

An excerpt from...

'CRACKING THE WHIP"  
A One-Act Comedy  
By Bruce Kane

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"CRACKING THE WHIP"  
by Bruce Kane

PLACE: Inside the confused mind of Alan Bedford

CHARACTERS:

ALAN BEDFORD - late thirties... confused.

SUSAN - Alan's fiancée - thirty and prim

AMBER - early twenties, pretty, sexy and wearing next to nothing.

LAURA - mid thirties, large breasted, dressed in black s&m boots with whip and outfit to match

*(LIGHTS UP: All the characters are arrayed on stage. Susan can not see Amber or Laura. Amber can not see Susan or Laura. Laura sees everything. Alan sees what he wants to see. The characters are frozen in place for several moments until Alan crosses to Laura. Susan and Amber remain frozen in place.)*

ALAN: You can go. You're not needed here.

LAURA: It's your mind, Alan. All you have to do is stop thinking about me and I'm out of here.

ALAN: Trust me, I'd like nothing better than to not think of you.

LAURA: *(to audience)* Alan is in crisis.

ALAN: I'm not in crisis... Just a little tired.

LAURA: *(to audience)* Alan couldn't rise to the occasion last night.

ALAN: Go ahead... Tell the whole world. Call CNN, why don't you?

LAURA: You never had a hydraulic problem with me.

ALAN: I didn't dare.

*(Susan now moves for the first time as she crosses to Alan)*

SUSAN: It's okay, honey... Really... There's nothing for you to be embarrassed about... These things happen.

ALAN: Maybe to you. Not to me.

SUSAN: What's that supposed to mean? Maybe to you, not to me.

ALAN: Nothing... Nothing... I didn't mean anything.

SUSAN: Are you saying it was my fault?

ALAN: No... No... It's nobody's fault.

SUSAN: Maybe you should think about seeing a doctor.

ALAN: I am a doctor.

SUSAN: No, you're not... You're a dentist.

ALAN: *(to audience)* Is it any wonder dentists have the highest suicide rate of any profession?

LAURA: Is that supposed to be some kind of ploy for sympathy?

ALAN: From you? That's a laugh. No. I was just pointing out a little known fact.

LAURA: Your life story. A collection of little known facts.

SUSAN: I'm only concerned for your sake.

ALAN: *(to Laura)* See... A woman concerned for my welfare. Listen and learn. *(to Susan)* I'm fine.

SUSAN: I know how something like this can damage a man's self esteem.

ALAN: My self-esteem will be up and around in no time.

SUSAN: It is me, isn't it?

ALAN: It's not you.

SUSAN: I don't excite you anymore.

ALAN: This has nothing to do with you.

SUSAN: You've never had this problem before, have you?

ALAN: No, I've never had this problem before.

SUSAN: Then why now?

LAURA: Alan... You know, of course, that impotence is usually a symptom of unresolved conflict.

ALAN: I'm not impotent.

SUSAN: I didn't say you were.

ALAN: Could we just drop the subject?

*(Susan freezes in place. Amber now moves for the first time as crosses to Alan, drapes herself all over him and speaks in a gooey kind of sexiness)*

AMBER: Alan... Honey...

ALAN: *(goes into baby talk mode)* Yes, sweetie, baby.

LAURA: *(disgusted)* I may hurl at any moment.

AMBER: How do you... like... feel?

ALAN: Fine. I feel absolutely finey winey.

AMBER: But, do, you feel ...like... all wonderful?

ALAN: I just said I did.

AMBER: No. You said you felt finey winey.

ALAN: Well, I meant wonderful.

AMBER: But you feel wonderful a lot, don't you?

ALAN: No, I wouldn't say a lot.

AMBER: Like ...how much?

ALAN: Some.

AMBER: So this isn't some kind of ...like ... new thing for you. Y'know feeling all wonderful and stuff.

ALAN: No.

LAURA: But I'd say this conversation is.

AMBER: Don't you want to know how I feel?

ALAN: Oh, sure... Yeah... How do you feel.

AMBER: Like... really good... Yknow?

ALAN: Oh, I know.

AMBER: And I don't, y'know... feel... like... bad about it. Feeling good.

LAURA: You might want to explain to her that one usually cancels out the other.

AMBER: Y'see feeling good always makes me feel like totally bummed. I mean every time I feel happy, I begin to... like... think about all the people around the world, y'know, who aren't happy and then I feel... like... all guilty and then I get... like... all depressed, y'know.

ALAN: But you're not depressed now?

AMBER: Oh, no.

LAURA: Then how does she know she's happy?

ALAN: *(to Laura)* Will you but out. *(to Amber)* You were actually expecting to feel bad because you felt good?

AMBER: Well, like, yeah.

ALAN: But, why, dumpling?

AMBER: Because I had all those... y'know... orgasms last night.

ALAN: *(proudly)* Oh, I know.

AMBER: And I keep thinking about all the women around the world waking up this morning who had like only one or two.

LAURA: *(to Alan)* You're making this up, aren't you?

ALAN: *(to Amber)* God, you're incredible. *(He puts his arms around Amber and begins to rub)* Have I mentioned your thighs in the last five minutes?

SUSAN: *(horrified, Susan responds)* My thighs? I knew it. You think I'm getting fat.

ALAN: I don't think you're getting fat.

SUSAN: Then why are you fixating on my thighs?

ALAN: I'm not fixating. I wasn't even...

SUSAN: Even what?

ALAN: Nothing.

LAURA: Does... uh? *(indicates Amber)*

ALAN: Amber... Her name is Amber.

LAURA: Amber. Of course... Does Amber know she's just a...?

ALAN: (*quickly cutting in*) Memory. Memory... Just like you... Only, she's a good memory. A pleasant memory. A memory I fondly remember.

AMBER: Alan... Honey....

ALAN: What is it sweetie cakes?

AMBER: You wanna... like, y'know... do it again?

ALAN: You've been reading my mind.

LAURA: Just the big print version.

AMBER: Last night was... like ...the best sex I ever had.

LAURA: Have you ever considered fiction writing as an alternate career?

ALAN: I could make love to you forever.

SUSAN: You just said you were tired.

LAURA: You are a bundle of contradictions, aren't you? One minute you can't light the old fire, and the next you're a late blooming nymphomaniac.

ALAN: For your information only women are nymphomaniacs.

LAURA: Another piece of sexist propaganda.

ALAN: Men are "satyrs."

LAURA: Oh, sure... Women are maniacs while men are characters from Greek mythology.

ALAN: (*to Amber*) Am I really the best lover you've ever had?

SUSAN: I thought we agreed not to delve into each other's past.

ALAN: Because you're the best I've ever had.

SUSAN: (*pleased*) Really?

LAURA: The best?

ALAN: Yes, the best.

LAURA: (*cracks her whip*) The best?

ALAN: (*nervously*) Okay... Maybe the second best.

LAURA: That's better.

SUSAN: If you really feel that I'm... Well, maybe we could give it another...

AMBER: You're like the hottest dude I've ever balled.

ALAN: (*modestly*) I try.

LAURA: Hey, "dude." Fantasy is one thing. Mental illness is another.

ALAN: *(to Laura)* You just can't stand the fact that I'm happy, can you?

LAURA: Happy? You're hallucinating.

ALAN: Isn't that the clinical definition of happy?

LAURA: You're a very sick man. You know that, don't you?

ALAN: And you know you're free to go anytime.

LAURA: And you know I can't do that, until you stop thinking about me. And that raises another question... Why are you thinking about me?

*(The play continues...)*

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