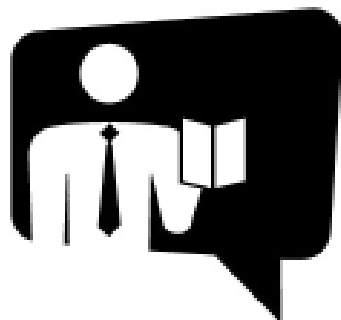


SpeechGeek



Season Six: Spring 2009



SpeechGeek

ISSN 1545-9209 Price \$25 US
<http://www.speechgeek.com>

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ISSN 1545-9209

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SpeechGeek is published four times per year: August, October, December, and April by Corey Alderdice, 806 Brownstone Way, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42104. Special issues are published from time to time.

<http://www.speechgeek.com>

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Corey Alderdice
Publisher

p.s. Check out our buddy site **ExtempCentral.com** while you're at it.

Operation: Saving Time

by Frank Joseph

SCIENTIST #1. Alright, now crank up the internal frequency by 12 degrees.
(*Scientist #2 walks over to a switchboard, dragging his foot.*)

SCIENTIST #2. Yes, master.

SCIENTIST #1. For the last time, cut it out!
(*Scientist #2 slowly stands up straight.*)

SCIENTIST #2. Sorry.
(*Scientist #2 pushes a lever up and pushes several buttons.*)

SCIENTIST #1. There, that's it!
(*Scientist #1 is holding a square object. The two scientists crowd around it.*)

SCIENTIST #2. How do we know if it works?

SCIENTIST #1. I don't know...let's see if we can figure this out.(*Scientist #1 pushes a large red button on the subject. Suddenly, he is in the same location, but several seconds into the past.*)

SCIENTIST #2. How do we know if it works?
(*Scientist #1 observes his surroundings.*)

SCIENTIST #1. Wow...it works

SCIENTIST #2. Let me see it!
(*Scientist #2 grabs the time machine out of his partners hands.*)

SCIENTIST #1. Don't play with that. It's not a toy!
(*Scientist #2 slaps Scientist #1 across the face, then pushes the button.*)

SCIENTIST #1. Ow! You son of a-
(*Scientist #2 appears a few seconds into the past.*)

SCIENTIST #1. Don't play with that. It's not a toy!
(*Scientist #2 looks around before cracking a smile.*)

SCIENTIST #2. Ok.

SCIENTIST #1. We need to get this to the Police Chief right away so he can commence with....Operation: Saving Time!

SCIENTIST #2. Ha. He is so clever.

SCIENTIST #1. He really is. Let's go.

CHIEF. There sure is a lot of paperwork here. (*pushes intercom button*) Margaret?

MARGARET. Yes?

CHIEF. I'm pretty busy with, you know, police stuff. Could you give me a hand with some of this paperwork?

MARGARET. No.

CHIEF. Ok. Well, thanks anyway. Jeez I hate her. If she would for just one second get off of her lazy-

MARGARET. Excuse me, Chief?

CHIEF. Uh, yes Margaret?

MARGARET. The button is still pushed down.

CHIEF. ...what?

MARGARET. When you're through talking to me, you have to push it twice. Otherwise we're still connected.

CHIEF. Oh. So, you heard?

MARGARET. Yup.

CHIEF. Huh? Good. (*Chief pushes the button twice.*) Now for this paperwork...I've got it! (*Chief throws away all the paperwork and gets out a new form.*) Crazy crack addict stole all of my paperwork...will investigate tomorrow... (*Chief thinks for a second. Then erases something on the paper.*) Next week. (*The scientists burst into the office.*)

SCIENTIST #2. Sir! Sir! We've figured it out!
(*Chief hurries to shove his new form into a drawer.*)

CHIEF. Great! Tell me how it works.

SCIENTIST #1. Well, you set this dial to any point in time and then push this button and presto! You've traveled back in time. It sounds easy, but it can get pretty complicated so just make sure you have someone responsible for the job.

CHIEF. Oh, I've got just the man. Margaret!

MARGARET. What?

CHIEF. Send in Officer McAllister.

MARGARET. Fine.
(*McAllister kicks open the doors and walks in.*)

McALLISTER. You wanted to see me Chief?

CHIEF. God, McAllister! You gotta stop kicking in my door! That's the fifth one this month!

McALLISTER. I can fix it.

CHIEF. No, just don't touch it...or anything.

McALLISTER. Sorry, Chief. It's just so exhilarating.

CHIEF. It's ok. So, the reason I called you in here is to give you your next assignment. McAllister, the President has been assassinated.

McALLISTER. Woohoo!

CHIEF. No, not the current President. Abraham Lincoln.

McALLISTER. My God! It can't be!

CHIEF. ...are you serious?

McALLISTER. What?

CHIEF. Well, Lincoln's been dead for almost 150 years.

McALLISTER. Oh...I knew that...

CHIEF. I was trying to set this whole thing up really dramatically but you pretty much just killed the mood.

McALLISTER. My bad.

CHIEF. I'll just tell you about it. Our leading scientists-slash- historians...

SCIENTIST #1. Hi.

SCIENTIST #2. Hey.

CHIEF. ...have uncovered something huge!

McALLISTER. Wait, why do we have scientists-slash-historians? This is the police department.

CHIEF. I don't know...oh, I've got it. They're part of our Never-Ending Research and Development Squad.

SCIENTIST #2. (*after a brief pause*) Ha, get it? That shortens to NERDS!

SCIENTIST #1. He's talking about us.

SCIENTIST #2. Oh...

CHIEF. Anyway, they've pinpointed the exact moment in history that, if changed, could alter our future resulting in world peace. And that moment is the moment Abraham Lincoln was shot.

Dad's Coming Home

by Joele Denis

(ABIGAIL is found looking outside her window, on her windowsill. She sighs.)

Dad's coming home today...

(Beat. ABIGAIL pulls out crunched up piece of paper from her pocket.)

The last letter he sent to me said,

Dear Beautiful Daughter of Mine,

I love you and I miss you. You're the best daughter in the world, and soon I will get to hug you in my own arms. I don't know if mommy told you, but I'm coming home in twenty-nine days. And when I get home, I'm going to give you the biggest hug in the whole wide world. I don't know if you remember our hug goodbye, but this one is going to be a bajillion times bigger. And then after our hug, I want you to tell me – face-to-face – everything that I missed over these last seven years. So make a list. For real this time.

*Love you,
Daddy*

And under that, it says, "P.S.", and next to that, there's a stick drawing of me and him holding hands... Sometimes I think 'daddy' forgets I'm not six years old anymore. I do remember our last hug though. I remember everything about that day. But... I have a really good memory, so I usually remember everything about everyday. And mom says I have a perfect image – something. Basically it means that I'm really smart.

Um, so... that day...

I didn't really know what was going on. But I knew *something* was... because I woke up to the sound of mom and dad fighting. And this was a little weird. Mom and dad never fought. Ever.

So I got out of my bed, and I went over to the door – which was already open because I'm afraid – I *used* to be afraid of the dark. And by the time I got from my bed to the doorway, the fighting got even louder, but I couldn't see anything. So I remember walking out of the room, and thinking that the lights were really bright in the hallway, and... I remember seeing my mom and dad's shadows. And... it was weird... because they were fighting, but the shadow showed mom and dad hugging. And I remember thinking... people don't hug each other when they're fighting. That's just... weird. *(beat)*

Anyway, dad's coming home and I'm really... I don't know what I am. I'm excited. I'm happy. I'm eager. I'm – what's a good S.A.T. word? – I'm... exuberated. *(beat)*. But I'm also nervous. I'm scared. I'm... petrified.

Well, I'm not afraid of my dad or anything like that. I just... I know that I've changed a lot since I was six. That was like... forever ago. And if I changed *that* much, then he must have changed too. Probably a lot more than me. Which is... weird. *(ABIGAIL hears something, and checks the window.)* I thought it was him.

I'm really excited. I know I said I was scared – petrified – but I'm really excited at the same time. I mean, the last time I saw him was *seven years ago*! I... I've known him longer on paper than I've known him in person. That's like... weird. We do have pictures. There's pictures of him, pictures of mom, pictures of me when I was really small. *(beat)* The one picture that I keep by my bed is of all of us together, actually. It was taken on my fourth birthday when mom and dad took me to Disney World. My mom's kissing Mickey, and my dad is looking all angry, and me of course... I'm just cracking up. It's my favorite picture of us. *(beat)*

But anyway... Umm... the last day that I saw my dad in person was, like I said... weird. I don't think I could actually comprehend, at the time, how long it would be until I saw my daddy again. But I knew something was going on – because all throughout breakfast, mom and dad were really nice to me and smiling a lot and hugging each other a lot and kissing each other a lot... at the table... but I knew that they were upset about *something*! *(beat)* It's that thing that parents do, when they try to hide their emotions behind their face to not let their kids know that their... hurting. It never works. At least with me it never worked. *(pause)*

Like... mom used to make that face every day. For a long time after he left, she would just... smile a lot, I guess. But I think her... I don't know... I guess it doesn't matter anymore anyway since dad's coming home in like... *(beat)* *(ABIGAIL hears something, and checks the window.)* Ugh... it's the mail guy. I'm over it. Dad needs to get here like... now. Mom said he was going to get here *two hours ago*. *(beat)* Like... why is it that when you're waiting for something, time seems to, like... slow down...? *(ABIGAIL hears something, and rushes toward the window.)*

Okay... I don't like this. I don't like waiting. I don't like freaking out. I don't like looking outside the window to see if dad is *finally* going to get here. He's done this before, you know. Here's a letter that he sent two and a half years ago.

Dear Beautiful Daughter of Mine,

I love you and I miss you. You're the best daughter in the world, and soon I will get to hug you in my arms once again. I don't know if mommy told you, but I'm coming home in fifteen days. Just in time for your birthday. And when I get home, I'm going to give you your present, and then I'm going to give you the biggest hug in the whole wide world. Do you remember our hug goodbye? This one is going to be a bajillion times bigger. And then after our hug, I want you to tell me – face-to-face – everything that I missed. So make a list.

*Love you,
Daddy*

P.S. I promise I'll be home soon.

Acting Lessons

by Doug McConaha

This scene involves two actors, one portrays Dave, an aging, cynical actor-turned-teacher, and the other actor portrays John, an eager acting pupil; the scene is an acting lesson that turns serious, with a twist. Setting: an empty stage.

Both actors – in character – address audience:

- DAVE.** Actors are not born, actors are made. They are shaped and molded by the actors who have come before them and built their craft into an art form. Being an actor means having talent and an ego that work together.
- JOHN.** But what about the essence of performance? What about the ability of an actor to reach out to an audience and help them to experience those moments?
- DAVE.** Acting is not about the actor. It never was.

END OF TEASER

- DAVE.** *(off left, staring at John, who is attempting a mime that is good, but not great):* Oh please, we've been over this already. The audience cannot visualize the wall if you keep moving it around. See it in your head. Make us see it.
- JOHN.** *(apprehensively)* I'm sorry, I'll try.
- DAVE.** Don't talk! Mime! Or are you stupid as well as clumsy? Now try it again. *(John Works the mime nicely, takes about 10 to 15 seconds, during which Dave is commenting out loud)* That's it, feel the texture of the wall. Slowly.....slower....Slower I said! Don't be in a rush to get past the wall. How can the audience feel what you are feeling if you don't feel it? *(Pause)* Better, not great, but improved. *(pause)* Stop now.
- JOHN.** I could almost really feel that wall. It seemed so real.
- DAVE.** Don't patronize me! If I thought you were capable of that level of acting yet, I'd know.
- JOHN.** I'm sorry.
- DAVE.** Don't apologize either! Just take my directions, and perform as I tell you. That will make me happy.
- JOHN.** *(looking hurt)* I am trying.
- DAVE.** *(sarcastically)* "I am trying." Then try this. *(takes a folded page from his jacket pocket and hands it to John)* Read this with character.
- JOHN.** *(hesitant)* Alright. Cold readings are always a little tricky. Do I have

a moment to pre-read it?

- DAVE.** No, not this time. Just read it aloud, and try to find your character as you go.
- JOHN.** I'll try – I mean, yes sir. *(Unfolds paper, reads for a moment then looks at Dave – shocked)* Where did you find this?
- DAVE.** You left your notebook here last time, so I had a look through it. Do you fancy yourself a writer as well as an actor?
- JOHN.** You had no business reading my personal writings.
- DAVE.** And you have no reason to be upset. Don't you know the rule about writing? Never write something you don't want people to read aloud. Now, read it.
- JOHN.** *(reading from script – getting more confident as the reading progresses; last line should be delivered very powerfully)* "It was never easy for my family to get along with each other. Some days we would just go without saying anything, and other days we would shout. My dad would trigger the bad days by starting in on me with 'What's wrong with you? Why can't you be more like your brother?' And I would respond with something like, 'Because I hate living here and I'm waiting for you to throw me out. If you have the courage.' Then he would hit me in the face with a closed fist and laugh as I was bleeding. He would look at me, standing there humiliated and then he'd smile. After a moment, he would always say the same thing: 'I keep you around for the laughs.'"
- DAVE.** Why would you write something like that? Your life was never like that. You grew up a spoiled, rich kid.
- JOHN.** *(glowering)* It's just a story idea I had. There's nothing wrong with wanting to be a writer.
- DAVE.** No, unless you're trying to be an actor. Don't lose your focus or you'll never be an actor – or a writer. *(takes paper from John and crumbles it up as John, defeated, does not resist).* Now, let's get back to acting - we are going to do another visualization exercise. Remember to keep your focus this time. *(John follows the instructions and acts as Dave talks.)* Close your eyes and go to center. Now, relax. Imagine that you are walking. You are on a dirt road, and it's hot outside. You're thirsty, very thirsty. Your mouth is dry, your lips are sticking together, and you can't even get enough spit to swallow. *(John continues to act.)* You're beginning to get light-headed from thirst. You realize that you might pass out, you struggle to stay balanced, you reach for something to hold onto, something that will keep you from falling, but you know that you are... *(John falls, not very convincingly. Dave yells.)* What are you doing? Did I tell you to fall? Get up!
- JOHN.** But I was doing what you said.
- DAVE.** No! You were doing what you thought I said. You were anticipating my directions – something that an actor should never – and I mean never do. Let's try another one. Walk over to that corner, turn and

I've Seen the Dark

by Doug McConaha

I don't know why I'm telling you this. No else has believed me, why should you? All right... fine, let's talk. (*sighs*) If you looked in my folder, you'd know that two other doctors have said that there's nothing physically wrong with me, and now you're here to see if I'm crazy - well I'm not. I'll tell you everything, but if you laugh at me, or even smile...

OK.

Everyone tells you not to be afraid of the dark; "there's nothing there that isn't there when the light is on." Right! I know better - I've been in the dark.

I know the drill, so I'll just start with my childhood. I knew that's what you wanted to talk about. That's what all the other doctors wanted to start with. You all hope that there's some event or trauma in my past that you can link my story to. Well, there isn't. I have a great childhood, or at least I did until the last two weeks.

(*as if answering a question*) No doctor, no really bad things have happened to me outside of this experience I'm having now. When I was eight, I broke my arm when I fell off a fence that I was climbing over. When I was in the seventh grade, I almost flunked math. Um, two different times I threw up in the car on the way to my grandparents' house. That's about it for trauma.

I'm not being sarcastic. I'm telling the truth. Why can't you just accept that? You're hoping that there's some secret psychological disturbance that will explain away what is happening to me. Wrong. I discovered something that you don't want to believe, and you need an easy answer, (*pause*) so YOU can sleep at night. Why should you get to enjoy that when I can't?

Look, here's the truth. Thirteen nights ago I was getting ready for bed. Thirteen nights ago I was a normal average teenager whose biggest worry was getting a date for the winter Snowball Dance. I was also stupid about the truth. As I was getting ready to turn out the light, I heard a noise, like something heavy scraping against the floor under my bed. At first I thought my cat Boomer was under there - she's been getting ready to have kittens, and I didn't want that mess under my bed. So I got down and pulled the cover back, and there was nothing there. But for a moment, just a flash, I thought I saw a shadow. But there wasn't anything I could see - I know now that was because my light was still on. I straightened up the cover, turned out the light and got into bed.

I think that no one else in the house heard anything because my room is down the hall from my parents' room and my sister's room. My room used to be an old root cellar before we bought the house and remodeled it last year. Anyway, I got into bed and closed my eyes.

You know, when you feel something is wrong - you can sense it, but you don't know yet what it is? I knew something wasn't right. At first, I thought that it was my imagination. You know how it is: you stay up late studying, working on projects, drinking way too much caffeine. So, I took a deep breath and tried to relax, but it didn't help. I tried lying very still, trying to sleep, when I became aware of a

noise. I couldn't figure it out right away - but then the hair on my neck stood up as I realized that I was hearing breathing! Slow, deliberate breathing coming from under my bed!!

Imagine this now. Close your eyes. Go ahead close 'em. Now, try to relax. Now try to imagine what it would be like to be alone and suddenly hear someone else in the room with you, all you hear is breathing, and it's NOT yours.

I noticed that you opened your eyes.

So did I. I heard the breathing and I at first tried to rationalize it away. I held my own breath to see if the sound would go away - but it didn't. I continued to hold my breath. The longer I lay there the clearer it got. Slowly, ever so slowly, I reached out my hand to turn on the light, and I heard that scraping sound again. This time I knew it wasn't *anything* like a cat. I held my hand still perfectly still, inches from the light switch. Something in my head kept telling me that if could just turn on the light, I would be OK. I moved my hand to the switch, and just as my fingers touched it, something cold grabbed my hand!

Everything began to move in slow motion - I opened my mouth to scream - I actually remember inhaling the breath to scream and thinking that there's no way anyone would sleep through this scream.

When I was just a little girl, I would lay in my room in the dark and listen to the sounds in the house. The comforting noises that the refrigerator made, the sounds of my parents talking in the living room, or just watching TV. I've never been afraid of the dark - before. Scary movies don't bother me, even when I'm in the house alone. That's why I knew on that night, that when I screamed, it would get everyone's attention.

So, I got ready to scream, when this voice - a voice like ice water - said, "You don't need the light." And then I screamed and I screamed and I screamed. I pulled my hand away and rolled out of bed away from the voice and the light switch. I hit my nightstand and turned it over. Everything fell off, and scattered. I could hear what ever it was making sounds like someone laughing to themselves - the same noise a cat must make just before it kills the mouse. I fell to my knees and started feeling around for my flashlight - I keep one by the bed in case the power goes out. I found the flashlight, stood up and pointed it at the sounds across the room. And then I turned it on...

I was prepared to see the most horrible thing imaginable - I was not prepared to see ... nothing. THERE WAS NOTHING THERE - BUT I COULD STILL HEAR IT LAUGHING AT ME!!

Then I realized that IT WAS COMING AFTER ME UNDERNEATH THE BED!! I dove over the bed and threw myself against the door - but it wouldn't open - whatever it was had jammed the door. I was banging on the door and screaming and my father was yelling at me - "Unlock the door, unlock the door!" and I was screaming, "Please, open the door it's behind me and it won't let me turn on the light!!"

My father kicked down the door and grabbed me. He was saying, "It's ok, I'm here, it was just a nightmare. Stop screaming. Stop screaming." He reached out and turned on the light switch and I turned around. My room was a mess - the overturned nightstand, stuff scattered all over the floor, and nothing else. Except the

Video Dating

by Doug McConaha

This scene involves one actor playing multiple characters. Synopsis: One actor portrays a variety of women each doing a video dating interview. A single chair faces the audience. The illusion is that the audience is the 'camera.' Character changes should be done simply and quickly by standing up, changing props/costume pieces, and sitting back down as the new character.

CRYSTAL. (*ditzy type, giggly, never really sits still, etc.*) Hi, my name is Crystal. My hobbies are shopping, spending money, and watching really good movies. Once, I saw this movie about a girl who fell in love with a man who turned out to be the Devil. I mean the guy was really the Devil. But he was still cute. My friend Brittany, she saw it with me and said that it was a dumb movie. I said, "You only thought it was dumb because you didn't understand the ending." And she said, "Oh, yeah?" and I said, "Duh, Brittany, pick up the clue phone, he was the Devil." And she said, "Maybe, but he was so hot." And then we laughed about how funny that was. Do you get it – you know, Devil, hot...? Anyway, my full name is Crystal, at least it will be when I change it officially, just like Cher, or Madonna, or Barbie. I'm going to be an actress. Or a singer. Maybe a supermodel. Being a supermodel would be so fun. You get to try on new clothes all day long without someone hassling you about having to buy it. And you get to walk around like a big snob in front of all those people and act like you don't care. So, if you want to go out with me, I prefer really hot guys with red sports cars and names like Brad or Ricco, something cool like that. My phone will be really busy after this video gets seen, so keep trying – unless you're a geek, then forget it.

SUNRISE. (*remembers Woodstock, misses the sixties*) Peace man, my name is Sunrise Glory, and I'm a Pisces. I am looking for a man who can handle the fact that I'm a liberated woman and an equal. I'm looking for someone who remembers Woodstock. I was there, I got arrested. I was also in Chicago in '68 for the Democratic Convention. I was arrested there, too. I kind of settled down after the Beatles broke up. I spent several years just making pottery and beaded jewelry, living close to nature in my mud hut. Those were the good old days. Even now, when I'm in the supermarket, sometimes the piped-in music triggers a flashback. I think I'm ready to find a long-term relationship now. I just had my

van rebuilt and it's ready to go again and I need another driver. That's all, just a cool dude who can drive a stick shift and knows all the words to "In-a-Gadda-da-Vida." It wouldn't hurt if you had a little cash of your own as well. Power to the people!!

APRIL.

(*country girl, packing a guitar*) Howdy there, my name is April Mae. I been a'hearin about this here TV match-making, and I told myself "April Mae, this could be for you." So, I been savin' up all my loose change, and here I am. I'm looking for a strong man who likes to line dance and sing along with Billy Ray Cyrus songs. In fact, I done brought my guitar down here with me, so's I can sing about the kind o' man I hanker after. (*Sings tunelessly*)

*My name is April Mae Scruggs,
I'd like to find a guy who hugs.
On Satiday nites I like to dance,
There ain't no better place for romance.*

*Oh, I'm a girl and you're a guy,
Come on call me and just say "Hi."
I got me a pickup truck that's red,
And a old hound dog that I call Fred.*

*I want to meet a real man who's strong,
Someone who wants a gal to tag along.
Give me a call and let's go out tonight,
Maybe we'll get lucky and get into a fight!*

Well, that's about it, I'll be waitin' by the phone.

MARSHA.

(*dressed semi-normal, carrying a ventriloquist dummy, just a little too much "show-biz"*) Hi there folks, this here is Eloise. Say hello, Eloise. (*character is really bad at ventriloquism*) My name is Marsha, and I am a professional ventriloquist. What's that Eloise, don't be shy, just speak. She needs a man, bad.

**DUMMY.
MARSHA.**

Eloise, that's not true. We just came here to in the hope of meeting someone interesting and have meaningful and intelligent conversations.

**DUMMY.
MARSHA.**

Get over it Marsha, you are desperate, and that's the truth. Look, you little half-carved piece of wood, I don't have to... I mean, Eloise, you are such a kiddie, ha ha ha. Why, just yesterday my friend Tammi and I were just saying how funny Eloise is.

DUMMY.

In case you don't know it, Tammi is the first dummy that this chick bought, but she got so jealous of it, she played 'plastic surgeon' on it.