

Commitment

A Ten-Minute Play by Kevin T. Moss

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This play was originally produced on May 5,6 of 1999 by the Michigan Technological University's Student Theatre Association in cooperation with the Michigan Technological University Fine Arts Department. It was produced as one of three short works grouped together as "Suite Penetration." It was staged at the University Theatre in Houghton, Michigan.

Written by Kevin T. Moss
Directed by Aaron Dykstra
Produced by Teresa Frusti

Cast:

Joe: Andrew Swartz
Allie: Amanda Sproule

Technical Direction by Brian Fiander.

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Characters:

Allie – Young woman, early twenties

Joe --- Young man, Allie's boyfriend of 4 months

Setting: A kitchen, not overly fancy. There is a small table with two chairs, and a counter upon which sit several appliances. It is summer a little before one in the morning.

(Lights up. Allie begins on, seated in a chair at the table. Joe enters to a moment of uncomfortable silence.)

Allie: You're late.

Joe: I know, I'm sorry.

A: (pause) You're not even going to bother with an excuse?

J: I don't have a good one—

A: Give me a bad one then. . .

J: I'm sorry--

A: I think I deserve at least that much!

J: I wasn't paying attention to the time.

A: Not good enough.

J: I told you I didn't have a good excuse.

A: Not bad enough either.

J: What do you want me to say?

A: If all you have is a bad excuse then you might as well make it really bad. Be inventive!

J: Car trouble?

A: More specific.

J: Flat tire?

A: Don't waste my time.

J: Horrible Car accident?

A: Well, it's a start.

J: Ok, I was driving home. . .

A: Freeway?

J: Yeah.

A: Day or night?

J: Six O'clock. (pause)

A: Go ahead.

J: So, I'm driving home around six o'clock and this oil tanker overturns in front of me. (pause)

A: And?

J: And what?

A: That's it?

J: What more do you want?

A: You come home at 1AM on a night you were supposed to take me out, our 4-month anniversary, and you stood me up here because of one lousy truck?

J: Two trucks?

A: No explosions? Terrorists? Aliens? One stupid truck falls over and you forget about the last 4 months of our lives?

J: It's not like that. C'mon, its not easy to make this up, give me a break!

A: I'm trying to give you a break but you're screwing it up! Where's your imagination? Why can't you at least offer a little entertainment if you can't offer any real excuse?

J: Ok, after the truck fell over it exploded and I tried to leave but some terrorists captured me and held me hostage.

A: What kind of terrorists?

J: I don't know, the kind with guns.

A: P.L.O.? I.R.A.? Michigan Militia?

J: Sure.

A: Jesus! You just copied what I said! Do you have any idea how to be creative?

J: I'm trying. . .

A: Say something. . .

J: I'm nervous is all--

A: . . .Something original.

J: This isn't easy.

A: Show me something Don't –

J: I'm not . . .

A: --just—bullshit.

J: . . . not good at this type of thing.. .

A: Show me!

J: Ok.

A: (pause) Just show me.

J: (sits in chair) I left work. I was driving, but I decided not to take the freeway. I thought I'd drive over to Pembry first to buy some . . . glasses. Champagne glasses – to celebrate. And as I was driving I saw the park by the lake where we first met.

A: Wait. What? We didn't –

J: Where's your imagination?

A: I – Oh. (smiles) We met by the lake. How romantic. (She moves to him and embraces him from behind, her arms around his neck.)

J: Well, it beats the New Releases section at "Gargantuan Video." Anyway, I stopped by the lake.

A: The Gazebo!

J: Yes, right next to the gazebo. So I was sitting next to the lake watching the ducks and I was just thinking about how lucky I was to have you –

A: Ok, enough with the hallmark card, let's develop the plot a little. . .

J: Well, I'm sitting on a bench and I see someone going by. Jogging, a woman. Something seems really strange, so I look again and she looks just like you. I tried to ignore it, but it made me feel very strange.

A: Was she pretty?

J: Of course, she looked like you.

A: (playfully) Stop.

J: So I sat and was thinking about it. I don't know why, but it made me angry. It was like she was taunting me, while I was just trying to have a nice afternoon. I don't know what I was thinking, but I thought I should follow her. Maybe I thought it was you and you didn't recognize me, maybe I just wanted to find out her name, but I had to go.

A: Do you always chase after strange women in parks? (Joe sighs exasperated) -- Sorry. No, this is getting interesting.

J: So (pause) I head down the path toward where she went jogging and I'm running to catch up and finally I see her around the corner, so I call out. I must have looked pretty weird, sweating and running in a shirt and tie. She freaked, she looked back and started running away and she still looked just like you.

A: From behind?

J: (reaching his hands behind him to her legs) Especially from behind.

A: Pig. (she slaps his hands away playfully and steps back.)

J: (as this speech goes on Allie is getting increasingly tense) So I'm running. And she keeps running away. I'm hollering, telling her not to worry and she keeps running faster and I'm starting to get really angry. I don't know why, but I'm really just furious. I'm not trying to hurt her, but she's running away, she just won't stop, and I don't know what to do. So, I'm shouting "Wait! Stop! Just hold on a fucking second, lady!" And I don't know what happened but all of a sudden it was like I was just watching myself from a distance and I sped up and knocked her down --

A: Wait.

J: -- and I could hear her but it was like her voice was a long ways away and I couldn't hear anything else but she was saying "Please don't, please stop," and I wanted to, but I couldn't control it,

A: Don't . . .

J: I was just watching and I started hitting her first just with my hands and then I picked up a rock that was nearby --

A: Stop.

J: -- and I just kept hitting her again and again, I couldn't stop. And I thought, Oh my god, it could've been you--

A: Please, stop. (Allie continues to shout at Joe to stop throughout this next speech.)

J: (overwhelmed by story) I don't know why I thought that but I did and I tried asking her what her name was but she didn't answer so I was shaking her, trying to get a response and there was blood everywhere

A: Shut Up! (Allie finally can't take it and looks around trying to find a way out, when she settles upon a kitchen knife on the counter)

J: and then I realized what happened and I picked her up and tried to see if she was breathing if she was ok, I tried to resuscitate her, but it was no use

and after awhile I was just holding her in my arms and kissing her and asking her to forgive me. I was so confused, I was scared and covered in blood.

A: (frantic) Stop it!

J: She was dead. I had to do something. (Realizing that Allie has become silent, Joe turns to her and sees her holding the knife eyeing him warily.) Whoa, hold on. (He reaches out to take the knife and Allie cuts his hand.)

A: You stay away from me!

J: (Grabbing his hand) Christ! What's wrong with you?

A: You killed that girl!

J: C'mon I'm just making up an excuse like you said.

A: I know better. You're not that creative! You told me all of it. Oh my God.

J: Hold on, its just a story...

A: Stop it. Just stop. And get out!

J: (moving to her) C'mon baby, don't be like this.

A: (striking when he gets within reach and then plunging the knife in again several times.) Stay away! (Joe cries, in shock and pain and falls to the floor)

J: (clutching his stomach, grimacing) Allie, Why?

A: Don't give me that! How could you. . .? What -- ? I don't believe it, I've spent all these months with a psycho!

J: (Biting back pain) Its just a story!

A: You couldn't make that up, I know better.

J: (slightly delirious) I heard it. On the way home. Jesus. The, god, the damn news. Public radio. (Gasping for breath) I'm really sorry about being late. You wouldn't believe how . . . Could you -- an ambulance -- (cough) something? (coughs and slumps over, muttering)

A: (standing stunned for a second) What? Oh, yeah. Oh, god, god. Oh, I'm sorry. Do you still love me? I love you, Joe. Do you still love me?

J: (losing consciousness and no longer capable of intelligible speech) Ahhh.... Ja - Ba (continues in several nonsense syllables)

A: (Allie looks at the knife and then stabs herself in the stomach) Yes, you do love me. I know that now. I always knew inside, but I never, I never thought you understood. That love is about (gasp) true love is about sacrifice. You're bleeding for me, Joe. Now I'll bleed for you. (She slices her arm and collapses next to Joe, who has slipped into unconsciousness, and holds him, stroking his hair. She begins to cry, as Joe moans. She holds him close to her, crying softly. Give this time, let the silence happen) What? Tell me, Joe.

J: (mostly unconscious and stammering) ah ah ah ah ahmm mm

A: Oh, Joe! Of course I'll marry you. Thank you. (crying softly) I love you so much. (Picking up cordless phone from table and dials) Yes, could you send an ambulance? My . . . fiancée is hurt.

(Blackout)

Properties:

Knife.

Costuming:

As expected.

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