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Dramatic Publishing



BROODING AND DANGEROUS

by
DANIEL FENTON



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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For Suzi ...

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Brooding and Dangerous was staged at the Harold Clurman Theatre in New York City as part of the annual Off-Off Broadway Original Short Plays Festival in March 1999. The production was directed by Richard Tazik and included the following cast:

Sid	LOU GEORGE
Kenneth	JAY BURNS
Margaret	CHERYL ORSINI
Mrs. Getz	JANIE KELLY

BROODING AND DANGEROUS

A Play in One Act
For 2 men and 2 women

CHARACTERS

SID in his early 30s

KENNETH Sid's neighbor

MARGARET Sid's wife

MRS. GETZ Kenneth's mother

TIME: The present.

PLACE: An apartment building.

BROODING AND DANGEROUS

SETTING: *Minimal set required, only enough to indicate an outdoor hall that runs between or alongside a row of apartments. Doors lead to two apartments—to the new apartment of SID and MARGARET, and to the apartment of KENNETH and his mother, MRS. GETZ.*

AT RISE: *SID moves boxes from his car offstage into his new apartment. He is overdressed for a Saturday, particularly since he is moving. He is carrying a box and has a list in his hand. KENNETH, his new neighbor, watches from nearby.*

KENNETH (*pointing back at SID's car offstage*). Hey, buddy, your car's leaking oil.

SID (*looking back*). Huh? Where? (*Ducks down with KENNETH to get a view under the car.*) Aw, jeez... I just had it changed. (*He gets back up and brushes himself off.*) Yeah, well, thanks.

KENNETH (*standing face to face with SID*). I can fix it.
SID. Yeah?

KENNETH (*starting toward the car*). Sure, I'll take a look.

SID (*stopping him*). Oh, well... Hey, that's all right.

KENNETH (*a nervous laugh*). I bet you're glad I seen it.

SID (*attempts to go inside with the box*). Well, yeah. I been so busy I didn't notice.

KENNETH (*stopping him*). I noticed after you left a while back.

SID. Well, thanks. You, uh, you got a good eye.

KENNETH (*stopping him again, reaching out to shake hands*). My name's Kenneth. I live across the hall. Right there. Me and my mom.

SID (*business-like; referring to his list*). Sid, Kenneth. I'm kind of in a rush. We have to get everything moved in and settled this weekend. I'm starting a new job on Monday morning. Jeez, Monday morning! You really think you can fix it?

KENNETH (*eyeing the car again, pulling a wrench from his pocket*). Stand back. We'll take a look at her. (*Exits. We hear the sound of the hood coming up and KENNETH getting under the car.*)

SID. No, hey, wait... (*Putting down the box and following KENNETH, then coming back to the box, not wanting to leave it alone. We hear the business of KENNETH working as SID waits.*) You, uh, you know a lot about cars, Kenneth?

KENNETH. No, but my brother, he's a mechanic.

SID. Oh. I tell you what. Don't worry about...

KENNETH. I can tell when the oil is leaking, though, because it leaves a big splotch of oil where you parked, and...

SID (*interrupting, irritated*). Yeah, I know.

KENNETH. Ah, there it is.

SID. What is it?

(*Car hood slams down. KENNETH returns, wiping his hands and an oily plug on a nice white shirt.*)

KENNETH. Can't trust those oil lube places. (*Leaning in to SID, whispering and showing him the oily plug wrapped in a white shirt.*) I hear they're government run.

SID. Hey, that's my good white shirt!

KENNETH. OK. I'm sorry. Here. (*He looks around to see if the coast is clear, takes the plug and tosses it far like a football.*) You and Margaret just moving in, huh?

SID. Hey, that was my plug!

KENNETH. You don't want that one.

SID. But I...

KENNETH. I put in a new one. Don't you worry about it.

SID (*stares at him blankly.*) You just threw my plug!
(*Beat.*) Wait a minute. You've met Margaret already?

KENNETH. Yeah, she brought over a coffee cake. Said you two was just married.

SID. She brought over a coffee cake?

KENNETH (*pointing at the car, then quietly to SID*). Whoever changed your oil didn't tighten the plug underneath.
(*Louder now.*) Margaret says you been living with her folks. I been living with my mom since my divorce two years ago. It ain't easy.

SID. OK. Why did you...?

KENNETH. OK. I see living with my mom and then living with my ex-wife and I count my blessings.

SID. So they forgot to tighten the plug.

KENNETH (*looking around*). Sssshh! Be careful what you say out here.

SID. What?

KENNETH. So you're trying to get a job up there at that bank? (*Then quietly to SID.*) Just, you know, trust me.

SID. Did Margaret tell you that, too? Huh! She's a talker, isn't she? *(Beat.)* What do you mean? Don't say anything around here?

KENNETH *(loudly and suspiciously)*. Sssshhh! *(Beat.)* Yeah, she's a talker. She didn't tell me, though. I seen you in there talking to the boss the other day.

SID. Oh.

KENNETH. There's a pretty girl works at that bank.

SID. You put a new plug back in my car?

KENNETH. I go up there and visit her a lot.

SID. I can't believe they forgot to tighten that. That means all that oil's run out.

KENNETH. It's just as well. You want to put in your own oil. *(A beat, then out of the blue:)* Can I borrow your car?

SID. What?

KENNETH. Can I borrow your car?

SID. Uh, I don't know. What do you need it for?

KENNETH. I need to be somewhere by three.

SID. Oh, well, how were you planning to get there?

KENNETH. Um, well, I was hopin' to borrow your car.

SID. I mean, before me.

KENNETH. What?

SID. Never mind. So you put in a new plug?

KENNETH. A brand new one. Don't you worry about it.
(He ducks down to look under the car again.)

SID. So, you're not a mechanic. What is it you do, Kenneth?

KENNETH. I'm disabled.

SID. Disabled?

KENNETH. The doctor says I'm paranoid schizophrenic.

SID. Oh.

KENNETH. I'm not though.

SID. Yeah?

KENNETH. I'm just paranoid.

SID. Oh.

KENNETH. My brother's schizophrenic.

SID. The mechanic? What's that all about?

KENNETH. What?

SID. What you say? Paranoid schitzo...

KENNETH. Well, it's where, you know, well, you think somebody's like out to get ya.

SID. Hmmm.

KENNETH. Yeah, like they might think that somebody's puttin' poison in their drinks, or somebody's, you know, followin' 'em or somethin', or somebody's tryin' to kill 'em maybe.

SID. Wow.

KENNETH. I'm not schizophrenic though. (*Whispering to SID.*) People really are tryin' to kill me.

SID. Really? Well, listen, I gotta...

KENNETH (*stopping him again*). You ride a motorcycle?

SID. Uh, yeah.

KENNETH. You lost your hair.

SID. Well, not really. A little, I guess. But...

KENNETH. My brother rides a motorcycle. My mom says that's how he lost his hair.

SID. It blew off?

KENNETH (*laughs*). Yeah. (*Beat.*) Mind if I come over sometimes?

SID. Uh, well, you know. Call first.

MARGARET (*entering*). Sid... Sid... Oh, honey, you've met Kenneth.

SID. Yes, I was trying to tell him a little bit about myself, but it seems he's already gotten the scoop.

KENNETH. Hey, Margaret, maybe your husband can fix me up with that pretty girl at the bank.

MARGARET. Why, that's a great idea! We could have her over for dinner.

SID. Oh, I don't know.

MARGARET. Why not? That would be... *(Looking at SID.)* Then again, maybe she doesn't like coming to people's houses for dinner. Some people are funny about that. *(SID exits with the box. MARGARET whispers.)* I'll work on him.

KENNETH. I fixed the oil leak in your car.

MARGARET. You are handy. That's the most important thing, you know, handiness. My mother always said, "Marry someone handy." My father was handy. Of course, Sid's not handy at all. *(Yelling so he can hear her.)* He's good at other things though! *(Back to KENNETH, whispering.)* He's so sensitive.

KENNETH. Can I borrow your car? *(Beat.)*

MARGARET. Hmm?

KENNETH. Can I borrow your car?

MARGARET. I, uh, well, I suppose that wouldn't hurt.

(She hands him the keys. MRS. GETZ, Kenneth's mother, yells from offstage.)

MRS. GETZ. Kenneth, Kenneth, I need you... What are you doing out here? Bothering people?

KENNETH. Margaret's gonna let me use her car.

MARGARET. Well, I just thought...