

SHOE STORY

a short comedy film by

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SHOE STORY

Setting: A bohemian apartment in Taipei City, Taiwan

The Present (2020-2021)

CAST

Dialogue Characters (in order of appearance):

BARNEY PAN (Taiwanese man, 20s)

SHELBY LAU (Hong Kong woman, 20s)

VIRNA LEE (Taiwanese woman, 20s)

Set: Floor, baseboard, and wall.

NOTES

All dialogue is off-screen.

Sound: Characters pad around in stockings or slippers. The only sound made by shoes occurs when one drops on camera.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Floor, baseboard, wall. Shot close from a fixed-position phone camera approximately 15 centimetres above the floor. ALL DIALOGUE IS OFF-SCREEN.

Several seconds pass. Nothing happens.

BARNEY (O.S., ETC)
Has the movie started?

SHELBY (O.S., ETC)
Yeah.

Pause.

BARNEY
It's not very interesting.

SHELBY
Of course not.

Pause.

SHELBY (contd)
But watch this.

A SHOE drops, screen left.

BARNEY
A shoe.

SHELBY
That's what they call it.

BARNEY
What difference does that make?

SHELBY
All the difference in the world. Now we have a story.

Pause.

BARNEY
Why is this a story?

SHELBY
Because something has happened.

BARNEY
Yeah, OK, but who cares?

SHELBY
The audience cares.

BARNEY
Why should the audience care?

SHELBY
Because it's only one shoe.

Pause.

BARNEY
They're waiting for the other shoe to drop.

SHELBY
Right. We have suspense!

Pause.

BARNEY
(ad libs dramatic music)

Pause.

BARNEY (contd)
Don't you need to give your story a three-part structure or something?

SHELBY
Some people say if you don't, you go to hell.

BARNEY
Those people won't like your story, then. It only has two shoes.

SHELBY
I'll tell them it has three parts anyway. It has a beginning, middle, and end.

Pause.

BARNEY
They fall for that?

SHELBY
Yeah.

Sound: Door unlocked, opened. VIRNA enters.

VIRNA (O.S., ETC)
Hi, guys. I'm back from the gym. Oh!
You're making a movie.

SHELBY
Yes. It's an experiment. We're seeing
how long we can maintain the
suspense.

Pause.

VIRNA
What suspense?

BARNEY
My question exactly.

SHELBY
I dropped one shoe. Now the audience
is waiting for the other one.

Sound under dialogue: shuffling of canvas gym bag as Virna
finds a seat on the sofa, right.

VIRNA
Oh, this is like Chekhov's gun.

BARNEY
Chekhov made a gun movie?

VIRNA
He said if you see a gun hanging on
the wall, the gun will fire a shot
later.

BARNEY
I bet he's enjoying this story.

VIRNA
He's not watching. He's dead.

BARNEY
He should have decorated with
posters.

Pause.

VIRNA
So how long can you sustain this?

SHELBY

I'm not sure. This is the tricky part. There's a balance you need to hit.

BARNEY

What are you balancing?

SHELBY

The delay and the stakes. If you delay too long, the audience gives up and goes out for a beer. When stakes are higher they stay with you longer.

BARNEY

Ah.

Pause.

SHELBY

But this story is really simple. I'll give it a few more seconds and finish.

VIRNA

Where's the other shoe?

SHELBY

It's on the floor there by the sofa.

VIRNA

I don't see it.

SHELBY

It's right—well, it was right there. Look underneath.

VIRNA

There's no shoe.

BARNEY

Uh oh.

SHELBY

We *lost* the other shoe?!

VIRNA

Nothing.

FOOTSTEPS as Shelby gets up, stalks around room.

SHELBY

Where's the shoe?! I had it right there where I could just reach over—Dammit! *Where is the fucking shoe?!*

BARNEY

There goes our family-friendly rating.

Sound: Shelby, frantic, storms around searching.

SHELBY

God, I hate props! People suck, but props are the worst! I hate props, I hate all the fucking shit that goes with props!

Flashing red BATTERY WARNING LIGHT appears in a lower corner. 5% power remaining.

Sounds: All three search the apartment.

VIRNA

It's not over here.

SHELBY

The foyer?

VIRNA

Nope. First place I looked.

SHELBY

The table? How about over by the bike stuff?

BARNEY

Nope... no. Don't see it.

VIRNA

No shoe.

SHELBY

Dammit. Now my timing is all messed up! (glancing around) Where's Lilina? That bitch. I bet she took it.

VIRNA

Lilina is at the groomer's.

SHELBY
Shit. (walking back) Oh, great. Now
I'm losing battery.

BATTERY WARNING LIGHT falls to 4%.

BARNEY
Can't we drop something else?

SHELBY
It doesn't work that way! I promised
the audience a shoe story! If now I
start dropping keys and bike helmets
and shit, everyone will know I'm
cheating. Everyone will know I fucked
up!

VIRNA
I don't see the shoe.

BARNEY
Four percent now.

SHELBY
Where is that god-damn fucking shoe?!

BATTERY WARNING LIGHT falls to 3%.

SHELBY (contd)
All the suspense is shot to hell now.
Nobody cares. I'll have to find both
shoes and begin from one. Shoot the
whole damn thing over.

VIRNA
That won't be difficult, will it?
It's a simple story.

SHELBY
Yeah, but by the time I recharge the
battery, the light from the window
will be different, we'll have more
noise from the street... I'll need to
figure out all that shit again!

BATTERY WARNING LIGHT shows 2%.

BARNEY
Too bad. It was a fun idea.

SHELBY
Now it's a sucky idea. Fuck it. Want
to see some credits?

BARNEY
You have credits?

SHELBY
Yeah.

CREDITS begin.

SHELBY (contd)
This is what they look like. You just
put text over the image.

CREDITS begin scrolling past, as if in response to an arrow
key.

BARNEY
Nice. At least these will be ready
when you shoot for real.

SHELBY
Yeah.

Last CREDIT: *"Filmed in Taiwan"*

Pause. BATTERY WARNING LIGHT flashing 1%.

BARNEY
That's the last one?

SHELBY
Yep.

CREDITS vanish.

BARNEY
So this is the end of the movie.

SHELBY
Yeah. I'm just... I'm still hoping
for a miracle, you know? Like, maybe
the ceiling will open, and we'll hear
harps and trombones, and a god will
float down on a golden cloud... and
drop the shoe.

Pause.

VIRNA
I don't think that's going to happen.

SHELBY
(sighing)
I guess not. Well, I've done what I
can. Things came out against me.

BARNEY
Here's to daring greatly. To life in
the arena.

Begin FADE TO BLACK.

SHELBY
Sorry, guys. I tried.

BLACK screen. BATTERY WARNING LIGHT goes to 0%.

Sound: ZIPPER opening a GYM BAG.

SHELBY (contd)
You hid it in your bag?

QUICK FADE IN.

VIRNA
Yeah.

SECOND SHOE DROPS as:

VIRNA (contd)
I like fucking with people.

CUT TO BLACK.

END