

REMEMBER, REMEMBER

A Short Play

by

JEFF ROBERTS

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

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CHARACTERS

“Baddies”

Robert
Jackie
Kenny
Peter

“Goodies”

Tony
Jim
Brian
Julie
Jane
Jill
Lorraine

Adults

Des *A Youth Club Leader*
Mrs. Hardcastle

The action of the play takes place in a schoolroom, in the playground and on a piece of waste ground.

The time is the present, a few days either side of Bonfire Night.

PRODUCTION NOTES

SETTING

The play can be performed in any open space. A hall, a stage or a classroom with desks moved back to make room for the actors. If you have stage lighting, then use it to show the end of each scene by dimming the lights but it doesn't matter if you haven't any; just have a few seconds between scenes when the acting area is empty and make sure the 'new' actors for each scene do not enter from the side the previous actors used to go out from.

At the start of Scene 3 you can bring on with you half-made Guys, newspaper and some old clothes for dressing Brian.

Make sure you have a large box ready with some pump bags (carrier bags) on the top so that Robert can drag it in with him at the end of Scene 4.

COSTUMES

The costumes are very easy to organise. Des would wear jeans and a sweater or a track suit. Robert and his gang would wear something 'tough' - perhaps leather jackets with studs on or even 'punkish' gear. Everyone else would wear ordinary clothes.

SOUND EFFECTS

The sound effects at the end of the play are very important so you will need a tape recorder to record them and then play them back during the performance.

DON'T try to record a real fire. Instead try crumpling cellophane paper close to the microphone and see what a realistic fire sound you obtain. For the sound of the fire engine, see if anyone has one of those fancy siren horns you can buy for bicycles and record that; or perhaps you have a younger brother with a toy that has a siren that you can record.

THE BONFIRE

It would be very hard to build a realistic bonfire inside school, even if the caretaker allowed it, so you must create it by imagining that it is just off the acting area. When you talk about it, "see it" to one side of the stage and convince the audience it is there by how well you "see" it in your imagination.

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SCENE 1

A schoolroom/hall which doubles as a youth club. It is near the end of the session and everyone is putting on coats etc.

“BADDIES” generally lounging about, flicking paper etc. Certainly they are not helping.

“GOODIES” on the other hand are tidying up, putting away chairs etc.

Robert: If he's not here in two minutes we go - right?

Jackie: Yes. Two minutes then we're off.

Jim: If you ask me you've been off for weeks.

Robert: Shut it you - or else....

Jim: Go on then Davis - just try it. *(They begin to square up to each other. The rest gather round with shouts of “Fight! fight!” and general encouragement)*

Tony: Hold it you two.... Des is coming *(Enter DES - a typical youth leader)*.

Des: Sorry to keep you everyone but I've got some great news. I've just come from a community council meeting and guess what?

Robert: *(sarcastically)* They've agreed to build a new youth centre with a pool, floodlit football pitches and a running track?

Des: Eh no - not exactly Robert.

Tony: Don't listen to him Des. Carry on - what is it?

Des: We've got the go ahead to organise the bonfire this year. *(Derisory hoots of amazement from ROBERT and company. Genuine pleasure from the others)*.

Des: And the community council has agreed to sponsor a Best Made Guy competition. First prize £20 worth of c.d. and tape vouchers.

Jackie: Big deal!

Des: It is a big deal Jackie - bigger than you think.

Jane: How come, Des?

Des: Remember the struggle we had getting the use of the school for the Youth Club?

Jane: Yes, but so what?

Des: So what? It means we are being taken seriously at last. That's what!

Tony: And they are beginning to trust us.

Des: Exactly, Tony. This is our chance to show them we don't spend all our time lounging about or scrawling graffiti everywhere.

Jim: Are you listening, Davis?

Robert: That does it, crater mouth. I'll smash your stupid....

Des: Enough you two! This is just what we don't want. No more.... right.... right?
(grabs them by the collar) If anyone else has any spare energy, like these two, use it for collecting wood and taking it down to the usual place.

Jill: What about the fireworks Des?

Des: Of yes - I nearly forgot. I've already got a large box of display fireworks locked in the school office. If you have any at home you want me to keep safe, bring them along anytime but don't forget to put them in a tin for safety if you can. The caretaker is waiting to lock up now so can we clear away please? *(As the chairs are stacked the club members say their 'goodnights' to DES).*

Jill: Goodnight Des.... I reckon it will be a really great bonfire night.

Des: Thanks Jill - bye....

Robert: Should be a knockout night Des. With any luck it will go with a bang!
(amid loud laughter from his gang ROBERT and the BADDIES leave).

SCENE 2

ROBERT and gang are bored, hanging about outside school.

Kenny: *(laughing, having only just got the joke)* Should go with a bang. I get it now; fireworks - bang. Good eh?

Peter: Oh well done Kenny, well done! *(to the rest of the gang)* I think he must have fallen out of the pram when he was a baby.

Jackie: His mum pushed him out, more like.

Kenny: That's not fair. No, honest - I used to be my mum's pet.

Peter: So that's why she kept you in a cage, is it?

Kenny: You make me sound stupid.

Robert: No, you're not Kenny. I mean, you answer all the questions in class, don't you?

Peter: Yes. When sir asked you to name four members of the cat family, what did you say?

Robert: Father cat, mother cat and two kittens!

Peter: And when he said "If I have got ten apples in this hand and fifteen in this hand, what have I got?" You replied, "Big hands, sir."

Kenny: At least I listened to Des and remembered what he said. He was right you know. Look, I'll go home and get a biscuit tin and bring it back. Then if we get any fireworks I'll take them.

Jackie: Take them where?

Kenny: To the school office, of course, like Des said. It's safer that way.

Jackie: You fool. It's not safer at all. He just likes setting fireworks off himself and spoiling it for us. I mean, what's the difference between him lighting them and us lighting them?

Robert: Leave him Jackie. There isn't time to get through to him. Let's go for some wood before it gets dark.

Kenny: Good idea! It's a long way to take it to the community fire.

Peter: You must be joking! We're not going to take it there. Who wants to go to their rubbish fire anyway? No, Kenny - we're having our own!

Kenny: Where?

Peter: Do you know that waste ground at the back of the garage, behind the petrol pumps?... well there!

Kenny: But what about fireworks? None of the shops will sell them to us and none of us has any?

Peter: That's true. Looks as if we might have to go to the community fire after all.

Robert: No you won't. Stick with me. I know where we can get as many fire works as we want. Come on. *(They move to exit, leaving KENNY centre. The gang stop and look at him. He has a decision to make).*

Robert: Well, Kenny. Coming with us... or joining that other lot? *(After a moment KENNY turns and goes with them).*

SCENE 3

GOODIES are resting near to the bonfire, which is off stage. We see it through their eyes. Someone is busy making guys)

Jane: At last. I thought we would never finish. Look, my hands are filthy.

Jill: And mine - oh no, a splinter!

Jane: Let me try and get it out!

Tony: But it's worth it, though. What a bonfire! I bet it will burn all night.

Brian: And the next day!

Jim: We've packed it well enough to last a week, I reckon.

Jane: It's certainly the best one we've had for years.

Tony: What's more - it's safe. With Des lighting it, everyone will enjoy it with

no risk of accidents.

Brian: Yes, with luck everything will go like a house on fire.

Jill: Oh Brian, that's terrible. Don't you know any better jokes?

Brian: Well yes! This fire engine zooms off on an emergency call, siren blasting away, DADA, DADA, DADA, how they do, you know. It swerves through the traffic going about 45 mph, when the driver notices this boy running alongside. Well, soon the fire engine is on a motorway, so he really speeds up, about 70 mph, and the siren is still blasting away, DADA, DADA, DADA, but this boy is still running alongside. So the driver speeds up to 90mph, but the lad's still there. So he slows down a bit and shouts, "Hey son, what do you want?" and the boy shouts back, "A 30p cornet, please, but no chocolate flake!" *(Groans, laughs etc.)*

Lorraine: Never mind the corny jokes. What do you think of this? *(She holds up a well made Guy).*

Jane: Hey, that's great.

Jill: Fantastic, Lorraine. Don't you think it looks a bit like Des, though?

Brian: Yes, it does - Des-aster! Surprised she managed it without the head dropping off.

Lorraine: I'll get you for that Brian Carter. *(They chase each other around, annoying everyone else in the process).*

Tony: O.K. you two, that's enough. Talking of Guys, where's yours, Brian?

Brian: Ah! well, I er....

Lorraine: Come on then, clever, where is it?

Brian: It's like this.... er.... mum didn't have any old clothes to give me so I....

Jim: That's no excuse, the girls brought plenty with them - look at that pile over there.

Brian: Well there is another reason.

Jill: Go on then, what?

Brian: It's like this, see. What with me being so brilliant, I didn't want to show you up. I would have been sure to win the competition so I decided....

Lorraine: You liar.

Brian: It's true.

Tony: *(picking out an old jacket and trousers from the pile)* Hey, listen, if Brian can't make a Guy out of these - let's use them to make a Guy out of Brian.

Brian: *(puzzled)* What do you mean.... Oh no.... Look, I was only joking. I didn't mean.... *(Rest of the group good naturedly descend on BRIAN, intending to make a Guy out of him and teach him a lesson).*

SCENE 4

Inside school. Everyone has gone. All is quiet. ROBERT, KENNY, JACKIE and PETER appear.

Kenny: This is spooky. I'd much rather have it with kids and teachers in it. Anyway what are we doing back at school? I thought we all hated it.

Jackie: So we do Kenny but there are times when it has its own uses. Right Robert?

Robert: Sure but keep your voices down. We don't want old Collins the caretaker to hear us.

Kenny: But he's as deaf as a drainpipe; you have to shout your head off if you take a message to him.

Robert: That's what he wants you to think. Tell him the truth Peter.

Peter: What.... *(realises what ROBERT is getting at)*. Oh yes. Well they do say that anyone he finds alone in school he kidnaps and takes them to his room. They say that in his boiler-room are kids chained to the wall; too weak to escape because they spend all day locked away. He only lets them out at night to do the work and clean the place and all they live on are left over school dinners.

All: Ugh!.... revolting.... horrible.

Peter: Some of them have been there so long they have forgotten who they are or where they come from.

Kenny: Get away. That's just stories to try and scare me.

Jackie: No it's not. What about that kid who used to be in Miss Clarke's group who suddenly disappeared?

Kenny: *(uncertain)* His dad got a new job and he had to move.

Peter: That's what the teachers said. But they didn't want us to know the truth.

Jackie: And what about the Khalid twins?

Kenny: Didn't they go back to Pakistan?

Peter: No. Still in the boiler room. *(During the last few speeches the gang have grouped themselves in a semi-circle around KENNY who now almost believes them).*

Kenny: Hey! I never did like old Collins. I wonder where he is now?

Jackie: }

Peter: } *(pouncing on KENNY)* BEHIND YOU!

Robert: }

(KENNY screams. The others collapse, laughing).

Kenny: That's not fair.... I could have had a heart attack.... You rotten lot.... You were joking weren't you.... I can tell.

Robert: O.K. that's enough. Let's finish what we came for. You three keep watch, it shouldn't take me long. *(He disappears).*

Kenny: Where has he gone now?

Jackie: I'll tell you this, Kenny, there will be fireworks if he is caught.

Peter: Yes, and fireworks if he is not caught. *(JACKIE and PETER laugh).*

Kenny: It's not fair. Nobody tells me anything. *(ROBERT re-enters struggling with a large box marked "DANGER FIREWORKS". On top of it are some pump bags).*

Robert: Right, grab these and fill them as fast as you can.

Kenny: But these are the fireworks for the community fire.... you've nicked them!

Robert: Right for once, Kenny. I promised you fireworks didn't I. Now fill your bag and shut up. *(KENNY quickly begins to stuff his bag).*

SCENE 5

Back at the bonfire. TONY and the others have managed to make a passable Guy out of BRIAN)

Tony: *(holding a struggling BRIAN)* Steady.... Tough Guy. Have we finished yet, girls?

Lorraine: Not quite. I still think he needs more padding. *(She stuffs newspaper wherever convenient).*

Brian: No! Ow! Get off.... I'm sorry, honest.

Jill: Hold him still. I know what he needs to finish him off. *(She uses face paints or a lipstick to give him rosy cheeks and exaggerated moustache).* There we go, finished. Oh you really are a handsome guy! *(kisses his cheek).*

Jim: *(enters with a wheelbarrow)* Here Brian, try this for size. *(They put him into the barrow).*

Lorraine: Wait, don't forget this. *(places a "Penny for the Guy" sign around his neck).*

Tony: Quiet you lot, someone is coming. *(ROBERT and his gang enter).*

Jill: Oh no - trouble.

Brian: Looking for a fight, Davis. Well you've come to the right place. Just let me get out....

Robert: Shut up - dummy! *(laughter from his gang).*

Jim: Just say that to me, pin head.

Robert: Listen to Mighty Mouse.

Tony: Right, Davis, cool it. What do you lot want?

Robert: Just being friendly. Good bonfire you have there. Must have taken ages to build. What do you say, Pete?

Peter: Oh yes.... ages!

Robert: We might have a little fire of our own. I was just wondering if you could tell us how you got your wood?

Lorraine: Hard work. So there's no chance of you lot getting any, is there?

Robert: (*ignoring her*) Mind you, seems to me you've got too much there. What do you think, Pete?

Peter: Oh yes.... far too much.

Robert: So if you can spare some then.

Jane: Not for you we can't, so clear off and leave us alone.

Jackie: Quiet, crater mouth before I fill it in.

Tony: You heard her, Davis. No one wants any trouble and there's no wood for you, so you might as well go!

Robert: Looks as if they won't give us any, gang. It seems as if we'll have to help ourselves. Come on! (*During the above the GOODIES have formed up to protect the path to the bonfire. As the BADDIES square up to them MRS. HARDCASTLE appears*).

Mrs. H. Right, right, right! Not a step further. (*talks to BADDIES*) I've watched these kids build that fire all day. They've been sensible, quiet, hard-working and they haven't offended anyone. Adults are quick enough to criticise children these days but they are doing something that everyone can enjoy, and I'm not going to see it spoiled by the likes of you. I'm giving you ten seconds to go, or else I shall go straight back into my house and call the police. One.... two.... three.... (*Reluctantly the BADDIES go*).

Tony: Thanks very much, Mrs. Hardcastle.

Mrs. H. It's all right, love. I've never liked that Davis lad and I shan't let the likes of him destroy all that fine work you've put in. Now, I shall be in all day, so if they come back, just run across and let me know and I shall be on that telephone quicker than you can say "Guy Fawkes". (*Exit*).

Jim: We didn't need her Tony. I could have dealt with them, just one punch, that's all it needed.

Julie: And who could have brushed up the pieces.... Mrs. Hardcastle?

Jane: She saved you from being beaten up, Jim, and you know it!

Brian: At least, she will look after the bonfire if we leave it, so that's O.K.

Julie: But we can't expect her to look out for it all the time. That lot could easily slip back when it's dark and take what they want.

Tony: Right Julie. No - the only answer is to place a guard on it until tomorrow.

Jim: What? Through the night?

Lorraine: Yes, tough guy, and you watch it from midnight until dawn.

Jim: I'd like to but.... er.... but.... you see....

Brian: His Teddy would miss him! *(General laughter)*.

Tony: It's O.K. Jim. I shall stay, but if you could manage until midnight?

Jane: But you will freeze, or be seen by someone!

Tony: Not if I build a den inside the bonfire. Can I borrow your sleeping bag Lorraine?

Lorraine: Of course you can and I shall make you a flask of coffee as well!

Tony: Great. Brian, can you do the first watch now?

Brian: Sure.

Tony: Right everyone. See you tomorrow. See you at midnight, Jim. *(Exeunt)*.

SCENE 6

Some distance from the bonfire. Still smarting from MRS HARDCASTLE'S attack they shout "off stage" at her)

Robert: Stupid old bat. Come here and say that. I'll show you!

Jackie: Just wait till I tell my mum, she'll come round and duff you up. You nosey old creep!

Peter: We'll be round to smash your windows, just wait.

Kenny: Yeah, crummy old mouse sack!

Robert: What?

Kenny: Crummy old mouse sack!

Jackie: I think he means rat bag, Robert.

Kenny: Well, whatever I mean, that's it now isn't it? I suppose we'll just have to go.

Jackie: Go where?

Kenny: Obvious isn't it. We can't have our own fire so we'll have to go to the community bonfire.

Peter: No chance. I'd rather stay at home and watch "Come Dancing" or "Open University".

Jackie: Nothing's that bad, Pete.

Peter: But he's right. How can we....

Robert: Just listen to me O.K. We will have our own fire. It just won't be on November 5th.

Peter: } { What do you mean?
Jackie: } (*together*) { Come again.
Kenny: } { I don't understand
Robert: Never mind now. Meet me here tonight at midnight and I'll show you
then. Come on. (*Exeunt*).

SCENE 7

Back in the open space near to the fire. It is dark. We see JIM with a torch casting the beam all over the audience. He is obviously scared.

Jim: Who's that? Is it you Tony? Where are you? I can't see you properly. Say something.... Is it Mrs. Hardcastle?.... I'm just going Mrs. Hardcastle.... it isn't you is it? Oh help!.... Why did I come?.... I could have been at home warm in bed..... If my dad finds out he'll kill me.

(During the above JIM has been moving around but now begins to back across the area. At the same time, TONY appears also with torch and backing across the area. They narrowly miss each other centre stage).

Tony: Jim. Where are you? I can't see you.... are you still here? Stop fooling about. I'm too tired for stupid games. Now, come on - say something.... make a noise for goodness sake! Anything.... whistle.... cough.... anything.

(During TONY's speech the two have passed each other, reached the outside of the acting area and have started backing towards the centre again where they should collide at the end of TONY's speech).

Jim: Help! Police! Mrs. Hardcastle! I want teddy! Please don't get me whoever you are.

Tony: Calm down, you twit. It's me, Tony!

Jim: Eh? What? (*composing himself*) What do you think you're up to, creeping up on people like that? I've a good mind to....

Tony: Keep quiet will you. Look's like it's midnight. I'm taking over now, so you can get off home to bed.... and teddy. See you in the morning. (*JIM exits. TONY watches him go then moves off to the bonfire*).

Lights fade.

SCENE 8

(BADDIES enter the acting area also with torches).

Peter: I was nearly caught you know. My dad was still up and I'm sure he heard me coming downstairs. Hope it's going to be worth it!

Jackie: It's freezing. If I had realised how cold it was, I would have stayed in bed. We must be mad. Hey - my mum will kill me if she finds me missing.

Kenny: No one cares whether I'm in or not. If I left home it would be a week before they missed me.

Peter: Hope it's worth it!

Robert: Shut up will you. I promised you a bonfire didn't I?... Just stay here and watch. *(He exits towards the bonfire and we 'see' what is happening through the eyes of the group).*

Peter: What is he up to?

Jackie: He's getting something out of his pocket.

Kenny: It's a bit of old rag. Hey, he's setting fire to it. Great - he's lighting the bonfire.

Peter: Wow-ee - look at it burn! *(ROBERT re-enters).*
(Flame effects).

Robert: How's that then? I said I would give you a bonfire. Well, now you have got it!

Jackie: You can feel the heat from here. I've got to hand it to you those swots, they made it really well.

Peter: Hey, look. In the flames! Would you believe it - they've even left the Guy inside. It's hidden well, but if you look into the centre - there, see it?

Kenny: Yes! I can! A bit stupid, leaving it all night.

Peter: Hang on a second, it's.... moving. It's trying to sit up!

Robert: Don't be thick! It's just the heat drying out the straw and making it shrink. I mean to say, how can a dummy move? Grow up!

(Over the above we hear TONY's gang shouting and getting closer. They run into the area shouting for TONY).

Jim: Tony! Tony! *(stops on seeing DAVIS)* If you have hurt him, Davis, I'll kill you. Where is he?

Robert: Don't ask me pal.... perhaps his daddy wouldn't let him out so late.

Jim: He knew you were going to try something like this so he stayed to guard the bonfire. I'm only going to ask you once more. Where is he?

Robert: No one was here when we came. I bet he's chickened off home to bed.

Lorraine: *(suddenly horrified)* The den! What about the den! He said he would build it in the bonfire and hide there.... Oh no! *(A moment of stunned)*

realisation, then everyone runs off shouting “Tony” etc, leaving acting area, as the sound of an approaching fire engine gets louder and louder - only ROBERT remains).

Robert: *(addressing the audience)* What are you lot staring at? Eh? You don't think this has got anything to do with me do you.... It was only a laugh.... It's not my fault, is it? How was I to know the stupid fool was inside? A stupid place to have a den anyway. If you're going to be that thick, you deserve all you get. It's his own fault for hiding in there.... Look it was only a guy anyway. A person could have jumped out, couldn't they? Yes, of course they could.... Anyway, if anything has happened to him I can't be blamed, can I?.... What's going to happen to me? I'll only get told off, cautioned, eh.... O, heck! what shall I do?.... Give myself up and face years in a detention centre? No, no, not me.... No, I'm off. They can arrest me.... if they can catch me! *(turns, runs off)*.

Sounds of voices, sirens, crackling fire to a deafening crescendo.

SCENE 9

Back in the schoolroom/hall - a few days later. GOODIES are sitting around looking miserable and devastated.

Lorraine: HOW long ago did it happen?

Jill: Six days.

Lorraine: It seems he's been gone for ever.

Jill: I know.

Lorraine: I shall even start to forget what he looked like!

Brian: All right you two - no crying. It will be hard but we've got to try and not think about the fire.

Jim: Just let me find that Davis and his lot. I'll make them pay.

Julie: That won't do Tony much good, will it?

Brian: Julie's right, Jim. Even if we knew where Davis was, a fight won't solve anything.

Lorraine: It just doesn't seem right, does it, Tony not being with us?

Jill: I know.

Brian: Look - we all wish he was here, but he isn't. So let's try and get used to

the idea shall we? *(During this exchange TONY has appeared upstage of the group. He can't be seen by them but is clearly visible to the audience).*

Tony: Well what a miserable lot you are. That's a fine welcome I must say. *(Everyone is amazed to see TONY and excitedly crowd round him).*

Brian: I thought your Mum and Dad had grounded you for a month when they realised it wasn't you in the fire, just a guy.

Tony: They did - but then they reckoned missing bonfire night was punishment enough.

Jim: You didn't miss anything - it was a real flop after what went on.

Lorraine: Taking Mrs. Hardcastle's dog back after he had followed you into the den must have been one of the best things that ever happened to you Tony.

Tony: It was.... no wonder Mrs. Hardcastle calls him Lucky. *(General laughter and pleasure from all to have TONY back They are suddenly quietened by JIM).*

Jim: Quiet everyone - listen - there's someone outside.... Right we know you are there! get in here before we thump you! *(ROBERT, followed by BADDIES enter - ROBERT looks terrible - dirty, tired, dishevelled).*

Jim: Davis - you.... just let me.... ! *(TONY stops him).*

Tony: *(to ROBERT)* You look awful - what's happened?

Robert: I've been hiding and sleeping rough since I thought I'd kill.... since the fire.... They have been bringing me food and stuff *(indicates JACKIE, KENNY, PETER)* but it's stupid. I can't run for ever so I'm giving myself up.... Look I really thought it was you in that fire - I'm glad it wasn't - I've learned a lesson the hard way *(He holds out his hand to TONY).* Sorry.

Tony: *(shakes ROBERT'S hand)* Look, when things have settled down with the police and at home, why don't you four come and help us? There's going to be a lot to do. *(Everyone looks blank).* Christmas is only five weeks away and I still think I can get round Des to let us organise the best party for the old people there has ever been. Am I right? *(General chorus of 'Right Tony', 'O.K.', 'Sure thing' etc. EVERYONE exits talking excitedly about what they will do.... singing snatches of Christmas carols.... Leaving an empty acting area).*

CURTAIN