

A GOOD ASS

A short stage play

CHARACTERS:

- SAGE (50s), a robust man in denim shirt, khakis and work boots. Weathered. Put upon. Angry.
- PENELOPE (50s), a Rubenesque woman in a stylish dress and sensible heels. Pert. Forward. Completely over it.
- COUNSELOR (30s), any gender, professorially dressed. The middle ground.

*Lights up on three chairs at center stage.
SAGE and PENELOPE sit together. The COUNSELOR,
with pad and paper, sits opposite them. The
chairs cheat to the audience.*

The counselor consults a watch.

COUNSELOR

So, we're fifteen minutes in. That's \$75 worth of silence, or approximately eight cents per second.

SAGE

I can't do this anymore.

PENELOPE

Here we go...

SAGE

It's a bridge too far, I tell you. A bridge too far.

COUNSELOR

Sage, we've heard this.

SAGE

NO! No, not this time you haven't. That -- that harpy went too far.

PENELOPE

It was an accident.

SAGE

Waiting to happen, is what it was.

PENELOPE

You are so dramatic.

COUNSELOR

Sage, Penelope... usually you're fighting about cloth bags verses plastic, or Egyptian cotton verses flannel. I'm sensing a change here.

SAGE

God damn it.

PENELOPE
He has nothing to do with it.

SAGE
Jesus...

PENELOPE
Neither does he. Heathen.

Sage stares daggers at Penelope.

SAGE
Satan.

COUNSELOR
I'll wait. Eight cents. Sixteen...

The counselor waits. Then...

SAGE
Moses is dead.

PENELOPE
It was an accident.

COUNSELOR
Moses?

PENELOPE
His ass.

SAGE
MY DONKEY!

PENELOPE
Potato, po-TA-to.

SAGE
NO. No, you knew I loved Moses. And he loved me. We'd go into the field and turn the soil together and I'd plant tomatoes and squash and the alfalfa he liked. And the chickens would cluck when he entered the paddock. And the ducks... and the llama!

COUNSELOR
Quite the agrarian utopia.

PENELOPE
Okay, in Moses' defense, he had a plow attached to him so more of a slave than a member of some socialistic co-op. And the alfalfa... all right, so your basic hay was probably minimum wage to his "minimum wage plus benefits" but...

SAGE

-- YOU would have fed her grass clippings from the lawn mower!

PENELOPE

And she would have enjoyed them. But really, she lived in a stall.

COUNSELOR

But Moses -- died?

Sage stews in his chair.

PENELOPE

I'm not telling her.

SAGE

Murderer.

PENELOPE

Ass lover.

SAGE

Donkey daddy to you.

PENELOPE

Snowflake.

SAGE

What? That... that is beyond the pale, missy.

COUNSELOR

Okay, okay, Moses died. Someone tell me what happened.

PENELOPE

We got another pet.

SAGE

Jesus H...

PENELOPE

A circus was closing and... well, Peanut needed a home.

SAGE

And I'm the bleeding heart.

COUNSELOR

Okay, you brought this Peanut home. How does this affect..?

PENELOPE

-- Peanut is delightful. So gentle. LOVES the alfalfa.

SAGE

And now has plenty of it, right, hon? PLENTY. OF. IT.

PENELOPE

And Moses was in the way.

SAGE

Oh, and Peanut is a real big girl.

COUNSELOR

Hold on. What kind of animal is Peanut?

Sage motions that Penelope has the floor.

PENELOPE

Peanut is an elephant...

SAGE

-- A full-grown, African elephant! From a circus!! It now lives in the garage between the recycling bins and my organic compost bucket and... dammit, I had to move my socially-responsible Suburu Crosstrex hybrid into the barn where my dear Moses used to live.

PENELOPE

Like my Tesla was going out there.

SAGE

It destroyed our budget! The farm has run deficits the last year. And what could that bumbling behemoth possibly know about farming?

PENELOPE

It knows plenty. You just don't give it enough credit.

SAGE

As much as you want everyone to embrace your pachyderm, Pollyanna... Peanut is strictly for show.

PENELOPE

Sure it can stand on its hind legs, and dance, and twirl a plate on a stick but... well, have you even tried to attached the plow?

SAGE

I'm not getting behind that thing again.

PENELOPE

Coward.

SAGE

Those Carhartt's were brand new.

PENELOPE

We have a washing machine.

SAGE

We're talking pounds of Peanut's --

Oh my God. COUNSELOR

Daddy taught me to field dress a kill early on. PENELOPE

Savage. SAGE

Tomato, to-MA-to. PENELOPE

I want a divorce. SAGE

(genuinely surprised)
Sage, you don't mean that. PENELOPE

The counselor consults her watch again.

At a quarter a word, you could sell this story to *The Enquirer* and recoup every session we've attempted. Sage, Penelope – there must be common ground here somewhere? COUNSELOR

(bereft)
Moses is dead. SAGE

You still have the chickens. The llama? COUNSELOR

Hon, we have Peanut. PENELOPE

I can't... SAGE

Penelope: Sage has lost his dear Moses. Could you give up Peanut? COUNSELOR

She will cling to Peanut until it's a dead husk – and then she'll make a bag out of it. SAGE

You liked the teriyaki flavor as I recall -- PENELOPE

-- But you could move Peanut on, right? COUNSELOR

PENELOPE

Well, I'm not really beholden to the big lug.

COUNSELOR

You'd still have the chickens.

SAGE

How the hell do you get rid of an elephant?

PENELOPE

I'd let it loose. It would drift into oblivion eventually. Maybe someone would shoot it.

COUNSELOR

And there's the ducks...

SAGE

You love your gun more than me.

PENELOPE

It was a wedding present.

COUNSELOR

-- The llama! You'd still have THE LLAMA!

SAGE AND PENELOPE

Thank God we have pot.

They turn to look at each other. Common ground!

SAGE

I could make CBD oil. And brownies.

PENELOPE

We've never tried to sell it.

SAGE

Jesus, is everything a business to you? What about the people that can't afford it?

PENELOPE

They have Canada.

COUNSELOR

-- Okay! That's sixty minutes! I think we've made some progress. See you back here next week?

Sage and Penelope get up and move to exit without acknowledging their counselor.

SAGE

They have excellent health care in Canada.

PENELOPE

Here we go.

The counselor opens a National Enquirer. Pulls out an iPhone.

PENELOPE

I'm sorry about Moses. He was a good ass.

SAGE

Donkey. Maybe we need a cat.

PENELOPE

Maybe. I hear they're much more independent.

CURTAIN