

Serving it Up

David Eldridge

Act 1, scene 3. A park in east London. The 1990s.

Wendy (late teens) works in a hairdressing salon which she hates – 'My whole life revolves around washing hair for one-fifty an hour.' She always aspired to be a secretary but never got the right grades. She and Teresa (late teens) have been best friends since primary school days.

(WENDY and TERESA sit on the park bench. They both smoke.)

WENDY. I've given up on a real tan. (A beat.) I've got to get on me mum's sunbed, Trese.

TERESA. You don't need it. Sunbed just gives you wrinkles.

WENDY. White legs. Look at them, Trese – like a milk bottle!

TERESA. Get some tanning lotion.

WENDY. It goes all streaky.

TERESA. Your legs are all right.

WENDY. This country. Sun – we've had sun all summer and the week I'm off for a weekend on the beach it's been pissing down. (A beat.) Mary's not coming any more. Fucking bitch. She's not getting her deposit back.

TERESA. What are you going to do?

WENDY. Well, you're not doing anything this weekend.

TERESA. I can't afford it, Wend.

WENDY. Come on – what do you reckon?

TERESA. I don't know.

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WENDY. It'll be a laugh.

TERESA. A caravan in Bognor?

WENDY. You're just a snob.

TERESA. I'm not. I just draw the line at Bognor, that's all. (A beat.)

WENDY. Well, if you're not going to go I'll just have to pull tonight.

TERESA. Where are we going?

WENDY. Don't know.

TERESA. I'm not going to the Red Fox again.

WENDY. Options?

TERESA. I'd rather get food poisoning at the Red Fox.

WENDY. They've changed the music now, Trese...

TERESA. My idea of a night out does not involve five hundred sixteen-year-olds bobbing up and down on their first fucking E.

WENDY. They don't play hardcore any more.

TERESA. What is it? Load of metallers and a trip-head shagging a weirdo in the corner?

WENDY. I thought you liked Indie?

TERESA. Will you just leave it, Wend.

WENDY. Sorry!

TERESA. Look, there is more to life than a Friday night and a weekend in Bognor, right.

WENDY. Why don't you just leave the PMT routine, Trese. (Pause.)

TERESA. I'm a week late.

WENDY. I thought you stopped seeing Freddie?

TERESA. Yeah – well.

WENDY. Forget it, darling. Talk to me about it in a week's time and you'll wonder what you were worrying about. (A beat.) Tell you what. Wouldn't mind a dirty weekend with that Nick.

TERESA. You're a nympho!

(They laugh.)

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Nick's all right. His mate Sonny's a prat though.

(Pause.)

WENDY. I used to fancy Sonny.

TERESA. He looks like an ape.

WENDY. He's not that bad.

TERESA. Sonny's just like the other blokes round here. If you want to meet someone decent you've got to look up west.

WENDY. I haven't got West End money.

TERESA. And most of them are wankers. I met this city bloke once, Wend. Honestly - he stroked his mobile like it was his prick. And I said to him - I don't care where you're from or how much money you've got, if you try and touch my tits again I'll kneecap you in the bollocks -

(Pause.)

I don't know why you bother with blokes so much.

WENDY. You're just a feminist.

TERESA. I'm not a feminist!

WENDY. You are! Always saying it about men. Next thing you'll be shaving your head and shagging a lesbo.

TERESA. Bloody cheek. I don't just let blokes take liberties with me.

WENDY. I like a bloke who takes a few liberties. At least it's a bit of excitement.

TERESA. It's not. They crap all over you. I'm not getting married.

WENDY (*nodding somewhere in the audience*). Look at him over there walking his dog. I bet he ain't a piss-taker.

TERESA. He must be thirty-odd.

WENDY. I wouldn't mind an older man. Someone to look out for you. Someone to listen to, talk to.

TERESA. No. Look at his face. I've seen that look before. My dad had it. I bet he's just been with a bird, and not his wife either . . .

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WENDY. No! Not him - he looks like Richard Gere.

TERESA. He's a shit - just like the rest.

WENDY. He's lovely in *Pretty Woman*. Anyway, Cindy Crawford wouldn't go with a bastard.

TERESA. They split up, you silly tart.

(Pause.)

WENDY. What will you do then? You can't live on your own . . .

TERESA. I'm not going to live under the thumb.

WENDY. What about when you fall in love?

TERESA. No way!

WENDY. I believe in love.

TERESA. You still believe in Father Christmas.

(Pause.)

It's all rubbish, Wend. You'll wake up one morning and think - I'm forty, I'm fourteen stone and I don't know what I'm doing. But before it pisses you off, you look at your old man and you ask him for a cuddle. What does he do? He rolls over, farts, and tells you to go and make him a cup of tea. I don't want that.

WENDY. You've got to have love. You've got to have love, Teresa.

(Pause.)

I've been in love - I know what it's like. I was in love with Jason.

TERESA. Jason?

(TERESA *laughs*.)

WENDY. Yes.

TERESA. That plonker? You could hit him with a hammer and that fuckwit would still grin.

WENDY. He had a nice smile.

TERESA. He was born with that. His mum dropped him on his head.

WENDY. Don't take the piss.

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TERESA. And he had a twitch. We used to call him Shakin' Stevens at school!

WENDY. You always take the piss.

TERESA. Bloody hell. That's your romance? What was that? Hand up your skirt and make your fanny wet?

WENDY. Fuck off.

TERESA. Wend . . .

(*WENDY goes to leave.*)

TERESA. No, wait. Please, Wendy.

(*WENDY stops and turns.*)

TERESA. You know what I believe, Wend? Sometimes I can see it when I'm here at the park. I look at the kids with their mums and dads, and I know that I shouldn't feel it, because I look at the faces of the mums and they're so heavy and drawn – But I look at the kids and there I see it – life.

(*Pause.*)

This place, the park, the playground – You remember Wend, when we were kids, on the swings. Swinging higher and higher, faster and faster, so you could almost feel, you could jump off and you would fly – but you don't. You hold on tight. We lop off each year backwards and forwards on that swing, and it gets slower and slower and when you finally want to jump – you really want to jump – you're going nowhere, you're stuck.

(*Pause.*)

I'm not saying I'm going to fly, but I can't be tied to a bloke who doesn't give a shit and I can't be tied here for the rest of my life.

WENDY. Are you saying you're leaving?

TERESA. No, no – but I have to be free. I have to have a choice when something comes along.

WENDY. What's coming along? What's going to turn up round here?

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COMMENTARY: This play depicts a world of bleak frustrations and dead-end options. Wendy thinks she is streetwise, savvy and sexy, but, as Teresa remarks, she is merely a hopeless romantic. They both intuitively know that they want something better than their current lot, but they can't quite articulate what it is or how they will get it. In this scene Wendy is most concerned with getting Teresa to come away with her for the weekend so that they can have a good time and find some blokes. Teresa, who has an extremely cynical view of the opposite sex and life in general, is reluctant to go along with her. It is interesting to note that it is Teresa and not good-time Wendy who thinks she's pregnant.

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