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ALL FOURS

A Ten Minute Play.
(Absurd Comedy)

By

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CHARACTERS

HUSBAND 1: Middle aged, middle class, married man.

HUSBAND 2: Middle aged, middle class, married man.

DOCTOR: Professional woman, any age over 25.

WIFE 1: Middle aged, middle class, married woman.

WIFE 2: Middle aged, middle class, married woman.

SETTING: A DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM.

TIME: THE PRESENT.

All Fours.

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(A doctor's waiting room. There are two doors onstage: one to the outside, the other to the doctor's office. Two middle-aged to elderly men circle the chairs, looking for a comfortable seat. They sniff the air, barely acknowledge each other and sit. A short but uncomfortable pause ensues)

HUSBAND 1: Women's magazines. Why is that?

HUSBAND 2: *(growls)* You talking to me?

HUSBAND 1: The reading material here. *(sniffs)* It's all celebrity diets and boob jobs gone wrong. Should be lining litter trays in the laundry, yet it's here. Why is that?

HUSBAND 2: The clientele?

HUSBAND 1: Hmm. *(snuffles)* No, that's not it. *They're in there (sotto voce) with the shrink (indicates the doctor's door which is labeled 'Dr. Rosie Afterthoughts')*.

HUSBAND 2: *(scratches)* Well, that is, the partners of the clientele. Their escorts. Consorts. All sorts.

HUSBAND 1: Best friends. Us.

HUSBAND 2: Who? Me? You? Me? We?

Pause.

HUSBAND 1: No, that's not it. We're men. Can't read this rubbish. We're manly men. Mainly. Born to rule.

HUSBAND 2: Leaders.

HUSBAND 1: Of the pack.

HUSBAND 2: Aren't we just.

HUSBAND 1: Yes, I am. You certainly appear to be.

Pause.

HUSBAND 1: And yet - and still - why?

HUSBAND 2: (*licks self*) Hmm?

HUSBAND 1: Why demonstrate so readily, so un-self-consciously, one's down-market proclivities?

HUSBAND 2: (*continues to lick*) One's what?

HUSBAND 1: Proclivities. The down-market ones.

HUSBAND 2: (*stops licking*) It's their doctor's idea? Women!

HUSBAND 1: Woman doctor, yes, of course.

HUSBAND 2: All that estrogen. Numbs the proclivities. Sensitivities. Hysterectomies, that's what they need. Rip out the old ovaries, no more hysterics, thank you.

HUSBAND 1: Of course. Still, women's magazines. I mean, No Idea. Women's Weakly - not too strong, mind you, preferably insipid - and said self same periodical comes out every month. That time of the month? I think I'll buy a Who Who.

HUSBAND 2: You said it. Periodicals!

Pause.

HUSBAND 1: Name's Rufus. Yours?

HUSBAND 2: Oh, just call me Boy. Uh, I mean, boy, oh, boy! Just call me, uh ... (*stares off into middle distance*).

Pause.

HUSBAND 2: (*goes to cock his leg but thinks better of it*) Yours? In there? (*indicates door*)

HUSBAND 1: (*re-focuses*) Yep. Monthly checkup.

HUSBAND 2: Wacko?

HUSBAND 1: No, don't like em that much, thanks anyway. I prefer Schmack Dackos.

Pause.

HUSBAND 2: Not like us, eh? Every 28 days! Huh!

HUSBAND 1: Not me. You? Me? Not we.

Pause.

HUSBAND 1: Job?

HUSBAND 2: No, thanks, got one. Furniture designer.

HUSBAND 1: Oooh ...

HUSBAND 2: No, it's not like that. Very practical. Not just four legs and a seat, you know. Take this (*indicates couch*).

HUSBAND 1: No, thanks, got one. Designer of interiors, myself.

HUSBAND 2: Oooh ... I mean ... (*strokes couch*) Very tactile. My kind of design. Made for lounging. Lou - in - ging.

HUSBAND 1: Not that way at all. I've got one (*indicates door*). In there.

HUSBAND 2: Wouldn't have thought that for a minute. I mean your entire ... Your whole ... The way you scratch and sniff ...

Pause.

HUSBAND 2: Portfolio?

HUSBAND 1: No, thanks, got one. Not on me.

HUSBAND 2: Précis?

HUSBAND 1: Living rooms. Comfort. Non-conductive to death. Where all the serious living takes place.

HUSBAND 2: Of course.

HUSBAND 1: Dining rooms. Tasteful. Conducive to degustation. Where all the serious dining takes place.

HUSBAND 2: (*licks chops*) Of course.

HUSBAND 1: Bedrooms. Sex, no thanks, you've got a headache. No bedding takes place, what-so-ever. Seriously.

HUSBAND 2: Of course. I mean, go on.

HUSBAND 1: Well, then there's the kitchen. Where she should be but isn't. Swing-out cupboards. Fridge magnets. Dish-lickers. So much ... kitsch. Takes over the damn place.

HUSBAND 2: And I do love sitting on this.

HUSBAND 1: Please don't let me disconcert you. I can be a little disconcerting at times. Not a great one for concerts, I'm afraid. Rather, a maker of interiors. Sit! Sit! Sitting room? Sitting room only? Not there! That's my seat! Get down!

Pause.

HUSBAND 1: Yes, well. What's her name?

HUSBAND 2: Oh, Fifi. Or Tinkerbelle. Dolores. Goneril. Gonorrhoea. No.

Pause.

HUSBAND 2: And I do love sitting on this.

Pause.

HUSBAND 2: She never did like ... (*changes direction*). Yours?

HUSBAND 1: Oh, who knows? She just comes when I tell her. Except when it's that time of the month. That's when she starts ripping up the screen door.

HUSBAND 2: Urinating in the peace lilies.

HUSBAND 1: Digging up the evidence.

HUSBAND 2: Letting slip a sly one.

HUSBAND 1: Humping Mormon elders on the front porch.

HUSBAND 2: What?

HUSBAND 1: Humping. Humping! Are you hard of hearing? She loved it.

HUSBAND 2: Oh, you're special. Are you a bit slow? A bit special?

HUSBAND 1: Oh, you're a fancy breed. Are you in fact extinct? Are you sitting on your seat or on your brain?

HUSBAND 2: Why, you stinking ...

HUSBAND 1: Why, you mangy ...

HUSBAND 2: I've never been so ... get off that couch!

HUSBAND 1: You are the worst kind of ... get out of this sitting room!

(Standing up, then circling and snarling, then ... freeze. Three women, one wearing a doctor's white coat and stethoscope, unfreeze on the other side of the office door)

DOCTOR: Just slip two of these into his chopped rump every four weeks. As I said, at a certain age the dear old boys tend to get a bit amorphous. Ambiguous. Androgynous ... Like Afghans.

WIFE 1: Do I like Afghans?

DOCTOR: Not the tribes-people bordering Pakistan, no, more like the hounds.

WIFE 2: Ah, Afghan hounds.

WIFE 1: Ah, yes. Stupidest breed there is.

WIFE 2: Inbred.

WIFE 1: Congenially.

WIFE 2: But such lovely long hair. Hell on the velveteen furniture, though.

WIFE 1: Mmm, still, an eloquent fashion statement.

WIFE 2: Very retro.

WIFE 1: Very 70s.

WIFE 2: Goes with a tie-dyed caftan quite nicely.

WIFE 1: Great concept. Hides the leg cellulite so effectively.

WIFE 2: That's why Fergie ...

WIFE 1: Oh, yes, and her nose job ...

WIFE 2: Mmm, I know, such a devious septum.

WIFE 1: Deviated? Devalued? De Veers?

WIFE 2: Ah, yes, those gorgeous diamonds!

WIFE 1: Girl's best friend!

DOCTOR: Yes, well. That should see them through to their next checkup, ladies.

WIFE 1: Lovely. Oh, the poor boy can be such a nuisance without his testosterone top up.

WIFE 2: I know, I know, an awful estrogen build up.

WIFE 1: Can't get it, well, you know ...

WIFE 2: Just like he'd been neutered.

WIFE 1: Feminised.

WIFE 2: Unable to bond.

WIFE 1: Loss of all social skills.

WIFE 2: Mucking all over the linoleum.

WIFE 1: Chewing the leather-like upholstery.

WIFE 2: Returning with relish to his vomit.

WIFE 1: Chasing bits of fluff in his sleep.

WIFE 2: Drooling all over the chintz and the chaise.

WIFE 1: Toe-nails scratching on the upstairs parquetry.

WIFE 2: Wads of fur blocking the semi air-conditioning ducts.

WIFE 1: Wet spots spoiling the faux French renaissance fireplace.

WIFE 2: Such a strain.

WIFE 1: Darling, you do need a hug (*they embrace*).

WIFE 2: (*holds back a tear*) Smells like a ...

WIFE 1: (*tries to comfort*) Whines all the ...

WIFE 2: Coughs up the ... But we do love them.

WIFE 1: Sniffs all the wrong ... Maybe that's why we love them?

(The women enter through the doctor's door. The men unfreeze and bound about on all fours)

HUSBAND 1: Bark! Bark!

HUSBAND 2: Bow wow wow!

(The two wives clip leads onto their partner's collars and struggle to hold them as the men whine excitedly and make for the exit)

WIFE 1: Down, Boy, down!

WIFE 2: Heel, Rufus, heel!

DOCTOR: Be firm, ladies, you must be firm. Show them who's boss. Superior body language, that's the key. And don't forget: a monthly subscription to Bitch-house or Play-mutt does wonders. Down-market proclivities, you know (*indicates groin*).

CURTAIN.