

THE FEAST

BY CORY FINLEY



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PLAY SERVICE
INC.

THE FEAST
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THE FEAST was first produced in New York City by the Flea Theater (Jim Simpson, Artistic Director; Carol Ostrow, Producing Director), on March 4, 2015. It was directed by Courtney Ulrich, the set design was by Andrew Diaz, the costume design was by Travis Alexandra Boatright, the lighting design was by Scot Gianelli, the sound design was by Elliot Davoren, and the stage manager was Colleen McCaughey. The cast was as follows:

MATT Ivan Dolido
ANNA Marlowe Holden
MAN Donald Prescod

THE FEAST was developed at SPACE on Ryder Farm.

CHARACTERS

MATT, late 20s / early 30s

ANNA, the same

A MAN, who plays all additional roles.

NOTES

/ = interruption.

The shifts in tone that occur in the dialogue should be as subtle as possible, and not highlighted by production elements. We should be kept guessing, right up through the ending, about what is real and what is not.

THE FEAST

1.

*Matt, in a silk bathrobe, answers the door to his apartment.
It's a plumber.*

MATT. Hello?

PLUMBER. Plumber.

MATT. Hold on—wrong apartment.

PLUMBER. Nope.

MATT. Ah, *yeah*. This is 3B. I didn't order a plumber.

PLUMBER. Your wife did.

MATT. There must be a mistake. I don't have a wife.

PLUMBER. Anna.

MATT. Excuse me?

PLUMBER. That wasn't your wife? Girl called me up last night, said the toilet was making noises.

MATT. Oh—Anna's my girlfriend. She didn't tell me she'd ordered a plumber.

PLUMBER. Well I don't know what to tell you. You've got one now.

MATT. But the thing is, the noises aren't bothering me. Anna didn't need to call anyone. They're really not a problem.

PLUMBER. You sure?

MATT. I'm sure. So as much as I hate to do this, I think I've gotta say no / thanks.

PLUMBER. I've got a family, you know.

MATT. ... Sorry?

PLUMBER. This isn't fun for me. I don't do this for the kicks.

MATT. What?

PLUMBER. I was already on my way here when I got a call from a couple in Queens, needed drainage maintenance. I had to tell them I'd fit it in tomorrow; they said they'd go with another company. And now my morning's shot. Nobody gives me a salary, my friend. I get paid by the job.

MATT. Whoa whoa whoa. OK. Let me get you some money.

PLUMBER. Do I sound like I'm asking you for money? Do I look like a beggar to you?

MATT. It's not a problem—

PLUMBER. Have a good day, boss.

He turns to go.

MATT. Hold on!

The plumber stops.

You wanna look at my toilet? You come look at my toilet.

The plumber comes inside.

He pauses inside and looks around.

PLUMBER. Beautiful home.

MATT. Thank you.

PLUMBER. When I was first working around here, nobody had a home like this.

MATT. Mm.

PLUMBER. Then the bankers came. But you're not a banker.

MATT. How do you know I'm not a banker?

PLUMBER. You're home on a Monday at ten in the morning. And you're wearing a dress.

MATT. It's a robe.

PLUMBER. It's silk. And it shows your legs.

MATT. It's Anna's. I borrowed it. It's very comfortable.

PLUMBER. I bet it is.

MATT. I'm a painter.

PLUMBER. Like a house painter?

MATT. (*Laughs.*) “Like a house painter.” Like an artist. Like in galleries.

PLUMBER. Have I heard of you?

MATT. I don’t know, have you heard of anyone? Picasso doesn’t count.

PLUMBER. You think I don’t follow the arts?

MATT. Do you?

Beat.

Instead of answering, the plumber looks at an unseen painting on the fourth wall.

PLUMBER. That one yours?

MATT. Yeah. Yeah it is.

They stare for a long moment.

The plumber folds his arms.

PLUMBER. Is that her?

MATT. Is that who?

PLUMBER. Anna.

MATT. God no.

PLUMBER. Then who is she?

MATT. Just an idea of someone.

PLUMBER. What happened to her face?

MATT. I don’t know. What do *you* think happened to her face?

Beat.

PLUMBER. I wouldn’t hang something like that on my wall.

The plumber goes into the bathroom and takes out his tools.

Matt lingers for a moment.

MATT. So it’s probably just a screw loose or something. There was just a little squeak coming from it throughout the day yesterday.

PLUMBER. (*Off.*) Squeak?

MATT. Maybe not a squeak. A little noise. I might have imagined it.

PLUMBER. (*Off.*) Uh huh.

MATT. It’s hard to describe. But it was happening all day. Sometimes it got a little louder. And coming from way down in there. Almost like metal on metal. Or / like a sort of—

PLUMBER. (*Off.*) Like someone screaming.

MATT. ... Sorry?

The plumber enters from the bathroom.

PLUMBER. That's what Anna said on the phone. That you heard someone screaming. Groaning. From inside your toilet.

The plumber goes back into the bathroom.

MATT. Well I don't know why she'd say that.

PLUMBER. (*Off.*) She said that's what you told her.

MATT. I didn't—I maybe mentioned that as a reference point / but I didn't say it actually

PLUMBER. (*Suddenly entering.*) Deep in the pipes. Like a man, tied up down there. Water streaming over his mouth.

MATT. What are you talking about?

PLUMBER. All day. Not quite a human. Almost like a dying whale. Full of sorrow. Like it was whispering the experience of its own slow death into your ear.

Matt is scared.

MATT. How do you know about that? I didn't tell Anna about all that.

PLUMBER. You know there's something in the pipes. You're just afraid to go down there.

MATT. Go down *there*?

The plumber nods.

How am I supposed to go down *there*?

PLUMBER. How do you think?

Silence.

Matt is terrified.

I'll go ahead and bill your landlord, boss. You have a good one now.

The plumber leaves.

Matt stands speechless.

2.

After a moment, Matt collects himself and walks into the bathroom.

Lights change. It's that night. Anna is there next to him in the bathroom in pajamas with his-and-hers electric toothbrushes.

They brush in silence for a moment.

ANNA. (*Toothbrush in mouth.*) Do you think I'm brusque?

MATT. (*Toothbrush in mouth.*) Do I think you're what?

Anna removes the toothbrush so she can enunciate.

ANNA. "Brusque."

MATT. I don't even know that word.

ANNA. "Abrupt and curt in manner of speech." I looked it up.

MATT. You're not abrupt and curt in manner of speech. Why?

ANNA. They said that in my performance review today.

MATT. That you're brusque?

ANNA. Yeah.

MATT. You're not brusque.

ANNA. Thanks. But *you're* kind of brusque.

MATT. I am?

ANNA. Yeah. So maybe you don't notice my brusqueness. It's just natural to you.

MATT. That's a ridiculous thing to tell someone. To tell your employee. How do they expect you to act on that?

ANNA. I suppose they want me to become less abrupt. Less curt.

MATT. Like just, use long sentences?

ANNA. Maybe.

MATT. Talk slower?

ANNA. Maybe.

MATT. Who wants a slow-talking consultant? Or like a really

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2M, 1W (doubling)

Matt and Anna's relationship is going swimmingly, until the sewers under their apartment open up and begin to speak. The plumber is angry, Matt's paintings are getting stranger, and a storm is gathering. An eerie comedy about what is real, what is not, and who knows.

"... nicely creepy... agreeably scary and original. ... There are twists and turns and more than one startling U-bend."
—**The New York Times**

"... smartly mixes the comedic and the macabre. ... Peel back its magical-horror story of ancient sewer creatures who reach out to a gentle artist... and you'll find a perceptive study of a character and relationship."
—**BlogCritics.org**

"... a briskly paced... and largely unflinching examination of the how we hurt and try to heal the ones we love. ... What's real and what's imagined is a slippery issue and a big part of the piece's appeal. ... Finley's crackling script is ruthlessly efficient."
—**StageBuddy.com**

"... very funny... The play is concise, efficient, and humorous with a good dose of the fantastic."
—**WomanAroundTown.com**

"[THE FEAST] has an old-fashioned Gothic feel to it, despite... taking place in an instantly recognizable, urban setting. ... the tension is maintained beautifully, and the ambiguity between breakdown and ghost story leads to a denouement, in a dark apartment with a storm brewing, that is genuinely scary and surprising."
—**ExeuntMagazine.com**

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