

THE CELEBRITY

TEN-MINUTE PLAY

By Paul D. Patton

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SYNOPSIS: Based loosely on Eugene Ionesco's short play, "The Leader," a group of teens are bored until they get word of a celebrity's visit to their uneventful town. The cast can be all male, all female, or mixed.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(MIXED CAST OF 8 MEN OR WOMEN, 1 NON-SPEAKING ROLE)

FAN #1 Teenager (30 lines)
FAN #2 Teenager (29 lines)
FAN #3 Teenager (31 lines)
FAN #4 Teenager (32 lines)
FAN #5 Teenager (30 lines)
FAN #6 Teenager (20 lines)
FAN #7 Teenager (18 lines)
BIKE RIDER A person riding their bike, not the
celebrity (3 lines)
THE CELEBRITY Non-speaking role

SETTING

Seven friends milling around, bored.

PRODUCTION NOTES

It is essential that this play is possessed by an "over-the-top" comic-book spirit. Every instrument of variance - verbal speed, volume levels, physical movements, emotional extremes - should be played to the hilt!

FAN #1: (*Looking at newspaper.*) I don't believe it! It absolutely can't be true!!

OTHERS: What? What?!

FAN #1: The celebrity is coming!

FAN #2: Who's coming?

FAN #3: Which celebrity?

FAN #1: (*Shows newspaper article.*) This one!

THEY quickly all gather around. Screams of delirium.

FAN #2: To our town?

FAN #1: Can you believe it?

FAN #3: Here, right here where we live?

FAN #4: Touching the same ground we touch! Looking at the same trees we see?

FAN #1: It's unbelievable.

THEY start jumping up and down, still thrilled.

ALL: It's unbelievable! It's unbelievable! It's unbelievable! (*Repeated with building frenzy, until stopped by FAN #5.*)

FAN #5 peers out to corner of the house/audience. SEES something. Moves closer, closer to the lip of the stage, down left.

FAN #5: (*Screaming, until getting attention.*) Wait! Wait! I think I see the celebrity!!

The OTHERS run over to join FAN #5, thrilled.

FAN #6: Where?!

FAN #5: (*Pointing.*) See? There's the celebrity riding a bicycle!

FAN #7: Noo! My celebrity would never ride a bicycle!

FAN #1: A bicycle?! Absolutely no way would my celebrity be riding a bicycle! I refuse to believe it until I see my celebrity ringing the bicycle bell!

FAN #3: I'm getting my bike out and ride it just like my celebrity!

FAN #4: Just what kind of bike is that?

FAN #1: I don't know, but I absolutely have to have one!

FAN #6: Me too!

FAN #7: It's suddenly ridiculous to think I haven't ridden my bike in such a long time!

FAN #5: I'm starting to hyperventilate.

ALL: Our celebrity is riding this way!

Other super-shocked commentary.

BIKE-RIDER enters riding a bike, ideally from the back of the theater, up the aisle toward the FANS.

The thunderous response builds. The BIKE-RIDER gets closer. STOPS right next to the fans. Gets off bike.

FAN #2: *(Shouts.)* Hey, that's not the celebrity!

OTHERS: What?

FAN #2: I know it looks like the celebrity, even pedals like the celebrity probably pedals.

FAN #1: But it is absolutely not the celebrity.

FAN #6: This is unbelievable.

FAN #4: Hey, you're not the celebrity!

BIKE-RIDER: Why no, I'm not the celebrity. I'm a bike-rider.

FAN #3: A bike-rider?

BIKE-RIDER: Why, yes.

FAN #5: *(Derisively.)* So what?

FAN #2: Yeh, who cares?

FAN#7: And ya' wanna know who really doesn't care? Hey bike-rider, ya' really wanna know who doesn't care? *(Gets the BIKE-RIDER'S attention.)* You're lookin' right at 'im.

FAN #6: This is ridiculous.

FAN #3: Yeh, I'm leaving my bike in the garage.

THEY walk back to original positions, angry, disappointed, leaving the BIKE-RIDER.

BIKE-RIDER: *(To self.)* No, I'm not the celebrity. I'm just a bike-rider.

BIKE-RIDER rides off.

FAN #2: So when does it say the celebrity is supposed to be here?

FAN #1: (*Looking for the info in the newspaper, finds it.*) Absolutely any time!

FAN #2: So it could be any second?

FAN #1: Absolutely.

FAN #3: So we'd better get ready and be on the look out.

FAN #5: We could miss the celebrity while we're busy talking to each other.

FAN #2: So shut up!

FANS #6 and #7: Yeh, shut up!!

THEY begin to watch in the same area where FAN #5 first saw the BIKE-RIDER.

FAN #4: We could miss the celebrity while we're eating or sleeping or doing anything but keeping our eyes peeled.

FAN #3: Wait! I think I see the celebrity! Way over there!

FAN #3 walks to the lip of the stage down right, uses binoculars. The OTHERS crowd around.

FAN #3: Yes, I think it's our celebrity. Yes, it *is* the celebrity!

FAN #1: Are you absolutely sure?

FAN #6: Yeh, we don't want any more bike-rider incidents!

FAN #7: So you're sure it's the celebrity?

FAN #3: Yes. The celebrity's petting a little Scottie dog. Now the celebrity's picking up the dog, bending over towards the grass by the sidewalk. Now the celebrity's picking a - - what is it? I'm not sure I see clearly - - yes, it's, it's blades of grass. The celebrity's bending over, picking blades of grass and trying to feed the Scottie dog the grass.

FAN #5: Oh, I wish I had a Scottie dog.

FAN #7: Oh, me too!

FAN #2: Is the Scottie dog eating the grass?

FAN #4: Yes, is the dog eating the grass?

FAN #3: Wait, the Scottie dog is *not* eating the grass. The celebrity looks angry that the act of kindness is not appreciated by the Scottie dog.

FAN #1: There's absolutely nothing worse than an unappreciative Scottie dog!

FAN #3: The celebrity threw the dog to the ground. The dog yelped and scampered off.

FAN #2: Serves the dog right for not eating the grass from the hand of the celebrity!

FAN #4: Isn't it so cool that the celebrity is cool enough to not hold on to a Scottie dog that doesn't eat the grass?

OTHERS: Cool.

FAN #3: Wait a minute. It looks to me like the celebrity is not enjoying their visit.

FAN #1: Oh, no!

FAN #5: Oh, please, don't go away!

FAN #2: Life is more livable with you here.

FAN #4: You must not go away!

FAN #6: We love you!

FAN #7: Yes, we love you; don't leave us!!

FAN #1: I'm absolutely starting to cry. I'm starting to cry.

FAN #2: Don't leave us!

FAN #1: (*Turns to another.*) Look, I'm absolutely starting to cry!

FAN #1 and FAN #5 move back upstage, dejected.

FAN #3: I wanna die. I've never felt so despairing.

FAN #3 moves upstage.

FAN #2: Now I have to live with the non-celebrities - - my stupid family, my boring friends.

FAN #2 moves upstage.

FAN #6: Yeh, stupid family.

FAN #7: Boring friends.

FAN #4: The celebrity is gone. Gone. All hope is gone.

FAN #4 follows.

FAN #3: I can't stand it anymore. Life is absolutely no longer worth living!

FAN #5: Is it that bad, really?

FAN #3: Absolutely.

FAN #4: Yes, it's the end!

FAN #5: End of what?

FAN #4: Of civilization as I know it!

FAN #5: But maybe not the end of civilization as I know it!

FAN #2: What do you mean?

FAN #7: Oh, don't tell me you're gonna get all bubbly on us again.

FAN #5: I've learned to put all despair in a little box, wrap it up in lovely holiday paper with a note that says, "Do not open until Christmas."

FAN #4: I'm not sure I follow.

FAN #5: So, in that way hope always shines through.

FAN #2: What hope are you referring to?

FAN #5: Nothing but the hope of the celebrity's return, of course.

OTHERS: Oh, of course, of course! The hope of the celebrity's return!

SOUND EFFECTS: GREGORIAN CHANT

FAN #1: Wasn't it lovely just a few moments ago when we were thrilled with the joy of the celebrity's possible presence?

FAN #3: Absolutely joyous!

FAN #4: It was euphoric!

FAN #5: Oh how desperately I want that feeling again!

FAN #2: Oh, yes!

FAN #5: Desperately!

FAN #3: Absolutely!

FAN #6: Divinely!

FAN #1: To see what the celebrity is wearing!

FAN #2: To witness how they wear their belt, the height of their heel, the buttons buttoned and unbuttoned!

FAN #5: Oh, to be allowed in to such a revelation! I would shield my eyes!

FAN #4: Oh, just to see the celebrity live in person before me!

FAN #1: May we hope once more!

OTHERS: Yes, may we hope once more!

SOUND EFFECTS: END GREGORIAN CHANT

FAN #4: Wait! I think I see the celebrity! Way over there!

FAN #4 walks closer downstage center. The OTHERS remain in place, but watchful. FAN #4 takes binoculars (or View Master) from FAN #3.

FAN #4: Yes, I think it's our celebrity. Yes, it *is* the celebrity!

FAN #1: Are you absolutely sure?

OTHERS quickly gather around.

FAN #4: Yes and the celebrity is heading our way. The celebrity walks in ways different than I've ever seen before. Wait - - someone came to the celebrity and, and, handed the celebrity a large bouquet of flowers. The bouquet is so large it has to be held with both of the celebrity's hands. Can you believe it? The celebrity holds the bouquet with both hands!

OTHERS: *(In disbelief.)* Both hands?

FAN #4: What's this?!

FAN #1: What?

FAN #4: The celebrity carrying the bouquet of flowers with both hands is now being followed by the Scottie dog.

FAN #5: The Scottie dog?

FAN #4: Now the Scottie dog is barking at the celebrity, nipping at the celebrity's heels.

FAN #2: Bad, Scotty dog!

OTHERS: Bad, bad Scottie dog!

FAN #4: Oh, noo!!

OTHERS: What?!

FAN #4: The celebrity has tripped over the Scottie dog! The Scottie dog ran away. The celebrity got up, no scrapes, no apparent bruises! But the celebrity left the bouquet of flowers on the sidewalk. Now the celebrity is walking with both hands free to put, to put - - I don't believe this!!

OTHERS: What?!

FAN #4: The celebrity is put both hands in its *pockets*!

FAN #2: Profound!!

FAN #4: Quick, come here! It's clear the celebrity is coming our way!

FAN #5: Oh no, what are we going to do?!

FAN #2: We must give the celebrity our best welcome!

FAN #4: Yes, our best face forward!

FAN #3: No, our unwavering devotion!

FAN #5: No, our undying love!

FAN #3: (*Starting to square off with FAN #5.*) Our unwavering devotion!!

FAN #5: Our undying love!!

FAN #6: Nooo! We must line the streets and give the celebrity the space due their presence!!

OTHERS run back upstage and form a line.

FAN #3: Here comes the celebrity!!

OTHERS shout for joy, with glee.

THE CELEBRITY walks across the stage without a HEAD. THE CELEBRITY without a head waves at them. The FANS are stunned! THE CELEBRITY walks offstage and out of sight.

There is an extended, awkward silence. Then:

FAN #5: But, but the celebrity had no head.

FAN #4: Yeah, I noticed that, too.

FAN #2: Yeah, but at least the celebrity doesn't ride a bike.

FAN #1: Yeah.

More awkward silence. Then:

FAN #3: Wish I could get my head cut off.

FAN #4: Yeah, me too.

BLACKOUT.

THE END

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