

WONDER WIPES

by Ken Bradbury

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SYNOPSIS: The world's greatest new cleaning product needs a spokesperson. A Shakespearean actor, a soap opera star and a completely inexperienced performer all audition for a TV commercial. Who will get the part?

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(4 either)*

HAVEN (m/f) A casting agent for a TV commercial firm. *(41 lines)*

KELLEN (m/f)..... A trained Shakespearean actor. *(40 lines)*

PETIT (m/f) A well-meaning but totally inexperienced young performer. *(50 lines)*

SAXON (m/f)..... Comes from a brief and unsuccessful career in soap operas. *(32 lines)*

AT START: *It's the office of Haven who sits working at his desk. Three chairs are lined up on the other side of the room.*

KELLEN: *(Entering.)* Excuse me?

HAVEN: Yes?

KELLEN: Is this the casting agency?

HAVEN: According to the sign on the door. Have a seat. You here for the audition?

KELLEN: As a matter of fact I am. Perhaps you'd like to see my resume.

HAVEN: No. In show biz all that counts is what you can show me today. Just have a seat. *(KELLEN sits.)*

KELLEN: It's quite a good resume.

HAVEN: That's nice.

KELLEN: You don't want to even...

HAVEN: No. Just wait a moment.

PETIT: *(Entering.)* Hello?

HAVEN: Here for the audition?

PETIT: Yes.

HAVEN: Have a seat. I'll be right with you.

PETIT: Anywhere?

HAVEN: A chair would be appropriate.

PETIT: *(Sitting.)* Of course. *(To KELLEN.)* You here for the tryout?

KELLEN: We call it "the audition."

PETIT: Oh. *(A long, uncomfortable pause, then.)* Same thing isn't it?

KELLEN: It's a matter of perspective.

PETIT: Oh.

KELLEN: Training.

PETIT: Oh.

KELLEN: Experience.

PETIT: Gotcha. I think I'll just try out... sounds easier.

SAXON: *(Blasting into the room.)* I am here! *(The other three slowly turn to look at SAXON.)*

HAVEN: Good for you.

SAXON: I'm serious!

HAVEN: I can see you are.

SAXON: So give me the script!

HAVEN: Have a seat.

SAXON: But...

HAVEN: Sit. (*SAXON sits... dramatically.*)

PETIT: So... you guys ever done anything like this before?

KELLEN: Like what?

PETIT: This TV stuff. Pretty exciting. You ever done any acting?

KELLEN: You must be joking. I was three years with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

PETIT: Cool! What did they make?

KELLEN: Make?

PETIT: What did your company make?

KELLEN: My dear boy/girl. We made art! We made beauty! We made the hopes and dreams of all mankind come alive!

PETIT: Wow. They sell that stuff at Wal-Mart?

KELLEN: (*Groaning.*) Oh, dear.

PETIT: (*To SAXON.*) How 'bout you? You ever done this TV commercial stuff?

SAXON: You don't recognize me?

PETIT: (*Looking at SAXON carefully and closely, then.*) Nope. You're not my cousin are you?

SAXON: I most certainly am not. I'm Morgan Saxon! Of the daytime soap operas!

PETIT: Wow. Soap. He makes art and you make soap. We got ourselves one ritzy crew here.

SAXON: Soap operas! TV drama! Perhaps you saw me in "The Young and the Hopeless"?

PETIT: Uh... no.

SAXON: "All My Brazilians?"

PETIT: Nope. Don't sound familiar. I'm more of a cartoon guy. You ever watch Sponge Bob?

SAXON: Unbelievable.

HAVEN: Okay... let's get on with this. Here's the deal, folks: I'm looking for a spokesperson for Wonder Wipes.

PETIT: Do what?

HAVEN: Wonder Wipes. They're tissues.

PETIT: Funny name.

HAVEN: They're the sponsor... and they are not funny. They're looking for a face and a personality to make Wonder Wipes the biggest-selling tissue in the country.

PETIT: I'll be darned. (*To KELLEN.*) I'll bet they sell them things at Wal-Mart.

HAVEN: There's no script, but...

KELLEN: What?!

HAVEN: No script. It's gotta be natural. Ad-libbed.

KELLEN: I always work with a script! I've memorized the entire works of Shakespeare using scripts! How am I to act without a script?

HAVEN: Naturally, I hope. I want each of you to just talk about why people should buy Wonder Wipes.

SAXON: And you say they're...?

HAVEN: Tissues. (*Grabbing a handful from his desk and passing them out.*) Here. Have a Wonder Wipe. It's not complicated.

SAXON: So we must make...

HAVEN: You gotta make people want to have a Wonder Wipe. Like they can't live unless they rush out and buy some.

KELLEN: (*Staring at his imaginary tissue.*) I have it.

PETIT: You got what?

KELLEN: The inspiration! (*Standing, dramatically.*) "Oh, thou most noble of tissues! Oh, blessed gift from heaven! Would'st thou but gently caress the tender bridge of my nose! Would'st thou breathe thy angelic fragrance gently into my soul! Surely no tissue on this earth could half as well embrace the drippings of my nose! " (*And KELLEN collapses into an exhausted heap on the floor.*)

HAVEN: (*A very long pause, then.*) O----kay. That's one way to do it.

KELLEN: Were you moved?

HAVEN: I sat right here.

KELLEN: I mean in your soul!

PETIT: That was really something!

KELLEN: Thank you.

PETIT: All them words. Wow. You'd ought to be an actor.

KELLEN: I... oh, never mind.

HAVEN: (*To SAXON.*) How about you?

SAXON: (*Standing.*) Watch this. And prepare to be thrilled.

PETIT: Wow! I can't wait!

HAVEN: (*After SAXON has stood there for a very long moment, eyes closed, doing nothing.*) What're you doing?

SAXON: I'm... preparing.

PETIT: Oh, boy!

SAXON: (*Handing his imaginary tissue to PETIT.*) Would you hold this, please?

PETIT: Sure! (*Stands, holds tissue.*)

SAXON: (*Speaking to the tissue, exploding.*) How could you do this to me??? Erica told me you couldn't be trusted! You've betrayed me! How could you? I reached for you to wipe my nose but you turned away! You went for that other nostril! I can't believe you'd do this to me, Margo!

HAVEN: Margo?

SAXON: I give names to inanimate objects.

HAVEN: Really.

SAXON: It helps me with my motivation.

HAVEN: O----kay. (*To PETIT.*) And now how about you?

PETIT: Oh, gosh. I don't think I'd stand a chance with these professionals.

HAVEN: Give it try. The field is still wide open, believe me.

PETIT: So... I just hold up this tissue...

HAVEN: Wonder Wipe.

PETIT: Yeah. Wonder Wipe. Funny name. Gosh, I've never done anything like this before.

SAXON: Passion! You must have passion!

KELLEN: Fury! Let the heavens resound with the sound of your voice!

PETIT: Resound?

KELLEN: Thunder! Quake! Shake the earth with your... your...

SAXON: Passion!

KELLEN: Look... let me show you. Pretend you are Juliet.

PETIT: Juliet who?

KELLEN: Shakespeare's great lover!

PETIT: Oh. I'm not sure I can do that.

KELLEN: Then just hold the tissue ...

HAVEN: It's called a Wonder Wipe.

KELLEN: Hold the Wonder Wipe right there... delicately... let it waft on the breeze.

PETIT: Waft? I don't think I've ever wafted before. Could I get arrested for that?

KELLEN: Then just hold it! There! Now... speak to it! Speak to it in tones so loving that it will melt the heart of any audience! Go! Go ahead! Try it!

PETIT: *(In a very stilted, artificial manner.)* Oh... tissue. You... are... a... pretty... tissue. How... I... long... to... wipe... my... nose... with... you. *(smiles.)* How'd I do?

KELLEN: Perhaps we should have tried Hamlet.

SAXON: Here! Let me show you! Okay ... pretend that tissue just lied about you to your best friend, he cheated you out of a million bucks, stole your car, and kidnapped your family. Now! What would you do? Go! Go!

PETIT blows nose on tissue and throws it away.

SAXON: What? What are you doing?

PETIT: I blew my nose on it and threw it away.

SAXON: But ... where was the emotion? The anger?

KELLEN: The fury!

PETIT: Didn't have none, I guess. I just blew my nose and gave it a toss. Heck, I'm not afraid of a tissue.

KELLEN: *(Grabbing another tissue from the desk.)* Here! Here, try it again! This time speak to it like you were speaking to a king!

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