

# THE ACCIDENTAL GOTH

By Bradley Walton

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# THE ACCIDENTAL GOTH

*A Comedic Monologue*

By **Bradley Walton**

**SYNOPSIS:** Breanna finds herself uncomfortably relating to her father as he goes through a midlife crisis while she simultaneously makes her own awkward transition from child to teenager and unintentionally establishes herself as a goth—a label she is desperate to shed.

**TIME:** Present day, describing events four years ago.

**SETTING:** No specific setting.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(1 female)*

BREANNA (f) ..... A seventeen-year-old looking back on her father's midlife crisis and her own simultaneous transition from child to teenager.

**SET:** Bare stage.

**PROPS:** None.

## COSTUMING

Normal-looking contemporary teenage clothing that doesn't draw attention to itself. (Breanna has moved on from the phase of her life discussed in the monologue.)

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Keep in mind that Breanna is almost an adult, but she's still young enough to find her father generally embarrassing. Although most of her monologue is about events four years in the past, the opening and closing lines express feelings she had at the age of thirteen and still has today at the age of seventeen.

**AT START:** *BREANNA on a bare stage.*

**BREANNA:** There's nothing worse than being able to relate to your dad.

I remember mine turning forty-five a few years ago. His birthday was on a Saturday, and it was like when he woke up that morning, a switch had been flipped in his head that put him into midlife crisis mode. He spent the day browsing listings for used convertibles on the internet. Every time Mom walked by the computer, he'd click over to a news site. Finally, she asked, "What are you looking at?"

"Nothing," Dad replied, the exaggerated innocence in his voice betraying the fact that he was clearly looking at something.

"Then why are you slamming the mouse button like you're playing 'Whac-A-Mole' every time I walk in the room?"

There was an awkward pause. Then Dad said, "It's not what you think."

"What do you think I think it is?" asked Mom.

There was no good way to answer this question. Dad sat there, mind racing in wide-eyed panic. Finally, he answered, "I won't do it again" in a mumble so sheepish I half expected him to sprout wool.

Mom walked away. Dad went back to looking at convertibles. That night Mom served soup. There was a Hot Wheels convertible at the bottom of the bowl. It had been set on fire and sawed in half. Dad didn't look at any more convertibles on the internet after that.

The next day, he went to the attic and dug out some old toys he still had from when he was a kid. That actually wasn't so bad. What was bad was hearing him go on for hours and hours about all the toys he didn't still have, giving itemized lists of when and how he'd broken some, who he'd given others away to, and the exact dates everything else had been sold at yard sales. This went on for a

couple of weeks before trickling off and fading away. I thought he was done. I hoped he was done. I needed for him to be done. He wasn't done.

He started dyeing his hair. Even though most of it was already gone.

He didn't dye it blue or purple or anything like that—he dyed it brown. I don't know the name of the exact shade, but I would've called it "Too Benignly Masculine to Be Naturally Occurring Brown." Or just "Man Brown." It accentuated his bald spot and widow's peak in a way that made you wonder why he didn't just go ahead and dye it purple or blue. I'd have felt sorry for him except that too much of my emotional bandwidth was being eaten up by embarrassment.

But at the same time... I got that he was in an awkward period of transition. Because I was thirteen years old, and I was in one, too. And I don't mean puberty and everything that went with it. Don't get me wrong—puberty was a pain, but I knew all that stuff would sort itself out in the end and the only thing I could do was sit tight and wait.

No, what I mean is that I'd been a little kid not that long before. And all of a sudden, I wasn't. And I didn't want to be. Except for sometimes when I did.

I'd always liked Barbies. The accessories... the outfits... the playsets. I was so into all that stuff. But suddenly I felt like I couldn't be. That made me sad. Whenever we went to the store, I wanted to wander over to the toy department and just look, but I was scared that if I did, someone would see me and take my picture and post it on the internet with the caption, "Breanna still plays with dolls!" Truthfully, I don't think many people would've cared. Maybe even nobody. But some people might've pretended to care, and they might've made other people pretend to care. Because there was this mentality that the easiest way to convince everybody else at school you weren't a little kid was by making fun of other people for liking little kid things.

The second-easiest way to not seem like a little kid—at least in my head—was to dress entirely in black. Every single day. And to wear heavy black eye makeup. And black lipstick. Basically, to look like every bit of childhood brightness had been drained by a childhood-sucking vampire, or a very strong vacuum cleaner. Wanting to diffuse the awkwardness of my own transitional state as quickly and efficiently as possible, that's what I did.

My mother wasn't crazy about the change. Every time she looked at me, she'd sigh and say something like, "It's only clothes and makeup" in a way that I think was meant to passive-aggressively show support for my right to make my own choices. My dad was oddly silent.

At school, everyone assumed I had become a goth, despite the fact that I'd never listened to Gothic rock or invaded the Roman Empire from the east between the 3rd and 5th centuries. Further, I was considered to be "emo," which puzzled me. Not because I knew it didn't apply to me, but because I had no idea what "emo" actually meant, despite it being a word I'd thrown around in reference to other people who dressed the way I was now dressing.

It makes you wonder what else you don't know when you're smacked in the face with the reality that you don't know something that you always assumed you knew, even though you had no real reason to assume that you knew it in the first place.

So, I looked up the word "emo." It means "an overly sensitive person." Which I was not. Or at least didn't consider myself to be, the whole thirteen-years-old-going-through-puberty-and-an-identity-crisis thing notwithstanding.

But it really didn't bother me if people thought I was an emo goth. I mean, how bad could that be?

Pretty bad, it turned out.

Most of my so-called friends stopped talking to me, stopped texting me, and basically abandoned me. Then, once that social void had been created, I found out that apparently emo goths attract other emo goths. People in black clothes and heavy eyeliner—who I didn't even know—started sitting with me at lunch. Not talking to me. No. Just sitting with me, eating cafeteria food and staring at their phones, completely silent, except for when they got up to leave. Then they'd say, "See you tomorrow." Were they looking forward to it? Did they think I was looking forward to it? Or was it simply a declaration of existential hell? I still have no idea.

Worst of all, my teachers started constantly asking me if I was okay. Did the eye makeup make me look sleep deprived? Did all the black I was wearing make it look like somebody died? Did I just give off vibes of sadness? I have no clue. But teachers treated me like I was a wounded animal, or worse... a child. Which was the polar opposite of what I was trying to achieve in the first place.

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