*Acting Edition*

# Meteor Shower

by Steve Martin

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SAMUEL FRENCH

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The Original Broadway Production of *METEOR SHOWER* was produced by Joey Parnes, Sue Wagner, John Johnson, James L. Nederlander, The John Gore Organization, Scott Rudin, Eli Bush, FG Productions, Jamie deRoy, Sally Horchow, Sharon Karmazin, Barbara Manocherian, JABS Theatricals, Ergo Entertainment, Seth A. Goldstein, Elm City Productions, Diana DiMenna, Jay Alix & Una Jackman, Jennifer Manocherian, Cricket Jiranek, Catherine Adler & Marc David Levine, and The Shubert Organization.

The World Premiere Production of *METEOR SHOWER* was produced by The Old Globe (Barry Edelstein, Artistic Director; Michael G. Murphy, Managing Director) and Long Wharf Theatre (Gordon Edelstein, Artistic Director; Joshua Borenstein, Managing Director).

*METEOR SHOWER* premiered on Broadway on November 29, 2017 at the Booth Theatre in New York City. The performance was directed by Jerry Zaks, with scenic design by Beowulf Boritt, costume design by Ann Roth, lighting design by Natasha Katz, and sound design by Fitz Patton. The production stage manager was J. Jason Daunter. The cast was as follows:

**CORKY** . . . . . Amy Schumer
**NORM** . . . . . Jeremy Shamos
**GERALD** . . . . . Keegan-Michael Key
**LAURA** . . . . . Laura Benanti

## CHARACTERS

**CORKY**

**NORM**

**GERALD**

**LAURA**

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

This play has been performed both on a proscenium stage and in the round. In the round, the revelation of the meteor strike on the chaise lounge is simultaneous with the strike. In proscenium, the hole in the lounge is revealed in a subsequent scene.

In the "the bug flux has been achieved" scene there are two timings that can be used for the water that comes out of Norm's stomach. One is to do it as written. The other is to save the water effect for the very end of the scene when everything is truly chaotic. Both versions have been performed successfully.

"Chamois" is pronounced "shammy." I mention this because the issue has come up more than once.

The play is performed without an intermission.

## Scene One

*(A modern house in Ojai, California, early evening, August 1993.* **CORKY** *enters polishing coffee spoons, which she sets on a side table. Her husband,* **NORM***, hurried, enters from the bedroom, still in the process of getting dressed.)*

*(If projection is possible, right before curtain, three separate cards should announce:)*

*[Ojai, California.]*

*[August 1993.]*

*[83°.]*

**CORKY**. Norm, they're here in fifteen minutes.

**NORM**. I'm going crazy. Help me.

**CORKY**. What?

*(***NORM** *is exasperated. He's trying to remember something.)*

**NORM**. I'm trying to think…this book title. It's for *Jeopardy*…

*(Indicates the TV back in the bedroom.)*

It's…oh…the tip of my tongue. Something like…Death to the Cuckoo. But not that…com'n…book title. It's like Death to the Cuckoo…

**CORKY**. *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

**NORM**. Thank you! Thank you! How'd you come up with that?

**CORKY**. I know your brain.

**NORM**. And yet another reason to be married.

**CORKY**. You'd repressed it, that's all.

**NORM**. Yeah. And when I repress something, I push it way down and kick dirt over it. It's not coming back.

*(He puts on his pants.)*

**CORKY**. If you don't deal with your subconscious, it will deal with you.

**NORM**. That's good. Who said that?

**CORKY**. In that book, remember?

**NORM**. Oh yeah.

**CORKY**. You want a pre-wine?

**NORM**. A what?

**CORKY**. A pre-wine. A wine before the wine. Doesn't count.

**NORM**. Doesn't count?

**CORKY**. Not if it's before the guests come. Doesn't count.

**NORM**. Then what's the problem?

*(***NORM** *takes a sip of wine.)*

*(Sees the eggplants.)* What are these?

**CORKY**. Eggplants. Arrived this afternoon. No note.

**NORM**. Must be from the Newmans.

**CORKY**. Thoughtful.

**NORM**. I guess.

**CORKY**. What's *she* like?

**NORM**. I don't know her; just him. She was a West Coast editor at *Vogue* for three years. She seemed fine.

**CORKY**. You met her?

**NORM**. She was picking up Gerald after tennis. She's the one who mentioned the meteor shower.

**CORKY**. Oh.

*(Then.)* How does a meteor shower come up in conversation?

**NORM**. She said Gerald wanted to leave town to see this meteor shower, first I had heard of it. So he puffs up – kept calling it a rain of fire, can't miss the rain of fire, once in a lifetime, blah blah, and I said we live in Ojai and he said can you see stars there and I said, "Yeah, shopping on the weekends."

*(**CORKY** stares.)*

And he looked at me like that…

*(Points to her face.)*

…but she laughed.

**CORKY**. You liked that.

**NORM**. Well, yeah. She got the joke.

**CORKY**. I read people know if they want to sleep with a person within two seconds of meeting them. I believe it. Do you?

**NORM**. I could see that.

**CORKY**. *(Miffed.)* Oh yeah well that's fine.

**NORM**. I didn't mean I wanted to… You said you believed it.

**CORKY**. I said I read it; you said you believed it.

**NORM**. No, I didn't say I believed it; I said I could see it.

**CORKY**. Oh, so you can see the moon but you don't believe the moon.

**NORM**. What?

**CORKY**. *(Relaxing.)* Hey, remember the summer I believed in crystals?

**NORM**. *(Laughs a bit.)* Yeah. And how about me? In college I had a moment with the power of pyramids.

**CORKY**. Put a weapon in the hand of a stupid belief and it kills you.

**NORM**. Wow. That's a thought. Who said that?

**CORKY**. I did.

**NORM**. You did?

**CORKY**. Why?

**NORM**. It's clever. It just doesn't sound like you.

*(**CORKY**, hurt, steps toward him and enters a "talking mode." **NORM** goes to meet her. They hold hands and face each other. They've done this a hundred times.)*

**CORKY**. I love you and I know you love me.

**NORM**. *(Quoting **CORKY** back to her.)* You said, "I love you and I know you love me."

**CORKY**. I understand you probably did not know you hurt me.

**NORM**. You said, "I probably did not know I hurt you." That's what you meant?

**CORKY**. Yes. I'm asking you to be more careful with my feelings. They are not playthings.

**NORM**. Your feelings are not playthings. That's what you meant?

**CORKY**. Yes.

**NORM**. I'm sorry that I hurt you in this way. I hope that you understand that I did not intend to hurt you, and I will try to use that particular joking manner less often.

**CORKY**. I do understand.

*(Then.)* How come she's not with *Vogue* anymore?

**NORM**. No clue. I met her for five seconds.

**CORKY**. I hope they like our place.

**NORM**. Are you kidding, this place could be in *Architectural Digest*. I love the furniture, I love the pillows, I love everything about it.

**CORKY**. *He* sounds nice.

**NORM**. He is nice.

**CORKY**. I don't like *her*.

**NORM**. What? Why?

**CORKY**. I don't know. The *Vogue* thing. What was she wearing?

**NORM**. I can't remember. A top…a black top, pencil skirt… is that what they call it?

**CORKY**. It is if that's what it was.

**NORM**. Brunette. Stylish. Big hair. *[This description can change to suit the actress.]*

**CORKY**. Sexy?

**NORM**. Not in the least.

**CORKY**. So she was.

**NORM**. A bit.

**CORKY**. Thank you for being considerate.

**NORM**. I honor your feelings.

**CORKY**. And him?

**NORM**. Him. He's hard to describe, kind of two people. Can be vicious on the tennis court if he's behind, then if he's ahead, wonderful guy. Likes to pontificate. I figure for one night it could be interesting, and he seems very connected. Could be good for us.

**CORKY**. Your instincts are always good.

**NORM**. I really appreciate your attitude on this.

**CORKY**. I acknowledge your appreciation.

**NORM**. *(Picks up his glass.)* A bit more wine.

**CORKY**. Maybe you should wait.

**NORM**. Good idea. Don't want to peak too early.

**CORKY**. Or not at all.

*(He looks at her.)*

I'm so sorry…

**NORM**. I honor that you're sorry.

**CORKY**. I honor and cherish you as a person.

**NORM**. I need to be in my cave now.

**CORKY**. Yes.

*(She exits to the kitchen. He picks up a newspaper from a low table. Looks at a circled column.)*

**NORM**. *(Reads aloud, to himself.)* …From the northern sky. Tonight, fifty to sixty meteors are expected per hour. It has been suggested that life on this planet could have been generated by meteors striking the earth…

*(Lights fade.)*

## Scene Two

*(***CORKY**, **NORM**, **GERALD**, *and* **LAURA** *are in the living room, mid-conversation.* **GERALD** *is standing.)*

**GERALD**. A billion-year-old light show. Piercing the atmosphere, bursting with radiance.

**LAURA**. Nice.

**GERALD**. Caught in our gravitational pull, some grazing the atmosphere, some in a death spiral heading for Earth.

**LAURA**. Go, baby.

**GERALD**. Everyone thinks of meteors as something that happen at night. But they're striking the earth during the day too, but of course we can't see them can we…

*(Then.)* Can we?

*(More urgent.)* Can we?

**CORKY**. Oh, you want… I see, well I think…

**GERALD**. *(Points to* **NORM**.*)* I want him to answer.

**NORM**. Oh. Uh, no no we can't. Because of the sun…

**GERALD**. *(Walks to* **CORKY**, *gently touches her.)* Because of the sun, exactly. The brightness of the sun overwhelms the dimness of the meteor. Like the way some personalities overwhelm the lesser lights.

**CORKY**. I never thought of it that way.

**GERALD**. How about you, Norm?

**NORM**. What?

**GERALD**. Ever think of it that way?

**NORM**. I don't really know that I di…

**GERALD**. I thought of it that way when I was sixteen.

**NORM**. Huh.

**GERALD**. See, meteors represent the conjunction of two very different worlds. Like the bug flux.

**CORKY**. The bug flux?

**GERALD**. Yes, right here in California, too. You have the mountain bugs that love the mountains, and the

coastal bugs that love the coast. But where they meet and mingle is called the bug flux, and it's chaos. In a way, we're the coastal bugs who came to visit you, the mountain bugs.

**NORM**. Hors d'oeuvres?

*(He picks them up and offers the plate to everyone.* **GERALD** *takes one.)*

**GERALD**. Love to.

*(He offers the plate to* **LAURA***, who responds.)*

**LAURA**. *(Referencing her figure.)* Noooo.

**GERALD**. Hmm. Tasty. What is this?

**CORKY**. Petrale crab. From Chile.

**GERALD**. Delicious.

**LAURA**. We loved this invitation.

**GERALD**. Can't tell you. We can't see the sky in Santa Barbara. Just the little light from the city blocks out everything.

**LAURA**. And Corky. Norm has told me so much about you.

**CORKY**. He has? He said he hadn't talked to you that mu…

**LAURA**. Oh, did I misspeak?

*(***CORKY** *checks* **NORM***; he looks befuddled. Then:)*

**CORKY**. How did you like being an editor at *Vogue*?

**LAURA**. Oh…oh…it was fabulous. Then the LA office closed.

**CORKY**. Oh! Where in LA? We used to live there.

**LAURA**. Uptown.

**CORKY**. Uptown? There is no uptown in LA.

**LAURA**. *(Looking around at the house.)* Gerald, look at this place…so charming. This is exactly what we need. A little nothing out in the country.

*(Awkward moment.)*

**CORKY**. That dress is so nice.

**LAURA**. Oh, thank you. I just get tired of looking awful. Don't you?

**NORM**. *(After a beat, to* **GERALD**.*)* How long have you been interested in the heavens?

**GERALD**. Who said I was interested in the heavens? I'm interested in the *metaphor* of the heavens. Example: I flew in a plane once to follow a solar eclipse.

**CORKY**. That must have been beautiful.

**GERALD**. Beautiful? Powerful. To block out the sun? To be a man and block out the sun longer than nature intended? I defeated the sun. I thought, "I'm something to contend with." Should I go on?

**CORKY**. Oh, yes!

**GERALD**. Well, now I feel on the spot.

*(He sits, stands immediately.)*

Anyway…

*(Lights out.)*

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