

April Aardvark

by Nathaniel Moncrieff



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Notes

Characters

Ezekiel (EZ)

Elizabeth (Lizzie)

Alexandra (Alex)

George

Emerald (Emmie)

Deanna

Olive

Mortimer (Mort)

Cleopatra (Cleo)

Hilbert (Hilly)

Thelonious

April

Setting

Mildew College. A public secondary school (years 7-12).

The stage will be a fluid space, encompassing a range of different locations, primarily signified through lighting and sound, and occasionally props such as benches, chairs, desks and the base of a statue.

April Aardvark

ONE

School courtyard. Day.

Two benches spread slightly apart. ALEX and LIZZIE are seated on one bench; GEORGE on the other. All three are looking at their phones.

Behind them, in the centre, is a tall, thin, concrete base of a statue. The statue itself is absent.

EZ enters and sits down angrily next to GEORGE.

EZ I hate people.

LIZZIE People are so boring.

ALEX Total snooze buttons.

GEORGE Aren't we people?

LIZZIE No.

ALEX Definitely not.

GEORGE What are we then?

LIZZIE Different.

ALEX Better.

LIZZIE Like in that nature show we watched in class. Some animals are just fitter. Faster.

ALEX Better looking.

LIZZIE More vicious.

ALEX Right. You can be a tiny field mouse. Or you can be the
aardvark in the air, swooping down to eat the mouse.

GEORGE An aardvark isn't a bird.

ALEX Yes it is.

GEORGE It's a mammal.

ALEX Grow a brain cell, George.

LIZZIE has taken out her phone and is typing on it.

LIZZIE He's right. It's a mammal.

ALEX Then what am I thinking of? The big bird starting with A?

GEORGE Albatross?

ALEX That's it! The others are field mice and we're albatrosses.

LIZZIE *[Looking at her phone]* It says here that albatross mostly
eat fish.

ALEX Fine. They're fish. Little fish. God, you guys get so hung up
on facturacy.

GEORGE Accuracy?

ALEX Shut up, George.

GEORGE notices that EZ is staring off into the distance.

GEORGE *[To EZ]* How come you're so quiet?

EZ I don't feel like talking.

LIZZIE Everything ok?

EZ I said I don't feel like talking.

GEORGE The statue's coming along.

EZ What?

GEORGE The base looks good.

EZ Who cares?

GEORGE If they were putting up a statue of my dad, I'd care.

ALEX They don't put up statues of potatoes, George. Lol.

GEORGE Why can't you ever just laugh?

ALEX Laugh lines, doofus. I don't want to end up like my mum. She's twenty-two and she already looks like she's forty.

GEORGE Alex, your mum is definitely forty.

ALEX That's a very cruel thing to say, George.

LIZZIE I just wish they didn't have to put the statue right where we sit every day.

GEORGE Well, I like it there. I like that it's going to stand above us. I think it says to everyone ... we *are* part of a tradition. We are the school.

EZ I might not be for much longer.

GEORGE What do you mean?

EZ I got a month's detention. They were going to expel me, but they made a phone call to the statue. He talked them out of it.

LIZZIE Expel you? For what?

EZ They said if I get caught again, that's it. I'm gone.

LIZZIE For what?

EZ Those messages we sent last Thursday.

- ALEX Some people just can't take a joke.
- LIZZIE Babies.
- ALEX *Epecially* babies.
- GEORGE Did they say who told on us?
- EZ No. But I'll find out.
- LIZZIE How did they know it was you? We made the account anonymous so we wouldn't get caught.
- EZ They traced the messages back to me. We sent them from a school computer. In my school account.
- GEORGE So if we don't do it at school ... we won't get caught.
- EZ They'll know it's me. If there's no one else they can pin it on ...
- Pause.*
- We have to make it seem like it's another person doing it. A real person.
- LIZZIE You mean like using someone else's account?
- EZ No, I mean we create a person. Give them a name. An identity. Use a profile photo. Make them seem as real as possible.
- GEORGE You think that'll work?
- EZ It's worth a shot.
- GEORGE But if you get caught again, they'll suspend you.
- EZ So we won't get caught. We'll be careful. No using school computers. No posting about how pretty and popular Alex is.
- ALEX *[Sulkily]* What's even the point then?
- EZ I'll buy a prepaid phone and we'll use that to run the account. We'll cover our tracks.

- GEORGE So let's give it a name.
- ALEX April. I had an older cousin named April. She was the *worst*. Used to tease me about my Barbies.
- LIZZIE What's wrong with Barbies?
- ALEX She'd call me weird because I talked to them. But as if I would talk to dolls. *Dolls* talk to *me*.
- GEORGE Oh this is fascinating. What do they say?
- ALEX My Barbies always thought they were so pretty. They'd say, "Alex, we are so much prettier than you". So one day I set them all on fire.
- Pause.*
- GEORGE So, April then?
- ALEX April *Aardvark*.
- GEORGE Don't you mean "April *Albatross*"?
- EZ Aardvark. They live underground. They have sharp claws. They attack when provoked.
- LIZZIE And they're super cute.
- EZ No they're not! They're mean and they're vicious. Just like April Aardvark will be.
- ALEX So when do we start?
- EZ My house. Tonight.
- The bell rings.*
- EZ, ALEX, GEORGE and LIZZIE exit.*

TWO

School classroom. Day.

CLEO and OLIVE enter, carrying books. They sit down at two desks next to one another.

While they are speaking, HILLY enters and sits down at a nearby desk. He has a small handheld radio pressed to his ear.

OLIVE I can't tonight.

CLEO I can't do it alone, Olive.

OLIVE I always help you protest. Can't I just miss this one time?

CLEO You don't think it's important.

OLIVE Of course I think it's important. I've just got things I need to do.

CLEO But this affects you. It affects everyone. Do you know how long it takes plastic to break down in landfill?

HILLY One thousand years.

CLEO Right. One thousand years.

HILLY That is one hundred and twenty-four years in Venus time.

MORT enters, carrying books. He sits down at a desk.

OLIVE Cleo, you wanted vegan options in the canteen, so we protested and they started selling vegan muffins just for you. Now you want to protest that they're putting plastic wrapping on the muffins.

CLEO It's so mean! It's like they did it on purpose.

MORT suddenly stands upright, knocking over his desk and chair. He runs out of the room.

CLEO and OLIVE turn at the noise, confused. They resume their conversation.

OLIVE I just think if we keep making such a fuss, everyone will hate us more than they already do.

CLEO Not everyone hates us. There has to be others that care about these things.

HILLY I care.

CLEO You see.

HILLY I keep eating the plastic wrapping by mistake.

OLIVE But they make fun of us, Cleo. They call us —

HILLY *[Talking into the radio]* Jerks!

CLEO Excuse me?

HILLY *[Into the radio]* Space Commander Jerks! It is I, Space Private Hilbert Coyle reporting from day two thousand, one hundred and forty-two of my Earth mission.

OLIVE I just feel like we could ... draw less attention to ourselves.

HILLY *[Into the radio]* There is much unkindness here, Space Commander. I request a transfer. I would like to come home to Venus.

OLIVE We could pack our lunches, Cleo. Avoid the canteen completely.

MORT pushes THELONIOUS into the room. THELONIOUS holds a brown paper carry bag.

THELONIOUS *[To MORT, out of breath]* Too much running. Too many burritos.

MORT Say your line!

THELONIOUS *[Stiltedly]* This amazing new School Eats app has changed my life.

MORT How has it changed your life, Thelonious?

THELONIOUS I'm going to throw up.

MORT I said how has it changed your life, Thelonious?

THELONIOUS Once I had to rely solely on the canteen for my lunch. Now I can choose from fourteen —

MORT Sixteen.

THELONIOUS Sixteen local restaurants.

MORT And?

THELONIOUS opens the paper carry bag and vomits into it.

 And?!

THELONIOUS The first fifty people to trial the app get \$10 off their first order.

CLEO Does the food come in biodegradable packaging?

THELONIOUS No.

MORT Don't tell them that!

THELONIOUS Sorry.

MORT You're an investor in this app, Thelonious.

THELONIOUS *[To CLEO and OLIVE]* I loaned him thirteen dollars.

MORT Which could become thirteen *million* dollars.

THELONIOUS The teacher's coming.

MORT and THELONIOUS move to a couple of desks and sit down.

- MORT I don't see the teacher.
- THELONIOUS I just wanted you to stop talking. You were embarrassing me.
- MORT Embarrassing you? This could make you rich!
- THELONIOUS *[Offering the brown paper bag to MORT]* Do you want this back?
- MORT *[Pouting]* No, I don't want that back.
- CLEO *[To OLIVE]* So you won't come over tonight?
- OLIVE I'm not going to help you organise the protest. No more protests.
- CLEO I meant ... just to hang out.
- OLIVE I told you, I'm busy. I have to write an article for the newsletter.
- CLEO On what?
- OLIVE The statue.
- CLEO Gross.
- OLIVE I know. I heard EZ's dad offered to pay for the new gymnasium as long as they built him the statue.
- CLEO Maybe we should hold a protest about it.
- THELONIOUS Olive.
- OLIVE What?
- THELONIOUS falls asleep.*
- HILLY *[Shaking his radio]* I am frustrated by Earth technology!
- THELONIOUS *[Waking up, startled]* What?
- OLIVE You fell asleep.