

COASTER

By Scott Mullen

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SYNOPSIS: A young couple go on a roller coaster, where she turns out to have an ulterior motive—and he finds himself with no choice but to answer her questions about the future of their relationship.

TIME: Present.

SETTING: A roller coaster.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 1 male, 1 either)

MARIA (f)20s/30s; anxious. *(62 lines)*

PAUL (m)20s/30s; Maria's boyfriend. *(45 lines)*

CHRIS (m/f).....Any age; roller coaster employee. *(14 lines)*

PRODUCTION NOTES

Use your imagination as to what the roller coaster looks like, and what form the bar holding them in takes. The more fun the actors have with acting out the twists and turns of the ride - moving together - the funnier this play is. Roller coaster sounds can also be added if desired.

SET

A roller coaster, suggested by two chairs in the middle of the stage, and whatever modifications the production wants to add from there.

PROPS

- handcuffs

AT START: *MARIA and PAUL come in together, and take the two seats. MARIA is already nervous.*

MARIA: What am I doing, what am I doing? I hate roller coasters!

PAUL: We don't have to do this.

MARIA: We just waited a half-hour in line!

PAUL: If it's going to stress you out, we can just leave. The exit is right over there.

MARIA: No! I told myself this was going to happen. I have a plan. This is important for us.

PAUL: For us? Why?

MARIA: No reason. *(Looks around.)* The only time in my life I was on a roller coaster, I threw up. On my father.

PAUL makes a face.

PAUL: Maybe we should go.

MARIA: I was eight. That was a long time ago, right?

PAUL: What did he do?

MARIA: What would you do?

PAUL: I... I don't know. I don't think you know what you'd do until it happened.

MARIA: My father was mad.

PAUL: I won't be mad.

MARIA: Good. Good.

PAUL: But don't throw up on me. What have you eaten today?

MARIA: Not much. I was nervous.

PAUL: I'm sure you'll be fine.

CHRIS enters.

CHRIS: Okay, I'm going to lower this bar. Stay in the roller coaster at all times.

MARIA: Or what?

CHRIS: I don't even want to think about it.

MARIA: But no one has died.

CHRIS: Not since I've been working here.

MARIA: How long has that been?

CHRIS: Three weeks.

MARIA: That's not very long! No decapitations?

CHRIS: No!

MARIA: No horrible falls?

CHRIS: No!

MARIA: No seagulls flying into people's faces?

CHRIS: What?

MARIA: I read that happened once.

CHRIS: As long as you stay seated, and don't do anything more than this—*(Waves both arms in the air in extremely restrained fashion.)* then you'll be fine.

MARIA: But no climbing out while it's moving?

CHRIS: Definitely no climbing out while it's moving!

MARIA: *(To PAUL.)* Did you hear that?

PAUL: Me? I'm not going anywhere.

MARIA: Good.

CHRIS moves on toward the back of the stage, miming closing the bar in front of more people, until he disappears. MARIA pushes on the bar. It's firm.

MARIA: I don't think you can get out anyway.

PAUL: What?

MARIA: You have a habit of walking away, whenever we try and discuss anything. I want to make sure that doesn't happen.

PAUL: I don't do that.

They both lurch, to reflect the roller coaster going into motion.

MARIA: Here we go. That's a really tall hill.

They both lean back, to reflect the slow climb up the hill.

PAUL: I don't do that!

MARIA: We need to talk about where we are in our relationship.

PAUL: You're really going to do this now?

MARIA: Yes.

PAUL: Everything is good.

MARIA: We've been dating for three years!

PAUL: Three good years.

MARIA: We've plateaued.

PAUL: It's a good plateau.

MARIA: No. I want more. I've been waiting for a ring.

PAUL tries to get out.

MARIA: See! You're trying to get out!

PAUL: It's digging into my ribs!

MARIA: You can't run away from this!

PAUL: Is this hill ever going to end?

They hit the top.

MARIA: Here's the top. Here's where we are. Do you want to go flying into the sky—

PAUL: That's not a good thing!

MARIA: Or plunge back down screaming!

PAUL: I don't understand your metaphor!

MARIA: I need to know if you are going to give me a commitment!

Both of them scream, throwing their bodies back, as the roller coaster plunges down. They mime the same side to side movements until the ride is over, shouting their conversation.

MARIA: I need you to tell me that you love me!

PAUL: I love you!

MARIA: I need you to tell me that you'll love me forever!

PAUL shrieks as they lean to the side.

MARIA: Does that scare you?!?

PAUL: This ride scares me!

MARIA: Tell me that you'll love me forever!

PAUL: Maria!

MARIA: Tell me!

PAUL: We need to talk about this later! I can't focus!

MARIA: I don't want you to focus! I want you so scared that you are blurting out the truth from the depths of your lizard brain! Tell me! Tell me that you want a house, and three kids, and a dog! Maybe two dogs! Maybe a cat if you want cats! I don't really like cats, but I'm flexible, but tell me that you want that!

PAUL: Maybe!

The ride stops. They coast to a stop.

MARIA: Maybe?

PAUL: The ride's over.

MARIA: I need more than a maybe.

PAUL: Let's have dinner. We'll talk.

MARIA: We're talking now.

MARIA pulls handcuffs out of her pocket, and before PAUL knows what she's happening, she cuffs him to the ride.

PAUL: What are you doing?

MARIA: We're not leaving this roller coaster until I get my answer.

PAUL: Are these the handcuffs I bought you?

MARIA: Our sexy-time handcuffs? Yes. But no more sexy-time until I get my answer.

PAUL: Unlock the cuffs, Maria!

MARIA: No.

CHRIS returns.

CHRIS: What's going on?

MARIA: We're going around again.

CHRIS: That's not allowed. You must leave the ride.... Are those handcuffs?

MARIA: We're staying.

CHRIS: You can't stay.

MARIA: I'm a crazy, hormonal pregnant woman who is liable to do anything!! Do you want that?

PAUL looks at MARIA, stunned.

CHRIS: If you're pregnant, you shouldn't be on the ride!

MARIA: I'm only six weeks pregnant! It's safe! Start the ride!

CHRIS: I don't get paid enough for this.

CHRIS looks offstage, and spins a finger into the air. The ride lurches forward. MARIA and PAUL lean back as it starts up the hill.

PAUL: You're pregnant?

MARIA: If you ask me if it's yours, I'll throw you off the top.

PAUL: Have you thought about...

MARIA: Be careful—

PAUL: What you want to do?

MARIA: I'm keeping it.

PAUL lets out an undefinable noise.

MARIA: And I'd really like you to be a part of it. But I'm not going to make you. I'm not. That's not how this works. But I need to know if you are in or out. And I love you, I really do, but sometimes you need to be pushed into things. So I'm pushing, right now. We're at the top again. Let everything go. Empty your mind. And then just go full lizard brain.

They head down. They scream.

PAUL: Being a father terrifies me! My father was not the nicest person! We all wanted much more attention from him than we ever got! I don't think he was capable of it! But I hope I am! I hope I am! But I don't know! I really don't know!

They lurch side to side.

MARIA: What do you want!

PAUL: I don't know!

MARIA: What! Do! You! Want!

PAUL: I can't think!

MARIA: Dig deep, Paul! What do you want!

PAUL: I want you!

The ride smooths out.

PAUL: A life with you. And our child.

MARIA: You want me?

PAUL: I do.

MARIA: Forever?

PAUL: Will you marry me?

MARIA: I will.

PAUL: And do you have the key to these cuffs?

MARIA: I do.

The ride stops. MARIA reaches into her pocket. Then pats herself down.

MARIA: Oh no.

PAUL: What?

MARIA: It must have fallen out.

PAUL: Maria!

MARIA: We may have to go around a few more times.

PAUL looks at her. Smiles.

PAUL: As long as it's with you.

Blackout.

THE END