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Dramatic Publishing



Coffee Break

by
Jerry Thompson

From...

35 in 10

Thirty-Five Ten-Minute Plays

Compiled and Edited

KENT R. BROWN



Dramatic Publishing

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COFFEE BREAK

By
Jerry Thompson

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Coffee Break premiered in 2003 with the Provincetown Theatre Company under the direction of Robert Seaver, and featured Peter Scarbo Frawley and Deborah Peabody. It was also produced at the Academy of Performing Arts in Orleans, Mass., and was chosen for the 2003 Last Frontier Theatre Conference in Valdez, Alaska.

CHARACTERS

AL: Early 70s.

ANNA: Early 30s.

SETTING: The back of a modest home in a small New England town.

TIME: The present, late June. About nine a.m.

COFFEE BREAK

AT THE CURTAIN: *AL is painting a door. Downstage of him are two sawhorses standing side by side. A plank is laid across them. ANNA approaches carrying two cups of take-out coffee.*

AL. Took ya long enough! Whaddya do, stop at the beauty parlor fer a manicure? (*ANNA, used to this sort of abuse, does not respond. She places coffee cups on the plank and sits down beside them. AL goes over to a window on the back of the house. Examines the window. Turns to ANNA. Angry. Shouting:*) How many times have I told ya that ya gotta prime the window muntins* before ya putty 'em?

ANNA. Probably a hundred times.

AL. Then why the hell didn't ya prime 'em yesterday, after ya took out the broken glass? Ya can't glaze a window if it ain't primed! I tole ya—the putty won't stick! Jesus! (*Pulls off his hat and hurls it on the ground, moves to the plank. Sits down. Removes the top from the coffee cup. Sips coffee.*) Sometimes you make me so goddamn mad! Now we're goin' ta be here an extra day waitin' fer the damn primer ta dry!

ANNA (*calm, even tone*). I did prime the muntins. You better take a closer look.

AL. Whaddya talkin' about? (*Gets off the plank. Goes to the window and examines it.*) Look here, there ain't a

* Strips of wood separating panes of glass in a window sash.

drop a paint on these muntins? Now we got ta paint 'em and wait all day fer it ta dry before we can putty 'em. These people want us outa here. They're goin' ta be pissed!

ANNA. I used linseed oil. You said it worked better. You better put on your glasses, Al.

AL (*examines the window more closely. Touches the muntin*). Oh, yah. Yah. I guess ya did. (*Returns to the plank and sits down, picks up the coffee cup and sips.*)

ANNA (*trying to maintain control after AL's tirade*). Al, if you keep flying off the handle like that, you're going to have a heart attack. You don't have to yell all the time to get the job done right.

AL. I'm the boss. I have to yell. People always try ta take advantage of their boss. It's jus' human nature. Like you! Moseyin' in ta work every mornin' like ya ain't got a care in the world. I got responsibility. I got ta make sure the job keeps movin' along.

ANNA (*angry*). Responsibility? Responsibility? I've got a three-year old daughter. Wouldn't you call that responsibility?

AL. Yeah. (*Pause.*) Yeah a 'course I would but ya got ta...

ANNA. You know full well that the reason I come moseying in here late is because I've got to drop Tina off at daycare. And you manage to make up for the lost time by keeping me here every day 'til five-thirty cleaning brushes.

AL. You ain't on vacation ya know! This ain't Disney World! This is the real world. (*Pause.*)