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SF PERUSALS

TIME OF MY LIFE

A Play

by Alan Ayckbourn

SAMUEL FRENCH

samuelfrench.co.uk

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www.samuelfrench.co.uk
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For Amateur Production Enquiries

United Kingdom and World
excluding north america
plays@samuelfrench.co.uk
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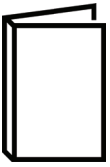
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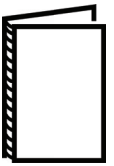
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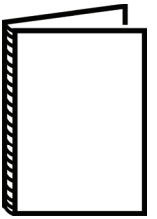
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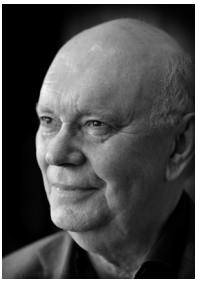
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Alan Ayckbourn has worked in theatre as a playwright and director for over fifty years, rarely if ever tempted by television or film, which perhaps explains why he continues to be so prolific. To date he has written more than 79 plays, many one act plays and a large amount of work for the younger audience. His work has been translated into over 35 languages, is performed on stage and television throughout the world and has won countless awards.

Major successes include: *Relatively Speaking, How the Other Half Loves, Absurd Person Singular, Bedroom Farce, A Chorus of Disapproval,* and *The Norman Conquests.* In recent years, there have been revivals of *Season's Greetings* and *A Small Family Business* at the National Theatre, in the West End *Absent Friends, A Chorus of Disapproval, Relatively Speaking* and *How the Other Half Loves.* In 2015, Chichester mounted a very successful revival of *Way Upstream.*

Artistic Director of the Stephen Joseph Theatre from 1972 – 2009 where almost all his plays have been first staged, he continues to direct his latest new work there. In recent years, he has been inducted into American Theatre's Hall of Fame, received the 2010 Critics' Circle Award for Services to the Arts and became the first British playwright to receive both Olivier and Tony Special Lifetime Achievement Awards. He was knighted in 1997 for services to the theatre.

Image credit: Andrew Higgins.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

After a lifetime of playwriting (I first started as an unpublished writer at the age of ten!) my career has moved steadily forward from the status of untried tyro through to establishment figure to ageing experimentalist!

The work has reflected this. From the early tried and tested plays, (*Relatively Speaking, How the Other Half Loves, The Norman Conquests*, etc.) which thankfully people still seem happy to produce and come to see, through the middle period, larger scale so called "social" pieces (*Man of the Moment, A Chorus of Disapproval*) to the more recent smaller scale departures such as *Private Fears in Public Places, Snake in the Grass and Haunting Julia*, I have continued to experiment with shape and form, whilst I hope continuing to deepen my characters.

Throughout this, though, I have always needed to remind myself of the overriding prime directive drummed into me at an early age by my mentor, Stephen Joseph, that above all else a playwright is a storyteller.

To keep an audience in their seats you need to involve them in a constantly unfolding series of unexpected twists and turns. These can, of course, be the narrative of the story itself as in *Relatively Speaking* or, as with *Woman in Mind* say, through the psychological development of the characters.

One of the nicest things people can ever say to me, coming out of a new play for the first time of seeing it, is "Well, I never saw THAT coming!"

Alan Ayckbourn

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First performed at the Stephen Joseph Theatre in the Round, Scarborough, on 21st April 1992, with the following cast:

GERRY	Russell Dixon
LAURA	Collette O'Neill
GLYN	Richard Garnett
ADAM	Stephen Mapes
STEPHANIE	Karen Drury
MAUREEN	Sophie Heyman
CALVINU **TUTO** **AGGI** **DINKA** **BENGIE**	Terence Booth

Directed by Alan Ayckbourn
Designed by Roger Glossop
Lighting by Mick Hughes

Subsequently performed at the Vaudeville Theatre, London,on 3rd August 1993, with the following cast:

GERRY	Anton Rodgers
LAURA	Gwen Taylor
GLYN	Richard Garnett
ADAM	Stephen Mapes
STEPHANIE	Karen Drury
MAUREEN	Sophie Heyman
CALVINU **TUTO** **AGGI** **DINKA** **BENGIE**	Terence Booth

Directed by Alan Ayckbourn
Designed by Roger Glossop
Lighting by Mick Hughes

CHARACTERS

GERRY, a business man
LAURA, his wife
GLYN, their elder son
ADAM, their younger son
STEPHANIE, Glyn's wife
MAUREEN

CALVINU, a restaurant owner
TUTO, head waiter
AGGI, a waiter
DINKA, another waiter
BENGIE, yet another waiter

} played by the same actor

Scene—Calvinu's restaurant, the Essa de Calvi
Time—past, present and future

ACT I

The restaurant Essa de Calvi.

The restaurant could be Greek, it could be Italian, even French or Spanish. It is none of these. It is whatever we decide to make it. It's a family concern, shabby but clean. Slightly under-lit. Distant piped music of indeterminate ethnic origin is heard from time to time. There can be several tables on view depending on the space available. Only three need be used, though: two "twos" – window tables – set apart at a distance, one downstage left (for **ADAM** *and* **MAUREEN***) and one downstage right (for* **GLYN** *and* **STEPHANIE***) and a large central table set for a party of six. There are entrances upstage centre, left and right. At the start there is a family dinner in progress at the main table. The other two are empty. The meal is all but over. It is around 10.30 p.m. on Saturday, 18th January. Evidence of the supper litters the table. Used coffee cups, dirty plates, sweet-papers, full ashtrays and half empty liqueur glasses. Also, evidence of gift wrapping paper, suggesting that someone has had a birthday.*

At either end of the table sit the parents, **LAURA** *and* **GERRY***, both in their fifties. He is a successful, self-made business man. Originally a builder, he has diversified and managed to weather economic storms and recessions through a combination of astuteness and ruthlessness. There is no doubt that, visibly at least, he is very much the head of the family. A man who rarely if ever expects his words or actions to be questioned. But he hasn't achieved this single-handedly.* **LAURA***, his wife, is also a force to be reckoned with, despite the fact that her*

profile, publicly, may suggest she exists purely to support her husband. But as so often in such partnerships, she has played a vital if largely unsung role in her husband's success. She is just as astute and every bit as determined. Though they are both dressed for their evening out, **GERRY** *is more casually attired than his wife. Around and under* **LAURA***'s chair are some of her birthday presents, now unwrapped. A large mantelpiece clock, a macramé flower basket holder and a slim volume of poems.* **LAURA** *is currently holding her other present, a pair of not unacceptable but modest "craft" ear-rings.* **GERRY** *and* **LAURA** *are a well-matched couple, and if their ambitions and drives have diminished slightly over the years and given way to a certain complacency and self-satisfaction, the pair are quite clearly, as they say, still on the board and in play – especially so far as their dealings with their own family are concerned. The closest of these, their two sons,* **GLYN** *and* **ADAM***, are also present.* **GLYN***, in his late twenties, is at first glance perhaps very much his father's son, a second version of his parent. But he has lived for too long in* **GERRY***'s shadow, has been compared unfavourably to his father just once too often, has tried to compete with an over-competitive parent and failed. He has been groomed to take over the family business, but it is unlikely that the firm will survive his father's death. He has charm but little of his father's drive or ambition. Across the table from him sits his wife,* **STEPHANIE***. In her mid-twenties, she has borne him one child and, as a result of recent emotional upheavals in her marriage, has worn less well than she should have done for someone reasonably comfortably off and with few material worries. One can only assume that in marrying* **GLYN** *she may have hoped she was marrying the father. She has since learnt better. Where she sought strength she has found weakness; instead of decisiveness nothing but vacillation and uncertainty.* **STEPHANIE** *is seated next to her younger brother- in-law,* **ADAM***, who is the apple of his mother's eye. In his early*

twenties, he is a nervous, uncoordinated windmill of a boy and in gatherings such as these hopelessly out of his depth. One of the reasons **ADAM** *is more anxious than usual tonight is due to the behaviour of his own partner seated across the table,* **MAUREEN**. *She is very much the outsider. She is* **ADAM***'s new girlfriend and this is her first meeting with the family. She is very drunk. This has taken the form of a sort of glazed, fixed smiling trance. The room is evidently revolving for her quite rapidly, the floor rocking up and down at regular intervals. Whatever small contribution she might have made earlier to the evening is now reduced to a loud, regular hiccup. Apart from the occasional nervous glance from* **ADAM***, the others have all chosen to act as if she doesn't exist.*

But now the party is nearly at an end. From a distance, they are a jolly group enjoying each other's company. After all, it is **LAURA***'s birthday and no one would want to spoil that.*

Around the table, coffee pot in hand, flits **TUTO***, one of several waiters we shall meet. They all have a marked resemblance, unsurprisingly, since they are all related in various ways to the head of the family and owner of the restaurant,* **ERNESTO CALVINU**. **TUTO** *is eternally cheerful and happy to serve.*

At the start, there are two conversations in progress, one between **GERRY** *and* **GLYN** *and another between* **LAURA** *and* **STEPHANIE***, all talking across each other.* **ADAM** *and* **MAUREEN** *remain very much spectators.* **LAURA** *is holding the ear-rings, evidently a present from* **GLYN** *and* **STEPHANIE**.

The following conversation between **LAURA** *and* **STEPHANIE** *occurs simultaneously with the conversation between* **GERRY** *and* **GLYN** *on page 6. At some stage during the combined exchange,* **TUTO** *serves coffee and*

says his dialogue on page 8. The conversations cease when **MAUREEN** *rushes out of the room on page 8.*

LAURA *(to* **STEPHANIE***)* ...they're so unusual. That's what I love about them. I don't think I've seen anything like them before. Not even in Crete.

STEPHANIE No, as I say, there's this woman we met at the nursery school, she's just started up. She's working from home but she was trained in jewellery making. She's fully trained. But she gave it up to have children but now they're at school she's just starting up again on her own from home...

LAURA I've not seen anything like them anywhere. I think they're just lovely. I think I'll probably go to bed in them...

STEPHANIE They suit you, I thought they'd suit you. They're your colour...

LAURA They are. They're exactly my colour. I wear this colour all the time...

STEPHANIE Yes, I've seen you wearing that colour... You've got that necklace that's not dissimilar, too, haven't you...? You know, the one you sometimes wear with—

LAURA Yes, I have. That's what I mean. I think they're the same stones. Semi-precious...

STEPHANIE Semi-precious, yes—

LAURA I prefer semi-precious, sometimes, you know. For certain occasions. I mean if you're just on your own, slopping around the house. You want to look good for yourself but you don't necessarily want to look that special. I mean for that you want semi-precious, you don't necessarily want precious, do you?

STEPHANIE No. I feel exactly the same. I know you're not supposed to—

LAURA Well, a diamond. A beautiful diamond. That takes a lot of beating...

STEPHANIE Oh well, a diamond... We're not talking about diamonds—

LAURA And sapphires, I love sapphires. Gerry gave me a sapphire bracelet when we first moved to Forest Road...

STEPHANIE I know, I've seen it on you. Oh, I covet that.

LAURA Well, God knows what it cost him. A damn sight more than we could afford in those days. But I love it to death. I wear it a lot...it was the first bit of real jewellery I ever owned.

STEPHANIE Yes—

LAURA You know what I mean, real jewellery...?

STEPHANIE Yes, yes—

LAURA I'd have worn it tonight, only—

STEPHANIE I love that bracelet—

LAURA I wear it a lot. Mind you, I'll wear these a lot, I think... I can see me wearing them a lot...

STEPHANIE I'll give you her address...

LAURA They're lovely... They'll do especially for daytime...

STEPHANIE Well, they're meant for daytime, really... I'll let you have her address. She lives quite near us...

LAURA Lovely, look at the light in them...

STEPHANIE They look very good in daylight. They're daytime jewellery, really. But I think they're unusual, aren't they?

LAURA They're certainly unusual...

STEPHANIE All her stuff's unusual. She does shoe bags as well. I've got her card. I'll give it to you—

LAURA Rubies. I quite like rubies, too. For certain occasions.

STEPHANIE Yes. I'm not so sure about rubies.

The following conversation between **GERRY** *and* **GLYN** *occurs simultaneously with the conversation between* **LAURA** *and* **STEPHANIE**, *above.*

GERRY *(to* **GLYN***)* ...there's no use him complaining about deadlines and what should have been done then and what wasn't done when it should have been done – he has to understand we're talking today—

GLYN Yes, yes, yes—

GERRY we're not talking twenty years ago when a supplier was prepared to wait six, nine months – a year sometimes before he got paid.

GLYN No, no—

GERRY Most of the fellers we deal with nowadays, they're not prepared to wait at all—

GLYN No, no, no—

GERRY because they, in turn, have got cash-flow problems just like anyone else—

GLYN Yes, yes...

GERRY – just as we have—

GLYN Yes...

GERRY and they're not just reaching for things off shelves, not these days—

GLYN No, no...

GERRY they can't afford it any more than we can—

GLYN No, no. Well, I said to him—

GERRY they're having to pay for them, cash up front—

GLYN Yes, I explained to him—

GERRY Those are the basic facts of life. He has to understand them...

GLYN Well, I phoned him three times and—

GERRY I mean, let's put it this way. What he's failing to appreciate – what he is quite transparently failing to appreciate – is the amount of *hidden* subsidy he's getting from us – every time he withholds an account—

GLYN Yes, I know, this is what I was—

GERRY that he has previously – let me finish – that he has previously in writing and technically, legally bindingly agreed to pay...

GLYN Well, it's easy to say that but—

GERRY I'll talk to him. Don't worry, I'll talk to him tomorrow. He's the same as his father, I knew his father and he used to try it on. Eighteen months I had to wait for him, once—

GLYN Yes, I know.

GERRY Eighteen months and then he asked me, would I mind overlooking the interest. I told him get – I told him—

GLYN I know, I know—

GERRY I mean, we were talking three or four hundred quid in interest—

GLYN Yes—

GERRY That was a lot of money—

GLYN It was—

GERRY in those days...

GLYN Quite.

GERRY Times have changed, but it's still no different today—

GLYN No.

GERRY More brandy? Another brandy?

GLYN / **ADAM** *(together)* No thanks, Dad, we need to be – Baby-sitter, you know… / *(softly, across to* **MAUREEN***)* You all right?

MAUREEN *nods miserably, but by way of a reply can only hiccup. She is evidently feeling very sick.*

Simultaneously with the above exchanges, **TUTO** *circles the table offering fresh coffee.* **STEPHANIE**, **MAUREEN**, **GLYN** *and* **ADAM** *all decline when asked.* **LAURA** *and* **GERRY** *both say yes.*

TUTO *(to* **LAURA***)* More coffee? Madama? …Yes? Good. Delicious coffee, with my own nuts. Yes? *(To* **MAUREEN***)* Madametta? More coffee? No? *(To* **STEPHANIE***)* Madama? Some lovely coffee? No? You break my heart. I cry all night. *(To* **GERRY** *)* Mr Stratton? Yes? Yes. Of course. *(To* **GLYN***)* Seerar? No? No coffee? *(To* **ADAM***)* Seerar? Of course. Coffee. No? No coffee. Beautiful coffee. I grow it myself… *(Back to* **MAUREEN**, *whom he obviously fancies)* Madametta? Please? No? Some liqueur? Crème de menthe? Some Crouscac? Grown in my village, very rich, very sweet. Just for the lady?

MAUREEN *looks green.*

No Crouscac? Some more sweet? Smooliboos? That is sugar melted with rum and cream and baked with eggs in a meringue case with a beautiful outside of chocolate and rich fresh cream and *glacé* fruits. Delicious.

MAUREEN*'s stomach turns over.*

Some trickletasse? This is delicious tart with treacle and cream mixed with passion fruit, fresh strawberries and Armagnac—

MAUREEN *rises suddenly from the table and makes a dash for the door. This has the effect of stopping the other conversations.*

Madametta…?

ADAM *(rising, alarmed)* Maureen... *(Hastily, to the others)* Excuse me...

He exits after **MAUREEN.**

TUTO *(slightly bemused)* Madametta, she is...?

LAURA *(rather tight-lipped)* Madametta is slightly under the weather, I'm afraid.

TUTO Ah! I tell Seerar Calvinu...

TUTO *goes off after them.*

A brief silence at the table.

LAURA Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear...

GERRY Yes—

LAURA Where does he find them? Where does that boy find them?

GERRY *(magnanimously)* Well—

LAURA No, seriously, Gerry, there are dozens of girls who'd be glad of him. Literally hundreds walking about out there. They'd give their right legs for a boy like Adam...

STEPHANIE It's not always that straightforward though, is it...?

LAURA It's perfectly straightforward...

STEPHANIE Not always—

LAURA I'm sorry, I don't see the problem, I'm sorry.

STEPHANIE It's meeting them, you have to get to meet them first, don't you? I don't think Adam meets that many girls, does he, Glyn?

GLYN No, I don't think he meets that many—

LAURA He could do if he wanted to – I don't care what they say, even today it's still easier for a man. I mean Glyn met you, didn't he?

STEPHANIE Yes, he did—

LAURA I mean Glyn's never had trouble meeting girls...

STEPHANIE He hasn't—

LAURA There we are, then. No, the trouble with Adam is they meet him. He doesn't have to look, they come out of the woodwork and seek him out, like that one did. He's a sitting target for every little tart in the district.

STEPHANIE Now, I don't think that's very fair—

TUTO *hurries through busily, calling another waiter, who is unseen.*

TUTO Bengie! Bengie! Chella bucketti. Ser madametta machosessa re-gorgettor. *("***BENGIE! BENGIE!** *Fetch a bucket. The young lady has been sick in the Gents." To the others)* It's OK. She's OK...

He goes off.

GERRY Shouldn't someone see how she is?

LAURA She's all right, Adam's with her...

GERRY He's not going to be much use, is he? Not if she's bolted herself in the Ladies...

LAURA She'll manage, it's her own fault. She was knocking them back like a goldfish... She had that champagne cocktail down in one gulp to start with, then she had three glasses of the Chablis—

GLYN That was excellent...

GERRY Yes, it was—

LAURA and at least four refills to my knowledge of that red I never touched...

GERRY Australian that. Good, wasn't it?

GLYN Australian? I thought it was Australian...

LAURA And on top of that she had all that Benedictine, or whatever it was—

STEPHANIE What were you doing, counting her?

LAURA I couldn't help but noticing, could I? I'm surprised none of you did—

GERRY We noticed—

LAURA Not until it was too late, you didn't—

GERRY Well—

LAURA I say I don't know where he finds them.

GERRY It's all right, it won't last. You know Adam...

STEPHANIE It might. How do we know it won't?

LAURA I hope to God it doesn't... I fear for that boy, sometimes.

GERRY He's not a kid now, Laura. He's twenty-four years old... It's his choice.

LAURA He's twenty-three. He's not twenty-four till next October. And I'm saying, it wasn't his choice—

GLYN Twenty-three's a grown man...

LAURA Maybe for you it was, for Adam at that age he's still finding himself. And he needs protecting from girls like that, who are just out for the main chance—

STEPHANIE I think you're being really unfair to her, you know...

GLYN Nobody protected me from girls like that...

LAURA Well, you. You both went into your marriage with your eyes open. Nothing I could do about that. You had to find out for yourselves. Well, you've been through the tunnel, you've both come out the other side, sadder but wiser and with a bit of luck you've learnt your lesson, I hope, and you'll know better next time. But with Adam, it's different. He needs help, he can't cope with these things on his own. He never could.

STEPHANIE He's going to have to one day, isn't he?

LAURA Not while I'm around. I'm amazed at you, Stephanie. I thought as a mother yourself, you might understand how I feel.

STEPHANIE *holds back her reply.*

BENGIE, *a younger waiter who speaks no English, hurries through anxiously.*

BENGIE *(calling behind him)* ...er goopini muckletracker, san? *("The mop in the cleaning cupboard, you say?" To the others)*'Scoos.

BENGIE *exits.*

STEPHANIE I think I'd better see if she needs some help.

LAURA *(rising)* No, it's all right, I'll go. I need to powder my nose, anyway.

STEPHANIE Let me know if I can.

LAURA She'll be right as rain. She just needs her head in a bucket... And quite frankly while we're at it, I do think a son of mine can do a lot better for himself than a hairdresser...

LAURA *goes out.*

GERRY I don't think, somehow, that one's gone down too well with your mother.

STEPHANIE She's fine. She was just very nervous, that's all...

GERRY Nervous?

STEPHANIE Not surprising, meeting you lot. I was nervous...

GLYN What's wrong with being a hairdresser...?

STEPHANIE Nothing wrong with being a hairdresser...

GERRY You know your mother...

STEPHANIE I was a shop assistant, I'm amazed you let me through the front door...

GLYN Ah well. It was only me you were marrying. Didn't matter so much, did it? And it was a very high-class shop, after all...

STEPHANIE I only wish she'd leave Adam alone. He has to find out for himself, doesn't he?

GERRY I've heard a rumour they're closing down, you know...

GLYN What, Thackers?

STEPHANIE Yes, I heard that too somewhere... Fancy. Established nineteen twenty-seven.

GERRY *(gloomily)* Sign of the times. Sign of the times.

GLYN By the way – do you think she liked the clock I gave her? Mother?

GERRY She loved it. Did you not see her face when she opened it?

GLYN Yes I did. I thought she seemed a bit – disapproving.

GERRY She was over the moon with it.

GLYN I can take it back and change it.

STEPHANIE Don't bother. You did your best. You spent days choosing it. You never take that much trouble with my birthday.

GLYN Well, you – generally know what you want, don't you...?

Pause.

BENGIE *returns with a mop and bucket and hurries through.*

GERRY She's attractive, though. That girl. Good looker...

GLYN Oh, yes...

STEPHANIE Yes. *(She makes to rise)* Well, we must be thinking of—

GERRY Baby-sitters?

GLYN Yes, right—

STEPHANIE Otherwise we'll have to pay her for another two hours or something…

GLYN Probably tucked up in our bed with her boyfriend by now…

STEPHANIE *(grimly)* She'd better not be…

GERRY You bring the car?

GLYN Oh, yes…

GERRY You all right to drive?

STEPHANIE Who do you think's driving? Muggins here.

GERRY You're all right?

STEPHANIE Of course.

GERRY Only they've been tightening up…

STEPHANIE I've had half a glass all evening. You know I never do…

GLYN You hardly ate anything either…

STEPHANIE What do you mean? I ate mountains.

GLYN I was watching. Three mouthfuls and you pushed it away.

STEPHANIE Well, I ate a lot for me… Anyway, I have to be careful. I start putting on weight, you're the first to complain.

GLYN Never.

STEPHANIE You do. A tub of lard in tights, he called me the other night…

GLYN I did not, you called yourself that…

STEPHANIE Well, maybe I did but I didn't want you going repeating it in the pub, did I? In front of everyone?

GERRY You look lovely, Steph, you look a picture. *(He embraces* **STEPHANIE** *with mock passion)*

STEPHANIE Here's someone who appreciates me. *(She kisses* **GERRY***)* That was a lovely meal, thank you, Gerry… As always.

GERRY Well, it did cross my mind to take her somewhere else and then I thought, well… It's a tradition this place, isn't it? Every birthday, anniversary – we always seem to end up here. And it's your mother's favourite, so why not?

GLYN We've been using it a bit lately. From the office. It's quite convenient. Have you ever tried lunch here?

GERRY No, never lunch…

GLYN Very good. Reasonable prices, too, aren't they?

STEPHANIE Don't ask me. You never take me out to lunch.

GLYN I would do, I would do. You've only to ask…

GERRY I'd take him up on that, Steph.

STEPHANIE I will, don't worry.

GERRY I'll see you to the door…

STEPHANIE There's no need.

GERRY No, I'll get the bill at the same time— *(He stops them)* Listen, just before we… Steph. Glyn.

GLYN Yes.

GERRY I hope you appreciate, this business with you two getting together again – patching it up between you – it couldn't have been a better birthday present for her, I'm telling you.

STEPHANIE *(not wishing to prolong this)* Well, maybe—

GERRY No, Steph, I don't think you properly – I mean Glyn and I, we know her – and sometimes she comes over, you know, as maybe a bit blunt, plain spoken, you know. Even tough, sometimes, yes. Well, yes, Laura can be tough. But underneath all that, she's a very vulnerable woman. A very caring person and someone who gets hurt quite easily.

STEPHANIE Yes, I'm sure.

GERRY Now you two, you've had your moments – you and her, Steph. I know you have. You've had your disagreements but let's say, starting today, it's a new leaf, all right? A new leaf for you and her, Steph. And a new leaf for you two. Right.

GLYN Dead right.

GERRY *puts his arm around* **STEPHANIE. STEPHANIE** *stands rather awkwardly.*

GERRY You see, if anything happened to... Well, you know how we both care for Timmy, don't you?

STEPHANIE Oh, yes.

GERRY Laura's always – I think she's always secretly dreamt of grandchildren – I think she wanted grandchildren more than she wanted children...

STEPHANIE Difficult—

GLYN Oh, yes, she's always wanted them, I think... I mean she's never said it in so many words, but—

STEPHANIE Well, she's got one...

GERRY Yes, but when we thought, you know, you and Glyn were all washed up, I mean... Maybe not get to see Stephanie – and Timmy again...

STEPHANIE *(slightly impatiently)* Yes, we're back together now though, aren't we?

GERRY *(kissing her again)* Yes, you are! You are! *(To* **GLYN***)* And he's going to behave himself from now on, aren't you?

GLYN It's all in the past, Dad.

GERRY Send her packing. Do you hear?

GLYN I've sent her packing.

GERRY We used to have a word for women like that—

GLYN Yes, OK—

GERRY Not a very pleasant word—

STEPHANIE Sorry, Gerry, we really must go—

GERRY *(ignoring her)* No more, do you hear? No more.

GLYN No more, promise.

GERRY Word of honour?

GLYN Word of honour, Dad.

GERRY *(grasping* **STEPHANIE** *again)* You stand by this one, you hear me? You stand by this lovely girl or you'll have me to answer to next time—

ADAM *returns rather anxiously.*

STEPHANIE How is she?

ADAM She's all right, she's—

GLYN Does she need a lift anywhere...?

ADAM No, she's fine. I'll see her home. She just needs her handbag...

STEPHANIE Has she been sick?

ADAM Yes.

STEPHANIE Best thing.

ADAM In the Gents.

GERRY The Gents?

ADAM Yes.

GERRY Bloody hell, Adam.

ADAM She was in that much of a hurry she misread the signs...

GERRY There's a bright pink door and a bright blue door, what else does she need?

ADAM Well, she wasn't feeling too good...

GERRY All the women in the world and you have to take up with a colourblind hairdresser. I don't know... Is she still in there?

ADAM No, she's in the Ladies now...

GERRY Just as well. I want to use the other one...

ADAM I'll just get her bag. Take her home.

GERRY *(as he goes)* Bloody hell, I don't know. It's your mother's birthday, son.

GERRY *goes out.*

ADAM Sorry.

STEPHANIE Take her home. She'll be all right. Probably have a bit of a hangover, that's all.

ADAM I don't know why she... She doesn't drink, you see. Normally. Hardly at all.

STEPHANIE I was saying, she was probably nervous.

ADAM Yes, she was. I mean, I told her there was no need to be but—

GLYN Nevermind. You know what they say about buses. There'll be another along in a minute. Same with women—

STEPHANIE Oh shut up, that's fat lot of help, isn't it...?

GLYN Plenty more fish—

ADAM It's not as simple as that. The trouble is – I'm in love with her—

GLYN *(laughing)* Oh, great...

ADAM I am.

GLYN Has there ever been one you haven't been in love with?

ADAM Not like this. Never like this.

STEPHANIE She's certainly in love with you...

ADAM You think so? How do you know?

STEPHANIE Because I was looking at her—

ADAM You could tell by looking at her?

STEPHANIE Of course. It was obvious. She couldn't take her eyes off you.

GLYN What do you mean? She was touching me up under the table for half the meal.

ADAM She was not!

STEPHANIE She certainly wasn't. Or I'd have cut her fingers off.

ADAM You really think she loves me?

STEPHANIE I keep saying. Hasn't she told you?

ADAM Yes, but...

STEPHANIE Then she most probably means it. *(Pleasantly to* **GLYN***)* Some people do...

LAURA *returns.*

LAURA *(with some satisfaction)* Well, she looks a right mess now, I must say. I doubt if they'll let her in here again in a hurry.

ADAM I must take her bag to her. Is she all right?

LAURA As far as I know. I left her in there, washing her face. *(To* **GLYN** *and* **STEPHANIE***)* She was sick in the Gents, you know. Not even the Ladies.

STEPHANIE Yes, we heard.

ADAM *starts to hunt for* **MAUREEN***'s handbag.*

LAURA There's a great queue of men waiting to get in while they clean up.

STEPHANIE Oh, dear.

LAURA Including your father.

STEPHANIE Oh, well. Good-night, Laura.

LAURA Oh, are you both off? Good-night, then.

LAURA *and* **STEPHANIE** *kiss quite sedately.*

And thank you for the lovely present, Steph. As I say, I'll wear them all the time. Good-night, Glyn. And thank you for the clock...

GLYN *(anxiously)* It was what you wanted, was it? You really liked it?

ADAM *(having located the bag under the table)* Excuse me...

LAURA Just a minute, Adam...

ADAM I just have to—

LAURA Just a quick word. *(She embraces* **GLYN**, *rather peremptorily)* Goodnight, dear.

GLYN 'Night, Mum. See you Thursday.

LAURA Thursday?

GLYN We're bringing Timmy up to visit you, aren't we?

LAURA *(unenthusiastically)* Oh yes, lovely.

STEPHANIE Good-night, Adam. And remember what I told you.

ADAM Oh, yes. Right. 'Night.

GLYN 'Night, Ad. *(As they go, to an unseen waiter)* Thank you. That was lovely.

STEPHANIE *(likewise)* Yes, lovely, yes. Thank you.

STEPHANIE *and* **GLYN** *exit.*

LAURA What's she been telling you, then?

ADAM Who?

LAURA Stephanie. What was it she told you?

ADAM *(evasively)* Oh, nothing. I forget.

LAURA Well. I think you know what I'm going to say, don't you?

ADAM Yes.

LAURA Do I need to say it?

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