Title
Turns Out I'm Funny

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Turns Out I’m Funny

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts in

Theatre and Dance (Acting)

by

Denise Flaten

Committee in charge:

Kyle Donnelly, Chair
Ursula Meyer
Charlie Oates
Manuel Rotenberg

2014
The thesis of Denise Flaten is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2014
DEDICATION

To my family, who kept me fed and clothed and loved while I travelled my path.
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File 11. Second *Grapes of Wrath* production photo
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am extremely grateful to my professors for inviting me into this program and being amazing generous with their time and wisdom.

I am also inexpressibly grateful to my fellow classmates: Danvir Singh Grewal, Michael Sweeney Hammond, Jasmine St. Clair, Chaz Hodges, Tom Patterson, Ronnie Kirk Washington, and Gerard Joseph. They have all shaped who I am today.
I came into this program wanting to become the most employable actor possible. Two years working as an actor in New York made me bitter and I was hoping grad school would give me the skills to land every role I auditioned for. Three years in La Jolla later, I have skills too wonderful to have even been imagined or wished for when I started.

It turns out I’m funny! Starting this program, I would have never thought to set a goal of perfecting my comedic skills. I didn’t think I had them. But the more I worked, the more the humor unintentionally tumbled from my mouth. Even in material that wasn’t outright comedy. I almost couldn’t stop it.
It turns out I am a good producer. Coming in, I thought, frankly, that my education would be perfect and outside projects couldn’t teach me more. But in my spare time here, I produced three short films. Seeing my peers’ unfinished projects reminds me how large and perhaps rare a skill this is. I never knew I had it in me.

But most importantly, it turns out that my joy in the process of preparing a role is far larger than the joy in simply landing a role. I do not need to land every role I audition for as I’d earlier hoped. I have rediscovered the joy of the craft. And that will be my greatest weapon against bitterness as I re-enter the professional world.