



WORD POWER: 10 Minute Play

from

PRESENTATION DAY: WORD POWER

written by

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FAITH BASED STUDENT MUSICALS

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THEME

THE POWER OF OUR WORDS

"Our words have the power to build people up...or tear people down..." Prov. 18:21

SYNOPSIS

It's Presentation Day at school, and Nellie is petrified to speak. The class has been studying what the Bible says about the power of our words. Each "Student Presentation" is based on their assigned scripture verse. How will Nellie navigate her fear, make decisions about confidentiality, and discover support from an unlikely ally?

CAST

NELLIE(F) Loyal friend, terrified to speak in front of the class. Makes progress with the help of an unlikely ally.

GIGI(F) Cheerleader. Shiny surface, appears to have it together, intimidating to other students. Action reveals her insecurities just beneath the surface, and her true heart.

SAM(M/F) Curious, even nosy, sees opportunity to gain status, comic instinct/physical comedy or athleticism a plus. Could be played as a "Ninja" type character, sneaking in and out, appearing from behind the lectern, etc.

Early morning before school, NELLIE enters the quiet, empty classroom alone. She nervously looks around as she musters courage for the dreaded Presentation Day.

She sits at her desk, somewhat out of sight, takes papers out of backpack, and reviews notes. She becomes nauseous, pulls hood over head, and puts her head down on her desk.

GIGI bops in, unaware that NELLIE is present. Thinking she is alone, GIGI decides to have some fun at the teacher's lectern.

GIGI

(clears throat)

Thank you! Thank you all so much. Literally, I want to thank all my millions of fans and followers of my Gigi Squad for this award. You are all literally the little people who make my life possible. And now, literally, I'll sing my new hit single "Swingin' Those Words Around."

GIGI attempts a song, badly.

GIGI (CONT'D)

EVERYBODY'S SINGIN', EVERYBODY'S FLINGING,

She definitely does not know anyone is listening.

GIGI (CONT'D)

EVERYBODY'S SINGIN', FLINGING,

NELLIE makes an accidental noise such as dropping a book or pencil. GIGI is startled, turns immediately.

GIGI (CONT'D)

Who's there?

Silence.

I demand you reveal yourself immediately!

NELLIE rises, now more nervous than ever.

Nellie Parsons, are you spying on me?

NELLIE

...Uh, no, of course not! I just came in early, cause I get so nervous when I have to **speak** in front of the class.

SAM (M/F) enters classroom, noticed by NELLIE, but unseen by GIGI.

S/HE is enthralled with their juicy interaction.

S/HE quickly ducks behind the Teacher's lectern or other hiding spot. (The lectern could be on casters for extra fun.) Audience must be able to see SAM'S humorous facial reactions to the scene.

GIGI

(annoyed)

Too bad for you. Did you see anything?

NELLIE

No!

GIGI crosses to NELLIE, threatening.

GIGI

What did you see?

SAM shows eager curiosity.

NELLIE

Nothing!

GIGI now softens, changing tactics.

GIGI

Look, I know I haven't always been the nicest to you, but I can change that.

NELLIE

(petrified)

Really. Nothing. I didn't see anything.

GIGI

Nothing but me being stupid. Nellie Parsons, if you ever tell anyone...

SAM does huge take here, as in, "This I gotta hear!"

NELLIE

I would never tell what I saw. I mean didn't see.

SAM does takes throughout the following.

GIGI

(bargaining)

Do I need to pretend we're friends at lunch for a month to keep you quiet about this?

NELLIE

No. Not unless you want to.

GIGI

Do I need to give you all my lip gloss rejects for the rest of the year?

NELLIE

No.

GIGI

Lemme guess, you want to post a picture of us together, as if we actually hang out.

NELLIE

No! I wouldn't tell something bad about someone on purpose.

GIGI

You wouldn't? Wow, that's a new one.

Beat for GIGI to absorb this revelation.

GIGI (CONT'D)

What a concept.

NELLIE

You want some help with that song?

GIGI

Yeah, I guess. Thanks. I know we're supposed to have it down today.

NELLIE

(sweet, lovely)

EVERYBODY'S SINGIN',

GIGI

EVERYBODY'S SINGIN',

NELLIE

EVERYBODY'S FLINGIN',

GIGI

EVERYBODY'S FLINGIN',

NELLIE

EVERYBODY'S SINGIN', FLINGIN', A LITTLE MUD SLINGIN'

GIGI

Hey, you have a nice voice. Really nice, actually.

NELLIE

Thanks.

GIGI

Thanks for your help.

Gigi ponders whether to prolong the exchange.

GIGI (CONT'D)

Speaking in public makes you really nervous, huh.

NELLIE

The worst! I'd rather get a tooth pulled, or arrested. Or cancelled!

GIGI

You don't wanna get cancelled, believe me. That almost happened to me when I – nevermind. Let's just say that now I actually **think** before I post.

NELLIE

Good advice.

GIGI

I'm kinda used to public speaking, from cheerleading, ya know? But I always have to work on not yelling, or clapping, or rhyming. And the cartwheel is sometimes out of place.

NELLIE

Right.

GIGI

Well, thanks for your help with that song.

NELLIE

You're welcome.

GIGI considers for a beat.

GIGI

Hey, maybe I can help you get over your nerves a little bit.

NELLIE

(shocked)

Really?! Oh, that'd be great.

GIGI

OK, meet me after school.

GIGI ponders how this coalition will be viewed.

How about the gym? That'll be less...more private.

NELLIE

Thanks.

Awkward beat.

GIGI

Time for class I guess. Here come the animals!

GIGI takes her seat.

NELLIE heads to her seat, but SAM appears, cuts her off and drags her far downstage for private exchange.

SAM

Hey, what happened this morning?

NELLIE

What do you mean?

SAM

You know what I mean. Between you and Gigi?

NELLIE

There's nothing to talk about.

SAM

C'mon, you can tell **me**!

NELLIE

I **am** telling you: There's nothing to talk about.

SAM

Oh right, Gigi was worked up because of what **didn't** happen?

NELLIE

It wouldn't be right.

SAM

You mean wouldn't be right to say something bad about **Gigi**.

NELLIE

It wouldn't be right to say something bad about **anybody**.

SAM

Yeah, yeah. C'mon, cough it up, Nellie.

NELLIE

Would you stop!?!

SAM

You don't recognize an opportunity when it smacks you in the face, do you?

NELLIE

What are you talking about?

SAM

This is our chance to get the respect we deserve from Gigi. She doesn't even speak to me - she acts like I don't exist. So if **you've** got some dirt on her, **I** need to know what it is. If we can blackmail her, we might just turn out to be her sudden new best friends!

NELLIE

I don't tell things when people ask me not to. That's not how friendship works, Sam.

SAM

(sarcastically)

Right!!! You're so **perfect**, Nellie. You never tell secrets, you **never** gossip. How about the time you told -

NELLIE

I never said I was perfect. Sam, just because I've made mistakes in the past doesn't mean I shouldn't try to do better.

SAM

Better for who? Better for **you**, Nellie. How about **me**? How about helping **me** out a little here?

(Mounting anger in following exchange.)

Ok, Nellie. Maybe **you** don't have anything to tell, but **I** do.

NELLIE

What are you talking about?

SAM

I'm talking about what happened with you at Rachel's party last summer?
Between you and—

NELLIE looks sick at the recall.

NELLIE

Oh come on, Sam. You wouldn't! That's a secret! I trusted you!

SAM

OHHHHHH, OKAAAY. You trusted me **then**. So you can trust me **now**. Tell me whatever you've got on Gigi.

NELLIE

(She's had enough)

Sam, stop! I thought I was your friend.

Both with escalating anger.

SAM

You **are** my friend! And now **Gigi** is gonna be my friend as well. Yours too, when you cough it up. Go ahead!

NELLIE

That is **so** mean! So unfair!

SAM

You're a scaredy cat, Nellie! Everybody knows it.

NELLIE

Yeah? Well everybody knows you're a big trouble maker. Always in everybody's business!

SAM

Oh really!

SAM raises hand, waiting to be called on by invisible teacher.

(subtly spiteful)

Mrs. Martin...Nellie hasn't gone yet! I can't imagine she would bypass the opportunity to **speak** in front of the class.

NELLIE

That's OK Mrs. Martin. Really. I don't need to go today.

Beat as NELLIE hesitates.

Yes, I definitely did prepare my presentation.

Beat.

Yes, I'm ready. It's just, I'm really nervous—

After an awkward stall, GIGI jumps up.

GIGI

May I say, Mrs. Martin, that Nellie informed me in private that she might actually like to **sing** her presentation.

GIGI makes eye contact with NELLIE, working her into this idea.

Right. She would actually rather **sing** it than **speak** it. Class, please give Nellie your undivided attention. In fact, if I may, Mrs. Martin, I'd like to lead the class in a little cheer in support for Nellie.

MARTIN nods consent, though uncertain.

GIGI

Everyone please stand and repeat after me.

NELLIE stands.

SAM stands, bewildered.

GIGI

Please repeat after me.

GIGI assumes "Cheer Stance," leading chant rhythm with clapping and cheer motions.

Ready, OK.
When someone speaks don't be a pest.

SAM AND NELLIE

When someone speaks don't be a pest.

GIGI

Help them do their very best.

SAM AND NELLIE

Help them do their very best.

GIGI

How about if it were you?

SAM AND NELLIE

How about if it were you?

GIGI

These are things that you can do.

SAM AND NELLIE

These are things that you can do.

GIGI

Listen.

SAM AND NELLIE

Listen.

GIGI

Make eye contact.

SAM AND NELLIE

Make eye contact.

GIGI

Don't look around.

SAM AND NELLIE

Don't look around.

GIGI

Or make a sound.

SAM AND NELLIE

Or make a sound.

GIGI transitions immediately to pacing, lecturing with authority.

GIGI

Yeah, and don't ever whisper or even make eye contact with anyone else. Just focus on the speaker. Have you ever seen two people whispering or laughing, or giving each other a look when you're not included? It always feels like they're talking about you, even if they aren't! So don't do that.

Beat.

And actually, I'm not gonna do that anymore either.

SAM and NELLIE react to this announcement.

GIGI (CONT'D)

(big announcement)

Everybody, please give Nellie your full attention. Me included. Nellie, take it away!

NELLIE

Uh, thank you, Gigi.

Mrs. Martin, before I start, may I have just a minute to speak with Gigi privately?

NELLIE calls GIGI downstage for a private exchange.

Listen, I'm not ever gonna tell your secret. But I do want to ask you for a favor.

GIGI

Ah, so you do want that picture after all.

GIGI strikes pose with NELLIE, phone up for selfie.

NELLIE

No, not exactly.

GIGI

Then what?

NELLIE

Will you be nicer to Sam? Treat him/her like he has feelings? Say "Hi?" Act like he's alive? Maybe sit with him at lunch once in a while? I mean, he has the same feelings you do, you know?

Beat.

GIGI

Wow. You're really something, Nellie.

OK, I can do that. Deal.

NELLIE takes place as GIGI takes seat.

NELLIE

(nervous, haltingly)

OK, here goes.

NELLIE sings acapella.

I HAVE A GIFT TO GIVE, THOUGH NOTHING'S IN MY HAND.
I WILL REMEMBER WHEN I SPEAK, MY WORDS WILL ALWAYS
LAND IN SOMEONE'S HEART, AND RING FOREVER,
LIKE AN OLD FAMILIAR SONG.
MAY I CHOOSE WORDS OF LOVE THAT ECHO ON AND ON AND ON.
MAY I CHOOSE WORDS OF LOVE THAT ECHO ON.

SAM and GIGI applaud NELLIE.

ALL pack backpacks to exit.

GIGI

(to Sam)

Hey Sam, wanna sit at my table?

SAM stops cold, looks around.

SAM

You talking to me? Are you talking to me?

GIGI

Uhhh...yeah!

SAM and GIGI exit together.

SAM

Hey and have you heard what Ricky said about...

GIGI puts her flexed hand in SAM's face.

GIGI

"Two ears, one mouth." There's a reason. I'm gonna try less talking and more listening.

SAM

(light bulb moment)

Riiiiggghht, riigghht. Good idea.

GIGI and SAM exit.

NELLIE gestures a private, "Thank you" to the Lord.

THE END

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