

THE MISTRESS & THE MAID

A completely original stageplay
by
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Based on
Some movies I saw...

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CHARACTERS

JANE, 30s, is the epitome of the blond New Jersey ditz. She speaks in the high-pitched, feathery voice. No accent is necessary. She's soft and wants everyone to be happy. She doesn't understand why PENNY hates her.

PENNY, 30s, is like a female Danny Tanner. Everything is in order and properly placed with this woman. She does not suffer fools easily and has hated JANE for years.

GRETA, 20s, is our everywoman. She's a little naughty and a little nice.

SETTING

- A - My brain.
- B - A black-box theatre.
- C - Purgatory.
- D - All of the above.

IN THE DARKNESS, A GUNSHOT.

LIGHTS RISE TO HALF ON TWO WOMEN SLUMPED HORIZONTAL ON THE FAR LEFT AND FAR RIGHT OF THE STAGE. A DESK AND CHAIR IS SITTING CENTER STAGE WITH A CLIPBOARD, PAPER AND PENCIL.

THE WOMAN AT STAGE RIGHT, PENNY, (IS WEARING NEAT, DARK PROFESSIONAL CLOTHING. THE WOMAN AT STAGE LEFT, JANE, IS WEARING SOMETHING DARK AND CARTOONISHLY SEXY. LIKE SOMETHING FROM A LITTLE SHOP ON HOLLYWOOD BLVD. THEY LAY STILL.

GRETA, A RATHER MUNDANE YOUNG WOMAN WEARING RATHER MUNDANE YOUNG CLOTHING, ENTERS FROM BACKSTAGE AND IMMEDIATELY GOES TO WORK SITTING UP THE WOMEN, PROPPING THEM AGAINST THE WALL. SHE WEARS THE PIRATE FLAG STUFFED IN HER BACK POCKET, JUST BARELY POKING OUT.

ONCE FINISHED, SHE GRABS HER CLIPBOARD FROM THE DESK AT CENTER STAGE, TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND AWAKENS EACH WOMAN WITH HER OUTSTRETCHED ARMS.

JANE
I've a right to sell flowers
if I keep off the kerb.

PENNY
But what's to become of
her?

(THE LIGHTS RISE SLIGHTLY, UNTIL STOPPED BY A GESTURE FROM GRETA. THEY REMAIN AT ABOUT HALF.

JANE GROANS.)

PENNY
Where am I?

GRETA
Uh, you're in... purgatory. Yes. That's it. Purgatory.

PENNY

Can we get a little light please?

GRETA

More light? Oh yes, of course. I thought halfway might be more dramatic but if you want to see each other I suppose that might be fine. (to tech booth) Lights up to full?

(LIGHTS UP TO FULL)

PENNY

Oh that's better. Lovely. Now. Where were we?

GRETA

Purgatory.

PENNY

Ah yes. (pause) What?! (to herself) Damn it, Jane!

JANE

Penny?

PENNY

Jane?

PENNY

AGH! You Norwegian trollop! You dare follow me here?!

(PENNY LUNGES AT JANE)

JANE

Oh my, oh my, oh m-

(GRETA INTERVENES)

GRETA

Not yet Penny.

PENNY

Not yet? Okay. Why not yet? What's going on? Why is she here? Why are you here? Why the devil am I here? Where is here?!

JANE

She said it was purgatory.

PENNY

We've established that. But I don't yet believe it. Okay. Tell me first. Who are you?

GRETA

Just consider me your helper. Your personal assistant. I'm helping you get your feelings out. Get your words out. Your vowels even. Ay, E, Oiy...

JANE

Ay E Oiy...Have we been hypnotized?

GRETA

Would you like to be? (no response) Tell me: what's the last thing you remember?

JANE

Well, I remember a room, quite like this one. I remember blood. I remember diamonds. I remember a pirate flag. And I remember an older man. (smiles) Henry!

(GRETA SUBCONSCIOUSLY CHECKS HER BACK POCKET)

PENNY

It was Henry's blood you maggot.

JANE

Hey, who you calling a maggot? I was his closest friend and confide-ant (sic).

GRETA

You girls are doin' great. But I'm gonna need you to kick it up a notch. Throw in a little "Damn! Damn! Damn!" if ya know what I mean. Can ya do that? Can ya go there?

PENNY

Who are you?

JANE

Who are you?

GRETA

I'm nobody. I'm here to help you fight, er uh, reconcile. No. I'm here to help you purge. So go on. Purge away. Literally if you need to. Bathroom's behind the curtain. Might be messy but I'm sure the stage manager can mop it up after the show's over.

(JANE AND PENNY STARE AT GRETA)

GRETA

Let's start again shall we? I'll set your scene. You, Jane, are Henry's lover. No rules. No holds barred. No commitments. You come and go as you please and you make each other deliriously happy. Er, made each other...

PENNY

Yes, yes, yes. Enough feather-dusting.

(GRETA AND JANE LOOK AT PENNY)

PENNY

What?! I'm a maid. I've exposed my share of gossip details on the stage in my day.

GRETA

That's right Greta. You're a maid. Henry's maid. And you resented him for bringing poor Eli- poor Jane into the house.

PENNY

Damn straight.

JANE

Why on earth would you resent him for something like that? He was so generous. He gave me a home. He taught me things that I'd never learn on the street.

GRETA

Because she thought you were-

PENNY

A slut.

GRETA

A whore.

PENNY

A whore.

GRETA

A slut.

GRETA

Whatever. How does that make you feel Jane. Do you think she's a devil-lady from Detroit for resenting you?

JANE

I don't even know where Detroit is...

GRETA

You two are livelier than a couple of troubadours eating artichokes in a Wafflehouse. Don't you enjoy being unfettered? Okay this isn't working. Jane, do you remember what Penny hates? What makes her skin crawl? Can you say that for me please?

JANE

I'll let you wash my panties, Penny!

(PENNY SEETHES)

GRETA

Yeah, that is awkward isn't it. Okay. Let's try adding a little Princess Bride.

JANE

Ever since my Henry fired you, your confidence has been shattered. But if you're good, I'll let you wash my panties!

PENNY

They are called underwear!!

JANE

Panties! Panties! Panties!

PENNY

Underwear. Underwear. Underwear!

JANE CHASES PENNY AROUND THE STAGE. GRETA CLIMBS UP ONTO HER NEARBY DESK WHILE THEY CHASE EACH OTHER OFFSTAGE. THEY MAKE NOISE OFFSTAGE.

GRETA

Much better!

JANE (O.S.)

Panties! Panties! Panties!

PENNY (O.S.)

I'm not listening!

(JANE ENTERS BEING CHASED BY PENNY)

PENNY

Underwear!

JANE

Panties!

GRETA

I need a little Middle Earth.

(JANE STOPS SHORT)

JANE

Damnit! The last time I saw something like that I was stuck up a tree in the middle of Norway and a troll had just stolen my livelihood.

(PENNY TACKLES JANE AND THEY FLY ACROSS THE FLOOR SLIDING TOWARDS THE AUDIENCE. PENNY ON TOP OF JANE.)

GRETA

Underwear, my ass!

PENNY

Jane, you tramp. Why did you come back? To gloat? You'll never be better than me, you swallowed up used tissue.

JANE

What am I? Swallowed up or a used tissue?

GRETA

Good! Good. But get up. No one can see you. Throw her against the wall, Penny.

(PENNY MOVES AS IF BY STRINGS AND PINS JANE
AGAINST THE STAGE LEFT WALL.)

JANE

What would you do with me Penny? Toss me or digest me?

GRETA

Wonderful. Now tell her why you're angry!

JANE

Well, I'm angry because... I'm angry, you washed up dried up old prune juice bath tub full of expired Epsom salt...

(JANE LOOKS AT GRETA FOR ENCOURAGEMENT.
GRETA NODS.)

JANE

I'm angry because you lied about me to Henry and then you killed him. You killed the only man who ever really saw me for who really I was.

PENNY

A good time?

GRETA

Ooo...

JANE

Henry and I had an understanding.

PENNY

The only thing you understood you little snot was how to waltz your way into a free situation and bat your pretty eyes and eat chocolates. Meanwhile I have to clean up after you and pick up your clothes and your underwear-

JANE

Panties.

PENNY

And wash the sheets and the upholstery and the floors.

JANE

And the counters! (wink)

PENNY

How do you think that made me feel?

JANE

Like a maid? Like the hired servant that you are?

GRETA

You're doing great. Just let it out. Just let it go.

PENNY

(to Jane)

You're a mind-numbingly stupid, idiotically optimistic nincompoop!

GRETA

Fabulous!

JANE

I'm a lover not a hater.

PENNY

The whites of your eyes remind me of lilies you might find bending to the wind of a Vermont June day. Is that what he said, Jane? Is that the sort of words he whispered in your ear Jane? Bending to the wind? Have you ever been to Vermont, Jane? I hear it's snowy there. Very snowy.

JANE

I like snowy.

PENNY

That's why he said those things to you Jane. That's why he fills your ear with pretty things. Things you thought no one else ever heard.

JANE

I never thought no one else ever heard pretty things.

PENNY

You never thought no...

GRETA

...no one else ever heard...

GRETA
...pretty things.

PENNY
...pretty things.

GRETA
Yes that makes sense.

JANE
It's true.

(PENNY LETS GO OF JANE AND WANDERS TO STAGE
RIGHT)

PENNY
All this time I thought you were oblivious.

GRETA
No no no, now it's falling apart. I need something else. How about... blood.

JANE
There... (squeemish) will be blood?

GRETA
Penny.

(GRETA ORCHESTRATES THE DIALOG)

PENNY
You have a milkshake Jane. And I have a milkshake see? And Henry's the milkshake
Jane! Do you see that?!

JANE
No, Penny. No...

PENNY
Stop crying, you sniveling twit! Stop your nonsense. You're just the afterbirth, Eli...za!

(EVERYTHING STOPS; GRETA DROPS HER CLIPBOARD)

JANE
Eliza?

GRETA
No, no, no, no, no....

PENNY
Miss Doolittle!

JANE

Mrs. Pierce!

GRETA

This isn't working girls! You have to stop!

JANE

What is your name?

GRETA

Uh, Wesley! I'm saving you from the Dread Pirate Roberts.

JANE

Liar! LIAR!

(PENNY SNATCHES THE PIRATE FLAG FROM GRETA'S
BACK POCKET)

PENNY

You are the Dread Pirate Roberts!

GRETA

I'm Benedick and you're both speaking poniards!

JANE

You dirty pirate!

GRETA

I'm not dirty! I warshed my face and 'ands afore ah come ah did!

PENNY

You plagiarizing pirate of a girl. You lackadaisical coward of a girl. Don't you have any original ideas?

GRETA

Panties?

PENNY

JANE

Underware!

Underware!

GRETA

I'm not listening!

JANE

Underwear! Underwear. Underwear!

(PENNY AND JANE CHASE GRETA AROUND THE STAGE YELLING... THEY PICK UP THE CLIPBOARD AND TRY TO BEAT HER WITH IT.)

PENNY
Underwear!

JANE
Underwear!

GRETA
You girls understand that if you get rid of me you both go poof!

PENNY
Underwear!

JANE
Underwear!

(GRETA RUNS OFFSTAGE.)

GRETA
Kill the lights Chelsea!

(THE LIGHT BUMP SLIGHTLY DOWN AND PENNY AND GRETA DROP TO THEIR KNEES.

AND THEN AS THE LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE THE REST OF THE WAY AS... PENNY AND JANE, REALIZING THEIR FATE, CRAWL TOWARDS THE MIDDLE OF THE STAGE TO HUDDLE TOGETHER.)

JANE
Mrs. Pierce, I never liked you. But I want you to know that I always appreciated you cleaning my-

PENNY
Panties. (sighing) Panties. Panties. Panties.

(AT THE VERY LAST BREATH OF LIGHT, BOTH WOMEN COLLAPSE TO THE FLOOR.

LIGHTS OUT.)