

Radio Suspense Plays

By Alice Duckworth

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AUTHOR'S COMMENTS

The three plays in this book are in radio format thus scenery and costuming are not necessary. Students selected should, on first reading, discuss the play's mood, attitudes, and values of the characters, and final outcome. If presentation is in a classroom, other class members should be encouraged to participate in the discussion. Clear enunciation, voice projection, character development, and building of suspense should be stressed. Each participant should be allowed to develop his character freely, to provide individual expression.

CONTENTS

THE WITNESSES
THE MOUND
THE BONFIRE

THE WITNESSES

CAST OF CHARACTERS

NARRATOR
GREG
CHARLIE
CAMERA MAN
FILM DIRECTOR
JACK
SAM
YOUNG MAN

A CITY STREET

Scene 1

NARRATOR: Greg and Charlie are walking to a ball game one afternoon when they notice an interesting looking van parked across the street.

GREG: Hey, look at the fancy van with the birds painted all over it.

CHARLIE: *(Reads.)* Fowle Film Co. *(Chuckling.)* That's neat. Fowle - birds - get it?

GREG: Yeah, Charlie, I get it! I get it! Look what they're taking out of the van. Looks like a T.V. camera.

CHARLIE: And spotlights.

GREG: And a trunk. They must be going to make a T.V. movie. Let's go find out.

NARRATOR: Hurrying across the street, they approach the man with the camera.

GREG: Hi! You making a movie?

CAMERA MAN: You got it, son.

GREG: Where? In that building?

CAMERA MAN: Right again.

CHARLIE: Could we -

CAMERA MAN: *(Interrupting.)* If you're thinking about watching the filming, kid, forget it. No one's allowed.

Radio Suspense Plays

- 4 -

NARRATOR: Just then a big, blue car pulls up behind the van and three men get out. One is tall and thin with a beard and seems to be in charge, one is wearing quite a lot of make-up, and the third wears a ski mask. A minute later another car arrives. More men climb out and they all start to enter the building.

GREG: It looks like a big production. I sure wish we could watch.

CHARLIE: I don't see why we can't. The worst they can do is throw us out.

GREG: There's a guy in the ski mask. Let's ask him, maybe he'll let us in.

CHARLIE: No way! Take a look at the man he's talking to. He's a tough-looking customer!

GREG: Yeah, you're right about that!

NARRATOR: While Greg and Charlie are trying to decide what to do, the tough-looking customer returns to his car and drives off, and the guy wearing the ski mask enters the building.

CHARLIE: There goes our last chance!

GREG: Let's give it a try on our own. You go first. I'm right behind you.

CHARLIE: Oh yeah? Forget it! We go in together, old buddy!

GREG: Oh, all right, let's go!

INSIDE THE BUILDING
Scene 2

NARRATOR: Greg and Charlie find themselves on the ground floor of a tenement building. A flight of stairs leads up to the second floor, and another flight to the basement.

GREG: Listen! I hear voices! They're downstairs. C'mon, let's go down.

CHARLIE: What if -

GREG: *(Interrupting.)* Don't what if! Just be quiet. *(A pause for THEM to get downstairs.)*

CHARLIE: This sure is a funny place to make a movie. I wonder why they didn't use a regular studio.

GREG: Who knows? But they're here all right. In that room down at the end of the hall. Hear them talking?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

DIRECTOR: *(From a distance, but easily understood.)* OK, everybody. Now, we've rehearsed this scene many times, but I'll go over it once more. Jack, you're alone in the basement. You're sure the money's in the trunk. You get the lid up, reach out to touch all that cash and Bingo! You're shot! You gasp, clutch your chest, and fall back. Then we quick cut to Mario's escape. Understood?

JACK: Understood.

DIRECTOR: Good! Everyone all set? Jack, start walking toward the trunk. Wait! Cut the lights, Sam, and give us full blue spots.

SAM: Righto!

DIRECTOR: OK. Now Jack, start walking.

GREG: Now's our chance. We'll sneak in and nobody will see us.

CHARLIE: It's a good thing we've got on tennis shoes.

INSIDE THE FILMING ROOM
Scene 3

NARRATOR: Within seconds, they're in the room with the film crew. They stay close to the door so that they can get out in a hurry, but no one seems to notice them.

DIRECTOR: TAKE ONE!

GREG: *(Whispering.)* That's Jack kneeling by the trunk.

CHARLIE: *(Whispering.)* I know. And that's Mario raising the pistol.

(A SHOT rings out.)

GREG: *(Whispering.)* That was really neat.

DIRECTOR: Great on the first take! That ought to do it. Sam, all set for Mario's getaway?

SAM: All set, Chief.

DIRECTOR: Then follow Mario out and up the stairs. Once outside get shots of several of the tenements. Take in the street for at least a half block. That's why we took the trouble to come out here. We want to get the feel of the neighborhood. Move fast now. GO, Mario, GO! *(Brief pause.)* All right, everybody out now, back to the studio. We'll get the props later.

(Pause with the sound of PEOPLE LEAVING.)

GREG: That was fast. They're all gone.

CHARLIE: It's sure dark in here. They forgot to turn on the lights.

GREG: You'd better be glad they did. We'd be in trouble.

CHARLIE: They left the trunk with all that money.

GREG: Are you kidding? You think they'd leave it if that was real money?

CHARLIE: It sure looked real to me.

GREG: You're crazy! I'll turn on the light and show you.

(Pause to turn on switch.)

End of Freeview

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