The Day I Lost To England!

A radio short by Linda Rose

GRAMS: WORLD CUP 2002 THEME TUNE. FADE.

Jasmine (Narrating): June the seventh, 2002. The date is indelibly printed on my mind and heart. Anticipation; expectation; frustration – and any other extreme emotion you can think of – I felt it that day. So many hopes… Too many. All fantasies come crashing down in the end…. Or do they?

FX: BIRDS SINGING; WIND RUSTLING LEAVES.

Jasmine (N): We climbed the hill together, Mitch and I; the bulge in his pocket exciting and enticing – our secret liaison; just us - alone in the cloudy sunless sky; just us – and the birds calling, warning of the trespassers in their private kingdom.

We found a dry spot under a tree and hunkered down together on Mitch's spread out coat.

Mitch: This do you, Jasmine?

Jasmine: Mmm. Yeah.

Jasmine (N): Nervous? Excited? Wouldn't you be too?

Mitch was the love of the sixth form. Long bleach-blond hair pulled back Beckham-style; piercing blue eyes that reached deep into your stomach until butterflies fluttered within you. And today he was all mine! And I planned to be his – I mean *really his* – today – this day. Friday June the seventh – *The* Day! My first! Wouldn't you be nervous too! Excited too?!

FX: TINNY SOUNDS OF TV BEING SWITCHED ON AND MITCH TRYING TO FIND A STATION

Mitch: Here – what channel is it on?

Jasmine: Both I think – try BBC One. Better without adverts anyway.

Mitch: Can't get a reception… bloody hell.

Jasmine (N): I held my breath – it was such a perfect place, alone on top of the world. Please…. Please God, let him get a reception! I don't want to move – to break the spell. This is the spot! I know it is!

FX: TINNY SOUND OF FOOTBALL COMMENTARY

Mitch: That's okay. Bit fuzzy.

Jasmine: Must be the best for miles around up here. Nowhere higher – gotta be the best reception.

Mitch: Yeah. S'pose.

Jasmine: Mitch - here – lean on me. Get yourself comfy – 90 minutes is a long time.

Jasmine (N): I smiled – hugging myself inside. If only the others knew – 90 minutes plus half time! Nearly two hours of Mitch. Mitch all to myself! Long enough, I hoped. Long enough to become a woman!

I could feel Mitch's warm body relaxing back into my arms as the pre-match commentary started.

TV Commentary (D): Good to see Beckham taking his place as England Captain. There were a few injury worries but no doubt he wants to play in this crucial match against Argentina…

Jasmine (N): I thought about my own game plan. Get beyond the defence; lose the markers, and hope to score! I stroked his hair gently, happy with the closeness, the shared intimacy.

Mitch: There's a few here that'll be crying for a bit of sweet revenge!

Jasmine: Ya what?

Mitch: The line-up – Seaman, Beckham, Campbell, Owen, Scholes! They all got thrashed last time England played the Argies – now it's their turn to get their own back!

Jasmine (N): I didn't care what happened on the tiny box he was staring at. He was in my arms! Mitch Cooper – all mine – for two hours – on this dreary cloudy June day. And if I had anything to do with it – I'd be his too!!

I wriggled down next to him – noticing how his arms moved my tee-shirt up; and noting with pleasure his glance at my brown skin. I snuggled closer – pushing my face nearer to his.

Mitch: Five minutes to kick-off!

FX: TINNY NATIONAL ANTHEMS BEGIN TO PLAY

Jasmine: Five whole minutes and nothing but the national…

Jasmine (N): He kissed me then. Beautiful it was – long, slow and tender. My heart was thumping and I felt it – annoyed by the distraction from the feel of his soft lips on mine.

Jasmine: (BREATHLESSLY) Oh Mitch!

FX: WHISTLE

Mitch: (LOUDLY) They've started! C'mon England!!

Jasmine (N): Could I keep the mood? This required the fiercest attack in my arsenal!

Mitch: Hargreaves! Injured already?!

Jasmine (N): Gradually I moved closer, brushing my tee-shirt against his arm – his hand touching my warm stomach. Absent-mindedly he stroked the bare flesh. A quiver of excitement coursed through me, and a warm rush passed through my body. I leant forward, nuzzling his cheek, willing his face to turn.

Realising I would have to make all the moves, I crept forward, so he barely had to move his eyes from the screen to kiss me. His hand was around my waist – clutching me. I closed my eyes, my hot breath reflecting off his cheek, millimetres away. His arm grew tight, holding me – my butterflies grew.

Mitch: Jasmine - your hair!

Jasmine: Mmmm?

Mitch: It's in me eyes – I can't see the telly!

FX: SOUNDS OF SHUFFLING ON THE GRASS

Jasmine: Sorry Mitch, I…

Mitch: Seaman… get it!!! Yes!!

Jasmine (N): I managed to get one leg casually over his, and pull my body closer. He turned slightly, distracted by my warm lips. He stroked my back and leant in towards me.

Jasmine: Oh Mitch!!

FX: SOUNDS OF PASSIONATE KISSING

Mitch: Mmmm. Soft lips!

FX: TINNY ROAR, CURTAILED

Mitch: Bloody hell – what was that?!

Jasmine: What?!

Mitch: I missed something! Beckham shot – look at the replay…

Jasmine: Mmmm. C'mon – snuggle back down. Watch it in comfort… Here – you can see it better like that!

Mitch: Okay.

Jasmine: Do you like that?

Mitch: Mmmm.

Jasmine: Mitch…?

Mitch: Mmmm?

Jasmine: Do you fancy me?

FX: TINNY FOOTBALL COMMENTARY

Jasmine: Mitch?

Mitch: Who's subbing for Hargreaves?

Jasmine: I said – do you fancy me?

Mitch: Yeah – what?

Jasmine: Tsk! Kiss me again!

THEY KISS

Jasmine (N): This was bliss! Birds in the sky, his hands on my bare skin – the soft warmth of his lips. All going according to the game plan!

Jasmine: Mitch! You've got your eyes open!

Mitch: So've you – or you wouldn't have seen!

Jasmine: You're watching the match!! You're supposed to close your eyes when you kiss!

Mitch: It's the World Cup!! England v. Argentina!!

Jasmine: You'll hear if they're going to score! Everyone'll be getting excited! (SOFTLY) I know I am!!

Jasmine (N): That got him. He pulled me then clear on top of him, and his fingers found the hooks on my bra. With surprising speed he opened it and I felt a tingle as he stroked my back in one long movement. My neck was stretched up to his and my chest heaved against his warm stomach.

FX: THE CROWD BEGINS TO SHOUT AND GET EXCITED, GRADUALLY GETTING LOUDER

Jasmine (N): I closed my eyes as his lips stroked my face; his hands on my hair now following the curls down my shoulder and on to my chest. Delightful waves of excitement coursed through my body. This was the moment I had dreamt of – his hands still moved, roaming, exploring, unzipping, arousing. My breath came in short bursts – strangely gasping.

SUDDEN SILENCE

Jasmine (N): The world stood still – my heart beat uncontrollably. As he paused – deliciously enticing – I waited - eyes closed, breath held – waited for the final moves towards ecstasy; my initiation into womanhood. His hand clasped around my breast grew tighter. My heart pounded. My head swam giddily –

FX: SUDDEN MASSIVE CHEERING ON TV AND IN DISTANCE ECHOING AROUND THE HILLSIDE

JASMINE CRIES IN SHOCK AS SHE IS THROWN OFF, AND MITCH JUMPS UP SHOUTING.

Mitch: Beckham!!! You beauty!!! Yeah! Yeah!!!!! Beat that, Argies!! Yeah!!!! (CHANTING) One nil one nil one nil!!! Hey Jasmine – it's half time! Let's go and find the others in the pub! It's much better with a crowd! (FADING AWAY) Come on – race ya!

FX: CHEERING AND CHANTING FADES AWAY SLOWLY

Jasmine (N): I was left – in the grass, body forgotten – my yearnings unfulfilled. Beckham had scored! Beckham had scored!!

And I hadn't!!

GRAMS: WORLD CUP THEME TUNE PLAY AND FADE OUT

*