

THEATRE GHOSTS:

CALIFORNIA BOUND

a play

by

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CHARACTERS

SHEILA

A Theatre nerd who never made it professionally. She tried and burnt her bridges..too proud to return home with her tail between her legs.

MAX

Sheila's boyfriend..a series of poor life choices accompanied by just bad luck has led him to live on the street.

MAX is prone to seizures. These are NOT drug related though many observers consider them so due to his economic situation.

"PAT"

(whose birth name is also Max [Maxwell/Maxine?]) A transitioning individual; not ready to commit to either male nor female. They (as "Pat" prefers to refer to *themselves*) ran out of money and courage at the same time.

THE SETTING

Here. (the actual theatre space the play is being presented in.)

THE TIME

Now. (after midnight)

The story takes place in current time in the actual venue it is being presented in. Lines pertaining to the venue, the light/tech booth, the proximity from Austin, Texas and New York City, should all be adjusted to match the venue's own layout and geographic location. Similarly, the characters should be dressed to match the weather conditions currently present on each performance. (If it's snowing, their clothing should be layered accordingly; if it's raining, their hair (at least) should be wet. etc.)

"PAT" decorates for whatever Holiday seems closest on the calendar and dialogue adjusted to meet whether that Holiday is upcoming or just passed. References to a Holiday where gifts are exchanged may be changed to match any gift giving Holiday that seems appropriate.

Dialogue referencing "PAT" 's genitalia should be adjusted to align with the actor's biological casting.

A list of alterations as well as a few grammatical comments are included as an appendage to this script.

With so much theatre being created for 90 minutes or less presentations, theatres often close their doors by ten at night. Leaving venues dark, yet available to create additional revenue and/or bring in a new audience; one that doesn't even consider night life starting till after 9:00.

THEATRE GHOSTS is a series of 'after hours' theatre. One act plays that are intended to be performed on a stage already in place for another production, regardless whether that production be *Noises off*, *Music Man*, *As You Like It* or *Raisin in the Sun*. The *Theatre Ghosts* plays utilize each venue as a theatre space—generally the same theatre space itself that the audience is attending...any dialogue pertaining to location or venue may and should be adjusted to match the venue.

SYNOPSIS

Three transients in their twenties steal shelter for the night in a theatre.

A NOTE ON THE DIALOGUE:

1. A slash “ / ” indicates the character with the next line of dialogue begins his or her speech (overlapping dialogue).
2. Dialogue in brackets “ [] ” is unspoken, although the character is thinking it.
3. Dialogue in parenthesis “ () ” is spoken aloud but is an aside.
4. Grammatical errors; sentences beginning in lower case; or UPPER CASE; used in place of common punctuation (even a few misspellings), were, indeed, intended.

SCENE 1

(A Ghost light [at most].

A light flashes.

Someone is moving along the stage.

Another light flashes. A series of flashes continue as we [the audience] come to realize someone or someones is/are using their phone(s) to take pictures of the set. In the dark.

There are lights flashed elsewhere in the building as well...offstage, in the direction of the tech booth.)

OK.	FEMALE VOICE ONSTAGE
OK?	VOICE OFFSTAGE
OK.	MALE VOICE ONSTAGE
OK.	FEMALE VOICE ONSTAGE
Ok, hit it.	MALE VOICE ONSTAGE
Got it. Coming up.	VOICE OFFSTAGE
What're you doing?	MALE VOICE ONSTAGE
I'm getting the lights.	VOICE OFFSTAGE
Well do so already.	FEMALE VOICE ONSTAGE
I am.	VOICE OFFSTAGE

(No lights but music comes up)

MALE VOICE ONSTAGE

That's not the lights.

VOICE OFFSTAGE

I'm working on it.

FEMALE VOICE ONSTAGE

Are you?

(VOICE OFFSTAGE's name is not Clive:)

Jesus, Clive.

VOICE OFFSTAGE

Fuck you.

(The sound goes up.)

FEMALE VOICE ONSTAGE

(VOICE OFFSTAGE's name is not Bernard:)

Bernard!!

VOICE OFFSTAGE

Sheila!!

(Lights up.

We see now there are two backpack clad people onstage:
Sheila and Max.

Their attire should fit with the prevailing actual weather conditions outside. If it's wet outside, Sheila and Max should appear to have come in out of the rain. Same would go for snow and/or any other climate or element conditions existing when and where the play is taking place.)

MAX

(Calling up to the booth:)

Thank you.

(The music is turned off.)

SHEILA

No, leave it on, I like the music.

MAX

But not so loud.

VOICE OFFSTAGE

Tell me when.

(The music comes back on again; volume adjusts till it sits just underneath the scene.)

SHEILA

There.

MAX

Is it a radio or / a [recording]?

VOICE OFFSTAGE

A tape—I don't know, I just hit a button.

MAX

What button did y—

VOICE OFFSTAGE

I'[ll] figure it out.

SHEILA

Just leave it. I like it.

VOICE OFFSTAGE

(Their voice is moving away now:)

You would.

SHEILA

Fuck you too, Homer.

(VOICE OFFSTAGE's name is not Homer.)

(SHEILA and MAX come together in their stolen moment. They hold each other, kiss and hold again. They are a couple. But there are three people here so Max and Sheila steal their moments when they can.

Our third member enters from a theatre aisle pushing a stolen grocery cart filled with their belongings. For the purposes of our script, we will call this person "PAT". "PAT" is neither male nor female, genderfluid is how they would refer to themselves. Max addresses/refers to "Pat" by pronouns while Sheila makes up names for "Pat" as she

thinks of them. Also, for purposes of our scripting “Pat” will be referred to as *they/them/theirs*.

“Pat” has also come in out of the same atmospheric conditions Max and Sheila have so bundled accordingly. Tonight, this theatre will be all their home. “PAT” sits in an unoccupied seat in the theatre’s front row. Putting their feet up on the cart.)

MAX

You clean the wheels on that thing?

“PAT”

Of course I cleaned the wheels.

MAX

Cuz I don’t want to spend half an hour washing shit off the carpet.

“PAT”

It *wasn’t* shit.

MAX

It *was* shit.

“PAT”

It *wasn’t* shit.

SHEILA

It was *shit*.

“PAT”

Ok, it was shit—damn. They’re clean, ok.

SHEILA

Love you, Myrna.

“PAT”

You too.

(Already reading the room:)

[ohhhh] Don’t make me go outside already. Can’t you use a dressing room or something like that?

SHEILA

They got a couch.

MAX

They might have a bed if they have a prop room.

SHEILA

Oh my god, an actual bed.

“PAT”

[Stop talking:] I don't want to hear it.

SHEILA

You know I'm a screamer.

“PAT”

Yes. We all know.

(Through the following:

SHEILA retrieves some food and drink out of the shopping cart as MAX starts removing various domestic items such as blankets, a lantern, pillow cases, books, possibly a laptop, electrical extension cord, surge protector attachment with dedicated cords already plugged in for their electronics and cellphone chargers. MAX goes about the task of setting up home along an empty area of the stage, making a point NOT to disturb the set itself. “PAT” eventually joins in the ritual: setting up a picnic area. They have a routine: they know what they're doing:)

SHEILA

So, you were saying?

(No one responds:)

Outside.

“PAT”

(A fifty-fifty shot:)

Are you talking to me?

SHEILA

Before we came in here, yes; you said you didn't want to say anything out on the [road]—you didn't like the way those guys in the parking lot were eyeing us.

“PAT”

Cuz I didn't.

SHEILA

So, what were you saying?

“PAT”

I—I don’t know.

SHEILA

Sure you do; it was two minutes ago.

“PAT”

Nope.

SHEILA

You don’t remember something you wanted to tell me just two minutes ago?

“PAT”

(Sincerely disregarding whatever ‘it’ was:)

Guess it wasn’t important.

MAX

Maybe he doesn’t want to say it in front of me.

“PAT”

Really Max, how long’ve you known me?

MAX

(Keeping his eye rolling to himself:)

Maybe *they* don’t want to say anything in front of me.

“PAT”

Thank you.

SHEILA

(Handing “Pat” a bottled beer:)

Open this.

SHEILA (Continued:)

(As “PAT” begins to open the beer using their teeth as a churchkey.)

Not with your teeth—jesus—

(But it’s too late. “PAT” offers Sheila the opened beer.)

SHEILA (Continued:)

(Getting herself another beer instead:)

Drink that yourself; its already got your slime all over it.

(“PAT” watches as SHEILA opens the second beer herself between the bars of the shopping cart. If there is any spillage it is immediately and completely wiped up. Meanwhile “PAT” busies themselves now by placing Holiday decorations for the closest [upcoming or recent] Holiday around the stage.)

SHEILA

You really don't remember?

“PAT”

(Continuing on task:)

If it's important it'll come back around. It's like a thought: leaving the station then taking a tour around the city and if the thought was any good it's gonna stay on for the full ride, otherwise it might hop off on third street and never see it again—and if that's the case: good riddance.

MAX

(Referring to the decorations:)

Why do you have to do that? Why does they have to do that?

SHEILA

It's festive. / Right?

MAX

It's not festive, it's stupid. And it isn't even Halloween anymore.

SHEILA

You celebrate your way, I'll celebrate mine.

MAX

You're putting it away.

“PAT”

Did I ask for your help; I'm putting it out on my own, aren't I?
When I grew up / we had a—

MAX

When you grew up I'm sure you had a room with a door on it, / so nobody [was forced to see how you decorate].

SHEILA

You got a door?

(Helping "Pat" arrange:)

Whaddo you want for Veteran's Day?

MAX

It's not Christmas; we're not exchanging gifts.

SHEILA

Who said anything about exchanging gifts?; I just wanna know what Shelley wants.

"PAT"

We're not exchanging gifts.

SHEILA

[I heard you clearly the first time] But what do you *want*?

MAX

And anyway you have to be Christian.

SHEILA

You just—you don't have to be a Chris—you just have to be American. If you're American you can celebrate any Holiday you want irregardless. / You just—

"PAT"

Regardless.

SHEILA (Continued:)

—have to be alive.

"PAT"

There is no "irregardless"

SHEILA

(Quickly taking the upper road—rather than engaging in a routine argument—a toast:)

To being alive.

MAX

Memorial Day?

SHEILA

(She continues her toast undeterred:)

Alive.

(She offers to clink beers with “Pat”):

“PAT”

Alive.

SHEILA

Alive.

(To Max:)

Alive. alive.

MAX

alive.

SHEILA

god, I almost believe you.

(She shares a drink of her beer with Max though she doesn't go so far as to let go of the bottle. She stays a moment more with him:)

So whaddo you want? You're not going to get it—you're not going to get it: problem solved—we're just sharing what we *want*.

MAX

(Because of course it's a test:)

You.

SHEILA

Good answer.

(She drinks to the answer. To “Pat”):

And whaddo you want?

“PAT”

Peace. And quiet.

SHEILA

Not Moi?

“PAT”

Sorry.

SHEILA

[“Peace and quiet”:] For all the world or just you?

“PAT”

For all the world: I’m feeling generous.

SHEILA

But what about all the people in the world who don’t want peace and quiet?; some people want noise and celebration.

“PAT”

Then just for me.

SHEILA

A moment of silence then / [for my dear friend..whoever he/she/they may be].

“PAT”

(Not allowing for said moment:)

And you?

SHEILA

(And yet she gives a beat of silence before responding all the same...before answering:)

Me what?

MAX

Are you really gonna make us / say it?

“PAT”

Whaddo / you want?

SHEILA

(In her best Cockney [ala My Fair Lady]:)

*“Alls I want iz a room sumwhere.
Fars away from d kold nights ai[r].
Wif one enormous chai[r]
Awww wouldn’t it be / luverly”
“Somunz [h]ead restin’ on mey knee—*

“PAT”

Ok, I’ve change my mind, I want peace and quiet for all of us.

SHEILA

Challenge accepted.

(They all go suddenly radio silent. This is a showdown: who can last the longest in silence. They listen. They take account of each other. We have no idea how long this may last...)

The music in the background changes. A new song comes on. An unexpected choice. SHEILA’s eyes go: “OOOOOH, I LOVE THIS SONG” but she can not sing it. Nor dance to it. Nor even move. It is the rules of the bet. We make it through the first verse.)

MAX

This is stupid.

(“PAT” motions only with their fingers: Max is out and Sheila and “Pat” are still playing.)

MAX goes about to set out the meal. As he does so he taunts both Sheila and “Pat” into the rhythms of the music. This goes on for at least twenty seconds until “PAT”’s toe or knee or some part of their anatomy begins to subtly tap or twitch in rhythm. SHEILA notices and jumps up victorious—to which “PAT” immediately follows suit as if Sheila were the first to move—almost simultaneously claiming the win.)

SHEILA

You moved first.

“PAT”

Did not.

SHEILA

U-hunh.

“PAT”

How / [do you figure]?

MAX
You moved first, Dude.

“PAT”
How do you figure?

MAX
Your / hand—

SHEILA
Your hand!

MAX
Your thumb to be precise.

“PAT”
(Blaming Max:)
It’s *your* fault.

MAX
Yes, it is.

“PAT”
Why would you do that; you lost?

MAX
Or did I?

“PAT”
Don’t. Just go to the lobby and pound it out.

SHEILA
God, you’re a romantic.

SHEILA
(Noticing Max has stopped.. transfixed on something:)
You okay?

MAX
(Hearing something outside:)
What was that?

“PAT”
Don’t change / the subject.

MAX

No: I—

(MAX instinctively goes silent they all listen for only an instant then immediately move into action:

“PAT” heads back off upstairs.

SHEILA moves the beer bottles clear of detection as she pulls up all four corners of their picnic blanket while MAX wheels the shopping cart to the aisle closest the stage. The folded spread goes into the cart; MAX and SHEILA pick up the cart, moving it further out of the theatre without making a sound as

The Lights go OFF. One of our trios’ phones cast a light somewhere on or near the stage.

There is a moment. We hear a noise from the lobby. Doors opening/possibly voices as the

Music shuts OFF.

Both the Ghost light AND the phone light fade to black.)

SCENE 2

(The ghost light—and ONLY the ghost light returns as

We hear the pull of the doors leading outside—confirming everything is locked up tight.

A beat.)

Godammit. "PAT" (FROM THE TECH BOOTH)

(shhh.) SHEILA (OFFSTAGE)

(fuck.) "PAT" (FROM THE TECH BOOTH)

(Ethel.) SHEILA (OFFSTAGE)

(A beat.)

"PAT" (FROM THE TECH BOOTH)
They took my fucking phone.

MAX (OFFSTAGE)
(They could..come back so just [shut up for a minute, will ya?])

"PAT" (FROM THE TECH BOOTH)
God fucking dammit

SHEILA (OFFSTAGE)
(Shut the fuck up.)

(The lights and sound come back up...a bit too abruptly.
An annoying song to say the least:)

MUSIC
1-8-7-7-Kars-4-Kids

(lucy!) SHEILA (OFFSTAGE)

MUSIC (Continuing:)

K-A-R-S Kars—

(The sound cuts immediately off.
A slight beat. MAX and SHEILA begin to re-emerge.)

“PAT” (FROM THE TECH BOOTH)

Fuck.

(MAX and SHEILA start to reset up the stage—a little less elaborately than before—in silence. “PAT” again re-enters to pull their share.)

MAX

Dude, it’s a phone.

“PAT”

Yyeah—

SHEILA

(Suddenly realizing and for some reason enjoying the fact that “Pat” will probably panic:)

Oh shit.

(Re: the shopping cart:)

—Can we get this out again?

MAX

What?

“PAT”

Why?: Did they chain the door?

MAX

.. oh god, I hope not.

“PAT”

Check / the—

SHEILA

Check / the—

MAX

It’s too soon to check the / door.

SHEILA (Continuing:)

Check the *window*. [You know:] How we got in?

ALTERNATIVE DIALOGUE:

Part of the concept of THEATRE GHOSTS is to adapt the script to the actual venue of the given production.

Therefore, building descriptions, locations (Austin, Texas, California, New York, Boston). Calendar dates, and a few lines pertaining to the biological gender of the actor cast as “Pat” are all to be adjusted accordingly.

Details follow.

Venue:

- pg 4 (flooring—adjust carpeting to match the venue [i.e: tile, wood, cement etc.].)*
- pgs 4-5 (the existence of a couch or bed—if either is on stage or in the lobby, please, refer to them—incorporate them accordingly)*
- pg 18 (The Tech Booth location may be offstage, behind the audience etc. It is preferred that the area remain out of audience view for purposes of distancing “Pat” from Max and Sheila.)*

Calendar dates:

- pgs 7 – 8 (The Holiday being decorated for should be the current Holiday most recently past or upcoming. The gift giving Holiday should refer to of course a Holiday celebrated with gift exchanges as well as the social community associated with its observance.)*
- pg 9 (If Memorial Day is the most current [recent or upcoming Holiday] change this reference to Labor Day.)*

Miscellaneous

- Pg 14 – 15 MUSIC: “1-8-7-7-Kars-4-Kids ...”
(If there is a more annoying song in existence...keeping with current pop culture for reference...feel free to use it—respecting copyright use of course.)*