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Family Plays

MAKING IT!

Comedy/Drama by
Hindi Brooks



MAKING IT!

Comedy/Drama. By Hindi Brooks. Cast: 7m., 10w., extras. Set in a high school for the performing arts, *Making It!* is about a group of students who have their hearts set on making it in the theatre world, and several who like to be in plays simply because it's fun. The author, Hindi Brooks, has written many plays and TV shows. She knows the hearts and dreams of young people. That's why the hopes, the frustrations and the conflicts of the high-school students in this play are so real and convincing. The three acts are entitled "Auditions," "Rehearsals" and "The Show." They symbolize the stages in a young person's life as he or she is growing up and stepping into the world. There's fun, excitement, jealousy, heartbreak and ecstasy for the one who makes it. Alex returns to his alma mater as a teaching and directing intern. His cast includes Chuck, a talented senior who is so sure that he has the ability to make it on Broadway that he spends all his money trying to get a New York agent to come to see the play. Buddy is also talented but troubled by parents who don't want him to "waste his time" acting. Lisa, the best actress at T. A., has been Alex's girlfriend since his student days at the high school. Lisa's little sister, Cindy, is determined to take away Lisa's boyfriend and her leading role in the play. Peg has a love for fun and clowning around that overpowers her desire to act. Carol is the talented dancer suffering from anorexia. Gwen is the pretty junior who is upset because her costume is ugly. Then there are the adults—Mr. Barnett, the school principal who loves the money a good show brings in; Ms. Nelson, the drama teacher, once a professional actress and Mrs. Potter, the parent who volunteers to help with costumes—to her daughter's chagrin. *Making It!* is a family play about teenage dreams and problems—like *West Side Story* and *Our Town*—for community and university theatres as well as for high schools. Professionally premiered by the Northside Theatre Co., San Jose, California, this play can be produced elaborately or inexpensively. The "play within a play" is *Romeo and Juliet*. Rather than using authentic Elizabethan costumes, the script suggests leotards with colorful accessories. The best features of *Making It!* are the fast-moving, suspenseful plot and the believable characters struggling with today's problems of growing up and preparing for the world "out there." Set: a school stage. Time: the present. Approximate running time: 100 to 120 minutes. Code: ML5.

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Making It!

MAKING IT!

A Play in Three Acts

by

HINDI BROOKS

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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(MAKING IT!)

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MAKING IT!

Characters

The Students

LISA, senior
CINDY, freshman
CHUCK, senior
BUDDY, sophomore
PEG, senior
CAROL, sophomore
GWEN, junior
MICHELLE
NAOMI
JOSH
MARK
OTHER STUDENTS, as desired

} smaller parts,
may double
in other parts

The Staff

ALEX SINCLAIR, college junior, teaching intern
MS. NELSON, drama instructor
MR. BARNETT, principal

The Parents

MRS. POTTER, Carol's mother
DR. SLOAN, Buddy's father

The Agent

MAGGIE WILKINS

TIME: The present

PLACE: The stagehouse at Theatre Arts High School

ACT I: The Auditions

ACT II: Rehearsals

ACT III: The Show

ABOUT THE PLAY

Set in a Theatre Arts High School, *Making It!* is about several students who have their hearts set on making it in the theatre world, and several who like to be in plays simply because it's fun.

Alex, a graduate of T. A. H. S. and now a junior in college, returns to his alma mater as a teaching and directing intern. Among the students he casts are:

Chuck, a talented senior who is so sure that he has the ability to make it on Broadway, he spends all his money trying to get a New York agent to come to see the play.

Buddy, also talented but troubled by parents who don't want him to "waste his time" acting.

Lisa, the best actress at T. A. She has been Alex's girlfriend since his students days at the high school. The romance is still going strong, but it is threatened by Lisa's little sister, Cindy, a freshman who resents the fact that she's always in Lisa's shadow. She is determined to take away Lisa's boyfriend and her leading role in the play.

Other characters add to the depth and significance and entertainment value of *Making It!* There's Peg, whose love of fun and clowning overpowers her desire to act; Carol, the talented dancer suffering from anorexia; Gwen, the pretty junior who is upset because her costume is ugly. And the adults—Mr. Barnett, the school principal who loves the money a good show brings in; Ms. Nelson, the drama teacher, once a professional actress; Mrs. Potter, the parent who volunteers to help with costumes—to her daughter's chagrin.

A family play about teenage dreams and problems—like *West Side Story* and *Our Town*—*Making It!* is a play for community and university theatres as well as for high schools.

The play can be produced elaborately or inexpensively. The "play within a play" is *Romeo and Juliet*. But rather than using authentic Elizabethan costumes, the script suggests leotards with colorful accessories. The stage is divided into several areas. These may merely be suggested, or they can be made realistic with a complex set.

The best features of *Making It!* are the fast-moving, suspenseful plot, and the believable characters struggling with today's problems of growing up and preparing for the world "out there."

Hindi Brooks, the author, knows young people—their hopes and dreams, their frustrations and anxiety. A seasoned Los Angeles author, she has written innumerable scripts for *Fame*, *Eight Is Enough*, *Little House on the Prairie*, and other TV shows featuring young people and their joys and frustrations.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Properties

Folding chairs—on stage

Playscripts, letters, papers, notepad, pencils, etc.—on desk in office

ACT I

School books, totebags—students

Dance bags—Carol, Gwen

Chimes or xylophone—In control booth

ACT II

Playing cards—Josh and Mark

Partially built scenery—on stage

Playscripts—cast members of *Romeo and Juliet*

Costume charts—on desk in office

Coins—Chuck

Bottle of pills—Carol

Set props (bench, pillar, etc.)—on stage

Strips of colorful material—Cindy

Wrapped sandwich—Mrs. Potter

Wooden swords—Josh, Mark

ACT III

Tickets—on desk in office

Money box, with currency—on desk in office

Costumes

During most of the play the performers wear what they would ordinarily wear to school—perhaps a bit more bizarre than usual, since the students are teenage *artists*.

The costumes for the play-within-the-play may be authentic, traditional Elizabethan dress if the producer wishes. However—for the sake of both economy and quick-change—the author has created dialog to justify simple costumes with leotards and tights as the basic garment. One or two accessories simply constructed of inexpensive but colorful material will identify the roles: a flowing cape or train and skirt for Juliet, a robe for the nurse, full-sleeved tunics, jerkins, or doublets for the men (the Montagues might all wear shades of red and the Capulets shades of blue).

There are two important features of the costumes: they should be seen in various stages of construction as the play progresses. For example, Peg's clown tunic may be seen first with no sleeves, then with one sleeve, and finally with both sleeves. For ease in handling these changes, the sleeves may be attached to the body of the blouse with velcro or hooks and eyes.

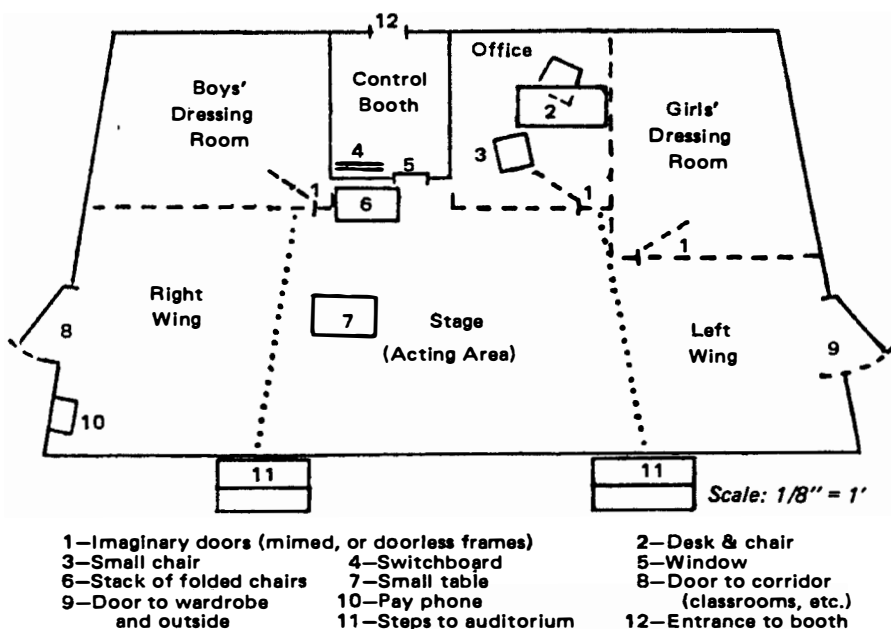
The second important feature of the costumes is that Cindy transforms them from unattractive to attractive. The Nurse, for example, may appear with a robe or gown that hangs like a sack, making her look shapeless or overweight. Cindy takes a strip of colorful cloth and, using it as a sash, deftly turns the gown into a shapely, becoming costume. Tucking under the collar and widening the chest opening of Romeo's blouse may make him more masculine. A cape may be draped around the neck and shoulders rather than simply hanging loose; a piece of cloth may become a shawl or a headdress, etc. In other words, it should become obvious as the play progresses that Cindy's taste and sense of color and design can do magic with simple, inexpensive costumes.

Lights, Sound, and Special Effects

The stage directions give explicit instructions for using light to focus the audience's attention on various areas of the stage. If your theatre's lighting equipment cannot do the job, there is a simple solution: don't use lighting effects. The play is skillfully written so that the dialog and action focus attention where it is needed without help from the lights. *Making It!* is designed to fit all stages, from the most modest to the best equipped.

It is desirable to have a microphone and speaker hooked up to give the illusion that people in the control booth can communicate with the stage only in that manner. The only other sound effect called for is the taped applause at the end of the play. Music is also desirable as indicated in the stage directions.

The Set



The set represents the complete stagehouse of a high school auditorium—all visible to the audience. Ground rows, framework, and/or doorless door frames can accomplish the illusion. Since the number of people occupying any given area at one time is small, even tiny stages can be divided up into the various areas.

It is important that the control booth appears to be raised above the rest of the stage. A simple platform, flats, and window unit can accomplish this illusion. Companies with the facilities and budget to build a booth as high up as the proscenium opening permits can present a more realistic effect. A light (the flicked-on wall-switch type) should be used in the booth as indicated in the stage directions. If possible, the dressing rooms and office should also be raised above the stage floor (but not as high as the control booth) primarily to show that they are not part of the acting area. The most important thing to remember, though, is that *acting* can do as much as scenery to define the various areas.

MAKING IT!

By HINDI BROOKS

[The set is the well-equipped stage of a high school auditorium. Down Center is the Stage Area; downstage on the sides are the wings, visible to the audience. To the right of the Right Wing is the door into the school corridor. To the left of the Left Wing is the door to the outside. On the Down Right wall, in the wing, is a pay phone mounted on the wall. There is no front curtain. The wing "curtains" can be suggested, or scrim may be used.]

Upstage, preferably a step or two up on a platform, are the boys' dressing room, Right; the girls' dressing room, Left; and Ms. Nelson's office, Right Center. All are visible through the use of half-walls, scrims, or suggested walls. Left Center, upstage, is the control booth, visible through a window when the booth light is on. (The booth is entered from the back, offstage). Preferably, it is a step or several steps higher still. It is equipped with a control panel, including a microphone that makes communication possible with those on stage.

At several times during the play, many people are on stage at the same time, with different actions occurring. It would be helpful to light different areas of the stage independently, with just the spill of that light illuminating the other areas]

ACT I

THE AUDITIONS

[AT RISE: The LIGHTS are up full on the stage area. It is empty except for some chairs standing, folded, against a wall. Nobody is in any of the "offstage" areas or rooms, which are seen in a dim light. In the office, the desk is piled high with fresh, unused scripts and various papers. No clothes or costumes are in the dressing rooms.]

NOTE: All the students who will come in now will be carrying school books and/or bags of necessities for dance and/or rehearsal. They'll be wearing this school's version of school clothes: creative, theatrical, and a bit bizarre.

CAROL and GWEN, carrying dance bags, come down the (actual) aisle from the auditorium door, to the stage, laughing and talking ad lib (about boys, clothes, current movies, etc.), and simultaneously

peeling off their school clothes. CAROL is extremely thin and nervous; she moves like a dancer. GWEN slumps in beside her—a cross between lazy and sexy. They peel down to their rehearsal clothes—leotards, tights, and leg warmers for CAROL; shorts and a T-shirt for GWEN—as they cross the stage to the girls' dressing room. Still talking, they open the dressing room door, throw their clothes and dance bags on the floor inside, come back to the stage, and begin to stretch out. CAROL stops talking, works intensely. GWEN works lazily—and keeps on talking. Now, it's about:]

GWEN. They probably won't give me the lead, but they should. Don't you think so? . . . Carol? *[She looks to Carol for an answer, but CAROL is concentrating on her exercise]* Lisa'll probably get it . . . and not necessarily because she's right for it, either. If you know what I mean. *[She looks to Carol again—no response. CAROL is contorted into a position that makes her ribs stick out. Admiringly]* God, make me look like that! *[And she goes back to her lazy exercise. CHUCK comes into the wing from the Left. CHUCK is handsome, and knows it. He's a hustler, determined to get ahead. He heads straight across the stage to the office without breaking his stride—but with a glance at the girls and a wolf whistle. CAROL pulls shyly out of her contortion, and curls up into a ball. GWEN poses]* Thank you, kind sir. *[But CHUCK has already forgotten them. He goes into the office, closes the door, and starts nosing around the desk, covertly, keeping an eye on the office door. On stage, CAROL goes back to her exercises, now diverted by her thoughts about Chuck. She keeps her eye on the office door as she works. GWEN sprawls lazily beside her]*

CAROL. Oh, Gwen, I'd trade every album I own for a date with him.

GWEN. He likes himself too much. I like a man who has room in his brain for me.

CAROL. He bought a custom convertible.

GWEN. *[Interested now]* When?

[With an eye on the office door, to make sure Chuck's not listening, CAROL and GWEN huddle to discuss this latest development in (unheard) whispers. MS. NELSON and ALEX come into the wing from the Right, talking (unheard) as they cross toward Stage Left. Ms. Nelson never made it as an actress and has now made teaching drama her life. She dresses a bit like the Grand Dame of the Theatre. ALEX stands out among the teenage boys here because—just a few years

older than they are—he is a “college man.” CAROL and GWEN are not aware of them at first. In the office, CHUCK will become aware of them, move away from the desk, and take a visitor’s chair

MS. NELSON. You’ll find a few changes in the place.

ALEX. The students? [*CAROL and GWEN see them now and stop whispering. CAROL, embarrassed, tries to cover her body with her hands as she runs into the girls’ dressing room. GWEN does her pose, again, smiling at Alex, as:*]

MS. NELSON. [*Laughing*] They’ll never change. [*To Gwen*] You may wait for auditions in the dressing room, Gwen.

GWEN. Yes, Ms. Nelson. [*She wiggles her way to the dressing room, making a wide circle around Alex*]

MS. NELSON. [*To Alex*] I meant the equipment. We have a new light board, better sound system.

ALEX. The Board of Education came through?

MS. NELSON. Our last production came through. [*As they exit, through Left Wing door:*]

ALEX. How about acoustics? Have they been improved?

MS. NELSON. We ran out of money before we got to acoustics. Maybe your show will be a hit, and we can start a new fund.

[And they’re off. In the office, CHUCK opens the door, looks out, sees the coast is clear, closes the door and goes back to nosing through the papers on the desk. In the girls’ dressing room, CAROL puts her school clothes on, and GWEN looks at herself in the mirror. In the control booth, the LIGHTS go on, and we can see (not hear) MS. NELSON point out new equipment to Alex. LISA and PEG come into the wing from Left, talking. LISA is a lovely, unassuming girl. PEG is a vivacious clown. ALEX will see them in a moment, from the booth, and then only half-listen to Ms. Nelson]

PEG. Of course, you’ll get the lead. And not just because of him.

LISA. But that’s what everyone will think.

PEG. So?

LISA. I just don’t want to be in a show where everyone hates me.

PEG. Want to give up the part? . . . If it’s offered?

LISA. [*Laughing*] No . . . If it’s offered. [*In the booth, ALEX flips a switch on the panel, turning on the mike. He talks into it, his voice echoing*]

ALEX. Hello, again. [*LISA and PEG look up to the control booth.*

LISA and ALEX exchange a wave. MS. NELSON flips some switches on the board, and we can hear as she plays three notes on a tiny xylophone. Then she talks into the microphone—to be heard throughout the school—here included:]

MS. NELSON. Attention, all actors. Romeo and Juliet auditions will begin in three minutes on stage. All auditioners *must* get officially excused from your classes. [*Flips switches to talk to girls on stage*] Will you girls please set up for the audition? [*She turns off the control booth light, and it goes DARK. On stage, LISA, still looking dreamily toward the booth, and PEG pull a small table to Downstage Right facing upstage, put two chairs behind it, then start setting folding chairs into a semicircle facing downstage, as:*]

PEG. Is this the first you've seen him since he got in?

LISA. Yes, but we talked on the phone . . . doesn't he look great?

PEG. [*Teasingly casual*] Oh, he looks like any old gorgeous, fabulous college junior. [*LISA punches her playfully, and they go on setting up chairs. CAROL and GWEN come from the girls' dressing room, and look about*]

GWEN. Did he leave?

PEG. Who?

GWEN. The hunk?

PEG. Gwen, he's taken.

GWEN. [*Imitating her tone*] Peg, things change. [*To Carol*] They're not going to start for ages. Let's go get a doughnut or something. [*She goes to the Left Wing. CAROL follows with:*]

CAROL. I'm not hungry, but I'll come along. [*They go off, Left. A moment later, ALEX and MS. NELSON come back on from the Right Wing. PEG sees them first. She nudges Lisa. LISA looks up—stops working—and she and ALEX just stand and smile at each other. MS. NELSON continues toward the office*]

MS. NELSON. I'll get the scripts. Lisa, you can help me.

PEG. I'll help, Ms. Nelson.

[*Onstage, LISA and ALEX fly into each other's arms, Stage Right, as LIGHT dims on them. They'll finish their embrace and then talk (unheard), as LIGHTS come up in the office. CHUCK jumps away from the desk as MS. NELSON leads PEG in. He smiles at them, innocently*]

MS. NELSON. On time, as usual, Chuck.

CHUCK. Just thought I could help set up. *[PEG, onto him, indicates the pile of scripts]*

PEG. Find something interesting to . . . set up?

MS. NELSON. *[The innuendo goes right past her]* Oh, we'll need those scripts. *[CHUCK starts to pick up the scripts]* Wait, I want them numbered. I don't intend to spend my entire budget replacing lost scripts. From now on, you lose a script, you buy a replacement.

PEG. I'll number them, Ms. Nelson.

CHUCK. Isn't she the helpful little thing?

MS. NELSON. You both are. Peg, you take my chair. Chuck, bring that one. *[Pushing the pile of scripts to Peg]* Number them from one to forty—on the cover, right top corner. *[Gives pad and pencil to Chuck]* You number the lines on this pad, Chuck. Every script we hand out, the name goes down.

CHUCK. I'll put their homeroom numbers down, too.

MS. NELSON. Good idea. *[She turns away from them to do other work. CHUCK and PEG exchange a gesture—score one for him. All three work on, silently—and the LIGHTS dim on them. LIGHTS come up on stage. ALEX and LISA walk downstage to the small table, as:]*

LISA. We never seem to be in the same school at the same time.

ALEX. I'll still be at Fine Arts when you get there.

LISA. For one year. Then you'll graduate, and I'll be a sophomore . . . and it's back to letters and phone calls.

ALEX. Unless we're both on Broadway by then.

LISA. *[Laughing]* You directing Carol Channing, and me ushering in the audience.

ALEX. Then I'll fire Channing and put you in the lead.

LISA. And another star is born.

ALEX. If that's the only way we can be in the same place, at the same time . . . *[Laughing, they hug again, not seeing CINDY, a cute, cuddly, sweet freshman, come into the wing from the Left. CINDY stands there, watching them]* I missed you, Lisa.

LISA. All I've done all year is think about you. I don't want to *think* about you. I want to *be* with you.

ALEX. Why do you think I wangled this assignment?

LISA. Because you had a chance to direct Romeo and Juliet.

ALEX. A mere coincidence. *[And they're laughing again. Now, CINDY comes on stage. CAROL and GWEN come back, GWEN polishing off her doughnut. Other students come on singly, or in twos and threes—*

from both wings, and through the aisles from the (actual) auditorium—for the audition. They are nervous, excited, unsure, very sure. They talk (unheard) to each other about things related and unrelated to the audition—some talk about CINDY, LISA, and ALEX, as is obvious from the glances. They drop their things on the stage, or throw them into the dressing rooms. All this under:]

CINDY. *[Going to Lisa and Alex]* I think this is where I came in. *[LISA turns to Cindy smiling as ALEX gives Cindy a bear hug]*

ALEX. Hey, how's my favorite little kid?

LISA. Grown into a big one.

ALEX. *[Realizing]* You're here at T. A.?! going here?!

[BUDDY, very nervous, comes into the wing from the Right. Sees Alex. Stops. Prepares himself, then comes to them, with a phony heartiness, as:]

CINDY. A certified freshman.

ALEX. What happened to the braces, and the dirty face?

CINDY. Never met her.

LISA. *[To Alex, laughing]* I told you you were away too long.

BUDDY. *[To Alex, hand out]* I'll bet you're the director . . . Buddy Sloan. Leads, character parts, and I also sing.

ALEX. *[Shaking his hand]* Then we'll have to find a song for you. Alex Sinclair.

BUDDY. I know. Theatre Arts High grad. Fine Arts State U. junior. On a work/study assignment to direct this motley crew of so-called actors.

ALEX. *[Laughing]* Good. That's good. You still have to audition.

BUDDY. Well, you can't say I didn't try. *[CHUCK with the scripts, PEG with the notepad and pencil, and MS. NELSON come onto the stage from the office. MS. NELSON gets attention with:]*

MS. NELSON. Goodness. Looks like a cattle call. *[The mood on stage changes. All other conversations stop, and everyone tenses, waiting for the "big chance." MS. NELSON nods an instruction for PEG and CHUCK to put their burdens on the table; they do so. To the students]* I know how you're all feeling. I've been through it, hundreds of times, myself . . . And I'm still alive.

GWEN. And teaching high school kids.

MS. NELSON. *[Over-protesting]* And loving it! *[Hurriedly, to change the subject]* I guess some of you know Alex Sinclair, our director, or have just met him. *[Ad lib reactions—most do not know him]* Well, we're

very lucky to have him back home. He was our most talented student while he was with us.

JOSH. *[Calling from a hidden position]* And teacher's pet.

MS. NELSON. *[Flustered]* I don't have pets! Who said that? *[Nobody answers. MS. NELSON covers her anger with a smile to Alex]* You see, nothing's changed. *[To the students]* What I *do* have is an excellent director for our production of *Romeo and Juliet*. So, I'll turn you all over to him . . . You won't mind, Alex, if I watch?

ALEX. Just don't grade me until I find out how to do this. *[Which lightens things up a bit. MS. NELSON sits in one of the chairs at the small table]* Please, everyone—sit. Anywhere. Someone want to pass out scripts? *[Students take chairs in the circle. A girl moves to distribute scripts, but CINDY beats her to it]*

CINDY. I'll do it, Alex.

ALEX. While Cindy's doing that, I want to say one mushy thing. *[The students groan]* Just one. I know you're all serious about your careers—or you wouldn't be here at T. A. H. S. And, like all true actors, you'd kill for a good part. *[Some students laugh, guiltily]* Don't. Not here. Not now. You've got time for that later. Right now, let's work together and help each other . . . End of mushy speech . . . Okay, the play is *Romeo and Juliet*, by . . . ?

EVERYONE. William Shakespeare.

ALEX. *[To Ms. Nelson]* Brainy group. *[And another laugh lightens things even more]* I hope Mr. Shakespeare will forgive us, but we'll have to double up in a lot of parts, and give some of the men's speeches to women. *[Reaction—girls cheer, boys boo]* Now, anybody read the play? *[Some hands go up—all our major characters, except GWEN, whose hand goes up half way. Among the others, many haven't read it, a few have. CINDY stands up]*

CINDY. I read it three times, Alex.

ALEX. Good for you, Peanut. *[He looks to Gwen]* Is that a yes or a no?

GWEN. I read all of Juliet's lines.

ALEX. Ah, but do you know who she says them to?

GWEN. Oh . . . does that matter?

ALEX. *[Gets picture on her]* Ah ha! Why don't we find out? *[Gestures her center]*

GWEN. Me?

ALEX. Unless you want to read the rest of the lines first.

GWEN. No. *[She comes Down Center with her script]*

ALEX. Who wants to read with . . . what's your name?

GWEN. *[Theatrically]* Gwendolyn. *[Which gets a laugh from the others]*

ALEX. With— *[in a friendly comic imitation]* Gwendolyn. Any Romeos out there? *[Several hands go up; BUDDY runs Center Stage]*
Ah, Buddy Sloan.

BUDDY. You got it.

ALEX. Let's see if *you* do. Let's try Act Two, Scene Two, Line 123. The balcony scene. Juliet starts. *[GWEN and BUDDY read the scene together, clumsily. BUDDY is trying too hard, and GWEN is working too hard at just reading, to give the scene anything else]*

GWEN. Good night, good night. As sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart as that within my breast.

BUDDY. O wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?
[The other students start to giggle. MS. NELSON jumps up]

MS. NELSON. This is not meant to be funny!

ALEX. It's okay, Ms. Nelson. I'd rather they get the laughing out of their systems now. *[MS. NELSON doesn't agree, but she sits down]* Go on, please.

GWEN. What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?
[The LIGHTS dim to half as the reading continues. In the near dark another couple come to Center Stage—NAOMI and JOSH. For a word or two, the voices overlap, and the two girls are saying Juliet's line; the two boys are saying Romeo's. Then GWEN and BUDDY sit down and the new couple continue. NAOMI is a little better than Gwen, JOSH a little worse than Buddy. The lights stay dim]

BUDDY/JOSH. Th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

GWEN/NAOMI. I gave thee mine before thou didst request it.

And yet I would it were to give again.

[With the lights still dim, another exchange—MICHELLE and MARK, both pretty bad, replace Naomi and Josh]

JOSH/MARK. Wouldst't thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?

NAOMI/MICHELLE. But to be frank and give it thee again;

And yet I wish but for the thing I have.

[Another exchange—Michelle and Mark are replaced by LISA, who is excellent, and CHUCK, who is almost as good]

MICHELLE/LISA. My bounty is as boundless as the sea,

My love as deep; the more I give to thee
The more I have to give, for both are infinite.

ALEX. [*Checks script*] Wait, Lisa, skip to . . . Line 165. [*LIGHTS come up Center Stage, as MARK and CHUCK find the place*]

MARK/CHUCK. It is my soul that calls upon my name.

How silver-sweet sound Lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears.

LISA. [*Moving in to Chuck in character*] Romeo!

CHUCK. My sweet.

LISA. At what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee?

CHUCK. By the hour of nine.

LISA. I will not fail; 'tis twenty years till then.

I have forgot why I did call thee back.

CHUCK. Let me stand here till thou remember it.

LISA. I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Remembering how I love thy company.

[*There is a quiet moment—then suddenly, the LIGHTS come up full on the entire stage as the students applaud. MS. NELSON runs, applauding to hug Chuck, then realizes she's showing her bias, and hurries to hug Lisa, too. As the excitement dies:*]

ALEX. I'm supposed to finish auditions for all the roles before I announce the results, but I can't help it . . . we have our two leads. [*There is ad libbed agreement throughout . . . even, a bit less enthusiastically, from GWEN and BUDDY, until:*]

CINDY. Don't I get a chance to read, Alex?

MS. NELSON. [*Before Alex can answer*] Freshmen can't take major roles, Cindy.

CINDY. But you don't even know if I'm any good.

MS. NELSON. We have two more years to find out, dear.

ALEX. Oh, we can find something for her, Ms. Nelson. [*CINDY smiles a thank you at him, as GWEN jumps up for:*]

GWEN. Is there another good female part? [*And immediately others want to know—overlapped:*]

BUDDY. Can I be Benvolio?

PEG. I have a good idea for me!

MARK. I usually get an older role.

NAOMI. Aren't there any more ingenue parts?

[Then others close in on ALEX, while he assures them he'll cast them and MS. NELSON fights them off, all ad lib. LIGHTS dim to black.]

When LIGHTS come up, the students are sitting again. More informally now; on the floor, on straddled chairs (all somewhere else than where they were, before). MS. NELSON, at the table, makes notes as ALEX reads off the cast. He's almost finished, so some of the students are reacting to what they've gotten—some happy, some unhappy, in muttered conversations with their friends]

ALEX. Okay, let's keep it quiet. I'm almost finished. *[The talking subsides]* Buddy, you're Benvolio.

BUDDY. All right! And I'll be the best damned Benvolio that ever got on a stage.

ALEX. That's why I cast you.

GWEN. Who am I?

ALEX. I was just coming to you. You're the nurse.

GWEN. *[Insulted]* The nurse? . . . Any other choices?

ALEX. You can be the nurse, or you can be an usher. I'm all cast, Gwendolyn.

GWEN. *[Accepting, pouting]* Call me Gwen.

ALEX. Okay. Next. Carol.

CAROL. *[Jumping up]* Yes?

ALEX. I like the way you move. You're lead dancer in the ballroom sequence—and choreographer.

CAROL. Choreographer?! Me?!

GWEN. I don't have to wear a starched white uniform . . . or one of those dumb caps, do I?

ALEX. I don't think those were popular in the sixteenth century, Gwen. And we'll talk about costumes, later. *[CINDY goes to whisper something to Lisa. We don't hear, but we see that CINDY is pleading, and LISA looks guilty. At the same time, MR. BARNETT, easy going, friendly, comes down (actual) aisle and stands just below the stage, watching]* Next. Peg.

PEG. Right here.

ALEX. I don't know what to do with you . . . You're very good—but you don't fit any of the parts.

PEG. *[On a shrug]* Story of my life.

ALEX. How about something . . . off the wall?

PEG. Or ceiling or any place.