

Written by Rita Shelton Deverell
Directed by Don Molnar

SYNOPSIS

Who you Callin Black Eh? is a coming of age play set in Canada's largest, most multicultural, multilingual city, that is not about sexuality, but is about colour.

Wherever Our Heroine goes, whatever she does, with whomever she relates, she is not Black Enough or White Enough to find her people. Shadism causes her to be shunned. Who is she? Where is she going? What is the meaning of life, her life that is? What colour is she? – a very basic question of identity and coming of age, a question for millennials.

5 Actors are needed:

Setting

In reach of the 5 actors, and easy sight of the audience, is a colour wheel of masks, which could be as simple as inexpensive fans, painted all shades of skin from lily white to ebony black. This colour wheel can look like paint samples in Home Depot.

***Who you Callin Black eh?** is **not** a completely “masked” show. The actors also use their own skin/faces when appropriate. Putting on and taking off masks is transparent to us; nobody ever leaves the stage. The masks will allow the 5 actors to play an entire range of characters as well as Crowds, who are like a Chorus (in the classical Greek sense).*

Characters:

--**Actor 1 - OUR HEROINE**, 20-30 something, skin very slightly brown-ish.

--To play multiple characters: 4 actors, age not really important, ideally skin colours from lilly white to ebony black. Everyone contributes to **CROWDS/CHORUS**.

-2. **Actor 2** --A Youngish Man, will play Heroine's **DREAM BOYFRIEND**; a working colleague, a social justice comrade (possibly Black Lives Matter or a Syrian Refugee sponsorship group is the justice group).

-3. **Actor 3** -- An Older Woman, will play **HEROINE'S MOTHER**; a working colleague, **BLACK LULU LEMON**; Heroine's **FUTURE MOTHERINLAW**; a social justice comrade; and Our Heroine's best friend in high school.

-4. **Actor 4** - An Older Man, will play **Our HEROINE'S FATHER**; Heroine's **FUTURE FATHERINLAW**; an employer, **MR. HUGO BOSS**; and will be in a social justice opposition group.

-5. **Actor 5** --Not age/gender/race specific, **Narrator/Chorus Leader**. A resonant, multi-character voice is important, the kind used in audio books.

Scene 1.

Actor 5 = NARRATOR/CHORUS LEADER

The title of the play is Who you Callin Black eh?

Scene One, the only kitchen sink part of this drama, is when Our Heroine's Mom and Dad, someplace in Atlantic Canada, have a terrible argument about the texture of their 6-year-old's kinky hair.

Actor 3 = OUR HEROINE'S MOM

There's nothing on her head so good and precious that it can't be straightened.

Actor 4 = OUR HEROINE'S DAD

Why don't you worry about what's in her head?

Actor 3 = OUR HEROINE'S MOM

I'm more worried about what's in yours.

Actor 4 = DAD

You used to think that my beautiful soul was enough for you.

Actor 3 = MOM

Oh well.

That was then. This is now.

Hand me that curling iron right now.

All the girls use them. Even white girls. So you don't have to be so touchy.

You have such a big chip on your shoulder, you have no idea what's good for our little girl.

Actor 4 = DAD

Yeah! And you've got a log in your own blue eyes that you're so proud of.

I will not help to burn my child.

To teach her to hate every hair on her head.

Her skin.

Her self.

I'm not that crazy.

Actor 3 = MOM

I'm not burning her! For God's sake.

Just improving her a teensy bit.

I want her to look like beautiful Viola Desmond.

Not like fat black rag-headed Aunt Jemima.

Actor 4 – DAD

She's 6 years old Trudy for God's sake.
She should be a carefree bouncy little tyke, with lots of bouncy little corkscrew curls.

Actor 3 - MOM

I certainly don't hate her.
Hate has nothing to do with it.

Actor 4 = DAD

No, that's reserved for me.

Actor 3 = MOM

We don't have to fight like this. She'll hear us.

Actor 4 = DAD

And that worries you?
She'll hear. Right.
Kinky hair, brown skin, and all of her will hear.

Actor 3 = MOM

You are such a liar.

Actor 4 = DAD

What about? That her mother hates her?
And her Mom hates her Dad.
Maybe your hate is about my skin colour?

Actor 3 = MOM

Whatever.
Just give me the hot comb to take to her nappy head. Right now.
That hair has five minutes to get straight.
And so do you.