



A one-act dramatic play

The Boy Without a Name

by Idries Shah

CAST

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

Narrator 3

The Wise Man: dressed in a long belted coat and turban

The Parents of Nameless (or Benaam – whose name changes to Husni)

Nameless (Benaam – whose name changes to Husni in the middle of the play)

Anwar

The Other Participants in the Play

IDEAS FOR PROPS

(Props are optional and can all be constructed out of cardboard and other common items.)

1. Magic Boxes (decorated with exotic colors and images), such as a small box “full of all kinds of names...from all the countries of the world.” You might research and discuss in class what each child’s name would be in a different country. (For example, *John* would be *Jean* in France, or *Joseph* would be *Giuseppe* in Italy.) Have the students come up with various names. Write these down on pieces of paper and place them in the box. You might refer to the illustrations in the book for ideas. (See other ideas for researching names in the “Home/School” section of the Teacher’s Lesson Plan.)

2. A box “of dreams that people don’t want.” Have the class decide on a dream that Husni might not want and make an image of it.

3. A box “full of wonderful dreams”: Ask the students to share their ideas of what they think is “wonderful,” then have them draw or cut out from magazines images that illustrate these ideas. Fill the box with these images. The book’s illustrations offer some “wonderful” ideas, too.

4. Items in the Wise Man’s house: colorful pillows, “oriental” rugs, a cat, etc.

THE SCRIPT FOR *THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME*

Narrator 1: Once upon a time, long, long, long ago, in a country far from here, there lived a boy who had no name.

Narrator 2: It is very strange to have no name, and you might ask...

One of the Participants: Why didn't he have a name?

Narrator 3: Well, it was like this.

Narrator 1: On the day he was born, his parents were just about to choose a name for him...

Narrator 2: when a very wise man came to the house.

The Wise Man (*to the parents*): This is a very, very important boy, and I am going to give him something marvelous one day, but I will have to give him his name first. So please don't give him a name yet.

The Parents: All right, but when will he get a name?

The Wise Man: I cannot say now, but remember, he is a very important boy and you must be careful not to give him a name.

Narrator 3: So the parents called him "Benaam"...

Narrator 1: which means "Nameless" in the language of that country.

Narrator 2: For he was a boy without a name.

Narrator 3: One day Nameless went to see his friend who lived in the next house.

Nameless (*to his friend Anwar*): Everybody has a name, and I would like to have one, too. Do you have a name you can give me?

Anwar: I only have one name. It is Anwar. That's my name, and I need it. If I gave it to you, what would I do for a name? Besides, what would you give me if I did give you my name? You haven't got anything.

Nameless: I've got a dream I don't want. I could give you that.

Anwar: But how can we find out how to get a name and how to pass on a dream from one person to another?

Nameless: I know, let's go and ask the wise man!

Narrator 1: Now, the wise man knew everything, and fortunately he didn't live very far away.

Narrator 2: So Nameless and Anwar went to his house and they knocked on the door.

Narrator 3: As soon as he saw them, the wise man said...

The Wise Man: Come in, Nameless and Anwar...

Narrator 3: even though he had never seen them before.

Nameless and Anwar (*in unison*): How did you know who we were?

The Wise Man: I know many things. And, besides, I was expecting you. Sit down here, and I'll see what I have in my magic boxes.

(Nameless and Anwar sit down on the cushions beside the wise man.)

The Wise Man (*picking up the small box of "names"*): This is a magic box, and it's absolutely full of all kinds of names. You just see.

Narrator 1: And when he opened the lid of the box, the boys could hear all the names in it.

All Other Participants: (*in unison, whisper the names written on the pieces of paper in the box...have each participant pick a different name to whisper.*)

Narrator 2: There were all kinds of names.

All of the Narrators: Names, names, names.

Narrator 3: Names saying themselves...

Narrator 1: names saying other names.

Narrator 2: Names saying names from all the countries of the world.

Narrator 3: And the wise man picked a name out of the box and handed it to Nameless...

Narrator 1: and the name jumped onto his hand...

Narrator 2: ran up his arm and sprang onto his shoulder...

Narrator 3: and then it went into his ear...

Narrator 1: and right into his head.

All of the Narrators: And suddenly he knew that he had a name!

Nameless – now known as Husni: Hooray! Hooray! I've got a name. I am Husni!

Narrator 2: Husni was his name.

Anwar: But I want the dream that Husni promised me!

The Wise Man: Patience, my boy!

(Pick up the box of "dreams that people don't want" and open it)

This is a box of dreams that people don't want. You just stroke your head to take the dream out of it, Husni, and then put the dream into this box.

Narrator 3: And Husni did so, and, sure enough, when he stroked his head he found that the dream came into his hand...

Narrator 1: and when he put his hand down near the box, the dream popped into the box.

(Husni holds the picture that the class made of the dream he didn't want and puts it in the box.)

The Wise Man *(picking up the box of "wonderful dreams" and opening it):* This box is full of wonderful dreams!

Narrator 2: And the two boys could see all sorts of marvelous dreams inside.

All of the Narrators: Wonderful, wonderful dreams!

All Other Participants: *(pick out of the box the images of dreams that they created.)*

The Wise Man: I am going to give you one dream each. Pick a dream.

Narrator 3 *(as the boys pick a dream out of the box):* And the dreams, as soon as they caught hold of them...

Narrator 1: ran up their arms, onto their shoulders, into their ears...

Narrator 2: and right into their heads...

Narrator 3: just as Husni's name had done. And after that...

All of the Narrators: forever and ever, Husni had a name...

All of the cast: and the two boys, Husni and Anwar, always had wonderful dreams.

THE END