

JAKE AND BEEBEE

BEEBEE: Do you want to talk to someone... I can...

JAKE: No. No, I don't know why I came. Thanks anyway.

BEEBEE: Jake. He doesn't blame you, he blames himself. Don't forget that.

JAKE: But he's the greatest guy! Why would he want...

BEEBEE: You better go. Don't tell anyone you saw me here, ok?

BEEBEE exits, leaving JAKE alone on stage.

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SHELLEY AND BEN

PLAY: Deck the Stage!

GENRE: Seriocomic

TIME: 5:00

DESCRIPTION

The scene is the kitchen in the home of Shelley Langford. It is just before Christmas. She and Ben have been working on a project together.

ACTING HINTS

Ben is a non-stop talker while Shelley is practically silent. In the course of the play we learn the reason. Why does Shelley feel she cannot accept the present? Does she feel she doesn't deserve any happiness that can't be shared with her mom?

What does Ben like about Shelley? Does he love her? Has he ever bought a gift for a girl before? What did he imagine would happen when he gave her the present?

SHELLEY and BEN sit at a table. BEN reaches under the table, pulls out a small present, and puts it on the table.

SHELLEY: What's that?

BEN: What?

SHELLEY: That.

BEN: Oh that. I believe it's called a Christmas present.

SHELLEY: I know what it is. What's it doing on the table?

BEN: Ok, you caught me. I thought 'tis the season and we've been working on this project and after next week it'll be all over and I just wanted to give you a little something, a little present, a Christmas thing. Merry Christmas!

SHELLEY: I didn't get you anything.

BEN: I didn't expect anything.

SHELLEY continues to stare at the package.

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BEN: Aren't you going to open it?

SHELLEY: No.

BEN: I understand. You're a traditionalist. A woman after my own heart. Christmas presents should be opened on Christmas day.

SHELLEY: No, that's not what I meant. This was a very nice idea but I can't accept it.

BEN: What are you talking about?

SHELLEY: Take it back please.

BEN: Take it back? You're rejecting a present? You haven't even seen it yet! Take it back? I've never heard of this. Sure, I've done the ugly sweater return, but at least I opened the box and saw it was a sweater and went, "gee what a neat sweater" a couple of times. Are you trying to pulverize my heart into tiny bits?

SHELLEY: It's your own fault. If you had asked, I would have told you not to.

BEN: And why is that?

SHELLEY: We don't celebrate Christmas.

BEN: Oh. *(a thought hits him)* Oh! *(he hits himself on the head)* I am such an idiot. Oh wow. I feel so stupid. What an idiot. I didn't know.

SHELLEY: Now you do.

BEN: I didn't clue in. Shelley Langford doesn't sound like a Jewish name. There I go making assumptions. I'm always doing that.

SHELLEY: Who's Jewish?

BEN: You are. That's why you don't celebrate Christmas, right?

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SHELLEY: I'm not Jewish.

BEN: Oh.

SHELLEY: Shall we get started? I did some more research on the economical -

BEN: *(a thought just hitting him)* Oh! Oh!! Oh!!!

SHELLEY: What?

BEN: I get it now.

SHELLEY: Get what?

BEN: That's what's missing here. There's no tree! There's no wreaths! There's no Christmas decorations of any kind. You'd never know it was December. You know, my uncle has a tree farm and I can probably get you a pretty good deal. Maybe I can get you one for free, who knows. I kinda forgot his birthday this year so I'm not exactly in the good books...

SHELLEY: *(loudly)* Ben! *(a little more quietly)* If we wanted a tree we'd have one. We don't. Ok?

BEN: Riiiiiiight. It's the commercial thing isn't it?

SHELLEY gives a little groan of frustration.

BEN: You seem like the kind of girl, um, woman, who would really shun all that money jive. I totally agree, people spending too much money, once a year, going totally crazy on things they don't need instead of spending good decent quality time with their families and...

SHELLEY: Look, will you shut up! Just shut up!

BEN: You don't have to shout.

SHELLEY: Then shut up about Christmas. Ok? Just do your work and

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get out of here and leave me alone.

BEN: You are trying to pulverize my heart into tiny bits.

SHELLEY: I am not.

BEN: All I did was spend five minutes picking out something nice for you. I wrapped it myself. I thought I was doing a nice thing.

SHELLEY: You did.

BEN: Then open it, say "Gee what a neat sweater!" and I won't say another word.

SHELLEY: I can't.

BEN: Then give me a good reason why not. (*SHELLEY doesn't say anything*) You know, I defend you a lot at school. I. Me. I have come to your defence. You've got a pretty messy reputation. "Cold fish" comes up a lot. So does "snob," "pretentious" and "stuck-up." "No, no," I say, "She's funny. She's ok. She's just new, she doesn't know many people. She's just shy." Obviously I've been the biggest fool 'cause obviously everyone is right about you and I just couldn't see it.

SHELLEY runs from the room. BEN takes a big breath.

BEN: Damn. Merry Christmas.

He sighs and calls out.

BEN: I'll let myself out.

He starts to exit when SHELLEY runs back on with a picture in her hands.

SHELLEY: You don't get off that easy. Sit down!

BEN: I've said all I want to say.

SHELLEY: I haven't even started. Sit down. (*She holds the picture in front*

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of his face) Ask me who's in the picture.

BEN: Shelley...

SHELLEY: Ask!

BEN: Who's in the picture?

SHELLEY: That's my dad. Pretty handsome guy, don't you think? Ask where he is.

BEN: Maybe I should -

SHELLEY: Ask where he is! Come on, you wanted to talk; ask where he is.

BEN: Where's your dad?

SHELLEY: I don't know. Isn't that funny? Isn't that a scream? I don't know. Two years ago he went to work on Christmas Eve and he never came home.

BEN: I'm sorry.

SHELLEY: Don't be. He stole money from his company and ran away with the boss' secretary. Merry Christmas! That's our nearest guess anyway. No one knows for sure because there hasn't been one word. Not one. Not a letter. Not a telegram. Not a postcard. Not an answering machine message. Nothing. He left us with debts up to our ears, and we didn't even get a goodbye. How's your dad? Is he alive? Does he talk to you every day?

BEN: Loudly.

SHELLEY: Well good, 'cause let me tell you; around here there isn't much talking. Around here, we bounce from apartment to apartment and my mom tries to keep working but she's not very strong. My dad knew that. And he left. So you'll have to excuse me if I'm cold, or distant, or pretentious. But my mind's a little full

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'cause I only got three hours of sleep after working the night shift at the 7-11. And I could really give a crap about Christmas because all it means is that my father didn't love my mother and he didn't love me.

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CHANTICLEER AND PERTELOTE

PLAY: *The Canterbury Tales*
originally by Geoffrey Chaucer
GENRE: Comedy
TIME: 4:00

DESCRIPTION

This scene is taken from one of the stories in *The Canterbury Tales*, by Geoffrey Chaucer. Chanticleer is a vain rooster who gets caught by a fox and needs to trick the fox to be set free. This moment is between the rooster and his love, Pertelote, a hen.

ACTING HINTS

This is a scene of high romance. The acting should be stylized instead of realistic. Think big gestures and exaggerated emotional choices.

Also, think about how you will physicalize the two characters since they are animals. How will you balance the human and animal characteristics?

Pertelote believes hens are upper-class, while chickens are lower-class. See how often she falls into "chicken-like" behaviour.

CHANTICLEER the rooster enters and gives a loud 'cock-a-doodle-do.' He's very vain and proud of himself.
CHANTICLEER begins to sing, showing off his lovely voice. This brings *PERTELOTE*, the hen, to his side.

CHANTICLEER: (*singing*) Hey trolly loly lo, maid where do you go?
I go to the meadow to milk my cow.

PERTELOTE: My dearest sweetheart, that was ever so beautiful.

CHANTICLEER: Thank you, lady Pertelote. The notes come out so because they are all for you.

The two coo at each other. Then CHANTICLEER turns away and gives a melodramatic groan.

PERTELOTE: My darling dear! What noise is this? What ails you to groan so?