

Highlife

Jason, 28, usually charming, however today he is distraught.

Alice, 28, deceased, she was a professional dancer.

House-party guests, mixed backgrounds, mixed cultures, they dance like animals.

The play opens on a room, it is dirty, dusty, grease marks the floors and mould covers the ceilings. There is surprisingly little furniture, apart from a sofa and coffee table centre stage, and a set of speakers SL. On the coffee table are crumpled magazines, tobacco and moulding glasses. Underneath the table is a laptop. There is a small shelf on SR that holds mostly empty spirit bottles. There is a door centre stage; the flat is eerie, lifeless. The lighting is dim and grey. All of a sudden the door is being unlocked, and Jason bursts through and closes the door quickly behind him. He is dressed in a black suit; his tie and shirt are loose. He holds a bottle of spirit in his hand and his hair is a mess. It is clear he is a mess. He leans up against the door and eventually slides down it into a weakened heap. The pain in his head looks like a version of a cluster headache.

Jason Oh my god, oh my god! (He cries) I can't forget about it, oh my god, oh my god.
 Aaaaah! Fuck. I'm, I'm so sorry. Oh my god. Alice, I.

Jason's head is now in his hands, he takes a large swig from the bottle.

Uh. Mm.

Jason tries to stand multiple times, but lacks the energy, he eventually drags himself over to the sofa, it's as the lower half of his body has suddenly been paralysed. He pulls himself up, and puts his full body on it; he swigs from the bottle once more, and lets it crash on the floor below. He stares up at the ceiling.

I did it, I went. It was hell babe, it was fucking hell. They all hated me you could see it, on everyone's face, I, I even had to stand at the back. You know? Even your mum, your lovely mum couldn't even look me in the eye without crying. That hurt. That really fucking hurt. Oh god. I can't get it out of my head babe, I can't stop it. God, it's all I can see.

Jason breathes heavily, like his body is drained.

You and me. You're smiling, you look beautiful. I can smell you babe, it's so. You look beautiful, the sun is just catching you, and you're smiling. What were you laughing about? What was so funny I can't remember? Tell me.

Jason raises his hands as if he is reaching for her.

Why are you with me? Why are you with me babe? Be with your sisters, your parents, your friends. Why are you with me? After everything I did to you, after everything that happened you came to me! You know I need you, even now. Thank you. God that smile, that fucking smile. When I came round and I saw you, do you know that you had a smile just like that. It was weird, you were gone. I could see you'd died but, you left behind that smile that was the best gift you've ever given me. But you gave it to the wrong person, I didn't deserve it.

It's as if Jason suddenly has another cluster headache.

I killed you Alice. Oh my god. Oh my god. Forget about it! I can't, I can't. Why the fuck did I do this to you?! Why the fuck did I have to bring you down to my level. Why did you let me? You knew what kind of guy I was, don't lie, you knew the shit I got up to, the first time we even met I was high and I didn't even remember your name. I was always a mess; you should've run when you had the chance. But no, you let me ruin something beautiful, something pure. You.

Jason is stood up; he is SR in the middle of the room.

I need to forget, just for a moment. Forgive me.

This should all be done in real-time with no dialogue: Jason walks over to the coffee table, there is a mac that he brings out from underneath. He turns it on. He goes over to the stereo SL and turns on the speakers. He plays with the volume, bass and treble functions until he hits the right setting. Jason goes back to the mac and opens a music software app. He then links the mac to the stereo so that they are connected. He hits play on a song, and then stands back SR. The song that plays is “Groove Is In The Heart” – Deee-Lite.

Jason stands very still at the start, he lets the music move into his body, and then after a while he is dancing. Very, very well. It's as if he has run out of tears and this is now his only release.

Jason dances until he reaches the 2:10 mark of the song, at this moment the lighting changes, it is now a party. Alice runs into the room, she jumps on Jason's back they embrace and they are smiling, they start dancing together, in sync, very rhythmic. As if it were a piece of art. This is a flashback, once that flashback starts “Circles” – Digitalism starts, they are shortly joined by others, the whole room erupts into a house party. It is a messy party, people in outrageous clothing are there, and these are not Jason and Alice's friends. Drugs are taken, bottles are smashed against the wall, but Jason and Alice do not mind. With everyone chaotically trashing the house and dancing without order, Jason and Alice execute a perfect routine, they are dancing for their lives, they are coordinated, and they are one.

At the end of the routine Jason lifts Alice in the air, a bright light comes down and shines above them and only on these two, Jason's arms begin to shake, he is weak and she falls onto the sofa. Once she hits the sofa the party resumes in the previous style, Alice and Jason sit on the sofa laughing with one another. However Alice slowly begins to drift out of consciousness, she is happy, she is smiling. But something is wrong, her body goes into a fit, Jason passes out too. Alice has died, with a smile on her face. Jason remains unconscious as the party goers exit. And with them the music fades.

Jason comes round, he looks at Alice, he smiles and then turns to the audience. His energy is different now, it's brighter and more mature.

Jason She went out happy. That's important right? I mean, people say they want to live a long and happy life, surrounded by family, even if they've been in pain for a decade. And they're dying because they have to, not because they want to. Alice died because she wanted to, that's something her parents won't quite understand, something I didn't get for quite a while either to be honest. Look at her, she's beautiful right? She was a dancer; she worked so fucking hard as well. She had just finished a huge show in the west end, the gig of her life, and she was so happy on it. We had the best sex we've ever had; we had all sorts of highs and no lows not once. Not one, single, time. This party, this was for the wrap. Dancers came from all over

London; some even came from mainland Europe just to be here. This was the end of the show, end of her incredible show, her incredible life. And so she decided to stop it. The doctor says it was an overdose, and of course her parents blamed me. I did for a long time, I mean, I got the pills, I got the drink. But all under her instruction, I mean, this was her goodbye right? She had planned for this, and what was I to do, say no? Umm, sorry Alice but you can't have this because I don't want you to hurt yourself. Trust me, it wouldn't have worked. She wanted to be at her own funeral, and she wanted it to be fun.

Alice comes to, she looks at Jason.

Hey you.

She kisses him. It is a passionate kiss. After the kiss she stands up, and he follows her, she opens the front door and goes through it, Jason closes the door behind her. He turns to face the audience and holds his back to the door.

I'm sorry I didn't say anything earlier, you saw me just after the funeral. That was the worst day of my life, I mean; I had already been to one of her funerals. And that was so much better. But she made me promise, it wasn't just for her, she said, it was for her family. She knew they wouldn't understand, that I would be seen as the bad guy, but that's why I went. They needed someone to blame, because they couldn't blame her. I was their target. This is why it hurt I think, because we all used to be so close, but as Alice says; now I don't have to see them again. That part of my life is done now. And now I do one of two things, I live life to the full, with all its highs and lows. Or, I die now, like Alice and live only for the highs. Erm...Let me think about it.

Jason sits down on the sofa, and begins to lie down like his position earlier. He passes out. The lights go back to the old dim setting from the start. Jason suddenly wakes up, he's been asleep. The cluster headaches come back.

No. No, no, no, no. I was just okay, I was just okay. Hello? Hello! Fuck! No, no, no. Oh my god, oh my god. Ahhh! Forget about it. No, please come back. Please, please.

Jason searches all over the house for pills and for drink, he finds the drink from earlier on, and finds a few pills. He sits in the position Alice was when she died.

Come back, please, I want to go back. I've decided. I'm done.

Jason consumes both the pills and alcohol, and waits.

Hurry up. Please, hurry up.

He starts to breathe heavily, just as there is a blackout.

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