

ROOM SERVICE

Cast of characters:

(out of role)

Janet married to **Michael**

Michael married to **Janet**

Linda married to **Keith**

Keith married to **Linda**

(in role)

Janet as 'Leonora' not married to **Keith** as 'Maurice'

Keith as 'Maurice' not married to **Janet** as 'Leonora'

Linda as 'Miss Siskin' not married to **Michael** as 'Mr Mooney'

Michael as 'Mr Mooney' not married to **Linda** as 'Miss Siskin'

Setting: A make-believe hotel bedroom

Costume:

Janet – more or less sexy pyjamas

Keith – riding boots and cape (?)

Linda – dressed as a chambermaid

Michael – dressed as a hotel butler

Properties:

Janet's reading glasses

Janet's magazine

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Janet, dressed in pyjamas, is sitting and waiting. She is wearing glasses and reading a magazine. She looks at her watch, checks the time and then continues reading her magazine.

There is a knock at the door. **Janet** puts down her magazine quickly, takes off her glasses and, stretching out languidly, prepares to receive her visitor.

Janet (in role as 'Leonora') (sultry) Come in.

Michael, dressed as a hotel butler, enters. He mimes carrying a bottle of champagne, glasses and a bowl of caviar.

Michael (in role as 'Mr Mooney') Room service, Madam.

Janet looks up, sees that it is **Michael** and her demeanour changes.

Janet (out of role) (slightly irritated) What is it, Michael?

Michael Room service, Madam. Your champagne and caviar. As ordered by your 'gentleman friend'.

Janet He isn't here yet.

Michael (out of role) Oh. I thought he must be. Linda's been here for half-an-hour. They must have travelled separately. Oh, well. I'll come back later, shall I, Janet?

Janet (in role) (shocked) I'm sorry?

Michael (in role) I do beg your pardon, Madam.

Janet (dismissive) That will be all, Mr Mooney.

Michael Yes, Madam. Thank you.

Michael exits. **Janet** puts on her glasses again and continues reading her magazine.

Another knock at the door. As before, **Janet** puts down her magazine, takes off her glasses and stretches out.

Janet (in role) (sultry) Come in.

Linda enters demurely.

Linda (in role as 'Miss Siskin') Room service, Madam. I've come to turn down the bed and put two of the 'you-spoil-us-ambassador' chocolates on your pillow.

Janet looks up and sees that it is **Linda**.

Janet (out of role) Keith isn't here yet, I'm afraid, Linda.

Linda (out of role) Isn't he? We left the house about the same time. He must be 'preparing himself'.

Janet Preparing himself?

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Linda You know. 'Getting ready'. They take time to work, don't they?

Janet What do? Oh, I see. You mean ...

Linda The blue pills.

Janet I didn't know Keith —

Linda You thought it was all down to you, did you? Or should I say 'up to you'?

Janet (*mock shocked*) Linda! Really! (*sheepish*) But, yes, I probably did think that. Ah, well. I suppose at our age Nature needs a helping hand.

Linda More than a hand sometimes.

Janet (*in role*) (*grand*) I've no idea what you're talking about, Miss Siskin. And I've no wish to know.

Linda (*in role*) I beg your pardon, I'm sure, Madam. I'll come back later then, shall I?

Linda exits. **Janet** puts on her glasses and continues reading her magazine.

Pause. Another knock at the door. This time, **Janet** does not put down her magazine, take off her glasses or stretch out.

Janet (*out of role*) (*irritated*) Yes?

Keith enters with a flourish. He mimes carrying a bunch of flowers.

Keith (*in role as 'Maurice'*) My own sweet darling. Here I am.

Janet (*out of role*) Finally!

Keith Through thick and thin. Through flood and fire. Up hill and down dale. I have battled onward and now — at last — I am here.

Janet What took you so long?

Keith (*out of role*) Flat battery. I had to call out the RAC. (*in role*) None of that matters now. Here, my darling. Take these. (*holds out flowers*) Fresh flowers from the forest.

Janet From the florist?

Keith (*out of role*) Well, yes, actually. (*in role*) Glorious gladioli. A token of my enduring love. (*out of role*) What's the matter?

Janet I'm not that keen on gladioli.

Keith Aren't you? I thought you were. Very well ... (*in role*) Tulips. Crimson tulips. As scarlet as your carmine lips.

Janet (*in role*) Tulips! Crimson tulips! My darling Keith. How ... exquisite.

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Keith (out of role) (correcting) Maurice.

Janet Sorry. Yes. Maurice. How exquisite. Thank you, my angel.

Keith and Janet embrace.

Keith (out of role) (mildly accusatory) You're wearing glasses.

Janet (out of role) Oh. Am I? (taking off her glasses) Sorry.

Keith And pyjamas.

Janet Don't you like my pyjamas?

Keith (hesitant) Well ...

Janet Well?

Keith I prefer you in a nightdress. Something silky. Or floaty. Or clinging. Clinging's good.

Janet Not pyjamas then.

Keith (explanatory) I just feel pyjamas can be a little 'mannish'.

Janet You're saying I'm 'mannish'?

Keith No, Janet. I'm only saying —

Janet Leonora.

Keith Sorry? Of course. Leonora. (beat) This isn't working, is it? Why don't I go away, come back and start again?

Janet If you like.

Keith exits.

Pause. Another knock at the door. **Janet** stretches out.

Janet (in role) (sultry) Come in.

Michael enters with champagne etc.

Michael (in role) Room service, Madam. Your champagne and ... (out of role) (looking round) Where's Keith?

Janet (out of role) Gone. But he's coming back. At least I think he is.
(explanatory) We didn't get off to a very good start. He thought we ought to try again.

Another knock at the door. **Janet** stretches out.

Janet (in role) (sultry) Come in.

Linda enters.

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- Linda** (in role) Room service, Madam.
- Michael** (in role) You've come to turn down the bed, haven't you, Miss Siskin?
- Linda** That's right, Mr Mooney.
- Michael** And put the 'you-spoil-us-ambassador' chocolates on the pillow.
- Linda** Yes, Mr Mooney.
- Michael** And —
- Linda** (irritated) I know what I'm doing, Mr Mooney.
- Michael** I'm sure you do, Miss Siskin.
- Linda** I don't need to be reminded of every little thing.
- Michael** I'm sure you don't, Miss Siskin.
- Linda** The truth is ... (out of role) Where is he?
- Michael** (out of role) You mean Keith?
- Linda** Who do you think I mean? Noel Coward? Napoleon Bonaparte? The Aga Khan?
- Michael** He's gone out. Keith, that is. The Aga Khan has a prior engagement.
- Linda** (sarcastic) And Napoleon Bonaparte?
- Janet** (out of role) He's coming back, Linda. The truth is, we didn't get off to a very good start ...
- Linda** Tell me about it. (in role) (deep breath) Very well. I'll turn down the bed later, shall I, Madam?
- Janet** (in role) Thank you so much, Miss Siskin.
- Michael** (in role) That will be all, Miss Siskin.

Linda is about to respond but instead she gives **Janet** a pleasant smile, **Michael** an unpleasant look and exits.

- Janet** (out of role) Oh, dear. Janet seems very out of sorts.
- Michael** (out of role) She is. Thoroughly grumpy. It's not much fun in the butler's pantry at the moment I can tell you.

Another knock at the door.

- Janet** }
- Michael** } (weary) Come in.
- }

Keith re-enters.

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Keith (in role) My jewel. My precious. My precious jewel. I have fought my way through — umm — the traffic on the by-pass and now — at last — here I am. (holds out flowers) For you. Flowers plucked in the florist.

Janet The florist?

Keith The forest.

Janet Which?

Keith (out of role) Whichever you like. Does it really matter?

Michael coughs discreetly.

Oh. Sorry, Michael. I didn't see you there.

Michael (in role) I beg your pardon, sir, but I wonder if I might have a word with you. Man to man.

Keith Man to man?

Michael If you wouldn't mind.

Michael and **Keith** look at **Janet**.

Janet I'll leave you boys to it, shall I?

Keith (in role) Will you be safe, my heavenly angel?

Janet What? Oh, yes. I'm going outside for a cigarette.

Keith (out of role) I didn't know you smoked.

Janet I don't. Not normally. But tonight ... Tonight ...

Janet exits.

Beat.

Keith You wanted a word?

Michael Yes.

Keith Man to man?

Michael That's right. It's a little ... awkward. A little ... delicate. A little ...

Keith I get the picture. It's a little ...

Michael That's right.

Pause.

Michael }
} Listen ...
Keith }

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Michael }
} Look ...
Keith }
Michael }
} You first.
Keith }
Michael What I was going to say is ...
Keith What?
Michael It's not working any more.
Keith I'm sorry to hear that, old boy. Have you tried — ?
Michael No, I don't mean ... That's working fine. Most of the time. With a little chemical assistance if I'm honest.
Keith Stunning stuff, isn't it?
Michael Yes. No. I mean our 'arrangement'. Mine and Linda's. The whole 'Miss Siskin' and 'Mr Mooney' business. It's gone off the boil. From hot to tepid to stone cold. All in the course of a month.

Beat.

Keith I'm not going to lie to you, Michael. It's the same with us. The 'Leonora' and 'Maurice' thing. The sparkle's gone out of it. Fizzled away. It doesn't do it for me any more. And Janet's started wearing pyjamas.
Michael I rather like Janet's pyjamas.
Keith Do you? Oh. Ah, well. *À chacun son goût.*
Michael Well, that was our starting-point, wasn't it? You and Janet wanting to play out your 'romantic' scenes in a five-star hotel ...
Keith ... while you and Linda did the dirty in the butler's pantry.
Michael I'd prefer 'frolicked'.
Keith What you and Linda get up to in the butler's pantry is none of my business, old boy.
Michael Well, in a way it is. After all, she is your wife. The point is: I think it's time to call a halt.
Keith Yes. Agreed. We've given it a fair old go.
Michael Once a fortnight for almost nine months.

Beat.

Keith How are we going to tell the girls?
Michael Sensitively. Sympathetically. We don't want hurt their feelings.

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Keith Do you think they'll be upset?

Michael Devastated. After all, the whole role-playing malarkey was their idea, wasn't it?

Keith Was it? Probably. I really can't remember.

A knock at the door.

Keith }
} Come in.
Michael }

Janet and Linda re-enter.

Janet (*authoritative*) Now listen, boys. Linda and I have been talking and we're both in complete agreement.

Linda You've had your fun but it's gone very stale and it's time to stop. I'm not turning down any more beds. What's more, Janet and I have gobbled up the last of the ambassador's sodding chocolates.

Janet And I've taken the gladioli or the tulips or the dahlias or whatever they were and stuffed them down the ruddy loo.

Linda It's no good pleading or wheedling ...

Janet I'm going home, 'Mr Mooney'.

Linda And if you know what's good for you, 'Maurice', you won't be far behind.

Linda and Janet exit.

Beat.

Michael (*thoughtful*) I've been thinking ...

Keith Oh, yes?

Michael Someone historical.

Keith Who?

Michael Napoleon Bonaparte.

Keith Napoleon Bonaparte?

Michael Yes, Napoleon Bonaparte and the Empress Josephine.

Keith Naturally. (*beat*) I must admit ...

Michael What?

Keith Well, I've often toyed with Horatio Nelson.

Michael Horatio Nelson? Have you?

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Keith Admiral Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton.

Michael Yes, I can see Janet as the lovely Emma Hamilton ...

Keith And Linda as the frisky Empress Josephine ...

Michael Mm. Maybe we'll need give them a week or two to get used to the idea.

Keith Time for things to bed down so to speak.

Michael That's right. Time for things to bed down. 'Not tonight, Josephine.'

Keith No, not tonight. But maybe in a couple of months' time ...

Michael and Keith exit together.

THE END