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Cast of Characters

Because the characters change names throughout the play, they are identified by letters. Numbers added to a character's letter indicate a character change.

Many of the characters are gender-neutral, and can be played male / female as needed.

A	An Actress
B	An Actor
C	A Director
D	A Stage Manager
E	Another Director
F	Another Other Director
G	Another Actress
H	Another Actor
Techie	A Techie
Jack	A Workman
Nick	Another Workman
Shannon	A Girl
Jennifer	Another Girl
The Director	The Director

Setting

The stage of a theater. Onstage is a set for a play. The set is a living room with badly painted flats for walls. The furniture does not match. The effect should be of someone trying very hard to create a nice set, but not quite succeeding. At center stage is a couch. Two easy chairs are on either side of the couch. A bar (actually a table with material draped over it) with various bottles is upstage center, behind the couch. At stage right is a table with a telephone. An unstable door that sticks is stage left. Other various knickknacks are placed about.

Production Notes

(See the end of the play for a note from the author.)

CUT

by Ed Monk

Play begins

(At rise: The stage is empty. A and B enter through the door, returning from their evening out. A is dressed in a very attractive evening gown; B wears a suit and tie. A crosses to bar and begins to pour a drink.)

A. That was a charming little restaurant.

B. Carol. When are you going to tell him?

A. I don't want to talk about this now.

B. Well I do. It's been six months now. I'm tired of all the sneaking around and the lying and waiting all week hoping that I'll get to spend a few hours with you.

A. Please Brad, I need some more time.

B. What for? You don't love him, we both know that. All you're doing is delaying the inevitable!

(B crosses to A and grabs her.)

Carol, I want you now!

(A pushes B away.)

A. I said I need more time! I'm not ready yet!

B. I'm starting to think you'll never be ready.

(A and B stare at each other for several seconds. The audience should get the sense that something is going wrong on stage. IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT THE ACTORS DO NOT OVERSELL OR MUG THIS MOMENT. It should be played very subtly and look and feel exactly as it would in a "real play" when something goes wrong. At this point the audience should still think that this is a "real" play, and should be experiencing those special emotions of watching a live performance crash and burn. Finally B crosses to the table and picks up the phone.)

B. Hello? Oh hello Jason, how did the Wickerman account go?

(Sound of phone ringing.)

C. *(Sitting in the audience:)* CUT!

(C rises from seat and goes onstage.)

MARK! Where was the freaking sound cue?!

(Enter D from SR, wearing headset and carrying copy of script.)

D. Hey don't yell at me! Steve changed the line again!

B1. I did not!

D. Yes you did! You do it differently every time!

C. What is the line supposed to be?

D. *(Reading from script:)* "I am starting to believe that you will never be ready."

B1. What did I say?

D. *(Mocking the way B said the line:)* I'm starting to think you'll never be ready.

B1. That's the same thing!

D. No, you said I'm instead of I am, think instead of believe, and you'll instead of you will!

B1. Oh for the love of Mike! I give up! Andy, you deal with him!

D. Hey, I go by the script! If you can't remember your lines, that's not my problem!

A1. Can we get on with this? I have to get out of here on time today!

C. All right Steve, just say the line the way it's written.

B1. I like my way better.

D. Oh yeah, it's soooo much better!

B1. Shut up!

C. Just say the line the way it's written.

B1. My character wouldn't say something like that! It doesn't fit! It ruins the whole scene!

C. Look, just say...

B1. No, damn it! Why should I have to screw up my character that I have spent six weeks working on just because that meathead can't figure out when to push a frigging button!?

D. Up yours pal!

C. Knock it off! *(To B1:)* How do you want to say the line!?

B1. *(Exactly as he said it as B in opening scene:)* I'm starting to think you'll never be ready.

C. Fine! *(To D:)* You write it down that way. *(To B1:)* And you don't change it again!

B1. Fine.

D. Sure! As long as the prima donna is happy!

C. *(To D:)* Did you get those flats finished yet?

D. No.

C. Why not!?

D. Because they won't fit out the door.

C. What do you mean?

D. I mean the flats won't fit out the door.

C. Why not!?

D. Because they're too big.

C. Ah hell! Come on!

(C begins to exit with D.)

A1. Andy, I have to leave at four!

C. I know honey.

(C and D exit .)

B. Well, when are you going to tell him?

A1. I don't know.

B1. Sarah, you can't wait forever. I mean even Andy isn't that

stupid. He's going to figure out something is going on between us.

A1. Shut up!

B1. O.K. He's your boyfriend.

A1. That's right! We've been going out for three years. And before I throw that away for someone like you, I'm going to be sure about it!

B1. Just what is that supposed to mean?

A1. Nothing.

B1. Hey baby, just because you're feeling guilty about cheating on your boyfriend, don't start dumping on me. You don't like this situation, you can walk away any time you like.

A1. Oh, is that what you told Ashley?

B1. What?

A1. What? You remember Ashley don't you? She's the girl from the last production you were in. She said you were the most wonderful guy she ever met. Right up to the moment you dumped her. We had a very interesting talk about you yesterday. What's the matter hon? Nothing to say?

B1. *(B1 moves to A1 and takes her into his arms:)* O.K., so maybe I wasn't too nice to Ashley. But that doesn't mean that... *(B1 coughs into A1's face.)* ...LINE!

(E rises from audience and moves onto stage as C enters.)

E. Aw hell Richard! Every time we get something started, you forget your lines!

B2. It's not my fault!

E. Then whose fault is it?!

B2. Look, I've got more lines than anyone else in this stupid play and I've had strep throat for the last two weeks! I still can't breathe!

A2. Why don't you grow up?

B2. What's your problem?

A2. My problem?! I'll tell you what my problem is! I'm stuck in this

lame production with a bunch of amateurs who don't know how to act and a director who thinks he's God's gift to the theatre! This play is going to be the biggest flop in the world! And this is how I get to end my acting career!

C1. What are you talking about? You're not quitting the play, are you?

A2. No. My parents' business is going bankrupt. There's no money left. I have to drop out of school.

E. Can't you get a loan?

A2. I've already got every loan there is! There just isn't any money.

(A2 sits on the couch and begins to cry. After two beats, F rises from audience and moves to stage.)

F. CUT! O.K. Beth, this time I want you to kneel when you cry instead of sitting.

A3. Like it makes any difference! This thing is so confusing nobody's gonna know what's going on anyway!

E1. She's right Pam, this play sucks.

F. Look, I know this isn't Shakespeare, but it's going to be a great play!

B3. Yeah right.

(A3, E1, and C2 also show little enthusiasm.)

F. Well we have to try! What do you want to do? Quit?

(A3, E1, C2, and B3 all nod yes.)

Fine! Go ahead! But you can kiss your Equity cards goodbye! Don't you think I know this play sucks!? But this is my first paying job as a director and I'm going to make it work! And if any of you don't like it, you can go to hell!

(Enter G from SL.)

G. Mrs. Smith, there's a call for you in the office.

F. What?

(Once again a very subtle, puzzled reaction. Something is not right. G repeats the line exactly as she just said it, using the same gestures.)

G. Mrs. Smith, there's a call for you in the office.

F. My name's not Smith.

(This is another character shift for everyone but F.)

G1. All right, what's going on!?

F. What are you talking about?

G1. Did we change the lines again?

F. What lines?

G1. The lines! The lines! *(Pulls out a script:)* You say "go to hell" and I walk in and say, *(Doing the lines and gestures exactly as before:)* Mrs. Smith, there's a call for you in the office. And then you say "thanks Bambi" and exit left!

F. Who are you?

G1. I'm playing Bambi!

F. What are you talking about!? There's no Bambi in this play!

G1. What are you talking about what am I talking about!? We've done this scene a million times! *(G1 shoves script at F:)* See "if any of you don't like it, you can go to hell!" Enter Bambi. That's me! And then I say, *(Exactly as before:)* "Mrs. Smith, there's a call for you in the office."

F. *(Flipping through the script:)* Something weird is going on here. You say I'm just an actor playing the part of a director?

C3. So am I.

E2. So am I.

F. I could've sworn I was directing this play.

G1. No, you were just playing the part of a director who was directing a play that wasn't really a play.

F. I guess I must have gotten into the part a little too much.

A4. Obviously.

F. Say...this may be a really stupid question, but who is directing this play?

B4. What?

F. Who is the director? I can't seem to remember?

(Everybody looks confused.)

E2. Well I'm directing one of the plays.

B4. No, that's a fake play. Who is directing the real play?

C3. What do you mean the real play?

B4. Not the plays within the plays, but the play with everything in it.

A4. I can't remember who the director is. I mean things got so confused with all the plots and whatnot. *(Shouting out to audience:)* HELLO! IS ANYONE OUT THERE?

(TECHIE enters.)

TECHIE. *(To C3:)* Hey, that stinking Fresnel I've been trying to get you to replace for the last two weeks just burned up the last of the blue gels. Whaddya want me to do?

C3. Why are you talking to me?

TECHIE. You're the director aren't you?

C3. Oh, no. I'm just playing the part of the director in the second fake play.

TECHIE. Second fake play?

C3. Yes.

TECHIE. O.K. So who's the director?

B4. We're not sure.

TECHIE. You're not sure?

A4. Yes, it's all a little confusing.

TECHIE. Yeah, right. Well, when you figure out who the director is,

tell him we need a new Fresnel and some blue gels. I'm gonna get a smoke.

(TECHIE exits.)

E2. Oh this is ridiculous! Someone must remember who the director is!

G1. When we got here this evening, who else was here?

A4. Well nobody. *(Slips back into A character:)* Brad and I had just got back from dinner...

F. No, no! That's the play you're doing!

A4. *(As A4:)* Oh. Yeah. *(To B:)* Brad, do you remember what happened?

B4. My name isn't Brad. It's Steve.

C3. No it's not. Your name is Bob. Steve is the character you play in the second play.

B4. Oh. Right. I knew that. Thanks Scott.

C3. My name isn't Scott.

B4. Oh. Uh...what is it?

(There is a pause while C3 thinks it over. Finally he pulls out a script and flips through it.)

C3. Uuuuummm...Carol?

A4. No, I'm Carol. I think.

(Everybody thinks for a beat and then they all pull out scripts. All of the scripts are different. They all start flipping through the scripts.)

F. Wait. I think you're Mark, I'm Tom, and you're Tony.

G1. Isn't Tony the Vietnam vet who dies of a heart attack?

(E2 starts to die of a heart attack.)

A4. No, he's not Tony, he's Terry.

(E2 immediately stops dying and pops up.)

E2. Thanks. This is too strange. I'm going home!

(E2 exits. After a few beats E2 comes back onstage.)

E2. Does anyone know where I live?

(There is a beat and then everyone begins flipping through the scripts.)

A4. *(Reading from script:)* You live at 22 East 56th Street with your quadriplegic wife, your suicidal daughter, and your son who is afraid to reveal his homosexuality.

E2. Anyone else?

C3. *(Reading from script:)* You live at the State Hospital for the Criminally Insane where you were committed after shooting six people at the mall.

B4. *(Reading from script:)* A homeless shelter. Where you are waiting for the results of your AIDS test.

(There is a beat and then everyone takes a step away from E2.)

E2. I think I'll stay here.

F. Well we still don't know who the director is!

(Enter H dressed in dark suit. He has a vaguely Eastern European accent.)

H. Perhaps I can help answer some of your questions.

G1. Who are you?

F. Are you the director?

H. You might call me that. I do indeed direct events. However, unlike your pathetic little playacting, my direction takes place in the realm of the real. I deal with lives, not parts.

C3. Are you God?

H. Ha! Hardly. Although, for a short time, I did work for him.

E2. Then you're the devil!

H. Some men call me that. Others call me Satan, Beelzebub, Lucifer, Mesatalphales, the Prince of Darkness. As for myself, I prefer being called...

(Sound of phone ringing. There is a short, awkward beat (played very subtly) that says that this isn't supposed to be happening. After the beat, A walks to the phone and picks it up.)

A. Hello? Oh hello Jason, how did the Wickerman account go?

(Enter D.)

D. Sorry, my bad.

(D exits.)

H. Some men call me Satan, Lucifer, Beezlebub...

E3. Oh forget it! It was really, really lame!

H. You have all been condemned to hell for your sins!

E3. Oh shut up all ready!

C3. And lose the cheesy accent while you're at it.

H1. It wasn't cheesy!

G1. If it was any cheesier, they'd put it in a can and people could spray it on crackers!

H1. I thought it was good. Besides, the devil thing was a cool idea.

F2. Yeah, it's not like it hasn't been done eight million times before.

H1. Well, what if I was an angel instead of the devil?

E3. Angel, devil, it doesn't make any difference. You still can't act!

F2. Well what are we gonna do about the play?

(The following speech is delivered absolutely seriously. The intent is to fool the audience into thinking that now this is the start of the "real play.")

G2. There is no play, you fool! Haven't you figured that out yet? There's no play and there's no director! There is no reality here! Existence. Identity. Home. Those are just meaningless concepts! We're all just figments of someone else's imagination! We get up in the morning, put on our clothes and makeup, walk out the door, and spend all day letting other people write lines for us, choreograph our movements, direct our lives. They tell us what to

do and what to think and who to love and who to hate. And then one day you wake up and you're not you anymore. You're just some stinking character in someone else's play.

(There is a pause.)

B5. *(Quietly:)* Now do you understand?

G3. Understand what?

B5. *(Pulling out script:)* No, that's the last line of your monologue. "...stinking character in someone else's play. Now do you understand?"

G4. Oh right! Sorry. *(Back to serious character G3 from monologue:)* Now do you understand? *(As G4:)* Do you think I should pause a little longer and say it softer? *(As G3, softer with a bigger pause:)* Now do you understand?

E2. No, I like it better the first way. It has more emotion to it.

G4. Yeah, I think so too.

(There is a pause while everyone looks around trying to figure out what to do.)

A5. You know, this reminds me of when I was a little girl. One day, I went fishing with my father. I remember it was a bright, sunny day and the seagulls looked like delicate little clouds. My father said we had to buy some bait first so we went to this little shack underneath the boardwalk. There was this old immigrant man with a scar across his face and horrible yellow teeth. My father told him we needed bait and the old man opened up a big can and my father told me to look inside and I did and...there were thousands and thousands of worms and they were squirming and crawling all over each other with their blind faces staring straight at me. I started screaming and screaming and then running down the beach just trying to get away from those blank faces looking at me. Finally my father caught me and took me home. So you see Josh, I can't marry you. I'm sorry.

F. Who's Josh?

C4. Whoops! *(Running to A:)* Damn it Betty! I don't give a darn about worms or old immigrant men or your painful skin condition!

I love! I need you! I ain't never gonna leave you!

B6. DAD!

C4. What?

B6. Dad! It's me! Your son Bobby! You thought I was killed in that plane crash in Venezuela 15 years ago, but I'm alive!

A6. Why did you do that!?

B7. Do what?

C4. You ruined our scene! What did you butt in for!?

B7. Well I need something to do.

A6. Use your own script!

B7. I get killed on page 25!

E3. Then use your other script, dummy!

B7. What other script?

E3. In the play, you're an actor in a play. So rather than using the script for the play that you're in, use the script from the play that you're supposed to be in, in the play.

B7. *(After pondering for a beat:)* OOOOHHHHHH! I get it! But should I be the character from the play or the character from the play I'm supposed to be in or one that's both. Or neither?

(During the following descriptions, B7 quickly pantomimes the characters.)

G5. Well, your character in the play is a handsome young man from a wealthy eastern prep school but you get killed on page 24. On the other hand, your character from the play that you're supposed to be in, in the play, is a small, dwarfish, evil-smelling con man who pretends to be blind on the streets of New York. However, he doesn't die in the play, he just gets stepped on by a horse.

F2. So what we're talking about here is a basic philosophical question. Is it better to be rich and handsome and die young or short and smelly and get stepped on by a horse but not die?

B7. Gosh, that's a tough one.

C4. Yeah.

(There is a pause.)

A6. Someone have a line here?

(Everyone flips through scripts.)

F2. Nope.

G5. Uh-uh.

H1. All my lines got cut!

(Enter JACK and NICK, two workmen carrying a ladder. The ladder is set downstage, center. They are characters right out of Mamet/Shepard/Pinter. The actors should play the scene very low-key, almost deadpan and totally seriously.)

JACK. Sorry to interrupt folks, just have to change this light bulb, won't be a minute.

NICK. I was talking to Frank down at the Union Hall the other day.

JACK. Yeah? What did Frank say?

NICK. Said it was all over with. They're shutting down the plant at the end of the month.

JACK. Well, that's it then. So they're really moving it to Mexico?

NICK. Yeah. They're gonna pay 'em 50 cents an hour.

JACK. That's just great! And too bad for us I guess.

NICK. *(Looking at ceiling:)* So...uhh...there's the light we gotta fix.

JACK. Oh. That's a 3349. We don't got none of those.

NICK. That's not a 3349...that's...a...whattyacallit? Uh...that's a...uh...a Z 52 Halogen.

JACK. Nope. They took all the 52s out a couple a months ago. That there's a 3349. And like I said, we ain't got none of those.

NICK. How come they took the 52s out?

JACK. Them 52s had too much leakage there. They was putting out some kinda ozone stuff and the EGA *(sic)* said they hadda take

them out and put in the 3349s. We ain't got none of those.

NICK. Say, my kid's brother-in-law had some of that ozone stuff at his work. Now's he got the cancer.

JACK. Damn government don't give a damn about the working man. Whole world is going to stinking hell. Sometimes I almost wish I was back in Nam. Say, we could probably put a 3368 up in there.

NICK. My wife left me six years ago. Now, I don't even know how to talk to a woman. Uh...why don't we try one of those 3368s.

JACK. Oh, wait a minute, I just remembered. Those 3368s are bi-pins, not Edisons. It won't fit.

NICK. Nothing fits anymore! When I was a kid, we used to have these woods in back of my house. We'd play there all the time. I went back there last week. They cut all the trees down and put up a Wal-Mart. It's all gone.

JACK. My oldest kid came home for Christmas. We're like strangers. Oh, we sit and watch the games and talk about the weather. But we really don't say anything. I'd like to tell him about Nam. But I just can't.

NICK. When I was 17, I thought I was so tough. I was gonna rule the world. Now, I just want someone to hold me.

JACK. I used to know what life was about. Then I went to Nam.

NICK. Say Jack, I just thought of something.

JACK. Yeah?

NICK. We never tried the light switch.

JACK. We didn't, did we?

NICK. I guess we don't even know if it works or not.

(They begin to take down the ladder.)

JACK. I guess it's kinda like life.

NICK. How do you mean?

JACK. You have to try to turn it on.

NICK. But what if you don't know how, Jack? What if you don't know how?

JACK. I don't know, Nick. I don't know.

(JACK and NICK exit.)

A5. You know, this reminds me of when I was a little girl. One day, I went fishing with my father. I remember it was a bright, sunny day and the seagulls looked...

F2. We did that already!

A7. So?

F2. So it was stupid the first time!

(Enter SHANNON, a teenage girl dressed sexily. At her entrance, all of the other characters instantly change to become teenagers at a party. Everyone immediately accepts and plays along with the new situation.)

SHANNON. Hi guys! Sorry I'm late but Bobby and I had to make a stop on the way.

(D2 enters carrying two beers, one of which he tosses to SHANNON.)

D2. Yeah, I know what they were stopping for!

(Everyone laughs.)

Where's Bobby?

SHANNON. He had to drive some of the guys over to Karen's party. He'll be back.

(Enter JENNIFER, a teenage girl dressed in nerd fashion.)

JENNIFER. Shannon! Did you see how Bobby pulled out of here? He almost smashed into the Wilsons' car!

SHANNON. He was just fooling around.

JENNIFER. No he wasn't! He's drunk!

SHANNON. No way! He only had a couple of beers.

(Knock at the door. D2 moves to answer it.)

D2. I'll get it.

JENNIFER. More like a couple of six-packs! How can you let him do that!?

SHANNON. What am I? His mother? Besides, he's fine. Why don't you just take a chill?

JENNIFER. I don't believe you! You say you love him, but you let him drink and drive! If he was my boyfriend...

SHANNON. But he's not, is he? Why don't you just accept the fact that he's my boyfriend, not yours!

(Everyone else reacts to the fight.)

SHANNON. Here Jennifer, have a beer. Or does that go against your little S.A.D.D. rules!?

(SHANNON tosses beer to JENNIFER, who catches and holds it. Enter D2, looking very upset. Everyone must play this next sequence totally straight.)

JENNIFER. Tom, what's wrong?

D2. That was a policeman at the door. There's been an accident. It's Bobby. He's dead.

(Everyone reacts with shock and horror.)

SHANNON. Oh no... No! No!

(SHANNON runs off crying, followed by D2 who goes to comfort her.)

JENNIFER. Why didn't I take his keys? I knew he was drunk. But I just stood there. I guess I didn't want to look like a nerd. I guess I really didn't love Bobby either.

(JENNIFER exits, crying softly.)

A8. I can't believe it. He was just here. I just talked to him.

F3. It can't be true. There must be some mistake!

G6. No! The only mistake was this!

(G holds up a bottle of beer.)

B8. There's just one thing I want to know.

E4. What's that?

B8. *(After a beat, and then totally breaking the serious mood by bursting out:)* WHO'S BOBBY!?

(As soon as B8 says the line, everyone drops the teenage characters and the sadness over Bobby's death, and reverts to the characters they were just before Shannon came in. Everyone looks at each other.)

F2. I thought you guys knew him.

A7. I never heard of him.

F2. And what about those two girls?

G5. Yeah! Who were they?

A7. That was weird.

F2. Still, it's a shame about Bobby.

C4. Oh yeah, he was a great guy.

(Enter TECHIE.)

TECHIE. Hey, the sound man just spilled his Coke down the sound board. So now we don't have any sound. Whaddya want me to do?

E5. We don't know who the director is yet.

TECHIE. Great. Well, when he, she, or it shows up, tell 'em we need a new Fresnel, some blue gels, a new sound board and a new sound man. I'm gonna get a smoke.

(TECHIE begins to exit.)

A7. Hey, what's your name?

TECHIE. *(Thinks for a second, pulls out a script and looks at the cover:)* Crew chief.

C4. No, your real name.

TECHIE. *(Looks at script again:)* That's all it says here. I'm gonna get a smoke.

F2. But don't you want to know who you really are?

TECHIE. *(Thinks for a beat:)* I'm gonna get a smoke. Actors!

(TECHIE exits SR as THE DIRECTOR enters from SL. THE DIRECTOR is dressed very artsy fartsy and carries a huge shoulder bag. She enters in a great hurry.)

THE DIRECTOR. Sorry I'm late, guys.

G5. Who are you?

THE DIRECTOR. Not today Melissa, I'm not in the mood!

F2. Who's Melissa?

C4. Who are you?

THE DIRECTOR. All right! I know you've been waiting here all afternoon! I know that just yesterday I gave you a big lecture on how irresponsible actors are because they're always late! O.K.! The director is late today! I'm sorry! You've made your point! I've just had one of the worst days of my life! I'm afraid we have something to talk about.

B7. You're the director?

THE DIRECTOR. *(Exploding in a fury and throwing a pen at B7:)* You idiot! Didn't you hear a word of what I just said!? My husband, the man I swore to love forever just six months ago, told me this morning, that he was very sorry but that he had fallen in love with another woman and he was leaving me and going with her to Florida. I don't know what I'm going to do. I'll have to move back to Columbus. Not even a year in New York and I'm running home to Mommy and Daddy! I'm sorry, but there's just no way I can direct this play now. Oh my God, how could he... *(She begins to cry.)*

C4. Wow. That was really good!

G5. Yeah. The way she started out all angry and then got softer and softer and then those little choking sounds she made just before she cried. Incredible.

THE DIRECTOR. *(Confused by their reaction:)* What are you talking about?

A7. I don't know. It wasn't bad. But I think it would have been much more effective if she was more devastated. (*Acting out the emotion:*) Almost out of control with grief! She's too calm.

THE DIRECTOR. WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?

E5. Your scene.

THE DIRECTOR. WHAT SCENE? WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU PEOPLE?!

A7. See, now that's much better! Much more emotional. It touches the audience more deeply.

B7. Definitely. But I think she needs to change some of the lines. They sound a little cliché to me.

G5. Yeah, especially that one about the waitress from Florida. It's been done a million times.

THE DIRECTOR. Have you all gone insane!? This isn't some play I'm talking about! THIS IS MY LIFE!

(They all stare at her as if they have absolutely no idea what she is talking about. In tears, THE DIRECTOR picks up her bag and begins to run out. However, the bag spills open and its contents scatter all about. THE DIRECTOR begins to pick up the mess but breaks down into sobs.)

E6. Oh my God. I know what's been going on here. All of us have become so wrapped up in our own lives, in our careers, even our parts in this stupid play, that we can't even see when someone close to us is in pain. We've become unfeeling robots. What happens to us? We all try to be good. We all mean well. But somehow that isn't enough. (*Bending down to THE DIRECTOR and taking her in her arms:*) Please forgive me. Please forgive us.

(THE DIRECTOR hugs E back and they embrace for three beats, until E lets go and stands up quickly.)

E7. All right! Who blew their cue!?

(Everyone responds with various "not me," "it wasn't my line.")

THE DIRECTOR. I must be losing my mind. Why are you doing this to me!? What did I do to deserve this?!

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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