

Discovering Amelia

By Trey Clarkson

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DEDICATION

To Holly Smith

STORY OF THE PLAY

Amelia Jones's life is falling apart. Her father has left, her mother is usually drunk, and her brother, a high school senior before being expelled, must now try to support the family, such as it is. Then there's Courtney and her posse who are dedicated to bullying Amelia, who finds herself with few friends. Now, another challenge. In a long-standing school tradition, each freshman must present on an American hero. Failing to choose a hero for herself, Amelia is assigned the historic female pilot, Amelia Earhart. Soon Earhart begins showing up in Amelia's daily life offering advice. She encourages young Amelia to take chances, push boundaries, and overcome fear. No one else can see or hear Earhart, and Amelia questions her own sanity. Is the presence of an imaginary friend a sign of deeper issues, or can Amelia rise above her problems and soar to new heights? With focused lighting allowing for simple staging and props, this deeply moving and inspiring play offers challenging roles for Earhart, Amelia, and her mother. Earhart's lines are all taken from her actual letters to her family and friends written throughout her life. Full evening.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Bishop Sullivan Catholic High School Theatre Company, Barry Robinson Theatre and Fine Arts Center in Virginia Beach, Virginia, March 20th, 2015. Directed by Trey Clarkson and Katherine Parker. Original cast: Sarah Hurley, Carlisle Hughes, Catherine Hutchens, Luke Sicard, Rachel Ciampoli, Zach Gandara, Sara Hutchens, Hannah Brown, Olivia Pellegrino, Jessica Truelove, Ryan Layton, Maryanne Peck, Holly Foster, Christiana Conte, Claire Hudson, Rebecca White, Jon Gandara, Madison Powell, and Grayson Petrovich.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(3 m, 12 w, 2 flex, and an ensemble of 5 or more.
Doubling possible.)*

AMELIA JONES: An at-risk high school girl

SUSAN JONES: Amelia Jones' mother and an alcoholic

TOM JONES: Amelia Jones' brother

COURTNEY KNICKS: A mean and a popular girl

GOSSIP GIRLS (2): Friends of Courtney

MRS. CARROLL: The band director

PRINCIPAL BAILEY (flex): Principal of Andover High

MRS. HOLLY SMITH: Amelia Jones's history teacher

COACH JAY: The PE teacher at Andover High School

AGATHA: One of Amelia Jones's friends

EMILY: Amelia Jones's other friend

SIMON CHAPMAN: A popular boy and love interest of Amelia Jones

AMELIA EARHART: Imaginary character only Amelia Jones can see.

MS. MALLARD: A teacher at Andover High School

A SECRETARY: Secretary to Principal Bailey

THE MINISTER (flex): Presides over funeral

ENSEMBLE: Students and funeral goers

Flexible casing: The Band Teacher, Principal, PE Teacher, and minister can all be female actors if necessary.

Doubling: PE Teacher could also play the Minister, one of the Gossip Girls could play Ms. Mallard; the other Gossip Girl could play the Secretary.

Set Notes

The design for the piece is minimalistic. Simple desks, chairs, benches, and a couch are all that are really needed. The piece relies heavily on isolation lighting. Pantomime is an option to further the minimalistic design. In the original production a large slate house shape was erected upstage to artistically signify a broken home and allow for a piece of interesting scenery for the audience; however, it is not necessary.

Sound and Light Design

The use of blue lights during transitions helps the audience see the scene changes. Modern music can be used as transition music between scenes. The music masks the noise and should accentuate the emotions and character of Amelia Jones. Act 1 music should be more somber than Act 2. All lighting is isolation lighting and detailed in the stage directions.

Script Cuts

You also have permission to trim Earhart's lines if necessary. The actor playing Earhart should listen to Earhart's actual voice as well as Katherine Hepburn to develop an accent and help with characterization.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Katherine Parker for help writing the Mom's big scene, Brant Powell for his creative and editing help, as well as Lauren Ciampoli and Alice Kirby for their artistic support.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: AMELIA JONES in an isolated center SPOTLIGHT. The beginning of the play is a timed opening montage scored to SOUND EFFECTS and sad piano MUSIC. The happenings of Amelia's day take place stage left and right in isolation. Amelia is carrying her book bag, a lunch box, and an instrument case. She remains focused towards the audience. The characters in isolation talk out to the audience when they speak to Amelia.)

(SFX: An alarm clock blaring. LIGHTS up SL on SUSAN JONES passed out on a couch. The alarm clock is visible on a small end table or stool beside her. The time reads 7:35. TOM JONES is standing beside her. He turns off the alarm and tries to wake his mother. There is callousness in his demeanor. She does not wake.)

TOM: Mom. Mom, wake up. Susan? The alarm has been going off for 20 minutes. Wake up.

(HE looks at audience "seeing Amelia" who is in her center stage spot.)

TOM: *(Cont'd.)* I'm sorry, Amelia. She had a late night. I'll drive you to school.

(LIGHTS on SL fade out. SFX: A school bell rings. AMELIA sighs. Lights fade up on isolation spot SR with three GIRLS gossiping at their locker.)

COURTNEY: Why does she even go here anymore? She should be kicked out.

GOSSIP GIRL 1: She has, like, a million tardies.

GOSSIP GIRL 2: And I think she has worn that same pathetic outfit, like, a hundred days in a row.

COURTNEY: Gross. She's gross. Oh look. She has decided to grace us with her presence today.

COURTNEY: *(Cont'd.)* What was it this time, Amelia? Car trouble or could you not find your favorite outfit? *(Sarcastically.)* Love that sweater, is it new?

(Gossip GIRLS laugh as LIGHTS fade out on them. AMELIA sighs. SFX: A band playing a warm-up scale. Isolation LIGHTS come up SL and the scene has changed to MRS. CARROLL directing with a baton at a music stand. Three or four MUSICIANS with instruments sitting in chairs can represent the band.)

MRS. CARROLL: Miss Jones. Congratulations. You are five for five this week for being late. *(Vigorously writes a referral to the office.)* Your blatant disregard for the rules of my classroom have won you a referral. *(The BAND MEMBERS laugh.)* Report to the office immediately, young lady, and tell the secretary you are to see Principal Bailey.

(SHE holds out the referral slip and AMELIA takes one out of her pocket, looks at it, and puts it back in her pocket as the LIGHTS fade out on band. SFX: A busy signal. The isolation LIGHTS fade up on SR. It is now the principal's office. PRINCIPAL BAILEY is leaning on a desk holding the telephone.)

PRINCIPAL BAILEY: *(Hanging up the phone.)* Are you sure your mother is at home, Amelia? I have tried to contact her every day this week. The mockery you made of the class elections has still not been addressed. Your inability to be arrive at school on time has become an issue. You are averaging fifteen tardies a month. Mrs. Carroll is threatening to kick you out of the band. I need you to take this letter home today. I am setting up a parent conference so we can get to the bottom of all this. Now report to your second period class.

(PRINCIPAL BAILEY holds out the letter, and again AMELIA reveals that she has a letter to the audience. LIGHTS fade down on SR. SFX: A bell. Isolation LIGHTS fade up SL on a

End of Freeview

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