

MONOLOGUES FOR BOYS

The Matchmaker

by Thornton Wilder

CORNELIUS

Isn't the world full of wonderful things? There we sit cooped up in Yonkers years and years and all the time wonderful people like Mrs. Malloy are walking around in New York and we don't know them at all. I don't know whether---from where you're sitting---you can see---well, for instance, the way her eye and forehead and cheek come together, up here. Can you? And the kind of fireworks that shoot out of her eyes all the time. I tell you right now: a fine woman is the greatest work of God. You can talk all you like about Niagara Falls and the Pyramids; they aren't in it at all. Of course, up there at Yonkers they came into the store all the time and bought this and that, and I said, "Yes, Ma'am" and "That'll be seventy-five cents, ma'am"; and I watched them. But today I've talked to one, equal to equal, equal to equal, and to the finest one that ever existed in my opinion. They're so different from men. Why, everything that they say and do is so different that you feel like laughing all the time. Golly, they're different from men. And they're awfully mysterious too. You never can be really sure what's going on in their heads. They have a kind of wall around them all the time---of pride, and a sort of play acting; I bet you could know a woman a hundred years without every being really sure whether she liked you or not. This minute I'm in danger. I'm in danger of losing my job and my future and everything that people think is important but I don't care. Even if I have to dig ditches for the rest of my life, I'll be a ditch-digger who once had a wonderful day.

Lost In Yonkers

by Neil Simon

JAY

Don't do it, Arty. . . Leave him alone, Uncle Louie. You want the bag open, do it yourself. *(He takes the bag from Arty and tosses it at Louie's feet.)* Maybe you don't rob banks or grocery stores or little old women. You're worse than that. You're a bully. You pick on a couple of kids. Your own nephews. You make fun of my father because he cried and was afraid of Grandma. Well, everyone in *Yonkers* is afraid of Grandma. . . And let me tell you something about my father. At least he doing something in this war. He's sick and he's tired but he's out there selling iron to make ships, and tanks and cannons, and I'm proud of him. What are *you* doing? Hiding in your mother's apartment and scaring little kids and acting like Humphrey Bogart. . . And I'll tell you something else— No. That's all.

columbinus

created by The United States Theatre Project

[Gym class. The basketball court. AP enters, dribbles and hesitates.]

AP

Focus, breathe, see the shot, and shoot. *(AP focuses on the shot, takes a big breath, and preps the ball; he hesitates)* I can do this. Focus, breathe, see the shot, and shoot. *(AP focuses on the shot, takes a big breath, and preps the ball; he hesitates)* I see it. I see the shot. But I see much more than the shot: I see that ball swish, some crowd go wild, and

an “Awesome shot, man”...until this guy who I shared Oreos and Power Rangers and the occasional Legend of Zelda level with...looks at me like a stranger because I had failed him moments before. He did me the favor, he took the handicap, and I confirmed what everyone knows, who I am: pathetic. Why can’t I just accept that? I don’t see any other solution to this problem. I can’t control it, so just toss the stupid ball and hope that people will grow up and realize that all this will mean nothing. I sound like my dad. “It’s just a phase and when school is over everything will change” Makes sense, but how is that helpful to me NOW...in these high school days with these people—these stupid people—won’t go away. Do their eyes and that silence ever leave you? I wonder...Even now...and I know the certain ends to this shot...and the next few years, but that can’t stop my hands shaking, my heart pounding, their eyes staring, their thoughts unknown, this feeling of failure that was out of my control. (*He lifts the ball to shoot, trembling*) Focus. Definite 3.9. Breathe. Information technology with a minor in artificial intelligence. See the shot. I see all that so far away of me. Shoot... (*He tosses it off stage.*)

it is no desert

by Daniel Stroeh

DAN

So there we are. A late August Monday morning. Six AM. Dew on the football field. The all-weather track looking foreboding under a slight haze of mist. Everybody’s got their running shoes on. Gel-soles and Air-soles. I don’t own running shoes. I’m wearing Samba Classics, my favorite indoor soccer shoes. Everyone’s nervous. Some of the freshmen are puking already. The hotshot midfielders who—don’t ask me why—absolutely LOVE to run are in a circle stretching and talking and looking at us defenders with smirks on their faces. I stretch. Psyche myself up. Set my Timex Ironman Triathlon Watch. And line up with the others to await Coach’s whistle.

And off I go. For the first few seconds I focus only on myself, my eyes fixed straight ahead of me, looking down periodically at the red track and the little white lines flying by. Then, hesitantly, I risk a look up and behind me. And, much to my surprise, I’m in the lead pack. I’m eating the midfielders’ dust, granted, but behind me the rest of the team is sort of petering out in groups of four or five down to those last few guys who either should have been working harder on their summer break or just can’t handle the pressure. And I realize, “Hey, I’m doing it! I’m actually doing it!” So I go back to focusing on myself. Trying to breathe the way my track-star friends had taught me. Trying to make my entire body move in one forward motion, no up and down, no side to side, just forward... forward... forward.... And I’m running! And I’m keeping up with those bloody midfielders and I can hardly believe it. Lap after lap, I follow them, trying to keep myself going and matching the rhythm of their feet which are slapping the track in those neon-covered shoes. And I’m *running!* I pass the coach and he says, “Last lap, gentleman. Last lap and you boys have fifty-five seconds.” And I look down at my Timex Ironman Triathlon Watch and up at the midfielders who have taken off at this news leaving me far behind, and I’m starting to feel like myself again, and I say to myself, “Okay, Dan, you’re gonna do this. Now go!”

And for a split second I imagine myself, streaking around the track, passing that finish line a half-second before eight minutes is up, falling to the ground, my body quivering, the coach standing above me saying, “Well, Stroeh, you did it!” And in that split second I envision my triumph. And I make up my mind that I am going to finish under time. Visualize and then go. If you can dream it, you can do it. And so I suck in a deep breath, gather my last bit of strength and strain forward toward victory....

And then I hear a sound I’ve never heard before, and I find myself face down on the ground, making out with the all-weather track. And I can’t move my leg.

Our Town

by Thornton Wilder

GEORGE GIBBS

I’m celebrating because I’ve got a friend who tells me all the things that ought to be told me. I’m glad you spoke to me like you did. But you’ll see. I’m going to change. And Emily, I want to ask you a favor. Emily, if I go away to State

Agricultural College next year, will you write me a letter? The day wouldn't come when I wouldn't want to know everything about our town. Y' know, Emily, whenever I meet a farmer I ask him if he thinks it's important to go to Agricultural School to be a good farmer. And some of them say it's even a waste of time. And like you say, being gone all that time—in other places, and meeting other people. I guess new people probably aren't any better than old ones. Emily—I feel that you're as good a friend as I've got. I don't need to go and meet the people in other towns. Emily, I'm going to make up my mind right now—I won't go. I'll tell Pa about it tonight.

The Seagull

by Anton Chekhov

[Treplev has a very complex relationship with his mother, who is a famous actress. He only sees her a few months out of the year now that he is an adult. Treplev wishes to be a playwright, but abhors current standards of theatre. In this monologue, he addresses his uncle, Sorin. At the start of it, he is pulling the petals off of a flower.]

TREPLEV

She loves me, she loves me not; she loves me, she loves me not; she loves me, she loves me not. You see? My mother doesn't love me. Of course not! She wants to live, to love, to wear bright dresses, and here I am, twenty-five years old, a constant reminder that she is no longer young. When I'm not there, she's only thirty-two, but when I am, she's forty-three - and for that, she hates me. Besides, she knows I don't accept the theatre. She loves the theatre, she thinks she is serving humanity and the sacred cause of art, while in my opinion, the theatre of today is hidebound and conventional. When the curtain goes up, and, in a room with three walls and artificial light, those great geniuses, those priests of holy art, show me how people eat, drink, love, walk about, and wear their jackets; when from those banal scenes and phrases they try to fish out a moral - some little moral that is easily grasped and suitable for domestic use; when, in a thousand variations, I am served the same thing over and over and over again - then I flee, as Maupassant fled from the Eiffel Tower, which made his brain reel with vulgarity.

BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS

by Neil Simon

EUGENE

"That*s-what-they-have-gutters-for". . . *(to audience)* If my mother knew I was writing all this down, she would stuff me like one of her chickens. . . I*d better explain what she meant by Aunt Blanche*s "situation" . . . You see, her husband, Uncle Dave, died six years ago from . . . *(He looks around.)*.., this thing. . . They never say the word. They always whisper it. It was — *(He whispers.)* — Cancer! . . . I think they*re afraid if they said it out loud, God would say, "I HEARD THAT! YOU SAID THE DREAD DISEASE! *(He points finger down.)* JUST FOR THAT, I SMITE YOU DOWN WITH IT! !" ... There are some things that grown-ups just won*t discuss ... For example, my grandfather. He died from — *(He whispers.)* —Diphtheria! . . .Anyway, after Uncle Dave died, he left Aunt Blanche with no money. Not even insurance. . . And she couldn*t support herself because she *has*—*(He whispers.)* Asthma - So my big-hearted mother insisted we take her and her kids in to live with us. So they broke up our room into two small rooms and me and my brother Stan live on this side, and Laurie and her sister Nora live on the other side. My father thought it would just be temporary but it*s been three and a half years so far and I think because of Aunt Blanche*s situation, my father is developing — *(He whispers.)* —High blood pressure! My cousin Laurie has a "flutter in her heart." Because of her "condition," I have to do twice as much work around here... Boy, if I could just make the Yankees, I*d be in St. Petersburg this winter. . . *(He starts out and down the stairs.)* Her sister Nora isn*t too bad. She*s sixteen. I don*t mind her much. *(He is downstairs by now.)* At least she*s not too bad to look at. *(He starts taking glasses down from open cupboard.)* To be absolutely honest, this is the year I started noticing girls that weren*t too bad to look at... Nora started developing about eight months ago ... I have the exact date written in my diary.

FORTINBRAS

by Lee Blessing

Fortinbras

God, what is all this? You can't keep something like this quiet. Captain, why don't you take these, um — *bodies* (*Indicates the bodies.*) and put them someplace safe for now, ok? Is everyone dead? The whole family, I mean? Two families?! No one's left? Of the whole royal —? They all just kill— each other, or what? Say, who's in charge now, anyway? I mean, who can understand all this stuff? So, what you're telling me is a ghost appears to Hamlet and tells him his uncle killed his father, so Hamlet pretends to go crazy — or maybe he really is, who cares?— and he decides to kill his uncle. But he stalls around for a long time instead, kills a guy who's *not* his uncle, gets sent to England, gets rescued by pirates, comes back and kills everybody — including himself. I mean, come *on*. Horatio, we've got to have a new story. You want to tell everyone in Denmark that their entire royal family killed itself, plus a family of reasonably innocent nobles, *plus* two attendant lords? Good God, Horatio — how much do you think people can take? No one wants to hear their whole royal family's incompetent. Personally, I think we should just replace the whole story. We need a story that'll do something for us: explain the bodies, preserve the monarchy, give the people some kind of focus for all their — I don't know — anger, loss, whatever. And most of all, something that'll show people that everything that's happened up till now had to happen so that I could become king. I know how I'd like to explain it. A Polish spy. It's the perfect idea. Look — the Poles, bitter at Claudius's pact with my uncle to grant me and my troops free passage through Denmark so that I can kick their Polish butts, send a spy to the court here in Elsinore. His job is to destroy the entire Danish royal family. You know, as a lesson to all who would conspire against the Polish crown — all that crap. Anyhow, he successfully sabotages the fencing match, bares the sword tip, poisons the weapon, the wine — see how easy this is, all one guy — sets the unsuspecting participants against each other in a sort of frenzy of sudden rage and paranoia, and executes the most extraordinary mass-regicide in the history of Europe. *And* we can even add a lot of stuff about the horror when the royal Danes, each mortally wounded and/or poisoned, suddenly realized that Poland had achieved its ultimate revenge — blah, blah, blah. You don't think it will be believed, Horatio? I bet it will be. It's just so much better. Anyone can understand it. And the best thing is, it gives me that historical reason-for-being that's so important to a new king. You see? I'm here to save Denmark from an imminent attack by Poland. (*Horatio looks incredibly dubious.*) Of course, if you want to tell people that ridiculous story of yours, be my guest. But I'll bet mine's the one that catches on. (*He winks conspiratorially*)

The Glass Menagerie

By Tennessee Williams

Scene Seven

Jim

Jim is the long-awaited gentleman caller. He is described as a person more connected to the real world than any of the other characters are, but Jim is also a symbol for the "expected something that we live for." He is outgoing, enthusiastic, and believes in self-improvement. He raises Laura's hopes before revealing to her that he is engaged. Note: Tom is Laura's brother.

I'm glad to see you have a sense of humor. You know - you're — different than anybody else I know? Do you mind me telling you that? I mean it. You make me feel sort of — I don't know how to say it! I'm usually pretty good at expressing things, but — this is something I don't know how to say! Did anybody ever tell you that you were pretty? Well, you are! And in a different way from anyone else. And all the nicer because of the difference. Oh, boy, I wish that you were my sister. I'd teach you to have confidence in yourself. Being different is nothing to be ashamed of. Because other people aren't such wonderful people. They're a hundred times one thousand. You're one times one! They walk all over the earth. You just stay here. They're as common as — weeds, but - you, well you're a rose! It's right for you! — You're pretty! You're pretty in all respects — your eyes — your hair. Your hands are pretty! You think I'm saying this because I'm invited to dinner and have to be nice. Oh, I could do that! I could say lots of things without being sincere. But I'm talking to you sincerely. I happened to notice you had this inferiority complex that keeps you from feeling comfortable with people. Somebody ought to build your confidence up — way up! And make you proud instead of shy and turning away and — blushing - . Somebody — ought to

– somebody ought to – kiss you Laura! (*Awkward pause*) ... Laura, you know, if I had a sister like you, I'd do the same things as Tom. I'd bring fellows home to meet you. Maybe I shouldn't be saying this. That may not have been the idea in having me over. But what if it was? There's nothing wrong with that. – The only trouble is that in my case – I'm not in a position to ---- I can't ask for your number and say I'll phone. I can't call up next week end – ask for a date. I thought I had better explain the situation in case you – misunderstood and I hurt your feelings... You see, I've – got strings on me. Laura, I've – been going steady! I go out all the time with a girl named Betty. Oh, she's a nice quiet home girl like you, and Catholic and Irish, and in a great many ways we – get along fine. I met her last summer on a moonlight boat trip up the river to Alton, on the Majestic. Well – right away from the start it was – love! Oh, boy, being in love has made a new man of me! The power of love is pretty tremendous! Love is something that – changes the whole world. I happened that Betty's aunt took sick and she got a wire and had to go to Centralia. So naturally when Tom asked me to dinner – naturally I accepted the invitation, not knowing – I mean – not knowing. I wish that you would – say something. Well... I hope it doesn't seem like I'm rushing off. But I promised Betty I'd pick her up at the Wabash depot an' by the time I get my jalopy down there her train'll be in. Some women are pretty upset if you keep them waiting. Good-bye, Laura. And don't you forget the good advice I gave you.