

the beginning of

OH MY GOD, IT'S ANOTHER PLAY!

a short comedy by Rich Orloff

(**OH MY GOD, IT'S ANOTHER PLAY!** has been published in Playscripts' anthology **NOTHING SERIOUS.**)

Place: Yes.

Time: Don't be so literal.

Characters: THE DIRECTOR, mid-20's to 135
THE STAGE MANAGER, a force to be reckoned with
(but nobody does)
THE DRAMATURG, a smart and perceptive person
whom I'm sure has *wonderful* taste
SOME ACTORS (FOUR OR MORE), male and female,
and all better looking than their head shots

(*Notes:* The stage manager and dramaturg can be played by the same actor, but must be different characters.

In this script, the phrase "AN ACTOR" refers to both men and women. Also, a line for "AN ACTOR" can sometimes be said by a character who isn't an actor. However, any line for "A TALL GOAT" must be said by a tall goat.)

The first day of rehearsal. Gathered are the DIRECTOR, STAGE MANAGER, DRAMATURG and several ACTORS. The actual stage crew can also be visible and choreographed into the action. General hubbub until the director speaks.

THE DIRECTOR

(to everyone:)

What is theatah?!

AN ACTOR

I don't know, but I was reading the play last night, and I'd like some more lines.

AN ACTOR

I never read a script before the first rehearsal.

AN ACTOR

I never read a script *during* rehearsal. It interferes with my process.

THE DIRECTOR

Forget the script!

Everyone tosses away their scripts.

THE DIRECTOR (cont'd)

I want us to do something daring, something different, something that's never been seen before!

AN ACTOR

I saw something like that last week.

THE DIRECTOR

That's what I want! And I will stop at nothing to get it, even if we have to rehearse till we drop! After all, what does "rehearse" mean, anyway? "Re" from the Latin "to repeat" and "hearse", a car that takes you to a funeral. And so we will keep working on the text, running over it and over it and over it until it shrieks in pain.

AN ACTOR

Is it okay if we paraphrase?

THE DIRECTOR

Never! I demand complete fidelity to the text.

AN ACTOR

Including stage directions?

THE DIRECTOR

(laughs, then:)

Don't be silly. I also ignore all punctuation and believe actors should feel free to move around vowels.

AN ACTOR

I haven't moved my vowels in days.

THE DIRECTOR

And now I'd like to introduce our dramaturg, to polite applause.

Polite applause.

THE DRAMATURG

As I've researched the author's life, the essential thing I've learned was that in order to fit into the theatrical community, the author was forced to hide his true sexual identity. He was a completely closeted – heterosexual. And it made him miserable.

AN ACTOR WHO READ A LETTER

I once read a letter the author wrote in which he claimed to be happy and well-adjusted.

THE DRAMATURG

Are you suggesting the playwright knew his own life better than a dramaturg?!

THE ACTOR WHO READ A LETTER

It's possi—

THE DIRECTOR

Don't argue with the dramaturg. After all, what does dramaturgy mean, anyway? "Drama" from the Latin "drama", meaning "a play that isn't funny", and "turgid": swollen, distended, pompous and bombastic. But enough table work. We only have a short rehearsal period, and we have to start attacking the text and keep attacking it till it loses the will to live, and nothing, I say, nothing will stop us!

THE STAGE MANAGER

Five minute break.

The actors immediately start smoking, eating, drinking various liquids and doing drugs. One takes out a cell phone and makes a call.

AN ACTOR WITH A PHONE

I'd like to speak to my agent, please...
Get me out of here!!!! I didn't struggle for years to appear in something *artistic*. I want commercials, damn it, national commercials where I can fake enthusiasm over products I'd never use in a million years.

A FLIRTATIOUS ACTOR

You know, I've admired your work for years.

AN ACTRESS WHO
COULDN'T CARE LESS

I almost saw you in a play once,
but you were in the second act.

A ROMANTIC ACTRESS

You know, we have a lot of scenes together.

A ROMANTIC ACTOR

Maybe we should work on our lines together later.

A ROMANTIC ACTRESS

I'll bring the wine.

A ROMANTIC ACTOR

I'll bring the condoms.

THE STAGE MANAGER

Break's over.

THE DIRECTOR

Now what was I saying?

THE STAGE MANAGER

(reading from notes:)

"These people think they're actors?!"

I could act better with a lobotomy!"

Oops, sorry. I was reading from my diary.

THE DIRECTOR

Let's move forward, shall we?

Everyone moves forward.

THE DIRECTOR (cont'd)

After two weeks, I think rehearsals are coming along excellently. But this is no time to rest on our bay leaves. I want this production to be the cutting edge of non-threatening theater. I want to stretch the definition of theater until it's pronounced "theeeeeetuuuuuh."

A FRUSTRATED ACTOR

Excuse me. I'm trying my best to absorb your note that I should play my character as if I'm still traumatized that my parents once tried to sell me for a new microwave, but this play doesn't mention microwaves and is set before they invented microwaves.

THE DIRECTOR

Oh, a literalist! And you call yourself an actor?! Where'd you learn to act, anyway?

THE FRUSTRATED ACTOR

I studied that great textbook, *An Actor Despairs*.

AN ACTRESS

I studied the Method.

AN ACTOR

You've slept with every director who's hired you.

THE ACTRESS

The Method works.

AN ACTOR WITH A MOUTHFUL
OF DRIBBLING FOOD

Everything I know about acting came
from studying the Stanislabsky method.

THE DIRECTOR

Listen, everyone, you have to trust me.
American Theatre magazine listed me
432nd in their annual list of Top 500
Geniuses in the Theater.

AN INTERRUPTING ACTOR

Yes, but –

THE DIRECTOR

How dare you? I've been directing theater
for 22 years, which is 154 dog years.
And what's *your* theater experience?

THE INTERRUPTING ACTOR

I spent five years with the National
Black Female Left-Handed Polish Theater.

AN ACTOR

But you're none of those things.

THE INTERRUPTING ACTOR

I know. I was their token right-handed white guy.
It was awful. The other actors got all the good
parts, and because they insisted on non-traditional
casting, I was only allowed to play left-handed
Black Polish women. The only good role I ever
got was when they did a reverse-gender
OTHELLO set in Krakow.

THE FRUSTRATED ACTOR

Look, I'm sorry if I created a problem.
I'll do whatever you tell me.

THE DIRECTOR

I like your attitude. After all, what are the
most common words out of an actor's mouth?

AN ACTOR

"Would you like some coffee or dessert?"

THE STAGE MANAGER

Five minute break.

AN ACTOR

I don't understand any of this.

AN UNCOMPROMISING ACTOR

If anybody understood it, it wouldn't be art.

AN ACTOR

Why can't it just be entertainment?

THE UNCOMPROMISING ACTOR

Entertainment, *puh*. I spit on entertainment.
Entertainment is the psychological
refuge of those who are in such denial
they think life is worth living.

THE STAGE MANAGER

Oh, I forgot to tell you. Your agent
called and said you got a pilot.

THE UNCOMPROMISING ACTOR

See ya!

The uncompromising actor exits.

THE ROMANTIC ACTRESS

I feel such simpatico with you. It's as
if the gods cast us together as lovers.

THE ROMANTIC ACTOR

My girl friend called last night. She's coming
to visit tomorrow. You and I have something
she and I will never have, but since she has a
steady job, I'm going to act like I don't know you.

THE ROMANTIC ACTRESS

You scum, you low life! And to think
I almost left my husband for you!