

The Curse Of The Prom

By

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THE CURSE OF THE PROM

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The Curse Of The Prom

Scene 1

The Set: A school auditorium/gym that is being decorated for a prom. This is the “old” gym that had been used as a combination gym and auditorium. We see a stage at the right end and there are windows on the back wall that allow light in but are too high to see through from gym floor. This is the first time this room has been used in years.

Curtain goes up: In the dark we hear a loud whistle. As the lights come up we see one student on the stage and MISS JOHNSON, a gym teacher in her sixties, who is a bit eccentric and appears to be partially deaf, she is out of shape but moves quickly...

The student is ALEX, a computer hack.

The stage is decorated with a large pyramid that is going to be suspended from the ceiling for the theme of the prom---The Enchanted Nile-- It will be suspended from the rope that had been used for climbing in gym class. We see the rope hanging from above with the one end tied off stage. The rope is cut. A small piece is still attached to the top of the pyramid. This pyramid is made of “scrim” material. The students’ original plan was that the pyramid would be filled with balloons which would be dropped at eleven p.m.. Once the balloons were released from the ceiling, the pyramid would descend to cover the sphinx that is to be the center piece of the floor decorations. A light inside the scrim will allow the sphinx to be seen. This becomes the center piece of the dance floor.

There is an overturned ladder in front of it and assorted brooms, tables, decorations, fake palm trees, etc. are lying around the room. There is a throne for the prom queen at the back

MISS JOHNSON

(Blowing whistle) OK, everybody listen up. We’ve got exactly twelve hours to get this place in shape for the prom and I aim to be finished on time with the most romantic display that Hillsdale has seen since.....(waxing nostalgic)since the class of ‘44 did Enchanted Paris--- with real punch flowing from the top of a giant Eiffel Tower---and dainty paper napkins with French sayings printed on them--- and who could forget the food the home ec class prepared--little sandwiches made out of colored bread---I wore a pink taffeta dress that was the exact color of the egg salad sandwiches--that was romance my boy, that was romance---why, back then....

ALEX

Excuse me, Miss Johnson, I would love to hear all about it for the hundredth time, but I think we should get to work.

MISS JOHNSON

What? Speak up boy. How can a person understand what you're saying if you don't speak up? (She slaps him on the back.) Go ahead boy, talk!

ALEX

(Shouting) I think we should get started. It's 8:37

MISS JOHNSON

Well, where's the rest of the committee? I thought I told them to be here by 8:30 and it's 8:30 now.

ALEX

It's 8:38 and I think they're late.

(Enter BUTCH dribbling a basketball, wearing a leather jacket)

MISS JOHNSON

Young man, put that ball down. We have work to do.

(Butch dribbles the ball in front of her and she takes it away with a flourish.)

MISS JOHNSON

Let's hope your decorating is better than your ball handling---it's got to be better than your grade in gym. Coach Henson tells me you're in danger of not graduating?

BUTCH

Let's just say that I like to play it close to the edge.

MISS JOHNSON

Let's just say that your might get a big fat push over that edge if you don't turn in that paper you owe the coach.

Now, let's get to work. It'll be in my office listening to everything that goes on so watch it. When the others show up, let them know that I marked them late...by the way, I'll be here all day...all the gym classes are reporting to the auditorium for a health film: "You and Head Lice."

(She exits)

BUTCH

Is it illegal to kill teachers? I mean we kill roaches, don't we?

ALEX

I think they're a higher life form, but I'm not sure.

BUTCH

Say, Alex, old buddy, why don't you just slip into the school's computer for me and kind of massage my second marking period grades a bit?

ALEX

Oh, no. the last time I did that my parents locked up my modem for a month. Nothing doing. I almost died. Do you know what it's like to sit at a computer and not be able to communicate with anyone?

BUTCH

What's a modem?

ALEX

Come into the 21st century!

BUTCH

Oh, but this won't be like the last time. Didn't you change all the kids schedules so we all had lunch for three periods?

ALEX

Yeah, I thought Mr. Hamilton would never notice. Who knew he ever left the principal's office?

BUTCH

Come on. Just one little change.

ALEX

No dice.

(Enter KAREN)

KAREN

Don't listen to him Alex. Whatever it is, don't listen to him.

BUTCH

Well, if it isn't Miss Runner-up. Too bad the Prom Queen ballots weren't computerized or you would have been the one asking Alex for help.

KAREN

Not a chance. I play it fair and square.

BUTCH

Rough and tumble is more like it. Rumor has it that you had it out with Marlo after school yesterday.

KAREN

What I had to say to Marlo yesterday was between her and me.

BUTCH

And the entire second floor from what I hear. Do the words: "I'll see you dead before I'm

one of your attendants at the prom: "Lying a ven?"

KAREN

Not exactly. But pretty close. She made me so mad. I know she somehow cheated in that election. Only, I can't prove it. I wanted her to know that I had her number. Anyway, I would think that you would be happy to see her get some grief....she certainly gave you enough.

BUTCH

What's that crack suppose to mean?

KAREN

Everyone in school knows that you've been chasing her for the last four years only she wouldn't give you a tumble.

BUTCH

For your information, we did have a date this summer. I decided that she wasn't my type after all.

KAREN

Oh, does she have a brain? Anyway, that was yesterday. We'd better get started decorating this awful place. How long has this place been locked up?

ALEX

At least fifteen years, that's when the new gym and auditorium were built and this was closed. It was suppose to be turned into something else, but that never seemed to happen.

BUTCH

I hear this was the combination, gym and auditorium from the original building in the 1920's. I think that's why they wanted us to get involved with this scheme. They want us to fall victim to the curse.

ALEX

You don't believe in that nonsense, do you?

KAREN

You can't believe that proms held in this gym were cursed?

(Enter JAMES from the back, knocking over some pails, tripping, and making a racket as he enters. The others can't see him. They jump and scream at the loud noise.)

JAMES

(lying on the ground)

Did I get marked late?

BUTCH

(acting nonchalant) Is Shakespeare boring?

JAMES

That's three times this week! Now I've got central.

BUTCH

You know, there was a time when the "old James" wouldn't have cared about being late for a month.

JAMES

What do you mean the "old James"?

BUTCH

You know, the James I knew freshman, sophomore and junior year. The guy who drew that not so flattering mural of the principal on the movie screen at Parent's Night freshman year. The guy who sophomore year switched the Planned Parenthood guest speaker's film to Nation Geographic visits the Vatican?
The guy who junior year....

JAMES

Oh, that "old James." Well, he's gone. The "new James" is keeping his nose clean and praying he gets into Harvard

KAREN

Harvard? What happened to leaving right after the graduation ceremony for the art life of New York City?

BUTCH

I thought it was Paris you were going to?

JAMES

New York City, Paris...a kid's dream. I've decided to become a doctor. I've applied for the pre-med. program at Harvard. I think I have a good shot at it if they kind of forget some of my little jokes the first three years here.

BUTCH

And last week?

JAMES

Oh, a minor slip . Anyway, my recommendations from the faculty were in a month ago, so last week doesn't count.

KAREN

I hope you get in James. I never understood you wanting to starve as an artist. I say go for the bucks. Now, let's get started.

BUTCH

Who took the pyramid down?

JAMES

I thought you guys must have.

KAREN

Alex, put that book down, you were here first. What's the story with the pyramid? Why is it down?

ALEX

I don't know. It was that way when I came in.

(enter MISS JOHNSON blowing her whistle)

MISS JOHNSON

Hup, two, three four. Attention!

Well, doesn't look like we got much work done, does it?

One, two, three, four, where are the other three?

ALEX

I'm sure Marlo has a good explanation, Miss Johnson

BUTCH

Jane just stepped out to her locker to get some tape.

MISS JOHNSON

And what about Daisy Johnson?

ALEX, BUTCH, KAREN

Who?

MISS JOHNSON

(louder) Daisy Johnson? Are all young people deaf?

BUTCH

I don't think Mr. Hamilton assigned any Daisy Jones to this committee?

MISS JOHNSON

Mr. Hamilton signed you derelicts up for this job because you are the reason the class can't have their prom in a restaurant. The things that this class has pulled---I wouldn't have a prom at all...and I guess that's what Mr. Hamilton thinks will happen...that you guys won't be able to get this done in time for any kind of a dance tonight, let alone a prom, and that no one will show up even if you do.

As for Miss Daisy Jones.

She signed up (Miss Johnson shows them the sign up sheet and pronounces the word slowly) vol..un..teered. That's a new word for you Butch. It means someone who does something that is good for the school willingly.

Think about it. It's a radical new concept.

Sum, even volunteers shouldn't be late.

I'll just go make sure she's not hiding out someplace. (She blows whistle) Carry on!

(Miss Johnson exits)

KAREN

Any of you ever heard of Daisy Jones?

BUTCH

Not me. And I thought I knew every girl in the school.

KAREN

Not the "good" girls.

BUTCH

Very funny.

And why wasn't she here after school yesterday when we were struggling to get the pyramid hung. Not that it seems to have done us any good to put it up.

JAMES

Say, Alex, what's with the nice words for the prom queen?

ALEX

I know you guys don't like her. But she's not so bad. Sorry, Karen, but that's how I feel. Here attitude is just a defense mechanism.

BUTCH

Please spare us the psychology stuff. You're talking to three people who spent more time in the school psychologist's office than the school psychologist.

ALEX

Perhaps, if you gave the psychologist half a chance he might have been able to help you.

BUTCH

What kind of crack is that? So, you little nerd with a clipboard, you think I'm crazy?

KAREN (stepping between them)

Let's all count to ten.

ALEX

See what I mean? You think you can just bully your way through life.

BUTCH

Move out of the way Karen.

ALEX

Life isn't always that simple. You can't always fix things yourself.

JAMES

Lighten up Alex.

ALEX

No, we have to learn to face things. We're graduating from high school in two weeks. If we can't even talk like civilized humans how can we ever manage to survive in the real world.

BUTCH

So, now I'm not human. Get out of the way Karen! Now!

(Enter DAISY JONES. She is South American with a heavy accent. She's wearing a cleaning lady type outfit, with a bandanna on her head, wearing bright colored rubber gloves and carrying a mop and pail. She peers into the gym from the door.)

DAISY

Ola! Yo soy Daisy Jones!
Excuse please. I espeak English now.
Such a beautiful gym, no?

BUTCH, JAMES, ALEX, KAREN

No

DAISY

Yes, she is beautiful. It will be wonderful for the prom, no?

BUTCH, JAMES, ALEX, KAREN

No.

DAISY

Yes, we--(She says with a flourish)--The Prom Committee---will make it so, no?

BUTCH, JAMES, ALEX, KAREN

NO!

DAISY

Yes, espeakin English is hard, decorating is not.

BUTCH

Pardon me if I seem a bit uncivilized, but are you for real?

KAREN

Butch! Hi, I'm Karen and you're Daisy Jones?

DAISY

Si

JAMES

Yo soy James. Might as well practice Spanish. I may have Spanish patients some day.

BUTCH

You're right, Alex. We all do need psychological help.

DAISY

You must forgive me for being late. I had to find where they keep the mop.

(Enter BOB, James' brother, in a wheelchair. He is energetic and upbeat.)

BOB

I should have known nothing would get done.

JAMES

What are you doing here?

BOB

Just thought I'd wheel in and check on you guys and not a moment too soon.

BUTCH

What's up Bob?

BOB

Not much from the look of this place. Say is this a new member of the bad guys of Hillsdale High?

DAISY

Hi! I'm Daisy.

BOB

Hi. How did you get mixed up with this crew? Are you an ax murderer or an environmental terrorist?

DAISY

No, I'm a volunteer!

BOB

No! Someone actually signed up to help? You haven't been in the country very long have you?

DAISY

Yes, two wonderful weeks.

BOB

Two whole weeks and you still volunteered? Have you any idea what kind of people are you working with?

DAISY

Nice clean cut American boys and girls.

(The following is done on a dark stage with a single spot light on the person being described. Done like a line up, actors facing sideways)

BOB

You think so?

(Spot on Butch)

Well, meet Butch. Last month he paid a surprise visit to the driver ed class. Unfortunately for Mr. Henderson he was on his new Honda motorcycle at the time.

(Spot on James)

Meet James, my older brother, the black sheep of the family, being ever thoughtful he sent the principal a gift for his birthday last week. Unfortunately the principal was at a board of education meeting at the time it arrived and it was six live chickens.

(Spot on Alex)

You heard, no doubt of the sudden unexplained tearing down of the Berlin Wall? Rumor has it that Alex as only a third grader slipped into the Kremlin road maintenance computer and simply put in a work order for its removal.

(Spot on Karen)

And last, but not least, we have Karen who volunteered to head the senior prom fund raising committee. Traditionally we have had candy sales...she thought a gambling casino night would be better and was \$6000 in the black when the police arrived...she was forced to donate the money to Gambler's Anonymous.

(Lights up)

They, my new friend, are the reason the real prom was canceled and they have to come up with a decorated gym by tonight and hope that people show up to a spontaneous prom.

DAISY

In my country they are saints. What about Marlo? I she one of the bad guys of Hillsdale High?

BOB

No, she just wants to make sure that as queen of the prom she has a nice palace. Just what country are you from?

DAISY

(Being evasive) Isn't that a beautiful palm tree? You like it no?

BOB

Well.....

JAMES

Hey, you'd better get back to class.

BOB

Big brothers can be such a drag!
Are you going to the prom tonight?

DAISY

Yes, it is my dream since coming from my country. Only, I have to come as you say like a deer.

BOB

I think you mean stag.
I sure wish I could see what this place looks like when it's all done.

DAISY

You are not coming? Is not the whole school invited?

BOB

No, only seniors can come or people who are invited by seniors.

DAISY

Oh, too bad.
(We hear a bell)

JAMES

Bob, that was the late bell for period three.

BOB

Ok, Ok, Catch you guys later.
(He starts out)

DAISY

Oh, I think of something. (Bob turns back towards her) This is America, no.

BOB

Yes.

DAISY

In America it is possible for a girl to ask a boy to dance?

BOB

Yes

DAISY

Oh
(Bob starts to leave again.)

people don't think such a girl is speedy!

BOB

(Bob turns back towards her again) I think you mean fast. No. It's done all the time.

DAISY

Oh, (she turns her back to him. He starts to leave for the third time.)
Then you will go with me.

BOB

(With his back still to her)
I'd like that.

JAMES

Bob, it's gonna be goofy. These cheap decorations, a prom in a gym, who wants to go to that kind of prom?

BOB

You're going aren't you?

JAMES

Yeah, but only because I'm forced to be on the committee. I wouldn't be going otherwise. I swear.

BOB

Look, I know what you're trying to do, James and I appreciate it.

JAMES

What are you talking about? I'm not trying to do anything. All I'm saying is that it's gonna be a waste of time. Look, when I get home we'll rent an Eddie Murphy movie...you love him.

BOB

Yes, but I don't want to take him to the prom. Bob, you've got to let go. For the last nine months, ever since the accident and I became a prisoner to this chair, you been smothering me. You're trying to avoid my knowing that I'll may never walk again.

JAMES

Don't say that. There are new medical techniques all the time. Someday someone will figure it out and you'll be fine.

BOB

Yeah, I think that too...Someday I will walk again....but today I'm in the chair and today I want to live not just sit.

JAMES

You got it all wrong. I just think it's going to be goofy. That's all.

BOB

Well, big brother, I'm coming, if you'll give me a ride?

JAMES

Yeah, sure.

DAISY

I will meet you here. I have to come early to set up the refreshments. I am also on the program committee and the music committee and the clean up committee. I love the American boys and girls like arroz con pollo.

BOB

They love it. When we think prom, we think arroz con pollo. See you at nine?

DAISY

I'll be here with ringers on.

BOB

I think that's bells on, but I get the idea. Hey Butch it's good to see you looking better. You looked pretty bad when they carried you out of the nurse's office yesterday. Everything OK?

BUTCH

Yeah, yeah, sure. Just a bug I probably got. I ate the school lunch yesterday...enough said?

BOB

Enough said. Well, I've got to wheel. See you guys tonight.

KAREN

Bye Bob.

(For no apparent reason the pails that James knocked over make noise again. They all jump.)

BUTCH

What was that? This place has ghosts!

KAREN

Probably just a rat.

BUTCH

I hate rats more than ghosts!

ALEX

Hey Bob, if you see Miss Johnson on you way, run her over for me.

BOB

Will do

(Enter Miss Johnson)

BOB

Speak of the devil...I'm out of here!

(very loud) Good Morning, Miss Johnson!

(Bob exits)

MISS JOHNSON

Nice boy, speaks up. I love that in kids.

What have you people accomplished since I left. Nothing?

You haven't even gotten that pyramid up yet.

And where are Jane and Marlo?

BUTCH

Jane had to go and get more masking tape from shop class. She'll be right back.

ALEX

Marlo had a meeting with the debate club. Why don't you come and take a closer look at the pyramid. You're going to love this idea we had. James is going to make a paper mache sphinx that will be the center piece of the dance floor. This pyramid will be raised to the ceiling and filled with balloons. At eleven o'clock the balloons will be released and the pyramid will descend to cover the sphinx. But here's the catch, there's a battery operated light inside and when we turn that light on the pyramid becomes transparent and you can see inside. Watch.

(Alex switches on the light and the inside of the pyramid is visible, exposing the dead body of Marlo)

ALEX

It's Marlo! Quick get this off her.

MISS JOHNSON

She's dead.

BUTCH

The curse of the prom strikes again.

(BLACKOUT)

Scene 2

Lights up, but now we see the ghosts of the past. They dress in all white. Marlo is lying over a dummy dressed exactly the same as Marlo was in Scene 1. Now Marlo's outfit is all white. She gets off the dummy appearing to be coming out of her body and wanders around bewildered.

MARLO

If I'm lying there....I remember being on the ladder....then the fall....I must be dead. The curse of the prom!

(We see lightening flashes, hear thunder crack and then loud piercing screams from offstage. Enter BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE (he can enter on a Harley Davidson if budget allows!))

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

Cut that out Johnny. Sorry about that, Johnny was on the lighting crew when he went. Still can't stop doing the special effects stuff.

MARLO

Butch? What's going on here?

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE (He turns)

No, I'm Jack. Class of 1956, Butch's great uncle. It's just that when you die you stop aging.

MARLO

You're dead too?

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

Yes, geez for a good looking chick, you're kind of slow.

HAZEL (speaking from above the stage)

Hold on there Jack. I'll be right down.

MARLO

Who's that?

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

That's Hazel, Class of 1932, Likes to think she runs the place. Use to be on the AV Squad, but to tell the truth I don't think there was AV in her day, if you get my drift.

HAZEL

GOOD AFTERNOON. If I had known you were coming, I would have been ready earlier.
Now, here's a badge for you to wear (she puts a name tag on Marlo). I'll introduce you to everyone. We didn't think you'd be coming, thought you'd go straight up. Sorry to hear you were murdered.

MARLO

Murdered!
(Thunder and lightening again)

HAZEL

Cut it out Johnny.
Yes, at least we think so, as far as we can figure out. We are all here in kind of a holding pattern until we find out why we died. There is some unfinished business, usually a murder.

MARLO

So the curse of the prom is true?

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

No, there is no such thing as the curse of the prom!

GLEE CLUB

(The Glee Club makes an elongated sound. Similar to wind sound.)

MARLO

Cut that out Johnny!

HAZEL

That's not Johnny. It's the glee club, Class of 1922
(We see the scrim that was in front of the glee club lighted and hear them sing parts of the Whiffenpoof song with words slightly changed...)

GLEE CLUB

To the tables down at Mory's,
To the place where Louis dwells,
To the dear old Temple bar we love so well....
We will celebrate our Hillsdale
While life and voice shall last,
Then we'll pass and be forgotten with the rest....

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

It's not the curse of the prom. It's the curse of the gym!
(THUNDER AND LIGHTNING)

MARLO

I don't get it.

HAZEL

Well, from what we could figure out. This gym was built on an old cemetery. Oh, the board of education didn't know it at the time. It's an old Indian burial ground that had long been covered over. This is part of the original high school, built in 1919. Notice the great attention to the detail, the arches above the window, the lovely proscenium arch around the stage. The architect was the same one who did Grand Central Station in NYC....

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

Forget the tour, Hazel, get to the point.....

HAZEL

Oh, I do forget myself, you see we don't know whether the murders occur because of the building or because the building is on this holy site, the victims get to stay and solve the crime. You see, after here, we go somewhere else and no one has come back from there to fill us in.

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

We don't know that they are all murders either.

MARLO

Just how many are included in the "us"?

HAZEL

Forgive me. Where are my manners? Been dead too long, I guess. Let's see. You've met Jack. (We hear a motorcycle revving up) He was killed when his motorcycle crashed into the punch bowl on Parents' Night. Sept. 1954

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

I think someone played with the brakes.

MARLO

Like GREAT UNCLE like nephew

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

Butch like me? Please, he rides a Honda!
There are no real hoods these days. Just kids who want to be in remakes of Grease!
Real hoods don't sing, especially not as high as John Travolta!
(He mimics the high notes of the Grease song.)

HAZEL

Johnny doesn't usually come down from the lighting booth. Say hello, Johnny.

JOHNNY

(Very softly) hi.

HAZEL

(we see lights blink on and on)

He's kind of shy. It seems the lighting board blew up on opening night of a production of West Side Story. 1963

And there's the Glee Club, Class of 1922, did I say that already?

(Glee Club sings)

Their platform collapsed on the opening night of this building. The architect carefully calculated the weight, but it seems they were ten pounds over the limit somehow.

MARLO

And you?

HAZEL

A year after the school opened. I was giving the tours on Education Night. You see that door up there?

MARLO

Yes.

HAZEL

Well, the original plans for this gym/auditorium called for a cat walk around the upper level so that the lights could be set and basketball hoops put up, etc. etc. It wasn't ready for the official opening of the school, but was being completed in a rush for the first anniversary. I was giving tours of the third floor where that door joins the catwalk and the hallway....I was told there was only one small section of the catwalk not finished when I checked in that night. What they forgot to tell me was that it was the small section near the door. I opened the door and took one small step into eternity.

(We hear the same crash of pails we heard before.)

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

Are you OK, Georgie?

(GEORGIE enters limping, dressed in gym outfit)

GEORGIE

I'm fine. I almost made it that time!

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

Marlo, this is Georgie. Class of 1962 Bit the dust in gym class trying to do a roundoff.

GEORGIE

Pleased to meet you. You've new here, aren't you?

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

You see, you don't get any smarter after you die!

HAZEL

And you're not the brightest bulb in the chandelier!

(Voice of Johnny, mimicking an announcer in a prize fight, blurred like in a big area that reverberates)And in this corner, AV Squad leader and defending Champion, Hazel!
Her opponent, appearing without his Harley

MARLO

Yes, I'm new here and still quite confused.

GEORGIE

Don't feel bad. I was confused for about fifteen years!

MARLO

If I'm lying there and talking to you at the same time. Then I'm dead.
You say that I'm here because I was murdered or something.

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

Or something.

MARLO

And I stay here until I figure that or something out?

CHORUS

(Chorus sings "Ah" using Chord Change #1)

MARLO

But some of you have been here for more than 50 years. I may never figure it out?

(Enter two police officers and two paramedics to take body away. They are unseen by Marlo. She has her back to them.)

Police officer 2 exams the body and the pyramid while the ghosts keep talking until Marlo notices them.)

CHORUS

(Chorus sings "Ah" using Chord Change #2)

GEORGIE

Don't be sad Marlo. It's not that bad, really. I think I've almost got mine figured out.
You see, I think that if I can complete just one good roundoff, I'm outta here. I think that I need to prove to myself that I can do it....

CHORUS

(Chorus sings "Ah" using Chord Change #1)

GEORGIE

But, so far, I just seem to panic at the last minute. I was the star of the tumbling team. It was the state finals and I froze on my opening roundoff. I just never completed the rotation and landed right on my neck.

(Marlo turns away from the thought of landing on your neck to see the attendant taking her body out)

(Exit attendants)

MARLO

Hey, stop.

(She runs to stop them, but they can't see or hear her.)

Don't go. Wait!

POLICE OFFICER 1

I think we've got all that we need from here.

Looks pretty much like an accident to me. She must have been on that ladder and slipped. Tragic. The Curse of the Prom strikes again.

(The police officers exit)

MARLO

Wait! Don't go!

(She attempts to chase them but is blocked from leaving the stage area by an unseen force. And is knocked to the ground)

(Enter SUNSHINE and FLOWING RIVER, two "hippie" ghosts)

(They are dressed in obviously "hippie" outfits)

FLOWING RIVER

Pigs! Down with the establishment!

SUNSHINE

Power to the people!

Are you OK?

MARLO

I think so. In fact, I don't feel anything

FLOWING RIVER

Like it's the containment field. Here have a flower. (He takes a flower from his hair)
I'm Flowing River and this is Sunshine

SUNSHINE

Power to the people.

MARLO

Maybe this is all some kind of dream? That's it! It's all a dream! I'll wake up and I'll be in

my own sea:

SUNSHINE

Like, you've had some really heavy stuff if this is a trip. I've been here for thirty years.

MARLO

Please say it's a dream.

CHORUS

(Chorus sings "Ah" using Chord Change #2)

PROM QUEEN GHOSTS

Don't cry dear! Think of your mascara!

HAZEL

That's Ada. Died a week after graduations. We've never been sure why she's here since she died outside of these walls. Well, now that you've met everyone except Hank, let's get you settled.

BUTCH'S GRANDFATHER

It'll be OK. It only seems weird for the first ten or fifteen years.

MARLO

Ten or fifteen years! I can't stay in here that long. Look at what I'm wearing! I didn't pack!

HAZEL

Perhaps I didn't make myself real clear, dear. You're dead. You're not going anywhere for quite a while.

MARLO

If this is for real, how come I couldn't just talk to that policeman? I thought ghost were able to scare people if they wanted.

SUNSHINE

Flowing River, let's split. She's a downer.

FLOWING RIVER

So true.

(They walk off into the darkness)

HAZEL

You have to forgive them. They did a little too much acid in the sixties.

I know it's confusing at first. And we haven't got it quite all figured out ourselves.

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

in the first place, we can't just interfere with the living whenever we want to. There has to be some kind of connection between the spirit of the dead person, that's us, and the spirit of a living person.

MARLO

Connection?

HAZEL

It's not quite clear what that means. It could be a family relationship or it could be something that both parties want.

MARLO

So, you could talk to Butch?

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

I don't know. Possibly

GEORGIE

Marlo, we don't necessarily want to talk to living people. We don't really care about them. That part of our lives is over. We want to move on.

HAZEL

Besides, it's been years since we've had any real contact with the living. This gym hasn't been used since 1985. We're kind of out of practice.

MARLO

But it can be done?

CHORUS

(Chorus sings "Ah" using Chord Change #1)

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

Yes, but there are risks of course.

MARLO

Risks?

HAZEL

Well, yes.

MARLO

What kind of risks could there be? I don't feel pain or hunger, I'm locked in a musty old gym without so much as a change of underwear for the next who knows how many years, what could possibly happen by trying to find a way out?

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

You could get out.

CHORUS

(Chorus sings "Ah" using Chord Change #1)

MARLO

And?

GEORGIE

Suppose where you are going is a bit warmer?

CHORUS

(Chorus sings "Ah" using Chord Change #2)

HAZEL

You see, as I said, no one has ever come back from there. We don't know what it's like.

MARLO

So, you're afraid of dying just like living people.

CHORUS

(Chorus sings "Ah" using Chord Change #3)

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

And just how well did you live? You heard what they said about you while you were lying under that pyramid, didn't you? We can always hear the living. It doesn't appear that you were the most loved member of the group.

MARLO

They didn't know me. Not the real me. There were a thousand things I wanted to say to them but never did. So many misunderstandings, so many things put off until a later time.

If I only knew that time was too short!

(Enter JANE, a mousy looking girl, she goes over to the pyramid and seems to be looking for something)

(Enter Butch)

MARLO

Butch!

BUTCH (to Jane)

Where have you been?

MARLO

(Louder) Butch!

JANE

I didn't think it was a good idea for me to be seen around here this morning. If I got here late no one could tie me to anything. I tried to get into Mr. Hamilton's office to see what he knew, but it's locked. He's away on some school thing.

BUTCH

Marlo's dead.

JANE

I know. It's all over school.
Where are all the others?

BUTCH

At the police station.

JANE

(a little panicked)
At the police station?

BUTCH

Just a formality. Covering all the bases.

JANE

Oh, I see. Listen, we still have a few loose ends to tie up. Maybe we'd better get them done before the others get back.

BUTCH (Dejected)

OK. Marlo's dead.

JANE

I know, we all know.
(Blackout)

Scene 3

MARLO

Hazel! Chorus! Georgie? Where is everyone?

(We hear the Marseilles)
(Enter HANK)

HANK

(Speaking with a fake French accent)

GOOD MORNING, MADemoISELLE. I see that you have some distress, no?

You must forgive Johnny's ignorance. (To Johnny) I am Belgian, not French, you simpleton! I am afraid his little gray cells died many years ago, now tell Hercule Poirot what is the problem?

MARGOT

I think I have been murdered, maybe by some people who were friends.

HANK

Mon Amiee, most people are murdered by friends. After all, why would a stranger kill you?

MARGOT

You've got to help me find out what happened. I can't spend fifteen years in this gym like the rest of you.

HANK

Ah, the Americans, always in a rush. But, Hercule will try to help. Now, tell me what has happened so far.

MARGOT

I don't really know. You've been here the entire time. You should know what happened when I was alive.

HANK

We don't usually bother about live people, Mademoiselle, so, I am afraid that I must have been tending to my mustache when you were, how do you say in your country, blown away?

(Enter Hazel)

HAZEL

I see you have met Hank.

MARGOT

Hazel, I think I am on to who might have murdered me. Do you really believe that if I find out that I will be free of this place?

HAZEL

It has happened in the past.

(We hear Johnny doing Franklin Delano Roosevelt's radio show)

JOHNNY

The only thing you have to fear, is fear itself. This is Frankly.....

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

I remember hearing about that. Wasn't that the guy that people thought was a spy during

HAZEL

Yes, of course that was when this gym was still being used and we had a lot more access to information. There was a dance here to celebrate VJ day and a couple of the kids got a bit too much alcohol and one thing led to another and before you knew what was happening two of the them were fighting over who killed him. They had put some Nazi information in his locker to put off suspicion.

MARGOT

Why did they kill him?

CHORUS

(sings love song)

HANK

What else, Mademoiselle, love, it is the reason for most everything, no?
Hercule shall take on your case.

(We hear Johnny doing the race opening trumpets)

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

Here we go again. It's not going to do any good. We're stuck here for eternity.

(We hear the falling of the pails again)
(Off stage voice of Georgie)

GEORGIE

I almost had it that time!

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

Well, at least he doesn't feel pain. You may feel some disappointment. But, I guess we've all got to go through it.

HAZEL

There are people coming.
(To Margot) Don't try to interact with them. It makes them uncomfortable.

HANK

She is right. Let us sit and observe. The little gray cells will figure it out.

(All the ghosts move to the background. They each have a space on the stage by themselves and are half lit.

(Enter Karen, Alex, and Daisy)

KAREN

Why didn't the police want Butch to make a statement?

ALEX

Detective Gonzalez said that he was tired of talking to Butch. Said he talked more to him than he did to his own kids and that he was sure that Butch would get the details all wrong anyway.

KAREN

The police make me nervous.

DAISY

In my country they make you bleed.

ALEX

This is America, Daisy and you are going to have to learn that if you are ever questioned by the police again you do not have to throw yourself on the floor, kiss their feet and say that you support the junta!

(Enter Butch)

BUTCH

So, how'd it go with the pigs?

DAISY

Pigs? We were suppose to pick up a pig to roast at the prom?

KAREN

(To Daisy)Pigs is a word, not a nice word, that some people, not nice people, use to refer to the police.

(To Butch) OK, and Detective Gonzalez sends his love.

ALEX

Look, it's twelve o'clock already. We've got to get this place in shape. Last night I made out a list of things we each had to do....Butch, Karen (He hands them lists)Daisy, you take Jane's until she gets here.

BUTCH

I forgot to tell you. She was here while you guys were with the police. She's sick so I took her to the nurse.

ALEX

OK, we have less than eight hours to get this place in order. Where's James.

(Enter James)

JAMES

right here.

KAREN

They kept you in the office quite a long time. Everything OK?

JAMES

Yeah, sure. They believed me. Everything's fine.

KAREN

What do you mean "believed you"? Is there any question in their minds about what happened?

JAMES

Did I say "believed me"? Force of habit I guess when talking about the police. You know how they never believe a kid.

I meant that they just wanted to make sure that they had all our names right and all. I mean we were in the room with a dead body for a couple of hours. Could have been suspicious, right?

No, it's pretty clear to them. Marlo slipped off the ladder, grabbed onto the pyramid and the rope snapped under her weight. Clear, right?

Let's get moving. I got a date to pick up at 7:30.

(The living start to get the gym ready.)

MARLO

So that's it! It was just an accident. I guess I'll be going now.

HANK

(Who now has an English accent like Sherlock Holmes)

I should think not just yet, my dear.

MARLO

Didn't you just have a French accent?

HANK

French, I would think not, having lived at 22 Baker Street for the last fifteen years solving London's most difficult cases. Mr. Holmes is the name.

GLEE CLUB

(The Glee Club sings one of the chord changes.)

HAZEL

Perhaps I'd better explain. Margot, Hank left the living doing a production of the school play. It was some kind of mystery. It was years before we figured out how to get out of this place and he is trying to remember what character he was playing at the time in hopes that that will be his pass out of here.

HANK

Precisely my dear Watson. Now I think it best if we are all quiet and listen to what they have to say.

(The live characters have moved to different parts of the stage to perform their respective jobs)

BUTCH

Funny, when you think about it. Marlo being dead. I mean here we are going on as if nothing has happened.

KAREN

Well, Mr. Hamilton decided that we should have the prom, that life goes on speech and all of that.

BUTCH

I know but it's still strange some how. Like she's still here. Like I can feel her.

MARLO

(running over to him)

I am here Butch! Look at me!

BUTCH

I mean how an accident could change a person's life

JAMES

I know what you mean.

One day life is all pranks and jokes and the next, dead serious.

ALEX

James, do you think that maybe the police don't think it was an accident?

JAMES

No, I mean they saw the broken rope.

(He goes over to the rope that is attached to the pyramid ...he is followed by Hank...and shows the others..the rest of the rope is still in the air with the other end tied to the hook off stage)

How could they think it was anything other than she fell off the ladder and tried to grab onto the pyramid and the rope snapped?

HANK

(Hank looks at the rope.)

Hmmmm. A broken rope.

DAISY

Maybe she killed herself?

ALEX

Suicide? No way. She wasn't the type?

MARLO

You tell them Alex! Suicide why would I do that?

KAREN

How do you know Alex? I didn't think you and Marlo were friends.

JAMES

Yeah, it's possible she was hiding something. Something she didn't want anyone to know. Maybe suicide was the better alternative. And maybe she knew that the rope would snap and that it would look like an accident?

BUTCH

Suicide is never the better alternative

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

Way to go, Butch!

ALEX

You're crazy. Why? Why would anyone kill herself the day before she was going to be the prom queen? It's just crazy. Look at the pyramid and the ropes.
(Alex moves to examine the ropes)

JAMES

(blurting out) Marlo was a drug addict!
(Alex stops dead in his tracks)

MARLO

That's a lie!

ALEX

That's a lie.

BUTCH

Prove it.

ALEX

OK, I will. There will be a complete autopsy done because the police will have to rule out foul play. I'll tap into the police records and have it here as soon as they get it.
(Alex exits)
(Lights go to black on ghosts)

KAREN

Satisfied? Now he might get into trouble for breaking into the police computer.

JAMES

It's his idea. Besides he's done that a number of times already without getting caught.

KAREN

He has?

BUTCH

Yeah, I had one to many tickets on my motorcycle. Alex owed me a favor...

KAREN

Why would Alex owe you a favor?

BUTCH

None of your business.

JAMES

Let's make a pack. No more arguing. Marlo's death is bad enough.

KAREN

OK, no more arguing. Deal?

BUTCH

Deal.

JAMES

Good, I can't believe we'll be leaving here in two weeks. It's funny but in some ways it seems as if we've always been here and in other ways it seems as if we just got here yesterday.

KAREN

I know what you mean. Life sure is funny

DAISY

What will you do after graduation Karen?

KAREN

I'm going to college. Not Harvard like James over there, a state school. Somewhere I can afford. Scholarship money is tight these days and all I can manage on what I got is a state college.

DAISY

And you Butch?

BUTCH

The army. "Be all you can be...be like Butch"

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

Not the army! Why not Hells Angels?

DAISY

I came to American because I want to be an actress and song writer. My country has such beautiful songs.

JAMES

Aren't there any actresses in your country?

DAISY

In my country there are only two kinds of people. Soldiers and dead people.

BUTCH

So, how did you get the idea to be an actress?

DAISY

From the American movies we get. I want to be just like Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich

JAMES

Who?

KAREN

Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich. They were stars in the 1940's

DAISY

My country doesn't get what you call "new releases."

BUTCH

I'll say.

KAREN

Why don't you (to Daisy) and Butch start decorating that side.

BUTCH

Aye, aye sir!

(Karen and James move to the opposite side and start to decorate. Lights come up on ghosts.)

MARLO

Hazel, why can't I remember what happened last night? I only have bits and pieces of the accident. It didn't dawn on me until just now.

HANK

Elementary, my dear. The trauma of your death has blacked out the what happened. It may

come back to you, in time. But, I think we can unravel this case in short enough fashion.

BUTCH'S GREAT UNCLE

You have an idea?

HANK

When we eliminate all the possibilities, whatever is left will be the answer. First: Miss Marlo was not a drug addict.

HAZEL

How do you know that?
(Johnny plays God Save The Queen softly)

HANK

She was the first to yell it's a lie when James proposed the idea. Now, we all know that her memory of the accident is impaired, but her memory of the rest of her life is perfect. She would have no reason to lie about it. She is in search of the truth of about her death and since being a drug addict is an intricate part of a person's existence would have simply taken it as fact.

HAZEL

What's your point then?

HANK

(Dramatically)James lied.
Blackout

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