

## Easter According to Niles and Raymond©

**Message:** Niles and Maris Crane, Raymond and Debra Barone and their family and friends muddle through planning for Easter when unplanned visitors come along. A comedy look at how society views the Easter celebrations, could be standard or dinner theatre.

**Bible Reference:** various Easter

**Cast:** Ray Barone  
Brenda Barone  
Niles Crane  
Maris Crane  
Frank Barone  
Marie Barone  
James the butler  
Slapshot Stevens, the Easter Egg  
Eddie the Eagle, the Easter Rabbit  
Dan, the preacher

**Set:** The living room at the Crane home, very richly appointed  
Act II is the same but a large table with empty plates

**Costumes:** Cranes and James would be well dressed. Barones more plainly dressed

**Lighting and Sound:**  
as available

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Script:**

ACT I

*Maris is sitting at the table going through mail, Niles enters from stage right*

Maris: Dr. Crane, how nice to see you home.

*Niles thoroughly wipes his shoes on the mat then moves to Maris, leans down as though to kiss, they come within a foot of each other, make gestures as though kissing, move apart again . . . leave time for audience laughter as Niles picks up mail, goes through it*

Niles: Maris, dear, I really do feel as though your formality, while admirable, could be construed as excessive. I truly must insist that you please call me Niles, after all we have been married for many years now.

Maris: I understand your preference Dr. Crane, errrrr, Niles, but it seems to me that we need to maintain a certain decorum, for the children you know.

Niles, *does double take*:

But dearest, we have no children.

Maris: You are technically right, however . . .

Niles, *shocked*:

You are not saying that you are . . we are . . .

Maris: Oh my no, no, you can be assured that should that happen I would immediately inform you via email.

Niles: Well, I assumed so, you were always the considerate one, considerate to a fault, yes, indeed. But then why do you insist on this rather strange compulsion to call me Dr. Crane rather than Niles?

Maris: Well should children come into our lives I would feel uncomfortable that they might hear me call you by your given name. And it seems awfully premature to refer to you as . . . “Daddy”.

*Niles holds back of his hand to his forehead, rocks unsteadily on his feet*

Niles: Oh my, the very thought nearly brought on my Papaphobia.

Maris: Papaphobia?

Niles: Yes dear, my fear of becoming a father.

Maris: As your loving and supportive wife I would never correct you, however I have it on good authority that Papaphobia is actually fear of the Pope.

Niles: Are you sure?

Maris: Quite sure my husband. But enough of phobias, how was your day at the practice?

Niles: Absolutely exhausting! Being a psychiatrist is incredibly demanding.

Maris: Poor dear! What was the ailment of the day?

Niles: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

Maris: You saw a patient who is suffering OCD?

Niles, *frowns*: Noooo! My brother Frasier came to my office, he believes that I show classic signs of obsessive compulsive disorder. Ridiculous! (*thinks*) Did

I clean the dust off my feet when I came in the house? (*rushes to the mat and thoroughly wipes his feet*)

Maris: Yes dear you did, passionately, I might say. What did Frasier have to say about your obsessive compulsive behavior . . . ?

*Niles turns around abruptly, holds up hand, is about to respond, Maris quickly continues*

Maris: Which you do not have, I assure you.

Niles: It is quite frustrating is what! Frasier makes a big deal out of the fact that I have an extensive tongue depressor collection.

Maris: But Niles, it could seem rather strange, you are a psychiatrist, not a general practitioner, psychiatrists normally do not look down their patient's throats, thus not normally requiring tongue depressors.

Niles, *smiles, coy:*

GP's look in their patient's mouths, psychiatrists look in their patient's wallets. (*waits expectantly looking at Maris*) Do you get it? It's a psychiatric joke.

Maris, *slaps her side, never breaks a smile:*

Niles, you are such a card!

Niles, *self conscious working at fingers:*

Well I must admit I did tell that one quite good joke while in medical college, see it was all about Bill Gates and the psychiatrist who . . .

*doorbell*

Maris: Pardon me for breaking in on your intriguing story Niles, I unfortunately neglected to tell you that I invited the Barones next door for coffee tonight, I hope you don't mind.

Niles: No, not at all Maris, providing that you promise me you didn't overdo it and over-exert your frail self.

Maris: Well, it did require informing the servants to prepare for two additional people at the table but, such is my role as lady of the house.

Niles, *sincere sympathy, holding Maris' hand:*

My poor pumpkin! How awful for you it must have been . . .

*doorbell*

Maris, *makes move to stand up, Niles holds up hand to stop her:*

Do not move a muscle, you have done quite enough, I shall look after this!  
(*calls out*) James, will you answer the door please?

James, *comes on from stage left, bows to Niles and Maris:*

Certainly Dr. Crane, Mrs. Crane, my pleasure.

*James goes off-stage right, sound of door opening, closing, James and the Barones come on stage*

James: Excuse me, Dr. Crane, Mrs. Crane, Mr. and Mrs. Barone have arrived.  
May I bring the coffee and appetizers, Mrs. Crane?

Maris: Yes, that will be fine James.

*James goes offstage left*

Niles, *shakes hands with Raymond:*

How good to see you again!

Maris: Actually, Niles, I don't believe you have ever met Raymond and Debra Barone.

Niles, *recovering:*

Exactly, that is why I said how nice it was to see . . . them . . . again . . . for the first . . . time.

*James bring in coffee and dessert, places them on table, all partake*

Ray: Hey, it's good meetin' you guys! Wow, some car you got out there, Mercedes Benz, huh?

Niles: Well, thank you Raymond, I certainly do feel deserving of the good things in life. And what do you drive Ray?

Debra: A '68 Ford station wagon, not one of the good things in life!

Maris: Eeeeeww!

Debra: I like the personalized license plate, S-H-R-I-N-K, SHRINK!

Ray: Oh you mean like you are a shrink, like a weird guy who digs in guy's brains?

Debra: No Ray, Niles works in a Chinese laundry.

Ray, *smiling coyly at Niles*:

So go ahead, tell me, what am I thinkin'?

Niles, *bewildered*:

I don't understand, you want me to tell you what you are thinking?

Ray: Yeh, like, isn't that what you shrinks do?

*Niles and Maris have the following discussion while Ray and Debra stare at them, mouths open in shock*

Niles: No, not at all, although I will have to admit that is a common misconception of the role of modern psychiatry. The primary purpose of diagnostic psychiatric analysis is to probe the inner recesses of the psyche, both the deeper and surface levels of an individual's personality as well as his/her emotional and social functioning, cataloguing symptoms and behaviors. Through painstaking analysis to determine any subliminal causes for the beliefs and neuroses which may tend to dominate the cognitive capabilities of the subject, leading not infrequently to irrationality and ultimately despair, we perform our service to humanity.

Maris: Intriguing concept analysis Niles, but how do you rationalize the ever-increasing predisposition for the human person to exhibit inclinations toward the masking of overt introspection and mitro-expectant psychosomatic role reversal?

Niles: Well said Maris, however your take on those ever-fluctuating randomly applied coordinates demonstrates how these unconscious factors affect current relationships and patterns of behavior, thus it is obvious that we ultra-trained clinicians are able to form an intimate partnership with the subject, trace them back to their subjective historical origins, show how they have altered and developed over time, and assist the individual to more favorably re-visit and re-experience the realities of adult life. Our position in the equation is thus to help elucidate these for the patient, who refines, corrects, rejects, and adds further thoughts and feelings. Thus the patient, without suffering incapacitation, wrestles with these insights in a firm and rational manner.

Maris: Interesting, indeed! What is your take, Ray?

Ray: Well, some of that stuff I didn't exactly pick up on but the wrestling part sounds good, see I am sports writer for the newspaper, maybe you read my column?

Niles: Let's see, Ray Barone . . . didn't you write an article on advanced chromosomatic changes in the American Medical Journal?

Maris: No sweetums, I believe that was Raymond Petroni from Cal State.

Niles: My error, precious . . . so what is it you write about Ray?

Ray: I am sports, all sports, nothin' but sports. . . . just sports.

Maris: Sports?

Ray: Yeh, you know like baseball, football, ice hockey . . .

Maris, *smiling reflectively to herself*:

Ice hockey? Aren't they the ones who do all the fighting and say some awful words and smell absolutely manly?

*(suddenly becomes aware of those around her, embarrassed)*

I . . . I've . . . never seen ice hockey!

Ray: You into sports Niles?

Niles, *smiles, self-important*:

Well there was there was the intramural crokinol : championship in medical college, . . . of course I had to drop out before the croke-off, *(holds up finger, frown painfully)*, . . . a particularly pesky severe hangnail!

Maris: Oh my poor, poor baby, must have been awful . . . . And Debra, how about you, did you play sports?

Debra: Well, yes, I played softball, track and field, basketball, volleyball. Did you play as well Maris?

Maris: I tried, I really did. No matter how I tried I couldn't stop signs of perspiration.

Niles: Oh, precious, how absolutely humiliating that must have been for you!

Ray: You mean sweat? Guys is supposed to sweat when they play sports. It's a natural thing to do, natural just like . . . *(thinks)* . . . like . . . to sweat. Everybody does it, no big deal.

Niles: You must understand, my sweetums suffers from Hygrophobia.

Debra: Hygrophobia?

Niles: Fear of perspiration.

Ray: Well, to me, I mean sweat is like no big deal. But I always had this kinda like fear of . . . of peanut butter sticking to the roof of my mouth.

Debra: You have a fear of what? (*laughing, ridiculing*) Oh my, poor Ray might have peanut butter sticking to the roof of his mouth! Oh no!

Niles: Well, actually Debra, arachibutyrophobia is not that uncommon.

Debra, *incredulous*:

Arachibut . . . what? You've got to be kidding!

Niles: Not at all. Thousands of people suffer from arachibutyrophobia.

Ray, *pointing at Debra*:

Ah huh! See there, me I got that Archy whatever, a serious disease and you always laugh at me. Teach you to laugh at diseases Debra! I mean like guys don't go around laughing at Mother Teresa and she has . . . some awful disease that . . . nuns get . . . working in Central America and stuff.

Debra: Mother Teresa wasn't in Central America, she was in India . . .

Ray: All right but Mother Teresa spent a lotta holidays in Central America, I think. Point is you don't laugh at someone's infirmities.

Debra, *laughing*:

Your fear of having peanut butter sticking to the roof of your mouth is an infirmity? Next thing we know you will apply for a disabled person's parking tag for your car.

Ray: OK fine, Debra Barone, you just go ahead, laugh your head off! Just realize it hasn't been easy for me all these years, puttin' up with this disease! Worse I didn't even know until today what it was called, Archy . . . whatever Niles said it was!

Niles: One should really not make light of these fears, why I myself, even with all my incredible training, expertise and vastly superior brain, even I do have phobias.

Maris: Bolshephobia.

Debra: Bolshephobia?

Niles: It is sadly true, I indeed do suffer from Bolshephobia, the fear of Bolsheviks. And also Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia.

Maris: Yes but Niles but you are getting over the fear of long words.

Niles: Thankfully that is true, Maris, and I owe it all to you.

Debra: Ray's got Arenaphobia.

Ray: Debra I do not! Besides, I don't know, what is Arenaphobia?

Debra: Fear of missing even one lousy sports event.

Ray: That is so very untrue Debra, maybe you forgot, just last month I didn't go to the game when the Lakers were in town! Alright then, now, OK, Miss Smartypants knowitall!

Debra: Sorry, you are right Ray. Now let me remember, hmmm, oh yes, that was when our kids had a strange disease and the doctor quarantined our house, wouldn't let any of us leave the house. And I seem to remember that a certain member of the household was caught trying to climb down the rain drain to make his escape.

Ray: You don't seem to understand Brenda, that is my job, I report on sports. Besides, that was likely the match up of the season. *(to Niles)* Hey listen, I got me some extra tickets to the Yankees game next Wednesday. Niles, what say me and you go to the game? Front row seats, best in the house!

Maris: Why not indeed Niles. Cavort with primeval Neanderthal inclinations.

Ray: What you sayin' Neander . . . whoever you said, it's the Astros that Yankees are playin'.

Niles: Well, just one thing. Will we have to cross any streets?

Ray: Cross streets? Well, we will park right in the parking lot at the stadium.

Niles: Good, my old Dromophobia is acting up again! That's fear of crossing streets. At any rate, yes, yes, I do believe I will go.

Ray: All right! High five!

*Ray and Niles high five, Niles turns his back, convulsed in pain from the contact*

Maris: Now tell us more about yourselves, I know you have children, do your parents live far from you?

Debra, *angry*: No! No Ray's parents do not live far away at all.



Ray: Yeh, my parents live across the street.

Debra, *becoming more angry*:

Yes, they live across the street! Directly across the street! Continuously directly across the street!

Ray: See, like my mom, like she don't mean to or nothin' but she can sometimes be, maybe just a bit pushy.

Debra: Ray! A bit pushy! You are going to stand there and say that your mother Marie is a bit pushy! That's like saying that Jack the Ripper was a little aggressive!

Ray: See, like Maw, she sometimes can be helpful, like especially when no one really wants help.

Debra: And then there is Frank!

Ray: My father he is good, he is OK, its just that he is kinda . . .

Debra: Frank is kinda just Frank!

Maris: Interesting family. Our families are . . . , well . . . , cultured.

Debra: Ray's father Frank, his idea of cultured is an undershirt with sleeves!

Ray: Hey, like Pop's, like . . . Pop. . . . What can I say?

Niles: Well, I for one would love to meet your parents Ray, it would be an . . . experience.

Ray: Trust me, you do not want to meet my parents. I do not want to meet my parents, and we are, like, related.

Debra: When my parents come to visit from out of town we try not to announce it in advance but it's like Marie she's got some kind of radar, she just knows.

*door bell*

Niles: The door, I will look after that.

Maris: No, Niles, you remember what we always say, equality of the sexes, my turn.

Niles: Well sweetums, if you insist . . .

Maris: And so I do insist, it is my turn to look after the door!  
(calls out)  
James, will you get the door?

Niles, to Ray and Debra:  
I am so impressed at how my wife pitches in!

Ray: Wow, I'll say, if we had a butler I would do my part too! A lot.

*James comes back on stage with Marie and Frank*

James: Mr. and Mrs. Barone, senior, have arrived.

Debra: What did I say? She has radar!

Ray: Niles and Maris Crane, this is my parents, Frank and Marie Barone. Look what are you guys doin' here anyhow? And are you planning to go back home real soon, I hope so.

Marie: Raymond, what way is that to speak of your parents? Remember Raymond, I am your mother. I gave you life, and your birth, it was no walk in the park, I am here to tell you.

Frank: Oh here we go again with the old story of the trials of childbirth. Look Marie, I gotta tell you, it was no picnic slavin' away 20 hours a day, bringin' home the bacon, I tell you.

Debra: Marie, we were just over here having coffee with the Cranes, just the four of us...

Marie: I expected as much! (worried) You didn't bring food did you Debra?

Debra: No, I didn't, I . . .

Marie: Oh good! (to Maris) Debra, she grew up in a different kind of family, very permissive so it's really not Debra's fault, it's just no one ever took the time to show her around the kitchen. But it's OK, I am always there to see that Raymond and the children have decent meals.

Frank, looking around:  
Some place you got here, must'a cost like a gazillion bucks!

Ray: Please Pop, just . . .

Marie: No fear, Raymond. I made your father promise to be cultured and refined tonight.

Frank: What you talkin' about Marie? See this? (*holds out hands waist height, palms up*) You are lookin' at full-time cultured and refined!

Debra: You are cultured and refined all right Frank! When they made you they threw away the mold. Trouble is they were one try too late!

Marie: That is no way to talk about your father-in-law Debra. You never hear us talking about your parents, though goodness knows there is fodder for a real discussion there, I tell you.

Debra: And just what is wrong with my parents Marie?

Marie: Look Debra, here in front of the neighbors is no place to discuss the seedy side of our family.

Frank: So what do you do to afford this shack Niles?

Niles: I am a psychiatrist, of Jungian persuasion.

Frank, *raises eyebrows, holds up little fingers*:  
Oh, so you are one of those . . . guys?

Niles: Yes, most certainly I am, and proudly. As opposed to my brother Frasier who, (*Niles condescendingly*), subscribes to Freudian theories.

Marie: Seriously, what would one expect from a radio psychiatrist?

Ray: I got offered jobs in radio more than once. I like newspaper though, know what I mean?

Frank: Stay where you are kid, you have a newspaper voice. (*laughs at his own joke, elbows Nile in the side, Niles holds his side in pain*)

Debra: Frank, I happen to like Ray's voice, I think it is very masculine. Certainly better than your scratchy voice!

Marie: Debra, I have been meaning to talk to you about your attitude, but you know I do not believe in correcting anyone in front of others.

Debra: You take that back . . . now take it back this instant!

Ray: Oh my, do you see the time? I hate to eat and run but . . . .

Frank: Hey, hold on to your shirt, will ya? I never finished my . . . what is this, . . . some kinda biscuit?

Maris: I beg your pardon! I will have you know that is genuine petit fours, lovingly handmade by Francois at Chez Paris.

Frank, *mocking*:

Petit fours? I figured it must be some off-shore thing, way too dry for biscuits.

Ray, *changing subject*:

Hey like and what are you guys doin' for Easter?

Maris: Easter! Such a morbid thought!

Debra: You don't like Easter?

Maris: What's to like or not like? It's just that two years ago at Easter time we were in Geneva, last year in the Swiss Alps. This year? Staying home!

Niles: I am so sorry sweetums but the week before Easter I have a "Learning to Live with Existentialism" symposium and the following week I have a "Your Alter Ego and You" seminar

Ray: Wow! You teach at a lot of these kinda things huh?

Niles: Teach? Oh my goodness no, I am taking those classes as part of my "Learning To Be Friendly With Yourself" Lifestyle Shapers.

Maris: Say not another word Niles, I am cognizant of the great importance you place on that aspect of your life and I wouldn't hold you back for the world.

Niles: I truly wish I had someone who might accompany me . . . Ray, would you be interested perhaps?

Ray: Nothing would make me more, like, excited, but I gotta do a whole bunch of important stuff right then. Like . . . too bad cause I would'a if I could. . . . For sure!

Marie: Well, with everybody being around, why don't we all get together for Easter, all our family and the Cranes? Unfortunately Robbie, (*aside to Cranes*), that's my other son, Raymond's brother, he's an important member of our police force, unfortunately Robbie will be out of town.

Debra: You know, that's not a bad idea Marie. I could bring my lemon chicken.