***Table* by Mark Ravenhill**

**Matt** is an actor – about to audition for another small TV role. He meets up with a woman with whom he had a sexual relationship, a one-night stand, when they were at university, and some truths emerge!

This is a nuanced and detailed play – a real joy for an actor to explore.

**Emma**

Emma had a reputation for being ‘a trampette’ at university. Some years later, now a mother, she meets up with one of the men she had a fling with all those years ago, and some truths emerge!

This is a nuanced and detailed play – a real joy for an actor to explore.

**This is a short play and we’re sharing the full text**

MATT and EMMA, with glasses of wine.

A table.

MATT: Just the one table, yes. Neither of us has space for a table in our rooms.

EMMA: The table is for guests?

MATT: We don’t as a rule. I should have – better wine –

EMMA: Is this her stuff spread out on the table this evening? I can see – when’s she spread out all her stuff, the last thing she – a glass of wine..

(Puts her glass on the table)

EMMA: It could topple. Ruin her work.

(Takes her glass off the table)

EMMA: I could swear that’s exactly the same sweat shirt –

MATT: Possibly.

EMMA: You always wore. You wore the same sweat shirt for three years. Here you are wearing it now.

MATT: You’re .. More of an adult.

EMMA: That’s something I’ve had to work at. I’ve put in a lot of work. To be treated with the respect I believe I deserve. It’s taken a lot of time, money, a lot of hair dressers. Mustn’t threaten. Lead but also reassure. It’s a balance.

MATT: What’s happened I wonder to the Deliveroo? Nothing in the kitchen. An old tin can. So.. After we’ve eaten, I have to get on. A self tape.

EMMA: Will you wear the sweat shirt for your self tape?

MATT: My pyjamas. I’m a dying man. In the tape, I’m a man who’s almost dead. Calling on the nurse. Turn the nozzle. I’ll tape myself, on my bed, in the pyjamas.

EMMA: You’re very brave.

MATT: It’s just a speech.

EMMA: Still. There’s so much risk.

MATT: It’s mostly rejection.

EMMA: Of ridicule. Of people finding you ridiculous.

MATT: Do you think so? Ridiculous. I don’t much think about that.

EMMA: That’s the one thing - I’ve avoided ridicule now for years. When you’ve been called -. Do you remember what you, all of you, used to call me?

MATT: I don’t.

EMMA: Did you know that I knew all the time that all of you referred to me as the Trampette?

MATT: That was a horrible thing to –

EMMA: To walk away from there. Never hear it again. A relief. I do everything I can, stay clear of ridicule. My guiding principle. With my girls. You can hate me, much as you like. Go ahead. Hate. Just. Don’t laugh at me. While you – lay yourself open. A self tape. In your pyjamas. If you want to ridicule me.

MATT: No thanks.

EMMA: Say what you never said at the time to my face.

MATT: Look. Look.

EMMA: Bounce, bounce. Here I am. Trampette.

MATT: We’ve all … I’ve changed. My attitudes, altogether more evolved. That was a very cruel time and I’ve – the world has moved. As have I.

EMMA: I’m not ashamed. Never allowed any of the boys – you - to use anything. It’s all taken care of, I’d say as they – as you - unzipped their fly. Go right ahead because I’ve already taken care. I think on the whole, they believed me. Or didn’t mind. Overwhelmed as I released myself from my bra. After the first year, three score and ten of boys, I actually grew worried. None of the seed had taken. Was there something wrong? With me. I was reassured, a doctor. ‘I would advise you to take precautions’. I carried on as I had before. In three years, not a period missed. Clockwork. That place, the boys. Something wrong. With them. Once I was away from there. Conceived in six months. And now, three girls.

MATT: I always took care to..

ELLA: No you didn’t.

MATT: Yes. Because listen – I wasn’t … I didn’t put it about.

(pause)

MATT: There were actually very few. Maybe I should have – I don’t know – gone for it. I didn’t. I was .. selective. I always, in case the need arose – carried, back pocket, a packet of condoms. For each encounter, I would remove a condom. From the packet. By the time I left, just one packet, worked through. In three years. You didn’t use anything. Fine. But I … I suppose you didn’t - I suppose your eyes were shut. You laid back with your eyes shut. Didn’t see as I took out the packet, put on my condom. I’d like you to acknowledge. Will you acknowledge that I wore a condom? It’s very important to me that you acknowledge that.

ELLA: I’m sorry.

MATT: But you must –

ELLA: Shut my eyes? I’m sorry. No. That’s something I never do.

(ELLA puts her glass on the table)