

RAW PROVOCATIVE HUMANE PLAYS

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Two Birds
by Jerzy Gwiazdowski

A very cool Bushwick coffee shop. CELA, a very cool Bushwick coffee shop patron, enters carrying her very large handbag. She approaches LARRY, who is a bit rough around the edges, noodling on his phone and looking uncomfortable in his trendy button-down shirt. She sees him first and smiles.

CELA
Happy New Year.

Cela leans over the table toward him. He half-stands and hugs her.

LARRY
It's April.

CELA
I never got to say it.

She pecks him on the corner of his mouth.

CELA
Never got to kiss you, either.

LARRY
Happy New Year.

Cela reaches into her bag, smirking at a confused Larry.

CELA
So that's New Year's...

Cela produces a small cat toy with a bell on it. She hands it to Larry. He looks at it, then at her.

CELA
That's for Della. (*Off Larry's look*) I missed her birthday. March 16th.

LARRY
I found Della in a barn.

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LARRY (CONT'D)
I don't know her birthday.

CELA
It's March 16th.

CELA smiles and heads back to the bag.

CELA
Now what else did we miss...

LARRY
The Equinox?

CELA
Yes. But no.

Cela pulls a heart-shaped card out of her bag and gives it to Larry.

CELA
Happy Valentines' Day.

LARRY
Valentines' Day?

CELA
We missed it.

LARRY
We did.

Larry looks at the front of the card, then at Cela.

CELA
You don't have a coffee!

LARRY
I was waiting.

CELA
Do you want one?

LARRY
Sure.

CELA
Coffee. (*Points a finger at him*) Black.

LARRY
Thanks.

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Cela heads to the counter. Larry opens the heart-shaped card and reads the inside. He looks in Cela's direction. He takes out his cell phone and uses the camera as a mirror to check himself out. Cela returns and places her bag on the chair.

CELA

They never remember me. How many times have we come here?

LARRY

A lot.

CELA

And I'm still "the girl with Larry."

She digs out her wallet. Larry reaches for his back pocket.

LARRY

Come on. I got it.

Larry fishes out some bills and hands them to her.

LARRY

You got a haircut.

CELA

I hate it.

She starts to fix her hair.

LARRY

Leave it there. You look beautiful.

CELA

Oh, I went to that place!

LARRY

What place?

CELA

Where they give you beer. You said they probably do it to get you buzzed so you don't complain.

LARRY

I just don't get why the music is so loud.

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CELA
 It wasn't so bad. Jane went to one of the
 hairdressers and she was going to come to the
 apartment to do it, but then the salon asked
 her to fill in, so I just did it there, but I
 think actually-

LARRY
 It suits you.

Cela strikes a dorky pose.

CELA
 I'll get used to it.

LARRY
 How's Jane?

CELA
 She says hi.

LARRY
 Hi, Jane.

Larry holds up the heart-card.

LARRY
 What does this mean?

CELA
 Just what it says.

LARRY
 "I love you more than two birds."

CELA smiles. From off, a voice
 calls: "Sheila!"

CELA
 I do. (To the counter, as she walks off) It's
 "Cela."

Larry looks down at his shirt.
 Unbuttons the top button,
 reconsiders. Buttons it back up.
 Cela returns with two coffee
 cups.

CELA
 Blank stares. No idea who I am.

LARRY
 It's a lot busier now. This place used to be
 empty.

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CELA

And cheaper. Okay, one more.

Cela plops a gift bag on the table between them.

CELA

That's for today.

LARRY

April Fool's?

CELA

Larry Day.

LARRY

What's that?

CELA

My favorite holiday of the year. *Open it.*

Cela nudges the gift bag toward Larry.

LARRY

I didn't get you anything.

CELA

You got me coffee.

Cela holds her phone to Larry.

CELA

Look: I put it in my calendar.

LARRY (Grabbing the phone)

"Reminder: Allowed to talk to Larry again. Swallow Cafe, 4pm." Oh, It's marked as urgent.

CELA

It is.

LARRY

That's very organized of you.

CELA

I didn't want to miss it.

Cela's phone gets an incoming notification.

LARRY

Jane is texting. She wants to know "how it's going, girl?"

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Cela reaches for the phone and puts it in her bag.

LARRY

I wasn't trying to read it, it just popped up.

Cela pokes the gift bag toward him.

CELA

Open it.

LARRY

I don't understand why you're giving me gifts.

CELA

It's Larry Day.

Beat.

CELA

You're Larry.

LARRY

This is all very nice. But I think we should talk.

CELA

Okay.

LARRY

But what are we celebrating, Cela? I want to celebrate. But what does it mean if I open this?

CELA

It's just a gift.

LARRY

Cela.

CELA

I want things to be good again. I want to move on.

LARRY

I want to move on, too. But I don't want to ignore it. If we move on without talking about the last three months, it doesn't feel like we are actually moving on, you know?

Larry looks at her.

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LARRY

This is all very nice. But I need to know where you stand. I've been thinking a lot about this.

CELA

Yeah, so have I.

LARRY

(*re: the gifts*) I know. I can't just leave today with presents and never see you again. I don't want fucking Larry Day. I need more than a day from you.

CELA

So do I.

LARRY

I haven't seen you for three months.

CELA

It was your idea.

LARRY

It wasn't... Let's not argue. If you're saying you want to get back together with me, then the answer is yes. Text Jane back. Tell her "It's going great, girl." Tell her you're nailing it. You look great. I feel awful for breaking up with you.

CELA

Lar...

LARRY

I was sitting in the apartment, looking at boxes of your books, and your tiny pillows, thinking to myself "I don't want this. I want these things here." I want you here.

CELA

I want to be here...

LARRY

After that fight, I was worried it was something about me. That I just wanted to be *with someone*. But I don't. It isn't about someone. It's about you. You're the someone.

Cela looks at him, trying to read him.

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LARRY

And I understand why you wondered who else was out there. I hadn't wondered who else was out there. But maybe I needed to. Maybe ultimately this was good for us. And I don't need to know the details. I don't need to discuss who you were with. I don't need a gift. Just tell me you want to get back together. Just tell me that's what you're saying.

CELA

Larry. We didn't break up.

LARRY

What?

CELA

Three months. You said you wanted to take three months.

LARRY

I said I didn't want you to contact me for three months. After we broke up.

CELA

You said you wanted a cool-down period. I think of us as together.

LARRY

We broke up. You said you wanted to see other people.

CELA

I said that I was wondering about it.

LARRY

Yeah, you "found yourself wondering..."

CELA

But I didn't break up with you.

LARRY

I broke up with you!

CELA

No you didn't.

LARRY (raising his voice)

What the fuck are you talking about?

Cela looks around.

LARRY

You didn't see a future with me.

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CELA

I said- Larry, I said I was having trouble seeing it. Because we were trying to plan for it.

LARRY

You said we were "missing something." And now, what?

CELA

I was wrong. We were having a fight, I had doubts.

LARRY

Doubts.

CELA

But I wasn't with anyone else.

LARRY

Okay.

CELA

Were you?

LARRY

Hold on...

CELA

Larry. Were you?

LARRY

You said. You said you "found yourself wondering."

CELA

Yes. WONDERING, Larry. Just WONDERING. I wanted to talk about it. And you wouldn't. You wouldn't even talk about it for three months. So I took my little punishment. And I waited. That's what I've been doing for three months. Waiting until you were ready. What have you been doing?

LARRY

I've been... realizing you were right.

CELA

You've been fucking other people.

LARRY

I didn't want to do that. I wanted to be with you!

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CELA

I wanted to be with you, but you locked me out of your life for three months!

LARRY

Because you were willing to question our whole relationship over a fucking tee shirt!

CELA

It wasn't about the shirt.

LARRY

It was about the shirt, and the little throw pillows, and the thousand other things that make you look at me like I'm not enough.

CELA

But I didn't stop trying.

LARRY

Neither did I.

CELA

Did you bring them to the apartment?

LARRY

I'm not the bad one here.

CELA

Did you bring them here in the morning? No wonder they don't recognize me.

LARRY

I didn't want to bring them home. I didn't want to bring them here. I wanted to bring you here. I didn't have any doubts. You had doubts. You were wondering. You were missing something. And you still feel like you're missing it. You just gave up looking?

CELA

No.

LARRY

Maybe you didn't look hard enough.

CELA

But you have.

LARRY

After a stupid fight, you decided that you wanted to see if there was anything else out there. And then you didn't.

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CELA
I didn't want to.

LARRY
And now you're sure?

CELA
Yes.

LARRY
The last thing I heard from you was the complete opposite. You had a "crush on the bookstore guy, and maybe it meant something."

CELA
It didn't.

LARRY
What happened? Did he embarrass you in front of your friends? Did he wear the wrong clothes?

CELA
I'm sorry. I was nervous about the party. It wasn't about you.

LARRY
It was about my shirt.

CELA
It's not about the damn shirt. I suggested you might want to change. You didn't have to flip out.

LARRY
I didn't flip out. *And I was going to change.* But you couldn't trust me enough to dress myself.

CELA
You weren't going to change. You were daring me to say something about it.

LARRY
What is so wrong with the shirt?

CELA
No one actually wears those.

LARRY
I do. I wear those.

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CELA

To a New Year's Eve party at my boss' penthouse?

LARRY

There were plenty of people there in tee shirts.

CELA

Not the same. It wasn't unreasonable to ask.

LARRY

You didn't ask.

CELA

It was a stupid fight; I'm sorry. It doesn't have to be that big of a deal.

LARRY

It wasn't, until you used it as an excuse to bail out of the relationship completely.

CELA

No. I just wanted some time.

LARRY

To see what else was out there.

CELA

Yes. And I did.

LARRY

And?

CELA

I'm not interested in anything but you.

Larry looks at her.

LARRY

That's the problem.

CELA

What is?

LARRY

I can't believe you when you say that anymore. All I hear is "I swear until I have doubts again."

CELA

Babe-

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LARRY

I loved you from the moment we met. And I've never questioned it.

CELA

I love you too.

LARRY

Until I wear the wrong shirt.

CELA

It's not about the shirt.

LARRY

It's about me. What's wrong with me? What are you missing?

CELA

Nothing.

LARRY

Jane said you went out with me a second time because you felt sorry for me.

CELA

That was forever ago.

LARRY

You're embarrassed of me.

CELA

I'm not embarrassed of you. When did she tell you that?

LARRY

Thanksgiving.

CELA

Why didn't you say anything?

LARRY

Why didn't you tell me you were settling?

CELA

I'm not.

LARRY

Better to have a bird in the hand?

CELA

No.

LARRY

What am I missing?

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LARRY (CONT'D)

Why are you so embarrassed of me?

CELA

It wasn't you, Larry. I was insecure.

LARRY

About what?

CELA

I don't know.

LARRY

You would know. You're not sure, and you're not secure, and you don't know. When you love someone, you aren't embarrassed to show it.

CELA

Larry, I could care less about your clothes.

LARRY

Just tell me what I'm missing.

Cela looks at him.

LARRY

Tell me.

CELA

...Nothing.

Cela hands the gift bag to Larry and exits. He pulls out a tee shirt, emblazoned with "I LOVE NEW YORK." He looks down at his outfit, then in the direction Cela left.

END OF PLAY