



2003

The Analysis of Mineral #4

Jennifer Eskelsen

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Eskelsen, Jennifer (2003) "The Analysis of Mineral #4," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 24 : Iss. 1 , Article 26.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol24/iss1/26>

This Play Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Goldberg, Moses. *The Analysis of Mineral #4*. The Anchorage Press, Inc., 1982. \$25.00. 33 pp.

Reviewer: Jennifer Eskelsen

Reading Level: Intermediate; Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Science Fiction Plays; Plays; Contemporary realistic plays; Occult plays;

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Fellowship--Juvenile drama; Adolescence--Juvenile drama; Meteorites--Juvenile drama;

Theme: Everyone has unique qualities and it is important to respect them.

Production Requirements: Open Stage. Simple costumes and props. Need for resemblance of chemical reactions (ideas are specified within the script); usually food coloring, baking soda and water are used.

Acts: 1

Run Time: 30 min

Characters: 3F, 3M

Cast: Can be all played by teenagers, but there are specified 3F teens, 2M teens, 1M adult

Time Period: Present Day

Mickey and Judy are lab partners who are trying to finish their high school lab final before the deadline. They have one problem left, and neither one really cares about it, but they need to finish it in order to get an "A." The problem they are trying to solve comes from a substance taken from a meteorite. Aline and Bunny are also lab partners who are working on the same problem, but have done a lot of research and really care about their work. Mickey and Judy hate Aline and Bunny because they are different. Micky accuses Aline of being a witch because Aline can make predications that usually come true. Aline and Bunny find a mysterious compound that they cannot figure out so they ask their chemistry teacher, Mr. Archer, for help. He finds out that they found a rare substance that suggests the possibility of life in outer space. After more teasing about being weird, Aline comes up with the idea that perhaps she's an alien, since she was an orphan and her heart is on the right side of her body. This makes the other kids harass her more. Mr. Archer takes the substance to a nearby university to run more tests on the chemical makeup of the substance, where he finds out that it isn't what they first thought it to be, disproving Aline's theory that she is an alien. Mr. Archer explains that everyone is unique, which makes Aline feel better about being strange.

The characters in this play are all unique; each one has quirks, which illustrates the theme. These separate personalities conflict even within an individual group. For example, Judy believes that Aline is a witch, but she doesn't feel right about making fun of her the way that Micky does, even though she and Micky are best friends. This sort of diversity among the characters makes this play seem more realistic and believable. The author does a nice job of showing contrast between the soft-spoken Bunny and the loud and proud Tommy. With some scientific plays the audience may get lost in scientific jargon, but not with this play. Because of the high school setting, it's natural for characters (especially Mr. Archer) to explain what certain things mean. The pace of the play is smooth and consistent. There are high points, such as when Micky, after having been warned by Aline not to use it, adds a chemical and it boils over. Actions and situations like this drive the play forward and keep the theme fresh in the audience's mind. The theme teaches an excellent point but it is not overbearing. Not only does it show the highlights of everyone's differences, but it also illustrates the effects of someone being harassed for being unusual. The only difficulty in this production is that there are supposed to be visual chemical reactions. The script does give safe suggestions for these reactions, like using baking soda and water with different food coloring. There are other alternatives that could be used besides this. One problem is that these reactions may not always be reliable. This play would be suitable for a high school theatre class production.