



**THE LAST OF THE
LOVE LETTERS**

A MEDITATION ON LONELINESS

BY **NGOZI ANYANWU**



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



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The world premiere of THE LAST OF THE LOVE LETTERS was presented by Atlantic Theater Company (Neil Pepe, Artistic Director; Jeffory Lawson, Managing Director) in New York City on August 26, 2021. It was directed by Patricia McGregor, the scenic design was by Yu-Hsuan Chen, the costume design was by Dede Ayite, the lighting design was by Stacey Derosier, the sound design was by Twi McCallum, and the production stage manager was Jonathan Castanien. The cast was as follows:

YOU Ngozi Anyanwu
YOU NO.2 Daniel J. Watts
PERSON Xavier Scott Evans

SPECIAL THANKS

This play came in pieces over a period of time over the early months
of the pandemic and many late nights
And a few moments even before then

...

So special thanks to those who
knowingly or unknowingly helped put the pieces of the piece together

Daniel Talbott

Jenna Worsham

Hari Nef

Mark Armstrong and the good people at The 24 Hour Plays

Pedro Pascal

Ronald Pete

Candis C. Jones

Williamstown Theatre Festival

Always Chi Chi Anyanwu

And Olivier Sultan and Neil Pepe for encouraging that I write that
companion piece

CHARACTERS

YOU

Struggling/trying to leave

YOU .2

Struggling/trying to stay

A PERSON

Struggling/trying to maintain

PLACE

A room that is full and unassuming with all the things YOU struggle to leave behind. Those things that YOU as a person are both tethered to and distracted by

And then

.....

It becomes stripped of all its distractions

And once that's done we

Very quickly become aware that this room is now is a container and ultimately a kind of prison

NOTE

If it's in italics it's a stage direction
Or maybe a suggestion of a direction
If it's regular text then it's spoken

NOTE ON CASTING

This piece took on many iterations
The original intent was that this play
Was gendered
It was originally HIM and HER
I, Ngozi, being HER/YOU
And
Daniel very much being HIM/YOU .2
But ultimately
It's meant for two deep thinking feeling bodies
And
Both parts are meant to move through deeply and deftly
It was very much OURS
And now it's all YOURS
So cast it as you like

THE LAST OF THE LOVE LETTERS

YOU. It's important that you know that
This wasn't easy
I didn't want to
I didn't make this decision
Lightly
It didn't just come in a second
It came over many seconds
Minutes
Hours
Days
Months
Years
Decades
It was not easy
But also, it wasn't that hard
All I had to do was think back to every time you took it out on me
Every time you turned over in bed because YOU were done
Every time we left early because YOU were tired
Every time an argument ended because YOU made your point
EVERY TIME
I put on the perfect lip color
I wore the clothes you liked
The ones that fit my ass just right
You always wanted it just
Right
The perfume you can't get enough of
the way I styled my hair
Face beat
Hair Curly
Braided

Straight
No braids
“I love your hair like that”
“I love it long”
You liked it long
'Cause you're a fucking cliché
“You look great”
“I like it like that”
“I don't know why, I just like it”
But
I liked that you liked it
Even though it wasn't fully me
I convinced myself you wanted me
Not the me you created
Not the me I remade to fit your image so that you would fuck me
Not my me
But your me
Huh.

*Perhaps a slight shift in the room
You don't notice it*

Where was I
What was I saying
Right
Um...
Maybe this wasn't hard
Maybe this was easy
Yeah
easy
breezy
No problem
No sweat
Not a thing
Didn't deserve you
Never did
Never have
Never will
Girl, no need to cry over it,

my dear stop your crying
Can you mourn someone who did not know how to love
Can you
Am I
Anyway
Where was I
I was...
Right
Right
You always had to be right
And sometimes you were
Sometimes I was
Sometimes you let me win
Sometimes you punished me for winning
Sometimes I liked it
Sometimes I stepped into the pain like my favorite part
I waited for my places
I stepped into the light
And gave the performance of a lifetime
A happy partner
Smiling
Smiles
Enjoying
Laughs
Posing
For you
Loving
You
Wanting
You
Needing
You
Worshipping you
Prostrating for you
But...
I AM FREE FROM THAT SHIT
Free

relieved from or lacking something and especially something unpleasant or burdensome

Ha

Free

Not bound contained/or defined by force

Free

Not fastened/not confined/unrestricted

not united with/attached to/combined with/or mixed with something else

Haha

Capable of moving or turning in any direction

not determined by anything beyond its own nature or being:

choosing or capable of choosing for itself

Capable of choosing for itself

Moves towards the door and then quickly turns back around

Okay if I'm being honest, I liked being the thing you needed

I would be lying if I said the way you clinged to me didn't make me feel powerful

I would be lying if I said I didn't love how a wise word from me made me feel like I held your life in my hands

I would be lying if I said it didn't feel good

To withhold sometimes

A lot of times

Okay most of the time

Especially near the end

To wait until you came for me

And you always came for me

Until you didn't

But, it felt good

To be plucked

To be picked

Anointed even

Knighted

Special

Hand in hand

On your arm

Made people look at me

Like I was more
And that
I got high off that shit
And I wanted more of that
That me
That me I built for you
I made her for you
Rockin' bod
nice smile
well-spoken
well-mannered
Witty banter
pleasant disposition
Knows how to argue...
No
debate
But not so much that it makes one feel threatened
Or uncomfortable
just so
Just right
Right?
That's how you liked it
right
You did that
You made that
And that person
that person that you made
that I let you make
chicken
egg
who knows
I don't know her
She don't even go here
She is in my body
But I don't know who this bitch is
And I did that for you... And you say you didn't ask me to do all that
And that...
THAT

The play doesn't end here...

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