Just Like Us

By Craig Sodaro

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# JUST LIKE US

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## CHARACTERS

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<td>our storyteller</td>
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<td>TWO</td>
<td>second in command of the Blues</td>
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<td>THREE</td>
<td>a Blue</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOUR</td>
<td>another; FOUR'S parent</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIVE</td>
<td>another; more open-minded than the other Blues</td>
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<td>SIX</td>
<td>another; a child</td>
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<td>SEVEN</td>
<td>another</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>leader of the Greens</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>second in command of the Greens</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>a Green</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>another; more open-minded than the other Greens</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>another</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>another</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>another</td>
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<tr>
<td>STORM</td>
<td>optional</td>
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<td>the Purple girl</td>
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JUST LIKE US

SETTING: Two benches, one STAGE LEFT painted green, one STAGE RIGHT painted blue. At CENTER STAGE stands TREE, dressed in black, leafless, with a few knots here and there.

AT RISE: A lone, leafless TREE stands CENTER. BLUES stand UP RIGHT, their backs to the audience. GREENS stand UP LEFT, their backs also to the audience. The TREE comes to life, surveying the audience.

TREE: Welcome to a land of fantasy, where extraordinary things happen and nothing is like in the real world. For instance, I am a talking tree. Imagine that! I used to be covered with beautiful, thick leaves, but now my branches are so very thin and weak. You're probably wondering what a lonely, miserable tree like me is doing here. Well, even in a world of fantasy, sad things can happen. It would help me feel better if I could tell you what happened. Is that okay with you? (Waits for any response, then continues.) Oh, thank you. I've been needing some friends for a very long time now. And don't worry, this story is just from my fantasy world. I don't think it could ever happen in the real world, though I'm not totally sure about that. (Pause. We hear the BLUES’ MUSIC. [Consult PRODUCTION NOTES.]) Some of the people around here call themselves the Blues. (The BLUES turn around. They wear blue spots on their costumes, blue hats and perhaps sport blue skin. Each BLUE carries and "plays" an instrument.) They love the color blue.

ONE: And why not?
TWO: It's the color of the sky!
THREE: And sapphires.
FOUR: Christmas lights.
FIVE: Tropical fish.
SIX: Blueberries!
SEVEN: The blood of kings!
ONE: And parakeets.
TWO: The biggest whales in the ocean.
THREE: Juicy grapes.
FOUR: Peacock feathers.
FIVE: Fields of bluebells.
SIX: My shiny bean-bag chair!
SEVEN: And the deep, blue sea.
TREE: Such a beautiful color, blue! It looks so beautiful next to green in the rainbow!
ONE: (Angrily,) That was a mistake!
FOUR: Can you believe it? Putting such a wondrous color next to (Cringing,) green.
TWO: What a terrible accident! We've already written to the Powers That Be so it can be corrected!
TREE: Any reply?
THREE: Not yet, but we're sure they'll listen to reason!
TREE: And next to the color blue, they love to play music. The first thing they do in the morning is play a beautiful melody. (The BLUES play or pantomime playing instruments. We hear a simple melody.) The last thing they do at night is play an even more beautiful melody because, of course, a day's practice makes them all the better. (The BLUES play. We hear a more difficult melody.) Now, the Blues live on one side of what used to be a beautiful park. It isn't so beautiful any more, as you can see. I'm the only tree left, and I don't look like I used to. No, siree! A long time ago, they cared about me, but no more. No one comes to the park. And why is that? They don't get along with the folks on the other side of the park. They're afraid of one another. (BLUES hide behind bench, RIGHT, in terror and freeze. The GREEN A turns around. As with the other GREENS, A wears green spots and a green hat and possibly sports green skin.)
A: You're mistaken, my friend. We don't live in fear.
We're nothing but happy people here.
TREE: You see, on the other side of the park live the Greens. And since you are very intelligent people, you are way ahead of me. These folks love the color green. (B, C, D, E, F and G turn around on their lines.)
B: It's Mother Earth's favorite hue,
So much better than the color blue!
C: Lettuce and kale, zucchini and beans,
Are all beautiful shades of greens.
D: Green animals are not without merit.
Consider the lizard and the parrot.
E: My house is green and so's my car.
I once had a blue one, but it didn't go far.
F: Money's green! You can't live without it.
Life without greenbacks? I doubt it!
G: Grass is green where we rest for hours,
And green stems give us all our flowers.

TREE: And once again your intelligence is quick to see. The Greens are all devoted to poetry. (BLUES gather courage as they come to life.)

ONE: A waste of time!
TWO: Silly loons!
A: But so much better
B: Than silly tunes. (The BLUES play a loud note.)
C: Make them stop!
E: They hurt our ears!
F: Their horrid notes
G: Reduce me to tears!
THREE: Their rhythm! Their rhyme!
FOUR: It's driving us insane!
SIX: Can't they just say what they mean?
SEVEN: Without the frillies?
A: The frillies?!
ONE: That's all poetry is! The frillies!
B: We'll pound you for that!
C: We'll fight to the death.
G: We'll force you to rhyme.
E: With your very last breath! (The BLUES blow a loud note.)

TREE: It wasn't always quite this bad, of course. It takes time to cultivate such distrust and hate. Years earlier, the Blues didn't play their music quite so often. And the Greens' poetry wasn't so refined. They were just beginning to get on each other's nerves. So, it wasn't outside the realm of possibilities back then that the Blues and Greens would attempt to communicate about a common interest. (BLUES and GREENS inch toward CENTER.)

A: Excuse me, One, but have you a minute? The poor park has few living things in it.
ONE: It's not our fault!
FIVE: We'd like to tend to the park, especially our blueberry bushes.
B: And for our part we would love to see Verdant leaves growing on each tree.
THREE: But we can't get too close!
FOUR: It scares us too much.
C: No more than the fear we feel
    When down to the park we have to steal.
TWO: We're afraid we'll hear some... some...
BLUES: (Disgustedly.) Poetry!
E: Nothing compared to what we might face.
    That hideous music! What a disgrace! (The BLUES blow a
    note.)
A: But what about the park? It'll surely die
    If we do nothing but just stand by.
SIX: Let it die! It's not worth it to us.
SEVEN: Yeah... it's mostly green anyway! (The BLUES blow
    a note, while the GREENS angrily ad lib. Each side
    clumps by their benches and pantomimes going about
    their business. BLUES polish their instruments, GREENS
    recite poetry.)
TREE: Of course, it wasn't long before the inevitable
    happened. (FIVE moves to the TREE.)
FIVE: Psssst! Psssst! Are you there? (D moves to TREE.)
D: I am here, Five.
FIVE: I was afraid you weren't coming.
D: Oh, Five... I wouldn't miss our meeting.
    Even if our time together is oh, so fleeting.
FIVE: What a beautiful rhymne. (Holding up instrument.) Shall I
    play you something?
D: Yes! Something beautiful from your heart,
    Something that won't tear us apart. (FIVE plays a soft
    melody. Then, FIVE and D freeze as dialogue continues
    UPSTAGE.)
ONE: I hear Five playing music near the park!
TWO: What's he doing down there?
A: Have you seen D? She's not with the rest.
B: Let's hope she hasn't fallen from the nest! (ONE and TWO,
    A and B move to the TREE and find the lovers.)
ONE: Five! What are you doing?!
A: D, are you insane?!
TWO: You're playing to a Greenie!
B: Stop at once! You must refrain! (A pulls D away. ONE pulls
    FIVE away.)
A: Go home! Be gone! We shall talk later!
B: Of all the crimes to commit, none could be greater.
ONE: Get back where you belong, you fool!!
TWO: Or you'll be upsetting everything we believe in!
FIVE: But we love each other! (ALL gasp.)
A: Love? Don't let the word fall from your lips.
B: You can't be in love with one of these dips!
D: Five means everything, he's my life!
ONE: Go home and be a Greenie's wife!
TWO: (Horrified. To ONE.) One! Didn't you hear? You made a rhymede!
ONE: (To FIVE.) And that's what will happen to you if you spend too much time with them!
A: Come home!
D: No!
ONE: Come back, Five!
FIVE: Never! (D and FIVE hold hands at the TREE.)
A: Think of your mother, D. What will she do?
    You will break her heart clean through.
TWO: And your mama, Five. . . she's not that strong. This will hurt her deeply.
D: (To FIVE.) Maybe it's not meant to be.
FIVE: (To D.) Our worlds are too far apart.
D: What else can I say, dear Five. . .
FIVE: Good-bye.
D: Good-bye.
FIVE & D: Good-bye. (FIVE and D sadly drop hands and return to their respective sides.)
TREE: Each was duly punished, of course.
A: (To D.) No rhyming dictionary
    Shall you even touch
    'Til the book is covered
    With this much dust! (Gestures.)
ONE: Now, Five, for your own good, you're confined to your room without your instruments for two moons!
A and ONE: Love? Bah!
TREE: I continued to wither and the gulf grew deeper and deeper between the Blues and the Greens. The sad part is that nobody seemed to mind things ending up this way. Each comfortable in his own little corner of the world. As long as they each stayed on their own side of the park, no chance of contact. No threat of contamination. Only when the air was heavy and the breeze blew just so could the music of the Blues cross the park to annoy the Greens. And only when they partied did the rhythms and rhymes of the Greens bother the Blues. But nothing lasts forever, right? And so, this separate peace was destroyed one night by a storm. (STORM ENTERS wearing flowing robes and carrying a drum. [NOTE: STORM can instead be portrayed using flashing lights and recorded sound effects, if desired. Consult PRODUCTION NOTES.]) The thunder rolled! (STORM beats the drum.) Lightning
flashed! *(LIGHTS FLICKER.*) And the storm sent the
Blues and the Greens hurrying for shelter. *(The BLUES
huddle together UP RIGHT, the GREENS UP LEFT, while
the STORM continues to threaten them, beating the
drum.*) At the same time, a stranger approached. *(From
back of audience, if possible, ALLINA ENTERS. She
wears purple dots on her purple costume along with a
purple hat. Her skin might also be purple. She is
obviously fighting her way through the STORM, which now
circles ALLINA.*) As the storm wore itself out, the stranger
sought refuge beneath me and fell asleep. *(STORM slows
down, stretches, yawns and EXITS as ALLINA lies down
under tree. Pause. BLUES’ MUSIC begins.*) Beautiful
music awoke the stranger. *(The BLUES turn around,
playing their instruments. ALLINA awakens, stretches. The
MUSIC STOPS. The BLUES are terrified.*)

ALLINA: Please don’t stop. *(Gradually, the BLUES huddle
around her.*)

ONE: Who are you?
TWO: What are you doing here?
THREE: We’ve never seen anyone...
FOUR: Quite like you before!
FIVE: Where did you get that color?
SIX: It looks dangerous!
SEVEN: I see a touch of blue in it, so she must be harmless
enough! *(SEVEN moves to ALLINA.*)

ONE: Be careful!
TWO: She might be one of them in disguise!
SEVEN: *(Sits on bench.*) My name is Seven.
THREE: Seven’s so brave!
ALLINA: *(Sitting with SEVEN.*) My name is Allina. I am from
the Land of Purple.

ONE: Never heard of the Land of Purple. What’s it like there?
ALLINA: We used to play... all the time!
TWO: You mean play musical instruments, like us?
ALLINA: No, we use to play games.
THREE: What kind of games?
ALLINA: Oh, any sort really. We loved them all. Things like
soccer and baseball and golf. It was such fun until the
Oranges came. They didn’t like games. They liked to
read. They liked it very quiet. So when our games began,
they shut up their houses so they couldn’t hear the
cheering. But then so many of them came that they took
over and outlawed games all together! And that’s when my people rose up in revolt.

FIVE: What a silly thing to fight over!

ALLINA: I know! Why couldn’t we just have a time for noisy games and a time for quiet reading?

SIX: Sounds terribly sensible to us! *(The BLUES all agree.)*

ALLINA: I couldn’t bear the suffering anymore, so I ran away. I’ve been traveling for days and days. . . and then the storm hit. Where am I?

THREE: The Land of the Blues.

FOUR: It’s the best land in the whole world!

FIVE: We love music!

SIX: Do you love music?

ALLINA: I don’t know. I don’t think I know what music is.

ONE: We’ll play some for you. One, two, three. . . *(The BLUES play a short melody.)*

ALLINA: Oh, that’s beautiful. Where I come from we don’t have music. Would you show me how to make music, too?

SEVEN: Of course we will! Come here and sit down. *(ALLINA sits with SEVEN on bench. ONE gives ALLINA an instrument, possibly a recorder or flute.)*

ONE: Here is an instrument for you. It’s a good one to start on.

SEVEN: All you need to do is hold it like this. Then blow gently into the tube. *(ALLINA does so and hits a clear note.)*

TWO: Oh, that’s excellent!

FIVE: She’s got talent!

SIX: You’ll make a wonderful Blue!

FOUR: Why, in no time you’ll be just like us!

THREE: Here. . . you don’t need that old purple thing! *(Pulls a purple dot off of ALLINA’S costume.)* Have one of my blue ones. *(Attaches a blue dot.)*

ALLINA: Thank you! Thank you all!

TREE: *(As TREE speaks, each BLUE takes a purple dot off ALLINA as she practices her instrument and replaces it with a blue dot.)* And so Allina stayed with the Blues and practiced until she was quite capable with her instrument. Slowly but surely, she came to not only sound like a Blue, but look like one, too.

SEVEN: You really fit in, Allina!

ALLINA: Thank you, Seven. It’s so nice to be in a land that’s at peace.
ONE: And to keep the peace, you must promise one thing,
   Allina.
ALLINA: Anything.
TWO: You must not go near the park.
ALLINA: (Looking towards the TREE.) That's not much of a
   park.
THREE: That's true! And it's all their fault!
ALLINA: Whose fault?
FOUR: The Greens!
FIVE: If they weren't around, we could take care of the park.
SIX: But their rhythm and rhyme hurt our ears so!
ONE: Just stay away, Allina, and we'll all be happy. (BLUES
   freeze in happy poses.)
TREE: What Allina did not tell the Blues was that the Purples
   are very curious people. They love to investigate and
   learn. And Allina had no fear of new places and simply
   saw them as challenges. So one evening, while Allina was
   alone, she walked to the park. (ALLINA moves to the
   TREE, still carrying her instrument. The GREENS come
   alive, poetry books in hand, and recite as ALLINA
   ENTERS their midst.)
GREENS: Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
   Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
   Rough winds do shake... the darling... buds of May...
   (The GREENS trail off as they notice ALLINA.)
ALLINA: Please don't stop. Your words are beautiful. (The
   GREENS are terrified and gradually huddle together to
   confer.)
E: Look! She wears spots of blue!
D: But her hat is purple!
C: Can this be true?
ALLINA: My name is Allina. I came to the Blues during a
   storm.
F: Oh, but you made a bad choice! Those people are fools.
B: They live in a land where music rules.
ALLINA: I like music. (The GREENS gasp.) Shall I play you
   some? (ALLINA holds up instrument. The GREENS gasp
   again.)
A: Never! Never! We don't want notes here.
   We only want words, crisp and clear.
G: We are poets, can't you tell?
   We use words and use them well.
ALLINA: That's wonderful! (The GREENS relax a bit.)
C: Words tell us what the heart can’t utter.
D: Words clear all our thoughts of clutter.
E: Well-chosen words make the message clear.
F: So we understand everyone perfectly here.
ALLINA: Will you teach me to be a poet?
A: I don’t know if you’re that smart.
B: Poetry has to come straight from the heart.
ALLINA: (Thinking hard to make the rhyme.)
But I want my words to work for me,
I can learn anything! You will see!
D: Oh, my! You rhymed! Isn’t that nice!
C: But can you do it more than once or twice?
E: Time enough to teach her a lot.
But for now... how about a dot? (E pulls off a blue dot
and replaces it with a green dot. All the other GREENS do
the same. As TREE speaks, expressions and bodies of
BLUES gradually sadden.)
TREE: And so Allina stayed with the Greens, who taught her
poetry. She learned sonnets, epics, lyrics and ballads. Her
head spun with words and gradually she forgot her music.
One day, one of the little Blues walked too near the park.
(SIX comes alive, moves LEFT. GREENS freeze happily.)
SIX: (Near TREE.) Mama! Mama! (FOUR moves to SIX.)
FOUR: Come away from there, Six! You know you’re not
supposed to play so close to them! You’ll get the cooties!
SIX: But look! It’s her! It’s Allina!
FOUR: (Looking across park LEFT.) So it is! (FOUR drags SIX
back to the other BLUES, who come alive.) One! One! We
have news!
SIX: Allina’s with the Greens!
ONE: Are you sure?
FOUR: We saw her.
TWO: So she didn’t just run off.
FIVE: She’s been there the whole time! With one of our
instruments!
FOUR: We must get her back! She played so beautifully!
ONE: That’s not a good idea, Four. She’s probably
contaminated with bugs now.
TWO: True! I heard the Greens attract flies they’re so filthy.
THREE: And they’re very violent. No telling who she’ll rob or
cut up now that they’ve taught her how!
SIX: But we can clean her up!
ONE: And the most important thing, we found her first!
THREE: You're right! She's one of us!
TWO: Then what are we going to do? (ONE marches to the TREE.)
THREE: One, what are you doing?
SEVEN: You're putting yourself in danger!
TWO: You know they're dirty! You might catch something!
ONE: (Calling to GREENS.) Greens! (GREENS come alive.)
A: Hark! Hark, did you hear a sound?
B: Nothing but the wind blowing 'round.
ONE: Greens!
C: I thought I heard it that time, too.
D: Could it be a voice out of the blue?
ONE: Greens!
E: It's one of them! Let's run and hide!
F: If they're too close, we might get fried!
ONE: Wait! You've got something that belongs to us!
A: Something that belongs to you is here?
    Not a chance of that, no fear!
B: We don't touch things belonging to you!
    Heaven knows, we might turn blue!
ONE: Return the girl Allina before you do terrible things to her!
ALLINA: But I'm fine, One.
TWO: It's her!
ONE: Come back here before they destroy you!
ALLINA: You don't understand, I'm really fine,
    The Greens have been very, very kind.
THREE: Oh, no! She rhymed!
FOUR: Sort of.
SIX: They're turning her into one of them!
FIVE: And she made such a nice one of us.
ALLINA: But I'm not one of you.
A: There, you see! The truth is out.
    No use you Blues scampering about.
B: Allina is here and here to stay,
    So take your music and go away!
ALLINA: But I'm not one of you, either, A.
A: What? It must be the sun...
C: Maybe it's a fever.
F: She's delirious!
G: We can't just leave her!
A: You're right. She's a Greenie now without fail.
    To protect her from them, let's lock her in jail!
PRODUCTION NOTES

GENERAL NOTES
The play has intentionally been designed to lend itself to a variety of cast and budget sizes. BLUES and GREENS may be added or subtracted as necessary by simply dividing or combining lines. The STORM may be one individual or several. Different lighting effects, costume designs and performance areas can all be accommodated. The production can just as easily and effectively be produced in a gymnasium or a fully equipped theatre.

CASTING
Only three cast members are gender specific: FIVE and D, who are male and female respectively, and ALLINA, who is female. All others may be cast as best suits your needs. The lines referring to FOUR as "Mama" can easily be changed to "Dada."

COSTUMES
As noted in the script, costumes are blue, green and purple specific and can be as simple or complex as you desire. Many times, "less is more" when it comes to costuming. Simple tights and leotards covered with spots may be all that is necessary. The colored spots can be of varying sizes. At least some of each person's spots should be larger and attached with velcro so they can be easily removed when the script calls for them to be transferred to ALLINA or pasted onto the TREE. TREE'S "branches" must therefore also have velcro in specific sites.

SET & LIGHTING
The set is in and of itself quite simple. However, the lighting effects may be made as complex as you (and your budget) wish. The addition of blue and green gels in the appropriate areas can go a long way towards making the two "villages" stand apart from one another. Key lighting of specific characters as they un-freeze can also be quite effective. Likewise, stark, almost harsh lighting can initially be used for the TREE/park area, gradually softening it up with color as the "leaves" are added to the TREE. The STORM can also be an effective segment in which to utilize your fullest lighting capabilities. Use your imagination. For those with limited budgets and/or equipment, creative use of either spotlights or un-gelled lighting can also be quite effective.
BLUES’ MUSIC
The BLUES can either play their instruments for real or pantomime playing, in which case taped or live music would be heard from offstage. Either way, each Blue should always have his or her instrument and should use it to accentuate most of the Blues’ spoken lines. Recorders would work especially well for this. They are easily accessible and simple to carry around, and your performers could all quickly learn to play a few notes. However, guitars might also serve well so the performers could speak and strum quietly at the same time.

THE STORM
The storm can either be played by a real person or created with lighting and sound effects. If played by a real person, use gray flowing robes and/or long ribbons that swirl behind the person to create a windblown effect. Or two people can hold a large sheet stretching across the stage which they wave in response to the sound effects. For maximum impact, use both an actor and stage effects. Be creative, and don’t be too fast with the storm; it is a critical turning point in the play.

STAGE PROPERTIES: Blue bench, RIGHT; Green bench, LEFT.

HAND PROPERTIES: Instruments (BLUES); poetry books, two-sided cell (GREENS); drum, flashing lights, recorded sound effects (STORM); extra instrument for ALLINA (ONE); glove (C); key (A).
We hope you’ve enjoyed this script sample.

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