

THE PLUMS

by

Dirk Strasser

1. EXT. BACKYARD. DAY. 1.

Suburban backyard. Large plum tree. Ground covered in red plums. BOY and GIRL throwing plums at target drawn on side fence.

2. INT. LIVINGROOM. DAY. 2.

Spotlessly clean living room. Expensive furniture. Pavarotti being played on the CD. ANDREW drinking a boutique beer. He sits back with his eyes closed in between drinks and listens to the music. KATHY can be seen on the phone in the corridor just as she is hanging up.

KATHY

She's done it.

ANDREW

What?

KATHY

She's let herself get pregnant.

KATHY sits down opposite ANDREW.

ANDREW

Maree? Pregnant? What happened to all that talk about freedom?

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KATHY

I don't know.

ANDREW

She's a bloody hypocrite.

KATHY

You can say that again.

ANDREW

She's a bloody –

KATHY

Shut up, will you?

KATHY sits staring at ANDREW who sits back and closes his eyes.

KATHY

I don't know what's gotten into her.

ANDREW

I think I've got a fair idea.

KATHY

Don't be so vulgar, Andrew. You know what I mean.

ANDREW

I like this part.

ANDREW leans back further and smiles as he listens to the music.

KATHY

Can't we listen to something else for a change?

ANDREW

But you like Pavarotti.

KATHY

Don't tell me what I like.

ANDREW opens his eyes and stares at KATHY. KATHY is running her fingers absently along the armrest of the chair.

ANDREW

This news about Maree has really upset you, hasn't it?

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KATHY shakes head and looks away. ANDREW looks at the ground.

KATHY

No, of course not. Why should it?

ANDREW

I don't know – you tell me.

KATHY

It's just that... well... I feel sort of betrayed. You know what I mean. We'd spoken about it so often. We'd agreed... you know what I mean? It was like a pact.

ANDREW

Just goes to show you can't believe everything someone tells you.

KATHY

But... I thought we understood each other.

ANDREW

Just shows you can't really know what's going on in someone's head, doesn't it?

KATHY

But I was so sure.

ANDREW and KATHY look up at each other.

3. EXT. BACKYARD. DAY. 3.

Target on fence is now stained red with plum pulp. BOY and GIRL are still shooting plums at the target. BOY accidentally throws one over the fence. He looks worried at first, but then the GIRL throws one over deliberately. Then they both start enthusiastically throwing them over the fence.

4. INT. LIVINGROOM. DAY. 4.

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KATHY has a half bottle of champagne and is pouring herself a glass. ANDREW is still listening to music.

KATHY

I suppose we should celebrate.

ANDREW

What was that?

KATHY

I'm going to turn that damn Pavarotti off.

ANDREW

No, no. Leave it. I'm listening to you.

KATHY

I said we ought to celebrate this wonderful occasion.

ANDREW

I hope Maree doesn't expect to stay on our dinner party list. How can we have a decent conversation with a baby crawling all over the place?

KATHY

I suppose she could get a sitter.

ANDREW

She won't, you know.

KATHY

You're right. If I know Maree, she's going to get obsessive about this thing.

ANDREW

I hate it when women get obsessive.

KATHY

Just women, is it?

ANDREW

Now don't get touchy about it. You know what I mean.

KATHY

No, I don't think I do know what you

mean.

ANDREW

Well, look Kathy, even you get something in your head sometimes and you won't let go.

KATHY

What's that supposed to mean? I get something in my head – what's that supposed to mean?

ANDREW

Look, I don't want argue with you, Kathy.

KATHY

That's the problem with you, you know. You never argue a point.

ANDREW

That's not true.

KATHY

Yes, it is. And you know why you never want to argue – it's because you don't think my points of view are worth arguing about, do you? That's true, isn't it?

ANDREW

What are you talking about? How the hell did we get into this conversation? It's all that bloody Maree's fault.

KATHY

Don't change the subject. We were talking about why you never argue a point with me.

ANDREW

I hate arguing, you know that. It's not really a... a mature way to deal with things. Besides, we were talking about obsessions first. You always lose track of what we're talking about.

KATHY

I haven't forgotten. You said I was obsessive.

ANDREW

I don't think I said that... Look, is there any point to this. All I want to do is listen to Pavarotti.

KATHY

There you go.

ANDREW

There I go where?

KATHY

That just sums you up, Andrew. Talk about being obsessed. I'll bet you'd be really pissed off if I switched off the CD right now. That would be a real worry, wouldn't it? A real worry. You might have to argue a point with me rather than avoiding it. You wouldn't like that, would you?

ANDREW sits up straight in chair.

ANDREW

Are you deliberately trying to antagonise me today? If you are, you've almost got it right. Don't you dare switch the CD off on me. You know I hate that.

KATHY

What's it like to be so obsessive?

ANDREW

All I want to do is listen to this. Is that too much to ask? Is that being obsessive? Okay, so Maree's pissed you off, don't take it out on me.

KATHY

Obsessive.

ANDREW tries to ignore her.

KATHY

Obsessive.

ANDREW gives up trying to ignore her.

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ANDREW
Kathy, why don't you grow up?

ANDREW and KATHY glare at each other.

5. EXT. BACKYARD. DAY. 5.

BOY and GIRL are laughing, squealing and running around, gathering up plums as fast as they can and throwing them over the fence.

6. INT. LIVINGROOM. DAY. 6.

KATHY is washing the champagne glass vigorously in kitchen. ANDREW can be seen in livingroom, still listening to Pavarotti.

ANDREW
Don't tell me you're getting funny?

KATHY
What do you mean?

ANDREW
You know what I'm talking about.

KATHY
(irritated)
No, I'm not getting funny.

ANDREW
It's not even the babies so much that I'm worried about. It's when they get to the stage of those two next door.

KATHY
Haven't we had this conversation before?

ANDREW
They're bloody destructive, you know.

KATHY

Shit.

KATHY has cut her hand on the glass.

ANDREW

What's wrong?

KATHY watches her blood drip into the sink.

ANDREW

Kathy, I said what's wrong?

KATHY

I'm bleeding.

ANDREW

Serves you right. You shouldn't wash up when you're in one of these moods.

KATHY

Don't bother moving. I'm okay. Don't worry about me. Just stay where you are.

ANDREW

Spare me the sarcasm, Kathy. You know how I am with blood.

KATHY

It's a bit of a luxury, isn't it?

ANDREW

What?

KATHY

The way you are with blood.

ANDREW

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

KATHY walks to cupboard and searches for cotton wool. She dabs the cut finger but the blood continues to well up. She walks into livingroom.

KATHY

Wouldn't it be funny if this just kept bleeding?

ANDREW

What sort of a thought is that?

KATHY

I don't know. It just popped into my head. You can't control your thoughts, can you?

ANDREW

I think you can – to an extent. Anyway, you don't have to tell people about them.

KATHY

Wouldn't it be funny, though, if I just kept bleeding? Not a lot, mind you, but just a little bit at a time. Wouldn't it be funny?

ANDREW

Kathy, will you shut up, I'm trying to listen.

KATHY

Andrew, you're a prick sometimes. I'm trying to tell you something and all you want to hear is that damn CD.

ANDREW

Kathy, I said, shut up. I'm trying to listen and all you're doing is talking crap. Go ring up Maree and tell her your problems.

KATHY

I'm sick of this music.

KATHY gets up and switches the CD player off. ANDREW glares at her, gets up, and walks out of room.

7. EXT. COUPLE'S BACKYARD. DAY. 7.

ANDREW walks out into his backyard. It is covered with plums. ANDREW is hit on the head with a plum and squeals of laughter can be heard from next door. He reaches down and starts picking up plums.

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8. EXT. SIDE FENCE & FIRST BACKYARD. DAY. 8.

ANDREW has climbed onto the side fence, has an armful of plums, and is firing them at the children who are running away in panic.