EXTRACT

LOST

a comedy

by

Alex Broun

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Characters

EDITH

VERONICA

THE STRANGER

GOD

Time

One Friday Night.

The present.

Settings

A City:	A bar
	A house in the suburbs
	A road nearby

“God come down, if you're really there.

Well you're the one who claims to care."

- Morrissey

LOST

was first performed by

Stageworks Theatre

at

Belvoir Street Theatre - Downstairs, Surry Hills, Sydney,

on **the 3rd of July, 1992,**

with the following cast:

EDITH **Pelagia Jordan**

VERONICA **Jennifer Coyne - O'Brien**

THE STRANGER **Michael Greer**

GOD **Ken Welsh**

The production was directed by **Nicholas Papadametriou**
and designed by **David Waller**.

SPOTLIGHT, DOWN CENTRE.

IN IT, **THE STRANGER.**

MID 40s, BUT TRYING TO LOOK MUCH YOUNGER, HE'S WEARING VERY FASHIONABLE, VERY EXPENSIVE, CASUAL GEAR - JEANS, JACKET, REEBOKS ETC. THE CLOTHES ARE BRAND NEW BUT IT'S HARD TO TELL DUE TO THE FACT THAT THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY FILTHY.

HIS LONGISH HAIR IS SLICKED BACK IN A PONYTAIL AND HE WEARS A PAIR OF DARK SUNGLASSES. A "5 O'CLOCK" SHADOW DARKENS HIS COMPLEXION.

THE STRANGER STARES INTO THE AUDIENCE BLANKLY. PAUSE.

HE STARTS TO SEARCH HIS POCKETS FOR SOMETHING. EVENTUALLY HE FINDS IT - A CIGARETTE. HE BRUSHES IT OFF AND STICKS IT IN HIS MOUTH.

HE STARTS TO GO THROUGH HIS POCKETS AGAIN, SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING ELSE - PRESUMABLY, A LIGHT. HE COMES ACROSS A SMALL BOTTLE OF VODKA.

WITHOUT TAKING THE CIGARETTE OUT OF HIS MOUTH HE OPENS THE BOTTLE AND TAKES A LARGE SWIG. HE PUTS THE BOTTLE BACK IN HIS POCKET. PAUSE.

NOW **THE STRANGER** CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR BEFORE HE FOUND THE VODKA (A LIGHT.) HE STARES AT THE AUDIENCE BLANKLY. PAUSE.

STILL WITH UNLIT CIGARETTE IN HIS MOUTH, HE LOOKS OFF LEFT. THEN HE LOOKS BACK TO THE AUDIENCE. HE LOOKS OFF RIGHT. THEN AGAIN BACK TO THE AUDIENCE. HE LOOKS OFF LEFT ONCE MORE.

PAUSE. **THE STRANGER** EXITS - RIGHT.

THE LIGHTS COME UP ON A HIGH BAR TABLE, DOWN LEFT.
BESIDE IT TWO STOOLS.

Scene 1.
The Voodoo Bar. Friday 6pm.

EDITH SITS ON A STOOL AT A HIGH TABLE, LOOKING AROUND THE BAR ANXIOUSLY.

THREE EMPTY GLASS TUMBLERS SIT NEXT TO HER ON THE TABLE. A FOURTH, HALF FULL OF A STRANGE COLOURED LIQUID, IS IN FRONT OF HER. SHE IS QUITE DRUNK.

VERONICA: (OFF) Sleep with you. I'd rather go down on Hitler. Queenslander.

VERONICA ENTERS, **EDITH** SPOTS HER. SHE WAVES.

EDITH: Veronica.

VERONICA: (AT PACE) There you are! I've been looking for you for the last twenty minutes. What is this place?

EDITH: The Voodoo Bar.

VERONICA: Charming. If one more prick pinched my arse I was just about to - Why in the world did you want to meet here?

EDITH: It's private. Sit down. (**EDITH** SITS **VERONICA** DOWN)

VERONICA: So what's the "big emergency"?

EDITH: Did you get my note?

VERONICA: I wouldn't be here otherwise. Well come on. What is it?

EDITH Let me buy you a drink and I'll tell you.

VERONICA: Actually I'm in a bit of a rush.

EDITH: Just one. Please. My shout.

VERONICA: Alright. But make it quick.

EDITH STANDS. SHE FUMBLES IN HER PURSE FOR MONEY. **VERONICA** ANNOYED AT THE WAIT, STANDS AND GRABS THE MONEY.

VERONICA: I'll do it. What are you having?

EDITH: Wait a sec.

EDITH EMPTIES THE GLASS IN FRONT OF HER IN ONE GULP.

VERONICA: What was that?

EDITH: A double.

VERONICA: A double what?

EDITH: Screaming pygmy.

VERONICA: How many of those have you had?

EDITH: Only four.

VERONICA: My God, that's a whole tribe. No wonder you're - I'll get you a mineral water.

EDITH: (DISAPPOINTED) Oh.

VERONICA EXITS. **EDITH** FUMBLES WITH HER BAG AND EVENTUALLY SITS. **VERONICA** RETURNS WITH THE DRINKS

VERONICA: (REFERRING TO DRINK) Idiot. A twist I said. A twist, no ice. Look what he gives me. No twist and ice. (SHE DRINKS) Yuck! What kind of rocket fuel do they use in this place?

EDITH: (REACHING FOR GLASS) You're meant to slam it.

VERONICA: I don't think so. Now, I've got my drink. So what's all the fuss? And the abbreviated version, please. Time is running out.

EDITH: Where you going?

VERONICA: Well unlike some people, I do have a life. The other Account Managers and I are meeting Mr Ryegold for dinner, you know, the Bread Man. And it's something of a VIM.

EDITH: V I M?

VERONICA: Very Important Meeting. The Account Director's stepping down and we're all being given an equal chance to get our hands on the account. And guess what? I've got the inside running.

EDITH: You do?

VERONICA: I've got a secret weapon

EDITH: What?

VERONICA: Tits! The old sleaze bag can't keep his hands off me. (SHE LAUGHS) After dinner we're going to Karaoke, god knows why , fifty going on fifteen you know the type.

EDITH: Karaoke?

VERONICA: Yes, Karaoke. Can't wait.

EDITH SUDDENLY BURSTS INTO TEARS.

VERONICA: It's not that bad? They don't only do Elvis. (TRYING TO COVER UP) Evelyn. Evelyn, what's wrong? Stop it Evelyn, people are looking. Evelyn!

EDITH: (STILL CRYING) Edith.

VERONICA: What?

EDITH: My name is Edith.

VERONICA: Edith then. Look whatever you're name is just stop crying. You're making a scene.

EDITH: I'm sorry.

VERONICA: Don't apologise. Just stop crying.

EDITH TRIES TO STOP HER TEARS. SHE WIPES HER NOSE WITH HER HAND.

VERONICA: Don't do that. (PRODUCING HANDKERCHIEF) Here use this. Now get a hold of yourself. Anymore outbursts like that and I'm straight out the door.

EDITH HANDS THE HANKIE BACK.

VERONICA: No, you keep it. Now what is all this about? (And make it snappy. Everybody else was stopping in at Nevada for a few stiff Stollis , but not me. I'm drinking Brand X, with Edith, the Temp, at the Voodoo Bar.

EDITH: You didn't have to come.

VERONICA: Don't remind me, but here I am - so make the most of it. Speak. Karaoke awaits.

EDITH AGAIN BURSTS INTO TEARS.

VERONICA: What is wrong with you?

EDITH: I'm sorry. It's just that every time I hear that word -

VERONICA: Karaoke?

EDITH ONCE MORE BEGINS TO CRY LOUDLY.

VERONICA: Edith, this is starting to get boring.

EDITH: (RECOVERING) I'm sorry. I'm better now. I won't cry anymore.

VERONICA: Let’s hope so. And stop apologising. Sorry is for wimps. Now drink your mineral water. (**EDITH** HESITATES) Drink it!

EDITH DRINKS. PAUSE.

VERONICA: We all better? Good. Now, nice and slowly, tell Auntie V what the problem is.

EDITH IS SILENT.

VERONICA: Come on. Big voice.

EDITH IS STILL SILENT.

VERONICA: I'm waiting.

STILL NO RESPONSE.

VERONICA: Edith!

EDITH: I can't.

VERONICA: What do you mean "can't". Can't does not exist. Can't is an un-word. You can. You can tell me.

EDITH: I can't.

VERONICA: Edith, you are fast approaching the pain threshold.

EDITH: You have to come with me.

VERONICA: Come with you?

EDITH: To my house. I have to show you.

VERONICA: And where, pray tell, is your house?

EDITH: In Villawood.

PAUSE **VERONICA** LAUGHS.

VERONICA: Villawood? Vill-a-wood? You want me to go to Villawood? Who lives in Villawood? Refugees – that's who. Undesirables. Do I look like an undesirable? Listen to me. Listen very carefully. Villawood does not exist in my universe. Villawood is an un-suburb. I can't, I repeat can't, go to Villawood.

EDITH: Can't is an un-word.

VERONICA: Tres clever. Score one for the typing pool, but it does not change the fact that this AM is not going to Villawood. It might, just might, have something to do with Villawood being ten miles past Timbuktu but it probably has more to do with the fact that I am running late for a major, that's major, dinner slash business meeting. (**VERONICA** STANDS) Now if you'll excuse me I really must dash. A certain middle aged hippy client and a certain million dollar account are ripe for the taking.

VERONICA STARTS TO LEAVE. **EDITH** THROWS HERSELF ON THE FLOOR AND GRAB'S **VERONICA'S** FEET.

EDITH: (BEGINNING TO CRY) Please.

VERONICA: (TO OTHER PATRONS IN THE BAR) Excuse us. She's co-dependent. (PICKING **EDITH** UP) Why did you have to pick me? There's at least another hundred people at the agency, a couple of thousand on the street, why chose me? Do I bear a striking resemblance to Mary McKillop?

EDITH: I didn't know who else to turn to. You always know what to do. You're so organised, you always say the right thing, you wear such nice clothes, and you fixed the coffee machine for me. –

VERONICA: And this is the thanks I get? I mend the Cafe Bar for you and then I get Shanghaied at Voodoo.

EDITH: Please. Please come with me. You'll know what to do.

VERONICA: Look, this is all very flattering, but I really have got to go. Isn't there anyone else you can ask? What about your friends? In Villawood?

EDITH: I can't.

VERONICA: That word again. What about your parents then?

EDITH: They're dead.

VERONICA: Uncles? Aunts? One legged step sisters?

EDITH: I use to have an Uncle, Uncle Ken, but he disappeared.

VERONICA: Don't you have a boyfriend?

EDITH BEGINS TO CRY ONCE MORE.

VERONICA: Oh my god. Listen. I'm sorry but I just don't have time for this. I'm just an AM, and if I ever want to be an AD I have to suck up to this eternal teenager tonight and get this account. It may seem tough, I know, but that's the way you've got to be in this day and age. Nice guys don't finish last, they're not even in the race. Thanks. It's been great. See you Monday.

VERONICA STARTS TO LEAVE AGAIN.

EDITH: I've got the photocopies.

VERONICA STOPS. **VERONICA** RETURNS.

VERONICA: What photocopies?

EDITH: The ones of you and Mr Dalton.

VERONICA: I don't know what you're talking about.

EDITH TAKES A PIECE OF PAPER FROM HER BAG. SHE SHOWS IT TO **VERONICA**.

VERONICA: How did you get this?

EDITH: I went to use the copier but the door was locked and there were strange noises coming from inside. I went back later and that was in the bin.

VERONICA: I told him to get rid of them. Edith, darling, how many copies of this do you have?

EDITH: A few.

VERONICA: And what are you planning to do with them?

EDITH: If you don't come home with me I'm going to stick them on the bulletin board.

VERONICA: Edith, are you trying to blackmail me?

EDITH : Yep.

VERONICA: Sweet little thing aren't you?

EDITH SMILES. **VERONICA** CONSIDERS.

VERONICA: Alright, alright. What plane do we catch to Villawood?

EDITH: Thank you.

EDITH HUGS **VERONICA**. BLACKOUT.

SPOTLIGHT, DOWN CENTRE.

IN IT, ONCE MORE, **THE STRANGER**. HE STANDS FACING THE AUDIENCE, STILL WITH THE UNLIT CIGARETTE IN HIS MOUTH.

SLOWLY HE BECOMES AWARE THAT HE HAS SOMETHING IN HIS MOUTH. (HE'S FORGOTTEN ABOUT PUTTING THE CIGARETTE THERE.)

HE TAKES THE CIGARETTE OUT OF HIS MOUTH AND STARES AT IT BLANKLY. HE PUTS IT IN ONE OF HIS POCKETS.

THE STRANGER BEGINS TO GO THROUGH HIS POCKETS, SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING - PRESUMABLY, THE VODKA.

INSTEAD HE FINDS A CIGARETTE LIGHTER. HE STARES AT IT. HE BEGINS TO SEARCH THROUGH HIS POCKETS ONCE MORE. (THIS TIME FOR THE CIGARETTE.) HE FINDS THE VODKA.

HE OPENS THE BOTTLE AND STILL HOLDING THE CIGARETTE LIGHTER IN ONE HAND, TAKES A SWIG. HE PUTS THE VODKA BACK IN ONE OF HIS POCKETS.

NOW HE'S FORGOTTEN WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR BEFORE HE FOUND THE VODKA (THE CIGARETTE.) HE STARES AT THE AUDIENCE BLANKLY. PAUSE.

STILL WITH THE CIGARETTE LIGHTER IN HIS HAND, HE LOOKS OFF RIGHT. THEN HE LOOKS BACK TO THE AUDIENCE. HE LOOKS OFF LEFT. THEN AGAIN BACK TO THE AUDIENCE. HE LOOKS OFF RIGHT ONCE MORE.

PAUSE. **THE STRANGER** EXITS - LEFT.

THE LIGHTS COME UP ON A LARGE CUPBOARD, UP RIGHT.

Scene 2.
Edith's parent's bedroom, Villawood. One hour later.

EDITH ENTERS. SHE LOOKS AT THE CUPBOARD ANXIOUSLY.

VERONICA: (ENTERING) We have arrived at the end of the earth. I just want you to know that Edith. You live at the end of the earth. Or maybe it's further. I'm sure we passed Pluto a couple of miles back.

EDITH: It's not that far.

VERONICA: The price of that cab would have fed a small film crew.

EDITH: We could've caught the train.

VERONICA: (LAUGHS) This AM does not catch the train, especially to Villawood and especially when she's running late for a VIM.

EDITH: I like the train.

PAUSE. **VERONICA** LOOKS AT **EDITH**.

VERONICA: Edith, you don't live in Villawood - you are Villawood.

EDITH: It would've been quicker.

VERONICA: Nonsense. Anyway it doesn't matter now. We're here. In Villawood.

EDITH: Villawood East actually.

VERONICA: Oh my god. I don't believe this. What am I doing here? You go out for a quick drink after work and you end up in Villawood East.

EDITH: What have you got against Villawood?

VERONICA: (UNEASY) Nothing. It's just a long way from where I should be at this moment in my life.

EDITH: Sorry.

VERONICA: What did I tell you? Don't apologise. This just better be worth it. (LOOKING AROUND) Is this your room?