

A SKUNK'S TALE

A Play with Music

in One Act

for Young People

by

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SYNOPSIS

Saskia Skunk comes to a new school to discover cliques of popular students, rumors of her past, and isolation. She befriends two other equally isolated students, Terence Toad and Brittnee Buzzard, and tries to fit in against the judgment and mockery of those with social power, and the indifference and fear of those who look on impartially. As her sadness and sense of isolation grow, threatening to push her beyond an emotional breaking point, a small but wise onlooker, Micah Mouse, intervenes to teach all a lesson about acceptance and authenticity

PRODUCTION HISTORY

A Skunk's Tale has received two productions, with two studio performances each, by the Junior Players of the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, GA, in 2003 and 2008. The performances took place in Theatre 3 of the 14th Street Playhouse, and in the Black Box Theatre of the Woodruff Arts Center. The show was presented free of charge, and it was not reviewed.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

A Skunk's Tale has 14 roles, which are written for eight girls and six boys. However, several of the roles are not necessarily gender-specific, and could be reassigned with simple name and pronoun changes. The characters are all animals, but they are very human in personality and behavior, and exist in an anthropomorphic setting

Saskia Skunk
Terence Toad
Brittnee Buzzard
Destiny Deer
Frederick Fox
Beverly Bluebird
Hector Hawk

Sarah Snake
Samantha Salamander
Rina Raccoon
Omar Opossum
Micah Mouse
Ms. Hooley the Owl, the teacher
Mr. Turban the Turtle, the counselor

SET AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

A Skunk's Tale can, as it was in its original incarnations, be produced with a minimum of set or technical needs, using simple props, neutral stage pieces, suggestive costumes and makeup, and ordinary sound effects to establish the various characters and settings. Conversely, the play could also be presented with more elaborate sets, costumes, makeup, lights and sound to evoke the metaphorical world of the play. Sheet music for the songs is provided.

List of Scenes

- Scene 1: Introduction (Mr. Turban, Ms. Hooley, Micah)
- Scene 2: Lunchtime (All)
- Scene 3: Out In the Cold (Saskia, Brittnee, Terence)
- Scene 4: The Rumor Mill (All)
- Scene 5: Saskia Responds (All)
- Scene 6: Counseling (Mr. Turban, Saskia, Brittnee, Terence)
- Scene 7: You Don't Fit In (All)
- Scene 8: Small Group Imaginings (All)
- Scene 9: The Only One You Have To Be Afraid Of (All)
- Scene 10: Misunderstood (All)

List of Songs

- "Out In the Cold" (Saskia, Terence, & Brittnee)
- "You Don't Fit In"
(Destiny, Frederick, Beverly, Hector, Sarah, Samantha, Rina & Omar)
- "The Only One You Have To Be Afraid Of"
(Micah, Mr. Turban, Ms. Hooley, & All)

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Scene 1: Introduction

(At a school. MR. TURBAN, THE TURTLE, comes plodding out slowly. As he speaks, MS. HOOLEY, THE OWL enters.)

MR. TURBAN, THE TURTLE *(slowly, wisely)*: A tale to tell. It was an ordinary day, in an ordinary school. A school not so very different from the one you went to, or maybe, for you young ones, the one you go to now.

MS. HOOLEY, THE OWL: Who knows what goes through the minds of children? I come to school everyday, and look into their sweet eyes. But they have secrets that we grown-ups will never understand.

MR. TURBAN, THE TURTLE: That's right, Ms. Hooley -- secrets.

(A squeaky laugh is heard offstage. MICAH MOUSE comes out. MR. TURBAN and MS. HOOLEY split the stage and move to the sides.)

MICAH MOUSE: Secrets? I guess we have secrets. My secret is that I like to watch. I watch all the other kids. You see, going to school is hard. Being around so many kids. Everyone is so different. Especially if you're the new kid in the school.

(MICAH MOUSE moves upstage, pulls out a snack to munch on. SASKIA SKUNK enters with a lunch tray. She takes a seat at a table, and begins to mime eating. Laughter and improvised conversation is heard offstage. SARAH SNAKE, HECTOR HAWK, FREDERICA FOX, DESTINY DEER, and BEVERLY BLUEBIRD come rushing in laughing, with lunch trays, except for SARAH. They come right to where SASKIA is sitting.)

Scene 2: Lunchtime

(In the school cafeteria.)

SARAH SNAKE: Excuse me, but, like, this is our table. We sit here everyday.

SASKIA SKUNK: Oh, sorry.
(She gets up and moves.)

DESTINY DEER *(quietly mocking)*: Oh, sorry.

HECTOR HAWK: Who is that, anyway?

FREDERICA FOX: She's new. She just moved here.

HECTOR HAWK: She's kind of strange-looking. That white stripe in her hair.

SARAH SNAKE: You've got sharp eyes. She is strange. I think she's the one my friend was telling me about.

(MR. TURBAN, THE TURTLE starts walking slowly across the room.)

FREDERICA, DESTINY, HECTOR: What did your friend tell you?

SARAH SNAKE: My friend goes to this other school. And she told me. . .

BEVERLY BLUEBIRD: You guys, it's Mr. Turban. Hi, Mr. Turban.

(SARAH SNAKE becomes suddenly quiet and angelic. MR. TURBAN THE TURTLE slowly moves across as they all greet him.)

DESTINY, FREDERICA, HECTOR and SARAH: Hello, Mr. Turban.

MR. TURBAN THE TURTLE: Hello, kids. Enjoy your lunch.

SARAH SNAKE: Mr. Turban, I'm not eating today. I had a big meal just the other day.

MR. TURBAN THE TURTLE: Good for you, Sarah.

(He exits. BRITTNEE BUZZARD enters with a tray, and takes a seat during the following.)

HECTOR HAWK: Look, it's Brittnee. Hey, buzzard-breath.
(The others laugh.)

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[From Scene 6, Counseling:]

SASKIA SKUNK: . . . Suddenly, I lost it. I stamped my feet to warn them, and I hissed and growled. But they didn't listen. So I pulled out my musk gland and I let 'em have it. As soon as I did it, I felt horrible. I wished I could take it back.

MR. TURBAN THE TURTLE: I see.
(TERENCE and BRITTNEE listen in amazement.)

SASKIA SKUNK: But no one got hurt. A few of them got it in their eyes, or felt dizzy. There was a lot of coughing and sneezing and crying. And I got sent to the principal's office, and my parents had to come in.

MR. TURBAN THE TURTLE: Is that why you're at this school now?

SASKIA SKUNK: Not exactly. When I explained it, they all kind of understood. I apologized to everybody the next day. Everything went back to normal. But my parents thought maybe I should try a new school, and I said okay.

MR. TURBAN THE TURTLE: We're not going to have an accident like that here, will we?

SASKIA SKUNK: No. It's just that, everything they say or do, it feels like they're telling me that I don't fit in.

BRITTNEE BUZZARD: I know exactly how she feels. We're not like them.

MR. TURBAN THE TURTLE: Well, Saskia, you just need to ignore what other people say. Do you think you can do that?

SASKIA SKUNK: I'll try.

TERENCE TOAD: That's what we told her.

MR. TURBAN THE TURTLE: Okay. Well, you kids hurry back to class. And, Saskia, if you ever want to talk to me, I'm here.

SASKIA SKUNK: Thank you, Mr. Turban.

MR. TURBAN THE TURTLE: And Terence, don't hop too fast in the hallways.

TERENCE TOAD: Yes, Mr. Turban.

Scene 7: You Don't Fit In

(SASKIA, BRITTNEE, and TERENCE return to class. The others glance up at them as they come in.)

MS. HOOLEY THE OWL: Saskia, is everything all right?

(SASKIA nods.)

Well, you three, get back to your worksheets.

(They sit down and start working on their worksheets. MS. HOOLEY THE OWL is occupied. All glance at them as they come in, then silence. After a moment, SAMANTHA SALAMANDER starts tapping her pencil in rhythm; then HECTOR HAWK joins in tapping his foot; then BEVERLY BLUEBIRD joins in with short staccato whistling in rhythm; then all (except MICAH MOUSE) join in with very light tapping as they lift their heads and look at BRITTNEE BUZZARD, TERENCE TOAD and SASKIA SKUNK and the song begins low and menacing, with pointed, synchronized movements.)

(SONG: You Don't Fit In)

SARAH, HECTOR, FREDERICA, DESTINY,
BEVERLY, SAMANTHA, OMAR, AND RINA:

You don't fit in.

You don't fit in.

You don't fit in at all.

You stink, you're slimy, you're a scavenger.

You're ugly, you're poisonous, you're a stranger.

(The rhythm continues as MS HOOLEY THE OWL speaks.)

MS. HOOLEY THE OWL: Whoever isn't finished, we'll work on these again tomorrow. Please pass them back to me. Now it's time for us to go to the media center to work on your group projects. Let's go.

(They pass the papers back, then stand up and begin to move into positions.)

MICAH MOUSE (*to audience*): Everyone seems very tense today. There's something in the air.

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