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WE HAVE WHAT YOU WANT

by Deborah Sheldon

EXTRACT

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

GORDON, cantankerous fifty-something year old owner of the roadhouse

NARELLE, his flirty teenaged daughter

DRIVER, the twenty-something year old customer, a smart-aleck thug who provokes arguments so that he can feel justified in committing violence

The play takes place in a roadhouse somewhere along a highway in regional Victoria.

AT RISE:

(The interior of a roadhouse, early morning. A high counter with a front face sits in centre stage, and a handwritten sign on the front face reads “HOT SURFACE – DO NOT TOUCH”. A cash register sits on the counter top. A blackboard lists prices for typical roadhouse food such as cooked breakfasts, hamburgers, pies and pasties. A door set into the rear wall (or a sign pinned to the rear curtains) is marked “Staff only”. Downstage house right is a collection of shelves stacked with canned and packaged goods, and a freestanding door that serves as the roadhouse’s entrance, fitted with a bell that jangles when the door is opened. At downstage house left sit two plastic tables with plastic chairs, and a freestanding door marked “This way to motel units”. Roadhouse owner GORDON, a cantankerous man in his fifties, is putting cruet sets on the tables.)

The front door opens, jangling the bell. A man in his twenties, DRIVER, saunters in, swinging car keys on a chain attached to his belt. During this initial exchange, GORDON goes behind the counter.

DRIVER Morning, mate. Jeez, you’re really in the middle of nowhere, aren’t you? Get much trade? Most people would stop at the towns, I’d reckon.

GORDON What do you want?

DRIVER *(smirks, points at GORDON’s nametag)* You tell me, Gordon.

GORDON Yeah, funny. Look mate, it’s too early, I don’t want to play any games.

DRIVER Me neither, but you’ve got a big sign out there on a sandwich board. Don’t you know what it says? “We have what you want”. *(laughs)* That’s what it says. We have what you want. Well, do you? Do you have what I want?

GORDON *(scowls, peers out the front 'window' situated over the heads of the audience)* That your ute at the bowser?

DRIVER Yep, that's me, the one and only.

GORDON Forty dollars.

DRIVER You know what? I've been driving most of the night and I'm starved. Think I might have me some breakfast.

GORDON Breakfast isn't on today.

DRIVER The sign in the window says you have breakfast.

GORDON That'll be forty dollars.

DRIVER Okay then, I'll have a hamburger. Or a pie. Anything you've got.

GORDON Forty dollars. You don't eat till you pay me for the petrol.

DRIVER Okay.

DRIVER pays. GORDON gives him his change and indicates the blackboard listing the food.

GORDON So what do you want?

DRIVER You tell me.

NARELLE enters stage, struggling with a mop and bucket. She pushes through the door at house left marked "This way to motel units". DRIVER takes the bucket for her and puts it on the floor. NARELLE is instantly attracted to DRIVER, and GORDON knows it and doesn't like it. DRIVER notices with interest; this is how he will needle GORDON.

GORDON Narelle, get back to the units.