

PLAYS FOR  
**New Audiences**

A Division of Children's Theatre Company

# *Ruby*

by Kevin Dyer

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TIME: Now.

PLACE: Here.

CHARACTERS:

Ruby. A Girl aged 15 (Played by one, two or three of the performers all at once.)

Ruby's Mum

Ruby's Dad

Charlotte

Ruby's best friend.

Mr Williams

A Teacher at Ruby's School.

Ryan

Mr Williams' Son.

Adam

Kirsty

Amanda

Vicky

Lewis

Donna

Sarah

Tammy

Jim

Val

Nel

Meghan

Toby

Neil

Meghan

Stuart

Tommy

Jordan

Zoe

Peter Madely

Valerie Small

Tony Capaldi

Maria Capaldi

Vicky Tyler

That girl from Year 7

Sam

Asif

Jason Briggs

Callum

Nathan

Alan Livingstone

CAMHS Councillor

Sally the School Counsellor

The Tightrope Walker

The Escapologist.

PE teacher  
English teacher  
Miss Grant, primary school teacher.

LOCATIONS:

Ruby's Home  
The Bus to school  
School

SET:

23 plastic chairs. And a large length of rope that edges the space in a rectangle.

NB. As well as a script, this is also a description of some of the performance elements and styles used in the first production. All three performers played Ruby – a future production may have a bigger cast. There was no off-stage: all changes were visible. The piece is fast-moving with no black-outs and no obvious scene changes.

The script tries to indicate when Ruby is played by more than one performer.

The play was introduced by the three performers Eli, Abi and Becki. And if it helps with multi-role playing: Becki played Ruby throughout (and only Ruby); Abbi played Ruby 2 and Mum and Mr Williams; Eli played Ruby 3 and Dad and Ryan. The rest were shared by Eli and Abby.

Any future productions might split the Ruby dialogue in a different way – especially if the cast was bigger, maybe much bigger.

The reason for having more than one performer to play Ruby is: a, to amplify her words and feelings, and b, because her feelings are not particular to her but are felt by many. Ruby is not a blonde or a brunette or a girl of colour or a girl from Poland or fat or thin – she is part of all of them, possibly any one of them.

In the event that you choose to only cast 1 performer as Ruby, feel free to cut the lines that indicate to the audience to who is playing Ruby at any given moment. You are also welcome to cut or edit the introduction to fit your specific production.

This play was written and produced in the UK- if you are doing the show from any other place in the world, feel free to change some of the British words such as “mum” or “bloody” to be words that are relevant to your location.

# Ruby.

Adjust the following intro as needed for your specific production.

When all the audience is in...

ELI: Hello, I'm Eli and this is Abbi and this is Becki.

ABBI: We are from {INSERT THEATRE OR GROUP}

ELI: And this morning we are going to be doing a play.

BECKI: It is full of true stories told to us by real people.

ABBI: It's also got some lies in it - cos that's life isn't it.

BECKI: We'll be doing a bit of running and jumping about, some crazy moving of chairs, and we play lots of characters - male and female.

ELI: Like I play a dad called Phil who has a small moustache.

She sticks on a moustache.

ELI: And even if my moustache falls off,

It does.

ELI: I'd be grateful if you'd carry on believing that I am him. Thank you.  
Let's start.

Music. Lights.

Mum and Dad are in bed, Ruby is in front of the mirror in the bathroom.

RUBY: 7.13 am. Mirror basin bath.  
Mum and Dad are still in bed.

MUM: Ruby, is that you?

DAD: Course it is, rattling about.

MUM: She's not rattling-

DAD: Up so early every day, she's like a bloody owl.

MUM: Don't you mean a cockerel?

DAD: What's the difference?

MUM: Well, Phil, if you don't know the difference between an owl and a cockerel.

DAD: Of course I know the difference between an owl and a cockerel. One's a twit-two and the others a cock a doodle doo.

MUM: Thank you, David Attenborough.

He rolls over with his back to her.

RUBY: 7.14. Mirror, basin, bath. I can hear them, just the other side of the wall; they've got that tone... you know, when they don't want you to hear, when they're disagreeing on the parenting strategy.

DAD: Are you going to tell her?

MUM: I won't *tell*, Phil, I'll *ask*. She's not a child.

DAD: For Christ's sake, we are tip-toeing round her like she's made of glass.

MUM: She is made of glass.

He turns his back again.

RUBY: 7.15. Mirror, basin, bath, showered, dressed. It'll be fine.

DAD: You said you'd tell her-

MUM: Ask her.

DAD: Ask her then:  
tell her, ask her; ask her tell her,  
what's the difference? Jesus!

He turns his back again. Mum turns hers.

Then they become the other two Rubies and for the first time we see all the performers playing the same girl. They work physically in unison.

RUBY: 7.16 Mirror basin bath. Hair ok. Skin ok. Lips ok. (She breathes deep.)  
Breakfast and school are coming. (She breathes) But first - subtext. What's going on under Batman's mask?

RUBY 2: What's going on under the Joker's make-up? I'm also playing Ruby now. Keep up.

RUBY 3: Or Woody in Toy-Story – he works his little cowboy boots off being brave, battling to keep the family together, I'm Ruby as well now. But what's inside his little plastic heart?

RUBY: And don't tell me he wants to be a real boy cos that's Pinocchio.

All 3 Rubies tuck their hair behind their ear. They stand there, identical in costume and gestures.

RUBY: 7.17. Mirror. Basin, bath. Miss Silly bubble bath from Charlotte for my birthday, only I use that.

RUBY 2: Restless, keyed up, on edge, tired, really tired, can't concentrate, irritable, muscles tense like wire, didn't sleep.

RUBY: 7.18. Still no text from Charlotte. Mirror, basin, toilet, toilet roll, bath mat... You know in music, in a track, the 'drop'?

RUBY 2: Yeah, the music is just starting...

RUBY 3: Like it's all ok, ticking along just cool...

RUBY 2: But you know something's coming...

RUBY: It builds up inside you...

RUBY 3: And here it comes

ALL THREE: Oh yes here it comes here it comes here it comes and then

RUBY: Boommmmm!

Music loud, the three Rubies spin and spin, two with chairs above their heads. It's a crazy physical metaphor movement piece about their inner state.

Sound cuts. They stop. Ruby goes back to the mirror.  
Mum and Dad are sitting in chairs at breakfast.

RUBY: 7.19. Mirror, basin, shower glass panel with fish on,  
Tesco cranberry and orange shower gel.  
Aussie anti-tangle shampoo, soap with a curly hair in  
it - that's gross.

7.20. School will be crap. Make a plan: I'll go see  
Mister Williams and he will listen he will listen.

MUM: Ruby! Breakfast!

RUBY: I cannot avoid breakfast. It's a thing that happens,  
like Christmas or periods or GCSE's.  
Just  
get  
through  
it.

She sits at breakfast. Her Mum and dad are already sitting, waiting for her. The  
three chairs are on the edges of the space, a long way apart.

RUBY: Three chairs.  
Like the bears' house.

DAD: Want some porridge, Ruby?

RUBY: No thanks.

MUM: I want to ask you, Rube... errr... errr....

DAD: Jesus Christ. Just tell her...

MUM: Phil, I'm asking remember.

DAD: Well bloody get on and bloody well ask then.

Pause.

MUM: Ruby...

She still can't say it.

DAD: Christ, I'm going outside for a cigarette.

MUM: You don't smoke.

DAD: No I'm gonna stand there and pretend for Christ's sake.

He goes.

RUBY: I haven't heard from Charlotte; she's not texted and she always texts first thing.

Dad comes back.

DAD: Well?

MUM: I've got you this new almond milk

DAD: Oh Christ, we're not going vegan are we? That's all I need - a vegan in the house.

MUM: She's not a vegan.

DAD: She's talked about it.

RUBY: (Snapping) I talked about the Queen, but I'm not gonna buy a corgi.  
I talked about Donald Trump but I'm not gonna get a spray tan.

Pause.

DAD: You know what I mean. Kids, fads.

MUM: This isn't a fad.

RUBY: What isn't?!

Pause.

MUM: Nut milk uses far less CO2 than milk to produce it says.

DAD: How the hell do you milk a nut?

MUM: Phil!

Music. Dad gets from his chair, moves fast in straight lines, pacing the room. Mum moves in slow circles. It's a visual metaphor of their relationship. Ruby eats her breakfast as the parents describe different lines around her.

Eventually they come either side of their daughter, facing each other, looking at each other for the first time. They sigh, go back to their chairs.

**PURCHASE PERUSAL FOR FULL SCRIPT**