

How to Go to a Dance Stag (And Still Look Cool)

By Shelley Leiser

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DEDICATION

To my kids –both the ones at home, and the ones in the classroom. Every year I see the world getting harder and harder to live in, and being a teenager gets to be more and more complicated. I hope that through the characters in this show my kids have realized that all people have problems, insecurities, and embarrassing moments. I hope they realize that the date isn't always the right one; there is nothing wrong with being single; no dance is perfect; and at the end of the day, if you are going to fall, "fall with style."

STORY OF THE PLAY

Being a teenager is stressful enough, but it's even worse when there is a dance on the horizon, and you don't have a date. Four groups of students deal with the looming dance in their own way. Some conduct scientific social experiments, and others have to learn to dance. One girl finds out she is apparently "spoken for" (although she has no idea by whom), and another just locks herself in the bathroom and refuses to come out. With a little help from their friends and some "hip" parents, these students try to figure out if it is even possible to learn "How to Go to a Dance Stag and Still Look Cool."

Run time: 90 minutes with optional intermission.

PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

Premiered at the Waukee Community School Theatre Arts Center on November 16-18, 2017.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

*18-33 speaking roles + extras (min. of 6 m, 8 w, 4 flexible)
(max. 9 m, 14 w, 10 flexible)*

“SINGLE” CHARACTERS

MAGGIE: Lacks confidence. A bit dramatic.

DAD: 40's. Maggie's father, a stud.

TELEPHONE VOICE: *(Flexible.)* A telephone voice.

“SPOKEN FOR” CHARACTERS

GINA: Head cheerleader, a little uptight.

FRANKIE: Cheerleader, Matt's neighbor, witty, academic.

MELODY: Cheerleader, super social.

MATT: Frankie's neighbor, the boy next door.

MATT'S MOM: 40's. Matt's quirky, overly affectionate mother.

LISA/LYLE: *(Flexible. Optional.)* Way too smart!

MRS. / MR. MACKLETREE: *(Flexible.)* Math teacher, a bit stuffy.

DREW: *(Flexible. Optional.)* Slacker student.

PAYTON: *(Flexible. Optional.)* Hard-working, overwhelmed student.

THE NICK FREALY: Cocky, academically dishonest, totally full of himself.

MARY SIMMONS: New girl in school, kind, strong-minded.

EXTRAS: Cheerleaders and classmates.

“THE EQUATION FOR THE PERFECT DANCE” CHARACTERS

TRAVIS: Relatively normal, poet, delightfully dorky.

MAX: *(Flexible.)* Skeptical, overly critical, snappy, sarcastic.

PAT: *(Flexible.)* Encouraging, positive, kind.

ZACH: *(Optional.)* A jokester, smooth talker.

CHRIS: *(Flexible.)* Overly literal, auditioning for the National Spelling Bee, annoyingly intelligent.

AUNT GLENDA / UNCLE GLEN: *(Flexible.)* 40's+, eccentric, over-the-top.

MOLLY: *(Optional.)* A romantic.

ISABELLA: *(Optional.)* A romantic, giggly girl.

JOY: *(Optional.)* A romantic, giggly girl.

REBECCA: A confident girl.

MALLORY: Rebecca's impatient friend.

TANYA: The gossip.

RODNEY / RONDA: *(Flexible. Optional.)* The newspaper editor.

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“BRO CODE” CHARACTERS

JAKE: “Understands” girls, has three older sisters, can dance.

TYLER: Delightfully dorky, “that” friend.

LOGAN: Can’t dance, Rachel’s boyfriend, insecure.

CHUCK: Too “cool” for this, masculine.

CHUCK’S MOM: 40’s. Clever, overly expressive.

RACHEL: Logan’s girlfriend, cheerleader, a little insecure.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Many roles can be double or triple cast. The script also calls for extras as cheerleaders and classmates. Any character can be an extra. Additionally, scenes or extra classroom conversations may be omitted, depending on casting needs.

This show has the potential to be a very male-heavy show if the main characters in “The Equation for the Perfect Dance” are cast as boys, but it can also be performed with only 6 male performers. The easiest way to get the 9 male-specific roles down to 6 is to have Tyler say Zach’s lines, replace Chuck with Matt, and slap a wig and some sunglasses on the actor playing Dad, so he can double as The Nick Frealy. Scenes can be rearranged, and lines minimally modified to make this work.

The order of scenes provided in this script is a suggestion, and the scenes can be rearranged depending on your set needs. You can perform each set of scenes or you can mix and match them like the scene list suggests.

This play can be as elaborate as you want it to be. Platforms may be used to separate the spaces, or the whole show can be done with different-sized theatrical boxes, a couple of tables, and a door (preferably on castors).

To help transitions occur smoothly throughout the play, sometimes it works well to have characters for multiple scenes come out during the longer transitions. This allows transitions to occur with simple light shifts rather than having to wait for character entrances. Multiple platforms lit separately can allow this show to move very quickly, without long breaks in the action.

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“Single” (Part 1): The Girl in the Bathroom

(MUSIC fades. Footsteps are heard moving quickly across the floor, followed by door slamming. A LIGHT comes up on a door. On one side of the door is MAGGIE, who is obviously distraught, and on the other side, DAD.)

DAD: Mags.

MAGGIE: Go away!

DAD: Mags, what's wrong?

MAGGIE: Dad, go away!

DAD: Are you hurt?

MAGGIE: No!

DAD: *(After a pause.)* Did you and a friend have a fight?

MAGGIE: No!

DAD: *(Thinking.)* Is it that time of the—

MAGGIE: *(Interrupting quickly.)* DAD!!!

DAD: Well, I don't know. You came bursting through the door with tears streaming down your face, and locked yourself in the bathroom... that usually means...

MAGGIE: *(Quickly.)* Just go away.

(Long beat.)

DAD: *(Softly.)* Did something happen at school?

MAGGIE: No.

DAD: Did you not do well on a test?

MAGGIE: No.

DAD: Are you having issues with... I mean... Well, is this about... a boy?

(Silence, sniffing.)

DAD: *(Cont'd.)* Anyone I know?

MAGGIE: *(Softly.)* No.

DAD: You know, there are a lot of boys in the... *(Long beat.)*
Do you want to talk about it?

(Silence as MAGGIE quietly cries.)

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DAD: *(Cont'd.)* I'm here, Mags. When you're ready to talk. I'll listen.

(LIGHTS fade.)

“Spoken For” (Part 1): Dibs on Gina

(LIGHTS up. Upbeat dance MUSIC, as CHEERLEADERS enter the stage from all sides. This dance is a great distraction to be used during the transition. Another option is to perform a stomp/clap routine. The juxtaposition of the sentimentality of the “Single” scene and the strong “we are women” effect of a strong stomp/clap routine can have a great impact on an audience. As the music ends, GINA and her friends MELODY and FRANKIE are near the front of the group.)

GINA: *(After completing the dance.)* 5, 6, 7, 8.

(CHEERLEADERS clapping to the beat and chanting; feel free to insert your school's mascot. A fun add-on is to have the other students in the cafeteria do the stomping, sliding, and clapping along with the cheerleaders, moving around their tables as they go.)

CHEERLEADERS: Hey Tigers,
You've got the beat,
Now let us see you move those feet.

(EVERYONE in the cafeteria participates in a short stomp routine: Stomp, stomp, slide. Stomp, stomp, clap. Stomp, stomp, slide. Stomp, stomp, clap.)

CHEERLEADERS: You like to dance, you like to move.
At Friday's dance you'll really groove.

(Stomp, stomp, slide. Stomp, stomp, clap. Stomp, stomp, slide. Stomp, stomp, clap.)

End of Freeview

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