

CORNER CRITICS

A one-act dramedy by
Donna Latham

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CAST OF CHARACTERS
(in order of appearance)

BREE, teens, a snarky girl waiting for a meet-up.

JESSICA, teens, her slightly plump, hippie chick friend.

JEREMY, teens, male, their oddball friend.

LOCUST, teens-early twenties, male, Bree's scruffy, poetic meet-up.

WALK-ONS, flexible in number.

SETTING

On a street outside a coffee shop.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Corner Critics was developed through Nothing Without a Company's Word Circus II in Chicago, during May-June 2009. Director, Hannah K. Michaelson; Dramaturg, Alexander Marcus; Project Manager: Anna Rose Epstein.

(BREE and JESSICA sip drinks outside a coffee shop. Others sit and stroll nearby. Onstage performers may be used for the passersby Bree and Jeremy critique, or they may be left to the audience's imagination.)

BREE: I'm loving this beaded cami. I tried on every single piece of clothing in my closet. Finally snagged this. Isn't the color totally perfect?

JESSICA: Love it.

BREE: Not like that heinous lavender thing that girl's got on.

JESSICA: C'mon, Bree.

BREE: What?

JESSICA: Don't bring on the snarky.

BREE: You say that like it's a bad thing.

JESSICA: It's bad karma. Her top is cute! Wish I could wedge my curvy self into something like that.

BREE: You could, Jessica. If you cut out the carbs.

JESSICA: Carbs give you energy.

BREE: Only if they're good carbs.

JESSICA: The fantabulous human machine can't run without them. Remember? We learned that way back in fourth grade.

BREE: Gigando-mocha-with-extra-whip? Bad carbs. Majorly bad. Hellooo, squishy muffin top.

JESSICA: Yeah, but what a dreary place the world would be without whipped cream.

(Slurps through straw.)

BREE: No fatty, fluffy stuff for me. I'm the pom squad captain. Don't see me prancing around in a frumpified hippie chick get-up, do you?

JESSICA: Hey, I love my vintage stuff. To each her own.

BREE: Just saying.

JESSICA: I don't obsess about my looks. Who cares? I'd rather enjoy life to the fullest. Really live in the moment.

BREE: To each her own.

JESSICA: A sweet treat every now and then never hurt a soul. (*Slurps again:*) Anyway, I'm celebrating. We finally patched things up.

BREE: We used to chill here all the time, remember?

JESSICA: How could I forget? We practically lived here. I'm glad we made up, Bree.

BREE: Right back at ya.

JESSICA: What's it been? Like, a whole semester?

BREE: Seems like forever. Jess, we have so much to catch up on.

JESSICA: Tell me about it.

BREE: Where do I even start? Let's see, I broke up with him whose name shall not be spoken. Odious! At least I scored epicly stellar prom pictures. Switched my hair to fuchsia and back...Oh, how could I forget? Got elected pom captain.

JESSICA: Aye, aye! You mentioned –

BREE: I'm talking major events in my life, Jessica. Majorly major. You missed every single one.

JESSICA: Life goes famously on. The universe chugs along no matter what.

BREE: I hope you know how really sorry I am about—you know. About the, uh, incident.

JESSICA: Incident? Ha, that's a nice, powder-puffy way to say it. More like bombardment without the balls.

BREE: Whatever. A gaggle of the pom girls are full-on mean.

JESSICA: Used me for target practice.

BREE: What they did to you was totally heinous. They never should've posted those pictures—

JESSICA: —and tagged them with vile comments. Those cruel words sliced me to the soul.

BREE: But it's all behind us now. Right? We picked up right where we left off. Didn't we?

JESSICA: Look, Bree, I won't pretend that hideous experience didn't wound me. It was brutal. Daggers to the heart. All's well now, I'm proud to say. What doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

BREE: Do you believe time really does heal all wounds?

JESSICA: Most of the wound heals, but there will always be a jagged scar. Here—across the heart. You can't see it. No one can. For long stretches, you forget all about it. Most days you're not even aware of it. Other days? Pesky thing itches like poison ivy.

BREE: (*Has been people-watching and not paying attention to Jessica's speech.*) Yipes!

JESSICA: Bree, are you listening? I just poured my heart out to you. Did you hear a single word?

BREE: Eww! Girl's frumped out in stonewashed Mom Jeans.

JESSICA: Bree, really? You're still smack talking? After we finally patched things up?

BREE: Oops. My bad.

JESSICA: So, what time did Jeremy and Locust say they'd meet you?

BREE: Around eightish.

JESSICA: (*Checks cell phone for time:*) It's 8:48 now. Been waiting nearly an hour.

BREE: An hour? Are you kidding me? Wonder what's taking so long.

JESSICA: It's probably nothing.

BREE: That loony Jeremy. He's clueless as Adam on Mother's Day. Probably forgot where he parked his mom's car again.

JESSICA: He's still doing that?

BREE: Daily. Had to rustle up the mall cops last week to shuttle him up and down every aisle in the parking lot. Should I text Locust again? Or is that too desperate?

JESSICA: You've already texted him every five minutes.

(JEREMY enters. Glances around.)

BREE: Hey, Germy! Over here!

JEREMY: Fancy meeting you here! 'Sup, Dudes?

BREE: Helloooo! We're waiting for you.

JEREMY: For me?

JESSICA: For realsies.

BREE: No duh, Sherlock!

JEREMY: Dig deeper, Watson!

BREE: We've been waiting a bajillion years. Where's Locust?

JEREMY: Locust?

BREE: Duh! Locust! Your best friend. The guy you set me up with.

JEREMY: Oh, right, right. Locust.

BREE: You promised to bring him here, 'member? To meet me.

JEREMY: You got a big mondo glob of foam on your nose, Bree.

BREE: Uh, gross! (*Rubs nose:*) Did I get it?

JESSICA: You got it.

BREE: Are you pos? I'll horrify Locust if my face is all foamy and frothy.

JEREMY: Hey, did you ever wonder what kind of repulsive gunk would zip up your nose if you didn't have those bristly little hairs as sentries?

BREE: I don't have spinach squished between my teeth, do I?

(Shows teeth.)

JESSICA: No, no. Choppers look great.

JEREMY: Think of all the goop that would ooze out if the schnoz bristles didn't hold it back.

BREE: Germy, you're yammering. Focus. Focus. Look into my eyes.

JEREMY: Focus pocus dominocus. I am getting sleepy.

BREE: Mission Control to Germy: Do you read me? Return from the galaxy far, far away. Over.

JEREMY: Chillax. You're on ten. I need you at seven.

BREE: Are you going to answer my question or what?

JEREMY: Dude's still sweating in the salt mines. Just texted me to say he's running late.

BREE: (*Receives text message:*) Finally! Locust punched out and

he's on his way.

JESSICA: Stoked!

BREE: I can't wait to finally, finally, finally meet Locust in the flesh. He's amazing! Phenomenal!

JEREMY: He rocks. Class act all the way. Insane class. Epic.

BREE: He totally dazzled me when we talked. Plus, his Tweets are über clever.

JESSICA: Never underestimate the power of clever. So, what's up with the moniker? Locust?

BREE: Duh! He's in an indie emo band. The Plagues.

JEREMY: Locust plays lead guitar. He's a poet, too.

JESSICA: Hmm, talented guy.

BREE: He's incredible! Sang me a mushy love song over the phone and recited poetry. Rhymed couplets.

JEREMY: He's, you know, a barge. Like Shakespeare.

JESSICA: Oh, yum. Caught a whiff of the bakery next door. I'm gonna dash over and snag one of those to-die-for red velvet cupcakes.

BREE: You sure?

JESSICA: The red velvet is luscious.

BREE: You slurped a bazillion calories...

JESSICA: I guess.

BREE: Already.

JESSICA: Well...I'll just fantasize. For now.

JEREMY: Hey, Jess, you got some kinda fuzzball on your lip. Dandelion fluff or something. Puff. (*Jeremy puffs air between lips to demonstrate. Jessica repeats:*) Again. Once more. Okay,

you launched it to Pluto, the little planet that couldn't. What would you do without me?

JESSICA: Thanks, Jer.

JEREMY: I tell you what. Locust is deep. Pens angsty lyrics about the apocalypse and processed foods.

BREE: I love, love, love deep guys.

JESSICA: Who doesn't?

JEREMY: You'll be great with Locust, Bree. He's deep as the Mighty Mississippi Ocean. Real sensitive, too.

BREE: Loves me some sensitive souls. Whoa—take a look at this butterface!

JESSICA: That's so random. And so mean. We're talking about Locust. Make nice, pussycat.

JEREMY: Now, there's a lady who puts the bra in bravo.

JESSICA: You too, Jeremy. No trash talking.

JEREMY: (*Whispers to Jessica:*) If you can't beat 'em, join 'em, Jessie Girl. And you can't beat 'em. Watch out or Bree'll go after you—again.

JESSICA: No more, guys. It's *deja vous* all over again. After all we've been through, Bree? I'm shocked! Bashing is bad karma. What goes around comes around.

BREE: Karma rant, anyone?

JESSICA: Sooner or later, karma swoops around to bite you in the bootie.

BREE: Talk about *deja vous*. You're still karma-crazed, Jessica. Obsessive-repulsive.

JESSICA: Karma reigns.

JEREMY: Karma powns.

JESSICA: True! Now, back to Locust...

BREE: Right, right. I'm totally convinced Locust is The One.

JESSICA: Whoa, Bree, you haven't even met him yet. Aren't you rushing things just a bit?

BREE: A girl knows these things. Tats, anyone?

JEREMY: On the throat? Like, yee-ouch.

BREE: It's so skanky.

JEREMY: Dude. Eyeballing that fire-breathing neck dragon totally harshes my mellow. Had to hurt. Needles on the neck? Gah, scorpions are creepy-crawling over my scalp just thinking about it.

JESSICA: Bree! You were telling me about Locust...

BREE: He's The One. I'm positive. I feel it in my bones.

JESSICA: I feel everything in my heart and soul. Bones? Not so much.

BREE: Ahem. Tweak that high BMI...

JESSICA: Pin-thin is so not my thing. If you'll remember from the, um, incident.

BREE: Anyway, I'm everything Locust's searching for. Beautiful, smart, ambitious, funny. Compassionate. Can't forget compassionate.

JEREMY: What if he's a total tool in person?

BREE: He's your friend.

JEREMY: So? What if he's the tooliest tool in Toolville?

BREE: You don't know what he's like?

JEREMY: Who?

BREE: Duh! Locust!

JEREMY: Yeah, Locust.

BREE: Focus, Gergy. Focus.

JEREMY: Focused on Locust. I am Sam. Sam I am. Who's gonna whip up green eggs and ham?

BREE: Oh, I absolutely adore her hair! What color is that? Eggplant?

JESSICA: Plum?

BREE: Plummy eggplant. Love, love, love it.

JESSICA: Yay, Bree! You finally eeked out a positive comment. See, it's not so tricky. I could get so used to this.

BREE: Whatever. (*Beat.*) Locust is a real gentleman, too. Not a tool like him whose name shall not be spoken, Taylor Trotter.

JESSICA: You sensed his aura over the phone?

BREE: Duh! Why wouldn't I? As if! Oh. My. God. Check out this heifer with the cottage cheese thighs.

JESSICA: That didn't take long. Where, oh, where did the positive Bree go? Wonder what you say about me when I'm not around...

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