

DRAMA CLUB

By Anthony Giordano

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STORY OF THE PLAY

As auditions for the school play begin, members of the drama club hear a voice from the back of the auditorium claiming to be the director, Mr. John Shakespeare. They of course know that he is a fake--they had to make up a director to get to put on the play--but are afraid that he might be the ghost of Alice's dead father. The plot is complicated by the unrequited love of several students who are auditioning, and a member of the club who lapses into characters from plays mentioned.

With an almost bare stage, this fast-paced, ensemble comedy provides well-defined roles and an upbeat ending. Since some of the exits, entrances and character positions are in the rear of the auditorium, the audience is drawn quickly into solving the mystery of just who is John Shakespeare. With themes of love, competition, aspirations, and dreams, this play is ideal for high school students.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 6 w, 1 flexible)

ALICE: An intelligent high school senior who wants to be a theatrical producer but had led her father to believe that she wanted to be an accountant.

FAY: High school senior desperate for a date for the prom. Typical crew worker.

RUBY: High school senior. An assertive, take-charge type.

JANE: High school senior. Overachiever and president of many clubs.

FELICIA: Another high school student.

GRETA: High school student. Has a small voice heard off-stage only.

BILL: High school senior. Very nondescript personality until he hears some historical or theatrical reference, then he becomes that personality.

CHUCK: High school senior. Unwilling accomplice to the rest of the crowd.

PAUL: High school student. Good actor. In love with Ruby. Small build. Opposite of Jack.

JACK: High school senior. Football star. Not too bright. Large build. Opposite of Paul.

JOHN SHAKESPEARE: Adult male. Ghost of Alice's father.

KEELER: High school principal. Heavy. Not too bright. Can be played by a woman, if desired.

HANK: Fay's cousin. Will serve as director.

SETTING

A typical high school stage. There are a lot of props and costumes from other productions stored at the sides and upstage but the CS area is bare. A skeleton hangs near one of the prop trunks and a cauldron near another box. DS is a student desk and a work light.

PROPS

On stage: Trunk and boxes containing various props including a skull, lantern, and three swords.

Mr. Shakespeare: Book, horned rimmed glasses, matches and pipe, and wallet for Mr. Shakespeare.

Jack: Script.

Paul: Shakespearean costume and microphone.

Bill: Sparkles.

SOUND EFFECTS

Crowd noises, screams, lion's roars, knocks at door.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Bare stage lit with work lights.)

FAY: *(Offstage)* You can do it!

ALICE: *(Offstage)* No!

RUBY: *(Offstage)* Yes! Just move your feet.

ALICE: *(Offstage)* I'm scared! *(We hear the shuffling of feet as BILL, CHUCK, FAY, and RUBY enter in a circle with ALICE hiding in the middle.)* I can't. *(THEY shuffle back out and then in again.)*

RUBY: Yes, you can!

(When THEY break open the circle we see ALICE crunched down.)

FAY: See, you did it.

RUBY: C'mon. Stand up and open your eyes.

(BILL goes to look through a trunk of props. The trunk lid is open so there are times when we can only see the prop and not Bill.)

FAY: There, you see, no ghosts. *(ALICE looks around tentatively, then just as she turns around to look behind her BILL holds up a skull.)*

ALICE: *(Screams)* Run!

FAY: *(Blocks HER exit)* Calm down! It's just Bill looking at a lot of junk. Bill, put that stuff down.

BILL: Sorry. I didn't mean to frighten you, Alice. It's just a prop from last year's production of *Hamlet*. *(HE kind of shuffles away. He is uncoordinated and goofy.)*

ALICE: I tell you I saw him here yesterday after school. I know you think I'm crazy, but I'm not. He was sitting on that stool with his pipe in his mouth and holding an accounting book...

CHUCK: Hold it! You had me with you until you got to the accounting book part. What respectable ghost would be holding an accounting book?

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ALICE: My father, that's who. I swear. I came in to straighten up for today's audition. The custodians moved all of this junk in here because they're painting the drama club's storeroom, and I saw him. Right there.

BILL: (*Wanders over*) I believe you, Alice.

RUBY: You're not helping, Bill.

BILL: Well, I don't like the idea of working here if there's a ghost around. I mean, I could get hurt.

FAY: Bill, there are no ghosts, and even if there were such things, ones with accounting books would hardly be dangerous.

CHUCK: Anyway, Bill, all you would have to do is pretend that you're in a play and you could handle him.

BILL: (*Innocently*) What's that supposed to mean? (*HE wanders back to the props, becoming immersed in them.*)

ALICE: Don't pick on Bill. He's the only one of you who seems to have a grasp on reality here.

CHUCK: Bill? I'm not quite sure Bill is too clear on the reality thing.

ALICE: He's just shy, that's all.

FAY: He's not shy, Alice. He has no personality until he's in a play, and then he becomes the person that he's playing.

ALICE: Isn't that what acting is all about?

RUBY: On stage, yeah, but he does it 24 hours a day. Remember freshman year when we did *Oklahoma* and he rode a horse to school for three weeks?

FAY: And sophomore year when we did *West Side Story*, and he insisted that all the teachers call him Chico?

ALICE: He was just getting into his character, that's all.

CHUCK: I saw him at Mass three Sundays in a row. Alice, he's Jewish.

FAY: Look, you think you saw your father, who's been dead for a year now, here last night. You were tired...lots of pressure about the play on your mind. Let's move on. If you see a ghost let us know, and we'll find out what he wants.

ALICE: I know what he wants.

CHUCK: OK, I'll play along. What does he want?

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