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The school play

Joanna Jones is on the stage of a theatre. The people in the audience are clapping and cheering and calling her name. The bright lights feel hot on her face. She moves forward and bows. The audience stands. Someone comes onto the stage and gives her some flowers. She smiles and bows again. The noise of the audience gets louder. She feels wonderful. Joanna Jones is a great actor. She is a star.

Joanna heard a noise behind her. She turned, but no one was there. She looked around her. There were no lights, no audience, no clapping and cheering. The theatre was quiet. She was Joanna Jones, a fifteen-year-old schoolgirl, standing on the stage of her school theatre. But she knew that one day her dream would come true. One day she was going to be a famous actor.

Joanna shivered. She felt cold. She felt as if someone was watching her. She looked around her but the theatre was empty.

I shouldn't be here, she thought. I'd better go before someone catches me.

Joanna went down the stairs behind the stage, then out of the door at the back of the theatre. She walked around to the front, where a crowd of students was waiting. She found her friend Lisa in the crowd.

'Where have you been?' demanded Lisa.

'Nowhere,' Joanna answered.

'I don't know why I agreed to come to this meeting,' Lisa said.

'You agreed to come because you're my best friend. You agreed to come because you know how important this is to me,'



The audition

A week later Joanna was wishing she hadn't made that promise to Lisa. It was the day of the audition and she felt sick. Her head hurt. She dressed slowly, then sat in front of the mirror to brush her hair. Her tired, sad face stared back at her.

What are you doing? she asked herself. *You're going to look foolish. Everyone will laugh at you.*

She dragged herself downstairs and sat at the table to have breakfast. She tried to smile. She didn't want her parents to see how nervous she was.

'Here's some toast, love,' said her mother.

'Thanks,' replied Joanna.

'It's the big day today. How are you feeling?' said her father.

'Oh, fine, Dad. A bit nervous...you know,' said Joanna. She put down her piece of toast. She couldn't eat.

'You'll be fine. You've been practising all week,' said her mother. 'And *Grease* is a great musical. You'll have lots of fun.'

'Yes, I know I will,' said Joanna, but she didn't want to talk about it. She left the room and picked up her bag. She opened the front door and called, 'Bye, Mum, bye, Dad. See you later.'

'Bye, love.' 'Good luck.'

The morning dragged by slowly. Joanna's headache got worse, and by lunchtime she wanted to go home and climb back into bed.

'Right,' said a voice beside her, 'let's go.' Lisa took Joanna's arm and started to walk towards the theatre. Joanna didn't move.

'I don't know, Lisa,' she said. 'I think I might not audition this time.'

'Joanna, you promised me you would do this,' said Lisa. 'So come on, star!'

Chapter 3

Mr Joseph

The old man sat down in the chair next to her and looked at her in the mirror. He smiled.

‘I’m not laughing at you,’ he said gently.

Joanna stared back at him. She didn’t say anything. She just glared at him.

‘What were you thinking of when you were singing?’ He pointed up to the ceiling and the stage above them.

Joanna didn’t reply. She shrugged her shoulders. She was still angry with this stranger. She was still angry with herself.

‘Come on. I won’t laugh again. Tell me what you were thinking,’ he asked again.

Joanna thought for a moment. ‘I was telling myself that I could do it. I was telling myself to relax,’ she answered.

The man smiled. Joanna glared at him for the second time.

‘Do you always do what you’re told?’ he asked.

She shrugged her shoulders again. ‘No, not always,’ she said.

‘No, nor do I,’ he said. ‘If you think about trying to relax, then you’ll think about being on the stage. You’ll think about the audience. You’ll think about the other actors. It will make you more nervous. When you’re singing a song, you need to think about the words you are singing. Songs always tell a story – well, the good ones do, anyway. If you think about the story that you’re telling, you’ll forget about where you are.’

Joanna sat up. She wasn’t so angry any more. She was interested in what this man was saying.

‘Tell me about the song,’ the man continued.

Joanna thought for a moment. She told him about the song.

‘You see?’ he said when she had finished. ‘Each character is telling a story. Sandy’s story is sweet, about the boy she met in

Activities

Chapters 1 and 2

Before you read

A. Look at the picture on page 5 and circle the correct answers.

1. Where is the girl standing?
a. on a stage b. on a bus c. on a beach
2. What is she wearing?
a. a nurse's uniform b. a soldier's uniform c. a school uniform

B. Find these words in your dictionary. Use them in the sentences.

theatre audience bowed shivered

1. We _____ as we waited in the cold wind for our bus.
2. The new _____ can seat over a thousand people.
3. The _____ loved the ballet star's performance.
4. The people _____ as the king walked past them.

C. Listen to Track 3 on CD 1 and answer these questions.

1. What did Mrs Moon teach?
a. history b. drama
2. Who gave the theatre to the school?
a. Joanna's family b. the Willis family
3. How did Joanna feel about the Willis Theatre?
a. She loved it. b. She didn't like it.

After you read

COMPREHENSION

A. Circle the correct answers.

1. How old was Joanna?
a. fourteen b. fifteen c. sixteen
2. What year was she in at school?
a. Year Nine b. Year Ten c. Year Eleven
3. Who was in an audition pair with Joanna?
a. Mark b. Lisa c. Juliet
4. Where was the music teacher sitting at the auditions?
a. with Mrs Moon b. behind the stage c. at the piano

Chapters 3, 4 and 5

Before you read

A. Look at the picture on page 16 and circle the correct answers.

- How does Joanna look?
a. happy b. excited c. unhappy
- What are Joanna and the man sitting in front of?
a. a window b. a mirror c. a television

B. Find these words in your dictionary. Use them in the sentences.

confused whispered corridor calm

- The boy _____, 'What's the answer?' to his friend in class.
- Our hotel room was at the end of a long _____.
- 'I'm _____,' she said. 'I thought you weren't coming until Saturday.'
- Mum is always _____ after she has had a cup of tea.

C. Listen to Track 4 on CD 1 and answer these questions.

- Who had the leading male role of Danny in *Grease*?
a. Mark b. Mr Joseph
- Who was Joanna going to meet after adding her name to the list?
a. Mark b. Mr Joseph
- Where were the dressing rooms and storeroom in the theatre?
a. next to the stage b. below the stage

After you read

COMPREHENSION

A. Circle the correct answers.

- Where did Joanna meet Mr Joseph?
a. in a storeroom b. in a corridor c. in a dressing room
- What did Joanna hide behind in the corridor?
a. a pile of boxes b. a piano c. a door
- What did Mark hope to be one day?
a. a teacher b. a painter c. a doctor
- What colour were Joanna's clothes at the dress rehearsal?
a. red b. black c. brown

Glossary

adj. adjective; *adv.* adverb; *n.* noun; *v.* verb

actor /'æktə/ <i>n.</i>	Schauspieler(in)
assembly /ə'sembli/ <i>n.</i>	Versammlung
audience /'ɔ:dʒəns/ <i>n.</i>	Publikum
audition /ɔ:'dɪʃn/ <i>n.</i>	Vorsprechen, Vorsingen
<i>v.</i>	vorsprechen, vorsingen
backstage /,bæk'steɪdʒ/ <i>adv.</i>	hinter den Kulissen
band /bænd/ <i>n.</i>	Band
bow /baʊ/ <i>n.</i>	Verbeugung
<i>v.</i>	sich verbeugen
calm /kɑ:m/ <i>adj.</i>	ruhig, gelassen
cancel /'kænsəl/ <i>v.</i>	absagen
character /'kærəktə/ <i>n.</i>	Figur (in einem Theaterstück)
check something out /tʃek 'sʌmθɪŋ aʊt/ <i>v.</i>	etwas überprüfen, klären
cheer /tʃɪə/ <i>v.</i>	jubeln
clap /klæp/ <i>v.</i>	klatschen
complain /kəm'pleɪn/ <i>v.</i>	sich beschweren
confident /'kɒnfɪd(ə)nt/ <i>adj.</i>	selbstsicher
confused /kən'fju:zd/ <i>adj.</i>	verwirrt, durcheinander
corridor /'kɒrɪ,dɔ:/ <i>n.</i>	Gang, Korridor
cue /kju:/ <i>n.</i>	Stichwort
cutting /'kʌtɪŋ/ <i>n.</i>	Ausschnitt
(from a newspaper)	
decision /dɪ'sɪʒn/ <i>n.</i>	Entscheidung
dressing room /'dresɪŋ ru:m/ <i>n.</i>	Garderobe
expect /ɪk'spekt/ <i>v.</i>	erwarten
finally /'faɪn(ə)li/ <i>adv.</i>	endlich
fire alarm /faɪə ə'laɪm/ <i>n.</i>	Feueralarm
fire chief /faɪə tʃi:f/ <i>n.</i>	Einsatzleiter (bei der Feuerwehr)