

LADY LIBERTY

A One Act Play

by

Ty DeMartino

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Bio

Ty DeMartino is an award-winning playwright and produced screenwriter whose works have appeared on stages from Hollywood to New York City to The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. In 2007, he was named Playwright of the Year in The Baltimore City Paper's "Best Of" edition for his political drama "The Blessed Mothers of War" and in 2008, his play "Finding Fossils" was honored as best production of the Baltimore Playwrights Festival. He has written the books for two original musicals -- "Furry Tales" and "Cougarland" which were both workshopped and performed in Pittsburgh. His short plays include "Objects in the Mirror," "A Fan Letter to Monica Lewinsky" and "Poor Little Thing." He is currently writing two new works for the stage -- a drama about children dealing with a murder of a family member called "The Darling Siblings" and a comedy about an eccentric group of Italians entitled called "Four Martini Lunch."

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CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Jen -- (f), late 20s, a run-away bride from Staten Island

Kurt -- (m), 40s, a tourist from a town outside of London

SETTING:

The Staten Island Ferry

TIME:

Present

BRIEF SYNOPSIS:

On the Staten Island Ferry, a British tourist runs into the most unusual of sights on his sightseeing expedition: a run-away bride who's contemplating her past and her future.

(AT RISE: The Staten Island Ferry. JEN sits on a bench, staring blankly at the Bay. She wears a white, sleeveless wedding gown and a veil pulled back over her face.)

(KURT enters. He has a backpack and carries a Fodor's New York City Guide Book and wears a camera around his neck. KURT walks to the railing and looks out. From the corner of his eye, he notices the bride behind him. He quickly takes a look at her. He blinks. After a moment, he turns back and looks at her again. His eyes aren't fooling him. After a few moments, JEN crosses to KURT.)

JEN

Excuse me.

KURT

Yes?

JEN

Do you have a cigarette?

KURT

A cigarette? No, I don't. I don't smoke.

JEN

Neither do I. I did. When I was young. But not anymore.

KURT

Hmmmmph.

JEN

It's fine. Besides, I don't think you're allowed to smoke on the ferry anyway. It's a stupid rule when you think about it. I mean, we're outside in the open air. What's the big deal if you smoke or not?

KURT

I don't know. I could check the guide book about cigarette smoking outdoors, if you'd like.

(KURT holds up his tour book.)

JEN

No. You don't have to. I just suddenly wanted one. That's all.

(JEN stands next to KURT. Both stare at the Bay.
Awkward silence, then:)

JEN

Pretty.

KURT

Hmmm?

JEN

I was saying, 'It turned out to be a pretty day after all.'

KURT

Oh yes. It's a nice day.

JEN

A nice day for a white wedding.

(chuckles to herself)

Do you remember that song?

KURT

And which song is that?

JEN

'White Wedding.' From the '80's. A nice day for a white wedding.

KURT

No. I don't believe I know that one--

JEN

Oh, come on. You have to know it. 'White Wedding?' Billy Idol?

KURT

Ah! Yes! From way back.

JEN

See. I knew you knew it.

KURT

Right. A nice day for a white wedding.

JEN

A nice day to start again.

KURT

Yes. Well done.

(Awkward silence. KURT takes a photo of the Bay.
JEN stares over the railing.)

KURT

So... Are you coming from or going to your 'white wedding?'

JEN

Both. I mean, I was there and I left. I guess they're waiting for me to come back. I don't know. I left my purse and cell phone back at the church. What time is it now?

KURT

(checking his watch)

6:20.

(quickly realizing)

I mean -- it's 1:20. I haven't turned back my watch.

JEN

Then it hasn't started.

KURT

What time are the nuptials?

JEN

Two.

(recites from memory))

The parents of Jennifer Rose Porter invite you to share in the joy of Christian marriage between their daughter and Lawrence Pricks Eastaway on Saturday, October the tenth at two o'clock in the afternoon at Trinity Evangelical Luther Church, 309 St. Pauls Avenue, Staten Island, New York 1-0-3-0-4.

(A beat.)

KURT

Did you say Pricks?

JEN

It's a family name.

KURT

How unfortunate.

JEN

Yes, it is.

(KURT takes a photo.)

JEN

I guess you're sightseeing?

KURT

Ah, yes. The guide book said that the Ferry is one of the best and cheapest places to take photos of the Statue of Liberty.

JEN

I guess it is. Living here so long, I don't even pay attention to her anymore. You from England?

KURT

Yes.

JEN

Which part?

KURT

A town outside London -- Potters Bar.

JEN

Potters Bar! Really?

KURT

You've heard of it?

JEN

No. Not at all. I've never been outside the United States. I want to travel. Someday.

KURT

Well, maybe someday you will.

JEN

Larry and I are going to The Poconos for our honeymoon.

KURT

The Poconos! Really?

JEN

You know it?

KURT

No. Not at all.

(JEN smiles.)

JEN

What are you doing here in New York?

KURT

I'm on business -- a distributors convention at the Javits Center.

JEN

Distributors of what?

KURT

Small computer accessories, actually. Mouse pads, cases, bags. It's all terribly exciting.

JEN

Hey -- at least you got a trip out of it.

KURT

At least. I came a day early to sightsee.

JEN

What have you seen so far?

KURT

Well, let's see. So far, I've seen JFK Airport, the Sheraton Hotel, the Staten Island Ferry, the Statue of Liberty and one genuine New York bride.

JEN

All part of the tour.

(JEN rubs her bare arms to get warm.)

KURT

Here. Take my jacket.

(KURT removes his jacket.)

JEN

You don't have to--

KURT

It wouldn't be very gentlemanly -- or British -- of me, if I didn't. Here. On we go.

(KURT puts his jacket over Jen's shoulders.)

JEN

Just until I warm up. What was I thinking -- going with a sleeveless dress.

KURT

You were probably thinking you'd be in a warm, cozy church surrounded by family and friends instead of being on a windy Ferry with a complete stranger.

JEN

What's your name?

KURT

Kurt.

JEN

There. You're not a stranger anymore. I'm--

KURT

Don't tell me. You are Jennifer Rose Porter betrothed to the unfortunately named Lawrence Pricks Eastaway.

JEN

That's me. You can call me Jen.

KURT

Very well. Jen.

JEN

Are you married, Kurt?

KURT

No. Not at the moment.

JEN

So you were?

KURT

Ah, yes.

JEN

Any kids?

KURT

One.

JEN

A boy or girl?

KURT

A daughter -- Emily.

JEN

That's pretty. She live with you?

KURT

No. She's lives with her mother. But I see her when I can.

JEN

So... Are you and your ex still friends?

KURT

No. Then again, we never were.

JEN

Is that why you got divorced?

KURT

No. Well, sort of... Not really, I guess.

JEN

Then why did you?

KURT

Mostly because she badgered me with incessant questions.

JEN

You're a bit of a smart ass, Kurt. I like that.

KURT

It's a rather long story, honestly. One filled with a series of bad decisions on both our parts. And lots of running away from our problems.

JEN

Was that comment directed at me?

KURT

No. Absolutely not. I wasn't directing anything at anyone.

JEN

Because you should know -- I didn't run away from anything.

(a beat)

I walked.

KURT

I didn't mean to imply that you either ran or walked away from any problems.

JEN

The thing is -- Larry and I don't really have any problems. It's just that -- everything started closing in on me. I felt like I couldn't breathe. So I told my mom and my sister that I was going to walk outside to catch my breath. I ended up catching the Ferry instead. Ever since, I've just been riding back and forth and back and forth. But just when I start to get off the Ferry and head back to the church, I get back on. I'm sure they're all wondering what the hell happened to me.

KURT

You should phone them. At least Lawrence. I don't have a mobile with me, but I'm sure you can borrow one from somebody.

JEN

No. That's okay. Besides, what would I say to him? 'Sorry, Larry. Just felt the urge to ride the Ferry.'

KURT

He will understand. All first-time brides get nervous.

JEN

Not all of them. I wasn't nervous my first time.

KURT

Oh, I see. You've done this before.

(JEN nods.)

KURT

You must have been a child bride.

JEN

I was.

KURT

And how about you? Are you still friends with your ex?

JEN

No. He's dead.

KURT

Oh. I'm terribly sorry.

JEN

Yeah. Me too. He worked in the South Tower.

KURT

The South Tower?

(JEN points over the railing and off into the distance.
KURT looks. There's nothing there. After a moment...)

KURT

Oh.

(slowly realizing)

Oh.

(A beat.)

KURT

I never knew someone who actually knew someone...

JEN

Now you know someone.

KURT

I can't even imagine.

JEN

Yeah, well, it was pretty unimaginable. Jimmy -- he was my husband -- he was such a good guy. Don't get me wrong, Larry's a good guy, too. Solid. Dependable. But Jimmy was Italian and loud and drank and smoked and loved to laugh and party and just loved life. When Jimmy and I got married, we didn't have a big church and lots of people. Hell, I didn't even have a wedding gown. I just put on my prettiest sun dress and we hopped on the Ferry and went to the courthouse downtown. Just him and me. Of course, when we got back and told everyone, his folks made us get married by the priest over at St. Clare's. But I didn't care. I just wanted to be his wife -- more than anything in the world. And now, well, Jean and Tommy, those are Jimmy's parents, they're coming to the wedding today. They've been real supportive, but when I got their RSVP, I nearly fell over. Now I have to stand up there in front of them and everyone who knew me and Jimmy. It just feels like I'm betraying him. I don't know what to do.

KURT

I'd like to give you advice, but we Brits are traditionally emotionless creatures who go through with clearly doomed marriages and then live years in silent resentment until one day one of us ups and shags the fat woman at the Chip Shop.

JEN

You did that?

KURT

No. My wife did.

(KURT and JEN both smile. KURT looks off.)

KURT

It looks like we're docking.

JEN

Again. Here -- let me give you your jacket back.

KURT

Are you warm now?

JEN

A little bit. Thanks.

KURT

Look, I'm not going to pretend to remotely know what you're feeling. And I'm certainly in no position to give advice on relationships, but I do think you shouldn't feel guilty. And from what I gathered, Jimmy sounded like a free spirit. And he'd want you to be free to move on with your life.

JEN

That's pretty deep for an emotionless Brit.

KURT

We have our moments. And I apologize if I overstepped my boundaries.

JEN

No. And you're right. I need to move on. I mean, Larry's a great guy...

KURT

I'm sure he is. Despite the family name.

JEN

And he loves me very much...

KURT

What else does one need?

JEN

And he'll make a wonderful husband... and father someday...

KURT

Sounds lovely.

JEN

If I do this, I can finally move on...

KURT

Yes.

JEN

Be free.

KURT

Exactly.

JEN

Thank you, Kurt. You really helped me.

KURT

Oh, I did nothing. Now, may I escort you to a taxi to carry you back to the church? My treat.

JEN

You don't have to do that.

KURT

I want to. Consider it a wedding present.

JEN

Thank you.

(JEN offers her hand. KURT shakes her hand.)

KURT

Would you mind terribly if I snapped your photo?

JEN

Go ahead. It'll make one hell of a story at the Javits Center. The crazy bride on the Ferry.

(KURT raises his camera to his eye.)

KURT

Strike a pose.

(Not knowing what to do, she raises an arm in the air.)

JEN

How's this?

KURT

Perfect.

(KURT snaps the photo.)

JEN

Good luck to you, Jennifer Rose Porter. Soon to be Jennifer Rose Pricks Eastaway.

JEN

I'm dropping the Pricks.

KURT

Good thinking.

(As KURT puts on his jacket and gathers his things,
JEN slowly returns to the railing and looks out.)

KURT

I may grab lunch here in Staten Island before heading back. I'd like to go to Central Park later since the day turned out so lovely and then maybe see a Broadway show. The guide book says there's a place to purchase seats half-off.

(turns to JEN)

Right, then. Off we go.

(KURT notices JEN not moving.)

KURT

Are you coming?

JEN

Why don't you go on ahead? I think I'm going to go around again.

(Kurt nods and exits. JEN stands at the railing, looking out over the Bay.)

(LIGHTS OUT.)

-END OF PLAY-