

TRUTH CLOWN

by Chris Van Strander

(originally written for the Mottola Theatre Project's Cherry Picking Festival)

chrisvanstrander@gmail.com

484-995-0483

Copyright ©2012

All Rights Reserved.

CHARACTERS

TRUTH CLOWN A dark, postmodern clown.

ADDITIONAL FOLKS WHO GET ROPED IN

PRODUCER One of Mottola Theatre Project's actual producers.

VOLUNTEER An actual volunteer from the audience.

SETTING

Onstage at the Mottola Theatre Project's Cherry Picking Festival.

NOTE: Each Cherry Picking Festival revolves around a theme. This festival's theme was "Real Lies."

One of Mottola Theatre Project's Producers takes the stage with a prepared statement.

PRODUCER

Hi, I'm [name], [affiliation with Mottola Theatre Project]. I'm being forced to read this.
(reads statement:)

As this evening's about Truth, Playwright wants to come clean.

One: Playwright solicited a grizzled Cherry Picking veteran for advice on what kind of piece to submit for this. He was informed, quote: "Make it short and hysterically funny. Do you like the assignment you got?", end quote. To be honest, *no*, Playwright doesn't like the assignment he got—namely, writing a play around the lie "This is my natural hair color."

Two: Clowns! Clowns are as ancient, as venerable, as Theater itself. (Actually, Playwright hasn't verified this, but it sounds right.) That said, Playwright's suffered through *many* a woeful show where it's Lights up and pretty soon oooo here comes a *(air quotes)* "dark, postmodern" clown. Symbolizing what, exactly? The ever-present threat of primal deviance? The ultimate unknowability of Man? The mockery of the concept of a unifi—

On "That said," TRUTH CLOWN, an evil clown in a colored wig, begins to make an amazing, sinister entrance—overtaking the stage from PRODUCER and staring them down until they slip offstage, unnerved. TRUTH CLOWN then turns and stares the audience down. Uncomfortable moments pass.

TRUTH CLOWN

(indicates self) Take a good look. This's what happens when you don't go to college. *(beat)* How do you make a dead clown float? Add two scoops of ice cream and root beer. *(beat)* Did I mention I have tape of *all* these jokes killing? *(beat)* So. I'm Truth Clown. And I've had lots of requests about this next game, but we're gonna play it anyway. I need a volunteer.

Hopefully someone in the audience volunteers. TRUTH CLOWN ushers Volunteer onstage.

TRUTH CLOWN

What's your name? *(gets Volunteer's name)* Who's your daddy? Is he rich like me?

TRUTH CLOWN produces a rainbow clown wig for Volunteer to don.

TRUTH CLOWN

Be so kind as to put this on, please? Thank you. *(appraising)* Stunning. *(to all)* I call this game: Truth Or... An Entire Packet Of Ketchup! (You'll see.) *(to Volunteer)* And since Truth Clown would never dream of making you play a game I myself wouldn't, I'm gonna play with you. Not "*play with you*" play with you. Just, play with you.

TRUTH CLOWN produces a top hat or similar receptacle containing eight folded slips of

paper, tossing them around to mix them up. TRUTH CLOWN shows this to Volunteer and audience.

TRUTH CLOWN

In here we got nine count 'em nine slips a' paper. These slips contain questions, stuff like *(indicates Volunteer)* "What's your name?" and *(indicates self)* "Do you regret most of your life decisions thus far?" We take turns picking. When each of us picks a question, we'll read it out loud, and *answer truthfully. (turns to audience)* If you determine we have *not* answered truthfully, a.k.a. *lied*, we incur a Penalty, and will be forced to— *(produces a fistful of individual ketchup packets)* eat an entire packet of ketchup! *(to all)* That's the game! Confused? Good! How do you win? You don't! That's called "life!" When's the game end? Game ends when one of us utters... *The Secret Phrase!* What's The Secret Phrase?! Which Hidden Truths Are About To Be Revealed?! Where Will This Ridonkulous Crazy Train Lead?! Let's Find Out!!! You wanna go first, or should I?

Whichever one of them Volunteer wants to go first goes first, and picks a slip. The slips read:

What's the worst lie you've ever told?

What is your deepest, darkest secret?

What's your worst fear?

What's your guiltiest pleasure?

Describe yourself in three words.

In what way are you most inadequate?

If you could make whoopee with anyone in this room—besides your partner—who would it be?

If you met Jesus face to face, what would you say to him?

When either of them selects a slip, they must read the question aloud, then answer it. After each answer (including TRUTH CLOWN's own answers), TRUTH CLOWN polls the audience if they think the answer's honest. If Yes, play continues with the opposite player's turn. If No, the player in question must eat a packet of ketchup, after which play continues.

The game continues back and forth between TRUTH CLOWN and Volunteer until either: 1. there are only a couple slips left, OR 2. it's obvious the game's going long. At this point, TRUTH CLOWN will add, unseen, a slip of paper into the hat containing The Secret Phrase: Is this your natural hair color? When either of them pick and reads The Secret Phrase, a SIREN BLARES!

**To read the rest of this play, please contact me at:
chrisvanstrander@gmail.com.**