

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# Endsville

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by Anne Harris

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EXTRACT

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## CHARACTERS

FRANK - 25, a nightclub singer

LORETTA - 20, a drifter

TOMMY - 30, a mechanic

Setting: The TWILIGHT LOUNGE, Hoboken, New Jersey. Late 90's.

**ACT 1:**

**SCENE ONE: THE TWILIGHT LOUNGE**

(In darkness, FRANK blows into a microphone for a sound check.)

FRANK

Hello? Hello out there? One two three...*check*.

(silence. A click, then canned music begins to play through the sound system, and we hear Frank sing "I've Got the World On A String", karaoke style.

[Simultaneously:

IN THE GARAGE, nighttime:

TOMMY straightens his tool bench. LORETTA drives up. Tommy approaches, pumps gas. They speak, but we don't hear them. Loretta gets out of the car, hands the keys to Tommy, and walks into the Lounge. Tommy looks after her.]

As Frank finishes his song, Loretta enters the bar. She takes a seat at one of the grungy tables. Only a smattering of applause as lights come slowly up, to reveal FRANK, in a bad suit, peering into the audience.)

FRANK

Is anybody breathing out there? Is this an audience or an oil painting?  
(he laughs, alone)

LORETTA

(from the audience)  
I don't get that.

(beat)

FRANK

Who is she? Get rid of her. So like I was sayin--

LORETTA

I'm Loretta. My name's Loretta.

FRANK

Right. I'll tell you what, Loretta, your next drink's on me, okay?  
(to the bar)  
Hey Sal, make it a Coke.

LORETTA  
Was that another joke? Oh.  
(she laughs)

FRANK  
Anyway--  
(moving on)  
Two weeks ago I was down in AC doing a gig at the Hiawatha --  
(to Loretta)  
That's ATLANTIC CITY, okay? For the culturally impaired.

LORETTA  
I got that one.

FRANK  
(beat)  
Can I continue?

LORETTA  
Do you want an honest answer?

FRANK  
What do you, sit in the movie theatre and talk back to the screen? I mean, this is a one-way thing. I make the jokes, you laugh. It's an age-old system that's worked for millions of years.

LORETTA  
But your jokes are bad.

FRANK  
(totally disgusted)  
Alright, I'm gonna sing one more song then I'm going home. And you can all blame this broad right here with the big fat Rita Moreno mouth, because usually I mean normally I stay til eleven thirty, but I'm above this, okay? So whoever has a problem with that can take it up with management or with miss fucking *Loretta*, okay? Thank you Loretta.  
(he calms down)

(beat)

LORETTA  
Nobody minds if you quit early.

(chuckles from the audience)

FRANK

I'm singing one more song and then I'm outta here.

LORETTA

You don't have to.

FRANK

I'm singing "New York New York" now put a sock in it before I throw you out on your francis.

(he clicks on the tape accompaniment to "New York, New York" as lights fade.)

**SCENE 2: THE GARAGE**

(Loretta pulls up in her car. Tommy is inside, at the toolbench. He doesn't come out right away.)

LORETTA  
Hello?

(she beeps the horn. Tommy emerges.)

TOMMY  
Hi.

LORETTA  
Oh hi! I didn't see you there. Fill it up for me, would you? And would you mind to have a look under the hood? I just drove down from New York and it's making this sound.

TOMMY  
Okay.

LORETTA  
Don't you want to know what kind of sound it's making?

TOMMY  
Alright.

LORETTA  
It's kind of a...*ping*. Yeah.

TOMMY  
Alright.

LORETTA  
No, no---let's see. It's more of a...what is it? A *ding*, I think.. A ding.

TOMMY  
Right.

LORETTA  
No, more of a *whir*...

TOMMY  
Mm-hmm.

LORETTA  
Or maybe it's a *zing*...

(Tommy is confused. Loretta checks him out slowly and favourably.)

LORETTA (cont)  
No, it's definitely a *doing*.

TOMMY  
Right.

(he rushes over under the hood and away from her)

LORETTA  
Oh, and the worst part is that I have to hit the brakes *really* hard to get anything. I mean, like pump the shit out of them just to coast to a stop.

TOMMY  
Uh-huh.

(he looks under the hood as the gas pumps)

LORETTA  
So, this is Hoboken, right?

(she checks out his butt as he walks around the car)

TOMMY  
Mm-hmm.

LORETTA  
You from Hoboken?

TOMMY  
Yep.

LORETTA  
Born and bred?

TOMMY  
Mm-hmm.

LORETTA  
You weren't on the debating team in high school by any chance?

TOMMY

Huh?

LORETTA  
Skip it.

(he goes back to the car. She is bored.)

LORETTA  
So how far is it from here to Atlantic City?

TOMMY  
From here?

LORETTA  
Uh, yeah?

TOMMY  
Six hours. About.

LORETTA  
That's about five and a half hours too long for a girl like me!

(he goes back to the car)

LORETTA (cont)  
I can't sit still for long---  
(no response)  
So what's your name?  
(no response)  
Excuse me?

(he starts, hits his head on the hood. she laughs.)

LORETTA  
Sorry. I just wanted to know what your name is.

TOMMY  
My name?

LORETTA  
That's the general idea.

TOMMY  
Oh, Tommy.

LORETTA  
Oh, Tommy. I'm Oh, Loretta.

TOMMY  
Mm-hmm.

LORETTA  
You don't talk much, do you, Oh Tommy.

TOMMY  
Carbouretor's shot. You want me to put a new one in?

LORETTA  
Mmm. Is it like a spleen?

TOMMY  
Huh?

LORETTA  
Can I do without it?

TOMMY  
Not really.

LORETTA  
Alright, well, then I guess you'll have to put a new one in. What about the brakes?

TOMMY  
I'll look at em.

LORETTA  
How much?

TOMMY  
Fifty bucks for the carb. I don't know about the brakes til I look at em.

LORETTA  
Mm-hmm. Can you do it now?

TOMMY  
Not really. I gotta tow a wreck out on the Turnpike.

LORETTA

Okay, when can you get it done by?

TOMMY

Tonight. Tomorrow maybe.

LORETTA

There is a difference.

TOMMY

Tomorrow.

LORETTA

Alright. I'll come back tomorrow then, Oh Tommy.

(she hands him the keys, takes her purse out of the car, and walks to the bar next door.

Tommy watches her go.

(SFX: NEW YORK, NEW YORK fades back up.)

### SCENE 3: THE LOUNGE

(As he finishes his song, FRANK comes down to the bar. Loretta sits nearby. He tries to ignore her, but she is very flirtatious. It's working, despite everything his head tells him. She approaches.)

[During the scene, TOMMY works on Loretta's car. He polishes it lovingly, looks under the hood, airs up the tires. He pretends he is driving it.]

LORETTA

You're a lot better looking minus the karaoke machine.

FRANK

What's your angle?

LORETTA

No angle.

FRANK

I can sue you for what you just did, okay? I hope you know that.

LORETTA

I'm sorry. You were too good to pass up.

FRANK

I don't know what you think you're dealing with here, *Loretta*, but I'm too busy for this.

LORETTA

I can tell.

(scans the near-empty room)

I was just having a little fun, that's all.

FRANK

That's what you call fun, I'd hate to stick around for games.

LORETTA

You're an exceptionally good-looking man, but just between you and me....?

(he's hanging on her every word)

I think you should look into another line of work.

FRANK

Yeah well nobody asked you what you think.

LORETTA  
You're right, you're not that good-looking.

FRANK  
And you are---? The local entertainment expert or is it just a bad hair day?

LORETTA  
I know what I like.

FRANK  
We all know what we like, we just can't have it.

LORETTA  
Speak for yourself.

FRANK  
Okay, Miss---

LORETTA  
America.

(he laughs)

FRANK  
Oh, right. You're Miss America.

LORETTA  
Will be after tomorrow night.

(Frank keeps drinking)

FRANK  
Right.

(Loretta finishes her coke and rises. She puts on her coat and heads toward the door, stopping at the bar.)

LORETTA  
Thanks for the drink, big spender. One word of advice: you should sing live instead of that recording. Even if it's bad. People want the real thing.

FRANK