

A Modest Faux Pas

By Erhardt Graeff

CAST

MARK: High-schooler, who is unsure whether or not he is a cannibal

KERRY (Carrie): Friend of MARK, who is actively supporting him coming out

TIM: Friend of MARK, who thinks cannibalism is wrong

PHIL: Friend of MARK, who isn't sure if any human can be a cannibal

COSTUMES

All characters will wear normal high school clothes, maybe with a lean toward mid to late 80s in style.

PROPS

3 coffee cups

2 notebooks

3 textbooks

1 makeshift locker

1 table

3 chairs

3 paper plates

3 burger buns

SCENE 1

[lights on center, front of stage]

(MARK enters from stage left, hands in pockets, head drooping slightly)

(He walks to center stage and slumps into sitting on the front of the stage)

(He is feeling his legs in a studious way as KERRY walks in from stage left)

KERRY: Hey Mark! What's up?

MARK: Oh, hey Kerry, not much.

KERRY: You looked rather consumed by thought.

MARK: Oh?

KERRY: Yeah, what's on your mind?

(MARK pauses and looks straight ahead)

MARK: I've been thinking about who I am. I mean...what kind of person I am.

KERRY: OK. And?

MARK: Well, I have been having these certain reoccurring dreams—daydreams about...

(trails off)

KERRY: Daydreams about?

MARK: Um...about other people, I don't think it's normal. They are like urges—pangs. Hitting my senses of smell and taste and touch.

KERRY: Weird.

MARK: Yeah, I'm not sure what to think about it.

KERRY: Well, what is it about the dreams that irks you?

MARK: It's what I'm doing in the dreams with other people.

KERRY: Like other guys?

MARK: Yeah, other guys...

(KERRY looks very eager to hear the rest)

MARK: but girls too.

KERRY: (*disappointed*) Oh.

(MARK pauses again, as KERRY bows his head)

MARK: I'm...eating them.

KERRY: Huh?

MARK: Um...like cooking and eating them.

KERRY: The other people?

MARK: Yeah, I'm making cutlets and breading them or grilling them, and I can taste it.

(*Gets a faraway look of eagerness, almost but not licking lips*)

KERRY: Jesus!

MARK: Heh. Yeah, kinda messed up, huh?

KERRY: A little.

MARK: I always snap out of it with drool running down my chin.

KERRY: Hmm...

(KERRY pauses to think)

KERRY: Did you ever consider that you might be a cannibal?

MARK: (*slightly annoyed*) What? No!

KERRY: I mean, not that there is anything wrong with that, right?

MARK: I guess not...well...wait...we have always been taught that it was wrong. I mean...human flesh KERRY!

KERRY: I know, its kinda fucked up, but if you are born that way, can you help it?

MARK: I suppose not. But I'm NOT a cannibal.

KERRY: Are you sure?

(MARK looks like he is going to try and reply but stops himself, very subtle)

[lights fade out]

(MARK and KERRY move off stage right)

(Table and four chairs is set up in the middle of the stage)

SCENE 2

[lights on center stage and stage right]

(KERRY, TIM, and PHIL walk in from stage right with coffee cups, talking)

PHIL: So have you noticed Mark acting stranger than usual, of late?

TIM: Yeah, he seems a little cut off from the rest of us—kind of spacing out.

PHIL: Yeah. What do you think Kerry?

KERRY: Um...well, I mean yeah he has, but Mark has been going through some tough times

TIM: (*puzzled*) What do you mean?

(They sit down at the table, KERRY on stage right, PHIL at the head of the table, and TIM at stage left, they drink from their cups leisurely)

KERRY: Like...he has been coming to terms with some things about who he is.

PHIL: Really?

TIM: I hope he isn't going gay on us.

KERRY: No, it's nothing like that.

TIM: Good.

PHIL: Then what is it?

KERRY: It's kind of hard to explain.

PHIL: (*in an impatient tone*) It can't be that tough.

KERRY: Well...lets see...all that spacing out he's been doing.

TIM and PHIL: (*quickly*) Yeah?

KERRY: It's been about eating, like eating, um, people.

PHIL: People?

TIM: (*in a fit of distaste*) Awgh!

KERRY: Yeah, people.

TIM: (*visibly disturbed*) That is disgusting, and just plain wrong.

PHIL: (*subdued disbelief*) Wow. Craziness.

KERRY: Wait, wait, I mean it's not like there's anything wrong with that.

TIM: Huh?! Of course there is something wrong with that!

PHIL: Isn't Mark Jewish?

KERRY: So? That doesn't mean he can't eat humans, I mean as long as they aren't dirty or anything. Like if we lived in our own feces like pigs, I could see it being a problem, but human flesh shouldn't need to be blessed by a rabbi or anything.

TIM: I can't believe we are even discussing this!

PHIL: It does seem pretty silly.

KERRY: Well, whatever this turns out to be, I think we should make sure and support him in his decision...you know, if he comes out.

TIM: If he comes out? No!—NO! It's wrong, it goes against everything natural in the world.

KERRY: What do you mean? You know they are born that way.

PHIL: Who are?

KERRY: Cannibals.

TIM: They aren't fucking born that way, it's a decision. A WRONG—FUCKING—Decision!

(PHIL shakes his head with some low laughter)

KERRY: (*pleading*) Come on guys. Mark needs us now.

(TIM can't speak he is so angry)

(PHIL looks to stage right and sees MARK coming, and goes to proclaim this and then stops kind of dumbfounded)

MARK: Hey guys.

(TIM's eyes bulge, PHIL doesn't know what to say)

KERRY: Hey Mar—

TIM: Dude! What is this about being a cannibal!

(MARK is stunned aback)

KERRY: TIM, shut the hell up. You're not being fair.

(PHIL's eyes dart back and forth, not sure what to do)

TIM: But—

KERRY: (*anger toward TIM*) No!—You can't—

MARK: Kerry, he has a right to be mad.

(Everyone pauses)

PHIL: So...Mark, what's up?

(Everyone pauses)

MARK: I should just go.

KERRY: No...Mark...stay.

MARK: (*visibly unsettled*) I'm—I'm going to go.

(MARK makes his way of stage right quickly)

(TIM folds his arms and looks pissed)

(KERRY sits there remorseful)

(PHIL still looks dumbfounded)

[lights go down]

(locker is moved into place stage left of center)

SCENE 3

[lights go on most of stage]

(MARK is at his locker on stage left changing books for school)

(PHIL walks in from stage right holding a notebook and sees MARK, he pauses to think about what to do and then slowly approaches MARK's back)

PHIL: Um...Hi MARK.

(MARK slightly startled turns and can't look PHIL in the eye)

MARK: Hi Phil.

(MARK turns back around and continues shuffling in locker)

PHIL: Had any more of those "daydreams?"

MARK: Why?

PHIL: Just curious.

MARK: Oh...yeah, I have had a couple. They occur pretty regularly.

PHIL: (*with head nod*) Hmm.

MARK: But, I don't want to talk about it.

PHIL. Right, right.

(They both pause, PHIL looks through the pages of his notebook and MARK looks at the floor)

MARK: Do you think— (*stopping*)

PHIL: Yeah?

MARK: Nevermind.

PHIL: (*as calm as possible*) Do I think you are a cannibal?

MARK: No. no. no. Well, do you think it is possible? That someone can be a cannibal I mean.

PHIL: I really don't know. There are reports of cannibalism in Africa and on islands in the Pacific, but it seems kind of far-fetched.

MARK: (*kind of disheartened*) Yeah.

PHIL: Well, I have to get to class. See you later MARK.

MARK: Bye.

(PHIL leaves stage left)

(MARK grabs his books and "closes" his locker, and starts to walk toward stage right)

(KERRY comes in stage right and intercepts MARK)

KERRY: Hey MARK!

MARK: Hi KERRY.

KERRY: How's it going?

MARK: Alright, I suppose.

KERRY: Have you been thinking more about...you know?

MARK: Yeah I have.

KERRY: And?

MARK: I don't know Kerry...I just don't know, I mean that's a big step. I'm not that confident with myself.

KERRY: Right...I mean you need to make sure you are comfortable with the idea. You should have some more time to mull it over.

MARK: Yeah.

KERRY: Oh! I stopped by the morgue yesterday!

MARK: What?!

KERRY: Yeah, I think we might be able to get a deal.

MARK: A deal?

KERRY: A deal. You know, on a corpse.

MARK: A corpse? Wait! What the—

KERRY: For your coming out party.

MARK: Coming out party?! I'm not even sure about this whole thing, and you are planning a coming out party?!

KERRY: I thought it would be nice.

MARK: Kerry, I'm really glad you are supporting me and all, but hold up. This is about who I am. I have a lot to think about—and your planning an inaugural barbecue?!

KERRY: Sorry, you're right. This is your deal. Just let me know when you are ready.

MARK: I'm not sure if I'm EVER going to be ready. I'm not sure about a lot of things right now.

(KERRY bows his head ashamed)

MARK: (*slightly frustrated*) I got to get to class. I'll talk to you later man.

KERRY: OK, see ya.

(MARK exits stage right)

(KERRY pauses in reflection and then leaves stage left)

[lights go down as KERRY is walking off stage]

SCENE 4

[lights go up on most of the stage]

(TIM and PHIL walk in from stage right talking)

TIM: So have you spoken to Mark lately?

PHIL: Yeah, I talked to him in school briefly, a couple of days ago.

TIM: Is he still thinking that he might be a cannibal.

PHIL: Um...he's not really sure.

(They stop and loiter at center stage)

TIM: I can't believe him. I thought he would know better, I mean he's always been kind of different, but this is ridiculous. It's so...so vile.

PHIL: *(with a nod like he is testing TIM's statement)* Vile?

TIM: Yes, vile. I really can't be friends with someone who is morally corrupted like that.

PHIL: Well, Kerry said that people are born like that.

TIM: Humans are not born with a disposition toward eating another human.

PHIL: How do you know?

TIM: Because, it's just wrong. It goes against nature and...and...and morals.

PHIL: Who says what is moral though, isn't that relative?

TIM: *(shaking head)* No, people aren't meant to eat other people.

PHIL: Whatever, I don't think it's that big of a deal.

TIM: *(frustrated)* Ugh! Come on.

(TIM and PHIL walk off stage left)

(MARK and KERRY walk on from stage right talking)

KERRY: So it's decided then.

MARK: Well...

KERRY: I mean, it is, isn't it?

(They stop and loiter at center stage)

(MARK sways his upper-body back and forth in unsure motion)

KERRY: Say it out loud. I want you to say it outloud.

MARK: Oh come on. That's really not necessary.

KERRY: *(more firm)* No, I think it is. Say it.

(MARK looks at KERRY with unconvinced glance)

(KERRY bulges eyes and leans head at him in insistence)

MARK: *(slightly apathetically)* I am a cannibal.

KERRY: Good.....now louder.

MARK: What?

KERRY: Say it louder.

MARK: *(slightly louder)* I am a cannibal.

KERRY: Louder.

(MARK takes a deep breath and looks at KERRY)

MARK: (louder) I am a cannibal.

KERRY: One more time.

MARK: Kerry!

KERRY: Come on.

MARK: Jesus Fucking Christ man. Hey! I'm a cannibal, I'm A Cannibal, I'M A CANNIBAL.

KERRY: (*with a big smile*) Alright then. Don't you feel better.

MARK: (*very sarcastically*) Sure, whatever.

(KERRY and MARK walk off stage left)

[lights go down]

SCENE 5

[lights go up on most of stage]

(KERRY, MARK, and PHIL are center stage with picnic plates and food)

KERRY: So how did the burgers turn out?

MARK: Reeeeeeally good.

KERRY: Awesome.

(PHIL just shakes his head)

MARK: Are you sure you guys don't want to try it?

KERRY: No thanks.

PHIL: Uh...no.

MARK: (*to KERRY*) Thanks a lot man, this really means a lot to me.

KERRY: What are friends for?

MARK: (*to PHIL*) And thanks for coming Phil.

PHIL: No problem, I figured it would be an interesting experience I would regret missing.

KERRY: It's a shame Tim won't come. He is just so ignorant and stubborn.

(MARK looks a bit saddened)

PHIL: I guess he just can't rectify it in his head. You coming out was total blasphemy to him.

KERRY: Forget about him Mark. Enjoy the barbecue, this is your day.

MARK: Thanks guys.

PHIL: *(to KERRY)* Hey Kerry, want to go get the cake?

KERRY: Oh yeah! Let's go.

(PHIL and Kevin exit stage right, leaving MARK standing there smiling)

(MARK takes another bite of his burger and looks in ecstasy)

MARK: Damn these are good. Could be a little more tender...

(MARK starts walking off stage right continuing his statement)

MARK: Not so athletic next time...

[lights go down]

FIN.