

A Rare Case

One Act Play

by
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| CHARACTER NAME | BRIEF DESCRIPTION | AGE | GENDER |
|----------------|---|-------|--------|
| Colleen | Peri-menopausal, slightly neurotic and hyper. | 40s | Female |
| Sheila | Colleen's older sister. Wisened. Doesn't take shit from anyone. | 55-60 | Female |
| Derek | Colleen's husband, OCD. A computer science professor. | 50-55 | Male |
| Alan | Sheila's husband. Believes himself to be upper crust, but is no where near. He is also a professor. | 55-65 | Male |
| Alena | Sheila and Alan's daughter | 20s | Female |
| Dr. Langram | The emergency psychiatrist. | 35-45 | |

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

FADE IN

COLLEEN and DEREK's living room. Down center stage is a sofa and coffee table, with a chess board, a side chair is stage left from sofa. Up center stage, a table and a refrigerator with a freezer.

Up stage left is a single chair for the psych ward. The stage is clearly divided; The living room/kitchen and the Psych ward.

COLLEEN is half standing outside, half inside the freezer.

COLLEEN:

(Moaning)
Ohhhh god help me!

SHE begins to unbutton her top, then takes an iced tray and fans herself. SHEILA enters from down center. SHE doesn't notice COLLEEN as she enters.

SHEILA:

Colleen! Hey! Where are you?

COLLEEN:

I'm in the kitchen, Sheila. Ughhhhhh.

SHEILA:

What's the matter? You sound funny! (Beat)

(As she sees Colleen)
For heaven's sake! What are you doin' in there?

COLLEEN:

My god, I feel like I'm going to burst into flames! What fresh hell is this? Did I piss off satan and he's punishing me, by setting me on fire?

SHEILA:

(Laughing)
Leenie, get a grip. You're being such a drama queen!

COLLEEN:

It's not funny. I'm hot in places that have never been steamy, even when Derek and I are in the sheets. What is wrong with me? (Beat) Am I going to die? Is this some exotic disease, like in Contagion--

She lays her head back into the freezer.

SHEILA:

No, you silly twit. You're just having hot flashes.

COLLEEN:

What?

SHEILA:

The change.

Colleen looks at Sheila quizzically.
Jesus Colleen, menopause!

COLLEEN:

Oh come on! I'm too young for that shit.

SHEILA:

Look, you're in your 40's, it's normal.

COLLEEN:

Burning from the inside out, is NOT normal!

SHEILA:

I'm afraid, it is. I remember feeling like a volcano had erupted inside my tits and radiated up my face through my eyeballs! I'm telling you all of it is natural.

DEREK enters stage center. He just returned from teaching a morning class. He is carrying a computer bag and a bag of groceries. He lays his computer bag on the couch, starts to carry the grocery bag to the kitchen.

DEREK:

My God! What is the temperature in this place? It's freezing in here!

HE looks at the thermostat, off stage right.

50! 50 degrees! Seriously!

(As he crosses to the kitchen.
To COLLEEN HE says)

DEREK [CONT'D]

What on earth are you doin'? That is so unsanitary. Now, get on out of there! Whatever is the matter with you?

COLLEEN grabs a steak, uses it as a fan. DEREK starts to reach for the packages of food to throw in the garbage can.

DEREK [CONT'D]

You are laying and sweating (shivers)all over it.

(Crosses to the couch, takes out plastic gloves. Crosses back to the fridge, throws a package of food in the garbage can. COLLEEN grabs a package of green beans, keeps the steak hidden behind her back.)

COLLEEN:

Really, Derek. I'm dying of heat stroke and all you care about is the electric bill and if I'm dripping on the cauliflower!

(DEREK grabs the package)
I..I mean green beans?

(HE turns to throw the green beans away. COLLEEN fans herself with the steak)

DEREK:

I'm sorry, you know I'm paranoid when it comes to my food.

(He tries to take the steak from COLLEEN. They fight over the steak.)

Give it!

(He grabs the steak, throws it in the garbage)

Now, tell me what is going on.

SHEILA:

She's having a power surge.

DEREK:

A what?

SHEILA:

A hot flash...you know the change in life--

COLLEEN:

NOOOO!

(starts crying)

You don't care if I live or diiiieeeee!

She grabs a bag of green peas from the freezer. Holds them across her chest.

COLLEEN [CONT'D]

Even my tits are on fire! I'm causing my own heat stroke.

She stares straight ahead, blinking for a few seconds.

SHEILA:

Colleen! Hey! Hey! Hello.

COLLEEN:

Did I pass out?

SHEILA:

Oh come on now. You're taking this too far.

DEREK:

Sweetie, it's not that bad. You're not dying! You're gonna be just fine.

COLLEEN:

It's not that bad? How would you like it if your gonads felt like they were searing in your pants like two little scallops on a barbecue?

DEREK:

Of course not. That's sounds particularly heinous.

COLLEEN:

See, then you can't say what I'm going through isn't that bad.

DEREK:

(frustrated)

Fair enough, now, give me those peas.

COLLEEN:

No. I need them.

DEREK:

(exasperated)
Why do you need them, Colleen?

COLLEEN:

I need them, because there isn't any ice in the house.
Because someone can't refill the ice trays and this piece of
crap fridge doesn't make ice anymore. That's why.

(DEREK puts his arm around
COLLEEN and leads her to the
sofa. She sits at the edge of
the sofa.)

SHEILA:

I've told her she's not dying. She's just being a drama
queen, as usual.

(To Colleen)
You aren't that special. I've gone through the same thing.

DEREK:

How long has she been like this?

SHEILA:

I don't know. I came over a few minutes before you and she
was like this.

DEREK:

Is this normal--

COLLEEN:

Hello! I'm still here!

DEREK:

I know, hon. I'm trying to understand what is happening.
It's not everyday I come home and you're... you know.

COLLEEN:

I'm what?

DEREK:

You're...uh... a little out of sorts.

COLLEEN:

(giving Sheila a look)
I don't remember you or Mom ever having this! Not like this.
So don't tell me the symptoms are the same for everyone. I
must have a rare case of it.

SHEILA looks at her watch.

SHEILA:

Oh jeeze, we gotta scoot. We're suppose to meet Emma and Jessica for lunch, remember. I'll text them that we're on our way. But, I promise, this will all pass and you will be just fine.

(COLLEEN gives her a
disbelieving look)

Seriously. Why would I lie to you?

COLLEEN:

You're right. OK, let me get my purse.

(COLLEEN grabs her purse from
the arm chair. They exit.
DEREK crosses to the kitchen
grabs a bottle of whiskey and
a glass. Crosses down to the
sofa, pours a drink. There is
a knock. DEREK crosses to
answer the door.)

DEREK:

Alan, come on in. Would you like a drink?

ALAN enters.

ALAN:

Whiskey? Sure.

DEREK crosses to the kitchen to get a
glass. ALAN crosses to the arm chair.
DEREK sits on the sofa, pours ALAN some
whiskey and hands him the glass.

ALAN:

(points to the chess board)
I bought myself one of these.

DEREK:

(raises his glass)

That's awesome. So I've brought you over to the dark side.
(beat) But, I thought the only game you enjoyed was golf.
Especially since, I roasted you the last time we tried to
play.

ALAN:

It's still my game. If I remember correctly, I smoked you the
last time we played. I have noticed, though, your game has
improved.

DEREK:

Well, I'm not completely inept. Golf just isn't a very cerebral game, like Chess. Fancy a game?

(ALAN places his glass on the coffee table. DEREK takes a coaster, moves the glass, wipes the water spot with a handkerchief he takes from his pocket.)

ALAN:

Golf may not be cerebral, as you call it, but it does take strategy and skill, along with eye and hand coordination. Which, you don't have. But, I'll humor you. Let's go.

ALAN pulls the side chair to the opposite side of the table from DEREK. Derek pulls the chess board to where it sits in between.

DEREK:

I do admit, that my eye/hand coordination is sub par.

ALAN:

Ha! I see what you did there.

DEREK:

(laughing)

White?

ALAN nods. DEREK turns the board so white is in front of ALAN.

DEREK [CONT'D]

Let's see if you have improved.

ALAN makes the first move.

ALAN:

Queen's pawn to D4.

DEREK:

(gives him a quizzing look)
Been practicing?

ALAN:

You aren't the only one who has room to improve. I've been making Sheila and Alena help me practice my chess moves.

(laughs)

Sheila got so angry at me when I took her knight, she through her rook at me.

DEREK makes his move.

DEREK:

Speaking of wives, other than throwing chess pieces, does Sheila ever act really strange sometimes?

ALAN:

Ha! You're gonna have to be more specific. There are several levels of strange. Are we talking, slightly bizarre, as in she talks to herself. Or are we talking bat shit crazy strange?

DEREK:

I'm talking certifiably nuts, strange.

ALAN:

Sheila gets into a mood sometimes. I'm just not sure where you're going with this.

DEREK:

I think Colleen has completely lost her mind. I found her earlier, practically sitting in the freezer. Yesterday, I found her keys in the oven. And don't get me started on the mood swings, they are giving me whiplash! Sometimes, at night, I think she is watching me.

(ALAN laughs.)

DEREK [CONT'D]

Seriously, I wake up and I swear she had been standing over me, looking at me like she is planning my death.

ALAN:

So, the old craziness has hit Colleen? (beat) Poor ole boy!

He picks up the bottle of whiskey.
Pours another shot in both glasses.

ALAN [CONT'D]

You're gonna have to become better acquainted with this,

(Holds up the glass.)
to get through the adventure you're starting.

DEREK:

(gulps)
Is it that bad?

ALAN:

(downs the shot)

Worse!

(DEREK pours another shot and
downs it.)

FADE

FADE IN.

The next evening.

COLLEEN crosses stage left to stage
right pacing in back of the sofa.

Colleen:

Where the hell is it? I just had it yesterday at lunch.
Dammit!

(Door knock. COLLEEN crosses to
answer. ALENA enters with
SHEILA.)

ALENA:

Hey Aunt Colleen. What movie....(beat) Are you okay? You look
upset--

COLLEEN:

I can't find it. I've looked all over the house. (beat)

(to herself)

No, I didn't put it there! (beat) For fuck! Why would I do
that? That would be crazy.

ALENA:

What's wrong? What can't you find?

(COLLEEN continues to talk to
the voices in her head.)

COLLEEN:

I've looked there, you saw me do it. If you can't be helpful,
then shut the fuck up. I mean it. I've about had it up to
here.

SHEILA:

Colleen? Who are you talking to?

COLLEEN:

What? I'm talking to you aren't I? (Beat) Is it hot in here?
Damn, it's getting hot!

(Crosses stage right and exits,
turns down the AC.)

There, maybe it will get cooler. I swear to god, my face
feels like it's melting off my skull.

(to the voices in her head)

No, I haven't forgotten. You don't need to keep reminding me.
You think I'm a stupid idiot, doncha?

SHEILA:

Colleen! What the hell are you talking about--

ALENA:

Mom, who is she talking to... I'm worried about her.

COLLEEN:

(to Alena and Sheila)

Stop talking like I'm not even standing right here. Didn't
anyone tell you that's rude?

SHEILA:

(shakes her head)

Come on, let's sit down--

(SHEILA crosses to COLLEEN,
tries to guide her to the
sofa.)

COLLEEN:

(shakes off Sheila's hands)

Don't touch me! I can't take anymore.

(COLLEEN runs off stage left,
crying.)

ALENA:

I don't understand Mom. She's always been a happy person.
Always, joking around.

SHEILA:

I know... I know..This...this isn't right.

(SHEILA takes her cell phone
out of her purse. Calls DEREK)

Derek, you need to come home. Colleen... yes. Please, hurry.

ALENA:

(visibly worried)

Aunt Colleen has never acted like this before.

COLLEEN re-enters from stage left as if nothing happened, crosses to ALENA.

COLLEEN:

(hugs Alena)
Hey girlie! How is school? Got a boyfriend?

(ALENA and SHEILA give COLLEEN a worried look.)

ALENA:

School is fine. I've had the same boyfriend for two years.
Don't you remember Brian?

COLLEEN:

Oh, yeah...right...Brian.

SHEILA:

Did you find what were you looking for?

COLLEEN:

What?

ALENA:

When we came in, you said you had looked all over for it--

SHEILA:

But, you didn't say what it was. Are you doing ok? You were talking--

COLLEEN:

Oh com'on now. You know me. I'm just fine.