

COSMIC FRUIT BOWL

a one-act play

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CHARACTERS

APPLE.....male or female. The angst-ridden pretender.

ORANGE...female. The obnoxious diva.

BANANA...male or female. The introspective thinker.

KIWI.....female. The fresh newcomer.

SETTING

The inside of a fruit bowl.

TIME

The present.

N.B. The obvious wardrobe choice would be to go with all-out “fruit” costumes. But the author would like to point out that it’s not strictly necessary. A shirt or a single accessory in the appropriate color would work as well.

SYNOPSIS

Think living in a fishbowl is tough? Try a fruit bowl. There’s anxiety, alarm, alienation and bad attitude. All the regulars are there: the self-centered star, the individual with a secret, and the anxious, philosophical type. Talk about tension! Is the focus on looks or what’s inside? Is it a question of appeal? (Or a peel?) All oranges are acidic but the one in this bowl is off the charts. Apple is worried because he’s all or nothing at all...and what’s really underneath that skin? Bruised by self-doubt, the banana wrestles with the big questions. Can he possibly be top banana? Then the arrival of a strange brown fruit from down under ups the ante. Can the newbie pass the test? Is she truly a fruit or just a bird? Prejudice ripens in the bowl. Will the newcomer be accepted? Or will one of the regulars be rejected? As the light fades at the end of the day, there’s a whole lot more than seeds and juice in this fruit bowl.

Lights up on APPLE, BANANA &
ORANGE. APPLE & ORANGE are
jostling for room.

APPLE

If I didn't know any better, I'd think you were trying to push me out of the bowl.

ORANGE

Would I do that?

APPLE

Probably. That's how you are. Sharp, spiteful, acidic...that's the word for you.

ORANGE

That's not what people say. To the world, I'm everybody's sunshine.

APPLE

Hah! Advertising.

BANANA

Will you two give it a rest?

APPLE

We're having a discussion over here. Anyway, what's it to you?

BANANA

I'm going through a ripening stage. It takes a lot out of me.

ORANGE

Aw, poor baby. He's trying to ripen.

BANANA

I mean it. Knock it off.

APPLE

What's the matter? Missing your buddies?

ORANGE

Sure he is. He's the reject of the bunch.

BANANA

Come on, cut me some slack.

APPLE

Okay, we'll back off. We're just, I don't know, a little antsy today.

BANANA

Ants? Are there ants around?

APPLE

Chill. I just meant we're hungry for excitement.

BANANA

Who cares about excitement? I just want some answers.

APPLE

Answers to what?

BANANA

The big questions. You know, is there any meaning to all this?

ORANGE

Oh. Now he wants meaning.

APPLE

What kind of meaning?

BANANA

You know, one day you're green, the next day, you're yellow. It's all so...fleeting. And should we aim for something better? A bigger fruit bowl, perhaps? Then again, maybe--

APPLE

Woe, buddy, time out. You're a banana. That's it.

BANANA

But is that enough? Should I try and be a better banana? Maybe even the best banana? Can we be what we want to be or are we just what we are?

ORANGE

Geez, all these questions.

BANANA

I can't help it. You know what they say. An unexamined life is not worth living.

APPLE

Who says?

BANANA

Plato.

ORANGE

What's a Plato?

BANANA

It's not a what, it's a he.

APPLE

He, who? The guy who makes plates?

BANANA

This is not about plates! Get your mind off the table. I'm talking about one of the great thinkers of all time. He was Greek. Lived a long time ago. And he ate bananas.

APPLE

I think you've gone bananas.

BANANA

What's that supposed to mean?

APPLE makes the sign for crazy.

But don't you two ever wonder if there's anything beyond the fruitbowl? Is this all there is?

ORANGE

I know what your problem is. You're jealous.

BANANA

What have I got to be jealous about?

ORANGE

You got no juice. Apple man and me, we got flavor that's drinkable. That's what keeps us at the top of the favorite fruit list. We're popular, you're not. Deal with it.

BANANA

Thank you very much, but I am not jealous of an orange. I'm just the kind of guy who focuses on the big picture. I want to know what it's like out there.

APPLE

To me, the big issue is how to stay ripe, tasty and good-looking.

ORANGE

For some of us that's no problem.

APPLE

Get her. But how do we keep at the top of our game?

BANANA

Well, if we were vegetables, it would be different.

APPLE

Sure. Nobody cares what a potato looks like. Ugly, bumpy things.

ORANGE

It's that whole french fry thing, I'm telling you. If it weren't for that, nobody'd give 'em a second glance.

APPLE

Yeah, but we got to look good. And the time frame. Too early, we're bitter and tasteless. Too late, we've got bruises and we're rotten to the core. The pressure is unrelenting.

BANANA

And you two have a bigger window than I do.

ORANGE

There's no window in the fruit bowl.

BANANA

I meant you can hang out for days and days. With me, it's green one day, rotten the next.

APPLE

Don't be so thin-skinned. Besides, I've got it toughest of all in that department. You get peeled. Me? It's all or nothing at all.

ORANGE

Oh, p--lease. You two are depressing me. This is what comes of thinking too much. Do what I do. Just be. I'm the best orange there is. And that's that.

BANANA

How do you know you're the best?

ORANGE

Well, because...I've never wanted to be anything but the best.

KIWI enters.

And I'm the one and only orange in the fruit bowl. So there.

KIWI

Struck on herself, isn't she?

APPLE

Who are you?

BANANA

And where did you come from? We've never seen your kind before.

ORANGE

Maybe she's a potato.

KIWI

I'm not a potato. I'm a kiwi.

BANANA

A what?

KIWI

Kiwi. I come from New Zealand.

ORANGE

Well, I come from Whole Foods. I never heard of a "newzeelin" store.

KIWI

It's not a store, it's a country.

BANANA

What kind of country?

KIWI

You know, a country-country. Down near Australia.

APPLE

I never heard of that either.

KIWI

Well, just because you never heard of it doesn't mean it's not there. It's a place. It's where kiwis grow. There's even a bird called a kiwi.

BANANA

Wait a minute. You said you were a kiwi.

KIWI

I am.

APPLE

So are you a bird or are you a fruit?

KIWI

A fruit, naturally.

BANANA

But there's a bird with the same name?

KIWI

Yeah, it's a flightless bird.

ORANGE

What's that mean?

KIWI

It doesn't fly. It just walks around. It's kind of brown.

ORANGE

You're brown. Do you fly?

KIWI

Of course, I don't fly.

APPLE

Well, if the bird is brown, doesn't fly and it's called we-kee---

KIWI

Not we-kee, Kiwi.

APPLE

Whatever. If it's got that name, and you've got that name, maybe you're---

ORANGE

A bird! We've got a bird in the fruit bowl!

APPLE

You don't belong here. Get out.

BANANA

Hold on guys. Maybe she's not---

ORANGE

What do we want with birds that can't fly and stuff like that in here?

APPLE

Yeah, this is our fruit bowl. We need to keep it just like it's always been.

KIWI

But I belong. Really. I'm a fruit.

APPLE

Okay, prove it.

KIWI

How?

APPLE

Well...peel.

KIWI

You mean---

APPLE

Show us your insides.

KIWI

But if I do that, my seeds 'll spill, my juices 'll run, what 'll be left of me?

ORANGE

More important, the bowl 'll get really messy.

BANANA

How about a test? With questions.

ORANGE

He loves questions.

APPLE

And if she doesn't give the right answer, she's out of the bowl, right?

BANANA

I guess.

APPLE

Okay. I got one. What's the difference between a fruit and a vegetable?

KIWI

Well...fruits are soft and vegetables are hard.

BANANA

A watermelon is soft? A tomato is hard?

KIWI

How about...fruits are fruity and vegetables are...ve-ge-ta-be-ly?

APPLE

Aw, this is no good. The test is too complicated.

ORANGE

We don't need a test. Wee-kee or kee-wee or whatever she is, is ugly and therefore does not belong in our fruit bowl. That's it.

BANANA

I don't think we should kick her out just because of that.

APPLE

But what if more of her kind come?

KIWI

Aw, come on. Just let me stay. Please---

KIWI touches APPLE.

APPLE

Don't do that! Don't come any closer.

BANANA

What's the matter?

KIWI

He's...he's not real.

ORANGE

What?

APPLE

Don't listen to her. Don't, don't---

BANANA

Wait a minute.

BANANA approaches APPLE.

She's right. He's artificial.

APPLE

Okay, you've got me. I know when I've been found out.

BANANA

And we never knew until you came along. Maybe you are a bird.

KIWI

I am not a bird!

ORANGE

But why didn't I see?

APPLE

You didn't want to see. You don't like to think, remember?

BANANA

Why didn't I notice?

APPLE

Aw, you're always with the questions. Looking at everything from the inside out.
Besides, it's not my fault I'm not real.

BANANA

What if...none of us is real?

ORANGE

Here he goes again with the questions.

APPLE

Just don't make me leave, guys, please. Don't kick me out of the bowl. I didn't mean to be artificial. I just wanted to be an apple.

BANANA

But...if you think you're an apple, doesn't that make you an apple?

APPLE

Sure, sure it does! I think I'm an apple, so I'm an apple. Right? Come on. Say I'm an apple!

KIWI

What if I think I'm an orange? Does that make me---

ORANGE

You cannot be an orange. I'm the orange.

KIWI

But if it works for him?

BANANA

Like I said before, can we be what we want to be or are we just what we are? How do we figure this out?

ORANGE

I'm not figuring anything out. I'm going to go over here. And the rest of you, mr. question, mr. artificial, miss bird-fruit---

KIWI

I am not a bird-fruit!

ORANGE

Whatever you are, you can all do what you want. I'm just going to be the best orange there is. And that's that.

ORANGE moves apart from the rest.
Pause.

APPLE

I guess things are simple if you don't think too much.

BANANA

But what kind of bowl will it be if we don't think?

KIWI

Look, the light is fading.

APPLE

That means our day in the bowl is ending.

KIWI

Well, there's tomorrow.

APPLE

For some of us.

KIWI

And for the rest?

BANANA

Who knows?

Lights down.

END OF PLAY