

FAULT OR NO FAULT

By Scott Haan

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ISBN: 978-1-61588-338-7

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FAULT OR NO FAULT*A Ten Minute Dramatic Comedy Duet***By Scott Haan**

SYNOPSIS: What seems like a simple fender-bender turns out to be much more as Bill and Donna talk through the aftermath of a minor car crash. The events leading up to the crash reveal secret after secret, and they realize that their lives might never be the same.

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(1 female, 1 male)*

BILL (m)..... Donna's husband. *(53 lines)*

DONNA (f)..... Bill's Wife. *(54 lines)*

TIME: Present day. Early evening on a weeknight.

SETTING: Outside, the site of a fender bender.

PROPS

- Cell Phone (BILL)
- Jewelry Box with a Ring in his Pocket (BILL)

SOUND EFFECTS

- A car crash-sound of tires screeching. (Optional)

PRODUCTION NOTES

The ages of both characters are flexible, but for best results, they should be roughly the same age. This show could be performed on a blank stage, or a few set pieces to denote outdoors could be used, if available. A bench might be useful to give Bill something to stand on, but is optional.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Fault or No Fault was first presented on June 12-13, 2015 as part of the 10-Minute Play Festival at the Civic Theatre of Greater Lafayette in Lafayette, IN. The roles were performed by the following cast:

BILL..... Martin Fernandez

DONNA Kate Martin

DIRECTOR.....Laurie Russell

PRODUCER.....Steven Koehler

AT RISE: *Lights are down and the stage is bare. (OPTIONAL SFX: The sound of screeching tires and a minor car crash can be heard in the dark.) Lights up. BILL and DONNA are standing DSC. Both are distressed. DONNA is looking down – maybe around the feet of the front row of the audience – at their imaginary “cars” that just crashed, but BILL is looking at DONNA with concern.*

DONNA: You hit me!

BILL: *(Worried.)* Are you all right?

DONNA: You hit me!

BILL: *(More insistent.)* Are you all right?

DONNA: *(Looking up at him for the first time.)* Yes, jeez, I'm fine. Calm down. Psycho.

BILL: *(Looking down at the cars for the first time.)* Oh man. Look at that. That's gonna be expensive.

DONNA: Well then, maybe you shouldn't have hit me.

BILL: Great. That's helpful.

DONNA: What happened?

BILL: I don't know, I...I saw you stopped in plenty of time, so I stepped on the brake, but nothing happened. Wasn't slowing down. So I slammed the pedal down harder, but it was too late. I tried to swerve, but it wasn't enough.

DONNA: *(Regarding him with suspicion.)* Huh. Your brakes gave out, did they? Fascinating. So, shall we try this again, and maybe give the truth a shot? What happened?

BILL: What? That is what happened. Total brake failure. I am going to have words with my mechanic – that is for darn sure. Should take away his, uh...his mechanic's degree thingy. *(Pause.)* I might sue.

DONNA: Uh-huh. So you were texting?

BILL: *(Pause. Then, guilty.)* Trying to find a good song on the radio.

DONNA: I knew it!

BILL: *(Hand up, as if testifying in court.)* But I only looked down for a split-second! A half of a fraction of a portion of a tiny part of a small percentage of a split-second!

DONNA: That's all it takes.

BILL: Obviously.

DONNA: Why did you try to lie about it? Why not just admit that you made a mistake, you big moron?

BILL: Name-calling? Really? Seems unnecessary.

DONNA jabs her finger at BILL'S chest.

DONNA: Does it, you big chowderhead?

BILL: Wow. You know, you're right. I've made a huge mistake.

DONNA: Being an idiot while you're driving?

BILL: No, not today. I mean the day I proposed!

DONNA: *(Sarcastic.)* Ha ha.

BILL: Yep, that was my mistake.

DONNA: Please. I'm the best thing that's ever happened to you.

BILL: Okay, yes. True. But, if we weren't married, I could have just hit you and kept on going.

DONNA: *(Holding up her fist.)* I'm about to hit you and keep on going.

BILL laughs at this, and puts his arm around DONNA'S shoulder. They hug, and hold the embrace for the next few lines.

BILL: You're sure you're okay?

DONNA: I'm fine, Bill. It just surprised me.

BILL: Sorry, babe. But hey, at least we don't have to exchange information.

DONNA breaks the hug.

DONNA: That's right, because I already know where you live. *(Pointedly.)* On the couch. For the next decade.

BILL: *(Mocking.)* Oh no! However will I sleep without the dulcet tones of your snoring? Oh, wait...I'll still be able to hear it downstairs.

DONNA: It's not that loud.

BILL: The neighbors complained. *(Beat.)* And they're on vacation.

DONNA: Oh, yeah? Did they drive out of town? I sure hope their brakes don't give out.

BILL: Touché. I should have known better than to try to fool you. After all, you're an expert on brakes. You even have that invisible one on the passenger side that you slam down all the time. *(He imitates*

this, slamming his foot down repeatedly with a look of terror on his face and a death grip on an imaginary dashboard.)

DONNA: *(Gesturing down at the crashed “cars.”)* Yeah, can you blame me? You drive like you’re playing bumper cars.

BILL: Actually, I was going for “Mario Kart.” I wish my car could drop banana peels on the road.

DONNA: People always make fun of “women drivers,” but men are way worse. Can I give you a few pointers? One...Those painted lines in the middle of the road are not just a suggestion. Two...When you’re in motion, don’t turn around to look at something in the back. Nothing behind you is more important than what’s happening in front of you. And three...If you want to pass someone, but you’ll have to speed up to a hundred and thirty and you’ll only miss that oncoming truck with five inches to spare, don’t pass!

BILL: Hey, I know what I’m doing. When I drive, I’m in complete control, and everyone in the vehicle is perfectly safe.

DONNA: Really? Was I safe today? I could have been killed, you know.

BILL: Killed? I was going, like, five miles an hour.

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