

Plays

THE DRAMA MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

APRIL 2026

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Plays

The drama magazine for young people

In this issue. . .

Upper & Middle Grades

Watch Out for Aunt Hattie, by Maxine Shore

4 actors: 2 female, 2 male; 25 minutes. Obsessed with a “real” artist, Celia drops her boyfriend while trying her hand at her own painting—with fun results.

Truth and Lies, by Mary E. Hanson

7 male and female actors; 30 minutes. When Morgan experiences a string of bad luck, she buys into nasty rumors about a classmate, coming very close to destroying more than one reputation.

Anne of Green Gables, by Lucy M. Montgomery, adapted by Jamie Turner

9 actors: 6 female, 3 male; 25 minutes. An adaptation of this favorite story of an orphaned girl who, despite a series of mistakes, finds a loving home.

Middle & Lower Grades

The Clown, by Carol D. Wise

4 male and female actors; 20 minutes. Thieves rob a store and come away with cash and a toy clown—that could just be alive!

The Book Hospital, by Jean McKinney

8 male and female actors; 10 minutes. Broken spine, torn pages, smudged covers? Dr. Librarian will see you now.

The Tale of the Unhappy Bunny, by Colleen Neuman

8 actors: 3 female, 2 male, 3 male or female; 20 minutes. Forsythia is a perfect little rabbit, so why won't she hop?

Watch Out for Aunt Hattie is protected by U.S. copyright law. It is unlawful to use this play in any way unless you are a current subscriber to *PLAYS Magazine* (www.playsmagazine.com).

Watch Out for Aunt Hattie

Obsessed with a “real” artist, Celia drops her boyfriend while trying her hand at painting. . . .

by Maxine Shore

Characters

CELIA PARKS

SAM TORRES, *her boyfriend*

MRS. PARKS, *her mother*

JONATHAN RANDALL

SCENE 1

SETTING: *The attic of the Parks home. There are old boxes, trunks, etc., scattered about. Window is up left; easel with painting on it is near window, as is woman's dress form with old-fashioned dress on it. door is at right. Old screen is propped against wall far right.*

AT RISE: *CELIA, in painter's smock and beret, stands near window, working earnestly at painting on easel. From offstage comes sound of whistling, and then a door bangs loudly. CELIA stops painting and frowns.*

SAM (*Bellowing offstage*): Hey, Celia! I'm coming up!

CELIA (*Exasperated*): Oh, no! I specifically did not want to be disturbed this morning! (*Winces at sound of heavy feet on stairs*)

SAM (*As he enters*): Hi, sweetie! Your mom told me it was O.K. to come up. What are you doing up here, anyway?

CELIA (*Without enthusiasm*): Hello, Sam. Hey, look out for that. . . (*Too late; SAM has tripped, fallen over a trunk and, clutching at dress form, falls to the floor, wrestling with it.*) Oh, now you've done it! You've knocked over Aunt Hattie! (*She rushes over, picks up dress form, and tenderly sets it on its pedestal again. SAM sits up, bewildered.*)

SAM: Who? This thing has a name?

CELIA: Aunt Hattie was my great-aunt; she's been dead for many years. I don't remember her, of course. But her influence lingers on. (*She examines dress form anxiously for signs of damage.*)

SAM (*Ruefully*): I'll say it does. (*Rubs*

ankle) I almost killed myself. (*Looks reproachfully at form*)

CELIA: Aunt Hattie left us her old dress form in her will. There's a curse in our family—if anything happens to Aunt Hattie's dress form, it means trouble.

SAM: Really? Like what?

CELIA: Well, the last time she was knocked over, I came down with the flu, the very next day! Who knows what will happen this time.

SAM: I hope I haven't broken my leg, then. Here, help me up. (*He reaches out a hand, and CELIA takes it reluctantly.*) Thanks. (*Stands, wiggles feet*) Nothing seems to be broken. I guess Aunt Hattie's curse works only on your family. (*CELIA goes back to easel. SAM takes a good look at her, frowns.*) What's with that outfit? Are you going to a costume party or something?

CELIA (*Defensively*): Very funny. For your information, this is not a costume. These are my career clothes. I've taken up art.

SAM (*Feigning suspicion; in joking tone*): Art? Art who? You're dating someone named Art now? (*Chuckles*)

CELIA (*Exasperated*): Sam, will you stop it? I'm talking about art, as in paintings, drawings—

SAM: Yeah, yeah, I know. . . art, as in Monet, Manet, Picasso. But that still doesn't explain why you have to wear that outfit just to do a little painting.

CELIA: Would you take me seriously for once? Art has really transformed me; it's my new love. . . (*After a pause, then bluntly*) and frankly, I don't think

there's room left for you.

SAM (*After a stunned silence*): Whoa! Hold on. You're not serious. We've been dating for over two years and suddenly you're dumping me for art? That's crazy. Why can't you do both? I can learn to live with it.

CELIA: You just don't understand me anymore. I'm no longer the girl you once knew. I'm learning how to create. . . to be inspired by the muse.

SAM (*Putting hand on her shoulder*): Celia, you've really got to get out more. The musty air up here is getting to you. Come on, let's go out and get some fresh air; maybe play some tennis.

CELIA (*Turning away*): I'm not interested in playing games. I've devoted my life to art, and I simply have no time for anything else. Why don't you face facts, Sam; we no longer have anything in common.

SAM: What are you talking about? How about I like you, and you like me, for starters. There's also playing tennis, going to the movies, drinking cappuccino together—

CELIA (*Gently*): No more, Sam, I'm sorry. I've put all that behind me so I can concentrate on more important things. (*She walks back to easel, squeezes some paint from a tube, and begins daubing on the canvas, ignoring SAM. After a minute, he goes over to easel, looks over CELIA's shoulder, and shudders.*)

SAM (*Pointing to picture*): What's that supposed to be?

CELIA: A cow, of course.

SAM: A cow? From what planet? Or

solar system, I should say!

CELIA: Sam Torres! I'll ask you to keep your artistic criticism to yourself.

SAM: Excuse me, but the last time I checked, cows were white, brown, even red—but definitely not blue.

CELIA: What's wrong with blue? I chose blue for a very specific reason. Do I have to explain everything to you?

SAM: What can I say? I'm not quite up to speed on blue cows.

CELIA: Well first of all, you've got to realize that a modern artist has to . . . to free her mind from conventional fetters. . . break away from reality in order to express greater truth and higher meaning. The reason I painted the cow blue was to indicate a sort of universal gloom. You know, blue generally signifies sadness and depression. Now I plan on painting the cow's tail orange, to indicate spiritual unrest and—

SAM (*Holding up hand*): O.K., O.K. I've heard quite enough of your explanation. (*Sarcastically*) Why don't you just throw a bucket of black paint on the canvas?

CELIA (*Bitterly*): I might have known I was wasting my breath trying to educate you! You're just a conventional bore!

SAM: If you say so, but I won't stand by and watch you sink deeper into this world of doom and gloom. It's just not like you. Come on, let's go to the Daily Grind; we can have a nice talk over a cup of cappuccino.

CELIA: I figured you'd try to distract me somehow. Thank you, Sam. . .but

I'm just not in the mood to go out. I'm happy right here, working on my masterpiece.

SAM (*Disgusted*): I don't believe it. You've really gone off the deep end. It must be that Jonathan Randall's influence.

CELIA (*Surprised*): How did you know? (*Stammers*) I mean, I don't know what you're talking about. So what if I've been spending time with Jonathan; he's a fellow artist and he's an inspiration to me.

SAM: An inspiration? That's a joke. He's turned you into a raving madwoman.

CELIA: You just don't understand, Sam. You won't even try. You should be encouraging me to do something that's really important to me instead of making fun of me. (*She picks up brush with sigh and begins to paint again.*)

SAM: Well, it's clear you've made your choice. It's goodbye Sam and cappuccinos, and hello Jonathan and blue cows. (*He exits. After a few moments, MRS. PARKS enters with sandwich on plate.*)

MRS. PARKS: I brought the starving artist some sustenance.

CELIA: Thanks, Mom, but I'm not very hungry right now.

MRS. PARKS: Did you and Sam have a fight? He was in such a rush, he barely said goodbye. (*She sets plate on table.*)

CELIA (*Sighing heavily*): Oh, Mom, Sam doesn't have an artistic bone in his body! All he wants to do is play tennis and video games and hang out.

He has no direction, and can't deal with reality.

MRS. PARKS: Oh, now, Celia, that's a little harsh, don't you think? I'm sure Sam knows how to deal with reality. He's very mature for his age.

CELIA (*Dreamily*): Well, not as mature as some other boys I know.

MRS. PARKS (*In realization*): Oh, I see. It's your artist friend; the one who's gotten you into this painting craze. (*She waves her hand vaguely toward CELIA's painting, then stops, staring.*) Honey, did you do this?

CELIA (*Proudly*): Of course. Don't you think I'm improving?

MRS. PARKS (*Shrugging*): Well, I guess so. I really don't know much about modern art. But I do think blue fish swimming in green water looks very refreshing.

CELIA: Fish? Mom, that's not a fish. It's a cow in a pasture.

MRS. PARKS: Oops. I'm sorry, I thought—

CELIA (*Cheerfully*): That's O.K. I'm glad it doesn't look like what it's supposed to be. That's the whole point. Modern art is much less obvious than the traditional stuff. It has deeper hidden meaning; that's what Jonathan says.

MRS. PARKS (*Dubious*): I see.

CELIA (*Excitedly*): And guess what? I've decided to enter this painting in the Junior Modern Art Contest at the Sibley Institute. This is the last day for entries.

MRS. PARKS: Well, that's very ambi-

tious of you, honey. I hope you win, but remember, this is your first painting, so don't be too disappointed if you don't.

CELIA (*Laughing*): Win? I certainly don't expect to win!

MRS. PARKS (*Confused*): You don't? Then why are you entering?

CELIA: Only to show Jonathan how sincere I am about art. I want to surprise him. You see, he's entering, and of course he'll win first prize. He's an artistic genius.

MRS. PARKS (*Smiling*): He is, is he?

CELIA: Also, if I enter, I'll get to go to the banquet honoring all the winners. I want to be by Jonathan's side during his moment of glory.

MRS. PARKS: Yes, I suppose it will be quite an experience. (*Hesitates*) And where does Sam fit in, might I ask?

CELIA (*Uncomfortably*): Well, Mom, he. . .ah, you see. . . (*Sound of doorbell; smiles*) Saved by the bell! I hope that's Jonathan. He promised to come over this morning, so I could watch him paint. (*Suddenly*) I've got to hide my painting! I don't want Jonathan to see it. (*She rushes easel to far side of attic behind old screen.*) Will you let him in when you go downstairs?

MRS. PARKS (*Vaguely*): I thought I'd stay up here a while and sort through some of these old magazines.

CELIA: No, offense, Mom, but I wouldn't mind being alone with Jonathan. We both like our privacy, especially when we're "at the easel."

MRS. PARKS (*Sighing*): All right. (*Doorbell rings again.*) I'll go let the

young artist into our humble abode.

CELIA: Thanks, Mom. (*MRS. PARKS exits. CELIA hurries around, putting her painting materials out of sight, takes off smock and beret, and then poses dreamily at window when JONATHAN enters, carrying easel and canvas bag filled with artist's materials.*)

JONATHAN: Hello, Celia.

CELIA (*Pretending to be surprised*): Oh, Jonathan, hello-oo! I didn't hear you come in. I was just nourishing my starved soul on the sight of the clouds floating out there in the distance.

JONATHAN (*Coming forward, setting up easel, getting out paints, etc.*): I'm glad you're the sort of girl who notices such things, Celia. Many of the girls I know are interested only in how their hair looks and what they're going to wear.

CELIA: Well, I'm not like that at all. And neither are you, Jonathan. It's wonderful how refreshingly different you are.

JONATHAN (*Coming to stand beside her at window*): No, I am not like others, it is true. Today, for example, my soul is aflame with love—

CELIA (*Enraptured*): Oh, Jonathan.

JONATHAN: Love for my art.

CELIA (*Disappointed*): Oh, Jonathan.

JONATHAN (*Pretentiously*): People are either born with an artistic soul, or they're not. How I pity those who aren't.

CELIA (*Expectantly*): Do you think I have an artistic soul?

JONATHAN: I'm afraid not, Celia. But, we can't all be artists. There has to be someone to appreciate and buy the pictures we paint.

CELIA: Yes, I suppose so. And I certainly do appreciate art. You just wait and see. (*JONATHAN busies himself with his materials.*)

JONATHAN: Now, I'm ready to begin—although the light isn't very good. (*Turns to CELIA, as she hovers eagerly*) If you're going to watch, find something to sit on and sit still. (*His gaze, in search of a chair, falls upon dress form.*) Good grief, what's that?

CELIA: Oh, that's just Aunt Hattie's dress form.

JONATHAN (*Staring in horror*): It's hideous; absolutely repulsive! Take it away! Throw it out the window. I don't care how you do it, but get it out of my sight.

CELIA (*Alarmed*): Oh, you shouldn't have said that. I can't get rid of Aunt Hattie. She's an old relative, and you can't treat the dead with such disrespect.

JONATHAN: You mean you expect me to sit here and try to paint with that thing looking over my shoulder? (*He rises.*) Sorry, but I can't do it. (*He starts gathering his equipment.*)

CELIA: Jonathan!

JONATHAN: No, the mood has left me. Inspiration has faded and I cannot work now.

CELIA (*Anguished*): Oh, Jonathan, don't go! I'll get rid of Aunt Hattie. . . I mean, I'll hide her somewhere, and you won't even see her. I'll—

JONATHAN: Too late.

CELIA: But, I was really looking forward to watching you work. It would really mean a lot to me.

JONATHAN (*With dignity*): I'm sorry, Celia. Another time, perhaps. Under more favorable conditions.

CELIA (*Upset*): Oh, dear!

JONATHAN: Besides, it's probably just as well. My mind is elsewhere today. This is the last day to enter the Junior Art Contest, and I have to get my painting over to the Institute. I've finally finished it, after a month's work.

CELIA: Yes, I know. Don't you remember you promised to let me see it before you enter it?

JONATHAN: Yes, vaguely. I suppose I could show it to you before I take it over, since it apparently means so much to you.

CELIA: Oh, it does, Jonathan, it does!

JONATHAN: It won't be too inconvenient, since your house is right on the way. (*Exits, shuddering as he passes Aunt Hattie*)

CELIA (*Looking reproachfully at Aunt Hattie*): Oh, Aunt Hattie, how could you? . . . But I suppose it wasn't really your fault anyway. (*Sighs*) I hope I can persuade Jonathan to forgive me. He seemed so distant. (*Straightens shoulders*) Well, maybe if I finish my painting and get it into the contest, that will help. It's my last chance to make an impression on Jonathan. (*Looks at watch*) I've got to hurry. There isn't much time. (*She gets her painting things out again, sets hurriedly to work on canvas.*) A dab here, one

there. . . Oh, what the heck, another one for good measure. (*With a flourish*) There! Done at last. I've spent three whole days on this—whew! What a job! (*Offstage there is the sound of footsteps and shrill yelps coming from below. CELIA turns, listens.*) What in the world. . . (*SAM bursts in, leading puppy on a leash.*)

SAM: Hi, there! Meet Max.

CELIA (*Surprised*): Sam! Oh, what a darling puppy! (*Petting dog*) Where'd you get him? Is he yours?

SAM: No, he's yours. I was going to surprise you for your birthday, but I couldn't wait.

CELIA: You mean you're giving him to me? But, Sam, how on earth—I mean, what's my mother going to say?

SAM: I already checked with her to see if it would be O.K.

CELIA: You did? I don't know about—hey! (*SAM puts puppy into CELIA's arms.*) Oh, you cute thing!

SAM: See, he likes you.

CELIA: Oh, Sam, he's adorable. But you still haven't told me where you got him.

SAM: Well, my uncle's dog, Queenie, had a litter, and he asked me if I knew anyone looking for a puppy. Of course, I immediately thought of you. I know it was impulsive of me, but I really wanted to surprise you with something fantastic.

CELIA: That's really sweet of you, Sam, but. . . (*Her voice trails off.*)

SAM: But what?

CELIA: It's Jonathan—he hates animals. He'll be so angry when he finds out I got a dog.

SAM (*Angrily*): Jonathan? I can't believe you're even considering what he thinks. You'd give up this adorable little pup just for Jonathan?

CELIA: I'm sorry, Sam. It's not just Jonathan. It's my art career. I don't have time for any distractions, and I'm afraid Max would be just that, a distraction. (*Handing puppy back to SAM*) Take him. I'm afraid I'm getting attached to him already. (*Starts to paint again. SAM puts puppy down on the floor, holds leash.*)

SAM: What's wrong with getting attached to something you like? You used to be quite attached to me, remember?

CELIA (*Ignoring him*): I'm sorry, Sam. I have to get back to work. (*Doorbell rings; excitedly, she puts brush down*) That must be Jonathan. He's going to show me his painting before he takes it over to the art contest.

SAM (*Sarcastically*): Well, don't let me interfere with Jonathan's precious career.

CELIA: No need to be so snide. (*Exits*)

SAM (*Shrugging shoulders*): Oh, well. (*He wanders over to window, sees sandwich, picks it up.*) Don't mind if I do. (*Takes a bite, then looks down at puppy*) You want one too? Hey! Look out! (*Puppy's leash becomes tangled with easel, easel tips over, painting falls to floor and pup walks on painting.*) Oh, no, Max. You've ruined the painting! There are tracks all over it! (*He picks up Max, and quickly sets up easel and painting. He looks at painting again.*) Hmm, it's actually not too

bad. An improvement, even. (*Footsteps are heard.*) Oh, no, here she comes. (*Hurries to doorway to head her off*)

CELIA (*In doorway*): Sam, can I ask you to do me a huge favor?

SAM (*Uncomfortably*): Well, I'd be glad to, but Max and I were just on our way out.

CELIA: Oh, please. It would mean the world to me.

SAM (*Hesitating*): Well, I—

CELIA: Jonathan wants me to walk over to the Sibley Institute with him. If I do, I may not be back in time to wrap up my painting and take it over, and I can't do it now, because it's still wet.

SAM (*Eagerly*): So you want me to wait until your painting dries, and then take it over for you?

CELIA: Oh, would you? I'd be so grateful.

SAM: Sure. No problem.

CELIA: That's great! Make sure it's dry first, so it won't smudge or anything.

SAM (*Impatiently*): All right, all right. Don't worry. I'll be very careful with it. Now hurry along. You don't want to keep poor Jonathan waiting.

CELIA (*Perplexed*): Since when have you become so concerned with Jonathan? I thought you hated him.

SAM: I guess you misunderstood me. It's not that I don't like him. I don't like his influence. There's a big difference.

CELIA (*Suspiciously*): Hey, what's going on? Just a little while ago you claimed Jonathan had turned me into a madwoman, and now you're eager for the two of us to be together.

SAM: Well, I've decided I'll just let your infatuation with Jonathan pass. Meanwhile, I'm happy just to wait it out until you come back to your senses, and back to me.

CELIA: Well, you're awfully confident, aren't you? What makes you so sure I'll come back to you?

SAM (*Grinning*): Just a feeling I have.

CELIA: Don't be such a goof! (*Pauses*) Would you mind moving out of the way so I can get through? I want to take one last look at my painting before I go.

SAM: What for? It's too late to change it now, so just let it be.

CELIA: Oh, all right. I guess I'd better get going anyway. Thanks again for taking care of my painting.

SAM (*Relieved*): It's fine, really.

CELIA: See you later. (*Exits. SAM throws head back in relief as curtain quickly closes.*)

* * *

SCENE 2

TIME: *A couple of weeks later.*

SETTING: *Same as Scene 1.*

AT RISE: *CELIA sits at easel, half-heartedly trying to paint. She jumps up quickly when she hears the sound of footsteps. SAM enters.*

SAM: Hi, Celia!

CELIA (*Disappointed*): Oh. It's you.

SAM: I guess you were expecting the young Picasso, huh?

CELIA: Well, he just called a little while ago, and said he had some news for me. I'll bet he heard about the contest. I'm sure his painting won.

SAM (*Shrugging*): Maybe.

CELIA: Maybe? Sam, give him a little credit. Don't you have any appreciation for the higher things in life?

SAM (*Shaking his head*): Still haven't recovered, have you?

CELIA (*Frowning*): Recovered? From what?

SAM: From art-itis. Terrible disease. Leads to serious loss of appetite, mood swings, and severe change in personality.

CELIA (*Irritated*): Oh, Sam, you're impossible. I don't know why I keep putting up with you.

SAM: I know. I'm like a bad habit—almost impossible to break, and the more you fight it the harder it becomes. (*Looks at painting*) So. . . what is that you're working on? Is it supposed to be a painting?

CELIA (*Angrily*): Well, what do you think, Sam? Of course it's a painting! That just goes to show how little you know.

SAM: I'm sorry, Celia. I didn't mean to be critical. (*Pauses*) Would you tell me one thing, though?

CELIA: What's that?

SAM: What is that painting supposed to be?

CELIA: You wouldn't understand, but I'm trying to show the—the pathos of rising smoke. I've decided to show it to Jonathan for advice, and while I'm at it, tell him that I entered my cow painting in the art contest.

SAM: You're right. I don't understand. Well, it's your life, I suppose, but it seems a shame. (*He wanders away from her and stands thoughtfully before Aunt Hattie.*) I don't know. The more I see of old Aunt Hattie, the better I like her. She's quite a character. Bet she never owned a paintbrush.

CELIA: Oh, no! Aunt Hattie—I'd forgotten all about her. I've got to get her out of sight before Jonathan gets here. (*She rushes over, takes Aunt Hattie around the waist and is lugging her across to other side of attic when JONATHAN enters.*)

JONATHAN: Greetings, Celia.

CELIA (*Dropping Aunt Hattie*): Oh—I didn't hear you come up. I was just—

JONATHAN (*With distaste*): I had hoped you would have gotten rid of that monstrosity by now.

SAM (*Gallantly*): Hey, man, come on. Don't speak of Aunt Hattie like that. What has she ever done to you?

JONATHAN: *Done?* She hasn't done anything! It's the very sight of her that is offensive to me.

SAM: You shouldn't talk about the dearly departed like that, Jonathan. It's not right. (*Rushed footsteps are heard, then MRS. PARKS enters.*)

MRS. PARKS (*Excitedly*): Celia, you just got a FedEx. It's from the Sibley Institute.

CELIA (*Surprised*): Really?

JONATHAN (*Looking over her shoulder*): How curious!

SAM: Uh-oh! (*Pauses*) Look, Celia, there's something I need to tell you. I didn't mean to, but—

MRS. PARKS (*Interrupting impatiently*): Hang on a sec, Sam. Come on, Celia, aren't you going to open it?

CELIA: I am. I mean, I'm trying to! (*She tears envelope open.*) Oh, wow. There must be some mistake!

MRS. PARKS: What is it? (*CELIA hands letter to MRS. PARKS, who reads it and beams.*) Honey, this is great! (*To SAM and JONATHAN*) Celia's won first place in the Junior Modern Art Contest.

SAM (*Happily*): Hey, terrific!

MRS. PARKS: First place! (*Hugs CELIA*) I'm so proud of you!

JONATHAN (*Stunned*): Absurd! There must be some mistake—you didn't even enter the contest.

CELIA: Well, actually I did. I decided to do it at the last minute, and I was planning to tell you. . . (*Voice trails off.*)

JONATHAN (*Still perplexed*): I don't understand.

SAM (*Matter-of-factly*): What's to understand? She entered the contest and won. In fact, I took the painting over there myself, so there's definitely no mistake. The blue cow won! Unbelievable!

JONATHAN: You can say that again. It's unbelievable! I came over here to tell Celia that I just found out I'd won second place.

CELIA: Good for you! That's great. (*Pauses; looks closely at JONATHAN*) Why are you looking at me that way? I only entered the contest so you could see that we were kindred spirits.

JONATHAN (*Nastily*): Ha! That's a joke.

CELIA (*Desperately*): I didn't even expect to get an honorable mention. Honest. You know how bad my paintings are—I guess the judges liked cows or something.

JONATHAN (*Stiffly*): Come on, Celia. Don't insult me with these ridiculous lies. I know you and Sam hatched this whole scheme to humiliate me.

SAM: Hey, man, wait a minute!

MRS. PARKS (*Shocked*): Jonathan! You're the one who's insulting.

JONATHAN (*Glaring at CELIA*): Well, I hope you're happy. Now you've denied me the first prize art scholarship I worked so hard to win.

CELIA: Jonathan, believe me—

JONATHAN: So long, Celia. Goodbye, Mrs. Parks. And—and you. (*He glares at SAM.*)

CELIA (*Pleading*): Jonathan, wait! (*JONATHAN exits.*)

MRS. PARKS (*Shaking her head*): He's the strangest boy I ever met. I don't understand why he's not happy for you.

CELIA: Me neither.

SAM: He's just jealous, that's all.

CELIA: No way. He's not the jealous type. He's way above that.

SAM: Did you hear him congratulate you?

CELIA: Well, no, but—

SAM: No buts about it, Celia, he's green with envy. What he liked about you was the fact that you worshipped the ground he walked on. He loved being the center of attention and the object of your infatuation. (*Shakes head*) What a narcissist.

MRS. PARKS (*Sighing*): I'm afraid Sam's right, Celia. At least now you know the truth. . . . Well, I've got a couple of work calls to make. Sam, can you stay for dinner? After all, we have something to celebrate!

SAM: That'd be great, Mrs. Parks. Thanks.

MRS. PARKS: O.K. See you kids later. Ooh, I'm so proud of you, honey! (*She hugs CELIA again, then exits.*)

CELIA (*Taking SAM's hand*): Oh, Sam, I've been such a fool. (*She looks down, guiltily*) I don't suppose you'll ever forgive me for the way I've been treating you, will you?

SAM: I'll try. (*He gently lifts up her chin.*) Come on—this ought to be a happy day for you, winning first prize and all.

CELIA: Well, it's not. I don't deserve it, and I feel as if I stole it from Jonathan.

SAM: Hey, give yourself some credit. You deserve that first prize.

CELIA: Sam, sometimes I think you know me better than I know myself. Thanks for sticking by me. I guess I got a little carried away by this whole art thing.

SAM: You don't have to explain.

(CELIA looks down at the letter, which has fluttered to floor, picks it up, reads it over again.)

CELIA: What do you suppose they mean by the “master stroke” in my entry—“bestial imprints rampant on a world of chaos”?

SAM (*Uncomfortably*): Well—um—maybe I can explain.

CELIA (*Confused*): What?

SAM: You see, Max accidentally got loose that day, and ran across your painting before it was quite dry—

CELIA: No! He—he—oh, no. (*She bursts out giggling.*) You mean—puppy tracks! (*Laughs helplessly*) Oh, Sam—Jonathan would be so mad if he knew that a dog was the artist of the prize-winning painting. (*SAM crosses stage.*) Hey, where are you going? (*SAM carries Aunt Hattie back to window.*)

SAM: It’s no more than Jonathan deserves for insulting a lady. Personally, I think Aunt Hattie is a very good influence in this house!

CELIA (*Hugging SAM*): I think so, too! (*Curtain*)

THE END

PRODUCTION NOTES

Watch Out for Aunt Hattie (*Play on pages 2-11*)

CHARACTERS: 2 female; 2 male.

PLAYING TIME: 25 minutes.

COSTUMES: Everyday dress for all. In Scene 1, Celia has smock over her clothes, and wears beret.

SETTING: The attic of the Parks home. There are old boxes, trunks, etc., scattered about. Window is up left; easel with painting on it and table covered with artists’ materials are near win-

dow, as is woman’s dress form with old-fashioned dress. Door is at right. Old screen is propped against wall far right.

PROPERTIES: Easel; canvas bag of artists’ material; sandwich on plate; puppy on leash; letter in envelope.

SOUND: Whistling; door banging; heavy footsteps; doorbell; dog yelping.

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Upper & Middle Grades

Truth and Lies

When Morgan experiences a string of bad luck, she buys into nasty rumors about a classmate, coming very close to destroying more than one reputation. . . .

by Mary E. Hanson

Characters

MORGAN, *teenager*

MRS. EVANS, *Morgan's mother*

JADE

BEN

EMILY

ANNIE

DEVIN

Morgan's friends

SCENE 1

TIME: *The present; after school.*

SETTING: *Living room of the Evans family. Sofa with pillows is center, chair left center, coffee table in front of sofa. Working door to the outside is down right; exit to the kitchen is up left. Door to rest of house is down left.*

AT RISE: *JADE and MORGAN are center.*

JADE: I knew you'd understand.

MORGAN (*Miffed*): Oh, I understand, all right.

JADE: It's just that we're only allowed so many members, and I didn't realize that when I asked you to join. Are we still friends?

MORGAN (*Abruptly*): Of course.

JADE (*Moving to MORGAN*): I hope you're not too disappointed.

MORGAN (*Curtly*): Disappointed? Why should I be? (*MRS. EVANS enters up left.*)

JADE: Glad to see you're taking it so well. I was afraid you'd be upset. (*Noticing MRS. EVANS*) Oh, hi, Mrs. Evans. (*Looks at watch*) Well, I've got to run. I don't want to be late for work. See you.

MRS. EVANS: Goodbye, Jade. (*JADE exits down right.*) What are you "taking so well"?

MORGAN (*Evasive*): Nothing.

MRS. EVANS: Sounds to me it's more than "nothing."

MORGAN: Please, Mom, let's just drop it, O.K.?

MRS. EVANS (*Frowning*): I see, so it is something important.

MORGAN (*Protesting*): Mom—

MRS. EVANS (*Sitting on couch, patting cushion next to her*): Come here. (*MORGAN pauses, then sits.*) Tell me, what's bothering you?

MORGAN: Nothing's bothering me.

MRS. EVANS: Honey, I'm your mother. I know when you're upset.

MORGAN: I'm not upset. (*Pauses, then sighs heavily*) Oh, all right. I'm not going to be joining the Navigators Club after all. (*Picks up pillow and holds it her chest*)

MRS. EVANS (*Surprised*): Why not?

MORGAN: I got "uninvited."

MRS. EVANS (*Puzzled*): Uninvited? How did that happen?

MORGAN: Jade said the membership is limited to 15.

MRS. EVANS: But wasn't Jade the one who asked you to join in the first place?

MORGAN: It's not Jade's fault, really. They have an old bylaw. Devin Warner, the new president, told her about it.

MRS. EVANS: Too bad Jade didn't know that before she asked you.

MORGAN (*Getting up*): Well, she didn't, and I'm out. As far as I'm concerned, the subject is (*Pitches pillow back onto sofa*) closed! (*Doorbell is heard. MORGAN opens door down right to BEN.*)

MORGAN (*Dejectedly*): Oh, hey, Ben, come on in. (*BEN enters.*)

MRS. EVANS: Hi, Ben.

BEN (*As he enters*): Hi, Mrs. Evans. (*To MORGAN*) Hey, Morgan, sorry you didn't win the election. I just wanted you to know I voted for you.

MRS. EVANS (*To MORGAN; surprised*): You weren't elected class secretary? Why didn't you tell me?

MORGAN (*Shrugging*): I was going to tell you later. Seems like nothing's going right in my life.

MRS. EVANS: That's not true! What about first place for your Bear Lake photograph?

MORGAN (*Awkwardly*): Uh. . .yeah, that. Well, actually, I guess it was mailed out by mistake.

BEN (*Puzzled*): Mistake?

MRS. EVANS (*Shaking head*): I don't understand.

MORGAN (*Interrupting*): Neither do I. I feel as if someone's got it in for me.

MRS. EVANS: Oh, Morgan, I don't think so. Sometimes things just. . . happen.

MORGAN: Why don't they happen to someone else? Anyway, I'm tired of thinking about it. (*Heads for door up left*) Soda, anyone?

BEN: Sounds good.

MRS. EVANS: None for me, thanks.
(*MORGAN exits up left.*)

BEN: Morgan's having it tough these days, Mrs. Evans. (*Sits on couch*) I know how she feels.

MRS. EVANS: You do?

BEN: A person I won't mention once gave me a rough time.

MRS. EVANS: Sorry to hear that, but life isn't always fair.

BEN: Actually, I think someone's behind all these rejections Morgan's been getting.

MRS. EVANS: Oh? What do you mean?

BEN (*Confidentially*): Remember when Morgan chaired the student committee to stop the townhouses?

MRS. EVANS: Sure! I was very proud of her for doing that.

BEN: Well, there are some people in town who weren't so happy about it. She stepped on some pretty influential toes.

MRS. EVANS: But she helped stop a major development that would have been right in the middle of the wildlife corridor.

BEN: That's just it. Some people, like Devin Warner's father, planned to make a lot of money on those townhouses.

MRS. EVANS (*Slowly*): I never thought of that. Hm-m-m, Cal Warner. . . Warner's Construction. Makes sense.

BEN: And it was Devin Warner who

kept Morgan out of the Navigators Club.

MRS. EVANS: How did you find that out?

BEN (*Shrugging*): Word gets around. (*MORGAN enters with two drinks, which she sets on the coffee table. BEN picks up glass.*)

MRS. EVANS: But the Warners are fine people, Ben. (*Shakes head*) I can't believe that's the reason.

MORGAN (*Interrupting*): What reason? What are you two talking about? (*Sits down; picks up glass*)

BEN (*To MRS. EVANS*): Just think about it.

MORGAN: Think about what?

BEN: Morgan, when you helped fight those developers and your side won, you made some powerful enemies—especially Mr. Warner. I'll bet that's what's behind your string of bad luck.

MORGAN: That's crazy!

BEN: My dad has business dealings with Mr. Warner. He says he wants to run the town without interference.

MRS. EVANS: I wouldn't say that. The Warners donate a lot of money—

BEN: Sure, so they can look like generous, concerned citizens.

MRS. EVANS: Ben, that's a pretty harsh thing to say.

MORGAN: But he does have a point, Mom. Remember when Devin lost the race for class president last year? She had the ballots recounted.

MRS. EVANS: There's nothing wrong with that. It was a close election. *(After a pause)* Well, I wouldn't jump to conclusions about any of this. Besides, I thought Devin was your friend.

MORGAN: She was until now. Ben's right. Too many things are going wrong all at once to be a coincidence. *(Suddenly, cell phone rings.)*

MRS. EVANS: Oh! I have to take this. I'm expecting a call from a client. *(Gets up, pulls cell phone from pocket and as she starts to exit down left)* Now, Morgan, I want you to think this thing through before you make any hasty decisions. *(MRS. EVANS answers phone.)* Hello? *(Exits)*

MORGAN: Well, I'm not going to sit here and do nothing. Devin's no angel. I remember a time when I thought she was trying to copy off my English test. Anyway, she sure looked guilty when I glanced up.

BEN: I'm not surprised. She told me English is her worst subject. And I've heard rumors. . .

MORGAN: So have I, come to think of it. I remember someone telling me she heard that Devin once passed off her cousin's paper as her own.

BEN: Wouldn't surprise me. I never could understand her getting all A's.

MORGAN: Especially not in English. As far as I'm concerned, she's a big cheater and deserves to get into big trouble, if you know what I mean.

BEN: I hear ya.

MORGAN: Ben, I'm thinking clearly for the first time in a long time, and it all adds up. It's time to see about setting

the record straight about my former friend, Devin Warner! *(Curtain)*

* * *

SCENE 2

TIME: *A few days later.*

SETTING: *Student lounge. There are doors down right and up and down left. Tables with chairs are center, left, and right.*

AT RISE: *JADE, EMILY, ANNIE, and DEVIN sit at table center. Books and backpacks are on table.*

JADE: I feel so bad about Morgan losing the election. She would have made a great class secretary.

EMILY: I helped count ballots. She lost by only a few votes.

JADE: That's a shame.

ANNIE *(Uneasily):* I plead guilty.

EMILY: To what?

ANNIE: Well, I—I forgot to vote. *(JADE, EMILY, and DEVIN groan.)*

EMILY: Annie, that's terrible! In a close election, every vote counts!

ANNIE *(Meekly):* I know, I know. I'm sorry. I promise it won't happen again.

EMILY: Losing the class election *and* the photography contest must have been hard for Morgan to take.

DEVIN: And I feel terrible about her not being able to join the Navigators.

JADE: You were the one who told me about the limitation on membership.

DEVIN: I know, but I think it's a silly rule.

ANNIE: I'm going to propose a change at our next meeting.

DEVIN: I'll second that motion.

EMILY: Morgan must be feeling awful—so many rejections at once.

ANNIE: If she ever needed friends, it's now. (*BEN enters down left.*)

BEN: Hey, why the long faces? Mid-terms are over.

EMILY: We're talking about Morgan's run of bad luck.

BEN: Yeah, I guess (*With meaning*) some people have it in for her.

DEVIN: I don't think that's true at all. Stuff happens.

EMILY: I asked Liam Dexter, the Camera Club president, why Morgan didn't win first prize. He said she turned her entry in a day late.

BEN: That's totally unfair! Everyone knows she's the school's best photographer.

EMILY: True, but as Liam said, rules are rules, and the contest rules specifically stated that entries turned in late would be disqualified.

BEN: Well, I don't go along with this "A rule's a rule" business.

DEVIN: We know, Ben. That's what keeps getting you in trouble.

ANNIE (*Laughing*): Remember when you ditched English class, and Mr. Gonzalez caught you?

BEN (*Defensively*): What about it? Everyone skips classes once in a while.

JADE: Speak for yourself.

DEVIN: Anyway, he didn't buy your excuse that the cafeteria lunch gave you food poisoning. Especially when he found out you'd gone to the movies.

BEN: Well, he wouldn't have known if *someone* hadn't snitched.

DEVIN: It could have been anyone, the way you bragged about being so clever.

BEN (*Suspiciously*): Maybe.

ANNIE: Don't take things so personally, Ben. We're just kidding with you.

DEVIN: I didn't take it personally when you put that snake in my desk.

BEN: Oh, no? You reported it and got me in big trouble.

DEVIN: Look, I didn't say you did it. I just told Mrs. Smith there was a snake in my desk. She figured out all by herself that you were the practical joker.

EMILY: Now, to get back to Morgan. Let's find her and tell her she can count on us.

ANNIE: Good idea. (*Gathering up books and backpacks, girls exit down right. One book is left on table. After a few moments, MORGAN enters up left.*)

MORGAN (*Smiling*): Well, I'm just about ready to put my plan into action.

BEN: What is it?

MORGAN: You'll find out soon enough.

BEN: Come on, tell me.

MORGAN: Ben, I know your reputation. If I tell you, it'll be all over school.

BEN: This time you can trust me. Scout's honor.

MORGAN: Oh, please! When were you ever a Boy Scout?

BEN: I'll have you know I was once a cub scout. Anyway, I promise not to tell a soul. Come on—spill.

MORGAN (*Relenting*): Well, O.K. So, after thinking about it, I realized you were right. . . it *is* Devin who's behind all my troubles. And about her cheating—I've decided to give her a taste of her own medicine.

BEN: How?

MORGAN: I'll just let the fact slip from my lips to certain people. I doubt Mr. Gonzalez would want her representing our school if he knew some of the things she's done.

BEN: But will he believe you?

MORGAN: Of course, because I'm telling him the truth! If Devin can't be trusted, she's not the right person to represent Hamilton High at the government council. (*DEVIN enters down right.*)

DEVIN: Hey, guys, have you seen my English book? I think I left it here a few minutes ago.

MORGAN (*Sarcastic*): Oh, so you're studying English now?

DEVIN: I need to if I expect to pass next Thursday's exam. If it's anything like the last one, it'll be hard.

MORGAN (*Sarcastic*): So *this* time you're going to study for the test.

DEVIN (*Confused*): Of course. I have to work really hard to keep up my grades—especially in English.

BEN: And because your dad expects you to get all A's, you can't let Daddy down.

DEVIN: That's right. I don't want to disappoint him—or my mom. (*After a pause*) Morgan, I wanted you to know how sorry we all are about what's happened to you. You've had a real run of bad luck.

MORGAN (*With an edge*): Appears that way.

BEN (*Picking up book*): Is this yours?

DEVIN: Yup, that's it. Thanks. (*Takes book*) I seem to be losing everything lately. Too much on my mind, I guess.

MORGAN: Being on so many committees and planning to represent Hamilton at the government conference can be pretty distracting.

DEVIN: Not to mention all the homework we've had lately.

MORGAN: Oh, you don't need to worry. You can always copy.

DEVIN: What do you mean?

BEN (*Quickly*): Hate to leave this sparkling conversation, but I just remembered I've got a class to cut. (*Exits down left*)

DEVIN: Morgan, what do you mean, I can always copy?

MORGAN: You know perfectly well what I'm talking about. (*Heatedly*) But this time, you're not going to get away with it. I'll see to that!

DEVIN (*Shocked*): Morgan, I've never cheated in my life! How could you think such a thing?

MORGAN: That's not what I've heard.

DEVIN: What are you talking about?

MORGAN: Oh, don't act all innocent and surprised. You know perfectly well what I'm talking about. You've got a reputation, and it isn't only about being your important father's darling daughter!

DEVIN (*Near tears*): Morgan, I thought you were my friend. How can you say such terrible things?

MORGAN: Because they're true. How can you call yourself a friend when you saw to it I wasn't allowed in the Navigators Club, among other things?

DEVIN: That wasn't my fault. It's in the club's bylaws—which I plan to change, by the way.

MORGAN: I'd like to see that.

DEVIN (*Hurt*): What have I ever done to you to make you say such mean things?

MORGAN: You and your family have had it in for me ever since I helped stop your father from building his townhouses.

DEVIN: I can't believe I'm hearing this! O.K., Dad was angry at first because his company had big plans, but he got over it. In fact, he told me he admires you for standing up for what you believed was right.

MORGAN (*Surprised*): He—he does? He admires me?

DEVIN: Yes! Even though the deer

sometimes eat our plants, he realizes now that the corridor was a good idea.

MORGAN: Wait, I find that hard to believe.

DEVIN: Well, it's true. I'll admit Dad can be stubborn at times, but he can also change his mind and admit he was wrong about something. His friend Bill Ellis is big on saving the environment, and he's convinced my father it's important.

MORGAN: Well, I'm glad to learn people can change.

DEVIN: So to get back to my alleged cheating—that everyone knows I'm a cheat. What's that all about?

MORGAN (*Uncomfortably*): Oh, that? Well, Devin, you know how rumors spread. One person says something, then another.

DEVIN: But it hurts! I get good grades because I study—a lot. Especially for my English class. It doesn't come easily for me.

MORGAN: I admit gossip can be unfair. Someone holding a grudge can cause a lot of harm. Like whoever kept me from being class secretary and winning the Camera Club prize.

DEVIN: I heard you lost the election by only a few votes, and you turned your photograph in too late to qualify.

MORGAN (*After a pause; embarrassed*): You're right. I did turn my entry in late. I thought the club would make an exception in my case. I guess I was wrong to think they should bend the rules just for me.

DEVIN: But you know, even if you didn't win the prize, everyone still thinks

you're our best photographer.

MORGAN: Thanks. I appreciate that. *(Pauses)* Devin, I'm really sorry. I owe you an apology. I've been jumping to some really stupid conclusions. I shouldn't have said those terrible things.

DEVIN: They were pretty awful. *(Pause)* Oh, well, apology accepted. Guess we've all had times when our imaginations have gone wild. I know I have. *(JADE, ANNIE, and EMILY enter down right.)*

ANNIE: Devin, we were wondering what happened to you. Oh, hi, Morgan. Listen, I'm really sorry about the bad luck you've been having.

MORGAN: Thanks, Annie, but I'm the one who's sorry. I have to tell you all something I'm not proud of.

JADE: What's that?

MORGAN: By believing the rumors and gossip I've heard around school, I almost got Devin in a lot of trouble. Thank goodness I learned the truth in time. *(Puts arm around DEVIN)* When I think I came so close to losing you as a friend. . . *(Shakes head)* well,

I'm glad I came to my senses.

DEVIN *(Smiling broadly):* I'm glad, too.

JADE, ANNIE, and EMILY *(Ad lib):* I'm glad things worked out. So am I. *(Etc.)*

EMILY: I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm starved. Anyone else up for going to the Snack Shack?

DEVIN: Good idea. *(BEN appears at door down left.)*

BEN: Is it safe to come in?

DEVIN: Sure. We're heading over to the Snack Shack for something to eat, if you want to tag along.

BEN: When have I ever said no to the Shack? I'm in!

MORGAN: You can come along, but only on one condition.

BEN: What's that?

MORGAN: That you leave all your wild rumors outside the door! *(Girls, some arm in arm, others pushing BEN out the door, exit as curtain closes.)*

THE END

PRODUCTION NOTES

Truth and Lies

CHARACTERS: 7 male and female.

PLAYING TIME: 30 minutes.

COSTUMES: Modern, everyday dress. Jade wears watch. Mrs. Evans has cell phone in pocket.

SETTING: Scene 1, living room of the Evans family. Sofa with pillows is center, chair left center, coffee table in front of sofa. Working door to the outside is down right; exit to the kitchen

is up left. Door to rest of house is down left. Scene 2, student lounge. There are doors down right and up and down left. Tables with chairs are center, left, and right.

PROPERTIES: Two glasses of soda; book.

LIGHTING: No special effects.

SOUND: Doorbell; cell phone.

This adaptation of *Anne of Green Gables* is protected by U.S. copyright law. It is unlawful to use this play in any way unless you are a current subscriber to *PLAYS Magazine* (www.playsmagazine.com).

Dramatized Classic
(Middle Grades)

Anne of Green Gables

An adaptation of this favorite story of an orphaned girl who, despite a few missteps, finds a loving home.

by Lucy M. Montgomery

Adapted by Jamie Turner

Characters

MARILLA CUTHBERT

MATTHEW CUTHBERT

ANNE SHIRLEY

MRS. RACHEL LYNDE

MRS. BARRY

DIANA BARRY

PEDDLER

REVEREND ALLAN

MRS. ALLAN

SCENE 1

TIME: *Early 1900s.*

SETTING: *Kitchen in Green Gables, a farm on Prince Edward Island. Door left leads outside. Dining table and chairs are center; rocking chair, footstool, easy chair and lamp are left. Cupboard or long table across back of*

stage holds dishes, kitchen utensils, etc. Stove with pots on it stands right. A large window is set into back wall. Exit right leads to rest of house.

AT RISE: *MARILLA CUTHBERT sits in rocking chair, sewing.*

MARILLA (*To herself*): Where is that brother of mine? He should be back from the station by now. (*Rises and crosses to stove*) This stew will be cold if he doesn't come soon. (*MARILLA turns as MATTHEW CUTHBERT and ANNE SHIRLEY enter. ANNE carries battered suitcase and wears worn straw hat. Puzzled, MARILLA points to ANNE.*) Matthew, who's that? Where's the boy we sent for? (*During following conversation, ANNE looks back and forth at MARILLA and MATTHEW.*)

MATTHEW: There wasn't any boy at the train station. Just this girl.

MARILLA (*Upset*): But there must be a mistake. We sent word to Mrs.

Spencer at the orphanage to send us a boy.

MATTHEW (*Matter-of-factly*): Well, Marilla, she didn't. She sent her, and I couldn't very well leave her at the station, mistake or not.

MARILLA (*Upset*): Well, how is a girl going to be able to work on the farm?

ANNE (*Bursting in, spiritedly*): You just don't want me! (*Dramatically*) I might have expected it! Nobody ever did want me! I should have known all this was too good to last. (*Tearfully*) Oh, what shall I do? (*Throws herself into chair, buries head in her arms, and sobs loudly*)

MARILLA (*Sharply*): Well, well, there's no need to cry about it.

ANNE (*Looking up*): Yes, there is a need. You would cry too, if you were an orphan and had come to a place you thought was going to be home and found they didn't want you because you're not a boy. (*Dramatically*) Oh, this is the most tragical thing that ever happened to me! (*More sobs*)

MATTHEW (*Gently*): Marilla, we'd best let her get a night's sleep. She's had a hard day.

MARILLA (*To ANNE, soothingly*): Now, now. Don't cry anymore. We're not going to turn you out of doors tonight. What's your name?

ANNE (*Wiping eyes*): Well. . . I wish my name were Cordelia. It's such an elegant name. But my real name is Anne—with an e on the end. (*Spells*) A-n-n-e looks so much more distinguished than plain old A-n-n, don't you agree?

MARILLA (*Tartly*): I don't see what dif-

ference it makes. (*Shakes head, puzzled*) Come, let's have our supper, and then you can get to bed.

ANNE: Oh, I couldn't possibly eat, thank you anyway.

MARILLA (*Sternly*): And why not?

ANNE (*With a deep sigh*): Because I am in the depths of despair. (*Looks at pot on stove*) Everything looks extremely nice, but I still cannot eat. I hope you won't be offended.

MATTHEW (*Gently*): Come on, Anne. I'll show you your room. (*Exits*)

MARILLA: Good night, Anne.

ANNE (*Starting to exit*): I'm sorry, Miss Cuthbert, but I can't bear to say good night when I'm sure it's the very worst night I've ever had! (*Exits. MARILLA ladles stew from pot to bowl, sets it on table. MATTHEW reenters, sits at table, and begins to eat.*)

MARILLA: Well, Matthew, this is a pretty kettle of fish! The girl will have to be sent back to the orphanage, of course.

MATTHEW (*Sighing*): Well, yes, I suppose so.

MARILLA (*Sharply*): You suppose so? Don't you know it?

MATTHEW (*Uneasily*): Well, she's a nice little thing, Marilla.

MARILLA (*Sharply*): Matthew Cuthbert! You don't mean to say you think we ought to keep her! We need a boy to help out on the farm. What good would she be to us?

MATTHEW (*Firmly*): We might be some good to her, Marilla.

MARILLA (*Crossing arms*): I can see as plain as plain that you want to let her stay.

MATTHEW: It does seem kind of a pity to send her back when she's so set on staying. (*Chuckling*) She's quite an interesting little girl, Marilla. You should have heard her talk coming home from the station.

MARILLA: Oh, she can talk, all right, but talk is . . .

MATTHEW (*Interrupting*): I can hire a boy to help out with the farm, Marilla.

MARILLA: Well, I . . . (*Exasperated*) Matthew! You're a stubborn one, for sure. (*Sighs heavily*) I can fight forever, but I may as well give in now as later. All right. She can stay.

MATTHEW (*Smiling*): You won't regret this decision, Marilla. It will be nice to have a lively little girl on the farm. (*Curtain*)

* * *

SCENE 2

TIME: *Next morning.*

SETTING: *Same.*

AT RISE: *MARILLA is setting food on table, at which MATTHEW sits.*

MARILLA (*Calling off*): Anne! Time to be up and dressed for breakfast! (*ANNE enters.*)

ANNE: Oh, aren't mornings a wonderful thing? Though my heart is still aggrieved, I'm not in the depths of despair anymore. I'm glad it's such a sunshiny morning; it's easier to bear up under afflictions when the sun is shining, isn't it?

MARILLA (*Grumpily*): Never mind all your talk now. Let's sit down to eat.

(*ANNE and MARILLA join MATTHEW at table. They start to eat. MARILLA puts down fork and speaks to ANNE in businesslike tone.*) I suppose I might as well tell you that Matthew and I have decided to keep you (*MATTHEW smiles.*)—that is, if you will try to be a good little girl. (*ANNE looks disturbed.*) Why child, whatever is the matter?

ANNE (*Bewildered*): I'm crying—and trembling. I can't think why. I'm as glad as glad can be. But glad doesn't seem the right word at all. I was glad when I saw that wild cherry tree blooming outside my window, but this—oh, Miss Cuthbert, this is something more than glad! (*Sobs loudly*)

MARILLA (*Briskly*): Well, there's no sense in getting so worked up. You are really too emotional. And you must not call me Miss Cuthbert. We'll be just Marilla and Matthew.

ANNE: Oh, Miss—I mean, Marilla—I'll try ever so hard to be good—angelically good.

MARILLA (*Looking out window*): Well, here comes your first opportunity. Our neighbor Mrs. Lynde is headed up the path to pay us a visit.

MATTHEW (*Standing*): I'm going to plant the rest of my turnips. (*Exits right. Sound of knock at door. MARILLA rises, goes to door, and lets in MRS. RACHEL LYNDE, who brushes past her to sit at table.*)

MARILLA (*Dryly*): Why, Rachel, you're out early this morning. (*Joins her at table*)

MRS. LYNDE (*With a groan*): I must be coming down with a terrible case of the rheumatics. I can just feel myself stiffening up something fearful! (*Sighs*)

heavily) Well, well, life is full of suffering. (*Turns to peer over her glasses at ANNE*) Well! And who is this, Marilla?

MARILLA: This is Anne Shirley. Mrs. Spencer sent her to us from the orphanage. Anne, this is Mrs. Lynde.

MRS. LYNDE: I thought you said you were getting a boy from the orphanage. (*Stares at ANNE disapprovingly*) She's very homely and skinny. And did anyone ever see such freckles, or hair as red as carrots?

ANNE (*Jumping to feet; angrily*): Carrots! How dare you call me homely and skinny! You are a rude, impolite woman! How would you like to be told that you are fat and clumsy? You've hurt my feelings excruciatingly, and I shall never forgive your unkindness! Never! (*Stamps foot and runs from stage, crying. MARILLA and MRS. LYNDE sit in stunned silence.*)

MRS. LYNDE: Well! What a temper! I don't envy you your job of bringing that up, Marilla!

MARILLA (*Tersely*): What Anne just did was very naughty, Rachel, but what you said was very unkind. (*Sighs*) I'll give her a good talking to. (*Rises*)

MRS. LYNDE (*Sharply*): Take my advice and do that "talking to" with a good-sized hickory switch. (*Rises and goes to door*) Goodbye, Marilla. I'm going to look around in your garden for a few minutes before I go, if you don't mind. (*Exits*)

MARILLA (*Calling*): Anne, come here. (*ANNE enters, head down.*) Now, aren't you ashamed of the way you spoke to Mrs. Lynde?

ANNE: She had no right to say those things.

MARILLA: True, but you had no right to fly into such a fury. You must ask her forgiveness.

ANNE (*Stubbornly*): I can never do that, Marilla. (*Dramatically*) You can shut me up in a dark, damp dungeon inhabited by snakes and toads, but I cannot ask Mrs. Lynde to forgive me.

MARILLA (*Sternly*): Disrespect in a child is a terrible thing, Anne. I'm disappointed in you. (*ANNE hangs her head.*) You did tell me that you would try to be good, didn't you?

ANNE (*Looking up*): Now that my temper has died down, I suppose I am sorry for speaking so to Mrs. Lynde.

MARILLA: And you will tell her so?

ANNE: Yes, Marilla. I will. (*MARILLA goes to door.*)

MARILLA (*Calling*): Rachel! Anne has something to say to you. Will you please come back in for a minute? (*ANNE is mouthing words to herself.*) What are you doing, Anne?

ANNE: I'm practicing what I must say to Mrs. Lynde. (*MRS. LYNDE enters, and ANNE approaches her, falling down on her knees and extending her hands.*) Oh, Mrs. Lynde, I am so extremely sorry. (*In quivering voice*) I could never express all my sorrow, no, not if I used up a whole dictionary. You must just try to imagine the extent of my grief. I have been dreadfully wicked and ungrateful. Oh, Mrs. Lynde, please, please forgive me. (*MRS. LYNDE and MARILLA exchange surprised glances.*)

MRS. LYNDE (*Embarrassed*): There, there, child. Get up. Of course I forgive you. I guess I was a little too harsh.

ANNE (*Rising*): Oh, thank you, Mrs. Lynde. Your forgiveness is like a soothing ointment to my heart.

MRS. LYNDE (*Patting ANNE on head*): Good day, Anne. Good day, Marilla. (*Aside to MARILLA*) She's an odd little thing, but you know, on the whole I rather like her. (*Exits. Curtain*)

* * *

SCENE 3

TIME: *Next day.*

SETTING: *The same.*

AT RISE: *MARILLA is sweeping floor, while ANNE dries dishes.*

MARILLA: Anne, the Barrys are coming over this morning. Mrs. Barry is going to return a skirt pattern she borrowed. You can get acquainted with her daughter, Diana. She's about your age.

ANNE (*Dropping dish towel*): Oh, Marilla, what if she doesn't like me?

MARILLA: Now, don't get into a fluster. I'm sure Diana will like you well enough. Just be polite and well behaved, and don't make any of your startling speeches.

ANNE: You'd be flustered, too, Marilla, if you were going to meet a little girl who might become your best friend. I've never had a best friend in my whole life. My nerves are absolutely frazzled with excitement! (*Knock at door is heard.*)

MARILLA (*Exasperated*): Calm yourself, child. (*Opens door, and MRS. BARRY and DIANA enter.*) Hello, Margaret. Hello, Diana.

MRS. BARRY: How are you, Marilla?

MARILLA: Fine. I'd like you both to meet the girl we've taken in. (*Gestures*)

This is Anne Shirley.

ANNE: That's "Anne" with an e.

DIANA: Hello, Anne, I'm Diana.

MRS. BARRY (*Taking ANNE's hand*): How are you, Anne?

ANNE: I am well in body although considerably troubled in spirit, thank you, ma'am. (*Aside to MARILLA*) There wasn't anything startling in that, was there?

MARILLA: Anne, why don't you take Diana outside and show her the flower garden, while Mrs. Barry and I talk? (*Women sit.*)

ANNE: All right, Marilla. (*Girls exit through door and walk to stage front, sit on edge of stage, and look at each other shyly. Women mime conversation during following exchange.*) Diana, do you think. . . do you think you can like me well enough to be my best friend?

DIANA (*Laughing*): Why, I guess so. I'm glad you've come to live at Green Gables. I can tell we're going to have lots of fun together. Will you go with me to the Sunday School picnic next week? We eat our lunch down by the lake and go for boat rides—and then we have ice cream for dessert!

ANNE: Ice cream! Oh, Diana, I would be perfectly enraptured to go, if Marilla would let me. I'll go ask her right now. Come on. (*Girls reenter left and approach MARILLA and MRS. BARRY.*) Oh, Marilla! Diana has invited me to go to the Sunday School picnic with her next week! I've never been to a picnic, though I've dreamed of them often. Oh, and Marilla, they are going to serve ice cream! Ice cream, Marilla, may I go, please, please?

MARILLA: Anne, I've never seen the likes of you for going on and on about a thing. Now, just try to control yourself. As for the picnic, I'm not likely to refuse you when all the other children are going.

ANNE (*Throwing her arms around MARILLA*): Oh, you dear, good Marilla! You are so kind to me.

MARILLA (*Flustered*): There, there, never mind your hugging nonsense.

MRS. BARRY: Anne may ride over to the picnic with Diana if you like, and we'll bring her home, too. (*Rises*) We must be going home now, Diana. Maybe you can play together tomorrow. Thank you, Marilla, for the nice visit.

DIANA: Goodbye, Anne. (*DIANA and MRS. BARRY exit.*)

ANNE: Oh, Marilla, looking forward to things is half the pleasure of them, don't you think? I do hope the weather is fine next week. I don't feel that I could endure the disappointment if anything happened to prevent me from getting to the picnic. (*Curtain*)

* * *

SCENE 4

TIME: *Several days later.*

SETTING: *Same. There is a brooch on floor, under chair. Loose flowers and vase are on table.*

AT RISE: *ANNE sits with patchwork in lap, daydreaming. MARILLA enters. ANNE begins stitching vigorously.*

ANNE: I've been working steadily, Marilla, but it's ever so hard when the picnic is this very afternoon.

MARILLA (*Looking around, puzzled*): Anne, have you seen my amethyst brooch? I thought I put it right here in

my pin cushion, but I can't find it anywhere.

ANNE (*Nervously*): I—I saw it last night when you were at the Ladies Aid Society. It was in the pin cushion, as you said.

MARILLA (*Sternly*): Did you touch it?

ANNE (*Uncomfortably*): Yes. I pinned it on my dress for just a minute—only to see how it would look.

MARILLA (*Angrily*): You had no business touching something that didn't belong to you, Anne. Where did you put it?

ANNE: Oh, I put it right back. I didn't have it on but a minute. I'll never do it again. That's one good thing about me. I never do the same naughty thing twice.

MARILLA (*Sternly*): You did not put it back, or else it would be here. You've taken it and put it somewhere else, Anne. Tell me the truth at once. Did you lose it?

ANNE (*Upset*): Oh, but I did put it back, Marilla, I'm certain I did!

MARILLA (*Angrily*): If you had put it back, it would be here. I believe you are telling me a falsehood, Anne.

ANNE: Oh, but, Marilla. . .

MARILLA (*Harshly*): Don't say another word unless you are prepared to tell me where the brooch is. Go to your room and stay there until you are ready to confess. (*Downcast, ANNE starts toward exit.*)

ANNE: You will let me out of my room for the picnic, won't you?

MARILLA: Anne Shirley, you'll go to no picnic nor anywhere else until you've confessed! Now go! (*ANNE exits.*)

MATTHEW (*Entering*): Where's Anne? I wanted to show her the new geese down at the pond.

MARILLA (*Coldly*): She's in her room. She lost my amethyst brooch and she's lied about it, Matthew.

MATTHEW: Don't be too hasty to accuse Anne. I don't think she'd lie to you. (*Exits. ANNE enters.*)

ANNE: Marilla, I'm ready to confess.

MARILLA: Well, that was quick. What do you have to say, Anne?

ANNE (*Speaking quickly, as if reciting from memory*): I took the amethyst brooch, just as you said. I pinned it on my dress and then was overcome with an irresistible temptation to take it down by the Lake of Shining Waters to pretend that I was an elegant lady named Cordelia Fitzgerald. But, alas, as I was leaning over the bridge to catch its purple reflection in the water, it fell off and went down-down-down, and sank forevermore into the Lake.

MARILLA (*Staring at ANNE in anger*): Anne, you must be the wickedest girl I ever heard of to take something that wasn't yours and to lose it and then to lie about it and now to show no sign of sorrow whatever!

ANNE (*Nervously*): Now, I've confessed, Marilla. Will you please punish me so that I can go to the picnic?

MARILLA (*Incensed*): Picnic, indeed! You'll go to no picnic! That will be your punishment, and it isn't half severe enough either for what you've done!

ANNE (*Sobbing*): Not go to the picnic! But, Marilla, that's why I confessed! Oh, Marilla, you promised!

MARILLA (*Stonily*): You needn't plead, Anne. You are not going to the picnic, and that is final. (*ANNE flings herself into chair, sobbing and shrieking wildly.*) I believe the child is out of control. (*MARILLA walks around, wringing her hands. She suddenly catches sight of brooch under chair and picks it up with a startled cry. To herself*) What can this mean? Here's my brooch, safe and sound! And I thought it was at the bottom of the lake! (*ANNE looks up.*) Child, whatever did you mean by saying you took it and lost it?

ANNE: Well, you said you'd keep me in my room until I confessed, so I thought up an interesting confession so I could go to the picnic.

MARILLA (*Trying to look stern, but finally laughing*): Anne, you do beat all! But I was wrong—I shouldn't have doubted your word when you'd never told me a lie before. Of course, you shouldn't have made up that story, but I drove you to it. So if you'll forgive me, I'll forgive you. Now, go upstairs and wash your face and get ready for the picnic.

ANNE: It isn't too late?

MARILLA: No, they'll just be getting started. You won't miss a thing—especially the ice cream. That's always last.

ANNE (*Squealing happily*): Oh, Marilla! Thank you! (*Exits*)

* * *

SCENE 5

TIME: Next day.

SETTING: Same, but there are various cooking implements on table.

AT RISE: *MARILLA is dusting furniture. ANNE enters.*

ANNE: Good morning, Marilla!

MARILLA: Good morning. I've invited the new minister, Mr. Allan, and his wife for tea this afternoon.

ANNE: How divine! Marilla, will you let me make a cake for the Allans? I'd love to do something special for them.

MARILLA: Well, I suppose you can—if you'll be very careful to measure properly and clean up afterward.

ANNE: Oh, I will, I will—I promise! Thank you, Marilla! *(ANNE goes to table and starts to measure, stir, etc. As she works, she alternately hums and talks.)* I do hope the minister and Mrs. Allan like layer cake. Diana says she has a cousin who doesn't even like ice cream. Can you imagine, Marilla? *(Pours batter into pan, puts pan into oven)* There, now. The cake's in the oven. Oh, I don't see how I can ever wait till this afternoon. I'm bound to explode before the Allans arrive.

MARILLA: Goodness, child, let's hope not. That would be quite a spectacle. Now, why don't you go outdoors and run off a little of your excitement? I'll keep an eye on your cake and take it out when it's done.

ANNE: Thank you, Marilla! *(Exits left, comes to stage front, and sits on edge of stage as PEDDLER enters right, pushing cart on floor before stage. MARILLA works at kitchen table during following exchange.)*

PEDDLER *(Stopping center; calling up):* Hello there, miss. Would you be interested in buying some of my wares?

ANNE *(Leaning over to look down at*

PEDDLER): Uh—well—what kinds of things do you have?

PEDDLER *(Peering up at ANNE, shaking his head):* Well, right here in my cart, miss, I have a bottle of Mr. Roberts' Magic Hair Potion that is guaranteed to turn you into the raven-haired beauty of Prince Edward Island. *(Takes bottle from cart)* One simple application will give your hair a glossy, ebony sheen.

ANNE *(Touching her hair):* My red hair is a sore affliction to my soul. And I have always dreamed of having beautiful black hair. But I have only fifty cents. *(Fishes in pocket)*

PEDDLER: Well, now I'll tell you what, miss. The regular price of Mr. Roberts' Magic Hair Potion is seventy-five cents, but just for today I'll give it to you for only fifty cents. *(Takes her money and gives her the bottle; exits quickly)*

ANNE: What a kind-hearted man! *(Excited)* Now I can be the dark-haired beauty I've always wanted to be! I'll go home right now and put the magic potion on before the Allans come. With my cake and my beautiful new hair, I'm sure to impress them! *(Exits. MARILLA takes cake from oven, rearranges flowers in vase, straightens napkins at table.)*

MARILLA *(Calling off):* Anne! Time for tea! *(MATTHEW enters.)*

MATTHEW: I didn't see Anne outside, Marilla. *(Knock on door is heard.)*

MARILLA: That must be the Allans. Now, where could Anne be? *(Goes to door and opens it. REVEREND and MRS. ALLAN enter.)* Hello, Reverend Allan. Mrs. Allan! We're so glad you could come.

MRS. ALLAN: How lovely of you to invite us for tea, Marilla.

REV. ALLAN: We've been looking forward to it. (*To MATTHEW*) Hello, Matthew.

MATTHEW (*Shaking hands with ALLANS*): Welcome to our home.

MARILLA (*Gesturing to chairs*): Please have a seat. Anne will be right here to greet you. (*ANNE enters, wearing large, floppy hat.*) Why, Anne, what in the world are you doing with that hat on?

ANNE: Uh—my head feels a little chilly, Marilla. Good day, Reverend and Mrs. Allan. It's an honor to have you come for tea. (*Curtsies with a flourish. Her hat falls off and ANNE's hair, bright green, tumbles down.*)

MARILLA (*Stepping back; covering mouth*): Anne Shirley! What have you done to your hair?

MATTHEW (*Amused*): It looks green!

ANNE (*Miserably*): Oh, please don't scold me. I'm utterly wretched as it is, and scolding would only make it worse. (*Covers face with hands*) I wanted to have beautiful raven hair—the peddler promised—but. . .

MARILLA (*Sternly*): Peddler? What peddler?

MATTHEW: I did see a traveling peddler pass by this morning. . .

MARILLA (*Sharply*): Anne, what did you buy from the peddler?

ANNE: Mr. Roberts' Magic Hair Potion. My hair was supposed to turn glossy black, but it turned. . . (*Holding up a strand*) green.

MARILLA (*Shaking head*): You get yourself into such scrapes, Anne! Will you ever run out of ideas for mischief? (*MATTHEW chuckles quietly, then all but ANNE join in, laughing heartily. ANNE frowns.*)

REV. ALLAN (*Smiling, holding hand out to ANNE*): I don't believe we've ever been greeted in such a unique fashion, Anne. We're pleased to be here.

MRS. ALLAN (*Shaking ANNE's hand*): Hello, Anne. Don't be upset. I like little girls with imagination and an adventurous spirit. (*ANNE brightens.*)

MARILLA: Well, I do hope you'll pardon us. Anne, we'll have to see what we can do with your hair after tea. But for now, let's all sit down. Everything's ready. (*All sit.*) Let me serve the cake first. Anne made this all by herself.

MRS. ALLAN: What an accomplished girl to bake such a lovely cake!

REV. ALLAN: Yellow layer cake is my favorite, Anne. (*Each takes a bite of cake and makes a face. All cough, take quick sips of tea, gasp, etc.*)

MARILLA: Anne Shirley! What did you put into that cake?

MATTHEW: Well, now, it does taste a mite peculiar.

ANNE (*Forlornly*): I put in what the recipe said. Maybe it was the baking powder!

MARILLA: Baking powder, fiddlesticks! What flavoring did you use?

ANNE: Only vanilla.

MARILLA: Go and bring me the bottle you used. (*ANNE gets up and brings back small brown bottle from cupboard.*)

board, which she hands to MARILLA. MARILLA looks at it, startled.) Anne Shirley, you've gone and flavored our cake with Matthew's cough medicine! (ANNE cries out in distress and runs off. All look at one another, stunned, as curtain closes. ANNE enters before curtain and sits, crying dejectedly. MRS. ALLAN enters and stands quietly while ANNE talks aloud to herself.)

ANNE (Crying): Oh, I'm disgraced forever and ever. I shall never live this down, not if I live to be a hundred years old. First my hair and then the cake. (Sighs) How can I ever tell Mrs. Allan that the cake was an innocent mistake? What if she thinks I tried to poison her?

MRS. ALLAN (Stepping closer): Oh, I doubt that she'll think that. (ANNE looks up and rises quickly, wiping eyes.) You mustn't cry like this, Anne. It's only a funny mistake that anybody might make.

ANNE (Sniffing): Oh, no, it takes me to make such a mistake, Mrs. Allan. And I so wanted to have that cake perfect for you.

MRS. ALLAN: In that case, I assure you I appreciate your kindness and thoughtfulness just as much as if it had turned out all right. Now, you mustn't cry anymore, but come down to the flower garden with me. Miss Cuthbert tells me you have a flowerbed of your own. I want to see it, for I love flowers. (They begin walking across stage together.)

ANNE: Well, I suppose there's one encouraging thing about making mistakes. There must be a limit to the number one person can make, and when I get to the end of them, then I'll be through with them for good. (They exit.)

THE END

PRODUCTION NOTES

Anne of Green Gables

CHARACTERS: 6 female, 3 male.

PLAYING TIME: 25 minutes.

COSTUMES: Early 1900s attire. Women wear floor-length skirts or dresses, high-necked blouses, hair on top of head. Girls wear dresses and pinafores. If actress playing Anne is not a redhead, she may wear a wig or two braids of rust-colored yarn, then green wig for hair-dyeing episode. Matthew wears dark suit. Peddler wears baggy pants and jacket.

PROPERTIES: Fabric, needle, thread; small battered suitcase; worn straw hat; broom; dish towel; brooch; pin cushion; loose flowers and vase; feather duster; wooden peddler's cart, from

which hang pots, pans, and is filled with odd items, including a bottle of hair dye; coins; cake; large floppy hat.

SETTING: Farmhouse kitchen/sitting room, with dining table and five chairs; rugs, lamp; rocking chair, footstool, and another chair stage left; small table between two chairs; cupboard or long table across back on which to set dishes, kitchen utensils, cake pans, etc. A "stove" made from a large appliance box is near cupboard. Large window is cut into back wall. Working door is left.

LIGHTING and **SOUND:** No special effects.

The Clown is protected by U.S. copyright law. It is unlawful to use this play in any way unless you are a current subscriber to *PLAYS Magazine* (www.playsmagazine.com).

Middle Grades

The Clown

Thieves rob a toy store and come away with cash and a doll that could just be alive! . . .

by Carol D. Wise

Characters

CHUCKLES, *a clown*

LONNIE }
LENNY } *robbers*

MRS. FINNIGAN, *neighbor*

SETTING: *Living room. Door left leads to outside; door right to other parts of the house. Sofa with a flanking chair is center. A blanket lies on the back of the sofa. A calculator is set on a small table by chair.*

AT RISE: *LONNIE and LENNY enter left. LONNIE is “carrying” a large clown doll (Chuckles), and LENNY is carrying a satchel full of money.*

LONNIE: Boy, Lenny! You are so clever! That heist from the toy store was like taking candy from a baby.

LENNY (*Hesitantly*): Yeah, it was almost too easy. That’s what worries me. Mr. Ferrell was pretty stupid, forgetting to repair the latch on his shop window before he went away for the

weekend—not to mention leaving cash in the register. All good for us, though.

LONNIE (*Pensively*): Mr. Fennell’s getting old and forgetful. He’s owned that toy shop for more than fifty years. I remember when we used to call him Mr. Wizard. He knew so many magic tricks. (*Sets CHUCKLES on the left side of the sofa*)

LENNY (*Exasperated*): I wish I hadn’t let you grab that ridiculous clown.

LONNIE: Aw, Lenny, I’ve always loved clowns. They were my favorite part of the circus when I was a kid.

LENNY: There’s something creepy about him.

LONNIE: I think he’s neat. I’m going to name him Chuckles.

LENNY (*Puzzled*): Chuckles?

LONNIE: Yeah. Chuckles was the name of the clown in the Disney movie *Toy Story*. Clowns make me happy.

LENNY (*Grumpy*): Well, they don’t

make me happy, so keep him out of sight. He could be considered evidence of our robbery if he's seen. It's easy to hide money but not so much an oversized clown. Come on in the kitchen and help me count the loot. I bet there's several thousand dollars here. (*LONNIE follows LENNY to exit right. CHUCKLES begins to move, gets up and stretches and begins doing some light aerobics. When LENNY returns to the room, CHUCKLES quickly flops down on the right side of the sofa.*) I forgot to bring the calculator. It was right here on the—hey, Lonnie—wasn't the clown sitting on the left side of the sofa? (*LONNIE enters right.*)

LONNIE: Uh—yeah! I thought so!

LENNY: You must have moved him when you went in the kitchen.

LONNIE (*Scratching his head*): Yeah, maybe. I don't remember doing that.

LENNY (*Gruffly*): You can't remember your name sometimes.

LONNIE (*Patting CHUCKLE's head*): He's just kidding, Chuckles. I know my name's Lonnie.

LENNY (*Shaking his head*): So you're talking to a dummy now?

LONNIE: Chuckles and I are buddies, aren't we, Chuckles?

LENNY (*Rolling his eyes*): I'm not sure who's the bigger dummy. Come on, Lonnie. Let's count the dough.

LONNIE (*Taking out his phone and tapping it*): I'm going to put on some music for Chuckles.

LENNY (*Harshly*): Good grief, Lonnie! You'd think that stupid dummy was alive. (*Lively music starts. They exit*

right. CHUCKLES gets up and starts dancing around to the music. The doorbell rings and CHUCKLES flops down in the center of the sofa. LENNY and LONNIE rush in. They look at CHUCKLES' new location on the sofa, puzzled.) Lonnie—did you move the clown again?

LONNIE (*Scratching his head*): I don't think so.

LENNY: Forget it—just cover him up quickly. And turn off that blasted music! (*LONNIE throws a blanket over CHUCKLES and turns off the music. LENNY opens the door to MRS. FINNIGAN, who is carrying some cinnamon rolls.*) Well, hello, Mrs. Finnigan. So nice to see you.

MRS. FINNIGAN: I was making cinnamon rolls and was thinking of how much you boys liked them, so I made an extra batch for you. (*Hands them to LENNY*)

LENNY (*Nervously looking back at CHUCKLES*): How thoughtful of you, Mrs. Finnigan!

LONNIE: Chuckles loves cinnamon rolls too.

MRS. FINNIGAN (*Frowning*): Chuckles?

LONNIE: Yes, my—(*Hesitates*)

LENNY: Lonnie's brother—Chuckles. Laughs all the time. He's visiting.

MRS. FINNIGAN: Oh, how lovely! I hope I get to meet him.

LENNY: Oh, he won't be staying long. In fact, he may be leaving today.

MRS. FINNIGAN: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

LENNY: Forgive us for not inviting you

in. We're in the middle of—of cleaning. Chuckles is very fastidious.

MRS. FINNIGAN: Oh, I'd be delighted to help you. I just bought a new vacuum cleaner.

LENNY: Ah—that's very nice of you, but that won't be necessary.

MRS. FINNIGAN: Suppose I bring over some more food?

LENNY (*Quickly*): Oh, no thank you, Mrs. Finnigan. You've already been so generous, but Chuckles—you see—follows a rigid diet. Gluten-free.

MRS. FINNIGAN: I have some gluten-free flour. I could make some gluten-free cinnamon rolls.

LENNY: Oh, that's very kind of you, but Chuckles is also a vegan—and macrobiotic—and he follows a paleo diet as well.

MRS. FINNIGAN (*Gasping*): Oh, my! A most peculiar combination of diets! (*Looks over at the lump on the sofa*) Oh—is that your brother, Lonnie?

LONNIE: He's not—

LENNY (*Quickly*): Yes, that's Chuckles. He's napping. He has a very rare medical condition and must have complete rest—and quiet.

MRS. FINNIGAN: Is that why he's on so many different diet plans?

LENNY: Yes! Exactly! (*MRS. FINNIGAN starts to walk over to sofa.*)

MRS. FINNIGAN: He has the blanket completely over his face. He'll smother.

LENNY (*Holding up his hand*): No—no! That's just the way he sleeps. He can't

have too much air, you see.

MRS. FINNIGAN (*Slowly retreating to the door*): Oh, my! That's a very strange malady, I must say.

LENNY: Indeed, it is. But you are so thoughtful to bring us these cinnamon rolls. Lonnie and I will certainly enjoy them. Please forgive us for rushing but we need to clean the house for Chuckles. He's allergic to dust, you see.

MRS. FINNIGAN: The poor dear! I understand completely, but if— (*LENNY closes the door on her.*)

LONNIE: I don't get it, Lenny. How did you know that Chuckles was on all those diets—and had all those illnesses?

LENNY (*Impatiently*): Good grief, Lonnie! I made that up to get rid of Mrs. Finnigan. You have difficulty remembering that Chuckles is a dummy. Now, I want you to stop playing silly buggers with me and quit moving Chuckles around the sofa. First, he was on the left side of the sofa, then the right side, and now he's in the middle.

LONNIE: But I don't think I moved him, Lenny.

LENNY: Well, dummies don't move on their own.

LONNIE: I don't like you calling Chuckles a dummy.

LENNY (*Exasperated*): But Chuckles is a dummy, Lenny. Now come on back in the kitchen and let's finish counting our heist.

LONNIE: Let me take the blanket off him. He'll smother.

LENNY: Forget it, Lonnie! I don't want to see that smiling face again. He's creeping me out. Leave him covered. *(They exit right. CHUCKLES jumps up and starts interacting with the audience by performing funny gestures and magic tricks. When LENNY and LONNIE reenter right, CHUCKLES quickly jumps on the left chair flanking the sofa and remains still.)* Lonnie, so help me! You moved that clown again! And took the blanket off!

LONNIE: No, Lenny. I swear! Besides, I went into the kitchen before you. If anyone moved him, you did!

LENNY *(Angrily)*: I told you that clown was creepy. I want him out of here.

LONNIE: But Lenny. . .

LENNY: Don't "but Lenny" me. I didn't want you to bring that dummy here in the first place.

LONNIE: Chuckles is—

LENNY: Don't "Chuckles" me. I never want to hear that word again. *(Points to the door)* Take him out to the car—now!

LONNIE: But what if Mrs. Finnigan sees me?

LENNY: Just tell her you're taking your brother to the hospital.

LONNIE: What are we going to do with him?

LENNY: Throw him off a bridge, leave him in the woods, I don't care, just as long as he isn't here.

LONNIE *(Meekly)*: Can we take him back to the toy shop?

LENNY *(Scowling)*: Return to the scene

of the crime? Not a brilliant idea, Lonnie.

LONNIE: You know what, Lenny? I think Chuckles wants us to return the money to Mr. Fennell's store.

LENNY *(Aghast)*: What?

LONNIE: What seemed like a brilliant idea to begin with is bothering me now. We were wrong to take someone else's money. Mr. Fennell works hard to earn a living. Chuckles knows that.

LENNY: Lonnie, I don't know how to tell you this, but Chuckles doesn't know anything. He's not real.

LONNIE: He's real to me. Lenny, Mr. Fennell's a really nice man. He used to let me play in his shop when I was a little boy and couldn't afford to buy any of his toys. I really looked up to him.

LENNY *(Sighing)*: Yeah, me too.

LONNIE: Tell me—do you actually feel good about stealing from old Mr. Fennell?

LENNY: Well, no, but—

LONNIE: We've never taken anything before, Lenny. I don't think we'll ever enjoy this money. Do we really want to lead a life of crime?

LENNY: But Lonnie, think of what we can do with several thousand dollars.

LONNIE: Think of what we can do if we lead an honest life.

LENNY *(Shaking his head sadly)*: Oh, Lonnie, I know, but it—it was the perfect crime! We would have gotten away clean.

LONNIE: No crime is perfect. *(Looks at*

the clown) Right, Chuckles?

LENNY (*Sighing*): Good grief, Lonnie.

LONNIE: Lenny, look at his eyes. He actually reminds me of Mr. Fennell.

LENNY (*Staring at CHUCKLES*): Don't be ridiculous.

LONNIE: I mean it. (*Gasps*) Did you see that? His eyes just moved.

LENNY: You're losing it, Lonnie.

LONNIE: Chuckles is reminding us what a good man Mr. Fennell is. This money—

LENNY (*Sighing heavily*): O.K. O.K. I'm probably going to regret this, but we'll take the money back. I can't believe I just said that. I guess we're just not cut out to be robbers. (*Exits right*)

LONNIE (*To CHUCKLES*): Thanks for helping us understand how wrong we were, Chuckles. I wish I could keep you, but if we return the money, we have to return you too. Maybe I can visit you at the toy store. (*LENNY*

reenters with satchel.)

LENNY: Let's hurry up before I change my mind.

LONNIE: It's the right thing to do, Lenny.

LENNY (*Nodding*): I know. I know.

LONNIE (*Picking up CHUCKLES*): All right, Chuckles. We're going home. I'm going to miss you, buddy.

LENNY: You can put Chuckles in the trunk.

LONNIE (*Shocked*): Put Chuckles in the trunk!

LENNY: Well, he's certainly not riding up front with me. That is one scary clown.

LONNIE (*To CHUCKLES*): Come on, Chuckles. We're going back to the toy store. Thank you for helping us. (*Picks up CHUCKLES so that he faces the audience. As they exit, CHUCKLES looks over LONNIE's shoulder and waves goodbye to audience. Curtain*)

THE END

PRODUCTION NOTES

The Clown

CHARACTERS: 4 male and female actors.

PLAYING TIME: 20 minutes.

COSTUMES: Everyday dress for Lenny, Lonnie, and Mrs. Finnigan. Clown wears appropriate costume. Lonnie has cell phone in pocket.

SETTING: Living room. Door left leads to outside; door right to other parts of

the house. Sofa with a flanking chair is center. A blanket lies on the back of the sofa. A calculator is set on a small table by chair.

PROPERTIES: Large satchel; plate of cinnamon rolls.

SOUND: Doorbell; dance music from phone.

The Book Hospital

Broken spine, torn pages, smudged covers?

Dr. Librarian will see you now! . . .

by Jean McKinney

Characters

DR. LIBRARIAN

NURSE BIANCA

ROBINSON CRUSOE

HEIDI

TOM SAWYER

CINDERELLA

KING ARTHUR

PAUL BUNYAN

followed by NURSE. Loud moans and cries of "Doctor!" "Please help me," etc., are heard as curtain rises.

SETTING: *The book hospital. There are two or three cots and several chairs.*

AT RISE: *HEIDI, TOM SAWYER, CINDERELLA, KING ARTHUR, and PAUL BUNYAN sit in chairs. ROBINSON CRUSOE is lying down on one of the cots. Each wears a cardboard cover representing a book. DR. LIBRARIAN goes to ROBINSON CRUSOE and takes his pulse. NURSE places thermometer in HEIDI's mouth.*

BEFORE RISE: *Loud moans and groans are heard from behind curtain. After a few moments, DR. LIBRARIAN walks briskly onto apron of stage. Behind her is NURSE BIANCA, pushing hospital cart holding large containers labeled GLUE, SHELLAC, ALCOHOL, as well as mending tape, rolls of binding tape, cotton balls, thermometer, a pair of pliers, etc. DR. LIBRARIAN opens curtain wide enough to enter through it,*

ROBINSON CRUSOE: Oh, Doctor, thank goodness you're here. I'm in such pain. There I was, brand-new and dressed in my beautiful book cover, just waiting for someone to check me out, when along came a little boy who jerked me from the shelf. I heard myself go, "Creak, creak, creak!" Then I felt limp, and knew my spine was broken. I haven't been able to stand up since then. *(Groans)* Oh,

my aching spine!

DR. LIBRARIAN (*Soothingly*): Yes, you are very sick, Robinson Crusoe. Now, what you need to do right now is get a good night's sleep, and tomorrow we'll get you ready for surgery at the bindery. You'll be good as new then.

ROBINSON CRUSOE: Thank you, Doctor! I feel better already. (*Drowsily*) I am feeling a little tired . . . (*Closes eyes and turns head on pillow. NURSE and DR. LIBRARIAN pull up blanket and tuck it around ROBINSON CRUSOE. NURSE then takes thermometer from HEIDI's mouth.*)

DR. LIBRARIAN: Good morning, Heidi. (*Reads thermometer*) Hmmm—quite a bit of fever. (*HEIDI coughs miserably.*) How did you catch such a terrible cold?

HEIDI: I'm used to the Swiss Alps, and cold weather doesn't usually bother me. But I was so mistreated by a care-less little girl. (*HEIDI cries.*)

NURSE: Why don't you tell us about it.

HEIDI: One bitter cold day the little girl checked me out of the library and took me home with her. Just as she was going up the steps to her nice warm house, she dropped me. She didn't even notice me, and I lay on the steps all night while the snow and rain came down. Now I'm all faded and out of shape. (*Coughs again*)

DR. LIBRARIAN: You did get a soaking. You're still limp. We'll get you dry. Nurse Bianca, please make sure Heidi gets plenty of rest and fluids to take care of this cold.

NURSE: Yes, of course, Dr. Librarian.

DR. LIBRARIAN: Don't worry, Heidi. In

a few days you'll be well enough to go to the bindery and select a new cover for yourself.

HEIDI (*Cheering up*): Oh, Dr. Librarian, do you think I could get a red cover with my name in big gold letters?

DR. LIBRARIAN: I think that could be arranged.

NURSE (*In stage whisper*): Dr. Librarian, that's Tom Sawyer over there. Isn't his breathing dreadful?

DR. LIBRARIAN (*Going to TOM SAWYER*): Hello, Tom. How are you?

TOM SAWYER (*Breathing loudly*): I'm terrible. Every time I breathe, I feel as though my lungs are glued together. (*NURSE takes TOM SAWYER's pulse while DR. LIBRARIAN listens to his chest with her stethoscope.*)

DR. LIBRARIAN: Stand up, Tom, and let me take a look between your covers. (*TOM SAWYER stands. He is still breathing heavily while DR. LIBRARIAN and NURSE stand on either side of him and take a look between his book covers.*) Aha, I see the trouble. Nurse Bianca, please hand me a pair of pliers.

TOM SAWYER (*Frightened*): What are you going to do?

DR. LIBRARIAN: Your wheezing has been caused by a wad of chewing gum that's stuck inside you.

TOM SAWYER: Oh, what'll these kids do next! (*Nervously*) Will it hurt to pull it out?

DR. LIBRARIAN: A little, but it won't take long. (*She pulls long rubbery substance out while TOM SAWYER gives*

a loud yelp.) There now, Tom, you'll be all right. Fortunately, no pages are torn. Nurse Bianca, bring the alcohol and cotton, please. (*NURSE goes to cart and brings cotton and alcohol.* DR. LIBRARIAN gives the spot beneath TOM SAWYER's cover a dab. TOM is now breathing normally.) There we go, all done. Feel better now?

TOM SAWYER: Thank you, Dr. Librarian. I feel 100% better.

DR. LIBRARIAN: You should stay in the hospital for a few days and then you can return to your place on the shelf. (*To NURSE, in stage whisper, pointing to CINDERELLA*) Who's that over there?

NURSE: Oh, that's Cinderella.

DR. LIBRARIAN (*Approaching CINDERELLA*): Cinderella! What happened to you? You were the prettiest book in the library!

CINDERELLA: Two girls—not one, but two—with the dirtiest hands you've ever seen, came and leafed through my pages and smudged my cover.

DR. LIBRARIAN: It looks like one of them was eating chocolate. Your whole cover is streaked.

NURSE: I'll get the sponge and that new cleaning fluid. (*She goes to cart and returns with large bottle and sponge. They both work on CINDERELLA's book cover.*)

DR. LIBRARIAN (*Standing back*): You look much better now. Nurse Bianca will work on your pages later today.

CINDERELLA (*Gratefully*): Thank you, Dr. Librarian.

NURSE (*Going ahead to next patient*): Why, King Arthur, let's straighten that crown. You look a bit bedraggled to be a king.

KING ARTHUR: I don't even feel like a king. Whoever heard of a king who was chewed up by a puppy? I'm really dog-eared.

DR. LIBRARIAN: That's a dreadful thing to happen to a king. But don't worry, King Arthur. Nurse, could I have a roll of that binding tape and some scissors, please? (*NURSE brings tape and scissors and she and DR. LIBRARIAN quickly repair ragged corners of book cover.*) Now, you look much better.

KING ARTHUR: I feel much better, too. Thank you, Dr. Librarian.

DR. LIBRARIAN (*To next patient*): Paul Bunyan! You look as strong and healthy as ever. What are you doing here?

PAUL BUNYAN (*Moaning*): I'm afraid I have internal injuries.

DR. LIBRARIAN: Let's have a look. (*PAUL BUNYAN stands painfully while DR. LIBRARIAN and NURSE look between the covers.*) You are torn inside. Two of your pages are ripped in two. (*NURSE brings mending tape from cart and they quickly repair the pages.*) Now, Paul, sit back down and stay quiet until you're entirely healed. Then you can go back to the shelves.

PAUL BUNYAN (*Grumbling*): An active guy like me having to be in the hospital with torn pages! Isn't that something! (*Sits obediently. NURSE and DR. LIBRARIAN walk downstage away from the patients.*)

DR. LIBRARIAN: I try hard to show the boys and girls who come to the library

what a treasure they have on the shelves and what exciting adventures books can offer them.

NURSE: If only they would take care of their books!

DR. LIBRARIAN: I've spoken to them about that, too. I'm sure that when our patients are back in circulation, the children will take better care of them.

NURSE: In the meantime, I'll do my best to make our patients comfortable.

DR. LIBRARIAN: I'll be back tomorrow. Goodbye, everyone.

BOOKS (*Ad lib*): Goodbye, Dr. Librarian. Thank you! (*Etc. Then, in unison, to audience*) And remember, everyone—please take care of your books! (*Curtain*)

THE END

PRODUCTION NOTES

The Book Hospital

CHARACTERS: 8 male and female actors.

PLAYING TIME: 10 minutes.

COSTUMES: Dr. Librarian and Nurse Bianca wear white uniforms. Book characters wear cardboard book covers, divided into two parts at the waistline so bending is possible. The covers are soiled, torn, bent, etc., as indicated in text. King Arthur wears a crown.

PROPERTIES: Hospital cart or tea wagon with containers marked GLUE, SHELLAC, ALCOHOL, as well as mending tape, rolls of binding tape, cotton balls, thermometer, a pair of pliers, etc.

SETTING: The book hospital. There are two or three cots and five chairs for patients.

LIGHTING and **SOUND:** No special effects.

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The Tale of the Unhappy Bunny

Forsythia is a perfect little rabbit.

So why won't she hop? . . .

by Colleen Neuman

Characters

NARRATOR

FATHER RABBIT

MOTHER RABBIT

LILY

WARREN

FORSYTHIA

DR. VON RABBIT

FREDDY FOX

} Rabbit children

like you could use a good story.
(*Settles into chair and opens book*)
Now, let's see. . .

* * *

TIME: *One spring day.*

SETTING: *Rabbits' house and garden, with path to Doctor's office. Wood chips strewn on floor, right, represent house. Hidden from audience under blanket on floor are LILY, WARREN, and FORSYTHIA. Box labeled CARROT CRINKLES, bowls, and bunches of carrots are on table. Chairs surround table. Left of house is garden, with rows of carrots and cabbages on floor. Doctor's office, with two stools and table of equipment, is up center. Path of colored construction paper winds around floor and over a hill, low bridge, and trees.*

BEFORE RISE: *Down right is overstuffed chair with book under cushion; floor lamp is next to it. NARRATOR enters left, goes to chair, looks around before finding book.*

NARRATOR (*Holding up book*): I've been looking all over for this book! (*Addressing audience*) It's one of my favorites: "The Tale of the Unhappy Bunny." (*Peering at audience*) You look

NARRATOR (*Reading*): Once upon a time. . . (*To audience*) Don't you just love that part? (*Continues reading*). . . there was a Father Rabbit and a Mother Rabbit. (*Clicks on floor lamp. FATHER RABBIT and MOTHER RABBIT hop on left, FATHER push-*

ing wheelbarrow, MOTHER carrying hoe. They were very brave, very strong, and worked very hard in their garden raising vegetables to feed their family. (*MOTHER mimes hoeing garden.*)

FATHER: Goodness gracious! We certainly have plenty of carrots and cabbages this year.

NARRATOR: The Rabbits were also terrific cooks.

MOTHER: Goodness gracious! Look at all these carrots! (*Picks some up, puts them in pockets*) For supper tonight, we'll have carrot soup, carrot salad, baked carrots, mashed carrots, carrot gravy and, for dessert, carrot cake with cabbage ice cream.

FATHER: Oh, boy! All my favorites! (*Both mime hoeing garden.*)

NARRATOR: Father and Mother Rabbit lived in a charming rabbit hole next to their garden, with their three lovely rabbit children: their son Warren (*WARREN sits up from under blanket, stretches.*) and their daughters Lily (*LILY sits up, stretches.*) and Forsythia. (*FORSYTHIA sits up, stretches.*) Like all good children everywhere, they did their chores (*They fold up blanket.*), ate a nutritious breakfast of Carrot Crinkles (*Mime pouring cereal from box into bowls and eating*), and kept their ears nicely combed. (*Comb ears with paws*) There was just one problem.

MOTHER (*Calling*): Warren! Lily! Forsythia! Come along, children! Time to help in the garden!

WARREN: Coming, Mother! (*Hops to garden*)

LILY: Coming, Mother! (*Hops to garden*)

FORSYTHIA: Coming, Mother! (*Walks to garden. Children pile carrots and cabbages in wheelbarrow.*)

NARRATOR: The problem was, Forsythia couldn't hop! While the rest of her family hopped and hopped and hopped, Forsythia just walked and walked and walked. And when Warren and Lily played their favorite rabbit games, Forsythia couldn't even join in.

WARREN: Come on, Forsythia! Let's play hopscotch. It's fun! (*Mimes playing hopscotch*)

NARRATOR: But Forsythia just said. . .

FORSYTHIA: No, thank you.

LILY: Come on, Forsythia, play hop rope with me. Look! It's fun! (*Mimes jumping rope*)

NARRATOR: But Forsythia just said. . .

FORSYTHIA: No, thank you.

NARRATOR: Father Rabbit and Mother Rabbit were very puzzled.

FATHER: Goodness gracious, Mother Rabbit. I'm very puzzled. I've never seen Forsythia hop. Not even once.

MOTHER (*Sadly*): I know. And tomorrow is the first day of school. How will she ever fit in if she can't hop? All the rabbit children will laugh at her.

FATHER: What will we do?

NARRATOR: And they looked very worried. (*They assume worried pose: right arm folded across midriff, left elbow resting in right hand, left hand pressed to left cheek. They wear worried expressions on their faces.*) And then Mother Rabbit had an idea.

MOTHER (*Dropping worried pose*): I have an idea! Why don't we take Forsythia to see Dr. Von Rabbit? He knew what to do when the children had rabbit pox. Maybe he can help.

FATHER (*Brightening*): Of course! Why didn't we think of that before? (*RABBITS and NARRATOR face audience and shrug.*)

MOTHER: Come along, children. We're going to see Dr. Von Rabbit.

NARRATOR: And so they did. Father Rabbit took Warren's hand. (*He does.*) Mother Rabbit took Lily's and Forsythia's hands. (*She does.*) And off they hopped—and walked—down the path, up the hill, through the woods, over the bridge and between the two big apple trees to Dr. Von Rabbit's office (*RABBITS follow path as NARRATOR describes it, till they reach doctor's office.*), where they rang. . .

RABBITS (*Loudly, together*): Ring!

NARRATOR: . . .the bell.

DOCTOR (*Entering and hopping onto stool, his back to Rabbits*): Who's that at my door?

FATHER: It's Father Rabbit.

MOTHER: And Mother Rabbit. And our children. . .

WARREN: Warren Rabbit.

LILY: Lily Rabbit.

FORSYTHIA: And Forsythia Rabbit.

DOCTOR (*Turning on stool*): Well, why didn't you say so? Come on in! (*RABBITS take one step closer to stool.*) What can I do for you?

MOTHER: It's our youngest daughter Forsythia, Dr. Von Rabbit. She's very brave and very strong and always keeps her ears nicely combed. (*Anxiously*) But she can't hop!

DOCTOR: Well, let's take a look. Sit down, Forsythia. (*FORSYTHIA sits on other stool.*) First, I'd better take her temperature. (*Puts thermometer in her mouth*) How long has Forsythia had this hopeless problem?

FATHER: All her life.

DOCTOR: Well, why didn't you say so? This could be serious!

NARRATOR: This made them very worried. (*FATHER, MOTHER, LILY, and WARREN strike worried pose.*)

DOCTOR (*Taking out thermometer, reading it*): Two hundred degrees! (*FATHER, MOTHER, WARREN, and LILY gasp and bring hands to cheeks.*) Perfect for a rabbit! (*They drop hands, sighing.*) I'd better listen to her heart. (*Holds stethoscope to her chest*) Be quiet, everyone. (*They strike worried pose, putting fingers to lips.*)

NARRATOR (*Whispering*): And so they were.

DOCTOR: Five hundred beats per minute! (*They gasp again, hands to face.*) Perfect for a rabbit! (*They sigh in relief.*) Now, I would like to check one more thing. Hold up your feet, Forsythia. (*Takes tape measure*)

NARRATOR: And so she did.

DOCTOR (*Measuring her feet*): Ten inches by ten inches by ten inches. (*They gasp again.*) Perfect for a rabbit! (*They sigh again.*) I am happy to report that Forsythia is perfect for a rabbit.

FATHER (*Bewildered*): Then why can't she hop?

DOCTOR (*Shrugging*): Beats me. That will be two carrots, please.

NARRATOR: Of course, they were very disappointed, but Mother Rabbit paid him (*She gives DOCTOR two carrots from her pocket.*) and they headed home. Father Rabbit took Warren's hand (*He does.*), Mother Rabbit took Lily's and Forsythia's hands (*She does.*), and off they hopped—and walked—back between the two big apple trees, over the bridge, (*FRED-DY FOX enters right and creeps after them.*) and so on toward home. (*Ominously*) But this time they were followed-by a fox! He crept between the two big apple trees, over the bridge, through the woods and up the hill right behind them. And he looked hungry! Just when they got to the top of the hill, the fox reached out and grabbed Father Rabbit's arm!

FOX (*In friendly tone*): Excuse me, but aren't you Father Rabbit?

FATHER (*Alarmed*): A fox! And he looks hungry!

MOTHER (*Anxiously*): Hop, *children*! Hop! Hop for your lives! Back to Dr. Von Rabbit's!

NARRATOR (*Quickly*): And so they did! They hopped furiously back down the hill, through the woods, over the bridge and between the two big apple trees to Dr. Von Rabbit's, where they rang. . .

RABBITS (*Loudly*): Ring!!

NARRATOR: . . .the bell.

DOCTOR (*From his stool*): Who's that at my door?

FATHER: It's Father Rabbit!

MOTHER: And Mother Rabbit! And our children!

WARREN: Warren Rabbit!

LILY: Lily Rabbit!

FORSYTHIA: And Forsythia Rabbit!

RABBITS (*Together*): We're being chased by a fox!

DOCTOR (*Turning on stool to face them*): Well, why didn't you say so? Come on in! (*RABBITS quickly step closer to stool, sigh in relief.*)

NARRATOR: And so they did—just in the nick of time! (*FOX arrives at "door" and leans his head against it, eavesdropping.*)

FATHER: Goodness gracious! That was close! I've never hopped so fast in all my life!

MOTHER: Me either!

WARREN: Me either!

LILY: Me either!

FORSYTHIA: Me either! (*Others stare at FORSYTHIA.*)

OTHER RABBITS (*Pause; together*): Forsythia! You *hopped*!

FORSYTHIA (*In exasperation*): Of course I hopped! A fox was chasing me!

MOTHER: But you never hopped before!

FORSYTHIA: A fox never chased me before!

DOCTOR: Do you mean to tell us that you could hop all along?

FORSYTHIA (*Shrugging*): Of course.

DOCTOR: Why didn't you say so?

FORSYTHIA: Nobody ever asked me.

NARRATOR: And it was true. . .

NARRATOR and **RABBITS** (*To audience, shrugging*): Nobody ever had.

MOTHER: But Forsythia, dear, if you know how to hop, why don't you ever do it?

FORSYTHIA: I like walking. It gets me where I want to go - and it's smoother than hopping. All that bouncing gives me a headache.

FATHER: But rabbits aren't supposed to walk.

FORSYTHIA: Why not? Did you ever try it? Maybe you'd like it. Come on - I'll show you. (*Rabbits form chorus line, with FORSYTHIA a few steps ahead of them.*)

NARRATOR: And so she did.

FORSYTHIA: Just do what I do. Keep your paws close to the ground. (*Turns and shakes paw at them*) And no bouncing! (*Turns to audience*) Here we go—nice and smooth, see? (*RABBITS take one slow giant step forward, while FOX looks on, bewildered.*)

FOX (*Impatiently*): Ring!

NARRATOR: The bell.

DOCTOR: Who's that at my door?

FOX: It's Freddy Fox!

DOCTOR: Well, why didn't you say so? Come on in!

OTHER RABBITS: Goodness gracious, a fox! (*They huddle in fear.*)

DOCTOR: Don't be afraid. Freddy doesn't eat rabbits.

FOX (*Stepping into office*): Oh, dear, no. I gave that up long ago. Now I'm a vegetarian. I eat only salads—lettuce, beets, onions. But carrots and cabbages are my favorites. That's why I wanted to talk to you Rabbits. You have such a nice cabbage patch, I was hoping you could give me some gardening advice.

FATHER and **MOTHER** (*Delighted; ad lib*): We'd be happy to! We love talking about our garden! (*Etc.*)

MOTHER: In fact, why don't you and Dr. Von Rabbit come for supper tonight? We'll celebrate!

FOX and **DOCTOR** (*Ad lib*): Oh, boy! We'd love to come! (*Etc.*)

NARRATOR: And so they did. Father Rabbit took Warren's hand. (*He does.*) Mother Rabbit took Lily's and Forsythia's hands. (*She does.*) Freddy Fox took Dr. Von Rabbit's hand. (*He does.*) And they all walked—that's right, walked—back between the two big apple trees, over the bridge, through the woods, up the hill and down the path and back to their garden and house, where Mother Rabbit said. . .

MOTHER: You know, I still prefer hopping, but walking is a nice change of pace.

NARRATOR: Then they sat down and had a wonderful supper of. . . (*They sit around table. MOTHER sets bowl of*

carrots on table; each takes a carrot after reciting line.)

FATHER: Carrot soup!

MOTHER: Carrot salad!

WARREN: Baked carrots!

LILY: Mashed carrots!

FORSYTHIA: Carrot gravy!

FOX: Carrot cake!

DOCTOR: And cabbage ice cream! (*All nibble on carrots.*)

NARRATOR: And when Forsythia went to school the next day, nobody laughed at her. She made lots of friends because she was smart and fun, had very good manners, and was perfect for a rabbit. After that, Freddy Fox became best friends with the Rabbits. He helped them in the garden and gave shared exciting new salad

recipes. Freddy and Dr. Von Rabbit came for supper every Saturday night, when Warren and Lily and Forsythia would talk about what they learned in school.

WARREN: Guess what I learned in school this week? One cabbage plus one cabbage equals two cabbages.

LILY: Guess what I learned in school this week? I learned how to spell carrot: (*Spells*) C-a-r-r-o-t.

FORSYTHIA: Guess what I learned in school this week? (*Jumps up and runs around, flapping her arms*) I learned all about flying!

NARRATOR: And this made them very worried. (*All but FORSYTHIA strike worried pose.*)

ALL: The End! (*NARRATOR turns off lamp and exits. Quick curtain*)

THE END

PRODUCTION NOTES

The Tale of the Unhappy Bunny

CHARACTERS: 3 female; 2 male; 3 male or female for Narrator, Doctor, Fox.

PLAYING TIME: 20 minutes.

COSTUMES: All wear sweatsuits, socks or slippers, and appropriate hats (Easter bonnets and ears for female rabbits, derby and ears for male rabbits, etc.). Doctor lab coat.

PROPERTIES: Wheelbarrow, hoe.

SETTING: Before Rise, down right is overstuffed chair with book under cushion; floor lamp is next to it. At Rise, Rabbits' house and garden, with

path to doctor's office. Wood chips on floor, right, represent house. Box labeled CARROT CRINKLES, bowls, and bunches of carrots are on table. Chairs surround table. Left of house is garden, with alternating rows of carrots and cabbages on floor. Doctor's office, with two stools and table of equipment, is up center. Path of colored construction paper winds around floor and over a hill, low bridge, and trees.

LIGHTING: Spotlight on Narrator before rise, if desired.

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