

GREGORY'S GIRL



Bill Forsyth

Bill Forsyth, who wrote and directed the film *Gregory's Girl*, grew up in Glasgow, Scotland. He began working in films as a very young man. *Gregory's Girl*—only his second feature film—scored a great success when it was shown in Britain and the United States. Forsyth's script for *Gregory's Girl* won the 1981 Best Screenplay award from the British Academy of Film and Television Arts, an honor similar to the U.S. film industry's Oscars. Forsyth's later films include the highly acclaimed *Local Hero* and *Comfort and Joy*.

Gregory's Girl

In reading the screenplay for *Gregory's Girl*, you need to keep in mind the similarities and differences between films like *Gregory's Girl* and plays like *The Speckled Band*, which appears at the beginning of this book. Because films often use real-life settings, outdoors as well as indoors, they seem more immediately "lifelike" than plays, which take place on a stage in a theater in front of an audience. *Gregory's Girl*, for instance, was filmed in an actual Scottish town and on the grounds of an actual school. Nevertheless, a film like *Gregory's Girl* is as much a work of the imagination as a story or play. That is, it is *fiction* rather than fact; like a story or play, *Gregory's Girl* uses invented situations and characters to present the writer's ideas about life.

In what ways are Gregory and the people you meet in the script like people in your own school? What differences do you find between Gregory's school and your own?

Key Ideas in Gregory's Girl

As you read *Gregory's Girl* think about the following topics. If you keep track of what the screenplay says about each topic, you will begin to understand the most important themes of *Gregory's Girl*.

- The difficulties of growing up
- The need for a sense of humor
- Relationships between young men and young women
- The importance of understanding who you are and what you really need



Susan.

Dorothy.

Gregory.

Adapted from an Original Screenplay by
Bill Forsyth

Gregory's Girl

CHARACTERS

GREGORY: high school soccer player; gangly sixteen-year-old

DOROTHY: high school soccer player; athletic, pretty

STEVE: Gregory's best friend; expert cook

MADELINE: Gregory's younger sister; ten years old

SUSAN: friend of Dorothy; classmate of Gregory

CAROL: friend of Dorothy

MARGO: friend of Dorothy

ANDY: friend and former teammate of Gregory

CHARLIE: friend of Andy

PHIL MENZIES: high school gym teacher and soccer coach

GORDON: ace reporter for the school magazine

ERIC: photographer for the school magazine

RICHARD: friend of Gregory's sister, Madeline; ten years old

A WAITRESS

SOCCER PLAYERS; STUDENTS

Scene: Scotland. The present day.

Scene 1

The soccer field of a Scottish high school. The present time.

[We begin as the REFEREE blows his whistle to end the match. Even in the simple business of leaving the field and heading for the dressing room, our team manage to demonstrate some of their ineptness. One boy is reacting in a fit of mild hysterics. He is GREGORY, a tall, gangly boy of about sixteen. He is leaving the field in a fit of laughter, shaking his head in disbelief. During the whole scene PHIL MENZIES, the young gym teacher and coach, watches sadly from the sidelines. He then walks defeatedly into the dressing room.]

[Dressing room. A few minutes have passed, and GREGORY is now alone in the dressing room, changing into his school clothes. PHIL MENZIES joins him.]

GREGORY. [Laughing.] Terrible game, eh?

MENZIES. [Grimly.] Very bad, very very bad.

GREGORY. [Shaking his head.] You've got to laugh.

MENZIES. What have you got to laugh about?

[GREGORY senses a hurt in MENZIES. He tries to make amends.]

GREGORY. Soccer is all about entertainment. We give them a good laugh. It's only a game.

MENZIES. It's only eight games. Eight games in a row you've lost.

GREGORY. Can't lose them all. [Consoling MENZIES.] You push us really hard, no mercy, lots of discipline, that's what we need. [Nods.] Get tough.

MENZIES. We need goals, son; you're not making any goals. That's your job.

GREGORY. [With a shrug.] Nobody's perfect. [Matter-of-fact.] It's a tricky time for me. I'm doing a lot of growing; it slows you down. Five inches this year. [GREGORY crouches down so that he's level with MENZIES, and their faces are very close together.] Remember last year I was way down here? [Smiling at MENZIES.] Are you growing a mustache?

MENZIES. [Ignoring this.] I want to make some changes. I want to try out some other people. Switch the team around. Take some people out. [A pause.] I was going to take you out.

GREGORY. [Laughing at the silly idea.] You don't want to do that.

MENZIES. Yes I do.

GREGORY. [Still a coaxing smile.] You don't.

MENZIES. I do.

GREGORY. [Pauses. Serious.] You don't.

MENZIES. I might.

GREGORY. What about Andy? He's hardly started growing yet. He's going to be real trouble.

[MENZIES is thinking.]

I'll tell him. . . .

MENZIES. I'll tell him. A week's trial as goalie for you. Then I'll decide.

GREGORY. [New tack.] Have you got a jersey my size? Andy's a lot smaller.

MENZIES. Don't worry about the jersey. A week as goalie and then I'll decide.

GREGORY. [Resigned.] You're the boss. Who's getting my position?

MENZIES. I want to try out some new people.

[GREGORY is dressed now and ready to leave. He makes his way to the door.]

GREGORY. [With thumbs up and a winning smile.] You won't regret this.

Scene 2

Soccer field. Later that day.

[MENZIES is assembling his hopefuls for the trial session—five BOYS in assorted soccer gear.]

MENZIES. You all know what I'm looking for—a goal scorer—and that means two things: ball control, shooting accuracy and the ability to read the game . . . uh, three things.

[The BOYS look on attentively, as if they actually understand him.]

MENZIES. So this trial will allow me to assess these two—three basic aspects of your skills. Right? First, simple ball control. I want you to trot with the ball at your feet, fifty yards and back. Two lines. Go!

[As the BOYS play ineptly, DOROTHY, a pretty blonde girl, emerges confidently from the building, dressed in a dark tracksuit.]

MENZIES. Both sides of the foot! Let me see complete control. . . .

[DOROTHY approaches the group. MENZIES presumes that she is on some errand or other and gives her little attention.]

MENZIES. I want it faster now—come on! [A half glance to DOROTHY.] What d'you want, lass? [Back to the BOYS.] Get some pace into it! Anybody can walk with a ball! [To DOROTHY.] What is it, dear?

DOROTHY. The trial. I'm here for the trial.

MENZIES. This is soccer here, sweetheart. Maybe Miss McAlpine is up to something with the hockey team. I don't know, but this here is soccer, for boys.

DOROTHY. That's right—soccer trials 11 A.M. I saw the notice.

[MENZIES laughs, trying to stay in control.]

MENZIES. There's been a slight misunderstanding, dear; it was boys I wanted for the trials.

DOROTHY. Didn't say so on the notice—just said "talented players."

[MENZIES tries getting tougher.]

MENZIES. That's a shame that you picked it up wrongly, but I'm afraid I can't do anything now.

DOROTHY. You didn't say boys only—you're not allowed to, anyway. I want a trial.

[MENZIES knows he is losing ground.]

MENZIES. Not possible, dear, not today. Well, we don't have a spare ball . . . [Trailing off.]

[DOROTHY nods towards an extra ball on the field. She moves for it and with the gentlest of flicks of her foot raises the ball from the ground and seems to float it into her hands.]

DOROTHY. Here's one.

[DOROTHY and MENZIES face each other. The challenge is open now. MENZIES gives in, and hopes he is playing for time. He sets about organizing the boys again. He speaks very quietly now.]

MENZIES. Two basic skills—control and the other one—trotting with the ball again. Two lines, lots of speed. On you go.

[DOROTHY joins one of the lines and does her stuff. She moves with the ball as if it were anchored to her feet with elastic. None of the boys can match DOROTHY's skill in even this simple exercise. At the gym

entrance we see GREGORY. His expression reveals definite interest in DOROTHY. Back on the soccer field, MENZIES is still irritated by DOROTHY, but he is also impressed by her. They move on to another exercise.]

MENZIES. Into two's now, out from the goal. I want to see a shot for the goal. One attack and one defend. Let's see who's first in the net. Go!

[The six hopefuls line themselves up in three pairs. DOROTHY is one of the attacking three. They start off, and the three defenders come out for them. GREGORY is now joined by two friends, ANDY, whom he replaced as goalkeeper, and CHARLIE.]

ANDY. What's going on?

GREGORY. She's gorgeous! She's absolutely gorgeous!

ANDY. [Looks at the players.] That's Dorothy. . . . She's got funny ears.

[DOROTHY's ball rips into the net. The BOYS are bewildered. They look to MENZIES for leadership. He gets tougher.]

MENZIES. Three shots each at goal now—accuracy. Best of three shots. [To DOROTHY.] You first, dear.

[MENZIES himself defends the goal. The BOYS and DOROTHY form a line for three shots each at the goal. Three times we see DOROTHY hammer the ball past MENZIES into the goal tent.]

GREGORY. [To himself.] What a dream . . . what an absolute dream!

MENZIES. [Giving it up.] Right, that's it. Just show me some stamina now. Once round the field and back to the dressing rooms. It's only half a mile and should be tackled as a sprint. On your way.

[The five BOYS and DOROTHY race off round the field. MENZIES turns his back on them and heads for the building. We watch the progress of the race. DOROTHY takes the lead immediately and finishes well in front of the rest. She runs up to a halt beside MENZIES, and she is hardly out of breath.]

DOROTHY. Well?

[MENZIES has no time to be patronizing now.]

MENZIES. I'll let everyone know in the fullness of time. I'll pass the word on to Miss McAlpine.

DOROTHY. [Forceful.] You know I was the best!

MENZIES. It's not that simple. It could be out of my hands. We'll have to see. . . .

[MENZIES moves off for his office. DOROTHY follows him. GREGORY stands watching nearby.]

DOROTHY. You've got to put me on the team list. I want to sign something—you've got to let me sign something. . . .

[The two of them hurry past GREGORY and into the building.]

GREGORY. What a dream. . . .

Scene 3

Cooking class. Later that day.

[The class is underway, and GREGORY comes in late. The pupils work in groups of two to each oven. GREGORY arrives at his cooker, where his friend and cooking partner STEVE is already working.]

STEVE. [A little irritated at GREGORY's lateness.] I've got the biscuit mix started. You get on with the sponge and put the oven on, 450 degrees.



GREGORY. [Saluting.] Yes, boss.

[SUSAN, a petite, very pretty girl with dark hair leaves her own work area and approaches GREGORY and STEVE, who is the acknowledged expert on cooking.]

SUSAN. Hey, Steve, can you help me out with this pastry mix thing? [A glance at GREGORY.]

STEVE. Pastry? There's more than one kind, you know. Is it rough puff, short crust . . . flaky . . . suet¹? . . .

SUSAN. Well, Margaret's doing the strudel soup, and I'm doing the pie. It's the eggs for the pastry I'm not sure of. . . .

STEVE. [Sarcastic.] Strudel soup, eh? I'd like to try some of that. It's NOODLE soup, and what eggs? You don't put eggs in a pastry. It's eight ounces flour, four ounces margarine. . . .

1. suet [soo'it]: beef fat.

GREGORY. [Helpfully.] . . . pinch of salt . . .

[SUSAN takes a long look at GREGORY; STEVE ignores him.]

STEVE. . . . mix it up, into the oven, fifteen minutes, and that's it, OK? No eggs, no strudels, nothing.

SUSAN. Is that all? That's simple, really.

[She wanders off. STEVE shakes his head and turns back to GREGORY's frantic mixing.]

STEVE. Take it easy. Take it easy!

GREGORY. Have you ever been in love?

[STEVE looks uncomfortable, but GREGORY goes on blissfully.]

I'm in love. [He is absent-mindedly stirring the sponge mix with his finger.] It's great, I can't eat, when I think about it I feel dizzy, I'm restless—it's wonderful. [Proudly.] I bet I don't get any sleep tonight.

STEVE. That sounds more like indigestion.

GREGORY. No. I'm serious.

[STEVE extracts GREGORY's finger from the mixing bowl.]

STEVE. Who is it?

GREGORY. You'll just laugh and tell people.

STEVE. Give us a clue.

GREGORY. [Reluctantly.] It's someone on the soccer team.

[STEVE gives him a look.]

GREGORY. I mean Dorothy, she came into the team last week. She's in 4A.² [Gesticulating, getting carried away.] She's a wonderful player, she's a girl. She's got long lovely hair, and she smells mmmm, lovely . . . even if you just pass her in the corridor she smells gorgeous. . . . She's got teeth, lovely white teeth, white white teeth. . . .

STEVE. Oh, that Dorothy, the hair, the teeth, and the smell—that Dorothy. And she's on the team?

GREGORY. [Confidentially.] Well, I think she's taking my position. She's a really good player. She's some girl.

STEVE. Can she cook? Can she do this?

[STEVE throws his rolled-out pastry into the air and juggles it with a pizza maker's flourish.]

GREGORY. [Very serious.] Look, Steve, when you're in love, things like that just don't matter.

STEVE. Give me the margarine.

2. 4A: Like Gregory, Dorothy is a fourth-year student (roughly equivalent to a sophomore or junior in American high schools).

GREGORY. Think she'll love me back?

STEVE. [Shaking his head.] No chance. . . . Watch that mix. I told you, nice and slowly—take it easy. . . .

[STEVE takes GREGORY's hands and guides him.]

GREGORY. What do you mean, "No chance"?

STEVE. [Takes a look at his gangly, awkward friend.] No chance.

Scene 4

The soccer field. A few days later.

[In preparation for a practice game, GREGORY does his warmup. It consists of a few awkward jumping jacks, a kneebend in which he almost loses his balance, and a lung-clearing cough. Then he runs a bit, stumbling occasionally, with his arms dangling. At the end he collapses gasping on a bench. Meanwhile DOROTHY confidently practices with the ball. As the game begins, we see DOROTHY at her best, weaving and dancing with the ball. GREGORY is defending the goal, but he is most interested in watching DOROTHY. He is also talking to his friend ANDY, the boy whom he replaced as goalie. ANDY hangs around the goal, shaking his head in frustration.]

ANDY. This is a real farce, a shambles. Nine games lost in a row, and then what do we do? Sack the goalie and put a girl in the forward line. It's a madhouse!

GREGORY. [His eyes on DOROTHY.] Watch the game, Andy, watch the game. She's good, she can move!

ANDY. [Unbelieving.] It's not right—it's unnatural—it doesn't even look nice!

GREGORY. [Enthusiastically.] It's modern, Andy—it's good! Modern girls, modern boys. . . . It's tremendous! Look—

ANDY. [Working up a lather.] Girls weren't meant to play soccer; it's too tough, too physical!

GREGORY. [Turning his back on the game to chat with ANDY.] Tough? Have you ever watched them play hockey? They're like wild animals. Even at twelve, thirteen—

[Suddenly the play makes its way towards GREGORY's goal. GREGORY and ANDY both panic.]

ANDY. [Hopping about.] Gregory!!! Watch the ball, go out and meet it, don't wait for it—

GREGORY. [Running back and forth, trying to follow ANDY's advice.] Watch the ball—meet the ball—

ANDY. [Frantic.] Watch the winger³—he's coming up fast—wait for the cross⁴. . . !

GREGORY. [Bobbing like a jack-in-the-box.] Watch the ball—watch the winger—meet the ball. . . . [He lunges in the wrong direction, away from the ball, and DOROTHY shoots it past him into the unguarded goal. GREGORY stares at the ball.]

DOROTHY. [Impatient.] Come on, give me the ball.

[GREGORY tenderly dusts off the ball and gives it to her. He turns back to ANDY.]

GREGORY. I took my eye off the ball for a split second. Two microseconds.

3. **winger:** soccer team member who plays forward on the right or left side.

4. **cross:** pass from a wing toward center field in a soccer game.



ANDY. [Impressed by DOROTHY.] We need more women on this team, more new blood.

GREGORY. [Proudly.] Yeah. She's some girl.

Scene 5

The dressing room. A few minutes later.

[GREGORY is alone now, dressed and drying his hair. DOROTHY comes in. She has just come from a shower and has slipped back into her shirt and pants. She is paying a great deal of attention to a small cut on her leg.]

DOROTHY. Do you have any plaster?⁵ There's none in the girls' dressing room.

GREGORY. [Spluttering and blushing with embarrassment at meeting her here.] No—maybe—um—I'll get some. What's wrong—does it hurt? Hold on—

DOROTHY. [Calmly, sitting down, examining her wound.] Don't panic, it's just a scratch. I only want to save my tights from getting blood on them. That big gorilla on the left wing—I got back at him though. Just before that last corner, I got my boot on his shin and scraped it right down . . . big animal. . .

[GREGORY's face reacts a little delicately to this. He tries to latch onto the mood, however.]

GREGORY. You'll have a bruise there.

DOROTHY. Not if I let it bleed. That's the idea. I don't bruise easily.

GREGORY. I do. [Softly.] I bruise like a peach. [Hits himself here and there to make a point.] Boing . . . bruise . . . bop . . . bruise . . . chung . . . bruise.

5. **plaster:** bandage tape.

[DOROTHY rewards him with a smile. Her attention wanders to a tiny scar on her other knee. She points it out to GREGORY.]

DOROTHY. See that? I was only three when that happened. On the beach. I was chasing a boy; I wasn't going to hurt him. I fell on a bottle. That'll never go away. Marked for life—I'm imperfect!

[They laugh.]

GREGORY. [Enthusiastically.] It's nice. I like it.

DOROTHY. Really? [She smiles.]

GREGORY. Yes. [Clowning for her.] I hurt my arm once, at the joint. Can't get it any higher than this. [He raises his left arm to head level.] I used to be able to get it away up here, no bother. [He raises the same arm.]

DOROTHY. You just did.

GREGORY. No—it's this arm. See? Stuck.

[He now goes through the same routine with his other arm. They both laugh. DOROTHY indicates another scar at the back of her neck, a little bit down her back.]

DOROTHY. Look at this. That was my big brother. I was only seven—he threw a bike at me. I can only see it in the mirror. It's quite nice, isn't it? . . . Nice shape.

GREGORY. [Shyly.] Yeah. [With more bravado.] Yeah.

DOROTHY. Renaldo, that was a boy in Italy last summer, he said it was like a new moon. Very romantic—*la luna!*⁶

GREGORY. [A deep, Italian voice.] Ah si, si, bella! Bella!⁷

6. **la luna** [lä löö'nä]: Italian for the "the moon."
7. **si, si, bella! Bella!** [sē, sē, bel'ä, bel'ä]: Italian for "yes, yes, beautiful! Beautiful!"

DOROTHY. Ah, *parliamo italiano!*⁸

GREGORY. [Shrugging apologetically.] No, not really. Just . . . *bella, bella.*

DOROTHY. Oh, I think it's a wonderful language—so . . . *alive!* I want to live in Italy when I leave school.

GREGORY. [Awed.] Oh. . . .

DOROTHY. I can speak a de language. I'm a quarter Italian and a quarter Irish, on my mother's side.

GREGORY. [Brightening up again.] Hey, I can speak Irish. . . .

[They giggle.]

GREGORY. [Like an overanimated talk-show host.] Any major wounds when you were twelve? Fourteen?

[They both laugh. Just then the door is thrown open, the spell is broken, and in come GORDON and ERIC. GORDON is the sixteen-year-old ace reporter from the school magazine. ERIC is the photographer. They have come to interview DOROTHY. They breeze past GREGORY.]

GORDON. [Self-assured.] Dorothy, there you are, nice to see you. Good game?

[GREGORY tries desperately to retrieve their intimacy.]

GREGORY. Sorry, this is a dressing room; you can't come in here. . . .

[This gambit⁹ of GREGORY's is completely ignored.]

GORDON. [To DOROTHY.] You know Eric, don't

8. **parliamo italiano** [pä'r'lyä'mö é'tä lyä'nö]: Italian for "we are speaking Italian."

9. **gambit:** move made to gain an advantage.

you? I'd like to have a chat with you, for the magazine.

DOROTHY. You want to interview me?

GORDON. You bet. We're covering two or three school personalities. You're pretty famous now, you know. [GORDON is pretty much in command now.] Eric, pick off a few shots, will you? Get the whole dressing room thing. And some nice big close shots of Dorothy.

[GREGORY has a last effort. He takes ERIC aside.]

GREGORY. This is no place for a camera, Eric; people take their clothes off in here.

ERIC. [To GREGORY, brushing his appeal aside.] Could you move over here, please? I want to isolate the lady in the shot. Too many shadows.

[GREGORY, defeated, sits in his allotted place.]

GORDON. I like to interview people like this—no preparation, everything nice and natural. Now, tell me, Dorothy, how are the boys taking it, you being on the team now?

[GREGORY sees another chance.]

GREGORY. You guys are so predictable . . . always trying to make trouble. There are no problems at all—we're all very happy. Dorothy is a very good player. . . .

GORDON. Slow down, Gregory. This is an in-depth interview. Dorothy?

DOROTHY. Things are fine. Some of them thought I wouldn't be heavy enough for a tackle, but I'm quicker than most boys; I can keep out of trouble. I take dancing lessons too, and that helps my balance.

GORDON. [Nodding wisely.] You must train a lot, keep in shape. Do you have time for any-

thing else? What do you do on Saturday nights, for instance?

DOROTHY. Saturday nights are special. I like to do something special.

[GREGORY has caught GORDON's drift and is paying the utmost attention to his technique, because he's appalled by it and also because he wants to know how to do it.]

GORDON. Hey—how about doing something special this Saturday?

GREGORY. [Fed up.] Come on! Can't a guy dry his hair in here? This is a dressing room. . . . You go and conduct your business somewhere else.

DOROTHY. [Getting up.] I'll go and change too.

GORDON. We'll come with you, Dorothy. You're an interesting girl, you know. I want to find the real Dorothy. OK?

DOROTHY. OK.

GORDON. Cheerio,¹⁰ Gregory.

GREGORY. Arrivederci,¹¹ Gordon. Hurry back.

[The three of them leave. GREGORY resumes his hair drying, muttering disgustedly.]

GREGORY. Bella, bella . . . bella Renaldo . . . bella Gordon . . .

Scene 6

The science laboratory. A few days later.

[DOROTHY is working on an experiment with her friend SUSAN, the girl from cooking class.]

DOROTHY. Pass the sulfuric acid, will you?

10. **Cheerio:** British expression for "good-bye."

11. **Arrivederci** [a' rē ve dār' chē]: Italian for "good-bye."

SUSAN. What is the pH¹² of that?

DOROTHY. Um . . . [Checking.] seven.

SUSAN. [After a pause, casually.] How's the soccer going?

DOROTHY. Oh, it's good. [Looks critically at the specimen SUSAN is preparing.] You need to cut that up a bit. It's too big.

SUSAN. [Still casually.] What about the goalie, Gregory? [Pause.] What do you make of Gregory?

DOROTHY. [Considering.] Well, he's a bit slow, and a bit awkward. [Nodding.] Slow and awkward.

SUSAN. [A little smile.] He's got a nice laugh.

DOROTHY. [Back to business.] Give me the bromide,¹³ will you?

Scene 7

Lunchtime in the school cafeteria.

[SUSAN is sitting alone, reading. ANDY, accompanied by his constant companion, CHARLIE, attempts to make small talk with her.]

ANDY. [Grandly.] Good afternoon.

[SUSAN says nothing. A pause.]

ANDY. [Another try.] Do you know, when you sneeze, it comes out your nose at a hundred miles an hour!

[SUSAN stares at him.]

ANDY. [Nodding with enthusiasm.] It's a well-known fact—a hundred miles an hour! [He

12. **pH:** a measure of the degree to which a solution is either acidic or alkaline.

13. **bromide** [brō' mid]: any chemical compound that includes bromine.



demonstrates.) Ahhh-choooooo!!! Just like that!

[SUSAN gets up and walks away. ANDY looks bewildered.]

Scene 8

Outside the school. About a week later.

[We now meet GREGORY's little sister, MADELINE. She is ten, and she and GREGORY are very close. On her way to meet GREGORY, she

meets her friend RICHARD, also ten. They are both amazingly self-possessed.]

RICHARD. Hello.

MADLINE. Hello.

RICHARD. Carry your bag for you?

MADLINE. I can't see you today. I've got to go to the big school. Family trouble.

RICHARD. [Sagely.] Is it Gregory?

MADLINE. [Nodding.] Guess what? He's fallen in love.

RICHARD. [*Sympathetically.*] That's big trouble. Well, maybe I can see you later on.

MADLINE. Right. Bye.

Scene 9

A shopping mall. A few minutes later.

[*Having met GREGORY, MADLINE counsels him as they browse the store windows at the mall.*]

MADLINE. [*Critically.*] You need some new trousers. These baggy ones are awful. I'll talk to Mum about it. Blue ones, Italian. If you're going to start falling in love, you'll have to start taking care of yourself.

GREGORY. Are Italians good dressers?

MADLINE. They have style. And they make nice trousers. . . . I was talking to Steven's sister about Dorothy. She's very attractive. I knew you would fall for that type. She wears nice things—she's got style.

GREGORY. [*Agreeing.*] She's one-quarter Italian.

MADLINE. Don't get too serious about her, if you can help it. Have you asked her out yet? [*GREGORY shakes his head.*] I can help you. I can tell you things. You were nice to me when other boys *hated* their sisters.

[*They pause in front of a clothing store.*]

MADLINE. [*Pointing to some sweaters.*] Which color do you like?

GREGORY. If it were brown, it would be OK.

MADLINE. [*Frustrated by his lack of style.*] Brown! You don't think about colors, do you? If you don't take an interest in yourself, how can you expect other people to be interested in you? Talk to Dorothy. Ask her out. She

won't say no, I'll bet you. But don't treat her too special. You're too romantic—it could scare a girl off.

GREGORY. What kind of things should I say?

MADLINE. For heaven's sake, don't plan it, don't think about it. Do it!

[*They walk into a café.*]

GREGORY. [*Summing up.*] So, I should think less about love and more about colors.

MADLINE. [*Congratulating him.*] You've got it.

[*A WAITRESS comes up for their order.*]

WAITRESS. What would you like?

MADLINE. A ginger beer,¹⁴ with vanilla ice cream and some lime juice, please, and don't stir it.

GREGORY. Coffee, please.

WAITRESS. Black or white?¹⁵

GREGORY. Ummm . . . [*Looks at MADLINE. He knows he's going to blow it.*] Brown.

[*A big sigh from MADLINE, to tease him.*]

GREGORY. They don't do blue coffees here, Madeline. This isn't Italy. No style.

MADLINE. [*More serious.*] Do you dream about her? [*GREGORY nods.*] That means you love her. It's the one you have the dreams about that counts.

GREGORY. [*After a pause.*] What do you dream about?

MADLINE. I just dream about ginger beer and ice cream. I'm still a little girl, remember?

14. **ginger beer:** soft drink similar to ginger ale but stronger in flavor.
15. **"Black or white?":** The waitress is asking whether Gregory wants his coffee without milk or with milk.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Recalling

1. Explain how Dorothy first comes to Gregory's attention. Contrast Dorothy and Gregory as soccer players.
2. In Scene 3 what does Gregory tell Steve about his feelings for Dorothy?
3. What opinions about Gregory do Susan and Dorothy express in Scene 6?
4. What advice does Madeline give her brother as they walk through the mall?

Interpreting

5. What qualities of Gregory's do you find appealing? Think about characters who act as romantic heroes in other films, and point out what qualities Gregory might lack as such a hero.
6. How accurate do you find Susan's and Dorothy's opinions of Gregory?
7. List three or four ways in which Gregory and Dorothy differ as people. Do you think that they will make a good couple? Why or why not?

Extending

8. What advice would you give Gregory if you were a friend of his?

READING AND LITERARY FOCUS

Dialogue

Dialogue is the conversation between characters in a literary work. Short stories, novels, and even some poems and nonfiction pieces contain dialogue, but dialogue is absolutely essential in a play or film. Usually the only words spoken in a

play or film are the characters' speeches. As audience members we must pay close attention to what these characters say in order to understand what they are like.

At the start of *Gregory's Girl*, we watch a soccer team leaving the field after a game. The first bit of dialogue between Gregory and the coach tells us how the game went. More important, it tells us about Gregory's sense of humor. Rather than moping over the team's defeat, Gregory laughs at himself and his teammates.

Thinking About Dialogue

1. Look again at Scene 5, in which Gregory has his first conversation with Dorothy. What do Dorothy's statements about her "imperfections" show about her? What does Gregory's attempt to speak Italian reveal about him?
2. The stage direction at the beginning of Scene 8 says that Gregory and his sister Madeline are "very close." Find two examples in which their dialogue shows this closeness.

CHALLENGE

Props

■ Part of the pleasure of reading drama comes from imagining how the scenes would look when performed with costumes, sets, and props (portable articles used by the actors in a scene—for example, the soccer equipment in Scene 2 or the cooking utensils in Scene 3). Choose a scene from *Gregory's Girl* to act out with other students. Bring in appropriate props and items of clothing to make the scene more convincing.

Scene 10

GREGORY's home, evening. A few days later.

[STEVE and GREGORY are in the sitting room watching the television. At least STEVE is watching it. The program is a cookery demonstration, and STEVE reacts to it much as others react to a televised sports match, engrossed and critical. GREGORY is uninterested. He would rather be talking about DOROTHY. We hear snatches of the sound from the TV. Apart from them the house is empty.]

GREGORY. Do you know anything about Italians?

STEVE. [Without taking his eyes from the screen.] Excellent seafood in the northwest. Some of their regional pasta dishes are good too. Good with salads, very stylish all round. . . . [To the television.] Whoa! Whoa! Go easy with the sugar, lady!

GREGORY. [A frustrated outburst.] Food! Food! Food! Is that all you think about? [Turns off the TV.] You're unnatural, pal; you're a freak!

STEVE. [Responding now.] You eat it, don't you? I've never seen you turn up your nose at anything I've made. [As if cut to the quick.] Hours and hours I've spent making you lovely, lovely things, and all it means to you in the end is food?

GREGORY. Look, pal. I don't know whether you've noticed, but I'm going through a crisis.

STEVE. Of course I've noticed. What do you want me to do? The whole world's got problems. You're just obsessed by a beautiful, young, unattainable girl. So what?

GREGORY. Stop saying things like that—unattainable—obsessed. . . . It's love.

STEVE. OK, it's love. Sweep her off her feet,

then. Oh, I forgot, you're the goalkeeper, she's the sweeper.

GREGORY. [Darkly.] Ha ha.

STEVE. [Sensibly now.] Look, one key question: Have you talked to her, asked her for a date? Anything?

[GREGORY shakes his head.]

STEVE. Well, do it. Then complain. [Turns TV set back on.]

[GREGORY thinks for a second or two.]

GREGORY. If I get a date, can I borrow your white jacket?

STEVE. [Emphatically.] No.

[The doorbell rings. Both of them react to it.]

STEVE. [Sarcastically.] Maybe that's her.

[GREGORY makes for the door. He looks to the right and left when he opens the door. He's slightly baffled because nobody appears to be there. Then he looks down. He finds RICHARD, MADELINE's friend.]

RICHARD. I wonder if Maddy is in?

GREGORY. [Upset at his self-assurance.] You mean Madeline. She's out with her mother.

RICHARD. That's a shame. I thought we could go for a walk. Maybe I could wait. . . .

GREGORY. No. They'll be ages.

RICHARD. Maybe she could phone me later on. She has my number.

GREGORY. Who are you anyway? You're talking about my sister, and she doesn't go for walks with anybody. What's the idea, coming to people's doors, asking for people's sisters. Act your age. See, when I was your age—

RICHARD. [Interrupting.] You're Gregory, aren't you?

[He offers GREGORY his hand. GREGORY gives his without thinking, and his outraged speech trails off.]

Maddy's told me all about you. How are you feeling? Everything OK?

[GREGORY gets his outrage underway again.]

GREGORY. Oho! There's nothing wrong with me, son. You're the one that should be worried. Dates at your age!

[He splutters off. RICHARD figures he's got a crazy person on his hands.]

RICHARD. OK, Gregory, fair enough. Richard's the name. Ask Maddy to call me anyway.

[He beats a rational man's retreat down the path. GREGORY feels in command now and shouts after him.]

GREGORY. The name's Madeline. . . .

Scene 11

The school corridor. A few days later.

[A GIRL from the third year catches up with GREGORY.]

GIRL. Are you Gregory?

[GREGORY turns around, and puts on an easeful, mature air. Junior girls make him feel comfortable.]

GREGORY. That's me, sweetheart. Who wants to know?

GIRL. Dorothy wants to see you.

[This rocks him. The mature act vanishes. He turns to jelly.]

GREGORY. Dorothy?

GIRL. That's what I said. She'll be in room nine at breaktime, OK?

[The GIRL leaves a stunned GREGORY. Then he tears down the corridor, smoothing his hair and straightening his clothes. He finds room nine. After a pause to put on an air of sophistication, he knocks and sticks his head into the room. DOROTHY and four GIRLFRIENDS are casually draped over chairs and desks.]

GREGORY. [A little taken aback.] Got your message, Dorothy.

DOROTHY. Good. I just wanted to know what you were up to at lunchtime.

GREGORY. [A new spark of optimism lights up his face.] Nothing that can't wait a million years.

DOROTHY. Good. Will you help me out with some goal practice?

GREGORY. Yes—sure.

DOROTHY. Good. It'll speed things up. I want to practice goal shots at different angles.

GREGORY. [Jokingly.] I'll bring my compass.

[Just a look from DOROTHY.]

GREGORY. [More subdued.] Good. See you at half-twelve?¹⁶

DOROTHY. [Smiling now.] Fine.

GREGORY. Good. See you.

[GREGORY tears off down the school corridor, where he eagerly accosts STEVE.]

GREGORY. [Breathlessly.] I'm on the way.

16. **half-twelve:** British expression for "eleven-thirty."

Steve. It's off the ground. Romance is in the air. Can I have your white jacket?

STEVE. Hi, pal! No.

GREGORY. I don't want to make a big thing over it, but it's just that the jacket would really help. It would make the—it would put the whole date on a different footing. Just for one night, eh?

STEVE. What are you raving on about?

GREGORY. [Patiently.] Me . . . Dorothy . . . date . . . it's in the bag! She's after me—she wants me to play soccer with her at lunch!

STEVE. Not with my good jacket, you won't.

GREGORY. No—the jacket's for later on, for the real date!

[STEVE shakes his head.]

GREGORY. Come on, Steve, you gave Pete the jacket last week. Why not me?

STEVE. That's exactly why, Gregory old son. Did you see the state of that coat the day after? Never again.

[As GREGORY begins to protest, STEVE sees a way to get off the hook.]

STEVE. Look, I'll make a deal, old pal . . . you get the date, signed, sealed, delivered . . . and then come and ask for the jacket. . . . Fair?

GREGORY. [Triumphant.] It's a deal! Want to throw in your brown shoes as well?

[STEVE gives him a cutting look.]

Scene 12

School cafeteria. Lunchtime that day.

[ANDY and his friend CHARLIE have picked up their food. ANDY is scanning the dining room,

looking for a likely couple of girls to sit with. Nudging CHARLIE, he walks over to CAROL and MARGO.]

ANDY. [Sociably.] Good afternoon, ladies. Mind if we join you?

[The girls give a shrug of acquiescence. ANDY gives CHARLIE an encouraging look as they sit.]

ANDY. [Smiling round the table.] I'm particularly fond of lamb chops. . . .

[No great response from the girls so far. They eat on in silence. ANDY looks across the table to CHARLIE, and makes a kind of "do something, say something" gesture to him. No response from CHARLIE. ANDY plows on alone.]

ANDY. How's your roast beef?

CAROL. [Dryly.] It's veal.

ANDY. Oh, veal! [Enthusiastic.] You know how they make veal? They get the little baby calves and they hang them upside down and they slit their throats and let the blood drip out. It's very interesting, isn't it?

[The girls put down their forks and leave.]

Scene 13

The soccer field. The same lunch period.

[With lunchtime well underway we see GREGORY and DOROTHY practicing. GREGORY is a hopelessly inept goalie. He hops back and forth, clapping his hands together with a great show of energy, shouting encouraging remarks to DOROTHY, who again and again kicks the ball past him into the net.]

GREGORY. This is great! I can really use the practice in goal! [As the ball whizzes past him once more.] That was a good shot!

[The ball goes back to DOROTHY, who ignores GREGORY and gets off another crackling shot.]

Great shot! You got me that time!

DOROTHY. [Losing patience.] Could you stop dancing around so much? It's very distracting.

[She lines up another shot, and the ball's in the net again.]

GREGORY. Great! First class! You know, you're some girl. I haven't got near the ball yet. . . .

[Spoken just too soon. The ball is hampered into his stomach. He hits the dirt.]

DOROTHY. [Allowing herself a smile.] Well held. You OK?

GREGORY. [On his knees, gasping.] Think I've broke my neckchain.

[GREGORY fumbles around in the dirt. DOROTHY wants to get back to work.]

DOROTHY. Come on, we've only got another hour. I want to try some shots on the move—come out and tackle me, try and block, then move back and block some more. Use your feet . . . don't grab for the ball.

[It looks like GREGORY is a long way from getting the encouragement to ask Dorothy for that date.]

GREGORY. [Gallantly.] OK! Keep 'em coming, Dorothy!

Scene 14

The cafeteria. The same lunch period.

[ANDY and CHARLIE are very desolate looking. They pick at their food.]

ANDY. Of course, you know we're in the wrong place.

[They munch some more.]



You know where we should be. . . ?

[Another pause for eating.]

South America.

[A glimmer of interest from CHARLIE.]

There's a town there—do you know the ratio of women to men?

[CHARLIE looks more interested.]

Eight to one! Eight South American women per guy! That's the sort of place for us, eh?

[CHARLIE gives a nod this time.]

It's called Caracas.¹⁷

[CHARLIE smiles.]

Scene 15

Back on the field. The end of the lunch hour.

[As practice ends, GREGORY is panting and sweating. He walks with the stagger of near exhaustion. DOROTHY is cool and serene.]

DOROTHY. Are you happy as a goalie?

GREGORY. [Heavily breathing.] S'OK.

DOROTHY. You waste a lot of energy. No control.

GREGORY. [Bravely.] I've got tons left! [Runs in place to demonstrate.]

DOROTHY. [Smiling.] Thanks for the practice.

GREGORY. No sweat, eh? [He looks down at his own dishevelment.] Well, lots of sweat actually—but no sweat, if you get my meaning.

DOROTHY. Sorry you missed lunch.

GREGORY. Oh, lunch means nothing to me . . . some fresh fruit—

17. **Caracas** [kə rā'kās]: capital and largest city of Venezuela, a South American country.



DOROTHY. [Smiling.] Double apple pie and custard—

GREGORY. [Sheepishly.] That kind of thing.

DOROTHY. I'm off for a shower.

[With that she moves quickly and beautifully off. GREGORY is perplexed and angry with himself for failing to move the relationship forward. Then, with amazing resolve, he sprints after her.]

GREGORY. [Breathless but resolute.] Dorothy! Just wanted to say—any time—for more practice. Any time. Just say the word.

DOROTHY. [Waving good-bye.] Right. Bye.

GREGORY. [A big gulp.] Also . . . would you like to come out with me?

DOROTHY. OK.

[GREGORY cannot quite take it in so quickly.]

GREGORY. I mean on a kind of date. [Looks around nervously.]

DOROTHY. I said OK.

[It is still not making sense to GREGORY.]

GREGORY. Come on, stop fooling around. I mean a real—

DOROTHY. [Teasingly exasperated.] If you're going to argue about it, forget it.

GREGORY. No! No! Fine. [Thinks.] When?

DOROTHY. Tonight. Half-past seven, at the clock in the plaza. [She goes into the building to change.]

[GREGORY follows DOROTHY into the dressing room, then stands tongue-tied.]

GREGORY. [Finally.] I—uh—just wanted to check—

DOROTHY. Yes?

GREGORY. Tonight.

DOROTHY. Yes, tonight.

GREGORY. Half-past seven.

DOROTHY. Half-past seven.

GREGORY. And you'll be there. [Pointing to her.]

DOROTHY. I'll be there.

GREGORY. And I'll be there. [Pointing to himself.]

DOROTHY. Uh huh.

GREGORY. At the clock.

DOROTHY. At the clock.

[GREGORY floats out the door and down the corridor, ten feet tall.]

Scene 16

GREGORY'S room. That evening.

[MADELINE is blow-drying and combing GREGORY'S hair at the mirror. She is happy to be fussing over him, and he is wearing the contented, half-drowsy expression of someone being pampered. He is singing to himself.]

GREGORY. " . . . Heaven, I'm in heaven. . . "

[The singing stops.]

GREGORY. Should I tell her some jokes?

MADELINE. [Still busy on the hair.] Maybe.

[After a pause.]

GREGORY. Do you know any jokes?

[MADELINE giggles lightly. GREGORY catches her eye in the mirror and starts to giggle.]

Scene 17

The town plaza. Rendezvous time.

[GREGORY is waiting in the deserted mall in front of a gigantic clock. He is wearing STEVE'S white jacket and looks almost stylish, but his tension and anticipation show on his face.]

GREGORY. [Practicing different voices.] Hi there. [More friendly.] Hi there! [With a deep voice and nonchalant swagger.] Hi, there.

[He hears the sound of light footsteps before he sees anyone. Alert, he pulls himself to attention. The footsteps get closer and stop beside him. He swings his head round elegantly. He sees CAROL. By now his wide nice-guy smile is well underway and it is too late to stop it.]

CAROL. Hi, Gregory.

GREGORY. [Starting his wave but losing heart. Still smiling, however.] Hello, Carol.

CAROL. Waiting for Dorothy?

GREGORY. [Still with the smile.] Yes.

CAROL. [Dealing her blow quickly.] She's not coming.

GREGORY. [Nodding.] Thanks. [Walks off, trying to whistle nonchalantly. Then comes back.] Wrong way. [Starts off the other way.]

CAROL. Something turned up—to do with her soccer, I think. . . . [CAROL gives GREGORY a long look.] Is that Steve's jacket?

GREGORY. No. Thanks for the word about Dorothy.

CAROL. S'OK. Couldn't leave you here all night. What will you do now?

[GREGORY looks at CAROL. She's a nice-looking girl with big open eyes.]

GREGORY. [Nothing to lose.] Fancy a walk?

CAROL. Where?

GREGORY. [Thinks a moment.] We can go past Capaldi's. I'll buy you some chips.¹⁸

CAROL. Well, OK. I'm going that way anyway.

[They walk into the street. CAROL suddenly heads for a phone booth.]

CAROL. Gregory! Hold on a minute!

[She dodges into the booth. Up until now CAROL has been dressed in her conservative school uniform. GREGORY is astonished to witness a rapid transformation. She puts on lipstick and eyeliner quickly and expertly and removes her school clothes to reveal a jersey and short skirt underneath. She teases out her hair and changes her shoes for horrific white spike heels.]

CAROL. [A sigh of relief.] I feel like a human being again.

GREGORY. [A bit frightened by her transformation. He makes a strange little noise and then backs off.] Uh, look, I've got to go home—I've really enjoyed the walk—

CAROL. Hold it, Gregory. I thought we were going for chips!

GREGORY. [Reluctantly.] OK, OK. But put your coat on.

CAROL. Oh no! Come on, Gregory, all I'm asking for is a walk up to the chips shop. I've got a date—I'm going away. [Mysteriously.] I've just got a funny feeling that something nice might happen up there . . . so, come on! We haven't got all night!

[And they go.]

18. **chips:** French fried potatoes.



Scene 18

Near the chips shop. A few minutes later.

[GREGORY and CAROL are perched on the back of a concrete bench, nibbling at their chips.]

CAROL. Do you like Dorothy?

GREGORY. Yes.

CAROL. Can you drive?

GREGORY. Not yet. My father has a car though. Why?

CAROL. Oh nothing, it doesn't matter. . . . It's just that Ricky Swift has a car. He's up at the Physical Ed. College, and his father has a sports shop. Dorothy knows him.

GREGORY. He must be quite old then.

CAROL. Mmmmm. He's nearly nineteen.

GREGORY. Has he got any hair left? [Retreating into laughter.] Ricky Swift! Sounds like something out of a comic! Does he fly through the

air like Batman? [In a mock cartoon-type voice.] Quick, Dorothy, to the Rickmobile!

CAROL. OK, OK. Calm down.

[GREGORY does calm down. In an instant the hysteria has been washed away, and a sober-faced GREGORY gets on with his chips. CAROL notices the approach of her friend MARGO.]

CAROL. Well, I'm off! [Hailing MARGO.] Hey, Margo, here's Gregory. Dorothy stood him up, so he's buying everybody chips and telling jokes. [To GREGORY.] Have fun, Gregory. You can tell me all about it tomorrow.

[Then she goes off, leaving GREGORY and MARGO alone. MARGO takes the initiative.]

MARGO. Well, I'll buy my own chips, but you can keep telling the jokes.

[As MARGO goes into the shop, GREGORY spots ANDY and CHARLIE sitting nearby.]

GREGORY. [Confidentially.] I think Margo's after me.

ANDY. [Egging him on, eager to see some success in romance somewhere.] It's a good night for it. Are you taking her to the Country Park?

GREGORY. I don't know. Should I?

ANDY. [With great confidence.] Aye, aye!

[GREGORY sees MARGO coming out of the shop and with a hopeful grin waves to ANDY and CHARLIE. They look at each other, impressed, as GREGORY and MARGO stroll off. MARGO signals GREGORY to wait for her while she goes into a phone booth and makes a quick call. We cut to SUSAN waiting outside another phone booth and answering a call. After MARGO finishes her end of the call, she summons GREGORY, who, rather than walking with her, follows warily a few feet behind her. He is not sure what is happening tonight.]

MARGO. [Sensing his mood.] Relax.

GREGORY. Where are we going?

MARGO. Relax. Enjoy it!

GREGORY. [With a brave smile.] I am . . . I will. But where are we going? Where are you and I going? I'm just a bit emotional tonight. OK?

MARGO. That's OK, that's fine. There's nothing wrong with a bit of emotion. [Impatient.] Come on.

[MARGO hurries him along, as if they have an appointment somewhere. And very soon they meet SUSAN, who has been waiting for them a few blocks away.]

SUSAN. [Pleasantly.] Hello, Gregory. You're all dressed up. Anywhere to go?

[GREGORY clowns wordlessly for the two

girls. Several times he seems about to say something and then thinks better of it. He shrugs, looks at the sky, whistles, and puffs out his cheeks in exaggerated bewilderment. He ends with a sheepish smile.]

MARGO. Well, I have got somewhere to go. See you tomorrow, Susan. [To GREGORY.] Bye. [She leaves.]

[GREGORY, left alone with SUSAN, laughs at his ridiculous predicament.]

SUSAN. [Brightly.] I believe you're short of a date.

GREGORY. There was a bit of a mix-up earlier on. It's OK.

SUSAN. Would you like to spend some time with me—on a kind of date?

GREGORY. Look, I'm not very sure what's going on. Is this some kind of a joke? All this—with Carol—and Margo—and—[Looks at her closely.] It is a joke, isn't it?

SUSAN. [Patiently.] It's not a joke. It's just the way girls work. They help each other.

GREGORY. Is Dorothy—

SUSAN. [Gently.] Dorothy's a good sport. Anyway, how about it, you and me, what do you say? [SUSAN makes things easier.] Think about it.

[GREGORY laughs nervously.]

Sit down there and think about it.

[GREGORY sits, giving SUSAN a reassuring wave, while SUSAN stands nearby whistling. GREGORY gets up after a minute or so.]

GREGORY. OK. A kind of date. Do we start right away?

SUSAN. Yes. We'll go to the Country Park. [As they walk.] What we'll do is, we'll just walk

and talk. And we don't even need to talk much, either. We'll just see how it goes.

GREGORY. [Relieved.] Fine.

SUSAN. I hope you don't think I do this kind of thing all the time.

GREGORY. No. . . . Can we whistle too?

SUSAN. We can whistle too.

Scene 19

The Country Park. A little while later.

[GREGORY and SUSAN continue to walk, whistling.]

SUSAN. I like your jacket.

GREGORY. I like your skirt.

SUSAN. [Giggling.] I like your shirt.

GREGORY. I like your beret.

SUSAN. Thank you.

[They both laugh and sit down under a tree.]

GREGORY. [Relaxed.] Now this is really good. I'm really enjoying myself.

SUSAN. [Smiling.] Good. I'm glad we—bumped into each other. [She whistles innocently.]

GREGORY. Do you want to dance? It's really good—you just lie flat down and dance. I'll show you what I mean. I'll start off, and you just join in when you feel confident enough. OK?

[He lies on his back and begins to wave his arms and wiggle his hands around. SUSAN laughs.]

GREGORY. Just dance.

[SUSAN reclines beside him, and they con-

tinue to "dance" in this way as GREGORY speaks.]

GREGORY. I'll tell you something, and not a lot of people know this. [Momentously.] We are clinging to the surface of this planet while it spins through space at a thousand miles an hour, held only by the mystery force called . . . gravity!

SUSAN. [Amused.] Wild.

GREGORY. A lot of people panic when you tell them that. They just fall off.

SUSAN. Oh!

GREGORY. But I see you're not falling off. That means you've got the hang of it. That means that you've got—

SUSAN. [Smiles.] Natural ability.

GREGORY. Yeah. A thousand miles an hour, eh?

SUSAN. Why are boys obsessed with numbers?

GREGORY. No, we're not.

SUSAN. [A superior laugh.] Ah.

GREGORY. Don't stop dancing—you'll fall off.

SUSAN. Listen, I want to tell you something. Do you know when you sneeze, it comes out of your nose at a hundred miles an hour?

GREGORY. Really?

SUSAN. [Demonstrates with a little sneeze.] Ah-choo! Just like that.

[GREGORY and SUSAN continue waving their arms around and talking as it grows darker. They gradually move their arms more and more in unison, each following the other's lead in trying out new movements. The whole thing actually begins to look like a kind of dance. Time passes quickly.]



GREGORY. One more number. . . . Eleven. Home by. I've got to be. . . .

SUSAN. [Getting up.] OK, Mister Spaceman, I'll walk you home.

GREGORY. Really?

SUSAN. Umm hmmm.

GREGORY. I don't want to put you to any trouble.

SUSAN. It's OK.

GREGORY. If you just want to walk to the bridge, that's fine.

SUSAN. All the way home. I don't mind.

GREGORY. OK, I'll do the same for you sometime.

SUSAN. Good!

Scene 20

GREGORY's backdoor. A little while later.

[Moonlight. SUSAN and GREGORY talk softly.]

GREGORY. When can I see you again?

SUSAN. Tomorrow. History. Ten-thirty.

GREGORY. I want a date.

SUSAN. OK, Mister Spaceman. Twelve-thirty in room seventeen. We'll talk about it.

GREGORY. Ten four.¹⁹

SUSAN. A million and nine. Good night, Mister Spaceman.

[A peck on the cheek, and SUSAN is gone.]

GREGORY. [Watching her.] Three hundred and seventy-five. [Blows a kiss.] Five thousand six hundred and seventy-two. [Blows another kiss.]

¹⁹ Ten four: radio jargon for "message received."

Scene 21

GREGORY's house. A few minutes later.

[MADELINE makes her way quietly to GREGORY's room. It is in darkness as she creeps in and switches on the bed lamp. We find GREGORY not asleep but lying wide awake in bed with his hands folded under his head, smiling.]

MADELINE. How did it go? Are you going to see her again?

GREGORY. Who? Dorothy?

MADELINE. Who else?

GREGORY. [Mysteriously.] Well . . . maybe Susan for instance. . . .

[MADELINE is too eager for news to stand for this coy stuff. She grabs him by the pajama collar and starts banging his head on the pillow.]

MADELINE. Tell me! I'll hurt you. Tell me!!!!!!

GREGORY. OK, OK! Dorothy didn't show up. But I met Carol and Margo and then Susan. She's lovely. We went to the park. I think she likes me. I'll see her tomorrow.

MADELINE. [With a sympathetic grtn.] It's hard work being in love, eh? Especially when you don't know which girl it is?

GREGORY. [Happily.] I'll work on it.

MADELINE. [Sighs and shakes her head in mock bewilderment.] Who's going to be Gregory's girl?

GREGORY. [Laughing.] You are!

[MADELINE pulls the pillow from under his head and shoves it over his face. She jumps off the bed and disappears back to her room. GREGORY lies back, settled for sleep. He stretches over and puts out the light, looking very content.]

Scene 22

The highway. Later that night.

[ANDY and CHARLIE are on the roadside, watching for passing cars. ANDY holds a cardboard sign with the word Caracus (misspelled) printed on it. Both boys look exhausted. CHARLIE is sitting on the curb. He looks at ANDY and finally speaks (for the first time in the film).]

CHARLIE. Come on, Andy. Let's go home.

[ANDY lets himself be led away by CHARLIE.]

CHARLIE. That's not the way to spell Caracus, anyway.

ANDY. [Stunned.] What?! What do you mean?

CHARLIE. [Patiently.] Caracus is spelled with an a. It's c-a-s, not c-u-s.

ANDY. Well, why didn't you tell me that before?! Could you not have told me that four hours ago?! We've been standing here, waiting, for ages!

CHARLIE. Well, let's go home. [Coaxing.] Come on, we can start again tomorrow. There are some nice girls in the third year. They always go for older guys. There's even some beauties in the second year. . . . [Reassuring him.] Andy, I think everything's going to be all right. . . .

STUDY QUESTIONS

Recalling

1. Describe the conditions under which Gregory manages to ask Dorothy for a date.
2. What message does Carol bring Gregory at the mall? Where does she go with him, and whom do they meet?
3. What do Gregory and Susan do and talk about on their "kind of date"?

Interpreting

4. Susan says that girls "help each other." Show how Gregory's evening proves this statement.
5. Contrast Dorothy's treatment of Gregory on the soccer field with Susan's treatment of him during their date. How does he respond to each girl?
6. Prove that Gregory is better matched with Susan than with Dorothy.
7. Who do you think is the real "Gregory's girl"? Why?

Extending

8. What do you find in Gregory's world that seems most like your own? What seems different?

READING AND LITERARY FOCUS

Character and Theme

We come to understand **characters** in drama partly by what they say, partly by what they do, and partly by what others say about them or do with them. Of course, some characters are simpler to understand than others. Andy, for instance, remains the same throughout *Gregory's Girl*: wanting to impress girls but never managing to figure out how. Compare the effect he has on Susan in Scene 7, for example, with the effect he has on Carol and her friends in Scene 12. By contrast, Gregory is a more complex character, one who develops in the course of the screenplay.

In fact, Gregory's development helps us understand the theme of the play. The **theme** is the larger, general meaning that grows out of the spe-

cific story being told. Although specifically about one Scottish high school student and his friends, *Gregory's Girl* is more generally about young people in most times and places. It portrays that period in our lives when we come to know ourselves better and to understand better what is right for us.

Thinking About Character and Theme

1. How would you describe Gregory's character by the end of the play? How has he changed, and what has happened to make him change?
2. Gregory falls in love with Dorothy, who is very different from him and does not appreciate him. Then he discovers Susan, who likes him and shares his sense of humor. What point might Gregory's situation make about the difference between what we think we want and what we actually need?

Foreshadowing and Predicting Outcomes

Surprises make life and literature more interesting. However, any well-written work contains hints, known as **foreshadowing**, that help us to predict future developments in the plot. For example, Gregory's date turns out to be something quite different from what we and he might have expected. Yet we can see in earlier scenes hints that help us to predict the outcome of his date.

Thinking About Foreshadowing and Predicting Outcomes

1. At what point in the screenplay does Susan first show interest in Gregory?
2. Before Gregory's meeting with Susan, when did you begin to think that his evening might turn out happily?

VOCABULARY

Technical Words

Every occupation or activity develops its own special vocabulary. Carpenters, nurses, sailors, lawyers all use special **technical words** or words

that describe their professional activities. Many sports also have their own vocabularies. In the early scenes of *Gregory's Girl*, a number of technical words referring to the game of soccer appear: for example, *goalie*, *corner*, *cross*, and *winger*.

To what sports do the following terms apply? Check in a dictionary for definitions of any terms you may not know.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. field goal | 6. slalom |
| 2. dribble | 7. inning |
| 3. touchdown | 8. deuce |
| 4. tacking | 9. spare |
| 5. free throw | 10. marathon |

COMPOSITION

Comparing Characters

- Write a three-paragraph composition explaining how Susan and Dorothy differ from each other. Begin by thinking about how each girl treats Gregory. Think also about the effect that each has on him. Then compare the two, pointing out specific ways in which they resemble each other, as well as specific ways in which they differ. End by indicating which girl you like better, and why.

Writing a Scene

- Consider the brief scenes in which either Andy or Charlie or both appear. Write yet another brief scene presenting the two at school the day after their attempt to hitchhike to Caracas. Set the scene wherever you choose, and show the two boys trying to impress "some nice girls in the third year." Try to capture the way Andy and Charlie speak and behave in *Gregory's Girl*. Be sure to follow the format for writing drama, using dialogue and stage directions. You can use *Gregory's Girl* as a model. For help with this assignment, see Lesson 10 in the *Writing About Literature Handbook at the back of this book*.