

CAPE ABELITY

by Greg Vovos
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TO PRODUCE THIS PLAY
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CHARACTERS

CAPER: A superhero with low self-esteem. He's just getting back into the biz. He is partially dressed in his outfit, though he does not wear his cape.

ABEL: The HR Manager at the Superhero Company. She's a corporate killer. She knows how to play the man's game.

SETTING

The HR offices of a Superhero firm, specifically Abel's office. Upstage is the door that leads to the outside world – a world in great turmoil. Her desk and a seat for a guest are also present.

SYNOPSIS

Caper has arrived for his first day on the job to save the world. However, he starts to have doubts whether he has what it takes, and it's up to Abel to convince him that he's up to the task.

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CAPE ABELITY

Lights up on CAPER and ABEL. ABEL, a woman, sits behind her desk, and CAPER sits in her guest chair. There is a cape like a superhero would wear in CAPER's lap. He also holds a document. Behind Abel is a door. Occasionally, noises sound from behind the door. As the play progresses, the sounds should get louder and more dangerous.

ABEL

Do you like the cape?

CAPER

I do. It's just that—

ABEL

What?

CAPER

Well, I was going to wear my knee-high red flashy boots today but I didn't think it would be appropriate for the first day of work.

ABEL

Oh, red boots would have been so cute with that cape.

CAPER

I need to trust my instincts more!!

ABEL

Don't worry, Caper, I'll help you with that. You should know that we're certainly proud to have you as part of the team. As you can see, your assignment is outlined clearly in that document. The items with the smiley faces are of the highest importance. And of course, there's your cape. Just put it on and you'll be all set. Are you ready?

CAPER

No.

ABEL

What?

CAPER

Yes.

ABEL
We're counting on you.

CAPER
Oh boy.

ABEL
What?

CAPER
Great.

ABEL
We believe in you.

CAPER
Why?

ABEL
Why?

CAPER
I mean, thank you.

Pause.

ABEL
I'm starting to think you don't believe in yourself.

CAPER
No, of course, I don't.

ABEL
Caper, you can do it.

CAPER
No, you're right.

ABEL
Of course, I'm right.

CAPER
I hope.

ABEL

You don't instill a lot of confidence.

CAPER

I know.

ABEL

Nonetheless, I believe in you.

CAPER

Thank you. That means a lot.

ABEL

Now get to it.

CAPER

And if I fail?

ABEL

And if you don't?

CAPER

But if I do?

ABEL

You won't.

CAPER

But if I do?

ABEL

It will be catastrophic. No pressure.

CAPER

[*Gulp*]

ABEL

Do you doubt my skills?

CAPER

Of course not.

ABEL

Do you doubt the man I am?

CAPER

I don't understand.

ABEL

I hired you.

CAPER

Yes.

ABEL

I selected you from many applicants.

CAPER

Yes.

ABEL

I reviewed. Analyzed. Chose. You.

CAPER

True.

ABEL

Because I believe in you. I believe in your wherewithal, your dynamism, your love of the encompassing.

CAPER

You do?

ABEL

Of course. And I believe in the man you are.

CAPER

What if I'm not the man...

ABEL

What man?

CAPER

The man you think I am?

ABEL

What if you are?

CAPER

I suppose that would be good.

ABEL

Caper, if you believe in yourself as I do, I think you'll find you're capable of things you never before imagined.

CAPER

Really?

ABEL

Really. Now get to it.

CAPER

But was there one specific quality about me that made you think that Caper Johns is the man? He can do it. No matter how great the task may be, here is a man who can rise to the occasion.

ABEL

Yes. For one, your name: Caper Johns. That's a nice name. I think it would look great in a headline. CAPER JOHNS SAVES THE DAY.

CAPER

That does sound nice. Strong. Assured. It puts me at ease.

ABEL

Me too.

CAPER

My mother gave me that name. Because she loves me.

ABEL

I don't doubt it for a second. Now off to work.

Loud noise from the other side of the door.

CAPER

But is that it? Just my name?

ABEL

(She might be standing by the end of this speech.) Just your name? I couldn't think of a more important way to judge someone than by their name. It tells me everything I need to know. Take my name, for instance, Abel. Abel is a man's name that means I am able to do things. I am capable. I can be counted on. I

should be trusted by those who don't even trust themselves for I am able to see the greater good in the world and all its beautiful people. I AM ABEL!!!

CAPER
Hmmm.

ABEL
You disagree?

CAPER
It sounds good, but –

ABEL
I think inside you lies a hidden treasure, my friend. But you are so blind to your greatness that you will not allow yourself to see it.

CAPER
But what if my mother had inadvertently inserted an S into my name and instead named me CASPER. Would you still believe in my abilities?

ABEL
Hmmm. Casper Johns. Casper Johns. No. Not for this job. In that case I would hire you to paint me a masterpiece.

CAPER
So that's it? The mere coincidence that my mother named me Caper –

ABEL
It's more than coincidence, my friend. It is destiny. A destiny you are obliged to fulfill.

A LOUD NOISE from inside.

I think it's time you got in there.

CAPER
Look, Ma'am. It's just –

ABEL
What did you just call me?

CAPER
Excuse me?

ABEL

Did you just refer to me as a Ma'am?

CAPER

Yes, I'm sorry. Was that inappropriate?

ABEL

I would say it's highly inappropriate.

CAPER

I'm sorry. I've been out of the field for quite some time and I guess I'm not abreast as to what—

ABEL

Abreast? You're not abreast? What are you then, if not abreast?

CAPER

I guess I'm not up to date with the jargon.

ABEL

I understand. It can be intimidating. Starting at a new job and all. Learning the corporate culture as it were. You know when I first started here, my greatest enemy was not myself, as it is in your case, but it was other people. Would you believe that there were some who didn't feel I was man enough for this position?

She sits on his lap.

Do you feel I'm man enough for this position?

CAPER

I, uh, I don't know.

ABEL

You don't know?

CAPER

I'm really not comfortable discussing positions with you.

ABEL

If I didn't know any better, Caper, I would think you were turning this into something sexual.

CAPER

No, no, no. Of course, I'm not. It's just the way you're sitting is making me—

ABEL
Is this hard on you, Caper?

CAPER
Yes.

ABEL
Relax, Caper. We're just a couple of guys.

CAPER,
Yeah, right. No. I mean, I know.

ABEL
Would you like me to let you in on a little secret?

CAPER
No.

ABEL
I do prefer the company of men. If you know what I mean.

CAPER
I think it best I leave.

ABEL
Are you turning down the job, Caper?

CAPER
I, uh, uh...Here's my cape.

HE tosses the cape away. Abel quickly retrieves it.

ABEL
I am truly disappointed in you.

CAPER
I'm sorry.

ABEL
Don't be sorry. I just thought you were much more of a man. I didn't realize you were such a weasel. A fraidy cat. A spineless —

CAPER

I don't think you should talk to me like that.

ABEL

I'm sorry, Caper, did I just hurt your wuss?

CAPER

What? Huh? No.

ABEL

Clearly, I was off the mark on you. You may leave. The job of saving the world takes a real man. Not someone like you. Good Day.

CAPER

I don't appreciate —

ABEL

And I don't appreciate your homophobic tendencies —

CAPER

Homophobic- What are you talking about?

ABEL

The second I confided in you about my sexuality, and my taste for men, you turned on me like a —

CAPER

I hate to break the news to you, Abel, but you're not a man.

ABEL

What?

CAPER

You're not a man. You're wearing lipstick —

ABEL

Men wear lipstick. You were going to wear knee-high boots.

CAPER

Okay, but your cheekbones, your eyes,

ABEL

Men have cheekbones and eyes.

CAPER

Yes, but they don't have boobs. I mean not boobs like yours.

ABEL
(Appalled) Are you suggesting that I am a woman?

CAPER
I'm suggesting you're not a man!

She gets in his face.

ABEL
Really? Am I not a man? Say that again. Tell me to my face that I am not a man.

He can't do it.

Just as I suspected.

She sits at her desk and goes back to work.

You may leave.

He starts to leave, but then turns.

CAPER
Excuse me, Ma'am--. I mean, Sir. Did you really think I had it in me? That I could save the world?

ABEL
I didn't just think it, Caper. I felt it - all the way to my inner core.

CAPER
And to not believe in myself would be an affront to you, wouldn't it?

ABEL
It would be an affront, indeed. However, and unfortunately, now that I've become so intimate with your prejudices I'm not so sure I believe it anymore.

CAPER
I'm sorry, Abel. I really am. I was wrong and I apologize.

ABEL
I like a man who can admit when he's wrong. It shows strength. Are you a strong man, Caper?

CAPER

Yes, I'm strong. I'm very strong.

ABEL

Oooh, I just bet you are.

CAPER

Oh, yes, Abel. I'm very strong.

ABEL

Put on the cape, Caper.

He puts on the cape.

Do you feel it, Caper? Do you feel the power?

CAPER

I do, Abel. I feel it.

ABEL

Who's your daddy?

CAPER

You are. You're my daddy.

ABEL

Who's the man, Caper?

CAPER

You are. You the man.

ABEL

No, you the man. Who's the man?

CAPER

You the man! Or maybe I the man.

ABEL

Repeat after me. I am man.

CAPER

I am man.

ABEL

Hear me roar.

CAPER

Hear me roar.

ABEL

Hear me meow.

CAPER

Hear me meow.

ABEL

Lick my face.

CAPER

Lick my –

ABEL

(Commanding) Lick it!

He licks it.

Now kiss me.

He kisses her.

CAPER

I felt that.

ABEL

Now go get em', Tiger.

She smacks his ass and he starts to go. He turns to her just before exiting.

CAPER

Nothing can stop me now. Roar *(or some variation of the tiger growl/claws/sex kitteny thing)*.

CAPER rushes through the door. He screams loudly, the sounds of furniture being thrown around can be heard. Lions, tigers and bears roar. More screams. Singing. A giant explosion. Then a bell gongs. Throughout this, ABEL sits on her desk meditating - perhaps in some sort of Yoga pose. Finally, Silence.

ABEL sits behind her desk and takes a very deep breath.

ABEL

(Speaking through a seen or unseen intercom system.) Who's my next appointment, Dolores?

DOLORES *(offstage)*

Britney Spear – I mean, Super Britney. It seems she's having motherhood issues again. Also, she doesn't think her cape matches her cleavage – whatever that means.

ABEL

Oh, God. I hope I can do this.

CAPER

(From offstage and a galaxy far far away) Yooouuuuuuu Caaaaaaaannnnn Doooooo
liiiiiitttt.

ABEL is empowered by the voice.

ABEL

Okay, send her in.

LIGHTS FADE.

END OF PLAY