

Screwfang, the frillytexter, meets The Austrian

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a short play

by

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Characters

DAVINA

SCREWFANG

THE AUSTRIAN

Screwfang, the frillytexter, meets The Austrian

DAVINA stands centre stage. On one side is **THE AUSTRIAN** on the other is **SCREWFANG**.

DAVINA: People ask me who I'm involved with – Screwfang or The Austrian.

I'm involved with my Legal Advisor, Screwfang. Screwfang the frillytexter. Screwfang, the giver of tea. Screwfang, the faller of stairs and the toppler of headstands. Screwfang the Indestructible.

The Austrian is just a friend. A very Rain-man-ish friend. I often think I deserve a government subsidy for looking after him.

THE AUSTRIAN EXITS.

DAVINA: How did he get the name Screwfang?

SCREWFANG GETS A SMALL BOX AND HANDS A WATER DOWNPIPE TO **DAVINA**.

DAVINA: I went around to his house one day to help him put up some pipes around his house. He'd just bought a new water tank. I was wearing this white shawl around my shoulders and holding up the pipe for him to screw in to the gutter.

DAVINA STANDS ON THE BOX, SHE HOLDS UP THE PIPE. **SCREWFANG** TURNS AROUND. HE NOW HAS TWO SCREWS HANGING OUT OF HIS MOUTH.

SCREWFANG: I'm stunned. Standing there you look just like the "Statue of Liberty". I'll never forget this image of you.

DAVINA: And standing there you look diabolical. I'll never forget this image of you. And so he became:

SCREWFANG: Screwfang!

SCREWFANG PUTS ON A SHIRT AND TIE.

DAVINA: Screwfang, the frillytexter went to Canberra. Occasionally he legally advises there. He legally advises

DAVINA: (CONT) here, there, everywhere. Whoever will have his legal advice.
He sent a frillytext from the restaurant-in-the-club-that-you-have-to-wear-a-jacket-and-tie-at-all-times saying that he was :

SCREWFANG: Forming a hypothesis that someone spiked my drink on the weekend.

DAVINA: (TO **SCREWFANG**) Yes. It was me. I just wanted sex. Didn't mean for you to break your toe. Sorry.
(TO **AUDIENCE**) Screwfang had thrown a party the previous weekend.

LIGHTS CHANGE TO SUGGEST A PARTY. MUSIC.

SCREWFANG GOES INTO PARTY MODE DRINKING, CHATTING, LAUGHING.

DAVINA: He drank a bit too much and became worried about being too old.

SCREWFANG BEGINS TO DO PUSH UPS ENERGETICALLY.

DAVINA: Then challenged all of the *strapping young* men at the party to push ups competitions, and won, because although they may have been half of his age, they were all the X-Box generation and had atrophied.

SCREWFANG IS ELATED, VICTORIOUS. HE BEGINS TO DO HEADSTANDS.

DAVINA: Then he fell over twice trying to do headstands,

SCREWFANG FALLS FORWARDS, THEN BACKWARDS.

DAVINA: then fell forwards down the outside stairs, then backwards down the inside stairs and then slid down a ladder rung by rung.

SCREWFANG SLIDES DOWN A LADDER – RUNG BY RUNG.

DAVINA: That's when I upgraded him in my head from "Screwfang, the Diabolical" to "Screwfang the Indestructible".

SCREWFANG STAGGERS AROUND, JUST WOKEN UP, HOLDING HIS HEAD.

DAVINA: In the morning he did not know much about all this, so I had the advantage that I knew about his secret torment of having a “thing” about his age, but he didn’t know that I knew.

SCREWFANG PRODUCES A CHOCOLATE EASTER EGG. HE EATS IT.

DAVINA: Then he ate chocolate Easter Eggs for breakfast and decided to go back to bed again. I made a fuss and followed him around.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

DAVINA: (TO **SCREWFANG**) “Wow, I can’t believe you just ate chocolate Easter Eggs for breakfast and then just decided to go back to bed at 11am. That’s so wild! You are so decadent...just like a teenager!!”

I think he looked a bit secretly pleased.

SCREWFANG SMILES SECRETLY AND EXITS. LIGHTS CHANGE.

DAVINA: It was Easter but I decided to have a crack at some new New Year’s Resolutions. I read somewhere that life is supposed to be like a seesaw - possibly a cubicle of a toilet door - so I hope someone is getting the upside for my downside.

But then it was my old New Year’s Resolutions that got me into this mess in the first place.

My resolutions / recipe for disaster back then were:

- 1 Be more affectionate.
- 2 Try to eat a bit better.
- 3 Get over the coffee thing.

Sounds bulletproof, doesn’t it?

SCREWFANG ENTERS, BUSINESSLIKE – WITH A BRIEFCASE.

DAVINA: OK perhaps my legal advisor was not the best place to start with the affectionate resolution but January was already a whole week in and I was getting concerned

DAVINA: (CONT) that I hadn't made a start. So I gave my legal advisor a hug. Yes really. He was a bit surprised, no, that's not strong enough, more startled or alarmed like he was possibly expecting I was going to stick a knife in his kidney. People can sometimes move surprisingly quickly when they sense they are in mortal danger and he stepped back so fast that I –

DAVINA GOES TO HUG **SCREWFANG**. **SCREWFANG** STEPS BACK. **DAVINA** MISSES HIM AND FALLS OVER.

DAVINA: (ON FLOOR) I'm not sure if he appreciated this gesture eventually, or it was just that I helped him have a near death experience, but he was a lot nicer after that.

SCREWFANG OFFERS **DAVINA** HIS HAND. SHE TAKES IT AND HE HELPS HER UP.

DAVINA: He started sending me SMS messages in the evenings that were lengthy, articulate and flooded with little used but correct punctuation.

SCREWFANG STANDS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STAGE, TEXTING **DAVINA** ON HIS PHONE.

DAVINA: I have never seen a colon and semicolon in a SMS before, I don't even know how to get them up on the buttons, and there were parentheses too. I asked if he was channelling "Jane Austen" and he immediately started to clip the start of his sentences to casualise them - ala Austen.

SCREWFANG: Am enhancing my sojourn by way of gentle discourse with a very beautiful teacup...

DAVINA: The following Thursday - he invited me to a cocktail party for the launch of the BMW hydrogen engine. He promised it would:

LIGHTS CHANGE. **SCREWFANG** TAKES **DAVINA'S** ARM, HE LEADS HER INTO THE COCKTAIL PARTY.

SCREWFANG: Be a laugh.

DAVINA: (TO **SCREWFANG**) I'm not expecting it to be a laugh at all, because you can't make any jokes about German Engineering, it is a Very Serious Topic. Especially since

DAVINA: (CONT) the last time the Germans had a crack at Hydrogen was the Hindenberg.
(TO AUDIENCE) Then I realised Screwfang's last name was German. Shitfuck shitfuck. Last cocktail party for launching BMW hydrogen engine's I ever get invited to.

SCREWFANG EXITS.

DAVINA: Last week I Googled "my sunglasses" and it returned 1170 hits including everywhere I had ever left them in my whole life and "On your head" was top and it was true.

DAVINA TAKES HER SUNGLASSES OFF THE TOP OF HER HEAD. SHE PUTS THEM ON.

DAVINA: But Google did not know about Screwfang.

THE AUSTRIAN ENTERS. HE IS DRESSED IN A ROBE.

DAVINA: The Austrian is rather busy this week. He is simultaneously thinking through whether he can jack in his job at IBM for a career in nude photography –

THE AUSTRIAN THROWS OFF HIS ROBE. HE IS NAKED. HE BEGINS TO MAKE POSES.

DAVINA: and develop his psychic abilities.

THE AUSTRIAN'S POSES TAKE ON A PSYCHIC QUALITY.

DAVINA: The psychic thing is because he has an instinct that his ex is lonely and needs him and is not sure if it is genuine psychic signal he is picking up or just self talk. I said: (TO AUSTRIAN) "If that's true, she would just call."

THE AUSTRIAN IS DISTRAUGHT. HE GATHERS HIS ROBE AND RUNS OFF.

DAVINA: It was a bit of a Doc Martin bluntness moment, and I regretted it immediately. The Austrian's hope for his ex is like Corsican Mint; the more I trample it, the sweeter it smells.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

DAVINA: Damn that Screwfang!

SCREWFANG ENTERS, IN MOCK-HEROIC STYLE HE MIMES ANSWERING THE PHONE, BOUNDING OUT OF HIS HOUSE AND INTO HIS 4WD.

DAVINA: I worried all this morning because Screwfang's neighbour called from the beach house and said there is a tree lying across powerlines.

Screwfang doesn't call the SES or SEC like any normal person but leaps into his Patrol-with-a-shovel-on-the-outside-in-case-it-gets-bogged and Y-chromosomes all the way down there to fix it himself.

I fired up my sensible X-chromosomes and told him: (TO **SCREWFANG**) "It's a high risk low yield, bizarre thing to do. Probably endangering power workers further down the line, when you take the tension off the line and the power goes through unexpectedly again. You are a menace with your stubborn old man do-gooder handyman meddling.

He y-ed back a crappy lowercase response...

SCREWFANG: (DRIVING) It's not "bizarre".

DAVINA: OK given this problem, out of 100 people, how many do you think would try to fix it themselves.

SCREWFANG: Only me.

DAVINA: YES. So go and drive your BMW bike at 340kms I don't complain, no not at all. But this is just f..u..c...k...i...n...g b.i.z.a.r.r.e.. You'll turn me into an old bag. I think I am having a hot flush.

SCREWFANG: Without me.

DAVINA: (TO AUDIENCE) It was then I realised I was hopelessly and madly in love with Screwfang. Two days later – during a stroll on the sand - I decided to tell him. Bad move.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

SCREWFANG: I'm afraid.

DAVINA: I don't have any transmittable diseases. I promise.

SCREWFANG: Of the pain of letting anyone too near my heart.

BEAT.

DAVINA: Did you just say you were afraid of the pain of letting anyone too near your heart?

SCREWFANG: My pain is more valid, more visceral, more real than yours. Than anyone's.

DAVINA: Did you just say that your pain is more valid, than mine?

SCREWFANG: I want you to wait.

DAVINA: Till you say something else completely ridiculous?

SCREWFANG: To see me every few days. But I won't touch your hand –

DAVINA: But you'll touch the rest of me ?

SCREWFANG: And you can't stay at my place.

DAVINA: (TO AUDIENCE) Suddenly The Austrian is starting to look a whole more sane. I tell him:
(TO SCREWFANG) I'll be patient. I'll wait. It is really all okay.
(TO AUDIENCE) But secretly I've decided to get back into training hard so my Abs go really flat and then I will go back on the market.

SCREWFANG EXITS. LIGHTS CHANGE.

DAVINA: I think I am starting to make a dint on the male population - numbers wise at least. I'm beginning to sweat it that there are only 3 billion men in the world to start with and once you minus the stupid fat Americans and misogynistic Pakistanis and people from countries where they're just too soccer mad to deal with, and ones in Africa that think female circumcision is a good idea and the ones I've already trashed and burnt there aren't really that many left.
But then I realise – there are.
(REMOVING WIG) I change my hairstyle, feeling like a

DAVINA: post-Screwfang change of image. A bit of a fringe cut. A fringe I have discovered allows for all new variants of "bad hair day". Yesterday it all went into clumpy stripes down my forehead and I looked like Chief Wiggam's fat little boy from the Simpsons.

LIGHTS CHANGE. **THE AUSTRIAN** ENTERS, DRESSED IN THE ROBE AND STIRRING A POT.

DAVINA: In order to cure my grumpiness – I go around to see The Austrian. It's difficult to be grumpy around someone so insane.

He cooks me pasta.

He tells me he missed "Fast Yoga" class today.

He has some "Intense Orange" dark chocolate on his kitchen bench. He likes everything to be Intense. I break off a piece.

DAVINA TAKES A PIECE, EATS IT.

DAVINA: It's sweet, tangy, delicious. Maybe The Austrian isn't too mad after all.

Then he takes off his robe.

THE AUSTRIAN TAKES OFF HIS ROBE TO REVEAL A PINK SEE-THROUGH NEGLIGEE.

DAVINA: Three billion – minus one more.

BLACKOUT.