They enter. The audience is full of various students from different clubs and walks of life. Scarves are littered throughout. Kyle and Annette find a seat. The doors shut. Lackey takes the stage- looking a little nervous.

LACKEY
Ladies and gentleman, thank you all for coming! I hope you all find yourself with too many new members to count! New members, welcome! Hopefully tonight will mark the beginning of the best years of your life at Ball State! The Drama Club will soon present you the winner, but first, let’s all give a warm, warm welcome to Ball State’s very own Jo Anne Gora!

Excited murmurs tremor through the crowd. The lights go down-- a spotlight stage right. And then she enters- Jo Anne Gora as acted by Frigo, dressed in a baby blue blazer and skirt.

FRIGO
Hello students!

A moment- everyone judges the character, is she real? Then, all the scarves stand up- applause!

KYLE
Annette! Don’t watch! This is the final plan! They’re trying to get as many people in here to brainwash them into believing Frigo is Jo Anne Gora so he can understudy her, taking her place in the Administration! God knows what would be next!

Kyle and Annette huddle together as more and more non-scarfed students stand, giving a similar ovation, the performance winning them over.

FRIGO
Thank you so much! You guys are too much! I am so glad to be here today!

Everyone sits down.

FRIGO
First of all, I just want to say how much I appreciate your guys’s support! Without the support of the students, I would be nothing. This is why I am here to ask you to work with me! In the coming weeks, I will be looking to make some major changes to Ball State University, and at a university where students come first, I need your support!

KYLE
Don’t listen to her!
Kyle stands up in his seat. Frigo throws a look at Lackey, who saunters off stage.

**KYLE**

That’s not Jo Anne Gora!

**VOICE IN THE CROWD**

Sit down! Don’t disrespect the President!

**ANNETTE**

He’s right! That’s not the president! It’s an actor from the Drama Club!

Boo’s start building.

**FRIGO**

Now, now children, jokes over. Please sit down and let me finish.

Kyle jumps out of his seat, hopping up on stage.

**KYLE**

Listen! The Drama Club is trying to brainwash you into believing someone *acting* like Jo Anne Gora is in the administration! It’s all just an act! That’s Frigo, the President of the Drama Club acting like Jo Anne Gora!

**FRIGO**

Sir, please sit down.

**KYLE**

Why... Why... He’s no more Jo Anne Gora than I am!

**FRIGO**

Sir...

Kyle starts taking deep breaths, he turns around, back to audience.

**FRIGO**

Well, we obviously have a little jokester here tonight-

Kyle whips around, now with bright, red lipstick on, talking in a higher pitch. He brushes his hair aside.

**KYLE**

Hi, everybody! I’m Jo Anne Gora!
Gasps, confusion, especially from the Scarves.

FRIGO
No, no, no... Students. I am Jo Anne Gora. The president of this university.

KYLE
I am Jo Anne Gora. I promote immersive learning and emerging media, seeking to immerse students in immersive learning environments!

Frigo takes up the competition.

FRIGO
No, students. I am Jo Anne Gora and I drink Cardinal Pride for breakfast!

Kyle’s performance builds.

KYLE
Hi! I’m Jo Anne Gora and I can’t wait to talk to you about our new geothermal energy plant going into construction!

FRIGO
Hi! I’m Jo Anne Gora and I can’t wait to get to know you students-

KYLE
Hi All! I’m your beloved President Jo Anne Gora. How about that Men’s Volleyball team?!

Some cheers from the audience.

FRIGO
Hi students, Jo Anne Gora here-

KYLE
Students! My name is Jo Anne Gora and I want you to know that I live in the President’s House- where me, the President of Ball State University lives!

Frigo falls to his knees, unable to keep up. Kyle seizes the moment.

KYLE
Everybody. I am Jo Anne Gora. And I want to tell you about a serious problem.

Frigo collapses. Kyle walks over and pulls the scarf off him. The audience gasps- realizing it’s Frigo.
KYLE
I’m Jo Anne Gora, and I want to tell you that looks can be deceiving.

Kyle wipes some lipstick away, falling down to his normal vocal register.

KYLE
Because I’m not Jo Anne Gora. And neither is he! Jo Anne Gora would never come to something like this. My name is Kyle and I am a Freshman, and I’m here to tell you that you have all been duped!

VOICE IN THE CROWD
He did it without a scarf!

KYLE
Of course. It’s acting- you don’t need to wear something to become a character. Don’t let the Drama Club fool you! Now, I’d like you to meet a friend of mine. Annette!

Annette hops on stage.

KYLE
We’re just Freshman. We’re new to all this. And this is madness. I feel like I’ve lived four years in one day.

ANNETTE
Yeah, so we’ll make this short. (beat) Stop it! No more Drama, no more acting, no more intimidation, and no more scarves. If you’re wearing a scarf, or you see someone wearing a scarf- find out who they really are! Be nice! Be open! And be yourself!

VOICE IN THE CROWD
So... We don’t need to worry about anyone owning the space for the Scramble Light?

KYLE
No. It’s just a four-way cross-walk. Do with it whatever you want.

VOICE IN THE CROWD
And... We can perform wherever we want?

KYLE
Yes! Just don’t, you know, hurt anyone. From now on, the Drama Club is just another club. Everyone plays by the same rules.

VOICE IN THE CROWD
Who says?
We do.

ANNETTE

Who are you?

VOICE IN THE CROWD

KYLE
Just two freshman wanting to enjoy their next four years without having to worry about where we walk, who we talk to, or what groups we join. Isn’t that what you want?

A lull from the crowd.

VOICE IN THE CROWD
Hey! I just got a text- there’s free pizza at the Student Center!

At “free pizza” the general crowd starts buzzing, making a dash for the exit. This leaves Kyle, Annette, and Frigo.

FRIGO
You haven’t heard the last of the Drama Club! We spent years working our way to the top!

KYLE
Act responsibly and maybe you won’t need to trick everyone. People should enjoy your performance.

FRIGO
I’ll get you still!

They exit. Kyle and Annette are left on stage.

ANNETTE
And you said that you’ve never acted before.

KYLE
I have to confess. I actually have acted before

ANNETTE
No way! I knew it!

KYLE
Yeah. She was an easy character for me.

ANNETTE
Oh really?
Annette walks towards Kyle, a moment of seduction.

ANNETTE
An older, female administrator was an easy role for you, Mr. Young Gun, baseball playing, always confident, Captain Indiana born-and-raised?

Annette leans in close, almost kissing Kyle.

KYLE
I guess, I’m just really comfortable being myself around you.

Do I get a prize for that?

ANNETTE
No, but I think I’ve decided.

KYLE
Decided on a major?

ANNETTE
No. I’ve been acting the last nineteen years of my life. That was the real me up there!

A moment of clarity.

ANNETTE
As Jo Anne Gora?

KYLE
Well, as a-

ANNETTE
Woman.

Kyle nods, a hint of fear. He waits for her reaction. The wait is an eternity. Then she throws her arms around him-embracing him.

ANNETTE
I know we’ve only known each other for a couple hours now, but I am so proud of you!

Thank you.
ANNETTE
And, I think we’re the same shoe size!

END - CURTAIN
The Power of Acting

A Moving Production

by

Elliott San

Story by:
Elliott San, Adam Lord, and Dominic Schiferl
SCENE 1 - PRUIS HALL STAGE

ANNETTE and KYLE rehearse a scene brashly directed by FRIGO. Frigo constantly stops them to question Annette’s motivation and not say much to Kyle.

KYLE
Excuse me? Ms. Sue- do you need any help potting that flower? It’s mighty large.

ANNETTE
Mr. Chapman, if you would kindly refrain from admonishing me- I am quite capable of potting my own flowers.

KYLE
Well, Ms. Sue, if you’ll forgive me, I know you’re quite capable- I just thought you could use a little help. I know I certainly wouldn’t mind helping.

ANNETTE
Mr. Lloyd Chapman, I want you to understand one thing, and one thing only- I don’t need your help. You’re mighty kind, but I don’t need your help.

KYLE
Well, Ms. Sue Halloway- let me tell you one thing- you do. You darn near tore your dress and dirtied your hat. Now, if that’s your goal than fine, but I’m not aiming to say you can’t pot that plant over there- I am merely saying, you need my help- because it’s easier with me helping.

ANNETTE
Quite the tongue you got on you Mr. Chapman, can’t say I knew that about you. You’re to pot that one plant and that is all.

KYLE
Ms. Sue Halloway, I never thought you’d ask.

ANNETTE
Well now, Mr. Chapman- I didn’t ask you, now did I? A bit more of a command, I would surmise.

He crosses stage right.
ANNETTE
You best watch out, with an attitude and smile like that- I might get the notion to keep you around.

KYLE
Ma’m, I’m going to pot this plant before I say something quick.

With a wink- the scene ends. Kyle’s cell phone RINGS from his backpack. Frigo flips.

FRIGO
Hold, please! Cell phone again, Kyle? Christ! We’re done for today. We can’t work without Alexander, anyway. I swear to God, if he’s not dead, I’m going to kill him myself.

Frigo waits for the two to hop off stage.

FRIGO
Annette, I hope to see you at the end-of-the year banquet tonight. I think you have a lot of potential, the Drama Club would love to have you.

ANNETTE
Yeah, well, thanks...

KYLE
Hey Frigo, you think you could let slip my chances of getting a scarf tonight? I would be honored if the Drama Club picked-

FRIGO
Yes, well we’ll see with you.

He shoos Kyle away, giving Annette a last thumbs up before he exits.

KYLE
Well, I thought that went well.

ANNETTE
I’m glad you think so.

KYLE
What? It wasn’t that bad, come on.
ANNETTE
Well for you, maybe. I was horrible.

KYLE
No, I thought you were great. I love working with you. You seem very grounded, it’s comfortable up there with you. I really do enjoy it.

Annette just stares.

KYLE
I mean, if you would want to work together outside of rehearsal. I’d be ok with it...

ANNETTE
Frigo didn’t even let me get through five lines without stopping to ask me why I did something. Sometimes I just want to quit.

KYLE
No! You’re getting a lot better.

Annette takes this as an insult and leaves the hall. Kyle hurries to get his things.

KYLE
Hold up! Wait! Annette!

He follows her out.

SCENE 2 - PRUIS LOBBY

Annette briskly walks towards the exit with Kyle in tow.

KYLE
I didn’t mean it that way! Look, at least Frigo was giving you some direction, he left me up there to flounder.

ANNETTE
I’m just worried that I’m wasting my time with this acting thing.

KYLE
Well, you know, it’s a good thing Frigo’s directing, you do know he’s the president of the Drama Club, right?

ANNETTE
Yeah, so?
KYLE
Brando, James Dean, Jimmy Stewart, Marilyn Monroe, Audrey Hepburn- all Drama Club alumni. Literally, if you want to be somebody- you get in with the Drama Club, and Frigo is our in.

ANNETTE
What if I don’t know what I want to be?

KYLE

ANNETTE
All actors! What if I don’t want to act? I’m tired, I’m going home.

Kyle grabs her arm as she turns to go.

KYLE
Annette. We should find Alexander.

Annette just rolls her eyes.

KYLE
Seriously, he’s never missed a rehearsal. And think of how many points that would win us with Frigo.

ANNETTE
The only reason I’d want to find Alexander is to actually get on honest opinion on my performance- at least I trust him.

With that, Annette turns and walks out of Pruis Hall.

SCENE 3 - OUTSIDE PRUIS

A drunken SAGE sits in the empty squares in that weird structure outside Pruis. Kyle follows Annette through the door.

KYLE
What and you don’t trust mine? Thanks.

ANNETTE
No offense Kyle, but you sort of just drown me in compliments. Plus, where would we even start looking?
SAGE
Try the naked lady.

Both turn to him, skeptically. Sage stumbles out of his square.

SAGE
You’re looking for Alexander Strathclyde, right?

KYLE
I don’t know. Depends on who’s asking.

ANNETTE
(under her breath)
Kyle, don’t talk to him. He’s drunk.

KYLE
It’s cool. It’s college.

(to Alexander)
You know where he is?

SAGE
Like I said, try the naked lady.

KYLE
In the library?

SAGE
The one and only. Rumor is he’s had a tiff with the Drama Club. So, he’s probably hiding out there. It’s the only neutral space left.

KYLE
Why would he be hiding? And what’s a neutral space?

ANNETTE
Let’s go, Kyle. He’s just drunk.

SAGE
Annette, Annette, Annette. Always your own worst enemy. You wanted an honest opinion- go find it.

Annette shies away.
KYLE
Hey- what do you mean he’s had a tiff with the Drama Club?

SAGE
All will be revealed in time, young Kyle.

Sage mysteriously walks away, then passes out a few steps later. Annette and Kyle look at each other.

KYLE
Indulge me, OK? Just come with me to the library to see if Alexander’s there.

ANNETTE
I have a lot of homework.

He gives her sad puppy eyes.

ANNETTE
And I’m hungry and a million other excuses I can make up.

KYLE
I’ll buy you dinner. Ten minutes. Please?

Annette softens, giving in to Kyle’s wild demands.

ANNETTE
Fine.

KYLE
Yes!

They walk towards Bracken.

SCENE 4 - BETWEEN PRUIS AND BRACKEN

ANNETTE
Alright, but I get to pick where we eat.

KYLE
I got Dining Plus exploding out my ass- we can go wherever you want.

ANNETTE
Are you ready for this- favorite dining halls, Letterman Top 10 list-style.
KYLE
Speaking of, I thought I saw a bake sale in the Letterman building if you want dessert.

ANNETTE
Watch out, it’s on your dime.

KYLE
Are you making this into a date?

ANNETTE
What? No- you just said you were paying. I can pay if you’re going to make it into a big deal...

KYLE
Annette, relax. I was just kidding, jeez.

A bit of silence.

ANNETTE
Tell me this little adventure has more to do with Alexander, and less to do with being in the Drama Club.

A FRIGHTENED STUDENT exiting Bracken quickly recoils upon hearing these words.

FRIGHTENED STUDENT
You guys are with the Drama Club?

The two pause for a second, looking at each other.

FRIGHTENED STUDENT
Look, just tell Frigo I’m sorry sorry about the study lounge- I didn’t think we needed permission.

KYLE
Look, we’re-

FRIGHTENED STUDENT
Just, please don’t send an understudy! I swear it will never happen again- the Chess Club is forever loyal to the Drama Club!

With a kneel and a bow, the Frightened Student runs off, leaving Annette and Kyle frozen, mouths open.
ANNETTE
What was that all about?

KYLE
I don’t know.

ANNETTE
Are we sure the Drama Club is a good thing? He didn’t seem too thrilled by them. And why would the Chess Team need an understudy?

KYLE
I’m- I’m sure he was just stressed out over homework or something. Let’s just go inside and keep looking.

SCENE 5 - BRACKEN LIBRARY

Kyle and Annette enter the library and head to the naked lady.

ANNETTE
Well, he's not here. Dinner?

KYLE
Don’t give up so easy.

Annette sighs as they approach the naked lady.

KYLE
Let’s just give it a good look over...

Annette looks around at the people in the library as Kyle scans the mass of papers at the foot of the lady. Annette sees a Drama Club student, GUSTO, threatening FRAT GUY 1.

ANNETTE
Kyle, look.

KYLE
Hold on. What’s this?

Kyle grabs a note.
KYLE
Well, it's addressed to a "Alexander".

ANNETTE
Kyle.

Gusto recognizes Annette and Kyle. He gives one last warning to Frat Guy 1 and approaches them, all smiles.

KYLE
It says Alexander and then has some weird pictures on it. Oh, that's a cool lion.

GUSTO
Hey, I know you two. Freshmen, right?

KYLE
Yeah, well, technically I have enough credits to be a sophomore, but I'm a freshman in the theatre department.

GUSTO
I've heard good things about you. Annette, right?

ANNETTE
Yes.

GUSTO
Frigo talks about you a lot. Nice to meet you, my name is Gusto. Will you be joining the Drama Club?

KYLE
Well, I mean we've only heard good things so far-

ANNETTE
But we're not sure quite yet.

GUSTO
Always good to hear good things. You guys here for some late night studying?

ANNETTE
We're actually looking for someone.

KYLE
Yeah, one of the cast didn't show up- and he's never missed a rehearsal. Do you know Alexander Strathclyde?
Woah, woah, woah, hold, please. Why are you looking for Alexander?

We just told you.

Well he had good reason. Stop looking for him, OK? He’s bad news. If you want to make it into the Drama Club, you’ll stay away from him.

OK.

OK.

(all smiles)
Great! See you guys at the call-out meeting tonight! Bet you can’t wait to get a hold of these!

Gusto tugs at his scarf and leaves the way Kyle and Annette came in.

Add that to the reasons I don’t want to join the Drama Club- scarves in April are tacky.

Kyle looks at the jibberish on the note.

You know that feeling you get when your parents tell you not to do something, and then all you want to do is do exactly that?

My parents told me not to be an actress.

Kyle rolls eyes and pulls her towards the exit.

Come on, you still have to finish your Top 10 list.

I’ll save you some suspense. Number One has nothing to do with going to find a missing cast member after being told not to.
KYLE
Annette- where’s your sense of adventure?

They exit Bracken Library towards Frog Baby.

SCENE 6 - BETWEEN BRACKEN AND FROG BABY

Kyle and Annette step outside, Kyle trying to make sense of the scribbled note.

ANNETTE
Kyle- we have a note full of gibberish, the Drama Club snapping at us, and not the slightest clue about where Alexander could possibly be. Let’s just call it a night.

On cue, the Sage slinks out of the shadows.

SAGE
Ah, but the night is young, young one!

Annette recoils, briefly grabbing Kyle.

SAGE
And I couldn’t help but overhear you discussing that brutish Drama Club. I believe his name is Gusto?

KYLE
Yeah- how did you know?

SAGE
In college, my good man, the next thing to being invisible, is being drunk.

The Sage saunters over, hand extended for the note.

ANNETTE
It’s just jibberish- all it has is Alexander’s name on it.

He snatches it up anyway.

KYLE
Hey!

SAGE
One man’s jibberish is another man’s... Anyway! Let’s take a look here.

He starts turning the paper over in his hands.
SAGE
Yes. “Meet me at Frog Baby” I believe that would be that way.

KYLE
Yeah, we know where Frog Baby is.

ANNETTE
Why should we trust you?

SAGE
Because, my darling, I am not a member of the Drama Club. Scurry along now, the last bit says “it’s urgent”.

Exit the Sage, humming and singing to himself.

ANNETTE
Oldest trick in the book. Here-

(Pretends to read the note)
It says that you should definitely include dessert in the dinner you now owe me.

KYLE
Frog Baby’s right there. Right there!

Annette rolls her eyes, throwing the map at Kyle as they head off towards Frog Baby.

ANNETTE
Alright Kyle, I don’t want to burst your bubble, but the Drama Club is very quickly becoming something I want no part of.

KYLE
Come on, you’re going to trust a drunk and a confused Chess nerd?

ANNETTE
Yes, absolutely. That’s both ends of the spectrum agreeing on something- more commonly referred to as the long awaited moment “when pigs fly”!

KYLE
Mixed messages. I’m sticking with what I know.

ANNETTE
But what do we know, Kyle? We have Gusto telling us NOT to look for Alexander, a drunken Obi-Wan Kenobi telling us TO look for Alexander but to LOOK OUT FOR the Drama Club, and a poor guy wetting himself at the very mention of the Drama Club!
How much more is it going to take to convince you that A) we would be much better off just going to get dinner, B) If Alexander were even a tiny bit smart, he would be hiding in the farthest recesses of North Quad because C) the Drama Club is clearly up to something, and that something doesn’t seem to be any good!

By this time they have made it to Frog Baby.

SCENE 7 - FROG BABY

The seemingly empty circle is suddenly rattled with Annette’s loud protests. But a voice interjects.

JULIE
Hey! Genius, shut up and get over here!

Kyle and Annette look around for the voice.

JULIE
Walk over here. Nonchalant. We don’t know each other.

Julie takes a step out from behind a large rock. Annette and Kyle hesitate. She waves them over.

JULIE
Come on, Christ, I don’t have all night! Drag your fuckin’ feet some more!

KYLE
Who are you?

JULIE
The ghost of goddamn Christmas Past, now get over here!

Reluctantly, the two walk over.

ANNETTE
You know you really-

JULIE
Shouldn’t talk to strangers, I’ll thank your parents later.

(she glares about, snapping to like a hawk)

Walk with me.
Without another word she takes off, leaving Kyle and Annette a moment before they catch up.

**SCENE 8 - BELL TOWER FIELD**

Julie sets a brisk pace along the sidewalk and eventually through to the center of the Field.

**JULIE**

Either of you part of the Drama Club?

**ANNETTE**

No.

**JULIE**

Well how do I know you're not acting?

**ANNETTE**

Because I'm not a good actor.

**JULIE**

Well a good actor would say that.

**KYLE**

She is a pretty good actor.

**ANNETTE**

Kyle!

**JULIE**

I've seen this act before. Now he says he's not part of it.

**KYLE**

I'm not!

**JULIE**

And she says he's not.

**ANNETTE**

I'm not saying it.

**JULIE**

And then we sit in silence for a bit.

And they do. Silence, for a bit.
JULIE

KYLE
We’re in a play together- he didn’t show up for rehearsal so we thought we’d look for him.

JULIE
You have a run in with the Drama Club?

ANNETTE
Yeah, they told us not to look for Alexander.

JULIE
No shit. You freshman?

(quick glance)
Of course you are. Alright, eyes peeled- we should be bug free out here, but you never know.

KYLE
Alright, I have to know. What’s so bad about the Drama Club?

JULIE
Julie stops dead in her tracks.

JULIE
Your friend stupid or something?

KYLE
Hey!

ANNETTE
Yeah, we didn’t ask to be insulted.

JULIE
Technically it was just him but alright. What’s so bad about the Drama Club? Jesus. Everything. Everything from the top down.

KYLE
You mean Frigo?

JULIE
Frigo, Gusto, every scarf wearing busy-body performer that works these godforsaken spaces. Alright. Huddle up.

(spitfire monologue)
The Drama Club used to be the lowest student group on campus. A couple nobodies with extra time on their hands and the ability to play a mean fucking game of pretend. But you can only be underfunded and underappreciated for so long- and these guys, these guys were a powder keg waiting to blow- pixie fucking dust everywhere. They started small, performing at cultural events for the exchange students. Then they started working the Greek system. They pull from the Department of Theater AND Dance remember? Can’t have a part without dancers. Then they expanded- they used their acting abilities to coerce and intimidate. Soon they were everywhere, you didn’t know who to trust. Was that just another member of your student group making the decisions or the Drama Club working an actor in? Bake sales, sidewalk pamphleteers- everyone pays tribute, just to keep their sanity. It’s America, everyone just wants their own little space and to be left alone.

ANNETTE
Where does Alexander fill in?

JULIE
Come on! Two and two, sister! Now this is on the ultra down low, got it?

The two nod, captivated.

JULIE
Alexander was pretty high up- but he wasn’t happy. Started squirming. Said the Club was up to something big, a game changer, and he wanted out, cut free. The deal was, he’d give me the exclusive and I’d call in a favor at Admissions to speed up his transfer. And then he disappeared- you can fill in the blanks.

KYLE
So the Drama Club cut him out?

ANNETTE
Not yet, they can’t find him.

JULIE
Yeah, and neither can I. Shit.

KYLE
I don’t believe it. There’s no way.

Julie is looking around, getting anxious.

JULIE
Look kid, you don’t believe me, head over to Letterman- the proofs in the pudding. And the pudding is an unauthorized bake sale that the Drama Club ain’t happy about.
ANNETTE
But what are they planning, did Alexander-

JULIE
No! No, no, no. He disappeared before I could hear anything. But there’s something in the air, campus is buzzing. It’s given me the heebie-jeebies. Look kids, keep your eyes peeled- you see anything, you can find me, just ask for a Free Hug.

With that she starts walking away. Kyle curses under his breath.

JULIE
Go check out Letterman, see what you’re getting yourself in to.

KYLE
I hate James Franco...

Kyle and Annette square off for a moment. Annette turns and starts walking towards the Bell Tower.

KYLE
It’s a giant conspiracy! I bet she failed out of the pre-reqs as an Acting option!

ANNETTE
Might I remind you that this was your idea?

Kyle throws his hands up in the air, jogging after her.

KYLE
Fine. Fine!

ANNETTE
Look, now I need to get to the bottom of this. I left rehearsal THIS CLOSE to giving up acting, and now, I find out that the Drama Club has some evil diabolical plan up its sleeve? That’s like killing two birds with one stone- and I’m both birds.

KYLE
Yeah, well, my bird isn’t doing too great either... I finally might be able to sympathize with you. But I stand by my statement! You’re a great actor.

They pause, looking at the Bell Tower, someone circling around it.
What is that?

SCENE 9 - THE BELL TOWER

A lonely, tattered Happy Friday Guy endlessly circles the perimeter of the Bell Tower. Annette and Kyle walk into the center.

HAPPY FRIDAY GUY

Happy Friday... Happy Friday...

KYLE

It’s Thursday...

Happy Friday Guy doesn’t seem to notice them at first.

ANNETTE

He doesn’t look so good.

KYLE

Excuse me. Happy Friday Guy, are you alright? You know it’s not Friday, right?

HAPPY FRIDAY GUY

It’s been Friday since 2007.

KYLE

Actually, it’s been Friday tomorrow and every seven days since then... since 2007.

ANNETTE

Have you not left here since then?

HAPPY FRIDAY GUY

It’s the only performance space I have left. Every Friday, they just kept shrinking it and shrinking it...

ANNETTE

Who did? Did the Drama-

HAPPY FRIDAY GUY

Don’t say their name!

(as if to cover up)

Happy Friday everybody!
KYLE
Can we help at all?

HAPPY FRIDAY GUY
You can leave! Leave before they see you! I don't want any trouble!

ANNETTE
But, could we do anything to-

HAPPY FRIDAY GUY
HAPPY FRIDAY! HAPPY, HAPPY FRIDAY!

KYLE
Is it good though? You get to perform every day?

HAPPY FRIDAY GUY
Kid, the magic of Friday is that it's once a week- it's a happy ending. Now, it's just another day. There is no end.

ANNETTE
Well, just walk with us, we'll escort you out.

HAPPY FRIDAY GUY
No! Please, you have to go. They're watching! Go! HAPPY FRIDAY!

The two leave the Bell Tower, walking towards the Letterman Building. Vice President Cody Howard walks towards them.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD
Good evening. I see you've met Happy Friday Guy. Kind of a shame, isn't it. How're ya' doin' Happy Friday Guy?

HAAAAPY FRIDAY!

The Vice President sidles up to Kyle and Annette, shaking their hands.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD
Hi, Vice President Cody Howard, student government. I think you voted for me.

KYLE
We're... freshman. We've been here for like, four months.
VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD
Ah, how am I kidding, it doesn’t matter. Look, guys. I’ve heard a couple things about you guys tonight. You guys gotta be careful where you’re steppin’.

ANNETTE
Are you working with the Drama Club?

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD
Now, now- I’ve stated very clearly my opposition to lobbyists and special interest parties.

ANNETTE
As if we haven’t heard that before.

KYLE
So, if I said we were looking for someone named Alexander-

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD
I’d say, you’re not the only one and you don’t want to run into the other guys who are. Now, I can’t tell you NOT to walk through those doors. Just know that if you do, I can’t do anything about what happens after. Understand?

ANNETTE
I think we can take care of ourselves.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD
Alright. Your choice. Don’t say I didn’t warn ya. Be safe, kiddos.

He exits, walking towards Happy Friday Guy.

Kyle grabs Annette’s wrist, pausing before they go in.

KYLE
Hold on. One second.

ANNETTE
What?

KYLE
I just- I don’t know if I want to see what’s in there. I know it’s cowardly of me, but, honestly, if everything we’ve heard is true; our lives are going to be much easier if we do NOT walk through those doors.
ANNETTE
Kyle, you’ve been telling me to take more risks for as long as I can remember. And, this may not be a stage, but through there, that has everything to do with any stage I will ever step in from here on out.

BEAT

KYLE
I don’t like this role reversal. I really don’t.

ANNETTE
You left me no choice.

KYLE
Or did I leave YOU no choice?

ANNETTE
That’s. That’s what I just said. Exactly, just reversed.

KYLE
Shit. You’re right. Alright, let’s go.

They exit, pulling their way into the Letterman Building.

SCENE 10 - THE LETTERMAN LOBBY

Two Frat Boys cower behind a table housing a bake sale-one the frat boys was from the Library. Gusto and a Drama Club Goon are shouting at them. They take shelter behind a pillar.

GUSTO
Boys! You’re not listening to me! I don’t care how few cookies you baked or IF the money is, supposedly, for the World Wildlife Foundation—nothing gets sold that WE don’t get a cut of!

FRAT GUY I
Gusto, I was just coming back to clean up— I swear I wasn’t doing nothin’!

GUSTO
(to his lackey)
Take a bite out of one of those.
The Lackey does as he’s told. He swallows with a grimace.

GUSTO
Looks like they taste terrible. I could’ve guessed. You know why?

FRAT GUY 2
Gusto! We didn’t have time to ask, we went with store bought!

GUSTO
What did you just say to me?

FRAT GUY 2
We went with store bought...

LACKEY
Worst mistake you’ll ever make.

GUSTO
Not only did you not come to the Drama Club and put in a request for OUR cookies- you went around our backs and went with store bought?

FRAT GUY 1
Please Gusto, don’t tell Frigo. Sigman Alpha Gamma has always cooperate with the Drama Club!

GUSTO
Oh, don’t worry, I don’t have to go to Frigo. I’m going to take care of this myself.

(re: Lacky)
I’m casting you as ol’ Chef Boyardee over here.

He snaps his finger at the Lackey and takes a minute to look around the lobby. He spies Kyle and Annette peeking around the column.

GUSTO
Hold on. What are you doing here?

Busted, they step out from behind the pillar.

KYLE
Oh hey, didn’t see you guys there.
ANNETTE
We were just passing through, going, um, that way.

Gusto eyes them as they make their way up the stairs.

LACKEY
Do you want me to do something?

GUSTO
You guys aren’t still nosing around for Alexander are you?

No, definitely not.

ANNETTE
Alexander who?

GUSTO
Good, because you wouldn’t want to hurt your chances with getting in the Drama Club.

Kyle and Annette turn the corner shielding themselves from Gusto.

FRAT GUY 1
Gusto, please. Please don’t do this!

LACKEY
Gusto, please. Please don’t do this!

FRAT GUY 1
No, no, no, please I promise- it’ll never happen again!

LACKEY
No, no, no, please I promise- it’ll never happen again!

Annette and Kyle give each other a horrified look and run over to the balcony, looking back down. Frat Guy 1 retreats into the center of the lobby as the Lackey bears down on him. Frat Guy 2 tries to pull the Lackey away. Gusto puts on a hat.

GUSTO
(commanding voice)
Alright there youngster, you’re going to have to come with me.
Frat Boy 2 suddenly freezes and looks at Gusto, now acting as a Police Officer.

FRAT GUY 2
I... I’m sorry officer it’s just that, my friend over there...

He looks over, suddenly not able to figure out who is who.

FRAT GUY 1
Jimmy! Please, don’t let them do this!

LACKEY
Jimmy! Who is this guy? We need to get back to the house.

GUSTO
Alright you, you’re coming with me.

Kyle’s phone goes off. Gusto and company look up, seeing Kyle and Annette peering over.

KYLE
Shit!

GUSTO
Hey!

KYLE
Sorry officer!

Annette grabs Kyle by the wrist, taking off towards the Atrium.

GUSTO
Come back here!

SCENE 11 - BETWEEN LETTERMAN AND THE ATRIUM

Kyle and Annette run towards The Atrium along the second floor. They try to run down the stairs in Ball Communications but are cut off by the approaching yells of Gusto. They backtrack, running back towards The Atrium.
GUSTO
I swear, if I catch you, you’ll be lucky to get a bit part in community theater production of Oklahoma!

Gusto’s footprints echo behind them as they near the Photo displays.

GUSTO
I hope you’re ready to walk to class in fear for the next three years!

Lackey 2 comes flying around the corner at the other end of the hallway. Trapped. Kyle pulls Annette into an alcove housing two snack machines. Gusto and Lackey 2 meet in the middle, confused as to where the two went.

GUSTO
Where’d they go?!

LACKEY 2
Where’d who go? I just heard you yelling and came running!

GUSTO
The two Freshman! They’re looking for Alexander and they saw us understudy some stupid frat boy.

LACKEY 2
Do they know about the unveiling of Project Gora tonight?

GUSTO
Shut up! Jesus! Tell the whole world why don’t you?

Kyle mouths “Project Gora?” to Annette.

LACKEY 2
Sorry...

GUSTO
(whispers)
Also, the girl might have it.

LACKEY 2
It?
You know, the reason Frigo puts on that “play” every semester.

The one with just freshman?

Yes.

Ohhhh! For The Method!

Kyle’s phone goes off again. Gusto and the Lackey whip around to the alcove and approach. Annette takes a deep breath and bursts around the corner, her hair draped over her upper lip like a mustache.

Well, looks like you’re out of Animal Crackers again. Fourth time this week.

Oh. Excuse us.

You fellas didn’t want some Animal Crackers, did ya? Cuz them kids done cleaned this puppy out.

Did you see two, uh, youngsters come by here?

Only two youngsters I done seen tonight are you and you.

Gusto and Lackey 2 share a look.

Ok. Well, thank you. Have a good night.

Thank ya kindly. Now you boys cherish that there education. Imma go get you some more Animal Crackers to keep them noggin’s over yours beatin’. Movin’ all that blood around and all.
The two exit back towards the Letterman building. Annette collapses from exhaustion. Kyle attends to her.

**KYLE**

Annette! Where’d you go?

Annette makes incoherent noises, then faints.

**KYLE**

Annette! Annette! That animal cracker guy must have knocked her out. The bastard. Come on, I’ll get you some food at the Atrium. Let’s go.

Kyle slings Annette over his shoulder and walks through the art hallway. Annette makes a noise.

**KYLE**

That’s it. We’re fine. Here we go.

He launches into their scene- playing Annette’s part the way he wishes she would.

**KYLE**

Excuse me? Ms. Sue- do you need any help potting that flower? It’s mighty large.

**ANNETTE (KYLE)**

Mr. Chapman, if you would kindly refrain from admonishing me- I am quite capable of potting my own flowers.

**KYLE**

Well, Ms. Sue, if you’ll forgive me, I know you’re quite capable- I just thought you could use a little help. I know I certainly wouldn’t mind helping.

Annette sets the “pot” down and steps nose-to-nose with Kyle.

**ANNETTE (KYLE)**

Mr. Lloyd Chapman, I want you to understand one thing, and one thing only- I don’t need your help. You’re mighty kind, but I don’t need your help.

**KYLE**

Well, Ms. Sue Halloway- let me tell you one thing- you do. You darn near tore your dress and dirtied your hat. Now, if that’s your goal than fine, but I’m not aiming to say you can’t pot that plant over there- I am merely saying, you need my help- because it’s easier with me helping.
ANNETTE (KYLE)
Quite the tongue you got on you Mr. Chapman, can’t say I knew that about you. You’re to pot that one plant and that is all.

KYLE
Ms. Sue Halloway, I never thought you’d ask.

ANNETTE (KYLE)
Well now, Mr. Chapman- I didn’t ask you, now did I? A bit more of a command, I would surmise.

ANNETTE (KYLE)
You best watch out Mr. Lloyd Chapman, with an attitude and smile like that- I might get the notion to keep you around.

KYLE
Ma’m, I’m going to pot this plant before I say something quick.

SCENE 12 - ABOVE THE ATRIUM

As they round the corner toward the Atrium, they see the Sage, asleep on a bench. Kyle hesitantly approaches the Sage, then thinks better of it. No matter, the Sage pops awake.

SAGE
There you are! I’ve been trying to call you.

KYLE
So you’re the one who keeps trying to call me.

SAGE
Yeah, I just told you...Anyway! What’s the matter with her?

KYLE
Well, I think she was attacked by a vending machine stocker.

SAGE
What?

KYLE
One minute she was there, the next there was a weird guy with a sweet moustache, and then she was on the ground and he was gone.
Sage searches his coatpockets for something.

SAGE

She must have been acting!

He finds a mysterious flask and feeds it to Annette. She pops awake.

ANNETTE

Not the crackers!

What was that?

KYLE

Post-performance withdrawal. She needs time to break character.

ANNETTE

What's going on?

Did you just act?

KYLE

She was just acting like she fainted? I carried you that whole way!

SAGE

No, you fool, she was acting like the vending machine stocker. That was her.

KYLE

Annette doesn't have a moustache.

ANNETTE

They said something about a Method.

SAGE

Yes. The One True Method. Only a few actors in history have ever had it. It's the purest form of acting. The actor and the character mold into one. The actor sees the truth in the character. No longer is the actor concerned about rent or fame or getting laid. Unless the character is. But the Method is not strictly talent. It's a process that must be honed, developed, cultured. Those who have it are the only true actors!

Sage has gotten so into the monologue that he is standing on the bench in a gallant pose.
So she was the snack guy?

Jesus Christ. Let me show you.

Sage gets off the bench as a Hurried Student hurries by. The Sage takes a deep breath.

Excuse me, sir! You’re under arrest!

The Hurried Student snaps to—instantly frightened.

I’m sorry officer, I didn’t mean to.

Worry not, child you are forgiven.

Thank you Father!

Now go to your room, you’re grounded!

I hate you Dad!

The Hurried Student runs off pouting. The Sage falls out of character, huffing and puffing.

Ugh, gets harder every time. You’d better go downstairs and get some rest. I heard there’s free coffee. Then, you might want to get some Free Hugs.

Where did you learn to act like that?

Poor kid... Free Hugs?

Scramble Light’s your best bet. Grab me my flask.
ANNETTE
What did you give me? I feel a little funny.

SAGE
The elixir of the thespian. A screwdriver. Go get some coffee.

They leave the Sage and go downstairs.

INTERMISSION

SCENE 12 - TO THE SCRAMBLE LIGHT

Kyle and Annette collect their things and head out, walking alongside McKinley.

KYLE
You sure you’re ok to keep going?

ANNETTE
Yeah, I’ll make it.

KYLE
Man, what I’d give to have the acting abilities of that Sage. Or, what am I saying, you for that matter!

Annette doesn’t even look at him. A stretch of silence.

KYLE
What happened back there? I swear, you were there, and then this old vending machine guy, and then you were there- it was like you completely transformed! I still can’t quite pick up on it.

ANNETTE
I don’t know... I can’t explain it.

KYLE
I mean, if that was acting- that was phenomenal! I had no idea, you were someone else entirely! I knew you were talented, but honestly, I didn’t know-

ANNETTE
Kyle! I don’t really want to talk about it. It’s, I don’t know, it’s been a strange night.

Another silence falls over the two.
Let's run lines.

Ok.

It seems a bit more natural, them having fun with it a little more. As they are walking along, they notice that they are being followed by Vice President Cody Howard. He keeps his distance though.

Excuse me? Ms. Sue- do you need any help potting that flower? It’s mighty large.

Mr. Chapman, if you would kindly refrain from admonishing me- I am quite capable of potting my own flowers.

Well, Ms. Sue, if you’ll forgive me, I know you’re quite capable- I just thought you could use a little help. I know I certainly wouldn’t mind helping.

Annette sets the “pot” down and steps nose-to-nose with Kyle.

Mr. Lloyd Chapman, I want you to understand one thing, and one thing only- I don’t need your help. You’re mighty kind, but I don’t need your help.

Well, Ms. Sue Halloway- let me tell you one thing- you do. You darn near tore your dress and dirtied your hat. Now, if that’s your goal than fine, but I’m not aiming to say you can’t pot that plant over there- I am merely saying, you need my help- because it’s easier with me helping.

Annette steps down.

Quite the tongue you got on you Mr. Chapman, can’t say I knew that about you. You’re to pot that one plant and that is all.

Ms. Sue Halloway, I never thought you’d ask.
ANNETTE
Well now, Mr. Chapman- I didn’t ask you, now did I? A bit more of a command, I would surmise.

ANNETTE
You best watch out Mr. Lloyd Chapman, with an attitude and smile like that- I might get the notion to keep you around.

KYLE
Ma’m, I’m going to pot this plant before I say something quick.

They pause.

KYLE
Alright, I don’t think I need to feed you a compliment.

ANNETTE
You were good. You were really good, Kyle.

She playfully bumps into him as they near the Scramble Light.

SCENE 13 - THE SCRAMBLE LIGHT
A group of three students, including Julie stand with “Free Hug signs” shouting at anyone passing by

FREE HUGGER 1
Hugs not thugs!

FREE HUGGER 2
You may take our bake sales, but you will never take our hugs!

JULIE
We don’t want no Drama! Let’s hug it out!

KYLE
Well, I guess we should see if she knows anything more.

Kyle and Annette cross the scramble light towards them. Looking behind them, they see Vice President Cody Howard stay on the other side.
JULIE
Come, come get your Free Hugs!

As the audience and Kyle and Annette move about the members receiving hugs, Julie relays them information.

JULIE
Glad ya kids came by, I've got a scoop.

KYLE
Yeah, well it better be good, Annette almost died back there.

JULIE
It'll only make you stronger. What happened?

KYLE
She had to act her way out of us almost getting caught by Gusto and another Drama Club thug.

Julie raises an eyebrow curious.

JULIE
And you were convincing?

ANNETTE
What does it matter?

KYLE
I had no idea, I thought there were two different people at two different times.

JULIE
Alright, kiddos, the time has come. You know how evil the Drama Club is- I need your help.

ANNETTE
By the way, they called it Project Gora.

JULIE
What?!

ANNETTE
Yeah, Gusto said they were implementing "Project Gora".

JULIE
Tonight?
JULIE

Look, I found out that they’re probably announcing their plan at the New Member meeting tonight in Pruïs- you guys need to get over there. As you can see from your friend standing across the street, I’m too high profile- I’ll never get in. Annette, you can act your way in. This is bigger than big.

As soon as she says that, a Drama Club member comes walking out of the Quad.

FREE HUGGER 1

Drama Club! Scatter!

Everyone runs different ways, the Drama Club member chasing an arbitrary member. Kyle and Annette also hurry away from the Scramble Light, crossing towards Pruïs, where they are met by Vice President Cody Howard.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

Hey there, good to see you guys again. Unfortunate circumstances though.

KYLE

Look, we haven’t done anything wrong.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

Ah, you just don’t know it yet. I’m sorry kiddos, I got my hands tied.

Gusto literally emerges from behind a tree.

ANNETTE

What’s he doing here?

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

I told you guys, you’re barking up the wrong tree. This is the way things are now.

KYLE

What do you mean? You’re just going to bow down for the Drama Club?

GUSTO

Past tense Kyle- he has
VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD
That’s funny, you’re not the only one.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD
Seems like you’re wanted by someone- and we’re here to make sure you get there.

Kyle jumps between Annette and the VP as Gusto lumbers over.

KYLE
Annette, make a break for it.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD
What are you doing?

Kyle starts taking deep breathes, getting into the zone.

GUSTO
Wait, don’t let him do that!

KYLE
Wait, don’t let him do that!

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD
What’s going on?

GUSTO
He’s trying to pretend to be me to confuse you!

KYLE
He’s trying to pretend to be me to confuse you!

Torn, Annette takes off, looking behind her. Gusto tries to take off after her.

KYLE
Vice President Cody Howard, stop him!

The VP obliges, wrapping up Gusto, thinking Kyle is Gusto.

GUSTO
You idiot! I’m Gusto!

KYLE
No, I’m Gusto!
VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD
I don’t understand, wait, what’s going on?

With Annette safely out of distance, Kyle falls out of character, falling to a knee, gasping for air. The two pull him up, leading him away.

SCENE 13 - BETWEEN SCRAMBLE LIGHT AND BRACKEN

Annette sits down on the bus bench, head hung. A STUDENT reading the paper sits next to her.

ANNETTE

Shit.

STUDENT

What’s wrong?

Annette looks at him.

ANNETTE

Are you waiting for the bus?

STUDENT

(wide smile)

Yes. What are YOU waiting for?

Launches into epic song number entitled “What Are YOU Waiting For?”

SCENE 14 - BETWEEN BRACKEN/UNIVERSITY THEATER

Annette runs towards Pruis, when suddenly a group of medievally dressed members flood around her, stopping in the pass. Outside Pruis, a similar group filters in. Annette weaves her way through the warriors, huddling up against the wall by University Theater. A Red Leader and a Blue Leader step forward.

RED LEADER

Blue Clan! What are you doing? This is our space! We have been chosen directly by the Drama Club to be the guardian force for their new secret project, tasked with first protecting Pruis Hall!
BLUE LEADER
Lies! They have anointed us, the Blue Clan as their guardian force- all performances spaces shall fall under our watch! Which mean you lot better run and hide!

RED LEADER
You are a mighty stupid bunch! Frigo will bathe us in Dining Plus when we deliver your cheap PVC pipe toys to him.

BLUE LEADER
Ha! Rumor has it that the secret project is a stage adaptation of 300! I’d like to see you try!

RED LEADER
That’s it! Those are fighting words!

BLUE LEADER
Indeed they are! To the victor go the spoils- let it be known- the winner of this Dagorhir competition shall cede power and henceforth be known as the official guardian force of the Drama Club for their as yet untitled Secret Project rumored to be a stage adaptation of 300.

RED LEADER
Agreed! Prepare to be hit forcefully!

A roar erupts from the both sides as they prepare for battle. Annette runs through the ranks of the Red Army.

ANNETTE
It’s all a set up! It’s not an adaptation of 300! You should storm into Pruis and find out what it really is!

RED LEADER
ATTACK!

Her cries fall on deaf ears. As the two sides clash, Annette weaves her way towards Pruis, entering.

SCENE 15 - PRUIS HALL
Annette makes her way quickly into the lobby. There stands a Drama Club member.

DRAMA CLUB MEMBER 1
Welcome new members- if you’ll make your way up the ramp we’ll get started in a little bit.
Annette then notices the audience, using them as characters, telling them to go ahead of her, she filters in near the end into auditorium. She ducks down into a seat.

On the stage are all the major members of the Drama Club, huddled around a chair with a sheet slung over it.

FRIGO
Welcome, welcome, so good to see all your sparkling, pretty faces! I am proud and eager to welcome you all to the first informal phase of inducting your brilliant careers into our capable hands! With our help, and the gift of the scarf, you will cull and hone your abilities, eventually harnessing the Power of Acting! With these powers, you can become anybody, helping to spread the name of the Drama Club far and wide! But, forgive me, are we not performers? Let me show you!

Frigo snaps his fingers and a tied up Kyle is brought in from offstage.

FRIGO
This poor boy didn’t quite see eye-to-eye with us on the purpose of acting and spread of the scarf. Before teaching him a lesson, I thought I would save him for a demonstration so you could witness the Power of Acting!

Frigo takes a deep breath, tightening his scarf. He rips the tape off Kyle’s mouth.

KYLE
You’re a fraud and a fake! You bully people with your so called “power!”

FRIGO
You’re a fraud and a fake! You bully people with your so called “power!”

KYLE
Stop it! Don’t listen to him!

FRIGO
Stop it! Don’t listen to him!

KYLE
Don’t put on the scarves!

Frigo whips around to the audience- now in character.

DO put on the scarves!

FRIGO
Annette jumps up from the audience.

ANNETTE

Leave him alone Frigo!

Frigo breaks character.

FRIGO

Ahh, there you are. I was hoping you’d sneak your way in!

ANNETTE

I won’t let you understudy him.

FRIGO

Well, my dear, I was hoping I wouldn’t have to. In fact, you can make the choice for me right now. All I ask is a simple favor- join the Drama Club. Which, it looks like is what you were planning to do anyway.

Annette walks to the aisle.

FRIGO

You have a great talent- a truly great talent. Let the Drama Club help you grow it, we can show you how to use it. Accept the scarf. You wouldn’t want your friend here to get hurt, would you?

KYLE

Annette! Don’t do it. I’m sorry I ever wanted to join this awful club!

FRIGO

Oh Annette, your friend is so noble. But that won’t change his fate. Only you can.

Annette walks a step closer to the stage.

KYLE

Annette, stop where you are. Stop!

She takes another step.

FRIGO

You’re making the right choice Annette.

Suddenly, the Drunken Sage dashes out from stage left.

SAGE

Annette! You don’t need to do this! This is my battle. You will see.
Who’s that!

Well, well, well.

Dude, get out of here.

There you are. And to think, we’ve been looking all over for you.

The Sage begins tidying himself up, taking a pair of glasses out of his jacket and putting them on.

Alexander!

Frigo, this ends here.

You’re right. It does. Allow me to show you why.

Frigo rips off the sheet covering the chair, revealing a large man dressed suspiciously like-

Meet Jo Anne Gora!

Gasps from everyone, snickers from the Drama Club.

You disgust me.

That’s who you’re going to put in the administration!?

A bit slow, aren’t you. Everyone wants to understudy the lead in the show- Naturally, we want to understudy Jo Anne Gora.

I won’t allow it.
FRIGO
Oh, really, what are you going to do?

ALEXANDER
You forget. I do a mean Gora.

He steps towards the Secret Gora taking deep breaths.

FRIGO
Alexander, this will be the end of you!

ALEXANDER
Hi, I'm Jo Anne Gora, and I want to welcome you to Ball State University.

He uses his slender hands for dramatic effect.

FRIGO
Stop him!

The Secret Gora lumbers to life, at first big and robotic, then quickly falling into character.

SECRET GORA
Hi, I'm Jo Anne Gora, and I want to talk to you about education “redefined.”

ALEXANDER
Hi, I'm Jo Anne Gora and I'd like to tell you about our new geothermal energy plant going into construction!

The battle gets more intense, the two straining, and leaning towards each other.

SECRET GORA
Hi, I'm Jo Anne Gora and I only buy my clothes in New York City, the only place in the world which sells powder blue blouses.

ALEXANDER
Hi, I'm Jo Anne Gora, and I'd like to take you into one of our immersive learning classrooms- where we immerse our students in immersive information!

SECRET GORA
Hi, I'm Jo Anne Gora and I am the smiling but personable, albeit removed from the student body, president of Ball State University!
Alexander falters, falling to a knee.

ALEXANDER

Hi, I’m Jo Anne Gora...

SECRET GORA

Hi, I’m Jo Anne Gora and I live in the President’s House- where the President of Ball State University lives! Where I live!

ALEXANDER

Hi, I’m...

Alexander collapses on the stage.

ANNETTE

Alexander, no!

FRIGO

What a pity... Out Gora’d. Never a pleasant sight.

Annette runs up onto stage, huddling over Alexander.

FRIGO

Don’t mourn the weak, child.

KYLE

Is he dead?

FRIGO

Of course he’s dead. He’s been out-acted, what else is there to do? You just die.

ANNETTE

No, Alexander, I need your help!

Suddenly, everyone begins moving in slow motion, with the exception of Annette and Alexander. Annette props up Alexander’s head, but his voice echoes from above.

ALEXANDER (OFF STAGE)

Annette, you can do this. You have the One True Method. I saw it in you, just as Frigo did when we were rehearsing.

ANNETTE

Are you dead?
ALEXANDER (OFF STAGE)

I am in fact dead.

ANNETTE

How are you talking to me?

ALEXANDER (OFF STAGE)

You know, with my dead mouth.

ANNETTE

But, where are you?

ALEXANDER (OFF STAGE)

I’m in actor heaven. Hey, there’s some people I want you to meet. Hey, Brando, get over here! Say hi.

MARLON BRANDO

I coulda been somebody, I coulda been a contender!

ALEXANDER (OFF STAGE)

Yeah, yeah, we know- get outta here. Anyways...

ANNETTE

I need your help, I don’t know what to do.

CLARK GABLE

Frankly my dear, I don’t give a damn.

ALEXANDER

Easy Clarky, she’s new.

ANNETTE

I guess I’ll just have to join...

ALEXANDER (OFF STAGE)

No, Annette. You must take action. You must act.

ANNETTE

But I’m not a good actor!

ALEXANDER

You are, I saw it from the first day of rehearsal. You have all the right instincts- you just needed to see the world a little bit.
An actor creates a performance, but they also pull from real life. If you wouldn't have gone through the things you did tonight, you may not have grown.

ANNETTE
But what should I do- how can I fix this?

ALEXANDER
You'll think of something. Just think, you can be anyone. I gotta go, Hepburn is having a barbecue. Good luck!

Annette gently lays Alexander down. Things come back into fast motion.

FRIGO
Alright, Annette. I accept your defeat. I won't harm your useless friend. Just go take a seat so we can continue- it's time to hand out scarves.

Annette begins taking deep breaths. Frigo goes on.

FRIGO
With our own Jo Anne Gora in the administration- we will be able to do whatever we want! The possibilities would be endless. And, with someone at the front of the administration, expanding beyond Ball State is just on the horizon.

He notices Annette head bowed, breathing slow.

FRIGO
Annette. What are you doing? Don't do that! Hey!

She whips around.

ANNETTE
(mighty voice)
Good evening, Drama Club. It is I, Meryl Streep. Yes, the pantheon god of acting and patron saint of being joyful and immeasurably talented and, oh yes, being the best actress alive. You could only count my Oscar nominations if you were an alien and had more than two hands- but you don't. Now listen closely.

FRIGO
Wait. Meryl? Wait, no this can't be right.

ANNETTE
You, little man. Please, I'm trying to speak. Could you place your two hands, full of my Oscar nominations, and place them on your head?
Frisco struggles, trying to see through the character.

FRIGO

Bit, I thought, I swear...

ANNETTE
I really don’t have all day. If you would kindly.

He obliges. She has control.

ANNETTE
Now, I’ve heard a couple things about the Drama Club here at Ball State University, and I must say, a part of me is really quite proud. You’ve taken the theater and the art form of acting, and you’ve taken it to dizzying heights. Unfortunately, and I hate to rain on the parade here, but unfortunately, you’ve taken an amazing process and you’ve turned it into a mechanism of fear and intimidation. And that’s just not fucking right, ok?

GUSTO
Ms. Streep, I just wanted to say- I am your biggest, biggest fan, and I am so sorry-

ANNETTE
Sir? I’m sorry, I’m going to need you to hush up until I’m done. I’ll autograph your face later. Where was I? Yes. You’ve really made a mess of things. You’ve stranggled and raped the acting process. You’ve shut yourself in dark rooms and dimly lit stages and searched for a way to make yourself more powerful, more persuasive- all with the idea of achieving a more real performance. And in all the darkness, you’re eyes have been fooled. You’ve become accustomed to the darkness and it’s all you see. What would Meryl do? (Trademark) She would open those doors, and she would walk right out. I would walk into the world and experience everything it has to offer. Because to be me- you have to follow your own path, and you have to live your own life, and then you take all of that and you apply it to who you are trying to be. And you think how they would react to that little real thing you felt, that little bite of existence that you tasted, and you inject it into the character- and you’re a better actor for it.

FRIGO
Ms. Streep, I am so sorry.

ANNETTE
Shush, shush. Almost there. So what would I like you to do? I want you to stop this silly Jo Anne Gora nonsense and I want you to disband the Drama Club. Pretty simple. I want you to think about your craft and I want you to regroup in a month and think of how to better use your powers. And if I ever hear of this happening again- I swear, I will make a truly terrible movie, and smear my perfect record. You wouldn’t want that would you!
No, No! Meryl, no!

ANNETTE

Alright then. Go home. Leave, get out of here. Except for you.

She points to Kyle, who looks like he pooped himself.

I need to talk to you.

FRIGO

Again, I'm so sorry, Ms. Streep. I feel fully responsible.

ANNETTE

You are. Go home. Your favorite movie from now on is Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle. You'll have fun explaining that one.

The Drama Club begins to slowly dissipate, giving last looks at their Lady of the Lake. When everyone is gone except Kyle, she breaks character, collapsing to the stage. Surprised, Kyle runs over to her.

KYLE

Oh my God, Annette! You just missed Meryl Streep! She was here!

He picks her up, shaking her back to life.

That was me.

ANNETTE

What?

KYLE

I was acting like Meryl Streep.

ANNETTE

What? No. She was right here. She disbanded the Drama Club! It was a miracle!

KYLE

Kyle. I was acting like her. See, now I'm back here.

He looks around, slowly pulling the pieces together.
Are you ok?

Just a little tired.

Man, that was really good. I mean, if you were really Meryl Streep. I mean, I thought she was here. Like, talking to me.

Thanks.

Here, let me help you up.

He helps her up. They see Alexander’s body.

Is he?

Yeah, pretty sure he’s still dead.

Just then Julie runs in.

What happened, I just saw everyone start filing out!

Yeah, we-

Julie notices Alexander laying on the stage.

Oh my God!

Yeah. He’s dead.

No!

He was out-acted.
JULIE
What about my article!

The two just shrug.

JULIE
Wait. This is better. I can write his memoir. I’ll get a book deal! Wait, I can’t be seen here with his body! Good work guys!

She runs back out, pausing at the exit.

JULIE
But hey, really good work kiddos. We’re all in a better place now.

She exits.

KYLE
I guess we should probably go too.

ANNETTE
Yeah. (beat) Hey, thanks for always believing in me.

KYLE
I told you- you have the talent.

ANNETTE
Well, Mr. Lloyd Chapman, with an attitude and smile like that- I might get the notion to keep you around.

Kyle is stunned for a second.

KYLE
I’m.. Thank you? Miss?

ANNETTE
No, Kyle, I was just doing our scene.

KYLE
Wow! See! So good, I totally believed you. Man, I have a lot of work to do...

ANNETTE
No, but really. I mean it.

KYLE
I know, I totally believed it. Too bad that scene will never see the light of day- you’d get pelted with roses.
Annette sighs, looking around.

KYLE

Are you ok to walk?

ANNETTE

Yeah. God knows we've done enough of it tonight. Why stop now, right?

· NON-EXISTANT CURTAIN

THE END
April 2, 2011
Selection Committee
Honors College – Joe and Carol Trimmer Award

To the Committee:

It is with pleasure that I submit this letter nominating Elliott San for the 2011 Joe and Carol Trimmer Award. I worked with Elliott this semester on his creative thesis, “The Power of Acting” and I am proud to nominate him to celebrate, what I feel, has been a truly successful, challenging, and rewarding creative process. I will freely admit to this committee that when I first met with Elliott about his idea for a project I was skeptical; here was a student I’d never met interested in creating a play, something he’d never really studied. How could he achieve success in a short period of time? The fact that Elliott was so interested and willing to step outside his comfort zone compelled me, and I agreed to work with him (also assuring him that I would not go easy on him).

As his artist’s statement so articulately states, Elliott was soon confronted with the full scope of the difficulty of artistic creation – the event he could see so clearly in his head, the product, needed a story to drive it, and a process to fully explore it. Creating a story takes time and preparation, something he was rarely given as a TCOM major; Elliot’s “past” and “future” collided, and he needed time to really engage with the results. His Honors Advisor and I encouraged him to scale down a bit, and use his time creating this thesis to explore what it means to tell a story, engage with and create a distinct world, and experiment with metaphors. As we discussed his first draft, it became clear that Elliot had written the script with too many limitations in mind, and these limitations were bankrupting the story of any meaning and purpose. Elliott then, of his own accord, chose to rewrite it from beginning to end.

While I still feel that the play is still in need of a few revisions and clarification, I am truly amazed at how far he came and how much he managed to learn in such a short time. The real strength of this project is not revealed in the final product alone, but, rather, in Elliot’s articulations of his process. In my view, his willingness to embrace this work, revise and review through intense contemplation and critical examination, makes this an outstanding thesis. My only regret as Elliot graduates is that we did not meet sooner; I would have loved the opportunity to work with him more closely and hone his storytelling skills. I feel he has great promise.

I do hope you’ll consider this nomination; feel free to contact me with any questions.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Blackmer
Associate Professor, Department of Theatre & Dance
Ball State University