

PLAY #28 THE LEAP

by

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## CHARACTERS

MR. JONES	An aging British fight director.
EAGAN	An American actor.
GRETZ	An American actor.

## THE LEAP

(At Rise: MR. JONES is trying to show EAGAN and GRETZ the moves. Both EAGAN and GRETZ carry swords.)

MR. JONES

How good are you at leaping? Because I was thinking what I'd like to have you do in this scene... is you Eagan draw your sword and take a flying leap toward Gretz. Gretz will simply move aside. Eagan will land, tumble. You'll come up facing Gretz, who will have by this time presumably drawn his sword, ready for more action. How does that sound?

GRETZ

That sounds totally doable.

EAGAN

Yeah. Sure. I mean I'm not sure I've actually leapt that way before with a sword in my hand and all.

MR. JONES

But you've done stage fighting. I believe I saw that in your resumé?

EAGAN

Oh yes. Of course. And I have a sense of what you have in mind.

MR. JONES

Good. Well, let's begin with a simple break fall. For exercise.

GRETZ

Sure. Shall I go first?

MR. JONES

Genius. Gretz first. Then switch. (Pause.) Place your hands on his shoulders.

(GRETZ puts his hands on EAGAN's shoulders.)

GRETZ

Like this?

MR. JONES

Precisely. And...?

EAGAN

What's he gonna do?

(GRETZ takes EAGAN down. EAGAN gets up  
and GRETZ takes him down again.)

Wait a minute! What are we doing?

MR. JONES

It's a break fall! A break fall, Eagan.

EAGAN

I got that. But...

(EAGAN tries to get up and GRETZ takes  
him down again.)

I thought we were gonna switch.

MR. JONES

Just remember to fall simply, Eagan. You're so tight.  
Muscles lose. Flopsy all the way to the ground.  
Otherwise we'll have an injury on our hands.

(EAGAN gets up. GRETZ drops him again.)

Have we had quite enough?

GRETZ

He's easy to take down.

MR. JONES

That's what worries me. I'm concerned about your leap.  
That you'll have enough projection and follow through  
to jettison yourself into a tumble.

EAGAN

I think... with enough practice...

MR. JONES

Alright. Let's continue then.

GRETZ

You put your hands on my shoulders. And your leg...

EAGAN

I know. I know how to do this.

(EAGAN tries to take down GRETZ, but  
GRETZ puts him in a headlock.)

MR. JONES

Nice move, Gretz! Very believable. We may have to use that.

EAGAN

Release please.

(GRETZ lets him go.)

Do we need a safe word or something? I thought it was my break fall.

MR. JONES

Well, do it then! It's what we're waiting for.

EAGAN

He didn't let me.

MR. JONES

If he let's you... Eagan... It's not going to be *believable*. Have you had any stage fighting?

EAGAN

I have my advanced certificate.

MR. JONES

Not from me you don't!

EAGAN

From the Society of American Fight Directors.

MR. JONES

Yes. It's quite clearly the American version.

GRETZ

I studied with Mr. Jones here.

EAGAN

I can see that.

GRETZ

I highly recommend him.

MR. JONES

Well, Gretz, we'll work with what we've got. The clock is ticking away. Shall we start in on the leap?

EAGAN

I think I need maybe a little more warm up.

MR. JONES

What sort of warm-up would you like?

(EAGAN takes GRETZ down.)

EAGAN

How about a simple break fall?

(EAGAN elbows GRETZ's back, which  
knocks him to the floor.)

And the old elbow to the back.

(GRETZ tries to get up. EAGAN takes him  
in a headlock.)

I guess I sort of stole that move from him. But how  
about this?

(EAGAN kicks him in the crotch from  
behind. GRETZ doubles over in pain.)

MR. JONES

That was not very nice!

EAGAN

It was believable.

MR. JONES

What have you done?

(MR. JONES puts his arm around GRETZ.)

Are you alright, dear boy? Do we need to get you to a  
doctor? The director will have my head!

(GRETZ stands up.)

GRETZ

Ah-HAH! Had you fooled there! It looked real, didn't  
it? Fuckin' A!

(He high fives EAGAN.)

How's that for instant rapport? Partner?

MR. JONES

Alright. Alright now. Very good, boys.

EAGAN

I think I'm ready for the leap.

GRETZ

Let's do it.

MR. JONES

Alright then. We'll proceed. We'll have Eagan here.  
And Gretz here.

EAGAN

Now. You want me to leap through the air from here to there.

MR. JONES

You'll draw your sword.

EAGAN

Yes.

(He draws his sword.)

MR. JONES

Like you mean it, Eagan!

EAGAN

Like I mean it?

MR. JONES

With your sword pointing up! Not down! You look impotent that way.

EAGAN

Sorry.

(He redraws his sword.)

MR. JONES

That's it! With potency. Now you take flight.

EAGAN

Take flight.

MR. JONES

With enough force and loft to land you into a roll just past him.

EAGAN

Just past him.

MR. JONES

Say. Here.

(He marks the spot.)

GRETZ

And I...

MR. JONES

You'll move aside.

GRETZ

Like this?

(He moves aside. And moves back.)

MR. JONES

Precisely.

(GRETZ moves aside and back again.)

GRETZ

Piece of cake.

EAGAN

It's a running jump, then.

MR. JONES

A few steps.

EAGAN

Only a few? I'm not Houdini, Mr. Jones.

MR. JONES

Ah, yes... One of my students, the great Houdini.

EAGAN

Surely not...

MR. JONES

Talk about a master of the leap of faith. Stupendous he was...

GRETZ

It's true.

MR. JONES

Now I know your training, Eagan... In America... May have been somewhat lacking.

EAGAN

Okay. This leap. Can you please demonstrate?

MR. JONES

Demonstrate? Do I look like I'm capable of leaping, dear boy? If I could, I'd play the role myself. If I were your age--

GRETZ

Piece of cake. He could have done it. No problem.



EAGAN

You've done this move before?

MR. JONES

Of course. Many times.

EAGAN

Maybe you can show me how you land and propel yourself into a tumble.

MR. JONES

I suppose I could show you that part of it.

GRETZ

We could help get you started.

MR. JONES

That's it. Both of you hold me from either side.

GRETZ

Right here?

EAGAN

I'm not so sure about this.

MR. JONES

I'm trying to help you. For crying out loud! Do as I say.

(GRETZ and EAGAN lift MR. JONES from both sides.)

Okay then. On three.

EAGAN

Maybe we should start further center.

MR. JONES

Proceed, Eagan! One... Two... Three!!

(They drop him not far from where they are.)

GRETZ

Sorry, Mr. Jones.

MR. JONES

That's not enough propulsion to forward roll! Clearly we're not ready for the leap. Let's practice the sword fight that follows.

GRETZ

We could easily do that.

MR. JONES

Alright, then. En garde.

(GRETZ and EAGAN draw their swords.

They follow his direction.)

Proceed. Advance. Parry. Passado. Advance. Parry. Stacatta. Staccata. Advance. Parry. Imbrocatta. No! Eagan! The forte! The forte! Let me show you. Give me your sword.

(EAGAN gives MR. JONES his sword.)

Like this, uh-huh? Not like that.

(MR. JONES gives him back his sword.)

And! Advance. Advance. Advance. And... Patinando.

(GRETZ lunges. EAGAN drops to the floor.)

No no!

EAGAN

What's the problem?

MR. JONES

Too quick!

EAGAN

Too quick?

MR. JONES

The death! No one dies that quickly from a mortal sword wound. Once you've been run through, you must take your time with your death. Give me your sword.

(EAGAN gives JONES his sword. JONES opposes GRETZ.)

Proceed. Advance. Parry. Advance. Advance. Good. Good. Advance. Advance.

(MR. JONES is being walked backward with every "Advance". He heroically jumps on to a chair near the wing.)

And! Patinando.

(GRETZ lunges. The chair goes over. MR. JONES falls backwards into the wings. Huge crash. Things breaking. Silence. GRETZ runs offstage.)

GRETZ

Mr. Jones?!

(Pause. GRETZ returns.)

EAGAN

Is he okay?

GRETZ

He's not moving!

EAGAN

Seriously?!

GRETZ

He might be...

EAGAN

What? He might be what?

GRETZ

We'd better call an ambulance!

EAGAN

Did you run him through?

GRETZ

It's a stage sword!

EAGAN

Right! No point.

(There's a sound of moving pieces  
hitting the floor.)

What's that?

GRETZ

Mr. Jones?

(MR. JONES emerges, brushing himself  
off.)

MR. JONES

The lights must have gone out for a moment there.  
Touché, boys... Well done! Brilliant! The table back  
there is history. But just a rehearsal table. No  
worries. I'm wondering, however. Perhaps we could work  
that into the sequence. What do you think?

(GRETZ and EAGAN shrug.)

Anyhow... first things first. The clock is ticking,  
boys. Shall we try again? The leap. From the top.

BLACKOUT

END OF PLAY