

THE LAST FILL

by Bradley Hayward

Copyright © MMXIX by Bradley Hayward All rights reserved.
ISBN: 978-1-61588-482-7

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Heuer Publishing LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Heuer Publishing LLC. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Heuer Publishing LLC. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Heuer Publishing LLC.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this Work must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this Work. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the Work. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this Work is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: ***Produced by special arrangement with Heuer Publishing LLC.***

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Heuer Publishing LLC.

HEUER PUBLISHING LLC
P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406
TOLL FREE (800) 950-7529 • FAX (319) 368-8011

THE LAST FILL

by Bradley Hayward

SYNOPSIS: A young woman riding her motorcycle across Canada gets lost and stops for gas at a small filling station in rural Saskatchewan. There she meets a kindly gas attendant who guides her in the right direction.

DURATION: 30 minutes.

TIME: Past and present day.

SETTING: A filling station in the middle of nowhere, Saskatchewan.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 females, 2 males)

THE GAS MAN (m).....Kindly & gentle; any age. *(137 lines)*

DAISY (f)Feisty & fearless; 20's. *(159 lines)*

GRANDMOTHER (f).....Stoic & stubborn; 70's. *(Non-Speaking)*

FATHER (m)Playful & warm; 40's. *(Non-Speaking)*

MOTHER (f).....Pretty & cold; 50's. *(Non-Speaking)*

PRODUCTION NOTES

MOVEMENT: The gestures of the unnamed characters should be deliberate and methodical, as one might see in a pantomime. For maximum dramatic effect, they should carefully select only what gestures are necessary and then exaggerate those gestures ever so slightly.

SET: The set should be as minimal as possible, suggesting rural Saskatchewan without being specific to any one time or place. There are three playing areas, each with its own pool of light. At center stage is a vintage gas pump with a small wooden foot stool on one side and a wooden crate filled with bags of ice on the other; on a raised platform upstage right is a simple kitchen table and four chairs; downstage left is a stool that suggests a motorcycle. This downstage left stool has a large eye hook screwed onto the side that suggests a gas tank.

LIGHTS: There is a warm glow around the gas pump to indicate a sweltering summer afternoon. A ghostly light illuminates the kitchen table. A simple pool of white light surrounds the motorcycle.

SOUND: There are moments of the play that are performed as pantomime and may be accompanied by live or recorded music, if desired. Daisy's entrance is marked by the "ding-ding" of a filling station bell as she drives up to the gas pump.

COSTUMES

THE GAS MAN – a pair of worn overalls with bottle opener attached, a gas attendant hat, and work gloves.

DAISY – an oversized men's leather jacket with mud on it, blue jeans, and a motorcycle helmet.

GRANDMOTHER – a loose, floral pattern dress.

FATHER – a fitted white t-shirt, blue jeans, and a baseball cap.

MOTHER – a button down dress with an apron over it.

PROPS

There are a few choice props written into the script and these should be the only props to appear onstage. Please resist the temptation to fill the stage with any unnecessary decoration.

- stem of wheat
- glass bottle of 7-Up
- iPhone
- teapot
- 4 teacups
- tea tray
- damp rag
- wallet
- bright red handkerchief

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

The world premiere of THE LAST FILL was produced by Sacred Heart High School in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. It was directed by Gregory Digout, with the following cast and crew:

THE GAS MAN Klay Sawatsky
 DAISY Tess Jendrasheske
 GRANDMOTHER Dezire Vehnnon
 FATHER Connor Lemcke
 MOTHER Jillianne Sutkan

Stage Manager: Savannah Guy

Assistant Stage Managers: Bethany Guy, Micah Lim

Lighting: Daniel Bazin

Sound: Jeanne Almonia

Stage Crew: Calina Tolentino, Caitlin Berge, Jodi Delorme, Emma Morgan,
 Emerson Light, Victoria Deters, Walker Swain

This production received multiple awards at the 2019 Saskatchewan Drama Association Region 4 One Act Festival, including Best Overall Production. The company advanced to the Provincial One Act Festival, where it won the University of Saskatchewan Kenneth Gordon Award for Best Overall Production.

SPECIAL THANKS

THE LAST FILL was originally presented as a staged reading by The Curtain Club Theatre in Richmond Hill, Ontario. It was directed by Anne Kim, assisted by Peter Shipston, with the following cast:

THE GAS MAN Fabian Levy-Hara
 DAISY Laken Vanderee
 GRANDMOTHER Carol Moore
 FATHER Cam Lund
 MOTHER Debbie Mackarenko

AT START: *A pool of warm light rises center stage, on a vintage gas pump. It is a hot and sunny afternoon in rural Saskatchewan.*

THE GAS MAN is seated on a short foot stool next to the gas pump. He is fast asleep, leaning with his back against the pump. He is of indeterminate age and wears a pair of worn overalls. There is a long stem of golden wheat tucked behind his ear.

After a moment, he awakens. He hears something in the distance. He looks out front. Carefully, he rises. He turns the foot stool over. He places the foot stool beside the gas pump. He unhooks a pair of work gloves from the side of the gas pump. He puts on the work gloves. He brushes the work gloves on his overalls. He picks up a hat from atop the gas pump. He puts the hat on his head.

A pool of light rises downstage left, on a stool that indicates a motorcycle. The "ding-ding" sound of someone driving up to a gas pump accompanies the light. DAISY is seated on the stool, wearing a muddy leather jacket and a motorcycle helmet. She's a feisty woman in her 20's, although at the moment she's in a dazed state of shock.

The following exchange takes place with both THE GAS MAN and DAISY facing front.

THE GAS MAN: Fill'er up?

DAISY: Yes.

THE GAS MAN: That's a mighty fine motorcycle.

DAISY: Sure.

THE GAS MAN: You just passin' through?

DAISY: Mostly.

THE GAS MAN: Certainly is a hot day.

DAISY: Very.

THE GAS MAN: Must be thirsty.

DAISY: Yeah.

THE GAS MAN: Let's get you a 7-Up.

DAISY: Okay.

THE GAS MAN goes to the wooden crate and takes out a glass bottle of 7-Up. DAISY gets off the stool. As she takes off her helmet, the two areas of light merge into one and they begin to address one another directly. DAISY sets her helmet on the stool and the state of shock she was experiencing slowly turns into panic.

THE GAS MAN: What's your name, miss?

DAISY: Is this Highway 9? I haven't seen a sign for Highway 9 in forever. I don't think I'm on Highway 9 anymore.

THE GAS MAN: This is not Highway 9.

DAISY: I knew it! I'm lost! I must have made a wrong turn. I'm always making wrong turns. Friggin' Google has me taking left turns where I should be taking right turns and right turns where I should keep going straight!

THE GAS MAN: You must have turned off the new highway. Highway 9 is far from here.

DAISY: Follow the leader, follow the leader, follow the leader. What crap advice!

THE GAS MAN: This is Saskatchewan. You can always follow the sun.

DAISY: Do you know that Google Maps is the reason I'm single? *(Takes a cell phone from her jacket pocket and angrily waves it around.)* That's right. The reason I'm single! I was all set to get married, but instead of taking me to the church, this stupid iPhone had me weaving in and out of traffic until I ended up at McDonald's!

THE GAS MAN offers her the bottle of 7-Up. DAISY takes it.

DAISY: So there I am on my wedding day, in the parking lot of McDonald's, looking up at a sign that says "Over 1 Billion Served." I figure a billion people can't be wrong, so I say to myself, "What the hell?" I walk inside, order a half dozen cheeseburgers, and start to cry. Right there at the counter. In my wedding dress! The poor girl behind the counter didn't know what to do. She asked if I wanted any fries. *(She struggles to take the cap off of the 7-Up bottle.)*

THE GAS MAN: Here. Let me get that for you.

DAISY: (*Hands THE GAS MAN the bottle and he opens it with a bottle opener attached to his overalls.*) The thing is, I'm not a crier. Never have been. When I was five years old, I fell off my bicycle. I was riding around the farm, along a path toward the pig pen, when I hit a rock and flipped into the ditch. Broke my leg in three places. And it hurt. Let me tell you, it hurt. But did I cry? No way. Not a chance. I got right back up on my bike and pedalled all the way home as though nothing had happened.

THE GAS MAN: (*Holds up the 7-Up bottle.*) Here you go, miss.

DAISY: (*Grabs the bottle and takes a swig.*) Can you imagine what would have happened if I didn't get back up on my bike? If I had stayed in the ditch, crying like a baby until someone found me? I'll tell you what would have happened. A coyote would have got to me first. I would have been breakfast, that's what. And I sure as hell wouldn't be on this bike today.

THE GAS MAN: It's a nice bike.

DAISY: So you said. And it's a damn good thing I didn't cry that day. When I got home, I hobbled through the front door, my leg busted to hell, and saw that Grandma had the table set for tea. As usual.

A ghostly light rises upstage right, on a kitchen table and four chairs. There is a teapot on the table. GRANDMOTHER enters with a tray of four teacups. She sets a teacup in front of each of the empty chairs.

DAISY: Grandma insisted on tea at two. Every Sunday, tea at two.

THE GAS MAN: Why two?

DAISY: With her heart medication.

THE GAS MAN: I see.

DAISY: So, a cup for Dad.

FATHER enters the kitchen. He sits at of one of the teacups.

DAISY: A cup for Mom.

MOTHER enters the kitchen. She sits at of one of teacups.

DAISY: And a cup for Grandpa.

GRANDMOTHER, FATHER, and MOTHER look toward the entrance to the kitchen. Nobody enters.

DAISY: A cup for Grandpa.

FATHER stands.

DAISY: Cup for Grandpa...

MOTHER stands.

DAISY: For Grandpa...

GRANDMOTHER picks up one of the teacups and rushes offstage.

DAISY: Grandpa died that day.

SFX: a teacup shatters offstage. FATHER lowers his head.

DAISY: It's the only time I saw Dad cry.

MOTHER puts her arm around FATHER. The lights fade from the kitchen.

DAISY: So it's a good thing I didn't cry that day. A damn good thing.

Can you imagine? Crying over something stupid like a broken leg?

THE GAS MAN: I'm sure he went peacefully.

DAISY: I dunno. Maybe. I was five, so the details are muddy.

THE GAS MAN: So's your jacket.

DAISY: Same damn thing just happened to me now, not ten minutes ago! So I'm minding my own business, riding this bike down NOT Highway 9—friggin' Google—when out of nowhere, a deer jumps out at me. A deer! In the middle of the day! What the hell is that all about?

THE GAS MAN: It happens.

DAISY: It may be years since I've driven in Saskatchewan, but I know as sure as I'm standing here today that it's birds by day and deer by dark.

THE GAS MAN: No wonder you're so agitated.

DAISY: Damn straight I'm agitated. I almost died! Flipped into the ditch, just like that day on the farm.

THE GAS MAN: Are you hurt?

DAISY: Just my pride. This bike is brand new and already a dent.

THE GAS MAN: And the deer?

DAISY: Just stood there, like he owned the road.

THE GAS MAN: So long as you're all right.

DAISY: Already a dent. *(Takes a swig of 7-Up.)*

THE GAS MAN: How's the 7-Up?

DAISY: Warm. But wet.

THE GAS MAN: Ice doesn't stand a chance on a hot day like this.

DAISY: You know, I must'a heard a dozen different stories about what happened to Grandpa. When you're a kid, you'll believe anything. He fell from the barn. He drowned in the tub. He was attacked by gophers. The newspaper said it was heat stroke, but I find that hard to believe.

THE GAS MAN: Why's that?

DAISY: Grandma used to hang her panties out to dry on the front porch. Flapping in the wind, for the whole world to see, her enormous panties. If that didn't give Grandpa a stroke, I don't know what would.

THE GAS MAN: Sounds like your grandmother was a funny woman.

DAISY: Not funny. Weird. And that's my first memory.

THE GAS MAN: Enormous panties?

DAISY: No. A broken leg and Dad crying. I don't remember which hurt more.

THE GAS MAN: If I had to take a guess, I'd say your father.

DAISY: Why do you say that?

THE GAS MAN: Your leg healed, didn't it?

DAISY: That was the day everything went to hell. The day Grandpa died. I never saw Grandma smile again. Not once. She just gave up on life. Waiting. And waiting. And waiting. For years, she waited.

THE GAS MAN: Waited for what?

DAISY: Waited to die. She stretched out that death bed of hers for twenty five years.

THE GAS MAN: Maybe she was waiting for something else.

DAISY: Like what?

THE GAS MAN: A sign.

DAISY: What kind of sign?

THE GAS MAN: A sign from your grandfather.

DAISY: Be serious.

THE GAS MAN: A sign that he was looking out for her.

DAISY: I don't believe in that crap. Do you?

THE GAS MAN: Doesn't matter what I believe.

DAISY: The thing is, I'm supposed to have all these memories of Grandpa. Like how he used to bring Grandma bouquets of wheat during the harvest. How he'd lean into my crib and call me Baby Face. How on hot days, he'd take a bright red handkerchief from his front pocket and dab sweat from the back of his neck.

THE GAS MAN: But you don't remember these things?

DAISY: Maybe I do, maybe I don't. People say things enough times and you start collecting memories that aren't even yours.

THE GAS MAN: True enough.

DAISY: And I hate, absolutely hate, how death puts a spit and polish on all those phony memories. Baby Face? Bouquets of wheat? A bright red handkerchief! I grew up in Saskatchewan, not the friggin' *Little House on the Prairie*.

THE GAS MAN: Is that where you picked up that colourful language?

DAISY: No. Toronto.

THE GAS MAN: Is that where you're from?

DAISY: It's not where I'm from, but it's where I'm at.

THE GAS MAN: Toronto, eh? That's awfully far from here.

DAISY: By design.

THE GAS MAN: And you drove all this way on that motorcycle?

DAISY: Yep. And now it has a dent. Typical. (*Finishes the last of the 7-Up. Belches.*) Excuse me. (*Hands THE GAS MAN the empty bottle of 7-Up.*)

THE GAS MAN: Perfectly natural. You have gas. (*Indicates the gas pump.*) And I have gas. (*DAISY laughs.*) How's about that fill?

DAISY nods. THE GAS MAN returns the bottle of 7-Up to the wooden crate. He picks up the nozzle from the gas pump. He hangs the

nozzle on the eye hook attached to the side of the high stool. As he does this, DAISY looks out front, across the prairie.

DAISY: It's been so long that I forgot all you see in Saskatchewan is wheat. You drive hundreds of kilometers and it's nothing but wheat, wheat, wheat. I finally came across a corn field and was so excited that I damn near pissed myself.

THE GAS MAN: Where I'm from, we like to say that wheat is a golden blanket that puts the prairie to sleep.

DAISY: That's a stupid thing to say. Where are you from?

THE GAS MAN: Manitoba.

DAISY: Oh. That explains it, then.

THE GAS MAN: Explains what?

DAISY: Stupid. (*THE GAS MAN laughs.*) When I was little, Dad would take me on road trips to Manitoba. He never said the people there were stupid, but he didn't have to. I figured it out for myself when we crossed the border and I saw a guy peeing on the side of the road.

THE GAS MAN: This is the country. Lots of guys do that.

DAISY: Into the wind?

THE GAS MAN: What was your father doing in Manitoba?

DAISY: It's not what he was doing, it's what I was doing. See, Dad and I liked all the same things. Chief among them, baseball.

THE GAS MAN: You like baseball, eh?

DAISY: I love baseball. And once a year, Dad would ride his motorcycle into Winnipeg for the ladies' provincial championships. He wanted me to see what was possible if I worked hard enough. Make no mistake, I was right there on the back of his bike, holding on for dear life.

THE GAS MAN: Your mother didn't go?

DAISY: No. Her fair skin didn't stand a chance in the sun. Once, she burned to a crisp at one of my games. Besides, someone had to watch after Grandma. And she didn't go anywhere after Grandpa died.

The lights rise on the kitchen. GRANDMOTHER enters and fills all three teacups from the teapot.

DAISY: Dad was always playing games, and one in particular used to drive Grandma crazy.

FATHER enters. He sits at one of the teacups.

DAISY: On Sunday, at two, he'd take a loaf of her fresh bread and mash it up into a little round ball. Then he'd stick the ball of dough in the freezer and wait for her to find it.

FATHER grins.

DAISY: He just wanted to make her smile. But like I said, that never happened.

GRANDMOTHER puts a hand on her hip and a sour look on her face.

DAISY: So instead, he'd take the ball out of the freezer and we'd play baseball in the yard until it got soft. Mom would have preferred I play with dolls or put on dresses.

MOTHER enters. She stands next to GRANDMOTHER and becomes her mirror image, hand on hip.

DAISY: But I don't like dolls. And I damn well don't wear dresses. Anyway, the last time Dad took me to Winnipeg, a thunderstorm came out of nowhere and put an end to the game, right in the middle of the ninth inning. Bases loaded and everything! And just as he was getting off the bleachers, zap! Lightning got him.

THE GAS MAN: He was electrocuted?

DAISY: Close to it. From then on, he talked with a stutter and his hair turned red.

THE GAS MAN: All of it?

DAISY: So far as I could see. For the rest, you'd have to ask Mom.

FATHER gooses MOTHER. She swats his hand away.

DAISY: After that, Mom put an end to Winnipeg.

MOTHER sits at one of the other teacups.

DAISY: You know, it's actually kind of funny, now that I think of it.

THE GAS MAN: What is?

DAISY: Not funny, I guess. Strange.

THE GAS MAN: Strange?

DAISY: Later that year, Dad was hanging a ceiling fan in our living room when he was electrocuted. That's how he died.

FATHER picks up his teacup. He stands. He exits with the teacup. The lights fade from the kitchen.

DAISY: I wonder if Winnipeg was some kind of warning. You know, a sign of things to come.

THE GAS MAN: You don't believe in signs.

DAISY: You're right. I don't. What the hell am I thinking?

THE GAS MAN: Say, let's get you out of that jacket.

DAISY: It's only mud.

THE GAS MAN: I have just the thing. *(Returns to the wooden crate and takes out a damp rag from the ice.)*

DAISY: Really, it's fine.

THE GAS MAN: We'll have you ship-shape in no time. *(Hands DAISY the rag. She wipes mud off her sleeve.)* Being from Toronto, I gather you take in a lot of Blue Jays games.

DAISY: Hell, no. I said I love baseball, not tragedy.

THE GAS MAN picks up the foot stool, turns it over, and sets it down.

THE GAS MAN: Have a seat.

DAISY: I'm fine.

THE GAS MAN: You've come a long way. Give those feet of yours a rest.

DAISY sits on the foot stool. THE GAS MAN holds out his hands.

THE GAS MAN: And your jacket.

DAISY: I got it.

THE GAS MAN: It's no bother.

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:

THE LAST FILL

by Bradley Hayward

**For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the
script, please contact us at:**

Heuer Publishing LLC

P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 1-800-950-7529 • Fax (319) 368-8011

WWW.HEUERPUB.COM

DO NOT COPY