

FIGHTING FOR A GRADE

by Brent Holland

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A Comedic Trio & More

by Brent Holland

SYNOPSIS: Ten students prepare for their final in their theatre class. Having chosen to do stage combat, the group struggles with their own interpretation of what is needed for the scene to be a success.

TIME: The present.

SETTING: In a big open space.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(10 either)

KEVIN (m/f).....	Very talkative. Wants the scene to be very dramatic. <i>(28 lines)</i>
JACKI (m/f).....	Easy going and friendly. <i>(6 lines)</i>
MADDY (m/f).....	Hard worker who is skilled at sword combat. <i>(10 lines)</i>
EMMA (m/f).....	Outgoing and talkative. <i>(3 lines)</i>
KEEGAN (m/f).....	Wants to die first to lessen his workload. <i>(19 lines)</i>
MIRIAM (m/f).....	Experienced in sword combat. Wants the scene to be flashier. <i>(14 lines)</i>
HANNAH (m/f).....	A phone zombie no one enjoys working with. <i>(22 lines)</i>
MICAH (m/f).....	The director of the scene. <i>(57 lines)</i>
SARA (m/f).....	Failing. Needs to excel at this scene to pass the class. <i>(20 lines)</i>
LILY (m/f).....	Hannah's partner, and very tired of her partner's lack of work. <i>(10 lines)</i>

PROPS: Nine prop swords, 1 cell phone.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: This piece was originally written for an arts celebration in Wilmington, North Carolina called "Best Foot Forward". It was written for my honors theatre kids, who volunteered to perform and each character bears the name of the original actor. (Such a great group of kids!) With that in mind, each role is entirely gender flexible, and if name changes are needed, change away!

As far as sword combat is concerned, the choreography within the script is merely a guideline that can be altered as needed. Depending on your strengths, the swords could be high quality fake blades all the way down to padded nerf toys! The big thing is to have fun with the bit and enjoy the physicality.

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AT START: *When the lights come up, KEVIN, JACKI, MADDY, EMMA, KEEGAN, MIRIAM, SARA and LILY are on stage in the midst of a full blown sword fight. KEVIN is battling SARA, MADDY is with KEEGAN, MIRIAM is fighting JACKI and EMMA, and LILY is pantomiming fighting an opponent who isn't there. Very early in the fight, MADDY kills KEEGAN, who dramatically dies and then joins the fight on the side with MIRIAM against JACKI and EMMA.*

KEVIN: *(Amidst the fighting.)* Fool! Did you really think you could beat me?

The fighting continues.

KEVIN: I will avenge my father! His death, at your hands, so many years ago...

SARA attacks, cutting off his speech.

KEVIN: Hey! I was talking! *(Tries to speak while they fight.)* As I was saying... my father's death, at your hands... *(Out of character.)* Can you slow down some? *(Back in character.)* And the villainy your family has plagued our village with... *(Again, out of character.)* Seriously, you need to chill

MICAH enters.

MICAH: Cut!

There is a groan from everyone on stage, minus MICAH.

MICAH: Kevin!

KEVIN: What?!

MICAH: Less talking, more fighting!

KEVIN: My character needs his opponents to know why they're about to be cut in half!

MICAH: No, he doesn't!

KEVIN: Yes, he does! Plus, Sara totally needs to know.

SARA: No, I don't.

MICAH: And Keegan!

KEEGAN: How was that death?

MICAH: The death was fine, but could you please fight Maddy a little longer? Maddy is getting to Miriam too early.

KEEGAN: So?

MADDY: I don't have anything to do. I'm just standing there.

KEEGAN: Attack one of them!

MICAH: That messes up the choreography!

MIRIAM: And I didn't get to do my front roll!

MICAH: We cut the front roll, remember?

MIRIAM: We did? Why?

MICAH: It wasn't very practical.

MIRIAM gives a nonplussed look.

MICAH: I'm directing, and I cut the front roll! Just stick to the choreography. *(A beat.)* Let's run it again!

LILY: Is Hannah coming?

MICAH: I texted her. She said she'd be here.

LILY: I feel stupid doing this without a partner.

MICAH: Just run through the moves. It will be fine. Let's do it again! And... action!

The fighting starts... KEEGAN immediately dies on the first move.

MICAH: Keegan!

KEEGAN: What?

MICAH: Don't die! Not yet!

KEEGAN: Uh... Ok...

KEEGAN stands back up as the fighting continues, MADDY runs back to him. She takes one swing, and he dies again, dramatically.

MICAH: Keegan!

KEEGAN gets back to his knees and fights a little more.

KEVIN: You thought you could kill my father and not pay the price?

Fighting continues, no response.

KEVIN: What do you have to say for yourself, villain?

KEEGAN dies again. MADDY looks aggravated, but runs to MIRIAM, who stops what she is doing to do a dramatic front roll.

KEVIN: I demand you account for your crimes!

SARA: Shut up, Kevin!

KEVIN: Kevin? I'm not, Kevin! Kevin was the name of my pet weasel! I am, Sir William of... *(KEVIN messes up the choreography.)* Oops, my fault.

SARA: Just do the moves!

KEVIN: What?

SARA: Just do the moves! That's what we're being graded on!

KEVIN: We're telling a story!

MICAH: Cut!

EMMA: We're never going to get through this, are we?

MICAH: Can everyone please focus?

SARA: I can't afford to fail this! After failing my line tests, I have a D in this stupid class.

JACKI: You have a D? I didn't even think that was possible.

SARA: Trust me, it's possible.

KEEGAN is still lying down.

MICAH: *(Walking over to KEEGAN.)* Can you please, please live a little longer?

KEEGAN: *(Matter of factly.)* You know, in battles like this, some warriors are really awesome and some aren't. I'm one of those guys... I'm not awesome. That's my motivation.

MICAH: Your motivation is to be an unmotivated fighter?

KEEGAN: An unmotivated fighter with a death wish.

MICAH: Why would you want to die?

KEEGAN: I dunno. Maybe my goldfish pond froze over and killed everything. I have a failure to thrive. Just go with it. I just want to die first.

MICAH: Right.

KEEGAN: And fast.

EMMA: What are we supposed to be doing when she somersaults at us?

MICAH: (*To MIRIAM.*) Don't do the front roll!

MIRIAM: Why? I like the front roll!

MICAH: Because it looks stupid.

MIRIAM: But my character is flashy!

MICAH: (*To EMMA and JACKI.*) If Miriam front rolls, stab her in the butt.

MIRIAM: What?

JACKI: Ok...

MICAH: Let's run it again! Back to places. (*ALL participants, minus MICAH return to their starting spots.*) And... action!

The fighting gets started again and HANNAH enters.

HANNAH: Hold up! I'm here!

MICAH: Cut!

KEEGAN dies dramatically.

MICAH: I said, cut!

KEEGAN: Sorry!

MICAH: And you died too quick!

KEEGAN: Sorry again!

MICAH: You're late.

HANNAH: I know. I totally spaced on rehearsal.

MICAH: Where's your sword?

HANNAH: I left it in the hall! BRB! (*HANNAH runs off.*)

MICAH: Ok, back to places!

MADDY: Should we wait for her?

LILY: Yes!

MICAH: No. We've wasted enough time! Also, Maddy, come here.

MADDY: Ok... (*MADDY moves to MICAH, who whispers in her ear.*)

MICAH: Got it?

MADDY: Got it.

MICAH: Action!

The fighting starts. KEEGAN is ready to die again, but MADDY hasn't made an offensive move at him.

KEVIN: Your villainous villainy has come to an end!

SARA: Shut up! Just fight!

KEEGAN: (*Irked that MADDY won't swing at him.*) What are you doing?

MADDY: What do you mean?

KEEGAN: Why aren't you fighting me?

MADDY: I'm sizing you up.

KEEGAN: No need to size me up. I'm the village wimp. Kill me.

MADDY: Maybe you're lying to me. Maybe you're a sword master.

KEEGAN: Trust me. I'm not.

KEVIN: (*To SARA.*) You will not escape your destiny!

MIRIAM does a front roll. EMMA stabs her in the rear.

MIRIAM: Ow! That hurt!

At this, without any move from MADDY, KEEGAN falls over dead.

MADDY: What?

HANNAH runs on.

HANNAH: What are we doing? You started without me?

LILY: Just come here and fight me!

HANNAH: What part of the fight are we on?

LILY attacks her. MADDY has run over to MIRIAM, JACKI and EMMA. MIRIAM is rubbing her rear.

MADDY: What are you doing?

MIRIAM: She stabbed me in the butt! That hurt!

JACKI attacks MADDY to continue the choreography. EMMA goes to attack MIRIAM.

MIRIAM: Hold up, I need a minute.

KEVIN: You will find justice on the blade of my sword you son of a motherless troll!

SARA: I'm a girl!

KEVIN: Do you expect me to trust you on that? You could be anyone!!

HANNAH: (*Stops and looks around.*) I'm totally lost!

LILY: Just do something!

MICAH: Cut!

HANNAH gets her phone out.

SARA: I hate all of you. I quit.

MICAH: You can't quit. If you do, you'll fail.

SARA: I know. I was lying. But not about the part about hating all of you.

HANNAH: (*Looking up from her phone.*) What was that?

MICAH: What do you mean?

HANNAH: I don't remember any of that.

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