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Dramatic Publishing

NEXT DOOR

**Based upon a story from
“Welcome to the Monkey House”
by
KURT VONNEGUT**

**Adapted
by
DAVID COOPERMAN**



Dramatic Publishing

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DAVID COOPERMAN

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“Welcome to the Monkey House” by
KURT VONNEGUT JR.

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(NEXT DOOR)

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NEXT DOOR

A Play in One Act
For Six Men and Three Women

CHARACTERS

ALL-NIGHT SAM a deejay for a local radio station
MR. LEONARD a family man
LEMUEL HARGER his next door neighbor
CHARLOTTE Lemuel Harger's mistress
MRS. LEONARD the wife
JOE LEONARD the Leonards' 12-year-old son
PAUL LEONARD the younger son, 9 years old
SGT. JACOBSEN a policeman
ROSE HARGER wife of Lemuel Harger

TIME: 1953.

SETTING:

The action takes place in an apartment building.

NEXT DOOR

SETTING: *The stage is divided by a single wall that runs through its center. On the left side of this wall we see half the living room of the Leonard family. To the right we see half the living room of the Hargers'. On the right side we see the Hargers' radio.*

AT RISE: *ALL-NIGHT SAM is ready to speak to his many listeners as he sits at his desk, on the Harger's side. On the desk is his telephone and a record player, along with a microphone. LEMUEL HARGER and CHARLOTTE are sitting on a love seat and giggling as LEMUEL pops the cork of a champagne bottle. On the left we see a desk against the wall in which PAUL gazes at a specimen in his microscope. Sitting on the couch is JOE, busying himself by reading a comic book. MR. LEONARD has his coat on, but MRS. LEONARD is reluctant to put on her coat.*

ALL-NIGHT SAM. It is now 6:23, I'm All-Night Sam the record man... We'll be getting back to playing your favorite music, but first, here is the news. Not one hour ago, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg met their end at the hands of the electric chair... For the second time, President Eisenhower refused them executive clemency, saying that the couple had jeopardized, and I quote, "millions of innocent people all over the world." How 'bout that, folks? We fried a couple

of commies, today, but remember there're still thousands more to be found.

MR. LEONARD. Hey, (*Bangs on wall.*) turn that stupid radio down! You hear me, Harger! Turn it down, I said!

HARGER. All right, take it easy! I'll turn it off, jerk, if it makes you happy. (*Turns off ALL-NIGHT SAM who continues to mumble until he's "off." HARGER and CHARLOTTE exit.*)

MR. LEONARD. Finally...(To MRS. LEONARD.) Now, where were we?

MRS. LEONARD. I was telling you that I'm not too crazy about this idea.

MR. LEONARD. C'mon.

MRS. LEONARD. No, I really think we should call a baby sitter or something.

MR. LEONARD. Oh, great. You know how tight our money is. And what is a baby sitter going to do, anyway? They get paid to sit on our couch, eat our food, they certainly don't watch the kids and then they're all surly and sullen about it...I don't think that's a sound investment.

MRS. LEONARD. Well, I still want one, anyway.

MR. LEONARD. Quiet down, will ya?

MRS. LEONARD. Was I shouting? I was talking in a perfectly normal tone.

MR. LEONARD. Yeah, well, (*Points to wall.*) this place ain't normal. If I could hear that Harger guy pulling a cork, he certainly can hear you.

MRS. LEONARD. Who cares if he can hear me. I want a baby sitter, how scandalous! I'll have to wear a veil when I walk the streets now.

MR. LEONARD. Knock it off, will ya?...Jeez, we've been here for only a week and now everyone will know about...

MRS. LEONARD. What?

MR. LEONARD. Us,...how we live, and fight.

JOE. Ma?

MRS. LEONARD. Joe, honey,...please. Me and your father are fighting about your immediate future.

JOE. But, Ma, I'm hungry.

MRS. LEONARD. I just gave you dinner.

JOE. I'm still hungry.

MRS. LEONARD. Okay, I'll go make you a sandwich.

MR. LEONARD. We don't have time, the movie is starting soon.

MRS. LEONARD. Joe needs to eat.

MR. LEONARD. No, he doesn't. Besides he should be punished for doing so badly on his report card.

MRS. LEONARD. He just needs to concentrate more. He'll be fine. I don't know why you're taking that tone, you didn't do well in school.

MR. LEONARD. That's not true, I was just as good as the next guy.

MRS. LEONARD. You cheated most of the time.

MR. LEONARD. That's right, I was exactly as good as the next guy.

MRS. LEONARD. Joey, I'm afraid you're going to have to make your own sandwich, you know how to, right?

MR. LEONARD. Of course, they know how! Will you stop treating them like they're two...These boys are men, they're budding little men...Right, guys?

PAUL. What, Dad?

MR. LEONARD. You and your older brother are men.

PAUL. Anatomically, that's somewhat correct.

MR. LEONARD. What's with this kid?

MRS. LEONARD. What, dear?

MR. LEONARD. My son, my younger son, he sounds like an Encyclopedia Britannica.

MRS. LEONARD. Don't be confused by Paul, dear. He's just smart. We mustn't criticize what we don't understand.

MR. LEONARD. Paul, c'mere.

PAUL (*puts down microscope and approaches MR. LEONARD*). Yes, Dad?

MR. LEONARD. You're eight years old now.

PAUL. Nine, Dad.

MR. LEONARD. All right, you're nine years old, and Joe?

JOE. Yeah, Pop?

MR. LEONARD. Get over here, your Superman comic can wait. (*JOE comes over. MR. LEONARD puts his hands on both their shoulders.*) Now, you two are really growin' up fast. Tonight I feel somehow that you can act responsibly...Joe, don't pick your nose! I think you two can be mature. So, I want you to show me I'm right. I want to test you because I...I believe in you.

MRS. LEONARD. And because he's cheap.

MR. LEONARD. Never mind your mother. Now, boys, can I trust ya?

JOE. Sure.

PAUL. Oh yes, Dad. (*CHARLOTTE goes to radio and turns on ALL-NIGHT SAM.*)

ALL-NIGHT SAM. It is now 6:40. It's a comfortable seventy-one degrees, I'm Wam-Bam-Thank ya Ma'am-All-Night Sam, keeping you company on this beautiful summer night...

MR. LEONARD. Hey! (*Goes over to wall.*) Hey! (*Bangs on wall.*) He's back at it again with that radio. You turn your back two seconds...Hey! Turn down that damn radio!

(*HARGER enters.*)