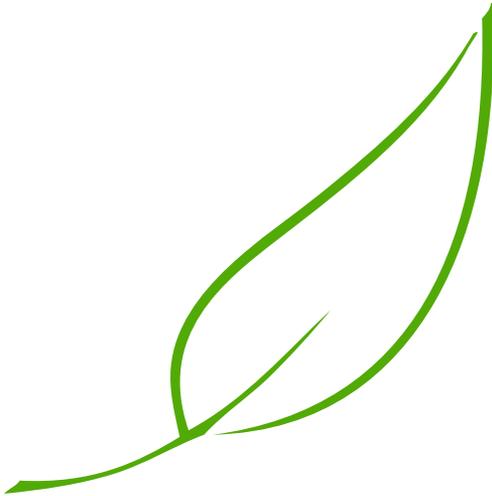


EXIT STAGE RIGHT

by Ken Bradbury



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Cast: Michael, Vanessa, and Vladimir

(Michael is pacing onstage, nervously studying a script.)

VANESSA: *(entering)* Oh. Sorry.

MICHAEL: No ... come in. Are you ...?

VANESSA: Vanessa.

MICHAEL: *(extending his hand)* I'm Michael. I'm your partner.

VANESSA: Good to meet you, Michael. Have you ever done anything like this before?

MICHAEL: Audition?

VANESSA: No, I mean in teams. Trying out for a part with a person you've never met.

MICHAEL: The director's from Russia. Very, you know ... experimental.

VANESSA: Oh ...

MICHAEL: No, it's okay. Vladimir is very good ... just ... weird. He wants to know how actors react to new situation.

VANESSA: But we've never

MICHAEL: Look, acting's acting, right? So what if we don't know each other?

VANESSA: But can't we just spend a few minutes ... you know ... getting to know ...

MICHAEL: We go on in five.

VANESSA: You're kidding! Five minutes! We have only five minutes to rehearse?

MICHAEL: Vladimir believes that too much preparation ruins a performance. He also writes the paychecks.

VANESSA: Gimme the script. *(he hands her a script)*
(reading) "The stage is dark. There is no scenery. The audience area is fully lit but the entire play takes place on a dark stage."
This is nuts! Who wrote this?

MICHAEL: Vladimir writes his own stuff.

VANESSA: (*reading*) No costuming, no set, no entrances, and ... what? "Actors should not be limited to only the words written in the script. Animal sounds are appropriate." Nuts ... the guy is a loony.

MICHAEL: And he writes the paycheck.

VANESSA: Let's rehearse.

MICHAEL: Great! "Rosco enters stage right."

VANESSA: There are no entrances, just exits.

MICHAEL: Then how to I get on?

VANESSA: You act. You were born there. A stork dropped you. How should I know? Come on, five minutes!

MICHAEL: "Rosco has a certain light in his eye."

VANESSA: Good. The stage is dark. We need a light somewhere.

MICHAEL: You can do this, Vanessa.

VANESSA: I can do this.

MICHAEL: Rosco speaks.. "Roberta, there's something I have to..."

VLADIMIR: (*entering ... flamboyant, eccentric, two shades beyond plain weird, and perhaps with a bit of a Slavic accent*) Ready?

MICHAEL: Mr. Stanislisky!

VLADIMIR: Vladimir, dear boy. Call me Vladimir. The audition will now begin! Go! (*he sits*)

VANESSA: But ... Mr. ...

VLADIMIR: Vladimir! Call me Vladimir! Or Harold. Harold is a nice name. Or Butch. No, not Butch. Begin!

MICHAEL: But we've just ...

VLADIMIR: Theatre is an art, dear boy! Stop being so hypothetical! So anti-climactic! Emote! Live in your space! Become one with this world I have created.

VANESSA: World? What ... uh ... world? We don't even have entrances.

VLADIMIR: We all have entrances! The day the spirit of theatre descended upon you and laid the golden wreath of stagecraft upon your brow was your entrance!

VANESSA: I've ... I've been onstage all my life?

VLADIMIR: Yes. Just waiting to go on.

VANESSA: So where's my entrance?

VLADIMIR: You don't have one. Now begin ...

MICHAEL: You mean the script?

VLADIMIR: The script is your roadmap, not your destination. Keep that in mind.

MICHAEL: I ... uh ... will. (*He looks at Vanessa. Both are clueless.*) So ... maybe at the beginning?

VLADIMIR: There are no beginnings ... just passageways.

MICHAEL: Oo---kay. (*Again, a glance to Vanessa... Do we begin? then tentatively*) "Scene one. "Roscoe enters stage right." I mean, but he actually has no entrance.

VLADIMIR: You get it! You get it!

MICHAEL: I do? I do. (*in character*) "Roberta, there's something I have to say before it's too late."

VANESSA: "I'm not speaking to you, Roscoe."

VLADIMIR: What are you doing?

MICHAEL: I'm ... I'm reading the script.

VLADIMIR: All of it?

MICHAEL: Did I miss something?

VLADIMIR: The stage directions! You're not reading the stage directions!

VANESSA: We read the stage directions?

VLADIMIR: Why do you think I wrote them?

MICHAEL: But ... out loud?

VLADIMIR: Are you ashamed of them?

MICHAEL: No! No ... you have ... uh ... quite lovely stage directions.

VANESSA: Some of the nicest I've ever ... uh ... read aloud.

VLADIMIR: Begin!

MICHAEL: Okay ... (*a look to Vanessa, then*) "Rosco enters stage right. There is a certain light in his eye. "Roberta, there's something I have to say to you before it's too late."

VANESSA: "Her eyes averting his, a slight tremor in her voice. She speaks. I'm not speaking to you, Roscoe."

MICHAEL: "A glance, a frown, a slight turn of the head. But you're all I have, Roberta!"



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