

WHO ARE YOU GOING AS? -- a one-act

CHARACTERS: (2) COSTUME SHOP OWNER, any age, either sex
MARCHER, male, 20-45

SETTING: A Costume Shop, or a suggestion thereof

LIGHTS UP

(Owner is moving boxes and articles of clothing around.)

(Marcher enters shop, dressed in everyday clothes.)

OWNER: Good day. May I help you?

MARCH: I don't know. I've been to three other costume shops and nobody has been able to help me.

OWNER: Let me see what I can do. Why do you need a costume? A party, is it?

MARCHER: Not exactly.

OWNER: Is it for yourself? Or possibly a child?

MARCHER: For me.

OWNER: Is it for Halloween?

MARCHER: Not exactly.

OWNER: Do you want to look around and see if there is anything you might like?

MARCHER: Not exactly.

OWNER: Well, we seem to be at a loss as to how to proceed then, don't we?

MARCHER: I'm going to be marching in a parade. And it's going to be my first time.

OWNER: Oh, how nice. Shriners? Rose Bowl? Chinese New Year?

MARCHER: No.

OWNER: St. Patrick's Day? Fourth of July?

MARCHER: No.

OWNER: Macy's Thanksgiving Day? Cinco de Mayo? Carnivale? Mardi Gras?

MARCHER: The Gay Pride Parade.

OWNER: Oh?

MARCHER: Ever been?

OWNER: Can't say that I have.

MARCHER: I'm marching for a friend. Who's sick.

OWNER: Sick?

MARCHER: Not marching because he's sick. Because he's *not* sick. Only he's actually sick right now, and so he can't march.

OWNER: So you're doing it for him or her.

MARCHER: Not exactly.

OWNER: I see.

MARCHER: Okay, I'm marching for myself.

OWNER: I wouldn't have guessed. And you need a costume. Do I have that part right?

MARCHER: It's my first time.

OWNER: As you said.

MARCHER: I want to go as a famous gay icon.

OWNER: Of course you do.

MARCHER: I want to make a big, big splash.

OWNER: Do you?

MARCHER: Only I don't want anybody to know it's me under the costume.

OWNER: *Interesting*. Who did you have in mind?

MARCHER: How about if I go as Daniel Curzon?

OWNER: Who?

MARCHER: Daniel Curzon, the person who wrote this skit we're in.

OWNER: I'm afraid I've never heard of him.

MARCHER: He thinks he's a gay icon.

OWNER: I'm sorry, the name just doesn't resonate somehow.

MARCHER: He'd be mad if he heard that.

OWNER: I'm sorry. But I just haven't heard of him.

MARCHER: Well, that's not from him not trying!

OWNER: Why does he think he's a gay icon?

MARCHER: Oh, he wrote some books, back when.

OWNER: I must say I haven't read any of them.

MARCHER: Me either.

OWNER: What are some of his titles?

MARCHER: Ah . . . let me think. Mmm . . .

OWNER: I don't read much.

MARCHER: Me neither.

OWNER/MARCHER: (together) Who does?!

OWNER: I don't think I have any Daniel Curzon costumes, in any case.

MARCHER: I told him I'd try. Who else have you got?

OWNER: Gay icons?

MARCHER: Yeah.

OWNER: I'm not gay myself. But how about Harvey Milk?

MARCHER: No, I don't think so. That whole assassination thing is not exactly festive.

OWNER: Okay. I don't think we have any Harvey Milk costumes anyway.

MARCHER: How about Harvey Fierstein?

OWNER: The drag queen?

MARCHER: Sometimes. With the deep, gravelly voice.

OWNER: Very funny, right?

MARCHER: Very.

OWNER: Well, let me look through my stock and see what I have.

MARCHER: Wait! I don't want to do drag.

OWNER: Really? No?

MARCHER: Really. No.

OWNER: But wasn't it drag queens who started Stonewall?

MARCHER: Folklore. Street people more likely. It's a fight for credit.

OWNER: Do you know who's hot right now?

MARCHER: Who?

OWNER: Caitlyn Jenner. The former Bruce Jenner – the athlete from the Wheaties box.

MARCHER: The trans-Jenner!

OWNER: Not as popular as she used to be, but still pretty much in demand. Let me look and see.

MARCHER: No. I'd rather not do trans. Especially Republican trans.

OWNER: Oh?

MARCHER: Every trans person I've ever heard goes out of their way to say they are not gay. So why should I march in a *Gay* Pride Parade as one?

OWNER: I'm sure I don't know. The politics of that world is . . .

MARCHER: Believe me, you don't want to get involved in all that!

OWNER: What about somebody from the past?

MARCHER: Not Oscar Wilde! Everybody does Oscar Wilde!

OWNER: I did not know that.

MARCHER: And not Leonardo Da Vinci either. So tired!

OWNER: Really? I had no idea. What about . . . Gertrude Stein or Alice B. Toklas? Weren't they a lesbian couple? In fact, I believe I have a costume in the back that has the two of them joined at the hip. It comes with a moustache for Alice.

MARCHER: I don't think so.

OWNER: I know! How about John Wayne Gacy?! Wasn't he gay?

MARCHER: The serial murderer who painted clowns? I'll pass.

OWNER: I don't suppose I could interest you in a Jeffrey Dahmer?

MARCHER: The cannibal?

OWNER: Too soon?

MARCHER: Too soon. It was always be too soon.

OWNER: I appear to be running out of suggestions.

MARCHER: What about Frank Kameny?

OWNER: Who?

MARCHER: He was one of the very first to march in protest for gay rights, when it really took a lot of guts.

OWNER: I'm sure it did. What did he look like?

MARCHER: I have no idea. Sort of ugly, I think.

OWNER: I have lots of Richard Nixon masks. Is that the same period?

MARCHER: Late nineteen-fifties, early sixties.

OWNER: Do you want to see the Richard Nixon mask?

MARCHER: Not really. Hmm, maybe this place can't help me either.

OWNER: Oh, don't leave. I'm sure we can come up with something! Didn't Eleanor Roosevelt flirt with lesbianism? I saw this mini-series on Public Television. Would you consider going as Eleanor Roosevelt? We perhaps could rig you up in some sort of closet.

MARCHER: I know you're trying to be helpful, but . . . no. No Eleanor Roosevelt and no closets. Closets as jokes?

OWNER: Too soon?

MARCHER: Too soon.

OWNER: Aunt Jemima head rags are starting to come back, believe it or not. Fashion is fickle!

MARCHER: It's still no.

OWNER: You don't want to do Eleanor Roosevelt because it's drag?

MARCHER: That too.

OWNER: Because it's offensive to women?

MARCHER: Because it's offensive to *men*! By the way, my name is Phillipe.

OWNER: Nice to meet you. (They shake hands.) Phillipe?

MARCHER: Something wrong with Phillipe?

OWNER: Not a thing. How about Marcel Proust? *He* was French.

MARCHER: I'm not French.

OWNER: Oh, I thought maybe you were, because you're . . . Phillipe.

MARCHER: I think I'll skip the Marcel Proust.

OWNER: I'm running out of ideas.

MARCHER: Me too.

OWNER: I know! What about Abraham Lincoln?

MARCHER: He was gay?

OWNER: There have been rumors. I believe he shared a bed with another man for three years.

MARCHER: Really? Was that other man named Mary Todd Lincoln?

OWNER: I believe Mary Todd Lincoln was a woman, a biological woman.

MARCHER: I'm not very good at history.

OWNER: Well, I'm no expert, but I know a little bit, because of all the costumes. (Gestures around.)

MARCHER: Well . . . I guess I'm not going to march after all.

OWNER: Wait! How about John the Beloved?

MARCHER: John the . . . ?

OWNER: Christ's best buddy. The one in the painting of the Last Supper with his head on Christ's chest or shoulder, depending.

MARCHER: I thought that was Mary Magdalene.

OWNER: No, it was a stag event.

MARCHER: It's not Mary Magdalene, the prostitute?

OWNER: I'm pretty sure it's John the Beloved. Not that that proves anything, of course.

MARCHER: People had nick names back then, like Ivan the Terrible and Ming the Merciless.

OWNER: And John the Beloved.

MARCHER: Then I guess it's John the Beloved it will be!

OWNER: We can see about getting a John the Beloved get-up for you. I can look around in the back.

MARCHER: Didn't he have very long hair and was sort of on the fem side?

OWNER: Probably.

MARCHER: Sounds like drag, doesn't it?

OWNER: I can tell that you're not comfortable with "drag."

MARCHER: I'm not. Maybe something a little more macho. You know facial hair and . . .

OWNER: Testosterone?

MARCHER: Not all of us want desperately to wear women's clothing. It's a stereotype.

OWNER: I think I'm stumped!

MARCHER: Okay, I've made a decision.

OWNER: Yes?

MARCHER: I'm finally marching. I want to make a statement.

OWNER: Okay?

MARCHER: What about his best buddy?

OWNER: Who's best buddy?

MARCHER: John the Beloved's.

OWNER: You mean . . . Jesus?

MARCHER: Yeah, Jesus.

OWNER: Hmm, I'm not sure if I have any Jesus costumes at the moment. Sometimes around Easter, with certain ethnicities who like to do crucifixions. Do you want me to check?

MARCHER: Yes, check. I'll wait.

OWNER: Be right back. (Leaves for the back of the shop.)

MARCHER: (after a few seconds, calling) Got anything?

OWNER: (calling) Maybe! (Sound of boxes being moved.)

MARCHER: (calling) Quick, before I change my mind!

OWNER: (returning with a box) I think this may very well serve. (Opens the box.)

MARCHER: It says Ladies' Dresses on that.

OWNER: Oh, that's just a general description. I also put some other things in here. (Pulls out a white robe such as Jesus would wear.) Voila!

MARCHER: You're sure that's not a dress?

OWNER: It's a robe!

MARCHER: I don't do drag!

OWNER: Yes, I got that. But this is a *robe*. (Shakes out the garment for display.) What about that? Nifty, huh?

MARCHER: I suppose.

OWNER: And look! It comes with sandals! (Takes out a pair of sandals.)

MARCHER: I don't know about those. I'd rather wear tennis shoes.

OWNER: You can do tennis shoes. Probably safer for a parade.

MARCHER: What else is in there?

OWNER: (searching through the box) Let's see. Ah, a beard! And a wig. A male wig!

MARCHER: Do you think this means I'm saying Jesus was gay?

OWNER: He could also have been lesbian, bisexual, trans, or questioning. I think.

MARCHER: Because I'm not absolutely sure he was any of those things. But sympathetic.

OWNER: Oh, okay. I'm not taking a stand on the issue myself. I'm just trying to rent a costume.

MARCHER: Even if Jesus wasn't gay, I think, if he were around today, he'd be marching in gay parades.

OWNER: Since he favored the downtrodden.

MARCHER: Exactly.

OWNER: And who's more downtrodden than those holding a parade!

MARCHER: Exactly! . . . Are you being ironic?

OWNER: Never!

MARCHER: A lot of people misuse the word "ironic," but I don't.

OWNER: So shall I wrap this up for you? We take credit cards.

MARCHER: I don't even want to know how much it costs. I'm making a statement.

OWNER: Fine.

MARCHER: Would you have any crosses to rent?

OWNER: Let me think. Ah, let me see. (Goes to the back of the shop again.)

MARCHER: Any luck? I think a cross would give that special touch.

OWNER: Here I come! (Returns carrying a wooden cross.) It just so happens that there was a Passion Play a couple of months ago. Does it look good? (Holds up the cross.) Did you try on the wig and beard yet?

MARCHER: No.

OWNER: Try them on.

MARCHER: All right. Here goes nothin'! (Dons the wig.) How does it look?

OWNER: Perfect. And very masculine!

MARCHER: And with the beard? (Holds the beard up to his chin.)

OWNER: It's you! It's you! I mean it's Jesus Christ in the flesh.

MARCHER: You're not just saying that to get a rental?

OWNER: Absolutely not.

MARCHER: (holds the beard to his chin, takes the cross, puts it on his shoulder) How's this?

OWNER: Great! Do you want me to box it or do you want to wear it?

MARCHER: Is it too much? Is it enough?

OWNER: Wait. A few more things! (Runs to the back of the shop.)

MARCHER: What?

OWNER: (Returning with with flags. Waves them.)

MARCHER: What are those?

OWNER: The flags of all the countries where homosexuality is illegal!

MARCHER: Wow! So many!

OWNER: Let's attach them to the cross. I'm into this now!

(They affix flags to the cross, African flags, Middle Eastern flags, the Russian flag, etc., naming them as they do: Nigeria, Ghana, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and even more.)

MARCHER: Are there really eighty?

OWNER: I just grabbed a bunch from anywhere but North America and Europe and here we are!

MARCHER: I'll affix them more securely when I am actually marching.

OWNER: Good idea.

MARCHER: Let me try it. (He puts on the robe, the beard, the wig and places the cross on his shoulder, a complete image of the traditional Christ.) Am I good?

OWNER: You know you might get pelted with things as you march along?

MARCHER: I am aware of that, yes.

OWNER: Let's see you sell it. I'll be the crowd.

MARCHER: Okay.

(The Marcher begins to cross the stage as Christ carrying his cross, with the flags of the anti-gay nations fluttering as he moves.)

OWNER: (with different voices) Hey, fag! . . . Hey, you goddamn queer! . . . How dare you pretend to be Jesus! This is blasphemy! . . . Stop it! Stop it! Stop it right now! (Throws stones at Marcher. Use dyed marshmallows.)

MARCHER: You're very good at that.

OWNER: It's surprisingly satisfying! (Throws more stones as Marcher marches across the stage.) Take that, you faggot! You hear me . . . cocksucker?!

MARCHER: (angry) Hey! Stop that! Stop it!

OWNER: Yeah? Make me!

MARCHER: Okay, I can do that. (Takes his cross and starts to come after Owner.)

OWNER: Hey! Now you watch it!

MARCHER: I'm getting the hang of this. And it's surprisingly satisfying!

(The Marcher chases the Owner with the cross, swinging it wildly, as both run from the stage.)

BLACKOUT