

'WHAT HAPPENED AT RAZOR'

A new stage play

By Elizabeth Greatrex

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Scene 1

Present day

ROBERT'S *living room*

LIBERTY: I think I want to get out of the contract.

ROBERT: But, tell me why?

LIBERTY: It's complicated.

ROBERT: I'm listening?

LIBERTY: I don't think I can, I just don't know if I can do it anymore. It's not that I, **pause** that I don't, **pause** that I don't... Fuck, I just can't, Rob.

ROBERT: Just calm down for a sec, yeah?

LIBERTY: I've got a problem. I've really fucked up.

ROBERT: Sit down, for a minute. Whatever it is I think you'd better tell me. There's got to be a good reason you're here this late.

LIBERTY: Rob...

ROBERT: What?

Pause

LIBERTY: I'm, I'm, scared.

ROBERT: What are you scared of, darling, tell me?

LIBERTY: I don't want you to be angry.

ROBERT: Why would I be angry?

LIBERTY: I just think, I think that maybe, that partly, that partly...

ROBERT: Yes?

LIBERTY: That the whole thing is my fault. I feel like if I tell anyone it's going to backfire on me and everything will go to shit, and-

ROBERT: Calm down, please Liberty. Tell me what's wrong. Do you want me to ring Mike for you?

LIBERTY: No.

ROBERT: Do you want me to call anyone for you, Joel?

LIBERTY: No, no. I don't want to talk to Joel.

Pause

LIBERTY: I have wondered Rob, from time to time, if there would ever be a possibility, that maybe I could work more directly with you? Do you think that would be able to happen, one day?

Pause

ROBERT: You know what a pleasure it is to work with you sweetheart, but I don't think I have the skill set he has, to carry out the job, to be honest with you. Besides, Mike has always been your guy; he's always backed you? I don't understand? Have you argued with him?

LIBERTY: I have to go. Forget I said anything. I'm being stupid, everything's fine.

ROBERT: Don't go Liberty, wait a minute its late. Let me call you a cab.

LIBERTY: No, I have to go. I shouldn't have come. I'm sorry, Rob.

LIBERTY *swiftly goes to the door.*

ROBERT: Liberty, wait.

LIBERTY: Rob. Don't tell anyone we had this conversation. DON'T, ok? Promise me you won't, promise me?

ROBERT: Yeah ok, but-

LIBERTY *exits through the door and slams it after her.*

Blackout

Scene 2

Flashback: Two years previously

JIMMY, MIKE and **LIBERTY** have been to a party

The street outside

LIBERTY is eating chips

JIMMY: And then I said to her, back to mine? She completely mugged me off mate, she didn't even reply, she just walked away. I saw some guy giving me some dirty look at the end of the party, probably her boyfriend.

LIBERTY: I saw him as well!

JIMMY: Scary looking geezer. Oh well. These parties never get me laid.

MIKE: You don't have much luck with women, do you Jim?

JIMMY: It appears not. Not that you can talk Mike.

MIKE: I've got a missis, remember, Jim.

JIMMY: Oh that's right, I stand corrected. That's my ride, guys; I'll see you at the studio Monday.

LIBERTY: Bye, Jim!

Exit JIMMY

MIKE: What a cheeky fucker.

LIBERTY: He was only having a joke, Mike.

MIKE: He don't know what he's on about. Well, look at you, my little Libby. You're turning out to be a real success, aren't ya? They all absolutely loved you, Lib. I reckon you're going to be the best thing that's happened to Razor in a long time.

LIBERTY: You're just saying that.

MIKE: I'm not! I mean look at you you've got everything. What is there right now in your life that's going to hold you back? Nothing.

LIBERTY: Oh hush Mike, I'm not all that.

MIKE: You are, Lib. You know you're gorgeous as well don't you. I don't need to tell you that.

Pause

MIKE: Just one thing.

LIBERTY: What's that?

MIKE: That dress your wearing it's a bit, I dunno...

LIBERTY: A bit, what? What's wrong with it?

MIKE: Just, not really my style.

LIBERTY: Why does it matter if it's your style?

MIKE: Don't get all defensive now Lib, I'm here to help you remember? It's a bit boring don't you think? You can do better than that, surely. I know what I'm talking about when it comes to this stuff.

LIBERTY: I don't know what you mean.

MIKE: Just next time, make sure you wear a mini skirt, or something like that. Part of being a successful female artist is, you know, looking the part. It's about the image as much as it's about the voice. I don't need to tell you that do I? I just want to make sure you've got it all, you know.

LIBERTY: Um, ok.

MIKE: Are you happy?

LIBERTY: I... yeah, yeah, I am.

MIKE: Thanks to me, I'm sure. You're gonna be rich, soon as you know it, Liberty Mooney.

Pause

LIBERTY: You know I'm grateful.

MIKE: Strange to think a couple of months ago you we're just a girl singing in a local pub, eh?

LIBERTY: Pretty strange, I guess.

MIKE: Oh, come here, you've got ketchup on your face.

MIKE *licks his finger and rubs the ketchup off LIBERTY'S cheek.*

MIKE: You know you're gonna start eating at nice restaurants. Eating nice, dressing nice. Trust me, you'll thank me later for telling you. When I was trying to make it in the music business, I didn't have anyone telling me how to get on in life. I'm telling you all these things because I care about you. I want you to do well. You know that right?

LIBERTY: Yeah, of course.

Exit MIKE and LIBERTY

Blackout

Scene 3

*Flash-forward: Present day
Razor Records Recording Studio*

MIKE: Let's go from the top, Liberty.

LIBERTY: Again?

ARWIN: I think this will be the twentieth time in one hour we've been over these last couple of lines. Shall we take a break, guys?

MIKE: I don't care if we done it twenty times mate, I want it to be perfect. You agree right Rob? Perfection is key here.

ROBERT: We'll get it right this time.

MIKE: Ok, Liberty? Jimmy?

JIMMY: Ready when you are.

Music starts, LIBERTY sings.

LIBERTY: *You're the only one that I can ever see, every time I see you its like ecstasy, and I think about you all the time-*

MIKE: No, no. Listen, babe, I want it sung like I said before, try and really hit that high note on 'time'. We need the emotion here, let's try it again.

LIBERTY: Mike, I'm just going to go and get a glass of water, I feel kind of faint.

MIKE: In a minute, we're not done.

ROBERT: No, Mike, let's have five minutes.

MIKE: Fine. Back in the studio at ten to ten.

Exit MIKE, JIMMY and LIBERTY

ARWIN: Jheeze, we have a long way to go on this album you know Rob.

ROBERT: But we have the time?

ARWIN: Not really. The album release is set for the end of March. That means we have just under six months. Six months, Rob. That's not that much time, especially with the way she's carrying on.

ROBERT: You mean her drinking.

ARWIN: *(under his breath)* When she was younger, I mean, when she was sixteen and she'd just come onto the scene, I guess she could get away with it and still look cute and all that, but the whole act just feels a bit old now? Boring, you know? I mean, the girl's pissed as hell at every party. I tried to introduce her to Michael Madsen the other day and she spilt her champagne glass down his shirt, mate! It's not on. Some morning's she looks like she hasn't been home all night and she's just managed to get in on time. Me and Mike have had just about enough, I'll tell you that much.

ROBERT: You're a hypocrite. The amount of times I've carried you both home.

ARWIN: Not the point. Listen I can have a laugh and a drink like anyone else, but when I see a young girl throwing it all away like that, something's gotta be said.

ROBERT: Yeah, I know. I'm worried about her, I mean, I'm really worried Arwin.

ARWIN: I haven't noticed anything more than the usual going on with her.

ROBERT: She just seems, tired, mundane, and I hate to say it but some of the new material she's coming out with is rather, stale?

ARWIN: This will be her second album with this label. She hasn't let us down before. I think she's a very talented girl she's definitely got some great material to come.

ROBERT: We just have to make sure we're willing to give her time. Mike's pushing for it too much.

ARWIN: I guess.

Pause

ARWIN: God, that song is driving me absolutely batty, mate.

ROBERT: Sometimes when I look at her, I think she looks so tired. Like someone's squeezed the life out of her, like she's worked herself to the bone. She's only eighteen but sometimes she looks about forty.

ARWIN: Mate, never tell a woman she looks tired. Tired, means old. I'll tell you that much. I told my wife she looked tired once, wasn't good. Learn from my mistakes.

ROBERT: I don't know maybe I'm being stupid. I just want to help her.

ARWIN: Women eh. They like to think they can do everything a man can do and never get worn out. Wanna hear a joke?

ROBERT: Err, alright then.

ARWIN: Is Google male or female?

ROBERT: I dunno?

ARWIN: Female, because it doesn't let you finish a sentence before making a suggestion!

ROBERT: Ha. Ha.

ARWIN: Here's another one-

ROBERT: Let's not go off topic. Especially since you're in a particularly sexist mood today. I wanna see if we can get someone to help Liberty with her song writing.

ARWIN: That's an idea. Let's ask Mike.

ROBERT: I don't want to be out of line here, but have you noticed the way Mike is with Liberty sometimes? He's a bit, I don't know, brash?

ARWIN: That's just Mike though, he gets the job done.

ROBERT: Yes, but there's a certain way you go about getting results. She's still young you know she's a kid. I think he pushes her too hard. Tell me I'm not the only one that see's this?

ARWIN: Well, it's between them I guess. Bit of advice Rob, I know you've got a big heart, and all, but don't make problems for yourself.

Exit ARWIN
Blackout

Scene 4

Present Day:
LIBERTY'S bedroom

JOEL: Come over here.

LIBERTY: I'm writing, Joel.

JOEL: Just for a minute, come on.

LIBERTY: Just give me five minutes, I need to find the end to this lyric, I had a really good idea a minute ago. I had it, and then it keeps slipping away. I need to get it perfect.

JOEL: Lib, all you ever do is write. Don't know who you're trying to please.

LIBERTY: What?

Pause

LIBERTY: What do you mean, who am I trying to please. I'm trying to finish my album. Isn't that clear?

JOEL: Jesus. Alright, sorry! Touched a nerve clearly, didn't I.

LIBERTY: Thought you knew I'm only doing this for myself.

JOEL: Yeah, obviously. Who else would you be doing it for? Come over here?

Pause

LIBERTY: Just for a minute, then.

JOEL and LIBERTY *start kissing on her bed*

LIBERTY: I, I don't have time for this, Joel. I just can't right now.

JOEL: What's wrong with you?

LIBERTY: Do we have to do it, every time we see each other? I mean, I didn't realise we couldn't hang out without sleeping with each other, is it THAT important to you?

JOEL: Well, I don't know Lib, all I'm trying to do is kiss my girlfriend. Don't know what the hell your problem is at the moment.

LIBERTY: I just don't feel like it. Ok.

JOEL: That's fine.

LIBERTY: Good.

Pause

JOEL: I wish you would tell me what's wrong?

LIBERTY: Nothing's wrong, Joel, please. I just need to finish this song. I need to finish this album. Did you like what I showed you yesterday? Did you think it was any good?

JOEL: Yeah, obviously, everything you write is good.

LIBERTY: No, it isn't. You're not listening to me. I'm asking you if those lyrics I showed you yesterday in PARTICULAR were good.

JOEL: Right, sorry.

LIBERTY: This album isn't nearly as good as my first. I was in my prime then, I had so many ideas. If I could just come up with material half as good as I did then, everything would be fine.

JOEL: Don't be dramatic you're only eighteen, Libby. And everything is fine?

LIBERTY: How is everything fine? You don't understand the pressure I'm under.

JOEL: Just take a break for a minute.

LIBERTY: Stop being needy!

JOEL: Needy? If I am one thing I am not needy. I'll see you later, Lib.

LIBERTY: I didn't say you had to go!

JOEL exits

LIBERTY: Prick.

Blackout

Scene 5

Flashback: Two years previously

LIBERTY'S Bedroom

LIBERTY: Do you think my hair looks nice?

KATIE: Yeah, really nice, your make up looks pretty too. Where are you going tonight, again?

LIBERTY: I'm going to an event with the label, Mike's picking me up in about an hour.

KATIE: Another industry party, with Mike, then?

LIBERTY: Yeah, why?

KATIE: You seem to do a lot with this guy. He takes you out to a lot of things doesn't he?

LIBERTY: It's just part of the job, Katie. He wants me to do well. I want me to do well. I have to be introduced to the right people and that means going to parties.

KATIE: Right, yeah.

LIBERTY: Mike thinks I'm so talented you know. He said he knew that first time he saw me sing at the Abbey Tavern in Camden that I just had something, that I was different

to all the other singers he'd seen. What was the word he used? He said I had 'charisma'. No one's ever said that to me before.

KATIE: You quite like this guy then.

LIBERTY: Well, yeah, He's given me a chance. We're in the studio all the time just coming up with ideas.

LIBERTY goes and re-arranges the flowers on her bedside table.

KATIE: Who gave you those?

LIBERTY: Oh, my mum.

KATIE: Your mum?

Pause

LIBERTY: Yeah.

Blackout

Scene 6

Flash-forward: Present day

JOEL's house

The buzzer rings, JOEL answers

JOEL: Hello?

ROBERT: Hi, is this Joel?

JOEL: Yeah, who's asking?

ROBERT: It's Robert from Razor.

JOEL: Oh, right, what's up?

ROBERT: Can I come in please? This is quite a sensitive matter I don't really want to discuss through a buzzer if you don't mind?

JOEL: Err, yeah, fine. One second.

JOEL buzzes **ROBERT** in.

Enter ROBERT.

ROBERT: Alright, Joel.

JOEL: What's this about then?

ROBERT: I just wanted to discuss a few things with you. I know you and Liberty have been together for a while.

Pause Liberty is a really lovely girl, her and I have always got along really well-

JOEL: Where's this going?

ROBERT: Look I don't know if you're aware, but on more than one occasion Lib has turned up to rehearsals and recordings, you know, a bit out of it.

JOEL: Right, ok, what's that to do with me?

ROBERT: Would you have anything to do with this?

JOEL: No.

ROBERT: You sure about that?

JOEL: Are you trying to imply I'm a bad influence on my girlfriend?

ROBERT: I've seen you with her before, Joel, at parties and such. If you're introducing her to drinking then that's exactly what I'm trying to imply.

JOEL: I don't know what the big deal is.

ROBERT: Look, I just want you to make sure she doesn't drink any more, or anything else like that, before she goes completely off the rails. I'm sure you want the best for her as much as I do.

JOEL: I'll admit she's been acting a bit crazy, recently. I don't know what's wrong with her. Every time I try with her she swats me away. Must be hormones, fuck knows.

ROBERT: Right. Well, thank-you, I'd better be going.

Pause

JOEL: Erm, Robert?

ROBERT: Yeah?

JOEL: To be honest with you I've been feeling the same way. You're friends you and Liberty aren't you?

ROBERT: Yeah, I'd like to think so.

Pause

ROBERT: I'm going to see her now. Come with me? Maybe she'll tell us what's going on.

Exit ROBERT and JOEL

Scene 7

Razor Records

LIBERTY is asleep on the sofa

Enter MIKE. MIKE speaks directly to audience to indicate he is in LIBERTY'S dream.

MIKE: Quit? I don't know what you think you're talking about. Do you know who you were before you met me? You weren't nobody. No one. You was an average girl, with an average voice, and going nowhere. **Pause.** The fuck you on about, quit. **Pause** Look, I don't wanna upset you. But, you know I love you Lib. I wouldn't want to lose you. No one can make music like you and me. That's why we're good for each other can't you see that?

Exit MIKE

Enter ROBERT and JOEL

ROBERT: Liberty, darling, how long have you been here for? Darling, tell us what's wrong. We need to know if you're alright. You're not alright are you?

Lights go down on ROBERT and JOEL as they freeze.

LIBERTY walks downstage. *Speaks directly to audience.*

LIBERTY: Yeah, hi. You want to know don't you? You probably already do. **Pause** I find it funny that, people have normal lives, wake up every day, go to sleep every night, go about living their pleasant little lives with their mediocre problems. Some of us have REAL problems. **Pause** Listen, let's get one thing straight, I don't really want to talk to you, I don't know you, and you don't know me. But I'm going too because I need to tell someone now. Not because I'm feeling sorry for myself, by the way, because I'm not. You want the truth right. You think it's easy for me to tell you the truth? **Pause** You won't tell anyone will you? **Pause** I don't trust you. **Pause** Yes, alright then. It is what you're thinking. Yes I've slept with Mike. **Pause** Are you happy! **Pause** I don't

know why I told you that. You don't understand. I know no one else in my life would If I told them so what makes you different?

It started off as nothing, flowers being sent to my door. He took me for expensive lunches and spoiled me with anything I wanted. I thought he was attractive, I thought I liked him. **Pause** I've got to remember, I was sixteen.

Pause Tell someone. Tell who? Try being in my position. Every person in the label is a man. I'm too ashamed. Saying you've slept with someone that means it's consensual right? That's what they ask you when you go for the morning after pill. Was the sex consensual? That it's your choice. **Pause** Consensual. I don't feel like it was my choice. **Pause** He knows that he can tell me what to do and what to wear and how to talk and where to be at what time. He knows he can, because he knows I don't have another choice. If I say no that means my career over. Embarrassment. Humiliation. **Pause** It's music and success or nothing at all. He'll make sure of that. He's obsessed with me. No way out, can you see that? **Pause** Can you see that? **Pause** When there's no one, there's drink. **A long pause** Yes, It wasn't my choice, he made me. Many times. **Pause** I fucking hate him. **Pause**

LIBERTY strokes her stomach.

I can't tell anyone, I can't tell them. **Pause** but I can tell you. I'm running out of time.

CURTAIN.