

# UP THE STAGE OVER

By *ROBERT A. ANDERSON*

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*Up the Stage Over*

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Original production at Rich Central H.S. Olympia Fields,  
Illinois under the title "They Don't Shoot Grammies."

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(2 m, 7 w)*

**PAUL** *(Leonard)*  
**JOAN**  
**LAURIE**  
**SALLY** *(Tammy)*  
**MARY**  
**JIMMY**  
**MRS. KAZAN**  
**MRS. BRODIE**  
**GRAMMIE** *(No speaking lines)*

**NOTE ON CHARACTERS**

In ACT I all characters but MRS. BRODIE and MRS. KAZAN wear casual school clothes. MRS. BRODIE'S and MRS. KAZAN'S clothes reflect the fact that they are older. SALLY should wear white make-up in ACT II and made to look as though she's ready to faint at any time. In ACT II LAURIE, MARY and SALLY should wear very bright red lipstick along with calf length skirts or dresses. Along with his "baggy" pants, PAUL'S hair should be grayed and a small goatee might be applied. He carries a cane. MRS. BRODIE wears a light jacket over her ACT I costume. GRAMMIE wears a shawl and hat. GRAMMIE'S face should be made to look as old as possible and her walk also reflects her age. MARY, while playing in the play within the play, should act quite naive, almost dumb, and her dialogue should reflect this. PAUL in the play within the play could well use a falsetto voice for contrast and humor.

### **SYNOPSIS**

**ACT I:** The living room of the Brodie home. Modern.

**ACT II:** The high school stage. The late thirties.

**NOTE ON ACT II:** In the original production after the Blackout, all furniture and props were removed from set and entire set was turned around and rebraced for ACT II. All of this was done in dim lighting while the audience watched.

### **ABOUT THE PLAY**

ACT I concerns itself with a play rehearsal in one of the character's homes.

ACT II represents the high school stage with all scenery reversed so the audience sees only what normally would be the back stage during an actual play production. The audience sees the characters entering and exiting into their miniature set UPS. All sound effects are visible, prop table, prompter, stage braces and the like. About every problem a director has had is pointed out in this play. There's room for an intermission between acts but because of the length of the play it would be better and interesting to the audience to change the set in a dim-out.

**PROPS:** Three play scripts, knitting, telephone, diary, bucket, two toy guns, ball bat, several cans of soft drink, miscellaneous props for prop table, class ring, glass of water, cane.

### **SPECIAL EFFECTS**

Lightning box - A box lined with tin foil with a light bulb placed in it. A wire should run to an off-on button near sound effect area.

Rain machine - A box about 3' x 10" x 8" with a wire mesh bottom. Place box on legs that will allow it to tip slightly. Place hard peas in bottom and tilt gently allowing peas to roll along mesh creating the sound of rain.

Thunder sheet - A piece of sheet metal about 6' x 3' suspended from ceiling by a rope.

Telephone bell and Doorbell

**ACT I**

(AT RISE: We see the living room of the Brodie home. LAURIE, about 17, is pacing the floor while rehearsing her part for the upcoming high school play. She reads to herself for a moment then places the script on the table. She speaks to an imaginary woman to her left. GRAMMIE is seated DSR. She knits and looks up squinting once in a while. She is very old and doesn't know what's going on. Door SL leads to outside and basement. Door SR leads to interior of house.)

LAURIE: Let me remind you that you are not legally married to Leonard. You aren't now and never can be as long as Tammy is alive. You have made Leonard a bigamist and there is a law against bigamy. You and you alone are responsible for making him a bigamist. I suggest that you go right to the authorities and tell them that you married a man who had amnesia and to one who forgot he already had a wife. Leonard has two wives and this is illegal. (*Mouthing other character's lines*) But I don't know what to do ... (*HER own part.*) We'll help you, my dear. We'll call the authorities and, and, and ... (*Forgets part.*) We'll call the authorities and, and, and ... (*Grabs script.*) ... and report you.

MRS. BRODIE: (*Entering SR.*) Still stumbling on that line?

LAURIE: Mother, I forget it every time I come to it. Every time.

MRS. BRODIE: Don't worry. Come time for the play and you'll have it down.

LAURIE: The play's tomorrow night.

MRS. BRODIE: I still don't know why Mrs. Kazan had dress rehearsal last night. Every director I know has dress rehearsal the night *before* the play.

LAURIE: Mrs. Kazan isn't every director. Besides, there are different ways of doing things.

MRS. BRODIE: I know. You going to work on your lines tonight with someone or do you want me to read with you?

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LAURIE: Mother, I told you the kids are coming over. Mrs. Kazan will be here, too. Just to work on some rough spots. *(DOORBELL SL.)* Will you take Grammie into the other room?

MRS. BRODIE: *(Assisting GRAMMIE and leading her out SR.)* Come along, Grammie.

LAURIE: *(Shouting SL.)* Come in. *(JOAN and PAUL enter SL. Joan carries a bucket. Reading from her script as they enter.)* We'll call the authorities and report you. So I suggest that you do it yourself and save a lot of grief and trouble.

JOAN: Haven't you got that part down yet?

LAURIE: No.

PAUL: The play is tomorrow night.

LAURIE: Really? I thought it was next week.

PAUL: I'm just reminding you.

LAURIE: And the reminder wasn't necessary.

JOAN: You want me to leave you two alone?

PAUL: She gets so upset at the littlest things.

LAURIE: Forget it.

PAUL: I won't forget it.

LAURIE: Do you have to pick a fight every time we meet?

PAUL: You were the one who started it by being sarcastic.

You said, "Really? I thought the play was next" ...

LAURIE: *(Interrupting.)* Forget it, huh?

*(PAUL goes to corner USL and sulks a bit. Takes out his script and looks it over.)*

JOAN: I can't stand fighting with my boy-friend. I just give him a good whack once in a while and he straightens up fast.

LAURIE: *(In a whisper.)* I don't know why I put up with him.

JOAN: Cause you love him. That's why.

PAUL: What pages are we supposed to be going over?

LAURIE: The part where I tell your present wife that she made you a bigamist.

PAUL: What page?

LAURIE: *(Referring to HER script.)* Twenty-two.

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*(Enter SALLY and MARY SL.)*

SALLY: Hi. Started yet?

MARY: Mrs. Kazan pulled in behind us.

LAURIE: Got your scripts?

MARY: Don't need mine.

SALLY: Me neither.

MARY: I'll be glad when this flop is over.

LAURIE: Such a cheery outlook.

MARY: Well, this play just isn't right for high school. Too adult.

LAURIE: I think it's fun.

MARY: Let the audience decide that.

SALLY: What do you mean?

MARY: It might be fun for us, but the audience is the one we have to please. They're the judge.

PAUL: *(From USL.)* You think too much.

MARY: *(Noticing HIM for the first time.)* Oh, are you here, dear husband of mine?

PAUL: Yes, dear, I'm here.

MARY: *(To LAURIE.)* You don't mind my calling him dear, do you? I'm just trying to feel the part, as Stanislavsky would say.

LAURIE: Be my guest.

SALLY: What grade is he in?

MARY: Who?

SALLY: Stanis ... whoever you said.

MARY: You gotta be kidding.

SALLY: I don't know him.

MARY: Stanislavsky's the best acting teacher who ever lived.

SALLY: Well, pardon me, I didn't know.

MARY: Now you do.

*(Enter MRS. BRODIE and MRS. KAZAN.)*

MRS. KAZAN: *(Looking around.)* I see all the children are here. Shall we get started?

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JOAN: *(Muttering.)* Children!

MRS. BRODIE: May I ask a question about the play?

MRS. KAZAN: Of course.

MRS. BRODIE: I just can't keep the story line straight.

*(LAURIE has gone up to PAUL. They chat. SALLY and MARY stand at SR while JOAN is USC. MRS. BRODIE is at CS and MRS. KAZAN is at SL.)*

MRS. KAZAN: It's quite simple. What confuses you?

MRS. BRODIE: The wives for one thing. Which wife is which?

MRS. KAZAN: Paul *(Points.)* is an amnesiac in the play and he remembers nothing that happened to him further than five years ago. Three years ago he married Mary. *(Points.)* Unknown to him was the fact that he was already married to Sally. *(Points to SALLY.)* Then Paul's sister finds him in a lounge with a woman whom she thinks Leonard is running around with. It turns out that Paul or Leonard is not only a bigamist but practically a trigamist and to top all this off at the end of the play we find out that Paul didn't have amnesia at all, but used it as a front in case he got caught having more than one wife.

MRS. BRODIE: I see. Sounds confusing.

MRS. KAZAN: Will you be our prompter tonight? Our regular prompter is just getting over the flu.

MRS. BRODIE: Be happy to help.

MRS. KAZAN: OK, children, let's get organized. Is the furniture set, Laurie?

LAURIE: Roughly, yes. *(SHE moves a chair to CS.)*

MRS. KAZAN: All right, let's take it from where Laurie tells Mary about Leonard's bigamy. Act I, Scene 2, places, children. That's it, move right along. *(LAURIE moves to RC as MARY moves to LC.)* Go ahead, Mary.

MARY: From the beginning where I come in?

MRS. KAZAN: That's right.

MARY: So it doesn't make any difference to me what you say. I'm his wife.

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