



**Sample Pages from
The Magic Diary of Mozambique**

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THE MAGIC DIARY OF MOZAMBIQUE

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT BY
Chris Stiles



The Magic Diary of Mozambique
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Characters

Darla: A girl of 13.

Mom: Darla's mother.

Dad: Darla's father.

Margaret: A young woman of 22; Darla's sister.

David: An autistic boy of 14.

Becky: A girl of 13; Darla's best friend.

Jill: An upper-class popular girl of 13.

Jill's "Posse": Three girls who always hover around Jill.

Extra students: To mill around the hallway.

The Raccoons: An unlimited number of offstage varmints.

Setting

The living room of Darla's house, as well as her bedroom, and the hallway of Darla's school.

Time

The Present.

The Magic Diary of Mozambique premiered May 3, 2003 at Concordia High School, Concordia, Kansas, performed by the Concordia Junior High School. The playwright wishes to acknowledge the original cast for their hard work and great assistance in the creation of this play:

Darla: Larissa Whitney

Mom: Ali Watson

Dad: Chris Ukens

Margaret: Sarah Cibolski

David: Graham Pritchett

Becky: Mattie Vance

Jill: Latisha Deaver

Raccoons and Extra Students: Morgan Budke, Natalie Elliott, Jamie Michel, Danielle Moore, Ashley Otott, Erin Reedy, Lisa Tran and Christina Walker

Crew: Blake Brewer, Kyle Wallen and Tom Walsh

Production Notes

Costumes: The only specific costume requirements are Dad's Kofi hat, which can be purchased through any African clothing company, and Mom's African headwrap, which can either be purchased through the same venue as the Kofi hat or can be created with any brightly-colored cloth.

Lighting: The lighting for this play is simple and straightforward. The only specific requirements are that each part of the set (living room, Darla's bedroom, school) need to be lit separately, and the lights need to flicker before the blackout in Scene Sixteen.

Voice-Over: It is desirable to have a PA system for Darla's voice-over as she writes, and for the telephone conversations. Darla's voice-over should be pre-taped; the phone conversations should be live. If no PA is available, Darla can recite the lines as she writes them, and the phone voices can be spoken from offstage.

Sound Effects: Aside from the attacking raccoons, the only sound effects needed are a car honking, a telephone ringing and a doorbell.

Raccoons: Two raccoons are needed: one to be attached to Dad's leg as he enters in Scene Sixteen, and another that comes through the window in the same scene. If a good-sized stuffed raccoon can't be found, a homemade version would work; neither raccoon is on stage long enough for an audience to discern quality.

The raccoon attached to Dad's leg should be attached loosely so the actor can easily kick it off. We used masking tape in the original production. Originally, we created a complicated Velcro contraption that worked too well – the raccoon wouldn't come off. Masking tape gave just the right amount of attachment.

The Raccoon Attack: The trickiest aspect of this part of the production is to find the right volume for the raccoons. The raccoons should make a chirping-like sound (something like a cross between a chimpanzee and a pigeon) and there should be several "raccoons" spread around backstage. However, it's easy for the raccoons to get too loud, drowning out the actors onstage. Plenty of rehearsal is the key to success.

The raccoons should also throw in some additional noise, such as scratching at the door, the breaking of glass, and a trash can being turned over. Again, the right volume is the key.

The Disappearance of the Diary: In the original production, we performed a complex smoke machine trick, where the diary disappeared in a cloud of fog. In retrospect, however, this was too complicated and didn't work that well. Hence, in this script the diary simply needs to disappear when the lights go out. Assign one actor (like the one playing Margaret) or a fleet-footed crew member to hide the diary or take it offstage.

The part of David: The character of David is autistic; there should be a concerted effort to play the part with accuracy. The main points to remember when portraying David is that he doesn't make eye contact with any other character, and that he shows noticeable discomfort when he is touched. In the original production, the actor portraying David watched a documentary video about autistic children; he found it very helpful. The playwright highly recommends a similar approach from both the actor and the director.

SCENE ONE – DARLA’S HOUSE

The living room and bedroom of DARLA’s house, shown simultaneously. The living room has a couch with a coffee table and an end table; a telephone sits on the end table. At far left is a hallway exit. At far right is a front door exit, or an exit leading to an offstage front door.

The backdrop can be done two ways. The first option is a set with flats. At upstage center are two French doors, with a window just to the left.

The second option eliminates the backdrop. The furniture settings remain the same, as do the exits. For any action that takes place at the window, the actors will use an implied window in the upper left corner; props that are thrown through this window will need to come from offstage at this point.

The rear wall of the living room can be implied with a back curtain. No backdrop is necessary.

This script will assume the use of the simple stage and all stage directions will accommodate this approach. If the more elaborate set is used, the director can adjust the stage directions as needed.

DARLA’s room is downstage to the far right. It can be separated by a platform, or set on the wings of the stage. It is represented simply with a bed and nightstand.

At rise: DARLA is in her bedroom, sitting on her bed, flipping through a magazine. MOM, DAD and MARGARET are in the living room. MOM faces DARLA’s room; she cannot see into the room, but she speaks as though hollering down a hallway or up a set of stairs.

MOM: Darla? Come down, honey!

DARLA: (to herself) I’ll come down when I’m good and ready.

MOM: Honey? Margaret is waiting to see you!

DARLA: (*again, to herself, imitating MOM*) “Margaret is waiting to see you!” Let her wait. Let her world revolve around me for a change.

DAD: Darla! Your sister is only here for a short while. Come down now!

DARLA: How come they only notice me when I’m not there? As soon as I walk in the room, I vanish.

*DARLA leaves her bedroom, enters living room.
MARGARET stands near the couch. DAD sits on the
arm of the couch. MOM stands to the right.*

MOM: (*looking to DARLA*) There she is. (*Looking away quickly, back to MARGARET.*) Anyway, Margaret dear, why leave so soon?

MARGARET: Well, working in the Peace Corps gave me some good connections.

DAD: And?

MARGARET: I’ve been offered a job at the embassy in Maputo.

MOM: Maputo? (*DARLA mouths the word.*)

DAD: A job with the U.S. Embassy! I knew you’d go places!

MARGARET: It’s just a short term position... but they need me right away.

MOM: You’re such a globetrotter! A summer in Japan, a year in Italy, two years in Africa...

DAD: Always going places, that’s my girl. And now a job in the embassy in Maputo! (*Pauses, looks puzzled.*) ...Where’s Maputo?

MARGARET: Mozambique.

DAD: Mozambique! (*He turns to DARLA. MOM and MARGARET indulge in a silent side conversation.*) Mozambique! Doesn’t your sister lead an exciting life?

DARLA: (*sarcastically*) I lead an exciting life.

DAD: She’s a special girl, Margaret is.

DARLA: Just last week I went on a field trip to the state capitol.

DAD: A job in the embassy!

DARLA: We met the governor.

DAD: Can't you just see her as a diplomat someday?

DARLA: I set fire to the governor's cat. It was an accident of course, but needless to say, I'm no longer welcome in Topeka.

DAD: Yes indeed, that Margaret is going places!

DARLA: (*speaking to no one in particular*) Like I say, no one notices me once I enter a room.

MARGARET: Well, I'm sorry I can't stay long. My plane leaves soon. But I did pick up some gifts while I toured Africa last month. (*MARGARET reaches behind the couch and grabs a big bag.*)

MOM: Gifts from Africa! How exotic!

DAD: Did you hear that Darla? Margaret brought gifts from Africa!

DARLA: If I get some sort of animal, I should probably forward it to the governor. I guess he really misses his cat. (*No one pays attention to her.*)

MARGARET: I've got something for everybody. Mom? (*She hands a package to MOM.*)

MOM: What's this? (*She unwraps the package.*) Oh my! (*She holds up the present.*)

MARGARET: It's an Algerian head wrap! All the women of West Africa wear them. It keeps the sun off their heads.

MOM: It's beautiful!

DARLA: (*rolling her eyes*) You could have brought her elephant dung and she would have said it was beautiful. (*Again, no one hears DARLA.*)

MARGARET: (*handing a package to DAD*) And Dad?

DAD: (*takes package*) For me? You shouldn't have! (*He unwraps the package.*) Say what? Well, look at this! (*He holds up present.*)

MARGARET: It's a Kofi hat. Many African men wear them.

DAD: (*trying on hat*) Well, I LIKE this. I believe I'll wear it to play golf!

DARLA: (*again, rolling her eyes*) I buy him a new shirt for Father's Day. Perfect for golfing. It's even called a golf shirt. Has he worn it yet? Not once!

MARGARET: I have something for David. Will he come down?

MOM: He will if we bring him. Darla, go get David.

DARLA: Do I have to?

MOM: Go get him!

DARLA exits through left hall.

MARGARET: How is David, Mom? Is he doing any better?

MOM: Well, you know, autism just doesn't go away.

DAD: He is better, though. He talks more now.

MOM: That's true, he is talking more now.

MARGARET: That's wonderful! I've never heard him talk! What kinds of things does he talk about?

MOM: Pretty much one thing.

MARGARET: One thing?

DAVID'S VOICE: Rac-COO-oon!

DAD: And there it is.

MARGARET: Raccoons?

DAD: Raccoons.

MARGARET: Well, I guess it's good that he's talking at all.

MOM: That's true. And you know he's started to write as well.

MARGARET: Writes? What does he write?

DAVID'S VOICE: Rac-COO-oon!

DAD: Pretty much that.

DARLA and DAVID enter, with DARLA leading DAVID.

DARLA: Here we go, David. *(She leads DAVID to the couch.)*

MOM: David? Come here, honey. Sit down. Now, this is your sister Margaret. Do you remember Margaret?

DAVID: Rac-COO-oon!

MOM: No, not raccoon, David. Margaret!

MARGARET: That's okay, Mom. *(She turns to DAVID.)* David! I brought something for you. It's from Africa! It's... well, here it is *(She hands DAVID a package.)*

DAVID: *(opens the package and holds up a stuffed lemur)* Raccoon!

MARGARET: Well, no, it's a lemur. It's from...

DAVID: Raccoon!

MARGARET: Okay, raccoon.

There is a short silence while everyone watches DAVID play with his new "raccoon." Just as the silence grows awkward...

DAD: Well, Margaret, I love this... whadja call it? Kofi hat?

MOM: And this head wrap! I'll wear it in the garden!

DARLA: Ahem!

MARGARET: Oh Darla! You always think you're being ignored. Don't you know I was saving your present for last?

DARLA: Well I hope it's a dandy!

MARGARET: Here you go. *(She hands DARLA a package.)*

DARLA: *(opening package)* Let's see... it's... *(She pulls out the present, a medium sized, ornately decorated leather-bound book.)* It's a book.

MARGARET: I bought it in a marketplace in Maputo. It's very old.

DARLA: (*thumbing through book*) It's a book with no words.

MARGARET: You can put your own words into it.

DARLA: It's a diary?

MARGARET: Remember when we shared a room? You were always looking in my journal.

DARLA: Oh yeah... (*reflecting*) You never got very mad about that.

MARGARET: I gave you a notebook to write in. You used to scribble in it whenever I wrote in my journal.

DARLA: Yeah... I do remember that.

MARGARET: Do you still write?

DARLA: Not since you left.

MARGARET: Well, you can start again.

DARLA: (*examining the book*) A diary...

MARGARET: Look at the quality of it. Feel this paper, like silk! And this leather binding. It must be over a hundred years old. Maybe more.

DARLA: (*looking at the cover*) What does it say on the front?

MARGARET: (*looking as well*) I'm not sure... I don't recognize the language. I think the old man who sold it to me tried to explain it, but I could barely understand him. (*She tries to make the book more special.*) Perhaps it's the language of a tribe who has long disappeared...

DARLA: (*realizing how hard MARGARET is trying*) Well, thanks.

MARGARET: (*hugging DARLA*) You're welcome.

A horn honks from offstage.

MARGARET: That's my cab to the airport. I have to go.

MOM: Oh, I wish you could stay...

DAD: We all do, Mother, but this globetrotting diplomat needs to get to her job!

MARGARET: (*hugging DAD*) I'm not a diplomat, Dad.

DAD: Soon enough.

MOM: (*hugging MARGARET*) We're proud of you dear.

MARGARET: Thanks, love you! (*She turns to DARLA and DAVID.*)
Goodbye Darla! (*DARLA waves half-heartedly.*) Goodbye David!
(*DAVID doesn't look up.*)

MOM: Goodbye, honey!

*MARGARET exits. DARLA crosses to her room.
MOM and DAD escort DAVID offstage left. Lights
focus on DARLA's room.*

DARLA: A diary. What kind of gift is that? I could get a diary at Wal-Mart! But could you get a Kofi hat at Wal-Mart? Or an African head wrap?! I doubt it! (*She pauses and looks at the book.*) You couldn't even get a stuffed lemur. (*She stares at the book silently for a moment.*) Conversation, attention, presents... I always get the shaft. (*She tosses the diary on the nightstand, then flops back onto bed.*)

The lights fade.

SCENE TWO – SCHOOL HALLWAY

The hallway of DARLA's school. This can be represented in front of a closed curtain, or in front of the darkened living room set, with some freestanding lockers. DARLA's locker is just left of center.

DARLA and BECKY enter, walking down the hallway. OTHER STUDENTS are milling about, going to lockers, etc.; it is a typical after school scene.

DARLA: So anyway, my parents doted on Margaret all afternoon – didn't give me the time of day.

BECKY: Well, she was home only for a little bit...

DARLA: But even after she left, all they talked about was Margaret, Margaret, Margaret.

BECKY: Well...

DARLA: Dad wore that stupid hat all night. I think he wore it to work this morning, so he could brag to everyone about "The Great Margaret."

BECKY: Working for an embassy in Africa is interesting.

DARLA: And if it's not Margaret they're talking about, it's David. David gets all the attention around the house.

BECKY: I'd think an autistic kid would require a lot of attention...

DARLA sees a note taped to her locker.

DARLA: What's this? *(She pulls the note off the locker. Reading.)* "You have not selected a locker partner for the next school year. If you have not notified the school office by 3:10 today, the office will select a partner for you." Oh great. It's what, five after three now? Just great.

BECKY: You haven't turned that in?

DARLA: Well, it's a big decision, a locker partner. It's like choosing a mate. Of course, I better get this in. I didn't choose last year and the office chose for me.

BECKY: They put us together.

DARLA: Yeah. And hey, you've been a great locker partner... but wouldn't it be nice to choose who we want this year?

BECKY: I...

DARLA: *(looking down hall at another group of students)* You know who would be a great locker partner? Jill Morlan. Man, there's a together girl. Smart, good-looking... but real nice, you know? And an honour student. Boy, that would be handy, with Algebra next year and all. *(She looks back at the note, has a realization.)* So how come you didn't get one of these notes?

BECKY: I turned mine in already.

DARLA: Oh, so you already chose someone? Okay... *(She's oblivious.)*
I guess I'll put my fate in the hands of the school office gods.

BECKY: *(becoming angry at DARLA's insensitivity)* Darla, you are so self-centered.

DARLA: *(genuinely shocked)* Whoa, where did that come from?

BECKY: All you think about is yourself.

DARLA: What? No...

BECKY: You hardly listen to what anyone has to say.

DARLA: *(getting defensive)* That's not true.

BECKY: The only reason you're listening now is because we're talking about you.

DARLA: Now that's low.

BECKY: *(turning away from DARLA)* You don't think about other people's feelings.

DARLA: I do too!

BECKY: *(turning back to DARLA)* Really? Then how come you're trying to find another locker partner?

DARLA: Hey, you're the one who said you already turned in your partner request.

BECKY: I chose you, you self-centered moron!

There is a pause while DARLA absorbs this. She focuses on the insult rather than the information.

DARLA: Well! I don't know if I can live with a locker partner who is so mean-spirited.

BECKY: Take a flying leap, Darla. *(She storms off, exiting left.)*

DARLA: *(shouting after BECKY)* That's exactly what I'm talking about, Becky. Mean-spirited!

DARLA slumps against her locker and down onto the floor. She looks at note about locker partners again. She crumples it up, throws it, puts her head in her hands.

The lights fade.

SCENE THREE – DARLA’S HOUSE

DAD is in the living room, sporting his new Kofi hat, practicing his golf swing. DARLA storms in.

DARLA: *(half-crying)* Daddy!

DAD: *(not looking at DARLA)* What is it, honey?

DARLA: *(realizing DAD won’t pay attention to her)* Where’s Mom?

DAD: She’s in the garden, trying out her new Algerian head wrap. Last time I looked out there, she was trying to balance a water bucket on her head. What do you need?

DARLA: Oh, nothing. *(She crosses to her bedroom.)*

Lights up in DARLA’s bedroom. DAVID is sitting on her bed, playing with his lemur. DARLA enters.

DARLA: Not again. David! *(He doesn’t respond.)* David! This is not your room! *(She grabs DAVID’s arm, pulls him up from the bed.)* David! Go to your room! *(She shoves DAVID toward the exit.)* Go on, David! *(He leaves, not once acknowledging DARLA, or much else.)*

DARLA growls to herself. She sits on bed, twisting her hands together. She looks toward the door, as though she wants to go find someone to talk to. She looks away, stares forward, sighs, then falls sideways on bed. She’s eye to eye with the diary. She grabs the diary, sets it on floor and thumbs through it. Suddenly she sits up, fishes a pen from the nightstand drawer, picks up the diary and starts writing.

DARLA VOICE-OVER: Dear Diary. *(DARLA stops, pauses for a beat.)* Of course, you’re an African diary. You’re probably not called a diary but an oomba-gatoo, or something like that. Dear

Oomba-gatoo... (*She chuckles to herself, then remembers why she's writing.*) Dear Diary. What a lousy day. What a lousy two days, if you want to count yesterday's Margaret festival. Dang it. I gotta stop being so sarcastic. I love Margaret – it's so cool she travels all those places. I just can't stand how my parents dote on her. Anyway, that's just half my problems. Becky's mad at me. I suppose I don't blame her – but come on! I didn't know she wanted to be locker partners again... she should have said something! She drives me nuts like that. I need a sane locker partner. (*Pause for a beat.*) I wish Jill Morlan would be my locker partner – now that would be cool! But that'll never happen. I'm not even sure Jill Morlan knows who I am. (*She stops writing, sighs, picks up the pen again.*) I guess I'll accept my fate. I'm sure Becky will be my partner again. She did request me after all. I'll forgive her if she forgives me...

The lights fade.

SCENE FOUR – SCHOOL HALLWAY

BECKY is at DARLA and BECKY's locker, getting books; she doesn't see DARLA approach. DARLA stops for a second, sighs, then approaches BECKY.

DARLA: Hey.

BECKY: (*turning around*) Hey.

DARLA: Look, I'm sorry about what I said.

BECKY: Me too.

DARLA: It's just that you never tell me anything. How was I supposed to know you wanted to be locker partners again?

BECKY: Does everything need to be pointed out to you? Isn't it obvious we're friends?

DARLA: I guess so. You know, I didn't get my partner request into the office.

BECKY: Well, I did. Surely they'll go by that. I mean, you never turn in anything.

DARLA: That's true... maybe we should go to the office and explain everything?

BECKY: Sure.

They walk a few steps to the right, kidding around. JILL MORLAN and her POSSE approach from the right.

BECKY: (*teasing*) Hey, there's your dream partner.

DARLA: (*knowing she's teasing*) Oh shut up. To be honest, I've never even spoken to Jill Morlan before. I'm just another face in the hall.

ONE of JILL's POSSE points toward DARLA and BECKY. JILL approaches. The POSSE exits right.

JILL: Which one of you is Darla Betts?

Both girls are slightly stunned by JILL's approach.

BECKY: (*pointing*) She is.

JILL: (*looking straight at DARLA*) Really? Well, hey, pleased to meet you. I'm Jill Morlan.

DARLA: (*puzzled*) I know.

JILL: I feel terrible. When I saw your name on that slip of paper, I didn't know who you were. I had to ask somebody.

DARLA: (*still puzzled*) What slip of paper?

JILL: (*chuckling*) The slip of paper with our locker partner assignments. Didn't you get yours?

DARLA: What? No! I mean, wow. That was fast. So what are you trying to say?

JILL: You and I are locker partners next year.

BECKY: What?

JILL: (*to BECKY*) I know! I'm surprised too. (*Turning to DARLA.*) But hey, who am I to argue with the wisdom of the office?

DARLA: Wow. I didn't see this coming.

BECKY: Me either.

JILL: Me either. But hey, surprises are what makes life interesting. Say, do you have a minute? I thought we could talk themes.

DARLA: Themes?

JILL: Decorating themes. For our locker. *(She puts arm around DARLA, leading her down the hall, away from BECKY.)* What do you like? Do you do contact paper? That looks so cool, but it's hard to scrape off at the end of the year...

BECKY: Darla!

DARLA stops and looks back toward BECKY, as though having doubts about all this. Then JILL grabs her again, oblivious to what DARLA might be thinking.

JILL: And of course, since we're going to be locker partners, you should probably come to my end of the year party.

DARLA: Party? *(She suddenly forgets BECKY. JILL and DARLA exit. BECKY stands alone, about to cry over this desertion.)*

BECKY: Darla?

The lights fade.

SCENE FIVE – DARLA'S HOUSE

DARLA enters, coming home from school. DAD is in the middle of the living room, still wearing the Kofi hat, practicing his golf swing. DAD hears DARLA; he doesn't turn to her but responds.

DAD: Hey honey. How was your day?

DARLA: Pretty eventful, actually.

DAD: *(momentarily stopping his golf swing)* Really?

DARLA: We got locker assignments for next year.

DAD: Huh. You and Becky again next year?

DARLA: No, actually. Jill Morlan's my new partner.

DAD: *(turning to DARLA)* Jill Morlan? Dr. Morlan's daughter?

DARLA: I think so.

DAD: Huh. I didn't think you knew her. You know, I saw Dr. Morlan on the course today. Boy, that man can play golf. I'd love to play a round with him sometime. Not that he'd give me the time of day. Of course, I did notice him staring at me this afternoon. *(He reflects.)* I noticed everyone staring at me. You don't suppose it had something to do with my Kofi hat, do you?

DARLA: No, Dad. Of course not.

DAD: If it was, it's probably just envy.

DARLA: Whatever, Dad.

DAD: Well, back to the old swing. I've got to practice, practice, practice if I'm ever going to break 150.

DAD goes back to his golf swing. DARLA watches him for a beat, shakes her head and crosses to her room.

Lights up in bedroom. DAVID is in there again, sitting on the bed, this time holding the diary – not doing anything threatening with it, just holding it.

DARLA: David, this is not your room. David... *(She sees the diary in DAVID's hands.)* David no! Give me that! *(She grabs the diary but DAVID has a vise grip on it.)* David, give me the diary. *(She yanks the diary from DAVID's hand. DAVID makes a groan of displeasure. This makes DARLA feel bad; she doesn't like to hurt DAVID.)* Oh, I'm sorry David! Here... *(She fishes through the nightstand drawer.)* Here's some gum. Take the gum and go to your room, David. Go to your room.

DAVID takes the gum, exits, crossing the living room and through the other exit. DARLA sits on the bed, holding the diary. She grabs a pen off the nightstand and begins to write.

DARLA VOICE-OVER: Dear Diary. Today was fantastic. I thought it would be a normal, boring day... but somehow – I don't know how – I became Jill Morlan's locker partner. This is so cool – she's exactly the kind of friend I've always wanted. She's smart and successful, but not stuck up, like other girls in school

who've got it all. We're quickly becoming friends, too. She invited me to her end of the year party, and we're making plans to get together this summer... boy, things are going great. I wish tomorrow could be exactly like today...

The lights fade.

SCENE SIX – SCHOOL HALLWAY

Everything is exactly as it was yesterday. BECKY is at DARLA and BECKY's locker, getting books. She doesn't see DARLA approach. DARLA stops for a second, sighs, then approaches BECKY.

DARLA: Hey.

BECKY: *(turning around)* Hey.

DARLA: Look, I'm sorry about what I said.

BECKY: Me too.

DARLA: It's just that you never tell me anything. How was I supposed to know you wanted to be locker partners again?

BECKY: Does everything need to be pointed out to you? Isn't it obvious we're friends?

DARLA: I guess so. You know, I didn't get my partner request into the office.

BECKY: Well, I did. I mean, surely they'll go by that. I mean, you never turn in anything.

DARLA: That's true... maybe we should go to the office and explain everything?

BECKY: Sure.

They walk a few steps to the right, kidding around. JILL MORLAN and her POSSE approach from the right.

BECKY: *(teasing)* Hey, there's your dream partner.

DARLA: Oh shut up. To be honest, I've never even spoken to Jill Morlan before. I'm just another face in the hall. *(At this point DARLA realizes something's amiss. A confused look crosses her face.)* Wait a minute. I talked to Jill Morlan yesterday.

ONE of JILL's POSSE points toward DARLA and BECKY. JILL Morlan approaches. The posse exits right.

JILL: Which one of you is Darla Betts?

Now DARLA is very confused.

BECKY: *(pointing)* She is.

JILL: Really? Well, hey, pleased to meet you. I'm Jill Morlan.

DARLA: *(puzzled)* I know. And you know who I am already.

JILL: I feel terrible. When I saw your name on that slip of paper, I didn't know who you were. I had to ask somebody.

DARLA: *(starting to freak a bit)* Okay, didn't this all happen yesterday?

JILL: *(chuckling, like DARLA's just made a joke, and as though DARLA said what she did yesterday, not today)* The slip of paper with our locker partner assignments. Didn't you get yours?

DARLA: Okay, I'm freaking out. What's going on here?

JILL: *(chuckling again)* You and I are locker partners next year.

BECKY: What?

JILL: *(to BECKY)* I know! I'm surprised too. *(To DARLA.)* But hey, who am I to argue with the wisdom of the office?

DARLA: This is some sort of joke, right. If it's a joke, ha ha. You got me. I didn't see it coming.

BECKY: Me either.

JILL: Me either. But hey, surprises are what makes life interesting. Say, do you have a minute? I thought we could talk themes.

DARLA: Enough is enough, guys.

JILL: Decorating themes. For our locker. *(She puts her arm around DARLA and leads her down the hall, away from BECKY. DARLA is exasperated over this “joke,” but she goes along with JILL.)* What do you like? Do you do contact paper? That looks so cool, but it’s hard to scrape off at the end of the year...

BECKY: Darla!

DARLA stops, looks back toward BECKY. She’s starting to realize it’s not a joke, but has no idea of what is really happening. Then JILL grabs her again.

JILL: And of course, since we’re going to be locker partners, you should probably come to my end of the year party.

DARLA: Party? *(DARLA’s just going to go with the flow of this weirdness until she can figure it out.)*

BECKY: Darla?

The lights fade.

SCENE SEVEN – DARLA’S HOUSE

DARLA enters, coming home from school. DAD is in the living room, still wearing the Kofi hat, practicing his golf swing. Of course he is. DARLA has accepted that things are exactly like yesterday. She doesn’t know why, but she’s going along with it.

DAD: Hey honey. How was your day?

DARLA: Nothing I haven’t been through before.

DAD: Really?

DARLA: We got locker assignments for next year. *(To herself.)* Again.

DAD: Huh. You and Becky again next year?

DARLA: No, actually. Jill Morlan’s my new partner.

DAD: *(stopping his golf swing and turning to DARLA)* Jill Morlan? Dr. Morlan’s daughter?

DARLA: Indeed.

DAD: Huh. I didn't think you knew her. You know, I saw Dr. Morlan on the course today. Boy, that man can play golf. I'd love to play a round with him some time. Not that he'd give me the time of day. Of course, I did notice him staring at me this afternoon. *(He reflects.)* I noticed everyone staring at me. You don't suppose it had something to do with my Kofi hat, do you?

DARLA: No, Dad. Of course not.

DAD and DARLA: If it was, it's probably just envy.

DAD: What?

DARLA: Nothing. Whatever, Dad.

DAD: Well, back to the old swing. I've got to practice, practice, practice if I'm ever going to break 150.

DAD goes back to his golf swing. DARLA watches him for a quick moment, shakes her head and heads to her room. Lights up in the bedroom. DAVID is in there, just like yesterday, sitting on the bed, holding the diary.

DARLA: David, this is not your room. David... *(She sees the diary in DAVID's hands.)* David no! Give me that! *(She starts to fight DAVID for the diary, but then remembers what happened yesterday. She decides to jump ahead to the end result – she fishes some gum out of her drawer.)* Here's some gum. Take the gum and go to your room, David. Go to your room. *(DAVID takes the gum, exits the bedroom, crossing the living room and through the other exit.)*

DARLA sits on her bed, holding the diary, takes deep breath and shakes her head in disbelief. Then she grabs a pen off the nightstand and begins to write.

DARLA VOICE-OVER: Dear Diary. I think I'm cracking up. Everything that happened today happened yesterday. Or maybe I just think it happened yesterday. Or maybe I'm living the same day over and over, like some weird science fiction thing. Or am I going nuts? *(She thinks about this for a moment.)* No, today happened twice. I know it did. But how can that be? *(She thinks some more, takes deep breath.)* I don't know. I wish I knew what was going on! If I don't figure it out, I will go nuts!

The phone rings. Lights come up in the living room. DAD, who has remained onstage, answers the phone.

DAD: I'll get that. Hello? Margaret, honey! Where are you calling from? Maputo! Wow! I've never been called from Maputo before. This call must be costing, what five dollars a minute? Oh, right. Darla? Yes, she's home. You want to speak to her? Well, okay, honey... Darla!

DARLA: What?

DAD: Your sister Margaret is on the phone!

DARLA: Who cares?

DAD: She wants to talk to you!

DARLA: To me? *(She crosses from the bedroom to the living room.)* Okay, I know Margaret didn't call me yesterday, so that's not repeating... *(She takes the phone from DAD.)* Hello? *(MOM enters from the left. DAD indicates that it is MARGARET. MOM hovers over the phone, wanting to listen in – DARLA gives her a dirty look and turns away from MOM.)* Margaret! This is unexpected.

MARGARET'S VOICE: Darla! About that diary.

DARLA: Yeah. Hey, I'm sorry I was such a snot. I really like it after all. I've been using it.

MARGARET'S VOICE: You've been using it? You mean writing in it?

DARLA: That's what you're supposed to do with a diary, isn't it? Or do they do something else in Mozambique?

MARGARET'S VOICE: Darla, listen to me. Listen carefully. Remember you asked what it said on the front of the book? And I didn't know?

DARLA: Yeah...

MARGARET'S VOICE: Well, I was curious. I had some time when I got back. I went down to the marketplace where I got your book.

DARLA: So?

MARGARET'S VOICE: I talked to the man I bought it from. He mumbled something... I could barely understand his dialect... something about "be careful." I had him slow down so I could understand...

DARLA: And?

MARGARET'S VOICE: Darla, you need to get rid of that book.

DARLA: What do you mean?

MARGARET'S VOICE: Get rid of it! It has... well, it has special powers.

DARLA: What, like magic? Oh come on Margaret.

MARGARET'S VOICE: Look Darla, I know it sounds weird. But I've seen some strange stuff in my travels. Unexplainable things. Stuff you think happens only in books and movies. You have to take my word on this.

DARLA: (*wanting to believe her*) So what does the front of the book say?

MARGARET'S VOICE: Well, it's difficult to translate – it's a very old dialect. But in part, it says, "Be careful what you wish for."

DARLA: Be careful what you wish for...

MARGARET'S VOICE: Darla? What have you written in that diary? Just boring 13-year-old stuff, right? You haven't wished for anything, have you?

DARLA says nothing, thinking about this.

MARGARET'S VOICE: Darla?

DARLA: (*quoting from diary*) "I wish Jill Morlan was my locker partner."

MARGARET'S VOICE: What?

DARLA: (*still quoting*) "I wish tomorrow would be just like today!"

MARGARET'S VOICE: Darla! Whatever wish you write in that diary comes true! Darla! Get rid of that diary! It's trouble, Darla! Get rid of the diary!

DARLA: But... if wishes come true...

MARGARET'S VOICE: No, Darla! It's trouble! Look... I have to go.
But promise me you'll get rid of that diary. Bury it! No, burn it!
Promise me, Darla!

DARLA: (*thinking this over*) Okay, Margaret.

DARLA hangs up the phone. She's stunned – too stunned to remember to say goodbye even. She stands by the phone, staring into space.

MOM: What did Margaret want, dear?

DARLA: (*coming back to earth*) Oh... She's just wanted to know how I liked my present.

MOM: She called all the way from Maputo to ask that?

DAD: She didn't ask about my Kofi hat!

DARLA shrugs, walks slowly up to bedroom. The lights fade in the living room and come up in the bedroom. DARLA picks up diary, looks at the front of it and suddenly shudders. She tosses the book into the wastebasket. She sighs a breath of relief. Suddenly a big smile comes across her face. She fishes the book out of the trash, picks up a pen, opens the book, then looks out toward audience.

DARLA: My every wish is about to come true!!!

The lights fade.

SCENE EIGHT – DARLA'S HOUSE

DARLA, MOM, DAD, and DAVID are gathered around the couch. A birthday cake with burning candles sits on the coffee table in front of DARLA. Everyone is singing happy birthday to DARLA.

DAD: Happy birthday, sweetheart. (*He gives DARLA a hug.*)

DARLA: Thanks, Dad.

MOM: (*putting her arm around DARLA*) They grow up so fast. It seems like just three months ago she had her last birthday.

DAD: It was just three months ago. But this is a special birthday – 13 and one-quarter years old!

MOM: 13 and one-quarter. My, my, my.

DAD: Blow out the candles, sweetie.

MOM: And don't forget to make a wish!

DARLA: I already did. (*A sly smile grows across her face.*) I already did. (*She blows out the candles.*)

DAD: Are you ready for your presents?

DARLA: Sure!

MOM: (*handing DARLA a card*) Here you go, honey.

DARLA: (*reading the card*) “This exempts you from dishwashing, garbage detail and all other chores for the next five years.” Oh, thanks, Mom. (*She hugs MOM.*)

DAD: This one's from me. (*He hands her another card.*)

DARLA: (*reading*) “I hereby triple your weekly allowance – and here's a bonus – just for being a great kid.” (*She pulls a hundred dollar bill from the card.*) Wow! Thanks, Dad. (*She looks to DAD.*) Do you mean that? About being a great kid?

DAD: Oh certainly, sweetheart.

MOM: You're the best!

DARLA: Better than Margaret?

DAD: Margaret who? (*MOM and DAD laugh and give each other a high five.*)

DARLA: All my wishes did come true, then.

DAD: That's wonderful.

DARLA: Yes it is... yes it is... (*The sly smile comes back across DARLA's face.*)

The lights fade.

SCENE NINE – SCHOOL HALLWAY

It is between classes. DARLA approaches her locker. She sees BECKY and begins to approach apprehensively. BECKY turns and sees DARLA – she does not look thrilled to see DARLA.

BECKY: Oh, hi.

DARLA: Hi. Hey, I didn't see you before school.

BECKY: I was in the library, studying. Last minute cramming, you know. Anyway, I didn't think you cared.

DARLA: What, the thing with Jill? C'mon. We can still be friends. It's the office that picked the locker partners, right?

BECKY: I guess so. Hey, how'd you do on the pre-algebra final?

DARLA: *(shrugging)* I got an A.

BECKY: What? No way.

DARLA: Way. Mr. Roberts graded it right when I finished. I didn't miss any.

BECKY: You wish. Your highest test grade all year was a D plus!

DARLA: Well, maybe I studied hard.

BECKY: Yeah, right. You've never studied for anything.

DARLA: Well, I didn't want to flunk.

BECKY: I suppose your new friend Jill helped you.

DARLA: Hey, that's not fair!

BECKY: *(realizing she's sinking low)* You're right. Sorry. *(She turns away, mumbling to herself.)* It's not fair Jill gets to be your locker partner, either.

DARLA: What?

BECKY: Oh, nothing.

JILL enters, approaching from the right.

JILL: Hey Darla – Friday night at the Country Club. After the last day of school – big end of the year bash. Swimming, food, guys... it'll be a blast.

DARLA: Yeah, right. Hey Jill... *(She takes JILL aside, away from BECKY.)* Is there any way Becky could come? Like as my guest or something?

JILL: Well... *(She looks over at BECKY, then back to DARLA.)* I don't have a problem with it. But see, we have to make reservations at the Country Club, and my mom said I could have exactly 20 kids – no more. You were the twentieth. *(She looks back to BECKY.)* I wish she could come...

DARLA: I wish she could come too.

JILL: I mean, if somebody cancels or something... *(DARLA is hopeful.)* But that's not too likely. Well, anyway, good luck on the rest of your finals.

DARLA: Oh no problem there.

JILL exits right.

DARLA: *(crossing back to BECKY, who heard everything)* Hey look Becky. Why don't we get together Saturday night? Have our own end of the year party?

BECKY: It's not the same when it's later than the last day of school.

DARLA: Yeah, but...

BECKY: I know, you gotta go to the Country Club with all the Jill Morlans. I gotta get to class. *(She turns and walks away.)*

DARLA: Becky... Becky! I tried to get you invited! I wish you could come! *(She watches BECKY walk away, becomes dejected.)* Dang it!

The lights fade.

SCENE TEN – DARLA’S HOUSE

DARLA enters from the left. DAD is in the living room, practicing his golf putt with a putting green. DAVID is on the floor, playing with some other piece of golf paraphernalia.

DARLA: Hey Dad.

DAD: Shhh. I think I’ve found the secret.

DARLA: What secret?

DAD: The secret to the perfect game of golf. *(he looks up)* It’s all in the mind, you know. It’s a matter of channelling the positive energy from here *(he points to his skull)* to there *(he points to the ball)*. Observe. *(DAD putts. It’s a terrible shot – he putts it directly off of the green toward DAVID. It hits DAVID, who lets out a moan.)* Dang! Just once I’d like to shoot a decent game of golf. Just once!

DARLA: I’m sorry, Dad.

DAD: It’s not your fault. I’m just a lousy golfer. *(He sighs.)* I wish I had what it takes.

DARLA: *(the word rouses DARLA)* You wish?

Suddenly, a scream of frustration is heard offstage.

DARLA: What was that?

DAD: Your mother. She’s working in the rose garden. *(Another scream comes from offstage.)* I don’t think it’s going so well. *(He crosses to the upper-left garden exit, calling outside.)* Honey? Is everything alright? *(A pair of gardening gloves are thrown onstage, perhaps hitting DAD.)* Whoa! It’s worse than I thought! *(He shouts out the window.)* Do you need help with anything, dear? *(A plastic garden trowel is thrown onstage. DAD ducks.)* Yikes!

MOM, wearing her Algerian head wrap, enters and crosses to center.

MOM: I can’t take it anymore!

DAD: What’s wrong?

MOM: What's wrong? I'll tell you what's wrong! If it isn't caterpillars it's aphids. If it isn't aphids it's crown galls. If it isn't crown galls it's *(She breaks down and sobs.)* POWDERY MILDEW! Somebody does not want me to grow champion roses!

DAD: Well, it's not like roses are the most important thing in the...

MOM: *(grabbing DAD by the collar)* Oh yes it is! It's very important! *(She lets go of DAD.)* Ever since I was a little girl I dreamed of winning the Cloud County Rose Garden Crown. After years of failure, I thought this was the year. *(She grabs DAD again.)* This was going to be the year! *(She lets go of him.)* But nothing, nothing has gone right. Disease, insects, late frost. Oh, how I wish this could have been the year!

DARLA: You wish?

DAD: Cheer up honey. Your roses are no worse off than my golf game. *(MOM sobs hysterically.)*

DARLA: *(having a sudden brainstorm)* Excuse me, I have to... I have some homework to do.

DARLA exits the living room and crosses up to the bedroom. MOM and DAD, consoling each other, exit left. DARLA picks up the diary, sits on the bed and begins to write.

DARLA VOICE-OVER: Dear Diary. I can't believe how selfish I've been. All I've wished for are things for myself! The birthday party, the presents, the good grades on my finals... and it's made me happy... very happy... but everyone around me is miserable. *(She pauses.)* It's time to spread the wealth. No wishes for me, just other people. *(She stops again, chews on the pen as if in thought, then begins writing again.)* For Becky, I wish someone would cancel on Jill's party so that Becky can go. *(She nods to herself, satisfied with this wish.)* For Mom, I wish for that champion rose garden. But not just ordinary champions. Killer champion roses, the best ever! *(Again, she pauses, nods, happy with the wish... goes back to writing.)* For Dad – well, that's a no-brainer. A great golf game. An incredible golf game. The best he could ever wish for...

DARLA: The best he could ever wish for...

The lights fade.

SCENE ELEVEN – DARLA’S HOUSE

DARLA enters from the right, coming home from school. DAD is pacing around the living room, excitedly, like he’s bursting to tell somebody some exciting news. He is.

DARLA: Hi Dad.

DAD: Hey, sweetie. How was your day?

DARLA: Pretty good. Just one more day of school.

DAD: Hey, that’s great. *(He pauses, waiting for DARLA to say something.)* Well? Aren’t you going to ask me about my day?

DARLA: How was your day?

DAD: *(exploding with excitement)* Oh Darla! You wouldn’t believe it! I shot the game of the century! No, the game of the millennium. No, the game of all time.

DARLA: That’s great, Dad. What was your score?

DAD: *(beaming)* Sixty-Five.

DARLA: Really? Isn’t that like, really good?

DAD: Really good? Really good? I would have been happy with 80. I would have been happy with 100. Even 120 would be a good day for me! But 65? Tiger Woods would be happy with 65.

DARLA: I’m glad you finally had a good game, Dad.

DAD: Thanks. Let me tell you about it. *(He shifts into a dramatic storyteller pose.)* Everything went my way. Every drive off the tee – beautiful. Every chip shot – BLOOP – right on the green. Every putt – kerplunk – right in the cup. I shot three holes in one. Three!

DARLA: Not a single bad shot today, huh?

DAD: Well you know, that’s not true. On the 8th hole, I hit a drive, and it starts slicing to the right, like my drives usually do – and this shot is heading straight for the water trap. And not the edge of the pond, mind you, but smack dab in the middle of

the lake. But out of nowhere, from the depths of the water, a snapping turtle emerges, and smack! The ball hits the shell of the turtle, bounces up, out and over the water, lands on the green, a mere four feet from the cup.

DARLA: That's incredible!

DAD: It was though some unseen force was working on my side.

DARLA: Perhaps there was, Dad. Perhaps there was.

MOM'S VOICE: Oh my gosh!

DAD: Your mother. She's in the rose garden again. (*He crosses to the window.*) Everything okay, dear?

MOM'S VOICE: Look at my garden!

DAD: (*looking out*) I... Holy smokes!

DARLA crosses to window and looks out.

DARLA: I don't believe it!

DAD: That's the most beautiful garden I've ever seen!

MOM enters.

MOM: Aren't they gorgeous? Aren't they beautiful? Aren't they the most fantastic flowers you've ever seen?

DAD: (*incredulous*) How did this happen?

MOM: Hard work, I tell you. Hard work and perseverance!

DAD: (*still disbelieving*) But yesterday the entire garden was almost completely dead!

MOM: Almost, but not quite. (*She beams.*) I've brought them back to life!

DAD: Back to life? What are you, Dr. Frankenstein?

MOM: (*ignoring DAD's comment*) And just in time for the county rose show. This will be the year!

DAD: They are indeed beautiful.

DARLA: Yeah, Mom. They're gorgeous.

DARLA leaves MOM and DAD as they continue to admire the roses. DARLA goes up to her room. Lights up in bedroom, down in living room. DAVID is there, sitting on her bed.

DARLA: David. David! This is not your room! David! Go to your room! (*DAVID gets up, but just stands still, as though lost.*) Oh, David. (*DARLA puts her hand on his shoulder.*) I wish you had something to do besides hang out in my room.

DAVID leaves. DARLA reflects for a moment, then picks up diary off table and begins to write.

DARLA VOICE-OVER: Dear Diary. Well, I must say you've been a pretty reliable diary. Dad has his awesome golf game, Mom has her killer roses, I aced all my finals... the only thing that hasn't happened is Becky's invitation to Jill's party, and I'm sure that will happen... every other wish has come true. (*DARLA pauses.*) I probably shouldn't get too greedy with this wish thing. It seems too good to be true. And it can't go on forever, can it? What if it's like Aladdin's lamp? You only get so many wishes... I should make one or two important wishes, just in case the well runs dry...

DARLA: (*thinking out loud*) Let's see... I've wished plenty for myself, and I've made wishes for Becky, and Mom and Dad...

DARLA VOICE-OVER: All that's left is Margaret and David. Boy, that's a tough order to fill. What could I possibly wish for Margaret? She already has it all, always has. The only thing I wish about Margaret is that she was home. I know I act jealous of her, but the truth is I miss her. We had so much fun growing up, sharing this room... I guess all I can wish for her is that she does exactly what she wants, which I think she's already doing... oh well. David. Boy. What does he want? What goes on in his head? It's hard to tell. He doesn't seem unhappy, exactly, but he never seems happy, either, just kind of in-between. (*DARLA pauses, thinks.*) For David, I wish he could get the one thing that would make him happy, whatever it is. The one thing...

The lights fade.

SCENE TWELVE – DARLA’S HOUSE

DARLA enters from the front door right, coming home from school. DAD is in the living room, sitting on the arm of the couch, his head hanging low.

DARLA: Hello Daddy.

DAD: *(in a depressed tone)* Hi honey.

DARLA: *(walking over to him, surprised at his sullen tone)* What’s wrong?

DAD: Oh, nothing.

DARLA: C’mon. It must be something. *(She asks apprehensively.)* Golf game not so good today?

DAD: Oh, it was going great. At least on the three holes I played.

DARLA: You only played three holes?

DAD: *(sighing)* I was on the 4th hole – just teeing up – when up in a golf cart comes Dr. Morlan and two other members of the board of directors.

DARLA: Yeah? So?

DAD: *(grabbing DARLA, sobbing)* I’ve been banned from the Country Club!

DARLA: What?

DAD: They say I cheated at golf!

DARLA: What? You didn’t cheat!

DAD: They said there’s no way I could have shot a 65 without some “assistance.” You’ve never shot below 150, they said. How do you explain a 65? I tried to explain my positive energy theory, as well as my lucky Kofi hat – but they told me to pack up my locker and leave! *(He sobs.)*

DARLA: This is terrible.

DAD: I’m ruined!

DAD breaks into uncontrollable sobs. DARLA consoles him, though she herself is a bit nervous, wondering why the wish went awry. MOM enters. Her hands and arms are wrapped in bandages, as well as assorted small bandages on her face and legs.

DAD: *(looking up)* What happened to you?

MOM: *(clearly trying to hide something)* Hmm? Oh nothing.

DAD: Nothing? You're wrapped head-to-toe in bandages!

MOM: Yes, well, there was an incident.

DARLA: An incident? What kind of incident?

MOM: *(acting very nervous)* An incident with... the roses.

DAD: Roses? That looks like a bit more than a little run-in with a rose bush.

MOM grabs DAD by the collar (as best she can with bandaged hands) and gets a wild, frightened look in her eyes.

MOM: You don't know what it was like! They were alive, I tell you, alive! When I had my back turned, I felt them grab me – that's right, grab! They ripped the gardening gloves right off my hand, sticking, pricking, slicing and dicing with their evil thorns of death!

DAD: You're kidding, right? This is some kind of joke?

MOM: *(thrusting her bandaged hands into DAD's face)* Does this look like a joke? Some kind of joke, ha ha! Mommy's hands have been turned into hamburger!

DARLA: This is too weird. *(The phone rings.)* I'll get it. *(She crosses to the phone.)* Hello?

BECKY'S VOICE: Darla! It's Becky! I've got good news!

DARLA looks over at MOM and DAD, who are consoling each other. At some point during the phone conversation, they both exit.

DARLA: I could use some good news.

BECKY'S VOICE: The party.

DARLA: What about it?

BECKY'S VOICE: Someone cancelled. I'm going.

DARLA: Really? Who cancelled?

BECKY'S VOICE: I don't know. Jill just called, said I was invited.

DARLA: Well, that's the first wish that's gone right today.

BECKY'S VOICE: What?

DARLA: Nothing. See you at the party (*She hangs up. The phone rings immediately.*) Hello?

JILL'S VOICE: Darla. This is Jill.

DARLA: Oh hey! I was just talking to Becky. This is so cool!

JILL'S VOICE: Yeah, look. About the party.

DARLA: Need me to bring something?

JILL'S VOICE: Just so you know, this isn't my idea. My parents say I have to do this.

DARLA: What are you talking about?

JILL'S VOICE: I guess there was some kind of incident on the golf course.

DARLA: Incident? (*She lowers the phone, talking to herself.*) That's the second time I've heard that word today. (*She realizes where she heard it, puts the phone back up to her ear.*) What kind of incident?

JILL'S VOICE: Something with your dad.

DARLA: Oh no...

JILL'S VOICE: Some kind of cheating investigation...

DARLA: He wasn't cheating.

JILL'S VOICE: Hey, I'm not judging. But my parents say if your dad's been kicked out, I can't have you.

DARLA: So I'm the cancellation.

JILL'S VOICE: I'm really sorry.

DARLA: Me too. (*She hangs up.*) What is going on? The last three wishes I've made have backfired. Mom's roses, Dad's golf game, Becky's invitation to the party... (*She paces nervously, feeling that her world is collapsing. Then she gets a brainstorm.*) I can fix this. Yes, I'll fix this. Make more wishes. Wishes to undo the bad wishes. Counter-wishes, if you will. (*She thinks about this.*) I just need to be careful what I say. Wish for exactly what I want. (*She crosses quickly to her room to start writing in her diary. But the diary is not there. She looks on the table, the drawer, under her bed, under her blankets.*) Where's my diary? Where's my diary! Did someone take my diary? Who could have possibly taken my diary? (*She storms out of the room. She hears DAVID's voice, coming from offstage...*)

DAVID: Rac-COO-oon!

DARLA: Oh no! (*DARLA grabs her head and slumps to the floor.*)

The lights fade.

SCENE THIRTEEN - DARLA'S HOUSE

It is early morning. DAD sits on the couch. MOM enters from the left, carrying two cups of coffee.

DAD: Morning.

MOM: If you can call it good.

DAD: I didn't. I just said "morning."

MOM: (*giving DAD a cup*) Did you sleep as badly as I did?

DAD: You slept?

DARLA enters the living room from her bedroom.

DARLA: Morning.

DAD: Looks like Darla didn't sleep so well, either.

DARLA: What was all that noise?

MOM: You mean the crashing and banging?

DAD: And scritchng and scratching?

DARLA: Yeah. What was it?

DAD: The wind maybe?

MOM: The wind? I doubt that. It was calm when we went to bed.

DAD: I'll get the paper. Perhaps there was an unusual zephyr. *(He crosses to the right exit and walks just offstage to look outside.)*

MOM: That was no zephyr.

DARLA: What's a zephyr?

DAD: *(from outside)* Oh my Lord!

MOM: What?

DAD: The yard, it's, garbage, it's...

DARLA and MOM cross to the right exit and look toward the outside.

DARLA: Holy smokes!

MOM: Oh mercy!

DAD: *(re-entering the house)* There's garbage everywhere! Garbage in the yard, garbage in the driveway, trash cans in the street! It looks like the whole neighbourhood's trash is in our yard!

MOM: What on earth could have...

DAVID enters from the left.

DAVID: Rac-COO-oon.

MOM: Oh good morning, David honey. Let me get your Pop Tart. *(MOM crosses to right exit.)*

DAD: I can't go to work today. I've got to clean up!

DARLA: I'll help too.

DAD: No you won't. Last day of school. Finals...

DARLA: Don't remind me.

DAD: Who or what could have possibly made this mess?

DAVID: Rac-COO-oon!

DAD: Well, it doesn't matter, I guess. Honey! Get the garbage bags!

DAVID: Rac-COO-oon!

The lights fade.

SCENE FOURTEEN – SCHOOL HALLWAY

It is the end of the school day. DARLA has just cleaned out her locker and is going home. BECKY approaches from the left.

BECKY: Darla. Darla!

DARLA: *(turning around slowly)* What?

BECKY: How'd your finals go today?

DARLA: Um, I'm not sure. Probably okay. *(Talking more to herself)* I mean, I did good yesterday... but who knows... things aren't always what they seem...

BECKY: Are you okay?

DARLA: What? Oh, sure.

BECKY: You look like heck.

DARLA: Really?

BECKY: You've got raccoon eyes.

DARLA: *(the word "raccoon" sends a shiver down her spine)* Yeah, well, I didn't sleep much last night.

BECKY: *(a beat)* Is it me?

DARLA: What?

BECKY: I mean, everything that's happened between us.

DARLA: Don't flatter yourself. (*She's not being mean, she just knows that it's not true.*)

BECKY: Stop being so pigheaded. I feel bad enough as it is. I shouldn't have got so mad because you became Jill's locker partner, though you should have remembered to turn in your sign-up sheet. And I shouldn't go to Jill's party at your expense. I mean, it's not your fault your dad cheated at golf.

DARLA: My dad did not cheat at golf.

BECKY: Like I care. Look, I hate this. I want us to be friends again. I just wish things were back to normal.

DARLA: (*the word "wish" has sent another shiver...*) Wish things were back to normal... I could do that.

BECKY: Do what?

DARLA: Wish it in my diary... make it come true!

BECKY: What are you talking about?

DARLA: What? Oh, nothing. I'm just tired.

BECKY: What's this about your diary? I didn't even know you kept a diary.

DARLA: I dunno. I don't even know where my diary is.

BECKY: You're delirious. Go home and get some sleep.

DARLA: Sleep, yes. I'll go home and sleep.

BECKY: I gotta run. Call me tomorrow.

DARLA: Yeah, sure. (*She is formulating a plan.*) Tomorrow things will be normal.

BECKY: Whatever. (*BECKY exits left.*)

The lights fade.

SCENE FIFTEEN – DARLA’S HOUSE

It is a short time later. DARLA enters from the right, coming home from school. She sees no one at first.

DARLA: Hello?

MOM enters from the left.

MOM: Oh hi honey. How’d your finals go?

DARLA: Who knows? Looks like you cleaned the place up pretty well.

MOM: Well, it wasn’t easy. Have you ever tried to open a garbage bag with bandaged hands?

DARLA: Can’t say as I have...

DAD enters from the right.

DAD: Well, I think that’s the last of it... Oh, hi sweetheart. How was the last day of school?

DARLA: Everything I wished for, I guess.

DAD: I sure wish I knew who or what made that mess.

DARLA: You wish?

MOM: Is something wrong, dear?

DARLA has realized that the front yard mess is a result of her wishes, though she’s not exactly sure how. She decides it’s time to come clean with MOM and DAD.

DARLA: Look, Mom, Dad, sit down. I think I might know something about the mess...

DAD: Really?

MOM: What is it, honey?

DARLA: You know that diary Margaret gave me?

MOM and DAD: Yes...



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