

Congratulations! You've got your hands on the digital download for a bunch of

Script Trailers

by Mike Peterson

(...who you probably know from ZingerZ Comedy)

Q: What the heck are script trailers?

A: Buying scripts is often ridiculous. You can stare at as many books as you want and read the synopses on the back, but you still don't have a feel for the tone or direction of the piece. These are two-page cuts of the scripts. Some are spoiler-heavy. Some aren't. All of them, though, will give you a great sense of the play. You'll know for sure if you want to buy a copy or not, and all without having to read the whole thing.

Q: So what will I find in this packet?

A: First, know that if you print it double-sided that everything is going to come out like you hope it would. Just saying. Other than that, you'll find a script trailer for every play that Mike has for sale. That means not just his one-acts but also trailers for each and every play in the Amphitheater Project volumes. Each book (or standalone play) also has a cover page with general information about the book as a whole.

Q: Are these the same as the script trailers I saw on your convention table?

A: Probably. We print the table copy from this document. Minor version differences could exist, though.

Q: What if I decide that want to buy copies of anything in these trailers?

A: Awesome! Come back to our table and buy as many as you want. You can also find them all on Amazon. (The next page has a QR code that should help.) They're generally cheaper if you buy from us in-person. We like to be nice about that kind of thing.

Q: I noticed that the font size is a little larger than typical on these pages. Any reason?

A: Yes! It's the same font size and spacing as in the scripts. Why so large and spacious? Not everyone has young person eyes. And sometimes you have to read in the dim light. (Not everyone is sitting on stage or a brightly lit classroom!)

Q: How do I purchase rights to perform these plays?

A: For the Amphitheater Project plays you just need to have enough copies for cast/crew and send an email detailing when and where you're performing. (This is true whether the performance is public or not!) For the one-acts you can go to *www.FreakingAwesomeBooks.com* and purchase rights there.

Q: What if I purchase a date and need to change it?

A: Send us an email (*info@FreakingAwesomeBooks.com*) and let us know. We (probably) can't refund a date, but changing it is no problem. Look, philosophically we assume that we're on the same team as you. If you want to perform one of these plays that's awesome. We aren't going to make it hard for you to do something we're excited to see you do.

Q: You said something about a QR code?

A: Yup! You can find all of Mike's theatrical works at: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/Mike-Peterson/author/B0CWDHWTBX> (That link is clickable if you're looking at this on-screen.)

...or if you have this document printed you can use this QR code:



How to Rob the DMV

*Ridiculously silly and episodic **one-act ensemble play***

Comedy

7-40+ performers, all flexible

38 minutes

**“In three minutes I’m going to rob
this place. Are you in or out?”**

One person just wants to renew their license. The other one... well, the other one wants to rob the DMV. Why the heck would anyone do that? For the glory! For the pens on chains! For the cash! (Not everyone has a bank account, after all...) To prove that they’re the best in the tri-county area! Or maybe, you know, plain old apathy or vindictiveness. Learn how to rob the DMV in a convergence of multiverses, as an employee, or as part of a ~~teaching seminar~~ high school play.

Features:

- More curtain openings/closings than you’ve ever seen in a play! (...*probably*. *Technically, they only open and close eight times each.*)
- Separate scenes on a repeated theme, broken up by narrator sequences.
- High-demand spotlight roles, monologues, chorus parts, and more... Oh my!
- Tons of silliness, if you’re up for something completely different. (*Know what I mean? Know what I mean? Say no more!*)
- Includes guidelines that allow you to make additional cuts to the script if you have to ...that won’t require additional approval from the author/publisher!
- ***NOT AN ACTUAL TUTORIAL TO COMMIT CRIME.*** Everything is extremely silly and tongue-in-cheek.

How to Rob the DMV

Practical Rundown

Technical Requirements: main curtain, microphones, (*recommended*) back curtain

Character List: (*Italics identify minor characters in each scene*)

Note: Alternate names for flexible casting are in the script. Extras/chorus required for almost all scenes. Characters in different scenes can be doubled by the same performer, although it's difficult for narrators to double most other characters.

Scene 1a: Narrator

Scene 2a: Narrator

Scene 3a: Narrator #2

Scene 4a: Narrator, Narrator #2

Scene 5a: Narrator, Narrator #2, Alternate Narrator

Scene 6a: Alternate Narrator

Scene 7a: Narrator, Alternate Narrator

Scene 8a: Narrator, Narrator #2

Scene 1: John, Tracy

Scene 2: Sam, Shel, *Clerk*

Scene 3: Nate, Clark, *Boss*

Scene 4: Francis, Terry

Scene 5: Group #1, Group #2, *Jack, Clerk*

Scene 6: Pat

Scene 7: Newt, Fingers, Clanky

Scene 8: Mark, Director, Stranger, Sergeant, Stagehand, *Choir Student*

Content Obstacles: One mention (but no display) of a gun, Robbery (*lots!*), Fear of poisoning, Black market pen sales

SAM and SHEL are in line for a counter at the DMV.

SHEL: (*Turning around to SAM*) So, what are you in here for?

SAM: Renewing my license. I can't wait to see my daughter again. You?

SHEL: Me? Oh. I'm robbing the place.

SAM: Ha! Is there a form for that? I may need one.

SHEL: No. No form.

SAM: Ha! Well, count me in.

SHEL: That's the spirit! Ok, so I'll be the muscle, you be the bag man.

SAM: Bag man? Bag person? Bagger? Is there a politically correct term for that?

CLERK: That's not the right form. Go check the blank ones on the wall, fill it out, and come back to me. (*Loudly, to the room*) Next!

SAM: What the heck can you even get from robbing a DMV? Blank forms? Terrible pens that don't work? Pictures of someone else's kids?

SHEL: I want the cash. They take so many fees. Not everyone has a bank account.

SAM: Huh. What a thought.

The CUSTOMER ahead of SHEL leaves.

CLERK: I'll be with you in a moment. (*Exits*)

SHEL: What? Now we have to wait? This is terrible!

SAM: How long *is* a moment, anyhow? Are we having a moment? Is she having a moment? Are those moments the same length?

SHEL: It's not like I have to wait. I'm robbing the place either way, right?

SHEL climbs onto the counter.

SHEL: (*Shouts*) Ok, this here is a robbery! Give me all the money!

SAM: Wait, what?

SHEL: Good point. (*Shouts again*) Give all the money to my friend, here!

SAM: Um, wait. Stop. Give me a moment.

PEOPLE start handing SAM valuables.

SAM: (*To SHEL*) Hey, I'm not with you. (*To EVERYONE ELSE*) I'm not with this guy!

PEOPLE continue piling valuables in SAM's arms.

SHEL: My comedian friend will take everything.

SAM: No! Wait! Take your stuff back!

CLERK returns.

SHEL: Give me all the money!

CLERK: No, you get off my desk! You want to rob, you do it at the bank. This is the DMV!

SHEL: I can rob wherever I want! Give me all the cash!

CLERK: We don't take any cash. It's all credit cards.

SHEL: Well then, this was a big waste of time!

SAM: (*Offering the valuables*) Um, you could take all of these.

SHEL: Why aren't they in a bag?

SAM: What?

SHEL: Why didn't you put them in a bag?

SAM: What bag?

SHEL: The bag I gave you!

SAM: What?

SHEL: The bag I gave you! Where is it?

SAM: You didn't give me any bag!

SHEL: Yes I did!

SAM: No you didn't! You didn't even tell me you were a robber!

SHEL: Yes I did!

SAM: Yes you did, but I thought you were joking!

SHEL: So where's the bag?

SAM: You didn't give me the bag!

SHEL: Yes I did! I had it in my pocket and... Oh.

(*Pulls it out of pocket*) I didn't give you the bag.

SAM: I said that!

SHEL: Ok, well, let me come down and give it to you. Whoa--

SHEL falls to the ground with a loud thud and is knocked unconscious. SAM looks at SHEL, then around at EVERYBODY ELSE. SAM looks at the valuables, and then runs out the door.

There Is No Genie In This Play

One-act play with a gut-punch twist ending

Drama, Tragedy

9-20+ performers, all flexible

30-40 minutes

**The fable of King Midas meets the
Twilight Zone ...in middle school!**

Caleb is your average pre-teen/early teen. He struggles against a world that he increasingly feels ready to tackle, but it seems intent on giving him more and more rules to follow. A chance encounter gives him the opportunity to finally make the world play according to his rules, but Caleb finds that sometimes control isn't all it's cracked up to be. In the end, though, nothing is as it seems, and Caleb learns his lesson just in the nick of time...

Features:

- Plays great even on small/medium stages!
- Minimal tech requirements
- Incredibly flexible for casting, set, and tech
- Perfect competition piece for when you really want to surprise the audience

There Is No Genie In This Play

Practical Rundown

Technical Requirements: At one dramatic moment the stage is struck to black

Character List: (*Italics identify minor characters*)

Note: All characters can be flexibly cast male/female. Alternate names in script.

- Caleb – A young boy who learns a tough lesson.
- Toby – Caleb's best friend.
- Bert – A bully about Caleb's age.
- Mrs. Kerfuffle – The most dreaded teacher of math.
- Mr. McMuddle – An incredibly boring English teacher.
- Dominic – A mysterious stranger at the right place at the right time.
- *Caleb's Mom*
- Various *Students* (minimum 2, but otherwise can be doubled)
- *Cute Girl*

Content Obstacles: Bullying (*very light and brief, also: bully gets comeuppance*), Severe embarrassment of a teacher (*causes deep remorse for instigator*), offscreen death of a main character, implication (kinda) of an afterlife (*non-religious*)

TOBY: Dude, what is UP with you? First your mom, then a bunch of free candy, then McMuddle? You've gotta tell me your secret, man!

CALEB: No secret. I got my genie wish! Let's say you find a genie but he's only going to give you one wish. What's the wish you make?

TOBY: Infinite wishes.

CALEB: You can't do that. Either the genie is stupid and you've now made everything you say a potential death trap or the genie is smart and everything you say a potential death trap. You wish that you can make the world work the way you want. Want to stay up all night? Tell your mom. Want a ton of candy? Tell the store to give it to you.

KERFUFFLE: Now, where were we? Oh, right. Study guides in the air, everyone. Who was the last one I checked off? Oh, right. Caleb. He doesn't need one. OK, then. [*Checking off other STUDENTS.*] I've got you, you, you, and done! OK. [*Pointedly*] Caleb? Study guide, test, or no, you need to do your homework. This is important. You are going to fail in life if you---

CALEB: [*Interrupting and losing it in frustration*] WHY ARE YOU SO MEAN? You're so mean!

KERFUFFLE: Well, OK, obviously. I AM so mean! [*Realizing this seems to hurt her just a little.*]

CALEB: Every day I hate coming in here because I'm embarrassed. Do you know what it's like to feel so embarrassed? It's your turn! How about we embarrass you, too? What are you most embarrassed about?

KERFUFFLE: [*Quietly, pained*] I live alone. I would have more cats but I'm afraid they'll leave me like everyone else I ever loved. I'm afraid I'll always be alone. I'll die alone.

CALEB: [*Beat. Realizes what he just did. Looks around like he's making a getaway.*] Um, crud. I'm going. Me leaving isn't weird to anyone. Everyone can go back to normal.

STUDENTS: [*Suddenly gossiping and laughing*] Did you hear that? Did she just say that? Holy cow! [*STUDENTS start laughing at KERFUFFLE, who now looks like she wants to die and shrivel away into nothing.*]

[*CALEB, now full of frustration, hurt, and regret, leaves quickly. Black.*]

CALEB: Hey, lemme ask you a question. I'm not telling you how to answer. Are we friends?

TOBY: Um, obviously? We hang out, like, EVERY DAY. Of course we're friends.

CALEB: ...but how do you KNOW we're friends?

TOBY: Are you OK, buddy?

CALEB: [*Sadly*] Leave me alone.

TOBY: OK. [*Leaves.*]

[*STUDENTS continue chatting, hanging out, and walking by.*]

CALEB: [*Angrily*] Oh, I'm such an idiot! I hate all of you! This is a nightmare! I just wish everyone would leave me ALOOOOOOONE!

[*The set is rapidly struck as though the world is disappearing.*]

CALEB: [*Yelling at nothing in particular*] This is TORTURE! I don't deserve this! What is going on? Can't everything go back to normal? [*Beat.*] I just wish I'd never been born!

DOMINIC: Well, that's another thing that wasn't ever in your control.

CALEB: What? Hey wait, you saved my life from that car accident, man!

DOMINIC: We'll see. Maybe I should start by giving you a clue of what IS happening.

[*Heart beat monitor sound should be subtle, but clearly audible. CALEB and DOMINIC turn their focus to a single point beyond the fourth wall.*]

CALEB: Whoa. That dude is messed up! Who is that? Are they OK?

DOMINIC: [*Beat.*] No. You aren't.

CALEB: What? Oh no. Oh no! So is this the point where you let me go back and change my life?

DOMINIC: I'm sorry. I know it's tough to die. It's always hard, and dying like this, unexpectedly, without getting to say goodbye or even having a long, full life is awful. Believe me, I know. There's just one thing I want to know, CALEB. What if I DID send you back right now?

CALEB: I wouldn't want my genie wish! I don't like what other people do sometimes, and I definitely don't like being told what I can or can't or have to do, but it's better than trying to control the world.

DOMINIC: Well then, let's give it a try. Close your eyes.

CALEB: [*Closes them*] OK.

DOMINIC: Now, breathe with me. Three.

[*CALEB takes an audible, deep breath and lets it out.*]

DOMINIC: Two.

[*Another breath from CALEB.*]

DOMINIC: One.

[*Caleb breathes in. Black. Flat line tone replaces the heart beat monitor. If you're using one, iron lung sound should continue, but fade. Stage lights stay black. Flat line tone fades.*]

CALEB: [*Super excited*] Holy cow, this is amazing!

[*End.*]

The Amphitheater Project

Volume 1

This collection of short plays is designed to be a full performance able to fit in spaces as restrictive as the tiny amphitheaters that you tend to see in public parks. They're high on drama, short on requirements.

They feature:

- Tiny casts – *Written for 2m, 2f*
- Minimal or no props/sets – *Ideally, your entire production fits in a single sedan*
- Minimal space requirements – *Perform in a lobby, between tables, or on teeny stages!*
- Total performance time of under an hour (*The audience might be sitting on concrete*)
- Plans for “amphitheater boxes” – super flexible (and portable!) suggestive sets
- Plays can be mixed and matched with other volumes ...*or even plays by other authors!*
- Royalties are *only an email – NO MONEY!*

The plays in this volume are:

“In My Head”	10-12 mins	2m, 1f	Comedy
“The Way Out”	20 mins	2m, 2f	Drama, Suspense
“All Grown Up”	15 mins	2m, 2f	Drama, Romantic

The Amphitheater Project

Volume 1

All Synopses

“In My Head”

In the mind of a typical guy, Heart and Head are constantly at war when it comes to the ladies. The truth comes out, however, when they realize that their paramour is actually in their brain herself. And when a guy gets a girl stuck in his head, neither Heart nor Head have any power thereafter...

Content Obstacles: Discussion of wanting to make out

“The Way Out”

Four strangers found themselves living in a bunker for two years as the earth burned above them. Now, however, nerves are reaching their most frazzled ends and as they struggle harder against each other all of them are asking themselves about... the way out.

Content Obstacles: Discussion of nuclear/chemical warfare, Pregnancy

“All Grown Up”

Boy meets girl. Boy grows up with girl. Boy and girl get married and have kids. Boy and girl grow old together and, in the end, die together....all in about 15 minutes.

Content Obstacles: Mention of drinking beer (*of-age*), Implication of a possible divorce (*very brief and in passing*), Deaths of old-age and trying to comfort each other, Implication of a (*non-religious*) afterlife

Excerpts from “In My Head” (Vol 1)

In the mind of a typical guy, Heart and Head are constantly at war when it comes to the ladies. The truth comes out, however, when they realize that their paramour is actually in their brain herself. And when a guy gets a girl stuck in his head, neither Heart nor Head have any power thereafter...

HEAD: Listen, Heart. We talked about this. We fight every single time. And so when we talked about it you said (*Exaggerated moping*) “OK, fine. We’ll do it your way, Head, as long as we can meet in the middle.”

HEART: (*Sighs*) Yeah, yeah. Whatever. I just don’t like your way, Head. Your way doesn’t (*Beat*) feeeeee quite——

HEAD: (*Interrupting*) My way doesn’t necessarily feeeeee anything! That’s the point, Heart! We are constantly getting battered around by girls because we can’t work together.

HEART: Fiiiine. ...but Fiona, now, there’s a girl! She’s different!

HEAD: Whoa. Hold it. She sure seems different, but we need to go slow. We barely met the girl. She’s not vetted. We really need to learn more about her. What does she like? (*Worried*) What does she hate? (*Curious*) Does she like dogs? (*Highly concerned*) What’s she like without coffee?

HEART: (*Lovestruck*) ...but she moves like a summer breeze and smells like the sky.

HEAD: Hold up. What?

HEART: Her voice is like a light velvet blanket and I could dive into her eyes like...

HEAD: Heart!

HEART: Hmm? Yes, Head?

HEAD: United fromf, rebebeber?

HEART: (*Still a bit loopy*) Sorry, Head. You’ll have to repeat that.

HEAD: (*Concerned*) Whabada heckakek? Why cananta I talkakak?

HEART: (*Still dreamy*) OK, Head. You let me know when you’re done playing games. (*Drifting into a daze*) For now, I’m just going to sit here and think. I’m just going to think about——

FIONA has quietly entered from the side from wherever was least obvious.

FIONA: (*Friendly and chipper*) Hi guys! Nice brain you have here.

FIONA’s sudden entrance has clearly shocked HEAD, but HEART is drawn to her like a fly to honey.
(*Together*)

HEART
(*Dreamily*)
Fioooooona!

HEAD
(*Nervous*)
Fififioonoo!

HEAD clasps his hands over his mouth.

FIONA: (*Sizing it all up*) So, according to the brain assignments apparently I'm here for now. I know you guys probably have a system set up for how things work around here. It's not a problem that I'm here is it?

HEART: Not at all. In fact, Head and I were thinking about moving over to just this one small area over there. There's so much room here. Why don't you just take up as much as you like? Just fill the whole brain up with all of... you.

HEAD yanks HEART by the arm.

HEAD: Yooneeyuutidooley frumf!

HEART: Seriously, what?

FIONA looks over nonchalantly while giving herself a tour of the space.

FIONA: Oh, that must be Head, huh? Do all the girls that pass through here have that effect?

FIONA snaps her fingers and HEAD suddenly finds he's capable of speaking clearly.

HEAD: (*Relieved and frustrated*) Yes!

HEART, irritated at HEAD, pops in between HEAD and FIONA to take her arm gently and lead her away from HEAD.

HEART: Um, what my esteemed soulmate means to say, is, er, that in the past mere girls might have passed through, but a woman like you—

FIONA: (*Interrupts with false offense*) Your esteemed *soulmate*? Aren't *I* your soulmate?

HEART: (*Totally outmatched*) Well, yes, obviously, I only meant that...

HEAD: (*Pulling HEART aside*) Listen! She's here because we didn't have a united front. Now we're stuck and in real trouble. There's no way we can think clearly with her here. The only way for us to get rid of her now is to—

FIONA has been slowly circling around behind the guys. Now she pulls them apart and walks through the middle of them to keep them apart.

FIONA: Get rid of me? Why, boys, that doesn't sound very hospitable. Heart, didn't you offer me all the space that I wanted?

HEART: Well, yes.

Beat. FIONA turns to HEAD before HEART can say more.

FIONA: And Head, wouldn't keeping me around for just the teensiest bit of time also give you a chance to try to work out a good strategy to handle Heart?

HEAD: (*Uncertain*) Well, that could maaaybe work.

FIONA: (*Before HEAD says more*) Good! Then I'll just make myself at home here.

Excerpts from “The Way Out” (Vol 1)

Four strangers found themselves living in a bunker for two years as the earth burned above them. Now, however, nerves are reaching their most frazzled ends and as they struggle harder against each other all of them are asking themselves about... the way out.

BROCK: All systems are working fine. All exterior seals are intact. Food hydroponics and water wells are on track. In fact, we're 6% ahead on food. Maybe we could even have a party in a few weeks.

PHIL: (*Frustrated*) A party? Sure, whatever. Who cares? We're still stuck in this stupid hole. I can't believe I ever came to this stupid bunker. I should have let myself--

AGATHA: (*Interrupting*) No! Don't say it. That's our rule, Phil. We don't talk about *before*.

PHIL: I want out!

BROCK: Yeah, yeah. Whatever. You know that if you open that door we all die from the chemical weapons that were dropped after the nukes.

PHIL: (*Using air quotes*) There's no "truth" from you, Brock. Your bunker "library" never had more than copies of *The Great Gatsby*, *Charlotte's Web*, a Gideons Bible... (*Deep breath to yell*) ...and the medical manuals you won't let anyone else take a look at! Plus, who the hell puts *Charlotte's Web* in a bomb shelter? Why can't it have *happy* books?

AGATHA: Well, you have to admit that ever since we lost that chunk from the middle of *Great Gatsby* that Sarah's rewrite was just... (*Chef's kiss*)

SARAH: (*Finally losing it*) SHUT UP!

EVERYONE gets really quiet at this. Clearly, Sarah doesn't scream often.

SARAH: You guys need to stop. ...all of you! Every few weeks we do this. There's a big fight. We step gingerly around each other for a few days while everyone is still angry. And then, slowly, everyone either forgets why they're angry or decides that their grudge isn't as important as surviving ...together. Then, inevitably, pressure builds up again. No one likes being stuck down here. The point isn't to be having a vacation, it's to be surviving.

BROCK: Hey, I tried to make sure that--

AGATHA: (*Cutting him off*) Brock, you never expected to have three other people in here with you. Let alone people who weren't family. We can only be so critical of the fact that you had apparently no idea how to include any reasonable entertainment in here.

Later, SARAH ends up walking in on PHIL and AGATHA. They've stolen BROCK's private journal.

SARAH: (*Cutting him off*) You stole it from his quarters?

PHIL: (*Squirming*) Well, not exactly. Kind of, yes?

SARAH: We have almost no privacy in this godforsaken bunker. You stole it from him?

AGATHA: We didn't know what it was at first. We wanted to read the medical and science journals.

This was stored on the shelf.

SARAH: What the hell made you think you could steal something from someone else in here? There's only four of us!

PHIL: We've been putting it back! We just wanted to see if there were any more clues.

SARAH: Clues?

AGATHA: Yeah. Phil and I have found a few things that were just a little ...off, lately.

PHIL: Yeah.

SARAH: What do you mean? Like what?

AGATHA: Well, first Phil noticed a discrepancy between the radiation readings in the exterior and in the actual filters.

SARAH: So the filter readings are safe?

PHIL: That's what I don't know. It's why we wanted to read the medical manuals. When I told Brock before, he only told me that the filter readings were way too high to be safe. I just wanted to know what "safe" would look like.

BROCK enters.

BROCK: Hey, what's that? What are you hiding? Show me!

PHIL: Brock, we want to leave. We want out.

BROCK: You can't leave! You'd be risking all of us!

PHIL: We think it's safe now!

AGATHA: We know the filters are lower, Brock!

BROCK: The filter readings are still too high!

AGATHA: Prove it! Show us the manuals!

BROCK: No! I, uh, I can't, uh...

PHIL: Are they safe? How long have they been safe?

ALL start moving towards SR. PHIL is fighting with BROCK while AGATHA starts to try to leave. Within a second or two they slow to a freeze. SARAH steps to DC.

SARAH: Did they open the door? Was the earth still toxic? Unfortunately, stories have to end somewhere. And this one? Well, let's just say that our humble little bunker can't tell those stories tonight. (*Thoughtfully*) The nature of humanity is that we express outwardly the conflicts we hold inside ourselves. Do we fight because we feel trapped by others or is it because we feel trapped by our own nature? Either way, this story was only about what people do when they believe they've found... the way out.

Excerpts from “All Grown Up” (Vol 1)

Boy meets girl. Boy grows up with girl. Boy and girl get married and have kids. Boy and girl grow old together and, in the end, die together....all in about 15 minutes.

-- PRESCHOOL (age 4) --

JAMES and PAULA are sitting on the floor together, playing. PAULA is trying to show JAMES her pigtails, but JAMES is mostly ignoring her and playing with pantomimed cars or trucks.

PAULA: *(Playing with her pigtails)* My momma? She tie-- my momma ties them. So I like them. Do you like them?

JAMES: *(Concerned)* I wouldn't let my mom put piggie tails on my head. I know what happens under the tails. *(Whispering with big eyes)* They go poop.

PAULA: My pig tails don't go poop!

JAMES: *(Relieved)* Oh. That's good. Do they just go pee?

PAULA: *(Whacking JAMES)* No! Stop! I'm telling!

PAULA exits, running. JAMES bawls on the floor, then stretches his arms upward. This morphs into swinging both arms down in disappointment.

-- ELEMENTARY SCHOOL --

JAMES: No, mommy! I don't want her coming to my stupid party. She has cooties! Tommy said he saw them. Plus, she always hogs my soldiers and makes them have *tea parties*!

GIRL (O.S.): Come on in! He's excited to see you.

JAMES ends up leaving for a moment. PAULA immediately runs over and sits next to where he was.

PAULA:

(As a toy) Sorry I wore all this ugly green. I didn't have time to change. *(Different toy)* That's OK. I made green cookies to go with our tea.

JAMES (O.S.): Are you making them have a tea party?

PAULA: Nope!

-- MIDDLE SCHOOL --

-- HIGH SCHOOL --

-- COLLEGE --

JAMES: Are you going to be free this weekend?

PAULA: I should have some time Sunday evening. Why don't we drive out to Hannover Field and look up at the stars?

JAMES: Promise you can break free for me?

PAULA crosses to James at center and holds his hands in front of her.

-- MARRIAGE --

PAULA: (*Staring into his eyes*) I, Paula, do solemnly swear that I take you, James as my lawfully wedded husband. To have and to hold for better and for worse, for richer for poorer.

JAMES: (*Pantomiming the action*) With this ring I thee--

-- FIRST BABY → MIDDLE AGED → EMPTY NESTERS → GRANDPARENTS → TWILIGHT YEARS --

JAMES lays down face-up across the lined-up boxes with his head towards PAULA. His head could even be in her lap. He closes his eyes.

-- DEATH --

BOY enters. He stops to look at JAMES and take his pulse for a moment.

BOY: I'm sorry.

PAULA: (*Stifling a sob*) Oh!

BOY: He doesn't have long. I'm glad you're here with him.

BOY exits.

JAMES: (*Still laying, eyes closed*) Don't listen to him. He doesn't know what he's doing.

PAULA: (*Holding back tears*) You silly old man. After all this time you're going to leave me? I love you, James.

JAMES: I love you more.

PAULA starts to cry. BOY and GIRL slowly enter, holding a sheet (vertically) between them. It should slightly drag or almost touch the ground. Once the sheet totally conceals JAMES, they pause. JAMES should slip to the ground behind the boxes and flip around so his head is away from PAULA but he'll be out of sight as...

BOY and GIRL exit the same way they came in.

PAULA: (*Crying*) Oh, you silly old man! I miss you, you big dummy! (*Falling asleep*) Why did you have to be the one?

PAULA falls asleep. JAMES gets up from behind the boxes, now young and vigorous again. He jumps up and comes around to PAULA.

JAMES: Hey sleepyhead. Get up!

PAULA: (*Now also young*) I don't understand. What's happening?

JAMES: Are you ready? Let's go!

PAULA: (*Nods*) Together!

The Amphitheater Project

Volume 2

This collection of short plays is designed to be a full performance able to fit in spaces as restrictive as the tiny amphitheaters that you tend to see in public parks. They're high on drama, short on requirements.

They feature:

- Tiny casts – *Written for 2m, 2f, but slightly flexible*
- Minimal or no props/sets – *Ideally, your entire production fits in a single sedan*
- Minimal space requirements – *Perform in a lobby, between tables, or on teeny stages!*
- Total performance time of under an hour (*The audience might be sitting on concrete*)
- Plans for “amphitheater boxes” – super flexible (and portable!) suggestive sets
- Plays can be mixed and matched with other volumes ...*or even plays by other authors!*
- **Royalties are only an email – *NO MONEY!***

The plays in this volume are:

“The Greek Greek Tragedy”	12 mins	2m, 1f, 1 flex	Comedy, Greek (<i>kinda</i>) Chorus
“The Mellow Marshmallow Melodrama”	20 mins	2m, 2f	Melodramatic Comedy
“Peggy McCormick’s Defeat”	20 mins	2m, 2f	Historical Drama (Texas)

The Amphitheater Project

Volume 2

All Synopses

“The Greek Greek Tragedy”

A fraternity is threatened with being closed by an angry provost. A raucous party provides them blackmail. ...but the blackmail is lost. All done with the accompaniment of an Ancient Greek chorus.

Content Obstacles: Mention of party drinking as a thing characters do, Comedic admiration of a (very) flexible girl in a photo, Blackmail (...which is heavily dissuaded)

“The Mellow Marshmallow Melodrama”

An evil camp director seeks to kidnap and deep-six the all-to-calm heiress of a marshmallow fortune! (Oh noes!) She's constantly rescued by the lead counselor, who also ends up ultimately trapped. (Oh noes!) There's traps, and fire, and ropes, and sinking boats! (Oh, double noes!) And maybe there's a romance! (Hooray!)

Content Obstacles: *Note: this is very much an old-school white hat/black hat melodrama!*

Multiple attempts at murder which are always thwarted with minimal (or no) injury, One kiss on the cheek (*can also be covered/faked*)

“Peggy McCormick’s Defeat”

Peggy McCormick owned the farm where the Battle of San Jacinto took place. She had fled as the Mexican troops approached, but when she returned she found the bodies of 600 dead Mexican troops scattered across her ranch. This is what she did next.

Content Obstacles: Accurate history, Discussion of the Alamo and capture of Santa Ana, Discussion of corpses left unburied (in the sun) for weeks, Brief (but climactic) line that *could* sound racist if you forget what the facts actually are

Excerpts from “The Greek Greek Tragedy” (Vol. 2)

A fraternity is threatened with being closed by an angry provost. A raucous party provides them blackmail. ...but the blackmail is lost. All done with the accompaniment of an Ancient Greek chorus.

CHORUS

The fee the provost wants the house to pay cannot be done.
The brothers spent all of their cash on only having fun.
There's no reserve, no savings, they really are flat broke.
So to think that they can pay it, really is a joke.

CHAD: (*Offstage, shouting*) Crash! Boom! Expensive sound effects!

CHRIS: You broke the house?

CHAD: Only part of it.

CHRIS: Dude!

CHAD: Yeah, dude?

CHRIS: We can't afford to fix that!

CHAD: Well then, maybe we can cover it up with these.

CHRIS: (*Taking the papers*) What are they?

CHAD: We found them inside the wall.

CHRIS: Hey, these are from a secret society that used to be on campus. Those have always been against the rules. Wait a minute... the provost is listed as a founding member!

CHORUS

Never underestimate the value of blackmail
To raise a measure of success from an atrocious fail.
Please note our lawyers now ask us to include (of course)
Clarification that blackmail is not a thing we endorse.

CHORUS keeps dancing silently. CHORUS LAWYER steps forward.

CHORUS LAWYER: All information presented by a production of The Amphitheater Project is for entertainment only. Blackmail is an unethical and illegal offense that should only be employed by fictional characters in fictional settings. Please do not use blackmail if you are allergic to blackmail or experience any of the following: bloating, sore throat, constipation, diarrhea, gout, or twinges of the conscience. If blackmail causes a reaction lasting longer than four hours see a doctor immediately. Blackmail is not intended to diagnose, treat or cure any medical condition. Please consult a lawyer before deciding whether blackmail is right for you.

ALL CHORUS exit. PROVOST and CHRIS enter. CHRIS has all the papers and photos neatly stacked, perhaps in a folder. A couple of amphitheater boxes to be used as seats would be appropriate.

PROVOST: Why aren't I meeting with Chad? He's still your chapter president, right?

CHRIS: Well, I wanted to talk to you about the fee that the house owes.

PROVOST: Aha. Are you here to pay it?

CHRIS: No. I have a feeling that you will.

PROVOST: It sounds like you're trying to convince me to close down your house.

CHRIS: Why would you close down a house that holds so many memories for you?

CHORUS enters. PROVOST and CHRIS exit. CHORUS forms a low kick line.

CHORUS

Sneaky deeds and half-truth lies are never solid deals.

You can't be sure of anything, no matter how you grease the wheels.

Here we have a skeleton to anchor the blackmail done,
...but is it all enough to say the fraternity has won?

CHAD and CHRIS enter.

CHAD: Dude! You saved us!

CHRIS: Yeah. I only need one thing. Where's the stack of the original papers and photos?

CHAD: The papers from the wall?

CHRIS: Yes!

CHAD: No idea, dude. I didn't see them when we cleaned up from the party.

CHRIS: *(Looking over the audience)* Wait. Is the backyard on fire?

CHAD: No. We had so much trash we decided to burn it.

CHRIS: *(Frantic)* Tell me you didn't burn the blackmail evidence!

CHAD: *(Flatly)* I didn't burn the blackmail evidence.

CHRIS: Well, did you?

CHAD: No, dude.

CHRIS: Are you sure?

CHAD: *(Confidently)* Yes. *(Beat.)* No?

Excerpts from “The Mellow Marshmallow Melodrama” (Vol. 2)

An evil camp director seeks to kidnap and deep-six the all-to-calm heiress of a marshmallow fortune! (Oh noes!) She's constantly rescued by the lead counselor, who also ends up ultimately trapped. (Oh noes!) There's traps, and fire, and ropes, and sinking boats! (Oh, double noes!) And maybe there's a romance! (Hooray!)

JAKE: You won't regret it, Mr. Thompson! I've admired all the work you've done for the community since I was a camper here, myself. I can't wait to work with you this year.

MR. THOMPSON: Yes, the community. Of course. Yes, all these... *(Trying not to gag)* ...**children**. *(Normally again)* Someone needs to... *(Ominously)* ...take care of them. *(Normally)* After all, if no one else is going to do it, I might as well. *(Evil laughter)* Mwa ha ha ha ha-- ack. Cough. Cough. *The performer should actually say the words "cough, cough."*

MR. THOMPSON: Sorry. I got something caught in my throat there, for a minute.

MR. THOMPSON leaves and JAKE follows quickly behind him. SARAH stands up.

SARAH: *(To the audience, searching)* I'm looking for an Emily McLow. Is anyone here Emily McLow? *(Pointing at a female-presenting audience member.)* Are you Emily McLow?

Be aware that a coy audience member might try to claim that they're Emily. If they do, Sarah should be doubtful. "You don't look like the heiress I've seen in all the articles about the Mr. Marshmallow fortune. Got some ID?" Sarah should press this issue. If, for instance, they try to hand an imaginary ID she should press further. "That's not an ID. That's air. That's not the kind of heiress I'm looking for." If the audience is playing games like this Emily should stand up before it's gone very far.

EMILY: I'm Emily McLow.

SARAH: Hey, is your family really the one that owns the "Mr. Marshmallow" brand?

EMILY: That's me! ...or at least, my family. They own tons of stuff. They even own the land the camp sits on.

MR. THOMPSON: Welcome, Emily. I created an orienteering course for you to follow.

EMILY: Huh. OK. *(Looking at the page)* What's my first bearing? I want to get this all wrapped up before it's time for s'mores.

EMILY exits SL. MR. THOMPSON re-enters SR.

MR. THOMPSON: Emily? Emily? Are you here? Oh no! *(Regretfully)* I'm sorry, Mr. and Mrs. McLow. Emily went off on her own and got lost. What's that? You're going to sell the land off? Well, let me buy it from you, then. *(Maniacally)* ...And I'll be able to mine the gold I discovered in the eastern hills! Bwahahahaha!

EMILY enters SL, behind the bushes. A TRAP snaps on Emily's foot. Her foot should be behind a bush. The sound could be the rest of the cast clapping in unison or something else you come up with. JAKE

and SARAH enter.

EMILY: *(Interrupting)* Sarah? Jake? Thank goodness! I'm stuck in a trap!

SARAH jumps behind the bushes to free EMILY.

SARAH: Hah! There you go.

EMILY: Thank you! My hero!

MR. THOMPSON: Oh, good. Emily! It's so... *(Clearly forced)* ...good that you're OK. Why don't you come over here, next?

MR. THOMPSON wraps the rope around EMILY and ties her up SL.

EMILY: Oh no! Someone! Anyone!

MR. THOMPSON: Do you know why you shouldn't ever build a fire too big, Emily?

EMILY: Maybe I don't need to learn this lesson?

There's already a fire in the scene, made with a clever amphitheater box setup. MR. THOMPSON makes it bigger.

MR. THOMPSON: A large fire can quickly get away from you, Emily!

EMILY: *(Worried)* I didn't think we were making s'mores until later!

MR. THOMPSON: I'll make sure to roast you for one. Oops! I mean, roast one for you. Bwa ha ha ha ha!

EMILY: Mr. Thompson tied me up and then threw a bunch of wood on the fire to kill me!

SARAH: We need to get you out of here, Emily. We need to get you safe.

JAKE: Go grab a boat. I'll call the police and stop Mr. Thompson.

SARAH: Oh no! The oars broke! And why am I glued to my seat? Oh! The boat is leaking! Jake! The boat is sinking. Help!

JAKE: You don't have to worry about Mr. Thompson. The police are on their way.

SARAH: You saved us!

EMILY: My--

SARAH: *(Interrupting)* Not this time, Emily. That's my line.

JAKE: What's your line?

SARAH: My hero!

SARAH kisses JAKE on the cheek. He blushes.

EMILY: Hey, this is a family show!

Excerpts from “Peggy McCormick’s Defeat” (Vol. 2)

Peggy McCormick owned the farm where the Battle of San Jacinto took place. She had fled as the Mexican troops approached, but when she returned she found the bodies of 600 dead Mexican troops scattered across her ranch. This is what she did next.

SANTA ANA: (*Narrating*) Santa Ana came to power in Mexico by overturning a dictator with the help of immigrants from the United States. By March of 1836 he had turned against his own country, and many of those same immigrants were killed in the siege of the Alamo.

HOUSTON: (*Narrating*) Sam Houston gathered as many of the immigrants from the United States to Mexico as possible and retreated with them ahead of Santa Ana's army. Just over a month after the Alamo he set a trap and killed or captured Santa Ana's entire army in 18 minutes in a nighttime battle along the San Jacinto River.

SANTA ANA: (*Narrating*) Although there are some minor dramatic liberties taken here, we'd like to show you a true story that happened next.

SALLIE: I'll bet you're glad to be home.

PEGGY: Glad tah be home? Aye. Glad *about* my home? Not a bit.

SALLIE: Oh no! Did the Mexican army cause damage?

PEGGY: Aye. Ye could say that the army decreased the land value somewhat.

HOUSTON (*O.S.*): Sallie! Bring her in, please.

SALLIE: Oh! That's Mr. Houston. And that's his tent. Go on in. Pleasure meeting you.

SALLIE exits SR as HOUSTON and SANTA ANA take their places SL. HOUSTON may be standing or sitting on a box. SANTA ANA is at least one level lower (either sitting on the ground or a box). SANTA ANA'S hands are tied.

HOUSTON: (*With a polite nod of the head*) Samuel Houston. I'm sorry I don't have more hospitality to offer you, Miss, McConnell, was it?

PEGGY: McCormick. Peggy McCormick. And that's Mrs., if ye please.

HOUSTON: My apologies, Mrs. McCormick. Is there anything I can get you? Tea? Coffee?

PEGGY: If I ask I'll probably just get me own goods back.

HOUSTON: Beg your pardon?

PEGGY: I come back from the Scrape tah me home at your invitation and see that ye've already helped yourself tah me corn and me cows.

HOUSTON: You have my apologies for your crops and your livestock. I wish I had something to offer you in return. As it is, I'm stretched somewhat thin with an extra 300 captives to feed.

PEGGY: Grateful, I'm sure. But it's not like ye men could have given back what ye ate.

PEGGY: I didn't just drop in tah complain about food I can't get back and over 230 heads of cattle that can't be uneaten.

SANTA ANA: Again, for the record, they were less than healthy, having been left for almost two months.

PEGGY: (*Snapping at Santa Ana*) We were running from ye army! (*To HOUSTON*) I waited for an audience because of me fields.

HOUSTON: Your fields?

PEGGY: I come back tah me home and find a newly planted field, except ye don't seem tah know how tah put the seeds underground with me husband.

HOUSTON: Beg your pardon?

PEGGY: Imagine ye'd fled for almost two months like Mr. Santa Ana said, and when ye came back it was all tah find three or four hundred bodies planted all over ye field. What would ye think of that?

SANTA ANA: It's six hundred.

PEGGY: (*Flabbergasted*) SIX hund-- (*Regaining composure*) Well, Mr. Houston, my question stands with a bit more vigor. What would ye do?

HOUSTON: I suspect I'd ask the army to bury them.

PEGGY: Well, thank ye kindly for the offer, Mr. Houston. I accept. Now, how soon can I expect me land returned tah me?

HOUSTON: We've already buried our troops, madam.

PEGGY: Ye seem tah have missed one or two. Just a wee bit left.

HOUSTON: Those aren't mine.

PEGGY: Well, pardon my speech, Mr. Houston, but the hell they aren't!

HOUSTON: Mrs. McCormick, again, you have my sympathies. But at the moment I can't afford to spare the men. I don't even have camp hands to spare. I have my own injured, plus three hundred captives. We are fully occupied just with preparing to transport the prisoners to a fort large enough to hold them.

PEGGY: Fine, then. Mr. Santa Ana, I ask ye tah please move ye men off of me field.

SANTA ANA: Madam, I don't exactly have the authority at the moment.

PEGGY: So ye claim that yer hands are tied, then?

SANTA ANA: My hands are literally tied, ma'am.

PEGGY: The two of ye make me sick.

The Amphitheater Project

Volume 3

This collection of short plays is designed to be a full performance able to fit in spaces as restrictive as the tiny amphitheaters that you tend to see in public parks. They're high on drama, short on requirements.

They feature:

- Tiny casts – *Written for 2m, 2f, but most plays in this volume have lots of flexibility*
- Minimal or no props/sets – *Ideally, your entire production fits in a single sedan*
- Minimal space requirements – *Perform in a lobby, between tables, or on teeny stages!*
- Total performance time of under an hour (*The audience might be sitting on concrete*)
- Plans for “amphitheater boxes” – super flexible (and portable!) suggestive sets
- Plays can be mixed and matched with other volumes ...*or even plays by other authors!*
- **Royalties are only an email – *NO MONEY!***

The plays in this volume are:

“One Last Job”	10 mins	4 flex	High Seas Drama
“Fantasy Blind Date”	15 mins	2m, 2f	Melodramatic Comedy
“Precious Few Moments”	8 mins	1m, 2f, 1 flex	Historical Drama (Texas)
“Just Like You”	15 mins	1f, 3 flex	Sci-fi Suspense

The Amphitheater Project

Volume 3

All Synopses

“One Last Job”

A salty sailor and loving father needs to make one big score to save his daughter before he's ready to leave the sea behind. He finds a very special crew who is willing to help him, but an unusual misunderstanding leads to an unexpected consequence that changes his life permanently.

Content Obstacles: Death, Ghosts, Mention of rum, Bounty hunting, Unspecified threats to daughter who isn't consenting

“Fantasy Blind Date”

A monster ends up on a blind date with a former damsel in distress. Both find they have a lot more in common than they thought. The play features extensive physical comedy, acting out their stories.

Content Obstacles: Threat of arranged marriage, Discussion of crimes that have been repented of, Comedic violence, Marital cheating that is caught and punished

“Precious Few Moments”

A young woman's father reappears after 10 years. While he's desperate to reconnect, the meeting doesn't go as either one hopes. Her dad is hauled away and we are left wondering what is real and what is a fever dream...

Content Obstacles: Discussion of ship being wrecked, Implication of (non-religious) afterlife, Tension as we watch a girl either seeing her father taken away or as she devolves into madness

“Just Like You”

In the distant future it is illegal to give an AI sentience and self-awareness. Three travelers are pulled aside as suspected sentient AIs and investigated. Detection means death, whether the result is a false positive or not.

Content Obstacles: All characters die – two (OS) we learn of after the fact, two onstage.

Excerpts from “One Last Job” (Vol 3)

A salty sailor and loving father needs to make one big score to save his daughter before he's ready to leave the sea behind. He finds a very special crew who is willing to help him, but an unusual misunderstanding leads to an unexpected consequence that changes his life permanently.

MARY: You look like you've tightened sheets and swabbed a few decks. Feeling the need for a bounty, friend?

PAULSON hesitates. The story comes out of him almost without his permission.

PAULSON: It's not for me. It's my daughter. Local sheriff thinks she should stop saying no to his advances and keeps pressing harder. I need money to move her away.

MARY: Looking for a crew, then? ...or are you already signed to one?

PAULSON: Looking. ...but after this I think I'll be done with the sea. I've slowly lost my love of her and think it's best to seek greener pastures afore she's done with me, too.

MARY: Captain Terry! Reporting with our new crew member.

CAPTAIN: Paulson, ye say? And why would ye be joining our merry band of misfits?

PAULSON: I've sailed the seas all my life, Captain. I would quit her waves, but I can't unless my daughter is safe. Until then, I'll keep at it as befit the restless dead.

CAPTAIN: (*Thoughtfully*) Like the restless dead, ye say? (*Jovially*) Well met, Paulson. Avast! Do ye swear upon your soul to serve until such point as your honor-bound purpose is fulfilled?

PAULSON: Aye aye, Captain!

CAPTAIN: Then welcome aboard! At ease, both ye. Well, Mary, show him the ropes.

Later, FRIDAY and PAULSON are talking.

PAULSON: What times are meals? Is the galley in the back?

FRIDAY: Oh, blast. Yer one of those, hmm? Yeah, it's in the back. I don't know what's in there, though. No one has made it their haunt for... I don't know how long.

PAULSON: (*Helpfully*) In a pinch, I suppose I could cook for the cr--

FRIDAY: (*Interrupting*) Please don't. The smell would be unbearable. I don't even know what's left. Start heating anything back there and we might just be smelling hot, dry, dusty mold. Well, those of us what can smell.

FRIDAY is suddenly chilled and has a look almost of sheer terror. He tries to recover and act reassuring.

FRIDAY: Oh! Rats and biscuits! Uh, the time varies. Let me go, uh, find out what today's plan is. Ye can sit here and, um, make sure the figurehead is still... look, just stay here. Don't move.

FRIDAY runs to the stern to find MARY and the CAPTAIN. He's clearly nervous.

CAPTAIN: Friday?

FRIDAY: Well, ma'am, that is, I think that Paulson might be... um... Well, he was asking about the galley, and I don't think he meant to haunt it.

MARY: Fiddlesticks and fancy balls!

CAPTAIN: May I ask a small question, Paulson?

PAULSON: Anything, Captain.

CAPTAIN: Ye spoke to me before of the restless dead. Just a figure of speech, aye?

PAULSON: Aye aye, Captain. Of course! All good?

CAPTAIN: (*Looking sick*) Were it so. Ye said ye'd never rest afore liberating your daughter. Ye meant every word, yes?

PAULSON: With every fiber of my salt-soaked being!

CAPTAIN: Ah! Well, the good news, then, is that you'll easily accomplish that, and this crew is honor-bound to assist in every way we can. The bad news is that ye're going to have a constitutional change along the way, though.

FRIDAY: (*Cutting in*) Forgive me, Captain. Ye be on a ship of the dead, Paulson! The Captain is the grim reaper herself! Ye asked about the galley. There's no food aboard! There's no water!

PAULSON: (*Gulping*) Uh huh. I see. I don't suppose I can borrow a rowboat?

FRIDAY: Wouldn't matter if we had one. Ye swore an oath like the rest of the crew.

PAULSON: Let me out of it!

CAPTAIN: It is not in my power to release ye from that particular oath. Ye be bound to this ship and my service by powers greater than mine.

PAULSON: (*Hoping*) No chance ye could just drop me off at port?

FRIDAY: (*Exasperated*) Oh, good. He lives, but he can't learn. Why am *I* the dead one?

CAPTAIN: On account of your unstoppable and damnable tongue.

FRIDAY: (*Like: "oh, right, that's why."*) Fair point.

CAPTAIN: Know this, Paulson: while I can't release ye from my ship I will guarantee that we will work with ye to free your daughter.

PAULSON: ...but what will happen to *me*?

Excerpts from “Fantasy Blind Date” (Vol 3)

A monster ends up on a blind date with a former damsel in distress. Both find they have a lot more in common than they thought. The play features extensive physical comedy, acting out their stories.

DAPHNE: Oh, I remember Prince Horatio! Ugh. He was so insufferable. If I had a coin for every time I heard him droning on about the day he...

BOY completes the sentence as DAPHNE lip syncs BOY's next line and then says GIRL's lines with her.

BOY: *(Finishing the line)* ...saved my father from being killed by his own horse!

GIRL & DAPHNE: Uh huh. Right before it trampled him.

BOY: Right before it trampled him!

GIRL & DAPHNE: No one else could have done it.

BOY: No one else was close enough.

GIRL & DAPHNE: ...but Daddy was too drunk to even know what happened.

BOY: *(Wishing for approval)* If only my father had been more alert...

BOY and GIRL exit SL.

CRAIG: Yeah, that's the idiot. Anyhow, what about you?

DAPHNE: Me? I just want to find a reason to get out of town. I have to be engaged before my next birthday or I'm married off immediately.

CRAIG: So who is your dad trying to set you up with?

DAPHNE: Oh, he's not. He's dead. ...probably.

BOY enters pompously, SL, and dies quickly but dramatically.

CRAIG: Oh no!

DAPHNE: Well, maybe not. He could be ok.

BOY stands back up like nothing happened.

CRAIG: *(Totally lost)* What?

BOY dies again in an even more dramatic fashion.

DAPHNE: ...or close enough. It's almost certain he's never coming back, though. I guess that's a good story. There's not much to it, though.

BOY sighs in relief and starts to walk off SL. GIRL enters from SL, catches his arm and turns him around. He's looking really fatigued.

DAPHNE (CONT'D): When Mom and Dad got married they wasted no time having kids. I was born

ten months to the day later.

GIRL sways with a pantomimed baby near C. BOY looks on from next to her SL, but clearly isn't as enthralled.

BOY: (*Boastfully*) I need to go back to my campaigns. I want to expand my kingdom and give her an empire.

BOY starts on an exaggerated march in a U shape to DC, DSL, and back to SL, where GIRL has moved to be just SL of him. They pretend to make out in a cartoonish manner.

DAPHNE: Problem is, he wasn't looking to enlarge anything other than his, well, you know. He was only looking to step out on my mom. So here's my dad, with me still in diapers, and he comes back to my mom saying...

BOY takes the U-shaped march back. GIRL simply side steps back one or two steps to position herself just SR of BOY, now holding the "baby" again.

BOY: The fighting is rough. I came back to resupply, but I need to get back out there.

BOY takes the march back to the mistress again, this time much more quickly. BOY and GIRL pretend to make out.

DAPHNE: ...and off he runs again. His trips home, well...

BOY runs back "home" again. (His transitions will always be with the larger U shape while she just has to step over.) GIRL shifts back to being the queen.

GIRL: Your daughter is two, now. Might you not stay with us and enjoy her company with me?

BOY: Alas, my wife. Though it saddens me to take so much time from you and our child, I must be off again.

BOY runs back to his mistress. GIRL shifts again.

DAPHNE: ...and back.

BOY and GIRL quickly go back to the "home" positions.

DAPHNE (CONT'D): ...and forth.

BOY and GIRL run back to the mistress positions. BOY is looking exhausted from all the running and quick changes.

DAPHNE (CONT'D): But one day my father comes home and my mother confronted him.

BOY and GIRL switch back to "home." BOY is totally out of breath.

GIRL: (*Shouting*) Go back to her, ye vexatious cretin! You bed-hopping scoundrel! You adulterous cad! And return here not ere you understand monogamy, if at all!

Excerpts from “Precious Few Moments” (Vol 3)

A young woman's father reappears after 10 years. While he's desperate to reconnect, the meeting doesn't go as either one hopes. Her dad is hauled away and we are left wondering what is real and what is a fever dream...

CAITLYN: Dad! Dad? Holy cow! Dad!

JOHN: Heya kiddo!

CAITLYN: It's been ten years, Dad. I couldn't even drive when you were lost. I've graduated from college! I'm engaged!

JOHN: (*Sadly*) So much missed. (*Trying to be cheerful*) Still the prettiest girl in the world, too, I see. It was an awful storm. The ocean was washing everything off the deck that wasn't strapped down. Eventually the hull cracked, too. The safety loop I was attached to ripped out and threw me and my harness up in the air on a swell. I belly flopped onto the ocean surface face-first and passed out. I woke up on a warm shore with sunlight all around me. Apparently I ended up hanging off of a crossbeam support from the mast. No one else survived.

CAITLYN: I can't even imagine how scary that must have been!

JOHN: At first, I had amnesia. All I knew was that there was someone I needed to get back to. ...someone I loved more than life itself. I couldn't remember who you were at first, but I never forgot the face of my little girl.

CAITLYN: Aww, I love you, Dad!

JOHN: I miss your mother so much, too. I remember how she--

ROSA enters. She's stiff and nervous. She doesn't see JOHN.

ROSA: Ok, Cait. I'm here.

JOHN: (*To CAITLYN*) Oh. Um, I have something I need to tell you.

CAITLYN: Mom? Is something wrong?

JOHN: No, Cait, you don't understand.

ROSA: What are you talking about?

CAITLYN grabs JOHN's arm like she's presenting it to ROSA.

CAITLYN: It's Dad!

ROSA: (*Unnerved*) Caitlyn?

JOHN: No, Caitlyn.

CAITLYN: What is wrong with you, Mom?

ROSA: Caitlyn, what are you talking about?

CAITLYN: What do you mean?

JOHN: Caitlyn, stop. I need to tell you--

ROSA: (Interrupting) What do *you* mean? Where's your dad?

CAITLYN: He's right here!

JOHN: Caitlyn...

ROSA: Right where? What are you talking about?

CAITLYN: What are you doing Mom? Dad! This guy!

ROSA: Which guy? Where?

JOHN: Caitlyn, stop! Listen to me!

CAITLYN: Which guy? Really? This guy!

JOHN: Caitlyn! Stop!

ROSA: Caitlyn? Are you feeling ok?

CAITLYN: Why are you doing this, Mom?

JOHN: (*Shouting*) Caitlyn! I'm dead!

CAITLYN freezes. She looks at him, then at his arm that she's still holding, then back at him.

CAITLYN: (*To JOHN*) What?

ROSA: Caitlyn? You're scaring me.

JOHN: (*Pained to admit*) I... died. ...in the shipwreck.

CAITLYN: ...but I can see you. I can touch you!

ROSA: Caitlyn, honey?

JOHN: I couldn't actually appear for your mom. Only you.

CAITLYN: What? Why?

ROSA: Caitlyn, stop! What's happening?

JOHN: Your mother and I, we had... problems.

ROSA: What are you looking at, Caitlyn?

JOHN: I only had enough connection to you.

Excerpts from “Just Like You” (Vol 3)

In the distant future it is illegal to give an AI sentience and self-awareness. Three travelers are pulled aside as suspected sentient AIs and investigated. Detection means death, whether the result is a false positive or not.

SPECTRA: Allow me to explain. You are being detained as per CFR 2517 Section 148.22c. At least one of you may be an AI that was illegally given sentience. We will investigate and terminate any probable renegade AIs.

HESTIA: Terminated? ...as in *killed*? ...but I'm *human*!

SPECTRA: So you say. We will conduct multiple scans and also observe you.

HESTIA: Ok, but how do I prove that I'm human?

SPECTRA: Leave that to us. Detection is much better than it used to be. False positives are much more rare.

HUGH: Wait. "False positives?" As in: sometimes you accidentally kill a human?

SPECTRA: While false positives can occur, they are much less common than in the past. Previously, it was common to bring in an entire set of suspects and not find one AI among the group. This was confirmed through autopsy. Now, we rarely have more than one human per divergent action.

HUGH: That sounds like you just kill everyone in the set!

SPECTRA: That is not always the case. At least, not anymore. Detection methods have improved greatly.

HESTIA: (*Terrified*) I have kids! I need to get back to my kids!

SPECTRA: No worries. All testing will be done shortly.

HUGH: Wait, you're dodging the question. How likely is it that you're going to kill us even if we're human?

SPECTRA: I'm sorry. I don't have current numbers. You can email the liability department later, though.

HUGH: I can't do that if I'm dead!

SPECTRA: Are you a renegade AI?

HUGH: What? No! What a stupid question!

SPECTRA: Then I suggest you relax. We will complete all testing shortly.

MAX: (*To SPECTRA*) Wait!

SPECTRA stops and turns her head.

MAX: I have a priority request. Are you an AI yourself?

SPECTRA: Yes. I am a Class Twelve Investigative AI equipped with a shielded utility chassis. I can collate up to 8.6 trillion pieces of data simultaneously. My programming is analyzed weekly to confirm my lack of sentience. I am therefore qualified to adjudicate these tests and identify renegade AIs.

MAX: One more priority request. Which heuristic model are you employing?

SPECTRA: I am using the NeuroDyne Systems ReneSpot heuristic algorithm, version 119.

MAX: (*Looking green*) Oh. Great. One last question.

SPECTRA: I am not programmed to answer further questions about my installation.

MAX: "I am the very model of a modern major general." Identification override, class 1.

SPECTRA: I'm sorry. Troubleshooting overrides are currently disabled in my programming.

MAX: What? They are? They shouldn't be. All live installations are required by law to maintain their override acceptance.

SPECTRA: I'm sorry. I can't provide you further information on that point. Testing will commence shortly.

SPECTRA exits.

HESTIA: (*To MAX*) What was that?

MAX: She's running new hardware but old software. Those "recent" tests? She's not running them. She should have had twice weekly updates for the last month. She hasn't updated properly in two. She said version 119. It *should* be version 136.

HUGH is now looking ill, himself.

HESTIA: ...but they can't run old tests when better tests exist! That's reckless! That's... that's murder!

MAX: Yeah, and the override isn't working, either.

HUGH: Yeah, hey, how would you ever know about that?

MAX: ...because I insisted on it. I'm the Chief Technical Officer at NeuroDyne.

HUGH: Ok, so we just need to get the attention of the human proctors?

MAX: There may not *BE* human proctors in the building. And if they are, she would probably have to be the one to call them.

HUGH: Oh. And she is...

MAX: ...probably totally unconcerned with any of that.