



IN PERPETUUM

by Neville Judson

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# IN PERPETUUM

A Five Minute Radio Play

by

Neville Judson

# CHARACTERS

MIRANDA: A middle-aged woman.

JAMES: A middle-aged man.

LUCY: A young woman.

TIM: A young man.

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## SCENE ONE

City street

*Background traffic noise.*

*A bus approaches and comes to a stop. The doors open and people alight.*

*Depending on the timing of events in the recording of a bus, the doors close here, or during, or after, miranda's following speech.*

Miranda: I told you he wouldn't be on it. He never is. What a stupid decision, letting him keep the job. It's just like you.

*The bus drives away.*

James: What do you mean, "Just like me"?

Miranda: (SARCASTICALLY) I mean, James, it's just like you to do favours for somebody just like you. You're unreliable – Tim's unreliable.

If he could turn up when we expected him to, everything would be completely different.

This is radio, James. Youthful faces and athletic figures are irrelevant. But then, you never were objective about casting. I've known you long enough to see when...

James: Don't start pointing the finger at me. You're the one who's taken a shine to him.

Lucy: In case you haven't noticed, you're in the street! I can't stand middle-aged couples having rows in public. Those of us who are still young, are naïve enough to hope our relationships will be happy ones. We don't need reminding that it usually ends up badly.

(PAUSES BRIEFLY)

It's my boy friend you're fighting over! He's got better taste than to be your toy boy – either of you.

Miranda: James. You're making Lucy feel insecure.

Lucy: That's not what I meant.

Anyway, it's irrelevant. You know as well as I do, it's no good wanting Tim to be reliable. He's supposed to be unreliable.

James: Ah, that.

Well, it's too late now. We might as well turn round and go home.

Lucy: There's a bus every five minutes. He'll be on the next one.

James: Exactly. When it's too late.

Lucy: We *will* run out of time if we don't make a start.

At least we can go in and set things up.

***Sound of a key code being entered.***

***Rustle of miranda picking up carrier bags.***

Miranda: Just a few things we might need.

James: She's got enough packets of crisps to open a pub ... nuts ... tubes of Smarties.

Miranda: I had a premonition, if that's the right word – or is it *deja vu*? I'm sure we got hungry last time.

James: What 'last time'?

Miranda: (SOUNDING THOUGHTFUL) I don't know.

Lucy: Come on.

***Sound of a door being unlatched.***

## SCENE 2

Inside an entrance lobby and stairwell

***Sounds of people coming in through a door and noises from outside. The door clicks shut and it becomes quiet but not silent – some traffic noise still, sounds of the ventilation system.***

Miranda: Where do we go?

Lucy: Upstairs. First floor. Let me give you a hand with the bags. You're loaded down with stuff.

Miranda: I'll manage. Go on. James, you can come last. You take for ever going up stairs.

***Sounds of them climbing the stairs. Rustling from miranda. Uneven pace and hard breathing from james.***

***Sound of miranda stumbling and dropping bags.***

Ow!

James: Miranda! I told you, you'd got too much to carry. Take what you've still got. I'll bring the rest. (ASIDE) Stupid woman.

Miranda: I heard that. You're not in the House of Commons. You can't just say anything you like.

It wasn't my fault. I stubbed my toe.