

THE NO PURPOSE ROOM

By Guy Guyon

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STORY OF THE PLAY

ACT I: Miss Pricilla Louise Peacock is hired at midterm by Mr. Gregory, principal of Webster High School, to replace Miss Marie Fosdick Perrigrue, the drama coach, who has suffered a breakdown. It is imperative that she assume her duties at once since the yearly review and variety show is already in rehearsal. The first person Pricilla meets is Bob Huges, the young and handsome basketball coach. Since the stage is located in the gym, it isn't long before a conflict breaks out between them over the use of the joint facility. Tom Bradley, a science teacher and friend of Bob's, adds fuel to the fire by being openly sympathetic to Pricilla, Archie, captain of the basketball team, complicates the situation by becoming strongly attracted to the new teacher. Two girls let the air out of some basketballs so they won't "take up so much room" and the fight is on. The Act ends with Bob threatening to close the show and get rid of Pricilla as well.

ACT II: The Act opens with the review and variety show in rehearsal. Because her car wouldn't start, Pricilla arrives an hour late. But for Archie's help - and the basketball team - she wouldn't have made it at all. Bob and Pricilla have patched up their differences of the previous week and are now on polite speaking terms. However, when Bob discovers that Archie broke training rules, he becomes angry. He becomes more angry still when Archie tells him that he (Archie) and Pricilla are practically engaged. Bob confronts Pricilla with this and a heated argument ensues. Pricilla slaps him sharply across the face and, in his anger and frustration, Bob suddenly kisses her soundly. His anger mounts to rage when she reacts by laughing and Bob vows that she will pay for this and not to forget it!

ACT III: It is four weeks later and the opening night of the REV-A-RI-ETY SHOW as it is now called. The audience now becomes an actual part of the play by being the assembled audience for the variety show. Consequently, some members of the cast are "planted" in the audience and speak their lines from that location. The "performance" has progressed only briefly when Bob attempts to stop the show and meets with an accident that dazes him but does not injure him seriously. In his dazed condition, he realizes what he did not suspect or would not admit and confesses that he really loves Pricilla. He blacks out and collapses, a doctor is called for and comes up from the audience and Bob is taken to his office. The president of the school board takes charge. By the time Bob returns, a solution satisfactory to all is reached. The play ends with the entire cast singing the Grand Finale songs of the Rev-a-ri-ety Show.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m., 5 w., extras)

TONY BEECHER: A senior at Webster, 17 years old with dark hair and complexion. He is about 5-10 and well-built but no muscle man. He is intelligent, a good student and active in many phases of school life. An extrovert type but not overbearing or arrogant, he is popular with his peers as well as the faculty.

MARGIE MAXWELL: A junior 16 years old with blond hair and blue eyes. She is about 5-5, has a bright smile, pleasing personality and bursting with energy. She is a good student and anything but a "dumb" blond type. She dresses in the prevailing fashion but should not be sloppy.

MR. GREGORY: Gregory is the principal of Webster. He is about 55 with thinning hair, a rather ruddy complexion and somewhat on the stout side. He usually wears clothes of conservative cut and color because he believes this is in keeping with his role as principal.

PRICILLA LOUISE PEACOCK: Pricilla is about 24 or 25 with a beautiful complexion, green eyes and copper colored hair. She is about 5-7, extremely attractive and well-poised. She is informal and friendly and without affectation in speech or manner. She has a good sense of humor, an easy smile and a warm personality but can be firm and business-like when necessary. Her clothes are simple but stylish and she wears very little jewelry. Her whole appearance is evidence of culture and good taste.

BOB HUGHES: The basketball coach at Webster, he is tall, dark and handsome in a virile way. His eyes have a bit of the Irish mischief in them and he is good-natured, informal and breezy with everyone. He is about 27 and walks with relaxed somewhat disjointed movements. His clothes fit him well but in a casual way. Because he has been extremely successful as coach, he has been catered to.

ARCHIE WILLIAMS: He is the captain of the basketball team, 18 years old, a senior and very tall with large hands and feet. He stands and walks slightly stooped in an unconscious effort to minimize his height. He is a romantic by nature and tends to fantasize. At the moment he is in the poetic stage. He is well-liked by Bob who has assumed a big brother relationship with him. His teammates respect him and enjoy his confidence.

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STEVE EDWARDS: Since Steve is supposed to be a weight lifter and strong man, it is important that he look the part even though he never actually performs in that capacity. Otherwise he is a good natured, popular boy with short hair, a nice smile and friendly with all. Because of his strong build, his clothes always seem to be somewhat too small for him.

TOM BRADLEY: A science teacher at Webster and a good friend of Bob's. He is light complected with short, blond curly hair, 28 years old and about 5'10". He is a little on the plump side indicating that he exercises his mind more than his body. He has a ready smile and quick wit and loves to "needle" people in a friendly way. He keeps Bob from taking himself too seriously.

DOCTOR CRAMER: He has white hair and a thin, wiry frame and is in his early sixties. He is cool and calm and speaks with short brisk words. He is neat but because his clothes do not fit him too well, he appears a little on the shabby side.

CLEM WELLS: Clem is the president of the school board and the richest man in town. Past 65, he looks younger. He is about 5'8" and stockily built with iron-gray hair parted on the left side. He is neat but not prim. He speaks with authority and forceful deliberation.

MARIE FOSDICK PERRIGRUE: She speaks no lines but is important to the plot. She is a grand woman, close to 65 with white hair and an intelligent face. Although she is using a cane, she is not stoop shouldered or bent over. Her whole bearing and appearance are evidence of strength of character and good breeding. In spite of her recent ordeal, her face is relaxed and composed. Her dress and hair are in the latest fashion but in keeping with her age.

NOTE: Except for the major speaking roles and the basketball players, the parts can be played by male or female actors. The remaining adult and teen-age characters in this play do not need specific descriptions. The director should try to choose people of contrasting appearance however. The basketball players should all be tall boys probably not less than 5'10" in height

SYNOPSIS

The action takes place on the stage and in the gym of Webster High School, located in a Midwestern city of about 12,000 inhabitants, mostly of middle class and upper middle class families.

ACT I: Friday afternoon - about 3:30 P.M.

ACT II: Early evening, the following Monday.

ACT III: Friday evening, four weeks later - 7:30 P.M.

ACT I

(AT RISE: The action begins as soon as the house LIGHTS are dimmed out but without opening the curtain. TONY BEECHER and MARGIE MAXWELL rush through one of the doors at the rear of the house and run down the R aisle to see who can reach the stage first. A moment later they are followed by MR. GREGORY and MISS PRICILLA LOUISE PEACOCK, as the two teen-agers run down the aisle, Gregory calls after them to be quiet, not to run, to be careful not to trip in the dark, etc. They ad-lib with such remarks as: "Okay, we will." "We won't trip." "We've done this lots of times," and other such remarks but keep running nevertheless. TONY reaches the stage first and leaps up onto the apron. MARGIE follows by way of the steps R. Tony goes behind the curtain and immediately pokes only his head out from between them like a clown poking his head through a paper hoop. He makes all kinds of exaggerated faces and expressions. Margie crosses to him, places her full hand flat on his face and pushes him back behind the curtain.)

MARGIE: Open the curtain, you ham! *(HE does so, then joins MARGIE at C, where the two start to do "While Strolling Through The Park One Day" in the style and manner of the old vaudeville "song and dance" team. This is more in the way of "clowning" rather than any attempt to do anything seriously. The stage is still dark but the apron should be lighted sufficiently to light those on the apron and the dim forms of stage props in the background. GREGORY and PRICILLA soon reach the stage and start up the steps R. Gregory is about to stop the impromptu performance but Pricilla places a hand on his arm indicating that he should let them continue for the moment.)*

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GREGORY: *(As MARGIE and TONY reach C from DL.)*
Tony, turn on the lights, please. Then you and Margie may go. It will take only a minute to show Miss Peacock the stage.

TONY: Who'll put out the lights?

GREGORY: That shouldn't be too difficult. I spend half of my time putting out lights that teachers leave burning.
(TONY exits DR and turns on only the stage lights, NOT the house lights.)

MARGIE: But, Mr. Gregory, this is our act for the REV-A-RI-ETY SHOW and we'd like to do it for Miss Peacock.
(TONY re-enters and joins MARGIE.)

PRICILLA: What did you call it?

MARGIE: "Rev-a-ri-ety." It's a combination of the words "review" and "variety."

GREGORY: It's the annual review and variety show I was telling you about. The one Miss Perrigrue was directing when she ... a ... when she became ill.

PRICILLA: Oh, yes. *(Crossing to TONY and MARGIE.)*
Why, that's very clever. Who thought it up?

MARGIE: Tony did.

TONY: Yeah ... with a little help from my mother and dad.

MARGIE: Miss Perrigrue appointed Tony assistant director, and he's going to MC the show, too.

TONY: Knock it off .

PRICILLA: That's wonderful, Tony. And I hereby reappoint you to both. *(Turning to GREGORY.)* If I may ... ?

GREGORY: Certainly. It will serve as a liaison between the old and ... a ... the new, as it were.

MARGIE: Now can we do our act for Miss Peacock?

GREGORY: I have a 3:30 appointment. After that, if the gym is ... a ... if the auditorium is free, she may take a look at your act.

PRICILLA: Free?

GREGORY: In a school like this, Miss Peacock, the gym/ auditorium must be put to many uses.

PRICILLA: I understand. But don't you have a schedule allotting definite times to each activity?

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