

EXTRACT

Beijing Big Mac

a short play

by

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Cast

SUSANNAH

LEN

Setting

A McDonald's in Beijing, China

Time

About 7pm. New Year's Eve.

Beijing Big Mac

McDonald's. Beijing, China. 7pm.

SUSANNAH IS SIPPING TEA FROM A STYROFOAM CUP, READING A BOOK. LEN APPROACHES WITH A BURGER AND COKE ON A TRAY.

LEN: Can I sit here?

SUSANNAH LOOKS AT HIM.

LEN: I said can I sit here?

SUSANNAH LOOKS AWAY. LEN SITS.

LEN: Freezing isn't it?

SUSANNAH DOES NOT RESPOND.

LEN: I don't think it's got above zero since I arrived. It's the wind they reckon, coming down from Mongolia.

BEAT.

SUSANNAH: Siberia.

LEN: Sorry?

SUSANNAH: The wind comes down from Siberia. Not Mongolia.

LEN: Oops.

LEN UNWRAPS HIS BURGER. HE EXAMINES IT.

LEN: So what do you think of that?

SUSANNAH DOES NOT RESPOND.

LEN: I said what do you think of that?

SUSANNAH: I heard you.

LEN: Well what do you think? Take a good look. A genuine Beijing Big Mac.

SUSANNAH: (NOT LOOKING) Great.

LEN: I didn't think they'd even have the Golden Arches in China. Now what do I find, right in the middle of downtown Beijing central – my very own Maccie Dees. And since it's New Year's Eve I thought: "Hey, a special occasion. Treat yourself." Treat yourself to a Big Mac – Beijing style. See in the new year with a big bite. Well, here goes.

LEN TAKES A BITE. HE CHEWS.

LEN: Hey, that's okay. Almost as good as the real thing.

SUSANNAH: It is the real thing.

LEN: Sort of. But not really. Not really real. Like back home.
(OFFERING IT TO SUSANNAH) You want some?

SUSANNAH: I'm a vegetarian.

LEN: Then what are you doing in McDonald's? (LAUGHS) My name's Len.

HE HOLDS OUT HIS HAND. SUSANNAH LOOKS AT IT. LEN PULLS IT BACK.

LEN: Oops. (HE WIPES IT) So, when did you get in?

SUSANNAH PUTS DOWN HER BOOK.

SUSANNAH: You see - now that makes me mad.

LEN: What?

SUSANNAH: The way you immediately assume I just got in. Like the way you come over here and immediately assume I speak English.

LEN: Well you do don't you?

SUSANNAH: But that doesn't mean you should assume it. You don't know anything about me. How did you know I wasn't a local?

LEN: Excuse me?

SUSANNAH: You heard me. How did you know I wasn't a local?

LEN: I don't see too many other people with blonde hair in here.

SUSANNAH: Just because I'm blonde doesn't mean I'm *blonde* okay?

LEN: Okay. Okay. Don't get your panties in a twist.

SUSANNAH: I'll do whatever I like. I could've been naturalised. I could've been living here for years - but you just immediately assume that I'm not from here. I'm alien.

LEN: So you're not an alien? You're from here.

SUSANNAH: No. But that doesn't change my point. How would you've felt if I didn't speak English huh? If you just came over here and started blurting –

LEN: I wasn't blurting.

SUSANNAH: And I couldn't understand a word you were saying. How would you've felt then? Pretty stupid huh? You would've felt pretty stupid.

LEN: No.

SUSANNAH: What-ever.

**SUSANNAH TURNS AWAY AND STARTS READING HER BOOK.
LEN GOES TO TAKE ANOTHER BITE. HE STOPS.**

LEN: See this is no good now. You've put me off my Big Mac. On New Year's eve too. (PAUSE) I said I'm not eating my Big Mac.

SUSANNAH: Do you know how much crap is in one of those?

LEN: Hey baby, you're eating it too?

SUSANNAH: I'm not eating. I'm drinking. Tea. Green tea. Without milk.

LEN: That's usually how Green Tea comes.

SUSANNAH: I only come in here because I've got a friend who works behind the counter. He slips me an extra tea bag for free.

LEN: A friend?

SUSANNAH: He lives with the family I'm staying with.

LEN: You're staying with a family?