

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 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 as. 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.

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 (woman 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.