

AN APÉRITIF
A 1-Minute Drama

Steve Martin

Cast of Characters

KATHLEEN: Female, any background, any age older than 30. Married to JONATHAN.

JONATHAN: Male, any background, any age older than 30. Married to KATHLEEN.

Setting

JONATHAN's den. A chair and a desk would suffice.

Time

The early 1950s. A Friday afternoon after the traditional working day, but before dinner.

Playwright's Note

Although Kathleen and Jonathan can be any age, it would be best if they were portrayed no more than five years apart.

Setting: JONATHAN's den. A chair and a desk would suffice.

At Rise: KATHLEEN stands at JONATHAN's desk. She holds a bottle of bourbon. There is a glass on the desk, as well as a small, corked, dark blue bottle.

(LIGHTS UP.)

(KATHLEEN pours bourbon into the small glass. Her hands are shaking, but she manages not to spill any. KATHLEEN grasps the glass with both hands and drinks it down in a gulp. She shudders, but immediately pours more bourbon into the glass.)

JONATHAN (offstage)

Kathleen, baby, where's my drink?

KATHLEEN (as she finishes pouring the bourbon)

I'm in your den, sweetheart.

(During JONATHAN's next line, KATHLEEN uncorks the small, dark blue bottle and oh-so-carefully pours a splash of its liquid into the bourbon. She palms the small, dark blue bottle and hides it behind her back)

JONATHAN (offstage)

Why the hell is it down there? Christ!

(JONATHAN enters.)

All I ask for is bourbon after work.

KATHLEEN

Of course, darling. Here it is.

(KATHLEEN hands the glass to JONATHAN. He takes it and sits at his chair. He doesn't look at her.)

JONATHAN

Christ, what a day.

KATHLEEN

I'm sorry, darling.

(KATHLEEN walks toward the door of the den, the small, dark blue bottle hidden from JONATHAN's view. He still doesn't face her.)

I promised Margie I'd visit before dinner. I think she wants advice about the school assembly.

JONATHAN

Well, get back here before six. I'm damn hungry. What'd you make?

KATHLEEN (still walking)

Pork loin. Mashed potatoes. Asparagus. Your favorite kidney bean salad. Deviled eggs. And chocolate cake for dessert.

JONATHAN

Good. Be back before six.

KATHLEEN (standing at the door)

I will, darling. I love you, darling.

(JONATHAN grunts.)

(KATHLEEN holds her breath and watches, silently.)

(JONATHAN sips the contents of the glass.)

(KATHLEEN exhales. She exits.)

(After a moment, JONATHAN makes a face, as though he has unexpectedly tasted something bitter. He stares at his glass.)

(LIGHTS OUT.)

(END OF PLAY.)