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Little Parts Hunts a Baby-Daddy

Ann Noble

Ann Noble with Unmuted Participants

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Having been rejected for a major acting part, the protagonist of Ann Noble's play shows her hurt and anger by adopting a name reflecting the insignificant roles for which she has in effect been told she is suited: Little Parts. Possibly pregnant and seeking a partner in child-rearing, she advertises on the Internet announcing *Little Parts Hunts a Baby-Daddy*.

Little Parts (acted by author Noble) is also a clown. This is not simply her profession, more her lifestyle—although off the clock, she continues to wear a bulbous red nose and she reveals her career choice to her father in the manner of someone coming out of the closet and declaring their true nature. However, later events suggest this may also have been intended to provoke outrage; Little Parts is not above small acts of revenge.

The commitment of Little Parts to being a clown is such, the tone of the play is funny peculiar as much as funny ha-ha. She addresses the camera with a wide-eyed sense of innocence, inviting the viewer into her off-centre view of the world.

Plot points—the tense daughter / father relationship—and clues—the reason behind her dad's dislike of clowns—are dotted throughout Noble's script but obscured by very entertaining details. Little Parts ties herself in knots trying to discreetly find out the nationality of a candidate named 'Louis', fretting whether he is French. A hushed response from a fellow 'Jingles'—determines the type of clown he is—a silent one.

A major twist is, however, hidden in plain sight. The location in which the monologue takes place looks like a storage closet and props are obviously handmade—a cardboard box is used as a postbox. When Little Parts converses with candidates for the role of partner, the interviewees are represented by a broom wearing spectacles or a globe with a paper hat, so it is hardly a surprise to suggest events are playing out in her imagination.

After all, the play opens with a lengthy digression on what determines reality (Little Parts maintains a letter is not 'real' until it has been stamped and wonders if people should only be considered human if they have been stamped as if entering a nightclub). She acknowledges she is carrying a 'maybe baby' and asks candidates how they will cope if the child turns out not to be real. The name change to Little Parts demonstrates she is capable of taking extreme and eccentric action so one might wonder if the daddy hunting process is her attempt to resolve the dysfunctional relationship with her own father by finding a father figure more tolerant of her lifestyle.

Clever wordplay is a feature of the script but, having lulled the audience into a false sense of an ending, Noble delivers a genuine twist with Little Parts wordlessly revealing her true profession and nature to build to a very moving conclusion.

Little Parts Hunts a Baby—is a genuinely surprising play with an endearing protagonist and an engaging script.

Reviewer: [David Cunningham](#)