

The Bed Method

by Michael Olsen

Characters: Derrick, actor, 20s (M)
Miracy, actor, 30s (F)
Audrey, director (F)

Lights come up on a table with a rubber knife on it. Derrick is in front of it, centrestage, holding a copy of Romeo and Juliet, and declaiming Juliet's speech in Act III, Scene II. He is doing an horrendous job—but he doesn't think so. Miracy stands off, staring up at him.

DERRICK: "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phoebus' lodging! Such a wagoner
As Phaëton would whip you to the west
And bring in cloudy night immediately.
Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,
That runaways may wink, and Romeo
Leap to these arms untalked of and unseen."

Audrey enters, loudly dropping her books on the floor.

DERRICK: So how was that?

AUDREY: Shithouse.

DERRICK: OK. OK. Right now I don't have any idea how I can use what you've just said to get even better, but—

AUDREY: Better? You can't get any better, Derrick. I think this is the best that you can do.

DERRICK: Thank you.

AUDREY: I didn't mean it as a compliment.

DERRICK: Oh. How did you mean it, then?

AUDREY: I mean you're atrocious. You still are. You should be banned from even coming within 5 miles of a stage. There are rocks in the garden around this theatre that I think would do a better job than what I've just seen.

DERRICK: Do you think the set would look better with some rocks around it?

AUDREY: *(sarcastic)* Yes, Derrick, that's exactly what I mean.

- MIRACY:** But what about your Method, Audrey? Hasn't that unblocked us all?
- AUDREY:** There was nothing to unblock. I've come to the end of my powers, Derrick. There's nothing more I can do.
- DERRICK:** You mean I've achieved the goal of UTF—Ultimate Theatrical Freedom?
- AUDREY:** Well you are totally unembarrassable, but I think you were like that all along, weren't you?
- DERRICK:** But—but you're the director, Audrey. I'm sure I still *need* direction, even if I don't *feel* that I do.
- AUDREY:** You don't need direction, Derrick, you need a miracle. Unfortunately the only person who can help died two thousand years ago.
- DERRICK:** You think there's too much of The Divine in my interpretation?
- AUDREY:** No! No!
- MIRACY:** No director has ever compared *me* to Christ.
- DERRICK:** I'm rather touched, actually.
- AUDREY:** For godsake!
- MIRACY:** It must be working, Derrick. Keep going!
- AUDREY:** No! Don't keep going! Stop! Stop!
- MIRACY:** I really thought you were getting to grips with the inner torment of the girl, Derrick.
- DERRICK:** Thank you, Miracy. I actually took up your suggestion that I base it on someone I know, so I've based it on my grandmother.
- MIRACY:** That's wonderful!
- AUDREY:** You've based your interpretation of Juliet, a 14 year old girl, on a geriatric?
- MIRACY:** I never thought I'd hear you being ageist, Audrey!
- DERRICK:** I shared my misgivings about this whole role reversal thing, about portraying a young girl, but you said if I followed your Method I'd find my Inner Woman, and I have. I've traced the lineage of my Inner Woman back to my grandmother.
- AUDREY:** What have I done? What have I done?

DERRICK: You said three nights ago that I had to completely reinvent myself onstage.

MIRACY: Is that when she slept with you?

AUDREY: What?! You told Miracy?

DERRICK: Is that a problem?

AUDREY: But—

DERRICK: Miracy told me she'd slept with you too.

AUDREY: Yes but—

MIRACY: They say secrets are the lifeblood of any theatre, but all we're doing is a little transfusion.

DERRICK: You said if I slept with you that that would help unblock the potential that I had within. That was your Method: complete *sexual* openness and honesty leads to complete *theatrical* openness and honesty.

AUDREY: Well I was wrong. I was so wrong it hurts.

MIRACY: You didn't unblock his potential?

AUDREY: I don't know what I unblocked that night, but it wasn't his potential. Do you see any evidence of it?

MIRACY: Yes, yes I do.

AUDREY: What am I asking you for? It's like asking Guy Fawkes about fire safety.

MIRACY: So you think he ignites the character, do you?

AUDREY: There's never a can of petrol when you need one.

DERRICK: If I didn't know you better I'd say that you were upset with me.

AUDREY: Upset? Upset doesn't even come close to describing how I feel. Upset? I am in another universe entirely from "upset."

MIRACY: So where do you define upset? With your chi?

AUDREY: My what?

MIRACY: Your chi. It's where every good actor acts from. Just ask Pepé Le Pew.

AUDREY: Pepé Le Pew is a cartoon character!

MIRACY: But he has such great energy!

DERRICK: Great style, too.

MIRACY: I always believe his desire. So pure, so intense. It's because he's in synch with his chi.

DERRICK: That's it! Of course!

MIRACY: Have I talked about the chi before? Maybe we could—

AUDREY: Can we just—for a moment—get back to Shakespeare?

DERRICK: Who?

AUDREY: Shakespeare? The play?

MIRACY: Oh yes. The dead white male.