

Must the Show Go On?

Everything goes wrong on opening night. The four actors persevere despite a senile old man in the tech booth, a “costume malfunction”, a prop gun that doesn’t fire, and a sneezing corpse!

Note: All actors must be able to speak with a British accent.

CHARACTERS:

Alex (playing Grayson) - actor/director, excitable

Sam (playing Norris) - actor, doesn’t know his lines

Harold (playing Dixby) - actor, has a head cold, speaks bad Cockney

Julie (playing Evelyn) - actress, has a costume malfunction

Audition Material for Julie/Evelyn:

(JULIE strides in wearing a very large men’s trench coat, unbuttoned, over her evening gown.)

JULIE: Hello, darling! (Sees SAM) Or should I say hello, darlings?

ALEX: Evelyn, how . . . lovely, er, you look in that gown.

JULIE: I hoped you wouldn’t find it too daring.

SAM: How could you betray me this way?

JULIE: Quite easily. I’m surprised you hadn’t noticed before now.

ALEX: Norris intercepted one of my letters to you.

JULIE: Really? A letter? Let me see. (Takes the letter eagerly from SAM.) You write the most charming letters. I simply can’t wait to read it . . . (Finishes reading.) What a precious little letter . . . the most delectable yet!

ALEX: You inspire me more and more. But do be a good girl and run and powder your nose while I have a heart-to-heart with Norris.

JULIE: If you must. (Rises, grabs the top of her dress as if it’s slipping. Then to SAM.) Don’t let him take advantage of you, darling. (To ALEX.) Save that for me. (Exits right.)

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Audition Material for Alex/Grayson and Sam/Norris:

SAM: You're a perfect cad. (Goes blank.) That's what you are, all right . . . a cad . . . yes, sir. . .

ALEX: (Prompting) You wouldn't have proof of that, would you?

SAM: And I have proof of that!

ALEX: What proof?

SAM: This letter . . . the one you sent to Evelyn. (Pulls letter from coat pocket.)

ALEX: That only proves you're a mail thief. As for Evelyn . . . (Expectant pause.) . . . as for Evelyn . . . (Glances up toward tech booth.) I'm expecting a phone call any time. (Pause.) Let me make sure the telephone is working. (Picks up receiver.) What? Why, hello! You must've been calling in just as I picked up the phone. (SFX: Telephone rings.) There it goes now. Apparently some malfunction. (SFX: Telephone rings again.) Yes, well, let's try this . . . (Hangs up phone, ringing stops, picks it up again.) Still there? Oh, good . . . Yes, I understand . . . see you directly. (Hangs up.)

ALEX: (Continued) Well, well, well . . . that was Dixby, the private investigator I hired to follow Evelyn.

SAM: You have someone following my wife? I mean, my fiancé? Why?

ALEX: I suspected her of being unfaithful to me.

SAM: She's engaged to me!

ALEX: Precisely. How can one trust a woman like that?

SAM: So what did he say? Where is she now?

ALEX: Right about now, she should be ... (Glances expectantly at door, but no one enters.) Yes, any second now . . . right about now . . .

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Audition Material for Harold/Dixby:

HAROLD: (Cockney accent) Evening, sir. I been right on the lady's tail, all right . . . in a manner of speaking. (Looks at SAM.) Gang's all here, I see.

ALEX: On the contrary. From your previous reports, I should say we're three or four short.

SAM: What do you mean?

ALEX: Tell him, Dixby.

HAROLD: (Blows his nose.) The guv'ner's right. Busy little bundle, she is. Wore me out just following her around. A real lady of "breeding", if you catch my drift.

ALEX: (After a pause, prompting.) What do you say to that, Norris?

SAM: Huh? (To HAROLD) What are you insinuating?

HAROLD: I ain't 'sinuating nothing, sir. I'm saying it right out. She's a trollop if ever there was one. Only diff . . . (Tries to hold back a sneeze.) . . . only diff . . . only – (Sneezes) – difference, being rich like she is, she don't have to charge nothin' for it.

SAM: What an insolent scoundrel!

ALEX: True, but a useful one . . . up until now. Unfortunately, he has gotten ambitious and greedy. Haven't you, Dixby?

HAROLD: Now, sir . . . you can't blame a bloke for scratching where he can. With what-all I've dug up on the three of you, not to mention a few more, I ought to have me a steady bit of income from now on.
