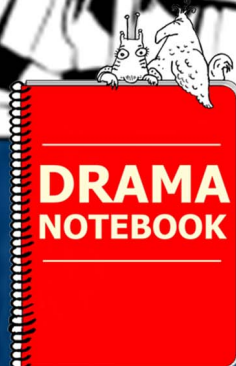


# MONSTER UNDER THE BED

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*By Debra A. Cole*



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## About the Author...

Debra A. Cole is a celebrated humanities teacher, youth theatre director, and children's playwright with degrees in journalism, art history, and elementary education. She understands the needs of young performers and their directors and creates pieces that encourage engaging discussion, creative thought, and quirky playfulness. Her goal is that young performers discover the power and delight that theatre brings to actors and audiences alike.



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## About the play...

The infamous "monster under the bed" has been a source of fear for generations. Maybe one monster thinks it's time for bedtime worries to end.



# Monster Under the Bed

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## CHARACTERS

**MOLLY** — (F) young girl who is afraid of a monster under her bed

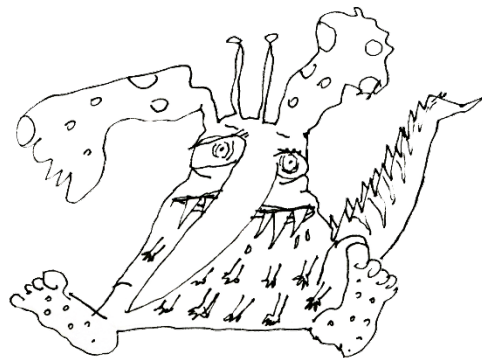
**MATT** — (M) monster who resides under Molly's bed - sometimes invisible - working on juggling

**BEN** — (M) older brother who teases Molly

**GRACE** — (F) older sister who tries to help Molly

**MOM** — (F) kind and loving - tries to be helpful

**DAD** — (M) no nonsense approach to problems



# Monster Under the Bed

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(The action takes place in modern day in the bedroom of the little girl.)

(Lights come up with Molly being tucked into bed by her parents. The lights are low from a single bedside lamp. The lamp should be a colorful lamp. Next to the lamp is a small bell. Her room is filled with bright colors, stuffed animals, and children's artwork. Molly looks worried, and her parents are trying to make her feel better.)

**DAD**

Enough is enough, Molly. For the last time, there is no such thing as a monster under your bed.

**MOM**

(scolding Dad but trying to stay calm) Sweetie, Molly is really struggling. Maybe the tough Dad approach is not the way to handle this.

**DAD**

Well, when I was Molly's age, I just went to sleep. No drinks, no snacks, no stories, and NO LOOKING UNDER THE BED to make sure there wasn't a monster!

**MOM**

Molly is not you, sweetie. Remember, Ben and Grace went through this when they were little, and now they are just fine. It's not that unusual at her age to be scared. We all have fears. You know how I feel about jugglers... they are just creepy! (looking to Molly) Do you want us to look one more time, sweet girl?

**MOLLY**

(worried) Yes, please.

**DAD**

(takes a deep breath and looks under the bed on his hands and knees) NOPE! Nothing. Well... I do see a few pairs of doll shoes and gum wrappers scattered around, but other than that... all clear!

**MOM**

See? Nothing to worry about. (deep breath) Now what did we say to do if you heard anything that made you worry or feel scared?

**MOLLY**

I can ring the bell.

(Mom grabs the bell next to the bedside table.)

**MOM**

Exactly. Just ring this bell, and we will check on you.

**MOLLY**

(rings bell over and over again) Like this?

**DAD**

(clearly not happy) THIS is a very bad idea.

**MOM**

(puts hand on bell to stop it from making noise) Yes, just like that. (kisses Molly on the forehead and places the bell back on the desk) Goodnight, sweet girl.

(Mom and Dad exits stage right off stage leaving Molly by herself with the table light still on.)

**MOLLY**

(pulling the covers up under her chin) I can do this. There is no such thing as a monster under my bed.

(Suddenly, there is knock on the bedroom door. Ben peeks in and addresses Molly.)

**BEN**

You asleep yet, squirt?

**MOLLY**

Not yet.

(Ben enter Molly's bedroom. He is clearly up to no good.)

**BEN**

I don't know how you do it.

**MOLLY**

(suspiciously) Do what?

**BEN**

Sleep knowing a monster lives underneath your bed.

**MOLLY**

STOP IT, Ben! Mom and Dad said there is no such thing as a monster under my bed.

**BEN**

(walking around the room examining toys as he goes) Sure, moms and dads are supposed to say that. I think it's part of the parent training they receive when they bring a kid home. (using adult voice) "Here are you diapers. Here are your bottles. Oh, and here is your parent guidebook that lists all the LIES you should tell your kid to make them feel better."

**MOLLY**

Stop trying to scare me! Mom said you were scared when you were my age too.

**BEN**

Me? Scared? I don't think so.

(Grace can be seen peering into Molly's room and overhears Ben's comments.)

**BEN** (CONT.) I hear monsters only live under beds of girls.

**GRACE**

(entering room) What are you telling her, Ben?

**BEN**

(casually) Oh, nothing. Just that monsters only live under the beds of girls.

**GRACE**

Funny, Ben. I seem to remember you were pretty sure a monster named "Frank" lived underneath your bed as a kid. And last time I checked, you were a boy. (sits down next to Molly on the bed)

**BEN**

Frank? (nervously) I don't remember anything about a Frank.

**MOLLY**

(looks worried again) Frank? Monsters under the bed have names?

**BEN**

(scolding in a joking manner) Look what you did, Grace! You made our baby sister even more scared. Way to go! Wait a minute... I seem to remember a story about YOU being afraid of a monster under YOUR bed. What was his name...?

(Grace looks nervous.)

Mike? No.... Gary? No.... Oh, I remember the story, his name was Todd. (laughs to himself)

**MOLLY**

(nervously) Todd?

**GRACE**

(shaking her head) I know, Todd isn't a very scary name, but neither is the name Frank, but YOU (looking at Ben) were pretty scared of him!

**MOLLY**

You guys aren't scared now! What did you do?

**BEN**

Easy! We just rang that bell back when we were little.

**MOLLY**

My bell?

**GRACE**

Do you think you are the first one in this family to use that bell?

**MOLLY**

I thought Mom and Dad bought it just for me!

**BEN**

NO! That bell has been used for years.

**GRACE**

Anytime I was scared, I just rang the bell and help arrived.

**BEN**

Easy. (takes a deep breath) Okay, kiddo. Time for you to go to sleep.

(Ben and Grace exit Molly's bedroom stage right.)

**MOLLY**

(over and over to herself) I have the bell. I have the bell. I have the bell.

(A voice comes out from under the bed.)

**MATT**

You have the bell.

**MOLLY**

(screams and grabs the bell and starts ringing) AAAAAAAAAAAAA!

(Dad and Mom come running in stage right.)

**MOM**

(upset) What is it honey?

**MOLLY**

Something just spoke to me from under the bed.

**DAD**

(looks under the bed) There is NOTHING there.

**MOLLY**

(upset) But I heard him! He said I had the bell.

**DAD**

You do have a bell.

**MOLLY**

But the monster shouldn't be agreeing with me!

**MOM**

Sweet girl, you are tired. I'm sure your imagination has just gotten the best of you. Did I hear Ben and Grace in here working you up? They know better than to try to scare you at bedtime.

**DAD**

This is crazy. Good night, sweetie.

(Dad kisses Molly on her forehead.)



(Both Mom and Dad exit the bedroom stage right.)

**MOLLY**

Come on, Molly. You are safe. Dad says he went right to sleep as a kid, and you can too. There is nothing under my bed.

**MATT**

(voice from under the bed) Nope, nothing at all...except me.

(Molly grabs the bell and starting ringing violently. Mom and Dad come running back in)

**DAD**

Okay, Molly, you have a bell, but that doesn't mean you have to ring it all night.

**MOLLY**

But, Dad. He talked to me again!

**DAD**

(sits down on the bed) You know, sweetie, I told you that I went right to sleep when I was little, no drink, no snack, no story, but... that wasn't completely true.

**MOLLY**

You lied?

**DAD**

Now, easy... I didn't exactly lie. I just didn't tell you that this bell was once my bell.

**MOLLY**

Yours? But you are never scared!

**DAD**

Well, not now, but when I was your age, I thought there was a monster under my bed too, but I grew up, and soon. I didn't need the bell. It's time for you to do the same.

**MOM**

You can do this, Molly. Try to get some sleep.

(Both Mom and Dad exit the bedroom door stage right)

**MATT**

(speaking as he comes up playfully from under the bed) Whew, I thought they would never leave!

**MOLLY**

(jumping on top of her bed and grabbing the bed for protection) YOU ARE REAL!

**MATT**

Of course, I'm real! I'm also Matt. Well, I've had many names over the years. For your sister, my name was Doug. For your brother, my name was Frank, and for your dad, well, he was a bit more creative, my name was BOO!

**MOLLY**

Boo? That's a silly name for a monster.

**MATT**

It's really more of a name for a ghost, but your dad seemed to like it.

**MOLLY**

Wait a minute, you sound nice. Aren't you supposed to be mean?

**MATT**

Who says?

**MOLLY**

Everyone!

**MATT**

Nah! I'm a cool guy! My friends all say so. The problem is that bell! Over the years, that bell has been used to keep me from getting to know the kids in the family. I really am a nice guy. Look (pulls out three small balls out of pockets) I can even juggle! (tries to juggle and fails miserably)

**MOLLY**

Not a very good juggler, are you?

**MATT**

Well, that's because no one has let me practice. Each kid in your family rang that bell before I could show what a cool friend I could be. I just gave up. But, Molly. I want a friend. I figured you might just be the bravest member of the family and the right friend for me.

**MOLLY**

I don't know, Matt. I'm a bit confused. Why can no one see you when they look under my bed?

**MATT**

Easy! I choose who I let see me. My first bedroom was that of a little girl. Every time I tried to show my face or get her attention by juggling, she fainted. I knew I had to find a new house and bed. I then moved to this house. Your grandma was the real problem. She bought THAT bell. Every time I tried to reach out to your dad, brother, or sister, each rang that bell. Your brother rang that thing every night for a month straight. It gave me a real headache.

**MOLLY**

My brother gives me headaches all the time.

**MATT**

After all of that, I decided none of them were ready for a friend like me.

**MOLLY**

They are all so brave now. I can't imagine that they were ever really scared of anything.

**MATT**

Well, not just anything... ME! You aren't scared of me now, are you Molly?

**MOLLY**

Now? (thinks about it) No. I can't believe I was ever scared of someone who can juggle... well, who wants to juggle.

**MATT**

(looking around) I'll tell you what, if you let me practice my juggling, I will let you get a great night sleep. Beauty sleep is important. Look at my skin, healthy and clean. That's because I sleep like a baby under this mattress.

**MOLLY**

(puts her hand out and shakes hands with Matt) Deal!

(Molly settles in her bed and pulls the covers up comfortably around her body.)

(Matt begins to juggle. Molly jumps up as if she has forgotten something - grabs the bell.)

I guess I won't be needing THIS (rings the bell) anymore, now that I am as brave as my family.

(Hearing the bell, the entire family runs in to see what Molly needs. Mom, Dad, Ben, and Grace all look scared to death and freeze once they see Matt.)

**DAD**

(stuttering) It's... It's... Boo!

**BEN**

(monotone) It can't be... Frank!

**GRACE**

(stuttering) D... D... Doug?

**MOM**

(stuttering) St... St... St... Steve?

(Molly looks at Matt for clarification.)

**MATT**

(stops juggling) I may have forgotten... Your mom was my first little girl. She lived down the street from your dad. It was easy to move between the two houses. (waves) Hi there, Mandy!

(Mom faints, and Dad catches her.)

(lights out)

**CURTAIN**



## Discussion Questions

"Monster Under the Bed" is an original play inspired by all the kids that have been scared of the monster under the bed over the years. When we are young, we never think of our brothers, sisters, and even parents might just have been scared too when they were little.

### Ask!

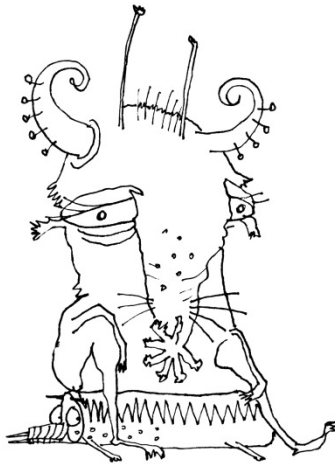
What scares you?

How do you handle something that scares you?

Do you have a brother or sister who teases you like Ben teases Molly? How do you handle it?

How did your parents help you with being afraid?

What advice would you give a friend who was afraid?



# Director/Production Notes

## Casting

These characters are ones that every young person knows. Tap into the teasing brother, older, kinder sister, nurturing mother, and frustrated father. Young actors know these people. Work with the familiarity.

## Characterization

Here are some director's tips that you can share with your cast members.

**Molly** – Molly is sweet, worried, and a little bit afraid of going to sleep at night. She wishes she could be as strong and brave as her siblings and parents.

**Matt** – This monster is playful, seasoned, and ready to make a positive connection.

**Ben** - Classic, naughty brother who loves his sister, but enjoys the game of teasing her.

**Grace** – This older sister is good at being wise and in charge. She has been through it all as the oldest but is still kind to Molly.

**Mom** – Mom is full of love, patience, and concern for Molly as she goes through this tough night process. She is usually the one who softens all the messages for Molly.

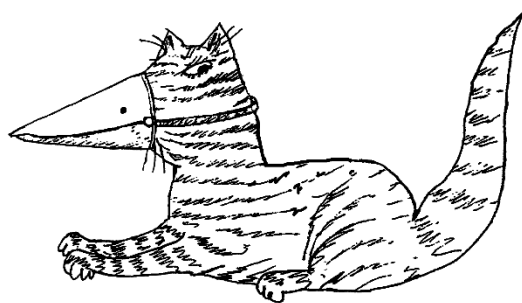
**Dad** – Dad loves Molly but becomes a little frustrated at times with this bell system. He puts on a brave face, but there is something underneath that says otherwise.

## Costumes

The easiest way to costume this show is to put all the humans in pajamas. It's bedtime across the board so this would work. As for Matt, go crazy! Let the young actors layer him up with crazy colors and funny embellishments.

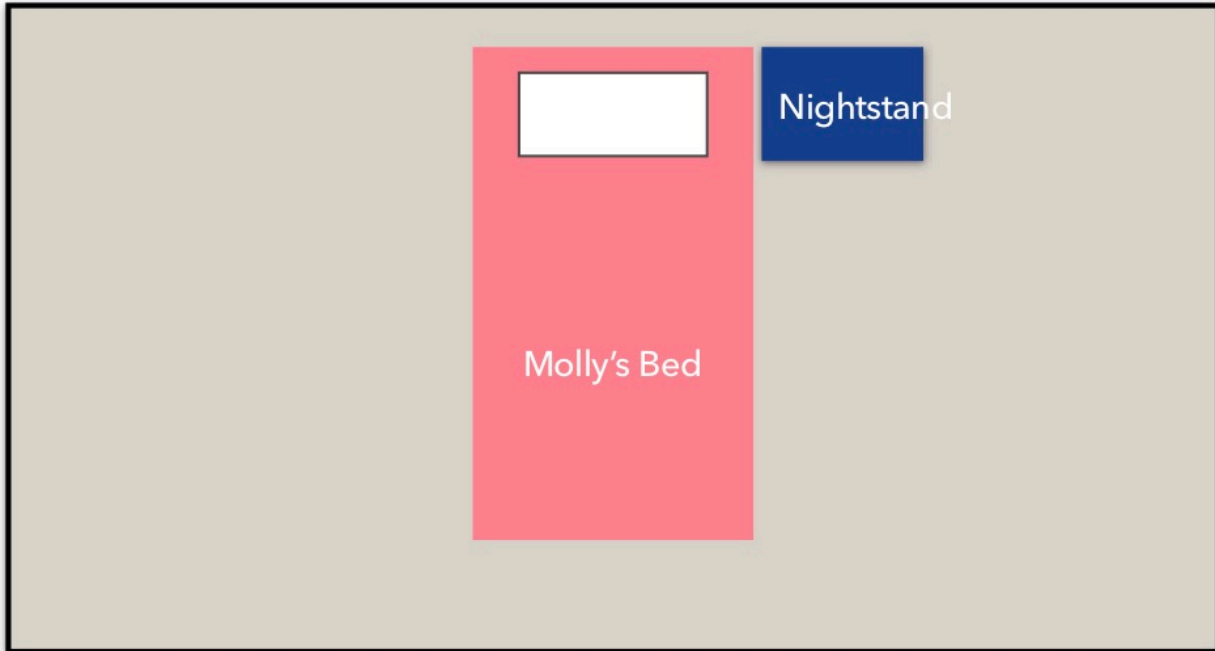
## Set

The play requires no set - just set pieces and props.



## Staging

Bedroom



Audience

### **Curtain Call**

With a small ensemble cast, curtain call is clean and easy with everyone gathering center stage and bowing as one. It takes the whole team to make this piece work, so the bows should celebrate that collaboration.

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