

THE DOG IN THE DRESSING ROOM



a new comedy
by Deborah Savadge

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Fall in love again...

THE DOG IN THE DRESSING ROOM

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A backstage comedy. Jealousies, games and secrets are uncorked along with the champagne.

CHARACTERS:

KIRA – a striking woman who makes her living as an actor, 30's

JOEL RILEY – theatre company manager with old-fashioned good manners, 30's

KEVIN – same age as Kira, her best friend since high school

Offstage voice - Holly, stage manager, authoritative

NOTE to ACTORS:

Slash marks (/) indicate the point at which the next speaker begins.

SET:

Multiple locations are indicated. The intent is that each location be established minimally, with, say, a hat rack, a step unit, a lighted mirror, a café table, a picnic blanket, a platform, so that the play flows from one scene to the next without fuss. All transitions are intended to occur in light. Actors may make costume changes (adding a scarf, subtracting a sweater, and so forth) in view of the audience.

THE DOG IN THE DRESSING ROOM

Lights up on a sign that reads: "The Dog in the Dressing Room."

There's a dog in my dressing room. KIRA

Yes. JOEL

What do you mean, "yes?" KIRA

I mean, "Yes. There's a dog in your dressing room." JOEL

You're agreeing with me. KIRA

I mean, I know there's a dog in your dressing room. Do you like it? JOEL

It's a very cute dog. But what is it doing in my dressing room? KIRA

I put it there. JOEL

Is it your dog? KIRA

No. It's - I mean, if you like it, it's your dog. JOEL

I like it, / but I KIRA

Good. JOEL

But where did it come from? KIRA

It's your birthday. JOEL

(*stating a fact*) It's my birthday.

KIRA

I heard you say, you'd like a dog.

JOEL

I said... ?

KIRA

You said, "I wish I could have a different sort of life with a dog and a house and a picket fence and" and and then I didn't hear the rest.

JOEL

But I mean, the reason I can't have a dog is because I live in a studio apartment.

KIRA

With an alcove and a large bathroom.

JOEL

How do you know that?

KIRA
(*a little freaked out*)

I heard you say, (*imitating her without caricature*) "I live in a studio apartment. Okay, it has an alcove and a huge bathroom, but it's a studio."

JOEL

Have you been recording me?

KIRA

No, No, I just... There's an intercom in my office and I...I usually have it turned on and I ... I heard you say...some things...when you were on a break in the / rehearsal

JOEL

Okay. Okay. I'm not sure I'm...
I know you're the the company manager and everything, but I mean, could you let us know when we're -? I mean, I guess you just did, but I'm not sure / I'm (comfortable)

JOEL

I just...I have it on for the rehearsals,

KIRA

Okay, / rehearsals.

JOEL
- to kind of get a sense how things are going,

KIRA
/ Okay, but

JOEL
- but then I don't turn it off. I mean it's just background noise, so I don't get up and cross the room and turn it off as soon as Holly says, "Take five."

KIRA
No, no, of course you wouldn't.Okay, about the dog.

JOEL
Have you named it yet?

KIRA
Um, no.

JOEL
Because I have an idea for a name.

CROSSFADE

Scene Two

SOUND: KIRA knocking. LIGHTS UP on a room that adjoins a broadcasting booth. A lit sign says, "ON AIR." KIRA pounds on the outer door. KEVIN emerges from the booth to answer the outside door, carrying a stopwatch.

KEVIN
Hold your horses.
/ Jesus!

KIRA
Why didn't you answer? I've been out there pounding and pounding for hours.

KEVIN
Hours?

KIRA
It felt like it.

Minutes. KEVIN

At least. KIRA

Seconds. KEVIN

Eons. KIRA

Nano seconds. KEVIN

Okay. KIRA

I'm in the middle of the show. KEVIN

Sorry. KIRA
(SHE looks at her watch.)

I've got Sinatra on. You've got three minutes. KEVIN

Frank Sinatra, really? KIRA

Really. Two minutes and 55 seconds, darlin'. KEVIN

He's given me a dog. KIRA

A dog. KEVIN

He gave me a dog...for my birthday. KIRA

Happy birthday, Love. / Who gave you a - ? KEVIN

KIRA

It's okay. We're celebrating on my / day off.

KEVIN

I know. We're celebrating Monday. Who gave you a dog?

KIRA

He...him... Joel. I've been talking to you about him / for ages.

KEVIN

Joel. Oh. Him. You've only been in rehearsal since -

KIRA

Wednesday. We started Wednesday.

KEVIN

Okay.

KIRA

He watches me. He eavesdrops.....And now...the dog.

KEVIN

An actual dog? / Not a - ?

KIRA

You think I'd come all the way up here about a stuffed toy?

KEVIN

Is it a nice dog?

KIRA

It's a precious dog. It's an adorable / dog

KEVIN

Where is the dog / now?

KIRA

The doorman asked me to leave him tied up and said he'd watch him.

KEVIN

Here? You tried to bring him here? This is the snootiest building on the whole / east

KIRA

I came straight from rehearsal. You weren't answering your phone and I tried texting you, / but you weren't

KEVIN

I'm in the middle of the podcast. Some of us are serious about our craft, darling.

KIRA

I had to ask you: do I keep it? Him? The dog.

KEVIN

I don't know if you keep it, Sweetheart, but I know I'm not taking it. The girls would hate it.

KIRA

I'm not asking you to take the dog. I'm just asking you what you think I should do.

KEVIN

Well, you should find out why he gave you the dog. Maybe his wife won't let him keep a dog and he gave it to you for / safekeeping.

KIRA

He doesn't have a – would you be serious?

KEVIN

Well, how do I / know?

KIRA

I told you. I told you. / He's a

KEVIN

I know, Ducks, you said, "He's a troll" and he "watches" you or / something.

KIRA

I mean, it's not as if he gave me a necklace or something. I'd know what to do if he gave me expensive / jewelry.

KEVIN

Is it an expensive dog?

KIRA

I don't know. But I can't keep a dog in a studio apartment. Can I?

KEVIN

Is it the kind of dog you can take in a tote bag?

KIRA

Yes. It's a *(SHE indicates a smallish dog.)*

KEVIN

What kind of a dog?

KIRA

I don't know. It's a Schnauzer or or a Scotty or something. Or a mix of somethings.

KEVIN

Well, ask him.

KIRA

But that's not the issue.

KEVIN

You said you'd know what to do if he gave you a necklace. So, find out if he got the dog from the pound or from a breeder. Doesn't that / make sense?

KIRA

It's not the amount of money he spent on the dog!

KEVIN

Gotta go, Darlin'. Nancy LaMott is up, then Judy, then Lena, then... *(full of drama)*
"The Quiz." *(HE is moving off.)*

KIRA

Meet me at the Greek place when you get off?

KEVIN

Sure sure.

HE dashes off on the CROSSFADE.

Scene 3

THE GREEN ROOM. LIGHTS UP ON JOEL holding a bag from a pet store. KIRA enters.

JOEL

I thought he might need a raincoat.

HE produces a handsome dog raincoat from the bag.

KIRA

Um, thanks.

JOEL

(rummaging in the bag and producing cans of dog food)

And some dog food.

KIRA

Um, thank you.

JOEL

Did you bring him today?

KIRA

He's in the dressing room. I put a towel down. I didn't think he'd like it if I left him at home all day by / himself.

JOEL

No. He's...well he's not a puppy, but he's young enough that he –

KIRA

- doesn't like to be alone.

JOEL

Right.....Did you name him yet?

KIRA

I've just been calling him Dog.

JOEL

Dog! *(HE laughs at the absurdity. SHE does not. Recovering:)*...Dog's a good name.

KIRA

I'm not sure I can keep him. So I didn't want to give him a name and get attached to him, since I'm / not –

JOEL

If he's a lot of trouble, I can help. He can stay in my office sometimes and I can take him for walks and and give him water and and baths and whatever you...need.

KIRA

Then why didn't you just keep him for yourself?

JOEL

I?...I...No, he's your dog, I'd just...I'd just help out...from time to time...if you wanted me to...

CROSSFADE.

Scene 4

LIGHTS up on KEVIN AND KIRA in a café.

KIRA

He said he'd give him a bath. I hadn't even THOUGHT about baths.

KEVIN

Does he smell?

KIRA

He smells fine. The Dog smells fine. I don't know how Joel smells.

KEVIN

If he starts to smell couldn't you take him to a...don't they have...Doggie Spas?

KIRA

Do you have any idea how much that costs?

KEVIN

Money doesn't seem like an object for Jo-elle.

CROSSFADE.

LIGHTS UP ON JOEL and KIRA in the theatre.

Scene 5

KIRA

I looked it up on U-Tube. There are millions of them.

JOEL

Really. I guess...I grew up around dogs, so I just thought...

KIRA

Well, you could put your own version on there.

JOEL

Me? You mean, like a video?

KIRA

Yeah.

JOEL

Oh, I couldn't do that.

KIRA

Well, you don't need to, there are thousands of them. They tell you what kind of shampoo to buy and they tell you to tether the dog / when you

JOEL

Oh, I have something for you. *(He picks up a tote bag from which he takes a couple of plastic bottles.)* Shampoo,

KIRA

Thank you.

JOEL

And conditioner.

KIRA

Dogs use conditioner?

JOEL

It's optional, but it's good for their coat. Makes them softer.

KIRA

Thank you. I don't think I got that far on the Instructional video.

HE produces a third plastic bottle.

JOEL

And this, you don't have to use this every time, but it's good for their skin and makes them smell nice.

SHE takes it from him. Looks at the label.

KIRA

Citrus. The dog will smell...citrusy?

JOEL

I asked the clerk to suggest the best one, but I can take it back if you'd rather have, "Forest" or "Berry" or "Coco...nut." I think.

KIRA

I don't know about this.

JOEL

You don't think he's the citrus type?

KIRA

I mean, the video only showed me how to give him a shampoo: tether him, start with dabbing the shampoo on in various places then, lather his face, then the, / um

I could help you.

JOEL

I don't think there's anywhere in the theatre where you could bathe a dog, do you?

KIRA

Um, no.

JOEL

Well then, where would we...?

KIRA

Um, my place. Or or or your place. Do you have a bathtub?

JOEL

CROSSFADE.

Scene 6

KIRA and KEVIN stand at a table, drinking wine.

"Do I have a bathtub?" It felt like a weird question. Most people have a bathtub. I don't think of myself as well-off, but I do have a bathtub AND a shower.

KIRA

Woo! Woo!

KEVIN

Does he think of me as a poor waif?

KIRA

He obviously thinks about you all the time.

KEVIN

Or the dog. He thinks about the dog a lot.

KIRA

Did you ask him if he wants it back?

KEVIN

CROSSFADE.

Scene 7

...And this is for burrs and twigs and leaves and stuff -

JOEL

(displaying a dog's comb and brush)