

Love, Lust & Life
By Joshua James

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A trilogy of ten-minute plays

By
Joshua James

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Three very short plays

- I. **A Boy, A Girl and A Dog**
- II. **A Man, A Woman and A Cat**
- III. **Grandma, Grandpa and The Car**

Special Notes on Staging

It is very important that the individual actors not look at or acknowledge each till the very end of the last play. In other words, only Grandma and Grandpa ever look at each other and even then, ONLY when stated they do in the script.

This is very, VERY important. Each actor only talks to the audience, not to each other at anytime. Also, whenever possible, it is best to cast age-appropriate actors when you are able.

Very simple set, just two stools. The Dog and Cat noises can be supplied offstage by one of the other actors. The sound effects in the first play (Angels, Thunder, etc.) are great when possible, but the play works just as well without them and therefore they are optional.

These three plays can be staged together or separately, but I have found that they work best when performed in sequence.

Notes on rights and royalties

No part of this play may be published or performed in public without permission of the author, Joshua James, although actors may make free use of any of the pieces for auditions or classroom study.

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A Boy, A Girl and A Dog

Spotlight comes up upon the BOY.

BOY

For a long time it was just me and my dog, Skippy. Just the two of us. Me and man's best friend. We were each other's best friend, best buddies, best PALS, inseparable together, soul brothers to the end. Ain't that right Skip?

Offstage sound of a dog, SKIPPY, barking joyfully.

BOY

That's right, Skippy my buddy, Skippy my PAL! Skippy, the best dog a guy could ever know! You, know what? Whenever I needed someone to talk to, I could go and talk to Skip! Whenever I had a problem that needed to be ironed out, I could tell Skippy, and, let me tell you, he'd understand!

SKIPPY barks.

BOY

Skippy understands cause we share something', something' special between us, a friendship that happens maybe once every hundred years. That's what we have. A friendship based on TRUST. We TRUST each other. I know that when it seemed as though the world was ganging' up on me, I could look to my side and there he would be, Skippy my buddy, my friend, my PAL!

SKIPPY barks again.

BOY

And Skippy trusts me. He knows I'll be there for him. He knows I look out for him, take him for walks in the park, feed him every day, care for him when he was sick. Skippy knows that I would never, under any circumstances, play fetch with him and PRETEND to throw the stick and then hide it behind my back to fake him out and make him look stupid. I respect him too much as a friend to do that. And he respects me. He never pees in the apartment, never chews on any of my shoes, nothing. It's an ideal relationship. I know if I were in an accident or a fire or something', and I was trapped, I know Skippy would go and get help and save my life, just like the dogs on TV. Ain't' that right Skip?!

SKIPPY once again barks joyfully.

BOY

So, life was pretty fine for me and Skip, a boy and his dog. Then, my life changed. Then, I met HER.

Spotlight Downstage right comes up upon the GIRL. They never acknowledge one another.

GIRL

He met me.

BOY

I met her and she met me, and I heard music playing. Which may have been because we met in an elevator, I'm not sure. Regardless, our eyes met and it was truly an event of epic proportions. I saw her, and she saw me, and somewhere inside our souls touched together. I asked her out right away, which is unusual for me.

GIRL

And I said no, which is usual for me.

BOY

But I kept after her! I didn't give up! I felt certain that somehow we were meant for each other, destined to be together. I was persistent, until finally . . .

GIRL

I said yes.

BOY

She said yes. And I heard angels sing a heavenly choir with that single word. Yes.

Offstage sound of angels singing the word "YES".

GIRL

He was kinda cute in an unusual sort of way. Why not?

BOY

I took her to dinner, and then to a concert. Afterwards, we went for a walk by the lake under the moonlight. It was great. Her eyes sparkled like the stars in the sky. I thought she was beautiful, and I told her so.

GIRL

He made me feel pretty, and I liked that. And he was cute.

BOY

But I didn't try nothin, no sir, I respected her too much.

GIRL

Cute, but kinda timid.

BOY

But we went out again.

GIRL

And again.

BOY
And again.

GIRL
And again.

BOY
To movies, plays, picnics, you name it, we were there together, inseparable. Then, one night over wine and cheese out on the riverbank . . .

GIRL
Finally.

BOY
I asked her if I could kiss her, and she said . . .

GIRL
I said yes.

BOY
She said yes. And I again heard angels sing a heavenly choir with that single word. Yes.

Offstage sound of angels singing the word "YES".

GIRL
About time he made his move. Worth the wait, though. I don't know if it was the wine or what, but that was one hell of a kiss.

BOY
Then we started seeing more of each other.

GIRL
We certainly did.

BOY
And we started talking a lot about ourselves. Sharing things. I even met her family.

GIRL
Well, they were in town, so why not?

BOY
It got to the point where not a day went by without us seeing or talking to each other.

GIRL
He kinda grows on you after awhile, you know?

BOY

Until one night, when we were alone in my apartment, under candlelight . . .

GIRL

It was very romantic.

BOY

I asked her if I could make love to her. And she said . . .

GIRL

I said yes.

BOY

She said yes. And I heard angels sing a heavenly choir with that single word. Yes.

Offstage, once again the angels sing the word YES".

GIRL

The timing was right, and I was curious. Besides, it's been six months since we started seeing each other. Why not?

BOY

Then I knew what love was. Then I knew. We became inseparable together. We went everywhere together, we did everything together. We were in love. I told her I loved her. She said she loved me.

GIRL

Well, I did, in my own way, I did love him. I cared for him quite a bit.

BOY

But now I knew. Now I knew what love meant. If you've never been in love, then you don't really know. It was just like it was in the movies, when two people that love see each other and music plays and the sky thunders. That was us. That was love. It was just like in those books, when the touch of the person you love would send jolts up and down your spine. That was us. That was love.

GIRL

There was definitely some chemistry happening there. We made love just about every night, and it was wonderful.

BOY

Then, there was a slight problem.

Offstage, SKIPPY barks angrily.

BOY

Skippy didn't like the love of my life, I don't know why.

GIRL

And I didn't like him. Bastard tried to bite me.

SKIPPY growls.

BOY

Easy Skip. I tried to work it out, but it turned out she's allergic to dogs.

GIRL

Especially that dog.

BOY

So it came down to a choice.

GIRL

The Mutt or me.

BOY

Sorry Skip.

SKIPPY whines.

BOY

I was sad for awhile, but I figured Skip would understand that this was love, love that happens only once in lifetime. We were in love, and together almost every night. I'd send her flowers and write her poetry, and she'd reward me with a kiss.

GIRL

He was very cute when he did that.

BOY

Most of all, I shared with her everything, everything about me, my childhood, my past, my hopes, my fears, and my dreams. I held nothing back. We had love. We had trust. Till finally, one night in an Italian restaurant over champagne, I gave her a ring and got down on one knee and asked her to marry me. And she said . . .

GIRL

I said no.

BOY

She said no. And the walls of the world surrounding me crumbled.

Sound of distant low thunder.

GIRL

I couldn't see spending the rest of my life with this guy. I had already heard all his stories and stuff at least

twice. I mean, he was nice and all that, but I wanted more.

BOY

I thought she loved me.

GIRL

I loved him but I wasn't IN love with him, you know what I'm saying?

BOY

I didn't get it.

GIRL

I didn't think he would understand.

BOY

So, because I had asked her to marry me and she didn't want to, she left me.

GIRL

The heat in that kitchen was definitely too hot for me, so I got out.

BOY

And she was gone.

GIRL

And I was gone.

Spotlight on GIRL goes out.

BOY

I walked around in a daze for awhile, like a zombie. It was like the year of my life that I had spent with her had been stolen, sucked out of me by a giant bat that flapped away in the dark of night, never to be seen again, and all that I was left with was cold, empty dreams.

Brief pause.

BOY

Then I started thinking, wouldn't it be great, if I could do absolutely anything I wanted to. What if I could just snap my fingers, and BOOM!

Loud Thunder.

BOY

Thunder at my fingertips. A wave of my hand and . . .

Loud Rain.

BOY

Raindrops for all. I could raise both arms and all the dogs in the world would howl!

Howling of all dogs.

BOY

I was thinking wouldn't it be great if I could control the tides, make the sun rise and set, stop all fighting and wars, abolish all the hunger in the world and maybe, just maybe get my dog Skippy back!

SKIPPY barks.

BOY

I was thinking wouldn't it be great if I were all-powerful, a supreme being, lord and master of the universe and maybe, just maybe she would like me again and come back!

Loud thud of something heavy falling.

BOY

But then I thought some more. And I realized that maybe there is a limit to even what God could do. So I went out and bought a puppy instead! I'm staying with what I know. Now maybe, just maybe I'll be happy again.

Lights down.

A Man, A Woman and A Cat

Spotlight comes up upon the WOMAN.

WOMAN

For a long time I didn't do much of anything except stay at home, watch TV, and pet my cat.

Sound of CAT purring.

WOMAN

I love my cat, and my cat loves me.

Purring gets louder.

WOMAN

Katherine is her name, and she has been my best friend for the past two years. She likes to play games with me, like hiding my socks under the bed, and jumping at my feet when I'm not looking. When I'm typing at my computer, she likes to jump up and stick her face right in there to see what I'm doing.

KATHERINE meows.

WOMAN

And she talks to me, too. If I'm in a really bad mood and I'm pounding around the apartment and feeling sorry for myself, she'll look at me and go . . .

KATHERINE meows again.

WOMAN

As if to say "Hey, lighten up, it can't be that bad." And she's right. So life has been fine for me and my little kitty, Katherine. Then, my life changed. Then I ran into him.

Spotlight comes up on the MAN. They never acknowledge each other.

MAN

She ran right into me.

WOMAN

Literally.

MAN

I was backing my Chrysler out of my parking place at the office and she plowed right into me.

WOMAN

I was so embarrassed. I didn't have any insurance.

MAN

She dented the shit out of my fender. But she looked so weebegone I couldn't help but laugh. She looked pretty hot too. I told her to forget about it.

WOMAN

He seemed very understanding.

MAN

What the hell, it's only money. And she was pretty.

WOMAN

But then I figured him out.

MAN

I asked her to have dinner with me.

WOMAN

I suppose he thought I should sleep with him just because I smashed his car.

MAN

I assured her it was nothing like that. Although the thought did cross my mind.

WOMAN

I took his number and told him I'd think about it.

MAN

And think about it she did.

WOMAN

In the end, I thought, "why not?" It's been two years since I broke up with that ape of a boyfriend I had before. They can't all be animals. Maybe he was different. He wore a tie, he looked liked he bathed regularly and he used words with more than three syllables. All plusses in his favor. I decided to take a chance. So I called him.

MAN

Finally.

WOMAN

And I said, lets go out.

MAN

It'd been three fucking weeks, I almost forgot who she was.

WOMAN

The next thing you know, I had a date.

MAN

So we went out for dinner. I love to eat out, but I hate first dates.

WOMAN

It was a lovely restaurant, and so expensive.

MAN

It's always a question of, what do we talk about?

WOMAN

He insisted on paying.

MAN

I mean I really suck at small talk.

WOMAN

I kept wondering, does he think I have to sleep with him now, since he paid for dinner?

MAN

So I'm fumbling around, trying not to talk with my mouth full and look like a moron

WOMAN

If he thought that, he had another thing coming.

MAN

I went through the usual routine, you know, what do ya do, where are you from and so on.

WOMAN

But I kept worrying about it. So I thought I should just tell him straight out.

MAN

I thought I was doin' pretty well, when all of a sudden . . .

WOMAN

So I said . . . No SEX!

MAN

BANG! I was shot right out of the saddle.

WOMAN

I just wanted to be clear.

MAN

As if I didn't suspect it already, I mean, she'd ordered CRAB, for crying out loud!

WOMAN

It's just that I value myself as a person. I didn't want to be deluded or deceived by physical desire. I wanted purity.

MAN

My older brother, who taught me everything I know, said if you wanna get any dick action with a woman, then there are three things you should never talk about on a first date. Politics, religion and . . . SEX. But she brought it up. I didn't know what to do.

WOMAN

I considered myself a woman of principle.

MAN

I panicked.

WOMAN

He seemed to understand.

MAN

I just started agreeing with everything she said.

WOMAN

In fact, he was really sweet about the whole thing.

MAN

I probably should've dumped her and forgot about her, but you know, she was really cute.

WOMAN

I just believe that you should be in love to make love to somebody.

MAN

Cute, but with crazy ideas.

WOMAN

I thought he would be disappointed and not call me again, but he did.

MAN

Hell, I wasn't seeing anyone else at the time. Why not?

WOMAN

So we went out again.

MAN

And again.

WOMAN

And again. Went out and talked and laughed and shared stories together and it was wonderful.

MAN

It was kinda fun.

WOMAN

Best of all, there was no sex flapping around to confuse everything.

MAN

Fun, but the sexual tension in the air was so thick I was choking on it.

WOMAN

I really started to care about him, and I think he cared about me.

MAN

The anticipation was making me cross-eyed. I woulda done anything to get in her pants.

WOMAN

And I thought, maybe this is it, maybe this is love.

MAN

If I didn't find some sort of release soon I was gonna explode.

WOMAN

So one night when we were having a romantic dinner by candlelight at my place, I decided to ask him directly how he felt.

MAN

Finally it looked like she was gonna come across.

WOMAN

Then there was a slight problem.

KATHERINE the cat snarls and hisses.

MAN

That fucking cat.

WOMAN

Katherine Kitty didn't like the new man in my life. And he didn't like her.

MAN

The little fucker snagged my good pair of slacks.

WOMAN

So it came down to a choice.

MAN

The cat or me.

WOMAN

What was I going do? The two I cared about most and they didn't like each other.

MAN

I wasn't gonna get anywhere with that little monster distracting her all the time.

WOMAN

So we came to a compromise. Whenever he came over I would lock Katherine Kitty in the closet.

Kitty wails.

WOMAN

Oh, and she hated it. But I knew that she would understand that could be love, true love that happens maybe once in a lifetime.

MAN

Finally the little beast was gone and I had room to maneuver.

WOMAN

So finally we got it all worked out and I told him how I felt and I asked him, point blank, if he loved me, and he said . . .

MAN

I said yes.

WOMAN

He said yes! I was so happy! Finally a man who felt with his heart and not his sex organ. A man who loved me!

MAN

Well I did. At the time.

WOMAN

So we made love and it was wonderful. It was so wonderful to be loved again.

MAN

Finally I got her into bed.

WOMAN

It was so wonderful to have a lover again.

MAN

So we did it, and at the time I'm thinking, all this waiting, all that time, just for this?

WOMAN

Best of all, we were completely honest and clear with each other.

MAN

I mean, it was all right, but it wasn't the Fourth of July.

WOMAN

We took steps so we wouldn't hurt each other.

MAN

And after awhile, listening to her chirp on and on, it started to get kinda dull.

WOMAN

It was just a matter of time till he got me a ring and we set the date.

MAN

And that cat, it always looked at me like I was a piece of shit.

KATHERINE hisses.

WOMAN

In fact, I decided to talk to him about it that very night.

MAN

All in all, I was feeling kinda crowded. So I got out.

WOMAN

But when I got home from work, he wasn't there.

MAN

But hey, I'm no barbarian, I left her a letter.

WOMAN

There was a note taped to the refrigerator.

MAN

And on my way out, I gave that fucking cat a swift kick in the ass.

KATHERINE wails in anger and pain.

WOMAN

It said he couldn't do this any longer.

MAN

And I was gone.

WOMAN

And he was gone.

Spotlight on MAN goes out.

WOMAN

Suicide came to mind, but it seemed like too much work. I just sat around, watching TV, and wondering just where did I go wrong? Was I such a repulsive person? Was I stupid, naive? What did I miss about this whole thing?

KATHERINE the cat starts purring.

WOMAN

Then I remembered that I was loved. And I resolved that in the future, I was going to listen closer to the one I trusted and loved the most.

Purring gets louder and spotlight fades.

Grandma, Grandpa and The Car

Two separate spotlights come up on a dark stage, revealing GRANDMA and GRANDPA, sitting in chairs. They speak to the audience without looking at or acknowledging one another.

GRANDPA

You know you're old when, instead of thinkin' about all the stuff you're gonna do, you sit an' think about all the stuff that you did.

GRANDMA

You've heard this one, everyone has, 'you can't teach an old dog new tricks', everyone in America has probably heard that one ten times.

GRANDPA

I spend my days on the porch, sippin' iced tea with lemon and dreaming' about the life I've led on up to this point. If I had any ambition at all, I would write it all down an' make a pile of money. But I don't have no ambition for that kinda thing. Not at all. I'm a simple man with simple tastes an' simple pleasures.

GRANDMA

What do think of when you hear the word old? You think of somethin' rotted, and decayed, and useless, that's what you think. I don't like to think of myself as old. I prefer to think of myself as accomplished.

GRANDPA

I used to be ambitious. Very ambitious. Not for money or land or ed-u-ca-tion, none of that bullshit. This was nineteen fifty we're talkin' about here, only sissies went to school, what was important in nineteen fifty was that you be a man, a proud man who worked hard an' kept his word. A man.

GRANDMA

For I am accomplished. I've done more in the last ten years than many people do their entire lives.

GRANDPA

A man had to have a home, a good car to take you to work, a good steady job, and a family. An you had to take care of all of 'em. Those were a man's responsibilities.

GRANDMA

Only two years ago did I receive my college degree, and I am the first in the history of my family to have done that. And I owe it all to my husband.

GRANDPA

I'll never forget the day it hit me, the day I knew my place in the scheme of things, it was the day I first saw her. I was walking down to the corner of Wiltshire Blvd an' almost ran right smack dab into her. I'd have to say it was love at first sight. She was beautiful.

GRANDMA

Girls at that time, while you were in high school, you looked for a possible husband, one that wouldn't be too mean, you got him interested in you, teased him along but you weren't fast, boys wouldn't marry fast girls, you got him so worked up till he'd almost bust, then he'd ask you to marry him. You got married, then you had kids and took care of the house.

GRANDPA

I had never seen anything in my life as beautiful as her. I knew the moment I laid eyes on her that I had to have her. I had a good job as a welder down at the foundry, good benefits, respectable. I set my jaw and went after her.

GRANDMA

Now when I was in high school, I had a boyfriend, just like everyone else, because that's what you did, you had to have someone to take you to dances and drive-inns and ice-cream socials. He was nice, he was older and he never got too fresh. He liked me and my parents liked him. The word love just never came up.

GRANDPA

The next thing you know, she was mine. I called her Priscilla. My little Priss. She was a cherry-red 1947 convertible Chevy with white sidewall tires. The first car I owned all by myself. Gawd, I loved that car. That was the day I knew I was a man.

GRANDMA

So I had this boyfriend, and eventually, because we didn't know what else to do, we got married.

GRANDPA

After that I got married an' bought a house. A house with a big garage.

GRANDMA

Then we had kids.

GRANDPA

I bought a Buick, a four door, for family drivin', couldn't have the kids spillin' their ice-cream on Priss's leather seats, now could I? The Buick was for drivin', the Chevy was for show.

GRANDMA

So I was a housewife, which was all I was trained to do, since I was a little girl. Do the laundry, make dinner, iron the clothes. Girls are trained to be task-orientated, thinking only of the job in front of them. That way they can be good housewives. It's only natural that they would start to think of their lives in the same way. Get a boyfriend, get him to marry you, have children, raise a family and keep the house clean in case company drops by unexpectedly.

GRANDPA

Nobody but me drove Priscilla, and every Saturday that it wasn't raining I would wash an' wax her out in the front drive where everybody could see, then I would take her for a spin down around the town square. The kids and the missus would sometimes come along.

GRANDMA

It's not until later, when all the tasks are done, the kids grown up and are married themselves, that you sit and wonder.

GRANDPA

I babied Priss like no one else, an' after the kids grewed up an' left home, the missus and I would drive her to car shows an' so on, it was a hell of a time. Every fourth of July we would drive her in the big parade. She was a by-gum classic.

GRANDMA

You wonder, just what the hell have I been doing these past twenty odd years? I've done something, I've got a good home, raised good children, but these were all unconscious acts, in a way, do you know what I mean? I wanted to do something conscious, for a change. To do something, anything, for myself. I tried to explain to my husband, but he just didn't understand.

GRANDPA

The wife, now with the kids gone, she was startin' to get itchy britches. She was jealous, I had Priscilla and she didn't have nothing.

GRANDMA

He was a good man, but like all good men he had his blind spots. His was that damn car.

GRANDPA

She started actin' by-God crazy.

GRANDMA

I just could not believe, that after all these years of marriage he did not trust me enough to drive his stupid car.

GRANDPA

She started makin' crazy demands.

GRANDMA

What it came down to is that he had our golden years all mapped out, and it was a calvacade of car shows and parades. I rebelled.

GRANDPA

She flipped her lid.

GRANDMA

I told him, "It's the car or me!"

GRANDPA

An' I said, "Get the hell out!"

GRANDMA

And I was gone.

GRANDPA

And she was gone.

GRANDMA

That was ten years ago today.

GRANDPA

I found out that I wasn't too old for divorce. She got the furniture and the Buick. I got the house and the Chevy.

GRANDMA

I really owe it to him, though, if he'd humored me, if he hadn't of thrown me out, the most I probably would have done is served on a school board or headed some church group. Instead, I went to college, got my degree in women's studies, wrote articles for magazines and became a part-time professor. I discovered my own individual worth. Him and his damn car galvanized me into action.

GRANDPA

My father, he was the one who taught me the value of things, and I'll always remember his lessons. Work was equal to worth, the harder you worked, the more you was worth. I felt I had worked hard, and I was worth somethin'. I don't know why the wife didn't understand that. I had my house and my classic car, but now I didn't have my wife.

GRANDMA

Still, there were times when I'd remember him driving his red convertible with the top down and the proud look on his face, and how it would tickle me. He was like a boy with a favorite toy. But I didn't have any room for boys in my life anymore.

GRANDPA

I'd always thought that she'd get scared an' come back to me, cause that's what girls did.

GRANDMA

When I had those thoughts I just pushed him from my mind.

GRANDPA

I waited for her to come back, and she didn't. So you know what I did? I went back to her.

GRANDMA

He came courting, just like the old days.

GRANDPA

I sent her flowers.

GRANDMA

I sent them back.

GRANDPA

I sent her candy.

GRANDMA

I asked, "Did he want me to get fat?"

GRANDPA

The woman was so dad-gum stubborn!

GRANDMA

I never thought he was serious.

GRANDPA

I couldn't get her to listen.

GRANDMA

Then, he did something extraordinary.

Very brief pause.

GRANDPA

I sold the car.

GRANDMA

He sold the car. I couldn't believe it.

GRANDPA

My father he taught me a lot of valuable things about bein' a man, but there was a couple of things he left out. I guess he figured I'd learn 'em on my own. One of these things was the art of compromise.

GRANDMA

You don't understand how many years of his life he sacrificed by selling that car. I thought, maybe he does love me.

GRANDPA

She cried when I told her what I had done. Maybe she does love me.

GRANDMA

I do.

She reaches out and takes her husband's hand. They look at each other for the very first time and smile.

GRANDPA

So now I'm a simple man with simple pleasures, sippin' iced tea with lemon with my wife an' discussin' what we're gonna do today. I'm happy, I have a home and a car and most of all, my beautiful wife.

GRANDMA

And I have my life and a husband who loves me.

GRANDPA

And when we go out, the wife drives.

GRANDMA

Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks?

They look at each other and smile. Lights down.

The End