

BONDING MOMENTS: DUETS FOR TEEN WOMEN

By Deborah Karczewski

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BONDING MOMENTS: DUETS FOR TEEN WOMEN

A Collection of Six Duets for Teen Women
by
Deborah Karczewski

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Too Perfect

by
Deborah Karczewski

CAST

FELICIA and STACEY

PROPS

food tray, cup of water, notepad

(STACEY is drinking from a cup on her cafeteria tray while writing on a note pad. FELICIA, wearing an outfit remarkably similar in style and color, enters stage left with her tray, sees STACEY, and sits emphatically beside her.)

FELICIA: **(angrily)** It's beyond belief.

STACEY: **(after FELICIA is seated)** Oh hello, Felicia. Do sit down.

FELICIA: **(unwrapping her food with agitation)** It really must be some kind of joke.

STACEY: Um-mmm.

FELICIA: Ellen Stratford!

STACEY: Ellen Stratford.

FELICIA: Ellen Stratford?

STACEY: Looks that way.

FELICIA: Ellen Stratford. Has anyone even *heard* of Ellen Stratford?

STACEY: Well - apparently.

FELICIA: I mean, before today!

STACEY: *I* certainly hadn't.

FELICIA: So *how*, in the name of everything logical, did Ellen Stratford become Student Council President? She's a nobody! A no-name! A piece of lint on my sweater! An ugly brown spot on my shoe!

STACEY: **(overly calm)** Now, now Felicia. People are looking. Remember - grace under pressure. Appearances are everything.

FELICIA: **(smiling at onlookers, a well-practiced smile)** ...And you, Stacey? How are *you* managing to remain so calm? Do I need to remind you that *you* lost as badly as *I* did?

STACEY: Oh no, I'm well aware of the little tramp's victory. In fact, I found out the election results an hour ago, way before they were announced. One of my girls was on the ballot committee and sent me the results by messenger.

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FELICIA: (*viciously stabbing at her food*) And you're OK with this?

STACEY: Quite the contrary. I've just had more time to deal with it than you have. At first I thought of every possible way to destroy that - that *Ellen Stratford*. (*As SHE speaks, STACEY symbolically dismembers her sandwich*) I considered sending her a special delivery - the ashes from the contents of her locker! I thought about having my girls pay her a little visit in the ladies' room - to rearrange her face! I even pictured myself leading Principal O'Neil to Ellen's purse which would just happen to be brimming with a certain, shall we say, garden weed.

FELICIA: I'm all for it! Count me in!

STACEY: But then I thought, "Wait a minute, Stacey. Let's think about this rationally. Let's figure out *how* this could have happened."

FELICIA: How *did* it happen? How could Ellen Stratford be voted Student Council President? It defies all logic! I would have understood it if *you* had won, Stacey. I mean, much as I despise the ground you walk on, I do realize that you and I are the two hottest girls in the Senior Class.

STACEY: True. And even though the thought of *your* winning makes me gag, I am mature enough to acknowledge that it might make *some* sense. After all, we did tie for the highest results on our SAT tests.

FELICIA: And socially, we're equally similar. I'm dating the captain of the Basketball Team, and you're seeing the captain of the Soccer Team.

STACEY: That's just it, Felicia. *That's* our problem. We are both too perfect.

FELICIA: I beg your pardon?

STACEY: We are both too perfect! We're beautiful...we wear impeccable clothing...

FELICIA: Now, Stacey, let's not get carried away. Those shoes you have on really are a bit much.

STACEY: Felicia, you are wearing the identical pair!

FELICIA: Oh.

STACEY: We're popular...we go to all the best parties...

FELICIA: OK, so we're fabulous. How is that a problem?

STACEY: Because there's TWO of us!

FELICIA: Huh?

STACEY: How can any ordinary peon choose between two perfect jewels? Take the average shmoe, OK? Put three gems in front of him. Two are diamonds - worth thousands! One is an imitation ruby - a bit of shiny, red glass. What's he going to pick? The ruby! Why? Because it's different!

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FELICIA: You are so right! This is terrible! But Stacey, the nightmare has only begun! We're only in our first week of our senior year in high school! We'll be competing for months! We'll never get chosen for anything! Our lives might as well be over!

STACEY: Shhhhhh, Felicia... Breathe deeply... Calm down... Remember – grace under pressure... **(They BOTH smile professionally at onlookers.)** You have seen the light, my friend, but I have discovered the way to the end of the tunnel.

FELICIA: Speak English, Stacey.

STACEY: **(showing her note pad)** Look, I've made a list of all the things that we'll be competing for this year. If we continue to try for the same items, we're bound to lose – just like today.

FELICIA: **(a cry of distress)** Oh.

STACEY: *But* if we divide up the wealth, we'll *both* be winners.

FELICIA: Say what?

STACEY: OK – take, for example cheerleading.

FELICIA: What about it?

STACEY: We're both the perfect choices to make team captain, right?

FELICIA: **(tentatively)** ... Well, yeah.

STACEY: If we both try out – and we're both equally perfect – the coach will have no other option than to pick her third choice! That Ellen Stratford or some other Plain Jane will become captain of the Cheerleading Team, and you and I will be back in the jewelry box – a couple of diamonds with nothing to show for it.

FELICIA: So what can we do?

STACEY: We've got to try out for different things!

FELICIA: But we want the *same* things!

STACEY: That's why we've got to haggle.

FELICIA: Haggle?

STACEY: Yeah, haggle! Bargain! Trade! We both want to be Cheerleading Captain *and* the lead in the school play, right?

FELICIA: They're putting on "Grease" this year! I've always wanted to play the part of Sandy.

STACEY: Well, which do you want more? Cheerleading or Sandy?

FELICIA: Um...well...Sandy.

STACEY: Good. I'll try out for cheerleading, and you'll go for Sandy. Next – there's THE Homecoming Dance and the Prom, both of which need queens. I was kind of hoping for Prom Queen.

FELICIA: Wait a minute! I wanted to be Prom Queen!

STACEY: Yeah, but you got first dibs on the school play.

FELICIA: Oh...all right.

STACEY: **(taking notes on her pad)** Yes! Homecoming Queen for Felicia. Prom Queen for Stacey.

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FELICIA: Hey, what about colleges? We're both planning on applying to the same schools, and our transcripts are almost identical!

STACEY: My thoughts exactly.

FELICIA: I was hoping to send applications to Wentworth, Cartwright, Lammington University, and Ffloyd College.

STACEY: (**writing**) Me too. Plus Foster Ridge and Sayles.

FELICIA: (**referring to the note pad**) Those are great schools! How 'bout I apply to the first three, and you take the second three.

STACEY: Works for me!

FELICIA: Oh – what if we're in the running for Valedictorian speaker?

STACEY: There's also the Commencement speech.

FELICIA: Do you have a preference?

STACEY: Not me.

FELICIA: Got a coin?

STACEY: Here's one. Heads or tails?

FELICIA: Heads you get the Valedictorian speech; tails you get Commencement.

STACEY: Go for it, sister!

(FELICIA tosses the coin with gusto.)

FELICIA: Heads! Congratulations Miss Valedictorian!

STACEY: Right on!

(The GIRLS begin to gather their food items on their trays.)

FELICIA: Ellen Stratford's not gonna know what hit her!

STACEY: Yeah, we're gonna fly by that loser so fast that all she'll feel is the breeze as we pass her sorry butt.

FELICIA: Student Council President – my foot! This is the last stop for *that* cubic zirconia!

STACEY: You said it. *Diamonds* are a girl's best friend!

(The GIRLS begin to walk stage right with their trays.)

FELICIA: It's been a pleasure doing business with you, my dear.

STACEY: Same here. Tomorrow – let's do lunch.

(Exit)

END OF PLAY

Best Friends on Moving Day

by
Deborah Karczewski

CAST

KATRIN and ZOIE

PROPS

clothes, suitcase, plate of cookies, two pillows

(ZOIE is sitting amidst boxes and crates, at the very least two or three. SHE is folding a laundry basket full of last minute clothes and placing them into a suitcase. There is a knock. ZOIE starts to get up but changes her mind. It is as though SHE is trying not to hear the knocking. KATRIN yells through the closed door.)

KATRIN: Zoie? Zoie, you home?

ZOIE: Katrin? That you?

KATRIN: Yeah!

ZOIE: Come on in!

(KATRIN, holding a plate of cookies, lets herself in. SHE looks around disapprovingly and sits beside ZOIE.)

KATRIN: Looks creepy.

ZOIE: Yeah.

KATRIN: How come you didn't answer the door?

ZOIE: I thought it was the moving men.

KATRIN: Oh...Look what I brought you!

ZOIE: Cookies?

KATRIN: These are not just cookies, my friend. These are creations made by my own two hands. By *me*. Me! The girl who can't cook! That should tell you something.

ZOIE: Not to eat them?

KATRIN: *(playfully throwing a piece of laundry)* No, you brat!

ZOIE: What?

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KATRIN: What, “what”?

ZOIE: What should it show me?

KATRIN: Well, if you saw my kitchen...covered ceiling to floor with flour... If you saw the garbage bag full of cookies that *didn't* make it... If you knew how long these things took me...you'd know what I was trying to say.

ZOIE: **(eyes beginning to tear up)** What?

KATRIN: ... How much you mean to me.

ZOIE: *How much?*

KATRIN: **(eyes also beginning to well up)** I was trying to avoid this, Zoie.

ZOIE: What?

KATRIN: The sappy good-bye.

ZOIE: ...But I need it, Katrin...I need a really sappy good-bye.

(The two girls hug tearfully. After sufficient pause, KATRIN pulls away and puts her hand to her nose.)

KATRIN: Aw, geez – do you have a tissue?

ZOIE: **(wiping her eyes on her sleeve)** Everything's packed.

KATRIN: What am I supposed to do?

ZOIE: **(handing her a piece of laundry)** Here, use this.

KATRIN: You kidding?

ZOIE: **(sad giggle)** Consider it a good-bye present.

KATRIN: **(wiping her nose on the fabric)** Thanks. **(There is an awkward pause.)** Where are your folks?

ZOIE: My dad's train already left. He's got to report all fresh and ready to his new job tomorrow. Mom's taking Grandma to the airport so she can get our rooms ready before we drive there.

KATRIN: Oh... Will it be a long ride?

ZOIE: Mom says it'll take us about four hours.

KATRIN: That's not so bad. You and I can hop on buses whenever we like, right? We can visit all the time...right? Heck, when my mom lets me, I'll be able to drive up on weekends... Zoie?

ZOIE: Hmm?

KATRIN: Right?

ZOIE: Well it depends on...

KATRIN: What?

ZOIE: I'm supposed to live with my dad in the summer and on alternating holidays.

KATRIN: Oh...All summer?

ZOIE: **(admitting her fears)** We're not going to make it are we?

KATRIN: Make it?

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ZOIE: Our friendship. We're not going to make it. How can we? There's too much going against us – too many obstacles.

KATRIN: Don't say that.

ZOIE: Well, it's true, isn't it? Everybody always says, "We'll keep in touch" or "Be sure to write." But it never really happens.

KATRIN: That's not true.

ZOIE: Yes it is. Oh, I'm sure we'll try hard for a month or so...writing letters...calling on the phone...E-mail. But then you'll make new friends...homework will take up a lot of time – you know how it is.

KATRIN: No, I don't. It won't be like that at all!

ZOIE: Yeah? How do you know?

KATRIN: Because this is *us* we're talking about! Us – not some other girls – us! We're best friends! Best-*best* friends!

ZOIE: ...This stinks!

KATRIN: ...Ranks.

ZOIE: It's...it's putrid.

KATRIN: Malodorous!

ZOIE: Whoa – big one!

KATRIN: Yeah well, it's on the list of most common S.A.T. words.

ZOIE: No doubt about it; you are *definitely* headed for college.

KATRIN: Hey, we didn't think of that!

ZOIE: College?

KATRIN: No, I mean – If we can just make it through this traveling-custody-thing, we can apply to the same schools for college!

ZOIE: You think?

KATRIN: Absolutely! We can do it, Zoie... It'll just take effort, you know? We have to *really* work at not letting go. I'm willing...are you?

(There is a long pause.)

ZOIE: Are they safe to eat?

KATRIN: What?

ZOIE: The cookies.

KATRIN: I'm talking about our future, and you want a cookie?

ZOIE: Well...that ought to tell you something.

KATRIN: (**confused**) Are we speaking the same language here?

ZOIE: I mean, if you think about it, I'm about to risk my very life by trying one of your – what did you call them – your *creations*. That should tell you something.

KATRIN: (**smiling**) Yeah...it does.

ZOIE: I'm scared, Katrin.

KATRIN: I know. Me too...but I really think we're gonna make it.

(Hearing a noise, ZOIE begins folding the remaining clothes hurriedly.)

ZOIE: Oh man, I think that's the moving truck! Can you help me finish this up?

KATRIN: ***(moving quickly)*** Sure!
(ZOIE shuts the suitcase.)

ZOIE: Well, I guess this is it.

KATRIN: Slow down...it's just the moving men. It's not really *time*, yet.

ZOIE: OK, but when it *is* time, I want a really sappy good-bye.

KATRIN: ***(sadly teasing)*** Again?

ZOIE: Guess I should open the door, huh?

KATRIN: I'll come with you.

(The GIRLS open the door for the moving men. Standing side by side, they stare out, with their backs to the audience. As the play ends, they touch their fingers between them.)

END OF PLAY

The Notorious Haunted Taylor House

by
Deborah Karczewski

CAST

TORIE and ALICE

PROPS

(inside the backpack) a candle, a couple of sodas

(TORIE is sitting on the floor, holding a backpack, and wearing a blanket like a poncho around her shoulders. SHE is terrified by every noise and shadow, and emits a squeak of fear.)

TORIE: AI? ... AI? ... Is that you? ... This isn't funny, Al...Al, if that's you, you'd better say something right now! **(AL enters slowly, feeling her way to indicate that it is very dark. SHE wears her blanket over her head for warmth. TORIE does not see her.)** Alice Lowery, stop playing games! Is that you or isn't that you?

AL: I couldn't find it. **(TORIE, caught off guard, starts to scream uncontrollably.)** Torie! Torie! Shhhhhh! It's only me! Torie, would you shut up?

TORIE: **(shaking)** You nearly scared the life out of me! Don't ever sneak up on me like that again!

AL: I wasn't sneaking. Oh Brave Hunter.

TORIE: And don't tell me to shut up. Who's gonna hear me, anyway?

AL: I couldn't find it. What made you drop the flashlight in the first place?

TORIE: I thought I saw a rat!

AL: Oh, nice of you to tell me this now after I've been on my hands and knees looking for the freakin' thing. Anyway – being the brilliant person that I am, I packed an emergency candle. Hand me the backpack.

TORIE: You are brilliant! All is forgiven, Al!

AL: **(setting up and lighting the candle, SHE continues teasing)** You're forgiving me? You're the one who dropped the flashlight. Ah! Voila! Let there be light!

TORIE: Did you pack a cola in there?

AL: **(handing TORIE her soda with a flourish)** Your highness!

TORIE: Thanks.

AL: This place isn't so bad when you can actually see it.

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TORIE: Speak for yourself. My heart's still pounding so hard, I feel like there's two little drummers sitting in my ears.

AL: Well, why did you agree to come with me, anyway?

TORIE: It sounded like fun at the time. Believe me – if I could make the decision all over again, I'd be home in my nice little bed, watching the inside of my eyelids.

AL: You're such a baby, Torie – you know that?

TORIE: Listen, it's cold – it's late – it's dark – we're in the middle of an empty house—

AL: —Yeah, they really emptied this place out. Not one stitch of furniture or anything!

TORIE: Well, my mom said that they had professional movers pack everything up in one day. They left even before the place was sold! Mom says it'll be a long time before anyone is willing to buy this place again.

AL: Wish I had enough money to buy it.

TORIE: That's because you're off your rocker.

AL: I'm serious.

TORIE: Yeah, right. **(gasps)** What was that?

AL: I didn't hear anything.

TORIE: **(grabbing on to AL)** I heard a shuffling noise coming from the kitchen!

AL: **(listening)** Honestly, Torie, I didn't hear anything.

TORIE: **(rambling nervously)** I've changed my mind. This is just not my idea of a fun evening. I dunno – maybe it's all those horror movies we've been watching that made me agree to come with you. Maybe I went temporarily insane. Who in her right mind agrees to sleep in a haunted house, anyway?

AL: Suit yourself.

TORIE: **(standing)** Good. Let's go.

AL: Uh-uh.

TORIE: What?

AL: You wanna go? Go. Nobody's stopping you.

TORIE: Aren't you coming?

AL: Nope.

TORIE: Look Al, we've got our story. We can tell everybody about it tomorrow. It'll get a good laugh! We'll tell everybody how you talked ol' scaredy cat Torie into breaking into the infamous Taylor House...how I was such a baby, I even lost our flashlight...how I started screaming bloody murder when you crept up behind me! Come on, Al – we'll be the talk of the lunch table!

AL: You go ahead.

TORIE: Without you?

AL: Yup.

TORIE: Oh man.

AL: What's the problem, now?

TORIE: You think I'm going home and leaving you here? All alone?

AL: I'll be fine.

TORIE: Listen to me... First of all – There's no such thing as ghosts. I only went along with you as a goof. You're not gonna see a thing here...except maybe a rat!

AL: The Taylors did.

TORIE: Al, I bet that was just a story. They probably had to get out of town fast – probably to escape the law for some reason. They always looked kind of suspicious to me.

AL: You saw them on the news same as I did, Tor. You saw the look on their faces. That was no story. They saw something... and I'm staying 'till I see it, too.

TORIE: And what if you do? What if you really see a ghost? What will you have won? You'll have a heart attack, and I'll wet my pants!

AL: I'll *know*!

TORIE: You'll know what?

AL: I'll know that there's something *after*! I'll know that the guy who died here is still here!

TORIE: Al, who the heck cares if some dead guy is still walking around this place?

AL: I do!

TORIE: Why?

AL: **(bursting into tears)** Because maybe if this guy is still here, then maybe my daddy...

TORIE: Oh Alice...I wasn't thinking.

AL: This'll prove to me that maybe my father is still around, too.

TORIE: I'm sorry, Al.

AL: No, don't be sorry. Don't you see? I've been trying so hard...praying every night...talking to his grave...visiting the spot where his car crashed...

TORIE: **(softly)** Al, it's been three years.

AL: I know! For three years I've tried every way possible to find out if he's...OK. I need to know if he's still here...if he's OK. I need to tell him how much I love him!

(AL sobs as TORIE hugs her tightly)

TORIE: He knows you love him, Al.

(AL gently pulls back and looks at TORIE sincerely.)

AL: If I see something tonight, at least I'll know there's a chance.

(There's a long pause.)

TORIE: ***(sighing)*** I should have gone to the bathroom before I left the house.

AL: There's a bathroom just down the hall, only you can't flush.

TORIE: OK, I'd better. It's going to be a *long* night.

AL: You want the candle?

TORIE: Do you mind?

AL: No, it's OK. ***(TORIE takes the candle and exits hesitantly. AL pulls the blanket over her head for warmth and hugs the bookbag to her chest. SHE shivers.) (tentatively) H-Hello? (AL stares out into the darkness.)***

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