

STILL LIFE

OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

A play by Phil Lewis

This play requires permission to perform and a performance fee

SHORTENED **SAMPLE** VERSION

For full version please contact:

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Approx. 12 minutes.

CAST:

SANDY: 40+

BYRON: 20+

SET:

Open stage.

A bar if possible.

OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

((OPENING MUSIC.

LIGHTS UP AS SANDY ENTERS WITH A HUGE SMILE AND LEANS ON THE BAR. SHE TALKS IN A LIVELY AND FRIENDLY MANNER, AS IF TALKING TO A SINGLE CUSTOMER ACROSS THE BAR)

SANDY: Hi ya.

See you've got the usual. Byron looking after you, is he? Lovely lad, don't you think? Stupid name, but lovely lad. Bashful Byron I calls him.

Daft Dave thinks he's gay. But then...he's not called Daft Dave for no reason, eh? (LAUGHS) No poofs in this bar, I can tell you. Only 'cause they're a waste of space. If they don't want me to get a handful of them, they're no good to me in here, eh? (LAUGHS).

Do you know what Daft Dave said the other night? He said, "If ignorance is bliss, why aren't more people happy?"

Laugh? I thought I'd never stop. He's so funny, Dave.

What did he say yesterday...er, "In the 60's, people took acid to make the world weird. Now the world is weird and people take Prozac to make it normal."

Then...Happy Harry says, "If a Man is talking in the forest and there's no woman there to hear him, is he still wrong?"

He's a lad, he is. We've got a good bunch in here in the evening, haven't we, eh? Great bunch of lads.

A bit quiet now though, eh? Time for you and me to finally get that snog you promised two Christmases ago. What'd you say?

It's okay, only joking. That was a good do though, eh? The booze flowed that night right enough. The best raffle we ever had and a lock-in 'till five. That drinking competition...wow, eh?

Yeah. A little older and lot wiser, eh? Well...older, anyway. (LAUGHS)

Customer. Excuse me.

(SANDY SEES A CUSTOMER AND EXITS TO SERVE.

BYRON ENTERS, TAKING HER PLACE AND SMILES SHYLY AT THE IMAGINARY CUSTOMER)

BYRON: She still on about the Christmas? I don't know how she remembers it. She was so drunk. I found her asleep on the seat over there the next morning. I didn't see her for two days after that. Someone said she'd been in hospital.

(LEANS FORWARD CONSPIRATORIALLY AND LOOKS TO SEE IF SHE CAN HEAR)

She cornered me in the stock room. I couldn't get away. She was kissing and groping me. What could I do? I don't even fancy her. At all. But she is my boss and ...well I like it here. I live round the corner, the shifts suit me and the pay's not bad. I don't want to upset her and get fired, do I?

It's the third time she's caught me alone now and it's getting me edgy. I'm going to have to tell her, but I don't know how she's going to take it.

Christ! I haven't even told me mum yet. I don't know how she's going to take it either. Me Dad'll be okay. I think. Me mum's the worry.

I've got to say something to someone, or I'll burst. God! What a state to be in. Another pint?

(BYRON EXITS TO SERVE AS SANDY ENTERS LOOKING BACK AT BYRON)

SANDY: Nice bum, eh?

Good kisser too. Yeah, I know. Well, perks of being the landlord, eh?
(LAUGHS)

Little else to merit the job, I'd say. Do you know.... The brewery now try to cheat the landlords. Swapping beer and not telling. It used to be the other way round – landlords skim from the brewery. Times have changed.

It's not all pleasure being a landlord, you know. Just because I lounge around behind this bar, doesn't mean it's a doddle. Its hours of this every day of the week.

You have to be nice to everyone. Even you...(LAUGHS) Only kidding. You have to be sociable ALL the time. Even to Bent Bobby and you know how hard work he is. Tight git.

Then there's the large screen TV, always on a channel somebody doesn't want. Never satisfied, some.

Food, Always something wrong with the food. Not enough lettuce. Too much lettuce. Too cold, too hot. What do these people want?

So...you've gotta laugh, haven't you? Did you hear the one about the kindergarten pupil told his teacher he'd found a cat, but it was dead?

(AFFECTS AN ACCENT) "How do you know that the cat was dead?" she asked her pupil.

(CHILD'S VOICE) "Because I pissed in its ear and! it didn't move," answered the child innocently.

(ACCENT) "You did WHAT ?" the teacher exclaimed in surprise.

(CHILD VOICE) "You know, I leaned over and went 'Pssst!' and it didn't move."

(SANDY LAUGHS LOUDLY)

Course, if you want the more serious side of The King's Head, spend a minute or two with the Professor, over there. It'll feel like an hour, but he really does know everything.

You know, the other day he was explaining to the bar at large, in that soft West Country accent of his, that (USES AN ACCENT) lead poisoning probably saw off the Romans. They used it for roofing, cisterns, water pipes and cooking pots. Pans and drinking vessels were lined with it. It may have caused the madness of Caligula and affected the health and sanity of people in the Roman high society.

Now that explains a lot, don't it? I suspect the whole of Parliament is lined with the stuff. (LAUGHS)

He also said, get this.... A pig's orgasm lasts 30 minutes. (LAUGHS) Imagine that, eh?

Hang on. Customer getting thirsty over there.

(SANDY EXITS THE BAR AND BYRON REPLACES HER)

BYRON: She been talking about me again? She sees me as the butt of all her jokes. It's getting a little wearing, I can tell you. The most destructive force in the universe is gossip. And she has it in spades. Do NOT tell her anything in confidence. Everyone will know before you finished your sentence.

Do you like the jokes? Wait till you've heard them a few times. Has she told you her line of bar room philosophies? No. Sure? She's told everyone else.

"People who want to share their religious views with you, almost never want you to share yours with them."

"The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status, or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, we ALL believe that we are above average drivers."

(LAUGHS) You like that one?

There's...."Sex is like air. It only becomes really important when you aren't getting any."

I think that's her favourite. Appropriate, anyhow.

She's the life and soul of the party all right, but only if your in the mood. Sometimes I'm...just quiet. She doesn't understand that. She's always telling me to cheer up. She doesn't have my problems. I just need....to make the decision. In fact I have. Today.

Before I go off shift I'll have a quiet word with her. Tell her...I'm the kind of guy that's not interested in women. Any age, any hair colour. Perhaps she'll stop harassing me then.

Then I'm going to tell my mother. Decision made. I feel better already.

(HE LOOKS ACROSS THE BAR)

She's coming back. I'd better get busy.

(BYRON EXITS AS SANDY ENTERS)

SANDY: I wish he'd cheer up a bit. You've got to have a laugh, haven't you?

Silly Cecil, him over there with the stupid French beret on his head, Cecil, said to me (IN ANOTHER ACCENT) "I want a divorce. My wife hasn't spoken to me in six months. I need to see a Lawyer:"

I said, better think it over. Wives like that are hard to get! (LAUGHS).

Good to see people smile, don't you think. A laugh a day keeps misery at bay. That's what I say.

But who am I kidding, eh? Life isn't as easy as that, is it?

(SANDY BECOMES SERIOUS AND A LITTLE MOROSE AS SHE OPENS UP)

I come across to you as a happy go lucky person, don't I? But I'm not, you know. When I go to bed at night, always alone, I feel depressed and lonely. Many nights I just...cry. So I don't go to bed until I'm exhausted and drunk enough.

My chasing the men routine is because..... I just don't know how to behave with men. I had one steady relationship, many years ago, that ended in disaster. It knocked me back. My confidence went, so bravado replaced it. Over the years that bravado somehow turned into aggressive behavior and the monster Sandy was born.

So how do I get out of this vicious circle? People know me for what I am and it's everything I don't want to be. I want to be kind, loving and genteel.

I suppose I take it out on others at times too. Byron, for instance. He can be a lazy little git and I need to show him whose boss and keep him on his toes.

(SANDY FORCES HERSELF BACK INTO JOVIALITY AGAIN)

I'm not still over the pig! (LAUGHS).

EDITED