



CLEVER LITTLE LIES

BY JOE DiPIETRO



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



CLEVER LITTLE LIES
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The premiere production of CLEVER LITTLE LIES was presented by George Street Playhouse (David Saint, Artistic Director; Kelly Ryman, Managing Director), opening on Novmeber 22, 2013. It was directed by David Saint, the scenic designer was Yoshi Tanokura, the costume designer was Esther Arroyo, the lighting designer was Christopher J. Bailey, and the sound design and composition was by Scott Killian.

BILL, SR. Greg Mullavey
ALICE Marlo Thomas
BILLY Jim Stanek
JANE Kate Wetherhead

CLEVER LITTLE LIES was originally produced Off-Broadway by Joan Raffe, Jhett Tolentino, Douglas Denoff, and Edward Walson at the Westside Theatre, opening on October 12, 2015. The creative team was the same. The cast was as follows:

BILL, SR. Greg Mullavey
ALICE Marlo Thomas
BILLY George Merrick
JANE Kate Wetherhead

CHARACTERS

BILL SR. & ALICE
a long-time married couple

BILLY & JANE
their son & daughter-in-law
new parents

PLACE

a tennis club locker room
a car
a living room

TIME

today

CLEVER LITTLE LIES

Scene 1

The locker room of a tennis club.

Bill, Sr. dressing. He is whistling—a man in a happy mood.

His very fit son, Billy, also in a towel, enters. He is not so happy.

Both men proceed to get dressed, putting on nicely tailored suits.

BILL SR. Oh, and did I mention your serve?

BILLY. You did.

BILL SR. That serve—in the first game of the second set—

BILLY. Let's not again—

BILL SR. But that one serve—had to be a hundred miles an hour, easy—near impossible to hit back.

BILLY. But you hit it back.

BILL SR. Oh, that's right, I did.

BILLY. Can we not talk about the match anymore?

BILL SR. Okay, sure, but you know, you played very, very well.

BILLY. I did not.

BILL SR. You were really hustling—

BILLY. I played like I was in a coma.

BILL SR. Don't be so hard on yourself—

BILLY. I'm not being hard on myself, Dad, I didn't play well. And you're just saying I did because you beat me—

BILL SR. No—

BILLY. Yes, because if I played well and you beat me that's so much better for you than if I played shitty.

BILL SR. I'm just trying to compliment you, and you...

BILLY. Dad, don't.
BILL SR. And you, you're psychoanalyzing me—
BILLY. Okay, let's just drop it.
BILL SR. You're attributing Machiavellian motives to me that...
BILLY. Just drop it, okay?!
BILL SR. Fine, fine. (*A beat.*) But you played very well.
BILLY. I've been having trouble focusing.
BILL SR. Everything all right?
BILLY. Just stress. Work. Life.
BILL SR. Is it that new case you're working on? The um—
BILLY. The McNally case. No, work is fine, it's fine, it sucks, it's fine.
BILL SR. The baby, is she—?
BILLY. Emily's fine, Jane's fine, everyone's fine. Just leave it alone.
(*Looking in his gym bag.*) Fuck!
BILL SR. What?
BILLY. Jane didn't pack any clean socks!
BILL SR. Jane packs your tennis clothes for you?
BILLY. Yeah.
BILL SR. You're kidding?
BILLY. That whole traditional wife stuff—keeping the house super spotless, taking care of her inept husband. She likes all that.
BILL SR. I wish your mother liked all that.
BILLY. She also likes focusing her whole world on the baby.
BILL SR. That's what they do. Is that what's upsetting you?
BILLY. (*Re: his tennis socks.*) I can't put these back on, they're soaked.
BILL SR. You want mine?
BILLY. What're you gonna wear?
BILL SR. Nothing, I've got loafers, everyone will think I'm hip.
BILLY. (*Taking the dress socks.*) Thanks.
BILL SR. Oh, and your backhand was fantastic today—
BILLY. I didn't play well, Dad!
BILL SR. All right, all right. By the way, your mother wants you to bring Jane and the baby over for dinner.
BILLY. When?
BILL SR. Wednesday.
BILLY. Can't, I've got the gym. On Wednesdays, I do my back and chest.
BILL SR. Thursday?
BILLY. Arms and glutes.

BILL SR. So we'll see you when? After the Olympics?
BILLY. Could you lay off me, Dad, I've been dealing with a lot lately—
BILL SR. Like what?
BILLY. Nothing, don't worry about it.
BILL SR. I'm your father, of course I'm going to worry about it.
BILLY. I just don't want to...
BILL SR. What?
BILLY. Disappoint you.
BILL SR. You've done something to disappoint me?
BILLY. Dad, do you think I'm a good man?
BILL SR. Oh my God, now you're scaring me, what's happened?
BILLY. Nothing, really. Maybe this weekend, you and I could go out and talk?
BILL SR. Sure, a little man-to-man—
BILLY. That'd be good 'cause... *(And suddenly, Billy begins to weep.)*
BILL SR. Billy, what's the—what's the matter?
BILLY. Nothing—nothing— *(And his weeping grows louder.)*
BILL SR. Stop saying nothing. Son, what's the matter?
BILLY. Everything's good, Dad, I have to get to the office.
BILL SR. Hey, let's finish getting dressed and go somewhere and talk and... *(And he breaks down again.)* Billy—
BILLY. This is so hard, Dad—
BILL SR. Are you ill? *(Billy keeps crying.)* C'mon, you know you can tell me anything—
BILLY. I can't tell you this—
BILL SR. Sure you can—
BILLY. I can't—
BILL SR. You can—
BILLY. Yeah?
BILL SR. Of course! Tell me—
BILLY. I'm in love with someone else. *(A beat.)*
BILL SR. What?
BILLY. I'm in love with someone else.
BILL SR. You're in love with—
BILLY. Someone else.
BILL SR. Oh my God, another woman? You're in love with another woman? *(And Billy weeps some more.)* Is it a man?
BILLY. What?
BILL SR. I mean, it's okay if it's a man—

BILLY. No, it's not a man! I don't know what to do, Dad. I love her so much—

BILL SR. Who? Jane?

BILLY. No.

BILL SR. Oh my God, Billy—

BILLY. She's so great, Dad. It's like we have this special connection—

BILL SR. Jesus Christ—

BILLY. And she's not like Jane. She likes to have fun.

BILL SR. I can't believe this—

BILLY. You said I could tell you so I told you, Dad! And now you're getting upset.

BILL SR. I'm not getting upset, I'm not, I'm just... processing. All right, Billy, you know when a man goes through something like this, it's generally a phase—he's missing something in his life, and he thinks someone else may be able to fulfill what he's missing—

BILLY. She never wants anything from me except for me to be happy. Do you know what that's like? How good that feels?

BILL SR. Okay, so maybe it's just a friendship. Maybe you're confusing friendship with—?

BILLY. We have sex all the time, Dad, every time we see each other we can't wait to get naked and have this animal—bam-bam-bam!—sex. Is that what'd you call a friend?

BILL SR. Well, no—

BILLY. And God, it's so much better than it is with Jane.

BILL SR. C'mon now, you just had a baby—

BILLY. But it's better than it ever was with Jane! She actually enjoys my body—

BILL SR. All right, don't tell me more—

BILLY. I mean, with Jane, there are things I want her to do that she doesn't really want to do—

BILL SR. Stop, stop—

BILLY. Like giving me head.

BILL SR. I said stop!

BILLY. Like she does it, you know, out of some wifely duty or something—

BILL SR. Oh, God—

BILLY. I mean, when I go down on Jane, I try to really get in there and make her happy but—when she goes down on me, she always has this look on her face, this sour look, like she's this martyr, like

she's Joan of Arc for giving me a blowjob. We've never spoken like this before, have we? (*A beat.*)

BILL SR. No, we haven't.

BILLY. Well, you always said we're friends, right? You always wanted me to treat you as a friend first—

BILL SR. Yeah, I'm rethinking that now.

BILLY. Just don't judge me, Dad, all right, can you not judge me right now?

BILL SR. And how long has this been going on?

BILLY. Six, seven months—

BILL SR. So Jane was...—

BILLY. Very pregnant, yeah. And before you say anything—think how I feel. I'm on the verge of blowing up my marriage.

BILL SR. You're actually thinking of—?

BILLY. All I know is I found the person I was meant to be with! I like myself better when I'm with her. I'm kinder, I don't obsess over work or scream over stupid things. She inspired me from the moment I saw her—

BILL SR. And where was that?

BILLY. At the gym. She's a personal trainer.

BILL SR. Oh my God, a personal trainer?

BILLY. She works mostly with women—and I'd watch her and she was so kind to them, so patient—there's something so special about her, Dad.

BILL SR. Is she married?

BILLY. Of course not!

BILL SR. Does she know you're married?

BILLY. Jesus, Dad, I'm not that fucking bad! She knows everything there is to know about me. It's like she has this window into my soul.

BILL SR. Oh, Christ—

BILLY. She does, Dad. A window. The other night, we were lying in bed and she said we should go dancing sometime. And I hate dancing but I thought, yes, yes, I want to go dancing!

BILL SR. How old is she?

BILLY. What does that matter?

BILL SR. How old?

BILLY. I'm not telling you because you're going to judge, you're going to criticize—

BILL SR. How old?

CLEVER LITTLE LIES

by Joe DiPietro

2M, 2W

A mother always knows when something is wrong. When Alice notices her beloved husband, Bill has returned home on edge after a tennis match with their son, she grows suspicious and springs into action. Determined to piece together the puzzle, she invites her son, Billy, and daughter-in-law, Jane, over for drinks and dessert. Sidesplitting chaos ensues as Alice digs for the truth, resulting in even more honesty than anyone expected. Shattering and hilarious, *CLEVER LITTLE LIES* is a story of long-term love and marriage... for better... and for worse.

"[CLEVER LITTLE LIES is] the kind of expertly machined situation comedy offered annually by Neil Simon in the early plays like Come Blow Your Horn and Barefoot in the Park. ... DiPietro—a jack of all theatrical genres who has Tony Awards for the book and lyrics for Memphis and who wrote the long-running comedy I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change—is a craftsman, and CLEVER LITTLE LIES is nothing if not well-crafted." —**Deadline**

"... good old-fashioned comfort food for theatergoers... that offer[s] a blend of comedy and sentiment, with maybe just a hint of a sting."
—**The New York Times**

"DiPietro is so clean—except for the occasional F-bomb—that it's refreshing. ... he's at his best when keeping us in the dark about whether the tale being told is real or one big ballsy lie. ... the fun is who knows what first, the audience or the people onstage."
—**The Wrap**

Also by Joe DiPietro
CREATING CLAIRE
THE LAST ROMANCE
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and others

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ISBN 978-0-8222-3498-2



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