



BROTHERS

by Kerry Drumm

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Characters

Jay, male, early 30s, older brother, a club DJ and recovering addict.

Matt, male, early 30s, a youth worker fighting testicular cancer.

The roles of the '*past*' Jay and Matt, teenagers and young adults, are played by the same actors.

Setting

Two chairs, a cabinet, chemo medical stand is placed centre of a skateboard park, or a graffiti back drop.

To begin with the setting is sterile and orderly. As props are used, and remain on stage throughout the play, the setting starts to resemble a teenager's bedroom.

The brothers remain on stage for the duration of the play.

Short Synopsis

Estranged brothers, Jay and Matt, come together as one of them battles cancer, the other addiction. Fearful of their own survival, the brothers revisit their childhood and the events impacting their once unbreakable relationship

Notes:

(,) denotes a withholding of speech, an expression of something without words.

(--) at the end of a sentence indicates the next line cutting in.

(...) indicates the trailing – off of thought.

SCENE 1: BOLLOCKS

DAY: Chemo Ward

Two chairs, cabinet, jug of water and cup. A lunch box, its contents concealed.

MATT (30s), attached to a chemo medical stand, reads a book.

JAY, (30s) designer headphones, travel bag, glances at a piece of paper in his hand. Seeing MATT, he stops and removes his headphones.

JAY watches MATT until he looks up from his book.

MATT wonders if he's seen a ghost.

JAY smiles. It's no ghost.

MATT: You've got to be fucking kidding me. I asked her, no, I bloody well insisted she promise. She promised. Wait till I see her.

JAY: Yeah, she figured you'd react this way.

MATT: No shit. What the bloody hell are you doing here?

JAY: You're sick.

MATT: I'm not *that* sick.

JAY: It's cancer.

MATT: Wow.

JAY: I mean, you know, people die from cancer, like every day and --

MATT: Seriously?

JAY inspects the medical equipment.

JAY: So, what's all this then?

MATT: That would be chemo, Jay.

JAY: Does it hurt?

MATT: No (*a glance at Jay*), not yet.

JAY: Nan said they chopped off one of your bollocks.

MATT: That's right.

JAY: Does everything, you know... still work?

MATT: Yes.

JAY: That's something.

MATT: Lucky me.

JAY: Did you know Hitler only had one ball?

MATT: Not the first time I've heard that.

JAY: Can I sit? Unless you're waiting on someone?

MATT: I'm not waiting on anyone.

JAY: I can come back another time, I don't want --

MATT: Just sit, will you. You'll get in the way of the nurses.

JAY: So, it's okay?

MATT: Yes!

JAY: (*sitting*) How long do you have to do all of this?

MATT: Six weeks.

JAY: You have to stay here for that long?

MATT: No, just a few days each week.

JAY: Intense.

MATT: Not until now.

JAY picks up a Tupperware box.

JAY: Is this where they keep your other bollock?

MATT: No, that would be where I keep my sandwiches.

JAY offers MATT a sandwich.

I'm all good, thanks. Help yourself.

JAY: No, I couldn't, they're yours and you're sick.

MATT: They make me sick, but Nan insists on me bringing them.

JAY: (*inspecting the contents*) Nan still makes you Spam sandwiches?

MATT: Why are you here?

JAY: Nan messaged me.

MATT: How?

JAY: Facebook.

MATT: You're not on Facebook.

JAY: How do you know?

MATT: Mum tried to find you.

JAY: The club I work at has one.

MATT: What kind of club?

JAY: Nightclub.

MATT: Fancy.

JAY: Not really.

MATT: Where is this club?

JAY: Ibiza.

MATT: You're living in Ibiza?

JAY: Yes.

MATT: For how long?

JAY: Seven or eight years.

MATT: For fuck's sake.

JAY: What?

MATT: You always landed on your feet.

JAY: It's just a club.

MATT: How did Nan know you worked there?

JAY: Someone had been over on holiday and saw me.

MATT: When?

JAY: Not sure, a few months back?

MATT: Nan doesn't know how to use a computer.

JAY: Someone at the library helped her.

MATT: You've an answer for everything.

JAY: No, it's just what I know.

MATT: Did Nan tell you I'm dying?

JAY: No.

MATT: What then?

JAY: What does it matter?

MATT: It matters to me if you lot think I'm going to die.

JAY: No one thinks you're going to die.

MATT: In which case, I'll ask again. Why are you here?

JAY: *(to self)* Starting to wish I wasn't.

MATT: I'm not keeping you here.

JAY's mobile phone repeatedly PINGS.

Someone's popular.

JAY checks his phone.

What do you do at the club, bouncer?

JAY: DJ.

MATT: Of course, you are.

JAY: Nan was just telling me you're a youth worker.

MATT: You been to the house?

JAY: Kind of.

MATT: What does that mean?

JAY: Nan kept me on the doorstep.

MATT: Protective over her possessions, perhaps?

JAY's phone RINGS.

MATT: You have to switch that off.

JAY: *(switching it off)* Sorry.

MATT: So, am I your excuse to come home?

JAY: No.

MATT: You know about Mum?

JAY: I do now.

MATT: Did Nan give you her letter?

JAY: Yes.

MATT: You read it?

JAY: No, have you?

MATT: Why would I read it? I have one of my own.

JAY: Okay, just checking.

MATT: You still using?

JAY shakes a no.

Need to hear you say it.

JAY: No, I'm not using.

MATT: Sober?

JAY: Yes.

MATT: It's just I don't want you sitting there thinking about what you could rob. This is a hospital Jay; they need everything in here.

JAY: I'm clean, Matt.

MATT: How long?

JAY: Ten months.

MATT: Wow, well done you.

JAY: Thanks.

MATT: It was not a compliment.

JAY: I know.

MATT: How many attempts before this one?

JAY: None of your business.

MATT: Fair enough. Well, as you can see, I'm fine. Nothing of interest has happened in the last ten years, so you can sod off back to your fancy club in Ibiza.

JAY: I'd like to hang around for a few more days, if that's okay with you?

MATT: Why?

JAY: I've flown all this way.

MATT: Oh right, it's a big deal, you flying *all* this way.

JAY: That's not what I meant.

MATT: How long do you need? It's not like you've friends to catch up with, and Mum's dead. So, really that just leaves me and Nan, and you've seen us both. Job done, Jay. Ticked a box. Oh... hang on a sec. You've a list, right? I know how this works. You're here to amend the fuck-ups. Repair the destruction you left behind. Achieve whatever step you've reached in your recovery and move on. You being here has fuck all to do with me and cancer. You're just using '*this*' as an excuse to come home and redeem yourself. Well listen, bro, I don't need to hear your apology, and if you're asking for any forgiveness from me, forget it. It's not happening.

JAY: Forgiveness?

MATT: Yeah, and don't expect it from them lot out there either. I can guarantee that you stood on Nan's doorstep will have spread around town quicker than you can snort a line of cocaine. They'll be locking up their homes and their daughters.

JAY: That's not me anymore, and I'm not here looking for... I just wanted to see you, and make sure you're okay.

MATT pours water and spills.

MATT: For fuck's sake.

JAY: Here, let me help.

MATT: Fuck off, I'm fine. Of course, it's still you. You can't just appear after ten years of nothing, in your designer jeans and sunglasses, cool job, '*big I am*' and expect a fucking embrace of welcoming arms.

JAY: I should leave you alone. I'd like to come and see you again, if that's okay?

MATT: Do I have a choice?

JAY: Yes, if you don't want me to, then I won't. I don't want to upset you while your undergoing treatment.

MATT: Especially when you're trying to manage your own, right?

JAY: Just give us a chance, Matt. That's all I'm asking.

MATT: Again?

JAY: Yeah, I guess.

(a beat)

Please.

MATT: Visiting hours, they're out there.

JAY: Thank you. It's good to see you, Matt.

MATT: Wish I could say the same.

JAY goes to leave.

JAY: Can I ask you a something?

MATT: Depends.

JAY: Where did it all go wrong?

MATT: You're an addict, Jay. That's where it went wrong.

JAY: You believe that?

(a pause)

Matt?

The SOUNDS of the hospital and approaching ambulance increase as DAY fades into NIGHT.