

O WAR by Holly Cate

(Note: The centerpiece of all three plays in this trilogy is an ensemble of citizen CLOWNS. *O WAR* was written for an ensemble of nine CLOWNS. Companies producing this work are encouraged to establish their own line attribution for the CLOWNS. The example below is one way of many to determine which CLOWN says what text.)

ACT II

(A CLOWN enters with mop and bucket and begins cleaning the blood from the stage. He talks to himself as he works, riffing on the sound of Lady Bona's name. The actor is encouraged to improvise.)

CLOWN 5 Bohn-uh. Bona. Bwohnya. Boonya. By'ona.

(Two more CLOWNS enter. They replace the chair with one that looks surprisingly similar to the one they are removing. They largely ignore the mopping CLOWN.)

CLOWN 4 Lima beans.

CLOWN 8 Impossible.

CLOWN 4 What do you mean?

Lima beans. You asked me what I was most looking forward to –
lima beans.

CLOWN 8 No one likes lima beans.

CLOWN 4 Oh, you have not had me mum's lima beans.

CLOWN 5 Boo-nyah.

CLOWN 4 What about you? What are you looking forward to?

CLOWN 8 Sleep. I'm going to sleep for a year.

CLOWN 4 No way – you couldn't do that, even if you wanted to.
It would take too long.

CLOWN 8 No, it wouldn't. 24 times 365 is . . .

(The chair CLOWNS exit.)

CLOWN 5 *(Calling after them)* A year! *(Returning to mopping)* Bul-nee-ah.

(Three more CLOWNS enter, pushing a wheelbarrow. They are rigging Clifford's head, which they will eventually throw up to replace York's.)

CLOWN 2 I'll feel safer when she's back.

CLOWN 3 How long does it take to get to France anyway?

CLOWN 2 48 hours.

CLOWN 5 What? More like 18.

CLOWN 2 That's only if the weather is good. Then she has to meet with King Charles and hope that Bona—

CLOWN 5 *(Interjecting)* Booo-nihyah.

CLOWN 2 *(Continuing)* hasn't been betrothed to someone else in the meantime. I'd say, start to finish, six weeks.

CLOWN 3 I don't understand why we have to get our Queens from France. Can't we have a homegrown Queen?

CLOWN 5 Marrying Edward to Bona is a way of ensuring peace.

CLOWN 2 There's a way to ensure peace?? I wish they'd figured that out sooner.

CLOWN 1 *(Laugh)*

CLOWN 5 *(Dancing with his mop)* Biooon-AH.

CLOWN 2 What is going on with you?

CLOWN 5 I like that she's named Bona. At least it's different. Boonuh.

CLOWN 3 I don't know. Six weeks is a long time. What if Henry comes back?

CLOWN 2 He won't come back – he's in exile.

CLOWN 5 *(In a Scottish accent)* In Scotland.

CLOWN 3 What about Margaret? Is she in Scotland?

CLOWN 5 No . . . *(With great mystery)* She disappeared.

CLOWN 2 She's in France.

CLOWN 1 *(Laugh)*

CLOWN 6 Thanks – wanna come um . . . *(she looks around)* . . . hunting with me?

CLOWN 7 Can I get a jacket like that?

CLOWN 3 Since when are you interested in hunting?

CLOWN 6 It's a hobby, okay.

CLOWN 1 *(Laugh)*

CLOWN 3 *(Eyeing the military CLOWN with suspicion and interest)* Oh, okay . . .

(The chair CLOWNS re-enter with more Coronation Ball preparations. One of the CLOWNS is doing math with his finger on his palm. The wheelbarrow CLOWNS throw Clifford's head into the air, and York's head now descends. No one has any reaction to the heads.)

CLOWN 9 *(Offstage)* Incoming!

CLOWN 8 Eight thousand seven hundred and twenty!

CLOWN 2 *(Aside to a friend)* Does it ever feel like the world has gone slightly mad to you?

CLOWN 3 All the time.

CLOWN 6 Come on – we gotta go.

(Two CLOWNS start to exit with her. Another CLOWN stops them on the way out.)

CLOWN 2 Wait, you're going with her?

CLOWN 3 *(Shrugging)* Eh, I'm curious.

CLOWN 4 Curious about what?

(The hunting party exits, and the wheelbarrow group begin to make their way offstage.)

CLOWN 8 Nope, eight thousand seven hundred and sixty. I forgot to carry the two. I always do that.

CLOWN 2 What are you talking about?

CLOWN 4 She wants to sleep for a year, and she's trying to calculate the total number of hours. Which is, of course, totally pointless.

CLOWN 8 It's not pointless. It's my aim in life, and I'm going to spend the next five years achieving it.

CLOWN 5 Wait – you’re going take five years to sleep for one year?

CLOWN 8 Right.

CLOWN 2 And when do you intend to begin this auspicious project?

CLOWN 8 As soon as we finish our work here.

(Suddenly the lights change and music swells. The CLOWNS flinch and duck for a moment.)

CLOWN 8 Shit, shit, shit, shit—

CLOWN 4 *(Overlapping)* What’s happening?

(EDWARD and ELIZABETH sweep in, dancing.)

CLOWN 5 I think it’s starting – the Coronation Ball is starting!

CLOWN 4 Oh, shit, fuck, SHIT!

(The CLOWNS frantically try to complete their work. RICHARD and GEORGE also enter, holding glasses of Champagne. All are dressed beautifully and formally for the Ball. RICHARD and GEORGE watch their brother, amused. EDWARD stops near his brothers and dips ELIZABETH theatrically. Everyone understands what the game is here.)

EDWARD Brother of Gloucester, at St. Albans field
This lady’s husband, Sir John Grey, was slain,
His lands then seized on by the conqueror.
Her suit is now to repossess those lands;
Which we in justice cannot well deny,
Because in quarrel of the house of York
This worthy gentleman did lose his life.

(EDWARD moves off, still dancing with ELIZABETH.)

RICHARD *(Aside to GEORGE)* Yea, is it so?
I see the lady hath a thing to grant,
Before the King will grant her humble suit.

GEORGE Ay. But what about Warwick?

(RICHARD just shrugs and gives his glass to one of the CLOWNS standing nearby. The CLOWN has no idea what to do with it.)

CLOWN 4 *(Pointing to ELIZ.)* Who’s that?

CLOWN 5 I don’t know, but she sure is pretty . . .

CLOWN 4 Oh, they’re all pretty.