

Johnny Shoemaker

Johnny may be a “nerd” but is never the less enchanted by the radiant, mesmerizing fairest of all maidens. With a little (pun intended) help from a questionable elf, Maid Mary agrees to have a date with Johnny and finds she rather enjoys him. But - there could be consequences!

Perfect for Middle and High Schools
or One-Act venues

2M, 2F

Great Stage Publishing



Johnny Shoemaker

**a one-act play
by
Rand Higbee**

Great Stage Publishing

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CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Narrator.....Female, of any age

Johnny.....Male high school student

Mary.....Female high school student

Timmy.....Male, of indeterminate age, something else entirely

TIME AND LOCALE:

It is once upon a time in the magical land of South Dakota. The stage is almost bare except for a few set pieces. There is a sofa and a kitchen table with a few chairs. On the table sits a telephone. It is probably an old fashioned phone...the type that might actually sit on a table.

Note that the script calls the magical land "South Dakota." If you wish to change this to your state or town, feel free to do so.

(At rise, the NARRATOR is found alone on stage. She looks to the audience.)

NARRATOR

Once upon a time, in a far off, magical land known as South Dakota, a great adventure took place. There lived in magical South Dakota a quite unremarkable, very ordinary young man. He was known as Johnny Shoemaker.

(JOHNNY enters and stands a few steps away from the NARRATOR.)

NARRATOR

Johnny attended a great institution of learning known as High School. The institution was quite well renowned for the many warriors it produced on the field of football and the court of basketball. Poor Johnny himself, however, did not possess any of these warrior abilities.

JOHNNY

No, I did not.

NARRATOR

He did, however, possess great prowess in the study of Mathematics!

JOHNNY

I did! I do!

NARRATOR

However, this helped Johnny not at all in attracting the attention of fair maidens.

JOHNNY

No. It did not.

(A beat.)

I was also involved in Theatre!

NARRATOR

This, however, helped even less in attracting the fair maidens.

JOHNNY

That's true.

NARRATOR

One magical year a new fair maiden appeared at High School. It was said she was the fairest of all fair maidens! She was named Mary Gruelle and her face shown with such beauty that people had to shield their eyes when they first beheld her.

(MARY enters and stands a few steps from the others. The NARRATOR and JOHNNY must shield their eyes from her beauty for several moments.)

NARRATOR

Mary's beauty was so dazzling that within a few short weeks of arriving at High School she became a Princess in the Court of Homecoming. Not Queen, mind you, for she was a little too new for that, but a Princess nonetheless. Mary's beauty won her many, many suitors who asked her to accompany them to a great feast or to a magical lantern theatrical performance. However, Mary turned all these suitors down.

MARY

(Pointing to a different location for each "No!")

No! No! No!

NARRATOR

With each "No!" the unfortunate suitor was hurled into a fiery, bottomless pit never to be heard from again.

MARY

There is no pit

NARRATOR

A fiery, bottomless pit!

MARY

There is no pit.

NARRATOR

When Johnny Shoemaker first beheld the fair maiden he was struck both blind and dumb.

MARY

That's not true either.

JOHNNY

Actually, that one is true. But just temporarily. 24 hours. It was just that...I had never beheld such beauty before!

NARRATOR

Never!

JOHNNY

She was more beautiful than a Euclidean proof!

NARRATOR

Which can be quite a beautiful thing!

JOHNNY

Is this the face that launched a thousand video games?

NARRATOR

Whatever that means.

JOHNNY

Beauty may only be skin deep, but she's got the deepest skin I've ever seen.

NARRATOR

Immediately upon beholding Mary, Johnny knew he would have to risk the fiery, bottomless pit—

MARY

There is no pit.

NARRATOR

--and attempt to woo the fair maiden. But alas! Johnny was a mere nobody of a Math student. What chance of success stood he when so many of the fiercest warriors had failed?

JOHNNY

But I had to try.

(MARY exits as JOHNNY sits down at the table with the phone.)

NARRATOR

So one Friday eve, when all his many chores had been completed, Johnny sat down at the instant vocal communication device, which a wizard had invented some years before, and contemplated hailing the fairest of all fair maidens.

JOHNNY

I must. I can't. I must. I can't. I must. I absolutely cannot! But I must try.

NARRATOR

Of course, Johnny had no experience in successfully wooing a fair maiden.

JOHNNY

Successfully, no, but over the years I have assembled quite a list of tactics to avoid when asking a girl out.

(JOHNNY hands the NARRATOR a notebook which she opens up to read.)

NARRATOR

"Number one: Avoid mathematical humor. Number two: No matter how cute, avoid complimenting any of her various body parts."

JOHNNY

Except eyes. Somehow eyes are okay.

NARRATOR

May I suggest that you find common ground?

JOHNNY

We have no common ground.

NARRATOR

Opposites attract.

JOHNNY

(Pointing to the notebook.)

Number seven.

NARRATOR

(Reading.)

“Opposites definitely do not attract.”

(JOHNNY begins to rehearse his phone call.)

JOHNNY

Hello. This is Johnny Shoemaker. I sit in front of you in Lit class. Hello. This is Johnny Shoemaker. I sit behind you in History. I have a really good view of your—Hello. This is Johnny Shoemaker. That’s right, the guy who passed out last Friday in Biology class. Hello. This is Johnny Shoemaker.

NARRATOR

This continued for 45 minutes.

JOHNNY

I’ll call her tomorrow. Or I’ll see her in school next week. Or... Oh, who am I fooling? I’ll never have the courage to call her up.

(JOHNNY slowly exits.)

NARRATOR

Humbled and defeated, Johnny slowly went to his bedroom chambers and fell asleep, presumably to dream of the most radiant of all radiant smiles. Late the afternoon next, a Saturday, Johnny was seated on the sofa playing magical lantern representations of warrior games while enjoying a snort of his favorite energy drink.

(JOHNNY re-enters, sits on the sofa and starts to play video games while drinking an energy drink. After a moment he gives the NARRATOR a look.)

JOHNNY

A snort?

NARRATOR

Precisely. What happened next would stir the imaginations of both poets and dreamers alike. There was a knock on the door.

JOHNNY
(Calls out.)

Get your butt in here!

NARRATOR
Said Johnny, assuming the knock was from his close companion Billy.

(MARY enters.)

MARY
Hi, Johnny. What did you say?

JOHNNY
Oh. I was... talking to the monster on my video game. Not to you, Mary.

MARY
Oh.

(JOHNNY suddenly realizes that MARY is actually standing before him.)

JOHNNY
Mary?

MARY
So. Are you ready?

JOHNNY
Of course I'm ready!

(A beat.)
What am I ready for?

MARY
Our date!

JOHNNY
Our date?

MARY
You were going to take me to see a movie.

NARRATOR
(Whispers as if not wishing to disturb the scene.)
She means a magical lantern theatrical performance.

MARY
(To the NARRATOR.)

No, I don't.

(To JOHNNY.)

Silly. You didn't forget, did you?

JOHNNY
Of course I didn't forget. It's just that...is it time already?

MARY
It is.

JOHNNY
I was just... I mean I thought... It's just that... Where does the time go?

NARRATOR
(Quietly to the audience.)
It goes to Cleveland.

MARY
(Pointing to JOHNNY's clothes.)
Is that what you're wearing?

(JOHNNY experiences a few moments of terror as he tries to decide if what he has on should be what he wears on his date. Finally...)

JOHNNY
Yes?

MARY
Cool. Oh, thank you so much for the flowers.

JOHNNY
Flowers?

MARY
How did you know tulips were my favorite?

JOHNNY
Oh. Because...you...have two lips.

MARY
Silly boy. Come on. Let's go.

(MARY grabs JOHNNY by the arm and the two walk off. They don't exit the stage, however, but only circle around for a bit and stop down stage facing the audience.)

NARRATOR

Johnny and Mary had a wonderful time at the magical lantern theatrical performance. They ate beans of the juju.

(JOHNNY and MARY mime eating candy.)

They ate corn which had exploded.

(JOHNNY and MARY mime eating popcorn.)

They laughed.

(JOHNNY and MARY laugh.)

They cried.

(MARY sobs a little, but JOHNNY does not.)

JOHNNY

I don't cry at movies.

NARRATOR

They learned a great many secrets about each other.

JOHNNY

(As if sharing a secret with the audience.)

Mary says she loves vampire movies, but she's never heard of Bela Lugosi! How could that be?

MARY

(Also as if sharing a secret with the audience.)

There is a genuine possibility that Johnny is, of all things, a nerd. But strangely, I find that rather compelling.

NARRATOR

The evening out together was a success and led to giddy expectations over what adventures might lay ahead the following weekend. Friday next Johnny again found himself alone with that terrifying instant communication device.

(MARY exits as once again JOHNNY sits down at the table by the telephone.)

JOHNNY

All right, Johnny. You had a great time at the movies last weekend.

NARRATOR

You both did.

JOHNNY

We both did. Mary seemed to enjoy being with me.

NARRATOR

She did.

JOHNNY

Disregarding the fact that it's completely illogical for the most beautiful woman on the planet to actually enjoy your company—

NARRATOR

Do not discourage yourself.

JOHNNY

I won't.

NARRATOR

You did it before and you can do it again.

JOHNNY

Exactly. I called her on the phone, asked her out, and she said "yes."

NARRATOR

Precisely.

JOHNNY

Only I didn't.

NARRATOR

You didn't.

JOHNNY

But I must have!

NARRATOR

You must have!

JOHNNY

I remember trying to ask her out. I remember being really nervous. Then I remember giving up and going to bed.

NARRATOR

And yet somehow the invitation was passed and accepted. The fair maiden enjoyed your company. Now you have confidence.

JOHNNY

I have confidence.

(Stares at the telephone.)

Only not too much.

NARRATOR

Destiny awaits.

(JOHNNY considers this a moment, then begins to rehearse his phone call.)

JOHNNY

Hello, this is Johnny Shoemaker. We went out last weekend. We really did. Hello, this is Johnny Shoemaker. Sorry about spilling the Coke. Hello, this is Johnny Shoemaker. The guy who had the pleasure of your company... Hello, this is Johnny Shoemaker. Unless you're a very good actress, I think you enjoyed being with me last weekend. Hello.

NARRATOR

This continued for 45 minutes.

JOHNNY

I can't do it! I just can't do it!

(JOHNNY gets up from the table and exits.)

NARRATOR

Once again the fainthearted Johnny—

(JOHNNY runs back on stage.)

JOHNNY

I prefer "reticent."

(JOHNNY quickly re-exits.)

NARRATOR

Once again the fainthearted Reticent was unable to complete the invitation. He ran to his bedroom chambers and went to bed, hiding his tears from the world. The next afternoon, now this time it may not surprise you as much, in fact you may anticipate the soon to be turn of events, Reticent was once again seated on his sofa playing games.

(JOHNNY re-enters and sits on the sofa. He starts playing a video game. The NARRATOR is about to speak again but JOHNNY quickly cuts her off.)

JOHNNY

And I didn't cry. I wasn't hiding any tears from the world.

NARRATOR

We're past that now. It's the afternoon next. Once again there was a knock at the door.

JOHNNY

Come in?

MARY
(Entering.)

Hi, Johnny.

NARRATOR
Said Mary, not realizing he now preferred to be called "Reticent."

JOHNNY
Actually, let's go back to "Johnny."

NARRATOR
As you will.

MARY
You ready?

JOHNNY
Oh. Yes. I am. I think. I mean... I was born ready!

MARY
Born ready. My, my. Come on.

(MARY grabs JOHNNY and starts to drag him off stage.)

JOHNNY
Can I ask a question?

MARY
Sure.

JOHNNY
Where are we going?

MARY
On our date.

JOHNNY
And...where are we going on our date.

MARY
Silly boy.

JOHNNY
Yes.

(A beat.)
But seriously. Where are we going?

(MARY doesn't respond but instead starts again to pull JOHNNY off stage. They don't exit, however, instead they again walk in a circle and end up downstage facing the audience.)

NARRATOR

That night Johnny and Mary dined in royal opulence.

(A beat.)

JOHNNY

We did?

NARRATOR

They dined in a castle! With a King!

JOHNNY

We did?

NARRATOR

The King of the Burgers!

JOHNNY

Oh.

NARRATOR

They laughed!

(JOHNNY and MARY laugh.)

They drank carbonated beverages!

(JOHNNY gives the NARRATOR a confused look. MARY whispers to him.)

MARY

Soda.

(JOHNNY looks blankly at her.)

Pop.

JOHNNY

Oh.

NARRATOR

They ate cow sandwiches! They ate elongated pieces of fried potatoes! A splendid time was had by all!

MARY

Until next time, Johnny!

(MARY gives JOHNNY a hug, then quickly walks away and exits.)

JOHNNY

Yes. Next time. Speaking of which maybe next Saturday we could, I mean if you wanted, the two of us could...

(He looks after her, but she is gone.)

Oh, shoot.

NARRATOR

Johnny was left with two mysteries.

JOHNNY

Only two?

NARRATOR

Number one, how were his desires for Mary's companionship getting passed onto her if he was not consciously aware of doing it himself?

JOHNNY

Yes.

NARRATOR

And number two, why would the fairest of all fair maidens be interested in spending time with Johnny in the first place?

JOHNNY

That's not a mystery! It's just that...she and I...it's sort of like when...I mean... All right. It's a mystery.

NARRATOR

The next Friday eve Johnny set out to solve at least one of those mysteries.

(JOHNNY sits down at the table and looks at the phone.)

JOHNNY

I'm going to make that phone call now. I'm going to call up Mary and ask her out on a date.

(A beat.)

NARRATOR

45 minutes later.

JOHNNY

Oh, I give up. I'll never work up the courage to ask Mary out. I'm going to bed now.

(JOHNNY gets up from the table and hides behind a nearby chair.)

NARRATOR

But Johnny didn't go to his bedroom chambers. He hid behind a chair where he could keep an eye on the instant communication device. If he wasn't making the calls, perhaps someone else was instead. Johnny didn't have to wait long. Only 10 minutes later...

(TIMMY enters. He is an elf.)

TIMMY

Hoity-toity pudding and pie,
Johnny Shoemaker is much too shy!
Higgledy-Piggledy turnips and seed,
'Tis Timmy the Elf must do the deed!

(TIMMY sits at the table and dials the phone.)

TIMMY

(Into the phone.)

Hello, Mary. It's your dreamboat, Johnny Shoemaker. So we've done dinner and we've done a movie. How about tomorrow we throw caution to the wind and do dinner and a movie? Be at my place at six o'clock. Aloha!

(TIMMY hangs up the phone and then goes skipping off stage humming a little tune to himself. JOHNNY slowly comes out from behind the chair.)

NARRATOR

Johnny was flabbergasted by what he had seen.

JOHNNY

I am flabbergasted.

NARRATOR

He was stupefied.

JOHNNY

I am stupid...

(Looks at the NARRATOR.)

I am what?

NARRATOR

He was dumbstruck.

JOHNNY

I am dumbstruck.

NARRATOR

Which means you cannot speak.

JOHNNY

Which means I cannot speak.

(A beat.)

But then I improved.

NARRATOR

Johnny and Mary met on their appointed rendezvous the next day.

(MARY enters and crosses to JOHNNY.)

MARY

Hello, Johnny Shoemaker.

JOHNNY

Hi.

(Again MARY grabs hold of JOHNNY and they walk around the set until stopping downstage facing the audience.)

NARRATOR

They ate.

(JOHNNY and MARY mime eating.)

They drank.

(JOHNNY and MARY mime drinking.)

They laughed.

(JOHNNY and MARY laugh.)

But all the while a burning question dominated Johnny's thoughts. Towards the end of the evening he found the courage to broach the subject, although in a rather oblique manner.

JOHNNY

Mary, when I speak to you on the phone, do I sound different?

MARY

Different how?

JOHNNY

Not quite myself?

MARY

Not quite yourself how?

JOHNNY

Different?

MARY

Different how?

JOHNNY

Not quite myself?

MARY

Not quite yourself how?