



## **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST ....FROM BACKSTAGE!**

By Rachel Barnett-Jones

### **Characters:**

Anton- The Usher: the person who sells the ice creams and programmes and tears the tickets

Georgie - The Stage Manager: the person who makes sure everything is running smoothly on stage

Sita - The Lighting Person: the person who makes all the lights and special effects go on and off

John- The Actor: the person playing a character in the panto

Toby- The Little Boy: in the audience - the person who this is all for

### **Note:**

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## Five Minute Call - The Usher

**Georgie- The Stage Manager:** Ladies and Gentlemen Of the Cast and Crew - this is your five minute call for Act One of Beauty and the Beast. Five minutes please. Thank you.

**Anton- The Usher:** Five minutes left! Crumbs! Right. How many more programmes can I sell? Let's see. Programmes! Programmes! Souvenir programmes. Only three pounds each. And whirly light stick things. Get your whirly light stick things here.

Hello, I'm the Usher, have you got your ticket? I can help you find your seat. ... That's what I do, I check your ticket and help you find your seat, and I sell you things that are useful for enjoying the show, and I can direct you to the toilets if you need to go. I'm very friendly and I love helping people in the audience who have come to the theatre to watch the show. Oh - here comes someone now who looks a bit worried. I wonder what the problem is.

Hello madam. Can I help you? There's someone sitting in your seat? Surely not, our box office, where you picked up your tickets from, rarely makes mistakes. Let me check. Ah. D33 and D34. Yes - I see the problem here - there is someone else sitting in your seat - that's because you've come on the wrong day. Yes. Looking at your ticket I can see that you're actually meant to be here tomorrow. It's ok. Don't worry about it. It's a busy time of year and people do sometimes make mistakes. Not a problem though - here, there are some spare seats on this side. Just as good, maybe even a bit better. Here, the show's about to start in a moment. Settle down and I'll save an ice cream for you for the interval. All part of the job madam. Enjoy the show - it's going to start soon.

You know what I love? I love this bit - the last few minutes before it starts, and the audience starts to quieten down in an excited sort of way, and then the lights start to happen, and the music, and then the curtain goes up, and the house lights go down, and everyone just stops whatever else they're doing, and stops worrying about whatever it was they were worrying about. And then for a couple of hours or so they get completely swept up in this bright, brilliant, colourful, funny story.

**Announcer:** Good evening ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, welcome to Fly High Theatre. Sit back, clap your hands, stamp your feet, and get ready for a theatrical feast ... it's time to begin Beauty and The Beast. (*Orchestral overture*)

**Anton – The Usher:** I'm meant to be going to get the ice cream tray ready for the interval but I would love to stay and watch the first bit - where Beauty is reading her books and all the villagers are dancing around her. She has literally no idea what's

about to happen to her. No idea she's about to have an amazing adventure and ... well, I won't ruin it for you. I've watched the play so many times I know it inside out, back to front, and even sideways.

Right - I'm off to order my ice creams by colour. Some ushers do it alphabetically - but I like to put mine in the colour of the rainbow. Then they'll be all ready on my tray and all the children and their grown ups can have a delicious interval treat. Yum!

Why don't you head backstage and meet the Stage Manager - she has a great job too, if you hurry you can get there just in time for the first lighting cue ... go on ... off you go ...



## Overture and beginners - The Stage Manager

Oh, hello there. Come and stand by me - I just have to do a quick announcement and then I can chat.

**Georgie – The Stage Manager:** Overture and beginners to the stage please, overture and beginners to the stage please. Beauty, Villagers, Pantomime horse front, Pantomime horse back, Dame Elderberry the Pantomime Dame, Beauty's father ... and anyone else I've forgotten

who's also in this scene.

Hello, I'm the Stage Manager and I have a Very Important Job. Sometimes I need to be quite strict with the actors to make sure they're all in the right place at the right time - they can be very cheeky sometimes.

**John- The Actor:** Oh no we're not!

**Georgie- The Stage Manager:** Right. All pre-show checks are done. Props are all in the right place - those are the things that the actors use to help tell the story. Actors are all in the right place. Both halves of the pantomime horse are in the right place. We are Good To Go.

A lot of my work is done before the show starts. Now I just have to make sure the lights and sound happen on time and that no-one forgets when to go on or off.

Right - everyone's in place on stage, The Usher has told me that all the audience are sitting down nicely, so we can start.

Curtain Up and

LX and Sound Q1 Go.

... That means the first lighting cue is happening now, making the set, which looks like a village square, look like it's the early morning sunrise. ... Later on you should head up to the lighting box and meet the person who makes all the lighting magic happen on stage ... They're very friendly too. But don't distract them so much that they miss their cues.

*(music starts)*

And there we go - the show has started. Ah lovely.

I love it when that happens. Just a second ago it was really busy - people running all about looking for their costumes and now all the business is happening on stage and it's rather quiet and peaceful back here.

... Oh this is the bit where the story starts properly - Beauty's Dad tells her that he has to go on a business trip, but that he'll bring her back a present. ... Well, it's all about to go horribly wrong for him because he accidentally stumbles upon the Beast's Castle and, in order to save his own life, he has to bring back the first thing that he sees when he gets home. And you know who that is? - Why, it's Beauty of course. Poor Beauty, carted off to the Beast's Castle. She's very brave though. I think you'd have to be very brave if you found that you were suddenly living with a stinky, hairy, grumpy monster - a bit like my girlfriend in the morning (that's a joke by the way!).

Uhoh - I've just seen that the clumsy pantomime horse back end has just kicked a hole in the scenery - I'll have to mend that in the interval. And he won't be getting any carrots for a treat.

Nearly time for me to give my next lighting cue ... why don't you see if you can head up to the lighting box before the lighting operator presses the button! If you run you might just make it. Tell her the stage manager says Hi.

## LX Cue GO - The Lighting Operator



**Georgie – The Stage Manager:** LX Cue 23. Go.

**Sita – The Lighting Operator:** LX Cue 23 GO. OOOOH. Exciting - the next cue is 24 - my favourite.

Hello. Welcome to the lighting box - there are cables and dangerous things all over the place, so sit down carefully and DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING.

Did the Stage Manager send you up here? Great. It's the best view in the whole theatre in my opinion. I love being up high and looking down on the stage, and the audience. Watching the audience enjoying the show is almost as much fun as watching the show itself.

Plus - I get to play with (I mean, work with) this huge lighting desk - that's Sam over there, she deals with sound, all the microphones and music and sound effects. She also has a huge desk with lots of gizmos and gadgets and knobs and bobs.

And my desk ... my desk is AMAZING. I can control EVERY SINGLE LIGHT IN THE WHOLE ENTIRE THEATRE - I can make it bright and sunny, or dark and stormy, I can make tiny glittery lights roll all over the walls so it feels like you're floating up in the stars. I can make it really dark and then put a spotlight on just one person. I can make it look like a light is coming through a tiny square window. Basically I can do anything with lights that you can imagine.

Oooh - and here comes Lighting Cue 24 - it's my favourite in the WHOLE ENTIRE SHOW. It's the bit of the story where the Evil Witch comes in and curses the Prince and turns him into The Beast - that actually happened quite a while ago but they tell it in a flashback sequence. And when the Evil Witch comes on the stage everything gets flooded with murky green and there's a flash and a bang and a bit of fire and a lot of smoke - that's called a pyrotechnic - AND I LOVE IT.

Sorry - got a bit carried away there.

**Georgie – The Stage Manager:** LX and Sound cue 24 Stand by

**Evil Witch:** (Cackles)

**Sita – The Lighting Operator:** Ooooh - standby - here I go, finger hovering over the button, little bit sweaty, don't even dare to blink - this is what it's all about - ooh, the adrenaline!

**Georgie- The Stage Manager:** LX and Sound cue 24 Go

**Sita- The Lighting Operator:** Go! That's a Go. Almost like it's happening in slow motion finger moves closer and closer to the button, feel the slightly rubbery feeling beneath the paddy bit of my finger getting lower and lower until the button connects with the circuitry beneath it and then a million atoms of electricity travel to the computer, and then the computer sends all those signals to all the lights hanging up in the ceiling and then in the blink of an eye - there's a flash and a bang and everything goes green and then the Evil Witch appears.

And then I go back to waiting for LX cue 25 - also a good one, but it's no 24.

And now the story can continue. Beauty has to help the Beast to undo the terrible curse and get turned back into a prince again. (bit of a shame really - I think he's much cooler when he's a beast). And along the way they fall in love. Ahhhh.

Nearly at the interval now ...

Later, after the show is over, why don't you come back and hit the go button and see the lighting change for yourself

Now, Why don't you head over to the Green Room and see if anyone's hanging out there? There's nearly always an actor or two making a cuppa - and they're a very chatty bunch.

Go on now - lovely meeting you - remember - see you later for a play with my lighting desk!

## No Small Parts - The Actor



**John – The Actor:** Hello. Welcome to the Green Room. I've just popped the kettle on. Fancy a mince pie?

**Georgie - the Stage Manager:** (*over comms*) Ladies and Gentlemen of the cast and crew of Beauty and the Beast this is your five minute call for the start of Act 2. Five minutes please. Five minutes.

**John – The Actor:** I've not got a great deal to do in Act Two so I'm just chilling out for a bit. Listening to a bit of the footie. My team are playing and it's not looking great for them.

Also I'm keeping out of the Stage Manager's way, I may have accidentally kicked the scenery and made a small hole. I'm hoping she won't be too cross.

What's my role? Well, it's essential really, one of the most important parts in the play - I'm part of the Pantomime Horse. Not the front end, no. I'm the back end of the Pantomime Horse.

**Georgie – The Stage Manager:** Beauty, Beast and Chorus of Singing Cutlery to the stage please.

**John – The Actor:** Turn that down a bit, want to keep an ear on the footie. ... Being the back end of the horse - I do quite enjoy it actually - I think I bring a certain humour to the role and, as we say in Showbusiness 'No small parts, only small actors' ... and without me where would the front part of the horse be? ... I'll tell you, running round in circles looking for its tail, that's where!

Actually, to tell you a secret, that's the thing I love most about acting in a play - we're all part of a team, and we all need each other. If the actor playing even the tiniest role isn't there then everything falls apart. All the little bits add up to one big glorious show.

I really love the next part of the story - it's my big scene ...

Beauty has made friends with the Beast but she misses her Dad. So the Beast gives her a magic mirror to see him. But when Beauty looks through it she realises her Dad is poorly. So The Beast lets her go home, because his heart is softening towards her.

But while Beauty is looking after her Dad the curse starts to take hold and The Beast is almost dying - when Beauty realises she jumps on her horse (half of which is me)



and gallops full pelt through a terrible storm to get back to the castle and SAVE THE BEAST!!

It's very dramatic - I love doing the galloping.

**Georgie – The Stage Manager:** Pantomime Horse - front end AND back end - standby for your entrance. Stand by Please.

**John – The Actor:** Oh - that's my cue.

Tell you what, why don't you head back into the auditorium (that's where the audience sits) and enjoy the second half - there's lots of good bits coming up, singing, dancing, a comedy routine with the pantomime dame and a cheeky ghost. And then, right at the end when the curse is broken and The Beast is a prince again, everyone changes into beautiful sparkling gold and silver costumes and everyone claps.

I like it when everyone claps - it gives me a warm fuzzy feeling in my tum!

That's it, off you trot.

Neigh!

## Encore, Encore - The Audience Member



(SFX: applause)

**Announcer:** Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls, we hope you enjoyed our pantomime of Beauty and Beast. Thank you for coming and everyone at Fly High Theatre wishes you a HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

*(playout)*

**Toby – The Audience Member:** That. Was. Incredible.

I LOVED IT.

Can we watch it all over again?

Right now?

PLEEEEEEEEEEEASE. Please please please please please.

I'm not tired. I don't want to go home to bed.

Please can we stay. Please please please.

I don't even know what my favourite bit was.

Was it the singing, or the band, or the dancing, or the flashes and bangs, or the glittering, sparkling costumes, or, or, or ... ?

SO MANY BIG FEELINGS!

I loved it when the Pantomime Dame threw sweets out into the audience, and then later when she got the super soaker and squirted us all with water - I stood up so I could get super wet.

I loved it when the Evil Witch cursed the Beast and everything went green on stage and there was even actual real fire.

I loved the pantomime horse. It was so funny - and when it kicked a hole in the wall it looked so real.

I loved eating the ice cream in the interval.

I loved doing the puzzles in the back of the programme.

I loved it when Beauty and The Beast sang a sad song when they were apart from each other. I think I nearly cried.

I loved it when they fell in love.

It was magical.

I loved sitting with my Mum and Dad and everyone else in the audience and watching the show all together, laughing at the funny bits, being a bit scared in the scary bits and holding my Dad's hand, and being happy at the happy ending bits. ... All together.

I love the pantomime.

I love the theatre.

I want to go again and again and again and again and .... *(fade out)*