

**Curse the Darkness**

by  
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## **Curse the Darkness**

Setting: Bare stage

Time: Right now.

Characters: (4 actors)

Bob

Ed

Lisa

Meagan

(Note: Though this is written for two men and two women, these roles can be played by actors of any gender, any age.)

## **CURSE THE DARKNESS**

Bare stage in semi-darkness.

Music plays--something peppy and upbeat and recognizable.

In the semi-darkness, two stagehands, Bob and Meagan, enter carrying a large table from offstage to downstage right. Set it. Bob finds the marks on the stage. Adjusts the table slightly. They exit stage right.

Lisa, another stagehand, enters quickly carrying a large box of props. She takes it over to the table, places a cloth over the table, and sets the table with four complete place settings--napkins, plates, glasses, double forks and spoons. She does this speedily and with great skill.

Ed, another stagehand, enters quickly carrying two chairs that he sets at the table. He exits stage left.

Bob and Meagan enter carrying a heavy couch and place it upstage left. Bob finds the marks, adjusts the couch slightly. He never passes any item on stage without adjusting it slightly. This annoys Meagan--she's anxious to get the scene set so the next play can begin. They exit stage right.

Lisa pulls a candle out of the box and places in the center of the table. Adjusts it. Tries to light it with a match. Match won't light. Tries again. Match won't light.

Ed enters from stage left carrying a small coffee table and places it stage left of the couch and exits.

Lisa is still trying to light the candle. None of the matches will light.

Bob and Meagan enter carrying an armchair, which they place stage right of the couch.

Bob adjusts it by an inch, then moves the coffee table back to the other side of the couch. Meagan isn't so sure that's where it goes. Bob adjusts it an inch.

Lisa still can't get the candle to light.

LISA  
(loud stage whisper.)  
Meagan. Help!

Meagan goes to help Lisa. She produces a lighter from her pocket. It only sparks.

Bob adjusts the coffee table by another inch. Then exits.

The song finishes. Pause. Then restarts from the beginning.

Ed enters carrying a large box full of cans and a lamp. He sets down the box and moves the coffee table back to the stage left side of the couch. Then he takes the cans downstage and quickly starts making a pyramid.

Lisa and Meagan still can't get the candle lit.

MEAGAN  
Screw it.

LISA  
It has to be lit.

MEAGAN  
Let's go! Let's go!

Lisa starts trying matches again. And again. And again.

LISA  
Ed!

Ed leaves the pyramid of cans to help Lisa and Meagan. He puts a hand on Meagan's hip.

Lisa notices.

Ed tries the matches and the lighter.  
No luck.

Bob enters carrying a laundry basket full of clothes. He sees the coffee table, moves it back to the other side of the couch.

Bob notices how close Meagan and Ed are standing to each other.

Ed and Meagan notice Bob. Meagan backs half a step away from Ed.

Bob shrugs and starts to toss the laundry around the couch and floor. He throws it quickly, but then adjusts each item of clothing so that it's just so.

Ed leaves the table.

MEAGAN

(to Lisa) Just forget it. Let's go!

Ed moves the coffee table back to the other side of the couch. Megan sees him.

MEAGAN

Ed!

Lisa returns to frantically trying to light the candle. She's getting increasingly worked up about it.

Bob watches Ed.

BOB

It doesn't go there.

ED

Yes, it does.

Ed goes back to constructing the pyramid of cans.

Bob moves the coffee table back to the other side.

MEAGAN

Come on.

Bob adjusts the coffee table by an inch, then goes back to spreading clothes.

Ed leaves the cans and moves the coffee table again.

MEAGAN

Tick tock.

LISA

(still trying the candle)  
I can't do it. I can't do it.

Bob leaves the laundry and goes over to Ed and the coffee table.

Meagan joins them, close to Ed.

BOB

Don't take his side in this.

MEAGAN

Bob.

ED

You get it wrong every night.

BOB

Don't talk to me.

MEAGAN

Let's go.

Bob picks up the coffee table and emphatically places it on the stage right side of the couch.

BOB

It goes here.

ED

You're wrong.

MEAGAN

Bob.

BOB

Of course you'd take his side.

MEAGAN

Don't.

BOB  
I'm not blind, you know.

ED  
Move the table, Bob.

BOB  
How could you?

MEAGAN  
Don't do this. Not now.

The music stops. Then restarts from the beginning.

Lisa is still trying to light the candle. She is hysterical with frustration. Her reactions range from tears, gnashing of teeth, to abject weeping and moaning. The pile of wasted matches grows larger and larger on the table, but there seems to be an unending supply in the prop box.

Ed picks up the table. Bob blocks his way.

ED  
It. Goes. Stage. Left.

BOB  
Put it back, pretty boy.

ED  
Get out of my way.

MEAGAN  
Stop it. Stop it right now.

Ed tries to get around Bob, but Bob shoves him, which jostles Meagan.

MEAGAN  
Hey!

ED  
Don't touch her!

BOB  
It goes over there.

MEAGAN  
You're such an idiot.

BOB  
Oh, I'm the idiot.

MEAGAN  
Yeah.

BOB  
I'm the idiot?

ED  
Yeah.

BOB  
Shut up.

The music stops. Then restarts from the beginning.

Bob shoves Ed with the table. Ed shoves him back.

Suddenly they're engaged in a full blown wrestling match. Meagan tries to split it up, but gets thrown backwards and smashes the pyramid of cans.

Ed and Bob hurl each other over the furniture and across the entire width of the stage, occasionally breaking free from each other long enough to put the coffee table back where they each think it belongs.

Ed gains the upper hand and has Bob pinned.

ED  
(to Meagan)  
Help me!

Meagan seizes some of the items of laundry and uses them to tie Bob's hands and feet.

BOB  
Meagan? Please? Don't do this. I can change. I can change.

MEAGAN  
Shut up, Bob. It's over.

BOB  
It goes stage right. It goes stage right. Stage. Right.

Meagan and Ed drag Bob off stage.

Lisa finally manages to light the candle. She does a silent happy dance of pure joy. Grabs the prop box. Places the coffee table in the center of the couch.

Lisa exits.

Lights all the way down.

End of Play.

Production note: Obviously, the fun of having a play like this in a festival is the element of surprise. I suggest making sure these stagehands are dressed just like your other stagehands. You'll want to make sure there is no obvious break between clearing the stage from the previous play and the start of this play. It goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway) that this play really only works if it's in the middle of the line-up for the evening.

Also, you might want to consider a fake cast list for the show in your program, i.e. "Curse the Darkness: Miranda -- Kelly Lawton, Masha--Fiona Tuttwiler. Bill--Fred Whittaker, Jake--Mike Sherman." Or anagrams of your actors' names.

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