

BOB.

A very short, one-act play.

By

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Act one, scene one.

Theatre audition room Scene.

At the end of a large room, three women sit close to one another at a long table. On the table itself are writing materials, a several soft drink bottles, and a number of glasses, they are reading from a folder and are quietly discussing the contents.

Corridor Scene.

Outside the audition room in the corridor, over a dozen people are waiting, some are sitting on the wooden benches available, some are walking around silently practicing their lines, while others chat quietly with their friends.

One couple, a young woman of 20, dressed in a smart two-piece, white blouse and sensible shoes, and an elderly man aged 60, dressed in Levis, denim jacket and T-shirt, are preparing to enter the room. The young woman is **Anne Baldwin**; the other is her fiancé's uncle, **Bob**. He is hoping for a part in the play.

Anne. (Enquiringly)

“Are you sure about this?”

Bob.

With his head bowed, nods vigorously.

Anne. (Resignedly)

“Let’s go then.”

She opens the door and Bob shuffles in behind her.

Audition room scene.

Anne walks confidently towards the table, she looks behind her at Bob, he is limping along on his left foot that is turned in somewhat. He walks with his head down and his left hand curled up and tucked in to his side. His left shoulder is somewhat hunched up and he is wearing odd shoes, the left one is a size or two smaller than the other one. Anne slows down so he can catch up with her.

Anne stops (3 metres) before the table with Bob standing behind her glancing nervously at the three women.

Anne.

“Good Morning, my name is Anne Baldwin, (she half turns to indicate Bob), and this is Mr Robert Thames and I hope you have found satisfaction in my résumé. Mr Thames would first like to give you a demonstration of his oratory talents by reciting a poem that he wrote himself.”

She turns to Bob and pulls him a little closer to the table; he complies, although his reluctance is apparent.

Anne. (Quietly and smiling with encouragement)

“Go on, off you go, they won’t bite you.”

Anne takes a few steps to the side.

Bob regards each of the three women in turn, and forces a nervous smile. He has a slight squint. He lifts his right hand close to his chin and fumbles with his fingers, his eyebrows, permanently raised, give him an expectant look. He looks directly at the woman in the centre; his voice has a muffled, nasal sound to it.

Bob. (Loud, so loud the woman is startled)

“I want to be an actor, on the stage.”

He stops and grins; the grin freezes and fades as the woman stares at him, her mouth slightly open. He takes a deep breath and continues slowly, his fingers dancing in the air.

Bob. (A little embarrassed, and not as loud as before.)

“I can’t dance or sing, but I can recite. I er -.”

He shuffles his feet still fumbling with his fingers as the three stare at him with concern.

Anne calls out to him and he jerks his head in her direction.

Anne. (Loud whisper, smiling.)

“Recite your poem.”

He smiles lopsidedly at her. (All his smiles are lopsided and partly-frozen.)

Anne. (Louder, still smiling)

“A Horse walking backwards, go on.”

She turns to the table, the woman stare back, their faces void of expression.

Anne. (Smiling.)

“He would like to recite one of his favourite poems.”

She turns back to Bob while the three women look at one another in uncertainty.

Anne. (Forcing a smile.)

“Go on, you can start.”

He looks down at the floor and grins, and then he starts, his head lifting as he does so.

Bob. (Shyly, mumbling the first three words.)

“A Horse walking backwards by Robert Thames.”

He grins idiotically at the three women and then continues.

Bob.

“The fading light of youth reflected,-“

He stops, his face is a frozen mask of fear, he pulls at his lower lip with his forefinger, and Anne comes to his rescue.

Anne. (A loud whisper slow and precise.)

“Reflected desire and-.”

The three women at the table scribble in their notebooks.

Bob. (He picks up the line enthusiastically.)

“-reflected desire and odious narrow effigies of lost glory danced like wraiths before boneless fingers. Lust brought-.”

He stops, knowing the last word is wrong and frowns.

Anne. (Visibly irritated, her voice hard and unsympathetic.)

“Lust born of decency.”

Bob grins apologetically at the three women and they turn their heads away a little embarrassed, he fumbles once more with his fingers for a second or two then continues.

