

Her Majesty's Pleasure

BAZ- A man in his 40's.

RYAN- A man in his 20's. He has tattoos and should appear well built.

GUARD 1- A prison guard.

GUARD 2- A prison guard.

A dimly lit stage with grey back drop. It should look like a prison cell though not explicitly so. The space should have a feeling of confinement about it. RYAN, in baggy orange trousers, trainers and a dull white t-shirt sits against the wall reading a leather bound hardback book which could be mistaken for a bible. Two guards appear to wrestle BAZ, who is in similar apparel, into the room and knees him in the stomach to stop his stream of expletives. The sound of a door shutting and locking is heard as the guards leave SR.

BAZ: *(gruffly)* Honey I'm home.

The second man, RYAN, looks over the top of his book at BAZ beside him, considers this and nods before disappearing behind his book again.

BAZ: Well... *(He struggles over to RYAN and sits near him with his back to the wall. He breathes heavily)* did you miss me?

RYAN lowers his book to look at BAZ with no expression.

BAZ: Of course you did. *(RYAN goes back to reading but this time using his finger to trace the lines attempting to look more absorbed in the book)* I know you miss me when I go on my little holidays. Little day trips. Excursions, like. *(He rubs his stomach and arms.)* I tell you though, don't go in for the massages. That little Thai girl is

brutal. What's her name? Malcolm, that's it. *(He puts up his middle fingers in the direction of the guards)* Shall I ring for a cocktail? WAITER!

RYAN lets out a delicate sigh and turns a page.

BAZ: Service at this hotel is shit. Her majesty may be many things but hospitable she ain't.

He laughs and looks to RYAN as if he expects him to join in, when he sees he is being ignored BAZ goes to slap him on the shoulder jovially. RYAN turns sharply to look at BAZ with venom and silent warning. BAZ withdraws his hand and stops laughing immediately. BAZ recoils back to sit back against the wall. He looks at RYAN who continues to stare at BAZ. He slowly moves a little away from RYAN and then a little more. The tension should be evident. Eventually RYAN seems satisfied and goes back to his book. Pause

BAZ: *(tentatively)* Looks like you're getting through that book of yours.

(Pause).

I don't much like reading myself.

(Pause)

I mean I don't like *reading*. I'm not saying I read...*myself*. *(BAZ picks at an imaginary spot on the floor appearing bored.)* The story of my life would be a depressing read, that's for damn sure.

Long pause. RYAN turns a page in his book.

I used to like the Dandy when I was younger

RYAN slowly turns his head to look in disbelief.

What?

RYAN shakes his head judgementally and goes back to his book with a raise of his eyebrows.

Hey, I got these from Jerry (*He pulls out a pack of playing cards from his pocket*).
Want to play?

(RYAN ignores him.)

(Laughing to himself) No, you're right. When there is such quality conversation to be had who needs distractions like cards, eh?

Pause. BAZ shuffles the cards which makes a noise. RYAN looks at him as if displeased by the noise.

(Whispers over dramatically) Sorry!

RYAN looks back at his book. BAZ senses an opportunity to irritate him and smiles cheekily at the audience. He taps the deck on the stage loudly to straighten the cards and feigns surprise at the noise.

(mouths or whispers) So sorry. I'll be quiet.

BAZ then shuffles the deck again even louder. RYAN is irate and goes to stand up in anger threatening to hit Baz with his book which is a hardback.

(BAZ raises his hands up in surrender) Sorry, sorry. I promise they're done. I'll just play with myself, well not with myself, you know what I...forget it. Patience! I'm playing patience! Solitaire, you know? It doesn't matter *(Pause)* I wish I was in solitary.

RYAN seems irritated but placated and sits back down with an exasperated expression. He begins to read again.

Pause.

BAZ smiles then flicks the entire deck of cards at RYAN'S face and promptly runs to evade him. RYAN slams his book shut and pursues him. BAZ sings the Benny Hill tune as he attempts to evade him in the small space. RYAN catches him grabbing his t-shirt from the back and pulls him down to the ground.

(Laughing) Ok, ok, I'm sorry. I give up. *(Serious)* You win. You win.

RYAN is angered by the laughter and goes to punch him but stops at BAZ'S pleas. He roughly lets BAZ go. The two men breathe heavily and eventually RYAN wanders to where his book ended up. He picks it up.

RYAN: Shit.

BAZ: What?

RYAN ignores him

BAZ: *(more insistently)* what?

RYAN: I lost my fucking page.

BAZ: Oh, that's alright. I know how it ends. That Jesus bloke gets killed by the Greeks. *(He starts to gather the cards slowly from the floor)*

RYAN: *(Flicking through the book trying to find his page)* Romans.

BAZ: Eh?

RYAN: Jesus was crucified by the Romans not the Greeks, you fucking idiot.

BAZ: *(Looking genuinely confused)* what's the difference?

RYAN: Really?

BAZ: Well they both have tans and wear skirts don't they?

RYAN: Twat.

BAZ: *(mocking)* Oooh, Mr. Fancy-pants has a GCSE. Fuck off.

Pause.

RYAN continues to flick through the book looking for his page.

BAZ: Why don't you just skip to the end so you can find out what will happen to your "immortal soul" and get on with your life. Check Relevation at the back. Look, I'll show you. *(Reaches for the book).*

RYAN snatches it out of reach and walks quickly to the other end of the cell facing offstage.

BAZ waits but then resolves to follow him. He sneaks behind RYAN and reads over his shoulder. Pause. BAZ gasps and RYAN now noticing him turns around, taken aback. He clutches the book to his chest.

BAZ: That's not a bible.

RYAN: Fuck off!

BAZ: It's-

RYAN: Shut up!

Pause as they both look at each other. Then BAZ collapses into hysterical laughter.

RYAN: I'll fucking end you!

BAZ: *(hysterically)* little fucking Women!

RYAN: Shut up!

Long pause while BAZ regains himself.

BAZ: Oh....Little fucking women. Hard man likes little women. He's hard as nails but likes to read Austen in his spare time. Well, now I've seen everything. *(Laughter wanes. Pause as he reconsiders)* fucking little women...Is it good?

Curtain