

The One You Love

By Tim Luscombe

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First performed The Royal Court Theatre 1996

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Representation:

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Act One: EAST

1 March

2 April

3 May

Act Two: SOUTH

1 June

2 July

3 August

Act Three: WEST

1 September

2 October

3 November

Act Four: NORTH

1 December

2 January

3 February

CHARACTERS:

Moon: Mid to late 20's.

Marty: Moon's lover. About 20.

Una: To be played by a man, but referred to in the text as 'she'. Not strictly TV, nor is she actually TS. She's a creation all of her own. Around 70.

Don: Middle-aged (or up) Essex S-M queen from Essex.

Frizz: 16.

Sam: Dutch. 30s.

Dominic: American. 25.

(Note: None of the characters should smoke or drink unless otherwise indicated in the script.)

Act One

Scene One

Essex

Moon and Marty's flat

A spacious area. It has the feeling of a glass cage. The North Sea can be seen, flat and grey.

Silence at first, then music fades up.

(The music's coming from a room off-stage. After a while, a phone rings on-stage. Moon enters from the direction of the music. He is naked, pale and lean. He goes to the phone)

Moon: (into the phone) Yeah? (...another person speaks...)
Dominic? (...) (Moon holds the phone to his chest, looks in the direction from which he entered and speaks into the phone, voice lowered) Where are you? (...) Of course we're in. (...) Of course you can. Blimey. Wait till Marty hears this. (...) Yeah. Bye.
(hangs up)

(Marty enters, also naked, pale and lean, but smaller and younger than Moon)

Marty: Fuck me again.

Moon: Gimme a break. (exits)

Marty: Why not? Moon?

Moon: (off) I'm knackered.

Marty: Who was that?

(The music is turned off offstage)

Moon: (off) Wrong number.

(Moon re-enters with a pair of jeans that he puts on and some shorts that he throws to Marty)

Marty: That thing you did with your fist was fantastic.

Moon: I was wanking inside you.

Marty: I couldn't tell.

Moon: I had my fist inside you. I got my cock in as well. And I wanked off.

Marty: I was so relaxed.

Moon: It was a tight squeeze, but worth it.

Marty: (his hand on his stomach, still in sexual reverie) It felt like a nuclear war in here, far away. You were thumping my guts. And my head was on an ice flow. In the Antarctic Ocean. No wind. Bright moon. Detached. (lost for words:) Completely...fucking...Christ almighty!

Moon: Marty?

Marty: Um?

Moon: (reaching for Marty and pulling him close, unable to say what's on his mind) You're all greasy.

Marty: Mmmm.

Moon: Your stomach is so precious. I love damaging it. Even on the outside it looks delicate. White skin. (marvelling) Really. Like a child's. Milky bag holding in your entrails; a poem wrapped round an explosion. What's it like inside? (Marty shrugs, amused) Black. It's so vulnerable. You're so vulnerable. (Marty is rubbing Moon's head) But you'll let me pummel you. You'll yield and take it. (Marty smiles. Moon kisses Marty's stomach. Suddenly very moved:) I don't want to lose you.

Marty: (surprised) You won't, Moon. Ever.

Moon: Promise.

Marty: Promise.

Moon: Do you miss Dominic?

Marty: (after a slight pause) Why?

Moon: I've been thinking about him.

Marty: What's new? We're always thinking about him.

Moon: Same time of year, maybe.

Marty: What?

Moon: Exactly a year since he went away. March. I remember the weather. And the flowers. Do you miss him?

Marty: (after another slight pause) Do you think he's still in England?

Moon: Why not?

Marty: No, I think of him back in the States. Why would he have stayed here?

Moon: Here Essex? Or here England?

Marty: England, of course. I'm bloody sure he wouldn't stay in Essex. There are no poofs in Essex.

Moon: Except us.

Marty: And sometimes it feels like we're the only two.

Moon: That's not OK?

Marty: Sure.

Moon: (holding Marty) You don't sound sure.

Marty: Sometimes it can seem a bit isolated.

(Marty looks out at the sea and Moon follows his eyes)

Moon: The sea's bleak today.

Marty: Winter feels endless.

Moon: (about the sea) It's completely still.

Marty: I don't believe the air will ever be warm again.

Moon: And grey.

Marty: Winter always gets me in the end, forces me into submission, head bowed, eyes on the ground, unprepared for spring.

Moon: It won't be long now.

Marty: I know. It doesn't matter. As long as I've got you, I'm OK.

Moon: Exactly. And now and then someone appears and keeps us company for a bit; like Dominic, knocking on the door to borrow a pump for his burst tyre and staying a week.

(Marty laughs)

Moon: What if he walked in now?

Marty: Why do you say that?

Moon: He might. What if he did?

Marty: It'd be great. No?

Moon: Yeah.

Marty: You want him back?

Moon: I don't need him back.

Marty: No, we don't need him back. But?

Moon: But yes, it'd be great. He was good for us. The three of us together was nice. He knew it, too. He must have known it, and been scared, to run away like he did.

Marty: Scared?

Moon: Of how good it was. One day he'll come back.

Marty: I hope you're right. It'd be great, for the sex alone!

Moon: You're bored with me?

Marty: Of course not. It's just, I mean, sometimes I'm doing something to you and I'm too preoccupied to see what your face is like, or how your body arches or shakes or writhes or twists. But when he was doing stuff to you, I could take the time to watch your ecstasy, and your concentration, and your oblivion. You're so beautiful when you're making love. I mean, especially beautiful. You change.

Moon: So do you.

Marty: You become totally you, truthfully you. You're more present for being less conscious. With Dominic, I could hold you and hold you at a distance, keep you separate and have you at the same time, make love with you through him. (pause) Do you think he thinks about us as much as we think about him?

Moon: Yes, I do.

Marty: There's so many others. We don't talk about them. Most of them, I can't remember their names.

Moon: Most of them are hopeless in bed, or sloppy or lazy or needy. Or fucked up one way or another. Dominic is serene and loving and powerful and good. The others are into you or me; one of us feels excluded. I think Dominic loved us both, equally.

Marty: He's not coming back

Moon: (with sudden urgency) Listen. You do know - don't you - it's you and me. For real. Forever.

Marty: (surprised) Sure.

Moon: You are my whole world.

Marty: Self-sufficient. That's what we are.

Moon: Complete. A circle, a sphere. My points of the compass. My days of the week, my months of the year.

Marty: I know.

Moon: But if he needs us...

Marty: He can have us. Can't he?

(pause)

Moon: Sure.

(a beat)

(Dominic enters. He's a preppily gorgeous, manically depressed American. He carries flowers. He wears a big black winter coat. He stands separate from Moon and Marty. He regards them and they him.)

Dominic: The door was open.

(A smile breaks across Marty's face)

Marty: (to Dominic) You fucking idiot!

(Marty hurls himself at Dominic, hugs him, dances him round and jumps all over him: a smothering bear)

Dominic: (happily protesting) Hey!

(The flowers leave Dominic's hand as he's knocked to the floor. Marty romps Dominic about, fast and playful)

Dominic: You'll kill the flowers.

Marty: Why did you run away, for fuck's sake?!

Dominic: I won't do it again. I promise.

Marty: You hear that, Moon? (noticing that Moon hasn't joined them) Come on!

(little pause)

Dominic: (to Moon) You didn't tell him?

Marty: (startled, to Moon) You knew?

Moon: Just ten minutes ago. The phone call.

Marty: Why didn't you say anything? Those questions. Did you find out what you wanted to know, you bastard? Did I say the right thing? (to Dominic) Well, who cares? You're a lovely surprise!

Moon: Welcome back, Dominic!

Dominic: I brought you flowers. I think Marty's destroyed them.

Marty: Come on, Moon!

(A renewed romp, involving all three, leaving them, at the end, exhausted on the ground)

Marty: (getting up and strewing flowers around the room)
Flowers! Tulips! Beautiful!

Dominic: (getting up to collect and protect the tulips) You should stick a pin in the stems, just under the head.

Marty: So, where've you been? Did you go back to the States? Are you still riding a bicycle?

Dominic: (ignoring this) Have you got a pin? I'll show you.

Moon: Leave them.

Dominic: It stops them drooping.

Marty: Smart coat.

Moon: Come on, Dominic. Talk to us.

(Dominic has collected the flowers. Moon and Marty are watching him)

Dominic: I thought I could escape you.

Moon: But you were wrong.

Dominic: Looks like it.

Marty: Let's fuck!

Dominic: Wait!

(Pause. Moon and Marty observe Dominic)

Moon: We were saying, if he wants us he can have us.

Marty: We can help him.

Moon: Do you think he needs helping?

Marty: Oh, yes.

(little pause)

Dominic: I'll get a vase.

(Dominic exits. Marty follows Dominic off, leaving Moon alone on stage. Moon looks worried, but covers it when Dominic re-enters with a vase and a pin, carrying Marty on his back.)

Marty: Fuck a doodle doo!

(Marty falls off Dominic onto Moon. Dominic sits separate, picks up each tulip in turn and carefully sticks the pin through the top of the stem, just underneath the bloom. After withdrawing the pin, he'll place each tulip in the vase. Moon and Marty regard him. He's aware of their stares)

Dominic: I should explain something.

Moon: Go ahead.

Dominic: OK. This is difficult.

Marty: We have time.

Dominic: OK. Well, it's a long story. You see... I was standing in Bromptons. And it came to me.

Moon: What?

Marty: What's Bromptons?

Dominic: It's a club. A very ordinary, middle-of-the-road gay club in Earl's Court. Nothing special.

Marty: What's Earl's Court?

Moon: I remember Bromptons. People drink too much, and stare at each other, and try to gather round them people they think look at least as good as them, and ignore everyone else. And there's no sex.

Dominic: Exactly; an ordinary middle-of-the-road gay club in Earl's Court.

Marty: (persistently) What's Earl's Court?

Moon: He doesn't get out much.

Marty: (cuddling Moon) No need!

Moon: Earl's Court's an area west of Soho, more traditionally gay than Old Compton Street, but losing its touch. Feasibly rescuable, 'coz endemically strange, but hardly worth the bother. It's full of young foreigners and old poofs.

Marty: What's Old Compton Street?

Moon: Oh dear. This could go on all day. Old Compton Street is a sort of small country. There's gay pubs and clubs, gay shops and taxis, gay theatres and tanning salons and hair cutters and travel agents and restaurants. There's even gay magazines and newspapers and a T.V. show. And whorehouses and shoe shops and... Fuck, it's depressing. It's full of a lot of men who all look the same. They have the same skin tones and the same hair style and the same jewellery. They all say the same things and laugh in the same way. They even walk and stand the same. And whether you're from Africa, America, Europe, Asia or Oz, you've read the same books, you've had the same holiday, you've seen the same shows and you have the same opinion about food and sex and Julia Roberts. What came to you?

Dominic: What?

Moon: You were standing in Bromptons and it came to you.

Dominic: That I was in hell.

Moon: Well - Bromptons...

Dominic: No, I don't mean the club necessarily, or even the scene in general, though it is pretty hellish. But me. (indicating his head) I was in hell.

Marty: Is that where you've been?

Moon: Hell?

Dominic: Earl's Court?

Marty: No. The gay scene. This gay country you're talking about.

Dominic: Yes.

Marty: On your bike?

Dominic: No. I threw the bike in the sea. Bought a car. I wanted to see what else there was. You see... You're going to find this hard to believe. I was a virgin when I met you.

Moon: What?

Dominic: A virgin.

Marty: You're kidding.

Dominic: No. I'd had no sex.

Marty: My God!

Moon: Why not?

Dominic: I'd never met anyone who'd turned me on, and who'd do it with me.

Moon: Jesus!

Dominic: Well, I never asked, but no-one offered.

Moon: That's incredible.

Marty: Yes. That is. Incredible.

Dominic: Suddenly, after I met you two guys, I wanted to experience everything. You got me going, sexually I mean. A week with you and I realised what I'd been missing out on. I could only think "sex": morning, noon and night. I had to have every experience, see everywhere gay, do everything queer, shag everyone I laid eyes on. And you can, if you want. There's a way to never stop. But it was madness. I mean, deep down I knew I'd already found what I wanted. But it was too big, too powerful. And you were the first guys I'd ever made out with. It seemed unlikely at least that I'd hit bulls-eye with my first throw. So I kidded myself I had to go see if, if...

Moon: If you couldn't do better.

Dominic: No. Well, yes.

Moon: And?

Dominic: Of course I couldn't. That's the point. That's why I've come back.

Marty: So, how many men did you fuck, do you think?

Dominic: None.

Moon: What?

Marty: You said -

Dominic: I know. I tried. I went everywhere, and I kept nearly...
But there's been no-one else.

Marty: Why not?

Dominic: I mean, I'm not bragging about my fidelity or anything. I just mean - in the end - there wasn't anyone else who came close. I trawled on: every club, every back room, every bar, and, eventually, a year on, I found myself in Earls Court. This guy was saying: (effeminate voice) "Cheer up. It might never happen." (normal voice) I said: "I've walked away from the two people I love and I need to get back to them." And he looked at me through his narrow little sun-bedded eyes and said (effeminate) "There's plenty more fish to fry", (normal) and I said -

Marty: Fish in the sea, isn't it?

Dominic: I said: "No, that's just it. There isn't. There's no one else anywhere. I've found what I want. I've found my men. For me. Forever". Christ! I mean, I didn't expect to find this last year, on my procession round the four corners of Britain. I wasn't even particularly looking. And forgive me, but Essex, of all places! I expected Sellafeld, some seals, a sand dune or two. But I found you. And I knew. And I think you knew. So, I was standing in Bromptons, and I was in hell, my stomach shrivelled up, my head just wood. I felt dead. Just the end. You see, I'd ignored the signs.

Marty: What signs?

Dominic: My bicycle got a puncture outside your door.

Moon: So?

Dominic: So, nothing happens by coincidence.

Moon: Yes, it does.

Dominic: It was your door. We're meant to be together.

Marty: Is that how it happens, do you think?

Moon: You mean, God punctured your tyre?

Dominic: Well, yes, in a way. I was nudged a bit in your direction.

Moon: What a strange sort of world you inhabit, Dominic.

Dominic: Hell is when you ignore the signs, when you blank opportunities, when you turn your back on what you know, deep down, is right - not objectively right - but right for you. What I'm trying to say is that this is total love I feel for you. Both of you. Together. Total. It's the "we are one" thing. The "indivisible" thing. The "till death do us part" thing. Only here, only with you guys, you two, can I find peace. I can look forever but - and I can't explain this - I'm yours, deep down. Yours. But.

Marty: But?! How can there be a "but"? If it's total, how can there be a "but"?!

Dominic: This is why it's difficult. I told you.

Moon: So tell us!

Dominic: I was standing in Bromptons.

Moon: We understand that!

Marty: Let him! This is hard for him!

Moon: Jesus! It's hard for me! "I was standing in Bromptons! I was standing in Bromptons!" What precisely are you saying, Dominic?

Dominic: In this bar. And I realized. I can't.

Moon: What?

Dominic: Can't love you.

Marty: Love us? Can't love us?

Dominic: I mean I can't fuck with you.

Marty: You can't?

Moon: Why not?

Dominic: I'm scared that you'll kill me. I'm scared of what you want from me. It's too dangerous.

Marty: We only want to love you, Dominic. It's really not complicated.

Dominic: But I'm negative.

Moon: As far as you know.

Dominic: As far as I know.

Moon: That's it? That's what's worrying you? The safe sex thing? The lack of condoms?

Dominic: It's madness! It's chaos! Why must sex be unsafe with you?

Moon: He's talking about condoms! "I love you, but I can't fuck with you 'coz you don't wear condoms".

Marty: (to Dominic) But we're negative!

Dominic: You know that?

Marty: No, of course not!

Dominic: Why say it?

Marty: I'm not ill.

Dominic: Christ! Moon?

Moon: It's not the point. It's not important.

Dominic: So, you might be positive, so I might be positive.

Moon: So, fine!

Dominic: But, I might be negative. So, I can't.

Moon: I think you wouldn't have come back if you didn't want to be persuaded. I can see through you, Dominic. Your coyness

doesn't fool me. You say we took away your virginity. You say no one since has come close. Of course you want us!

Dominic: But why won't you use condoms?

Marty: Because they're terrible things! They get in the way. They feel crap.

Moon: Why are you so obsessed with condoms? Most of what we want to do isn't about dicks, anyway. What's the point of a condom when you're fisting someone? How do you use a condom when you want to piss up someone's arse?

Dominic: But aren't you curious about your status?

Marty: What will be, will be.

Dominic: That's pathetic!

Moon: No, you're pathetic. Either shit or get off the pot. And don't insult us and bore us with this safe sex crap!

(little pause)

Dominic: I'll get a cottage near by.

Moon: A cottage?

Dominic: I need to think about it.

Moon: Oh, Christ!

Dominic: I need time.

Marty: So, we're not going to fuck, then? (moves away)

Moon: Thanks for the flowers. (moves away)

(Dominic looks down)

end of scene

Act One
Scene Two

April

The same place, a month later

The flowers are dead. The flat is a mess. Marty throws himself on stage, grasping his foot and screaming. Moon enters.

Moon: What the fuck - ?

Marty: Foot. Look.

Moon: Oh yes. I've never seen that before. Does it hurt if I - ?

Marty: Don't!

Moon: It's K.S. isn't it? That's Aids-related. You've got Aids. Wow.

Marty: Fuck off. Fuck right off. FUCK! (cries)

Moon: (soothing) Come on, Marty.

Marty: Why are you being so fucking flippant?

Moon: It's not the end of the world. Loads of people've got Aids. (casual) Me for one.

Marty: (shocked) What?

Moon: Of course!

Marty: You never said!

Moon: The chances are pretty high, you know, if you have unsafe sex all the time. Before I met you, I nearly died. You're not even sick. You've just got little purple patches on your foot. Anyway, I got better. Obviously.

Marty: (still aghast) Why didn't you tell me?

Moon: It's not important.

Marty: Isn't it ?

Moon: No, it's not.

Marty: You think that withholding that piece of information from me, your lover, with whom you've always had unsafe sex, is unimportant?

Moon: Right.

Marty: Why?

Moon: Did you have unsafe sex before you met me?

Marty: Yes.

Moon: You never said anything. Anyway, you know the risks. You were born the year people started dying of this. You were five when they named it. You were sixteen when we met, but you weren't a baby. You should have asked if you wanted to know.

(pause)

Marty: I'm scared.

Moon: What's there to be scared of? We all go the same way. You're born, you die, and in between you fuck your friends. If you want me inside you, you want me inside you.

Marty: I know.

Moon: And you inside me.

Marty: I know. It wasn't you. It must have been -

Moon: It really doesn't matter. Who cares who you got it from?

(little pause)

Marty: It's hard.

Moon: It's easy. You want to kill yourself? Now's as good a time as any.

(little pause)

Marty: I'd rather have a fuck.

(They kiss. Before the kiss can develop into something more, the door buzzes. Moon exits.)

Moon: (as he goes) If this is Dominic, he's in for a hell of a shock.

(Moon returns with Dominic, who stands. Dominic is in a nervous state and tries to hide it.)

Moon: It's our would-be lover. Man experiencing difficulty following through with desires. What a come-down. A month ago: The Return of Casanova. Today: Ramsey Street.

Dominic: (wondering why Moon and Marty are not preparing to leave) I thought you were coming out. I brought us this. (reveals champagne)

Marty: Another gift.

Dominic: He's really quite a decent guy, the guy at the liquor store.

Moon: Off-licence.

Dominic: Whatever. And he's doing a great deal this week on champagne. Buy six, get one free. So I did. Though it's ambiguous, isn't it? Does it mean 'buy six and get a seventh free', or 'buy six of which one is free'? The latter obviously being the better deal, each one costing you five-sixths of the normal price, as opposed to the 'buy six and get a seventh free' version, whereby each one would cost you six-sevenths of the normal price. You don't like?

Marty: You don't bring yourself. That's what we want.

Dominic: What's up?

Moon: Ask him.

Dominic: (to Marty) Well?

Marty: (getting up) You wanna go out?

Dominic: (getting up) Sure.

Marty: (sitting) I don't wanna do anything.

Dominic: (sitting) OK.

Marty: (getting up) Let's go out.

Dominic: (getting up) Great.

(Moon also rises and, at the same time, Marty sits)

Dominic: (continued) (after a moment) You gotta come round. I've got everything up and running now. Well, more or less. The gas isn't terribly reliable and the back door fell off yesterday, but apart from that, it's great! You wanna drop by. Help me paint the walls. (little pause) Tell me!

Moon: What're you gonna do? Take it away?

Dominic: What the hell are you talking about? (pause) Anyway, I've been thinking.

Marty: This isn't the best time, Dominic.

Dominic: (undeterred) It's April. It's been a month since I came back. And I've decided. (little pause) We fucked when I was here last year, for what? One week? Yes, one week.

Marty: Dominic, this isn't about you.

Dominic: No, but I want to tell you. I've been tested and I'm negative. And I've decided: if you don't know whether you're positive or not, then I'm prepared to believe you're negative. So, we can make love.

(Marty laughs at the irony)

Dominic: Why are you laughing? (little pause) I thought you'd be happy. I'm making a big effort here you know, guys. I've come a long way, you've got to admit it. This is a Big Concession. I'm saying I'm gonna risk this. In the face of ignorance. Risk my life. Because I love you. You are my life raft. The two of you love me. You love me! I can think of nothing more important than to make love to you. Now!

(Moon shows Dominic Marty's foot; quite brutally yanks it towards Dominic's face)

Dominic: (continued) Oh God. What's that? Oh fuck. Is that - ? Oh, Marty. It's awful.

Moon: It's beautiful!

Dominic: Beautiful?

Moon: It's part of him, so it's beautiful!

Marty: (softer, to Dominic) It's OK. Really.

(Dominic is distraught)

Moon: Dominic, don't for fuck's sake cry.

Marty: (to Dominic) Be with me. Comfort me. (holds Dominic)
Let me fuck you.

Dominic: (pulling away violently) No! I take it back! I'm not prepared to - I shouldn't have said - I didn't think - You're dying! One of my only two lovers is dying!

Marty: Dying?

Moon: Isn't it incredible how he turns everything back to himself? (grabbing Dominic) A minute ago, you were prepared to risk having probably unsafe sex with us, not knowing whether we were positive or not. What's the difference? Not knowing involved the possibility of one or both of us being positive. That, you were prepared to risk. But the certain knowledge that Marty's positive, and suddenly you're jumping around the room like a deranged baboon. What's the difference? And what about me? You still don't know about me for certain. Does your decision hold? Are you prepared to risk having my type of sex with me?

Dominic: No, I don't, I don't think - No. I, I, I, -

Moon: What's important is you said you love us.

Dominic: I do. I did! I do!! But, how can I risk...? Now that I know what I know? The difference is: I know!

Marty: (also reaching for Dominic) I need you.

Dominic: But -

Moon: Sex isn't safe! Sex is the most natural thing people do. It's animal. It's up there with the greats: eating, shitting, giving birth and dying. There's no point trying to regulate it, or proscribe it, or tame it. When will you learn? You gotta let go and join in. Get dirty, get real, be yourself. Live!

Dominic: (backing away from Marty towards Moon) But! He's!
Positive!

Marty: Yep, and so's he!

Dominic: (reeling away from Moon and finding himself back with
Marty again)
Oh Christ! When did - ? Wha - wha - wha - whe - ?

Moon: (grabs the champagne and shakes it) This is Essex:
maybe we're dying! Life's chaotic!! What's the surprise?

Marty: Jesus! All this talk! Let's just fuck.

Dominic: This is very hard. I'm not coping with this. Why should
the two men I love be dangerous corpses?

Marty: I'm sorry?

Dominic: (to Moon) How long have you known?

Moon: Years.

Dominic: Why didn't you tell me when I asked you before?

Moon: I told you: It's! Not! Important!

Dominic: What drugs are you taking?

Moon: I'm not.

Dominic: You're not.

Moon: No.

Dominic: (to Marty) What about you? What will you do?

Moon: I'm surprised you're surprised. You told us it's God's will
we met because you had a flat tyre outside our house. Then I
would say it's God's will I'm losing my immune system. Medicating
it isn't the point.

Dominic: Are you crazy? I was talking about reading the signs. I
was talking about being nudged along by an unseen hand. There's
a world of difference between that and suicide. Drugs are available
to you. Twenty thousand dollars worth a year, free for you, on your
health service.

Moon: How do you know?

Dominic: It's common knowledge.

Moon: Why would it interest you?

Dominic: Your nonchalance is criminal! You're privileged! In Africa, the best chance you'd have is a cheap vaccine! It wouldn't work but it'd still be your best chance!

Moon: OK! You wanna talk about drugs? We'll talk about drugs. (big breath) There's no long term evidence to suggest the new drugs won't suffer the same fate as all the Aids drugs that've ever been on the market, that the virus won't mutate again and outmanoeuvre them. Besides, they have no effect whatsoever in one in three cases. And in people like us who already have symptoms, there's much, much less point in even trying. Anyway, the side effects are lousy.

Marty: Like what?

Moon: Nausea, diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach pains, lethargy, rashes, kidney stones, ulcers, blindness, spontaneous bleeding -

Marty: Blimey. I'd rather have little purple patches on my foot.

Dominic: This is unbelievable. You don't know what you're talking about.

Moon: Anyway, I've survived this long. I'm not going to start making endless journeys to remote hospitals so a few drug barons can make mega-profits putting poison into me.

Dominic: Don't listen to him, Marty.

Moon: Look, when you're HIV positive, come and lecture me on drugs and combination therapies, but till then -

Dominic: If you want to let yourself die, fine. But don't you dare persuade Marty that's the only way.

Marty: I've got a mind of my own, you know.

Dominic: Yeah, well, use it. And you pair of lunatics want me to join in your suicide games. Why should I gamble with my life?!

Moon: Because you want to! Don't you? (Dominic doesn't answer) Dominic? (again no answer) I can feel it. (again) Deny it, Dominic. (again) (Moon kisses Dominic gently)

Dominic: Stop.

Moon: You can protest all you like, but I can see it in you. Remember, I can see through you, Dominic. Through to your truth. It's loud and clear. It says: help me jump into the unknown, help me make a mess, a mistake, gamble and possibly lose, help me risk.

(Marty kisses Dominic)

Dominic: But it's my life!

Moon: Your life is irrelevant.

Marty: We just want to make love.

Dominic: That's...so...irresponsible.

Marty: But you love us, you want us! We can be together.

Dominic: You have no idea how much I want you. I want to make love forever! I want everything about you. I want your bodies and your clothes. I want your house. I want you both together. I want you singly. (to Moon) You, to spite (to Marty) you. You, to feel what it's like to be (about Moon) him; both of you to make love to me at once, to have sensory overload, to be fought over, to have too much love, to breathe your air, to fill your space, to disappear in your one-ness, be absorbed in your partnership, to give up my identity, to..be...you. I'm ravenous for you. I feel like a snake that wants to eat something bigger than its head. I'm a baby at the nipple. I want to devour you and have you devour me.

Moon: You can have it! We're yours!

Marty: Let's do it!

Dominic: (beginning to lose it) I want everything! I need everything from you, everything from everyone. I want everything that exists, everything that anybody's ever thought of. I need all the love in the world. I need to feel more complete. I need to be filled with everything that isn't me!

Marty: Yes! I know! I understand!

Dominic: I'm empty. I need you.

Marty: We can be inside each other.

Moon: Fill each other up.

Marty: Feel each other inside.

Moon: As close to each other as it should be.

Marty: Because we love each other!

Dominic: I want to feel something! (a scream) Let me feel something!!

Moon: Let us be you!

(a tiny break, then as if scales had suddenly fallen from his eyes, a complete change in Dominic. He is having a psychotic episode)

Dominic: NO!!!

Moon: Yes! We can be each other! We can be the same!

Dominic: You want to use me! You want my health. You want my blood because it's clean.

Marty: What?

Dominic: You want I should give you my life. And have me take your disease into me! You want to kill me to save yourselves!

Moon: Enough.

Marty: Calm down, Dominic.

Dominic: You want me to say I'll have your cum inside me. That I'll take your blood, that I'll take your disease!

Moon: OK, OK, OK.

Dominic: I don't want to die!

Moon: We're here.

Dominic: No!

Marty: We love you.

Dominic: No!

Marty: We'll help you.

Dominic: I don't believe you. (becoming extremely cold, a coping mechanism) Leave me alone. I'm sorry. Ignore me. It's OK. I'm OK. I'll do the washing up. Forget it. It's over. I'm OK. This place is a tip. I'll clean up. I'm OK.

(Dominic collects things, including the dead tulips, and tidies up. Moon and Marty fuck. The important thing to establish is that the love making is both unprotected and loving. They are comforting themselves after what has happened, reassuring each other. Dominic does the washing up. It's important, however the fucking is done, that Dominic can see it as he washes up. He is turned on, tempted, tortured. He steadfastly sticks to the washing up. He finishes it. He puts on his coat. Moon and Marty are still fucking when he leaves)

end of scene

Scene Three

May

The same place, a month later

Party sounds from elsewhere in the house. Frizz and Don are sitting apart. Don is an Essex sadomasochistic queen of dubious tastes. Frizz is into death. They've just met. Nothing is said for a while.

Frizz: Do you like my arse?

Don: Yes.

Frizz: Do you like my cock?

Don: I don't know. I can't see it.

Frizz: You can't see my arse.

Don: Yes, I can. I saw it.

Frizz: Well then, you can see my cock.

Don: Where?

Frizz: Here.

Don: Is that your cock?

Frizz: What do you think?

Don: Can I feel it?

Frizz: Why?

Don: To make sure.

Frizz: No.

Don: No?

Frizz: No. (pause) Do you want to see it?

Don: I can see it.

Frizz: No, you can't. (pause) Do you like my balls?

Don: Yes.

Frizz: How much?

Don: Very much.

Frizz: You're very descriptive.

Don: You're very pushy.

Frizz: No, this is pushy.

(He kisses Don)

Don: That's not pushy.

Frizz: What is it then?

Don: Very nice.

Frizz: (moving away again, mocking) "Wet, warm, like the Mediterranean ocean"?

Don: Yes.

Frizz: And? (Pause) (a bit more aggressive but still light) Do you like my balls?

Don: Yes.

Frizz: How much?

Don: I want to open your flies, put my hand in and squeeze them.

Frizz: Why?

Don: To show you how much I like them.

Frizz: And?

Don: I wanna push and pull them, knead them.

Frizz: Need them?

Don: Like dough.

Frizz: Ow.

Don: Don't you like that?

Frizz: Maybe.

Don: And crush the life out of them. Make you squeal.

(Frizz squeals. Marty enters)

Marty: How are you two getting on?

Don and Frizz: Fine.

Marty: I met Frizz at an HIV group -

Frizz: - counselling -

Marty: - meeting -

Frizz: - thingy.

Marty: He's lovely.

Don: Yeah...scrummy.

Frizz: (to Marty) Don's idea of making love seems to be to crush the life out of things.

Don: (to Marty) Has he heard about my machine?

Frizz: No.

Marty: (to Frizz) It rams this metal pole up your arse, controlled by a knob that makes it go faster or slower. It can last for hours.

Don: It can last forever.

Frizz: Unless there's a power cut.

Don: (to Marty, after a little pause) He's positive then, is he?

Marty: Yeah.

Don: That's a shame. I would have paid a lot to watch you infect him.

Frizz: (to Marty) Charming!

Don: It's not so bad, is it, Marty? Nothing great about growing old.

Marty: (to Don) No. Look at you!

(Dominic enters)

Dominic: Any glasses need cleaning?

Don: (to Dominic) Who are you?

Dominic: (extending his hand) I'm Dominic.

Don: (ignoring Dominic's hand) I've been watching you. You're peculiar.

Dominic: Ashtrays?

Marty: (to Don) Leave him alone.

Dominic: I'm just cleaning up. I'm looking after.

Marty: He had a psychotic episode. Didn't you?

Dominic: That's what Moon called it. I was confused. It was a month ago.

Marty: Yes, alright Dominic. Take my glass and ... do something with it.

(Dominic takes the glass)

Marty: (continued) He was a virgin till he met us.

Frizz: Really?

Don: That doesn't seem very likely.

Dominic: I was saving myself till I met the right man.

Marty: And he met two.

Dominic: Last year we had sex twelve times.

Don: Each?

Dominic: Together.

Don: Does that count as twenty-four times, then?

Marty: Shut up.

Dominic: But it's alright. I'm negative. I got tested. So we can't do it again. So I live next door. In a cottage. I come by and clean.

Marty: And watch.

Don: He looks like a scene queen.

Marty: He's not a scene queen.

Don: Well, he's not part of this scene.

Dominic: I need to clean. Then I'm alright.

Marty: Off you go.

Dominic: OK.

(Dominic goes)

Don: (to Frizz) So, would you like to see it? My fucking machine.

(little pause)

Frizz: Yes.

Don: Teach you a lesson.

Frizz: Why?

Don: Because you're a naughty boy.

Frizz: How's that?

Don: Coming on to me like you're in control with your frizzy hair and your clear skin.

Frizz: I couldn't think of anything else to talk about, sorry. Anyway, can't you just abuse me without it having to be a punishment?

Marty: Frizz is a political activist.

Don: Oh, yeah?

Frizz: Queer rights, mostly. Aids funding and visibility. We used to do Queer visibility, but there's no call for it any more. (little pause) That's why I'm called Frizz, by the way, because of my frizzy hair. (little pause) What do you do?

Don: Fuck little boys. When I can get hold of them.

Frizz: And do you?

Don: Get hold of them? Yes. Sometimes.

Frizz: (tremulous) Really?

(Moon enters)

Moon: They're being very dull out there. Just talking about sex. Anyone fancy a game?

Don: Like what?

Moon: Monopoly?

Don: I thought we were going to have sex. You've got your sling up.

Marty: You can if you want.

Moon: Risk?

IF YOU'D LIKE TO READ THE REST OF THIS PLAY PLEASE CONTACT
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