

“RING TONE”
by Bruce Kane

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“RING TONE”
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WHERE: Park in Los Angeles
WHEN: Noon
WHO: Karen, thirty, attractive
Len, mid-thirties, nice looking,

LIGHTS UP:

We find Len sitting on a park bench, sipping a coffee, reading his newspaper and minding his own business. That is about to change. Karen, dressed in a tight fitting cocktail dress, oversize earrings and sky high heels enters staring at her cell phone. She is either overdressed or underdressed for the location. As we will learn, Karen is a struggling actress who treats every encounter as though it were a performance. She is dramatic to say the least.

Len glances up at her and almost does a double take. Karen notices Len's look. She stands waiting impatiently for her cell phone to ring. Finally, it goes off. She smiles and turns to Len.

KAREN: Could you answer this for me?

LEN: Your phone?

KAREN: *(holds the phone toward Len)* You just push this button.

LEN: Is there some reason you can't answer it?

KAREN: Yes... There is.

LEN: Would you care to share it with me?

KAREN: I'd rather not.

(Len looks at her rather quizzically)

KAREN: *(annoyed at his reaction)* If you must know, it's my ex. *(The phone stops ringing. Karen sits down next to Len)* He wants to get back.

LEN: I'm happy for you.

KAREN: He was cheating on me. With another woman. That's why I left. What else could I do? Can you imagine someone cheating on me?

(Len is doing his best not to pay attention to her. She stares at her phone until it rings again)

KAREN: It's him.

(Len nods but keeps trying hard to stay uninvolved.)

KAREN: I don't want to talk to him.

LEN: You could tell him that.

KAREN: Then I'd have to talk to him.

LEN: You could turn your phone off.

KAREN: What if my agent calls?

LEN: He could leave a message.

KAREN: *(responding to Len as though he was a complete idiot)* You're not in the business, are you?

LEN: *(more to himself)* Oh god, an actress. That explains the outfit.

(The phone keeps ringing)

KAREN: He's not going to stop.

LEN: You could tell him to stop.

KAREN: But, then...

LEN: You'd have to talk to him...Of course.

(Karen moves closer to Len, smiles flirtatiously - after all she is an actress... and holds the phone up so the ring tone begins to drive Len a little crazy)

LEN: You're going to keep doing that until I answer your phone, aren't you?

KAREN: *(She smiles and hands him the phone)* Thank you.

LEN: (*hits the button and speaks*) Hello... Hold on. (*to Karen*) Are you Karen?

KAREN: Of course, I'm Karen. That's my phone. Who else would I be?

LEN: He wants to talk to you.

KAREN: I know that.

LEN: (*into phone*) Can I tell her who's calling?

KAREN: I know who's calling.

LEN: (*to Karen*) He wants to know who I am.

KAREN: Tell him... Tell him... Tell him you're my (*with relish*) lover.

LEN: Are you crazy? You don't have to answer that.

KAREN: Yeah, you're right. Tell him... tell him... tell him you're the guy who's banging me. (*with great relish*) Yeah, tell him you're the guy who's banging me

LEN: (*into phone*) Hello... I'm the guy ... she handed the phone to. No...Really... Just some guy she handed her phone to. I was just sitting here, having a cup of coffee, minding my own business. Typical.

KAREN: What's typical?

(*She leans in to listen in on the call. Len moves the phone to his other ear*)

LEN: Well you'd know better than me... What's that? Hold on. (*to Karen*) He wants to know how you look.

KAREN: (*challengingly*) Well? How do I look?

LEN: Nice. You look nice.

KAREN: That's the best you can do? Nice?

LEN: Okay... You look... good... (*off Karen's look*) Okay... Very good.

KAREN: I look incredible. Tell him that. Tell him I look so hot you can't wait to get me in the sack.

LEN: I'm not going to tell him that.

KAREN: If you had any feelings for me at all, that's exactly what you would do.

LEN: Feelings? I don't even know you.

KAREN: That's no excuse.

LEN: (*into phone*) Hello... Oh, you heard. Uh... huh... Uh huh. (*to Karen*) He says there wasn't anybody else. That it's all in your head.

KAREN: There is nothing in my head. (*realizes what she just said*) I'd like to rephrase that.

LEN: Hey, I'm just an innocent bystander here. I don't know who caused this train wreck.

KAREN: But you have every reason to believe it was me.

LEN: I didn't say that.

KAREN: Pick a side.

LEN: You know you have to talk to him.

KAREN: If he wants to talk to me, he can talk to my lawyer. Tell him that.

LEN: *(into phone)* Hello... She feels it would be best all around if you dealt through her lawyer... Oh... *(to Karen)* He says you don't have a lawyer.

KAREN: I do too have a lawyer. Mickey is my lawyer. Tell him that.

LEN: *(into phone)* Hello... She says someone named Mickey is her lawyer. *(to Karen)* He says Mickey is his lawyer.

KAREN: Mickey is not his lawyer. Mickey is my lawyer.

LEN: Maybe you two could have Mickey on alternate weekends. *(into phone)* Hello... Sorry... I tried. She won't talk to you... Oh yeah... There's no doubt about that.

KAREN: About what? No doubt about what?

LEN: Nothing... He was saying how stubborn you are.

KAREN: Stubborn?? Stubborn??? *(stubbornly)* I am not stubborn. *(shouts into phone)* I just have a strong resolve.

LEN: *(into phone)* I understand. Sorry, I couldn't be of more help.

(He clicks off the phone and hands it to Karen. She stares at it)

KAREN: *(disappointed)* He's not calling back. How could he not call back? You'd call back, wouldn't you?

LEN: Maybe he got the message you don't want to talk to him.

KAREN: That's not the point.

LEN: *(Len stands)* If he does call back... talk to him.

KAREN: You're going?

LEN: Contrary to appearances, I don't actually live on this bench.

(He starts to leave. Karen jumps up.)

KAREN: Wait.

LEN: *(turns around)* Yes?

KAREN: *(a note of desperation in her voice)* Would you like to come home with me?

LEN: Home with you?

KAREN: Yes... That's what I said. Home with me.

LEN: Why would I want to go home with you?

KAREN: You said I looked good... Very good, if I remem... Ohmygod... You're gay. I'm so sorry.

LEN: There's nothing to be sorry about. I'm not gay.

KAREN: Then I don't get it.

LEN: Did you think it was an automatic because I'm a man?

KAREN: Well... Yeah.

LEN: I'm sure a woman like you isn't used to being rejected... very often.

KAREN: Are you kidding? I'm an actress. If it wasn't for rejection I wouldn't have any life at all.

LEN: I'm sorry I don't fulfill the typical male stereotype.

KAREN: It's not like I'm looking for a commitment or anything.

LEN: That's the problem.

KAREN: What are you talking about? What problem?

LEN: Nothing... Nothing... It was interesting meeting you.

KAREN: That's it? I offer you my body, which by the way you have been once overing pretty good, and all you have to say is, "it was interesting meeting you."

LEN: Strange as it may seem, you and I have a lot in common.

KAREN: Apparently, not as much as I thought.

LEN: No... We're both on the same journey. It's just that I'm a little further down the road than you are.

KAREN: Journey? When did this turn into the Travel Channel?

LEN: *(hesitates for a moment... then)* My wife...

KAREN: You're married. Why didn't you say anything? I never would have...

LEN: I'm not married... I was married... About two years ago I caught her with... Anyway... What I'm trying to say is... Whether he cheated on you or not.

KAREN: Oh, he cheated on me.

LEN: Either way, you're experiencing a sense of loss. It's perfectly natural. I went through the same thing. The need for some reassurance... Comfort... A warm body.

KAREN: Sounds good to me. Especially the warm body part.

LEN: No, it doesn't. Trust me.

KAREN: If it helps, I'll give you a thumbs up on Facebook.

LEN: I'll tell you what. Why don't we just consider ourselves two people who met...let's say... too soon.

KAREN: (*hopefully*) So that means that there's still a chance.

LEN: Y'know, you're a very hard person to let down easily.

KAREN: I get that a lot.

LEN: Okay then... Let's just say we're two people who met too late.

KAREN: Two people who met too late?

LEN: Two people who met too late.

KAREN: Wait a minute. I know that line. That's from a movie... "Forget Me Not."

LEN: Oh, you saw it.

KAREN: I read for it. How do you know it?

LEN: I wrote it.

KAREN: You wrote "Forget Me Not?"

LEN: Uh huh.

KAREN: You're... uh... uh.... whatshisname?

LEN: That's just my pen name. My real name is Len Carruthers.

(Play Continues...)

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