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YOU CAN'T TRUST THE MALE

by

RANDY NOOJIN



The Dramatic Publishing Company
Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

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(YOU CAN'T TRUST THE MALE)

Cover design by Susan Carle

ISBN 0-87129-059-6

YOU CAN'T TRUST THE MALE

**A Romantic Comedy in One Act
For One Man and One Woman**

CHARACTERS

**HARVEY KESSEL
LAURA SPIVEY**

SETTING: A night class room.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: In the Ensemble Studio Theatre production, Harvey was played as a Polish immigrant with accent. We made him Harvey Kesselkovski. This is a wonderful option worth consideration.

YOU CAN'T TRUST THE MALE was first produced by the Circle Repertory Lab as an in-house workshop, Michael Warren Powell as Lab Boss, in New York City in February 1989. It was directed by Richard Craine and stage managed by Susan Kaplan. The cast was as follows:

Laura Amy Hohn
Harvey L. B. Williams

The play was subsequently produced at The Raft Theatre in New York City on a double bill with Barbara Bishop's *Inadmissible Contrition* in May 1990. Both plays were directed by Donna Parish and stage managed by Jimmy Fall. The cast was as follows:

Laura Alice King
Harvey Michael Piontek

Most recently the play was produced at Ensemble Studio Theatre's Marathon Festival of One-Act Plays in New York City in May of 1991. It was directed by Melodie Somers. The stage manager was Mark E. Cole and the assistant director was Saul Fussiner. The cast was as follows:

Laura Lynn Ritchie
Harvey Garrett M. Brown

Thanks, Donna

YOU CAN'T TRUST THE MALE

SCENE: *A classroom. Chairs with desks for one arm face D toward a teacher's desk. A door U with frosted window. A piece of paper is taped to the window of the door on the outside. The sax solo in Tom Waits' "The One That Got Away," (off the "Small Change" album)* plays as lights go to black. Lightening flash and, as the subsequent thunder rumbles, dim light fades up outside the door and night light through the windows of the fourth wall. Sound of rain. A figure approaches the door and tears the paper and tape off the window. He enters and turns on the lights.*

HARVEY KESSEL is a man in his mid-thirties and he's sopping wet. He takes the crumpled paper to the trash can by the teacher's desk, thinks better of it and pockets it. He shakes water from his hat and umbrella. He stands the umbrella up in the can and goes to a seat UL. He takes off his coat. He has a Village Voice, a cup of coffee and a notebook. He settles in and lights a cigarette. LAURA SPIVEY enters. She's an attractive woman around Harvey's age. She has an umbrella, a big bag, a purse and a Beginning Spanish book. She's wet and late.

* Authorization to perform/play this musical composition must be obtained from its copyright proprietor: Fifth Floor Music, 740 N. La Brea Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90038. Phone: 213/938-5000.

HARVEY. Hello.

LAURA. You can't smoke in here.

HARVEY. I'm sorry. I'll put it out.

LAURA. You can go out in the hall and smoke.

HARVEY. Nah, I'm done with it.

LAURA. It's the law.

HARVEY. Absolutely. It's the law. And it's a good law.

Sorry if I stunk up the room already.

LAURA. It'll fade out. Intro to Spanish, right?

HARVEY. Si.

LAURA. Where the fuck is everybody? I thought I was late.

HARVEY. I don't know. I just got here.

LAURA. I cannot believe this shitty weather. Fuckin' thunderstorm in December. And then the goddam D train goes local and even when they *make* a fuckin' announcement that they are (surprise) fucked up, you can't understand a fuckin' word they say over the speakers at DeKalb. Are we in the right room?

HARVEY. 36A.

LAURA. Well, it's five after. (*A distant thunder.*)

HARVEY. The weather maybe. (*Pause. HARVEY is looking at the paper.*) Oh, no. Wouldn't you know it. Just my luck. Boy, oh, boy.

LAURA. What?

HARVEY. Oh, no, I was just realizing out loud that Andy and Red are playing at Dan Lynch's tonight. At eight. Great blues guys. And I'm stuck in an Intro to Spanish class. Darn it.

LAURA. So get outta here. The first class is always bullshit anyway.

HARVEY. Yeah, I guess I could do that.

LAURA. We got the right date? *(She checks her registration card.)*

HARVEY. Friday the sixth. *(He browses the paper. Casually.)* Yeah, nothin' like the blues to beat the devil outta ya.

LAURA. Huh?

HARVEY. No, I just remember I was in this relationship once, which I'm not now, this was awhile ago, but we were almost up to two years together when from outta the blue she up and dumps me and I had all this—I don't know—anger that I couldn't do anything with so I did it to myself. I beat the shit outta myself. For like four months I went into this dark hole of sick mud where I felt like I wasn't a bit of good to anybody—and—*(She's looking at him and he now sees that she is.)*—uhm—I'm sorry, what was I talking about?

LAURA. I don't—

HARVEY. Oh, and it took the blues—to, you know, at least make me feel like—I guess, that I wasn't the only one.

LAURA. Have we met before?

HARVEY. No, just—you know. Small talk. *(Pause.)* I wonder where is everybody. *(He goes to the door and looks down the hall.)*

LAURA. Yeah, this is ridiculous.

HARVEY. Maybe I'll get lucky and nobody'll show up. Still plenty of time to get to Andy and Red.

LAURA. It's supposed to start at seven, right?

HARVEY. Actually, no. They start at eight but these guys are always late.

LAURA. No, I mean class starts at seven, right?

HARVEY. Oh, yeah. Class does. Yeah. Seven. I wonder what's goin' on.

LAURA. I know.

HARVEY. Maybe—I mean, if there's no class, I don't know—

LAURA. Why would there be no class do ya think?

HARVEY. No, I'm not sayin' there's not, but where is everybody?

LAURA. There was a lady in the office. I'll go check.

HARVEY. We should give 'em a while longer. We're in the right place at the right time.

LAURA. I'll go make sure.

HARVEY. Oh, you know what? Hold on. Lemme check something.

LAURA. I just checked the schedule.

HARVEY. No, I know. This is not the schedule. I know, I did get that too, but this is something else. I didn't really—oh, yeah, here we go. *(He finds a postcard in his jacket pocket.)* Oh, no. Intro to Spanish is rescheduled for Tuesdays at eight!?

LAURA. What?

HARVEY. I shoulda read this.

LAURA. Lemme see that.

HARVEY. I thought it was just another something else.

LAURA. I NEVER GOT THIS! God damn it! What next?!

How come everything is picking *now* to happen? *(She takes his card to her desk and copies the information.)*

These are the most incompetent, disorganized, stupid bunch of timid, foreign fuck-ups I ever had to deal with in my life. *(Thunder.)* [No offense.]*

HARVEY. They probably sent you one, it's gonna come tomorrow.

LAURA. Yeah! Tomorrow! Why don't they *call* us? *(Her pencil lead breaks. She searches in purse for another.)*

* Added for the "Kesselkouski" version.

Shit. Would that be brilliant? A mailbox is a fuckin' wishin' well in Brooklyn.

HARVEY. Well, something's bound to fall through the cracks occasionally. Here. *(He hands her a pen.)*

LAURA. Thanks. They don't need an occasion to fuck-up in Brooklyn. They need a business day.

HARVEY. Well, this time a year, you know. Christmas cards and parcels pouring in. It's a flood.

LAURA. That's exactly why they should call. Everybody knows you can't trust the mail.

HARVEY. Well, it'll get there eventually I bet, but you're right.

LAURA. What, is your dad a mailman or something?

HARVEY. No, no.

LAURA. Hold it—

HARVEY. He's a mechanic.

LAURA. Oh, my God, I'm sorry.

HARVEY. What?

LAURA. I thought I'd seen you before.

HARVEY. I doubt it.

LAURA. Oh, God. Aren't you my mailman?

HARVEY. Your mailman?!

LAURA. You look jist like my mailman.

HARVEY. You're kidding?

LAURA. 294 Vanderbilt Avenue. Fort Greene.

HARVEY. Well, yeah, that's my route. I thought you looked—yeah, I guess maybe that might be it.

LAURA. I'm sorry.

HARVEY. No, no.

LAURA. I wasn't sayin' it was your fault.

HARVEY. No, I know.

LAURA. I didn't mean it was the mailmen. It's the post office, prob'ly.

HARVEY. You don't have to apologize. I know you didn't mean anything by it. It's funny. Ha. Forget it.

LAURA. You know what I mean.

HARVEY. Definitely. Forget it. I know what you mean.

But, yeah, hey, I'm your mailman! Wow! How are ya? Nice to meet ya. I'm Harvey. Harvey Kessel. *(The rain stops.)*

LAURA. Laura Spivey.

HARVEY. Nice to meet you. Small world.

LAURA. Yeah.

HARVEY. Your thing'll probably come tomorrow. I just deliver what they give me.

LAURA. Well, they should call, anyway. Or at least tape up a sign or somethin'.

HARVEY. Yeah.

LAURA. It doesn't matter. *(Pause.)* Well—

HARVEY. So we're both taking a Spanish class, huh?

LAURA. Yeah, weird, huh?

HARVEY. Why are you taking Spanish?

LAURA. I'm goin' to Mexico the end of February.

HARVEY. Really? That's great.

LAURA. Yeah, I love the sound of the language.

HARVEY. Mi perro no tiene nariz. ¿Como puede oler? ¡Horrible!

LAURA. Hey, that's pretty good. What did you say? *(He resists.)* It was dirty?

HARVEY. No. Just—

LAURA. What?

HARVEY. My dog has no nose. How does he smell? Terrible.

LAURA. Oh. Well—okay.

HARVEY. Oh, so why are you taking Spanish?

LAURA. 'Cause I'm—you know—