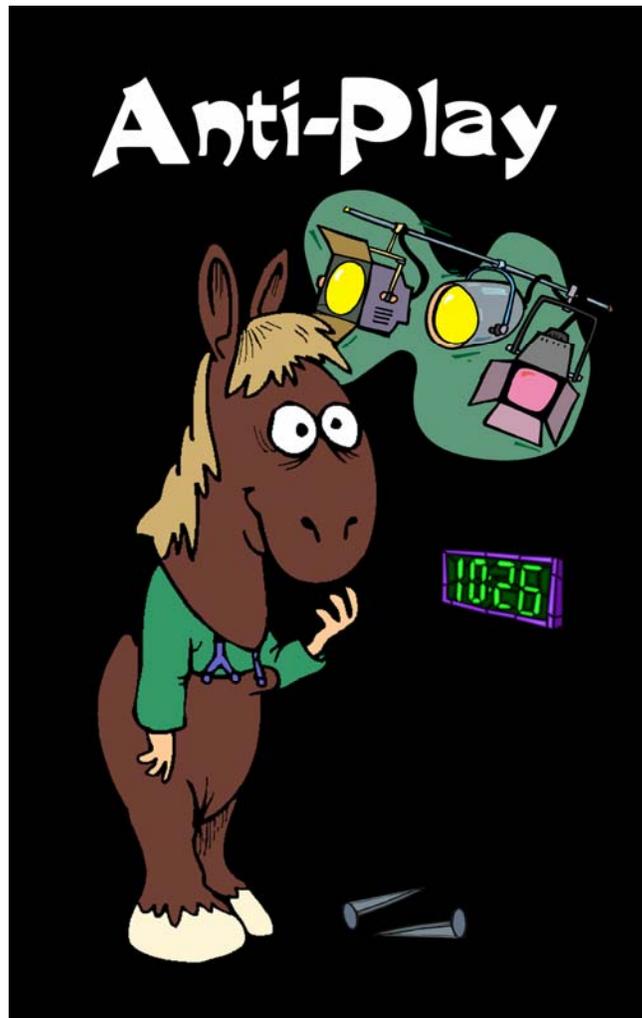


# Anti-Play



**Forrest Musselman**

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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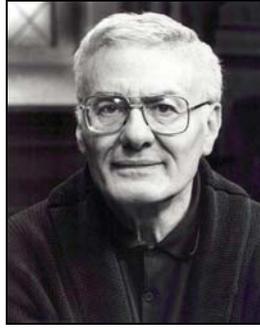
**Anti-Play** was first performed on January 18, 2014, at Wabasha-Kellogg High School, Wabasha, MN, as part of the Three-Rivers Conference Play Festival: Forrest Musselman, director; Kate Klungtvedt, stage manager; April Stone, lighting technician; Brittany Kuss, sound technician; Katie Humble, costumes; Salinah Ritter and Taylor Williams, set crew.

**MARCIE:** Hannah Kopperud  
**MR. STAUNCH:** Bailey Bestul  
**DAVID:** Luke Eide  
**OLIVIA:** Elizabeth Wick  
**PERCY:** Ethan Bergan  
**MOUSE:** Brook Bestul  
**BARB:** Kate Mackenzie  
**MICHELLE:** Mary Kate Buege  
**JANE:** Ashley Brown  
**WINNIE:** Emma Malone  
**TECH 1:** Lauren Hadley  
**TECH 2:** Hannah Boyum  
**TECH 3:** Nell Himlie  
**TECH 4:** Tovah Schroeder  
**CONTEST MANAGER:** Kallie Carlson

## **Anti-Play**

**FARCE/SPOOF.** A pompous drama teacher obsessed with winning the state drama competition is forcing his students to perform a cutting from the trendy Broadway play *Neck-wuss* by Peter Scnauffner. Disgusted by the ridiculous play, the drama students rebel and set out to disqualify themselves from the competition by performing their very own “anti-play” with tubs of Jell-O and spaghetti, a strobe light, and a few other imaginative alterations! The laughs never end in this hysterical theater spoof.

**Production Time:** Approximately 30 minutes.



Sir Peter Levin Shaffer  
(May 15, 1926- June 6, 2016)

## About the Story

The infamous 1973 play *Equus* by English playwright Peter Shaffer won the 1975 Tony Award for Best Play as well as the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award. The play is inspired by a news story Shaffer read about a teenager who blinded six horses in a small town near Suffolk, England. *Equus* was performed in London from 1973-75 and ran on Broadway for 1,209 performances. The Broadway productions starred Anthony Hopkins, Richard Burton, Leonard Nimoy, and Anthony Perkins as the psychiatrist Martin Dysart with Peter Firth playing the character of the troubled teen Alan Strang. Shaffer adapted the play into a film released in 1977 starring Richard Burton and Peter Firth. Shaffer is also widely known for his 1979 play *Amadeus*, which won the 1981 Tony Award. The film version of *Amadeus* won eight Oscars including the Academy Award for best picture.

## Characters

(2 M, 7 F, 6 flexible)

**MR./MRS. STAUNCH:** Egotistical, domineering, small school drama teacher who has made it to the state drama competition for the past 20 years; wears a scarf in which he occasionally tosses one end over his shoulder; flexible.

**MARCIE:** Nerdy, socially awkward senior who has had walk-on roles since the 7<sup>th</sup> grade; plays a horse; female.

**DAVID:** Student who always gets the lead in every play; plays the role of Fallon, a troubled guy; male.

**OLIVIA:** Student who always gets the lead in every play because she's pretty, smart, and a good singer; plays the role of Jill-o, Fallon's love interest; female.

**PERCY:** Asthmatic, whiny student who plays the psychiatrist who treats Fallon; male.

**MOUSE:** Student stage manager named Mary but is known as "Mouse" because she makes loud, unintelligible squeaking sounds when she speaks; female.

**MICHELLE:** Free-spirited student who plays a horse; female.

**JANE:** Student who just wants to play by the rules; plays a horse; female.

**WINNIE:** Timid student who plays Noo-git, the horse Fallon "rides"; female.

**BARB:** Student who comes up with the idea for an anti-play that will disqualify them from the state competition; plays as horse; female.

**TECH 1, 2, 3, 4:** Student drama techies; flexible.

**CONTEST MANAGER:** Hard-core state drama contest manager who loves rules; flexible.

**Note:** Everyone wears 1970s clothing.

## **Setting**

State high school drama competition, 1976.

## **Set**

**High school auditorium.** There is a small platform CS with three benches placed about. There are two acting blocks, one white and one black, on each side of the stage. Assorted set pieces are piled in the middle of the stage.

## **Props**

2 Clipboards with paper	5 Horse head costumes
Pencils	White acting box
Textbooks	Black acting box
Notebooks	Assorted set pieces (to create pile)
Paint brushes	Flask (empty)
Black paint	Plastic sword
White paint	Large tub with "Jell-O" marked on it
Spike made with aluminum foil	Large tube with "spaghetti" marked on it
Stopwatch	
Scarf	
Inhaler	

## **Special Effects**

Upbeat 1970s music

Fire effect. Rig a small fan and a light in a box that blows orange fabric upward when opened.

Large digital clock. This can be made with a television hooked up to an iPad)

## **Production Note**

The competition rules referred to in this play were created by Minnesota State High School League. The drama competition rules in other states may differ, so feel free to alter the script to reflect your state's competition rules.

**"Look,  
if we want  
to continue winning,  
then we need a show  
that no one else  
would dare do."**

**—Mr. Staunch**

## Anti-Play

*(AT RISE: High school auditorium, 1976. State high school drama competition. Upbeat music from the 1970s is heard. A large digital clock reading 0:00 begins to run. Lights slowly fade up. All the set pieces have been thrown into a pile in the middle of the stage. The actors enter slowly from various places offstage. They stand, staring defiantly out into the audience. Music fades. Marcie steps forward.)*

MARCIE: *(To audience.)* Okay, this is so cool! We just finished performing the anti-play. I'm Marcie, and I'm a senior. I've been involved in one-act play competitions since seventh grade. My first role was a walk-on role in the play "The Orphan Train." I was so nervous that I almost peed my pants. *(Pause.)* Okay, maybe I did pee my pants. *(Pause.)* A lot. But, thankfully, I was wearing dark pants and I found that corduroys can be quite absorbent. In reality, I don't talk a lot, and when I do, it always comes out wrong. So I'm happy with all the walk-on roles because I still get to be part of the play. It's just so...so fun! *(Darker tone.)* But that all changed at approximately 3:15 on a Monday afternoon in 1976 when our director, Mr. Staunch, picked a play that was completely out of our comfort zone. *(Approaches Mr. Staunch, who is standing, frozen.)* This is Mr. Staunch. He's been directing plays forever. He's pretty good at it, but we never tell him that. That's because he likes to tell us how good he is on a daily basis. *(Approaches David.)* This is David. He's my boyfriend, and he's super cute. Okay, he's not my boyfriend, and he's not really super cute. But I wish he was my boyfriend. He always gets the lead in every play, and he's so good and fun to watch. *(Approaches Olivia.)* This is Olivia. She gets all the good parts, too. And she's pretty and smart, and she's a really good singer, and I hate her guts. I'm glad I'm not her, though. She has a really tough role to play. I kinda feel sorry for her sometimes, but then I

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don't. (*Approaches Mouse.*) This is our stage manager, Mary, but we call her Mouse. She's a National Honor student, and really organized, but she really needs to speak more clearly. (*Approaches Barb.*) I guess I'll spare the details on who everyone else is. You'll learn about them soon enough. You could say that they're all really good in school and are involved in lots of activities, except for Barb. Barb tends not to care a lot about anything. (*Points to Percy.*) Oh...this is Percy. He has asthma. (*Slight pause.*) Okay, the play Mr. Staunch picked out this year is called "Eeek-wuss," by Paul Shaffer, and it was clear after the first table reading that this year was going to be different...

*(Upbeat 1970s music is heard. Actors break from their original positions and dance to the music as they move the set pieces into the desired locations. The set consists of a small platform CS. Three benches are placed around the platform. There are a couple acting boxes on each side of the stage. Actors take their places onstage.)*

MR. STAUNCH: (*To Actors.*) So...what do you think? I know it's not the whole play of "Neck-wuss" — it's just a cutting — but I think it truly captures Peter Shnauffner's spirit and intent. And with my vision, the whole thing will be fabulous. (*Long uncomfortable silence as cast members look at each other.*) David? You've always got an opinion. Why aren't you speaking?

DAVID: It was just a little weird. Why did he blind the horses again?

MR. STAUNCH: Fallon created his own religious theology that centered around horses. Then his worship of God — or the horses — got distorted into a sexual attraction toward them as well, and so when he makes out with Jill-o in the stable, he stabs the horses' eyes out because of guilt. It's kind of obvious.

WINNIE: I think this might be kind of... (*Trying to think of the right word.*) ...cool, but, mostly, I'm just really confused...

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MR. STAUNCH: You're going to have to trust me here. This is a really popular play on Broadway right now, and if we can pull it off, we're guaranteed a trip to State. Isn't that what you want?

**[END OF FREEVIEW]**