



OF GOOD STOCK

BY MELISSA ROSS



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OF GOOD STOCK
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For my sisters. Julie and Kim.

And for Sarah. Fuck cancer.

OF GOOD STOCK was commissioned and first produced by South Coast Repertory, with support from the Elizabeth George Foundation, in March 2015. It was directed by Gaye Taylor Upchurch; the set design was by Tony Fanning; the costume design was by David Kay Mickelsen; the lighting design was by Bradley King; the sound design was by Darron L West; the dramaturg was Jerry Patch; and the stage manager was Kathryn Davies. The cast was as follows:

JESS Melanie Lora
AMY Kat Foster
CELIA Andrea Syglowski
FRED Rob Nagle
JOSH Corey Brill
HUNTER Todd Lowe

OF GOOD STOCK was originally produced in New York City by the Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer) on June 4, 2015. It was directed by Lynne Meadow; the set design was by Santo Loquasto; the costume design was by Tom Broecker; the lighting design was Peter Kaczorowski; and the original music and sound design was by David Van Tieghem. The cast was as follows:

JESS Jennifer Mudge
AMY Alicia Silverstone
CELIA Heather Lind
FRED Kelly AuCoin
JOSH Greg Keller
HUNTER Nate Miller

CHARACTERS

The Sisters

JESS — The oldest

AMY — The middle

CELIA — The baby

The Men

FRED — Jess's husband

JOSH — Amy's fiancé

HUNTER — Celia's boyfriend

TIME AND PLACE

A family home in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Summer 2013.

THE TEXT

A slash in the middle of a line indicates overlapping dialogue.

Internal punctuation inside of a sentence should serve as a guide for emphasis and intention and not be considered true stops.

A beat is a quick shift in thought — a momentary breath — and should not be given *too* much significance. Pauses have a bit more weight. Silences should be allowed to linger.

*Many men have tried to split us up
But no one can
Lord help the mister
Who comes between me and my sister
And Lord help the sister
Who comes between me and my man*

—Irving Berlin

OF GOOD STOCK

ACT ONE

8:30 A.M.

A family home in Cape Cod. The occasional sound of gulls. A breeze through the windows. Jess enters with a basket of vegetables and fresh-cut flowers, presumably from a garden somewhere on the grounds. She is hip-ish and sweet-ish like an older version of your favorite RA from some sort of New England liberal arts college. It is a pretty house. Clean and bright and lovely. It is a house that looks like whoever lives there has never had a bad day. This is a stark contrast to Jess's uniform of stylish casual neutral separates, accented perhaps with a brightly colored pair of Converse. She begins the process of sifting through the vegetables, sifting through the mail, putting things where they should be. Fred enters in old saggy boxers. They might have holes. They might flap open a bit and show off what's going on underneath. He might have a belly that hangs over the top. He inspects a pot of coffee.

FRED. Is this fresh / or is it.

JESS. Ohmygod Fred??? / What the.

FRED. What???

JESS. Put *pants* on! What are / you doing???

FRED. Nobody's here!!!

JESS. Everybody's *gonna* be here / any second!

FRED. Why why why do I haveta dress up for family???

JESS. Would you please just honey please. / Put pants on.

FRED. Oh for fuck's sake fine whatever. *(He exits.)*

JESS. And a shirt too please!

FRED. You got it Mom!

JESS. Ew don't say that! Why would / you say that!

FRED. Relax!

JESS. I'm younger than you!

FRED. Yes yes yes / whatever.

JESS. And I am nothing like your *mother!*

FRED. Then stop acting like her! *(From off.)* Do you have a pants preference?

JESS. Nope.

FRED. Because once I get dressed I'm / not changing.

JESS. NO PREFERENCE!!

FRED. ALL RIGHT! *(She sifts through mail. He reenters in loud madras plaid pants. That look a little old? Maybe? They don't fit so well? He's also wearing an undershirt. He dumps the old coffee out and begins the process of making a new pot. She opens a big envelope with a huge stack of pages.)*

JESS. At what point do you think people will stop trying to turn my father's books into movies?

FRED. Probably never.

JESS. It is borderline harassment. It is environmentally irresponsible. To send this much. Paper.

FRED. Anybody interesting? *(He looks through various canisters.)*

JESS. Some chick who had a hit at Sundance last year. She's like. Twelve. Some director I think I'm supposed to've heard of who I have never heard of.

FRED. You should just do it. He's dead. He can't get mad at you.

JESS. Not my art. Not my choice. *(She gets up to put a pile in recycling and grabs a green juice out of the fridge. She sees him and his plaid pants. She makes a face.)*

FRED. Don't / say it.

JESS. Didn't we throw those pants out?

FRED. You said you / didn't care.

JESS. Haven't we thrown those pants out. *Multiple* times?

FRED. Come on! They're very beachy. They're *cruise wear*.

JESS. Didn't we also discuss a shirt?

FRED. I'm wearing a shirt.

JESS. A *real* shirt.

FRED. I will put on a *real* shirt. When there are people here aside

from *us*. (*Beat.*) You know ... When you met me you didn't have an issue with any of my clothes.

JESS. When I met you it was 1987. Those pants were a little less hideous in 1987.

FRED. Minute and unimportant detail. And did we bring more coffee?

JESS. I disagree. And yes it's in the Whole Foods bag.

FRED. (*Checks the bag.*) Found it! They sell Gorilla Coffee now at Whole Foods?

JESS. Yup.

FRED. That makes me a little sad.

JESS. Why?

FRED. It's like when your favorite band has a big huge hit and you suddenly have to share something you love with. People who won't really appreciate it. (*He begins to make coffee.*) You want?

JESS. Nope I'm good.

FRED. You got your "green juice."

JESS. Yup! Mmmmmm ... Want one?

FRED. Absolutely not.

JESS. What happened to "the year of Health and Fitness"?

FRED. I have decided instead that it will be the year of Sloth and Gluttony.

JESS. Honey ...

FRED. I do not want to drink green juice that looks like bile! I want to eat meat full of nitrates and drink gin and tonics.

JESS. OK.

FRED. And I don't want to have a / discussion about it.

JESS. OK OK I said OK!! (*She opens up an elaborate wedding invitation. An instrumental version of "Just the Way You Are" by Bruno Mars plays. Or maybe "I Love You Always and Forever" by Donna Lewis. Or "You're Still the One" by Shania Twain.* You get the picture. Fred comes over. They both look in awe.*)

FRED. Wow. Is that really happening?

JESS. I think it really is.

FRED. Stop it please. Please make it stop. (*Jess closes the invitation. She opens it again. She closes it again. She puts it away.*)

JESS. This wedding is six months away and it's already annoying.

FRED. Of course it's annoying. Amy had a wedding for her cats.

JESS. I know / but it's.

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

FRED. She had a wedding. For her cats. As a grown adult person.
(*Beat.*) She ask you to be in the wedding?

JESS. Nope.

FRED. That's weird, right?

JESS. I'm fine not being a part of the "wedding of the year". I'm happy to just. Show up as a guest.

FRED. That sounds passive-aggressive and I'm not even the intended recipient. (*Mail sorting. Coffee making. Green juice drinking.*)

JESS. (*Without looking at him.*) Those pants make you look like a douchebag in a teen movie.

FRED. From 1987.

JESS. (*Laughs.*) Yes. From 1987. (*He does an awkward little dance. It's a dad dance. Even though he's not a dad.*)

FRED. (*A spontaneous awkward little song.*) You know you want me. You know you want me bad in my. Plaid. Pants. (*She laughs.*) Dance with me.

JESS. I don't dance.

FRED. You useta dance.

JESS. (*A little laugh.*) In a mosh pit maybe?

FRED. So I'll go put on some. Public Image Limited.

JESS. (*Still laughing.*) Nope.

FRED. Dead Milkmen? / Sex Pistols?

JESS. No! No dancing! (*An attempt that's ignored. He shrugs it off. Coffee drinking. Mail sorting. Green juice drinking.*) Cee's bringing a guy. Did I tell you that?

FRED. *Really???*

JESS. Yup.

FRED. Is it serious?

JESS. No idea.

FRED. Who *is* he?

JESS. I donno. It's just some *guy*. She met him in Missoula.

FRED. When was she in Missoula?

JESS. That Habitat for Humanity trip she did with her girlfriends.

FRED. She is constantly going on assorted change-the-world trips / with assorted girlfriends.

JESS. Do you actually *listen*? When people talk / to you?

FRED. Uh ... Sometimes?

JESS. (*A little laugh.*) Well. She went on a trip to Missoula. To build houses. She met him there / I think?

FRED. And what. She brought him home with her?

JESS. I guess. I don't know all the details.
FRED. Well I don't know how I feel about it.
JESS. Honey I don't think how *you* feel is important. To *Celia*.
FRED. I just. I worry about her.
JESS. She's fine. She does this. She loves to take in. Lost things.
FRED. You are only validating my concerns.
JESS. It's not like we know all that much about Josh.
FRED. Amy's different than Celia. Amy probably did a credit check on the first date.
JESS. You're too overprotective of her. She's not even *your* sister.
FRED. I've known both of them since they were kids.
JESS. Listen. You don't have to. Worry. About Cee. She's fine.
(*Teasing.*) You're such a good guy.
FRED. No I'm not. I'm a crotchety curmudgeony old man.
JESS. That's what you like people to think / but I know the truth.
FRED. Keep quiet about it. You're gonna blow / my cover.
JESS. (*Laughs.*) Fine fine. (*Beat.*) We should ... Figure out dinner.
FRED. I've got a London broil marinating / downstairs.
JESS. I think Celia's a vegetarian? / Maybe?
FRED. Since *when*.
JESS. Remember? She was reading that book about the farming industry? / Last summer.
FRED. Vaguely?
JESS. On and on she went, remember. "I don't judge. I'm not / judging. But."
FRED. Oh jeez. Right.
JESS. She might eat fish? I feel like. Remember she ate a lobster roll? Last time she / was here?
FRED. Kinda?
JESS. Pay attention. You have to / pay attention.
FRED. Is any of this really important?? This *minutiae* of what people eat??
JESS. (*Laughs.*) You're a food writer!!!
FRED. So???
JESS. So that's what you *do!* You *write passionately* about the *minutiae* / of what people eat!
FRED. Indulging the constantly changing food whims of your sisters is *your* job / not *mine!*
JESS. Can't you just pick up some bluefish / or something?
FRED. Ugh why do I have to deal with this???

OF GOOD STOCK

by Melissa Ross

3M, 3W

When legendary novelist Mick Stockton died, he left his three daughters a house in Cape Cod, control over his books, and a whole lot of issues. Years later, the men in their lives struggle to be a part of this elusive family's legacy. It's not always easy keeping up with the hurricane of the whip-smart and sharp-tongued Stockton Sisters. Especially during a weekend filled with dramatic confrontations and surprising confessions. But good scotch helps. A raw, poignant, and hilarious look at the fun and dysfunction of family.

"Smoothly paced, occasionally touching, and ... as comforting as a quart of mint chocolate chip ice cream, eaten straight from the container."

—The New York Times

"The reunion, oiled with scotch, leads to upsetting revelations, the airing of grievances, clumsy tendernesses, profane screams and forgiving ruminations that volley across the stage in a zany, often very funny cacophony ... Ross's characters are drawn with assurance, wit and gentle mockery — we definitely have met these people ..."

—Los Angeles Times

"Laugh-out-loud funny ... relatable and thoroughly entertaining."

—Entertainment Weekly

"Ross displays a flair for writing sharp, funny dialogue."

—The Hollywood Reporter

"An engrossing mix of humor and heart. Ross's three sisters strike a fine balance between the comfortingly recognizable and enchantingly fresh."

—TheaterMania.com

Also by Melissa Ross

NICE GIRL

THINNER THAN WATER

ISBN: 978-0-8222-3374-9



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