

# Saturday Matinee

By Dan Roberts

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### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

Movie audiences can often be as entertaining as the film itself. This imaginative comedy takes place during the waiting period before a movie begins, offering a rare look at the personalities and idiosyncrasies of typical teen audience members. Alice only wants to enjoy the movie alone but someone's always invading her space. Kent doesn't know how much he wants to flirt with his date Maria, and she is shocked at her reactions. Mindy is a social outcast and just ripe for snotty Laura's tricks. Meanwhile, Ben continues to chow down, while two latecomers vie for seats.

Everyone will recognize these and other characters in this hilarious slice of life. Plenty of twists and turns, unique literary devices and easy staging make this an excellent piece for small theatre spaces, touring and drama festivals.

**Performance time:** About 30 minutes.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(3 m, 7 w, 4 flexible)*

**ALICE:** a bespectacled loner.

**TOM:** an empathetic boy.

**KATE:** an outgoing girl.

**PAT:** Kate's not-very-bright younger sibling; flexible role.

**KENT:** a boy on a first date.

**MARIA:** Kent's pretty and impulsive date.

**MINDY (or Randy):** a social outcast; flexible role.

**BEN:** a noisy eater.

**LAURA:** a snotty birthday girl.

**HOLLY:** Laura's party guest.

**GINA:** Laura's party guest.

**CRYSTAL:** Laura's party guest.

**SHANNON:** a latecomer, flexible role.

**CHARLIE:** a latecomer, flexible role.

**PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE**

Much of the "dialogue" consists of characters' thoughts, which are indicated with brackets [ ]. "Thoughts" can be pre-recorded.

## SETTING

An audience viewed from the front of a movie theatre. The simple set consists of 15 chairs in three rows on risers. The only technical requirements needed are changes in lighting and a tape or CD player.

*(Upstage)*

(Level 2) 10 11 12 13 14 15

(Level 1) 5 6 7 8 9

(Floor) 1 2 3 4

## COSTUME NOTES

Alice wears distinctive glasses with black frames. Ben wears a pair of jeans with brightly colored boxer shorts underneath.

## PROPS

Soft drink cups with lids  
Whoopee cushion  
Purse  
Napkin  
Tub of popcorn  
Food tray of miscellaneous concession snacks  
Cell phone

## SOUND EFFECTS

Background music before movie  
Eating/crunching nachos (optional)  
Movie music

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*(AT RISE: LIGHTING is full, with continuous background movie MUSIC playing softly. ALICE ENTERS UL carrying a soft drink.)*

ALICE: [Good. No one here. I can sit wherever I want. That's the good thing about being alone. You can sit wherever you want. No one to argue about being too close or too far away, on the aisle or not on the aisle. Yep, I can sit wherever I darn well please. So where? Hmm. The front row. I always wanted to sit on the front row, but nobody ever wants to sit there with me. Well, this is the day, 'cause I'm alone.] *(SHE sits in chair #3.)*

*(TOM ENTERS UR.)*

TOM: [Oh, great. Only one person here. I hate that. We'll both sit here for who knows how long, looking at those same slides over and over, pretending we don't see each other so we don't have to talk. And she's a girl, so if I sit behind her, she'll probably think I'm staring at her, or stalking her, or something. But she's all the way down front, for Pete's sake. If I don't sit behind her, I'll have to sit in the same row. Then she'll really think I'm stalking her because nobody sits in the front row.]

ALICE: [Someone's standing back there. I can feel it. Why are they just standing there? They're probably wondering why I'm sitting in the front row. I guess I look pretty stupid, since a person never sits in the front row unless a person is late or myopic or something. Well, they can just stand there all day and die of curiosity, for all I care. What gives them the right to question my behavior anyway? That's the good thing about being alone. You can behave however you want, and it's nobody's business.]

TOM: [I wonder why she's by herself? Probably waiting for someone. That's good. Maybe her friend will come in soon,

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and then they'll start talking, and it won't matter where I sit because they won't even notice me. Okay, I'll just wait.]  
ALICE: [Why don't they sit down? And why are they so quiet? This is getting scary. I've got to see who it is.]

*(SHE briefly turns her head, pretending to brush something off her right shoulder.)*

TOM: [She saw me.]

ALICE: [It's a guy.]

TOM: [She saw me looking at her.]

ALICE: [He's looking at me.]

TOM: [Now I've got to sit down.]

ALICE: [Why doesn't he sit down?] *(TOM crosses to row #1.)*  
[He's coming down here. He's going to sit in my row! Nobody wants to sit in the front row. Why is he coming down here?]

TOM: *(Standing at the end of the row.)* [If I sit here on the end, she'll think I came down here just so I can watch her better. But there's no way I can sit right next to her. Nobody does that.]

ALICE: [Why is he just standing there? Maybe he's waiting for someone.]

TOM: [And I can't go back because she'll suppose I saw her up close and think she's ugly. I can't believe it. I'm out of options!] *(HE just stands there, staring at the screen.)*

ALICE: [Or maybe he had a stroke. Or a myocardial infraction. Just my luck. The only other person who came to see this dumb movie has a myocardial infraction attack.]

*(KATE and PAT ENTER UL and make their way toward chairs #8 and #9.)*

KATE: I could have gotten in cheaper if you weren't such a dumb cluck.

PAT: You don't look twelve!

KATE: And you do?

PAT: I am twelve!

KATE: That's not the point.

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PAT: And the point is?

KATE: You told the ticket seller I would have been thirteen, but that I was sick for a year!

*(PAT sits in seat #8.)*

PAT: I was trying to help.

KATE: You owe me two bucks.

PAT: Two bucks?

KATE: That's what your help cost me. Fork it over.

PAT: Fork it over?

KATE: That's what I said.

PAT: That's weird. Why didn't you just say, "Give it to me?"

KATE: *(Embarrassed.)* Because I thought "fork it over" sounded more intimidating. I heard it on TV.

PAT: What, the classic movies channel?

KATE: *(Noticing TOM, SHE whispers.)* Shh. Look at that guy. What's he doing?

PAT: *(Also whispers, reading from the screen.)* Learning about how he can get Tae Kwon Do in four easy lessons at the Larry Lee Academy of Martial Arts. How am I supposed to know what he's doing?

KATE: He's just standing there. And that girl. What's she doing?

PAT: Watching him stand there?

KATE: What do you suppose is happening? Go sit between them, and see what's going on.

PAT: Oh, that's exactly what I'm going to do.

*(KATE stands and crosses to row #1.)*

KATE: Wimp.

PAT: *(Whispering loudly.)* Idiot!

*(KATE sits in chair #2.)*

TOM and ALICE: *(Simultaneously.)* [Finally! They'll start talking, and when she/he looks away, I'll go sit in the back.]

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