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Play Reviews

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Play Reviews

Ross, Monica Long. *Wilma's Revenge.*
Anchorage Press, Inc., 1989. $35.00 royalty for the first performance.

*Wilma's Revenge* is about ten-year-old Wilma and her twelve-year-old brother, Harry who is constantly teasing her. As the story beings, Harry has tied Wilma to a tree and run off, leaving her yelling for help. Her friends, Renee and Tracy, find her and as they untie her, Wilma vows to find a way to trick Harry. The girls decide to ignore Harry and his best friend Jake no matter what the boys may do to tease them. At first, this is very successful and Harry becomes frustrated and angry. The girls think they have outwitted him until Harry and Jake throw buckets of water on the girls during school picture day. The girls are so mad, they vow to get even for this last trick. An opportunity comes when Renee challenges Harry to play baseball. Harry thinks he is very good, but Renee is a much better player and she humiliates him. At the end of the game, Harry is crying and hurt. Wilma tells him she is sorry and she wants to be friends. Harry ends up teasing her again, but this time Wilma gets the upper hand and leaves Harry tied to a tree.

The play is fun-loving, and full of the kind of teasing and banter that pre-adolescents would enjoy. It also has a boy-girl, brother-sister rivalry that many children would relate to. However, the ending does leave the viewer dissatisfied because we are not sure if Harry has learned anything, although we are happy to see Wilma playfully outwit him and tie him to a tree. Also, while the writing is clear it is not memorable, and the dialogue is very stiff and stilted. Nonetheless, children would enjoy the easy banter.

The play would tour well as there is no set and few props. It would best be enacted by children, and while there are a couple of parts for adults, they could be played by children. This play would work best as a class project.

—Gayanne Ramsden

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Kehret, Peg. *Encore! More Winning Monologues for Young Actors.*

This book contains 63 "honest to life" monologues for girls and boys to be used as an English, speech, or drama classroom exercise. The subjects cover a wide variety of teen problems and situations and the selections vary from two to four minutes in length. Though written with the teenager in mind, I found some of them to appeal more to upper
elementary-age children. Of the 63 selections, I found 19 that were particularly well written: *Getting My First Bra*, *The World’s Longest Monopoly Game*, *The Doggie Dictionary*, and *Daddy Drinks Too Much*. The other selections seem to fall flat at the end. All of these could be used for classroom exercises and a few stand out for audition or contest pieces.

—Diane Breinholt


Shakespeare’s Hamlet: A Modern English Version Paraphrased from the Original, written by Dee White, is an extended plot summary of *Hamlet* written in modern English. White has retained many of the famous lines and soliloquies from the original in her modern version, giving the reader samples of Shakespeare’s language.

As a dramatic text, this play is not producible because the flow and beauty of the language have been lost in translation. However, the author recommends using the play in English classes as a supplement to *Hamlet* as this could be very helpful for those students who have difficulty understanding Shakespeare’s language. White has retained *Hamlet*’s plot and the play is easy to read and understand; however, it should only be used in conjunction with the original *Hamlet*.

—Kelli Jo Kerry

Mercati, Cynthia. *Makin’ It.*


*Makin’ It* is a play for teens with a large cast of twenty-four. It would make an excellent production for a high school that would like to involve many students. This is a play about students’ and also adults’ search for meaning and identity in their lives. It is not one particular student’s story but many stories in one play. Brooke wants to be popular, Karl wants the good life that being a football star will bring him, Howie wants to be left in peace and be what he is without peer ridicule, and Hunter thinks that money will answer all of his problems. What each character really wants is acceptance. The play shows, through vignettes and monologues, each character striving to find out who
he or she is. While the play is written for teens, adults will learn much, remember much, and arrive at a greater understanding of their children's and their own dreams.

The majority of the action takes place in different rooms, halls, and locations of a high school; however, different levels of platforms may be used to suggest different areas. There are several adult rolls that could be played by teens, but the play would be more effective and credible if they were played by adults. Costuming is modern dress, and the actor’s street clothes would be acceptable.

For many students the high-school years are spent in trying to be accepted, finding their place in society, and learning what is important in life—what is of value. The play *Makin' It* addresses these problems. This play could open up classroom discussion of what is important in each person’s life; and students would realize from some of the adult roles that older people also search for identity and meaning. *Makin' It* is well written and would be a fun and meaningful play for high school students to produce.

—Gayanne Ramsden

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*Follow That Rabbit* is a loose musical adaptation of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice In Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. The play begins as Alice falls down a huge rabbit hole while chasing a fully clothed white rabbit. Alice lands in "Wonderland," the topsy turvy world of imagination, and has many crazy adventures before she wakes up and concludes that "Wonderland" had only been a dream.

*Follow That Rabbit*, is best suited for elementary-aged children. The writing is concise and the action fast-paced. However, this frantic pace becomes a fault as it never comes down throughout the show, allowing the actors time to breathe and the audience to see different levels to the characters.

A few of the musical numbers are fresh and imaginative, but for the most part, it merely provides a musical interlude.

*Follow That Rabbit* has a cast of thirty, but many of the parts may be doubled up. The staging is simple with few props, and many of the special effects, such as swimming, are achieved through simple mime. Musically, the play would be difficult for elementary children but could be performed by children in junior high. *Follow That Rabbit* may also be purchased in nonmusical form.

—Kelli Jo Kerry