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Dramatic Publishing



Through the Glass Looking

By
KATHRYN PETERSEN



Dramatic Publishing
Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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“Commissioned and first produced by
The People’s Light & Theatre Company,
Malvern, Pennsylvania,
Abigail Adams - Artistic Director,
Grace E. Grillet - Managing Director.”

Through the Glass Looking was originally produced by The People's Light & Theatre Company, Malvern, Pa., in the spring of 1999.

Directed by
DAVID BRADLEY

Original music composed and performed by
JOHN LIONARONS

CAST

Manush JOHN LIONARONS
Alex JUANITA VEGA
Gypsy Queen / Mom MAUREEN TORSNEY-WEIR
Billy / Old Judge LARRY GRANT MALVERN
Umpires NICK HAAS
SARA ORR
ANTOINE MCCLARY
AMIRA WHITAKER
KHADYJAH WHITAKER
TONY YACENDA

PRODUCTION STAFF AND CREW

Scenic Designer L. PATTY BENNETT-FOX
Lighting Designer WILLIAM A. FISHBURN
Costume Designer MEGAN WHITE-MARLEY
Movement Coach LARRY GRANT MALVERN
Director of Production PETER WRENN-MELECK
Stage Manager ANDREW H. CLAPHAM

THROUGH THE GLASS LOOKING

A Play in One Act

For 1m., 2w., 3 either gender.

May be expanded to up to 10 actors.

CHARACTERS

ALEX HAWLEY . . An eleven-year-old girl with a passion for baseball. She and her brother are both adopted.

BILLY HAWLEY . . . Alexandra's fifteen-year-old brother.

MOM . . Their mother. She works at a bank and goes to law school.

IN EMITSAP:

MANUSH. A gypsy who cannot speak but expresses himself through music. The instruments he plays can be determined by the needs of the production.

THE GYPSY QUEEN An inventive gypsy who finds many ways to get by while trapped in Emitsap. She sings well.

THE JUDGE The tyrant who has seized Emitsap and rules it with an iron-tipped bat.

THE UMPS Two former judges of Emitsap who have been reduced to cleaning up the pathways. They are inspired by Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum.

(In the original production, the actor playing Billy also played the Judge; and the actress playing the Mom also played the Gypsy Queen.)

SETTING

TIME: In the present.

PLACE: In Alexandra Hawley's bedroom.

In her dream world that takes her through her mirror into the occupied territory of Emitsap.

THROUGH THE GLASS LOOKING

(In the middle of a diamond-shaped floor cloth sits a bed and a standing mirror. This is ALEX's bedroom. The mirror is an empty frame that can spin around inside another frame.)

ALEX. Mom, I'm home!

(ALEX runs into her room with a baseball bat. She touches it with reverence. She sees herself in the mirror and acts out the following fantasy. ALEX's knowledge of the game is much greater than her skills at handling a bat.)

ALEX *(using the bat as a microphone)*. Billy Hawley, the rookie phenom. In the sixth—seventh game of the World Series. How did someone so young get to be so good? He credits his sister, Alexandra Hawley, says she taught him everything he knows. He's stepping up to the plate, facing off against the rocket, Roger Clemens. *(Taps plate with bat. Adjusts cap. Glares at pitcher.)* The rookie steps out of the box. He picks up the pine tar rag and steps in again. He takes a few practice swings. Taps all five corners of the plate. He's digging in, Jim. And the pitch... A high hard one. That really jammed him, Jim. Ball one. He dusts himself off. He won't be intimi-

dated. The pitch. A swing and a miss. A bit of eye-candy for him. One and one. Here comes the pitch. A great change up. He's way out in front of it. One ball and two strikes. Clemens really made him look silly on that one. But the crowd goes wild. This rookie sure is a favorite with the hometown crowd. (*She waves and beats her bat on the plate.*) What a moment for this young rookie. Where did he come from, Jim? (*ALEX chews and spits, meeting the pitcher's intimidation with toughness.*) It all comes down to this, folks. This one pitch will decide the series. (*She swings and—*)

BILLY (*bursting in*). Do you have—?

ALEX (*trying to hide the bat*). Try knocking next time, Billy.

BILLY. What are you doing with my bat?

ALEX. Trying it out.

BILLY. Did I say you could?

ALEX. I wasn't going to hurt it.

BILLY. I told you to stay out of my room.

ALEX. It wasn't in your room. You left it in the hall.

BILLY (*coming to get it*). Just don't touch my stuff. Give it to me.

ALEX. I'm not done with it.

BILLY. Yes you are. (*He starts after her.*)

ALEX (*scampers away*). The coach looked like he was yelling at you after yesterday's game.

BILLY. It's none of your business.

ALEX. I know what you're doing wrong.

BILLY. I don't need your help.

ALEX. Yes you do. You struck out eight times in your last twelve at bats.

BILLY. I did not.

ALEX (*getting her scorebook*). I got it right here if you want to see it.

BILLY. I wish Dad never taught you how to keep score.

ALEX. But I know what you're doing wrong. You're putting your foot in the bucket. You're stepping out when the ball comes, see? You should step into the pitch.

BILLY. I wish you'd get a life.

ALEX. I wish I had a brother who didn't strike out all the time.

BILLY (*approaching*). Give me the bat.

ALEX (*running to the other side of the room*). Maybe I do. Maybe I have a brother out there who really plays baseball.

BILLY. Yeah, OK. (*Holding out his hand.*) I gotta go, Alex.

ALEX. That's weird.

BILLY. What?

ALEX. To really think about that. Like maybe I've walked by him and not even known, like through the mall or someplace. Do you ever think about that? You could go to the mall and walk right by your real brother or sister or mother—

BILLY. Mom is my real mother.

ALEX. I mean your birth mother. Do you ever think about that, Billy?

BILLY. Never.

ALEX. Really?

BILLY. Nope.

ALEX. Last week, Dad and I were watching TV and we saw this woman—she was a fortuneteller and she made

predictions and she said “the world as we know it is coming to an end.” I thought she could be my mother.

BILLY. A fortuneteller.

ALEX. We kind of looked alike. Sarah McDaniel’s family all look alike. They all have blonde hair and green eyes and this real prissy nose, even their two dogs. Do you ever wonder what your other name is?

BILLY. Alex, don’t be talking this way around Mom. It’ll upset her and she doesn’t need that right now.

ALEX. I was just wondering—

BILLY. Mom and Dad chose to be our parents; that’s all that matters.

ALEX. Somebody chose to give us up.

BILLY. So we could have better lives. End of Discussion.

ALEX. You don’t know that.

BILLY. Mom and Dad didn’t have to adopt us. They could have lived free and easy without us. But they gave us a home and food and clothes. If you go saying, Gee, Mom, Gee, Dad, I’d like to find my birth parents now, how do you think they’ll feel? When you’re grown up you can go to court and ask all your questions.

ALEX. Do I have to talk to a judge?

BILLY. Probably.

ALEX. I don’t like judges. Mom says they’re all old and mean.

BILLY. So don’t go to court. Just don’t be bringing this up again, OK?

ALEX. This is a nice bat. Can I come watch you practice tomorrow morning?

BILLY. No.

ALEX. Why not—

BILLY. Because you’re a little girl—

ALEX. I'm not—

BILLY. And you're my sister which makes you a double curse.

ALEX (*this hurts*). You drop a lot of fly balls in left field. Let's see how many... (*Going to book.*) My scorebook says—

BILLY. Shut up, Alex.

ALEX. April 21st—fourth inning. Home game with the Mantua Muskrats. E-7. Dropped a high fly ball.

BILLY. The ball got lost in the sun.

ALEX. April 23rd—fifth inning. E-7. A big fat ERROR—

BILLY. Give me my bat.

ALEX. Last season's batting average. 189.

BILLY (*going for bat*). I was in a slump.

ALEX. Twelve errors last year. (*He grabs her arm to get the bat.*) Ow! You're hurting me!

BILLY. Give it to me! (*He sees and grabs the scorebook.*) April 21st. (*He finds a page and rips it out.*) Gone.

ALEX. Give it back.

BILLY. April 23rd. (*Rips another page out.*) Out of here.

ALEX. No! Billy, stop!

BILLY. Give me my bat and I'll give you your book.

ALEX. Here. (*She throws it at him.*)

BILLY. You're such a pain! (*He rips several more pages out before he throws it down.*) Your real brother can have you! (*ALEX runs to her book.*)

(*MOM enters.*)

MOM. WHAT IS GOING ON IN HERE?

ALEX. Billy ripped my—

BILLY (*overlapping*). She stole my bat!

ALEX. I was just looking at it.

BILLY. She wouldn't give it back—

MOM. OK, OK—

ALEX. You didn't have to wreck my book!

MOM. Calm down—

BILLY. YOUR BOOK? What's this, Alex? (*He holds the torn pages in front of her face.*) And this? MY GAMES.

Who swung the bat? Where's your name, huh? Where are the runs you scored?

MOM. Billy, your ride's been waiting—

BILLY. MY GAMES! All you did was write them down.

ALEX. That's important.

BILLY. To leeches like you who don't have a life of their own.

MOM. William James Hawley! Go! I'll talk to you later.
(*He leaves.*)

ALEX. Where are you going, Billy? Where's he going?

MOM. He's got a game.

ALEX. But there isn't one on the schedule.

MOM. It's a make-up.

ALEX (*trying to gather her stuff to go to the game*). I've got to record it. Dad will want to know what happened when he gets home from Chicago.

MOM (*stopping her and pulling her over to sit down on the bed*). Billy will tell him.

ALEX. He just tells him the score. He doesn't explain the game play-by-play. Is it at the school field?

MOM. Alex, sit down here with me.

ALEX. But—

MOM. Shhh. Your dad and I have decided that you should stop going to Billy's games.

ALEX. What? Dad didn't say that.

MOM. We both think it's best for Billy right now.

ALEX. But Dad said hearing my reports are better than going to the real games.

MOM. Alex, your brother is at an age when he needs something that he can share just with his dad—a guy-to-guy thing.

ALEX. They could do other guy things together. They could bowl, take out the trash. It doesn't have to be baseball.

MOM. Baseball is Billy's game. He may not be very good at it sometimes but he's the one out there trying. When he comes home after losing, he needs to share that with his father as he chooses. He doesn't need his sister beating him to the punch with every gory detail. Do you understand? *(ALEX is silent.)* You know what we need? We need our own adventure today, just you and me. What do you want to do this afternoon? *(Pause.)* Do you want to go to the mall? *(Pause.)* Well that's what I want to do. I want to go to the mall with my beautiful eleven-year-old. What's today's date? Oh my gosh, you're turning twelve next week! Oh, Alex, I completely forgot. I'm so sorry. Between law school and work, I can't keep anything else in my head. Well, that's what we'll do today. We'll plan your party. OK?

ALEX. Do you have any tape? *(She sits on the floor with her ripped book and torn-out pages. She tries to put them back together again. Her mother watches her for a moment.)*

MOM. Alex, why don't you get involved in something else—something that can be all yours and not your brother's or your father's.

ALEX. Because I'm a leech?

MOM. Alex, honey, the world is bigger than a baseball diamond. Maybe it's time to open up to something else.

What about joining the school choir?

ALEX. The music teacher says I'm tone deaf.

MOM. You're kidding.

ALEX. She tells me to mouth the words.

MOM. There must be something YOU want to do. What do you like to do when you come home after school?

ALEX. Keep score at the Ashbury Braves' games.

MOM. Apart from that.

ALEX. Read the box scores in the newspaper.

MOM. If you love baseball so much, why don't you play it? Try out for a team.

ALEX. I can't.

MOM. Why not?

ALEX. Mom, it's obvious.

MOM. Because you're a girl? Girls play baseball.

ALEX. Not in my school.

MOM. Then play on the boys' team.

ALEX. No girls have ever done that.

MOM. So there's no precedent for it; are you going to let that stop you?

ALEX. You sound like a lawyer.

MOM. Sorry, but I'm just trying to understand. If you love this sport so much, find a way to play it. Are you afraid of something?

ALEX. No!

MOM. It's OK if you are—

ALEX. I'm not afraid!

MOM. Then play.

ALEX. I don't want to! I want to keep score at Billy's games.

MOM. You can't do that anymore—

ALEX. My real mom would let me.

MOM (*stunned*). What?

ALEX. She wouldn't treat me like a second-class citizen.

MOM. That's enough, Alex.

ALEX. What do you care about my birthday anyway? You weren't even there!

MOM. Is that what this is about? I told you—

ALEX. I wish I was with my real mom!

MOM. I'm going to give us both a little time to cool down. Then maybe we can talk.

(MOM exits. ALEX throws her book at the mirror. The book goes through the mirror and lands on the other side, but ALEX doesn't notice because she's collapsed on her bed, sobbing into a pillow. The sobbing gets softer as ALEX falls asleep and lights dim. Gypsy music plays softly in the background throughout the following. A light comes up on the mirror; ALEX sits up in bed and notices a man [MANUSH] in the mirror. She goes over to it, still holding her pillow.)

ALEX. Hello. *(They wave. MANUSH does everything ALEX does, acting like her reflection but no sound comes out of his mouth.)* This is weird. MOM!!!!!!! *(She sees her book at his feet.)* Is that my book? It—it went through the mirror? Would you please give me my book? No, it's right there at your feet. *(ALEX gets an idea and bends over to pick up an imaginary book at her feet and hands it out in front of her saying:)* Here. *(But MANUSH does exactly the same thing and picks up air like ALEX.)* I don't look like you, do I? *(They both look*

at themselves.) Uh-uh. Is my other reflection sick today and you're filling in? Do you live in there? (They both nod their heads yes and then MANUSH shakes his head no. ALEX gasps. Then MANUSH pushes against the glass.) Are you trapped in there? (MANUSH nods. He demonstrates how he can't get out.) I wish I could help you. (MANUSH shrugs and sadly picks up the book at his feet and turns to walk away.) Wait! You can't keep my scorebook! (Her hand goes through the plane of the mirror. She tests it again.) If I go through the mirror, can I get back again?

(MANUSH shrugs. ALEX steps into the mirror frame and holds on. Frenzied gypsy music can be heard. MANUSH spins the frame around and around. While this is happening, the two UMPS transform her bedroom into a disguised baseball field. First base is MANUSH's home; second base is the GYPSY QUEEN's home; third base is just a crate standing on its end. The UMPS live at home plate. MANUSH pushes the revolving mirror over to home plate. ALEX is shouting to stop it, to let her off. It finally stops and MANUSH returns to first base.)

ALEX. Oh my... *(She comes off the mirror and falls to the ground, letting go of her pillow.) That was worse than a roller coaster! (As she stands up, two creatures run up to her. They are bizarrely padded and they carry whisk brooms. They look subterranean.)*

UMPS. Welcome to Emitsap!

UMP 1. A foul territory if ever there was one.

UMP 2. We hope you don't stay long and find your way home.

ALEX. Thank you, I think. (*They whisk the ground and her body.*)

UMP 1. No stealing.

UMP 2. No walking.

UMP 1. No spitting.

UMP 2. No hawking.

UMP 1. Do you intend to interfere?

ALEX. I don't think so.

UMP 2. No licorice.

UMP 1. And no thin skin.

UMP 2. No emery boards.

UMP 1. Or paraffin.

UMP 2. Are you an improper substitution?

ALEX. For who?

UMP 1. For yourself of course.

ALEX. I don't think so.

UMP 1. Stay in line.

UMP 2. Keep off the grass.

UMP 1. Always be safe.

UMP 2. And never trespass.

UMP 1. Are you an obstruction?

ALEX. I'm not sure.

UMPS. Mind your threes and fours

In our land of drudge.

Keep yourself moving.

Beware of the Judge.

ALEX. Ow! I'm not a car in a carwash! (*Sees MANUSH at his base.*) Please make them stop! They're taking my skin off! (*She runs over to him and hides behind him. The UMPS sweep away all traces of her on the diamond and return to home plate.*) That's some welcome. So this is the land beyond the mirror? Where you live? This