

# Here We Sit

*By L. Don Swartz*

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## **DEDICATION**

*To Michael Thomas for keeping me young  
and lots of other reasons. - Love, Dada*

## **STORY OF THE PLAY**

"Here We Sit" is an outrageous comedy that puts the audience on the hot seat through a series of sixteen, quick-paced scenes, all illuminating the joys and tribulations of the modern theatre-going experience. In "An Audience of One," a single theatre patron delivers an impassioned monologue to convince the actors to perform the show just for her. The scene, "What the Crowd Is Thinking," allows us to hear the real thoughts of an audience sitting through an uninspired performance. In "Uber Ushers," a band of ushers, driven to the brink of madness by the boorish behavior of an audience, stages a ferocious uprising to reclaim their theatre.

The scenes are propelled by two feisty old ladies, Lottie and Bernice, who keep popping up to express their contempt for the theatre. Having been given free tickets, the two outrageous seniors turn the theatre upside-down with their constant talking and their non-stop snacking from enormous purses stuffed with groceries and candy, wrapped in crinkling paper, of course!

The comedy's ultimate conclusion is that the actors and audience desperately need one another and that this timeless dance we do, as crazy as it can be sometimes, will go on.

## **ORIGINAL PRODUCTION**

*World premiere cast, May 4, 2006, Ghostlight Theatre,  
North Tonawanda, New York.*

Lottie: Joann V. Mis  
Bernice: Debby Koszelak Swartz  
Actor One: Jesse Swartz  
Actor Two: Lauren Aquilina  
Actor Three: Don Swartz  
Actor Four: Mollie McDermott  
Actor Five: Charlie D. Hahn  
Actor Six: Pat Faulhaber  
Actor Seven: Sharon Priest  
Actor Eight: Paul McGinnis  
Actor Nine: Sarah Averill  
Actor Ten: Chris Fire  
Actor Eleven: Vanessa Stipkovits  
Actor Twelve: Joy Ann Wrona

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(5 m and 9 w)*

### MEN

1. Announcer, Actor Ten, John, Flannel Shirt, Uber-Usher #2, Acrobat, Usher.
2. Actor One, Tall Man, Michael, Assistant Director, Uber-Usher #1, Box Office Manager, White.
3. Actor Three, the Man, Blank Slate, Director, Sneezzer, Cover.
4. Actor Five, Well-Dressed Man, the Sleeper, He-Talker, House Manager, Duddy, Maurice.
5. Actor Eight, Wide Man, Scientist, Gurgles, Fish Fry, Brave Husband, Braun, Bender.

### WOMEN

1. Lottie.
2. Bernice.
3. Actor Two, Young Mother with Baby, Intern, Uber-Usher #4, The Screamer, Sky.
4. Actor Four, Big Coat #2, Sour Grapes, Fast Wife, Usher, Prone, Frump.
5. Actor Six, Mom, Cough Drop, Launch, Aunt Edna.
6. Actor Seven, Strange Lady, Big Hat, She-Talker, Fuddy, Gray.
7. Actor Nine, Pretty Girl, Bored Member, Sinister Voice, Fan, Vapours, Tweed.
8. Actor Eleven, Artsy Woman, Debby, Nice Dress, Colleen, Uber-Usher #3, Rage, Mrs. Brown.
9. Actor Twelve, Big Coat #1, Jingles, Young Woman, Emily, Duck.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

### ACT I

- Scene 1: Dueling Audiences**  
*Announcer, Actors 1-12*
- Scene 2: The Art of Picking Your Seat**  
*Usher, Man, Tall Man, Wide Man, 2 Ladies with Big Coats, Young Mother, Pretty Girl, Strange Lady, Well-Dressed Man, Artsy Woman*
- Scene 3: The Curse of the Free Tickets**  
*Lottie, Bernice, Audience*
- Scene 4: Second Choice**  
*Michael, John*
- Scene 5: Glass Eyes: "O Fortuna!"**  
*Actors 1-12*
- Scene 6: Research Says...**  
*Scientist, Audience, Usher*
- Scene 7: Actor Meltdown**  
*Audience, Woman opening a cough drop, Debby*
- Scene 8: What the Crowd Is Thinking**  
*Assistant Director, Intern, Sleeper, Blank Slate, Nice Dress, Flannel Shirt, Big Hat, Gurgles, Jingles, Mom, Bored Member, Sour Grapes*
- Scene 9: Surviving Act I**  
*Lottie, Bernice*

### ACT II

- Scene 1: Surviving Intermission**  
*Announcer, Lottie, Bernice*
- Scene 2: Director Meltdown**  
*Director, Colleen, Father*
- Scene 3: Uber-Ushers**  
*4 Ushers, Cough Drop, Fan, He-Talker, She-Talker, Sneezzer, Young Woman, Brave Husband, Fast Wife*

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### **SYNOPSIS OF SCENES – Continued**

**Scene 4: An Audience of One**

*Usher, Emily, House Manager, Other Actors*

**Scene 5: Sorry, No Refunds**

*Manager, Launch, Duck, Cover, Fuddy, Duddy, Vapours,  
Braun, Prone, Rage, Scream, Acrobat*

**Scene 6: Open Forum**

*Mrs. Brown, Tweed, Frump, Aunt Edna, Maurice, Bender,  
Gray, Sky, White, Usher*

**Scene 7: Trapped Like Rats**

*Lottie, Bernice*

**Curtain Call**

## **Notes from the Playwright**

In our original production, we were all amazed how hard the audience laughed at the very first scene. We played it kinda-Beckett, and my intent was to scare them a little...and they saw right through my bluff and laughed right through it.

In Scene 5, the recording "O, Fortuna," played 3 minutes. It has to be the most mentioned piece. High school and college patrons loved it and giggled all the way through it. Patrons of a certain age were baffled by it, and were disturbed by the lack of narrative. Ultimately, the scene is a prank in the Monty Python tradition and possibly the most cutting commentary we make about our audience the whole night. (Some nights we feel we'd be better off playing to a house of stuffed animals!) The fact that the targeted audience didn't get it made it all the more irresistible to the company. My response finally became: 20 years from now, it will be the only scene you remember. No matter who questioned me about it, and I'm still getting questions, I made a game of refusing to explain it to them. I guarantee the high school kids who hopefully will be in this some day will love the scene. Their parents? If they like absurd humor and are Monty Python fans, they will enjoy it. If not, all bets are off. And that not-knowing...was wonderful!

I was very pleased with the audiences' acceptance of the very Polish Lottie and Bernice. An African-American woman told me they WERE her grandmother and aunt, and we got a letter from a high school student who said her favorite part was the Russian ladies. We have a large Polish population in Western New York where I live, and they play very well here, but I just know they will play in the heartland also. I was very careful to make them real people. Smart and no nonsense, and no stereotype, and the audiences embraced them.

This play grew out of little scenes I started writing 15 years ago. I knew some day I would have enough material to tie them into a play.

## **End of Freeview**

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