

SPINNING JENNY

A STAGE PLAY IN TWO ACTS

BY

NORMAN KING LLOYD

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CAST LIST...

SUE	LATE THIRTIES
TED (HUSBAND OF SUE)	LATE THIRTIES
D/I ROY	ABOUT 30
MS LAIDLAW (SOCIAL WORKER)	ABOUT 25
JENNY (DAUGHTER OF TED & SUE)	AGED 14
GRANNY (MOTHER OF SUE)	50'S
MARLON (GRANNY'S EX)	60'S

‘SPINNING JENNY’

A SHORT RÉSUMÉ OF THE PLAY

A semi-detached, 'thirty-something' couple, beset by runaway daughter, superannuated Granny, sex games and parrot genocide, disintegrate when the daughter is found and makes an accusation of abuse. A prim Social Worker and Police Inspector add to their woes. By accident and fate, the characters gradually free themselves from their stereotypical roles. This simple tale of suburban life transformed into anarchy, is finally resolved under an Italianate sky in an amoral final twist.

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‘SPINNING JENNY’

Act 1

A 'thirty-something' suburban couple, in thrall to bizarre sexual games, have their strange lifestyle disturbed by 14 year old daughter (Jenny) who goes missing. They call in the police to help find her. An Detective Inspector (Roy) and a Social Worker (Ms Laidlaw) are involved in the investigation. The daughter (Jenny) is eventually found in a squat but surprises everyone by refusing to return home. Ted (the husband) is the target of early suspicions, however Jenny accuses the Mother (Sue) of abuse and the Sue is taken into custody. The Social Worker discusses the couple with Granny. (Sue's Mother) and is not reassured by what she hears. Jenny is examined by a psychiatrist who says that

Jenny is suffering from the delusions that she is in her mid-twenties and works for a Building Society. Ted visits his wife in prison and it is obvious they now have nothing in common.

ACT 2

A couple on months have passed and Jenny has been given into the custody of her father and 'Granny' provided she takes her medication. Jenny admits that she has injured her mother and more or less states that she has arranged the whole business in order to live with her father alone. Jenny now makes Granny's life hell, in order to get rid of the last remaining obstacle to living side by side with her father. Jenny is very upset about a note that Granny has left her confessing that she is only a salaried 'Granny' and in fact is in the pay of several families. Sue escapes from the Mental hospital and returns home for a reconciliation with Jenny. (Marlon) - Granny's old boyfriend arrives to take Granny out of a house that he considers morally polluted. Granny is found dead. The last scene takes place (as a fantasy) in an hotel room on the Italian Riviera (In reality a grotty squat in London). Jenny contacts her father and confesses to a murder of an Italian boyfriend and begs her father to help her. Ted joins Jenny and together they plan what to do with the body, who in reality is D/I Roy. Ted is completely shattered by this turn of events and Jenny has now got him where she wants - in total subservience to her. The play ends on an ambiguous note. Is Jenny instigating incest with her father and how complicit is her father in this?

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SCENE 1

(LIVING ROOM)

(At BACK there is a bird-cage about six-feet high, its top covered by a cloth. SUE is seated on the floor. She is in an extremely distraught state and is leafing through her address-book. TED has been redecorating and wears a paint-splashed apron. He is sitting in the armchair reading in his newspaper.)

SUE Uncle Victor's?

TED No.

SUE My friend, Gina?

TED **(Still engrossed in newspaper)** No chance.

SUE **(Desperately turning the pages)** Rita? Jenny extremely fond of Rita. She might have gone to stay at Rita's.

TED No...

SUE **(Looking hard at TED)** Adolphe Hitler.

TED **(Still engrossed in his paper)** Possibly...

SUE Possibly! **(Turns pages rapidly)** What about... Brian and Bernice? *Help* me, Ted. Brian and Bernice Boyle! You must remember them.

TED You're clutching at straws.

SUE That woman who runs the corner shop? Mrs Pavarotti?

TED **(Shaking his head)** We've been through these names hundreds of times...

SUE **(Interrupting)** Three times, to be exact! Anyone would think you didn't want Jenny found!

(TED gets up and puts his arm around SUE then gently takes the address-book out of her hands)

TED You know what started it all, don't you?

SUE Was it... When we bought, Dido?

TED Your Mother said that animals were good for children.

SUE Panamanian parrots, don't come cheap.

TED Six-hundred, bloody quid, they don't!

SUE **(SUE points upwards)** Sssh... They're wandering about upstairs.

TED I call it a bloody cheek, coming into people's houses and poking their noses everywhere.

SUE They're just doing their job. You won't get difficult, will you?

(SUE moves to the door and slightly opening it, listens intently)

Not a sound. Do you think they're in Jenny's room?

TED **(Irritably and parrot like)** No idea, no idea.

SUE **(Upset and parrot like)** No idea! No idea! You sound like Dido.

TED Dido didn't talk.

SUE Do you really think that's why little Jenny...

TED **(Angry)** Left us? I've absolutely no bloody...

SUE **(Interrupting)** Perhaps, she wasn't upset over Dido. It might have been something else.

TED Dido was an anally and aurally challenged parrot.

SUE Perhaps, Dido was only pretending. Playing games with us. Having us on.

TED For Christ's sake! Dido was a deaf and dumb parrot who refused to shit!

SUE No need to shout. **(SUE goes to the door and points upstairs)** What will those two think if they hear us with raised voices. **(She shuts the door)** A dog would have been more sensible.

TED Airedale's would be our sort of dog.

SUE I'd definitely favour a smallish animal. **(Short Pause)** A chinchilla.

TED A what?

SUE A chinchilla! That's what I had as a little girl. **(Almost in tears)** If we'd bought little Jenny a rabbit...

TED **(Anguished)** She didn't want a rabbit!

SUE A rabbit was good enough for me.

(The phone rings. SUE picks up the receiver in considerable excitement)

Hello? Mrs Hobson speaking. **(To TED)** It's Mother. **(To her Mother)** No, nothing yet... Mother! You watch too much TV!...Yes, Ted's here - *one* of us is always by the phone... Well, I'll have to ask him...**(TED waves his arms, meaning, 'No')** We're doing a spot of redecorating...Ted's got the week off work... Of course, it's good of him! He's a very caring husband! Look Mother, it might be better if you came over in a couple of weeks time... Colour? The hall? A very nice shade of magenta... **(Shouting)** *Magenta!* Got to go. The police insist we keep the line clear at all times. *No*, we are not touching her room! Speak to you soon.

(SUE slams the phone down)

TED Don't let the old cow get to you.

SUE She's so...

TED At least, we can get her off the phone now. That bit of flannel about the police wanting the line clear was brilliant.

SUE **(Shocked)** Ted! Sometimes, you're so... You know what Mother said? "These days, fourteen-year-olds, are very worldly wise, dear."

TED Jenny wasn't.

SUE Jenny was our little girl. Not quite with us sometimes...

TED **(Interrupting)** Stuck up in her room all day long. Face it, Sue. She'd be come very secretive.

SUE I thought Dido was going to be the making of her once she got used to its ways.

TED It had no bloody ways!

(There is a knock on the door)
ENTER D/I ROY)

D/I ROY We need to open your daughter's suitcase. Do you have a key, Mrs Hobson?

(SUE and TED look at one another and shake their heads, negatively)

D/I ROY In that case, we'll have to force her case open.

(SUE and TED nod OK and the INSPECTOR goes back upstairs)

SUE Remember that nice constable who first came round?

TED The one with the bushy 'tache?

SUE I thought he was very, very gorgeous.

TED A handsome *Bob*.

SUE If he calls again...We might proceed up the stairs.

TED Help him with his enquiries.

SUE Take down a few notes.

TED Release him from custody!

SUE Ted! How can we talk like this!

TED **(Comforts her)** There, there, Susie-Sue. It's our way of coping.

SUE Are we monsters?

TED **(Reassuring)** No!.. Let's just say we're at the cutting edge of non-conformity. **(Getting amorous)** Sue? I know now might be construed as not quite the right moment but... we could take our minds off things by a bit of... a bit of...

SUE **(Her heart not in it)** Doggy,doggy...

TED **(Very much into it)** Rumpy!

SUE **(Very sadly)** Doggy...doggy...doggy...

TED **(TED gives an enormous howl then covers his mouth and points upstairs)** Oh! Done it, again.

(D/I ROY rushes into the room)

D/I ROY Is anything the matter, Sir? Not bad news, I hope. Very well-made suitcase, your daughter had. Needed a spot of brute force.

(ROY EXITS. SUE and TED rather half-heartedly begin to touch each other again. The phone rings)

SUE Do you mind. It'll be Mother.

(TED picks up the receiver)