

Mr Blues
A Full-Length Play

Written by
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"They sicken of the calm, who knew the storm."

-Dorothy Parker

CAST of CHARACTERS

SANDY, 30's, female. Ambitious producer.

HOWIE, 60's, male. Classical actor turned children TV Personality.

STEVE/PETER PUPPET/BARRY BOOKWORM/SILLY SQUIRREL, 20's, male. Pothead Puppeteer.

MORGAN, any gender. 30's.

SETTING

Present day. TV studio, a public education film set. The set is dated and low budget. Center stage is a colorful couch. Upstage right there is a doll mansion. Camera dollies and A/V cables are strewn about.

ACT 1

Scene 1

AT RISE: The lights come up, moments later, HOWIE enters with an acoustic guitar in hand. He looks to the center of the audience as if reading his lines off of a teleprompter. HOWIE is warm and inviting.

HOWIE

Hello there. It's so lovely to have you here again. I brought my guitar today because I was hoping we could sing a song together.

(HOWIE lightly strums the guitar.)

Let me tell you a secret, sometimes I get mad. When I get mad, all these feelings start to build up inside me and I just don't know what to do with them! When that happens, I like to express myself so I can feel better. And one of the ways I like to express myself is through music. Why don't you sing along?

(HOWIE sings a song about love.)

Song, song, song

(PETER PUPPET enters from behind the dollhouse and begins to sing along.)

HOWIE AND PETER PUPPET

*Song, song, song,
Song, song.*

(HOWIE stops playing, PETER PUPPET claps. HOWIE crosses to PETER PUPPET and leans on the dollhouse casually.)

PETER PUPPET

Wow! You know something Howie? I was feeling so cranky until now! Thank you!

HOWIE

My pleasure Peter Puppet. Say, what got you so steamed in the first place?

PETER PUPPET

Oh, nothing really, Howie.

HOWIE

You know, as your friend, you can always count on me to listen. I find that when I'm very angry, it helps to talk out-loud about my problems.

PETER PUPPET

Really?

HOWIE

Absolutely, why don't you give it a try, Peter?

PETER PUPPET

Well, you see, Howie. I was building a house, like this one, out of Legos and my sister came in and knocked it over and I- I just got so mad!

HOWIE

I can see how that would bother anybody. Only natural for you to get mad. Maybe you can talk to her and let her how you feel. Thank you for sharing with me.

PETER PUPPET

Thank you for listening.

HOWIE

Did it make you feel better to let out your frustration?

PETER PUPPET

Yeah, it sure did!

*

HOWIE

I'm glad to hear it. Another trick I like to use when I'm frustrated is- (HOWIE sniffs) Is that? Do I smell pot?

PETER PUPPET

Uh, what?

HOWIE

Pot, I smell pot.

PETER PUPPET

No?

HOWIE

That's weed. I can smell it right now.

PETER PUPPET

Wait-

HOWIE
He's smoking drugs! On *my* show!

(SANDY sniffs the puppet.)

SANDY
I'll deal with it. *You* need to get yourself under control.

HOWIE
Me? Under control? I want him gone now!

(STEVE enters with ice on his hand.)

STEVE
You asshole. (To SANDY) He's a monster. Look what he did to my hand.

HOWIE
Shake it off, pussy.

SANDY
Howie!

STEVE
I depend on this hand-

HOWIE
Oh, I'm sorry. Did I hurt your jerk off hand? Guess you'll have to shake it lefty style tonight.

STEVE
How dare- This is my livelihood!

HOWIE
Livelihood? All you do is get high and talk with a sock on your hand.

STEVE
Excuse you? I am an artist! You know some Puppeteers get their hands insured?

HOWIE
(Scoffs) Puppeteer?

STEVE
You can talk. You're the one wearing eyeliner. You use a corset for Christ's sake!

HOWIE
It's called a waist trainer!

SANDY

Boys! Howie, go to hair and makeup you're sweating off all your foundation.

HOWIE

Fucking amateurs!

(HOWIE exits.)

SANDY

(Softly) Steve, do you think you could finish the taping?

STEVE

I don't know, I think I need to go to the emergency room.

SANDY

Absolutely, we'll get one of the interns to cover for you.

STEVE

Wait-

SANDY

(To O.S.) Where's Kyle? I need him here.

O.S. VOICE

Who?

SANDY

Kyle! Or Kevin or Calvin. Whatever someone get me an intern with a prepubescent voice, please! (To STEVE) I hope you've been hydrating plenty.

STEVE

Wha-why?

SANDY

Well, you'll need a urine sample for workman's comp.

STEVE

Wait, like a piss test- Well, this ice is starting to work I think. Maybe I could make it to the end of shooting?

SANDY

(Patronizing) You sure?

STEVE

Of course, Sandy. Just as long as you keep- (yelling) that animal in line!

SANDY

Great. (To O.S.) Cecilia, you can disregard the intern, thank you!

(SANDY stuffs the puppet into
STEVE's good hand.)

Might want to give him a bath. He's starting to smell a
little rank. Keep icing that little money maker of yours and
be back to places in 10 minutes. Mmkay?

(STEVE exits. SANDY puts the guitar
on its stand and exits.)

(O.S.) Cecilia! Reset lights to 45.

(END SCENE)

ACT 1

Scene 2

STEVE is sitting on the couch holding up his puppet. The studio is empty.

STEVE

It's just not fair. He's a practically a fossil. What right does he have to treat me like that?

PETER PUPPET

You're right.

STEVE

What's that?

PETER PUPPET

I said you're right, Steve!

STEVE

I am right, aren't I? Why should he get to be so cruel? I've never done anything to him.

PETER PUPPET

He should be lucky to have you.

STEVE

He is lucky!

PETER PUPPET

You should do something.

STEVE

I should do something! Like what?

PETER PUPPET

Well you can't take him down head on.

STEVE

Right.

PETER PUPPET

It's best that we keep under the radar.

STEVE

I see.

PETER PUPPET

You could kill him!

STEVE
What no!

PETER PUPPET
Why not?

STEVE
Because that's heinous!

PETER PUPPET
Fine. (Beat) You could sabotage him.

STEVE
Sabotage?

PETER PUPPET
You could do something to mess with him in front of those kids tomorrow.

STEVE
That's a great idea!

PETER PUPPET
I know.

STEVE
But what could we-

(They look at each other in excitement.)

PETER PUPPET
We could swap his song book!

STEVE
Perfect! We'll write something so sinister that they'll have no choice but to fire him!

PETER PUPPET
Then it can be our show!

STEVE
My own show.

PETER PUPPET
Peter Puppet and Steve Human.

STEVE
We'll need to work on that title but I like where your head's at.

PETER PUPPET
On your jerk off hand?

STEVE
That's not funny.

PETER PUPPET
How do you think I feel?

(STEVE packs the puppet into a
large carpet bag.)

Wait a sec. Wait!

(STEVE exits.)

END SCENE

ACT 1

Scene 3

The guitar stand is gone, a large storybook is beside the chair. SANDY is onstage marking a checklist. The lights are dim.

SANDY

(To Control Booth) Can I get the house lights up?

(Lights up.)

Thank you, Abby.

(STEVE enters wearing a backpack.
He has a puppet on his hand.)

STEVE

Oh, morning Sandy.

PETER PUPPET

Good morning, Sandy!

SANDY

Steve, we talked about this. That's creepy and it makes people uncomfortable.

STEVE

(Disappointed) Okay, Sandy.

(STEVE puts away his puppet.)

SANDY

You're here early. You remember we have a live audience today?

STEVE

Yeah.

SANDY

They're in the second grade. So maybe we can try to not scar them for life?

STEVE

You won't have to worry about me, Sandy.

SANDY

I know I don't. Just try to not to aggravate the diva, okay?

STEVE

Sure thing, Sandy.

SANDY

How's the paw?

STEVE

Oh, my hand? It's okay, still a bit tender.

SANDY

Put some Tiger Balm on it. You'll be fine.

(SANDY exits.)

STEVE

Bitch.

(STEVE takes a book out of his bag and replaces the stage book. HOWIE enters.)

HOWIE

Early for once? You look like garbage. You didn't sleep here, did you?

STEVE

No, I just wanted to get here early for my vocal warm ups.

(STEVE begins working his jaw and smooching his face.)

HOWIE

Vocal warm-ups? You don't do vocal warm-ups.

STEVE

Yeah, I do them all the time.

(STEVE makes loud, obnoxious "hums" and "ha's.")

Red leather, yellow leather. Red leather, yellow-

HOWIE

Alright! Quit it.

STEVE

What? You don't have a warm-up routine?

HOWIE

I do, it's called scotch. Warms the vocal cords and more importantly, the soul. Two for one.

STEVE

You have a soul?

HOWIE

Har-har. All you do is talk in a Mickey Mouse voice. Why do you bother warming up? As long as you keep taking estrogen, you should be just fine.`

STEVE

I don't take estrogen- you know what? You need to learn how to respect your peers and their artistic methods.

HOWIE

Ha! Peer? You think you're my peer?

STEVE

That's right. I have value on this show, just like you. Ever since I came on the ratings have shot up. You need me.

HOWIE

Need you? Listen, I was playing Hamlet for the Royal Shakespeare Company in London while your trailer trash mother was knocked up on her futon downing bottom-shelf gin in your absent father's Budweiser tee-shirt.

STEVE

Wha- She doesn't- you better watch yourself-

HOWIE

"*You better watch yourself.*" Or what?

STEVE

If I quit right now then-

HOWIE

I used to eat little sideshow freaks like you for breakfast. Your generation is so weak. Each new batch just gets weaker and weaker.

STEVE

But-

HOWIE

I wasn't done talking. Listen, punk, I'm not somebody you want to dance with. I've had fish far bigger and bolder than you blacklisted for so much as a sneeze in my general direction. You think you're not replaceable? There are thousands of little freaks, just like you, dying to make a break. So here's what you're gonna do. *You* are gonna waddle back to your dressing room with your dick tucked between your legs, warm that pretty little voice up, grab your little cumsock with googly eyes and be at "places" ready to film this goddamn episode on goddamn friendship!

(HOWIE exits. STEVE puts the puppet
back on his hand.)

PETER PUPPET

Asshole!

STEVE

You don't have googly eyes.

END SCENE

ACT 1

Scene 4

HOWIE is standing center stage.

HOWIE

Hey kids! Glad to have you back for this week's show. And would you look at this, today we have some special guests! introduce yourselves, friends!

(HOWIE motions to the audience. An applause sign flickers on. Sounds of children CHEERING.)

I thought we could begin today's episode with a tale from our great big book of stories!

(HOWIE picks up the book.)

Have you ever lied to somebody before? What about a small white lie? What about a big white lie! Like the great white whale from Moby Dick? (Shakespearean) "*Call me Ishmeal!*" Ahem, let's dig in, shall we?

(BARRY BOOKWORM pops up from behind the couch, the puppet has librarian glasses, the applause light turns on, O.S. the sound of children cheering.)

Oh and I've enlisted the help of my long-time friend, Barry Bookworm!

BARRY BOOKWORM

Hi, Howie! Oh my, we have a lot of new friends here today!

HOWIE

Isn't it great? Barry Bookworm, are you ready to read a story with us?

BARRY BOOKWORM

Sure, Howie! You know I love a good story. I also brought my special book reading glasses!

HOWIE

That's great Barry! Are you ready, friends.

BARRY BOOKWORM

(Over excited) Yeah!

(HOWIE startles at BARRY's excitement.)

HOWIE

Alright, let's get started! "Happy Harold was a little liar. He fibbed his way right through the days, never sorry for his lying ways. He lied and cheated and stole from others. He was a meanie weenie who had tiny-"

(HOWIE scans the page and rips it out.)

Who wrote this?

BARRY BOOKWORM

Huh?

HOWIE

(To AUDIENCE) What is this? (To BARRY BOOKWORM) Did you write this slander, you charlatan?

(HOWIE circles the couch.)

BARRY BOOKWORM

I have no idea what you're talking about. Howie- what about the children!

HOWIE

Who told you about- I'm gonna break both your hands.

(HOWIE wields the book ready to strike, STEVE holds up the puppet in defense.)

STEVE

(Normal voice) Wait, the kids!

(HOWIE freezes and looks at the audience.)

HOWIE

I didn't mean- I'm sorry.

(HOWIE drops the book and exits. SANDY enters and picks it up.)

SANDY

(To STEVE) Are you alright?

(SANDY helps STEVE up. STEVE exits.)

STEVE

I'll be okay.

SANDY

(To AUDIENCE) Hi kids, I am so sorry. It looks like that's our show for today. Howie isn't feeling well but if you please see our friends in the lobby they can give you your very own Barry Bookworm!

(SANDY starts flipping through the book amused as the lights fade.)

END SCENE

ACT 1

Scene 5

SANDY is sitting on the couch looking at the book. STEVE enters and tries to walk by her unnoticed.

SANDY

Hi, Steve.

STEVE

Bye, Sandy!

(SANDY looks up and slams the book closed.)

SANDY

Wait!

(STEVE freezes. SANDY stands and crosses to STEVE.)

You forgot your book.

STEVE

Huh?

SANDY

Your book. Right here. The one you swapped for our song book?

STEVE

I don't know what you're insinuating but I had nothing to do with-

SANDY

Nothing? Who do you think you're talking to?

STEVE

Huh?

SANDY

You obviously rewrote the story we put in the book and filled it with childish jokes. Do you think this is a joke?

STEVE

No?

SANDY

Good because this isn't a joke. This is a job. One that I take very seriously and I don't need pranks like that on my set. Especially in front of all those children.

STEVE

Okay.

SANDY

I've been working in education broadcasting for well over a decade. I've had scores of actors lie to me and let me tell you something, they weren't very good actors. I don't know if it's because I look naive or-

STEVE

Not at all! I really respect you. And I am truly grateful you hired me.

SANDY

Oh, good. Because for a second, I thought I might have spent 6 figures that I don't have and wasted 8 years I can't get back earning my PhD for nothing.

STEVE

You have a PhD?

SANDY

Yes, I have a PhD in Child Development. And apparently, it was for nothing. Because you take me for an idiot.

STEVE

Uh- No, I would never think that-

SANDY

Every morning before I come here I work in a children's clinic helping children in harmful family situations deal with their emotions. Then I come here where I help grown men like you deal with their emotions. I really hope these children grow up to be t

SANDY

Steve, you constantly lie to my face. Do you know why I don't hang my degree in my office? Because it intimidates weak men. Look at me, a degree in Child Development and I spend my days getting paid peanuts to babysit a bunch of whining man-children.

STEVE

Sandy-