

INSPIRATION

by Kristen Doherty

CHARACTERS

TOM: (20) A studious, hard-working, business student.

FAZ (28) An unemployed, uninspired playwright.

YASMIN (20s) A drama student with a hidden agenda.

Setting – The lounge room of a shared house.

Tom sits on the couch reading a newspaper. He is wearing neat work clothes. Faz enters in his pajamas, shoves Tom to the side and lies down, stretching his legs over Tom.

TOM: Faz! What are you doing? Get off! I'm sitting here.

Tom shoves Faz's legs off his lap.

FAZ: Do you mind... I am about to nap.

TOM: You don't need to nap on me. I've just got home from work. Work after my lecture. I've been at it all day and I deserve some couch time. You! What have you done all day? Nothing, right!?

FAZ: Pretty much.

TOM: Same as every day. Why don't you get a job? You're like 30.

FAZ: 28.

TOM: 28? That's old. Like really old. You should be adulting by now. Wife, kids, mortgage. Not renting with a couple of uni students. (*irritated*) Students who pay a third of the rent and would like their share of the couch.

FAZ: I have a job! I'm a writer.

TOM: A writer? You *used* to be a writer. You used to go off to your room for hours and hours... For days at a time sometimes. You wouldn't even come out to eat. You used to find such joy in it. What happened? I don't even remember the last time you were even in your room... Has this couch actually become your bed?

Tom picks up a pillow, smells it and throws it at Faz in disgust.

TOM: It's rank! Yasmin and I are worried about you mate. You're not your old self.

FAZ: I'm waiting for inspiration to hit me... And 28 is not old! You! You are the oldest, young person I know. Aren't you like 19?

TOM: 20.

FAZ: Psht! 20. You're so old! Like in your 'soul' man. I mean look at you. You look old. Why do you wear glasses like that? They're old man's glasses. They're John Lennon glasses. It's like your 'old John Lennon'. Like John Lennon but like when he was 80.

TOM: Fool! John Lennon didn't even get to be 80. He died when he was 40. He was shot dead by Mark David Chapman, on Monday, December 8, 1980, in the archway of the Dakota, his residence in New York City. He sustained four major gunshot wounds and was pronounced dead on arrival at Roosevelt Hospital.

FAZ: And that is exactly what I'm talking about. How do you even know that? It's like you're elderly. You know too much crap! You know too much crap! You. Know. Too. Much. Crap!

TOM: Everyone knows that you dim wit. (*pouts*) And lots of young people wear glasses like this... They're fashionable.

FAZ: Of course everyone knows that John Lennon died young. But the dates, the details. It's unnecessary. It just makes you sound like a massive old douche, as well as look like one.

TOM: (*frustrated*) What's unnecessary is you "napping" at 5pm. You'll be going to bed in a couple of hours. You need to nap because you are old. You are an old, old man.

FAZ: You are so much older than me.

TOM: You are!

Yasmin enters wearing a dressing gown (covering a costume) and holding two jackets and a plate of cupcakes. The boys stop bickering on her arrival.

YASMIN: Hey guys. I hope you weren't arguing again! It feels tense in here. The energy of the room is way off.

Yasmin plucks negative energy from the sky.

YASMIN: Remind me to clear your chakras later! Anyways. Look what I've made (*unveils*) Some delicious red velvet cupcakes. Only cooled enough to put the butter icing on.... Smell them... Oh my God! I think they're going to be my best ever.

TOM: Oh, thanks Yasmin! They look incredible.

FAZ: Oh yes! Gimme a couple.

They try to grab the cupcakes.

YASMIN: Uh, uh, uh!

She whips the cupcakes away with one hand and whacks their hands with her other.

YASMIN: This is a two-way street, gentlemen. You will receive said incredible cupcakes when you do me a little favour.

TOM: That's extortion.

FAZ: That's bullshit!

YASMIN: I admit it freely. I bring food only to bribe you. But I've got this audition that I need to prepare a scene for...

The boys groan.

TOM: Another one?

FAZ: I hate this.

TOM: Please don't make us do this again.

YASMIN: Please guys. This is a really, really important audition. The play is this beautiful, classic, timeless piece...It's been commissioned by State.

FAZ: Commissioned by The State Theatre Company!?

YASMIN: Yeah! It's going on tour and everything. Come on Faz, reading a bit of the competition might give you the inspiration you need, maybe your next piece could tour with State one day.

Faz and Tom stay silent, not wanting to give in.

YASMIN: That's ok. I'm guessing Olivia and Tyrone next door wouldn't mind reading with me and eating these delicious cupcakes... oops that bit just fell into my mouth...and... oh my God, *(she puts more pieces in)* I'm sorry... it's just... it's just. Oh yum. I cannot even describe how good...mmm... Food-gasm. *(brightly)* Ok... I'll just go and find my Tupperware then, shall I?

TOM: No. Don't. Stop. We'll rehearse.

FAZ: Yep. Yep. I'm in. Can I have one now?

YASMIN: Rehearse first. Cupcakes later.

TOM: What.

FAZ: Where's the trust?!

Yasmin covers the cupcakes with the tea towel and produces three thickish scripts and hands them out to reluctant participants.

YASMIN: I don't trust words, I trust actions, my friends. Ok. Turn to page 2. In this scene Ferdinand, that's you Faz, and Orlando, that's you Tom, are fighting for the affections of Celia. Celia is of course 'moi'. I've brought these jackets to get you into character.

They put the jackets on.

FAZ: I did not sign up for this.

TOM: I think I look rather dashing. And so do you my good fellow.

FAZ: Stop it, before I punch you in the throat.

TOM: No need to be grouchy.

Yasmin unties her dressing gown to reveal a buxom wench costume.

YASMIN: I thought I'd come prepared.

TOM: Wow! Big effort.

FAZ: Now I feel underdressed.

Faz goes to sit down again.

YASMIN: Uh, uh, uh. You'll need to stand to deliver your lines.

FAZ: Argh! I was about to nap before you got here.

TOM: No, you were not!

FAZ: That was fully my intention.

TOM: Your intention should be to get a job.

FAZ: Your intention should be to kiss my ass!

They jostle, Yasmin gets in between them.

YASMIN: Here are your scripts. We'll start in the bit when Celia is being embraced by the lusty Orlando.

TOM: Lusty?

YASMIN: *(shrugs)* That's what the stage directions say.

TOM: *(reads stage directions aloud)* "Celia is being embraced by the lusty Orlando. He grabs her around the waist and tries to kiss her neck". Whaaat?!

YASMIN: They're the stage directions, you don't need to ready them out-loud, you just need to act them out. So, embrace me.

TOM: I thought we were just reading lines.

YASMIN: *(forceful/guttural)* Do it!

TOM: Ok um.... Um...

Tom goes to grab her but can't seem to find the best position.

YASMIN: Oh my God, you are so awkward.

TOM: I'm not great with girls.

YASMIN: No joke.

They take a few moments to find their best position of a dramatic embrace. They finally pose.

YASMIN/CELIA: *(in character)* Oh, Orlando. This isn't right...

TOM: *(Breaking character, he goes to move)* Yes, I thought the one over the shoulder was better too... *(she swats him back to position)*

YASMIN/CELIA: *(through gritted teeth)* That's the line. The position is fine! *(back into character)* Oh Orlando, this isn't right! Not right at all. I could never betray my beloved Ferdinand like this... He would kill us if he were to find me here in your arms. Your strong, manly arms.

TOM: Typecast.

YASMIN: *(hisses)* Shut up!

They wait...awkwardly. Nothing happens.

YASMIN: Ferdinand enters! Ferdinand! Gah! Ferdinand! That's you Faz!

FAZ/FERDINAND: My bad. *(he reads)* Ferdinand. Orlando you k.nave.

They act shocked when he enters. Tom drops Yasmin.

YASMIN: Oh my God, Tom!

She crawls up awkwardly (big skirt) and gets back into position she was in before being dropped as following dialogue is delivered.

YASMIN: Faz, you don't say "Ferdinand", that's your character's name. And it's not k.nave. The k is silent... It's just nave.

FAZ: Yeah, I knew all that. I was just being funny.

TOM: Yeah, we believe you... funny!

FAZ: *(grabs him)* I will pound you!

YASMIN: Boys! You either do this properly or I'm taking the cupcakes. I'm serious. I will eat every single one of them by myself in front of you if I have to. So help me!

TOM/ORLANDO: *(whips around, straight into character)* If falling in love makes me a k.nave, then I guess that's what I truly am. A k.nave of the worst kind.

FAZ: You are seriously going to get a belting.

YASMIN/CELIA: Oh, my love. As the words spill from your luscious lips, I am tempted to drink from the fountain of their promises, but I cannot betray my beloved Ferdinand. *(she weeps, dramatically)*

FAZ: Who wrote this crap? It's absolute rubbish.

YASMIN: It's the prescribed text, keep reading.

TOM/ORLANDO: You dare claim to love the one I adore. My 'Mon Cherie', My beloved Celia whom only moments ago proclaimed her undying love to me.

FAZ/FERDINAND: Celia, say it isn't true.

YASMIN/CELIA: No, no, it's not true.

BOYS: Whaaatt!?

YASMIN/CELIA: *(to Ferdinand)* I'm sorry my love. I was wrong. I see that now. I can't bare to see the pain in your eyes. Ferdinand, you are the only one I truly love.

TOM/ORLANDO: We'll see about that! You're coming with me missy. We'll be married by morning.

YASMINE/CELIA: Unhand me, you brute! You fiend! Let me go! Let me go!

TOM/ORLANDO: Mwhahahahahahaha

He spins her out, Orlando catches her other hand, they have a tug-o-war with her.

FAZ/FERDIANAND: She's mine!

TOM/ORLANDO: No, she's mine.

FAZ/FERDIANAND: Mine.

TOM/ORLANDO: Mine.

YASMINE/CELIA: Boys, stop fighting over me. Please! End this madness!

FAZ: *(he stops, unable to continue)* "End this madness?" Seriously?! I'm sorry Yas... I know this audition is important to you but I can't read anymore. This is singlehandedly the shittiest thing I have ever heard. It is terrible, terrible writing.

YASMIN/CELIA: *(quietly)* Well, it's not that bad... *(she tries her line again, voice wavering)* "End this madness!"

FAZ: And you're telling me The State Theatre Company has picked it up and it's going on tour? If this is really for an audition, I actually think you should really reconsider doing it. It's going to bomb. Badly! There is no character development. It has no story arc. It's ridiculous. It make's absolutely no sense. It's repetitive. Like really repetitive... And what are these

archaic characters and same old stories. You can tell that the writer took no joy in writing it. It's actually insulting. Audiences don't want to see rehashed old crap. They want to hear and see incredible story telling. They want characters they can relate to. They want to see themselves onstage, but they want to be challenged, taken out of their comfort zone. Audiences want to be thrust into another world, one that their own imagination can't actually fathom.

Yasmin is mesmerized by his words, Tom also engaged, sits and picks up a cupcake.

FAZ: ... So they rely upon the writer to create that magic for them. To open the doors that they didn't even know were there. What an incredible thing it is to be a writer... an incredible thing indeed... *(a beat)* Look... I might go off to my room for a bit... *(he starts to go)* I'll be out later to eat... maybe.

Faz leaves, re-energized, stealing Tom's cupcake out of his hand as he leaves. Yasmine looks really pleased with herself, sits next to Tom. Tom flicks through his script.

TOM: Repetitive... really repetitive. Hang on/ There's only two pages. Every second page is a copy. What is this? This isn't a real script. "A bit of competition might give him the inspiration he needs" huh?... Very clever my dear Celia. Very clever indeed. Shall we?

They sit and eat the cupcakes together.

YASMIN: You know Orlando, you aren't all that bad with girls.

She kisses his cheek. He smiles.

Blackout.

The End.