

BANG BANG BANALITY

A dark comedy

By Bradley Plaxen

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INTRODUCTION TO SCENE

The ABSOLUTE and CORRUPT gamblers (AG and CG in stage directions) finally conclude their bet about the nature of evil. The Absolute gambler wins, "proving" that doing evil is a choice people consciously make. But something is wrong- they agreed that if Absolute won, the Corrupt gambler would vanish forever, but he hasn't. Is the bet really settled? What secret is the Absolute gambler hiding that would prevent his other half's disappearance?

ABSOLUTE

Please leave. I have somewhere to be.

CORRUPT

Are you one of the pallbearers?

ABSOLUTE

None of your business.

CORRUPT

I already know you are. I was being polite.

ABSOLUTE

I didn't forget.

CORRUPT

Because you're a good person?

ABSOLUTE

You keep saying that like it's a question.

CORRUPT

You tell me why I'm not gone.

ABSOLUTE

I don't know.

CORRUPT

I think you do.

ABSOLUTE

I don't know! Alright. I said it. I said it twice. You want to hear it again? I don't know what you're still doing here! If I knew, then we wouldn't have had to do this bet in the first place.

CORRUPT

We must have messed up the bet in some way, and since neither of us knows how, let's figure out why I'm still here using logic.

ABSOLUTE

What logic?

CORRUPT

Deduction, of course. Maybe we missed something about the rules.

ABSOLUTE

I don't care about the rules.

CORRUPT

We said that hurting someone else is doing a bad deed, but then, you couldn't have hurt anyone else. You're a good person after all.

ABSOLUTE

Stop it.

CORRUPT

Maybe we messed that up. Unless there was gray area, but no, we said that wouldn't really matter. If it's not gray area, you must know without a doubt what's going on.

ABSOLUTE

I don't care about this mystery. I just want you gone.

CORRUPT

Maybe you're lying to yourself. What are you lying about?

ABSOLUTE

I'm not lying!

CORRUPT

Well something is wrong, because I'm still here, and the bet was absolute.

ABSOLUTE

The bet was corrupt! It was broken from the start! These rules you came up with? Based on them and this and that. The bet doesn't matter anymore! What don't you understand? I don't care about the bet!

AG smashes the rules board to the ground.

CORRUPT

Don't get so upset.

CG puts a hand on AG's shoulder. AG shakes him off.

ABSOLUTE

Don't touch me.

CORRUPT

Easy. I don't think you're a bad person. I'm on your side.

CG puts his hand on AG's shoulder again. AG pushes him harder.

CORRUPT (CONT'D)

Hey, it's not like you pulled the trigger.

AG tackles CG to the ground. They begin to wrestle. CG jokes with the audience as they fight.

CORRUPT (CONT'D)

He's pretty good at this. Isn't he?

CG gets the upper hand.

CORRUPT (CONT'D)

Which is amazing considering how much stronger I-

AG punches CG in the face. AG reaches into CG's jacket pocket and pulls out the invisible pistol from before.

AG stands up, and stands back. AG holds the gun up to CG's forehead.

Silence.

CORRUPT (CONT'D)

You know pulling that trigger won't get rid of me. I am more than a momentary thought forgotten at the end of a daydream.

AG pulls back the hammer. A click noise as the gun gets cocked.

ABSOLUTE

Please. Leave me alone. Please.

CORRUPT

You didn't do anything wrong.

ABSOLUTE

I know.

CORRUPT

And you were only doing what you thought was right.

ABSOLUTE

I was trying to help him.

CORRUPT

And no one is blaming you.

ABSOLUTE

Then why do I feel like it's all my fault? Why do I feel so responsible, like there's a hole in my stomach, like there's something I could have done to fix things. I didn't buy him the gun. I didn't pull the trigger. I'm living with memories made by a different version of me, and they won't go away... I'm a good person.

CORRUPT

Maybe you did a bad thing.

AG pulls the trigger,. A loud bang. Blackout.

The same gunshot sound, played in reverse.

Lights up. CG has vanished. Player 2 enters.

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

Hey John, sorry I'm late.

AG believes Player 2 is speaking to him, but in fact,
Player 2 is speaking through him.

ABSOLUTE

Terry... what are you, I mean, I didn't think I'd get to see you again.

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

I missed the train, so I had to walk the whole way.

ABSOLUTE

Terry, come on, it's fine.

Terry is searching through his pockets.

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

I'm exhausted.

From behind AG, CG enters wearing the clothes AG has been wearing. Player 2 has been talking to CG the whole time.

CORRUPT (JOHN)

You okay?

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

Yeah. Why wouldn't I be?

CORRUPT (JOHN)

You should take me up on those morning jogs.

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

Yeah, you're right.

CORRUPT (JOHN)

I'm just saying. I go every morning. I lost ten pounds.

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

That's great, John.

CORRUPT (JOHN)

How'd the date go?

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

Here's your ticket.

Player 2 holds out a ticket for CG.

CORRUPT (JOHN)

Don't avoid the question. How'd it go?

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

There will not be a second date.

CORRUPT (JOHN)

What happened?

ABSOLUTE

I should have dropped it.

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

It's nothing. Take your ticket.

ABSOLUTE

I kept pushing.

CORRUPT (JOHN)

What? Too tall again?

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

She said I wasn't her type.

CORRUPT (JOHN)

What the hell does that mean?

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

She said I was too fat. Okay? She said the picture on my profile was misleading, and that I didn't tell her I was "a fat guy". Now, please take the ticket. I'm already late because of the train.

CORRUPT (JOHN)

People are shallow. Everyone cares too much about appearances. I read a study saying half of employers are less likely to hire someone because they're overweight. That they're perceived as lazy or sloppy. Isn't that sick?

ABSOLUTE

I was trying to make a point.

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

Take the ticket, or I'm giving it to someone else.

CG takes the ticket from Player 2.

PLAYER 2 (TERRY) (CONT'D)

I'll see you at the concert.

Player 2 turns around to walk away, but CG puts a hand on his shoulder to stop him.

CORRUPT (JOHN)

Wait.

ABSOLUTE

I could have let him leave.

CORRUPT (JOHN)

That girl last night... she's not wrong. She's a bad person, but she's right. That picture is old, and you've gained a lot of weight since then.

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

You think I don't know that?

CORRUPT (JOHN)

I could help you get it off. I *want* to help you lose weight.

ABSOLUTE

I wanted to help.

CORRUPT (JOHN)

I'm worried about you. You're one of my best friends. Diabetes, heart disease, I'm scared, you know? Besides the fact, I'm sure you'll have better luck on dates. I want you to be happy.

ABSOLUTE

I was doing a good thing.

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

You think I don't want to be happy? You think I haven't sought help? Unbelievable. I need a friend right now.

ABSOLUTE AND CORRUPT (JOHN)

Friends work out together. Right?

Pause.

PLAYER 2 (TERRY)

You know what, John. Here's the other ticket. Find someone else to go with.

Player 2 throws the other ticket on the ground. He storms away.

AG picks up the ticket off the ground.

ABSOLUTE

I thought I was a good person.

CORRUPT

Who's to say you're not?

ABSOLUTE

You?

CORRUPT

Pssh. I never said that.

ABSOLUTE

Yes you did.

CORRUPT

No I said it was possible for a good person to do a bad thing without realizing it. I never said that made them a bad person.

ABSOLUTE

Then why do I feel so bad all the time?

CORRUPT

Because you're a good person.

Beat.

ABSOLUTE

Huh.

CORRUPT

Huh.