

CREATIVE DESTRUCTION

A 10 minute Play in Nine Scenes

by MARIA VIERA BEATTY

Contact:

Maria Viera Beatty

455 Seed Path NW

Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

mbeatty@coregroupusa.com

562-277-8058

Creative Destruction

A 10 minute Play in Nine Scenes

Characters:

Zan: a modern woman

Charles: a modern man

Setting:

Zan's flat composed of a table and chair or two. Various items lay about: a jacket, a scarf, a mobile phone—items that can be quickly grabbed to designate a change in time.

Time: The present

(Note: The play consists of nine scenes that rapidly turn one into another. There should, however, be a feeling of time change and time passage between each scene. The entire play is a "choreographed" fight, moving rapidly, that suggests a wrestling match that goes on for nine rounds. Each character might go to their respective corner before the next round.)

Creative Destruction

Scene One

(Charles and Zan enter her flat. They are returning from having dinner with her friends.)

CHARLES: Your friends never match your descriptions of them. I thought Sue was awful. You said she was so smart, so clever, so much fun. I thought she was beyond dull. And Don. What a bore. All he could talk about was golf, and fishing, and cars. And the food—where'd she learn to cook? At a refugee camp?

ZAN: I like her. She's solving her problems as best she can. Women have to find their own solutions to situations... like having a baby...

CHARLES: Do you want to have a baby?

SHE: That's not a solution for me.

CHARLES: You women, you don't even know what the problem is.

SHE: Maybe not, but I'm learning what the solutions aren't.

CHARLES: Let's go out.

ZAN: You want to go out? We just got here. Can't we just be together? Alone?

CHARLES: Zan, stop it. What do you want anyway?

ZAN: If you have to ask, you'll never know.

Scene Two

(Zan is on her phone. Charles enters.)

CHARLES: Who was that?

ZAN: No one.

CHARLES: Well, if that was no one then you must have been talking to yourself on the phone and that would mean you are nuts.

ZAN: It was Sue. Have you seen my grey jacket?
(She is preparing to go leave for work.)

CHARLES: Here it is.

ZAN: Damn. There's a spot on it. Damn. Everything conspires against me when I am in a hurry. That's when the objects of the world get their revenge for being used.

CHARLES: Where are you going?

ZAN: I have to meet a client. What's wrong?

CHARLES: Nothing. I was just remembering that I used to miss you when you went off to work. Now I can't wait for you to go.

Scene Three

CHARLES: It's always about your feelings.

ZAN: But under the surface there's a panic ready to burst out...

CHARLES: Look, if I can accept you as an anal compulsive, you can accept me as a manic depressive.

ZAN: I'll let that pass.

CHARLES: I've got feelings too. I've got problems.

ZAN: But you won't share them with me. They might conflict with your image of yourself. You might look human.

CHARLES: I feel like a god damned prisoner. I can't breathe. You're suffocating me...

ZAN: Go ahead, leave, but I've told you once you walk out that door you can't come back. I won't take you back after you've fucked your way across town. The kind of relationship I want...

CHARLES: You and I are more like brother and sister than lovers. We've had a pretty adversarial relationship over the past year. I don't want to hurt you. I'm not going to sneak around behind your back. I'll let you know what I decide.

ZAN: What you decide! I'm not going to sit around here waiting... waiting for you to decide. Who do you think you are? The Pope? I'm supposed to sit around here waiting... waiting for your decision, you pompous son-of-a-bitch. You decide. You decide right now. You've got three minutes.

(Zan looks at her watch and plunks down in a chair. Charles leaves the room. Zan paces. He returns.)

CHARLES: I've decided to stay with you.

ZAN: I don't care. I don't really care anyway.

Scene Four

ZAN: *(world weary)* I know. You're having an affair.

CHARLES: No, I am not having an affair. Well, not exactly an affair.

ZAN: Sort of a semi-affair? You've felt her up, but you haven't screwed yet?

CHARLES: You always have to act crass when things get unpleasant.

ZAN: Who is it? Do I know her?

CHARLES: I met her before I met you?

ZAN: That older woman?

CHARLES: No. I told you about the one who went to New York and lived with a musician and then went to Paris...

ZAN: Sort of a legend in her own time. I know the type.

CHARLES: She called me.

ZAN: And you're having an affair.

CHARLES: No, I've met her for lunch a couple of times. She's down on her luck. She married this guy from Spain. She has a daughter. In Spain the father gets custody of the children so when she left him, she had to sneak the child out of the country...

ZAN: How Hollywood.

CHARLES: She's back here living with her mother and has this child to support and she's interested in me.

ZAN: It's a little mercenary, isn't it?

CHARLES: I guess so... but she wants me.

ZAN: And do you want her?

CHARLES: I don't know.

Scene Five

(Zan has locked herself in her flat. Charles knocks at the door trying to get her to come out.)

CHARLES: Don't be silly. Come on out. Please. Say something. What are you doing? Listen, maybe you're right. It's my fault. Open the door. Yes, you're right. I am a bastard...

ZAN: Do you think I give a damn?

CHARLES: Try to be reasonable. It was only a sexual thing. That's all.

ZAN: Oh, yeah, and with me it isn't sexual?

CHARLES: With you it's different. I love you. I respect you.

ZAN: You know what you can do with your respect.

CHARLES: It's different with you. You're the person I love most in the world. I feel safe with you. I need you. You're my safety net... my...

ZAN: Great. If you'd had a normal mother instead of that psychopath, you wouldn't need...

CHARLES: That's what I like about you—the way you always shit on my moments of genuine feelings when I try to open up—to talk...

Scene Six

(Charles and Zan enter her flat. They are returning from having dinner with his mother.)

ZAN: Why didn't you say something to your mother? She treated me like I was a hooker you picked up at McDonalds.

CHARLES: What am I supposed to say?

ZAN: If my mother acted that way to you, I'd kill her.

CHARLES: It's awkward. I don't talk to my mother about personal things. I don't have that kind of relationship.

ZAN: If it was my mother I would have stood up and screamed and yelled and stormed out of there and...

CHARLES: I don't really know my mother, personally.

ZAN: What do you mean you don't know your mother personally? She's your mother... you gotta know your own mother personally.

CHARLES: And why did Don call you during dinner?

ZAN: He wanted to know if I knew where Sue was?

CHARLES: Why would you know?

ZAN: She's my best friend.

CHARLES: I thought you said Nancy was your best friend. And Wendy was your best friend.

ZAN: I have many best friends.

CHARLES: If Don weren't such a dull ass I'd think you were having an affair with him. Are you having an affair with him?

ZAN: Don't be absurd.

CHARLES: You cheated on your fiancé...

ZAN: ...ex fiancé...

CHARLES: ... on your ex fiancé with me, you could cheat on me with your "best" friend's husband.

ZAN: No one locked you into this relationship.

CHARLES: Everything's always locked. Locked down. Locked up. Are we having a fight?

ZAN: I don't know

CHARLES: It's gotten to the point when I can't tell.

ZAN: Well maybe I can clarify the situation. I did sleep with Don. But only to get even with you.

CHARLES: I'm outta here. I am so out of here.

(He leaves.)

Scene Seven

CHARLES: You obviously have the morals of a cat.

ZAN: You don't know anything about my morals. You don't know anything about me.

CHARLES: I know all I need to know. You're just a user... you use men for your own amusement. You play with people's lives. You don't care.

ZAN: You came over here to tell me that? You could have sent a text. What are you doing here? I didn't invite you here. How dare you walk in here and insult me.

CHARLES: I couldn't forget you... I kept thinking...

ZAN: Do you think unhappy people can be in happy relationships?

CHARLES: I may have trouble expressing myself. I may not be smooth like the men you're used to, but that doesn't mean I don't feel any less deep. That doesn't mean it doesn't matter to me. That doesn't mean that... you're not the most important thing in the whole world to me just because I can't find the words to say so.

ZAN: I don't doubt your words. I doubt your passion.

(Charles walks out of the flat.)

Scene Eight

(Charles paces as he waits for her. Zan arrives at her flat.)

ZAN: What the hell are you doing here?

CHARLES: I miss you.

ZAN: Too little, too late. You called it off.

CHARLES: I made a mistake.

ZAN: Nothing like the mistake I made.

CHARLES: I want it to be like it was.

ZAN: Me, too. I lied to you, Charles. I didn't sleep with Don. I just told you that to try to punish you, to get revenge, to get even. To say: "fuck you." The winner is the one who gets to say "fuck you" last.

Scene Nine

ZAN: I feel like a walking cliché.

CHARLES: A cliché is one thing you've never been.

ZAN: Is that a compliment? You trying to make up?

CHARLES: On the other hand, fidelity. That's a different story.

ZAN: And something you know nothing about.

CHARLES: You think fidelity is not having two men in bed with you at the same time. I'm leaving you, Zan. Our relationship has become totally perfunctory.

ZAN: Fidelity, perfunctory... my, aren't we adult. I'll show you perfunctory...

CHARLES: Stop it, Zan.

ZAN: Well, I'm leaving you, Charles.

CHARLES: What did you do to stop things from falling apart?

ZAN: No, please. I can't. I'm all right with this. If you don't want to stay with me, I'd rather be alone.

CHARLES: Why don't you try to look at things with a little detachment? Behave like a normal person.

ZAN: I lied to you.

CHARLES: About sleeping with Don?

ZAN: No, about not sleeping with Don. I didn't make it up to punish you. I did sleep with him.

(Charles leaves the scene. Each stand alone.)

CHARLES' MONOLOGUE: Zan and I used to have songs. Songs and greeting cards. Every once in a while, late at night, we'd go to the Rite-Aid because they're open at night, and we'd read the greeting cards to each other. Because that's what songs and greeting cards do, they say the things you can't say, the things you want to say. Some people can say them. I guess they're the ones that write the songs and the greeting cards. But now Zan has taken the songs with her. And the cards at the Rite-Aid say all the wrong things. Same cards, wrong words.

ZAN'S MONOLOGUE: I keep myself in a very shallow place. I can't listen to music. I'm careful to only read things that do not matter to me. I won't let myself think thoughts of holidays, or trips, or hotel rooms, or beaches, or moonlight. I recall every memory to hate him. Some people remember the good things from their past. I used to be that way, but now I force up every little slight, everything that might be construed as a possible lack of loyalty. And what I want him to know is that when I look in the mirror, I don't see me. In his eyes, that's where I always saw me. But he took his eyes with him. And he's not in the mirror, and neither am I. I'd like him back because I'd like me back.

LIGHTS OUT