

WHY MARRIAGES FAIL

A Play in One Scene

by

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SYNOPSIS

ZENNA, the warrior princess, finds out that tigers and crocodiles are causing havoc within her tribe. Her solution? Marriage...but not as we know it.

Cast of Characters

ZEENA.....25-45; warrior woman; chief of the tribe

MALE ONE.....man, any age

 FEMALE ONE.....woman, any age

MALE TWO.....man, any age

FEMALE TWO.....woman, any age

FEMALE THREE.....woman, any age

NOTE: In addition to the chief, the "tribe" can have many members or as few as two. In this incarnation, there is dialogue for five.

SCENE

A cave.

TIME

6,000 years ago

WHY MARRIAGES FAIL

Setting: We are in a cave---or on a bare stage; in a black-out.

At Rise: As the lights gradually come up, we hear the theme music from 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY aka ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA. The actors are dressed, preferably, in furs.

ZEENA

Do you know why I've called this meeting of the tribal council? →

MALE ONE

The rumor, oh great and wise one, is that you are displeased.

ZEENA

You're damn right I'm displeased. Now, can anyone guess why I'm displeased?

FEMALE ONE

Uh, is it because we were late with the taxes this season?

MALE TWO

I know; I know! Because---because it rained and got your furs wet?

FEMALE TWO

Let me guess! Does it have something to do with the offering we made to the gods?

ZEENA

No, you idiots! I'm displeased because the tribe is shrinking.

FEMALE THREE

Uh, like, you mean it's getting smaller?

ZEENA

Yes! And why is getting smaller?

MALE ONE

Ummmm---is it because people are dying?

ZEENA

Bingo.

FEMALE ONE

You know, that's right. People are dying. Or getting killed. Same thing. Let's see---last full moon, Og got eaten by a tiger....

FEMALE TWO

Right! Right! And six suns before that, Urga got dragged into the lake by a crocodile. She's probably dead by now. You think?

ZEENA

Thank you. Thank you very much. Yes, I DO think we can assume that she's dead. So, we agree. Too many of our people are getting killed. Now, what do you think we can do about it?

MALE TWO

I know; I know! We can sacrifice a virgin...

ZEENA

Oh, that is brilliant! Our goal is to keep people from being killed---so the first thing we do is take a person and kill her?

MALE TWO

OK; bad idea.

ZEENA

Any other ideas---that don't involve whacking somebody?

FEMALE THREE

You know that tribe in the other valley? They had the same problem....

ZEENA

Really? What did they do about it?

FEMALE THREE

They paid a guy to beat a drum to ward off the evil spirits.

MALE ONE

Did it help?

FEMALE THREE

Uh, no; not really.

ZEENA

People! We've got to think. Let's examine the problem. Now, is there anything in common with these deaths? For instance, Og and what's-her-name---what were they doing when they got taken?

MALE TWO

Og was hunting rabbits and Urga was looking for craw-dads.

ZEENA

Um-m-m---maybe I see a pattern here. Each of them was out there, alone, right?

ALL

Yes! That's right! Alone! They were alone!

ZEENA

Now we're getting somewhere. If people DIDN'T go out alone, they'd be a lot safer.

FEMALE ONE

You mean, like, we should pair off...

ZEENA

Exactly. From now on, by my decree, we match people up. In pairs.

MALE TWO

Hum-m-m. This pairing up---just when do you see it happening? I mean, how old are the people?

ZEENA

I think---I think---about 16, 18---somewhere in there.

FEMALE TWO

And we can join them together in a ceremony. A solemn, holy ceremony!

FEMALE ONE

Yes. Join them together so that they stay together for life. And be responsible for each other. For life!

ZEENA

Great idea. We match them up and they can hunt together; eat together. Sleep in the same bed. For life!

MALE ONE

Uh, all this "matching" and "joining"---do you mean, like, a man and a woman would pair up? Match and Join? For life?

ZEEN

Oh, no---no---that would be insane. A man and a woman---eating together---forever? In the same bed---forever? Why, that would be crazy. Remember, people, we want to save lives---not give men and women reasons to kill each other. So---it's got to be a man with a man; a woman with a woman. All that togetherness? That'll cause enough stress without throwing in sex!

MALE TWO

Well, that's a relief. But what about making love? And making babies?

ZEENA

Oh, that's no problem. We just meet around the camp fire on Saturday nights---like we always do. Drink a flagon or two of mead; go into the bushes; do the deed.

FEMALE TWO

Oh, this is wonderful. I think it will work out just great. You know, I be that, thousands of years from now, people will still be thanking us.

FEMALE ONE

Do you think so? Do you really think so?

ZEENA

Naw; they'll find some way to screw it up.

BLACKOUT