

The Well Spoken

by

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Cast of Characters

FREDERICK:

30's

ELEANORA:

30's

Place
Study

Time
Evening

Setting: The play takes place inside Frederick's study room. There is an inordinate library of books running along one entire wall. A fireplace rests on the opposite site of the room. Stage center there is a three seat sofa accompanied by two single sofas on each side. There is a desk stage right made out of stained mahogany wood. A globe sits stage left about four feet tall.

At Rise: The play opens with Frederick drinking from a glass of scotch lost in thought when his wife Eleanora enters the room. They are both dressed extremely well.

Frederick stands motionless in front of a bookshelf with a glass of scotch in his hand. He leans against a single sofa chair staring at the books.

Frederick turns to sit as Eleanora enters. Eleanora stops at the doorframe.

They both exchange looks before Frederick sits.

FREDERICK: Are you just going to stand there?

Eleanora enters the room - pours herself a drink.

ELEANORA (*Pouring.*): The guests will be arriving shortly.

FREDERICK (*Uninterested.*): Wonderful.

ELEANORA: Did you have to?

FREDERICK: Yes.

Eleanora turns to Frederick.

ELEANORA: Why?

FREDERICK: Isn't it obvious?

ELEANORA: Yes, but why this evening? Why in such a foul fashion?

Eleanora motions to sit across from Frederick.

- Frederick...

FREDERICK: Chocolate, before dinner, melting on the outer rim of our son's lips...(*Shakes his head.*) It's about all I can stand at this point...did you follow me in here to guilt me? Make me feel as though I've done something wrong?

ELEANORA: You didn't have to be so, so, so -

FREDERICK: Vile?

ELEANORA: Yes.

FREDERICK: Our son will have no future. Is that what you want?

ELEANORA: Of course not.

FREDERICK: Then things must change, starting now, this evening.

ELEANORA: You're timing couldn't have been more -

FREDRICK: Perfect. My timing was perfect. Have you noticed how our son can barely keep up with the other children? Huffing and puffing while the other kids run through the house and garden, without a second's pause? When I last found him he was hanging on to the banister catching his breath. He's been to the physician. We know the cause. But you and Margaret, you give in to his needs! And yet, no matter how much is discussed at length, no matter what the Doctors say, it goes over your heads! And so it continues, he continues to self-destruct and eat everything in sight. I never imagined all of us being so weak against a boy's appetite.

Do you want to know what I am guilty of, Eleanora? You asked so here it is, I am guilty of allowing this to happen! My refusal to stop it sooner. Ignoring the fact that there really is a problem.

It won't be a problem anymore, not whilst I'm around. Sometimes there is pain in change and we all must be willing to accept it, stay the course, until the poison is eradicated.

ELEANORA: You don't see how he begs, you've got your head down in your work...you don't see his temper.

FREDERICK: I know he carries on!

ELEANORA: No, you don't, you are never home to bare witness. He frightens me.

FREDERICK: Frightens you?

ELEANORA: Yes.

FREDERICK: You are his mother!

ELEANORA: That is my point exactly. The things he says to me, the things he...in the face of me being his mother, he has no filter, no control when it comes to his urges, he will wreak havoc until he gets what he wants.

FREDERICK: What do you suggest we do about it?

ELEANORA: Humiliating him isn't going to help.

FREDERICK: It's a step in the appropriate direction.

ELEANORA: How was that the appropriate direction?

FREDERICK: Discipline! Awareness! He needs to see himself, KNOW himself.

ELEANORA: He's only a child.

FREDERICK: He's old enough to think.

ELEANORA: He is a baby.

FREDERICK: He is NOT a baby! That's the trouble right there, you BABY him!

ELEANORA (*Sadly.*): My little boy...

(*Pause.*)

FREDERICK (*Calmly.*): Elle, listen dear, it's time we give him tough love. We must. We are his parents. We can't keep making excuses for him. We can no longer pacify him. Truth be told it isn't his fault. We are to blame for the boy's size.

ELEANORA: No!

FREDERICK: Eleanora!

ELEANORA: I have tried. You don't have any idea what I go through with him on a daily basis. The agony he inflicts upon me. You want to sit there and tell me it's MY fault?

FREDERICK: I wasn't -

ELEANORA: Not from where I'm sitting. Not ever is there a glorious day for me Frederick. There are some days when I can't bare the burden, when I don't have the strength to combat him so I say, "Yes, YES, whatever you need son, whatever you WANT!". I give in to his needs in order to save my sanity.

FREDERICK: Why haven't you spoken to me about this?

ELEANORA: You aren't ever here! You're never around! Don't you think I want to? But you have your business to run and sometimes you come home exhausted and don't you think that affects me as well? How can I tell you anything?

Eleanora gets up and pours herself another drink.

FREDERICK: Don't.

ELEANORA: What difference will it make?

FREDERICK: We have guests arriving soon, don't we?

ELEANORA: One more won't kill anybody.

FREDERICK: You really shouldn't, not when you're this upset.

Eleanora pours and drinks.

ELEANORA: There. That's all. That's all I'm having.

FREDERICK: Where is he now?

ELEANORA: His bedroom. Door locked. Won't come out.

FREDERICK: I said I wanted the locks on the bedroom doors removed.

ELEANORA: I forgot.

FREDERICK: I'll go up and speak to him.

ELEANORA: Don't bother. He won't listen.

FREDERICK: He will listen.

ELEANORA (*Laughing.*): You can try.

FREDERICK: Eleanora, why don't you *try* and get yourself together.

ELEANORA: I am together, always together. You need to pay more attention around here. Using work as an excuse to block out your family. What good are you?

FREDEERICK: Excuse me?

ELEANORA: You heard me. Why do you think he eats? The boy misses his father. He's trying to feed the emptiness he feels, never having you around. He's replaced you with the only thing that makes him feel good..FOOD.

FREDERICK: How dare you?

ELEANORA: Face it.

FREDERICK: How dare you say such things to me?

Eleanora goes to pour herself another drink.

FREDRICK (*cont'd*): Don't even think about it.

Eleanora ignores him.

FREDERICK (*cont'd*): I said stop!

Eleanora finishes pouring herself another drink and downs it in one go. She stares at Frederick.

Eleanora throws her empty glass at Frederick, narrowly missing him.

FREDERICK (*cont'd*): What the hell are you doing woman?!

ELEANORA: WE ARE BROKEN! BROKEN!! BROKEN!!!

(*Pause.*)

Frederick slowly approaches Eleanora.

FREDERICK: Here's what's going to happen. You are going to gather yourself. I am going to talk to our son. We are going to greet our guests, have a lovely dinner and send them off. Then you and I are going to discuss this, whatever you have going on in your head. I want to know everything you're feeling, everything you've been going through...I wish to be there for you Eleanora, for our son..I wish to make things good. Do you hear me? Eleanora? Are you listening to me?

ELEANORA: Talk to our son if you can, if he will listen..he's the most important thing.

ELEANORA leaves the room.

LIGHTS FADE.

END OF PLAY