

MONTE CARLO
by
Lydia Stryk

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Author's note.

The author urges directors of MONTE CARLO to explore styles other than the naturalistic. To be sure the play contains visceral moments of eating and drinking. But so do circus acts. These moments are part of a stylized vision that I hope for the piece. Directors and actors might explore the play as a kind of cabaret or music hall in which DAISY stars. Thus, props, costumes, sets, even other characters, might appear magically, theatrically, with no attempt at making them seem logically real. The characters around DAISY are 'grotesques' in Stanislavski's sense of the word—crystalizations of desire. The scenes are meant to play like life as opposed to naturalism—that is, with large gestures, huge passions, High Drama, and even clowning. DAISY may 'camp' with the distance of one who enters into scenes with irony. Scenes can merge and flow and move through space as seems fit and are best staged without blackouts and breaks. The convention of the play should free DAISY to speak and act from anywhere. The stage is hers.

Characters.

Daisy Rose. In her early 60's. A born comedian. Passionate, dreamy, and ironic by nature. The opposite of the 'tired, old spinster' cliché, though clearly unconcerned about her appearance.

Lottie Rose. In her late 70's or older. DAISY's mother. Practical and worldly, a proud, hard-working survivor who somehow found time to work hard at pleasing men. Keeps up her appearance by making up and dying her hair—perhaps to an extreme.

Maggie. Middle-aged. A frazzled mother of five. Daisy's co-worker.

Angela. A very young woman. An immigrant's daughter. West Indian, perhaps. Artistic and spirited. Daisy's co-worker and friend.

Game Show Host. Sleazy and embittered to be stuck where he is.

Eddie Perkins. An old businessman to his core. Daisy's former suitor.

Settings.

Acts One and Two.

A London housing project, the Rose's apartment. A factory cafeteria. A television recording studio.

Act Three.

A beach. Two deckchairs. An umbrella.

SAMPLE SCENE

Scene

(LOTTIE sits at the kitchen table. DAISY places a plate of food before her mother, then sits across from her, waiting. LOTTIE stares at the food, perusing it from many angles, then begins to poke it.)

LOTTIE

What is it?

DAISY

What does it look like?

LOTTIE

If I knew, I wouldn't ask, would I?

DAISY

Yes, you would. To make me feel worse than I do already.

LOTTIE

What is it?

DAISY

Chicken, blast you.

LOTTIE

Chicken?

DAISY

Last time, you said it was pink. You wouldn't eat it. Kicked up such a stink.

LOTTIE

Chicken, is it?

DAISY

I left it in a bit.

LOTTIE

A bit?

DAISY

(whisking the plate away) So don't eat it.

LOTTIE

What am I supposed to eat?

DAISY

I'll make you a sandwich.

LOTTIE

God, almighty. A sandwich, she says. How'm I suppose to keep my health at my age on bread and bloody chutney?

DAISY

(near tears) I can't get it right. Can I? With you. Can't get it bloody right. Too pink. Too done.

(tears)

I don't know what I'm doing wrong! Thought I had it this time. Thought you'd, well, go ahead and laugh, thought you'd *like* it. Chomp a bit. Smile. Say. This is good, Daisy. No. No. Who am I kidding? The day you'd like a meal of mine enough to say so is the day the world turns upside down.

LOTTIE

Your sister could make a feast for a king with her eyes closed.

DAISY

And her hands tied behind her back, too. Right, mum?

(a pause)

You said for an hour longer.

LOTTIE

Covered, juiced up.

DAISY

You never said covered.

LOTTIE

Who'd of thought they'd have to say it?

DAISY

All my life, I've been a working girl. I'm on the moon in the kitchen. If it wasn't for your bloody rheumatism—

LOTTIE

That's it. Crucify your mother. She hasn't got enough to suffer with.

DAISY

Oh, I'm sorry.

LOTTIE

Then get us a sandwich.

DAISY

Oh, mum. Tomorrow, I'll get it right. Tell you what, I'll try a roast!

LOTTIE

Roast, who?

DAISY

Lamb.

LOTTIE

God help us.

DAISY

Mum!!

LOTTIE

Alright.

(DAISY turns to the audience and addresses them directly.)

DAISY

I don't know why it goes wrong. Except that: you can or you can't. You do or you don't. Some people are born to feed others. And others . . . are *not* born to feed. *Mum* was a cook. Late afternoons at the factory flew by on daydreams of what was to come. Could smell it before you turned the corner. Always ready, right at half past five. Piping hot. On the plate. Rich. Tasty. Good. Fried fish on Fridays. Steak and kidney, Tuesdays. Wednesday, a stew. Thursdays, egg and chips. Chips, a crunchy heaven. And apple fritters! Lemony syrup. Running butter. Saturdays to Lyon's, for a night out. Sundays, the roast. A work of art. Moist. Tender. So that the knife slipped through it. That soft. Melting in the mouth. Mondays, my favourite. Left overs. Roast bits and Bubble and Squeak. Smells. Tastes. Memories. Now those hands that fed me all those years are numb and lifeless. Poor mum. I want to get it right. For you. Just once. See you light up at the taste of it. An approving nod across the kitchen table. Plate held up for seconds. Like a blessing.

(end of scene)

TO READ THE WHOLE PLAY OR FOR ANY OTHER INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT info@lydiastryk.com.