

Introduction

The plays contained in this book are ideal for Drama, English and Citizenship lessons. They are suitable for:

- classroom reading
- performing in assemblies
- performing for open evenings
- practical Drama/Performing Arts examinations
- public performance
- use as a resource for Citizenship projects.

Play 1, *The Normalising Machine*, lasts 90 minutes and play 6, *My Mother Says*, lasts one minute, hence the title '*Six plays that get shorter and shorter!*'

The plays are very different, have been especially written for schools, and are great fun, both to read and to act.

Production notes, written exercises and humorous illustrations accompany the plays. Blank cue sheets are provided on pages 123 and 124 so that you can note your own lighting and sound plots.

Play details

Play 1 The Normalising Machine

Some time in the near future...

Despite various methods of reducing the male population having been implemented, there is still a lot of aggression in the world. Doctor Michael Molecule tries to create the Normalising Machine, a contraption that changes criminals into normal, 'nice' people. However, the task is beyond him. The final stages are completed by the sweet, young, innocent and extremely clever Grace Beverly Bryce. She even adds a finalising switch – which kills the criminal instead – to be used in emergencies only.

Citizens gain or lose citizenship points for the way they live. A lot of minus points means Judge Juniper Jones sends the 'unhealthy citizen' to be normalised. After normalising, the citizen is well behaved and, of course, criminals begin to disappear from society. Judge Juniper Jones and Grace Beverly Bryce rise to world recognition thanks to the public relations skills of Ben Percent. They also manage to make quite a lot of money. Everything is going well until it is noticed that normalising can wear off. Nevertheless, with the PR skills of Ben Percent, the devious mind of Judge Juniper Jones and the innocent looks of Grace Beverly Bryce, the trio manages to convince the world zones that finalising criminals is the best answer.

As time passes, finalising becomes a way of life or, more precisely, death. As more time passes, the population decreases even further. Good news for the unemployment figures but that's about all! It's almost science fiction. There's a moral but no happy ending. Even if there could be a happy ending, there would be very few citizens left to appreciate it!

The play is a modern comedy with a number of more serious undercurrents, ie power, greed, manipulation and the desire for fame.

Play 2 Coward

Kim is being bullied at school. She refuses to fight back. Her mother, her aunt and the headteacher offer her advice.

The play is suitable for use as a resource for a citizenship project or for supporting the school policy on bullying.

Play 3 Classroom Bullies

The classroom bully learns a lesson when the drama teacher organises a role-play on the theme of bullying.

The play is suitable for use as a resource for a citizenship project or for supporting the school policy on bullying.

Play 4 Happy Waiting Day

It's grandma's 75th birthday. This is the future, so this will be grandma's last birthday.

The play allows for thought-provoking and potentially moving performances.

Play 5 The secret

Emma has a secret. She is desperate to share it with Mary.

The play provides an opportunity to practise comic acting, with timing being of particular importance.

Play 6 My Mother Says

A boy comes onstage to tell the audience what his mother says about him.

The play provides an opportunity to practise comic acting, with timing being of particular importance.

Judge Of course, there is the media to deal with.

The judge moves upstage. Siobhan Claire McKinnon runs in. From either side, the narrators run in. Each pair blocks the path of Siobhan. They are menacing as they speak. As this occurs, Grace enters upstage. Newsrelater 1 and 2 slowly leave their places behind the screens and begin to walk downstage. Ben Percent and Judge Juniper Jones take up positions in the news-screens.

Narrator 1 All information to be telewaved will be checked.

Narrator 2 All information to be telewaved will be double-checked.

Narrator 3 All information to be telewaved is subject to scrutiny.

Narrator 4 All future information will be relevant to how the zones are organised.

Narrator 1 The copyright of all future information is the property of Ben Percent and Judge Juniper Jones.

All narrators All future information will be of vital importance.

◀**Newsrelater 1** Today, all stations were taken over by Judge Juniper Jones and Ben Percent on behalf of the seven world zones.

◀**Newsrelater 2** Our final news bulletin was to relay information about the engagement of Ben Percent and Judge Juniper Jones. However, this information will not now be telewaved.

◀**Newsrelater 1 and 2** Our reporter, Siobhan Claire McKinnon, said...

Siobhan I am unemployed!

Ben Percent appears in news-screen 1. All look at news-screen 1.

Ben I am proud to be wealthy and successful, but more than anything else, I am proud to be associated with the promotion of the Finalising Machine.

Light out on news-screen 1. Judge Juniper Jones appears in news-screen 2. All look at news-screen 2.

Judge I have achieved fame and power, but history will recall how my great decisions have changed all zones for the better.

Worksheet on *The Normalising Machine*

Questions

1 Which prizes did Grace Beverly Bryce win?

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2 Name three people for whom Ben Percent acted as an agent.

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3 Name some of Anthony Badlad's crimes.

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4 In which street was Anthony Badlad chased by members of the special arrest squad?

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5 How do people gain citizenship points?

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6 How do people lose citizenship points?

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7 What is the full name of Rudolf Fright's girlfriend?

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8 Who is the first criminal to be normalised, and how many minus citizenship points did he amass?

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9 Who is the first criminal to be finalised?

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10 Why does Mrs Joinin change her mind about saving Anthony Badlad from being finalised?

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