

From the Story Box:

The Big Election and the Coffee Pot Cafe

Written by

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(a stage play with scenes and no acts)

SCENE 1

LIGHTS UP.

The Coffee Pot Cafe, with a row of windows that overlook the sidewalk that runs along stage front.

(WILLIAM enters - stage left, walking down sidewalk to cafe door, which he opens and closes, entering cafe and sitting at table by windows.

MARY enters - stage right, from cafe kitchen, and walks to William's table.)

MARY

William. Haven't seen you since the big election. I heard you'd moved to Canada.

WILLIAM

I did. But they threw me out.

MARY

"Threw" you out? You mean ... ?

WILLIAM

Yes. Actually "threw" me out. Four "Relo's" - Mounties from the RCMP's new "Bureau of American Relocation" - came to my hotel room. It was just after 3:00 in the morning. They knocked on my door. I staggered to the door and asked "Who's there?" The lead guy said "Room service." So I opened the door and they stormed in.

The Relo's rolled me up inside a 6x8' oriental rug they had with them, hoisted me up on their shoulders and took me downstairs on the freight elevator, chanting as they marched down the narrow, hotel hall: "Left, right, left, gimme your left, your right, your left. I have a girl in Kansas City - left, right, left, gimme your left, your right, your left - she has a mole on her left titty."

Downstairs, they put me in a van and took me to the Lake Ontario lakefront, just west of Toronto. There they "threw" me into a small but sturdy, well-made Canadian rowboat. I was still rolled up inside the carpet as they started the outboard motor, locked the motor in a

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WILLIAM (cont'd)

straight-ahead position, and pointed the boat due south toward New York State.

Six hours later I was still a mile off Rochester when the motor ran out of gas, where I drifted for another day until some passing water skiers from the Rochester Polar Bear Club, stopped and towed the boat to shore, singing: "Michael towed the boat to shore, with an Ev-in-rude."

MARY

Fascinating. The usual, then?

WILLIAM

Yes, please. With a glass of orange juice, I think, this morning. I might need my vitamin C. Canada gets so little sun. It's like living deep inside the intestines of a mastodon, with national health care.

MARY

I think that's vitamin D. The vitamin you get from sunshine.

WILLIAM

Oh, right. Well, bring me a glass of something that has vitamin D in it, then, along with the orange juice.

MARY

A glass of milk?

WILLIAM

Sure. But chocolate milk, please. I'm still working through a dark mood.

MARY

Because of being thrown out of Canada?

WILLIAM

And the election. Which was like being thrown out of the United States.

MARY

So you're pretty much feeling, then, like a good citizen without a good country?

WILLIAM

Yes, that's it. You don't feel that way?

MARY

No. I stopped voting after Hoover was elected, on his famous promise that he'd make American clean again by using the crevice tool to vacuum along the baseboards and in the corners.

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WILLIAM

... Yes. But I always liked a Hoover. Well, you know, until J. Edgar took vacuuming deep into the dark side of good housekeeping.

MARY

Yes. And didn't you think it was weird that the only things the guy ever dusted, were fingerprints?

WILLIAM

Totally weird. But, then, America has always had a blind spot when it comes to philosophical hygiene. Take Thoreau.

MARY

Henry David?

WILLIAM

Yes. That's the one. In his blog "OnWaldenPond.com" he notes regular expenses paid for the people who did his laundry.

MARY

No shit.

WILLIAM

No shit, Mary. How weird is that?

MARY

Totally. Coffee?

WILLIAM

Thanks. And extra milk, today, please.

MARY

Chocolate?

WILLIAM

Oh. What a cool idea.

LIGHTS DOWN, BACK TO HALF.

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