

THE LAST REHEARSAL

By Gilbert Martin

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PUBLISHED BY

ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Eleanor Random is a Pulitzer Prize winning playwright who has not had a hit in 25 years. Her husband, J.C., has directed all of her plays to date and now is directing her latest, *A Life Forgotten*, in a final desperate attempt to recapture some semblance of their past glory. Unfortunately, they have been teamed up with two nearly incompetent actors who hope to get recognized as serious actors. Alexis is a soap queen and B-movie actress and her husband Kirk is the star of multimillion-dollar ninja movies.

In Eleanor's play, Kirk and Alexis portray James and June who yearn for professional recognition as they rehearse a drama called *A Forgotten Life*, a play about a director and his playwright wife.

Like a set of fun house mirrors creating reflections upon reflections, it soon becomes difficult to know when people are being themselves or acting their parts. Is it real life or is it a reflection? Intriguing, beguiling, and often ironic, *The Last Rehearsal* is sure to entertain until the very end.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

J.C. RANDOM: Theater director, late 50s.

ELEANOR RANDOM: A playwright, J.C.'s wife, also in her 50s.

KIRK RAINIER: Movie actor, 29 years old.

ALEXIS DUBOIS: Movie actress, Kirk's wife, also 29 years old.

GEORGE: Another theater director.

SET NOTES

The play takes place over a period of one month in the present. A simple set living room set depicts the rehearsal space on the stage of an empty theater. Two seats in the audience need to be reserved for use in the play. The main aisle in the theater will also be used as a playing area. There are two exit doors UPS, one left, one right

PROPS

Scripts and pencils

Phone

Liquor bottle and shot glass (in desk)

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: Mid-afternoon. The beginnings of a living room set is on stage. There should be a sofa, a desk, a couple of chairs, but not too much else. ELEANOR is seated at the desk going over her script. J.C. is glancing at his watch and pacing nervously.)

J.C.: I knew they'd be late, I just knew it.

ELEANOR: You've said that already, several times.

J.C.: You know what they are doing, don't you?

ELEANOR: No, Jason, tell me, what are they doing?

J.C.: They are defining the relationship they expect, no, the relationship they demand to have with us. This is their way of telling us that they will be in total control of this show whether we like it or not.

ELEANOR: Do you really think so?

J.C.: I know so.

ELEANOR: What can we do? Without them there is no show. Joe told us when he optioned the play that he would only agree to produce if Kirk and Alexis were both available, and willing, no ifs, ands, or buts.

J.C.: This is degrading. The three of them have us over a barrel and they know it. It's just the beginning, let me warn you. This marks the first time in my career that I was given absolutely no say in the casting of my two main characters. I'm being treated as though I'm some neophyte fresh out of drama school.

ELEANOR: In a way, I suppose this is almost like starting over.

J.C.: I've directed more plays than those two have even read. If they bother to read plays. If they even read anything but the *Hollywood Reporter*.

ELEANOR: Jason, let's not pretend we don't both know we've fallen on hard times lately. I think we were fortunate to have this opportunity.

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J.C.: I can think of a more appropriate word than fortunate. Those two won't listen to a thing I say, I can sense it. I've read all about the spoiled brats in the *National Enquirer*. They don't need a director, they need a nanny.

ELEANOR: You don't know them, and neither does the *National Enquirer*. You've never even met them. Let's at least give them the benefit of the doubt.

J.C.: *A Life Forgotten* is the best thing you have written since *America the Beautiful*. We deserve better treatment than this. We don't need them. This could be a hit with a couple of unknowns.

ELEANOR: Thank you for the show of confidence, Jason. I wish I felt as good about it as you do. But I don't, unfortunately. I think it needs a workshop, a long workshop.

J.C.: Kirk and Alexis don't do workshops. Their publicist has informed the media that they are taking a short hiatus from their "illustrious" film careers for this play. We've got one month for rehearsals and two months to run with King Kirk and Queen Alexis in the starring roles. With a couple of good understudies this show could continue for a year, maybe longer. If it does, our problems are over.

ELEANOR: *America the Beautiful* is the only play we've done that managed to run that long.

J.C.: But it was good enough to garner you the Pulitzer Prize.

ELEANOR: That was 25 years ago.

J.C.: Then you're due for another.

ELEANOR: We haven't had a healthy run ever since. The critics claim the modern theater has passed us by.

J.C.: Critics! What do they know anyway? I'd like to see one of them try to write a play, or direct one. I swear those bastards sit up nights trying to come up with ways to kick an artist like me off his pedestal to wallow in the muck right along with them.

ELEANOR: Please, let's not get into that again. My last two plays deserved to be panned, they were a disgrace, and we both know it. Your limp, meandering direction didn't help matters any either.

End of Freeview

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