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*Dramatic Publishing*

A Farce in One Act

by

ANNE COULTER MARTENS

If Boys Wore  
the Skirts



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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# If Boys Wore the Skirts

*A Farce in One Act*

FOR SIX BOYS, SEVEN GIRLS AND EXTRAS

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## CHARACTERS

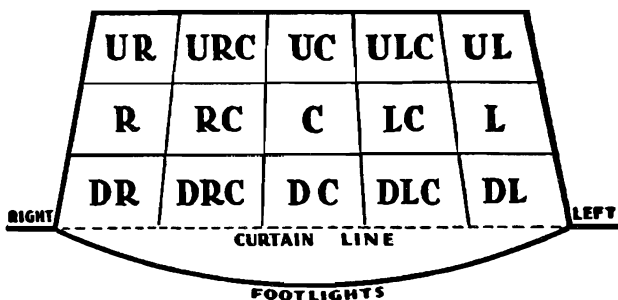
CONNIE	.....	<i>a "modern" girl</i>
ARLENE	.....	<i>her friend</i>
MATT	.....	<i>a "problem" boy</i>
BARNEY	.....	<i>his pal</i>
MISS CRAWFORD	.....	<i>a history teacher</i>
MARGIE	.....	<i>in the band</i>
CHUCK	.....	<i>on the team</i>
PHIL	.....	<i>a drum major</i>
ELSA	}	..... <i>students</i>
MURIEL		
DICK		
HERBIE		
AN ANNOUNCER	.....	<i>a girl or boy</i>
OSCAR	}	..... <i>attendants, extras</i>
ELROY		

PLACE: *A history classroom.*

TIME: *The present, with a glimpse at the possible future.*

NOTE: Although in this play boys wear the skirts, they remain very rugged and masculine. They accept skirts as their proper apparel because they have never worn anything else. The girls in slacks are sweet and feminine—but they *do* notice the boys' legs.

## CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



### STAGE POSITIONS

*Upstage* means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

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NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

## PROPERTIES

GENERAL: Study table and five chairs, desk and chair, several chair-desks, miscellaneous maps and charts on walls, bookcases and blackboards (optional), papers, books and pencil on desk and on table.

BARNEY: Book.

MISS CRAWFORD: Watch.

CONNIE: Large notebook.

ARLENE: Pencil.

DICK: Handbag or shoulder bag.

HERBIE: Handbag or shoulder bag.

MARGIE: Band instrument.

PHIL: Baton.

MATT: Cardboard box (card attached) containing pair of men's pants, shoulder bag.

CHUCK: Pocketbook containing, among other things, a fountain pen, chewing gum, safety razor, eraser, apple core, half a sandwich, scrap of paper.

## PRODUCTION NOTE

Nothing adds more to the polish of a production than the quick picking up of cues. Unless there is a definite reason for a pause, train your actors to come in with their speeches "on the heels," so to speak, of the preceding speeches. When a production lags, audience interest likewise will lag.

It is always advisable during the last week of rehearsals to hold one or more sessions during which the actors merely sit around in a circle and go through lines only with the express purpose of snapping up cues.

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# If Boys Wore the Skirts

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SCENE: *A high school classroom. Maps, charts, etc., on the walls indicate that it is a history room. The teacher's desk is D R, facing left. A chair is behind it. There is a chair-desk in front of the teacher's desk. At L C is a library-type study table. There are three chairs upstage of this table and one at either end. The table is covered with books, papers, etc. Against the wall D L is a chair-desk, and here and there about the room may be others. Bookcases and a blackboard may be added as desired. Doors L and R lead to corridors.]*

BEFORE RISE OF CURTAIN: *An ANNOUNCER steps in front of the curtain.]*

ANNOUNCER [*pausing D C*]. Everybody knows that girls are forever copying the clothes that boys wear. There's the "little boy" shirt, the boy coat, the man-tailored jacket. Dungarees, and shirt-tail-hanging-out. Even cuff links. Have you ever thought what this may lead to? The time may come when girls will abandon skirts entirely, and wear slacks all the time. And what about the boys? In self-defense, and to retain some degree of individuality, they may change over to wearing skirts. Whether this will be a voluntary change, or whether they will be tricked into it by some fashion designer who decrees that skirts for men are the "New Look" of the day, it's hard to say. Maybe in the beginning there will be some scattered opposition, as there always is with any new look in fashion. But in time, the old ways will be forgotten. And this is how things may be: [*Moves D L stage.*]

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *MISS CRAWFORD, an attractive young teacher, is seated at her desk looking at some papers. BARNEY, a student, stands upstage of the desk with a book in his hand. ELSA, MURIEL, DICK, HERBIE and ARLENE are*

*seated at the long table L C, studying. At first sight, no change in costume is apparent. MISS CRAWFORD wears a suit jacket and a pretty blouse. The girls wear the usual sweaters or blouses, and the boys wear sweaters, shirts or sport jackets.]*

ANNOUNCER: Things don't look any different to you? Wait.

*[ELSA gets up from table, crosses to desk and gets a book, then returns to her seat. It can be seen that instead of a skirt, she wears tailored slacks.]* You see? For the girls, well-tailored slacks to give them that sweet, feminine look.

*[DICK gets up from table, crosses to desk and gets a piece of paper, then returns to his seat. It can be seen that instead of slacks, he wears a narrow, too-tight skirt. His shoes are unchanged. He may wear regular socks, or knee socks to match his tie or sweater. In his too-tight skirt, he wiggles his hips as he walks.]* Skirts for the boys, to give them a rugged, he-man appearance. *[Throws up his hands.]* Take it from there! *[Leaves stage.]*

MISS CRAWFORD *[looking at her watch]*. Our assembly program goes on in fifteen minutes. Does anyone know where Connie is?

*[As she says this, CONNIE comes in L. She wears a pretty blouse and tailored slacks. She carries a large notebook.]*

CONNIE *[coming R C]*. Right here, Miss Crawford. Sorry I kept you waiting.

MISS CRAWFORD. I just wanted to make sure your special report is ready.

CONNIE. Here. *[Indicates notebook.]* "History's Fashion Parade."

MISS CRAWFORD. Good. The charts to illustrate the old-time costumes are all ready, too?

CONNIE. They're in the auditorium now. And the Museum is sending me an authentic costume to put on display.

MISS CRAWFORD. Wonderful! *[Gets up, coming from behind*



*desk to R C.*] What are they sending? [*It can now be seen that she wears tailored slacks.*]

CONNIE [*handing her notebook*]. I don't know yet. Matt's waiting at the front door for the delivery truck. [MISS CRAWFORD *glances through it.*]

MISS CRAWFORD. Take good care of whatever it is.

CONNIE. Oh, yes! I asked for a twentieth-century costume.

MISS CRAWFORD. That was an interesting period.

CONNIE. But the clothes they wore! Am I glad I live in modern times!

MISS CRAWFORD. Aren't we all! [*As they talk, DICK leaves his seat and goes to the wall D L, to consult a map. There is a wiggle in his walk. In a moment, he returns to his seat.*]

CONNIE. I simply can't imagine dressing differently from the way we do now.

MISS CRAWFORD. Fashions do change every few years. But now I think we've reached the most sensible and becoming fashions since time began.

CONNIE. Do you suppose people always thought so?

MISS CRAWFORD. What?

CONNIE. That *their* fashions were the best.

MISS CRAWFORD. Well, maybe. [*Hands notebook back to CONNIE.*] But they were mistaken, of course. [*Carefully smooths her slacks.*]

CONNIE. Let me check these notes once more. [*Sits in chair beside desk.*]

MISS CRAWFORD. Do that. I'm going to check on a few things in the auditorium. [*Goes to door L.*]

BARNEY. Anything I can do to help? [*Puts down his book and comes from behind end of desk to R C. It can now be seen that below his ordinary sport shirt he wears a lovely cotton skirt, very full, with several stiff crinolines under it to make it stand out.*]

MISS CRAWFORD. No, thank you, Barney. I'll take a couple of the girls. Elsa, Muriel?

ELSA [*getting up*]. Certainly, Miss Crawford.