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CONCORD
THEATRICALS

A GIRL IN A CAR WITH A MAN

by Robert Alan Evans

SAMUEL FRENCH

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FIRST PERFORMANCE

A Girl In A Car With A Man was first performed at the Royal Court in 2004. The director was Joe Hill Gibbins, with design by Ultz, lighting design by Johanna Towan and Ultz, and sound by Paul Arditti. The cast was as follows:

ALEX	Andrew Scott
STELLA	Claudie Blakley
DAVID	Mark Bonnar
PAULA	Sukie Smith
POLICEMAN	Mark Leadbetter

CHARACTERS

ALEX
STELLA
DAVID
PAULA
POLICEMAN

Darkness.

Over everything, a film plays. It is the grainy footage from a CCTV camera. A girl playing in the street. The low light of an autumn afternoon comes through the trees. A man takes the girl by the hand and leads her to a car. She gets in the passenger seat, the car drives off. The film plays again. Fades.*

Darkness.

We see **STELLA** *driving. The glow of the dashboard on her face. There are rhythms around her body. The beat of the rain on the car. The wash of the windscreen wipers, the clunk of the road beneath.*

ALEX *is lit bright with the neon lights of a tube train.*

PAULA *is lit by a CCTV monitor, her eyes flicker, taking in every detail.*

DAVID *is lit by a single lamp. In front of him are the parts of an old transistor radio.*

The sounds of a radio being tuned in.

RADIO Heavy downpours will continue across the country and well into tonight, floods are predicted across many areas as rainfall levels reach their highest since nineteen seventy-six…

Static.

---

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RADIO …Another from the legendary Charlie Parker in tonight's non-stop jazz hour…

Static.

Radio 4 pips.

Static.

*The hot sound of a trumpet squealing.**

Static.

Well, it was only after fifteen years I realised what was going on, where all the light was going, somewhere in the universe there was a stellar explosion and I was feeling it in my dreams, picking up on it…

Static.

The sound of the trumpet again, a long high note. It sounds like the screech of brakes.*

Simultaneously the light flickers out on **ALEX**, *snaps out on* **DAVID** *and* **STELLA.**

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1.

The rain is washing over fields and over a cottage. Quite ramshackle.

We can hear the rain beating off the tiles on the roof and gushing down drains.

DAVID, *wearing a woollen jumper that is too big for him, is standing in front of* **STELLA**, *whose hair is plastered to her face and to her shoulders. She is deathly pale and shivering.*

DAVID You.

STELLA I…I saw the light here.

I'm sorry.

There's been an accident.

DAVID *is silent.*

On the road.

Can I come in?

DAVID *moves to let her in.*

I was fiddling, trying to get some music.

DAVID *is silent.*

It's raining.

DAVID Yes.

STELLA I hate jazz.

DAVID I didn't realise.

STELLA It was non-stop; the man said it could go on all night.

DAVID It's pouring.

STELLA So I reached out without taking my eyes off…all that rain, I couldn't see.

DAVID I didn't hear it.

STELLA And I must have hit the wrong button because all of a sudden it's twice as loud. There's a button that does that. I don't use it.

DAVID *(to himself)* It's pouring. How could you not notice that?

STELLA A trumpet, screaming, solo, I've never heard anything like it.

DAVID Like what?

STELLA I took my eyes off for a second, just to get rid of it. I mean I wouldn't have minded just switching the whole thing off, I'd reached that point where I wouldn't have minded, but I couldn't see the right button at first... Should've punched it.

DAVID Punched it?

STELLA Should've punched it into the dashboard.

I'm staring right at it and I still couldn't find the button, hadn't done it, but I look up, because you do don't you...after you've looked down a certain time, you get nervous. So I look up and...there's someone in the road.

DAVID What?

STELLA ...

DAVID You hit someone?

STELLA ...I don't know.

2.

ALEX – *a young man, striking-looking, like he'd smile at you in a bar and you wouldn't know if it was good or bad.*

ALEX Rattle. Rattle. Rattle.

My body is against some poor girl whose face is likewise up against the armpit of a businessman.

No doubt he's pressed against fellows and ladies and we're all rattling along together.

Dead.

Comfortable like.

The carriage filled with the stale and tired smell of office workers.

Normal.

Normal Friday.

Except for me.

Except for me feeling a bit...opulent.

One cute boy, medium build.

Hairy.

Notices my stare.

I can't resist.

"I want to fuck you" I mouth at him.

Slow like.

Obvious.

Bad.

Unfortunately a screech in the carriage and the white flash of metal on metal light me up. Far too dramatic.

Me standing staring, mouthing.

Scares him.

See it in his eyes.

Scared.

Should've had him on the floor, his back to the rails, speeding along and looking up at me.

Should've had him. Looking up at me.

The girl I'm resting against twists her neck and stares at me. My half-erection pressing on her back.

Smiles at me.

Sinister.

Something wild in her eyes.

3.

A closed-circuit television control room. It is dimly lit. There are no windows. **PAULA** *comes to the end of a tape she has been watching.** *She is obviously tired. Her phone goes. She takes it out, looks at it and then puts it to silent, placing it on the table beside her. She watches it until it stops and the light has gone off.*

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4.

DAVID *and* **STELLA**, *the living room.* **DAVID** *is wet.*

DAVID Nothing.

STELLA What?

DAVID There was nothing out there.

STELLA Oh.

You're soaked.

DAVID I know.

STELLA Take those things off, I'll get a towel.

DAVID What about your car?

STELLA What about it?

DAVID You were driving.

STELLA Yes. But you just said there was nothing?

DAVID No.

STELLA Well then.

You'll catch your death. Come on.

DAVID I'm okay.

STELLA No one likes a summer cold, it's inappropriate.

DAVID It's October.

STELLA Don't be clever.

DAVID I thought there'd be something there.

STELLA Like what?

DAVID Skid marks. Tyre tracks. Broken glass.

STELLA But there wasn't?

DAVID No.

STELLA Maybe they were washed away.

DAVID I'll phone the police.

STELLA I've done that. I've phoned them. They said to hold tight, they said they'd come straight out.

...

Only they were quite busy.

DAVID Busy!?

STELLA They said there was flooding. They said people were floating out the windows.

Not literally.

DAVID Someone could be hurt.

STELLA There are sandbags.

DAVID I mean someone could be hurt, out there.

STELLA Right.

DAVID Did you tell them that? Did you tell them about the crash?

STELLA No.

DAVID You were shocked. I'll phone them again.

He picks up the phone.

STELLA Actually...listen...that's what I wanted to say. When you were gone, well, I had some time to think it through...it's a lovely place and I just sat here and I went over it again, you know, sort of replayed it and do you know I don't think I've been telling it quite right.

DAVID What?

STELLA Well, when I thought about it I realised it was just me. On the road. I guess I wasn't looking properly. And all the water coming down the windscreen like that, I made a mistake, it was like a river, easy to slip. So we slipped.

DAVID We?

STELLA Me and the car.

DAVID I couldn't see a car.

STELLA Well, it's dark blue. It's almost black.

DAVID I couldn't see it.

STELLA So you keep saying, and I'm agreeing, I'm not surprised.

DAVID I could've been looking in the wrong place. They could be lying there. I should go again.

STELLA I was daydreaming. I was thinking of things. That's all.

And that fucking radio.

When I looked up I thought I saw something that wasn't there. Have you never done that?

DAVID No.

STELLA Well, good for you.

DAVID *stares at her.*

Look. Calm down. Have a seat.

DAVID Yes.

He stays standing.

I don't know what we're meant to do.

STELLA We wait for the police and then they'll take my details and probably yours and… I don't know, I've never done this before.

DAVID I didn't even know it was raining. I should've known that. I was just fixing the radio and then…when I went out there it's all changed. All gone. I thought, 'Where's it all gone?' Underwater.

STELLA So, what's your name? Just to practice. They'll probably ask you that.

DAVID David.

STELLA Dave? Davie? You like either of those?

DAVID No.

STELLA Single? Married? Divorced?

DAVID I –

STELLA Single.

DAVID Look / are you sure...

STELLA Height...five eleven, medium build, brown eyes, age... late thirties.

DAVID What are you doing?

STELLA Practicing. Description.

DAVID You said you hit someone.

STELLA I didn't.

DAVID You said someone was in the road.

STELLA Did I? Yes. Yes I did say that.

...

...

It was just me. Really. I drift sometimes, you know. And the rain. I mean listen to that. Listen to it.

How could you not notice that?

5.

ALEX Shower, bubbles in my hair, bubbling and rattling off the skin on my back.

Hand leisurely over my nipples, my soapy stomach and then the round of my cock.

It's a short, one-fingered journey to slip down the crack of my arse – smooth, shaved, my finger slipping up and down.

I don't...

I DO!

I pretend to be fucked with my arse in the air and my cheek against the cold of the tiles, water running over my eyes, impossible to see who it is, who could be ramming it in so hard?

SO!

HARD!

Out. Towelled. New. Clean.

Moisturise.

Moisturise again.

Look at myself. Naked. Lovely. That's lovely there. That bit's lovely. Pose. Look at myself.

Shit.

Shit *me*!

It's one of those nights. One of those. Oh Jesus!

I look like I've caught a star between my teeth and I'm just blazing with it.

Good night for a fuck. Feel like a fuck.

First things first. Harness it. Be simple. Just underwear. Easy. I slip on a pair of Calvins and I feel this sureness inside. Like my planets coming into line.

Trousers on and then tugged down to reveal the waistband of my pants, a temptation, even to me.

Consider a wank. Would spoil things somehow. Anticipation better and all that…

Then again…

Before I can make up my mind I hear her.

Radio on.

Mind of its own.

Alarm set wrong.

I don't like Steps, I hate fucking –

Those poofs who put on foundation to hide their fucked up faces and stand on the dance floor like they just sucked a lemon doing the moves to Tragedy, trying to outdo one another as if there were nothing in their heads at all. Nothing at all! I'm not someone you would see and think 'They're gay' but Kylie.

Kylie on my radio.

She makes me dance is all I'll say.

She makes me fucking dance.

Phone a friend, see what time. Where? Who? Could go round for a drink. See you, see you, loving it already.

Dance my steps through the kitchen, kicking up my heels. Through the bedroom and I can see his clothes lying on the floor, strewn around like clues, where he stood, where he took his jacket off. Been home and out already.

Into the living room and see myself in the great big wall of glass that looks out over the city.

It's dark outside and the moon's made it to being very nearly full. Clear skies. The city strung out below. Me up high over it all.

I imagine myself from below, if you were walking and you were just to glance up, just see me in the window. 'Who's that?' you'd think. 'Dancing those steps. Who's that?'

And the telly, where he's left it on, plays silent in the window. Superimposed on the night.

A newsflash they've been playing all day.

The photo of a girl. A school photo.

Bright-eyed.

Blue background.

Smiling out.

It flicks to the dull footage they have.

Her last moves caught on security cameras. Grainy like. Shadowy.

The way she reaches up, takes his hand.

Across the city she's multiplied times a hundred. A thousand.

People getting in from work, opening a bottle of wine, their heads turned towards it. I can see them in the buildings below, families sitting round with their dinner, watching on screen. Every detail.

And I'm stuck, watching her. Imagining that. Imagining what he'll do to her. What it's like. What's that like? …

I see myself, as if from below, down on the street. Standing in the window. Dead still in my boyfriend's high-rise apartment. A girl's face on the television.

A phone in my hand and I've forgotten why.

I could speak to him.

Give him a ring.

Get him at the top of some mountain somewhere.

That's where he'd be.

Lying with his bike beside him.

Just lying there with his eyes closed.

Waiting for me.

I can imagine that.

The phone being in my hand and all, seems like an opportunity. Not to do anything, not to say anything special. Just to see him. Maybe. Tell him I want him. Tell him I'm home.

On screen she opens the door. Gets in the passenger seat.

The car drives off.

I turn off the lights. Slip out unseen.

6.

The CCTV control room. **PAULA** *is watching a monitor, over her shoulder a* **POLICEMAN** *is watching as well. They watch until the footage ends.*

POLICEMAN That's it?

PAULA Yes.

POLICEMAN Not much is it?

PAULA No.

POLICEMAN There's nothing more?

PAULA No.

POLICEMAN And that's normal, is it?

PAULA What?

POLICEMAN Just to disappear like that?

PAULA ...

POLICEMAN I mean no sightings. Nothing on tape.

PAULA No.

No, it's not normal. I don't know what it is. There's a camera at the end of this street. He should come up on that, but I've checked. I've checked it for the whole day. This is all there is.

They both look at the monitor.

POLICEMAN It's funny isn't it. I mean it looks so...

PAULA What?

POLICEMAN Well...normal.

I mean if you saw that you wouldn't bat an eye. You'd probably smile. We're trained to smile, puts people at their ease. But if I saw that I might actually smile. Man with his daughter. Nothing suspicious there.

PAULA Is that all you came for?

POLICEMAN What?

PAULA Did you want anything?

POLICEMAN Yeah. I've been sent up – Well, my partner's been sent up, but he had to go to the chemist, so I said I'd come and pick up the tapes.

PAULA I've sent it. They've got a copy.

POLICEMAN No, they want all the tapes. From all the cameras.

PAULA Why?

POLICEMAN Evidence. We'll need to look thought them ourselves. Poor bastard, looking through all them. Me probably. Poor bastard.

PAULA But I've told them. Nothing's come up. I've nearly finished checking them all.

POLICEMAN I expect they just want to go through it themselves.

PAULA Why?

POLICEMAN Make sure. Get the experts in.

PAULA There's nothing on them.

POLICEMAN Well, so you say, but / –

PAULA They're wasting their time.

POLICEMAN Well, that's hardly for us / to –

PAULA You're wasting your time. I've been checking everything. Every way out. Every camera. He knew exactly where they were. He's not wasting his time. He's miles away. Look at you. Coming in here. What for? You should be out there. You should be searching for her.

POLICEMAN We are.

PAULA How?

POLICEMAN Dogs. There are dogs out there right now looking for her. And volunteers. Locals, police, the press. They're all out there searching for her.

Especially the press. Love it. The hunt. Divers. They'll be dredging the river tonight.

We've left no stone unturned.

...

...

They asked you to look through the tapes did they?

PAULA What?

POLICEMAN Well, someone's asked you to look through them have they?

PAULA No.

POLICEMAN Oh.

...

...

Knew her did you?

PAULA No. Why do you say that?

POLICEMAN Well, it just sounds like maybe you knew her.

PAULA No.

POLICEMAN Personal.

PAULA I didn't know her.

POLICEMAN It just sounded like it.

PAULA Why?

POLICEMAN It just did.

PAULA I didn't know her.

...

I just wonder if I saw her, you know.

She might've walked past my house on the way to school. They do that. They walk past my garden. Swearing and hitting each other and screaming like...well, you wouldn't believe.

People say they're dangerous.

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