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Chaos in Theatre

A Grand Guignol of Actors' & Directors' Worst Nightmares

By Jean-Pierre Bongila

Revised English Version by
John Fenn

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Chaos in Theatre

By Jean-Pierre Bongila

CAST

ALPHA

DOCTOR HORACE THIERRY

BONAFFE

BADIKO, PROFESSOR STEINHERZ, ONE IA MAN

DAN MARTIN, TWO IA MAN, DEAN POLONIUS

HEHINIANG, THREE IA MAN

MIKI, Hehiniang's wife

EXTRAS

SETTING

*The Theatre at the College of Global Perfection
The Office of the Head of the Theatre Department*

Chaos in Theatre by Jean-Pierre Bongila

ACT I; SCENE I

(AT RISE: DOCTOR HORACE THIERRY's office represented by two three- fold flats plastered with college production theatre posters. The stage itself is otherwise bare; no masking, wings or backdrop. "College of Global Perfection" is inscribed on the marble arches along the proscenium. A door stage left opens and a decidedly distracted ALPHA enters.)

ALPHA

Oh, Lord! Nine o'clock and rehearsal at 10. I best check his E-mail. Oh dear! This is sure high priority. Now Alpha, you must remember tell Doctor Thierry the minute he comes in. Just like at support group last night, "You've got to learn to prioritize things, Alpha." Prioritize, prioritize, prioritize.

(There is a great clatter as DOCTOR THIERRY, head of the Theatre Department, enters.)

THIERRY

Prioritize! Absolutely, charming girl. Then tell me, if you will, knowing that I always take my little communion first thing before rehearsal, why, with this new found resolve to prioritize, why have you failed to make proper preparation for my little ritual?

ALPHA

I'm so sorry Doctor Thierry. I completely forgot ... *(Gets bottle of Jack Daniels)*...but I could never understand why you call this "communion". *(Pours glass for THIERRY)*

THIERRY

For my wife, dear child. For my religiously zealous, alcohol abhorring, controlling wife. I just tell her I always take communion every morning before rehearsal.

(THIERRY gestures for another shot; ALPHA complies.)

ALPHA

Oh, my oh my...

THIERRY

Don't tell me you disapprove! I will not get caught in a pincer movement between home and office, when I am so anxious about my tenure petition.

ALPHA

Oh, no, Professor. It just seems a little early in the day...

THIERRY

Nonsense, it jump starts me for rehearsal! Now, speaking of my tenure, has there been any answer from the administration about my much deserved, long awaited, vastly overdue authorization of my application.

ALPHA

You know that their answer is not due for two weeks.

THIERRY

I would have thought that they would make an exception in my case, Alpha! Where are those dolts for rehearsal?

(Enter DAN MARTIN in haste and hysteria.)

DAN

Oh, my God, oh, my God!

ALPHA

Dan, what's the matter? What's wrong?

DAN

Gastino, our beloved star, has drowned in the commons swimming pool.

ALPHA

Is he dead?

THIERRY

Alpha, my dear, to pass the course in drowning, death is required reading.

DAN

I thought the Dean would have informed you... it being so urgent...

ALPHA

Urgent. Oh Lord. I meant to tell you...

THIERRY

My prioritizing challenged secretary strikes again. What, what?

ALPHA

An E-mail, an urgent E-mail from the Dean.

THIERRY

Now, Dan, what in the world do you suppose could be the content of that urgent E-pistle from the Dean? Prioritize, Alpha!

ALPHA

I'm so sorry... a slip... I fell off the wagon... I'll talk about it in group this evening.

THIERRY

To wile away your time between now and your confessional, WHY DON'T YOU CLICK THE SILLY THING UP ON THE SCREEN AND READ IT TO US!

ALPHA

Yeh...yeh...yes. I definitely shall. I'll do that very thing... (*Scrambles to computer; reads*)
"My dear Professor THIERRY, I write with sorrowful heart as this letter brings news which is both...

THIERRY

Cut - To - The - Chase, Alpha! Dean Polonius is renowned for no matter and too much art!

ALPHA

...in short, Gastino, your leading actor, jumped into the commons swimming pool to his death"

(*ALPHA wails in grief.*)

THIERRY

Shut Up, Alpha! We are two weeks from opening night, he knew that. He's playing the lead, so why in the name of God would he die? I swear to God, I'll pull his degree... just a blank folder on Commencement day for him. A bloody blank folder.

ALPHA

He's a junior ... won't graduate until next...

THIERRY

Makes no difference, make a note. No degree for Gastino.

ALPHA

His father's going to be dreadfully upset.

DAN

He's probably pretty upset already, Alpha.

ALPHA

But there's more here...

THIERRY

I can't understand...

DAN

Professor, I think I can help. I was there, at the pool, at the time, at the door when it happened.

THIERRY

Well...

DAN

As you know, he was the four foot diving medal winner, two years running. Why, at the Philadelphia meet...

THIERRY

Go on. Go on.

DAN

Well, I can tell you, matters took a tragic turn for him yesterday evening...

ALPHA

Professor, the message from the Dean...

THIERRY

Will go on from here to eternity.

ALPHA

Ah, the Whiffenpoof song! Yes.

THIERRY

Dan!

DAN

Yes, yes. Well, the pool was only partially filled so when Gastino, God rest his soul, took his usual running dive in, he went straight to the bottom. After a bit I noticed blood diffusing into the water. So I waited, at the alert, for 30 seconds

THIERRY

Oh, very good. At the alert, very good.

DAN

Then 50 seconds, then 60 seconds and finally, two full minutes. Gastino, God rest his soul, simply would not come to the surface.

THIERRY

He knew he should be studying lines for his rehearsal this morning. What a horrible thing. So there you were, Dan, despite your pronounced Attention Deficit Disorder, poised like a Beagle, concentrating, at poolside, for a full two minutes. And then?

DAN

I immediately rang 911 and thirty minutes later they fished Gastino out of the somewhat rose tinted water, and wheeled him off to... to wherever they wheel folks off to.

THIERRY

And so here I am... two weeks 'til opening night, and a water soaked stiff for a star.

ALPHA

(Weeping uncontrollably) But Doctor, Gastino, Gastino, your prize actor is dead. Never to return. Can't we just think of him for a moment?

THIERRY

That's a good idea. Then on opening night, the whole cast is weeping on stage for our lost Gastino! But you're right, of course. It's a dreadfully sad thing. Ten years as head of this theatre department and this is the worst thing that has ever occurred.

(Another wail from ALPHA.)

ALPHA

But Professor, Professor, this E-mail.

THIERRY

How many times must I tell you Dean Polonius is a blithering...

ALPHA

Professor, you've asked me to prioritize!

THIERRY

And that is why...

ALPHA

The rest of this E-mail is top priority!

THIERRY

Oh. Well, read the thing.

ALPHA

"However, there is another crisis. We just got word that our founding University in South Africa has sent a Professor over on a surprise visit to make sure that our campus conforms to the high standards set by the Mother Institution..."

THIERRY

And the phenomena of our cum laude student's offing out in a swimming pool is hardly going to delight the Old Profs At Home.

ALPHA

There's more. Highest priority next.

THIERRY

God help us.

ALPHA

"The Professor they're sending is particularly delighted at the prospect of seeing opening night of the new play because he has heard that it deals with his own field of Psychology."

THIERRY

Well, at least we have a couple of weeks to prepare before opening.

ALPHA

"But one final problem?"

THIERRY

"The bow is drawn, let from the shaft!" as Lear said.

ALPHA

The Professor is arriving in two days and expects to see the play then!

THIERRY

A command performance in forty-eight hours with my leading man outside the pearly gates auditioning for St. Peter. Armageddon! Total Armageddon!

(BLACKOUT.)

ACT I; SCENE II

(AT RISE: the Theatre; the stage is entirely bare; BADIKO upstage ferociously pacing around going over his lines, script in hand, using a paper so he can read his cues. THIERRY, enters hysterically with a sweater tied around his neck by the arms, and a small thermos of, you guessed it, Jack Daniels. He takes a quick nip then runs around in a state of total panic, not noticing BADIKO in the back. THIERRY crosses downstage and looks up into the flies.)

THIERRY

The lights. Got to refocus the lights!

(THIERRY charges off stage to the pin rail and starts to lower in the first light pipe to work level and, despite the fact that as far as he knows, no one is in the theatre, he follows, Pavlovian-like, proper theatre protocol.)

THIERRY

(Calls out) Heads up! Light pipe coming in, heads up!

BADIKO

What in the world? Letting in the first pipe and we have rehearsal on stage in ten minutes?

THIERRY

Gotta get a wrench, tool box downstairs...

(He exits hysterically.)

BADIKO

The man is chicken crazy!

(The OTHER ACTORS come straggling in from the front of the house, preparing for rehearsal.)

DAN

Badiko! Thank heaven you're here!

BONAFFE

Being Gastino's understudy you're the man of the hour, fella. Have you got your lines?

BADIKO

You know me, Bonaffe. Had 'em before the first rehearsal. Came early just to refresh.

MIKI

He didn't get 'Thespian of the Year' for nothing.

BONAFFE

What's this light pipe in here? I'll fly it out.

(BONAFFE does so.)

BADIKO

Thierry has gone postal. He wants to focus the lights... went for a wrench.

MIKI

Oh, great. The ship's heading for an iceberg and the captain is fooling with the rigging.

BADIKO

No matter. If it gets too bad, we'll send him out with his thermos for a pick-me-up.

BONAFFE

It won't be the first time Jack Daniels has saved the day for the University Theatre Department.

DAN

Hey, let's not be disrespectful to our director.

BONAFFE

I'm just giving Jack Daniels his due. Best assistant director in the American theatre. Let's just get started.

(THIERRY enters with a big wrench.)

THIERRY

Where's the light pipe. Who struck the light pipe? *(Rushes to wing looking for it)*

BONAFFE

I just flew it out, Doctor Thierry.

BADIKO

We've only got forty-eight hours to opening. Let it in.

BONAFFE

If we don't get to rehearse, the lights will come up on an empty stage, Doctor Thierry.

ALPHA

First priority is to get the show rehearsed!

BADIKO

Way to go, Alpha! Those group meetings are doing some good at last!

THIERRY

Now let's make this perfectly clear, here. I'm the director; I set the priorities, not Alpha.

ALPHA

But...

THIERRY

Not another word. However, since you're all here, I guess we better get started. Now, before we begin, I think we should observe a moment of silence for our dear departed Gastino who, by now, has probably passed his audition and signed his contract for a long run on the great stage in the sky.

ALPHA

God bless him!

THIERRY

Come to think of it, we should use every minute for rehearsal.

MIKI

Have a heart, Doctor Thierry! We can take a minute... for a friend.

THIERRY

Oh, all right!

(THEY do so, but suddenly DAN jumps up and starts pacing frantically.)

ALPHA

Dan!

DAN

Sorry, a thick silence like this always makes me crazy.

MIKI

What's the matter with you all? Can't we be silent for just one minute?

BONAFFE

Shut up, Miki! It's impossible for actors not to run their mouths.

(Finally, a full minute passes in silence. DAN has been staring at his watch.)

DAN

Time's up!

THIERRY

Very well. Now, to make matters easier, we will all use our given names in the play instead of the character names, and we'll change the program accordingly. *(General reaction of distress)* Not a word! I'm the decider! I have to confess that if I can, by an Herculean foray of Theatrical genius, pull this rabbit out of the hat I am positive that I will be granted my long awaited and much deserved tenure. Now I will open the show with a prologue explaining the situation. *(Crosses down center and begins a flowery monologue)* I bid you welcome, gentles all, to this the opening of our play "The Mystery of Professor Bonaffe." For prologue and explanation, please admit me chorus to this history."

BADIKO

(Stage whisper) Oh, no. Just what we need, a rehash of Shakespeare's Henry the Fifth.

THIERRY

Silence. I am performing. *(Continuing speech)* This is the story of a man, who for six years labored on his dissertation on the subject Psychology: Is it a Science? However, the strait laced Professor Bonaffe...

BONAFFE

C'est moi!

THIERRY

Shush! *(Continuing)* Professor Bonaffe has bent every effort to veto acceptance of this man's work, and has sworn to vote against the candidate at his defense. The poor fellow was

THIERRY, *Continued*

driven to such distraction, that, the day before the defense presentation, he secretly shot and killed Professor Bonaffe. (*THE CAST gasps in melodramatic mock horror.*) Yes! We can expect that reaction from our audience. (*Continuing*) The action starts in the home of this candidate where his wife, Alpha, anxiously awaits the results of Gastino's defense – (*Breaks from speech*) Pardon me, we are using our own names – (*Continuing*) results of Thierry's defense.

BONAFFE

Thierry's defense? (*Referring to BADIKO*) He's Gastino's understudy, for Pete's sake.

THIERRY

This is a command performance! We can't use a student actor to play the lead. This role demands a trained, experienced talent. Of course I will be playing the degree candidate myself.

BADIKO

But Doctor Thierry, we open in forty-eight hours, and I know all the lines.

ALPHA

And you've always said that you have trouble learning lines. You can't expect that you will be able...

THIERRY

Nonsense! I'm a professional. The show must go on, and I will play the lead! (*General reaction of dismay*) Besides, I'll get a capable prompter.

BONAFFE

"A" prompter, you better get three of them!

THIERRY

Well, yes. Very good suggestion Bonaffe. We'll place them in different parts of the stage. Good idea! I tell you what. We'll start rehearsing the first scene now, with Badiko reading my role, and after we get things going, I'll run out and get the prompters, meet with the costume department and decide how to disguise them, and with the technical people to see how fast they can complete the set.

ALPHA

Priorities, Doctor Thierry.

THIERRY

I forbid you to go to another of those meetings, Alpha. I'm the prioritizer...

BADIKO

And the decider...

BONAFFE

And the director...

MIKI

And the Chorus...

THIERRY

Absolutely. In the meantime while I'm saving the day out there, you all will continue on with the rehearsal, using Badiko. Let me direct the first few pages to start you off in the right direction. Badiko, you read my role. Places for Scene 1, where Alpha is anxiously awaiting the news of the results of the defense. Places!

(THE ACTORS hustle about, bringing on a few set pieces and furniture.)

THIERRY, *Continued*

Now, I shall read the cue line from my prologue as you, Alpha, are anxiously awaiting the results from your husband's defense. "The action starts in the home of the candidate Badiko, where his wife, Alpha, anxiously awaits the results of Gastino's defense."

(ALPHA paces nervously.)

ALPHA

I can't stand it any longer! I'm going to call his cell.

THIERRY

Great heavens, girl. You're on the stage! You're an actor, not some frowzy hyped up housewife. Remember your elocution lessons, give it grace and grandeur. You're the leading lady. *Like this. (Dreadful stentorian old school voice)* "I cannot stand it a moment longer. I'm going to call his cellular phone!"

ALPHA

(Imitating him perfectly) I cannot stand it a moment longer. I'm going to call his cellular phone!

THIERRY

Bravo! You shall be a great actress...

BADIKO

(Stage whisper) For the 19th Century.

THIERRY

Now, go to the phone to call your beloved.

(ALPHA crosses to an outdated phone and picks up the receiver.)

ALPHA

Ah Badiko, is that you?

THIERRY

Wait, wait, wait. You've not even dialed the silly thing.

ALPHA

Well, of course I won't do that tomorrow night. This is just a rehearsal!

THIERRY

Ah, but remember I always say...

ALPHA

"... as ye rehearse, so shall ye play." Sorry. (*Dials; then*) Thierry, my darling... Yes, I know I wasn't to call... I've just been so anxious, I just wanted to know if... Yes... Oh, yes. How is that? Is the debate still going on?

THIERRY

Bravo. You've got me salivating with anticipation...

BONAFFE

(*Stage whisper*) Drooling with dementia...

(*BADIKO utters a gigantic guffaw.*)

THIERRY

Quiet, Badiko! You're ruining a great moment! But now I would like to work on your walk, we must be amazed by your elegance.

ALPHA

But Doctor Thierry, I'm playing a grad student's wife, not Queen Victoria.

THIERRY

Nonsense! In the theatre we expect actors to present themselves as ideal human beings, with exquisite posture and melliferous speech regardless of the part they are playing. Now, here is how I want you to walk and sit at the opening.

(*THIERRY demonstrates during the following looking for all the world like a prima ballerina.*)

THIERRY, *Continued*

You simply cannot scramble around like a horse in a fire. Now, this is the way an actress sits. Now, show us your swan like grace.

ALPHA

Doctor Thierry, we have forty-eight hours... I must say, in terms of priorities, I think these petty details should be left so we can—

THIERRY

Twenty years' experience in the American Theatre and you dismiss my talent as petty details. Oh, Lord, what I have to put up with in a world of Philistines. However, go ahead, but try to keep in mind the things I have taught you.

ALPHA

(Pacing about THIERRY) I only hope that nothing distressing happens to my poor Thierry. Those bald-headed inquisitors, led by that heinous Professor Bonaffe.

(BONAFFE steps downstage, twirls an imaginary moustache and snarls to the audience.)

THIERRY

Shut up, Bonaffe, you're not even on stage.

BONAFFE

You always say, "A true actor never...

ALL

"...steps out of character while he's in the theatre!"

THIERRY

Never mind, never mind! Just go on.

ALPHA

(Sitting down) Alas, but for that heinous Professor Bonaffe...

(BONAFFE is just about to fire a second shot when THIERRY hastily shuts him down.)

THIERRY

Not a word! Why are you looking at me, Alpha, go on!

ALPHA

I believe the telephone is supposed to ring, Doctor Thierry.

BONAFFE

Right there in the script.

THIERRY

Talk about petty details. Ding-a-damn-ling, for Heaven's sake!!

ALPHA

Oh my God, it must be news from the defense.

(Trembling like a leaf, ALPHA goes to phone.)

BONAFFE

(Stage whisper) Early onset of St. Vitae's Dance, methinks.

ALPHA

(Picks up phone.) Yes, yes it's Mrs. Thierry. What is happening? Oh, my God, he passed! My Goodness with "Summa Cum Laude"? Oh, my God, with Highest Honors? Oh, thank you, thank you Jesus! I'm so happy, I'm the happiest woman in the world! *(Hangs up and rejoices, repeating over and over)* My wonderful Darling, my wonderful Darling!

(ALPHA crosses to a radio, turns on the music and starts dancing by herself.)

THIERRY

You must waltz! Waltz! Don't do a Charleston. Waltz like a duchess, Alpha.

(HEHINIANG and MIKI snigger in the background.)

THIERRY, *Continued*

Bonaffe! Miki! This is no time for your stupid jokes, you're supposed to enter the scene! Remember, when the music is on you need to knock. Do it again! Alpha, music please!

(MIKI knocks on the door.)

ALPHA

Come in, please!

THIERRY

CUT! CUT! All right, that's fine for now. I have to leave and tend to a thousand matters, including those prompters. Now, you all continue on with Badiko reading my role as a stand in. I shall be back and we will have a run through with the prompters and myself rendering Gastino's role. You are to maintain the same style as I have established.

BONAFFE

You mean as if it were a nineteenth century melodrama, Doctor Thierry?

THIERRY

That is not the least bit funny, Bonaffe. And grossly insulting in the bargain. I'm out of here! *(Exits)*

BONAFFE

OK, team, now we've got to get control of this chaos. First of all, there is not a snowball's chance in hell that old Thierry is ever going to learn all those lines in time.

ALPHA

Doctor Thierry, Bonaffe. You know how he is about that... He's the only PHD in the University that insists on being called Doctor.

MIKI

Hey, do any of you guys happen to know what he did his PHD theses on?

ALPHA

Some great luminary of the theatre, I suppose.

MIKI

Nope. He wrote it on a guy from the 1930s who invented a wire hat holder so men could stash their fedoras under theatre seats.

HEHINIANG

That's as close to the bottom as he could get.

BONAFFE

Never mind Thierry's bizarre thesis. Let's just do this like a run through.

BADIKO

But how are we going to make this God-awful melodrama work?

BONAFFE

Just play it as realistically as possible. Think Stanislavsky, think the Studio. It's our only hope. Take it from your entrances.

(MIKI knocks on the door.)

ALPHA

Come in, please!

(MIKI and HEHINIANG enter.)

MIKI

What a great day for this household, sweetie. Let me give you a hug, darling!

ALPHA

A great day? I'm not sure yet, but we usually hug each other, don't we, sweetie?

MIKI

Come on, sweetie

(THEY hug.)

HEHINIANG

Don't worry so, Alpha. I was in the defense room and Badiko's thesis was simply outstanding! Badiko impressed the hell out of those bald-headed university dudes. They were terrified to see a brand new competitor. Without further notice, I ran to the hall and took my little Miki's hand and started to dance the funky chicken in celebration of Badiko's triumph.
(THEY dance the funky chicken.)

BONAFFE

OK, hold it. Maybe not Thierry's waltz, but the funky chicken?

MIKI

OK. OK. Let's go on. *(Continuing in part)* Where is the great brand new scientist at? I really need to hug him gluttonously today! *(Beat)* "Gluttonously?"

BONAFFE

Just cut the word.

ALPHA

Oh yes, indeed, it's a great day and we're all waiting for him. I will jump and cling on his neck, I'll swallow him, I will!

(ALPHA looks desperately at BONAFFE.)

BONAFFE

Stanislavsky!

ALPHA

(Method reading) I will jump and cling on his neck, I'll swallow him, I will!

HEHINIANG

Whoa, whoa, whoa, slow down, babe. I've not congratulated you yet.

(He pulls ALPHA to him, gives her a hug and looks straight into her eyes and does a Valentino Sheik imitation.)

ALPHA, *Continued*

Charming Alpha, Badiko has such great taste in women! With this shining hair, these twinkling eyes, this bewitching mouth with these super soft lips, my goodness.

MIKI

Hehiniang!!

HEHINIANG

But then, I know that I myself made a great choice, didn't I sweet Miki? I'm sorry I said all this in your presence. You know, I just did it on purpose just to bring out your jealousy.

MIKI

Right!

HEHINIANG

You know that Jealousy sharpens love,
(*HEHINIANG pulls MIKI to him and kisses her on the forehead. He begins singing Valentino-style.*)

HEHINIANG, *Continued*

"At night, when you're asleep, into your tent I'll creep!" And that's it, everything is just fine now!

(*BADIKO knocks on the door. ALPHA runs to the door, opens it.*)

ALPHA

It's him!

BADIKO

Now why in hell would I knock on the door of my own house?

BONAFFE

So Alpha can run with that hysterical squawk of ecstasy, Badiko.

BADIKO

Figures.

(*BADIKO messes up his hair, puts on an exhausted and dispirited face, picks up a suit and briefcase and enters like Willy Loman back from Providence. THE OTHERS run to hug him.*)

MIKI

My dear angel, what a success for a handsome boy like you! (*Fondling his face*) And what elegance! Oh, my God! Look at that suit. I confess you're the sexiest man! Isn't he, Hehiniang?

HEHINIANG

What's going on here? Would you please let others congratulate him, too?

MIKI

Jealousy sharpens love, dear. Still want to creep into my tent, Rudolph?

HEHINIANG

That's not in the script!!!

MIKI

It is now!

HEHINIANG

What a great gentleman. Honor, glory and power be unto him, be unto him.

MIKI

"That sitteth upon the throne."

BONAFFE

Now cut that out, you guys. We don't have time for re-writes!

HEHINIANG

You've demonstrated a resounding success in mastery of Psychology and Science? It will never be enough to say "you're the ace of aces, that..."

BADIKO

Oh, Hehiniang, don't carry on so.

HEHINIANG

From now on you're a great thinker! You have, by yourself reunited all those philosophers, anthropologists, psychologists, By the way, where was that Cro-Magnon Professor Bonaffe at your defense?

BADIKO

He's just enjoying a vacation in his Montevideo mansion

ALPHA

Hey, do you guys think that the audience is going to remember that Badiko killed Professor Bonaffe from Thierry's prologue?

BONAFFE

After Thierry's prologue, it'll be a miracle if there's any audience left to remember anything! Go on.

HEHINIANG

Bonaffe promised to give you hell during your defense. He was serious about it. His absence is weird.

MIKI

Why was his nose so out of joint anyway?

ALPHA

The controversy is that Badiko's thesis stipulates that psychology's scientific status is questionable. Professor Bonaffe thinks he's the master of that field. He can't stand anyone publishing in his area of expertise.

BADIKO

He even had the nerve to demand that I repeat five years of research—that's a bit much! I just imagine his diabolical face and shiny bald head. I can't wait to pelt his naked skull with a paperclip!

ALPHA

Just forget it. It's all over now. You'll work together now. Colleagues and equals.

HEHINIANG

I still can't figure why he wasn't there. But we must celebrate, now that we have a new-hatched PHD.

ALPHA

You're absolutely right, Hehiniang! I've a little surprise I prepared in the garden, just in case my beloved scholar passed his defense.

BADIKO

Alpha, you're the epitome of optimism.

ALPHA

It's a true feast and I even invited that nasty Professor Bonaffe...

BADIKO

Great God. Well, I'm pretty sure he won't be coming. *(To himself)* Damn sure, actually. At least he better not!

ALPHA

What's that, dear?

BADIKO

Uh... This is spectacular, dear. You couldn't have done better. Let's to the garden and see the wonders you've prepared.

BONAFFE

Now, of course, when we go into the garden scene, there will be a few undergraduate non-speaking extras milling about. *(Calls)* Bring on the picnic table. Garden scene.

(Several set pieces representing the Garden Scene are placed on stage. Among the added actors is a reggae disk jockey ALPHA has hired His music blares full tilt.)

ALPHA

And I even hired your favorite DJ... Paisley.

BADIKO

Paisley? Alpha, you're a wonder. Paisley, put on that Reggae number I request all the time!

MIKI

Our new PHD will open the dance wearing his new academic gown!

ALL

Long live Badiko, long live everybody!

ALPHA

Here's the gown, with the brand new crow's feet sewn on.

HEHINIANG

And now all rise, lift glasses and drink a toast to the success of a great master.

ALL

Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

(Following the toast, ALL rush onto the dance floor. HEHINIANG makes haste to hold ALPHA, but BADIKO intervenes.)

HEHINIANG

(Dancing frantically, with ALPHA) Wow, you're doin' it right, woman! Your hips are just jigging up and jaggging down. It's enough to break an elephant's heart, babe. *(To BADIKO)* My dear professor, I must hold her in my arms and I'm sure this is...

BADIKO

Really, Hehiniang, must you behave like such an adolescent...

HEHINIANG

I'm out of here! Give him a degree and he's everybody's father, already.

(HEHINIANG exits.)

BADIKO

Besides, it's time to eat. Seat yourselves and we will begin the meal.

ALPHA

Lord Badiko, you must join the feast here at the table's head. *(Gestures towards an empty chair)*

BADIKO

But first a toast to our noble Bonaffe.

(ALL rise and BONAFFE, with his head turned away wearing a slouch hat and cape, slips into BADIKO's chair unnoticed. Although we cannot see it yet, he has two gigantic bleeding bullet holes in his head.)

BADIKO, *Continued*

Although he has violently obstructed me in my dissertation, denying my thesis that Psychology is not a Science... (*OTHERS boo and make disparaging remarks.*) I have great respect for the man, and only wish he were here... (*Chokes slightly*) To enjoy our great feast.

ALPHA

Sit, great Badiko, that we may serve the feast.

BADIKO

The table's full.

ALPHA

(*Cannot see that BONAFFE has taken BADIKO'S chair*) Your place is reserved, sir.

(*BONAFFE whirls around so that BADIKO sees his face front on.*)

BADIKO

Which of you have done this?

MIKI

Done what, Doctor Badiko?

ALPHA

My God, it's Professor Bonaffe!

MIKI

Bloodied up!

BADIKO

You cannot say I did it! Never shake your balding head at me!

(*BONAFFE rises and moves like a menacing phantom towards BADIKO.*)

BADIKO, *Continued*

The phantom the phantom of professor Bonaffe. We're dead!

MIKI

Why are you talking about ghosts? Professor Bonaffe is alive and there is nothing mysterious about him, except his silly get up.

(*BADIKO grabs a huge carving knife from the grill.*)

BADIKO

What do you want from me? What do you want from me, you big old fool, you goitrous pork bastard?

BONAFFE

(Frighteningly grim voice) Confess my most heinous murder!

HEHINIANG

Professor Bonaffe, have you lost it completely? What in Sam Hill are you doing?

BADIKO

You lunatic, psychopathic, triple neurotic, megalomaniacal cretin.

MIKI

Calm down. What in hell is going on here, Badiko?

BADIKO

There he is! There he is! Do you see he's decided to make me crazy? I'm going to show you that I'm the very same Badiko who shot two bullets and blew your big old brain out.

MIKI

You what? Badiko...?

BADIKO

As long as you get in my way, fool, I will crash, trample and spit on you, you son of a dog. To hell with you, your soul and ghost. To hell with your ancestors, your forefathers, your wife, your children and all your loved ones who live in a blazing fire.

BONAFFE

Fire?

BADIKO

Why did you try to obstruct my way to my PhD degree? Your inhuman hatred against me is why your evil specter makes the atmosphere stink. You're Satan in person and I fight against you with divine strength in the Name of Jesus! O God, come to my rescue and the Devil will leave me alone in Peace, in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen. *(Breaks character and turns to the others.)* Now look, guys, let's get real here. That speech is just plain over the top.

(THIERRY enters, suddenly.)

THIERRY

Nonsense, Badiko! It is one of the great speeches in world theatre, and when I render it, with proper inflection, interpretation and clarity of vision, it will devastate the audience.

BONAFFE

With all due respect, Doctor Thierry, I think you better learn it first.

THIERRY

Nonsense. We still have a few hours 'till opening. I'll master the script in no time.

ALPHA

But you always had trouble learning lines...

THIERRY

I'll have three prompters...

BONAFFE

OK, but can I at least run through the next scene... my big reveal that I am a good guy and believe Psychology is not a Science like Thierry?

THIERRY

Oh, all right. I'm here, so I might as well assume my leading role.

BADIKO

In that case, I might just as well take off for a vacation in the mountains. You'll have no need of me!

BONAFFE

Doctor, don't you think we should have Badiko in the wings in case...

THIERRY

In case of what? Don't be ridiculous, everything will be fine. Go, Badiko. Have a great vacation. *(To OTHERS)* All right, places. Action!

BONAFFE

(Pulling off his latex bullet holes and blood) Relax, Thierry... uh, Thierry. I am most decidedly alive. You see you were set up to think that you had shot me in a fit of fury.

THIERRY

Uh... well...

ALPHA

(Prompting him) What are you saying?

THIERRY

I don't know what I am saying, obviously. Give me the line!

ALPHA

That IS the line. "What are you saying?"

THIERRY

Oh, yes, of course. *(To BONAFFE)* What are you saying?

BONAFFE

My sole purpose in so vigorously opposing your thesis was designed to make you work all the harder to improve it. Then, in the final test, I set you up to see if you would kill for your ideas.

THIERRY

Uh... um. Well, give me the damn script, Alpha, 'til I get a chance to refresh myself on these lines!

BONAFFE

With three hours to curtain, do you think you'll be able to work it in?

THIERRY

(Reading from the script) You mean I didn't shoot you?

BONAFFE

Just a mannequin. The whole thing succeeded magnificently, so that you waltzed through your defense with flying colors, establishing absolutely conclusively that Psychology is not a Science!

ALL

(Ad lib cheers and exclamations of approval) Here, here! Yeah! You can say that again!

THIERRY

But don't you believe...

BONAFFE

I do now and have always believed completely in the validity and wisdom of your thesis, Doctor Thierry, and welcome you as a respected colleague!

THIERRY

Curtain! Thank God that's over, now we can get down to the important thing, finding three prompters for the show.

(THREE MEN enter, wearing pork pie hats and IATSE stage hand jackets.)

THIERRY, *Continued*

Who in the world are you?

ONE IA MAN

(Played by BADIKO) We're from the stage hands union. Are you Thierry?

THIERRY

Uh... Doctor Thierry.

ONE IA MAN

Right. Well, the stage hands union heard you were opening a show tonight, so they sent us over...

TWO IA MAN

(Played by DAN) With a show this size, you're going to be required to hire two carpenters, me and him...

THREE IA MAN

(Played by HEHINIANG) And a property man... me.

ONE IA MAN

Now we know that you will probably want to resist, and you can call our Local 456 President and protest, but...

THIERRY

Quite the contrary, gentlemen! Your presence is a perfect case of Divine Intervention from the IATSE.

(THIERRY points to the IA seal on the back of ONE IA MAN's jacket. ALL THREE MEN are aghast, as LIGHTS FADE OUT.)

ACT II; SCENE I

(AT RISE: The scene continues, except that BONAFFE and ALPHA have moved downstage and are talking confidentially.)

ALPHA

You don't think that Thierry would be damn fool enough to dragoon those guys into...

BONAFFE

Being the prompters?

ALPHA

Well, remember your First Rule of Thierry...

BONAFFE

"He can always be counted on to make the worst, most ridiculous decision possible in any situation." *(Great rumble off-stage)* What in the name of God...

(THIERRY enters, calling off stage.)

THIERRY

Right in here, you guys! Roll all of that stuff on stage.

(IA MEN enter pushing an absolutely huge fan and the biggest thunder sheet anyone has ever seen.)

BONAFFE

Doctor Thierry, what in the world?

THIERRY

I have had a stroke of genius which will save the production tonight! To add intensity and drama to the ghost scene, we will have a thunder storm come up before your appearance. *(Calling off stage)* Harry, let's have a look at that lightning arc effect!

(ONE IA MAN, with a naughty smile, shakes the thunder sheet which emits the most unspeakably loud crashes as HARRY repeatedly hits the lightning effect.)

ALPHA

My God, Doctor, the audience is not going to be able to hear themselves think.

THIERRY

We don't want them to think, Alpha. We just want them to FEEL. To feel the enormity of the dramatic moment,

BONAFFE

(Aside to ALPHA) The Rule of Thierry! *(To THIERRY, with a cynical grin)* But how about the rain? We have to have rain, Doctor. We have that big fire hose...

THIERRY

Brilliant, Bonaffe. Absolutely brilliant! You are demonstrating the effect of years of study with a master!

BONAFFE

Using the Rule of Thierry, I can foresee your every move, Doctor.

THIERRY

Now, gentlemen, let me explain what I want you to do in this production. *(Beat)* Rule of Thierry?

BONAFFE

Never mind, Doctor. *(Aside to ALPHA)* Here it comes.

ALPHA

I don't believe it.

THIERRY

I will be playing the lead in tonight's production and I may be a little tentative on some of my lines.

ONE IA MAN
So?

THIERRY
I will want you three to act as on stage prompters

TWO IA MAN
ACT?

THREE IA MAN
ON STAGE?

ONE IA MAN
Now wait a goddamn minute here. We don't perform. Artists we ain't.

TWO IA MAN
Talent we don't got.

THREE IA MAN
(*An Italian accent*) Our a contract a says...

THIERRY
Gentlemen, gentlemen, gentlemen. You are not acting. You are not artistically creating characters, with names and identities. You are prompters! Here, you will each have one of these an iPads with the script clearly visible on the screen. (*Hands them out to the bewildered stage hands*) One of you will be stage right, one stage left and one upstage so if I should happen to lose a line, the one I am closest to will feed me the words.

THREE IA MAN
Hey, wait a damn a minuta here. I gotta this a big Italian accent a, you wonta be able to understanda one damna word I say!

THIERRY
No problem, we'll place you upstage, I probably won't need you anyway.

TWO IA MAN
Hey, I don't know how to work this thing...

THIERRY
Don't worry, I'll show you.

ONE IA MAN
Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute! Let me get this straight. You're going to have the three of us standing right out here on stage feeding you lines when you go up?

THIERRY

Very good, a terrific question. It certainly would be bizarre, except for Doctor Thierry's brilliant decision...

BONAFFE

(Aside) I feel the Rule of Thierry is about to strike once more.

THIERRY

Gentlemen, here is my most brilliant idea to date. Harry, lower 'em in.

(Three bilious papier mache trees, with sawed off hollowed trunks are lowered in from the grid.)

THIERRY, *Continued*

Stand under the trunks, gentlemen, you will be completely concealed. And we have arm holes so that you can hold your iPads, and knot holes so you can read the text and say the lines.

BONAFFE

Dear Jesus...

One IA MAN

Wait a minute, guy! We're hired to move the sets, not be the scenery.

THIERRY

Don't give it a thought. Just remember, whichever tree I'm closest to, you feed me the line.

THREE IA MAN

Mama mia, I canta believe this. I canta goddamn believe this.

BONAFFE

Don't worry, fella, neither will the audience!

THIERRY

What's that, Bonaffe?

BONAFFE

I just said this will amaze the audience.

THIERRY

Now Harry, remember when I say the line "isn't that a storm I see?" you start up the storm, softly at first and then build it to a fever pitch.

(LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK; SPOTLIGHT IN AUDIENCE, FRONT OF HOUSE. DEAN POLONIUS [Played by DAN] and the visiting PROFESSOR STEINHERZ [Played by BADIKO] enter and take seats in the audience.)

POLONIUS

I think the play is going rather well, don't you Professor Steinherz?

STEINHERZ

(With a German accent) Vell, as a Professor of Psychology the subject matter in the first act has been very interesting.

POLONIUS

I knew that would be the case.

STEINHERZ

However, I think that this Thierry's thesis topic is complete poppycock.

POLONIUS

Really?

STEINHERZ

He appears to question whether or not Psychology is a Science. Absolutely ridiculous! Might as well question if the sun is hot!

POLONIUS

(Terrified) Well... uh... we are open to all ideas here at the College...

STEINHERZ

But certainly not such a crazy notion that Psychology is not a Science! I am going to be very interested to see how this PhD candidate Thierry is portrayed. I trust that his thesis will not be accepted.

POLONIUS

Oh dear. Well... there go the house lights.

(SPOTLIGHT UP on DOCTOR THIERRY as he enters.)

THIERRY

I am Doctor Horace Thierry, PhD and head of the drama department. *(Some feeble smatterings of applause)* I hope you have enjoyed your intermission break. As you can see from your program, I am the director of this production and, due to an unfortunate incident, I have, in the grand tradition of the theatre...the show must go on type of thing...have been persuaded to lend my years of experience as a renowned actor, to render the leading roll.

(There is more feeble applause which spurs THIERRY to take sweeping bows as though precipitated by a thunderous standing ovation.)

THIERRY, *Continued*

Thank you, thank you, thank you. This act will feature the triumphal first entrance of my character, the victorious PhD candidate.

(FOLLOW SPOT BLINKS; THIERRY is somewhat confused.)

THIERRY, *Continued*

Oh. Oh, my. Yes, well, that must be the stage manager signaling me that the call is places for Act II. Even the greatest of actors must obey the commands of his stage manager, heh, heh, heh.

(THIERRY exits. SPOTLIGHT OUT. LIGHTS RISE. There is a smattering gaggle of giggling EXTRAS.)

ALPHA

Dear friends, I have just seen our conquering hero Doctor Thierry coming up to the door so I just want to tell you that his dissertation on Psychology has been resoundingly approved.

(ALL applaud profusely. There is silence; ALL look towards the door. No THIERRY.)

ALPHA, *Continued*

Yes, as I said *(Yelling)* HIS DISSERTATION ON PSYCHOLOGY HAS BEEN RESOUNDINGLY APPROVED.

(Another round of applause but still no THIERRY.)

MIKI

Didn't you just say that you saw him coming up the walk?

ALPHA

Uh... well, of course we have a very large mansion so it is a long walk.

MIKI

And I also heard you say, *(Yelling)* HIS DISSERTATION ON PSYCHOLOGY HAS BEEN RESOUNDINGLY APPROVED.

(Applause again; ALPHA, furious, rushes to the door and calls out in her loudest stage whisper.)

ALPHA

Doctor Thierry, you're on.

(Bewildered, DOCTOR THIERRY scrambles on stage, as ALL applaud. He, of course, thinks this is applause from the audience – traditional upon the first entrance of a famous actor in nineteenth century theatre – and bows profusely to the dead silent audience.)

HEHINIANG

You've demonstrated a resounding success in mastery of Psychology and Science. It will never be enough to say "you're the ace of aces." *(No next line)* Yes, you are the ace of aces.

ALPHA

(Feeding him the line) Oh, Hehiniang, don't carry on so.

THIERRY

He is just giving me proper credit, Alpha. How can you be so rude?

ALPHA

(Sotto voce) That's your line, Doctor. "Oh, Hehiniang, don't carry on so."

THIERRY

Of course. Oh, Hehiniang, don't carry on so.

HEHINIANG

From now on you're a great thinker! You have, by yourself reunited all those philosophers, anthropologists, psychologists. By the way, where was that Cro-Magnon Professor Bonaffe at your defense?

THIERRY

Well, you see I have just come from a successful defense on my thesis which ... *(Continues, ad libbing)*...

(DOCTOR THIERRY goes declaiming on in increasing confusion. As he speaks, OTHERS on stage whisper to one another.)

HEHINIANG

(Stage whisper) Great God, he doesn't know a line of the script.

ALPHA

(Stage whisper) He's ad libbing the whole story.

THIERRY

...discusses the role of Science in Psychology and when I went before the committee I anticipated strong resistance but, of course, I was delighted to discover that they were predisposed to...

HEHINIANG

(Stage whisper) Feed him a line to get him back on book.

ALPHA

(To THIERRY) Why, dear, to get back to Hehiniang's question about where was that Cro-Magnon Professor Bonaffe at your defense, didn't you tell me that he's just enjoying a vacation in his Montevideo mansion...?

THIERRY

Why, yes, Alpha. Hehiniang, he's just enjoying a vacation in his Montevideo mansion

HEHINIANG

Bonaffe promised to give you hell during your defense. He was serious about it. His absence is weird.

(There is no response from THIERRY.)

MIKI

Why was his nose so out of joint anyway?

HEHINIANG

Bonaffe thinks he's the master of that field. He can't stand anyone publishing in his area of expertise, so his absence is weird. *(Still nothing from THIERRY)* Yes, well, he can't stand anyone publishing in his area of expertise

ALPHA

Didn't you tell me he even had the nerve to demand that you repeat five years of research—that's a bit much!

THIERRY

Why yes. Hehiniang, he even had the nerve to demand that you... I repeat five years of research—that's a bit much! I just imagine his diabolical face and shiny bald head. I can't wait to pelt his naked skull with a paperclip!

HEHINIANG

(Sotto voce to ALPHA) For the love of God, Alpha, get us out into the garden scene with those tree prompters.

ALPHA

Well, my love, I think we should go out into the garden where I have prepared a little surprise.

THIERRY

Absolutely, my lovely wife! I can't wait to hear my favorite disc jockey, Paisley, performing my frequently requested reggae number at the wonderful party you have waiting for me!

ALPHA

Why, how in the world did you know about all that?

THIERRY

Well... uh, well I um.

HEHINIANG

He must have just guessed, Alpha. You know how intuitive your spouse is.

THIERRY

Uh... well... I guess I just guessed because you know how intuitive I am.

(HEHINIANG crosses to the wing, obviously calling off to the stage manager.)

HEHINIANG

So I think we should adjourn to the garden. I said the garden scene right now, don't you think?

(LLIGHTS OUT. There is a quick, frantic change to the Garden Scene as the intrepid THIERRY crosses downstage and addresses the audience. There is no spotlight. He claps his hands and gestures to the back of the theatre.)

THIERRY

Let there be light! As Claudius said.

(THE SPOTLIGHT comes on.)

THIERRY, *Continued*

Heh, heh, heh! Thank you. Well, I just thought you would enjoy the scene change a little more if I were to give you a speech from a role that I achieved incredible notoriety for in my youth, to wit, Macbeth.

(During the following, THE SPOTLIGHT slowly inches to stage right. THIERRY, constantly wanting to be in the center of the light, is inexorably drawn to the wing.)

THIERRY, *Continued*

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.
Until the final line...

Out, out, brief candle!

(Cues LIGHTS TO BLACK OUT.)

VOICE OFF STAGE

Places.

THIERRY

(Exiting) Oh, I guess the stage manager is ready for the garden scene.

VOICE OFF STAGE

You're damn Skippy, Doctor.

(LIGHTS UP: Garden scene; three trees, one up stage Hiding THREE IA MAN, one down right Hiding ONE IA MAN, and one down left Hiding TWO IA MAN. Their arms, protruding through holes in the side of the trees, are crudely hung with cheesy looking moss and in their hands are the iPads from which they will attempt to prompt while looking through bizarre knot holes placed for eye holes. SEVERAL EXTRAS are milling about. MIKI walks over to a tree, looking at it closely.)

MIKI

Why, Thierry, aren't these iPads stuck in the branches of your trees?

THIERRY

Why, uh... why yes, Miki. Those seem to be iPads indeed.

MIKI

Why in the world would you keep iPads out here?

THIERRY

Well. You see, uh... Well, I thought everyone kept their iPads in the garden.

ALPHA

(To the rescue) Actually, it is so unique we thought it was the perfect hiding place for them.

MIKI

Don't thy get wet in the rain?

THIERRY

The branches and leaves of the tree keep them dry—

ALPHA

—until we can take them indoors.

THIERRY

What a spectacular, surprise, my dear. I never suspected that you had prepared such a wonderful celebration.

ALPHA

Until, of course, you had that big intuition about this party...

THIERRY

Uh... oh yes, of course...

(THE IA MEN in the trees are desperately keying into the iPads trying to find their place in the script.)

ONE IA MAN

(Sotto voce) I can't find where they are in this damn script.

THREE IA MAN

(Sotto voce) Mama mia, me neither! This-a-stupid-a com-a-puter thingy dingy.

THIERRY

Oh, gracious. I think I am getting an E-mail on that tree down right's iPad. (Crosses to TREE) We're ad libbing, you fools. Here, *(Adjusts I-pad)*, this is where we are. Tell the others.

ONE IA MAN

Hey, you guys, get over here, I've got the place.

(The OTHER TWO IA MEN in their trees obediently walk to ONE IA MAN, as THIERRY smacks his head in dismay.)

MIKI

Oh, my! Looks like Burnham wood is coming to Dunsinane!

ONE IA MAN

(Full voice) Dunsinane! Hey, that's a character's name! I'm not going to play any Dunsinane guy. I told you, we're not allowed to play a role!

THIERRY

Dunsinane—it's a location! A location in Scotland. Get back, get back, you idiots and stand still. Think tree, feel like trees.

MIKI

A bow to Stanislavsky.

ONE IA MAN

Stanislavsky? Which one is Stanislavsky, we should bow to?

MIKI

Forgetaboutit!

THIERRY

Besides, it's time to eat. Seat yourselves and we will begin the meal.

(THE IA MEN in the trees take a step forward, eager to partake.)

THIERRY, *Continued*

Not you guys! Not you guys. Get back there. *(Much disgusted grumbling from the THE IA MEN forestry)* Uh, well, Alpha... *(Crosses to the wing and hollers off-stage)* ...isn't that a storm I see? *(Pause; yelling)* ISN'T THAT A STORM I SEE?

(From offstage comes SFX: Terribly loud crash of thunder sheet and arc flashes of lightning.)

THIERRY, *Continued*

(*Even louder*) APPROACHING FROM A GREAT DISTANCE! A GREAT DISTANCE!!!

(*SFX: A tiny rumble of the thunder sheet with teeny flashes of light.*)

THIERRY, *Continued*

Yes, a distance.

(*THE IA MEN TREES are poking the iPads desperately. THIERRY whispers to them.*)

THIERRY, *Continued*

(*Whispering*) New lines, not in the script. Scroll down, damnit, scroll down.

ALPHA

Lord Thierry, you must join the feast here at the table's head. (*Gestures towards an empty chair*)

THIERRY

But first a toast to our noble Bonaffe.

(*ALL rise and BONAFFE, with his head turned away wearing a slouch hat and cape slips into THIERRY's chair, unnoticed ad SFX: Storm grows louder. Although we cannot see it yet, he has two gigantic bleeding bullet holes in his head.*)

THIERRY

(*Standing dead center, equidistant from all the trees*) Although Professor Bonaffe has... has...

ALL THREE IA MEN TREES

VIOLENTLY OBSTRUCTED!

THIERRY

What, I can't hear all three of you! Just the one I'm closest to, I told you!

(*He looks, sees he is equidistant, then strolls casually towards THREE IA MAN.*)

THIERRY, *Continued*

Professor Bonaffe has... has...

THREE IA MAN

VIO-A-LENTALY OB-A-STRUCTED A.

THIERRY

VIO-A-LENTALY OB-A-STRUCTED A ... uh... uh... me... me...

THREE IA MAN

IN-A MY-A DISIRATION.

THIERRY

IN-A MY-A DISIRATION... in my dissertation (*Idiot*), denying my thesis that Psychology is not a Science...

(*ALL "boo" and make disparaging remarks.*)

THIERRY, *Continued*

I have a great a respect a ... I have great respect for the man, and only wish he were here... (*Chokes a little*)...to enjoy our great feast.

ALPHA

Sit, great Thierry, that we may serve the feast.

THIERRY

The table's full.

ALPHA

(*Cannot see that BONAFFE has taken THIERRY'S chair*) Your place is reserved, sir.

(*BONAFFE whirls around so that THIERRY sees his face front on.*)

THIERRY

Which of you have done this?

MIKI

Done what, Doctor Thierry?

ALPHA

My God, it's Professor Bonaffe!

MIKI

Bloodied up!

THIERRY

You cannot say I did it! Never shake your bloody head at me!

(*BONAFFE rises and moves like a menacing phantom towards THIERRY. SFX: The storm builds.*)

THIERRY, *Continued*

The phantom, the phantom of Professor Bonaffe. We are dead!

MIKI

What is all this about "Phantoms?" Why are you talking about ghosts? Professor Bonaffe is alive and there is nothing mysterious about him, excerpt his silly get up.

(THIERRY grabs a puny fork from the grill instead of the big knife, realizes his mistake and menaces BONAFFE with the fork.)

THIERRY

A poisoned fork! A poisoned fork. Deadly curari on every tine.

ONE IA MAN

Every tine? Every tine? Now where are we?

TWO IA MAN

How should I know, ask Luigi!

THREE IA MAN

Every time! Yeah, right! Every damn time som-a-thing goes wrong, it's ask a Luigi.

(SFX: The storm builds in intensity, almost obscuring THIERRY'S speech. THIERRY has now snatched one of the iPads and is blatantly reading from the machine.)

THIERRY

What do you want from me? What do you want from me, you big old goitrous bastard?

BONAFFE

(Frightening voice) Confess my most heinous murder!

THIERRY

You lunatic, psychopath, triple neurotic, megalomaniacal cretin.

MIKI

Calm down. What in hell is going on here, Thierry?

THIERRY

There he is. There he is! Do you see he's decided to make me crazy?

ONE IA MAN

(Walks to wing; yelling) Hey, Harry, the wind! Don't forget the wind!

THIERRY

I'm going to show you that I'm the very same Thierry who shot two bullets and blew your big old brain out.

MIKI

You what? Thierry...?

(SFX: The wind starts up in full force, blowing THE TREES left and then over onto the ground.)

THIERRY

As long as you get in my way, fool, I will crash, trample and spit on you, son of a dog. To hell with you, your soul and ghost. To hell with your ancestors, your forefathers, your wife, your children and all your loved ones who will live forever in blazing fire.

BONAFFE

Blazing fire!

ONE IA MAN

Fire! Did someone say fire? Harry, the rain effect, hit the flames with the damn rain!

(SFX: An effect of a great spurt of water like an enraged Niagara, cuts a trajectory across the stage with a torrential roar like the sound that greeted Noah. BLACKOUT.)

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes