

One for Sorrow

**A complete play
including 20 monologues**



by

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ARTS
on the move

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One For Sorrow

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This pack has three sections:

- Teachers' Notes
- One for Sorrow – the full play script
- The Monologues – one per page

“One for Sorrow
Two for Joy
Three for a Girl
Four for a Boy...”

From the age-old children's rhyme Clive Hulme and Chris Rowley have crafted a play with dialogue which also contains twenty self-contained monologues.

It can be performed as written or can be presented as monologues-only. Both make dramatic sense.

For a cast of between 4 and 21 (any gender mix) the full play lasts about 100 minutes.

Monologues are written in a variety of styles to suit all performers.

The authors are aware that, technically, Magpies do not tweet but if they do, use...



#oneforsorrowtheplay

Teachers' Notes

This play was originally written to satisfy the previous BTEC requirement for students to present a monologue on a specified theme which changed annually (the Individual Showcase Assignment Brief). This play – for which the brief was “Portent” - is one of four.

The others are:

Stirring It (on the theme of Destiny)

The Travelogues (Travel)

True Lies (Contradiction)

Each play has a narrative arc but also contains twenty monologues pertaining to the specified theme; each monologue makes perfect sense when taken out of the context of the whole play.

There are a wide variety of styles and complexities included in this play in order that all actors can find something suitable.

There are stage directions in the play dialogue but not in the monologues themselves. This is not necessarily because the authors are lazy, it is to encourage the students to think deeply about their interpretation and depiction of the characters without spoon-feeding them. As such, the play and monologues are great for directorial practice too. Students can approach them on their own, in pairs, or as a group.

Many of the characters can be played as either gender but some, due to the nature of the play, are gender specific – but these can be played by male or female actors.

The play is followed by the monologues alone repeated on separate pages, each fitting onto a single side of A4 for ease of handling by students.

If this play or parts of it are performed publicly – i.e. to parents or other guests – then there is a **Performance Licence** fee payable. This applies whether you charge an admission fee or not and even if monologues from this play only form part of the evening.

ONE FOR SORROW

Two characters are on stage, fairly close together.

They are dressed in black and white clothing, for example, black trousers and long black coat with white shirts.

They are up high on something - each of them is looking downward at various things but not taking much notice of each other. Their movements are sharp, birdlike, but one gets the impression that one is old (A), the other somewhat younger (B).

A *(Looking down and into the distance)* Lot of traffic today.

B Yes. Very busy.

(Pause)

A That wind's dropped though.

B Yes. Much better.

(Pause)

A Looks as though we might have a drop of rain though.

B Yes. Could do.

(Pause. After a while, B takes something from his pocket and eats it, as one would with a strand of spaghetti).

A Whatcha got?

B *(Chewing and, finally swallowing)* Worm.

A Oh. Nice. Rain'll bring some more out later.

B Perhaps.

A You ever had a rabbit?

B Once. Bit bony.

A Don't fancy rabbit.

B They're difficult to catch. Specially the younger ones. Road kill's better.

A I'll stick to berries!

B You know what they say about variety being the spice of life.

A Who says?

B Humans.

A Oh. Them. They say lots of things I don't understand.

B Yes.

A And do lots of things I don't understand.

B Yes. *(Pause)* Such as?

A Phhh.. Well... Football. I don't understand why they do that.

B Fair point.

A Swimming. Wearing coloured clothes.

B Hmm.

A Saluting me.

B They do that to all of us.

A “Morning Mr Magpie, how’s your wife and children?” Ridiculous.

B Yes. We’re supposed to bring good luck.

A I heard it was to stop us bringing *bad* luck.

B Whichever.

A Who in their right mind would believe that seeing one of us could bring bad luck?

B Or that seeing two of us would bring happiness?

A One for sorrow.

B Two for joy

A Three for a girl.

B Four for a boy.

A Five for silver.

B Six for gold.

A Seven for a secret never to be told.

B Eight’s a wish.

A Nine’s a kiss.

B Ten is a bird you should not miss.

A Eleven for health.

B Twelve for wealth.

A / B Thirteen beware – it’s the Devil himself!
(*They both chuckle*)

B Superstitious humans! I’ve heard a different version as well.
One for sorrow,
Two for mirth
Three for a funeral
Four for birth
Five for heaven
Six for hell
Seven for the devil, his own self

A Oh – there are many. Ten’s a surprise in some versions.

B Superstitious humans.

A Indeed. Indeed. (*Pause*) But I *have* heard some strange tales.

B Strange? Who from?

A My mother, who heard them from her mother, who heard them....

B What, word of beak, you mean?

A Yes, yes. Things that our previous generations have seen. Some I've seen myself.

B Tell me some.

A Now?

B We're not busy. There's no cats up this tree. *(They look around anxiously to assure themselves. Pointedly)* I've just had a worm. It won't rain for a bit. Go on.

A Well, I heard a story...

B Start at the beginning. One. For sorrow.

A It's got no magpies actually in it, you understand.

B No. Okay. But it's about.... Signs?

A Portents. Yes.

B Portents?

A Posh word for signs.

B Hate people who use posh words. Who in their right mind uses the word "portent" these days?

A Quite

B Probably people who think they are im-portent. Im-portent! You see?

A Yes. One for sorrow... One. For sorrow. It was a lady. She...
An old lady appears.

SORROW I know you're there, Albert. Looking down on me. Looking after me. I know you are. Always will do, that's what you said. And you're a man of your word, Albert Jenkins. Were. You never let me down, Albert. Never.
Except when you left me.
Oh I know you never wanted to go and it was a shock to both of us. Not the end, we both expected that. Coz you were poorly a long time.
No, I mean the shock when that doctor said you'd got dementia. We both thought he'd got dementia, saying that, didn't we? We both laughed. Laughed at him.

The play continues...