

Retrograde

by
Doug Brook

First Place

Fourth Annual Ten-Minutes Playwriting Contest (1998)

Actors' Theatre, Santa Cruz, California

Premiered January 7, 1999 in *Eight Tens @ 8 festival*

Published in *8 Tens @ 8* anthology, 2001 (Smith & Kraus)

Directed by John Howie Patterson

John: Chris Sugarman

Lynn: Katryn Kinser

New York professional premiere November 13, 2002

Streetlight Productions' *Yearning for the Fourth Grade*

Lion Theatre, 42nd Street Studios

John: John-Paul Lavoisier

Lynn: Kerri Tucker

Copyright 1998

PREVIEW SCRIPT

For the full script, or production/rights inquiries, contact doug@brookwrite.com

RETROGRADE

(The setting is unimportant. **LYNN** and **JOHN** are together onstage. There are several breaks that represent time gaps. These gaps should be portrayed by the actors in brief changes of direction, nothing fancier.

A retrograde is a musical construct, wherein a melody goes in a certain direction, then concludes by repeating itself exactly in reverse. This scene does the same thing. They go from hate to love to hate again. It is important to present the progression distinctly, or it might make little sense.)

LYNN

I really hate you.

JOHN

You're entitled to your wrong opinion.

LYNN

You see? How am I supposed to keep working with someone as irreverent and sarcastic as you?

JOHN

And somehow I'll again suffer through a partner who has no sense of humor when she's working.

LYNN

You're insufferable. No wonder you're not married.

JOHN

You're much too critical and absorbed in your perception of the world. No wonder you're divorced.

LYNN

Let's just get our work done.

(Break.)

LYNN

I can't believe the time we had to put in tonight.

JOHN

I can.

LYNN

It's four-thirty already. The sun will rise in an hour or so.

JOHN

I tried to warn you.

LYNN

You're always so damned smart... I guess you're right. You did warn me.

JOHN

See? I can be right sometimes. The question is, can you stand it?

LYNN

I don't think so. But I guess I'll have to learn if we keep getting stuck working together.

(Break.)

JOHN

Before you get all worked up about being stuck with me again, you should know that I requested it.

LYNN

Really? Why?

JOHN

Because of how you feel about me.

LYNN

You are such an ass! Why do you have to always do that?

JOHN

Okay. Seriously. We've worked well together. Even though we don't get along. Actually, especially when we didn't get along.

LYNN

Why are you so sure we get along now?

JOHN

I didn't say we do.

LYNN

Yes you did. You said “didn’t” which implies it’s no longer the case.

JOHN

Fine. But that's not what I meant. We seemed to take a small step toward being civil last time. Either way, somehow we seem to get results together.

LYNN

I suppose that's true. Somehow, as hard as you try to avoid it, we do some good work.

JOHN

Shall we get to work?

LYNN

After one question.

JOHN

Shoot.

LYNN

Is that the only reason you put in the request?

JOHN

I’m trying to be nice, but don’t flatter yourself. You’ve heard what everyone says. I’m all business. If I haven’t noticed anyone else around here why would I notice you?

LYNN

Because I’m better.

(Break.)

JOHN

What’s with us? At the rate we’re going we’ll still be here when the morning staff arrives.

LYNN

It is something else, isn’t it?

JOHN

What?

PREVIEW SCRIPT

For the full script, or production/rights inquiries, contact doug@brookwrite.com