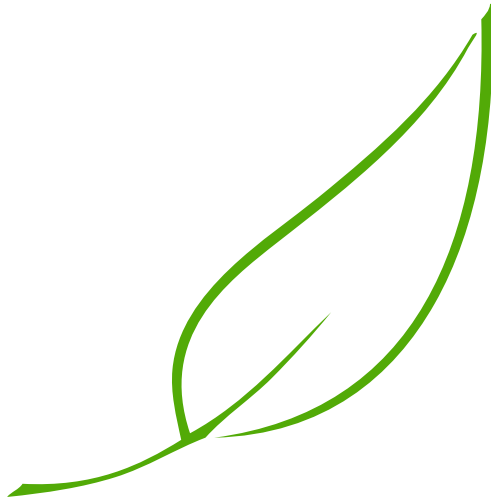


BUFFER ZONE

by Ken Bradbury



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Celeste

Woman One

Woman Two

Woman Three

Guest

(Celeste sits at a desk.)

WOMAN ONE: *(rushing in)* Is this it?

CELESTE: *(a beat, then)* Have a seat, please.

WOMAN ONE: Is this it?

CELESTE: Are you here?

WOMAN ONE: What do you mean? Of course I'm here.

CELESTE: Then this is it.

WOMAN ONE: Oh. *(she sits)*

CELESTE: *(to Woman Two, running in)* Could I help you?

WOMAN TWO: Is this ...

CELESTE: Yes.

WOMAN TWO: But is this ...

WOMAN ONE: Don't argue.

WOMAN TWO: What?

WOMAN ONE: This is it.

WOMAN TWO: Oh.

CELESTE: Have a seat.

WOMAN TWO: *(sitting)* Oh.

(a long pause, then)

WOMAN ONE: *(standing)* Do we ...?

CELESTE: No.

WOMAN TWO: *(standing)* Should I ...?

CELESTE: Not yet. Have a seat. *(they sit)*

WOMAN TWO: Okay.

WOMAN ONE: I mean, this is all new, you know.

CELESTE: Don't worry. It's quite simple really.

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WOMAN THREE: (*running in*) Excuse me, is this ...?

WOMAN ONE & WOMAN TWO: Have a seat.

WOMAN THREE: (*sits*) Sorry.

CELESTE: (*finishes writing something, then*) Now. Who was first?

(*the three look at each other*)

WOMAN ONE: (*finally, standing*) I guess that would be me.

CELESTE: Then you'll be last. Have a seat.

WOMAN ONE: Oh. (*sits*)

WOMAN THREE: Me then? I'm last.

CELESTE: First.

WOMAN THREE: Right. My name is ...

CELESTE: We know your name.

WOMAN THREE: Oh. I suppose you do.

CELESTE: That's why you're here.

WOMAN THREE: Of course.

CELESTE: We know your name.

WOMAN THREE: Of course.

CELESTE: (*looking through her papers*) Now ... when did you die?

WOMAN THREE: (*shocked*) Oh.

CELESTE: Excuse me?

WOMAN THREE: I'm sorry, I ... well, that's the first time I've heard it put that way.

CELESTE: You'll get used to it.

WOMAN THREE: I suppose so.

CELESTE: So?

WOMAN THREE: Uh ... just now. Just a moment ago, actually.

CELESTE: You came here directly?

WOMAN THREE: I think I did. I mean, there was no stopover or anything.

CELESTE: (*writing*) Protestant.

WOMAN TWO: (*a beat, then to Woman Three*) You came direct? No waiting? How'd you do that?

CELESTE: (*glancing at Woman Two, then writing*) Catholic.

WOMAN ONE: I'm not sure how I got here.

CELESTE: (*writing*) Universalist.

WOMAN ONE: In fact, I'm not even sure where I am.

CELESTE: (*scratching out what she's written and writing again*) Agnostic.

WOMAN THREE: Do you want to know how I died?

CELESTE: No.

WOMAN THREE: Oh.

CELESTE: It's not important.

WOMAN THREE: Oh.

WOMAN TWO: (*to Woman One*) How *did* you die?

CELESTE: It's not important.

WOMAN TWO: Oh.

WOMAN ONE: (*unable to hold it in, blurts out*) I was in a plane crash. (*the three do a slow take to her... She is cowed*)

CELESTE: Thank you for sharing. Now, about your future here ... (*the three eagerly stand*) What are you doing?

WOMAN THREE: Nothing. You just mentioned our future.

CELESTE: I know. Have a seat. (*they do ... a pause as Celeste continues to write*)

WOMAN TWO: (*to Woman One*) Domestic or International?

WOMAN ONE: A little Cessna. I should have known better.

CELESTE: (*a long stare*)

WOMAN ONE: Sorry.

WOMAN TWO: Sorry.

WOMAN ONE: (*a pause, then*) Storm.

CELESTE: Excuse me?

WOMAN ONE: It was a storm. (*a pause*) Sorry. (*looks round*) Oh, I lost my carry-on!

CELESTE: We don't take luggage. Please, just relax.

WOMAN THREE: I'm terrified.

CELESTE: That's natural.

WOMAN THREE: Thank God.

CELESTE: Yes. (*a short take, then a laugh from the three*) (*to Woman Two*) And now you.

WOMAN THREE: You're finished with me? (*standing*) I mean, don't I have to ... I don't know ... sign something ... put down a deposit?



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