

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Human Resources

by Chris Aronsten

EXTRACT

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SCENE 1.

A Man (Steven), 30's, in a suit. Sitting at a table; methodically peeling self-adhesive stamps from a roll and sticking them onto letters. He runs out of stamps and looks for more in a drawer. He finds stamps and something else: a lipstick.

SCENE 2.

STEVEN

"You want a little honey on that?" she says, and I give her a wink. No one ever listens and no one ever flirts. She's a non-coquette. The kind of girl who says "I want to be covered in chocolate and have a man lick it all off", only when it comes to the crunch she'd rather eat it all herself, alone, in bed, watching "Dirty Dancing".

She's in Admin. I'm here for an interview.

"You want a little honey on that?" she says, handing me a crumpet, and even before the interview I have decided to take the job. Take a look. I'd work in a Turkish prison if they had this much petty cash. Although even rose scented toilet paper couldn't take the sting out of ritualised sodomy. Could it?

The place is littered with biscuits, snacks, drinks and natural spring water. The bathrooms are a kind of K-Mart King Solomon's Mines. Upstairs, it's Mahogany Row, without the mahogany. I go to the interview concealing two packets of liquid soap and a plug-in deodoriser.

The boss is nervous and anxious to hire. The last person went to lunch and never came back.

Steven and his Boss; Steven plays both.

STEVEN

I can't type.

BOSS

Neither can I.

STEVEN

I can't work spreadsheets.

BOSS

We'll teach you.

STEVEN

Thursdays I play Bingo.

BOSS

Take the afternoon off.

STEVEN
(to audience)

I take out a cigarette. He lights it.

(to Boss)

You've got a supernatural talent for human resources.

BOSS

You smell nice.

STEVEN

It's called Ocean Spray.

(to audience)

I'm hired.

Pause.

STEVEN

Some of the things I said I'd do, I did do for a while. The rest I flirted and flirted and someone else did them for me. Flirted and flirted. Hovered right on the edge.

*Lighting change. Steven and a Co-worker -
Steven plays both.*

STEVEN

I don't go to gay nightclubs actually.

CO-WORKER

Really? I thought you would.

STEVEN

Do you go to gay nightclubs?

CO-WORKER

No, I hate them.

STEVEN

Not your kind of people.

CO-WORKER

No, they're awful, aren't they?

STEVEN

Either clones or crones.

CO-WORKER

So what is your type?

STEVEN

Oh, I guess -

(he looks the co-worker up
and down)

- I guess someone fair. Maybe blue eyes. Maybe loves music. I'm not concerned with their body type.

CO-WORKER

Really?

STEVEN

Of course, with this report to do, sex is the last thing on my mind.

Lighting change.

STEVEN

Some aren't attracted at first, but the more I ignore them, the more they're drawn to me. Perhaps they think I've got hidden depths. Or a large penis, or money. But I'm nothing special. I look my age. Acne on my neck. Irritable bowel syndrome.

"Apply whatever knick-knacks you like," says my boss. Pauses and pats the top of my Toshiba. Happy now. Half an hour before he'd suggested that I catalogue some monstrous amount of paper work, starting with 1978.

With the older types, you fire up their flaccid sexuality with the dirtiest word they know: hope.

Lighting change. Steven and his Boss.

STEVEN

He'd been circling me all night. Older and not my type.

BOSS

Oh dear, an old sleaze.

STEVEN

Yes. And no.

BOSS

What was the "no"?

STEVEN

There was something about him.

BOSS

Bit funny in the head?