

Qwendolyn's Gambit

a short play

by

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Characters

RAZZA	- A Rook
BRENDAN	- A Bishop
KEIRA	- A Knight
QWENDOLYN	- The Queen
PATTIE 8	- A Pawn
BELINDA	- The Replacement Queen

(PLEASE NOTE: Height is quite important in the play – QWENDOLYN and BELINDA must be the tallest, then BRENDAN, KEIRA and RAZZA. PATTIE must be noticeably smaller than the rest – can be on her knees. Characters can be played by either male or female actors.)

The Setting

The corner of a chessboard

Time

Sunday afternoon.

RAZZA, BRENDAN, KEIRA, QWENDOLYN and PATTIE stand on stage – **RAZZA, KEIRA, BRENDAN and QWENDOLYN** in a line – **PATTIE** in front of **RAZZA**. Their feet are rooted to the spot but they can move their upper bodies.

As the lights come up they all sway on the spot, trying to avoid something swinging above their heads.

RAZZA: Here he comes again.

BRENDAN: Ooh, he's a clumsy one this one.

KEIRA: (TO QWENDOLYN) Watch out he's coming for you.

QWENDOLYN: No, he's just hovering.

PATTIE: Where's he going now ?

KEIRA: (TO RAZZA) Over towards you.

BRENDAN: Watch out !

RAZZA: Here he comes, great clob-hoppers.

RAZZA DUCKS.

RAZZA: Ha, ha – missed me !

PATTIE: I think he got me.

QWENDOLYN: Are you sure ?

PATTIE: I think so.

KEIRA: He'll have to move you then.

BRENDAN: But was it a real touch – or just a graze ?

PATTIE: I'm not sure.

RAZZA: We'll get sure. I'm involved here.

PATTIE: I think it was a graze.

QWENDOLYN: You're safe then.

KEIRA: Is it tournament rules or a friendly ?

PATTIE: Or maybe it was a touch.

RAZZA: Make up your mind.

BRENDAN: All this uncertainty is quite off putting.

PATTIE: I don't know !

QWENDOLYN: It's okay. He's castling.

RAZZA: Castling ?

BRENDAN, KEIRA and RAZZA: Which side ?

QWENDOLYN: King's side.

PATTIE: Whew ! We can all relax then.

RAZZA: Not for long.

SLIGHT PAUSE.

KEIRA: Can anybody see ? How we doing ?

BRENDAN: Not too good. He's already lost a front liner.

PATTIE: Which one ?

QWENDOLYN: Mine.

PATTIE: Oh no – good old Pattie 5.

BRENDAN: I thought you were Pattie 5.

PATTIE: No silly – I'm Pattie 8. But don't feel too bad. We are identical.

RAZZA: Did he at least get one of theirs ?

BRENDAN: Afraid not. Gave it up without even the slightest hint of a fight.

KEIRA: He's hopeless.

RAZZA: We're doomed ! All doomed !

QWENDOLYN: Quiet now. It's early days. We all have to make sacrifices
occasionally.

PATTIE: Did she say 'sacrifices' ?

BRENDAN: Fraid so.

KEIRA: (TO **BRENDAN**) Well you'd know all about those I guess.

QWENDOLYN: It's all for the greater good.

RAZZA: Don't see what's good about it.

QWENDOLYN: We make an individual sacrifice so the rest may survive.

RAZZA: It's all very well for you to talk about sacrifices Miss La De Da, because it's not you who gets sacrificed.

KEIRA: How do you figure that ?

RAZZA: Think about it – you got Rook's Gambit, Knight's Gambit and Bishop's Gambit – even Pawn's Gambit – but who ever hard of Queen's Gambit.

PATTIE: What's a Gambit ?

BRENDAN: A sacrifice – he's talking about giving up your mortal role so the rest of us may live on.

PATTIE: Don't like the sound of that.

RAZZA: Well we all do it my small friend – me, Brendan, Keira – even all eight of you. All except Miss Queen Qwendolyn.

QWENDOLYN: Do be quiet – he's about to make his next move.

BRENDAN: Probably botch it up again.

RAZZA: No I won't be quiet. It's a travesty and I'm not putting up with it.

KEIRA: Actually I have.

RAZZA: Have what ?

KEIRA: Heard of a Queen's Gambit. I believe it's quite common actually.

RAZZA: Crap.

KEIRA: It is.

RAZZA: Is not.

QWENDOLYN: I can assure you Rachel – it does exist.

RAZZA: Don't call me that. My name's Razza.

QWENDOLYN: Well Razza I can assure you – there is such a thing as a Queen's Gambit.

RAZZA: Oh yeah – how can you be so sure ?

QWENDOLYN: Because I think he's about to play it.

PATTIE: Oh Queen Qwendolyn – no. No !

QWENDOLYN JERKS SUDDENLY AS IF BEING PULLED FROM THE SPOT – SHE STUMBLES LEFT THEN RIGHT THEN EXITS STRAIGHT AHEAD AND OFF THE STAGE.

BRENDAN MUTTERS A BLESSING AND CROSSES HIMSELF.

KEIRA: Oh dear Qwendolyn – and so early in the game. (TO **RAZZA**) And you – how rude and ungrateful.

RAZZA: Steady on sister. She'll be okay. We all gotta get moved sometime.

PATTIE: Don't speak so quickly.

KEIRA: What's he's doing ? Don't leave her there.

BRENDAN: Can't he see my black counterpart ? Oh my Grace.

RAZZA: (CALLING) Hey Dumbo – get her out of there !

KEIRA: Too late – he's released his hand.

BRENDAN: And our opponents seen the mistake.

PATTIE: Oh no – Queen Qwendolyn !

THEY ALL HIDE THEIR EYES AND TURN AWAY. THERE IS A LOUD CRUNCHING NOISE FROM OFF. THEY ALL FLINCH.

BRENDAN: (MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS, GIVING LAST RITES) II nomine Pater ...

PATTIE: Poor Gwendolyn.

RAZZA: That bloody idiot.

KEIRA: He wasn't even looking.

PATTIE: Noble Qwendolyn.

KEIRA: I wonder which one of us will be next.

RAZZA: Always the Rook. Once the Queen's gone – I'm next in line.

PATTIE: Regal Qwendolyn.

RAZZA: Steady on Pattie 8 – she wasn't all that crash hot.

- KEIRA: Says you ! Bloody useless. Stuck in the corner. Hiding.
- RAZZA: I am not hiding. Just fenced in. You wait till I get out of here. I'll show them !
- BRENDAN: Quiet now sisters, Qwendolyn's passing has affected us all but be assured that in the great land Off Board there is another life – one much greater than our humble existence here – where we will all live forever - in peace and harmony.
- PATTIE: Even with the black pieces ?
- BRENDAN: Yea sister – even with them. And readily I say unto you in the great world Off Board we may all live freely with no rigid constraints to bind us.
- PATTIE: You mean no squares ? Holy shit ! Oops. Sorry Father.
- RAZZA: Sorry you're lordship but you're missing the point. We're not that upset about Qwendolyn passing –
- KEIRA: Hey ! Speak for yourself.
- RAZZA: We're upset about the fact that she passed so pointlessly – for diddly-squat –
- PATTIE: Diddly what ?
- RAZA: All because our guy is so bloody hopeless. She went to the Great Board in the sky for nothing.
- KEIRA: (WATCHING) I wouldn't be so sure.
- KEIRA: Keira's right. Our opponents was so busy grabbing Qwendolyn he's left his whole left flank exposed.
- PATTIE: And our boy's on to it.
- RAZZA: Go on son !
- BRENDAN: He's moving fast now.
- KEIRA: The other guy doesn't even know what hit him.
- PATTIE: We may not even be needed.
- RAZZA: Go on son !
- BRENDAN: He's split them wide open.

KEIRA: Our opponents pieces are shell shocked.

PATTIE: Their king is exposed !

RAZZA: Go on son !

BRENDAN: Mate in two.

KEIRA: Does he see it ?

PATTIE: Yes he does !

RAZZA: Go on son.

BRENDAN: One !

KEIRA: Almost there.

PATTIE: Two !

RAZZA: Go on son !

ALL: Checkmate !

THEY ALL CHAP AND CHEER.

RAZZA: Good on you son. Well done !

KEIRA: Don't you mean – “Good on you girl !” It was Qwendolyn who won it for us.

RAZZA: Fair call. Gotta give her that.

BRENDAN: Yea you are right sisters. She did give up her mortal life so we may all live on in peace.

PATTIE: Yep, she was a bonza chick.

KEIRA: Thanks Qwendolyn -

RAZZA: Wherever you are -

BRENDAN: Lest we forget.

SLIGHT PAUSE.

PATTIE: So, what do we do now ?

RAZZA: I don't know about you but I'm looking forward to a good kip. I'm buggered.

BRENDAN FROWNS.

RAZZA: Sorry I mean tired. Real tired.

KEIRA: For once we both agree. Let's get some sleep.

SUDDENLY BELINDA ENTERS.

PATTIE: Who's she ?

BELINDA: Hello. My name is Belinda. I am your new Queen.

RAZZA: New Queen ? We just got rid of the last one.

BRENDAN: Great King defend us !

PATTIE: What is it ?

KEIRA: Look over the other side of the board.

BRENDAN: The vanquished black pieces. They're-appearing. Re-grouping.

PATTIE: What's going on ?

BELINDA: For your eternal sacrifice – we are grateful.

RAZZA: Oh no !

ALL (EXCEPT FOR BELINDA): He's playing another game.

**ALL THE PIECES SWAY ON THE SPOT, TRYING TO AVOID
SOMETHING SWINGING ABOVE THEIR HEADS.**

RAZZA: Here we go again !

THEY CONTINUE SWAYING AS THE LIGHTS FADE.