

Red Room

by

Joseph Arnone

Copyright © 2020

www.MonologueBlogger.com

All rights reserved. No part of this ePlay may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any other storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the author or publisher.

Cast of Characters

MORGAN: 40 and above
KELLY: 30's
RALPH: 30's

Place
Conference room

Time
Afternoon

2.

Setting: The play takes place inside a conference room. A dark and brooding atmosphere. Windows covered by dark grey curtains, black carpeting, black conference table and bare grey walls.

At Rise: The play opens up with both Morgan (standing) with Ralph and Kelly (seated side by side) inside the conference room.

MORGAN: Don't waste my fucking time. You've come in here like you've discovered electricity. I knew about those numbers ten years ago, at least. What else you got for me?

RALPH: That's really it, sir.

MORGAN: Kelly?

KELLY: ...That's all we have for you today.

MORGAN: Get lost.

RALPH and KELLY motion to leave.

Kelly, you stay, I need to have a word with you.

RALPH gives KELLY a worried look before exiting the room.

Sit down, sit down.

KELLY sits back down.

MORGAN casually walks around the conference table.

Tell me about Ralph.

KELLY: Ralph?

MORGAN: Your experience working with him.

KELLY: I like working with him.

MORGAN: Why?

KELLY: He doesn't get in the way of my creativity.

MORGAN: He's a pushover.

KELLY: I wouldn't say that.

MORGAN: I will. He's a pushover. How often does he contribute ideas?

KELLY: Often.

MORGAN: Or do you just bounce ideas off him...

KELLY: He helps shape the ideas I generate.

MORGAN: You can do that without him, can't ya?

KELLY: Yes, but---

MORGAN: I had a brother like that. He's dead now. I was the idea man and he would agree to things. Not much input, either. Just nodding his head up and down all the time. Is Ralph like that? ...Honestly...

KELLY: I wouldn't put it on those terms.

MORGAN: What terms would you place?

KELLY: I think it's a good thing to have him in my corner because it allows me to think outside myself and gain perspective on the potential of an idea.

MORGAN: You don't need him for that. Tell me, was there ever a time when he presented you with an idea and plan of action to obtain a business?

KELLY: He's had ideas.

MORGAN: But they sucked.

KELLY: I wouldn't say that exactly.

MORGAN: Stop being so damn polite and let's speak with some truth and honesty. His ideas are shit...right?

KELLY: Yeah, you could say that.

MORGAN: Good. Do you consider him an asset to your team?

KELLY: He's helpful.

MORGAN: Kelly...is he an asset or a liability?

KELLY: I don't want to say something negative.

MORGAN: You work for me, not him.

KELLY: I understand that.

MORGAN: Liability?

KELLY: He's not a liability because he can do better.

MORGAN: (laughs) I like how you got around that there. Clever. In other words, he's useless.

KELLY: He helps to get me started.

MORGAN: And you surpassed him by lightyears.

MORGAN (cont'd): And now he's like a dumbbell weight hanging around your neck. Right?

KELLY: Not really.

MORGAN: He's starting to...won't be long before that weight get really heavy and cripples your senses, ability and ambition. Is that what you want?

KELLY: No.

MORGAN: Sometimes in life we need to cut ties with those we care about most in order to set ourselves free.

KELLY: Free?

MORGAN: You want more, much more than what you currently have. I'm giving you a way forward because I think you have what it takes.

KELLY: You do?

MORGAN: Do you think Ralph is smart?

KELLY: I do.

MORGAN: Smart doesn't get the job done. You need to be extraordinary. Are you extraordinary?

KELLY: I try to be.

MORGAN: Try to be...I see...well, you are. I have reason to believe that you are extraordinary.

KELLY: Thank you.

MORGAN: That's no compliment.

KELLY: Oh...

MORGAN: It's a fact. Facts shouldn't be celebrated like kid's trophies. You know why? Because we live in a world where every kid gets a fucking trophy, last place gets a trophy. How do you like that shit?

KELLY: Ridiculous.

MORGAN: That's right. Why do you carry Ralph?

KELLY: I-I--

MORGAN: Before you came on the scene, Ralph would present us stuff that would die on arrival. Everything he touched DIED!

MORGAN (cont'd): I kept him on for so long quite honestly because I forgot about it. Believe that? Completely forgot he even existed, until you came along, were part of his team and suddenly he stepped out from the shadows, but I knew, I always knew it wasn't because of some divine intervention...it was you.

KELLY: Well, we've picked some winners.

MORGAN: YOU! YOU'VE picked the winners...all the winners.

KELLY: He's my partner and we've made---

MORGAN: Oh, spare me the cover up, Kelly. Really. I've been doing this for ten lifetimes already. You've gotta let him go, whatever attachments you've got with each other, let it go. He's out.

KELLY: Out?

MORGAN: He hasn't got the touch, kid. I don't want no one holding you down, you've got something and soon enough he'll drain you for all your worth.

KELLY: But he's loyal.

MORGAN: Ahh! You said loyal...'but he's loyal'...hmmm, notice how you didn't defend his talent, cause he has none, but he has loyalty. What good is loyalty if it doesn't produce positive results?

KELLY: Well, he does, he helps me produce.

MORGAN: You think he does because he held your hand at the start, which was probably his single act of greatness. And you got used to having him around. It gave you confidence, security and you are afraid of what will happen to you if he washes out with the tide. But do you know what will happen? You will only rise to further heights of success.

You know what I've always known about Ralph? Ego, charm and luck only get a person so far in life without the discipline and talent to go with it. He'll always be mediocre at best. The guy picked the wrong field. Should be a coach for little league baseball or something. He'll never make it to the majors...but you, that's different. You, your mind is made for the majors, in fact, you've been hitting home runs long before you were brought in...yes, I know all about you, your history, your choices...I like what you've done with your life, so far, so far...but now, today...on this very day the moment has arrived for you to be what I know you have in you to be. I'm doubling your salary, giving you a team of five that you will lead and I want you to pick the best ten you can find out there in that circle jerk of a room. The best! Under you! Find me the savages. But first, give Ralph his termination.

KELLY: You want *me* to fire Ralph?

MORGAN: Certainly.

KELLY: It's hard to explain, but---

MORGAN: DON'T! I don't wanna hear anymore. Here's the letter, give it to him and we'll move on with someone else.

MORGAN hands KELLY the letter, she puts it in her folder and gets up to leave.

Where are you going?

KELLY: To the red room to fire Ralph, I thought---

MORGAN: Sit down. One more thing. How do you feel?

KELLY: I'm fine.

MORGAN: How do you really feel?

KELLY: I'm upset. Ralph and I got on so well, I know he didn't execute on our ideas enough, let alone bring new ones to the table but he made things easier on me to get things done. He worked with me, not against me. I know I don't really need a partner in this but I'll miss him, Morgan. Besides, things can get tough in here and it's not such a bad thing to have a guy like Ralph around...I've gotten to know him quite well, his family, his daughter...what will he? What will he think about me? Won't he blame me for all of this?

MORGAN: It's a tough road kid. Tough for all of us and then we die.

KELLY: This all doesn't feel right. He never did anything to hurt me.

MORGAN: Ah, but he is hurting you Kelly...slowly but surely he is dragging you down, I told you this already. You will only stay at one level if you don't cut him loose and free yourself. I repeat.

KELLY: Can't you place him in a different department?

MORGAN: No, no. This isn't a charity.

KELLY: Why me?

MORGAN: I had a father who did nothing but kick me repeatedly until he died at the ripe old age of ninety-eight. Boom! Boom! Boom! Like it was going out of style. He loved it!

But what happened...his kicks lost their potency, not because he got old, but because I got strong. I'm not easy on any of you because

MORGAN (cont'd): I know that deep down, our desires will go to any length to be met, so long as we are willing and able practitioners. Are you?

KELLY: Yes.

MORGAN: That's why you are now on my personal team.

KELLY: Personal?

MORGAN: You've been selected to be one of my top ten. Don't let me down.

KELLY: I won't.

MORGAN: I know you won't. Because like me, you've known all your life what it feels like to never give up and to have the right mindset. You've got hope, something the rest of them don't have. You will be doing Ralph a tremendous favor in the end.

KELLY gets up and exits.

MORGAN sits down for the first time.

END OF PLAY