

THE WASHED UP TEENAGE CELEBRITY SOCIAL CLUB

By Bradley Walton

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A Dramatic One Act

By Bradley Walton

SYNOPSIS: Some of them were on television. Some of them were in movies. Some of them used to be famous. Some were barely famous at all. They are teenage actors whose careers have already peaked, and most of them are struggling to accept that their best years are already behind them. Today, as they prepare to cash in on the last vestiges of their celebrity at an autograph show, they will share with each other the truths that they have barely admitted to themselves.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 females, 1 male, 6-7 either, 0-1 extras; gender flexible)

- JASON/JANICE (m/f) 19; As a child, he had a tiny role in the sci-fi/fantasy blockbuster *Dragon Masters*. Positive and upbeat, he embraces having been part of something so popular. *(56 lines)*
- OLIVER (m) 18; Had a lead role in the sequel to *Dragon Masters* when he was 7 years old. Everyone hated his performance. He despises his former celebrity status, but depends on it for income. *(31 lines)*
- VICTORIA/VICTOR (m/f) 17; The daughter of the autograph show organizer and a member of the show staff. *(30 lines)*
- MICHELLE/MICHAEL (m/f) 18; Acted in a series of commercials for a fast-food restaurant as a child. *(74 lines)*

- SEAN/SHAWNA (m/f) 14; He had two lines in one episode of the popular kids' sitcom *Life According to Marley* as "Kid in Restaurant #1." He wants to give up on acting, but his mom won't let him. (60 lines)
- MEAGAN (f)..... 31; Sean's overbearing mother, trying to live vicariously through her child. (20 lines)
- ALLISON/ALLAN (m/f)..... 16; Appeared on the same episode of *Life According to Marley* as Sean, then landed a lead role in a sitcom that lasted 3 episodes before being cancelled. She is burned out on acting and is considering calling it quits. (38 lines)
- ZOE (f)..... 17; When she was 8, she played a killer robot in the movie *Star Carnage* and subsequently became an object of obsession for perverts across the internet. She is very bitter about this. (28 lines)
- ROGER/REBECCA (m/f) 40s or 50s; Victoria's father. He is in charge of the autograph show. (10 lines)
- SECURITY GUARD 1 (m/f)..... (1 line)
- SECURITY GUARD 2 (m/f)..... Optional extra. (Non-Speaking)

CAST NOTE: The same actress could play MEAGAN HAMPTON and REBECCA WILLIS.

DURATION: 35 minutes

SETTING

Staging is simple. The play requires 6 tables three or four feet in length (3 folding tables six or eight feet in length would also work) and seven chairs. There is a banner which reads “Celebrity Autograph Show” and an additional, slightly smaller sign that reads “Teen Star Edition”.

PRODUCTION NOTES

All of the celebrity characters have stacks of 8”x10” photos of themselves, but there is no reason for the audience to actually see any of the pictures. Blank pieces of cardstock, or even plain white paper, will work fine. It is also fine to use standard, 8.5”x11” paper. If the audience is seated where they can actually see the pictures, only the photos on the tops of the stacks need to have images printed on them.

AUTHOR NOTES

The Washed Up Teenage Celebrity Social Club is a work of fiction that takes dramatic liberties in order to explore the fallout of trying—and failing—to succeed as a young, professional actor. The play should not be construed as a fully accurate or comprehensive representation of autograph shows or the people who sign at them.

COSTUMES

OLIVER – Grungy and unkempt clothing.

SEAN – Wears something very hip and trendy. More than any of the others, his clothing should look like something a celebrity would be expected to wear.

ZOE – Dressed in black and has heavy eye makeup.

JASON – Casual but nice clothing.

MICHELLE and ALLISON – Nicely dressed.

MEAGAN – Professional clothing with gaudy jewelry.

VICTORIA and ROGER – Wear t-shirts that say “STAFF”.

SECURITY GUARDS – Wear t-shirts that say “SECURITY”.

PROPS

- 5 Boxes or Bags containing Photos and Pens/Markers
- Cell Phone
- Purse
- 2 Diet Sodas
- Tablet Computer or Clipboard with some Papers and a Pen
- Table Signs numbered A1 through A6.
- At table A2: Neat stacks of 8x10 photos spread out on the table, along with markers in several colors. A bag or box sits on the floor beside his chair.

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AT RISE: *An autograph show at a community center somewhere in California. Across the stage is a row of six tables marked, from stage right to left, A1 through A6. Behind each table is a chair, with two chairs behind table A1. The tables should be spaced far enough apart that people can pass between them. Tables three or four feet in length would be ideal. Three tables six or eight feet in length would also work, in which case A1, A2, etc. refer to half-table spaces. There is a sign or banner that reads “Celebrity Autograph Show” along with an additional, slightly smaller sign which reads “Teen Star Edition”. JASON sits at table A2, neat stacks of 8”x10” photos spread out on his table in front of him, along with markers in several colors. A bag or box in which he carried the photos sits on the floor beside his chair. He appears to be happy and excited. VICTORIA enters from left, followed by OLIVER. She is carrying a tablet computer or a clipboard with some papers and a pen. OLIVER is carrying a box or bag of photos and pens. His clothing is grungy and unkempt. He does not look like he wants to be here. VICTORIA gestures to table A6.*

VICTORIA: You’re right here at table A6, Oliver.

OLIVER: Okay. Thanks.

VICTORIA exits left. OLIVER puts his box down on table A6 and begins unpacking it.

JASON: *(Cheerily, standing.)* Hey, Oliver! How’s it going?

OLIVER: Don’t talk to me, Jason.

JASON: Come on, Oliver. The fans will be happier if you at least pretend to get along with me.

OLIVER: There aren’t any fans here yet, and even if there were, I quit acting years ago.

JASON: You shouldn’t be so grumpy. We were both part of a really great movie series. If that’s the high point of our lives, is it really such a bad thing?

OLIVER: If playing Ogden Firebrand in *Dragon Masters 2* turns out to have been the high point of my life, then yes, it’ll have been a crummy life.

JASON: I’ve embraced my little niche in popular culture and I’m having a blast. You should try it.

OLIVER: Shut up.

JASON shrugs and sits. VICTORIA enters from left again, this time followed by MICHELLE. MICHELLE is carrying a box or bag of photos and pens.

VICTORIA: You'll be set up at table A4. If you need anything, let me know.

MICHELLE: Great. Thanks.

VICTORIA exits left. MICHELLE crosses to table A4, puts down her box, then crosses to OLIVER, who is still unpacking, and extends her hand.

MICHELLE: Hey. I'm Michelle. Nice to meet you.

OLIVER: *(Not looking at MICHELLE.)* Whatever.

JASON: He's not very social.

MICHELLE lowers her hand and studies OLIVER, trying to figure out the best way to respond.

MICHELLE: Bad morning?

OLIVER: I'm here, aren't I?

MICHELLE: Do you not want to be here?

OLIVER: Why would I possibly *want* to be at an autograph show in some community center?

MICHELLE: Did your agent force this on you?

OLIVER: I don't have an agent.

MICHELLE: So why are you here?

OLIVER: None of your business.

MICHELLE: I need to make money, too. There's no shame in that.

OLIVER: Who said I needed money?

MICHELLE: Everybody has to make ends meet. People like us do it by signing autographs at shows like this.

OLIVER: I am not like you. Do not compare yourself to me.

MICHELLE: Do you even know who I am?

OLIVER: No, and I don't care.

MICHELLE: Well, for whatever it's worth, I know who you are, Oliver, and I'm sorry your time in the spotlight was such a lousy experience.

OLIVER: Up yours.

MICHELLE: (*Shrugging it off.*) Okay, then.

MICHELLE turns to JASON, who stands and holds out his hand, which MICHELLE shakes. OLIVER sits down and starts killing time on his phone.

JASON: Hi. I'm Jason. Sorry about him.

MICHELLE: Is he your responsibility somehow?

JASON: Not really.

MICHELLE: Then don't worry about it.

JASON: It's just...we were both in the *Dragon Masters* movies. Not in the same one together, but still, it's this thing we have in common, whether he likes it or not. He comes out and signs at autograph shows, but he's all grumpy and it makes me feel bad for the people who are paying to get his signature, you know?

MICHELLE: Yeah, well, I'm not paying him for his autograph, so don't worry about me. I'm Michelle Bateman, by the way.

JASON: I know. I saw you listed on the autograph show website. I think I remember seeing you on TV when I was a kid.

MICHELLE: (*A little surprised.*) That was a long time ago. You're what...19 years old?

JASON: Good guess.

MICHELLE: One year older than me. So you would've been six during my fifteen minutes of fame.

JASON: It was about the same time I did *Dragon Masters*. I remember a lot of stuff from around then.

MICHELLE: Who'd you play?

OLIVER: Don't humor him.

MICHELLE: Now you're talking?

OLIVER: Just don't.

MICHELLE: Sorry, you already forfeited your chance to be part of this conversation.

OLIVER: Don't say I didn't warn you.

JASON: Okay...you've seen *Dragon Masters*, right? The first one?

MICHELLE: Sure.

JASON: You know the part where the big space ship—the Pax Nullana—is about to crash into the dragons’ mountain, and there’s a bunch of quick images of all the chaos that’s going on inside the ship?

MICHELLE: Yeah.

JASON: There’s a shot of three aliens running down the corridor towards the camera...two tall ones and a little one? They’re blue with funky makeup prosthetics and red bug eyes?

MICHELLE: Kind of...maybe?

JASON: And then there’s a second shot of the little one running past the camera, waving his arms? That’s me.

MICHELLE: So you were onscreen in two shots?

JASON: Just one, actually. The shots were filmed on two different days. Somebody else was in the costume the first day, but for whatever reason, he wasn’t there on day two. I was just supposed to be a background extra with my dad, but the costume fit me, so they had me fill in. I’m the one waving my arms in the second shot.

MICHELLE: How long were you actually onscreen?

JASON: One point three seconds.

MICHELLE: One point three?

JASON: Yup.

MICHELLE: And people pay you money for your autograph?

JASON: A few, yeah. I mean, I was a foreground character in *Dragon Masters*. That’s a really big deal to some people. Even if it was just for one point three seconds.

MICHELLE: (*Sincerely.*) That’s actually kinda cool.

JASON: Thanks. And yeah. It really is cool. I mean, *Dragon Masters* was this low-budget sci-fi movie that was a massive, unexpected hit. When I was a kid, I’d try to tell people I was in it but nobody believed me. Of course, my name wasn’t in the credits and you couldn’t see my face, but I knew. When I got a little bit older, I started doing the autograph circuit and getting a little recognition...making a few extra bucks...it’s been nice.

MICHELLE: Have they made an action figure of you?

JASON: Not yet. I keep hoping.

MICHELLE: Did you do any other acting?

JASON: I was an extra in some crowd scenes for a couple of other things. Nothing major. Nothing like *Dragon Masters*...and definitely nothing where the camera was focusing right on me for one point three seconds.

MICHELLE: You seem really happy to have done that.

JASON: I was in *Dragon Masters*. How many people get to say that?

VICTORIA enters from left with SEAN and MEAGAN. MEAGAN is carrying a purse and a box or bag of photos and pens.

VICTORIA: Ms. Hampton, you and Sean will be at table A1.

MEAGAN: All the way over on the side?

VICTORIA: On that side. Correct.

MEAGAN: Couldn't we be in the center of the room?

VICTORIA: It's not that large of a room, and anyway, we've already posted a floor plan that shows Sean as being in this spot.

MEAGAN: Can't you change your floor plan?

VICTORIA: Not easily, no.

MEAGAN: But you can change it?

VICTORIA: You'd have to talk to my father about that. He's the one who runs the show.

MEAGAN: Can I speak to him?

VICTORIA: Sure. Follow me.

MEAGAN: (*Putting down the box.*) I'll be right back, Sean. We'll get this fixed.

SEAN: Sure, mom.

VICTORIA and MEAGAN exit left. SEAN sits on the edge of table A1, slouches, and sighs. MICHELLE crosses to SEAN.

MICHELLE: Showbiz mom?

SEAN: Oh my gosh, yes. She's exhausting.

MICHELLE: I'm Michelle.

JASON: Jason.

SEAN: Hi. I'm Sean.

SEAN shakes hands with MICHELLE and JASON.

MICHELLE: Nice to meet you.

SEAN: I hope you won't be offended if I don't recognize either of you.

MICHELLE: That's okay. I'm afraid I don't recognize you.

JASON: Ditto.

SEAN: Ever watch a kids' sitcom called *Life According to Marley*?

MICHELLE: No, but my little cousin is nuts about it. I'll get your autograph for her! That's really cool.

JASON: Yeah.

SEAN: Don't get too excited. I was on the show, but I only had two lines in one episode about a year ago. The name of my character was "Kid in Restaurant #1."

MICHELLE: What were your lines?

SEAN: "Are you eatin' that?" and "Me, neither."

JASON: Sounds potentially funny.

SEAN: It was okay. My mom and I had been in L.A. for a year trying to get my acting career off the ground. We were just about ready to pack up and go when that part came along. Actually, I was past ready. But landing that tiny bit role convinced mom that I was on the road to becoming an A-list celebrity, so we're still here.

MICHELLE: So this is her thing and not yours?

SEAN: I wanted it to begin with, yeah. I mean, what kid doesn't? I was doing school plays and community theatre back home in Indiana, and then I was in a TV commercial for a local car dealer. That got my mother thinking I had a future in acting. So she borrowed money from her parents and moved us out here.

MICHELLE: Would I be right in guessing she wanted to be an actress when she was younger and it didn't work out for her?

SEAN: Big time. She got pregnant with me when she was in high school and that kind of derailed things. So now it's like she wants me to have the life she never got so she can live it through me. The sad thing is, even though part of the reason we're doing this autograph show is because my grandparents finally decided this Hollywood thing is a dead end and stopped sending us money, my mom actually thinks that because I said two lines in a kids' sitcom, I'm somehow famous. Every autograph that I sign today, she'll see it as a notch in her belt. Assuming that I sign any. Just between you and me, I can't believe the guy who runs this thing would even have me here.

MICHELLE: These kinds of events don't usually pull in a lot of A-list talent.

SEAN: I know. Mostly it's actors whose careers have peaked and they're on the way down. Or they've bottomed out.

MICHELLE: If trading on your former celebrity status is what you have to do to make ends meet, then that's what you do.

SEAN: I think saying I've ever had "celebrity status" would be an overstatement.

MICHELLE: You had a speaking part on a TV show that most people have at least heard of. You have the perception of celebrity—a little bit, anyway—which for all intents and purposes is the same as the real thing.

SEAN: What all have you two done?

JASON: One point three seconds of screen time under heavy makeup in the first *Dragon Masters* when I was six.

SEAN: *Dragon Masters*, huh? You've got me beat. Anything else?

JASON: Just some work as an extra. My parents saw movies as something fun for me to do on the side. It was never a serious thing.

SEAN: I'm jealous. (To MICHELLE.) How about you?

MICHELLE: You're probably too young to remember.

SEAN: I'm not that much younger than you.

MICHELLE: You're what... fifteen?

SEAN: Fourteen.

MICHELLE: I'm eighteen. You would've been about a year old when I had my big moment.

SEAN: When you were five?

MICHELLE: Yup. I was in a series of commercials for Chicken Castle. I was this little kid who would go to a Chicken Castle restaurant and I'd be looking all over the place for the company mascot, Chester the Chicken. And he'd be peeking around corners at me behind my back, but I never saw him, not until the very last commercial, where I ran up and gave him this big hug while the Chicken Castle theme song played. The ads ran during prime time on all the major networks and apparently, people thought they were adorable.

SEAN: I'll have to look 'em up online. Did your parents pull you out of show biz on purpose, or did the parts stop coming after that?

MICHELLE: Little bit of both. Mostly, the parts stopped coming. I was legitimately sort of famous for a while, but famous in a way that made people think of Chicken Castle. So finding other work was an uphill battle, and my parents were actually kind of freaked out by the attention I got. I remember people pointing at me on the street and sometimes stopping and asking if I'd pose for a picture. So mom and dad decided to pull the plug on my acting career. And that's fine. I've gotten on with my life.

SEAN: And yet, here you are today.

MICHELLE: I don't get recognized on the street anymore, but people remember those commercials, and once they know it's me, they'll want me to pose for a picture or sign an autograph. It's an easy way to pull in a couple hundred bucks on top of my regular job.

SEAN: Which is what?

MICHELLE: Cashier at a KFC.

JASON: You're kidding.

MICHELLE: Honest truth.

SEAN: Do they know?

MICHELLE: *(Shaking her head and smiling.)* They don't have a clue.

VICTORIA enters from left, accompanying ALLISON. ALLISON is carrying a box or bag.

VICTORIA: *(Consulting her tablet.)* You're at table A3, Allison.

ALLISON: Thanks. *(Crosses to table A3 and puts down her box.)*

SEAN: *(To VICTORIA.)* I hope my mom's not being too much of a pain.

VICTORIA: She's, um...let's just say, I'm glad my dad is the one in charge of this thing and not me.

SEAN: Sorry.

VICTORIA: We deal with people like your mom pretty often. It's not that big of a deal. My dad is good about not letting them walk all over him.

SEAN: Still...sorry.

VICTORIA: Don't worry about it. *(Exits left.)*

ALLISON: *(To SEAN.)* Do I know you?

SEAN: *(Looking at ALLISON and thinking.)* Yeah...we worked together on *Life According to Marley*. I was “Kid in Restaurant #1” and you were “Kid in Restaurant #2.” I’m Sean Hampton.

ALLISON: Allison Dodge. Nice to see you again.

SEAN: These are Michelle and Jason.

MICHELLE: I did chicken restaurant commercials when I was five.

JASON: One point three seconds as an alien in the first *Dragon Masters*.

ALLISON: Nice to meet you. *(Indicating OLIVER.)* Do we know him?

JASON: He’s antisocial and hates his life.

ALLISON: Ah. One of those.

SEAN: I was wondering.

OLIVER: You know, I’m sitting right here.

JASON: Would you like to be included in this conversation?

OLIVER: Bite me.

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