

MORNING COFFEE

by Ken Bradbury



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Mother
Father
Leonora
Max
Ruff, the dog

(Mother and Father sit drinking their morning coffee and reading the newspaper.)

MOTHER: More coffee?

FATHER: *(a long beat, then)* Sure.

MOTHER: *(pouring)* Think we should wake the children?

FATHER: Who?

MOTHER: The children. We have two of them.

FATHER: *(a long beat, then)* Oh. Might as well.

MOTHER: What were their names?

FATHER: *(a beat, then)* Who?

MOTHER: The children.

FATHER: Oh. *(a beat, then)* Who?

MOTHER: The children ... names. I've forgotten.

FATHER: *(a beat, then)* You must write these things down.

LEONORA: *(running in, hysterical)* Ahhhh! Mom! Dad! Max is in trouble!

FATHER: *(indicating Leonora)* There's one of them now.

MOTHER: Leonora. Her name's Leonora. I remember her now.

LEONORA: Max slipped in the shower! He's hurt!

FATHER: Max?

MOTHER: Your son.

LEONORA: Mother!

FATHER: Oh.

LEONORA: Come help me! Please! I think he's broken his leg!

MOTHER: You can do that better.

FATHER: Not convincing.

LEONORA: What are you talking about?

MOTHER: Sweetheart ... uh ...

LEONORA: Leonora.

MOTHER: Leonora darling, your father and I have paid big money for your education at The Delacarte School of Theatre. Then you come in here this morning with this utterly unconvincing performance.

LEONORA: This is not a performance! Max slipped in the shower and broke his leg!

MOTHER: That's hardly the point.

FATHER: Hardly the point.

LEONORA: He's lying there crying the shower with a bone sticking out of his leg!

FATHER: Emote.

LEONORA: What?

MOTHER: Your father wants you to emote more, dear.

LEONORA: I am not acting!

FATHER: You're telling me. Terrible performance, just terrible.

MAX: (*groans painfully offstage*)

LEONORA: Listen to him.

FATHER: Who's that?

LEONORA: That's Max! I think he's dying!

FATHER: There you go again. Over the top. Let the script speak for itself.

LEONORA: The script!!?

FATHER: The author's intentions, Lena. Don't infuse it with your own personal whims.

LEONORA: My name's Leonora, father, and it's no whim!

MAX: (*screams in pain, still offstage*)

LEONORA: I'm coming, Max!

FATHER: Where are you going?

LEONORA: I'm going to help Max!

FATHER: But I mean, why. What's your motivation, sweetheart? An actress can't just go shouting about willy-nilly without proper motivation.

LEONORA: I'm going crazy!

FATHER: Weak.

LEONORA: What?

MOTHER: Insanity is so overused, dear. I mean it's so ... so amateurish.

FATHER: Copout?

MOTHER: Yes, that's it. A copout. And predictable. Insanity is always predictable in the hands of amateurs.

LEONORA: (*grabbing Father by the shirt*) Would one of you please help me?!

FATHER: Now that's good. ... physicalization.

MOTHER: Nice presence. Much more believable.

FATHER: I was nearly moved.

LEONORA: (*grabbing Mother*) Your son could be dying in the shower!

MAX: (*screams offstage*)

FATHER: Open yourself up, dear.

LEONORA: What!!

FATHER: Cheat it out. Bring it toward the audience. You're blocking. You're blocking.

LEONORA: I'm going to help Max!

FATHER: Where do you think you're going?

LEONORA: I just said I'm going to help Max!

FATHER: That is the worst exit line I've ever heard. Check your script.

MOTHER: Perhaps it's just overwritten.

FATHER: Happens a great deal. Then at least underplay it.

MOTHER: Try this. (*posing, then*) "I'm going to help Max."

FATHER: No. Your mother's an old Method actor. Just state the line dear.

MOTHER: Sorry. "I'm going to help Max."

FATHER: Yes. Yes, that did it. Perfect. (*to Leonora*) Now you try it, Lena.

LEONORA: If you won't help me then I'll do it myself!

FATHER: (*to Mother*) Better, don't you think?

MOTHER: Much better. A sense of danger ... foreboding.

MAX: (*comes crashing into the room and lands on the floor with a scream*)



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