

RUBY

A Ten-Minute Play
by
Donald Loftus

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Donald Loftus
233 East 70th Street
NYC, NY 10021
Phone: 646-752-4807
[donaldjloftusnyc@gmail.com](mailto:donal djloftusnyc@gmail.com)

RUBY

(Cast of Characters)

ADAM	AGE 40+	An uptight, suicidal British businessman. HE wears a business suit and carries an umbrella and a briefcase.
RUBY	AGE 60+	A homeless woman who speaks with a thick Cockney accent. SHE wears an ill-fitting house dress, a stained fedora, and well-worn shoes. SHE looks like she is in serious need of a shower.

RUBY

SETTING: London. The banks of the River Thames. Down-stage center are two benches over-looking the unseen river which is located out over the audience.

AT RISE: *ADAM sits in the center of one of the benches. HE appears to be upset as he talks into his cell phone.*

TIME: Mid-morning on a cold spring day.

ADAM

(Speaking into his cell phone)

And again Valerie, I am sorry to be leaving this in a phone message, but as you have accused me of being deadly dull, painfully predictable... and completely incapable of doing anything which might be viewed as spontaneous...I thought that rather just leaving you the conventional suicide note on the nightstand ... I would instead, leave you this suicide notification in the form of phone message. So that's it. I wish you a good life.

(After a beat)

Oh, and you can tell the London authorities that they can probably best discover the location of the body... in the dark and murky waters of the Thames...somewhere between the Westminster Bridge and the Waterloo Bridge...but not as far as the Blackfriar's... I shouldn't think. Okay, that is it. Goodbye.

(ADAM puts his phone in his pocket, wipes his eyes and stares out over the audience. RUBY enters)

RUBY

Well, what do you say? ... You there! ... Yes, you!

(ADAM looks around to see who RUBY is addressing)

ADAM

I'm sorry...were you addressing me???

RUBY

Yes! I'm addressing to you! Who the hell else would I be addressing?

ADAM

Oh, sorry...

RUBY

Well, Dearie... I don't suppose you need to be sorry...

ADAM

What?

RUBY

I said...I don't suppose you need to be at all sorry. In fact, I'm fairly certain you ain't *never* really done nothin' to be sorry for. Ain't that right?

(ADAM stares at HER unsure what to say. SHE sits next to ADAM on the bench. ADAM moves to the far-left end of the bench as far away from HER as possible.

RUBY (Continued)

Well, have you?

ADAM

I beg your pardon...

RUBY

It's really something, isn't it?

ADAM

What is?

RUBY

The River Thames... calmly, quietly ebbin' and flowin' through this brash and brassy metropolis...

ADAM

Oh, yes. Right.

RUBY

Funny name though. Thames.

ADAM

Is it?

RUBY

Where do you suppose it's from? ... The Thames.... How do you think it got its name?

ADAM

Oh. Well, I believe it's from the Middle English word "Temese" which was derived from the Celtic name "Tamesas" which is thought to mean 'dark' or 'muddiness.'

RUBY

Well look at you Mr. Smarty Pants!

ADAM

Well, that's just one possibility. No one knows for sure... the etymology... I mean...

RUBY

Yeah? Well, edible-ology or not... the old girl has certainly seen her share of tragedy.

ADAM

What do you mean?

RUBY

As sweet and peaceful as she may look, this cruel and cunning canal has a history chockfull with death... murders and suicides...and what have you.

ADAM

Oh. Right. Well, that's cheery.

RUBY

It especially seems to attract those who would take their own lives. It's like the river just swallows 'em up... their poor, pitiful lifeless bodies. They rot eventually, I suppose. Dissolve-like. Most are never found...

ADAM

You seem to know an awful lot about it...

RUBY

I know enough.

ADAM

Well... if you don't mind, I'd like to just sit here... in quiet.

RUBY

No, I don't mind. I don't mind at all. Anyways, I'm knackered me-self, I am, I am.

ADAM

Yes? You'd probably be best off just sitting quietly too then. Just resting...quiet-like.

RUBY

Yes. Lovely. Would you mind if I laid down?

ADAM

What?!?

RUBY

On the bench I mean.

ADAM

Oh. Well... I...

RUBY

I'm just askin' ya...would you mind if I rested my weary self on this here bench?

(ADAM stands up and moves to the empty bench)

ADAM

Oh! Yes. Certainly. There you go. I will just sit on *this* bench. This *empty* bench.

(RUBY lies on the bench)

RUBY

Thank you, Mate.

ADAM

No problem.

RUBY

Much appreciated.

ADAM

My pleasure.

RUBY

Really though...thank you very much. After all... I had no right. I mean...let's face it...you was here first.

ADAM

Okay! Enough!

RUBY

I was just tryin' to express my gratitude...

ADAM

Yes, sorry. It's fine, really. It's no problem at all.

RUBY

Problem or not...I do appreciate it.

ADAM

I got it!

RUBY

Well, good then.

ADAM

Besides, it is nearly time.

Say what?

RUBY

I really must be going soon anyway.

ADAM

Where are you going? ... Aw, come on now. Tell me where you're going.

RUBY

Please, I gave you my seat...

ADAM

So???

RUBY

So... where I'm going is really of no concern of yours.

ADAM

Well, pardon me, ya cheeky little monkey!

RUBY

Look, I'm sorry...

ADAM

Again, with the sorry business.

RUBY

Yes...well...it's been a very long day...

ADAM

Has it now???

RUBY

Yes, it has! And I just really wanted some quiet time right now...just a few quiet minutes.

ADAM

Oh sure. Quiet time. I totally understand that. Yes, quiet time.

RUBY

I just wanted to sit here and clear my head for a few minutes.

ADAM

Yes, of course! I understand.
(After a beat)
You won't hear another peep out of me.

ADAM

Brilliant. Thanks much. I really do appreciate that.

(SHE sits up, searches her pockets, and finally pulls out a cigarette butt)

RUBY

Got a match, mister?

ADAM

No.

RUBY

Just my luck!

ADAM

Yes, well...

RUBY

You know...if you had a match, I wouldn't mind letting you have a drag or two.

ADAM

I don't smoke.

RUBY

So, you *are* a good boy, eh?

ADAM

Shhh....

RUBY

Oh, right. Quiet time. Sorry.

(After a beat)

I suppose you go to church too.

ADAM

Yes, as a matter of fact I do.

RUBY

I never went to church.

ADAM

Really? Not even as a child?

RUBY

Nope...never. Hell, I never even went to Sunday school. And I wouldn't. It's only good for the loonies and hypocrites.

ADAM

(Irritated)

Okay, I don't even know what that means. But I really don't care...because I really don't care to talk to you as I said earlier!

(After a beat)

And do you think not going to church has helped you get to where you are in life?

RUBY

Well, actually, I haven't been so prosperous, if that's what you mean.

(ADAM snickers)

RUBY (Continued)

Here now! What's ya laughing at?

ADAM

Oh, sorry. I meant no offense.

RUBY

I'm telling you the truth. I don't have what one would call a nest egg.

ADAM

Yes, okay. I believe you.

RUBY

Well, you'd better. I don't allow no man to doubt my word.

(After a beat)

Have you got a tenner or two you could spare?

ADAM

No.

RUBY

How about a fiver then? A fiver will do.

ADAM

I have no money to spare.

RUBY

Just a quid then. I'll pay you back tomorrow.

ADAM

You'll have to borrow elsewhere. I work in a small shop and make a very small wage.

RUBY

Whose shop?

ADAM

Ben Benjamin's... but you won't know any better for my telling you that, unless you are acquainted in Bexleyheath...

RUBY

I've been through it. I've been through Bexleyheath. Benjamin keeps the grocery store.

ADAM

Yes, as a matter of fact he does!

RUBY

What's your name?

ADAM

Adam.

RUBY

Just Adam?

ADAM

Adam Forrester.

RUBY

Forrester? Not John Forrester's son?

ADAM

I am! Did you know my father?

RUBY

I've heard his name.

ADAM

What is your name?

*(RUBY starts searching **her** pockets for something)*

RUBY

I'm afraid I haven't got any of my cards with me...

ADAM

Nor do I... but I told you, my name.

RUBY

All right...I'll tell you mine. You can call me Rapunzel. That's me name.

ADAM

No it is not! Come on now! I gave you my real name.

RUBY

I've almost forgotten what my real name is. Okay then... if you don't like Rapunzel, you can call me Rumpelstiltskin.

ADAM

I don't think that name would suit you either.

RUBY

Why not?

ADAM

Firstly, Rumpelstiltskin was a man. And secondly, he was fiction. He was not real.

RUBY

Says you!

ADAM

What?

RUBY

Enough of that. It's time to get down to business. Have you got *any* money on you?

ADAM

No.

(RUBY looks around to make sure no one is coming, and she starts grabbing him to get into his suit pockets)

RUBY

Come on now. I know you have. Give it to me or things are going to get worse for you, ya snobby little snowflake!

ADAM

Name calling isn't going to get you anywhere. And you know... I've got to tell you... I was feeling pretty low earlier. I suppose you might say, I was feeling sorry for myself. I thought I'd fallen as far as one possibly could. And now...I suppose I *should* thank you! For after meeting you, I now see I'm not so bad off. I now see things could be so much worse! I now realize just how lucky I am!

RUBY

Well good then. All the more reason you should give me your money!

ADAM

No, there's where you are wrong! You will still get no money from me!

RUBY

I won't, hey! Do you think I'm going to let a little pansy like you get the best of me?

(RUBY grabs ADAM'S arm)

ADAM

Ouch! Stop that! You are hurting me!

(ADAM finally gives up. HE takes out a coin and throws it into the audience)

ADAM (Continued)

Fine, there's a pound. It's all I have. Go get it if you want it but then leave me alone.

RUBY

Curse you! Why couldn't you just give it to me instead of throwing it down there?

ADAM

Because I didn't want you to have it!

RUBY

Well at least it didn't hit the water. Go and get out and get it for me!

ADAM

I won't!

RUBY

Fine, I'll go and get it myself.

(RUBY goes into the audience to fetch the coin)

ADAM

Adios ya crazy old witch! I hope I never am to see the likes of you again.

(ADAM runs off the stage as RUBY picks up the coin and pockets it)

RUBY

Oh, you'll see me alright. You may not recognize me when you do...but next time you're in trouble...you are gonna see me. Just like you always have. Just like you always will.

(RUBY exits through the back of the theatre)

(BLACKOUT)
(END OF PLAY)