

The Actors

a comedy in one act

by Alex Emerson Acuff

Copyright © January 2017 Alex Acuff and Off The Wall Play Publishers

<http://offthewallplays.com>

This script is provided for reading purposes only Professionals and amateurs are hereby advised that it is subject to royalty It is fully protected under the laws of South Africa, the United States of America, the British Empire including the Dominion of Canada and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights including but not limited to professional amateur film radio and all other media including use on the worldwide web and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved and any unauthorized use of the material may subject the user to any and all applicable civil and criminal penalties. For any information about royalties or to apply for a performance license please click the following link:

<http://offthewallplays.com/royalties-and-licensing-of-plays-sold-by-off-the-wall-plays/>

The Actors

a comedy in one act

Cast of Characters

HARBO

WILLIAM

EDWIN

CHARLIE

STAGE MANAGER

ACTORS: (5) Includes an acapella quartet.

AT RISE: *Empty stage, a white backdrop. HARBO enters. He is wearing a blue bathrobe and holding a toothbrush. HARBO seems lost.*

HARBO. Hello? Hello!? Can anybody hear me? *(A barber shop QUARTET enters.)*

QUARTET. *(singing.)* Hello, hello, hello!

HARBO. Wow, that's pretty good.

QUARTET. *(singing.)* Thank you!

HARBO. That's great. Hey listen, I hope you don't mind me asking, but you think you guys could do me a favor?

BASS. *(singing.)* Of course! Just...

QUARTET. *(singing.)* Let us know!

HARBO. Can you tell me where I am?

QUARTET. *(singing.)* You're on the--

HARBO. I said tell me! Not, sing me. I've had enough with the singing. Can you please tell me where the hell I am?

(The QUARTET looks confused. They huddle together. They go back to their regular formation, the tenor steps up.)

TENOR. *(singing.)* Uh, it is standard procedure...

HARBO. What?

TENOR. We're just doing our jobs.

HARBO. Your jobs?

TENOR. Yes. Making sure you are...

QUARTET. *(singing.)* Happy!

HARBO. Are you guys messing with me? Oh man, I feel woozy. Listen, I'm tripping out or dreaming, or something... because I was just in my bathroom...and now I'm here.

BASS. Are you kidding me? Rookies on the job. Can't do anything right, I swear. He doesn't even know yet, code red!

HARBO. *(confused.)* What on earth are you talking about?

TENOR. This is just like every other time I've worked with a stinkin' union!

SOPRANO. Don't go knocking the unions, mate.

TENOR. Piss off.

SOPRANO. Just sayin', I like the unions.

TENOR. They're greedy pigs.

SOPRANO. Not really, they provide us benefits.

TENOR. Oh, kiss my ass. They don't really care about us; selling tickets, making sure people keep dying, that's all they care about in the end.

BASS. Would you two shut up!

SOPRANO. Sorry, mate.

BASS. William! Get out here!

HARBO. Can somebody explain to me what is going on?

BASS. (*annoyed.*) Talk to William. (*The QUARTET exits. WILLIAM enters.*)

WILLIAM. Hello, Harbo. (*HARBO turns.*)

HARBO. Holy crap! William Shakespeare!

WILLIAM. It is I.

HARBO. How are you doing dude?

WILLIAM. I'm fabulous.

HARBO. You look great.

WILLIAM. Thank you, dear.

HARBO. Any time. (*realizing.*) Oh my word...I know...It's those meds the doctor gave me for my ankle. Those crazy freakin' meds. That's what it is!

WILLIAM: It's not the meds, silly.

HARBO. Right.

WILLIAM. Don't you see, Harbo?

HARBO. See what?

WILLIAM. Why you're here.

HARBO. No clue.

WILLIAM. Listen...I'm here to peel back your horizon and give you a glimpse of the truth. To explain to you why we're *all* here. The world's a stage; each player has his time on the stage; but each man also has his final curtain. (*Beat.*) You have had your final curtain, Harbo. Do you understand now?

HARBO. Nope.

WILLIAM. How am I not being clear?

HARBO. I never understood your plays.

WILLIAM. Oh.

HARBO. Why would listening to you talk be any different?

WILLIAM. *(with significance.)* You're dead.

HARBO. Bull shit.

WILLIAM. You slipped and fell, then hit your head on the edge of your bathtub. You passed away minutes later on your way to the hospital.

HARBO. That wouldn't kill me.

WILLIAM. Blood clot in your brain. Been there for months, and the fall only made things worse for you.

HARBO. I'm not dead.

WILLIAM. Feel the lump on your forehead. *(He does.)*

HARBO. So, okay...okay...I hit my head. I was on my way to the hospital...I could be passed out at the hospital, and it's the meds they gave me! I'm high as a kite!

WILLIAM. It's not the meds.

HARBO. It's got to be.

WILLIAM. Your time on earth has passed.

HARBO. I was just getting started. Hannah--

WILLIAM. Accept the inevitable.

HARBO. I won't.

WILLIAM. This is the place to be. No job, no worries, no life to get tangled up in. All you have to do now is wait...and be entertained.

HARBO. What do you mean?

WILLIAM. You are being judged as we speak.

HARBO. By who?

WILLIAM. Not important. The point is your being judged. That's where I come in, as well as the barbershop brothers from earlier. Talented group of gents...anyway, our jobs in the afterlife deal with the only thing we know. Entertainment! While your soul awaits its sentence, we get to show you a good time; make sure you're not turning into ghosts, wandering through the infinite dimensions. So that's that, any questions?

HARBO. I'm not dead!

WILLIAM. No shouting.

HARBO. I'm passed out!

WILLIAM. Magnificent, you're in denial.

HARBO. I can't be dead.

WILLIAM. Code blue! Places! *(A bed with a figure under the covers. A window panel is on the left.)* Harbo! Get out of the scene! Come, sit over here. *(WILLIAM ushers HARBO to a seat.)*

Alright...we now take you to a cold night, November, nineteen seventy-two; a thirteen year old boy's room in the town of Lincoln, Nebraska. *(ACTOR 1 stands and walks to the window. He opens it. ACTOR 2 enters through the window.)*

ACTOR 1. Be really quiet.

ACTOR 2. I brought you chocolate.

ACTOR 1. Thanks.

ACTOR 2. It's your favorite.

ACTOR. Sh! My mom's asleep.

ACTOR 2: *(whispering.)* Sorry.

WILLIAM. Hold on!

ACTOR 2. What now?

WILLIAM. Clyde!

ACTOR 2. Yeah?

WILLIAM. How many times do I have to freaking tell you? Do I have to beat it through your tiny little head?

ACTOR 2. Not this again.

WILLIAM. Listen to me...at least if you're not going to listen to your partner in the scene then listen to me!

ACTOR 2. What man?

WILLIAM. You are pushing like a dog, I can feel you acting from a mile away! Connect with your scene partner! Don't show the audience how you feel!

ACTOR 2. It's eight words, dude.

WILLIAM. Acting isn't about the words!

ACTOR 2. This is ridiculous.

WILLIAM. You're ridiculous.

ACTOR 2. I'm not some amateur.

WILLIAM. Oh, please. Could have fooled me. You know what you can do with your conservatory training, you can shove it up your ass!

ACTOR 2. I don't need this.

WILLIAM. Neither do I!

ACTOR 2. Forget you! I quit! (*ACTOR 2 exits.*)

WILLIAM. Robert...great job.

ACTOR 1. Thank you, sir.

WILLIAM. I'm sorry you have to deal with that.

ACTOR 1. It's like talking to a wall sometimes.

WILLIAM. I know.

ACTOR 1. He won't look at me.

WILLIAM. Go get some rest. You've earned it.

ACTOR 1. (*exits.*) Thank you.

WILLIAM. So Harbo...

HARBO. Yeah.

WILLIAM. Are you alright?

HARBO. I'm over this.

WILLIAM. Shit! He's becoming restless! Code Green! I thought you'd enjoy that, Harbo. We just brilliantly re-created one of your fondest memories of childhood; the night you received your first kiss.

HARBO. (*unconfidently.*) That wasn't me, okay. Lots of people get their first kiss by letting a girl sneak in through their window.

WILLIAM. Her name was Stacey.

HARBO. Last name?

WILLIAM. Robinson.

HARBO. Lucky guess.

WILLIAM. Try me.

HARBO. Who'd I lose my virginity to? (*Beat.*)

WILLIAM. Stacey Robinson.

HARBO. Dammit.

WILLIAM. Should I keep going?

HARBO. You don't know me.

WILLIAM. You killed ants on the school playground.

HARBO. A lot of kids do that.

WILLIAM. You're a Yankees fan.

HARBO. Born and raised.

WILLIAM. You ate a deer after killing it with your car.

HARBO. Wait, how did you--

WILLIAM. You only brush your teeth five times a week because you say toothpaste is too expensive.

HARBO. It is.

WILLIAM. You believe that a flying saucer with alien life forms landed in Roswell, New Mexico, and you believe Aliens might have built the Pyramids.

HARBO. Did they?

WILLIAM. No.

HARBO. Well, who did?

WILLIAM. The Egyptians.

HARBO. But they could have been aliens...

WILLIAM. They weren't aliens, Harbo.

HARBO. How do you know?

WILLIAM. I'm not going to debate this with you. If you get into heaven, you can look it up for yourself.

HARBO. I still don't believe you.

WILLIAM. How could I have known all those things?

HARBO. You don't know me, man. I told you. *(Beat.)*

WILLIAM. I know one thing. I know...that you know...what it's like to take another man's life. To see the light go dim in a man's eye. To watch him take his last breath—

HARBO. Stop it.

WILLIAM. When you were overseas.

HARBO. I said enough.

WILLIAM. And that little girl--

HARBO. Shut up!

WILLIAM. You're life has been taken from you now (*Beat.*) For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

HARBO. I want to see my wife.

WILLIAM. Give it time.

HARBO. I can't be dead.

WILLIAM. You get used to it.

HARBO. How much longer?

WILLIAM. Until what?

HARBO. Until I'm judged.

WILLIAM. I don't know.

HARBO. I'm so scared.

WILLIAM. Don't worry, you'll be fine. The big man has seen much worse.

HARBO. God?

WILLIAM. Whatever you want to call him.

HARBO. He's taking forever.

WILLIAM. (*panicky.*) Don't even worry about it, Harbo! It's time for you to just sit back, relax, and enjoy the rest of the show. (*WILLIAM ushers him to his seat again.*) Actors! Places! (*to someone offstage.*) Do we have Edwin? Well, where is he? I don't care; we have a job to do! (*WILLIAM crosses to HARBO. A STAGE MANAGER enters.*)

MANAGER. Edwin is here.

WILLIAM. Thank you, Janice. (*She exits.*) Okay people! (*EDWIN enters. He is dressed in tights.*)

EDWIN. Is this the right spot?

WILLIAM. Yes, Edwin.

EDWIN. Here?

WILLIAM. Yes. (*Beat.*)

EDWIN. So just go?

WILLIAM. Yes, Edwin.

EDWIN. Okay...to be, or not to be...

WILLIAM. Get on with it.

EDWIN. I'm pausing for effect.

WILLIAM. Just say the lines.

EDWIN. You took me out of it.

WILLIAM. Get on with it. (*Beat.*)

EDWIN. To be or not to be, that is not the question.

WILLIAM. No, Edwin.

EDWIN. What?

WILLIAM. That *is* the question.

EDWIN. What is?

WILLIAM. (frustrated.) To be or not to be, that is the question.

EDWIN. Oh, right.

WILLIAM. Start over.

EDWIN. But, now--

WILLIAM. From the top.

EDWIN. To be or not to be, that is the question. (*He looks to WILLIAM for approval. WILLIAM nods.*) Whether tis nobler in the mind, to be shot by bows and arrows--

WILLIAM. No...to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of trouble, and by opposing, end them.

EDWIN. That's what I said.

WILLIAM. No, it's not. If that's what you said, then I wouldn't have had to stop you. Do you know the speech at all?

EDWIN. Yeah, I know it.

WILLIAM. Doesn't seem like it.

EDWIN. It's been a long day. I didn't get much sleep last night, and—

WILLIAM. I don't want to hear it, Edwin, you're not even alive anymore.

EDWIN. It's still hard sometimes.

WILLIAM. It's not like you have that many problems to deal with, the Civil War is over. Get some sleep.

EDWIN. I ran out of melatonin.

WILLIAM. You're supposed to be a professional actor; you should know your bloody lines! No excuses!

EDWIN. I'm not making--

WILLIAM. Look...if you think you'll continue to get special treatment from me, then you're not being honest with yourself.

EDWIN. I don't expect anything from you.

WILLIAM. I've had enough. I'm not going to baby you, and be decent just because you're Edwin Booth, so talented and handsome. Suck my left--

EDWIN. I'm so sorry, William. I apologize for everybody loving me so much. Why don't you just come out to the world and admit that you're jealous?

WILLIAM. Jealous?

HARBO. (quietly.) People?

WILLIAM. Of what, am I jealous, may I ask?

EDWIN. Come on, man. We both know.

WILLIAM. I sure don't.

EDWIN. Your work was dying.

WILLIAM. Please.

EDWIN. It was. People of my day were falling asleep and I woke them back up. There's a reason we cut half your shit.

WILLIAM. *(passive aggressive.)* You don't want this to happen, Edwin.

EDWIN. I think I do.

WILLIAM. No, you don't.

EDWIN. I really do.

WILLIAM. Edwin, you sexy little boy, I'm so jealous of you. I'm incredibly jealous, in fact, that your entire career was you reading poetry created by somebody other than yourself. *(Beat.)* I wonder who that was...

EDWIN. Pretentious cad.

WILLIAM. You would be nothing without my work.