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A High School Tail of Terror

COMEDY. Intrepid student detective Sam Archer has just solved his most recent case—locating a lost term paper. Now Sam has been called on to solve the case of “Operation Tall Tail.” After a cold-hearted thief steals Rhineburger High School’s most-prized artifact, Rocky the rhino’s tail, Sam finds himself on the trail of a tail. If Sam doesn’t find the missing rhino tail before prom night, his school will lose out on a million-dollar donation to build a new gym. As the clock ticks down, the suspense heightens as Sam has to decide who to take to prom, a task that may prove more difficult than finding Rocky’s tail!

Performance Time: Approximately 60 minutes.

Characters

(7 M, 11 F, opt. extras)

SAM ARCHER: Student detective; wears a classic private-eye trench coat; male.

EFFIE PIERCE: Student who is Sam's neighbor and friend; would like Sam to ask her to prom; female.

VEDA FABIAN: Exchange student; wears fashionable teen clothing; female.

WALDO ZULMUCHER: Student who's never without a book; male.

CHUCK CRATER: Student athlete.

ANGELA TEMPLE: Student.

NORA FINLEY: Student.

KITTY ROCCO: Student.

DEBBIE PERINE: Student

SHERRY GREY: Student.

KASPER JANZ: Student; male.

MILES GUTMAN: Kasper's friend.

MR. CORWIN: Rhineburger High School principal; wears a sport coat or suit, tie, and a collared shirt.

IDA PEATTY: School secretary; dresses rather primly.

SYLVIA DIEDRICKSON: Rhineburger High custodian.

LAUREL LYDECKER: Wealthy matron and owner of Ooey-Goey Donuts; wears a flashy, expensive-looking outfit with lots of sparkling jewelry.

MS. MARLOWE: Prom sponsor.

COSMO CRAMER: Man of mystery; wears a checkered sports coat, a red bow tie, mismatched shirt, or anything that makes him look comical.

NOTE: For prom, male students can put on sports coats and ties over their basic costume. Girls can wear wraparound dresses or step-in dresses with Velcro fastenings.

Setting

Rhineburger High School.

Set

Since the play is fluid, with characters moving on and off in brief segments, there is no need for a formal set.

Rhineburger High. A representational background would work well—perhaps a few windows, lockers, some student desks, stylized doorways, etc. A notice that prom will be on Saturday would be appropriate. Since the last episode takes place at prom, decorations such as bouquets of balloons, palm trees, etc. can be used.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I: Rhineburger High.

Intermission, opt.

ACT II: Rhineburger High, prom night.

Props

Camcorder	Various prom decorations
Book	Balloons
Rhinoceros tail for bookmark (A piece of rope about 8 inches long, flattened and fringed at the end will work. Paint it gray and decorate it with a colored ribbon at one end.)	Bicycle pump 2 Cell phones Pepto-Bismol bottle Spoon Note with letters cut from newspaper (Since no one sees the letter other than the two actors, the note can be written)
Handkerchief	Long list rolled up
Small notebook	Small box
Pen or pencil	Stack of books
Headphones	Umbrella
Broom	Lock box
Stick of gum	2 Chairs
Several bags of prom decorations	Prom outfits, for Students
Steamers	Check Pen

Sound Effects

Phone ringing (a mysterious ring tone for Sam)
Bell ringing
Dance music

*"When you've been around
as many women as I have
you get a kind of sixth sense
about what they're thinking."*

—Sam

ACT I

(AT RISE: Rhineburger High. Nora enters SL, holding a camcorder on Sam. Angela follows Sam, with Effie trailing behind.)

SAM: It was nothin', really, girls! Absolutely nothin'!

ANGELA: Oh, Sam, but it meant everything to me...at least in history class.

NORA: Yeah, Sam, how would you have felt if your term paper just up and disappeared?

SAM: Rotten, Nora, rotten to the core.

ANGELA: But I don't feel rotten anymore. You found my term paper, Sammy, and you've given me a new lease on life...or at least history class!

SAM: 'Tweren't nothin'! You just knew in a crisis you had to hire the best.

ANGELA: And the best is Sam Archer! I could just kiss you!

SAM: So what's stoppin' you?

(Angela gives Sam a peck on the cheek.)

NORA: Wow! This'll be the hottest video on SchoolTube. Thanks, guys!

ANGELA: Hey, Nora! What were Phelps and Kramer doing?

(Nora crosses SR.)

NORA: Collating graduation programs! See ya, Sam!

ANGELA: My hero!

(Angela rushes back to Sam and pecks him on the cheek again. She turns and goes to exit SR, but all freeze when Sam addresses the audience.)

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SAM: *(To audience.)* Nice girl, Angela. Discerning taste in men, if I do say so myself. And if anybody's discerning around here, it's me. Archer. Sam Archer's the name. Sophomore here at Rhineburger High. Yeah, you heard me right. Rhineburger. The place is named after Sydney Rhineburger who got rich manufacturing fertilizer. That's Rhineburger's chief industry now, so you wanna stay upwind of town as much as possible. All in all, though, it's a pretty quiet place, but that's mainly because some of us work real hard to keep the lid on things, if you know what I mean. Take Angela's case. She ran into the lunchroom earlier cryin' her eyes out, "Boo-hoo-hoo!" "What's wrong, Angela?" I said. "Somebody stole my term paper," she cried. "What was your term paper on?" I asked her. "The radiator," she said. I guess everybody can't be smart as yours truly, but the girl must've known I wanted to know the topic, right? Long story short, it was on the agricultural practices of the Mayan Indians. Yeesh! Imagine a snappy chick like Angela writing about rows of corn and potatoes. Anyhow, it didn't take me long to cap the caper. All it takes is a little know-how, right?

(Angela and Nora exit SR. Effie approaches Sam.)

EFFIE: *(Breathlessly.)* Gosh, Sam, you were wonderful!

SAM: *(To audience.)* Oh, and this is Effie. Effie Pierce. Effie and me go way back, like to second grade. We live next door to each other, walk to school together, and once in a while share a laugh. Right, Effie?

EFFIE: Right, what?

SAM: Just say "right."

EFFIE: Oh, sure. Right.

SAM: I sure made Angela's day, huh?

EFFIE: Yeah, you make everybody's day!

SAM: *(Touching cheek.)* And wow! Angela Temple kissed me!

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EFFIE: Gee, she sure is lucky. (*Catches herself.*) I mean, *you're* lucky!

SAM: And I've got you to thank for it.

EFFIE: Oh, Sam, I didn't do anything.

SAM: You only suggested the term paper might have fallen behind the radiator.

EFFIE: Yeah, but you had the courage to look, and then see it, and then reach down and get it.

SAM: It was nothin'!

EFFIE: Do you know how many spiders lurk behind radiators?

SAM: (*To audience.*) Effie was right. I guess it did take a lot of courage to retrieve that term paper. It sure was good to have Effie around to keep things straight.

[END OF FREEVIEW]