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Dramatic Publishing

Alice and Margo

Comedy by
Anne V. McGravie



Alice and Margo

Comedy. By Anne V. McGravie. Cast: 2w. Alice and Margo, attractive 40-year-olds, are lifelong friends. Married to uncaring, philandering men, the women spend a getaway weekend each year finding solace in each other. This year seems like any other year, except that it's not – not by a long shot. Alice, the long-suffering wife of a man who, apart from his acquiring a mistress, came by his Artist-of-the-Year Award nefariously, has a dreadful secret to disclose to Margo. Margo is herself married to a man who not only has a penchant for womanizing but also claims the Salesman-of-the-Year Award that rightfully belongs to Margo. At first, Alice's disclosure is too much for Margo to accept. When she comes to grips with it, she rolls up her metaphorical sleeves and sets about finding a solution that will exonerate Alice. It's a hard sell as Alice becomes convinced that she must serve as an example to womanhood by accepting her punishment. Is this the last getaway weekend they will ever spend together? What price will Alice pay for her dreadful deed? Or, since this is a comedy, will something completely different happen? *Unit set. Approximate running time: 40 minutes. Code: AF6.*

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ALICE AND MARGO

By
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Alice and Margo was rehearsed-read at LA MAMA, Melbourne, Australia, in January 2010, Liz Jones, CEO and artistic director, with Libby Stone as Alice and Sharon Kershaw as Margo, and directed by Joan Murray.

ALICE AND MARGO

CHARACTERS

ALICE, early middle-aged

MARGO, early middle-aged

PLACE: Melbourne, Australia

TIME: The present.

ALICE AND MARGO

SCENE: *A small, tasteful hotel suite in Melbourne, Australia. A small couch, a coffee table, possibly a good reproduction of an Australian landscape painting on wall. Prominent, a large, full-length mirror frame (without mirror, so that audience can see actors as they look in it), with an extension (to hold two dresses). A door leads to unseen areas—bedroom, bathroom, and convenience bar containing tray, coffee pot, two cups and saucers, two filled martini glasses.*

AT RISE: *The room is empty. Silence.*

Offstage door opens then closes. ALICE enters, sets overnight bag down, goes to mirror, examines her face (for bruises), and gingerly feels the back of her head. She sits, then rises and returns to mirror, examines herself critically, doesn't like what she sees, exits, returns with a bath towel that she places over mirror. She unpacks two unbecoming dresses, one brown, one blue, and hangs them on mirror extension. She exits with bag. Silence.

Sound of door opening. MARGO enters carrying overnight bag.

MARGO. Hullo? Anyone? *(She sets bag down, goes to mirror, throws towel aside, checks herself, plays model, with sunken cheeks, etc. Examines dresses, pretends to pull them down and dance on them.)*

(ALICE enters in bathrobe.)

ALICE. Admiring my wardrobe.

MARGO. It's getting to look more and more like the queen's.

ALICE. Lovely to see you, too, Margo.

(They kiss on both cheeks.)

MARGO. So, no trouble getting away? Good for you. As I closed the door behind me, he's listing all the reasons I shouldn't go. The usual. Who's going to make his meals? Did I leave enough food in the fridge? Had I seen to his dry-cleaning—things to go, things to be picked up? Oh, yes, and this is an addition to the list: Did I remember to pay all the bills? I'll be gone three days—three days out of every year that I get to go away on my own—and he's worried about the— There's more, lots more, as you know, Alice, but I need a coffee. *(She exits.)*

(ALICE goes to mirror, holds dresses against herself, then rehangs them without expression.)

MARGO enters with tray containing coffee pot and two cups and saucers. She pours, then sits.)

MARGO. Well, I've done my bit.

ALICE. Sorry, Margo. There just wasn't time.

MARGO. Time?

ALICE. I got busy and...there just wasn't time.

MARGO (*half joking*). We meet here once a year for three fun-filled carefree days, and you run out of time to make my favorite.

ALICE. I said I'm sorry. Now drop it.

MARGO (*trying to suppress shock*). Never fear. My nice neighbor Rosalee dropped off a box of her homemade chocolate-cream biscuits. Of course, the lord and master was present and thinks I left them in the fridge for him. (*She brings box from her bag and holds it up.*) Ta-ra!

ALICE. Must you?

MARGO (*laying box on coffee table*). Never know when to keep my big mouth shut.

(She sits. They drink coffee. Silence.)

MARGO. Want to tell Mummy all about it? Hubby dear worse than usual? Alice?

(ALICE rises, goes to mirror, indicates dresses.)

ALICE. Lovely dresses? Becoming dresses? He insisted I buy them. Insisted. (*Looks critically at herself in mirror. She indicates blue dress, then brown.*) Told me this was the color of my eyes. Told him this was the color of my cheek.

MARGO (*coming to mirror, examining ALICE's cheek*). Why do you let him?

ALICE (*feeble joke*). Ac-tu-ally, if he'd at least let me say, "When."

MARGO. Stop me if you've heard this one. Someday we're just going to walk off into the setting sun, with nothing but a toothbrush and an old battered suitcase filled with cold hard cash. Arranged in stacks, each with a paper band around it marked "Fifty-dollar bills," "Hundred-dollar bills," "Thousand-dollar bills"! We'll dye our hair and get facelifts and take on dazzling new personalities. Go to America and become famous for being famous, and be chased by the paparazzi! Oh, Alice, we can do it. It *will* happen. Alice?

ALICE. Only the police will be chasing me.

MARGO. You won't be wearing those ugly dresses! You'll have a whole new glamorous wardrobe!

ALICE. For killing my husband.

MARGO. No-no, girl. We'll just take off. Leave our better halves—to their better halves. (*Laughs.*) That's a good joke, Alice, considering their wayward ways. You're not laughing. Alice? You didn't— You haven't done anything, ah, foolish?

ALICE. Ac-tu-ally.

MARGO. Alice? You're kidding. Aren't you?

(*ALICE sings softly "If I Had a Hammer."*)

ALICE. I'm starving. Let's have an early dinner. Luigi's. I'm in a mood for stuffed peppers—stuffed fresh as only Mama Mia! can stuff a pepper. And a big, lively, fresh-from-the-garden salad. And a good lively bottle of wine. A good, full-bodied, Mama Mia! bottle of wine.

MARGO. Alice? How—?

ALICE. An opportune moment, a weapon at hand. You know. An accident of opportunity.

MARGO. Of course! An accident!

ALICE. If you call his Artist of the Year Award falling off a shelf across the room and cracking him on the head while he sits at the piano playing his only favorite song outside of his own compositions.

MARGO. One favorite outside his own so-called compositions?

ALICE. "If I had a hammer." (*She hums; MARGO harmonizes.*) Almost an invitation, if you think of it. Almost a death wish. (*Hums song again; MARGO harmonizes.*) We could go Mexican. Juan's *quesedillas* are good. They advertise, "Good enough to die for." —Oh.

MARGO. It was an accident, of course. But how? And you're not upset?

ALICE. I was. Very upset. Then I looked at the clock. I was going to miss the 3:47 if I didn't get cracking. —Oh.

MARGO. But how did it happen? The accident? And why was he playing the piano? He doesn't play the piano.

ALICE. He wasn't playing the piano.

MARGO. You said—

ALICE. I said, he was sitting at the piano, not playing the piano.

MARGO. So he was singing and playing his guitar while he sat at the piano.

ALICE. Duh.

MARGO. Glad we got that straightened out. So the accident—?

ALICE. Could we eat first?