

PROM NIGHT FRIGHT

By CRAIG SODARO

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SYNOPSIS

The kids have decided to hold their prom at the Candlewick Inn, an abandoned resort recently bought by the class president's father. It's a great idea except for one thing - it's haunted by the ghosts of a gangster and his moll. Big Charlie Bigsby and Frankie have called the Candlewick home for sixty years. But now their heavenly caseworker has told them they have to move out. They need to help some mortals somehow in order to redeem themselves or "the Boss" isn't going to look favorably on them.

Enter the prom committee with problems of its own. Julie, one of the more popular girls at school, has been receiving anonymous - but very romantic - notes from (she thinks) the class nerd, Stanley. And in spite of herself, she finds she's falling for the guy because of his honesty and sensitivity. But the notes are part of a nasty plot by Julie's rival, Veronica, who wants to get her old boyfriend, Dillon, back before the prom. To make matters worse, warnings begin turning up that suggest having the prom isn't such a good idea and that something terrible will happen at the prom. And these notes are decidedly human in origin.

Frankie, the ghostly moll, helps inspire Stanley to pursue Julie, even if he hasn't written the notes. But then just when it seems Julie and Stanley's love might actually blossom, a love-starved janitor, jilted by the prom sponsor twenty years earlier, now wants to marry the teacher - even if it has to be at gunpoint. And that's easy enough since he's got a gun. Holding the entire prom hostage, the janitor is ruining everything.

But, in steps Big Charlie. The fear of losing Frankie, who has already done her good deed, is enough to make him take care of the janitor and seal his own eternal fate.

CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

DR. CRANDALL.....A psychic investigator.
MABEL.....His devoted assistant.
BIG CHARLIE BIGSBY.....A ghostly gangster.
FRANKIE.....His ghostly moll.
ARELLA.....A heavenly caseworker.
MRS. WELTMAN.....New owner of the Candlewick Inn.
MARTI WELTMAN.....Her daughter.
JULIE GRANGER.....A popular teenager.
VERONICA.....Julie's rival.
ANNIE.....Julie's best friend.
CHERRI.....Veronica's best friend.
DILLON.....Julie's prom date, a popular teenager.
JODENE.....Chairperson of the decorating committee.
LYLE..... A friend of Dillon's, Veronica's date.
R.J......Another friend, Cherri's date.
MADLINE GRAY.....French teacher and prom advisor.
BARNEY BURROUGHS.....A helpful janitor.
STANLEY.....The class nerd.
JANE FOSDICK..... Society editor of the local paper.
BOY 1.....A prom-goer.
BOY 2.....Another.
GIRL 1.....Another.
GIRL 2.....Another.
MR. BENTNER.....Franklin High principal.
MRS. BENTNER.....His wife.

SET DESIGN

All the action takes place in the lobby of the old Candlewick Inn. In Act I, the lobby desk, which stands USR, is covered with dust. French doors, UPS, allow moonlight to filter through ragged curtains. The doors open onto terrace, the railing of which is visible in the moonlight, with a suggestion of trees beyond. A chandelier at the center of room hangs draped with cobwebs. Several comfortable chairs and tables at SL are shrouded in sheets, while a fireplace DSR has long ago gone cold. The main entrance to the room is DSR, with exits DSL to the ballroom and USL to the long-abandoned rooms and kitchen area.

In ACT II, the lobby is cleaned and decorated for prom. The lobby desk is covered with a lace tablecloth and ready to serve as a refreshment table with punch bowls, cups, etc. The sheets are gone from the furniture and a fire (red lights) has been lit in the fireplace.

LIGHTING

One good way to enhance the ghostly atmosphere is to use some dramatic lighting. For example, use a border of blue lights behind the French window. This will backlight those entering and exiting, and that will look great. Use a light in the fireplace so that even when the other lights dim down, there will be an eerie glow.

(See additional production notes at end.)

ACT I

(AT RISE: A gloomy Thursday in May, early evening. DR. CRANDALL enters the room boldly carrying what looks like a geiger counter. Following him is MABEL, his adoring assistant who carries other unusual paraphernalia.)

CRANDALL: You see, Mabel? A harmless old hotel lobby. There hasn't been a person - or a ghost - in this place in years!

MABEL: Gosh, you're so brave, Doc!

CRANDALL: Mabel, how many times do I have to tell you - it's Doctor Crandall.

MABEL: I'll try to remember, Doc - *(Remembers.)* - Dr. Crandall.

CRANDALL: Let's get our equipment set up. *(HE begins attaching wires to furniture, adjusting knobs and dials, and testing the atmosphere.)*

MABEL: It sure is funny somebody buying the old Candlewick Inn after all these years, ha?

CRANDALL: Owens is a businessman who knows a shrewd investment when he sees one. This place used to be the most popular resort in the state *(Walks to the French doors and looks out)* Look at that lake. Look at those trees.

MABEL: *(Following HIM.)* Look at the moon. Isn't it romantic?! *(SHE puts her arms around HIM.)*

CRANDALL: *(Embarrassed.)* Mabel...my goodness! Not here! Now, now! We must be professional. Now, I'll plug in the ecto-counter back here. *(HE places the geiger-counter-like machine behind the desk.)* Mabel, you put the microphones by each doorway.

MABEL: *(Picks mike from a box SHE carried in.)* Testing! *(The word blares out over the PA.)*

CRANDALL: *(Startled, angrily.)* MAY-BELL!!! How many times do I have to tell you those things are sensitive!

MABEL: *(Hurt.)* Yeah, yeah, yeah. They'll pick up a mouse's footsteps.

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CRANDALL: And any groans, chains, moans, or death rattles.

MABEL: Let's hope not.

CRANDALL: Don't worry! The place is not inhabited by spirits! I've been a psychic investigator long enough to tell when a place is haunted and when it's not. Why do you think Owens hired me to make sure the place is clean before he renovates it, ha?

MABEL: Pretty smart of him, Doc, I mean Dr. Crandall.

CRANDALL: We'll give it a clean bill of health and voila! The Candlewick will be open for business!

(A MOAN is heard off SL.)

MABEL: Shhhh! What was that?

CRANDALL: What was what?

(A CHAIN rattles off SR.)

MABEL: That!

CRANDALL: *(Nervously.)* I ... I didn't hear anything.

MABEL: Maybe ...there's something to this story.

CRANDALL: *(Nervously.)* Everybody knows Big Charlie Bigsby and his moll were gunned down at the Candlewick in 1931! But it's not like they've got a permanent room here.

(A wicked female LAUGH echoes through the lobby.)

MABEL: You SURE about that?

CRANDALL: *(Weakly.)* Would I lie to you?

(CHARLIE enters SL, a ghostly figure dressed in white and light gray, his make-up a ghastly white face, neck, hands. He wears a sheet of flimsy, gauzy material over himself, which allows him to be seen by the mortals in the room.)

MABEL: *(Terrified, pointing SL.)* Doc? Do you see what I see?

End of Freeview

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