

NOW YOU SEE ME
Jonathan Dorf

Commissioned and developed by the Choate Rosemary Hall Summer Arts Conservatory,
Wallingford, CT
First produced by Oak Park High School, Kansas City, MO

Cast of Characters

GIRL, a teenager
BOY, a teenager and the same person as the Girl
FIRST OFFICIAL, a secretary-like school employee
SECOND OFFICIAL, a principal-like school employee
MOM, mother of the Boy/Girl
DAD, father of the Boy/Girl
JANE, a high school girl
JOANNE, a high school girl
JOHN, a high school boy
TEACHER, a female role that could just as easily be male
JENN, a high school girl
JENN'S FRIEND, a high school girl
GUIDANCE SECRETARY, the guardian of the gates to the guidance office
COLLEGE REP, enthusiastic college admissions officer
MRS. COUNSELOR, member of the school counseling office
JESSIE, high school girl at the counseling office
MRS. GUIDANCE, second member of the school counseling office
VARIOUS COLLEGE REPS
FIRST TV PERSONALITY
SECOND TV PERSONALITY
PSYCHOLOGIST, a psychologist in need of a psychologist
NEW FRIEND, a high school outcast
SECOND NEW FRIEND, a high school outcast
THIRD NEW FRIEND, a high school outcast and a bit of a computer whiz

While it is possible, in the interest of using more actors, to cast a different person in each role, aside from the Boy and Girl, all roles can be multiple-cast. For simplicity, stage directions involving non-gender specific characters are written as if the characters were male. They don't need to be. And obviously, in the opening speech, substitute the name of your school or group for "Choate Rosemary Hall Summer Arts Conservatory."

The play is meant to be as theatrical as possible and to use minimal and/or suggested sets.

A smaller cast could work, with some creative staging, as follows:

GIRL
BOY
FIRST OFFICIAL/TEACHER/GUIDANCE SECRETARY/PSYCHOLOGIST
SECOND OFFICIAL/JOHN/EXTRA COLLEGE REP/SECOND NEW FRIEND
MOM//JENN/MRS. COUNSELOR/MRS. GUIDANCE
DAD/COLLEGE REP
JANE/JESSIE/FIRST TV PERSONALITY/NEW FRIEND
JOANNE/JENN'S FRIEND/JUNE/SECOND TV PERSONALITY/THIRD NEW FRIEND

(Nowhere particular in America. The present. An empty stage. Enter the actor playing the FIRST SCHOOL OFFICIAL, who should assume the traditional curtain-raiser speech position.)

ACTOR

Welcome to the Choate Rosemary Hall Summer Arts Conservatory presentation of NOW YOU SEE ME by Jonathan Dorf. At this time, please turn off all beepers and cellular phones, and please refrain from videotaping or taking flash photographs of the performance. In the event of a fire or an explosion, please exit the theater in an orderly fashion through the marked doors.

(As the actor exits, a TEENAGE GIRL in a spotlight pulls out a cellular phone and dials. A PHONE RINGS. The FIRST SCHOOL OFFICIAL, age indeterminate, returns to the stage carrying a phone handset, though probably not the whole phone.)

FIRST OFFICIAL

Hello?

GIRL

I'm blowing up the school.

FIRST OFFICIAL

Please hold.

(Enter a SECOND OFFICIAL, a principal-like personage, perhaps carrying the rest of the phone. The First Official hands the phone handset to the Second Official.)

GIRL

I'm blowing up the school.

SECOND OFFICIAL

Why?

GIRL

Someone looked at me funny.

SECOND OFFICIAL

Funny ha-ha?

GIRL

Funny weird.

SECOND OFFICIAL

Googly eyes weird?

GIRL

What are googly eyes?

SECOND OFFICIAL

I'm not sure. Maybe something like this.

(The Second Official makes "googly eyes.")

GIRL

We're on the phone.

SECOND OFFICIAL

You kind of bulge one eye—hang on.

(to the rest of the "office")

Can anybody make googly eyes?

FIRST OFFICIAL

Isn't it sort of—?

(The First Official makes a version of "googly eyes.")

SECOND OFFICIAL

I thought that was bug eyes.

FIRST OFFICIAL

No. That's googly. Bug is like this.

(The First Official makes a version of "bug eyes.")

SECOND OFFICIAL

Are you positive?

FIRST OFFICIAL

Not a hundred-ten percent.

SECOND OFFICIAL

Can we get a number and call you back?

FIRST OFFICIAL

Maybe search the internet. Or form a committee.

GIRL

I want to blow up the school and everybody in it!

SECOND OFFICIAL

Are you a girl?

GIRL

What do you think?

SECOND OFFICIAL

I think you are, but you could be disguising your voice.

FIRST OFFICIAL

It's a girl?

(The Second Official nods.)

Girls don't blow up schools.

SECOND OFFICIAL

I know.

(to the Girl)

This is a highly inappropriate conversation. Girls don't blow up schools.

FIRST OFFICIAL

Not in this neighborhood.

GIRL

Fine.

(A BOY enters. The Girl gives him the cell phone, and he takes her place. The Girl exits. Pause while the First and Second Officials scrutinize the Boy intensely.)

SECOND OFFICIAL

No. I don't see it.

FIRST OFFICIAL

Hang on.

(to the Boy)

Look mean.

BOY

What?

FIRST OFFICIAL

Look mean.

(brief pause)

Go ahead.

(The Boy tries to look mean.)

Try maybe closing your mouth all the way.

(The Boy does so.)

No. You're right.

SECOND OFFICIAL

It's not there.

BOY

What's not there?

SECOND OFFICIAL

The look.

FIRST OFFICIAL

Maybe it's the clothes.

SECOND OFFICIAL

Yes!

BOY

What's wrong with my clothes?

SECOND OFFICIAL

I'm thinking more black, or something baggy. Or with a slogan.

FIRST OFFICIAL

Do you buy them, or do your parents buy them?

SECOND OFFICIAL

That's a good question. Mom! Dad!

(Enter MOM and DAD carrying a bag, which they hand to the First Official. The First Official pulls a black T-shirt out of the bag and shoves it on the Boy's head. It's OK if the shirt covers his face, forcing him to struggle to see.)

FIRST OFFICIAL

Try this.

SECOND OFFICIAL

Are you aware of how your son dresses?

DAD

Honey, we have a son?

MOM

That's why I didn't recognize this laundry.

(She dumps the contents of the bag, black and other
"subversive-looking" T-shirts, onto the ground.)

SECOND OFFICIAL

He threatened to blow up the school.

MOM

In that outfit?

DAD

I have a son?

BOY

There's nothin' wrong with my clothes.

DAD

(to the Boy)

Is this your laundry?

MOM

You look like everyone else.

(Mom, soon joined by Dad, piles the T-shirts on the Boy.)

You should be special.

SECOND OFFICIAL

(helping with the T-shirts)

Maybe a badge.

MOM

What would people say about us?

(Mom completes the Boy's outfit with a pair of sunglasses.)

How is anybody going to know about your problem?

BOY

I don't wanna' wear—

SECOND OFFICIAL

How are we going to tell you apart—

BOY

Leave me alone!

FIRST OFFICIAL

If you're just—

BOY

Leave me—

MOM and OFFICIALS

Average?

BOY

Now you see me,

(The Boy becomes, in his mind, "invisible.")

now you don't!

(The Boy puts the sunglasses on Dad's face, then steps out of the scene.)

MOM

Honey, you know I hate it when you wear sunglasses.

DAD

They're not my sunglasses.

SECOND OFFICIAL

We're not needed here.

FIRST OFFICIAL

Right. Family problem.

Like what you see? Hit the back button and follow the instructions to order a perusal copy of the full script!