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Travis Hooper

- "Walk Away Renee"

A one act play - comedy

Running Time: approx. 45 minutes

Period: Modern Day

Synopsis:

Life is a funny thing. It seems that the last thing John and Renee were looking for was love. Somehow it managed to find them both. Will the fates that brought them together allow them to stay together? Is life really that far removed from the movie ideal? This sweet slice-of-life comedy will amuse and touch the hearts of those who watch it.

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About the Author: Travis Hooper

- This page will be updated shortly.



bio

About the Play:

Walk Away Renee was written and first performed in 2006 at The Brookman St Theatre, home of the Goldfields Repertory Club (1931) Inc in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia and was directed by Joy Harvey.

The original 2006 cast:

John played by Travis Hooper

Renee played by Stephanie Hayes

Susan played by Acarander Huntley

Andy played by Andrew Upfold

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Walk Away

Renee

by Travis Hooper.

John

- *A nice guy who finds love.*

Renee

- *A sweet woman who finds love*

Susan

- *Renee's Best friend and confidant.*

Andy

- *John's best mate and drinking buddy*

SCENE ONE.

(Music. Billy Bragg's 'Walk Away Renee' {first 20 seconds})

(curtains up)

(Stage is set with two sofas one, SR (John's home) and SL (Renee's home) with a bar table and two stools CS. Lights up CS on John and Andy at the table.)

(Music. US3's Cantaloup {0.10 mins in} gradually fades during the conversation.)

JOHN: Andy?

ANDY: Yes mate?

JOHN: Explain to me again why we're here?

ANDY: Alex from work told me this place is the bomb.

JOHN: The bomb? Bombsite more likely. Why do you insist on dragging me to these meat markets?

ANDY: Because you need to meet girls. You need to go out more often than Christmas and Easter. You've dug yourself into a rut.

JOHN: I am not in a rut! I lead a full and active social life.

ANDY: What happened on "The Bill" last week?

JOHN: Ok, DS Webb, who's now with the NCS, went back to Sun Hill. He gave Carver evidence he found that showed that DI Manson was bent. So Carver -

ANDY: HAH! The defence rests your honour.

JOHN: Well, what about you? Do you think that meaningless relationships with a multitude of beautiful women give you a satisfying social life?

BOTH: (pause) Yes.

ANDY: Just because I haven't found Miss Right, doesn't mean I can't show Miss Right Now a good time.

JOHN: Fair enough, but I'd like to think there's more to life than trying to pick up in seedy dives.

ANDY: Cheer up mate, your genie in a bottle's here. Now, what are you this week?

JOHN: No, I'm not playing this game, it never works.

ANDY: Yes it does, it shows your funny side. God knows, it needs the odd airing

JOHN: It doesn't. Your pick up lines are right up there with "is your daddy a thief? Cos' he's the one who must have taken the stars out of the sky and put them in your eyes."

ANDY: Worked for me.

JOHN: No it didn't, she came back with "is your daddy a farmer? Cos he's the one who took the bullcrap out of the paddock and put it in your mouth."

ANDY: The exception that proves the rule. Anyway, what are you?

JOHN: An upper school primary teacher.

ANDY: If I wanted the truth, I'd have checked the labels mummy sewed on your Jumper. Now, give me an occupation.

JOHN: Super Hero?

ANDY: Too obvious, beginner's mistake.

JOHN: Paediatric Surgeon?

ANDY: Too hard to maintain. What if she watches ER?

JOHN: Stockbroker?

ANDY: Too ambitious, you're married to the Job.

JOHN: Landscape gardener?

ANDY: Too lowly, you have to look like an ex-Chippendale to get away with it.

JOHN: Chef?

ANDY: Too boring, unless you've got an accent and a TV show

JOHN: Rodeo rider?

ANDY: Too butch.

JOHN: Deep sea fisherman?

ANDY: Too smelly.

JOHN: Counsellor?

ANDY: Too creepy.

JOHN: Well what then?

ANDY: Dolphin trainer.

JOHN: Dolphin Trainer?

ANDY: Perfect for you. It shows you like animals and have a sensitive side, outdoorsy, slightly dangerous, and gives you plenty of opportunity to be modest when describing your work.

JOHN: All I know is that they teach dolphins tricks by giving them fish.

ANDY: Exactly! That's all ANYONE knows about it. You'll tell her that, she thinks you're being self deprecating. Women love that stuff.

(during this time, Renee walks in and is looking around.)

JOHN: Why am I listening to you?

ANDY: Because I'm your wingman.

JOHN: What?

ANDY: Like the fighter pilots, you go in for the attack, and I'm there along side you, on your wing. I got your back buddy.

JOHN: How are you protecting my wing and back at the same time?

ANDY: Christ, it's a metaphor! Just like in Top Gun. I'm there for you, looking out for you man. I'm just like Maverick, and you're Goose.

JOHN: Didn't Goose die in an accident caused by Maverick's mistake?

ANDY: Shut up! *(noticing Renee)* Well, what about her?

JOHN: I can't, she's out of my league.

ANDY: Wing Commander, you have your mission objective. Home in on target at ten o'clock.

JOHN: Leave me alone.

ANDY: *(pushing John towards Renee)* Love missile locked and ready. Fire at will.

JOHN: *(hissing at Andy)* Would you just- *(to Renee)* Hi! Um, ah, I'm -

RENEE: *(angry)* You're what? A doctor who works with the starving in Africa? An SAS operative who's shipping out tomorrow for the Gulf?

JOHN: *(confused)* No, I just wanted to -

RENEE: What? Give me 40 cents to call my mum and tell her I'm not coming home tonight?

JOHN: No, I -

ANDY: *(off into the distance)* Hey! There's Alex! Hey buddy! What cha doing? *(to John)* mission failure! Abort! Abort!

(Andy beats a hasty retreat)

JOHN: I am so sorry, I'll leave -

RENEE: *(brightly)* Hi, I'm Renee. *(extends hand)*

JOHN: *(shakes, more confused)* Um, John.

RENEE: You're a teacher aren't you?

JOHN: Yes but how -

RENEE: My sister's kids go to your school. Years one and three. I've seen you at assemblies.

JOHN: Oh. Yeah, it's a good job. I like working with my kids.

RENEE: You also look kinda cute in your school jumper.

JOHN: *(surprised)* Really?

RENEE: Sorry about the spray, I thought things might go better if the Love Doctor left us.

JOHN: You know Andy?

RENEE: More by reputation. Some Girlfriends of mine have dated him. Nice enough guy, but more corny lines than James Bond.

JOHN: Sounds like him. *(deep breath)* Listen, would you like a drink?

RENEE: No thank you.

JOHN: Oh, That's OK. My mistake.

RENEE: No no, no. You see I can't stay, I'm meeting a girlfriend of mine here. We're off to a movie. *(Susan enters)* and here she is.

JOHN: *(putting on a brave face)* Oh. Well, nice meeting you anyway.

RENEE: *(rummaging through her bag, then writing down a number on a piece of paper)* It was very nice meeting you, John the Teacher. Here's my number, give me a call sometime about that drink. Bye. *(exit)*

JOHN: *(looking at the paper)* Yeah. Bye.

JOHN: *(to audience)* And that's how it happens. Right out of the blue, all the things your Parents told you turn out to be right. All the things female friends comforted you with after going home alone from parties are true. "If you be yourself, you'll meet the right girl someday." "As soon as you stop looking, the girls of your dreams will be just around the corner." Or "Don't worry, nice guys don't always finish last." *(laughs quickly)* I'd never held much stock in those sayings, I'd figured they were platitudes you told the unlucky in love, and yet here it was, in full Technicolor, straight out of a Romantic comedy. I didn't know why she liked me, and I had no idea where this was heading, but I wasn't about to let an opportunity slip by.

SCENE TWO.

(lights up on SL (Renee's home) Renee is pacing, Susan is Lounging on the sofa, watching Renee in obvious amusement .)

RENEE: Ring Damn you! Ring! Why hasn't he called?

SUSAN: Because you gave him your number and told him to ring you "sometime." Boys are stupid and need clear instructions.

RENEE: I was certain he was going to ring.

SUSAN: *(teasing)* sounds like someone has a boyfriend, wuh - woo!

RENEE: Was it something I did? Did I come on too strong? Did I put him offside talking about Andy like that? Is Andy Badmouthing me? Oh God, why did I say that? What's wrong with me?

SUSAN: Renee! *(motions her to be quiet, become calm, sit down)* Now, you gave him your number last night, 18 hours ago. If he shares a house he won't ring for at least another 6 hours.

RENEE: But I thought he liked me.

SUSAN: And I'm sure he does, but if I know men, and I -

RENEE: And I think you do,

SUSAN: What does that mean?

RENEE: Nothing. Go on.

SUSAN As I was saying, If he shares a house with a bloke, this guy is telling him that if he rings any earlier, he's in contravention of rule 43897 of the bloke's code of conduct.

RENEE: You're kidding me.

SUSAN: I wish I was. The fact is, there are nothing men like more than spouting rules and making lists. You know, twenty essential rules for first dates, top ten cartoon hotties, top five cartoon hotties you'd like to take on a first date. Believe me, as we speak, his best mate is telling John why he can't ring you.

(lights down)

(lights up on SR (John's home) John is pacing with the note, Andy is holding his phone out of reach .)

ANDY: No! Bad John! BAD John!

JOHN: Let me call her!

ANDY: Rule number three?

JOHN: I want to call her!

ANDY: What is rule number three?

JOHN: *(reciting)* don't call for three days.

ANDY: Very good

JOHN: This is crap. Who makes up these rules? Did I lose my invitation to bloke camp? Where did you learn these rules?

ANDY: A mate of mine sent me a list off the internet.

JOHN: The internet? You're telling me you're basing your life philosophy on a thirty five year old virgin who lives in his mother's basement? *(snatching phone)* give me that!

(John rings RENEE, who picks up the phone. She waits for a while before answering.)

RENEE: *(casually)* Hello?

JOHN: Hi. It's John, John the teacher. From the bar the other night?

RENEE: Oh yes. Hi. What can I do for you?

JOHN: I was wondering if you'd like to go out to see a movie tomorrow night?

RENEE: Direct and to the point.

JOHN: Oh sorry, I -

RENEE: No I like it.

JOHN: OK then. Tomorrow it is.

RENEE: What shall we watch? You've asked me out, how about you choose?

(Susan motions urgently with a cut throat action.)

JOHN: No that's OK, why don't you choose?

(Andy motions urgently with a cut throat action.)

RENEE: How about we choose together? What's your address? I'll pick you up.

JOHN: Oh, OK, say sevenish?

RENEE: Sounds good. See you then

JOHN: Bye.

(Both of them turn off their respective phones, turn to their friends and shout:)

BOTH: S/He said Yes!!

Lights down.

SCENE THREE.

(lights up centre stage, John and Renee enter with drinks)

RENEE: Just a quick drink, then I'll have to go home.

JOHN: Fair enough, can't drink too much, not on a school night anyway.

RENEE: *(laughing)* No, I guess not. So do you like being a teacher?

JOHN: It's a good job I suppose. The Holidays are good.

RENEE: You're lying to me. There must be more to it than that. Don't you want to change the world?

JOHN: Not really, well maybe one kid at a time.

RENEE: So, under that likable exterior beats the heart of an idealist?

JOHN: I suppose, so many of the kids need good role models today, so you do what you can. What about you? HR for a multinational company must have its moments.

RENEE: Its not all beer and skittles, aside from the occasional junket overseas, most of it involves dealing with the, well, shallower end of the gene pool.

JOHN You don't really mean that, do you?

RENEE: I most certainly do. They can be easily divided into two separate camps. There are the job-seeking fools, who think that two years of TAFE entitle them to a managing directorship. And then there are the departmental fools, who don't understand why they can't employ ten more staff and cut their budgets at the same time.

JON: Isn't that a bit cynical? There must be some good points to the job.

RENEE: *(thinking)* You're right. I do enjoy the training part, you know, helping people get better in their jobs. It's funny, the better you do your job, the more people leave the company. Head hunted by other firms. *(chuckles)* Perhaps we've got more in common that you think. We like helping people and deep down we're soft hearted.

(They drink in silence for a few moments.)

RENEE: So what did you think of the Movie?

JOHN: It was OK I guess.

RENEE: Really? OK?

JOHN: Well, it wasn't quite what I expected.

RENEE: So tell me what you thought.

JOHN: I didn't think it was as good as people claim.

RENEE: You're lying again. I want your opinion. Did you like the movie?

JOHN: OK. *(deep breath)* Look, I'm a big fan of Australian films, right? Some of my favourite movies were made right here. But why does every critic in this country see it as their holy duty to talk up every movie that features the outback in it? I don't see why every movie we make has to feature hour long panning shots of the harsh outdoors. That film we watched was a good eighty minute story dragged out over 120 minutes. It just annoys me *(trails off)* I've blown it haven't I?

RENEE: No, not at all. They were my thoughts exactly. It's refreshing to hear someone articulate their passions. Very few people show other people enough respect to tell them what they think. Kudos to you John.

JOHN: You're just talking the Mickey now.

RENEE: No. I'm being serious.

JOHN: We'll I like the way you talk to me. No games, no rubbish.

RENEE: Thank you kind sir, I'm flattered. *(pause)* So, in that spirit, how many times am I going to have to touch you on the arm before you accompany me back to my place?

JOHN: Just one more time.

(she does, they kiss. Lights down. Lights up on Susan SL)

SUSAN: *(to audience)* And that's how it happens. You throw all the right signals, flirt, sit close to a guy, the works, but when push comes to shove, you still sometimes have to beat the guy over the head before he gets it. Don't get me wrong, we appreciate a guy that takes his time. It makes a nice change from the lechers you normally have to deal with. But fellas? If a woman sends you the right signals, if she's interested, make the move. Otherwise, it's just, rude, you know? Despite how self assured and confident today's women are, we are still human, and ALL humans are just a collection of our fears and neuroses. And if you take too long, you're gonna miss your chance. Despite thirty years of independence, we still like to be swept off our feet.

(Lights down. Lights up on Andy SR)

ANDY: *(to audience)* And that's how it happens. Take it from me, there is nothing better for getting a woman hot and bothered than taking your time. If you play hard to get, the girls want to get you harder. Despite being such a wuss, the boy picked up. And he didn't have to do anything, massive respect to him. Those of you playing in the junior leagues could learn a thing or two from John. Except don't hang around too long. Women very rarely fall into your lap? Rarely. And of that calibre? Almost never.

SCENE FOUR

(John and Renee are on the couch SL in Renee's apartment both are dressed casually, reading papers.)

RENEE: Have you finished with that section?

JOHN: Sure. Here it is.

RENEE: Thank you. *(Kisses him.)* Do you want this bit?

JOHN: Yes please. *(kisses her.)*

(they read in silence for a moment)

JOHN: Now, this is a way to spend a Saturday morning. Snuggled up on the couch reading the papers. So much more civilised than when I was growing up.

RENEE: How so?

JOHN: Saturdays was always sport in my house. Dad would drive us to Footy in winter and would then stand with an umbrella watching us play. He would always just watch. He didn't yell or anything, nothing like that, he would just watch. He'd never miss a game, and always washed the jumpers when he was asked to, but he was always there. It was kind of nice, you know? Saturdays were father and son time. And then afterwards, he would take us to the deli for a big plate of chips and gravy, and no matter how cold you felt, the chips always left a warm feeling in your tummy - What are you smiling at?

RENEE: Nothing, I'm just imagining you as a ten year old boy, freezing on the footy field. I bet you were looked so cute in your Guernsey.

JOHN: If you find blue lips attractive, I guess.

RENEE: Actually, I prefer your red ones of today. *(they Kiss. Susan enters)*

SUSAN: *(Hiding her face)* Nothing to see here, just passing through. Nothing to - *(looking at them.)* Um aaahhhh! I'm telling on you! *(calling out 'upstairs')* Mum! Renee's kissing the babysitter again! *(normal voice)* get a room you two.

RENEE: But we've just been there. We were -

SUSAN: *(fingers in ears)* lalalalala! I am not listening to you! lalalalala!

RENEE: Goodbye Susan.

SUSAN: Just getting my shoes and I'll leave you two love birds in peace *(muttering while exiting)* can't even sit on the couch in my own house, why I ortta...

JOHN: So what about you? Did you play sport?

RENEE: Netball. At least you had shorts and long socks. Dad didn't watch us normally, he usually played Golf. Mum kinda used it as a free crèche while she did the weekly shopping. Although I remember they both came to watch us in the under 12's grand final. This bitch from the cathedral

grammar team tripped me up when I went to take a pass outside the "D". Under 12's didn't rate an indoor court, we had old school bitumen. I cut open my knee, and I'm lying there crying my eyes out when Dad comes over. And you know what he did? He squatted down beside me and said; "It never hurts that much if you win." And then he smiles at me. So, I swapped with the GS and hobbled around in the 'D' and I scored the winning goal. And he was right, it didn't hurt that much. Dad was good like that. And what are you smirking at? Thinking about me in a netball skirt?

JOHN: No, I was thinking about how tough you were. I really admire that.

RENEE: Admire? What am I? Your girlfriend, or some remarkable piece of architecture?

JOHN: You're my girlfriend.

RENEE: Well, I'm glad someone said it. We've seen each other almost every night for the past four weeks. So, Can I now write your name on my pencil case?

JOHN: Don't get sarcastic, I was just agreeing with -

RENEE: Oh no! my boyfriend and I are having a fight! Who will take me to the blue light disco?

JOHN: *(smiling)* careful, or I won't carve our initials on the desk with a compass.

RENEE: So what do we do now? We're all alone, Mum and Dad are out for a couple of hours. Shall we play spin the bottle?

JOHN: Do you have a Bottle?

RENEE: In my room.

JOHN: Last one there's a rotten egg!

(Light's down)

SCENE FIVE

(light's up SR John's apartment)

(John is offstage, as he remains throughout this scene. He is singing along to a schmaltzy love song, ie. "Love is all around" by Wet Wet Wet)

ANDY: Oh Christ. *(switches off CD)* John? Where are you?

JOHN: In the shower.

ANDY: Is Renee there with you?

JOHN: No. Hey! Turn the music back on.

ANDY: The "Four weddings and a funeral" soundtrack? You actually want me to listen to that pap? What happened? Did you trade in the old twig and berries for this CD?

JOHN: No. Renee burnt it for me. It was playing when we went back to her house the first time.

ANDY: Well, I suppose it beats the old "I bought the ABBA CD for my sister" excuse.

JOHN: Sorry? What did you say?

ANDY: Nothing mate, just admiring your taste in music. What happened to the Smiths and Billy Bragg?

JOHN: Too depressing mate.

ANDY: Right. *(pause)* You going out again?

JOHN: Aww, do you miss me?

ANDY: Bite me.

JOHN: No thanks, we're having dinner first. What are you up to?

ANDY: Going over to Alex's. DVD night. He said you could come if you want.

JOHN: What's on offer?

ANDY: Number 7 in our top ten dodgy eighties movies.

JOHN: Weird science?

ANDY: That's number four. Tonight's "Better off dead."

JOHN: Dinner with my girlfriend or Pizzas with John Cusack? I'll pass this one time mate.

ANDY: Pass? but you've passed up every invitation in the last seven weeks! The rate you're going, we'll have to revoke your membership to Bloke's anonymous.

JOHN: How about next Friday? We can get on the slops. Just the two of us.

ANDY: Renee away next weekend?

JOHN: No, *(quiet)* she'll be back on Sunday morning.

(lights down)

SCENE SIX

(lights up SC.)

(Susan and Renee are together in the bar SC.)

SUSAN: So, shall we grab a drink?

RENEE: Yeah. *(forced)* Let's party on Down!

SUSAN: So what happened to the conference?

RENEE: Was cancelled at the last minute.

SUSAN: Did you tell John?

RENEE: No, let's have a girl's night.

SUSAN: Whoo Hoo!

(Andy and John enter singing "the boys are back in town")

RENEE: John!

JOHN: Renee! What are you doing here?

RENEE: The conference was cancelled at the last minute. You?

JOHN: Boys night.

RENEE: How's it going?

JOHN: Good. But I'm feeling a bit tired.

RENEE: Me too.

JOHN: Um Andy,

RENEE: Susan I'm -

SUSAN: Feeling kinda tired so I'll -

RENEE: Catch a ride home -

JOHN: With Renee.

RENEE: Is that cool?

SUSAN: Sure.
ANDY: Fine.
JOHN: Oh Andy? This is Renee. Renee, Andy.
RENEE: Gotta Go. See ya!

(they exit)

SUSAN: Good evening.
ANDY: Gudday.
SUSAN: *(extends hand)* Susan. Best friend and confidant.
ANDY: *(accepting hand)* Andy. Best mate and drinking buddy.
SUSAN: So, You're the one who thinks he's God's gift to Women?
ANDY: So, you're the uptight pris who sees every man as beneath her?

(brief pause)

SUSAN: *(deep breath)* Well, I'm glad we got that out of the way.
ANDY: Me too.

(brief pause)

ANDY: So you live with Renee.
SUSAN: Correct, and you live with John.
ANDY: We share a house, yes.
SUSAN: They're a nice couple, aren't they?
ANDY: The Best.
SUSAN: Yes, I'm very happy for Renee. John's a nice bloke.
ANDY: Renee's real top bird. Johnno really lucked out there.
BOTH: It's just that -
ANDY: You go.
SUSAN: No, You go

(the following is done simultaneously, with both of them overlapping each other.)

ANDY: I mean no disrespect to your friend but she's set up camp in my house and the two of them are so lovey dovey.

SUSAN: I'm not having a go at John, I think he's lovely bloke, but he's always over at our house.

ANDY: I mean good on Johnno, it's great to see him getting some, but Christ can't they do it in the bedroom?

SUSAN: I'm really happy for Renee, she's happy with him, but does she have to rub everyone's noses in it?

ANDY: I'm sitting there trying to watch telly and they're all over each other, well not even all over each other, but they're touching each other and calling each other pet names, I swear I'm going to punch him the next time he giggles about how she's so silly.

SUSAN: She can't lift a finger now without finding out what John's doing, and god help you if you ask her somewhere without inviting him, I know you have to work on relationships but you should spend at least 10 seconds a week with your friends right?

ANDY: And then there's the programmes THEY now want to watch. I'm telling you, I watch another episode of McLeod's Daughters I'm gonna need a Mammogram.

SUSAN: And then there's the whole house thing. I know he's probably the cleanest straight man I've ever met but I will hurt someone if I have to dredge the bathroom sink for stubble.

ANDY: Oh, and the god awful music he now plays because it reminds him of Renee. If my 16 year old niece listened to some of the crap he's now playing I'd straighten her out quick smart.

SUSAN: Oh, and the toilet seat. Look, do what you want at your house, sign your name on the kitchen walls when you get the urge to go, but It's a chick's house, so put the damn seat down when you've finished.

ANDY: And Yes, I know they love each other, but it's really frustrating,

SUSAN: And yes, I know that they're good for each other, but it's really annoying

BOTH: You know?

ANDY: Well, I'm Finished

SUSAN: Me too. *(pause)* Well, aren't we a pair of bitches?

ANDY: Nothing to apologise for, everyone's got to let off steam.

SUSAN: Yes, but what if it continues? I don't want them to break up, but it's sending me around the twist.

ANDY: We only have to worry about that for the next two weeks, then the three month rule kicks in.

**This is not the end of "Walk Away Renee"
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