

# HIGH ART

A Humorous Duet

by  
Peg Ratliff



**Wetmore Declamation Bureau**

**Box 2695  
Sioux City, IA 51106**

**[www.wetmoredeclamation.com](http://www.wetmoredeclamation.com)  
Email: [speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com](mailto:speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com)**

CAUTION: Wetmore Declamation Bureau material is protected by United States copyright law and conventions. None of our material may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—without prior permission. No trademark, copyright or other notice may be removed or changed. All rights reserved. Violators will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

HIGH ART  
A Humorous Duet

Peg Ratliff

Copyright by the author. Exclusive permission to publish as a reading, granted by the author to the WETMORE DECLAMATION BUREAU, Sioux City, Iowa. Unauthorized duplication is a violation of applicable laws.

Note: Throughout the piece, Gabe spends a lot of time with his arms folded, finger to chin, contemplating, pacing. At first, Gail watches him, somewhat in awe, but this changes as the piece goes on. Every time he yells “Action!” or “Cut!” Gail jumps. He alternates between speaking passionately and yelling, even though she is the only actor present.

(Gabe is passionate about directing the play and Gail is his willing actress. Yet passion becomes obsession until Gail discovers they have both bitten off more than they can chew.)

GAIL: Gabe is obsessed with the acting process. No one will ever be able to reach the passion that he can feel for a scene. (Just a touch sarcastically) Too bad no one in Hollywood will ever have the pleasure.

GABE: Gail was the only one for this role. Only she comes close to feeling it. (To audience) Do you feel it?

GAIL: High Art.

GABE: (Passionately) By Peg Ratliff.

GABE: (Arms crossed, considering, then exuberant.) Now, remember, I want you to feel the play.

GAIL: (She is not very dramatic; she does try to understand what he wants.) Feel the play. I got it.

GABE: Let it get under your skin. Let it permeate your soul.

GAIL: Permeate my soul. Right.

GABE: Say your first line.

GAIL: If you please, sir—

GABE: Cut! (Every time he does this, it catches her off guard and she jumps.) Ask yourself—why is he my boss? Why am I beholden to him?

GAIL: (Musing) Why. Okay, I’m ready.

GABE: Action!

GAIL: If you please, sir—

GABE: Cut! Do you feel it? Do you feel her pain? He is bossy, forbidding, reminding her of all the mistakes she made as a child.

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---