Terror of the Swamp Thingy

By Craig Sodaro

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STORY OF THE PLAY

When the school principal asks high school students Dani, Jenna, and Ruby to include new student Lydia in their save-the-planet activities, they're none too pleased. Lydia comes with quite a résumé and skills to back it up. On top of that, Dani immediately thinks Lydia's out to trap her boyfriend Dante whose best friend Gavin is completely smitten with the new girl. When after school plans get messed up, Dani impulsively says she and her friends are going to clean up an old ranger cabin in a nearby state park Saturday night. Much to Dani's dismay, Lydia readily agrees to go along. Dani consoles herself knowing that at least Lydia won't be prowling around trying to steal Dante.

What the girls and two bewildered park rangers don't know is that the long-abandoned cabin holds a treasure trove of stolen goods courtesy of two cat burglar sisters, Sissy and Sassy. Needless to say when the thieves hear someone's coming to "clean up" the cabin, they have to think of a quick way to get rid of these do-gooders. But that's easy. A rumor has long circulated that a monster—the Swamp Thingy—inhabits the woods around the cabin. They figure a good costume, some growls, and the girls will be gone in a flash.

Of course, Dante and Gavin are pretty mad about being left off the trip guest list. So they decide to head out to the park and scare the girls just enough so Dante can come to Dani's rescue. To add even another layer of confusion, Dani's Aunt Cosimia, who has come with the girls as a chaperone, has her own agenda. Years before she says she was abducted by aliens. She loved it so much, she's always hoped they will return and abduct her again. Maybe it will be tonight!

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(3 m, 8 w, 1 flexible.)

LYDIA BANKS: The new girl, a senior.

DANI WALSH: Another senior.

JENNA MULLINS: A friend, another senior.

RUBY SANCHEZ: Another friend, senior.

AUNT COSIMIA: Dani's crazy aunt.

DANTE SMITH: Dani's boyfriend.

GAVIN GLENN: His friend.

SISSY MOON: A cat burglar.

SASSY MOON: Her sister, also a cat burglar.

LESTER GLEMKE: A park ranger.

BETTY LOU HIGGENBOTTOM: His partner ranger.

DR. FREUDLIN: Principal.

SETTING

The old ranger cabin in Pickawolly State Park. Wing entrance right leads to outside; wing entrance left leads to bedroom and bathroom. The living area contains a table at left center with several chairs tossed about the room. A fireplace stands right or upstage wall if desired. An old couch sits right, angled from up center to down right below wing entrance. A counter up center has a faucet indicating a sink. Pots and pans lie about along with some old clothes, including an old coat, gloves, and hat. Above the sink is a window through which we can see tree branches. The window needs to be functional so that actors can look into the cabin from the outside. A couple of lanterns, perhaps one hanging from the ceiling, provide light.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: Just outside a high school, after the last class. Played before the curtain.

Scene 2: An old ranger cabin, the following night, a short time later.

Scene 3: Just outside a high school, the following afternoon. Played before the curtain.

Scene 4: The ranger cabin, two hours later.

Scene 5: The woods around the cabin, played before the curtain.

ACT II

Scene 1: The ranger cabin, a half hour later.

Scene 2: The woods around the cabin shortly after, played before the curtain.

Scene 3: The ranger cabin, a short time later.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: An area just outside the high school, played before the curtain. DANI, JENNA, and RUBY walk in a circle around the stage holding signs that read "Save the Earth," "Save the Seals," and "Hug a Tree.")

DANI: Hey everybody! We've only got one planet!
JENNA: And it's getting mighty hot on this old home called Earth.
RUBY: It's up to us to do something!
VOICE: So what can we do about it?
DANI: Tell your mom not to leave the car running while you run into the store.
VOICE: What if she's the one who runs into the store?
JENNA: Don't let the water run while you're shaving!
VOICE: I'm too young to shave!
RUBY: Set your thermostats lower in the winter and higher in the summer!
VOICE: You got that backwards!
JENNA: *(To DANI.)* Do you think we're getting anywhere?
RUBY: All we get are kids staring at us like we're freakazoids.
DANI: We're not freakazoids! We're the Three Leaf Clovers, right? I mean we're in it to the end!
JENNA: That sounds awfully…permanent.
RUBY: Almost…fatal.
DANI: Look, all the great crusaders in history had to face opposition!
JENNA: Like who?
DANI: Well, like…like…Elvis when he started out.
RUBY: Ha?
DANI: All the adults said he swiveled his hips way too much!
JENNA: Who cares about that?
DANI: That's just the point. Elvis stood up to them all and swiveled away, and look where that got us!
RUBY: Into Hula Hoops.
DANI: Well, if Elvis could do it, we can!

(DR. FREUDLIN enters left with LYDIA.)

DR. FREUDLIN: Oh, girls! Girls! You're drumming up some nice business for the pom-pom girls!
JENNA: *(Bewildered.)* Ha? We're promoting climate change awareness.
RUBY: What does that have to do with pom-pom girls?
DR. FREUDLIN: Apparently everybody that passes by gets so hot and thirsty listening to you go on about global warming that they're running over to the pom-pom girls' soda cart. They're nearly sold out and soon they'll have enough money to buy new pom-poms. They send their heartfelt thanks!
DANI: *(Disappointed.)* Swell. I knew we'd do something important today.
DR. FREUDLIN: Now, girls, have you met Lydia Banks? She's new here at Newton High.
LYDIA: Hi!
JENNA: Somebody said you're from L.A., right?
LYDIA: Yeah, but don't hold that against me.
RUBY: Why would we do that?
LYDIA: Some people think anybody from Southern California is just waiting for the next wave.
DR. FREUDLIN: I can assure you Lydia is not a…well, for lack of a better term…a beach bum.
DANI: Well, these days the sand is way too hot and it's getting hotter.
LYDIA: That's why I have a strong interest in curbing climate change, too.
DR. FREUDLIN: Perhaps you girls would, well, adopt Lydia in your efforts to save the planet!
LYDIA: I've got some ideas that might just help.
DANI: Well, we've got lots of ideas, too.
DR. FREUDLIN: Lydia has quite a bit of experience.
JENNA: Like what?

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