NOT YOUR ORDINARY SHEEPFOLD – Preview information

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NOT YOUR ORDINARY SHEEPFOLD – Director’s Notes

**Casting:** This play was written to accommodate a large cast (27 roles), but several characters can be eliminated or combined with others, if necessary. Most characters can change gender, if necessary, also. Each sheep has a distinctive personality:

Felicia – rebellious, and uses big words (could be a boy: Felix)

Sharla – jittery and nervous

Darla – fashionable; into her looks

Marshall – the leader of the flock

Mimi – motherly

Theodore – the dramatic storyteller

Tipper – clumsy, always tipping over

Cici – a girly-girl, kind of ditsy

Polly and Dolly – baby lambs (can be combined into one)

J-Dawg – the surfer dude

\*Winnie – the whiner

\*Humphrey – always stuffing his mouth (could be eliminated and lines given to J-Dawg)

\*Alberta – the brainy one

\*Bubba – loves dirt and gross stuff

\*Lorenzo – never quite hears everything right

\*Bessie – sassy, “popular” girl

\*Kitty – Bessie’s tagalong (an easy role to eliminate, but a good role for a shy girl)

\*Tootie – excitable, says everything twice

\**These roles can easily be eliminated and their lines given to other characters – adjust the lines to fit the new speaker’s personality.*

Personalities of the bad guys (Wolf, Bear, Lazy Sam, 2 Thieves) are obvious. The 2 Thieves can be easily combined into one. In our production, Lazy Sam and the Thieves played the Hired Hands as well.

**Costumes**: We dressed all of our sheep in plain white or light gray sweatshirt with black pants and socks. A cast mom made ears for them all, which she attached to headbands or little felt hoods. A black painted on nose finished the effect. Each sheep also had a costume piece or prop to match their personality. For example, a helmet for Tipper, an apron for Mimi, a binky for Dolly, big glasses for Alberta, dirty face for Bubba, etc. (Some characters were hard to dress – we just gave them something random: a hair bow, a hat, a scarf, whatever.)

The wolf and bear wore gray and brown sweatsuits, respectively, and hood with animal face pieces attached. Hired hands, Sam, and thieves wore jeans and flannel shirts (rattier-looking for the thieves).

**Staging**: Essentially, the sheep are all on stage for the entire production. They mull around backstage behind the main action – eating, resting, swatting bugs, drinking, picking burrs out of each other’s coats (just make sure they aren’t distracting from the main action). If your stage space (or the maturity of your actors) won’t lend itself to so many actors being on stage at once, have a handful of sheep nonchalantly wander off backstage during scenes and take a break. They can wander back on later and others wander off.

During the story-telling scenes, a few sheep stay center stage to help tell the stories while the other sheep sit on the floor across the front of the stage, backs to audience, to listen. Acting out the stories is big and over-done – lots of fun! The story-telling groups are as follows:

JOURNEY SHEEP HIRED HAND SHEEP TABLE SHEEP

Winnie J-Dawg Tipper

Lorenzo Humphrey Cici

Kitty Kitty Lorenzo

Tootie Alberta Alberta

Bubba Bessie Tootie

Bessie Polly Bubba

Polly Dolly Dolly

Humphrey

(Obviously, if you eliminate characters, these lists will have to be adjusted)

The Shepherd is never seen as a character in the play; his presence is merely implied, as in Scene 1.

A gate (downstage right) is often referred to in the script. We had an actual stand-alone gate built (by a very talented student), which broke apart when the bear crashed in and was re-assembled by the hired hand. This was great, but it’s not feasible for everyone, obviously. The gate can be pantomimed.

**Music**: Musical clips add a lot to the overall effect. We used clips as follows:

Scene 1: the slow, sweet, pastoral-sounding section from the William Tell Overture

Scenes 2, 4, 6: the Jaws theme

Scenes 3, 7: a peppy introduction to a piano Dixieland song

Scene 5: beginning of Beethoven’s 5th

Scene 8 (panic scene): Katchaturian’s Sabre Dance

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SCENE 1 -- WELCOME TO THE FLOCK

(*Sheep are milling around, bleating; Hired Hands are checking on the sheep*)

Marshall: (*enters*) Good morning, boys!

Hired Hands: (*on their way out)* Mornin’, Marshall!

Marshall: Good morning, everyone!

All: Good morning!

Mimi: Isn’t it a lovely day? Doesn’t the pasture look especially beautiful this morning?

Marshall: Yes, it does. We always have wonderful places to graze – thanks to . . the Good Shepherd!

All: (*sigh*) The GOOD Shepherd!

Tipper: Is today the day the new sheep join the flock?

Marshall: I think it is, Tipper, if I heard him right.

Tootie: New sheep! New sheep! Oh, it’s so exciting! So exciting!

Mimi: And we’re going to have to go out of our way to make them feel very welcome. And safe. You know, it sometimes takes newcomers a while to feel comfortable when they join us. I mean, this isn’t your ordinary sheepfold.

(*Sharla, Darla and Felicia enter, looking around*)

Sharla: Oh, dear! Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!

Dolly & Polly: There they are! There they are!

Tootie: It’s so exciting – it’s so exciting!! You’re the new sheep, aren’t you? Aren’t you?

Darla: New sheep? (*laughs)* Oh, heavens no. I’m almost nine years old now. But you’re very sweet to think so. I do try to moisturize frequently . . .

Mimi: She means, you must be the newcomers joining our sheepfold.

Darla: Oh, well, yes, I suppose we are . . .

Marshall: Well, on behalf of the entire flock, let me bid you a warm and friendly WELCOME TO THE SHEEPFOLD! (*all clap and cheer*)

Sharla: Oh, thank you! Thank you very much!

Felicia: Yeah, yeah. Greetings and salutations.

Tipper: What’s your name?

Felicia: Felicia. It means “happy” or “fortunate”. Like, “felicity” or “felicitous” . . .

Tipper: I’m Tipper!

Felicia: Tipper? Where’d you get a freakish name like that?

Tipper: I’m not really sure. My dad says it has something to do with . . whoa! (*falls on her back*) . . with my lousy sense of balance.

Felicia: Ah. Tipper. Now it makes sense.

Sharla: Oh, dear! She’s on her back! Sheep can’t be on their back! They’ll die! Somebody’s gotta help her!

Marshall: Don’t worry – the shepherd will be here soon to pick her up. He keeps a close eye on our little Tipper here. See? Here he comes now. (*a small group of sheep gather at the edge of the stage, shuffle over to Tipper, like they’re walking around the shepherd’s feet, pick Tipper up, then disperse*)

Sharla: Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

Felicia: Sharla, for a sheep, you’re such a chicken.

Sharla: She’s right – I really am a chicken. I’m afraid of loud noises, sudden movements, strange shadows . . . it makes it very hard to relax.

Mimi: Sharla, ALL sheep are easily frightened. But you won’t have to worry about that in our sheepfold. You’re going to love it here!

Darla: It does look like a nice little spot.

Humphrey: You can come eat on my patch of grass. (*stuffs his mouth*) Mmm!

Sharla: Oh, that’s so kind of you!

Bessie: We’ll let you have cuts at the fresh water stream!

Darla: Cuts? Why, that would be very damaging to the skin – not to mention painful.

Bessie: I mean, we’ll let you drink first. Duh!

Kitty: Duh!

Darla: Oh! Well, that’s very kind of you.

Bubba: We’ll even show you the least buggy part of the pasture.

Darla: Oh, I hate those pesky bugs.

Bubba: Bugs are gross! So cool!

Sharla: That’s really SO very kind of you!

Felicia: (*barging to the front*) That’s enough of this poppycock!

Marshall: Poppycock?

Felicia: Thank you for your offers of grass patches and water line cuts and bug-free zones, but we have no intention of staying in this flock.

Darla: We don’t?

Felicia: No, we don’t!

Sharla: Oh dear! Oh dear, oh dear!

Marshall: Why not?

Felicia: Because this flock has . . a shepherd!

Marshall: (*long pause*) Yeah . . .?

Felicia: We’ve been in flocks before. We know the routine. We have no intention of letting some horrible shepherd take charge of us!

Mimi: What’s wrong with having a shepherd?

Felicia: Shepherds are frauds!

All: Frauds?

Felicia: Yes, frauds!

Lorenzo: Did she say frogs?

Alberta: Frogs are amphibious – they need to be near the water.

Lorenzo: Did you say “put a bib on us”?

Felicia: Not frogs – frauds!

Dolly: Frogs are too small to shepherd sheep.

Polly: They’re smaller than I am!

P-Dawg: Dude, frogs are da bomb . . .

Felicia: No, no, no – shepherds are FRAUDS! They’re fakes! Swindlers! Charlatans!

Darla: Well, what’s wrong with that? I’m a Charlottan.

Mimi: Really?

Darla: Yep, born and raised in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Felicia: You’re hopeless. You’re all hopeless.

Marshall: Well, we are sheep. Sheep aren’t all that bright, you know. (*everyone agrees*)

Mimi: Felicia, I think you’ll find our shepherd is different than the shepherds you’ve had before.

Felicia: Nope – a shepherd is a shepherd is a shepherd. Oh, they talk a good game . . . yeah, they love you so much! They’re going to take such good care of you. But in the end, they abandon you. Forsake you! Leave you to starve in misery and be devoured by wolves!

Marshall: But our shepherd isn’t like that. He’s completely different.

Darla: Different? How?

Marshall: Because OUR shepherd is the GOOD Shepherd!

All: (sigh) The GOOD Shepherd!

Darla: The Good Shepherd?

Sharla: Oh, he sounds wonderful!

Felicia: What do you mean he sounds wonderful? Stick a vague adjective in front of his title and suddenly you’re a fan? A shepherd is a shepherd is a shepherd. There’s no such thing as a good one.

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