

AUDITION PIECE ONE. FOUR ACTORS.

Sharpe Sir! On the night of March 13th I did summon one Henry Paine, gentleman, to do his duty as night guard at the storehouse. He did answer me with rude and uncivil language, sir, and did attempt to strike me but I, being an experienced officer, was able to institute an evasive manoeuvre such that his attack was unsuccessful. I did warn said gentleman that, should the Governor hear of his insolence, he would be in deep shi ... er, trouble, sir, and it could be as much as his life was worth. He did reply to me in the most unreverend terms such that I am not able to quote his reply in mixed company, sir.

Yeardley Give us the gist.

Sharpe Well, the content of what he said was that the Governor had no authority to order anyone around in the colony, from the top right down to even the unimportant people, and therefore the Governor could kiss his ...

Yeardley *Thank you, Mr Sharpe. (pause)* Now continue.

Sharpe I did then institute a search of the gentleman's premises and discovered a variety of items concealed in the pigsty out back; viz one sword, one hatchet, two planes, a mallet and three axes; these having recently gone missing from the storehouse.

Sir Thomas Paine, do you have anything to say?

Paine Not really.

Sir Thomas Is this true?

Paine Yes, it is. I deny your authority. Do what you will. *(with a sneer)*

Sir Thomas I *will* find you guilty of mutiny and sedition, and I *will* ...
(looks at assembled company, looks back)
... hang you, Henry Paine. Now. Make ready the ladder and rope, Captain Yeardley.

(Yeardley nods, Sharpe pulls Paine a step forward, Paine looks a little shaken. Suddenly Paine pulls free, squares his shoulders and turns back to Sir Thomas)

Paine No, *Mister* Gates, you will not hang me. *(beat)* As a gentleman, I require that I be shot to death.

Sir Thomas Very well, you may have your desire. *(nods at Yeardley)*

AUDITION PIECE TWO. TWO ACTORS.

UP You contradict everything I say.

DOWN No I don't.

UP You just did it again.

DOWN But how else will you know when you're wrong?

UP When am I wrong?

DOWN When I'm right.

UP And how am I supposed to know when you're right?

DOWN Dead easy. I'm always right.

UP Why should you always be right?

DOWN Because I'm smarter than you.

UP *(offended)* No you're not.

DOWN Yes I am.

UP Bollocks! NO YOU ARE NOT!

DOWN I wish you wouldn't contradict everything I say.

AUDITION PIECE THREE. FOUR ACTORS.

Jezz Hush Jude, I know, it won't be easy but I believe it'll work out somehow.

Judas You're always so *passive*. How can that work? The Romans don't understand passive, they *act*, they'll hurt us to stop us, I don't want to get hurt, I don't want you to get hurt.

Jezz It's not about the Romans Jude, it's about you ...

Judas Me?

Jezz You ... and everyone. You and everyone as individuals. You and everyone as individuals living your lives, making your choices ... what lies inside each of you, in your soul if you want to call it that.

Judas What if my soul is bad?

Jezz Nothing is fixed, you can change it. You, especially, Jude, you can change, you have so much feeling inside your soul, I can see it brimming up and spilling over ... (*she is close to him, touches his arm*)

Judas Jezz ...

(*Soldiers burst onstage, crudely breaking the spell*)

Sergeant Stop that!! You're under arrest! (*to Private*) Immobilise the miscreant!

Private What Sarge?

Sergeant Grab 'im! (*Private grabs Judas*) No, not 'im, 'er!

Private But you said 'im, Sir.

Sergeant Well, I meant 'er. (*reading orders*) Says 'ere to arrest one Jezz of Nazareth, itinerant preacher of the female persuasion, identity to be confirmed by a Mister Iscariot - is that you, sonny?

Judas Yes, but ...

Sergeant Thank you very much and we'll be on our way. Come along now Miss, we don't want no trouble, do we? (*Exits, with Private pulling Jezz along after him*)

Judas Jezz ...

Jezz Choices, Jude (*and she is gone*)

Judas (*pause*) But I made the wrong choice Jezz.

AUDITION PIECE FOUR. ONE ACTOR.

Why do I do this every year?

The Christmas Cocktail Marathon. Oh Come All Ye Faithful.

Same old rent-a-mob. Same cheap wine. Same stupid chatter. Wish I could think of something interesting to say, get a conversation going, get someone interested in me - huh!, that'd be too much to ask. But I *wish* I was better at talking to people ... making friends ... then maybe I wouldn't drink so much, always feel like shit in the morning. Hate getting older.

And how the hell are you supposed to keep your weight down with all this junk lying around? It's all very well starting out on three carrots and a stuffed celery stick - oh yes, stuff it, please - but what about the bowl of peanuts and six mince pies? Wish someone would take this plate away, they're awfully *good* mince pies ...

AUDITION PIECE FIVE. TWO ACTORS.

LAST Oh, yes! That's just how he was. He made you feel that you could actually be alive and confident and do things. Like when I wanted a pet - I always had animals when I was little, I missed them - but my lease said no pets and I didn't want to move, it's a nice apartment. So he came with me to talk to the landlord and I got permission, I hadn't had the nerve to ask before.

FIRST And are you a cat person or a dog person?

LAST What? Oh, no, it's a gerbil.... called Falstaff.... eats a lot. And I talk to it all the while. You live on your own, it's better than talking to the furniture... (*Remembers..*) Oh, it's not fair, why did he have to die, all the things he wanted to do...

FIRST There's no point going along that road, it won't get you anywhere. Try it in the other direction, try the 'all the things he has done' road.

LAST But he was young....

FIRST Ah, yes, the tyranny of mathematics. We all want to live to a ripe old age, but only half of us will, you can't beat the averages. For every old person you see, someone died young.

LAST But ...

FIRST But why am I alive and he's dead?

LAST No, I...

FIRST I don't know. Life isn't fair, there's no 'grand plan', you just have to take what happens and get on with it. (*beat*) Though perhaps I should work harder at an unhealthy lifestyle, it's much more fun and then I can shuffle off and let someone else live longer.

AUDITION PIECE SIX. TWO ACTORS.

Split stage effect, with Left and Right standing SL and SR, each speaking their thoughts to the audience

Left Why why why why WHY?!! Why did she do it ? Why WHY?

Right (*calmly*) Why not?

Left Why NOW? She was so much better, getting on with her life, looking forward ...

Right ... to nothing. More of the same. For another twenty years. Didn't seem worth the effort.

Left Didn't she *think* about it? Didn't she care how much it would hurt us?

Right I didn't particularly want to die, I just wanted not to be here anymore. Not to have to plod through another day. I expect they'll be relieved that I'm all sorted out now, I know I've been a problem for them.

Left But what'll I do with your cats?

Right (*shock!*) Damn, I forgot about the cats!!

(split stage effect disappears as they dissolve into giggles and turn toward each other)

Left No chance anyone'd ever believe you'd abandon your cats. Still, it's a good start for your first script - why don't you tidy it up a bit and enter it for 'Famous'.

Right (*laughs*) Doubt it'll go down well - last I heard, it was "We'd better have some comedies this year, we've had enough slit-your-throat-suicide-stuff, it's bad for Bar profits".

AUDITION PIECE SEVEN. TWO ACTORS.

Luce Nothing like good old hard work to keep the mischief makers quiet.

Strachey But it didn't work, of course. It was the sailors that were the worst bunch; didn't want to work, didn't want a new ship, spent their time in idleness.

Luce And of course the Devil finds work for idle ...

Strachey It was all "why should we build this boat and go to Virginia where we'll just starve and freeze and have to work our asses off and be shot at by savages? If we've gotta be stuck in the middle of nowhere with no friends and no home comforts, why not stay here? There's plenty of meat and fish and turtles and it's warm and it's all ours" and so on and so forth ...

Luce Well, it sounds like they had a point ...

Strachey That is mutiny, and we can't have mutiny! Who protects the weak if the strong ignore the law?

Luce And so?

Strachey (*chuckle*) But this is Bermuda and you can't keep a secret in Bermuda! Although they did still have a few days of freedom left before they were stopped, because on Monday 28th August there was great excitement! We launched our first bid to escape!

AUDITION PIECE EIGHT. THREE ACTORS.

Day My own comforts! I live but a simple life here among the colonists; no, simpler than most, for I lack a wife to be my helpmeet and children for support in my old age...

Bennet Hah! "But a simple life"! In the splendour of MY house!

Day This is my house...

Bennet It belongs to the Colony!

Day I built it ...

Bennet You did not!

Day I designed it...

Bennet I see very well that you had designs upon it.

Day That's not what I meant...

Bennet You have built this house with the King's money and call it your own! You are dishonest, Sir! You are dishonourable; you are despicable; you are disgraceful; you have been discovered in a malversation, a... a... peculation, a plunderage, a gross misappropriation and ... and ... (*he is speechless with fury*)

Constable ... and you've been thieving too! Just you come out of there and stand here in full sight so's everyone can see me do my job good and proper 'cos I've come to feel your collar! (*brandishing club*)

Day (*takes half a pace back*) Now, look here ...

Constable He's resisting me, Sir! Shall I take him, Sir? Shall I? Shall I?

Bennet Calm yourself..

Day But upon what charge?

Constable What charge? You've been using our monies for yerself and misusing our women for yerself and stealing our food for yerself and I've come to take you in for it! Just come out of there and let me get at you! (*waving club, there should be a feeling that real violence is imminent*)