

Beyond the Fourth Wall

By

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ACT I

Scene 1

*ONE enters into a spotlight.*

ONE

What is this darkness I see before me? Is it a testament to man's soul that I can not penetrate this inky gloom or is it a fault in my character that I cannot see beyond its boundaries...

(To AUDIENCE)

I'm not talking to you by the way. I know I'm the only one here but this is actually a soliloquy. I'm not actually talking to you at all because there's a wall here.

(Indicates beyond the footlights)

A fourth wall if you will... actually there was a fourth wall but I sort of just broke it... sorry. I'll get on with the... thing... ..er, where was I? Something about darkness wasn't it?

AUDIENCE

Get on with it.

ONE

(Waits for previous line)

You had a line there. It was in the script. You were supposed to say "Get on with it". This isn't me ad-libbing either. This is scripted. This is the actual character talking. The actor sounds like this...

(The actor playing ONE ad-libs)

... See that wasn't scripted... Anyway... Darkness. A fitting subject for a night as black as this, not in terms of light but in the nature of man...

*TWO enters.*

...For what demons dwell in those depths?

TWO

Scary ones?

ONE

What?

TWO

Scary demons?

ONE

What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

TWO

I thought you might be getting lonely.

ONE

Of course I'm not. I'm in the middle of a soliloquy.  
Get off and wait for your cue.

TWO

You've already given me my cue.

ONE

No I haven't.

TWO

Yes you have.

ONE

I haven't!

TWO

It's in the script.

ONE

Don't mention the script. It destroys the illusion of  
reality. I did it once already but I think I got away  
with it.

TWO

That's typical of you that is, destroying the illusion  
of reality. Next you'll be trying to do a soliloquy...  
With two people.

ONE

Of course I'm not.  
(To Audience)  
I might do an aside though.

TWO

I heard that.

ONE

Stop listening to my soliloquy and asides.

TWO

I can't help it. You're talking too loud.

ONE

If I don't speak loud enough they can't hear me.

TWO

Who?

ONE

(Pointing at audience)  
Them.

TWO

Why are you pointing at the wall?

ONE

(Stuck for a second)  
...Never mind. Just go off for a second and let me finish my soliloquy.

TWO

I can't go off now. My entrance would be ruined. Can't we do the soliloquy together.

ONE

No! Of course not. It wouldn't be a soliloquy then would it. It would be a... duliloquy?

TWO

Dual Dialogue?

ONE

No that's when...

ONE

...characters talk at the same time.

TWO

...characters talk at the same time.

ONE

It would be a duologue.

TWO

Right. Let's do that then.

ONE

No.

TWO

Why not?

ONE

Because... It's not in my nature.

TWO

How do you....

ONE

(Interrupting)  
Look! Can we just skip ahead to where I win this argument?

(CONTINUED)

TWO

But...

ONE

We both know I win.

TWO

(Defeated. Miserable)

All right. I'll wait in the wings... It's no fun back there you know... The stage-hands keep touching me.

ONE

Piss off.

*TWO may illicit sympathy from the audience. TWO exits.*

ONE

Don't give her any sympathy, she's not real... But for the purpose of suspension of disbelief she is real. Right...

(Prepares for soliloquy)

Darkness...

(TWO re-enters. ONE is Annoyed)

What!?

TWO

I was just thinking. If we're off script then it doesn't matter when I come on does it?

ONE

But we're not off script. We've stuck monotonously to the script, haven't we?

TWO

Probably. But if that is the case then I am supposed to come on when I have.

ONE

But I'm supposed to tell you haven't come on at the right time.

TWO

Cool. We're agreed.

ONE

Cool? Where did that word come from? Suddenly the writer thinks he is Quentin bloody Tarantino!

TWO

Quentin is a very inappropriate name for a someone who's supposed to be hip. It sounds more like someone who should be playing croquet.

(CONTINUED)

ONE

Stop that! This is not going to become a... stream of consciousness.

TWO

Why did you pause before you said stream of consciousness?

ONE

I couldn't think of the phrase.

TWO

You mean you had to look it up on Wikipedia.

ONE

(Sarcastic)

Oh, I see. I'm the writer now am I.

TWO

We both are.

ONE

No. That's just weird. That means I'm basically sitting in a room somewhere talking to myself.

TWO

That is weird. You're a schizophrenic.

ONE

You as well.

TWO

Oh yeah. I hadn't thought of that.

ONE

Stop! Let's abandon this train wreck of dialogue, before I do develop a mental illness, besides I think the audience is getting tired of this idea by now anyway.

TWO

I think they might be upset they haven't had another line yet.

AUDIENCE

Bollocks!

ONE

(To AUDIENCE)

Don't be so rude... You had a line there by the way and it was very rude but I covered the fact you didn't say it.

(CONTINUED)

TWO  
There's no point giving them lines if they're not going to say them.

ONE  
We could elect someone.

TWO  
What? As a representative?

ONE  
Yeah.

TWO  
Okay.  
(Pointing to audience member)  
How about him or her?  
(To Audience member)  
Sorry I'm not saying that you're gender is unidentifiable but everything we're saying is written in the past so we have to allow for all possibilities.

ONE  
Smooth.

TWO  
Right, so you'll be the character AUDIENCE from now on. Are you okay with that?

AUDIENCE  
Yes. I am very pleased to take part.

TWO  
I'm going to presume you said, "Yes. I am very pleased to take part," because that was in the script.

ONE  
I really don't think this idea is going to work. This play should have been wrapped up sometime ago but instead we're being dragged down some weird, theatrical experiment.

TWO  
(To AUDIENCE)  
What do you think?

AUDIENCE  
Stupendous.

TWO  
Stop ad-libbing!

(CONTINUED)

ONE

I think you we're suppose to direct that question to the actual Audience not the character AUDIENCE.

TWO

But he represents the audience... or she, sorry.

ONE

(Sigh)

Basically what we've got here is a script scraped bare of any kind of plot, structure, characters...

TWO

We're characters!

ONE

What's your name?

TWO

(Hesitant)

Two.

ONE

Two! What sort of character name is that? It's the laziest name ever put to paper.

TWO

What about "The Man with no name"?

ONE

That actually has a lot of words in it. I think we should either come up with a story or bail out.

TWO

I vote story!

ONE

I vote bail out!

*They both look at AUDIENCE. Black out.*