

# THE TALENT SHOW

## By Lavinia Roberts

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CAST: GAIL KEEBLER-High school student, male or female

PROPERTY LIST: None needed. Pencil and notepad optional

SETTING: Any. None needed. Chair optional

TIME: Present

**SETTING:** Any

**AT RISE:** *GAIL enters.*

GAIL: When I went from layout assistant to the arts and entertainment reporter for the Viking Shield, I thought I had gotten an upgrade. Finally, a chance to show my true Pulitzer Prize winning potential in the field of journalism. No longer would I be slaving away over mere layouts. I would be mingling with artists at galas, interviewing the future Andy Warhols of our generation. Attending concerts, exhibitions, independent film showings, the theatre!

My biggest story of the semester was when the concert mistress for the Viking Orchestra broke her bow at the annual spring concert. Granted, it was over the bass player's head. They had had a messy break up the week before. But still, is this material for a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist? No way!

I mean, I have real potential here! My talents are wasted on jazz concerts and mediocre productions of "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers." My name, Gail Keebler, even sounds like a prize winning journalist's name. Barbra Walters, move over. Okay, so I used to be called, "The Cookie Kid." But Keebler, now that's a distinctive name. Distinctive is good. Did Larry King give up because he had a weird name? I don't think so.

So I got my first real story this week-our school's first annual talent show. I use the term, "talent" generously. There is a reason we've never had a talent show before at Blue Valley High School. Because to have a talent show, you have to have talent. We could have a trying-really-hard-but-just-don't-have-it-show. But talent? We are lacking in that department. Well, except for me and my journalism skills.

The talent show is to raise money for the new gym. I think personally they would make way more money by making the whole school attend the talent show and requiring them to pay a fee in order to escape.

## The Talent Show - Page 3

Don't believe my cynicism? You didn't survive through four grueling hours of dress rehearsal today! Let me describe the prime contestants for you.

First, we have three members of Apex, our school math team. Apparently the Apex team wants to flex their muscles, which are non-existent, and display their superb arithmetic skills. Dexter Jones is converting any number that the audience gives him to scientific notation.

Like this. Why, 124 is written as  $1.24 \times 10^2$ . Another number? Anyone? Anyone? No one? Well, how about 567,000? 567,000 is  $5.67 \times 10^5$ . Anymore? Anyone? Thank you, Hyun Lee. 0.00053. Now, that is tricky. 0.00053 is  $5.3 \times 10^{-4}$ .

Hyun Lee is naming all the elements in the periodic table, sorted by their atomic weights, whatever that is, in under three minutes. Hydrogen, helium, lithium, beryllium, boron, carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, fluorine, neon, sodium, magnesium, aluminum, silicon... Now, imagine that for another two and half minutes.

Dominique Gates, another Apex member, is reciting every geometry theorem in existence. I'm not even going to demonstrate that for you. The Apex team seems to think this display of blatant full blown geekitis will raise memberships in the math club. I'm sure anyone who likes math, but doesn't want to commit social suicide, will probably take this display of ultimate nerdism as a warning to steer clear of joining Apex.

Apex is actually kind of entertaining in comparison to Candy Miller's cheerleading routine.

Candy seems to have mistaken her school popularity and recent election to cheerleading captain to mean she is the most talented person in the universe. The only real talent she has is for putting on fake eyelashes. I've seen her do it one handed after gym class. It's kind of amazing. Anyways, she is doing a cheer routine for the school. To the Beatles song "Let It Be." I don't think Candy even knows who the Beatles are. Her idea of oldies are songs by Justin Timberlake from when he was still in 'N Sync.

Candy says she wants to cheer the song in memory of the Beatles, all of whom are no long with us. Hello! What would Ringo Starr and Paul McCartney say to that I wonder? Maybe the years of inhaling nail polish fumes, and memorizing cheers hasn't left Candy enough room in her brain cells for knowing anything about rock music. I mean, I am no expert, I'm not going to lie, but I know at least enough in terms of the average person. Well, I am kind of a Beatles fan. Okay, so once in sixth

## The Talent Show - Page 4

grade I was a vegetarian for six months when I saw Sir Paul McCartney's picture on a PETA pamphlet.

Anyways, Candy wants to do something inspiring and deep to show how cheerleading isn't as shallow as everyone thinks. As if cheerleading was some misrepresented art form. Yeah right. And she's butchering a beloved hit in the process. I mean, it's bad enough that insurance firms misuse Beatles music, you know, on commercials on TV, but Candy Miller doing the same? I hope Sir Paul McCartney flies over from England and sues her down to her last pom pom. What a shock for Candy! Especially considering that she thinks he is dead and all.

Candy is ...here, just let me demonstrate what she did at today's dress rehearsal.

Give me a let! Give me a be! Give me a let it be! Give me a let it be! Now, why don't you repeat after me! When the broken. Hearted people. Living in the world agree. There will be an answer! Let it be! Give me a let! Give me a be! Give me a let it be! Give me a let it be! Leeeeeeetttt it beeeee! Go Beatles! Yeah! Yeah!

If that wasn't enough to make people flee we have Cassandra Jackson, head of the Thespian Club. I heard Candy tell the cheerleaders that Cassandra wears all black turtle necks because she has so many tattoos, but I have Cassandra in gym class, and I've seen her, you know, and well, the only thing unusual about her is she has one of those belly buttons that sticks out. I kind of like Cassandra. She drives an old Vespa to school, and knows a lot about bikes. If I was the human interest story columnist, I would totally interview her. Anyway, she has decided to do a tribute to "The Bard." You know, "The Bard," William Shakespeare. She has cut herself the ultimate Shakespeare monologue. She's a senior, and she couldn't decide which death scene she wanted to do, so she is doing all of them. Allow me to demonstrate. It goes something like this.

*(Becomes Juliet, female.)*

Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger!  
This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.

*(Stabs herself. Becomes Gertrude, older female.)*

No, no, the drink, the drink! O my dear Hamlet!  
The drink, the drink! I am poisoned.

*(Gertrude dies. Becomes Macbeth, male with a Scottish accent.)*

And thou opps'd, being of no woman born,  
Yet I will try the last. Before my body

The Talent Show - Page 5

I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff;  
And damn'd be him that first cries 'Hold,  
Enough!

*(Dies in imaginary sword fight. Becomes, Othello, male. Stabs himself.)*

I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee. No way this-  
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.

*(Dies. Becomes Cleopatra, now female, mimes holding an asp.)*

As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle-  
O Antony! Nay, I will take thee to:  
What should I stay-

*(Dies. Then becomes Lear, an old man.)*

Never, never, never, never.  
Pray you undo this button. Thank you, sir.  
Do you see this? Look on her. Look, her lips.  
Look there, look there!

*(Dies of grief. Becomes Romeo, drinks poison.)*

O true apothecary, they drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

*(Dies. Becomes Richard the III, hunchbacked and with a limp.)*

A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!

*(Dies in imaginary sword fight. Becomes Caesar.)*

Et tu, Brute?- Then fall, Caesar!

*(Dies. Becomes Hamlet, young male, dying of poison.)*

O, I die Horatio!  
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit.  
I cannot live to hear the news from England.  
But I do prophesy th' election lights  
On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice.  
So tell him, with th' occurrents, more and less,  
Which have solicited-the rest is silence.

*(Dies. GAIL becomes herself / himself again.)*

That is just a sampling of the finished version. The complete monologue takes forty-five minutes. I think next year they will know to put a time limit on each talent show contestant.

Now, you may be thinking, from my less than supportive, okay, down right scathing remarks about our talent show, that my review is going to be, well, not so nice.

Vitriolic reviews, they are okay for Roeper and Ebert. They don't have to eat lunch everyday with the people they critique. I, on the other hand, do. Okay, okay, so I am out to save my own skin, but before you think I am lacking in journalistic integrity, that I am just writing for "the man," I am writing a glowing review for another reason.

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