Twentieth Century Chats, in Six Acts

by strannikov

DRAMATIS PERSONAE: (in order of appearance)

GALAHAM, latter-day knight-errant, pious spectator
J. KIDDING, divided self with prospects, unemployed nuisance
DEATH, we know who s/he is
COL. MORD, myopic pillar, well-mannered exterminator
M. CALLAGHAN, another divided soul, pretensions to anonymity
T. BURKULAR, cosmopolitan provincial, jungle critter
DOLLY CUPQUAKE, devoted baker, perspicacious violinist
CALDERONE, sport and game enthusiast, professional witness
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ACT ONE (Scene: Train Terminal Diner)

GALAHAM: May a stranger offer condolences for your partner's unfortunate death?

J. KIDDING: I have to go. It's the last train, sorry.

DEATH: I am Death!

COL. MORD: Ah! Excuse me.

J. KIDDING: Give me a cigarette. Pack of Marlboros, please.

M. CALLAGHAN: I wish I'd asked you to bring some of those tablets. What happened to you?

T. BURKULAR: I'll have a big Coca-Cola—without ice—and . . .

DOLLY CUPQUAKE: Is that all . . . hang yourself! Hang yourself!

CALDERONE: Why the deuce didn't he say so in the first place?

ACT TWO (Scene: Train Terminal Platform)

COL. MORD: Why aren't they leaving? It's almost four o'clock.

CALDERONE: Wonder who all those women were?

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M. CALLAGHAN: I don't want to go. When you make up your mind, send me a message.

DEATH: I have been walking by your side for a long time.

DOLLY CUPQUAKE: Why, that's well said. A good heart's better than gold.

M. CALLAGHAN: It's the only way to save nowadays. It uses up their electricity.

J. KIDDING: I kind of doubt it. I'm sorry about the noise. I've almost finished.

T. BURKULAR: Me? I could never go to a place like that.

GALAHAM: You will take, say, one hundred dollars?

CALDERONE: I'm sorry I can't hear.

ACT THREE (Scene: Train Carriage Interior)

J. KIDDING: You fell asleep here yesterday . . . tomorrow, then. I'll get up at seven.

COL. MORD: And Edmundo? I cannot say.

M. CALLGHAN: What are you going to do? I never feel quite safe in these things.

DEATH: Are you prepared?

CALDERONE: If I'd known it was going to last twenty minutes . . .

DOLLY CUPQUAKE: You, a captain! For what? Not here, sweet captain.

COL. MORD: You would do well to hold your tongue.

GALAHAM: The fat man? Is he here?

T. BURKULAR: Yeah, I don't follow music too much.

ACT FOUR (Scene: Train Dining Car Interior)

M. CALLAGHAN: I've got a lot on my mind. You're drunk, aren't you?

COL. MORD: Good idea!

DEATH: Well, there is no shame in that.

J. KIDDING: Everyone suffers. Can you lend me your cat?

T. BURKULAR: I don't know, sir. I don't follow political issues much.

CALDERONE: You're a trifle late, aren't you? She may be dead by now.

DOLLY CUPQUAKE: You'll start me weeping if you say so. An old man.

COL. MORD: What the devil are you saying?

GALAHAM: I'm going with you?

ACT FIVE (Scene: Train Carriage Interior)

M. CALLAGHAN: Well, we shall be old for a very long time. I don't even know what protocol means.

CALDERONE: Looks pretty black.

DEATH: That's what they all say.

COL. MORD: I for my part do not wish to force your hospitality so freely.

J. KIDDING: Don't be surprised to see my obituary in the papers. There was a slip of paper . . .

DOLLY CUPQUAKE: Mmm. Poor ape, how you are sweating.

GALAHAM: Are you going?

T. BURKULAR: I'm off duty.

ACT SIX (Scene: Train Terminal Platform)

CALDERONE: I did read once that if you keep on the go you can stay awake.

DEATH: I have no secrets.

J. KIDDING: Do you know what's next? I didn't hear anything. I only saw . . .

M. CALLAGHAN: How did you know I'd be here? Those were the days, old man.

DOLLY CUPQUAKE: He, sure, is not in hell. Do you think I keep thieves in my house?

T. BURKULAR: My work may take me out of New York.

COL. MORD: What does that mean? Have they lost what's left of their wits?

GALAHAM: What? Facts?

DEATH: Oh, no reason at all.

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