

A BEATLE'S STORY

a one act play

by Morley Shulman

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SCENE 1

JOHN LENNON, 21, and PAUL
MCCARTNEY, 19, are sitting around a table
sipping tea.

PAUL
YOU brought him in!

JOHN
So bloody sue me.

PAUL
He's YOUR friend!

JOHN
And don't you forget that Paulie!

PAUL
We can't keep going like this.

JOHN
I've got nothing better to do meself..

PAUL
We're not getting better with him playing bass.

JOHN
I shared a flat in college with Stu.

PAUL
You're not in college any more.

JOHN
Bloody feels like it half the time. Sometimes it feels more like a prison.

PAUL
What are you complaining about? I was winding coils until you gave me an ultimatum.

JOHN
You can't do both and you know it. Either you're in a rock band or you're not.

PAUL

So I made my choice. But why are we allowing *him* to choose?

JOHN

I told you.

Beat.

PAUL

Remember when we first started playing at the Jacaranda as The Quarry men? And you remember how shite we were?

JOHN

How could I forget?

PAUL

It didn't matter back then.

JOHN

So what are you saying?

PAUL

Ever since we got back from Hamburg, we're been gear. Really gear. No one to touch us.

JOHN

Stu was part of The Beatles then or were you too busy showing off to notice?

PAUL

I can't believe you even remembered being there you were so bevvied up AND on those bloody prellies!

JOHN

(in a German accent)

Mach shau! Mach shau!

PAUL

Crikey. If we made any more "mach shau" they would have mach shau'd us to the hospital.

JOHN

I took some home you know.

PAUL

I didn't think you were taking bloody tic-tacs with your scotch and soda.

Beat.

JOHN

Have any more of those jam butties do ya?

Paul walks over to the counter and looks around.

PAUL

Me dad didn't make any. Why don't we go to your place. Your auntie would make us some.

JOHN

I told you before. She hates your guts.

PAUL

Me? What did I do?

JOHN

You're a delinquent you know. Skipping school and all.

PAUL

What about you?

JOHN

She *knows* I'm a delinquent.

PAUL

Well?

JOHN

But I told her that you're always convincing me to play truant instead of going to me art classes.

PAUL

You're daft!

JOHN
So what's the alternative?

PAUL
Stop playing truant.

JOHN
I meant about Stu, you arse!

PAUL
We get someone else!

JOHN
Like who? All our mates are in groups.

PAUL
What about Klaus?

JOHN
Klaus who?

PAUL
Klaus. Klaus Voorman. You know? Astrid, Klaus and Jurgen.

JOHN
We'd be better off with Santa Klaus. He's never even picked up the bloody bass!

PAUL
How hard can it be? He can learn.

JOHN
Now who's the one being daft!

PAUL
Why? Stu's been playing for over a year and still can't keep up with us.

JOHN
He's a slow learner Paulie. You try playing bass and see what happens.

PAUL
Sod that.

JOHN

Wherever we play the fans bloody love us. I don't see what the problem is?

PAUL

The problem is they love us in *spite* of him John! Why do you think I told him to play with his back towards the audience.

JOHN

Because you're afraid that he'll pull all the birds.

PAUL

That's a load of bollocks and you know it.

JOHN

You're right. I take it back.

PAUL

Good!

JOHN

What I meant to say is that you're jealous of PETE pulling all the birds!

Paul gets up into John's face.

PAUL

That's a lie and you know it.

JOHN

Is it now Paulie?

PAUL

I thought we were here to talk about Stu?

JOHN

I wasn't here to talk about anyone. I was slagging off school and was hoping to bum a fag and drink off you.

PAUL

So you think he's gear and all and that one day we'll make it to the Palladium with Stu?

JOHN

I never said that. He's very sensitive you know. You can't just tell him he's shite.

John pours himself a tea.

PAUL

Don't tell me you're being sensitive?

JOHN

I'm always sensitive!

John starts imitating a cripple by making facial gestures and scrunching his hands.

PAUL

If you're so concerned about the guy, then don't you think he'd make a better painter than rock and roll musician? You can't do both you know.

JOHN

How would you know? You're always looking for cause and effect. It's from all that bullshit reading you're doing. You're filling up your head with useless ideas.

PAUL

This coming from the guy who wrote in his notebook that "tomorrow will be Muggy, followed by Tuggy, Wuggy and Thuggy".

JOHN

So?

PAUL

(laughing)

Who were your influences? Dickens? Longfellow?

JOHN

Try Sellers. As in Peter. As in the Goons!

Beat.

JOHN

Look mate. We're not getting anywhere. I promised Cynthia I'd be there soon.

PAUL

I know he's your mate and all but we have our future ahead of us.