

# THIRD ACT AND TEN

## By David J. LeMaster

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***An audition. The ACTOR faces the DIRECTOR, who may be positioned in the audience. ACTOR steps forward and takes deep breath.***

DIRECTOR: And you are?

ACTOR: Matt Jones.

DIRECTOR: *(holds up headshot)* This is you?

ACTOR: *(embarrassed)* Yeah.

DIRECTOR: Five years ago, maybe.

ACTOR: Sorry. Old shots.

DIRECTOR: This is professional theater. You've got to be better prepared.

ACTOR: Yes sir.

DIRECTOR: Very well. Any time you're ready.

*(Pause. ACTOR takes deep breath, pauses, and then falls to the floor and energetically does ten pushups. HE jumps back up, runs in place, tap dances, and then falls on one knee and hits a pose as HE sings.)*

ACTOR: *(singing and posing)* Oh, yeah!!!!

*(Pause. The DIRECTOR is taking notes. HE grunts and groans, going through a quick, critical replay of the entire scene. Pause.)*

DIRECTOR: Okay then.

ACTOR: Okay?

DIRECTOR: Yes, okay.

ACTOR: Do I get the part?

DIRECTOR: Perhaps.

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ACTOR: Really?

DIRECTOR: The breadth of your performance was astounding.

The emotional levels were tremendous.

ACTOR: Thank you.

DIRECTOR: Have you done Shakespeare before?

ACTOR: In the Park.

DIRECTOR: What show?

ACTOR: Leer.

DIRECTOR: Let's see a scene from that.

*(ACTOR takes a deep breath, and then does jumping jacks.)*

Ah, very good. What about Mercutio?

*(ACTOR does aerobics.)*

Malvolio?

*(ACTOR does new aerobic.)*

Falstaff?

*(ACTOR does situps.)*

Very good. And according to this resume, you're 6'4"?

ACTOR: Yes.

DIRECTOR: Want to try again?

ACTOR: 6'2".

DIRECTOR: Really?

ACTOR: Almost six feet.

DIRECTOR: Uh huh. Do you have any experience with Iambic Pentameter?

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ACTOR: I was an offensive lineman in high school.

DIRECTOR: Perfect. (*writes*) Let's see you do comedy.

(*ACTOR does Pilates.*)

Tragedy.

(*ACTOR does lunges.*)

Tragicomedy.

(*ACTOR does a new exercise. The DIRECTOR is pained. Pause.*)

Thank you! Goodbye.

ACTOR: What?

DIRECTOR: That's it. Don't call us, we'll call you. Goodbye.

ACTOR: But I thought—

DIRECTOR: You're too limited.

ACTOR: It was just tragicomedy.

DIRECTOR: *Just* tragicomedy? Did those words come out of your mouth?

ACTOR: Well, I—

DIRECTOR: With an attitude like that, no wonder you were horrendous.

ACTOR: I can do better.

DIRECTOR: Forget it. You're done.

ACTOR: Please—

DIRECTOR: You think you can mail in a major role? Huh? You couldn't even play a nonspeaking roll with an audition like that.

ACTOR: I can work into it.

DIRECTOR: You're too limited.

ACTOR: But Hamlet—

DIRECTOR: Hamlet? You want to play Hamlet?

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ACTOR: Why not? I played it in grade school.

DIRECTOR: How much do you bench press?

ACTOR: Two fifty.

DIRECTOR: Liar.

ACTOR: Two and a quarter.

DIRECTOR: You've got to be kidding.

ACTOR: A hundred and two, and that's the honest truth.

DIRECTOR: You're pathetic. You're a tub of Jello, a fat, flabby, goo-ball, and you want to play Hamlet. You couldn't make it through the first half.

ACTOR: Sure I could.

DIRECTOR: You'd be flattened by Polonius. Trampled by Gertrude. KO'ed by Ophelia.

*(ACTOR, frustrated, does jumping jacks.)*

You call that Hamlet, you pathetic wuss?

*(ACTOR, more frustrated runs in place.)*

My mother could do better than that!

*(ACTOR goes berserk with exercises, doing everything HE can think of. DIRECTOR takes persona of football coach.)*

Come on! Move it! Harder! Get those knees higher up! Higher! Higher! You'll never get through "To Be or Not to Be" like that. Move! Move! Move! Move! Move!

*(By this time the ACTOR is exhausted, having moved across the stage at top speed doing every exercise HE could come up with. ACTOR collapses. Pause.)*

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Now, you pathetic plate of lazy, do you see why you're not ready to play Hamlet? You'd break you tonsils.

ACTOR: But . . . I . . . can . . .

DIRECTOR: All right. I'm taking pity on you. I'll give you one last shot.

ACTOR: Thank you.

DIRECTOR: I've got one position left; backup to Second Attendant. He's a veteran with injury problems, so you've got a chance to understudy.

ACTOR: Oh, thank you.

DIRECTOR: You've got to win the position, son. I'm not giving it to you.

ACTOR: Oh.

DIRECTOR: You get in the heat of the show, when they bring on that iambic Pentameter late in the fourth act, and you could really be in trouble out there. Let's do some drills.

ACTOR: Yes sir.

DIRECTOR: We'll do the obstacle course. You go through the tires, scale the wall, jump the barriers, and swing over the water.

ACTOR: Right.

DIRECTOR: While reciting the opening monologue to Richard III.

ACTOR: But I haven't played Richard III!

DIRECTOR: And you want to play Hamlet? How can you put points on the board when you haven't had a hunchback and played the villain?

ACTOR: Okay. I'll do it.

DIRECTOR: What did you say?

ACTOR: Okay.

DIRECTOR: Okay, sir!

ACTOR: Okay, sir!

DIRECTOR: Okay, sir, what?

ACTOR: I'll do it.

DIRECTOR: Sound off, actor, I can't hear you!

ACTOR: I'll do it!

DIRECTOR: Now go out for a cue line.

ACTOR: Sir, yes sir!

DIRECTOR: Here it comes. And . . . go!

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ACTOR: *(bouncing up and down as if running through tires on an obstacle course)*

Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious—

*(HE falls)*

DIRECTOR: Son, you just got smashed in the backfield.

ACTOR: I can do better.

DIRECTOR: I hope so. Let's try that play again. Ready, set, hut.  
Set, hut. Set . . . action!

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