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Play Reviews

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Although the first nine pages of Bradley's book serve as encouragement to the novice, it is not so much a how-to book as it is a try-it-you'll-like-it guide. Often adult leaders and young people refuse to try a play because they lack skills and training. The author lays down some good basic rules to follow and gives the reader ideas for involving everyone who is interested, and creating simple sets, props, and costumes. Bradley writes with enthusiasm, and she says what she has to say briefly and well.

After the initiatory section, the author continues with dramatic material from pantomime to one-act play. Providing thirty-six scripts, Bradley takes the reader from short, simple types of performance material to longer, more demanding pieces. Although her scripts are all pretty much the same style (almost all of them use a narrator), the situations are fun and workable. At the end of each script, suggestions are made to help with costumes and set. Bradley also encourages the
director and performers to be creative and make changes that will help the script work better for them.

Casts range from small to large and can be changed to suit specific needs. Eras and locales are varied. Topics range from history, holidays, sports, gardening to ghosts.

The scripts provided are for entertainment and experience on stage. There is no attempt made to be deep or artistic. This book would be most useful to grade schools, junior high schools and church youth groups. Permission is granted in the book to use the scripts without charge as long as they are done for fun, not profit. So... have some fun... give this book--and drama--a try!

--Janice Card.


This play is a clever twist to the familiar story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. The children in the audience are used often for townspeople, rats, and children. The Pied Piper is an egotistical man who tricks the mayor of Hamelin into committing a large amount of money and a statue in exchange for ridding the town of rats. Hamelin is in great financial stress and cannot pay the sum. The Pied Piper plots to hold the children of the town (audience children) until the mayor pays the sum. The Piper's clever assistant counterplots because she knows what the flute will not work unless it is used for good. She gets the children to play along so that she can humble the Piper.

The audience children are used well on and off the stage, and the story is propelled by using the audience. The actors will need to be well versed in improvisation in case the children don't respond in the prescribed manner. I would suggest using just a few students for the rats. Using the whole audience could cause chaos.

The Pied Piper is a fun play and would work well with pre-schoolers and the lower grades. It teaches good morals such as honesty, kindness, sharing, and even organization. The children are kept involved and the play will leave a positive effect on the children.--Erin Caldwell.


Stingy and Sneaky are two naughty elves who are living up to their names. Stingy is being stingy with glue on toys, thus making them break easily; and Sneaky is stealing the good elves' toys and claiming he made them. They are soon banished from Santa's village but seek revenge by stealing and hiding a Christmas tree that Mrs. Claus ordered special for Santa. They also demand a ransom of all the toys in return for the tree. (Trees don't grow at the North Pole.) The elves offer to work overtime so Santa can have his tree, but Santa refuses. He feels bad about banishing Sneaky and Stingy and, with a little help from the audience they "hope" them back. Santa gives them presents of new names to live up to--Loyal and Helpful.

This 15-minute one-act play teaches a good lesson and would be a fun experience for the lower grades. The play has eight plus characters, one of them is a mechanical doll with weak batteries. Fifth through twelfth graders would find this play challenging and rewarding to perform for younger children. Costumes are traditional, the set is simple, and sound and special effects are helpful but not necessary.--Dianne Breinholt.


*Between the Darkness and the Dream: the Crystal Chapter* is a successful attempt to portray the pain involved with accepting the responsibilities of adulthood while struggling to keep the creativity and dreams of childhood alive. This is accomplished in the setting of an inner city where the fear of gang violence is a constant threat. Any further attempts to explain the plot would not do the script justice so the reviewer suggests that the play be read--an experience well worth the effort.
The characters are well-developed and avoid the typical stereotypes often associated with parents, teenagers, and gangs. The music was enjoyable and different and would be exceptional with orchestration.

This play was a welcome change and except for a touch of objectionable language (easily cut) would be a worthwhile venture for audiences age 12 and up. Because the subject matter is sensitive, a discussion period might be advantageous for the junior high and some high school students.--Janice Mulligan and Erin Caldwell.