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Domby-Dom

A play

By “Denby Trubshaw”
(assisted by Nick Warburton)

Samuel French—London
New York-Toronto-Hollywood



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CHARACTERS

Twenty-two children playing themselves and the following parts:

Teddy Smith

Jemima

Timmy

Popkins

Rats

Helpers

The action of the play takes place on a stage in a theatre

Time: the present

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(See also page ii)

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PRODUCTION NOTE

The play can be performed by almost any size of group from about a dozen upwards. The parts are numbered one to twenty-two, but many of them can be divided up to increase the opportunities for speaking, or merged if fewer actors are available. However, it is probably best if the following actors play these roles:

Four - the organizer
Six - Teddy Smith
Seven - Jemima
Eleven and Twelve - set builders
Thirteen - the scene changer
Fourteen - Timmy
Fifteen - Popkins

When the play within the play starts, the action is carried out by the toys, with the actors making them move and providing the voices. Contemporary references can be changed at the whim of the cast and producers.

**Other plays by Nick Warburton
published by Samuel French Ltd:**

Distracted Globe
Don't Blame It On The Boots
The Droitwich Discovery
Easy Stages
The Last Bread Pudding
The Loophole
Not Bobby
Office Song
Round the World With Class Six
Receive This Light
Sour Grapes and Ashes
Zartan

DOMBY-DOM

Music. The Lights come up on several large boxes

A group of children is surrounded by toys—teddies, dolls, cars, etc.—and is playing, unaware of the audience

One (*making the teddy walk*) Domby-domby-domby-dom. (*Making the teddy stop and knock at an imaginary door*) Knock-knock-knock. (*In a teddy voice*) Is there anyone in?

Two and Three make their toys walk to the door, while Four enters and watches

Two |
Three | (*together*) Domby-domby-domby-dom.

Two (*in a toy voice*) Hallo. Who's there?

Three (*in a toy voice*) Hallo. Who's there?

One It's me. Teddy Smith. I've come round for tea.

Two You've come round for tea?

Three You've come round for tea?

One I've come round for tea.

Four (*crossly*) What are you doing?

One (*still as a teddy*) Oh, hallo. We're doing what you said, aren't we?

Two Yes, we're doing what you said.

Three Yes, we're doing...

Four (*to the toys*) I'm not talking to you. (*To the children*) I'm talking to you.

One (*in teddy's voice*) Oh, dear. S/he wants to talk to you. (*In own voice*) S/he wants to talk to me? (*In teddy's voice, making the teddy nod*) Yes, s/he wants to...

Four Will you pack that in? What are you doing, you clodpoles?

Two (*in own voice*) We're playing.

Three That's what you said, isn't it? Play?

Four Not play. A play. Do a play. With actors and things.

One A play? Oh. (*To the teddy*) Dearie me, we got it wrong.

Two Dearie, dearie, dearie me.

Four Stop that!

They make the toys cry

Stop it. Now. You're wasting time. Don't you realize? I said we'd do a play. Put on a play. And here you are, mucking about with a bunch of toys. It's ridiculous. (*Beat*) They aren't even in costume.

One (*in own voice*) Well, don't panic. We will do a play, if that's what you want.

Four It's not just what I want, mate. It's what I've told everyone we'd do. I said we'd put on a play. I did all the arrangements and you were going to do the play.

Three What arrangements?

Four For a start I asked all these people to come and see it.

One People? What people?

Four (*indicating the audience*) These people! Patiently waiting for something to happen.

The others peer at the audience. It's the first time they've noticed them

Three Oh dear.

Two Dearie me.

Four Exactly. So now what?

They make the toys wave

One (*in a teddy voice*) Hallo, everyone...

Four Don't keep doing that! We can't ask all these people to watch

half an hour of teddies waving and saying hallo! We have got to do a play!

Two But there's only [four] of us.

Four [Three] of you. I said I'd do the arrangements, that's all. You won't catch me appearing on stage.

Four exits in a huff

They watch him/her go

Three Dearie, dearie me.

One Well, we can't do a play on our own. I'd never remember the words.

Two I know. Let's ask them. (*Indicating the audience*) That's what they do in pantomimes, don't they?

Three They can't be in it. They've come to watch.

Two Well, we've got to do something. (*To the audience*) Listen, everyone: would you like to be in our play?

No response

Three Right, then. Just us.

Two But what are we going to do?

Three What else can we do? (*To the audience*) Ladies and gentlemen, we present *Teddy Smith Comes to Tea*. (*Making the toy walk*) Domby-domby-domby-dom...

A voice calls from the audience

Six Oh no! Not again!

One Don't interrupt. (*Making the teddy walk*) Domby-domby-domby-dom...

Six comes on stage

Six *Teddy Smith Comes to Tea*? Are you serious? Look at these

people. Some of them have high-powered jobs. They don't want to watch *Teddy Smith Comes to Tea*!

Two Well, we gave them the chance...

One But they couldn't be bothered.

Six Then you have to be a bit more forceful. (*To the audience*)

Right! Listen to me, you lot. Sit up and listen. Either some of you get up and act, or you sit through thirty minutes of *Teddy Smith Comes to Tea*. Now, what's it to be?

Pause

Several would-be actors flood on to the stage

There you are. Now all you have to do is get them acting.

Three Right... Well, what shall we do, then?

Five It's obvious, isn't it?

They all look at him/her

Teddy Smith Comes to Tea.

They continue to look at him/her

No, really. I mean, we can get to the heart of these characters. Discover what makes them tick.

Seven Clockwork, mostly. Anyway, we haven't come up here to do a play with Teddy blinking Smith.

One (*making the teddy cry*) I'm not good enough. Oh, dearie, dearie me...

Two Now look what you've done. You've upset him.

One (*making the teddy walk off*) I'll just have to get back in my box ... and cry myself to sleep.

All Ahh!

Six No, no. Do stay. I'm sure we can find something for you to do.

Three But not have tea. That's too boring.

Five What, then?

Seven Well, what most people want is football.

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