

The Magenta Revenge

by Michael Olsen

Characters: GARY DEVON—m, 20's

BRENDAN SCAMMELL—m, 20's

*Lights come up on the living/dining room of a small flat. Gary Devon is sitting at the table trying to write the poem of his life. He is failing badly and swearing under his breath about it.
A doorbell sounds. Gary gets up to answer it, goes off right.*

GARY: *(off)* Hey! What the hell!

*Gary comes stumbling back into the room, falling to the floor in the process.
Brendan Scammel enters.*

BRENDAN: Gary Devon?

GARY: What?

BRENDAN: Gary Devon? Shit! You do know your own name, don't you?

GARY: Yes! Yes! What do you want?

Brendan pulls out a small photo and compares it to Gary.

BRENDAN: It's you alright.

GARY: What are you—

Brendan kicks Gary in the guts. Gary rolls over, fighting for breath.

BRENDAN: Can't catch your breath? It's like "Jesus, will I ever breathe in fully ever again in my whole life?"

GARY: It—it—

BRENDAN: Don't talk. I'll just give you a couple of minutes to catch up..

Brendan walks around the room, inspecting everything.

BRENDAN: Nice place. I like the view. From here you can just see the Thompson Meatworks on the Maribyrnong. Very nice. Can you smell them as well, that nice sweaty meaty smell of cattle knowing they're about to die but not being able to do a damn thing about it?

GARY: What are you—

BRENDAN: Gary Gary Gary. I bet you're wondering who the hell I am and what the hell I'm doing here. Quite simple, really. I'm here because of you.

GARY: Me?

BRENDAN: Ah, I detect a hint of confusion. It's really because of you and Natalie.

GARY: Natalie?

BRENDAN: I offer a service to people. Do you know the service I provide?

Gary shakes his head.

BRENDAN: I'm a neurologist.

GARY: Huh?

BRENDAN: A neurologist of the heart. I help people remember things. You have forgotten a few things lately haven't you?

GARY: I don't—

BRENDAN: You have forgotten about Natalie.

GARY: No, no. I haven't, I—

BRENDAN: You've been neglecting her. Not telling her you love her, that she's beautiful, and you love her, that you thank God she's come into your worthless pathetic life, and you love her. It's a sad situation, and it shouldn't have happened, should it?

Gary shakes his head

BRENDAN: I see it every day. Romantic neglect, I call it. It's more common than dust, and once it builds up, layer upon layer upon layer, it gets harder to wipe away.

GARY: I've—I've neglected Natalie.

BRENDAN: Yes you have.

GARY: I have tried. I have. Really.

BRENDAN: Really?

GARY: Yes. Here.

Gary taps the poem on the table. Brendan picks up the poem and quickly scans it.

BRENDAN: *(shaking his head)* Is this the best you could do?

GARY: It's taken me the whole afternoon to write that.

BRENDAN: *(reading)* “And now in endless summer light / I lay down these words for you / and find the petals of possibility / that breathe the oceans’ light / across your eyes and find the”—what is that?

GARY: “storms of the future”

BRENDAN: “storms of the future / blowing within your heart.”

GARY: Yes.

BRENDAN: “Petals of possibility” is really bad.

GARY: You think so?

BRENDAN: And “endless summer light.” I feel like I’m in a bad Brooke Shields movie. You know what your problem is? Your one big problem?

GARY: No, I don’t.

BRENDAN: You think chicks score in the same way that guys do.

GARY: Huh?

BRENDAN: You think a sappy poem is going to get you what, 15, 20 points? It doesn’t work like that. All you get is one point.

GARY: No no. I’ll get quite a bit for this.

BRENDAN: One point. One point for a bunch of roses. One point for a free and unprompted compliment. One point. You and I we give bonus points for big things, like head jobs and great dinners, but chicks — one point all the time. You see, it’s the small stuff that matters, and lots of it, but guys

aren't designed to see that. I mean, you don't even know Natalie's favourite colour, do you?

GARY: Course I do. It's—um—pink.

Brendan laughs—then quick as a flash punches Gary in the chest. Gary reels, but stays on his feet.

GARY: It's pink, I tell you!

BRENDAN: It is not, it's magenta.

GARY: Magenta? (*pron. with a hard g*)

BRENDAN: Magenta. Always best to call things by their proper name. Properly speaking magenta's a variant of purple, but a common precise definition for the colour does not exist. Isn't that interesting?

GARY: Yes, I suppose—

BRENDAN: Named after a dye that was discovered shortly after the Battle of Magenta in 1859 which occurred near the town of Magenta in northern Italy. The colour is named after the battle.

GARY: I see.

BRENDAN: Do you? I find it intriguing that your girlfriend should have a favourite colour that most closely resembles the colour of the female genitalia when aroused.

GARY: What?

BRENDAN: Amazing, really. You never knew any of this?

GARY: No, no. It's all—new to me.

BRENDAN: I'm surprised you didn't know her favourite colour. I just assume everyone knows their partner's favourite colour.

GARY: Is that why you're here—to tell me her favourite colour?

BRENDAN: Among other things. The essential thing, though, is punishment.

GARY: Punishment?

BRENDAN: There always has to be a balance in the world, Gary. A balance between good and evil, black and white, day and night. Without some sort of balance, there's no progression, nothing.

GARY: You're gonna kick the shit out of me, is that it?

BRENDAN: Something like that.

GARY: OK.

BRENDAN: What?

GARY: OK. How do you want me? On all fours, or lying down—what?