



The Double-Minded Director

Jeff Berryman

Please look at the attached script – Easter Beach – and do whatever analysis you would normally do to prepare to direct the script.

This workshop will be very hands on. Several of you will be given a chance to work with actors who will have the text memorized, but otherwise will not have “done their homework.” You will both direct and coach the actors, and will be given immediate feedback on strengths, opportunities for growth, and new ideas and approaches. We will be talking about the differences and similarities between directing and coaching actors, and will be moving back and forth between the two ideas.

Enjoy...see you soon!

Jeff Berryman

EASTER BEACH

Start the stage in black.

Just before dawn.

LIGHTS UP on a thirty something woman sitting on the big empty stage in a small pool of light. This is DEBRA. She is rocking herself back and forth, looking out.

Behind her now, her brother GREG enters. He is perhaps a bit older. He stands upstage of her, looking at her. Though he will sometimes narrate, he will not address the audience. Though he speaks, keep the fourth wall up.

GREG

"She's always been just like this. She rocks here at the side of the lake, our family's cabin just out of sight,
(he looks back over his shoulder)
But still...it's there."

DEBRA

(not looking at him, inventing)
"The lake, windless tonight, is flat, like a kitchen counter."

GREG

Nice.

DEBRA

"It's mirrored surface catching all the clouds."

GREG

And who's the writer here?

DEBRA

"The brother often wondered about his little sister, hoped her mind would settle down, be like the lake."

GREG

Calm.

DEBRA

Fat chance.

(Pause.)

GREG

You comin' in?

No. DEBRA

What are you doing? GREG

Thinking. DEBRA

About Dad? GREG

Where's your wife? DEBRA

Getting in some quiet before the kids get up. I got pancakes or waffles. Your choice. GREG

Your kids are cute. DEBRA

You like them? GREG

They're a handful. DEBRA

You don't like them. GREG

They dumped my make-up bag in the lake. DEBRA

They thought it was funny. GREG

Whatever. DEBRA

I'm sorry. GREG

Oh, I don't care. They like it here, don't they? DEBRA

Water's good for kids. It was good for us. GREG

Yeah. DEBRA

(Pause.)

GREG

Dad would've like them.

DEBRA

Yes, he would have. You think he does?

GREG

What do you mean?

(no response)

Oh...oh, you mean, like he's still there or something. His spirit. Is that what you mean?

DEBRA

I think about it sometimes.

GREG

Me, too.

DEBRA

Although not as much as I used to.

GREG

Yeah, fifteen years is a long time.

DEBRA

Can you believe it?

GREG

No.

(Pause. NOTE: DEBRA still has not looked at GREG.)

DEBRA

Can I ask you something?

GREG

Pancakes or waffles, that's all I got.

DEBRA

What amazes you?

GREG

What amazes me?

DEBRA

Blows your mind, moves you, shifts your paradigm, whatever.

(GREG moves down to sit next to her.)

Don't sit down.

GREG

What do you mean? Why not?

DEBRA
Just don't I'm sitting here I like it this way don't crowd me.

GREG
(getting up)
Okay, okay. Sorry.

(Pauses.)

DEBRA
Amazes you?

GREG
Oh, yeah. I don't know. What does it matter?

DEBRA
You don't know what day it is, do you?

GREG
Sure I do. The anniversary, fifteen years ago. The day he died.

DEBRA
Yeah, but what else?

GREG
I don't know.

DEBRA
Yeah, I didn't think you did. Go back to your waffles.

(Pause.)

GREG
Okay.

(GREG heads back upstage, but stops and turns.)
"She often drives her brother away, the backhanded jab the most effective weapon."

DEBRA
I do not.

GREG
"She feigns interest, asks questions of intrigue, then absent of just the right response, she recoils, sends him back to his pancakes."

DEBRA
Waffles...I sent you back to your waffles.

GREG
Same difference.

(DEBRA turns to look at him for the first time.)

DEBRA

It's Easter morning.

GREG

It is?

DEBRA

Easter fell on Dad's anniversary this year.

GREG

Oh, wow. That's amazing.

DEBRA

Don't be flippant, and don't make fun.

GREG

I'm not.

DEBRA

So this revelation, this one right here this morning, this is an amazing moment for you, an epiphany?

GREG

Well, no.

DEBRA

You said, that's amazing.

GREG

Well, I know, I was just talking.

DEBRA

Say what you mean, mean what you say. Forget it.

(Pause. GREG has no idea what to do.)

GREG

I guess I'll go in.

DEBRA

Okay.

GREG

I never know what to say with you.

DEBRA

I know.

(Pause. GREG goes to leave.)

DEBRA

I'm just trying to comprehend it all.

(GREG stops.)

I mean, we had a father. Now we don't.

(She looks at GREG.)

Or do we?

(GREG doesn't answer.)

You remember playing tennis with him? He played in his work clothes, those black shoes leaving marks all over the court.

GREG

His keys in his pocket.

DEBRA

Yeah, they jingled like Christmas bells. Sweat dripping off his nose.

GREG

(seeing it as well)

Yeah.

DEBRA

Where is he?

(Pause.)

My brain hurts thinking about stuff. All of it, life, it's just freaky. I mean, do you get it?

GREG

What?

DEBRA

Life?

GREG

(he doesn't get it)

You got me.

DEBRA

The sun's coming up in a couple of minutes. It'll be warm, the heat riding on the light that's heading this way at 186,000 miles a second, so that when it gets here, we'll be seeing a sun that's really a picture of where it was 8 minutes ago. The stars at night? We're looking into the past. See what I mean?

GREG

Maybe.

DEBRA

There are over 6000 languages being spoken right now, this very minute.

GREG

I can't even speak good English.

DEBRA

Most people can't. I know. And then guys like Tolkein think we need to make up more. The whole notion of comprehension...it's absurd.

GREG

I don't understand.

(DEBRA looks at him.)

That was a joke.

DEBRA

Whatever.

(Pause.)

I heard somebody say just the other day 29,000 kids will die of starvation today. 29,000. That's not morbid, that's just what is. How many being born? How many parties, how many people singing happy birthday today? How many celebrations? I don't know...maybe I'm losing my mind. Every day, I think, souls are flying to God, man, souls are flying to God.

(a breath)

You like archeology, don't you?

GREG

I can dig it.

DEBRA

Would you stop it? I'm trying to tell you something.

GREG

Oh, c'mon, Debra, this is just intellectualizing the fact that you don't like your life.

DEBRA

(standing, turning on him,
angry)

Oh, so you think my amazement at life itself, my sense of awe, and that fact that it makes me furious that people act like they get it, as if there's nothing out there to make you weak in the knees, you think all that is nothing but being too intellectual?

GREG

Well, that's not what--

DEBRA

(running over him, furious)

This is my gut we're talking about here.

This is my heart, what I feel, what I need to feel on this morning when half the world is talking about a thing that if it were true would be the most devastating reality to have ever happened. *A man getting out of a grave? Are you kidding me?*

GREG

Okay, okay.

DEBRA

You think people that think have no feeling, that feelings are better. I feel *because* I think, because I try to understand the awe. To grasp it.

GREG

Maybe we can't.

DEBRA

Don't even start. That's a lazy man's excuse for not facing it. Maybe we can't understand it, but we can sure make the effort to put ourselves in its path. Now shut up, the sun's rising.

(Now the light changes and begins to steal across the stage as DEBRA faces the sun, totally absorbing it, taking it in, struggling to hold her eyes open against the light. GREG watches this and comes down next to her. After a long moment of watching:)

GREG

I'm sorry.

DEBRA

Hush. Can't you feel that?

GREG

I don't know. Maybe not.

DEBRA

Everyday this happens. Everyday the sun rises and night runs off to wait its turn.

(GREG doesn't know what to say.)

You know what the Bible says?

GREG

I've never been much for the Bible.

DEBRA

It says "His mercies are new every morning." And sometimes, you can feel it, like the heat from the sun on the face.

Listen--

GREG

DEBRA
One more thing. I need to tell someone, just one person, and don't make it a big deal, okay?

GREG
Okay.

DEBRA
Dad would flip out.

GREG
What?

(She takes a deep breath.)

DEBRA
I believe it.

GREG
What?

DEBRA
(looking out at the sun)
This. This morning. What it means.

(Pause as GREG thinks it over. Suddenly, it dawns on him.)

GREG
Resurrection.

DEBRA
Yes.

GREG
That Jesus actually...

(She looks him in the eye.)

DEBRA
Yes.

(He doesn't know how to respond.)

GREG
Oh...well...

(Now he looks out at the sun, and they are both looking out.)

DEBRA
Is that okay?

GREG
Sure. I guess.

(Pause.)
Wow. You mean...raised...from the...

DEBRA
Yeah. Wild, huh?

GREG
Yeah.

(Pause. DEBRA reaches for GREG's hand, a simple gesture.)

DEBRA
It changes things.

GREG
(not knowing what to make of all this)
Such as?

DEBRA
Such as me. It changes me.

(Now they look at each other, not moved so much as trying to grasp what's happening.)

GREG
Are you saying...that now...you want a waffle after all?

(They both smile.)

DEBRA
Maybe. Maybe that's exactly what I want.

GREG
Okay, that I can do.

(GREG heads for the house.)
You coming?

DEBRA
Give me just one more minute alone, okay. I'll be right there.

GREG
Okay, that's cool. See you inside.

DEBRA

Don't get it too brown.

GREG

(as he heads off)

Waffles over easy coming up.

(Now DEBRA is alone again. The sun is at full blaze. She stands in intense light. She closes her eyes and rises onto her tiptoes, closed eyes full into the sky.)

(After a moment LIGHTS fade to black.)

END of SCENE