

Ink'd by Benn Farrell © 2016

The Play:

ACT ONE

"Slinging Ink"

(Lights up. COLE, AYLÀ, BRITT, LORI and DANA stand DS, facing the house. Some of them have several visible tattoos, some pierces. Britt has none of either. Specials crossfade between the players as they speak, starting with Cole.)

Lights up on USC. KENT paces around in front of the shop entrance with a noticeable limp he's had for years.)

KENT

(panicked) What do you know about this expo? Where in Providence is it?

COLE

(to Kent) I don't know. I think I saw her showing Dana a mailer for it. I'll try and find it.

KENT

Please.

(Kent pulls out a six-barrel revolver from the back of his pants. He checks the bullets and tucks it back. He exits USC into the rest room.)

COLE

(to house) I got my first ink when I was seventeen. It was a birthday present from my Pops. He actually did it for me in his shop. Long before he got the shakes and had to give it up.

I'd always been fond of wolves, so I had him depict this photo I found in a National Geographic magazine at the library.

(MANNY enters USC wearing a black navy peacoat, cap, gloves and slacks. He cautiously moves into the shop. Crossfade to Ayla.)

AYLA

He's lying. He wouldn't know what a library looked like if it gave him a lap dance. He got the photo from a postcard he stole from a gal working at a bus station. (beat) I got my first tattoo when I was twelve. My boyfriend did it. He was nineteen.

(Manny backs up to the USL exit and quickly takes a glance past it.)

Not as bad as it sounds. The age difference I mean. We never did it. Only made out some. He was kind of a slow kid. (beat) My mom was fine with my ink when she first saw it. She was always fine when it came to me. My dad was different. He wasn't happy at all. It was Hello Kitty. (beat) That's why kids shouldn't get ink.

(Crossfade to Cole.)

KENT

(yelling from OS) Do me a favor.

COLE

(to Kent) What?

(Manny removes a handgun from his coat. Crossfade to Lori.)

LORI

I didn't get my first tatt 'til after my divorce. I was twenty-four. It was a portion of a painting my mother did when she was my age. It went on my shoulder, after she passed away.

(She shows the house.)

It's a lilac burning up in flames. Mom was a little dark, as artists go. She never sold anything. She didn't care to.

(Crossfade.)

COLE

I like people, but I also like being alone at times. That's the reason for my wolf. They can be rogue or hunt in a pack.

(Crossfade.)

AYLA

Cole is a moron. He got that wolf to impress the girl he swiped it from. They went on three dates before she told him she was pregnant from the guy who comes to clear the change from the gate in the parking garage.

(Crossfade.)

COLE

She was my first real girlfriend.

(Crossfade.)

AYLA

That's actually the truth, I heard. As short and shallow as that whole thing was, it's the only thing close to a girlfriend he's ever had, more so than in the three years I've known him. I tried to convince him to get that wolf covered up with something else.

(Crossfade.)

BRITT

I remember when my dad got that wolf tattoo. He didn't exactly tell me why, but I'm sure it had something to do with sex.

(beat) Not trying to make him sound like a he-whore or anything, but...I don't think he's had any in a pretty long time.

(Crossfade.)

COLE

I'd rather keep the wolf as is. (beat) Use it as a reminder not to get myself into that situation again. Plus, my mom always liked wolves. She passed away about six years ago. Helps remind me of her.

KENT

(from OS) If she stops in here, or you hear from her at all, call my cell.

(Crossfade.)

AYLA

When I got older, I had another guy redo my first tattoo. Had him make it up to look like Hello Kitty was a zombie. Sunken sockets, skin missing, eating flesh. Like Night of the Living Kitty.

(Crossfade.)

COLE

Yeah, the dude did a REALLY good job on that one. It looked great. Hilarious.

(Manny crosses to USR, gun drawn on the rest room.

Crossfade to Britt.)

BRITT

The only kids at my school who have ink are the ones in remedial English. I can see how they bring a certain negative stigma.

(Crossfade.)

LORI

My father liked my first tattoo but hated that I got one at all. He always said, "What if people think less of you, and it keeps you from getting a decent job?"

I told him people wouldn't see it. Not like I'm going to be a commodities broker or anything. I work for the county for God's sake. Then Dad said, "What if you get hepatitis?" I told him, "As long as I stay away from YOUR girlfriend, I should be fine."
(Crossfade.)

DANA

I've only had one tattoo. Ayla's working on my second, but it's going to cover my entire back, almost. The first one I got was a scorpion with some tribal art around it. It's down on my leg. I'm a Scorpio, so...

(Crossfade.)

COLE

I always try and tell clients, if they're going to get ink, they should choose something about themselves that will never change. At least for their first one.

(Crossfade.)

DANA

Not like my birthday is going to move anytime soon...
(Crossfade.)

LORI

I can't exactly take back the death of my mother.
(Crossfade.)

COLE

(giggles) Night of the Living Kitty. (to Ayla) That's funny.
(Crossfade.)

DANA

I had a bunch of pierces when I was younger but turns out I have some blood condition that leaves me prone to infection. Plus, getting past airport security was a bitch. So, I had to take them out. At one time, I had three in each ear. My tongue. Eyebrow. Belly-button. Nose and two in my lip. I was thinking about putting one...down there, but my mom always said, "Don't put anything between your legs that's doesn't drives a Mercedes."
(She shrugs. Crossfade.)

BRITT

I didn't really want any pierces. If I WANTED hepatitis, I'd use public restrooms.

(Crossfade.)

DANA

Now I just stick others while I take care of other things. And it brings in more biz for Ayla's shop.

(Crossfade.)

COLE

It WAS a good idea for the store, but I still think the only iron people should have is the one to fry an egg.

(Crossfade.)

LORI

When I got to town, I found this little tattoo shop. I talked to the artists. They were funny. Guy and a gal but not a couple.

KENT

(from OS) I have to run home and find a couple phone numbers. Maybe she left a message for me there.

LORI

Found this one piece in their portfolio of a tiger in this ... oasis of sorts, drinking from a small pond. It struck me. For one, I'm Year of the Tiger, and two... Tigers can be ferocious, but ... this one looked peaceful. And it found a quiet place to rest. And reset. (beat) That's kind of nice. So, I had Cole - the guy - start the line work along my side. Hurt like crazy.

(Crossfade.)

COLE

Yeah, over the rib cage is one of the most painful places to get one. (beat) I mean, if you're a bitch. I got MY side done. Didn't hurt at all.

(Crossfade.)

AYLA

I did the work for him. ...And he cried. (beat) Like he was in a Nicholas Sparks novel.

(Manny points the gun through the rest room doorway.

Crossfade to Lori.)

LORI

So, Cole suggested I come in a couple more times for the shading and coloring. Ya' know, spread it out over a few sessions, so it's easier to deal with.

(Crossfade.)

COLE

SHE IS SMOKING HOT! AND ... she's pretty funny too. (beat) I had to get her to come back a few more times.

(Crossfade.)

BRITT

I don't quite understand that whole situation.

(Crossfade.)

Chad Littman.

MANNY

(pause; OS) Oh, FUCK.

KENT

(Manny shoots twice. Kent DROPS TO THE FLOOR OS. Manny shoots twice more and quickly exits USC. Lights bang out.)

End of Scene One.

"Go Hard or Go Away"

(Dark stage.)

DANA

Ah, fuck!

(Lights up. AYL A is DSL at her work station. DANA lays face down on the table before her, topless. COLE stands over them, observing Ayla working an extensive design on Dana's back.)

AYLA

Sensitive?

DANA

A Little.

COLE

How long's it been since you've had one?

DANA

About four years.

COLE

Yeah, that's long enough to forget how it feels.

AYLA

Do you mind? You're making her nervous.

DANA

I'm okay.

COLE

I'm just sayin'.

AYLA

Thanks again for doing this, by the way. Never done a full back before.

DANA

I like it. It's gonna' look sick.

COLE

What is it?

AYLA

A murder of crows in a tree with a scarecrow in the foreground.

COLE

(frowns) What's wrong with the scarecrow?

AYLA

The murder attacked him.

COLE

He kind of looks like Nick Nolte in a mug shot.

AYLA

Cole.

COLE

I'm just sayin'... (beat) Why'd you choose all this, Dana?

DANA

It's elaborate. Lots of detail. Ayla's sketches were hard core.

COLE

Yeah, but why a scarecrow? You should throw Dorothy and the Tin Man in there.

AYLA

Don't you have a client coming in soon?

COLE

Oh, you have no idea.

(He crosses SR to his own station
and begins setting up his gear.)

Lori. The one getting that tiger on her side.

DANA

Lori?

AYLA

He's got a thing for a gal he's working on.

DANA

Dwaah...

COLE

Shut up.

DANA

What? That's sweet. I've never known you to have a THING.

AYLA

That's cause his last girlfriend took it with her.

COLE

Hey. This gal owns, all right? Excuse me, if after months of inking 300-pound gals wanting some sort of tramp stamp on what used to be a lower back twenty years ago, there's ONE steaming betty to come along and make enduring all the others worth it.

DANA

Well... All that WAS sweet. Did you just call her a 'Betty?' You are so nineties. Ouch!

AYLA

Okay?

DANA

Yeah.

AYLA

Once the line work is done, it'll get better.

DANA

Sure.

(Cole crosses to them, checks on the progress.)

COLE

Are you even going hard enough?

AYLA

Of course I am.

COLE

She's not even bleeding.

AYLA

I'm not trying to make her bleed.

DANA

Uh, thank you.

COLE

You need to go hard.

DANA

No, you don't.

AYLA

It's hard enough, Cole. You wanna' make a bloody mess of your clients, that's up to you. I care about mine.

COLE

You're defeating the whole purpose. If it's not hard, there's no point. It needs to be hard.

AYLA

It's not a penis. It's just skin. It's fine.

DANA

So, Cole, have you asked this gal out yet?

COLE

No, but today is the day.

DANA

What're you gonna do?

COLE

Well, she likes hard rock, so I'm gonna ask her to see Appetite For Destruction with me. They're a Guns N' Roses tribute band.

DANA

Cool. Do they sound just like 'em?

COLE

God, I hope not. I HATE Guns N' Roses.
(Lights bang out.)

End of Scene Two.