

# TAKING A SECOND LOOK

By Carl L. Williams

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**TAKING A SECOND LOOK***A Ten Minute Dramatic Duet***By Carl L. Williams**

**SYNOPSIS:** A young woman tries to study for her GED while her younger brother, who is mentally challenged, distracts her by showing off a hand mirror he got from his job at a barber shop. They find the mirror reveals not just images, but self-images and possibilities.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS***(1 female, 1 male)*

CLARISE (f)..... A young woman trying to better herself. *(67 lines)*

JAKE (m)..... Her mentally challenged younger brother. *(65 lines)*

**SETTING:** Lower middle class living room.

**PROPS**

- Math (Geometry) Textbook
- Ornate Hand Mirror

**PRODUCTION NOTE**

It should be clear that even though Clarise makes a few jokes at Jake's expense, these are good-natured and affectionate, not mean-spirited. The hand mirror, if possible, should be decorative, but tarnished.

**PRODUCTION HISTORY**

Scriptwriters/Houston Ten by Ten, Pearl Theater, Houston, TX, September 15-24, 2016.

**AT RISE:** CLARISE studies a geometry textbook. JAKE enters.

**CLARISE:** (*Frowns in concentration.*) Hey, Jake. Do you know what a hypotenuse is?

**JAKE:** (*Brightens.*) Oh, sure! I seen one of them at the zoo.

**CLARISE:** That's a hippopotamus, you dope.

**JAKE:** Don't call me a dope. You're the dope.

**CLARISE:** You're right. I'm a dope for asking you what a hypotenuse is.

**JAKE:** What are you reading?

**CLARISE:** It's not really reading. It's like figures and math and different kinds of triangles. What they call geometry.

**JAKE:** What do you want to learn that for?

**CLARISE:** I gotta pass my GED.

**JAKE:** No fair spelling things. You know I can't spell.

**CLARISE:** GED's not a word. It stands for something.

**JAKE:** So what's it stand for?

**CLARISE:** It stands for... (*Can't think of it.*) ...never mind what it stands for. It's something you get for taking a test.

**JAKE:** And then what?

**CLARISE:** What do you mean, then what?

**JAKE:** What does it get you?

**CLARISE:** It helps me get a job.

**JAKE:** What kind of job?

**CLARISE:** The kind you can't get without showing you've got an education. That's what GED means...that you've got an education.

**JAKE:** I got a job, and I don't have no education.

**CLARISE:** Sweeping hair off the floor at the barber shop isn't a real job.

**JAKE:** They pay me wages. And sometimes I get tips, same as you.

**CLARISE:** I get tips for waiting on people and serving their food. That's real work. And if you don't think so, you oughta come and watch me sometime!

**JAKE:** Okay, Clarise, don't get mad.

**CLARISE:** I'm not mad!

**JAKE:** You sound mad.

**CLARISE:** (*Calms down.*) Maybe I am mad, but not at you. At the job. That's why I want something better. And I can't get something better without this GED.

**JAKE:** Could I get a GED?

**CLARISE:** I don't think so.

**JAKE:** Why not?

**CLARISE:** You have to be able to read.

**JAKE:** I can read.

**CLARISE:** Not enough. This is hard for me, and if it's hard for me...

**JAKE:** (*Dispirited.*) I know. Then it's nothing I can do.

**CLARISE:** Sorry, Jake.

**JAKE:** That's okay. I'm a dope.

**CLARISE:** You're not a dope.

**JAKE:** You said I was.

**CLARISE:** I took it back.

**JAKE:** Maybe you took it back, but I'm still a dope. Like you and me are still orphans.

**CLARISE:** We're not orphans. Orphans are little kids.

**JAKE:** Mom and Pop are dead. When your parents are dead, that makes you an orphan. I know that.

**CLARISE:** I was already 19 when they died. I was too old to be an orphan.

**JAKE:** I wasn't. I wasn't too old.

**CLARISE:** You're too old now. And anyway, you had me, didn't you? I took care of you, didn't I? So don't call yourself an orphan.

**JAKE:** Why'd they have to die, Clarise?

**CLARISE:** They didn't have to, they just did. Now leave me alone and let me study.

*To occupy himself, JAKE produces an ornate hand mirror and looks at himself.*

**CLARISE:** (*Noticing.*) Where'd you get the mirror?

**JAKE:** From the barber shop.

**CLARISE:** You didn't take it, did you?

**JAKE:** They give it to me. Mr. Sam said it's no good anymore 'cause it's so worn out.

**CLARISE:** Let me see.

**JAKE:** (*Hands it to her.*) But you can still see yourself in it.

**CLARISE:** (*Looks at herself.*) Yeah. What a treat.

**JAKE:** You shouldn't talk like that.

**CLARISE:** Like what?

**JAKE:** You say bad things about yourself.

**CLARISE:** I say true things about myself. Maybe there's no difference.

**JAKE:** I don't understand.

**CLARISE:** Something can be bad and true at the same time. I'm no glamour girl.

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