

Tech Week

by Jim and Jane Jeffries

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to Travis, Nate, and Jeremy with thanks for the many extra hours that the others didn't know about, for always making us look good, and for managing not to blow up the school.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Tech week. It's sort of like trying to hit a homerun with a tennis racket. This tech week is especially challenging because the techies chose the play, *Cats from Mars*. Broken props and hyper-caffeinated techies are only some of the problems. The other human factors in this play, called actors, introduce chaos: the newbie breaks the laser gun (affectionately named Katniss), the prima donna badmouths the costumes, and the alpha male lead destroys the fog machine in between spates of directing advice. Meanwhile, the director desperately tries to hold the production together while desperately, desperately wishing for a baseball bat. We directors ask it every time: Is there any hope for this show? About 35-40 minutes.

THANK YOU

To Hudson High School's drama group, Hudson, WI, for performing this script at the District and Sectional levels of the 2014 WHSFA One-Act Festival. **Cast:** Grace Nelson, Jack-Henry Leines, Taylor Casey, Bella Zontelli, Claire Alberg, Kelly Holm, Afton Eisch, Ashley Videtich, Maddie Roth, Deena Whitwam, Charlie Thompson, Audra Grigus, Jonah Mahowald, and Michael Laraia **Stage Crew and Sound:** Luther Miller, Maria Franco, Alyssa Morris, Maddie Roth, and Alex Hadlich.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 m, 8 w, 2 flexible)

- TRAVIS (TRICIA)** (flex): A techie who spends a lot of time behind the scenes, sort of like the Wizard of Oz.
- JEREMY** (m): A techie who creates most of the props. He also names them.
- NATE** (m): A techie and unrivaled master of the fog machine. He likely owns one of his own.
- DAWN** (f): A costumer who has to work with leftover fabric from show choir, dull scissors, and an ancient sewing machine.
- MONICA** (f): Plays the Queen Alien Cat. She cares more about her costume than about others' feelings. She dated Mitch in the previous show...before Jessica stole him.
- GERTIE** (f): A techie who is willing to fight for her turf at the Hallmart dumpster.
- MRS. HUNT** (f): The beleaguered director of the show.
- SHELLY** (f): Plays an Alien Cat. She is new and very nervous about the show.
- TERRI** (f): Plays an Alien Cat. She currently dates Mitch.
- JESSICA** (f): Plays an Alien Cat. She used to date Mitch, so she doesn't like Terri.
- MANDY** (f): Plays an Alien Cat. She texts repeatedly throughout rehearsal because she just can't be in the moment. And she wants to date Mitch.
- ALEX** (flex): Plays an Alien Cat who thinks a small role is almost not worth playing.
- MITCH** (m): Plays President Armstrong, the lead actor of the show, though he arrives late and leaves early. You might know the type.

PROPERTIES

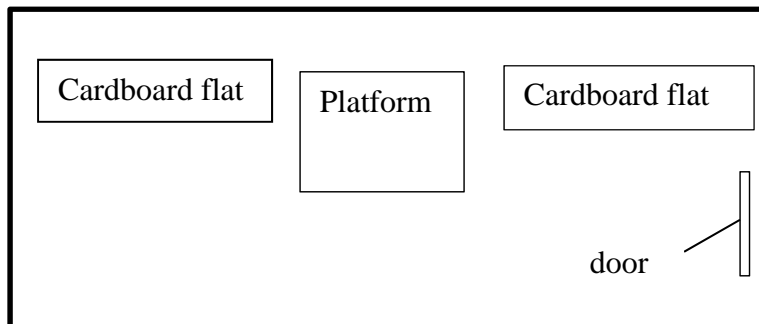
Laser gun, small bag of espresso beans, a gummy mess for Nate to hold up, mangled wig, cell phone for Mandy, box of take-out sushi, can of soda, notebook or clipboard for director

PRODUCTION NOTES

Have fun with the cat costumes, especially Monica's. If you Google "alien cat costumes," you will get plenty of ideas to work from. For Monica's costume, the pop tabs may work better if you stitch them rather than glue them onto the costume. They should be a prominent feature of the costume.

SET PLAN

The set is a pretty low-budget imitation of the alley set for *CATS*, so the flats are made of cardboard. It's tech week, so things aren't entirely finished. It should have a platform for the queen and a door that opens toward side-stage.



Tech Week

(AT RISE: LIGHTS up on an alley in a large city. TRAVIS enters, following an extension cord. He stops and picks up the end of one extension cord, then another and holds one in each hand.)

TRAVIS: *(Shouts to backstage.)* I found the trouble. Get ready to crank up the flux capacitor. Here comes 1.21 gigawatts! *(Plugs the extension cords together.)* Go, go, go!

(SFX: Something popping and small explosion.)

NATE: *(Urgently from backstage.)* Stop, stop, stop!

TRAVIS: *(Looks around frantically.)* You have the switch! *(Moves quickly to the extension cords and unplugs them.)* Got it! *(Listens toward backstage.)* Uh, you okay?

(NATE enters in shuffling, jerky steps. He blows on his thumb and shakes his hand.)

NATE: I've had worse. I can't believe a fog machine is this much trouble!

TRAVIS: Well, maybe we could—

NATE: *(Interrupts.)* Let me try one more thing. *(Exits, frustrated.)*

TRAVIS: *(Calls after NATE.)* Hey, at least we didn't trip the breaker this time! *(Looks at the two extension cords in his hands then drops them.)* Think I'll wait on that.

(JEREMY enters with a laser gun.)

TRAVIS: *(Cont'd.)* Jeremy, where have you been? I've been texting you for three hours. *(Looks closer.)* You look awful.

JEREMY: I was up 'til 4:30 repairing the laser gun. *(Holds it up for TRAVIS.)*

JEREMY: *(Cont'd.)* Again. The barrel is titanium steel, framed by bullet-proof glass. It can survive a direct nuclear strike. *(Beat.)* Maybe it can survive Shelly.

TRAVIS: *(Looks at laser.)* Nice. Think it'll work?

JEREMY: I hope so. If I have to repair this thing one more time, I'm going to change the setting from "stun" to "obliterate."

TRAVIS: Give her a break. It's her first gig on stage.

JEREMY: But not her first gig in demolitions. I swear she's a one-woman wrecking crew.

NATE: *(Offstage.)* Travis, can you hook up the power again?

(TRAVIS and JEREMY look up toward the lights and answer NATE in the catwalk.)

TRAVIS: Are you sure?

NATE: *(Offstage.)* Yep.

TRAVIS: Okaaaay. *(Plugs the extension cords and crosses behind the set piece.)*

JEREMY: *(To NATE.)* Did we lose another lamp?

NATE: *(Offstage.)* No. Still having problems with the fog machine. Where have you been? *(Beat.)* You look awful. *(Beat.)* Laser gun?

JEREMY: Yep.

NATE: Shelly?

JEREMY: Yep.

NATE: Trigger snapped off?

JEREMY: Nope. Twisted barrel.

NATE: Wow. The torque necessary for that is— How'd she do it?

JEREMY: A barrel is handy when you don't know that the stage door opens inward.

NATE: *(Offstage.)* Travis, is it on?

TRAVIS: *(From behind set piece.)* It's on.

(TRAVIS re-enters stage. JEREMY and Travis stare at set piece.)

NATE: Anything?

End of Freeview

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