



2009

Abe

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Wallin, Rebeca (2009) "Abe," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 30 : Iss. 4 , Article 14.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol30/iss4/14>

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Saunders, Dudley. *Abe*. Anchorage Plays Press, 2008. ISBN 9780876024249. \$50. 61 p.

Reviewer: Rebeca Wallin

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Plays; Historical Plays;

Subject: Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865--Juvenile drama; Children's plays; United States--History; Drama--Reviews;

Theme: Working hard and smart will get you where you want to be.

Production Requirements: Flexible, can be minimal, need log cabin and box swing.

Acts: 2

Run Time: 75 minutes

Characters: 17

Cast: 2-6 female, 5-11 male

Time Period: Mid 1800s

Abe dramatizes the largely unknown period of Abraham Lincoln's life from the ages of eight to twenty-one. The play begins in Indiana with 21-year-old Abe practicing for his first political speech. The scene then shifts back to an eight-year-old Abe in Kentucky, busy learning to read and chopping wood. The play follows him through his life there and then his move to Indiana. Throughout this time period Abe loses his mother, his father remarries, and he loses his sister. The play is interspersed with scenes of runaway slaves and a bounty hunter. Abe always helps the slaves and often talks about how wrong slavery laws are and how he will do something to make it better someday. The play ends with the same opening scene of Abe practicing his first speech.

As the author states in his opening notes, there are few historical records concerning this era of Abraham Lincoln's life. Following closely the records that do exist, Saunders creates a plausible dramatization of what Abraham Lincoln's younger life could have been like. Although the bulk of the play consists of dialogue, some action scenes are included to help keep the audience's attention. Because of some serious subject matter and the general tone of the play, it would be suitable for a somewhat older young audience. Flexible staging requirements make this play easy to produce and possible to tour.

Volume 30, no. 4 (March/April 2010)