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The Island of Dr. Libris

By

CHRIS GRABENSTEIN and RONNY VENABLE

Based on the book by

CHRIS GRABENSTEIN

Dramatic Publishing Company

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by CHRIS GRABENSTEIN

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(THE ISLAND OF DR. LIBRIS)

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The Island of Dr. Libris was first produced by the Knoxville Children's Theatre in Knoxville, Tenn., on May 5, 2017.

Cast:

Dr. Libris	Ethan J. Reed
Billy Gillfoyle	Luke Carter
Mom	Emily Cyrus
Alyssa Andrews	Eva Rogers
Nick Farkas	Boone Sommers
Hercules	Tripp Keeton
Antaeus, Aramis, Voltron	Draven Copeland
Robin Hood.....	P.J. Copeland
Maid Marian.....	Annika Kallstrom
Sheriff of Nottingham	Lucas Cunic
Walter Andrews.....	Corbin Fram
Athos	Tanner White
Porthos	Braxxton Sommers
D'Artagnan	C.J. Cyrus
Junior Wizard, Giant, Space Lizard	Wyatt Keeton
Pollyanna.....	Brycen Ritchie
Tom Sawyer	Eason Bullard

Production Staff:

Director	Zack Allen
Set and Lighting Designer	Wheeler Moon
Scene Painter.....	Jennie Cunic
Costumer	Bethany Moon
Specialty Prop Designer.....	Catherine Blevins
Original Theremin Music Composer	Paul Jones
Sound Designer.....	Zack Allen
Stage Manager	Quintin Jones

The Island of Dr. Libris

CHARACTERS

DR. LIBRIS: Mad scientist. Could be male or female.

BILLY GILLFOYLE: Shy, skinny, imaginative. Around 12.

MOM: Billy's mother.

ALYSSA ANDREWS: Spunky 6-year-old girl.

NICK FARKAS: The local bully.

HERCULES: The Hollywood version of the legendary Greek hero.

ANTAEUS: A 15-foot-tall mythological monster made of rock and stone.

ROBIN HOOD: The Hollywood version with a hearty laugh.

MAID MARIAN: The Hollywood version, with a touch of wisdom.

SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM: A foppish dandy.

WALTER ANDREWS: Chubby boy. Same age as Billy. A great friend.

ARAMIS: Very French, very Hollywood musketeer. The one who thinks he is quite handsome.

ATHOS: Very French, very Hollywood musketeer. The melancholy one.

PORTHOS: Very French, very Hollywood musketeer. The worldly, gluttonous one.

D'ARTAGNAN: Very French, very Hollywood. Hot tempered. Wants to join the musketeers.

SETTING

The play should be staged in a way that requires the audience to use their imaginations as much as the main character, Billy Gillfoyle, uses his.

An oversized book—the height of a bookcase—with a cover reading “The Island of Dr. Libris” sits in a pool of light at center stage. The back of this box might be equipped with hooks on which various drops can be hung as the scene changes. Actors sit in chairs along both sides of the lighted area.

There are suitcases, trunks and travel cases near the chairs. They are filled with props, costume pieces, noisemakers, etc. An upstage scrim will help with shadow puppet sequences.

TIME

The present.

NOTE

Traditionally male characters are referred to as “he” in stage directions throughout the playbook, but can be played by females.

The Island of Dr. Libris

ACT I

(DR. LIBRIS stands up, slips on a white lab coat, picks up a clipboard and moves to C. He directly addresses the audience, as if he were speaking to a board room filled with backers or a college lecture hall. DR. LIBRIS' speeches are accompanied by strange theremin music.)

DR. LIBRIS. Ladies and gentlemen. Supporters of the Theta Project. I am thrilled to report that, after an exhaustive search, I have found the ideal subject for our first field test, which will commence as soon as Billy G., a twelve-year-old male with a very vivid imagination, arrives on site.

(BILLY GILLFOYLE walks to C with a book bag slung over his shoulder. He is a shy, good-natured kid. A little bored but never angry. He opens up the book prop, which becomes an ornately carved bookcase hinged at the center. The bookcase is filled with leather bound classic books behind locked glass doors. An old-fashioned key is in the lock. A chair is slid into place near the open bookcase to give us the sense of a room, a study.)

DR. LIBRIS *(cont'd)*. His mother will be busy. His father will be away. He will be bored. In short, Billy G. will be perfect.

BILLY. Um, Mom? I think we might have a slight problem.

(MOM remains seated, delivering her lines from off. The book on her lap has a bold title: "VERY IMPORTANT TEXT BOOK.")

MOM. What is it, hon? I'm kind of busy.

BILLY. Right. Don't mean to bother you but, well, I've looked all over this cabin and I can't find the TV. There's no computer, either. No DVD or DVR—not even an old-fashioned VCR. There's no X-Box. No Playstation—one, two, three or four.

MOM. Billy? What do you think kids did in the days before electronic gadgets?

BILLY. I don't know. Cried a lot?

MOM. No, Billy. They used their imaginations. They made up stories and songs. They read books.

(A beat.)

BILLY. And then they cried?

MOM. Billy? We're going to be here for ten weeks. I need to focus on my research paper. You need to make the best of it. Come on. It's not so horrible. Look out back. There's a dock and a rowboat. And that island out there in the middle of the lake? Dr. Libris owns that, too.

(Weird theremin music plays. DR. LIBRIS stands.)

DR. LIBRIS. It's true. I do. *(Sits back down.)*

MOM. You could row out to the island and have an adventure.

BILLY. If I had an X-Box, I could stay inside and have an adventure with Commander Voltron, battling the Space Lizard! I'd get a lot less mosquito bites, too.

MOM. Billy? I really need some peace and quiet ...

BILLY. Right. Make the best of it.

(BILLY pulls an astronaut action figure out of his backpack. This is VOLTRON. As he plays, DR. LIBRIS holds up a small camcorder with a glowing red light.)

BILLY (*cont'd*). We are stranded, Commander Voltron. Marooned on this desolate planet where there is no WiFi. No cable. (*In action figure voice.*) It is that cursed Space Lizard's fault! He who gobbles eggs as power pellets! (*His own voice.*) Yes, we are doomed. Ten weeks of sheer torture. Cut off from all civilization. (*Action figure voice.*) We'll go mad, Billy! Mad I tell you! (*His own voice.*) If only there was something we could do. (*Action figure voice.*) Impossible. You're just a kid. I'm made of plastic. Together, we are totally powerless! (*His own voice, remembering something.*) Perhaps not! For I still have my phone! (*Action figure voice.*) You have an electronic instrument? Then use it, lad! Use it!

(*BILLY pulls out a smartphone.*)

BILLY (*cont'd*). Oh, man. No bars.

(*He walks around the room, looking for a signal. He holds up the phone. Nothing. He moves. Still nothing. But then he sees something.*)

BILLY (*cont'd*). OK. That's weird. Why is there a security camera mounted on that wall?

(*More weird theremin music.*)

BILLY (*cont'd*). And above the staircase? What's the matter, Dr. Libris? Afraid somebody might steal your dust bunnies? Because, sorry, there's nothing else worth stealing inside this cabin. There aren't even any bars for my phone. Maybe the signal is stronger outside ...

(*BILLY walks downstage. He still has the phone in his hand.*)

The light shifts, maybe suggesting leafy foliage. BILLY looks around and notices something out in the yard, off in the distance.)

BILLY (*cont'd*). Really, Dr. Libris? A satellite dish down by the dock? Too bad you didn't think to hook it up to a television set!

(ALYSSA, a six-year-old girl with lots of moxie, enters the light. The tallest actor stands up and holds out a branch to indicate a tree. There is a baby doll hooked to one of the limbs.)

ALYSSA. Hey, mister? New neighbor?

BILLY. Huh?

ALYSSA. I need your help.

BILLY. OK ...

ALYSSA (*barely pausing to breathe, but with good diction*). My dolly's stuck in that tree. I'm Alyssa. Alyssa Andrews. We live in the house next door. Me, my brother Walter, and my mom and dad. Not all the time. Just for the summer. It's not really a house. It's a cottage, like the cheese? I can't climb trees. I'm only six, so it's against the rules. Walter's allowed to climb trees but he doesn't like to do it because trees have pollen and pollen makes his asthma worse. Can you save Dolly?

BILLY. Well, I don't think I need to climb up there to rescue her. This tree's kind of spindly. Just need to give it a good shake.

(BILLY pantomimes shaking the "tree." After a few moments of rough shaking back and forth, the player acting as the tree makes sure the doll drops! It lands safely.)

Unfortunately, BILLY's motions are so violent, he drops his phone as the doll plummets. When the phone falls, another seated player takes a ball peen hammer to a picture frame in a box. We hear glass shatter.)

ALYSSA. You did it! You saved Dolly.

(BILLY picks his shattered phone up off the ground.)

BILLY *(sad)*. I also destroyed my phone.

ALYSSA. That's OK. You won't need it. It's really fun up here. It's like Sponge Bob says: You just have to use your *(With an overhead arm cross.)* ... IMAGINATION!

BILLY *(ignoring her)*. Is there an Apple store nearby?

ALYSSA. There's an apple orchard. They sell apple cider and apple doughnuts and apple fritters and apple pies and apple ...

BILLY. Never mind.

ALYSSA. Hey! You never told me your name.

BILLY. Billy.

ALYSSA. Oh, like "The Three Billy Goats Gruff." Walter read me that story yesterday. I like stories. Do you like stories, Billy?

BILLY *(still mourning the loss)*. I liked my phone ...

ALYSSA *(holding out her doll)*. Dolly wants to give you a hug.

BILLY. That's OK.

(NICK FARKAS enters the scene. Everything about NICK reeks of bully. He is carrying a stack of Space Lizard comic books.)

ALYSSA *(pouting)*. She wants to thank you! Give her a hug!

BILLY. No thanks.

ALYSSA. You'll make her cry.

BILLY. I don't ...

ALYSSA (*bawling her eyes out*). Waaaaaah!

(*BILLY grabs the doll and hugs it tightly. ALYSSA smiles. NICK sneers.*)

BILLY. There, there. Don't cry, Dolly.

NICK. Awwww. Isn't that sweet? Weedpole wuvs his widdle biddy baby doll.

(*Startled and embarrassed, BILLY tosses the doll back to ALYSSA, trying to recover some of his dignity.*)

ALYSSA (*sotto voce*). Be careful, Billy! That's Nick Farkas. He's a bully.

NICK. Shut up, Alyssa!

ALYSSA. See? I told you ...

(*She hides behind BILLY.*)

NICK. What's your name, Weedpole?

BILLY. Um, uh ... Gillfoyle.

NICK. Gillfoyle? What are you, a butler or something?

BILLY. No, that's my last name. My, uh, you know, first name is, um, Billy.

NICK (*mocking him*). Um, uh, you know, um, uh. You're stupid and have a stupid name, too, stupidhead.

BILLY. OK. I guess. (*Spying the stack of comic books.*) Oh, wow! You read *Space Lizard*? I've got all the *Space Lizard* comics. (*Does a roar and acid blast.*) Rrrrrrrr! Hisssssss! I love the *Space Lizard*.

NICK (*unimpressed*). Well Space Lizard can't stand wimpy weedpoles like you. He'd probably acid-blast your face till you shriveled up and died! And then he'd pluck out your eyeballs with his glue-stick tongue!

BILLY. Even though I'm dead?

NICK. Huh?

BILLY. If I'm already dead, why would he pluck out my eyeballs? It's not like I'd feel it, or, you know, go blind or anything.

NICK. He'd do it because the Space Lizard would hate your bony butt almost as much as I do.

BILLY. OK. Good to know. Well, I need to head back inside and, uh, unpack. Nice meeting you, Nick. You better hurry home, Alyssa.

ALYSSA. I know!

(She dashes away. BILLY keeps an eye on NICK to make certain the bully doesn't harm ALYSSA.)

NICK. Watch out, Weedpole. I'm keeping my eye on you. And don't you dare step across the border.

BILLY. No problemo. Um, exactly what border are we talking about?

NICK. The one between your lame-o log cabin and my place.
(Points off.)

BILLY *(with a gulp)*. You're my neighbor?

NICK. Yep. *(Pounding a fist into his palm.)* I'm also your worst nightmare! Happy summer, Weedpole!

(Laughing menacingly, NICK exits.)

BILLY. OK. Guess I'll just stay inside till sometime in September ...

(He walks upstage and into the cabin. We hear the tick-tock of a clock, provided by one of the players using a percussion instrument. BILLY steps into a pool of light and stares at his shattered phone.)

BILLY *(cont'd)*. I'm totally off the grid! Oh, the horror. The horror!

(He steps into darkness. The clock keeps ticking. BILLY steps into a new pool of light and tosses his action figure up and down.)

BILLY *(cont'd)*. Strap on your boots, Commander Voltron! It's time for zero gravity training. *(Voltron voice.)* Ooof! Take it easy, kid. I had a big lunch. I may hurl.

(He steps into darkness. The clock keeps ticking. Stepping into a new pool of light, he mugs and waves at the security cameras mounted in the ceiling.)

BILLY *(cont'd, in a cheesy, happy gameshow host voice)*. Hello, everybody out in security camera land. I'm your host, Billy Gillfoyle and this is: "Bored Out of Your Gourd!"

(DR. LIBRIS moves downstage in his lab coat as BILLY paces around the room and, eventually, examines the books in the bookcase.)

DR. LIBRIS *(to audience)*. Starved of all electronic stimuli, our unwitting subject's imaginative mind grows restless and will soon take drastic action. Yes, I predict that Billy G. will actually read a book!

(DUN-DUN-DUN music sting!)