

OPENING NIGHT

A Play in Two Acts by
Delanie Kay Tucker

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DEDICATION

For Cori, Tony, Fawn, Nathan, Adam, Ben, Kurtis, Ashley, Jeremy, Jessi, Samantha, Kris, BÿDe, Jeanne, and mom: Who made the show funnier than I thought possible. - Thanks

STORY OF THE PLAY

Kathy, the stage manager, has the play's first line: "I hate opening nights!" From that point on we see everything that could go wrong in the course of a performance happen to a group of dedicated high school actors and techies. You name it, if it has happened to you, it happens in this play and makes for non-stop hilarity as the process of theatre truly reveals that we are all crazy!!!!!! Mistakes, misscues, communication failures, dropped lines, forgotten entrances, actors not showing up, techies taking a break, the light board not working, props missing - it is very reminiscent of Michael Frayn's "Noises Off" but on a high school and youth theatre level - they all build to a fever pitch but it all turns out in the end. All three settings are visible at all times. We watch the running crew and actors backstage, we see what calamities occur onstage in the "play within the play" and we watch chaos reign in the tech booth. About 2 hours.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(9M, 5F)

TIFFANI: Diva.	Actress	senior
DAN: Having a blast.	Actor	senior
BECKY: What?	Actress	sophomore
MICHAEL: Everyman	Actor	junior
DAVE: This will be easy.	Actor	junior
RYAN: Freshman.	Actor	freshman
*KATHY: New age.	Stage manager	senior
*JEFF: Fear me.	Deck foreman	senior
*CHRIS: Duct tape king.	Tech crew	junior
JEN: Let's be friends.	Tech crew	junior
MELISSA: Gothic death bunny.	Costumes	sophomore
*ERIC: We have a problem.	Light crew	sophomore
GIZMO: It wasn't me.	Sound tech	sophomore
*KEVIN: The new guy.	Tech crew	sophomore

*May be played by either gender. Names become: Curtis, Jodi, Kris, Erica, Karen.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I admit it. This is a hard play to do. There is so much going on, both "onstage" and "off," with no break for the actors - and it's not accompanied with specific staged instructions for where every person is at every moment. It will be bitter, it will be painful. And ultimately, it will be worth it. This is an ensemble work, in a very literal sense; there is no 'lead'. This is a perfect opportunity to encourage your actors to develop their characters by finding backstage activities that would be appropriate. Encourage them to be creative. Let 'em run with ideas, see what they come up with. It's also a good time to work on not pulling focus and on maintaining consistency of character throughout the production. And most importantly, have fun! This is a comedy! If you have a good time, your audience is guaranteed the same.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

Friday night, Now - the stage of a high school theatre

Scene One: Jack's house, after a party, 1940s.

Scene Two: A bar, the following evening.

Scene Three: Jack's apartment, later that evening.

Scene Four: Clarisse's apartment, three weeks later.

Scene Five: A park, the next day.

ACT TWO

Friday night, Now - the stage of a high school theatre

Scene One: Jack's house, two months later, 1940s.

Scene Two: Jack's house, later that evening.

Scene Three: A park, later that night.

Scene Four: Jack's apartment, the next day.

SET

One set with three interiors:

Backstage

Onstage

Tech booth

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION notes at end of script.

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ACT ONE

(The show opens with MUSIC. The stage is divided in half; Stage Left represents "onstage" and Stage Right represents "offstage". DL there is a couch, wall, door, and French doors. The light booth is also DL. Stage manager's desk on SR. Chairs, and various props are spread across the rest of the stage. KATHY enters first, turns on 'stage' lights and begins sweeping floor. JEFF and CHRIS enter next, followed by JEN and MELISSA. All sign check-in sheet, posted above stage manager's table. RYAN enters, signs in, grabs costume, and leaves. ERIC and GIZMO enter, GIZMO is carrying a huge super-soaker water gun. TIFFANI, then MICHAEL enter. DAVE and DAN enter together. Jeff checks chandelier. Kathy crosses to him. Various cast and crew members are wandering through, getting dressed, checking props, etc., talking to one another. As Kathy speaks, music fades out.)

KATHY: I hate opening night. I hate it, I hate it. I feel so out of control! This time things will be different, though. I've got these new self-help tapes.

(GIZMO flops down onto "onstage" couch and starts pointing at lights, still wearing sunglasses.)

KATHY: They teach you how to focus your energies, you know, really relax and work under pressure. All you do is picture a safe, warm place and then pretend you're there. I guess I'd better do roll call. The crew: Jen is here, Chris is here, Eric is here, Gizmo is on the couch. Jeff, did you check the chandelier?

JEFF: Yes.

KATHY: Great. Melissa is on costumes, and Holly - where's Holly? Opening night, and one of my crew is missing. No, I can deal with this. I am safe, I am warm. The cast: Tiffani is here, Dan is Here, Dave is here, Ryan is? I don't see him, but his initials are here. Michael is here, and Becky is ... *(looks.)* Becky is ...

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(There is KNOCKING on the 'outside' door. KATHY crosses to it and admits BECKY.)

KATHY: Becky is late.

BECKY: Sorry.

KATHY: This is backstage, this is onstage. Over there is the light booth—

GIZMO: Mission Control, man.

KATHY: Whatever. Which is usually in the back of the theater.

(CAST and CREW gather together for pre-show cheer.)

MICHAEL: Take pains! Be perfect! Adieu!

KATHY: Everything is in place. *(Crosses to her desk.)* Five minutes, everybody!

ALL: Thank you.

DAN: Hey, Kathy, how many people are here? *(She holds her hand up in a 'don't talk to me' gesture.)* Melissa! How many people are here? *(She doesn't answer. To anybody.)* Are there a lot of people here?

(No one responds. DANIEL looks at JEN and CHRIS, then sneaks toward the "onstage" side. Starts to peek.)

JEN: *(Warning.)* Dan.

DAN: *(Jumps.)* What? They couldn't see me.

JEN: If you can see them, they can see you.

DAN: But I just—

JEN: Come over here before you get in trouble. Jeff'll see you.

DAN: Oh, what's he gonna do? Kick me out?

CHRIS: I wouldn't chance it, if I were you. *(To Jen.)* Do you know where the crystal fruit bowl is?

JEN: Yeah, I put it in the light booth so it wouldn't get broken. I'll go get it.

(During the previous conversation, KEVIN enters backstage area. JEFF finally notices him and crosses.)

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JEFF: I'm sorry, there's no family allowed backstage before the performance. If you have anything you want delivered, you can give it to me and I'll make sure they get it.

KEVIN: Oh. Um. I think I'm supposed to be ... here ... ?

JEFF: You're supposed to be here? Can I help you with something?

KEVIN: Miss Fontaine told me to come here.

(JEFF stares at him.)

KEVIN: She said I'm supposed to help with the play. *(No response.)* She said somebody was sick, and so I'm going to help instead. *(Desperate.)* Miss Fontaine said I should show up before seven-thirty, and somebody would tell me what to do.

JEN: *(Has noticed Kevin and crosses to them both.)* Hi. Did you say Miss Fontaine sent you?

KEVIN: Yeah. She said somebody is sick and I'm supposed to help. That's all I know.

JEN: Ah. Could you excuse us for a minute?

(KEVIN nods and looks around. JEN takes JEFF by the arm and drags him aside.)

JEN: Promise me you're not going to get mad.

JEFF: Why?

JEN: Just promise.

JEFF: I'm not promising anything until I know what I'm not supposed to get mad at.

JEN: Holly was feeling sick all day today, and then in home etc. she threw up, so I told her to go home and we would cover for her.

JEFF: And?

JEN: And it was in Miss Fontaine's class. When she realized Holly was on tech crew, she came completely unglued. She overheard me saying it was going to be a pain filling in on opening night, and I guess she went out and got somebody else.

End of Freeview

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