

PERUSAL SCRIPT

Lavender

by **Matthew Ivan Bennett**

Part 1 of Episode 2 of the **RADIO HOUR** Series



Newport, Maine

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LAVENDER

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CHARACTERS: 3f 3m 1either

Old Henry / Young Henry
Mrs. Tanner
“Lavender”
Warren
Emily
Old Neighbor (Gender Neutral)
Young People (doubled by various cast members)
EFFECTS (F/X)

Suggested doubling — 2f 2m

Actor 1: Old Henry / Young Henry / Young People
Actor 2: "Lavender" / Young People
Actor 3: Mrs. Tanner / Emily / Young People
Actor 4: Warren / Old Neighbor / Young People

Period Costumes or contemporary clothes

Radio Station setting

Sound Effects required (can be Foley, recorded, or a mix of both. Music required.)

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LAVENDER by *Matthew Ivan Bennett* (??minutes) 5f 6m 1either can be doubled to 2f 2m 1either. Simple costumes, setting. SFX essential. Staged Radio Drama, Radio Broadcast, Fully-Staged Production, or Virtual Theatre. In *Lavender*, a young man falls for a Scottish young woman who appears to be new to town. This sweet and haunting love story riffs on the familiar stories of ghosts and love at first sight. This haunting love story will tax your reason and twist the cockles of your heart. Based on a ghost story from Salt Lake City. RADIO HOUR is a co-production between Salt Lake City’s Plan-B Theatre Company and the University of Utah’s Public Radio station KUER's Radio West. **ORDER #3236.1**

MATTHEW IVAN BENNETT is a resident of Plan-B Theatre, listed by American Theater magazine as one of 14 companies nationwide exemplifying social action and civic engagement. At Plan-B, he’s premiered several stage and radio plays, including an adaptation of “*Frankenstein*” that won a Utah Broadcasters Association award and “*Eric(a)*”—which won Best Drama at the United Solo festival in New York. He received the Holland New Voices award from the Great Plains Theatre Commons, has twice been a finalist in screenwriting at Austin Film Festival, and in 2016 was an O’Neill finalist. His short plays have appeared at Chicago’s Circle Theatre, Rising Sun in New York, Monkeyman in Toronto, and the Source Festival in DC. Matt is a member of the Dramatists’ Guild.

LAVENDER AND EXILE

MUSIC UP

ANNOUNCER: Welcome. This segment of Radio Hour is brought to you by Shakey's ice-cold crackinated cola. Four out of five doctors agree a steady intake of crack strengthens the heart, purifies the liver, and enhances the nerves.

F/X: A glass BOTTLE BEING OPENED.

Shakey's: Getting The Shakes Never Tasted So Good.

COMPANY: (*jingly*) Shakey's.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you, as always, for inviting us into your living rooms through the magic of radio-waves. We have a stupendous program coming up, so keep those dials set right here. And now, introducing: the sonorous and sparkling [NAME OF ACTOR ONE]

(ACTOR ONE enters and bows.)

(ad-lib; F/X)

The tell-the-tale-to-me-trippingly-on-the-tongue [NAME OF ACTOR TWO]

(ACTOR TWO enters and bows)

(ad-lib; F/X)

The indefatigable and effervescent foley artist [NAME OF ACTOR THREE]

(ACTOR THREE enters and bows)

(ad-lib; F/X)

The maven of make-believe audio, the wizardess of weird sounds, the stereophonic sensation, foley artist [NAME OF ACTOR FOUR]

(ACTOR FOUR enters and bows.)

(ab-lib; F/X)

And last, but certainly not least talented, myself: the jocular and jingling, the jazzy and jubilant, the jocund, the makes y'wanna jump fer Jesus, the jungle-like—

ACTOR FOUR: —The juvenile.

ANNOUNCER: (drawing out the name of ACTOR FIVE, who is “himself”)

F/X: A whoopee cushion.

(clearing the throat; recovering)

How are you on this fine day [NAME OF ACTOR ONE]?

ACTOR ONE: I'm swell, thanks.

ANNOUNCER: And you [NAME OF ACTOR TWO]?

ACTOR TWO: Keen, thank you.

ANNOUNCER: And how are you Mr. [NAME OF ACTOR THREE]?

ACTOR THREE: Very gay. I appreciate your asking.

ANNOUNCER: Terr-ific. As I said, ladies and gents—

ACTOR FOUR: —I'm peachy. Thank you.

ANNOUNCER: Super... And—

ACTOR FOUR: Ahem! I'm good, too.

ANNOUNCER: Yes. Good.

(Sotto voce)

Sorry.

(Back in the swing)

As I said, you're in for quite a treat as we present two radio dramas based on little-known Utah ghost stories. The first, *Lavender*, is a haunting love story that will tax your reason and twist the cockles of your heart. The second, *Exile*, is a chilling yarn about a real-life grave-robber at the Salt Lake City Cemetery.

And now, [NAMES of THEATRE COMPANY and RADIO STATION] and Shakey's ice-cold crackinated cola—

ACTORS: *(singing)* —Shakey's—

ANNOUNCER: —Present...*Lavender*.

F/X: Henry BREATHES HEAVILY. Lavender LAUGHS.

MUSIC UP "LAVENDER" (haunting, romantic)

F/X: A soft warm WIND RUSTLING in a poplar tree; a MAGPIE.

OLD HENRY: (to the audience) They say you never forget your first love. In my case that's a double truth —not because of her haunting beauty, though she was devastating; but because it all happened in one night: the twenty-fourth of July, Eighteen-Sixty. Pioneer Day. On the night of the biggest dance of the year in the frontier settlement of Salt Lake City...

F/X: FIREWORKS (in the B/G throughout); the sounds of a SHOES being BRUSHED as Young Henry HUMS.

MRS. TANNER: Henry, those shoes couldn't be blacker if ya dipped 'em in tar. You're gonna be late.

F/X: More POLISHING.

YOUNG HENRY: I want to look hantsome, Mother.

MRS. TANNER: Henry, the girls will not be lookin' at your Sunday shoes.

YOUNG HENRY: *(nervous, stops polishing)* Where will they be lookin'?

MRS. TANNER: They—they look—they look at your manners, Henry.

YOUNG HENRY: Oh.

MRS. TANNER: So be at your best and the girls will take ta ya.

YOUNG HENRY: Thank you, Mother.

MRS. TANNER: You're a fine dancer.

YOUNG HENRY: Do ya think so?

MRS. TANNER: I seen you and I know so. And, besides, who taught you?

MUSIC UP (in the middle of the next speech)

OLD HENRY: *(to the audience)* The dance hall was a dream: white drapes and lanterns everywhere, the room thick with dancers and rose perfume and sweat and gold light. A piano, a fiddler, stern-faced chaperones, and her: a slender purple shadow moving from boy to boy, leaving them speechless.

MUSIC UP

F/X: Young people SQUARE-DANCING, CHATTING and CLAPPING.

YOUNG PEOPLE:

(in the B/G; a girl:) ...The gall!

(a boy:) ...Jist ask 'er!

(a girl:) ...Looks like a wilted pumpkin.

(a boy:) ...I wasn't tryin' nuthin', you could fit a Book 'a Mormon between us!

(a girl:) ...That boy is bad.

(a boy:) ...Smells like a flowerbed threw up in here.

WARREN: Hey, Henry!

YOUNG HENRY: Howdy, Warren.

(they shake hands; Henry sniffs)

'S that kerosene?

WARREN: *(smells himself)* Goldarnit! Yeah—Cin ya smell that? I had my jacket hanging on the back of a chair in the sittin' room and my liddle sister comes tearin' through and knocks a over a lamp. B'lieve that? 'S itchy, too.

(he itches)

You jist git here?

YOUNG HENRY: Yep. Did I miss anything?

WARREN: Nuthin' much. Couple handkerchiefs fell outta Harriet Henderson's dress when she was twirlin'.

YOUNG HENRY: Really?

WARREN: Yep. Never bin too curvy under the collarbones.

(the BOYS laugh)

F/X: PHLEGMATIC SNORTING as Emily approaches CLOPPINGLY.

EMILY: *(from twenty feet or so)* Yoo-hoo! Henry!

WARREN: Uh, oh. Here comes You-Know-Who.

YOUNG HENRY: Where?

WARREN: Time fer some summer air, I think.

(whispering)

She may be a Bishop's daughter, but the Lord sure didn't favor that family when it comes to faces.

YOUNG HENRY: *(under his breath)* Warren! Don't—

EMILY: *(dowdy)* Hello Henry Tanner.

YOUNG HENRY: Oh, Emily, hello.

WARREN: Cetch ya after, Henry.

(leaving)

Emily.

EMILY: *(icily)* Warren. 'Bye.

F/X: Warren PATS Henry and WALKS AWAY.

EMILY: Do you like my dress?

(Emily SNORTS)

YOUNG HENRY: Uh, yes, it's very...yellow. It reminds me of...butter.

EMILY: *(snorting, giggling)* Thank you.

(immediately)

Hey, I waved at you Sunday last and you did not wave back.

YOUNG HENRY: You waved at me?

EMILY: I was standing in plain sight, Henry Tanner.

(snorting)

You were on your way to the church and I was on my porch.

YOUNG HENRY: Hmmm. I, I remember that you were missing from church. Were you sick? ...Again?

EMILY: *(snorting)* You know perfectly well I was. My mother told Mrs. Clawson who told your mother. It is sweltering in here.

YOUNG HENRY: Is it?

EMILY: Under a dress it is.

(a longer snort)

YOUNG HENRY: I would not know.

EMILY: Well I should hope not, silly.

(cackling)

Are you gonna apologize?

YOUNG HENRY: Uh—

EMILY: At the very least you could ask me to dance.

YOUNG HENRY: You—aren't—too—sweltering?

EMILY: *(sighing)* Good Christmas. You really aren't so dandy, Henry. I would not rebuff me.

MUSIC UP (the song they dance to)

OLD HENRY: *(to the audience)* Out of pity I danced with Emily. I danced with other girls, too, but Emily always required long apologies for any slight, so we danced quite a few. But halfway through a song, I saw her for the first time: wearing a lavender dress and a matching shawl. Lavender like the twilight, like lilacs in the rain. Her hair was auburn, long and wavy; her eyes were mossy, the bottom of a crystal clear creek bed—from across the room I felt I was wading in them. And her hands. From thirty feet I knew that they let off a heat, touched you like sun, filled you with carelessness. I was dancing with Emily, but inside I was inches from that strange girl, studying her pale round face, breathing her lavender blossom breath.

F/X: Wind RUSTLING in a poplar tree.

EMILY: Owww! Watch it, you big Clydesdale! That was my foot!

(EMILY snorting)

F/X: Henry and Emily DANCING; far-off FIREWORKS.

YOUNG HENRY: Hey Emily, do you know who that girl is?

EMILY: What girl?

YOUNG HENRY: The girl in purple. She's danced every dance.

EMILY: Never seen her.

(another snort from EMILY)

YOUNG HENRY: Huh.

EMILY: Why?

YOUNG HENRY: I was wondering who she is. She looks...different.

EMILY: Different? Different in what way?

YOUNG HENRY: Not from here.

EMILY: Meaning?

YOUNG HENRY: From somewhere else?

EMILY: Meaning you think she's exotic.

YOUNG HENRY: Ummm, I suppose.

F/X: Emily STAMPS.

EMILY: Oooh, you are such a boor, Henry! Dancing with me and calling another girl "exotic"? I have a half a mind to stop helping you socially; your manners are atrocious.

(EMILY snorting)

YOUNG HENRY: Fine by me.

EMILY: *(the longest snort of all her snorts)* Oh. My mother, and your mother, shall be hearing of this.

F/X: Emily's shoes CLOMP OBNOXIOUSLY as she leaves; SNORTING.

OLD HENRY: *(to the audience)* My mother did hear of it, but my punishment was light: I was told never to talk to Emily again. In retrospect, though, I sometimes wish I had kept dancing with other girls. I wish I hadn't been as drawn to the girl in purple as I was.

YOUNG HENRY: Hey, Warren—

WARREN: *(panting)* Howdy, brother. Woo.

YOUNG HENRY: Do you know who that girl is?

WARREN: What girl?

YOUNG HENRY: That girl there.

WARREN: *(looking)* Her? The one in all purple?

YOUNG HENRY: Yeah.

WARREN: Wow.

YOUNG HENRY: I know.

WARREN: Sweet Peter's fishin' pole.

YOUNG HENRY: I know.

WARREN: No handkerchiefs hidin' there.

YOUNG HENRY: Who is she?

WARREN: Search me. Ya gonna ask 'er ta dance? Cuz if you ain't I am.

YOUNG HENRY: Yes, I'm gonna ask 'er.

WARREN: ...Now?

YOUNG HENRY: Soon as she comes over, hold your horses. The song's about to end.

OLD HENRY: *(to the audience)* The chance came when she lingered next to me by the punch bowl. I almost didn't speak, I was so hypnotized by her. She smelled like mountains, like a juniper berry that's been crushed open, like rock wet with rain. And, up close, the eyes were even deeper: looking into them I was lost in a deep wood.

F/X: WATER being LADLED into a glass.

YOUNG HENRY: Hello there.

LAVENDER: *(softly, slightly ethereal, a Scottish accent)* Hello.

MUSIC UP (“*Lavender’s Theme*,” *lowly*)

YOUNG HENRY: Pardon me—Hello there—I’ve been, uh—

WARREN: (*from across the room*) Lookit, Henry!

(*a bunch of BOYS laugh*)

YOUNG HENRY: (*going on*) I’ve been, uh, wanting to—

LAVENDER: Yes?

YOUNG HENRY: —Tell you: your dress. Is beautiful.

LAVENDER: Oh. Thank you. It’s the only one I’ve got, really.

YOUNG HENRY: Are you new to town?

LAVENDER: No—been about quite a while.

YOUNG HENRY: Oh. I haven’t seen you at the dances.

LAVENDER: (*giggling*) I’m at every one.

YOUNG HENRY: (*puzzled*) Huh.

(*Henry SIPS*)

—Would you like a refreshment? Water? Let me bring it to you. Or take mine. Would you?

LAVENDER: No, thank you.

(*a giggle into a little cough*)

YOUNG HENRY: Are you all right? Are you sick?

LAVENDER: I’m fine. Just a cough.

F/X: Henry “Hmmm’s”, SLURPS his water nervously, TAPS his foot.

YOUNG HENRY: I’m sorry, forgive my forwardness, but you are a—You’re—I mean to tell you—Lovely.

F/X: LAVENDER LAUGHS; it reverberates.

LAVENDER: Thank you.

YOUNG HENRY: And I like your laugh. And, uh, your accent.

LAVENDER: I like your way with words.

YOUNG HENRY: (*an anxious chuckle*) My name is Henry Tanner.

LAVENDER: Lavender.

YOUNG HENRY: Lavender? Your name is Lavender?

5 MORE PAGES TO THE END OF THE SCRIPT