

WHAT'S INSIDE THE EIFFEL TOWER COFFEE MUG

by Tara Meddaugh

a 10-minute play



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EXCERPT

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a ten-minute dark comedy

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Cast

REBECCA A woman in her 30s. Married to Henry.

HENRY A man in his 30s. Married to Rebecca.

Setting

In the kitchen of Rebecca and Henry's home.

EXCERPT

AT RISE: HENRY and REBECCA, married, 30s, are in their kitchen. It is morning. HENRY reads the newspaper at the table. REBECCA might busy herself or she might focus on her husband, or both, but in any case, she is managing forced patience along with a sense of nervous anticipation.

REBECCA

Have you had your coffee yet?

HENRY

It's not half past 7.

REBECCA

It's a quarter past.

HENRY

That's right.

REBECCA

Might you consider having your coffee earlier today? Since it is our wedding anniversary and all?

HENRY

Should that change my morning coffee routine, darling? We've scheduled a dinner at Moretti's at 8 post meridiem, which I'm very much looking forward to. But in the morning, I read the paper and converse with my wife until half past seven, at which time—

REBECCA

Henry—

HENRY

At which time, I then have my morning coffee.

REBECCA

You can be quite disagreeable, Henry.

HENRY

I suppose that's true.

REBECCA

A bit of spontaneity now and then would not hurt you. But none of this should be a surprise to me.

(HENRY reads)

I said, "None of this should be a surprise to me."

(HENRY looks up)

That's right, Henry. Your mother warned me of this the day we were married. Did I ever tell you?

HENRY

No.

REBECCA

"Henry is a man of routine," she said. "Don't be fooled into thinking he's spontaneous. Or you'll be gravely disappointed."

HENRY

That sounds like her.

REBECCA

Although...she probably should have warned me the day we were engaged instead, don't you think? That would have been the more sensible thing to do. Considerate.

HENRY

She never claimed to be considerate. Why should she have to be considerate?

REBECCA

What was I do to on my wedding day, with a warning about my husband-to-be, less than 1 hour from the ceremony? Perhaps she was hoping for a bit of drama.

HENRY

Most likely.

REBECCA

What time is it?

HENRY

Seventeen past the hour.

(pause. Rebecca paces or fiddles. HENRY continues reading the paper)

REBECCA

These minutes are years...Henry, what is a dramatic thing I could have said at our wedding? To please your mother? I know I could have turned my back to you while were exchanging vows, perhaps swung my gown train to hit your feet. But what's a good phrase when one wishes to insert drama in one's wedding?

HENRY

(thinks for a moment)

"I'll never marry this rogue, as long as we both shall live"?

REBECCA

Hm. I like the lilt of that. But you're not a rogue, now are you? Her warning was about your routinely manner.

HENRY

"I'll never marry this dolt, as long as we both shall live"?

REBECCA

Is a dolt a dullard?

HENRY

I think they're very similar.

REBECCA

Well, that sounds about right then. Oh, Henry, how dramatic it would have been if I had thrown my ring at you! Or your mother!

HENRY

That would have pleased her dramatic flair.

REBECCA

That's hindsight for you.

(pause)

Have your coffee, Henry. Please.

HENRY

Rebecca—

REBECCA

I've made the pot. Choose your mug from the cupboard and let's—there is no need to wait 10 more minutes. These moments of waiting are as though a black lizard is eating my intestines. I can't utter another word about the pretense of drama in our wedding!

HENRY

Oh, darling, I don't see why my coffee time should trouble you so, but since it does, and I love you—see? 10 years married and I love you just as nobly as I did at the alter—So I will open the cupboard and retrieve my coffee mug. Would that please you?

REBECCA

I don't know if "please" is the correct sentiment, but yes, I should very much like you to get it over with.

HENRY

Get what over with?

REBECCA

Kindly open the cupboard.

(HENRY puts down his paper, kisses Rebecca on the top of her head)

HENRY

No doubt there is an anniversary gift inside. My darling.

REBECCA

Well.

(HENRY moves to the cupboard. He opens it and starts or gasps.)

HENRY

Rebecca!

(pause)

Do you—

REBECCA

Yes.

HENRY

You know what's in the—

REBECCA

Yes, Henry. I know.

(He looks intently inside again, then to Rebecca. She looks up at him. He looks back to the cupboard)

(pause)

HENRY

I must say, Rebecca, your mother did not warn me about this!

(pause)

REBECCA

I'm not a psychopath.

HENRY

I would have to refer to my Oxford Dictionary for the exact definition.

(pause)

REBECCA

They're only squirrels. And a few mice.

HENRY

I thought I saw a hamster.

REBECCA

A brown mouse.

(pause)

HENRY

How long have you been...killing—[them?]

REBECCA

It's not killing! It's collecting.

HENRY

But do you not kill them first?

REBECCA

No! They just die!

HENRY

You're hoarding dead animals!

(paces)

This is disturbing. Rebecca, I am a man of social contract and regularity and clean glassware and this is disturbing.

(pause)

Where are the mice when they're not in the cupboard?

END OF EXCERPT

For the complete play, *What's Inside the Eiffel Tower Coffee Mug*, visit:

<https://www.tameddaugh.com/whats-inside-the-eiffel-tower-coffee-mug-a-10minute-play>

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



Tara is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University's MFA program in Dramatic Writing. Her work has been presented by theaters such as Fusion Theatre, The Directors Company, Le Petit Theatre de Terrebonne, Theatre One, Westchester Collaborative Theater, Tagragg Productions, One Armed Man, Oracle Theatre, Inc, the Bobik Theatre Ensemble, The Acme Theatre Company, The Harlequin Players, Woman Seeking..., and numerous schools, universities and colleges including Gardner-Webb, Prince Williams, and Colgate. Her work has also showcased at the Artists of Tomorrow Festival in NYC, The Bangkok Community Theatre Fringe Festival, the Pittsburgh New Works Series and the Last Frontier Theatre Conference in Alaska. Students, teachers and actors world-wide have utilized her plays and monologues for competitions, Directing, Acting and Dramatic Literature courses and workshops in schools, colleges and theatres. Serial monologues she wrote were performed for two years by the internationally recognized receptionist-robot, Valerie. She has taught Playwriting and Screenwriting at Carnegie Mellon, the Pittsburgh Public Theatre, and for The Westport Country Playhouse, and she has led Creative Dramatics Workshops for children in underserved areas throughout New York and New Jersey. Additionally, she toured in a Children's Theatre Troupe, which she wrote for, co-directed, and performed in. Tara's work has been published by YouthPLAYS, Oxford Press South Africa, the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (LAMDA), The Hunger Journal, Meriweather Publishing and Applause Theatre & Cinema. She is a two-time recipient of the Shubert Fellowship in Dramatic Writing, the Sloan Screenwriting Fellowship, the New Works for Young Women [Actors] Award and is a member of the Dramatist's Guild. Tara has written children's books, short stories, a novel, and writes and records music in the chick-core rap band, [Girl Crusade](#). She lives in Westchester County with her husband and two dramatic children.

For more information about Tara Meddaugh or her work,
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