

MIRACLE IN MUDVILLE

A new play for young actors

By D.W. Gregory

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## CHARACTERS

### KIDS

Casey Banks, a ballplayer down on his luck  
Billy Watkins, his friend, a boy who can't see  
Kitty, Casey's younger sister  
Amy, Casey's older sister  
Hector B. Tuckerman III, Casey's former best friend  
Andrea Levine, Hector's new best friend  
Annie Nelson, Andrea's friend  
Audrey Murphy, a terrible musician who prefers baseball  
Brooke Miller, the best pitcher on the opposing team  
Drew Szezepanski, the catcher on Brooke's team.  
Ballplayer No. 1  
Ballplayer No. 2  
Other members of the Tuckerman Medicinals  
Spectators at the ballgames  
Tam Lee  
Maggy  
Esabile  
Nathan

GROWNUPS: All made of cardboard

Voice of Mrs. Muddle, the Music teacher  
Audrey's mother  
Miss Grumpman  
Casey's Mom  
Casey's Dad  
The Coach  
The Umpire  
Voice of Announcer

### KIDS FROM THE PAST

Davy Banks, Casey's dad as a kid  
Linda Deal, Casey's mom as a kid  
Jeannie Kincaid, Andrea's mother as a kid  
Bonnie Dreamer, Murphy's mother as a kid  
Hector B. Tuckerman Jr. (Hector Jr.), Hector's dad as a kid  
Louie Levine, Andrea's father as a kid

### OTHERWORLDLY PEOPLE

Mrs. Oakley's ghost - played by a kid

Miracle in Mudville was developed with students in the Speak Out on Stage Junior Company at Imagination Stage, Bethesda, Md. and presented there on April 8 and 9, 2006. Kelly Cates directed.

SCENE ONE

Mudville, Indiana. An average town in an average state at an average time of the year with an average population and an average weather forecast.

Casey Banks, age 12, faces the audience. He wears a baseball cap, a Mudville Pee Wee League uniform and looks uncomfortable. Near him stand Audrey Murphy, 11, and Hector Tuckerman III, 12, members of his baseball team. To Casey's right, a table set for dinner.

CASEY

Mudville, Indiana.

MURPHY

Our home town.

CASEY

It's just an average town in an average state.

HECTOR

Population sixteen hundred and fifty-seven.

MURPHY

It was 58, but Mrs. Oakley died last week.

CASEY

She was the town librarian.

HECTOR

They found her face-down in a collection of Shakespeare plays.

CASEY

Rumor is, she keeled over reading the balcony scene from Hamlet.

MURPHY

That's enough to kill anybody.

Hector and Casey nod agreement.

CASEY

I'm Casey Banks. I play outfield in the Mudville Pee-Wee League.

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MURPHY  
My name is Murphy. I'm infield.

HECTOR  
And I'm Hector Tuckerman.

CASEY  
Hector B. Tuckerman III, actually.

HECTOR  
I go to private school. But I play the Pee-Wee League 'cause my dad says it's good for me to hang out with ordinary kids once in a while.

He smiles; Murphy and Casey each give him a dark look. Enter Casey's family: Mom and Dad, Kitty and Amy, his sisters. The parents are cardboard cutouts. Hector and Murphy break to play catch as Casey continues.

CASEY  
I live here with my family--my dad and mom--my sisters Amy and Kitty. We're just an average American family.

He crosses to the table.

DAD  
Why didn't you hit the ball today, son?

CASEY  
Well, Dad, I--

DAD  
(cutting him off)  
Next time *hit* the ball, Casey.

CASEY  
Well, I--

DAD  
(cutting him off)  
Put everything you've got into it. And who knows? You could get a *grand slam!*

CASEY  
Actually, I'd like--

DAD  
(cutting him off)  
Just like I did when I was in sixth grade! Bang! I hit that ball so far over the fence, nobody ever saw it again!

MOM

Try to hit the ball, honey.

AMY

And get to a base for once, dumbo.

KITTY

Any base.

FAMILY (EXCEPT CASEY)

That's why they call it *baseball*.

Amy and Kitty glare at Casey.

Casey turns back to the audience.

CASEY

(less sure of himself)

Like I said. Here in Mudville, we're completely average!

Enter Andrea and Annie.

ANDREA

Mon Dieu!

CASEY

Most of us, anyway.

ANDREA

(with disgust)

Mudville is so average that there's nothing to do! *Tres stupide!*

CASEY

That's Andrea Levine. She's from France.

ANNIE

Nothing to do. Except go to the ballpark.

CASEY

And her friend, Annie. She's just from here.

HECTOR

(crossing to them)

Oh yeah. Go to the park. And watch me get a homer! While Casey the Klutz strikes out!

CASEY

I used to like Hector. Until he started hanging out with Andrea.

MURPHY

Hector's Dad owns the Tuckerman Drug Company. It's that big red building over there.

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CASEY

Every year, Mr. Tuckerman sponsors our ballteam. The Tuckerman Medicinals!

Casey and Murphy turn and show the backs of their uniforms-- which read: 'Tuckerman Medicinals'

MURPHY

The Tuckerman Medicinals are the worst Pee-Wee Baseball team in Indiana history.

CASEY

And I'm the worst player on the team!

Murphy breaks as Billy Watkins enters. Billy is Casey's pal. He is blind and uses a cane.

BILLY

Not really. I'm the worst player.

CASEY

You're the water boy, Billy.

BILLY

Well. I *would be* the worst player--if the coach let me up to bat.

(laughs)

Can you see that? What do you think the team would do?

They cross to the bench and sit down.

CASEY

Does it bother you a lot that you can't see?

BILLY

Does it bother you a lot that you can?

CASEY

Sorry. Guess that was a dumb question.

BILLY

It's okay. I'm used to it. HEY LOOK!

CASEY

Where?

BILLY

Gotcha!

He laughs again.

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Music rises: Take Me Out to the Ballgame (organ music) as spectators enter (including Casey's family) and Casey's teammates run onto the field.

All the adults are cardboard cutouts.

Some kids clear the family table off as others stay on stage and practice ball.

CASEY

(to audience)

The Hector B. Tuckerman Memorial Field.

HECTOR

Named after my grandfather. Founder of the Tuckerman Drug Company.

BILLY

It's a beautiful morning in April.

MURPHY

The fifth game of the season.

CASEY

And as usual, I start out on the bench.

Hector goes up to bat, swings and goes to 1st base.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Twenty kids on the team--and I'm number 20 in the line-up. It's the last inning of the game--and it's going pretty well for once.

ANDREA

At least this time we're only losing by a couple of points.

ANNIE

15 to 13.

AMY

Two outs.

KITTY

One kid on base.

ANDREA

Kind of exciting for once.

DAD

For once!

CASEY

(to audience)

And I am beginning to think--maybe. Just maybe. We could turn this one around.

Coach crosses. Coach is a cardboard cutout.

COACH

Yo, Murphy! You're up!

MURPHY

Yikes!

Murphy scrambles off.

COACH

Not that way, Murphy. THAT WAY!

Everyone watches as Murphy goes up to bat.

BILLY

I got a bad feeling about this.

CASEY

We can't think that way, Billy. We've got to have faith! If we think we can win--we can!

Murphy swings and misses.

Crowd reacts with disappointment.

UMPIRE

Stee-rike One!

A beat.

CASEY

Like I said: If we think we can win--

Murphy swings, misses. Crowd reacts with disappointment.

UMPIRE

Stee-rike Two!

CROWD

MUR-PHEE, MUR-PHEE! MUR-PHEE!

Get a hit Murphy.

HECTOR

PLEASE GET A HIT!

BALLPLAYER NO. 1

The crack of a ball on a bat.

Billy jumps up.

BILLY

That sounds like a hit!

CROWD AND COACH

GO MURPHY! GO MURPHY! GO!!

CASEY

Left field! It's in left field!

CROWD

RUN MURPHY, RUN MURPHY!

CASEY

Now the ball goes to first base--

BILLY

Run Murphy!

CASEY

Now the ball goes to second! But Murphy is ahead of it!

Crowd reacts as Murphy gets to second and Hector to third.

UMPIRE

SAFE!

BILLY

Where is she?

CASEY

She's on second! And Hector's at third!

BASEBALL PLAYER NO. 1

The next batter up could get them home!

BALLPLAYER NO. 2

We could tie the game! We could *win*!

CASEY

Who's up next?

COACH

You are!

Crowd reacts with horror.

CASEY

Oh boy.

BILLY

Come on Casey. You gotta have faith.

With fear, Casey goes to the plate.

ANDREA

Oh great. Look who's up to bat--Casey the Klutz.

ANNIE

We shoulda stayed home.

HECTOR

Don't try anything fancy, Casey.

AMY

Just hit it, Casey!

DAD

Keep your eye on the ball, son!

Casey steps up to the plate.

DAD (CONT'D)

Don't crowd the plate!

Casey steps back from the plate.

DAD (CONT'D)

And put some muscle into it!

Casey licks his lips. He adjusts his stance. He swings with determination, but misses.

Crowd reacts

UMPIRE

Stee-rike one.

CASEY

Eye on the ball. Don't crowd the plate. Plenty of muscle.

Casey swings again and misses. Crowd boos.

UMPIRE

Stee-rike Two!

CROWD

Come on Casey! HIT IT!, etc!

CASEY

(to audience)

This is one of those times when you really need some confidence.

CASEY'S DAD

Whatever you do, Casey--don't strike out!

CASEY

(to audience)

My dad looked kind of sick. Like he'd swallowed a whole bottle of vinegar.

AMY

Don't embarrass us, Casey!

CASEY

I look back at the pitcher. Brooke Miller. The meanest, toughest pitcher in all of Mudville. There's the wind-up. And here comes the ball. Coming straight at me--not like a baseball either! Like a cannonball. As big as a house and going ninety miles an hour! YIKES!

He ducks. Crowd boos.

UMPIRE

Stee-rike Three! You're *out*!

Billy slaps his forehead in dismay.

CASEY

(to audience)

I couldn't help it. It was a gut reaction.

Casey slinks back to the bench amid heckles and boos. The crowd disperses.

Brooke enters with Drew.

BROOKE

Hey Casey.

CASEY

Hey Brooke.

BROOKE

That was some action at the plate, Casey. What was it--some kind of new dance?

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CASEY

I--um--uh--there was a *bumblebee* at the plate.

DREW

A bumblebee? That's a new one.

BROOKE

I didn't notice any bee's nest.

CASEY

Trust me--there was a bee. And it came right at me and I--I  
I'm allergic to bees.

DREW

Yeah? How come you didn't say anything to the umpire?

CASEY

Well. Um. I'm not *that* allergic.

Drew and Brooke walk away  
laughing.

DREW

Not that allergic. That's a good one.

BROOKE

Think he'll ever get a hit?

DREW

It would take a miracle.

Murphy crosses to the bench.

MURPHY

Well, that was horrible.

CASEY

I'm sorry, Murphy! I know I let you down.

MURPHY

Forget it, Casey. I'm just lucky I got a hit this time.

Hector approaches with Andrea and  
Annie.

HECTOR

Our fifth loss in a row. Good going, Casey.

BILLY

It's not all his fault.

HECTOR

We had a chance for once.

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HECTOR, OTHERS

And you blew it!

BILLY

Don't pay any attention to them, Casey. We were losing anyway.

CASEY

No, they're right. I'll never play ball as well as my dad!

MURPHY

At least your Dad comes to watch you play.

BILLY

Yeah, Casey--he's here every Saturday. Some kids' fathers never show up.

HECTOR

(overhearing)

Hey! For your information--my dad has been here plenty of times!

MURPHY

Yeah? Where was he today?

HECTOR

He had to work.

BILLY

He had to work last week, too.

HECTOR

He's got a business to run. You can't just drop everything to watch baseball. Don't you know anything?

Hector stomps out.

MURPHY

He is so full of hot air.

BILLY

Hey, Casey. Let's go to the batting cages and practice.

CASEY

Okay. How about it, Murphy? Wanna come with us?

Enter Audrey's mother, a cardboard cutout.

AUDREY'S MOTHER

Audrey, Sweetie! Time to go!

MURPHY

Maybe next time.

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She reaches under the bench and takes out a violin case.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

I've got a music lesson now.

AUDREY'S MOTHER

Oh don't look so sad, Sweetie! Let Mummy give you a nice, big kiss!

Murphy looks back the audience and shakes her head. Sound of loud kissing noises.

MURPHY

Ma! Do you have to do that now?

Murphy exits as AMY and KITTY enter.

AMY

Casey.

KITTY

Ca-sey. How come you didn't get a hit today?

AMY

Are you afraid of the ball?

KITTY

You better get it together, Casey.

AMY

Dad's getting sick of watching you lose.

KITTY

And don't forget! The library closes at 2.

BILLY

The library? Who goes to the library on a Saturday?

AMY

People who have papers due on Monday.

CASEY

My paper. Oh man!

BILLY

Oh man! Mine is due, too!

The girls go off. Now Casey and Billy are completely alone. Casey is very down.

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BILLY (CONT'D)

What I Want to Be When I Grow Up. Two pages, double-spaced.  
How am I supposed to know?

CASEY

I'll tell you what I want to be. Average. Just a completely  
average ballplayer. In an average town. With an average Dad--  
who doesn't yell when I strike out.

Lights down on Casey and Billy as  
scene shifts.

## SCENE TWO

Scene changes to the town library. Kids rearrange tables, bring in books, maybe wheel in a bookshelf, etc. As they set up the library, they address the audience.

HECTOR  
Mudville, Indiana. My home town.

DREW  
We've got two ballfields.

MAGGY  
A big park with a pond.

BROOKE  
And a sliding board.

TAM  
A public swimming pool.

ANDREA  
And a private sports club where I go.

ESABILE  
They've got tennis courts.

NATHAN  
At the high school there's a football field.

ANNIE  
With a big track around it.

AMY  
But the town's pride and joy. By Far.

ALL  
Is the library!

KITTY  
The Hector B. Tuckerman Memorial Library.

HECTOR  
In honor of my grandfather. Who donated the land.

ANNIE  
There's a fiction section.

DREW  
A science section!

BROOKE  
A whole shelf on biology!

MAGGY  
A mystery section.

NATHAN  
With all the Sherlock Holmes you want!

ANDREA  
A rack of fashion magazines.

DREW  
And National Geographic.

TAM  
In the corner, here's a quiet place to do your homework.

KITTY  
Or visit with your friends.

MAGGY  
And I have a lot of friends.

ALL  
(to audience)  
It's just an Average Saturday Afternoon at the Library.

All kids start to chatter: "Hi,  
how are you," etc. as enter Miss  
Grumpman, a librarian, who is  
also a cardboard cutout.

MISS GRUMPMAN  
QUIET! The Library is a place to work! Not chatter!

Everyone finds a place to work or  
read.

MAGGY  
(whispers)  
Ever since Mrs. Oakley died, the library just hasn't been the  
same.

BROOKE  
(whispers)  
Miss Grumpman is not nearly as nice.

ESABILE  
(whispers)  
Mrs. Oakley used to let us whisper and talk if we weren't too  
loud.

All the kids work diligently.  
Enter Billy and Casey.

CASEY  
(loudly)  
Okay--how about an astronaut?

BILLY  
You know any astronauts?

CASEY  
Do I need to?

MISS GRUMPMAN  
QUIET!

Everyone stares at Miss Grumpman.  
Then they stare at Billy and  
Casey. Then they go back to their  
schoolwork. Billy and Casey find  
a seat. Through an open window we  
hear some hideous violin music.

MISS GRUMPMAN (CONT'D)  
What is this noise? I must investigate!

Exit Miss Grumpman.

The kids stop and listen to the  
music. They wince. Ouch. It's  
that horrible.

HECTOR  
Ow! That hurts my ears!

DREW  
Mine, too!

NATHAN  
Where is it coming from?

Kids look out the window.

TAM  
That house over there.

KITTY  
That's Mrs. Muddle's house. The music teacher.

ESABILE  
Who's that playing the violin?

ANNIE  
You call that playing?

HECTOR  
It's like fingernails on a blackboard!

Violin stops.

VOICE OF MUSIC TEACHER  
(shaken)  
Thank you, Audrey. That's enough for today.

CASEY  
It's Murphy!

VOICE OF MURPHY  
I messed up some, Miss Muddle. Can I do it again?

VOICE OF MUSIC TEACHER  
No, please! Just pay me and leave!

ANDREA  
Well, now we know what Murphy *won't be* when she grows up.

Hector and Andrea laugh.

CASEY  
That's not very nice.

HECTOR  
(mocking)  
That's not very nice.

TAM  
She's doing the best she can you know.

NATHAN  
You shouldn't make fun of people, Hector.

KITTY  
Yeah! My Dad says: Be nice to people on the way up!

AMY  
So they'll be nice to you on the way down!

HECTOR  
Your dad is a loser.

CASEY  
He's not a loser!

ANNIE  
He works at the drug company.

DREW  
So what?

BILLY

Lots of people work there.

ESABILE

Hector's Dad works there, too.

ANDREA

Hector's Dad *owns* the drug company.

AMY

Oh la de da! And what does your dad do?

MAGGY

He's a cook.

ANDREA

He's a chef! He trained in Paris! *Mon dieu! Vous etes tres stupide!*

MAGGY

What did she say?

ANNIE

She called you stupid.

ESABILE

Who are you calling stupid?

ANDREA

You don't know the difference between a chef and a cook. Bet you never even tasted

(pronounced pah-TAY)

pate!

TAM

What's that?

BILLY

A fancy name for liverwurst.

Laughter.

ANDREA

You are all so pathetic! You have no culture and no style!

The kids split up and go to separate tables. Enter Murphy with her violin case.

MURPHY

Well, that was horrible.

CASEY

Why don't you just quit that thing?

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MURPHY

I can't quit! My mother would be too upset!

TAM

Maybe she'll yell--but then she'll get over it.

MURPHY

She won't yell. She'll cry. And I'll feel *terrible*. And *then--* she'll see how terrible I feel--and she'll *hug me!*

BILLY

Yech, that is bad.

MURPHY

And *kiss me!*

OTHER KIDS

Blech.

Other kids make faces.

MURPHY

And then--she'll tell me I'm the *best little girl in the whole world!* And if I only practice--I'll get better. But I won't get better! I hate the violin!

Andrea and Hector approach.

ANDREA

We heard you playing, Audrey.

HECTOR

But we thought it was someone torturing a cat.

Laughter.

VOICE OF MISS GRUMPMAN

QUIET CHILDREN! YOU'RE LOUD ENOUGH TO WAKE THE DEAD.

BILLY

Loud enough to wake the dead. That's funny!

CASEY

I wish Mrs. Oakley would come back from the dead! And help with my paper.

MURPHY

Me, too.

BROOKE

I don't. She always gave me funny looks.

DREW

Cause you were always talking.

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TAM

Mrs. Oakley was nice.

KITTY

She gave me an apple once.

NATHAN

She helped me with my spelling.

ANNIE

She introduced me to my favorite writer! William Shakespeare!

BILLY

She ordered talking books for me.

KIDS

I miss Mrs. Oakley!

Lights flicker.

NATHAN

What was that?

BILLY

What was what?

CASEY

The lights just did something funny.

MAGGY

Maybe Mrs. Oakley is still here.

ESABILE

That's creepy.

MAGGY

She loved this library--maybe she couldn't bear to leave. Maybe she's here to get revenge on whoever killed her.

TAM

Miss Grumpman?

ANDREA

That's ridiculous. There's no such thing as ghosts.

Outside a strange wind comes up.  
Kids notice the wind. Sound of a  
creaking door. All the kids look  
in the direction of the sound.

BILLY

Uh oh.

Loud footsteps overhead.

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All the kids look in the  
direction of the footsteps.

HECTOR

Are there rooms up there?

NATHAN

Just the roof.

Hector and Nathan look at each  
other.

Flash of lightning, thunder.  
Kids jump.

ANDREA

You know what? I think I've got all the sources I need.

ANNIE

Me, too. I think I'm finished.

SPOOKY VOICE

(over the intercom)

You can't be finished yet.

ESABILE

That doesn't sound like Miss Grumpman.

MAGGY

Kind of sounds like--

KIDS

MRS. OAKLEY!

Kids scramble to get out of the  
library. Billy drops his papers.  
Drew, Brooke, Kitty, Amy, Maggy,  
Esabile and Annie flee. Hector,  
Casey, Murphy and Andrea hurry to  
get out but instead run into each  
other. They keep trying to  
sidestep each other, but instead  
block each other.

HECTOR

Move!

CASEY

You move!

MURPHY

Get out of my way.

ANDREA

Both of you guys move!

A door slams shut. The lights  
change strangely.

SPOOKY VOICE

(intercom)

The library is now closed. Thanks for coming. Please come  
again.

Murphy hides behind the desk.

CASEY

That can't really be Mrs. Oakley.

BILLY

--it's got to be Miss Grumpman. Playing a joke.

A girl emerges from behind the  
bookcase. She is dressed like a  
frumpy old librarian, but she is  
a kid.

MRS. OAKLEY

Miss Grumpman? Please! Don't insult me! Miss Grumpman gives  
us librarians a bad name.

Everyone but Billy is fixated on  
Mrs. Oakley.

ANDREA

Who are you?

MRS. OAKLEY

All the years I've worked here and you don't recognize me,  
Andrea Levine?

CASEY

You can't be Mrs. Oakley. You're just a kid.

MRS. OAKLEY

I'm the *spirit* of Mrs. Oakley. And spirits are ageless.

BILLY

Okay, this is weird. How come I can--wait a minute! Casey? Is  
that you?

CASEY

Billy? You *see* me?

BILLY

You're taller than I thought you were. Hey! Are those the  
team colors?

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ANDREA

What's going on here?

BILLY

And you must be Andrea. You're not bad looking.

HECTOR

You sound surprised.

BILLY

Well. She's so mean--I just assumed she'd be ugly.

ANDREA

Hey!

MRS. OAKLEY

No squabbling now. We have too much to do.

(rapping on table)

Come out now, Audrey. There's nothing to be afraid of.

Murphy comes out.

MURPHY

Mrs. Oakley. Are you a ghost?

MRS. OAKLEY

Does it really matter?

ANDREA

Uh, yeah.

HECTOR

Matters to me.

MRS. OAKLEY

An open-minded person does not judge people by whether they're alive or dead. All right, let's get down to business.

ANDREA

What business?

MRS. OAKLEY

The business you summoned me for.

Want to read the rest of the play? Just click on the Place an Order button to receive a free perusal copy!