

DRY WIT

By Leon Kaye

Copyright © 2007 by Leon Kaye, All rights reserved.
ISBN: 1-60003-279-6

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice:

Produced by special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

DRY WIT

by
Leon Kaye

CHARACTERS

ANN Forties, smart, modern, tough
JOEY Italian, warm
TY African American, funny, loose
REG British: Uncaring

SETTING: Empty Stage, Present

AT RISE: ANN sits in the audience.

ANN: Okay, first we have Mr. Joey Tacoma.

(JOEY enters, script in hand.)

ANN: Hello, Mr. Tacoma.

JOEY: Hello, Miss Sheridan, or Missus. Is it Missus?

ANN: **(looks at her notes, not really listening. A pause)** So . . . are you reading for the part of Reginald?

JOEY: Yeah, that's right.

ANN: Reginald is English.

JOEY: Yeah, I know. I can do English.

ANN: English from England.

JOEY: Right.

ANN: You took English in high school?

JOEY: Yeah.

ANN: Or was it junior high school?

JOEY: Both.

ANN: This is different. This is Prince Charles, stuffy, God Save the Queen's English.

JOEY: Right. When can I get acting?

ANN: You can get acting now. But remember, the part calls for the driest delivery you can come up with.

JOEY: Oh no, I don't drink.

ANN: No, dry as in dry wit.

JOEY: **(not totally understanding)** Yeah. Dry wit. I can do dry wit.

ANN: No emotion whatsoever.

JOEY: Right, right.

ANN: The driest wit ever known to man.

JOEY: Yeah, got it.

ANN: Page three, I'm reading Claudia's part. (**British accent**) Reginald, darling, I will be visiting my convalescent sister, Jane, tomorrow.

JOEY: (**poor accent, and a bit animated**) Excellent news. Should I send with you a variety of wood choices so that she can select one for her coffin?

(ANN writes on a legal pad. JOEY looks on nervously.)

ANN: Okay, thank you.

JOEY: Did I need to be drier?

ANN: No, that was fine.

JOEY: I can be drier.

ANN: Well, when I said to you, "the driest wit known to man," what did you think I meant?

JOEY: I know I can be drier

ANN: Do you have a hearing aid, Mr. Tacoma?

JOEY: What – no.

ANN: Then you don't take direction very well, do you?

JOEY: I do. Ask my wife.

ANN: I'm sorry. I don't have the time. Thank you. Who's next?

(Disturbed, JOEY exits. TY enters, script in hand.)

TY: Hello.

ANN: You're black.

TY: You mean this isn't a protest march? (**smiles**) That's a joke.

ANN: I appreciate the humor, Mr. Marshall, but we're not casting black actors.

TY: I could be white.

ANN: Well, yes, I don't mean spiritually.

TY: I mean, I've got white make-up. It even has particles of white sand in it so with the lights, it reflects and gives this luminous sparkle.

ANN: I'm sorry. There are no sparkly, shiny white people in the nineteenth century.

TY: You saw my resume, right? I played King Lear in the park. White in David Copperfield. I was white in True West. White in the Odd Couple. I mean for months I avoided rap music and Kentucky Fried Chicken.

ANN: You are so racist for a black man.

TY: Ya see.

ANN: You really did Dickens with sand on your face?

TY: (**cockney**) Yes, mum. And a wee bit of Yorkshire puddin'.

ANN: Who was the director?

TY: Arnold Green.

ANN: Never heard of him. And by the sound of things, I never will.

(writes) Okay, Mr. Marshall, I'll give you a shot. Maybe I'll avoid a lawsuit.

TY: Thank you. I am brimming with gratitude.

ANN: Using white words isn't going to help your case.

TY: I knew it! Too much! **(smiles)**

ANN: Focus.

TY: Right.

ANN: Are you ready?

TY: Indisputably.

ANN: I'm ignoring that. Page sixteen. . . Reginald.

TY: Ready.

ANN: Reginald, there are only a few guests left. Perhaps I can clear the way for their hasty departure?

TY: **(Good British accent)** My dear, are you proposing murder?

ANN: Heavens, no. What I meant is that perhaps after the guests retire, we may have some time to ourselves.

TY: I see.

ANN: Well?

TY: While the thought does give me pause, such as thoughts of snowy winters sound idyllic whilst baking in the summer's heat. When the actual frosty storms do arrive, it slaps one in the face, quickly squashing all romantic ideas.

(ANN writes.)

TY: Well?

ANN: That was good, but you're still black.

TY: There's always the sand.

ANN: And there's always tap dancing.

TY: I'm going to ignore that racist remark because I am a professional and very loyal too, by the way.

ANN: In any case, you were pretty dry. And you had the accent dead on. So. . . I'll let you know.

TY: Right. **(tap dances off stage, exits.)**

ANN: Okay, next we have Reginald Huntington the third?

(REG enters with a script.)

ANN: Is your name really Reginald?

REG: **(British)** Yes, are you really a director?

ANN: Yes, I'm the director.

REG: Perfect. Your lack of intellect readily presents itself.

ANN: Well now, your name is Reginald. You are British. You're extremely nasty and lacking of all human emotion. Just what I'm looking for.

REG: If I had a nickel for every time I've heard that from an American.

ANN: Okay, page twenty-two, the top. Are you ready?

REG: I was born ready.

ANN: Sir Reginald, may I have a word with you?

REG: One word, yes. More and I may protest.

ANN: You have in your charge a picture frame belonging to my late mother. I would like to have it.

REG: The picture you may have. The frame, on the other hand, is quite becoming and I have grown attached to it.

ANN: You, sir, are a cold, insensitive man.

REG: You are swelling my head with such compliments.

ANN: **(stops reading)** Good. Very dry.

REG: And such horse's teeth I have not seen in a human mouth.

ANN: That's not in the script.

REG: I was riffing. Consider it a bonus.

ANN: This is fun. You're funny, witty. . . When can you start?

REG: I believe I already have.

ANN: You have, haven't you?

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from DRY WIT by Leon Kaye. For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:

Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 1-888-473-8521 • Fax (319) 368-8011

www.brookpub.com

Do Not Copy