

THE ACTORS GANG:  
A DARK COMEDY TELEVISION SERIES

by

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HONORS THESIS

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## **DEDICATION**

For all the lonely students who need laugh.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	1
ABSTRACT .....	2
SCRIPT.....	3
SERIES BIBLE .....	42
REFERENCES .....	63

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## ABSTRACT

Secret Society. Sexual Abuse. Collegiate Theatre. Black Turtlenecks. The Actors' Gang is a one-hour dark dramedy that's Glee meets The Vow, but without all the unnecessary singing. Oh, and, it's based on a true story. Set in the halls of a collegiate Acting program, The Actor's Gang follows a college freshman, Demaris, as she tries to find fame in a cult that only wants her money. And, possibly, her body...

In Episode One, Demaris's professors, Paul and Lorelai, guide the group of freshmen through a candlelit offering ceremony to the Spirit of the Gang. Out-bid by the other girls, Demaris gives the last of her money for the chance at a callback for *The Crucible*. Her offering works. At the callback, Paul encourages Demaris to trust his teachings, and he puts Demaris on stage beside, Owen, her classmate, for a scene from the Crucible. Paul pushes Demaris to her knees. Despite her objections, Paul uses his hand to guide Demaris' head forward into Owen's crotch... and then he moves on to the next female student. The next day, Demaris watches as Paul posts the cast list, distraught that she's only an understudy. Meanwhile her boyfriend, Brandon, spies on her from the dorm next door...

## I. SCRIPT

FADE IN:

INT. COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO - BLACKBOX - DAY

CLOSE ON - DEMARIS RIVERA (18, college freshman). Focused. Awkwardly tall. She's SPOTLIT in the dark room. A BLACK TURTLENECK cuts off her long neck, and she nurses a NOTEBOOK, pen perched in the air.

OWEN (O.S.)

Get off the box, Jax.

JAX (O.S.)

No.

OWEN (O.S.)

Come on.

JAX (O.S.)

Nuh uh!

Beside her, a BALD HEAD glows in the light. This is PAUL STEWART (40s, her charming acting professor). We zoom out to see they're in a full circle of COLLEGE FRESHMEN, everyone dressed in the same attire.

In the circle's center, JAX OTREMBA (18, jittery af) sits on an APPLE BOX while OWEN FEY (22, scruffy and swollen) towers over him.

OWEN

For five bucks?

JAX

No!



OWEN

Fifty?

JAX

...No?

Jax looks over to Paul. *That's a good offer.* Paul shakes his head, *keep going.*

JAX

Keep your money, Owen. I'm staying on the box.

OWEN

Well, then this is impossible!

PAUL

It's been done before.

OWEN

How?

Paul places a gentle hand on his shoulder.

PAUL

Focus, Owen. Trust. Ask yourself this: What will you do to get what you want?

Demaris scribbles this down.

OWEN

I could noogie him.

PAUL

Think *bigger*.

OWEN

Tell everyone he likes it up the butt?

The students giggle. Jax turns red.

JAX

Owen!

OWEN

It's okay! I do too!

Paul quiets the endless giggles.

PAUL

The deeper the sacrifice, the greater the reward. How far are you willing you go?

Paul returns to the circle. Demaris watches Owen, jotting down ideas of her own. Owen takes a deep breath.

OWEN

Well, what if I **peed** on you?

Demaris' pen stops.

JAX

What?

OWEN

What if I took my dick out and... peed. On you. Would that get you to move?

She looks at Paul. His face is unreadable. Jax awkwardly pushes on.

JAX

No. I don't want to fail, Owen. So. I'm willing to stay. If that means I succeed.

Paul nods. Demaris closes her notebook.

Owen UNZIPS HIS FLY, waiting to be stopped.

Paul does nothing.

Owen TAKES OUT HIS DICK.

Still, Paul does nothing.

From his spot in the circle, WARNER (18, vape eternally in hand) nods his head, impressed.

WARNER

Nice dick, man.

OWEN

Thanks.

A STREAM ARCS OUT, and Jax doesn't move.

Demaris's eyes glue to the YELLOW FLOOD. She can't look away.

Paul takes out his NOTEPAD and marks down an "A".

**TITLE: THE ACTOR'S GANG**

FADE IN:

INT. RETAMA HALL - LOBBY - DAY

CLOSE UP on a girl's gold-plated NECKLACE, its pendant in the shape of an "A".

This belongs to AVA WALSH (18, petite blonde), talking with Paul on the dorm's U-shaped LEATHER COUCH. They're smiling. More freshmen listen intently at Paul's feet. LORELAI (30s, another professor) hands out CANDLES.

PAUL

So, Ava, you enjoying it here?

AVA

Yes!! I love it.  
(to the others)

Don't you?

The freshmen chime in from the ground.

ALL

We love it!/It's great!/The best!

AVA

And I'm looking forward to the callbacks! I'd just love to play Abigail.

Across the couch, Demaris glares at her. A BOOK is propped in front of her face as a disguise, behind which she grits her teeth.

DEMARIS

(under her breath)

Just suck his dick, why don't you!

AVA (O.S.)

I'm sure you're an amazing director.

Paul places a hand on Ava's thigh, and Demaris rises, ready to fight. MEL LOPEZ (18, Demaris' roommate) holds her back.

MEL

(whispered)

We don't fight Family, Demaris. Even if they are a tad bitchy.

DEMARIS

(whispered)

A tad *bitchy*, Mel?! Come on, this girl's a straight up *cunt*.

Mel GASPS. Behind them, a TV plays an endless ADVERTISEMENT of smiling, turtlenecked students.

DEMARIS

(whispered)

What? I thought we reclaimed the "C" word!

MEL

(whispered)

The "C" word isn't for *Family*, Demaris. We still have four more years here with our chosen sister!

Ava flips her blonde locks as Demaris' frizzy brown bangs tangle in her eye. She swats the hairs away.

DEMARIS

That girl's *not* my sister. And she was incorrectly chosen. I've known Paul for years, and I'm a favorite.

Paul stands, moving to the next student.

DEMARIS

(whispered)

Here's our chance! Come on, he's free!

Demaris and Mel scootch their butts across the couch, grazing lightly over other students' laps.

STUDENTS

Hey!/Get off!/Stop!

OWEN

/Oh, shit...

Owen hides his erection. Demaris arrives at Paul's side, and she clears her throat. He's mid-conversation with JANINE (18). Demaris taps his shoulder, and Paul turns.

(FLASHBACK) EXT. MILLER OUTDOOR THEATRE -NIGHT

A YOUNG DEMARIS (9) watches as a NEARLY-BALD MAN tapes a CAST LIST to a stage door. Surrounded by OLDER KIDS, she bounces with excitement

LORELAI (PRE-LAP)

(whisper-screamed)

Demaris!!

INT. RETAMA HALL - LOBBY - DAY

Demaris turns, and Paul rises to a DESK near the TV. Lore-

lai's standing there, candles in hand, fervently shaking her head.

LORELAI

Let Paul have his time with others. He'll talk to you when he's ready.

Paul avoids Demaris' eyes.

LORELAI

In the meantime, you get a CANDLE! What color would you like? Pink, blue?

Demaris watches Paul set up a GOLDEN GONG on his desk.

DEMARIS

Gold, please. I like gold.

Lorelai hands Demaris the candle, and her phone BUZZES with a new call - BRANDON.

LORELAI

Trust the candle, and the candle will give you what you need!

Demaris silences it, and Lorelai CLAPS OFF the lights. Demaris sends back a RESPONSE -

ONSCREEN: I'm in a ceremony now, babe, I'll text you back later!

Lorelai LIGHTS a candle, and she passes around the flame.

INT. LAUREL HALL - BRANDON'S ROOM - SAME TIME

BRANDON FRAZIER (19, young Ted Danson type) sits on his bed, responding to Demaris. He uses way too many emojis.

ONSCREEN: Okay! Happy first day!!!!!!

Send. Deep breath. He's the first person we've seen without a black turtleneck.

Brandon goes to his window, opening the window and grabbing

a pair of BINOCULARS, paper, and a pen. He perches the lens just outside the window...

Through the binoculars we can see Demaris, Paul and the gang mid-ceremony -

INT. RETAMA HALL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Demaris and the others raise their lit candles in the air.

LORELAI

How much do you want this!

ALL

We want it!

LORELAI

Then go deeper!

ALL

Ahh!

They raise the candles higher, arms starting to shake. They CHANT, series of grunts and vowels -

ALL

Ohhhhhhhhh!

And their weak actor arms *tremble*.

INT. LAUREL HALL - BRANDON'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SPLAT. A bird poops on the binoculars from above. Brandon scowls, pulling back in his room to wash them off.

As he does, we see his wall is covered in photos... of a WOMAN other than Demaris.

He finishes scrubbing the binoculars, then returns to the window, leaning out yet again. He positions the view just right -

And SPLAT. The bird hits again. Brandon shakes his fist.

BRANDON

Ahhhhhhhh-

INT. RETAMA HALL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The actor's chant grows in volume, Demaris turning red -

ALL

Ahhhhhh -

INT. LAUREL HALL - BRANDON'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brandon's window is now closed, and he watches from behind the glass. Through his binoculars, we see he's looking at the Retama's EXTERIOR SECURITY CAMS, two videocams perched high on the porch's roof.

Brandon smiles to himself, scribbling down the cameras' location.

**(PRE-LAP) BONG BONG BONG.**

INT. RETAMA HALL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Paul rails against a TRAVEL-SIZED GOLDEN GONG. Lorelai throws her hands in the air.

LORELAI

CANDLELIGHT SPIRIT! STACY! ARE YOU WITH US?!?!

Silence. Beside Paul, a chair wobbles, and the students GASP.

JAX

An earthquake!

PAUL

It's Stacy, Jax.

JAX

Stacy?

LORELAI



The Spirit! She's here!

Lorelai places a BASKET in the circle. She bows her head, and the students reluctantly join.

LORELAI

Thank you, Stacy, for being here with us today, and for the help you're sure to bring in the casting process. I hope each student understands the weight of your power, and that they give according to the role they wish to receive. We know you are a generous Spirit. The most generous of Spirits.

Guided by Paul, the students repeat this phrase.

ALL

The most / The most kind / generous of spirits/ Thank you, Stacy.

Lorelai grins. Owen scratches his balls. They all stare at the basket in silence.

PAUL

Well, don't be shy. Offer her something! Anything!

Everyone digs into their backpacks. Demaris can't find anything. After a bit, Jax's hand shoots up.

JAX

I offer a deluxe fidget spinner!

LORELAI

For what role?

JAX

In exchange for Reverend Parris.  
(off her look)

Is that fine?

Lorelai looks to Paul, who nods, typing away at his comput-

er.

LORELAI

Stacy is satisfied, yes. Thank you for your offering, Jax.

MEL

I'll offer a Starplex coupon! In exchange for Mary, if that's alright?

Another nod and smile from Paul.

LORELAI

That's more than alright Mel, Stacy loves the Starplex! Mel happily returns to her seat.

DEMARIS

And I'll offer my entire backpack; in exchange for Abigail.

Demaris raises the off-brand, beat up backpack in the air, placing it gingerly in the basket. Lorelai prods around inside.

LORELAI

Stacy is dissatisfied with your offering, Demaris. Try again.

DEMARIS

Again?

Demaris retracts the bag.

LORELAI

Stacy only helps those who help themselves.

DEMARIS

(under her breath)

Stacy sounds like a real bitch.

Demaris returns to her seat, digging through her pockets.  
Ava smiles, raising her hand sweetly.

AVA

I'll offer my gold plated necklace! In exchange for Abigail, as well.

Ava carefully removes the beautiful GOLD, SHIMMERY, "A" from her neck. She sets it in the basket.

AVA

It's 14K gold. From Angara.

MEL

That costs more than my life.

The students ooooooooh as they admire the golden token.

AVA

The pendant is an A, for the Actor's Gang. I bought it because I was excited. To finally join the family we have here. The family I've always wanted.

The students awwwww. Demaris tears through her pockets, enraged.

DEMARIS

(under her breath)

An A for the Actor's Gang, how about an A for your fucking NAME, AVA?!

Ava return to her seat, and we notice that Ava has an A bracelet as well as an A earring set. Paul types happily away. Lorelai strokes the necklace's diamonds.

LORELAI

Stacy is very, very pleased with your offering, Ava.

PAUL

Very pleased.

LORELAI

It seems you, more than anyone, understand the road to success.

With this, Demaris yanks out her WALLET, tearing through the empty sections. No ones, no tens, no twenties...

But then, she spots it. *Thank God*. A BENJAMIN.

DEMARIS

I will offer... one ***hundred*** dollars!

Demaris raises it in the air, breathing hard like she just won a race.

DEMARIS

Also in exchange for Abigail.

Looking at Ava, she lays the wrinkled bill in the basket. Lorelai nods, and Paul CLACKS away at his computer.

DEMARIS

Because I too understand success.

Paul looks up as Demaris sits, grinning at her. This is the first time we've seen her from his POV. Mel leans in close.

MEL

(whispered)

Demaris, you can't afford that.

DEMARIS

(whispered)

I know what I'm doing.

As Demaris beams, the other students quickly fill the basket.

WARNER

I offer Chanel Number 5!

REESE

A can of beans!

JAMIE

Godiva chocolate!

OWEN

An electric toothbrush!

LORELAI

Try again.

Owen pulls it back. There's hair on the bristles. He replaces it in the basket with his NIXON watch.

LORELAI

Better.

AVA

What do you use that for?

Ava nods at the toothbrush. BONG. The room goes SILENT. Paul carries his laptop to the center of the room, his face illuminated by the screen.

PAUL

Stacy has listened. And Stacy is pleased. Here in the Actors' Gang, we value commitment, community, and trust... And Stacy has used your offerings to tell me who is worthy of that trust, who is deserving of a call-back for the Crucible.

Demaris SMILES. There's excited CHATTER.

(FLASHBACK) EXT. MILLER OUTDOOR THEATRE - NIGHT

Young Demaris stands at the back of the CAST LIST LINE, the older kids filling the space in front of her. They've already getting looked.

OLDER KID

I got it! I did!

OLDER KID 2

Hell yeah! Third lead in a row, right?

OLDER KID

The director loves me, what can I say?

They step aside, allowing Young Demaris to trace her finger down the sheet. Her finger never lands on a name.

YOUNG DEMARIS

Fuck.

Young Demaris sulks away, dejected, sitting on the curb outside the theatre. A PAIR OF FEET appear in her view.

YOUNG PAUL (O.S.)

That's no language for a little girl like you.

She looks up, seeing a YOUNG MAN, above her. He holds out a BROCHURE, and she takes it, looking up at the man's white face and nearly-hairless head.

YOUNG PAUL

One day soon, you'll be a star.

INT. RETAMA HALL - LOBBY - PRESENT

Demaris stares at the same white face in front of her, still the eager little girl she always was. There's a collective student BREATH and release.

PAUL

Jax, you're called for Reverend Parris, and Mel, you for Mary.

Jax and Mel SQUEAL.

MEL

My sacrifice worked!!!

JAX

High five!!!

PAUL

Owen, you for John Proctor -

Owen flexes his muscles.

PAUL

And Ava, you for Abigail!

Ava beams. Paul lowers his laptop, locking his eyes in hers.

PAUL

Stacy was particularly pleased with your gift.

Ava giggles, and Demaris lingers on her perch, waiting for Paul to say more. Nothing.

MEL

(whispering)

It's okay. No one can top Angara.

Ava twirls her blonde hair. Demaris stiffens. She looks over to the advertisement in the corner, where blonde girl after blonde girl flash on the screen. Her phone DINGS.

ONSCREEN (from Brandon): How much longer will you be in the lobby for?

PAUL (O.S.)

Demaris?

Mel nudges Demaris, and Demaris looks up, finding Paul in front of her. She refocuses in on him.

PAUL

One last name... Because Stacy thinks you deserve a chance. Demaris Rivera, you're called back for Abigail, too.

Lorelai CUTS ON the lights. Demaris breaks into an enormous smile, hugging Mel as Paul discreetly pockets the basket items, including the Benjamin, the necklace, and the watch.

DEMARIS  
(quietly)

Sorry, Stacy. You're not a bitch. You're the fucking bomb.

INT. LAUREL HALL - BRANDON'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Brandon sits at the window, tapping his foot. Beside him a NEWSPAPER CLIPPING, titled - MISSING PERSONS - ANNALYSE FRAZIER.

CLOSE ON - the article:

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

Student ANNALYSE FRAZIER has been missing for four months. Left behind is her mother, Bertha, and brother, Brandon -

His phone DINGS and he checks it - Demaris.

ONSCREEN: Just wrapping up. Going to celebrate because I got a CALLBACK!

Brandon sends CONFETTI. He pulls the window open, and repositions his binoculars, zooming close into -

INTERCUT INT/EXT LAUREL HALL

Paul walks down Retama's dorm steps, followed by the freshmen.

PAUL

Everyone get some sleep tonight, and we'll see you in the BlackBox tomorrow!

Brandon zooms in as Paul throws an arm around Demaris' shoulder. A bird POOPS on Brandon's binoculars.

INT. COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO - BLACKBOX - NEXT DAY



The six called-back actors stand on stage, drenched in warm light. For those unfamiliar, *this* is a *callback*, and Ava, Owen, Mel, Warner, Jax, and Demaris all have scripts in hand, rehearsing.

Paul watches them from the audience. Lorelai enters the room, leading THREE ADORABLE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS (16ish, not in turtlenecks) behind her.

LORELAI

And these are our lovely Family members, say hello to them!

HIGH SCHOOLERS

Hello!

Demaris and the others wave. The high school girls squeal, and Lorelai leads them right back out the door.

GIRL #1

Wait - can we watch the callbacks?

The door slams behind her. Paul stands, walking to the stage.

PAUL

New recruits always want to know the magic, but it's the chosen few who find it.

The students smile. From their turtlenecks alone, we can see they're the chosen few. Lorelai reenters, no high schoolers this time.

PAUL

How were they, Lorelai?

LORELAI

Eager. Too eager. We can check back on recruitment day, when these students can choose from the masses!

She takes her seat in the empty audience.

(FLASHBACK) EXT. MILLER OUTDOOR THEATRE - NIGHT

Demaris, lost on the curb in a crowd of other kids, raises her hand in the air. Paul grabs her, and pulls her up.

YOUNG PAUL

Let's take you home.

INT. COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO - BLACKBOX - CONTINUOUS

Now, Older Demaris raises her hand.

DEMARIS

Recruitment day?

Paul smiles. He nods.

PAUL

The day each year you're taxed to find a new younger brother or sister to join our Family! You get to contribute toward their success! Isn't that amazing?

Demaris grins. Paul lounges on the APPLE BOX we saw from the teaser, his huge portrait behind him.

PAUL

Let's get into the callback, shall we?

Nods all around. Paul stands and paces.

PAUL

Every time an actor steps on stage, what should they keep in mind?

Ava raises her hand.

AVA

Their objective!

PAUL

Exactly! "What do I want?" Every character wants something, it's just a question of what that *something* is.

Like, right now, if *Paul* were a character, he would want something from Ava!

Paul grabs Ava's arms, spinning her around.

PAUL

He might want Ava to see him as a father figure, or a lover! To obey him and trust him and never leave him alone!

Paul looks to Ava: her turn to speak.

AVA

I won't... I *do*. I obey you, and I trust you, Paul. I do. I promise.

Paul smiles, releasing her hands.

PAUL

See? I got what I want.

Chuckles from the group.

PAUL

Or, *if* Paul were a character, mind you, he might want Mel to have success, the success the Actors' Gang promises.

MEL

He'd want that?

PAUL

He would.

MEL

Well, I'll make it happen, then.

Paul smiles.

PAUL

I know, Mel. You're great.

Demaris' smile quickly turns into a frown.

PAUL

And *if* every character wants something, this means that in the *Crucible*, our play, Abigail and John must want something desperately from each other, too, correct?

DEMARIS

Yes...

PAUL

And what is that something, Demaris? Tell me.

DEMARIS

Abigail wants John to love her, to respect her.

Paul stares at her.

PAUL

And what else does she want?

DEMARIS

A husband? A family?

Demaris grips her paper full of notes as Paul chuckles, shaking his head. He places a gentle hand on Demaris' shoulder.

PAUL

You're looking at Abigail from an intellectual's point of view, but Abby is a human, Demaris.

(FLASHBACK) EXT. MILLER OUTDOOR THEATRE - NIGHT

Young Demaris and Paul walk toward the parking lot, his hand reaching down to grab hers.

PAUL (V.O.)

She has real feelings, feelings we all have, and she contains the human capacity to want something more raw, more unfiltered.

INT. COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO - BLACKBOX - PRESENT

Demaris nods, and her eyes drift down...

DEMARIS

... Did she want sex?

PAUL

Yes, Demaris. That is what she wanted.

Demaris and the class nod, taking note.

PAUL

And how was sex between Abby and John, do you think?  
What positions? Was it kinky?

Demaris shakes her head.

DEMARIS

The sex was... good? They're Christian, so probably missionary...

Jax SCOFFS, grabbing his cross necklace.

PAUL

Is missionary the most specific you can be?

Demaris shrugs. She looks around the circle, but none of her classmates will catch her eye.

DEMARIS

It's hard to be specific Paul. I'm only eighteen.

PAUL

And specificity, Demaris, is crucial to *good* acting at any age. Who has specifics?

Demaris bites her cheek. Ava raises her hand.

AVA

There's the Butter Churner and the Pretzel Dip that look fun. From the Reddit reviews, the Butter Churner led to 16-hour sex for some, and it is both beautiful and well-balanced.

FLASH FORWARD - BLACKBOX

Ava and Owen do a semi-clothed version of the Butter Churner.

INT. COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO - BLACKBOX - PRESENT

Ava lets her paper drop. Paul smiles.

PAUL

Good research, Ava. That's good.

AVA

Thank you.

Demaris' jaw tightens. She watches Ava's "A" necklace glint around Paul's neck as he returns to Demaris' side.

PAUL

So tell me, Demaris, with this research, how did Abigail *feel* when John denied her advances, choosing his wife, Elizabeth, over Abby, his mistress, who gave him the pretzel dip sex? How did she feel when he left her powerless, empty, and alone?

DEMARIS

I imagine sadness, anger, and betrayal.

PAUL

Very good.

DEMARIS

But, also, relief, I think. To finally be free of John's

spell.

Paul's smiles fades. He lets his eyes lock with Demaris.

PAUL

You think he's controlling her.

Her phone RINGS. Demaris silences it.

DEMARIS

In a way.

Paul moves toward his mallet, wailing against the gong.  
BONG. The sound reverberates through the theatre.

PAUL

Let's everyone take a five. Make sure all phones are  
placed on silent.

ALL

Thank you, five.

Demaris hurries toward the door.

EXT. COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO - SAME TIME

Brandon is on a LADDER outside the building, tucked away  
under the brick canopy. He's messing with the SECURITY CAM-  
ERA when his phone rings.

BRANDON  
(struggling)

Hello?!

INT. COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO - ELEVATOR SHAFT - SAME TIME

Demaris stands inside the shallow metal doorway, scream-  
whispering in the dark of an empty elevator.

DEMARIS

I'm botching it, Brandon! It's botched! I can't answer  
the fucking questions right...

BRANDON (O.S.)

Hold on, slow down...

INTERCUT INT / EXT COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO

Brandon changes the phone to another ear, repositioning on the ladder.

DEMARIS

I'm wrong about everything!

Demaris stamps her foot. Beneath Brandon, Paul's bald head emerges on the porch, smoking a CIGARETTE by the acting building's MOAT. Brandon tucks his face behind the ladder.

BRANDON

(whisper-screamed)

I thought you said the callback was until four?!

Demaris lets out a CRY.

DEMARIS

Paul says I'm not specific. Which is like the biggest insult ever for an actor. Besides not being pretty. Which I am.

BRANDON

(whisper-screamed)

Which you are!

DEMARIS

But I'm not *blonde*.

The ladder SHAKES.

DEMARIS

Or white.

Paul tosses the cigarette into the moat.

DEMARIS

Maybe it's just that I don't belong here.



BRANDON  
(whisper-screamed)  
No.

Brandon steadies himself on the ladder, hiding his face under the awning.

BRANDON  
(whisper-screamed)  
You do belong there, Demaris. Like Paul says, you were *chosen* -

DEMARIS  
I don't know...

BRANDON  
(whisper-screamed)  
And you need to stay there! Finish out your degree.

The ladder steadies. A TURTLE eats the cigarette. Brandon sighs.

BRANDON  
(whisper-screamed)  
So many kids want to be in your place.

Brandon looks at Paul, then back to the surveillance camera. Head still in the shadows, he begins to REWIRE IT.

DEMARIS  
You think?

BRANDON  
Yes. That's a big deal, Demaris! Not many people can say they're a Gang member like you.

Brandon stops. Demaris' brows furrows.

DEMARIS  
Well, I'm not a "Gang member", it's "The Actor's Gang".

BRANDON

I know, I-

DEMARIS

And it sounds bad to say "a gang member". It sounds like you're being racist.

BRANDON

Well, I'm Black -

DEMARIS

Or it sounds like we hurt things. Which we don't.

Brandon nods. He watches the turtle choke and DIE with the flaming cigarette in its throat.

BRANDON

You're part of the Actor's Gang, Demaris. The best acting school in the country. And you just got called back for a role. You're going to do great. You're great. You should stay.

Paul looks up at the ladder.

DEMARIS

You're right.

Paul turns away.

BRANDON

And if you need anything, just call!

Demaris doesn't respond. Brandon looks down as Paul reenters the building, and suddenly - the call ends. BEEP BEEP BEEP.

A SPIDER crawls across Brandon's hand, and he aggressively shakes it off as the ladder wobbles -

BRANDON

Woooooah-

INT. COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO - LOBBY - SAME TIME

Demaris stands in the now OPEN elevator shaft, Paul staring in at her. The tension is palpable.

PAUL

Are you okay?

DEMARIS

Yes.

PAUL

You're hiding in the elevator?

Demaris freezes. Shakes her head.

DEMARIS

No. I just needed to take a breather -

There's clearly no ventilation in the elevator.

DEMARIS

A moment to be alone.

PAUL

Next time, be alone with your family, Demaris.

Paul reaches out his hand, helping Demaris step out into the open lobby featuring a HUGE WALL that reaches up three floors.

PAUL (O.S.)

We're here to better you.

The wall is covered in PAINTINGS, PORTRAITS, and huge WAX RENDERINGS of the all kinds of actors, from Jack Black, to Demi Lovato, to Edie Patterson, to Shirley Temple. All are wearing black turtlenecks, and all are circled around an even huger WAX FIGURE of Paul. Below him is a PLAQUE with

the words: TRUST. HONOR. FAME.

Paul tucks Demaris into a hug.

PAUL

I know it's hard here, to fit in, but you were *chosen*, Demaris. You were chosen because you're *talented*, Demaris. Because you're *good*.

He touches her heart.

PAUL

And you're good in here, too. That's most important.

Demaris looks down at Paul's hand, resting just above her left boob. He doesn't move it away.

(FLASHBACK) INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT

Paul drives Young Demaris home, Demaris still in her clothes from the theatre. AMERICAN WOMAN blasts on the radio. Paul tussles her hair.

YOUNG PAUL

You like this song?

YOUNG DEMARIS

Yeah!

YOUNG PAUL

You know the words?

YOUNG DEMARIS

I'm only nine!

INT. COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO - LOBBY - PRESENT

Paul smiles his warm, genuine, heart-breaking bald smile.

PAUL

That's why you have this Family, here. Because we *under-*

*stand* that goodness, better than any parent, or partner, or boyfriend could.

Demaris nods. She looks at the wall, scanning over Danny Devito, Zooey Deschanel, and Oprah.

PAUL

Take a leap of faith, Demaris. Trust the process, trust me, and you will succeed.

He squeezes her hand.

PAUL

You're better than the rest.

Paul smiles his winning smile, and Demaris watches his bald head disappear into the -

INT. COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO - BLACKBOX - MOMENTS LATER

- Where Demaris stands centerstage beside Owen. All the other students are seated in the audience.

PAUL

Are we ready to dive in?

Demaris and Owen nod.

PAUL

Good! I love actors who care. Let's drop our scripts, and we'll do this scene as real and raw as possible, okay? I'm talking total impulses, full passion - the sexy, intimate lust we talked about before we took a break. Alright? Because this connection, this *specific-*

(pointed look at Demaris)

- connection is the most important.

Paul CLAPS OFF the house lights, and he replaces them with the WARM, ORANGE STAGE LIGHTS all actors and Glee fans know and love.

Demaris then prepares for the stage heat, taking off her turtleneck, to reveal a STRAPPY TANK TOP underneath. Owen follows suit, removing his turtleneck to reveal just his TAN, JACKED, NAKED UPPER BODY.

DEMARIS

Sorry, I should have left this on...

PAUL

Leave it, Demaris. Follow your impulses! You're specific, and you're doing nothing wrong.

Demaris nods. *Hell yeah, I'm specific!* She steps forward, even closer to Owen, which cuts off how much naked muscle she's forced to see. She takes a deep breath. The next chunk will be in character for *The Crucible* -

DEMARIS (AS ABIGAIL)

Give me a word, John. A soft word.

OWEN (AS JOHN)

No, no, Abby, I've not come for that.

DEMARIS (AS ABIGAIL)

You come five mile' to see a silly girl fly? I know you better.

OWEN (AS JOHN)

I come to see what mischief you're uncle's brewin' now.

Demaris has grabbed Owen's hand. They're pretty good! Paul rises from his seat.

OWEN (AS JOHN)

Put it out of mind, Abby.

And he pushes Demaris into Owen's arms.

DEMARIS

Like this?

PAUL

Perfect.

DEMARIS (AS ABIGAIL)

I am waiting for you every night.

OWEN (AS JOHN)

Abby, you'll put it out of mind.

Paul taps on Demaris' shoulders, and she lowers to her knees. He then pushes on the back of her head -

DEMARIS  
(whispered)

What are you doing?

PAUL  
(whispered)

Trust me.

OWEN (AS JOHN)

I'll not be comin' for you no more.

Demaris presses back against Paul's hand. His hand continues to fight her forward.

DEMARIS

No - wait!

Paul releases her. The audience looks on in semi-horror, both Ava and Mel on the edge of their seats.

DEMARIS

I don't want to go that far!

Paul nods, putting his hands up in defense.

PAUL

Hey, that's okay! I understand, Demaris, I do. You're

eighteen, you're new. It's hard to have what it takes.

DEMARIS

Thank you.

PAUL

Success can be scary. Some of us need time.

Demaris' eyebrows furrow.

DEMARIS

Well, it's not that, I-

PAUL

We'll switch it out, then? Move on to the next pair.  
Ava, why don't you come up here with Owen? Demaris, you rest. I wouldn't want to push you too hard.

Ava steps up to the stage, turtleneck already stripped off. Demaris watches Ava's boobs bounce up and down, even perkier than Demaris' boisterous set. Demaris slumps into an audience chair, defeated, as she watches the light hit Ava's golden hair -

(FLASHBACK) INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT

The Mercedes bumps along the road as Demaris looks down at the brochure in her lap. On the cover is a smiling BLONDE, THIN GIRL in a turtleneck.

INT. COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO - BLACKBOX - PRESENT

Demaris grips the arm rests of her chair. She pushes herself out of her seat -

DEMARIS

No!

- And she runs to the stage. Demaris drops to her knees.

DEMARIS

Stop. I do have what it takes. I want another shot.



PAUL

Are you sure?

DEMARIS

I am. Ava, get off the stage. It's not your time.

Paul nods, and Ava's blonde head sulks off. Paul leans into Demaris' ear.

PAUL

Good choice. I'm proud of you.

Beat. Demaris smiles up at him.

PAUL

Can you say your line, please, Owen?

OWEN (AS JOHN)

I'll not be comin' for you no more.

PAUL

(to Demaris)

Are you ready?

DEMARIS

Ready.

Demaris places her hands on Owen's hamstrings.

DEMARIS (AS ABIGAIL)

You're surely sportin' with me.

OWEN (AS JOHN)

You know me better.

Paul pushes against Demaris' head.

DEMARIS (AS ABIGAIL)

I know how you clutched my back behind your house and sweated like a stallion whenever I come near.

POV DEMARIS - Owen's jeaned crotch sits five inches in front of her face, getting closer every second.

DEMARIS (AS ABIGAIL)

I know how you clutched my back behind your house and sweated like a stallion whenever I come near.

PAUL

You already said that line.

DEMARIS (AS ABIGAIL)

Whenever I come near...

Paul presses her forward. Demaris scowls, allowing her face to finally fall toward Owen's jeaned penis.

(FLASHBACK) EXT. DEMARIS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Now in Demaris' driveway, Young Demaris turns her back for Paul to do his business.

YOUNG PAUL

Sorry, I have to piss.

Paul takes a piss in her yard, letting the yellow juice run out.

INT. COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO - BLACKBOX - CONTINUOUS

Demaris rests against the tip. It's awful, but sort of peaceful. The jeaned penis slowly hardens. Owen (as John) chuckles wildly.

OWEN (AS JOHN)

Abby! That's a wild thing to do!

Demaris shuts her eyes. Paul observes the tableaux for a moment, pleased with his work. Then, he CLAPS his hands together, signaling an end of scene. Demaris pulls away from the crotch, wiping her mouth vigorously.

PAUL

Excellent work, Demaris. We'll move on to Ava next.

DEMARIS

What do you mean? Did I get the part?

Paul just smiles. Demaris sit beside Mel in the audience.

MEL

You did great. Just great.

DEMARIS

Paul! Hello! Did I get the part?

LORELAI

(whispered)

Demaris, quiet! Your sister's working.

Ava stands center, stripping down to her bra. Paul rubs his hands together, smiling.

PAUL

Alright Gang, let's get started.

Demaris closes her eyes as Ava drops to her knees.

INT. RETAMA HALL - DEMARIS & MEL'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

A new day. The room is DARK. Bits of sunlight creep in through the window, but mostly, all we can see is Demaris' DROOL hit the floor. It reflects back at us in a DREAM - -

(DREAM SEQUENCE) INT. COLLEGIATE ACTING STUDIO - BLACKBOX

Demaris is centerstage, spotlit in the dark room, while her classmates sit in the audience around her. They throw FLOWERS Demaris bows, dressed in her 1692 Crucible garb.

DEMARIS

Thank you, thank you -

Suddenly, something else is flung to the stage, and Demaris picks it up. A PENIS. Then another, and another. The penises won't stop. She covers her face as the penises hit her limbs, and she hears Paul MANIACALLY LAUGHING -

INT. RETAMA HALL - DEMARIS & MEL'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

Demaris bolts awake, still hearing the laughter. She opens her shades -

DEMARIS

AHHH, too bright, too bright -

- And sees Paul standing on the front porch, talking to Ava and Mel. *Figures*. Behind him is a YELLOW FERRARI (bit of an upgrade from the Mercedes!). Demaris sees a WHITE PAPER in Paul's hand, and she bounds out of bed.

EXT. RETAMA HALL - PORCH - MORNING

Demaris steps outside. Already, the crowd of freshmen has grown to include the whole group of thirteen. Everyone is buzzing. Warner hits his vape, and Paul tapes the CAST LIST to the door.

TIME SLOWS.

(FLASHBACK) EXT. MILLER OUTDOOR THEATRE - NIGHT

We're back with Young Demaris, standing at the back of the CAST LIST LINE. She's swallowed in the large crowd, jumping up and down to see over the big kids. The line moves forward.

Excited and nervous, Young Demaris steps up to see her fate -

EXT. RETAMA HALL - PORCH - MORNING

Demaris stares at the list. Her face is blank. Smoke from Warner's vape floats across her face.

Behind her, Ava bobs up and down, SQUEALING and hugging Owen tight.

Demaris' phone BUZZES - a call from Brandon. She quietly

lifts it to her ear.

BRANDON  
What's all the yelling about?

DEMARIS  
(whispered)

I didn't get it, Brandon.

INT. LAUREL HALL - BRANDON'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Brandon - now with two MONITORS OF LIVE SURVEILLANCE -  
watches the porch activity.

BRANDON  
  
What?

INTERCUT PORCH / APARTMENT

Demaris retreats into the corner. She covers her face.

DEMARIS  
(whispered)

I got understudy. Abigail's understudy.

Brandon zooms in the feed, watching Paul as he saunters  
over to Demaris.

BRANDON  
Well, don't let that get you down. I'm sure you were  
great!

DEMARIS  
Brandon -

BRANDON  
Don't let it get you!

BEEEEEP.

The line cuts, and Brandon watches on the feed as Paul em-  
braces a crying Demaris. He pets her head.

Paul whispers in Demaris' ear, and Brandon UPs the volume,

trying to hear. But it's just STATIC.

(FLASHBACK) EXT. DEMARIS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Paul and Young Demaris stand outside his Mercedes he's finishing his piss. She hears the ZIP, and she turns around, Paul brushes her bangs back from her eyes. Their silhouettes are reflected onto her small house.

YOUNG PAUL

You're special, Demaris. Don't you ever forget that And, with my help, you'll be a STAR.

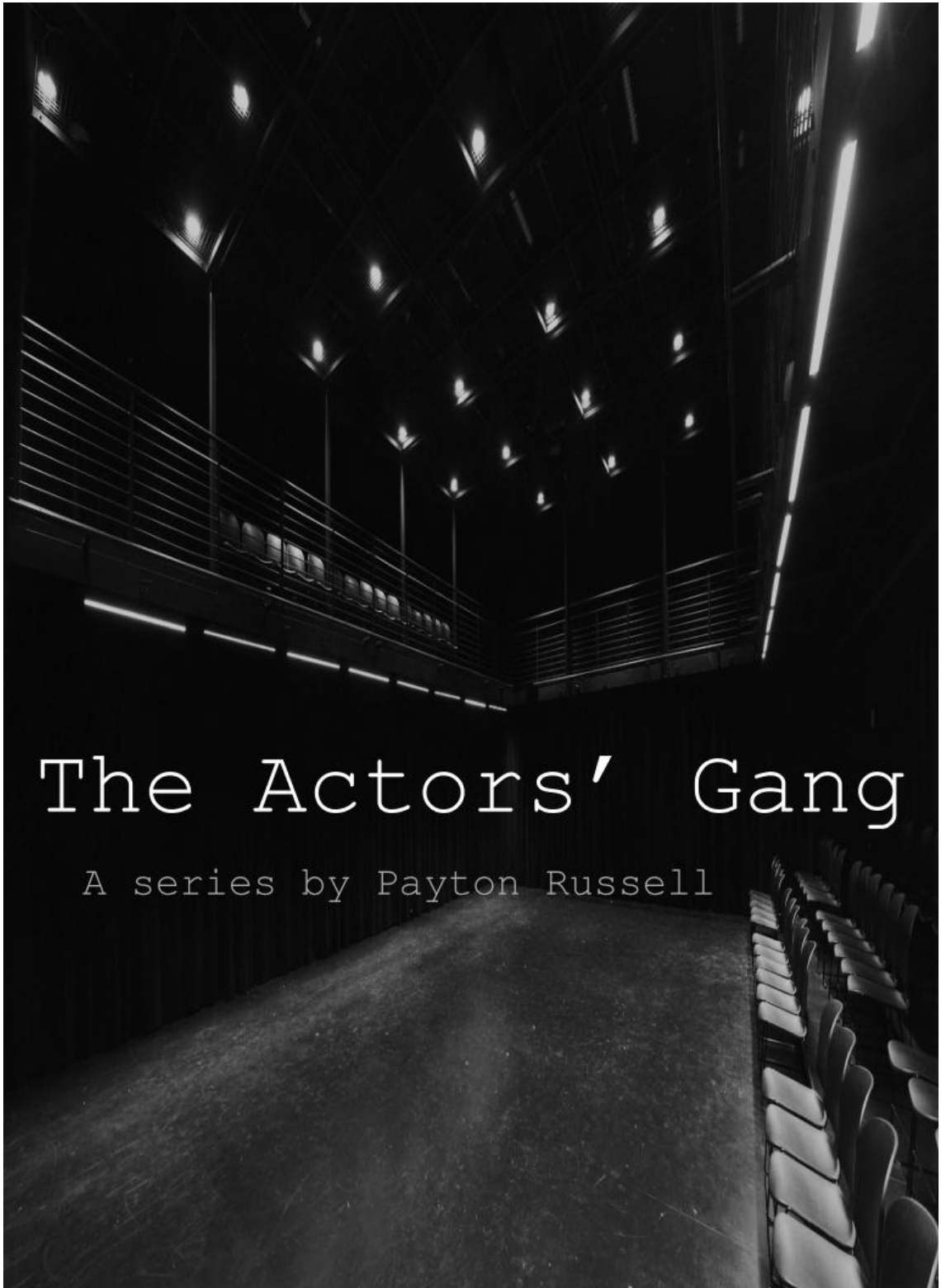
Paul squeezes her hand, and Demaris watches him drive off into the night. Alone, she looks down at the brochure, its gold words in LARGE LETTERS:

**THE ACTOR'S GANG: JOIN TODAY.**

END OF EPISODE ONE.

TO BE CONTINUED.

## II. SERIES BIBLE



"Every scene should be able to answer three questions: "Who wants what from whom? What happens if they don't get it? Why now?"

- David Mamet



Actor, writer, author of  
True and False, required  
reading for any acting  
program cult



What exactly do you remember about college? Was it the keg stands, the hookups, the late night study sessions at IHOP? Or was it the one teacher who changed your life?

In *THE ACTOR'S GANG*, we follow a college freshman, DEMARIS, as she navigates her first year in a new college Acting program. She pays the tuition, gets her honorary black turtleneck, and settles in for her first callback of the semester, taking direction from her charming teacher, PAUL. What she'll come to find, however, is that the teachers (and this school) might not be what they seem...



*It's also based on a true story...*



Payton  
(the writer)  
in her own  
acting cult



# THE WORLD

THE ACTORS GANG series is set in the small town of San Marcos, TX, about an hour from anywhere interesting but well worth it for the internationally recognized acting training. Here, the main university sits at the bottom of a great hill...

With a moat-surrounded ACTING CENTER at its highest peak.



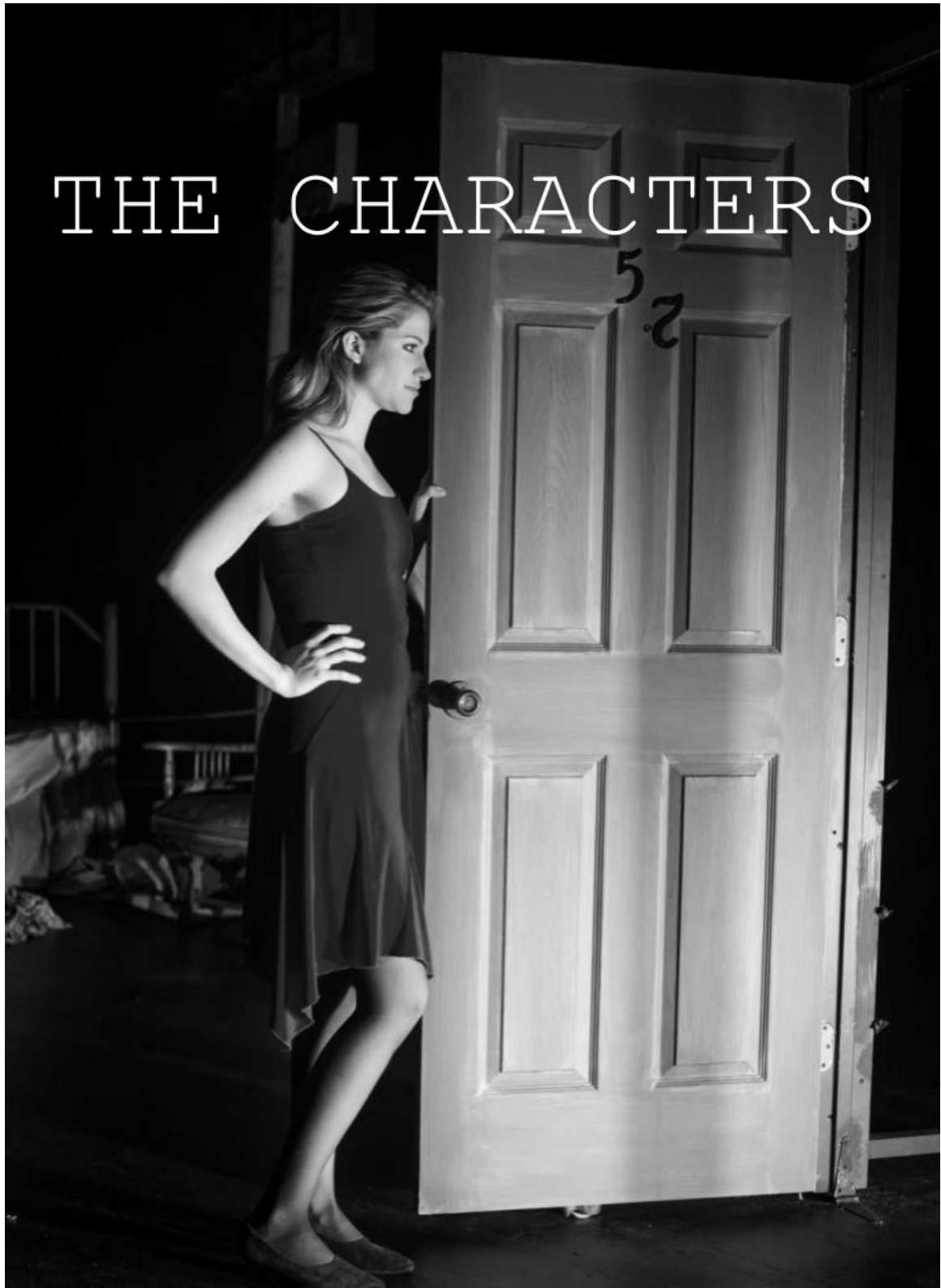




The Actors Gang is a four-year college program, that's incredibly difficult to get into: Not just any actor can go here; you have to be CHOSEN. There's no outside guests, no visitors, no Christmas visits home. Acting is sacred. And it deserves sacred time.

New students sign a contract, pay their tuition, and receive their daily uniform: a plain black turtleneck. All acting students are required to live together in one co-ed Residence Hall, and there's no taking classes at the top of the hill. Who needs math if you're an actor?

The Actor's Gang has been up-and-running for twenty years, founded by Paul in 2001. In that time, numerous stars have stepped through its doors, including Jack Black and Demi Lovato. But Paul can never *really* let a student go...





# Demaris Rivera



The Striver. Focused. 18 and uncomfortably tall. Demaris is more than your average college actor (which is to say, she has a brain... Demaris was a straight-A student from age three, yet her confident energy masks deep insecurities about her ability to succeed, and deep misjudgement of who to trust...

Demaris went to high school with MEL, her now-roommate, and she met her boyfriend, BRANDON, online. Demaris serves as our POV throughout the series.

# Brandon Frazier



The Investigator. Shattered. 19 going on 55. Brandon is Demaris' boyfriend, but he's also a whole lot more... Having lost his sister five years ago when she mysteriously went missing, Brandon sets out to find her in the last place she was seen: The Acting Studio. A five year student because of his long term plot for infiltration, Brandon has tried for years to try to date

a girl on the inside... and Demaris is his first taker. Brandon's plot takes a backseat as Demaris' story unravels, but his mission is always there.



# Paul Stewart



The Leader. Charming  
42 and bald  
(obviously). Paul  
isn't just a  
professor, he's a  
neighbor, a director,  
and a father to these  
students (or at least  
he'd like to think  
so). Paul founded the  
Actors Gang twenty  
years ago, when he  
was just a young  
graduate himself.  
Since, he's built  
everything from the  
ground up, an empire  
of actors surrounding

him. Paul's Demaris' biggest obstacle throughout  
Season 1, until we learn something that might  
change our minds...



**Ava White:** The Star. 18 and seemingly perfect. She's Demaris' on-stage rival because of her annoying blonde hair, but all Ava's ever wanted was a clear father figure. CUE: Paul.



**Lorelai:** The Witch. 34. Lover of Reiki and manifestation. Lorelai teaches the students the lessons of the heart. She serves as a sensual mentor for the young women, later on, because what is a teacher if not a sex guru?



**Owen Fey:** The Buff. 22. Not too smart. Owen looks like your average dude bro, but he's got a small dick and huge heart. Throughout S1, he serves as a naive aid to Paul's plans...



**Mel:** The Believer. 18. Bubbly af. Mel is so wrapped up in Paul's lies that she might even betray Demaris - her long time close friend - to keep the program together.

# The (Rest of the) Family:

These are the other freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors (about 40 in total) that surround our leading three. We'll come to know some of them throughout the season, and perhaps a few alumni, too... (Jack Black, are you available?)



# Pilot Summary:

## Episode 1: The Crucible

The series begins with DEMARIS and her fellow acting freshman in their Residence Hall for a first day offering ceremony to the Spirit of the Gang. *The bigger the offering, the better your role.* The students offer a wealth of different items, from jewelry to coupons to toys to vibrators, but poor Demaris is forced to pay with the last bill in her wallet. Meanwhile, BRANDON, Demaris' boyfriend, spies on the Residence Hall, doing detective work on his missing sister, ANNALYSE, who once was an acting student, too.

As the ceremony finishes, Paul announces the callback list, Demaris called back for Abigail, her dream role, in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*.

The callback begins the next day in the Blackbox. Demaris struggles when Paul asks about Abigail's favorite sex positions, but Paul assures her it's *specificity* that is most important to acting. Sensing her

frustration, Paul calls for a break, and Demaris calls Brandon feeling like a failure. Meanwhile, Brandon hacks the building's surveillance cameras, reassuring Demaris all will be fine. Then, Paul finds Demaris, complimenting her talent and reminding her to trust him.

After the break, Demaris proves her trust to Paul through showing off in a particularly sexy scene. Paul pushes Demaris to her knees, pressing her face against Owen's jeaned penis. Paul calls another actress, AVA, to the stage next. The cast list is left unannounced until the next day...

When Demaris bolts awake from a terrifying penis dream, finding Paul and the freshmen already on the front patio, CAST LIST in hand. Paul posts it to the wall, and Demaris finds out that she wasn't, in fact, cast. She's the *understudy*. Distraught, Brandon watches through his surveillance cameras as Paul hugs a crying Demaris, whispering something in her ear. We FLASHBACK to the day they met, Paul having driven 9-year-old Demaris home after a long show. He hands her a BROCHURE, advertising The Actors Gang. He tells her she'll one day be a STAR.



# A Look Ahead: Future Episodes

## Episode 2: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolfe?

To brighten the mood from the callbacks, Paul invites the female students to drinks at his huge MANSION across town. Demaris goes to convince Paul he was wrong about the casting. Meanwhile, Brandon follows Demaris, wanting to hack the cameras there, as well. As the girls and Paul chatter and play theatre games, Brandon rifles through Paul's room, finding a FILE that's of interest to his case. A drunken Demaris strips for Paul, hoping he'll see her prowess for Abigail, but they're interrupted by Ava and Mel walking in. Paul sends Demaris home. That night, Ava sleeps over alone at Paul's house while Demaris wrestles with the guilt of cheating on Brandon for a role in a play.

## Episode 3: The Importance of Being Earnest

Brandon scours through the file while Demaris and Paul discuss her drunken behavior... (contd)

Paul tells Demaris he'll have to report the stripping incident: it's school policy, but Demaris, mortified, begs him for another solution.

Meanwhile, Brandon visits alumni JACK BLACK, who knew his sister. Paul offers Demaris an unpaid TA role in exchange for his discretion. She accepts, resigning herself to mindless filing, dog walking, and dinner runs to Paul every rehearsal, even updating Paul on all the student gossip. However, when Demaris returns to Paul's office and finds Ava there, napping intimately on Paul's couch, she makes up some gossip, lying that Ava's been sleeping with Jax and Warner. Paul is livid, and Demaris leaves satisfied. Meanwhile, alumni Jack Black gives Brandon gets a BLUEPRINT of the Acting Center, where Brandon sees a SECRET ROOM that's gone unnoticed.

#### **Episode 4: Waiting for Godot**

The next day, Ava doesn't come to class. Or rehearsal, so Demaris excitedly steps in for Abigail. However, at dinner after with the cast, she starts to feel bad about lying when Ava doesn't answer anyone's calls. Demaris goes to Ava's dorm room, but Ava's not there, either. Meanwhile, Brandon, disguised as a janitor, searches the Acting Center for the secret room. Demaris heads to Paul's office, planning to admit she lied... (contd)

Finally, in Paul's office, Brandon finds the a secret room in a basement underneath the floor. When Demaris arrives, she sees the open basement, too. Joined down below, Brandon and Demaris find CAGES, ROBES, and THOUSANDS OF SCROLLS. One of the cages has TALLIES INSIDE ON THE WALL.

Jack Black calls Paul, alerting him of Brandon's investigation.

### Episode 5: A View from the Bridge

Demaris is in Brandon's dorm, and they're both freaking out. Not only did they find CAGES in a SECRET UNDERGROUND ROOM, but Ava's still missing. Demaris recognizes the photos on Brandon's wall as ANNALYSE FRAZIER, the famed alum who went missing a year after graduation, but Brandon still neglects to admit to Demaris he's searching for his sister. Meanwhile, Paul visits the chamber, finding a RATTY BROWN HAIR on the floor. He makes a call.

Then, Brandon then gets a visit from Paul. Paul apologizes for Brandon's loss, but he threatens to hurt Brandon if he keeps snooping in the Gang's business. Brandon attempts (and fails) to spit on Paul's face. Paul locks Brandon in the room using an old-timey rod situation, seeing a FRAMED PHOTO of Demaris in Brandon's room as he leaves. He hadn't known they were together. Demaris goes to Paul's mansion, finding the lost Ava drugged out of her mind in Paul's bed.



### Episode 6: The Glass Menagerie

*This Episode is from Paul's POV.*

FLASHBACK to 1985 - when Paul was 8 years old and had a beautiful *mullet*. He lives with the "Children of God" cult in OC, California, and he acts a scene in their living room from Punky Brewster while the adults around him *fuck*. He's wearing a BANDANA around his head. An OLDER WOMAN hits him, a sign to stop talking, and she takes him toward a bedroom.

Years later, 18 year old Paul leaves the cult while kids are beat in the background. A little girl, Young LORELAI, follows him, and they hop on a bus together. He ties the bandana around her head.

Back to the PRESENT - Paul stands outside his mansion with the same Bandana now wrapped around his wrist. He has Demaris' Instagram open in his hand, showing countless photos of Brandon.

Paul's livid. He goes inside, grabbing a drink and finding Ava and Demaris both awake, sentient, and accusatory. He freaks. Paul, at first, tries to apologize, but when that doesn't work, he zaps them both with a pressure point hold. He takes Demaris and Ava to the chamber, locking them in the cages.

### Episode 7: Macbeth

Demaris and Ava are locked in the cage while Brandon is locked in his room... (contd)

Terrified, the girls call Brandon, Mel, Jax, 911, but there's no service from underground.

Meanwhile, Brandon struggles to work up the courage to jump out of his second floor window. Ava tells Demaris that Paul tried to sleep with her, but he couldn't get it up, and Paul returns with food to bribe the girls into discretion. He brings along ANNALYSE FRAZIER, in the FLESH!! as an example of someone once in their position. *She's not dead!*

Brandon jumps out of the window, breaking his ankles and finding Owen on guard to manhandle Brandon back to his room. Annalyse tells the girls she's worked with Paul for years, and, if they do what he says, keep their head down, do their jobs, they'll be fine. If not, they can leave, no questions asked.

As the girls wrestle with what to do, Paul surprisingly lets the girls out for the night, and they thank him for his nice care while they were incarcerated. Demaris returns to her dorm, mind dazed, and Brandon calls her, telling Demaris that he's stuck in his room, admitting that he's lied all along about their relationship: he's here to investigate the disappearance of his sister, nothing more.

### **Episode 8: True West**

Demaris is hurt from the cage and the betrayal. Has Brandon ever loved her? Has anyone ever loved her? What of her career? ... (contd)

There's a knock on her door, and Demaris opens it to find Ava, who's decided to stay and serve Paul. Demaris, however, feels torn. She wants independence and to help the other brainwashed students, but all her money has been given away to the school, and she has no family back home. Also, the Actors Gang alumni really are fucking successful.

Demaris goes to help a crippled Brandon out of his room, and she tells him about meeting Annalyse. Brandon wants to go to the police. Together, Demaris and Brandon gather their evidence, using Demaris' theatre techniques to make her appear bruised and bloody. But, before they go to the police, they stop by the Acting Center so Demaris can relay her decision.

Demaris goes down to the chamber, finding Paul there in front of his own shrine. She tells him they're taking the information to the police, and Paul doesn't fight back. Instead, he assures Demaris the police are on his side, and he'll receive no flack. Demaris is dejected. As Paul chuckles to himself, Demaris grabs a GUN from her pocket, pointing it at Paul and forcing him into the cage. She offers him a deal, instead. She'll keep quiet and let him out if he steps down as the Head of Program, giving her the power instead. Paul, of course, disagrees, and Demaris leaves him down in the cage, closing the hatch. It's up at the top we see that was a prop gun. Ah, *theatre*.

# Further Ahead: Future Seasons

## Season 2:

With Demaris now as the head of program, there's the opportunity for her to either change the institution from the ground up, or to get lost in her power. I think option 2 is much more interesting. With such a young leader, Demaris struggles to get them on her side, but she hires a jet to Hollywood that gets the whole group deeply excited. With so many famous alumni, Demaris and the Gang get swept into the movies, taking the industry by storm while still in college. However, being in the public eye also means shining a light on the Gang's follies, as well as the mysterious death of Paul...

Season 2 is sexier, bigger, and arguably more sinister, and like all cults, there's the question: who will gain power next?

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