

Showtime

By

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Based on the short story
It's Showtime
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INT. OLD MOVIE THEATRE LOBBY: DAY

Old and badly maintained lobby of a vaudevillian theater that was converted into a movie theater. SHANNON (a nervous woman in her late teens) UNLOCKS the door and relocks it behind her. She slowly walks into the vestibule.

INT. THEATER VESTIBULE: DAY

Shannon stops at the door, leading to the dark auditorium. WILLIAM (dynamic 60-something man) WALKS from the office and turns on the vestibule lights.

SHANNON
(startled/angry)
How did you get in?

WILLIAM
(teasing)
Through the door just like you. We expected you earlier. We wanted to give you a grand send off.

SHANNON
Are you from the home office?

WILLIAM
You can say that.

SHANNON
We didn't expect you.

WILLIAM
Last look around?

SHANNON
I'm not sure I'm leaving.

WILLIAM
(surprised and confused)
Why pray tell not?

SHANNON
I can go next year.
(looking into the auditorium)
It needs me.

WILLIAM
(kindly)
You aren't the first to call it home. Many people like us found our place here.

(CONTINUED)

SHANNON

What do you mean people like us?

WILLIAM

The actors, the musicians, the singers, the dancers, the writers like you, all those believed their talents could make a difference in spite of the odds.

SHANNON

It's a dream. Nothing more.

WILLIAM

Talent you have. What you lack the skills to make it real. The university will give you the knowledge that you lack. It's okay to be afraid. The unknown is scary.

SHANNON

(facing him defiantly)

I'm not scared!

WILLIAM

Yes you are. But it's okay. That's when we learn the most.

SHANNON

I can't.

WILLIAM

Fear can motivate or hold you back. Letting it stop you blocks the flow. It's time for you to move on to make room for the next one. Just like room was made for you. Until you do, neither can anyone else.

SHANNON

That's not fair! I'm not ready!

Shannon runs to the office door and opens it.

WILLIAM

If you weren't, you wouldn't have applied. They wouldn't have accepted you.

Shannon turns. William has disappeared. She slowly walks back to the auditorium and looks inside.

(CONTINUED)

SHANNON
I wish it were true.

The house lights slowly come up. Confused, Shannon walks down the aisle.

INT. AUDITORIUM: DAY

The PIANO PLAYER (Confident mid 20-something man) begins playing the piano in the orchestra pit. Shannon walks toward him. An USHER (man in late teens dressed in an antique uniform, who looks like a younger William) GREETs her.

USHER
'Bout time you got her. We were waiting for you.

SHANNON
(startled)
What's going on?

Shannon follows him to the front row.

USHER
It's your going away celebration.
We're very late.

The house lights go down as the stage lights go up.

USHER (CONT.)
(sitting in a seat)
We had to cancel some of acts.

SHANNON
Who's we?

USHER
(pointing to the stage)
Shush.

The music changes. The curtains part. Dressed as a hobo, a MIME (70 something man) DANCES a soft shoe. The Piano Player flirts with Shannon. She flirts back.

USHER
(annoyed he points at the stage)
He's always been one of the best.

Snickering, the Piano player speeds up. The Mime keeps up with complicated dance step.

(CONTINUED)

SHANNON
He's amazing.

USHER
He only dances for very special
people.

The Mime fakes falling down and waggles his finger at the Piano Player. The Usher and Shannon laugh. The Mime fakes seeing them for first time and motions for her to join him.

USHER (CONT.)
(surprised)
Wow! He's inviting up. Go!

Shannon shakes her head.

SHANNON
I can't dance.

Putting his hand on his chest, the Mime mimics his heart beating.

USHER (CONT.)
(pushing her)
It's a very special honor.

The Piano Player encourages her to go up. Reluctantly, Shannon goes on stage. The Mime teaches her the basic steps. The Piano Player plays. Shannon and the Mime dance. The Usher and those behind the curtain cheer. The song ends. The Mime walks toward the curtain opening. He kisses MIRIAM (a colorfully dressed 60 something woman) as he exits and she ENTERS.

MIRIAM
I'm the Amazing Miriam. I'm going
to tell your future.

SHANNON
You're a psychic?

MIRIAM
Mentalist darling. I see all and
tell all.

MIME
(poking his head out between
the curtains)
Like anyone could keep you quiet.

(CONTINUED)

MIRIAM
Mimes are silent.

The Mime makes a funny face at her and closes the curtains with a flourish.

SHANNON
(sarcastic)
Right, I'm going to be rich,
famous, and fall in love with the
sexiest man in the world.

USHER
You're too young for me.

MIRIAM
Such a cynic at such a young
age. No matter.

SHANNON
We're same age!

USHER
Actually, I'm--

MIRIAM
(cutting him off)
Billy be nice!

SHANNON
I know my future. I'm going to stay
and rebuild the theater back to its
glory days.

MIRIAM
Au contraire. Your destiny lies
elsewhere.
(looking into Shannon's eyes)
I see sadness and loneliness. For a
long time, you felt this way. I
hear others telling you not to
try. You'll never be good enough.

Crying, Shannon tries to leave the stage.

MIRIAM (CONT.)
It's all a lie. They were afraid to
try. And now they are trying to
stop you so they feel better about
their choices. But my sweet girl,
even now, you have an amazing
talent. You will get your wish, but
not in the way you expect.

(CONTINUED)

MIME (OS)

Geeze, talking about making a point
the hard way. Just tell her that
not trying means failure.

MIRIAM

But when you try and keep trying
you never really fail.

MIME (OS)

Geeze!

SHANNON

But why do I have to leave? I can
work here and still write.

Miriam shakes her head.

MIME

(walking out)

Your real stories are out there
waiting for you to be able to tell
them.

USHER

I didn't want to leave either.
Working here was comfortable. But
if I hadn't...I wouldn't have found
what I was actually looking for.

Distant bangs echo. The Piano Player starts playing a waltz.
The Usher helps Shannon off the stage.

SHANNON

I don't want it to be over.

USHER

(walking onto the stage)

It's not over. It's just
beginning.

MIME

You're now part of the
family. Talent speaks to talent.
We stand with each other when chips
are down and celebrate when the
good times roll in. Remember that
and you'll always have someone in
your corner.

MIRIAM

For a mime you sure talk a lot.

(CONTINUED)

MIME
(kissing her cheek)
You my darling give me a lot to
say.

Miriam, The Mime and The Usher exit through the part in the curtains. The music stops. The Piano player walks to Shannon.

SHANNON
I know you.

PIANO PLAYER
You will.

He kisses her.

PIANO PLAYER
See ya later.

SHANNON
Don't leave.

PIANO PLAYER
We'll meet again.
(whispering in her ear)
I'm real. And I'm waiting for you.

He quickly kisses her again and disappears behind the curtain. The banging becomes more insistent. Shannon runs out as the stage lights fade out.

INT. THEATER VESTIBULE:DAY

Shannon stops at the auditorium door and stares into the darkness. She smiles. The banging continues.

INT. OLD MOVIE THEATRE LOBBY: DAY

Taking the keys from her pocket, Shannon enters from the vestibule. KAREN (women in her late 20's) and STEVE (man in his early 20's) WAIT outside the door. She unlocks the door and they enter.

SHANNON
Sorry. I was having a last look
around.

KAREN
Last look? Who you kidding?

(CONTINUED)

SHANNON
(giving the keys to Steve)
Your turn.

STEVE
Aren't you going to help me?

Shannon shakes her head.

STEVE (CONT.)
I'm still having trouble opening
the safe.

SHANNON
Then you'd best get too it.

Reluctantly Steve takes the keys and walks to the vestibule.

KAREN
What are you going to do?

SHANNON
Clean out my desk. Eat popcorn and
watch the movie.
(walking to the front door)
But first, I'm going to say
good-bye to the rest of the
town. I don't think I'll be back.
(stopping)
Make me a special batch of popcorn.

KAREN
(amused)
You're never going to eat popcorn
again.

SHANNON
Not here.

Shannon leaves.