

NEVER PULL THAT STUNT AGAIN
By J.J.P. Niemann

Cast of Characters

5 Females; 3 Males

STACY

RECEPTIONIST

BOBBI

BERTIE

CHERYL

BUSTER

ROXANNE

PRINCIPAL

Fade In on a waiting room, decorated with movie industry posters, things, etc. There are some awards in a case far off to the side. Centerstage is a Large Couch (behind it, invisible to the audience, is a large pad). Far Stage Left is the door, Stage Right is a desk, where the RECEPTIONIST sits. Soft rock plays quietly. The door opens, Enter STACY, dressed in athletic wear, who nervously approaches the desk. RCPT does not immediately look up.

STACY: Excuse me? Hi, my name's Stacy, I have an audition....?

RCPT: Hi, my name is The Receptionist,, around here we call auditions "tryout sessions" (*looks at computer*) You got a name?

STACY: Er...yeah. I'm sweetcakes, I mean Stacy. Stacy - it's short for Anastasia but my dad

RCPT (*interrupting*): That's nice, have a seat.

STACY makes her way over to the couch, and sits down looking stressed, and picks up a magazine. She opens it for a moment, but then rolls it up into a tube and goes through a series of poses and moves with it as if it's a knife, a bat, a camera, a magic wand, a lightsaber, etc. She is still doing this when BOBBI walks in. She wears cargo pants, a tank top, and sunglasses. The contrast with STACY's appearance is obvious. BOBBI strides confidently up to the desk and taps on it.

BOBBI: Excuse me. Hi, my name's Bobbi, and I have an audition.

RCPT (*sarcastically*): Well hello chief. Welcome to Golden State Cinematic Stunt College. What's this all about?

BOBBI: I said, my audition. With Merrimack?

RCPT: That's *Principal M. Emmitt Merrimack*, chief.

BOBBI: I'm Bobbi.

RCPT: You're no one to the principal if you don't know her name.

BOBBI: I know her name, and once she sees my audition she'll *want* to know mine.

RCPT: Whatever. She's in line ahead of you. (*points at Stacy*)

BOBBI is surprised to realize she's not alone, but then gets a cocky grin. She turns back to RCPT.

BOBBI: Well, I'll go wait over here then.

BOBBI turns away from the snotty RCPT and wanders casually toward the couch.

BOBBI [*to STACY*]: Hey, what you reading there?

Surprised, STACY starts and opens the magazine as if she's been reading it, but BOBBI's onto her.

STACY: Just....*California Mansions and Grounds.*

BOBBI: Why's it rolling up?

STACY: I don't know, it was like that when I grabbed it.

BOBBI grins during this pause, and then wanders over to the other end of the couch, and putting one foot up, start untying her shoe.

BOBBI: I'm Bobbi, I'm here to audition for Merrimack.

STACY [*nonchalantly*]: Me too.

BOBBI: And you're reading a gardening magazine. [*pause, as STACY does not respond*] ...You were throwing shapes, weren't you. (*STACY flings down the magazine and rolls her eyes*)

STACY: Okay, fine, yes! I practice when I'm nervous, okay? Happy?

BOBBI: No, it's cool to practice, I admire that....

STACY: Why are you *untying* your shoelaces--

At this moment BOBBI steps away from the couch, pretends to trip on her shoelaces, and goes

down hard with a yell. STACY does not react with shock, although she does stand up. BOBBI moans and holds her knee.

STACY: Sshhh! Look, the principal could walk in any second.

BOBBI [*dropping the act*]: But was it good?

STACY: It was good but I think you can do better, Bobbi. (*She walks over and gives BOBBI a hand up*)

STACY: I'm Stacy, by the way.

BOBBI: Ya got a mom there, Stacy?

STACY: Yeah, I get that a lot. I'm thinking about getting a stage name.

BOBBI: It's cool, I don't like my name either.

STACY: Why?

BOBBI: Because it's Aphrodite Apogee Johnson. Bobbi for short.

STACY: What.....what part of that name shortens to Bobbi?

BOBBI: I wouldn't worry about it. Let's practice, shall we?

STACY [*surprised*]: Really? Oh okay. Here--you telegraphed the fall. Step normally, but hold your foot back like the lace yanked it, and twist to protect yourself....

They continue to practice this move in the foreground as BERTIE walks in behind them, and not noticing them, heads to the desk. He's wearing jeans, a white tank top, and a bandana on his head.

BERTIE: Excuse me? Hi, my name's, uh, Bertie, I have an audition....?

RCPT: Holy cow, whoa! Are you a ghost?

BERTIE [*confused*]: Um...is this a trick question?

RCPT: Because no one in the twenty-first century is named "Bertie" for real. Who are you? Some kind of butler? [*snickers*]

BERTIE: Well...I am named that.

RCPT: Named what?

BERTIE:Bertie? (*RCPT bursts out laughing. BERTIE has no clue what to do with this. He eventually gets himself under control*)

RCPT: Whooh! Anyway. What are you here for?

BERTIE: My audition thing with the principal guy.

RCPT: *Madam* Principal wants me to tell everyone that they're called "tryout sessions." BERTIE: Cool. I've always been good at those too.

Without being asked, BERTIE makes his way back to the couch area. BOBBI and STACY are now slow-motion fist fighting each other off Stage Left. BERTIE sets up a little Stage Right of the couch and Upstage, closes his eyes, and begins to pump himself up. BERTIE starts grooving and moving and throwing air punches, getting himself psyched up. Meanwhile, STACY and BOBBI begin to take notice of this idiot, and move over to him, watching quizzically.

STACY: Uh--hey.

BERTIE stops, opens his eyes, and sees them. He looks them up and down, then jerks his chin.

BERTIE: Yeah, hey. [*goes back to dancing and punching*]

BOBBI: Hi, I'm Bobbi. We're also trying out.

BERTIE [*not stopping*]: Cool. I'm Bertie. Don't even try, I've heard all the jokes. BOBBI: What are you doing?

BERTIE: I'm warming up. Mentally, emotionally, and physically. And psychologically. This is my big chance and I'm not gonna blow it.

STACY [*not convinced*]: Nice.... Uh....we were just about to do some warmup ourselves, want to join us?

BERTIE: Nah, I'm good.

After watching several more seconds of this, STACY seems to make a decision and steps into the way of one of his punches, and goes down theatrically. BOBBI, realizing what she's doing, immediately leaps into the fray, and grabs him from behind, trying to "strangle" him. BERTIE yelps and tries to get her off, and STACY comes at him with "punches" and kicks. They make his life difficult enough that finally he throws up his hands.