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Welcome to Script Insights! Ever wonder what goes on in the mind of a playwright? In this series, you get a rare and exciting opportunity to hear directly from the authors themselves. Each article offers personal insights from the playwright, giving you a behind-the-scenes look at the creative process, character motivations, and thematic explorations that bring their scripts to life. Whether you're an educator, director, or theater enthusiast, these Script Insights provide a richer understanding of the play, helping you connect more deeply with the material.

At the end of each post, we also include brief activities to help teachers integrate the blog into classroom lessons, fostering critical engagement with the text.

We hope these reflections and activities give you a fresh perspective and deeper appreciation for the play, straight from the mind of the author.

This content is intended solely for educational purposes to enhance your experience with our plays. Please use it within these guidelines and refrain from distributing or reproducing it for other uses. Email info@gitelmangoodpublishers.com with any questions.

“The Weird World of D. P. Roberts”

Jason Sebacher

Imagine a high school where every day feels like an episode of *Black Mirror* crossed with *The Breakfast Club*. Welcome to Venkman High School, the setting for D. P. Roberts's trio of captivating science fiction plays for teens. Within the school's unassuming, all-American hallways, the world of technology and social media collide with the weird and mystical. These full-length scripts for high schoolers explore the comedy and perils of a wild not-too-distant future.

At the heart of these plays are recurring characters who develop as the series progresses. Meet Daniel, the outspoken video game and internet addict who never backs down from a challenge. His sister Alex, a cornerstone of stability, contrasts sharply with Fishface, the enigmatic and sometimes-villainous tech whiz. Helen, a fiercely intelligent hacker, escapes her hardships by digitizing herself, while Goth Sheila, a sarcastic yet golden-hearted outsider, provides a grounded perspective in the midst of chaos.

So far, there are three plays in the series (a fourth is under development in conjunction with Chicago Public Schools). The first play, *Inner Sanctum*, thrusts a group of friends into a mysterious video game to solve a friend's disappearance. *The Ghost* follows Helen's journey as she is tricked by the CEO at her internship into uploading her consciousness into the Cloud, leaving her former bullies to rescue her. Finally, *Sybil*, an "Instagram Reels play," explores the perplexing murder of a classmate through the fragmented and biased perspectives of students who barely knew her.

Across all three plays, Roberts explores themes of friendship, technology, and identity, rendering high school life with humor and heart. Technology is not only a theme but a storytelling medium. *Inner Sanctum* uses special effects and puppetry to create a computer-generated world, *The Ghost* relies entirely on Zoom for character entrances and exits, and *Sybil* unfolds on Instagram, making the audience part of the virtual reality. By leveraging technology in innovative ways, the plays take on a new depth of significance for actors and audiences alike.

These plays stand alone and do not need to be performed in sequence, offering flexibility for high school productions. By diving into [the weird world of D. P. Roberts](#), students can enrich their understanding of contemporary issues while enjoying an unforgettable theatrical experience. Truly unforgettable, these plays conjure a strange magic that can only be found at Venkman High. Imagine a high school where every day feels like an episode of *Black Mirror* crossed with *The Breakfast Club*. Welcome to Venkman High School, the setting for D. P. Roberts's trio of captivating science fiction plays for teens. Within the school's unassuming, all-American hallways, the world of technology and social media collide with the weird and mystical. These full-length scripts for high schoolers explore the comedy and perils of a wild not-too-distant future.

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wherein students memorialize the perplexing murder a classmate everyone has an opinion of--yet no one has actually ever met.

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Classroom Connections

Use the following quick activities to help your students engage more deeply with the themes and insights from both the play and this blog post.

- **Technology and Storytelling Discussion:** Ask students to reflect on how technology is used as both a theme and a medium in D. P. Roberts's plays. In small groups or as a class, discuss: How does the use of special effects, Zoom, or Instagram change the audience's experience? What might these technological tools symbolize about the role of technology in our lives today?
- **Character Connection Reflection:** Each student selects one recurring character (e.g., Daniel, Alex, Fishface, Helen, Sheila). In 1-2 sentences, they describe how the character's relationship with technology shapes their personality or motivations. Afterward, students can briefly share how these characters evolve across the three plays, considering the themes of identity and friendship.
- **Comparing High School Archetypes:** Have students compare the characters in Roberts's plays (Daniel, Alex, Fishface, etc.) with archetypes from other well-known high school stories like *The Breakfast Club* or modern teen shows. What are the similarities and differences? How does Roberts use these familiar archetypes in new, technology-driven ways?
- **Social Media Analysis:** Since *Sybil* unfolds on Instagram, ask students to analyze how social media impacts how characters are perceived. Students can examine a

real-life Instagram profile (or a fictional one you create) and discuss how different aspects of a person's identity are constructed through posts, comments, and interactions. Then, relate this to how Sybil's murder is investigated by people who never knew her in person.