

I didn't really give it a lot of thought.

GUY *(to the audience)*

`I'm not like a musical theatre person, you know? I couldn't tell you what Evita was – and half the time these people –

(A group of GIRLS come in and spontaneously launch into part of a song, possibly from Wicked.)

They just break into song for no reason.

ANGELA *(to the audience)*

It's weird. Who does that? They do that in the bathroom. I swear. I'll be in there and like, four-part harmony will suddenly burst out from the girls doing their makeup.

GUY *(to the audience)*

That doesn't happen in the boy's bathroom. Most of the time. Mostly it's just Barry singing solos. How can you sing and pee at the same time?! I've tried it. You can't do it.

ANGELA *(to the audience)*

But I tried out for the show – and wow –

GUY

Wow –

ANGELA

I wanted a small part –

GUY

I didn't really even want to talk.

ANGELA

Maybe one line.

GUY

A grunt, maybe.

ANGELA

And now –

GUY

The lead.

ANGELA

To be honest, I'm terrified. There, I said it. Petrified. Waking up in the middle of the night scared. You know what? I memorized every line in the show. Every single line. I could do the whole play for you right now. Even the scenes I'm not in. Because I want to be absolutely sure that I don't screw up. There's so much to remember that isn't even the lines, though. There's where to walk, and how to stand, and what to do with your hands. What am I going to do with my hands?! Normally I don't even think about my hands but when I'm on stage my hands are suddenly these stupid lead balloons on the end of my wrists, and so the only thing I can think to

do is cross them over my chest but that looks dumb so I'm sitting there – what do I do with my hands?! Aaah! I used to be a pretty calm person.

GUY

I have this dream pretty often. I'm in the show, and we're about to perform, and I'm backstage waiting to go on – and I realize that I've been rehearsing for the wrong play. I'm in a completely different play now. I don't know any of my lines. And I try to look at the script, I'm trying to find a copy of the script, and no one has one. And I'm running around in the dark trying to find the book to just get one look at it before I have to go out there, and time runs out and have to go anyway. So it's bright out there and the other actors are dressed up for Shakespeare, and they're looking at me like it's my turn to talk. So what comes out of my mouth? I don't know I can't remember that part. But I'm guessing it's pretty bad.

(lights change.)

9. Guys Dance!

(JULIE bursts in, with MORGAN hot on her heels.)

JULIE

Guys! I need the guys out here right now!

DEB

Right now!

JULIE

You hear me! Guys on stage!

DEB

Put down the X-Box!

JULIE

Save your game or something!

DEB

Save it!

JULIE

Deb?

DEB

Sorry I'm trying out a new personality today. You like it?

JULIE

No.

DEB

I'm trying to be more like you.

JULIE

I'm an original, okay?

DEB

And I am an original too.

(GUY, JIM, TYLER, DARREL, and MIKE enter.)

TYLER

Hey check it out – I got my gangsta walk.

(TYLER begins a stereotypical modern "gangsta slide shuffle walk thing.")

JULIE

For the last time, you are gangsters, not ganstas!

DARREL

What?

MIKE

This is lame.

JULIE

SILENCE! SIT!

(They do.)

It's time for Luck be a Lady tonight. The only time you have to dance in the show.

TYLER

Whoah! Hold on.

DARREL

Is this like dancing dancing?

MIKE

There's only dudes on stage.

TYLER

Are we like dancing with each other?

DARREL

I'm not wearing tights!

(JULIE raises her hand for silence.)

JULIE

If you speak again, I will poison you.

DEB

Shut up!

JULIE

A little late there, Deb.

DEB

Sorry.

MORGAN

I'll take the lead on this one. Now if we were doing Wicked, you guys would all be flying monkeys. Wouldn't that be awesome? I think so. But since we're doing a guy-heavy show without enough guys which-just-makes-so-much-sense, you guys get to have a dance number. You don't dance with each other, okay! You're gangsters, you're in the sewer, you're gambling –

TYLER

And we dance?

DEB *(cutting him off)*

Shut up!

JULIE *(aside, to DEB)*

Better.

MORGAN *(taking a hold of JIM)*

Because Sky here needs to win the bet in order to make the money to pay me, Sara, to go out with him. Because that's how love works. Bribery.

JIM

Um… don't I –

DEB *(cutting him off)*

Shut up!

JULIE

He can talk.

DEB

Oh sorry.

JIM

I thought I won their souls in a dice game and then took them to the mission. So it's not about money.

MORGAN

Oh right! You trick these scumbags into attending a religious meeting, which makes my character, since she's oh-so-smart, fall in love with you. Very realistic! Not at all like Wicked in which characters are emotionally developed and is a commentary on fascism. Anyway! We dance in the sewers! Not with each other! Now you may ask the question – if we're tough gangsters, why are we dancing? Gangsters don't normally dance. And my answer to that is shut up and do the musical. Okay? Good! Now –

(She starts into a dance routine. They all stare at her.)

One Two Three Four Five Six Seven Eight and One Two Three Four Five Six Seven Eight and One Two Three Four Five Six Seven Eight.

(She stops. No one has moved.)

Got it?

(Slowly, MIKE raises his hand.)

MIKE

No.

MORGAN *(doing the routine again)*

It's easy. Step Step Spin Shake Step Step Spin Shake and Back Back Arms Up Arms Down Front Front Side Arms Up and Shake Shake Wiggle Wiggle Spin Spin Step Down. See?

(MIKE raises his hand slowly again.)

MIKE

I'm not doing that.

DARREL

People will laugh at me.

MORGAN

It's a comedy! They're supposed to laugh!

DARREL

I don't them want them to laugh.

JULIE

Hey! I don't want to hear it! Do it now!

MORGAN

And Jim – you're over here. And I want you to just walk around and look cool, okay? Ready Guys!

(The guys do their best to do the routine while MORGAN calls it out. They're not good.)

And - Step Step Spin Shake Step Step Spin Shake and Back Back Arms Up Arms Down Front Front Side Arms Up and Shake Shake Wiggle Wiggle Spin Spin Step Down. Stop!

(They stop.)

DARREL

My brain hurts.

MORGAN

Let's try that again and not be so terrible this time, okay? I'm trying to be positive! You make it hard. And… again!

(The guys try to do the dance again – not well.)

Step Step Spin Shake Step Step Spin Shake and Back Back Arms Up Arms Down Front Front Side Arms Up and Shake Shake Wiggle

(DARREL wiggles into TYLER, knocking both of them down.)

Wiggle Spin – stop! Stop!

TYLER

Dude! I'm dancing here!

DARREL

You're dancing in my spot!

TYLER

I need space! I was being expressive!

DARREL

You're an idiot!

MORGAN

Stop! I've got a new plan for us! This is a really great plan that you don't need to have any skills to execute okay. It's called swaying back and forth. Can you do that? Cause sometimes I teach church choir to kindergarteners and they can do this, so I think you might be able to handle it!

(MR. HENDERSON enters.)

Ready? Sway. Sway. Sway. Sway.

(They try to sway. It's not good.)

You're doing it wrong. You're doing this wrong. You are swaying wrong. Wow.

MR. HENDERSON

All right guys we're gonna have to move on.

MIKE

Thank you!

MORGAN

I'm not finished with you!

DARREL

First game on X-Box!

(DARREL charges off-stage, followed by Tyler and Mike.)

10. I'd be Ringing

MORGAN
Mr. H. Boys are dumb. Can we please replace them with girls in fake mustaches?

MR. HENDERSON
No.

MORGAN
How bout just a few girls with mustaches? You put them in a suit and a hat and no one will know the difference.

MR. HENDERSON
No.

MORGAN
Please, I'm begging you here, they're awful.

MR. HENDERSON
Time for the Havana scene. We need one girl –
(JESSIE enters.)
You're going to be the Cuban dancer, okay?
(GIRLS 1-4 come in to lounge in the background.)

JESSIE
What do I do?

MORGAN
You're the Cuban hoochie. You try to steal my man. And I fight you to the death.

MR. HENDERSON
Not exactly to the death.

MORGAN
That's my interpretation.

MR. HENDERSON *(moving everyone)*
All right, Jim you're over here at the table. Morgan you're with him. And Jessie you are over there. And let's say this is the fountain right here in the middle.

JIM
Do I have to dance in this part?

MORGAN
Don't worry about it, I'll lead.

MR. HENDERSON
Do you guys have your lines memorized?

JIM

I got the script yesterday.

MORGAN

I'm still processing.

JESSIE

Do I have lines?

MR. HENDERSON

They're in Spanish.

JESSIE

Can I get a script then?

MR. HENDERSON

We'll just improv it. All right – Morgan, you've had a few too many to drink – Jim you're being charming, and Jessie – you spot him, and you want to own him. Got it? Let's just try it.

(MORGAN starts acting crazily drunk.)

MORGAN

Ha ha ha ha! Oh Mr. Masterson! You are funny!

(She falls off the chair.)

Whoopsie! Someone put a slanted thing in this chair! Ha ha ha ha! So tell me – why do they call you Sky?

JIM

Um…

(MORGAN fakes like's she puking.)

MR. HENDERSON

Stop! Maybe not quite that drunk.

MORGAN

I've never been drunk, so I'm just –

MR. HENDERSON

Just be dizzy.

MORGAN

Okay.

MR. HENDERSON

And Jim. You can say things too.

MORGAN

Can I just –

(MORGAN spins around really fast, then sits down.)

Ha ha ha ha! Oh Mr. Masterson… whoah…

JIM

Isn't Cuba nice?

MR. HENDERSON

And the music is going.

(He plays some rhumba music on a boombox. It doesn't have to be the actual music from the number.)

MORGAN

Oh my heart is beating so fast! Let's dance, baby!

(She grabs JIM and stands up.)

Woo! Ha ha ha!

MR. HENDERSON

Okay – Jessie – go get him.

(MORGAN dances JIM over towards JESSIE – she lets go of him and JESSIE grabs him.)

(Everything freezes. Music stops. Except Jim. Perhaps spotlight on JIM.)

GIRLS 1-4 *(angelic sound)*

Aaaaaaaaaa.

(JIM dances in slow motion with JESSIE. She pushes him back towards MORGAN. MORGAN reaches out and grabs JIM. As soon as she touches him, lights and sound and speed go back to normal.)

MORGAN

Oh no buster you're not getting away from me that easily! Woo!

(MORGAN dances him around, then back towards JESSIE. JESSIE grabs him again.)

(Once again, everything goes to slow motion. Lights and music change.)

GIRLS 1-4 *(angelic sound)*

Aaaaaaaaa.

(JESSIE dances with him in slow motion again. As she approaches MORGAN again, MORGAN punches her out. Everything goes back to regular speed.)

(MORGAN drags JIM to the opposite side of the stage as JESSIE hits the ground.)

MR. HENDERSON

And Good! That was fun. I like that. Jessie a little more latin hip action.

JESSIE

Okay.

MR. HENDERSON

All right guys that's it for today. Let's get those lines down, okay?

(He heads off. The GIRLS head off. MORGAN leaves.)

JESSIE

See ya later.

JIM

Hey wait Jessie can you hold on for a second?

JESSIE

Sure.

(She stops.)

JIM

I was thinking maybe I could um… run lines or something with you.

JESSIE

I gotta work at six actually.

JIM

Yeah.

JESSIE

I think you're doing a great job with the show.

JIM

Really? I think I'm terrible.

JESSIE

No! You're really funny. In the way you're supposed to be funny. Not like how Barry was funny. He sounded like Darth Vader.

JIM

Yeah, but he did have pitch, tone, and confidence.

JESSIE

You're doing great.

JIM

Thanks.

(she starts to leave.)

Um… Jessie… would you like to go out with me?

(she stops. JIM turns to the audience for a second.)
Now if this were an actual musical, this would be the time that I would break into song. If I got lucky, it would be a duet. So… here goes nothing.
(he turns back to her. Sings the beginning of a romantic musical theatre song.)*

**Feel free to use a song from any show. Maybe one verse. "Sue me" might be a good choice from Guys and Dolls, but don't feel limited.*

(he stops after a moment.)
I don't remember the rest of it.
(Pause.)

JESSIE
Oh. That was really nice. You sing great.
(Painful pause.)

JIM
…so?

JESSIE
I think we should be friends, okay?
(JIM wilts. She grabs him in a hug.)
Hey. It's all right.

End of Excerpt.
To purchase this play, visit www.concordtheatricals.com