

# Ridiculously, madly

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a short play

By

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**Characters**

ANDREW

ELOISE

BRADLEY

**Time**

Day.

**Setting**

A park bench.

**Ridiculously, madly**

Park Bench. Day.

**ANDREW** ALONE, A BAG NEXT TO HIM ON THE BENCH. **ELOISE** ENTERS. AN AWKWARD PAUSE.

ANDREW: Hi.

ELOISE: Hi.

ANDREW: Thanks.

ELOISE: What for ?

ANDREW: Coming.

ELOISE: I don't know why I did.

ANDREW: Because I asked you.

ELOISE: I'm not sure what it's going to achieve.

ANDREW: El – please. It's Christmas. (INDICATING BAG) I bought you a present.

BEAT. **ELOISE** SITS.

ELOISE: I didn't get you one. Sorry.

ANDREW: It's okay. (BEAT) I just wanted to talk.

ELOISE: About what ?

ANDREW: Wait a minute and I'll tell you.

ELOISE: We've been through all of it – a hundred times. (BEAT) Well. Talk.

ANDREW: Give me a moment.

BEAT.

ELOISE: Moment.

ANDREW: Jesus El.

ELOISE: I'm sorry Andrew. I really just don't want to be here.

ANDREW: If it's really that painful for you then go.

ELOISE: (LEAVING) Okay. I will.

ANDREW: Great.

ELOISE: See you round.

ANDREW: Hopefully not.

**ELOISE IS JUST ABOUT TO EXIT.**

ANDREW: 'Ridiculously, madly.'

**ELOISE STOPS. BEAT.**

ANDREW: 'Ridiculously, madly.'

**ELOISE TURNS.**

ANDREW: It's what you wrote on your Facebook profile.

ELOISE: I didn't think anyone else could see that.

ANDREW: It was on your Wall.

ELOISE: And you could read it.

ANDREW: Everyone can read your wall. It's only "Messages" that are private.

ELOISE: I must remember that for next time.

ANDREW: All for the best. Anyway, that kind of got me thinking. I was with her for three and a half years – she never writes that about me. She's with this other guy for three weeks and she's 'ridiculously, madly'.

**BEAT. ELOISE SITS.**

ELOISE: I really didn't think anyone else could read that.

ANDREW: All for the best. Anyway – my fault. If you go poking around on your ex's Facebook profile you're bound to get a few limbs blown off. Ah Facebook, bringing pain into the lives of millions across the globe every second.

ELOISE: I'm sorry Andy.

ANDREW: Why should you apologise? You met someone. You fell in love. Lucky you. I hope I'm as lucky one day. And that's what I want to talk to you about – if you'll indulge me - love. The nature and causes. Not just us specifically but in general. After I read - what

I read - I went for a walk and I felt like calling you. Not to talk about that specifically – just call you – talk about my day, ask about yours – like we always use to - and then I remembered that there isn't any point to that, cause we're not *in love* anymore. And then I thought but I still love you — so where does that love go now – what happens to that. Does it just disappear into a black hole somewhere in the Universe? The “Love dump”. Where love goes when it's not wanted anymore.

ELOISE: You'll meet somebody else.

ANDREW: I don't want to love somebody else. I want to love you.

ELOISE: But there wouldn't be much point in that. Because I'm in love with somebody else.

ANDREW: But you were in love with me.

ELOISE: And *now* I'm in love with somebody else.

ANDREW: 'Ridiculously, madly' ?

ELOISE: Don't get nasty.

ANDREW: I'm not being nasty. I'm just trying to believe.

ELOISE: Believe ? In love ?

ANDREW: Yes.

ELOISE: Right.

ANDREW: Look around. Do you know where we are ? This is where we first met. I was jogging by and you were sitting on this bench –

ELOISE: Rubbing my ankle.

ANDREW: And I stopped to see if you were okay.

ELOISE: Looks different.

ANDREW: Change of season. I often come here – to think – about what went wrong.

ELOISE: No point focusing on the past.

ANDREW: Exactly – and that's why I want you to help me focus on the future. I want you to help me believe in love again.

BEAT.

ELOISE: How do I do that ?

ANDREW: I was hoping you would know.

ELOISE: (MAKING MAGIC GESTURE) “Hey presto – believe in love.”  
(BEAT.) Oh well – I tried. (MAKING TO LEAVE) Check you.

ANDREW: A few months ago you come and stay with me and you’re  
ridiculously, madly in love with me –

ELOISE: I was in love with you.

ANDREW: Now who’s being nasty – anyway, you were *in love* with me and  
talking about moving in together and then two months – less  
than two months later – you’re ‘ridiculously, madly’ in love with  
somebody else. I’m just trying to understand how that happens.  
The speed of how that happens.

ELOISE: It happens.

ANDREW: But in our case.

ELOISE: It happened.

ANDREW: Happens or happened ?

ELOISE: It occurred.

ANDREW: But what actually occurred ?

ELOISE: It.

ANDREW: What ?

ELOISE: I stopped loving you and started loving Bradley.

BEAT.

ANDREW: I think I’ll just pick up what’s left of my pathetic self respect,  
crawl under the nearest rock and hopefully expire - quickly and  
quietly.

ELOISE: I told you this wouldn’t help.

ANDREW: Do you know how hard it is for me to fall in love ?

ELOISE: Me too.

ANDREW: El – it’s not even two months and you’re “ridiculously, madly”  
with some other guy.

ELOISE: It surprised me too. He was just so honest, about everything – his life, where he was at, what he wanted – no games – do you know how attractive to me that was ?

ANDREW: I wasn't playing games.

**A MAN ENTERS WITH DARK GLASSES AND A CANE, HE FEELS HIS WAY ACROSS STAGE.**

ELOISE: Andy - you always played games.

ANDREW: No I didn't.

**THE MAN BUMPS INTO A GARBAGE BIN. HE TRIES TO GO AROUND IT BUT KICKS IT WITH HIS FEET.**

ANDREW: (WATCHING THE MAN, BECOMING INCREASINGLY AGITATED) Did I ?

ELOISE: "I can't see you tonight. I can only see you tomorrow night."

**THE MAN TRIES TO FIND HIS WAY AROUND THE BIN BUT AGAIN GETS TANGLED.**

ANDREW: Hint of mystery, intrigue. Keep it fresh. Isn't that what women want?

ELOISE: Sometimes. Sometimes we also need to know where we stand.

ANDREW: You knew, I thought –

**THE MAN BANGS HIS KNEE INTO THE BIN.**

MAN: Oh shit.

ANDREW: (STANDING) You okay mate ? Can I give you a hand ?

ELOISE: (TO **MAN**) I'm over here. Come and sit on the bench.

MAN: There's a bench ?

ELOISE: Over here.

**THE MAN MAKES HIS WAY SLOWLY TOWARDS THE BENCH. ANDREW HELPS HIM SIT.**

MAN: Thank you.

**THE MAN SITS.**

ANDREW: You two know each other ?

ELOISE: Andy - this is Bradley.

ANDREW: The Bradley ?

**ELOISE NODS.**

BRADLEY: (HOLDING OUT HIS HAND) Nice to meet you.

**ANDREW TAKES BRADLEY'S HAND. THEY SHAKE.**

ANDREW: This sounds like some really bad joke.

BRADLEY: That so ?

ANDREW: You hear the one about the guy sitting on the bench with his ex and the blind guy.

ELOISE: (TO **BRADLEY**) Let's go.

BRADLEY: Elly, it's okay. Can you get me my eye-drops ? I left them in the car.

ANDREW: Hope you weren't driving.

BRADLEY: Only at night.

ELOISE: Bradley.

BRADLEY: I'll be okay. Just get the drops.

**ELOISE KISSES BRADLEY ON THE CHEEK. SHE EXITS. BEAT.**

BRADLEY: So, how's it going ?

ANDREW: Splendidly. Thanks for asking. (BEAT) I never use to call her Elly.

BRADLEY: She prefers it.

ANDREW: I know. But everyone calls her that. I wanted to call her something special.

BRADLEY: Can I – I know it's not really any of my business –

ANDREW: No – it's not.

BRADLEY: Then forgive me for my intrusion – but what are you actually hoping to achieve here ?

ANDREW: To believe in love again.

BEAT.

BRADLEY: Is that a joke ?

ANDREW: I want El to help me believe in love again.

BRADLEY: Sounds a bit ...

ANDREW: High and mighty ?

BRADLEY: Like bullshit.

BEAT.

ANDREW: I'm trying to make her realise that she's not 'ridiculously, madly' with you at all. She's actually still 'ridiculously, madly' with me. Apologies.

BRADLEY: No apologies necessary. All's fair in love –

ANDREW: - and war.

BRADLEY: Do you really think it's going to work ?

ANDREW: Honestly ? Snowflake. Hell. Much better chance.

BEAT.

BRADLEY: Can I ask you something ?

ANDREW: Shoot.

BRADLEY: Are you really upset that you've lost Elly? Or are you just upset that you've lost her to someone else?

ANDREW: Well, from all reports you are the perfect guy and now I see your ...

BRADLEY: You can say it.

ANDREW: Well – game over.

BRADLEY: She's not with me because of pity.

ANDREW: I'm not saying that.

BRADLEY: Well, answer the question. Is it really a broken heart or is it more wounded ego ?

ANDREW: I'm not sure we should be having this conversation.

BRADLEY: Just two blokes, having a chat.

ANDREW: Two blokes - one who once *did* and now *doesn't* – and one who once *didn't* and now *does* - go out with the same woman.

BRADLEY: Who better to talk to about her.

ANDREW: That's a bit strange.

BRADLEY: Not about everything. But about love – loving Elly – surely we are the best two men placed to discuss it.

ANDREW: I miss her.

BRADLEY: Of course you do. That's normal. You were together over three years. But is that the strongest feeling? From what Elly says you weren't even that into her.

ANDREW: Yes I was.

BRADLEY: She wrote you a big email, pouring out her heart to you, and you didn't even bother to write back.

ANDREW: I was waiting till I found the right words.

BRADLEY: Then when she talked about moving in together you were hesitant.

ANDREW: I didn't think we were ready.

BRADLEY: She said you never used to tell her you loved her.

ANDREW: I did. Occasionally. A few times. Once.

BRADLEY: Why not ?

ANDREW: I don't know. I guess I wasn't ...

BRADLEY: Sure. But I am sure. Very sure. Incredibly sure. I know one hundred percent I love Elly and she knows one hundred percent she loves me. There are no doubts. That's after two months. After three years you still had ... (BEAT) Okay, maybe you do miss her. But maybe that's not the strongest thing you're experiencing.

ANDREW: Really?

BRADLEY: Maybe you see two other people in love – one who you know exceedingly well – and that brings up some questions for you.

ANDREW: Like what?

BRADLEY: How come you never felt like that when you were with Elly? How come you were never ‘ridiculously, madly’ with her? Was it something she did? Or was it something inside you? Something that no matter how hard you tried never felt right. Something that always stopped you from taking the final step.

ANDREW: Are you saying I couldn’t love Elly?

BRADLEY: Only you know the answer to that. Or maybe you could love somebody else. Maybe Elly just wasn’t the one for you.

ANDREW: Well I certainly wasn’t the one for her.

BRADLEY: But if she wasn’t the one for you, does that matter?

ANDREW: I’m not ...

BRADLEY: And that’s your answer.

BEAT.

ANDREW: You know. For a blind guy – you see pretty clearly.

BRADLEY: Helps get rid of distractions.

BEAT.

ANDREW: You know what? I think I’m going to go.

BRADLEY: Really?

ANDREW: Yeah. I think I’m just gonna walk.

BRADLEY: But you and Elly were still chatting.

ANDREW: Like she said – it’s all been said – one hundred times.

BRADLEY: Okay.

**BRADLEY PUTS OUT HIS HAND. ANDREW SHAKES IT.**

ANDREW: Thanks. For the chat.

BRADLEY: Thank you.

ANDREW: I'll see you round. Oh shit – sorry. You must get that a lot.

BRADLEY: It's okay. I'm not actually blind.

ANDREW: You're not blind? Does Elly know? Oh shit – this isn't like some con to make her feel sorry for you.

BRADLEY: I had an operation on my corneas last month. My sight should come back in a few weeks.

ANDREW: Oh that's okay then. I mean – good luck with that.

BRADLEY: (CROSSING HIS FINGERS) Crossing fingers.

ANDREW: (ALSO CROSSING FINGERS) Crossing fingers. I guess you really are Mr Perfect.

BRADLEY: I just want to be Elly's Mr Pefect.

ANDREW: (BEAT) I'm leaving Elly's present beside the bench.

BRADLEY: I'll make sure she gets it.

ANDREW: Merry Christmas.

BRADLEY: You too.

**ANDREW EXITS. BRADLEY ALONE. ELOISE RETURNS.**

ELOISE: Where's Andy ?

BRADLEY: He went for a walk.

ELOISE: Did you two ... ?

BRADLEY: We had a chat.

ELOISE: Is he coming back ?

BRADLEY: He said something about "It's all been said a hundred times before."

ELOISE: That's what I said.

BRADLEY: He also left you a present.

ELOISE: (LOOKING AT **BRADLEY**) I've already got it.

**ELOISE KISSES HIM WARMLY ON THE LIPS.**

ELOISE: I love you.

BRADLEY: And I love you.

ELOISE: Shall we go?

**BRADLEY** HOLDS OUT HIS HAND. **ELOISE** TAKES IT. THEY EXIT.

THE LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE ON THE PRESENT STILL SITTING ON THE BENCH. END PLAY.