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Dramatic Publishing

Ma in Her Kerchief

by
Janet Kenney

From...

35 in 10

Thirty-Five Ten-Minute Plays

Compiled and Edited

KENT R. BROWN



Dramatic Publishing

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MA IN HER KERCHIEF

By
Janet Kenney

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Ma in Her Kerchief was originally produced at The 6th Annual Boston Theatre Marathon, Boston Playwrights' Theatre, Boston, Mass., in 2004. It was directed by Susan Kosoff, and featured Kippy Goldfarb and Helen McElwain.

CHARACTERS

ANDREA: A newly married woman in her 20s.

RUTH: Andrea's mother-in-law, late 50s or so.

SETTING: The living room of Andrea and her husband, Jack. A small suburban home. The place is ready to go for Christmas. There is a picture window behind the tree. A mantel, bare. Boxes of ornaments.

TIME: Christmas morning, two a.m. The present.

MA IN HER KERCHIEF

AT THE CURTAIN: *The tree lights are all off. RUTH is standing at the window beside the tree. She is in her bathrobe. A silky scarf covers her head. What bit of hair shows is wispy and nearly gone. After a moment, RUTH starts to sift through the ornament box. Pause, then ANDREA, in bathrobe and slippers, enters. She startles RUTH.*

RUTH. Oh! Andrea. I thought—Jack’s asleep?

ANDREA. You can’t hear the snoring?

RUTH. You’ll get used to that.

ANDREA. I doubt it.

RUTH. I never did. To Dave’s, I mean.

ANDREA. Any sign of Santa?

RUTH. Not yet. But it’s only two. He’s probably in Spain, or Iceland.

ANDREA. Probably.

RUTH. Can we turn on the tree lights?

ANDREA. Of course— *(She does so.)*

RUTH. I didn’t want to, well, I’m not paying the bill—

ANDREA. Don’t be silly. Did you have a nice nap?

RUTH. My last Christmas, and I’m sleeping through it.

ANDREA. Well, we’ll have a busy day tomorrow. It was smart to take a nap.

RUTH. When the children were young, Dave used to keep a little jingle bell in his pocket and ring it once in a while. The kids would scream and dash up the stairs.

ANDREA. Dave's funny.

RUTH. He's easy with people, not like me.

ANDREA. Oh, now don't say that—

RUTH. I can't live here if you're going to be using that tone with me.

ANDREA. Sorry.

(RUTH pulls a string of white lights out of the box, starts to work on the mantel.)

RUTH. Do you think I should have divorced Dave?

ANDREA. I couldn't know a thing like—

RUTH. Was I too hard on him? He looked so handsome at the wedding. How do they put that in the paper? "Survived by ex-husband"?

ANDREA. I really don't know. What would you like it to say?

RUTH. I'll get back to you on that one. Open your present, will you?

ANDREA. But it's not—all right, if you want. *(She opens a large package. It's a sweater; one of those embroidered/appliquéd Christmas jobs. It's ghastly.)* Oh, I love it!

RUTH. Take it back—

ANDREA. No, no, I love it—I'll wear it tomorrow—

RUTH. Andrea: every little thought shows on your face.

ANDREA.

Oh! I hate that! I've always been like that—I'm—
sorry, it's a very sweet gift, it's just a little loud for me, and I'm always hot, especially tomorrow when I'll be cooking the turkey, and that takes all day— Right. Sorry.

RUTH.

It's fine, don't worry about it—

It's fine, return it, I don't mind.

Please, please return it.