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HEAD OVER HEELS

by Gail Young

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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First performed by Tip Top Productions at the Forum Studio Theatre, Chester in October 2018 and directed by Gail Young. Assistant Director Leighton Williams, set and props by Pippa Grundon, sound by Brian Fray, lighting by Mark Shenton, publicity by Paul Croft. The Stage Manager was Pippa Grundon. The cast was as follows:

JILL Eileen Reisin
ANDY Richard Taylor
DANNY Ally Goodman
SALLY Jane Nugent
CAROL Rowena Owen
JUDY Dawn Adams
TINA Sarah Dyne
GP/PILOT Derek Weigh
SOLICITOR Fern Evans
**WAITER/GAME SHOW HOST/
POSTMAN/MEDIATOR** Evan Roberts

CHARACTERS

JILL – Our leading lady and a complex role. Age late fifties–sixty. We see her young and in love with Andy from an early age, wedded by her mid-twenties, a doting mum to her son Danny by her early thirties, looking forward to a happy early retirement with her long term hubby.

ANDY – Like Jill, Andy appears to have been content with his family and lot in life. More sporty than his wife, he discovered a love for mountain walking in his later years. And then it transpires that he has been doing more than walking up and down hills and dales with the walking group, especially the titillating trekker that is Tina. A great role for a leading man, both comedic and (at times) villainous!

DANNY – The play follows Danny from his early years to his twenties as the plot guides the audience through the passage of his mum and dad’s so-called happy marriage. We see him as a moody defiant teenager, and then as a confident young man in his twenties back with his parents post-college and getting on with life. The marital breakup rocks Danny’s world as he tries to support his vulnerable mum while maintaining a relationship with his adulterous father.

SALLY – Jill’s younger sister. Menopausal but refusing to admit it! She is still working for a living. Sally has known Andy since she was fourteen and cannot forgive him for doing the dirty on her sister. Supportive to both Jill and Danny in their hour of need and wanting nothing but the very worst for Andy in light of his ‘dirty deeds’, she views him as a mister who’s betrayed her sister, and Sally is baying for his blood.

CAROL – An old schoolfriend of Jill’s. Also retired. Like Sally, Carol cannot believe what Andy has done to Jill, and vigorously joins in with the sweary put-downs and insults that the girls heap on him. Carol was divorced ten years ago, and don’t we all know it. But she’s been hiding a big guilty secret that now eats her up in light of Jill’s impending divorce, and it all comes tumbling out in the end.

JUDY – Another old friend of Jill’s. One of her disco dancing pals from way back when, reminiscing about Cleopatra’s night club and Roxy Music. A lover of prosecco and a believer that there’s no problem that a few more drinks won’t solve. She has a great vulgar turn of phrase when putting men down, and the best joke about men and Christmas trees.

MS HYDE – Middle-aged. Jill’s chosen solicitor, and her legal attack dog for her impending divorce proceedings. A tough old bird who has seen it all before, she is full of both sage and aggressive advice for her client. A marital property war is looming, and Ms Hyde loves a good battle.

TINA – Aged fifty-ish. An attractive trekker with a roving eye that has landed very firmly on Jill’s hubby Andy. This is a role with no lines, but maximum impact. The audience has loads of laughs at Tina’s expense and this is a role that demands a real talent for both physical comedy and wonderful facial expressions.

GP/DR JEFFRIES – Jill’s local doctor. He provides a sympathetic and understanding ear for Jill. Easily doubles up with the role of the Pilot in a later scene.

PILOT – Drunken airline pilot who features in one of the many comedic fantasy sequences in the play. No lines for this character, but plenty of action! Doubles up with the role of Dr Jeffries.

WAITER – Flamboyant, attentive, and blissfully unaware of his customer’s marital dispute. To be played by the same actor playing the postman/the mediator/game show host.

GAME SHOW HOST – Larger than life TV game show host who loves the spotlight and chatting up his audience.

POSTMAN – A walk-on-walk-off role with lots of scope for engaging with Jill center stage as he hands her the divorce papers. No lines.

MEDIATOR – Lots of physical comedy in a choreographed routine where the mediator acts as a UN peacekeeper, desperately keeping Andy and Jill apart in a war over ownership of the family home.

SETTING

Minimal set to allow pace needed for quick location changes (e.g.) the pub/home/GP’s surgery/solicitors/the car/fantasy sequences etc.

TIME

Set around 2010 in the current day scenes.

Jill and Andy met in the 1970s and wed in the same decade.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

What can I say except that I've been there, and I've got the T-shirt.

Divorce and breaking up are hard for anyone at any time in their lives, but it's a long hard haul to reach retirement with the one you love, and then for it all to fall apart.

I considered therapy to help get to grips with my thoughts, but after a couple of years the lure of the keyboard proved too much, along with the need to laugh in the face of adversity.

So here it is folks.

Head over Heels.

Very loosely based on real events, but very firmly rooted in fantasy too.

It's no exaggeration to say that I had some of the best laughs of my entire life in rehearsals.

My cast were brilliant – so so funny!

The technicians and production team absolutely threw themselves into it.

All of them – amazing – a theatrical arm around my shoulder.

It turned out to be the best therapy I could have ever had.

It worked.

Hope it works for you too.

Gail Young

xx

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gail Young has directed and acted with community theatre groups in North West England for many years. Her first full length play *Cheshire Cats* was an Edinburgh Fringe 'Sell Out Show' in 2006 (published by Samuel French, 2011). Since then it has been performed worldwide, translated into other languages, and toured abroad. Her second full length play *Bothered and Bewildered* has also enjoyed similar success after its sell out debut in 2014 (published by Samuel French, 2015). *Bouncing Back* premiered in June 2016 and has also been published by Samuel French. All three plays are comedy dramas with a social conscience, focusing on problems/issues facing women in modern times.

See www.gailyoungplaywright.com for more information about *Head Over Heels*, and email Gail at gailyoungplaywright@gmail.com.

SUGGESTED SONG LIST

Please see the note on the Use of Copyrighted Music on page iii for clearance rights, or footnotes throughout the text for guidance on music use.

ACT ONE

- #1 “She Taught Me To Yodel” – Frank Ifield
- #2 “Let’s Stick Together” – Roxy Music
- #3 “Let’s Get It On” by Marvin Gaye
- #4 “I Feel Love” by Donna Summer
- #5 “Je Taime – Moi Non Plus” by Serge Gainsbourg
- #6 “Walk On By” by Burt Bacharach and Hal David
- #7 “Memories” by Barbara Streisand
- #8 “Climb Ev’ry Mountain” by Irwin Kostal and Margery MacKay
- #9 “Only Yesterday” by The Carpenters
- #10 “Holiday” by Madonna
- #11 “Love Don’t Live Here Anymore” by Rose Royce

ACT TWO

- #1 “Cars” by Gary Numan
- #2 “Little Lies” by Fleetwood Mac
- #3 “Band of Gold” by Freda Payne
- #4 “Leaving On A Jet Plane” by Peter, Paul and Mary
- #5 “Please Mr. Postman” by The Carpenters
- #6 “War” by Edwin Starr
- #7 “*Hawaii 5 O* Theme” by Morton Stevens
- #8 “Life is The Name of the Game” by Bruce Forsyth
- #9 “I Will Survive” by Gloria Gaynor

ACT ONE

(Spotlight snaps on JILL. She is sat at a table in a pub with her sister SALLY and her girlfriends JUDY and CAROL. SALLY, JUDY and CAROL are 'frozen' in the moment. The ladies are dressed for a summer day. JILL is wearing enormous sunglasses.)

(Suddenly another spot snaps on ANDY [Jill's husband]. He is wearing full mountain walking gear. JILL passively observes him as he energetically mimes to a '60s yodelling song. As the song hits the yodelling high-spot he stumbles. The yodel turns into an echoing scream as he falls off the mountain. The spotlight snaps off him. JILL talks directly to the audience.)*

JILL. I have a hundred fantasies a day like that.

(Lights snap up on JILL, CAROL, SALLY and JUDY in the pub. Sound effects of pub life.)

(A YOUNG MAN stands having a drink and chatting on his mobile, but ends up looking aghast at the group of mature women as he overhears the salty language they are using. Aged late fifties/early sixties, all the WOMEN are well-groomed and dressed for a

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hot summer's day. They are animated and angry.)

SALLY. Fucking wanker!

CAROL. Little shit.

JUDY. Who the bloody hell does he think he is?

SALLY. Geriatric scumbag.

*(The **YOUNG MAN** holds his hand over the mouthpiece of his phone and leans towards the table.)*

YOUNG MAN. Hey girls, do you think you could keep the language down?

*(The **WOMEN** speak as one [with the exception of **JILL**].)*

SALLY, CAROL & JUDY. FUCK OFF!

(He backs off and leaves in a hurry.)

SALLY. Bastard!

CAROL. *(Indicating the guy who has just left.)* Him?

SALLY. Not him! Andy! I can't believe it.

JUDY. How long has it been going on Jill?

JILL. Six months...a year...

*(**JILL** toys with her wedding ring as her voiceover echoes out across the stage.)*

(Voiceover.) I, Jill, take thee Andy to be my lawful wedded husband.

*(**JILL** is brought back to the present day by **CAROL**'s voice.)*

CAROL. Why didn't you tell us?

JILL. I dunno. I didn't know how to...and then we were meeting up for lunch today...so I thought I'd just come and...

(JILL can't continue. She fishes for a hanky in her handbag. All the others delve into their bags for a tissue. JUDY is the first to find one and she hands it to JILL.)

JUDY. There you go.

JILL. Thanks.

(JILL lifts up her sunglasses and dabs the mascara from her eyes. She resembles a very sad panda.)

Has my mascara run?

SALLY, CAROL & JUDY. NO!

(SALLY finds a wet wipe in her bag and dabs away at JILL's eyes.)

CAROL. You look absolutely fine.

JUDY. More than fine.

CAROL. You look great.

(JILL gives them a disbelieving look.)

SALLY, CAROL & JUDY. You do! You do!

(SALLY hands JILL back the sunglasses. JILL puts them back on.)

SALLY. I wish I knew how to make it better for you sis.

CAROL. Take it from me – when John left me ten years ago – nothing, NOTHING anyone said made it better!

(JUDY and SALLY glare at CAROL.)

SALLY. *(Hissing.)* Not now Carol, not now.

JUDY. *(To JILL.)* It's always good to talk to friends.

SALLY. Yeah...come on...get it off your chest sis.

(Pause as they wait for JILL to dish the dirt on ANDY.)

JILL. What?

SALLY, CAROL & JUDY. Talk!

(Spot on ANDY in formal evening dress. Lights fade on the pub scene. The other women are frozen in the moment.)

(ANDY shouts over to JILL.)

ANDY. Get a move on will you Jill! We're going to be late.

(JILL jumps up, takes off her sunglasses, picks up her handbag and rushes over to him.)

JILL. I'm coming. I'm coming.

(She stumbles.)

These bloody shoes!

(She adjusts her high heels. ANDY sighs impatiently.)

ANDY. I'll go and grab us some good seats.

(He darts off. JILL is left struggling with her shoes. We hear classical musicians warming up. JILL scans the busy room full of concert goers. She spots ANDY chatting to TINA – an attractive and smartly-dressed woman in her fifties who oozes self confidence. JILL tries to attract his attention. ANDY ignores her, he's*

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*deep in an intimate conversation, his and Tina's heads very close together. **JILL** stands isolated and nervously twists her wedding ring. **JILL'S VOICEOVER** is heard over the sound of the waves.)*

JILL'S VOICEOVER. Forsaking all others.

*(The sound of the orchestra tuning up swells, turning into the sound of ocean waves as the lights slowly change to green. **TINA** has her hand on Andy's arm, and casts a sideways glance at **JILL** as she casually brushes some lint from the shoulder of Andy's jacket. She whispers in his ear and they both giggle.)*

Welcome to the wonderful world of jealousy! The knot in my stomach grew tighter and tighter because there was just something about that woman...their private joke...the way she kept touching him...the look in her eyes. All my gut instincts made me want to knock ten bells out of her...but good manners stopped me.

*(**TINA** darts a triumphant knowing look at **JILL** and their eyes meet. She turns her attention back to **ANDY**.)*

I knew right then and there that she knew that I knew what she was doing... I felt it in my bones. And when I thought about what they might be getting up to in private I wanted to rip her dyed-blond hair out by the roots - in big fat clumps to match her big fat ego.

It was like a tsunami washing over me, sucking me out to sea - and I was helpless...bobbing about in poisonous jealous waves...drowning...

*(The sound of the crashing waves fades as **ANDY** leaves Tina's side and approaches **JILL**. Lights return to normal.)*

JILL. You could have waited for me.

ANDY. I didn't realise the seats were numbered till Tina told me. Sorry about that.

JILL. Tina?

ANDY. (*Indicating TINA.*) Tina from the walking group.

(JILL looks over towards TINA who is finishing her drink and looking at the programme.)

JILL. That's Tina?

ANDY. Yeah.

JILL. From your walking group?

ANDY. Yeah. Shall we go in?

(TINA glides by them to exit the room. She gives JILL a little smirk as Beethoven's 5th Symphony, The Victory, blasts out. ANDY scurries off after her as JILL helplessly watches him go. She turns to the audience...)*

JILL. And in the car on the way home...

(ANDY re-enters with a huge steering wheel. They both stand in a spotlight as though seated alongside each other in the family car. We hear the car driving along.)

ANDY. Not a bad venue was it?

JILL. No...not bad.

ANDY. A lot of people there.

JILL. Yeah.

ANDY. And it's always good to support local events isn't it?

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JILL. Yeah... I'm just a bit surprised that...

ANDY. What?

JILL. Classical music...

ANDY. What about it?

JILL. We wouldn't normally go to a classical music concert...

ANDY. (*Interrupting.*) I listen to Radio 3 a lot in the car. You'd be amazed.

JILL. You're right. You've never...

ANDY. (*Interrupting.*) It was great wasn't it? Lovely recital.

JILL. Oh yeah...great.

ANDY. Tina is a real fan of classical music.

JILL. Hmmmm.

ANDY. That's why she told me about it. She thought that I... I mean we...we might like to come along and...

JILL. (*Interrupting.*) Yeah...about Tina...

ANDY. She's always organising social events for the group.

JILL. I bet she is.

(Pause as they turn a bend.)

Why does she think you like classical music?

ANDY. We often listen to it when we car share.

JILL. Car share? I thought there was a coach at the club meeting point.

ANDY. On Sundays there's a coach. I'm talking about Wednesdays. When we're driving out to the mid-week walk...you know...

JILL. You and her? I thought John and Steve went with you on Wednesdays?

ANDY. Yes...but the four of us go now...usually...

JILL. Usually?

ANDY. Usually...yeah...

JILL. But sometimes?

(Pause. ANDY's dropped himself in it.)

ANDY. Well...sometimes...sometimes it's just me and...er...
(Quietly.) Tina.

JILL. Who? Just you and who?

(Pause.)

ANDY. Tina...sometimes.

JILL. Just the two of you? Sometimes? You never mentioned that before.

ANDY. I don't know what you're...

JILL. *(Interrupting.)* Out all day in the middle of nowhere?
Just the two of you?

ANDY. When you put it like that...

JILL. *(Interrupting.)* So when you strip off butt naked back at the car after the walk and towel yourself down to get changed coz you sweat so much... Tina is stood there...when there's just the two of you?

ANDY. Well...not right next to me.

JILL. Where the bloody hell is she stood then?

ANDY. I er...she er... She doesn't look!

JILL. Really? She doesn't look? SHE DOESN'T LOOK?
HOW DO YOU KNOW SHE DOESN'T BLOODY WELL LOOK?

ANDY. You're being ridiculous.

JILL. Am I?

ANDY. We're just good friends.

JILL. Just good friends? Really?

ANDY. You've got male friends. What about Derek at the yoga?

JILL. Yeah – Derek at the yoga! Fully clothed and in a room full of other people. Not naked and sweaty in the middle of nowhere!

ANDY. She's just a good friend that's all.

JILL. Well I think that she wants to be more than good friends – a lot bloody more.

ANDY. I'm not listening to this.

(ANDY leans across her to switch on the radio. Classical music blares out. JILL glares at him, and jumps out of the car to rejoin the pub scene. The classical music fades as ANDY zooms off in the car.)*

(SALLY, CAROL and JUDY are seated as before. They look at JILL.)

CAROL. Classical music?

JILL. Yeah.

SALLY. What the hell is that all about?

CAROL. Since when did Andy like classical music?

JILL. She likes it apparently.

JUDY. 'Tina'?

JILL. Yes.

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SALLY. Christ Almighty. He's changed his tune – and I've known him since I was fourteen – since you fell for him and brought him home to our house.

CAROL. My birthday – in town after that Roxy Music gig. Remember? That's when you met him. In that club. What was it called?

JUDY. (*Reminiscing.*) Oh God – yeah – *Cleopatra's*. Those were the days!

CAROL. Besotted you were. The pair of you. Music mad and head over heels in love.

JUDY. How many LPs have you got now Jill? That vinyl stash of yours from the seventies must be worth a bloody fortune by now.

CAROL. The seventies...aah...our era. Those were the days...

SALLY. You were fanatical about your record collection. And there's not a classical note amongst it!

(The women freeze in the moment again as a '70s rock song suddenly blasts out. Lights fade on the pub as JILL takes centre stage and dances along to the music. She is nineteen again and in Cleopatra's nightclub.)*

(ANDY enters, He is a 1970s fashion plate – desperately trying to look like Bryan Ferry but just missing the mark. He swaggers over to JILL.)

ANDY. Alright?

JILL. Alright.

ANDY. You dancing?

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