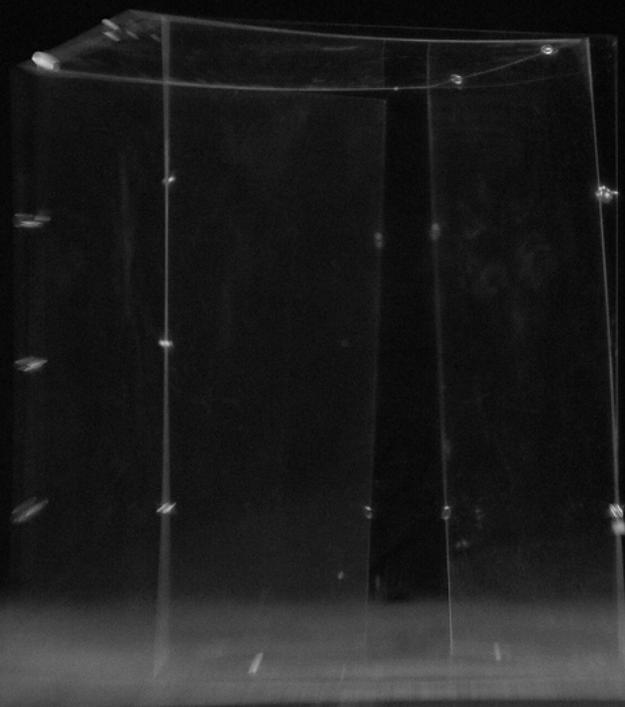


Plexiglass



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Preface

Dear gamemaster. Thank you for choosing to run *Plexiglass*.

During the last five years, a lot of people have asked if I could write yet another chapter in the story about cult theatre director Edvard Fehmerling. Many have specifically asked if they could get to play a scenario about his breakthrough show of 1982: *Plexiglass*. I have now decided to deliver.

Plexiglass has a very active gamemaster role and it is basically your responsibility to make this a good experience for the players. If you are sitting at some convention with a huge hangover reading this material for the first time and are due for running this in a few hours, I advise you to cancel. The scenario is not written in a way where it can be run without preparation.

If you have taken your time to prepare, do not worry if you don't know Edvard Fehmerling. *Plexiglass* can easily run in a group where neither gamemaster nor players know the character beforehand.

However, if you are curious to read more about Edvard Fehmerling, he is present in the scenarios *Dogme #4: Monogami* and *Kød* which are both available on Project R'lyeh's webpage (see links below). Fehmerling was also part of the scenario *Obstruction*, written for Fastaval 2001, but this scenario is not available online.

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Enjoy!

Morten Jaeger

Links:

Dogme #4: Monogami: <http://rlyeh.alexandria.dk/pub/scenarier/scenarie.php3?id=5>

Kød: <http://rlyeh.alexandria.dk/pub/scenarier/scenarie.php3?id=60>

Scenario / Theatre play

In order to distinguish between the scenario and the theatre play with the same title, I use italics when I write about the scenario *Plexiglass* and a regular font when I mention the theatre play *Plexiglass*.

Concept - Table of contents

Synopsis	1
Format and style of playing	2
Structure	3
Gamemastering	4
Setting and mood	5
Themes and sources of inspiration	6
Background	7
The actors	8
Personal relationships	10
Directing	11

Synopsis

Plexiglass is a story about competition and rivalry.

We are in the year 1981. Upcoming director Edvard Fehmerling (the gamemaster) and a group of actors (the players) go through an intense rehearsal process in order to prepare for the premiere of the theatre play Plexiglass. The characters of the play are not cast beforehand and the actors compete to impress Fehmerling as they hope to get the leading part. They all know that getting this role will take their respective careers to the next level.

The scenario focuses on the first part of the rehearsal process which takes place in a remote cabin. Every day represents a new intensification of the competition. After three days, the rehearsals are moved to the theatre where the show will premiere. The scenario ends with the group's first rehearsal at the theatre. This is where Fehmerling decides who gets to play the leading part.

A few times, the regular roleplaying scenes are interrupted and the players have a few meta scenes in which they discuss the progress of various storylines and suggest new scenes.

The scenario has many possible outcomes, and anything can happen in the competition. The winner is appointed by you in your npc-role as Edvard Fehmerling.

The final scene is to be played in a special room in which there is a human-sized plexiglass cabinet. The actor who wins the leading part is photographed for a poster which will be put on a designated 'Wall of Fame' at the convention.

Chapters

Concept (pdf p. 1-18)

A walk-through of the narrative and general principles and techniques.

Execution (pdf p. 19-45)

A step-by-step guide from preparation to finale. This includes both obligatory scenes, optional scenes and guidelines for the practical execution in terms of timetable, use of the physical space and various effects.

Work papers (pdf p. 46-51)

A short description of the theatre play Plexiglass as it looks at the beginning of the rehearsal process. This includes concept, characters and scene drafts. These pages are diegetic and you can show them to the players.

Role descriptions (pdf p. 52-81)

Descriptions of each of the actors. The descriptions also include a simplified concept description of the play and a scene overview.

Format and style of playing

Almost all scenes are played semi live. This means that all dialogue must be in first-person and all gestures count as part of the fiction. It is not 100% live in the sense that the players' actual appearances do not count as part of the fiction.

The meta scenes are run as regular conversations. I recommend that you mark out an off-game space (more about that in the Execution chapter).

The competition between the actors can easily be perceived as a competition between the players. When an actor wins the leading part, a player wins a spot on the Wall of Fame.

When you, in your role as Edvard Fehmerling evaluate the actors' performances it can be perceived as if you evaluate the players' performances as actors. This is not the intention.

The players should get the experience that their characters are in fierce competition, but they are not supposed to feel that they themselves are competing to be seen as the best actor. In order to avoid this, you must work to establish an alibi for you and the players by portraying Fehmerling as very irrational and unpredictable.

Terminology

The roleplaying includes several levels of roles. I seek to use a consistent terminology.

Players =

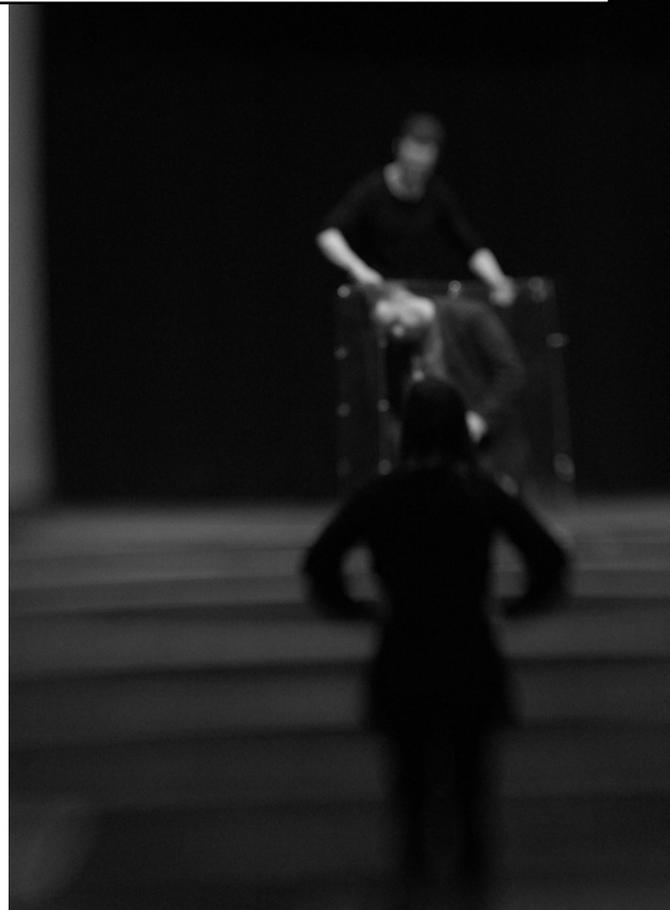
Roleplayers/convention participants

Actors =

The roles the roleplayers are handed at the beginning of the scenario.

Characters =

The roles the actors play in the different scenes of the play Plexiglass. The casting of these is the main source of conflict.



Structure

Both the scenario *Plexiglas* and the theatre play consist of three acts.

In the scenario, each act represent one day of rehearsals where the group works with scenes from the corresponding act in the play, i.e. in the first act of the scenario, they work with scenes from the first act of the play.

Act 1 = Day One

Work with scenes 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3. Focus should be on establishing the format and the relationship between the actors. Fehmerling is primarily directing and supporting.

Act 2 = Day Two

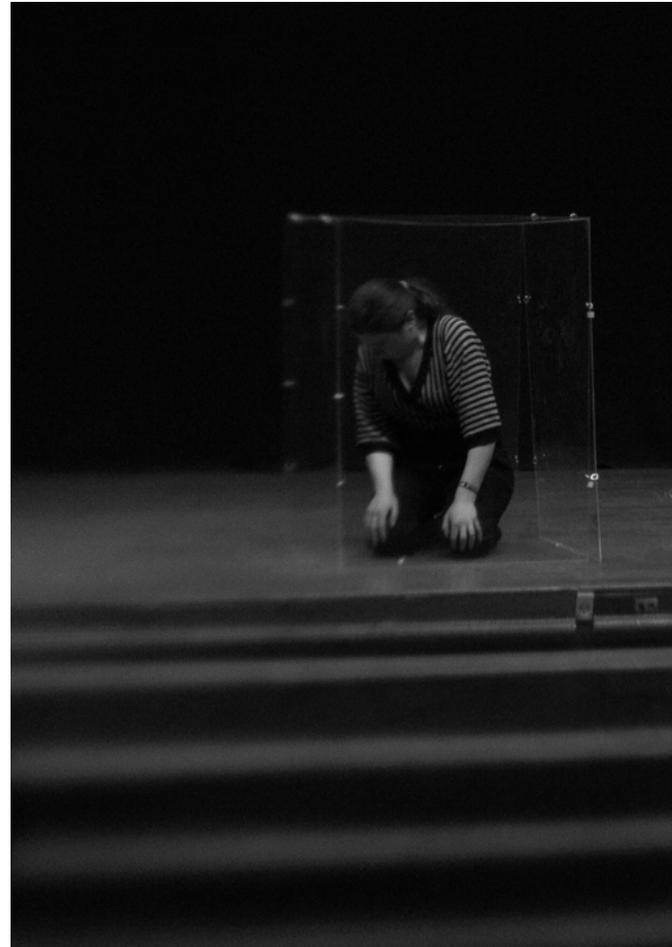
Work with scenes 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3. Focus should be on intensifying the competitive atmosphere. It becomes clearer who are friends and who are enemies. Fehmerling gets frustrated and starts pressuring the actors. He finally solves his creative problems when he and the scenographer decide to make the set design less naturalistic: The actors must now play the scenes sitting in large plexiglass cabinets.

Act 3 = Day Three

Work with scenes 3.1, 3.2, and finally 3.3. Focus should be on the intense scenes that lead up to the scenario's climax and conclusion. Fehmerling is very result-oriented and the competition culminates.

Every act consists of a number of scenes. Some of the scenes are very short and cut to the bone. Other scenes are written sandbox-style and we follow the actors' work with the play. In these, they constantly switch characters in order to test which combinations that work the best.

The sandbox scenes consist of various activities. An activity could be the group working with a specific scene or exercise. It can also be a short event that highlights the intensity of the situation, e.g. Fehmerling flips out because some actors talk too much about motivation.



Gamemastering

As gamemaster your job is to set and cut scenes and to play the dominating npc-role Edvard Fehmerling. You must get the players to feel that the actors are constantly struggling to guess what pleases Fehmerling.

The chapter Execution describes the scenes, and a list of activities and methods. See this as an inspiration catalogue. You must use this catalogue to put together a programme of activities and methods that will work for you in your portrayal of Fehmerling.

Last but not least, it is your job to decide the winner of the scenario. You have to pick one and only one. You make this choice alone based on your own gut feeling. I recommend that you base your choice on, partly what will create the best overall story, and partly what would be realistic based on what has happened throughout your session.

In one of my previous runs of the scenario, I chose an actor who went from being Fehmerling's favourite to having a severe crisis and be at odds with all of the other actors. That way there was a development (success-crisis-success) and at the same time the others had an emotional reaction to my choice. During the same run, one of the players had 10-15 minutes where she could not stop laughing. This caused quite a bit of disturbance both in-game and off-game. I did not see picking her as a realistic choice, because my rendition of Fehmerling would see her behaviour as extremely disrespectful. You can read more about the conclusion of the scenario in the chapter Execution.



Setting and mood

The scenario *Plexiglass* is set in 1981. This is done to keep continuity in the story about Edvard Fehmerling. The portrayal of the eighties is not important, and I have chosen not to do a thorough description of the epoch. If the players in your group are very young, please remind them that there is no internet and that cellular phones were extremely uncommon in Denmark at the time. If your group is more mature, I trust that you use your own background knowledge.

If you want to create a soundtrack, I recommend that you use music from that time. This could be Television, Blondie, Talking Heads, Roxy Music, The Velvet Underground, The Sex Pistols, Siouxsie and the Banshees, Adam and the Ants, The Modern Lovers and Buzzcocks. Fehmerling will not tolerate background music when he works, but when the actors have breaks and downtime, they would probably put on a record.

All scenes take place in a remote cabin, except the final scene which takes place in a proper theatre. This means that you do not need to worry too much about describing a comprehensive 80s setting historically correct.

In practice most of the scenario is played in a single room at the convention. However, for the last scene, you need to move to a designated room with a large plexiglass cabinet. The practicalities of this are described in the chapter Execution.

Plexiglass is a grotesque comedy. Roles and scenes are grotesque and sometimes funny, but because the scenario is played semi-live, Fehmerling will react very negatively to laughter. The role players will need to laugh and smile on the inside, or their actors will be seen as unprofessional.

The mood of the scenario will, to some degree, mirror the mood of a reality tv show where participants compete, grow or crumble under pressure, and where there is room for both tears and a bit of laughter.

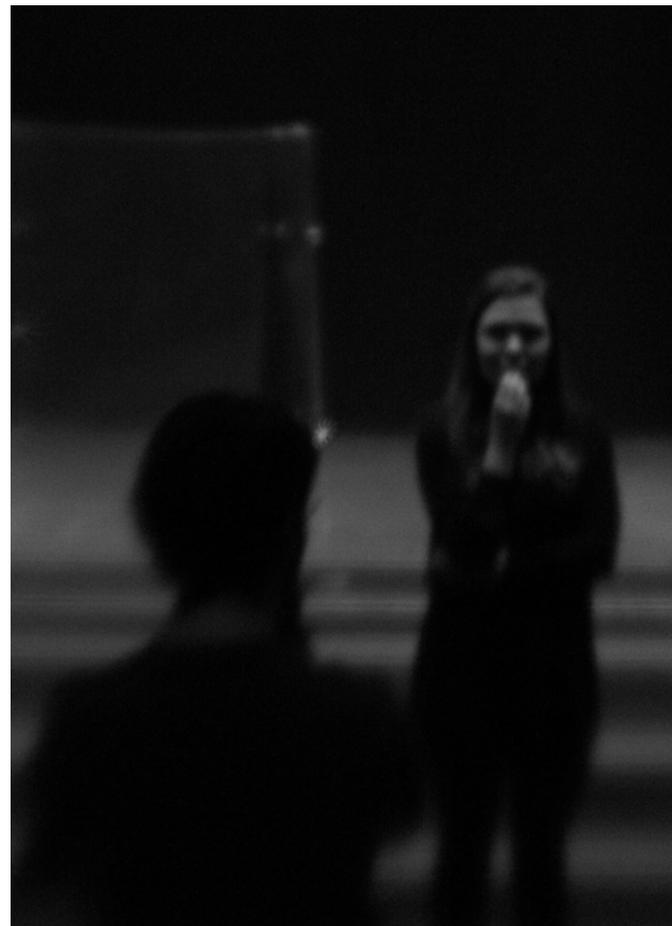
Themes and sources of inspiration

Both the scenario and the theatre play are about ambitions and how we pose, compromise and lose ourselves in our quest to meet them. In the play, the central characters betray each other in order to succeed. In the scenario, the actors are tempted to betray their own values and acting method in order to please Fehmerling.

With this scenario, I don't want to preach what is right or wrong in the world of theatre. My ambition is to introduce a number of effects and mechanics that will push the players and give them an emotional kick that will stay with them, also after the convention.

The scenario is inspired by the type of reality tv shows where the participants work hard to kick-start a career as pop star, model or business manager. During each season, certain crises arise because the participants do not feel adequate or because they struggle to understand what the judges want from them. This frustration in particular is what I want the players to experience.

Another source of inspiration is Darren Aronofsky's movie *Black Swan* from 2010 where Natalie Portman plays the ballerina Nina Sayers who gets the chance to dance the leading part in Pyotr Tchaikovsky's ballet *Swan Lake*. The perfectionistic Sayers is a technical virtuoso, but before she can embody the part, she must let go of her technical focus and instead infuse her dance with emotions and sexual desire. The journey to this insight is painful for the introverted Sayers who is constantly pressured by her competitors and her director. French actor Vincent Cassel's portrayal of the director may serve as a great source of inspiration for playing Edvard Fehmerling.



Background

Edvard Fehmerling (born 1952)

In 1981 Fehmerling is still fairly unknown in Copenhagen's artistic circles. He has dropped out of playwright school and has moved to Copenhagen where he has set up a few plays as a director. More and more people are noticing his talent, but *Plexiglass* is the first time he has managed to finance a production that could attract a large audience and get reviews in national newspapers.

Fehmerling has little respect for well-established actors and their demands. Instead he has chosen to work with unknown and relatively inexperienced talent. His funding is primarily spent on an expensive set design conceived in collaboration with avant garde Brazilian scenographer Helion Grande.

At the beginning of the rehearsal process, Fehmerling has a very unclear idea about what the finished result should look like. He sees himself as a stonemason working without a blueprint. He trusts that clarity will dawn upon him gradually as he carves out his art from a metaphorical granite block. Fehmerling evaluates the scenes and the actors' potential and carves away what he doesn't like. He takes no responsibility for pedagogy or leadership. In his opinion, the actors are responsible for making their own bodies and psyches work well in the context. Read more about Fehmerling's methods in the section "Directing" (p. 11).

The play *Plexiglass*

Plexiglass is about the isolation of the individual and the alienating effects of modern society. This is represented in a narrative about X and Y who move to The Big City. They have both moved here to succeed, but in their efforts, they end up betraying each other.

You can read a more detailed description of the concept and Fehmerling's scene outlines in the chapter "Work Papers". The printed papers work as a prop in the scenario and you are free to share these with the players. You are also welcome to scrap scenes or insert other, alternative scenes. I have chosen to include the papers as a point of departure for roleplaying, but don't hesitate if you want to make alterations. My only demand is that you work with "Scene 3.3 Death" in the scenario's final scene in the *plexiglass* cabinet.

In the final, fully developed version of *Plexiglass*, the actors are, in large portions of the play, trapped inside *plexiglass* cabinets. Their voices are only heard distorted by intercoms, telephones and other devices. At the beginning of the rehearsal process, the set design concept is not in place, but during the three days in the cabin, Fehmerling's and Helion Grande's vision becomes clear. In practice this means that the style of acting changes from naturalistic to grotesque in order to fit the new set design. This may, of course, also change which actors Fehmerling sees as the best fit for the different parts.

The actors

In the role descriptions, I have not described how the actors look. The players will be playing scenes using their own bodies. I have assigned gender to all roles to make it easier to write about them. However, you should consider yourself free to swap genders and maybe slightly modify the names.

The five actors are build upon basic archetypes: The Class Clown, The Over-Actor, The Smartass, The Rebel, and The Immersionist. The archetypes are all used as part of the start-up session where players are assigned to game masters. You can read about that in more detail in the chapter Execution. Here is a short description that will help your casting process.

Alex – The Class Clown

Alex is super extraverted. He can hardly have a thought or an emotion without sharing it. If he feels awkward or insecure, his reaction is to share this with everyone and be the first to say it out loud. He hates tense situations, and he often uses humour to release the tension. Alex is a master of improvisation and he is often the director's first choice when the group needs to try a new approach. As an actor Alex takes point of departure in his own interpretation of the play, and he is not good at receiving feedback that leads him in a different direction.

Curly – The Over-Actor

Curly has a lot of confidence and charisma. She has strong opinions about basically anything. She has a tendency to end up in long discussions and she hates losing.

Curly is a skilled actor. She can take specific physical direction just as easily as she can translate diffuse, mental images into concrete action techniques. Her main challenge is that she feels that everything should be played 'with a cherry on top'. In other words, she finds realistic acting boring and her body language and the emotion in her voice are always cranked up to eleven. She is not good at turning this down, even if she is asked to. This is mainly because she disagrees with that type of direction.

Mikkel – The Smartass

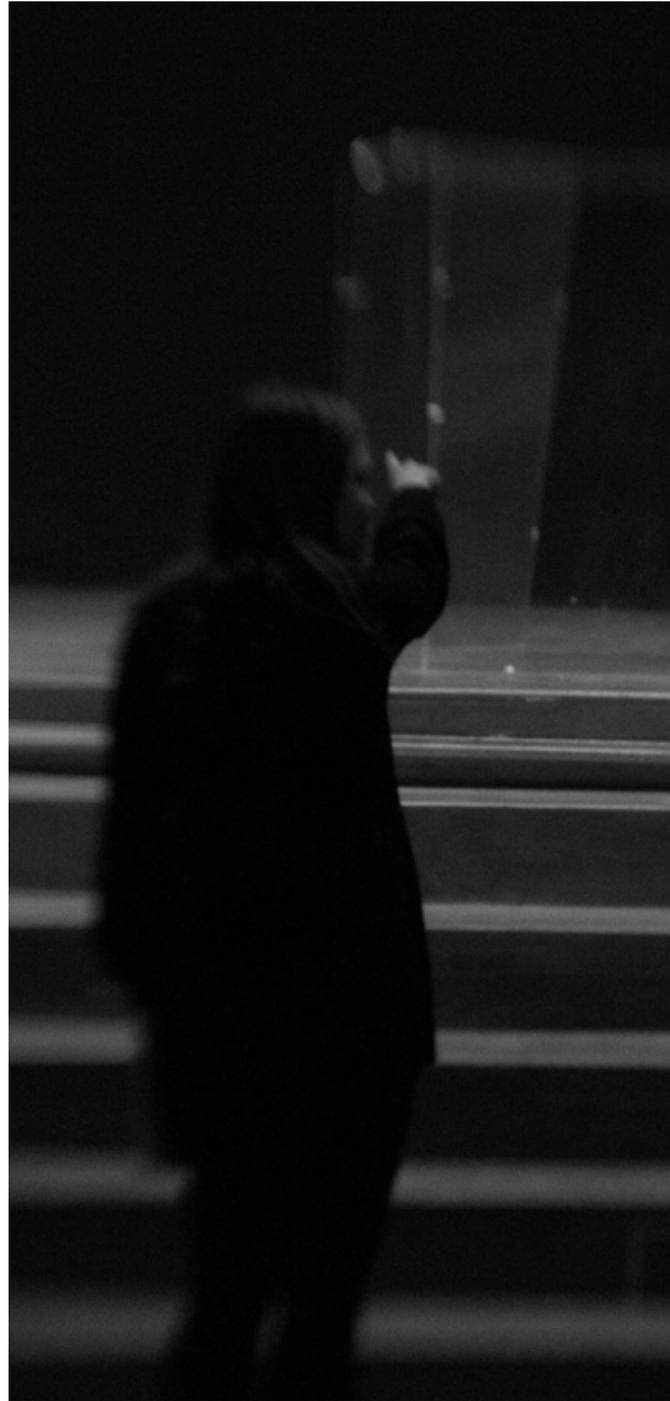
Mikkel is group's smartass. He is bright and quite analytical, and he is typically the first to come up with new solutions, if the group encounters a problem or an impasse. This can be an invaluable help in a rehearsal situation, but Fehmerling will most likely get irritated if Mikkel comes up with too many ideas. As an actor Mikkel's talent is limited. Mikkel is good at taking direction, but he has a hard time playing characters who are too far from his own personality.

Robin – The Rebel

Robin is a sworn enemy of conventional thinking. He loves playing Devil's Advocate and he challenges habits and assumptions if others rely too heavily on old routines. Robin feels that art is about challenging the spectators and societal structures. As an actor Robin has great potential, but he is quite green. He has great charisma and his immersion easily translates into expressive performance. However, he is quite bad at taking direction without breaking character and he is not good at understanding the director's perspective.

Johanne – The Immersionist

Johanne is very much in her own head, and she likes to work with the material on her own before she presents anything to the others or engages in discussions. Every once in a while, Johanne deviates from her cautious style and breaks out in short bursts of rage or euphoria. Sometimes she gets mad because the other actors waste precious time talking about half-baked ideas or engage in endless discussions. Other times, she gets euphoric about even the smallest creative breakthrough. As an actor Johanne is obsessed with clarifying her character's motivation and getting a deep understanding of its behavioural patterns.



Relationships

The relationships between the actors serve the purpose of intensifying the competition. In the style of a reality tv show, the actors can make alliances and agree to sabotage their rivals. Some of the relationships will emerge naturally in the scenes. Here you must as a gamemaster be attentive and set new scenes that follow up on the most interesting dynamics. Other relationships are already defined in the role descriptions. These you can draw upon in order to increase the competitive element. Here is a summary of the most obvious ones.

The challenged couple

At the beginning of the scenario, Curly and Mikkel are a couple. They have met during a previous production, but they are not used to working together. They both have strong opinions about the play and they are adamant about securing an important role. Their differences and the pressure of the situation may come between them.

Inside a bubble

Rehearsals are often a state of exception. The actors will quickly seek some sort of intimacy within the group. Alex has made a habit of making out with his co-stars. He quickly forgets the outside world and becomes open to new romantic adventures. Alex is charming and charismatic and his efforts are rarely in vain. He could be attracted to Johanne or Curly.

Robin's jealousy

Robin is yet to have the success he feels he deserves. He just doesn't get why Mikkel has such an easy time getting work. Johanne may be a great ally in a plot against Mikkel.

Curly The Bully

Even though Curly is quite confident about her own skills, she is afraid of being overlooked or losing to a rival. She minimises this risk by identifying her closest rivals and doing what she can to bully them and make them feel insecure.



Directing

As a director Fehmerling seeks to create an authentic performance. To him this means that the actors react naturally and with immediacy to all input, realistic or not. Typically, he aims to achieve this by getting the actor to immerse in the specific situation, but it can also be done through meticulous physical instructions. Fehmerling has no problem with using both approaches simultaneously, even though this often causes great frustration.

In the following pages, I list a number of methods you can use when you direct in your role as Edvard Fehmerling. Give direction in the middle of scenes as well as between scenes. If you direct during a scene it is more fun for the players who are not part of the scene.

The methods are to some degree listed chronologically in the order of when you should introduce them. This will help you create a good dramatic build up. You are, of course, free to improvise if the situation calls for it. Only use methods that you are comfortable with. After all, you need to embody each method as Fehmerling.

Observe each other

Have actors who are not part of the scene observe the others and provide focused feedback.

E.g.: "In this scene, Johanne should observe Curly's use of body language."

The favourite

Pick an actor. Commend this actor on everything she does and use her as an example of how the others should work, especially if they deliver a poor performance (in Fehmerling's opinion). Interrupt a scene or an exercise and substitute one of the actors with your favourite.

Purpose: This technique will boost the competitive element and do wonders for group dynamics.

Change favourites a couple of times, so the actors will feel that a new person jumps in the lead.

Change of pace

Have the actors repeat a scene but with a different pace, either slower or faster. Keep insisting on them doing it "even faster" or "even slower".

Purpose: This will change the energy in the scene and push the actors out of their comfort zone.

Physical instructions

Have the actors follow very detailed physical instructions.

Purpose: This will change the visual expression in aspects of the actors' work that they are not aware of. This method can also be used to fuel discussions about how to interpret a scene or a character (example: "No, I see him as quite insecure. Can't we have him slouch, break eye contact and fiddle with his hands.").

This method also has the advantage that the right movements sometimes lead to immersion. When you work with amateur actors (and roleplayers) there is, however, a risk that too detailed instructions will confuse them. It varies a lot how aware people are of their body language, and playing on that is a great way to push some people. Example: "I want you to say this while you walk across the stage and look at X. Stand straight. And, for God's sake, keep those hands at ease!".

Since most roleplayers are not trained actors, they will typically make a lot of mistakes which you can comment on. Examples: "Why are you turning your back to the audience?"; "Why are you not looking at her when you speak to her?"; "What are you doing with your hand?"; "You are touching her in a very awkward way. You are supposed to be in love!".

Other physical instructions will typically fall into one of these categories:

Correcting bad habits: "Get your hands out of your pockets."; "Sit up straight"; "No, don't look at me while you are acting!"; "Stand still while saying these lines", "Look up"; "Is it possible for you to act without having your head tilted?"; "Stand straight!".

Adjusting who occupies which spaces and when. Examples: "You enter from the right and walk to the chair over there."; "Get up, and move to edge of the stage before you start your monologue".

Stage direction. Examples: "Look her straight in the eye while you place your cigaret box on the table"; "The Yuppie runs his fingers through his hair when he talks"; "The boss takes long steps and stands with his legs spread apart.".

Visualisation

Have an actor play a scene while he or she does a particular visualisation.

Purpose: This will help if an actor relies too much on old routines or in other ways brings the wrong energy to a scene. The method is also a great way to confuse an actor who is feeling a little too comfortable.

Examples: "Act as if you have a stomach ache."; "Act as if you have a secret"; "Act as if you are hung over"; "Act as if you are a bit tipsy"; "Imagine that you have just had wildly great sex"; "Imagine that your co-actor has just sat for hours in the can with diarrhea"; "Imagine, that this place smells really bad."; "Imagine that you are acting with your head stuck in John Candy's ass"; "Act more red/green/yellow/black".

During both of my playtests, I had success with having an actor imagine being in a room with a bad smell and then turning this up gradually throughout the scene: "The smell becomes worse... And now EVEN WORSE... It stinks in here!... IT STINKS!!!".

Stress the favourite

Be extra hard on the favourite. Challenge him/her by assigning him/her very different characters or giving him/her very different types of direction. E.g. switch between "Visualisation" and "Physical instructions".

Purpose: Rattling the favourite and changing up group dynamics.

More / less

Have an actor repeat his/her performance, but with more or less intensity.

Purpose: Make the actor aware of how his/her performance looks from the outside. This method works particularly well with Curly, Mikkell and Johanne. This method also poses a great challenge to players who have difficulties adjusting their way of playing.

Examples: "Curly, can you do the same again. Only less?"; "Thanks, Johanne. Can you do it again and then add 25%?"; "Thank you both. Take it from the top, but turn it all up a bit".

Insist on authenticity

Have an actor repeat his performance, but ask him to make it more real and believable without you saying how.

Purpose: Challenge an actor who is not invested. The method is not super constructive, but it is a great way to provoke actors to try harder.

Examples: "Try again and do it like you mean it!"; "Can you do this with more integrity?"; "Can you make me believe it?"; "Very nice. But can you also make the audience believe it?"; "Can you do it in a way where you believe it yourself?".

Start, stop, repeat

Have an actor start a scene, then interrupt shortly after. Start the scene again, and then interrupt shortly after. Repeat this pattern several times. You may choose to make repetitions shorter and shorter, so, in the end, the actors will hardly have time to say a single word. This method may be combined with "More / Less" or "Insist on authenticity", but it also works well without additional direction. Then it becomes super frustrating. You may choose to look frustrated yourself or to show no emotion at all.

Purpose: Letting the actors know that they are not delivering.

Examples: "Stop. From the top."; "No...[sigh] ... from the top."; "From the top."; "Try again, this time 10 % less."

This method is perfect for running an actor into the ground, so she will need a break afterwards.

Exclude the favourite

Work with a scene without using the favourite a single time. Don't even comment on it.

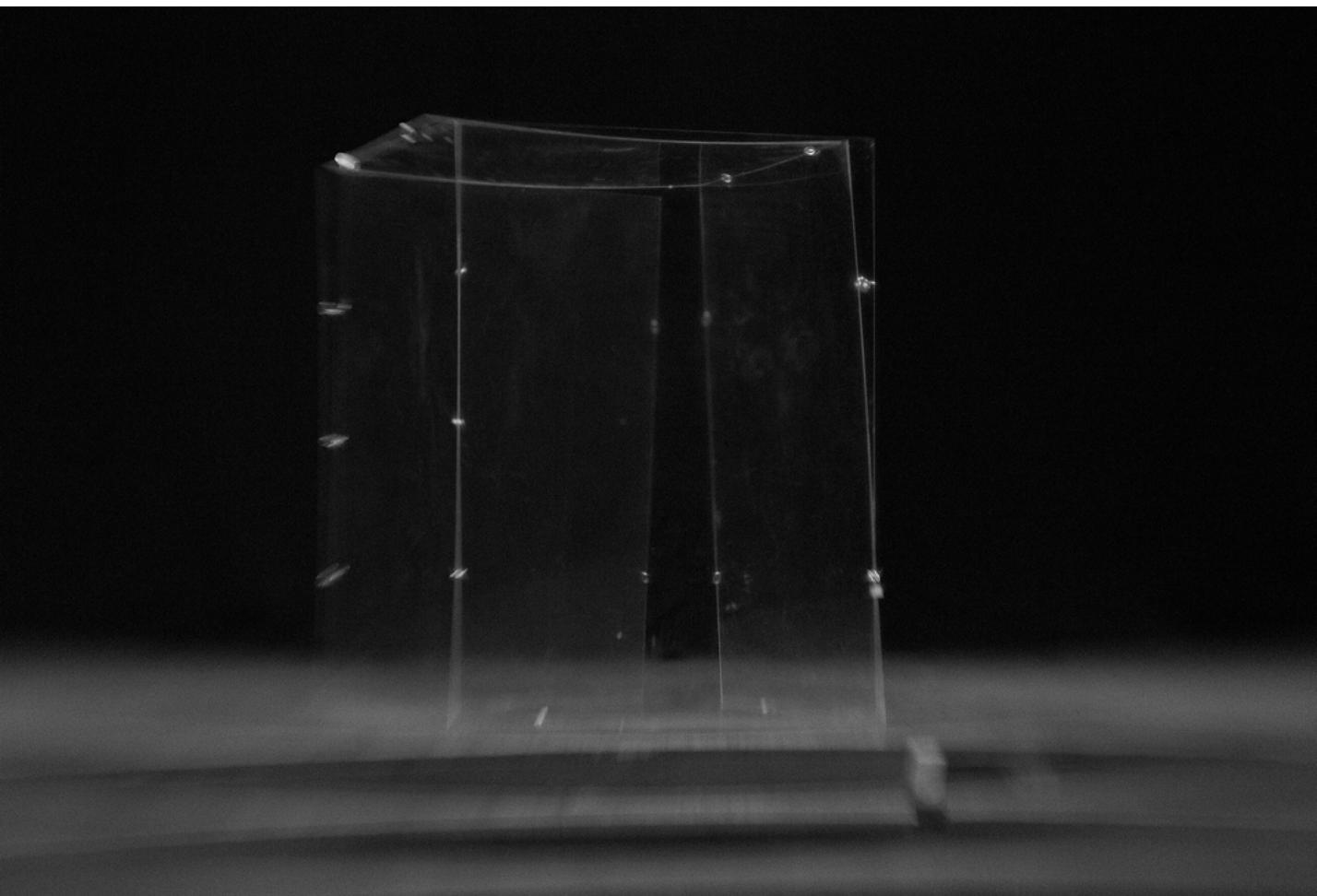
Purpose: Make the actors question who is really the favourite. Fehmerling's preferences vary, and nobody has a clear idea about what he is aiming for.

Status

Have two actors play with high social status (dominant/assertive) and low status (submissive/insecure), respectively.

Purpose: To add a sense of direction when the actors play out a confrontation. This also works to spice up a scene that is getting a little boring.

Plexiglass



Execution

Execution – Indhold

This chapter is a step-by-step manual to executing *Plexiglass*. It contains practical details, scene descriptions and scene-specific tips for directing as Edvard Fehmerling.

Practicalities	1
Starting up	2
Casting	3
Briefing	4
Warm-up	5
Act 1	6
Act 2	12
Act 3	17
Flowchart	25

Practicalities

Running *Plexiglass* takes two rooms: a playing room and a theatre space.

The playing room is a regular classroom or livingroom. Here is where the most of the scenario is played, representing the cabin in which Fehmerling rehearses with the actors. This is also the place where you play meta-scenes and discuss how the narrative progresses.

The theatre space is only used for the scenario's last scene. This is (preferably) decorated as a real life theatre space with the plexiglass cabinet in the middle. In this space, the actors rehearse the final scene of the play *Plexiglass*. This works as a final test in which the actors must convince Fehmerling that they deserve the leading part. Then there will be a short ceremonial scene where the winner is photographed for the Wall of Fame.

At your convention, the scenario could run a few times in parallel. Each group of participants will be in a separate playing room, but you will probably only have one theatre space. This takes some coordination. I advise that you delay some of the groups a bit. You can use the meta-scenes to coordinate the timing of your final scene with a central gamemaster. You can also have Fehmerling start up an exercise and then leave the room letting the actors work alone. I advise that the theatre space is dedicated only to *Plexiglass* while the scenario is running even though it will only be used in the last part of the scenario. This removes stress from the central game master and ensures that there is a place to meet and coordinate.

Materials

Before you start, make sure you have the following materials ready:

- Concept
(you will mainly need the part "Directing")
- Execution
(this chapter)
- Work Papers
- Role descriptions
(5 sets that all include a short description of the play. This represents the pre-read the actors received prior to the rehearsals.)



Starting up

I will do my best to be present and say a few introductory words.

Then the participants are split into groups:

Divisible by five

You must make sure the total number of participants is divisible by five. If numbers don't add up, you must pick a small group of players who will have to wait and see if you can get more people to join.

Archetypes

As soon as you have a large group divisible by five, define five spaces in the room, each representing one of these roleplayer archetypes:

The Class Clown

The Over-Actor

The Smartass

The Rebel

The Immersionist

The participants must now walk to the space that represents them the best.

Most likely the five areas will not be equally populated, and participants who can see themselves as more than one archetype are encouraged to change in order to secure equal distribution. Here is an opportunity for the game masters to challenge the players with comments like "no, you are more of an over-actor, aren't you?" and help people move between spaces until all are equally populated.

Forming groups

After this, one player from each space is sent to a game master until a group with one player from each archetype space is formed.

The group is sent to a playing room.

This process is repeated until all groups are formed and sent off.

Delayed start-up

If you have more than three groups, I advise that you delay the start-up of some of the groups 30-60 minutes. Make sure to arrange this with the game masters in advance. It is also a good idea to talk to all players and find out if some of them will have to leave early. This must be part of the considerations when the groups are formed ("now we will form a group to finish early").

If your team has a delayed start, you may choose to split up for a while and meet up at your playing room at a set time. Alternatively, you can sit and talk until it is time to start.

Casting

It can be quite challenging for a roleplayer to play an actor who is also playing a character. I recommend that you cast your players to be the actors who are closest to their own preferred playing style. The five archetypes from the start up exercise match the five actors and you can use the outcome of the exercise as a point of departure for casting.

The Class Clown = Alex

The Over-Actor = Curly

The Smartass = Mikkel

The Rebel = Robin

The Immersionist = Johanne

If you have a group of very experienced players, you may choose to challenge them with roles outside their comfort zone.

When casting is done, hand out all role descriptions.

More casting tips

– The players should preferably play the gender they identify as. In order to fit this, you may change the gender of the actors, e.g. Mikkel becomes Mia and Johanne becomes Johan.

– A love triangle could emerge between Mikkel, Curly and Alex, and Curly could end up being with Alex instead of Mikkel. I recommend that you either keep the original genders or switch completely so Curly becomes a man, and Mikkel and Alex become women. This could also work as a homosexual triangle, but I would like to avoid that one pairing is homosexual while the other is heterosexual. This may draw attention from other aspects of the story.

– I have not specified the age of any of the actors. Let the players play actors who are more or less their own age.

– Very extroverted players should be cast as Alex or Curly.

– More introverted players should be cast as Mikkel or Johanne.

– If the scenario ends up running only with four players (God forbid it!), leave out Robin or Alex.

Briefing

Make sure the group knows the basic storyline:

- We are in 1981. Five actors are chosen to go through an intense rehearsal process for three days in a remote cabin. They will be rehearsing the upcoming play Plexiglass. After this, rehearsals are moved to a real theatre. The scenario ends with the first rehearsal at the theatre.
- The final casting is not yet in place and the actors compete to get to play the character Y. They win by impressing the eccentric director Edvard Fehmerling.
- Let the players know that they can win this scenario, and there is a prize (don't say that it is a spot on the Wall of Fame). Make it clear that this is not a competition about being the best actor. Fehmerling is very unpredictable.
- Make sure they understand the format of playing. This is semi-live and all bodily gestures count as part of the fiction. If you cannot do it, your role cannot do it.
- Agree on how you handle in-game and off-game. You could mark a part of the room that is for meta or off-game talk.
- Make it clear that nothing needs to be historically correct.
- The role descriptions do not include a lot of background information. Make it clear that the players must themselves introduce anecdotes about previous productions, places they have lived or mutual acquaintances.

- Introduce the meta-scenes where you will all discuss how the scenario progresses. This will be about coming up with ideas for new scenes that develop the actors' relationships. You can turn the relationship aspect up or down to cater to the group's preferences.
- Explain the overall structure. Both the scenario and the theatre play are divided into three acts. The first act of the scenario is about the first day of rehearsals, where the group works with scenes from the first act of the play. In a similar way, the scenario's second act is about the second day and with scenes from the second act of the play, and so on. Let them know that there is an overview of all scenes in their role descriptions.
- During the different rehearsals, the group will work with a few storytelling exercises. Encourage the players to introduce stories that are "close to home" in order to secure maximum immersion and emotional effect.
- Have a short talk about boundaries. Many scenes are more or less live and you should agree to how much the players are comfortable with touching, yelling or even spitting at each other (in one of my tests, I actually had a player who wanted to spit another player in the face.).

Warm-up

Don't spend too much time on warm-up exercises. It is important to keep momentum. Also, the scenario is in itself designed to have a progression that warms up the players.

I recommend using a simple exercise where you have the players walk around randomly amongst each other on the floor:

Ask them to gradually get into the character of their assigned roles as actors.

Ask them to walk without interacting with each other. They should focus on their own body language.

Ask them to start talking as the actors. Let them utter random sentences and short monologues.

Finally, have them react to each other. Let them acknowledge each other's presence through saying "hello" or shaking hands.

If the players have agreed to more physical contact, have them hug each other, push each other, or take each other's hands and keep eye contact for a while.



Act 1

Act 1 is about the first day of the rehearsal process. In this the actors will work with scenes from the first act of the play. Fehmerling is optimistic and constructive, but he is also quite deterrent and result-oriented.

As a game master your most important tasks are to:

- Get the players off to a good start. Do your best to direct them in a way that improves their acting. Correct mistakes and bad habits. Adjust pacing, and commend the actors on good performances.
- Help the players establish the relationships between the actors. Notice when relationships emerge, and set scenes that help them develop.

Act 1 should take about an hour.

Welcome

The actors arrive at a remote cabin in Northern Zealand. They arrive separately, and as they get unpacked, they meet in the living room. Alex has the key and lets everyone in. They engage in casual conversation. Mikkel and Curly are the last of the actors to arrive.

A bit later, Fehmerling arrives. He arranges six chairs in a circle and have the actors sit down. He then introduces his vision for the play and the rehearsal process. It is important that the actors feel his passion for the project.

In both of my playtests, I had Fehmerling make it very clear that he does not like well-established actors and the Danish institutions' way of always picking the same ten stars for all major parts.

Explain, that the set design is still in development. Fehmerling has secured quite a bit of funding and he has started working with the avant garde scenographer Helion Grande.

Have the actors do a quick presentation round. They should talk about their previous experience, their ambitions, and their expectations. Fehmerling could ask about what possibilities they see in the material.

You may take the Work Papers and look at the list of scenes. The players already have these as part of their role descriptions.



Rehearsals, Day 1

Fehmerling works with the actors. Sometimes he runs various exercises. Sometimes he works with scenes from the Work Papers.

As Fehmerling you decide how the actors should work. The section "Directing" in the Concept chapter lists a number of methods you can use to push the actors.

Below you can see a range of possible activities. Put together a programme of approximately 45 minutes.

A STORY ABOUT ATTRACTION

Fehmerling starts with an exercise that works to warm up the actors for "Scene 1.1 The First Meeting".

One by one (but not necessarily everyone), the actors must tell a story about a situation where they have felt a strong romantic or sensual attraction to stranger or a new acquaintance.

While they tell these stories, Fehmerling asks about their physical experience of the situation. Examples: "What did the location look like?", "Which sounds did you hear in the background?", "Was the weather warm or cold?".

As the actors get more and more immersed, Fehmerling starts asking about how it felt in their bodies. Examples: "Where in your body was the attraction located?"; "How did it feel in your stomach?"; "How did it affect your breathing?"; "How did it feel in your chest?".

Note: The point of this is to create a physical anchoring of the emotion which the actors will use as their work with "Scene 1.1 The First Meeting". Take your time when you guide the first actor through the exercise. After that the others get the point, and you can speed it up.

THE FIRST MEETING

The group works with "Scene 1.1 The First Meeting". Set up four chairs to represent a small train compartment.

The actors play the scene in pairs, while the others watch. Every once in a while, Fehmerling changes who plays which part.

Note: The constant changes in casting is a general approach Fehmerling uses when he works with all scenes from the play.

Fehmerling reminds the actors of the physical anchoring of their attraction that they worked with in the previous exercise.

In the beginning, it makes sense to pair up actors who have more or less similar stories. It could be two actors who described silent attraction from a far. Or it can be two actors who talked about an attraction that emerged through a conversation or was sparked by an instance of physical contact.

Fehmerling

Fehmerling is ruthless when it comes to changing between who is playing and who is observing. One mistake or a semi-invested effort, and the actor goes back to observing. Fehmerling does not need to see a full scene before he is ready to make changes.

Tips from the section "Directing":

Observe each other

Make sure to activate the actors who are observing. Have them observe specific elements and give feedback.

Physical instructions

Have the actors mirror each other's body language. If your players are shy and awkward, you can ask for a more sensual body language. Have them keep eye contact. Let the women play with her hair. Have the man puff his chest and speak in a lower register. Make them touch each other in a natural way, e.g. by grabbing the other's forearm when emphasising something important.

Change pace

Play around with pacing. Speaking very slowly may increase sexual tension. Or ask for a fast-paced scene as if the characters become super energised by talking to each other.

The favourite

Pick a favourite, and have him/her play with the others one by one. Commend only the favourite on his/her performance as if the other actors didn't exist.

YOUR FACE

Fehmerling explores the chemistry within the group and how far the actors are ready to go as they engage in the exercises.

The actors do this exercise in pairs, as the rest watches. They do not get any characters to hide behind. There are two roles in the exercise: "The Observer" and "The Observed". They can do this sitting or standing.

The Observer must look at The Observed's face and describe it.

1) The first description is as neutral as possible. Example: "You have blue eyes with a bit of green around the pupils. Your stubble is about half a centimeter. You have a small gap between your front teeth.". Make this part very short.

2) The second description is about what The Observer likes about The Observed's face. Examples: "I like your freckles. You have a cute snub nose. I am crazy about how your hair falls and covers your forehead when you lean forward.".

3) Lastly, The Observer must reflect upon which characters The Observed can play well, or cannot pull off with such a face. Example: "You have a certain Lolita quality. You are probably good at playing someone innocent yet sexy. I don't see you playing someone dominant and powerful in a traditional way".

Fehmerling

Fehmerling uses this exercise to turn up the actors' presence in the room and intimacy with each other. If the exercise lacks intensity, Fehmerling can sit down right next to The Observer or even move in on The Observed and study him/her with great intensity.



SHOW-OFF

Fehmerling lets the actors look at the scene overview in the Work Papers and discuss the scenes. Then four actors must pair up two and two and pick one scene from Act 1 to work with. They need to show that they and their respective partners could work well in the roles of the characters X og Y. Fehmerling arranges the chairs to stage the two scenes. He gives the fifth actor an observation task.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Fehmerling lets the actors know that it is time for a break. The actors now have time to talk to each other and digest their experiences so far.

Set two short scenes in which the actors talk in pairs. Have the other players go to the off-game space.

Pick combinations of actors based on which relations that are starting to form. You can ask the players off-game if there is some alliance they want to pursue or if they want to play out a disagreement with anyone.

Fehmerling

If you have spent a long time rehearsing "Scene 1.1 The First Meeting", Fehmerling keeps this very brief and does not change casting during the scenes.

Tips from the section "Directing":**Observe each other**

It is important to activate the fifth actor.

Physical instructions

Help the actors who have picked the scenes. Give simple and useful direction. Examples: "Remember to look her in the eye" or "Speak up".

The favourite

Commend the favourite. Find a specific aspect to highlight, e.g. body language, voice, or the way he/she delivers a certain line.

Act 2

Act 2 is about the second day of the rehearsal process. In this the actors will work with scenes from the second act of the play. This act will focus more on artistic exploration and performance pressure. Fehmerling becomes more result-oriented and less pedagogical (if he ever was). Let him start out being deeply frustrated with bad scenes and bad acting.

At some point in time, Fehmerling is notified that Helion Grande is building plexiglass cabinets. This piece of information renews his vision and optimism. His direction becomes more focused, but this does not make his preferences easier to read.

As a game master your most important task is to raise the stakes and push the players, so they will all have to do their absolute best.

Act 2 should take about an hour.

Meta Scene: Relationships

Have the players join you in the off-game area and discuss how you can all work with the different relationships between the actors. Let each player suggest a scene where two actors get to be alone with each other. In these, they can form alliances and plan to influence who gets cast as X and Y. You can also focus on conflicts that could have arisen between Robin and the classically trained actors Mikkel and Johanne.

Write suggestions down, and keep these in mind, so you can set them later in the act.

Call the central game master and have him/her visit your playing room. Here you can talk about what time you expect to enter the theatre space.



Rehearsals, Day 2

Fehmerling works with the actors. Sometimes he runs various exercises. Sometimes he works with scenes from the Work Papers.

Below you can see a range of possible activities. Put together a programme of approximately 45 minutes.

THE TEST AND THE DILEMMA

The group works with "Scene 2.1 The Test" and "Scene 2.2 The Dilemma". The two scenes are supposed to mirror each other, so X and Y are put in similar dilemmas. This can be done by having the conversation flow or the set design (the arrangement of chairs and table, and how the actors move) mirror each other. This scene will work well for the more analytical actors who will help generate new ideas.

Make it clear that Fehmerling lacks clarity. He is frustrated when things do not work. Let the actors do a run-through where he just sits and looks tired. He stops and starts scenes without giving direction. All you hear is "Thank you. From the top." or "... [sigh] ... try again. From the top."

During my second playtest, the players had a hard time making these scenes work. This was obvious to everyone. I played off of this and had a disillusioned Fehmerling simply leave the room (I went to the off-game area) and let the actors direct themselves. At another point, I took it out on a single actor and had her start and stop the same scene again and again until she gave up.

Fehmerling

If an actor delivers a bad performance, you can look at him/her with tired eyes and say something like "What am I to do with you? What would you do if you were in my shoes?".

Tips from the section "Directing":

Start, stop, repeat

Let Fehmerling take his frustration out on the actors.

Push the favourite

Show your disappointment: "I really expected you to step up here. You are letting me down right now. You are letting us all down!".

More / less

You can use this method on Curly whether or not she is over-acting. Make her turn it down and more down. Then change your mind and have her turn it up again.

Insist on authenticity

Be hard on Johanne and Mikkel. Make it clear that there is a huge gap between how they feel about their performance and what the audience sees.

Status

You can let the supporting characters work with high or low status in relation to X and Y.

Visualisations

Have the scene start without any signs of conflict. Have the supporting characters play as if they just had wildly good sex.

LITTLE OUTBURSTS

Throw in little outbursts that show Fehmerling's temper. This will keep the actors on their toes.

Fehmerling

Suggested outbursts:

How I feel about motivation

Fehmerling gets tired of hearing the actors discuss the characters' motivation. He decides to stop this. "Now, let me tell you how I feel about motivation". Fehmerling writes "MOTIVATION" on a piece of paper or a blackboard/whiteboard. He then either spits on the word or he rips the paper into little pieces and stomps on them. "This is how I feel about motivation."

Coffee is for real actors

Fehmerling is in midst of directing a scene when he gets distracted by an actor drinking coffee (or similar).

Fehmerling yells: "Stop! Put the cup down. Coffee is for real actors. Once you start acting properly, you can start drinking coffee!"

EVENING

The sun has set, and the actors are off duty. They have a couple of beers and listen to some 80s tunes. There is time for both small talk and more serious conversations.

This is a good time to set some of the short scenes the players requested in the meta scene.

Plexiglass Cabinets

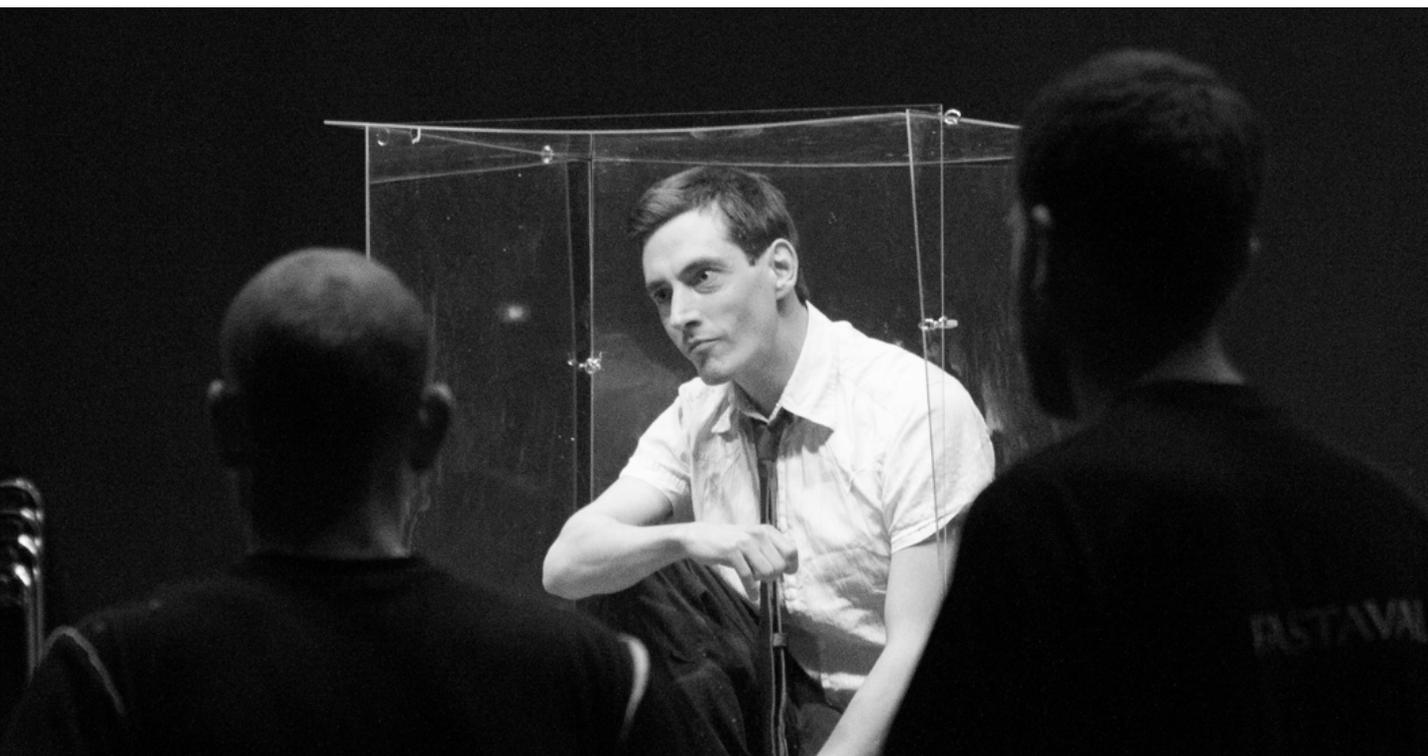
Fehmerling gathers the whole group to make an announcement. He has just spoken to Helion Grande and the set design concept is now in place: The actors will be playing most of the scenes sitting inside plexiglass cabinets.

Fehmerling is ecstatic. Now his vision comes together.

He immediately has the group rehearse "Scene 2.3 Chaos Scene". Fehmerling puts up five chairs next to each other and has the actors improvise monologues on top of each other as they play the different archetypes. Fehmerling breaks this cacophony and starts directing it as a musical piece, so only one actor speaks at a time. In the end, he has everyone chime in creating a massive crescendo. End this act on a high note with an ecstatic Fehmerling.

Fehmerling and Helion Grande

If circumstances allow it, you can have a guest roleplayer appear as Helion Grande. Coordinate this with the central game master. Maybe he/she can show up as Helion Grande and talk about the new set design concept.



Act 3

Act 3 is about the third day of the rehearsal process. In this the actors will work with scenes from the third act of the play.

This is where it all gets very competitive. Artistically, the concept is coming together, and it becomes more and more clear to the actors how to navigate the competition. Fehmerling becomes more insistent and confrontational. He knows he cannot afford to choose the wrong person for the leading part.

As a game master your most important tasks are to:

- Keep momentum and intensity. Cut scenes faster and have fewer repetitions. Use more spectacular methods when you give direction.
- Keep time. Make an appointment with the central game master about when you will enter the theatre space. Make sure to be there on time.
- Cast an actor in the leading role as Y. Make the choice that will create the most interesting story.

Act 3 should take about an hour.

Meta Scene: Status

Have the players join you in the off-game area and discuss how they think the competition is going. Share your current view of who is doing well with Fehmerling, and who is not. Remind them, that this is the final act and the last chance to work with the relationships. Have them suggest scenes in which the actors follow up on relationships, make alliances or try to shake each other.

Write suggestions down, and keep these in mind, so you can set them later in the act.

Practicalities

In this act, you must communicate exactly when you are ready to go to the theatre space. Call or text the main game master, or have him/her pick you up.



Your favourite

Fehmerling gathers the actors.

He now wants their opinions about who they see as the best choice to play Y.

He can also ask who they would like to play X, should they get cast as Y themselves.

Keep this scene short.



Being Let Down

This scene is built on the same exercise as "A Story About Attraction" in Act 1. It works well as a warm-up to working with "Scene 3.1 The Breakup" and to a certain degree "Scene 3.2 Broken".

One by one (but not necessarily everyone), the actors must tell a story about a situation where they were let down by a loved one.

Fehmerling places two chairs facing each other. Contrary to the previous exercise, the actors must now tell the story directly to another actor. This other actor's task is to listen and ask questions. Examples: "What did the location look like?"; "Were you hot or cold?"; "Where in your body is the feeling of disappointment located?".

Fehmerling

During the exercise, Fehmerling stays in the background. He leaves room for the actors to immerse.

If the exercise is off to a good start, the actors will try to outdo each other with immersion and detailed descriptions. If things go less well, or an actor delivers a poor performance, you may cut and have that person come up with "a story we can actually believe".

In my second play test, one actor started out telling a story he didn't really believe himself. When he was asked to anchor the emotion, he delivered the cliché "it gave me chills down my spine". As Fehmerling, I chose to ask him directly why he did not take the exercise seriously and if he at all wanted to be part of the process. Then I had him come up with a new story which he delivered very convincingly. I chose to give him very little positive feedback and instead commend his counterpart on her great listening skills. After the test, the player let me know that he was happy that I had challenged him but also given him a second chance. My point is that you can use Fehmerling to push the players to perform better while at the same time use his unpredictable nature as an alibi for making these kinds of confrontations less personal and invasive for you and the players.

Rehearsals, Day 3

Fehmerling works with the actors. Sometimes he runs various exercises. Sometimes he works with scenes from the Work Papers.

Below you can see a range of possible activities. Put together a programme of approximately 45 minutes.

BROKEN

The group works with "Scene 3.2 Broken". The scene is played as if the actors were sitting in separate plexiglass cabinets. Have the actors sit on the floor or on two chairs. Make sure they keep arms and legs in a very small, confined space.

It is very important to Fehmerling that Y really steps into character and embraces his disappointment.

During my first playtest we worked with different variations of this scene. We tried to turn it around so it was X who tried to make her editor recall the article.

In the second playtest we skipped this scene altogether. The group has worked great with "Being Let Down" and the whole atmosphere was so heavy that I did not want to introduce more of the same.

Fehmerling

Tips from the section "Directing":

Push the favourite

Act as if the favourite has completely lost her/his touch. "Where are you? What can I do to make you get back on track?"

Status

It makes good sense to work with extreme differences in status when Y is asking his colleague for help.

Mental images

Use mental images such as "here smells really bad" or "you have a stomach ache".

CONFRONTATIONS

Set short scenes where the actors are on a break. They leave the cabin to smoke or get a breath of fresh air. This leaves a moment for some of the actors to speak privately.

One scene could be Curly who picks on rival. Or it could be Robin who challenges one of the more established actors such as Johanne, Mikkell or Curly.

Make sure to use the players' ideas and suggestions.

THE BREAKUP

The group works with "Scene 3.1 The Breakup". The scene is played as if the actors were sitting in separate plexiglass cabinets. Have the actors sit on the floor or on two chairs. Make sure they keep arms and legs in a very small, confined space.

Fehmerling adjusts his methods to fit the situation. If the rehearsals have resulted in a few well-functioning couples, he is less inclined to switch actors mid-scene. This looks like a semi-finale and the fifth actor is kept in an observing role. If the rehearsals have not resulted in any obvious pairings, Fehmerling is ready to try anything. One idea could be trying out homosexual couples if he has not tried this yet.

In both playtests, I used this scene to work with homosexual relationships. The seating puts less stress on the physical chemistry and it is easy to play in all constellations.

LITTLE OUTBURSTS

Throw in little outbursts that show Fehmerling's temper. This will keep the actors on their toes.

Fehmerling

Suggested outbursts

Seriously

If an actor is goofing off while acting or during a conversation, Fehmerling will react promptly: "Some of us are taking this very seriously, and we believe in what we are doing. Can you please at least pretend that this is important to you? For our sake?"

Do you even want to be here?

Fehmerling hates when actors do not give 100%. If an actor repeatedly delivers mediocre performances, he will confront him/her.

Examples: "You look like you don't believe in what you are doing"; "Do you even want to be here?"; "Do you even want to be an actor?"; "Why do you want to be an actor, when you obviously don't want to act?"; "Do you hate acting?!"; "Do you want to go home?!".

Fehmerling

Tips from the section "Directing":

Leave out the favourite / The favourite

Keep the favourite out of this scene, unless he/she actively does something to get a go at it. Alternatively, use the favourite a lot and let him/her know that you are glad he/she is back on track.

Insist on authenticity

Insist that the relationship and the feelings between X og Y should be believable. Make comparisons between pairs of actors: "You are losing to these two right now. You are aware of that, right?"

Meta Scene: The Theatre Space

Explain to the players that the actors are through with the rehearsals in the cabin. They will now relocate to a theatre in central Copenhagen. Now is the time where Fehmerling decides who he will cast in the leading part as Y.

Practicalities

Make sure all arrangements with the central gamemaster are in place. Either he/she will pick you up or you will arrive at the theatre space at the set time.



Finale

Fehmerling bids everyone welcome to the theatre and Helion Grande (if you can get someone to play him).

He lets the actors know that he has been thinking long and hard about who should be cast in the leading role. But before he makes his choice, he wants to do a few final tests.

In this scene, he will try out at least two different combinations of actors in the roles of X and Y. He starts by calling out one actor to play X and one to play Y. Then they play "Scene 3.3 Death" on stage in the plexiglass cabinet. Immediately after, he calls out a new couple and lets them play the same scene.

Give thorough instructions before you let the actors play.

- Throughout the whole scene, Y sits inside the plexiglass cabinet. He starts the scene by calling and leaving a message on X's answering machine.
- X is at the opposite end of the stage. She picks up just in time to exchange a few sentences with Y.
- X moves across the stage to the plexiglass cabinet and places herself on the outside.
- X and Y press their hands towards the plexiglass as Y slowly dies.

When the scene starts, keep direction to a minimum. Stick to just reminding the actors of the general flow of the scene.

When you pick the two couples, I recommend that you play on conflicts that are already present in the group. E.g. you can pick a person to play X who may sabotage the scene in order to stand in the way of the other person successfully playing Y. You can also have the same two actors play both runs of the scene and have them switch characters between the two runs.

After the second run, Fehmerling chooses who he will cast as Y. He has the actors stand on a line. He then starts by revealing who he has chosen to play the secondary roles, e.g. "Mikkel, you will be playing Y's colleague Steffen" and "Curly, you will be playing X's editor Kristian". After this, he announces who he is casting to play X.

This leaves two actors. Fehmerling starts by announcing the "loser" of the whole process, e.g. "Robin... I am sorry, but I can only use you as The Squatter in the chaos scene". He then announces the winner "... this means that Johanne gets to play Y!".

When Fehmerling has announced his choice, the newly picked leading man or woman is photographed sitting inside the plexiglass cabinet. Fehmerling lets everyone know that the picture will be used for a promotional poster.

Practicalities

The central gamemaster takes the photo in his/her role as Helion Grande and makes sure the poster is put on on the Wall of Fame.

You and the players go back to the playing room for debriefing.

Flowchart

CASTING

Archetypes: The Class Clown, The Over-Actor, The Smartass, The Rebel and The Immersionist.

BRIEFING + WARM-UP

ACT 1

WELCOME

Arrival at the cabin. Fehmerling arrives later and presents the play and the set design status.

A STORY ABOUT ATTRACTION

Describe a moment of attraction.

THE FIRST MEETING

Rehearsal of “Scene 1.1 The First Meeting”

YOUR FACE

1) Neutral description; 2) What do you like?; 3) Which roles can he/she play?

SHOW-OFF

Four actors in two pairs. Actors choose scenes.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Short conversations between the actors.

ACT 2

META SCENE: RELATIONSHIPS

How can we work with the relationships?

THE TEST AND THE DILEMMA

Rehearsal of the scenes “2.1 The Test” and “2.2 The Dilemma “

LITTLE OUTBURSTS

Fehmerling shows his temper.

EVENING

Short conversations. Remember the meta scene.

THE PLEXIGLASS CABINET

Fehmerling presents the set design. Rehearsal of “Scene 2.3 Chaos Scene”.

ACT 3

META SCENE: STATUS

Focus on the competition. Who is in the lead?

YOUR FAVOURITE

In-game talk about who the actors feel will do best in the role of Y.

BEING LET DOWN

Stories about being let down by a loved one.

BROKEN

Rehearsal of the “Scene 3.2 Broken”. The actors are in plexiglas cabinets.

CONFRONTATIONS

Short conversations in private.

THE BREAKUP

Rehearsal of “Scene 3.1 The Breakup”. The actors are in plexiglas cabinets.

LITTLE OUTBURSTS

Fehmerling shows his temper.

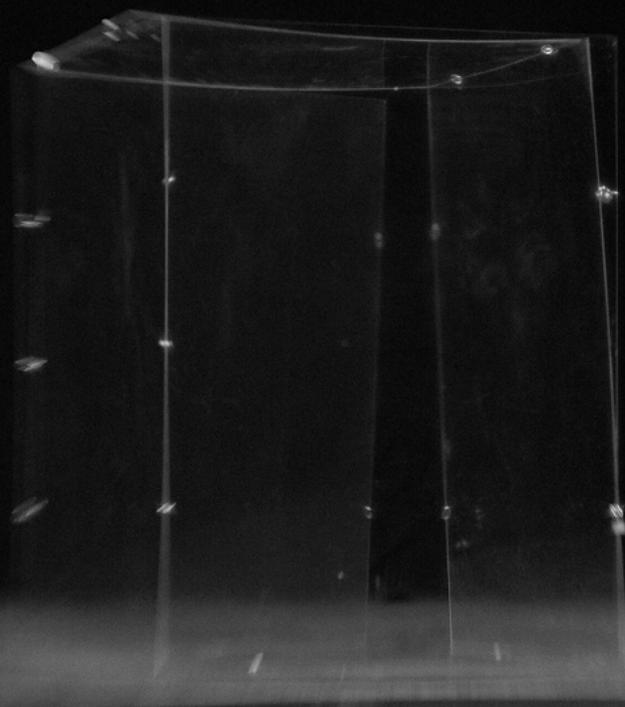
META SCENE: THE THEATRE SPACE

Practicalities. Walk to the theatre space.

FINALE

Fehmerling tries different pairings in “Scene 3.3 Death” and makes his final casting decision.

Plexiglass



Work Papers

PLEXIGLASS

– A play about isolation and alienation

PITCH

Two youngsters move to The Big City to find happiness. In their pursuit of career opportunities, love and freedom they must adapt to the lifestyles of The Big City. However, adapting is in conflict with their personal values, and the adaptation itself ends up getting in the way of real human connection.

STORYLINE

The story is a classic tragedy about the love between X and Y.

X and Y meet by chance. They have both moved to the city to fulfil their ambitions. Throughout the story, they find out that success comes with a cost, and they end up compromising their own integrity. This leads to their breakup. Y tries to save the situation, but fails. Instead, Y commits suicide. X tries to rescue Y, but it is too late. The climax is a dramatic death scene referencing *Romeo and Juliet*.

SCENOGRAPHY

The scenography will in one way or the other incorporate plexiglass as a metaphor for isolation. It is to be designed by the artist Helion Grande who will do this in parallel with the rehearsals.

REHEARSALS

It is not yet decided who will play X and Y. During the rehearsals, we will experiment with different combinations of actors to find the optimal cast.

Y is the main character, but he/she needs to have a good chemistry with the actor who plays X. We will finalise the cast, when we move from the rehearsal space and start working on the real stage. Then we will also start finalising the script.

PLEXIGLASS

— A play about isolation and alienation

ROLES

Y (here described as a man. Can be played by both genders.)

Y is young and ambitious. He has left his hometown and moved to The Big City to pursue a business career. He wants to make his family proud and show that he is strong and independent. He is used to keeping family and friends close and he is afraid that he will be lonely in the city. He hopes to find someone who will love and support him.

During the first act, he gets a job as a sales representative at a large producer of plexiglass.

Ambition: To make it in the business world. Success is measured in material wealth.

X (here described as a woman. Can be played by both genders.)

X is young and idealistic. She has lived in The Big City for a little more than a month. She is still struggling to make it as a journalist. She believes she can serve a higher purpose and make the world a better place. However, she finds it difficult to commit fully to her calling as she is easily distracted by mundane goals and benefits such as money, love and security.

Ambition: To tell the truth. To expose hidden truths and make offenders accountable for their actions.

ACT 1

1.1 THE FIRST MEETING

X and Y meet for the first time on the train to The Big City.

They strike up a conversation and talk about their dreams. The chemistry is undeniable. They agree to meet again. Maybe X can help Y get settled.

Y has just moved out and is carrying a big suitcase. The days ahead offer an intense job hunt and nights at a hostel.

X has moved to The Big City one month ago and she is now on her way home after a trip out of town.

1.2 I BELIEVE IN YOU

X and Y enjoy a nice evening in each other's company. They talk about their current challenges. They promise to trust and support each other.

X has just landed a job at a highly regarded newspaper. Y has just started in a position as a sales representative at a big plexiglass production company.

The scene can take place in a sofa, at a dinner table or in bed.

1.3 ONE OF US

A colleague offers Y a quick way to success in the form of a meeting with a big American client. The scene must show that this is a big scoop for Y. The meeting leads to a rite of passage marking that Y is now "one of us".

The scene can take place in a private room, in a restaurant or in a private corner of a larger party.

ACT 2

2.1 THE TEST

Y and his colleague are in the final stages of closing a big deal with their American client as they find out that their product has failed a quality control. The glass is not approved to handle the load it needs in order to be a safe choice for the client's project.

The colleague talks Y into ignoring the quality control and move on with the deal. It is clear that the colleague does not take "no" for an answer. Saying "yes" is part of being "one of us".

The scene takes place at the office.

2.2 THE DILEMMA

X has a meeting with her editor in chief who brings her a new assignment. The editor has received a tip that Y's company is systematically ignoring safety regulations. This could be X's first big scoop. Should she write the story?

2.3 CHAOS SCENE

A variety of archetypes sit in different sections of the scene and talk over each other. There is no real conversation. It is more like a cacophony of voices.

Possible archetypes: The Yuppie, The Political Activist, The Emigrant, The Jock, The Prostitute, The Squatter and The Model.

ACT 3

3.1 THE BREAKUP

X finds out about Y's illegal deal with the American client. This leads to a heated confrontation. It is also revealed how X handled her dilemma. The confrontation leads to a breakup.

The scene takes place in a private setting.

3.2 BROKEN

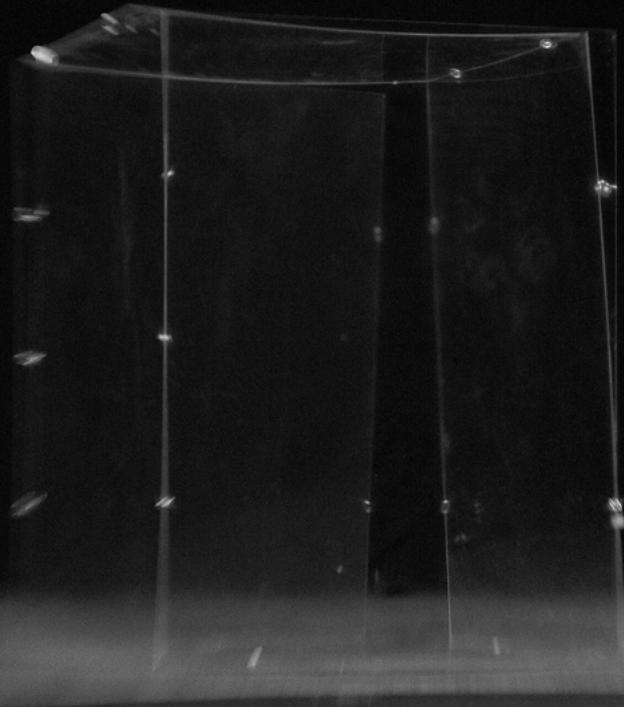
Y tries to pull out of the deal, but his colleague shows no mercy. Y breaks.

The scene takes place in a private setting or as a conversation on the phone. Y may end the scene alone reciting a monologue.

3.3 DEATH

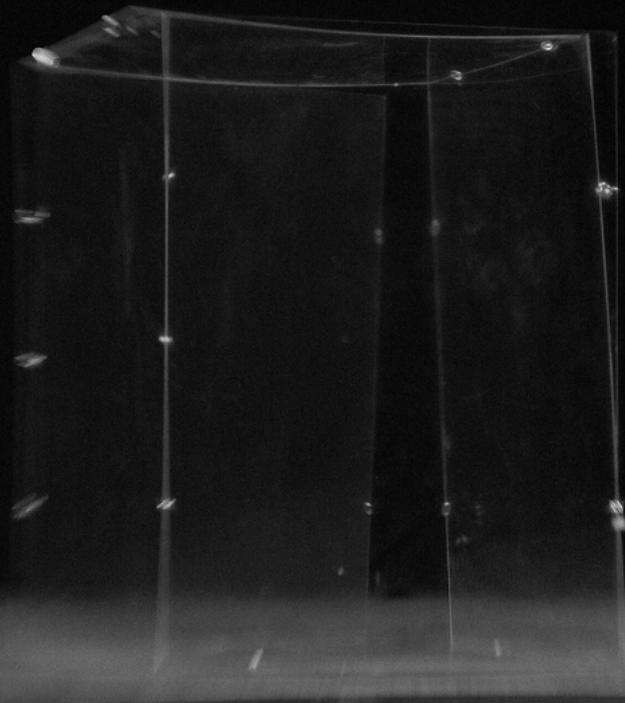
Y decides to commit suicide. He takes a large handful of pills and calls X's answering machine. X picks up the phone and we see a desperate rescue attempt, first over the phone, then through the front door intercom, and finally through the door to Y's apartment. Unfortunately, it is too late. Y dies while X is pressing her body against the door in defeat (on stage, the door may be a plexiglass window or display case).

Plexiglas



Roles

Plexiglas



Alex

Plexiglass

Dear player

Welcome to Plexiglass.

Over the course of the next few hours, you are to play one of five chosen actors who are participating in an intense three-day rehearsal period preparing for the premiere of the play Plexiglass.

The director is yet to reach a conclusion regarding the final cast. During the rehearsals, it is your mission to excel in a way that makes him choose you as the main character. More specifically, you must get the director Edward Fehmerling to pick you to play the character Y.

Enjoy!

Morten Jaeger

Alex - THE CLASS CLOWN

When other people talk about you, they often use the word “extroverted”. You don’t like being classified as anything, but if anyone was ever extroverted, it’s you. Your body language is expressive, your voice is loud, and you rarely have a thought without sharing it.

You see your way of being as an expression of honesty. It creates a sense of security that people know how you think and feel. It also serves as a defensive mechanism. If you are the first to recognise that you did something stupid or that you feel insecure, it becomes more awkward for people to attack you. You hate when people are being unclear. In general, you dislike tension and you often use humour to loosen things up.

Getting attention is very important. You hate being on the sidelines and it drives you crazy when people don’t listen to you, especially if they don’t take you seriously. You are aware that you sometimes get in your own way, one moment joking and then the next demanding to be taken seriously. But you are yet to find a good solution to this paradox.

As an actor, you are good at improvisation and you are always ready to accept a challenge. At the same time, you are good at reading new material and coming up with new ideas and interpretations. This also has a flipside. Whenever you have decided that your character has a certain motivation or feeling, it is hard for you to follow directions diverging from this.

Your career

You have no formal education but you have had a good deal of work in the alternative scene due to relentless networking. When it comes to the more established business, you are yet to get a foot in the door. Plexiglass will be the first time your performance is reviewed in the mainstream media. This is a truly unique opportunity.

Your method

To improvise results based on your own feelings and thoughts about your character’s motivation and general state of mind.

Relationships

Rehearsals are pure isolation. You forget about the outside world and start living completely inside a very small bubble. Within this, you need intimacy and recognition. You often end up falling in love with another cast member. As you are very charming and quite relentless, you often end up getting the girl.

You have no close relations within the group, but you look forward to working with Johanne and Curly. You have seen plays with Johanne who is both very charming and very gifted. You know Curly from a couple of improv workshops where you flirted wildly.

Edvard Fehmerling

You do not know a whole lot about the director Edvard Fehmerling, but he is definitely the talk of the town in the theatre world right now. Your friends say that you are very fortunate to have been invited to work with him without even going to an initial audition.

Roleplaying tips**Interrupt**

When the others work, interrupt them by sharing your thoughts and ideas, or just to crack a joke.

Go for the girl

Be very obvious about your interest in a female co-player. Try to get to sit next to her or play scenes with her.

Try to engage in deep personal conversations with Johanne and Curly, even though you do not yet have a well-established personal relationship.

Think out loud

State your thoughts and feelings verbally. You are always 'on speaker'.



PLEXIGLASS

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ROLES

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2.1 THE TEST

Y's colleague asks for a questionable favour. It is clear that he does not take "no" for an answer. Y chooses to help his colleague.

2.2 THE DILEMMA

X is offered a big opportunity that may end up hurting Y.

2.3 CHAOS SCENE

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3rd ACT

3.1 THE BREAKUP

X finds out what Y has done. This leads to a confrontation and their final breakup.

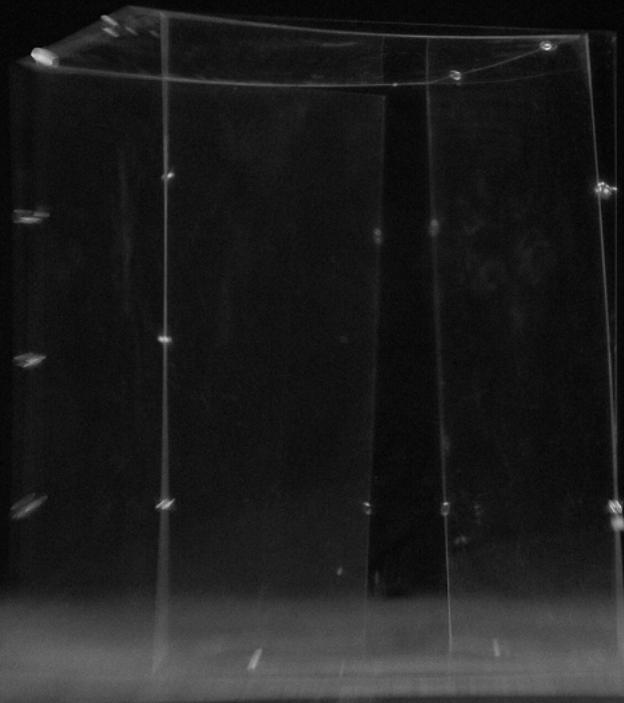
3.2 BROKEN

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Plexiglas



Curly

Plexiglass

Dear player

Welcome to Plexiglass.

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Enjoy!

Morten Jaeger

CURLY - THE OVER-ACTOR

You have great power and charisma. You carry yourself with elegant, precise movements and you look people straight in the eye.

You have a strong personality and opinions about everything. It is as if you have this inner compass that tells you what's right and what's wrong. This goes for moral issues as well as artistic choices. Your compass often leads to confrontations because you simply cannot keep quiet when people make the wrong choices. But confrontations frustrate you. You hate when you can't convince people that you are right. And you hate even more when people engage in an argument without getting involved emotionally and just take a random stance or play Devil's Advocate.

As an actor, you have worked with many directors and techniques and you are comfortable taking all kinds of direction, from meticulous physical instructions to diffuse mental images.

You are convinced that as a theatre actor you must dominate the whole room. So-called naturalistic acting is boring and it does not work on stage. One director once accused you of always playing 'with a cherry on top'. This was not meant in a positive way, but you kind of like the idea of always adding a little extra to your performance.

Your career

You began your stage career as a dancer and singer, but through your participation in various musicals, you started getting more and more speaking parts. This is very motivating and you have started to attend acting workshops to refine your technique. In this cast, you are one of the only actors who are used to getting paid for your work. Unfortunately, this only goes for parts in musicals and you dream about making it in the serious, artistic acting world. With Plexiglass, that dream is within reach.

Your method

You take direction and show the most important aspects of your character. Your playing style is large and expressive.

Relationships

This is your first serious rehearsal period working with your boyfriend Mikkel. You met Mikkel a year ago when you were both cast in small roles in a comedy playing at The New Theatre. This is exciting. You always get very emotionally invested in your work and you are a little afraid of working with Mikkel. When you have professional discussions, it is unclear whether he really disagrees with you or he is just arguing to win. At the same time, you have been fantasising about Alex. You and him were flirting a lot at an improv workshop not too long ago.

Even though you are very sure of your own acting abilities, you are nervous about being overlooked or rejected. Directors can be so unpredictable. When competing to get a role, you don't mind bullying your rivals and doing whatever you can to shake their confidence. Clearly, your career is much more important than casual friendships.

Edvard Fehmerling

You do not know a whole lot about the director Edvard Fehmerling, but he is definitely the talk of the town in the theatre world right now. Your friends say that you are very fortunate to have been invited to work with him without even going to an initial audition.

Roleplaying tips

Get provoked

Let yourself get provoked by the others' methods or artistic opinions. Especially, if you disagree with Mikkel.

Overact

Overact in all scenes. You have no shame!

Criticise

Be ruthless when criticising the others. Especially Johanne.

Flirt with Alex

Flirt with Alex by commending him on his performance. Look him straight in the eye. Make sure to touch him a lot.



PLEXIGLASS

— A play about isolation and alienation

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ROLES

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2.2 THE DILEMMA

X is offered a big opportunity that may end up hurting Y.

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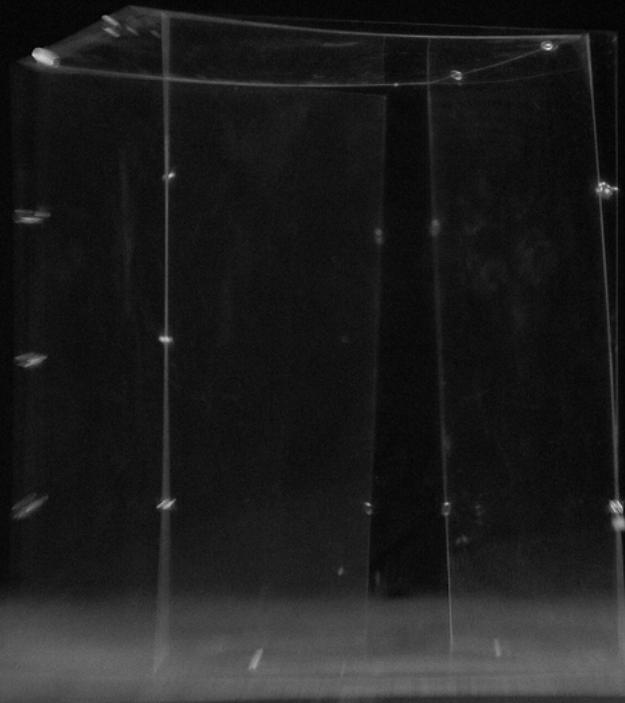
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3.3 DEATH

Y commits suicide. X tries to save him, but it is too late.

Plexiglas



Mikkel

Plexiglass

Dear player

Welcome to Plexiglass.

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The director is yet to reach a conclusion regarding the final cast. During the rehearsals, it is your mission to excel in a way that makes him choose you as the main character. More specifically, you must get the director Edward Fehmerling to pick you to play the character Y.

Enjoy!

Morten Jaeger

MIKKEL - THE SMARTASS

People have always admired your intelligence. As a kid, the admiration mostly took the form of other kids teasing you, but you have always enjoyed being brighter than most of your peers. As long as you can remember, you were always the one to win arguments or to come up with the best ideas. When it comes to knowledge, you are insatiable and you can relate almost any idea or meme to canonical works.

When you were younger, you were a nerdy, annoying Mr. Know It All, but over the years, you have become more aware of other people's feelings. You often find yourself taking a fatherly role helping and supporting others. However, you are also an alpha dog and nobody challenges you without getting crushed. Sometimes you end up having long stupid discussions were you argue just for the sake of arguing.

You are very good at identifying what works and what doesn't work in scripts as well as on stage. You don't shy away from sharing your ideas or giving a director a good piece of advice. As an actor, you are good at taking concrete, physical directions, but you have a hard time dealing with diffuse artistic experimentation and unfamiliar or uncomfortable roles and exercises.

Your career

Five years ago, you graduated from The Danish National School of Performing Arts. Your controlled manner and authoritative charisma have helped you book several roles as kings, fathers, councillors and the likes. It has been a long time since you last had a character who were supposed to be silly, freak out or show grand emotions. You are starting to doubt whether you can still pull things like that off. However, you are ready to take on the challenge and finally book a big leading part. You see great potential in Plexiglass and the competition doesn't scare you. Now is your chance to break through!

Your method

To understand the director's vision for how the character should contribute to the play.

Relationships

This is your first serious rehearsal period working with your girlfriend Curly. You met Curly a year ago when you were both cast in small roles in a comedy playing at The New Theatre. This is exciting. Curly is quite immature and she has some weird ideas about how the world works, but you love her passion and bubbly personality. Even though actors are notorious cheaters, you have never cheated on her and you are convinced that she is faithful, too. Just the thought of being betrayed like that creeps you out.

You don't know much about the others in the cast, but you have been to a few rehearsals with Robin and you are not impressed. Johanne went to the same school as you, but in a different class. She is quite good. You have never tried playing with her, but you always feel more comfortable working with classically trained actors.

Edvard Fehmerling

You do not know a whole lot about the director Edvard Fehmerling, but he is definitely the talk of the town in the theatre world right now. Your friends say that you are very fortunate to have been invited to work with him without even going to an initial audition.

Roleplaying tips**Come up with ideas**

Keep coming up with ideas and suggestions.

Argue

Engage in arguments.

Argue in a condescending manner.

Use references

Keep dropping references to new and old works.

Avoid the uncomfortable

Talk your way out of weird exercises. Try to get to play scenes with Johanne. Use long intricate arguments to build your case.



PLEXIGLASS

– A play about isolation and alienation

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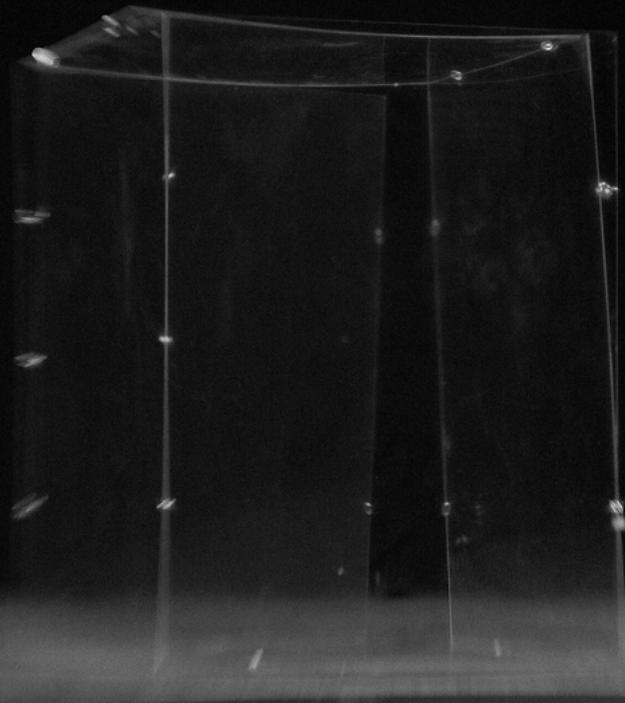
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Plexiglas



Robin

Plexiglass

Dear player

Welcome to Plexiglass.

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Enjoy!

Morten Jaeger

ROBIN - THE REBEL

You don't see the world in the same way other people do. People are way too quick to seek consensus about the right way of doing things. All too often, their agreements are based on habitual thinking. This happens within society's distribution of goods, gender roles and critics' conservative attempts to always interpret everything in relation to old classics. You hate how bourgeoisie interest in art is just a banal expression of social distinction. You feel that, as an artist, it is your calling to challenge habitual thinking and the idea of formation in general.

You are aware that most people find you annoying. However, you get energised from dealing with your key issues and you are always ready to criticise when other performers drift into 'autopilot' mode.

As an actor, you still lack experience, but you know that you have a huge natural talent. You are good at improvisation, both when it comes to text/lines and movements. Your best assets are your undeniable charisma and your ability to be present in the moment. You and your audience's reactions become one. If a scene works for you, you are convinced it also works for the audience. However, you are not good at taking direction. Even small physical corrections take too much of your mental capacity and you lose part of your presence. Also, you are not good at identifying what directors are really trying to achieve when they direct you.

Your career

You are still quite unknown in Copenhagen. When you were younger, you were part of an alternative performance group that travelled across Europe doing street performances. After a couple of years on the road, you decided to develop your talent and try to make it as a professional actor. So far you have in no way achieved the kind of success your talent entitles you to. The scene in Copenhagen is massively nepotistic. Even getting invited to a bloody audition takes great efforts and hours of networking. However, with Plexiglass you have a unique shot at proving your worth!

Your method

To get in a state of intense presence and respond to any situation in a natural way, just like your character would do.

Relationships

You do not know much about the other members of the cast, but you have been to a couple of rehearsals with Mikkel and Johanne and seen some of their performances. You are not impressed with Mikkel and you have no idea why he keeps getting cast in various plays. Johanne, however, possesses a form of 'realness' you rarely see in a classically trained actor.

You are wise enough to know that you need allies to make it. If you can find just one person with whom you can work relatively well, you are destined to excel. Johanne is the obvious choice... that is if you can stand her personality.

Edvard Fehmerling

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Roleplaying tips**Challenge people**

Always be ready to challenge the others. Especially Mikkel and Curly. Everything they do is a big cliché and they should know it.

Be stubborn

When you enter into an argument, keep insisting on being right. You can easily keep insisting on trying a certain method even if it keeps failing. And if you must surrender, you never surrender completely ("Okay, whatever. Let's just do it your way then...").

Be sceptical

Be sceptical about everything conventional, traditional or popular.

Build alliances

Try to build alliances, and don't be afraid to be obvious about it. You prefer winning to being popular.



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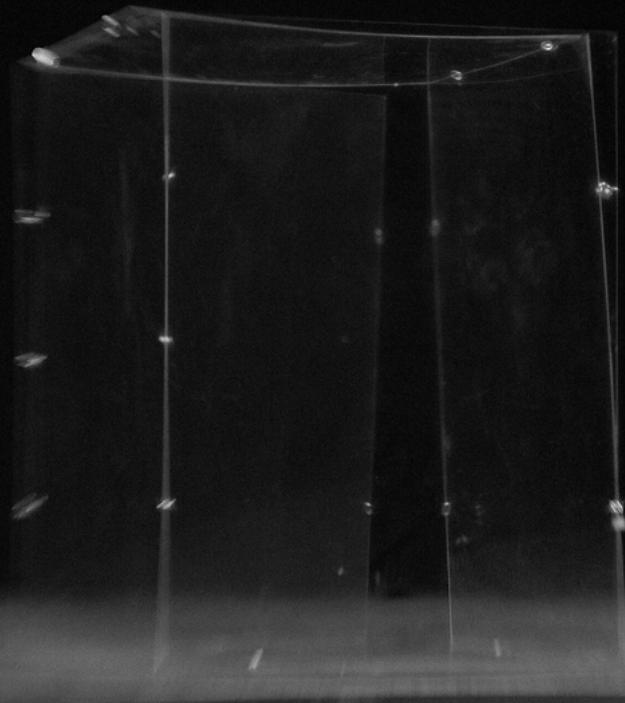
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Plexiglas



Johanne

Plexiglass

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Welcome to Plexiglass.

Over the course of the next few hours, you are to play one of five chosen actors who are participating in an intense three-day rehearsal period preparing for the premiere of the play Plexiglass.

The director is yet to reach a conclusion regarding the final cast. During the rehearsals, it is your mission to excel in a way that makes him choose you as the main character. More specifically, you must get the director Edward Fehmerling to pick you to play the character Y.

Enjoy!

Morten Jaeger

JOHANNE - THE IMMERSIONIST

Most people are genuinely surprised when you tell them that you are an actress. Actors are always expected to seek the spotlight. The cliché explanation is that they didn't get enough attention as a child and they spend the rest of their lives making up for it. This is probably true for many actors, but it has nothing to do with you.

As a private person, you never actively seek attention. This is rarely a problem. Most of the people you know prefer a good listener to yet another sob story or lecture in subject of 'the world according to what's-her-face'. However, it happens that you let your temper and emotions get the better of you. This happens when people waste your time sharing their half-baked ideas and convictions in endless, annoying discussions. Other times, you get carried away and surrender yourself to a positive mood, break into tears and let everyone know how much you love them.

You have always loved the theatre and its ability to trigger deep immersion for actors as well as audiences. You still remember your first performance. It was in a school play many years ago. It was here you first discovered your talent for completely immersing into a character. After that, you were cast in several roles as a child actor. In the beginning, you relied solely on your ability to immerse, but along the way, you started learning different techniques.

You are always very thorough. You read the script several times and spend hours clarifying your character's motivation and patterns of behaviour. When you are on stage and everything is thoroughly worked out, you can act naturally and get into character without even noticing the audience. However, you are not good at improvising unless you have had the chance to prepare yourself and truly understand the premise of the improvisation.

Your career

Your years as a child and teenage actor were followed by five years at the Danish National School of Performing Arts. Here you had your first share of defeat. The directors confronted you with statements such as "Input does not equal output. Immersion does not equal expression". These episodes spawned a small but significant feeling of insecurity and you are always unsure of how the audience sees you.

On the positive side, the school has provided you with a good network and you don't have to work very hard to book parts in professional productions. But it has been a long time since you last had a leading role. Maybe it is the insecurity. You hope that Plexiglass can turn this around.

Your method

To identify your character's motivation, immerse deeply, and base your acting on that fundamental state of being.

Relationships

You don't know much about the others in the cast. Mikkel went to the same school as you, but in a different class. You have only seen him in a couple of performances and he always seems to end up playing the same stiff, emotionless characters.

You have also seen Alex perform a couple of times. There is something uninhibited and natural about his presence. You are anxious to get to know him, both as an actor and as a person.

Then there is Robin. You once went to an audition together. He is quite talented, but he really needs to fix his attitude. You would like to offer him some advice. It hurts to see a talent like that go to waste.

Edvard Fehmerling

You do not know a whole lot about the director Edvard Fehmerling, but he is definitely the talk of the town in the theatre world right now. Your friends say that you are very fortunate to have been invited to work with him without even going to an initial audition.

Roleplaying tips**Ask about your motivation**

Always ask questions about your character's motivation. Challenge the director. Has he even given thought to what your character's motivation is?

Doubt yourself

Be unsure of yourself and your own performance ("was I okay in this scene?").

Ask for more time

You never feel completely prepared. You can always use a bit more time or clearer direction.

Show interest in Alex

Show an eager interest in Alex. You are into his acting, but you are also curious about his personality and emotional state.



PLEXIGLASS

– A play about isolation and alienation

PITCH

Two youngsters move to The Big City to find happiness. In their pursuit of career opportunities, love and freedom, they must adapt to the lifestyles of The Big City. However, adapting is in conflict with their personal values, and the adaptation itself ends up getting in the way of real human connection.

ROLES

Y (here described as a man. Can be played by both genders.)

Y is young and ambitious. He has left his hometown and moved to The Big City to pursue a business career. He wants to make his family proud and show that he is strong and independent. He is used to keeping family and friends close and he is afraid that he will be lonely in the city. He hopes to find someone who will love and support him.

During the first act, he gets a job as a sales representative at a large producer of plexiglass.

Ambition: To make it in the business world. Success is measured in material wealth.

X (here described as a woman. Can be played by both genders.)

X is young and idealistic. She has lived in The Big City for a little more than a month. She is still struggling to make it as a journalist. She believes she can serve a higher purpose and make the world a better place. However, she finds it difficult to commit fully to her calling as she is easily distracted by mundane goals and benefits such as money, love and security.

Ambition: To tell the truth. To expose hidden truths and make offenders accountable for their actions.

1st ACT

1.1 THE FIRST MEETING

X and Y meet for the first time on the train to The Big City. X has moved there one month ago. She is now on her way home after a trip out of town. Y arrives for the first time with his big suitcase.

1.2 I BELIEVE IN YOU

X and Y talk about their current challenges. They promise to trust and support each other.

1.3 ONE OF US

A colleague offers Y a quick way to success. This marks his entrance into a new tribe/community.

2nd ACT

2.1 THE TEST

Y's colleague asks for a questionable favour. It is clear that he does not take "no" for an answer. Y chooses to help his colleague.

2.2 THE DILEMMA

X is offered a big opportunity that may end up hurting Y.

2.3 CHAOS SCENE

Five archetypes talk over each other. There is no real conversation.

3rd ACT

3.1 THE BREAKUP

X finds out what Y has done. This leads to a confrontation and their final breakup.

3.2 BROKEN

Y tries to pull out of the deal with his colleague, but there is no mercy. Y breaks.

3.3 DEATH

Y commits suicide. X tries to save him, but it is too late.