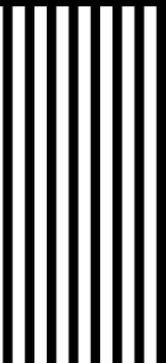


FRENCH WAITRESS AND OTHER PLAYS

BY JOHN PATRICK SHANLEY



DRAMATISTS
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FRENCH WAITRESS AND OTHER PLAYS
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FRENCH WAITRESS

FRENCH WAITRESS

Daytime. A restaurant on Bleecker Street, the backyard. A couple of cafe tables. At one of the tables is Pamela and Ricky. A French waitress named Blanche stands idle nearby.

PAMELA. Have you been here before?

RICKY. No.

PAMELA. It's all organic.

RICKY. Jesus. Maybe we should go somewhere else.

PAMELA. No, it's actually really good.

RICKY. Then why is it empty?

PAMELA. It's after lunch and before dinner.

RICKY. So what are we doing here?

PAMELA. I'm hungry.

RICKY. You could have made something at home.

PAMELA. My blood sugar's dropping. I need to eat something.

RICKY. So that's why we're here. It's a medical emergency. God, you're so dramatic.

PAMELA. You're just cranky.

RICKY. I'm myself.

PAMELA. Exactly. You're always cranky.

RICKY. Maybe I should spend some time alone.

PAMELA. Talk about dramatic. You're like always on the verge of leaving the human race.

RICKY. Can you blame me?

PAMELA. Yes. *(The waitress, Blanche, slowly walks to them. She has a French accent and English is work for her.)*

BLANCHE. Would you like ... water?

PAMELA. Hi. Yes, thank you. *(Blanche just stands there a bit, and then says:)*

BLANCHE. Natural?

RICKY. Natural what?

BLANCHE. Water?

RICKY. Natural water.

BLANCHE. Yes.

PAMELA. Tap water would be fine.

BLANCHE. Tap?

RICKY. Water you don't have to pay for?

BLANCHE. Okay. *(She just stands there.)*

PAMELA. Do you understand?

BLANCHE. Would you like a menu?

PAMELA. Sure, that'd be great. *(Blanche just stands there.)*

RICKY. What is it?

BLANCHE. Hello?

RICKY. Do you speak English?

BLANCHE. Yes. Cranky man. *(Pamela laughs and stops, explains to Ricky.)*

PAMELA. She's kidding. She's showing that she understood when we were talking.

RICKY. You mean she's showing she was eavesdropping. *(To Blanche.)*

You listen? *(Blanche uses the French pronunciation of her name.)*

BLANCHE. My name is Blanche. I am from Avignon. And yes, I listen. *(Blanche exits. Pamela enjoys the pronunciation.)*

PAMELA. Blanche.

RICKY. She's working from another whole time frame.

PAMELA. What do you mean?

RICKY. She doesn't care about time. She walked away like, so slow.

PAMELA. You were looking at her ass.

RICKY. What else did I have to look at? Her ass was walking away for like an hour.

PAMELA. Somebody who's moving at a very slow pace, that can be sexy.

RICKY. Not to me.

PAMELA. Well, I get it.

RICKY. You think she's sexy?

PAMELA. Yeah. Shit, she's French as hell.

RICKY. I like a little energy, you know?

PAMELA. Oh, she's got energy going on. Slow burn. *(Blanche reappears with a small bread basket and a small beaker of olive oil. She puts it on the table.)*

BLANCHE. Bread. Uh. *(She walks away again. Exits.)*

PAMELA. Amazing.

RICKY. What?

PAMELA. You hear what she said?

RICKY. She said bread.

PAMELA. Not exactly. She said "Bread. Uh."

RICKY. We asked for water and menus, and we got bread.

PAMELA. Uh. I wish I could get away with that.

RICKY. With what? Putting an "uh" after bread?

PAMELA. Yeah. I could use a change.

RICKY. Of what?

PAMELA. Why don't we just go home and have sex all afternoon?

RICKY. What happened to your blood sugar?

PAMELA. We could get fish and garlic and cook naked.

RICKY. We could do that. I mean, you could get injured ...

PAMELA. Don't stress.

RICKY. I'm not.

PAMELA. But I want to make love to connect. You want to make love to escape.

RICKY. Fine.

PAMELA. I've got to eat. I'm spacing. (*Blanche enters with a bottle of water, Badoit.*)

BLANCHE. Badoit.

RICKY. What's this?

BLANCHE. Badoit.

RICKY. We wanted tap water.

BLANCHE. It has gas.

PAMELA. Thank you. *Merci.*

BLANCHE. Would you like to order something?

RICKY. We need menus.

BLANCHE. What would you like?

RICKY. Menus.

BLANCHE. May I know what you do for a living?

RICKY. I'm a lawyer. (*Blanche laughs and goes, muttering.*)

BLANCHE. Very good. Very good. (*When she's almost to the door, she looks back, puts a hand on her ass, stares at Ricky, and goes.*)

PAMELA. Busted.

RICKY. What?

PAMELA. She caught you looking at her ass.

RICKY. I wasn't looking at her ass.

PAMELA. Ricky, please. She put her hand over her ass to block your view.

RICKY. Just because she puts a blocking hand over her ass does not mean I was looking at her ass.

PAMELA. I saw you.

RICKY. You didn't. You couldn't. 'Cause I wasn't. I was actually looking at her shoulders, thinking ... Never mind. (*Pamela's pouring the water.*) We shouldn't even drink that.

PAMELA. Why not? I'm thirsty.

RICKY. We ordered tap water.

PAMELA. I like Badoit.

RICKY. We have to pay for it.

PAMELA. Don't be so cheap.

RICKY. It's not about that.

PAMELA. Oh, yes it is. You won't spring for water? Jesus!

RICKY. What are you talking about? I'm not cheap. I just don't like finding myself being messed with.

PAMELA. She's not messing with you.

RICKY. YOU are!

PAMELA. Me? (*During this next bit, Blanche returns, unnoticed, with menus.*)

RICKY. I didn't order Badoit. I asked for a menu. She's walking as if she doesn't care if she ever actually gets anywhere, and I was not looking at that woman's ass!

BLANCHE. My ass?

PAMELA. Hi. (*Blanche puts menus on the table.*)

BLANCHE. Menus. (*To Ricky.*) Your face is European. You are from Europe.

RICKY. I'm from Connecticut.

BLANCHE. You're an immigrant?

RICKY. I'm a native-born American.

BLANCHE. Europe. (*Blanche exits.*)

RICKY. Hartford!

PAMELA. I think she meant you're of European descent.

RICKY. So what?

PAMELA. So you were probably more like her, culturally, in days gone by. Or you would have been if your family hadn't emigrated.

RICKY. I was never like her. I'm not French. I'm German, Irish and Basque.

PAMELA. Basque?

RICKY. One quarter. My mother's mother.

PAMELA. Aren't they like, terrorists?

FRENCH WAITRESS AND OTHER PLAYS

by John Patrick Shanley

DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE is proud to present six new short plays by John Patrick Shanley:

In **FRENCH WAITRESS**, Ricky and his girlfriend Pamela sit down to an unsettling meal, served to them by a beautiful but unnerving French waitress.

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