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The Audition

One-act comedy by Matt Thompson



Theatrical mayhem with a twist that will have you rolling in the aisles!

The Audition

Comedy. By Matt Thompson. Cast: 1m., 2w., 4 either gender. The local theater is producing *Medea*. With stopwatch in hand, the exceptionally organized and time-conscious stage manager meticulously micro-manages every minute of the audition process. After a bit of confusion, our first actor, Kelley, barely manages to speak three words of her monologue before the stage manager cuts her off with a curt, THANK YOU! NEXT! Jules, a bubbly musical theater actress, enters and “sings” a unique a cappella version of a popular song. NEXT! Without a word, The-Artist-Formerly-Known-as-Question-Mark enters in whiteface. This mime’s audition piece consists of staring into space for 30 seconds. NEXT! Sporting all black, with an English accent and a mighty ego in tow, M.R. Irving takes the stage. After some ridiculous warm-ups and an over-dramatic monologue, we learn that his first name is Macbeth. Upon hearing the name of the Scottish play, chaos ensues and all of the actors immediately return to the stage for callbacks. Jules acts out “I’m a Little Teapot” with an interpretive dance. M.R. Irving begins to read the part of Jason from that famous Greek tragedy but finds the dialogue a bit trite and decides instead to recite Bottom’s dialogue from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. At this point, the stage manager has lost all patience, and we soon find out that one of the actors is not who he/she appears to be. *The Audition* is theatrical mayhem with a twist that will have you rolling in the aisles! *Bare stage. Approximate running time: 30 minutes. Code: AC6.*

Cover photos: Broadway Theatre, Vista, Calif., featuring (top) Faeren Adams, (l-r) Jarrod Weintraub, Dallas McLaughlin and Whitney Thomas.
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THE AUDITION

A Play in One Act
by
MATT THOMPSON



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The Audition was presented in a condensed version at the Broadway Theatre in Vista, California, May 30, 2007. It was directed by Chelsea Whitmore with the following cast:

STAGE MANAGER. Faeren Adams

KELLEY Jarrod Weintraub

JULES Whitney Thomas

M.R. IRVING Dallas McLaughlin

THE AUDITION

CHARACTERS

STAGE MANAGER (w) tough as nails, queen of the theater

KELLEY (m or w) actor who never gets to audition

JULES (w) air-headed singer

M.R. IRVING (m) pretentious actor who has a little secret

THE-ARTIST-FORMERLY-KNOWN-AS-QUESTION-MARK (m or w) a mime

ROBIN (m or w) a stagehand, who works on the production (May double with ACTOR #5.)

ACTOR #5 (m or w) a very eager actor (May double with ROBIN.)

THE AUDITION

(A chair. Otherwise a blank stage. Lights up. The STAGE MANAGER is standing stage right looking at a stopwatch.)

KELLEY. Hello, I was here for the audition? I'm a little early. I hope you don't mind—

STAGE MANAGER. What is your audition time?

KELLEY. 1:57.

STAGE MANAGER. A.M. or P.M.?

KELLEY. Uh...P.M. 1:57 P.M.

STAGE MANAGER. You're early.

KELLEY. What time is it?

STAGE MANAGER. 1:56 P.M., so please wait outside.

KELLEY. I was just hoping to—

STAGE MANAGER. Please, wait outside!

KELLEY. Sure.

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you. *(KELLEY exits. The STAGE MANAGER looks at her stopwatch. A long pause, perhaps twenty seconds or so.)* NEXT! Send in the next victim...uh...I mean actor, please! Next!

(KELLEY enters, hesitantly.)

KELLEY. Hi, I was the next—

STAGE MANAGER (*to KELLEY*). Just head out to the center of the stage, and please, don't touch anything. (*The sound of footsteps, until our actor is center stage.*)

That's far enough.

KELLEY (*stopping and sticking out hand to shake*). Hi, my name is—

STAGE MANAGER. No contact please.

KELLEY. Sure. (*KELLEY walks downstage a few steps.*)

STAGE MANAGER. Don't step on the spike tape, please.

KELLEY. But, there isn't any spike tape.

STAGE MANAGER. Please don't touch the tape.

KELLEY. But, I—

STAGE MANAGER. Don't touch. It's for our current production.

KELLEY. What current production? It's a blank stage.

STAGE MANAGER. It's a Beckett piece.

KELLEY. Ah. I love *Waiting for Godot*. You know I once... (*He steps.*)

STAGE MANAGER (*yelling*). Off the tape!

KELLEY. I'm sorry. I just don't see any tape.

STAGE MANAGER. It's there.

KELLEY. Where?

STAGE MANAGER. In your mind.

KELLEY. Huh?

STAGE MANAGER. Please face straight out and address our director sitting in the back of the theater. (*The STAGE MANAGER steps out into the house.*)

KELLEY. Okay.

STAGE MANAGER. Could you take a step stage right. (*KELLEY steps stage left.*) That's house right.

KELLEY. *Your* right?

STAGE MANAGER. *Your* right.

(KELLEY takes one step to his right. The STAGE MANAGER steps off to the side. KELLEY turns to face directly out to the audience.)

KELLEY *(addressing the director at the back of the house)*. Hello there. Sorry, I'm just a little nervous. You see this is my first audition, and I've never done this before. My audition piece is...well, I've chosen a classic. I'm sure you've heard of it. I'll be doing a monologue from a piece entitled *The Applesauce Pig*.

STAGE MANAGER *(off stage left, near the wings, in the dark and with a very professional voice)*. You have two minutes.

KELLEY. What's that?

STAGE MANAGER *(a short pause)*. You have one minute and fifty-five seconds.

KELLEY. I'm sorry. Where's that coming from?

STAGE MANAGER. Over here.

KELLEY. Over where?

STAGE MANAGER. Stage left. *(KELLEY turns stage right.)* That's house left.

KELLEY *(stepping forward a little)*. Is this a joke or something?

STAGE MANAGER. No. I don't joke. You're standing on a spike.

KELLEY. Excuse me?

STAGE MANAGER. You're standing on spike tape.

KELLEY. Who are you? Are you the same lady that—

STAGE MANAGER. You have one minute.

KELLEY *(standing on the spike tape again)*. One minute until what?

STAGE MANAGER. Please don't stand on the spike.

KELLEY. Sorry.

STAGE MANAGER. Fifty-five seconds.

KELLEY. Just tell me who you are.

STAGE MANAGER. I'm the stage manager.

KELLEY. Oh. Well, it's very nice to meet you. My name is Kelley, and—

STAGE MANAGER. You have forty seconds.

KELLEY. Forty seconds for what?

STAGE MANAGER. Your piece. We are running a bit behind schedule due to other people going over their time.

You understand. You have thirty seconds for your piece.

KELLEY. You mean for my audition piece?

STAGE MANAGER. Yes.

KELLEY. Oh, well, then I better hurry. (*KELLEY waits for a response from the STAGE MANAGER but receives no more verbal communication.*) Again this is a monologue from *The Applesauce Pig*. (*Clears throat. Pause.*) When I first entered the deli I knew there was trouble—

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you!

KELLEY. Uh...thanks.

STAGE MANAGER. If you could please wait outside. And stay off the tape. (*KELLEY exits.*) Next!

(THE-ARTIST-FORMERLY-KNOWN-AS-QUESTION-MARK enters. He is dressed like a mime, complete with white face. Every movement he makes is in mime. He enters very mime-like and stops center stage.)

STAGE MANAGER (*cont'd*). Hi. Do you have a head shot and résumé?

(THE-ARTIST-FORMERLY-KNOWN-AS-QUESTION-MARK reaches into pocket and pulls out a slip of paper and hands it to the STAGE MANAGER. She reads it.)

STAGE MANAGER *(cont'd)*. “Hello, my name is... *(reading)* The-Artist-Formerly-Known-As-Question-Mark. I believe in the art of acting through the theatrical sphere of pure movement. *(To THE-ARTIST-FORMERLY-KNOWN-AS-QUESTION-MARK.)* Interesting perspective. Uh... Do you have a prepared piece?

(THE-ARTIST-FORMERLY-KNOWN-AS-QUESTION-MARK crosses to the STAGE MANAGER, reaches into other pocket, pulls out another slip of paper and hands it to her.)

STAGE MANAGER *(cont'd, reading the other slip of paper)*. This piece is entitled “The Great Bang.” *(To THE-ARTIST-FORMERLY-KNOWN-AS-QUESTION-MARK.)* Uh... Great. Whenever you’re ready.

(THE-ARTIST-FORMERLY-KNOWN-AS-QUESTION-MARK nods and takes center stage. Face and body are perfectly still, looking off into the distance. Then, s/he blinks his/her eyes, very dramatically, and bows. Scene.)

STAGE MANAGER *(cont'd)*. Uh... Thank you. Since we have some time we’d like to ask you a few questions if you don’t mind.

(THE-ARTIST-FORMERLY-KNOWN-AS-QUESTION-MARK just stares at the STAGE MANAGER. Beat.)

STAGE MANAGER (*cont'd*). Right. Well, perhaps it would be best if we skipped the interview and just have you wait outside. Thanks.

(*THE-ARTIST-FORMERLY-KNOWN-AS-QUESTION-MARK exits, very mime-like.*)

STAGE MANAGER (*cont'd*). Next!

(*JULES enters. She is quite bubbly.*)

STAGE MANAGER (*cont'd*). Next! Next, please. NEXT!

JULES. Hi, there!

STAGE MANAGER. Hello. (*Looking at her clipboard.*)

Ms. Julianne Reis?

JULES. Jules! Just Jules!

STAGE MANAGER (*always the professional*). And what are you going to do for us today, Ms. Reis?

JULES. I've prepared a song to sing today.

STAGE MANAGER. Do you need an accompanist?

JULES. No, just a piano player. (*A beat.*)

STAGE MANAGER. Right. Well, since we are squeezing you in during lunch our accompanist is on break. Could you just sing a capella?

JULES. I don't know that one, but I could sing it without any music.

(*Pause. Completely blank expression from the STAGE MANAGER.*)

STAGE MANAGER. Whenever you're ready.

JULES. I just need a moment to get my mind straight.

STAGE MANAGER. You need a lot more than that.

JULES (*sweet*). What was that?

STAGE MANAGER. Nothing. Whenever you're ready.

(JULES prepares herself and sings. She sings directly to the STAGE MANAGER.)

JULES.

La, la, la, la. "Happy Birthday to you.
Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday,
Mr. President! Happy birthday to you.

(Beat. She starts all over again.)

Happy birthday to you..."

STAGE MANAGER (*curt*). Thank you! Do you have a classical piece prepared?

JULES (*smiling*). Yes, I do. *(Beat.)*

STAGE MANAGER. May we see it?

JULES. See what?

STAGE MANAGER. The monologue?

JULES. I don't think you could see it, but you can hear it.

STAGE MANAGER (*starting to lose her cool*). Then we would like to hear it. Whenever you're ready.

JULES (*in her bubbly upbeat manner*). Thank you.

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you.

JULES. Thank you.

STAGE MANAGER (*really biting her lip*). Thank... You. Now... Whenever you're ready. *(STAGE MANAGER steps aside.)*

JULES (*smiling*). Thank you. *(JULES closes her eyes. She starts to sing scales in an upward fashion.)*

La, la, la, la, laaaaa! La, la, la,
la, laaaaa! La, la, la la, LAAAA!

(JULES launches into an interpretive rendition of “I’m a Little Teapot.” Her acting is horrible, beyond belief. Her “blocking” consists of dancing across the stage, be it tap or ballet, whatever works for the actor.)

JULES *(cont’d)*. I’m a little teapot, short and stout. Here! Here, my friends, is my handle *(puts one hand on hip)*, here is my spout! *(She stretches her other arm out to imitate the spout.)* When I get all steamed up, hear me shout! Shout! Shout! Shout! If you can’t stand the heat, then just tip me over and pour me out! *(She leans to the right, as a dancer would, and imitates pouring tea from the spout.)* I’m a clever teapot, mister! *(A quick dramatic dance step.)* Yes it’s true! *(Another quick dance step.)* Here’s an example of what I can do! *(A longer dance step.)* Jazz hands! Jazz hands! Fosse, Fosse, jazz hands! I can change my handle to my spout! *(She switches arm positions and repeat tipping motion.)* Just tip me over and pour me out! Pour me out! Pour... Me... Out! *(She finishes the monologue with yet one more dance step, her body in a dramatic flourish. She holds the pose for a moment. Another moment.)*

(The STAGE MANAGER is slack-jawed.)

STAGE MANAGER. That was...interesting.

JULES. Thank you. *(She takes a slight bow and recomposes herself.)*

STAGE MANAGER (*looking at JULES's résumé*). Against my better judgement the director would like for me to ask you a few questions.

JULES. Great!

STAGE MANAGER. Okay. So, it says on your résumé that you did a play on Broadway?

JULES. Yes, I did a play on Broadway.

STAGE MANAGER. New York is an amazing city.

JULES. Yes, I'd like to go there one day.

STAGE MANAGER. Go there? You just said you were on Broadway?

JULES. Oh, I was. Broadway and Pine.

STAGE MANAGER. Broadway and Pine?

JULES (*grinning ear to ear*). Yes, the Topeka Community Theatre on Broadway and Pine.

STAGE MANAGER. Topeka Community Theatre. That's... Amazing. (*She nods her head, smiles. Beat, as she just looks at the very bubbly JULES. She smiles with a small amount of angst.*) Could you please, just...go away.

JULES. Go away?

STAGE MANAGER. I mean... (*All smiles, re-composed*). Would you please just wait outside?

JULES. Sure. Thank you.

STAGE MANAGER. Thank you.

JULES. Thank you.

(JULES exits. The STAGE MANAGER takes a quick beat to compose herself.)

STAGE MANAGER. Next!