

Dead on Stage

by Gilbert Sarabia

Copyright © February 2022 Gilbert Sarabia and Off The Wall Play
Publishers

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 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:

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

Characters

Joe the Guitar-man

Ritchie the coin-flipper

Leena the Guitar-woman

Tina, a budding star

Minion one, a Tina fan in her entourage

Minion two, another one for the entourage

Minion three, yet another Tina fan

Mr. Warner the drama sponsor and director

Props

A coin for flipping

One wooden box, or casket to be use as a prop table and to nail Mr. Warner into at the end of the play.

Two guitars, or musical instruments

Notes

All that is needed is a stage. Make all the action look as though it is happening back stage.

For the scenes where Joe and Leena are playing you can have one of two things, according to your choice or circumstances. You can have two musically talented students in the cast actually improvise and play during the course of the scenes which call for music. Or, you can play a recording of music and have the players pantomime as though playing.

Costuming

For the opening scene you can have the players dress as like ordinary, or not so ordinary students...according to tastes. After scene one you need costumes which indicate the Renaissance.

Scene I

At rise: (Joe sits alone on stage playing a sad tune on his guitar. He stops to check his watch, then, sadly shakes his head and goes back to playing his guitar. Shortly, after Joe plays a few more mournful bars, Richie enters the auditorium and gets on stage.)

Richie

Hey, it's ten after four. Where is everyone? All I see is you and your sorry guitar.

Joe

That's pretty much it, Richie, just me and my guitar. And it's not a sorry guitar, it's an acoustic guitar. If anything's sorry it's this production...and you.

Richie

Can't you be more positive...I mean, even the music you play is sad and depressing.

Joe

I wrote it myself. I'm kind of proud of it.

Richie

Uhh...nice.

Joe

Nice? I write something new, and beautiful and all you can say is "uhh, nice?" Is Beethoven's fifth nice? Is Bach's Toccata and Fugue nice? Is Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring nice?

Richie

I don't know...I guess they are.

Joe

You ignorant philistine.

Richie

I may be ignorant, but I'm no...uh...no...Pales...tarini...en.

Joe
Never mind. Have you seen Mr. Warner?

Richie
No.

Joe
He's late.

Richie
So, who opened the auditorium?

Joe
It was open when I got here.

Richie
He must have been here to open up.

Joe
Did you see any of the cast today? Did they say they'd be here?

Richie
Some of them, but you know how it goes...just talk.

Joe
Did you see Augie?

Richie
Yeah, but he's doing a church play. He doesn't have the time...said he was afraid of mixing up lines from both plays.

Joe
How about Angie?

Richie
Her mom made her quit the play because she's flunking out.

Joe
There goes another role. Did you see Lori?

Richie
She's taking cello lessons now.

Joe

What, she's tone-deaf! What about Mike?

Richie

He's joining chorus.

Joe

How about Leena, was she here today?

Richie

She'll be a little late, but she'll be here.

Joe

What about the girl with hamburger clown red hair?

Richie

She got a job flipping burgers.

Joe

Richie, get serious! This isn't funny!

Richie

I am being serious. She really did get a job flipping burgers. She won't be in the play. *(Joe gets a sad look on his face. He sits and begins playing sad music again. After a few bars Leena enters playing her guitar and sits on stage. There is a short improv battle between the two. Finally, Leena finishes with a flourish.)*

Leena

Why so sad guys? Who died?

Joe

The production, Leena.

Richie

It's dead-on arrival.

Leena

Come on you guys, it'll be a great show! You have to have a little faith! The show must go on!

Joe

Our director isn't even here.

Leena

Give him some time, he'll be here. I saw him in his room.

Richie

Mr. Warner needs to be here, not in his room. Do you know we're the only ones here from the whole cast?

Leena

Cheer up, things could get worse.

Richie

You said that last week.

Leena

I did?

Joe

And you said it the week before.

Leena

What's your point?

Joe

You were right.

Richie

We cheered up.

Joe

And guess what?

Leena

Well?

Richie

Things got worse.

Leena

That's old, but at least you're still joking.

Richie

This production's a joke.

Joe

No, it's a tragedy.

Richie

Look, it's only three weeks to the dress rehearsal, the costumes are in, and Mr. Warner's been running the commercial for the show on the radio for a month.

Leena

So?

Richie

Half the people never show up, and of the ones that do, only half know their lines. WE...ARE...NOT...READY!

Leena

We can't give up. We could double up on characters, and you guys can wear dresses if you have to. Remember, in Shakespeare's day actors played in drag all the time.

Joe

I ain't putting on any dress!

Richie

That goes double for me.

Leena

Why not? We've got to save our show!

Joe

I wouldn't wear a dress to save my life.

Richie

That goes double for me, Leena!

Leena

Why?

Richie

Well...I don't have the best-looking legs, and my knees are kind of knobby and unattrac...uhh...you know what, forget that. I'm not going in drag. I AM Not, I AM NOT, I AM NOT, NOT, NOT!!! *(Joe and Leena look at him in stunned and silent surprise.)*

Leena

Wow, astonishing!

Joe

That's your best performance.

Richie

I wasn't performing.

Joe/Leena

Too bad.

Leena

Look, we're in a desperate situation. We need to make a decision.

Joe/Richie

Agreed.

Leena

We need to decide about going through with the show.

Joe/Richie

Agreed.

Leena

How do we decide?

Richie

Let's flip a coin.

Joe

One flip on a matter of life and death.

Richie

Life and death?

Joe

The dresses, Richie, we have to wear dresses if we lose!

Leena

How about if we all flip once and it has to come up heads for all of us. One tails and it's off.

Joe/Richie

Agreed.

Leena

Good. Who's got a coin?

Joe

Don't look at me. I used all my cash at lunch.

Leena

I don't have a penny after my doughnut this morning.

Richie

(Richie reaches into his pocket and pulls out a coin.) And Richie Montelupo saves the day with his special flipping coin. All your flips have to land on heads. One tails and it's all off! Joe, you're first. *(He flips the coin, catches it and slaps it on the back of his wrist.)* Okay, Joe, call it!

Joe

Tails.

Richie

Let's see what you got! *(Joe goes to see the coin.)*

Joe

Oh no, heads! Wait a minute, let's see that coin again!

Richie

Oh, you like that, huh? I found it on the floor at the motel we were in during last year's drama festival.

Joe

That's really hot, Richie. *(He tries to get it but Ritchie snatches it away.)*

Leena

Your turn, Richie. *(He flips the coin.)*

Richie

Check it out, so you know I'm not cheating. (*Joe checks out the coin. He tries to take it again, but Ritchie is too fast.*)

Joe

No! It's heads again! (*He picks up the coin and looks at it, Ritchie grabs it back.*) Dude, your coin is something else.

Leena

Okay, my turn! (*Richie flips the coin.*)

Richie

Call it!

Leena

Heads!

Joe

I'll check it.

Leena

No, I'll check it. You might cheat. One tails and we quit. We're going to do this show.

Richie

But...but...

Leena

Okay, show me the coin.

(*Richie has to show her the coin. Leena is shocked and outraged.*) Hey, this coin is indecent. It has an undressed woman on it!

Richie

Hey, it's the only coin I had.

Leena

Degenerate!

Richie

Leena, I'm really sorry.

Leena

Sorry is the perfect word to describe you.

Joe

Will you two stop fighting? How did it come up?

Leena\Richie

Heads.

Leena

That means we do the show!

Joe/Richie

Oh joy! What fun.

Leena

Change your attitude and it will be. Hey, I have suspicion about you two.

Richie

What's that?

Leena

I think you'll bail the first chance you get.

Joe

I won't. I give you my word.

Richie

Me, too.

Leena

I'm going to make you guys swear an oath. Put your hands over your hearts and repeat after me. *(They cover their hearts with their right hands with their left hands in the air.)* Okay, are you two ready? *(They both nod.)* Repeat after me...I swear...

Joe/Richie

I swear...

Leena

With my heart and soul...

Joe/Richie

With my heart and soul...

Leena

In sickness and in health...

Joe/Richie

In sickness and in health...

Leena

Against all enemies, foreign and domestic...

Joe/Richie

Against all enemies, foreign and domestic...

Leena

That neither rain, nor sleet, nor snow will hinder me

Joe/Riche

That neither rain, nor sleet, nor snow will hinder me

Leena

From being in this show...

Joe/Richie

From being in this show...

Leena

Semper Fi and break a leg...

Joe/Richie

Semper Fi and break a leg...

Leena

And this I'll do...

Joe/Richie

And this I'll do...

Leena

With or without...

Joe/Richie

With or without...

Leena

Our useless sponsor, Mr. Warner.

Joe/Richie

Our useless sponsor, Mr. Warner.

Richie

Don't you think the last part was harsh?

Leena

If you think about it, he doesn't really make that much difference. We usually work with or without him. All he does is pick the plays, open the house and turn on the lights.

Richie

Yeah, and he just sits on his big, fat bottom and grades papers while we slave under the hot lights.

Joe

And when five rolls around, he picks up his papers, and says, "It needs more work," and sends us home. What a loser.

(Tina and her minions enter the stage.)

Joe

What are you doing here?

Tina

I came in to use the restroom and heard you arguing and complaining. You sounded dramatic and kind of funny.

Richie

Hey, Drama club! We're actors! We belong here.

Joe

We can't say the same for you.

Leena

Wait a minute guys, come here. *(She huddles with them up stage.)* You two are idiots if you don't see the great break we just got. This girl and her friends can replace the losers that bailed on us.

Richie

You mean?

Leena

That's right, you guys won't have to wear dresses. *(Richie and Joe, breathe a sigh of relief and go to welcome the girl.)*

Richie

Hi, I'm Richie Montelupo.

Joe

Yeah, he's a degenerate. I'm Joe the Guitar Man, and I'm not a degenerate.

Leena

And who are you, if I may ask?

Tina

Tina!

Minions

Tina is awesome.

Leena

And what are your friend's names?

Minions

We have no names. Names are lame.

Leena

We're rehearsing a play, but we're short actors. Umm...would you like to join us? We could sure use some extra help.

Tina

What's the name of your show and what's it about?

Richie

It's called The Faun.

Joe

It's about Michelangelo when he was a kid.

Leena

It takes place in the Renaissance and we get to wear some awesome costumes. What do you think?

Tina

You know, I'm pretty good at memorizing stuff.

Minions

Tina is really good.

Joe

Show us.

Tina

I swear, with my heart and soul, in sickness and in health, against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that neither rain, nor sleet, nor snow will hinder me from being in this show. Semper Fi and break a leg! And this we'll do with or without our useless sponsor Mr. Warner. How's that for hearing it only once?

Leena

That's awesome! We can really use you. What do you think guys?

Joe

I'm convinced. What do you think, Richie?

Richie

I'm for anything that keeps me out of a dress.

Tina

It sounds like fun, it beats doing homework, and it could be the start of my Hollywood career. Okay, I'll do it. But I want to play the witch.

Leena

There's no witch in this play.

Minions

No witch, no Tina.

Tina

Then I'll play the vampire chick.

Leena

There's no vampire chick in the play either.

Minions

No vampire, no Tina.

Tina

Well, that's kind of...

Leena

Look, we'll find a good part for you, just trust us. Are you in?

Tina

Okay, just make sure it's a good part.

Minions

A good part for Tina and us...oh here comes someone.

(Everyone cheers for her as Mr. Warner enters.)

Mr. Warner

Wow, that was quite an entrance you gave me. Are we ready to start now?

Richie

We've been ready since four.

Mr. Warner

Sorry, I was at a meeting with a parent. Wait a minute. Who are you? I don't remember casting you kids.

Tina

Yeah, you did. I was at auditions...and you said I was a natural for this play.

Everyone

Supernatural.

Leena

You did Mr. Warner, don't you remember? You said you wanted Tina for the part of Contessina. Excellent choice, sir! How do you do it?

Mr. Warner

I'm not sure. I wish I knew.

Richie

You're the best director ever.

Joe

Come on, let's get started!

Tina

Oh, we need some new scripts.

Minions

New scripts.

Mr. Warner

Okay, everyone, let's get started. *(They go behind the curtains as they close and the lights fade to dark.)*

END SCENE I

SCENE II

(At rise it is tech rehearsal night. The Students are back stage. They are in various stages of costume and makeup, or offstage getting ready. Very few are off book. Mr. Warner is nowhere to be seen. Everyone but Joe and Tina are in a panic since one of the cast is going to have to also work the lights.)

Leena

Hey, Ritchie! You might have to work the lights in the opening scene.

Richie

(From offstage.) Can you at least wait until I get into costume? This is more than I can bear...I've been betrayed.

Leena

Just shut up and put the dress on, Richie.

Joe

(He comes out in costume and holding a script.) You never said I was going to end up as Michelangelo. Somehow, I don't think I fit the role.

Leena

Not my circus, not my monkeys.

Joe

This is your circus and monkeys. Going through with this is your idea.

Richie

(Richie enters wearing a period woman's dress.) Be glad you weren't betrayed. Look at me...I mean look at me! I ended up in drag anyway.

Tina

(She comes out in a man's costume of the period.) If only I had a sword to go with this outfit.

Minions

A sword, a sword, her kingdom for a sword.

Leena

There's no swordplay in this production.

Tina

I think that's so stupid!

Richie

Do you know your lines?

Tina

I'll have them ready the night of the show. *(She turns to Richie.)* Wow, look at Richie, he makes such a beautiful girl.

Minions

So pretty. So Hot.

Richie

You really think so?

Tina

Wait... *(She pulls out some lipstick and dabs it on his lips. Then she puts some eye make-up on him. She gives him a mirror.)*

Richie

Hmmm...I am kind of...kind of pretty.

Joe

Oh no, now he's fallen in love with himself.

Tina

Well, someone has to love him besides his grandma. (*Richie begins to sashay and act flirty with Joe.*)

Joe

Get away, you're creeping me out, man.

Richie

Oh, I love these new clothes! I wonder what Tabby will think of me now? I never felt such freedom and comfort in my...uh...uh...uh... sorry Joe, it's the pressure from this crazy show. I don't even know all my lines.