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Product Code YA801-SP

boy meets girl

A Contemporary One Act by

Jon Jory

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boy meets girl

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2 CHARACTERS

JENNA: *In girl attire; played by a boy*

JOEY: *In boy attire; played by a girl*

SETTING

In and around a High School and a Hospital Room

APPROXIMATE PLAYING TIME

30 Minutes

boy meets girl
by Jon Jory

AT RISE:

KENNA, female attire, played by a boy, sits on an empty stage with a copy of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet in hand rehearsing an audition piece.

KENNA

The clock struck nine when I did send the nurse:
In half an hour she promised to return.
Perchance she cannot meet him: that's not so.
O, she is lame! Love's heralds should be thoughts,
Which ten times faster...

(Can't think of the next line)

Which ten times faster...

(Looks at script)

Faster glide than the sun beams,
Driving back shadows...

(Looks at script)

Driving back shadows over louring hills:
Therefore do nimble – pinion'd doves draw love
And therefore do...

(Looks at script)

These lines, these lines! How does anybody learn Shakespeare? What is the matter with my brain? "Therefore do nimble pinioned doves..." How can I audition if I can't learn the monologue?

JOEY enters.

JOEY

Therefore do nimble pinion'd doves draw love,
And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings.
Now is the sun upon the highest hill
Of this day's journey, and from nine 'til twelve
Is three long hours, yet she is not come."

Hi.

KENNA

You know the speech.

JOEY

I played Juliet in this scene in middle school.

KENNA

And you still remember it?

JOEY

Maybe not all of it.

KENNA

I'm Kenna.

JOEY

I'm Joey. I heard you all the way up the hill.

KENNA

Well, it's comforting to know I'm loud enough.

JOEY

Not everybody is. They had to say, "louder" to me all the time.

KENNA

Are you auditioning for the play?

JOEY shakes his head.

Why not?

JOEY

Acting is a little much for me right now. How come I don't know you?

KENNA

Because we're in the ninth largest high school in the United States which kind of makes high school not high school, if you know what I mean.

JOEY

Oh, I do. Has its benefits though.

KENNA

Does it?

JOEY

Doesn't it?

KENNA

Some. Okay, I get it.

JOEY

I thought you might. Actually, I came from a small rural school in Kansas.

KENNA

Rural?

JOEY

You know, wheat and then more wheat and after that, wheat. The high school has a hundred and ninety kids. Let's just say I wasn't fully appreciated.

KENNA

Painful, huh?

JOEY

I learned to enjoy my own company. Anyway, my mom, who is the best, moved us here because...

KENNA

It's the ninth largest high school in the U.S.

JOEY

Bingo. It's sort of like Noah's Ark. There are at least two of everything.

KENNA

So you have one friend?

JOEY

Several actually. Plus a retinue of haters.

KENNA

What's a retinue?

JOEY

Ooooo, I love vocabulary quiz. In this case, let's just say a bunch. You?

KENNA

I'll go with retinue. Are you okay?

JOEY

Peachy delicious. You?

KENNA

Good days and bad days.

JOEY

Today?

KENNA

A little hall confrontation.

JOEY

Oh yes. My strategy is to go outside and walk around the building and come back in at the doorway nearest to my next class. There seems to be less hostility in the open air. Kenna, dearest, I'm going to risk saying you have a...

KENNA

Black eye.

JOEY

I was going to say an unusual makeup sense.

KENNA

I hate looking ugly.

JOEY

It's not ugly, it's just real. I'd even go so far as to call it a badge of honor. *(A pause)* Care to tell me?

She shakes her head.

KENNA

So how do you like LA?

JOEY

Fabulous. Everything in the world a boy could want. You know, I'd never been to a museum before I moved here. I thought a painting was something they did to your house.

KENNA

Joey in Toyland.

JOEY

Absolutely.

KENNA

Where do you live?

JOEY

Koreatown.

KENNA

In the midst.

JOEY

Glorious food and mainly good manners. You?

KENNA

The wild outskirts of Santa Monica. It's were they exile people who aren't beautiful and don't drive Range Rovers.

JOEY

And here I hoped you were the aristocracy.

KENNA

So you're just off Wilshire?

JOEY

Three blocks. How can you go to school here?

KENNA

We use an uncle's address.

JOEY

Kenna without a country. Did you tell me your last name?

KENNA

Mlynarsky.

JOEY

Polish.

KENNA

How did you know?

JOEY

Smigli. Isn't that dreadful?

KENNA

We should dance the mazurka.

JOEY

Just two gender-fluid idioci. Goodness, I was so thrilled to meet another Pole your first name jumped out of my head.

KENNA

Kenna. Or the "Amazing Marilyn" on the weekends.

JOEY

You do drag! Oops, is that gender-cool?

KENNA

Do I care? I only do it once a month. A place called, "The Living Room" in Glendale.

JOEY

You have to absolutely tell me when?

KENNA

Cross my heart. You'll come?

JOEY

With bells on.

KENNA

Honesty to the core. Do you think I can do Juliet?

JOEY

You know the school better than I do. Can you?

KENNA

The drama teacher gets it, I think.

JOEY

Juliet's a tough one.

KENNA

Why?

JOEY

For real?

KENNA

Might as well.

JOEY

Okay, but don't tell anyone I said this because it's scandalous. Funny stuff is easier, or mean stuff or just bigger wilder stuff. That gets accepted. A straight-on famous love thing by Willie? Scares 'em. I'm not saying you can't do it, I'm just asking if they'll come along for the ride.

KENNA

Hard to say.

JOEY

I know.

KENNA

I'm a little scared to try. You know the way Miss Spicer runs the auditions...

JOEY

I don't.

KENNA

Everybody auditioning sits at the back of the auditorium and watches everybody else.

JOEY

Really?

KENNA

Really.

JOEY

Sort of like throwing the Christians to the lions. That's just wrong.

KENNA

She tells everybody to be supportive.

JOEY

Yeah, right.

KENNA

What if they laugh?

JOEY

Absolutely don't do it if you're straight up scared.

KENNA

Isn't that why I should do it?

JOEY

No. No, no, no. You know that thing about how the bee won't sting you unless it senses you're scared. You have to shut them up with your iron nerves.

KENNA

I don't know, Joey.

JOEY

When anybody goes off on me, I force myself to look them in the eye and most times they stop.

KENNA

I'm not scared of them, I'm pretty much over that part. I figured out fast that you can't do this if you're that kind of scared. I'm just scared of how I might react.

JOEY

What do you mean?

I have anger problems.

KENNA

(Laughs)

JOEY

So you're afraid you'd go off on an entire audience?

KENNA

No seriously.

JOEY

I would pay such a lot of money to see that.

KENNA

(Southern accent)

Well, y'all come on down!

They high five.

JOEY

I have to go.

KENNA

Could I...

JOEY

Yes, you could. 323-502-4111.

KENNA

Wait a minute, I have to write it on my arm. Meanwhile, I'm KennaM@me.com

JOEY

I have a memory like a steel chastity belt.

KENNA

(Points at him)

Joey.

JOEY

(Points at her)

Kenna. Blood brother-sisters.

KENNA

Or sister-brothers. Would you help me with the audition?

JOEY

No.

Wow.

KENNA

When I think about acting I cry. It's terrible for my macho.

JOEY

Isn't that letting them define you?

KENNA

Yes. *(Pause)* Of course I should help you.

JOEY

Of course you should. *(Pause)* I'm liking this.

KENNA

Me too. I warn you, I'm a terrible taskmaster.

JOEY

Oooooo Joey, you give me the shivers.

KENNA

Very funny.

JOEY

I thought so. I'll style your hair. It's a little Kansas.

KENNA

Deal.

JOEY

Tomorrow.

KENNA

Four o'clock?

JOEY

Perfect.

KENNA

Well met by moonlight proud Titania.

JOEY

Huh?

KENNA

JOEY

Midsummer Night's Dream. Act 2, Scene 1. I played Titania, the Fairy Queen. It was the only Shakespeare we did. They hated it but I looked glorious. Just imagine me all see-through leafy with judiciously placed wild roses.

KENNA

I bet you were a sight.

JOEY

For sore eyes. Tomorrow then.

KENNA

Tomorrow.

JOEY

(As he exits.)

Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
to the last syllable of recorded time –

He's gone. A pause. He pops back in.

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
the way to dusty death.

He exits.

Quick blackout. Immediately back up. They are rehearsing.

KENNA

But old folks, many feign as they were dead;
unwieldy, slow, heavy, pale as lead.

(A pause)

Well?

JOEY

Great. You know, pretty great.

KENNA

You mean it was terrible.

JOEY

What? No I just said... well maybe it was a little terrible, not much though, really pretty great.

KENNA

You are such a wuss.

JOEY

See, she's sent the nurse to find out if Romeo will marry her and the nurse...

KENNA

I know she...

JOEY

Says she'll be back in a half hour...

KENNA

Joey, I know...

JOEY

And she takes forever and...

KENNA

Joey! Just tell me what to do.

JOEY

Fine. Don't yell.

KENNA

Just tell me.

JOEY

Do you remember I said I didn't want to get into this?

KENNA

Please.

JOEY

Too much. Too big. Too, I don't know... too pushy.

KENNA

It's an audition, Joey, I need to impress, right?

JOEY

I don't know what to say.

KENNA

You do, you just won't say it.

JOEY

Then you know already.

KENNA

Yes, I know. How could I not know? I just don't know how to fix it. (Covers her face)

JOEY

Hug time.

They hug.

I have the cure.

KENNA

What?

JOEY

Swedish fish.

KENNA

I love Swedish fish.

JOEY

Hold out your hands.

She does.

Oops, I gave you one too many.

KENNA

You're taking back one fish?

JOEY

I don't want you to overdose.

KENNA

It's still too butch.

JOEY

Did I say that?

KENNA

Yes.

JOEY

No way.

KENNA

It's called subtext, Joey. Why does it have to be so hard?

JOEY

Like that.

KENNA
Hard like what?

JOEY
No, no, no. Do it like that. Ummm, heartfelt.

KENNA
I thought it was.

JOEY
Be it, not like acting heartfelt. Go, go.

KENNA
But...

JOEY
Hey.

KENNA
What?

JOEY
You want help or you want a debate club?

KENNA
I want help.

JOEY
Do it. Simple. Simple as pie.

KENNA
Now is the sun upon the highest hill
Of this day's journey, and from nine 'til twelve
Is three hours long; yet she is not come.
Had she affections and warm youthful blood,
She would be as swift in motion as a ball;
But old folks, many feign as they are dead
Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as led.

(Pause)

JOEY
That's good. That's enough.

KENNA
Enough what?

JOEY
Enough acting.

KENNA
You think somebody would really cast me as Juliet?

JOEY
If they had a brain in their head.

KENNA
Should I do it again?

JOEY
No.

KENNA
Why?

JOEY
So it won't be stale.

KENNA
Can I have another Swedish fish?

JOEY
You had five and I have five left so if I give you another one, I care more about you than I do about me.

KENNA
Do you?

JOEY
No. But I'll loan you one more, so when you have Swedish Fish you'll give me three.

KENNA
That's like a payday loan.

JOEY
I have to look for an edge.

He hands her one. She takes him by the wrist.

KENNA
What's this?

JOEY
Well, gee, I wonder what you think it is?

KENNA

I think it's a nasty scar on your wrist.

JOEY

Bravo. So when is the audition?

KENNA

Next Monday. Why is there a scar on your wrist?

JOEY

It's from the old days when I was dramatic.

KENNA

That's pretty dramatic.

JOEY

It was a cry for... Swedish fish.

KENNA

Poor, Joey.

JOEY

I was sent to the nutsoid ward. In Kansas that's where the elite meet to greet. It's silly to talk about, I only tried it... three times.

KENNA

Three times?

JOEY

Once I threw myself in front of a train, but it stopped, and once I swallowed a hundred aspirin which didn't do anything but give me a terrible headache.

KENNA

It's not funny, Joey.

JOEY

It is when you know you would never, ever, ever, ever do it again.

KENNA

How do you know that?

JOEY

You know how I know. *(A pause)*

KENNA

I do.

JOEY

And so we return to the art of acting.

KENNA

We do?

JOEY

We do. You're going to be good. Better than anybody.

KENNA

My mantra, oh master.

JOEY

The only problem is that Juliet is dumb as a mossy rock and you're smart.

KENNA

She's not dumb.

JOEY

Really? A guy jumps the wall and hides in your garden. You talk to him for five minutes and you tell him you'll marry him the next day?

KENNA

Joey.

JOEY

What?

KENNA

If I don't get the part, we know why.

JOEY

They should call her the dim bulb of Verona.

KENNA

Joey.

JOEY

No, no there's more. Romeo is dating a friend of hers. She knows he's a Montague and Montagues are dirt bags. She kisses him once and is ready to rumble. Fourthly, he's in a gang. Fifthly, he kills her brother. Let me repeat that, he kills her brother. Sixthly, he gets thrown out of town so she'll never see him. Seventh, she takes a priest's advice on drugs and eighth she makes it a double suicide when she's not even fourteen years old. Where is the evidence she has a brain in her head? So to sum up you, Kenna, are smart, so you could probably cover all that up. But it's conceivable they want a dumb Juliet and that's the only way you could lose out.

KENNA

You're nice.

JOEY

Well, that's something nobody accused me of before. Oh look, you're healed.

KENNA

What?

JOEY

Your black eye. Gone. Did you go to a tent meeting?

KENNA

What's a tent meeting?

JOEY

It's when two hundred gullible Kansans go into a tent in a godforsaken cornfield and a preacher from a big city like Tulsa, who smells of alcohol and is incredibly sweaty, heals you by the putting on of hands and after you faint and come to you don't have acne any more. By the way, did I ever tell you I spent six months in juvie?

KENNA

No.

JOEY

Want to know why?

KENNA

If you'd like to tell me.

JOEY

Are we friends or are you just passing through?

KENNA

It's a little early to tell.

JOEY

Honest answer. I'll tell you why I was in juvie when we're friends. Give me a whistle after your audition. Just care enough not to do too much. *(Starts to exit)* Oh, by the way, today was my birthday.

KENNA

(Calling after him)

Joey!

But he's gone.

The lights change. Two nurses push on a hospital bed. JOEY is in it. KENNA enters and sits in a chair by the bed.

Hi Joey? KENNA

He looks at her and then smiles.

Well, look what the cat dragged in. JOEY

How are you feeling? KENNA

Oh, terrific. I like hospitals, want to know why? JOEY

Sure. KENNA

They expect so little of you. It's so easy to get a passing grade. Anyway, I'll be out tomorrow. JOEY

Swedish fish! KENNA
(Pulling a bag out of her backpack)

You are an angel from heaven. My mother brought me a fruit cup. Do you even know what a fruit cup is? JOEY

I think I can figure it out. KENNA

A fruit cup has rules. One: it has to be covered in a horrible sickly-sweet fluid. Two: it must have cantaloupe pieces so hard you would need a jackhammer. Three it absolutely must have rotten watermelon and four, there is always one, and no more than one grape. A really first-rate fruit cup has five kinds of fruit in it, all of them inedible for different reasons. I give this one a B minus. JOEY

Why didn't you call me? KENNA

Why would I call you? JOEY

KENNA

Because I would be a good person to call. Was this because of me?

JOEY

What? Are you out of your blonde-wigged mind? This is food poisoning. Did you poison my food?

KENNA

No.

JOEY

Then it's not your fault.

KENNA

I like to take care of people, Joey, it's my hobby.

JOEY laughs.

JOEY

You're a little young for a hobby. Hobby's only come into play when you no longer have a sex drive.

KENNA

That's so cold. I found out when I was twelve that taking care of people is the best substitute for being popular. Popular people don't take care of anybody, not even other popular people, so there's a definite job opening. By taking care of popular people I could hang out with them. And, by the way, they are much nicer when they have the flu or are trying to lose weight. *(Pause)* So why are you here?

JOEY

Bad halibut. I'm surprisingly glad to see you.

KENNA

And surprisingly I'm really glad to see you. *(Pause)* So why are you here?

JOEY

Dare I say it aloud?

KENNA

Come on, Joey.

JOEY

I want to say ahead of time, I don't want you to take care of me.

KENNA

I'm really good at it.

JOEY

And I'm really bad about being taken care of. I am prone to telling whoever is doing it that they are clumsy as an ox and that is emotionally as well as physically. *(Pause)*

KENNA

So why are you here?

JOEY

(Very directly)

I tried to hang myself from a door knob but it's obviously an acquired skill.

KENNA

Why?

JOEY

Aren't we inquisitive?

KENNA

Why Joey?!

JOEY

Because I didn't try out for the play. And don't tell me it's a dumb reason, I know it's a dumb reason. I actually started laughing.

KENNA

(Furious)

That is so stupid and unforgivable, Joey. It's just punishing me because you're a scaredy cat, and making everybody else feel horrible for the rest of their lives. Ooooo, I could just kill you!

JOEY starts to laugh uncontrollably.

How dare you laugh? How dare you?

JOEY applauds.

JOEY

(Wiping his eyes)

Oh my goodness! Sorry, sorry, that was just hilarious. Lordy lord! Seriously, that really cheers me up. If you don't look out I'll fall in love with you. You should have done that for an audition. Oh! The audition! What happened at the audition?

KENNA

We're not talking about the audition. And why didn't you call me? How dare you do this without calling me? And don't sit there smirking it's beneath you.

JOEY breaks out laughing again.

KENNA, *Continued*

I hate you.

JOEY

Actually you don't. For one thing I'm unfortunately the only one in your pale orbit who more or less understands you.

KENNA

You wouldn't do this crap, if you did.

JOEY

But that's the joke I didn't. Okay, here's the real deal. I was about to cross the street – I mean I had stepped out and this lady yells, "Sir, you dropped something." So I turned around to look and this car hits me and now my parents are convinced it was a suicide attempt because I've, you know, and they won't believe it wasn't no matter what I say and I'm absolutely drowning in psychologists and psychiatrists and social workers. I've had three this morning. I mean it's absolutely killing.

KENNA

Do you swear?

JOEY

Well, I've never read the bible and I don't have a bible but if somebody ever gave me a bible I'd swear on it.

KENNA

Really, really, really, really?

JOEY

Really, really.

KENNA

Really?

JOEY

Really.

KENNA

And your parents won't believe you?

JOEY

Absolutely will not.

KENNA

That is kind of hilarious.

JOEY

I know. It's a stitch. To use the medical term.

KENNA

Are you badly hurt?

JOEY

No. I have a fractured rib and two broken toes and supposedly a minor concussion though I don't even have a headache. But a wonderful thing happened, a football player came to me and said he always liked me in class and wanted to confide he was gay.

KENNA

And are you gay?

JOEY

Well really, I haven't decided. I read in the paper they are now listing fifty-six gender options and the menu is so glorious that I just can't order a meal.

KENNA

I know it's confusing.

JOEY

Choices to the right of us, choices to the left of us. But aren't you glad I didn't commit suicide?

KENNA punches him hard in the shoulder.

Ow. Ow! You hit me.

KENNA

Did I?

She hits him again.

JOEY

Ow!

KENNA

Do not ever joke about that again! Never, ever, forever! Do you understand me? Say you understand me?

JOEY

You hit like a boy.

KENNA

(Warningly)

Joey!

JOEY

Okay already, I won't joke about it. Geez, Louise. I never thought I'd be mugged in the hospital.

KENNA

From now on you tell me the truth.

JOEY

Well I did, it just took a little while. (*A pause*) You're kind of sweet actually. Would you care to finish my fruit cup?

KENNA

No, I don't like to eat things that have too many colors.

JOEY

Give with the audition?

KENNA

I didn't get it.

JOEY

Don't they understand it would be the talk of the school and all two thousand little students would batter down the doors to see it and I would tip off the *New York Times* and you would become famous and host a game show?

KENNA

But...

JOEY

There's a "but"?

KENNA

I got cast as the nurse.

JOEY

You didn't.

KENNA

I did. I pretended to be you and they loved me. The drama teacher's wife got up and shouted bravo.

JOEY

I am just desolated I missed that. The nurse is a better part than Juliet anyway. Shakespeare just blew it by not giving her a good speech at the end. I could write one for you. I don't think the drama teacher ever really reads the play anyway. She just wants everything to go faster. I'm really pleased, Kenna.

KENNA
You got me there.

JOEY
You got yourself there.

KENNA
When will you be out?

JOEY
They say tomorrow, so it will probably be the next day.

KENNA
I'll give you a week then I want to meet up.

JOEY
You're so pushy.

KENNA
On the hill a week from today.

JOEY
Yes, master.

The lights change. JOEY rises and pulls off his hospital gown. He is under dressed in his street wear. KENNA exits. JOEY moves downstage and speaks to the audience.

JOEY, *Continued*

So, there are now fifty-six gender options. No really. And just imagine, you're in there somewhere, my prettykins. And don't you just know I'm going to recite all fifty-six? I am such a toots. Feel free to let your mind wander but I'm going to do it in two minutes. Think of it as my audition piece. 1. Agender/Neutrois – neutral gender. 2. Androgyne/Androgynous – both male and female gender characteristics. 3. Bigender – identifies as male or female at different times. 4. Cis/Cisgender, aligns with birth sex 5. Female to Male – transitioning. Me. 6. Gender-Fluid. Expresses both whenever. 7. Gender non-conforming-tomboys, cross-dressers, transgender. 8. Gender questioning – not sure but working on it 9. Genderqueer – all who are non-conforming. 10. Intersex –sexual organs of both. 11. MTF, male to female. Kenna. 12. Neither – no name fits. You know what? It's a long way to fifty-six. You're off the hook. Just stop thinking it's so simple. I'll count to five and at five you'll become a fan of complexity. One, two, three, four, five. Boom! Now you're just a zucchini in a great big stew!

KENNA enters. JOEY sees her and gives a sweeping bow.

JOEY, *Continued*

My glorious Queen! I say that in the monarchial sense.

KENNA

Hi Joey.

She has a black eye and a purplish bruise on the other cheek.

JOEY

Not again! What happened?

KENNA

A guy at school just walked up and hit me.

JOEY

Somebody you know?

KENNA

I never saw him before in my life.

JOEY

That is monstrous!

KENNA

Kind of a terrible, no good, very bad day.

JOEY

(Hugging her)

You poor, sore, adorable child!

KENNA

The people I was with chased him but he got away.

JOEY

They are heroes, those people. I am so, so, so sorry.

KENNA

I was just feeling kind of normal.

JOEY

Whatever normal is, it's just not on my flight path. Oh Kenna, it's just not fair. I just can't stand it.

KENNA

I'm all right, really. It's kind of like I paid my dues. I kept thinking some ill-wind was out there which was messing with me. Now it's like – hey, I survived. How are you?

JOEY

I just got hit by a gender-neutral car. You got hit by what I hoped we wouldn't have to go through on the trip. Now I'm scared.

KENNA

He's one person, he got chased by four people. The odds are on our side.

JOEY

Did he say anything?

KENNA

Oh, several things you don't need to hear. Don't let it mess with your head. Why are we so threatening? It's like we're rabid dogs instead of geeky queers.

JOEY

My darling, you know the answer to that!

KENNA

Anyway, it's just embarrassing and I look terrible.

JOEY

You do. You just look gawdawful. Nobody in their right mind could ever be attracted to you again, you're worse than the elephant man. You look like Gloria Swanson in Sunset Boulevard.

KENNA

Is this supposed to cheer me up?

JOEY

However...

JOEY takes KENNA's hands,

KENNA

What on earth?

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes