

Life is Short

A ten-minute play

By Wesley Gift

## CHARACTERS

LOUDMOUTH: Male, 20s

SHUDDUP: Female, 20s

MALE VOICE: Age not specified

FEMALE VOICE: Age not specified

TIME: Late spring, present day.

PLACE: Outside.

*(LOUDMOUTH stands downstage right)*

LOUDMOUTH

My! How good it feels to finally be outside! I've been cooped up for far too long, ever since I was small. And now I'm free! Free to explore, free to enjoy life the way we were meant to! I'm finally going to live!

MALE VOICE (OFF)

Oh boy, it's starting.

LOUDMOUTH

Oh, but I haven't much time! Once you come out, the clock starts ticking! "Better make the most of it" they would always say. I guess they knew what they were talking about...I never got a chance to ask them, nor did I understand what they were saying at the time.

*(beat)*

Wait a second...was I the only one who made it out? Surely there must be another like me who's enjoying this beautiful day, who's living life to its fullest...

*(Loudmouth pauses to listen)*

Hmm. Perhaps if I made some noise, draw attention to myself, someone would hear me? Hello? Is there anyone like me out there?

*(Loudmouth pauses again to listen, then snaps his fingers)*

I know! If I want to get someone's attention, I need to sing, not shout! I'm sure to find someone that way.

*(takes a deep breath then sings)*

What a beautiful day! The sun is high in the sky, and I wish someone were here to share it with me—

MALE VOICE (OFF)

Hey Loudmouth, pipe down will ya?!

LOUDMOUTH

Well that wasn't the reaction I was hoping to get! I thought I sounded pretty good—

SHUDDUP

*(enters from stage left)*

Hello? Hello? Is anyone there? I just heard the most beautiful voice...

LOUDMOUTH

*(meets Shuddup centerstage)*

Hello there!

SHUDDUP

Was that you I just heard singing?

LOUDMOUTH

It was! I was beginning to think I was the only one who made it up.

SHUDDUP

Oh no, there's more of us! But not many with a beautiful voice like yours.

*(extends her hand to Loudmouth)*

My name is Shuddup.

LOUDMOUTH

*(taking her hand in his)*

Shuddup...did your parents name you that?

SHUDDUP

No, I was over there trying to learn more about my surroundings when someone yelled—

FEMALE VOICE (OFF)

Hey Shuddup!

LOUDMOUTH

Shuddup...hmm. I like it! It sounds, exotic!

SHUDDUP

What about you? Do you have a name?

LOUDMOUTH

A name? Of course I do! Why, just earlier when I was singing, someone called out—

MALE VOICE (OFF)

Hey Loudmouth! Pipe down will ya!

LOUDMOUTH

So I go by Loudmouth.

SHUDDUP

Well, it's nice to meet you Loudmouth.

*(pauses, looks around to take in the scenery)*

Isn't the world beautiful?

LOUDMOUTH

It really is. I was beginning to think I'd never see it. It's so nice and warm out here, almost too warm.

*(takes off his jacket)*

SHUDDUP

You're right, it is getting a bit warm out here.

*(takes off jacket)*

Ah, that's better.

*(she begins to dance slowly by herself around the stage)*

What should we do now?

LOUDMOUTH

Well, our time here is short—

SHUDDUP

Really short.

LOUDMOUTH

And, well, I was kind of hoping to experience...

SHUDDUP

What?

LOUDMOUTH

Love!

SHUDDUP

But...you need to find someone to fall in love with.

LOUDMOUTH

*(approaches Shuddup)*

Exactly! Shuddup, I have loved you since the first time I laid eyes on you just a few moments ago—

SHUDDUP

*(backs away from Loudmouth)*

Wait, what? You're in love with me?

LOUDMOUTH

Why yes! You heard my song, didn't you? And then you showed up—

SHUDDUP

But you can't be in love with me!

LOUDMOUTH

Why not?

SHUDDUP

Because you can't fall in love with someone you just met!

LOUDMOUTH

Of course you can, I'm sure of it!

SHUDDUP

Loudmouth, listen to me, there's so many of us out in the world now. How do you know I'm the right one for you?

LOUDMOUTH

I-I can't explain it, but I can feel it in my whole body. I know we're meant to be together!

SHUDDUP

I don't know Loudmouth.

*(pause)*

Hold on. Maybe if I start singing, someone will hear my song and come to me.

LOUDMOUTH

No, please, I don't think you sh—

SHUDDUP

*(moves to centerstage and sings offkey)*

I just want someone to love me for who I am, who loves me for my mind and not this body—

FEMALE VOICE

Hey Shuddup! Stop with all the noise!

SHUDDUP

Noise? Oh! How rude! I was just trying to see if there was anyone else out there who might be interested in me, but no one is coming.

*(she drops to her knees and starts to cries)*

LOUDMOUTH

*(kneels down to console her)*

Hey, it's okay.

SHUDDUP

*(crying)*

No, it's not. No one liked my song. There's nobody coming.

LOUDMOUTH

But I'm here. I thought your song was beautiful.

SHUDDUP

*(stops crying)*

You did?

LOUDMOUTH

Of course I did! They said that if you sing your song, you will find your match.

SHUDDUP

They did say that, didn't they?

LOUDMOUTH

One of the few things they told us before we left.

SHUDDUP

Oh Loudmouth, I'm so happy now!

*(she hugs him)*

LOUDMOUTH

I guess the next thing we need to talk about is our kids.

SHUDDUP

*(pushes away from Loudmouth)*

What?!

LOUDMOUTH

Our kids. You know we don't have much time, and our species depends on it!

SHUDDUP

But—it just seems so soon, you know?

LOUDMOUTH

There's no time like the present.

SHUDDUP

Spoken like a typical man.

LOUDMOUTH

We're going to have to at some point.

SHUDDUP

I don't have to do anything.

LOUDMOUTH

I'm sorry, that's not what I meant. What I'm trying to say, is that it's our purpose—we only have so much time, and we have to ensure our legacy will continue.

SHUDDUP

I guess you're right.

*(pause)*

Do you really like me?

LOUDMOUTH

*(approaches Shuddup)*

Of course I do.

SHUDDUP

And you're not just saying that so I'll be the mother of your children?

LOUDMOUTH

Of course not.

SHUDDUP

Oh my goodness. Our children!

LOUDMOUTH  
What about them?

SHUDDUP  
Loudmouth—we're never going to meet our children.

LOUDMOUTH  
I know...it's just something we'll have to accept.

SHUDDUP  
I wish we could meet them, to watch as they grow and find love like we did.

LOUDMOUTH  
It's just not meant to be.

SHUDDUP  
Do you think they will be okay? They'll be on their own for seventeen years...

LOUDMOUTH  
We'll put them in a safe place. Before we're gone, we will tell them what we know, so that they may thrive.

SHUDDUP  
Hold me Loudmouth. Tell me everything is going to be okay.

LOUDMOUTH  
Everything is going to be okay.  
*(he kisses her)*

SHUDDUP  
Dance with me Loudmouth.  
*(he dances with her)*  
Tell me what our children will be like.

LOUDMOUTH  
They'll have your eyes. Determined like their father, and they'll sing with the same angelic voice as their mother.

SHUDDUP  
*(stops dancing)*  
Oh—Loudmouth! I think they're coming!

LOUDMOUTH  
The children?

SHUDDUP

Yes! Can you feel them?  
*(puts Loudmouth's hand on her stomach)*

LOUDMOUTH

Yes! Yes I do! Our little babies!

SHUDDUP

I've got to get them somewhere safe!  
*(she starts to exit stage right)*

LOUDMOUTH

Wait! I'll come with you!

SHUDDUP

No! I don't want you to watch!

LOUDMOUTH

Okay just, put them somewhere safe!

SHUDDUP

Relax, I've got this. I am a mother after all.  
*(she exits stage right)*

LOUDMOUTH

We did it! We found each other, fell in love, and now we're going to be parents. We may never see them, but we can rest knowing that we gave them a chance.

*(pause)*

*(clutches his chest)*

Something—something's not right. I feel a pain in my chest.

*(drops to his knees)*

Gah, it hurts! Can it be? Can this be the end? Have I done everything I was supposed to in this short life? Did I make my parents proud? Will our legacy live on? Will my children be okay?

*(falls on his back)*

It will be okay—I'll be okay. I found love. I'm not alone.

SHUDDUP

*(enters from stage right)*

Loudmouth? Loudmouth!

*(rushes to his side)*

My love, what's wrong?

LOUDMOUTH

My darling, my time is almost up.

SHUDDUP

No, it can't be! It's too soon.

LOUDMOUTH

We both knew we didn't have much time.

*(pause)*

How are the children?

SHUDDUP

They're all tucked away safe and sound.

LOUDMOUTH

Did—did you tell them what we've learned?

SHUDDUP

I did. I told them how their father found me, how they should not be afraid of being their true self.

LOUDMOUTH

I knew you'd be a great mother. Stay with me.

SHUDDUP

I'm not going anywhere—I don't want you to go.

LOUDMOUTH

It's okay. Thanks to you—I have found peace in death. I love you, Shuddup.

SHUDDUP

I love you Loudmouth.

LOUDMOUTH

Goodbye.

*(he dies)*

SHUDDUP

My sweet Loudmouth. You brought me such happiness when I thought I would never find love.

*(pause)*

*(she clutches her chest)*

Oh no, I feel it! I think my time has come! My children! Don't be afraid, you will have a short life, but it can be a happy one!

*(she dies, stage lights begin to fade)*

MALE VOICE (OFF)

Oh thank god! I thought those loud-mouth cicadas would never shut up!

FEMALE VOICE (OFF)

You're telling me!

CURTAIN

THE END