

# **THE THATCHER THEATER TERROR**

By  
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# THE THATCHER THEATER TERROR

*"The Thatcher Theater Terror is dedicated to my playwriting mentor,  
Tyler Marchant, for pushing me to my fullest potential."*

# THE THATCHER THEATER TERROR

CAST: 2 Men, 2 Women

BEN	Late teens, Male.
ASHLEY	Early 20s, Female.
KAT	Mid 20s, Female.
RODNEY/TERRY	Early 50s, Male.

TIME: 11:00 p.m. Halloween night. Present Day.

PLACE: A movie theater lobby.

# THE THATCHER THEATER TERROR

## ACT 1 SCENE 1

*Lights rise on a run-down movie theater lobby. The lobby is adorned with old movie posters and a sign that reads “The Thatcher Theater.” A concessions counter full of candy, cups, and popcorn bags sits center stage along with a popcorn machine. A red curtain is held up as a backdrop behind the concessions counter. To the right of the concessions counter is a bust statue that reads “Founder of The Thatcher Theater - Terry Thatcher”. ASHLEY is mopping behind the counter. After a beat, BEN enters.*

**BEN.** That was the longest shift ever!

**ASHLEY.** Hate to break it to you, Ben, but we’re not done yet.

**BEN.** I know, I know. Need help with anything?

**ASHLEY.** Yeah, can you grab the vacuum?

**BEN.** Kat’s using it right now. She’s cleaning out the last showing of Creature in My Mind.

**ASHLEY.** Creature in My Mind 12: The Final Creature! Dude, I cannot wait to see it! Critics are calling it the seventh-best movie in the franchise!

**BEN.** Wow, that’s high praise.

**ASHLEY.** I just hope it’s better than Creature in My Mind 11: Help My Prom Date is a Creature.

**BEN.** That title really rolls off the tongue.

**ASHLEY.** It’s such a terrible movie! They say this is the last movie in the franchise, so it better be good! *(KAT enters with one hand behind her back.)*

**KAT.** Ashley, you will not believe what I just had to clean up!

## THE THATCHER THEATER TERROR

**ASHLEY.** Vomit?

**KAT.** Well, yes, but that's not out of the ordinary. I'm talking about this!  
*(Kat displays a hot dog with dentures bitten into the middle of it.)*

**ASHLEY.** Ew! Why aren't you wearing gloves?

**KAT.** Oh, I have super sweaty hands. Gloves get stuck on me, and they're hard to take off. Does anyone know what I should do with it?

**ASHLEY.** I don't know, ask Rodney.

**KAT.** I haven't seen him for a while. The last time I saw him, he was in his office signing some of his headshots.

**ASHLEY.** Let me guess, he has another date. The irony of a former voice actor trying to impress dates with headshots. So he's leaving early and having us clean up by ourselves?

**KAT.** A typical Friday night.

**ASHLEY.** Yeah, but it's Halloween. We were swamped! This place is a complete disaster!

**KAT.** Well, statistically, Halloween isn't a big movie-going weekend. Most horror films released around Halloween get most of their box office success two weeks before Halloween.

**ASHLEY.** Right...

**KAT.** What? It's the truth! The box office never lies!

**ASHLEY.** I'm sure you're going to miss Siskel and Ebert over here once you get to college.

**BEN.** I'm still thinking about it.

**ASHLEY.** What's there to think about? You've always wanted to go to Crestwood's film program.

**BEN.** I know, but I just need some more time to think it over.

**ASHLEY.** I think you'd be missing out. You can get out of this sleepy town and do what you want to do. Dude, your short film has like twelve thousand views! It's not just us who know you're talented!

**BEN.** If it wasn't for your alien makeup design, it would not have been any good.

**KAT.** Those were so cool! I miss having those tentacles on my face. It was nice that it could hold a sandwich, and I could eat it without grabbing onto it. Truly a revolutionary design!

**ASHLEY.** Glad you found a use for them.

## THE THATCHER THEATER TERROR

**BEN.** She's right, though. They were awesome! Why leave for Chicago when I can stay here and make short films with the two of you?

**ASHLEY.** All I'm saying is I think you should weigh your options. You're super talented, and I know you're passionate about it.

**BEN.** Well, you're a super-talented makeup artist, and you haven't even applied to any schools! Why can't I just stay here if you're staying here?

**ASHLEY.** Because you're you, not me. Besides, you have way more initiative than I do. I'm not cut out for that life.

**BEN.** Look, right now, I'm happy where my life is. I have a job that I love, and friends that I love even more. Life is good. Why risk giving that all up?

**ASHLEY.** Whatever, Ben. It's your life, all I'm saying is I think you should go. Kat, those dentures are getting drool all over the floor.

**KAT.** I'll try to find Rodney. He'll know what to do. *(Kat exits. Ashley picks up a bag of popcorn.)*

**ASHLEY.** Wanna play?

**BEN.** Ehh...we should probably start to clean up.

**ASHLEY.** C'mon! Do you know how long it's been since we've played?

**BEN.** We played two days ago.

**ASHLEY.** That's two days too many without playing! It'll cheer you up.

**BEN.** I'm not sad.

**ASHLEY.** I never said you were.

**BEN.** You said it would cheer me up.

**ASHLEY.** I know what I said.

**BEN.** Cheer me up from what? Is this about Crestwood again?

**ASHLEY.** I just don't understand why you're so indecisive on this. It's your dream, and it's waiting for you. What's stopping you from going to the best film school in the country?

**BEN.** I said I just need some more time to consider my options.

**ASHLEY.** What options? Continue to make minimum wage in an old crummy movie theater or go to your dream school?

**BEN.** See, now you get it. *(Ashley walks around the counter, and she begins throwing popcorn in Ben's mouth. He moves around trying to catch the popcorn.)* Do you like working here?

**ASHLEY.** I like working with you and Kat.

## THE THATCHER THEATER TERROR

**BEN.** That's not what I asked.

**ASHLEY.** No. No, I don't.

**BEN.** You have dreams, why stay here if you're not happy?

**ASHLEY.** I told you that life just isn't cut out for me. *(Ashley hands Ben the bag of popcorn. He begins throwing popcorn in Ashley's mouth. She misses the catch.)* Ha! One point for me!

**BEN.** You stepped out of bounds.

**ASHLEY.** Did not!

**BEN.** Did too! You were in front of the chocolate covered peanuts when you threw that. To get one point, you need to be in front of the sour gummy bears.

**ASHLEY.** You're so wrong! Standing in front of sour gummy bears is two points! Even Kat can back me up on that!

**BEN.** Well, she's currently tied up with some drooly dentures, so she can't back you up.

**ASHLEY.** Alright, alright. How about we just call this a practice round?

**BEN.** I can live with that.

**ASHLEY.** Your turn?

**BEN.** Sure. *(Ben hands Ashley the bag of popcorn. She begins throwing popcorn in Ben's mouth. Rodney and Kat enter. Ben misses.)*

**RODNEY.** Alright, alright, enough with the popcorn game! *(Ashley stops throwing popcorn and turns to Rodney.)* As you all know, I'm heading out early tonight.

**ASHLEY.** You didn't even tell us that, Kat did.

**RODNEY.** Well, you still found out about it, so that means you knew about it! I don't want any more complaints about my so-called "bad communication".

**ASHLEY.** Sir, yes, sir.

**RODNEY.** I want this place in tip-top shape before any of you leave.

**ASHLEY.** Oh, come on, Rodney! It's Halloween, can't we just leave early? We'll come back early tomorrow and clean up then.

**RODNEY.** You're not even on the schedule for tomorrow.

**ASHLEY.** Exactly, so then I don't have to worry about it.

**RODNEY.** Alright, Rickels, enough with the jokes!

**ASHLEY.** Who?

## THE THATCHER THEATER TERROR

**RODNEY.** Never mind...Look, just clean up, and then you can leave. *(Rodney begins to exit but stops in his tracks.)* Oh! I almost forgot! It's the last Friday of the month, Ben, you know what that means.

**BEN.** Clean the bust of Terry Thatcher?

**RODNEY.** That's why you've been the employee of the month for the past twenty-two months. You're just that good! My dad founded this theater with the hope of people like you working here someday. Someone who truly cares about the movie-going experience! You're an amazing employee, Ben. I can't wait for the day to see your movies playing here!

**BEN.** Well, I mean, what's the hurry for me to leave? There's plenty of time to pursue my dream.

**RODNEY.** Don't get me wrong, Ben, I love having you work here, but there's more to your life than this place. Remember that time you filmed that awesome commercial for us? You took it so seriously, like you were a professional director! I uploaded it to the BookFace and it got like six views!

**ASHLEY.** Don't you mean Facebook?

**RODNEY.** That's what I said. And hey, six views are six more views than our last commercial.

**BEN.** I don't get the reason why everyone wants me to leave. I like it here! I can make even more commercials!

**RODNEY.** We know you do, but you have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity waiting for you! Wouldn't it be cool to say that the Thatcher Theater is home to two famous employees?

**KAT.** Who's the first one?

**RODNEY.** Me.

**KAT.** You're famous?

**RODNEY.** Well, I was on TV.

**ASHLEY.** You voiced a dog in a dog food commercial. What a star.

**RODNEY.** Oh, I love how supportive my employees are to me...Alright, I'm outta here. Wait, I almost forgot. Ashley, make sure you save whatever popcorn was left over from tonight and save it for tomorrow. I need to save some money to buy a new slushie machine, so let's cut back on the fresh popcorn from now on, okay?

## THE THATCHER THEATER TERROR

**ASHLEY.** Rodney, your dad would be so proud of you for upholding the movie-going experience.

**RODNEY.** Ben, make sure you give my dad's statue a new coat of wax. Some kids have been throwing candy at him recently so he's all sticky. *(Rodney kisses his fingers and taps it on the forehead of the bust.)* Toodles, poodles! *(Rodney exits.)*

**ASHLEY.** Why does he have to be so weird...great, now it's going to take us forever to get out of here!

**KAT.** Just think of it this way: the sooner we clean up, the faster we can get out of here!

**ASHLEY.** Easy for you to say.

**BEN.** Kat's right. I'll wax the bust, Kat, you vacuum, and Ash can finish the concessions counter, then, bam! We're home-free! *(Ben moves behind the concessions counter and grabs a bottle of cleaner wax and a towel. He comes back from around the counter and walks towards the statue of Terry Thatcher.)*

**KAT.** Who put you in charge?

**ASHLEY.** He's a director. It's what he does best. *(Ben starts to shine up the statue.)*

**BEN.** Hey, I'm also really good at putting a fresh coat of wax on a statue. I think that's an important fact.

**ASHLEY.** True. Hey Kat. Wanna play? *(Ashley waves the bag of popcorn.)*

**KAT.** I was just going to vacuum the lobby.

**ASHLEY.** Ben's in your way anyway. Just a quick game!

**KAT.** Sure, why not!

**ASHLEY.** Here, you can throw first! *(Ashley hands Kat a bag of popcorn. Kat starts to toss the popcorn at Ashley. Ashley catches a piece of popcorn.)*

**ASHLEY.** Throw farther! I wanna see if I can catch it by the statue.

**BEN.** Just be careful, Rodney would kill us if we broke this.

*(Kat throws popcorn at Ashley. Ashley moves backward to catch it when she suddenly falls on Ben, who knocks over the bust of Terry Thatcher with the sound of a loud thud as a large crack splits the statue open.)*

**BEN.** Look what you did! Rodney's going to kill me! *(Blackout.)*

## THE THATCHER THEATER TERROR

Hey! What happened with the lights?

**KAT.** Let me call Rodney. I'm sure there's an explanation...oh no!

**BEN.** What's wrong?

**KAT.** The lights are out.

**BEN.** I know that! What's wrong with you?

**KAT.** My therapist told me that's a complicated answer. I mean, I don't want to ramble on about myself all night. But if you insist, it all started when I was-

**BEN.** No, I'm talking about what you just said!

**KAT.** That I shouldn't be talking about myself all night, but given the opportunity, I would?

**BEN.** No! Before that!

**KAT.** The lights are out?

**BEN.** I give up!

**ASHLEY.** He means when you were about to call Rodney!

**KAT.** Oh, right, that. My phone is dead.

**ASHLEY.** Mine is too. What about yours, Ben?

**BEN.** Mine's in the box office.

**ASHLEY.** Okay, not a problem. We'll just have to feel our way to the door. We can do that. We just need to take slow steps. Rodney can't blame us for leaving early because of this. *(Suddenly, the lights start to strobe, and the popcorn machine starts spitting out popcorn all over the place. A booming ghoulish groan is heard offstage.)*

**KAT.** I thought that the beluga whale documentary left theaters last week.

**ASHLEY.** It did.

**KAT.** Then, what was that noise? *(A projection of a large head appears on the back wall above the concessions counter.)*

**TERRY.** Who dares wake the spirit of Terry Thatcher?

**KAT.** Are you the spirit of Terry Thatcher?

**TERRY.** Yes! I thought I made that pretty clear...

**KAT.** Sorry, I didn't know that ghosts spoke about themselves in the third person. I mean, this is my first time speaking with a ghost, so I guess we're just dealing with a bunch of firsts tonight!

**TERRY.** SILENCE! You have released me, now you must pay the price...

## THE THATCHER THEATER TERROR

**ASHLEY.** Look, man, we work here, and we still have to PAY full price to see movies. I'd say that's paying the price!

**TERRY.** SILENCE!!

**ASHLEY.** Okay, okay! I'll shut up.

**KAT.** What do you want from us?

**TERRY.** I am seeking the one who released me from my statue!

**ASHLEY.** Look, we'll patch up your bust and then everything will be okay, right?

**TERRY.** Where is my son?

**KAT.** He's not here right now. Can you just come back in the morning?

**TERRY.** Oh sure, no problem!

**KAT.** Wow! Great, thanks, Mr. Thatcher!

**TERRY.** Of course, I can't come back in the morning! That's not how this works!

**KAT.** Look, I said I was new on the ghost stuff, so just cut me some slack, okay?

**TERRY.** I've had enough small talk! *(The pair of dentures from earlier in the play chatters across the stage. Ben, Ashley, and Kat scream. Kat kicks the dentures off stage.)*

**KAT.** He's possessed dentures! What kind of sick maniac are you?

**TERRY.** This is nothing compared to what I've had to suffer from seeing for the past fifteen years! Tell me, where is the one who broke my statue?

**BEN.** It was me.

**TERRY.** You. What is your name, boy?

**BEN.** Ben.

**TERRY.** So, you're the one who broke my statue?

**BEN.** It was an accident, sir! My co-worker bumped into me, and I knocked it over. I think there's a bottle of gorilla glue in the office that should fix this in-

**TERRY.** Silence! I don't want to be manhandled and thrown back together by some gorilla glue!

**BEN.** Then what do you want?

**TERRY.** For you to listen to me.

**BEN.** Well, you certainly have my attention.

## THE THATCHER THEATER TERROR

**TERRY.** When I was a boy, I dreamed of opening a movie theater. I worked hard, saving every penny so I could afford to make my dream come true. When I was twenty-five, I finally opened my theater. It became the grand jewel of the town. There was nothing more gratifying than seeing my dream come to life. As time went on, I met my wife and started a family. My life couldn't be happier. But then, audiences became ungrateful. They started to trash my theaters and become disruptive during movies. They were driving my business off a cliff! I realized I had had enough. There was nothing I could do until you released me from my eternal slumber. I ignored my fear of the younger generation ruining my theater, believing they would not impact my business. But, oh, how sadly mistaken I was. I've seen what you've done. Ungrateful employees, just as bad as the moviegoers. I see that popcorn game you play. Do you know how disrespectful that is to me? Seeing you hooligans play games within my establishment!

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