

# NO APPLAUSE FOR MAURICE

by

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## NO APPLAUSE FOR MAURICE

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## NO APPLAUSE FOR MAURICE

The play is set in the present day and revolves around the lives of two gay men: Maurice, an ageing, vain, self-centred, 'has been' actor, and Adam his much younger partner who has supported Maurice financially for many years. They have moved to the country when Adam inherited a small cottage and he transferred to take up the position of the local small town bank manager. Adam is quite content to live away from the bright lights of London, whereas Maurice is not, as he feels it will affect his career.

Adam – bank manager (aged 35)  
Maurice – actor (aged late 60s)  
Alf – mobile grocer / deliveryman (aged early 70s)  
Adam's Mother (aged 60)  
Celia Roberts – Gemini Enterprises Agency (attractive, in her 30s)  
Sally – Celia's new PA  
Rupert – Maurice's new lover (silent)  
Various Party Guests (general sounds only)

A One Act Play, comprising the following:

- Scene 1: Adam's Cottage – kitchen
- Scene 2: Adam's Cottage – kitchen
- Scene 3: Gemini Enterprises – London office
- Scene 4: Gemini Enterprises – London office
- Scene 5: Gemini Enterprises – kitchen
- Scene 6: Gemini Enterprises – reception
- Scene 7: Gemini Enterprises – kitchen
- Scene 8: Gemini Enterprises – reception / balcony
- Scene 9: Gemini Enterprises – kitchen
- Scene 10: Gemini Enterprises – Celia's office

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ACT 1

SCENE 1: INT – AM – KITCHEN – COTTAGE

(ADAM is preparing breakfast. MAURICE enters.)

MAURICE

Good morning Adam – looks like another nice day.

ADAM

So what –

MAURICE

Oh, you're in one of your moods again are you?

ADAM

What do you expect first thing in the morning?

MAURICE

A little civility wouldn't go amiss.

ADAM

Just tell me what you want for breakfast. Don't ask for eggs or crumpets, because there aren't any – only toast or porridge.

MAURICE

No crumpets?

ADAM

We're out of everything until Alf arrives.

MAURICE

And when might that be?

ADAM

This morning.

MAURICE

Well, make sure you double up on the order this week.

ADAM

May I remind you that we're supposed to be *cutting down*.

MAURICE

Why?

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ADAM

Because of your incessant visits to London. The fares are astronomical. Besides, you're just wasting your time.

MAURICE

What do you mean?

ADAM

Oh, wake up Maurice! There's not a lot of work for actors out there. We're being taken over by television and reality shows. You just can't accept it can you?

MAURICE

Oh, dry up!

ADAM

Keep running up to your agent is ludicrous.

MAURICE

(defensively)

Rubbish! Why the hell didn't we stay in London? I shall rot down here.

ADAM

Me – me – me – do you ever think of anyone else?

MAURICE

Well, it's true – stagnation. Narrow-minded country bumpkins, they're all dead from the neck up.

ADAM

Well, I love the pace down here – it's magic.

MAURICE

Of course it is for you. How lucky can you get to land a bank manager's job in the first week?

ADAM

I didn't *land* a job, I was transferred from my London branch.

MAURICE

Of course it was luck. Wasn't it luck that this tiny little town needed a bank manager in the first place? I would call it nothing short of a miracle.

ADAM

Well, that's maybe – but, I love Dorset. There's so much beauty here.

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MAURICE

If your old aunt hadn't left you this cottage we would still be in Finsbury Park.

ADAM

This cottage was a miracle. We were stony broke, remember, all down to your damn gambling.

MAURICE

Oh, change the record – you play that one every week.

ADAM

It's a good job you stay in London with Peter Laird, otherwise I'd have to foot the hotel bills as well.

MAURICE

You seem to forget I have my Old Age Pension, plus the Benevolent Fund.

ADAM

Oh, big deal. That's swallowed up in train fares. Maurice, you have to stop going on these wild goose chases, otherwise we are in big trouble. We've got the computer, and you're the one who's always on the internet – it's almost an addiction with you – let alone the text alerts on your mobile. If there was something urgent the agency would ring your mobile, or the house phone.

MAURICE

Nonsense, you have to be in the thick of things – you have to be *seen* – otherwise they'll think you're dead! How do you think actors get parts? It's who you brush up against and how you impress them.

ADAM

Well, you don't seem to have impressed anyone lately.

MAURICE

You'll never understand an actor's need for an audience, for the adrenalin. We're as different as chalk and cheese, you and I.

ADAM

That reminds me, we have to cut down on cheese. It's too expensive.

MAURICE

For Christ's sake stop talking about cutting down.

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(The POSTMAN is heard and the letterbox snaps closed.)

There's the post Adam – get it, there's a good chap.

(MAURICE remains seated, buttering his toast. ADAM exits and returns with a few items of mail.)

ADAM

Take your pick. There's a gas bill, a Pizza offer, some holiday brochures. Oh, here's one from London. Looks like it could be from – yes – Gemini Enterprises.

MAURICE

(snatches envelope and tears it open)  
There – you see, what did I tell you? They've got something that maybe of interest to me.

ADAM

What is it? Do they need someone to clean the toilets?

MAURICE

FUN – NY. They want me in London – as soon as convenient. What time are the trains after 10.30? They've just introduced a new timetable since West is Best took over the service

ADAM

How the hell should I know the train times!

MAURICE

I'd better look up the timetable. Is my pink shirt ironed?

ADAM

Of course, it's in the airing cupboard.

MAURICE

Not in my wardrobe?

ADAM

No, Maurice, I only ironed it this morning.

MAURICE

Good chap. Better do some sandwiches just in case.

ADAM

In case of what?

MAURICE

In case I get hungry, of course.

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ADAM

Do you ever think about anything but your bloody stomach?

MAURICE

What else is there? You're so aggressive these days.

ADAM

*I'm* aggressive? That's a joke. What about this toast?

MAURICE

Pack it with the sandwiches, I'll eat it on the train.

ADAM

It's a pity you don't cook once in a while, it would do you good.

MAURICE

Heaven forbid! I leave the domesticities to you.

ADAM

I've spoilt you, that's the trouble, waiting on you hand and foot. I suppose I've made you what you are.

MAURICE

And what's that, may I ask?

ADAM

A lazy parasite – what else?

MAURICE

Charming! Well, I'd better go and get dressed – don't want to miss the train. I had a lovely shower this morning, the water was hot for a change. You'd better ring that plumber again and get him to look at the boiler for the third time. It's still playing up, so we may have to invest in a new one.

ADAM

WE? Did you say *we*?

MAURICE

Well, I can't contribute towards it can I?

ADAM

(sarcastically)

Of course you can't.

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MAURICE

Look up the trains there's a good fellow, time's running on.

ADAM

I do have to go to work Maurice. If you want a packed lunch, you'll have to look them up yourself.

MAURICE

All right, I only asked. Snap-snap-snap, that's all you do. What's really bugging you Adam, I know there's something?

ADAM

I'm tired of paying out all the time, that's what is bugging me. You still expect the same standards. You smoke like a chimney, you drink too much wine, you demand the best food – plus, you don't contribute a penny. That's enough to hack anyone off.

MAURICE

(getting angry)

It's not my fault if I can't get work. It isn't that I don't *try*. Why do you think I keep going to London?

ADAM

It is your fault. You were offered a job at the Coach & Horses and you turned it down flat.

MAURICE

(contemptuously)

A barman – you expect *me* to work in a pub?

ADAM

Why not? At least you would earn a few quid.

MAURICE

I know nothing about bar work.

ADAM

George offered to train you and the wages were quite fair, for a beginner.

MAURICE

You expect someone of my *calibre* to work in a pub?

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ADAM

I would if I had to. I'd scrub floors if it gave me my independence.

MAURICE

Huh – come to think of it, you'd make a good scrubber.

ADAM

Ha-ha – very funny.

MAURICE

I'm going up to get changed. I haven't time to listen to all this twaddle.

ADAM

That's right, when it comes down to the nitty-gritty, you make one of your dramatic exits – that's typical.

(MAURICE turns towards the door).

MAURICE

Oh, go to hell.

ADAM

Hang on a minute, Maurice, let's get everything out in the open for once.

MAURICE

Look, I'm in a hurry, I haven't much time.

ADAM

Well, you're going to have to *make* time.

MAURICE

All right – all right – let's hear it.

(ADAM rips down a poster of the Royal Family, recently pinned up.)

ADAM

I'm sick of your posters everywhere. If you're so fond of the Royal Family, confine them to your study.

MAURICE

Hold on, I only bought that last week.

ADAM

Too bad! I'm sick of your laziness, and I'm double sick of you not pulling your weight with the finances. Who the hell do you think you are Maurice?

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MAURICE

(theatrically)

I'm a resting actor, that's who I am.

ADAM

Bullshit. You're a 'has been' who won't face up to reality. You're washed up Maurice, nobody wants to give you work anymore. Ten years ago, maybe, but it's a different ballgame today. The sooner you come down to earth the better.

MAURICE

Oh, you want me to become a bore like you. A dull human being, without an ounce of fire or passion.

ADAM

Thank God I am a bore, otherwise I wouldn't be keeping you. Just remember I am the dung that keeps the roses sweet.

MAURICE

Oh, you're dung are you? Good of you to admit it.

ADAM

That's a quotation, very fitting don't you think? All I know is things have *got* to change if you want us to stay together.

MAURICE

Are you threatening to leave me?

ADAM

Why should I, it's my house.

MAURICE

Oh, I knew you'd bring that into it. So you want *me* to leave?

ADAM

NO – I just want you to pull your weight – to be a bit more considerate, and stop living in your dream world.

MAURICE

And if I can't change, what then?

ADAM

Then, I can't see any future for us. All I know is that things can't go on as they are. The present situation is driving me insane.

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MAURICE

Look, can we finish this conversation and carry on with it some other time – I'm running late.

ADAM

Oh, go for your damn interview. I'm wasting my time trying to get through to you.

MAURICE

Yes – perhaps you are. I have to dash.