

**THE BOCCACCIO AFTERLIFE PRIZE FOR BEST
TRANSLATION AND ADAPTATION OF A DECAMERON
NOVELLA INTO ANY MEDIA**

**A contemporary theatrical adaptation
of Giovanni Boccaccio's Decameron, Day 9, first novella**

**Play written by Kieran Carroll
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CHARACTERS

PRINCESS FRANCESCA – a young widow, upper-class, 23 years.
In her speech she is attracted to the 18th and 19th centuries.

RICKY/FAN No 1 – bank teller, death metal music fan, middle class,
slim build, 20 years.

ALEX/FAN No 2 – information technology student, death metal music
fan, middle class, slim build, 20 years.

RACQUEL – Princess Francesca’s maid, an acquaintance of Ricky and
Alex, 19 years.

SLITGODSTHROAT– an obese, deceased death metal singer, 40s.

STAGING NOTE

RICKY and **ALEX** are able to double as Fan No 1 and Fan No 2 (Scene
10) keeping the cast to four.

SETTING

An extreme version of a city such as Los Angeles but more crowded
with heavier traffic, higher temperatures and greater pollution.

TIME

2013

SCENE 1

PRINCESS: (*Speaking to RACQUEL who is off-stage*): Racquel, listen to me. I'm bored with the romantic conventions of men! An email. Then another. A phone call then another. A text. Then another and another and another. And let us not talk of Skype! What an intrusion! I could be dressing! And me a widow. These men are all about technology but they never put themselves to the test by visiting me here.

Enter RACQUEL, the maid

RACQUEL: Are you talking about Ricky and Alex?

PRINCESS: I am.

RACQUEL: Do you remember how I told you that I would see them at Slitgodthroat's performances...when I liked death metal music...before I began working for you, Princess. I'd only say a quick hello. Nothing more.

PRINCESS: Death metal, how awful.

RACQUEL: In daylight hours those two men are hard working and sensible. I've seen Ricky in the city bank many times and Alex is completing an information technology degree.

PRINCESS: One day they will both make money, I'm sure. Not that I need it. I have this gorgeous nine bedroom mansion overlooking the chaotic freeway. What more could a pretty young widow want?

RACQUEL: It's an incredible location!

PRINCESS: Precisely! I love the 24/7 rumble of the traffic and the planes taking off. The density of smog and the cloying humidity excite me! Would you run me a cool bath? I'd like to listen to this delightful urbanism while luxuriating my fragile limbs.

SCENE 2

ALEX and RICKY are having an after-work beer

RICKY: Have you seen Princess Francesca lately?

ALEX: No. When she became a widow, she stopped visiting the city. And getting to her place is tough without a car.

RICKY: It is. Almost impossible on public transport.

ALEX: And the price of taxis - crazy.

RICKY: I knew she'd say no, but I asked her out not so long ago. I tried to get her to see Slitgodstroat's last ever performance.

ALEX: Who'd have thought when he said he'd die on stage, he'd actually go through with it! Okay, I'll come clean. I asked her to that performance as well.

RICKY: So you're in contact with her -

ALEX: Out of kindness, sympathy.

RICKY: Yes, me too.

ALEX: Excuse me. I gotta go to the toilet.

ALEX turns away and sends a text message. He returns to RICKY.

RICKY: Might do the same. The toilet. That way is it?

RICKY turns away and sends a text message. He returns to ALEX.

RICKY: I should be getting home.

ALEX: Me too.

They finish their drinks.

SCENE 3

RACQUEL is adding the finishing touches to PRINCESS FRANCESCA's dress.

RACQUEL: I don't wish to upset you Princess...but what country was your late husband the Prince of?

PRINCESS: Oh it was something small and vaguely eastern European. He conducted his affairs globally, of course. I remained here 99% of the time.

RACQUEL: Of course. Will you be entertaining yourself tonight at home, Princess?

PRINCESS: Indeed.

PRINCESS FRANCESCA picks up a mobile and reads a text message.

PRINCESS (*Whispers*): Alex.

PRINCESS FRANCESCA picks up a second mobile and reads a text message.

PRINCESS (*Whispers*): Ricky. (*To RACQUEL*) Further overtures from Alex and Ricky. I will tell you and only you. I have concocted a plan for both of them.

RACQUEL: You have –

PRINCESS: Here (*Handing RACQUEL the mobiles*) text them both. My fingers are weak this evening. Text Alex first. Tell him that if he is to win my love then he is to go to the grave of Slitgodsthroat. He must open the coffin, remove that awful man's clothes, then hide the body. Then he must dress in Slitgodsthroat's death metal attire, lie down in the coffin himself and wait until someone fetches him.

RACQUEL: That's a long and involved text - but yes - right away, Princess.

RACQUEL texts with incredible speed.

RACQUEL: Sent!

PRINCESS: Now text Ricky. Tell him that if he is to win my love he is to go to Slitgodstthroat's coffin at midnight tonight. He must remove Slitgodstthroat and bring him to my doorstep. Tell him that no artificial light is permitted as he searches in the graveyard.

RACQUEL texts with incredible speed.

RACQUEL: Sent! But won't Alex be in the coffin?

PRINCESS (*Dismisses this*): Now to supper. Could I have the anchovies, baby clams, sprats and beetroot dip with a baguette? Would you bring it to the balcony in thirty minutes? I'd like to watch the tired commuters in traffic jams.

RACQUEL: Yes, Princess. (*Pause*) You do realize Slitgodstthroat is buried many, many miles from here.

PRINCESS: I know where it is - but if they love me – both of them will find a way to reach me.

RACQUEL: Yes, Princess. Excuse me. I'll prepare supper.

SCENE 4

Death metal music plays. ALEX enters the graveyard and moves to the coffin of SLITGODSTHROAT. He has a difficult time getting him out of the coffin. He then slips into his clothing, drags SLITGODSTHROAT away and enters the coffin himself.

SCENE 5

RICKY enters the graveyard. We hear ALEX turning over in the coffin. RICKY sees the coffin.

RICKY: Slitgodstthroat. Finally.

He pulls ALEX's body out of the coffin.

RICKY: Not as heavy as I thought.

ALEX: Ricky, is that you?

RICKY: Jesus, Alex, what the –

ALEX: The Princess texted –

RICKY: Yeah, me too. What the hell are you doing in Slitgodsthroat's coffin?

ALEX: Obeying orders from the princess.

RICKY: I'm supposed to bring Slitgodsthroat to her doorstep.

ALEX: To win her love?

RICKY: Yes.

ALEX: But I love her and want to marry her! That's why I'm in the coffin. I'm doing what I'm told!

RICKY: She loves a trick, doesn't she? I love her so much! Where is Slitgodsthroat now?

ALEX: Over there, behind those dead trees, wearing only his underpants!

RICKY: I must take him to the Princess.

ALEX: There's only one way to settle this and know for certain who the Princess loves. We must take Slitgodsthroat to the mansion. Together. Then we will ask the Princess to decide which man she desires.

RICKY: Slitgodsthroat is a heavy guy. He used to eat a dozen hamburgers a day.

ALEX: And drink fourteen milkshakes. I know the buses start at 5am. We'll have to wait. I didn't say it would be easy.

RICKY: It'll take four buses from here to the mansion.

ALEX: We'll need to get Slitgodsthroat a hat and sunglasses if he's to travel on the bus!

RICKY: We will. Let's dress him first. Get out of his clothes!

ALEX: I will. I will. The Princess will think she's defeated us but she underestimates us both!

SCENE 6

The PRINCESS is bopping along to dance music on her Ipod as RACQUEL massages her toes.

SCENE 7

At the bus stop, RICKY and ALEX are propping up SLITGODSTHROAT who is seated between them. Wearing a hat and sunglasses, his body needs to be continually adjusted to give the impression he is alive. These adjustments occur through the following scene.

RICKY: We'll tell the bus driver he's narcoleptic.

ALEX: It shouldn't be crowded.

RICKY: The Princess enjoys her mornings in bed. There's no point getting to the mansion any earlier than 2PM.

RICKY checks his mobile.

RICKY: Jesus Christ, not today -

ALEX: What?

RICKY: There's a bus strike and tomorrow as well.

ALEX: We could hitch-hike –

RICKY: With Slitgodsthroat –

ALEX: Nobody would pick us up. We'll have to walk. I can't afford a taxi -

RICKY: Neither can I. I'm prepared to walk.

ALEX: We'll both walk. We'll carry Slitgodsthroat all the way.

RICKY: It's amazing we can be friends about this. One of us will leave the mansion very unhappy.

ALEX: I know.

RICKY: I'd say given the incredible weight of Slitgodsthroat, it will take a day and a half to reach Princess Francesca.

ALEX: It might take two. The heat will be extreme by this afternoon and the smog will make it difficult to see street signs. We have no choice though. Shall we begin?

RICKY and ALEX lift SLITGODSTHROAT and begin to drag him with them. I Believe In A Thing Called Love by British band The Darkness plays loudly as RICKY and ALEX struggle with the body and try to find a comfortable way to carry him.

SCENE 8

RACQUEL looks at her mobile.

RACQUEL: Oh no, a bus strike! Those poor boys! Surely, they won't try and move Slitgodsthroat by foot!

Spotlight moves to PRINCESS FRANCESCA looking at her mobile.

PRINCESS: A bus strike! Fabulous! How hard they will have to work on foot!

SCENE 9

Death metal music plays in darkness. The faces of two death metal music fans appear. They are at SLITGODSTHROAT's grave. They have noticed that the grave is open and SLITGODSTHROAT is not inside.

FAN NO 1 – He is gone! He has gone higher than God! Slitgodsthroat has ascended! He is travelling beyond God, up and up and up!

FAN NO 2 – No, the devil has come for him. He has been taken lower than hell!

FAN NO 1 – He is seated where Jesus once was only on a bigger stool!

FAN NO 2 – No, he is carousing with the devil, burning in ferocious fires!

FAN NO 1 – Let's go and eat hamburgers and drink milkshakes in his honour! Let us gorge ourselves! Slitgodsthroat is beyond human!

SCENE 10

The PRINCESS is sitting on her balcony. RACQUEL is doing her hair and fitting her with jewellery. ALEX and RICKY enter, exhausted, on the point of collapse and without SLITGODSTHROAT. They both collapse at the doorstep, barely able to breathe. RACQUEL tries to offer water but is stopped by the Princess.

ALEX: Princess –

RICKY: Princess –

ALEX: We did what you said –

RICKY: And we didn't text or phone or Skype –

ALEX: Because we didn't want to annoy you.

RICKY: We so wanted to surprise you!

ALEX: We left the cemetery two and a half days ago.

PRINCESS: I know. I've been irritated today – waiting.

RICKY: Slitgodsthroat was so heavy –

ALEX: And the buses remain on strike.

RICKY: We have done what you ask –

ALEX: Now you must decide –

RICKY: Who will have the honour of loving you.

ALEX: Tell us, please.

Long Pause

PRINCESS: And where is Slitgodsthroat?

ALEX: We couldn't carry him any longer.

RICKY: It is a sad story. We stopped for breath as we tried to cross the final freeway. A truck just missed the two of us but hit Slitgodsthroat in the stomach. His body shattered and splattered.

PRINCESS: So you have failed to do what I asked.

ALEX: We did what you asked - we did it - but the obesity of Slitgodsthroat made crossing that freeway impossible! The density of the traffic, Princess. Please understand!

RICKY: Racquel, could we have some water?

PRINCESS FRANCESCA again stops RACQUEL

PRINCESS: That freeway was your last, most difficult obstacle. You have failed the challenge and in failing the challenge you cannot win my love.

TOGETHER: But Princess!

PRINCESS: I will block your texts, close my Skype account and let my mobile go through to message bank. Off with you! Racquel will take you to a public washroom to clean yourselves.

TOGETHER: But Princess!

PRINCESS: I can do nothing for either of you. Go back to the city. Racquel, lead them away.

RACQUEL: Yes, Princess.

ALEX: But I love you!

RICKY: No, I love you!

PRINCESS (*Dismissing their pleas*): It looks like it may rain. Another perfect night to stay indoors. I might watch television. New episodes of 'Modern Family'.

PRINCESS departs. RACQUEL looks on anxiously as ALEX and RICKY fall into unconsciousness.

PRINCESS (*Off-stage*): Thank God I have knocked all that on the head! Racquel, before you go and get them off the ground - I don't wish to pry - but have you ever tried internet dating?

Blackout

The End

