

A GOOD ASS

A short stage play

Written by
Michael Alberstadt

Michael Alberstadt
25660 Dundee Road
Royal Oak, MI 48067
(248) 763-6019
mike@creativesmith.com

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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.

AT RISE: Three chairs rest 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, well - 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 Subaru
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 --

COUNSELOR

-- WHAT ABOUT THE ASS?

SAGE
Moses was a DONKEY.

PENELOPE
It wasn't my fault.

SAGE
Look, I took the high road. I said, "put them in the barn together and maybe they'll become friends." What an idiot! They were oil and water. Peanut stole his food --

PENELOPE
-- She took what she needed to thrive. Moses was weak.

SAGE
Peanut is a bully.

COUNSELOR
AND..?

SAGE
And...

Sage pauses to collect himself.

SAGE
Peanut, in a fit of pique...

PENELOPE
Fake news --

SAGE
-- ROLLED OVER on Moses in his sleep and squashed him like a Supreme Court nominee.

PENELOPE
Siskel and Ebert would so thumbs up that display --

SAGE
-- And YOU! You...you made jerky!

COUNSELOR
Beg pardon?

PENELOPE
You've always said, "waste not, want not, because kids are starving in Tajikistan."

SAGE
He -- he was still warm.

COUNSELOR
Oh my God.

PENELOPE
(to the counselor)
Daddy taught me to field dress a kill early on.

SAGE
Savage.

PENELOPE
Tomato, to-MA-to.

SAGE
I want a divorce.

PENELOPE
Sage, you don't mean that.

The counselor consults a
watch again.

COUNSELOR
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?

SAGE
Moses is dead.

COUNSELOR
You have the chickens. The llama?

PENELOPE
Hon, we have Peanut.

SAGE
I can't...

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

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

PENELOPE
You liked the teriyaki flavor as I recall --

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

PENELOPE
Well, I'm not really beholden to it.

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.

SAGE

You love your gun more than me.

PENELOPE

It was a wedding present --

COUNSELOR

-- The chickens. THE LLAMA.

SAGE AND PENELOPE

Thank God we have pot.

They turn to look at each
other. Common ground!

SAGE AND PENELOPE

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.

PENELOPE

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

SAGE

Donkey. Maybe we need a cat.

PENELOPE

Maybe. They're much more independent.

FADE OUT: