



NO VILLAIN

BY

ARTHUR
MILLER



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



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“Now for the first time a class arose which, without in any way participating in production, won for itself the directing role over production as a whole and threw the producers into economic subjection; a class which made itself the indispensable mediator between every two producers and exploited them both.”

—Friedrich Engels

So do I dedicate to the indispensable mediators who, between the two producers, stand deserted, waiting to return from whence they came or else to die, not even graced with a battlefield.

NO VILLAIN was first performed at the Old Red Lion Theatre, London, on December 7, 2015. It was produced by Samuel Julyan for Covent Garden Productions and Turner Theatre Ltd, in association with the Old Red Lion Theatre. It was directed by Sean Turner; the scenic design was by Max Dorey; the costume supervisor was Natalie Pryce; the lighting design was by Jack Weir; the sound design and composition was by Richard Melkonian; the production manager was Heather Doole; and the stage manager was Edwina Allen. The cast was as follows:

ABE SIMON	David Bromley
BEN SIMON	George Turvey
ESTHER SIMON	Nesba Crenshaw
MAXINE SIMON	Helen Coles
GRANDFATHER BARNETT	Kenneth Jay
ARNOLD SIMON	Adam Harley
FRANK	Anton Cross
MR. DAWSON/ROTH/DOCTOR	Stephen Omer

The production subsequently transferred to Trafalgar Studios, where it resumed performances on June 14, 2016, with the following cast:

ABE SIMON	David Bromley
BEN SIMON	George Turvey
ESTHER SIMON	Nesba Crenshaw
MAXINE SIMON	Helen Coles
GRANDFATHER BARNETT	Kenneth Jay
ARNOLD SIMON	Alex Forsyth
FRANK	Michael Lyle
MR. DAWSON/ROTH/DOCTOR	Stephen Omer

CHARACTERS

ABE SIMON (the father)

ESTHER (the mother)

BEN (the eldest son)

ARNOLD (the youngest son)

MAXINE (the daughter)

GRANDFATHER BARNETT (Esther's father)

ROTH (a rich man)

HELEN (his daughter)

FRANK (a shipping clerk)

DAWSON (a buyer)

And SIXTEEN WORKERS, FIVE OLD MEN in black,
a PROCESS SERVER, a SALESMAN, a DOCTOR,
and a NEGRO ELEVATOR MAN

NO VILLAIN

ACT ONE

In the parlor of a small six-room house in a suburb of New York City are four members of the Simon family. Abe, the father, a tall and heavy man of fifty-five, sits with his legs extended before him on the long couch against the rear wall. Above him are three small latticed windows. Before him and to the right is Ben, his twenty-three year old son, lying his full length on the floor with his head resting under the high-boy radio cabinet. He is fine featured and almost six feet tall. Maxine, his sister, tall for her thirteen years and very pretty, sits quietly on his stomach, her chin in her palms.

Across the room to the left, Esther, the mother, sits with a book in her lap, gazing ahead. Her large armchair faces the radio and is placed against the left wall. Deeper into the room on Esther's left is a doorway to the dining room, more than the end section of which shall not be seen. In the deep right corner of the room, next to the couch on which Abe rests, is a small door to the street. Over the couch and Esther's chair there are lamps which illuminate the room only fairly well.

It is about eleven twenty-five at night. Deep symphonic music comes softly through the radio. Abe's eyes are closing and Ben's are already so. Only the women of the clan are fully awake and Esther especially is quite upright in her chair.

ESTHER. Please, Maxine, turn the radio lower. How can you listen to it so loud? Such beautiful music. You'll wake up the neighbors, Maxine, please.

MAXINE. See, Ben? I told you nobody wants to listen to that stuff. Get something else.

She tickles Ben. He writhes and yells, trying to push her away.

Are you, are you?

ABE. (*Pleadingly as he opens his eyes.*) Macky, Macky, Macky. Stop it, Macky. People are sleeping. Momma's got a headache, please,

Maxine rises and walks quietly to Esther. She leans over the chair.

MAXINE. What's the matter, Mother darling?

ESTHER. (*Takes Maxine's face in her palms.*) Don't make so much noise, darling. I'm so worried.

ABE. You'll wake up the neighbors like last week and you know what'll happen.

MAXINE. (*Pulling away from Esther.*) I don't see why you care so much for the neighbors. They don't care any for you.

Ben slides silently along the floor and tickles Maxine's leg, laughing.

Ha! So!

She makes for him and in the scuffle kicks Abe's leg.

ABE. Oh Maxine!

He makes a wry face.

MAXINE. (*All silent. She goes to Abe and cuddles him.*) Oh father. My varicose father.

He laughs, as do they all.

(*Mocking.*) Come baby, you ought to be in bed. School tomorrow, you know. (*Straightening.*) But there is no school tomorrow. (*To the tune.*) "For it's June in January, no school for three months, there'll always be Spring in my heart with no books in my arms."

Laughter. Abe makes attempt to kiss her but she evades him.

Isn't that nice? We sing that on the trolley going to school!

BEN. (*Resuming place under the radio.*) She's some student all right. When they burn the books in this country she'll be right there to warm her hands over the fire. Say, what did Art tell in his letter

about those students being expelled for striking? You know that anti-war strike at school?

ESTHER. God forbid! He's liable to come home and tell us he was expelled from school. He's liable to do that with those communistic ideas he has.

BEN. Oh please. Stop that talk. We know he doesn't go with those fellows...

ESTHER. But he does go with them. Don't you remember that letter?

BEN. Well we'd have known long ago. Calamity Jane.

ESTHER. "Calamity Jane." I suppose I shouldn't be worried about him.

Abe is whispering with Maxine on the couch. He puts Maxine aside.

First of all he's a communist, second of all he has no money and he's on the open road then...

ABE. Listen, Ben, don't be like that, let her worry. She gets pleasure out of it. Let her, let her. I never saw in my life a woman who could enjoy worrying like my Esther. It's calastrous!

Maxine smothers him with kisses. Abe sits and smiles as they all roar with laughter.

ESTHER. Go see what time it is, Benny, go.

BEN. Say, Max, go in and look at the clock, will you. I'm lying down.

MAXINE. Mother asked you.

BEN. Who got you your bathrobe this morning, eh?

MAXINE. Daddy.

BEN. All right, yesterday morning.

MAXINE. I didn't need it yesterday morning.

ABE. Go in already, Ben, go in already and stop arguing. Leave her alone.

BEN. Wait a minute. This is gotta be settled once and for all. Who brought you that new fountain pen, eh?

MAXINE. Well it's broken.

BEN. What! I brought it home last night, what are you doing, eating them?

He gets up.

ESTHER. Some training that child is getting. You can't get her to do anything.

ABE. What are you talking, training. What is she, a dog? I never...

ESTHER. Oh my God in heaven...

MAXINE. Well you're not laying down anymore so you can see the time.

BEN. (*Going off left to kitchen.*) That's the last time I buy her anything. What she needs is a good whipping.

Silence until he comes on again.

Twenty-five to twelve. It's all right to do some intensive worrying now.

ESTHER. God in heaven. I shouldn't worry, heh? My boy hitchhikes all the way from Michigan, half-way across the country, and I should find out what time to start to worry. What's the matter with you? Can't I even think about it? I suppose it's a marvelous thing that you couldn't even afford to send him bus fare, eh?

ABE. I wanted to send him money but he writes he doesn't need it. If I'd a known...

BEN. Listen, Mother. He wrote and said he was coming by bus. It wasn't until after he left that he sent that card saying he was hiking.

ESTHER. Sure, sure. I know you *want* to send him money. He's too fine a boy to ask when he knows his father hasn't got any.

ABE. So what am I supposed to do...make it? What am I supposed to do, Esther? Esther, Esther, Esther, what am I supposed to do? Tell me, Esther, tell me.

ESTHER. (*Beginning to cry.*) I ask you, is that the way for a boy to travel—without a cent in his pocket? I never thought...

BEN. Oh stop that business again. You know he's got money enough to keep himself well and if he needs some he can wire. I've always told him that.

ABE. Esther, don't be afraid, he's got plenty of money.

ESTHER. A fine thing, (*Wiping her eyes.*) Abe Simon can't send his son money to come home.

BEN. What do you mean? Abe Simon. There were richer men than Abe Simon who haven't even got salesman's jobs, let alone businesses.

A long silence.

ESTHER. Go, Ben, call up and see if he came...call.

BEN. (*Tenderly.*) Please, Mother, who am I going to call up? Don't be so impatient. He said he might not be home tonight, anyway.

ESTHER. Gott in Himmel, he said about eleven thirty. Call up a bus station. Maybe he took a bus in from somewhere near here.

BEN. We'll wait five minutes or so. He'll be in.

He sits on couch. Abe gets up, looks through one of the latticed windows, and sits down again in the chair next to the radio.

ESTHER. You're nervous aren't you? (*Smiling.*)

ABE. Listen, when I was twenty I sold coats in every town in the west. If I didn't get nervous then I don't have to start now. For God's sake what did you used to do when I was away for two, three weeks at a time after Ben was born? You can't tell on the dot when you're traveling, what time you'll get in town. You can't.

ESTHER. Believe me, he used to travel. You remember the time you went to Nevada? What a snow blizzard. The first time the Pennsylvania was ever late, eh Abe?

Abe goes to couch and fondles Maxine.

ABE. (*Heartening to the subject.*) No kidding, Binks, you oughta see the snow. People were digging tunnels...you know, digging tunnels in the snow.

MAXINE. Why didn't they build one for the Pennsylvania then?

ESTHER. Don't be so smart!

MAXINE. Yeh, but he used to bring Army hundred-dollar toys and things. I don't even get a hundred dollars' worth in a year, or ten years.

BEN. Imagine! Poor little girl. Doesn't even get a hundred dollars' worth of toys in a year. My, my, my.

MAXINE. Well he did. I don't get anything anymore, not even coats from downtown. (*Sadly.*) And Mother promised I could take piano lessons again and I'm not. I guess you think that's funny too.

NO VILLAIN

by Arthur Miller

6M, 2W

Over six days during the spring break of 1936 at the University of Michigan, a twenty-year-old college sophomore wrote his first play, NO VILLAIN. His aim was to win the prestigious Avery Hopwood award and, more importantly, the \$250 prize he needed in order to return to college the following year. Miller won the award, but the play would remain buried until it received its world premiere nearly eighty years after it was written. NO VILLAIN tells the story of a garment industry strike that sets a son against his factory proprietor father. Here, Miller explores the Marxist theory that would see him hauled before the House Un-American Activities Committee years later. This remarkable debut play gives us a tantalising glimpse of Miller's early life, the seeding of his political values, and the beginning of his extraordinary career.

"...[NO VILLAIN] is recognisably the apprenticeship of a theatrical genius. ... Miller gives a sense of knowing where he was going from the start. ... Most startling, though, is to be shown the embryo of Death of a Salesman. ... [a] thrilling discovery... [a] gripping and intelligent drama..."

—The Guardian (UK)

"...absolutely brilliant... Undiscovered early works are not invariably the best predictors of their author's future fame, but NO VILLAIN is a remarkable exception. ... the urgent authenticity of the dialogue, the stifling account of the love, terror and resentment of a family in crisis, the desperation of ordinary men trying to survive in extraordinary times, are the work of a young writer who has already discovered his voice."

—The Daily Telegraph (UK)

Also by Arthur Miller

THE AMERICAN CLOCK
DEATH OF A SALESMAN
THE PRICE
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DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.

ISBN 978-0-8222-3650-4



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