

NOVEL AND GROVEL

by Kelly Meadows

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A Comedy Duet

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SYNOPSIS: Novelist Tamara Winters is caught in a jam, and she's turned to her main character for help! Can he motivate her into a life-saving plot twist? Will she return him to the woman he loves? What about the money? And most importantly, how will this impact her career? An interesting perspective on the relationship between a writer and her creations.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 1 male)

TAMARA WINTERS (f)..... A frustrated novelist. *(45 lines)*

TAYLOR (m)..... A character in Tamara's book,
frustrated at his plot line.
(46 lines)

TIME: Present day.

SETTING: Can be performed on a bare stage, this is set mainly in the mind of the novelist, but it can also be put her bedroom or sitting room. Some furniture or acting blocks can be used at director's discretion.

COSTUMES

Think of Taylor as a TV drama action hero, while Tamara, perhaps seeking the action she writes into her novels, is dressed for the success she doesn't yet have. Essentially modern day, looking good.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Tamara might be selling books, but not enough to move out of her mother's house. She's frustrated, and she's not living a glamorous life by any means. Taylor taunts her, but in a sense, that's her own imagination playing tricks on her, giving her roadblocks and not letting her proceed. The more she gives up control to her own creation, the more she realizes that might be the path to success. Use nonverbal expression to change up who has the upper hand at any given moment.

TAYLOR: (*Pacing, but seemingly locked in a room; therefore, he starts this at high energy.*) When are you going to let me out of here?

TAMARA: (*A little bit sinister and controlling.*) I don't know, Taylor. I might just keep you trapped. You have no power over me.

TAYLOR: (*Sarcastic and grandiose.*) Tamara Winters, famous writer! (*Snarky.*) So they say. (*Self-denigrating.*) I'm just your character, waiting, waiting... depending on your every whim. (*Losing it.*) Let me out of here! (*Pause, quizzical.*) Please?

TAMARA: (*Dismissive.*) Sorry Taylor. You don't interest me anymore.

TAYLOR: (*Still trying to get out of a pantomimed space.*) I have to! If I escape, if I find my true love, if I get that money that...

TAMARA: (*Perks up.*) What money?

TAYLOR: (*Approaches TAMARA, surprised TAMARA doesn't know this.*) There's a bunch of money hidden by a tree in Arizona. (*Bursting out after getting no response.*) You put it in on page four and I've been after it ever since.

TAMARA: (*Walks off, disinterested.*) I took it out. I needed it for my bills.

TAYLOR: Why didn't you tell me?

TAMARA: You should read your own book.

TAYLOR: I can't. I'm trapped in your very lazy imagination. I've been looking for this tree and hiding from the mob and trying to save my messy romance. If you take out the tree, I have no reason to be in this predicament. No wonder you don't care anymore, you ruined your own plot line.

TAMARA: (*Again, trying to escape TAYLOR.*) Money under a tree is cliché, and so, Taylor, are you. I'm tempted to delete you and write about characters that are interesting, and (*Pushes TAYLOR away with a finger.*) a lot less reliant on me.

TAYLOR: But I'm so close. To wit, page 172: "Taylor was so close. Happiness was in sight, except for the seemingly insurmountable problem of escaping a situation that promised certain death."

TAMARA: That doesn't sound close to me.

TAYLOR: Just get me past that insurmountable problem of escaping a situation that promises certain death and I'll be sitting pretty – money, love, happiness, just a chapter away, two at most.

TAMARA: I can't believe you put money first.

TAYLOR: Who's the one threatening my life to boost her book sales?

TAMARA: You have no mind of your own or you'd have found a way out.

TAYLOR: I have your mind. And if you don't mind, I need you to put it to work.

TAMARA: You're taking the lazy way out. Waiting for me to make the decision for you.

TAYLOR: That's what being a character means.

TAMARA: (*Self-pitying.*) Clingy, dependent, abusive, complaining. No wonder I've written you into a corner.

TAYLOR: Which is sad, because from your readers' perspective, how I feel matters and what you feel is irrelevant.

TAMARA: You don't know "write" from wrong, Taylor.

TAYLOR: I know it's wrong not to write, Winters.

TAMARA: I could write you wrong.

TAYLOR: (*Taunting.*) You'd never sell another book. (*Sits down.*)

TAMARA: (*Giving it back.*) Some writers say their characters tell them what to do. You just wait for dictation like a secretary from the sixties.

TAYLOR: I'm panicking about my next move and you're like "Ooo Taylor can wait, let me go get a lemonade."

TAMARA: (*Offended.*) I drink coffee.

TAYLOR: You must be drinking something to thrust me into this predicament. The orange juice of agony. The whiskey of no-sympathy. The elixir of sloth. Pick one and drink up hot.

TAMARA: What would you do? Come Taylor, be swift about it.

TAYLOR: You actually care what I think?

TAMARA: You're in the thick of it, so think thick. (*Pushes TAYLOR out of the chair and sits down there.*) I can sit here and watch you squirm and it doesn't affect my day at all. (*Very laid back, sits down, annoyingly complacent.*) How would you get out of it?

TAYLOR: (*Bitter, and high energy.*) I'd hire a writer who cares. You acted like you liked me and then you framed me for a crime I didn't commit, locked me in a room somewhere between Phoenix and Tucson and put my fiancée across the country where you're forcing her to walk down the aisle with my sworn enemy.

TAMARA: We don't know if you committed the crime or not. (*With a haughty laugh, gets up and walks far away.*) I never said.

TAYLOR: I didn't do it! I was too busy looking for an invisible tree in Arizona and keeping tabs on a wedding in New Brunswick.

TAMARA: *(Comes back to the action, aggravated with TAYLOR.)* Ohhh, now you're getting all like it matters. *(They both get very "in your face.")* You just blithely followed along with everything I suggested, but suddenly the going gets rough and you've got an opinion.

TAYLOR: My reputation is at stake. Yours is too, if you can't fix this.

TAMARA: You have a reputation, but do you deserve it? That's the question I left everyone wondering. Now that's some good writing on my part!

TAYLOR: You hooked me up with organized crime and everyone thinks I've betrayed them. *(Blaming TAMARA for all his problems.)* You wrote me into a corner and you don't have the skills or the vocabulary to extricate me, so you're going to strand me in Casa Grande, Arizona, uninspired and unpublished. Just call me Prometheus.

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