

PLAY TITLE
by
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NOTE: When the dialogue says "LAUGHTER," it should be read by the actors as the word "LAUGHTER" -- flatly, loudly, in unison. They should not actually laugh. They may smile, but there should be no laughing. If actual laughter feels necessary or natural in unison with other lines, go for it.

ONE sits at a table with a mug, legs crossed, occasionally checking his wristwatch. Presently, TWO arrives.

Greeting.	TWO
Observation.	ONE (looks at watch)
Acknowledgement. Apology.	TWO
Dismissal.	ONE
Offer?	(gestures to mug)
Refusal.	TWO
Topic change. Pleasantry.	ONE
Pleasantry.	TWO
Question?	ONE
Answer.	TWO
Next question.	ONE
Next answer.	TWO
Contemplation of answer. Statement.	ONE
Guarded reply.	TWO

ONE
Preamble to real question.

TWO
Attempt to steer elsewhere.

ONE
Determined pursuit of real question.
Groundwork...groundwork...groundwork...

TWO
Interruption--

ONE
--Groundwork--

TWO
--Surge of discomfort--

ONE
Question.

TWO
Hesitation.
(a pretty woman passes and
both men gawk)

Double entendre.

BOTH
LAUGHTER.

ONE
Revised question.

TWO
Hesitation.

ONE
Overtures of friendship and mutual trust.

TWO
Acknowledgement of friendship. Affirmation of mutual trust.

ONE
Curiosity about hesitation, then.

TWO
Evasion.

ONE
Retreat. Topic change. Anecdote invoking faux-pas committed
by mutual friend, provoking laughter and thereby establishing
camaraderie.

TWO
Rapt attention, relief at abandonment of initial question.

ONE
Tone and delivery intended to disarm and flank opponent, lowering defenses until question can be resprung.

TWO
Relief.

ONE
End of anecdote.

BOTH
LAUGHTER.

ONE
Inquiry about welfare of family.

TWO
Report on welfare of family largely positive, but hint of vague and unspoken trouble.

ONE
Seizure of opportunity. Request to elaborate on vague and unspoken trouble.

TWO
Dismissal of trouble's importance.

ONE
Assurance that all troubles are important.

TWO
Brief, hesitant explanation of trouble.

ONE
Condolences.

TWO
Statement of gratitude.

ONE
Platitude.

TWO
Jab.

ONE
Riposte.

TWO
Counter-riposte.

LAUGHTER. BOTH

Request for a mug. TWO

Eager acquiescence. ONE

Inquiry about welfare of family, an expression of reciprocal concern. TWO

Expression of gratitude for concern. ONE

Musings on state of world today. TWO

Cynical remark on state of world, offset by kernel of optimism. ONE

Agreement. TWO

Observation that, all things considered, it could be worse. ONE

Strong agreement. TWO

Statement regarding how long it's been. ONE

Acknowledgement that it has been too long. TWO

Request for a refill. ONE
(pause)

Observation on nature of coffee. ONE

Confusion. TWO

Explanation of implication therein. ONE

Residual confusion. TWO

ONE
 Explanation that a substance like coffee allows for kernels
 of optimism in an otherwise bleak assessment of world.

TWO
 Comprehension.

ONE
 Return to initial question.

TWO
 Frustration.

ONE
 (raises palms)
 Retreat.

TWO
 Frustration at self. Hurried explanation of behavior.

ONE
 Interruption. Assurance that explanation is unnecessary.

TWO
 Insistence that explanation is necessary.

ONE
 Long pause.
 (long pause)
 Topic change. Sports.

TWO
 Sports.

ONE
 Sports.

TWO
 Sports.

ONE
 Sports.

TWO
 Sports.

ONE
 Sports.

TWO
 Sports.

ONE
 Sports.

And women. TWO

And women. ONE

Both raise mugs.

LAUGHTER. BOTH

Assessment of contents of mug. ONE

Agreement about quality of mug contents. TWO

Long exhale, indicative of nostalgia. ONE

Imitation of dramatic exhale. TWO

Invitation to go fuck oneself. ONE

LAUGHTER. TWO

Invitation to laugh it up. ONE

Questioning of sexuality. TWO

Parry. Speculation about penis size. ONE

Counter-speculation. TWO

LAUGHTER. BOTH

Cautious return to question. ONE
(after long, coffee-stirring pause)

Hesitation. TWO

Display of frustration. ONE

Hesitation.	TWO
Demand for answer.	ONE
Stilted, ambiguous reply.	TWO
Demand for clarification.	ONE
Hesitation.	TWO
Offer refill of mug.	ONE
Refusal.	TWO
Exasperation.	ONE
Apology.	TWO
Bracing of self. Real question.	ONE
Question.	TWO
Answer. Question.	ONE
Answer.	TWO
Real question.	ONE
Evasion.	TWO
Interruption. Ultimatum. Real question.	ONE
Non-sequitur?	TWO
Pause. Confusion.	ONE

Proverb. TWO

Demand that bullshit be dispensed with. ONE

Invitation to draw conclusions. TWO

Denial. ONE

Speculation that ignorance is sometimes bliss. TWO

Angry denial. ONE

Reminder that you asked for it. TWO

Angry, angry denial. Denial. Denial! ONE

Invitation to draw conclusions. TWO

Denial! ONE

Statement. TWO

Frustration. Statement. ONE

Tender statement. TWO

Meek drawing of conclusions. ONE
(a pause)

Silence indicative that conclusions are accurate. TWO

Low groan, like that of a wounded animal. ONE

Reiteration that I tried many evasions. TWO

Answer to question? ONE

TWO
 (confirming)
 Answer to question.

ONE
 Expression of desire for very stiff cocktail.

TWO
 Expression of willingness to buy that cocktail, provided it's
 not at that place you always go.

*They stand to leave. As they walk offstage, TWO puts
 his arm around one consolingly.*

TWO (CONT'D)
 Beginning of speech meant to console.

ONE
 End of conversation, for god's sake.

TWO
 Sports.

ONE
 Sports.

TWO
 Sports.

*As they make their way offstage, the lights come down
 to a back and forth of "Sports, sports, sports," that
 eventually fades out as they disappear entirely.*

CURTAIN.