

SALSA PARTY

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a short play

by

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Characters

PAULA

SASHA

NATALIE

ROBBIE

JENNIFER

MARY

JACQUELINE

Setting

A party

Time

11pm

SALSA PARTY

Party. 11pm.

LIGHTS ON PAULA AND SASHA

PAULA: Why don't you two get away ?

SASHA: Where would we go ?

PAULA: Somewhere different. Like out of Australia.

SASHA: You mean like Tasmania ?

LIGHTS ON NATALIE AND ROBBIE

NATALIE: It's just that I lost my job.

ROBBIE: Well come back to the class. It'll help you relax.

NATALIE: I will next term. But for now – I really need the money.

ROBBIE: I'm sorry Natalie - it's non-refundable.

LIGHTS ON JENNIFER AND MARY.

JENNIFER: Did you make the dip yourself ?

MARY: Yes.

JENNIFER: It's delicious.

MARY: Thank you.

JENNIFER: What is it ?

MARY: Cheese guacamole.

PAULA AND SASHA

PAULA: Tasmania's in Australia.

SASHA: But it is an island.

PAULA: I was suggesting somewhere outside Australia.

SASHA: Like where ?

PAULA: Thailand, Bali.

SASHA: You mean were all the people got blown up ?

NATALIE AND ROBBIE

NATALIE: I could relax then. Next term.

ROBBIE: I came to this party to relax.

NATALIE: It's just I really need the money.

ROBBIE: So you said.

NATALIE: And if you could just do me this special favour – just once. It would really help.

ROBBIE: I'm sorry Natalie but I can't.

NATALIE: Special favour – for me.

ROBBIE: Call me about during the week.

NATALIE: I did. Twice. But you didn't pick up.

ROBBIE: Then leave a message.

NATALIE: You don't have a voice mailbox on your phone.

ROBBIE: Look this is a business transaction and I came to a party. So if you don't mind.

NATALIE: You don't understand –

ROBBIE: No, you don't understand. I need to relax – you are stopping me from relaxing. Call me about it in business hours – and now ...

ROBBIE MOVES AWAY.

JENNIFER AND MARY

JENNIFER: I didn't know there was any cheese in guacamole.

MARY: Mine does.

JENNIFER: What type of cheese ?

MARY: Kraft. Slices.

JENNIFER: Lovely. I didn't ...

MARY: Don't worry. They're Lite.

JENNIFER: And I need that because ...

A LOUD BANGING AT THE DOOR.

MARY: Another guest.

MARY GOES TO THE DOOR AND OPENS IT.

JACQUELINE: Mary.

SHE GIVES HER A BIG HUG.

MARY: Jackie. Thanks for coming.

JACQUELINE: It's Jacqueline. And look everybody's here. Dumbo, droopy and bitchface.

MARY: Who ?

JACQUELINE: You know, Frau Cow. The salsa teacher who can't salsa.

MARY: Would you like a drink ?

ROBBIE IS NOW WITH JENNIFER.

ROBBIE: Great party.

JENNIFER: You should try the dip.

ROBBIE: (SEEING JACQUELINE) Oh jesus.

JENNIFER: What ?

ROBBIE: Why the hell did she invite her ?

JENNIFER: Who ?

ROBBIE: Jacqueline. You remember – she used to teach the class ?

JENNIFER: When she turned up.

ROBBIE: Exactly. That's why I had to -

JENNIFER: Terminate her ?

ROBBIE: Drama queen. Really turned it on. Threw a big tantrum in my office. Said she was going to sue me for wrongful dismissal. She's a casual for godsake.

JENNIFER: They're not very pleasant. Terminations.

ROBBIE: You've had one recently ?

JENNIFER: Natalie.

ROBBIE: Really ?

JENNIFER: She was on trial at my firm. I reviewed her. She didn't meet the standard.

ROBBIE: And now she's out of job so she wants a refund.

JENNIFER: It's her own fault.

ROBBIE: Like I said. Great party.

MARY BRINGS JACQUELINE OVER TO NATALIE, PAULA AND SASHA.

NATALIE: She said no.

PAULA: Maybe that's for the best. You should come back to the class. De-stress.

NATALIE: How can I de-stress when I haven't got enough money to pay the rent ?

PAULA: I'm sorry. I understand.

SASHA: What happened ? Did you get sacked ?

NATALIE: Yes.

SASHA: You can come and stay with me.

NATALIE: I don't want to stay with you. No offence. It's just I like where I'm staying. It's my apartment. And I just want to pay the rent and I could if –

MARY: Natalie, Paula, Sasha – you remember Jacqueline ?

SASHA: Oh hi. How's your career going ?

JACQUELINE: What career ?

SASHA: I thought you left to like – do your TV reporting ?

JACQUELINE: I got sacked.

SASHA: You two ?

NATALIE: Why ?

JACQUELINE: Found out about the bosses little secret.

SASHA: You were late a couple of times.

JACQUELINE: Once or twice. And how's your dropkick of a boyfriend ?

SASHA IS SHOCKED. SHE MOVES AWAY.

JACQUELINE: What's this shit music ? Is it Salsa ? Are you listening to Salsa ?

JACQUELINE GOES TO TURN OFF THE STEREO. ROBBIE CUTS HER OFF.

ROBBIE: We're actually quite enjoying the music.

JACQUELINE: That makes sense. It's crap.

ROBBIE: Just like you're teaching.

JACQUELINE: And you're dancing. That's why she teaches. She can't dance so she teaches.

ROBBIE: Can't remember you setting the salsa world alight.

JACQUELINE: Won more than you.

JACQUELINE HEADS BACK TO NATALIE AND PAULA.

MARY: Would you like some dip ?

NATALIE: No no no no no no – no ! I just want my money back.

MARY: What money ?

NATALIE GOES OVER TO JACQUELINE.

NATALIE: How's thing going between you and Robbie since she fired you ?

JACQUELINE: See for yourself. Like I said. I know her secret ...
(INDICATES DRINKING WITH HER HAND)

NATALIE: Really ?

JACQUELINE: Check the bottles out the back in the bin sometime.

NATALIE: She's being mean to me too.

JACQUELINE: Why ?

NATALIE: She won't refund my fees.

JACQUELINE: You quitting ?

NATALIE: Well ever since you left, the class hasn't been the same. I mean, she's an okay teacher but she's not you ...

JACQUELINE: No arguments there.

NATALIE: I just want my money back.

JACQUELINE: And she needs to support her habit.

NATALIE: Would you talk to me for her ?

JACQUELINE: Be happy to.

PAULA: (COMING OVER) What's up ?

NATALIE: Jacqueline's going to talk to Robbie for me about getting my money back ?

PAULA: Is that such a good idea ?

JACQUELINE: What's wrong with it ?

PAULA: (TO JACQUELINE) It's just you and Robbie don't really get on.

JACQUELINE: That's only because I stick up to her.

NATALIE: Paula. Who else is going to do it ?

PAULA: I could do it.

JACQUELINE: Yeah right.

MARY: (COMING OVER) Everybody having a good time ?

JACQUELINE: Fantastic. (DOWNS DRINK) Hold that.

SHE GIVES THE GLASS TO MARY.

SASHA IS NEAR ROBBIE AND JENNIFER.

SASHA: Having a good time ?

ROBBIE: Of course we are. And you ?

SASHA: It's a party. Maybe everybody could come to my place next time.

JENNIFER: Sure. That would be ... nice.

ROBBIE: Wouldn't your boyfriend mine ?

SASHA: He wouldn't care. Just turn the TV up louder.

ROBBIE: You should've brought him along tonight ? Meet the girls.

SASHA LAUGHS.

ROBBIE: Or bring him to the class. We need a few men.

SASHA: You wouldn't want my boyfriend to come.

ROBBIE: Of course we would. Has he got some friends ? Bring them along too.

SASHA: I don't think that's such a good idea.

ROBBIE: Why not ?

SASHA: They might throw up on somebody. That's what they usually do when they get together.

JACQUELINE, NATALIE AND PAULA FOLLOW

JACQUELINE: Hey, chubby checker.

ROBBIE: Would you mind leaving ?

JACQUELINE: I was invited.

ROBBIE: By mistake. I'm having a relaxing drink with the members of the class, which I might point out – you no longer belong to.

JACQUELINE: Beginners Salsa. Should call it Leper's Salsa ?

PAULA: Watch it.

JACQUELINE: Why do you think there's no men in the class ?

SASHA: There's Ricardo.

JACQUELINE: The young poof.

SASHA: Is he ?

JACQUELINE: Shit class, shit teacher. The only reason anyone comes is because they're all desperate and trying to meet men but there's no men at the class is there ? Apart from the (TO PAULA) lipstick lesbian trying to sleaze on to everyone.

PAULA: Shut up !

MARY: Maybe we should turn the music up. Start some dancing.

ROBBIE: Jacqueline, you are making an even greater fool of yourself than you already are. I think you should go.

JACQUELINE: I will. Once you refund Natalie's fee.

ROBBIE: What's it to you ?

JACQUELINE: Rather than drinking it away.

ROBBIE: And your point would be ? May I remind you it's none of your concern.

JACQUELINE: It is when you're ripping off students.

ROBBIE: Who do the fuck do you think you are to say things like that to me ?

JACQUELINE: Her teacher.

PAULA: Ex-teacher.

JACQUELINE: I just want you to give her, her money back.

ROBBIE: Why ? Need a loan ?

NATALIE: But I only did three lessons and then I left.

ROBBIE: Not because of the quality of the lessons.

JACQUELINE: The teacher changed.

ROBBIE: But that's not why she left. Natalie left because she (JENNIFER) sacked her and she didn't want to be in the same room as her.

SASHA: Hey guys, it's like a party. For the salsa class. Maybe everybody should just enjoy themselves.

JENNIFER/NATALIE/ROBBIE?JACQUELINE: Shut up !

PAULA: I want you to take back what you said.

JACQUELINE: Put on some more lippy.

MARY: Punch anyone ?

ROBBIE: Don't mind if I do.

ROBBIE GOES TO MARY.

JACQUELINE: There she goes. Avoiding the issue. Putting the needle in her arm.

PAULA: I don't think she's one to talk.

ROBBIE: Thanks for the party Mary.

MARY: You're going ?

ROBBIE: I don't care much for the company.

MARY: I thought it would be good to invite her. Give you a chance to talk.

ROBBIE: Forget it. It's not your fault she's a stupid bitch. (LEAVING) Thanks Jacqueline. A pleasure as always.

JACQUELINE: Up yours.

ROBBIE LEAVES.

JENNIFER: I might go too.

MARY: But it's only 11 o'clock.

JENNIFER: Thanks Mary but I've got a big day tomorrow.

JENNIFER EXITS.

PAULA: I can't believe you said that.

JACQUELINE: Get over it.

PAULA: I'm going to go.

JACQUELINE: And we're all running to stop you.

MARY: No Paula. Everyone can't go. Wait.

PAULA: Sorry Mary. Not in the mood anymore.

PAULA LEAVES.

JACQUELINE: Boo hoo.

NATALIE: I'll see if she's okay.

JACQUELINE: Sure, run after your little girlfriend.

MARY: No Natalie. Don't go.

NATALIE: Sorry Mary.

NATALIE FOLLOWS PAULA OUT.

SASHA: Is everybody going ?

JACQUELINE: Yeah, why not ? Let's kick on. It's Salsa time. I know a good salsa bar. One that would never let bitch face in.

JACQUELINE AND SASHA HEAD FOR THE DOOR.

MARY GOES TO THE CD PLAYER.

MARY: I've got another CD. It's Afro –

SHE TURNS TO SEE SHE IS ALONE.

MARY: Cuban.

BEAT. MARY GOES TO THE SOFA. SHE SITS. SHE PICKS AT THE DIP THEN SITS BACK ON THE SOFA.

LIGHTS FADE.