

The Actor Games

By Wade Bradford

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DEDICATION

To the Drama Teachers of the world. Thank you.

STORY OF THE PLAY

In this dystopian/Hunger Games parody everyone is starving...for attention. Society's obsession with all things drama has become so distracting, the Capitol has outlawed all auditions and has divided the population into ten districts: Greek Tragedy, Shakespeare Drama, Commedia Dell'Arte, and others.

During the annual Actor Games, a tribute from each district competes to become a star. The losers must suffer the fate of the Fallback Wheel. This year, Meryl hopes to become the first ever winner from High School Drama. Unfortunately, the odds are never in her favor. *The Actor Games* is a fast-paced one-act play that provides lots of comedy opportunities for each cast member, as well as a humorous overview of modern and historic acting methods.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Flexible cast of 13, plus extras

HOST
GREEK TRAGEDY
SHAKESPERIAN DRAMA
COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE
MELODRAMA
SILENT FILM
MUSICAL THEATRE
AVANT GARDE
HOLLYWOOD
METHOD
MOTHER
POSEY
MERYL
CREW MEMBERS
DRAMA TEACHER

The Actor Games

- 3 -

PROPS

2 blankets (Posey and Meryl)
Pocket cue card (Posey)
Bowl with paper (Crew)
Cards with lines (Host)
Book of "Romeo and Juliet" (Meryl)
Wheel with numbers (Crew)
Mop, face cream, tea, toothpaste, toothbrush, Slinky (Crew)
Notecard (Host)
Masks *optional* (Commedia/Greek)
Table (Crew)
Blue and green sheets (Crew)
White sheet (Host)
Toy sword (Shakes)
Broken mop (Shakes)
Title cards (Crew)
Envelope (Crew)
Scroll (Shakes)
Feathery pen (Shakes)
Dictionary (Crew)
Fishing pole (Crew)
Hat (Crew)
Necklace (Melodrama)
Money bills (Shakes)
Chef's hat (Musical)
Sandwich tray (Musical)
Board listing of dramatic deaths (Crew)
Cutout lightning bolt (Greek)
Banana with peel (Commedia)
Inflatable globe (Avant)
Blue and green sheets (Method/Silent)
Shark fin headpiece (Hollywood)

SFX

crash, dramatic music cue, ding, buzzer, sad romantic music,
train whistle, "Jaws"-style music, sad music

The Actor Games

(AT RISE: The stage is dark. A somber narrator/HOST walks downstage.)

HOST: In the not too distant future. In a world where everyone is starving...for attention. A place where each citizen desperately craves fame. Once in this dystopian society, everyone wanted to be in the spotlight. Everyone wanted to be the star. Humanity's obsession with all things drama became so distracting, that people left their jobs, their homes, and their families, just to audition for a bit part. In order to curb this mayhem, the Capitol put a stop to all auditions. The leader of the Capitol, a tyrannical dictator known as the Great Casting Director, divided the population into ten different districts, each one based upon the acting styles of the citizens. *(LIGHTS come up on nine ACTORS. Each one steps forward as his/her name is called.)* Greek Tragedy.

GREEK: May Zeus look down upon you and smile.

HOST: Shakespearean Drama.

SHAKES: Good morrow to thee, kind sirs and gentlewomen.

HOST: Commedia Dell'Arte.

(COMMEDIA steps forward and simply bursts into giggles.)

HOST: *(Cont'd.)* Melodrama.

MELODRAMA: Good day... Or is it??? *(Optional: dramatic music cue.)*

HOST: Silent Film.

(SILENT, a male or female dressed in the style of Buster Keaton or Charlie Chaplin, moves as if in an old-time movie. SILENT raises hat to audience.)

HOST: *(Cont'd.)* Musical Theatre.

MUSICAL: *(Bursting into song.)* Hello!!!!!!!

HOST: Avant Garde.

The Actor Games

- 5 -

AVANT: I am a cactus. We are all cacti.

HOST: Just a simple greeting is all we need.

AVANT: *(Moving close to the Host.)* You are a cantaloupe.

HOST: Thank you. Now, stand back over there. The next district: Hollywood.

HOLLYWOOD: *(Glamorous, incredibly shallow.)* Hi there.

HOST: And how can we forget, Method Acting.

(METHOD paces back and forth, not responding, still deep within the inner workings of his character.)

HOST: *(Cont'd.)* Uh...Method Acting? Hello?

METHOD: *(Intense.)* Hello!!! Is that what you want me to say? Hello? There, I said it. Happy?

HOST: *(To audience.)* As you can tell, it's a wide assortment. Once a year, the Casting Call takes place. One hopeful actor from each district is chosen. They are brought together to a place called the Stage. It is there that an intense competition takes place. We call this terrifying event the Actor Games. Because only one person can win, there are many losers, each of whom suffers a terrible fate. But for the one victor who remains on stage, there is fame, fortune, and a long life in the most wonderful place in all the world: the Theatre.

(The nine district Representatives/ACTORS bow at the word "theatre.")

HOST: *(Cont'd.)* Those are nine of the districts, but we haven't met the last one... In all the years of the Actor Games, this district has never won. It is known as the Land of High School Drama.... And that is where the story begins.

(NOTE: If Land of High School Drama doesn't apply, you could change it to the Land of Amateurs, the Land of Community Theater, or simply the Land of Bad Acting.)

The Actor Games

- 6 -

(LIGHTS on a MOTHER, entering the scene where her two DAUGHTERS sleep under blankets. The Mother and Posey are wonderfully horrible actors. They should sound very unnatural, sometimes monotone, sometimes just a lousy line reading. They should move stiffly and uncomfortably. However, the second daughter, who goes by the name of Meryl, is very ambitious and quite talented as we shall soon see.)

MOTHER: Good morning, daughter, it is time to wake-up-and-start-your-day.

POSEY: Please, Mother, I am SO tired. I want to go back to... uh...I want to go back to...uh...line.

MOTHER: Sleep?

POSEY: Yes! Sleep!

MOTHER: No, no. Wake up. You know what is happening today? *(She says her stage directions out loud.)* Sits down.

POSEY: No-I-do-not-what-is-happening.

MOTHER: Today is the Day of the Casting Call.

POSEY: Oh no.

MOTHER: Do not cry. It is time to wake up your sister. Exit stage left. *(SHE exits stage right.)*

POSEY: Mary, Mary, it is time to wake up.

(The other girl, Mary, who prefers the name MERYL, bounces up from underneath her blanket with book of "Romeo and Juliet.")

MERYL: "Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon!"

POSEY: Sister, what are you doing? Where did you get that book? That does not belong to our district. You should not have it, Mary, you will get in trouble.

MERYL: I've told you before, twerp, I don't go by Mary anymore. I'm changing my name to Meryl.

POSEY: But Meryl, only the Hollywood People change their names. And only the Shakespeare people read that play.

MERYL: Well, I'm trying new things. During the last 75 years, no one from our district has ever won the Actor Games.

The Actor Games

- 7 -

POSEY: That is because we are bad actors. We will never win.

MERYL: And don't you want that to change?

POSEY: Uh... *(Pulls out a cue card from her pocket.)* Yes, I most certainly do.

MERYL: Good, so don't tell Mom. I want to learn all about the other districts, just in case I make call backs.

(The HOST enters. MOTHER, POSEY, and MERYL line up. OTHER ACTORS might line up too.)

HOST: Happy Actor Games, everyone!

MOTHER and POSEY: *(Glum.)* Happy Actor Games.

HOST: Oh, don't look so glum, good citizens. I know that we have not had a champion from this district in the history of the Games, but maybe this year we'll finally nail the audition. *(SOMEONE carries in a bowl filled with paper entries.)* And now, let the casting begin. *(HOST reaches in and draws a name.)* The family's last name is Never-Seen.

MERYL: That's us! That's our family!

POSEY: Oh no... I don't want to be in the Actor Games, Mother.

MERYL: Think about it, Posey. This is our chance to be a star!

POSEY: What happens if you lose?

MOTHER: I don't even want to think about it, children.

HOST: Congratulations, Neverseen Family. But only one of you can participate in the Actor Games. *(Handing out cards.)* Here are your lines. Let the cold reading begin! *(Pointing to POSEY.)* You first.

POSEY: *(Steps forward, awkwardly reads card.)* Toy boat. Toy boat. Toy boat.

HOST: Very nice. Now you.

MOTHER: *(Steps forward, reads with difficulty.)* Unique New York. Unique New York. New-neek new-nork.

HOST: Nice try. Your turn.

MERYL: *(Reading with confidence.)* One smart man, he felt smart. Two smart men...*(Stops reading.)* This is a bit immature, don't you think?

End of Freeview

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