

The Struggle Within

A short play

by

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Three actors on stage. There is a pile of some description near the middle, on top of this lies the program for the comedy festival. One actor is seated on a chair centre stage, another is hunched over on the floor in a prayer-like position between the seated actor's legs and the third is hunched over behind the seated actor. Only the standing actor seems awake. They are all dressed in similar colours (preferably beige) to indicate nudity and unity. The actor on the floor should wear a hooded jacket with the hoodie tied up. When this actor first rises, he also pulls off the hood. Lights fade up.

Hi! I'm Brain. Pardon my whispering but as you can see, Ben here is asleep, and I thought I'd give you the background story before I wake him up. First off, if you're wondering about my accent, this curious bastardisation of Queen's English, it's just an effect in place to create a sense of intellectual superiority. Do you feel it, by the way? Do you feel slightly in awe of my accent? Oh, I know you do. You're *all* my little accent bitches, aren't you. Yes, yes. Quite. Anyhow: today is an important day in Ben's life. To this point, his social outings have been limited to football games, strip clubs and a Shannon Noll concert. I have been absent for all these events. I did, however, appear briefly during Shannon's concert and was able to penetrate the immense amounts of alcohol with a muddled "get fucked, you bogan". Needless to say, a brawl ensued and since then my input has been minimal. Well, I'm back. And I want to go to the comedy festival! So... oh, Ben! Ben! Look at him. Sound asleep. BEN!

Ben: *(In complete awe of how real his dream felt)* Whoa! I just had the craziest dream! There was a room full of people just staring at me!

Brain: Don't worry, it was only a dream.

Ben: It felt really real though.

Brain: Thanks, I've been working on that.

Ben: You're getting really good, actually!

Brain: Do you think so?

Ben: Hell, yeah!

Brain: Thanks, thanks, that means a lot. We brains tend to be taken for granted.

Ben: I mean, I could see them, hear them, smell them –

Brain: Okay, let's stop there. Do you know what today is?

Ben: It's Saturday... hang on - what are you doing here? I don't normally see you on the weekends...?

Brain: Oh, I'm there, fighting for my survival. Do you know what the effects of excessive binge drinking and drug taking are?

Ben: (*Matter-of-factly*) Combined, they're a cocktail that makes you the wittiest man in the room and a fantastic dancer to boot.

Brain: That's right, but that's not all...you also become unbeatable at

Both: Kar-a-oke!

Brain: That's it! Anyway, I asked you a question - you know it's Saturday, but it's not just any Saturday... Do you know what's on tonight?

Ben: Not really... refresh my memory.

Brain: I am your memory, Ben.

Ben: Ok, refresh! (*Claps his hands twice*)

Brain slaps Ben across the head

Ben: Oh, there it is! Comedy festival!

Brain: That's right! Who would you like to see first?

Ben: Oh, I don't know... who is there to choose from?

Brain: Check the program!

Ben: Yeah, good idea, why didn't I think of that?

Brain: You did.

Ben: Well, I suppose I did, but... (*short pause*) this is very confusing, you know? Okay, where's the program?

Brain: Over there, by The Literature.

Ben: Where?

Brain: By The Magazines.

Ben: I don't quite, um, I can't -

Brain: Next to your massive stack of pornography!

Ben: Oooh.. *(leans over and grabs the program from the top of a stack of magazines next to the bed)*

Penis: Hello!

Brain: Oh, God, not him.

Ben: Hey, big man! *(Drops program)*

Penis: Benny! Slap me some skin!

(They high-five; each high-five is slower and more sensual)

Ben: Yay! High five!

Penis: Slap me again. *(Starts to close his eyes, smiles with anticipation.)*

Ben: Okay!

Penis: *(Shivers with pleasure)* And again.

They high five

Penis: And again....

Brain: No! None of that! Not now! We're looking for comedy shows to attend!

Penis: What are you doing here? You're not on for another two days!

Brain: Oh shut up. Ben! Get up! Come on!

Ben: Yeah, yeah, just a minute. *(To Penis)* So... how you been?

Penis: Yeah, not bad, not bad. Haven't seen you for a while?

Ben: Must've been - what - eight hours?

Penis: Yeah.... so, do you wanna...?

Ben: Phhh.....I don't know, with this guy looking and stuff I'm not really sure...

Ben starts playing with Penis' hair carefully

Brain: What do you mean "with this guy looking"? I'm here all the time, for crying out loud! I just don't get any attention, cos you're either getting stoned, getting pissed, or you're –

Ben tilts his head back slightly and closes his eyes whilst still playing with Penis' hair.

Brain: Hey! What's this? Open your eyes!

Penis: Ssssh.

Brain: What's going on! Why are you quiet all of a sudden?

Penis: Just shut up for a minute. Or five....

Brain: What are you doing? What are these images? Oh my god! That is not your girlfriend!

Ben: Just... sssh. Let it happen.

Brain: What is she doing! Is that a bike pump? They don't go there...!

Ben: Sssh....

Brain: Ooooh... hang on, I know this one. Oh, no. Blood amassing in groin area. Meaty sensation in right hand. Powers fading. You're wanking!

Ben: *(Opens his eyes)* I can't believe it took you this long to realise. *(Lets go of Penis, who starts wobbling, then sinking slowly)*

Penis: Whoa... whoa....

Brain: It's called weed, Ben.

Penis: Will you just let him have some fun? Huh? All we need is five minutes, come on!

Brain: No, I'm sick of this. I want in on the Saturdays. You can have Tuesdays from now on.

Penis: Tuesdays! Why don't you suck my... me!

Brain: And we should start exercising. There! I said it.

Ben: Oh, no. I'm getting older. I knew this would happen.

Brain: Yes, you're quite perceptive. Oh, and I want us to eat more vegetables, and perhaps if we could go to the theatre...?

Ben and Penis: NO!!

Brain: Ok, that might be taking it a bit too far, but like I said: I want in on the Saturdays.

Starting now.

Ben: You can't just barge in here and start making demands after all these years! Who do you think you are - Spice Girls?

Penis rises

Brain: *(incredulous)* What?

Penis: Best segue ever. Slap me some skin.

Brain: Oh no you don't! Get out of bed.

Penis: Slap me some skin!

Brain: Get out of bed!

Penis: SLAP ME SOME SKIN!

Brain: GET OUT OF BED!

They talk on top of each other

Penis: SLAP ME SOME -

Brain: GET OUT OF -

Ben: Okay, come on - we have to compromise here! So... stop right now. Thank you very much... *(closes his eyes and tilts his head back)*

Penis: *(Sings along)* I need somebody with a human toooooo-ouch...

Brain: Get off him! Now! I want comedy, exercise, a healthy lifestyle and theatre, not endless masturbation!

Penis: You're such a wanker!

Ben: But I thought you liked it when I -

Penis: *(turns around to face Ben)* Not you! I meant him -

Ben: Ow! Oh my god, turn around! *(Twists Penis back to initial position, flash of pain across Ben's face, but nothing too serious)*

Brain: How am I the wanker! Just because I would like some cultural influence for once!

Penis: (*mocking*) "Just because I would like some cultural influence.." Rath-eeeeer...

Brain: Oi, - don't make me come down there...

Ben: That's what she said.

Penis: Haha, I get it, nice one. High five. (*turns around*)

Ben: (*Screams*) Hey, hey, hey! Ow! Don't do that, I said, turn around! (*This time around the pain is much worse*)

Penis: Sorry, I just get so excited.

Ben: Yeah - how about you don't.

Brain: Dickhead.

Penis: I heard that!

Brain: Oh yeah?

Penis: Yeah!

Brain: OH YEAH?

Penis: YEAH!

Brain: OH YEAH?!?

PENIS: YEAH!!!

Ben: Guys, guys, guys. Come on. Why can't we all just get along?

Brain: You give me Saturday and I'll get along just fine.

Penis: Not happening. Weekends are mine.

Brain: No way! I want the weekends now! You've had them ever since our testicles dropped!

Penis: So what were those first twelve years of life? (*Starts counting on his fingers*) Learning to talk, learning to read, learning to write, learning maths - do you think I enjoyed that? Huh? The only action I got was when we got punched in the nuts! You barely grazed me for the first half of our life, man! That's called neglect!

Brain: You know what, I'm not discussing this with you. I want stimulation and I want it now. I don't want to tickle the pink anymore, I want my intellect to be tickled pink! I want to go see Dave Hughes, Daniel Kitson -

Penis: Oh, no....(*Starts sinking*)

Brain: Tom Gleeson, Mark Watson,

Penis: Come on, man! Play fair! (*Keeps sinking*)

Brain: Ross Noble -

Penis: Ackh!

Brain: Greg Fleet -

Penis: (*Strangling sounds*)

Brain: Arj Barker -

Penis freezes midway.

Penis: That was unexpected.

Brain: Hum. Are you... okay?

Penis: Yeah, I'm... fine. (*A bit bemused, pats himself down*)

Ben: What the fuck are you doing?! (*Starts to panic*)

Penis: Well, I guess I'm partially aroused?

Ben: No! This is not happening! Down, boy! Down!

Penis: I can't help it, you're the one who's gay!

Ben: I'm not gay! Get down!

Brain: I don't know what all the fuss is about. Gay is the new straight, Ben, you'll pull it off like a sock!

Ben: I don't want to pull it off! Get - down! Brain! Give me a hand, man! (*Starts pushing Penis down, tries to strangle him between his thighs*)

Brain: (*Sighs*) Okay, how's this - I was thinking we could go see Judith Lucy.

Penis drops to the floor instantly.

Ben: *(Exhales with extreme relief and exhaustion)* Okay! We never talk about this again, agreed?

Penis: You've practically killed me anyway.

Brain: I don't know why you're so stressed. So we're not seeing Arj Barker then?

Penis shifts position on the floor.

Ben: No! *(Kicks Penis)*

Penis: How about some resuscitation here...CPR... mouth to mouth...

Ben: *(Quietly)* I wish...

Brain: *(Slightly frustrated)* Okay... I was looking forward to Arj, but anyway... I still want to see Judith, though!

Penis: *(Muffled, high-pitched scream)* No!

Brain: Well, I think they're both talented comedians,

Ben and Penis: Don't care!

Brain: ...albeit not extremely important. So I guess we can look for others. Program!

Ben: Hepp!

Penis grabs the program and hands it to Ben who starts leafing through. Brain is amazed at this act.

Brain: ...how the hell did you do that?

Penis: Practice! What do you think we've been doing all these weekends?

Ben: Alright, let's see... I was thinking it'd be nice to see someone up and coming...

Penis: Oh, come on, man. You're setting these jokes up now. I may be a dick, but I've got some standards...

Ben: Sorry... Hey, look, Rove McManus is doing stand-up!

Brain: He can stand up til he gets deep vein Thrombosis, he's still shorter than a gay pride parade in Frankston.

Penis: Oohh, snap.

Brain: No, but Rove is terribly overrated, Ben.

Penis: Yeah, I don't even like him, and I've been into some serious shit, man.

Ben: Literally.

Brain: Okay, so we agree that Rove is out. How do we feel about Tripod?

Ben: Tripod... Oh! Yeah. Those two guys that support Gollum.

Penis: Aaaaw, they're alright...?

Brain: Trust you to love a singing male threesome...

Penis: Hey!

Ben: Don't you start again!

Brain: Start what?

Penis: Yeah, don't you start... (*very unconvincing comment, starts to get up*)

Ben: You want to stay down or so help me, God, I will not lay a hand on you!

Penis: This is stupid. (*lies down*)

Ben: And stay down!

Penis: That's what *she*...

Ben: I'm not in the mood! Okay - what about Wil Anderson?

Brain: One man's battle with extreme perspiration. I don't know...

Penis: Yeah, I always think his head's gonna explode. Blue, throbbing veins everywhere—

Ben: Bit too close to home?

Penis: Maybe?

Brain: Like looking in a mirror?

Penis: Something like that...

Brain: Well, there's gotta be someone we can all agree on? How about Corinne Grant?

Penis strains to get back up. It's a visible effort with groans and moaning.

Brain: Does it worry you that he's like a sleeping bag with arthritis now, but if I mention Arj Barker once, he's stiffer than Kerry Packer?

Ben: Shut up.

Penis: *(At half chubb)* Okay! I'm better now. Listen, I hate to say this, but I really don't care for comedy. If you can just toss me off quickly, you guys can go see whatever you want; Class Clowns, Best of Adelaide, I don't care, knock yourselves out - Brain; you can have Ben for the rest of the day. Okay? Just give me a hand here.

Brain: Get fucked.

Penis: I'd love to, but it's just not on the cards right now. Come on, don't be so proud! Let Benny boy stroke me quickly and I'll be out of your hair before you can say Kleenex.

Brain: I don't know...

Ben: Come on...

Brain: Well...I suppose... Oh, no, here are those images again. Who is that?

Ben: She's just a friend.

Brain shakes his head and Penis starts rising

Brain: Does she know how you feel about her?

Ben and Penis laugh, Ben leans over and grabs Penis' shoulders. He starts rubbing them gently.

Ben: Oh yeah, sure... we talk about it all the time.

Penis: That's nice. Little to the left.

Brain: Okay... well, enjoy. I'll just go do some long division or something - whoa! Here she comes again! What's with that bike pump, man! Can I just say: you are a very disturbed human being. *(Starts sinking)*

Ben: You can say whatever you want, just get out...

Penis: Yeah, listen to the man!

Brain: You mum would be so disappointed if she saw you now.

Penis shrieks, drops to the floor and starts crying, Ben gets up in a flash and starts getting dressed.

Ben: What the fuck did you just do!

Brain: What! What did I do!

Ben: Look! Look at him! He's crying!

Brain: How can he cry? He's a cock for fuck's sake!

Penis: Cocks have feelings too!

Brain: I'm sorry!

Ben: It's too late for being sorry, Brain. I'm gonna do something I should've done years ago.

Brain: What - what are you doing?

Ben picks up the phone and starts ringing a number.

Brain: Don't do something you'll regret now!

Ben: This has gone too far. You have to be stopped.

Brain: You can't stop me! Do you know how absurd this is, by the way?

Ben: Oh, I've got an idea. *(On phone)* Hello?

Brain: Wait. We're not thinking what I think we're thinking, are we? I mean you?

Ben: Yeah, hi. *(Mutes the receiver, to Brain:)* You're going down, mate.

Brain: Don't do anything stupid, Ben! You're only hurting yourself!

Ben: I'm after something so stupid and vulgar it would only appeal to a fourteen year-old boy. No, I'm after.... *(pause)* No, much worse. No, something like - *(searches for words)* talking dicks. Yeah, that's what I want. *(Enunciates to Brain)* Talking dicks.

Brain: Come on, man! This is dangerous!

Ben: *(Still to phone, almost surprised)* You do? Okay, I'll have that, then. Thanks. One ticket to go see - what is it? Okay. Big Brother 2008.

Brain: NOOOOOOOOOOOOO!! (*Brain falls*)

Penis: (*gets back up, turns around*) Hell yeah! High five!!

Ben screams, falls over

Lights out.