

# TREASURE

## By Dennis Bush

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# TREASURE

*A One Act Drama*

**By Dennis Bush**

**SYNOPSIS:** With a quirky, light touch, *Treasure* explores the way we “profile” and judge the people we encounter on our life’s journey. Are we looking for treasure or are we content to find reasons not to get to know people or let them get to know us? Through four interwoven stories, we get a window into the perceptions, relationships, and life experiences of eight compelling characters. This insightful one-act play takes audiences on an entertaining adventure of discovery, and gives actors an opportunity to play intriguing, challenging characters.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(4 female, 3 male, 1 either; gender flexible)*

MILES (m) .....	Late teens/early 20’s; believes a map is essential for every journey <i>(63 lines)</i>
MONDAY (f) .....	Late teens/early 20’s; quirky, adventurous in her own way <i>(63 lines)</i>
JOE (m) .....	Late teens; smart, flirtatious with Kinley <i>(43 lines)</i>
KINLEY (f) .....	Late teens; sassy, fun; doesn’t let Joe take himself too seriously <i>(40 lines)</i>
CANDACE (f) .....	17; an athlete; won’t let herself be defined by other people’s ideas <i>(52 lines)</i>
GRAY (m/f) .....	17; Candace’s sidekick <i>(50 lines)</i>
CALEB (m) .....	Late teens; confident; likes to be perceived as rugged <i>(98 lines)</i>
AQUA (f) .....	Late teens; sweet; can be sassy and silly <i>(98 lines)</i>

**DURATION:** 35 minutes

## SETTING

*Treasure* is set in the present, in four different outdoor locations, during a late summer evening.

## PROPS

- A parchment-style treasure map

## PRODUCTION NOTES

*Treasure* can be presented with a very simple set. Directors are encouraged to be creative with casting and staging.

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

*Treasure* had a reading at Shetler Studios in New York City in August 2013. The play had its premiere production in Phoenix, Arizona, in October 2013. The original cast included Hailey Araza, A.J. Katek, Monica Ramirez, Marija Petovic, Tristan Campbell, Logan Umbanhowar, Anthony Quezada, and Elena Conti. The production was directed by the playwright.

**AT RISE:** Lights up on MILES and MONDAY.

**MILES:** When you're searching for treasure, it helps to have a treasure map. So you know where to look. Otherwise you spend a lot of time looking in all the wrong places.

**MONDAY:** People look for a lot of things in all the wrong places.

**MILES:** Because they don't have a map. Which underscores the value of having a map when you're looking for treasure. Underscore – like when you underline something for emphasis but, also, in the case of treasure, it's usually buried, so the score – the *treasure* – is under the ground.

**MONDAY:** Or under the water. A lot of treasure is in sunken ships – galleons or frigates or even cruise ships like the Titanic or Lusitania – that sink to the bottom of the ocean.

**MILES:** But you can't use a treasure map – a traditional, old-school treasure map – to search for treasure on the bottom of the ocean.

**MONDAY:** There's still a map involved. Kind of...it wouldn't be on a rolled up piece of parchment or animal skin, but it'd still be a map.

**MILES:** Or just some kind of radar – or sonar – coordinates.

**MONDAY:** I think that counts as a map. Unless they're just wandering around in a submarine or something. Just cruising around seeing what they can see, finding whatever they find. Like the guys on *American Pickers*, when they're "free styling." When they don't have a lead or a specific appointment, they just drive around on the back roads looking for junk in people's yards and old buildings that look kind of dumpy.

**MILES:** Treasure hunting – on land or at the bottom of the ocean – isn't the same as the *American Pickers* guys driving around looking for junk willy-nilly.

**MONDAY:** Tell that to the *American Pickers* guys. They say they're traveling "the back roads of America looking to buy rusty gold."

**MILES:** That's just a slogan...an advertising tag line.

**MONDAY:** It's a way of life. A calling... A mission.

**MILES:** If you say so.

**MONDAY:** When you say, "If you say so," it means "I totally disagree with you, but I'm not going to fight about it because I think fighting about it is beneath you."

**MILES:** If you say so.

**MONDAY:** And that's just the kind of condescending mind-set that the mermaid scientists have to deal with. Disbelief and condescension.

**MILES:** Mermaid scientists?

**MONDAY:** The scientists who've discovered the mermaids.

**MILES:** They're mythical creatures.

**MONDAY:** Disbelief and condescension.

**MILES:** Fiction, not facts.

**MONDAY:** Didn't you see the *Mermaids* show? On the Discovery Channel or Animal Planet. One of those two.

**MILES:** Is it some underwater version of *Ancient Aliens*?

**MONDAY:** No, it's a documentary. With documented evidence. And video. And audio. And a government conspiracy.

**MILES:** If you...

**MONDAY:** (*Cutting him off.*) Don't say it.

**MILES:** I'll just think it.

**MONDAY:** You're too quick to judge.

**MILES:** The mermaids? Or the so-called scientists supposedly searching for them.

**MONDAY:** Yes. All of them. And *me*.

**MILES:** So you believe in mermaids?

**MONDAY:** Absolutely.

**MONDAY and KINLEY:** There's not a doubt in my mind.

*Transition to KINLEY and JOE, as they look at a map.*

**JOE:** So you're sure.

**KINLEY:** If I wasn't, I'd have doubts and I just said, "There's not a doubt in my mind."

**JOE:** (*Looking at the map; pointing at two different spots.*) So this is the X, and this mark over here is some kind of small tree or wilderness vegetation or something like that?

**KINLEY:** Yep, that's what I think.

**JOE:** You think? I thought you said you were sure.

**KINLEY:** I did. I *am*. But nobody says, "Yep, that's what I know."

**JOE:** Maybe they should. Maybe that should be what people say.

**KINLEY:** The only way I could be absolutely sure is if I time traveled back to when and where they were making the treasure map and ask them to clarify which is the X and which is the X-like wilderness vegetation.

**JOE:** Or small tree. It could be a small tree. Or two small trees that are growing crossways.

**KINLEY:** Or two very-tanned ancient little people wearing brownish tunics and doing some kind of partnered yoga pose.

**JOE:** I'd bet against that theory.

**KINLEY:** You'd bet against the ancient little people?

**JOE:** The theory, not the people.

**KINLEY:** Because little people can surprise you. We see them and we think, "They're little people. They can't do this or that, because they're little people. And then they do exactly what we thought they couldn't do, because they weren't limited by the limitations we projected onto them.

**JOE:** (*Looking intently at the map; pointing to a spot.*) Yeah, this mark is definitely wilderness vegetation. (*Pointing to a different spot.*) And this one is definitely the X.

**KINLEY:** Which is what I said in the first place.

**JOE:** I was agreeing with you.

**KINLEY:** It's sounded like you were postulating your own theory, independent of the fact that I'd already theorized the theory and had said there was no doubt in mind as to the accuracy of the theory.

**JOE:** Nope. Just agreeing with your assertion.

**KINLEY:** Assertion sounds aggressive. Very warlike in a Medieval way.

**JOE:** No more aggressive than postulating.

**KINLEY:** I've always thought postulating sounded like something that philosophy and litigation would do together.

**JOE:** Like on a date?

**KINLEY:** Like when you bring philosophy and litigation together...

**JOE:** (*Joking.*) They have a relationship and make a lifetime commitment and nine months later, along comes their baby-word, "postulating."

**KINLEY:** You are seriously disturbed.

**JOE:** More disturbed than you and your very tanned little people doing yoga?

**KINLEY:** That's at least possible. There *are* little people and they *can* get very tanned and they *can* do yoga.

**JOE:** There's not a doubt in my mind.

**KINLEY:** About the tanned, yoga-doing little people?

**JOE:** Among other things.

**KINLEY:** Is that a passive-aggressive remark?

**JOE:** I don't know.

*Transition to CANDACE and GRAY, mid-conversation.*

**CANDACE:** And I said, "I don't know what you're looking for, but you're not going to find it, there."

**GRAY:** Where was he looking?

**CANDACE:** In the cat toy drawer. I thought I said that.

**GRAY:** Nope. It's the first I'm hearing about a cat toy drawer. You have a whole drawer just for cat toys?

**CANDACE:** If we didn't have a drawer for cat toys, he couldn't have been looking in the cat toy drawer, because there wouldn't be one. There'd be a drawer with other stuff in it. But that's not where he was looking. He was looking in the cat toy drawer.

**GRAY:** How many cat toys do you have that you need a whole drawer for them?

**CANDACE:** A drawer full. We have enough cat toys to fill a whole drawer, which is why we put them in the drawer and why we call it the cat toy drawer.

**GRAY:** I guess that's logical.

**CANDACE:** Logic doesn't have anything to do with it. If it was about logic, he wouldn't have been looking for what he was looking for in the cat toy drawer.

**GRAY:** What was he looking for?

**CANDACE:** I don't know. He wouldn't tell me but, when I asked him how big it was, he held his hands pretty far apart... (*She demonstrates*) And that's a lot bigger than anything that would fit in the drawer – with or without the cat toys in the drawer with whatever it was that he was looking for in the cat toy drawer.

**GRAY:** I don't think I even knew you had cats.

**CANDACE:** You don't *think* or you don't *know*?

**GRAY:** Know. I didn't know you had cats.

**CANDACE:** We don't.

**GRAY:** But you have a drawer full of cat toys. A cat toy drawer.

**CANDACE:** Yes, in the kitchen, underneath the melon baller drawer.

**GRAY:** A drawer full of melon ballers?

**CANDACE:** Not anymore.

**GRAY:** But you still call it the melon baller drawer?

**CANDACE:** It's a hard habit to break.

**GRAY:** And that's why you call the cat toy drawer the cat toy drawer, even though you don't have any cats?

**CANDACE:** It's a drawer full of cat toys. You don't have to have cats to have cat toys.

**GRAY:** One usually follows the other.

**CANDACE:** Cats don't follow each other. They're not herding animals.

**GRAY:** (*Clarifying.*) Having cat toys usually follows having cats.

**CANDACE:** Many things usually follow many other things.

**GRAY:** That makes it sound like we live in a perpetual parade. Or a world of stalkers.

**CANDACE:** We do.

**GRAY:** A perpetual parade or stalkers?

**CANDACE:** Yes. Both. You might even say a perpetual parade of stalkers.

**GRAY:** I'm not a stalker.

**CANDACE:** You spend entire days stalking people's Facebooks and Instagrams.

**GRAY:** That's not stalking. It's *research*...for potential relationships.

**CANDACE:** How many times has the research resulted in actual relationships?

**GRAY:** That's not the point.

**CANDACE:** Which is what he said, when I told him he wasn't going to find what he was looking for in the cat toy drawer!

**GRAY:** And we're back to the cat toy drawer.

**CANDACE and CALEB:** We never left.

*Transition to CALEB and AQUA, sipping beverages, outside at night.*

**AQUA:** Never's a long time. You had to leave at some point. Or you'd still be there instead of here.

**CALEB:** But we're still outside. I'm still outside. So I'm here and there. *There and here.*

**AQUA:** There and here?

**CALEB:** Exactly.

**AQUA:** So you're saying there and here are all the same if you're outside in both places. Like here and there—

**CALEB:** *(Interjecting.)* And everywhere...

**AQUA:** *(Continuing, as if she hadn't been interrupted.)* ...are some kind of ubiquitous zone of outsideness?

**CALEB:** Yes. So, when I say that I've never left, it means I've never left that...

**AQUA:** *(Completing his thought.)* Ubiquitous zone of outsideness...

**CALEB:** Right. I've been outside the whole time.

**AQUA:** From what point? Because unless you're some kind of wolf boy who's been raised in the forest by...

**CALEB:** *(Finishing her thought.)* Wolves.

**AQUA:** Right. Unless you're some kind of wolfboy – which I think I would have noticed by some kind of wolf-like...

**CALEB:** *(Injecting what he sees as valuable information.)* Lupine. It means “wolf-like,” as opposed to vulpine, which is foxlike.

**AQUA:** *(Not amused by the tangent.)* Yeah, okay. *(Getting them back on track, trying to include any information that CALEB might potentially add.)* So, if you'd been raised by wolves, I'd have notice the *lupine* behavior – as opposed to the *vulpine* behavior – that would've been present, if you'd be raised by foxes instead of wolves. *(Honing in on her essential idea.)* My point being that you weren't raised by wolves or foxes or any other animals, so you clearly haven't always been outside. If you've lived in a house or apartment, you've lived inside, so you haven't always been in the ubiquitous zone of out sideness.

**CALEB:** I never said I was.

**AQUA:** You specifically said, “We never left.”

**CALEB:** Uh-huh. In the conceptual sense. We, meaning “us.” Never, meaning “not ever.” Left, meaning the past tense of “leave.”

**AQUA:** *(As if the words come from a foreign language.)* So, us not ever leave.

**CALEB:** Yes, in the conceptual sense. Because –pay attention, this is going to be deep – even when we’re physically inside, we can still be outside intellectually and emotionally. We can be inside a room with walls five-feet thick...

**AQUA:** (*Raising her hand, needing an explanation.*) Why would anyone want walls that thick?

**CALEB:** Battering rams. People have reasons.

**AQUA:** I guess. It just seems excessive.

**CALEB:** (*Frustrated, trying to refocus AQUA.*) Regardless how thick the walls are...if we’re inside a room, and we’re thinking about something outside of that room, *part of us is outside the room.* And, if we’re in a room...

**AQUA:** The same room or a different one?

**CALEB:** It doesn’t matter.

**AQUA:** It matters to me.

**CALEB:** A different room. If we’re in a room – with any kind of walls you want – and we feel like we don’t belong or we aren’t welcome in the room, that’d make us feel like we’re *outside*, even though we’re *inside*.

*Transition to GRAY and CANDACE, continuing their conversation.*

**GRAY:** We never left the cat toy drawer? So, metaphorically speaking, we’re inside the cat toy drawer.

**CANDACE:** The *world* is a cat toy drawer. (*Taking it one more step.*) *Life* is a cat toy drawer.

**GRAY:** And we’re metaphorical cats in this whole-world-size cat toy drawer?

**CANDACE:** No. That’s the thing. We’re not cats, and yet we find ourselves surrounded by – almost *suffocated by* – cat toys.

**GRAY:** And all of this because what’s his name was looking for something in the cat toy drawer that he couldn’t possibly find there?

**CANDACE:** Kyan.

**GRAY:** Who?

**CANDACE:** What’s his name.

**GRAY:** Who?

**CANDACE:** Kyan. That's his name. You said, "because what's his name was looking for something in the cat toy drawer." Kyan is his name.

**GRAY:** How do you spell that?

**CANDACE:** K-Y-A-N.

**GRAY:** That's odd.

**CANDACE:** The spelling or the name itself?

**GRAY:** Both.

**CANDACE:** I didn't name him,

**GRAY:** I didn't say you did.

**CANDACE:** His parents did.

**GRAY:** That's usually how it works.

**CANDACE:** I don't even know his parents.

**GRAY:** He's in your kitchen, rummaging around in your cat toy drawer and you don't know his parents?

**CANDACE:** Do you know the parents of all your friends?

**GRAY:** No, but all of my friends haven't been in my kitchen.

**CANDACE:** So, before somebody is allowed in my kitchen, I have to know his or her parents?

**GRAY:** Or meet them. Maybe see a picture, to get a sense of what kind of people they are.

**CANDACE:** *That's* odd.

**GRAY:** I can see how you could think that.

**CANDACE:** You're odd. I'm odd. The spelling of Kyan's name is odd.

**GRAY:** Having a *drawer full* of cat toys is odd, whether or not you have cats.

**CANDACE:** Everyone is odd. We're all odd in some way or another. Or odd by association.

*Transition to MONDAY and MILES.*

**MILES:** Do they have an organization? An association?

**MONDAY:** The mermaids?

**MILES:** The people who are out searching for them. The ones who say mermaids exist.

**MONDAY:** They don't just say it, they have *proof*. Webbed mermaid hands slapping at submarine windows. And parts of a mermaid that washed ashore.

**MILES:** But no formal organization?

**MONDAY:** I think it's just small groups of truth-telling scientists in different parts of the world.

**MILES:** Sounds sketchy. Like a loose operation.

**MONDAY:** As opposed to what?

**MILES:** The organization I got the treasure map from. The Association of Amateur Treasure Hunters. (*Proudly.*) A-A-T-H.

**MONDAY:** (*Pronouncing the acronym as if it was a word.*) AATH?

**MILES:** That's what they go by.

**MONDAY:** Seriously?

**MILES:** It's an acronym.

**MONDAY:** I got that.

**MILES:** But they usually say Double-A T-H.

**MONDAY:** It sounds like when parents spell something out so their kids won't know what they're talking about.

**MILES:** I guess.

**MONDAY:** But that only works with very young children. And when you've got an acronym that doesn't sound like you have a lisp.

**MILES:** Nobody's walking around saying, "Aath," at the meetings.

**MONDAY:** They have meetings?

**MILES:** And conventions.

**MONDAY:** An AATH convention?

**MILES:** The annual Double-A T-H Con.

**MONDAY:** And that's where you got the map?

**MILES:** Yep. The maps are big sellers. Most people go to the convention for the sole purpose of getting a treasure map.

**MONDAY:** The AATH people hand them out to anyone who shows up?

**MILES:** Of course not. You have to *buy* them. Sometimes, they give away the baseball caps with the lights on them – for nighttime treasure hunting. But if you want a treasure map, you definitely have to buy it.

**MONDAY:** At this point, I can't think about a map, because I'm obsessing about the idea of a baseball cap with lights on it.

*Transition to JOE and KINLEY*

**JOE:** It's getting too dark to see the map.

**KINLEY:** You can't find the treasure, if you can't see the X on the map.

**JOE:** Or the spot on the ground that corresponds to where the X is on the map.

**KINLEY:** In the dark, you'd be even less sure that it was an X and not tanned little people doing yoga.

**JOE:** Or if it's just wilderness vegetation.

**KINLEY:** You can't tell anything in the dark, because you're in the dark.

*Transition to AQUA and CALEB.*

**AQUA:** Take a tent, for example.

**CALEB:** A tent?

**AQUA:** Do you become hearing impaired when it gets dark? (*Not waiting for CALEB to answer.*) Yes, a tent.

**CALEB:** Why am I taking a tent?

**AQUA:** You're not *taking* it. You're considering it. Pondering it. Reflecting on it.

**CALEB:** I'm doing all that with a tent?

**AQUA:** They have very thin walls.

**CALEB:** That's what makes them tents.

**AQUA:** (*Augmenting her point.*) Just a super-thin layer of canvas or nylon and some netting.

**CALEB:** The netting keeps out the bugs, while you're sleeping out under the stars.

**AQUA:** That's just it! People who sell tents try to have it both ways.

**CALEB:** To appeal to the most potential customers.

**AQUA:** I know *why* they do it. But that doesn't mean I have to like it. (*Back to her point.*) They tell you a tent is like being out in the wild. That you're communing with nature in a way that you can't do inside your house. But, at the same time, they try to convince you that you're protected from the elements.

**CALEB:** Nobody wants to get rained on, when you're camping.

**AQUA:** But it's more than the rain. They say that, when you're in their tent, you're safe from the animals, because – and here's where their logic gets sketchy – wild animals can't open the zippered flaps to get in the tent.

**CALEB:** They don't have opposable thumbs.

**AQUA:** But if they're wild animals, they're not going to stop and think... (*Doing her version of a talking wild animal.*) "Gee, I'm a wild animal. I don't have opposable thumbs; therefore, I'm not going to be able to unzip the flap on this tent – which means I won't be able to get to the people, inside, who would, otherwise, be my dinner. So, I'll just move along to the next campsite and hope they don't have their flaps zipped."

**CALEB:** That's ridiculous.

**AQUA:** Right! They're wild animals. They'd just rip open the tent with their wild animal claws and dinner would be served.

**CALEB:** People shouldn't camp in areas where wild animals are looking for food.

**AQUA:** I used to camp in my backyard.

**CALEB:** In a tent?

**AQUA:** My big brother put it up about five feet from the back door to our house.

**CALEB:** (*With a chuckle.*) So, no danger of wild animals.

**AQUA:** Which is the kind of arrogant thinking that gave my brother a false sense of security.

**CALEB:** Arrogant thinking?

**AQUA:** It's not new information. Guys are socialized to be arrogant. And aggressive. And condescending to women.

**CALEB:** (*Sarcastically.*) We're animals.

**AQUA:** I forgot snide. Guys are also socialized to be snide.

**CALEB:** How did this become about me?

**AQUA:** It didn't. Not specifically. But you are a guy. And so is my brother.

**CALEB:** The one who put up a tent five feet from the back door of your house?

**AQUA:** Yes.

**CALEB:** And he had a false sense of security about wild animals.

**AQUA:** A raccoon got into the tent – by, somehow, opening the flap. (*She begins to cry.*) And then crawled into his sleeping bag.

**CALEB:** (A statement, not a question.) And you're sad because a raccoon got into your brother's sleeping bag.

**AQUA:** (Continuing to cry.) No.

**CALEB:** (A statement, not a question.) Because your brother got bit by the raccoon.

**AQUA:** (Continuing to cry.) No!

**CALEB:** (A statement, not a question.) Because your brother died.

**AQUA:** (Completely taken aback by CALEB'S remark.) No! Because he got married and moved away and now I don't see him every day.

**CALEB:** That's it?

**AQUA:** Yes.

**CALEB:** I thought he got bit. Or died.

**AQUA:** So you said.

**CALEB:** Because you were crying.

**AQUA:** The only possible reasons for tears are animal bites or death?

**CALEB:** The raccoon was in his sleeping bag. It's a logical thought progression.

**AQUA:** Depending on your logic. And the story within the context of my relationship with my brother.

**CALEB:** I didn't even know you had a brother.

**AQUA:** You never asked.

**CALEB:** You could've mentioned him – casually in conversation, at some point.

**AQUA:** I did. I told you he put up a tent about five feet from the back door of our house. And, much to his surprise, a raccoon found a way to unzip the flaps on the front of the tent. And it crawled into his sleeping bag and did, actually, bite him. And Animal Control had to come and capture the raccoon – which wasn't too hard, because the raccoon couldn't seem to find its way back out of the tent. And my brother had to get shots for rabies and something else – which served him right for being so arrogant and having a false sense of security.

**CALEB:** He *did* get bit!

**AQUA:** Yes.

**CALEB:** I told you!

*TREASURE*

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