

ACTING RICH

By Rob Frankel

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DEDICATION

To Judy Replin, friend and teacher for life.

Rob Frankel, playwright

STORY OF THE PLAY

See the butler and maid help the Cummings pack.
See the butler and maid escort the Cummings out the door.
See the butler and the maid turn to each other and embrace (!) because they are actually two aspiring actors, Billy and Wendy, who now have the Cummings estate to themselves! One week of ACTING RICH!

Unfortunately for them, they aren't the only ones acting. The neighbor is posing as a cleaning lady to look for some incriminating evidence which she must hide; the Cummings' daughter is acting like a family friend so she can have some time to think; the daughter's fiance is acting like her financier because her parents hate him; the jewel thief is acting like a long-lost dad; and the doctor ... well ... isn't one at all. Still with us? Stay tuned to the climax when the Cummings return unexpectedly and everyone's true identity is revealed at a surprise birthday party. We won't give away the ending but suffice it to say, "The chef did it!"

If you're looking for a drama with deep meaning, look elsewhere. This one is pure fun and farce.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(6 M, 7 W)

WENTWORTH CUMMINGS: Famous cooking author.
ELIZABETH CUMMINGS: His shrewd wife.
CHEF ATTLEZENIA: House chef.
WENDY BARLOW: Actress, Billy's girlfriend.
BILLY ERICKSON: Actor, Wendy's boyfriend.
HORTENCE HOGSWALLOW: A neighbor who's having an affair with Wentworth.
SHARON CUMMINGS: Daughter of Elizabeth and Wentworth, college student engaged to Phil.
PHIL: College student, engaged to Sharon.
JIMMY: A likable thief.
KITTY DeLONG: Stage and screen star.
MARGARET WINCHESTER: Kitty's mentor.
DR. LARRY FISCHBEIN: Crazy doctor having an affair with Elizabeth.
INSPECTOR/FRIEDA: Chef's secret lover.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I: The home of Wentworth Cummings. Late afternoon on a spring day.
ACT II: Later that afternoon.

PLAYING TIME: 90 minutes.

SOUND EFFECTS

Car doors slamming, car driving off, car crash, thunder.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

As with any farce, the play should move along quickly. As well, each actor must maintain their primary objective or motivation even when not speaking. We must see Hogswallow constantly trying to figure out how to get that sweater, Jimmy lusting after the diamond, Sharon for anonymity, etc. Finally and importantly, the actors must be having a good time! A farce is not deep drama, and rich characterizations played by actors who can laugh at themselves will make the play very enjoyable!

SET DESIGN

The setting is the beautiful home of Wentworth Cummings, noted gourmet and critic, and his wife, Elizabeth. It is well appointed. There are four doors/exits in the room. USC is the main door to the outside (*opens to SL*) - mock windows on either side. It is on a platform a step or two up from the rest of the playing area. There is a coat rack SL of the door. Further USL is a desk and chair. There is a fireplace CSL, with a sitting chair just DS of it. There is a door/exit DSL to the unseen master bedroom. DSR is an exit suggesting stairs to the upstairs. CSR is a chest of drawers with a picture over it and a wall safe behind the picture. USR is an exit to the kitchen. CS is a couch with an end table and lamp on either side. In front is a large throw rug.

ACT I

(AT RISE: It is afternoon. The MAID (WENDY) is busy dusting USR while the BUTLER (BILLY) polishes the furniture USL. SIR WENTWORTH CUMMINGS enters DSL from bedroom, raincoat thrown over his arm. He stops at the door and holds his coat out, expectantly. Nobody seems to notice him.)

CUMMINGS: *(Indignantly clears HIS throat.)* Harumph!

(WENDY and BILLY notice HIM and anxiously run over to him - Wendy still with duster, Billy still with rag and polish.)

BILLY: *(In refined English, voice.)* Oh, I do beg your pardon, sir! *(Immediately looks for some way to make it right, and for lack of anything better, begins polishing CUMMINGS' shoes with the polish and rag.)*

CUMMINGS: *(Noticing furniture polish being applied to shoes.)* Rothgard! I ...

WENDY: *(SHE too speaks in refined voice.)* So sorry, sir! *(Immediately begins dusting off CUMMINGS.)*

CUMMINGS: Miss Baggage! *(Note: accent on the second syllable so that it sounds French.)* I am allergic to ...

(HE sneezes. Feathers fly. Enter ELIZABETH CUMMINGS DSL dressed smartly for travel. She observes the scene and feathers.)

ELIZABETH: *(Dryly.)* Well, Wentworth. Is this what you meant by "full valet service" when you hired these two?

CUMMINGS: *(Brushing BILLY and WENDY aside and rushing to her.)* Elizabeth, darling! As I've explained, it is time that we live in the manner we can now afford.

ELIZABETH: Isn't Chef Attlezenia enough? At least Chef has served a purpose here for eight years.

CUMMINGS: I thought, what with this new house, that we certainly needed a maid and a butler, at least to, you know, sort of clean up, odds and ends, that sort of ...

ELIZABETH: Wentworth. You have feathers on your Gucci's.

CUMMINGS: I ... what? *(SHE points imperiously at HIS shoes.)* Oh ... *(HE sheepishly brushes feathers away.)*

BILLY: *(To ELIZABETH.)* Shall I get your bags, ma'am?

ELIZABETH: *(Gloves in hand, SHE saunters over to BILLY.)* Rothgard.

BILLY: Yes, ma'am?

ELIZABETH: *(Turning violent and hitting HIM over the head with HER gloves.)* You are never to refer to me in the first person! NEVER! Do you understand?

BILLY: Y-yes ... ma'am. Shall I get your, uh ... *(SHE glares. HE considers for a moment.)* Would Mrs. Cummings like me to get her bags?

CUMMINGS: How do I know what ...

ELIZABETH: *(To CUMMINGS.)* He was talking to me, you ninny! *(To BILLY.)* Yes, Rothgard. Get them.

(HE obediently exits DSL. WENDY feels conspicuous and returns to USR to dust. CUMMINGS and ELIZABETH move toward the door.)

CUMMINGS: One glorious week in Paris! Le Bistro de Paris, that beautiful five-star cafe on the Champs Elysees, and oh, those tasty crepes suzettes at Chez Louis! Filet mignon at Roget's! And how about ...

ELIZABETH: How about the Eiffel Tower, Wentworth? The Seine River? The Notre Dame Cathedral? Wentworth, I hope you don't intend to eat your way through Paris working on another of your "Wentworth Cummings Samples India" books, are you? I'm going there to vacation!

CUMMINGS: Of course, of course, darling. But those books, after all, are why we are able to afford this trip, snookums.

End of Freeview

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