

# Subverting the Will

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a short play

by

Alex Broun

Email: [abroun@bigpond.net.au](mailto:abroun@bigpond.net.au)

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**Cast**

**Will**

**Charlotte**

**Subverting the Will**

CHARLOTTE: You only love her because she doesn't love you.

WILL: Say that again.

CHARLOTTE: You only love her because she doesn't love you.

WILL: Crap.

CHARLOTTE: If she did return your love, you wouldn't be interested.

WILL: Says who ?

CHARLOTTE: Says me. Or worse still if she committed the greatest crime of all.

WILL: Which is ?

CHARLOTTE: Fell in love with you first. You'd be outta there so fast you'd leave skid marks on the sheets.

WILL: Where is this coming from ?

CHARLOTTE: Fact, life, history. Read up, you'll soon realise it has nothing to do with love. It's all about subverting the will.

WILL: You mean Will ? As in me ?

CHARLOTTE: No, just will.

WILL: So love doesn't exist ?

CHARLOTTE: Not for you. It's just an excuse. For you gaining power over someone else. For you subverting their will. To triumph.

WILL: I don't want to triumph.

CHARLOTTE: Yes you do. By getting her to love you and then you win. One more point on the great ego scoreboard. Then you can drop her like a stone in a black, bottomless ocean and move on to the next round.

WILL: It's not a Table Tennis tournament. I'm not making my way to the final.

CHARLOTTE: There isn't a final, sadly. The contest goes on indefinitely. Deep down you hate her.

WILL: I love her.

CHARLOTTE: No you hate her. Like you hate all women.

WILL: Bullshit.

CHARLOTTE: You do and that's why you want to humiliate and degrade them by getting them to fall in love with you and then getting rid of them as quick as you can.

WILL: So loving me is humiliating and degrading ?

CHARLOTTE: It is when the only reason you want them to do it is so you can break their heart. It's all because of Jayne with a "y".

WILL: Jayne ?

CHARLOTTE: Yes Jayne with a "y".

WILL: Why do you say it like that ?

CHARLOTTE: Because it reminds me of all the questions she gives rise to. Or to be accurate – your brief liaison gives rise to.

WILL: It wasn't that brief.

CHARLOTTE: You're not together now.

WILL: It was ten years ago !

CHARLOTTE: Exactly. It was ten years ago but when she decimated your fragile little heart it set up the pattern of revenge that you now extract on any poor suspecting female who crosses your orbit.

WILL: She didn't decimate my heart.

CHARLOTTE: Then how would you describe a woman –

WILL: She was hardly a woman.

CHARLOTTE: Girl who takes your gift of first love – your initial emotional outpouring – and mangles it in her many calloused fist. Not once – but twice.

WILL: It was a mistake to get back with her. I should've realised it wasn't going to work.

CHARLOTTE: Such foresight – at seventeen ? And then afterwards you discover that not only has she dropped you twice but

despite the brief nature of your liaison she still managed to sleep with half of the First XV during the time she was meant to be with you –

WILL: Not half.

CHARLOTTE: A team that I should point out you happened to be a member of.

WILL: I said not half.

CHARLOTTE: A third ?

WILL: No it was exactly one fifth. Three other ... players. Three into fifteen is one fifth.

CHARLOTTE: Including you ?

WILL: No.

CHARLOTTE: Four then. Just as close to a third. How did that feel knowing that the pimply faced prick who was passing you the ball may have been passing something else to Jayne with a “y” the night before ? Or the hooker’s hands you grasped in victory may have recently been exploring her nether regions behind the school gymnasium ?

WILL: Why should you care ?

CHARLOTTE: Emergence and acceptance.

WILL: What ?

CHARLOTTE: Emergence of the truth and acceptance of the damage she did to you and how much damage you’ve been doling out ever since in subconscious revenge.

WILL: I do not hate women.

CHARLOTTE: Just Jayne with “y”.

WILL: Stop calling her that – and I don’t hate her. I loved her. Do love her. Have forgiven her for any minor –

CHARLOTTE: Major.

WILL: Indiscretions she may have ... perpetrated.

CHARLOTTE: Perpetrated ? Interesting choice of word.

WILL: Committed then. Been guilty of. Done ! I mean done.

CHARLOTTE: I think you mean did. As in diddle, diddle, diddle.

WILL: It was ten years ago.

CHARLOTTE: And it's still stoking the fires.

WILL: No it is not – Charlotte with a "o".

CHARLOTTE: "O" ?

WILL: For unbelievably off course.

CHARLOTTE: Alright Will with a double "d" – "desperately in denial" – then answer me this. Why have the greatest loves of your life all been unrequited ?

WILL: They have not.

CHARLOTTE: You sure about that ? Let's take a closer look.

WILL: I thought this was about avoiding damage.

CHARLOTTE: A bit of pain now might be positive all round. Emily.

WILL: Okay, unrequited.

CHARLOTTE: Apart from a snog in the carpark.

WILL: Love isn't just physical.

CHARLOTTE: But that's as far as it went during the six months you dallianced.

WILL: If that's the word for it.

CHARLOTTE: Chere-ann. More snogging, not much else.

WILL: Some quite heated snogging.

CHARLOTTE: But again.

WILL: Love isn't just physical – again. If you need to be that specific, no, we did not do the deed but so bloody what ? She may have loved me passionately and there were reasons why it never translated to a physical level.

CHARLOTTE: Such as she was engaged to a racing car driver ?

WILL: That didn't become clear –

CHARLOTTE: Till he chased you down a back alley in his V8 Monaro.

WILL: I think she felt the same.

CHARLOTTE: But in the end she opted for the Monaro.

WILL: It was complicated.

CHARLOTTE: Sounds it. Natalie.

WILL: How can you reduce the test of whether my love for these human beings was unrequited solely on whether I fucked them or not ?

CHARLOTTE: Well did you ?

WILL: Charlotte !

CHARLOTTE: Did you ?

WILL: No I did not have penetrative sex with any of the people you have just mentioned.

CHARLOTTE: Thank you.

WILL: Now who wants to win ?

CHARLOTTE: I'm just pointing out –

WILL: What ? That I didn't have sex with these girls and that's why I still love them ?

CHARLOTTE: Yes. If you had you would've subverted their will, emerged triumphant and moved on to your next conquest.

WILL: I loved them.

CHARLOTTE: Because they remained unconquered.

WILL: You're making this so grubby.

CHARLOTTE: Oh and it's meant to be beautiful and poetic.

WILL: For me. Their memory. Yes.

CHARLOTTE: Okay then I want you to admit it. Admit that there isn't a day that goes by that you don't think back on those three non-roots.

WILL: Yes I do think about them. You often think about things you treasure and love. Not because I didn't *root* them.

CHARLOTTE: And what do you think about ? Their witty dialogue, their passionate beliefs, their caring and sharing nature. No, you think about what it would've been like to bone them.

WILL: Well I did bone one of them if you must know.

CHARLOTTE: A drunken tit-fuck with Natalie doesn't count.

WILL: I can't believe I told you that !

CHARLOTTE: You tell me everything. And it still doesn't count.

WILL: What is wrong with you ? You're not my sister and you're sure not my mother.

CHARLOTTE: No. I'm not.

PAUSE.

WILL: So you happy now ? You've proved your point.

CHARLOTTE: Partly.

WILL: What else do you want me to say ?

CHARLOTTE: I want to know why, with a "Jayne" ?

WILL: Why what ?

CHARLOTTE: Why the only persons you can love are the ones who say no to you ?

WILL: You want me to tell you the most secret secret at the very core of my soul.

CHARLOTTE: Yes !

WILL: Why ?

CHARLOTTE: Because you owe it to me. Because I've stuck by you for ten years. Because I've nursed you through every heartbreak, heartache, infatuation, insinuation, flirtation, titillation, dream, hope, held hand, lip touch, squirm, flutter, crush. After all that I deserve it. And because this may be the last conversation we ever had.

WILL: Lottie ...

CHARLOTTE: I hate it when you call me that. Every letter laced with condescending affection.

WILL: And I hate it when you won't tell me what is going on ?

CHARLOTTE: No I won't.

WILL: Why ?

CHARLOTTE: Because on this day, for this one moment, I will not be subverted to your will. You will not win this triumph. This one is mine. And I want you to tell me, right now, why do you discard everybody whoever falls in love you ?

WILL: No. That's not the right question. The question is why do I always fall in love with the wrong people ?

CHARLOTTE: No. The question is why are you unable to love the right ones ?

WILL: Because if Jayne didn't love me then I'm not someone worth loving. And if I'm not someone worth loving then what the fuck is wrong with someone who falls in love with me !?!

PAUSE.

CHARLOTTE: Yes. What indeed. (BEAT) You know I was in Jayne with a "y"'s English class. I use to sit two behind her, to the right. Monitor her many and ever changing hair styles. Red, green, blue with black flecks. Even for one very brief period – blonde. She was really stupid, did you know that? One of those people who'd always shoot up their hand at the slightest inclination, open their big gob, yap yap yap. Prattle on inanely about "Brave New World" or "1984" or "Pride and Prejudice". And it'd all be shit –

CHARLOTTE: (CONT) straight out of the crib notes she handily bought at Dymocks the day before. Not one original syllable but exactly what the teacher wanted to hear. And then the teacher would congratulate her on her insight, her accuracy, her observation. But I'd know, me and me alone, and I'd asked myself, every single day, "Why the fuck can't Will see what a big fat, lying phoney she really was ?"

WILL: I was in love with her.

CHARLOTTE: Because she wasn't in love with you ! Not like someone else in that class. The girl with the mousey brown hair and daggy glasses who used to sit to the right and two

behind the great Jayne with a “y”. A love she treasured for ten years like a delicate flower. Until today. And then she realised – finally – that she couldn’t remain in love one second longer with a man who was so fucked up that he could never, ever love her back because she had committed the greatest sin of all. She was already his.

PAUSE. **CHARLOTTE** EXITS. **WILL** ALONE.

WILL: Charlotte ?

LIGHTS FADE.