

Readaholics

By

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This play is meant to be performed scripts in hand

Location: A meeting room in a public library. Four people are seated around a table

Phil

Hello, my name is Phil and I'm a readaholic.

ALL:

Hello Phil

PHIL:

This is my first meeting and I'm not really sure what to say....

ANGIE:

Just being here is a positive first step Phil, we're all very proud of you.

PHIL:

I almost didn't make it here...

BOB:

We know it's hard Phil.

PHIL:

I took a bus...

BOB:

Don't tell me you brought a book on the bus.

ANGIE:

I once went around my entire route 5 times just so I could finish a Robert Ludlum

SHEILA

Ludlum...what a hack

PHIL:

No, No, nothing like that, no book.

ANGIE:

You were reading the bus ads above the windows?

PHIL:

No.

BOB:

Somebody left a newspaper on the seat?

PHIL:

No.

SHEILA:

You got sucked into reading the bus schedule?

PHIL:

No, nothing like that. It's just thatI didn't realize the bus stopped right outside the newsagents...

ANGIE:

Oh my God he took Route 6

BOB:

That's a killer.

SHEILA:

Are you some kind of insane masochist?

BOB:

He didn't know Sheila, go easy on him.

ANGIE:

If you take 4B it stops right behind the library and you can come in the back way.

PHIL:

I almost went in. I stood outside the door....I could smell the newspapers. But then I ran. I ran across the road and straight here to the meeting. Look my hands are still shaking!

BOB:

But the important thing is, you're here and that's a positive first step. We've all been where you are. I used to reach for a book first thing after waking up.

SHEILA:

I couldn't leave the house in the morning without reading every word on the cereal box.

BOB:

I used to read that scrolly thingy at the bottom of the TV screen on CNN.

SHEILA:

Do you realize one cup of Raisin Bran contains 9% of your daily requirement for potassium?

BOB:

Do you realize CNN TV is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Turner Broadcasting System? You see, that's what reading does! Fills our minds with useless facts. It's only in groups like where we can find support and strength! Group hug!

(pause, as nobody moves)

SHEILA:

I don't think so, Bob.

BOB:

OK, OK....good hug.

PHIL:

But just a minute, aren't you reading something right now?

BOB:

No!

PHIL:

Yes you are, you're holding it in your hands!

BOB:

Well, so is Sheila!

SHEILA:
And so is Angie!

ANGIE:
And so are you!

BOB:
Alright, alright...we can deal with this. On the count of three, everybody put the scripts down. One, two, three.

(everyone puts their scripts down. There's complete silence with maybe the odd throat clearing sound as everybody stares uncomfortably at each other, not knowing what to do. This should continue until it feels really uncomfortable. Finally, Bob will pick up his script and start reading again)

BOB:
Well, that's obviously not going to work.

(everybody picks up their scripts)

ANGIE:
Oh thank God!

PHIL:
I felt naked.

SHEILA:
I felt like puking.

BOB:
A little dribble of sweat ran down the small of my back and is now being soaked up by the elastic waistband of my jockey shorts.

SHEILA:
Now I really feel like puking.

ANGIE:
Did you have to tell us that?

BOB:
Yes I did. See....it's written right here, right above where Sheila says "Now I really feel like puking"

ANGIE:

Hmm, so it does.

PHIL:

You know what's happening here, don't you?

BOB:

Yes I did. See....it's written right here, right above where Sheila says "Now I really feel like puking"

SHEILA:

No Bob, you're 4 lines further down the page, you've already read that.

BOB:

Oh...sorry. (*finds his place*) No, what's happening here?

PHIL:

We can't live without reading! We try to stay away from words but it's useless. We are *nothing* without reading, we're hopelessly addicted.

ANGIE:

Just when I think I'm out, they pull me back in!

SHEILA:

You've been reading movie scripts again, haven't you?

ANGIE:

Maybe

PHIL:

How did we think we could ever stay away from reading? Our lives are intertwined with words... from Sheila's cereal boxes to Angies movie scripts, to (*accusingly*) the paperback Bob has stuffed in his coat pocket!

BOB:

Paperback?? What paperback? (*finds the book, a Steven King novel in his coat pocket*) What?! This isn't mine, I've never seen this before! Besides, I've already read this Steven King book!

SHEILA:

King...what a hack.

BOB:

I've been set up!

ANGIE:

Don't be ridiculous, who would do a thing like that? We're all here to help each other get over our reading addiction. This is supposed to be a supportive environment where we can lean on each other, draw strength from each other! Who would want to sabotage anyone?

BOB:

Who indeed?

ANGIE:

Well I want to find out and I want to find out now! Does anybody have it in their scripts?
(general mumbling "no...I don't think so etc...")
No notes in the margin?Nothing? Bob...skip to the bottom of your page....anything there?

BOB:

Nope

ANGIE:

OK, we'll just have to continue

BOB:

Who indeed?

PHIL:

This is most intriguing. A group of people ostensibly gathered to defeat a common enemy, yet lurking in their midst...the unsuspected foe!

BOB:

Read a lot of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle?

PHIL:

Oh yes. And what I find most intriguing is the location of this meeting for readaholics! Why would a group of people who are trying to break themselves of a controlling habit meet in the very place that offers the most temptation? Why would we walk past rows and rows of books magazines and newspapers to get to this room? Unless....

(pause)

ANGIE:

Unless what?

PHIL:

See how I'm building suspense here?

BOB:

Just get on with it!

PHIL:

Unlesssomebody *wants* us to fail!

ANGIE:

Dumb, dumb, dumb dumb!

PHIL:

No, it's like this... (*sings it with that generic "ominous" tune*) Dum dum dum dum...

ANGIE:

Oh, Ok (*sings*) Dum dum dum dum.....

BOB:

Wait a minute. "somebody wants us to fail"? Is that the best you can come up with? Isn't that the only reason somebody would sabotage anything? You've just spent an entire page telling us what we already know!

PHIL:

Alright, how about this...unless somebody wants us *dead*!

ANGIE:

(*sings*) Dum dum dum dum....

PHIL:

You didn't know *that* did you?

BOB:

Oh for crying out loud.

PHIL:

Let's see you come up with something better.

BOB:

Sheila...what do you think?

SHEILA:

Who me? What do I think? Why would I think anything?

BOB:

You've been strangely silent.

SHEILA:

Silent? Me? No, not at all, what are you talking about?

ANGIE:

That's right...you haven't had anything to say in almost 2 and a half pages!

PHIL:

And the last thing you said was "King...what a hack"!
The second time you demeaned a popular author! Why would anybody who loves to read
do that? Unless....

(pause)

BOB:

Oh don't start that again!

PHIL:

I have to....to get to my next point.

BOB:

OK fine.

PHIL:

Unless...you were trying to hide something!

BOB:

(sarcastically)

Well done Sherlock.

ANGIE:

Just a second! Isn't Sheila the one who suggested we meet here?

BOB:

Yes! In fact, she insisted on it!

PHIL:

Now that I think of it...she's the one who suggested I take the route 6 bus today!

SHEILA:

All right all right!! I'll admit it! I'm Sheila Kelly MLIS!!

(awkward pause as nobody understands what she means)

ANGIE:
MLIS?

BOB:
Sorry, I don't understand...whats an MLIS?

PHIL:
I don't get it either...

SHEILA:
Nobody does!!! It's Masters of Library and Information Science!
(general mumbling... "of course I knew that...didn't have to tell me etc)

ANGIE:
You work here??

SHEILA:
Yes! When I heard about your group...how you felt you were readaholics I couldn't stand by and do nothing! What you see as an addiction, something to be cleansed from your life, I see as a passion, something to enrich your life! Bob...did any harm ever come to you from reading the scrolly thingy on the CNN screen?

BOB:
No...I actually learned a lot...

SHEILA:
And Angie....didn't you find lots of enjoyment reading movie scripts.

ANGIE:
I guess so...

SHEILA:
See, you're not addicted...you have a passion, a passion for knowledge that can only be sated with the written word! You don't need the cure, you never did! Just click your heels together three times and say "There's no place like the library"!

(they do it)

Gotta love L. Frank Baum!

ANGIE:
And Robert Ludlum!

BOB:
And Stephen King!

PHIL:
And Sir Arthur Conan Doyle!

SHEILA:
You really need to read, don't you!!

ALL:
Yes!!

SHEILA:
Right! now get out there and sate that passion!!

ALL:
Yes!!!
(they all run out into the library except Sheila, who sits back and tents her fingers.)

SHEILA:
Most excellent!

End

