

The logo for Offbeat Theatre features the name in a black, ornate, cursive font. The text is centered within a yellow, wavy-edged banner that has a subtle gradient. This banner is set against a solid blue background. On either side of the banner, there are decorative, swirling patterns in shades of purple and blue.

Offbeat Theatre

May Contain Nuts!

A very silly one act play
by
Barbara Hockley

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further plays and sketches for
Youth Theatres and Schools

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Part One: Inside Henry's Mind

Characters:

The only real character is Henry. Everyone else lives in his imagination. 'Nuts' is played out as Henry's imagination runs away with him

Henry - a would-be writer of adventurous and romantic literature

Jane - His imagined heroine (or damsel in distress)

Boris (Jane's big bruv)

Bill (Jane's other big bruv)

Brian de Bergerac - a dashing French poet and swordsman of great renown (apologies to Cyrano and Edmond Rostand)

Juliet-1 (apologies to Shakespeare)

Romeo-1

Juliet-2

Romeo-2

Mercutio

3 more Montagues

Black-hearted Lil - a black-hearted pirate

Smeek - another pirate

Bootleg (Doris in disguise) - a pirate

3 more Pirates (or as many as you like)

Wise Old Woman

The 3 Screaming Furies - 3 harmless looking old ladies

Statues

Daisy

Poppy

Johnny

} Characters from a completely different 'spiffing adventure'

Dracula

Van Helsing

Jonathan Harker

Mina Harker

More Vampires

Henry is sitting on the end of his bed, pen poised over paper & ready for inspiration to strike. The elements of his imagination are scattered all over the floor & furniture (if there is any). At any moment they might leap up and start performing as his mind grinds into action. He starts to write footballs scenes.. stops, starts .. sex scenes ... stops ..starts .. violence ... stops ..starts rock 'n' roll ..stops. He stands & walks SL. Puts his pen & paper down & speaks out loud instead of writing.

Henry

Jane sat on the bus, reading a magazineno Jane was at the zoo, watching the monkeys ... no Jane was at the beach (*sexy hunk of a man walks past & she's interested..*) ...definitely NOT Jane stood in the queue for lunch....(*Jane stands rather shakily, a few other people stand either side*)... she was reasonably attractive(*she gives him a 'look'*) But then, (*she looks interested*) Jane realised she had forgotten her lunch money....No, no, no!

Start again ... ok ... a new approachI'm the romantic hero and Jane is the girl of my dreams... (*Jane gets up*) .. Jane stands in the kitchen chopping root vegetables (*mimes chopping veg*)

Jane

I'm so tired of chopping root vegetables. There must be more to a story than this. I wish a handsome, romantic hero would come rushing through that door and rescue me from this domestic drudgery.

Henry comes rushing through the door

Who are you?

Henry

I'm here to rescue you Jane

Jane

(screams) Stay away from me you, you maniac! Don't come any closer ... I'll use this *(brandishes chopping knife)*

Henry

But, Jane, darling, it's me ... your hero ... come to rescue you from root vegetables.

Jane screams and runs around getting hysterical. Boris and Bill appear

Boris

Leave our sister alone or you'll get trouble

Bill

Yeah, big trouble

Henry protests a lot, Jane panics & screams a lot, hiding behind B&B

Henry

But Jane, this is my story. This isn't fair. Go away, I was about to rescue her.

Jane

Keep him away from me

Boris

This is a part of your imagination I would strongly suggest you don't stay in, my son...

Bill

Yeah, might be best if you LEAVE

Boris

Like, now

Bill

Yeah, now

Boris

You have 5 seconds to find a way out of this story

Bill

And don't come back

They start to count

Henry

Ok, okJane suddenly changed her shape and revealed her true nature to be ... a turnip ... faced with this terrifying and UGLY sight, Henry turned and ran bravely through the door, slamming it shut so the monster could never ever get out ...

Everyone collapses again

That was terrible ... how did that happen. I'm not in control of my mind. She was supposed to fall for me .. what went wrong.... I think I need help ...

Brian de Bergerac bursts into the room in flamboyant manner

Brian

My friend, what you need is a little help from one who has travelled this path before. Allow me to introduce myself – Brian de Bergerac. I am a romantic poet of great renown, I am a passionate

lover and a fearless fighter ... and I am French.

Henry

I didn't imagine you, did I? Where did you come from?

Brian

I heard your cries of anguish as your tortured soul was stretched on the rack of confusion

Henry

Oh

Brian

I will teach you how to master your mind, my friend. But first you need a hat.

Henry

A hat?

Brian

Of course. A hat serves 2 purposes. Number one, it makes you look good; and two it helps to incubate all those tiny little thoughts you have. It will encourage them to grow into fat and fiery ideas that will burst out through the walls of your mind and live!

Henry

Oh

Brian

Try this one (*passes hat to Henry*)

Henry

I feel silly

Brian

That is of little consequence, my friend. Now, try again. This time let your thoughts grow BIG and BEAUTIFUL

Henry

Ok (*shouts*) Jane was in the laundry room, folding up her newly washed apron

Brian

No, no, no. That is an awful story. It has no passion, no magic – it is boring. No wonder your heroine is so, so crazy.

Henry

But I was going to rescue her

Brian

No. Watch this. This is a part of a story I've just this second created in my rich and fertile mind. (*thinks hard, Juliet-1 appears on the balcony*)

Juliet-1

Ay, me

Romeo-1 appears from opposite side

Romeo-1

Oh, speak again bright angel

Juliet-1

Oh Brian, Brian, wherefore art thou Brian?

Deny thy father and refuse thy name.

Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,

And I'll no longer be a Capulet

Romeo-1

Shall I hear more, or shall I climb the balcony

Juliet-1

Brian, climb the balcony

Romeo-1 climbs the balcony & they embrace passionately. As soon as Henry speaks they collapse

Henry

Crikey, he didn't mess about. Let me try that scene. Only this time, I'll play the hero and I think I'll call him Romeo.

Brian

A strange choice of name, but it's your story.

Henry strikes a 'thinking pose' Juliet-2 appears on the balcony

Juliet-2

(sighs, a really long one)

Henry

Juliet, it's me, come to rescue you from domestic chores

Juliet-2

Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?

Deny thy father and refuse thy name.

Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,

And I'll no longer be a Capulet

Henry

Fair enough, I'm coming up *(starts to 'climb')*

Romeo-2

(appears from the other side) But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

Juliet-2

Ay, me

Henry

(to Romeo) Go away, this is my bit. You're not in it

Romeo-2

Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

Juliet-2

'Tis but Henry that is your enemy

Romeo-2

You, are you Henry?

Henry

No, I'm Romeo and you're not here

Romeo-2

You are mistaken

I suggest you leave this story or I shall be forced to fight you

You have insulted Juliet and stolen my name

Mercutio enters brandishing a sword

Mercutio

Romeo! Are you in need of my sharp wit and my fiery temper?

Romeo-2

Well met, Mercutio. This villain would take my place, climb the balcony and seduce my girl. And, he refuses to leave my story.

Mercutio

Ah. I see the kind of villain he is. Do you bite your thumb at us sir?

Henry

What? No, I just got a thorn in it from the climbing rose.

Mercutio

Do you bite your thumb at us sir

Henry

No sir, I do not bite my thumb at you sir, but I bite my thumb sir

Juliet-2

Parting is such sweet sorrow,

That I shall say good night, till it be morrow.

Romeo-2

Now look what you've done! That was supposed to be my line. And she's gone. Now I'm really fed up. Come sir, I am for you.

Henry

But, I have no sword

Brian

Here, use my spare. This is a great story my friend.

Romeo-2 & Henry start to fight. At some point Henry thrusts at Romeo who steps out the way & Mercutio is hurt

Mercutio

I am hurt.

Romeo-2

Courage man, the hurt cannot be much.

Mercutio

It will serve (*he dies*)

Romeo-2

Now I am really mad. And if you bite your thumb at me again I will cut it off at the neck!

Henry

Brian, I'm feeling a little out of my depth here. I seem to be losing the plot a bit, any advice?

Brian

Your story is full of unbridled passion, anger and great love - just my sort of story. Step aside.

Romeo-2

Perish the universe, provided I have my revenge

Brian

You steal my best lines sir, I hope your sword has more wit than your brain

They start to size each other up as 3 more Montagues arrive on the scene

Montague-1

Look Romeo is outnumbered, one to one

Montague-2

You fiend sir, you villain

Montague-3

We are for you, sir

Romeo-2

Cousins, your entrance is timely. Let us fight.

Brian fights all four Montagues, disposing of them one by one.

Brian

(*Stands on bed triumphantly*)

I-I am going to be a storm-a flame-

I need to fight whole armies alone;

I have ten hearts; I have a hundred arms;

I feel too strong to war with mortals-

BRING ME PIRATES!

Henry

Yes, yes, a pirate story. Good idea. Can I be the hero? The one who wins the beautiful pirate girl?

Brian

BRING ME BLACK-HEARTED LIL!

Black-Hearted Lil enters. She is a devastatingly evil, beautiful and sexy pirate with a black

heart.

B-H Lil

Arhhhhhhh. I be a damn sexy pirate. What be you callin' on pirates for?

Brian

I have an appetite for pirates, Madam.

B-H Lil

Where be the treasure then?

Brian

That, Madam, is for you to find. I know how much you pirates love a good treasure hunt.

Henry

I rather like treasure hunts, maybe we could team up and find some treasure together?

B-H Lil

And who be you?

Henry

Errr, I'm erm Big-Headed Henry. No, no, that's wrong... I'm Big-Haired Henry, the fearless friend of pirates.

B-H Lil

Smeek, come here

Smeek

Arhhhhhhh, here I be Black-Hearted Lil

B-H Lil

This be Big-Haired Henry, fearless friend of pirates

Smeek

Arhhhhhhh, I've heard tales of Big-Haired Henry. We can't trust him, he be in two minds, that's what they be sayin'

B-H Lil

We'll play the fool, let him lead us to the treasure and then we'll make him walk the plank

Henry overhears this & Brian sneaks off

Smeek

Arhhhhhhhhh

B-H Lil

Arhhhhhhhhhhh. So, you know where the treasure is Big-Haired Henry, lead us to it.

Henry

Brian, where did you say you put the treasure? (*Looks around, no Brian*) Brian, where are you. These people are ruthless pirates, you can't leave me.

B-H Lil

What be the matter, fearless friend of pirates?

Henry

Nothing at all. Hold on

Henry takes off his hat & immediately everyone falls to the ground. Sighs & sits on bed.

Crikey, this is adventurous stuff. Not sure I'm ready for it. Maybe I'll try a different story. One where I'm the romantic hero and I rescue a reasonably attractive girl from her airing cupboard.

Puts the hat back on again. The pirates leap up before he can speak

Smeek

Arhhhhhhhhh

B-H Lil

Arhhhhhhhhhhh

Henry

Arhhhhhhh!

BH Lil

You scurvy knave. There be no treasure, what say you, Henry?

Henry

(With a sudden passion) Yes, there is treasure. I know where the treasure be, Follow me Lil and be not afraid, for the road be perilous andsometimes a bit lumpy. Arhhhhhhh.

B-H Lil

Arhhhh. Nothing makes Black-Hearted Lil afearred. Lead on into peril.

Smeeek

I'll call up the rest of the crew. Arhhhhhhhhh.

4 more pirates appear – one is Bootleg, clearly not a pirate, but in disguise..

Bootleg & pirates

Arhhhhhhhhh

Smeeek

Keep an eye on Big-Haired Henry lads, I be not trusting him

Bootleg & pirates

Arhhhhhhhhh

Henry

Ok, this way Follow me. *(Throughout this sequence only Bootleg & Lil are fearless, the others cringe & quail...)*

First we must cross the perilous river that has carried many a lesser man to certain death *(they cross the river)*; then through the perilous cave where the bones of many lesser men lie, eaten by the perilous cave monster *(through the cave)*; then up the perilous steep bank and along the ledge where...

Lil & Bootleg

...many lesser men have fallen to their deaths

Henry

You know it! *(they climb the bank)* Then through the lumpy mud

Pirate

Be it perilous? Arhhh

Henry

No, just a bit lumpy. And here we are ...the beach

BH Lil

Arhhhh. I be knowing this beach

Henry

(Pleased with himself) The usual place for buried treasure I believe.

Bootleg

(Nudging Henry) Are we supposed to be looking for a big X thenarhhhh

Henry

(Everyone looks at him, expectantly) Errr, well. Now, where.....Yes, the big X is around here somewhere

BH Lil

So, where be the treasure map then Big 'Aired 'Enry?

Henry

Treasure Map?

Pirate

There's always a map, arhhhhh

Bootleg

(Pulls Henry away from the others) I think you're losing the pace of the story. You need to inject a little excitement into it.

Henry

Do I know you?

BH Lil

The big X is always on a map. I be thinking we have an impostor here, in fact... I be thinking we have two

Bootleg

Two impostors?

BH Lil

Who be you

Bootleg

Who be I

BH Lil

No, who be you

Bootleg

I'm Bootleg, the infamous, beautiful and sexy pirate (*pulls back her cloak to reveal just how infamous she is..*)

Pirate

That be Doris, the landlord's daughter from the Olde Black Rum Tavern

Henry

Doris? Not the Doris that I once rescued in a short story involving a vacuum cleaner?

Bootleg/Doris

Yes, it's me. I just wanted to be in more of your stories Henry. I loved that one where I was chased by a runaway wheelie bin.

Henry

Oh Doris, what a fool I've been

Bootleg/Doris

Oh Henry....

Smeek

Make her walk the plank

Pirates

Walk the plank Doris for the plank etc

BH Lil

And Big 'Aired 'Enry, he be walking the plank as well.

Henry

I have an idea (*He stands on the bed & takes off his hat Nothing happens puts it on, takes it off*) That was it, sorry ... Doris..

Bootleg/Doris

What about writing in a duel, a fight to the death, something heroic?

Henry

Great idea. I have an idea. What if Bootleg fights Black Hearted Lil in a duel? If Bootleg wins, we go free. If Lil wins, we walk the plank.

Bootleg/Doris

Me? You want me to fight for your freedom?

Henry

Trust me Doris (*winks knowingly, although he doesn't have a clue*)

BH Lil

Fetch me guns Smeek

Smeek gets guns & they line up to shoot

Pirate

We'll do it pirate fashion. Walk 5 paces, turn and shoot the first person you see. Ready?

One, two, three, four, five

They turn and shoot. Two people fall down.

BH Lil

Misfire. We go again.

Pirate

One, two, three, four, five

They turn and shoot. Two more people fall down.

Bootleg/Doris

This isn't working. I say we wrestle

Henry

Oh! There's some mud over here

They glare at him

Sorry, joking...

BH Lil

We'll wrestle pirate style. The first one to get their eyes ripped out loses.

Jane

(Suddenly appears on the bed, ranting...) What about me. Where do I fit in to all this. You used to think up stories about me all the time, and now where am I? Am I a sexy pirate, no, I don't think so. Am I a landlord's daughter in disguise, no – she is! So, I'm not leaving until I get a good role – and I want to be sexy!

Henry stares in disbelief.

Bootleg/Doris

Who is she?

BH Lil

Arhhhh. A wench.

Pirate

Let's make HER walk the plank

Pirates

Arhhhhh, yes, make the wench walk the plank etc.

BH Lil

Wench, you be walking the plank with Doris!

The pirates grab Jane & start to prod her with swords along the plank.

Jane

No. Henry this is all your fault. Henry SAVE ME!

Bootleg/Doris

I refuse to walk the plank with HER!

Henry

I don't understand what's happening anymore!

*Someone comes out with a big sign that says
"EARLIER THAT SAME STORY"*

The scene changes to Jane being turned into a turnip, just after Henry rushes bravely through the door to escape Boris & Bill, who strangely, are no longer there.