

## NOTES

*The Secret Language of Fish* is a contemporary comedy and may be performed by a male and female and entered in Duo Interpretation or Duet Acting, or this selection could be performed by either a male or female and be entered in Humorous Interpretation. If this selection is performed in Duo Interpretation or Duet Acting, this play will require the actors to portray two high school freshmen and two fish in an aquarium found in a biology classroom. Be creative with the physical transitions between each scene. Also, not only will the performers have the creative license to decide what *types* of fish are being portrayed, but each actor will also have the arduous task of determining how to *physically* portray each fish. There are many puns found within the dialogue between Jilly and Frieda. The references to these puns are often italicized in the script; however, it is not necessary to make the puns obvious by emphasizing them during the performance. In one scene, there are several satirized references to various musicals. If the performers are adept at singing, it would be beneficial to know the tune to each of the referenced songs. The drama mask icons are simply visible to indicate a possible ending for a teaser, if a teaser is used. This is a very clever script for two comedic actors, so have fun and be creative!

### Characters:

Lance, a freshman boy

Alexis, a freshman girl

Jilly, a male fish

Frieda, a female fish

*(Alexis enters a biology classroom with a backpack. Lance is setting up their lab assignment.)*

**Lance:** Hey, Alexis.

**Alexis:** Hi. Where's Ms. Tuttle?

**Lance:** She left us a note. She said she wasn't feeling well, and we're on the honor system.

**Alexis:** Did she leave the frog?

**Lance:** Already on the lab table.

**Alexis:** Well, are you ready to start?

**Lance:** Sure, but first, the note asked if we'd feed the fish in the tank.

**Alexis:** No problem. I have a Betta in my bedroom.

**Lance:** I *betta* you do.

# The Secret Language of Fish

By Gregory T. Burns

**Alexis:** *(Not really laughing)* Ha ha ha. Lance, you're a regular David Letterman.

**Lance:** *(Sprinkling flakes into the aquarium)* Who's hungry for some fish flakes?

**Alexis:** They'd probably prefer ground up worms or something.

**Lance:** No, fish love these flakes. *(ala Tony the Tiger)* They're g-r-e-a-t!

**Alexis:** *(Taking the fish food from Lance)* Let me see that. *(Reading the content label)* Yummy. Contains: Fish meal, dried yeast, dehulled soybean, Sorbitol, Lecithin... Trust me. They'd prefer worms.

**Lance:** *(Beat)* Do you think they communicate?

**Alexis:** *(Squatting, looking at the fish through the glass)* What? The fish?

**Lance:** Yeah.

**Alexis:** They must. I'm sure all species do.

**Lance:** But how? They have no facial expressions. They probably don't even have a sense of humor. How do they communicate?

**Alexis:** I don't know. Maybe they have some sort of secret language or something.

**Lance:** Secret language?

**Alexis:** Sure. They're probably looking at us right now and thinking we're two of the oddest things they've ever seen.

*(Physical transition into the fish)*

**Jilly:** If only they knew. Right, Frieda?

**Frieda:** Right, Jilly.

**Jilly:** *(Looking up at the floating fish flakes at the top of the tank)* Look! More fish flakes. *(Sarcastically)* Yum.

**Frieda:** *(Beat)* I'd rather have worms.



**Lance:** Well, I guess we'd better start dissecting our frog.

**Alexis:** Sounds like a plan. The quicker we do it *(Lance immediately giggles)* the quicker it will be over. *(Beat, irritated)* The second I said those words, I knew you'd react that way.

**Lance:** *(Smiling)* What?

**Alexis:** I've yet to meet a freshman boy who doesn't turn an innocent comment into something dirty.

**Lance:** No, I'm sorry. I was just thinking about something funny.

**Alexis:** Yeah? Like what?

**Lance:** Nothing.

**Alexis:** No, really, I want to know. I said, "The quicker we do it, the quicker it will be over." You started giggling the second I said, "Do it." *(Crosses arms)* So what were you thinking about that was so funny at *that*

exact second?

**Lance:** Promise you won't get mad?

**Alexis:** Promise.

**Lance:** Okay. I was picturing you with a scalpel in your hand, ripping open our frog.

**Alexis:** What's so funny about that?

**Lance:** Come on. A girl? With a scalpel?

**Alexis:** (*Not amused*) Yeah?

**Lance:** Cutting up a slimy frog?

**Alexis:** For your information, Lance Cartwright, someday I intend to go to medical school.

**Lance:** I'm sorry.

**Alexis:** Why be sorry? I'm going to be a world-famous doctor someday.

**Lance:** No. I mean, I'm sorry I laughed.

**Alexis:** Are you really?

**Lance:** Yes, and I sincerely apologize.

**Alexis:** Apology accepted.

**Lance:** So, what do you want to study? In the medical field, that is?

**Alexis:** Well, I haven't completely made up my mind yet, but I know I want to be some sort of surgeon.

*(Physical transition into the fish)*

**Jilly:** Did you hear that, Frieda? She's not happy being human. She wants to be a *sturgeon*.

**Frieda:** Jilly, I'm afraid your *herring* isn't what it used to be. She said, "Surgeon."

**Jilly:** Oh. And I see you still know how to have fun with a pun.

**Frieda:** I think that's very noble of her. She'll probably save a lot of *sole*.

**Jilly:** That's a *halibut* field for a young girl to enter. Good for her!

**Frieda:** That's right. Good for her! It's always important to have a *porpoise* in life.

**Jilly:** (*Swimming around looking for the teacher*) Where's that teacher of theirs? Shouldn't she be here supervising them?

**Frieda:** I think she left right after school. She's had hot flashes all day long.

**Jilly:** I didn't notice anything.

**Frieda:** Of course you didn't notice. You were taking a nap in the day-glow castle over there. I think their teacher's going through *minnow*-pause.

*(Physical transition into the two freshmen)*

**Lance:** Well, now that we're suited up with our gloves and safety goggles,