
Slapping Jonathan

A New One-Act Play
by
Andreas Fecker

Production notes and suggestions are provided immediately following the script.
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CAST:

Director
Annie
Jonathan
2 Cameramen
Sound master
Microphone man
2 lighting operators
Make-up Girl
Script Girl
Clara, Jonathan's wife

Scene: A film-set, showing a Bavarian living room.

On stage: The director, two cameras, Camera ONE operated by a male, Camera TWO operated by a female, the sound master, the boom operator with a gallows mike, the two lighting operators, and the script girl.

In the scene: Annie, an aspiring young actress about 30 years old. Annie moonlights as a waitress in a local German restaurant as she breaks into the biz.

Jonathan, 36 years old, more accomplished than Annie but still fresh enough to not quite know all the right moves.

At rise the Director is leafing through his Script.

Director: "Alright. This is the scene where Annie slaps Jonathan. Jonathan, you are angry over Annie's obsessive jealousy. Do you have the script?"

Jonathan: "Yes. I say: The last thing I need is your jealousy. If you're going through the roof every time I mention that girl, you shouldn't be surprised if she ends up with a fur coat."

Director: "Good. Remember, you've got to get that across. You are upset and angry. You want to hurt her. You want to push her beyond her limits. And Annie, you must explode. You take a step towards him and slap his face, using your left hand on his right cheek. You have the script?"

Annie: "'You jerk!' And bang! I slap his face. Sorry, Jonathan, -- of course I won't say that then. Then I say, 'stop screwing around with that tart, or you won't see me again'."

Jonathan: "Would you like to give that a dry run?"

Director: "I think it'll be better if we shoot this right away. Spontaneity is always better."

Jonathan: "I want to scare the hell out of her. She should really smack me one. It should explode on my cheek. It must look good. Real."

Annie: "Jonathan is right. I've never struck a man in my entire life, much less slapped his face."

Director: "Okay, okay. Let's do the dry run, but with the script."

Jonathan: (*shouting*) "The last thing I need is your jealousy. If you're going through the roof every time I mention that girl, you shouldn't be surprised if she ends up with a fur coat."

Annie: "You jerk!"

She swings wide and hard, hitting his cheek with a loud smacking sound. Silence. Jonathan holds his cheek and tries a smile.

Jonathan: "That was good. Ouch, that was very good. Are you sure you didn't have some practice on that?"

Annie: "I'm sorry, Jonathan, I am **really** sorry. I used to work the Oktoberfest carrying beer steins. That builds some strength in your arms. Are you sure it wasn't too strong?"

Director: "No, that was absolutely perfect. Were cameras rolling on that shot?"

Camera ONE and Camera TWO shake their heads.

Jonathan: "Pity. Okay, let's do it."

Director: "Camera ONE?"

Camera ONE "Rolling."

Director: "Camera TWO?"

Camera TWO: "Rolling."

Director: "Sound."

Sound: "Ready."

Director: "Slate."

Script girl: "Slapping Jonathan, Take **ONE**." *The slate goes off.*

Jonathan: (*shouts*) "The last thing I need is your jealousy. If you're going through the roof every time I mention that girl, you shouldn't be surprised if she ends up with a fur coat."

Annie: "You jerk!"

She takes a step towards him and slaps his face as hard as she can, harder than the first time.

Annie: (*Shouting*) "Stop screwing around with that tart or you won't see me again."

Camera ONE: "OUT."

Director: "What! Since when does the camera man cut a scene?"

Camera ONE: "Annie blocked my shot when she stepped into Jonathan. Either they need to change their blocking, or I'll have to move."

Jonathan is holding his cheek. Annie looks at him regretfully.

Annie: "Does it hurt?"

Jonathan is wounded but still proud.

Jonathan: "Not a bit."

Director: "Annie, move a foot to your right. Camera ONE, one foot to your left. Camera TWO, I want you to shoot from Annie's left, medium close-up. We'll be taking the better shot. Ready?"

Jonathan: *(bravely)* "Yes."

Director: "Camera ONE?"

Camera ONE "Rolling."

Director: "Camera TWO?"

Camera TWO: "Rolling."

Director: "Sound."

Sound: "Ready."

Director: "Slate."

Script girl: "Slapping Jonathan, take **TWO**." *The slate goes off.*

Jonathan: "The last thing I need is your jealousy. If you're going through the roof every time I mention that girl, you shouldn't be surprised if she ends up with a fur coat."

Annie: "You jerk!"

She takes the step and hits him with all her might.

Annie: *(yelling)* "Keep screwing around with that tart, and you won't see me again."

Camera ONE: "OUT!"

Director: "What the hell!"

Camera ONE: "The microphone is in the shot."

Director: (*yells to the microphone operator*) "Amateur!"

Jonathan holds his cheek. Annie embraces him, consoling him inaudibly. Jonathan pushes her away and holds his cheek with both hands. He licks his palm and rubs his reddening skin.

Director: "Ready?"

Jonathan: "If we must."

Director: "Camera ONE?"

Camera ONE "Rolling."

Director: "Camera TWO?"

Camera TWO: "Rolling."

Director: "Sound."

Sound: "Ready."

Director: "Slate."

Script girl: "Slapping Jonathan take **THREE.**" *The slate goes off.*

Jonathan: "The last thing I need is your jealousy. If you're going through the roof every time I mention that girl, you shouldn't be surprised if she ends up with a fur coat."

Annie: "You jerk!"

She hits him again, but Jonathan ducks away a bit and screams:

Jonathan: "Aaauuuuuuu! Not in my eye, you stupid bitch!"

Annie: (*shouts*) "Sorry!"

Director: "OUT! Annie! Now you've slapped him three times in a row..."

Jonathan: (*indignant*) "Four times!"

Director: "...okay. Do you think you can do it one more time? Annie, if something goes wrong, stick to the frigging script. If you hadn't said you were sorry the moment you slapped his face, we could have used that take.

" Ready, Camera ONE." Camera ONE?"

Camera ONE "Rolling."

Director: "Camera TWO?"

Camera TWO: "Rolling."

Director: "Sound."

Sound: "Ready."

Director: "Slate."

Script girl: "Slapping Jonathan, Take **FOUR.**" *The slate goes off.*

Jonathan: "If you're going through the roof every time I buy you a fur coat, you shouldn't be surprised if you never end up with one."

Annie: "I am s o r r y!"

She takes the step and hits him, but not quite as forcefully as before.

Annie: (*Shouts*) "Keep screwing your stupid fur coat and you won't ever see that girl again!"

Director: "OUT."

Jonathan: "What the hell..."

Director: "YEAH, WHAT THE HELL! What the hell is this dialogue? Would you just stick to the script?"

Annie: "I forgot my lines!"

Jonathan: "You could have thought of that **before** you slapped my face, NOW COULDN'T YOU!"

Director: "You BOTH were babbling bullshit. Where in the script does it say anything about Jonathan screwing his "stupid fur coat?" The entire scene makes no sense that way. Jonathan says: 'The last thing I need is your jealousy. If you're going through the roof every time I mention that girl, you shouldn't be surprised if she ends up with a fur coat' and Annie says: 'You jerk! Keep screwing around with that tart, and you won't see me again.' Two stupid lines! For each of you! And a stupid slap in-between. What's so hard about that?"

Jonathan: (*furious*) "What's so hard about it! She hits me like a blacksmith! Do you know how that feels?"

(*and to Annie*) "Go ahead, Annie, let HIM feel it! Go ahead and slap HIS face!"

Director: (*sweetly*) "Jonathan. Pull yourself together. I'll give you an extra 100 Bucks for this take, but let's get it done.

Listen, do you know the story of old Captain Stortebecker, the pirate? When he and his crew were captured and tried, the verdict was immediate death by decapitation. But Stortebecker made a deal with his prosecutors: To save as much of his crew as he could, he offered to line them up and run past them -- after his head had been cut off. Each man he was able to run past headlessly was to be spared. Well, he ran 50 meters. On willpower alone, and he saved them all.

Jonathan: "I don't care about Stortebecker. He didn't have much to look forward to, after that little jog. But I wanna live and shoot a couple of movies more."

Director: (*yelling*) "Then pull yourself together! Camera ONE?"

"Camera ONE!"

Camera ONE "Rolling."

Director: "Camera TWO?"

Camera TWO: "Rolling."

Director: "Sound."

Sound: "Ready."

Director: "Slate."

Script girl: "Slapping Jonathan, Take **FIVE.**" *The slate goes off.*

Jonathan: (*screaming*) "The last thing I need is your jealousy. If you're going through the roof every time I mention that girl, you shouldn't be surprised if she ends up with a fur coat."

Annie: "You jerk!"

She takes the step and hits him, hesitatingly, not wanting to really hurt him anymore than necessary. The slap is much too tame for the director.

Annie: (*yells*) "Keep screwing around with that tart ..."

Director: "OUT"

Jonathan storms toward the director, the sound master holds him back.

Jonathan: "What the f...!"

Director: (*sternly*) "Annie, this is no love scene. This is serious. You are not supposed to STROKE him! You must HIT and HIT HIM HARD!"

Jonathan tries to break loose and charge toward the director but the sound master holds on tight.

Director: "I once had to shoot a scene where a cat goes after a dog. Have **you** ever had to work with animals? No? Well don't! But that scene didn't take me half as long as this silly scene with a slap in the face."

Director: "Camera ONE?"

Camera ONE "Rolling."

Director: "Camera TWO?"

Camera TWO: "Rolling."

Director: "Sound."

Sound: "Ready."

Director: "Slate."

Script girl: "Slapping Jonathan take **SIX.**" *The slate goes off.*

Jonathan: "I refuse."

Director: (incredulous) "What?"

Jonathan: "I won't do it! I am fed up to the teeth. Literally."

His hands are probing his jaw, feeling his teeth.

Annie: "Can't we change the script?"

Jonathan: "YES! Let's change it so I beat up the director. What a terrific idea!"

Camera ONE breaks out in laughter, which makes Jonathan furious.

Jonathan: "What are you laughing at, you stupid son-of-a-bitch! I'll bet you haven't had your face slapped in a good, long time, have you! How about me taking the camera and filming you getting whacked?"

The Director now runs toward Jonathan, shouting:

Director: "What's going on here -- a mutiny? God damn it, it's an easy scene! The slate goes off, Jonathan says his lines, you slap his face and say your lines. What's the problem?"
Watch.

Saying that he turns around to Jonathan and slaps his face.

Director: "Just like that. 6 seconds! And we're screwing around here for fifteen minutes!"

While the director rumbles along Jonathan sinks howling on his knees.

Jonathan: "ICE! I need a bag of ice! Does anyone have some ice!"

Director (to the Script girl) "Go to the kitchen and find some ice."

(*then to Jonathan*) "The ice is coming. Now tell me; what do we have to do to finish that take?"

Jonathan: "I want a stand-in."

Director: "You leave me speechless!"

Jonathan: "Clint Eastwood has a stand-in!"

Director: "Clint Eastwood wouldn't be in a silly play like this. I can't believe what I'm hearing! I'm dealing with beginners and this one thinks he's Clint Eastwood."

Jonathan: "My contract doesn't say that I have to let myself be killed or mutilated..."

Director: "Stortebecker ..."

Jonathan: "Here he comes again with Stortebecker! We're in the wrong movie!"

Annie: "My left hand hurts."

Jonathan: "Did you all hear that? Her hand hurts! I am moved to tears! I suppose pretty soon I'll have to apologize to her!"

Annie: "Maybe we should change sides. Can't I slap the other side of his face? I don't think it's healthy to keep hitting the same side over and over again!"

Jonathan: (*dripping with sarcasm*) "Oh Annie, such compassion, you've touched my heart. You're concerned about my health and well-being! About my balance. You're right, my right half feels somewhat heavier than my left. It feels swollen, furry, numb. It's about time for us to work on my other side some."

Annie: "I'm only thinking of your best interest."

The Script girl brings the ice and passes it to Jonathan.

Jonathan: "Why don't you try to get a role next door in the ladies wrestling show! You ought to hit it big time there! This is like being kicked in the face by a mule, you jackass!"

Annie: "Now you've gone too far!"

She slaps his face as hard as she can. The blow comes as Jonathan is placing the ice cubes into the bag. On reflex, he wants to hit her back but suppresses this and hurls the ice bag forcefully to the floor instead.

Jonathan: "That's it. That's all. It's over. You all can kiss my ass. I quit. You can't do that to me! NOBODY can do that to me! I am working with hypocrites. None of you people care about me. All of you are hypocrites!

He throws an angry glance at the man with the microphone.

Jonathan: "If that asshole could have kept the boom out of the shot, we could have had that take. If the cameraman had set up the right angle, we could have used **that** take too. If this stupid cow hadn't messed up her lines, we'd be done. If, if, if... Now I'm done! See, my teeth are loose already!"

Director: "Annie, Jonathan! Let's take a break. This is getting out of control."

Jonathan: "I don't need a break. I'll sue this company for cruelty on the set. I quit. I leave. I do not need this soap opera crap!"

Director: "Jonathan, this isn't a soap. I'll increase your salary."

Jonathan: "Ahhhhhhhhh. Do I hear...double"?"

Director: "Sure, sure, double. But only if everyone calms down and if we get this scene within the next 6 or 8 hours!"

Jonathan: "SIX HOURS!!!! Let me figure that out, that's going to be about 85 slaps in the face! No thanks!"

Annie is laughing out loud.

Jonathan: "Would you please explain to me, what *I* have to laugh about?"

Director: "Annie, you apologize to Jonathan immediately."

Annie: "Apologize? For what? I'm playing what's written in the script. And if he calls me a jackass again, he's earned an

appropriate response. That last one came from the bottom of my heart. Let me tell you that.“

Director: "We can't work like this. I want everyone at his place for the scene. I want everyone to concentrate. This may be our last chance to get the scene..."

Lighting operator TWO: "His right eye is swelling shut. We should try to hurry.“

Jonathan: "I want a mirror. Can somebody bring me a mirror?“

Director: (thundering) "No! We'll change the angle. Jonathan, forget about the mirror. Don't do that to yourself. Think about your double salary.“

Sound Master: "Somehow Jonathan's voice has changed, too. It sounds a little - blurry.“

Jonathan: "Sounds blurry? I'd love to hear your voice after massaging your face for an hour and a half! See? You people don't care. I'm going to the bathroom to find a mirror.“

Jonathan leaves the set.

Lighting operator ONE: That's gonna cost money!“

There is an outcry from OFFSTAGE. Jonathan storms onto the set.

Jonathan: "I'll bring the entire studio to the highest court in the land! This is a blow against human rights! No, make-up won't help me anymore. What I need is plastic surgery!“

Director: "Or a triple salary?“

Jonathan: "What use is all the money if I have to be fed intravenously for the rest of my life? Have you seen my face? Of course you have. And you don't give a shit! This will never, ever return to normal! YOU have RUINED my FACE! And you damn well know it, besides which, I can barely speak with all the swelling.“

Director: (cold) "We still have the sound from the earlier takes. We can mix in replacing the voices later. So the voice isn't that important anymore. I want the lights to be changed so

Jonathan's right half is in the shadow. Camera ONE shoots from the opposite side."

Jonathan: "See? You don't give a damn about me. I want a thousand dollars for that take."

Director: "Fine! I'll talk to the producer. Can we get on with it?"

Jonathan: "For the very last time. And for the triple salary."

Director: "Granted."

Annie: "And me? My hand is sprained. I want double salary."

Jonathan: "You'll be lucky if I don't sue you for ruining my face, not to mention my career! Who'd want to hire an actor with a face like this? I'm sure *Phantom of the Opera* has already been cast!"

Director: "Can we?"

Director: "Camera ONE?"

Camera ONE "Rolling."

Director: "Camera TWO?"

Camera TWO: "Rolling."

Director: "Sound?"

Sound: "Ready."

Director: "Slate."

Script girl: "Slapping Jonathan, Take **SEVEN.**" *The slate goes off.*

Jonathan: (to Annie) "I'm warning you."

Director: "Go. GO. GO!"

Jonathan: (*threatening*) "The last thing I need is your jealousy. And if you hit me hard again you shouldn't be surprised if she ends up with a fur coat."

Annie: "You jerk!"

She takes the step and hits him, well placed, medium strength. Jonathan screams, turns around and holds his cheek. Annie turns around as well and holds her wrist.

Annie: (screams) "I have broken my hand!"

The lighting operators head towards Annie and inspect her hand.

Director: "OUT! Camera ONE, you got it?"

Camera ONE: "Perfect."

Director: "Camera TWO?"

Camera TWO: "Yessss."

Director: "Sound, can we dub it with the earlier takes?"

Sound Master: "Of course."

Lighting operator TWO glances at the director and shakes his head:
"Sprained only. I'm sure."

Director: "Let's call it a day."

Jonathan: "A day? Do you mean I should come back tomorrow? My face won't heal for weeks."

Director: (rubbing his hands) "Jonathan wears sun glasses tomorrow. That is a cool effect. See a doctor. And rub some Vodka on it."

Jonathan: "Yes, Vodka."

Director: "Rub it in, son, rub it in. That's a wrap for today. Tomorrow 10 a.m. Bang on."

Jonathan: (to the lighting operators) "Leave the lights on. Annie is taking care of my face."

Lighting operator TWO: "Here is an old recipe from my grandma: Put a cold, raw steak on your eye. It'll help. See you tomorrow."

Make-up brings in a bottle of Vodka and a cloth and passes it to Annie. The set is emptying, only Jonathan and Annie stay back. The stage lights are still on. Annie swabs Jonathan's face with the Vodka soaked cloth.

Annie: "Jonathan, I'm sorry, I really am. Come here. I don't have a steak but I know what will do you good."

She carefully takes Jonathan's hurting cheek to her breasts, much of which is visible because of her low cut dress.

In this moment Jonathan's wife Clara appears from the back of the set. She looks into the blinding lights but doesn't immediately recognize the two people in the set.

Clara: "Excuse me? I'm Jonathan's wife, is he still here? I was just passing by. The director told me, he was on the set. Jonathan?"

Jonathan pushes Annie away hastily.

Jonathan. "I'm here."

Clara: "That is you? Oh, I see! The work is over and now it's playtime!"

Jonathan: "Oh, please. Just shut up! You have no idea what I've been through today!"

Clara: "Oh I can see what you've been through today. What kind of a movie is this anyway? A porn movie? And now you have time to relax at the bosom of nature! I've always suspected that you were fooling around!"

Jonathan: "Clara! The last thing I need is your jealousy..."

Annie: "Oh no, the next thing is the fur coat!"

Jonathan: "If you're going through the roof every time I'm with a girl, you shouldn't be surprised if Annie gets a fur coat."

Clara: "You cheating son of a bitch!"

Annie: "You jerk!"

Clara moves to slap Jonathan's uninjured left cheek but Annie steps between the two and grabs Clara's right arm and, holding it...

Annie: (*Shouting*) "Don't do it".

Clara, furious with jealousy uses her left and hits Jonathan's maltreated cheek.

Jonathan faints.

CURTAIN.

Production Notes:

To simulate the effect of the reddening caused by the repeated slapping of Jonathan's cheek, a small amount of red or pink theatrical face powder spread out on a small tray or plastic plate out of sight of the audience will help. Near the tray place a damp cloth or sponge. Prior to each slap (and hopefully unnoticed by the audience), Annie can lightly place her hand on the sponge, carefully obtaining just enough moisture to allow the powder to stick to her hand and to facilitate the transfer to Jonathan's cheek.

After displaying the hand-printed cheek to the audience, Jonathan can lightly spread the powder by gently rubbing the cheek. This will diminish the details of the imprint of the previous slap and add to the general reddening effect over the entire cheek area.

To assist with bruising and swelling, Jonathan can have access to a small cake of purple eye shadow. Later in the play, using his finger tip, he can apply small, purple "bruises" to complement the reddening of the cheek. When the ice arrives, the cloth can also contain a number of moist cotton balls which Jonathan will surreptitiously transfer to his mouth. Forcing the cotton between cheek and upper or lower teeth will prevent the cotton from interfering with speech. The more cotton the performer can use, and the more sites (between upper and lower teeth and cheeks) the greater will be the swelling effect.

For more information regarding the production of this or any other Andreas Fecker play, please see our Performance Information page or contact Mr. Fecker via email.

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Tel: (+49 6103) 935197 Fax: (+49 6103) 935198

Slapping Jonathan

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