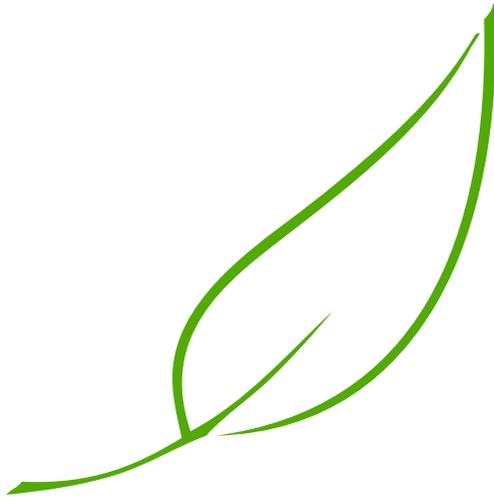


A REAL BEAUT!

by Ken Bradbury



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 male, 4 female)

Parks

Beulah

Betty

Mrs. Floss

Melinda

PARKS: *(nervously pacing as he listens into a set of headphones)* What? Speak up! There's too much noise. *(shouting off)* Would somebody put a muzzle on Miss Philadelphia's poodles? I can't hear a thing! *(into his headset)* Sixteen purple poodles! Whoever heard of purple poodles?

BEULAH: *(entering like a bomb blast, with her precocious little daughter Betty in tow)* Is this the place? They told me this was the place. Hey fella, is the place or what?

PARKS: *(into his headset)* Just a minute. *(to Beulah)* Can I help you?

BEULAH: This the Miss Terrific Teen Talent Search?

PARKS: You're supposed to register at the desk.

BEULAH: Amateurs. Nothin' but amateurs. My Betty's a pro. Where's the front of the line?

PARKS: Ma'am, you'll have to wait right over ...

BEULAH: Betty don't wait for nobody. Where do we put the pony?

PARKS: Pony?

BEULAH: Gaylord the Wonder Pony. It's part of Betty's act. *(to her daughter)* Betty, don't scratch in public. And stop fingerin' your dress. There's a thousand bucks worth of buckskin in that thing.

PARKS: Ma'am, if you'd just have a seat ...

BEULAH: There he is! Hey! Stop pullin' on him like that! That pony's over 40 years old! Yeh? Well, you clean it up! You're the one who made him nervous.

PARKS: We need a broom over here!

BETTY: I'm tired, Mama. I wanna sit down. I need a Coke. Is my makeup runnin'? Is there a bathroom in this joint?

PARKS: (*into his headset*) I know! I know! Five minutes and we're on the air. (*shouting to everyone*) Would all the contestants for the Miss Terrific Teen Talent Search please go back stage?

BEULAH: No.

PARKS: Ma'am?

BEULAH: There ain't no cameras backstage. Once the judges see Betty's act you won't even need the rest of those little wimps back there.

PARKS: Her talent?

BEULAH: Betty's gonna ride Gaylord around in a circle while standin' on his back and playin' the accordion. Betcha never had that before.

PARKS: Never.

BEULAH: The William Tell Overture. You gotta see it. It's a classic.

PARKS: (*shouting off*) Would somebody shut up those poodles?

BEULAH: Good night a-mighty. Purple poodles. They look like a bunch of fuzzy grapes.

BETTY: I'm tired, Mommy. Bring me a bed.

BEULAH: Oh my poopsie-woopsie is tired! It's this horrible man who's making us stand here on this horrible stage. Would you mind hurrying? She's getting tired.

PARKS: Good grief!

MRS. FLOSS: (*entering dramatically, pulling her daughter Melinda ... Mrs. Floss was born with a permanent smile attached. Although she may cut you off at the knees, she does it with a sickeningly sweet smile. Sort of like a grinning python.*) We're here!

PARKS: Who are you?

MRS. FLOSS: Oh, how humorous. Of course, you know my little Melinda! (*Melinda grins ... in fact, that's about all Melinda does. She stands there when called upon and makes a small, obnoxious humming sound.*) (*Melinda smiles and hums.*)

PARKS: Oh. Of course. Ladies, we're less than five minutes from show time. Please. Please line up back stage.

BEULAH: (*to Mrs. Floss*) What does the little weasel do?

MRS. FLOSS: (*again, through the smile*) I assume you're the lady with the dying pony?

BEULAH: Gaylord is a champion!

MRS. FLOSS: He's a four-legged rug. Now, where do we stand?

PARKS: You stand back stage! Please!

MRS. FLOSS: Oh, there's no need for that. Once the judges see Melinda's gorgeous smile, the contest will be over. Stand up straight, Melinda. There are over four thousand ruby-red hand-sewn sequins in this dress and if we bend over, we'll get stuck in that position.

BEULAH: She looks like an explodin' Popsicle.

MRS. FLOSS: That's why I bring her to these things ... to expose her to (*indicating Betty*) the lower classes. Now, if I could just have a pink light right over ...

PARKS: Ladies, you can't be out here. I have to open the show.

MRS. FLOSS: Of course you do, sweetheart. Then announce, "Our first contestant! Melinda Floss doing the aria from Don Corleone ... in mime!" Then applause, applause, applause, we pick up the trophy and we're off.

PARKS: She does opera ... in mime?

MRS. FLOSS: It's a challenge.

PARKS: Doing it or watching it?

MRS. FLOSS: Look, Melinda! There's a camera! Smile! (*Melinda gives her sickening smile and wave accompanied by that obnoxious humming sound.*)

PARKS: It's not on, Mrs. Floss.

BEULAH: Mount up, Betty! Gaylord's gettin' nervous again. You got your accordion?



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