

Just Another High School Play

By Bryan Starchman

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STORY OF THE PLAY

What happens when your drama teacher abandons ship to become a mini-golf instructor in Mexico and you have a theater full of people expecting a show? You improvise! In this hilarious metatheatrical comedy, a desperate Stage Manager and an overly confident Assistant Director (who has "never actually seen a play but has great ideas") attempt to cobble together a production using whatever scripts they can find backstage.

Since its 2005 debut this beloved show has been performed more than a thousand times, and now it's been completely reimagined for today's students. This updated script maintains everything that made the original a hit while bringing the show firmly into the present. Watch as a troupe of unprepared actors tackle everything from Shakespeare (with magazine cutout puppets) to a unique take on the Salem witch trials to *Twelve Angry Men* performed by just two sort of angry actors. New additions include AI assistants who won't stop interrupting, commercials that perfectly spoof current trends, and a court case about the heinous crime of ghosting someone after borrowing their favorite hoodie.

Featuring flexible casting for 10-40 performers, this show can be customized for your community with local references and inside jokes. Perfect for both experienced performers and first-time actors, "Just Another High School Play" celebrates everything that makes high school theater both maddening and magical. From tech week disasters to forgotten props, from Shakespeare performed with rubber chickens to interpretive dance gone wrong, this show will have your audience laughing while your actors have the time of their lives creating controlled chaos on stage.

Warning: May contain traces of glitter that will never fully leave your stage.

Performance time is approximately 90 minutes. Rubber chickens not included.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Minimum cast of 10 plus drama teacher; maximum of 40.)

Characters in both acts. All 3 are flexible parts.

Stage Manager (SM): Uptight, tries to keep the show on track.

Assistant Director (AD): Comedic fool who keeps the show *off* track.

Announcer: An actor in the booth or offstage with a microphone.

Characters in Act I

Siri	Alexa	Stagehand
Narrator	Male Thespian	Female Thespian
Spokesperson 1	Tom	Carrie
Logan	Anita	Craig
Teena	Hamlet	Booth Operator
Narrator 2	Child	Mom
Dad	Shakespeare	Marlowe
Barkeep	Narrator 3	Student
Android	Grad Student	Female Lead
Male Lead	Cop	Actors 1-4 and Extras

Characters in Act II

Prompter	Jurors 1-12	Reverend Parris
Thomas Putnam	John Proctor	George Jacobs
Abigail Williams	Elizabeth Proctor	Tituba (optional)
Spokesperson	Nervous Actor	Small Print Reader
2nd Actor	Ghost	Scrooge
Tiny Tim	George	Emily
Salesperson	Tired Student	Romeo
Juliet	Puppeteer	Spokesperson
Chatty Person 1	Chatty Person 2	Small Print Lawyer
Teenager	Puppet	Drama Teacher
Siri	Alexa	Extras

DOUBLING OPTIONS

Director may decide how to double. There are many options. Keep in mind the following:

- Stage Manager and Assistant Director cannot be doubled
- Quick changes will be needed between some scenes
- Consider costume pieces that can be quickly changed
- Some roles require specific skills (puppetry, improv experience)
- Gender flexibility is built into most roles. Change pronouns as necessary

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: Opening Scene

Announcer, SM, AD, Siri, Alexa, Stagehand, Extras

Scene 2: History of Theatre: 5,000 Years in 5 Minutes

Narrator, Male Thespian, Female Thespian, SM, AD

Commercial #1: Bull's-Eye BBQ Sauce Cologne™

SM, AD, Siri, Spokesperson 1

Scene 3: Questions From the Audience and Improv Game

SM, AD, Tom, Carrie, Logan, Anita, Craig, and Teena

Scene 4: To Be, or Not to Be: That Is the Digression

Hamlet, Announcer, SM, Booth Operator

Commercial #2: The Infinite Puzzle™

Narrator, Child, Mom, Dad

Scene 5: Christopher Marlowe:

The Elizabethan True Hollywood Story

Announcer, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Barkeep, AD, Extras

Commercial #3: A+ Buddy™

Narrator, Student, Android

Scene 6: Melodramas in 90 Seconds

AD, SM, Grad Student, Extra, Female Lead, Male Lead

Scene 7: The Writing War

AD, SM, Male Lead, Cop, Actors 1-4

ACT II

Scene 1: Two or Three Really Angry Jurors

(That's All We Could Find)

SM, AD, Prompter, Jurors 1-12

Scene 2: Witch Crafts

*SM, AD, Rev. Parris, Thomas Putnam, John Proctor,
George Jacobs, Abigail Williams, Elizabeth Proctor,
Optional - Tituba, Extras*

Commercial #4: Stage Fright Be Gone™

*Spokesperson, Nervous Actor, Small Print Reader, 2nd
Actor*

Scene 3: A Christmas Carol Rap

Announcer, Ghost, Scrooge, Tiny Tim

Scene 4: Our Town, This Town

AD, SM, Announcer, George, Emily

(Cont'd.)

Commercial #5: Tech Week Survival Kit

Narrator, Salesperson, Tired Student, Extras

Scene 5: Romeo and Juliet: A Puppet Show

Romeo, Juliet, Puppeteer in all black, Narrator, SM, and AD. Can be expanded so that each puppet has an actor.

Commercial #6: Shut It! Puppet™

Spokesperson, Chatty Person 1, Chatty Person 2, Teenager, Puppet, Small Print Lawyer

Scene 6: The Drama Teacher Cometh

Drama Teacher, SM, AD, SIRI, ALEXA, Extras

PRODUCTION NOTES

1. This show requires local customization to work effectively. Have the full cast and crew help fill in the blanks during the first read-through to ensure accuracy and maximize comedic potential.
2. Technology and pop culture can change quickly. Fill in any dated references with current ones that your audience will recognize. The key is maintaining the meta-theatrical style while keeping the humor fresh and relevant.
3. For the improv scene, directors have two options:
 - Use the scripted version with plants in the audience.
 - Take actual audience suggestions, either via paper slips or digital submission. If taking live suggestions, have appropriate backup options ready in case audience suggestions are unsuitable or the energy falls flat.
4. For audience interaction segments: Set up a table in the lobby with paper slips for show questions. Alternatively, use a QR code/digital form for question submission. Have moderators screen submissions before the show.

ACT I

Scene 1: Opening Scene

(Cast: ANNOUNCER, STAGE MANAGER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, SIRI, ALEXA, STAGEHAND, EXTRAS.)

ANNOUNCER: *(Offstage on microphone.)* Before the show begins, the producers would like to make a few apologies prior to your viewing this fine piece of theatre. We would like to apologize to the people of _____. *(Insert name of your town.)* We would also like to apologize to the people of _____. *(Insert surrounding counties.)* To the people of _____, *(Insert rival high school.)* we apologize if some of the jokes go over your heads; we'll try to speak slowly. We'd also like to apologize to anyone who has ever tripped up the stairs while carrying their drama binder. To everyone whose mom still shows their elementary school musical video to relatives. To all the tech crew members who keep "accidentally" missing Saturday set builds. To anyone who's ever had their costume fall apart during a dress rehearsal. To the person who ate everyone's prop food before opening night. The entire marching band. Anyone who's ever gotten hit by a falling backdrop. England. Anyone born between the years 1782 and 2024. And finally, Thespis, the father of theatre, who probably also forgot his lines on opening night.

(SPOTLIGHTS begin to shine all over the stage as the ANNOUNCER sings in a fanfare style. "Bahhhh da da da da da da da da da da dum da da dum!" After a while the Announcer takes a breath and the spotlights stop. Then they begin again. After about 30 seconds of this, the SM pops their head out and starts motioning to the AD in the audience who gets up and moves into the wings. The spotlights stop on SM and they look up at the spots with a grimace.)

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SM: Um. Good evening. How's everybody doing tonight?
Good, good... I'll be right back. (*Disappears offstage and can be heard snapping at AD.*) Don't give me that. You're in this as deep as I am. Deeper. Get out here... now!

(*SM pushes AD out onto the stage.*)

AD: (*Smiling at audience.*) Hello, everyone. I'm _____,
(*Insert name.*) the assistant director of this show and this
(*Roughly pulling SM out.*) is _____, (*Insert name.*)
the show's stage manager.

SM: (*Visibly nervous.*) Hi again, we met earlier.

AD: And we want to thank everyone for coming out tonight
to... to... (*Turning to SM.*) What show is this?

SM: (*Quietly to AD.*) What!? You mean you don't know?

AD: Well, I thought you knew.

SM: You're the assistant director!

AD: You're the stage manager! Didn't you show up to
rehearsal?

SM: Well... um... no... I had that thing, and I had to....

AD: Oh right, that important date with that person
from _____ (*Insert nearby town.*) who's in three
different school musicals at once.

(*SFX: A phone starts playing an annoying ringtone very loudly. SM rolls their eyes; the ringtone continues.*)

SM: (*Smiling tensely at audience.*) Ahem, as I was saying....

(*SFX: Phone keeps playing.*)

AD: (*Suddenly excited.*) Oh, it's mine! (*Pulls out phone.*)
Hello? Oh, hi, Aunt Jane. Nope, nothing much. Just putting
on a play.

SM: (*Grabs phone from AD's hand.*) We're in the middle of a
show!

SIRI: (*From phone.*) I heard "middle." Would you like
directions to Middle School?

AD: No, Siri, not now!

ALEXA: *(Also from phone.)* Playing "Now That's What I Call Show Tunes, Volume 6."

SM: Why do you have multiple AI assistants on your phone?

AD: *(Defensive.)* They're understudies for each other!

(STAGEHAND pops on stage with a note. SM and AD turn on them.)

SM and AD: WHAT!?!?

STAGEHAND: Um... I found this note backstage. It's a note... from _____ *(Insert drama teacher's name.)*

SM: *(Grabbing the note.)* Give me that!

(STAGEHAND exits.)

AD: What does it say?

SM: *(Reading.)* My Dearest Students... *(Looking up.)* How nice. *(Reading.)* The best of luck to you on tonight's show. I would like to say something positive to give you all some motivation, but the fact that none of you bothered to come to a single rehearsal – not even the one where I ordered pizza – prevents me from doing so.

SIRI: Would you like me to order pizza?

AD: Shhhh! This is getting good!

SM: *(Continuing to read.)* I imagine you have a packed house full of people on the brink of turning into an angry mob, so I've headed south to pursue my true calling.

AD: Which is...?

SM: *(Still reading.)* The _____ *(Teacher's name.)* you all know is dead and gone. I am now following my lifelong dream of becoming a professional mini-golf instructor in Mexico. My putting techniques are unconventional, but my students say I have a real flair for the dramatic. By the way, none of you ever turned in your History of Theatre projects from last semester. Don't bother sending them – I'll be too busy perfecting my windmill shot. P.S. - Remember that prop closet key you all kept asking for? It was taped under the drama room water fountain the entire time.

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AD: *(Looking around the house and behind the curtain.)* Very funny, _____ *(Teacher's name.)* Come on out. Where are you?

SIRI: Searching for _____ *(Teacher's name.)* in Mexico...

AD: Not now, Siri!

ALEXA: I found three mini-golf courses in Cancun.

SM: I don't think they're coming back.

AD: No... this has to be a joke.

SM: It all makes sense now. I thought nothing of it at the time, but...

AD: But what?

SM: On my way here tonight, I passed _____ *(Teacher's name.)* heading out of town. They had "Don't Stop Believin'" blasting while wearing a polo shirt with little golf clubs on it, and they were practicing their victory dance for hole-in-ones.

AD: So they've finally done it... they're chasing their dreams. I'll see you, _____ *(Teacher's name.)* at the big Putt-Putt in the sky.

SM: Will you stop thinking about them? We've got a problem here. All of these people are expecting a show and....

(They BOTH turn back to the audience.)

SM: *(Giggling nervously.)* It'll just be one moment; our actors are a little nervous. *(Runs off stage.)*

AD: Wait! Where are you...? *(Turns to look at audience.)* So... who here's done tech week without crying? *(Nervous pause.)* No one? *(Takes out phone.)* Oh wait, let me check my director's notes... I had them somewhere...

SIRI: Playing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow."

AD: No, Siri! Stop!

(SM re-appears carrying a box and AD looks back at him.)

AD: *(To audience.)* We'll figure out the music later.

SM: What are you doing? Get over here. Now!

AD: And now... on with the show. (*Aside to SM.*) We do have a show... right?

SM: Of course, of course. (*To AD.*) I found a box full of old scripts, different classics we've had to study over the past four years. (*Calling offstage.*) Could everyone please come out here!

(*The ENTIRE CAST comes out on stage.*)

SM: Everybody, take a script. Pick a scene and get to work. We'll call you when we're ready for you.

AD: They can't memorize a whole scene in just a few minutes.

SM: Well... um... wing it, you know, improvise. It'll be fine. It'll be like the history of high school theatre. A showcase of scenes.

AD: Boring.

SM: Fine, you run the show.

AD: (*Beat and then.*) All right, everybody, you heard the stage manager. Get to work on those scripts. And someone find me my lucky directing pencil!

(*EVERYONE grabs a script and looks uncertain as they head backstage.*)

AD: (*Aside.*) You sure we're not in over our heads?

SM: We can do this, we don't need _____.
(*Teacher's name.*)

AD: The Mini-Golf Master.

SM: Excuse me?

AD: They're now known as The Mini-Golf Master.

SIRI: Searching for mini-golf lessons near you...

SM and AD: NOT NOW, SIRI!

End of Scene

End of Freeview

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