

**DEER PLAYRITE**

**By Rob Rosiello**

(Lights up on PETER as he fumbles through a massive stack of letters and papers.  
He's lost in his paperwork and doesn't see ABBY rushing towards him on her cell phone.  
She is reading a newspaper clipping, talking and clearly not looking where she is going.)

ABBY

Who the hell taught him to write a review? Well I should kick *both* of them in the—

(ABBY and PETER collide.

His papers go flying.)

Oh Christ— I'll call you back!

(She hangs up and immediately starts picking up the fallen papers)

I am so, so sorry. Last week I walked right into a phone booth while I was bitching to my friend on the phone and I was like— “who uses phone booths anymore?”

(ABBY stands holding on of the papers she has picked up.)

Dear Playwrite— hey! Do you know they spelled playwright wrong—

(PETER snatches the paper from her.)

PETER

Don't read that—

ABBY

They spelled—

PETER

I know what they did.

(PETER tries to pick up the papers as ABBY again reads them.)

ABBY

Oh my god— are these all—

PETER

What are you doing?

(Again snatching the papers from ABBY.)

ABBY

So you're a playwright—

PETER

I guess.

ABBY

Have I seen anything you've done?

PETER

What do you think?

(He sits on a bench to arrange the papers.  
ABBY picks up a few letters he missed.)

ABBY

I'm Abby.

(She extends her hand and he ignores it.)

Well, very nice to meet you...

(She looks at one of the papers in her hand.)

*Peter.*

(He looks up and she hides the papers behind her back.)

Sorry I ran you down.

(Pause as she considers to leave.)

I read somewhere once that Dr. Seuss received 27 rejection letters on his first book and when he gave it to a friend of his who was in the publishing world, he finally got his first book published.

PETER

Looks like more than 27 rejection letters here—

ABBY

And you sure as hell ain't Dr. Seuss—

PETER

What—

ABBY

It's a good thing! I mean that as a good thing!

(She hands him a few more papers that have fallen.)

Who needs another Dr. Seuss?

(PETER says nothing but stares at one of the letters.  
He wipes his eyes quickly and shoves it with the others.)

ABBY

Were you crying—

PETER

No!

ABBY

Yes you were! Oh! I'm sorry—

(She sits and he stands.

ABBY slams her hand down on the stack of papers as he tries to grab them.)

ABBY

Let me tell you something my Grandfather told me when I was little and then I'll leave you alone.

(Pause.

PETER sits.)

My grandfather used to say...nobody likes a cry baby!

(PETER recoils as if slapped.)

I'm kidding! Kidding! Oh my god doesn't anyone have a sense of humor anymore? God!

(She reaches into her shoulder bag and pulls out a colorful band aid.)

Gimme your hand.

(PETER is obviously reluctant.

ABBY takes advantage of his hesitation and grabs his hand.)

My grandfather said a lot of crazy shit— he was from the Old South so some of it was a little on the racist side too, but one thing he always said to us kids has stuck with me right to this very day.

(ABBY fishes in her oversized purse.)

You know they say a woman's insecurities can be directly related to the size of the purse she carries...

PETER

That thing looks like a small carry on bag.

ABBY

The last flight I was on they made me check it at the gate...  
YES! I knew I had one left!

PETER

Is that a—

ABBY

A Dora the Explorer bandaid? Sure is!  
(She takes PETER by the hand and puts the bandaid on it)  
My Pop-Pop always said— take bad news and make it fast and funny.

PETER

So what's this have to—

ABBY

Just like ripping off a band aid—  
(And she does.  
And PETER howls.)

ABBY

Huh. Your hand was hairier than I thought.

PETER

Are you crazy?!

ABBY

Depends on whom you ask. But that's why Dora the Explorer— I think she's *hysterical*—

PETER

Are you high!?

ABBY

Not usually. But my Pop-Pop was always right— take bad news, make it funny and make it fast and the news suddenly isn't so bad. Hence— the Dora bandaid. She's a riot and if you rip her off quickly, the pain only lasts for a second. Make sense?

PETER

Not at all.

ABBY

Let me demonstrate...

(She takes one of the letters and begins to read it in a funny or character voice—  
Perhaps Marilyn Monroe, perhaps Alfred Hitchcock, perhaps a BBC Reporter.  
She inserts her own commentary along the way.)

ABBY

Dear Artist: (How generously personal of them) Thank you for applying to the Topeka Fringe Festival (Who knew Topeka had a Fringe Festival!) We received hundreds and hundreds of submissions from around the country and around the world! (How glamorous!) While the submissions were very exciting (Lying bastards!), we unfortunately have a limited amount of resources.....

(Pause.)

So they reject you without actually rejecting you.

PETER

They go on to say you can self produce—

ABBY

For a fee, of course.

PETER

Of course.

ABBY

Losers.

(She crumbles up the paper and throws it on the ground.)

PETER

Don't do that!

ABBY

Why not? You don't save a bandaid after you've ripped it off, do you?

PETER

But these aren't bandaids—

ABBY

I mean, I love me some Dora too but I don't go around carrying a bag full of used bandaids. I think Bravo has a show about people who do shit like that.

(She takes another.)

Dear Mr. R—

PETER

No last names!

ABBY

Got ya. Dear Mr. R: Thank you for sending your plays to The Black Box New Play Festival. I did enjoy reading.... They rejected all of them?

PETER

Three plays in one letter!

ABBY

I guess they wanted to save a tree or two.

PETER

It was an email.

ABBY

Oh.

(Beat. ABBY crumbles it and tosses it on the ground.

PETER wants to object but stops.

ABBY hands him a letter.)

Try it.

(PETER is reluctant but takes one and clears his throat.)

Stand up. Sing out Louise!

(PETER stands.)

PETER

Dear Peter, Please know that we deeply appreciate the blood, sweat and tears you have put into your writing—

ABBY

Are you kidding me?

PETER

—We admire your courage in showing it to us.

ABBY

They can suck it!

PETER

I am getting in touch to let you know that after careful consideration, we have decided not to pursue a collaboration with you at this time.

(ABBY rips it from his hands and crumbles it.)

ABBY

Next!

PETER

Dear Blank...

(ABBY takes the paper from him.)

ABBY

It doesn't say "Dear Blank?!"

PETER

They forgot to put my name in the letter. Look who it's from!

ABBY

No! They should know better!

(PETER takes this letter, pause and crumbles it.  
It now becomes a free for all as they both read and crumble letters.)

PETER

Dear Mr. R.- with my name spelled wrong—

ABBY

Dear Pete—

PETER

Dear Artist—

ABBY

Dear Playwright— spelled right this time!

PETER

Dear Mr...oh! This is my favorite! From an artistic director who read my solo play about Vincent Price called *Priceless*—

Cute title—

ABBY

She misspells my name *twice* in the letter—

PETER

Get out!

ABBY

Says the only person who could possibly play the part of Vincent Price is Vincent Price himself—

PETER

Didn't he die like a hundred years ago?

ABBY

And look how she wrote the letter—

PETER

(PETER hands it to ABBY.)

She wrote it—

ABBY

Yep.

PETER

On a type writer?!

ABBY

And used white out—

PETER

And still spelled your name wrong!

ABBY

Twice! And look at the date—

PETER

Last year? Shut the front door!

ABBY

(She considers crumpling it but doesn't.  
She hands it back to PETER.)

This one's too good to toss—

ABBY

It's a keeper.

PETER

(Beat.)

Oh God— we should clean this up before a cop comes along and fines us for littering.

PETER

(PETER scurries to pick up the mess.)

ABBY

Or the stage manager yells at us for making such a mess.

(PETER stares at her.)

I always think of everything in theatrical terms. Sorry— not sorry.

(Beat.)

Oh. My. God. That's it!

(ABBY starts smoothing out the crumpled pages.)

You've gotta keep these—

PETER

I thought you said—

ABBY

No— forget what I said. You have to take these hysterical rejection letters and turn them into a play!

PETER

A play? No one wants—

ABBY

Oh come on! If *What's Their Name* can turn the stage directions of Eugene O'Neill into a sell out hit— imagine what you could do with these babies!

PETER

I mean, it is kind of a fun idea—

ABBY

It's genius, I tell you! Genius!

PETER

Maybe. Yeah...maybe. Yeah...

ABBY

Do not mention it. You are *very* welcome.

PETER

No, seriously, I mean it. I know I said it— but I honestly don't know how to... thank you. This is awesome.

ABBY

Well— since you are a playwright— and we just figured out how to handle your mess— maybe you can help me with these....

(She pulls out a massive stack of newspaper clippings from her shoulder bag.)

PETER

What's that?

ABBY

My acting reviews.

(Lights fade to black)

END OF PLAY