

# THE TREEHOUSE

## By Maureen Brady Johnson

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## CHARACTERS

JAKE	Charismatic, impulsive, the leader of the group
WILL	Acts like a pirate, talks like one, too.
DEVIN	Precise, clueless, LOVES cookies
SAM	Outspoken, self-assured. SAM wears a baseball cap with hair tucked in.

*They are all 10 years old. The play can be performed by a cast that is older but they should all play kids who are 10 years old.*

## SOUND

Off Stage Voice of Jake's mom

Sound FX of wind blowing and a fierce thunderstorm with thunder and lightening. The low moaning that SAM uses to scare the boys could also be a sound FX.

## SETTING

Downstage Right is the treehouse area. (approx. 10' by 10')

Stage Left: three stacks of stage blocks. These are the "trees" that SAM and JAKE climb.

SAM hides in the one farthest SL at the beginning of the show.

## TIME

After sunset/into the night the first day of summer vacation.

## PROPERTIES

2 Wooden Benches

3 Flashlights

2 Long Sticks

Backpack

Container of Cookies

Deck of Cards

Covering that looks like dead leaves to hide SAM from the audience at the beginning of the show.

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

*The Treehouse* is the 2008 recipient of The Gregory Millard Memorial Playwriting Award from TADA! Youth Theatre, N.Y. *The Treehouse* was a part of their Staged Reading Series on February 6, 2010.

## THE TREEHOUSE

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**AT RISE: The stage is dark. Noises of the night. DEVIN and WILL are in the treehouse. SAM is on one of the stage block towers that double as “trees” covered with something to look like a pile of leaves to the audience. In the dim stage light, DEVIN, facing the audience, flips on his flashlight which rests on his chin shining up. WILL does the same thing. Then THEY turn slowly to look at each other and yell, pretending to be scared. Then THEY begin to laugh until THEY fall down. Lights come up a bit. The sun is setting.**

JAKE: *(Enters right.)* Hey, you guys! I'm comin' up. I got cookies! *(HE joins them in the treehouse area)*

WILL: C'mon aboard, Cap'n Jake, and share the treasure.

DEVIN: *(Looking at the pile of cookies)* Chocolate chip, peanut butter AND Snickerdoodles?

JAKE: Yep. And we're gonna eat 'em all!

WILL and DEVIN: Yeah!

JAKE: It's the first night in our new treehouse.

WILL and DEVIN: *(Yelling)* YEAH!

JAKE: No school! Summer vacation!

WILL and DEVIN: YEAH!

JAKE'S MOM: *(off stage)* HEY, you guys. Keep it down.

WILL: ARGGHH, me hearties!

JAKE'S MOM: *(off stage)* Will, I mean it!

WILL: Ok, Mrs. Callahan.

JAKE'S MOM: *(off stage)* There might be some rain tonight so stay inside the treehouse where it's dry. And no tree climbing at night, remember?

ALL: We remember.

*(Pause. THEY all eat)*

JAKE: She doesn't want us to freak out the neighbors that just moved in.

DEVIN: Do they have any kids?

JAKE: I think I saw a kid but I'm not sure. Hey, Devin, leave some of the cookies for later!

DEVIN: All right.

JAKE: Guys. You know what tonight is? The first summer night of the brotherhood of the treehouse.

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WILL: I don't follow your drift, Cap'n.

JAKE: Will, cut the pirate talk. This is serious.

WILL: Ok.

JAKE: My dad built this treehouse for us. We're a brotherhood and a brotherhood should have some rules. The first rule is: Drum roll!

*(WILL and DEVIN do a drum roll.)*

This treehouse is for guys only. No girls allowed. No girls at all!!!

DEVIN: Especially girls like Francine, huh, Jake?

WILL: *(Trying to quiet him)* Devin!

JAKE: *(Pause)* Yeah, especially Francine.

DEVIN: Remember the time in the cafeteria when she made us move so that she and her girlfriends could sit with you? All they talked about was how they were gonna have their hair done for the dance.

JAKE: *(Annoyed)* Yeah.

DEVIN: And the time when she told everyone that the two of you were going steady...

JAKE: *(Getting angry)* Right. I remember...

DEVIN: ...and then she wrote it on her notebook in strawberry marker...

JAKE: *(Angry)* Ok.

DEVIN: ....and you found out about it the next day when all her girlfriends ambushed you at school...

JAKE: *(Furious)* OK!!!!

DEVIN: *(Clueless)* and then when she said...

WILL: *(Clamps his hand over DEVIN's mouth)* We get your drift... *(To DEVIN like a pirate)* Clam up or you'll be swingin' from the yardarm. *(To JAKE like WILL)* So we're all in agreement...NO GIRLS.

JAKE: Right. Rule number two: Drum Roll!

*(WILL and DEVIN do a drum roll.)*

This treehouse is for guys who can climb,

WILL: And sword fight!

DEVIN: And eat!

JAKE: We're gonna do guy stuff, like burp! *(HE burps)*

WILL and DEVIN: Yeah! *(THEY burp)*

JAKE: And scratch... *(HE scratches)*

WILL and DEVIN: Yeah! *(THEY scratch)*

JAKE: And make disgusting noises with our mouths! *(JAKE makes noises with his hand to his mouth)*

WILL and DEVIN: Yeah! *(THEY try...nothing happens)*

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JAKE: Raise your right hands and repeat after me...At no time

WILL and DEVIN: At no time...

JAKE: and under any circumstances

WILL and DEVIN: And under any circumstances...

JAKE: will there ever be a girl up here. NO GIRLS.

WILL and DEVIN: *(Yelling)* NO GIRLS!

DEVIN: Let's eat cookies!

*(THEY eat.)*

WILL: Shiver me timbers, these cookies are fine. They remind me of the time I was forced to eat raw coconuts on the island of....

*(THEY hear low, scary moaning and THEY freeze.)*

WILL: *(Stage whisper)* What was that?

DEVIN: I don't know.

JAKE: Let's look around.

*(THEY flip on their flashlights and move cautiously around the treehouse. THEY move to the edges of the treehouse and then slowly back up into each other and yell.)*

ALL: AAAHHH!!!

DEVIN: Maybe you should put the cookies in the cooler to keep them safe.

JAKE: OK. OK.

*(HE does. Then JAKE, DEVIN and WILL stand center keeping close to each other and flashing their lights around. Silence. Then...)*

Now what?

*(More moaning.)*

JAKE: *(Whispering)* Turn off your flashlights.

*(THEY turn off their lights. Dimly lit stage.)*

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Who's there?

*(The moaning continues. The GUYS huddle, whispering.)*

WILL: Where's it coming from?

DEVIN: Sounds like it's over there.

*(THEY flip on their flashlights and point them at the audience. SAM moves to the next USL pile of stage blocks.)*

DEVIN: I can't see anything out there.

JAKE: *(HE speaks slowly)* Hey! Whoever you are, get out of here. This is my tree...MY treehouse.

*(SAM groans louder and frightens them more)*

JAKE: Devin, think of something.

DEVIN: *(Meekly)* We're not scared of you.

JAKE: Great....

*(SAM groans and moans even louder. SAM changes position and climbs the last pile of stage blocks UL.)*

JAKE: Will, say something.

WILL: *(Picking up a stick, using it as a sword, steps forward with swashbuckling bravado.)* Show yourself, you scurvy dog. I'll cut you to pieces!

SAM: *(Jumps down from the blocks and into the treehouse space, scaring THE BOYS. SAM is brandishing a stick as a sword.)* A challenge? I accept!

*(The sword/stick fight begins. SAM fights WILL. SAM obviously knows what to do. WILL puts up a good fight but in the end, SAM beats him. WILL is down for the count with SAM's sword/stick at his chest.)*

SAM: Do you yield?

WILL: I yield. *(Gets up)* Where did you learn to fight like that?

SAM: My old school had a fencing club.

WILL: Cool! I'm Will and this is Devin and that's Jake.

SAM: I'm Sam. From next door.

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JAKE: You're the new kid.

SAM: Yeah. (*Looking around the treehouse*) This is the coolest treehouse, ever.

JAKE: Where did you come from?

SAM: Boston.

JAKE: No, I mean just now...where were you hiding?

SAM: (*Indicates the three "trees"*) Up there and there and over there.

JAKE: No way. Those trees are impossible to climb.

WILL: Yeah, Jake's tried.

DEVIN: Their branches won't hold anyone.

SAM: They held me.

JAKE: Let's see.

SAM: Another challenge?

JAKE: Yeah, something like that.

WILL: Jake, your mom said no tree climbing at night.

DEVIN: Yeah, it's dangerous.

SAM: Watch. I'll show you how I did it. (*Climbs up the stage blocks UL and stands on the top block.*) Now, shine your lights over there. (*Indicates the second pile of stage blocks.*)

(*THE BOYS shine their flashlights and watch as SAM perches atop that "tree"*)

Now do you believe me?

WILL and DEVIN: (*Yell!*) Yeah! Sam, you are Awesome! Isn't he, Jake?

JAKE: Yeah. He's OK. Where did you learn to climb like that?

SAM: I had a lot of trees on the farm where I used to live. I started climbing when I was about 5... small trees first and then I tackled the big ones. But I never had a treehouse. I always wanted a treehouse. You guys are lucky.

DEVIN: C'mon down and take a look at it.

WILL: Climb the ratlines and come aboard.

JAKE: Wait a minute! I'm the leader and I say who comes aboard and who doesn't.

WILL: I call for Parley...right?

DEVIN: Yeah, Parley!

(*THEY all move downstage for a meeting.*)

WILL: He's a cool guy, Jake. He beat me at sword fighting!

DEVIN: And did you see him climb those trees? Even you can't climb those...

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JAKE: Hey! Whose treehouse is this? The new kid's or mine?

DEVIN: I thought it was ours...

JAKE: Yeah, well, it is. But we don't even know this kid. There's somethin' fishy about him.

WILL: Maybe there is...But we'll never know if we don't ask him over.

DEVIN: Wait, do we have to share the cookies with him?

WILL: There's plenty of vittles, you greedy curr...

DEVIN: What did you call me?

JAKE: Cut it out. Will's right. Let's see what kind of a kid he really is.

SAM: Hey. Can I come back?

JAKE: Yeah.

*(SAM leaps down and into the treehouse space.)*

DEVIN: Whoa! Did you see that move Jake?

JAKE: Yeah, I saw it.

SAM: This place is great. Who did this cool carving on the bench?

DEVIN: I did.

SAM: What's this? A trap door with a rope ladder? Pretty awesome!

WILL: My idea.

DEVIN: Do you want a cookie?

SAM: Sure. What kind have you got?

DEVIN: Chocolate chip, peanut butter and snickerdoodles.

SAM: I'll take a snickerdoodle.

*(DEVIN gets the cookies and THEY ALL eat except JAKE.)*

DEVIN: Hey, Jake, what do you say we make Sam a member.

SAM: A member of what?

WILL: You've heard of the brotherhood of pirates, matey?

SAM: Aye, aye.

WILL: *(HE gets the joke and laughs)* Well, the three of us be the brotherhood of the treehouse.

SAM: So, what do I have to do to be a member?

WILL: Argghh...I guess that's up to Jake. He's the leader. This here treehouse belongs to him. What do you say, Cap'n'?

JAKE: You have to pass a test.

SAM: What kind of a test?

JAKE: A test of courage.

SAM: Oh?

JAKE: Of course, if you're scared...

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SAM: Naw, at least not as scared as you guys were ... I really had you going, didn't I? *(SAM moans)*

DEVIN: That's really scary.

*(Sound FX of the wind blowing. Thunder in the distance.)*

SAM: How about you, Will? Were you scared when I jumped down out of the tree.

WILL: Aye! You shivered me timbers...arghh....

SAM: So. Jake. What about you? Tell the truth.

JAKE: *(Pause)* Truth?

SAM: *(Pause)* ...or Dare?

*(Wind sound FX increases. Thunder in the distance.)*

JAKE: What's the dare?

SAM: Climb to the top of that tree.

JAKE: The one you just climbed?

SAM: Yeah.

WILL: Don't do it Jake. The wind's picking up.

DEVIN: Yeah, just admit you were scared like the rest of us.

JAKE: I'll take the dare. Devin, shine your flashlight over there.

*(JAKE heads DSL to climb stage blocks on the far DSL side of the tower of blocks. Wind Sound FX increases. Thunder rumbles in the distance. JAKE struggles to climb the "tree" and begins to lose his balance. HE freezes, frightened, on the side of the blocks.)*

I...I can't move.

SAM: The wind's picking up.

WILL: Hang on, Jake!

DEVIN: Grab the branch.

SAM: He can't see it. Shine your flashlights over there.

*(WILL and DEVIN shine their flashlights. SAM climbs quickly to the top of the "tree" from the side closest to them. SAM offers JAKE a hand. Sound FX of thunder. WILL and DEVIN's flashlights go out. THEY can't see JAKE and SAM.)*

WILL: *(yelling)* Hey. Our batteries died!

DEVIN: *(yelling)* Are you guys all right?

*(Increasing thunder and lightening. Sound of rain.)*

SAM: Jake! Take my hand!

*(SAM's baseball cap blows off. Her hair falls down and JAKE sees that SHE is a girl.)*

JAKE: No Way! *(HE slips a bit)*

SAM: You're gonna slip and fall. Let me help you.

JAKE: I don't need a girl to help me. You lied!

SAM: I never said I was a guy.

JAKE: But you acted like one.

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