

IT'LL PASS, IT ALWAYS DOES

A PLAY

BY

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SETTING:

A Laundromat. Present day.

CHARACTERS:

HENRY - Mid-twenties.

JOANNE - Mid-twenties. They have been living together for four years.

ROGER - Mid-twenties. A smooth player.

MAXIM - Mid-twenties. An unlikely friend of Roger's.

JESSICA - Six years old.

The BABYSITTER - Twenty. Currently attending community college.

(Lights up on Henry and Joanne. They fold their clothes and put them in a basket.)

HENRY

It'll pass, it always does.

JOANNE

Do you really think saying that makes it better?

HENRY

You've just gotten into one of your moods. This has nothing to do with me. I'm not going to fight with you.

JOANNE

Just because you're not the reason I was originally mad, doesn't mean I'm not pissed at you now. I mean my God, you have no empathy for me.

HENRY

How can I have empathy for you when you don't make any sense? I don't see how you go from one thing to the next.

JOANNE

That's the problem, you don't understand women's logic.

HENRY

What kind of logic justifies you shifting your anger onto me?

JOANNE

Sometimes I think you really do hate women.

HENRY

Who the hell are you to tell me I hate women? Do you have any concept as to how large a statement that is? Jesus Christ, woman. I happen to love the female sex, and everything that goes along with it. Is this your monthly thing?

JOANNE

You know what? I'm done talking to you.

HENRY

Oh, that's very mature, Joanne. Give me the silent treatment. It seems unreasonable that we're not able to discuss things as adults. Doesn't it seem that way to you? Am I really out of line on this? I don't even know what we're fighting about . . .

JOANNE

That's the problem, Henry. You don't listen.

HENRY

I've been listening to every word you've said. I swear. I still don't know what we're fighting about.

JOANNE

You need to listen to what I mean, not what I say.

HENRY

But wouldn't it be easier if you just said what you meant?

JOANNE

Of course it would be easier, Henry. What does that matter?

HENRY

If you did, maybe we could . . .

(Maxim and Roger enter and go over to the washing machines where they begin to transport their laundry from the washers to the dryers.)

JOANNE

So now I'm supposed to make everything easy for you? Is that it? You'd like that, wouldn't you? You'd love for me to do everything for you, just like your mother did.

HENRY

Woah there. I really don't think you need to bring my mother into this.

JOANNE

And don't think I'm angry because of my "monthly thing" as you call it.

HENRY

Well, that doesn't seem unreasonable to me. Here you are, in a public place, aimlessly angry with me. What conclusion should I draw?

JOANNE

How about your performance in bed last night, Henry? Did you ever think maybe that has something to do with it?

HENRY

(In a hushed voice) I told you I was sorry.

JOANNE

Oh, you're sorry all right.

HENRY

What is wrong with you?

JOANNE

There has to be something wrong with *me*. Figures. You'd never assume the problem is with you. "It can't be anything wrong with me, oh no, it must be her." That is so typical.

HENRY

Well, you sure as Hell don't give me much inspiration . . .

JOANNE

And I'm sorry to tell you this, but your penis is very small.

HENRY

(Looking to see if the two guys have noticed. They have, but at this point they have already looked away.) I thought you said size doesn't matter.

JOANNE

I said size doesn't matter if you have technique. You have no TECHNIQUE!

HENRY

I really don't think this is the time or place to do this.

JOANNE

What are we doing Henry? Huh? What, are we talking? Oh that's right, you don't like to talk. We never do it. That's why you don't want to do this.

HENRY

I am not wrong in wanting to avoid this topic in a Goddamn Laundromat!

JOANNE

Of course you're not wrong, dear. You're never wrong.

HENRY

Right, right, I'm never wrong. Fuck you I'm never wrong.

JOANNE

I am not your mother, Henry . . .

HENRY

Damn right, my mother isn't a moron.

JOANNE

I might as well just leave now.

HENRY

WELL I'M SURE AS HELL NOT STOPPING YOU... !

(Maxim and Roger pause for a moment, but quickly go back to folding their laundry and their conversation.)

JOANNE

I used to smile every time I thought of you.

HENRY

I want this to work, Joanne. I love you. Don't I make you happy?

(She folds her last pair of socks, drops it into the laundry basket, looks at Henry one last time, and exits. Henry looks dumbfounded for a moment, realizes she has left him, and runs after her, laundry basket in hand.)

ROGER

It'll pass, it always does.

MAXIM

I don't know, man. This is some scary shit. I've never had a rash down there before.

ROGER

I'm telling you, you're getting yourself all worked up over nothing. Give it a couple of days, it'll go away.

MAXIM

Are you sure, 'cause it's been three already? I'm really starting to get worried.

ROGER

Trust me, it's nothing.

MAXIM

This is so *comme il faut* ...

ROGER

Huh?

MAXIM

Fitting.

ROGER

What is?

MAXIM

That I caught something. It's so fucking perfect! The one time I have a random hookup, I get a Goddamn venereal disease. I never should have listened to you. If I had stayed home that night and rubbed one out like I wanted to, I wouldn't be dealing with this now. But, no, you had to make me go out to the club.

ROGER

I didn't make you go out.

MAXIM

You didn't make me go out? "Come out to the club, Max. It'll be a good time. We'll get you laid. Women there like you only dream about." I'm such an asshole. Why do I keep listening to you?

ROGER,

All right, so I made you go out. I didn't tell you to go home with the town higgledy-piggledy.

MAXIM

What the Hell's a higgledy-piggledy?

ROGER

An indiscriminate.

MAXIM

Why didn't you tell me she was a Goddamn higgledy-piggledy when you saw me leaving with her?

ROGER

I figured you knew what you were doing. What am I, your father? I gotta' take care of you? You're an adult, Max. It's about time you started taking some responsibility for your actions.

MAXIM

Look, forget it. I have to get this looked at.

ROGER

You're worrying about nothing.

MAXIM

Roger, there's a mauve rash on my balls and it hurts every time I pee; I think there might be something wrong with me.

ROGER

Everyone's got a little something wrong with their balls, you just learn to deal with yours and be thankful it's not something worse.

MAXIM

Are you kidding me? Do you hear the words coming out of your mouth? No, everyone does not have a little something wrong with their ... (*notices a small child who has just entered with her Babysitter*) You-know-whats. In fact most people think it's a pretty big deal when something's wrong down there.

ROGER

Was it fun?

MAXIM

What?

ROGER

Did you have a good time that night?

MAXIM

That's not the point, Roger. I'm trying to get at something deeper here.

ROGER

No, Max, that is exactly the point; you don't know how to have a good time.

MAXIM

I most certainly do know how to have a good time.

ROGER

Last time we went to a ball game, you had a bad hot-dog and got sick. We go to a club, you take the wrong girl home and get a V.D.. It's always something with you.

MAXIM

What, it's my fault I got a bad hot-dog and a girl with the clap?

ROGER

I'm sorry Max, but yes, it's your fault.

MAXIM

It's bad luck. I can't control that.

ROGER

Yes you can.

MAXIM

You can control your luck?

ROGER

If you know how to have a good time, yes.

MAXIM

I have a good time. I always have a good time. Don't I look like I have a good time?

ROGER

Max, if you worry about whether or not everything you do is dirty, you're gonna' get an infection.

MAXIM

I don't follow.

ROGER

You have to free yourself up, man. You've got to live a little. Otherwise, you won't look back with fond memories.

MAXIM

How many women have you slept with?

ROGER

I don't know.

MAXIM

It's okay, I'm not gonna' get mad or laugh or anything, I just want to know.

ROGER

I don't need a lecture, Max.

MAXIM

I promise, no lecture. I just need to know.

ROGER

Two hundred and seventy-six.

MAXIM

(Pause. Maxim cannot help himself and a laugh explode.)

That's fucking ridiculous! Why hasn't your you know what fallen off?!

ROGER

(Seeing that the Babysitter is looking at the two of them.) Don't worry about my you know what, it's doing just fine.

MAXIM

(Seriously) How many times have you had, you know, a little something wrong down there?

ROGER

You sure you want to know?

MAXIM

Yeah, I'm sure.

ROGER

Never.

MAXIM

Never?

ROGER

Never.

MAXIM

That is *so comme il faut*! I take a random woman home once in my life and I get the bubonic plague; you sleep with two-hundred and seventy-six and all you get are fond memories, *(catching himself, whispers)* That's fucked up.

ROGER

(putting the last of his load in the drier and getting his stuff together to leave.)

I'm telling you man, you need to learn how to roll with a good time, the rest falls into place.

(They both start to leave the Laundromat. Right before they reach the door thunder strikes and a hard rain can be heard. MAXIM puts a newspaper he had in his arms over his head and the two men exit. The little girl is scared and runs under a bench. Her Babysitter notices and goes over to the bench.)

BABYSITTER

It'll pass, it always does.

JESSICA

I'm scared.

BS

Oh, there's nothing to be scared of, it's just a little thunderstorm.

JESSICA

I don't like it.

BS

You wouldn't be very happy without it.

JESSICA

Why?'

BS

Because then there wouldn't be any food to eat.

JESSICA Why?

BS

Because the earth needs water to grow food.

JESSICA

Why?

BS

Why do you need water to grow?

JESSICA

I don't.

BS

Yes you do.

JESSICA

No I don't.

BS

Yes you do.

JESSICA

Why?

BS

Same reason you need food.

JESSICA

Why do I need food?

BS

The same reason we had to put gas in my car on the way here; it needs gas to get from one place to the other, and you need food to get from one place to the other.

JESSICA

Mommy says: "The reason you have *to* put gas in your car so much is because it's a piece of shit."

BS

You shouldn't say words like that, Jessica.

JESSICA

Why not, Mommy does?

BS

If Mommy doesn't like my car, why don't you tell her to give me a raise so I can get a better car.

JESSICA

I don't think Mommy would do that.

BS

Why not?

JESSICA

Because Mommy says: "The only reason she lets white-trash like you take care of me is because we can't afford a better baby-sitter, but I shouldn't tell you that." How come Mommy doesn't want me to tell you that?

BS

Because Mommy knows better than to talk like that about people when they're not in the room to speak up for themselves! But that's just a guess.

JESSICA

What's a guess?

BS

A guess is what you do when you don't know the answer to something.

JESSICA

You mean *you* don't always know the answer?

BS

Sometimes I think the older you get, the less answers you have.

JESSICA

But Mommy says she knows everything.

BS

Well, Mommy is wrong.

JESSICA

Are you sure?

BS

Yes, I'm sure!

JESSICA

Are you mad?

BS

No, Jessica, I'm just a little hurt by what your Mommy said.

JESSICA

Are you someone's Mommy?

BS

Sometimes I feel like I'm your Mommy.

JESSICA

That's not what I mean.

BS

What do you mean?

JESSICA

Do you have your own kids?

BS

No.

JESSICA

Why not?

BS

Because I haven't found anyone who I want to have kids with. Yet.

JESSICA

What about that boy whose house we went to today? Do you want to have kids with him?

BS

Jessica. The way you talk.

JESSICA

Don't you like him?

BS

I do, but it's complicated.

JESSICA

Does he like you?

BS

He used to.

JESSICA

Not anymore?

BS

No, not anymore.

JESSICA

You thought Mommy liked you, and she doesn't. Maybe he does like you.

How do you know?

BS

Do you always ask so many questions, Jessica?

JESSICA

Yes.

BS

Why?

JESSICA

I don't know.

BS

Neither do I. Things get complicated when you get older. I don't know why, they just do. (*pause*) Did your Mommy really say those things about me?

JESSICA

Yes.

BS

Do you think she's right?

JESSICA

I don't know, I'm six years old.

BS

Well, take a guess?

JESSICA

What's trash?

BS

Trash is something you throw away because you don't want it anymore.

JESSICA

People get thrown away too?

BS

Sometimes.

JESSICA

That would hurt a lot.

BS

It does.

JESSICA

Then I guess Mommy's wrong, because I don't want to throw you away.

BS

Do you mean that, Jessica?

JESSICA

I love you, why would I want to hurt you? (*The Babysitter starts to cry.*) Why are you crying?

BS

Because you make me happy, Jessica.

JESSICA

You cry when you're happy?

BS

Just give me a big hug. (*Jessica gives her a big hug and they hold it for a moment. The Babysitter puts the last piece of clothing in the washer and shuts the door.*) Are you ready to get some ice cream?

JESSICA

YEEEAHH!!!

BS

Okay, let's go.

(*They start to exit, but as they reach the door thunder strikes and lightning flashes. Jessica grabs onto the Babysitter's leg in fear and starts crying.*)

JESSICA

I don't want to go.

BS

Not even for ice cream?

JESSICA

No.

BS

Because you're scared?

JESSICA

(*Wiping a tear*) Uh-huh.

BS

You don't have to be scared. Remember what I told you about the rain?

JESSICA

Uh-huh.

BS

What did I say?

JESSICA

It'll pass?

BS

Yeah. It always does.

(The Babysitter takes Jessica's hand and they exit.)

Black Out