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Don't Cry for Me, Pasadena

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Don't Cry for Me, Pasadena was performed at the Eclectic Company Theatre in North Hollywood, CA, Oct. 1-17, 2004: Trish Geiger, director; John Dickey, light design; Jeff Folschinsky, sound design; and Chris Rice, art design.

IRENE: Marybeth Scherr

THOMAS: Matt Crabtree

JESUS PASADENA: Philip Restivo

MARY: Darcy Shean

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COMEDY. A neglected housewife, Irene Pasadena, calls the newspaper and reports that her husband, Jesus, has died just so that people will send her flowers. But the plan goes awry when Thomas, a rookie obituary writer from the local newspaper, arrives at Irene's doorstep to get the full story on Jesus' passing. Flustered, Irene seeks the help of her friend, Mary, an avid romance novel reader, to make up a convincing story. Mary tells Thomas that poor Jesus was killed by a savage fawn. But when Jesus comes home from work, Thomas thinks Jesus has risen from the dead, and Jesus is convinced Thomas is having an affair with his wife. This witty comedy will delight with its abundance of one-liners and use of double entendre.

Performance Time: Approximately 20-25 minutes.

Characters

(2 m, 2 f)

JESUS PASADENA: Early 50s; "Jesus" is pronounced in the Christian sense.

IRENE PASADENA: Late 40s, Jesus' wife; bored, lonely, neglected housewife.

MARY: 50s, widow and the Pasadenas' neighbor; avid reader of romance novels.

THOMAS: Early 20s, obit writer; carries a notepad and continuously jots down notes; wears all black and appears very awkward.

Costuming

Irene, Mary, and Jesus appear not to have purchased clothes since the 1970s.

Setting

The present. Living room of the Pasadenas'. Eclectic room that has a couch center stage and a small bar to one side. The room is full of books and a deer head hangs on the back wall and looms over the actors. An obviously homemade plaque with wooden ladles hanging from it graces the bar.

Props

Pen
Notepad

**"The shock of being dead
will kill him."**

—**Mary**

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(AT RISE: Irene is sitting on the couch while Mary stands next to her.)

MARY: Jesus died?

IRENE: You must think I'm evil.

MARY: Satan herself.

IRENE: I was bored.

MARY: And killing Jesus seemed liked the logical thing to do?

IRENE: I suppose.

MARY: You told the newspaper your husband died to see if people would send flowers?

IRENE: I was depressed. We haven't made love in three months and good love in six.

MARY: No wonder you said he was dead. But what will you do, Irene, when Jesus walks into work while they're having a memorial for him? People will think he was raised from the dead. It's very difficult to die and live a normal life you know. And what about when he sees his name in the obituaries? The shock of being dead will kill him.

IRENE: I just wanted to see if people would send me flowers. God knows Jesus doesn't bring me flowers anymore.

MARY: Christ Irene, you're not a Neil Diamond song.

IRENE: There is never anything to do, ever. I've already read the back of every book in the house.

MARY: You might try opening them. Trust me, I've had two husbands die, and it isn't much fun.

IRENE: Do you think I made a horrible mistake?

MARY: No, I think you made a wonderful mistake. What could go wrong with telling people your living husband is dead? Besides, this will no doubt cause me a great amount of entertainment. I used to get engaged just for the gifts.

Once I even pretended I was pregnant and threw myself a baby shower.

IRENE: What happened when the baby never came?

MARY: You'd be surprised what a miscarriage will get you.

IRENE: That's abhorrent.

MARY: You have a surprisingly good vocabulary for only reading the backs of books. *(Pause, sensitively.)* People like you, Irene, but they might like you better if you didn't kill them off. Besides, just because people send flowers doesn't prove anything. *(There is a knock at the door, Irene moves to answer it.)* Irene, I really think the only thing you will get out of this is cold leftovers and an angry husband. Jesus Pasadena dead. I can't wait to read it in the paper.

(Irene opens the door. Thomas waits nervously.)

IRENE: Hello.

(Thomas holds out his hand. Mary cuts in front of Irene and pulls Thomas in by his hand.)

MARY: *(To Thomas.)* Well, hello. You must be here to share your grievances for our abhorrent loss.

THOMAS: My name is Thomas. I am from the Sunrise News. I am looking for Mrs. Pasadena.

MARY: You mean Ms. Pasadena.

IRENE: Mary!

THOMAS: Yes, yes, I am so sorry. Ms. Pasadena. I apologize for coming at such a difficult time, but I need to gather information for the obituary. *(Rehearsed.)* In matters so personal and sensitive, we at the Sunrise News like to make personal visits to make sure everything we print is correct, as well as to share our own grievances. *(He hugs Irene forcefully.)* Plus, you'd be surprised how many people call in fake deaths just to see their name in the paper.

MARY: That's abhorrent. People are so sick. Doesn't that make you feel sick, Irene, to think that people would do that.

IRENE: Nauseous. But I assure you this is no hoax.

MARY: Would you like to see the body?

THOMAS/IRENE: The body?!

MARY: It's in the other room.

THOMAS: Really? Yeah, okay.

IRENE: *(Trying to change the subject.)* So do you like working for a newspaper, Thomas? It must be difficult.

(Mary moves closer to Thomas.)

MARY: I think it would be just savagely interesting. To write about the world with extraordinary acuteness and glass-sharp detail seems like it would require epic talent. It must be hard.

THOMAS: In all honesty, this is my first assignment, but don't worry. I am excited, I mean, ready for this story.

MARY: And what a first assignment to have...to come to a stranger's house still in mourning where even the slightest thing might upset the widow and throw everything off. Seems like that would be a lot of stress.

THOMAS: As a reporter, I naturally work best under stress. Besides, I just need to gather a few facts and I'll be out of your hair and writing a phenomenal obituary.

MARY: Hair? No doubt that's what we'll miss most. His beautiful head of hair...

IRENE: Please go ahead.

THOMAS: Tell me, what was *(Spanish pronunciation)* Jesus' occupation?

IRENE: It's pronounced Jesus. Jesus Pasadena.

THOMAS: His name is Jesus? But Pasadena is Spanish.

IRENE: He despised the name with a chilly desolation. It's given him quite a complex. *(Thomas makes a note on a pad of paper while mouthing the words "chilly desolation.")* He

preferred to be called by his last name, Pasadena. Don't put this in the paper, though.

THOMAS: No, no, of course not. *(He scratches out what he wrote.)* Please tell me how Jesus, I mean, Mr. Pasadena, passed away.

MARY: Tell him, Irene, how he died. I know it's hard, but do try to give him every detail. It was such an unusual death after all.

THOMAS: Unusual?

(Mary sees the mounted deer head.)

MARY: Yes, very tragic. Tell him, Irene. Tell him about the angry fawn.

THOMAS: Angry fawn?

IRENE: *(Struggling, nervously, as she tries to make her story believable.)* Yes. My husband was killed by a fawn.

THOMAS: Oh dear! *(Awkward pause. Realizes pun.)* I didn't mean, oh Jesus. *(Again realizing.)* I mean, that is very tragic. I didn't know fawns killed. They don't even have antlers. He must have been badgering it to make it want to kill him?

MARY: Pasadena had very low self-esteem.

THOMAS: Please, go on.

IRENE: I don't think I want anything in the paper anymore.

MARY: Nonsense! People need to know about him.

THOMAS: It's true, how else will people know about Jesus unless they read about him. Why don't you just tell me what you would like to have written in the paper.

IRENE: Well, I wouldn't know what to say. I've never written an obituary before.

MARY: You've really led a boring life. It's easy. How about "Jesus died for you. Send flowers"?

IRENE: That's not funny.

MARY: Give it a try, Thomas. What do you say about Jesus?

THOMAS: I'm Jewish.

MARY: Who? You or Jesus?

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THOMAS: Both, I think.

MARY: Everyone knows Jesus.

THOMAS: How about, "Jesus: He died for you. Please send bread, seven loaves will do."

IRENE: Okay, I think the game is over.

(Thomas becomes very involved in the game.)

THOMAS: "Jesus died for you so use the rhythm method."

MARY: Thank you, Thomas, but one was quite enough.

(Thomas jumps on the table and acts like a televangelist just as Jesus Pasadena enters through the front door.)

THOMAS: "Jesus is dead and he loved you this much...
(Opens his arms as if being crucified.) ...so send money."

(Irene spots Pasadena.)

IRENE: Jesus!

MARY: *(Spots Pasadena.)* Christ!

THOMAS: "Died so that you might live. Please send wine, or water."

PASADENA: Actually, it's Jesus Pasadena, and I am quite alive.

MARY: Not for long.

PASADENA: What is going on here?

THOMAS: Wait, you're Jesus Pasadena? You're alive? I don't believe it!

(Thomas pokes Pasadena's side and looks at his hands for signs of stigmata.)

PASADENA: Irene, who is this very observant boy and why is he in my house poking me?

IRENE: Well, he is here because he came here to come here and because so he is here. *(Looks to Mary for help.)*

MARY: *(Struggling for an idea.)* The truth is, Pasadena, that Irene is having an affair with him.

THOMAS/PASADENA/IRENE: What?!

IRENE: *(To Mary.)* You were supposed to help.

MARY: It's all I could think of.

THOMAS: Jesus is alive? You said his body was in the other room.

MARY: Try not to think about it, Thomas, 2,000 years of theology hasn't solved that one.

THOMAS: That's just great. I mean, my first assignment is to write an obituary and the guy comes back to life.

PASADENA: Are you having an affair with my wife?

THOMAS: God, no, look at her. I mean I would never sleep with Jesus' wife. I am simply here to report your death.

PASADENA: My death? Mary, what did you put my wife up to?

IRENE: Mary had nothing to do with it.

PASADENA: Tell me, Mary, what did you put my wife up to?

IRENE: Listen to me, Pasadena, she had nothing to do with this. It was all my idea.

(Thomas falls on the couch coming between them, taking notes.)

MARY: It's okay. Tell him how I gave birth to the whole thing.

IRENE: Be quiet, Mary. I set these inexorable events into motion. Why can't you believe I did something?

PASADENA: Well then, tell me what you did?

IRENE: I told the newspaper you were dead. Thomas is a writer who came to get information for your obituary.

(Thomas extends his hand to Jesus.)

THOMAS: Nice to meet you, Jesus. I must admit I wasn't expecting to meet you so soon.

[End of Freeview]