

BRUNO

LOVE - FIRST CONNECTION MONOLOGUE

by Michele Sheldon

A dog talks about what real love looks like.

BRUNO: It was the arcs and bombs of light that did it. That's a dog thing. You humans get the colours. We get the beams, the arcs, the circles, spirals, balls and the fizzing and burning. Baldy red face had the fizzing really bad. But I'm getting ahead of myself again. That's a common trait with us dogs. Straining on the lead. Always running off. Just like I did. Saved my life though. So perhaps getting ahead of yourself is a good thing some of the time.

(BEAT)

Let's get introductions over. My name's Bruno. Bruno Mars to be precise. Yes, I know; it's the name of a famous pop star but I can't help that. It was something to do with the colour of my fur and the way I move. I'm not a big fan but that's what they wanted to call me and to be honest, they could have named me anything after all the bad words hurled at me. And no, I don't want to repeat any of them because when you grow up in

fizzing air it makes you feel dirty. Like no amount of *Shine Fur Shine!* shampoo can ever get rid of them grimy words.

(BEAT)

I was born in a stable like the man with the circle light some of you worship. Well, when I say stable, it was more like a shed, I suppose. Full of Mumma and my brothers and sisters. Seven of us all together though there was eight of us to begin with until Mr Poodle Hair disappeared Arthur by shoving him into a crumbled shed. Mumma told us he'd gone to the big bearded collie in the sky. Not that I'm a believer.

Anyway, we was getting on fine in that little shed. It was cosy and warm snuggling up to Mumma who told us stories of the moon, the sun and the stars, walks in green spaces with no roof and on beaches where the land meets a never-ending bowl of water, and tales of over-fluffed demons waiting to ambush us from up high and slit our throats. But we were safe there. Until one day we awoke to Mr Poodle Hair standing over us. Razor sharp splinters of light bounced around him,

warning us to get as far away as possible. Only trouble is we couldn't. We was trapped. Mumma tried to protect us. Bit him on the hand and got a kick to her tummy for her trouble. I hid behind Mumma but before I knew it, I was lifted by the scruff of my neck and came face to face with red face fizzman, the blades of light so barbed and mean, I nearly passed out and joined poor Arthur.

(PAUSE)

The cold of the night hit me as he chucked me into a tiny shed with bars which he threw into another on wheels and the stars Mumma spoke about exploded in my head.

(BEAT)

When I woke, I was lying on a cold bare floor in another shed without Mumma or my brothers and sisters. All alone. I was shivering so bad I thought all my new teeth would fall out and began to cry. That's when Fangly and Hellboy introduced themselves. They were in sheds either side of me and told me they'd found themselves in the same predicament a year ago and the best policy was to shut up. Not to whimper or else the fizzing man

would come. But I didn't pay heed to their warnings and I sobbed so much for my family that when he crashed through the door and started beating me with a long stick, fizzing so bad I thought he'd explode.

I just want my mumma, I cried. But he didn't understand. His lights of fangs and claws were dancing round him like the demons Mumma spoke of. A long time later, after I used up all my grief, he sneaked in and pushed a big bowl of biscuits and some water towards me. I sniffed the biscuits, too weak to eat. He disappeared for a few moments and came back with something shaped like one of Mumma's soft milky places. I wondered if he'd butchered her and cut one off so I refused to take it. But he kept dropping the liquid into my mouth and it tasted so good I couldn't resist. After that he fetched me to his shed every few hours. Sat down with me on his lap and fed me until I could walk and the scabs on my back began to heal. That's when the other fizzing men visited too, poking, prodding and squeezing me

until I yelled. Red face fizzman pushed them away.

Took me in his arms.

Don't be too kind, they'd fizzle and froth. If you're kind you'll kill it.

Kill what? I asked Hellboy and Fangly after they left.

The love, they laughed.

Please. (BEAT) I don't understand, I yelled, crying for several hours until red face came back hissing and burning, stick raised high and I stopped asking.

(PAUSE)

(LOW) I ain't proud of what I did.

The wood swinging was the easy bit. Made me lock my jaws and though I hate to admit it, it made me feel kind of felt special. I'd like to see any of you lot hanging by your yellow stumpy teeth. Not every dog can do it either. And the best thing of all about my excellent jaw swinging was red face's fizz disappeared, although it grew bad in some of the others who came to watch. And it was tough, trying to fight off the daggers of light they hurled at me, trying to break my grip.

(PAUSE)

Then, one day, the wood was gone and in its place stood Hellboy. I peed myself when I took in the scar around his neck, his missing left ear and the mismatching patches of black fur where the scars had healed.

He's only doing this coz he loves you, growled Fangly from his shed.

Loves me? I asked because that wasn't the kind of love I remembered from Mumma.

Look! You can see the love in the air, shouted Hellboy. Bathe yourself in the love!

I glanced around me but couldn't see any of Mumma's orbs and arcs, just splinters of black like the demons' claws.

Come on! Show the love and fight! said Fangly.

I slunk back into my shed, tail between my legs.

And that's when Hellboy pounced. Nipped me on the left leg and then chowed down on my right.

(BEAT)

To be honest, I don't remember much except looking down on Hellboy minutes later, wondering why his tan fur was turning pink and why red face

was out of his shed, bearing his teeth at me, all his friends patting him on the back as if *he'd* just killed Hellboy. And as I lay on the floor trying to get my breath back, I smelt a familiar stench and glanced up to see Mr Poodle Hair wearing the very same boots that'd kicked Mumma. I jumped up, snapped right between his legs, felling him to the ground while the other fizzmen fled through a green gap in the fence and I followed, biting their arses until they'd jumped into their sheds on wheels.

(PAUSE)

I hid behind sheds of old food for two nights. Gourmet meals a plenty. The remains of a Chinese takeaway one night and pizza the following. A sweet lady found me and I came out to say hello because of all the soft bouncy lights following her around reminded me of the ball the fizzman sometimes threw me when he wasn't fizzing so bad. Got a shed with holes put over my muzzle, then dragged into a shed with bars, then one with wheels before being taken to the biggest shed in

the world, bursting with the broken and broken-hearted.

All the faces peering in became a blur after a while. Some were full of the bouncy ball lights like the lady at the bins. But most were followed by messed up arcs, spirals and orbs all tangled up together like they was fighting to free themselves, and they hurried on by as I went to greet them. To say hello. That's until one day the woman and the boy with their arcs and bombs of orange and pink wrapped me in love and took me home.

(FO) SOUND OF SQUEAKY BALL BEING SQUEEZED AND BOUNCED.

BOY'S VOICE: (OFF) Bruno! Bruno Mars! Where are you? Come on boy!

SOUND OF DOG'S PAWS DANCING IN EXCITEMENT ON WOODEN FLOOR & HIGH-PITCHED EXCITED DOG GROWLING. HUMAN FOOTSTEPS. DOOR OPENING AND SLAMMING.