

Screenagers

by
Jim and Jane Jeffries

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PUBLISHED BY
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DEDICATION

Special thanks to Sue Maenner and the Augusta High School drama troupe for performing this work at the Wisconsin High School Forensics Association One-Act Festival in 2011.

The Playwrights, Jim and Jane Jeffries
To God be the glory; to us be the blame

STORY OF THE PLAY

In this fast-paced, technology-saturated world, has communication really improved all that much? If you think about it, the term *cell phone* is ironic. What is supposed to keep us connected with other people is isolating us in a cell of technology. And in the world of teenagers, can one really survive *without* a computer or cell phone? From breaking up on Facebook, to in-class research, to real-time dating advice this play delves into the world of teens to see how they navigate with (or - gasp! - without) technology. *Screenagers* is a humorous look at how technology is shaping the way we socialize, communicate, and—hang on, I've got a call coming in.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(10 m, 9 w, 2 flexible)

Male roles:

JAKE: Likes the Shakespeare Insult Generator.

KYLE: Likes playing games on his calculator; studies Shakespeare via Wikipedia.

ERICK: In a relationship with Julie but dumps her on Facebook.

MAX: On a first date with Sara.

JIM: Cyrano to Max.

SAM: Plugged in to his technology a lot; late for class.

MARK THE MUGGER: A troubled teen.

DAD: Tyler's dad who thinks his son needs an intervention.

TYLER: Restricted from cell phone and Facebook—for a whole week!—for texting while driving.

JOHN: Likes Carly (we think) if he could get beyond the apps.

Female roles:

DANA: The birthday girl.

JULIE: In a relationship with Erick; gets dumped on Facebook, and it doesn't go well.

MOLLY: Sydney's friend; likes texting the teacher her answers.

SARA: On a first date with Max.

SYDNEY: Cyrano to Sara.

BRITA: Lonely teenage girl who likes old movies.

GRANDMOTHER: A spunky old lady; Dana's grandmother.

CARLY: Likes John; thinks Cat Head Theatre will help her learn Shakespeare.

BECKY: Tyler's girlfriend (or "good friend," if his dad asks).

Flexible roles:

TEACHER: A high school English teacher.

WAITER: A server at the fancy restaurant Le Bernadin.

(DOUBLING: Dad may double as Mugger, Teacher or Waiter. Grandmother may double as Teacher.)

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SETTING: Minimalist stage with modular blocks.

PROPS: Numerous cellphones, laptops, ipads, and other electronic devices, including earbuds, are needed for the teens. A big purse for Grandmother. Wrapped bandages for Tyler's hands. Paper and pen for Teacher. Order pad or towel over arm for Waiter. Menus. Purse for Sara.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Stage is dark, and a cell phone starts ringing--the plainer the ringtone the better. Another cell phone rings while the first is still ringing. This one is a little crazier. Cell phones progress ringing in faster succession with increasingly crazy ringtones. LIGHTS come up. Some STUDENTS are on cubes or sitting working on laptops; others are walking around with headphones in; some are texting; some are talking on cell phones as they walk or sit. A boyfriend and girlfriend walk across the stage sharing ear buds; boy is significantly taller, so he bends down as they walk.)

SARA: *(Walking and talking in her cell phone.)* So, can you make it tonight? I plan on coming late, but I'll be there. K. Just text me. *(Snaps or slides phone shut and moves on.)*

MAX: *(On cell phone, he holds it to his chest and talks to JAKE.)* Jake, you want to play Nazi Zombies with Evan?

JAKE: *(In the middle of texting, he doesn't look up.)* Yeah, fine.

MAX: What time do you want to meet?

JAKE: *(In the middle of texting, he doesn't look up.)* Yeah, fine.

MAX: *(Back on cell phone.)* He says nine. Okay, gotta go. I'll text you. Well, I'm out of here. Hey, Jake, see you at nine! *(Exits quickly.)*

JAKE: *(In the middle of texting, he doesn't look up.)* Yeah, fine.

(ALL actors freeze; DANA looks up from her laptop and speaks to audience.)

DANA: It's my birthday today! The big 16! Four birthday wishes on my wall so far. *(Looks down at laptop.)* Make that nine! I love this! Let me see if I got any response to my party e-vite for tonight. *(Exits reading her laptop.)*

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ERICK: *(Looks up from his laptop.)* Just updated my status. "In a relationship," and I tagged Julie in it. We're Facebook official. Like. *(Looks down at laptop.)* Nine people like it so far! *(Freezes.)*

BRITA: *(Looks up from her laptop.)* Looks like another day sitting at home watching old movies and making candles. Am I the only teenager who likes old movies? *(Sighs and talks to audience.)* Why doesn't anyone respond to my posts? *(Looks back to laptop and types.)* Anyone want to watch *The African Queen* and pour some hot wax?

(ACTORS unfreeze and keep busy with technology.)

MOLLY: Did you get your paper done for class?

SYDNEY: No, I may have to go home sick.

MOLLY: You feeling bad?

SYDNEY: Not yet.

(CARLY, listening to cell phone with earpiece, crosses toward SL. MUGGER enters from SR as GRANDMOTHER enters from SL. Mugger tries to take Grandmother's purse; she fights back.)

GRANDMOTHER: Someone help me!

CARLY: Hey, stop that!

(MUGGER pauses and looks at CARLY.)

CARLY: *(Cont'd.)* If you don't stop, I'll scream.

GRANDMOTHER: Oh, thank you, dearie!

CARLY: *(Gives GRANDMOTHER an exasperated look and points to her earpiece.)* Hello? Phone. *(Back to cell phone.)* Sorry. Some old lady interrupted. As I was saying ... *(Beat.)* What do you mean you have another call?

(The MUGGER goes back to pulling the purse as the GRANDMOTHER fights. Grandmother starts beating Mugger with purse. CARLY crosses two steps SL, then stops in anger.)

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CARLY: *(Cont'd.)* You did NOT just put me on hold again.
(Screams.)

SYDNEY: Molly, what's going on over there?

MOLLY: He's mugging that woman!

(SYDNEY, MAX, SARA, and JIM rush over from various places on stage.)

JIM: Don't worry!

(In unison, SYDNEY, MAX, SARA, and JIM all pull out cell phones and begin recording the altercation. MUGGER runs off.)

GRANDMOTHER: Someone stop him!

(MUGGER runs past two people walking -- SAM, who has earphones in, and TYLER, who is texting. ALL actors are absorbed in their technology. Mugger bumps Sam and Tyler on his exit.)

SAM: *(Tears out one earphone.)* Hey, watch where you're going, jerk!

(SYDNEY, MAX, SARA, and JIM surround the GRANDMOTHER.)

SARA: Are you okay?

MAX: Don't worry. He won't get away.

GRANDMOTHER: But he just did!

JIM: He only thinks he did! I got the whole thing on my phone.

GRANDMOTHER: Phone? Did anyone call 9-1-1?

(Pause. ALL TEENS look confused.)

SARA: Well, we got it all on our cells. But 9-1-1 is a good idea. I'll call now.

End of Freeview

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