

HOW TO WRITE A PLAY: STEP FOUR

CELESTIA

“Step Four: The Tiny Prophet.”

To make your play unforgettable, introduce an enlightened innocent — a child, pure and small, who unravels life’s tangled web by speaking truths no one dares utter. Behold the oracle in pajamas! For audiences adore piercing, thunderous wisdom spilled from the mouths of babes.

So, go on, add a cutie-patootie! Who doesn’t love a kid?

(Lights up on our two cops from earlier, RAMIREZ and JACKSON — remember them and their budding love affair? They are in RAMIREZ’S sad studio apartment, complete with RAMIREZ’S potted plant. They are in a lovers’ quarrel.)

JACKSON

(exasperated)

For crying out loud, Ramirez — what’s happened to us?

RAMIREZ

We were so happy, Jackson!

JACKSON

Euphoric!

RAMIREZ

Rapturous!

JACKSON

Transcendent!

RAMIREZ

We loved with a fury that scorched the air, a passion so fierce it left embers in our wake. And now, it’s gone cold and limp, like poor Leaf Erickson here.

(RAMIREZ cradles Leaf Erickson, the potted plant.)

JACKSON

What’s changed, Ramirez?

RAMIREZ

If only I knew, Jackson...

JACKSON

Have we grown bored of each other?

RAMIREZ

Perhaps.

JACKSON

Do we long for more?

RAMIREZ

Perhaps.

JACKSON

Or... I mean, it could be that your weird three-year old-niece came to visit last week and just won't leave?

(On walks NOODLES, a three-year-old with pigtails and footy pajamas, holding a giant swirly lollipop.)

NOODLES

Hi! I'm Noodles!

RAMIREZ

We know who you are, Noodles.

NOODLES

Noodles wonders: why so sad?

JACKSON

Well, Noodles, it's adult stuff.

RAMIREZ

It's complicated, kid.

NOODLES

What I always say is: "Big people forget where their shoes go."

(Ramirez and Jackson take in the profundity.)

RAMIREZ

Wow...

JACKSON

That's... really wise.

RAMIREZ

I think Noodles means we should rebuild our foundation?

JACKSON

(agreeing)

"Shoes" must a metaphor for the love on which we stand.

(taking Ramirez's hand)

Thank you, Noodles.

NOODLES

Noodles also says: "Don't ask the duck for directions. It always says quack."

(Another beat as RAMIREZ and JACKSON take it in.)

RAMIREZ

Wow...

JACKSON

I think Noodles is saying that we have the answer within our hearts. We can't rely on the "quacking ducks" of the world to save us.

NOODLES

"Cookies should be friends. Not crumbs."

(A beat)

RAMIREZ

Huh...

JACKSON

That one I don't get.

NOODLES

"Spill flour? Make more pancakes!"

RAMIREZ

What?

NOODLES

"Bananas talk, but only when no one's listening."

JACKSON

Nope.

NOODLES

"Rainbows are the butts of the sky."

RAMIREZ

Stop.

NOODLES

"Potatoes are just dragons who skipped their nap."

JACKSON

(firmly, to RAMIREZ)

You have to call your sister to come get this kid.

RAMIREZ

Tell me about it.

NOODLES

NOODLES!!!

(This time, we crossfade right to CELESTIA.)