half a person

my life as told by The Smiths

by

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Cast

WILLIAM

Songs

Hand in Glove	The Smiths
Cemetery Gates	The Smiths
Bigmouth Strikes Again	The Smiths
Sheila Take A Bow	The Smiths
Everyday Is Like Sunday	Morrissey
The Boy With The Thorn In His Side	The Smiths
This Charming Man	The Smiths
That Joke Isn't Funny Anymore	The Smiths
William, It Was Really Nothing	The Smiths
How Soon Is Now ?	The Smiths
There Is A Light That Never Goes Out	The Smiths

HALF A PERSON

My life as told by The Smiths

WILLIAM APPEARS IN A SPOTLIGHT, HE SINGS: HAND IN GLOVE

Hand in glove
The sun shines out of our behinds
No, it's not like any other love
This one is different - because it's us

Hand in glove
We can go wherever we please
And everything depends upon
How near you stand to me

And if the people stare
Then the people stare
Oh, I really don't know and I really don't care

Kiss My Shades

Hand in glove
The Good People laugh
Yes, we may be hidden by rags
But we've something they'll never have

Hand in glove
The sun shines out of our behinds
Yes, we may be hidden by rags
But we've something they'll never have

And if the people stare
Then the people stare
Oh, I really don't know and I really don't care

Kiss My Shades ... oh ...

So, hand in glove I stake my claim
I'll fight to the last breath

If they dare touch a hair on your head
I'll fight to the last breath

For the Good Life is out there somewhere
So stay on my arm, you little charmer

But I know my luck too well
Yes, I know my luck too well
And I'll probably never see you again
I'll probably never see you again
I'll probably never see you again
Oh ...

LIGHTS CHANGE AS WILLIAM TAKES OFF HIS T-SHIRT.

WILLIAM: (TO AUDIENCE) Okay, so I'm in a bathroom.
Shower in a grubby bath, filthy sink, mildew ... Charming.
But the worse thing is – I'm not alone.
A man is coming towards me. "This Charming Man".
Not quite.
He's huge. Seven foot, 150 kilos.
Most of which is blubber.
Samoan or Tongan or something, dripping wet, and all he's wearing is this tiny yellow towel.
On his face is this odd expression – half "I want to eat you", half "I wants to kiss you", half "I want to do both" – and I'm not sure in which order.
So he's coming towards me, the floor literally shuddering under each gigantic footstep, and he's starting to undo his towel – and something huge begins to emerge.
What is that ?
A snake ?
A club ?
A cricket bat !
Oh my god – what does he want to do with that ?
And all that I'm thinking, all that keeps going through my head is "Wow ! I wonder if all people in Sydney are this friendly."
Wait.
[LOUDER] Stop.
Stop !

A BRIEF FREEZE AS LIGHTS CHANGE. HE PUTS ON ANOTHER T-SHIRT.

WILLIAM: I can't start there.
If I want to tell this story – and I do want to tell this story – I've got to tell it all, start right from the beginning.
And it all begins with a skinny latte – or was it a cappuccino?
It was a Saturday morning in Brunswick Street.

I'd stopped off at my local café – you know the place, pseudo Greek but with Italian coffee – sat in my usual corner and ordered my usual strong long black.
But the waitress was different that day.
To start with he was a wait*er*, not a waitress.
I was usually served by this very cute redhead with the attitude from hell.
When you asked her for a coffee she'd look at you like she wanted to spit on you.
I loved her.
Actually that's why I came to the *pseudo* café – the red head with capital "A" attitude.
But anyway she wasn't there – he was – so if we're looking for someone to blame – and believe me when you've heard this whole sorry debacle you will be looking for someone to blame – let's start with him.
I ordered … *(ORDERS TO WAITER)* "Strong long black."
I said it very clearly, well I mumbled it through my slab like pre-coffee lips.
No matter how hungover I was, anyone – especially a waiter in a café - could understand the difference between ***(MUMBLED)*** "Latte" and ***(MUMBLED)*** "Long Black".
He should be trained in the art of "Understanding the grumbled orders of insanely hungover patrons."
But what appears – ten and a half minutes later – is definitely not a strong long black.
This huge glass of steaming brown liquid topped with a gallon of dairy foam.
What am I meant to do with that - Fertilise a plant ?
Re-live my breast feeding ?
But before I can raise even the merest quibble of a complaint he's gone. Scampered back to sulk behind the espresso machine. This waiter wasn't a glarer like my deadly redhead, he was a sulker.
I'm about to track down said sulker and demand retribution when I look over at the next table and I see a girl looking quizzically at a long black the size of a small soup bowl on the table in front of her.
Long black plus latte equals coff-astrophe.
I only glance at her for a second but I reckon she could give the redhead a real run in the attitude stakes.
Her skin is pale, white like ivory, translucent.
She looks like she hasn't been out in the sun since the last ice age.
Her hair is black, jet black – and she's wearing this dark burgundy dress and thick black sunglasses – and her lips …
Her lips are like blood oozing from a freshly slit wrist.

Now I can't see her eyes – the glasses –but I reckon if I could, they would be searing holes in my faded green corduroy jacket, which is very, very cool by the way.
I'm out of my chair and I'm standing in front of her in about the time it takes Morrissey to count his friends.
She doesn't say anything.
I wait.
She still doesn't say anything.
This fucking latte is burning grooves in my hand.
If she doesn't say something in one second this latte is going all over her – fucking sex god ice queen or not.
But then she speaks – and like they say in the classics: "I'm fucked."

[AS SALOME] *Long black ?*

WILLIAM: ***[TO SALOME]*** Latte ?
[TO AUDIENCE] I place the coffee down about as gracefully as I can with scorched fingers.
By now tears are running down my face from the pain of my third degree palms.

[AS SALOME] Thanks

WILLIAM: ***[TO AUDIENCE]*** - Ice crystals dripping from her tongue.
Then she looks down again, continues reading her book.
That's my cue.
Pick up my coffee, go back to my table.
In short – fuck off.
But that skin, those lips, those eyes – even though I actually can't see them – those eyes.
I glance down at the book.
"Keats – collected works."
I'm in luck.
[TO SALOME] Personally I prefer Wilde.
[TO AUDIENCE] She raises her head.
Is she looking at me ?
Sizing me up.
I don't know.
The opening gambit was bold, foolhardy even, but just clever enough, cross referenced enough, showing enough useless knowledge that she might grant me the honour of a reply.
Or at least a follow up to my opening Brunswick Street parlay.
[PAUSE]
She's still not saying anything.
[TO SALOME] "The Ballad of Reading Gaol"
I offer helpfully**.**

And then, finally –

[AS SALOME] I haven't read it

WILLIAM: ***[TO AUDIENCE]*** She replied ! She actually – Demurely! That's the word for her – demure, demure, demure.
[TO SALOME] Don't bother.
He gets out in the end.
[TO AUDIENCE] So cool I'm dead.

[AS SALOME] Only to die at the hands of one he loved.

WILLIAM: I'm in love.
That skin, that voice, those eyes – although I still haven't actually seen them – *those eyes*, AND she just mentioned love and death in the same sentence.
Oh my god, I *am* in love.
Of course she's not quite right.
Wilde died penniless of mis-diagnosed syphilis, which he referred to as "Mussel Poisoning", at 1.50pm on November 30th, 1900 – a Friday - under the alias Sebastian Melmoth in Hotel d'Alsace on the Rue des Beaux-Arts, Paris - today it's just called L'Hotel – in a room with bad wallpaper.
But it was as if his lover - Lord Alfred "Bosie" Douglas - had …
So she is right.
Sort of.
But anyway what are details ?
I'm in love.
I stand there gaping like a very stupid and very stunned mullet.
Eventually, almost as an afterthought:

[AS SALOME] Would you like to sit down ?

WILLIAM: Would I ?
Play it cool.
Play it cool.
[TO SALOME] Well I guess it is a long way back to my table.

[AS SALOME] All of three feet.

WILLIAM: And then she does it - she smiles.
Her lips part and she shows these gleaming white teeth and soft pink tongue and my cock just got so big I'm worried it's going to knock over the table.
I sit down, with difficulty, and a week later we're going on our first date.