

VMFA TAKE & MAKE

A Melodrama for One Actor

For thousands of years, humans have made art to tell stories -- from an illustration of a hunt on a cave wall, to a documentary photograph of a current event. But art is just one way to tell a story! Oral storytelling, writing, and acting can also convey the tales of our lives from the simplest of experiences to complex explorations of the unknown.

Melodramas are dramatic plays that feature exaggerated emotions and predictable characters. In this melodrama for one actor, you will be the star of *Must Pay the Rent* as you play three different characters using only one prop.

MUST PAY THE RENT a play in one act

MUST PAY THE RENT character list

THE LADY: a frantic, distressed, and later relieved, fair maiden

THE VILLAIN: a cruel, evil landlord

THE HERO: a kind, caring gentleman

Synopsis

A lady is desperate to find enough money to pay the rent. Her landlord, who is not an understanding gentleman, will do whatever it takes to pressure her into paying her rent. Much to the lady's relief, a gentleman understands her distress and volunteers to pay the rent.

VILLAIN

(Spoken in a deep, menacing tone, while aggressively pointing at the lady.)

You must pay the rent.

LADY

(Spoken in a high pitched, mousey tone, with hand gestures that suggest she is about to faint.)

But I can't pay the rent.

VILLAIN

(Spoken in an angry, deep, menacing tone, with threatening hand gestures.)

You must pay the rent.

LADY

(Spoken in a shrill, frightened tone, with nail-biting hand gestures.)

But I can't pay the rent.

HERO

(Spoken in an excited, manly voice, with broad open-arm gestures.)

I'll pay the rent!

LADY

(Spoken in an ecstatic, high pitched tone, with hand gestures that suggest she's reaching out to embrace the hero.)

My hero!

(over)

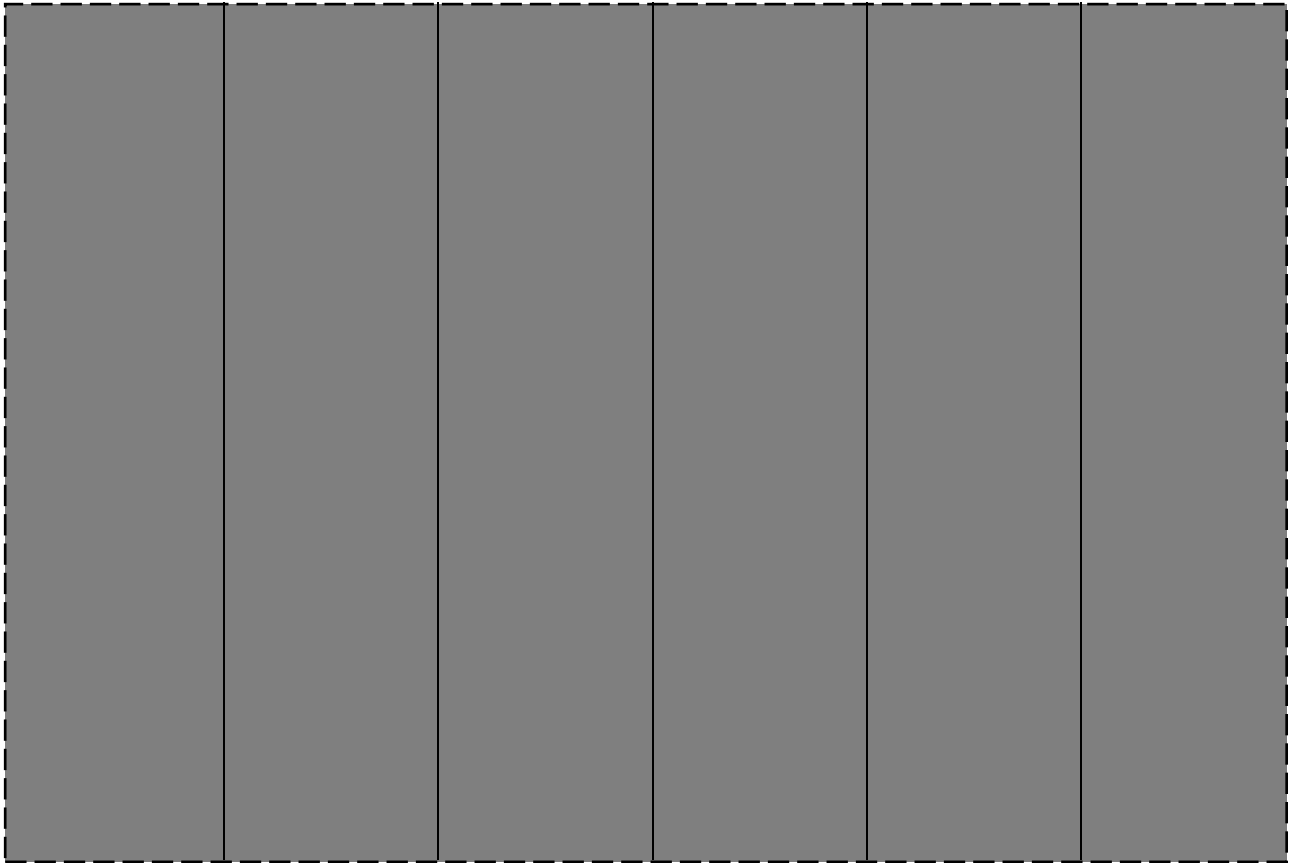
The Costumes:

1. Using scissors, cut out the rectangle below along the dotted lines.
2. Fold the paper as if you were making an accordion fan. Starting from the bottom, fold upward on the first solid line. Next, flip your paper and fold downward. Continue this procedure until the entire rectangle is folded.
3. Change the positioning of the folded paper as you perform each character.

THE LADY: hold the folded paper on top of your head as if it were a bow in your hair.

THE VILLAIN: hold the folded paper beneath your nose as if it were a bushy mustache.

THE HERO: hold the folded paper at the collar of your shirt as if it were a neat and tidy bow-tie.



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It's your art.