

FINDING STARS

By

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A ten minute play about relationships and Zeppelins

September 26, 2006

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CAST:

ALEX, a, young father, 20's
BEATRICE, his date, 20's

JENNIFER / MERANDA, a teen babysitter / a young voice heard
from offstage

SETTING:

TIME: Now, autumn, evening.

PLACE: A college town, America

SETTING: A porch.

FINDING STARS

AT RISE, ALEX and BEATRICE return from a nervous first date and approach a house, of which a door is visible, perhaps a porch or stoop. ALEX, is confident but indifferent at the moment. He seems as if he's got somewhere else to be. BEATRICE is gazing up at the night sky. It is Summer.

BEATRICE

Hey! What's your rush, handsome? Have you seen these stars?

ALEX

Huh? Yeah, almost every night, unless it's cloudy.

BEATRICE

When was the last time you looked, I mean, really looked at these stars?

ALEX

I don't know.

BEATRICE

Neither do I... "The Earth is my body. My head is in the stars" Who said that?

ALEX

I don't know.

BEATRICE

Well, I suppose I did.

ALEX

I guess you did....So, you coming in?

BEATRICE

Sure...No, I mean, no...Is that really all-

ALEX

What? I...Harold. Was it Harold?...What?!

BEATRICE

Tell me there's more. Please....It was Maude...Tell me there's more.

ALEX

Isn't it? I mean, I thought the date was over. I mean...look, I... Weren't we doing well?

BEATRICE

It's just, the way you, seems a little, I don't know..."Am I coming inside?"

ALEX

I don't... No, It's not that... Look, I'm just trying to plan my evening. That's all.

BEATRICE

"Plan your evening?" Isn't that?... Well, I don't know, yet-

ALEX

Hey, don't..."You don't know?!" Whatta you mean "You-

BEATRICE

"Yet". I don't, I said, "yet."

ALEX

Well, where else would you go?

BEATRICE

Be nice... OK? I don't know. I guess I really hadn't thought of it. Had you?

ALEX

Thought? No! Of course not. No. Never. I just, well, I mean, I thought you might want to stay here tonight.

BEATRICE

Certainly not on our first date. I mean, it's happened before. But, certainly not after, I don't know, after *this*. Of course, the thought had crossed my mind: that I might come inside, dependant on variables, you know, but I didn't, I mean, I hadn't specifically planned on, well, anything, for that matter, if that's what you're asking. Were you asking a question?

ALEX

Look, I know that you want romance, here, and I'm trying, really, really trying to be this, you know, but-

BEATRICE

I don't want...Yes, I know you're trying. And, I get the feeling that this is your first, "first date," in a while.

ALEX

Well, yes. This is the craziest, without a doubt, the craziest fucking...sorry...first date I've ever been on...Sorry.

BEATRICE

No, It's fine. I mean, well, me too. But, Hey! Isn't it fun?

JENNIFER, a homecoming queen who loves children but is ready to leave, opens the door, pokes her head out.

JENNIFER

Sorry...Hi... I didn't want to bother you but you said, "until eleven," and it's, well... I already called my boyfriend. I heard you out here earlier. He's kinda already on the way. He really wants to go out to the point, I don't know, see some stars or something...

ALEX

Oh, No, no. That's fine. I mean, I said eleven, uhm, Jennifer. Is Meranda asleep?

JENNIFER

For at least an hour, she's upstairs, in your room. She said that you said--

ALEX

No, yeah, yeah, that's fine. I told her that was OK. Thanks a lot for doing this...I never remember to call...

ALEX opens his wallet, finds it empty, mumbles something incoherent, but short.

You probably wanted money?

BEATRICE

No Problem. I got it. What does he owe you? Jennifer?

JENNIFER

It's twenty five for the night. Call me, "Jen." Plus fifteen for the movie and the popcorn.

ALEX

So, how was the movie?

BEATRICE hands ALEX the money, who hands it to JENNIFER.

JENNIFER

OK. I mean, Meranda loved it. She's cute, Meranda...Thank You.

Headlights, engine noise, squeaky brakes, and a horn. JENNIFER waves offstage to the truck

ALEX

Thank you.

SFX: Car Horn

JENNIFER

Sure, any time...That's my ride. I gotta go.

JENNIFER runs offstage.

Night!

JENNIFER runs offstage. ALEX and BEATRICE wave...Engine fades.

ALEX

So, I mean, where, or what do you--

BEATRICE

You never told me you had kids.

ALEX

What? Oh! I, I thought you knew. Sorry... Actually , there's, uhm, just one: Meranda. She's five. Perhaps you'll meet her in the morning, over pancakes.

BEATRICE

That's very forward of you, Alex, but I do love me some pancakes.

ALEX

Thank you.

BEATRICE

Thank *you*. Now, close the damn deal.

ALEX

Yes. OK. Yes, well, how about... would you like to come in for some coffee?

BEATRICE

Coffee? It's nearly eleven o' clock, I don't see-

(BEATRICE looks at watch.)

It's actually just past eleven. At any rate, coffee's no good.

ALEX

Well, would you like some...Tea?

BEATRICE

Tea? Well, I guess, I could-

ALEX

Sorry, we...I don't have any tea, actually. I mean-

BEATRICE

Are you sure you don't have any tea?

ALEX

I guess, well, I guess I don't know if I have any tea or not.

BEATRICE

I think you probably have tea, but it's difficult to tell, from the porch.

ALEX

Would you, I mean, How about some cheese? And wine. Perhaps wine. I know I have wine. Are you into wine?

BEATRICE

Not really, but I do drink it. No....Yes, I do...

ALEX

Really, well, Kool Aid?...But you drink it! Wine. Sounds...

BEATRICE & ALEX

Divine

BEATRICE

So...

ALEX

Yes, uhm, would you like to come inside? For some wine? Cheese? Would you like some wine and cheese?

BEATRICE

What about your daughter?

ALEX

She's asleep.

BEATRICE

Well, she's sleeping in your bed. Right?

ALEX

Yes, but we are just having some wine. And cheese. We're also having cheese, if I have any.

BEATRICE

And, if I stay?

ALEX

Stay, yes. Well, I guess, if I can somehow convince you to stay for the night, I suppose, I mean, we could use her room.

BEATRICE

We *could* use her room.

ALEX

I mean, if you wouldn't feel too put out. And, I do have her old crib in there, if you're into that. But, uhm, well, let's start with the wine. Right? See where it goes.

BEATRICE

Good Idea. Let's start with the wine. You never know...

BEATRICE & ALEX start a kiss-

MERANDA

Mommy!

BEATRICE

Mommy? Who's her mommy? Where's her mommy?

ALEX

What?...Wow, I, well, I just don't have the heart to tell her that her mother died seven months ago in a Zeppelin accident...I know. Who rides a Zeppelin? I never saw it coming.

Well, I mean, obviously, I saw it...I mean, it's a Zeppelin...It was a Zeppelin...We were supposed to be with her, you know, on the Zeppelin. It could have been me. Both of us, all three. Sometimes I think, "It should have been me."

MERANDA

Mommy!

ALEX

Always calling for her. She's still waiting.. for her to come home. Sometimes she cries out all night. Sometimes I join her. I really thought she'd be able to move past it all by now. But, I suppose that's my fault for not telling my poor, beautiful daughter that her mommy's never coming home. She looks just like her--

MERANDA

Mom!

BEATRICE

Well, I mean, aren't you? Is there anything I can do?

ALEX

What can we do? She's dead. Right?

ALEX and BEATRICE are each straining in what seems to be an effort to hold back the inevitable tears.

MERANDA

Mommy! Come up the stairs!

ALEX

Oh, you know what? She...I'm sorry...she thinks your voice is her mommy. Wow! You know? This is awkward. I mean...God! Doesn't that just break your fucking heart?

Both share an eruption of laughter.

MERANDA

Mommy! Why are you laughing? Come up the stairs!

BEATRICE

(Pokes through door that is still left open from when JENNIFER left.)

It's nothing, honey! Daddy's just being silly. I'm coming upstairs right now.

(To ALEX)

You stay down here and, maybe, you put some music on.

I'll take her to her room...Even better, how about we let her sleep in our room tonight? We'll move her later. Perhaps. If we make it. Upstairs, I mean.

ALEX

(Glances the stars, the stairs, and then, to BEATRICE)

"I will love the light, for it shows me the way. Yet, I will endure the darkness, for it shows me the stars"...Who said that?

BEATRICE

I suppose you did.

BEATRICE heads inside, then turns back to face ALEX, as if she plans to say something.

MIRANDA

Mommy!

BEATRICE

I'm coming, honey. I'm coming upstairs right now.

(To ALEX, who is looking at the stars.)

Hey.

ALEX

Yeah?

BEATRICE

Happy Anniversary.

ALEX

Happy Anniversary.

BEATRICE disappears inside, as ALEX, makes his peace with the stars, then goes inside, closing the door.

The End