

an angel but in the dark

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a short play

By

Alex Broun

March 2008

Email: abroun@bigpond.net.au

www.alexbroun.com

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Characters

ALAN a father, 50s

CLAIRE a mother, 50s

KARL late 20s

Author's Note:

This play was written in response to the death of Kate Beagley in London, England, 2007 and the conviction of Karl Taylor for her murder.

With the greatest respect for Kate's memory and her family.

Alex Broun. March 2008.

an angel but in the dark

ALAN: an angel

CLAIRE: but in the dark.

ALAN: That's how he described her.

CLAIRE: The words he used

ALAN: An angel

KARL: "but in the dark"

ALAN: They went to a pub.
On Star and Garter Hill.

CLAIRE: People said it was a date.
It wasn't a date.

KARL: "All I want is your car."

ALAN: They had a drink then went for a walk beside the river.
They sat on a bench.

KARL: Sometimes you don't have to touch a flower -

CLAIRE: She was bored.
She kept texting her friends.

KARL: to make it grow.

CLAIRE: "She seemed distracted."

ALAN: I'm trying to remember but all I think about is her sitting on that
bench.

KARL: An angel

ALAN: Overlooking the Thames.
Was the water still that night ?
Peaceful ?

KARL: but in the dark.

CLAIRE: She graduated from University with a degree in sports
administration.

ALAN: Though she chose a different field.

ALAN: British Gas.
Ten years.

CLAIRE: She was getting promoted.
Constantly promoted.
It seemed every time she came around she'd been promoted again.
I started to wonder if there was any higher rank she could be promoted to.
(LAUGHING) "National compliance manager.
What does that mean ?"

KARL: "Here you go mum.
Got you some vouchers."

ALAN: When he went on the date -

CLAIRE: It wasn't a date ?
Don't call it a date.
She felt sorry for him.
Awkward out of place black boy.

ALAN: Don't make it about that.

CLAIRE: I'm stating a fact.
He was black.
And stupid.
She felt sorry for him so she went for a drink.
A drink.
It was not a date.
It was because of Fraser.

ALAN: She had just come out of a turbulent relationship.

CLAIRE: She was completely in love with Fraser

ALAN: But he wouldn't commit to her

CLAIRE: in terms of marriage and Kate, more than anything,

ALAN: wanted a family.

CLAIRE: That's what her friend said.
She had such good friends.
They loved her.

ALAN: After she disappeared they organised a search.

CLAIRE: On Facebook.
ALAN: They didn't know she was already ...

CLAIRE: Kate was just trying to get over Fraser by going out and meeting other people

She was out and about.
Not moping around at home.
That's the type of girl she was.
Not letting things get her down.
That's what she was doing there.
How can you call it a date ?

ALAN: He hid the knife up his sleeve.
He always knew what he was going to do.
But why Kate ?
Why her ?

CLAIRE: He worked as a fitness instructor.
Who did he instruct ?
Surely someone at the gym must have known.
You have a psychotic working in your midst.

KARL: "I've dropped my keys.
We've got to go back."

ALAN: They left the bench.
Got in Kate's car.
Drove off.
Kate was alive.
My daughter was alive.

CLAIRE: And that's when he did it.
When they went back.

ALAN: To look for his keys.

CLAIRE: And Kate took him back.
Because that's how she was.
Caring

ALAN: Kind

CLAIRE: Always looking after stray dogs.
But that's the problem with stray dogs.
In the end one of them will

ALAN: Bite you.

CLAIRE: And it was the keys that brought him undone.

ALAN: Kate's keys.
Two days later –

CLAIRE: That's all it took – two days !

ALAN: A detective turned up at the flat of his friend in west London and interviewed him for several hours.
During the interview he kept getting up to visit the bathroom.

CLAIRE: "Weak bladder."
It's not that weak.

ALAN: So the detective –

CLAIRE: Thinks something's up

ALAN: Goes into the bathroom.

CLAIRE: He's dropped Kate's car keys in to the toilet.
They are sitting in the toilet bowl.
The man is an idiot.

ALAN: He had driven Kate's car

CLAIRE: Her grey Volkswagon Golf

ALAN: back through London in the early hours of the morning.

CLAIRE: While he drove he was chatting to his girlfriend

ALAN: On his mobile.

CLAIRE: Lauren.
Love to meet her.
Asian.
*"This is my boyfriend, Karl
He the one what killed that girl."*
Lovely couple.

ALAN: Just before midnight he drove across Chiswick Bridge and bought one pound of diesel

CLAIRE: One pound.

ALAN: at a garage in Shepherds Bush.
He stopped and chatted with other drivers on the forecourt.

KARL: "How's your night ?"

CLAIRE: And Kate's body was literally metres away, lying in the boot of her car.

KARL: "Down in Richmond. Star and Garter."

CLAIRE: My daughter's body.

- KARL: "You too."
- CLAIRE: He washed Kate's body using bottles of mineral water he found in the boot.
- ALAN: She was later found in woodland in Hertfordshire.
- CLAIRE: Oxhey Wood
A nature reserve.
- ALAN: He didn't hide it particularly well.
- CLAIRE: Mad.
- ALAN: He stripped Kate's body and concealed it in a small drainage ditch near a car park.
- CLAIRE: Covered it with stinging nettles.
Nice touch that.
Stinging nettles.
- ALAN: She was so badly damaged ... we could not see her to say goodbye.
- CLAIRE: I didn't want to.
- ALAN: Then he drove back down the M1 motorway.
- CLAIRE: He threw the murder weapon, along with Kate's clothes and some of her things, on to an embankment.
An embankment.
- ALAN: He sold her mobile phone to one of his friends.
How much did he sell it for ?
Did he buy something with the money ?
- CLAIRE: Then he went around showing off the VW as "his new car".
Kate's car.
- ALAN: A new shirt ?
Some sports shoes ?
- CLAIRE: The next morning he went around to his mother's home – love to meet her - in Notting Hill
- ALAN: He offered to take his nephew to playschool in the car.
Kate's car.
Our Kate.
- CLAIRE: Notting Hill !

KARL: "Here you go mum."

ALAN: Then he gave his mother some Marks & Spencer shopping vouchers that he had found in the glove box of Kate's car.

KARL: "Got you some vouchers."

CLAIRE: He gave them to his Mum.

KARL: My name is Karl.
I am the guy that met your daughter on Friday night!

ALAN: He wrote me a letter.

KARL: To be honest my first impression of her was she is a kind but unhappy girl

CLAIRE: He wrote it between the interviews at Staines Police Station.

KARL: to some respect.

ALAN: It was addressed to me.
Why was it addressed to me ?

KARL: Anyway for the short time I met your daughter I began to see she was an angel
but in the dark.

ALAN: That's how he described her.

CLAIRE: The words he used
An angel

ALAN: but in the dark.

CLAIRE: The hand writing was formal but shaky.
Like an over eager student trying too hard in his end of term exams. Was he ever a student ?
This man who had -

KARL: Even though Katie

CLAIRE: Why did he call her that ?
Katie.
No one called her that.

KARL: is not with us she still shines brightly as a star in the night sky.

ALAN: It was full of odd references.
Stars, night skies,

CLAIRE: Angels

ALAN: "good heart still beating."

CLAIRE: Almost like it was written by a child.
A foolish idiotic child.

KARL: I might have took –

CLAIRE: Took !

KARL: - your daughter's life but we all know, some of us more than others, that her heart still beats in the good we all do and her soul lives on with all the good memories of her.

ALAN: I'm trying to remember but all I think about is her sitting on that bench.

KARL: My life has and many years ago not been with me –

CLAIRE: "Not been with me"
Then where was it ?
His life.

KARL: from significant events destroying my heart

ALAN: You have destroyed my heart.
Our hearts.
Kate's heart.

KARL: but your lives, and in with much respect Katie's will not be a memory

CLAIRE: Mad.

ALAN: And if he is mad does that mean -

CLAIRE: Completely mad.

KARL: but a certainly real happiness that angels do live on earth

ALAN: That's he 's not ...

CLAIRE: How can this happen.
Everyday, in society, someone can be completely mad but still existing among us.

KARL: but sometimes have to go to Heaven.

- CLAIRE: You walk pass them everyday on the street, smile at them politely, nod - but they are completely mad.
And you don't know that I until they stab your daughter thirty one times.
In the face
- ALAN: Neck
- CLAIRE: And throat
- ALAN: There were two stab wounds in the hands.
Defensive wounds.
(HE RAISES HIS HANDS TO COVER HIS FACE)
She was holding up her hands to protect her ...
- KARL: We live in a world where life is hard for all, and those who try and embrace the good nature get rejected!
- CLAIRE: A world where things like this happen.
In Richmond.
- ALAN: Is that what happened to you Karl ?
Why you did this ?
- CLAIRE: Apparently on a daily basis.
- ALAN: Were you rejected ?
- KARL: Without any doubt what I did was wrong!!!
- CLAIRE: He realises that now.
- KARL: But ask yourself this?
Whose life have I really taken?
- ALAN: You took my daughter's life.
My beautiful daughter.
- CLAIRE: She stretched out her hand in friendship and you –
- KARL: I don't expect by writing you this I will soften your pain but as birds sing and flowers grow in spring –
- CLAIRE: "Birds sing."
Flowers !
- KARL: remember Katie and let the love you have and always had for her and always

ALAN: I will never forget that.

KARL: will be like the drum beats in your heart

CLAIRE: Drum beats !

KARL: when she first opened her eyes.

CLAIRE: Before you closed them.

KARL: Remember you have not lost her since she never lost you.

ALAN: In court, he tries to retract everything.

CLAIRE: Of course.

ALAN: Even though he's already written the letter to me.
He's confessed in the letter.

CLAIRE: Through -

ALAN: "Crocodile tears"

CLAIRE: He claims that Kate committed suicide in front of him.
It's absurd.
Does he serious believe –

ALAN: He says she killed herself by prodding her head forward on to
the knife –

CLAIRE: 31 times !

ALAN: which he was holding upright in his hands –

CLAIRE: after tearfully telling him of her problems.

KARL: "She was prodding herself in the neck area and at the same
time was pulling her hair so her head was moving around."

ALAN: Prodded.
Such an odd word.

KARL: "I didn't know what to do.
I just stood there –"

ALAN: Prodded.

KARL: "in awe.
I realised she passed away."

CLAIRE: No one must believe this.

ALAN: I feel cold and empty and will never lose that feeling.

KARL: "I was crying profusely."

CLAIRE: Can believe this.

KARL: "I lay on the grass and looked at the sky."

ALAN: As the judge sentenced him he said:

KARL: "You are arrogant, manipulative, and you are highly dangerous."

CLAIRE: The way he said it made me wonder which one of those three he was receiving the thirty years for.

ALAN : Kate was so vibrant and full of life.

CLAIRE: What's the point of living in this world if this is the way of this world ?

ALAN: What must it have felt like during those last seconds –

CLAIRE: If events like this can occur.
Do occur.

ALAN: as she was savagely struck down?

CLAIRE: If men like Karl Taylor can just murder my daughter

ALAN: The sheer terror and confusion.

CLAIRE: then write a letter talking about "birds singing" and "flowers growing".

KARL: An angel

ALAN: Is that how you see yourself Karl ?

CLAIRE: I keep having nightmares.

ALAN: An angel ?

KARL: but in the dark.

CLAIRE: I see him.
The knife.
Kate.

ALAN: The sheer terror and confusion.

CLAIRE: But in the end, just as he's about to stab her, it ends.
I never see that part.
It always ends there.

ALAN: The worse possible moment.

CLAIRE: The moment she knows

ALAN: What's going to happen

CLAIRE: And she is completely

ALAN: Powerless

KARL: To stop it.

LIGHTS FADE.