

LOVE THE ONE YOU HURT

A one act play by Andrew Gunn

LOVE THE ONE YOU HURT

CHARACTERS:

Jen, female, 20s, an actor

Tom, male, 20s, an actor

SCENE:

A nondescript rehearsal space. Jen and Tom refer to their scripts as they read through the scene.

PROPS:

2x scripts

1x handbag (Jen)

2x glasses of water

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Tom sits, leafs through his script. Jen bustles into the room, flushed. Tom stands.

JEN

Oh, God . . . Yes, I made it. I'm here, I'm here.

TOM

Uh, you look . . . Can I get you a drink?

JEN

Water. Water.

Tom fetches a glass of water, which Jen doesn't drink. They sit. Jen takes her script from her handbag. They settle.

TOM

. . . okay. You don't mind rehearsing here?

JEN

No. Here's fine.

TOM

We should probably . . .

JEN

Yes.

TOM

. . . just get right into it.

They open their scripts.

TOM

All right. So . . . should we read the actions?

JEN

Just the dialogue, I think. Are you nervous?

TOM

No. No.

JEN

I'll be gentle.

TOM

All right.

(beat)

God, it's cold out there.

JEN

Stamp your feet. On the *mat*, not the parquet. Yeah, place takes a minute to warm up. Would you like a whisky?

TOM

Whisky?

JEN

Brandy from a Saint Bernard or a whisky from me.

TOM

Whisky from you, please. Hm.

JEN

What?

TOM

You have a nice kitchen.

JEN

Are you joking?

TOM

No, no. Breakfast bar, block of knives, no microwave. I like that.

JEN

I think you need one of these.

Jen mimes pouring and serving. Tom lifts his own glass of water.

TOM

That's serious stuff.

JEN

You mean *I'm* not serious.

TOM

I mean I like it.

JEN

You're a very serious young man.

TOM

Is it not just that I can't dance?

JEN

I'll tell you later why you can't dance.

TOM
My jokes aren't funny, then.

JEN
I never met a man who told so many jokes who was so serious.

TOM
Do you know any good jokes?

JEN
Man walks into a bar. I forget the rest. You don't smoke.

TOM
I don't mind if you do.

JEN
Do you mind working the lighter?

TOM
(mimes lighting her cigarette)
Snap.

JEN
(mimes inhaling/exhaling)
Did I scare you?

TOM
Scare me?
(beat)
At the club. Well. Doesn't happen very often. Not to me.

JEN
What did you think about?

TOM
. . . when?

JEN
When I had my hand around you.

TOM
Oh, then.

JEN
Then.

TOM
God, I don't . . . remember.

JEN
You do remember.

TOM
Probably hoping nobody would see us.

JEN
Why?

TOM
Well, it's . . . if like a bouncer had . . .

JEN
You weren't thinking about the bouncers.

TOM
No. Just. Self-conscious. I suppose it looked like we were kissing.

JEN
Weren't we kissing?

TOM
We were also kissing.

JEN
Did you think you'd come?

TOM
God, you ask a lot of questions.

JEN
I do.

TOM
I think *I* should ask some questions.

JEN
That would certainly stop me.

TOM
Well, and for symmetry.

JEN

But make them worth it. Don't ask me what my name is.
Ask me something you want to know.

TOM

. . . will you put your hands on me again?

JEN

Yes.

(mimes smoking)

When they're available.

TOM

What made you come over to me?

JEN

You want a compliment.

TOM

Maybe.

JEN

I saw you with your friends. And that girl. They all left and
you stayed. Something told me you wouldn't flake.

TOM

I wouldn't "flake"?

JEN

You wouldn't give me a line and run off. You wouldn't
charm yourself out of the moment. You wouldn't say no.

TOM

You were all over me. Who would say no?

JEN

A lot of men would.

TOM

. . . their loss.

JEN

I would say so. Of course I would. But they might say they
got away with something. Men are afraid of women. *You're*
afraid of women.

TOM

I don't think so.

JEN

You don't feel a *bit* like you're stuck in a web and I'm a black widow crawling towards you with a big, hungry . . . open-mouthed smile?

TOM

Well . . . now I do. A bit. Should we do the . . .

Jen kisses Tom quickly, and stays close to him, counting beats until her line—

JEN

You're trembling.

TOM

Just cold.

JEN

It's not cold anymore. Spiders like it hot.

TOM

Um.

Another kiss.

JEN

You are afraid, but you came up anyway. I like that. I wonder if it's courage or self-hatred.

TOM

I'm not afraid.

JEN

I want you to hurt me.

Jen kisses him, a little longer.

TOM

Um . . .

JEN

Yes.

TOM

I think I didn't . . .

JEN

I want you to hurt me.

TOM
What . . . do you mean, like how?

JEN
Use your imagination.

TOM
No, no. No, look—look—

JEN
Come here.

TOM
This . . .

JEN
(mimes stubbing out cigarette)
Come here. Crowd me.

Tom moves closer but they don't touch.

TOM
I don't think . . .

JEN
You *do* think. *Don't*. I don't want to hurt *you*.

TOM
I . . . maybe said something and you thought I was into that kind of, but . . . I'm not.

JEN
I know you're not. And you did say something. You said you wanted inside me.

Jen mimes a kiss without actually touching Tom—

JEN
“I want inside you.”

TOM
With . . . your consent.

JEN
You have my consent. Look. Hands by my sides, you don't have to touch me. Just look at me. Look at me. Yes, look. The rest of the room goes dark. Will you kiss me? Will you kiss me again?

Tom mimics Jen's first kiss: it's short, but he stays close and counts beats—

JEN

(whispers)

Put your hands on my shoulders. Put your hands on my shoulders.

Tom kisses her again.

JEN

You taste of the land.

TOM

You taste . . . earthy.

JEN

It's the peat. I have a question. Did you ever, in a club or in a bar, did you have a woman all over you. Dance with you. Give you all the signals. And you had your hands on each other, and you kissed, and then you took her number and never called. Or she called you and you never answered.

TOM

Yeah, I've done that.

JEN

Why?

TOM

She, like . . .

JEN

This is one girl?

TOM

Yeah.

JEN

Just one?

TOM

This one. She, like, she patted me on the back.

JEN

She patted you . . .

TOM

We'd danced a bit, we were kissing and . . .

JEN

And your hands . . .

TOM

Small—on the small of her back. And, we kissed, we . . . hugged, and she patted me on the back.

JEN

Show me how.

Tom mimes without touching Jen.

TOM

Like, uh . . . I don't know, I didn't like it.

JEN

Why?

TOM

I don't know. Made me feel like a wee boy. It was like your mother pats you on the back.

JEN

Did you tell her you didn't like it?

TOM

No.

JEN

Did you kiss her again?

TOM

Yeah. Yeah.

JEN

Did you walk her out?

TOM

Yeah, we went . . . looking for a taxi. I waved one down for her.

JEN

Did she invite you in? Share the ride?

TOM

No. Different directions. She asked me what I wanted. She said "Be a man."

JEN
“Be a man.”

TOM
I said, so “can I have your number”. She gave me . . . and I said goodnight.

JEN
You didn’t call.

TOM
No.

JEN
Because she patted you on the back.

TOM
I didn’t like it. I was a dick. I’d had too much to drink.

JEN
Did you have too much to drink tonight?

TOM
Listen. I liked dancing with her. I liked to flirt with her. I don’t think I wanted to go home with her. I shouldn’t have asked for her number, but she put me on the spot. This is different.

JEN
Because you did come home with me.

TOM
I like you.

JEN
If I patted you on the back, would you leave?

TOM
No.

JEN
If I asked you to pat me on the back, would you leave?

TOM
. . . no.

JEN
Then do it. Please.

TOM

I think you're trying to get inside my head.

JEN

I think I'm already in. Put your hands on the small of my back. Please.

(beat)

You like that more.

Tom gestures without touching her. They stand close.

JEN

Mmm, that's my skirt.

TOM

That's right.

JEN

Move inside.

TOM

. . . there?

JEN

Inside.

TOM

It's tight.

JEN

Take one of your hands out.

TOM

Hm.

JEN

Push it down.

TOM

Mm. Let me get the, uh . . .

JEN

I can feel you here.

TOM

I know.

JEN
Push it down.

TOM
Yeah . . .

JEN
(whispers)
Push it down.

TOM
(whispers)
Oh, my God . . .

JEN
Hit me there. Hit me there.
(beat)
Hit me.

Tom hesitates, mimes a slap.

JEN
I said hit me.

Tom mimes a harder slap.

JEN
Pull this off.

TOM
Jesus . . .

JEN
Pull—

TOM
(mimes pulling Jen's top off)
Where's your bedroom?

JEN
I don't remember. Hit me again. Hold me. Hit me.

Tom isn't sure what to do with his hands. Jen steps back, lowers her script.

TOM
Are you all right?

JEN
Yes. Do you mind if we try something?

TOM
Uh, sure.

JEN
Just for kicks.

TOM
Sure.

JEN
We swap the lines.

TOM
Swap lines?

JEN
You read me and I'll read you.

TOM
Uh . . . yeah. Why?

JEN
Just for kicks.

TOM
Will it help?

JEN
Let's see.

Jen gestures; she and Tom switch places.

TOM
God. Okay. This is confusing.

JEN
Is it?

TOM
No, just . . . Okay.

JEN
All right. Your line, then.

TOM
Do you want me down . . .

JEN
Yes.

Tom crouches on the floor, reaches up.

TOM
Come on.

JEN
The floor's cold.

TOM
I'm warm.

Jen kneels next to him. They kiss.

TOM
You kiss like a teenager.

JEN
How should I kiss?

TOM
Like a teenager. No, don't take anything off. Kiss me there.

JEN
Watch your head.

TOM
. . . "Giggles."

JEN
Didn't do much of this when I was a teenager . . .

TOM
Make up for lost time. Bite me there.

JEN
. . . here?

TOM
Um. "Moans."

JEN
Actually do the moans.

TOM
Mm?

JEN
Do them, do the moans.

TOM
It's not dialogue.

JEN
It's speech.

TOM
It's not . . . language.

JEN
It is language.

TOM
Jesus.
(*moans*)

JEN
. . . like that?

TOM
Make it hurt.

Jen mimes a bite. Tom moans.

TOM
And there. And there . . .

JEN
Here?

TOM
You're afraid.

JEN
I've done this before.

TOM
You're afraid of what I'll ask you to do.

JEN
Well, you're the kind of woman has a secret black box
under her bed.

TOM
Can you reach the knives?

JEN
That's not funny.

TOM
Can you reach them?

JEN
No.

TOM
Would you like to see it?

JEN
What?

TOM
The box under my bed. Would you like to see it?

JEN
I'd like to go down on you.

TOM
I suddenly remember where my bedroom is.

Tom stands up, grabs Jen's hand. They move around, as if to another room.

TOM
Swap back?

JEN
No.

(beat)
Jesus . . . wait. I can't . . .

TOM
Come in.

JEN
I can't do this.

TOM
Let me light some of these.

JEN
Tell me your name.

TOM

You'll do anything to stop me now.
(mimes lighter)

Candle.

JEN

I can't do this.

TOM

Of course you can. Candle.

JEN

I can't hurt you.

TOM

You can't hurt me. Candle. You hit me, you bit me. Candle.
 If you had a line, you've crossed it . . . Candle . . . And I'd
 like to see what you want to do next.

(mimes taking the box from under the bed)

JEN

I think I want to leave.

TOM

And if you leave. What you'll see, for the next week and
 whenever you're afraid . . . a woman, naked and candle-lit,
 and fucking wet, standing in front of you. I know you want
 to leave . . . Candle . . . But what do you want to do *first*?

(mimes opening the box)

JEN

. . . first.

(mimes taking things from the box)

Oh, my God.

TOM

Whatever you want to do, I consent.

JEN

I, ah . . . maybe use these.

TOM

Yes. For my wrists or my ankles?

JEN

Ankles.

TOM

Do you want me to wear that?

JEN

Mm? No. I . . . I like your face.

TOM

What do you mean?

JEN

I'd like to see your face. Um . . . the bed.

TOM

Show me.

Jen and Tom shuffle around without quite touching—

JEN

Here. Here, like . . . like this. But . . . turn.

TOM

As you like.

JEN

Ankles . . . I like that word . . . apart, by the frame.

TOM

Yes.

JEN

Oh, God . . .

TOM

Tie them close. Are you going to hit me?

JEN

Do you want me to hit you?

TOM

I don't want you to tell me a fucking joke.

JEN

All right.

TOM

Use the cat.

JEN
Mm?

TOM
The . . . nine tails.

JEN
Right. Yes. God. Your hands.

TOM
Where?

JEN
Um . . .

TOM
Move them. Show me.

JEN
(mumbles)
I'll use these . . .

TOM
Use what you like.

JEN
Here. And here.

TOM
Are you going to hit me?

JEN
Yes.

TOM
Hard?

JEN
. . . hard.

TOM
How hard? Can we, uh . . . ?

JEN
No. Keep going. Hard.

TOM
You can blindfold me.

JEN
Is that what you want?

TOM
Yes.

JEN
Then no.

TOM
Will you fuck me?
(beat)
Will you fuck me? Or will you leave me?

JEN
(moves close behind Tom)
Fuck you or leave you. Maybe I'll leave you. Maybe I'll do what you did to me in the club. Get you wet. Make you tremble. Ready to do anything I want. And then I'll wait.

Tom looks over his shoulder: he and Jen lock eyes. Jen mimes using the whip.

JEN
Snap.

Tom hesitates.

JEN
Snap.

TOM
Ah!

JEN
Properly.

Tom yelps.

JEN
Snap.

TOM
Yes.

JEN
. . . blindfold.

TOM
Yes.

JEN
Don't say yes. Say "please".

TOM
Please.

Jen mimes taking a blindfold from the box.

JEN
You want to swap back?

TOM
Mm?

JEN
Swap back. Read yourself.

TOM
Yes please.

JEN
Okay.

Jen mimes handing him a blindfold, but stays facing him. Tom moves her into the position he just occupied. Jen lets him shift her legs, then her arms. Tom mimes fixing the blindfold.

TOM
All right. All right, so . . .

JEN
What are you going to do? What are you going to do?

TOM
. . . snap.

JEN
(yelps)
Yes.

TOM
(mumbles)
I'm going . . . to, uh, candles . . .

Tom mimes lifting a candle and tipping out some wax. Jen moans. Tom does it again.

JEN

Fuck me.

Tom mimes putting down the candle and lifting the whip . . .

TOM

Snap.

Jen yelps again . . .

TOM

Snap.

. . . and again . . .

TOM

Snap.

. . . and again. Tom hesitates.

TOM

I think . . . I think this is fucked-up.

JEN

Yes.

TOM

Wait.

JEN

No. Fuck me up.

TOM

Fuck you up . . . fuck you up . . .

Tom lowers his script, looks away. Jen turns, watches him.

TOM

I need a minute.

JEN

All right.

(beat)

Well . . . look, that's pretty much the end.

TOM

Just . . . give me a minute. This isn't me.

JEN

What do you mean? I know it's not "you".

TOM

But it's *really* not.

Tom looks at Jen. She steps closer to him, puts her hands on his shoulder. Tom avoids her gaze. Jen mimes removing her blindfold. Tom looks at her.

JEN

It's all right.

TOM

. . . I know.

JEN

Are you afraid?

TOM

Yes.

JEN

Hey, listen. Listen. Tom.

TOM

. . . Jen.

JEN

(grins)

If you were really going to hurt me. How would you hurt me?

TOM

I'd tell you a fucking joke.

JEN

I thought so.

TOM

How would you hurt me?

JEN

(beat)

I need a drink.

TOM

I gave you a drink.

JEN
Come and find me another.

Jen goes to the door. Tom hesitates.

JEN
I'll be gentle.

Tom puts down his script and follows Jen to the door. They leave.
