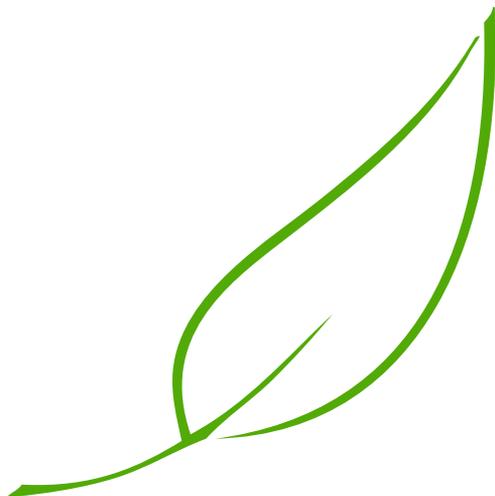


THE YOUNG AND THE SOAPLESS

by Ken Bradbury



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Nanette, Rita, Erin

(Nanette is sitting watching television as Rita enters.)

RITA: What's on?

NANETTE: Nothin'. As usual.

RITA: *(looking at the television)* A soap opera? You actually watch those things?

NANETTE: It's either that or a documentary on Killer Whales of the Amazon.

ERIN: *(entering)* Yo ... what's up?

RITA: We're bored. Nan's even watching a soap opera.

ERIN: You know what gets me about those things? They're so ... fake. I mean, they don't talk about girls our age ... just those slinky housewives with messed up lives.

RITA: Yeh. What about us? We're messed up!

ERIN: But nobody writes about it.

NANETTE: So let's do it.

ERIN: Do what?

NANETTE: Our own soap opera! You got anything better to do this afternoon? Only our soap will be about the real dangers of being a teenage American girl!

RITA: Sounds stupid.

ERIN: Yeh. I love it.

RITA: Me too.

NANETTE: *(standing and taking a dramatic stance)* Presenting! For the first time in this ... uh ... bedroom! The Young and the Soapless!

RITA: *(buying into this completely)* The story of a young girl in her tragic quest to simply get through the day without a nervous breakdown, bad hair, or complexion problems!

ERIN: Scene one!

NANETTE: (*becomes a desperate teenage daughter. For the remainder of this scene, the acting is way over the top ... terribly dramatic*) Oh, oh, Mother!

RITA: (*as the mother*) Yes, yes, my emotionally disturbed and dysfunctional daughter?

NANETTE: Oh, mother, I can no longer go on this way!

RITA: Emotionally disturbed and dysfunctional?

NANETTE: Yes! And I can't do anything with my hair.

RITA: Erica, I've never told you this, but your real father was a Tibetan monk who'd been deprived of any human contact since his parents were eaten live by a very large hairy creature with a craving for spicy mustard. That's why you are so totally fouled up.

NANETTE: (*grabbing her*) But why didn't you tell me this, Mother!?

RITA: Because I was afraid you'd someday grab me by the front of my shirt and scream, "But why didn't you tell me this, Mother!?"

NANETTE: (*breaking away from her*) Oh, the heartbreak! The tragedy! (*suddenly something occurs to her*) That's why I get frightened every time I watch the Discovery Channel?

RITA: Yes. Any mention of Tibet or spicy mustard and we must immediately rush you into therapy.

NANETTE: Oh, the heartbreak! Oh, the shame!

RITA: Oh, the heck with it. (*the two girls turn upstage, leaving the scene, as Erin turns downstage in a similar stage of angst.*)

ERIN: (*typing at a keyboard*) (*reading what she's typing*) Hi, everybody! It's me! Back again! (*sees something pop up on the screen*) What? Oh no! This can't be! This just can't be! (*crying out*) Daddy!!!!

NANETTE: (*entering as Daddy*) Yes, sweetheart?

ERIN: Did you do this? (*reading*) "Your Internet access is now being monitored by the all-knew Parent-Snoop Software." You are monitoring my email?

NANETTE: I had to do it, darling.

ERIN: You've been watching those TV commercials again, haven't you?

NANETTE: They say we must take an active interest in our child's life.

ERIN: My ... life ... is ... ruined! Ruined! Can you hear me, Daddy? My life is over! There is absolutely nothing to live for!

NANETTE: Aren't you overreacting, honey?

ERIN: (*screaming*) I never overreact! I go crazy! You've killed me! The entire world will pass before my eyes and can't even send it an email! I'll be a social outcast, daddy! Even the dog will find a new friend!

NANETTE: I'm scanning his emails, too.

ERIN: Sell my bed, daddy! Rent out my room! Break my CD's and give my styling gel to the Salvation Army! My life is over! Do you hear me, daddy? O-V-R, Over! (*she cries as she storms offstage*)

RITA: (*entering as the mother*) What was that all about?

NANETTE: She found out I was scanning her emails.

RITA: Then let's sell her bed, rent out her room, break her CD's and give her styling gel to the Salvation Army.

NANETTE: Sounds reasonable to me. (*both "exit" as Erin enters, quietly, sneaking*)

ERIN: (*looking at an imaginary slip of paper*) This is the address. Sort of a dump.

RITA: (*entering*) Help you?

ERIN: You the tattoo guy?

RITA: Tattoos R Us. Whatta ya got in mind, kid?

ERIN: I'm not a kid. I want heart right here on my ankle.

RITA: Heart on your ankle. Weird anatomy but what's it to me? How old are you?

ERIN: (*a pause, then*) Uh ...18.

RITA: Try again.

ERIN: 17 and a half.

RITA: You got a permission slip from your parents?

ERIN: What?

RITA: Gotta have it.

ERIN: That's crazy! This is my ankle, not my dad's!



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