

The Poe Show

Adapted from the works of Edgar Allan Poe

by
Jonathan Yukich

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STORY OF THE PLAY

What could go wrong when a group of patients at the Sunnyvale Insane Asylum decide to put on an evening of Edgar Allan Poe works for the public? A lot. With tongue-in-cheek comedy, and a host of kooky characters, this wild romp provides a uniquely theatrical take on such Poe classics as “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Raven,” and many more. Beware, though, there are surprises within, and things may not always be what they seem. Muhahaha!

Running time: 60 minutes

NOTE

This is largely a comedic adaptation of Poe’s work. His stories and poems are exquisitely outlandish and melodramatic, and this adaptation attempts to enjoy and embellish their bizarre, peculiar, sometimes even hammy, style. Much of it can be playful, sensational, even farcical.

There are scenes listed for rehearsal purposes, however, the show should be presented with no breaks.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(6 m, 6 w, some flexibility)

DR. SEYMOUR DARKLY (m)

MARGO (w)

ZELDA (w)

HARRY (m)

CLARENCE (m)

BEBE (w)

CONRAD (m)

GINNY (w)

LOLA (w)

DR. SPRATT (m) In last scene only.

NURSE SMILES (w) In last scene only.

POLICE OFFICER (m) In last scene only.

* Gender flexibility is possible with only slight modifications.

* There is character doubling that is apparent in the script. The doubling employed attempts to capture an ensemble quality necessary for the piece. Please try to adhere to the doubling as assigned.

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SETTING

The play takes place on a makeshift stage inside an insane asylum. The set can be as spare and minimal as the director deems necessary. Because the play is being performed by patients at the asylum, the set can have a thrown-together, slightly off, quality to it.

SOUND EFFECTS

Lightning and thunder crash
Low, distant rumble of a heartbeat
Heartbeat gradually increases in rate and volume
Loud crash or thunk
Doorbell sounds, followed by knocking
Soft, distant heartbeat
Louder heartbeat
Heartbeat that continues to increase in volume and intensity
Heartbeat that becomes almost unbearably loud
A crash of thunder and lightning
Party/ dance club music
Loud clanging chime of a great clock
Clock chimes again
Midnight chiming of the clock

PROPS

Couple of wallets
A spooky blue eye
Teacups
Laser pointer
Penknife
A large sheet of cardboard with painted bricks on it
Mobile phone
Dagger
Id bracelets

COSTUMES

Officers - Three trench coats
Cat - Black cat costume and then add white scarf
Raven - Costume can be less than stellar
Revelers - Masks, frocks, and waistcoats, matching their respective colors, with powdered wigs or perukes

Opening Scene

(AT RISE: LIGHTS up on DR. DARKLY, our host for the evening. He greets us with a big, devilish grin. His tone and fashion are confident, stylish, debonair, though there is something askew lurking beneath the surface.)

DR. DARKLY: Dear audience, welcome! Oh, it warms the cockles to see such a grand turnout here tonight. A welcome sight indeed!

(SFX: Lightning and a thunder crash.)

DR. DARKLY: *(Cont'd.)* Let me introduce myself: Dr. Seymour Darkly, head psychiatrist here at the Sunnyvale Asylum for the Mentally Insane. Here at Sunnyvale, we're all one big family.

(SFX: Lightning and thunder crash.)

DR. DARKLY: *(Cont'd.)* Yes, we're so close that often you can't tell the doctors from the patients! *(Snickers.)* But I digress. At Sunnyvale, we believe that theatre and storytelling have the power to heal, to bring people together. So we've allowed our inmates – ahem, *patients* – to create a theatrical event for you here tonight. To no surprise, they've selected the works of the master of the macabre, Mr. Edgar Allan Poe. Tantalizing, isn't it? Rest assured, all of the theatrics have been carried out under my clinical supervision. I assure you that the performers are no more psychotic than your typical company of actors. So, let us begin with what is perhaps Mr. Poe's most famous short story, "The Tale-Tell Heart." But first, allow me to introduce the cast of this opening piece. Playing the story's maniacal narrator is the one and only Margo!

(MARGO enters, a bit mousy and bashful, with wandering, crazed eyes and a wry smirk.)

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DR. DARKLY: Good evening, Margo.

MARGO: Good evening, Dr. Darkly.

DR. DARKLY: Margo, tell our audience a bit about yourself.

MARGO: I have voices. In my head. Several of them.

DR. DARKLY: Scary voices?

MARGO: None as scary as my own. *(Cackles abruptly and loudly.)*

DR. DARKLY: I should note that Margo is given to random bouts of –

(MARGO cackles again.)

DR. DARKLY: *(Cont'd.)* Cackling. Thank you, Margo.

(MARGO scampers off. HARRY enters, plants himself, and stares out blankly.)

DR. DARKLY: *(Cont'd.)* Here we have Harry. He plays the Old Man, the hapless victim of “The Tell-Tale Heart.” Though at first sight he may appear oafish and dense, Harry has a heart of gold. A man of few words, Harry’s been here at the asylum longer than anyone. No one can remember what first brought him here, but rumor is it had something to do with a lost love. Is that right, Harry? *(HARRY stares blankly.)* Harry? *(Stares blankly.)* Thank you, Harry. Rounding out the cast are Zelda, Clarence, and Bebe.

(HARRY lumbers off as ZELDA, CLARENCE, and BEBE enter.)

ZELDA: *(A bit of a pistol.)* Hiya folks! I’m Zelda! My, my aren’t you a swell looking group!

DR. DARKLY: Zelda’s a real charmer. She’s been a patient here since her parents ran away from her.

ZELDA: *(Milking it.)* Poor wittle orphan me.

DR. DARKLY: She knows how to pour it on thick.

ZELDA: My mommy and daddy didn’t want me. Boo-hoo-woo.

End of Freeview

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