

BUNNIES – A ONE ACT PLAY

Its 1965, and the women's rights movement has taken hold of America. Termed - the second wave of feminism – a war on gender inequality is gaining traction, as women battle to find their place as equals among men. Playing backdrop to the 'second wave' – The Vietnam war. A highly controversial war that many American's believed was not theirs to fight. When one war is started however, another is bound to erupt. Chaos and turmoil overflow, as a country looks to redefine the way it see's not only itself, but the women that made it great.

Two young ladies, from well to do families, are traveling first class by train, returning home from boarding school for the summer. With differing worldview's they are sandwiched together in a cabin, with nowhere to turn for hours, as they roll towards an uncertain future. One thing however is certain, change is inevitable and after today, their lives will have transformed forever...

Margret, an aspiring poet/writer has been spending her time rewriting history novels. Ashley wants to be the wife in a perfect white picket fence life.

The war in Vietnam becomes a metaphor for the battle that woman are raging here at home. A small group of Viet Cong's doing battle against a war machine, and in the end not only defeat them, but decimate their will to fight and force them to reconsider their long standing beliefs. America went to war against a people it had no business fighting. America's war on women still rages on today.

INT. First Class Cabin

Margret Is looking through a newspaper, headline reads **PLAYBOY BUNNIES DO THEIR PART FOR WAR EFFORT:** *'Keeping the morale high for our Troops in Vietnam'*. She becomes visibly upset as she reads. Ashley quietly pulls out a letter still in its envelope. She flirts with the idea of opening it like a schoolgirl engaging a crush, then looks up at Margaret and decides against it. She turns her attention back towards the blurred landscape outside the window, as the train speeds past it. (If this is filmed, it becomes a metaphor

for the speed with which change is about to happen.)

A long beat off the top brings us awkwardly into the scene. Then as if out of nowhere, Margaret blurts something out.

M: Is that all?

Ashley takes it as if she is talking to her.

A: Excuse me?

M: Bunnies.

A: Bunnies?

M: Yes. Bunnies.

A: You're not making any sense.

M: I'm not making any sense?

A: Correct. You're not making any sense.

Margaret is incensed by what she has read and is projecting it onto Ashley.

M: Have you looked in the mirror lately?

A: I beg your pardon.

M: A lot of things don't make sense.

A: I don't get you.

M: I wouldn't expect you too.

A: Hmph. Because I like boys!

M: Excuse me?

A: Nothing.

M: No, say it.

A: Look, I'm not happy that we got stuck with each other for the ride home either; the lord knows I'd rather be riding with Deborah and Kathleen, however exams need to be written and they had to finish theirs. Normally I would have waited for them an extra day, but I just couldn't wait to get back to see my Andrew. I checked with the conductor I boarded and all of the first class cabins are full and I am definitely not moving to a second-class cabin for you. So unless you want too, I'd suggest we just make the best of it and sit here quietly until we both can get off. Then I can go and be with my Andrew and you can go off do what ever it is girls like you do!

M: Girls, like me, huh?

A: Yes, girls like you.

M: Well if that's just not a hum digger of a dig. I bet you have never cussed a day in your perfect little life.

A: Cussing is a sin. And I will not be made to sin, for some silly little schoolgirl that does not have the proper manners of the time.

M: Manners I have. It's the time that seems to be a little bit off.

A: Of course it is.

M: Have you ever crossed a mirror that you didn't like?

A: Never.

Ashley then turns her head away from Margaret and stares back out the window.

M: *(Sotto voce)* Of course not.

Margaret turns back to reading the newspaper.

Long Pause – almost uncomfortably long.

Breaking the silence.

A: So are they true?

M: What?

A: The rumors about you. They can't really be true?

Margaret reluctantly responds.

M: Of course they can. When have rumors at our school been false about anything?

A: Your sarcasm is deafening.

M: Who was being sarcastic?

A: Well... I hardly believe you were the one responsible for setting the frogs loose from the science room.

M: Really, I liked to think of it as rescuing them from a premature death.

A: And filling the vending machines with bags of goldfish?

M: An artistic statement about our institutional captivity and our lack of free thought within its walls.

A: Dousing Mr. Wheeler's car with red paint?

M: He kills animals for sport. He got what he deserved.

She begins realizing the rumors might be true.

A: Dear me, how do your parents put up with you and your subterfuge?

M: They sent me to boarding school of course.

A: And you wonder why?

M: No. Not really.

A: Gosh you can be so impudent.

M: *(sotto voce)*

And you... do a really good job of impersonating an adult.

A: I beg your pardon.

M: I said, what if he's not there when you arrive today?

A: Who?

M: Your... Andrew.

A: Don't be ridiculous. Why wouldn't he be there?

M: Oh, any number of reasons really.

A: Andrew loves me. And he will be there. Waiting for me. Probably with a dozen roses and candy too.

M: I'm sure he will. I mean you are after all, YOU. But, what if he's not?

A: Name one?

M: One what?

A: One reason.

M: Seriously.

A: Yes.

M: All right... lets see... His car broke down.

A: We live in New York. He doesn't drive.

M: He's running a high fever.

A: Hasn't been sick a day since we've met.

M: He got called to dinner with his parents.

A: Hah... no one eats dinner at 3pm in the afternoon.

M: The Dean of his school wants to see him.

A: Nice try. But school's done for the summer.

M: Doesn't mean the Dean doesn't want to see him.

Ashley just looks at Margret, like 'you've got to be kidding me.'

M: Fine. Ok. I got one. It is possible he met...

A: Don't say it.

M: What?

A: What you were about to say.

M: And what was I about to say?

A: You know what you were about to say.

M: That he met someone else?

A: I told you not to say it.

M: Well you have to admit it is possible for someone to meet someone new everyday.

A: You are a real piece of work aren't you?

M: I try.

A: No wonder all the girls at school make fun of you.

This stings Margret a bit.

M: Funny. I thought the reason was because they were all jealous of me.

A: Jealous, of you? So you're a comedian too?

M: Fine. But I'm sticking with my hypothesis.

Long silent beat.

A: Your hypothesis doesn't hold water.

M: What? Why?

A: Well if you must know and I'm not sure why I'm telling you this, but we last saw each other over Christmas break, and had a marvelous time together. He's written me a letter every month since... In fact, I have the last one he wrote me right here in my purse.

M: That letter. The one, that hasn't been opened yet?

A: That's correct.

M: And you haven't opened it yet because?

A: I just received, as I was leaving school this morning.

M: You didn't think it was important to open it right away.

A: It's not like that?

M: Not like what? It's letter. A letter comes in you open it.

A: Unless, it's from someone important and you would like a bit of privacy when you are reading it.

M: So it's because of me you haven't opened the letter? Not because said person, may have written to tell you that he met someone else.

A: Gosh. Do you ever give up?

M: Haven't yet.

A: You're incorrigible.

M: I'll take that as a compliment.

A: Well it wasn't meant to be one.

M: It sounded like one to me.

A: Do you're parents know your crazy?

M: Probably. But really, isn't crazy just a sane person that looks at the world from a unique perspective?

Getting frustrated with Margret.

A: He does love me you know.

M: You said that already.

A: Well he does.

M: I'm not trying to sound rude or impolite, I'm just wondering how you know for sure?

A: I just do all right.

M: If you say so.

A: I do.

M: Good. Well I'm glad that's settled.

A: Indeed.

Ashley pauses; she really wants to tell someone. Margret is someone

A: Fine. I know he loves me, because he is going to ask me to marry him!

M: Today? When he picks you up at the station? Seriously?

A: No silly girl. Not today. Not for a few years.

M: And I thought I was confused before.

A: We went for a walk during Christmas break a long the pier at Cony Island. It was a perfect day. The sun was out. A light snow covered the ground. He was holding a bag of hot chestnuts. The snow crunched under our feet as we walked. It was like being inside a snow globe. Like in a movie or something. And that's when he told me he would be honored to make an honest woman out of me, just as soon as he graduates college. He asked me if I'd wait for him. He

even got me this promise ring to prove to me that his intentions were serious. Well I just about did the jig right there in front of him.

M: And here I always thought you were just little old Miss Prissy Face McFarland. Who knew you were a sentimental romantic?

A: Gosh. You really can be so rude can't you?

M: I'm sorry. It's an automatic response. It comes from years of being laid into by girls like you.

A: Well if you weren't such a know-it-all hipster maybe people wouldn't pick on you so much.

M: Oh hipster! Look at you. You know more than you're letting on.

A: If you are referring to modern slang, yes I'm aware of most of the new terms.

M: And if you weren't so damn pretentious maybe more people would be friends with you.

A: I'll have you know...

M: That you have a lot of friends.

A: YES! As a matter of fact and you yourself know that to be true.

M: And how many of those friends actually like you for you and not because of whom your daddy is.

A: What does that have to do with anything?

M: Well if my father was Mayor of New York people would probably like me a whole lot more too. Treat me with the kind of kindness reserved for human beings like yourself.

A: Well maybe, if you just tried being normal for once in your life, people might start to treat you that way.

M: Be normal?

A: Yes. I mean, look at you. The way you dress.

M: What's wrong with the way I dress?

A: You wear men's pants for starters, and that V-neck vest. Ugh. I would just die if anyone ever caught me wearing that thing.

M: These are not men's pants. And they are very comfortable not to mention make traveling on a train a whole lot easier than waddling around like a duck in a dress.

A: I have never.

M: Well get used to it. The world is changing and with any luck your kind will slowly die off.

A: My kind?

M: You know, the type that yearn for a boy to be waiting for them at a train stop off of Staten Island, with a ring in there pocket, hoping they will get to say yes to a life filled with

infinite servitude and unyielding boredom, coupled with suckling babies on each teat. Envisioning a life filled with endless folding and ironing, to wit they say; yes honey. I'll be right there honey. Whatever you desire honey. Dinner is ready honey. All while your husband wanders the exterior world freely, bringing home the proverbial bacon, only to sit back as women pay homage to their masculine conquest of the great outdoors. Well damnit, I'm nobody's honey.

A: What ran up your underwear today?

M: Bunnies.

Frustrated, Margret throws the newspaper at Ashley.

M: Ugh. I need a smoke.

Margret exits.

Ashley, is left sitting there with the newspaper at her side, she looks down at the newspaper. Her purse rests between the paper and herself. The letter pokes written by Andrew pokes its head out. She tenderly picks it up. Looks at the letter, as if contemplating what they just talked about and all the possibilities. She thinks about opening it and then quietly puts it back into her purse. As she does, she moves carefully to pick up the newspaper Margaret threw down curious to see what Margret is all upset about. She reads the headlines about the Playboy models in Vietnam. Then looks around, as if embarrassed by what she is reading.

Ashley is still reading when Margret re-enters the train car and sits back down. Margret begins speaking, as if lost in thought or talking in a waking dream.

M: My dream is to be writer some day. To write poetry and

novels that move people. To ask the tough questions even if I can't find the answers. We go to school like them. We study like them. And we work twice as hard to be recognized by them. And then I read a headline like that and I start to wonder, is that all? Is, that all men think we're good for? To wash their clothes, cook their meals. Have their babies. And provide a little entertainment for them, while they go off and fight the wars. Wars that they've created to give themselves a feeling of purpose, a sense of importance, a show of dominance over everything. When is it our turn to steer the ship. Too lead humanity on a new course, towards our unknown future? A brighter future! A more equal future! I say today. I say now. I say this is where we make our stand. Where we say NO to bunnies. We say NO to what they represent for all women. We demand to be heard. We demand our equal rights.

Ashley puts down the newspaper.

A: Slow down their Gloria Steinem.

M: (shocked) You know who Gloria Steinem is?

A: My daddy is the Mayor of New York after all and word gets around quickly about a crazy lady who writes for the New Yorker, who is trying to get laws for women changed. Not to mention get more women elected into office. (Pause) Well, my daddy has some choice things to say about her.

M: I bet he would.

Ashley takes this as a personal affront.

A: What is wrong with being a lady? Having nice things.

Letting the men do the heavy lifting. As far as I can tell, we have it nicely laid out for ourselves. Why should we want to be equal?

Pause.

M: Because Ms. Ashley, its very simple. Not everyone has a daddy who's the mayor of New York. Not everyone has it laid out as nicely as you would be suggesting. Most women have to fight just to be heard. Most women are treated like second-class citizens. Its women like us. Young, upwardly mobile women, with connection to status and class, that can actually do something to change the way those other women that don't have access to the pretty things in life are treated. We are more than just pretty little Bunnies to be fawned over. We are brave, strong and courageous women that have earned our right to be treated equal among men. Damn it Ashley when are you gonna wake up?

Pause.

A: It's just like you to try and ruin a girl's day.

With a huff, Ashley picks up her little hand purse resting beside her. Opens it and begins searching for her lipstick and pocket mirror. She removes a small letter addressed to her, briefly glances at it and places it down beside her, as if it's nothing at all. She finds her lipstick and pocket mirror and begins applying it like this just another ordinary moment.

M: Did you even listen to a word I said?

A: I did indeed.

M: And?

A: And what?

M: You're just going to sit there a stare at me as if nothing I said is important.

A: Oh... it's important, I guess. Just, not as important as seeing my Andrew today.

M: You've got to be kidding me.

A: I'm not.

M: The world is changing all around us. Women for the first time since the suffragette movement began 50 years ago finally have a chance to take significant strides in being treated equal and all you can think about is seeing a boy.

A: Well I guess that's it then.

M: What's it?

A: I should've known.

M: Known what?

A: Well it's as obvious as that dreadful vest you're wearing.

Margaret is not fazed by the attempted insult.

A: Darling. You've never been in love.

M: Excuse me? What the hell does that have to do with

anything? I'm talking about changing world views, changing stereotypes. Changing the way WE are treated as people.

A: My dear Margaret, it has everything to do with it.

Margaret is confused, lost for words.

M: You got me.

A: Well I would love to explain, but YOU of all people wouldn't understand.

M: Because I'm a "Hipster"? Maybe even, God forbid, a Lesbian?

Pause.

A: Yes.

A look of disbelief is on Margret's face.

A: Look, I'm not trying to judge you and your beliefs or anything. It's just, what I want and what you want can be different. And that can be OK. We all don't have to see the world like you do, do we? Isn't that what democracy is about? (Pause) Andrew is the first boy that I have ever felt like this with. You don't know him like I do. When I'm with him, everything just seems to make sense. Its like time just seems to stop and everything becomes a lot easier when he's around. NO. Not like you think. He doesn't see me like one of those, 'Bunnies' in the Newspaper. Or treat me like a trophy, and take care of me like my Daddy does. He really sees me, for me. He cares about what I think, what I have to say. And doesn't just shut me up and tell me what to do and say, like

all the other boys I've gone around with. Andrew has a big heart and wants to do right in the world. When we last saw each other, he just couldn't stop talking about how necessary it was for us to stand up for what we believe in, to protect what's important to us. He looked me in the eyes and he said, "you're the most important thing in my world and I would do anything to protect you."

M: *(Taken a back)* Why are you telling me all this?

A: I don't know... maybe because I don't really know you or, because you're different. Or because every time I try to talk with Kathleen or Deborah about him they shut me down and only want to talk about themselves and their pretty little dresses.

M: Well you know what they say, 'like does attract like.'

A: Ugh. I'm not like them. *(Long pause)*

A: Fine. Maybe I am. I don't know. Look, I do know the world is changing. I can see that. I'm not dumb. But I can still have Andrew. It's what's important to me right now. I want my happiness. Maybe I am being selfish. And you can make fun of me for it, call rude names, and believe I should doing something with my position in life. And you could be right, and at some point in time I may have to deal with it, but right now I don't have too. Right now, the only thing I care about is seeing those beautiful eyes waiting for me when I step down from this damn train.

Ashley touches the letter as if, looking for reassurance of Andrews love.

Silence.

M: You want to read it don't you?

Ashley looks down at the letter.

A: More than anything in the world.

M: I needed an excuse for another smoke anyway.

Margaret gets up to leave the cabin.

M: You are right about one thing though.

A: Oh yeah. What is that?

M: While you can be pretentious and a little to, 'pink' for me. You're not like the other girls. I just hope Andrew really sees that.

A: He does. At least, I think he does. And though your taste in clothes may be a bit 'masculine' you're not as horrible as everyone says you are.

M: Well that won't do. I promise, I will try to be more horrible then.

A: Well would you look at that?

M: What?

A: I guess it is possible to meet someone new everyday.

M: Huh. I guess it is.

With a smile, Margaret exits the cabin and goes for a smoke. Ashley looks at the letter, she picks it up gently and begins to lovingly open it. She begins to read it.

V.O. Andrew

Too my beloved Ashley...

The thought of writing this letter to you is excruciatingly painful. Uncle Sam has called me into service. Vietnam. I ship out tomorrow. We begin basic training right away. Then after a month they are sending us over seas to the front lines. I was hoping that I would get to see those beautiful eyes of yours one last before I left. Maybe this is all part of God's plan. He's testing our love for each other. I will think about you everyday. And I will write as much as they let us. My every thought will be about getting back home to you. You have been my shining light, my path forward. You are the strength in my soul, the air in my lungs. You are worth fighting for. And I will fight for you. They say the war should be over quickly; the North Viet Cong's aren't heavily armed. With any luck, the war may be over before I get there and I will be back in your arms before you know it. Promise you'll wait for me...

Love Always & Forever - Your Andrew

Ashley can't contain the tears. She is utterly gutted.

Fade to Black

