

GLASS

By Saul Zachary

Copyright © 2005 by Saul Zachary, All rights reserved.
ISBN 1-60003-115-3

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.

CHARACTERS

EDWARD CHARNEY	The famous actor.
KAREN	His wife.
DOCTOR GANDER	A psychoanalyst.
A WOMAN	
AN AUDIENCE	

TIME & PLACE

The Present. Charney's apartment, twenty-two stories above New York's East Side.

PRODUCTION NOTES

A recording of Anton Webern's "Six Pieces for Orchestra Opus 6, No. 3" to be played as background music at the beginning and end of the play. The WOMAN, in the audience, should be the one to cough on cue. There needs to be a sound effect of someone rapping on glass three times.

PROP LIST

Small box of fuses
Eyeglasses
Book tied to a thin wire moored to a chair
Retractable letter opener

GLASS
by
Saul Zachary

Setting: *The living room of EDWARD CHARNEY's apartment, predictably fashionable and slick as Bloomingdale's catalog. The room should suggest the lobby of the building it occupies, filled with "genuine objects d'art," the high-rise people hives on all sides of it, Xeroxed copies in prefab concrete and glass, and a cookie-mold sameness synonymous with nervous East Side living. Off right, a foyer leading to the hall. Upstage left, a door connecting to the bedroom. Covering practically the entire downstage area is the rectangular frame of an enormous living room window. Music: Webern's "Six Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6, No. 3," eerie, atonal, suggesting the quietest kind of terror.*

At Rise: *As lights come up, EDWARD CHARNEY, tall, haunted-looking, the very model of a model actor, is standing directly in front of the window, peering outward. What HE sees makes him shudder. HE passes his hands over his eyes, looks again, begins to laugh unpleasantly, turns, drops into an easy chair, laughs once more – a bitter, private joke-type-laugh, shakes his head and without thinking, starts to pick his nose, then stops as if HE were being observed, a bit embarrassed. Sound off right of a key turning in a lock. Suddenly, EDWARD is flattened to the chair with fear.*

EDWARD: *(rigid, almost a prayer)* No, no. Make it not so! Please no!

(Door slams off right. Angry high heels and a woman's voice coming closer.)

KAREN: Edward, what happened to you?

(Music out.)

EDWARD: *(going completely limp)* So be it. Forever.

(His wife, KAREN, enters dressed in evening clothes. SHE is the female counterpart of her husband; porcelain, beautiful, a press agent's dream of what every successful actor should have opening the front door of his apartment.)

KAREN: You're not even dressed yet! I waited, I called, I was getting frantic. Didn't you hear the phone? This party's for you, darling. The least you can do is show up.

EDWARD: I'm tired.

KAREN: So am I. I've been shopping all day. I mean, *really*, Edward, I felt like such a fool! There I was with the whole cast, shifting from foot to foot, trying to make excuses for you. **(continuing without pause, SHE goes into the bedroom, throws her wrap on the bed and through the open door we see her fixing her makeup and hair in a mirror)** And that bitchy little columnist... what's her name, I've repressed it already, you know, the one with the sweaty hands... looking so sympathetic! Can't you just see her column tomorrow? "What famous matinee idol left his wife standing high and dry at his show's third anniversary party? Could it be hit shows and hit marriages don't mix?" I could've died. Edward! Edward, if you don't get a move on, that woman will have us divorced all over town!

EDWARD: **(wearily, his eyes searching the darkness)** There's nothing to worry about, Karen.

KAREN: It's easy for you to say that now, but when she starts smearing our private life... **(HE laughs harshly.)** Edward, this is serious.

EDWARD: Yes, it is.

KAREN: **(coming back to the living room)** Well, what are you going to do – sit there and stare out the window all night?

EDWARD: **(looking at her for the first time)** What window?

KAREN: **(in exasperation)** The big glass thing you're staring through. What would you call it – a shower curtain?

EDWARD: **(quietly)** Karen, are you putting me on?

KAREN: Putting you on? Somebody tell me what he's talking about!

EDWARD: **(springs out of the chair)** You're asking... **(jerks his head toward the window)** THEM?

KAREN: **(bewildered)** Them? Honey, what's wrong? You don't look well, are you feeling all right? **(puts her hand on his forehead)**

EDWARD: **(slaps her hand away)** Oh you're good, you're very good.

KAREN: Eight shows a week for three years straight, not counting benefits, it's no wonder you're a little peevish. You do look rotten, darling. Well, I will not accept any more smoke from you about a vacation. That's final. I need lipstick. **(goes back into the bedroom)**

EDWARD: **(paces, his eyes on the window)** How did you have it done, that's what I'd like to know.

KAREN: **(off)** Leave it to me. Next week we'll be in Antigua.

EDWARD: Reproducing the whole room down to even the stains on the carpet. In a theatre, no less.

KAREN: **(off)** I'll tell Barney to sign a replacement for you. He can get Jackman or Broderick. **(comes back into the living room)** You

forget about the party, darling. Go to bed. Oh, that snake! I'm going back there and I'll tell her simply, calmly, that you were exhausted, which is true. If the phone rings, it'll be her checking on you. Tell her to go to hell if you want to – but just answer it, pul-ease. **(pecks him on the cheek)** See you later. **(starts out the door)**

EDWARD: And where do you think you're going?

KAREN: Back to the party! I just got finished telling you.

EDWARD: The "party." **(laughs, goes up to her, takes her by the shoulders and looks intently at her for a moment)** I know something about acting. And no one, no one could act as well as you've been if you were lying... so that's it, then. You're not supposed to know.

KAREN: Know what, for heaven's sakes?

(Someone in the audience coughs. At the sound, EDWARD snaps his head toward the darkness, walks downstage, cupping his eyes to see better.)

EDWARD: Did you hear?

KAREN: Hear what? Edward, what is the matter with you?

EDWARD: **(slowly)** You didn't hear someone out there cough?

KAREN: All the time. There are eight million people down in those streets who cough, sneeze, belch, and God knows what constantly. That's New York. **(goes to him and puts her arm around his waist, looking outward)** Isn't it glorious?

EDWARD: **(throws her away)** Stop this nonsense, will you?

KAREN: **(with heat)** My sentiments exactly.

EDWARD: **(points)** Even a blind man could tell what's out there! And it's not New York!

KAREN: **(dryly)** Well, it's not Des Moines, Iowa. There's the Met Life Building – ugly box. And the Empire State. And the Triboro Bridge. And the U.N.

EDWARD: **(simultaneously)** Oh God, let me wake up. Just let me wake up now.

KAREN: **(without pause)** And the Chrysler Building. And the Manhattan Bridge. Edward, you're hurting my arm!

EDWARD: Why won't you tell me the truth?

KAREN: What truth? Let go of me!

EDWARD: **(releases her; almost in a whisper)** That... that there's an audience out there. Watching us. Listening. That this whole thing is a fake. It's a set for a play!

KAREN: A set? You mean a stage set?

EDWARD: Yes. Yes, that's right.

KAREN: Edward, this is our apartment. We did this place, not Tony Walton.

EDWARD: When I'm onstage, it's real. But this... **(shakes his head doggedly)**

KAREN: By my alcoholic aunt Sophie, you're serious!

EDWARD: Damn straight I'm serious. Where's your precious picture window? **(takes a step downstage and kicks out, hard; sarcastic)** See, I just stuck my foot through it.

KAREN: **(looks at him in annoyance, steps closer downstage and raps on air three times, producing three distinct bone on glass sounds)** Glass. If it sounds like glass, looks like glass and feels like glass – what is it?

EDWARD: **(blinks in fear)** It's a lie. Like everything else around here.

KAREN: Edward, I really wish you'd stop this Pirandello-ing about. You're getting me worried. This is our home, darling.

EDWARD: I don't know why or how it happened, Karen, but we are not home. We're someplace else. A place that looks like home.

KAREN: **(catching a little bit of his fear)** Edward, stop it. Just stop it now!

EDWARD: You don't believe me. I'll prove it. There's... there's a console for the stage lights offstage left. We'll play this scene in the dark. **(HE leaves. All the lights go out.)**

KAREN: **(angrily)** Edward!

EDWARD: **(offstage, delighted)** I found it! Ha, ha! Didn't I tell you? **(comes back onstage and is heard banging into furniture)** The Great Power Failure! **(laughs)** No show tonight. Go home, everybody.

(The lights go on again. KAREN walks in from stage left holding a box of fuses.)

KAREN: Sorry to ruin your fun, little boy. If you want to snatch any more fuses, I have a whole box of them. See?

EDWARD: Fuses! Karen, don't humor me. I'm going to end this nightmare right now. **(runs off again)**

KAREN: **(looks at him)** What are you doing there? Edward! **(the curtain starts to descend; furious)** My drapes! Leave my drapes alone, do you hear? I worked six months on those drapes. Fix them. Fix them the way they were or I swear I'll divorce you! **(The curtain stops its descent, then reluctantly goes back up. EDWARD re-enters.)** Edward, I've never seen you acting like this.

EDWARD: That's because I don't know my part yet. Nor do you, Karen dear. And the joke is we may never find out. But *they* know.

KAREN: They?

EDWARD: Those peeping toms out there. Sitting in the dark like bats, watching us. Sponging off our lives.

KAREN: Not again. Edward, come to your senses; there is no one here but us!

EDWARD: We'll see about that. **(HE dashes offstage into the audience, hauls a convenient WOMAN to her feet and drags her, struggling amidst ad-lib objections, back onstage.)** Look what I found! Fourth row on the aisle!

(WOMAN closes her eyes and emits a screech.)

KAREN: Miss, calm down.

WOMAN: Police! Help! I'm being assaulted! Call the police!

KAREN: Everything's all right, Miss. Just a little joke, don't get excited.

WOMAN: That... that man's crazy! He... he assaulted me! Police!

KAREN: I know about it. He's my husband.

WOMAN: And you don't mind? Let me outta here! You're crazier than he is! Somebody, anybody, rape!

EDWARD: Oh, shut up, will you.

WOMAN: Me shut up? Why... why'd you drag me off the street up here?

EDWARD: Off the street?

WOMAN: Oh, you have a short memory, huh? I'm walkin', mindin' my own business, suddenly this maniac runs out of this here building, grabs my arm, forces me into the elevator. I read about sex-fiends like you in the paper. You just watch. I'm going to press charges.

EDWARD: Lady, you weren't in the street; you were in the audience.

WOMAN: Yeah, there was an audience, all right. Lots of people walkin' by. You think one of 'em would help a lady in distress? **(to KAREN)** And you wanna hear something, one guy asked him if he needed a hand! Only in New York, only in New York could this happen to an innocent person like me!

EDWARD: Karen, she's lying. **(points)** She was sitting right there.

WOMAN: What's he sayin'? Hey, hey, keep away from me, you nut! ...Say, you look kinda familiar.

KAREN: So he found you in the street.

WOMAN: Where else? I was on my way to Bloomingdale's. It's open till nine on Thursday nights. **(looks at EDWARD again)** Wait a minute. Aren't you – **(starts to giggle)**

KAREN: He is.

EDWARD: **(recognizing the signs)** Get her out of here.

WOMAN: EDWARD CHARNEY! Oh, Mister Charney, I think you're just wonderful. I seen you in all your pictures and shows. **(whispers to KAREN)** We ain't on reality TV, are we?

KAREN: **(steers her to the door)** No.

WOMAN: Wait until I tell my friends that I was almost raped by Edward Charney! If I'da known this would happen to me, I woulda worn my black sequined dress.

EDWARD: I'll let you know next time.

WOMAN: Any time! (*whispers to KAREN again*) Say, it's none of my business, Mrs. Charney, but your husband seems a little disturbed.

KAREN: Really? I hadn't noticed. Thank you so much.

WOMAN: I mean, does he do this kinda thing often? Some people might not understand.

KAREN: No, no. Thank you again. I hope we didn't inconvenience you too much. Goodbye.

WOMAN: Don't mention it, I'm sure. Like I said, Bloomingdale's is open till nine. (*over KAREN's shoulder as the door is finally closing, to EDWARD*) Remember – any time!

(Sound of front door closing.)

EDWARD: She was *not* in the street, Karen. I found her in the audience. Right there. You believe me, don't you, Karen?

KAREN: I believe you think she was in the "audience," wherever that is. Perhaps we ought to let someone better qualified hear about this. (*goes to the telephone on the coffee table, starts dialing*)

EDWARD: Who are you calling?

KAREN: Doctor Gander.

EDWARD: What for? I don't need a psychoanalyst.

KAREN: He is also our friend, remember...Hello, Bob? It's Karen, Karen Charney. Fine, well no, not exactly... oh, it's not me, it's Edward. He's been acting... well, he has this wild idea about an audience watching us... where? In our living room. That's right, in our living room. (*with a pained smile*) Yes, it is very interesting. I... I was wondering, Bob, if you could come up to the twenty-second floor and talk to him. I'm sure it's nothing but overtiredness, but I'd really appreciate it if you could... you're a dear. See you soon. (*puts the phone down*) He'll be right up.

EDWARD: Now you're trying to convince me I'm crazy, is that it?

KAREN: Edward, it's a good thing you married a patient woman. I just want you to talk to Doctor Gander. Tell him what you told me and let him judge.

EDWARD: Any man who always has ketchup on his tie is not fit to judge. Besides, he's a lousy poker player, he's got bad breath, and his insights aren't worth Monopoly money.

KAREN: He happens to be a very brilliant man. (*EDWARD groans.*) Are you afraid of what he'll say?

EDWARD: Of course not. There's nothing wrong with me. But if I can help him, I don't mind giving up the time.

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from GLASS by Saul Zachary. 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