

GHOST LIGHT

NINE SHORT PLAYS ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE LIFE

by Greg Cummings

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GHOST LIGHT

NINE SHORT PLAYS ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE LIFE

by **Greg Cummings**

SYNOPSIS: The life of theatre geeks: diva battles, wise techies, know-it-all costumers, and shy sound designers. Throw in athletes bit by the acting bug, a theatrical promposal, a college audition, a play written in stage directions, and you have nine short plays showcasing high school theatre life.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5-12 females, 5-11 males)

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S...HOOP DREAM!

DEREK (m)

MEGAN (f)

SHOWMANCE

BRANDON (m)

TERESA (f)

THE TAMING OF THE SHOES

TIM (m)

KAREN (f)

OH, YOU!

BARRY (m)

AMY (f)

SHALL WE DANCE?

HARRY (m)

LILA (f)

STEVEN (m)

KAREN (f)

TO BE OR NOT TO BE...A DIVA

RONALD (m)

DENNIS (m)

CHRISTY (f)

FINDING A (STAGE) DIRECTION IN LIFE

JANET (f)

ROB (m)

ACCEPTANCE

LIZ (f)

RACHEL (f)

ANDREW (m)

MARGARET (f)

GHOST LIGHT

JONAH (m)

JANE (f)

ENTIRE CAST (m/f)

DEDICATION

For Brian, Anna, Jonah, Lola and Lucy.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S HOOP DREAM

by Greg Cummings

SYNOPSIS: Two athletes, sidelined from their winter sports, find themselves cast in the fall play. And, eventually, loving it.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 1 male)

DEREK (m) Teen. Sidelined athlete. (41 lines)

MEGAN (f)..... Teen. Sidelined athlete. (40 lines)

TIME: Present.

SETTING: Informal rehearsal for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

AT START: *A bare stage. Enter DEREK, stage left, and MEGAN, stage left. Both wear their varsity sports jackets. They walk slowly because they also both wear medical walking boots. Each reads from their copy of A Midsummer Night's Dream. They stand shoulder-to-shoulder downstage center and read, mumblingly, from the play.*

DEREK: "Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania."

MEGAN: "What, jealous Oberon."

DEREK: Oh come on! (*Throws book on floor.*)

MEGAN: No! Oh, you come on, Derek!

DEREK: (*Mocking.*) "Seriously"! Really, Megan?! "Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania"? "Ill met"? What the heck does that even mean?!

MEGAN: (*Slowly, as if to a halfwit.*) Well, Derek, "ill" means bad, the "moon" is that shiny object in the nighttime sky, and "proud" means that I, Titania...

DEREK: No! "I" means that "I", Derek, don't care! That's it! I'm outta here! (*Slowly clomping, starts to exit into the auditorium.*)

MEGAN: Fine! I'll just tell the director!

DEREK: Fine! Just tell the director!

MEGAN: And Coach Brombell!

Pause. DEREK slowly clomps back to downstage center.

DEREK: I can't believe my coach is making me do this!

MEGAN: Hey! I can't believe my coach is making me do this, either!

But we're both out for the season, we both need a winter activity or we won't graduate, so let's just shut up and do this thing!

DEREK: But: the fall play?! "A Midsummer Night's Dream"? Come on!

MEGAN: Come on, it's not that bad!

DEREK: Not that bad?!

MEGAN: We read it last year in English! It was kinda fun.

DEREK: Maybe you read it last year in English! Maybe it was kinda fun for you!

MEGAN: (*Mockingly.*) Oh: "Me Derek. Derek big, dumb, tough guy. Derek never read books." (*Beat.*) Can we please just get on with it?

DEREK: Get on with what?

MEGAN: Rehearsal!

DEREK: Rehearsal?! What are you talking about?! We just rehearsed!

MEGAN: You don't rehearse just once, dummy! Play rehearsal is like basketball drills! You gotta do it till you get it right!

DEREK: We just got this right!

MEGAN: We did not get it right! I bet they couldn't even hear us!

DEREK: Who couldn't hear us!

MEGAN: The audience, dope! They sit way out there! I couldn't even hear you, and I was right next to you!

DEREK: Well, I was right next to you, and I couldn't hear you, either!

MEGAN: That's what I'm talking about! That's why we have to rehearse! I don't know about you, but I need that Activity Credit!

DEREK: Fine!

MEGAN: Fine!

DEREK picks up his book.

DEREK: I'll rehearse!

MEGAN: Good!

DEREK: Good!

MEGAN starts to exit left. She clomps slowly, because of her medical boot.

DEREK: But I will not become a theatre geek!

MEGAN: One play will not make us theatre geeks, dope! *(Beat.)* Move!

DEREK starts to exit right. He clomps slowly, because of his medical boot.

DEREK: You move!

MEGAN: I'm moving!

They continue their respective exits. Slowly, because of their medical walking boots.

DEREK: Good!

MEGAN: Good!

DEREK: Fine!

MEGAN: Fine!

MEGAN and DEREK have exited. Pause.

DEREK: *(Off right.)* Go! *(Beat.)* Go on! *(Beat.)* What are you waiting for?!

MEGAN: *(Off left.)* Don't yell at me! Actors don't yell at each other! They work together! Like teammates!

DEREK: *(Off right, exasperated.)* Fine!

MEGAN: *(Off left, exasperated.)* Fine!

Pause. MEGAN enters. It is clear now that she has become an actress. She has transformed herself into Titania. She has found a cloth backstage that she now uses as a cape. She has taken off her varsity jacket, folded it, and cradles it to her, as if it were a baby. DEREK enters stage right and regards her acting ability with increasing admiration. As Titania, MEGAN crosses, proudly, to downstage center. She regards the moon above.

DEREK: *(Overcome, to himself.)* Wow.

MEGAN arrives downstage center.

MEGAN: *(Beat.)* Psst. Derek. *(Beat.)* Derek, it's your line....

DEREK: *(Stunned, admiring.)* What? I...

MEGAN: Derek. It's your line. *(Turns to DEREK.)* What are you staring at?

DEREK: *(Stunned, admiring.)* Um... you.

MEGAN: *(Blushing.)* Well, stop it!

DEREK: *(Sincerely impressed.)* I... can't. Really. It's like you... you have "become"... this strong, proud... queen.

MEGAN: Well, good... because that's who I'm supposed to be.

DEREK: And is that supposed to be... *(Pointing to her jacket.)* a... child?

MEGAN: It's the changeling boy. From the play. Too goofy?

DEREK: *(Sincerely impressed.)* No! It's a wonderful choice, Megan. *(Beat.)* Megan, you know, when you entered... I actually saw... the moonlight on your face.

MEGAN: *(Blushing a bit.)* I... thanks, Derek. *(Beat.)* What is it?

DEREK: No, no, it's nothing, I...

MEGAN: *(Sincerely.)* Tell me. Please?

DEREK: *(Slowly realizing.)* It's just that... I was so... impressed by you, your entrance, and everything... I just thought that, maybe... my Oberon could also be... so impressed when he sees... Titania. *(Beat.)* Or... not, I don't know, I honestly don't really remember the play, I...

MEGAN: No, Derek, it's perfect!

DEREK: Really?!

MEGAN: Really! It's a great idea! *(Beat.)* But... would Oberon want to show her how impressed he is? They are at war with each other.

DEREK: *(Slowly brainstorming.)* Oh. OK... so... maybe Oberon could... hide... *(Runs offstage and returns with a chair.)* ...behind a rock!? He could see her without being seen? *(Places the chair up stage right.)*

MEGAN: Perfect!

DEREK: So... this could be a rock?

MEGAN: *(Beaming.)* From what I've seen, set construction crew can do just about anything!

DEREK: *(Beaming.)* So: let's rehearse!

They high five each other. MEGAN starts to exit left; DEREK starts to exit right. Their medical boots make their exits slow.

MEGAN: *(Beaming.)* Hey, Derek, you gonna audition for the spring musical?

DEREK: *(Beaming.)* Spring musical? What is it?

MEGAN: *(Beaming.)* *Guys and Dolls!*

DEREK: *(Beaming.)* *Guys and Dolls?* Are you kidding me? Never in a million years!

MEGAN: *(Beaming.)* Yeah, me neither!

They smile knowingly at each other, realizing that they might, indeed, audition.

DEREK: *(Beaming.)* Good!

MEGAN: *(Beaming.)* Good!

DEREK: *(Beaming.)* Fine!

MEGAN: *(Beaming.)* Fine!

DEREK: *(Beaming.)* You and me? We will never become theatre geeks!

MEGAN: *(Beaming.)* Us? Theatre geeks? Never!

DEREK: *(Beaming.)* Never!

MEGAN: *(Beaming.)* Never ever!

Both beaming, MEGAN and DEREK clomp off stage, MEGAN to the left, DEREK to the right. Fade to black.

END OF PLAY

SHOWMANCE**by Greg Cummings**

SYNOPSIS: A veteran techie teaches a rookie actor/robotics guy the meaning of “showmance” (a romance that only lasts for the duration of the show.)

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(1 female, 1 male)*

BRANDON (m) Teen. Theatre newcomer. Shy. *(21 lines)*

TERESA (f) Teen. Veteran techie. Shy. *(23 lines)*

SETTING: A bare stage.

TIME: After the show, before the cast party.



AT START: BRANDON sits, looking at his phone, stunned.

BRANDON: Whoa.

Enter TERESA, downstage right. She pulls a nice jacket over her black backstage “techie” shirt.

TERESA: Are you... going to the cast party, Brandon?

TERESA crosses downstage left, then stops and turns to BRANDON.

TERESA: Brandon? *(Beat.)* Brandon?

BRANDON: Huh?

TERESA: Brandon? *(Beat.)* “Beast”? *(Beat.)* Are you going to... the cast party?

BRANDON: What? Oh, yeah, thanks, Teresa, I...

TERESA crosses and sits next to BRANDON.

TERESA: Brandon? Are you all right?

- BRANDON:** What? Oh, yeah, thanks, Teresa, I.... *(Bursts into tears.)*
She dumped me!
- TERESA:** *(Reading his text.)* Oh. Yeah...
- BRANDON:** Nicoletta dumped me!
- TERESA:** Yeah, I'm reading it now.
- BRANDON:** And she dumped me by text!
- TERESA:** Yeah, that is harsh. *(Reading.)* Looks like she's not even going to the cast party...
- BRANDON:** Why? Was it me?
- TERESA:** No, Brandon...
- BRANDON:** Nicoletta was the Beauty! Brandon was the Beast! Beauty and the Beast were inseparable on stage! And Nicoletta and Brandon were inseparable offstage!
- TERESA:** Yeah, about that...
- BRANDON:** Beast learned how to love! And so did Brandon! Brandon learned how to love! *(Howls like Beast.)* Nicoletta!
- TERESA:** Brandon?
- BRANDON:** Sorry, I'm sorry.
- TERESA:** No, no. It's all right. You're just passionate, that's all. There's nothing wrong with passion. *(Re: herself.)* A lot of girls like passionate guys. *(Beat.)* It's just that this was your first show, and...
- BRANDON:** I know! You're right! You're right! I shouldn't have even auditioned for the musical! I should've just stayed in my robotics lab, where I can control everything!
- TERESA:** No, no, no. Brandon! Theatre is fun!
- BRANDON:** Fun?! *(Howls.)* Nicoletta! *(Beat.)* Sorry, I'm sorry!
- TERESA:** No. It's all right, Brandon. Really. You just got caught up in a "Showmance", that's all.
- BRANDON:** "Showmance?" *(Takes out his notepad.)* Define: "Showmance!"
- TERESA:** Um... you're going to take notes? *(To herself.)* That's kinda cute...
- BRANDON:** I always take notes. It's how I learn. And, this time, it might help me get Nicoletta back! So... *(Writes.)* "Showmance!" Define!
- TERESA:** All right. Um... showmance. I guess it's just... a romance that starts on the first day of rehearsal and ends when the show ends.

BRANDON stops writing, reads what he wrote, and slowly, sadly realizes.

BRANDON: Oh. So: Nicoletta dumped me. Because, to her, we were a just a... a “showmance?”

TERESA: Yeah.

BRANDON: So... it’s... over? Really, truly over?

TERESA: Yeah. *(Beat.)* I’m sorry, Brandon.

BRANDON: That’s OK... *(Pockets his notebook.)* I’d like to be alone now, Teresa.

TERESA: *(To herself.)* Passionate. Smart. Sensitive. *(To BRANDON.)* What, yeah, sure, all right, I understand. *(Quickly stands and crosses to downstage left, then changes her mind.)* No! *(Stops, faces BRANDON and works up some courage.)* I’d like to define another theatre term for you, Brandon!

BRANDON: *(Sad.)* I don’t know. I think I’ve learned enough theatre terms for one night, Teresa.

TERESA: *(Defining, hopefully.)* Cast Party Romance!

BRANDON, confused, looks at her.

BRANDON: Cast Party Romance? OK... *(Takes out his notepad.)* OK... what’s the... definition?

TERESA: *(Working up the courage.)* Definition: A Cast Party Romance is not really a romance, it’s just a time after a show when two people who are kinda alone and who just kinda met but who just kinda started to like each other a little bit can go and just...I don’t know, talk... a little bit more. Just talk. And, it’s not a date or anything. *(Beat.)* So, no pressure...

BRANDON, happy but confused, starts to write in his notebook.

TERESA: *(Smiles, hopefully.)* But, and this is an important part of the definition, no note-taking.

BRANDON smiles, replaces his notebook in his pocket, and stands.

BRANDON: *(Looks at her, smiles.)* No note-taking?

TERESA: *(Looks at him, smiles.)* No note-taking.

BRANDON crosses downstage to TERESA.

BRANDON: *(Smiles.)* I like that definition, Teresa.

TERESA: *(Smiles.)* Good. Me, too, Brandon.

BRANDON and TERESA smile and exit downstage left together. Fade to black.

END OF PLAY

DO NOT COPY

THE TAMING OF THE SHOES

by Greg Cummings

SYNOPSIS: A member of the costume crew confronts an actor who won't wear his costume for "The Taming of the Shrew."

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 1 male)

TIM (m)A nervous actor who finds inspiration. (17 lines)

KAREN (f).....An exasperated costumer. (16 lines)

SETTING: A bare stage.

TIME: Production week for "The Taming of the Shrew"



AT START: *KAREN*, carrying a clipboard, enters stage left and crosses stage right, as *TIM* enters stage right and crosses stage left.

KAREN: Costume parade in ten, Petruchio.

TIM: Whatever!

KAREN: Don't you "whatever" me! You're going the wrong way!

TIM: I need to see Ms. McConnell! Now!

KAREN: She's busy!

TIM: I'll wait in her office!

KAREN: For what?

TIM: Never mind!

KAREN: Don't you "never mind" me! I'm the Student Costumer!

TIM: You know what? You're right! It's your fault us guys got the wrong costumes for this crazy play!

KAREN: Impossible! I supervised those costumes myself!

TIM: Tights? Puffy shirts? Lace? Pointy shoes?

KAREN: Yes!

TIM: For guys?

KAREN: In the cast of "The Taming of the Shrew?" Yes! That's what they wore back then!

TIM: But Ms. McConnell updated the play!

KAREN: She updated the words! To make it less overtly sexist! She didn't change the costumes! Didn't any of you guys ever pay any attention during any rehearsals?!

TIM: Whatever! (*Crosses arms.*) I won't wear that costume.

KAREN: You will wear that costume!

TIM: And none of the guys will wear their costumes, either!

KAREN: Oh, really?

TIM: Yes, really!

KAREN slowly and menacingly crosses to TIM. KAREN stands toe to toe with TIM.

KAREN: (*Menacingly.*) Well, Tim. "Petruchio." Looks like we've got our own little "Taming of the Shrew," "battle of the sexes" right here... (*Stares TIM down.*)

TIM: (*Cowed.*) No... pointy shoes?

KAREN: (*Menacingly.*) What?

TIM: (*Frightened.*) Please, please, please! Just for the preview assembly on Thursday! The whole school will be there. Can we please wear our Nikes instead of those... pointy shoes?

KAREN: (*Coldly.*) I don't know...

TIM: We'll wear the pointy shoes for the evening performances! Please, I can't go back to the guys with nothing!

KAREN: (*Beat. Coldly.*) Deal.

TIM: (*Majorly relieved.*) Thanks! Thank you! Oh, whew, you won't regret this!

TIM turns to go, turns back, grinning.

KAREN: (*Coldly.*) What's so funny!?

TIM: Nothing! (*Giggles nervously.*) I just realized that... our own little version of "The Taming of the Shrew," our own little "battle of the sexes" that we're doing now, right here by ourselves, just you and me, is kind of like Ms. O'Connell's updated version of "The Taming of the Shrew!" You know, the update? Where the men don't win all of the time? Like I'm not winning now?

KAREN stares at him, icily. TIM stops giggling.

TIM: I get it. Not funny. I'm not funny at all. I'll go now. *(Exits.)*

KAREN stares after him. Fade to black.

END OF PLAY

DO NOT COPY

OH, YOU!by **Greg Cummings**

SYNOPSIS: A shy sound designer and a shy production assistant attempt an acting exercise and are overcome with feelings for each other.

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(1 female, 1 male)*

BARRY (m)..... Teen. Theatre sound designer. Painfully shy. Barely audible. *(15 lines)*

AMY (f) Teen. Theatre Production Assistant. Painfully shy. Barely audible. *(16 lines)*

SETTING: Theatrical sound booth.

TIME: A week before the next show opens.

SET: A desk and chair. On the desk, a laptop.



AT START: *BARRY sits at his desk, earbuds in ears, focused intently on his laptop. Enter AMY, stage right, carrying a pile of flyers. They're too shy to acknowledge that they like each other. AMY places one flyer next to BARRY, and then turns to exit. BARRY hits "pause" on his laptop and removes his earbuds.*

BARRY: Um. Hi, Amy.

AMY stops.

AMY: Hi, Barry.

BARRY: What's umm... what's this, Amy?

AMY: I... don't know. *(Looks at her copy of the flyer.)* It's... from the new Artistic Director.

BARRY: *(Reading his flyer.)* "Acting Boot Camp?"

AMY: (*Reading her flyer.*) "...for the Production Staff." (*Beat.*) The Production Staff? Wait. Barry... (*Faces BARRY.*) does that mean... us?

BARRY: Um. Yeah, I guess. (*Reads.*) "You are all missing something vital. I need you all to approach the script..."

AMY: (*Reading.*) "...as actors."

BARRY: Approach the script... as actors? But... I'm not an actor.

AMY: Neither am I!

BARRY: I'm the Sound Designer! I'm supposed to live here, by myself, alone, in my sound booth!

AMY: And I'm just a lowly Production Assistant! I'm just supposed to slink around and quietly deliver flyers! Nobody's ever supposed to even notice me!

AMY and BARRY: I don't know about this... (*They read their flyers.*) "So, my Production Staff, this afternoon we will begin with the acting exercise: Vocalizing Long Vowel Sounds." (*To each other.*) Vocalizing long vowel sounds? What? Like AEIOU? (*They read.*) "Exactly! That's right: Just like AEIOU." (*To each other.*) But... why AEIOU? (*They read.*) "Because by vocalizing the long vowel sounds—AEIOU—you will release your deepest and truest... inner feelings! Like actors do!" (*To themselves.*) Release... my deepest... and truest... inner feelings? (*Shaking this off, they read.*) "Required attendance, techies! See you at three! And remember: AEIOU!"

Pause.

AMY and BARRY: My deepest... and truest... inner feelings...?

Pause.

AMY: (*Hesitantly.*) Well, I guess... I should go now...

BARRY: (*Hesitantly.*) Ummm. Yeah. Bye, Amy.

AMY: (*Hesitantly.*) Bye, Barry.

AMY turns to exit right; BARRY resumes working on his laptop.

AMY and BARRY: (*To themselves, simultaneously.*) A... E... I... O... U....

BARRY: *(Hopeful.)* Um... A?

AMY: A?

BARRY stands.

BARRY: *(Decisively.)* Aaaaaa!

AMY faces BARRY.

AMY: *(Decisively.)* Aaaaaaaa!

They slowly lose their shyness and begin to “release their deepest and truest inner feelings” for each other.

AMY: *(Smiles, steps to him.)* Eeeeeeee!

BARRY: *(Smiles, steps to her.)* Eeeeeeee!

AMY: *(Beaming, steps to him.)* llllllll!

BARRY: *(Beaming, steps to her.)* llllllll!

Both are overcome with the “deepest and truest inner feelings” for each other.

AMY and BARRY: !! !! !! *(Beat.)* Oooo! Uuuu! *(Even more overcome.)*

Ohhhh, you! Ohhhhh, you! Ohhhhh, you!

Blackout.

END OF PLAY

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GHOST LIGHT

By Greg Cummings

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