



THE ASSEMBLED PARTIES

BY RICHARD GREENBERG



DRAMATISTS
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Originally commissioned by Manhattan Theater Club
(Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer)
with funds provided by U.S. Trust
and received its world premiere there on March 21, 2013.

THE ASSEMBLED PARTIES
was written for
Jessica Hecht, Judith Light, and Lynne Meadow.

The world premiere of THE ASSEMBLED PARTIES was presented on Broadway by Manhattan Theater Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer) at the Samuel J. Friedman Theater, opening on March 21, 2013. It was directed by Lynne Meadow; the set design was by Santo Loquasto; the costume design was by Jane Greenwood; the lighting design was by Peter Kaczorowski; the music and sound design were by Obadiah Eaves; the hair and wig design were by Tom Watson; and the production stage manager was Barclay Stiff. The cast was as follows:

JULIE Jessica Hecht
FAYE.....Judith Light
JEFF.....Jeremy Shamos
MORT.....Mark Blum
SHELLEY Lauren Blumenfeld
TIMMY Alex Dreier
SCOTTY/TIM Jake Silbermann
BEN.....Jonathan Walker
VOICE OF HECTORGabriel Sloy

CHARACTERS

JULIE

FAYE

JEFF

MORT

SHELLEY

TIMMY / TIM

SCOTTY

BEN

VOICE OF HECTOR

PLACE

A fourteen-room apartment on Central Park West.

TIME

ACT ONE — Christmas Day, 1980.

ACT TWO — Christmas Day, 2000.

The first act moves swiftly among suggestions of rooms.

The second act resolves into a detailed box set, inert, depicting the living room and, recessed, the dining room.

A slash (/) in dialogue indicates that the next actor starts speaking.

THE ASSEMBLED PARTIES

ACT ONE

The kitchen. Food. Julie and Jeff.

JULIE. Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!

Oh lovely!

That would be so lovely!

JEFF. Good.

JULIE. Are you sophisticated at this sort of thing?

JEFF. I have no skills

JULIE. None needed — are you safe with a chef's knife?

JEFF. I love to cut things

JULIE. These vegetables

JEFF. (*Continuous.*) I don't mean in a Norman Bates sort of way — I like being a sous chef —

JULIE. Cut them crosswise — medium and then toss them in that bowl of water so they don't get mangle, okay?

JEFF. What is this going to be

JULIE. Oh that's part crudite — part mirepoix — and this is going to be rumaki — Rumaki? Like from eons ago? The *sixties*

JEFF. That's liver?

JULIE. Yes, and for the main we're having a goose!

JEFF. I've never had a goose

JULIE. Oh! You coat the potatoes in semolina, then fry them in the drippings — it's medieval, there should be vassals and broadswords and a *maypole*

JEFF. Ha!

JULIE. How is your room; are you settled? Do you like it?

JEFF. After the dorm, it's pretty amazing

JULIE. Stay if you want, it's so remote you can hole up there for decades we won't even know.

JEFF. Tempting but ...

JULIE. Obligations obligations

JEFF. Yes

JULIE. The Pressure to Become Something; Scotty, too

JEFF. Scotty espec / ially

JULIE. Graduation, I cried and cried; touching so touching, all of you — so witty, so oblique, so overeducated, so utterly ignorant of *absolutely everything*. (*Beat.*)

JEFF. I *guess*.

JULIE. It's so lovely Christmas.

Though you find that all the dying tends to accelerate around now.

And of course there's Bing Crosby.

JEFF. Bing Crosby?

JULIE. He's a tribulation, don't you find?

And you can't escape him!

To the Optimo Cigar Store for a five-cent stamp
and he's dreaming of a white Christmas.

It's like a tiny acoustic *rape* every time you leave the apartment.

But other than Bing Crosby and all that dying, it's a lovely, lovely season.

JEFF. Yes.

(*He chops.*)

Is someone dying?

JULIE. My husband's mother, most likely

JEFF. She's dying.

JULIE. We can't get a *timetable* on it — she might linger even *years* — *but*, the smart money says kaput.

JEFF. I'm sorry.

Is she very old?

JULIE. Only eighty-seven.

JEFF. Oh!

JULIE. But she's an old eighty-seven.

JEFF. Is there such a thing as a young

JULIE. Come around when *I'm* eighty-seven; I'm going to be practically prepubes / cent.

JEFF. I bet.

But should I *be* here?

JULIE. Certainly. Why not?

JEFF. Things you need to do and ... I'll be in the way? (*Beat.*)

JULIE. You haven't had a lot of people die, have you?

JEFF. None.

JULIE. That changes.

 You get to a point there's always somebody.

 You have to be hard-headed about it, you have to go about your business. A cheerful nature is an utterly ruthless thing.

JEFF. You're not ruthless.

JULIE. I'm the most ruthless woman you'll ever meet.

 I'm diabolical. (*She smiles.*)

JEFF. I'm so glad I'm here!

JULIE. Oh, you're lovely, aren't you? Just lovely.

JEFF. (*Bursting.*) Thank you.

JULIE. Scotty's friends are all so nice.

JEFF. (*Disappointed.*) Oh. (*Ben enters.*)

BEN. Why aren't you drinking?

JEFF. It's still kind of / early

JULIE. How is Timmy? Did you

BEN. Subsiding

JULIE. Oh my! I don't think I like the sound of

BEN. The fever, sweetie, the fever; sleeping like a

JULIE. Is he still flushed

BEN. He's *four*; they're always flushed

JULIE. You're useless — useless man!

BEN. Scotty's still in the / shower?

JULIE. Still in the / shower

BEN. Christ! The Rappaports haven't called / have they?

JULIE. Slightly larger cuts, sweetheart — I'm sure they're on the road by now

BEN. You know Faye — if traffic's bad, they'll pull off and phone from, I don't know, the Fiorello LaGuardia Memorial Rest Stop — how would you like to have a rest stop named after you? I mean, do we think that's actually an honor —

JEFF. I doubt I'll ever be distinguished enough to have a rest stop named after me.

BEN. That's always seemed a backhanded compliment

JEFF. I'm trying for a urinal, you know, if I step things up —

BEN. HA! That's funny.

JEFF. ... Oh.

BEN. You're funny.

You should come visit us this summer.

In Nantucket.

JEFF. I would love to.

BEN. So now: Let's *talk* to you — are there nuts, by the

JULIE. (*Slides bowl to him.*) Don't eat them / all

BEN. So then: the Law.

JEFF. Yes. Well ... *yes*.

BEN. Do you love the Law in a ... an Oliver Wendell

JEFF. No. Absolutely not.

BEN. I see. Then what do you

JEFF. It's a delaying tactic

BEN. Ah! So.

JEFF. Also it's a good basis.

Like for anything.

Everything's still a little

um

scintillating?

And this is a way to have whatever skills I may

need when I finally

... whatever.

JULIE. When you find your heart's desire.

JEFF. ... My heart's desire. Yes. (*They smile at each other.*)

BEN. You like Boston?

JEFF. It's Cambridge, really,

I *like* Cambridge.

Cambridge is fun; you keep thinking
something might *happen* in Cambridge.

Also, you're walking from Torts to ... lunch
and it hits you:

This is where Howells fought with James and —

JULIE. You're literary?

Do you want to write?

Ultimately? Lawyer-writer?

Like Louis Auchincloss.

JEFF. No I'm just a reader

JULIE. All writers are readers; you sell yourself short.

JEFF. I don't

JULIE. You do

JEFF. (*Beaming because she's interested in him.*) I have absolutely no abilities

BEN. I was expecting Scotty'd be there with you

JEFF. Oh.

Yes.

Well, deferred.

BEN. I was really *counting* on that.

JEFF. You're not ... worried, about him are you?

JULIE. No.

BEN. To a degree.

JULIE. No of course not.

BEN. The question with Scotty has always been: Has he inherited his mother's aleatory qualities?

JEFF. Aleatory?

BEN. Haphazard, windblown, fortuitous

JULIE. Thank you for the endorsement, / darling

JEFF. I don't think so.

Scott's very *steady*?

Anyway I don't think you have to worry about, you know, his electability — the presidency is safe. (*Pause.*)

BEN. Are you making fun?

JEFF. ... No.

BEN. I think you are.

JEFF. Truly, I

BEN. Okay, you can forget about the summer —

JEFF. I

JULIE. He's joking, pay no attention; it's just that he's the most wretched man who ever drew breath

BEN. Every boy's parents want him to be president.

What? Don't yours?

JEFF. I ... *doubt* it.

BEN. No? What do they want you to be?

JEFF. ... Solvent?

BEN. So they're: Whatever makes him happy.

JEFF. Um? I think they'd be *fine* with me being happy?

But I'm not like —

I don't give off the sense that I'm destined to be the first Jew on paper currency since Lincoln. Ha, ha.

BEN. What you think in twenty-five years we won't be ready?

That's a hangover from my parents' generation.

THE ASSEMBLED PARTIES

by Richard Greenberg

6M, 3W

THE ASSEMBLED PARTIES welcomes us to the world of the Bascovs, an Upper West Side Jewish family in 1980. In a sprawling Central Park West apartment, former movie star Julie Bascov and her sister-in-law Faye bring their families together for their traditional holiday dinner. But tonight, things are not usual. A houseguest has joined the festivities for the first time and he unwittingly — or perhaps by design — insinuates himself into the family drama. Twenty years later, as 2001 approaches, the Bascovs' seemingly picture-perfect life may be about to crumble. A stunning play infused with humor, THE ASSEMBLED PARTIES is an incisive portrait of a family grasping for stability at the dawn of a new millennium.

"... smart, sad and so impossibly well-spoken you may feel like giving up on conversation."
—The New York Times

"Richard Greenberg's touching comedy-drama THE ASSEMBLED PARTIES [speaks] through the interactions of interesting, well-written characters dramatized with wit, insight, and boundless affection."
—Backstage

"... the show's freewheeling nature makes it exciting, real, and unpredictable ... The beauty of Greenberg's play lies in its richness. The playwright captures the particulars of how a New York family lives and loves through the years."
—Entertainment Weekly

"[A] warm-hearted ... group portrait of how families regroup, surprise and survive."
—The New York Daily News

"... excellent ... Greenberg's most richly emotional work in years, and the most beautifully detailed."
—New York Magazine

"... elegantly moving ... somewhere between a slice of life and a slice of mille-feuille. A brisk draft of intelligence blows straight through the script, tempering moments of sentiment with astringency and surprise."
—Time Out New York

Also by Richard Greenberg

TAKE ME OUT
THREE DAYS OF RAIN
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