

Good Game: the story and the rules by Ben Teague

1. Why Good Game?

Auditions in our community theater can be frustrating: When you read for the first time, you have no energy and no ideas. It's only on the second reading, when you begin to get your timing and a feel for the script, that you accomplish anything. I wanted to short-circuit the process of building energy and animation, so I invented a simple game for the beginning of audition evening. The players at our *Arcadia* auditions (October 2008) responded well to it.

2. Where did it come from?

Every Little League baseball game ends the same way. One team forms a line, and the members of the second team pass down the line shaking hands and exchanging compliments. I adapted their ritual for my audition game.

3. How do you play Good Game?

All the performers form two lines facing each other.

After saying the rules, you give the "Go" signal and the game begins.

Here's a little script you can use to explain the rules:

Shake hands with the person you're facing, say "Good Game" and introduce yourself. Then move a half-step to your left so that you face the next person in the facing line. Repeat the greeting. If you are at the end of a line, just turn the corner. If you find yourself not facing anyone for a moment, shake hands with yourself. The game ends when everyone has greeted everyone else.

There are two more rules: First, you can't do the greeting the same way twice; you have to shake hands a different way with every person you greet.

Final rule: Belly-bumps by mutual consent only.

4. Did the results justify the effort?

On both our audition nights, the performers made a loud, agitated racket, which met my hopes. Their energy did carry over to their readings, although with better planning we could have taken better advantage of it. I certainly plan to use Good Game again the next time I hold auditions.