

You

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a short play

by

Alex Broun

email: abroun@bigpond.net.au

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Cast

DEBORAH **A marketing executive, late 20s**

DOMINIC **Photocopying technician, mid 20s**

STRANG **Gym instructor, late 20s**

ALICE **An art student, early 20s**

WALTER **A music teacher, late 40s**

Setting

Busy inner city cafe.

Time

Saturday afternoon.

You by Alex Broun

Café. **DOMINIC** and **DEBORAH**.

DOMINIC: You.

DEBORAH: Me ?

DOMINIC: Yes - you.

DEBORAH: Really.

DOMINIC: That's what it's all about.

DEBORAH: Is it ?

DOMINIC: And what I need you to understand -

DEBORAH: Hold on. I don't *need* to understand anything.

DOMINIC: I mean what I'd *like* you to understand –

DEBORAH: Better.

DOMINIC: Is that this is not a casual thing - for me.

DEBORAH: Wrong. It's not a *thing* at all.

DOMINIC: Sorry ?

DEBORAH: You're implying there is a *thing* – some *thing* – between us, and let me make it clear there is no *thing* between us.

DOMINIC: Well there is to me. And it's not ...

DEBORAH: As you said.

DOMINIC: Casual. It's more, much more than that.

PAUSE.

DEBORAH: Oh. That's sweet.

DOMINIC: Sweet ?

DEBORAH: Yes sweet.

DOMINIC: You mean you feel the same ?

DEBORAH: No, it's just sweet. You've got a crush.

DOMINIC: I told you. It's more than that.

DEBORAH: Well then you've got more than a crush.

DOMINIC: On you.

DEBORAH: Yes.

DOMINIC: But you don't have more than a crush back ?

DEBORAH: Not even less than a crush, I'm afraid.

PAUSE. **DOMINIC** IS CRESTFALLEN.

DEBORAH: (LAUGHS) Hope you're not crushed.

DOMINIC: Glad you think it's funny.

DEBORAH: Oops ! Look, it's not your fault. Your great, really great.

DOMINIC: Obviously not great enough.

DEBORAH: It's me. All me. I'm just not ready for that kind of commitment. And you know, there's the other thing.

DOMINIC: You're big on things aren't you ?

DEBORAH: We work together. Office romance. It is a bit *passé*.

DOMINIC: *Passe* ? Did you say – *passé* ?

DEBORAH: Yes.

DOMINIC: So now not only am I not a *thing* – now I'm *passé* as well.

DEBORAH: I didn't mean it like that. It's just that you're young.

DOMINIC: Not that young.

DEBORAH: Well younger than me. I need someone older now. Wiser. With more experience. Someone who can teach me things, who I can grow with . Someone like my old music teacher. Mr Maguire. I was only fourteen but I'll never forget him. That's who I need.

DOMINIC: I thought you just said you weren't ready for something right now ?

DEBORAH: Well I'm not but I might be if the right person came along.

DOMINIC: But that's not ...

DEBORAH: You. Sorry.

DOMINIC LOWERS HIS HEAD. HE BEGINS TO CRY.

DEBORAH: Dominic. What are you doing ?

DOMINIC: What's wrong ? Are tears passé too ?

DEBORAH: It's only a crush. I know you think it's more than that but it's not. I mean it's not like we even know each other. I've hardly ever said seven words to you.

DOMINIC: (THROUGH HIS TEARS) Eight.

DEBORAH: Eight then.

DOMINIC: But they meant a lot to me.

DEBORAH: "Can I have some more photocopying fluid, please ?" meant a lot to you ?

DOMINIC: But you don't understand. If we just got to know each other a bit more I know you'd like me.

DEBORAH: Dom, you're a nice guy but like – get over it.

DOMINIC: But you don't understand – I can't get over it. I haven't had a girlfriend in two years.

DEBORAH: Then maybe you should get out more.

STRANG ENTERS. HE LOOKS AROUND THE CAFÉ.

DOMINIC: (SEEING STRANG) Oh shit.

DOMINIC DUCKS UNDER THE TABLE.

DOMINIC: (WHISPERS) Don't tell him I'm here.

DEBORAH: Who ?

BUT IT'S TOO LATE. STRANG HAS SEEN **DOMINIC**. HE MARCHES OVER.

STRANG: Come out from there you little worm. (TO **DEBORAH**) So this is her eh ? This is what all the fuss is about. Just what I expected. A trumped up little blonde tart.

DEBORAH: And what are you – The Terminator ?

STRANG: Better than Malibu Barbie.

DOMINIC: (EMERGING FROM UNDERNEATH TABLE) Strang. What are you doing here ?

DEBORAH: That's your name ? Strang.

STRANG: What about it – Cindy ?

DOMINIC: Strang. This is Deborah. I've told you about Deborah.

STRANG: Every bloody day for the last year. I thought she was Lady Di and now I find she's nothing.

DEBORAH: Hey – I'm not nothing.

STRANG: Pretty close. How can you choose her over me ?

DEBORAH: Dominic – are you ... ?

DOMINIC: No, no ! This is all just a misunderstanding.

STRANG: No misunderstanding. Come on baby, no one else can make you feel like I can.

DEBORAH: No wonder you haven't had a girlfriend for two years.

DOMINIC: Look, I'm not gay, okay ?

STRANG: Oh my little Domino –

DOMINIC: Don't call me that.

STRANG: Stop fighting it. Jump. I'll catch you.

DEBORAH: Yeah Domino, come out of the closet. You're among friends.

DOMINIC: I can't come out of the closet cause I was never in the closet. For the last time Strang – I am not gay.

STRANG: Didn't seem like that last night.

DOMINIC: That was just a one off. I was experimenting.

DEBORAH: Domino. Kinky.

DOMINIC: Stop calling me that.

STRANG: (OPENING ARMS) Come on Domino. Come to my ever loving arms. Let The Strang Man rap you in his big bear hug.

DOMINIC: Get away from me !

DOMINIC TRIES TO ELUDE STRANG AS HE CHASES HIM AROUND THE CAFÉ.

DEBORAH: Hey Dom, two years is a long time between drinks. Maybe you should stop fighting it. He's pretty cute.

DOMINIC: But he's not you.

STRANG: Just because I don't have fake tits and a painted on tan.

DEBORAH: Hey buddy. This tan is real.

STRANG: I have a firm muscular physique, hard throbbing power and a heart that beats for just one thing – you.

DOMINIC: (CORNERED) That's great Strang. And you're nice. Really nice. But I'm sorry I just don't want you.

STRANG: (GOING DOWN ON TO HIS KNEES) Come on Domino, let me taste your love.

DOMINIC: Get away from me !

ALICE ENTERS.

ALICE: Strang. Is that you ?

STRANG: (SEEING ALICE) Oh, shit !

STRANG TRIES TO HIDE UNSUCCESSFULLY BEHIND DOMINIC.

ALICE: Strang. It is you. What are you doing here ? I thought you didn't drink coffee.

STRANG: You stalking me now.

ALICE: (LAUGHS) Of course not. Just going to the library to return my Milan Kundera novels. Saw you through the window.

DOMINIC: Who the hell is this ?

DEBORAH: Jealous now ?

DOMINIC: No. Just curious.

STRANG: See. You do care.

ALICE: (TO STRANG) Are these your friends ?

STRANG: Alice, this is Domin –

DOMINIC: Nic.

STRANG: And –

DEBORAH: Deborah. Delighted to meet you.

ALICE: Cool. (TO STRANG) I never get to meet your friends.

DOMINIC: What is she talking about ?

STRANG: Look, Alice, I'm kind of busy now.

ALICE: Oh sorry. Just wanted to know if you want me to come over later. We haven't done it in like three days and I'm really horny.

DEBORAH: Why Strang, you have been a busy boy.

ALICE: Oh, sorry. Am I being inappropriate again ? I always do that.

STRANG: Look Alice, can I just call you later ?

DEBORAH: Don't mind us, please continue.

ALICE: It's just that since I had that third orgasm with you last Tuesday I can't stop thinking about you. Oh shit ! I did it again didn't I ?

DOMINIC: But you were with me last Tuesday, till about ten.

DEBORAH: Strang – you surprise me.

STRANG: Alice please – just go.

ALICE: Okay but first – I just want to read you this poem I wrote.

ALICE TAKES OUT A SLIP OF PAPER FROM AMONG HER BOOKS.

DEBORAH: What's the name of this place ? I must come here again.

ALICE: (READING) Oh Strang, my wild stallion of love
How you do thrust me

STRANG: Please stop.

DEBORAH: Keep going honey. It's beautiful.

ALICE: What I feel for you is so intense, so profound
It's like nothing I have ever felt before
When you make love to me, so aggressive and hard

ALICE: (CONT) It's the most powerful experience of my life

DOMINIC: I thought you were gay.

STRANG: I am !

DEBORAH: Doesn't sound like it baby.

STRANG: Look Alice, this is really sweet of you but would you just – PISS OFF !

DOMINIC: Let her finish.

ALICE SMILES AT DOMINIC, SHE CONTINUES.

STRANG: Just a few more lines.
(READING) When we first did it the first time
And I saw the full extent of your love
I wondered : "How am I going to –

IN DESPERATION STRANG GRABS ALICE'S POEM AND PUTS IT IN HIS MOUTH. HE STARTS CHEWING IT.

ALICE: Wow ! He ate my poem. That's like the second most powerful experience of my life. He loved my words so much he had to have them inside him.

STRANG SPITS OUT THE POEM.

ALICE: See – I was right to love you !

ALICE BEGINS CHASING STRANG AROUND THE CAFÉ.

STRANG: (DODGING ALICE, TO DOMINIC) I can explain.

DEBORAH: We're listening.

STRANG: She works in the bookstore near my house.

ALICE: "The Cosmic Love Box"

STRANG: And then you wouldn't let me in that night –

DOMINIC: He was pounding on my door at three A.M..

STRANG: So I was walking home and I was really drunk and stoned –

ALICE: And depressed.

STRANG: And then I ran into (TO ALICE) you.

ALICE: I'm an insomniac.

DEBORAH: Of course you are.

STRANG: And I was lonely. Just so lonely – and she started quoting Joe Jackson songs to me. You know how much I love those.

ALICE: So do I.

DOMINIC: I don't care about any of this.

DEBORAH: He says quietly fuming.

STRANG: And then it just happened.

ALICE: Over and over again.

STRANG: But every single time I was thinking of you.

DOMINIC: Don't tell me that.

TOGETHER:

ALICE: (TO STRANG))

STRANG: (TO DOMINIC)) – You see how much I need you.

DOMINIC: (TO DEBORAH))

DEBORAH: Somebody kill me.

WALTER ENTERS, HE GOES STRAIGHT TO ALICE AND KNEELS AT HER FEET.

WALTER: Dear One, I can't bear it any longer. We must be united as one.
(PRODUCING RING) Will you marry me ?

STRANG, DOMINIC and DEBORAH: Who the fuck are you ?

ALICE: (ANNOYED) Walter.

STRANG: Who's Walter ?

ALICE: He was my Music Teacher at High School. I gave him a hand job three years ago behind the boys' dunnies and now he's like completely obsessed with me.

WALTER: It's you Alice. Only you Dear One.

ALICE: Stop calling me that.

WALTER: (PRODUCING DAGGER) If I can't have you I'll die.

ALICE: That is like so fake.

WALTER: It's from my operatic version of Romeo and Juliet – written as a tribute to you.

DEBORAH: (TO ALICE) Did you say music teacher ? Where did you go to school ?

ALICE: North Rushton. Why ?

DEBORAH: Me too. (TO WALTER) Mr Maguire.

WALTER: Oh my god - Debbie Prince. Psycho Bitch from Hell. Keep away from me.

WALTER STARTS BACKING AWAY.

DEBORAH: You can't say that anymore. What are the chances of us meeting like this ? It's fate.

WALTER: Get back.

DEBORAH: You can't deny what you felt for me any longer.

WALTER: I never felt anything for you.

DEBORAH: I saw the way you use to look at me. Wonder in you're eyes.

WALTER: I was wondering how anybody could be that stupid.

DEBORAH: Forget this little four eyes. I'll show you what a real woman can do.

STRANG: What a joke.

WALTER: Alice has an IQ of 169. She knew all of Beethoven's concertos before she was nine. That's why I love (TO ALICE) you – and why I could never love (TO DEBORAH) you. Look at that ridiculous tan – just like at school. How many kinds of skin cancer do you have ?

DEBORAH: I'll lose the tan. I'll wear a shroud. I'll turn the colour of snow. I'll do anything to be around you again. To learn from you. To worship you. To bathe in your knowledge.

WALTER: Maybe you should bathe in disinfectant first.

DEBORAH: How can you be so cruel ?

DOMINIC: (TO DEBORAH) How can you ?

STRANG: (TO **DOMINIC**) How can you ?

ALICE: (TO **STRANG**) How can you ?

WALTER: (TO **ALICE**) How can you ?

ALL AT ONCE:

DEBORAH: If only you'd just let me into your life. You'll see I've changed – I've grown up. I'm ready to learn now. I'll read every book in your library – three times each. If you just –

DOMINIC: How can you be interested in him ? He's like ninety seven years old. I'm just as smart as him. I know how to fix 43 different brand of photocopiers. If you just –

STRANG: My little Domino – you see what you drove me to. I had to resort to sleeping with a girl because the pain of not having you was so great. We could be magic together. If you just –

ALICE: Strang my power muscle love machine man. You can't deny the true connection that we have. The soul bonding. When you're inside me you fill me up I never want you to pull out. If you just -

WALTER: Alice – petal of wisdom. Goddess of knowledge. Mozart means nothing next to you. You are every note in my symphony. Every score in my songbook. Without you there is silence. If you just –

DOMINIC: (OVER THE DIN) Stop it. Stop it. Everybody just stop it.

THERE IS SILENCE.

DOMINIC: Okay. I know exactly where all the trouble stems from. What all our problems are.

DEBORAH: So do I.

STRANG: And me.

ALICE: I agree.

WALTER: As do I.

DOMINIC: Our problem is –

TOGETHER:

DEBORAH: (POINTING TO **WALTER**))

DOMINIC: (POINTING TO **DEBORAH**))

STRANG: (POINTING TO **DOMINIC**)) - You !

ALICE: (POINTING TO **STRANG**))

WALTER: (POINTING TO **ALICE**))

BLACKOUT.

END PLAY.