

SWEET, SWEET JUSTICE

A Play in Two Acts

Sample Pages

by

Kasy Ostrom

ACT 1  
IN DARKNESS we hear a voice.

CARMEN

(singing a dark, haunting version of “When I Fall in Love” by Nat King Cole)  
When I Fall in Love, It Will Be Forever

LIGHTS UP on CARMEN. She wears a provocative red dress and tall heels. She stands with a glass of red wine in the combined kitchen and dining area of a small but nice, middle class, urban apartment. There is a table with chairs, a few cupboards, a pantry door, and general kitchen requirements such as a fridge, sink or stove. A door leads out of the apartment and another exit leads to the rest of the unseen rooms. CARMEN's purse rests on the counter next to a bottle of wine. She takes a break from her song to finish her glass.

CARMEN

(continuing the song)  
Or I'll never fall in love.

(Suddenly, CARMEN drops the empty wine glass to the floor. It shatters. She contemplates what she's done. She leaves the room. As she goes she continues to hum the dark tune. After a few seconds she returns with a broom and dustpan. She cleans her up mess. The sound of footsteps. Someone is approaching the apartment door. CARMEN looks up in a brief moment of panic. She starts primping herself, fixing her hair, straightening her dress, pulling up her boobs. The person at the door is finding their keys. She creates a couple sexy poses facing the door. She realizes that the broom and dustpan are still in the room.)

CARMEN

Shit.

(She grabs the broom and dustpan and runs offstage. We hear key against lock. JASON enters)

JASON

(as he enters)  
Sorry I'm late, babe. Traffic on the 405 was miserable. And, guess what? They're doing elevator construction. So I had to climb four fucking flights of stairs to get here. The whole world is trying to make us late.

(CARMEN re-enters, seductively.)

JASON

Wow. You look great.

(JASON pulls CARMEN into his embrace and places a kiss softly on her lips)

JASON

We have to be at dinner in 20 minutes. I'm glad you're ready. I'll be just another minute. I've sweat right through this shirt. I need look as good as you do, babe.

(JASON exits. CARMEN crosses to the cupboards and pulls out two fresh wine glasses. She sets them neatly on the kitchen table.)

JASON

(yelling from offstage)

Carmen! Where are all of my dress shirts?

CARMEN

In the drier!

(CARMEN pours the wine into one glass. Then the other. JASON enters with some formerly white dress shirts that are now laundry-stained pink in color.)

JASON

Ha ha very funny.

CARMEN

What's funny, hon?

JASON

Would you mind telling me where my *other* dress shirts are? You know, the one's that aren't pink?

CARMEN

Oh...They're in the washer. I guess if we put them in the drier now they'll be done in about an hour.

JASON

What's going on?

CARMEN

You know, I decided that today was a great day to mess everything up. Yes. This morning I woke up and thought I will be fuck-up today! How did I do?

JASON

Is this about yesterday? I shouldn't have called you a fuckup, but I did come home to a kitchen full of broken dishes. What did you expect me to say? "Oh Carmen, you dear, sweet, woman, you've destroyed our kitchen. How, wonderful?!"

CARMEN

I'm only living up to my name. I'm being exactly what you told me I am. Your fuck-up of a wife.

JASON

Listen, I was out of line. I shouldn't have called you that. We can buy new dishes. I'm not still angry about yesterday. You know that, right?

CARMEN

I know.

JASON

So why did you ruin my shirts?

CARMEN

Guess you have nothing to wear tonight.

JASON

No. I cannot miss this dinner. You know that. My own promotion dinner? Babe, we've been discussing tonight for weeks.

CARMEN

I know.

JASON

Honey, I know things have been a little tense between us. I've been over-working but that'll change after this promotion. It'll be worth it. I promise. But we have to go to this event tonight. We have to.

CARMEN

Okay.

JASON

Plus, babe, you look stunning. Come on. I want to show you off.

(JASON pulls CARMEN into his embrace. He strokes her hair. He seduces her.)

CARMEN

Okay.

JASON

I'm sorry, alright? You're not a fuckup. A little crazy, but not a fuckup.

CARMEN

I'm not crazy.

JASON

Babe, I'm joking. Can't I joke a little bit?

CARMEN

But I'm not.

JASON

I know you're not. You're just right. You're the best wife in the world and I want to brag about it to my co-workers. Please cooperate and come to dinner tonight? I'll make it up to you later.

CARMEN

Okay.

JASON

You are one in a million. I'll find a blazer or something to put over what I'm wearing. Be ready to go.

(JASON exits. CARMEN picks up a glass of wine and takes a gulp. She crosses to her purse and pulls out her cellphone. She calls a number that is saved in her contacts. She takes another drink as she waits. JASON re-enters.)

CARMEN

Hi, City Pizza?

JASON

Why are you calling –

CARMEN

(to JASON)

I'm ordering dinner.

(To phone)

Yeah hi, I'd like to place an order for delivery please.

JASON

Honey, hang up.

CARMEN

Yes, I'd like one large pizza. Half: plain cheese and the other half: Veggie Deluxe.

JASON

Please.

CARMEN

(to phone)  
Ooh, you know I don't know!  
(to Jason)  
Classic or thin crust, darling?

JASON

Do not try me, Carmen. This is a big night for me.

CARMEN

Let's go with the classic. Oh! And I almost forgot! A side of garlic bread, please.

JASON

Hang up. Now.

CARMEN

The garlic bread is for you, honey. It's your favorite.

JASON

We are not eating in!

(JASON goes for CARMEN's phone. She throws her red wine at him. There is a stunned silence.)

CARMEN

...Oops.

JASON

This was my last shirt

CARMEN

(back on the phone)  
Yes, I live in the Blackbird Apartment Complex on Jackson. Apartment 501. The elevator is broken so you'll have to take the stairs. I'll pay in cash when you get here.  
(She hangs up and sets down her phone and the empty wine glass.)

JASON

What am I supposed to wear?

CARMEN

I just want you to myself. Is that too much to ask?

(It's CARMEN's turn to seduce him)

JASON

That is not an option tonight and you know that.

CARMEN

You've been coming home later and later every night. I never get you to myself.

JASON

I've been working.

CARMEN

Then, when you need me, you drag me around like a showgirl to this dinner, that dinner, this event, that event.

JASON

Is it hard on you? Why don't you try to be the breadwinner? You don't become well off by sitting at home and doing jack-shit, you know?

CARMEN

I haven't been doing jack-shit. I've been writing.

JASON

You haven't shown me anything.

CARMEN

I can't show it to you. It's not done yet.

JASON

It's been two years since you quit your job, Carmen. Two years, and nothing to show for it? Meanwhile, I've been working my ass off.

CARMEN

It's a long book.

JASON

Two years is a long time.

CARMEN

It took Tolstoy six years to write War and Peace.

JASON

Oh, and I'm supposed to believe that you're the next fucking Tolstoy?! That you're writing the next world-renowned classic?

CARMEN

I'm writing my own classic.

JASON

I'm calling Gerry. I need to tell him we'll be late.

(JASON pulls his work-issued cellphone out of his pocket)

CARMEN

I'm writing the best thing that I can. So, yeah. It's taking a while.

(JASON laughs to himself. He dials the phone)

CARMEN

Why are you laughing.

JASON

Because you're not Tolstoy, Carmen.

CARMEN

Maybe I am! How would you know?

JASON

I *don't* know. I don't even know if you're writing anything because you won't show me.

CARMEN

I never agreed to a two-year contract.

JASON

Never mind. Now's not the time to talk about your little masterpiece. We're leaving. I'll pick up a shirt on the way. We'll be late but we're going.

(JASON ushers CARMEN towards the door, while trying to reach Gerry on the phone.  
CARMEN resists)

CARMEN

The only agreement I made with you is to be your wife and I haven't broken that contract.

JASON

Let's go.

(There is a small struggle between them as JASON tries to get CARMEN out the door. She grabs his phone and ducks around him to drop it into the remaining full wine glass.)

JASON

Ah FUCK! NO.

(He tries to salvage his phone)

CARMEN

(clearing her throat for the big performance)

I know you're MYSTIFIED by my recent behavior. Well, Jason, it's you. *You're* the reason I broke the plates. *You're* the reason your white dress shirts are pink. *You're* the reason that we're eating in tonight! You've been hiding something from me and tonight is when I will have my justice!

JASON

(talking about his cell phone)

Oh thank Jesus. It still works.

CARMEN

...tonight is when I will have my JUSTICE!

JASON

You, my dear, would have been in deep shit if this thing was broken. Now, pull yourself together. We're leaving.

CARMEN

Is anyone listening to me? JUSTICE!!!

(The pantry door swings open and JUSTICE tumbles into the room. She wears a tiny black dress and only one heel. The other heel is in her right hand and she holds a frying pan in her left.)

JUSTICE

Sorry! It's really hard to hear in there. It's like a fucking bomb shelter!

JASON

No.

CARMEN

The script!

JUSTICE

Oh! Sorry!

(Suddenly creepy and sexy)

Hello, Jason. Bet you didn't expect to see me here.

(JUSTICE hobbles towards JASON)

CARMEN

Hold on a second –  
Justice, why are you only wearing one heel?

JUSTICE

I'm sorry! I was getting one of those annoying heel blisters because these are new. So I took it off while I was waiting in the pantry, but it's really dark in there and I couldn't see anything and I tried to put it back on when Jason came in but it was literally impossible.

CARMEN

Will you put it on now? It's kind of ruining the effect.

JUSTICE

Yes! So sorry! One second.

(JUSTICE she sits awkwardly on the floor as she puts on her shoe)

JASON

Okay. You two have met. Shit. Let me explain –

CARMEN

Luckily for you, Jason, you're getting exactly what you wanted tonight. A little something I wrote. I spent a lot of precious time on this script so will you please give Justice a second to put her shoe back on? It'll be worth it, I promise.

JASON

I see what you're doing, Carmen. I get it. Alright?

JUSTICE

(as before)

Hello, Jason! Bet you didn't expect to see me here!

(JUSTICE has finished putting her heel on and stands tall, still holding the frying pan)

CARMEN

(back to the script)

Jason – meet Justice, Justice – Jason. Oh wait. Did I hear correctly? You two already know each other?

JUSTICE

Jason – meet Carmen. Carmen – Jason. Oh wait, you've been married to this woman for 7 years?

JASON

Did this have to happen tonight?

CARMEN

PLEASE will you shut up already about tonight? –

I read all your little text messages. To answer your question: that's what this is about. That's why I smashed the plates. But I couldn't tell you I knew. It wasn't enough. After all those nights you said you were working late. After all those lies. No, telling you I knew wasn't enough. But, you know what? I thought maybe it was her fault. Your mysterious mistress. I loved you enough to blame her. So, I set out to find this girl, to give the bitch a piece of my mind. Turns out, it wasn't a Justice problem. She not only had no idea you were married, she was also really fucking awesome.

JUSTICE

Oh wow. Thanks!

CARMEN

You're welcome, but shh!

JUSTICE

Sorry!

CARMEN

If there's one thing I know about you, Jason, it's that you've always been a man of good taste and that's why I can't be angry at Justice here, she's just too cool! But you did me an injustice all those times you were IN JUSTICE. And now JUSTICE WILL BE SERVED.

JASON

...What?

CARMEN

That's your cue!

JUSTICE

Oh! Oops.

(JUSTICE hits JASON upside the head with the frying pan.)

JASON

Auuuugh. Oh my GOD.

JUSTICE

That was a lousy hit. I'm so sorry.

JASON

I know you two are upset. I know.

You're feeling a lot of...feelings right now, but I want to clear one thing up. When I was with Justice I never took off my ring.

CARMEN

Excuse me?

JASON

Honey, I know telling you that doesn't fix things, but Justice was a mistake. I know that. She was a horrible, terrible mistake. Compared to you, she's nothing. Nobody, really. I know you're angry and you have the right to be angry, I just hope... God, are you beautiful even when you're mad.

CARMEN

Stop that.

JASON

I just hope you'll let me prove to you how little she means to me. Carmen, you are my everything. Justice is *nothing* compared to you. I never took off my ring when I was with her. She was too just too vapid to notice. She's absolutely *nothing*. Nothing but a mistake.

JUSTICE

AAAAAAAAAH!

(JASON turns around as JUSTICE runs at him and swings the frying pan, with both hands this time. She nails JASON square in the head and he falls to the ground like a tree in the forest)

JUSTICE

Take that motherfucker!!

(JUSTICE lifts the frying pan as if she'll hit JASON again.)

CARMEN

No! Justice! That's good.