

EXTRACT

The Actress' Dilemma

a short comedy

by

Alex Broun

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abroun@bigpond.net.au

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Cast

THE ACTRESS

THE DIRECTOR

Setting

A theatre. Bare stage.

Time

Morning.

THE ACTRESS' DILEMMA

Theatre. Bare stage. A voice from the audience calls:

VOICE: Next.

THE ACTRESS ENTERS, YOUNG AND ATTRACTIVE. SHE STRUTS CONFIDENTLY TO CENTRE STAGE.

ACTRESS: Good morning.

VOICE: Is it still only morning ?

ACTRESS: (BIG SMILE) Just.

VOICE: Only eight hours to go.

ACTRESS: You're seeing a lot of people today ?

VOICE: Yes we are. But we can't just sit here all morning exchanging witty banter, can we ?

ACTRESS: Time is money.

VOICE: Is it ?

ACTRESS: That's what they say.

VOICE: They do ?

ACTRESS: (LAUGHS) Got me. My name is Rebecca Paddle and today I'll be performing –

VOICE: I'm sorry, did you say "I didn't bring a saddle" ?

ACTRESS: No, I said "my name is Rebecca Paddle."

VOICE: Oh it's your name.

ACTRESS: My name is Paddle, not -

VOICE: I'm glad it's just your name. I was thinking "Good God ! Why did she bring a saddle ?"

ACTRESS: Paddle.

VOICE: A paddle too ? A paddle and a saddle.

ACTRESS: No. My name is –

VOICE: Neither of them's going to come in handy unless we're doing "Annie Get Your Gun, underwater" which we aren't. Are we ?

ACTRESS: Of course I was just saying –

VOICE: What darling ?

ACTRESS: You have my photo and biog.

VOICE: We do.

ACTRESS: My name's on there.

VOICE: Good thinking.

ACTRESS: I'll just get started.

VOICE: That would be nice, we are waiting. And what are you going to be doing for us today ?

ACTRESS: Blanche du Bois from Streetcar.

VOICE: How original. Why in the world did you choose that ?

ACTRESS: I played it last year. Summer stock.

VOICE: But you're too young.

ACTRESS: Thank you.

VOICE: Wasn't a complement honey.

ACTRESS: Oh.

VOICE: Never mind. Blunder forth.

ACTRESS: I'm sorry.

VOICE: We're ready ! In your own time.

THE ACTRESS TURNS, PREPARING HERSELF. SUDDENLY THERE IS A LOUD "NEIGHING" FROM THE BACK OF THE THEATRE.

VOICE: Neeeeiiiiiggghhh ! Nnnnneeeiiiggghhh !

THE NEIGHING STOPS. THE ACTRESS COMPOSES HERSELF. SHE IS JUST ABOUT TO TURN WHEN THE NEIGHING COMES AGAIN.

VOICE: Nnnnnneeeiiiiiggghhh ! Nnnnneeeiiiggghhh !

SHE TURNS AWAY.

VOICE: I'm sorry, is there a problem ?

ACTRESS: (TURNING) Sorry, I was just -

VOICE: Don't be sorry darling it's just we do have -

ACTRESS: I was just waiting for -

VOICE: Talent ?

ACTRESS: No, the neighing. I was just waiting for the neighing to stop.

VOICE: (FLABBERGASTED) The what ?

ACTRESS: The ... neighing.

BEAT.

VOICE: You've got a fixation haven't you ? Saddles, neighing - next you'll be talking of bareback mounts.

ACTRESS: I'm sorry.

VOICE: Don't be darling. We all have our little fetishes. Let's forget all about it. Our little secret.

ACTRESS: It's just -

VOICE: Yes I know, neighing. I know, here's a good idea. Let's start again. Shall we ? Why don't you just go out and come in again ? Just like brand new.

ACTRESS: Okay. Thank you.

VOICE: My pleasure darling.

THE ACTRESS EXITS.

VOICE: (TO HIMSELF) Neighing ... a saddle ... goodness.

THE ACTRESS RE-ENTERS AND STRIDES CONFIDENTLY TO THE CENTRE OF THE STAGE.

ACTRESS: Good morning.

VOICE: Morning.