

## A Ruby in a Sky of Diamonds.

A Short Fantasy

Summer – Aged 19

April – Aged 19

Summer - Aged 39

*Midsummer's night, 11.45pm. It is a hot night. Outside somewhere during a party. Party music being played in the background, muffled. Ideally a bare stage with a starlit black curtain. Either use the stage floor or have a raised platform for when the characters lay down. This should be played subtly, but not too slow. Use the pauses to good effect.*

**April:** (*'walks out of the building' and onto the stage, lights a cigarette, takes a drag, blows, looks up to the clear night and sighs, it's a tired but content sigh. April has been drinking, drunk but not too much.*) (*softly singing to herself*) Look at the stars, see how they shine for you....

**Summer:** (*approaches from behind, unheard by April, also softly singing*) And they're all...yellow.

**April:** (*not looking round*) And everything you do....

**Summer:** Yeah, they were all yellow.

**April:** (*pause.*) But they're not are they?

**Summer:** Pardon me?

**April:** They're not yellow. Gold I'd say. Sparkly gold.

**Summer:** True. I like to think of them as diamonds.

**April:** Bit cliché.

**Summer:** Maybe, but the stars have been around for... forever.

**April:** Your point being?

**Summer:** Diamonds have been too... around forever. So, I figure each star is a diamond, that's why they shine so.

**April:** Isn't it simply where they are in relation to the sun? I mean, they just reflect don't they?

**Summer:** Hmmm, OK. But I like to think they are diamonds. Each one a giant sparkly rock looking down on us.

**April:** ...

**Summer:** ...

**April:** Had to get some fresh air, stifling in there. Sweating my.... (*turns to face Summer*) Just far too hot.

**Summer:** Tell me about it! No cooler out here though.

**April:** Yeah, but at least I can breathe. (*offers her cigarette.*)

**Summer:** (*refuses with a slight smile.*)

**April:** Wise, I'm trying to quit.

**Summer:** That's up to you.

**April:** (*pointing*) Is that the plough?

**Summer:** Yep, as clear as night. You can also make out the Bear. And Saturn, see.

**April:** I used to have stars on my bedroom ceiling. Mum stuck them there when I was little. You know, those little yellow glow in the dark plastic stars. She made some in the shape of the plough.

**Summer:** That's sweet.

**April:** Gone now, when my dad redecorated.

**Summer:** That's the shame about growing up.

**April:** How do you mean?

**Summer:** To have to let your childhood go, I often wish we could hold onto it. Keep a bit in our hearts.

**April:** Oh I always do. So much in my heart, I feel it could burst sometimes.

**Summer:** That's lovely.

**April:** And a bear, a little teddy by the name of Bobo.

**Summer:** Bobo the bear, yes. *(smiles)*

**April:** I still have it, in my bed would you believe? I rarely have any other company.

**Summer:** That's sweet. I mean about the ted. No harm in keeping hold of a beloved teddy.

**April:** ....

**Summer:** ...

**April:** I like being on my own though.

**Summer:** Ah, sorry. Should I go?

**April:** No! I didn't mean it like that. No, stay. It's nice to talk. Sure you don't...*(offers her cigarette again)*

**Summer:** Sure, I hate smoke, but don't mind me.

**April:** It calms my nerves. I get... well...you know...all anxious I suppose.

**Summer:** I understand, I do too. Sometimes.

**April:** *(sighs, looks in the direction of the 'party')* All annoyingly heterosexual.

**Summer:** Say what?

**April:** Every girl, woman here... all so damned straight.

**Summer:** Oh. I see.

**April:** So pretty, so straight. Typical.

**Summer:** I can't say I'd noticed.

**April:** No you wouldn't.

**Summer:** ...

**April:** So pretty, some. And totally not gay.

**Summer:** You assume.

**April:** Rightly.

**Summer:** Yes, rightly. I guess. Sorry.

**April:** What for? ... Look, it's fine. Thank you.

**Summer:** I mean, sorry there's no one here for you. But there will be. One day.

**April:** You think? I begin to doubt it. Who'd want me?

**Summer:** Lots! Lots of women.

**April:** Please!

**Summer:** ...

**April:** ...

**Summer:** (*produces a bottle of whiskey she's been hiding.*) Here, look what I smuggled out. Want some?

**April:** What is it? Actually yeah, please.

**Summer:** Whiskey. I just grabbed something before anyone saw. Here. (*hands Summer the bottle.*)

**April:** (*unscrews the cap and takes a big swig, passes it back.*)

**Summer:** (*also takes a big swig.*)

**April:** Nice.

**Summer:** It is. Nice dress by the way. Short.

**April:** Yep, too short, I realise now... all the attention I'm getting is from perky uncles.

**Summer:** Oh dear! ... It suits you.

**April:** Thanks. I like yours too, sparkly.

**Summer:** Oh come on! I look like a glitter ball on stilettos!

**April:** Correction. A *beautiful* glitter ball on stilettos!

**Summer:** Flatterer.

**April:** Well...

**Summer:** ... Summer.

**April:** It is. Midsummer's night.

**Summer:** I mean my name is Summer.

**April:** April, as in the month.

**Summer:** Ha! What are the chances?

**April:** I know. Good to meet you Summer.

**Summer:** (*Takes another swig of whiskey.*) And nice to meet you, April. (*passes the bottle*)

**April:** (*Has a drink*) Who are you with then, I didn't see you inside.... I, I would have noticed.

**Summer:** Oh, I'm here all alone.

**April:** What a fortunate coincidence.

**Summer:** *(singing softly.)* Maybe you're my reward, for my efforts here tonight?

**April:** No way! Evita fan too!

**Summer:** I love loads of musicals, but Evita tops them all.

**April:** We had a rabbit called Eva!

**Summer:** Haha, I love it!

**April:** Sit, *(she sits, beckoning Summer to join her)* my feet are killing me.

*(They both sit on the edge of the stage, or small platform on stage, which will allow them to lay back. April kicks off her shoes and Summer does the same.)*

**April:** That's better. So... how come you're alone? Tonight. Boyfriend away?

**Summer:** No. No boyfriend. I came here to meet someone.

**April:** Instead you bumped into me, little ol' me, feeling sorry for myself.

**Summer:** Stop it. Stop feeling sorry for yourself, it doesn't suit you, besides, no-one's interested.

**April:** Oh, sorry, *Mum!*

**Summer:** I don't mean it like that. Sorry.

**April:** It's fine. I need to hear it. *(takes the whiskey, a smaller sip this time.)*

**Summer:** Lay back with me, the grass is dry, we can look at the stars.

*(they maybe take more whiskey before laying back.)*

*(a period of silence.)*

**Summer:** If you lay still enough and focus on one area of sky, you might just see a shooting star...

**April:** I might just fall asleep.

*(They both laugh.)*

**Summer:** Yes, and that!

**April:** My mum used to say I was a shooting star, when I did well at school. Or won at hockey.

**Summer:** That's sweet. She sounds nice.

**April:** Yes.... Yes, she was.

**Summer:** I'm so sorry, I didn't mean/

**April:** It's OK, I'm not here for sympathy. *(beat)* So, which one is Mars?

**Summer:** *(pointing up)* Er...There I think, follow the moon to the right then down a bit. It glows a kind of red.

**April:** A ruby in a sky of diamonds.

**Summer:** *(looks over to April.)* That's beautiful.

**April:** I guess.... Are the stars more beautiful to lovers?

**Summer:** I've never thought of that, maybe?

**April:** I think they must be. Lovers all loved up love that sort of stuff.

**Summer:** That's a lot of love!

**April:** Haha!

**Summer:** There! Did you see it?

**April:** Yes, just!

**Summer:** We saw one!

**April:** This calls for a drink. *(she sits up, takes a swig of whiskey from the bottle. April looks down over Summer, leans over and slowly moves in, as if to kiss her.)*

**Summer:** *(backs off slightly and sits up.)* Whoa!

**April:** Oh God, sorry!

**Summer:** It's fine, don't worry.

**April:** No, it was out of order, I've had too much.

**Summer:** Really, it doesn't matter. Forgotten it.

**April:** Urrgggg!

**Summer:** What's up?

**April:** Oh, just stupid me. The April fool again!

**Summer:** Don't ever say that! You are not a fool. Your mother never saw you as a fool.

*(Beat)*

**April:** I miss her so much. *(her voice starts to break)*

**Summer:** I know.

**April:** She would have loved tonight, not the party I mean, this night. She loved hot summer nights. Always dressed bohemian, chic, flowery dresses usually, I used to tell her she belonged in the seventies! *(tears, but smiling through them.)* And she always smiled... no, not smiled, beamed, do you know what I mean?

**Summer:** Yes, of course. *You* should try to smile more, it lights up your face.

**April:** Oh I try. Mum used to tell me that. But it's difficult you know. She was like my mum, sister and best friend rolled into one. You know that song, don't know who it's by, goes something like "I just can't smile without you..."

**Summer:** *(singing softly)* "I can't laugh and I can't sing, finding it hard, to do anything."

**April:** You know it! It was one of her favourites. I used to hate it, especially the whistling at the start. Now I don't know if I love or hate it.

**Summer:** Hey!

**April:** What is it?

**Summer:** It's nearly time!

**April:** For what?

**Summer:** It's almost midnight! *(jumps up.)* Come on, stand up!

**April:** Why? You're confusing me.

**Summer:** All will become clear, give me your hand!

**April:** You're weird. Gorgeous, but weird.

**Summer:** Enough with the compliments! Hand!

**April:** *(slowly raises her arm and hand out to Summer)*

**Summer:** *(takes her hand, and places it on her chest, over her heart.)* There.

**April:** Why are you/

**Summer:** Relax. And no funny business!

**April:** But/

**Summer:** *(checks her watch)* A few seconds until midnight.

**April:** I don't know what weird game you're playing here, bu/

**Summer:** Ssssh!

**April:** What the? I can't feel your heartbeat!

**Summer:** You won't right now, any second...

**April:** Why ca/

**Summer:** Now! Close your eyes!

**April:** *(closes her eyes)*

*(There should now be blinding flashes of light, or a short black-out, enough for 19 year old Summer to disappear and be replaced by 39 year old Summer.)*

**Summer:** *(Now 39)* Now open your eyes.

**April:** *(shrieks. Tries to pull her hand away. Summer holds her hand on her chest.)*

**Summer:** It's alright.

**April:** No! What the hell! *(she backs off. Then looks directly at Summer.)* Mu.....? Mum?

**Summer:** My baby!

**April:** But, but, no. No! I've drunk too much, this isn't happening!

**Summer:** It is April, I'm here! I think I only have a few minutes, but I'm here baby!

**April:** *(lunges forwards and hugs Summer tightly, her legs give way so she slides down as Summer helps her to her knees. Summer kisses Aprils head.)* You're really here!

**Summer:** Yes, yes I am!

**April:** I've missed you so much. Why mum, why?

**Summer:** No time baby. I need you to be strong. I need you to live your life.

**April:** But I can't! I can't live without you. The song you loved! Wait! Where's Summer?

**Summer:** It's me. I'm Summer.

**April:** Summer? But your name is Maria. My mum Maria! Right here with me now!

**Summer:** I know! Odd choice of name I know, but once I figured this was my only opportunity to see you, I thought the name rather fitting!

**April:** What do you mean, only opportunity to see me? What does that mean, you're back!

**Summer:** I really don't have long. I had to see you. To tell you just how much I love you!

**April:** I already know that silly!

**Summer:** But I wanted to tell you, I never got to tell you before...

**April:** You always told me! Not always in those words, but you always showed me! Every day you told me in your own way. That's why I miss you so damned much Mum!

**Summer:** I did, I just didn't tell you enough.

**April:** So you come back to tell me what I already know! Ha!

**Summer:** Yes! *(now there are tears and laughter for both.)*

**April:** Can't you stay?

**Summer:** I wish. It was hard enough to do this as it was, I tried once before last Christmas, but you couldn't see me. You looked so sad, so...lost.

**April:** I was, am... So you come back as a strikingly beautiful young woman to catch my attention.

**Summer:** It worked.

**April:** Yeah, it did!

**Summer:** I haven't long.

**April:** Please stay, just for a little longer.

**Summer:** I don't think I can. Baby, my beautiful April. Never consider yourself a fool. You are so bright, so clever, so pretty. Your father and I are always so proud of you.

**April:** But how do I go on without you? How?

**Summer:** Be strong, follow your heart, stop thinking of me every minute. Work hard, play hard, have fun! Love! Find someone to love!

**April:** Heaven knows I'm looking!

**Summer:** I have to go now April.

**April:** No mum, don't go!



**Summer:** I have to.

**April:** When will I see you again?

**Summer:** I don't know, but be alone, outside, next midsummers night. It worked this time.

**April:** I will, I will! *(throws her arms around Summer again.)*

**Summer:** You *can* smile without me, you *can* sing and you *can* laugh.

**April:** I hate that song!

**Summer:** *(breaking off the hug, holding April at arm's length.)* Look at the stars, see how they shine for you.

**April:** *(looks up.)*

**Summer:** One last thing. Go back into the party, the blonde in the long red poppy dress is single, she's with her brother. Trust me, talk to her!

**April:** Seriously, that's the last thing you're going to say to me?

**Summer:** No. I love you April, Baby/ *(another blinding flash(es) of light or fast blackout, then Summer has gone, leaving April centre stage.)*

**April:** No! No, Mum, no, don't go! *(she sits, a pause)* Love you too mum. *(she picks up the bottle of whiskey and takes a sip, looks up at the night sky.)* My ruby in a sky of diamonds.

*(If rights allow, it would be a fitting ending to play 'Can't Smile Without You' by Barry Manilow.)*

End of Play