

THE SETUP

This is the first appearance of Duke in the play. It is also a combination of two scenes, the first a short introduction to the latter, book-ending another scene between them.

Previous to this, the Duchess, in Love's Prick Excerpt 1, spoke of her former life as a minister to a church, a way of life and a congregation she lost. Later, it was revealed that the Duchess started life as a man named Forrest and has since transitioned to life as a woman.

Auggie, in Love's Prick Excerpt 4, was trying to steer his friend Alonzo away from his strategy of spray painting pictures of a girl Alonzo has a crush on all over the walls of buildings around town. Auggie was also nervous because of his own past brushes with the law as a runaway living on the streets.

Auggie now works for the Duchess in her coffee shop, called The Forest. They are at work on a normal busy day when Duke, a policeman, walks in...

DUKE, a policeman in his late 40s/
early 50s, enters.

Both the DUCHESS and AUGGIE see
him. The DUCHESS intercepts DUKE
before he can get to AUGGIE.

DUCHESS

And what may we do for you, officer?

DUKE

Are you the owner?

DUCHESS

The very same.

DUKE

I'd like to talk with you and your staff about a rash of vandalism in the area.

DUCHESS

Vandalism.

Graffiti, specifically.

DUKE

A short time later...

AUGGIE looks on uncertainly as the
DUCHESS converses with DUKE.

It is clear she has charmed the
man in short order.

Never a full face or body? Just bits and pieces.

DUCHESS

An ear, an eye, a nose --

DUKE

That's a rather singular obsession. Dangerous, do you think?

DUCHESS

Nothing violent about the images, per se, no.

DUKE

So it's a grand, romantic gesture of some sort.

DUCHESS

Could be.

DUKE

You have to admire the dedication, the attention to detail.

DUCHESS

If the artist had chosen any other medium, perhaps. But the
sides of buildings, that's public property.

DUKE

Which is where you come in.

DUCHESS

Yes.

DUKE

DUCHESS

Any leads in the case? Someone so prolific, it's a wonder they haven't been spotted.

DUKE

We thought the same thing. The fellow knows the neighborhood, that's clear.

DUCHESS

What makes you think it's a fellow?

DUKE

Well, the features all seem to be those of a young lady, so...

DUCHESS

So you thought, a young man.

DUKE

Yes.

DUCHESS

You might have an amorous young lesbian on your hands.

DUKE

This is true.

DUCHESS

Anything goes these days. We must expand our mental horizons, expect the unexpected.

DUKE

You weren't, by any chance, in law enforcement once, were you?

DUCHESS

Me? Oh goodness no.

The DUCHESS points out an unseen picture on the wall, hanging somewhere just off in the dark.

DUCHESS (cont'd)

That was my past life.

DUKE

Picture of a church.

DUCHESS

Yes.

DUKE

You were in the ministry.

DUCHESS

Once upon a time.

DUKE

Well, Reverend, I thank you for your time. You've been very helpful.

DUCHESS

No need to stand on ceremony. My friends call me the Duchess.

DUKE

That's funny.

DUCHESS

Well, I admit it's a little "Tennessee Williams" of me, but...

DUKE

My name is Duke.

DUCHESS

Oh.

Well, ain't that a happy little circumstance.

DUKE

I may drop back around.

DUCHESS

Please do. Since we're on your beat, it's good to have a friend on the thin blue line.

DUKE

Do you mind if I talk to your server, while I'm here?

DUCHESS

Certainly not. You go right ahead.

August, the officer has a couple of questions for you.

DUKE takes AUGGIE aside.

AUGGIE

What can I help you with, sir?

DUKE

Just wanted a little information on your employer.

AUGGIE

I'll tell you what I can.

DUKE

Is she the sole owner?

AUGGIE

Yes.

DUKE

So, she runs the place alone, no partners?

AUGGIE

No. I mean, yes. Alone. No partners.

DUKE

And she's -- ?

AUGGIE

She's -- ?

DUKE

Her -- status.

AUGGIE

Um, she's -- a woman.

DUKE

Yes, I know that. I simply meant, I didn't see a ring, so I was wondering --

AUGGIE

Oh. Oh! Really? Well, you sly little detective, you.

DUKE

I wonder how she'd feel about a man in uniform.

AUGGIE

Only one way to find out.

DUKE heads for the door.

DUKE

Thank you, Duchess, for your hospitality. I'll check back in again soon, keep you posted.

DUCHESS

Why thank you, officer.

DUKE

Please. Call me Duke.

DUCHESS

Duke. You drop by any time.

DUKE goes.

AUGGIE

What are you up to?

DUCHESS

What makes you think I'm up to anything?

AUGGIE

What was that little chat all about?

DUCHESS

You notice I managed to steer the conversation as far away from your friend Alonzo's handiwork as possible?

AUGGIE

I don't know what you're talking about.

DUCHESS

Of course you don't. Neither do I.

AUGGIE

You were flirting with him.

DUCHESS

How's a girl supposed to keep a guy off balance if she doesn't flirt with him a little?

AUGGIE

Well, it's working.

DUCHESS

I should hope so.

AUGGIE

Are you serious?

DUCHESS

About Duke? I just met him.

AUGGIE

He's interested.

DUCHESS

I thought he might be.

AUGGIE

He thinks you're a woman.

DUCHESS

I beg your pardon?

AUGGIE

OK, yes. You are a woman. But you weren't always a woman.

DUCHESS

Your point?

AUGGIE

Don't you think he should know?

DUCHESS

I. just. met. him.

Come to think it, so did you. Why are you so concerned about his supposedly fragile psyche all of a sudden?

AUGGIE

Just be careful.

DUCHESS

I haven't gotten this far in life without being careful. But there's a difference between careful and timid, my dear. I'm not doing this to play a joke on him. He seems like a nice man.

AUGGIE

For a cop.

DUCHESS

Cop or not, he seems like a nice man.

AUGGIE

Let's hope it stays that way.

DUCHESS

From your lips to God's ears.
Make me a sandwich.