



2010

The Selfish Shellfish

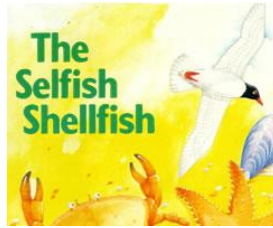
Rebeca Wallin

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Wood, David. *The Selfish Shellfish*. Samuel French, Inc., 1983. 0906399440. \$75 per performance. 63 p.

Reviewer: Rebeca Wallin

Reading Level: Preschool, Primary

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Humorous Plays; Plays

Subject: Pollution--Juvenile drama; Sea creatures--Juvenile drama; Ecology--Juvenile drama; Drama--Reviews;

Themes: All creatures in the world must work together for the greater good.

Production Requirements: Large sea-side set with moving parts, sea creature costumes, and some lighting.

Acts: 2

Runtime: 1 hour

Characters: 7

Cast: 7 male or female

Time Period: Present day

The action takes place in a small rockpool where a hermit crab and his servant, a mussel, live. The hermit crab is content living his life in his shell “thinking” about important things and will not allow other creatures to live in his rockpool. When a sea urchin and his aunt a starfish turn up hermit crab orders them to leave. Things change however when they receive word that oil spill occurred and that sludge and the oil are on their way to the rockpool. At first the hermit crab does not believe and refuses to help. Only when all the creatures finally work together are they able to keep the oil and sludge away.

As in other David Wood plays, this one contains many interesting characters and action with dialogue that does not talk down to children. There is also plenty of audience interaction to help keep the children engaged. The world of the rockpool is interesting, imaginative, and believable. The show requires somewhat large and elaborate set pieces and costumes, making it difficult but not impossible to tour. A negative aspect of the play is its overt “preachiness.” The play begins and ends with a song titled “When Will We Learn,” which seems to imply that humans are all ruining the world for the other creatures that live in it. This theme is somewhat emphasized throughout the show.

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