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CURTAINS!

Curtains!

A two-act play gangster comedy
set in a theatre

by
Craig Sodaro



Meriwether Publishing Ltd.

Contemporary Drama Service

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

12 females, 6 males, 1 male or female

Charlie Leach — 20s, a guy who's afraid of work

Cheri Leach — 20s, his ditzy bride

Tony Tenor — 30s, a loan shark

Daffodil — 20s, one of Tony's thugs

Tulip — 20s, another thug

Hyacinth — 20s, another thug

Monica Steele — 30s, a real estate agent

Isabella De Starr — 30s, a flamboyant director and actress

Angela Angel — 20s, a member of Isabella's acting company

Sprinkles — 20s, another member of the acting company

Paula — 30s, another member of the acting company

Connie — 30s, another member of the acting company

Deborahh — 30s, another member of the acting company

Mrs. Petrie — 60s, another member of the acting company

Mr. Krook — 60s, the lone male performer

Lance Culpepper — 20s, an insurance agent

Professor Quirk — 50s, an engineer and demolition expert

Rex Rippit — 20s, a theatre critic

Voice — the theatre's ghost

Casting Note

The parts of Monica, Lance, and Rex can be tailored to suit the company's needs. They can be all male (change Monica to Mike) or all female (change Lance to Laura and Rex to Regina), and a single actor can then play all three roles. The Voice of the ghost is a very small role appearing at the end of the play. It can easily be read by a crew member as the character is not seen, or it can be recorded as a sound effect.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Synopsis

Running from a loan shark, Charlie Leach and his new bride Cheri duck into a rundown theatre. Unfortunately, Tony Tenor, to whom Charlie owes \$50,000, follows Charlie inside with his three “botanical” thugs — Daffodil, Tulip, and Hyacinth. Tony gives a very scared Charlie one week to come up with the cash or risk wearing cement boots.

When a real estate agent bursts in assuming Charlie and Cheri are interested in buying the old place, an idea strikes Charlie. He wants to know how much he can insure the theatre for. The agent tells him at least a hundred grand, and twice that if there was a production being staged. Undaunted, Charlie, the perfect con man, convinces Cheri to use their \$2,000 honeymoon fund as a down payment.

The next morning the theatre is invaded by Isabella De Starr, Cheri’s cousin and the head of a theatrical troupe, the Bard’s Head Players. Cheri found out the theatre where Isabelle was to have opened her almost-all-female production of *Frankenstein* on Saturday had closed due to massive electrical and roof problems. She has invited Isabella’s production to open in the Odeon, much to Charlie’s horror. Saturday is the day he’s got to pay Tony. When Tony meets Isabella, romantic sparks fly all over the place, but the production of *Frankenstein* quickly runs into a big problem. The old man playing the monster is injured and Charlie is forced to take his place. At the same time, Charlie has employed an old “friend,” Professor Quirk, an engineer known as Doctor Demolition, to bring down the house — literally. Opening night finds an antsy Tony with his thugs in the front row, the Professor setting a timer, and Charlie hysterical because he’s given the Professor the wrong time. It isn’t long before *Frankenstein* crumbles into disaster with Charlie jumping out of character to warn people to get out of the theatre, Tony chasing Charlie demanding his cash, Cheri running after the Professor trying to stop him, and Isabella trying to hold the show together. Fortunately, Charlie’s check has bounced, so Professor Quirk didn’t complete the job. Isabella demands Tony give Charlie plenty of time to pay up (eighty-five years), and Charlie finds himself a job playing the monster and agreeing to run the giant white elephant.

Set

The stage of the Odeon Theatre, an old, run-down, once-legitimate theatre in a rather dismal part of town. Flats and weathered set pieces sit haphazardly On-Stage, a ghost light at the center. The flats should be painted as stone walls (later used in the *Frankenstein* scenes) and there should be enough platforms, etc., to create a small bed. A table on which an actor can lie is also necessary. Tormentors are pulled out with at least one hanging Upstage Right of Center (behind which actors can hide).

Other curtains aren't necessary. A ladder stands idle. Costumes and furniture (used later in *Frankenstein*) sit about helter-skelter. Props and so on can finish the backstage look.

The essential set pieces required for the entire action of the play:

1. Two flats that can form a corner of a laboratory. They depict stone walls and perhaps a tiny window. These can face the audience at the opening or be turned around until needed for the *Frankenstein* play.
2. One table large enough to suggest a makeshift bed and strong enough to hold Charlie. A piece of three-quarter inch plywood secured to two sawhorses will do the trick. This is used as Charlie's bed and the table on which Frankenstein lies.
3. One small table that can later be set up as a laboratory table.
4. Boxes or crates to sit on here and there.
5. If possible, a ghost light for the opening of the play, turned on as the audience enters.

Any other set elements are at the discretion of the art director.

Synopsis of Scenes

Act I

Scene One — The stage of the Odeon Theatre, one summer afternoon

Scene Two — The same, the following morning

Scene Three — The same, the next day

Act II

Scene One — The same, several days later

Scene Two — The same, the following evening

Costume Notes

Cheri — (Scene One) a very short dress, high heels, a short veil, and carries a small bouquet of flowers; otherwise dresses in young, perky outfits, very feminine

Charlie — (Scene One) wears a loud, checkered sport coat with a flower in the lapel; otherwise dresses cool and casual in sport coat, jeans, tennis shoes

Monica — very professional, a pantsuit or slacks and a jacket

Tulip, Hyacinth, Daffodil — colorful and feminine exercise clothes

Tony — flashy tie and suit with a flower in the lapel

Isabella — cape, flowing scarf, lots of jewelry, large hat

Angela, Sprinkles, Paula, Connie, Deborahh — everyday dress for twenty-somethings

Mrs. Petrie — flowered print dress, cardigan sweater, granny glasses

Mr. Krook — pants way too high held up by suspenders, short sleeve shirt, bowtie

Lance — everyday dress

Professor — overalls, flannel shirt, work boots

Rex Rippit — brightly colored sport coat, clashing pants, old-fashioned tie, white tennis shoes

For the Frankenstein play:

Paula, Angela, Connie, Sprinkles, Mrs. Petrie — long dresses that look like those worn in the nineteenth century. These don't have to be accurate since the company is on a very tight budget.

Charlie as the Monster — Frankenstein mask, dark turtleneck, dark sport coat, dark pants, and oversized work boots.

Props

Monica — cell phone

Cheri — small bouquet of flowers; purse; roll of bills; tray set with two cereal bowls, cereal box full of beans, small carton of milk, and two coffee mugs; newspaper; suitcase; plastic or foam prop hammer; bed sheet

Charlie — two pillows, blanket, cell phone, prop sword, check, boxes

Connie — box of donuts, bag of donuts, bag of snack food

Lance — paper and pen

Isabella — director's chair, megaphone

Paula, Mr. Krook — huge plug attached to wire with a neck strap

Deborahh — newspaper

Professor — boxes, roll of wire

Paula, Angela, Sprinkles, Mrs. Petrie — various prop items such as books, beakers, small tools, extension cords, computer parts, and a clock

Mrs. Petrie — rope

Daffodil, Tulip, Hyacinth — gags, ropes

Other — sticks of dynamite from boxes; wire, electrical equipment from boxes

Sound Effects

Gunshot (Act I, Scene One), Off-Stage bang (Act I, Scene Two), Off-Stage noises (Act I, Scene Two), thunder (Act II, Scene Two), chase music (if desired, Act II, Scene Two), voice over P.A. (Act II, Scene Two).

Act I
Scene One
The stage of the Odeon Theatre.

(Flats and old set pieces sit haphazardly On-Stage with a ghost light at center. A tormentor hangs Upstage Right of center. Other curtains are optional. At rise, the stage is empty. CHARLIE and CHERI enter at rear of theatre or auditorium. They are very clearly newlyweds.)

CHARLIE: *(Terrified)* In here, Cheri, quick!

CHERI: Gosh, Charlie! How come we had to duck in here?

CHARLIE: I ... I just thought this place looked interesting, you know.

CHERI: Sure! To my cousin Isabella ... she needs a theatre 'cause the one she was workin' in fell apart or something ... but I never knew you were interested in plays.

CHARLIE: Oh, honey ... I love to play! I once played the Littlest Christmas Tree.

CHERI: Well, yeah, but we're on our way to our honeymoon! You like this old place more than you like me? *(CHARLIE drags CHERI down the aisle to the stage.)*

CHARLIE: Baby, just look at this architecture!

CHERI: What's wrong with my architecture?

CHARLIE: Oh, nothin', baby, nothin'! *(Mounting stairs to stage)* But have you ever seen a more romantic place?

CHERI: I could think of a couple. Oh, Charlie, you ain't thinkin' of this as an *(Mispronounced)* investament, are you?

CHARLIE: *(Thinking)* An investment? Yeah! Yeah, I sure am!

CHERI: Don't look like it's got much of a future.

CHARLIE: But what a past.

CHERI: Well, I suppose an investament counselor knows a deal when he sees one.

CHARLIE: You got that right! And this one is solid as they come. *(Leans on a set piece and it falls with a crash.)*

CHERI: Let's get out of here before you get killed, Charlie!

CHARLIE: C'mon, be a sport!

CHERI: That's what you said about eloping!

CHARLIE: Well, your dad wasn't too keen on us gettin' married.

CHERI: He was still holding out for Bruno Killjoy.

CHARLIE: Oh, yeah ... he's the one with a job.

CHERI: I told daddy you're an investament counselor, but he said you're nothin' but a con man!

CHARLIE: What does he know?

CHERI: Nothin' 'til the private investigator gave him the report.

CHARLIE: A bunch a lies, that's all!

CHERI: But you promise you'll get a job, right?

1 CHARLIE: Oh, sure, Cheri! Soon as the honeymoon's over, I'll get
2 my nose to the grindstone.

3 CHERI: Oh, don't do that! I wouldn't want anything to happen to
4 that cute nose of yours!

5 DAFFODIL: (*Off-Stage, rear of auditorium*) In here, boss!

6 CHARLIE: (*Terrified*) Let's look behind here. (*CHARLIE grabs*
7 *CHERI and pulls her behind tormentor.*)

8 CHERI: Hey! There's nothin' back here but more dust!

9 CHARLIE: Shhhh! (*CHARLIE and CHERI are hidden behind*
10 *tormentor as DAFFODIL, TULIP, HYACINTH, and TONY enter at*
11 *rear of auditorium.*)

12 TULIP: They came this way, boss!

13 TONY: How do you know, Tulip?

14 HYACINTH: Tracks on the dusty floor, boss!

15 TULIP: Hyacinth! Boss asked me how I knew!

16 HYACINTH: Oh, don't get in a snit!

17 DAFFODIL: But you're always trying to steal our thunder,
18 Hyacinth!

19 TULIP: Yeah! And one of these days you're gonna find yourself in
20 the river wearin' cement boots!

21 TONY: Girls! Girls! Knock it off! We got a bigger fish to fry! (*TONY*
22 *leads the GIRLS slowly down the aisle to the stage.*)

23 DAFFODIL: Yeah! We know you're in here, Charlie Leach!

24 TULIP: We saw you run in here!

25 HYACINTH: You 'n' that floozy you're with!

26 CHERI: (*From behind tormentor, angrily*) Floozy!

27 CHARLIE: (*From behind tormentor*) Shhhh!

28 TONY: Look, Charlie, we don't want no trouble. It's just that you
29 owe us a little money! (*TONY and the GIRLS mount the stairs to*
30 *the stage.*)

31 DAFFODIL: Fifty grand ain't a little money, boss.

32 TULIP: You were supposed to invest it for Tony!

33 HYACINTH: Yeah, in Caesar's Pizzeria.

34 CHARLIE: Turns out Caesar wasn't gonna open a pizzeria.

35 DAFFODIL: Caesar's Pizzeria was a horse at the race track!

36 TULIP: And he didn't even win, place, or show!

37 TONY: I don't bet on nags, Charlie! I only bet on sure things.

38 HYACINTH: And one thing's sure: You're gonna look mighty good
39 in cement boots! (*CHERI screams from behind tormentor and runs*
40 *out into TONY's waiting arms.*)

41 CHERI: Oh, gosh! Oh, gosh! There's a rat back there!

42 TONY: Yeah, we know it, sweetheart.

43 TULIP: And his name's Charlie Leach!

44 CHERI: No! A real one! Big, hairy, with a long tail, and buck teeth!

45 DAFFODIL: That sounds like Charlie.

1 HYACINTH: You better dump him, girl! He's a loser with a capital
2 L.
3 CHERI: Well, I'm Mrs. Capital L.
4 TONY: Oh, no! Charlie, you didn't get yourself hitched, did you?
5 (*CHARLIE sheepishly appears from behind the tormentor.*)
6 CHARLIE: Hello, Tony. Meet my wife, Cheri.
7 TONY: If I'da known, I'da sent you a gift.
8 TULIP: Yeah! A one way ticket to the Everglades!
9 TONY: Now, come, come, girls! Let's congratulate the happy
10 couple! May you have many happy years of wedded bliss.
11 DAFFODIL: Unless you don't pay Tony the fifty grand ...
12 HYACINTH: Then you'll have a couple of hours of wedded bliss.
13 CHERI: Charlie, who are these people? They ain't friends of yours
14 are they?
15 CHARLIE: This is Tony Tenor.
16 CHERI: You ain't exactly a diplomat, are ya?
17 TONY: I'm in business, Mrs. Leach.
18 CHERI: What kind of business?
19 TONY: Anything I can get my hands on.
20 CHARLIE: And these are his secretaries. Daffodil, Tulip, and
21 Hyacinth.
22 CHERI: Ain't exactly shrinkin' violets, if you ask me! Charlie,
23 what's going on?
24 CHARLIE: Tony, could I talk to you for a sec?
25 TONY: Talk's cheap, Charlie.
26 CHARLIE: Yeah, well, I'm not exactly loaded at the moment.
27 CHERI: But, Charlie, we got the —
28 CHARLIE: Shhhh! Tell the girls about the wedding!
29 CHERI: Oh, yeah! Well, Charlie and me, we eloped at the Little
30 Chapel of the Ding Dongs.
31 DAFFODIL: Ain't that romantic! (*CHERI and the GIRLS huddle for*
32 *an animated discussion of the wedding. CHARLIE pulls TONY*
33 *Downstage.*)
34 CHARLIE: I'm really sorry about this, Tony.
35 TONY: So am I, Charlie, but I need my money. My mudda needs
36 surgery.
37 CHARLIE: Oh, no! What's wrong?
38 TONY: She needs a face-lift. She spotted a wrinkle last week!
39 CHARLIE: Well, you gotta understand, I didn't know Caesar's
40 Pizzeria was a horse. I thought it was a restaurant.
41 TONY: Look, Charlie, I don't like to hurt people ... well, maybe
42 just a little bit ... but in your case, it's gonna hurt a lot if I
43 don't get my money.
44 CHARLIE: Tony, I just got hitched! I love Cheri and wouldn't do
45 anything to hurt her.

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