

CLEVELAND WAITS

By
Greg Vovos

CHARACTERS

MIKE
AGENT

SETTING

Agent's Office

To Produce This Play
Contact Playwright at:
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Lights up as THE AGENT sits at his desk staring at a pencil. MIKE enters and the AGENT gets busy.

AGENT

Mikey, how are you? You're looking good. Damn good. You putting on weight?

MIKE

Listen, I know you didn't want me to, but I called Big Darla myself and told her I couldn't do her show. I told her I respected the offer very much but with my job and my kid it's just too far to drive way across town. She said she would make it worth my while, but I told her I was really committed to doing "The Red Umbrella" at Habana Theatre because it's original and it's more artistic and dammit I need to do art. And get paid. So what do you think about that?

AGENT

I think there's no way in hell you're doing "The Red Umbrella."

MIKE

Too bad. It's a done deal. I set it up.

AGENT

Habana cancelled their show. In fact, they cancelled the rest of their season.

MIKE

But I just talked to the director not five minutes ago. She's really excited. She said it's going to be the biggest thing to hit Cleveland since Ghouardi.

AGENT

Yeah, well, the ax is probably dropping on her as we speak.

MIKE

I don't believe this. Call Big Darla. Get me that job back. Come on, be an agent!

AGENT

She won't take you back now that you flaked on her. Jesus, Mike, how could you call her like that? This is a small town. Word travels fast about flakes. I don't think I have to name names.

MIKE

I'm leaving this town. I'm going to LA.

AGENT

You're too fat for LA.

MIKE

Then I'll go to New York.

AGENT

You don't have the chops for New York.

MIKE

I have the chops.

AGENT

All right. Then go to New York.

MIKE

How the hell am I going to go to New York? I can barely afford Cleveland. I know. I'll go to Chicago.

AGENT

There you go. Go to Chicago.

MIKE

I will. As soon as my summer gig with the Theatre of the Snoop is done, I'm going to Chicago

The AGENT's phone rings. HE answers.

AGENT

Fall From The— Yeah? Bye. [*He hangs up.*] That was Theatre of the Snoop. They just cancelled the rest of their season.

MIKE

(*Desperate*) I passed up Hamlet to work at the Snoop!

AGENT

What can I tell you? Blame the terrorists.

MIKE

Those damn terrorists. I'll get them. You'll see.

AGENT

What if I were to tell you that The Kaleidoscope Theatre wants you to play The Big Hairy Box in their production of "Things Bought and Sold."

MIKE

I don't know. They're way out on the east side—

AGENT

Not anymore. They lost that space. Landlords raised the rent. Word is they just wanted to push the theatre out.

MIKE

Damn. Theatre's a tough racket. Why do I do this?

AGENT

Well, you're not the brightest guy I ever met. So do you want The Big Hairy Box role or don't you?

MIKE

Is it a good role?

AGENT

It's a fantastic role. You'd be playing a big hairy box!

MIKE

Would I have lines?

AGENT

No lines. But you're integral to the play. The play cannot resolve itself without the grandiose presence of the Big Hairy Box.

MIKE

Well, it does sound intriguing.

AGENT

This could be just what you need before you make your move to Chicago. Imagine what playing the Big Hairy Box would do for your resume.

MIKE

Okay, you sold me. I will play the Big Hairy Box.

The phone rings and the AGENT answers it.

AGENT

'Fall From the Stars Agency.' We'll pick you up when no one else will. Oh hey Johnny John Jon. I was just telling him about it. He's very excited--. Oh really. Is that a fact? Well, thank you. Yeah. Oh and Johnny –

AGENT hangs up on him.

MIKE

What he say? Is he excited? Huh? Is he? Is he?

AGENT

They cancelled the show.

MIKE

What?

AGENT

It seems they are experiencing financial difficulties and they felt it better to wait until next season.

MIKE

Dammit. That's it. I love this town but I hate it. I'm moving out of here and I'm not going to Chicago. I'm going to New York. I'll live on the subway if I have to.

AGENT

And what about your son?

MIKE

He'll live there with me. He's an adaptable kid. And small. I'll hide him in my coat.

AGENT

You really mean it don't you?

MIKE

I do at that. There's no theatres left open in this town so –

AGENT

Well, that's not entirely true. The Mother of All Theatres has yet to cancel their season.

MIKE

What does that have to with me?

AGENT

They called me the other day. Wanted me to send a very special actor their way. I want to send you.

MIKE

No you don't.

AGENT

I do.

MIKE

You said you would never send me to the Mother of All Theatres. You said I didn't have what it takes. You said every actor would have to leave town before—

AGENT

But that was before you showed me your spunk. And I can't think of a better person to play this role than you.

MIKE

Are you serious? I could kiss you. I've waited all my life to work at The Mother of All Theatres. And now FINALLY I get my chance! I have been dying to get back on stage. I don't mind telling you that if I didn't get on the stage in the next week or so that I might actually have to kill myself. And that's no joke.

MIKE pulls out a revolver. He recklessly waves it around.

What's the role? What's the role???

AGENT

Godot.

MIKE

Godot? God I love that play! I love Beckett! Who am I playing? Didi? Gogo? Pozzo? Lucky? the little boy? I can play a little boy! See? *(He gets on his knees and talks in a higher pitched voice.)* "Mr. Godot can't see you now, but he'll gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today."

AGENT

No, not the little boy. Even better. You would play Godot. The title Role. Godot at the Mother of All Theatres.

MIKE

(Again reckless with the gun.) But Godot never appears in the play. Not once.

AGENT

But you are a master of subtleties.

MIKE

Well, that is true. What other choice do I have?

AGENT

It's either that, leave town or kill yourself. But if you're the true Clevelander that I know you to be, then you'll stay here.

AGENT hold out his hand for the gun.

Think of your little boy.

The AGENT crosses closer to MIKE and confides.

Just between me and you, Mikey, I have an inside scoop into what kind of shows are on the horizon for next year, and it looks damn good—not to mention Absurd--and I know a certain actor named Mikey who would kill for some of these roles.

MIKE

Really? That good?

AGENT

Oh yeah. It looks to be a promising season indeed.

MIKE

But that's what you said last year.

AGENT

Get with times, Son. That was then. This is now. If you spend too much time looking back you're going to fall on your face and your future will be kissing the pavement. You don't want to kiss the pavement do you? Hell no. You want to kiss pretty girls. Or maybe pretty boys.

MIKE

I don't know. I just—Even if I do play Godot. I mean I don't know if I can go on until next season. How would I survive? What would I do with myself?

AGENT

You do what any real Clevelander would do in this situation.

MIKE

What?

AGENT

You wait until next year.

The AGENT again holds out his hand for the gun. MIKE considers the situation and is about to hand him the gun, and the phone rings. MIKE and the AGENT look at each other in horror. QUICK BLACKOUT.

END OF PLAY