

"CAUGHT IN THE ACT"

Written by

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*(Lights up on ANNIE and DAN in bed, under the covers)*

DAN  
So... Amy... How...uh... was it?

ANNIE  
How was what?

DAN  
It.

ANNIE  
It?

DAN  
You know... It.

ANNIE  
Oh... It.

DAN  
Yeah... It.

ANNIE  
Let's see. For technical merit I'd give you a four point five. Artistic achievement... three point two.

DAN  
(annoyed)  
I was just asking to see if you found it...pleasing?  
Satisfying? The least bit entertaining?

ANNIE  
No, I didn't find it pleasing or satisfying or the least bit entertaining.

DAN  
I'm sorry I asked.

ANNIE  
Would you like to know why?

DAN  
Not really. No.

ANNIE  
I didn't find it pleasing, or satisfying or the least bit  
entertaining because we didn't do... it.

DAN  
We didn't?

ANNIE  
No, we didn't. We've never done it and the way things stand,  
we will never do it. And one more thing.

DAN  
I can't wait.

ANNIE  
My name isn't Amy.

DAN  
It's not.

ANNIE  
It's Annie.

DAN  
Annie?

ANNIE  
Annie.

DAN  
I could've sworn it was Amy.

ANNIE  
It was.

DAN  
What do you mean it was?

ANNIE  
In drafts number three, five and nine.

DAN  
Drafts? What drafts?

ANNIE  
Play drafts.

DAN  
What play drafts?

ANNIE  
This is the fifteenth.

DAN

What are you talking about? The fifteenth what?

ANNIE

We're in the fifteenth draft of a play.

DAN

What does that mean, we're in the fifteenth draft of a play?

ANNIE

You, my naked friend, are a character.

DAN

(please with himself)

Really? No one's ever called me a character before. Does that mean you find me... charming? Quirky... Off...?

ANNIE

Not that kind of character. We're both characters... in a play or more to the point a work in progress. Except the writer isn't making that much progress.

DAN

Wait... Wait... That makes absolutely no sense. I'm here... You're here. I'm flesh and blood. You're definitely flesh and blood. And you're saying I'm a fictional construct?

ANNIE

Look around. What do you see?

DAN

You... Me... A bed

ANNIE

Anything else?

DAN

No.

ANNIE

Don't you find that a little strange?

DAN

Well... Yeah... I suppose. I hadn't thought about it.

ANNIE

It's called a limbo set. We could be anywhere.

DAN

Or... nowhere.

ANNIE  
Exactly.

DAN  
There's gotta be another explanation.

ANNIE  
Let me ask you this. Where were you born?

DAN  
Uh...

ANNIE  
A simple question. Where were you born?

DAN  
Let me think.

ANNIE  
While you're working on that, what is your mother's name?

DAN  
That's easy. It's uh... uh...

ANNIE  
What did you have for breakfast?

DAN  
Breakfast... Breakfast.

ANNIE  
Yes, breakfast, the most important meal of the day.

DAN  
Ohmygod, I have amnesia!!!

ANNIE  
You don't have amnesia.

DAN  
I don't?

ANNIE  
It would be an interesting plot twist if you did, but this guy's not that inventive.

DAN  
What guy?

ANNIE  
The writer.

DAN  
What writer?

ANNIE  
The one who is... or, more accurately, isn't writing all this.

DAN  
Someone is writing all of this?

ANNIE  
Yes... We're figments of someone's not very active imagination.

DAN  
How come you know all this stuff and I don't?

ANNIE  
Probably because he's re-written you so many times, it's a wonder you know your own name

DAN  
Ted.

ANNIE  
Dan.

DAN  
Dan?

ANNIE  
Dan.

DAN  
When did it become Dan?

ANNIE  
In draft number three... or four.

DAN  
Wait a minute... Maybe I'm not a character. May I'm an actor.

ANNIE  
An actor? Oh, God, I hope not.

DAN  
That could be it. I'm an actor playing a character who has amnesia.

ANNIE  
Interesting idea, but...  
(MORE)

ANNIE (cont'd)

(points us)

...again, he's not that inventive. Look at us. We're here in bed, stark naked and through fifteen drafts and we still haven't gotten it on.

DAN

That's weird

ANNIE

Not to mention frustrating. We both want to do it. You do want to do it, right? Silly question. Of course you want to do it. You're a guy.

DAN

Do you want to do it?

ANNIE

Yes, but for all the wrong reasons.

DAN

There's a wrong reason for wanting to..?

ANNIE

I want it as a form of reassurance. A way of validating my attractiveness... My womanness.

DAN

That's crazy. Why would you, of all people, need reassurance?

ANNIE

My husband, Ed, Phil, Roger, Arnie, left me for my best friend, co-worker, physical trainer. It keeps changing. I'm feeling rejected and I'm using you to reassure myself that I'm still desirable.

DAN

Using me?

ANNIE

Using you. Does that bother you?

DAN

No.

ANNIE

Of course not, you're a guy.

DAN

I want to do it. You want to do it. What are we waiting for?

ANNIE

The rewrites.

DAN  
How long will that take?

ANNIE  
Go only knows.

DAN  
Well, while we're waiting...

ANNIE  
Yeah?

DAN  
Seeing as how you know everything, what can you tell me about me?

ANNIE  
You're a dentist.

DAN  
Have I always been a dentist?

ANNIE  
That's never changed.

DAN  
Then I gather this is not a comedy.

ANNIE  
Not on purpose.

DAN  
That's it? I'm a dentist.

ANNIE  
You're also nice, polite and somewhat confused.

DAN  
How do you know that?

ANNIE  
It was in the stage directions.

DAN  
Maybe, just maybe, that's how he sees himself. Maybe I'm just a projection.

ANNIE  
Possible.

DAN  
So, if I'm him, who are you?



ANNIE

I haven't figured that out yet. Mostly because he hasn't figured it out yet.

DAN

Maybe you're somebody in his life.

ANNIE

A woman who is angry, insecure and repressed. I've hit the male viewpoint trifecta.

DAN

What would you have to be insecure about? Just look at you.

ANNIE

(warmly)

Thank you. That's very reassuring.

DAN

What else can you tell me about me?

ANNIE

You're divorced. Her name was Carol, Mary, Dolores and in three drafts Marilyn. She left you because she thought you were boring.

DAN

Boring?

ANNIE

Boring.

DAN

I wasn't fooling around.

ANNIE

No.

DAN

She wasn't fooling around.

ANNIE

No.

DAN

She didn't leave me for somebody else.

ANNIE

No, she just left you. Oh... And then you tried to kill yourself.

DAN

That's pretty drastic. What happened?

ANNIE

He...

(points up)

...realized that in a two character play, if you kill off one of the characters...

DAN

You don't have a play.

ANNIE

Bingo.

DAN

Anything else?

ANNIE

Your ex was a short blonde with big maracas.

DAN

Maybe this guy...

(points up)

... has more imagination that we give him credit for.

ANNIE

Obviously that's your type...or his.

DAN

If that's my type... short blondes with big...

ANNIE

Maracas.

DAN

Then, why am I interested in you? You're not a short blonde with big...

ANNIE

Maracas. Thank you for noticing.

DAN

Just trying to fill in the....

(suddenly turns very dramatic)

Joannie...

ANNIE

Joannie???

DAN

Joannie, I love you. I've always loved you.

ANNIE  
(equally as dramatic)  
How can that be Bob? We hardly know each other.

DAN  
I don't know. I don't understand it myself.  
(suddenly back to  
normal)  
What was that all about? And why did I call you Joannie?

ANNIE  
He's writing again.

DAN  
Is that what it's like?

ANNIE  
Get used to it.

DAN  
So, now, I'm in love with you. Or with Joannie, whoever she  
is.

ANNIE  
That's a new wrinkle. Probably won't last long. Nothing with  
this guy ever does.

DAN  
Did you ever consider that he is a she?

ANNIE  
Not a chance.

DAN  
Think about this. Maybe she's just working through some  
issues and using you as her surrogate.

ANNIE  
You mean she can't get laid, either.

DAN  
It's gotta be more than that.

ANNIE  
(suddenly very warm)  
You're so understanding, Don.

DAN  
Dan.

ANNIE

Dan... I don't know what it is. I feel so comfortable with you. Usually I'm very self conscious. How I look. Am I wearing the right outfit for the occasion.

DAN

(peeking under the covers)

Trust me, you're wearing the right outfit.

ANNIE

(mockingly)

I'm very self conscious. Am I wearing the right outfit?

(angrily)

Where the hell did that come from?

DAN

I kind of like the "trust me you're wearing the right outfit" line.

ANNIE

You just liked peeking under the covers.

DAN

It's very nice under the covers.

ANNIE

Why couldn't I be a three dimensional creation of someone with real talent? Instead of this stick figure.

DAN

I realize I only had time for a quick glance, but you're definitely not a stick figure.

ANNIE

(warmly)

Thank you, that's very reassuring.

(angrily)

Why do I keep saying that?

DAN

Maybe it's part of your character.

ANNIE

That's what I mean. One dimensional. There's got to be more to me than just seeking validation from a man.

DAN

Do we sound like a couple of losers or what?

ANNIE

We are a couple of losers.

DAN

Who wants to be a character in a play about a couple of losers.

ANNIE

It's the basis for half the stuff that gets written these days.

DAN

And people want to see this?

ANNIE

They identify.

DAN

With losers?

ANNIE

Losers who overcome obstacles, including their own inadequacies to eventually triumph.

DAN

Is that where we're headed? To a happy ending?

ANNIE

God, I'd settle for any kind of ending, happy or not.

DAN

You mean we... you and I... could get together?

ANNIE

Who knows, but I wouldn't count on it.

DAN

What if, in the next rewrite, you fall in love with me?

ANNIE

Why would I want to do that?

DAN

Right... I'm boring. What the hell? Why don't we just shut up and do it.

ANNIE

Do what?

DAN

Throw the entire story arc to the wind and make mad, passionate, wall shaking love. What do you say?

ANNIE

It doesn't work that way.

DAN

Who says it doesn't work that way?

ANNIE

It doesn't work that way. This has to be going somewhere, plot wise.

DAN

How about this for plot wise? We make love in act one and it's so earth shattering you fall in love with me in act two.

ANNIE

There is not going to be an act two. This is a one act play. Two characters... Simple set. Inexpensive to produce. We'll be lucky to make it to...

(Dan takes Annie by the shoulders and kisses her passionately.)

(The Stagehands rolls a black curtain past the foot of the bed. The look behind the curtain, look at each other and nod approvingly. After a couple of moments they roll the curtain out.)

(Annie and Dan are still in bed. Annie is now smoking a cigarette.)

ANNIE

Aren't you going to ask me how it was?

DAN

How what was?

ANNIE

It.

DAN

It?

ANNIE

It.

DAN

You mean we...?

ANNIE

Oh yeah. Big time.

DAN

When?

ANNIE

During the scene break. Right after the blackout. It's in the stage directions. Scene two. Lights up. Annie and Dan are still in bed. She's smoking a cigarette.

DAN  
I really do have to pay more attention.

ANNIE  
You were incredible, by the way.

DAN  
Is that in the stage directions, too?

ANNIE  
No, I just threw that in.

DAN  
I guess I'll have to take your word for it.

ANNIE  
It's true... All I needed was a good roll in the hay.  
(angrily)  
Oh God.

DAN  
What?

ANNIE  
I can't believe I just said that. He's definitely a male.

DAN  
This whole thing is going nowhere. I'm getting out of here.

ANNIE  
You can't. Characters don't leave a play in the middle.

DAN  
Why not? Audiences do it all the time.

ANNIE  
It's not our story. It's his...  
(points up)  
...story.

DAN  
Then let's make it our story.

ANNIE  
It doesn't work that way.

DAN  
Characters take over plays all the time. Isn't that what  
writers are always saying.

ANNIE  
How do you know what writers are always saying?

DAN  
I don't know. Maybe...

ANNIE  
What?

DAN  
Maybe everything we're saying...

ANNIE  
Yeah?

DAN  
Maybe it's not random.

ANNIE  
You mean he's writing all of this.

DAN  
Sort of makes sense in an odd way.

ANNIE  
So even what we're saying now... The questions. The complaints... You wanting to take off.

DAN  
Are being written as we say them.  
(Annie suddenly becomes over the top dramatic.)

ANNIE  
You can't leave me. I'll do anything you say. Just stay here with me a little longer.

DAN  
That's not you talking, Annie. It's him... You gotta fight it.

ANNIE  
I'm trying...

DAN  
(getting overly dramatic)  
I can't live without you, Jenny.

ANNIE  
(back to normal)  
Now he's rewriting you.

DAN  
He's trying to keep us in the script. We have to fight back.



ANNIE  
(dramatically)  
I'm not strong like you, Ken.

DAN  
(equally dramatic)  
I'll never leave you, Nora.

ANNIE  
I can't go on. This is bigger than both of us.

DAN  
(back to normal)  
Do you want to be stuck with that kind of dialogue for the rest of your life?

ANNIE  
I feel so powerless.... So manipulated.

DAN  
Then quit. Walk out.

ANNIE  
I keep telling you, it doesn't work that way.

DAN  
You'll never know if you don't try. We do this step by step. Step one, get out of bed.

ANNIE  
This bed is all I know.

DAN  
Just throw the covers back and climb out.

ANNIE  
I'm naked.

DAN  
I won't look.

ANNIE  
I'm not doing a nude scene.

DAN  
Then I'll do it.  
(He gets out of bed. He's wearing pants, shoes and socks.)

ANNIE  
When did you put your pants on?

DAN  
Let's just say I'm taking charge of my own rewrite.

ANNIE

That nails it.

DAN

Nails what.

ANNIE

If he was a she I'd be be the decisive one. I'd the one taking charge of my own rewrite. But no, it has to be the man who takes charge. The woman has to be passive, reluctant, frightened. If a woman was writing this I'd be a strong, independent, liberated woman... who was incredibly hot.

DAN

I don't why but I find that very... arousing.

ANNIE

You're a man. You'd find a root canal arousing.

DAN

If it was done right. I realize what I'm about to say is coming from the male perspective... limited as that may be... but before you can be that strong, independent, liberated woman... who is incredibly hot... you're going to have to get out of this bed.

ANNIE

You're right. You are absolutely right.

DAN

Thank you. I find that very reassuring.

ANNIE

I can do this.

DAN

I have every confidence in you.  
(Slowly and carefully, Annie peels back the covers and gets out of the bed. She's fully dressed)

DAN

Frankly, I liked the other outfit better.

ANNIE

I did it

DAN

You did it.

ANNIE

I really did it.

DAN

You really did it.

ANNIE

Okay... Great... This is great.

DAN

So what do you want to do now?

ANNIE

Let me think. What would a strong, independent, liberated woman...

DAN

Who is incredibly hot.

ANNIE

Who is incredibly hot... do in this situation?

DAN

I give up. What would a strong, independent, liberated woman who is incredibly hot do in this situation?

ANNIE

Stand on her own two feet. For once in my life I've go stand on my own two feet.

DAN

Not to point out the obvious, but for the first time in your life you are standing on your own two feet.

ANNIE

(happily surprised)

I am. Look at me.

DAN

Now, are you ready to get out of here?

ANNIE

Yes... I am.

DAN

Lead the way, strong, independent woman who is incredibly hot.

ANNIE

Right... Lead the way. To where? I've never been out of this room except for a couple of flash backs in the fourth draft.

DAN

How about my apartment for starters?

ANNIE  
Your apartment?

DAN  
I just live upstairs... Downstairs... Across the hall? I'll cook you the best dinner you've ever had.

ANNIE  
I don't think I've ever had dinner.

DAN  
Than you'll definitely love my cooking.  
(Annie looks around)

DAN  
What is it?

ANNIE  
There's no door.

DAN  
Mmmm...We're characters in a play written for the theatre, right?

ANNIE  
Right.

DAN  
And if the audience believes they see a door where there is no door, then, in the theater, there's a door, right?

ANNIE  
I guess.

DAN  
Just pull open that make believe door.

ANNIE  
What?

DAN  
Work with me. Pull on that make believe door.  
(she hesitates)

Go on.  
(Annie mimes trying to pull a door open. It won't open)

DAN  
 They're not believing... Keep pulling.  
 (to audience)  
 If you believe there's a door, please clap.  
 (A few audience members clap, Dan tries harder)  
 If you really believe there is a door, let's hear it.  
 (A few more audience members clap, Dan goes for it)  
 If you really, truly want Annie to walk through that door to a brand new life, then let's really... really hear it.  
 (All of the audience breaks into applause. Annie pulls the imaginary door open and steps through.)

ANNIE  
 I did it. I did it. I'm free.

DAN  
 No more exposition.

ANNIE  
 No more contorted dialogue.

DAN  
 No more plot points.

ANNIE  
 I fee so...

DAN  
 Reassured?

ANNIE  
 Strong... Powerful... Liberated.

DAN  
 Not to mention incredibly hot.

ANNIE  
 That goes without saying.

*(She pulls him through the imaginary door)*

*(Lights Down)*

THE END

