

ONE OF OUR CLOWNS IS MISSING

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT

Adaptation by Jay W. Patterson
Based on the full-length play by Robert Frankel

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SYNOPSIS: Sandy lacks all self-esteem, but meets a group of characters that turns her life around and gives her the confidence to wake up tomorrow and start anew.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(FLEXIBLE CAST OF THREE MEN, FIVE WOMEN,
NINE NON-GENDER SPECIFIC)*

Randi (f) a nurse (1 line)

Sandy (f) a travel agent (23 lines)

Group home residents, eight residents

Samuel (m) thinks he is Mrs. Elaine Hahmberger (20
lines)

Rollo (m) (17 lines)

Daphne (f) (10 lines)

Tweety (f) (12 lines)

Chips (f) (17 lines)

Tallman (m) (21 lines)

Toosday (m or f) (2 lines)

Wensday (m or f) (1 line)

Dr. Pimpernell (m or f) (13 lines)

Clowns, six clowns in full costume and white-faced makeup

Running time: 30 minutes

Props

- ☐ Clown doll

- ☐ Telephone
- ☐ Paper and pens
- ☐ Potato chips
- ☐ Plant
- ☐ Stapler
- ☐ Note
- ☐ Gift with clown doll inside

Set

Desk and chair center stage. Large boxes around perimeter of stage.

Suggested music:

"Send in the Clowns" by Judy Collins

One of Our Clowns is Missing was staged January 23, 1998 and "Starred" the same year at Minnesota's High School League State One Act Play Festival. "Starred Performance," which is top billing at the state festival, is determined by private balloting of the judges. It is the ultimate honor.

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AT RISE:

CLOWNS move in darkness onto boxes around perimeter. Project a Birthday Party video [one minute, 20 seconds] from behind onto a two-way 10'x 10' screen at upstage center. The RESIDENTS had a birthday party for RANDI complete with costumes, characterization, singing the "Happy Birthday" song, a cake, blowing out candles and opening the gift of a special clown doll. After video freezes on doll, bring up a slow tempo song for one minute, 30 seconds [see Suggested Music]. Bring lights up slowly, CLOWNS on stage become living dolls juggling, dancing, twirling, somersaulting, SAMUEL begins to lead the group home residents in from the back or side of the auditorium while the music plays. CLOWNS notice residents and bid them come. RESIDENTS take their places on same boxes and freeze. CLOWNS are frozen at their side. RANDI, the nurse, comes out and says her monologue.

RANDI: *(Holds the special clown doll that she received at her birthday party. She moves from one resident to the other as she speaks.)*

To my dearest of friends,

I am needing to leave you.

Where I am going, you cannot come.

It is a special place.

But you cannot come. Not yet.

Please remember me.

Remember the stories.

Remember the songs.

Remember our laughter.

Remember our clowning around.

You were such wonderful clowns.
You were my clowns.
My special clowns.
You brought me joy and lifted my spirit when I was sad.
Please remember me.

You were my heart.
You were my soul.
You were my life.
Please remember me.
I will remember you.

After monologue, lights fade to darkness, entire group exits, lights come up on SANDY at a desk center stage.

SANDY: Dear Mom and Dad, I learned something about myself last night. You now the degree I earned last month in Botany? Well . . . I HATE PLANTS!!!! Well, it is not that I hate them. They just make me nervous. STOP looking at me! I don't really know what I'm going to do with my life now. Except that I just got a job yesterday as a travel agent. It sounds really fun. But since I'm not really big on fun, I'll probably quit. Other than that, things are swell. Give a kiss to Grandma. Love always, Sandy.

Telephone rings. Enter SAMUEL to watch SANDY. SAMUEL thinks SANDY has flipped a few screws. He mimics her actions.

SANDY: Oh, hi, Mr. Davidson. How's it going? It's just fine except for the plants. What? Oh, it's nothing. I'm getting used to them. Thank you for hiring me, sir. Yes, I have made reservations for you. Have fun! (*Hangs up phone.*) The Davidson's are going to . . . Me-hee-co! (*She dances.*) Fritoos tostados por favor seniorita su casa!!!! La cuca-RAH-CHA! La cuca-RAH-CHA! La la ba-ba

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ba-ba Ba! La cuca-RAH-CHA! La cuca-RAH-CHA! La la ba-ba
ba-ba Ba! OH LAY!

The Gilners are going to . . . Florida! The MAGIC KINGDOM!
Wow! Goofy, Bugs . . . MICKEY! "What have you got for the kids
today, Sandy? A vacation!" The Finkels are going to . . . Vermont
. . . The Finkels are going to . . . Vermont. The Gilners are going to
. . . Florida. And me I'm going to . . .

SAM: Excuse me. (*Sandy jumps sky high.*)

SANDY: Hi, I'm Sandy.

SAM: Yes, you are.

SANDY: Yes, I . . . please sit down Mr. . . .

SAM: No, sank you. I prefer to sit.

SANDY: Well, I . . . we here at Davidson Travel Agency . . . this is
. . . just a minute! Hi, I'm fill-in-your-name and I'm . . . hi, I'm
Sandy. And I'm here to help you make some important decisions
about your travel arrangements. Whether you're going to London
or China, I can make it happen for you . . . oh I . . . now -
(*Frustration.*)

SAM: Enough! You haf zee papers?

SANDY: You mean brochures. I . . . let's start over. Hi, I'm Sandy.
And you are Mr. . . . ?

SAM: Ahh. Zee code. Yes. You are right.

SANDY: Mr.?

SAM: Mrs.! Mrs. Elaine Hahmberger. And . . . "The circus is in town
tonight."

SANDY: The circus? Mr.? - what is your name? Mr. Cheeseburger.

SAM: Hahmberger! Mrs. Elaine Hahmberger. It is my disguise . . .
my adopted name, yes?

SANDY: Do you mean your wife is Elaine Hahm . . .

SAM: No!!! I am she!

SANDY: You are your wife?

SAM: No, I am Mrs. Elaine Hahmberger. I . . . am . . . under . . . cover. Will you be my Randi?

SANDY: No, no . . . I'm Sandy. Ssssandy!

SAM: Oh, I see, I see. I understand. Stupid of me, ya!

SANDY: What did you say your name was?

SAM: *(In unison.)* Mr. Samuel Hahmberger!

SANDY: *(In unison.)* Mrs. Elaine Hahmberger!

SANDY: Didn't you say just a minute ago that your name was Mrs. Elaine Hahmberger?

SAM: *(Says name at the same time as Mrs. Elaine Hahmberger is said.)* Mr. Samuel Hahmberger!

SANDY: You must mean your wife is Elaine.

SAM: No, no, no!!! My wife is Elaine and I am Samuel.

SANDY: Right. You are Samuel.

SAM: Yes, goot!! Goot!!

SANDY: But you did say you were Mrs. Elaine . . . *(Sandy goes to sit in chair.)*

SAM: That is my deep cover name. That is, how you say, 'Who I am today'! And you will be my Randi today!!! Yes? *(Grabs Sandy's hand. Looks like he wants to propose.)*

SANDY: Ssss - andy!! I am SSS - ANDY!!!

SAM: You know, I have always been charmed by your girlish ways, Randi.

SANDY: But I am not . . .

SAM: *(With great passion.)* You always had all the men, Randi, but never me!!! Don't play the flirt like this. It drives me wild. I am going crazy. No . . . no . . . let us stay strictly business!

SANDY: But . . .

SAM: Sssssh! *(Puts finger comically over Sandy's mouth to quiet her.)* I know. But it must be this way.

SANDY: You know I think you're making a big . . . I mean, I'm not, it's just, I've only been working here for one week you know.

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SAM: Ya sure. One week under this disguise. But you are, Randi, the master spy!!!! Remember the time ven you and I dressed up as a horse to infiltrate the stables? *(Both drop to all fours and come to edge of stage. Sam makes the sound of a horse and really gets into the horse thing.)* You were called Sheila den. Dey didn't know for three days, but by then . . . *(Sam hears something. Goes and checks for intruders. Sandy is scared. With back toward Sandy, he says the next line.)*

SAM: Randi, sit down!!! *(Sandy sits down right where she stands. Sam looks for her at desk and can't figure out what happened and then finds her on the floor. He helps her up.)* Zee computer. If vee are to arrange for the trips to Sur-Bay, vee vill need some tickets, ya???

SANDY: Sorbay?

SAM: No . . . no . . . not ice cream. Sur-Bay! Sur-bay! Many people make that mistake.

SANDY: But who is going to Sur-bay?? Where is Sur-bay? I mean . . .

Enter ROLLO and DAPHNE.

ROLLO: Yo, Daphne. Your knees is frozen again. Let me crack 'em. You want me to crack 'em. I'll crack 'em for you.

DAPHNE: Don't do it don't do it don't do it don't do it don't do it don't touch my knees, please don't touch, don't . . . don't . . .

ROLLO: Daphne doesn't want me to crack her knees, Mrs. H. Her knees is killing her, but she don't want me to crack 'em. Ballerinas! Go figure!

SAM: Never mind, Rollo. Just sit quietly while I finish business. Tonight, vee must all meet to arrange the plan and the tickets. You remember all of dis, ya??

SANDY: No, no. NO! I -

SAM: Sssssh!

SANDY: I don't remember anything. I am not who you think I am.
(*Frustrated, crying.*) I am Sandy, not Randi. I just started working here last week, and I don't like plants and oh, now you tell me about Sor-Bay and then . . .

SAM: SUR-BAY! Not ice cream! Sor-bay? No, SUR-BAY!

SANDY: That's what I said. And now the plan and the tickets and the code and . . . !!!!!

SAM: That's it!!!

SANDY: What's it?

SAM: You don't remember anything, do you?

SANDY: Well, no, I mean 'yes'. I remember just fine. But I never met you before! Oh, I've lost my memory. Then I'm not this neurotic mess named Sandy? I'm really . . .

SAM: One of the world's greatest spies! James Bond if there ever was one!

SANDY: And I'm not . . . Sandy?

SAM: Not today! Today, you are Randi!! Zee master spy! (*Starts walking out in a huff. He just can't get through to Sandi.*)

ROLLO: Yo! Mrs. H, Daphne's knees is thawed out; they is thawed out. (*Rollo exits talking to Sam the whole way.*)

DAPHNE: Ohhhhhh . . . ahhhh . . . not bad not bad not bad not bad . . . great . . . but not bad not bad not bad . . . no way uh uh . . . (*Dances her way off the set. Enter Toosday and Wensday.*)

SANDY: We're just closing up . . . I'm afraid.

TOOSDAY: We'd like to talk to you, I'm Toosday.

WENSDAY: I'm Wensday.

TOOSDAY: We're security for the Jefferson Street Group Home down the road. (*Wensday does Karate thing repeatedly and loudly and scares Sandy to death.*) Several patients escaped two weeks ago at . . .

WENSDAY: . . . 9:42 . . . (*Grabs hand full of pens from desk. He needs plenty to take good notes. He is very clumsy.*)

TOOSDAY: . . . a.m. . . . they were believed to be headed in . . .

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WENSDAY: . . . this . . . direction. We don't believe them to be dangerous, but we . . .

TOOSDAY: . . . do need to find them.

WENSDAY: Anything unusual, Monday?

SANDY: I thought you said your name was Wednesday.

TOOSDAY: It is. I was talking to you. Anything unusual, Monday . . . today? You know odd occurrences or saying odd things? That is usually a sure sign of our patients.

SANDY: No, no . . . it was a slow day, all around . . . except for Elaine.

WENSDAY: Slow day all around.

SANDY: Yes . . . Oh I see . . .

TOOSDAY: Bye, sir.

WENSDAY: Goodbye, sir. *(Pens back in holder but they fall all over the place. Exit Toosday and Wensday. Telephone rings.)*

SANDY: Hello, Davidson Travel Agency. Oh, hello Mr. Davidson. You did what? You forgot your tickets. Oh, here they are. I will bring them to the airport right away. *(Exit Sandy. Enter Tweety and Chips from stage left and stage right.)*

TWEETY: Psssst! Elaine? Mrs. Hahmberger? Psssst! *(Hears loud crunch of potato chips. Chips is hiding behind a plant eating chips.)* All right! Come out of there. I know how to use this! *(She grabs stapler from desk.)*

CHIPS: D . . . D . . . Don't! D . . . Don't sssshoot . . . Staple me!!!

TWEETY: Staple you? Chips, it's Tweety. It's only Tweety. Oh, you scared me!

CHIPS: Tweety! I scared you? You scared me!!!! I was just waiting for Elaine.

TWEETY: You were just waiting for Elaine.

CHIPS: Tweety! You're repeating my last sentences again.

TWEETY: I'm repeating your last sentences again?

CHIPS: Yes, Tweety. Remember what Dr. Pimpernell said: It is a demonstration of repressed hostility. *(Keep eating those chips.)*

TWEETY: A demonstration of repressed hostility? A demonstration of repressed hostility?

CHIPS: Sssssh! *(They both hide. Enter ROLLO and DAPHNE.)*

ROLLO: Elaine? Elaine?

DAPHNE: Sssssh! The lights the lights the lights they're on and on and on . . . *(Loud eating of potato chips.)* Sssssh!

ROLLO: All right! Come out of there, you's guys! *(CHIPS and TWEETY come out.)*

DAPHNE: Chips! Tweety! Where have you's guys been and been and been.

TWEETY: Daphne! Rollo! It is so good to see you.

ROLLO: Tweety! Chips!

CHIPS: Rollo! Daphne! *(Family squish! TALLMAN enters.)*

TALLMAN: Hey, where's the party? Where is the party!

ROLLO: Is that you, Tallman?

TALLMAN: Who'd you think it was? Wilt Chamberlain? *(He climbs on a box.)* I . . . AM . . . TALLMAN! I AM TALLER THAN ANYONE! EVEN THE DOCTOR WHO YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED IS NOT AROUND ANYMORE ANYWAY!

CHIPS: Here, Tallman. Have some chips. They'll make you feel better.

TALLMAN: Thanks, Chips.

TWEETY: So where is Elaine, anyway?

ROLLO: Yeah! What's the emergency! *(Enter SAM.)*

SAM: I'll tell you what the emergency is!

ROLLO: Elaine!

TALLMAN: What's going on, Cheeseburger?

SAM: I am varning you, Tallman! It's Hahmberger, not cheeseburger!

TALLMAN: Seriously, folks! Is this guy psycho or what? It's not like I said sanitarium or something!

TWEETY: What did he say? What did he say?

CHIPS: I think he did. Don't worry. I won't tell.

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DAPHNE: Who's he calling psycho? - he should talk should he should he is some nasty guy he is I'll tell you if I could . . .

ROLLO: It's okay, Daphne. He didn't mean it.

SAM: Tallman. Think about this! Do you not want to come to Sur-Bay with us?

CHIPS: Sur-bay! Where all the trees have leaves in pastels. I heard that potato chips grow right in the ground.

TWEETY: Right in the ground?

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