



**University of  
Sunderland**

McCulloch, Jo (2014) I Love Laurie (play). [Performance]

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I Love Laurie – Jo McCulloch

Kara, early 20's.

Steph, mid 30's.

Nurse/Guy

## **Lights up**

### **Scene 1**

Kara is drinking vodka. She picks up a load of bills and sifts through them. She puts them down.

Kara                    I couldn't stop thinking about it – sorry her. Laurie. Inside me, growing so quickly, different each day. I didn't even mind being sick because I read somewhere that it was a sign of how intelligent the child would be. The sicker the mother, the more intelligent the child. Probably rubbish though.

Kara pukes in a bucket. She looks in the mirror and wipes her face. She phones Steph.

Kara                    I'm definitely pregnant. No it's not food poisoning. Feels like it but it's not. A couple of weeks, maybe. I just feel like I am. I feel *different*. I'll do a test to make sure. Can you bring one over? See you later then.

She addresses the audience.

Kara                    You know we did try and go about it the proper way but it was too complicated...So in the end I said let's just improvise. And we did, well I did.

She pulls out a turkey baster.

Kara                    Deep down I didn't think it would work – thought it was a bit of an urban myth but no - a month. That's all it took.  
(Beat) Steph has always been there for me. Put me up here. Doesn't take any rent, well not much. If it wasn't for Steph I don't know where I'd be now. Dead probably. Definitely.

She pours the bottle of vodka down the sink and sits on the floor with a bag of shopping in front of her. She takes out a jar of gherkins and some peanut butter. She dips the gherkin in the peanut butter and starts to eat.

Kara                    I loved it . I never thought I would but after the sickness subsided it was... I felt the best I ever had. Eating for two as well and I love my food. Missed the vodka though, but it was going to be worth it. 40 weeks, well actually 36 in this case, without a drink. Nothing. Easy peasy.

She pulls out a pair of booties. Looks at them and then holds them to her chest. She stands up.

Kara                    I didn't even mind getting fat. Everyone said I had a glow about me and I felt it too, like I was walking on air. Purpose. I felt I had purpose. For once I wasn't just thinking about me and what I wanted. Someone else mattered, someone besides me.

**DISCO MUSIC** Kara takes off her dressing gown. Kara in a revealing dress. She sidles up to someone at front of stage.

Kara                    No I haven't got a boyfriend. (She laughs.) I might dance with you later.

She moves on to someone else. She pats her hair.

Kara                      Thanks, I've just had it done.  
                                 No I don't want a drink – I'm pregnant, can't you see.  
She strokes her bump.

Kara                      Do you think? Thanks. Go on then I'll have a coke – full fat  
                                 please.

She moves to the dance floor and has a little dance.

Kara                      (Waving to someone at the side) Hiya.

She addresses the audience again.

Kara                      Of course my tits grew enormous! Quite big anyway. I was  
                                 definitely what you would call voluptuous. The bra I wore  
                                 didn't have a size, it had a name – Doreen – bit of a passion  
                                 killer but I wasn't really on the lookout. And you should  
                                 have seen my cleavage! Obviously it felt a bit slutty showing  
                                 it off with the big belly and all but hey...Still got winks and  
                                 whistles though.

We hear a wolf whistle offstage and Kara smiles. She leaves the stage.

## **Scene 2**

Kara is lying on a hospital bed. She is giving birth. She is screaming in agony.  
Steph is holding her hand.

Kara                      (To audience)The birth was dreadful. The drugs were  
                                 fantastic. Dia- morphine – bloody brilliant. Definitely have  
                                 that again – pregnant or not.

The nurse takes the baby away. There is no sound.

Kara                      Is she ok? Is Laurie ok? Why isn't she crying?

Steph strokes her head but looks offstage concerned. She leaves.

(PAUSE)

Kara sits up in bed and puts the cover over her.

Steph comes back in with the baby. She is overjoyed. She is reluctant to give the baby to Kara but does.

Kara                      And Laurie was born. She was so perfect. As soon as I saw her I thought how beautiful she was and how I wanted to hold her forever and protect her and all those feelings that you see on slushy TV movies that they show in the afternoon on channel 5.

Kara                      I'd done this. I'd made her. She belonged to me. But...

Steph takes the baby away from Kara and leaves the stage. Kara is left alone.  
Fade lights.

### **Scene 3**

Kara is sitting at home. **The phone rings.** She ignores it. She is depressed. She takes a handful of painkillers.

Kara                      There was a problem after the birth. An infection. Common they said. The drugs weren't so good this time – they didn't work in fact. And I still couldn't have a drink. I had to go

back into hospital and have an operation. I'd love to say it all turned out well but (pause, quieter) it didn't – irreversible damage.

She takes another handful of tablets.

Kara                    “it's a good job you had her when you did', they said. But it wasn't was it? Cos I rushed in. I was too quick to say yes. Too quick to say I'll do it for you. Too quick to say I know how much you want a baby.

She picks up her mail. She is in pain and walks like that. She opens an envelope. There's a cheque for £2000. She shows it to the audience.

Kara                    Money's not meant to change hands but.. She's my sister. And she felt bad although there was nothing she could have done. £2000 helped on those dark days – helped with diamorphine's sister.

Kara is on the phone.

Kara                    Maybe next week. No, I'm not shutting you out. (Pause) I do want to see you all. Still on the painkillers and antibiotics. (pause) No, how would you have known. There's nothing you could have done. I'd do it *all* again. See you soon.

She puts the phone down.

Kara                    (to audience) I wouldn't really. I'd change everything. I can't visit. It's too much. And I'm sure they're glad that I don't. It's too awkward. Who am I? Am I her Mum or am I her aunty. I had her for a little while but she doesn't belong to me.

Kara picks up a bottle of vodka and swigs it back with some pills.

