

Slipping into Anarchy

A short play

By Jeffrey Wolf

Jeffrey Wolf
13004 E. Idaho Drive
Aurora, CO 80012
720.272.9608
wolfwink2@hotmail.com
jeffreewolfplays.com

© Copyright 2005
Jeffrey Wolf

Cast

Kip
Male, 50s or 60s.

Victoria
Female, 50s or 60s

Setting:

A kitchen, just after Hurricane Katrina.

(At rise, a kitchen, late morning. There is a breakfast table with two chairs, a full coffee pot on the counter, and a phone on the wall. A coffee cup is sitting on the counter next to the pot. KIP is sitting at the table hunched over a newspaper. He is studying it carefully. He holds a sharpened pencil in his hand and every so often he will mark something in the paper, underlining or circling. KIP is in his 50s or 60s and wears small, round glasses. VICTORIA enters. KIP does not look at her, but continues to study the paper. There is tension. VICTORIA gets a mug and prepares to pour herself a cup of coffee.)

KIP:

(Without looking at her:)

I already made you a cup.

VICTORIA:

Oh. Thank you.

KIP:

Sure.

(She leans against the counter, watching KIP and sipping from the cup he prepared for her.)

VICTORIA:

You haven't made me coffee in ten years. *(She sips.)* And it's just right. What a nice surprise.

KIP:

(Grunting:)

Huh.

VICTORIA:

What is it?

KIP:

Just this article about the Gulf Coast. Says this guy shot his sister in the head, just for a bag of ice.

(VICTORIA cranes her neck to see the newspaper.)

VICTORIA:

Good headline then.

KIP:

Yeah.

VICTORIA:

At first it seems tacky.

KIP:

Headlines are supposed to be tacky.

(Pause. VICTORIA sips at her coffee.)

VICTORIA:

You know, Kip, the more I think about it, it really is a good headline.
“Slipping into anarchy.” Very poetic.

KIP:

Victoria, it’s a newspaper; it’s not supposed to be poetic.

VICTORIA:

Then why do you read it every morning?

KIP:

Not for poetry. I just want the news, at my pace.

(Pause.)

KIP (CONT.):

I poisoned the coffee, Victoria.

(A beat.)

VICTORIA:

What?

KIP:

I thought you should know.

VICTORIA:

Why bother telling me at all?

KIP:

It’s something for you to look forward to.

VICTORIA:

I’m not sure a thank you is in order. Why poison?

KIP:

I thought it wouldn't be as messy as if I stabbed you.

VICTORIA:

You also would have to look me in the eye.

KIP:

I could stab you in the back.

VICTORIA:

You already have, Kip. *(Pause. She looks out the window.)* At least it's a pretty day.

KIP:

Enjoy it while you can.

(Pause.)

VICTORIA:

How come you didn't use the gun?

KIP:

Same reason as the knife, I don't know where you keep the cleaning supplies.

(A beat.)

VICTORIA:

Maybe we should expect more poetry from newspapers.

KIP:

Maybe you shouldn't take your death so lightly.

(A beat.)

VICTORIA:

I'm not, Kip. But this is good coffee. *(She continues to sip.)* Who will water my roses?

KIP:

I was going to burn them.

VICTORIA:

A nice bonfire in the front yard? You could have s'mores.

KIP:

I don't like marshmallows much.

VICTORIA:

Promise me you won't cut down the apple tree. I love that tree.

KIP:

I'll need wood for the bonfire.

VICTORIA:

It will be a good way to warm you up after I'm gone. Just like a good cup of coffee. (*She takes another sip.*) I wish you would have strangled me.

KIP:

Why?

VICTORIA:

So I can look into your eyes while I go. Maybe you'd even fuck me as I do it, and you'd come just as I breathe my last gasp. Like any good wife.

KIP:

Exhilarating.

VICTORIA:

No, you never were exciting.

KIP:

So you should expect something like the poison then. (*A beat.*) You never liked fucking me anyway.

VICTORIA:

You were always bad at it.

KIP:

You never tried. You wouldn't do what I wanted.

VICTORIA:

Then maybe shooting me would have been best.

KIP:

I told you, no. Besides, you don't have a bag of ice.

VICTORIA:

Either way, it's still good coffee.

(Pause.)

KIP:

People are literally dying in the streets down there. They have no food or water.

VICTORIA:

Sad.

KIP:

One man killed himself in the Superdome. Jumped right off the upper level.

VICTORIA:

Now there's an option. You could have dropped me off a building.

KIP:

I didn't want to have to drive anywhere.

VICTORIA:

Typical. You always were lazy. I think that's why the fucking was so bad.

KIP:

Possibly.

VICTORIA:

Did you have any coffee?

KIP:

I prefer tea.

VICTORIA:

I'd prefer it if I could flay the skin right off your body.

KIP:

We all want things we can't have.

VICTORIA:

Wonder what the guy who jumped in the Superdome wanted?

KIP:

It probably saved him a lot of grief. He lost his home, his whole life.

VICTORIA:

The easy way out?

KIP:

Probably. It says here that they could face all these diseases from all the dead bodies lying around.

VICTORIA:

That reminds me, after I drop dead, don't forget to clean up.

KIP:

I told you, I don't know where you keep the cleaning supplies.

VICTORIA:

Come on, you know where everything is in this house. We picked it out together.

KIP:

Maybe I stopped paying attention.

VICTORIA:

How long will it take for the poison to work?

KIP:

(Looks at his watch:)

Apparently, too long.

VICTORIA:

I'm sure I'll join those people dying in the streets soon enough.

KIP:

There's all this looting. Some people are even taking big screen TVs. What's the point of that if there's no power?

VICTORIA:

You'd think they'd just take food.

KIP:

The grocery stores were emptied out first. I guess three people with shotguns stormed a big Wal-Mart. They took the rest of the guns too.

VICTORIA:

Where did you buy the poison?

KIP:

Wal-Mart has everything.

VICTORIA:

Must have been cheap then.

KIP:

Convenient. I was out of milk.

VICTORIA:

Our marriage was never one of convenience.

KIP:

I suppose you think it was something else.

VICTORIA:

Many people marry for love.

KIP:

Lucky them.

VICTORIA:

Yes, lucky them. Dying in the streets; leaping from the balcony of the Superdome; killed off by disease.

(Pause. Kip snaps the pencil in his hand cleanly in half.)

VICTORIA (CONT.):

Why don't you look at me?

(Kip looks at Victoria. It is the first time he has looked at her.)

KIP:

(Angry:)

What do you want?

VICTORIA:

Aren't you tired of this?

(Kip gets up and starts toward her.)

KIP:

Whore! Slut! You cruel, heartless bitch! I hate you so much.

VICTORIA:

We both know that's not true.

KIP:

I wish I had poisoned you.

VICTORIA:

You didn't? Pity. It would have made things easier.

KIP:

It's not your fault.

VICTORIA:

Still the good husband. It would have been better if someone had shot me in the head for a bag of ice. Then at least it would be quick, and you wouldn't go insane every morning.

KIP:

I hate that I miss you already.

VICTORIA:

Cancer is cruel like that. (*A beat.*) You have to let me go, Kip.

KIP:

Who will make your coffee?

VICTORIA:

Who is slipping, Kip? The people in Louisiana, or you?

KIP:

What about you? You're the one who is supposed to be dying.

VICTORIA:

I bet you wish it was you.

KIP:

What do you want to hear? That I poisoned you or that I didn't?

VICTORIA:

What do you think?

KIP:

This is insane.

VICTORIA:

That's what anarchy is.

KIP:

But you're so damn calm.

VICTORIA:

At least if you poisoned me you could feel something new. Like you had control.

KIP:

Yes.

VICTORIA:

You should try this coffee, Kip. You really do make a mean cup.

KIP:

Maybe I will.

(*A beat.*)

VICTORIA:

I don't want it to be like this.

KIP:

Me either.

VICTORIA:

I already miss you too.

KIP:

I don't know how I'm going to deal with this.

VICTORIA:

I'll be here for awhile yet.

KIP:

I'm sorry.

VICTORIA:

I'm sorry too.

(VICTORIA sets down her coffee cup and opens her arms. She and KIP embrace.)

KIP:

I'm so sorry.

(Curtain.)