

# LAID OFF

## By Lauren Tunnell

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**CHARACTERS:** Each of the characters is a line from a play. He or she wears a large cardboard sign with the line printed on it, on top of the other costume specifics.

**WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?:** (F) All around good employee. Middle-management type. Dress is business casual.

**LET'S GET ON WITH IT:** (M) Top executive. Wears power suit.

**ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR:** (M) LET'S GET ON WITH IT's executive assistant, or rather more like his slave.

**LIKE...YEAH:** (F) Twenty-something scantily clad bimbo. Serves drinks, runs errands, is not required to think much.

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** *As written, this script calls for two men and two women. However, the gender of each of the four characters is flexible, and can be switched by simply changing a few adverbs.*

**SETTING:** LET'S GET ON WITH IT's executive office.

***AT RISE: LET'S GET ON WITH IT is sitting behind his desk. ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR enters.***

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: "Where's the moon tonight?" is here to see you sir.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: Let's get on with it.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: (*enters*) You called?

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: Yes, please take a seat

(*WHERE'S THE MOON sits, LET'S GET ON WITH IT delivers the following line in a summoning tone.*)

Anything you say, sir?

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: Yes

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: Finish filing the documents in the other room.

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: Anything you say, sir.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: And do my laundry, and the dishes.

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ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: Anything you say, sir.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: And while you're at it, I'd like you to clean the outhouse.

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: Anything you say, sir.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: With a toothbrush.

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: Anything you say, sir. *(exits)*

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: *(to WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?)* Do you have any idea why I called you in here?

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: Um... no.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: Well you see, our script is coming along okay, but we're still in need of considerable revision.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: Of course, revision is an integral part in developing a manuscript.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: Yes, and as you know, a stage play is a very... precise thing. Each line, each word really, has to do his part. Hold his own. Benefit the good of the finished product.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: Naturally, that's Playwriting 101. But what does any of this have to do with me?

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: Well you see, the last revision was a little more drastic than the others.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: What? Was the plot restructured or something?

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: Not exactly, but we had to make some cuts that were, frankly, pretty brutal.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: You can't be serious.

*(LET'S GET ON WITH IT nods.)*

You're cutting me?

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: I can see how this might come as a shock.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: You can't cut me! I'm "Where's the moon tonight"? I'm a great line. I'm where it all started.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: I can see that this is upsetting you but...

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: You bet I'm upset! You can't write this play without me? I'm the thought that popped into our esteemed playwright's head as he was trying to see through the smog over Beijing. I'm the springboard that inspired the entire story to begin with.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: We all know that you played a vital role in the story's origins. Unfortunately, right now we really don't see a place for you in the manuscript's future.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: I can't believe this.

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LET'S GET ON WITH IT: It's nothing personal. We have to tighten it up. They're looking for brief and punchy. *(beat)* I'm exhausted. Can we get some coffee in here?

LIKE... YEAH: *(entering with coffee)* Like... Yeah

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: Like yeah?! Like yeah?!

LIKE... YEAH: Like... yeah.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: I'm being cut, but "Like... Yeah" gets to keep her job?

LIKE... YEAH: Like... yeah

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: I demand an explanation.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: At some point in nearly every play, somebody asks a question that must be answered in the affirmative.

LIKE... YEAH: Like... yeah

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: Shut up!!! *(to LET'S GET ON WITH IT)* Okay, I understand why "Yes" might be necessary, but "Like... yeah?"

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: She adds flair to it.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: She's insipid.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: And you really overestimate yourself. You're not nearly as literary as you think you are.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: And you are, Mr. "Let's get on with it?"

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: I move the plot along. That's my job.

*(ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR enters with a stack of papers. HE drops them off on the desk.)*

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: I don't suppose "Anything you say, sir" is getting cut either.

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: I'd do *anything* to get cut from this play.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: "Anything you say, sir" isn't going anywhere.

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: I'm not that useful. Really, I'm not!

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: Stand on one foot! Put your hands on your head!

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: *(does so)* Anything you say, sir.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: I can't believe it. For as long as I can remember... as long as I've existed actually, this play has been my life—my *raison d'être*. What will I do now?

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: If I were cut from this play I'd serve Piña Coladas on some tropical island, or maybe I'd get a job at the royal palace. *(dreamily, to himself, with a bow and an affected British accent)* Anything you say, sir.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: Nobody asked you.

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: Yes, sir.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: I can offer you a place in the idea box. We can file you away in there, and maybe, just maybe, our esteemed author will dig you up again and use you somewhere else.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: The idea box! But everyone who's ever gone in there has ended up...

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: Never heard from again? Utterly forgotten? Yes, that's usually what happens.

LIKE... YEAH: Ouch.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: At least it's a chance, albeit a very small one. It's the best I can offer you.

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: I'll go into the idea box.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: That's enough from you. Get out of here. Don't you have a sewer to clean?

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: Anything you say, sir. *(exits)*

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: So... if I go into the box, and nobody takes me back out again, than basically...

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: You would cease to exist. You would die so to speak.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: Then I won't do it. I can't literally just... roll over and die. Not without putting up a fight.

LIKE... YEAH: You have to. You got cut.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: I don't have to do anything. I belong right here in this play and I'm not going anywhere.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: I'm sorry, but I'm afraid you'll have to leave.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: You can't make me!

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: *(summoning again)* Anything you say, sir.

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: *(enters)* Here.

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: Please escort this line off the premises.

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: Anything you say, sir. *(to WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?)* Ma'am you'll need to come with me.

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: I'm staying right here.

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR: Ma'am please...

WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT?: No, no, no, no, no!

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: Like... yeah, can you help him out a little?

LIKE... YEAH: Like... yeah.

*(LIKE... YEAH and ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR drag WHERE'S THE MOON TONIGHT? offstage, kicking and screaming.)*

LET'S GET ON WITH IT: *(as LIKE... YEAH and ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR return)* And another one bites the dust. Well, what are we waiting for? There's still a lot more downsizing that needs to happen today. We really got our work cut out for us.

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