

SO WHAT IF LIFE'S A CLICHÉ?

A SHORT PLAY

by
Philip Vassallo



Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

Toll-Free 888-473-8521

Fax 319-368-8011

Web www.brookpub.com

Copyright © 2011 by Philip Vassallo
All rights reserved

CAUTION: Professionals & amateurs are hereby warned that *So What If Life's a Cliché?* is subject to a royalty. This play is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, Canada, the British Commonwealth and all other countries of the Copyright Union.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this play are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion pictures, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS & ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this play 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. If necessary, we will contact the author or the author's agent. PLEASE NOTE that royalty fees for performing this play can be located online at Brooklyn Publishers, LLC website (<http://www.brookpub.com>). 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. You will find our contact information on the following page.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged. Only forensics competitions are exempt from this fee.

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

<http://www.brookpub.com>

TRADE MARKS, PUBLIC FIGURES, & MUSICAL WORKS: This play may include references to brand names or public figures. All references are intended only as parody or other legal means of expression. This play may contain suggestions for the performance of a musical work (either in part or in whole). Brooklyn Publishers, LLC have not obtained performing rights of these works. The direction of such works is only a playwright's suggestion, and the play producer should obtain such permissions on their own. The website for the U.S. copyright office is <http://www.copyright.gov>.

COPYING from the book in any form (in whole or excerpt), whether photocopying, scanning recording, videotaping, storing in a retrieval system, or by any other means, is strictly forbidden without consent of Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

TO PERFORM THIS PLAY

1. Royalty fees must be paid to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC before permission is granted to use and perform the playwright's work.
2. Royalty of the required amount must be paid each time the play is performed, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.
3. When performing one-acts or full-length plays, enough playbooks must be purchased for cast and crew.
4. Copying or duplication of any part of this script is strictly forbidden.
5. Any changes to the script are not allowed without direct authorization by Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.
6. Credit to the author and publisher is required on all promotional items associated with this play's performance(s).
7. Do not break copyright laws with any of our plays. This is a very serious matter and the consequences can be quite expensive. We must protect our playwrights, who earn their living through the legal payment of script and performance royalties.
8. If you have questions concerning performance rules, contact us by the various ways listed below:

Toll-free: 888-473-8521

Fax: 319-368-8011

Email: customerservice@brookpub.com

Copying, rather than purchasing cast copies, and/or failure to pay royalties is a federal offense. Cheating us and our wonderful playwrights in this manner will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Please support theatre and follow federal copyright laws.

SO WHAT IF LIFE'S A CLICHÉ?

by
Philip Vassallo

CHARACTERS

CLEE, either sex and any age will do

SHAY, either sex and any age do, but same age and dress as CLEE

SCENE

A void

TIME

Now

PROPERTY LIST

For Clee: folding chair, bottled water

For Shay: folding chair, bottled water

PRODUCTION HISTORY

So What If Life's a Cliché? premiered in Trinity Church, Englewood, New Jersey, on February 25, 2011, as a production of the Italian-American Repertory Company, produced and directed by John Fedele with the following cast:

CLEE: Dan Pona

SHAY: Angela Rauscher

SETTING: Two folding chairs Down Center.

AT RISE: CLEE and SHAY are sitting on the chairs and holding their bottle on their lap. THEY speak quickly, anxiously.

CLEE: *(Looks at us)* Did you ever feel ...

SHAY: *(Looks at us)* ... your life is a cliché?

CLEE: *(Turns to SHAY)* Like no matter what you said ...

SHAY: *(Turns to CLEE)* ... you'd said it before?

CLEE: Or whatever you did ...

SHAY: ... you'd done it before?

CLEE: *(Turns to us)* Your ...

SHAY: *(Turns to us)* ... gestures ...

CLEE: ... your ...

SHAY: ... thoughts ...

CLEE: ... and even your ...

SHAY: ... dreams?

CLEE: Your life: nothing but ...

SHAY: a cliché ...

CLEE: ... a pathetic ...

SHAY: ... embarrassing ...

CLEE: ... loathsome ...

SHAY: ... cliché.

(THEY simultaneously open their bottles, take a quick sip, place the bottles on the floor, and rise. THEY turn to each other as their voices grow sad.)

CLEE: The art ...

SHAY: ... you've seen ...

CLEE: ... the music ...

SHAY: ... you've heard ...

CLEE: ... the flowers ...

SHAY: ... you've smelled ...

CLEE: ... the food ...

SHAY: ... you've tasted ...

CLEE: ... the lovers ...

SHAY: ... you've touched ...

CLEE: ... just ...

SHAY: ... clichés ...

CLEE: ... pathetic ...

SHAY: ... embarrassing ...

CLEE: ... loathsome ...

SHAY: ... clichés.

(THEY face each other.)

SHAY: ... You would turn toward someone ...

CLEE: ... as if by chance ...

SHAY: ... like someone for the first time ...

CLEE: ... someone you'd never met before ...

SHAY: ... someone in a class listening really hard to the teacher's lecture...

CLEE: ... so beautiful in her search for wisdom. Or on a train ...

SHAY: ... so radiant against the backdrop of the passing landscape. Or in a mall ...

CLEE: ... so colorful against the bright holiday displays ...

SHAY: ... anyone, anywhere really ...

CLEE: ... or someone you've known forever ...

SHAY: ... someone you've known all along ...

CLEE: ... maybe your mother ...

SHAY: ... stunningly beautiful in her love for you ...

CLEE: ... placing before you your favorite dish as if for the very first time. Or your father ...

SHAY: ... a beacon of brilliant perception ...

CLEE: ... telling his childhood story that helps you define your own life. Or a big brother ...

SHAY: ... so glaringly gallant ...

CLEE: ... in how he fights your battles for you ... Or a little sister ...

SHAY: ... a precious spark of unbearable light ...

CLEE: ... who in wearing your hand-me-downs becomes your very flesh and blood. Or a friend ...

SHAY: ... an eternally shining memory ...

CLEE: ... for having kept that secret you'd tell no one else ...

SHAY: ... or a lover, now in candlelight ...

CLEE: ... a face ablaze with passion ...

SHAY: ... how that moment will last forever!

CLEE: ... Sitting on a beach ...

SHAY: ... in the pitch black night ...

CLEE: ... listening to the waves ...

SHAY: ... feeling his shoulder press against yours ...

CLEE: ... you could swear you hear his heart beating ...

SHAY: ... or is it yours? No wonder you promised to give him your heart ...

CLEE: ... your soul ...

SHAY: ... your blood ...

CLEE: ... your life ...

SHAY: ... your child ...

CLEE: ... your child ...

SHAY: ... your child, about whom there's nothing you need to say ...

CLEE: ... but gives you every reason to live ...

SHAY: ... and a cause you're willing to die for ...

CLEE: ... or maybe that glorious moment in candlelight ...

SHAY: ... or by the sea that leads to little more than a memory, a passing experience existing now only in your journal. You go off to college ...

CLEE: ... Plato versus Aristotle, did Shakespeare write all those plays, the standard deviation of virtually anything, including Corona Extras and Margaritas you mixed in Key West on spring break ...

SHAY: ... graduate ...

CLEE: ... cum laude, partying until dawn, that last summer vacation before you start to pay off those loans ...

SHAY: ... get a good job ...

CLEE: ... blazing your own path through a company ...

SHAY: ... or two ...

CLEE: ... innovating, contributing, climbing the corporate ladder ...

SHAY: ... finding a new lover ...

CLEE: ... weekend bike rides in the park, nighttimes watching movies, sharing bags of microwavable popcorn, Club Med vacations ...

SHAY: ... get the question ...

CLEE: ... will you marry me ... will you be my wife ... will you be my soul mate ... will you spend the rest of your life ...

SHAY: ... get married ...

CLEE: ... help him live his life, write his résumé, prep him for his job interview, cook his meals, wash his clothes ...

SHAY: ... bear his children ...

CLEE: ... help them live their lives, nurse them, dress them, feed them, watch them grow up, love them, watch them move away, sadly say goodbye ...

SHAY: ... Get a phone call from your child ...

CLEE: ... more than likely a text message ...

SHAY: ... more than likely a text message saying, "Mom, please go to the attic and find my old photo album" ...

CLEE: ... or school uniform or stamp collection or treasure chest ...

SHAY: ... You walk past your husband watching the ballgame with a beer in one hand, the remote in another, and his eyes sagging into sleep. You climb the stairs to the attic, walk past the sealed cartons marked by years running clear across the attic, all those years you've lived, all those things collected and forgotten, covered in dust. You open the box you think you were looking for and find not your child's memento but your journal from thirty-five years ago. You open it and there he is ...

CLEE: ... your lover, now in candlelight, a face ablaze with passion, sitting on a beach in the pitch black night, listening to the waves, feeling his shoulder press against yours. You could swear you hear his heart beating. Or is it yours? No wonder you promised to give him your heart. (Pause.) How you thought that moment would last forever.

SHAY: And you read the date you made that entry. You were seventeen ...

CLEE: ... Ten years younger than your child is now. And from that lonely place in the attic you feel your skin rash, feel your back ache, and hear the TV announcer screaming, "home run," drowning out your husband's snores, and you aren't quite sure why, but you sit there on the attic floor, your journal in hand, and ...

SHAY: ... weep. The tears just keep streaming down your face, wetting your housedress. You're making a mess of yourself. Where is he? Would he remember? What difference would it make? What just happened these past thirty-five years?

CLEE: Sad.

SHAY: Heartbreaking.

CLEE: But no ...

SHAY: ... you never did get married ...

CLEE: ... remaining true to your sense of adventure ...

SHAY: ... your boundless ambition ...

CLEE: ... you travel the world ...

SHAY: ... join the Peace Corps, teach literacy to Guatemalan children in a poor remote mountain village in return for learning the language of Borges, Mistral, Neruda, and Marquez. You tour Europe, Asia, Africa to discover why every immigrant you ever met left their homeland and why their homeland kept them from what they were able to do here. You meet the rich, the famous, the powerful ...

CLEE: ... the prime minister of Japan at a command performance by your musician friend in Tokyo, the Academy Award winners at a reception in the Cannes Film Festival, a Nobel Prize winner whose child you tutored ...

SHAY: You're invited to mansions of world leaders, say just the right things at the right times to influence their course of action to affect the lives of their millions of constituents in a positive way.

CLEE: But wouldn't you know it ...

SHAY: ... one day ...

CLEE: ... when you've missed your connecting flight ...

SHAY: ... to find you won't be flying first class...

CLEE: ... and you check your smartphone for the next dozen messages inviting you to this reception or that command performance ...

SHAY: ... but nothing's there ...

CLEE: ... no messages ...

SHAY: ... not a single e-mail, voicemail, text message ...

CLEE: ... you board your flight and cross an ocean and arrive home ...

SHAY: ... and still not a single e-mail, voicemail, text message ...

END OF FREE PREVIEW