

MILK AND COOKIES
Jonathan Dorf

Cast of Characters

MARGARET NANCY REAGAN BALLMOTH, harried thirtysomething mother

JACKIE, her ten year old son, played by the actor who plays Rufus

BRUCE, the average-looking man from the milk carton and about Marge's age

BLONDIE, a mysterious, youngish, not necessarily blond woman

MARGE'S HUSBAND, played by the actor who plays Rufus

RUFUS, a freelance version of the witness protection program living in Montana

The play takes place over several days in various suggested settings in California, Nevada, Idaho and Montana.

ACT I

SCENE 1

(A kitchen/living room somewhere in California. Early evening. MARGE, thirtysomething mother, stops to scrutinize the carton before pouring milk into a bowl of flour. On the table are four place settings, one of which includes a martini. Enter JACKIE, her ten year old son, played by an adult actor.)

MARGE

There's a grown man on the milk carton.

JACKIE

Can I have milk and cookies?

MARGE

Sometimes you see a man and a child, but when was the last time you saw a single man on a milk carton?

JACKIE

I'm having two cookies.

MARGE

Not before dinner. It says "wanted," but it doesn't say why.

JACKIE

Maybe he murdered somebody.

MARGE

Murdered.

JACKIE

Please? It won't ruin my appetite.

MARGE

Doesn't it normally say "missing" or "have you seen me?"

(Marge turns on the TV. Enter BLONDIE, a youngish woman, not necessarily blond, but so covered by a dark scarf, sunglasses and a coat that it's hard to tell what she looks like. She might appear from behind the TV. Jackie opens a cookie tin.)

BLONDIE

Tragedy struck Interdependence Bank earlier today when a teller vomited into the drive-through drawer. He later began seizing and died.

(Jackie comes over to watch.)

The cause of death is still unconfirmed at this time, as are the origin of the poison cookies.

(brief pause)

Oops.

(Marge grabs the cookies from Jackie. Exit Blondie as Marge turns off the TV.)

JACKIE

It's not *these* cookies.

MARGE

What's not these cookies?

JACKIE

The poison cookies.

MARGE

I baked these cookies.

JACKIE

You baked the poison cookies too.

(The DOORBELL RINGS.)

Me and Lizzie—

MARGE

Lizzie and I—

JACKIE

Lizzie and I put the poison in the cookies, and those are the ones we gave the man at the drive-through window. At the bank.

(The DOORBELL RINGS again.)

I called the police and told them we made the cookies so they wouldn't take all the cookies out of the store.

MARGE

You called the police?

(A third DOORBELL RING.)

JACKIE

Nine-one-one. That's the police—right?

MARGE

Did you tell them your name?

JACKIE

They said they'd be over in a few minutes.

MARGE

Shit.

JACKIE

You shouldn't curse.

MARGE

I forgot to flush Daddy's stash. He hasn't been here in so long I forgot. Shit!

JACKIE

Bad language!

(Marge races to the closet and unearths a suitcase.)

Bad language!

MARGE

I'll curse if I feel like it.

JACKIE

Why is there a suitcase in the closet?

MARGE

Because Mommy has a sixth sense.

JACKIE

What's that?

MARGE

Mommy's psychic. She gets hunches that she'll have to bolt out of the house after her children kill people and call the police.

(Jackie grabs the suitcase. It's a tug of war.)

JACKIE
Mom!

MARGE
You'll be fine. You're a minor.

JACKIE
Where are you—

(Marge wins the tug of war.)

MARGE
You'll get off. They'll throw me in jail. Selfish little—

JACKIE
Who's gonna' make me dinner? You're supposed to make—

MARGE
Ask the police for a donut.

JACKIE
What about Lizzie?

(There's BANGING, as if on a door, from offstage. Marge pulls out her checkbook, then rips out a handful of checks and signs with abandon.)

MARGE
There's two thousand in the checking account. Take it. I'll use plastic.

JACKIE
When are you coming back?

MARGE
After dinner.

JACKIE
I'm sorry. I wouldn't 'a done it if I knew you were gonna' get so mad. I won't do it again.

MARGE
Do you love me, sweetie?

JACKIE
Yes! Please don't leave.

MARGE

Do you really love me?

(She kisses him on the forehead.)

Be a dear and don't let the police in until you put Daddy's drugs in the toilet and flush three times. I'm going out the back. Daddy's number in Tokyo is on the refrigerator. Actually, on the freezer door. Make him a fresh martini if he comes back.

JACKIE

Mom!

MARGE

There's a packet of white powder under the mattress in Mommy and Daddy's room—that's what you should flush.

JACKIE

But Mom!

MARGE

If anybody asks, make sure you tell them the powder is Daddy's and that Mommy didn't know anything about it.

JACKIE

Mom!

(She exits.)

I can't reach the freezer!

(Blackout.)

SCENE 2

(Late that night. Marge, dragging her suitcase by its now-broken handle and limping badly, walks along a highway. Enter a "car"—maybe chairs on wheels—driven by BRUCE, the average-looking man from the milk carton. He stops.)

Hi.

Excuse me?

Hi.

Oh. Yes. Hi.

Everything all right?

Fine.

Everything's fine with me too.

Good.

No. Just fine.

I wasn't correcting you. I just meant it's *good* that everything is fine.

I didn't think you were correcting me. *I* was correcting *you*. I thought you were trying to equate good with fine.

No. Never. **MARGE**

You don't look fine. You're limping. **BRUCE**

Have I seen you before? **MARGE**

No. **BRUCE**

I know I've seen you before. **MARGE**

I'm a model. **BRUCE**

You? **MARGE**

BRUCE
A lot of companies want average-looking models. In fact, I know a bunch of ugly people who have more work than they can handle.

MARGE
Milk carton. That's where I've seen you. You were on my milk carton.

BRUCE
Low fat or skim?

MARGE
Whole.

BRUCE
You drink whole milk?

MARGE
Are you a milk model . . . Bruce?

BRUCE
Bruce? Who's Bruce?

MARGE
You are. Aren't you?

BRUCE

My name is Howard. I think you have me confused.

MARGE

I don't believe you.

BRUCE

That I'm a milk model, or that my name is Howard?

MARGE

Either one. Why were you on my milk carton?

(Marge loses hold of her suitcase and ends up on her butt.
Bruce gets "out" of his car to help.)

BRUCE

You're not fine or good or even almost fine.

(beat)

Get in.

MARGE

In your car? A strange man's car?

BRUCE

I'm not sure you know me well enough to judge me. Can I help you with that?

MARGE

Where were you an hour ago when the handle broke and I dropped it on my foot?

(Marge almost gets to her feet.)

BRUCE

I didn't want to intrude.

(beat)

I've been following you—you looked like you were going to need some help. I just didn't know when.

MARGE

You've been following me?

BRUCE

Not a strict follow—I'd kind of drive back and forth. Where are you going?

MARGE

I don't know that I should tell you.

BRUCE

If I was on your milk carton, I'm not exactly a stranger. I was in your home. My face was in your refrigerator. We connected over your morning coffee.

(beat)

You're not going anywhere on that ankle.

MARGE

Then I'll sleep.

BRUCE

On the shoulder?

MARGE

I'll crawl off the shoulder.

BRUCE

It's a twenty foot drop.

MARGE

Surely somewhere on this highway there isn't a twenty foot drop.

BRUCE

Absolutely. Opens way up in eight miles.

MARGE

Eight miles?

BRUCE

Give or take a tenth or two.

(Beat, then Marge allows Bruce to help with the suitcase.
She gets "in" to the car.)

MARGE

Are you missing?

BRUCE

I hope so, considering the alternative.

MARGE

What's the alternative?

BRUCE

Being found. How did you remember my name?

MARGE

It's rare to see a single man on a milk carton. You stayed with me.

BRUCE

Was I attractive? Oh—sorry. You answered that.

MARGE

I did?

BRUCE

The modeling dig. You said "you?" in disbelief.

(beat)

I'd like to trust you. Of course, I'm at an incredible disadvantage. You've been living with my milk carton, and I—I don't know you . . .

MARGE

You've been stalking me.

BRUCE

For an hour?

MARGE

Marge. Margaret Nancy Reagan . . . I'd rather not say my last name just yet.

(beat)

My son, Jackie, is ten. Lizzie, my daughter—his sister—is seven. They poisoned the teller at the drive-through window of our local bank. I love that bank, because it's really a local bank and not part of a conglomerate. I wonder if it'll get taken over now.

BRUCE

People might not feel safe banking there anymore. They lose confidence sometimes when employees die on the job.

(beat)

It's not your fault.

MARGE

It is. In the eyes of the law, I'm guilty. Properly supervised children don't poison people. It never happens. If they'd been watching TV or playing video games or reading the comics, they wouldn't have spiked the cookies.

Like what you see? Hit the back button and follow the instructions to order a perusal copy of the full script!