

## ***Couple***

***By***

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Man I thought you were going out tonight.  
Woman No.  
Man No?  
Woman No. Why did you think that?  
Man I thought you'd told me; the other night you told me you were going out tomorrow.  
Woman Well I'm not, I'm staying in.  
Man Today is tomorrow.  
Woman What?  
Man It is tomorrow today –  
Woman Depending where you stand.  
Man Yes, depending where you're coming from. But, nonetheless, you are not going out.  
Woman No. [Pause.] Is there any reason why you want me to go out?  
Man No.  
Woman It feels very much as if there is.  
Man Really? No.  
Woman Yes. It's as if you want to hustle me out, get rid of me.  
Man I'd never want to get rid of you.  
Woman Are you expecting someone?  
Man No. Whatever gives you that idea?  
Woman Well, all this hustle, trying to get me out, it's as if you're expecting someone and you don't want me to meet them.  
Man No, of course not.  
Woman Of course you don't want me to meet them.  
Man I'm not meeting anyone.  
Woman No?  
Man No. I'm on my own. With you, of course.  
Woman Of course. [Pause.] Who is it then?  
Man It isn't anyone. I merely inquired if you were going out, I was

expecting you to go out, is there anything wrong with that?

Woman Well, yes, perhaps there is, there might be.

Man Ohhh.

Woman Do you want to be alone.

Man No. Of course –

Woman Who said that?

Man What?

Woman Someone famous, she said it. She was famous for saying it.

Man Greta Garbo. What a face! She was famous for other things too.

Woman Oh, I'm sure, yes of course she was. Her films, for instance.

Man Yes, of course, her films, and her face.

Woman Her accent.

Man Being foreign.

Woman And glamorous.

Man Yes. It all adds up doesn't it.

Woman Adds up to what?

Man Fame.

Woman Some people are famous just for being famous.

Man I wonder how people do it? If, for instance, I wanted to become famous just for being me, for being the famous me. How would one start? There seems to be no way into the circle of being famous for being famous.

Woman You're so naïve.

Man Am I?

Woman Yes, in some ways. It's obvious.

Man Is it?

Woman Yes, it's easy, it's obvious, you just have to persuade lots of journalists to write about you, and photographers to photograph you, and there you are, famous.

Man You make it sound so easy.

Woman It is.

Man It can't be that easy, if it was everyone would be famous.

Woman Perhaps everyone doesn't want to be famous.

Man You're joking.

Woman It can't be all fun.

Man You mean –

Woman Can it.

Man There are thousands of people out there striving for obscurity.

Woman Yes.

Man Huh.

Woman So who is it?

Man What?

Woman Who's coming round tonight? This person, or persons, you don't want me to see.

Man No one.

Woman Come on.

Man Okay. It's my lover.

Woman What!

Man I said –

Woman I know what you said.

Man Well then –

Woman You're joking.

Man Yes, I'm joking.

Woman You are joking, aren't you?

Man Yes, of course. The thought of me and a lover, here, ridiculous.

Woman Yes, ridiculous.

Man You needn't agree so readily.

Woman What?

Man It isn't so impossible that I should have a lover. I'm still reasonably presentable.

Woman Ha ha. And once you get famous.

Man Yes, exactly, once I get famous.

Woman They'll be crawling all over you –

Man All over me.

Woman Pushing me out the way –

Man Yes, quite possibly.

Woman Fame. It does that.

Man Yes. Yes, it does.

Woman Can't lead a normal life.

Man No.

Woman Not when you're famous.

Man What is this normal? This normal life we hear so much about. Who

lives it? I've yet to find anybody who leads a 'normal' life. They're all bloody peculiar, if you ask me.

Woman Ha ha, there must be someone.

Man Name one. A normal couple.

Woman A normal couple . . . a normal couple. [Pause.] Angeline and John!

Man They're not normal!

Woman Angeline and John?

Man They're *very* peculiar, if you ask me.

Woman What's peculiar about them?

Man Well, if you don't know –

Woman Go on.

Man If you haven't noticed, well, I wouldn't want to intrude upon your sublime innocence.

Woman You can be so pompous at times.

Man Me!

Woman Don't look so shocked. You know you have a tendency to be pompous, don't deny it.

Man I wouldn't dream –

Woman When are they coming?

Man Who, what?

Woman This visitor you don't want me to see, your 'lover'.

Man Nobody's coming. I told you, I'm not expecting –

Woman Anyone.

Man That's right, I'm not expecting anyone –

Woman Then you're expecting someone.

Man What?

Woman As distinct from anyone you are expecting someone, some specific person.

Man Why are you so suspicious?

Woman You try and hustle me out the house, then start going on about your lover, what do you expect.

Man I was joking.

Woman It's not in very good taste.

Man I thought you'd enjoy it.

Woman No. I don't.

Man I thought you liked a bit of a spar.

Woman I'm surprised you think that.  
Man Well, you enjoy a –  
Woman I'm just defending myself.  
Man You're not under attack.  
Woman It feels that way.  
Man No need –  
Woman But it does, it feels that way.  
Man Relax, have a drink.  
Woman No.  
Man Go on, it'll relax you.  
Woman No. I have to go out.  
Man I thought you said you were staying in.  
Woman I can't stay in now. [Pause.] They'll see me.  
Man Who?  
Woman Your lover, your visitor.  
Man What're you going to do?  
Woman I'll just go out.  
Man You can't wander the streets.  
Woman I'll visit my lover.  
Man What?  
Woman I'll visit him, he's always pleased to see me.  
Man You haven't got a lover.  
Woman How do you know?  
Man You're joking.  
Woman Ha ha, yes, I'm joking.  
Man You're winding me up, another one of your little sparring matches.  
Woman On guard!  
Man Yes, on guard.  
Woman I'd better get going.  
Man But you did say you were going out.  
Woman When?  
Man Yesterday. Yesterday you said, Tomorrow I'm going out –  
Woman To see my lover, did I say that?  
Man No. No, you didn't say that.  
Woman I must've forgotten. [The doorbell rings.] Who's that?  
Man I don't know.

Woman Are you expecting anyone?  
Man No. Are you?  
Woman No. You'd better see who it is.  
Man Why me?  
Woman You're the one who's expecting company.  
Man No I'm not. You're the one who's going out, you can answer the door on the way out.  
Woman What if it's one of those . . . you know, whatcha call its . . . one of those –  
Man Jehovah's Witness.  
Woman Yes, that's it, you know how hopeless I am at getting rid of them.  
Man I thought you were rather good.  
Woman Really?  
Man Yes, last time I thought you handled it rather well.  
Woman Oh –  
Man Better than me. I'm inclined to be a bit, heavy handed; then I feel guilty afterwards; it's silly I know but I do, I feel guilty for spoiling their evening when really, if you think about it, it's they who've spoiled my evening, by making me feel guilty about telling them to piss off.  
Woman It's gone very quiet.  
Man Perhaps they've gone away; whoever it was.  
Woman Perhaps it was a prank, you know, a school-boy.  
Man Possible. Do they still do that?  
Woman I suppose they do.  
Man They did in my day, but I'd've thought it was rather old hat these days.  
Woman Oh, I'll go. [Exit Woman.]  
Man Be firm. [Man rummages among bookcase, retrieves book and starts to read. Woman returns.] Who was it?  
Woman You didn't order a pizza, did you?  
Man No.  
Woman [pause.] What've you got there?  
Man It's your diary.  
Woman My diary!  
Man I should've thought you'd recognise it, your diary.  
Woman What're you doing with my diary?

Man I fancied something sensational to read.

Woman You're not supposed to read other people's diaries. They're private.  
Give it back.

Man No. I haven't finished it.

Woman You shouldn't be reading it.

Man I'm just getting to the good bit: 'the mad mystic hammering of your  
body upon my body'. That's not me is it, by any chance?

Woman No.

Man I didn't think so. I think I'd remember that.

Woman It's a quote.

Man A quote.

Woman It's not me, it's a quote.

Man Who from?

Woman I don't remember.

Man Pretty racy quote.

Woman That's why I wrote it down.

Man I didn't know you'd taken to reading pornography.

Woman It's poetry.

Man Is it?

Woman Yes. Yes, it is. Put it down.

Man Any more good bits.

Woman [Snatching back the diary.] No! None of your business if there is.  
Where's your diary?

Man I don't keep a diary, you never know who might read it.

Woman Liar. I feel ravaged. I feel . . . raped –

Man Oh come on.

Woman Yes, raped, you read my diary. Oh God, it's so embarrassing.  
What's in there is for me, only me.

Man Sorry.

Woman Give me yours.

Man No.

Woman It's only fair, you read mine so I should read yours.

Man Mine isn't interesting, unlike yours.

Woman Let me be the judge of that.

Man Dear diary, got up, went to work, came home, watched T.V., went to  
bed, no sex, that kind of thing.

Woman I don't believe you.  
Man Makes me wonder why I bother.  
Woman I want to see it.  
Man No. What's for dinner?  
Woman Nothing!  
Man Nothing?  
Woman There's nothing for dinner. Not now. I'm going out.  
Man I thought you were staying in.  
Woman Not now, not now I've been . . . been –  
Man Raped?  
Woman Exactly.  
Man I wish you'd let me know.  
Woman What?  
Man That you're going out this evening. I could've made plans.  
Woman Tough!  
Man That's rather harsh.  
Woman So?  
Man I think it is. Do you remember when we met?  
Woman Of course I remember.  
Man Unforgettable!  
Woman Absolutely.  
Man I'll always remember how you looked that night.  
Woman Me too. I'll always remember how I looked that night.  
Man You were stunning!  
Woman Quite probably.  
Man Absolutely!  
Woman Don't go over the top, it doesn't suit you.  
Man Sorry.  
Woman Where were we?  
Man You were leaving.  
Woman Was I?  
Man Yes.  
Woman I thought it was your turn to leave.  
Man Don't be silly.  
Woman I'm not silly.  
Man It's just a phrase.

Woman Well don't use it. Anyway, I have to be going.  
Man So soon?  
Woman Don't do that. Sorry darling, I do have to go I promised Jack I'd read the kids a story tonight.  
Man I wouldn't want to intrude on your parental quality time.  
Woman You're so understanding.  
Man Anyway I have to be getting back to Michelle, she's doing this cordon bleu course and wants to try out one of her recipes on me tonight.  
Woman Poor you.  
Man It's our sharing moment.  
Woman How's her depression?  
Man Oh you know, so so.  
Woman Until next time then?  
Man Miss you, lover. [They kiss.]

END