

# THE AUDITION

## By Joseph Sorrentino

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# THE AUDITION

*A Comedic Duet*

**By Joseph Sorrentino**

**SYNOPSIS:** Frank has written a one-man musical about the Marquis de Lafayette and is holding auditions. Harry, desperate to land a role in a play—any play—arrives. In fact, he’s the only person to audition. When he doesn’t get the part on his first audition, he puts on a disguise for a second. And a third.

**TIME:** Modern day

**SETTING:** A small room that Frank is using for auditions. Should have the feel of being in an unused broom closet.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(2 males)*

FRANK (m) ..... A moderately pompous actor/director. He thinks that speaking French makes him seem more worldly but since he butchers the language, it probably doesn’t. *(97 lines)*

HARRY (m) ..... A blue collar type. Wants to be an actor but because he’s not a very good one, doesn’t get many roles. In fact, he doesn’t get any. *(94 lines)*

**SET:** A desk with some papers, two chairs on opposite sides of the desk.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

Characters can dress in normal clothing, perhaps something with a little flair. Frank mispronounces all of the French he speaks and uses three syllables to pronounce “theater.”

**DIRECTOR'S NOTES**

Both Frank and Harry vastly overestimate their talent but are convinced they're on the verge of being stars in theater. Frank gets increasingly frustrated as the play goes on but does his best to keep his temper in check. Harry is somewhat naive and will do what he can to be in a play; any play.

**PROPS**

- Desk with papers
- Two chairs
- Cell phone
- Wrist watch
- Fake beard
- Big glasses
- Blonde wig

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**AT START:** *FRANK sits at his desk, drumming with his fingers. He sighs, looks at his watch. Goes back to drumming.*

**FRANK:** *(Muttering to himself.)* My goodness, you'd think an actor would jump at the chance to play Gilbert du Motier, AKA the Marquis de Lafayette, in a one-man musical highlighting his role in the Battle of Yorktown...book and music by none other than *moi*. American theater is simply not what it used to be. *C'est dommage.*

*There's a knock on the door. FRANK looks startled, composes himself.*

**FRANK:** *Salut! Vous pouvez entrer. (Pause.) Entrer. (Pause, louder.)*  
Yo, c'mon in.

*HARRY enters.*

**HARRY:** This where the auditions are for that play?

**FRANK:** For my play.

**HARRY:** For My Play. Yeah, that's the one. Heck of a title you got there, bud. Heck of a title. I like it.

**FRANK:** That's not the title.

**HARRY:** No?

**FRANK:** No. It's my play.

**HARRY:** Hey, know what? I like that title even better. Even better.

**FRANK:** That's not the title, either.

**HARRY:** It's not?

**FRANK:** No. What I'm saying... or trying to say is... it's *my* play... I wrote it.

**HARRY:** Congratulations.

**FRANK:** *Merci.*

**HARRY:** Mercy?

**FRANK:** *Merci.* It's French... it means "thank you."

**HARRY:** Life, huh? Ya learn something new every day.

**FRANK:** I'm a bit of a Francophile.

**HARRY:** A what?

**FRANK:** A Francophile. One who truly, deeply appreciates French culture... the language... the cuisine...

**HARRY:** Oh yeah, I'm definitely one of them.

**FRANK:** Do tell.

**HARRY:** You kiddin'? Especially that French cuisine. I really appreciate that French cuisine.

**FRANK:** Do you now?

**HARRY:** Oh yeah. Give me a plate of French fries and get outta the way. Love 'em.

**FRANK:** How nice. Anyhoo, this play... my play... actually, it's a musical.

**HARRY:** Love musicals. Absolutely love 'em.

**FRANK:** I wrote it. Book *and* music. It's called, "Lafayette."

**HARRY:** Heck of a title. Heck. Of. A. Title.

**FRANK:** *Merci*. It's about the Marquis de Lafayette, nobleman and hero during the American Revolution... friend of George Washington, dedicated to the ideals of freedom and liberty. As the French so elegantly put it, *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. He fought...

**HARRY:** (*Interrupting.*) Whoo. Hey. Sounds great. Really great. I love all that historical stuff.

**FRANK:** So. You're here for the audition.

**HARRY:** Yep.

**FRANK:** Your name is...?

**HARRY:** Harry. Harry Harrelson.

**FRANK:** Frank Pompeux. Nice to meet you.

**HARRY:** Same here.

**FRANK:** Have you done much theater?

**HARRY:** You kiddin'? I been in dozens of plays. Dozens.

**FRANK:** Such as?

**HARRY:** Name a play, I probably been in it.

**FRANK:** Any Shakespeare?

**HARRY:** Actually, I was up for a part in that one but I didn't get it... went to a friend of the director. This business... sometimes it's who ya know, am I right?

**FRANK:** What I mean is... have you acted in any Shakespeare?

**HARRY:** Sure I have.

**FRANK:** Which ones?

**HARRY:** Ah, you know... the usual.

**FRANK:** The usual.

**HARRY:** That's right. The usual.

**FRANK:** Hamlet? That's pretty "usual." Were you in that?

**HARRY:** Uhm... nope.

**FRANK:** Richard the Third?

**HARRY:** I... I don't think so.

**FRANK:** As You Like It?

**HARRY:** As I like what?

**FRANK:** That's the title.

**HARRY:** Oh. No... that doesn't ring a bell.

**FRANK:** Any Shakespeare? Anything at all?

**HARRY:** Not that I recall.

**FRANK:** OK. Moving on. Some musicals, perhaps...

**HARRY:** Love 'em.

**FRANK:** West Side Story?

**HARRY:** No.

**FRANK:** Hamilton?

**HARRY:** Sorry.

**FRANK:** Cabaret?

**HARRY:** Doesn't sound familiar.

**FRANK:** Guys and Dolls?

**HARRY:** *(Pause.)* Ya know... that does sound familiar.

**FRANK:** Terrif. What role?

**HARRY:** But I wasn't in it.

**FRANK:** OK. Well, perhaps you can name a play... one play... *any* play... you've been in.

**HARRY:** I got no mind for names.

**FRANK:** Well... maybe we should just start the audition. Shall we begin?

**HARRY:** Whatever you say. You're the boss.

**FRANK:** Can you do a French accent?

**HARRY:** Absolutely. French, German, Russian... all kinds of accents.

**FRANK:** Terrif. So. You have your five-minute monologue?

**HARRY:** No.

**FRANK:** No?

**HARRY:** No.

**FRANK:** But that's what I asked for... in the ad. It says so right here.

**HARRY:** I know. But I don't like doing monologues. Too restricting. I'd rather tell you a story. More expansive.

**FRANK:** A story.

**HARRY:** Yep. Shows my range.

**FRANK:** OK, fine. Go ahead. Tell me a story.

**HARRY:** I got a ton.

**FRANK:** Terrif. I'm all ears.

**HARRY:** What kind you want?

**FRANK:** What kind do you have?

**HARRY:** You kiddin'? I got all kinds. I got dramatic stories... funny ones... tear-jerkers...

**FRANK:** How about a tear-jerker?

**HARRY:** You know... it's too nice a day for a tear-jerker. It's gotta be overcast... gloomy... hint of rain... that sorta thing for a tear-jerker.

**FRANK:** OK. A funny one, then.

**HARRY:** About what?

**FRANK:** About... about whatever you want.

**HARRY:** Could you narrow it down a bit? I mean, I got so many.

**FRANK:** Just tell a story. Please. One story.

**HARRY:** No need to get all huffy.

**FRANK:** I'm not getting all huffy.

**HARRY:** Well, I think you are.

**FRANK:** You have five minutes to tell me a story. Starting now. Go.

**HARRY:** *(Pause.)* I don't work well under pressure.

**FRANK:** You don't? Look. I'm sorry but... let's just say I don't think you're right for the part.

**HARRY:** Really? *(Pause.)* Why not?

**FRANK:** Why not? Why not? For one thing, you say you've been in dozens of plays but none that I've named and you can't remember the names of the ones you've been in. For another, you don't have a monologue prepared and then you tell me you have tons of stories but can't tell me one.

**HARRY:** *(Pause.)* That's it?

**FRANK:** That's it? That's... that's plenty.

**HARRY:** I... I gotta be honest here. All due respect but I disagree. Those really don't sound like much of a reason.

**FRANK:** OK. Time's up. Time to go. I'm sure there are *beaucoup* people waiting in the hall, anxiously awaiting their chance to audition for my play. Thank you so much for coming by.

**HARRY:** *(Standing.)* Boy. Some audition. This business... I guess it really is who ya know. *(Exits, then returns.)* For your information, there's nobody in the hall.

**FRANK:** Out!

*HARRY exits. FRANK sits, drumming on the desk again. Looks at watch. Sighs. There's a knock on the door.*

**FRANK:** *Salut! Vous pouvez entrer. (Pause.) Entrer. (Pause, louder.)*  
Yo, c'mon in.

*HARRY, wearing big glasses, a fake beard, enters.*

**HARRY:** I'm here for the audition... for "Lafayette."

**FRANK:** Well, you've come to the right place. *Asseyez-vous s'il vous plait.*

*HARRY hesitates. FRANK points to chair, HARRY sits.*

**HARRY:** Mercy.

**FRANK:** Mercy?

**HARRY:** That's French.

**FRANK:** Ah. Of course.

**HARRY:** It's my second language.

**FRANK:** Really? *(Pause.)* Have... have we met before?

**HARRY:** I don't think so.

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