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*Dramatic Publishing*



A Play in One Act

# *The Haunted Auditorium*

by

ROSEMARY J. OWENS



**THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY**

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(THE HAUNTED AUDITORIUM)

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## THE HAUNTED AUDITORIUM

*A Play in One Act*

Three Men and Two Women, or  
Two Men and Three Women\*

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### CHARACTERS

JOYCE ELLIS..... *a young schoolteacher*  
MR. KARNS..... *an old man*  
MR. GRAY..... *school custodian*  
DR. GENTRY\*..... *a doctor*  
NANCY WILSON..... *a senior*

PLACE: *The stage of the auditorium at Lakeview  
High School.*

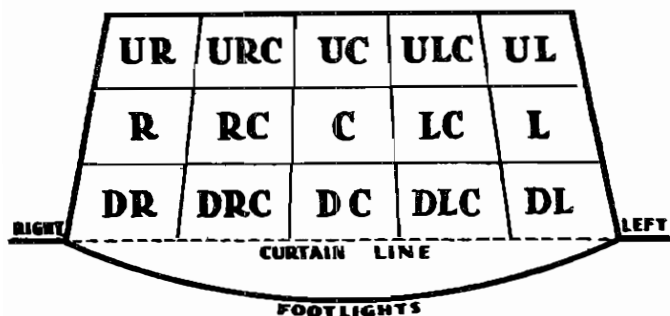
TIME: *A fall evening.*

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*\*The part of the doctor may be played by a male  
or female.*

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## 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: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, 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.

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## PRODUCTION NOTES

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### NOTES ON CHARACTERS:

JOYCE ELLIS: She is young, small, attractive --a teacher of speech and drama at Lakeview High School.

MR. KARNS: He is a tall, powerfully built man in his late sixties--a former custodian at the school.

MR. GRAY: He is in his early forties--the present custodian at the school.

DR. GENTRY: The doctor in charge of patients at the local rest home is in the early thirties, and may be either a man or a woman.

NANCY WILSON: She is a senior at the school.

### PROPERTIES:

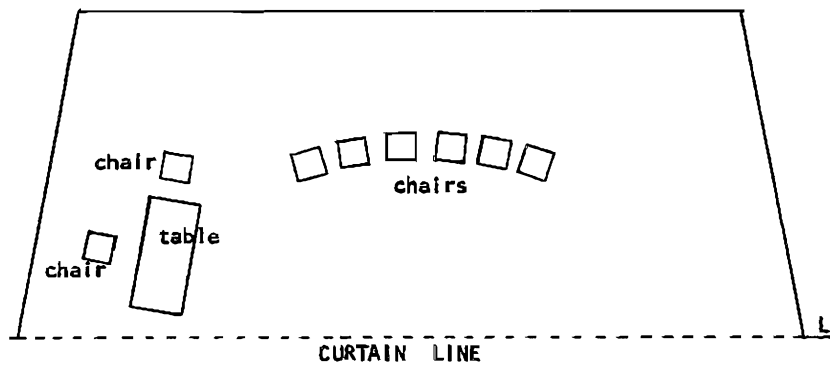
GENERAL: Eight chairs, small table.

JOYCE: Six (or more) playbooks, small dark purse.

KARNS: Janitor's broom.

DR. GENTRY: Doctor's satchel.

## STAGE CHART



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# The Haunted Auditorium

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**SCENE:** The setting is the stage and auditorium of Lakeview High School. There are six chairs arranged in a semi-circle in the center area of the stage. There is a table DR with several playbooks on it. There are two chairs by the table, one upstage of it and one at the right side. Karns and the other characters make their entrances down the center aisle of the auditorium. This may be changed according to the arrangement of the aisle of the auditorium or the discretion of the director.)

**AT RISE OF CURTAIN:** JOYCE ELLIS enters and starts arranging six chairs in a semicircle on the stage of the auditorium. She carries a small dark purse which she puts on the floor leaning unobtrusively against the central chair. She then crosses to a small table DR and picks up six of the playbooks and places one on each chair. As she places the last playbook, she becomes aware of someone entering from the back of the auditorium. She crosses DC and peers into the darkness.)

**JOYCE.** Who's there? (There is no answer.) Who is it, please! (Still there is no answer, but the sound of sweeping can be heard.) Is that you, Mr. Gray?



(KARNS enters.)

KARNS. No'm.

(A figure wearing coveralls continues sweeping and gradually works his way down the center aisle of the auditorium. He occasionally mutters under his breath in complaint.)

JOYCE. Who are you?

KARNS. Name's Karns. Who're you?

JOYCE. I'm Miss Ellis, the new drama teacher.

KARNS (with disapproval). One of them?

JOYCE. What are you doing here?

KARNS. Sweeping.

JOYCE (laughs slightly, despite herself). That's rather obvious.

KARNS. Yep. (By this time he is at the brink of the stage to the right of JOYCE, who is still DC.)

JOYCE. I mean--what are you doing in the auditorium at this hour?

KARNS (taciturn). Sweeping.

JOYCE (for a moment at a loss for words). I thought Mr. Gray was janitor at Lakeview High.

KARNS (correcting her). Custodian.

JOYCE. I'm sorry, custodian.

KARNS. He's day, I'm night. (Rather abruptly.) What are you doing here?

JOYCE. I'm getting ready for tryouts. (KARNS is silent.) You know, tryouts for a play, the Senior play.

KARNS (annoyed). I know what tryouts mean. They mean the start of a lot of extra work.

JOYCE. That's very true.

KARNS. Extra work for me and Gray. Candy wrappers all over the floor, empty pop bottles--the like.

JOYCE. That may have been true in the past, but I

intend to see that it doesn't happen when I'm directing.

KARNS. You're right, that's all in the past. There ain't no future.

JOYCE. I don't understand.

KARNS. There ain't gonna be no tryouts.

JOYCE (perplexed). Just why not?

KARNS. 'Cause no one's gonna come.

JOYCE. You must be joking.

KARNS. Nope. Ain't nobody here, is there?

JOYCE. It's early.

KARNS. Don't make no difference.

JOYCE (wondering why she's explaining to him). You see, I came up early to get things ready. The students will be here soon.

KARNS (doggedly). Nope.

JOYCE. Why not?

KARNS. You're new here.

JOYCE. Yes.

KARNS. Then you don't know.

JOYCE. Know what?

KARNS. This here auditorium's haunted. (There is a second or two of silence as JOYCE, nonplussed, tries to collect her thoughts. Then she begins to see humor in the situation.)

JOYCE (laughs). That's ridiculous.

KARNS. Words don't change facts. There's a ghost.

JOYCE (still a bit amused). Now I know you're joking.

KARNS. No, I ain't. The place is haunted.

JOYCE. Fantastic!

KARNS. I said words don't change it! No one's comin' 'cause they're scared to. They don't wanta use the auditorium.

JOYCE. But, there was an assembly here this morning.

KARNS. For programs like that it's okay and the

kids ain't afraid.

JOYCE. Then you're saying . . .

KARNS. It's only haunted when they try to do plays.

JOYCE. I've heard nothing of this--(Then deliberately.)--rumor.

KARNS. 'Tain't no rumor!

JOYCE. The students have said nothing about this.

KARNS. They don't wanta talk about it!

JOYCE (now a little uncertain). If there was anything at all to this tale, Principal Griffin would have mentioned it.

KARNS. Could be he didn't want to tell you.

JOYCE. Why?

KARNS. Ain't likely he's gonna hire many new teachers by tellin' 'em about a ghost. Most of all them that thinks they're gonna put on plays.

JOYCE (fascinated despite herself, but trying to assume indifference). Would you mind telling me one thing?

KARNS. Nope.

JOYCE. Just why did this so-called ghost single out plays for haunting?

KARNS (coming up the short flight of stairs R, that lead to the stage). What's that you say?

JOYCE (patiently). Why does the ghost only haunt plays?

KARNS. 'Cause a play is what turned him into a ghost.

JOYCE (showing a sincere interest in the old man and his story). Suppose we sit down for a while and you tell me just how a play turned him into a ghost. (She crosses to the two center chairs of the semi-circle, picks up the two playbooks and places them on another chair.)

KARNS. I oughta sweep the stage now.

JOYCE (sits in left chair). That can wait. Please sit down and tell me--(Indicates other chair.)