

FOOTBALL CHEER

By Tricia Williams

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DEDICATION

To Dr. Susan Sailor, my principal.

This play is a direct result of her belief in me as a teacher and without her support of our school's drama program, I would have found myself in other places and most likely not writing. As a result, "Football Cheer" would not have been realized.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Here is a slice-of-life peek into the locker room of both the players and the cheerleaders on game day at a typical high school. From Phil, the gladiator on a mission, to little Helena who just wants a hamburger, each team member plays an important piece of the mosaic. With both comic hijinks to serious moments, this dramedy delves into the heart of the athletes that make up the sport, their motivations, desires and the camaraderie that makes them a team on and off the field. These are not caricatures of football players and cheerleaders, but real kids dealing with the pressures and stresses of high school life and football. Individual monologues allow each actor to shine.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Directed by the playwright the original production was in Keystone Heights, Florida. This show was performed at the District One-Act Thespian Competition where it received a superior rating. The cast was as follows:

Lizzie: Taylor Kennedy

Phil: Junior Russell

Kurt: Thomas Richardson

Rachel: Ashley Long

Trent: Carson Sailor

John: Travis Hutchison

Helena: Caitlin Charrier

Maureen: Sierra Brown

CAST OF CHARACTERS

4 m, 4 w

JOHN JACOB: Football player searching for his “star” identity on the field.

PHILLIP (PHIL): Football player who wants to be the quintessential football player.

TRENT: Football player who listens to everything his girlfriend says because he believes it is why he wins at life.

KURTIS (KURT): Football player whose main interest is popularity.

HELENA: Cheerleader battling with height issues and the desire to not be in physical pain.

MAUREEN: Cheerleader looking for a more mature boyfriend.

LIZZIE: Cheerleader with ambitions.

RACHEL: Cheerleader who cheers to belong to a family of sorts.

PLAYWRIGHT’S NOTE

These are not caricatures of football players and cheerleaders. These are real kids dealing with the pressures and stresses of high school life and football. These roles need to be played completely seriously in order for the inherent comedy of everyday life to come out.

Scene 1 – Practice Pranks

(AT RISE: LIZZIE and TRENT stand on opposite sides of the stage. Behind them, the three other football players are sitting on the bench. JOHN is asleep, next to him is a space with a bag of chips. PHIL is sitting alert, facing straight ahead and KURT is staring at the ceiling. ALL are frozen as Lizzie delivers her monologue.)

LIZZIE: My boyfriend's a football player. Maybe you've heard of him? His name is Trent. He's going to be starting quarterback next year, then a senator. Well, maybe there will be a few things in between. But he's going into politics. First, he'll play college ball, then NFL for a while....just long enough to make us some money and become a household name. Then he'll run for senate. You only have to be 30 to run for senate. I know, I researched it back in 7th grade. I thought about preparing myself to run for senate back then but I realized that like it or not, guys have an easier time coasting on public opinion. They can do just about anything other than cheat on their wives and get away with it. Women...not so much. So I found Trent. He's the perfect candidate. Back in 8th grade, he wasn't quite there but I've been working on him. I've been tutoring him on what he needs to know and what he doesn't need to know. I had to join cheerleading to get an inside line on the team roster. I don't even like cheerleading. There is no future in it after school. But once I got a peek at that roster, I knew when the next big shift would be. What players were weak, who was graduating, what kind of talent they need. Quarterback was an added bonus. I could have worked with a running back. Now he's a football player soon to be senator. And I'm not worried about that cheating thing...I'd have to tell him to do something like that.

(LIZZIE freezes as TRENT delivers his monologue.)

TRENT: My girlfriend is a cheerleader. We've been going out for four years. Since 8th grade. Her name is Elizabeth. I call her Lizzie. When she made the cheerleading squad last year, she said I had to go out for football. So I went out for football. Some people would say she demanded it, but you have to understand my relationship with my girlfriend. She doesn't demand anything from me. Lizzie just tells me what's best for me. Sounds bad but she has yet to be wrong. Back in 8th grade, Lizzie had braces and kinda stringy hair. She told me I better go out with her because she was a swan waiting to emerge. I didn't really know what emerge meant back then but something told me to listen to her. My friends thought I was crazy. Actually, everyone thought I was crazy but you know we had fun together. Doing whatever Lizzie wanted to at the time. Sometimes it was learning about stuff or doing these science kits she got at the bookstore and sometimes it was other stuff.

And Lizzie emerged, if you know what I mean. The braces came off, certain parts filled out, she got some new shampoo or dyed her hair or something and I figured out what emerge meant. This year she was part of the homecoming court and I have one of the hottest girls on campus as my girlfriend. I guess I would probably jump off a bridge if Lizzie told me to do it but she wouldn't. She only tells me things that are in my best interest. Lizzie told me to go out for football and guess what – I ended up as the second string quarterback. Next year, I have a shot of playing first string. Me. The kid who wouldn't have went out for football if it had been left up to me. Turns out I'm pretty good. Who knew?

(PHIL stands up and thumps his watch glaring at LIZZIE. LIZZIE gives TRENT a quick kiss on the cheek.)

LIZZIE: Have fun.

(LIZZIE looks at Phil and saunters off as TRENT grabs his chips and sits. PHIL steps forward.)

PHIL: Guys don't play football for fun. People watch football for entertainment but guys don't play football for fun. Guys who play football are the entertainment. The crowd comes to watch us perform on the field. They come to see us soar to victory and fall in the mud. Yeah, they come to see us fail. When I'm on the field, it's like I'm in world history class and we're studying the ancient Romans. The team is a modern-day version of the gladiators. Instead of lions or tigers, we're battling some other guys – their team of gladiators. Sometimes when I'm on the field, I can sort of picture the Roman Coliseum, the crowd cheering their approval or their disapproval. Sometimes it's hard to come out of the field house. Fear sort of hovers over the outdoor. Fear of failure. Fear of the other team. Fear of letting down the coach or the fans. That's not fun. That's when I have to think about the gladiators, the Roman ones. They went out into that arena and faced certain death and lived to tell about it. Or at least fight another day. They weren't fighting for fun but they were the entertainment. Some of them didn't even have a choice and once they lost, they were done – sometimes dead. I know that most high school football players are only as good as their game. Once they graduate, no one remembers them or what they did on the field. There is always someone to take their place. But for the few moments they are on the field...they are gladiators. So I think about that and I go out on that field and listen to the arena, the cheers and the boos. For that game...I am the gladiator.

(ALL FOUR BOYS are sitting on a bench facing the audience. SFX: The game film soundtrack is heard as the scene progresses. JOHN is asleep facing the audience with his mouth slightly open. KURT grabs Trent's chips and starts trying to throw food in John's open mouth. Kurt starts out slowly so he doesn't get discovered.)

(Phil is sitting in between John and Kurt so he continually gets caught in the crossfire. PHIL glares at Kurt because he's trying to concentrate. Meanwhile, TRENT has bought in

End of Freeview

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