EXTRACT

Trip

A play

By

Alex Broun

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“The future’s uncertain and the end is always near”

The Doors, “Roadhouse Blues”

Cast

ALAN EDWARDS – former athlete, now advertising salesman for a small newspaper, 35

GERALDINE (GERRY) ANDERSON – an American tourist, 28

LORNA PETERS – Alan’s ex-girlfriend, 27

JOHN MacMASTERS – developer and pub owner, 50s

IVAN – an associate of MacMasters, European, late 30s

ROBERT LANG – a prominent businessman, 50s

ELIZABETH LANG – his wife, 50s

ERIC (SHINEY) – a skinhead, English, 30s

WALTER – an associate of Eric’s, New Zealander, 30s

ALICE – a workmate of Alan’s, 50s

BILL – a waiter at the Porthole Bar, 30s

POLICEWOMAN – late 20s

POLICEMAN – 30s

LAWYER – 30s

Scene – Various locations around a large city

Time – A few years ago

Act 1: Towards the Darkness

In darkness we hear the sound of footsteps running, heavy breathing.

The lights slowly come up on ALAN, he is running on the spot, panting for breath, a bright light shining behind him. He continues to run, his panting getting heavier, his steps more desperate.

SPOTLIGHT COMES UP SLOWLY ON **LANG**.

LANG: In the time I have spent on this earth I have learnt many things, some important, some not so. But above them all one lesson stands out – a simple three word phrase. Life is relative. And what separates men and women is not race or religion, creed or colour, bank accounts or breeding – but values. Something that is absolutely crucial to one person is worthless to the next. We must all run our own race. For some one human life is more precious than anything on earth. To others it is like a speck of dust on the palm of your hand.

LANG WIPES HIS HANDS, AS HE DOES THE SPOTLIGHT ON **ALAN** FADES.

LANG: It all depends on perception, where you stand, your own particular point of view. It's all in the judgement.

LIGHTS COME UP ON **ALAN**, NOW SEATED AT A TABLE, WAITING.

LANG: Hero or villain? You decide. Angel or devil? You decide. Life or death? You decide. The challenge I give to you is the same as the Oracle presented to Oedipus one fine sunny day in Delphi. Find an answer, if there are any.

LANG EXITS.

1. Coffee shop, morning.

LORNA ENTERS.

ALAN: Didn't think you were coming.

LORNA: Well I'm here.

ALAN: (PULLING OUT CHAIR) Sit down. Nice clothes. Is that fur?

LORNA: (SITTING) It's new. Unlike yours. Is this going to take long?

ALAN: You just got here.

LORNA: I'm in a bit of a hurry.

ALAN: Seems like ages.

LORNA: Whose fault is that?

ALAN: Do you want a coffee?

LORNA: Alan, I mean it. I'm in a rush.

ALAN: You never use to call me Alan.

LORNA: It's your name isn't it?

ALAN: Bit formal. You don't seem very happy to see me.

LORNA: (TAKING OUT CIGARETTE) One cigarette. That's all.

SHE LIGHTS IT WITH A GOLD LIGHTER.

ALAN: I don't think you can smoke here.

LORNA LOOKS AROUND, ANNOYED. SHE PUTS AWAY THE CIGARETTE.

ALAN: Nice lighter.

LORNA: It's a present.

ALAN: (GRABBING LIGHTER AND READING) Who's Robert?

LORNA: A friend.

LORNA HOLDS OUT HER HAND. **ALAN** GIVES HER BACK THE LIGHTER.

LORNA: Well, I'm waiting.

ALAN: What I wanted to say is that it's taken me awhile to realise.

LORNA: Realise what?

ALAN: (REHEARSED) That I never really appreciated you. That I took you for granted. That I never knew what I had. But now I know. My eyes are open and I'm looking at you properly for the first time. I want you back Lorna.

BEAT.

LORNA: Nice speech. Been practising it long?

ALAN: All week.

LORNA: You want me back?

ALAN: I made a mistake.

LORNA: Feeling lonely are we?

ALAN: It's not that. I miss *you*. The flat, it's so … empty.

LORNA: It was my furniture. You're serious?

ALAN: I've thought about it and I've realised you're the one for me. I made a mistake.

LORNA: Well that's just great.

ALAN: What?

LORNA: It's a bit late.

ALAN: Three months. Not that long.

LORNA: People change.

ALAN: I don't.

LORNA BEGINS TO LAUGH.

ALAN: What's so funny?

LORNA: Remember those words I tried to teach you.

ALAN: "Lorna words".

LORNA: Yeah. Here's one. Irony.

ALAN: I don't get it.

LORNA: How many times did I beg you to come back to me?

ALAN: The boot's on the other foot.

LORNA: Exactly.

ALAN: Is there someone else?

LORNA: No.

ALAN PICKS UP THE LIGHTER.

LORNA: Well, kind of.

ALAN: You're seeing somebody else?

LORNA: And I suppose you're not.

ALAN: No.

LORNA: I wasn't looking, you can be sure of that. After you ... did what you did, I was definitely cured of any desire for a relationship. I met him at … work.

ALAN: You're screwing your boss?

LORNA: It's not like that – (LOOKING AROUND) and keep your voice down. (BEAT) That's not all.

ALAN: What else did you do?

LORNA: It's hard to say.

ALAN: Just say it. I did.

LORNA: Well, when you shacked up with Rebecca from Lay-down and Design I didn't really cope.

ALAN: I told you - I made a mistake.

LORNA: I'm trying to say something. I felt unattractive, low self-esteem - all that crap. Anyway … I met someone and they made me an offer.

ALAN: Some guy?

LORNA: A lady actually. At an agency.

ALAN: Advertising?

LORNA: Escort. I slept with men for money. A lot of money. (BEAT.) Guess you don't want me back now.

ALAN CONSIDERS.

ALAN: Yes. Yes I do.

LORNA: Alan, you're just saying that.

ALAN: I've done some pretty bad things too, you know that? We both have. That doesn't matter now. All that matters is you and me.

LORNA: I've never heard you talk like this before.

ALAN: Had a bit of time to think. Let's forget the last three months ever happened. You're not still doing it … are you?

LORNA: No.

ALAN: Right. Well then?

LORNA: One of my … clients, very wealthy, very powerful. He liked me. We connected.

ALAN: (PUTTING IT TOGETHER) Robert?

LORNA: It doesn't matter who he is.

ALAN: So you're seeing him?

LORNA: He's … looking after me.

ALAN: Well you just tell him you don't want to do it anymore. Or I'll tell him. (GETTING OUT PHONE) What's his number?

LORNA: Who said I don't want to do it anymore?

BEAT.

ALAN: I think I need a cigarette.

LORNA: Since I've been away from you I've changed. I need to live for me now. I want to do what's best for Lorna.

ALAN: And being a prostitute is what's best for you?

LORNA: (HUSHING HIM) I'm not a prostitute – Robert's good to me. He treasures me – something you don't know much about. He's got me this beautiful little apartment, overlooking the harbour.

ALAN: He's giving you money to sleep with him.

LORNA: How could I expect you to understand? (BEAT) Anyway, I won't be doing it for much longer. When I've got enough I'm going to the States. Start again.

ALAN: So it's money? Is that what you want? I can get money.

LORNA: How can you get money? From your "job". You're lucky to even get paid each week. Look, even if you had all the money in the world it wouldn't make any difference. Too much has happened. (BEAT) Five years Al. We had a good run.

ALAN: I've never heard you talk like this before.

LORNA: I'm getting … stronger. I think it's Roberts' influence. He's very … tough. (STANDING) I got to go.

LORNA STARTS TO LEAVE.

ALAN: Wait.

ALAN GRABS HER HAND.

LORNA: Let go of my hand.

ALAN: Please.

LORNA: Alan, don't beg. It's pathetic.

ALAN LETS GO OF HER HAND.

LORNA: (POINTING) See the blue Bentley? That's him. (BEAT) It's crazy isn't it? All that time we spent together and we never once talked like this. Maybe we should have. Well, too late now. (HOLDING OUT HAND) Goodbye Alan.

ALAN: You said you loved me.

LORNA: I did.

ALAN: What happened?

LORNA: You.

LORNA EXITS. **ALAN** WATCHES HER GO. **ALICE** ENTERS. **ALAN** BEGINS TO SWAY.

ALICE: Where have you been?

LIGHTS CHANGE TO:

2. Offices of The People's Voice newspaper, noon.

ALAN: (SLURRED) Out.

ALICE: Where?

ALAN: Making a few callbacks.

ALICE: You sell anything?

ALAN: Ten full pages.

ALICE: Joe's looking for you.

ALAN: So?

ALICE: He's on the warpath.

ALAN: He's always on the warpath.

ALICE: Alan, what are your figures for this week?

ALAN: Three million.

ALICE: Come on.

ALAN: Two.

ALICE Thousand?

ALAN: Hundred.

ALICE: Alan.

ALAN: She won't come back.

ALICE: Who?

ALAN: Lorna. I don't even know who she is anymore.

ALICE: Alan, we'll talk about it later. We haven't got time now darling. You've got to get some sales.

ALAN: Stuff the sales.

ALICE: Joe's serious.

ALAN: I want her back Alice. That's all I want. Stuff this paper. Stuff Joe. I just want her back. There I was pouring my heart out in the middle of this coffee shop and people were just sitting there, eating cheesecake and drinking cappuccinos. Didn't they realise what was happening at the next table? Didn't they realise my life was falling apart?

ALICE: It happens every day.

ALAN: I had my dream again the other night.

ALICE: Alan, we haven't got time to talk about your dream.

ALAN: It was exactly the same. I was in the tunnel. Running. I was tired, my breathing was heavy. I'd obviously been running for a long time. But I'm

ALAN: (CONT) running the wrong way. The light is behind me. I can feel it on my back. The end of the tunnel is in the other direction and every step takes me further away. I keep telling myself to stop, turn around, go back. But nothing happens. I just keep running, further, into the darkness. Why can't I stop? Turn around. I don't get it.

ALICE: That makes two of us. Listen to me. I know you're upset but believe me, the best way to mend a broken heart is to throw yourself into your work. Killing birds, stone – and all that.

ALAN: I told you - I don't care.

ALICE: You say that now but you'll regret it tomorrow. This job isn't much but at least it's a job. You're not the only one treading water here.

ALAN: What?

ALICE: Joe can't keep propping up the paper forever. Noble endeavour or not it still comes down to money. We're right on the edge.

ALAN: Alice, I don't care.

ALICE: Please. For me.

ALICE PULLS OUT A CARD. SHE HANDS IT TO **ALAN**.

ALICE: I was going to see this man this afternoon. He's interested in taking a half page.

ALAN: I'm not taking your sales.

ALICE: You'd do the same for me. I'm fine for this week. Go and see him. He's a good man. Get Joe off your back. Afterwards we'll have a drink and you can tell me all about Laura.

ALAN: Lorna.

ALICE: Lorna. (HELPING HIM UP) Now put your face on and up you get. Don't want to keep the man waiting. (HANDING HIM BRIEFCASE) There's your briefcase.

ALAN: I can't go.