

Darling

by Meg Coombs

The entire play is set in the kitchen. There is an island in the middle of the stage. There is a fridge on the left of the stage and counters going around the edge of the space. A sink is built into a counter in the middle as well. It is all fairly modern and chic; a basic kitchen set up with neutral colours; it is very naturalistic. There is a stool next to the island. The island has drawers on the side that the audience cannot see, along the back. There is a CD player on the counter.

The play does not run chronologically, as in the scenes that follow after the first one do not happen one right after the other; it may be on a different day, for example. However, all of the action leads up to the first and final scene.

Scene 1

Anna enters as if home from a party. She wears all black. Puts down her bag, coat and a toy Dalmatian puppy. Ed enters with her and gets a glass of water. Anna watches him intently, as if searching for an answer. Ed does not seem to notice.

Long pause.

Anna, she finally pipes up, trying to start a conversation: God, I'm exhausted.

Ed remains silent, drinking the water, ignoring her.

Anna: I didn't get what Laura was meant to be...

Pause.

Anna, *picks up the puppy and laughs slightly*: I mean, I know I didn't really dress up but at least its obvious with me.

Pause.

Anna: I asked her eventually. I felt a bit rude actually but it would have bothered me if I hadn't.

Pause.

Anna: She was Snow White.

Ed smiles slightly. Pause.

Ed: I thought she looked great.

Pause.

Anna: Yeah, well she did look good. She always does. But it wasn't really fancy dress was it?

Ed: And yours is?

Anna: I bought a toy.

Ed, *sarcastically*: Right. Of course.

Anna, *talking over Ed's previous line*: She just wore jeans and a pretty yellow top.

Alright, same colour scheme but no effort whatsoever.

Ed: Well, she looked great.

Pause.

Anna: I don't look too silly, do I?

Silence.

Ed: Not silly.

Anna: Oh. Good. Because I-

Ed: Just not very good.

Anna, *not hearing his previous line*: I should have just gone as-

Ed: You just- don't look very- nice.

Ed, unphased, carries on drinking his water. Anna is brought to an immediate halt.

Ed finishes the rest of the water, kisses her on the forehead and leaves.

Scene 2

Lighting change.

Anna stays onstage; she then begins to search around the kitchen for something.

Ed enters, looking tired.

Anna: Have you seen the...

Ed: Hi.

Anna: The... um. Um.

Ed: What?

Anna: You know? The... Um... Errr...

Ed: What, what.

Anna: You know! The um...

Anna gestures a shape and the action of a corkscrew. Very rough though- hard to tell.

Ed: No, no I don't kn-

Anna: When did we last use it?

Ed: I have no idea.

Anna: Well could you please just have a think, darling?

Ed: Um.. Right.. Maybe-

Anna: I haven't had wine in about a week, I know that.

Ed: Corkscrew? Corkscrew. Is that what you're- And how do you know that?

Anna: I twitch.

Ed: What?

Anna: When I haven't had alcohol in a while.

Ed: What?

Anna, *she twitches her head*: See?

Ed: But you've never- have you seen a doctor-

Pause as Anna looks at him. She laughs.

Ed: Oh you're such a bitch.

Anna: Honestly, darling, I drink a glass of wine and need to go to bed...

Ed: You never do that though.

Anna: Do what?

Ed: Go to bed.

Anna: No, because I enjoy feeling reckless.

Ed: If I had to describe you in one word...

Anna: What?

Ed: Reckless.

Anna: Oh the irony.

Ed: Quite.

Anna: You and your wit...

Ed: Now who's being sarcastic?

Anna: Did I do it well?!

Ed: Very.

Pause.

Anna: Anyway. Corkscrew?

Ed: Why wine?

Anna: Sorry?

Ed: Why the wine?

Anna: Oh, I just felt like a glass.

Ed: Oh. Okay.

Anna: Is that okay?

Ed: Course.

Anna: Do you want one?

Ed: What?

Anna: A glass of wine?

Ed: Red or white?

Anna: Um... White I think.

Ed: I'll pass.

Anna: Well I can have red if you want red.

Ed: But you want white.

Anna: Yes but I'd rather drink wine with you, not alone.

Ed: Don't let me stop you-

Anna: No, no I'll have red.

Ed: But yo-

Anna: No. It's fine. Red.

Pause.

Ed: Okay.

Anna has still been looking for the corkscrew.

Ed: I think I remember where it is.

Anna: Why didn't you say so!?

Ed: Because I hadn't thought about it.

Anna: Even when I asked you to?

Pause.

Ed: Sorry. No.

Anna: Well?

Ed: What?

Anna: Ed!

Ed: Corkscrew! Right. Yes. I think it's in my office.

Anna: Why's it in your office?

Ed: I opened a bottle of wine in there recently, I guess.

Anna: Okay.

Pause.

Anna: How come?

Ed: I think it was the night of the dinner party.

Pause.

Ed: What's wrong?

Anna: Nothing. Just a little confused as to why-

Ed: Jesus, Anna, I don't fucking know. I must have took a bottle of wine out of the fridge, gone to get something from my office with the corkscrew in my hand and opened it in there!

Anna: Okay, okay.

Ed: Okay?

Anna: Okay.

Pause.

Ed: What?

Anna: Well, could you get it please?

Ed: Right, sorry, yeah.

Ed leaves.

He returns after a few seconds.

Anna: Thank you.

Pause.

Anna: Do you want so-

Ed: No. Actually. No. I think I'll- just- I'm going to do some work.

Anna: Oh, okay.

Ed: I'll come in for Sherlock. What time is it again?

Anna: Um.

Pause as Ed waits for an answer, somewhat impatiently.

Anna: Sorry, well I've recorded it so whenever-

Ed: 10 okay?

Anna: Alright.

Ed: Okay.

Ed exits.

Anna goes to open a bottle of red wine but opens a bottle of white wine instead and drinks a glass.

Scene 3

Lighting change.

Anna is sitting in the same place, sounds of a dinner party are heard offstage.

Long pause.

Ed enters with empty plates.

Ed, *addressing the party guests*: I look absolutely nothing like Harry Potter, I don't know where you get this crap from.

Surge of laughter.

Silence as Ed puts the empty plates down and goes to the fridge.

Anna says the following few lines bitterly, it is obvious she is a bit drunk.

Anna: You do look like Harry Potter.

Ed: So its you who's been telling all of our friends that.

Anna: No.

Ed: Anna, I don't even wear those glasses anymore.

Anna: Sarah came up with it.

Ed: I don't believe you.

Anna: She did!

Ed: Anna-

Anna: We were watching the new Harry Potter film and we'd had a few wines and she just came out with it-

Ed: Anna-

Anna: -'LOOK ITS ED!'

Ed: Anna.

Anna: What.

Ed: Why are you sitting out here?

Anna: You were mean.

Ed: Was I?

Anna: Yes.

Pause.

Ed: Okay. Well what did I do?

Anna: You said I was drunk.

Ed: Darling, you are drunk.

Anna: NO. I'm not! I'm just- spunky!

Ed: Anna, you're drunk.

Anna: Will you stop saying that?

Ed: 'Spunky'?!

Anna: Stop it!

Ed: Why?!

Anna: It's embarrassing!

Ed: No, it's not, it's funny!

Anna: I'm telling you that it's embarrassing.

Ed: Why?! Nobody cares!

Anna: Yes, they do.

Ed: Anna, all of our friends are alcoholics-

Anna: Well no maybe they don't care but I do.

Ed: Why?

Anna: Because I'm meant to be the host. The wonderful, exquisitely presented host.

And we haven't had one of these in a while. And-

Ed: Anna.

Anna: -and you just waltz in with your nice- hair- and your- stubble-

Ed: Ann-

Anna: -and your witty comments-

Ed: Anna-

Anna: -‘Look I’m Ann- ED- and I’m a ROGUE.’

Ed: Darling.

Anna: ‘ROGUE.’

Approaching Anna.

Ed: Rogue?

Anna: ROGUE! YES ROGUE!

Ed: Rogue.

Anna: Ro- You know when you say a word too many times-

Ed, *holding Anna’s face in his hands*: You are a daft cow.

Anna starts laughing until it becomes uncontrollable.

Ed: Let's go back.

They start to head for the exit.

Anna: Where?

Ed: To the dinner party you're hosting.

Anna: Oh shut- WASHING UP. You can do that.

Ed: Yes, I'll do it tomorrow.

Anna: Shame. If we had a daughter we could get her to do it.

She laughs.

Ed halts.

Anna: What?

Silence.

Anna: Oh shit. You know what I-

Ed: Yeah, I know.

He quickly exits.

Anna runs after him.

Anna: If he's Harry Potter then I'm Gilly Weasley. Oh god, I'm ginger. No offense, Mike.

Scene 4

Lighting change.

Ed enters.

He slowly prepares to do the washing up.

He puts in a CD to the player on the counter.

The song 'Antmusic' by Adam and the Ants plays.

He begins to dance.

Badly.

He goes to get the washing up gloves, which are on a rail above the bin.

He takes off his wedding ring and tries to put the gloves on at the same time.

The ring slips out of his hands.

Ed: Shit.

He rummages around quickly.

He pauses.

He brings out an empty contraceptive pill packet.

Silence.

Long silence.

He leaves.

Scene 5

Lighting change.

Anna arrives with shopping bags, she unpacks them, humming. Throughout the scene she remains preoccupied with unpacking.

After some time, Ed appears and watches her in silence.

Anna: Oh hello. Didn't see you there.

Pause.

Anna: You okay?

Pause.

Anna: It was mad at M & S today. No idea why, I went at an awkward time on a Tuesday. I'm always so careful- because if you pick the wrong time, it's a fucking nightmare.

Pause.

Anna: I got ingredients for chicken salad tonight.

Pause.

Anna: That okay?

Pause.

Anna: And- I got that really fresh garlic bread. You know. Not the normal one. That cheaper one. It's just not as nice. Remember?

Pause.

Anna: Ed?

Pause.

Anna: Oh shit.

Pause.

Anna: I forgot- forgo- avocado.

Pause.

Anna: I knew I'd forgotten something.

Pause.

Anna: You don't mind, do you?

Pause.

Anna: It doesn't matter, does it?

Pause.

Anna: You don't even like it-

Pause.

Anna: -it that much.

Pause.

Anna: Doesn't matter.

Pause.

Anna: Don't need it.

Pause.

Anna: Ed?

Pause.

Anna: Ed.

Pause.

Anna: Darling.

Pause.

Anna: Are you okay?

Pause.

Anna: Actually. Actual- I really would like some avocado.

Pause.

Anna: If you're not too busy could you pop to Tesco and get some?

Pause.

Anna: Some- some-

Pause.

Anna: Avocado.

Pause.

Anna: Ed?

Pause.

Anna: Ed, will you please-

Ed quickly walks over to Anna and kisses her passionately.

Anna: Ed, what are you-

He kisses her again.

Anna: Ed-

He kisses her again.

Anna: Ed, you're hurting-

He kisses her again.

Anna: Ed, stop-

She pushes him off.

Silence.

They stare at one another.

He slaps her across the face.

Anna: What the fu-?!

Silence.

He grabs her and squeezes her buttocks.

Anna struggles.

Anna: What the fuck is wrong wi-?!

Ed: Come on then!

Anna: What!

Ed: Come on!

Anna: WHAT.

Ed: Come on.

Beat.

Ed: I mean you're infertile, right?!

He slams the pill pack down and leaves.

Long pause.

Anna leaves after Ed.

Scene 6

Lighting change.

Anna enters on her mobile.

There is a long pause as if she is listening to someone on the other line.

Anna: I don't know. I don't- I- Well. Yeah, well, when I found out- he- he slammed it down in front me. Yeah. I know. I know. I thought I was going to be- sick. Jesus, I feel sick now. I've felt like I'm going to be sick at any second- well- well it was- it's a bit of a blur now. I was unpacking shopping and trying to talk to him but he wasn't responding and- well, I thought he was just on his blackberry, you know. Well, no I didn't look at him because I- because I was- unpacking. And then- the- yeah. He looked so confused. And so angry. He's so angry. Oh god. Mum, he's so angry at me. I feel so stupid. I can't believe I thought I'd get away with this. But then, it all seemed so easy. I know. I wish I'd just- I know. But once we got married, I don't know how or why it happened but I saw them and I just hated them. I literally hated them. I hated the things. I don't know. Just- how they... The mums, I mean, with their huge- they looked like they were going to burst. It made my skin crawl. I just didn't want- I

know. I have no idea. I'm just pathetic- I'm a terrible, terrible- Okay, sorry. Yeah.

Um, well. I'm not sure. I think we've agreed to work things out. Yeah. Well, I mean we discussed it and he hasn't left yet so... I think so. I hope so. I don't know about that but I'm just keeping quiet. I don't want to fuck things up any- I can't answer that. I don't know.

Anna hears the front door open and starts leaving with the phone as she says the next line.

But I loved him. I love him.

Anna exits.

Scene 7

Anna enters as if home from a party. She wears all black. Puts down her bag, coat and a toy Dalmatian puppy. Ed enters with her and gets a glass of water. Anna watches him intently, as if searching for an answer. Ed does not seem to notice.

Long pause.

Anna, she finally pipes up, trying to start a conversation: God, I'm exhausted.

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Anna: I didn't get what Laura was meant to be...

Pause.

Anna, picks up the puppy and laughs slightly: I mean, I know I didn't really dress up but at least its obvious with me.

Pause.

Anna: I asked her eventually. I felt a bit rude actually but it would have bothered me if I hadn't.

Pause.

Anna: She was Snow White.

Ed smiles slightly. Pause.

Ed: I thought she looked great.

Pause.

Anna: Yeah, well she did look good. She always does. But it wasn't really fancy dress was it?

Ed: And yours is?

Anna: I bought a toy.

Ed, *sarcastically*: Right. Of course.

Anna, *talking over Ed's previous line*: She just wore jeans and a pretty yellow top.

Alright, same colour scheme but no effort whatsoever.

Ed: Well, she looked great.

Pause.

Anna: I don't look too silly, do I?

Silence.

Ed: Not silly.

Anna: Oh. Good. Because I-

Ed: Just not very good.

Anna, *not hearing his previous line*: I should have just gone as-

Ed: You just- don't look very- nice.

Ed, unphased, carries on drinking his water. Anna is brought to an immediate halt.

Ed finishes the rest of the water, kisses her on the forehead and leaves.

Blackout.

End of play.