

ARTNET

A Radio/Stage Play

By

Eric Coble

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(THE DRAGNET THEME PLAYS EMPHATICALLY)

(DOMM-DA-DOM-DOMM)

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

THE STORY YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR IS TRUE. ONLY THE COLORS
HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT THE ARTISTS.

(DOMM-DA-DOM-DOMM)

JOE

THIS IS THE ART WORLD. MY NAME IS FRIDA. JOE FRIDA. I
CARRY A BRUSH. 3:45 A.M. I WAS AT HOPPER'S NIGHTHAWKS DINER
INVESTIGATING A 419: ILLEGAL IMPLICATION OF DESPAIR AND GLOOM
ON A PERFECTLY NICE EVENING. THAT'S WHEN THE CALL CAME IN.
A 232: MISSING ARTIST'S MODEL. I HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THE
STATION.

(DOOR OPENING)

JOE (CONT'D)

MORNING, CHIEF.

CHIEF

JOE! I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE DONE WITH YOUR NARRATION.

JOE

I WAS AT 1247 VINCENT ON A 419 AT 3:47 WHEN I GOT THE 232, I
DID A 180, AND 10-60'D BACK HERE ON THE DOUBLE.

CHIEF

WHY IS IT I ALWAYS NEED A CALCULATOR TO TALK TO YOU?

JOE

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT AN ARTIST'S MODEL?

CHIEF

GUY NAMED DA VINCI. HE HAD A DATE WITH SOME GIRL TO PAINT
HER PICTURE. SHE NEVER SHOWED. HE'S CONCERNED.

JOE

THINKS SHE MIGHT HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED?

CHIEF

WORSE.

JOE

MURDERED?

CHIEF
 WORSE. HE THINKS SHE'S MODELING FOR SOMEONE ELSE.

JOE
 WHAT'S THE GIRL'S NAME?

CHIEF
 LISA. MONA LISA.

JOE
 MEN HAVE NAMED HER?

CHIEF
 SHE'S SO LIKE THE LADY WITH THE MYSTIC SMILE-

JOE
 IS IT ONLY CAUSE SHE'S LONELY THAT THEY BLAME HER FOR THE
 STRANGENESS IN HER SMILE?

CHIEF
 THAT I CAN'T REALLY TELL YA, JOE.

JOE
 ANY DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS?

CHIEF
 JUST THE MOUTH. SHE NEVER STOPS SMILING.

(DOMM-DA-DOM-DOMM)

JOE
 8:22 A.M. I HEADED OUT. THOUGHT I'D CANVAS THE
 NEIGHBORHOOD. I WAS DRIVING AND THINKING. THINKING AND
 DRIVING. THINKING. THINKING. THINKING. FORGOT ABOUT
 DRIVING. ALMOST PLOWED INTO A LITTLE NUN TAKING A GROUP OF
 ORPHANS TO THE MUSEUM. SHE TELLS ME HER NAME IS SISTER
 WENDY. I ARREST THEM ON A 309: JAYWALKING. AS I FILLED OUT
 THE PAPER WORK, I NOTICED A YOUNG MAN PAINTING IN THE PARK
 ACROSS THE STREET. HE LOOKED SUSPICIOUS. I GAVE THE NUN THE
 BRUSH OFF, TOLD HER TO GET HER OWN PBS SHOW, AND HIGH-TAILED
 IT OVER TO THE SUSPECT.

(TO MONET)

MORNING, SIR. MIND IF I ASK WHAT YOU'RE DOING WITH THE EASEL
 AND PAINTS?

MONET
 (FRENCH DIALECT)
 MERDE! MON DIEU!

JOE
 I DON'T SPEAK FRENCH. IS THAT A "YES" OR A "NO"?

MONET

I KEEP TRYING TO PAINT THE STUPID TOADS AND FROGS -- BUT THEY KEEP LEAPING ALL OVER THE STUPID POND!!

JOE

JUST FROGS AND TOADS YOU'RE TRYING TO PAINT? NO YOUNG WOMEN?

MONET

DO YOU SEE ANY YOUNG WOMEN? I WOULD KILL FOR A HUMAN MODEL -- THEN I COULD TELL THEM TO SIT STILL!! LOOK AT THIS TOAD!

JOE

NO THANK YOU. WHAT'S YOUR NAME, SIR?

MONET

CLAUDE MONET. THE BIG FROG-PAINTING FAILURE MONET.

JOE

HERE'S MY CARD. IF YOU SEE A WOMAN MODELING AROUND HERE -- ALWAYS SMILING -- CALL ME IMMEDIATELY.

MONET

BUT HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO CAPTURE THE WAY THE LIGHT PLAYS OVER THE SLIMY SKIN OF THESE TOADS WHEN THEY KEEP MOVING?

JOE

TRY THE LILY PADS.

MONET

WHAT?

JOE

THE WATER LILIES. THEY HOLD STILL. PAINT THE WATER LILIES.

MONET

MON DIEU! BRILLIANCE!

JOE

I THINK YOU'LL MAKE A GREAT IMPRESSION.

(DOMM-DA-DOM-DOMM)

JOE (CONT'D)

9:36 A.M. I DROVE ON. I'D HEARD OF A NEW GUY IN TOWN. CRAZY MAN. BUT CRAZY ENOUGH TO STEAL ANOTHER ARTIST'S MODEL? I HAD TO FIND OUT.

(KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK)

DALI

YESSSS?

JOE
MR. DALI?

DALI
YESSSS.

JOE
JOE FRIDA. ART SQUAD. MAY I COME IN?
(TO HIMSELF)
9:37 A.M. I ENTERED THE SUSPECT'S STUDIO-

DALI
WHO IS IT YOU ARE TALKING TO?

JOE
9:38 A.M. I REALIZE I'M NARRATING OUT LOUD AGAIN.

DALI
THAT'S A NICE WATCH YOU KEEP LOOKING AT.

JOE
9:39 A.M. I TAKE OFF MY WATCH, SET IT DOWN, AND BEGIN
QUESTIONING.
(TO DALI)
I'M LOOKING FOR A FEMALE MODEL NAMED LISA. HAVE YOU SEEN
HER?

DALI
SEEN? FELT! IS IT A CRIME MERELY TO LOBSTER? ANT! ANT!
ANT!

JOE
I'M JUST AFTER THE FACTS, SIR.

DALI
THE EGG CRACKS, THE WORLD WITHIN!

JOE
JUST THE FACTS.

DALI
FROM ONE WOMAN SPRINGS A MOUNTAIN!

JOE
THE FACTS.

DALI
FACTS, SHMACTS! THE DOGS ARE HOWLING!

JOE
IF YOU DON'T STICK TO THE FACTS, I'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOU IN ON
A 106.

DALI
WHAT IS THAT?

JOE
INORDINATE SURREALISM.

DALI
I DON'T USE MODELS. WHO NEEDS MODELS WHEN YOU HAVE DREAMS?

JOE
SOME PEOPLE HAVE DREAMS OF MODELS.

DALI
SOME PEOPLE ARE THE MODELS OF DREAMS.

JOE
SOME MODELS ARE DREAM PEOPLE.

DALI
SOME DREAMS MODEL PEOPLE.

JOE
I THINK I NEED TO LEAVE. MY HEAD IS ABOUT TO EXPLODE.

DALI
YOUR WATCH!

JOE
MY WATCH IS A TIMEX. IT DOESN'T EXPLODE. "TAKES A LICKING--"

DALI
YOUR WATCH IS MELTING!

JOE
I REPEAT, MY WATCH IS A TIMEX. IT DOESN'T MELT--

DALI
THIS ONE DOES! LOOK!

(BEAT)

JOE
OH DEAR.

DALI
YOU SET IT ON THE RADIATOR AND IT IS MELTING! LOOK AT IT
OOZING DOWN THE SIDE OF THE METAL LIKE TIME ITSELF SLIPPING
INTO THE PAST AND FUTURE SIMULTANEOUSLY--

JOE
THAT'S A TIMEX. THAT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN.

DALI

IT'S THE MOST GLORIOUS THING I'VE EVER SEEN! I MUST PAINT IT IMMEDIATELY!!

JOE

I'D GET A BUCKET FIRST. NOTE TO SELF: CALL TIMEX WITH NEW SLOGAN -- "TAKES A WARMING AND STARTS DEFORMING".

(DOMM-DA-DOM-DOMM)

JOE (CONT'D)

11:45... A.M.... APPROXIMATELY. I NO LONGER HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT TIME IT IS. I LEFT DALI'S PLACE, HEADING TO THE STUDIO OF THE OTHER NEW GUY IN TOWN -- SOMEONE WHO MIGHT NOT KNOW IT'S NOT KOSHER TO STEAL ANOTHER ARTIST'S MODELS.

(DING DONG)

WARHOL

HEYyyy.

JOE

MR. WARHOL. JOE FRIDA. ART SQUAD. DO YOU MIND IF I TAKE A LOOK AROUND YOUR STUDIO?

WARHOL

IN THE FUTURE, EVERY STUDIO WILL BE INVESTIGATED FOR 15 MINUTES.

JOE

IT WON'T TAKE THAT LONG. I'M LOOKING FOR A MODEL NAMED LISA.

WARHOL

WHAT AN OMNISCIENT NAME. IN THE FUTURE EVERYONE WILL BE NAMED "LISA" FOR 15 MINUTES.

JOE

...RIGHT. HOPE YOU DON'T MIND IF I EAT AND SEARCH. I BROUGHT MY LUNCH.

(SLURP)

WARHOL

IN THE FUTURE, EVERYONE WILL EAT LUNCH FOR 15 MINUTES.

JOE

(SLURP)

I DON'T THINK YOU'VE GOT ANY MODELS HERE.

WARHOL

WHY?

JOE

I DON'T THINK ANY WOMAN COULD STAND TO BE IN THE SAME ROOM WITH YOU FOR 15 MINUTES.

WARHOL

I KNOW A WOMAN NAMED MARILYN. AND ONE NAMED JACKIE...

JOE

LISA. I'M LOOKING FOR A LISA.
(SLURP)

(WARHOL GASPS)

JOE (CONT'D)

WHAT.

WARHOL

YOUR LUNCH...

JOE

CAMPBELL'S TOMATO SOUP. I EAT IT RIGHT OUT OF THE CAN. MORE EFFICIENT. MM-MM-GOOD.

WARHOL

CAN I HAVE IT?

JOE

NO. IT'S MY SOUP. SUPPOSED TO MIX IT WITH A CUP OF WATER, BUT I LIKE MINE THICK.
(SLURP)

WARHOL

NO, TO PAINT! PAINT THE CAN, MAN! CAN I HAVE THE CAN, MAN, CAN I?

JOE

YOU CAN HAVE THE CAN... MAN.
(SLURP)

I THINK I'M BEGINNING TO SEE WHY SOME PEOPLE HATE MODERN ART.

WARHOL

IN THE FUTURE, EVERYONE WILL HATE MODERN ART-

JOE

FOR 15 MINUTES. I KNOW. CAN WE JUST CUE THE MUSIC PLEASE?

(DOMM-DA-DOM-DOMM)

JOE (CONT'D)

12:15 P.M. GIVE OR TAKE. I'D LOST MY LUNCH. I'D LOST MY WATCH. I WAS LOSING MY MIND. I'D PAINTED MYSELF INTO A CORNER. I COULDN'T TAKE ANY MORE MODERNISM. I HAD TO FIND SOMEONE WHO STILL USED MODELS.

AS I CLIMBED THE LONG SET OF STAIRS TO THE STUDIO, I KNEW I HAD TO FIND SOMEONE WITH STABILITY. SOMEONE WHO PLAYED BY THE RULES-

(KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. DOOR OPENS)

PICASSO

HELLO?

JOE

MR. PICASSO?

PICASSO

YES.

JOE

JOE FRIDA. ART SQUAD. SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOU. ARE YOU STILL IN YOUR BLUE PERIOD?

PICASSO

ROSE. IT'S ALL ROSE NOW.

JOE

I'M SEEING RED MYSELF. MIND IF I COME IN? IT'S BEEN A LONG CLIMB UP THE STAIRS-

PICASSO

ACTUALLY I'M A LITTLE BUSY-

(A WOMAN GIGGLES)

JOE

WHAT WAS THAT?

PICASSO

NOTHING.

WOMAN'S VOICE

PABLO-OOOY...

JOE

DO YOU HAVE A MODEL IN THERE?

PICASSO

NO! NO MODELS HERE! FRUIT. BOWLS OF FRUIT AND COW'S SKULLS, NOTHING MORE-

WOMAN

AM I THE FRUIT OR THE COW SKULL?

JOE

HELLO, MA'AM. JOE FRIDA, MA'AM. WERE YOU POSING FOR THIS MAN?

PICASSO

SHE'S NOT POSING! SHE'S... POSTURING.

WOMAN

YOU SAID IT WAS A SITTING.

JOE

ARE YOU MONA LISA, MA'AM?

WOMAN

WHO'S ASKIN'?

JOE

JOE FRIDA. ART SQUAD. I THOUGHT I MADE THAT CLEAR IN MY INTRODUCTION.

WOMAN

WELL, I'M MONA LISA. PLEASSED TO MEETCHA.

JOE

WHY ARE YOU SMILING, MA'AM?

MONA

NO REASON.

JOE

YOU MUST HAVE A REASON, MA'AM.

MONA

IT'S A SECRET REASON.

JOE

YOU CAN TELL ME, MA'AM. I'M A POLICE DETECTIVE, MA'AM.

MONA

I CAN'T TELL YOU. IT'S A SECRET.

JOE

I SHARE ALL MY THOUGHTS COMPLETE WITH THE TIMES I THINK THEM. ASK ANYONE.

MONA

WELL, THAT'S FINE FOR YOU, BUT NOBODY'S EVER GONNA KNOW WHY I'M SMILIN'.

JOE

FINE. YOU'RE BOTH COMING IN FOR QUESTIONING.

MONA AND PICASSO

WHAT?!

JOE

A 682 AND 593. THEFT OF ANOTHER ARTIST'S MODEL AND REFUSAL
TO SHARE AN INNER MONOLOGUE.

PICASSO

NO! I'VE BEEN FRAMED!

JOE

DON'T WORRY. IT'S NOT A HANGING OFFENSE. STEP AWAY FROM THE
EASEL AND NOBODY GETS HURT.

PICASSO

I CAN EXPLAIN-

JOE

YOU CAN'T COLOR THE CASE NOW, MR. PICASSO. THERE'S NO
TINTING THE EVIDENCE.

PICASSO

BUT-

JOE

DOWN THE STAIRS. BOTH OF YOU.

MONA

QUIT PUSHIN'-

PICASSO

THIS IS ALL A MISTAKE-

MONA

WATCH THE STAIRS -- WATCH THE STAEEEEEEEEEEE-

(CLUMP BUMP BUMP BUMP BUMP THUD)

(BEAT)

JOE

UH OH.

PICASSO

MONA! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

MONA

MY HEAD FEELS FUNNY...

PICASSO

(GASPS)

OH... MY GOD.

JOE

YOU SAID IT, PABLO. MA'AM, YOU'RE A MESS.

PICASSO
 NO! SHE'S... SHE'S... BEAUTIFUL. BACK TO MY EASEL!
 QUICKLY! QUICKLY!

MONA
 I THINK I MUSTA BROKE SOMETHIN'—

JOE
 SHE'S IN NO CONDITION—

PICASSO
 I MUST PAINT HER! NOW!

JOE
 HER NOSE IS ALL SMOOSHED OVER... AND HER EYES ARE CLUMPED
 OVER ON ONE SIDE OF HER HEAD... HER HANDS ARE MISSHAPEN
 BLOBS...

PICASSO
 SHE'S PERFECT!

JOE
 SHE NEEDS MEDICAL ATTENTION!

MONA
 NO, IF PABLO WANTS TO PAINT ME THIS WAY... IT'D BE AN HONOR.

JOE
 WELL... ALL RIGHT.

PICASSO
 YES!

JOE
 I DON'T HAVE THE HEART TO TAKE YOU AWAY, MA'AM. NOT LOOKING
 LIKE... THAT. POSING FOR A PICASSO CUBIST PAINTING MAY BE
 THE LAST MODELING GIG YOU EVER GET.

MONA
 THANK YOU. I THINK. ARE BOTH MY EARS STILL ATTACHED?

(DOMM-DA-DOM-DOMM)

JOE
 1:45...-ISH. I LEFT PICASSO AND LISA TO THEIR SESSION. THIS
 HAD BEEN A HECK OF A DAY. BUT I HAD ONE LAST STOP TO MAKE.

(DING DONG. DOOR OPENS)

DA VINCI
 (ITALIAN ACCENT)
 YES?

JOE

MR. DA VINCI?

DA VINCI

YOU MUST BE THE POLICE, AH? WHERE'S MY GIRL? WHERE'S MY MONA?

JOE

THAT'S WHAT I CAME TO SEE YOU ABOUT. MONA'S NOT COMING BACK. AT LEAST NOT WITH ANY REALISM.

DA VINCI

YOU DON'T MEAN...

JOE

I'M AFRAID SO. SHE'S GONE ABSTRACT.

DA VINCI

NO! NO NO NO. WHAT AM I GOING TO DO NOW? THIS WAS TO BE MY GREATEST PAINTING!

JOE

IT STILL CAN BE. BUCK UP, SIR. I'M SURE YOU'LL SMILE AGAIN.

DA VINCI

WHAT, LIKE THIS?

JOE

WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

DA VINCI

NOTHING. I'M JUST TRYING TO SMILE.

JOE

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

DA VINCI

I'M THINKING I'M TRYING TO SMILE.

JOE

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN YOUR SMILE?

DA VINCI

NO. NOT REALLY.

JOE

LOOK IN THIS MIRROR. YOU HAVE QUITE THE MYSTERIOUS SMILE.

DA VINCI

I DO, DON'T I?

JOE

YOU EVER CONSIDER A SELF-PORTRAIT?

DA VINCI
BUT I'M SUPPOSED TO PAINT A WOMAN!

JOE
LIKE I SAID, YOU EVER CONSIDER A SELF-PORTRAIT?

DA VINCI
AAAAHHH! DO YOU REALLY THINK... I COULD...

JOE
DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL, SIR.

DA VINCI
IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME... I HAVE A MASTERPIECE TO CREATE.

(DOOR SLAMS)

(DOMM-DA-DOM-DOMM)

JOE
2:37 P.M. BY THE BANK CLOCK. I WENT BACK TO THE OFFICE AND
FILLED OUT THE PAPERWORK-

(DOMM-DA-...)

JOE (CONT'D)
NOT YET.

(MUSIC STOPS)
I DIDN'T GET MY MAN -- OR WOMAN -- BUT MONET, DALI, PICASSO,
AND DA VINCI GOT THEIR PAINTINGS. PRETTY GOOD DAY OVER ALL.

(DOMM-DA...)

JOE (CONT'D)
NOT YET.

(MUSIC STOPS)
IF I WAS GOING TO WRAP UP THE ART WORLD TODAY, I'D SAY... NOW
THAT'S IT'S ALL OEUVRE, OIL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

(PAUSE)

NOW.

(DOMM-DA-DOM-DOMM.

DOMM-DA-DOM-DOM-DOMMMMMMM)