

The Audition
By Kenneth Robbins

TIME: Eight in the evening, the present
PLACE: New York City, an empty theatre
SETTING: A bare stage
CAST: Amy, an actress

AT RISE: The stage is clear except for an electric bulb near the middle and edge of the stage. Various items are seen along the back wall.

AMY enters through the auditorium. She remains in the aisle, waiting, listening.

AMY

Anybody here?

(Silence.)

AMY *(Continued)*

Hello?

(Silence. She wanders about the empty stage.)

Hellloooo. Anybody? . . . Well. . .

(Silence. She fingers the bulb, goes into the wings, returns, checks items along back wall, stands on the edge of the stage, and surveys the theatre.)

Hey!!

(Silence.)

I must be early. . . or late. . . Well, I suppose I can. . .
If I'm early. Who am I talking to? Sheez, Amy.

(She leaves. She runs into something in the wings. She curses, returns rubbing her shin. She takes the bulb and moves it into the wings where she exits.)

(OFF) Oh, my God. . . where the hell. . .

(Crash.)

Jeez! Gotta be. . .

(A work light comes on. She returns without the bulb.)

There.

(Surveys the stage, lit with white light.)

I'm home. *(Pause.)* If anybody can hear me, don't worry, just little me. Okay?

(Silence.)

Who cares. They don't for sure. Even if they heard me, they'd -- which they don't.

(She assumes the role of actress, surveying her playing space.)

Well, what the heck. Why not? I'm here. So, let's do it. Ahhh. This is mine. For this little bit. All all mine. I can do -- *(Pause.)* What? Did somebody say something?

(Long silence.)

It is eight, isn't it? *(Checks watch.)* Of course. Eight. Always on time, Amy-tamy. Why always so punctual? Ever been late? Just once? Oh, well. . .

(Sings.)

"Who is Amy

What is she

That all her thoughts offend her?

Oooooo...Oooooo..."

Need a piano. Need a singing voice. Is there a musician in the house? Yes? No?

(She leaves the stage. She rummages in the wings. She crosses the stage to the other wing, more rummaging. She returns with a walking stick.)

Nope. No piano.

(Sings.)

"Yes we have no piano --

We have no piano today."

Can't sing. Stop singing, Amy! Of course, you can sing. Everybody sings. Question is quality. Yeah, quality. I could sing if. . . No orchestra! A person needs a good orchestra before she can sing. Music, maestro, if you please. Key? Oh, B flat would do nicely. Let me prepare.

(Clears throat, sings.)

"My bonnie lies over the ocean

My bonnie lies over the sea

My bonnie lies over the ocean

So bring back my bonnie to--

(There is a sound of a door slamming somewhere in front of theatre, as if the main entrance is being shut and locked. AMY

freezes, then rushes up the aisle and out.)

Hello? Hey, who's there!

(She returns, holds in the aisle, then back to the stage where she sings.)

"Bring back, bring back

Oh bring back my bonnie. . .

Thank you, thank you. Most kind. Nothing really. No, no please, no more for now. You may all go home. Thank you, maestro, you were scrumptious.

(Silence.)

Where is everybody! Must be some sort of. . .

(Checks her purse, finds a memo pad.)

Yep. 8:00 p.m. So, where are you!! They're doing this to me on purpose. Well, screw you. I know what you're doing-- and why! You can't get to me, you goddamn sons of . . .

(She goes silent, staring into theatre.)

This beautiful empty space. What magic has been created here. Beautiful, beautiful. . . lights, please, costumes, sets. . . people. . . I wonder why the front door's locked?

(To walking stick.)

Well, old friend, it's just you and me, now, see? We're in this together. We'll make it, we'll come through.

(Dances with stick, stops, looks about.)

What? Who said that?

(Back to stick.)

Can I tell you a secret? This is. . . this is frightening, awesome. What? Not for you? Oh, come now. Surely you jest. Oh, I see, you've been here before. Well, so have I. Sure, that makes sense. All right then, not for me either. Nor for old Amy-bamy. No siree. Everybody'll be here soon. Besides, it's not every actress who gets this sort of opportunity. A stage. A huge house filled with dignitaries. Ghosts, too. Ghosts of. . . theatre past. . . Listen, you can hear the applause. All those wonderful people, applauding. Amy, you're the best! Thank you, thanks, you are too generous. I owe my sensational success to my super parents. . .

(She stops herself.)

Being silly. Your parents are dead, dodo, and so are you.

Dead? Yeah, dead! No, I'm not. Yes, you are. NO I'M NOT!

You died four years ago. No, No!! Yes!!! Why don't you go home? No, I'm not, I'm not. . . GO HOME!!

(She goes into wing and is heard calling somewhere deep in the

theatre. After a time, she trudges back on stage and exits through the auditorium, still calling. She is heard, trying a door. She returns to the stage.)

Locked. . . That's strange. Well, if I can't get out, how can they get in? Yeah, if I can't get out. . . I'm in here, they're out there, somewhere. Laughing. But you're home, Amy, you're where you've always wanted to be -- on stage!

(Leaps into the center of the stage, arms spread.)

Tada!! You're all probably wondering why I've asked you here tonight--

(Glares into auditorium.)

Damn bright up here, you know? Out damn spot out I say -- Yeah, that's it. Why not? You're here, all of you. . . Even you, Mr. Big-Time-Producer, Mr. Prince, Mr. Smart-Pants Whoever!

(She turns her back, begins LADY MACBETH'S speech.)

"Out damned spot! out I say! -- One, two; why, then 'tis time to do't.-- Hell is murky.-- Fie, my Lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? -- What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? -- Yet, who would've thought the old man to have had so much blood in him? The Thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now? -- What, will these hands ne'er be clean? -- No more o' that: you mar all with this starting. Here's the smell of blood still!! All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! Oh! Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale. -- I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried: he cannot come out on's grave. To bed, to bed: There's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed. . ."

(She breaks character.)

Not bad. . . not bad. . . When there's nobody around to hear, I'm perfect! If they'd just give me a chance. . . got to be famous to be cast as he Lady. Ha! You're not famous, Amy-gamy. Never will be, I bet, I bet. . . Oh, Morbid Mamy, that's you. Perk up. You're here, you might as well make the best of it, eh?

(To theatre ghost.)

How many Lady Macbeth's have you seen, Old Man? Five? Fifty? Five Hundred? Well, you've just seen the best of the lot. Best ever! Anywhere!! And you better remember that name: Amy the bamy the lamy Colatta. Because someday you'll see that name eclipse all stars ever concocted. AMY COLATTA! in Macbeth. My name will bump the old Bard right off the Marquee! Wow!

(Silence.)

What am I doing? Would you listen to me? Ha. Ego-maniac. Sorry, I didn't mean. . . They're going to punish me.

(Silence.)

Hey, old Man, you know something? I had a title role once. No, give me a minute. Me, Amy Colatta, alias Pierson, from Grand Island, USA, it's in Nebraska, had a title role! Dinner theatre in Omaha. The Firehouse Dinner Theatre presents *Finian's Rainbow!* I played the rainbow. Beautiful, wonderful, magnificent rainbow! Claim to fame, you know?

(Sings.)

"Somewhere over the rainbow -- "
Ha! Judy Garland I'm not. But Liza?

(Sings.)

"It's Liza with a z, not Lisa with an s
Cause Lisa with an s goes ssss not zzzzz..."

(Silence.)

Ophelia's more my style. How does it go. . .

(She messes her hair, puts lipstick on her lips, smears it.)

Do I look crazed enough? Mad as a bee? Zzzzzzzzz. That little old mad-hatter, that's Amy-Zamy.

(She blubbers.)

"Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?. . . How should I your true-love know From another one? By his cockle hat and staff, and his sandal shoon. . . He is dead and gone, lady, He is dead and gone. . ." No! What's the matter with you, gal? Ophelia wasn't a loony. What was she, you ask? Nobody knows. She was a. . . con artist. . . and committed suicide because. . . because. . . God, Shakespeare was a depressing bastard. Away with you, nymph. To a nunnery I say. Go, commit suicide on your own time.

(She is depressed. She rummages in and among the items against the back wall, comes away with crushed hat.)

Hey! Neat. Anybody for Vaudeville? "Say, doctor, I've got this problem." "Oh? What's your problem?" "Every time I do this -- *(lifts arm)*-- it hurts!" "Tell you what, sister." "What, brother?" "Don't do this --*(lifts arm)*-- and you're cured."

(She laughs.)

How about this one? "Hey, Joe, what do ya get when you cross a telephone pole with a rooster?" "Don't know, what?" "A twenty-five foot long cock reaching out to touch someone."

(She laughs.)

Pretty sick. "Doctor, Doctor. I ain't slept for two weeks. How about helping me catch a coupla winks." (*She winks twice.*) "There, did you catch them?"

(*Hollow laugh.*)

How time flies. . . Wish they'd get here. Me, always the first to come, first to go. Why's that? Listen, you stupid idiots, get your behinds in here so we can get this business over with!

(*She discards the hat.*)

No respect of persons anymore. My time is just as valuable as the next guys. You know, I didn't have to come here tonight. You realize that, don't you? And I can leave anytime I feel like it. Right now. I could leave right now and. . . then what? It's all his fault. That louse, that male chauvinist. He hates my . . . everything. Well, I don't like you so awful much either, you swine, you pervert. Nothing to be done. I'm beginning to come round to that opinion. That's a line from something, I don't remember what. I know, I'll practice. Good idea.

(*She begins warmups.*)

My elevations. My elongations. My relaxations. My elongations. To slow me down. To perk me up. To do whatever it is they're supposed to do. . . Ah, feel much better. Where's that stick? Here, stickie, here, boy. Gotcha. Hello, old buddy o' mine. Miss me much?

(*She begins improvs with the stick.*)

(*It becomes a baseball bat.*)

I'm Big Mac. Chuck that old ball right in here, comma baby, comma boy, slip that old thingamabob by me if you can.

(*Swing.*)

It's a high fly ball -- it's going, it's going, it's gone!

(*Stick is a microphone.*)

Homerun number 2,365, a New All-Time High for Career Among Active Women Players. Let's hear it for Amy the Whamy Colatta! The Sultress of Sultana!

(*The stick is a fishing pole.*)

"Ole Man Ribber

Dat Ole man Ribber

He don say nuthin--"

Got me sumthin. It's a big un, shore nuff. Lordy, it's big as ole Jonah's whale--Bigger! The damn thing's gonna swaller me whole. Talk about a fish fry!

(*She is swallowed by a giant fish.*)

Oh my God, oh my God. . . it's dark as a momma's womb in here. How did I get myself into this mess? Something fishy going on around here. Guess I'll have to fish myself right out of this tuna. Easier said than done. Know what I mean, Sam? So, how did Jonah manage it? Built a fire and the creature puked him right up.

(*Stick becomes a fire.*)

Good warm fire. *(Coughs.)* It's working. *(Coughs.)* Come on, you no count sardine, puke me up! Maybe if I give her a little tickler tween the ribbers. Here goes.

(She stabs the sides of the fish with the stick. Laughs.)

Tickles! Jeez. Uh oh, it's working. Oh my God, oh my God, here goes!

(She is puked up by the fish.)

Whew, that was a close one. Now what? There's sea everywhere and not a horse to saw.

(The stick becomes a telescope.)

LAND HO!! What, what, what? Land, you crazy lubbers, land! What land? Yes land. Where land? Any land. So long as it's solid. Maybe cannibals. . . maybe not. . . Must see. Must find out. Oh, the trauma of owning an inquisitive mind.

(Stick is a machete; she cuts her way through a dense jungle.)

Hot, hot, hot. Must find a Coke machine. Coke, Coca Cola, my kingdom for a Pepsi!

(Stick is a rifle.)

Ah, ha! That rhino, it's charging! Help! Help! Wait!! Who needs help with dandy Daisy at my side. Bang, bang, bang. Actually only one bang was necessary, the other two were for show.

(She inspects the fallen rhino.)

Bull's eye. Oops. Rhino's eye. Clean as a whistle. Don't worry, fellas, I'll find us a Coke Machine if it kills me. Follow me. *(Stops.)* Now that was disgusting. Even in play, to kill a harmless beast like that. . . Poor thing. Where are you, rhino baby. I'll fix you right up, restore you with my healing hand. Amy-shamy taketh, Amy-shamy giveth back. I'm really a very nice person. Ask anyone here. That's a good rhino, nice rhino. Friends again? Yipes!

(She is chased by the rhino.)

Down boy, down. . . kind rhino. . . pretty rhino. Amy-flamy's friend. How! Oh, my God. Rhino, no, rhino -- LOOK OUT!!!

(She is trampled and gored. She writhes on the floor.)

Oh, rhino, what did I do to you? I should have let you die. Now it is I who must die. . . in your stead. I--I--I die. . .

(She dies.)

If you should run into any of my friends in these parts, be sure you tell them, I died a hero's death. Ahhhh.

(She dies. She sits up.)

Never fear, Amy's no longer here.

(She dies. Sits up.)

That was undoubtedly the most idiotic. . . Here I am, a strong healthy midwestern woman, fully grown, playing. . . There must be something wrong with my psyche. Yeah, all bunged up. So, when was the last time you wanted to kill your mother? Last time? The night she died, I guess. A rhinoceros? I mean, really. A rhinoceros!? I've never even seen one. Much less. . . I must be horny.

(To stick.)

Yeah. Must be. Even you look. . . how shall I say. . . I won't. Safer that way. You know, if anybody should walk in here right now, I'd just die.

(A faint sound from somewhere.)

What was that? I thought. . . Did you hear something? You didn't? Me neither. Listen. Ah, nothing to listen to. Listen.

(Silence. She sings.)

"Sometimes I feel like a motherless child. . ."
 Ah, stop it, Amy, for pity's sake. All right, all right. They'll be here soon. . . Maybe. . . You don't want to be depressed when they get here, do you? Think about the play they're doing, the role in it that was made just for you. Good suggestion. For a change. Change? You want change? Something, somebody. Play somebody. Character, character. . . Give me a character, any character. . . Ah, Malaprop! Of course, she's the dear one. Remember that time in -- NO! Don't do that. If you start remembering. . . so, don't do that. Fine. No memories. . . First time I used the Malaprop piece. . .

(She laughs.)

Ho, boy. Do I ever remember that. College. Remember the time ----- NO!! I said don't do that! I'm sorry. We must deal with the future, never steps taken, steps retraced. The future, that's the important thing. The other, too too dangerous. I said I'm sorry. Amy sorry, forgive? The future. What is it? What's in it for me? I've been here-- how long? Five minutes? Ten years? A lifetime?

(Silence.)

What difference does it make? You're still here, aren't you? I mean, you haven't done it yet, have you? Well, have you?! I don't suppose, not with any success anyway. Though I feel. . . dead. . . I feel tired. I'm tired.

(She sits on the edge of the stage, talks quietly as though to a close intimate friend.)

I came to New York -- No, that's wrong. Start it off right, Amy. I *died* to New York after a year in Omaha, a year after summer graduation. Oh, sure, I finished college. Pre-professional training, you know? Tada. That's what I'm doing here, I guess. Pre-professional training in the theatre. Bullshit. Hit New York, dinner theatre work as

experience and BFA in my tight little fist to show I know my stuff. Here to set the business on fire with my charm, my flare, my new name. I expected the city to thank me for coming. Hardy handshake, key to the . . . pay toilet in Penn Station. Ding-dong, Amy's here. Well, why not? I'm good. I really am. That's all you need, isn't it, to be good? Ha. Provincial. You know what that means, don't you. It means anything that ain't New York City. Me, I'm the walking definition of "provincial." Un-so-FISH-ti-cated. Who called me that? Don't remember. Ach! Got me right where it hurts. Well, whoever, he was wrong. Not really. Yes, yes he was. Oh, Amy. . . So much, from the time I stepped off the bus, so much has happened. So little actually. All those auditions. Auditions, auditions, auditions. I was auditioning in my sleep, in my dreams. Nightmares is what they were. Waking-mares. Even when not asleep, they were all around. That kid. Little black kid, no more than twelve, standing there up against me on the subway. You're leaning into my space, kiddo, I told him, but he couldn't hear. The kid next to him had put this ice-pick between his ribs and in his heart, and the kid, leaning on me was. . . was. . . Oh, Christ, and there wasn't even any blood.

(Silence.)

This room, this space. This is all you know, isn't it. Just goes to show. Nothing exists outside here, right? Get real. The only world worth having is here on the stage, any stage, doesn't matter. Not in the subways, not on the corners or on the sidewalks, stepping over human fetuses. Oh, God, when I saw that, I threw-up! Life can't be like this. Life has to be worth something, not just dumped like garbage in the middle of the streets! So, here, on the stage, where I want to be, here, nowhere else. Only time I could get anywhere close to it was in those God-awful auditions! Sorry. Don't listen to me. I'm messed up in my psyche, remember? Still, sometimes. . . sometimes. . . I remember my first callback. I'm there, dressed in my lucky jeans and sweatshirt, the one with "God Loves a Cornhusker" on the back, all ready, you see. They give me a script. One page. All that's written on it is a stage direction, no lines, just one simple little, unimportant stage direction that this weirdo tells me over and over how vital that stage direction is to the success of the evening. It reads, "The girl," not even a name, you notice, just "The girl." "The girl crawls from beneath the covers, naked, and strolls to the bathroom, exits." It. Nothing else. My BIG BREAK!! Ha. Me, strut my tits and ass across the stage for some some some bug eyed pervert who. . . When they asked me to uh, you know, undress, strip, come clean, bare it toots, I said, "Fuck off," and split, man. I mean there are other ways of making a living. I mean, that's what my BFA in pre-

professional theatre training had prepared me for, you see -
 -to take my my my clothes off in front of a bunch of pseudo-
 intellectual assholes who get their rocks off watching
 hungry actresses screw themselves for a role. Any role. A
 one liner -- a no liner. "Screwball McPherson is hiring
 today!" We flock to the place, crawl on the floor, kiss
 filthy feet, spread our legs. . . Christ! When I asked
 about pay, he said, "Hell, kiddo, this is a Equity-waiver
 showcase. Where you from anyway?" And I said Grand Island.
 I tried to make it sound like Long Island but it didn't
 work. So I left. I think I left. I wanted to leave.
 Anyways, I didn't get the part. Not that I really wanted
 it. . . Yeah, I wanted it. It was a part, on the stage, my
 first big. . . I wanted it. My boobs weren't right, they
 said. Too pointy. . . Well, it was cold, and. . .

(Silence.)

Is there anybody here? I mean, if there is, I'd appreciate
 knowing it. This is pretty personal stuff, and if you're
 here. . . If anybody's here, it wouldn't be nice, you know,
 letting me go on and on and on like this.

(Silence.)

There was this friend. No, I don't want to talk about him.
 Just forget all about. . . I don't know, I just don't. . .
 Well. Let's talk about something else. Why bring him up?
 I don't know. I was just thinking. . . well. . . that if he
 were here, we could, you know, play a scene. "Doll's House"
 or something. We were so good together that time. The
 Adler Hour. Best hour of my life. Oh, I miss him. Come
 home, soon, all right? He's good. Damn good. He's out of
 town, national tour. Come home, okay? . . . He's a gofer,
 right now, tour of. . . LES MIZ! Spelled with a z! God, I
 know what it's all about. LES MIZ! He's gonna make it.
 Sure he's gonna make it. He's so good it hurts. Just give
 him a chance. . .

*(Long silence. She clears her
 throat, enters a scene.)*

"Listen, Torvald. I have heard that when a wife deserts her
 husband's house, as I am doing now, he is legally freed from
 all obligations. You are not to feel yourself bound in the
 slightest way, anymore than me. There must be perfect
 freedom on both sides. . . Now it is all over. The maids
 know all about everything -- better than I do. Oh, Torvald,
 I don't believe any longer in wonderful things happening. .
 . I don't believe in wonderful things happening."

(She is in tears.)

Come home, all right? We can work it out, please? Please?

(Silence.)

They're not going to show up. It's all some kind of joke.
 A silly rotten joke! Idiotic joke! Those noncompoops have

set me up, and I'm locked in, and Frank is on tour, and my life is the pits! YOU GODDAMN SONSABITCHES!!

(Silence.)

What am I doing? You'd think I was off my rocker or something. Wow. Calm down, Amy-damy. There's nobody to hear. . . a tree in the forest. . .

(Silence.)

It was his idea. Just like him, the. . . He's never liked me. Workshop productions. It's not work. It's not shop. I don't know what it is. Kinky, that's what it is. What have I done to you, anyway? Is it my deodorant? My hair style? I can cut my hair, you know. Use another anti-perspirant. This is really like him. . . me, stuck like this. All planned, you know. Ohhhhhh, yeah. Planned to the finish. And I fell for it. Ohhhhhh, yeah. Sort of funny, right? Good old Amy. Goofball from Grand Island. Believe anything. Anytime. "Can't you just see her, good old Amy, on that empty stage, screaming her eyeballs out?" Some joke. Don't you understand, you people? Don't you realize that to laugh at Amy. . . Ahhh!! It hurts, you know, I mean really hurts. . . Bunch of lemon peels. Worms. No feelings, no understanding whatsoever. But really, when you get right down to it, what does it matter? Hm? I'm here, can't leave, they're not coming. . . I guess. . . I could end it. . .

(She finds the walking stick.)

Hi, old friend. Old. No offense. How old are you, anyway? Really? I'd never have guessed. You're like a puppy dog, never desert anybody, would you. Good, I need you, stay with me. . . If you were -- I'd --!

(She chokes the stick.)

You son of a . . .

(Caresses the stick.)

Didn't hurt you, did I? No, no, don't cry. Amy didn't mean to. Amy wouldn't hurt you for anything. You're the only friend Amy has, you know that, don't you? So, don't cry, please, don't cry.

(She is crying.)

Nothing to cry about, not really. You're alone, you love being alone, you ache to be alone. You say all the time how you enjoy being alone. . . Jackass. What's all this carrying on about, huh? Blubbering. Just look at you, Amy-bamy, your make-up is running. Black streaks on white cheeks! Ohhh, you! You're no friend!

(She stands on the front edge of the stage for a long time, surveying the auditorium.)

So. So, so, so. This is what being alone feels like. Lonely. Lonesome. How. . . enlightening. This the most populated city in the world and Amy-lamy is lonely. Lonely,

lonely, now lonely. Who's lonely, me lonely? No, not lonely. You -- you're lonely, not me lonely. Isn't it lovely being lonely. Wait. Yes. Right. Jolly lonely. Yes, yes, powerful lonely. Wait a -- I say wait a minute! How can you be lonely as long as I'm here. Answer me that, Angela Lansbury. What? You're saying I'm not here? I'm dead? Right. Right again and again and again. Take care of it immedijutely. I dare say IMMEDIJUTLY. Die. Die good. Die now. Here we go.

(She dies by making her hand into a pistol, loading it, placing it against her head, and pulling the trigger. She falls, dead. Then sits up.)

Not bad, eh? Right. Try again. No, I didn't miss. Just practicing, okay? Russian roulette. Here goes.

(She falls again, sits up.)

Cheers, bravos, bouquets, standing ovations, rotten reviews. Right. Amy Colatta DIES! with more flare than Gena Davis but less charisma. Oh, well, such is life according to Roger Ebert. . . Wish I could, you know? Wonder what it feels like, sailing off the cliff edge, just you and the car and nothing but air all around you and Sue Sarandon sitting beside you. Just zoom into into into what. . . A once in a lifetime proposition. To choose the time and place like Thelma and Louise, like Hedda. . . such freedom. . . Oh, could I die! But no audience to see it. What good is dying without an audience? Creation in a void is void of creation. Who said that? Stanislavski? Couldn't have been. He never said anything quite so obvious. Ha. Probably one of those stupid professors. . . Not stupid. Lazy. Lazy, that's their dominant quality. Ah, college, joke time. So long ago. I remember -- don't do that! You'll only depress yourself if you remember, so don't -- Still. . . well, why not? Nothing else to do, might as well depress myself to hell. Remember *Hamlet*? Polonius behind his drape in Gertrude's bedroom -- who played Polonius? Mike somebody, business major. Anyway, Hamlet goes at him with his dagger and lets out a cry like something from a Rambo epic, and turns his wrist at the last possible second so the blade is parallel to the actor. Only thing, he comes in too low. Gets Mike business major Polonius right in the jewels. Poor guy. He has to die and lay there on stage and in such pain! He yells like the world's come to an end and writhes through the rest of the scene. Oh, horrible. I wonder what it feels like, getting balled like that? Having balls in the first place. The poor guy finally lay still. The scene over, they have to drag him off stage. He can't stand. He walked bowlegged for weeks after that and his girlfriend said *Hamlet* ruined her sex life for three months.

Oh goodness, those were the fun times. . . all those beautiful people. . . energy everywhere. Love them all. Then there was the time -- Amy-ramy, come on now, you could go on and on all night long. Well, why not? Anybody got any place to go? College. Everybody was so innocent back then. If I knew then what I know now. . . I'd be living in Grand Island, two and a half kids, ranch-style house, the works. Job as a secretary to a law firm. American dream. Well, so much for college and pre-professional BFA.

(Pause)

I'm so lonesome. . . nothing but ghosts. . . spooky, frightening. All theatres are frightening when dark. . . Don't think bout it, idiotchild.

(She whistles. She takes off her shoes.)

Get comfortable, why don't you. Think I might. No idea how long this "little joke" will go on. I'll write a novel about this. All Night on an Empty Stage by FreakedOutDisplacedActress. I could die, you know. The janitor or somebody will come in and find my emaciated corpse stretched out here on the floor. I could make the front page of the *Times*. Even a picture if I manage it right. Big time, you know. How many folks from Grand Island get their name plastered across the front page of the *Times* "Budding Young Star Found Dead on the Stage of the--" What theatre is this? Did I-- Oh, my God. . . I don't remember. What if. . . Oh, God. If this isn't the right place! I'll die. They could have already come and gone and I wasn't there. This has to be the right theatre -- it has to be. I hate this!! I want you all to know that I hate this!! I don't know if I can stand this!!

(She struggles for calm.)

Diversion. That's what I need. Something to divert. . . my anger. Something to relax me. If I'm where I'm not supposed to be. . . if they said someplace else. . . if they've held the audition without me. . . I'll I'll I'll. . . I don't know. Maybe even. . . Who knows? Diversion. Diversion.

(She finds a large canvas bag in the wings and drags it into the light. It is filled with costume pieces and props.)

Oh, this is fun, like Christmas. A bag of toys. Ho Ho Ho. I'm Santa, kiddies -- Who left this here? These things are valuable. Somebody might come in here and steal -- Oh, no, I wouldn't do a thing like that.

(She takes a Dracula cape from the bag. Puts it on.)

Ah ha. Mata Hari! No. Dracula. Count Dracula. Why do men always get the best parts? Countess Dracula. That would

be more interesting, right? Only not Countess. That's sounds so so so second-class. We should demand our equal rights! Right? Of course, we've been doing it for years, and to no avail.

(She finds a crown.)

Nice. This is really nice. I demand! Wouldn't that be a prick up their behinds, huh? You white middleclass males, I command, I reprimand -- I countermand. I -- I... Yes, I! I dictate that all great roles be rewritten for the female sex. No, forget sex. Just rewrite them for me. Today. Right this instance! "Come, let us gather together and tell sad tales of the death of women kings. . ." If I were Richard, what a king I'd make. . . No, not necessary. Fellas? you can keep your parts. For what is man devoid of his parts, eh? Yeah. . .

(She takes a small bag of coins from the sack.)

What's this? Heavy. This makes me feel like. . . Shylock. No. Mrs. Shylock. No. Ms. Shylock. Must be. . . a dollar's worth of pennies. Ha! At least I'll get home. If. . . Big if.

(Returns money bag.)

Shakespeare was a male chauvinist pig. His women's roles? Anything worth doing is a man in woman's garb -- in drag. Rosalind, the Lady, Portia, etc. etc. etc. Not Desdemona. Dizzy Dezzy. Who wants to play that weeping willow? She's enough to make your stomach crawl. You knew what you were about when you put that broad out of your misery, right, Othello?

(She pulls a gun from the bag.)

Wow. Can you believe this? Real, too. Heavy. My God, who would have left this here? Crazy people. Oh, what scenes could play with this toy. Oh, such a death scene. Hey, Kevin Costner, move your butt over. Here comes Pistol-packing Amy!

(She struts, shoots by making noises with her mouth.)

Gunsmoke. You remember *Gunsmoke*? On Lifetime late at night. Real oldie. Marshall Dillon and Miss Kitty. Yeah, you've got it, comes on right after *M*A*S*H* weeknights. "Hey, mista, yeah you. Them words you drawled about Doc. Well, them weren't the kinds of words We allow in these parts. Them filthy things bout him being a red-hot honker horny for Miss Kitty. . . Well, them's fighting words, that you're gonna have to eat. Draw!"

(She draws. The gun explodes with sound and smoke. She is terrified and drops the gun.)

Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God. . . Oh my God, oh my God.

(She runs into the wings where the gun had been pointed. Returns.)

There's a hole in the wall. A hole. This big. What're they gonna say about a hole in the wall. Oh my God. I can't afford to pay for holes in walls. I could have killed somebody. Nobody here. Thank God nobody here. Oh my God, I've got to sit. . . What if -- somebody'd been here. I could of killed. . . They could send me to Attica. Somebody should be shot, leaving a thing like that lying around -- loaded. . . Look, I wanna go home. I've had enough of this place. Let me out of here, okay, please? Please? Mama. . . *(She is crying.)* Oh, my God, I didn't mean to do it. I didn't mean to, honest, that hole, I didn't know the gun was loaded. I was just playing with it, it scared me, I don't even know how to shoot a gun. Please, don't please don't please please don't. . .

(She has the gun pointed to her head. She stops, throws the gun from her.)

You're not gonna hurt me, are you? You stay away from me. Just stay far far away from me. Amy doesn't need you. Not ever. Not yet. There's nothing to be afraid of. Right. Nothing at all. It's passed. There, settle down.

(She addresses the gun.)

Right. You stay right where you are and I'll stay where I am. I won't bother you if you promise not to bother me. That's a good little gun.

(She touches it with her toe.)

Why, you're not so bad, now that we know where both of us stand. Tell you what. If you just sit there and be quiet, I'll just sit here and be quiet, too. Deal? Good.

(She sits quietly beside the gun, trying to ignore it but can't.)

"Do-be-doo, be-do-be-do-be. . ."

Did they set me up with you? Is that it? If they did, I'm gonna. . . No, I'm not. That's exactly the reaction they'd want from me. No. I'll fool them. You and me will become friends. Like old buddies. Come over here, pal-o-mine.

(She picks up gun, inspects it, checks for shells.)

A miracle. An honest to God miracle. It's as though I willed you here. Or vice versa. Who has the strongest will, you or me? What? You brought me here? How nice of you to honor me so. Wow. So cool, so well developed. A neat machine. You look innocent. So innocent. But oh what you're capable of. . . An end -- to everything. One tiny little second and it's finished. Kaput. Like that. Ohhhh, gives me shivers. You've often thought of it, Amy-damy. You've not been able to sleep some nights for sitting there, wanting to. . . but you never have. Why not? Coward. But

that was then. This is now. Are you a coward still? I'm already dead, no one would ever miss me, so what's the big deal? I'm old, too. So old. So decrepit. You just don't have it, Amy Colatta. Amy Pierson. Whoever. You just don't have it, and that's a fact. No roles, no callbacks. No auditions. Waste of time. Nothing but waste. . .

(Long pause.)

Let me set my stage. I'll need a few more props, a table, a chair. . .

(She prepares the scene.)

Is it right? Close enough. Twill do. Won't it, Hedda? This is your moment, so you decide. Yeah, close enough.

(She sits, gun in lap.)

This is important, Amy love, you have only this last scene to play. Your stage, your audience. . . your role. Now, do it.

(She assumes Hedda's character.

She is transformed.)

"What were you saying about a gun. . . Yes, Eilert Lovborg was here this morning, and I was alone with him. No, I never left the room, so how could the gun have been stolen. It was here on the desk, in its case. So, the gun they found on his body was. . . And should the police find it's owner? I understand. I'd rather *die*. Of course people don't do things like that. And if. . . if the gun were not stolen? And they find the owner -- then what happens? A scandal. So, then I'm in your power, Judge. From now on you can do anything with me. In your power. Dependent on your Will. Not free! No -- I can't stand that thought. Never! Yes, don't you think that would be nice, Judge Brack! You-- sole cock-'o-the-walk. --"

(She exits into the wing. In a

moment, a gunshot is heard.

Complete silence. Nothing moves.

Finally, the rear door of the theatre is heard to open. A male voice calls out.)

MAN

Amy? Are you here?! Yo, anybody! Amy!!! She's not here, guys. I told you the crazy bitch wouldn't show up.

(The door slams.)

End of play.)

Performance rights must be secured before production. For contact information, please see the *The Audition* information page (click on your browser's "Back" button, or visit www.singlelane.com/proplay/audition.html)