

Bear Hug

A One Act Play by Robin French
Directed for RDG by Paul Foster



A conventional middle-class couple are in their conventional middle-class kitchen. The mother, Linda, is serving dinner to her Volvo-obsessed husband David and their son Michael. This could be an episode of a gentle family 1970s sitcom starring Wendy Craig and Martin Jarvis but something is wrong with the picture. Michael is a bear and he is angry, frustrated and alienated. Linda and David are trying their best but their cosy world view is about to spiral into a nightmarish black comedy as they try to cope with a son who is out of control.

Bear Hug was first performed at the Royal Court in 2004. It is a comedy which explores the way family relationships are tested to breaking point by a son who has become lost to himself and to his parents. The play offers the actors the opportunity to explore through black comedy the pain and anguish of a family being torn apart both figuratively and literally whilst against all odds they try to keep their suburban façade intact.

The Cast:

Linda

Middle class, middle aged wife and mother. She wants everything to be as it was before their son changed. Soon we see the guilt she feels for sending him to a zoo. This is a role of comedy and pathos requiring an honest portrayal of a woman desperately trying to maintain normality.

David

Middle class, middle aged husband and father. A pragmatist who tries to deal with their son in a practical way. Does his love for his wife match the deep attachment he has for his Volvo? Maybe not; he blames her for sending their son away and tries everything to keep him out of an institution. Like Linda the comedy comes from the juxtaposition of his conventional attitude and the increasing madness of the situation.

Michael

Unspeaking for most of the play, he utters two words on the last page. However, he is the focal point of the play and the part requires physical acting to convey the frustration, anger, unhappiness and fear Michael is feeling. The audience need to understand and identify with his emotions.

The Setting:

All the action takes place in the kitchen, which needs to have a realistic oven, a window and a door. There are some interesting special effects, including the bear head and paws, bloody bandages and internal organs and a dummy dressed as the son/bear and driving gloves for father and son/bear. Simple lighting getting colder as the play progresses. Some music and a doobell and roaring bear sound effects

Auditions :

There will be a read through of the play on Friday, 3rd January 2020 and Auditions will take place on Wednesday 8th January. The play will be rehearsed on Wednesday and Thursday nights at the RDG Studio from January.

There will be two performances at the Maidenhead and Leatherhead drama festivals. Maidenhead Festival runs from 24th to 28th March 2020 and Leatherhead Festival runs from 4th to 16th May 2020.

**Contact Paul Foster for a script and to indicate your interest in auditioning. paul.foster3@virgin.net
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