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# THE REGINA MONOLOGUES

A ONE-ACT PLAY

REBECCA RUSSELL  
AND JENNY WAFER

WORKING DRAFT / NOT A FINAL VERSION



**SAMUEL  
FRENCH**

FOUNDED 1830

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For our families

WORKING DRAFT  
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***The Regina Monologues*** was first presented by Tidemark Theatre at the Abbey Theatre, St Albans on July 10<sup>th</sup> 2004, with the following cast:

Cathy            Rebecca Russell

Annie            Anna MacLeod

Jane             Madison Hughes

Anna             Julie Grant

Katie            Louisa Stevens

Katherine      Tina Swain

Directed by Rosemary Goodman

The Regina Monologues

by Rebecca Russell and Jenny Wafer

**CAST**

*Cathy is the discarded wife.*

*Annie is the faded beauty. Worn out with partying.*

*Jane is pale and vulnerable with an air of simplistic naivety.*

*Anna looks older than her years. Striking and intelligent. Wears a wig.*

*Katie is sometimes vulnerable and childlike, sometimes the assured teenager.*

*Katherine is the composed widow. She is determined and single minded.*

**Scene: A room in which all the wives of one man have lived in their time.**

**It is sparsely but richly set, in colours suggesting a faded opulence.**

**There is a double bed centre stage, a screen upstage right draped with clothing, a chair next to the bed up stage right, a rocking chair up stage left, a dressing table and chair down stage left, a low coffee table at the front of the stage and floor cushions down stage right. All of these stations provide a start and finish for the monologues. A large empty gilded frame hangs over the bed.**

**There is one of everything set – one wine glass, one hand bag, one set of make-up, one pregnancy book, one magazine etc. The Queens share and make use of the appropriate objects during their monologues. Their actions may be linked e.g. one Queen pours a glass of wine from which**

another later drinks. Cathy also wears a ring which is passed from Queen to Queen at the end.

The Queens remain on stage most of the time, occasionally leaving for a quick costume change. They subtly carry on with their activities during the other monologues.

**FX MUSIC – ‘Remember Me My Dear’ – The Hilliard Ensemble fade into ‘Greensleeves’ LIGHTS soft but with focus on the empty frame**

**FX MUSIC ‘Greensleeves’ fades into ‘Love me or leave me’ – Nina Simone. LIGHTS up. The wives enter one by one and end up at each of the stations. They are each oblivious to the presence of the others.**

**CATHY:** Golden hair. That was the first impression I had. Golden, with just a touch of red. Like a halo. And a laugh so huge that it seemed to fill the air with a life of its own... the sort of person who leaves behind a hole in a room when he goes out.

He was only eighteen when I first met him. He'd just arrived from Luton. It was my late shift at the bar and the bus stop was just opposite outside the Palace Hotel, so I always used to glance over, you know, see who's arriving. I was clearing tables as usual, wiping away spilt San Miguel and stale paella. Then I saw Him, getting off the bus. He was laughing, a God amongst the rest

of the plebs. I couldn't take my eyes off him. I knew absolutely that here was my future, the ghost of my life to come. I had to have that man. He said that he felt it too, that instant attraction, which sounds really clichéd when you call it love at first sight. But it was. And it was all a bit tricky really as I was due to marry his brother the next day. We had to go through with it. I mean, I'd just taken all those breaded mushrooms out of the freezer, and you can't refreeze those, can you?

**ANNIE:** I've got this new phone. He gave it me. Had it for a week now, still can't figure out how to phone my mum. It's got polyphonic ring tones. What the fuck are polyphonic ring tones? Not that I'm not grateful. But I didn't really need a new phone, just a new number. What with the calls I'm getting from her. Really nasty. Abusive.

OK, so you can't blame her. I mean, I'm not entirely stupid, I can see it from her point of view. Married, not getting any younger, stuck by him through thick and thin, and then when she's just about past it herself, wham! He turns around and says he's leaving her. Only it wasn't really wham! It was months, years. And I really can't believe she didn't know.

**JANE:** I'm so lucky. He's just so lovely. Honestly, I'm so happy. He's just...you know...so lovely and thoughtful. And he makes me feel as if I'm the only woman he's ever loved. The only woman in the universe. I bet his first two wives never felt like this.

The thing is, he says...this is so sweet...that it's as if he mistook the first two for me, like when you're searching a crowd for the face you love. Even though

he didn't know me then, didn't know I existed, it was me he was looking for. He saw them first and...and married them. But he always knew he'd find me one day. And now he has. And he's just...so lovely. I'm so happy. I'm so lucky.

**ANNA:** *(Setting up a lap-top)* There! Lock up your men folk, sell pork belly and buy London Rubber Company.

It's really amazing isn't it, the potential in this little box. Recipes for anything from cherry scones to cement. You can find anything, buy anything. My friend Gudrun found the man of her dreams on hers. Russian. Built like Adonis and with a touch as sensitive as a cotton top sheet. Can't speak a word of English mind but then who needs words when you have a dick the size of Gibraltar?

And the good thing about this way of doing things is that you fall in love with the inner self before you see the real person. No preconceptions. And with the Internet thing it'll be at least a few months before I have to meet him so that'll give me time to lose a couple of pounds, get a transformation.

Enter your personal details. That's the toughest bit. What you put in here makes all the difference. Oh, bollocks. Fun loving ...blonde. No! *(Beat)* Fun loving shapely blonde, mid...mmm...twenties seeks sensitive older man for friendship. Must share interests in ... *(looks around for inspiration.)* ... food. Food and fine wine and Eastenders. No! Theatre, classical music and keep fit. Non-smoker who likes children and small animals. Good sense of humour essential.

**KATIE:** (*Receiving a text*) What?!

**FX BEEP OF MOBILE PHONE**

(*Reads*) Oh, no way! No way! Oh my God. Caz, you are such a slapper.

**FX BEEP**

Shit. I mean he could have had anything.

(*Types*) U cud b prgnt...

**FX BEEP**

Silly cow, I mean what is the point of wasting your life on some sixteen year old? Eh?

**FX BEEP**

(*Reads*) Have got morning after pill. Might as well save it till after tonight so can see what Jimmy's like as well...

(*Types*) ...and what about STDs????

For Gods sake. See my mom always said that I could do what I liked as long as I was sensible. She even gave me a pack of three the first time I went out on a date and my mates were like, amazed, because she was so cool and she said 'well, I don't want to become a granny yet Katie, so for God's sake take care'. And, like that's so right. She went with me to the docs as well so as I could go on the pill but even so, I always get the bloke to use a condom because the last thing I want right now is to die of AIDs or get Chlamydia, become infertile and piss blood you know?

**FX BEEP**

(Reads) Don't worry so much. Live a little.

Well, if she's not worried 'bout herself then why should I worry? I'd better get ready to go over to Sharma's, she's got a load of new tops and she says I can borrow one to go with my new skirt for Tommo's party tonight and we're going to do fake tan first so I've got to find my razor as well before I go. Shit, where did I put it?

**KATHERINE:** People have often asked me, why I seem to prefer older men. Of course, I never tell them the truth. I always say, 'Oh my dear, age has nothing to do with love'. And I suppose in a way that's true. But it has everything to do with lust. Or the absence of it. Three marriages, widowed twice. Once an accident, twice a tragedy ... and three times? Some would say jolly good luck.

Provided that the assets are healthy enough, the main consideration when trying to decide whether or not to marry a man significantly older than oneself, is whether one would be prepared, if absolutely necessary, to wipe his arse for him. You know, assuming the worst. And I have to admit that it was rather touch and go in the arse department this time. Frankly, I thought that his suppurating leg-wounds were more than enough for any woman. However, on reflection, I felt that his bank balance more than compensated for his anus horribilis. (*She laughs at her little joke.*) And here we are!

You see, being very rich and about to die makes any man practically irresistible to women.

**FX MUSIC 'Queen for Tonight' - Helen Shapiro. LIGHTS to 50%.**

**Queens move to different station. LIGHTS up.**

**CATHY:** It was a lovely wedding. Everyone said so, even if I'm sure they said differently behind my back. They were even running a sweepstake at the back of the hall, you know, over how long it would last.

No one could fault the day though. Perfect weather, the church filled with Calla Lilies, and me, looking radiant. Well bloody right I did! I had most of the Elizabeth Arden counter slapped on my face. I wasn't taking any chances with open pores, I can tell you.

Oh, I knew what they were all thinking. Snide digs about the older bride...nobody bats an eyelid if a man marries a woman younger than himself, but a woman marries a younger man and they're straight on the phone to Esther bloody Rantzen.

But he didn't care. He watched me walking up that aisle as if I was the only woman in the universe. All that Pilates and Botox had finally paid off and it was definitely worth it, just to see the look in his eyes.

He made a lovely speech at the reception. Really moving, about how he missed his older brother on this special day, but knew that, if he'd been able to make it, he would have raised his glass and blessed us both. I even had a bit of a weep. Silly really, as had his older brother been there, and not six foot under, then I wouldn't have been getting married at all, because I would still have been married to him. The brother. So there would be no special day on which to miss him...

Of course, it was tragic. We'd only been man and wife for a few months. But, you know, he was never what you might call the Picture of Health. Rather small really, and pale, with skinny legs and a bit of a pigeon chest thingy going on. Not a bit like his brother, who sat there at the reception like Adonis. And I thought; well, if his brother's looking down on us now, I'm sure he'd be comforted, to see me in such good hands. Keeping it in the family so to speak. Yes! He'd have liked that, I'm sure.

**ANNIE:** You'd have to be stupid, wouldn't you? Not to know. Most women I know could spot an affair before it even started. They start brushing their teeth before they go out, fresh underwear without so much as a prompt - and the toenails! Christ! The minute they stop lacerating your calves in bed with their grotty, neglected keratin, you practically have absolute proof. Then there are the receipts. Only your skilled adulterer discards telltale receipts. Your average, first-time adulterer keeps them. Doesn't give them so much as a passing thought. And you'd find them, wouldn't you? Next time you put his jeans in the wash. In there, amongst the fluff and the multiplying microbes and the Twix wrappers. Evidence of illicit lunches caught forever in carbon paper, just waiting to be found. Asking for it.

**JANE:** I've had the scan, and... it's a boy! But someone said a really mean thing to me. She said, thank goodness it's a boy, because if the baby has to look like its dad, then being a boy will be a blessing. Well, she didn't actually say it to me, she said it to my stepdaughter, who, to give her credit, stood up for her dad. It's not true anyway. Oh, I know he's put on weight now,

but I've seen pictures of when he was young. Golden hair. Honestly, golden. And very handsome.

When I told him I was pregnant...this is so sweet. He went straight out and bought a little, tiny football shirt. And I said; what if it's a girl? And he said that I had given him everything he dreamed of and he didn't see why I would stop now.

I'm not going to tell him that I know for definite. I'm going to keep it secret. I'm so lucky.

**ANNA:** Bloody hell! Fifty four responses in twenty four hours. There are some right saddos out there, aren't there? Present company excepted naturellement. I've cut out all the ones who still live with their parents, all those who list being a friend of a tank museum high amongst their hobbies and all those who generally look like axe murderers from their photos and now I'm left with three. Not a bad days work though. Number one says that he is looking for a special someone to travel the world with and who can take an interest in the smaller things in life with him. Mmmmm, possibly has very small dick. Number two would also like to meet a special someone to venture into the sunset years with. Likes chess and good conversation. Physical relationship secondary to spiritual bonding. Uh huh, can't get it up. Now, number three looks a bit more like it. Passionate, musical and artistic male seeks partner to share life, fortune and bed. Looks a bit ginger in the photo but it's probably just the flash. Beggars can't be too choosy, can I? Well hello number three, you lucky, lucky man!

**KATIE:** He was ever so nice. Really friendly, and not a bit, you know, up himself. I thought he might be, the way Mum went on about how rich he is and how well he's done for himself and how if I played my cards right he might be able to help all of us.

Did I say he's got a pool? Fantastic. We all went in, even dad. Poor old dad. He was a bit uptight on the way there...I think it was the car. Not our car, the one sent to pick us up! Yeah, leather seats, silver Mercedes convertible – amazing. I just loved being in that car. And when we got to the house, there were these electronic gates and this fantastic sound of crunching gravel - I felt like I was on Footballer's Wives. And the house, all white, pillars everywhere. Imagine me being related to that lot, and no one telling me till I'm almost sixteen!

'Course, he's not really my uncle. He said not to call him uncle, just to use his first name, 'cos he's only a distant relative. So I did. Dad didn't like it; he's really tight about what he calls "over familiarity."

It did feel weird at first. I mean, he's quite old...and fat. I've seen photos of him when he was young; they're all over his house. He was well fit. But now he's...well... fat. And he sweats really badly.... and he's ginger. I'm just glad he didn't get into his trunks. He just watched us all from his lounge. He had on this cream linen suit. He said I could come over anytime, just to let him know and he'll send a car. He said he'd let me use the sauna.

How cool is that?

**KATHERINE:** It's the children I feel sorry for. All that chopping and changing. Troops of women trying to find different euphemisms for

stepmother. Or not even pretending that they care, like that nasty little piece he had for a second wife. But I'm not one to gossip.

I try to remain ...even. No gushing, but I'm there if they need me. A sympathetic, objective ear. I think it helps - the fact that I have no children of my own. Taking on other women's children is rather like taking on a failing school; you've got to drag the little sods up by their ears.

The girls are...difficult. The younger one is clever, of course, and she'll need to be, with that hair and a forehead you could land a helicopter on. The second one is as wilful as they come. And the boy? Poor little chap. Not very strong. Asthmatic.

They'll soon learn that things are better, with me around.

**FX MUSIC 'Baby Baby All The Time' – Diana Krall. LIGHTS to 50%.**

**Queens move to a different station. LIGHTS up.**

**CATHY:** *(upside down with legs raised on the bed, counting)* Fifty-seven monkeys, fifty-eight monkeys, fifty-nine monkeys, and sixty monkeys. *(Laughs)* God, if that won't do it, nothing will. Fifteen minutes post-coitus upside down and a banana. *(Grabs banana and peels, starts to eat)*. See, if you want a boy you have to eat food shaped like a willy. Bananas, sausages, courgettes... marrows! Bloody hell! No, I'm only joking now! And of course, the upside down bit just encourages those sperm without a sense of direction, which let's face it is most of the little shits, to swim up stream, as it were. Egg bound, so to speak. Until gravity does it's bit and then you're stuffed. Or, more to the point, not stuffed. Oh bugger. No, I can't get upset, that would be

counter-effective, mess my hormonal balance up. And I've already had one child, so, you know, it can't be that bad; I mean - everything functioned once upon a time. And I've still got my health, so it's only a matter of time, really. And today is day eleven, so we've still got days thirteen and fifteen. Even for a girl, odd for a boy. It's got to work this time. Because I've not had any alcohol, I don't smoke, and I've tried hard not to think bad thoughts. Although I may have lapsed once. Or twice. Oh, God, don't get upset, breathe, breathe, relax, relax, relax. There. You see? Think calm thoughts, walking along a path by a rippling brook. The stream breaking gently over the pebbles, worn smooth with time. A thrush sings in the trees above me. In the distance a church bell sounds. That's better. Oh, I know for a fact that he's fathered at least one little brat without so much as a single wedding vow, and if those tarts can manage it, why the hell can't I? Eh God? Are you listening? I do everything right, keep the commandments; arrange the altar flowers, pray! And yet where the hell are you when I need you? I'll even be happy if it's ginger. Please?

**ANNIE:** I'm pregnant. That didn't take long, did it? I reckon the sperm were so bloody relieved not to have to put up with his first wife's wizened ovaries that they just went right ahead and had a party. Bet they were fighting over the privilege of fertilizing my lovely, ripe eggs.

Sorry. Do I sound smug? Gloating? Triumphant? Good. I'm making the right impression, then.

At the wedding, you could tell that none of his lot gave it more than a year. This'll wipe the smirks of their faces. Especially if it's a boy. Heir to the family

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