

The 4th Annual Davenport Theatrical
10 Minute Play Contest

Tin Can Telephone
By Sara Fellini

DANNY BERETTA – mid forties, New Yorker, manual laborer

DANNY KALASHNIKOV – mid forties, New Yorker, manual laborer

COLT MUSTANG – mid twenties, Texan, manual laborer

BERETTA and KALASHNIKOV are sitting on a train going back to Queens.

KALASHNIKOV: So I'm saying I think it's an irrational reaction.

COLT enters the train.

BERETTA: Hey. Colt, right?

COLT: Yeah. You guys are in the same yard as me?

BERETTA: Yeah, Danny Beretta and this is Danny Kalashnikov.

COLT: How you doing.

KALASHNIKOV: You're Colt?

COLT: Yeah.

KALASHNIKOV: From the South?

COLT: Yeah, I came up from Texas.

KALASHNIKOV: Colt what?

COLT: Colt Mustang.

BERETTA: Colt Mustang! Geez. I guess your parents loved guns?

COLT: Nah. Colt's a horse. I'm part Comanche.

BERETTA: Part what?

COLT: Part Comanche.

KALASHNIKOV: Everybody in the South's part Comanche. It's bullshit.

COLT: Nah. Everybody in the South's part Cherokee, and that's bullshit.

BERETTA: But you're Comanche.

COLT: Yeah. I'm Comanche.

BERETTA: And a horse.

COLT: Yeah. I'm a horse.

KALASHNIKOV: A colt is a baby horse. You're a baby horse.

COLT: Yeah, I'm a baby horse. That's me.

BERETTA: It's a weird name.

COLT: You guys are both named Danny. Everybody up here is named Danny or Frankie or Joe. At least I got a name.

BERETTA: All right, all right.

KALASHNIKOV: Anyway, as I was saying to Beretta here a minute ago. It was my anniversary last week, and I got my wife a vacuum cleaner.

BERETTA: Huge mistake.

KALASHNIKOV: Yeah, I realize that, but what I'm saying is I don't understand *why*.

COLT: What do you mean, why? You don't get a woman a vacuum cleaner.

KALASHNIKOV: All right, quick draw. Take it easy.

COLT: It's a fact.

KALASHNIKOV: She wanted a vacuum cleaner. She'd been looking at a particular one for weeks. She mentioned it to me several times.

BERETTA: Does she like the vacuum cleaner?

KALASHNIKOV: She loves this vacuum cleaner. She just didn't want it on our anniversary.

BERETTA: Of course she didn't. That's really stupid, Danny. You're a fucking meathead.

KALASHNIKOV: I'm not arguing that I'm a fucking meathead. I know I'm a fucking meathead. I just don't understand why it's not a nice gift. She wanted it. I got it for her. And she's unhappy.

BERETTA: Maybe because you're not supposed to give her something she needs. You're supposed to give her something she wants.

KALASHNIKOV: We have a fucking vacuum cleaner. She doesn't need a vacuum cleaner. This is a special one with extra suction or whatever for dog hair in the carpet. It was expensive as fuck, but now I'm the bad guy.

COLT: It's cause she can't show a vacuum to her friends.

KALASHNIKOV: That's interesting.

COLT: Yeah. She can't show off a vacuum to her friends, because it's not nice. It's embarrassing.

KALASHNIKOV: I think you're onto something there.

COLT: What'd she get you?

KALASHNIKOV: A handgun.

COLT: See, that's nice. What kind?

KALASHNIKOV: It's forty caliber, Smith and Wesson.

BERETTA: He's got a whole collection a guns locked up in a safe in fucking Queens. Like a militiaman or something.

KALASHNIKOV: Yeah. But I got it with me now.

COLT: Oh yeah? Let's see it.

KALASHNIKOV: Nah, I can't whip it out in the subway, idiot. You're not in Podunk anymore.

COLT: There's no one else here! It's the middle of the night.

KALASHNIKOV: Come here.

Kalashnikov opens his jacket discreetly. Beretta and Colt peer inside.

COLT: Pretty good. Bigger than I thought.

BERETTA: That's a nice gift, though. That's a gift you can show to your friends.

KALASHNIKOV: Yeah, you're right. Maybe I'll get her some jewelry or something.

COLT: Flowers.

Subway chime, garbled announcement of a stop.

COLT: What the fuck was that?

KALASHNIKOV: Yeah they haven't got new speakers in thirty years. Probably a stop announcement?

BERETTA: Where you getting off, Colt?

COLT: I'm staying with some guys in Astoria until I can find a place.

KALASHNIKOV: We're in Astoria too.

Train stops suddenly. The lights go out.

COLT: Oh shit!

BERETTA: Train's stopping.

COLT: Why's it stopping?

BERETTA: I dunno. It stops sometimes.

COLT: Yeah but not like this. It's usually cause there's "train traffic ahead". It's the middle of the goddamn night.

BERETTA: It felt like somebody pulled the emergency break.

KALASHNIKOV: Maybe somebody threw himself on the tracks.

COLT: That's not funny.

BERETTA: It's not a joke, it happens all the time.

COLT: People jumping in front of trains?

BERETTA: Yeah, why not?

KALASHNIKOV: Why not.

BERETTA: I been there.

KALASHNIKOV: I been there.

COLT: I guess me too.

BERETTA: I've had times. Sometimes it's hard to live a life.

KALASHNIKOV: Sometimes it's hard to feel like you're living a life, you know? Sometimes I feel like I never feel anything at all.

COLT: I get that. I get that. I get moments where it feels like I want to feel something, but I just push it right down.

BERETTA: Yeah! Yeah. But I don't know how to not do that.

COLT: No, I don't know either. Usually I just grab a beer.

BERETTA: That's what I do!

KALASHNIKOV: Yeah, me too.

Pause. Garbled announcement.

COLT: What are they saying?

KALASHNIKOV: I don't know.

COLT: You really think a guy killed himself?

BERETTA: I dunno. Go look.

Colt looks out the side window, then looks through the window in the door into the other cars.

COLT: I can't really see. But there's a guy making his way through the cars.

KALASHNIKOV: The conductor?

COLT: No. No, just some guy.

BERETTA gets up to look.

BERETTA: Oh, that don't look good.

COLT: Why?

BERETTA: I dunno. That guy don't look good. I'd stop him at an airport, if you know what I mean.

KALASHNIKOV: Let me see. That guy? Like two cars down? Yeah, I don't know about him.

BERETTA: He's looking around.

KALASHNIKOV: I don't like it.

COLT: What's he got in his hand there?

BERETTA: Is that a gun?

COLT: He's got a gun! We're in the tunnel, right?

BERETTA: Yeah, stopped in the tunnel.

COLT: If I was gonna shoot up a train, I'd shoot it up in a tunnel.

BERETTA: Oh shit, you're right. Oh, shit.

COLT: Not only that, but I'd blow it up. In the tunnel. No one's getting out of a tunnel. Wait, shut up!

Another garbled announcement.

COLT: Did you hear that? They're trying to warn us!

BERETTA: You got your gun, Danny?

KALASHNIKOV: Yeah, I do, but—

COLT: Well, whip it out, son!

KALASHNIKOV: Nah, nah, nah, don't be an idiot. This isn't a dick swinging contest, I whip it out somebody's gonna get killed.

COLT: You don't be an idiot! Somebody killed is gonna be one of us! All those people in all those school shootings, that just sit there and let some guy with an AK-47 shoot em all up, now you got a chance to nip it in the bud.

KALASHNIKOV: I don't even think I could aim it right! I'm nervous!

BERETTA: No, the kid's right, Danny. What do you spend all that time practicing for?

KALASHNIKOV: I just like it.

BERETTA: You telling me there ain't nothing else to that? If you just like aiming it, how come you don't do golf or tennis or fucking handball or something else?

KALASHNIKOV: I like the way it feels.

BERETTA: Yeah, you like power, and you like responsibility. Now it's your responsibility to nip this fucking terrorist in the bud.

COLT: All you hear about is a guy coming into a place, and shooting everybody dead because no one is man enough to shoot first and ask questions later. Now you got a clean shot of a guy, coming right at us, and you're telling me you're gonna leave us sitting ducks here?

BERETTA: When we're in the papers in the morning, I hope it's your ugly face on the front page: Coward Lets Friends Die in a Fucking Tin Can.

KALASHNIKOV: What if I hit the wall and it ricochets?

BERETTA: (scoffing) What if you hit the wall and it ricochets.

COLT: Are we in a fucking cartoon right now? This is real life, man. You get one shot. That guy is coming right for us, and if you don't shoot him before he shoots us, our blood will be on your hands.

BERETTA: You could be a Hero or a Coward, Kalashnikov. What's it gonna be?

KALASHNIKOV: Okay, okay. I'm gonna do it. He's coming this way. I'll get him. Jesus Mary and Joseph.

BERETTA: Get ready, Danny.

COLT: He's right outside the other door.

BERETTA: He bent down.

KALASHNIKOV: What's he doing? What's he doing?

COLT: I can't see.

BERETTA: He's got a woman.

KALASHNIKOV: Jesus.

BERETTA: (a slow realization) He's... he's...

COLT: He's—

KALASHNIKOV: WHAT'S HE DOING? I'm cocked and ready!

COLT: He, um...

BERETTA: He's... Look, I'm gonna be straight with you, Danny. It seems like he's some kind of doctor. He's uh, he's helping a woman who looks sick.

KALASHNIKOV: What? What are you saying to me?

COLT: He looks like some kind of doctor, man.

KALASHNIKOV: I was gonna fucking murder him. I thought he had a gun?

BERETTA: Uh... nah. Nah he didn't.

KALASHNIKOV: Where is it? He had a gun!

BERETTA: I... I don't know.

COLT: I guess he didn't. I guess he didn't have a gun.

The lights come back on.

BERETTA: Train's moving.

KALASHNIKOV: Jesus. Jesus.

Pause.

COLT: Felt good though, for a minute. Felt like we were going into battle, for a minute!

BERETTA: Yeah. It did feel good.

KALASHNIKOV: I don't know.

COLT: Sometimes I feel like I got some kind of destiny, locked away from me.

BERETTA: Yeah. Me too.

KALASHNIKOV: Yeah. I was watching a program on the history channel about the ancient Greeks, and they built a statue in honor of their enemies, the Gaelic soldiers. Made them out to be brave warriors. The guy was playing trumpet, and dying, and trumpeting his national anthem or whatever.

BERETTA: Why'd they do that?

COLT: Because it made them feel big. To fight somebody big.

KALASHNIKOV: Yeah.

BERETTA: Yeah.

COLT: You guys want to get a beer?

BERETTA: Yeah.

KALASHNIKOV: ...Yeah.

End of play.

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