See-Saw

Mark Bell

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Reviewer: Mark Bell  
Reading Level: Young adult  
Rating: Excellent  
Genre: Plays; Childhood Drama; Surrealism  
Subject: Divorce; Peer Pressure; Bullying; Drama--Reviews;  
Theme: Young people can overcome peer pressures and stereotypes if they work together. Production Requirements: A smaller cast and a simple black box set are sufficient for this production. Puppets can be used for the other roles, but regular actors can be used as well.  
Acts: 2  
Run Time: 50–65 min  
Characters: ~15  
Cast: Two boys and two girls are the main cast. Puppets perform the minor roles in the play.  
Time Period: Contemporary

*See-Saw* showcases four 7th graders who are dealing with the pressures of popularity, bullying, and stereotyping. It is only when the students come together in helping one another that these peer pressures dwindle. The characters facing these issues are Charla, Josh, Adam, and Paige. Charla is the new girl who comes to school hoping to be accepted by her classmates. Josh is an introverted boy who studies magic to escape reality. Paige is the pretty, popular girl who hides the fact that she is from a broken home. Adam is a bully, but he wants to be an artist. Each of these students gives into the peer pressures at school until they meet at a wall Adam is drawing on. At the wall, an event occurs that brings them together as friends and causes them to look past their stereotypes.

Playwright Foon succeeds at creating believable characters and realistic dialogue. To make his play more realistic, Foon addresses social issues that children would be facing in similar circumstances. Yet, Foon adds an interesting dimension to his realistic play by adding puppets to his production. The playwright effectively mixes several character archetypes. For example, Adam uses bullying as a front to cover up the fact that he is a tortured artist. Even though the play is relatively short, Foon completely develops his characters. One drawback to the play might be the cost in creating the puppets and costumes. But the play seems flexible enough to give a director room to substitute human characters for the puppets if needed.