

Soliciting Temptation was first produced at the Tarragon Theatre in April 2014 with the following cast and creative team:

Man: Derek Boyes

Girl: Miriam Fernandes

Director: Andrea Donaldson

Stage manager: Laura Baxter

Script coordinator: Brandon Hackett

Fight director: Daniel Levinson

Set and costume designer: Ken MacKenzie

Assistant director: Marilo Nuñez

Sound designer: Thomas Ryder Payne

Lighting designer: Kimberly Purtell

Associate lighting designer: Oz Weaver

PUNCTUATION NOTE

A slash (/) indicates a point at which the following line cuts in early, creating an overlap.

THE CAST

Man: A white man in his fifties. A consultant from abroad.

Girl: A non-white woman in her early twenties. She looks much younger. Maybe fifteen.

THE SETTING

A hotel room in a developing country.

Lights up on a tired hotel room in a developing country.

A mosquito net, once knotted above the bed, lies discarded on a chair.

The air conditioner is broken.

So is the fan.

The MAN sits on the bed.

He wipes his face with a towel.

He fiddles with the air conditioner.

He scowls at the fan.

He pours himself a drink.

He opens the window.

Loud sounds from the street invade the room.

He coughs.

He walks to the bed, stubbing his toe on the way.

MAN Shit.

He wipes his head.

He calls down to the front desk.

Hello. Yes it's. . . yes. Hello? . . . Hello? Yes, I called down this morning about the air conditioner. 204, yes. No, it's still not working. Not working. . . not—it's broken. Broken, yes, and I. . . well, I would but the fan's not working either. Not working. . . not—it doesn't work. . . it never worked. . . I didn't break it. Look, I'd just like to change rooms.

A tentative knock at the door.

I mean. . . yes. . . I'd like to change rooms but not now—

Another knock.

No, not now, now it's fine. . . no it's still broken and I'd like to change rooms tomorrow. . . not tonight, no—

Another knock.

Tomorrow. . . another room. . . tomorrow I'd like a room with a functional air conditioner.

He slams down the phone, knocks back his drink and walks to the door.

He opens it.

The GIRL stands before him.

They stare at one another.

You're . . . here.

Beat.

Come in.

Please.

Come in.

She does.

He closes the door.

I'm sorry.

About the smell.

It's me.

Haha.

Haven't had a shower.

That is, I took one this morning but I've only just returned to find the maid has flipped off the switch for the hot.

Hot water.

Conserving energy, I imagine, saving money.

Not that I need it.

Hot, that is.

Hot enough in here and the air conditioner's on the fritz.

Stopped working sometime in the night.

Woke up in a pool of sweat and thought I'd come down with it.

Malaria or yellow fever or something yet unnamed, though my shots are up to date

and I'm pretty good with the Malarone, but I suppose you never know what strain

of delirium the mosquitoes will think of next.

Buzz.

Haha.

Beat.

I really can't sleep in the net.
Does it ever bother you?

Beat.

I wacked it a few times.
The air conditioner, not the net.
That's what we do,
we men who don't work with our hands,
haha.
It breaks, you kick it, you get on the phone.
Club hands of thumbs, that's what these are.
My wife won't let me anywhere near light bulbs or
hammers
and I stub my toe on something different every morning.
How old did you say you were?

Beat.

Never ask a woman her age.
Learned that the hard way.
Haha.

Beat.

Do you want a drink?
Some water maybe?
I have it from the bottle,
though your system, I'm sure, can take it from the tap;
you're familiar with the native parasites but us—

we men who fly in and out—
we're made of softer stuff,
weaker stuff,
whiter stuff,
haha.

My colleague came back with worms last year.
Are you sure you don't want some water?
(*miming*) Water?

She nods.

He pours.

The heat wouldn't be so bad but I'm a sweater.
Oh. Haha!
Not a sweater sweater,
I just mean that I sweat all the time
and whenever I'm here I can't seem to stop.
I suppose for one born in an equatorial region,
the body becomes accustomed, but I'm from the north—
not the north north, but the temperate north—
and in the winter it snows.
I suppose you've never seen snow?

Beat.

I'd open the window but for the sound and the stench.
To be honest it makes me nervous to consider
what might fly through an open window in this country
of yours
if given the chance.
There's something chewing patterns in the ceiling.
I have yet to catch the culprit
but I've been finding debris in the morning