

MAD FRANKENSTEIN

A 21ST Century Horror Comedy

by Michael Bigelow Dixon and Jon Jory

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MAD FRANKENSTEIN*A 21ST Century Horror Comedy***by Michael Bigelow Dixon and Jon Jory**

SYNOPSIS: “Mad Frankenstein: A 21st Century Horror Comedy” unleashes scientific chaos at a high school! Madelyn "Mad" Frankenstein's experiment brings a dust bunny to life, but this furry creature quickly grows into a monster. Rejected for her "mad scientist" dance theme, Mad brings her creation to the Environmental Science Club's "Thrash the Trash" fundraiser. After a terrifying encounter with a vacuum cleaner, the monstrous dust bunny is vanquished, but an army of tiny, vengeful dust bunnies emerges, promising a hilarious, yet horrifying, showdown!

DURATION: 30 minutes.

TIME: The Present.

PLACE: Several locations at a high school.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 females, 3 males, 3–7+ gender neutral)

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE CLUB MEMBERS:

PREZ (f) late teens. *(46 lines)*
 CAMILLA (f) late teens. *(13 lines)*
 ANNIE (f) late teens. *(17 lines)*
 LORI (f) late teens. *(18 lines)*
 WINDY (f) late teens. *(17 lines)*
 WALTER (m) late teens. *(25 lines)*
 FRANKIE (m/f) late teens. *(10 lines)*
 MADELYN “MAD” (f) late teens. *(108 lines)*
 JOY (f) late teens. *(101 lines)*
 PROMETHEUS (m/f) mythic god. *(9 lines)*
 DUST BUNNY (m/f) mythic creature. *(4 lines)*
 DJ SHRED (m) late teens/early twenties. *(8 lines)*
 ROADIE (m) late teens. *(8 lines)*

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTENDING THE DANCE:

WEST (m/f) late teens. *(3 lines)*

SALLY (m/f) late teens. *(6 lines)*

CALEB (m/f) late teens. *(5 lines)*

JOEY (m/f) late teens. *(3 lines)*

STUDENTS (m/f) Dance Attendees. *(Non-Speaking.)*

SET: An empty room with several entrances.

COSTUMES: Contemporary high school mostly, with imprinted trash bags for students attending the dance. A Titan god outfit for Prometheus. The Dust Bunny wears white sneakers and a large onesie with a hood, all of which is covered with tufts of hair and various pieces of trash and gunk. Make-up or a mask covers the face.

AT START: *Lights up on a group of students sitting, standing and pacing in an empty room with a few chairs.*

PREZ: She's late.

LORI: Only a couple minutes.

JOY: Mad's never late.

CAMILLA: And why's she called Mad?

WALTER: It's short for Madam Frankenstein.

JOY: It's short for Madelyn.

ANNIE: Hey, I got softball practice in ten.

WINDY: I got a dentist's appointment to even out my teeth. See?

PREZ: We've waited long enough. I'm calling this meeting of the Environmental Science Club to order. Let's begin with committee reports. Who's on Sustainability?

WALTER and JOY raise their hands.

PREZ: You're committee chair, Walter. Whatcha got?

WALTER: Last week we took a field trip to the sewage treatment plant, and it smelled like rotten eggs.

ALL: Ewww.

PREZ: Good report. Air Quality?

ANNIE and LORI raise their hands.

PREZ: Annie, go ahead.

ANNIE: We were also on that field trip, and we tested the air outside the sewage treatment plant.

Pause.

PREZ: And?

LORI: It smelled like the inside the sewage treatment plant.

ALL: Ewwwww.

PREZ: Well, at least it's at the treatment plant. Climate committee?

WINDY and JOY raise their hands.

PREZ: What's the forecast, Windy?

WINDY: We'll have a high of 76 degrees, a low of 52, and winds out of the south southeast—

JOY: Which is from the sewage treatment plant heading this way.

LORI: Whoa. I was wondering if that smell was...

WALTER: It wasn't me!

ALL: Ewwwww.

PREZ: All right. All right. New business. What's the status of our budget?

CAMILLA: As treasurer, I can report that as of yesterday at 12:30 pm, our bank account was overdrawn, because someone used Venmo to buy themselves a huevo burrito bandito Dorrito loco taco with a side of guac.

LORI: Who did that?

CAMILLA: Prez and I are the only ones with access to the Venmo account, and it wasn't me.

PREZ: Right. Other new business. Something positive. How's fundraising going? Who's on that committee?

FRANKIE and JOY raise their hands.

PREZ: Right. Frankie. What's the fundraising plan?

FRANKIE: We don't have a fundraising plan.

PREZ: Why don't we have a fundraising plan?

JOY: Because we don't have an event to raise funds for.

PREZ: Ahhh. So we need an event to raise funds for. Any ideas?

WALTER: How about a "clean up the environment" event? Those are always popular.

WINDY: Right. Good. We can start here at school and move out to the parks, do the whole town.

ANNIE: I like it.

LORI: Me, too.

PREZ: All in favor of a clean-up crusade say, "Aye."

ALL: Aye.

PREZ: Done. That was easy.

CAMILLA: I don't mean to throw shade here, but we're gonna need to buy supplies, rent a dumpster, advertise. We need money to make something like this happen.

PREZ: Which brings us back to fundraising.

FRANKIE: How about crowdfunding?

WINDY: Yeah, GoFundMe. People send you money if they believe in your cause.

CAMILLA: And sometimes they don't.

ANNIE: What about a bake sale?

FRANKIE: A 10K. *(Reacting to negative response.)* OK, a 5K.

LORI: A challenge. Like the ice bucket...

MADELYN enters. She wears jeans and a t-shirt. She tosses a book bag on the floor.

MADELYN: Sorry, sorry, double sorry. I was pursued by werewolves.

WALTER: You weren't pursued by werewolves, Mad.

MADELYN: Whatever. Meeting is convened.

PREZ: We're convened. You're just late.

JOY: You missed the reports on the sewage treatment plant.

MADELYN: Bummer. But here I am, and I'm terrific when I arrive, right? So, where are we?

PREZ: We're choosing an event to raise funds for so we'll have funds to fund an event.

WALTER: It's the classic chicken or egg.

MADELYN: Why don't we have a dance? Everybody digs a dance, right. Charge admission. Sell merch. Hold a raffle. Dance till you drop and rake in the dough.

WINDY: It could work.

CAMILLA: It could work but it needs a theme.

FRANKIE: Just spitballin' here, but how about "Clean Up Your Act."

PREZ: Oh, that's a fun dance party.

ANNIE: We need something catchy but practical.

LORI: Something possible but motivating.

MADELYN: I got it! I got it. A super-good idea. Wait for it. Wait for it.
A mad scientist theme!

Silence.

MADELYN: So are you stunned in a good way?

ALL: No.

WINDY: Too weird.

CAMILLA: How do you dress for a dance with a mad scientist theme?

MADELYN: Exactly. Get this. White fright wigs. Giant glasses in kooky frames. Rainboots. Nutty ties.

WALTER: You're a science nerd, Mad.

MADELYN: What's wrong with that?

WALTER: Science nerds don't go to dances. They stare hopefully at test tubes and beakers.

MADELYN: It's a choice.

WINDY: You gotta to get a life, Mad.

MADELYN: I got a life of ideas.

LORI: Whoa, look out world. There's a Mad Frankenstein on the loose.

WALTER: Mad Frankenstein. I like it.

JOY: Come on, Mad. Let's get out of here.

MADELYN: Yeah, you're right, Joy. You'll all see. Good luck with your theme.

MADELYN and JOY exit.

PREZ: Well, that didn't go well.

CAMILLA: Still, the clean-up is righteous, and the dance could fill the coffers.

WINDY: Wait, wait, wait!

LORI: "Wait, wait, wait" what?

WINDY: "Dance the Pollution Away!"

ANNIE: How's that work?

WINDY: It's a figure of speech.

FRANKIE: I got it.

ALL: What?

FRANKIE: "Thrash the trash!" Heavy metal, Metallica t-shirts.

ANNIE: Thrash is kinda retro.

LORI: It's making a comeback.

PREZ: All in favor?

ALL: Aye!

LORI: This is so meta.

Lights change as MADELYN wheels on a table covered with scientific equipment: scales, chemicals, beakers and test tubes, etc. JOY follows.

JOY: Man, environmental science can be brutal. Hey Mad Frankenstein, how about we grab some edibles. Something with chocolate sauce. *(No answer.)* Yo, Mad! Whatcha doin'?

MADELYN: This is a science lab and I'm doing science. Feast your eyes on this!

MADELYN holds up a glass jar. Inside is something the size of a ping pong ball that could be a dust bunny.

JOY: And this is what?

MADELYN: Abiogenesis.

JOY: A whatsit?

MADELYN: Unless I'm mistaken, which is highly unlikely according to the data, what you see before you is a mind-boggling breakthrough.

JOY: It looks like a dust bunny.

MADELYN: It was a dust bunny. Now it is the proud product of abiogenesis.

JOY: You drive me crazy with your science talk. The deal with science words is you don't understand them, can't pronounce them, and they're never funny, like wackadoodle. Wouldn't it be more fun, for example, if that thing in the jar was a wackadoodle?

MADELYN: Love you, Joy, you are my best friend...

JOY: Possibly your only friend.

MADELYN: You are kind and loving and loyal, but your mind has died a horrible death.

MADELYN shines a flashlight on the jar.

JOY: What are you doing?

MADELYN: Maybe it needs light.

JOY: Dust bunnies don't like light. That's why they hide under beds and in corners.

MADELYN: We're still in the experimental phase. Wait, wait!

JOY: Wait what?

MADELYN: This isn't your average, everyday dust bunny.

JOY: Why?

MADELYN: Because it just moved.

JOY: Bull-pucky.

MADELYN: Seriously. On its own.

JOY: Dust bunnies don't move on their own. Well, actually they do, but that's because of air currents and gravity. But they're just a random clump of cat hair, crumbs and dust.

MADELYN: Yes. You're right. That's what they are... or were... until you add some chemicals, which is exactly what I did. I have the formula here somewhere.

JOY: (*Disbelief.*) You added chemicals to a dust bunny?

MADELYN: And now it's moving. I've done it. I've created life from inorganic matter. That's abiogenesis! Do you have any idea how big this is? Where is that formula? Scientists have been working on this forever. How does life begin? What elements need to be present, what kinds of energy, do you need a meteor, a lightning strike?

JOY: You're tilting the jar, that's why it's moving.

MADELYN: Huh-uh. Where is that formula? I need to reproduce these results.

JOY: You moved the jar just to freakin' freak me out.

MADELYN: I didn't move the jar.

JOY: You had to move the jar.

MADELYN: I did not move the jar!

JOY: Did!!

MADELYN: Didn't!! Now shhhh!

JOY: But—

MADELYN: SHHHHH!

JOY: (*Whispering.*) Why are we shhhh-ing?

MADELYN: So we don't rile up the dust bunny.

JOY: If we rile it up, what will the dust bunny do?

MADELYN: (*Dangerously.*) I don't think we better find that out. Now...

JOY: "Now" what?

MADELYN: This is the crucial and perhaps most dangerous moment.

JOY: (*Backing away.*) I'm not a big fan of dangerous moments.

MADELYN: I am going to remove the living dust bunny from this jar and then place it in this box so it has room to grow.

JOY: Are you out of your mind?

MADELYN: Possibly.

JOY: Why exactly would you want the dust bunny to grow.

MADELYN: Because that's what dust bunnies do.

JOY: Well... true, they get bigger if you don't vacuum. That's the only way to stop them.

MADELYN: Shhhh. This is the moment every scientist dreams of... the moment when you make profound contact with the unknown. Hand me those tongs.

JOY: What's tongs?

MADELYN: That picky-up thing over there that looks like a giant tweezer.

JOY hands MADELYN the tongs.

MADELYN: Good. Now I'll place the incubator on the lab table.

JOY: That's just a cardboard box.

MADELYN: To you, maybe. To me it is a dust bunny petri dish, and this is key, it's the moment the world has been waiting for.

MADELYN picks up the jar, turns it over and whacks the bottom with the palm of her hand so the dust bunny falls onto the lab table. Carefully she picks up the dust bunny with the tongs and deposits it into the box.

MADELYN: Incubator, oh dust bunny, become what you must become. *(She backs away.)* You and I, Joy, have witnessed the moment when the world as we know it will never be the same.

JOY stares at her.

MADELYN: What?

JOY: I hope you're kidding.

Blackout. The science lab table is wheeled off. The stage is empty, as it was at the beginning. Enter members of the Environmental Science Club, except for MADELYN and JOY.

PREZ: I'm calling this meeting of the Environmental Science Club to order to finalize plans for our upcoming fundraiser.

ALL: Thrash the trash!

PREZ: Right. Do we have the necessary permissions?

FRANKIE: Yes.

PREZ: Do we have the space reserved?

WINDY: Yes.

PREZ: Do we have a DJ?

WALTER: DJ Shred is on board.

LORI: You got Shred?!?

ANNIE: Awesome!

WALTER: And we also got a cover group for the band Municipal Waste.

CAMILLA: What's the cover group?

WALTER: Hazardous Waste.

LORI: Awesome. I love their crossover hit, "Thrashing's My Business and Business Is Good!"

FRANKIE: And don't forget "Thrash? Don't Mind If I Do."

PREZ: Excellent. Ticket sales?

CAMILLA: We're maxing out. Our launch went viral.

PREZ: Any merch to sell? T-shirts maybe?

WINDY: Forget t-shirts. Those are so yesterday.

PREZ: What's today?

WINDY: For an environmental clean-up? Catch this: embossed trash bags! You pull 'em over your head and put your arms through the sides.

ANNIE: Like a frat-boy raincoat.

WINDY: I'll demonstrate.

WINDY pulls out a standard black garbage bag and pulls it over her head so her head and arms extend through the seams. Painted on the front is the theme: "Thrash the Trash".

LORI: I love it.

PREZ: This ties it all together. The fundraiser, the clean-up, the theme.

CAMILLA: We'll sell a gazillion.

WALTER: And the *pièce de résistance*.

WINDY: The what?

ANNIE: The finishing touch.

WALTER: To make the connection of thrash to trash totally iconic...

(Pause.)

ALL: Yes?

WALTER: We're gonna create for the first time anywhere... *(Pause.)*

ALL: Yes?

WALTER: A vacuum cleaner symphony!

ALL: Huh?

WALTER: Trust me. We get a bunch of vacuums, mic 'em, amplify 'em—they'll sound just like thrash.

CAMILLA: A P.R. coup.

FRANKIE: Talk about viral!

ANNIE: Dancing in the vacuum.

LORI: Where nobody can hear you scream.

PREZ: Let's do this!

ALL: Yeah!

LORI: This is so damn meta.

They exit. Enter JOY and MADELYN rolling the science table, on which sits the cardboard box containing the dust bunny.

JOY: Are you sure you want to do this?

MAD: We have to look. We have to know if it's alive.

JOY: You're playing with fire.

Sound of screeching eagles.

JOY: What's that?

PROMETHEUS enters from another direction. He is chained to a large rock which he carries or drags behind him—probably made of paper mâché.

PROMETHEUS: Playing with fire... Did someone call?

MADELYN and JOY scream.

PROMETHEUS: That's a very human way to say hello.

MADELYN: Who are you?

PROMETHEUS: A champion of humankind.

MADELYN: Sounds like you should be in *Christmas Carol*. Are those the chains you forged in life?

PROMETHEUS: (*Thunderous.*) I am Prometheus, bringer of fire to humanity.

JOY: (*To MADELYN.*) This could only happen when I'm with you.

PROMETHEUS: I see you bring the dust bunny of life to humanity.

MADELYN: It's in the box, yeah.

PROMETHEUS: All of the future is made of dust and fragments, the detritus of the past out of which we carve our patchwork life of failure and confusions.

JOY: I thought you called yourself a champion of humankind.

PROMETHEUS: Only the dust bunny knows your heart.

MADELYN: How'd you know about the dust bunny?

PROMETHEUS: On Mount Orthys I am known for my intelligence, and I've come to warn you of the dangers of overreach and unintended consequences. You may see a dust bunny, others will see a monster. Take me as an example. Knowledge is seldom welcome at first glance.

Sound of eagle screeching.

PROMETHEUS: I am called forth. The eagle has landed. (*Exits.*)

JOY: Did I actually see him, or have I entered the Marvel multiverse.

MADELYN: You saw him.

JOY: You are a magnet for the truly weird.

MAD: It's a talent. I think we should check the dust bunny. (*Lifts the lid of the box.*) It's bigger.

JOY: Don't tell me that.

MAD: Actually, it's a lot bigger.

JOY: How big?

MAD: Take a look.

JOY: (*Peering in.*) Incredibly bigger. Let's get out of here.

MAD: Wait. Look.

MAD pulls an object comprised of dust and hair the size of a volleyball out of the box. MAD rolls it across the floor.

MAD: Look, it can move!

JOY: You're just rolling it. It's not alive.

MAD retrieves it.

MAD: Then how did it grow?

JOY: And if it keeps growing, how big's it gonna get, Mad
Frankenstein?

MAD: We may need to ask for help.

JOY: No kidding.

*MAD returns the dust bunny to the box and they roll the table offstage.
Enter MEMBERS of the Environmental Science Club. They all wear
trash bags imprinted with "Thrash the Trash," and they carry cleaning
supplies and crepe paper.*

PREZ: Decorations committee, proceed to decorate.

MEMBERS begin taping crepe paper to the walls.

ANNIE: I'll check the light cues.

CAMILLA: I'll do the box office.

PREZ: Lori, you're on merch. Frankie, you're refreshments. What's
up with the cleaning supplies?

WINDY: When the dance ends, everyone leaves with cleaning
supplies and the clean-up starts tomorrow. We got everything ever
invented to clean up this place.

PREZ: Sounds good. Where's our music? Where's Hazardous
Waste?

WALTER: They couldn't make it. But that's OK, we got DJ Shred.
Shred!

*Enter SHRED, followed by a ROADIE wearing a cowboy hat and
hauling, rolling, pushing and/or carrying as many pieces of equipment,
containers, and boxes as possible.*

SHRED: DJ Shred is in the house.

ROADIE: Just in time.

SHRED: Always in time. Set your clock, we're gonna rock. Soon as you catch my tunes you're gonna be lockin', poppin' and tuttin'. Show 'em, Roadie.

ROADIE does some lockin', poppin' or tuttin'.

ROADIE: No cap.

SHRED: My music slaps! I am the GOAT, right?

ROADIE: Bet.

SHRED: He's my Stan. Carries my dirt-box, mixer, filter, amps, synthesizer, deck, and a crate of wax in mint condition. Vinyl or digital, it's all fire.

ROADIE: Where you want the set-up?

WALTER: Check with the sound booth up there. Maybe you can run your sound through the house speakers.

ROADIE: In a high school? Ick. That is so cheugy.

WALTER: *(To SHRED.)* What's your playlist?

SHRED: We're thrashin' the trash, right?

WALTER: *(Indicating trash bag jersey.)* Looks like it.

SHRED: So, we got metal, industrial, danger, drone and throwbacks to acousmatic and Elektronische Musik from Germany. But we're totally crossover, so expect a mix, remix and micromontage of hip hop, rock, R&B, EDM, K-Pop, and Latin, capped off with my signature scratch. *(To ROADIE.)* I leave anything out?

ROADIE: Country.

SHRED: Right. I always spin a little Zach, Kacey, and Luke for my Cowboy Stan. Point the way and grab your bestie. I'm playin' you a musical mash-up tonight, an epicurean epic, 'cause music be the food of love.

ROADIE: Shakespeare.

SHRED: Let's set the mood.

ROADIE: And that's why he's the GOAT.

SHRED and ROADIE exit.

ANNIE: *(Offstage voice.)* Light check!

PREZ: Thank you, light check.

ANNIE: (*Offstage voice.*) Going to black.

PREZ: Thank you, going to black.

Lights black out.

ANNIE: (*Offstage voice.*) Light cue 1.

Lights up, same as before.

PREZ: That's the same as before.

ANNIE: (*Offstage voice.*) That's all we got.

PREZ: Well, Shred will carry the day.

LORI: They're pushing and shoving outside. Should we open the doors?

PREZ: Lights, action, doors. Let the games begin.

STUDENTS enter and crowd around the edges. They're all wearing "Thrash the Trash" garbage bags.

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