

Only Acting

A 10 minute play
by Robert Salisbury

SYNOPSIS

Infidelity and female exploitation are examined against the back drop of play rehearsals.

THE CAST

NAT	The girlfriend / pained / angry	-
BOB	The writer/ calm / drole	-
STEVE	The boyfriend / frantic / exasperated	-

SETTING

Bare wooden stage. Rehearsals for a play.

COSTUMES

Casual dress.

PROPS

Scripts.

Scene # 1 BOB, NAT, ARE ON STAGE, REHEARSING A PLAY.

[ENTER STEVE]

STEVE Sorry I'm late guys..

NAT At last! Here's your new script.

STEVE New?

BOB Scene 2, alright.

NAT I'm ready.

[BOB STANDS ASIDE NAT FACING STEVE]

STEVE Thanks for the Meal. It was delicious.

NAT The pleasure was all mine Steve.

[BOB PUTS HANDS ON NATS HIPS]

BOB She's good at giving pleasure...

NAT Bob *[LIGHT REPRIMAND]*

STEVE You two make a great couple.

NAT Isn't it about time you got serious, Steve?

STEVE I don't do serious.

BOB He always cheats on his girlfriend.

NAT Do you Steve?

STEVE I do. ... *[EMBARASSING SILENCE...]* Coffee was good.

NAT Its Free trade.

BOB Half the coffee, twice the price.

NAT I buy it because, I hate to see those farmers being exploited. They get a better deal with Free Trade.

BOB Says who?

NAT Its written on the jar.

BOB I think we all know who's being exploited.

NAT Don't be so cynical. Every cup helps.

BOB That written on the jar too?

STEVE Well, I'd better get going..

NAT Drive safely.

STEVE You know me *[MAKES CAR SKIDDING NOISES. MIMES STEERING WILDLY]*

BOB Night.

[STEVE RETREATS TO SIDE STAGE. BOB CLOSSES IMAGINARY DOOR.]

NAT I'll put the dishes in the sink.

BOB No... Leave them.

[BOB STAND AND NAT STAND CENTRE STAGE LOOKING EACH OTHER]

BOB You know you look beautiful tonight.

NAT What? *[coy]*

BOB Open your top. Go on. Open it.

[NAT UNDOES BUTTONS. STEVE FLIPS PAGES OF SCRIPT FRANTICALLY.]

BOB Take off your bra.

[NAT STARTS UNDOING HER BRA]

STEVE Hold on. What's this?

[STEVE WALKS TO CENTRE STAGE]

NAT Its the new bit.

STEVE When did you add this?

NAT Earlier on today.

STEVE Bit full on, isn't it?

NAT Don't worry about it Steve.

STEVE *[STEVE WAGS HIS FINGER AT NAT'S TOP. STEPS BACK TO SIDE STAGE]*

STEVE Ok.

BOB Come here. Let me feel your breasts.

STEVE That's not in the script! Surely...

[STEVE RETURNS TO CENTRE STAGE]

STEVE Nat removes bra. Bob cups Nat's breasts! 'Bob: 'They are firm' What is this? I suppose you wrote this. *[SHAKES SCRIPT AT BOB.]*

BOB I am the writer.

STEVE You just want to feel my girlfriends tits.

NAT Steve! Don't be paranoid.

BOB Don't you grope her tits?

STEVE That's different! She's my girlfriend.

NAT But they're lovers, Steve.

STEVE I know they are, but why does he have to grope your tits?

NAT Oh Steve. Stop it. Its relevant.

STEVE How? This is a murder mystery.

BOB That's the whole point. Dramatic counterpoint. No one would think Bob was a murderer.

STEVE While he's busy groping my girlfriend's tits.

NAT Don't you see Steve? They're passionate.

STEVE You don't have to take your bra off to do passion.

NAT I've never seen you complain.

BOB Didn't you learn anything at Naida?

STEVE Why can't you just hug each other, or something.

NAT We're actors. Our job is to interpret the script.

STEVE Its just something he wrote. If we don't like it we can change it. I mean anyone can write a script. Look at Baz Lurhman: he wrote, produced and directed Australia.

BOB I rest my case.

STEVE Let's just say Its unnecessarily realisitc.

BOB That's what Stalin said of Dostyevski.

STEVE So what!

BOB Before he put him in the Gulags for 15 years!

STEVE What's Stalin got to do with it?

BOB He built them.

STEVE Oh who cares?

BOB That's it. There. That's your problem. You don't care. You should read: Koba The Dread by Martin Amis.

STEVE What you talking about?

NAT What's it about Bob?

BOB Stalin's atrocities. Every letter in that book, not word, every letter, represents the loss of 20 human lives, caused by Stalin.

STEVE So what!

NAT That's Terrific!

STEVE Hardly appropriate Nat.

BOB Unless you were using its original meaning.

NAT *[NAT TURNS TO FACE BOB.]* Meaning to cause terror. Are you a Milton fan too Bob?

BOB I am! I am!

NAT Isn't it amazing that he invented so many new words!

BOB It is! It is!

NAT I mean 400 years ago he ceated words like: fragrance and enjoyable,
[BOB AND NAT GRADUALLY MOVE CLOSER TOGETHER AS THEY SAY THIS]

BOB Sensuous, Irresponsible.

NAT Unprincipled,

BOB Impenetrable.
[STEVE STEPS BETWEEN THEM]

STEVE You're not touching Nat's tits. And that's final! Do you're blouse up.

NAT I can't.

STEVE Why not?

NAT If I did that, he wouldn't be able to suck my nipples.

STEVE What! *[FLIPS THROUGH SCRIPT]* Bob sucks Nat's nipples.

BOB Yes.

STEVE Sucks nipples?On stage?

BOB Yes. Don't you do that?

STEVE Well of course I do, she's my girlfriend. But not on stage!

NAT I think its wonderful. It shows they are infatuated with each other. And it highlights her womanhood.

BOB Hmm. I agreed.

STEVE You're kidding me yeah. You're having me on. This is a wind up. Bob? You're playing around with me? Nat?

BOB I don't know what you're getting so worked up about...

STEVE Don't be so dumb Nat. He writes the script.

NAT Of course he does, he's the writer.

STEVE Anyway why aren't I playing Bob. Like we agreed.

NAT Bob thought it would be better..

STEVE Oh he did! Did he! You know what? This isn't happening. You are NOT taking your top off!

NAT Says who?

STEVE Says me!

NAT And who do you think YOU are? If the script says Bob sucks Nat's nipples, then he's gonna suck my nipples. And you'll not stop me.

STEVE Nat!

NAT Oh don't Nat me. I'm sick and tired of your pleadings.
[IMITATES BEGGING]
Oh please Nat.. I'll burst if I don't Nat.. you don't know what its like to be a man Nat...

STEVE Na-at!

NAT Open wider Nat... Take it deeper...

STEVE *[THROUGH GRITTED TEETH]* Nat shut up!

NAT You think you can just jump aboard and pound away at me, anytime the urge takes you! And what do I get in return? I've had enough!

BOB She's had enough.

STEVE Alright Nat. Calm down. Look. Why don't we just put in the script, they retire to the bedroom and let the audience work it out for themselves.

BOB That's scene 4.
[STEVE FLIPS SCRIPT AGAIN]

STEVE Bob & Nat lie naked on bed... *[FLIPS ANOTHER PAGE]* Nat kneels in front of Bob and takes his penis in her mouth!

BOB What? *[CAN'T UNDERSTAND PROBLEM.]*

STEVE This is maddness. You're just using my girlfriend to give you a blow job on stage for everyone to see.

NAT *[STOPPING EVERYTHING]* Don't be ridiculous! *[SOFTER]* I don't give him a blow job on stage for everyone to see.

STEVE You don't?

NAT Of course not.

STEVE Oh.. *[HEAVY RELIEF]* Thank god for that.

NAT You can't see me, I'm crouched down behind a chair.

STEVE Oh this is... totally fucking ridiculous! You're meant to be the Vicar's daughter. Why would you be giving him a blow job? In the Hallway. And what's all that shit about me cheating on my girlfriend.. and don't you two make a lovely couple bullshit?

NAT I hope you haven't been cheating on me Steve?

STEVE Of course I haven't.

NAT Bob?

BOB What?

NAT If there is even a thread of truth..

STEVE Don't be silly.. Its just the script.. Isn't it Bob?... Bob!

BOB Just something I wrote.

STEVE See! Let's get on with things.. *[RUBBING HANDS TOGETHER]* Let's just leave out the bit about Nat's tits.

NAT Its in - the - script.

STEVE Which - he - wrote!

BOB He'll be burning books next.

STEVE You're just.. just.. writing parts to titilate and amuse yourself!

BOB I thought that was the whole idea.

[STEVE AND NAT FACE EACH OTHER.]

STEVE And Nat, I never thought I'd say this, but I didn't think you'd prostitute yourself so easily.

NAT *[TO STEVE]* I'm not a prostitute! Tell him! Bob!

[BOB IN MIDDLE HEAD MOVING LIKE AT A TENNIS MATCH]

BOB They get paid.

STEVE *[TO NAT]* There! There! He admitted it!

NAT I'm an actress Steve! Aren't I Bob?

BOB Actress.

STEVE What's the difference? If you're prepared to take your clothes off on stage. You might as well be a whore!

NAT How dare you! Some of Hollywood's biggest stars have appeared in the nude. Pamela Anderson, Madonna. You wouldn't call them whores!... *[pause]*

[BOB AND STEVE LOOK AROUND UNCOMFOTABLEY. BOB WHISTLES]

Demi Moore did the cover of Vogue, in the nude, while she was pregnant!

STEVE Is that the Demi who has plastic tits and left her balding husband for a school boy?

NAT Cate Blanchette appeared in the nude.

BOB What about Sharon Stone, she flashed her *-[INTERRUPTED]*

NAT Thank you Bob. And Kate Winslet! She's flashes her tits in almost everything.

BOB 16 times in Hideous-Kinky.

STEVE Yeah. But she won an Oscar.

NAT An Oscar! See! For showing her tits!

BOB I thought it was for her acting?
NAT And that. And then there's... eh. eh..
BOB Daniel Ratcliffe! He did a play in the nude.
STEVE Harry Potter? Naked on stage?
BOB Apparently.
STEVE What the fuck for?
NAT He was acting!
STEVE I suppose you get a kick out of appearing topless on stage.
NAT Oh look who's talking... what about that hippie musical you did? Hair! The whole cast were naked.
STEVE That's different. It was set in the 70's. Free love.
NAT You looked ridiculous. With your bits jiggling all over the place.
STEVE Great songs though.
BOB & STEVE *[SINGS]* This is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius.. Age of Aquarius!!
NAT It was a freak show!
STEVE Its called entertainment! *[FLIPS THROUGH SCRIPT]* What's this.. Nat lies naked on all fours whilst Bob enters her from the rear! Entering my girlfriend. From the rear! On stage! Like that? What were you thinking?
BOB I was thinking..
STEVE I know what you were thinking!
NAT Its alright Steve, we've changed that.
BOB Yeah we've changed it.
NAT Bob said, it gives out the wrong message.
STEVE I should bloody well think so!
NAT He puts on a condom first.
STEVE I don't believe this! I just don't believe it!
BOB You're not telling me you don't enter Nat from the rear?
NAT Bob!
BOB Sorry Nat.
NAT Do you mind! Somethings are private you know. Besides... I don't like that kind of thing.
BOB You didn't say anything earlier.
STEVE What are you talking about?
BOB We ran through a few things earlier.
NAT Before your got here.
STEVE Nat!
NAT It was uncomfortable.
BOB + STEVE Oww-ooooo! *[LIKE DOGS HOWLING]*
BOB I thought you said you liked it.

STEVE You told me you don't do that kind of thing.

NAT I don't!

STEVE He just said you did!

NAT I was acting!

BOB You were?

NAT Of course!

BOB She's a good actress.

STEVE Nat! You didn't do anything . you might.. regret?

NAT No Steve. Of course not. I told you, I was only acting. Wasn't I Bob?.. Bob?

BOB Yeah. Sure.

STEVE Well.. why can't you act for me sometimes?

NAT I'm not doing it.

STEVE Why not?

NAT Because you're my boyfriend....

STEVE That doesn't make sense.

NAT Oh Steve, don't take it to heart.

BOB Chill Steve.

STEVE Look, can we just go back to the original script. All this new stuff has got nothing to do with the murder. Its just exploiting Nat's sexuality. The audience have come to see a murder mystery. Not Nat's boobs.

BOB I think I know which they'd prefer.

STEVE They want a murder mystery.

BOB I think they want to see tits.

STEVE No they don't.

BOB *[TO AUDIENCE STAGE LEFT]* Who wants to see Nat's tits? Come on let's have a show of hands for Nat's tits!

STEVE *[TO AUDIENCE STAGE RIGHT]* Who would rather see a murder mystery?

NAT Guys! Guys! Guys!

BOB + STEVE Sorry.

NAT Oh Steve, you're so naieve.
[NAT APPROACHES STEVE. THEY HOLD EMBRACE. FACING EACH OTHER]

STEVE Me!

NAT You can't be a woman and have no sexuality. Its a part of life.

BOB Face it Steve. A woman in her prime is the honey, around which, all the bees buzz.
[BOB STANDS AWKWARDLY CLOSE. WATCHING]

STEVE *[CHANGE OF MOOD]* I'm sorry Nat. I should never have doubted you.
[LIGHT-HEARTEDLY] I guess, I just got jealous. *[INTIMATE]* I just feel... somethings should be, sacred. You know, kept between ourselves.

NAT You don't own me Steve.

STEVE Of course not.
NAT But if you care for me...? and always want to be with me?
STEVE I do.
NAT And you're not just... acting?
STEVE Me!!
NAT And you love me?...
STEVE You know I do.
NAT Then you might... consider... I mean you might wanna marry me.
STEVE Hold on... That's a bit heavy.
NAT You nearly shit yourself.. . Oh Steve, don't worry... Still wanna kiss me?
STEVE Sure..
[THEY GO TO KISS. STEVE STOPS.]
 Hold it, you've got something on your cheek.
[STEVE WIPES IT ON TO HIS FINGER. SNIFF IT.]
 Smells like – *[ABRUPT CHANGE]*
 Urrgh! Shit! Oh Yuck!
[FLICKS IT AWAY. SHAKING HIS HAND VIOLENTLY]
BOB Oh shit!
[BOB RUNS OFF STAGE]
STEVE I'm gonna murder him!
[STEVE RUNS OFF STAGE AFTER BOB.]
[NAT WIPES HER CHEEK]
NAT Steve! We were only acting!
[NAT WINKS AT AUDIENCE.]
[NAT RUNS OFF STAGE]
 Steve!

THE END.