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# Artistic Truth

by Michael Jeffery

EXTRACT

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[THE LIGHTS ARE DOWN. OVER THE P.A. WE HEAR FRANK SINATRA CROONING 'COME FLY WITH ME.' AFTER APPROX. 30 SECONDS; LIGHTS RISE AT A SPECIFIC TIME -

LYRICS:

COME [LIGHTS UP] FLY WITH ME LET'S FLOAT DOWN TO PERU.

REVEALED - ROGER ; A CONSERVATIVE, PRETENTIOUS, VERY CONTENTED FELLOW. HE IS SEATED ON ONE OF TWO CHAIRS IN AN AIRPORT DEPARTURE LOUNGE.

HE EYES A THICK, PINK COLOURED SCRIPT. THE SCRIPT IS PRISTINE - NOT A SINGLE CREASE. ROGER MOUTHS SOME WORDS TO HIMSELF - TO CHECK THAT HE KNOWS HIS LINES. CONTENT THAT HE DOES, HE PUTS AWAY THE SCRIPT, AND NIBBLES ON SOME CHEESE AND RICE CRACKERS AND TAKES GREAT DELIGHT IN SIPPING SOME WINE, WHICH HAS APPARENTLY BEEN PROVIDED BY THE AIRLINE.

THE MUSIC IS THEN STOPPED. CHIMES ARE HEARD, FOLLOWED BY AN ANNOUNCEMENT:]

ANNOUNCER:

Ladies and gentlemen, may I have you attention please, may I have your attention please. Due to current weather conditions, departure time for Am-Aus Air Flight 6-7-0 to Los Angles has been delayed by approximately 25 minutes.

Just repeating, our 4.30pm service to Los Angeles has been delayed due to current weather conditions. The staff and crew apologize for the delay and hope to have you in the air as soon as possible.

Thank you again for flying Am-Aus Air.

JERRY:

[OFF] Well, doesn't that just plonk the cherry on the Sundae!?

[JERRY ENTERS. HE IS A BRASH, NO NONSENSE SORT OF BLOKE, WEARING AN EXTREMELY LOUD JACKET. HE HOLDS A GLASS OF

WINE IN ONE HAND, SOME RICE CRACKERS IN THE OTHER, AND AN OVERNIGHT BAG AROUND HIS NECK. AS HE ENTERS, HE DROPS HIS HEAD ALLOWING THE OVERNIGHT BAG TO FALL TO THE FLOOR]

JERRY:

First of all they give us this crap [THE WINE AND RICE CRACKERS], then they delay the flight! I mean look at it! [THE WINE AND CRACKERS] Absolute tripe! If they wanted to impress us they should have put out pretzels, they could've even got those cheep pretzels like from BiLo, [JERKY HAND GESTURE ON THIS LINE, SPILLING MUCH OF HIS WINE] they should have put out pretzels and beer. Not this stuff.

[LOOKS AT THE WINE, TASTES SOME, AND UNCEREMONIOUSLY SPITS IT BACK INTO THE GLASS], good God, someone should tell them. [SLIGHT PAUSE] In fact I will, [EXITING, LEAVES THE GLASS OF WINE ON A SIDE TABLE], back in a minute, no idea, not a bloody clue.

[ROGER APPEARS WORRIED, AND LOOKS ABOUT THE LOUNGE FOR ANOTHER CHAIR TO SIT ON - TO ESCAPE SITTING NEXT TO JERRY. HOWEVER, THERE AREN'T ANY OTHER SEATS, SO ROGER STAYS IN HIS CHAIR, AND PLACES HIS OVERNIGHT BAG AND COAT ON THE ONLY OTHER SEAT]

JERRY:

[RE-ENTERS. ABOUT THE SPILT WINE ON THE FLOOR:] Good God, some people are just so rude! [REMOVES ROGER'S COAT AND BAG FROM THE SPARE SEAT, DUMPS THEM ON THE FLOOR, AND SITS DOWN NEXT TO ROGER]

[PAUSE]

ROGER:

[RISING] I might just find a seat somewhere else. [OFFERS A WEAK EXCUSE TO LEAVE:] I'm in a draft here, you see, and it might be best if I...

JERRY:

Oh, there aren't any other seats.

ROGER:

No?

JERRY:

No, apparently we're sharing our flight with the Under 23 Australian Lacrosse team. [LOOKS AROUND] They've taken up most of the lounge. There AREN'T any other seats. [PAUSE, SITS UP STRAIGHT] Looks like we're stuck with each other. [GRINS DAFTLY, INDICATES THE CHAIR FOR ROGER TO SIT ON BY TAPPING IT TWICE]

[ROGER PICKS UP THIS COAT, POSITIONS IT OVER THE BACK OF HIS CHAIR AND SLOWLY SITS. PAUSE]

JERRY:

My name's Jerry, I work in radio.

ROGER:

Oh, my name's Roger, [PROUDLY:] I'm an actor. [OFFERS HIS HAND FOR JERRY TO SHAKE. JERRY GOES TO DO SO BUT THEN... :]

JERRY:

Actor?

ROGER:

Hmm.

JERRY:

[REMOVES A RING FROM HIS FINGER BEFORE SHAKING] Nice to meet you Roger, nice to meet you. You going to L.A. to work, are ya?

ROGER:

In a way. You?

JERRY:

Well yes. [PAUSE, NOTICES ROGER ISN'T PAYING MUCH ATTENTION] Sort of. [TURNS STAGE LEFT; BUSINESS WITH THE POT PLANT ON THE SIDE TABLE] Never been there before though; L.A. that is. No, no. But I'm well travelled, well travelled. Ya get to be in my line of work. [FINISHED WITH THE POT PLANT FOR NOW] Certainly see the sights. Take in all the GLAMOROUS locations.

ROGER: