

GIRLS

A play in one-act
By Linda Kampley

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Cast of Characters

SUZANNE, KAREN & ELLEN, young apprentices in their early-teens(around 14). They are best friends and dance in the "pre-show concert" before the theater opens. Karen has an enormous crush on Tom (slightly more than Suzanne and Ellen).

DIANNE, 16-17, an apprentice and understudy to Ophelia. She is pretty, ambitious although shy and a little unsure of herself.

MARCIE, around 16. Quiet - doesn't socialize with the rest of the girls.

JAMES, Mid-20's. One of the actors in the main production. Handsome, a bit of a flirt, but a very nice guy.

MAXINE (MAX), around 35. The Stage Manager. No-nonsense kind of person doing her job, but very understanding.

This is a large multi-purpose room in the environs of the theater, which, for the time being has been divided into two sections. Taking up the larger part of the set can be seen a makeshift dressing room with mirrors, which is the place for "young lady" apprentices and non-speaking performers. From this space there is a doorway into the larger room, which is used as a rehearsal hall in the daytime - but now is just an extension of the greenroom. It is only dimly lighted, compared to the dressing room, and empty, except for benches along the walls, and a table with coffee urn on it.

There are three doorways, which might be seen in the rehearsal hall: one to the girls' dressing room; one on the left side, connecting to the main theater; and one, a big double door, at the back of the rehearsal hall.

These double doors are closed now, but if opened to the outside would reveal a small theatrical version of an English fair: booths where one might buy spiced tea, hot-cross buns, and other "Shakespearean" pastries and souvenirs, perhaps even a Folio, or collection of the complete works of William Shakespeare. There would also be colorful banners, a green lawn, part of the theater itself, people walking around, and general good spirits. It is summer and twilight.

At rise there are five young ladies in the dressing room: KAREN, SUZANNE and ELLEN, all around 14, and DIANE and MARCIE, perhaps 15-16.

They all are dressed cheerily in not quite Elizabethan dance costumes, bright full skirts and tops and black flats or ballet slippers.

Karen, Suzanne and Ellen are together in conference at a downstage mirror.

KAREN

(With hair down)

What do you think...?

SUZANNE

(Enthusiastic - she has hair up in ponytail)

I like it.

KAREN

(Very undecided)

Oh...

Karen pulls hair up, looks at herself and lets it drop.

ELLEN

(Taking the plunge - also has hair in ponytail)

I think it looks better up.

KAREN

Yes...?

ELLEN

Uh, yes.

SUZANNE

I don't.

KAREN

(To Ellen)

Why?

ELLEN

(Not saying all)

It'll get all frizzy.

KAREN

(Discouraged)

Oh, for sure.

SUZANNE
(Helpful)
We could spray it.

ELLEN
It would still get frizzy.

SUZANNE
No it wouldn't.

KAREN
But which way does it look - do I look - older?

Ellen and Suzanne contemplate.

ELLEN
Why would you want to?

SUZANNE
How much older?

KAREN
(Not wanting to say exactly)
I don't know...

SUZANNE
Maybe you need more makeup.

KAREN
Do you think so?

ELLEN
That's gross.

SUZANNE
No it isn't.

ELLEN
Yes it is.

SUZANNE
Just some blush...see...

Suzanne picks up her "blush" for Karen.

ELLEN
(Approving)
Oh, well...

Karen watches, not too hopefully,
as they discuss blush.

It's new. SUZANNE

Can I try it? ELLEN

Sure. SUZANNE

ELLEN
(While putting on blush)
I thought you were going to use "foundation."

SUZANNE
Maybe... Do you think we should?

ELLEN
No.

KAREN
(Very "left out")
But what about my hair?

Marcie, one of the girls not involved in conversation, has finished putting on her make-up and combing her hair. She places her pocketbook carefully by her other things.

ELLEN
Well, what does it matter...?

KAREN
(Not telling all)
It always matters.

ELLEN
I know, but I mean - don't we have to go out now?

SUZANNE
Huh uh - we have at least 15 minutes.

ELLEN
I don't think so.

SUZANNE
How can you not think so?

ELLEN
Well, Marcie's going.
(To Marcie)
Aren't you?

MARCIE
(Turning back for a second,
smiles.)

Sure.

ELLEN
(To Suzanne)

There, you see.

Marcie exits the dressing room.
The girls continue talking while
Marcie crosses the larger room in
an unhurried manner and goes out
the double doors, revealing for a
moment bright light and sound.
She pulls the doors closed,
creating a sense that the girls
are almost an island of quiet in
the beginning of swirling
activity.

KAREN
(Frustrated)

Oh...

SUZANNE
(Referring to Marcie)
She always gets ready early - that doesn't mean we have to.

ELLEN
I hate it when Max yells at us.

KAREN
(Wanting their attention)
Guys...

SUZANNE
She doesn't yell.

ELLEN
Not much.

KAREN
Guys...this is important...my hair.

The girls are quiet for a second -
not knowing what to say.

ELLEN
Do you want to try curling it?

KAREN
There isn't time! - oh, what am I to do!

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The girls are quiet for a moment, contemplating hair. At this point, JAMES, an actor in "street clothes" - jeans, tee shirt - enters the rehearsal hall from doorway on the left. He crosses to center, hesitates for a moment. He gets a cup of coffee from the urn on the table, takes out a small book (which is his script), mouths a few words - then sits on a bench along the back wall studying part of his script (he plays Hamlet in the coming play).

ELLEN

(Finally)

Sometimes I twist my hair on my fingers.

SUZANNE

Does that work?

ELLEN

Sort of - see...

(She demonstrates - ringlet fashion.)

Then you could spray it.

SUZANNE

(Enjoying it)

Oh, get real.

But Suzanne tries it anyway.

ELLEN

(Suddenly embarrassed)

I guess not...

KAREN

Why does this always happen when I want to look my best?

SUZANNE

What's the big deal anyway?

(Then realizing "in a flash")

You dog - you have a date tonight, and you didn't tell us!

KAREN

Uh, no, no...

SUZANNE

How dense could I be?

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KAREN
 No, really, I just thought I'd hang round after we finish -
 'til intermission or something...

SUZANNE
 (Kidding her)
 By yourself?

KAREN
 Sure.

ELLEN
 Why?

KAREN
 (Sounding even less
 convincing)
 Why not? I mean, it would be, you know, cool with the
 actors in their costumes, just walking around...and...

ELLEN
 We could stay too!

KAREN
 (Not too enthusiastic)
 Uh, great...

SUZANNE
 Oh, don't kid us - he asked you out, didn't he?!... What did
 he say? - it's so exciting, romantic...!

KAREN
 (Trying to distract Suzanne)
 You think my hair is better up?

ELLEN
 Yes.

SUZANNE
 (Not to be deferred)
 Come on, we can keep a secret!

Slight pause.

KAREN
 All right - you promise?

SUZANNE
 Promise.

KAREN
 Promise?

SUZANNE

Yes! - tell us what happened.

KAREN

Well...he hasn't asked me out.

SUZANNE

He hasn't?

ELLEN

(Disappointed)

Really?

SUZANNE

Oh, it was too good to be true.

KAREN

No, listen, that's just it - that's why I have to stay.

ELLEN

Maybe it wasn't meant to be - I mean...an actor...

KAREN

Well, so what, actors have girl friends...don't they?

SUZANNE

Sure. I guess.

ELLEN

It would just be too...phenomenal.

Slight pause. Karen sighs.

SUZANNE

Do you think it's the age thing?

KAREN

He's not that old.

ELLEN

How old do you think?

KAREN

(With bravado)

I don't care - I think maybe, I, love him...

SUZANNE

Really?

ELLEN

That's so sad.

KAREN

You are such a wet blanket sometimes. It isn't sad - he obviously wants to ask me out.

ELLEN

But...

KAREN

(Cutting her off)

It's in his eyes, I can tell - and that time he took my hand.

SUZANNE

He shook your hand.

KAREN

It's the same thing - there was an electric shock - doesn't that always mean something? And when he said "hello" - you should have seen him.

ELLEN

What do you mean?

KAREN

I can't explain it... He has this incredibly deep voice, and then his eyes...

(She sighs)

Oh.

SUZANNE

What...what?

KAREN

Oh, nothing.

ELLEN

What?

KAREN

I was thinking... His eyes, don't they just drive you crazy?

ELLEN

(In love with the name)

Tom.

SUZANNE

(Ditto)

Tom's eyes.

KAREN

(Enjoying it)

Shhh.

SUZANNE
(Mouths the name - no sound)

Tom.

ELLEN

Ohhhh.

Then they all giggle.

SUZANNE

You-are-too-much.

ELLEN

You started it.

KAREN

What do you think of his eyes?

Suzanne and Ellen look at each other.

SUZANNE

I like them.

ELLEN

I like his hands.

SUZANNE

(Aghast)

His hands?!

ELLEN

(Embarrassed that she said this)

Well, I don't know...I don't know...the way he holds things...seems nice.

KAREN

(A little jealous)

Well, of course, that's true - but it's something else - I can't explain it.

SUZANNE

(Agreeing)

Really.

KAREN

Anyway - tonight...oh...I just have to see him more. Have to. I wish we were in class together or something. The way I see it, the reason he hasn't asked me out yet is really probably because he hasn't had the opportunity.

ELLEN

Do you think so?

KAREN

Sure. We're hardly ever in the same place at the same time.

SUZANNE

What about before the music starts?

ELLEN

Yeah, like now.

KAREN

There are hundreds of people around.

SUZANNE

Still...

KAREN

Then, there's the dance-

ELLEN

Last night he waved.

KAREN

(Hopeful)

He did, didn't he-

(Sighs)

It's not the same. And when we're finished with the dance, it's his "half-hour."

ELLEN

That's right.

KAREN

Nobody can talk to him then. And that's exactly when we go home...

Slight pause as the girls
contemplate this for a second.

SUZANNE

I hadn't thought of it like that.

ELLEN

That's so romantic.

KAREN

It isn't, it's...terrible!...tragedy!

Want to read the entire script? Order a free
electronic perusal copy today!

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