

FOOTBALL THEATER: FIRST DOWN AND FRANKENSTEIN TO GO

a Comedy in Two Acts

by Rob Frankel

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DEDICATION

*To our new niece, Ryan Grace,
and her parents, Dan and Tracy*

STORY OF THE PLAY

When millionaire Peter Graham dies, he leaves something for his two sisters and brother; most of his inheritance to his daughter, Popper; and a whopping \$5 million endowment to the football program run by his old friend, Coach Cougher. There's a catch, though: Coach must successfully steward Peter's beloved Blue Skies Community Theatre for one year in order to earn the money! When Coach, with Popper at his side, arrives, he discovers that the director has walked out and it's up to him to direct the first play, "Frankenstein." And what would you do when the locals don't turn out for tryouts, er, auditions? That's right – Coach brings in the football players, Burger, Fries and Shake, to help him! And Popper brings in her friend, Bonnie, another football coach, who brings with her an all-female team of players, er, actors. Coach also hires a third-rate writer and friend of his, Raspberry Bailey, to "spruce this old thing up"!

Mix these elements together, along with Peter's siblings scheming to sabotage the play to get even more inheritance, and the stage is set for the most fractured version of "Frankenstein" you'll ever see!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(9 m, 16 w, 7 either, 6-12 optional.)

MR. DAVIDSON: Lawyer of deceased Peter Graham/doubles as the Critic.
BEVERLY RICHARDSON: Money-loving sister of deceased Peter Graham.
PENNY RICHARDSON: Beverly's daughter.
ISABELLE "POPPER" GRAHAM: Peter's only daughter.
JOHN "GRAY" GRAHAM: Peter's absent-minded brother.
DOROTHY "DOTTY" HILLMAN: Peter's very proper older sister.
COACH BENNY COUGHER: Coach of men's college football team. He speaks gruffly but is not a grouch.
MS. PATCH: Legal secretary.
BURGER/"MONSTER": Quarterback on Coach's football team/the monster in play.
MELISSA/"CHEERLEADER": Football player/cheerleader.
KATE/"CHEERLEADER": Football player/cheerleader.
BONNIE: Coach of local women's college football team.
ED/"DOCTOR FRANKENSTEIN": Local pharmacist/doctor.
SHAKE/"HENCHMAN": Male football player/henchman.
RASPBERRY BAILEY: Coach's cool writer friend.
FRIES/"BROADCASTER": Male football player/broadcaster.
JOYCE/"FRAU GEZUNDHEIT": Football player/maid in play.
CHEERLEADERS #1, #2, #3: Actual pom-pom waving cheerleaders.
LARRY: Play's stage manager.
WALKER: Victim in park scene of play.
JOGGER: Victim in park scene of play.
MIME: Victim in park scene of play.
GYMNASTS #1, #2: Football players who can do some gymnastics as "stunt doubles" in play.
GRACE/"IGOR": Quarterback who is Igor in play.
TOWNSPEOPLE: Football players/angry townpeople.
TORCHPERSON: Football player/townsperson carrying torch.
MEDIC: Football player/medic in play.
REFEREE: Football players/referee townsperson in play.
SHEILA HYPE: Football player/news reporter in play.
APRIL: Football player who substitutes briefly for Igor in play.

Casting Note: *There is a core group of male and female football players. How many of each and which roles might be double-cast is open to the director's particular needs.*

SET

This play does not require an elaborate set. The stage can be roughly divided into four pieces – DS, SR, CS, and SL. Scenes like Act I-1 and the park scene in Act II can be played on the stage's apron (with, for Act I-1, curtain closed if one is being used). For Act II, the scenes can roughly alternate from SL to CS and back again, with occasional use of the apron area, to give the feeling of a new setting. Some basic tables with gadgets and lights on it will give the illusion of the castle/lab. There will be times where pieces like cots will need to be moved on and off. There really is no need for any stagehands to be backstage. They can all be in uniform on the bench and serve the same purpose – part of the fun!

COSTUMES

Actors on the bench in the second act who do not have a major role in "Frankenstein" should be dressed in football uniforms. Helmets can be used for humorous effect as well, unless they prevent the audience from seeing a facial reaction or hearing a line. These football players will be everything from the medic to the broadcaster to the interviewer.

Dorothy, Beverly, and Gray should wear tasteful, expensive-looking dresses and suits. Everyone else should be casually attired. Coach and Bonnie should wear typical coach-garb – sweatshirts, sweat pants or shorts, and gym shoes.

Major characters in Act II (Frau, Henchman, Igor) can be costumed simply, using older clothes indicating a degree of poverty in a foreign country. Igor, of course, will need a pillow or other padding to use as a hump.

SOUND

The three key sound effects needed are:

Thunder for Frankenstein's name early in Act II.

Offstage sneezes which can be done as a taped response or live and loud from offstage.

Accompaniment to scoreboard lighting up – should be a good 5-10 seconds of loud, electrical sound.

NOTE: Additional production notes at end of script.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: An attorney's office. A desk with phone sits DSR on the stage apron. There is a chair behind it and one to the DS side of it. Six chairs sit SL of the desk. It is the occasion of the will reading for recently deceased Peter Graham. Attorney DAVIDSON sits at desk, examining the will in his hand. Seated SR to SL are Peter's sister BEVERLY GRAHAM and her daughter PENELOPE; Peter's only child, ISABELLE "POPPER" GRAHAM; and Peter's other siblings, JOHN "GRAY" GRAHAM and DOROTHY "DOTTY" HILLMAN. The seat farthest SL is empty. Dotty dabs at her eyes with a hankie. ALL are dressed formally and appropriately for a grave affair except for POPPER who wears a sunny yellow dress.)

GRAY: Beautiful office. All the wood ... cherry ...

DOROTHY: Petey could afford nice wood, Gray.

GRAY: This isn't our brother's wood, Dotty. It's his attorney Davidson's wood. And it's nice.

DOROTHY: Why did he go surfing? I do not know why we let him go surfing.

BEVERLY: Maybe because little brother Petey was 41 years old and wealthier than all of us combined.

DOROTHY: Point taken, Beverly. But then he'd still be alive if he just hadn't ...

GRAY: All right you two, now is not the time.

PENNY: Was Uncle Petey really a billionaire, Mom?

BEVERLY: Hush now, Penny. *(Pause.)* Millionaire, dear, millionaire.

(Pause. Out of nowhere.)

POPPER: He loved Van Gogh. He said he loved his ... yellow. *(SHE fingers HER dress and gets weepy.)*

BEVERLY: *(Perfunctorily.)* There, there, Popper. He made green. Now that's something to get weepy about.

(The CLOCK GONGS SEVEN o'clock and DAVIDSON clears his throat.)

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DAVIDSON: Hem, well, 7 p.m. It looks as though we'd best get started.

BEVERLY: Yes, I would say so. Petey always was punctual. Petey would appreciate punctuality.

PENNY: *(Snickering.)* Say that three times fast!

BEVERLY: Hush, Penny.

DAVIDSON: *(Leans forward and presses a button on HIS phone.)* Ms. Patch? Would you please come in here?

(MS. PATCH ENTERS, notepad and pen in hand.)

DAVIDSON: Please take the proceedings down, Ms. Patch.

MS. PATCH: Certainly, Mr. Davidson.

(Commotion offstage. MS. PATCH starts back SR, but is met by COACH BENNY COUGHER wearing sweat clothes and a ball cap. He is harried, dirt-smudged, and his hair a mess.)

MS. PATCH: Sir, excuse –

COACH: 'M I late?

DAVIDSON: Well, we've just –

COACH: Kids 'd just learn to rock forward 'n hit, rock forward 'n hit, I'd 'a been here right on time. That my seat?

MS. PATCH: Yes, Mr. Cougher. May I take –

COACH: *(Going to empty seat.)* You ain't takin' nothin'.

(HE looks at the OTHERS who are staring at him, and finally removes his cap.)

DAVIDSON: Uh, well, let's continue ... all right then. We are gathered here to hear the last will and testament of one Mr. Peter Jacob Graham, deceased last Tuesday, August 19, of this year. As the trustee for his estate, I can assert this will's authenticity, and will now read it to you. *(Slips on reading glasses and reads.)* "I, Peter Jacob Graham, being of sound mind and body, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera ... "

DOROTHY: Please don't skip anything, Mr. Davidson.

DAVIDSON: Hmm? Oh I haven't. He, uh, he included the "etceteras" – written right in here – thought it might be funny as I recall ...

End of Freeview

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