

## Stage Fright

*It is the production's decision as to how many are in the cast, which lines are read aloud and which cast member speaks them. Some of the lines are dialogue, some stage directions, some narration.*

Hal writing.

Ding.

Bus turns.

Splot.

Red.

Ketchup.

Hal is frustrated.

He looks up.

At a big man.

Big man looks down.

What?

Uh.

Nothing.

Ding.

Chishhh.

Clump.

Hal's heel clipped.

Angry.

Control.

Turns.

Waves sorry.

Driver.

Just drives off.

Dark street.

Broken windows.

Dog barks.

Hal jumps.

A rough looking man.

Head down.

Hal avoids him.

Man barks.

Hal jumps.

A theatre.

Hal looks up.

Awning worn.

Lights broken.

Hal moves towards the door but stops.

A poster.

A pancy man intensely acting.

Hal recoils.

“Craig Hollywell in...”

“The Cuckoo’s Back”

“Written by Ha-”

A sticker.

“Final Performance Tonight.”

Hal is irked.  
Reaches down.  
Peals off the sticker.  
Balls it up.  
Puts it in his pocket.  
Stands back.  
“Written by Hal Durkan.”  
Double take.  
A scribble.  
“Written by Hal Dorkan.”  
Sigh.  
Hal is defeated.  
Opens door.  
Clunk.  
Half comes off hinges.  
Hal struggles to close it.

Theatre lobby.  
Dingy.  
An old couple.  
A group of drunk women.  
A sleeping man.  
A weary woman.  
A toilet flushes.  
A large man walks out buckling his belt.  
Hal is dismayed.  
Bored ticket clerk.  
How's it looking?  
Shrugs.  
Nods at the half empty lobby.  
Yeah.  
A door bangs.  
Frazzled woman in her 50s.  
Cigarette in mouth.  
Denise.  
Denise!  
Hustles through.  
Denise!  
Realises she can't avoid it.  
Ah. Hal. How are you dear?  
Pulls out script.  
Just.  
Um.  
A few notes.  
If you could.  
Maybe.  
Give them to the cast.  
Denise tosses her eyes.  
In the second scene Vanessa needs to be-  
Sorry dear, I can't.  
But you're the director.

So let me decide what to-  
Just a couple of-  
Not tonight.  
Why?  
It's the last night!  
But it could be a little bit better.  
But it could get a lot worse.  
Let's take that chance.  
Not tonight.  
Why not?  
Produces a magazine.  
An article.  
A smiling man.  
A shiny theatre.  
"What next for big producer?"  
Henry Dorman.  
Henry Dorman?  
Henry Dorman.  
What about him?  
Pulls magazine away.  
Front door.  
Clunk.  
Bang.  
A scowling man.  
A shaking head.  
Henry Dorman.  
I pulled in a favour.  
He's looking for a new show.  
Hal is hopeful.  
Hal is nervous.  
He might...?  
If the cast can hold it together.  
Right.  
So don't tell them he's here.  
Right.  
And don't confuse them with notes.  
Sure.  
And hope everything goes right.  
Denise departs.  
Rushes to Dorman.  
Fusses around him.  
Here's your ticket.  
Have a glass of wine.  
Are your shoes wet?  
Hal's heart beats.  
Looks at his notes.  
Looks at a door.  
Backstage.  
Hal thinks.

Shimmering shiny theatre.

Clammering crowds of people.  
“The Cuckoo’s Back.”

Taps his script.  
Hal walks over.  
Taps his script.  
Hal walks through.

Corridor.  
Belinda.  
Manic beauty, eyes afire.  
What?!  
Nothing.  
18<sup>th</sup> Century attire.  
Is something wrong?  
Cranes to see.  
Hal blocks her view.  
Shuts the door.  
Just came to wish you luck.  
Why?  
No reason.  
Oh.  
But...just a couple of notes?  
Oh no. I’m so terrible- I have to- I can’t-  
Belinda wafts down the corridor.  
No, nothing bad. It could just be a little bit...  
Hal follows.

Green Room.  
Busy preparation.  
Hal follows Belinda.  
If you could just remember, just for tonight, to-  
Belinda turns.  
Alarmed.  
Why tonight?  
Caught.  
Nothing.  
Horrified.  
Is there a reviewer in?  
Ohh no. I promise.  
Gasps.  
Swoons.  
Opens door.  
I need a moment.  
Oh, yeah.  
Goes inside.  
Door closes.  
Hal looks at the sign confused.  
Men’s Dressing Room.  
Door opens.  
The Women’s Dressing Room.

Reviewer?

Vanessa enters.

Brassy and brazen.

If it's Percy Hollowill don't worry.

No, there's no revi-

Starts talcing her tits.

Ugm.

Averts his gaze.

He owes me after I gave him a handjob during the interval at the Royal.

He's not- You did? I don't-

Fuck the reviewers.

Anton.

Steely passion, solid conviction.

They're not real people.

Well, they *are*- But they're not here.

That's right. They're not even here.

No, they're really not here.

There's more than one?!

Just point them out.

I'll give them something to review.

Please don't hurt anyone.

Ahh, who cares.

Willy.

Bloodshot and bewildered.

Yes, let's not get worked up about this.

Who cares if anyone likes this?

Yeah. Although. We should care if people...

It's just a job.

When you get to my age.

You'll understand.

Willy is that a bottle of...?

A bottle of vodka.

Oh Jesus.

I forgot I was carrying it.

Takes a drink.

Thanks for reminding me.

You're drinking before the show?

Depends on your perspective.

What?

Maybe I'm still drinking since the last one.

Guys, please, please just...

Speaker on the wall.

Warbly voice.

First places please. All actors to stage.

Belinda re-enters.

...just have a good show.

They gather their props.

Pats on the back.

Good luck.

Break a leg.

Good show.

Hope it goes well.  
Raises hand.  
Ha-  
No one there.  
Poster on the wall.  
Smug face.  
Craig.  
Hal crosses the room.  
Men's Changing Room.  
Knocks timidly.  
No answer.  
Opens door.

Craig.  
Half dressed.  
Haphazard wig.  
Feet on the counter.  
Newspaper.  
Large sandwich.  
Craig takes a bite.  
Hal stands waiting.  
Doesn't look up.  
Hal coughs.  
Um.  
Yeah.  
Everyone was called to stage.  
Craig sighs.  
Puts down newspaper.  
Picks up newspaper.  
Reads another sentence.  
Puts down newspaper.  
Takes feet off counter.  
Hal waits patiently impatiently.  
Craig takes another bite.  
Slowly stands up.  
Hal holds breath.  
Craig belches.  
We really need to hurry.  
You don't need to do anything.  
You're just the writer.  
Okay. You need to do the show.  
Why bother?  
“Why bother?”  
Because...because...  
No one cares.  
Just give up.  
It's over.  
We can't give up.  
Distracted look.  
Not tonight.  
Why?

Because...because...  
Henry Dorman is-!  
Uggh! I think I need to take a shit.  
Keels over.  
Face first.  
Hal stands stunned.  
Looks around.  
What?  
Not moving.  
Frozen.  
Warbly voice.  
Craig to stage.  
Hal jumps into action.  
Turns Craig over.  
Lifeless eyes.  
Shakes his head.  
Taps it.  
Slaps it.  
Puts his ear to Craig's mouth.  
No breath.  
Puts it to his chest.  
No heartbeat.  
Shakes his futile fist.  
Thumps his chest.  
Powerless panic.  
Looks around.  
Runs over.  
Opens window.  
Tries to fan in air.  
No change.  
Looks around.  
Runs back.  
Grabs Craig.  
Pulls him over.  
Into shower.  
Full cold.  
Full blast.  
Into his face.  
Shake, shake, shake.  
Nothing.  
A first aid kit.  
Runs over.  
Grabs it off the wall.  
Spills open.  
Contents everywhere.  
Tries to repack it.  
Looks back.  
Craig.  
Face down.  
In the water.  
Yelp.

Gy!  
Runs back.  
Pulls him up.  
Out of the shower.  
Limp.  
Sopping.  
Defeated.  
Slumps down.  
Deflates.  
Shakes his head.  
Stares into nothing.  
Suddenly.  
Craig rises.  
Hal watches.  
Craig gets up.  
Hal watches.  
Craig leaves the dressing room.  
Wait.  
Craig!  
Hal follows.  
Frothing at the mouth.  
Ghh. Fooo. Musrr.  
Craig?  
Lumbers.  
Are you sure you're okay to go on?  
Head lolls around.  
Craig? Craig?  
Bangs off counter.  
Knocks over coat stand.  
Catches on sofa.  
Drags across room.  
Hal stands in front of the door.  
Craig. Stop!  
Craig pushes Hal out of the way.  
Nnnuuhn.  
Opens door.  
Slamming it into his head.  
Doesn't notice.  
Keeps walking.  
Hal pulls on his coat.  
Into corridor.  
Hal can't hold him.  
Lets go.  
Hal runs ahead.

Into the wings.  
Crack in the set.  
Actors performing.  
We must tell Mr Jenner.  
He should be returning any moment.  
Turns to the auditorium.

Peaks through.  
30 people.  
Dorman watching.  
Hal thinks.

Shimmering shiny theatre.  
Clammering crowds of people.  
“The Cuckoo’s Back.”

Turns back.  
Craig lumbers in.  
Eyes in different directions.  
Hal holds up hands.  
Tense whisper.  
Sstooooopp.  
Blarrupphhawawaaa-  
Shiny theatre.  
“The Cuckoo’s Back.”  
Hal punches Craig.  
As hard as he can.

Aye sir, ‘tis a curse on this land.  
On stage.  
Silence.  
Awkwardly waiting.  
Confused looks.  
Pretending to be busy.  
Packing pipe.  
Readjusting dress.  
Audience watching.  
Louder.  
Aye sir, ‘tis a curse on this land.  
Looks towards door.  
Clunk.  
Wobble.  
Pause.  
Clunk.  
Wobble.  
Door opens.  
Hal steps on stage.  
Craig’s costume.  
Still damp.  
Wig.  
Looking like a dead animal.  
Willy looks to Anton.  
Belinda looks to Vanessa.  
Talks carefully.  
Ahhh. Ed-ward.  
You have returned from your rounds.  
Hal standing.  
Blazing lights.

Empty chasm.  
 Wobbling eyes.  
 Blank expression.  
 Silence.  
 Hopeful eyes.  
 Helpful whispers.  
 Yes, I have.  
 No movement.  
 Yes, I have.  
 Jolt.  
 Yes. I have.  
 Sighs of relief.  
 Simon, brings news of the smallpox in Cirencester.  
 Oh. No. It draws. Closer. To us.  
 What can be done?  
 Y-Ye-s. Yes. Yes? Yes.

Lurching forward.  
 Swimming pictures.  
 All a blur.  
 Fumbled line.  
 Mumbled reply.  
 Too quiet.  
 Too loud.  
 Croaking.  
 Wobbling.  
 Dropped prop.  
 Long pause.  
 Wig slip.  
 Elbow face.

Well, I shall see to that honeysuckle bush.  
 Willy moves towards the door.  
 Hal starts.  
 Runs over.  
 Stands in Willy's way.  
 Willy looks confused.  
 Stay.  
 Uh...I...can't.  
 Looks around. Unsure.  
 Hal opens door.  
 Jumps out.  
 Closes door.  
 Willy tries the door.  
 Hal holding the other side.  
 Turns around.  
 Craig's body.  
 Still dead.  
 Propped against a wall.  
 Tries to reach.  
 Still holding the door.

Too far.  
Tries to strain.  
Still too far.  
Pulls on door.  
Holds it harder.  
A rope.  
Grabs it.  
Swings it.  
Throws it.  
Lassos around Craig's neck.  
Pulls another rope.  
Craig shoots up.  
Into the dark.  
Willy pulls door.  
Lets go.  
Door opens.  
Willy stumbles back.  
Knocks into Belinda.  
Belinda falls onto couch.  
What are you...?  
Hal shrugs.  
Walks out, shaking his head.  
Hal re-enters the stage.  
Lights go down.  
Hal looks up.  
Scenery moves.  
Different directions.  
Hal looks worried.  
Up above.  
The body shuttles.  
Onstage a garden.  
Outside a house.  
Craig's body in the window of the house.  
Still dark.  
Hal runs.  
Jumps through window.  
Pushing Craig's body aside.  
Lights up.  
Hal in the window.  
Others look at him confused.  
Oh.  
Belinda looks around.  
You're in the house Mr Jenner.  
Yes. I am.  
But I was going to show you the cow sores.  
Out here.  
Ummmmm.  
Behind the scenery.  
Craig draped across him.  
No. Thank you. I'm fine here.  
O-kay.

Bring them up. Up here. Over here.  
If you wish.  
Clammers over garden.  
Over to windowsill.  
Extends her hand.  
Hal looks down at his hand.  
Doesn't move.  
Not his hand.  
Craig's hand.  
Uses hidden hand to move Craig's arm.  
Holds her hand in Craig's.  
Most interesting.  
Wouldn't you see better out here.  
I'm fine.  
Waves hand.  
I really think you should.  
Sighs.  
Deep breath.  
An extra hard shove.  
Craig's body flies.  
Off the rope.  
Into a wardrobe.  
Wardrobe shuts.  
Hal relieved.  
Walks on stage.

Off stage.  
Green Room.  
Hal staggers in.  
Throws off wig.  
Takes off costume.  
Clothes underneath.  
Slumps down.  
Closes eyes.  
Warbly voice.  
10 minute interval.  
Breathes.  
Breathes.  
Opens eyes.  
Anton, Vanessa, Belinda, Willy.  
Staring at him.  
Expectant.  
Well?  
W-where's Craig?  
Upside down in a cupboard on the other side of the stage.  
What's going on?  
Uh. He's okay. No need to panic.  
Then where is he?  
Yeah.  
Where?  
Just.

What?  
Just give me one moment.  
I think I need to...  
Gets up.  
Backs away.  
Into corridor.  
Hal!  
One finger.  
Hal!  
Out the door.

Into the lobby.  
Patrons milling around.  
Backs against the wall.  
Wary.  
Worried.  
Tries to be invisible.  
Hides face.  
People talking.  
What do you think of it so far?  
Well, that one guy is interesting.  
Catches attention.  
Leans closer.  
A real discovery.  
Where did they find him?  
Sudden presence.  
Denise.  
Jesus.  
Where is he?!  
He's dead.  
Dorman?!  
Craig!  
What?!  
What?!  
Thinks.  
Thinks.  
Dorman's missing?!  
Craig's dead?!  
He just collapsed.  
Jesus.  
That's why I was on stage.  
Right. Good.  
Didn't you notice?  
Yeah. Sure. Of course. Well done.  
Thanks. No notes?  
Yeah, of course. More of the...just, yeah, more.  
O-kay. And Dorman?  
Shrugs.  
They scan the room.  
No sign.  
The toilet.

The toilet!  
Go and check.  
Isn't that going to be a bit weird?  
What?  
What if he's in there?  
What if he's not?

Men's Toilets.  
Hal slides in.  
Making no sound.  
Cubicles.  
One door closed.  
Toilet flushes.  
Hal panics.  
Looks around.  
Jumps to the taps.  
Starts to wash his hands.  
Head down.  
Cubicle opens.  
A tall, thin man.  
Not Dorman.  
A sigh of relief and disappointment.  
Trouble?  
*How do you know?*  
I get blocked up too sometimes.  
Oh. Yeah.  
Spots something.  
Out the window.  
In the lane.  
Dorman.  
Runs to the door.  
Grabs the handle.  
Hand still wet.  
Flies back.  
Slaps face.  
Tries again.  
Maybe try prunes!

Into Lobby.  
Rubbing face.  
Denise waiting.  
Did he hit you?  
He wasn't there.  
Then who-?  
Outside.  
What?  
I think he's leaving.  
What?!  
Hal marches.  
Denise follows.

Clunk.  
Into the Street.  
Half comes off hinges.  
Struggles to put it back.  
Looks around.  
Dorman exits the lane.  
Skulking walk.  
Nonchalant run.  
Dorman turns.  
Startled.  
Oh!  
Ah.  
What?!  
Everything okay?  
Yes. Fine.  
Do you want to...?  
Leans towards theatre.  
What?  
Have another glass of wine?  
Denise produces a glass.  
And then a bottle.  
Dorman shrugs.  
Grabs the wine.  
Marches past.  
Denise and Hal look at each other relieved.  
Turn to follow.  
As he walks.  
Dorman's pocket.  
Sheaf of pages.  
Drop.  
Keeps walking.  
Hal picks them up.  
Uh...!  
Denise grabs him.  
Big eyes.  
Down to pages.  
Hal looks.  
“Contract for Rights.”  
Dorman turns.  
What?  
Nothing.  
Jesus.  
Dorman turns.  
Enters the theatre.  
Pulls up contract.  
Denise grabs it.  
Flicks through.  
“200 performances.”  
“€100,000.”  
Denise looks at Hal.  
Passion in her eyes.

Last page.  
 Dorman's signature.  
 On the contract.  
 He's signed it.  
 What?  
 He's already signed it!  
 If we sign it too we're done!  
 I can't just...He won't just honour it just because...  
 He has to.  
 Why?  
 He'll look like an idiot.  
 But we can't...  
 He'll *have* to go through with it.  
 Who leaves a signed contract lying around?  
 Denise produces a pen.  
 Hal takes the pen.  
 Takes off the lid.  
 Holds it over the page.  
 Stops.  
 I'd better read it first.  
 Oh for god's sake!  
 What does it matter?!  
 €100,000!  
 This is it!  
 Yes.  
 But...  
 I'll be quick.  
 Throws her arms in the air.  
 Marches back in.  
 Hal follows.

Into the Lobby.  
 Hides his face.  
 Moves across.  
 People talking.  
 Interesting performance.  
 Fascinating actor.  
 Slows down.  
 Cranes to hear.  
 Almost childish.  
 Like a simpleton.  
 Keeps moving.  
 Towards backstage.  
 Dorman in the way.  
 Pouring a glass of wine.  
 Alters course.  
 Into the Cloak Room.  
 Coats.  
 Bags.  
 A little stool.  
 Hidden from view.

Sits down.  
Starts to read.  
Little speaker.  
Ladies and gentlemen.  
5 minutes until the performance resumes.  
Reads faster.  
Complicated words.  
Starts to sweat.  
Blinks his eyes.  
Reads more.  
Wipes his brow.  
Loosens his collar.  
Shakes his head wozily.  
Stops reading.  
Looks up.  
Sniffs.  
Turns around.  
Smoke rising.  
Jumps up.  
Coats on fire.  
Gah!  
Terrified.  
Swipes at the fire.  
Flames grow.  
Swipes harder.  
Contract on fire.  
Gaaah!  
Pats the contract.  
Ow!  
Ow!  
Puts it out.  
Edges singed.  
Looks around.  
Grabs a coat.  
Bats the fire.  
A woman at the window.  
Ticket in hand.  
Double takes.  
She looks confused.  
Smiles.  
Starts to pretend to be acting.  
Bats the fire.  
More awkwardly.  
Other patrons gather.  
Looking thoughtful.  
Hal keeps acting.  
Keeps fighting.  
Keeps acting.  
And fighting.  
Flames dying.  
Final flicker.

Sizzle.  
Puff.  
Out.  
Turns.  
Embarrassed.  
Half bows to the crowd.  
Slight applause.  
Hands woman her coat.  
Takes her ticket.

Green Room.  
Staggers in.  
Singed clothes.  
Frazzled hair.  
Contract in hand.  
Anton, Vanessa, Belinda and Willy.  
Turn.  
Look at him speechless.  
Waves away wearily.  
Sits down.  
Opens contract.  
What's going on?  
Where's Craig?  
What happened to you?  
What is going on?  
Opens mouth.  
Silence.  
Closes mouth.  
Actors to stage.  
They shake their heads.  
March to stage.  
Hal collects his energy.  
Gets up.  
Puts on damp costume.  
Starts to follow.  
Clutches his head.  
Looks around.  
Into the Men's Dressing Room.  
On the counter.  
Grabs the wig.  
Puts it on his head.  
Turns to leave.  
Something in his way.  
Cat's face.  
Upside down.  
Takes off wig.  
Dead cat.  
Recoils.  
Throws it away.  
Turns around.  
Open window.

On the counter.  
Wig.  
Sandwich.  
Human teeth marks.  
Cat teeth marks.  
Picks up sandwich.  
Examines it.  
Sniffs it.  
Opens it.  
Green.  
Green powder.  
What?  
Thought slowly dawns.  
Poison!

On stage.  
Hal steps out.  
Curtains closed.  
Actors in position.  
Hal studies them.  
Ricocheting eyes.  
Vanessa.  
Fanning herself.  
Back in the Green Room.  
Bag of make up powders.  
Anton.  
Psyching himself up.  
Back in the Green Room.  
Boiling fury.  
Willy.  
Lifeless eyes.  
Back in the Green Room.  
Drinking heavily.  
Belinda.  
Smiles mournfully.  
Back in the Green Room.  
Entering the Men's Dressing Room.  
Hal's eyes darting.  
Between the four of them.  
Curtains open.

Watching.  
Wary.  
Jump.  
Flinch.  
Quick hop.

Hal talking to Anton.  
But we need someone to try the inoculation on.  
Sir.  
Willy approaches from behind.

Spins around.  
 Jumps back.  
 Watches his hands.  
 Anton speaks.  
 We'd need a young boy.  
 Spins around again.  
 Carefully retreats.  
 Tries to read his face.  
 Sir.  
 Bumps into Willy.  
 Jumps again.  
 Don't kill me!  
 Others pause.  
 Wide eyed.  
 Sorry.  
 I...was just going to say, "Don't kill me...if I suggest we use Mr Phipps' son."

This is madness Edward!  
 He's just a boy.  
 He could die.  
 Trust me Catharine.  
 The cowpox will-  
 Looks up.  
 Chandelier shakes.  
 Woah!  
 Leaps.  
 Barges.  
 Tumble.  
 Roll.  
 Looks up.  
 Nothing.  
 Oh.  
 I...thought the chandelier was going to fall on you.

Pop!  
 Hal ducks.  
 Turns to see.  
 Vanessa.  
 Champagne.  
 Glasses.  
 We must celebrate!  
 Pours champagne.  
 Hal breathes.  
 Not a trace of smallpox on the boy.  
 Hands glasses out.  
 It's a miracle!  
 Belinda holding glass.  
 Bubbling liquid.  
 Goes to drink.  
 Hal runs.  
 Slaps it out of her hand.

Belinda is shocked.  
Woops!  
Willy steps forward.  
What are you-  
Slap.  
Glass goes flying.  
Sorry.  
Yes.  
I...just didn't want to drink to the idea that it's a miracle.  
It's science.

The audience watch.

Off stage.  
Leaving Anton and Vanessa.  
Into the wings.  
Sudden presence.  
Recoils.  
Denise.  
Jesus!  
Whispers.  
What the hell is going on?!  
You're jumping and tumbling and slapping everything that moves.  
Sorry, I...it could have been poison...the chandelier could have...I didn't...  
Into the corridor.  
I'm just a bit on edge.  
Why, 'cause the first time you've ever tried to act is on stage during the most important night of your career after your lead actor died?  
That and...  
Suspicious eyes.  
Puzzled eyes.  
I think he might have been murdered.  
What?!  
How?!  
Poison.  
Poison?  
In his sandwich.  
Fuck.  
Why?!  
I don't know.  
Who?!  
I don't know.  
Sidelong look.  
Did you...have a problem with Craig?  
Offended.  
Of course!  
He's a prick.  
But not tonight.  
Yeah.  
That decides it.  
We've got to sign that contract.

Now?  
Before Dorman finds out.  
Yeah. I still haven't read it.  
Frustrated.  
I...You...I...You...  
Stomps off disgusted.

Green Room.  
Pulls out the contract.  
Women's Dressing Room opens.  
Belinda.  
What's happening?!  
I'm so worried.  
I can't- This is just too- How can we-  
Yeah. One second.  
Into the Men's.  
Willy.  
A glass of scotch.  
Points at contract.  
What's that?  
One second.  
Exits again.

Corridor.  
Hal searching.  
Rounds a corner.  
A door.  
"Store Room".  
Opens the door.  
Goes inside.  
Closes the door.  
A moment.  
Door bursts open.  
Hal.  
Runs.  
An angry dog.  
Chases.  
Up the corridor.  
Rounds corner.  
Slides on the tiles.  
Dog follows.  
Rounds corner.  
Slides on the tiles.  
Desperately opens door.  
Green Room.  
Willy and Belinda.  
Something wrong?  
Nothing!  
Turns around.  
Closes door.  
Runs.

Dog nips at his heels.

Into the Wings.  
Looks around.  
Runs behind the set.  
Under ropes.  
Over struts.  
Dog follows.  
Under ropes.  
Over struts.  
On stage.  
Vanessa and Anton.  
The set shakes.  
Muffled barks.  
Other wing.  
Dead end.  
Turns around.  
Dog snarls.  
Squares off.  
Rolls up contract.  
Dog snaps.  
Deflects with contract.  
Snaps again.  
Strikes with contract.  
Grabs contract.  
Out of his hand.  
Turns.  
Runs.  
Empty hand.  
Disappearing dog.  
Gives chase.  
Behind the set.  
Under ropes.  
Over struts.  
Set shakes.  
Muffled noises.

Corridor.  
Green Room door.  
Dog bangs it.  
Runs on.  
Door opens.  
Hal slows to walk.  
Belinda and Willy.  
Waves reassuringly.  
Sprints again.  
Dog rounds corner.  
Slides on tiles.  
Hal rounds corner.  
Slides on tiles.

End of the corridor.  
Back door.  
Dog turns.  
Snarls.  
Holds contract.  
Hal approaches warily.  
Looks for a gap.  
Afraid.  
Grabs contract.  
Tugs.  
Dog holds.  
Hal grits his teeth.  
Dog growls.  
Hal growls.  
Pulls harder.  
Pulls dog.  
Along corridor.  
Won't let go.  
Round the corner.  
Still struggling.  
Slipping on the tiles.

Green Room.  
Door open.  
Edge of the door.  
Leans in.  
Belinda and Willy.  
Hi.  
Shaking with the dog.  
What are you doing?  
Points his nose.  
Is that Craig there?  
Turn to look.  
Extra hard yank.  
Pulls the dog past the door.  
What are you talking about?  
Turns back.  
He's gone.

Into the wings.  
Still struggling.  
Just let go.  
Keeps pulling.  
Behind the set.  
Under ropes.  
Over struts.  
Anton and Vanessa.  
Set shakes.  
Piece of shit.

Other wing.

Hal pops out from behind the set.  
Tumbles.  
Stands.  
Hal surprised.  
Contract in his hand.  
Set door opens.  
Anton.  
Edward you made it!  
Oh yeah.  
Half steps onto stage.  
Stops.  
Face in pain.  
Behind the set.  
Dog's teeth in his leg.  
I've...just...returned from...London.  
The vaccination.  
They're...unsure.  
But you proved it.  
Shakes his leg hard.  
The dog flies.  
Backstage bangs into cupboard.  
Cupboard opens.  
Craig's body.  
Hal blocks view.  
Yes, but people are stuck in their ways.  
Then what must we do.  
We'll just have to-  
Bark!  
Anton confused.  
Hal coughs.  
We'll just have to-  
Bark!  
Sighs.  
Offers his leg.  
Dog bites.  
Gnn.  
We'll just have to take it to the world.  
Hal exits.  
Closes door.  
Dog on his leg.  
Venom in his eye.  
Kicks dog.  
Flies through the air.  
Into cupboard.  
Onto Craig.  
Cupboard wobbles.  
Door closes.  
Hal leaps.  
Turns lock.  
Breathes a sigh of relief.  
Wardrobe shakes.

Dog snarls.  
Fuck.  
Unlocks.  
Opens door a crack.  
Peaks in.  
Dog snarls.  
Pulls back his arm.  
Takes aim.  
Plunges it in.  
Pulls out Craig's arm.  
Pulls Craig through the crack.  
Holds dog back.  
Craig out.  
Dog in.  
Slams door.  
Locks door.  
Craig's body.  
Scratched up.  
Hal looks around.

Corridor.  
Hal drags Craig.  
Green Room.  
Open door.  
Peaks round.  
Just Belinda.  
Not looking.  
Steps back.  
A big kick.  
Craig's body goes flying past.  
Belinda turns.  
Hal walks past.  
Nods.  
Picks up Craig.  
Keeps dragging.  
Round the corner.  
Slides on the tiles.  
To the Store Room.  
Opens the door.  
Willy.  
Slumped over.  
Not moving.  
Hal shocked.  
Snort.  
Willy wakes with a start.  
Looks around.  
Looks at Hal.  
Looks at Craig.  
Shakes his head.  
Hal slams the door.  
Looks around.

Door handle shakes.  
Back Door.  
Hal opens it.  
Oh for-  
Police Officer.  
Standing there.  
Hand up.  
About to knock.  
Neither moves.  
Hal looks down.  
Craig's body on the floor.  
Police Officer looks down.  
Craig's body on the floor.  
Hal looks up at the policeman.  
Police Officer looks up at him.  
Y-  
Slams the door.  
Hoists Craig on his shoulders.  
Staggers up the corridor.  
Back Door rattles.  
Store Room door rattles.

In the lane.  
Officer steps back for a run.

In the corridor.  
Willy opens the Store Room.  
Officer comes through Back Door.  
They collide.  
Tumble.  
Entangle.  
Scrabble to their feet.  
Officer runs after Hal.  
Willy follows.  
Slowly.

Into the Wings.  
Belinda waiting to go on.  
Hal spots her.  
Spots a rope.  
Wraps it round Craig.  
Set door opens.  
Belinda steps out.  
Hal pulls rope.  
Craig ascends.  
The Spanish are taking his vaccine to the Americas.  
Officer enters the wings.  
Hal backs away.  
That's wonderful news.  
It's a shame Edward isn't here to hear it.  
Officer advances on Hal.

Nowhere to run.

Hal steps backwards onto Stage.  
Belinda, Anton and Vanessa turn.  
Surprised.  
Oh!  
Hal starts acting.  
Vanessa confused.  
You *are* here Edward.  
Just passing through.  
He strides across the stage.  
The Spanish are taking your vaccine to the Americas?  
Excellent. Well, that changes everything.  
The Officer runs onto stage.  
Belinda, Anton and Vanessa turn.  
Police Officer.  
Their jaws drop.  
Officer looks around.  
Confused.  
Costumes.  
Lights.  
Audience.  
Looks at Hal.  
Officer starts to act.  
Holds up his truncheon.  
You have been very bold.  
Shakes truncheon.  
Oh no, it's the police.  
Runs deliberately.  
Officer gives clumsy chase.  
Pretends to run.  
Set Door.  
Hal exits.  
Officer follows.  
Door closes.  
Belinda, Anton and Vanessa turn to each other.  
Uhhhhhhhhh.  
The...we...the mission is being led by Francisco Javier de Balmis.

In the Wings.  
Officer advances.  
Hal backs away.  
Into wall.  
Nowhere else.  
Looks around.  
Ropes beside him.  
Cupboard shakes and growls.  
Reaches out.  
Yanks a rope.

Onstage.

A tree descends.

Yanks another rope.

Onstage.

A farmyard fence slides out.

Willy dragged with it.

Officer moves closer.

Grabs another rope.

Pulls hard.

Craig's body swings.

Crashes into the Officer.

Officer collapses.

Unconscious.

Hal delighted.

Punches the air.

Craig still swinging.

Back and forward.

Rope loosens.

Craig released.

Through the set.

Onto stage.

The actors turn.

Everything stops.

Craig's body.

Lying backwards across the sofa.

Mouth open.

Eyes blank.

Faces contort in horror.

Hal steps out.

A merry wave.

Oh dear.

Poor old...Henry.

He's been drinking.

Anton, Willy, Vanessa and Belinda look at him dumbstruck.

Raises his eyebrows.

Winks.

Pause.

Vanessa looks at the audience.

Then back.

Oh. Dear. Silly old Henry.

Willy.

I'll help him home.

Anton joins him.

Pick up the body.

Across the stage.

Hal opens the door.

They exit the stage.

Watches them leave.

Hal turns to Belinda.  
Um.  
Uh.  
You were mentioning Francisco Javier de Balmis.  
Belinda.  
Goes to speak.  
Breaks down crying.  
Flees the stage.  
Vanessa glares at Hal.  
Follows Belinda.  
Hal on stage.  
By himself.  
Lights shine.  
Audience waits.  
Goes to speak.  
Says nothing.  
Runs off.

Green Room.  
Belinda crying.  
Vanessa consoling.  
Willy drinking.  
Anton fuming.  
Hal enters.  
Glower.  
Please.  
We've got to finish.  
What?!  
Why?!  
Because...because...because...  
Henry Dorman.  
He's here tonight.  
So?!  
Pulls out the contract.  
He could buy the show.  
Please.  
Silence.  
Dropped eyes.  
Belinda thinks.  
Hazy vision.  
On stage.  
Standing ovation.  
Glowing auditorium.  
Roses fly.  
Anton.  
At the Stage Door.  
Adoring fans.  
Wait for his words.  
Vanessa.  
A limousine.  
A handsome man.

A rich man.  
Willy.  
A stocked drinks cabinet.  
Hal looks hopeful.  
Actors determination wilts.  
Belinda takes the contract.  
Looks through it.  
Holds up the last page.  
Dorman's signature illegible.  
Singed and bitten.  
Actors fold their arms.  
Hal holds up his finger.  
Okay.  
One second.  
Takes contract.

Auditorium.  
Confused audience.  
Looking around.  
Frustration.  
Dorman unimpressed.  
Hal appears.  
Taps him on the shoulder.  
Dorman turns around.  
Hal beckons.  
Slowly Dorman follows.

Into the Lobby.  
What the hell?!  
Yeah, great isn't it?  
This is a disaster.  
No, no, no, no, no.  
There's no one on the stage!  
Powerful image.  
For five minutes now!  
Okay.  
Actually.  
Yes, it is.  
What?  
It's a disaster.  
One of our actors died.  
And there was a fire.  
And a mad dog.  
And the police arrived.  
The play is a lot better than this.  
It just needs a chance.  
Please.  
Hands Dorman the contract.  
Dorman thinks.  
Looks around in disdain.  
Shrugs.

I guess I liked the script.  
 Sure.  
 Hal is delighted.  
 Dorman just stares at him.  
 Oh!  
 A pen!  
 Hal pats his pockets.  
 Nothing.  
 Apologetic look.  
 Dorman sighs.  
 Starts emptying his pockets.  
 Onto a table.  
 A programme.  
 A ticket.  
 An elastic band.  
 A bottle of green powder.  
 Hal's eyes widen.  
 A lighter.  
 A dog lead.  
 A can of spray paint.  
 Everything stops.

Green powder on Craig's sandwich.  
 Coats catching fire.  
 A mad dog left in the Store Room.  
 Paint on the wall by the Back Door.  
 "Help! Murder!"  
 Dorman walks from the lane.

A pen.  
 Dorman signs.  
 Turns back.  
 Hal is horrified.  
 Dorman chuckles.  
 You...You!  
 Shrugs.  
 I've produced a few plays.  
 I'm giving you a chance.  
 Nothing sells like a scandal.  
 Raises an eyebrow.

Hazy images.  
 Headlines.  
 "Actor Dies During Show."  
 "The Show That Was Cursed."  
 "Notorious."  
 Shimmering shiny theatre.  
 Clammering crowds of people.  
 "The Cuckoo's Back."  
 "By Hal Durkan."  
 Patrons join the long queue.

They gossip excitedly.

In the Lobby.  
 Dorman smiles.  
 Hal is deadened.  
 This is how it works.  
 Hands him the contract and the pen.  
 Hal pauses.  
 Behind Dorman.  
 Audience members leaving.  
 Shaking their heads.  
 Wait-!  
 Forget them.  
 Hal watches them go.  
 There'll be bigger audiences.  
 Better audiences.  
 Hal bows his head.  
 He signs.  
 Hands Dorman the pages.  
 Turns around.  
 Trudges away.

Green Room.  
 Hal enters.  
 The others look up.  
 Denise arrives.  
 What's going on?!  
 Get back on the stage!  
 The others watch Hal.  
 Well?  
 Did he sign?  
 Have we a deal?

Clunk.  
 Front door opens.  
 Dorman exits.  
 Chuckles.  
 Looks at the contract.  
 A copy of the script.  
 Little notes.  
 Hal's signature.  
 "All the best, Hal Durkan."  
 Dorman is furious.

Green Room.  
 No.  
 Hal rips up the contract.  
 The others sag.  
 Vanessa starts to remove her costume.  
 Anton follows.  
 Stop.

They wait.  
We've got to finish the show.  
Why bother?  
Because...because...  
Nobody's here.  
Nobody cares.  
It's a waste of time.  
No.  
Searches.  
His old trousers.  
Picks them up.  
Into pocket.  
Takes something out.  
Unfurls it.  
Shows the others.  
Not tonight.  
Sticker.  
"Final Performance Tonight."  
The others look.  
The others nod.

Clunk.  
Dorman.  
Lobby.  
Empty.  
Except.  
Angry dog.  
Sees Dorman.  
Dorman flees.  
Dog chases.  
Backstage door.  
Corridor.  
Turns corner.  
Slides on tiles.  
Craig's body.  
Lying on floor.  
Picks it up.  
Dog approaches.  
Dog snaps.  
Dorman swings body.  
Dog bites.  
Officer rounds corner.  
Rubbing head.  
Dorman looks at Officer.  
Officer looks at Dorman.  
Dorman looks down.  
Craig's body, hands around his neck, dog biting his arm.  
Officer looks down.  
Craig's body, hands around his neck, dog biting his arm.  
Dorman looks at Officer.  
Officer looks at Dorman.

The Stage.

Anton, Belinda, Vanessa, Willy, Hal acting.

In recognition of your work which may have saved more lives than the work of any other human you are to appointed physician extraordinary to the court of King George IV.

The lights go out.

The lights come back up.

Two people clap.

The actors line up.

Smile.

Bow.

Old couple in the audience.

Delighted.

Hal looks pleased.

The End.