

SHAMELESS SELF-PROMOTION

By Leon Kalayjian

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ISBN: 1-60003-069-6

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by
Leon Kaye

CHARACTERS

LYDIA	20s, a beautiful Grecian maidservant, dressed in a draped chiton (a belted linen garb down to the ankles)
DIANA	40s, heavy, loud, not beautiful
CONNIE	20s, fetching, dressed in modern low-straddling jeans and a halter top

NOTE: It is important that no program be printed with actor's names.

PROP LIST

Knife
Scrolls on a table
Hung curtain
Necklace (string of beads)
Wrist watch

At Rise: A Grecian bed chamber, 400 B.C. A beautiful maidservant in draped chiton (a belted linen garb down to the ankles), LYDIA, twenties, peeks in. Undetected, SHE enters and rushes across the room, begins rifling through scrolls which are laying on a table.

DIANA enters from behind a wall curtain, across the stage. Discovered, LYDIA gasps as SHE turns to DIANA.

DIANA: I believe you are searching for this? ***(holds up a necklace string of beads)***

LYDIA: My mother is not well, miss. If she could but rub her hands on those precious beads as she prayed to the oracles –

DIANA: Yes. She would be cured. But then whose life would be offered in exchange for that of your mother? Hmm?

(LYDIA pulls a knife out, or mimes it, from beneath her layered garb. DIANA laughs evilly.)

DIANA: Do you think your mortal weapons have any effect on me?

(Both ready for attack as they encircle one another. CONNIE peeks in from behind DIANA and enters.)

CONNIE: I'm sorry. Excuse me. **(LYDIA and DIANA look to CONNIE, then continue in their warlike posture.)** I had to... it's just that the playwright died. **(LYDIA and DIANA glance over toward CONNIE, this time with more interest.)** Leon Kaye? The playwright... your playwright? He just... I don't know... he was writing me into this play. He was thinking about what type of lines I might say if I were a wealthy Grecian landowner and then, you know...

DIANA: **(to CONNIE)** Stop. Stop your speaking now.

LYDIA: I must have that necklace.

CONNIE: **(steps in the middle)** I know it's difficult. But I think we just have to press on. Make the best of things.

DIANA: I am Diana, sorceress of Athens, mistress to Apollo. Comrade to Aphrodite.

CONNIE: I kind of know that. I've read your character descriptions. **(LYDIA lunges at DIANA, who jumps back, away from the parry.)** There's no need for any more of this. Look, it's a play. There's an audience there. **(motions toward the audience, LYDIA and DIANA also notice the audience)** Didn't you notice them before?

LYDIA: My stars, there are people watching us.

DIANA: There must be an explanation.

LYDIA: **(to CONNIE)** Why are you dressed so foolishly?

CONNIE: Well, I'm not an Ancient Greek Person per se. Leon was thinking about me MAYBE being in this play. Ya see, we went to college together. And he was thinking about incorporating someone like me, someone that's really beautiful and totally approachable and creating a lead character the audience would really root for.

DIANA: I will not stand for such nonsense. Be gone.

CONNIE: I think I can help you out if I stayed.

DIANA: You? Help me? How?

CONNIE: Maybe if we all put our knowledge of Leon together, we could understand where he was going with the play.

DIANA: There is no play. Now, leave us so we may clash.

CONNIE: I could go but, like... do you even know what your next line is? **(DIANA looks lost.)** What were you going to say next?

DIANA: I... I do not remember.

CONNIE: (*pulls out a folded piece of paper*) Lydia pulls a knife out from beneath her layered garb. Diana laughs evilly. Then you say, "do you think your mortal weapons have any effect on me?" (*pause*) Then there's nothing.

DIANA: (*grabs the paper, reads in horror*) What do you mean, nothing?!

LYDIA: What does it mean? (*a realization*) Are our lives over?

DIANA: Of course not. (*hands the page back to CONNIE*) I am an intelligent woman, wife to a member of the Senate. Certainly I have life experiences. I must have a rich multitude of experiences from which to select!

CONNIE: Do you even know the names of your own parents?

DIANA: (*lost*) Blast! I have no back story. I am not a fully realized character.

CONNIE: Hey, don't be too hard on yourself. We were only on page two. If we got to page ten, I'm sure you'd be a lot better written.

DIANA: There should be a crime against this behavior. To write a character, and to not even inform her of her parents, her childhood. All people no matter which creed, color, or sexual orientation should know from whence they came!

LYDIA: I remember! My father's name... is... Leon! OH! How awfully self-serving!

DIANA: This playwright is a monster!

LYDIA: Hideous creature.

CONNIE: He really isn't. He just has this weird sense of humor.

DIANA: What do we do now? How do we live? Do we wait?

LYDIA: Perhaps if we started again from the beginning?

CONNIE: And what?

LYDIA: I do not know... maybe something will come to us.

DIANA: You are as shallow as a puddle, my dear.

LYDIA: At least I am pretty.

(DIANA stands, angrily approaches LYDIA. CONNIE jumps between the two.)

CONNIE: Okay, okay, there's no use fighting. It looks like we're gonna be stuck here a while. We might as well make friends.

LYDIA: I cannot be her friend. I feel a choking hatred for her.

CONNIE: That's just how you were written. Diana really hasn't done anything to you.

LYDIA: But she's a sorceress. An evil sorceress.

CONNIE: Not for real.

DIANA: I am a sorceress.

CONNIE: No, you're a fictional character.

DIANA: A fictional character, eh? Can a fictional character do this?
(gestures broadly, nothing happens)

CONNIE: Ya see? Zip.

DIANA: *(gestures again)* What has happened? My powers... what has—
(to CONNIE) You!! You are a creature incanted from the netherworld!

CONNIE: You've spoken to my old boyfriend, Mark, haven't you?

DIANA: No. But I shall speak to Pericles about you.

LYDIA: If this is a play, then we must be actresses... actresses with full lives outside of this room? *(to the audience)* Does anyone have a program?

DIANA: Yes. Good... A program?

(Awaits a program from the audience. CONNIE takes it, reads.)

CONNIE: Lydia as herself.

LYDIA: Myself?! Who am I?!

CONNIE: Diana as herself. Connie as herself.

DIANA: Well, I prefer to be Diana, sorceress of Athens, to some lowly actress.

LYDIA: Yes! And a ten-minute play actress at that!

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