

Two of a Kind

Short Play (Comedy)

by

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A thief, a terrorist and two Mars bars

CHARACTERS:

CANDICE: Female, early 20s, university student

JAMAL: Male, late 20s, university lecturer

GUARD: Male, late 20s/30s, railway security guard

SETTING: A railway cafeteria with two small tables and two chairs

TIME: The present

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CANDICE is sitting at a table, sipping coffee and reading a book. She has her bag on her lap. There is a spare table and chair near her, and a rubbish bin off to one side. Trains can be heard in the distance.

JAMAL enters carrying a backpack and coffee. He puts his coffee on the spare table and sits down. He gets out an Arabic newspaper and a Mars bar from his backpack and puts them on the table, with the newspaper on top of the Mars bar. He leans forward to check what book CANDICE is reading.

JAMAL: I read the same book a few weeks ago. It'd make a great film don't you think?

CANDICE: I'm still on page one.

JAMAL: I'd better let you get back to it then.

As CANDICE continues reading, her bag falls on the floor and a few things spill out. JAMAL quickly bends down, picks them all up and gives them to her.

CANDICE: Thanks.

CANDICE puts the things in her bag and keeps reading. JAMAL picks up his newspaper and reads the front page. He turns a few pages noisily then lowers the newspaper.

JAMAL: You go to the movies much?

CANDICE: I've just read the same sentence three times.

JAMAL: You should be paying more attention. (*pause*). I think I've seen you before.

CANDICE puts down her book.

CANDICE: Are you stalking me?

JAMAL: Chill out! I was just trying to make conversation. It's not unheard of, you know, for people who are sitting at the next table to talk to each other.

CANDICE: Yeah, right!

CANDICE reads her book while JAMAL reads his newspaper and drinks his coffee. CANDICE noisily turns the first page of her book. JAMAL picks up the Mars Bar and tears it open. CANDICE stops reading and stares at the Mars Bar. She looks in her bag quickly then gets up and grabs the Mars bar from JAMAL and starts eating it.

JAMAL: What the...!

CANDICE glares at JAMAL as she eats the Mars Bar.

What do you think you're doing?

JAMAL tries to grab the Mars Bar from CANDICE but she moves away.

That's *my* Mars Bar!

CANDICE: In your dreams!

JAMAL: I don't believe this! You won't even talk to me, but you have the hide to steal my Mars bar. And eat it!

CANDICE throws the remaining Mars bar and wrapper at JAMAL.

CANDICE: Buy your own next time!

JAMAL: I thought I already did.

CANDICE: Whatever!

CANDICE sits back down and licks her fingers. She glares at JAMAL as she opens her book. JAMAL picks up the half-eaten Mars Bar and wrapper.

JAMAL: You can be fined for littering, you know?

CANDICE watches as JAMAL throws the rubbish in the bin. He sits down and reads his newspaper. She is still watching him.

CANDICE: Are you really reading that?

JAMAL: No, I'm just looking at the pictures.

CANDICE: It's Arabic isn't it? (*pause*) Are you Muslim?

JAMAL puts his newspaper down.

JAMAL: You think I'm Muslim because I'm reading an Arabic newspaper? Are you Muslim?

CANDICE: No.

JAMAL: But you're reading a book by Randa Abdel-Fattah.

CANDICE: In English, not Arabic, der! OK then, where are you from?

JAMAL: Victoria.

CANDICE: You know what I mean...where were you born?

JAMAL: Victoria General Hospital.

CANDICE: You're hysterical, you know that? What about your parents? *Where* were they born?

JAMAL: What is this? First you don't even make eye contact let alone talk to me, then you steal my Mars bar –

CANDICE: It was *my* Mars bar.

JAMAL: And now you want to know where my parents were born? (*pause*) I don't know why I'm doing this! Dad was born in Egypt and Mum in Lebanon. How about your parents, where were they born?

CANDICE: Dad was born in Vancouver and Mum in Alice Springs. It's in Australia, you know.

JAMAL: Is your mother Aboriginal?

CANDICE: Do I look Aboriginal?

JAMAL: You don't have to look Aboriginal to be Aboriginal. One of your grandparents could be Aboriginal.

CANDICE: Well they're not.

JAMAL: What about convict ancestors? I bet you've got some of those hiding in your family tree? You know, I don't get the whole convict thing. Why are people so proud to have thieves, rapists and murderers in their family?

CANDICE: There are no rapists or murderers in my family.

JAMAL: Ah, just thieves! That explains it.

CANDICE: Explains what?

JAMAL: Why you stole my Mars bar.

CANDICE: It was my Mars bar! What about *your* family tree? Are there any terrorists hiding there?

JAMAL: Excuse me?

CANDICE: You accused me of having rapists and murderers in my family.

JAMAL: No I didn't, I was just trying to make a point about convicts.

CANDICE: For your information, I'm proud of my convict heritage.

JAMAL: Why is that so easy to believe?

CANDICE folds her arms and looks at JAMAL's backpack.

CANDICE: What's in your backpack?

JAMAL: The usual suspects - explosives, timer...

CANDICE jumps up and gets out her mobile phone. She starts pressing keys.

CANDICE: I'm calling the cops!

A railway GUARD enters and walks slowly around the cafeteria reading a book – Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. CANDICE holds up her phone trying to get a signal.

Shit! There's no signal.

CANDICE sees the GUARD.

Guard! That man has a bomb in his backpack!

JAMAL: No I don't.

CANDICE: What about the explosives and timer?

JAMAL: What about my Mars bar? First, you chuck a Goldilocks and eat some then you throw the rest at me.

The GUARD closes his book and puts it in his jacket pocket.

GUARD: Sir, can you open your backpack?

JAMAL: Do you often harass innocent people on the say so of crazy people like her?

CANDICE: I'm not the crazy one.

JAMAL opens his backpack and takes out some text books.

JAMAL: Satisfied?

GUARD: Sorry to bother you. Just doin' me job. You can't be too careful these days. Terrorists don't walk around with "terrorist" tattooed on their foreheads.

JAMAL: *(Repacking the books into his backpack)* I want to make two things clear: 1. She stole *my* Mars bar, and 2. I'm not a terrorist.

The GUARD writes in his notebook.

CANDICE: Why did you tell me you had explosives and a timer in your backpack?

JAMAL: You're totally paranoid! And you don't have any sense of humour.

GUARD: Sir, bombs are no laughing matter.

JAMAL: I was being ironic.

CANDICE: No you weren't.

GUARD: Yes he was. Irony is when you say one thing but mean another. It's a literary or rhetorical device. And there's more than one type of irony. For instance, dramatic irony is when the audience knows more about what's goin' on than any of the characters.

JAMAL: You're very well informed for a railway guard?

GUARD: Honours degree in English Literature.

JAMAL: Dramatic irony, hey? *(To CANDICE)* I wonder if anyone else saw you steal my Mars bar?

They all look around.

GUARD: No-one else here. No audience, no dramatic irony.

CANDICE: How fascinating!

GUARD: That's sarcasm. Sarcasm is another type of irony, but with a sneer. It's when you say the opposite of what you mean, but we know that you really mean the opposite.

CANDICE: Huh?

GUARD: I'm not boring you am I?

JAMAL: Not at all.

GUARD: More irony. You two don't know when to stop. I'd better leave you to it then. I've got places to go, people to fine!

The GUARD exits. CANDICE checks her phone then puts it in her bag. She stares at her bag.

CANDICE: Shit!

JAMAL: Pardon?

CANDICE: Nothing.

JAMAL leans across to look in her bag.

JAMAL: What's that?

CANDICE: It's nothing.

JAMAL: Well it looks like something.

JAMAL moves closer.

CANDICE: You have no right to look in my bag!

JAMAL: What's that wrapper?

CANDICE: Rubbish.

JAMAL: It doesn't look like rubbish. It looks like... Could that just possibly, in your wildest dreams, actually be *your* Mars bar?

CANDICE: Of course not! What do you take me for?

CANDICE looks down at her bag.

Far out! Well maybe... probably... in all likelihood... I think I...um...made a mistake.

CANDICE sheepishly pulls out the Mars bar from her bag and puts it on the table in front of JAMAL. She drops her head on her table in shame.

JAMAL: So you did eat *my* Mars bar after all?

CANDICE: I'm so embarrassed!

JAMAL: Is that the sound of wimpering guilt I hear or perhaps a half-hearted attempt at an apology?

CANDICE: Mmhhmm.

JAMAL: That doesn't sound like an apology. Usually when someone makes an apology, they say the "sorry" or "apologise" word.

CANDICE sits up and looks at JAMAL.

CANDICE: OK, I'm sorry. And that's yours.

JAMAL: No, it's not, it's yours. You ate mine.

CANDICE: I said I'm sorry!

JAMAL: I'm very pleased to discover that you're not a lunatic after all. Just a thief. Apology accepted.

CANDICE: I'm not a thief! I didn't steal anything. I thought it was mine.

JAMAL: Interesting point of view. So if you take something but you don't realise you're actually stealing it, then it isn't stealing?

CANDICE: That's right. How can it be? There's no intent.

JAMAL: You sound like a CSI tragic.

CANDICE: 4th year law at University of BC. How about you?

JAMAL: International Relations at UBC.

CANDICE: What year?

JAMAL: I'm not a student, I'm a lecturer. Dr Jamal Sharif.

JAMAL holds out his hand to shake hands.

CANDICE: Freaking hell!

JAMAL: And you are?

CANDICE: Candice...McKenzie.

JAMAL shakes CANDICE'S hand.

JAMAL: Pleased to meet you Candice. As a token of our new friendship, I'd like you to have this Mars bar. Eat it in peace.

JAMAL puts the Mars Bar on the table in front of CANDICE.

CANDICE: I can't. I can't believe I said –

JAMAL: That I was a terrorist?

CANDICE: I didn't say that.

JAMAL: You don't seem to trust people...or is it just me you don't trust?

CANDICE: Who's being paranoid now?

JAMAL: Me, paranoid? Ironic maybe, but paranoid? Never!

CANDICE looks at her watch and stands up.

CANDICE: I have to catch the six o'clock train.

JAMAL: What about the Mars bar?

CANDICE: I think I've already had more than my recommended daily intake of kilojoules, not to mention carbs.

JAMAL: True.

CANDICE: Maybe we could um...have coffee sometime?

JAMAL: Sorry, I try not to socialise with students.

CANDICE: But you've just been chatting me up for the last ten minutes!

JAMAL: Chatting you up? More like defending myself from spurious allegations. *(pause)* Let me check my diary.

JAMAL takes out his mobile phone.

What about tomorrow afternoon. Around three?

CANDICE presses some buttons on her phone. The GUARD enters.

GUARD: Are you two still here?

CANDICE: Three is good.

JAMAL stands up and throws his backpack over his shoulder.

JAMAL: Is "The Boulevard" OK with you? They make the best coffee on campus.

CANDICE: It's my new favourite place.

JAMAL: I'll see you then.

JAMAL exits. CANDICE puts her phone in her bag and rushes after him.

CANDICE: Hey, wait for me!

GUARD: Everything's OK then I see.

The GUARD gets the book out of his pocket and reads aloud from "Romeo and Juliet":

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life.

The GUARD closes the book. He straightens the chairs and picks up the Mars bar. He throws the Mars bar in the air then puts it in his pocket.

Another day at the office!

The GUARD exits.