

FANTASTICAL FRIENDS

By Billy St. John

*featuring dramatizations of the classic works of
Louisa May Alcott, Charlotte Bronte, Lewis Carroll,
Charles Dickens, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle,
W. W. Jacobs, Bram Stoker and Mark Twain*

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Flexible casting: 7 - 20+ M, 6 - 20+ F)

LIBRARY

FRED: Typical preteen boy, hates to read.

JILL: Preteen girl, loves books and libraries.

THE BOOK MASTER: A bizarre, funny, man with a magical air.

MRS. WILLIAMS: A librarian.

“LITTLE WOMEN”

MEG: Teaches younger children, 16.

JO: A tomboy, sits with her elderly aunt, 15.

BETH: Shy, 13.

AMY: Prim and proper, 12.

MARMEE: Their mother, wise and gentle.

“GREAT EXPECTATIONS”

PIP: A young British country boy.

CONVICT: A fugitive, desperate, rough.

ESTELLA: A pretty young British girl, vain, haughty.

MISS HAVISHAM: A strange old woman in a tattered wedding dress.

CAMILLA: A relative of Miss Havisham, reserved.

“THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN”

JIM: A runaway slave.

HUCK: 12 or older, an adventurous boy of the mid-1800's.

WOMAN: A country woman.

MAN: Looking for runaway slaves.

“A THOUSAND AND ONE ARABIAN NIGHTS”

SCHEHERAZADE: An enchanting Arabian storyteller.

*Optional Mimed Parts include:

King: Sets up the challenge.

Prince Houssain: Purchases a magic carpet.

Prince Ali: Purchases a magic telescope.

Prince Ahmed: Purchases a magic apple.

Princess Nouronihar: Beautiful woman who becomes ill.

Servant/Seller 1: Sells magical rug.

Servant/Seller 2: Sells magical telescope.

Servant/Seller 3: Sells magical apple.

“DRACULA”

DRACULA: A vampire.

JONATHAN HARKER: A young lawyer.

FIRST WOMAN: A vampire.

SECOND WOMAN: A vampire.

THIRD WOMAN: A vampire.

DR. SEWARD: Trying to save Lucy Westenra, Dracula's victim.

ARTHUR HOLMWOOD: Lucy's fiancé.

ABRAHAM VAN HELSING: A vampire killer.

LUCY WESTENRA: Being turned into a vampire by Dracula.

“ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND”

ALICE: A pretty little girl with long blonde hair.

MOUSE: A small gray mouse, excitable.

CATERPILLAR: An arrogant insect.

BIRD: A very frantic fowl.

MAD HATTER: Nutty as a fruitcake.

MARCH HARE: A wild hare.

DORMOUSE: A sleepy rodent, can be the same mouse listed above.

MOCK TURTLE: A sad sea creature.

“THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES”

DR. JOHN WATSON: Sherlock's companion, middle aged.

SHERLOCK HOLMES: A super-sleuth, about 40.

COL. BARCLAY: A portly man in his late 40s.

NANCY BARCLAY: His wife, an attractive middle-aged lady.

JANE STEWART: Their maid, 20s.

COACHMAN: Their servant, any age.

MISS MORRISON: The Barclays' neighbor, 30s.

THE CROOKED MAN: A frightening looking man, 50.

“JANE EYRE”

JANE EYRE: A young woman able to overcome life's hardships.

MRS. FAIRFAX: A kind, middle-aged housekeeper.

GRACE POOLE: A mysterious woman in her 30s.

EDWARD ROCHESTER: A wealthy, domineering man in his 40s.

MR. MASON: A visitor, 40s.

“THE MONKEY'S PAW”

MRS. WHITE: An elderly country woman.

MR. WHITE: Her husband, also elderly.

HERBERT WHITE: Their son, 30s.

SERGEANT/MAJOR MORRIS: A gruff war veteran.

THE VISITOR: A somber man, any age.

SETTING

The setting is a reading section of a library. Although a realistic set can be used, the play can be effectively staged employing only stage curtains and simple set pieces. On stage at rise are two rectangular, wooden library tables, one SL and one SR. Two wooden chairs are UPS of each table. There is a tall bookcase filled with books behind each table, with an opening between them CS. You may choose to attach painted backdrops to the backs of these bookcases and flip them over to create scenery for various scenes. Characters will make entrances and exits behind these bookcases, as well as off SR and off SL.

There can be rows of other bookcases behind the two required, or rows of bookcases diminishing into the distance can be painted on a backdrop, or a stage curtain can span the UPS area. At times the two tables and their chairs will be moved offstage, and other set pieces brought on; you might place them on low, wheeled platforms that can be pushed on and off. A check-out desk with two stools behind it are in the extreme DSR corner, below the proscenium arch if possible, facing the audience. In the extreme DSL corner is a table, below the proscenium arch if possible, on which is placed a display of books.

The play can be performed in a real library. If so, perhaps a display of the books from which scenes are performed can be prominently displayed so that the audience can find them easily to check them out.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

(The scenes in the play are divided in such a way that each director can choose selected scenes and arrange them in whichever order desired. Using 4 or 5 scenes in Act I, and 2 or 3 scenes in Act II (6 - 8 scenes in all) will provide a full evening's entertainment. The play's flexibility will allow you to use a large cast, or a small cast if you double your actors in the roles. If a small cast is used, you can arrange the scenes in the best order as to allow the actors time to change costumes easily. For your playbill, arrange the following synopsis to fit the scenes you chose, and the order in which you present them.)

ACT I

Prologue

Scene 1: "Little Women"

Time: The Civil War.

Place: The March home in New England.

Scene 2: "Great Expectations"

Time: Mid-1800's.

Place: An English village.

Scene 3: "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn"

Time: 19th century.

Place: Along the Mississippi River.

Scene 4: "A Thousand and One Arabian Nights"

Time: Ancient Arabia.

Place: A king's palace and several "distant" locations.

Scene 5: "Dracula"

Time: Late 1800's.

Place: A castle in Transylvania and Dr. Seward's home in England.

Scene 6: "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"

Time: 1860's.

Place: Wonderland.

Intermission

ACT II

Scene 1: "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes"

Time: 1888.

Place: London.

Scene 2 "Jane Eyre"

Time: 1800's.

Place: Thorndyke Castle in Northern England.

Scene 3 "The Monkey's Paw"

Time: Early 1900's.

Place: A cottage in the English countryside.

Conclusion

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ACT I
Prologue

(AT RISE: The library is empty. From behind the SR bookcase, we hear FRED's voice:)

FRED: *(Offstage.)* No...no...no...no...*(FRED appears at the CS end of the bookcase. He has been reading book titles on the back side of the bookcase, and as he rounds the end and comes into view, he inches down the row, reading titles on the stage side.)* No...no...no...no...no. *(HE stops and turns forward.)* Shoot! *(HE pulls out the chair at the UPS end of the table and sits on it. He puts his elbows on the table and rests his chin on his hands, dejectedly; to himself.)* I don't like any of them. Who wants to read some old book anyway?

(JILL enters USC from behind the SL bookcase carrying two books. She crosses to SL of FRED.)

JILL: Hi, Fred.

(FRED jumps up, startled. From the way he looks at her and acts around her, it is obvious that Fred has a huge crush on JILL.)

FRED: Jill!!!

VOICES FROM BEHIND THE BOOKCASES. Shuuuuu!!!

JILL: You have to keep your voice down in the library, Fred. People are trying to read.

FRED: I forgot. I...uh...I don't spend much time in libraries.

JILL: You don't? I do. I love books.

FRED: Well, I don't. I hate to read, but I've got to do that book report for Miss Collins' class.

JILL: I've already picked my book. What are you going to read?

FRED: I haven't got one yet; I'm still looking for the skinniest book in the library.

JILL: *(Laughing softly.)* That's no way to choose a book. Try to find a subject you'll like.

FRED: Aw, it's too much trouble.

JILL: It's up to you. Well, see you in class.

FRED: Yeah. *(FRED sits back down and watches JILL as she crosses to the desk DSR.)*

JILL: I wonder where the librarian went?

(JILL taps the bell on the desk. There is a puff of smoke behind the desk, startling her and FRED. THE BOOK MASTER pops up in the smoke. He is a bizarre character, dressed in an old-fashioned coat and vest, looking something like the Mad Hatter in "Alice in Wonderland." He has a wild, bushy head of hair. He waves the smoke away.)

B.M.: I was just sorting some of the books' dust covers - and not a moment too soon! Hello, young lady. May I help you?

JILL: I was looking for Mrs. Williams, the librarian.

End of Freeview

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