

# **TOTAL EXPRESSION**

## **A Ten-Minute Play**

© 2015 by Marisa Smith  
December 27, 2015

177 Lyme Rd.  
Hanover, NH 03755  
(cell) 603-359-4854  
[marisasmithkraus@gmail.com](mailto:marisasmithkraus@gmail.com)

Agent: The Peregrine Whittlesey Agency,  
279 Central Park West, NYC, 10024. Tel: (212) 787-1802.  
Email: [pwwagy@aol.com](mailto:pwwagy@aol.com).

## TOTAL EXPRESSION

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

<b>KATERINA</b>	Russian woman in her 20s. A knockout.
<b>JANE</b>	American woman. About 50. Not a knockout, but not Plain Jane either.
<b>WAITER</b>	Your basic waiter. Could be any age.
<b>NORMAN</b>	Jane's husband. About 50, too. •

Waiter and Norman can be played by the same actor.

**SETTING:** A sidewalk café.

**TIME:** The present.

## TOTAL EXPRESSION

*(A sidewalk café on Madison Avenue, New York City.*

*KATERINA exits a drugstore, waves a box in the air and runs after JANE.*

*KATERINA speaks with a Russian accent.)*

KATERINA

Lady! Lady! Lady with blue scarf! La-dy!

*(JANE stops and turns around, sees what KATERINA is holding and quickly approaches her, horrified.)*

KATERINA

Excuse me, but this you left at the CVS. Yes? Is this belonging to you?

JANE

*(Grabs the box and shoves it into her purse, looking around to see if anyone saw.)*

Yes, thank you, oh,

*(Whispering.)*

I'm so embarrassed, really, just mortified. How could I be so stupid?

KATERINA

*(Not understanding the word.)*

Mor-ti-fied?

JANE

Oh, you know, embarrassed....blushing.

KATERINA

Yes, blushing, you blushing, yes, yes I see.

JANE

Well, thank you, thank you very much.

*(Turns to go.)*

KATERINA

*Astroglide* is very good, we don't have in my country. Especially the warming one.

JANE

Shhh, please!

*(Looks around.)*

KATERINA

Sorry, sorry. But very good product, don't you think?

JANE

Well, I don't know, I've never used it before.

KATERINA

Change of life, yes?

JANE *(offended)*

No, actually, I'm still having regular....oh really this is ridiculous, I need to go. Thank you again.

KATERINA

*(Starts to cry.)*

I'm sorry, I say too much. I always say too much, everybody says. But this English so hard. And now I go and put hand in mouth with you, I am sorry.

JANE *(softening)*

Now, don't cry. And it's put your *foot* in your mouth.

KATERINA

I hate to cry. In my country I never cry but in New York I cry all the time. Everybody is so friendly.

JANE

*(Reaching into her purse.)*

Here, have a Kleenex.

KATERINA

Foot in mouth you say?

JANE

Yes, that's the expression.

KATERINA

We don't have that expression in Russia.

JANE

I thought you were Russian. Or maybe Polish.

KATERINA

*(Makes sour face.)*

Polish. Please ... I am from Moscow.

JANE

Oh, Moscow, to Moscow, I've always wanted to go. I just love Chekhov!

KATERINA

Yes, yes, many Americans love Chekhov.

JANE

You don't?

KATERINA

He makes me chilly.

JANE

You mean cold? He leaves you cold?

KATERINA

Yes, cold. He bores me.

*(KATERINA waves Chekhov away and JANE laughs.)*

Your hair, so nice. The cut, very good. It is a bobby?

JANE

Oh, it's called a bob. Very old fashioned.

KATERINA

I wish I could have the bob. But, I have to keep it long. I am model.

JANE

A model! So, that's what brings you to New York!

KATERINA

Yes, but I love to know who does the bob. I need to split my ends.

*(She holds up the ends of her hair.)*

Hey, you want to have a coffee—see the café?

*(KATERINA points to a nearby café table and chairs.)*

I am Katerina.

*(KATERINA puts her hand out to shake JANE's.)*

JANE

*(Shakes Katerina's hand.)*

Nice to meet you Katerina, I'm Jane. Jane Wimbly. Well, I guess, I could use a pick me up.

KATERINA

Pick me up?

JANE

Ahh, boost of energy.

*(Gestures with her hands.)*

Get up, up, awake.

*(KATERINA and JANE sit at the nearby table.)*

KATERINA

Very nice. Pick me up!

JANE

So, did you come here all by yourself?

KATERINA

No, no, I came with many girls. Agency in Moscow was looking for girls and they say we take you to Miami—

*(WAITER arrives.)*

JANE

Two coffees, please.

KATERINA

Cappucino.

JANE

Two cappuccinos.

WAITER

Thank you ladies.

*(He exits.)*

KATERINA

Hotel in Miami was beautiful, they give us free towel robe, they take us to doctor, dentist-- I have now night retainer. For teeth? I took English test and math test and made best score in math!

JANE

It's good to be smart in math.

KATERINA

*(Pulls out a cigarette and lighter.)*

You care?

*(JANE indicates "no.")*

Then they bring us to city and take many pictures for modeling and I wait now for modeling job.

JANE

So you don't have a regular job?

KATERINA

Oh, no, I work at the *Bocca Del Lupo*. Italian restaurant---

JANE

Yes, on eighty-fifth. You're a waitress?

KATERINA

Not as waitress, pshhhzt, no, I am hostess.

JANE

Wonderful.

KATERINA

So...Jane, you married, you have lover, maybe?

JANE

Oh no, I've been married for twenty-five years!

KATERINA

And you have sex. I mean, still.

JANE

Well, I'm not *that* old—

KATERINA

With your husband, I mean so many years with him, right?

JANE

Well, yes. Well, actually, not that much. That's why I got the, you know, at CVS, I thought---

KATERINA

Yes, he probably worry about death.

JANE

Death?

KATERINA

Some men, they worry so much about death so they can't do sex, other men have to do more sex because they worry about death.

JANE

I see.

KATERINA

My boyfriend is old too and he very worry about death. But he wants the sex.

JANE

You have a boyfriend? Is he Russian too?

KATERINA

*(KATERINA finds this hysterically funny.)*

Oh, no, no, I hate Russian men, would never date Russian pig, never, never! No, he is American, at the Wall Street! See these boots---

*(KATERINA sticks her leg up in the air.)*

Tory Burch. One thousand dollar. Misha bought them for me yesterday!

JANE

But Misha is a Russian name.

KATERINA

He want Russian name, so I pick Misha. Nice, no? Like Baryshnikov!

JANE

How did you meet him, at the restaurant?

KATERINA

No, at party with other girls, the agency brings many mens from the Wall Street. Very soon Misha get me my own apartment. I hate my roommate, Svetlana, she is disgusting. She ate once a cooked chicken standing up with her fingers. Gross me out.

JANE

That's very generous of Misha. Maybe you should marry him.

KATERINA

*(KATERINA starts laughing again.)*

He *is* married! That would make a disaster! I don't want to get *married*, I want to go to school. Become "crime scene examiner." Like on TV. Blood and murder I like, no problem.

JANE

So, Misha buys you clothes and apartments and you... you have sex with him.

KATERINA

We have "total expression," he never says sex. I like that, total expression, very nice.

JANE

Like, a lot, of ... total expression?

KATERINA

Only two nights a week! And he never sleep over! He likes the "minet" (*Pronounced meenet*)—you say the blow job. Misha loves the blow job. But all mens, they do.

*(WAITER appears, smiling broadly, having overheard KATERINA.)*

WAITER

Another cappuccino, ladies?

JANE

I'll have a bourbon on the rocks, two cherries. Knob's Creek. Please.

KATERINA

Me too!

*(WAITER exits.)*

KATERINA

See this is Alexander Wang--

*(Points to the vest she is wearing.)*

--and this Tiffany. Little blue box!

*(Shows JANE her bracelet.)*

JANE

*(Looks at bracelet.)*

Yes, lovely.

KATERINA

And we go to France this summer. We plan now. Not during my red zone.

JANE

Your red zone?

KATERINA

Misha says I'm real bitch in the red zone. All women are the bitches then.

*(WAITER enters.)*

WAITER

Here you go.

*(Sets down the bourbons.)*

JANE

*(Takes a big drink of her bourbon.)*

But maybe, Katerina, you don't need him as much as you think you do. I mean, once you start modeling and making more money *you* can pay for everything. And that way you don't have to, you know, "minet."

*(JANE makes a face when she says "minet.")*

KATERINA

You have job Jane?

JANE

Well, I work at *home* and... I volunteer.

KATERINA

You have job that make money?

JANE

No, but what I do lets my husband do his---

KATERINA



You don't make money.

JANE

No.

KATERINA

You have sex with husband, he make money.

JANE

Yes, but it's different than--

KATERINA

Me and Misha?

JANE

Well....

KATERINA

*(Thrusts her handbag in JANE'S lap.)*

See how soft? Like bottom of the baby?

JANE

Yes?

KATERINA

Bottega Veneta.

JANE

Very nice.

KATERINA

You very nice, maybe husband get you one too.

*(Looks at her phone.)*

Oh, no it's almost six. Sample sale at Betsey Johnson start now! Want to come?

*(Takes a big sip of her drink and fishes out a cherry.)*

JANE

No thanks, you go Katerina.

KATERINA

*(Stands up and gets her stuff together.)*

Thank you for drink, Jane. Come see me at the *Bocca del Lupo*, okay? Promise?

*(Gives her a quick hug and a kiss on each cheek.)*

JANE

Yes, I will! Promise!

KATERINA

*(Touching her hair.)*

Your bob, who does the bob?

JANE

*Rapunzel*, Eighty-six and Lex. Ask for Patty.

KATERINA

*Rapunzel!* I remember! *Rapunzel!* Ask for Patty! I see you there!

*(KATERINA leans into JANE.)*

KATERINA

“Minet” not so bad Jane.

*(KATERINA exits.*

*JANE sits, drinking her bourbon.*

*A man walks by her and then doubles back.)*

NORMAN

Jane! What are you doing?

JANE

Well, obviously Norman, I’m having a drink.

NORMAN

*(Sets his briefcase on the ground and pulls up a chair.)*

But, why, why aren’t you home?

JANE

Yes, why isn’t the little women home indeed. Indeed.

NORMAN

I didn’t mean it like that. I mean, you don’t usually sit alone drinking-- out here in the street!

JANE

I wasn’t alone. I had a drink with a very interesting young woman who had to run to the Betsey Johnson sample sale, you just missed her.

NORMAN

Is something wrong? You’re acting funny.

JANE

No, not at all, in fact I think we should come here regularly, why don’t we? It’s like we’re in Rome or Paris. A sidewalk café is so rare in the city and this is right in our neighborhood.

NORMAN

Sure, why not?

JANE

Good. We should do some different things now and then, don’t you think? Get out of the same old rut.

NORMAN

I don’t think we’re in a rut.

JANE

No?

NORMAN

Jane, who were you talking to? Betsey who?

JANE

I'd like another bourbon and a big juicy steak, I'm starved.

NORMAN

Well, I suppose we could eat here--

JANE

And then afterwards can we go to *Bloomingdales*. I saw these fabulous over-the-knee boots that are just ridiculous but I think I love them and I'd like you to buy them for me.

NORMAN

You want me to buy you boots?

JANE

I think you'll love them too.

NORMAN

I thought we're going to finish *The Jewel and the Crown* tonight.

JANE

And then we'll go home. After the boots. Get an early night.

NORMAN

An early night?

JANE

You know, for a change.

NORMAN

Listen, are you okay? Did someone die?

JANE

No, Norman, no one died, what a thing to say.

NORMAN

It's just that you don't seem yourself.

JANE

Honey, I'm fine.

*(Starting on KATERINA'S drink.)*

May I ask you a personal question, Norman?

NORMAN

Of course. You seem very strange Jane.

JANE

How do you feel about...

*(Leans into NORMAN and whispers.)*

NORMAN

Jane!

JANE

I'm serious Norman, it's a perfectly legitimate question.

NORMAN

Well, I don't know. Fine I guess. I mean...yes.

JANE

Good, that's good.

*(Smiling.)*

Well, I don't really *need* the boots.

NORMAN

*(Finally gets it.)*

Oh! Sure! Sure! No, I want you to have them, Jane if you really want them.

JANE

I mean, they are kind of frivolous.

NORMAN

No, no, you should have them Jane, absolutely!

*(Waving furiously.)*

Waiter! Waiter!

**BLACKOUT**