

THE LEITZ ACTION CAMERA

A play in One Act

by

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CAST

HUSBAND

WIFE

SALESMAN

AMATEUR MODEL, a camera

PRO MODEL, a camera

STANDARD MODEL, a camera

YOUNG WOMAN

(A SALESMAN waits behind a glass-fronted counter filled with cameras and photographic equipment. HUSBAND and WIFE enter. )

HUSBAND

Are you sure you want to do this?

WIFE

We live in an age of miracles.

HUSBAND

I don't trust miracles.

WIFE

We need a little adventure in our lives.

HUSBAND

I'm married to you.

WIFE

I come home from the bank. You're all day at the phone company. Life is too short. Everybody has a creative side. I saw this show on TV. I look at that computer screen sometimes and think, if only I could reach that place in me, I could do something...something...magical.

HUSBAND

Sometimes in the truck I just sit and I think of crazy things.

WIFE

You see?

(They head for the SALESMAN.)

We're interested in buying a camera.

SALESMAN

Well, you've come to the right place.

WIFE

We really haven't had a lot of experience with photography.

SALESMAN

Of course. We have a number of quite sophisticated models that are very simple to use.

(He reaches into the glass counter and takes out a camera. He breathes carefully on the lens and then wipes it ever so gently, scrutinizing it for infinitesimal flaws. He gently sets it down on a velvet pad, as if presenting an exotic jewel. The HUSBAND reaches to pick it up, but the SALESMAN hurriedly snatches it back before the HUSBAND can get hold of it.)

This particular model is quite a nice little item. It has many features you'd find on considerably more expensive models. For instance it is self-loading. Just pop the film in here like this, and push this little button, here, like this, and after that its fully synchronized computer takes over. It has autofocus, and autowind, and a built-in exposure compensator monitors light shifts and even adds filters for proper color balance.

(The SALESMAN lets the HUSBAND, who by now is totally intimidated, hold the camera.)

HUSBAND

We're looking for something that develops the picture, you know, on the spot.

(The SALESMAN replaces the camera under the counter and removes another which, with appropriate ceremony he places on the pad.)

SALESMAN

Ah well, that's entirely a different story. Now this is certainly a nifty little number. It has autofocus, and autowind and, of course, self development. And a built-in flash. It records the date and time of each picture, and if you connect it to this computer...

(The SALESMAN reaches under the counter and brings out a lap-top computer.)

...here. Like this...

(He plugs them together.)

...it automatically encodes the time, place location subject and weather, barometric pressure, temperature and so forth, latitude and longitude, the phases of the sun and the moon and the location of all the houses of the zodiac, at exactly the moment the picture is taken. In this way, you can, by referring to these...

(He brings out an accordion file of CD-ROM disks.)

... astrological reference charts, given positions and poses of the subjects in the photo...predict the future.

WIFE

I don't know. It seems awfully complicated.

HUSBAND

We just want something to take pictures of our kids and vacations and stuff. We don't want anything we really have to think about.

SALESMAN

Well, there is a new model. Came out a few months ago. There's not much to it, but you still have to think about your picture a little. But that's the magic.

HUSBAND

I think of stuff in the truck.

SALESMAN

There you go!

WIFE

Sounds like it has possibilities.

SALESMAN

Possibilities? Possibilities? The possibilities are as vast and great as the camera is simple. You are limited only by the limits of imagination and creativity. The mind is liberated to the fullest extent. It is an extraordinary new beginning for the human creative spirit.

WIFE

I knew we'd find something! I'm so excited!

(From the cabinet the SALESMAN takes out a camera that is worn like a hat.)

SALESMAN

Here. Try this on.

(He places it on the HUSBAND'S head.)

HUSBAND

How's it work?

SALESMAN

It's simple. Very simple. Let's say you want a picture of your wife. All you do is face her...

(The man turns and faces his WIFE.)

...close your eyes and think, "I wish I had a picture of this right now". It takes a little practice.

HUSBAND

Okay. Like this?

(He closes his eyes and, after a beat and a FLASH, the camera ejects a finished, Polaroid-type picture.)

HUSBAND (cont'd)

That's amazing!

WIFE

I've never seen anything like it! That's incredible!  
And it certainly looks simple enough.

SALESMAN

Can't miss.

(The couple study the picture. They are pleased with the results. While they are engrossed, a good-looking YOUNG WOMAN in tight pants and sweater enters and steps up to the counter.)

YOUNG WOMAN

Can you tell me where I go to have some film developed?

SALESMAN

Over there. At the front of the store.

YOUNG WOMAN

Thanks.

(The HUSBAND notices the YOUNG WOMAN beside him as she turns to leave. As she strides sexily across the stage and exits, he does a double take. On the second glance the camera, which is still on his head, sprays out ten pictures in rapid-fire succession (or all at once, if that is easier to achieve). He tries to catch them as they fly through the air. He misses them all and they land on the floor.)

WIFE

What did you do?

(The HUSBAND gets on his hands and knees and hastily gathers them up.)

HUSBAND

I think it's broken.

(Having retrieved the pictures, the HUSBAND stands up and sheepishly hands them to the SALESMAN.)

I'm sorry. I don't know what happened.

(As the SALESMAN is about to take back the pictures, the HUSBAND looks at them and hastily snatches them back and guiltily shoves them into his pocket.)

This causes his WIFE to look at him suspiciously, and so he guiltily offers them back to the SALESMAN.)

SALESMAN

That's all right. No harm done.

(the SALESMAN reaches over and snatches the photos out of his hands. The SALESMAN glances at them briefly.)

Oh my.

WIFE

(stealing a glance at the pictures)  
What were you thinking?

HUSBAND

I-I-I wasn't thinking anything. It's broken.

(The SALESMAN drops them disdainfully into a wastebasket. He takes the camera off the HUSBAND'S head.)

I don't think this was quite the right camera for you anyway.

WIFE

What're we going to do, dear? I don't think they come much more automatic.

SALESMAN

Well, as a matter of fact, we have a few new models that have only just come in. They're probably a little more than you were prepared to pay, but they're very special.

HUSBAND

I think we probably don't have much choice, dear.

WIFE

We can't just keep buying postcards.

HUSBAND

Let's have a look.

SALESMAN

This way then.

(The SALESMAN leads the couple to another counter. He exits stage right and returns after a moment pushing a platform on which sit three men and one woman dressed in camera costumes, lenses protruding from their chests, flash guns astride their shoulders etc.)

One of the men is dressed in black leather. The SALESMAN takes the young woman AMATEUR MODEL by the hand and leads her off the shelf and brings her in front of the couple.)

We are proud to be the first in the States to import the complete line of Leitz Action Cameras the newest development in photographic technology from Europe. A phenomenal achievement, a spin-off from the space program. This is the amateur model. It's totally automatic, and the least expensive in the line. This button turns it on. That's all you have to do.

(He looks at the WIFE and points to a button on the front of the AMATEUR MODEL.)

Here. Just push this button.

(The WIFE reaches over and pushes the button as she has been directed. The AMATEUR MODEL comes instantly to life.)

AMATEUR MODEL  
(cheerfully taking control )  
Okay everybody.  
(to HUSBAND)  
Now you stand over here.

(The AMATEUR MODEL takes WIFE by the arm and positions her next to the HUSBAND.)

And you stand next to him.  
(to SALESMAN)  
You get into the picture too. Don't be shy. That's it. Okay, move over a little. No, no. Not that way. Closer. Okay now, why don't you put your arm around her.

(The HUSBAND goes to put his arm around the WIFE'S shoulder, but finds that the SALESMAN has gotten his there first. After a moment's hesitation, the HUSBAND sticks his hands into his pants' pocket and grins sheepishly at the AMATEUR MODEL. The SALESMAN, his arm still around the WIFE, also smiles.)

AMATEUR MODEL (cont'd)  
There. That's perfect! Now all together, on the count of three smile. One. Two. Threee. CHEESE!

(The WIFE adds her smile to that of her HUSBAND and the SALESMAN.)

The flash goes off, and after a moment a finished picture emerges from the AMATEUR MODEL'S midsection.)

Would you like enlargements? Glossy or matte? Wallet size or jumbo borderless?

(The SALESMAN steps over and shuts her off. The camera becomes inanimate again. The HUSBAND and WIFE study the finished picture together.)

WIFE

This is simply incredible! That's the nicest picture of you I've ever taken.

SALESMAN

It's quite a sensational little item. It's all we can do to keep them in stock. They literally walk out of the store as soon as we get them in.

(The WIFE points to the black PRO MODEL.)

WIFE

What's that one?

(The SALESMAN returns the AMATEUR CAMERA to the shelf and takes down the PRO MODEL.)

SALESMAN

This is the black-body professional model.

HUSBAND

What does it do?

SALESMAN

Oh, quite a bit. It's really quite a sophisticated little bit of equipment. First, it's fully programmable in several modes. Then, it comes equipped with a thirty-five to two-hundred millimeter zoom lens.

HUSBAND

And what about that one?

(The HUSBAND points to a polished chrome STANDARD MODEL next to the PRO MODEL on the shelf.)

SALESMAN

That's the Standard Model. It only goes up to one-thirty-five.

WIFE

Are the lenses interchangeable?

SALESMAN

No. Unfortunately not.

WIFE

Could you show us how this one works?

SALESMAN

Of course. This here is the program. It does fashion, landscape, photoreportage....

HUSBAND

I always was fascinated by fashion photography.

SALESMAN

Well, go ahead. Now's your chance. Just push this button here. That turns on your fashion program.

(The HUSBAND pushes a button and the PRO CAMERA snaps into action.)

PRO CAMERA

(Feigning excitement, obnoxious)  
Okay, everybody, here at table ten. Before you all run off and attack the Viennese Table just a quick picture for the wedding album. Boy! You really get to hear the band up close from here.

(The SALESMAN hastily shuts it off.)

SALESMAN

You pushed the wrong button. That was the wedding and Bar Mitzvah mode. Here. This button.

(He pushes a different button and the PRO CAMERA snaps back into action. It heads straight for the WIFE.)

PRO CAMERA

(smooth, slick, sexual )  
Oh, baby. Good. Good! I love that look.

(The WIFE is at first terrified but then warms up to the situation. The PRO CAMERA'S speech is punctuated by a steady stream of motor drive WHIRS, and FLASHES as he makes exposures and urges her on.)

PRO CAMERA (cont'd)

Good! Good! You're gorgeous! A little pout. More. Easy. Easy. Oooh baby. Yeah. Yeah! That's good! That's good! A little thigh. Yeah. And step and move. A little move. That's it. That's good. Oh, yeah. Keep it up. You're hot. Oh, yeah. You're hot. Sweet! A little pout now. Show a little tongue. Great, baby. Beautiful, baby. Yeah. Yeah!

(The WIFE winds up writhing on the floor beneath the legs of the PRO CAMERA, like Anne Bancroft and David Hemmings in BLOWUP. She starts to loosen items of her clothing. She is on the verge of orgasm. Before the WIFE can completely remove her blouse the SALESMAN shuts off the PRO CAMERA. The exhausted WIFE picks herself off the floor with the eager assistance of her HUSBAND. She is very turned on.)

WIFE

Oooh, baby. I didn't realize how talented you were.

HUSBAND

It wasn't anything.

(to SALESMAN)

I think we'll take this one.

(The WIFE has unbuttoned the top button of her HUSBAND'S shirt and is playing with his chest hairs.)

SALESMAN

An excellent choice. You won't be disappointed.

(aside to the HUSBAND)

You know a company out in California makes some nifty X-rated attachments.

HUSBAND

Really?

(The SALESMAN slips a card into his shirt pocket, then brings the newly purchased camera to the front.)

SALESMAN

It's really quite an excellent little item. Would you like a case for it?

(The SALESMAN exits stage right and returns pulling a coat rack hung with a variety of overcoats and jackets.)

Something in leather will be serviceable and look very sharp.

HUSBAND

I don't know. We're way over what we planned to spend.

SALESMAN

Perhaps I can show you something in a gabardine.

(He turns to the rack and begins flipping through the clothes.)

SALESMAN (cont'd)

Something in a wool blend, perhaps. Fifty percent polyester. Good wearing and a nice cut. Wide lapels, double side vents.

HUSBAND

I don't know.

(The SALESMAN pulls out a yellow, rubberized raincoat with matching hat, in which he dresses the PRO CAMERA.)

SALESMAN

I think this is definitely the one. It's the last one I have in genuine vinyl. I didn't see it at first.

WIFE

We should protect our investment. Don't you think, dear?

SALESMAN

You can pay over there. By the door.

WIFE

Thank you so much.

SALESMAN

My pleasure. Come again.

(The SALESMAN puts the raincoat on the PRO CAMERA, and taking the CAMERA by the hand, the HUSBAND, WIFE and CAMERA exit.)

(curtain)