



a short play by  
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CAST

IDA..... a mature woman

CARL ..... a mature man

The set is a table and two chairs at a sandwich joint somewhere on Hollywood Boulevard. IDA looks at her wristwatch impatiently then sighs. After a beat CARL enters.

IDA

There you are. I've been waiting for over an hour.

CARL

Couldn't be helped.

IDA

What happened?

CARL

My schedule got all jammed up.

IDA

How did that happen?

CARL

The impossible happened. I had an audition.

IDA

You had an audition?

CARL

Yeah, my agent calls me once every year to make sure her phone is still working.

IDA

An audition. For TV?

CARL

No, a movie.

IDA

Oh, my God!

CARL

And it's a big one.

IDA

How exciting! Who did you see?

CARL

Lois Felcher.

IDA

Ooo! She's big time!

CARL

Probably the most powerful casting director in Hollywood.

IDA

She's well known and well liked. And she wanted you to read for a movie?

CARL

I didn't have to read. There was no dialogue.

IDA

What kind of character was it?

CARL

What?

IDA

What kind of character were you auditioning for?

CARL

A dead body.

IDA

What!

CARL

A dead body. In this movie the lead finds a dead body. You know, someone who doesn't move. Someone who has assumed room temperature.

IDA

Well, you would be very good in a role like that.

CARL

You think?

IDA

Yes, you're one of the slowest moving people I know.

CARL

Thank you.

IDA

When I saw you walking down the street...

CARL  
Uh huh.

IDA  
I thought you were standing still.

CARL  
Thank you.

IDA  
Your body moves...

CARL  
Yes?

IDA  
Like a statue.

CARL  
It comes naturally.

IDA  
When we go to the movies...

CARL  
Yeah?

IDA  
Sometimes I check to see if you're  
still breathing.

CARL  
It's how I fly, baby.

IDA  
So how do you audition for a dead  
body?

CARL  
Mostly it involves...

IDA  
Yeah?

CARL  
Being very still.

IDA  
Not moving?

CARL  
Exactly.

IDA  
You really thought this out.

CARL  
What can I tell you, I'm a method actor. I studied with Lee.

IDA  
Lee Strasberg?

CARL  
No, Lee Berkowitz. Just as good.

IDA  
So how did you audition for a dead guy?

CARL  
I got down on the floor...

IDA  
Uh huh...

CARL  
And I didn't move.

IDA  
Good choice!

CARL  
Thank you.

IDA  
Then what?

CARL  
Lois and her assistant helped me get up.

IDA  
And what did she say?

CARL  
She said there would be no call backs because it shoots tomorrow.

IDA  
Okay.

CARL  
And they were going with someone else.

IDA

Dammit! Did she at least tell you why?

CARL

Lois said they're looking for someone who's a little more "bubbly."

IDA

Bubbly! But the guy is *dead!*

CARL

I know!

IDA

She's an idiot!

CARL

I know.

IDA

A fat, ugly witch!

CARL

I know.

IDA

I hate her!

CARL

Everyone does.

IDA

She's a weasel with lipstick!

CARL

Yeah.

IDA

A two timing, back stabber.

CARL

Total phony.

IDA

A monster in high heels! The most hated woman in Hollywood. Bubbly! I don't believe it!

CARL

Neither did I.

IDA

How on earth could a dead guy be bubbly!

CARL

You know casting directors, they get this thing in their head and nothing will erase it.

IDA

Unbelievable! Did they tell you who got the part?

CARL

No. But I think it was Ivan Sharansky.

IDA

Was he there?

CARL

No, but I saw he had signed in two hours before me.

IDA

They probably went with him.

CARL

Yeah.

IDA

Dead bodies are Ivan Sharansky's thing. He's numero uno.

CARL

Ivan's the Jackie Robinson of dead bodies.

IDA

His license plate says "Dead Guy." His phone message says "Sorry I can't come to the phone right now, I'm dead!"

CARL

The man *invented* the open eye stare, the body in a bathtub, the dead guy hanging upside-down...

IDA

Dead in a swamp, dead in a garbage can, dead inside a vending machine!



CARL  
He's very versatile.

IDA  
At Metro he once stayed in a  
master shot for three minutes...  
didn't breath once.

CARL  
How did he do that?

IDA  
He passed out.

CARL  
The man is committed to his craft.  
Casting people, producers,  
directors, when they think dead  
body... they think Ivan Sharansky.

IDA  
I know. And yet...

CARL  
Yeah.

IDA  
I want you to know I hesitate  
saying this.

CARL  
Go on.

IDA  
Because I don't like to gossip or  
judge people.

CARL  
Please! We're in show business!  
All we do is gossip and judge  
people!

IDA  
It's just that Ivan has played  
dead bodies in maybe a hundred  
movies and you have to admit,  
over the years, his work has  
gotten a little stale.

CARL  
You know what?

IDA  
What.

CARL

I have to agree with you. And not just because I probably lost a role to Ivan... but sometimes, when I see his work, I tell myself "I'm sorry, Ivan... I've seen that body before."

IDA

You know his dead body in that western *Silver Six Guns*?

CARL

Sure.

IDA

There's no difference between that and the one he did in *Manhattan Murder*.

CARL

You're not the first one to mention it.

(sighs)

This one was tough to take, Ida. To lie on the floor and be told someone else did it better. I think I'm going to call it quits.

IDA

No, Carl don't say that. One bad audition. It's not worth it. You're a good actor and -

CARL'S cellphone rings.

CARL

Hold on.

CARL answers his phone.

CARL

(into phone)

Hello. Yes? This is him. Uh huh... Uh huh... Oh, that's horrible. Just terrible. I'm so sorry to hear. What a shock!

IDA attempts to get some information from CARL but CARL waves her off.

CARL

Uh huh... uh huh... yes. I think I can. Let me check. Hold on.

CARL holds the phone to his chest and warns IDA to say nothing. Then...

CARL  
(into phone)  
Looks like I can, yes. Eight  
o'clock. Yes, I'll be there. And  
thank you. Sorry to hear the  
horrible news.

CARL ends his call.

IDA  
What was that all about?

CARL  
Ivan Sharansky dropped dead.

IDA  
When?

CARL  
About an hour after he auditioned.

IDA  
My God.

CARL  
Was he ill?

IDA  
Not that I know of.

CARL  
Maybe when he auditioned...

IDA  
Yeah.

CARL  
He exerted himself too much.

IDA  
Could have.

CARL  
Could have.

IDA  
Got down on the floor too fast...

CARL  
Got up too fast...

IDA  
And now the role he played all his  
life...

CARL  
Is the role he will play forever.

IDA  
Sad.

CARL  
Very sad.

IDA  
Who was that on the phone?

CARL  
Lois Felcher. She said they only  
had one second choice and it was  
me.

IDA  
God bless her!

CARL  
She's fantastic.

IDA  
Incredible.

CARL  
Lovely woman.

IDA  
Attractive, too.

CARL  
Classy.

IDA  
Very bright.

CARL  
And insightful.

IDA  
Slightly rude.

CARL  
At times.

IDA  
But she has to be!

CARL  
I know!

IDA  
She's a woman in a male dominated  
industry!

CARL  
Of course!

IDA  
It takes its toll. I work  
tomorrow.

IDA  
Fantastic.

CARL  
Pays big money.

IDA  
Big films always do.

CARL  
And no dialogue to memorize.

IDA  
Dead guy.

CARL  
Dead guy. And get this... Lois  
says there's a morgue scene. She  
talked them into using me for that  
as well.

IDA  
Another day of work.

CARL  
Yes.

IDA  
And Lois talked them into that?

CARL  
That's what she said.

IDA  
God bless her!

CARL  
She's fantastic!

IDA  
Love her!

CARL  
Yeah.

IDA  
When you see her.

CARL  
Uh huh.

IDA  
Tell her I think she's terrific  
and if they're casting any roles  
I'm right for...

CARL  
I will. I'm going to celebrate  
and buy us a sandwich!

IDA  
Six inch?

CARL  
Twelve inch!

IDA  
Wow... when you celebrate you go  
all out.

CARL  
It's how I fly.

CARL begins to cross to the counter but stops, when...

IDA  
Carl...

CARL  
Yeah?

IDA  
This could be the start of  
something.

CARL  
You think?

IDA  
Yes. You could become... the next  
Ivan Sharansky.

CARL thinks for a beat, then.

CARL  
It makes my head spin.

CARL exits and as IDA watches him go, the lights fade to black.

END