

THE ROOK

Written by

Adam Langer

CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE FAMILY

Addison

The Mother

The Father

Celia

Jimbo

THE COMPANY OF ACTORS

Melissande

Clark

Cuyler

Kedvale

Troy

Paulina

Sallie

ASSORTED RIFF-RAFF & MISCELLANEOUS CHARACTERS

Brandon Chartrain

Hardy Dickstein

Peter O'Toole

Johnny Carson

Mork

Actor #1

Actor #2

Sally Field

Psychiatrist

Doctor

Rabbi

Neighbor

Officer Ken Oakley

Mango Vendor

Librarian

Jimmy Stewart

Kim Novak

Woman

Casting Director

Phone Operator

Restaurant Manager

Rabid Depeche Mode Fan

A Note on Casting:

Given the sheer number of characters in "The Rook," some double and triple and even quadruple and quintuple-casting will be necessary. This can be done any number of ways and will be somewhat dependent on budget, directorial desire, and other variables.

That said, my preference would be for each of the roles of THE FAMILY (Addison, Celia, Jimbo, The Mother, The Father) to be played by one actor who plays no other roles. The rest of the characters would be played by members of THE COMPANY OF ACTORS, all of whom would play multiple roles. The idea behind this conceit is that, while the members of THE FAMILY are stuck in their roles, the fantastical world represented by THE COMPANY is populated by shape-shifters embodying multiple possibilities. Here is one possible configuration:

- 1) Addison
- 2) Celia
- 3) Jimbo
- 4) The Mother
- 5) The Father
- 6) Melissande/Kim Novak/Sally Field
- 7) Paulina/Phone Operator/Depeche Mode Fan/Woman
- 8) Cuyler/Actor 1/Pushcart Vendor/Johnny Carson
- 9) Troy/Brandon/Jimmy Stewart/Casting Director/7-11 Manager/Restaurant Manager
- 10) Kedvale/Ed McMahon/Doctor/Psychatrist/Oakley/Carl Sagan/Mork
- 11) Sallie/Tammy/Neighbor/Librarian
- 12) Hardy/Clark/Actor 2/Peter O'Toole

A Note On The Ages of Actors:

This will also depend on the capacity of the production company and the desires of the director. But my preference here is for Addison and "THE COMPANY" to be played by young adults (late teens, 20s) who can convincingly play a wide range of ages.

A bare stage. Silence. The COMPANY OF ACTORS assembles in a line at the back. They wear multicolored t-shirts and painters' pants as if for a children's story theater production.

ADDISON enters casually with THE FAMILY.

He casually whistles the opening stanzas of Gerry Rafferty's "Baker Street" in a contemplative, almost mournful manner.

THE FAMILY joins the COMPANY OF ACTORS

ADDISON turns to face the COMPANY. He raises his hands like an orchestra conductor.

Lights up full.

ADDISON turns abruptly and confidently steps forward, entering a pool of light.

Singing fades.

ADDISON

This a story about a love so strong...

CLARK

(stepping forward)
...It almost overcomes the power of hate.

ADDISON

Almost.

MELISSANDE

(stepping forward)
This is a story of a joy so great...

SALLIE

(entering)
...a bliss so pure...

CELIA

(entering)
It almost compensates for the misery around it.

ADDISON

Almost. This is the story I never wanted to tell.

THE MOTHER
Never should have told.

CELIA
Really you shouldn't have.

BRANDON
(entering)
You could have at least changed the names.

CLARK
Seriously, dude. You could have changed the names.

ADDISON
Which is why I have to tell it.
Now.

ACTORS freeze in a tableau.

LIGHTS dim on everyone save for ADDISON.

ADDISON (CONT'D)
(to audience)
The story could start anywhere. To make sense of it, I'd probably have to begin it before I was born.

ACTORS criss-cross the stage, passing by ADDISON on their way to the exits as if on a busy street or sidewalk until all have exited and ADDISON stands alone.

ADDISON (CONT'D)
(to audience)
But I'll start in the middle because that's how life works. There's no such thing as a clean beginning; you're always showing up in the middle of someone else's story. So, I'll go right to the time and place I remember best.

A PHONE RINGS

ADDISON walks towards ringing phone.

ADDISON
1980.

PHONE RINGS