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## **Cast of Characters**

SARAH

GIRL 1

GIRL 2

JANET

WENDY

MARTIN

JAMIE

ZACH

THE DRAMA TEACHERS

## **Character Notes**

Janet and Wendy are both in their last year of high school. They have been in many productions together with the Drama Teachers.

Martin is in Grade 11. He has been in plays before, though usually in minor roles. He is an intense young man.

Jamie is Martin's friend. He is an athlete and has never tried out for a play. He is on the school's rugby team. And football team. And hockey team.

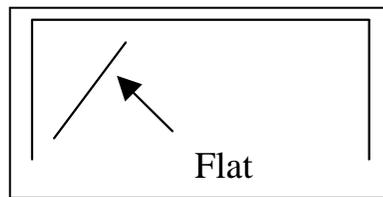
Sarah is a Grade 9 student. This is her first time trying out for drama in high school.

The Drama Teachers (1 through 5) may be male or female. I suggest three males and two females.

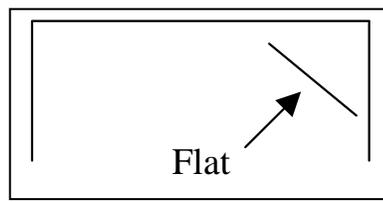
The cast includes several other students (two Grade 9 girls, Zach, students who check the cast list in the last scene).

## The Set

The set is bare except for a flat with a door in it. The flat has a base which is on casters, so that the whole piece can be moved from one side of the stage to the other. When the focus of the action is the students waiting in the Hall, the flat is located in upstage right:



In this position, the flat screens the Drama Teachers and their chairs. When the focus of the action shifts to the Drama Room, the flat should be moved to upstage left:



There is a door in the flat through which, ideally, the actors can pass **WHILE THE FLAT IS MOVING**. The flat is decorated, on the Hall side, with a bulletin board. On it are several photocopies relating to high school drama. One of these says "Last Othello Audition Today, Drama Room."

## Language Notes

1. Slang: The slang in the piece is meant to be current. You are *encouraged* to modify lines to make the students sound more up to date. That would be groovy, man.

The full text of Desdemona's speech, without the students' mistakes, is as follows:

O good Iago,  
What shall I do to win my lord again?  
Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,  
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:  
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,  
Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,  
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,  
Delighted them in any other form;  
Or that I do not yet, and ever did.  
And ever will—though he do shake me off  
To beggarly divorcement—love him dearly,  
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much;  
And his unkindness may defeat my life,  
But never taint my love.

*Othello*, IV, 2

The speech that Martin mangles during his cold read is:

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:  
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,  
If I would time expend with such a snipe.  
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor:  
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets  
He has done my office: I know not if't be true;  
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,  
Will do as if for surety.

*Othello*, I, 3



# STAND CENTRE STAGE AND BARK!

by Douglas Craven

## Scene 1

*(A high school Hall, outside of the Drama Room. It is 4:30 p.m.)*

*(SARAH, the Grade 9 student, sits waiting for her audition. She looks frail. She radiates uncertainty and vulnerability.)*

*(SARAH sees two GRADE 9 GIRLS approaching. They are carrying books, heading home. They improvise gossip. Their friendship contrasts with Sarah's solitude. SARAH recognises the girls. She smiles as they come near her, not quite aware that they don't really see her.)*

**SARAH.** Hi.

**GIRL 1.** Oh. Hi, Sally.

**SARAH.** Sarah.

**GIRL 1.** Oh, my God. I'm so sorry.

**SARAH.** Don't worry about it.

**GIRL 1.** *(Walking away:)* Sorry.

**GIRL 2.** You can go home now, you know. School is over.

**SARAH.** I know. I'm trying out for the play.

*(They are almost gone.)*

**GIRL 2.** Great. Good for you.

**GIRL 1.** Bye. Good luck!

*(They both giggle as they exit.)*

**SARAH.** You mean— *(Sees that they are gone:)* You mean, "Break a leg."

*(Enter JANET. She is reading from a copy of Othello. She occasionally speaks a few lines of her speech to practise for her audition. SARAH is a bit too shy to watch JANET openly, but risks glances when she can. She is surprised when JANET begins declaiming:)*

**JANET.** Alas, Iago.

What shall I do to win my lord again?

Good friend, go to him; for by this light of heaven,  
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:

*(She realizes that she is not kneeling.)*

Here I kneel:

If ever my will did trespass 'gainst his love  
Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,  
Or that mine ears, mine eyes, or any sense,  
Delighted them in any other form,  
Or that I do not, yet, and ever did...  
And ever will, and ever *shit!*  
Come on, you know this!

*(She looks up and sees SARAH for the first time.)*

**JANET.** Hi!

**SARAH.** Hi.

**JANET.** You're trying out for the play, right?

**SARAH.** Yes.

**JANET.** Good. Would you do me a *real* big favour? Help me check my lines?

*(SARAH nods.)*

**JANET.** I know we don't have to memorise the speeches, but...well, you know. Couldn't hurt, right? *(She hands her script to SARAH.)*

**JANET.** Okay, great. *(She begins to do the speech:)* "Or that I do not, yet, and ever did..." By the way, I'm Janet. I probably should have introduced myself before using you as my script lackey.

**SARAH.** I'm Sarah.

**JANET.** *(Theatrically:)* Welcome to The Arts, Sarah.

*(They both laugh. JANET points to the speech in the script:)*

**JANET.** I'll start right here, okay. *(She prepares to speak:)*

Here I kneel:

If ever my will did trespass 'gainst his love  
Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,  
Or that mine ears, mine eyes, or any sense,  
Delighted them in any other form,  
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,  
And ever will, though he do shake me off  
To beggarly divorcement, love me dearly,  
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much,  
And his unkindness may defeat my life,  
But never taint my love.

**SARAH.** That was perfect.

**JANET.** Thank you. I hope *they* think so. The drama teachers, I mean.

*(As they speak, WENDY enters. She is the sort of person who likes to be noticed when she enters. JANET and SARAH do not notice her.)*

**SARAH.** Oh. Are they—are they all going to be in there?

**JANET.** Yep. All five of them. They always do auditions together. But don't worry. They're nice.

**SARAH.** Really?

**WENDY.** Sure. They're just from *hell*, that's all.

**JANET.** *(Rushing to her friend and hugging her:)* Hey!

**WENDY.** Hey there, you! I am *so* stressed about this. You wouldn't believe it.

**JANET.** You're worried?

**WENDY.** I could only puke. I swear I haven't slept in three days.

**JANET.** What were you thinking? You always do great at auditions. You know the speech, right?

**WENDY.** Sure do. I know it like *(She snaps her fingers.)* But we both know who'll get the part. Come on, admit it. You're the one.

**JANET.** No. Seriously, I think you're getting Desdemona. Do some for me.

**WENDY.** What, in front of the child?

**SARAH.** Oh, sorry.

**JANET.** No, she's just joking. Relax. *(To WENDY:)* This is Sarah.

**WENDY.** Ah, good. Young blood for drama. *(She turns her attention back to JANET:)* So, which speech do you want to hear, first or second?

**JANET.** You memorised them both?

**WENDY.** I had a little time on my hands.

*(WENDY begins to perform one of Desdemona's speeches from Othello. SARAH watches her, beginning to look very worried. WENDY is only a few lines into the speech when MARTIN and JAMIE enter.)*

*(JAMIE is dressed in a jersey or jacket from the school's Rugby team. He is solid. MARTIN is lithe and energetic.)*

**MARTIN.** You will love it, man.

**JAMIE.** I can't believe you dragged me here. Drama. Jesus.

**MARTIN.** Just give it a chance. I mean, look...women.

**JAMIE.** Okay, okay.

**MARTIN.** Hey, Janet.

*(JANET smiles and waves, but indicates through gesturing that she's listening to WENDY.)*

**MARTIN.** Oh. Sorry.

*(WENDY glares at him, but keeps speaking.)*

**JAMIE.** *(Indicating Wendy:)* What's she doing?

**MARTIN.** She's rehearsing for her audition. It's a speech.

**JAMIE.** What's she saying?

**MARTIN.** It's Shakespeare—who knows?

(WENDY finishes. They all applaud.)

**WENDY.** Thank you, thank you, thank you. (To JAMIE:) And thank you.

(She exchanges a look with JANET which effectively communicates her appreciation of Jamie's appearance. But, she quickly focuses in, once again, on herself.)

**WENDY.** So, anyway, that sucked. I mixed up "my ears" and "my eyes."

**JANET.** No, it was fine. They won't notice anyway. What is it...5 o'clock? On the third day of auditions? They'll be completely punchy. You'll get that part.

**WENDY.** I hope you do.

**JANET.** I hope you do too!

(They laugh and hug.)

**MARTIN.** So, what part are you guys trying out for?

**WENDY.** Desdemona.

**MARTIN.** Oh, yeah. So, who's she?

**JANET.** She's Othello's wife. Haven't you read the play, Martin?

**MARTIN.** Like I have time to read Shakespeare.

**JANET.** So what part are you trying out for?

**MARTIN.** Iago. (He pronounces it "Eye-ah-joe.")

**JANET.** Good for you, Martin.

**WENDY.** It's "Iago," actually.

**MARTIN.** Oh. He's the lead, right?

**WENDY.** Yes, the lead in the play called *Othello* is Iago. (She moves over to JAMIE, turning up her temperature as she moves.) How about your friend? What part is he going for?

**JAMIE.** Me? I don't really care. I just wanted to do something besides rugby and hockey this year. You know, to pad my resume.

Maybe meet a few chicks (MARTIN *jabs him in the ribs.*) babes (MARTIN *jabs him again.*) —women. People.

**WENDY.** Rugby, eh? Are you on the Junior or Senior team?

**JAMIE.** Senior this year.

**WENDY.** Oh really?

**JANET.** Are you going to be on any other teams?

**JAMIE.** Probably hockey. Maybe baseball too, if I still have time left over. I work part-time at Wendy's.

*(JANET and WENDY exchange significant looks. MARTIN shakes his head.)*

**JANET and WENDY.** Oh, oh.

**JAMIE.** What? Did I miss something?

**MARTIN.** You are so screwed, man.

**JAMIE.** Why?

**JANET.** "They" don't like it when people do sports and drama.

**WENDY.** Or music and drama.

**MARTIN.** Or work and drama.

**WENDY.** Or have a life and drama.

**JAMIE.** Why not? It's just a stupid play.

*(WENDY, JANET and MARTIN react.)*

**JAMIE.** What?

**WENDY.** Okay, so I'm a drama teacher. Say, Mrs. Paddock. *(She goes into role as a teacher:)* "Are you doing any other extracurricular activities?"

**JANET.** *(Playing along, acting the role of a student at an audition:)* "Yes, just Lacrosse. But I'm only on the B Team and games don't start until two months after the play. And practises are on Sunday at 3 in the morning. For twenty minutes."

**WENDY.** “Oh, really? We do have expectations that drama will be your major commitment this year.”

**JANET.** (*Melodramatic tragic heroine:*) “Oh, please. Please please please let me be in your play.

**WENDY.** “Wellllll...with your schedule I can’t promise you a role, but...

**JANET and WENDY.** (*Dropping out of character:*) ...would you be willing to work backstage should we be unable to cast you?!”

*(They both laugh. SARAH looks worried.)*

**MARTIN.** (*To JAMIE:*) Just remember, Jamie, if they ask if you’ll give up rugby for the show, say “Yes.”

**JAMIE.** But...I’m already on the team.

**MARTIN.** Just. Say. Yes.

**JAMIE.** Won’t they find out?

**MARTIN.** Hell, yes. They find out everything. They know all, see all.

**JAMIE.** So...

**WENDY.** It’s easy. Get a part and then tell them that the coach changed your practise times on you.

**JANET.** (*To SARAH:*) So, what part do you want?

**SARAH.** I...I don’t know. Any part, I guess.

**JANET.** Did you go over the monologues?

**SARAH.** The what? I don’t know what...

**WENDY.** Ah, the innocence of youth.

**JANET.** It’s okay, Sarah. You can give a cold read. Here. (*She nabs MARTIN’s script.*) Thanks, Marty.

**MARTIN.** Don’t mention it. Any time.

**JANET.** (*To SARAH:*) Have a look at Desdemona’s speech here.

*(They both look.)*

**SARAH.** It looks hard.

**JANET.** Yeah, it's not even English, is it? Basically, Desdemona's married to this man named Othello. She's telling her friend Iago...

**MARTIN.** *(To himself:)* Iago. Iago.

**JANET.** She's telling Iago that she's been faithful. Her husband thinks she's been sleeping around.

**SARAH.** *(Embarrassed:)* Oh.

**JANET.** So, in this speech, she's saying, you know, tell him that I love him and I never thought about screwing somebody else.

**SARAH.** I...

**JANET.** She wants Iago to tell Othello that. Look, it doesn't matter. Just smile at them and use a good stage voice.

**SARAH.** Stage voice?

**WENDY.** *[Makes a lightly derisive sound like "Chu."]*

**JANET.** Just talk loudly and clearly. Come on over here. We'll practise together.

*(They move off.)*

**MARTIN.** Whoever's in there's been a long time.

**JAMIE.** What are these drama teachers like, anyway?

**WENDY.** Never had a drama class?

**JAMIE.** *(Affronted:)* No!

**MARTIN.** They can be a little...odd.

**WENDY.** Chu!

**JANET.** I like them.

**WENDY.** Because they love you.

**JAMIE.** What do you mean? What do they make you...do in there?

**WENDY.** Whatever the hell they want.

**MARTIN.** Strange things...

**JANET.** They're not bad. Maybe just a bit "unfocused" sometimes. *(To SARAH:)* Don't worry. All they do is have you read the speech and answer a few questions. It's easy.

**MARTIN.** For you, maybe. I always feel like they can look right through me. You know, like they know what I'm thinking. It's like they're some bizarre alien hive mind that can read my thoughts.

**JANET.** *(Sincerely:)* Hah! You are SO funny, Marty!

*(SARAH is clearly intimidated. She fumbles with the script and drops it. As she reaches to pick it up, the door slowly opens. ZACH comes out, dazed. JANET, MARTIN and WENDY rush towards him and inundate him with questions such as "What did they ask?", "Did you give a good audition?", "What did they say after?" and so on.)*

**MARTIN.** So, really. How'd it go?

**ZACH.** Not so good. They're in a strange mood.

**JANET.** So, you read, they ask some questions...

**ZACH.** Yeah, and then they...they made me bark like a dog.

*(Long pause.)*

**JAMIE.** What?

**WENDY.** I do NOT need this.

**JANET.** Why would they do that?

**MARTIN.** Is there a dog in *Othello*?

**WENDY.** No!

**ZACH.** They said it was to hear my "voice quality" and see if I'm willing to take risks.

**JANET.** Sounds more like they're getting a bit punchy again.

**JAMIE.** Fuckin' nuts, more like it. *(Substitute "Friggin" or delete expletive if desired.)*

**JANET.** No, no. Just tired. Three days means a lot of auditions.

**WENDY.** You always stand up for them. What do you want, to marry one of them?

**JANET.** It's my dream.

**MARTIN.** Who do they want next?

**ZACH.** Martin Daice. That's you right?

**MARTIN.** Yeah. Thanks.

*(ZACH leaves. JANET and WENDY say goodbye as he goes.)*

**MARTIN.** Okay. So here I go. Off to meet...The Hive. *(As science fiction hero or Japanese animation character:)* Activate psychic shields!

**JANET.** Hah!

*(MARTIN strides purposefully to the door. He stops. He strides purposefully to WENDY. Holds out his hand.)*

**MARTIN.** *(Still using his space hero voice:)* May I borrow...your script?

*(She hands it to him.)*

**MARTIN.** Thank you! *(He opens to his speech. In his normal voice:)* How do you pronounce that word?

**WENDY.** Sure-ih-tee.

**MARTIN.** Oh.

**WENDY.** It means "for certain."

**MARTIN.** Thanks.

*(He moves back to the door.)*

**JAMIE.** Good luck, man.

*(MARTIN freezes. WENDY and JANET both react!)*

**WENDY.** Hey, don't jinx him!

**JAMIE.** I just wished him good luck.

**WENDY.** In theatre, wishing someone good luck is bad luck.

**JANET.** If you want to wish him good luck, tell him you hope something bad happens to him. Like “break a leg.”

**WENDY.** Or “Fall over backwards.”

**JAMIE.** “Get hit in the bag.” *(Pause.)* Was that okay?

**MARTIN.** It will have to be because *(He is the action hero again, miming the raising of his psychic shield:)* “I am going in!”

## Scene 2

*(The flat moves to reveal the Drama Room. The TEACHERS are in shadow, parts of them eerily lit, parts of them completely obscured. We hear the sound of rasping breathing as in a creature’s lair, and perhaps the sound of machinery. The DRAMA TEACHERS, as we will see, are connected to each other by lengths of hose and wire. They are “the hive mind” that Martin fears.)*

*(The lighting and sound should recall the nightmarish surroundings of movies like Aliens. Odd noises at odd times. Strange lighting shifts. Fog if possible and practical. Black light is highly recommended.)*

**MARTIN.** Hello? *(He does not see the TEACHERS:)* Should I just...? *(Pause.)*

**TEACHER 1.** *(In a cybernetic voice, perhaps electronically enhanced:)* Martin...Daice. You are...Martin...Daice.

**MARTIN.** Yes. Yes, I am.

**TEACHER 2.** We know that, Martin Daice. We know...

**TEACHER 3.** No need to be nervous.

**TEACHER 4.** No need.

**TEACHER 5.** No need no.

**ALL TEACHERS.** Martin Daice!

**MARTIN.** Sorry, I can’t see you. The lights...they’re kind of burning my retinas.

**ALL TEACHERS.** We are here, Martin Daice. All around you.

**TEACHER 1.** And we can see you.

**TEACHERS.** See you.

**MARTIN.** Should I go ahead? Sorry, but auditions always freak me out. *(Please use current slang for this expression.)*

*(The TEACHERS do not reply.)*

**MARTIN.** Do you want me to read my speech?

**TEACHER 2.** Yes.

**TEACHER 3.** Yes.

**ALL TEACHERS.** Yes. Read the speech.

**MARTIN.** Right here...Or...?

**TEACHER 1.** *(Very loudly:)* On the stage!

**ALL TEACHERS.** Ssssssss.

**MARTIN.** *(Takes a breath:)* Okay.

**TEACHER 2.** Just relax.

**TEACHER 1.** We mean you no harm.

**TEACHER 3.** No harm. We've all been there.

**TEACHER 4.** We know how you feel.

**TEACHER 5.** We know what you are like.

**TEACHER 2.** We see everything about you.

**TEACHER 3.** Everything

**TEACHER 4.** About

**TEACHER 5.** You

**ALL TEACHERS.** *(Staccato:)* Everything-about-you.

*(Sudden silence.)*

**MARTIN.** Here goes. I'm doing Eye-a-Joe...Iago, all right? All right? All right. *(He has obviously not rehearsed the following speech:)*

Thus do I ever make my foot my purse?

For I mind own gain knowledge should pro-fan  
If I would time expense such a...snipe  
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor!  
And it is thought aboard that 'twixt my sheets  
He's done my offense. I know not ifet be true;  
Yet I, for mere suspense in that kind,  
Will do as if for shur-etty.

I was a little nervous.

**TEACHER 1.** That is adequate, Martin Daice. You have nothing else to show us.

**MARTIN.** Don't you want to ask me any...questions?

**TEACHER 2.** Ques-tions?

**TEACHER 3.** Yes. We'll ask you questions.

**TEACHER 4.** To learn all there is about

**ALL TEACHERS.** Martin Daice!

**TEACHER 5.** (*Coming in on "Daice!"*;) Daice Martin Daice Martin Daice.

**TEACHER 4.** Sit.

**TEACHER 3.** Sit and answer.

**TEACHER 2.** Sit here for questions.

(*MARTIN finds a stool and sits.*)

**MARTIN.** All set!

**TEACHER 2.** Begin the procedure.

(*They suddenly appear all around MARTIN, holding him in his stool. They are mechanical, devoid of individual personality.*)

**ALL TEACHERS.** Do you have a job?

**MARTIN.** (*Panicked:*) No!

**ALL TEACHERS.** Do you belong to any...athletic teams?

**MARTIN.** Yes. I have rugby on Thursdays.

*(The TEACHERS hiss.)*

**MARTIN.** But I'll quit if you cast me.

**ALL TEACHERS.** In the event we cannot find a role for you would you still be willing to work backstage? Will you join with us, Martin Daice?

**MARTIN.** Yes. Sure. Can I go?

*(The TEACHERS release him and withdraw into the shadows.)*

**TEACHER 2.** Relax.

**TEACHER 4.** Relax Martin Daice

**TEACHER 3.** We mean you no harm.

**TEACHER 2.** We will contact you soon

**ALL TEACHERS.** Martin

*(Extremely long pause.)*

**ALL TEACHERS.** Daice.

**MARTIN.** Can I...go now?

**ALL TEACHERS.** Go NOW!!!

*(He bolts, knocking over his stool. But, just as he reaches the door...)*

**TEACHER 5.** Stop, Martin Daice, stop.

**ALL TEACHERS.** Stop!

**MARTIN.** W-hat?

**TEACHER 3.** Can you bark like a dog?

**ALL TEACHERS.** Bbbb-aaarrrrrrrrrr-kkkkhkkk.

**MARTIN.** I guess I could. Give me a second. *(He clears his throat and produces a rather feeble:)* Bark!

**ALL TEACHERS.** Go!!

*(He opens the door and leaves. As he steps through, the flat rotates to its Hall position.)*

### Scene 3

*(We are back in the Hall. The students rush to MARTIN and inundate him with questions, as before.)*

**JANET.** How was it?

**MARTIN.** Rough!

**SARAH.** What does he mean, rough?

**JANET.** It's okay. He's kind of paranoid.

**SARAH.** I don't think I like auditions.

**WENDY.** Don't worry. You can always try out for another play if you don't make it into this one. *(To MARTIN:)* Did they make you bark?

**MARTIN.** *(Shuddering:)* Yes.

**JANET.** Hilarious!

*(MARTIN, however, does not find it funny as she proceeds to bark twice.)*

**WENDY.** Like you're ever going to have to bark like a dog in Shakespeare. What are they, stoned?

**JANET.** No, just a little "blissed out," you know. Psychedelic. *(Pause.)* Yeah, and maybe a bit stoned.

**WENDY.** Whatever. Who's next?

**MARTIN.** I didn't...they didn't say.

**JANET.** I'll go. *(She barks twice and laughs.)* They're completely spacey, but I like them.

### Scene 4

*(The flat moves as before, revealing a very different Drama Room: 'Sixties' psychedelia and lava lamps. Hendrix or sitar music playing quietly in the background. TEACHERS are dressed as hippies.)*

**JANET.** Hello everyone.

**TEACHER 1.** Wooow. Iz Janet.

**TEACHER 2.** Far out.

**TEACHER 3.** (*Who has “the giggles”:*) How the heck are you?

**JANET.** Oh, I’m just fine, sir. Should I read first or answer questions?

**TEACHER 4.** (*Thinks:*) I...don’t know.

*(All TEACHERS giggle.)*

**TEACHER 3.** What do you think?

**TEACHER 2.** I can’t decide.

**TEACHER 5.** You’ll have to excuse us. We’re all a little tired.

**JANET.** And a bit punchy too, I see.

*(More giggling.)*

**TEACHER 3.** And rilly, rilly hungry.

**TEACHER 1.** I just remembered something. (*Long pause.*) Never mind.

*(Still more giggling.)*

**TEACHER 4.** So, Janet. Janet, Janet, Janet. Ja-net. Janet. Janet. Janet. Jaaaaan-et.

**TEACHER 3.** “Damn it, Janet.” (*Realises he/she has used a cuss-word in front of a student:*) Oops. Sorry.

**JANET.** No problem. I’ve heard it all before.

**TEACHER 5.** Whenever you’re ready...

**TEACHER 4.** Oh, I’m ready. What for?

**TEACHER 5.** No, not you, man. Her.

**TEACHER 4.** Oh, sorry.

*(Yet more giggling.)*

**JANET.** Okay? Okay.

*(She performs her audition piece. After a few lines, one of the TEACHERS takes out a set of bongo drums and begins to play, recalling a “Beat” reading. The TEACHERS all groove to Janet’s karma, man.)*

Alas, Iago.

What shall I do to win my lord again?

Good friend, go to him; for by this light of heaven,

I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:

*(She kneels.)*

Here I kneel...

*(She searches for the line.)*

If ever my will did trespass ’gainst his love

Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,

Or that mine ears, mine eyes, or any sense,

Delighted them in any other form,

Or that I do not, yet, and ever did...

And ever will, though he do shake me off

To beggarly divorcement, love me dearly,

Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much,

And his unkindness may defeat my life,

But never taint my love.

*(The TEACHERS snap their fingers and call out “Amazing!”, “Far out!” and the like.)*

**TEACHER 1.** Wuz great, rilly. So, you know the old “drill.” Come on and sit yourself down right here and answer a few questions.

*(TEACHER 3 and TEACHER 4 begin to write each other silly notes and attempt to suppress their giggles throughout the following.)*

**TEACHER 2.** You doing any excra-ter...extracurricular...stuff this year?

**JANET.** No. Drama’s my main focus this year.

*(All the TEACHERS applaud as before.)*

**TEACHER 5.** Can I ask the next question?

**TEACHER 2.** Sure!

**TEACHER 5.** Do you have any chips or anything?

**JANET.** No.

**TEACHER 5.** Bummer.

**TEACHER 2.** You're supposed to ask if she has a job, man. *(Pause.)*  
So. *(Pause.)* Do you have like...a job, man?

**JANET.** No, I don't.

*(TEACHERS applaud. JANET notices TEACHER 3 and TEACHER 4's antics.)*

**TEACHER 3.** Sorry. We're not laughing at you. We're just a little punchy.

**TEACHER 4.** Just a bit. *(To TEACHER 3:)* Turnips!

*(TEACHERS laugh.)*

**TEACHER 1.** Moving right along...could you bark like a dog for us?

*(A sudden hush. All of the TEACHERS are almost twitching with restraint.)*

**JANET.** What kind of dog, sir *(/ma'am)?*

*(All of the TEACHERS fracture their skulls laughing and praising Janet. This is their biggest laugh of the scene.)*

**TEACHER 4.** Woooo!

**TEACHER 3.** She's good! She's good!

**TEACHER 1.** A...terrier.

**TEACHER 2.** Wire-haired terrier.

**TEACHER 3.** A brown one!

**TEACHER 5.** With a limp.

**JANET.** So you want to hear a limping brown wire-haired terrier bark?

**TEACHER 4.** Yes, please.

**JANET.** *(Throwing herself into the part:) [Woof!]*

*(More applause. This time, the TEACHERS take out a large Beauty Pageant-style ribbon which TEACHER 2 places around JANET's neck. It reads: "Precast.")*

**TEACHER 2.** Isn't she great?

**JANET.** Thanks for your time. Should I send the next person in?

**TEACHER 3.** Just give us a minute and...to...now, what the hell was I going to say? *(Realising that he/she has used a cuss-word:)* Oops. Sorry.

**JANET.** *(Laughing:)* No problem...again. See you.

**TEACHER 1.** Maybe soon!

### Scene 5

*(The flat moves, as before. During the transition, and before she joins the others in the Hall, JANET removes her "Precast" ribbon. The students crowd around her.)*

**JANET.** I told you. They were fine. Just a wee bit punchy, but no problem.

**WENDY.** So, how did you do?

**JANET.** Really well!

*(They hug.)*

**WENDY.** *(To SARAH:)* Hey... *(Pause.)* New Girl. Do you want to go next?

**SARAH.** I don't think so.

**WENDY.** I will then. Although I don't know why I should even bother. They hate my guts.

**JANET.** Wendy, that's not true.

**WENDY.** *(She has begun to do some neck and shoulder warm-ups:)* They do. Just because I missed one rehearsal during "The Crucible." Two years ago.

**JANET.** Oh, they don't hold that against you.

**WENDY.** They hold grudges. *(She begins to do a vocal warm-up:)* "The lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue." You only get a part if they like you. "The lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue." And did I mention that they hate me? "The lips..." They *precast*, you know?

**JANET.** *(To SARAH as well as to WENDY:)* No, they don't.

**WENDY.** Yes. I've heard they've known who'd get Othello last April. Terrance Balazo told me. *(She continues her warm-ups.)*

**JANET.** *(Moving over to SARAH, who looks crestfallen:)* Are you okay?

**SARAH.** No. Are they like she *(Indicating Wendy:)* says?

**JANET.** No. They're really fair. They try to be.

**WENDY.** Yeah, right.

**JANET.** Wendy, come on. She's nervous.

**MARTIN.** *(Who is waiting for JAMIE to have his audition:)* Everybody gets nervous. It's okay.

**SARAH.** It's worse than nervous.

**JANET.** Is this your first audition?

**SARAH.** No. I went out for almost every play at my old school. I never got a part.

*(Everyone, even WENDY and JAMIE, are watching her.)*

**SARAH.** It was like...standing there, on the stage in the gym...like there was nobody watching me. Like I was trying out all alone.

*(Pause.)*

**JAMIE.** That blows.

**SARAH.** I really want to be in this play. I think I could be...pretty good.

**WENDY.** *(Breaking the mood:)* Well, there's always the Little Theatre if you don't get in. *(She resumes her warm-ups.)*

**MARTIN.** *(Punching JAMIE's arm:)* Soon be your turn, Jamie.

**JAMIE.** Hey, you said this would be fun.

**MARTIN.** It is.

*(WENDY and JANET nod in agreement.)*

**JAMIE.** I don't know, man.

**MARTIN.** It's just getting INTO the play that's hard. Come on. You've tried out for lots of teams.

**JAMIE.** Yeah, but the coaches all act...normal, you know. They never ask you to make...animal sounds.

**MARTIN.** Relax.

**JAMIE.** Coach Jackson sort of makes animal noises himself, but not on purpose. And the coaches are...you know, tough.

**MARTIN.** You'll do okay.

**JAMIE.** You know what they say about drama teachers.

**SARAH.** What?

**JAMIE.** They're all gay.

**WENDY.** *(Cutting off JAMIE's line:)* Okay, here I go.

## Scene 6

*(The flat moves again. This time, the Drama Room is on fire. We are in Hell. It is different from Martin's vision of the Drama Room in that, instead of being eerie, the room is filled with motion. The DRAMA TEACHERS are dressed as devils, complete with pitch-forks. They rush to WENDY and drag her into the room. Include music if desired; I suggest "Night on Bald Mountain" or "In the Hall of the Mountain King.")*

**TEACHER 1.** Welcome, Wendy. We've been waiting for you.

**TEACHER 2.** It doesn't really matter WHERE you stand.

**TEACHER 3.** Because you're in here...

**TEACHER 4.** With us!

*(They laugh. We hear moans coming from behind the walls, performed by the actors playing the STUDENTS.)*

**TEACHER 5.** Say your speech. Say. Your. Speech.

**WENDY.** “I shall...”

**TEACHER 2.** *(Pushing her:)* That’s enough.

**TEACHER 4.** That’s all we need to hear from *you*, Wendy.

**TEACHER 1.** You did a “wonderful job,” Wendy. *(He/she pokes her with his/her pitchfork.)*

**TEACHER 2.** “Outstanding audition.”

**TEACHER 3.** “Strong delivery.”

**TEACHER 5.** “Wonderful. Wonderful.”

*(All of the circles circle WENDY, cackling. The tempo of their movements increases as they ask these questions. In the background we hear moans rising and falling. Those devils not speaking should chant Latin-sounding phrases.)*

**TEACHER 1.** Do you have a job?

**TEACHER 2.** Do you play a sport?

**TEACHER 3.** Are you willing to work backstage?

*(They repeat these three lines at least two more times.)*

**WENDY.** No. Yes. I just want to be in the play.

**TEACHER 5.** Oh, no problem, Wendy. In fact, you can have the part.

**WENDY.** Desdemona?

**TEACHER 5.** Yes.

**WENDY.** Thank you. I—

**TEACHER 2.** But just wait a second. It seems to me...

**TEACHER 5.** And it seems to me...

**TEACHER 1.** And it seems to me...

**TEACHER 3.** And it seems to me...

**TEACHER 4.** That somebody once missed a rehearsal.

*(Moans rise. TEACHER 3 picks up an enormous binder labelled "Drama Sins" from the right wing.)*

**ALL TEACHERS.** WHO WAS THAT WENDY?

**WENDY.** I told you...when that happened...two years ago...I had to baby-sit my—

**TEACHER 3.** *(Flipping through the book:)* Your brother.

**TEACHER 5.** Poor poor baby brudder!

**TEACHER 4.** Awww, Wendy.

**TEACHER 1.** Except...

**TEACHER 2.** You lied.

**TEACHER 3.** You lied Wendy. Didn't you Wendy? You lied Wendy. Didn't you Wendy? You lied Wendy. Didn't you Wendy?

**WENDY.** No.

**TEACHER 2.** Admit it.

**WENDY.** No!

**TEACHER 2** *(Slamming book shut:)* You went to *(Insert a band which was popular two years ago here:)* concert, didn't you?

**WENDY.** That was years ago. I've changed.

**TEACHER 3.** Too late, Wendy.

*(Echoes from moaners: "Too late!")*

**TEACHER 3.** *(As all devils chant "Late! Late!":)* You can't change here, Wendy. We have long memories, Wendy. We're going to remember what you did forever, Wendy.

**ALL TEACHERS.** Forever!

**WENDY.** No!

*(She runs for the door as the flat begins to move, quickly this time. Blackout.)*

*(This time, the others do not have time to ask her how things went. WENDY stands with her back to the door.)*

**JANET.** How was it?

**WENDY.** *(Weakly:)* Okay. *(She grabs JANET's sleeve:)* Can we talk?

**JANET.** *(Indicating SARAH:)* I have to...

**WENDY.** Fine. Whatever.

*(She exits.)*

*(JANET thinks about following her friend, but elects to stay with SARAH. They are working on the speech together to prepare the young student for her audition.)*

### Scene 7

**MARTIN.** All right, man! You're up!

**JAMIE.** It's just another try-out, right?

**MARTIN.** Right! Just think of them as coaches. Are you big?

**JAMIE.** I'm big!!

**MARTIN.** Go get them!

**JAMIE.** Yeah!!!!

**MARTIN and JAMIE.** *(Pumping up:)* Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh!

*(They jump towards each other and bash their chests together.)*

**MARTIN.** Go! Do it!

*(JAMIE moves purposefully and manfully towards the door with his "Game Face" on.)*

*(The flat moves. This time the change is very quick. The lights are pink. There are stuffed animals on the desk and floors. We hear music: "The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies." The TEACHERS are all wearing tutus and are dancing interpretively with gymnastic ribbons.)*

*(A male TEACHER minces up to JAMIE and gives him a flower.)*

**TEACHER.** Welcome to the Fine Arts!

*(JAMIE runs out. The scene quickly changes back to the Hall.)*

**MARTIN.** What happened?

**JAMIE.** I am so not doing this.

**MARTIN.** Where are you going? Wait up!

*(MARTIN follows JAMIE.)*

### Scene 8

*(JANET and SARAH are left alone onstage.)*

**JANET.** That's right. You've got it. You memorize fast.

**SARAH.** I hope I'm okay. *(Pause.)* I'm the last one.

**JANET.** Hey, in Vaudeville, the best acts were last.

**SARAH.** What's Vaudeville?

**JANET.** I'll tell you later. You'll do great.

**SARAH.** I never have before. I don't think I want to do this again.

**JANET.** You'll ace this. *(Please use current slang for this expression.)*  
Go on. I'll wait for you.

*(The flat moves as SARAH goes through the door. This time, the lights are neutral, the stage is bare.)*

*(The TEACHERS are gone.)*

**SARAH.** Hi. I'm Sarah Kerr. Do I stand up here? Centre stage?

*(Receiving no answer, she stands centre stage and delivers Janet's Othello speech. She is reading from the script, but her reading is wonderful. She is a natural. Not just excellent, she gives the speech as if she feels it deeply herself. She pleads. She finishes.)*

**SARAH.** Was that okay?

*(Long pause.)*

**SARAH.** Is that all?

*(Long pause.)*

**SARAH.** Should I bark?

*(The lights fade. In the darkness, we hear a school bell and the sounds of students filling the halls. Lights up on:)*

*(The Hall, two days later. We know this from the bulletin board; the audition sign has been replaced by one that reads: "Cast List for Othello will be posted TODAY at 3:30.")*

*(SARAH is sitting where we discovered her at the beginning. She walks towards the board. She loses her courage. She sits back down.)*

*(The two GRADE 9 GIRLS walk by. They see SARAH and giggle. They exit.)*

*(Several STUDENTS filter onto the stage during the following scene. They go to the Drama Room door, discover that the list has not been posted, and wait.)*

*(The sounds of the student exodus grow fainter. Enter JANET. She immediately sees SARAH.)*

**JANET.** Hi, Sarah.

**SARAH.** Oh, hello, Janet.

**JANET.** Have they posted the list yet?

**SARAH.** No.

**JANET.** Well, any time now! They said it would be up on Friday and *(Laughing:)* here it is, Friday!

*(Enter WENDY. She extends her arms to JANET and they hug; however the hug has the beginnings of ice in it.)*

**WENDY.** Hey. Did you get it?

**JANET.** It's not up yet.

**WENDY.** Chu.

*(Enter MARTIN and JAMIE.)*

**MARTIN.** I just want to check.

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