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Play Reviews

Children's Book Review

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Who could have imagined a story told first-person from the dragon's point of view? Well, Lawrence Yep has pulled it off—and stunningly. This is the kind of story that replays scenes in your mind at odd moments for the rest of your life, long after you've forgotten the details.

Shimmer (the dragon) is seeking her enemy Civet, who has stolen the sea of dragon clan and so made them all homeless wanderers. For years the lust for vengeance has been the dragon's sole desire, and now—at last—Civet is within her grasp. But along the way, Shimmer has picked up a human named Thorn ("I always have a hard time telling humans apart—they have almost no features at all: such tiny eyes and such little snouts."). and Thorn's combined helplessness and valiance have worked a slow change in the dragon's proud independence. The story ends satisfactorily but without the preaching and cliches that are so common in tales of this type (if there is such a thing as "this type"). The dragon and Thorn do not swim off into the sunset and find home just as it has always been in their memories, and everything is not neat and perfect. But it is right.

Lawrence Yep has written other books, but this is my favorite. If there were more books like this, there would be more kids who loved to read!--T.H.

PLAYS


Wonderfully weird characters people this spoof on the Dracula story. Everything takes place in Dr. Seward's "Sanitorium for the Disturbed" on the outskirts of London. The play opens with Mrs. Half-Nelson sitting on the sofa knitting without needles or yarn. Renfield wonders through the room catching insects and popping them in his mouth. Immediately the stage is set and the audience prepared for the other irregular personalities that will appear and reappear.

The play is fast moving. The lines and situations are silly, but fun. In the proper frame of mind both audience and cast will have a howling good time with this musical play.

There are thirteen actors required for the cast—seven women and six men. The parts are varied: vampires, inmates, doctors, and even a wolf-creature. Great costumes and makeup.

The end of the play leaves you thinking there is more to come—or should be.—J.C.


A Simplistic and predictable plot combine with trite and tedious dialogue to make this script generally boring. Its best features are the circus characters who offer interesting costuming and characterization. Toby Tyler runs away to the circus and becomes the hero who saves the circus by tricking the crooks.

The script could be enhanced through suggested stage and set-up directions to create a circus environment. The script might be fun for elementary students to perform for peers and parents but would not be recommended as a show by older performers or touring.—C.S.

Royalty: $5.00.

This eight page play is a clever twist on the typical melodrama. Sweet Priscilla Goodheart has married Filthy McCreedy, so now Filthy has all he has ever wanted... the Goodheart property which he thinks is loaded with gold.

B+

The couple return to the Goodheart home after the wedding. They converse with one another, but they don't communicate well. This creates much of the humor in the script.

Priscilla and Filthy start reminiscing and go over their past adventures in the sawmill and on the railroad tracks with Thomas True saving the day. Priscilla tells one story with Filthy doing the sound effects (train whistle, saw buzzing, etc.), then they switch and Filthy tells the story with Priscilla doing the sound effects. This provides fun for two creative performers and their audience.

One thing that does not ring true for melodrama is that Priscilla hears and responds to Filthy's aside to the audience. This might work, but what is the point in having an aside if everyone can hear it?

No Sooner Won Than Done is more of a skit than a play because it is so brief and really has very little plot. It could be combined with other skits or warm up an audience for a longer play. The cost to do it is very little and with a two-person cast it should be a snap to put together.--J.C.

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