

Whatever Will Bewilder

By Pete Malicki

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Cast: HAWK – a black man in his twenties
MARK – Hawk’s friend; same age
SARAH – Hawk’s girlfriend
ALI – a pretty, white / Eurasian female. Erratic personality

Scene One

STAGE: An indiscernible location. There are side and backstage doors.

(Sarah is standing in the middle of the stage facing the audience. Ali stands behind her and to the side, looking at her with a look of mild displeasure)

SARAH: It’s funny.

(Ali starts pacing around Sarah, inspecting her. Sarah doesn’t see her)

SARAH: You know how people don’t see you? You know how – no matter what you do – somebody just never pays any attention to you? I’m sure you do. Think back to the first guy, or girl, who you fell in love with in high school. You’d think about them all day, you’d write about them in your diary, you’d stare at the back of their head in class while your teacher yells at you for bludging. But they never seem to notice *you*. They’d walk right past you in the hallway; they’d stand beside you in the canteen line and laugh with their friends; they’d look right through you as though you didn’t exist.

(Ali stands directly in front of Sarah, frowning with her arms crossed. Sarah continues speaking without acknowledging her)

SARAH: It keeps building and building until you’ve cultivated your own little obsessive-compulsive disorder. And then one day you speak to them.

(Ali flicks her hand across Sarah’s face and when she gets no response, shakes her head and turns away)

SARAH: You try to be perfect. Everything you say or do in their presence is carefully planned and executed. But the more you think about what you’re saying, the more unnatural and uneasy you become. They will probably never know how you really feel about them unless you tell them.

(Ali starts blowing on Sarah’s ears. She mimes ‘blah blah blah’ and impersonates a mouth with her hand while she talks)

SARAH: I guess what I’m trying to say is this: you always have a greater impact than you think you do. Whether it’s because someone hates you, or because they love you, or just because they want to sleep with you, you probably mean something to more people than you ever would have thought.

(Ali claps her hands in front of Sarah but she is still ignored. Angrily, she walks offstage via the backstage exit)

SARAH: I wonder who's lives I've affected like that.

(Sarah leaves the stage in a different direction to Ali)

Scene Two

STAGE: The living room of Hawk's house. One lounge in the middle of the stage faces the audience, which from the characters' perspective is the television. A door from the back of the stage leads to the bathroom.

HAWK: *(Enters and sits down on the lounge)* Random. *(Adopts a philosopher's pose)* I've been thinking a fair bit lately. You know how stuff just seems to happen for no reason? Like when your dog starts barking and belting around in little circles, or when your girlfriend comes in and says 'Hi honey, how are you?' and you say 'Good thanks, how about you?' and then she tells you to go fuck yourself and throws her handbag at your head. It all seems pretty random, but there's always a rational explanation. *(pauses)* Well – *an* – explanation. Like, your dog might have a flea biting its arse, or your girlfriend might be on the rag and have one of those 'hormonal imbalances.' But I was wondering if anything 'just happens.' Is anything truly random?

You see, I have this university assignment due in a few days which I've barely started. Our physics lecturer wants us to write an essay on some famous quote which says; 'The concept of randomness is used as a substitute for a proper scientific explanation.' Basically, I'm supposed to discuss whether or not random events actually exist.

So I thought of something. A test. I went up to a whole bunch of different people and said 'Randomly select a number between one and ten.' *(Pauses and looks around¹)* I got them to tell me their number, then I told them to pick again. *(Another pause)* Do you know how many people picked the same number twice? Zero. Out of a hundred people, no one picked the same number twice. Do the math. And what's more, not a single person said 'One point six one eight,' or 'seven and three quarters.' I never said to pick a *whole* number. 'Two and a half' fits all the requirements of being between one and ten, but no one ever said it.

So it *seemed* to me that supposedly 'random' events still have guidelines. Whether they're the guidelines that people create for themselves, or the laws of science, there always seems to be something which stops an event from 'just happening.' But I'm still not convinced. There's something inside which tells me that randomness must exist. It must.

(Mark enters the stage holding a ruler and a compass. Hawk sees him and stops looking at the audience/television)

MARK: G'day Hawk. How are ya mate?

HAWK: Mark! I've got a test for you. Randomly select a number between one and ten.

MARK: *(Sits down with Hawk)* One point six one eight.

¹ This gives the audience time to select their own number.

HAWK: (*Shocked*) What?

MARK: I was watching this doco on the ABC right? They were talking about beauty. The ancient Greeks, or the Romans, or the Nepalese... I can't remember, but they were definitely ancient. Anyway, these ancient dudes worked out a mathematical formula for beauty. It's a ratio. One to one point six one eight it is.

HAWK: Huh?

MARK: A beautiful person fits the ratio closely, and an ugly bastard like yourself wouldn't fit it at all.

HAWK: But... how would a ratio make someone beautiful? That makes no sense.

MARK: Sure it does. (*Using the compass and ruler to illustrate his point*) Let's say we measure your nose and it's one inch wide. We then measure your mouth, and it's one point six one eight inches wide. You fit the scale of one to one point six one eight, therefore you are beautiful.

HAWK: (*Not convinced*) So I'm beautiful just because my nose and mouth are certain widths.

MARK: No, *you're* ugly.

HAWK: Thanks dickhead.

MARK: Pleasure love. Yeah, so this ratio works in heaps of different places all over the body. (*Demonstrates each of these*) The smallest bone in your fingers to the next bone; the middle teeth to the next teeth; the feet to the navel and the navel to the head. They all fit that same ratio.

HAWK: Well. I'm amazed. Looks like there's a formula for everything these days.

MARK: Yeah. You can blame maths for your ugliness now.

HAWK: Ooh, good one Fabio.

MARK: Touched a nerve did I Hawk?

HAWK: Whatever you reckon.

MARK: Anyway, I think there's more to beauty than just that.

HAWK: Well of course. Beauty is within as much as without.

MARK: No, I mean I think there's more to *physical* beauty than only what you can see.

HAWK: (*Screws up his face*) That makes no sense, Mark.

MARK: It makes no sense to you 'cause you're a dick.

(Hawk gives Mark a dirty look, then shakes his head. A beat)

MARK: Hey, let's watch TV. *(He presses a button on the remote which is on the couch. They both face the audience/television)* What's this show?

HAWK: It's the news, Mark.

MARK: Oh... what's it about?

HAWK: For Christ's sake! All you ever do is watch TV. Were you specially bred to be a retard?

MARK: Yeah. So?

(Hawk shakes his head. They continue watching for a few moments, then Mark starts laughing.)

MARK: This is pretty funny, man.

HAWK: *(Sighs, then looks side to side like he did when he first appeared)* Let me tell you a little bit about my friend Mark here. Contrary to his appearance, Mark is quite a smart bloke. My personal theory is that he's been playing dumb for so damned long his brain actually adapted to the reduced power level. But he *does* come up with some pretty amazing things. Like when he rigged up his remote control car with the toaster, and we could watch TV without having to leave the room for food.

His academic background is in philosophy and psychology, so he knows a fair bit about people and behaviour. *(Thoughtful)* I don't really know if that explains why he's still working at Coles though. Anyway, I reckon he'd be a good person to talk to about my theory on randomness. *(Turns the TV off with the remote and turns to Mark)* Hey mate, I've been thinking...

MARK: *(Interrupting; excited)* Aaw, hey! Guess what I came up with the other day? Check this.

(Mark puts his arms around Hawk in an embrace. He pulls him close and starts rubbing their chests together)

HAWK: What the hell?

MARK: Just imagine I'm a woman.

HAWK: O-kay.

MARK: You'd be rubbing against my breasts! *(Breaks away)* Look, every man's goal in life is to feel a woman's airbags, right? And when you're hugging a chick, they're pressed up right against you. I mean, you're not exactly holding them with your hands *(he demonstrates)*, but you can feel them all the same.

HAWK: (*Gives Mark a long stare, then shakes his head*) You really need a girlfriend, mate. And whoever she turns out to be, I feel sorry for her.

MARK: Oh come on. I bet you think the exact same thing whenever you're hugging Sarah. At least I'm honest about my perv...osity.

HAWK: Too honest, mate. Too honest.

MARK: (*Sighs*) Were you going to say something earlier?

HAWK: Huh? Oh, yeah. There's this thing which has been bewildering me, and I need your philosopher's brain. I've been given this essay on randomness which I'm really struggling to get some good ideas for. Does anything happen which can't be explained with science, or is there a logical reason for everything?

MARK: Microsoft.

HAWK: What?

MARK: Pretty much everything they've ever produced defies all conventional laws of logic.

HAWK: I'm being serious, Mark. If nothing is random, then it seems logical to me that you could accurately predict the future with mathematical equations.

MARK: Yeah sure. There'd only be about a *billion* factors to consider.

HAWK: Think about it though. If you flip a coin, it's subject to the laws of physics. The amount and direction of force used to propel it, gravity, wind; they all determine whether it will land heads or tails. There's no *luck* involved.

MARK: I guess if there's a formula for beauty, there's probably a formula for everything.

HAWK: No. You're wrong.

MARK: Er, didn't I just *agree* with you?

HAWK: No. I believe that randomness exists. I believe that some things happen for no reason, and I am making it my personal quest to discover these things.

MARK: How about spontaneous human combustion?

HAWK: Urngh, can't you take anything seriously? Do you want me to fail my stupid degree and be forced to spend the rest of my life mowing lawns and cleaning windows?

(*Mark and Hawk both look as there is a sound at the door. Sarah lets herself in*)

SARAH: (*To Hawk*) Hi honey, how are you?

HAWK: Good thanks, how about you? (*Covers his head, as though expecting a handbag to be thrown at him*)

SARAH: (*Raises an eyebrow*) I'm good. Thanks. And how are you Mark? I haven't seen you since... ooh, last week.

MARK: (*Gets up enthusiastically*) Yeah. I've missed you Sarah. Give me a hug.

(*Mark embraces Sarah tightly and beams over her shoulder at Hawk, then raises his eyebrows and gives him the thumbs up. Hawk is furious, and when their hug is over he puts a protective arm around Sarah and takes her to the lounge. She puts her handbag down*)

HAWK: How was work, babe? Did you have a good time?

SARAH: Nope.

HAWK: Oh.

MARK: (*Looks down at his crotch*) I just thought of something. (*Grabs his ruler and compass and leaves to the bathroom, slightly doubled over*)

SARAH: What's up with you two? You're acting slightly more unintelligent than normal.

HAWK: I dunno. I think it has something to do with the planets. Maybe Pluto's out of whack or something.

SARAH: Didn't you know? Pluto isn't a real planet. Turns out it was just a passing... um, space phenomenon. Gases and comets and all that junk.

HAWK: What? But it was my favourite!

SARAH: I'm sorry.

HAWK: No wonder I felt bad.

SARAH: You'll be okay.

HAWK: It's just not fair.

SARAH: No. (*beat*) Hey, you know what happened at work today? I got a letter from the runner which was personally addressed to me, and when I opened it up it was blank. Just a blank sheet of paper, all folded up into perfect thirds.

HAWK: (*Musing*) Weird.

SARAH: Yeah. And then later on this woman comes up to me and makes a funny face. She's not part of my team, and I don't even remember seeing her in the office before. So I said

‘What’s your problem?’ and she just laughs, blows me a kiss and runs off. It was totally random.

HAWK: Sounds bizarre.

SARAH: You gotta wonder about security.

HAWK: Was she pretty? White?

SARAH: Yes and yes.

HAWK: Well there you go. Nobody stops a pretty white girl.

SARAH: (*Snuggles up close to Hawk on the lounge*) I’m a pretty white girl. Would *you* stop me?

MARK: (*Swaggers out of the bathroom with his compass and ruler*) Heh heh. Well, I have no idea what *that* means.

SARAH: What what means, Mark?

HAWK: Oh, he’s on some quest to find beauty using stationery.

SARAH: Makeup would work better. Oh! What’s the time. There’s something on TV I wanna watch.

(*Sarah grabs the remote and presses a button. Hawk and Mark exchange a look, then they all start watching the television. Hawk looks around again*)

HAWK: I suppose I should take this opportunity to say a few words about Sarah. She is my girlfriend. She is great in bed. Um... what else, what else. She can cook.

No, but seriously, she’s the best. She is smart, funny and great to be with, and she likes all the same things I do. (*Considers this*) Except girls.

Sarah works for a market research firm – you know the ones? They stand in shopping centres and annoy the shit out of you while you’re trying to select which brand of yoghurt to buy? Well, I know this doesn’t sound very admirable, but Sarah doesn’t play the game the way the rules tell her to. What she does is this: she takes all the surveys to a quiet little park and sits there filling them out by herself. She’s the absolute *master* of handwriting: can make a hundred pages look completely different from each other. Anyway, aside from saving herself a lot of time, she gets to rig the answers. There’s usually a little box which says ‘How much would you pay for this product?’ and she always writes down a really low price. Then when she goes back to the office to compile the results, she mixes *her* surveys in with the other staff members’ ones so there’s never an obvious trend. (*Laughs*) You know who to thank when the price of Milo goes down. My Sarah.

MARK: (*Jumping up unexpectedly*) My bladder’s about to explode. I have to take a piss.

SARAH: Didn’t you just go to the bathroom, Mark?

MARK: Yeah. So? (*Frowns and goes back into the bathroom*)

SARAH: Hawk, I really worry about that guy sometimes.

HAWK: Join the club.

SARAH: Is there an entry fee?

HAWK: Nope. But you have to bring your own tea.

SARAH: Oh well. I can't make that kind of commitment.

MARK: *(From the bathroom)* Ooh yeah. That's better. *(Hawk and Sarah exchange a look, then after a slight pause)* What the fuck!?

(The door bursts open and Ali storms through)

ALI: Jesus Christ. I can't believe he just flopped it out right in front of me!

HAWK: *(Getting up)* Who the fuck are you?

SARAH: *(Getting up)* What the fuck are *you* doing here?

HAWK: *(To Sarah)* Who the fuck is she?

SARAH: I don't know.

ALI: What's on TV?

MARK: *(Emerging from the bathroom)* Who are you?

HAWK: *(To Mark)* Who's she? Why was she in the bathroom?

ALI: Change the channel. Who's got the remote?

SARAH: What's she doing here Mark?

MARK: What?! Why are you asking me?

HAWK: She was in the bathroom with *you*.

MARK: She was hiding behind the shower curtain! She just sprung out on me while I was taking a slash.

SARAH: What's her name?

MARK: How the hell should I know?!

HAWK: You were in the room together.

MARK: Jesus Christ. It's not as though we had a fucking book club meeting!

ALI: *(Singing)* Neighbours. Everybody has good neighbours.

(Everybody stares at Ali as she sits down on the couch, sniffs Sarah's purse, then puts it aside)

ALI: Good. Silence.

HAWK: *(Whispering to Sarah)* What's she doing on our lounge?

SARAH: *(Whispering in reply)* I don't know.

HAWK: Did you recognise her? Do you know who she is?

SARAH: You know how I told you about that chick who made a face at me in the office?

HAWK: The pretty white girl?

SARAH: *(Nods and points indicatively at Ali)* That's her.

MARK: *(Also whispering)* What are you guys on about? Pretty white girl?

HAWK: She made a face at Sarah at work today.

MARK: Who is she?

SARAH: We don't bloody know, okay?

ALI: What is this? A library? If you're not going to talk properly, then don't talk at all. It's distracting.

(Mark, Hawk and Sarah all exchange a look)

SARAH: What are you doing in our house?

ALI: Well I'm *trying* to watch TV, but you aren't making it easy.

SARAH: I mean why are you in *our* house? Nobody here invited you in. And who the hell are you anyway?

ALI: Look. Can't a complete stranger who's broken into someone's house and hid in the bathroom for two hours watch TV in peace?

(They all exchange glances again)

HAWK: *(Taking authority)* Alright girl. I don't know how you got in here, and I don't know *why* you got in here, but you will leave immediately. I don't want to call the police but that's what I generally do when people break into my house.

(Ali scratches her head with her middle finger, directed at Hawk)

HAWK: Fine then. Sarah, pass me your phone.

SARAH: I don't have it with me.

HAWK: Shit. Mark?

MARK: I don't own a phone Hawk. You know that.

ALI: *(Turning to face Hawk)* Hawk? What kind of a name is Hawk?

HAWK: *(To Ali)* You are not in a position to ask *me* any questions. *(To Sarah)* Why didn't you bring your phone, Sarah? You know I don't have a landline.

(Ali makes a loud bird noise)

SARAH: *(Giving Ali a foul look)* The battery's empty. I left it charging.

HAWK: You could've charged it here if you wanted to.

(Hawk and Sarah stare at each other; Mark watches them. Ali starts looking around like Hawk did earlier)

ALI: Perhaps I should introduce myself. People usually call me Ali, but my full name is Alexandria Chang. Granddad is Chinese. If you asked me what I did, I wouldn't be a happy girl. Why? Well...

(Takes a deep breath) You know how when you first meet somebody, they ask you what you do? *(Imitating a man's voice)* 'Hi, I'm Billy.' 'Oh hello Billy, I'm Ali.' 'Hello Ali. What do you do?' Now, I'm supposed to reply by telling Billy what my job is. *(Jabs her chest with her finger)* I don't have a job. If I say to Billy 'I'm unemployed,' then Billy will think I'm lazy.

Yeah? Well fuck you Billy. I have about fifteen different hobbies and interests and I put a lot of time and effort into them. Just because nobody's paying me, doesn't mean what I do doesn't matter. *(Grinds her teeth)* Look at yourself! You stupid bastard! You go to work, you suck corporate dick, and you make lots of money. Then you get into your Mercedes and drive back to your million dollar home where your token wife who you hate has cooked you dinner. You go into your dining room – which you selected from a fucking catalogue – and you eat while ignoring your wife's stories about her cancer. Then when you're fattened up nicely, you go and watch this... this shitbox *(points accusingly at the TV)* all night, even though there's fuck all on. Then you go back to work for the same old shit the next day, and the next day, and the next week, and the next twenty years.

(Lowers her voice) You hate your life Billy, and I love every god damned second of mine. So next time you're looking down at me from your high horse, have a look at *this*. *(Ali snarls viciously and points her middle finger up in the air. When she's done, she crosses her arms and fumes quietly)* You fucking prick. *(Turns the TV off)*

HAWK: Okay, fine. We don't have a phone, so we can't call the cops.

MARK: I told you you should get a landline.

HAWK: Shut up Mark.

ALI: *(Getting off the lounge. Her expression changes quickly and considerably)* Your name's Mark is it? Pleased to meet you Mark. *(Shakes Mark's hand)*

MARK: Um.

ALI: I'm Ali.

MARK: Good.

ALI: Aren't you going to introduce me around?

(Mark stares at Ali, then pulls out his compass and ruler and starts measuring her face. Ali frowns interestedly, then poses for him)

HAWK: What are you doing Mark? I want that psycho out of here!

MARK: Hmm. She *is* pretty.

SARAH: She's pretty-in-the-wrong-fucking-house, that's what she is.

ALI: Give me a break, Sarah. I'm being appraised.

SARAH: *(Shocked)* Sarah?

ALI: *(To Mark)* Phi.² The golden ratio. The square root of five, plus one, all divided by two.

SARAH: How'd you know my...

ALI: Shhhh. Using the ratio of phi – one point six one eight to one – we can determine beauty. This ratio can be found in ancient architecture, nature, DNA, and even snowflakes.

MARK: How'd you know that?

SARAH: How'd you know my name?

ALI: Now now children. One question at a time.

HAWK: *(Angry)* Right. She's gotta go. *(Marches over to Ali)*

MARK: Wait!

SARAH: Wait! How do you know who I am?!

² Pronounced fEYE, rather than PIE or FEE.

ALI: *(Frowns at Hawk, then turns to Mark)* I had an interest in mathematics and numerology one day, so I went to the library and stole a few books.

MARK: *(Spoony)* Really?

ALI: I gave them back though. I guess that's not really stealing, just borrowing. But I don't have a library card.

HAWK: How do you know my girlfriend's name, why are you in my house, and why are you acting like you have three different personalities which are all defective?

ALI: Excuse me, birdman, but we're trying to have a conversation here. We'll play twenty questions afterwards.

(Hawk fumes, then picks Ali up and starts taking her to the front door. She starts crying out in pain and thrashing about)

ALI: My tendonitis! Oh my god!

HAWK: *(Drops Ali)* Shit. Sorry.

ALI: *(Glares at Hawk, then grins widely and marches over to Mark, taking his hand)* C'mon Mark. Let me show you something. *(Leads Mark into the bathroom. He shrugs at Hawk just before the door shuts)*

(Sarah stares at the door then goes and sits on the couch. Hawk joins her)

HAWK: *(Exasperated)* Who the hell is this Ali woman? Sarah, can you please help me get her out of my house?

SARAH: *(Absently)* I'd never seen her before she came into my work today, but somehow she knows my name.

HAWK: Yeah well, she certainly seems to know who *you* are. But that doesn't change the fact that I want her out of here.

SARAH: How did she know where I lived? Hang on, this *isn't even* where I live! It's my boyfriend's house.

HAWK: *(Shakes Sarah)* Are you guys setting me up? Is this some sort of prank? *(Sarah doesn't respond)* I know we played a prank on you all that time ago. I hope this isn't some long awaited vengeance.

(Sarah still doesn't respond. Hawk leans back on the couch)

MARK: *(From the bathroom)* Holy shit!

(Hawk turns his head to face the bathroom door. Sarah looks from side to side, then faces the television)

SARAH: When I first met Hawk, he invited me back to his house for the overly romantic ‘pizza and a movie.’ We’d only been going out for a few days at this stage. Anyway, we were sitting there watching Tomb Raider when someone knocked on the door. Before we had time to get up, this lunatic burst through the door with a knife and ran straight up to us. Hawk punched him in the guts, but then the man put the knife up to his throat. God I was scared. I almost wet myself right here on the lounge. The psycho with the knife told me to go into the bathroom or else he’d kill Hawk. I was so scared I just did it without thinking. I stayed in there for three minutes, and then when I came back out they were sitting together eating popcorn.

And that was how I met Mark. *(Holds up her fist)* It was also how Hawk lost his favourite tooth. When we got back from emergency, we made a pact that neither of us would ever play a practical joke on the other again. I don’t ever intend to break that pact.

HAWK: I think I’d better go check on Mark before he gets stabbed by that freak. *(Gets up and goes over to the bathroom. Opens the door)* Oh my god! That’s disgusting! *(Shuts the door and backs away)* That’s gotta be illegal!

SARAH: What? What’s going on?

(Mark emerges from the bathroom. Ali follows shortly)

MARK: That was amazing.

HAWK: That was *revolting*!

SARAH: What?

MARK: I didn’t know that was possible.

ALI: The human body’s an amazing thing.

MARK: It sure is, Ali. Especially *yours*.

ALI: I’m no different to anyone. That just takes practice.

SARAH: Could someone please tell me what...

MARK: I like you Ali. You can stay if you want.

HAWK: Oh no she damn well can’t. I’m not letting somebody who breaks into my house stay around just because she can... she can... *(tries to find the right words)*

ALI: I have a cunning plan.

(Ali skips quickly out to the front door and lets herself out. There is a pause while the three remaining in the room exchange looks)

SARAH: What was she just doing in the bathroom...

(Sarah is cut off by a loud knock)

MARK: *(Catching on)* Oh. What's that? Sounds like we have a visitor. *(Calling)* Come in. It's open.

ALI: *(Runs excitedly up to Mark and starts hugging him. Pommy dialect)* Oh hello Mark darling, how are you? You're looking well.

MARK: *(Holds Ali tightly)* Mmm. Good.

ALI: *(Breaks away)* Hawk. It's good to see you gorgeous. How about a hug for your old chum?

(Ali hugs Hawk. Hawk looks annoyed, then surprised, then raises his eyebrows appraisingly. Mark looks expectant and mouths, 'Well?' Hawk nods and gives the thumbs up)

ALI: What have you been doing lately Hawky? Found a cure for AIDS? Or cancer, or death?

SARAH: He's trying to get rid of his unwanted visitor...

MARK: He's trying to discover *random*. There is a common theory that everything has some form of logical, mathematical, or scientific explanation, and that nothing happens for no reason. Hawk believes that some things *do* happen for no reason.

ALI: Really? *(Turns to Hawk; in a loud voice)* REALLY?!

HAWK: *(Eyes widening; taken aback)* Uh... yes.

ALI: I like wristwatches. Especially the digital ones with heat sensors. *(To Mark)* Do you have a stamp collection?

HAWK: Is she sick?

MARK: I think she's onto something. Or *on* something...

ALI: I'm hungry. *(Sits down on the couch)* Hawk, make your guest some food. Be a good host now.

SARAH: Am I a ghost? Why are you all ignor...

ALI: Chop chop. I'm not a model, I don't get full just from breathing. ...Actually, a chop would be nice.

MARK: *(To Hawk)* Don't you see what she's doing?

HAWK: No.

MARK: It's her. Randomness personified. She is saying and doing the most random shit. First she says something weird, then she says something normal. She reacts appropriately sometimes, and inappropriately other times. At random.

ALI: He's onto me. (*Suggestively*) Or *onto* me.

HAWK: But... surely she reacts under guidelines still. If she was truly random, then she would speak in multiple languages, and walk backwards, and probably break more things.

SARAH: Can someone acknowledge me?

HAWK: Oh my god, I've just worked it out! There are *degrees* of randomness.

ALI: Hooray!

HAWK: If someone picks a number between one and ten, and they come up with six, it's still random. It's just not *as* random as it could be. (*Excited*) It'd be like if someone gave you some jelly, and told you to put it in a bowl. You could have one big blob, or lots of little pools of it.

ALI: He's so profound.

HAWK: I'm saved!

ALI: Fantastic! (*Getting up again*) Let's play charades. Hawk, get on the floor.

HAWK: (*Taken aback*) What? Why?

ALI: It's charades. You lie on the ground. (*No one moves*) 'Black Hawk Down!'

(*Mark and Hawk stare at Ali in horror of her terrible pun*)

MARK: (*Reverently*) Let's all have a minute's silence for that joke. It was a lonely joke. Had a bad job, a pregnant wife...

ALI: Alright, don't rub it in.

SARAH: Have I stopped existing? Did I become invisible when...

ALI: Hark!

MARK: Yes?

HAWK: Yes?

ALI: (*Giggling*) I said 'Hark.'

SARAH: (*Anxiety attack*) Why are you all ignoring me?! Is this freak more important to you two than I am? Hawk, I'm your girlfriend! Could you find the decency to respond to me every once in a while?

HAWK: Aw, Sarah. Come over here. (*Puts an arm around her*) We're not trying to hurt your feelings babe. It's not that we're ignoring you, it's just that there's something more important going on at the moment.

SARAH: (*Breaking away*) Is that so? I guess there are more significant things to worry about than your girlfriend. I'll just get out of your way and let you deal with your *important* friend here.

(*Sarah marches into the bathroom and slams the door. Hawk puts his head in his hands*)

MARK: Probably shouldn't've said that.

HAWK: I didn't mean it like that.

MARK: Did you mean it like, 'You're a crap girlfriend, babe.'?

HAWK: Piss off.

ALI: So tactless. You really need to try a bit better than that with women. Maybe I could give you a few pointers sometime.

HAWK: (*Looking up*) Get fucked.

ALI: Mark, you're a woman okay? Alright, here we go. (*Speaks slowly in a deep voice*) 'Hello Markina, how are you?'

MARK: (*Playing along; high voice*) I'm good thanks, Mr Ali.

ALI: 'That's good.' (*Normal voice*) Now here's an example of what not to say. (*Slow/deep voice*) 'Markina. Do you want to have sex with me?'

HAWK: (*Furious; standing up*) That's it! I've had enough of you, you cheeky little bitch. Get out of my fucking house right now or you'll be coughing up your teeth for the next ten minutes.

MARK: Fair go, Hawk. She's only joking around.

HAWK: She stopped being funny long before she broke into my fucking house.

ALI: Hey pal, don't blame me because you're an asshole to your girlfriend.

HAWK: (*Intimidating*) Are you for real?

ALI: (*Unfazed by Hawk*) I'm the least of your problems.

HAWK: You're the least of my problems?

ALI: Yes! Sarah's the one you should be concerned about right now. She's in that bathroom crying because she thinks that *you* don't care about her.

HAWK: Wait up. How did you know her name? You called her Sarah before anyone else here did.

MARK: (*Uncomfortable with the situation*) I think I'd better go check on her, Hawk.

HAWK: Whatever. (*To Ali*) Well? Answer me.

(*Mark heads towards the bathroom, opening the door*)

ALI: If I told you, you wouldn't believe me.

HAWK: Try me.

ALI: (*Deep breath*) I'm her cousin. My mother is the sister of her father. We didn't see each other much as kids because we lived so far away, but I recently moved out of home and came down here. I've been trying to find her for months.

HAWK: (*Unsatisfied*) You're her cousin. Well that's just wonderful. And tell me, when you're not breaking into people's houses, what do you actually *do*?

(*Ali's eyes widen angrily at the question*)

SARAH: (*Screeched*) Fuck off!

(*Mark hastily exits the bathroom. Ali and Hawk both lose their intense expressions and look over at him*)

MARK: Jesus! I was only trying to give her a hug.

HAWK: A hug!?! Christ you're a brainless moron, Mark. Girls don't want to be felt up when they're upset.

ALI: Some do.

(*Mark and Hawk both turn to face Ali, shocked*)

ALI: Well it's true! I knew this little brunette who...

HAWK: You're a sick woman. You should seek counselling.

ALI: (*Robotic voice*) Seek and destroy.

(*Hawk rolls his eyes flamboyantly. Sarah opens the bathroom door and storms over to the lounge to get her handbag*)

HAWK: What are you doing, babe?

SARAH: I'm going home. *You* can have your freak.

HAWK: Don't leave.

ALI: (*To Sarah*) It hurts, doesn't it?

SARAH: (*Stopping dead*) Excuse me?

ALI: Being ignored.

SARAH: What do you mean?

ALI: It hurts to be ignored.

SARAH: (*Not comprehending*) Why are you saying that?

ALI: I was giving you a taste of what it's like.

SARAH: (*Repeating Ali*) What it's like...

ALI: (*Getting emotional*) What it's like to be *ignored*, damn it! You're still doing it!

SARAH: Still doing what? What am I doing?!

ALI: Argh! I can't believe you! Do you really not know who I am?

HAWK: I guess you're not really cousins, then. (*Mark gives Hawk a prolonged look at this comment*)

SARAH: Am I *supposed* to know who you are?

ALI: Fuck Sarah. Haven't you seen me when you're in the park rigging those surveys, or when you go to the shops and you bump into me near the milk, or when you're walking home at night and no one's around? Who do you think watches you in your sleep?

MARK: (*To Hawk*) Did I miss something?

SARAH: You're following me? You're *stalking* me!?

ALI: I *love* you!

(*Mark, Hawk and Sarah all stare at Ali in shock*)

ALI: I've sat in my room thinking about you. I've pined away for weeks – *months* even – and you didn't even know my name! My god, words do not come close to being able to describe the way I feel about you Sarah.

SARAH: (*Whispered*) I never knew.

MARK: (*To Hawk*) Are they cousins? Because she's acting mighty Tasmanian for a...

(*Hawk hits Mark over the back of the head to shut him up*)

ALI: (*Walks up to Sarah and takes her hands*) I love you Sarah.

(*Ali embraces Sarah and kisses her on the mouth. Sarah stares at her – shocked – but doesn't move*)

MARK: (*Breaking the silence*) Oh – my – good – lord. I've just died and been resurrected as an orgasm. (*Still looking at the girls*) Hawk, I think I've just discovered the true meaning of beauty... (*Looks at Hawk*) Hawk?

(*Hawk's eyes have rolled back in his head and he has fainted. The women break away from each other and look at him*)

MARK: (*Bending down*) Hawk. Hawk! Are you okay buddy?

(*Mark shakes Hawk and starts checking his vital signs. Sarah reaches for Ali's hand. They make eye contact and Ali takes her hand*)

Scene Three

STAGE: Mark's lounge room. Identical to Hawk's old room.

(*Mark is slumped on the lounge. After a while he sighs and turns off the television*)

MARK: They just don't make comedy like they used to. (*Looks at his watch and makes an irritated noise*) Hawk is always late. Whenever we watch a movie, he always rolls up twenty minutes in and wants details on everything he's missed. He's just lucky today cause it was his pick.

(*There is a knock at the door*)

MARK: Well it's about time (*Calling*). Come in buddy. It's open.

HAWK: (*Entering*) Heya Mark. Not watching TV?

MARK: Nah. Nothing's on but that *news* crap.

HAWK: (*Sitting with Mark*) Yeah. Righto.

MARK: What movie did you get?

HAWK: Oh. Black Hawk Down. Haven't seen it yet.

MARK: *(Silent for a moment)* You know what mate? That kinda reminds me of that day all those years ago when that Ali lesbo broke into your house.

HAWK: *(Nodding)* How could I forget? Man that was a bizarre day.

MARK: Sure was. I reckon I remember more of it than you do though.

HAWK: Yeah. I passed out pretty good, didn't I?

MARK: You did well. *(Reflective)* You know, I genuinely thought I had a chance with Ali. She was so strange and pretty and funny. And that thing she did in the bathroom. *(Grabs his foot and attempts to pull it above his head)* Phwoar.

HAWK: I don't think you're her type, mate. *(Makes several brief gestures at his genitals and chest)*

MARK: I guess not. And hey, remember how *I* wanted to find the meaning of beauty, and *you* wanted to find the meaning of randomness because you had some stupid uni assignment?

HAWK: *(Laughs)* Yeah. *(Points accusingly)* And I haven't been able to hug my mum since that day thanks to you.

MARK: *(Nostalgic sigh)* What a memorable day. It should be a public holiday or something.

HAWK: *(Nods. After a long pause, he sighs)* It's not every day a stranger breaks into your house and steals nothing but your girlfriend, is it?

MARK: No. It certainly isn't. But hey, at least we've got each other.

HAWK: *(Takes Mark's hand and they smile suggestively at each other)* At least we've got each other.

FIN