Audition

by

Kris Griffin

Current Revisions by
Kris Griffin, 09 October 2006

Kris Griffin
078 999 22 506
EXT. CAR PARK IN THE RAIN - EVENING - PRESENT

FREUD, 29 stands by a BMW and lights a cigarette. He is overweight and dressed like a club bouncer. He walks away from the car and toward a large building with lights on inside. He takes long drags from his cigarette. As he approaches the building he looks towards the sky and slowly exhales. He arrives at the building, flicks his cigarette to the ground, stamps on it and peers through the window.

INT. A WELL LIT PUBLIC HALL - EVENING - PRESENT

Two men - STUART DALTON, 26, camp, white, dressed: smart casual and ALEXANDER MILLER, 32, white, dressed in a suit sit in the middle of a well lit hall facing a stage. They are surrounded by pieces of paper and both clutch notepads and pens.

STUART
(shouting at the stage)
Next please! Lea Saunders!
(to ALEXANDER)
This is the last one right?

ALEXANDER
Yes, let’s hope we’ve saved the best until last, it’s been a very long day and I can’t stand much more mediocrity.

LEA SAUNDERS walks onstage. 17 years old and very pretty. She is dressed for a nightclub with a short skirt, heels and low cut top rather than for an audition for Jane Ayre.

LEA
(shouting)
When do you want me to start?

ALEXANDER
Whenever you are ready.
(to Stuart)
This could be painful.

Lea takes a piece of gum from her mouth and drops it on the floor. She looks to the ceiling, adjusts her skirt on her hips and exhales loudly.

LEA
(halfheartedly)
A light shone through the keyhole and from under the door; a profound stillness pervaded the vicinity. Coming near, I found the door slightly ajar; probably to admit some fresh air into the close abode of sickness. I put it back and looked in.
(MORE)
My eye sought Helen, and feared to find death. Close by Miss Temple's bed, and half covered with its white curtains, there stood a little crib. I saw the outline of a form under the clothes, but the face was hid by the hangings. I advanced; then paused by the crib side: my hand was on the curtain, but I preferred speaking before I withdrew it. I still recoiled at the dread of seeing a corpse.

STUART
Stop now, that’s enough. Thanks for that - we’ll be in touch if we need you.

Lea leaves the stage with a blank expression, her heels echo on the wooden stage floor. The sound fades as she disappears from view.

HOWARD SAUNDERS, 45, well dressed and slightly built wearing a pinstripe suit and his friend FREUD have stood unobserved at the rear of the hall by an open fire exit.

Howard walks forward clapping his hands.

HOWARD
Fantastic! Fabulous! Wasn’t she great boys, wasn’t she just great.

STUART
Can I ask who you are, this is a private audition.

HOWARD
That’s my little girl, I’ve come to support her. Great isn’t she, a real talent.

(to Freud standing at the back of the hall)
Oy Freud, wasn’t she great.

Freud looks at Howard and gives a wide grin, he nods he head appreciatively.

HOWARD (CONT’D)
The question here boys is which part are you going to give her, one with plenty of lines I hope. She won’t let you down I’ll guarantee that.
ALEXANDER
(standing and shaking hands with Howard nervously)
Good to meet you Mr Saunders.

HOWARD
(enthusiastically shaking the hand of Alexander)
Howard, young man - call me Howard.

ALEXANDER
Thank you...Howard. I’m Alexander Miller and this is my partner Stuart Dalton. I’m not sure how to tell you this.

STUART
(abruptly cutting in)
She’s not good enough! Lacks passion, enthusiasm and talent. We won’t be calling her back. I’m sorry.

Silence.

HOWARD
(laughing and facing Freud)
Do you hear that Freud, these boys are having a laugh with me, having a fucking laugh. My new buddies don’t think my little girl has any talent, I don’t think they are going to call her back.

Freud looks serious, he purses his lips and shakes his head. He allows his gaze to drop to the floor.

STUART
(starting to stand)
I’m not at all keen on the direction of this conversation.

HOWARD
(walking towards Stuart and now shouting)
You need to sit the fuck down and listen to what I’m telling you. My girl Lea has the talent, you just don’t have the vision to see it. Her fate in your hands, please don’t make me laugh, show a bit of vision boys.
Howard is a little calmer and now walking towards the stage.

HOWARD (CONT’D)
I’m a man of vision, a man of enterprise, I take advantage of situations and run with them. No room for losers in the Saunders camp are there Freud?

Freud shakes his head vigorously.

Howard makes his way up the stairs onto the stage.

HOWARD (CONT’D)
I’m an actor you see boys, and life is my stage. I may not do things quite by the book but do I get fucking results every fucking time. It’s about grafting, solid hard work and making people understand. I want you two to understand what I’m saying. I’m a family-man you see, my family are very precious and they mean everything to me. I’ll do all I can to protect my family. This is where we’ll start. Doors please Freud.

Freud closes the door at the back of the hall.

HOWARD (CONT’D)
If I was being subtle I’d ask you to reconsider the decisions you have made and the explore the feelings you have about my little girl and her career prospects as an actress. Unfortunately for you both I’m not a subtle man so I going to tell you something and I expect you to fucking act upon it. Lesson one being the action and reaction. Welcome to stage school boys, this class has started.

Howard is centre stage and starts to pace the length of the stage staring at Stuart and Alexander.

HOWARD (CONT’D)
My daughter. My little girl gets an opportunity to act in your production not because I’m telling you to do so but because it’s the right thing to do.

(MORE)
HOWARD (CONT’D)
You both know it, I certainly know, fuck me even Freud knows it.

Freud cocks his head to one side and nods slowly.

HOWARD (CONT’D)
So I really don’t understand where you are both coming from. Lesson number two - never confuse your audience. Let’s simplify things a little I’m good at getting things out of people.

QUICK FLASHES

EXT. - WOODLAND - NIGHT

Howard and Freud are standing over a figure lying on the ground. Howard starts to kick the figure remorselessly.

INT. A WELL LIT PUBLIC HALL - EVENING - PRESENT

HOWARD
Many people have told me what a talent I have for persuasion, it’s something I’m rather proud of, I quite enjoy changing people minds especially ones that are resistant, it’s a challenge sometimes but in the end they always tend to agree. Gentle persuasion. Allow me to clarify, this is how it is, and your third lesson - clarity. If you don’t call my daughter back with some fucking great news, you are both going to wish you’d crossed Don Vito Corleone instead of me. The Godfather, you’ve seen the movie...with Brando. Lesson four - research. I’ll have you two little fuckers hung up by your balls and Freud here slitting you straight down the middle like two little pigs in a slaughterhouse. You’ll disappear for fucking good, never to be heard from again, your legends living on stronger than they could have ever been like Hendrix, Jimi Dean or that yank drug addict who blew his brains out. (MORE)
No doubt you’d get a musical written about your legend, the West End smash starring Michael Ball and Jonathan Wilkes. Everybody loves a tragedy, every loves that sad story...apart from me...I don’t like them. I want happiness. So I leave you with lesson five - keep Mr Saunders happy. Keep me fucking happy boys, make me smile, make me love you, call my daughter back and me and Freud won’t have to get our suits all messy. Simple as.

Howard leaves the stage and walks toward Stuart and Alexander

Stuart and Alexander sit open-mouthed throughout. They are intimidated but are also in awe of a performance of the highest order.

They both start to nervously applaud.

INT. WOMEN’S TOILETS - EVENING

Lea and another girl, IMOGEN HARRIS, 18, who is dressed in a smart trouser suit are applying heavy make-up in front of a mirror.

IMOGEN
How’d you think it went?

LEA
Not bad at all. You go on, read from the book and fuck off again. I don’t see no problem. If they fancy you, you get the part, if they don’t you don’t. Simple.

IMOGEN
They looked like puffs so we’re right fucked ain’t we.

LEA
You reckon. Nah we’ll be OK. If I don’t get this one my Dad’ll kill me. Acting classes, auditions auditions auditions. He keeps threatening to make me get a proper job an all.

IMOGEN
What type of proper job - like a butcher or a baker or something?

They both laugh.
Clapping and laughter can be heard from outside the toilet.

IMOGEN (CONT'D)
I thought you was last in.

LEA
I was.

IMOGEN
So what’s all that noise in the hall – there’s people in there.

LEA
You’re fucking right, i’ll go and look.

INT. A WELL LIT PUBLIC HALL - EVENING - PRESENT
Freud stands at the back of the hall in position.
Alexander and Stuart and clapping enthusiastically if a little nervously.
Howard stands in front of them soaking up the applause.
All three are laughing, Howards’ booming laugh over all of them.
Lea appears from behind the curtain on stage.

LEA
(surprised and shouting)
Dad!

HOWARD
Baby, I came to see how you’d done.

LEA
Bullshit. You’ve come to make sure I get the part, I know you, I know how you operate. You and your monkey-boy at the back.

Freud smiles.

HOWARD
Come on now babes, I was just telling these two lads how things were and they were admiring my communication. Lot’s of admiration happening here.
LEA
Fuck you. I know all about you and your admiration and your persuasion, and your intimidation, and your infidelities. You can’t keep your hands to yourself, no wonder Mum hates your guts. She knows you cheat on her but she’s scared to do anything about it. I bet you got women all over the place you pig.

QUICK FLASHES

EXT. CAR PARK - NIGHT
Howard in involved in a clinch with a young woman, holding her tightly - we see that it is Lea’s friend Imogen.

INT. A WELL LIT PUBLIC HALL - EVENING - PRESENT

LEA
(screaming at her Dad, tears start to fall)
I don’t know how she can stand to look at you. You don’t spend any time at home, in fact you spend more time with that idiot.

Lea points at Freud.

LEA (CONT’D)
Anyone would think you are married.

Freud smiles.

Howard sneers at his daughter and looks toward the floor.

LEA (CONT’D)
Your loyal friend is a glorified bodyguard because you don’t want to get your hands dirty. You trust that wanker with your life and I can tell you he isn’t to be trusted. I know, I know all about him...fucking pervert.

QUICK FLASHES
EXT. STREET - DUSK

Freud is escorting Lea to a nightclub for Howard. She is dressed provocatively. They chat and he grabs her ass in a sexual manner. She pushes him away and he is mad. He lunges towards her pushing her into a doorway.

INT. A WELL LIT PUBLIC HALL - EVENING - PRESENT

LEA
I hate him and I hate you. You've given Mum and I nothing at all, we have to fight everyday for your attention. You make me take acting lessons to get me outta the way, when I don't get the parts you give me a third degree. Now here you are putting pressure on like only you know how to - flexing your muscles. Ever wondered what I want Dad, I don't want to be on TV or in a play, my heart isn't in it, I don't like it. Maybe I just want a normal job, with a normal Dad and a normal boyfriend who doesn't shit himself when he meets you.

HOWARD
(sympathetically)
Can you blame me for being a protective father. You're an attractive girl, I don't want no jumped up little shit getting his paws on you.

Silence. He glances over his shoulder towards Freud.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
(through gritted teeth)
Over my dead body.

LEA
I'm tired of the attention from everyone when all I want is yours, I used to love it, still dressed like a stupid little slut craving my Dad's eye in the hope he will look, disapprove and tell me to change - put something a little respectable on - you really don't give a shit.

(MORE)
LEA (CONT'D)
Is it too fucking much to ask to leave me alone and let me live my own life, I feel like that dead girl in that shit I had to read earlier, soulless, lifeless without a way forward or a way out. I stand here on this stage with you four arseholes

Lea looks at her Dad.

LEA (CONT'D)
Watching me.

Lea looks at Stuart and Alexander.

LEA (CONT'D)
Judging me.

Lea looks at Freud in disgust.

LEA (CONT'D)
Fantasizing about me. Well you can all pull back the curtain now because I've nothing left to give, I'm empty, take what you can...I've become that corpse in the crib.

Lea sinks to her knees sobbing.

LEA (CONT'D)
I'm empty, I'm 17 and it's all gone...empty.

Silence.

Stuart and Alexander look at each other open mouthed. Alexander mouths the word Wow to Stuart.

Freud is looking sorry for himself and staring at the floor.

Howard looks up, looks at Stuart and Alexander and raises his eyebrow.

HOWARD
Told she has talent boys, over to you now.

Howard smiles and walks towards the back of the hall with a ruthless grin on his face.

Freeze-frame close-up on Howards face.

END