

BOXHEAD THE RUSTIC

By Christian Kiley

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CHARACTERS

BOX-HEAD THE RUSTIC Born with a proscenium stage on his head

FANNY FRESNEL Born with a theatrical grade lighting instrument on her head

PRODUCTION NOTES

“Box-head the Rustic” is easy to produce since the set is on the heads of the actors. A simple cardboard box can be turned into a proscenium stage and a flashlight taped to a baseball or similar style hat can serve as Fanny’s theatrical light.

This quirky little play is for those who love and understand theatre. The cynical critics are right. We are weird. But there is so much more to it than that.

“Box-head the Rustic” was developed at Etiwanda High School with the generous help and immense talent of Ayden Lopez and Kimberly Scott. Both designed the costumes for the characters and played a vital role in this short play’s growth.

Box-head the Rustic Ayden Lopez
Fanny Fresnel Kimberly Scott

Editing/Proofreading Bill and Ellen Kiley

BOX-HEAD THE RUSTIC

by
Christian Kiley

Plagued to live the rest of his days with a proscenium stage on his head and curtains covering his face, BOX-HEAD THE RUSTIC must come to terms with his physical condition and attempt to live a normal life. FANNY FRESNEL has a lighting instrument permanently attached to her head. Are they better together than they are apart?

BOX-HEAD THE RUSTIC: *(opening his face-curtain slightly)* I can feel your judgmental glances and I know what you are thinking. Yes, yes. I have a proscenium stage permanently affixed to my head. *(opening the curtain)* No, smart guy, I don't do finger-puppet shows. This, up here, *(gestures to his face)* is for legitimate theatre only. Watch as my eyelids perform a scene from Richard the Third. You'll notice that my left eyelid is kind of lazy -- he will play Richard. And my right has longer, lustrous eyelashes. Therefore, the right eye will be the young Anne. *(moving his right eye like a mouth)* "I detesteth thee Richard, thou art a deformed devil." *(moving the left eye)* "My horse! My horse! My cornea for a horse!" Oh, you want something more contemporary? Free Willy! My tongue will play the Orca whale, and my nose will play Jesse, the young boy. "Jump to your freedom, Willy!" *(Making a grotesque whale sound and sticking his tongue out)* What do you want from me? I can't play any sports with helmets. Halloweens are a disaster; one time an army of ants tried to stage the Battle of Bull Run on my forehead. I think a couple of the deserters are still hiding in my left nostril. Once, at a party, a guy mistook me for a garbage can. A garbage can! I mean, look, these are fine curtains. . . my Mother told me they were taken from the Globe Theatre in London before the fire of 1613. What did you say? You'll blow your nose on them? Very mature! Would you make out with the Mona Lisa, or draw a picture of Mickey Mouse in The Artist's Bedroom, or put a thought bubble over the head of The Thinker? You just might. But you will not abuse me any longer. *(closes curtains and quickly opens them again)* Obligatory curtain call. *(does a facial bow)* It is tradition, I am obligated. *(closes curtains and then quickly opens them)* Was that an ovation or a stampede of water buffalo? One more for good measure. And we are closing down due to the black plague of your ignorance. I'm sure if my face were high definition plasma television, you wouldn't be so rude. *(closes curtains and immediately opens them)* Sorry, you can buy tickets for future events in the box office. Located in the rear. *(HE*

flips his box head around and opens the flaps in the back with the words “Box Office” above them)

(FANNY enters. BOX-HEAD does his best to hide.)

FANNY FRESNEL: People say I'm bright. And that should be a compliment. But it isn't. I'm bright because I was born with a theatrical grade lighting instrument attached to my head. Do you know how hard it is to be romantic when you are exposing people's flaws with your high-powered head lamp? Do you? I can see blackheads that have yet to surface on someone's skin. I wish I could see the future. Yes, it will be bright! I get it. Bright, light, bright, I have a light riveted to my skull. I have never kissed a boy, because every time I get close, he screams in pain and anguish. Once I thought I was in love. He would let me stand over him while he was doing his homework. But only to use me. . .for my light. Do you know what I miss? Darkness. Even in the womb, the most private of places, I was drowning in light. The scrutiny! I can never get away from it. Some kids want a small, delicate pool of light to provide security. Just not a floodlight! There are some great jobs for me! Interrogation light, or that light that they use to find criminals that are running through city streets. I got offered a part-time job as a street lamp. But I had to bend over at a severe angle, and the hours were horrible, and I'm pretty sure that animals pee on you and people spray paint misspelled words on you. And I'm just a mess. . .a total mess! If I could be a string of Christmas lights, or one of those lights that help airplane passengers read, or a star! Organic light and gaseous warmth and an exhibition of gravity and heat and I've always wanted to do something valuable and important and remembered. Like project images on the wall of a cave. . .to teach and inspire and. . .I'll just. . .leave.

BOX-HEAD: Don't go!

FANNY: Really?

BOX-HEAD: Yes.

FANNY: That is so. . .refreshing!

BOX-HEAD: The fact that I don't want you to leave?

FANNY: No, the fact. . .how do I say this? You have a. . .

BOX-HEAD: Stage on my head.

FANNY: Yes, but it is hardly noticeable. It is very subtle.

BOX-HEAD: Come on, medical helicopters could use my head as an emergency landing pad.

FANNY: You're helping the sick then.

BOX-HEAD: You don't have to appease me.

FANNY: I'm not, I just. . .I know how you feel.

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BOX-HEAD: You have a perfectly head-shaped head.

FANNY: Yes, but. . .

BOX-HEAD: But what?

FANNY: Aren't your eyes beginning to burn and water?

BOX-HEAD: No. Why would they?

FANNY: Well, I have a large theatrical lighting instrument on my head.

BOX-HEAD: (*noticing*) It is the most intoxicating and wonderful. . .

FANNY: Stop it!

BOX-HEAD: Can I tell you something? Something honest?

FANNY: Sure.

BOX-HEAD: I believe I. . .

FANNY: Yes?

BOX-HEAD: I. . .am getting a tan. Do you emit UV rays?

FANNY: What?

BOX-HEAD: Should I put some sun block on? I don't want to get a burn.

FANNY: I knew it!

BOX-HEAD: What?

FANNY: You are just like all the others, except with a proscenium stage shaped head.

BOX-HEAD: There are many jobs for you.

FANNY: Really, like. . .

BOX-HEAD: Like an spotlight or. . .a nightlight.

FANNY: A nightlight is a delicate light.

BOX-HEAD: Well, not a nightlight then.

FANNY: Area equals length times width! Rectangle head.

BOX-HEAD: Your slander is geometric! You are beautiful! And you got the formula right.

FANNY: You can't be serious?

BOX-HEAD: I need you to. . .

FANNY: What? What could I possibly do for you!

BOX-HEAD: To. . .to. . .light my. . .stage. Forever.

FANNY: What is that supposed to mean?

BOX-HEAD: It is supposed to be romantic. It wasn't! I should have been a storage unit like my father told me. That or. . .an outhouse.

FANNY: Your father told you to be an outhouse?

BOX-HEAD: Yes. But he didn't mean it. I hope.

FANNY: So how does this work? If I agree to light your stage. . . forever.

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BOX-HEAD: Well, I have a repertory season replete with comedy, tragedy, musicals, even dinner theatre. You should try the Mac-beth and Cheese! There are dagger shaped noodles in cheese sauce with a side of blood. But it's only ketchup! And your server pours it over the noodles when Macbeth kills Duncan. The people squeal with delight, and some fall face down in their dinners.

FANNY: Oh.

BOX-HEAD: What is that supposed to mean?

FANNY: It's a lot to think about.

BOX-HEAD: The commitment?

FANNY: Your style of theatre is very. . .extreme.

BOX-HEAD: What would you like to do?

FANNY: Musicals.

BOX-HEAD: The choreography is a nightmare. Who would teach it to me?

FANNY: I would.

BOX-HEAD: Really, I. . .I'm frightened.

FANNY: You have the eyes of a tap dancer and the nose of a ballerina.

BOX-HEAD: Really?

FANNY: Your face is timeless.

BOX-HEAD: And so is your light. Is it? Do you ever have to change the bulb or anything?

FANNY: There are issues with maintenance, but I have an extended warranty.

BOX-HEAD: And I have flood and fire insurance.

FANNY: What are you suggesting?

BOX-HEAD: I don't know. . .I never considered. . .

FANNY: What? What did you never consider?

BOX-HEAD: Being a touring show.

FANNY: Like traveling.

BOX-HEAD: Yes, traveling! You, me, and our award-winning Shakespearian Musicals!

FANNY: With the best lighting you have ever seen or felt.

BOX-HEAD: And the most intimate staging. Theatre, personified on my face!

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