



MONTE CARLO
BY **LYDIA STRYK**



DRAMATISTS
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MONTE CARLO
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AUTHOR'S NOTE

MONTE CARLO is set in the 1980s before mobile phones and the UK National Lottery existed. As such, it's a memory play, and the author urges directors to explore styles and designs other than realism. To be sure, the play contains visceral moments of eating and drinking, but so do circus acts. The characters around Daisy are “grotesques” in Stanislavski's sense of the word — crystallisations 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 the distortions of clowning. Scenes can merge and flow and move through space as seems fit and are best staged without blackouts and breaks. Daisy is free to speak and act in motion and from anywhere. Her bed is also a stage.

MONTE CARLO premiered at the Ricketson Theatre (Donovan Marley, Artistic Director) at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts on May 5, 1993. It was directed by Jennifer McCray Rincon; the set design was by Richard L. Hay; the lighting design was by Robert A. Keosheyan; the sound design was by Joel Underwood; the dramaturg was Tom Szentgyorgyi; and the stage manager was Lyle Raper. The cast was as follows:

DAISY ROSEGeorgine Hall
LOTTIE ROSE Frances Ingalls
MAGGIE.....Kathleen Brady-Garvin
ANGELA.....LaTonya Borsay
GAME SHOW HOSTAnthony Powell
EDDIE PERKINSFrank Georgianna

CHARACTERS

DAISY ROSE. In her early 60s. 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. Daisy’s mother. In her early 80s. 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. Daisy’s co-worker. Middle-aged. A frazzled mother of five.

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

GAME SHOW HOST. Sleazy and embittered to be stuck where he is.

EDDIE PERKINS. Daisy’s former suitor. An old salesman to his core.

Note: the game show host and Eddie Perkins may be played by the same actor.

PLACE

Acts One and Two

A London council flat; the Roses’ apartment: A kitchen with table and chairs, a twelve-inch television on a stand. A bedroom with two twin beds facing each other, both with nightstands and lamps. A coat-rack on which Daisy’s various costumes hang visibly. The coat-rack stands somewhere between the playing spaces and is also used as part of the set in the visitor scenes.

A factory cafeteria. Three chairs, a table. A wall payphone.

Act Two

A television recording studio, as well as the above.

Act Three

A beach. Two deck chairs.

MONTE CARLO

ACT ONE

Scene 1

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.*) 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. Leftovers. 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.

MONTE CARLO

by Lydia Stryk

2M, 4W

Daisy, now approaching retirement, has lived with her mother, while working in a factory, for her entire adult life. Nothing seems set to change until she wins the football pools and becomes a millionaire, and her world is turned upside-down. But with the riches and the fulfillment of a life-long unspoken dream to see Monte Carlo, comes a realisation about her long relationship with her mother which will change her life in far more unexpected ways.

MONTE CARLO turns the classic stereotype of the spinster on its head by letting her take centre stage.

"In a bittersweet, sparkling gem of a play, Lydia Stryk examines a fractious, yet loving, relationship between an English working-class mother and daughter that has stretched through ... decades of evening meals, petty disagreements, shared humor and late night chats from the depths of their twin beds."

—**The Denver Post**

"MONTE CARLO ... is alternately hilarious — almost ridiculous at times in the Charles Ludlam sense — and poignant. A sure choice for smaller theatre companies and those interested in lifting female roles out of the stereotypes and into a rich reality, MONTE CARLO is consummately feminine, consummately human, and wonderfully entertaining."

—**Backstage**

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