

NO SHOW

By Alan Haehnel

Copyright © 2001 by Alan Haehnel, All rights reserved.
ISBN: 1-931805-05-9

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice:

Produced by special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

CHARACTERS

Jack
Rachel
Chris
Normie
Sally
Gloria
Jessica
Pat
Sandra
Ben
Hannah
Shirley
Rob
Caitlin
Jolene
Chelsea
Carrie
Joshua

All of the above characters are students in a theater class. The only distinguishing factors between characters are their being either male or female; even that, with few exceptions, can be altered without affecting the script. If your particular cast is larger or smaller than the one listed above, parts can be reassigned to accommodate your particular numbers.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I wrote this play with the intention of letting my beginning theater arts students have a chance to put on a production for their peers, one that required no set, no props, little costuming and lines for everyone. Feel free to change who says which lines to make "No Show" work well for you.

NO SHOW

by
Alan Haehnel

(Audience enters. House lights go down. Curtain opens. Blackness. In the dark, we hear JACK's voice.)

JACK: Okay, the lights are off to encourage us to stay in our bubbles as we warm up this morning. As you go through the exercises, just focus on your internal processes. What does your body feel like as you stretch; are you holding in any tension: let's begin with the neck and work our way down the body, relaxing as you go. Keep your eyes closed to help you focus on just you, nobody else.

(The lights come up to reveal a theater class warming up. ALL members have their eyes closed and are stretching their necks silently. JACK is near the front.)

RACHEL: Who turned on the lights?

CHRIS: If your eyes are closed, how do you know the lights are on?

RACHEL: You can see the lights through your eyelids.

JACK: No talking, remember; focus on yourself. Relax. Now move to the shoulders.

NORMIE: ***(opens eyes, sees the audience)*** Jack.

JACK: Shh.

NORMIE: Jack.

SALLY: Get back in your bubble, Norm.

JACK: No talk. Now move to your arms. Let them swing, nice and free and relaxed.

NORMIE: Jack, I'm feeling tense.

JACK: It's good that you recognize that, Normie—now isolate the particular area and work it out.

NORMIE: It's all over, Jack.

JACK: What's all over?

NORMIE: The particular area. It's all over my whole body that I'm tense.

GLORIA: Norm, what is your problem?

NORMIE: ***(frantic)*** Everybody stop what you're doing and open your stupid eyes!

(Everyone does as NORM has instructed. They open their eyes and freeze when they see the audience.)

JESSICA: Oh, crap.

PAT: Who invited them?

JACK: Nobody move. Nobody say anything.

(They remain frozen for several seconds.)

SANDRA: Jack, that's an audience.

JACK: I know that's an audience.

BEN: So why are we frozen?

HANNAH: Yeah, why are we doing this?

JACK: Because...I can't think of anything better to do.

(Everyone breaks the freeze; some start to exit.)

SHIRLEY: I'm getting out of here.

ROB: Let's go.

CAITLIN: Who invited them, anyway? This is embarrassing.

JACK: Wait, wait! Don't leave.

JOLENE: Why not? I'm not going to warm up in front of a bunch of strangers.

CHELSEA: Yeah. That guy was staring at my navel.

CHRIS: I can see why.

CHELSEA: Get away from me.

JACK: Carrie, do you still have that assignment sheet, the one the teacher gave us about the final exam?

CARRIE: I think so. ***(taking various notes from her pockets)*** Um, no, that's from my mother excusing me from gym because I have warts on my feet that hurt when I run. Here it is! Oh, wait...no, that's a receipt from K-Mart...they ripped me off! That shirt was supposed to be on clearance.

JACK: Carrie...

CARRIE: Oh, yeah. Uh... ***(looking at another piece of paper)*** ...Do you love me, yes or no? Check one.

GLORIA: Who's that from? Joey?

CARRIE: I don't think so? ***(turns note over)*** From Grandma. ***(SHE shrugs)*** Anyways, I think I have it...

HANNAH: Forget it, Carrie; go lie down. I have it, Jack.

JACK: Good, good. What are the requirements again?

HANNAH: Your final presentation must involve the whole class; it must demonstrate the skills you have learned during the semester; and it must be ready to present to an outside audience who will be invited to the theater on...

BEN: On when? When?

HANNAH: January 21st ***(current day)***

JESSICA: Oh, thank goodness—the 21st. For a minute I thought it was... **(looking at her watch)** ...that's today!

JACK: Oh, no.

NORMIE: Wait a minute. Are you telling me that these people are here to watch us perform our final exam project, the one we were supposed to have been working on for the last three weeks but kept putting off because we figured we had plenty of time? Is that what you're telling me?

(JACK is speechless.)

SHIRLEY: If he could speak, I think that's what he'd tell you.

(ALL look out at the audience for a moment, then scream in unison.)

CHELSEA: All right, all right. Let's make the best of this. Let's just take a minute to figure out our situation here. The audience is here. This is our final exam. We all need this to pass the class. We're totally unprepared and we have no idea what we're going to.

(ALL look out at the audience and scream again, this time scattering in multiple directions.)

JOLENE: Look, look, look...we're not stupid here. We can make something out of this. **(to audience)** Hi. I'm Jolene. This is our theatre class. This is our final exam, an exhibition of everything we have learned during the semester. And now...and now...uh...does anyone have anything they'd like to say to the audience...who has gathered here...has kindly taken time out of its busy schedule to watch us...do something...say something...anything...anybody?

(Long silence.)

JESSICA: This is a theater. **(pause)** You are the audience. **(pause, a bit shorter)** Those are lights. **(shorter pause)** In theater, we call the lights instruments. There are many different types of lighting instruments for many different uses. That one up there is an ellipsoidal. All of the instruments are connected to the control board, which is behind you, and in the control board there is a board operator who sends the correct cues to the board operator who punches the buttons and makes the lights go on and off or go dim and bright or go cold or warm...

GLORIA: Jessica, I don't think...

JESSICA: Leave me alone; this is my show! Mine! The lights illuminate not only what the director wants the audience to see, but they can also illuminate the theme of a show, if the show is well written. That is, if you write to the person who owns the rights to the show and you get the rights to the show and you pay the money to the one who owns the rights, the spirit of the law dictates according to the contract that you have to...

CAITLIN: Jessica, they don't want to hear all of this.

ROB: Stop it, now.

JESSICA: No! I'll tell them everything! I'll tell them about the class. **(starts moving wildly around the stage)** This is called a cross. This is center stage. This is downstage. This is upstage. This is downstage right.

BEN: We've got to stop her. Jessica.

RACHEL: Jessica, that's enough. Settle down, now.

JESSICA: And this is downstage center. This is upstage center. This is center stage center.

CHELSEA: Caitlin, grab her before she hurts herself.

JESSICA: Noooo! I've got to show them where the aisles are!

CAITLIN: Somebody help me here!

JESSICA: And the wings! I'll show them the wings! Give me the wings!

(JESSICA is dragged offstage where her voice is suddenly silenced.)

JACK: **(to audience)** Pressure. Not everybody's cut out for this business.

(Everybody stands or sits around, again not sure what to do.)

HANNAH: Look, the lights are changing. **(the lights go to black but for a single pool of light, stage left)** What's that for?

JOLENE: Well, it looks big enough for about one person. Maybe somebody should stand in it. Somebody go stand in it. Caitlin, go stand in it.

CAITLIN: I'm not going to stand in it.

JOLENE: I'm not going to stand in it.

JACK: All right, all right. That's enough. This is ridiculous. Sally, go stand in the light.

SALLY: Why me?

JACK: Because it's your turn.

SALLY: Oh. Okay. **(SHE stands in the light)** Now what?

BEN: Say something. Exhibit your theatre skills.

SALLY: Hi. I'm Sally. I have a hamster. It sleeps in wood shavings. I clean the cage twice a week, on Mondays and Wednesdays. Except for last week, I forgot and cleaned it on a Thursday.

NORMIE: For crying out loud, Sally, this is our final exam! Don't tell them about your hamster!

SALLY: I love my hamster!

RACHEL: She needs a script. Somebody give her a script – something to say.

SHIRLEY: Here, here's something. **(handing a book to SALLY)** There you go; use that.

SALLY: This is a geometry book.

SANDRA: Don't be picky. Just read from it and...be theatrical.

(SALLY opens the book to a random page and begins to read, very theatrically.)

SALLY: If ABCD and EBCF are the parallelograms, BC the common base, and AF and BC the parallels, the student can easily reproduce Euclid's proof by showing the triangles EAB and FDC are equal...

(The lights come up on the rest of the group suddenly, then just as suddenly go back down.)

CHRIS: What was that?

GLORIA: That was the lights coming up and the going down again.

CHRIS: Thank you. I wasn't sure.

SALLY: Should I keep going?

JACK: Wait a minute. Let's see what happens. **(In a second, the lights do the same thing they did before.)** All right, I think I'm getting this. Follow my lead, everybody. Keep going, Sally; make it big.

SALLY: Actually, I've got the rest memorized now. **(SHE throws the book aside)** Subtracting from each triangle DGE and then adding to each the triangle GBC. **(the lights shift again)**

JACK: **(mirroring SALLY's tone)** Triangle GBC!

(Light change, featuring SALLY again. Now, at each light change, the rest of the class joins in, echoing SALLY's delivery and movements.)

SALLY: The proof is easily modified for the case in which D and E...

ALL: D and E!

SALLY: ...coincide and the one in which AD and EF have a segment in common.

ALL: Segment in common!

SALLY: Thus the equality of the two parallelograms results from the fact that the congruent figures...

ALL: Congruent figures.

SALLY: ...and then...**(SHE pauses for dramatic effect)** ...congruent figures added!

ALL: **(shouting and cheering ecstatic)** Congruent figures added!

(The lights don't move back to feature SALLY alone.)

SALLY: Where's my light?

PAT: I think your scene is done.

SALLY: I was just warming up.

BEN: You were great.

SALLY: Thanks. I really think I nailed it on the parallelograms section. I felt so...geometrical.

BEN: It was a great moment.

SALLY: Do you think so?

(The lights go down to black again.)

RACHEL: Now what?

ROB: Maybe it's over.

CHELSEA: Oh, I hope so.

JESSICA: No, not yet! I still have to show them the wings. And then I'm going to talk about motivation and objective and tactics and the various parts to a lighting instrument and how to construct a flat...

HANNAH: Jessica! Jessica! This is not your show!

JESSICA: But I want it to be.

SANDRA: I think it's done. I really think it's over. **(lights come up on just the front apron of the stage)** Crap. I guess not.

JOLENE: You know, this sort of feels like – with all the soft, cool colors and all – I think it's a set up for a love scene.

(Romantic music starts to come over the intercom.)

ALL: It's a love scene.

NORMIE: So who's going to play it?

SHIRLEY: Not me. Forget it. You couldn't get me to play a love scene if my life depended on it. I wouldn't play a love scene if you threatened to cut off my pinky toe with a spoon. No love scenes for this girl. Uh-uh.

ROB: Shirley, come play this scene with me.

SHIRLEY: Okay.

ROB: But, what about a script?

HANNAH: I'll get another book!

SHIRLEY: No! I don't want to play this with a script. I might need my hands free.

ROB: You beast.

SHIRLEY: Rrrrrr.

JACK: Just...just use something you know, something you've already memorized. Anything.

ROB: All right. Are you ready, Shirley?

SHIRLEY: Oh, yes.

ROB: ***(as they move in a tender love scene)*** Mary had a little lamb,
little lamb, little lamb.

SHIRLEY: Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

ROB: Mary had a little lamb whose fleece was white as snow.

SHIRLEY: How I wonder where you are. Up above the sky so high.

SALLY: I wish my boyfriend would talk to me like that.

ROB: It followed her to school one day, school one day, school one day.

***Thank you for reading this free excerpt from NO SHOW by Alan Haehnel.
For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact
us at:***

Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 1-888-473-8521 • Fax (319) 368-8011

www.brookpub.com