

I'm Only Sleeping

By Thom Vanstone

February 14 2013.

Albert is sitting in the men's toilet cubicle looking at 2 ticket stubs taken from his wallet. *Locarno Liverpool. 14 feb '63 we present your valentines THE BEATLES free gifts to the first 500 ladies 7.30-11.30 all pay at day 3'6.* He places the stubs back into his wallet, stands and leaves the rest room. He enters the staff room where three cleaners are having lunch. He collects a meal and sits down, the only time he touches his food is to push it around the plate.

SUE

Bloody hell Bertie, you didn't even take today off? If you were ever going to have a day off I would have thought it'd be today.

BRENDA

It's only Valentine's day Sue, I've never gone along with it myself. Bleedin' scam isn't it.

SUE

Romeo here loves his Valentine's days Bren. Isn't it 50 years since your first date with Gene today Bert? Nobody woulda minded had you taken it off you know. Why don't you take the rest of the day? Bert.... Bertie?

Albert is staring off into the distance when Sue's calls return him to the room.

ALBERT

Huh... oh, no Sue, no days off. Father would never have had that.

BRENDA

Day dreaming about your evening with Gene were you Bertie? You saucy old bugger.

Sue shares a concerned look with Julie. Albert pushes some mashed potato across his plate.

JULIE

Albert. Is everything ok?

Albert looks at the women for the first time.

ALBERT

Sorry?....

He seems like his normal self and flashes his trademark grin at the women.

ALBERT

Oh, yes, yes fine. Thank you. Just planning our evening is all.

SUE

Really Bertie? Thought you might have had that all sorted months ago.

Sue turns to the other women.

Last year Albert organised a wonderful surprise for....

Albert interrupts Sue

ALBERT

You know what ladies; I think I will take the afternoon off. There's a few bulbs need changing but I'll sort those in the morning. Enjoy your evening girls. Goodbye.

The women call their goodbyes as Albert scrapes his plate and collects his coat. He makes his way home.

As Albert enters his apartment he looks at the table. There are a dozen red roses, a wrapped gift and two untouched breakfasts on the table.

Albert picks up the flowers and the gift and heads into the bedroom. As he sees his dead wife he pauses for a moment before placing the gift on the bedside table. Then he takes a sleeping pill bottle from the drawer and swallows all of the contents. Finally Albert rests the roses on his wife's chest, lays next to her, locks the fingers of his right hand through the fingers of her cold left hand. He kisses her softly on the lips before lying back down.

ALBERT

Happy Valentine's day sweetheart. I'll see you soon.

Albert closes his eyes for the last time.