

CANCELLATIONS

By Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

GARY

A disgruntled, unwilling director of a show that has been canceled due to the pandemic.

Note: Gary's name/gender can be changed. The script is written for a dry, British-style delivery, so a British accent is recommended.

SETTING

A small recording studio.

SCENE

(Gary is live streaming from a small studio. He fiddles with camera, making sure it's on.)

GARY

Alright, I think that does it. Right. Well, hello. My name is Gary Andrews, and I'm the director of Transition Theatre's 2020 fall production. Or, as was recently decided, the director of our summer non-production rehearsal exercise.

Now you may be wondering why I'm streaming this live video. Well, Transition Theatre's leadership felt that we should have a friendly face to provide answers to some of the rather polite questions that you have been sending in, and the board members were all far too brave and responsible to do this themselves. The decision to stream this *live*, versus a recording that could be reviewed prior to being aired, was mine. I explained to the board that I felt that this approach would lend an air of genuineness and sincerity to the message. The novelty and, in fact, seeming unfamiliarity of those concepts apparently won their hearts, and so here we are.

As you know, after long and intense deliberations – that did not include anyone actually involved in the production, interestingly enough – the decision was made to cancel our show. Some of you have asked, and I think rightly so, why they opted to cancel it rather than just postpone it until after everyone was finished infecting themselves. Good question, and one that I too had asked of the board. Let me share with you what they shared with me. Because.

Now naturally, this decision gave rise to several supplemental questions on the part of the theater's constituency, and I'll try to answer as many of them as I can before my feed is accidentally disconnected due to technical difficulties.

First, and most importantly, several of you have asked why Transition Theatre decided not to refund tickets that were already purchased. When I asked this question, Rebecca Corbana, the theater's treasurer, assured me that... here, I wrote it down to make certain that I got it just right... "it has nothing to do with any monies inexplicably disappearing off the books, and just so you know, nothing of the kind has occurred. At all. And you better not even hint of that when you give your speech if you know what's good for you." Which I clearly don't. That last bit was my observation, not Rebecca's.

So, why no refunds? Simple. Knowing that all the money is, if not present, at least accounted for, it is safe to say that it is being used for other critical, even existential, theater functions, such as catering invitation-only board meetings. It is worth noting, by the way, that while cleaning up very carefully and spraying down the conference room with several canisters of air freshener was certainly clever thinking, the

delivery vans from Le Comptoir du Vin are quite recognizable to anyone hiding in the bushes nearby. Just saying.

But, as the board so eloquently explained in their email last week, community theater is not about the money. And, in fact, the cast and crew of Transition's fall show have received numerous queries over the past months that had nothing to do with finance. The most recurring interests, actually, were focused on the theater's decision to stage this rather unusual adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's 19th century classic, "Little Women". I think Miss Margaret Turner of Northampton brilliantly summarized the issue when she wrote in to ask... Why did you change the name from "Little Woman" to "Women of Undisclosed Stature and Gender", and do you think that might distract from the point?

As you might imagine, this was a question that I too, as the involuntarily-assigned director, posed early on. The producer, one Arnold Tremont of Lissington Grove, explained that there were, and I quote, "some desired casting decisions we felt would work better this way," a statement that simultaneously addresses a question from a Mister Samuel Beech, who asked: "Given that so many more women came to auditions than men, why did you decide cast the wealthy but inexperienced newcomers Edgar Pomphrey and Hugo Grunt in the roles of Beth and Amy March?"

As a follow-on, Mr. Beech also asked if they would have been expected to shave their legs for the show. I could simply say yes, but I will opt for the more comprehensive and informative answer of "not just their legs."

If you have any continuing concerns regarding inappropriate casting or why the adaptation appears to have been written by someone who never bothered to read the original work, I'd encourage you to reach out to Arnold Tremont, perhaps sending him an emoji-rich text, or even an email with several large, malicious attachments.

(A banging sound has begun, growing louder, and Gary starts speaking more loudly and quickly.)

In our remaining time, let's turn to another excellent question several people have raised, including myself, that being: just how stupid are you, Gary, to sign a contract agreeing to direct a show before even knowing what that show will be. The obvious answer is, nearly as stupid as a board who thinks that just because they received a copy of *a* speech, that it would necessarily be the *same* speech I would actually give. On a brighter note, however, I believe that the board may have just decided to release me from that contract on account of—

(The video feed is cut. End scene.)