

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Nude All-Stars on the Mango Planet of Love

by Simon Luckhurst

EXTRACT

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Scene One

We hear the somewhat tinny, lilting strains of a porn movie soundtrack punctuated by an occasional slightly too impassioned moan. We become aware of Jim sitting on a lounge watching a DVD. Then Maggie enters. She has just come from work. Jim hurriedly stops the movie.

MAGGIE: Jim?

JIM: Maggie?

MAGGIE: What are you doing here?

JIM: I'm having a stress day.

MAGGIE: You mean a sickie?

JIM: There's no fun being at home if you're ill. This is preventative.

MAGGIE: It certainly prevents you from being at work.

JIM: You haven't said what *you're* doing here.

MAGGIE: There was a fire next door to my office.

JIM: The firework company?

MAGGIE: No, the extinguisher factory. The blokes from the firework place helped put it out. Ironic, really. Anyway, we were sent home. What's this?

Maggie looks at the DVD cover, and presses 'play' on the remote. The music from the DVD becomes prominent again. Jim grabs the remote and stops the movie again.

JIM: Nothing. Not sure. I just turned it on.

MAGGIE: It looks like porn.

JIM: No. Not really. I mean, those two did have sex a while back, but it was accidental. Or possibly for research purposes. Deeply related to the plot.

Maggie picks up the cover of the DVD.

MAGGIE: *Nude All-Stars on the Mango Planet of Love.*

JIM: She *was* wearing a bikini, but it was snagged on a bush.

MAGGIE: Her?

JIM: Er, fell off when she was swimming. Something about a crocodile.

Maggie re-starts the movie. Jim playfully tries to take the remote from Maggie, but she won't let him, although there's not a lot of playfulness in her motives.

MAGGIE: How do you explain that?

JIM: Well, it's a mango.

MAGGIE: I meant what she's doing with it.

JIM: On this planet, mangoes are considered holy, so they, er, anoint each other with them-

MAGGIE: That's not anointing, Jim! There's no other possible way to interpret it. That's blatant fruit juice enhanced foreplay.

Jim seems to notice the behaviour of the performers for the first time.

JIM: Now you mention it, it *does* rather look like it, doesn't it?

Maggie gives him a withering look, 'Don't even pretend!' Jim finally manages to get the movie paused again.

JIM: I thought it was science fiction!

Maggie reads the cover of the DVD.

MAGGIE: One, two, three, five nipples and one erect penis, and what appears to be a rather messy accident involving a lot of egg-white.

JIM: Covers can be very misleading.

Pause.

MAGGIE: X-rated.

JIM: I didn't notice!

Maggie is quite upset.

MAGGIE: You know my feelings on this.

JIM: It's just a stupid movie.

MAGGIE: We had an agreement, Jim. I trusted you!

JIM: You don't want to watch it with me then?

MAGGIE: You're supposed to find *me* pretty, not them!

We hear Maggie's mobile ring. She answers it.

MAGGIE: (*On phone*) Hullo? Oh, hi Jan. Sorry, I can't talk right now, I'm having a thing with Jim. I came home from work and he had a porno movie on. Five years and he's always claimed to support my feelings on this. Exactly, him watching large numbers of eighteen-year old girls doing things I never thought anatomically possible with a mango is a fantastic confirmation he still finds me physically attractive. What do *you* think I should do? Where would I get the equipment? And God, it's not as if I *want* to end up on Rove. Look, I have to go. Call me later.

Maggie ends the call.

JIM: How about we just watch a little bit, and you can see it's really not as bad as-

MAGGIE: Why would I want to see a lot of young women who've cut their Home Economics class to have basketballs inserted into their chests rub mango juice over their lithe naked bodies?

Jim reacts with some excitement to this thought, but then recovers.

JIM: Let's just put it on for the story.

Maggie looks at the cover again.

MAGGIE: "...more penetration and quivering flesh than *Roman Orgy III- Caesar's Salad Undressing*." Doesn't seem to mention a plot.

JIM: Ah, there's this whole thing, where the prisoners-

MAGGIE: Very young, attractive, half-naked female prisoners-

JIM: Crash-land on this planet-

MAGGIE: A planet filled with younger, more attractive, *completely* naked female warriors-

JIM: Yeah, and they have to find some fuel-

MAGGIE: Which they get from a secret source-

J: - known only by the few men who inhabit the lost city of Rashamon, that's right.

MAGGIE: And then there's the mangoes, which they rub against each other.

JIM: The atmosphere of the planet contains a poisonous gas which can only be neutralised by fruit juice.

MAGGIE: When we met you wanted to be a writer! You read the classics. You watched Capra, Fellini, Bergman. You never felt this passionately about *their* films. What's so special about *this* kind of cinema?

JIM: Um, it's post-modern.

Maggie glares at Jim again.

JIM: You don't think I'd be watching it just for it's, er-

MAGGIE: Mangoes?

JIM: *Art.* That's what it is.

MAGGIE: Go on.

JIM: OK, um, here we go. It's, well, a deconstructionist essay into contemporary feminist iconography. The naked women represent the classic approach of Susan Sontag and Germaine Greer, while the bikini-wearing prisoners are a reference to the post-feminist theorists

MAGGIE: So the bikini women are confined in a duality?

Jim has been demonstrating his thesis physically with his hands, unfortunately for him this makes him look like he's now cupping two enormous breasts.

JIM: Yeah, they're the revisionists quite, er, constrained by their...

Jim's argument runs out of steam. Maggie thinks for a moment.

MAGGIE: Mangoes. What exactly do *they* stand for, Jim?

JIM: Our need to bond with nature?

MAGGIE: Interesting.

JIM: Can you understand why I was watching it now?

MAGGIE: No, but I think I have a clearer idea why you spent a semester thrashing through that stupid course.

JIM: 'Demystifying the Post-Colonial?'

MAGGIE: Did you watch these sorts of movies there?

JIM: No, just reality TV and talkback radio.

Jim's mobile rings. Possibly it has a slightly inappropriate ring tone.

JIM: (*On phone*) Oh, hi Tommy. No, mate, I don't think I'll be able to come out for a beer, Maggie's pissed off. I was watching a movie. *Nude All-Stars on the Mango Planet*. Really? I don't think I saw that bit yet. Yeah, I think I would have noticed. Pete said he and Gretel watched it together. No, Maggie doesn't like women seen as sex objects. I know there are men in it. Well, no, not too many. Yeah, it's a bloody

good thing all right. Hmm, but she'll say she doesn't like men being seen purely as sex objects either. Anyway, I have to sort it out. Call me later. (*Sotto voce*) Don't worry, if I get a chance I'll fast forward to it.

Maggie is watching Jim as he ends the call.

MAGGIE: Jim, do you still find me attractive?

JIM: Now who's reverting to the value systems of our society? You think it's only your looks that turn me on?

MAGGIE: (*Hurt*) You mean you're *not* turned on by how I look?

JIM: Christ, no. I mean, *yes*, of course I am. But I'm also really aware that there's so much more to you.

MAGGIE: Now you're saying I'm fat?!

JIM: Am I being misinterpreted? Constantly. Are you displaying the worst excesses of a full-scale neurosis? It's hard to think of it in any other way. Am I happy in our relationship and with how you look and act? Quite contented if you must know.

MAGGIE: This is not the time to tell me how happy you are!

JIM: Let's put the video back on and we can critique the rest of the film.

MAGGIE: You're such a bullshit artist.

JIM: OK. All right. I just wanted a change from those frigid politically correct European art house movies you keep making me suffer through. Just for once I wanted to see some bare skin that didn't have anything to do with an enigmatic and strangely beautiful woman's obsession with the car accident she had when she was seven.

MAGGIE: You said you liked *Marie Claire's Revenge*.

JIM: Her intensity was almost Arctic. I don't understand how her lovers managed to get into her bed without the essential parts of their reproductive systems looking like they'd been transplanted from a Smurf.

MAGGIE: Have you liked *any* of our evening entertainments?

JIM: If they're entertainment why do we have to spend most of the following week trying to work out what the hell they were actually about? Someone should write a book about that one with the ostrich and the purple glove.

MAGGIE: *Five Fingers, One Neck* is released next week. I was going to get it for your birthday.

Maggie's mobile rings. She answers it.