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# **World of Wonder**

Book and lyrics by

TONYA HAYS

Music and lyrics by

GENESIS BE

**Dramatic Publishing Company**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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(WORLD OF WONDER)

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*World of Wonder* was premiered by the WINGS Performing Arts Program on Nov. 10, 2017, at the Lynn Meadows Discovery Center in Gulfport, Miss.

CAST:

Jenny ..... Grace Noelle Williams  
Noah ..... Ayden Ladner  
Mom ..... Aliyah Necaise  
Dad ..... Jeb Vonder Bruegge  
Dancer/Hope ..... Christina Larson  
Diversus ..... Breyton Moran  
Green Man ..... Joseph Jones  
Stimmies ..... Claire Carter, Christopher Clemons,  
Elaina Dunning, Olivia Grammar,  
Ebby Johnson, Naomi Kapusinski,  
Robert LaCour, Eli Ladner, Meg McDougal,  
Mattie Millet, Mallory Pictairn, Thea Rose

PRODUCTION:

Directors ..... Tonya Hays, Tanya Prater  
Choreographers ..... Eli Ladner, Christina Larson  
Stage Manager ..... Gretchen McDermid  
Props Mistress ..... Elaine Morrow  
Costumers ..... Amanda Overmyer,  
Kelli Overmyer, Thea Rose  
Lighting ..... Jonathan Streetman, Chayce Lundy  
Sound ..... Austin Wade  
Soundtrack ..... Christina Larson  
Stage Crew ..... Jacolby Saucier,  
Jonathan Streetman, Ryan Bergman  
Graphic Design ..... Thea Rose  
Puppet Design ..... Allyson Williams

Set Design ..... David Carter,  
Melanie Kidd, Katie Miller  
Technical Director.....Melanie Kidd  
Executive Music Producer .....Genesis Be  
Music Arrangers..... The Mors,  
Rich Matthew, Buddy Dubourg  
Special Advisors.....Thea Rose,  
Christopher Clemons, Tanya Clemons

### AUTHOR’S NOTES

The preparation for *World of Wonder* involved a great deal of research, meetings with focus groups of families that face the challenges of autism, and work with mental health professionals and educators who specialize in autism. In our work, we learned that 85% of families with an autistic child divorce, and that became part of our story. We also learned how important it is to consider the siblings of the autistic child, which led to Jenny being the narrative voice through the show.

One young lady, Thea Rose, whose brother is on the spectrum, inspired much of the story. Christopher Clemons, who is on the spectrum and was in the play, provided much insight on the play. Not all autistic children see people as colors, and not all autistic people are as high functioning as Noah. These are selected traits for our specific story that came from these young people who participated in our work.

If an autistic child can find the ability to speak before he is 5 years old, language can become their path into the world of the neuro-typical. That is the battle in *World of Wonder*, for Jenny to reach Noah before it is too late. Music and rhythm play a

large role in the effort to assist an autistic child in language. Often they will chant or sing before they speak, and this is Jenny's key to Noah's language.

The cast and crew of this project grew immensely from the experience of working on this play and the dramaturgy they did. The autistic students who attended the performances were very appreciative of the piece, as were their families. Their comments enriched all audience members during the post-show discussions. They especially liked the fact that it was told from the sibling's point of view. A post-show discussion followed every performance, and the author encourages directors to consider offering this at the conclusion of the piece. We were fortunate to have mental health experts and family members as well as students on the spectrum available to moderate these discussions.

The list of names at the conclusion of the play are from the Awetism Hall of Fame. We added names from our own community as well. The director is welcome to add to this list.

Finally, the author encourages the director to look at the writings of Temple Grandin as well as the film about her life. Other suggested resources include *The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-Year-Old Boy with Autism* by Naoki Higashida and *Life, Animated: A Story of Sidekicks, Heroes, and Autism* by Ron Suskind as well as the documentary film based on the book. These works will truly enrich you and your cast and crew as you work on this piece.

*World of Wonder* is dedicated to the memory of the author's nephew, Rick Alexander, who was a beautiful soul on the spectrum.

# World of Wonder

## CHARACTERS

**MOM:** Mother of Jenny and Noah. She is devoted to her children.

**DAD:** Father of Jenny and Noah. He is very close to Jenny. Although he chooses to leave the family at the end, he should not be portrayed as a bad guy.

**JENNY:** Teen, older sibling of Noah. She is the color violet to Noah and is an artistic soul who paints and loves music and poetry.

**NOAH:** In the beginning we see him as a normal child. The actor portraying Noah should be able to show difficulty with speech and talk in a stilted manner at the end of the piece.

**DANCER:** Symbol of hope, the color yellow to Noah and Emily Dickinson later. She is the manifestation of the ballerina from Jenny's music box.

**DIVERSUS:** The different drummer, the color red to Noah and Lewis Carroll later. He is a beat boxer. He is wacky, charming, perplexing, whimsical and bigger than life.

**GREEN MAN:** The natural world, the color green to Noah and later Albert Einstein. He is mysterious, comical and cunning. He has a wild burst of hair, twinkling eyes and a willingness to dispense bits of wisdom and quips.

**THE STIMMIES:** Ensemble who represent water, nature and the self-stimulation habits of autistic children. These characters become many things through simple costume changes: water, forest, eyes, school children, etc. They function as a Greek chorus would. The director should feel free to experiment with this ensemble. Recommended size of this group is six to 12. This ensemble is the true magic of the show. They are onstage most of the time, representing various things.



**JABBERWOCK:** The dragon of over-stimulation when all of Noah's sensory processing goes into overload. It is created by Stimmies through puppetry and light.

**WEAVER:** The spider whose rainbow web connects us all.

**SETTING:** Unit set with various levels that can represent different places. In the original production, black-light paint was applied to eye-shaped puppets. These were visible during the black light scenes.

**TIME:** The present.

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Not That Story.....  | 9  |
| Melody by Genesis Be, lyrics by Tonya Hays,<br>arrangements by Buddy Dubourg and Tonya Hays |    |
| 2. Jenny's Requiem .....  | 13 |
| Lyrics by Genesis Be, produced by Rich Matthew (New York)                                   |    |
| 3. A World of Wonder .....  | 21 |
| Lyrics by Genesis Be, produced by Rich Matthew (New York)                                   |    |
| 4. Nature's Call .....  | 26 |
| Lyrics by Genesis Be, produced by Rich Matthew (New York)                                   |    |
| 5. We Are Stimmies (Stimmie Rap).....   | 31 |
| Lyrics by Tonya Hays and Genesis Be   |    |
| 6. I am the Jabberwock .....  | 40 |
| Lyrics by Genesis Be and Lewis Carrol, produced by The Mors.                                |    |

All songs are owned by Genesis Be and Tonya Hays. Rehearsal and accompaniment CDs are available from the publisher.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

Production notes, including information on how to make the show sensory friendly, can be found in the back of the book.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

### **Costumes:**

Costumes for MOM, DAD, NOAH and JENNY are modern day.

Dad: Coat, tie and slacks suggest he is a professional

Mom: Skirt, shirt and sweater

Jenny: Long tunic and leggings make for easy movement. She can later refer to the tunic as a dress and not have to change

Noah: Plain, blue T-shirt, blue jeans and tennis shoes. The actor dresses in all black when the autism becomes diagnosed and returns to his regular clothes when he finds his voice. If the director chooses to use a puppet, the actor is seen as the puppeteer. In the original production, a puppet that resembled the actor was used. The director may opt to use a younger child representing a boy of 5

The STIMMIES wear a foundation of plain, black, long-sleeved shirts, black harem pants and black shoes. Additional costumes for Stimmies include:

Children: Colored T-shirts, baseball caps, etc.

Doctors: Lab coats

Water: Blue sleeves with blue streamers

Nature: Flowers and greenery vines draped on base costume

Eyes: Black, hooded jackets with felt, black-light eyes sewn on that will glow in the dark as they carry black-light puppets.

Stimmies: Sequined vests, ties, scarves, hats; flashy and colorful

Jabberwock: In the original production, Stimmies wore LED Medusa headpieces that flickered in the dark. They also carried the large Jabberwock head and wings that glowed in the dark, and some of them wore white gloves

Weaver: Four stimmies created the Weaver, and the web was created as they held wound-up tulle pieces that were taken out in the audience by other cast members.

**DANCER:** White tutu, leotard and tights with a flash of yellow on the bodice of the leotard. The Dancer is supposed to represent the ballerina in Jenny’s music box and dances *en pointe* if possible. At the end of the play, she wears a white dress to suggest Emily Dickinson.

**DIVERSUS:** Should wear tones of burgundy and red to suggest the Mad Hatter from *Alice in Wonderland*. At the end of the play, Diversus wears a period coat and pants to suggest Lewis Carroll.

**GREEN MAN:** Organic-looking clothing in greens and browns. At the end of the play, Diversus dons a jacket and vest to suggest Albert Einstein.

### **Puppetry:**

In the first performances, when Noah is diagnosed with autism, the actor portraying Noah manipulated a small puppet that looked like him. Large, eye-shaped puppets were created out of pool noodles wrapped in masking tape and then painted with black-light paint and attached to black dowels. The Jabberwock puppet also glowed in the dark and was created out of foamboard and resembled a Chinese dragon. Wings were created out of fabric with black-light paint. Black-light puppetry is effective in creating the surreal world that Noah inhabits.

### **Lighting:**

Area lighting is suggested. Black lights will be needed for black-light puppetry. In the original production, during the “Eyes and the Jabberwock” scene, the actor playing Noah held a flashlight beneath the puppet’s face, which added a surreal effect. For the battle with the Jabberwock, black light was used mainly on one side of the stage with Jenny and Dancer, while Diversus and Green Man were lit in another area on the opposite side.

## **Props and Suggested Furniture:**

3 phones  
File folder  
Cradle  
Baby doll  
Large headphones  
Noah puppet (optional)  
Easel  
Chair  
Partially painted canvas  
Watercolor palette  
Purse  
Wind-up music box with white ballerina in it  
Four chairs  
Small table  
Tablecloth  
4 plates  
4 cups  
Various pieces of greenery and flowers  
Purple flower  
Brightly colored leaves  
Flashlight (optional, if using Noah puppet)  
LED flashing headpieces  
White rope  
Black light Jabberwock puppet with wings  
Envelope with letter in it  
Book  
Sword  
Grocery bags  
Various colors of ribbon or tulle

## **Music Notes:**

An accompaniment CD with all sound effects is available from the publisher and required for performance. The Jabberwock track includes a distorted voice.

The rehearsal and accompaniment tracks are the same except vocals are included on rehearsal tracks. Also, the accompaniment CD does not include the “We Are Stimmies (Stimmie Rap)” song. Below is a track list of the rehearsal CD with information about each song.

1. Not That Story  
Jenny, Noah, Mom and Dad and Stimmies
2. Rewind 1  
Flashback effect
3. Jenny’s Requiem  
Jenny
4. Not That Story Music Box  
Transition to Wonderland
5. A World of Wonder  
Diversus
6. Nature’s Call  
Green Man
7. Creepy Eyes Sound  
Underscoring for Creepy Eye Puppets
8. We Are Stimmies (Stimmie Rap)  
Created live by the actors through voice and body rhythms
9. Rewind 2  
Flashback effect
10. Return to Wonderland 1  
Transition effect
11. Rewind 3  
Flashback effect

12. Return to Wonderland 2

Transition effect

13. Jabberwock Battle

School Sounds into “I Am the Jabberwock” into underscoring until the Jabberwock is defeated

14. Not That Story Music Box

Transition to real world

15. Not That Story

Underscoring for weaving of the spiders web that connects all

**Making *World of Wonder* Sensory-Friendly:**

As a director or producer, you may wish to make the play sensory-friendly for specific performances. Following are suggestions on how to do this effectively.

Before your audience arrives, provide a guide. The guide can describe and introduce the show and let audience members know what to expect. The plot can be outlined and include pictures. It can also contain details about what the theatre space looks like: parking, getting tickets and how to find your seat for the show. It can also include basic theatre etiquette.

Strive to keep the running time to no more than 50 minutes.

Try to limit the audience to 100 people so the crowd is not overwhelming. A smaller audience also gives space for children and youth to move if they need to. You may wish to open the house a little earlier to give children the chance to find their seat and get comfortable with the space. Parents may request a buffer, a chair between them and others. You should plan to allow manipulatives. Children may have fidgets or stuffed animals. They may need to wear noise-canceling headphones or use earplugs.

Children on the autism spectrum who have seen *World of Wonder* have all identified with the Stimmies, who represent stimming

behavior. You may wish to have the actors who are members of the Stimmie ensemble greet the children and help them find their seats. Their interaction with the children will make them more comfortable with the production in general and will absolve them to take part in creating the web at the conclusion of the show.

Keep the house lights on during the performance as much as 25% to 50%. In the original production, black-light puppetry was used. The black-light effect may overwhelm some children. You could also demonstrate this before the production so it will not be startling. If you opt to use sudden blackouts, these can be toned down.

You may wish to use a modified pre-show announcement detailing what changes have been made, for example “Welcome to a sensory-friendly performance at (theatre name here). Tonight’s performance is relaxed and our audience may freely move, respond and be themselves. We will leave the house lights on low and have made minor adjustments to sound and lights to be more sensory-friendly. We hope you enjoy the show.”

Sound cues can also be lowered from their original volume. The Jabberwock’s distorted sound can be a scary moment in the show. If the director chooses to use a puppet, this puppet could be introduced before the show and a sample of his voice played. Pictures could be provided in advance in the guide as well.

In advertising the sensory-friendly show, it is important that other audience members understand that the theatre becomes a judgment-free zone. The audience may be more reactive and active as they watch the show.

As you prepare and work on *World of Wonder*, we encourage all involved in the production to do some research on autism. This preparation will assist everyone in knowing what to expect from a sensory-friendly audience.

# World of Wonder

AT RISE: *The STIMMIES ensemble, dressed in colorful T-shirts, are positioned on various levels of the stage across from each other to play pat-a-cake. The family members are also poised to play, DAD with JENNY and MOM with NOAH.*

## (#1: “Not That Story”)

*(JENNY begins a pat-a-cake rhythm with DAD and MOM plays with NOAH. The STIMMIES are frozen in place.)*

JENNY.

FATHER, MOTHER, DAUGHTER, SON  
A PERFECT FAMILY HAS BEGUN  
FATHER, MOTHER, DAUGHTER, SON  
NOW OUR STORY HAS BEGUN.

*(The rest of the family joins in. The STIMMIES, as children, start to play pat-a-cake and sing along. The family takes selfies together.)*

JENNY, MOM, DAD, NOAH & STIMMIES.

FAMILY, COULD WE BE?  
FAMILY, SHALL WE SEE?

MOM.

SHE LOVED HIM,

DAD.

AND HE LOVED HER SO.

JENNY.

SHE LOVED HIM,



NOAH.

AND HE LOVED HER SO.

JENNY, MOM, DAD & NOAH.

FAMILY HYMN

STIMMIES.

A SONG THAT YOU DON'T KNOW.

JENNY, MOM, DAD & NOAH.

FAMILY HYMN

ALL.

FATHER, MOTHER, DAUGHTER, SON  
A PERFECT FAMILY, WE'RE NOT ONE  
FATHER, MOTHER, DAUGHTER, SON.  
NOT THAT STORY, NOT THAT ONE

JENNY.

FATHER, MOTHER, DAUGHTER, SON  
A PERFECT FAMILY, WE'RE NOT ONE  
FATHER, MOTHER, DAUGHTER SON.  
NOT THAT STORY, NOT THAT ONE

*(STIMMIES and NOAH exit. DAD is busy at work on one side of the stage. MOM is calling DAD on the phone from home on the opposite side of the stage. JENNY is C. They are in separately lit areas.)*

MOM *(on the phone)*. It's official, he's been removed from the school. The letter came today.

DAD *(on phone holding a file folder)*. What do you expect me to do about it? It's not like this is the first time.

MOM. Maybe ... maybe I just wanted to hear your voice.

DAD. Look, I have some big meetings with clients coming up. Now, is not a good time.

MOM. It never seems to be a good time.

DAD. I need these sales to pay for all of this therapy, medications, not to mention the mortgage and all the other bills.

MOM. I am sorry I had to quit work, but I have to get him to all this stuff.

DAD. Yeah, I know.

MOM. You don't know. You have no idea what it's like every day, endless medications, the tantrums, trying to keep him from running away.

DAD. And you have no idea of the pressure I am under to finance all of this.

JENNY. And you have no idea what's it's like to be his big sister.

MOM. At least you can get a break from all of this.

DAD. I never get a break from the hopeless end that he will get better.

MOM. And I never will give up on my endless hope.

DAD. Maybe it's time you did. Perhaps it's time we consider other options.

JENNY. Emily Dickinson said, "Hope is that thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without words and never stops at all."

*(She walks into another area of the stage as the flashback sound effect occurs. JENNY joins MOM, who is standing by a cradle. MOM is interacting with a young baby in the cradle.)*

MOM. Come here, honey, I think he's trying to say something.

NOAH *(makes baby sounds)*. Dada.

DAD. He said Daddy? I heard him. Did you hear it?

MOM. Yes, of course I did. OK, Noah, try Mama.

*(Noah giggles and coos.)*

DAD. He must think you're a joke sweetheart.

JENNY. OK, little bro, say—sissy, sissy.

NOAH. Vi, vi—

JENNY. No, say sissy.

NOAH. Vi, vi.

DAD. Maybe he's saying bye, bye, because he has said his most important word for the day.

JENNY. Right, Dad. Just cuz he said Daddy.

*(She laughs and then steps away addressing the audience.)*

JENNY *(cont'd)*. And then in a few months everything changed.

DAD. Someone kidnapped my son.

*(NOAH, now dressed in black, takes the baby doll from the cradle and stands, holding it apart from his family.)*

MOM. He didn't laugh anymore or try to talk. He became silent.

JENNY. He began pounding his head with his hands and ...

MOM. Sometimes he pounded his head on the wall ...

DAD. And the tantrums started and the screaming ...

JENNY. The awful screaming.

MOM. What has happened to my child?

DAD. Where is my son?

ALL. Where did he go?

MOM. Then came the doctor visits.

*(STIMMIES enter in white lab coats as doctors. NOAH hands them the baby, which they pass around, and NOAH exits. At some point, the baby doll is passed off and a small boy puppet is passed around.)*

*NOTE: If the director decides to use a younger actor the doctors continue to examine him.)*

JENNY. Lots of doctors.

MOM. Why won't my son look at me anymore?

JENNY. Lots of tests.

MOM. Why won't my son let me hold him anymore?

DAD. Lots of money

MOM. Why?

JENNY. Until finally ...

STIMMIES (*as doctors*). Your son has autism.

MOM. My dreams for my family vanished.

DAD. My dreams for my son disappeared.

JENNY. My dreams for my baby brother disintegrated.

*(The STIMMIES exit. If a puppet is used, they take it offstage.)*

JENNY (*cont'd*). Our dreams died that day.

## **(#2: “Jenny’s Requiem”)**

*(As JENNY sings this song. Her parents walk to another side and begin arguing inaudibly. An easel, chair and watercolor supplies are present.)*

JENNY.

MAMA TOLD ME YOU MAY NEVER SPEAK AGAIN  
DADDY’S WORKIN’ OVERTIME TO PAY THE RENT  
ALL THEY DO IS FIGHT AND NEVER MAKE  
AMENDS

NOTHIN’ ’BOUT THIS SITUATION’S MAKIN’ SENSE.  
YOU YELL AND YOU SCREAM, YOU DON’T SAY  
MUCH

I STILL FEEL WE GOT A BOND THAT THEY CAN’T  
TOUCH

JENNY (*cont'd*).

IT'S LIKE A NIGHTMARE, I WISH THAT WE COULD  
WAKE UP  
SEEMS MY ONLY PEACE OF MIND IS IN MY PAINT  
BRUSH

*(JENNY begins painting.)*

JENNY (*cont'd*).

I FIND SOLACE IN THESE COLORS, I JUST MISS  
MY BABY BROTHER

*(NOAH enters with large headphones on and sits by  
JENNY. He rocks gently back and forth.)*

JENNY (*cont'd*).

ALTHOUGH I'M FEELING SMOTHERED, GOTTA  
STAY STRONG FOR MY MOTHER.  
IT'S NO WONDER, DADDY'S NEVER HOME  
HE WANTS TO SEND YOU AWAY AND LEAVE YOU  
ALL ALONE  
BUT AS LONG AS I'M ALIVE, YOU'LL NEVER BE  
ON YOUR OWN  
I'M KEEPING HOPE ALIVE THAT YOU'LL BE  
BETTER AS YOU GROW  
I THINK ABOUT THE DAY YOU DISAPPEARED AND  
TURNED TO STONE  
AND HOW WE HAD A HAPPY HOME.

*(DAD exits, and MOM sits onstage in despair. JENNY  
stops painting and sings to NOAH.)*

JENNY (*cont'd*).

OH YEAH, OH YEAH, I REMEMBER WHEN YOU  
CHANGED  
THE DAY YOU WENT AWAY, LIKE IT WAS  
YESTERDAY

OH YEAH, OH YEAH, I REMEMBER WHEN YOU  
CHANGED

THE DAY YOU WENT AWAY, LIKE IT WAS  
YESTERDAY

OH YEAH, GUESS I GOTTA FACE THE FACTS  
YOU MIGHT NEVER MAKE IT BACK  
YOU'RE NEVER COMING BACK

OH YEAH, OH YEAH, I REMEMBER WHEN YOU  
CHANGED

THE DAY YOU WENT AWAY, LIKE IT WAS  
YESTERDAY, OH YEAH

I WISH THERE WAS A WAY TO DEFINE  
WHAT'S GOIN' ON IN YOUR MIND, GOIN' ON IN  
YOUR MIND

MAMA USED TO SMILE, BUT IT'S BEEN AWHILE  
SOMETIMES I WISH I WAS AN ONLY CHILD

IN SCHOOL THEY CALL YOU NAMES

THE JEALOUSY AND SHAME

RESENTMENT AND THE PAIN

I JUST WANT IT ALL TO CHANGE.

CAN WE BE A FAMILY ONCE AGAIN?

OH YEAH, OH YEAH, I REMEMBER WHEN YOU  
CHANGED

THE DAY YOU WENT AWAY, LIKE IT WAS  
YESTERDAY

OH YEAH, OH YEAH, I REMEMBER WHEN YOU  
CHANGED

THE DAY YOU WENT AWAY, LIKE IT WAS  
YESTERDAY

OH YEAH, GUESS I GOTTA FACE THE FACTS  
YOU MIGHT NEVER MAKE IT BACK  
YOU'RE NEVER COMING BACK

OH YEAH, OH YEAH, I REMEMBER WHEN YOU  
CHANGED

THE DAY YOU WENT AWAY, LIKE IT WAS  
YESTERDAY, OH YEAH

*(Music fades. JENNY picks up paints and colors and resumes painting as MOM crosses to her carrying a purse and music box.)*

MOM. Jenny, thanks for watching Noah. It's so much easier getting groceries when I don't have to bring him along. If he gets restless—here's your music box.

*(JENNY rolls her eyes, saying nothing, and keeps painting. NOAH is oblivious to all with his headphones on. MOM looks at the painting.)*

MOM *(cont'd)*. That's lovely, dear. I am glad you have your art. God knows you deserve some way to escape this. I am grateful he is quiet and seems to enjoy watching you work. Remember if he gets in the pool you need to be with him.

*(JENNY nods and keeps painting.)*

MOM *(cont'd)*. At least you taught him to swim now. So many of them have drowned. I don't know what it is about the water?

*(She pauses, hoping for response from JENNY.)*

MOM *(cont'd)*. If he gets upset read to him. He loves that poem by Carroll—oh what is it ... the gibber ... I hate it when I can't think of it ... the Jabberwock ... That's it. I know you must get tired of reciting that—but he loves it.

*(JENNY keeps painting.)*

MOM. Bye, honey. Could you at least tell me bye? Don't turn into another silent child. I will absolutely go insane.

JENNY. Bye, Mom. Hurry back.

MOM. Jenny, you and Noah are my whole world. Your dad has lost hope. He says every time he looks at Noah he sees all that is and all that may never be.

*(Beat.)*

MOM *(cont'd)*. He thinks it may be best to send Noah away somewhere like the Jones family did with Benny.

JENNY. We don't need to keep up with the Joneses. They couldn't afford the services, Mom. They didn't have a choice. We can't send him away. Nobody will take care of him the way we do.

MOM. I know. But your dad is also worried about you and the sacrifices you make. Jenny, why don't you invite a friend over when I get back?

JENNY. That is not a good idea. You know any change in routine is a Noah disaster.

MOM. OK, well, maybe you could go to a movie with a friend.

JENNY. Mom, go to the store. I am fine.

MOM. Jenny, you just don't seem to be yourself.

JENNY. I am an artist—remember? We have our melancholy. “No great mind has ever existed without a touch of madness,” but I promise not to cut off my ear.

*(MOM kisses her on the forehead.)*

JENNY *(cont'd, watches her mom exit and then rises and addresses the audience)*. But, I'm not fine. Sometimes I think I will drown in my tears. At other times I am angry and resentful. I escape in my own way, with my art, my music and my poetry. The Cheshire cat says, “Imagination is the only weapon against reality.” Guess I am not much different than Noah. He escapes into his silent world. Aloneness is



our preferred state of being. I just wish he would come out of it and speak for Mom's sake. *(To NOAH.)* They can't send you away. I won't let them.

*(Suddenly, NOAH stops rocking and goes to JENNY. NOAH tries to put violet paint on her arm.)*

JENNY. Noah, do not put paint on me. Stop it!

*(NOAH then rushes to the painting and points at it agitated.)*

NOAH. Vi, Vi—

JENNY. What does that mean? It is all you ever say. And you only say it to me. Does it mean bye bye? Do you want to go to this place?

NOAH *(continues pointing and staring at the painting)*. Vi, Vi—

JENNY. This place is my art assignment, an illustration from a book—so I chose *Alice in Wonderland*. We're studying it in English, and I thought I could also submit it for my thousand word essay, after all a picture is worth a thousand words ...

*(NOAH becomes more excited and begins bouncing up and down and flipping his fingers and takes off his headphones.)*

JENNY *(cont'd)*. Noah, calm down. I have to get this done. It can't be late. Here's my music box.

*(She opens the music box and a delicate melody plays. NOAH watches the dancer and is soothed by it. Then he begins to stand and turn around lost in the music.)*

JENNY. Where are you now my little brother? Where does that spinning take you?