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Dramatic Publishing



Memory

A Very Short One-Act Play

By
JOHN O'BRIEN



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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(MEMORY)

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*Psychologists say you shouldn't grieve
After a certain number of years.
Though you're bereaved, you should dry your sleeve
After a certain tonnage of tears.
Maybe they think that love is something you order from Sears.*

MEMORY was first performed by Hovey Players of Waltham, Massachusetts, at the Spingold Theater, Brandeis University, May 14, 1980.

Andrew..... David Thomas
Jean Jean Fontechhio
Brother..... Philip Alibrande
Frank..... Sam Silverman

Director.....Ralph Tamao
Stage Manager..... Mike Johansen
Set Designer..... John Malone
Lighting Designer..... John Conway
Makeup Designer Rowena Dores

MEMORY
A Play in One Act
For One Woman and Three Men

C H A R A C T E R S

ANDREW a 30- to 50-year-old newspaper editor
JEAN Andrew's wife
ANDREW'S BROTHER close to Andrew's age
FRANK STOUGHTON a psychiatrist of any age

TIME: Evening, the present.

PLACE: The livingroom of an apartment.

Memory

SCENE: The room is dreary. It has a distinctly bachelor look.

ANDREW enters UL. He has his suit jacket slung over his shoulder. His tie is unloosened. He wears a black leather glove on one hand.

ANDREW. Jean? Jean, darling, I'm home. It's me, Andrew.
(He pours himself a glass of wine and sits on the sofa DC. He shuts his eyes and waits tensely.)

(JEAN enters UR. She is dressed in white. When she enters, and whenever she enters throughout the play, the stage becomes suffused with light. She crosses to the record player UC and passes her hand over it. As she does, the record starts to turn and the needle moves into place. We hear an old sentimental tune. When ANDREW hears the music, his face relaxes. JEAN goes to ANDREW and kisses him lightly on top of his head. ANDREW opens his eyes and takes her hand in his.)

ANDREW. Where were you hiding?

JEAN. In your heart.

ANDREW. A glass of wine.

JEAN. And I am thine.

ANDREW (holding up his wine glass). Aladdin's lamp.

JEAN. And your genie answers.

ANDREW. My Jeannie with the light brown hair. (JEAN sits on the rug next to the couch.)

JEAN. I'm on the magic carpet, master. Where to?

ANDREW. Our first dance.

JEAN. Again?

ANDREW. Again and again.

JEAN. In the ninth grade.

ANDREW. You wore a yellow dress . . .

JEAN. You had a bow tie . . .

ANDREW. And red lipstick . . .

JEAN. That clipped on . . .

ANDREW. And silk stockings.

JEAN. And kept slipping off.

ANDREW. We were children.

JEAN. It seems that way, looking back.

ANDREW. I didn't feel like a child.

JEAN. A man?

ANDREW. A god.

JEAN. My first.

ANDREW. Your first?

JEAN. My first date, silly.

ANDREW. For a minute, I thought . . .

JEAN. Now, Andrew, we've been through all that before.

ANDREW. You were my first.

JEAN. That's all in the past.

ANDREW. Why did we drift apart?

JEAN. I forbid you for the rest of this evening to speak in the past tense.

ANDREW. Just this one point.

JEAN. Not again.

ANDREW. We were friends when we were . . .

JEAN. Children.

ANDREW. What happened?

JEAN. I don't know.

ANDREW. Why didn't we stay together?

JEAN. Does it matter now?

ANDREW. Those are important years, from seventeen to twenty-two.

JEAN. All years are important.

ANDREW. No, each year is less important. The early ones count the most.

JEAN (trying to joke him out of his mood). And I suppose the nine months before birth are more important than any nine months later.

ANDREW. Without a doubt.

JEAN. Maybe your father's childhood influenced you more than your own.

ANDREW. Maybe.

JEAN. But not so much as your grandfather's childhood.

ANDREW. Possibly.

JEAN. Where does it stop?

ANDREW. It doesn't.

JEAN. I've had enough of the past. Time out?

ANDREW. Time out.

JEAN. What about the present?

ANDREW. No present tonight. It's not your birthday.

JEAN. Very funny.

ANDREW. Couldn't resist.

JEAN. You haven't told me what kind of a day you had.

ANDREW. Like all the others, when I'm not with you.

JEAN. Don't try to tell me you don't like your work. I know better.

ANDREW. Putting out a newspaper is like playing baseball.

JEAN. How?

ANDREW. You know there's going to be a game, but you're never sure if you're going to win or lose.

JEAN. Did you win today?

ANDREW. I think so.

JEAN. But that's not enough?

ANDREW. If I had the job and not you, I'd crack up.

JEAN. Don't say that.

ANDREW. But if I had you and not the job, I'd survive.

JEAN. Silly man.

ANDREW. How about your day?

JEAN. You don't have to ask that.

ANDREW. I just want to hear you say it again.

JEAN. I wait for you all day. I listen for your footsteps in the hall.

ANDREW (teasing). Then why weren't you here when I came in?

JEAN. I had to fix my hair. I wanted to look special for you.

ANDREW. You always look special.

JEAN. Love is blind.

ANDREW. And deaf.

JEAN. And dumb.

ANDREW. And wonderful.

JEAN (breathing deeply). Peace.

ANDREW. Peace. (The telephone rings harshly.)

JEAN. I'm not here.

ANDREW. Coward.

JEAN. I've had enough of the outside world. (She passes her hand over the record player. The music stops.)

ANDREW. Maybe it's a wrong number.