



AFTER WE DANCED

by Andy Moseley

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After We Danced

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**CHARACTERS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)**

FRANCES MORGAN (FRAN): Female, 20

JAMES FINNEGAN (FINN): Male, 21

JOHN FINNEGAN (JOHN) : Male 50, son of Finn

BRADLEY TURNER (BRAD): Male 49, son of Fran

JENNIFER TURNER (JEN): Female, 45, wife of Brad

POLICE OFFICER (POLICE): Male, mid 50s

**SETTING**

Lynmouth in 1952, and a wedding reception in 2012.

**NOTES**

The Police Officer and Brad can be played by the same actor.

References to footage of Lynmouth at the end of scenes 2 and 14 are optional. There are several royalty free clips available on YouTube. The playwright can also advise on recommended clips if required.

The stage directions for Scene 1 include the playing of Unforgettable by Nat King Cole. Other music can be played instead of this, but the same music must be repeated in scene 16. Please note that normal requirements for music licensing and royalty payments apply.

## THE PLAY

### Scene 1

*Unforgettable by Nat King Cole plays. A couple (FRAN and FINN) dance. As the music finishes they speak. They look as if they are in their early twenties and are dressed in ballroom dancing attire. Their moves are exercised with precision and grace.*

*When the song cuts to an instrumental section FINN takes FRAN's hands in his and they speak.*

FRAN: Thank you Mr Finnegan.

FINN: My pleasure Frances.

FRAN: I love you, you know.

FINN: I know. I love you too.

FRAN: I'm so glad I met you. We're going to have the rest of our lives together.

FINN: Never a moment apart.

*The lights fade on them and go up on another part of the stage for scene 2. There should be one brief moment when the set and actors for both scenes are lit and can be seen by the audience.*

### Scene 2

2012. A wedding reception.

*Lights go up on JOHN, the best man at the wedding of Fran and Finn. He is addressing the audience as guests at the reception.*

JOHN: We're here today because my dad saw a story in a paper about a couple in Ohio. They'd been married more than seventy years and in all that time, they'd never spent a night apart. Always slept in the same bed too. Then one night, she passed away. He was dead fifteen hours later. For seventy years, without fail, they'd slept side by side, and he wasn't even going to spend one night without her. He couldn't. She was the only woman he had ever loved, and he was the

only man she'd ever loved. My dad read about it and he said it made him so sad, because he had no one he wouldn't want to live without, and that got him thinking and he realised that he had had someone like that once. Sixty years before then. He was down in Devon. His first summer out of the army. He met Fran on the beach. That's where their story starts.

*Lights down on JOHN.*

*(Footage of Lynmouth filmed prior to August 1952 is played)*

### **Scene Three**

1952. A beach in Lynmouth Devon.

*FRAN is sitting on a deckchair. A football comes over to her, landing on her lap. She picks it up. Shortly afterwards FINN runs over to her. He is slightly nervous as he starts to speak.*

FINN: Begging your pardon miss. Could I get my ball back please?

FRAN: This is yours is it?

FINN: Well, it's my friends actually, but he's a bit, shy, around women, so he asked me to come.

FRAN: And you're not shy?

FINN: Well, I'm here, so -

FRAN: You're not.

FINN: Yeah. So, er, can I have my ball.

FRAN: Your friend's ball.

FINN: Yeah, my friends ball.

FRAN: I suppose so.

*FRAN goes to hand the ball to Finn, then smiles and pulls the ball back towards her.*

It's a good job my father's not here.

FINN: Why?

FRAN: He wouldn't let me give you your ball back. If you were lucky he'd kick it in the other direction.

FINN: And if I was unlucky?

FRAN: He'd kick you in the other direction.

FINN: Right. He's not one of these people that think you shouldn't play games on the beach is he? Or thinks that if you do, you should be Stanley Matthews so the ball never goes anywhere it shouldn't.

FRAN: No, but he is traditional. He thinks there is a right way for men to approach ladies and a ball in their face is not it. I disagree with him about a lot of things, but on that he might have a point.

FINN: It wasn't in your face.

FRAN: I think where it was might be worse.

*FINN looks down.*

FINN: Right yes. Probably a wise man, your father, kicking a ball at a lady isn't the best way to meet them.

FRAN: Did you say, you kicked it at me?

FINN: Well, not at you, well, not on purpose, but we ended up sort of hitting you, so I suppose you could say we kicked it at you. We couldn't help it. Can you forgive me for being a bad shot?

FRAN: I suppose I can.

FINN: And your father?

FRAN: Don't worry. He doesn't come to the beach. You're safe.

*FINN contemplates what to say next, still nervous about taking the next move. Amused by this, FRAN fills the silence.*

Haven't you got to go back and play football?

FINN: They can carry on without me.

FRAN: Not without the ball, they can't.

FINN: Oh, yeah, that is a problem. Will you stay here while I take it back?

FRAN: I was about to leave.

FINN: So soon?

FRAN: Sorry I've -

FINN: Well, how about this evening then?

FRAN: I don't know.

FINN: Please. My way of apologising. And I am a complete gentleman.

FRAN: I'm sure you are.

FINN: So how about it?

FRAN: Maybe.

FINN: Come on. I'll buy you a fish and chip supper, and I'll make sure you're home by nine.

FRAN: A fish and chip supper, how could a lady resist? You've talked me into it.

FINN: Great. Shall we meet at the cafe on the front at half seven.

FRAN: Best make it half six, if you're going to get me home by nine.

FINN: Alright. Half six it is.

*FRAN gives FINN his ball back.*

I'll see you there.

*FINN turns to go.*

FRAN: Aren't you going to tell me your name?

FINN: Oh, yes, sorry, it's Finn.

FRAN: Finn? Are you a fish?

FINN: No, it's what they call me. My full name's James Finnegan.

FRAN: Well James Finnegan, now I know your name I'll tell you mine. I'm Frances Morgan.

FINN: Frances.

FRAN: But you can call me Fran.

FINN: Right. Fran.

FRAN: Now. Why don't you go back to your game?

FINN: Right. Yes. See you later Fran.

*FINN kicks the ball and gently runs behind it.*

FRAN: See you later Finn.

#### **Scene Four**

2012. The wedding reception.

*JOHN is as he was in scene 2. Towards the end of his opening lines BRAD and JEN enter.*

JOHN: That was sixty years ago. Most of you here today weren't even born then, and while we've all known one of them most of our lives, none of us have known both of them till now. Even finding out they existed probably came as a bit of a shock to some of you. If it didn't, then finding out how much they still meant to each other certainly did for some of us.

BRAD: Is he talking about me?

JEN: Probably. Cheer up. It's your mum's big day.

BRAD: My mum's big day was when she married my dad.

JEN: You know what I mean.

*Over the next lines JEN makes her way to the table to join JOHN. BRAD follows her.*