



Something New

A play in one act

By Bo Anderson

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Character List

Cliff: Average 20 something male, an outsider

Dawn: 20 something, beautiful and intelligent

Mac the Bartender: A big bearded bartender

Setting

Scene One: Downtown at night in the side streets between bars.

Scene Two: inside of a quaint bar. There are 6 or 7 costumed mannequins seated and standing around in the bar as if they are regular customers.

SCENE 1

(CLIFF and DAWN are wondering around the stage trying to find their way to the bar. CLIFF is nervously trying to lead the way, while DAWN is relaxed and enjoying the situation.)

CLIFF

Don't worry, I'll find it soon enough.

DAWN

So you are lost then.

CLIFF

No, I'm not lost, stop saying that. It's just these couple of blocks they all look the same, but I'll find it soon enough don't worry.

DAWN

I'm not worried, but you, Cliff, you are lost.

CLIFF

I'm not lost, not yet. I knew where we were a minute ago. I just seemed to have suddenly lost all reference, but if we just take our time and logically think about where we have been...

DAWN

You are getting nervous aren't you?

CLIFF

Are you kidding, I've been nervous since I met you.

DAWN

That's funny because we're lost and I'm still just as relaxed as the day I was born.

CLIFF

That was relaxing for you?

DAWN

What?

CLIFF

The day you were born, you're telling me that that was relaxing for you?

DAWN

Oh yeah, it was wonderful.

CLIFF

Really? I hated it, I can't think of a single more traumatizing event in my life, all that bright light and the blood... I still have nightmares.

DAWN

Ha-ha, you're cute. Wow, look at that.

CLIFF

Look at what?

DAWN

The stars they're amazing.

CLIFF

Yeah, I guess, so I think we should head this way.

DAWN

The moon is really bright too, can you see the ring around it. It's really bright, and big I don't think I've ever seen a ring around the moon that big before. I think that's supposed to be an omen of some kind. I can't remember if it's good or bad though.

CLIFF

I've never heard of that.

DAWN

So where are we going, what's the place called?

CLIFF

"The Lucky Lady"

DAWN

Interesting name, I've never heard of it.

CLIFF

That's because it's a total dive, you'll love it.

Oh, gee, thanks. DAWN

You're welcome. CLIFF

I wasn't being serious. DAWN

I know, but I do think you'll like it. CLIFF

What makes you think that? DAWN

Because, I hate it. CLIFF

Oh, great, so you hate it, so do you come here often? DAWN

Here? CLIFF

To "The Lucky Lady", or rather stuck on your way to it. DAWN

Well actually, on both counts, yes. CLIFF

Wait, what? DAWN

Yes. CLIFF

That's not really what I meant. I mean, you actually come here often and get lost often. DAWN

Yes, well we're not really lost. CLIFF

You get lost going to the same place every time. DAWN

CLIFF

Well, I know it sounds bad but, I just keep taking the same shortcut through those side streets and I keep getting confused in roughly the same area.

DAWN

Why do you keep taking the same shortcut if you keep getting lost?

CLIFF

I guess I'm just a creature of habit.

DAWN

Weird.

CLIFF

What?

DAWN

Well, mostly you, but also this evening is a lot more interesting than I thought it would be. At first I didn't know why I agreed to go out with you, you're really not my type. I just have trouble saying no, you know.

CLIFF

No.

DAWN

Well anyways, I thought you were the nervous quiet type, and for the majority of the evening I imagined that I'd have to struggle to make conversation and not really find any of your short answers all that interesting.

CLIFF

You thought that?

DAWN

Yeah, you're getting embarrassed, I've probably insulted you, but what I'm trying to say is that so far this has been a good start.

CLIFF

Really? That is weird. Thanks.

DAWN

You're welcome.

CLIFF

You want to know something?

DAWN

What?

MAN

I know where we are, well, at least I know where the bar is from here.

DAWN

You do?

CLIFF

Ha, yeah, I'm so stupid, it's right over here.

DAWN

That was easy.

CLIFF

Told you we weren't lost.

DAWN

I stand corrected, shall we go in?

CLIFF

After you (opens door for DAWN, they enter)

SCENE 2

(The couple enters the bar, it is full of mannequins, the two take no notice of this and seat themselves at a table center stage. The bartender is behind the bar cleaning glasses, emptying ashtrays, and making drinks for the mannequins)

DAWN

Do you know any of these people?

CLIFF

I know some of them.

DAWN

Are you going to introduce me to any of them.

CLIFF

Oh no, I don't know anyone that well.

DAWN

You don't?

CLIFF

Nope.

DAWN

How often do you come here?

CLIFF

Oh I've been coming here at least three times a week for a couple of years now.

DAWN

And you don't know these regulars here, the bartender, anybody?

CLIFF

NO! That's what I love about this place, no one here knows me. It's like the opposite of Cheers, I'm here all the time and nobody knows my name. The bartender doesn't give me my usual because he doesn't even remember me even though I always sit here, alone, and have the same beer.

DAWN

Have you ever tried to get them to remember you?

CLIFF

No, you see, I love the anonymity of it.

DAWN

Why?

CLIFF

Because, no one here knows me, I'm completely undefined in their minds. I could be anyone, I can do anything, and



CLIFF

there aren't any preconceived misconceptions of who I am. I'm totally free, I love it.

DAWN

But before, when we were outside, you said you hate this place.

CLIFF

Oh yeah, I do. You know, you're very observant.

DAWN

I'm confused, how can you hate it if you love it so much.

CLIFF

Because I never do.

DAWN

What? Never do what?

MAN

Anything.

DAWN

With your freedom?

CLIFF

Exactly! I get depressed just thinking about it.

DAWN

Why?

CLIFF

Because I'm totally free but as soon as I do something out of the ordinary then these people will instantly define me and then whatever that thing is then no matter what I do I will be stuck with everyone thinking of me in that overly simplistic way.

DAWN

But you come here a lot, so what do you do?

CLIFF

Mostly I, well mostly I sit quietly, drinking a beer or something and watch other people interact.

DAWN

Watch people, like in like a creepy way?

CLIFF

No, not in a creepy way, at least I don't think it is in a creepy way.

DAWN

So you sit here night after night for what? Coming out here, getting lost on the way, and then you spend your money on drinks in isolation for what?

CLIFF

Yeah, I don't know something like, like I love having options I guess, I don't know. So what about you, what do you do, you know, for fun and stuff.

DAWN

Me?

CLIFF

Yeah, you, what do you do for fun?

DAWN

You mean aside from getting lost with you on the way to the Lucky Lady, I'm sorry that was mean. I, oh, I don't know, I guess I entertain myself the old fashioned way, movies, music, TV, friends, it all sounds so boring and run of the mill, but I like what I like.

CLIFF

Yeah.

DAWN

There is, well I mean I also take notes.

CLIFF

Notes?

DAWN

Yeah well I want to be a writer maybe someday, so I jot down ideas into my journal and as soon as I have enough material then one day maybe I'll write it all out. All my ideas and stories and who knows, it at least gives me this

DAWN

big overall arc of an ambition for my life, like a purpose, something to shoot for.

CLIFF

I didn't expect that.

DAWN

What?

CLIFF

Oh, uh, n-n-nothing.

DAWN

Are you all right you look pale, and you're sweating?

CLIFF

I'm nervous.

DAWN

What about?

CLIFF

It didn't go like this, I mean, well, I never got this far.

DAWN

What do you mean?

CLIFF

In my head, in my head I never thought this far ahead, when I was thinking about it. Now, I don't know what is going to happen next.

DAWN

Welcome to the real world honey, haha, in the real world you offer to buy me a drink and I accept. (DAWN and BARTENDER make eye contact and give a silent nod of agreement)

CLIFF

Uh, can I buy you a drink?

DAWN

Sure, what are you having?

CLIFF

No, no, no, I have to tell you something first. Today on my way to work I bought something, something new and it has changed my life. I walk the same route to work everyday and I've never look into any of the shop windows along to way, and for the first time in a long time I did something different. I went into this pawn shop on second street-

DAWN

-What is it? What did you get?

CLIFF

This! (Pulls a revolver out of his pocket and places in on the table between them)

DAWN

OH MY GOD!!! OH MY GOD!!! OH MY GOD!!!

CLIFF

Hey, settle down, settle down. I don't even know how to use it.

DAWN

Oh my god, are you going to kill me?

CLIFF

No I'm not going to kill you. I just want to tell you about my day. Hey Barkeep can I get a pitcher of "Naughty Nelly" and two pint glasses please.

MAC

Coming right up! (Pours drinks)

CLIFF

So, in the morning on my way to work I buy this, this gun. Totally an impulse buy, I was barely aware of myself as I was doing it, like I was in a dream. I left the store with the gun in my pocket and I felt different, I felt powerful. I've been walking around all day doing the same old routine with this in my pocket all day. It was my dirty little secret, my first dirty little secret.

DAWN

Cliff, you, you haven't killed anyone have you?

CLIFF

Are you kidding me, of course not? I haven't taken it out of my pocket all day. All that I've been using it for until now was to empower myself, I don't want to impose my will onto anyone else you see?

MAC

Here's your beer, that'll be sixteen fifty.

CLIFF

(Picks up the gun from the table) Actually, I think that beer will be on the house. (Points gun at MAC) In fact I think there will be free drinks for everyone in here. What do you think about that?

MAC

Well okay then. (Goes back behind the bar and starts pouring drinks for the mannequins) So then what happened?

CLIFF

What?

MAC

With the rest of your story, you buy the gun, you feel powerful, and then what happened?

CLIFF

All kinds of things, new and different, the entire day was amazing.

MAC

Ok, right, but how was it amazing?

DAWN

Yeah, what was so new and amazing about your day?

CLIFF

Well, okay. Ok. For instance, today I used the copy machine that was down the hall from my office, and when I was done, Stan, who works in the office next to mine, came to use the machine. So as I was walking out of the copy room he starts screaming at me. Apparently there was a load letter jam and he just decided to take it out on me. So there I am listening to this man scream in my face about how I broke the copier, how the company is going to take

CLIFF

the repair costs out of my next paycheck, and then he crosses way over the line and starts pushing me while he's yelling at me. I reached my hand down into my coat pocket, the one with the gun in it. My finger slipped onto the trigger, instantly I felt this warmth come over my body, and then suddenly I pushed him back and said 'No Stan, I didn't break the copier, it worked just fine when I used it, so I am not going to be bullied by you into paying for it.' So Stan is standing there astonished and before I leave I tell him, 'Oh yeah, and I don't like to be pushed around either, I don't think that it is appropriate for the work place, and I would appreciate it if you would refrain from that in the future.'

MAC

That's it?

CLIFF

Well, yeah, I never would have stood up to Stan in the past.

MAC

That's the lamest story I've ever heard!

DAWN

Well, I think it was very brave of you to stand up to Stan, he seemed like a real bully, but you don't need a gun in your pocket to do something like that.

CLIFF

Maybe most people don't, but I do.

DAWN

No you don't-

MAC

-So then what happened, with the rest of your amazing day?

CLIFF

Well a few minor conflicts, that apparently aren't worth telling, and then I went on lunch.

DAWN

That's when I met you.

CLIFF

That's right, I decided to treat myself to a beer and some pizza for lunch and Dawn here served it to me.

DAWN

And before I served him his drink he asked me out on a date, he was so calm and confident about it that I said yes before I knew what happened.

MAC

Did you use the gun? I mean did you have to use the gun again in order to ask her out?

CLIFF

No, well I mean I still had it in my pocket, but I was still feeling all excited from my confrontations earlier in the day that I didn't actually need to touch the gun this time.

DAWN

You see you don't need the gun at all.

MAC

So, so far on your amazing day you've confronted your peers and asked a pretty girl on a date, that's it, anything else?

CLIFF

Well, no, no, after lunch I just kind of wandered around outside the restaurant waiting for Dawn to get off.

DAWN

You just waited around for me?

CLIFF

Well, yeah, I didn't want to go back to work.

DAWN

So you waited around outside for 5 hours!

CLIFF

Well, yeah, I didn't want to go back to work, I'm pretty sure I had gotten myself fired anyways, and I had no place else to go. What else was I supposed to do?

DAWN
5 hours, that's not normal.

MAC
That's down right creepy.

DAWN
Why would you do that?

CLIFF
I had to, I couldn't go back to, I just couldn't go back,
so I didn't leave.

MAC
You were scared!

DAWN
You were scared?

CLIFF
No.

MAC
Sure, just look at him. You know what I see, I see a
coward.

CLIFF
Shut up!

MAC
No.

CLIFF
Shut up!

MAC
No, I won't shut up.

DAWN
Just leave him alone.

MAC
No, I won't leave him alone and I won't shut up, because I
know why he bought the gun, and I know why he brought you
here.

CLIFF

What, why, what? What happens next? How do you know?

DAWN

Why?

MAC

Haven't you figured it out yet? He's done for, game over, he knows it, so now he's so scared he's going to end it all and either take you with him, or make you watch.

DAWN

I don't believe that, that's not true is it Cliff?

CLIFF

(Cliff collapses onto the table in tears) I, I don't know, I don't know what happens next.

DAWN

That's ok, everything is going to be ok.

CLIFF

I can't go back, I just can't go back, and I don't know what else to do. I bought the gun, and now I have to pay for it. It's over, he's right.

MAC

Ha!

DAWN

Nothing is decided, you can be whatever you want to be, you can do anything.

CLIFF

No I cant, not anymore. (puts the gun to his head)

DAWN

NO, OH MY GOD DON'T DO IT!!!

MAC

Ha, lets see if he actually has the balls to try it.

DAWN

You don't have to do this, it'll be ok, you haven't done anything wrong.

MAC

Heck, you haven't even done anything interesting... yet.

DAWN

Shut up, will you just leave him alone? He needs help, he needs our help.

CLIFF

NO! No, I don't need anybody's help. I'm fine. This has been the best day of my life. Goodbye. (CLIFF pulls the trigger, there is a loud CLICK, every one jumps) WHAT? NO, no, no!!! NO!!!

DAWN

WHAT? You are, this is, I am leaving. I am leaving right now! Go kill yourself on your own time. (As DAWN gets up from the table CLIFF pulls the trigger another 5 times... CLICK... CLICK... CLICK... CLICK... CLICK... CLIFF falls into the table sobbing)

MAC

Don't leave now, this is just getting interesting.

DAWN

Are you both insane?

MAC

I saved your life.

DAWN

I don't think so, I don't think you helped the situation at all. You both need a lot of help, and I hope you get it. (DAWN storms out of the bar)

MAC

Wow, she's a real firecracker! Oh Cliff (Pats CLIFF on the back) you crack me up, you didn't buy any bullets for that gun did you?

CLIFF

(Sobbing) I, I didn't even know I had too, I'm so worthless.

MAC

Here let me see that, do you mind? (Takes gun from CLIFF, opens it up and loads a bullet, spins the chamber, closes it and hands the revolver back to CLIFF) So, you see what you were doing wrong, now try.

CLIFF

I don't know if I can.

MAC

Sure you can, it's easy, and it'll be the easiest thing you have ever done.

CLIFF

Really?

MAC

Of course and the best part is that no one will ever completely understand why you did it. Oh, your neighbors will all tell the new reporters how you were a nice quiet young man that they never had any problems with you, and they never knew that you were suicidal.

CLIFF

Really?

MAC

Oh yes, and everyone who hears the story will want to know more. They will try and wrap their feeble minds around, droves of them will find themselves wandering into my bar, and they will order the 'Suicide Special', a drink I will name after you. They will sit in your seat and wonder. They'll want to know more about your life, they'll want to know about that which they'll never understand. They will all want to know what happens next.

CLIFF

REALLY?

MAC

You betcha.

THE END