

## ❖ Away

.....MICHAEL GOW

CHARACTERS: MEG (20's), TOM (20's)

SETTING: *Backstage of a theatre. England, 1967.*

*MEG and TOM have just been in a performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream. It is Christmas 1967 and time for MEG and TOM to go off for a holiday. Both MEG and TOM feel a nostalgic sadness about leaving the play.*

TOM: You going away tomorrow?

MEG: We're leaving really early.

TOM: Well . . . have a good time.

MEG: Where are you going?

TOM: Up the coast. Some beach.

MEG: Have a good time.

TOM: Bound to.

MEG: See you.

TOM: Yeah . . . see you in pictures.

MEG: You too.

TOM: No thanks.

MEG: You were really good in the play.

TOM: Bull.

MEG: You were!

TOM: Cut it out. I'll get a fat head.

MEG: My olds are waiting.

TOM: Anyway, I got this for you. As a memento of the play.

MEG: Thanks.

TOM: It was a real laugh being in the play with you.

MEG: No-o . . .

TOM: It was! So I got you something as a token of my appreciation.

MEG: What is it?

TOM: If you open it up you might find out. It's a piece of junk, actually. Actually I nicked it. But it's the thought that counts.

MEG: You nicked it?

TOM: Actually, I got a night job and slogged me guts out for ten years to pay for it.

MEG: A brooch.

TOM: A mere bauble.

MEG: It's really nice. That's really nice of you.

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TOM: Oh, stop before you start sobbing.

MEG: I really like it.

TOM: It's from the bottom of my heart, actually.

MEG: I wish I'd got you something

TOM: I have some beautiful memories.

MEG: Oh, yuck.

TOM: Sick, eh?

MEG: It was good fun, though. Pity it was only for one night. Fancy doing it night after night like in America. Plays go on for years there. London too. Wouldn't you get sick of it?

TOM: Depends who else was in it. Be great if you hated everyone's guts.

MEG: But then it'd only be the same as a proper job.

TOM: What are you going to be when you grow up?

MEG: An engine driver. You?

TOM: I'll wait and see.

MEG: I'd better be going. Thanks for the brooch.

TOM: It matches your eyes.

MEG: Yellow?

TOM: Joke.

MEG: Ha ha.

TOM: Sorry.

MEG: Well . . .

TOM: The olds.

MEG: Have a good Christmas.

TOM: Don't go yet.

MEG: Why?

TOM: This is fun.

MEG: What is?

TOM: Trying to think of things to say.

MEG: We haven't done the weather yet.

TOM: Do you really like the brooch?

MEG: Yep.

TOM: Good.

MEG: I really like it.

TOM: It was either jewelry or perfume. But it's hard to buy perfume for someone you don't know very well. You need to know their personal chemical make up. I could have got something on spec and it mightn't have worked on you and you'd have to put it on and stunk like a dead dog. You wouldn't have been able to wash it off, either. You have to wait till something like that fades. You wouldn't be so nice about me in the play then, eh? My name'd

be mud. That's why I went for jewelry. Safer. Better bet. Actually I asked around a few places. Got a bit of advice. Shop girls and that.

MEG: And they said jewelry?

TOM: Most of them. They said I should opt for the jewelry. A few suggested some perfume. Very subtle stuff. Couldn't actually smell it. One of them tried some on and I was halfway down her neck before any smell registered. Pointless.

MEG: Well . . . I still wish I'd got you something.

TOM: Bottle of gin would've been nice.

MEG: Oh.

TOM: Or a Harley Davidson.

MEG: Is he a poet?

TOM: It's a bike.

MEG: I knew that.

TOM: Poet! Why would I want a poet?

MEG: Maybe you read poetry.

TOM: Me? Come one! Me?

MEG: You might. You're pretty . . .

TOM: Deep?

MEG: You're pretty quiet.

TOM: Soulful?

MEG: Still waters run deep. My father's always saying that.

TOM: Still waters stink.

Source: Currency Press

