

Minor Movements

by

Julius Galacki

- DIALOGUE SAMPLE -

CAST

(in alphabetical order)

THE CASHIER middle-aged, taciturn, vaguely
aware life has passed him by.

THE COOK almost not young, but curious and
still dreaming.

THE DISSATISFIED MAN 20 to 40 years old, quite in angst.

THE DISSATISFIED WOMAN 20 - 40 years old, similar angst quotient.

THE INTELLECTUAL MAN 20 - 40, all form - no content.

THE INTELLECTUAL WOMAN 20 - 40, a jargon hunter.

THE LADY IN RED the Cook's obscure object of desire.

THE MERCENARY WHO KNOWS an experienced gun for hire.

THE OTHER MERCENARY his apprentice.

THE OLD ACTOR a pompous "artist".

THE YOUNG PROTÉGÉ another blind follower.

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(A Chamber Comedy in One Act)

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In this play, the audience sees everything, but they only hear what the character of the COOK hears. As the COOK moves near the other characters, the audience eavesdrops along with him. The same principle applies when a particular character raises his/her voice or moves toward him. His ears are the microphone, from which a verbal score is broadcast, or perhaps a better metaphor is that the Cook is the conductor and everyone else are his instruments. Also, for the most part, the dialogue indicates where the COOK is on stage.

Everyone is frozen in place except the Cook.

It is midnight. Closing time at the "Donut Inn Coffee Shop" is fast approaching. The two MERCENARIES are sitting at a table near the window, two cups of coffee are before them. The OLD ACTOR and his PROTÉGÉ are at a table downstage of them. The DISSATISFIED COUPLE are seated center stage; on their table are two nearly untouched plates of food. The INTELLECTUAL COUPLE are located stage left; conversely, a maze of plates and half-eaten food is on their table.

All of these (frozen) couples are engaged in normal, continuous conversation, albeit silent - though perhaps the DISSATISFIED COUPLE'S conversation is as made up of sullen stares as bursts of verbal punches. Near the door, is the CASHIER, a rather large surly man, who is picking his teeth with a tooth-pick and reading a newspaper. The COOK, who at this hour doubles as a waiter, is behind the counter.

Muzak is playing on the radio. The COOK looks at the clock on the wall and goes over to the radio and turns the dial. Suddenly, the opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony blare out of the radio, which the COOK then makes even louder. Everyone in the coffee shop reacts to the sudden surge of sound except the INTELLECTUAL COUPLE who come to life but are oblivious. They all return to their private conversations when the music stops.

CASHIER

Hey, what's your problem? You're disturbin' the customers.

COOK

It's almost closing.

CASHIER

I don't care. Shut it off.

(The COOK glares at the CASHIER, then shuts off the radio.)

COOK

(To himself, though loud enough that the CASHIER can overhear.) No taste.

CASHIER

What's that? I ain't got no taste? Well I gotta taste for cleanliness. So start sweeping.

(Suddenly the DISSATISFIED WOMAN stands up.)

DISSATISFIED WOMAN

I won't forget this. I didn't forgive Nixon and I'm not going to forgive you.

(She turns and storms out of the coffee shop. Her boyfriend stands up.)

DISSATISFIED MAN

Oh, stop it. You're making a... *(He follows after her.)* Wait... Hon...

CASHIER

Hey! *(The CASHIER grabs the man firmly by the shoulder, preventing him from exiting.)* Who's paying the bill?

DISSATISFIED MAN

We'll be back.

CASHIER

When? The tomorrow before yesterday.

DISSATISFIED MAN

Please...here take my watch...

(He starts out then turns back.)

...as collateral.

(The DISSATISFIED MAN exits.)

CASHIER

(Looking at the watch.) Nice watch. *(Then to the COOK.)* I hope he doesn't come back....Well? Get your broom movin'.

(The COOK sweeps laconically.)

INTELLECTUAL MAN

You must understand. I'm looking at sex from a purely sub... marine point of view – aquatically – not as a metaphor but as a way of being.

INTELLECTUAL WOMAN

Intellectually that makes subversive sense, but in reality, it doesn't.

PROTÉGÉ

I'm really worried that when I speak on stage, I won't mean what I'm saying.

OLD ACTOR

Don't be afraid, my boy. You only have to trust the vowel. Trust the vowel....Now, when I was playing Horatio...

THE OTHER MERCENARY

It's no use. I can't remember.

(He hands an antiquated War Department Spanish phrase book back to the MERCENARY WHO KNOWS.)