

MAD FOR MYSTERY

MAD FOR MYSTERY

By
Vivian Lermond

MAD FOR MYSTERY

© 2023 by Vivian Lermond

CAUTION: Professionals and Amateurs are hereby warned that performance of **MAD FOR MYSTERY** is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of The United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth) and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission of which must be obtained from the Author in writing.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for **MAD FOR MYSTERY** are controlled exclusively by Next Stage Press. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance written permission and paying the requisite fee. Inquiries concerning production rights should be addressed to licensing@nextstagepress.net

SPECIAL NOTE

Anyone receiving permission to produce **MAD FOR MYSTERY** is required to give credit to the Author as sole and exclusive Author of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the Author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and in size of type equal to 50% of the size of the largest, most prominent letter used for the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the Author.

MAD FOR MYSTERY

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

CONSTANCE Late 30's, disheveled, depressed, needy
LINDY Late 20's, the new temporary roommate

*CONSTANCE sits on her sofa, sipping wine, looking despondent.
LINDY, her new roommate, ENTERS the apartment.*

LINDY. Bad day, Constance?

CONSTANCE. My life is all bad days since Hank left. Hope your day was good, Lindy.

LINDY. So far, so good.

CONSTANCE. My lawyer called.

LINDY. And?

CONSTANCE. My husband is pushing hard. He wants out. He refuses to give me another dime until the divorce is final.

LINDY. (*Upbeat.*) Since I moved in last week, at least that cut your household expenses a little.

CONSTANCE. When you answered my ad, I couldn't believe my luck! YOU were a God-send!

LINDY. However temporary. I should be ready to move into my new home soon, if everything goes as planned. Just a few loose ends to tie up.

CONSTANCE. I'm excited for you.

MAD FOR MYSTERY

LINDY. Which reminds me ... Here's next week's rent. (*She digs through her purse, extracts an envelope and places it on the coffee table. Constance reaches for the envelope and looks inside.*)

CONSTANCE. You really don't need to pay in cash, Lindy. I certainly would trust your check.

LINDY. We've already discussed that. You're going through a messy divorce and you sure don't want "What's-His-Name's" lawyer sniffing around and finding a new income trail, do you?

CONSTANCE. Hank. His name is Hank. (*A slight pause.*) No. You're right. You're so thoughtful.

LINDY. No worries. It will all be over soon.

CONSTANCE. You never really know someone, do you? Twelve years ... we were married for twelve years! I thought he loved me.

LINDY. (*Soothing.*) I'm sure he did.

CONSTANCE. But now he's in love with someone else. He can't wait for our divorce to be final so he can marry HER!

LINDY. He told you that?

CONSTANCE. Yes. And you know what really hurts? I still love that man! I don't want a divorce! I want to fight to win him back! (*A short pause.*) I've been giving a lot of thought to not signing the divorce papers. I don't want change! It's killing me!

LINDY. (*Softly.*) You can't bring what's dead back to life.

CONSTANCE. (*Bitter laugh.*) Acceptance. I have to accept reality. That's what my therapist says. I had an appointment today.

LINDY. That's a positive.

CONSTANCE. Therapists ... they never "say" what you should do. They just ask questions, like, "Have you considered the benefits of moving on?" What benefits are there of a loveless life?

LINDY. (*Awkward.*) Did you discuss your ... extreme thoughts?

MAD FOR MYSTERY

CONSTANCE. I've been taking my prescriptions since the ... incident. The pills take the edge off. Happy pills in the morning ... sleeping pills at night.

LINDY. Should you be drinking wine with your medications?

CONSTANCE. I've never been much of a drinker. I don't even like the taste of wine. I just need all the help I can get ... that feeling of being comfortably numb.

LINDY. Ah Ha! What you need is one of Lindy's "full of life" cocktails! (*She yanks Constance off the sofa, steers her toward a small side table that holds two glasses and a filled decanter.*) I mixed up a fresh batch last night! Pour yourself a glass!

CONSTANCE. (*She pours herself a glass and does a taste test.*) This is delicious!

LINDY. Guaranteed to make you see that light at the end of the tunnel! Down the hatch, girl! (*Constance takes a big swig.*)

CONSTANCE. Aren't you joining me?

LINDY. No way! I've got a meeting cross town in an hour! (*Constance crosses back to the sofa, carrying her glass and the decanter, places the decanter on the coffee table.*)

CONSTANCE. Business, business! You're young, Lindy! Enjoy life!

LINDY. Don't worry. My future is looking bright!

CONSTANCE. Make room for romance. A woman needs to be loved!

LINDY. I agree totally! (*Constance drains her glass, helps herself to a refill, sips.*)

CONSTANCE. This is so tasty! Like a fruity liquid hug! I can't even taste the alcohol!

LINDY. I am enjoying watching you enjoy it!

CONSTANCE. (*Giggling.*) This stuff sure does pack a punch. I'm feeling a little lightheaded already! (*She lifts her glass to Lindy.*)

Cheers, you brilliant girl!

LINDY. Feeling relaxed?

MAD FOR MYSTERY

CONSTANCE. (*Slurring a little.*) Relaxed. Feeling re ... laxed. Like swimming underwater, singing a song. (*Off key, half spoken.*)

Yesterday, all my troubles

Seemed so far away

Now I need a place to hide away

Oh, I believe in yesterday.

LINDY. I believe in tomorrow.

CONSTANCE. (*Slurring worse.*) My lips ... feel ... fuzzy.

LINDY. (*Laughing.*) I think you're ready for the big sleep.

CONSTANCE. Sleep ... (*She slumps over, her empty glass hits the floor. Lindy watches her for a ten count, rises, collects the money envelope from the coffee table and places it back in her purse. She moves to Constance, checks her pulse, smiles, pulls out a disposable cell phone and places a call.*)

LINDY. (*Laughing to herself.*) She was right all along. Yesterday, her troubles were so far away. (*A brief pause.*) Hi honey. Our problems are over. I'm on my way. (*A beat*) I love you too, Hank. (*She exits.*)

END OF PLAY

MAD FOR MYSTERY

THE MADNESS OF MEMORY

ROSIE 60's - 70's, a sufferer in the later stages of dementia

GINA 40's - 50's, Rosie's ever-patient daughter

ROSIE is seated at the kitchen table. Her daughter GINA paces. A shopping bag is on the table.

GINA. Think, Mom! When did you have the car keys last?

ROSIE. When I went somewhere.

GINA. Where? Try to focus!

ROSIE. Why do you want to know?

GINA. Because you can't find them!

ROSIE. Robbers came! They've been stolen!

GINA. Not likely.

ROSIE. Then where did they go?

GINA. You misplaced them ... just like you did your glasses last week.

ROSIE. (*Peevish.*) I found my glasses.

GINA. I found your glasses ... in your refrigerator.

ROSIE. Go away! I don't need your help!

GINA. You called me and asked me to come over!

ROSIE. I didn't call you.

GINA. Never mind. Let's start over. Did you look in your purse?

ROSIE. (*Dreamy.*) Frankie gave me a purse ... soft ... the color of butter.

GINA. (*Softening.*) Yes. A long time ago.

ROSIE. Time ... ago?

GINA. Before he left us.

ROSIE. Gone? He's gone?

GINA. Yes. Ten years.

MAD FOR MYSTERY

ROSIE. Where did he go?

GINA. To a new life.

ROSIE. Did he? I'm not sure I like that.

GINA. None of us do.

ROSIE. Why wouldn't he tell me? I'm his wife!

GINA. You were. (*A beat.*) He's gone, mom.

ROSIE. When is he coming back?

GINA. (*Softly.*) The 12th of Never. (*A slight pause,*). About your car keys ... don't worry about them. From now on, I'll drive you where you need to go.

ROSIE. I have a car. I have a license.

GINA. So, about that ... the insurance company called. They cancelled your policy.

ROSIE. Cancelled?

GINA. You've had four accidents in six months. Your license has been revoked.

ROSIE. Liars!

GINA. You have to turn in your license. You can't drive anymore.

ROSIE. It was you! You took my keys!

GINA. No. I didn't. But I should have a long time ago! You could have killed somebody!

ROSIE. You! Always talking nonsense!

GINA. I've called a special doctor and made an appointment to run some tests.

ROSIE. I've been to the doctor. I take pills. I feel good.

GINA. This is a NEW doctor who might help with other ... concerns.

ROSIE. Concerns?

GINA. Memory loss ... that kind of thing.

ROSIE. Tsk, tsk, tsk ... losing your mind at your young age.

GINA. No mom! YOUR memory loss! I'm putting the appointment on your calendar right now! (*Gina eyes the calendar on the wall.*) June? You haven't changed your calendar since June! It's September!

MAD FOR MYSTERY

ROSIE. I like June. I don't like you. You're a bad girl! I'm calling the police! They'll put you in prison!

GINA. Go ahead. Here ... use my phone. I have the cops on speed dial.

ROSIE. Don't tell me what to do!

GINA. It's time for some big changes. Things are going to be different. It's not safe anymore for you to be alone.

ROSIE. Are they coming?

GINA. Who?

ROSIE. Robbers! Robbers to take my money!

GINA. No robbers.

ROSIE. I shouldn't have named you Stella.

GINA. You didn't.

ROSIE. Where is Stella? I want Stella!

GINA. She died, mom ... when she was a toddler.

ROSIE. She did not!

GINA. Oh? Have you seen her? Have you talked to her?

ROSIE. She's busy.

GINA. She's dead. Dad is dead. Come back to reality land! Please mom ... come back!

ROSIE. Who are you?

GINA. Gina ... your daughter that lived.

ROSIE. Gina ...

GINA. You named me after your brother Geno who died in the Vietnam War.

ROSIE. Geno.

GINA. He was nineteen.

ROSIE. There was an explosion. They gave us a flag in a glass case.

(She pauses.) I feel tired.

GINA. I'm tired too.

ROSIE. *(Confidential.)* I have keys that unlock kingdoms.

GINA. And keys to the car maybe?

ROSIE. Whose car?

GINA. Dad's car.

ROSIE. I don't want to drive that car!

MAD FOR MYSTERY

GINA. (*Almost joyful.*) Great news!

ROSIE. I'm getting a new car that tells me where I'm going!

GINA. I'd like to know that too.

ROSIE. I want to go back.

GINA. Back where?

ROSIE. To when things weren't broken. You should come with me, Stella.

GINA. Gina. (*A beat.*) Alright. I'll go.

ROSIE. It was a pretty wedding. I wore dahlias.

GINA. A beautiful day ... the happiest day of your life. I know the story mom.

ROSIE. You don't know nothing.

GINA. Okay. I don't.

ROSIE. I loved Frankie.

GINA. And he adored you.

ROSIE. Frankie loved HER!

GINA. He loved YOU! You were married 40 years!

ROSIE. He loved HER!

GINA. Who?!

ROSIE. That other one.

GINA. If he loved somebody else, why did he marry you? You had happy years. I grew up in a house full of laughter and love.

ROSIE. Shh! Secrets ... secrets.

GINA. Sweet secrets.

ROSIE. (*Giggling.*) Chocolates and gelato.

GINA. Beautiful secrets from a beautiful marriage. (*A beat.*) Tell me a secret.

ROSIE. I changed things. I had keys ... locking doors, opening doors ... locking doors, opening doors.

GINA. Very magical. That's a nice secret.

ROSIE. Magic?

GINA. You unlocked Dad's heart. Worked your magic on him.

ROSIE. I made her go away.

GINA. Well, it all worked out. He chose you.

MAD FOR MYSTERY

ROSIE. Comfort ... I gave him comfort.

GINA. (*Switching gears, she starts emptying the contents of the shopping bag and places the items on the table.*) Are you hungry? I can fix you a sandwich. I brought cold cuts and --

ROSIE. -- Annette.

GINA. Gina.

ROSIE. Her ... her name.

GINA. Ham or turkey breast?

ROSIE. Blonde. Big breasts.

GINA. Or would you like me to order a pizza from Salvo's? Sausage with extra cheese?

ROSIE. She was all wrong for him.

GINA. Of course she was. And dad came to his senses and married you.

ROSIE. (*Trance-like.*) June ... There was a party at the shore ... loud music.

GINA. (*Upbeat.*) Sounds like fun. (*A beat.*) I think I'll make us some nice ham sandwiches.

ROSIE. She was there --

GINA. -- I brought the rye bread you like --

ROSIE. -- Swimming, swimming ...

GINA. -- And potato salad --

ROSIE. -- Past the flags --

GINA. -- And two nice pieces of tiramisu --

ROSIE. -- Under, under ... going under --

GINA. -- I'll put the coffee on and we'll --

ROSIE. -- There were bubbles bubbles and then there weren't. Bye bye Annette. (*Gina freezes.*)

GINA. She drowned? Annette drowned?

ROSIE. Bubbles, bubbles, then no more bubbles.

GINA. You just watched? You didn't try to save her?

ROSIE. (*Matter-of-fact.*) I drowned her. (*Gina recoils at the revelation.*)

GINA. You don't know what you're saying!

ROSIE. Secrets, secrets ... (*Gina grabs her, shakes her. Rosie laughs.*)

GINA. Stop it! You stop this crazy talk right now!

MAD FOR MYSTERY

ROSIE. They found her body, all ugly and bloated.

GINA. I feel sick ...

ROSIE. You should take medicine.

GINA. Medicine! In the refrigerator! (*Gina makes a quick off-stage exit.*)

ROSIE. (*Animated.*) Here comes the bride! Here comes the bride! Rosie carrying dahlias. (*Singing off-key to the Beach Boys song "Help me Rhonda" ... Help me, Rosie; help help me Rosie ... help me get her out of my heart! Gina re-enters. She is cold and detached.*)

GINA. I found the car keys. Just where you left them. In the refrigerator, same place you left your glasses. I'm taking the keys with me. All your keys. You won't need them anymore. You won't be unlocking any doors. Someone else will have the keys.

ROSIE. I don't understand.

GINA. You're going away, mom.

ROSIE. (*Brightening.*) On a vacation? A long vacation?

GINA. Yes ... for the rest of your life ... for the rest of your tormented life.

END OF PLAY

**TO SEE MORE FROM THIS COLLECTION –
ORDER A COPY AT WWW.NEXTSTAGEPRESS.COM**