

THE SCRIPT

by

Jo Freedman

T H E       S C R I P T

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(RICHARD and PAMELA are seated close to each other on a couch facing the audience. They are dressed in formal, slightly exaggerated evening attire. When the curtain parts, they very deliberately take each other's hands and smile brightly, tensely, toothily in the direction of the audience.)

PAMELA: Richard. (Without the slightest affection, but without animosity either) Darling.

RICHARD: Yes. Darling.

PAMELA: Dearest, the dinner guests are late.

RICHARD: Whose dinner guests?

PAMELA: Ours.

RICHARD: But we haven't any.

PAMELA: (acidly) Precisely my point. (pause) Anyway, they're late.

RICHARD: (carelessly) As a matter of fact, they were due last night.

PAMELA: Or the night before.

RICHARD: Or tomorrow.

PAMELA: Or the night after that. Or the night before.

RICHARD: (acidly) That's tonight. (pause)

PAMELA: (pacifyingly) Well, it's clear they were due sometime. But they haven't come.

RICHARD: (refuses to console her) No they have not.

PAMELA: Well, must we expect them? That is, must we continue to expect them?

RICHARD: (opens the script) Apparently. (reading) We are in formal evening attire, perhaps slightly exaggerated.

PAMELA: (examining herself) Certainly not exaggerated!

RICHARD: (continues to read) The table is laid for a party of eight. (accusingly) We're only two.

PAMELA: (sadly) Yes, only two.

RICHARD: (continues reading) The dining room furniture is tidy and polished. (bitterly) Now that in itself is significant because you never clean up this pigpen unless you anticipate company.

PAMELA: You're suggesting I'm untidy?

RICHARD: (coolly) Perhaps only clovenly.

PAMELA: Careless?

RICHARD: Negligent.

PAMELA: Disorderly?

RICHARD: Slatternly.

PAMELA: Slatternly? You'd say I was slatternly?

RICHARD: I would.

PAMELA: I don't think the word's used anymore. Anyway, love, the whole thing's slightly ridiculous because there's nothing in the room. (this is quite true. There are no furnishings except the couch)

RICHARD: (looking around in slight surprise) Yes, you're quite right. It's plain there's no furniture in the room. Do you think that was intentional? (PAMELA says nothing) I said, do you think that was intentional? DO YOU? (pause) Pamela. Darling. At times I find you somewhat less responsive than I would like.

PAMELA: (as offering a suggestion) Close?

RICHARD: Cold.

PAMELA: Thick-skinned?

RICHARD: Callous.

PAMELA: (her voice rising) Indifferent?

RICHARD: (the pace increases) Apathetic.