

Contents

Kandor to Planet E

1

by Andrea Hayes

A Special Task Force from Planet Kandor is about to leave on a secret mission to Planet E. They must find and bring back the valuable substance 'hassite'. General Zat and various experts must brief the Task Force about the peculiar habits and anatomy of Earthbods, Earth lingo, and the dangers of 'hereboys', 'smileflash' and other tortures.

Christmas Balls

17

by Jennifer Blackburn

Christmas is the season to be jolly! This comic play opens with the traditional exchange of gifts on Christmas morning at the Ball household. Grandma is driving everyone crazy and no one likes their presents. Then Uncle Baz arrives with a sackload of suspiciously expensive presents, and cousin Sebastian threatens to give the game away.

The Wonderful Wide World of People

31

by Michael Pryor

Anna Conder and Tyrone Saurus are the hosts of a television program, 'The Wonderful Wide World of People'. In this comic play we meet a range of unusual and amusing characters, each with their own special talent.

Testing, Testing, 1, 2, 3

45

by Mathew Clausen

Step inside the minds of a range of characters during an important history test. Barry thinks he's going to fail, Mikaela is excited, Kate and Connie couldn't care less and Stephanie thinks she's uncovered a secret plot involving Principal Prunewhistle. This classroom comedy includes a student chorus to act out the daydreams of the characters.

Cleo Must Die

63

by Andrea Hayes

There's a major problem in Ancient Egypt: Cleopatra's loyal servants plan to stop her from killing herself. PC, Sam and Kelly are sent back in time and must make sure history happens correctly in order to get back to detention in room thirteen.

This Isn't Kansas!

77

by Jennifer Blackburn

In this parody of *The Wizard of Oz* Em, Wilson, Jo and Ash are magically transported into a fantasy land. Their quest is to free the people from the grip of incredible boredom brought about by the curse of the evil witch Fester. On their journey they meet a range of characters and must solve one final problem for the 'King' before they can return home.

The Undoing of Strapp

93

by Nicole Murphy

Camp Getoutthere's militant fitness instructor, Mr Strapp, is making everyone's life a misery. But when Ben, Dee, Fleur and friends stumble onto information that the camp is in deep financial trouble, they mastermind a daring plan to save it. As they put their plan into action, they uncover an even bigger surprise.

No Humans Allowed

111

by Andrea Hayes

The Scary Creatures Club must find ten thousand dollars to repair their clubrooms or the council will shut them down. They plan a party (no humans allowed!) to raise money, and hope the feral Podzolites don't hear about it.

About the authors

Jennifer Blackburn was born and bred in Victoria, but before breeding she travelled the world and worked for a king and a couple of pretty gorgeous queens on a very beautiful yacht. Later, after a brush with teaching, she discovered she loved to edit and write for young adults, and so set about having two of her own to read and write stories for. She also loves sweaty sports, especially footy, and in the off-season she goes to movies and the beach. Jennifer is co-author of *Word Sense 1, 2 and 3*, a funny series on grammar and punctuation.

Mathew Clausen is an experienced drama teacher and author of the award-winning textbook *Centre Stage*. He is currently branching out into the world of multimedia, and is in serious danger of becoming a nerd with big square eyes. He is very excited about this collection of plays and has even bought a copy for his mum. Mathew's favourite food is cake and his favourite television star is Lisa Simpson.

Andrea Hayes comes from a family of twenty-six. After she was chased by crocodiles in Papua New Guinea and rode a bicycle in Japan, she played basketball in the US, then made hamburgers in London. She once worked in a school where the principal was too scared to come out of his office. She is a shopaholic and is addicted to plain salted potato chips. Andrea has written eight thousand texts (zeros don't count, do they?) and lots of stories, and she is an enormous liar.

Nicole Murphy is a full-time educator and part-time aspiring actress from Melbourne. She has taught at both primary and secondary levels, specialising in literacy and the arts. She has been involved in writing, directing and performing in school and public drama productions, but her passion is musical theatre.

Nicole loves reading, especially mystery and thrillers. Her favourite pastimes include going to the movies, swimming and playing with her faithful companion, Rusty.

Michael Pryor taught in secondary schools for eighteen years. He is now involved in software development and is the author of nine highly successful novels for teenagers. He has appeared on radio and on TV, but never in court. Michael's favourite colour is blue, his favourite fish is the goby and his favourite street sign is 'No U-Turn'. He enjoys reading, entering competitions that he never has a chance of winning, and writing quirky autobiographical notes like this one.

Sample pages

The Wonderful Wide World of People

BY MICHAEL PRYOR

The Wonderful Wide World of People



Performers

Thirteen: eight male, five female. Gender is flexible.

Length

Twenty minutes.

Director's notes

Anna Conder and Tyrone Saurus are the hosts of a television program, 'The Wonderful Wide World of People'. In this comic play we meet a range of unusual and amusing characters, each with their own special talent. The play is best performed with lots of exaggerated expressions, movements and gestures to make the most of the humour.

Scene dock

A simple set requiring five chairs, a coffee table and an APPLAUSE sign as an audience prompt.

Characters

Anna Conder	Co-host
Tyrone Saurus	Co-host
Mark Clark	Trains vegetables
Fay Day	Can't tell left from right
Dale Hale	Thinks he is a tree
Barry Parry	Shares a brain with Harry
Harry Parry	Shares a brain with Barry
Hilda Childer	Eats cars
Jill Gill	Performs impressions of insects
Jen Wren	Triplet 1
Ben Wren	Triplet 2
Len Wren	Triplet 3
Stagehand	Prompts audience to applause



Rehearsal room

1 Word by word

Work with a partner to create one character. Stand shoulder-to-shoulder and put your inside arms around each other's waists. Now create sentences by saying one word each, alternating turns—for example, 'The—window—is—dirty—and—needs—cleaning'. Use first person singular—for example, 'I—like—that—chair', not 'We—like—that—chair'. Move through the room together describing objects and furnishings.

2 Characters from objects

Choose an object to 'become'. Take a frozen physical shape to represent the object. Now find a way to move as the object. Develop a character that has characteristics of the object. For example, if you are a tomato your character might be plump with rosy cheeks and a bright personality. Work with a partner to devise a short role-play where two different objects get to know each other.

scene

TV chat show

Anna and Tyrone are seated beside three empty chairs and a coffee table. They are beaming cheesily at the audience. Guests enter from Left, exit Right. At appropriate times a stagehand holds up an APPLAUSE sign to prompt the audience.

- Anna Hi! I'm Anna Conder. Welcome to 'The Wonderful Wide World of People', the show where you see more strange and unusual characters than you thought possible! And here's my co-host, Tyrone Saurus! Nice shirt, Tyrone!
- Tyrone Hi, and thanks Anna! It's one hundred per cent polyester and it was a present from my Mum. And speaking of presents, let me present our first guest, Mark Clark from Albert Park!
- [Applause as Mark Clark enters and sits.]*
- Mark Hello. Nice to be here.
- Anna What do you do, Mark?
- Mark I'm a trainer.
- Tyrone A sports trainer, Mark? A wild animal trainer?
- Mark *[hesitantly]* Sort of.
- Anna Well, what *do* you train, Mark?
- Mark Vegetables.
- Tyrone Vegetables?
- Mark Yes, vegetables. Not your normal, domestic vegetables—those weak, tame types you find at the greengrocer. That sort of vegetable isn't dangerous. Not like the wild, killer veggies I risk my life to tame!
- Anna So you see yourself just like a lion tamer?
- Mark Yes, but it's much harder. Have *you* ever tried to teach a pumpkin to jump through a hoop?
- Tyrone Well, how do you do it, Mark?
- Mark It's a gift I have, Tyrone. I can relate to vegetables. I know how to treat them with respect, as equals.

- Anna I can understand that. And how do you get them to obey you?
- Mark It's a matter of knowing the right commands to give. Look, I'll show you. *[He pulls an avocado out of his pocket.]*
- Tyrone *[backing away]* Isn't it dangerous?
- Mark No, I've tamed this one. I'll just put it on the table here, and you'll see.
- Anna It's not doing anything, Mark.
- Mark That's because it's asleep. I'll wake it up. Devil! Wake up! *[Pause.]* There you go.
- [Tyrone and Anna look at each other.]*
- Tyrone Can we see some tricks now, Mark?
- Mark Certainly. Now remember, the secret is in knowing the right commands to give. Here we go. *[Sternly.]* Devil, sit! *[Nods, smiling.]* Good boy. Devil, play dead! Well done, fella! Now watch this! *[Stands up.]* Devil, stay! *[He walks off, looking over his shoulder at the avocado.]* There! *[He comes back to his seat, picks up the avocado, and puts it in his pocket.]* Back to sleep, Devil.
- Tyrone That's it?
- Mark Yes. It took me years to get him to that stage. What a talent!
- Anna Mark, we think you're a fraud.
- Mark Me?
- Anna You claim to be a vegetable trainer, but the avocado is a fruit, Mark.
- Tyrone Can't you handle veggies, Mark?
- Mark *[breaks down and sobs]* No, no. Carrots ignored me, potatoes pretended I wasn't there. I couldn't even handle brussels sprouts!
- [Tyrone and Anna swivel away from Mark to face the audience.]*
- Anna Well, thanks for coming tonight, Mark!
- [Applause as Mark shuffles offstage.]*
- Anna Our next guest is Fay Day from Hobson's Bay, and she can't tell left from right!

[Applause. Enter Fay, who looks confused, but eventually finds her way to her chair.]

Tyrone Hi, Fay! Is it true that you can't tell right from left?

Fay Right.

Anna Or is it left from right?

Fay Yes.

Tyrone Which?

Fay Right.

Anna I know how to sort this out. Fay, will you please hold up your right hand?

[Fay holds up both hands.]

Tyrone Which hand do you write with, Fay?

Fay Write?

Anna Right?

Fay No, left.

Tyrone You write with your left, right?

Anna And you would have your right left, right?

Fay *[puzzled]* Right.

Tyrone It seems simple to me. Thanks for coming, Fay.

[Applause. Fay exits, going the wrong way at first.]

Anna Hey, what a show we're having tonight! Let's welcome our next guest, Mr Dale Hale from Ascot Vale, who thinks he's a tree!

[Dale Hale enters, walking stiffly as though he can't bend. He sits down awkwardly.]

Tyrone Thanks for coming, Dale. And how long have you thought you were a tree?

Dale Ever since I was a little sapling, Tyrone. I left home and branched out on my own, and I've been happy ever since.

Anna And what sort of tree are you?

- Dale Oh, various sorts. I used to think I was a gum tree, but too many koalas started climbing up me. I was a rubber tree for a while, but I got *tyred* of that—a little tree joke there for you, Tyrone. And now I'm a mighty oak.
- Anna And you have a family, Dale. How do they feel about this?
- Dale Well, my wife thinks it's a bit strange, but our two acorns think it's fun, except when I get angry. But my bark *is* worse than my bite.
- Anna Are they chips off the old block, Dale?
- Dale Certainly, Anna. They're proud of me. When someone says to them, 'Your Dad's a nutcase!' they just smile and say, 'That's right!'
- Tyrone And what does the future hold for you, Dale?
- Dale I often ask myself, 'Wattle I be doing in ten years' time?' Tyrone, the answer is that I don't know, but I just hope that I don't get the chop.
- Anna Dale Hale, it's been great having you.
- Dale It's been great being great.
[Applause. Dale exits in his odd way.]
- Tyrone Our next guests are probably two of the most unusual we've ever had. Meet Barry and Harry Parry from Glengarrie!
[Applause as Barry and Harry enter, each with one hand on the box they hold between them. They sit, still holding the box.]
- Anna Hi guys! What's unusual about you?
- Barry and Harry *[together, slowly]* We only have one brain.
- Anna But everyone has only one brain!
- Barry and Harry We only have one brain between us, Anna.
- Tyrone And where is it, fellas?
[Harry snatches the box. Barry's mouth drops open and he stares into space.]
- Harry It's in this box, Tyrone. It's better if I do the talking because I'm much smarter than him.
- Anna You do have one more brain than he has at the moment.
- Tyrone And how did this all happen, Harry?

Harry We heard that two heads are better than one, so we thought we'd give it a try. We didn't realise that it meant two brains are better than one, so we threw one away. We thought it would be more efficient. I think Barry gave it to the cat. Let's check.

[Harry gives the brain box to Barry. Barry's face lights up, and Harry's goes dull.]

Barry Yes, I gave it to Arnold, our cat. He was hungry.

Tyrone I see. And what are the advantages of this system, Barry?

Barry There aren't very many, Tyrone, but I *can* go and see a movie, and when I get home Harry can use the brain to remember what it was like.

Anna And the disadvantages?

Barry Harry tricks me sometimes. He gave me a box with a sheep's brain in it once, and he didn't snap me out of it until I'd eaten the whole front lawn. He said it saved us buying a lawn mower.

Tyrone Thanks for sharing your time with us, guys!

[Barry puts the box back so they're both touching it.]

Barry and Harry *[together, slowly]* That's okay. We're used to sharing.

[Applause as they exit.]

Tyrone Our next guest tonight is Hilda Childer from St Kilda!

[Applause as Hilda enters, holding her stomach.]

Anna Now, Hilda, you've eaten a whole car in just under a week, is that right?

Hilda Yes, Anna.

Tyrone Amazing. And what was the hardest part?

Hilda Getting the car to stop, I suppose.

Anna You were trying to eat a moving car?

Hilda Yes. It was very hard to hang on and munch on the bumper bar while it was going a hundred kilometres an hour. It would have been all right on a side street, but not on the freeway.

Tyrone Uh huh. And what was the second hardest thing?

Hilda The road.

- Anna You tried to eat the road, too?
- Hilda No, but it was very hard when I fell off the car.
- Anna Okay. And did you have any trouble when the car was stationary?
- Hilda Well, I had to make sure the owner of the car didn't see me.
- Tyrone Why not?
- Hilda I thought he'd stop me eating his car.
- Anna Didn't you ask him if you could?
- Hilda No.
- Tyrone Why not?
- Hilda I didn't think he'd let me.
- Anna Mmmm... And what was the tastiest part, Hilda?
- Hilda The seat belts, definitely. Sort of like stale licorice.
- Anna And what's next for you, Hilda?
- Hilda I'm just going to take it easy. That's what my doctor said. 'Take it easy and stay away from magnets,' he said.
- Tyrone Thanks for being here with us tonight. How about a big round of applause for Hilda Childer from St Kilda!
- [Applause as she exits.]*
- Tyrone Hey, wow! This is the best show since we featured the man who invented exploding trousers! Right, Anna?
- Anna You bet. And since you liked those trousers so much, Tyrone, I bought you a pair for your birthday.
- Tyrone You're all heart, Anna. And someone else who's all heart is our next guest. Please welcome Jill Gill from Rooty Hill!
- [Applause as Jill enters, waves to the crowd and sits.]*
- Anna Hi, Jill, and welcome to 'The Wonderful Wide World of People'!
- Jill Thanks, Anna. Nice to be here.
- Tyrone Why don't you tell the audience why you're so wonderful?
- Jill *[modestly]* All right, then. You've heard of people who can imitate bird calls?

Anna Of course. They're sensational, and we had one on the show last year.

Tyrone That's right. He did a terrific bull terrier call.

Anna A bull terrier isn't a bird, Tyrone.

Tyrone *[puzzled]* It's not? What about the beak?

Anna *[to the audience]* Don't worry about Tyrone, folks, he's a bit confused.

Tyrone *[muttering]* I was sure a bull terrier was a bird.

Anna Now, Jill, why don't you give us a demonstration of your ability to imitate... what is it you imitate?

Jill Insects.

Anna How original. Can you demonstrate some now?

Jill Delighted. *[Puts both hands up in front of her chest and wiggles them like claws.]* Nik-nik-nik-nik-nik-nik.

[Applause.]

Anna Hey, that's great. What sort of insect was that?

Jill *[frowns]* That's not an insect. I just had something caught in my throat. *[Coughs, splutters, nods.]* That's better. Here we go. *[Wiggles claws again.]* Eeee-eeee-eeee-eeee-eeee-ip!



Tyrone Fantastic! How about a round of applause!

[Applause.]

Anna Tell us about that one, Jill.

Jill That was a red-banded mosquito singing the national anthem.

Anna Stupendous! How about another?

Tyrone *[leaning forward]* Can you do a bull terrier?

Anna A bull terrier isn't an insect, Tyrone. Take it away, Jill.

Jill *[repeats the performance exactly as before, wiggling claws]*
Eeee-eeee-eeee-eeee-eeee-ip!

Anna Amazing! And that was...?

Jill That was a lesser spotted weevil telling its friends about its holidays.

Tyrone Talkative little fella, wasn't it?

Anna I think I'm starting to see a pattern here, Jill. Tell me, do all your insect calls sound the same?

Jill *[offended]* Only to the untrained ear. For example, you probably think this *[Repeats her standard insect sound.]* sounds the same as this. *[Repeats standard sound.]*

Tyrone *[scratches head]* Well, to tell you the truth...

Anna Jill Gill from Rooty Hill, I think it's time for you to do your imitation of a bee.

Jill What?

Anna Buzz off. *[Turns to audience.]* Please thank Jill Gill from Rooty Hill!

[Applause as Jill Gill leaves.]

Tyrone And now, I'd like you all to welcome the most astounding, amazing, fantastic, extraordinary, incredible, spectacular, astonishing... *[He goes blank.]* Where was I?

Anna *[smoothly filling in]* Please give a warm welcome to our next guests, the Wren triplets! Jen, Ben and Len Wren, all way from Watson's Glen!

[Applause as three completely different-looking people walk in, smiling and waving to the audience. They sit in a row in this order—Jen, Ben, then Len.]

Tyrone Welcome to the show, guys! Did you have any trouble getting here?

[The triplets all shake their heads, but they do it in a peculiar manner. First one shakes, then the next, then the next, in turn, as if they pass the head shake from one to the other. Tyrone is flabbergasted.]

Anna Easy, Tyrone. Relax. *[Consults her notes.]* It says here that you're identical triplets.

[The triplets nod, again passing the nod down the line.]

Tyrone *[frowning]* But you don't look identical.

[The triplets speak one word at a time, quickly passing the sentence along from each to the other.]

Jen Only

Ben In

Len Looks,

Jen Tyrone.

Ben We're

Len Identical

Jen In

Ben All

Len Other

Jen Ways.

[Slight pause.]

Ben Just

Len About.

[While this is going on, Anna and Tyrone are having great difficulty following the bouncing ball conversation. Lots of blinking and head shaking.]

Anna *[recovering herself]* I see. And when did you discover your unique method of talking?

[Triplets reply in puzzled manner.]

Jen What

Ben Unique

Len Method

Jen Of

Ben Talking,

Len Anna?

Tyrone You don't finish your sentences!

Jen Yes

Ben We

Len Do!

Anna In fact, Tyrone, they do.

[Triplets smile at each other, congratulating themselves.]

Jen See?

Ben I

Len Told

Jen You

Ben She

Len Was

Jen The

Ben Smart

Len One!

Anna It's just that you finish your sentences all together. It's a group effort.

[A nod rapidly passes down the line.]

Jen That's

Ben Right,

Len Anna.

Jen Say,

Ben Have

Len You

Jen Ever

Ben Thought

Len Of
 Jen Getting
 Ben Your
 Len Own
 Jen Show?
 Ben You're
 Len Great!

Tyrone Oh, I see! You pass the sentence on to each other! Bit by bit you get it done!

[The triplets turn to Anna.]

Jen He's
 Ben As
 Len Thick
 Jen As
 Ben Three
 Len Bricks!

Anna *[to audience]* The amazing Wren triplets! A great team, and smart, too! Give them a big hand!

[Wild applause as the triplets exit.]

Anna And as the sandwich said when it saw the greaseproof paper, 'That just about wraps it up!'

Tyrone Next week, we'll have a man who juggles worms and a granny who knits underwater.

Anna And we'll have a woman who knows how to say 'I have a very big nose' in twenty different languages.

Tyrone Until then, it's goodnight from us, and we'll see you next week. And if you turn on your TV, you'll see us!

Anna Goodnight from 'The Wonderful Wide World of People'!

[They wave to the audience, then stand and leave, chatting as they go. Wild applause.]

the end

1 Exaggerated characters

Create an exaggerated character. You will need to exaggerate voice, walk, gestures and personality. First take a moment to think about what character you would like to be. You will need to give the character a name, age and occupation. Then consider how you will exaggerate their voice, walk, gestures and personality. For example, a news reporter might speak with a very loud and energetic voice, walk quickly, use big arm movements and be very anxious in their interactions with others. Practise being the character—start with a frozen statue, then allow the character to make a few gestures, then walk and finally add the voice.

2 Interviews

Divide into groups of three. One person is an interviewer and the other two are to be interviewed. Using the exaggerated characters you've just created, improvise a short role-play. The interview might be in a studio or on location. You could use one of the following examples:

- a shopping centre on Mother's Day
- the scene of an accident
- the premiere of a new movie.

3 Speaking in rhyme

Work in groups of four. Prepare a short rhyming role-play. You will need to create a location, characters and situation. For example, at the beach—two lifeguards and a ballerina. The ballerina has been employed to coach the lifeguards in new lifesaving techniques:

Lifesaver 1 How do we learn the sea rescue *groove*?
Ballerina Just follow me and I'll show you the *moves*.
Lifesaver 2 This is so hard and my leg is *sore*.
Ballerina Stop complaining and come down to the *shore*.

4 Write and discuss

- Discuss either a performance of 'The Wonderful Wide World of People' or the interview with an exaggerated character. Describe how one performer used movement well to portray their character, and how they made their character amusing.
- Imagine you are instructing a performer on how to play an exaggerated character. What advice would you give them?