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Marriage, Miscarriage

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11th March 2017 B.L. Sherrington



“Virginia. Her name is practically vagina. Of course, she’s a slut.” It’s New York. It’s infidelity. It’s hilarious.

The play centres around four friends and a hidden secret that reveals itself over the course of an evening of sarcasm and cough syrup... Hilarity ensues as the sarcastic Beth (Nora Goldbach), the

ditzy Jenny (Larhysa Saddul) and her proctologist husband Larry (Hadleigh Harrison) unravel the past.

Directed by Goldbach and Rupert Holloway, the play begins with Beth acting the very stereotype of the betrayed wife. She pours alcohol into her husband’s shoes, cuts up his clothes and has scattered the pages of his books around their apartment. Interestingly, she’s not bitter: she’s actually giddy as she stands in their stately home drinking from a crystal whisky bottle and throws darts at a photograph of her husband Walter (Jean-Baptiste Fillon) before moving on to taking sips of cough syrup. To the casual spectator, Beth is the very picture of the middle-class wife. She’s beautiful, lives in an expensive apartment building, wears beautiful clothing and, as it turns out, has a husband with a wandering eye. As the story gets deeper we discover that said wandering eye has landed on many women including a septuagenarian neighbour and her friend Jenny.

Saddul portrays Jenny as a socialite, replete with bold red lipstick and a glossy fur coat. She’s vain and decidedly dim, making her the perfect candidate to be manipulated into an adulterous fling. The character may not realise that she is funny, but that she is: her privileged, self-centred personality creates the most amount of comedy in the play. She dreams of being an actress on Broadway in a world-renowned theatre; Beth is quick to sarcastically give the novice a reality check. It’s a witty exchange, given the intimate, fringe surroundings of the

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Courtyard Theatre itself. It is worlds away from the stage Jenny has in mind.

The banter between Saddul and Goldbach works tremendously well. They are polar opposites. Goldbach is a slim blonde woman, working as an actress enjoying her independence. She boasts of her intelligence – “I feel like I’m talking to a croûton” – and displays several layers in her personality. She remarks: “That’s my job. To make people believe I’m something I’m not.” When Beth discovers Jenny’s betrayal, she insists: “I’m not saying I want to kill you. But I would unplug your life support to charge my phone.” Later, she films Jenny breaking down.

In contrast, Saddul is a curvaceous brunette enjoying the perks of being a doctor’s wife, craving excitement. Her bubbly personality is endearing, but this is ultimately a mask for the true reality. At the core Jenny is childlike. She believed Walter (Fillon), was her knight in shining armour and was going to take her away on his travels despite never being invited. Her immaturity is most colourful when she throws herself on the ground and sticks her fingers in her ears when Larry (Harrison) prevents her getting her own way. She loves money and envies Beth for her career. Perhaps this was her reason for embarking on an affair: she craved a piece of Beth’s life.

Larry has a timid nature, used to being ignored and talked down to. He’s aware of his wife’s infidelity but says nothing for an easy life. When he plucks up the carriage to stand up to Jenny and Walter, we’re encouraged that he’ll separate from his wife – particularly as he has a gun in his hand. Unfortunately, when he takes his wife back, his incorrigibly WASP nature means that he reverts to sweeping the affair under the carpet.

Walter, on the other hand, is an alpha male. He immediately embodies seduction with his French accent and his desire to live as a free spirit. When he arrives and we see the interaction between Fillon and Goldbach, they are every inch the bitter divorcees-to-be. The play ends with Beth, in glamorous get-up in anticipation of a date with another actor, boasting that Walter will need a good lawyer. The ending felt somewhat underplayed. Beth walking out was powerful for herself but would have been stronger had Walter been forced to face Virginia and their ageing neighbour.

At its heart, Marriage Miscarriage takes a comedic look at infidelity. It forces us to face the music of keeping secrets, what everyone does behind closed doors and the consequences of hurting those we claim to care about.

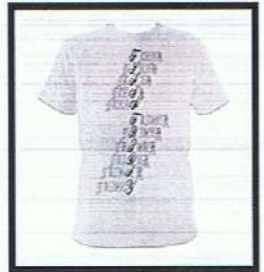
Marriage Miscarriage is showing at The Courtyard Theatre until 11th March.



About B.L. Sherrington

B. L. Sherrington is an aspiring novelist. In between writing short stories and reviews, Sherrington is penning a science fiction/fantasy novel and co-writing a play. An experienced journalist, Sherrington has previously written for Neon. The

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