

What Part Will I Play?

A Play in One Act

By Mary Hall Surface

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This play is dedicated to all of my students.

—Mary Hall Surface

STORY OF THE PLAY

Finding an appropriate and challenging play for 13 young women ages 12-16 is not an easy task—but your search is at an end! This is a play that gives a voice to young women's hopes and dreams, fears and failures, fantasies and hard knocks. The girls arrive at a theatre to audition for a promising new play. Each girl has come with her own ambitions, even secrets. But upon arrival, the girls learn that the director will be late. The voice of the stage manager takes them through a series of improvisations. But the girls, confused and anxious, are soon left to "wait." Each girl must decide how she will respond to the situation and to one another. As the play progresses, barriers are broken down, friendships and sometimes just tolerances are made, fears put aside and dreams re-engaged. A dynamic play!

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

What Part Will I Play? was originally produced by the California Theatre Centre's Advanced Conservatory in July, 1987, under the direction of Mary Hall Surface. Set, light and costume designs were by Ms. Surface and the conservatory students. Choreography and sound design was by Kevin Reese.

ORIGINAL CAST

BRITTANY: Karin Wolman **TIFFANY:** Jennifer Adams

ERICA: Heidi Tokheim

ENID: Rebecca Ennals

MIKE: Michelle Six

ZORA: Whitney Couch

KARINA: Julie Comparini

MARLEY: Anya Plutynski

JESSIE: Jennie James

AMY: Sara Davison

FRANCIS: Becky Aced

DESIRÉE: Karen Manfield

CHASE: Jenny McCreight

STAGE MANAGER: Kevin Reese

DIRECTOR: Mary Hall Surface

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(13 w, also 1 male voice and 1 female voice.)

BRITTANY: The super-talented child star, 15.

TIFFANY: The ultimate preppie, 15.

ERICA: The wannabe preppie, 13.

ENID: The nerd, the “bookie,” 12.

MIKE: The class clown, 13.

ZORA: Very eccentric and very Californian, 12.

KARINA: The loner, shy and awkward, 13.

MARLEY: The leather-wearing stoner, 14.

JESSIE: Curious and insecure, wanting to belong, 13.

AMY: The “goodie,” level-headed, 14.

FRANCIS: A show-off, bragger, hiding a deep hurt, 14.

DESIRÉE: The flirty, high school hot number, 15.

CHASE: The tomboy, 16.

STAGE MANAGER: Offstage male voice.

DIRECTOR: Offstage female voice.

NOTE: *All 13 actors remain on stage throughout the performance.*

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SCENE

The stage of a theatre, with upstage blacks. Perhaps some risers, some cubes, a ladder.

TIME

The present.

MUSIC

Some song suggestions are listed in the script. Be sure to obtain permission before using copyrighted songs. Getting the cast involved in the sound selection process will ensure the music's relevance to the audience. The original music for the song contained in this play was written by Terry Silver-Alford and is available from the publisher.

Performance Time: About an hour.

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(A SPOTLIGHT hits the back curtain. MUSIC. "On Broadway." One by one, each actor enters through an opening in the curtain. Each assumes a place on the stage, striking a pose and remaining frozen until all the GIRLS have arrived. Each girl's entrance, reaction to the other girls, and place she assumes reflects who she is and how she feels about this audition. Once assembled, the GIRLS begin a Movement Piece in which they begin to size one another up—seeing who is different, who appears to fit into what group, who might be the stiffest competition for the parts in the play. BRITTANY is featured in a solo moment, showing her skill and confidence as a dancer. TIFFANY and DESIRÉE circle each other; FRANCIS breaks through their circle. The entire group gives MARLEY a look, who through a dance move, tells them to leave her alone. Then the group gives KARINA a look, and she shrinks into the corner. The piece ends in a freeze, which then breaks into the girls, nervously chattering, waiting for the director to arrive.)

STAGE MANAGER: *(Voice-over.)* All right, everyone. Could you line up downstage, please?

(The GIRLS quickly form a line along the DS edge of the stage, some taking the lead to get to a good place.)

STAGE MANAGER: *(Cont'd.)* I'm the stage manager for today's audition.

BRITTANY: *(Stepping forward.)* I'm Brittany Taylor.

FRANCIS: *(Stepping forward.)* I'm Francis Elizabeth Phillips ... Francis Louise Elizabeth Phillips. I --

STAGE MANAGER: Thank you. You'll all have a chance to introduce yourselves in a moment.

FRANCIS: I can wait.

STAGE MANAGER: The director will be arriving late this morning.

TIFFANY: You mean, you're not the director?

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STAGE MANAGER: No. She's in a meeting with the playwright. As you all know, you're auditioning for a new play today—a play that's scheduled to open in the city next year if everything goes well. But right now, there're still some details to be worked out.

BRITTANY: Like who gets what part.

ENID: How exciting!

(ENID receives a “what a nerd” look from a number of the GIRLS.)

FRANCIS: How long do we have to wait?

STAGE MANAGER: Anyone who doesn't want to wait is free to leave now. *(Pause.)* Anyone? *(Pause.)* Fine. Now, I need you to give me your name, and what kind of part you're interested in playing.

MIKE: Excuse me. Do you help with casting?

STAGE MANAGER: Let's just keep this brief and keep it moving. OK? Let's start on this end.

JESSIE: Me?

STAGE MANAGER: Stage right.

(The GIRLS cross center one by one to introduce themselves, then cross to take a place at the other end of the line.)

JESSIE: I'm Jessie Kravitz. I didn't know we were going to have to say this, so I don't know what to say. So I'll say, I don't know. Whatever.

AMY: I'm Amy McKee. I'd be happy to play any part. I just like being in plays.

TIFFANY: Hi. My name is Tiffany. Tiffany Chambers. I usually play somebody important or somebody pretty because, *(Giggles.)* well, I mean, you know.

BRITTANY: Brittany Taylor. You could have checked with my agent, World Class Talent. Since you didn't, check my résumé. I always play the lead.

CHASE: I'm Chase Mitchell. I heard you might need a tomboy type. That's me.

End of Freeview

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