

When The Cooking Is Done

by

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Cast of Characters

MARZA:

Late 50's

CHELLI:

Late 50's

Place

Kitchen

Time

Morning

Setting: Marza and Chelli prepare food in Marza's kitchen

At Rise: Marza and Chelli push the turkey roast into the stove together.

MARZA: The cooking, it's done...I'm done.

CHELLI: You only just put it in.

MARZA: That's all.

CHELLI: About three and a half hours?

MARZA: Yes.

CHELLI: Where's the crackers for the pudding pie?

MARZA: This turkey is the last of it.

CHELLI: But aren't we preparing the pie?

MARZA: No more.

CHELLI: We aren't making the pudding pie?

MARZA: No more. No.

CHELLI: Isn't Diego going to want you to make it?

MARZA: Yes.

CHELLI: And you aren't making it?

MARZA: Not anymore.

CHELLI: We all love your pudding pie. (beat) Why won't you make it?

MARZA: He didn't come to the theatre. Last week. He didn't come.

CHELLI: I would have gone with you, if Diego couldn't make it.

MARZA: I didn't wish to invite you.

CHELLI: Oh.

MARZA: You are a pain in the ass. Anyone's ass but especially my ass. I went alone, by myself, alone.

CHELLI: Why go alone?

MARZA: It was good for me.

CHELLI: To go all by yourself, Marza?

MARZA: It was the most extraordinary time I've ever had alone. It felt unreal, like I stepped into a different world altogether. ...I was upset because he tells me last minute that he cannot go. I was so angry with him. This was something we planned months in advance. Three hours time max, together. No preparation. He blames work. Always. I've had enough. I've finally had enough...

I was all ready to leave and so I left as soon as I hung up the phone with him. I was so mad I could not believe it. I left the house in a rage. Didn't even remember if I had locked the front door. I think I did. He would have said something. I went to the train and something took over me. I was lost. I felt different. Free. Like I had stepped out from the shadows. I don't know. I was uplifted. I felt like the speed of the train. Energy. Such energy.

I reached the theatre. Watched the play. I only watched half. At intermission I left. Not because the play was boring but because it was the greatest play I had ever seen. I wanted to imagine the ending. I didn't want it spoiled. Instead, I walked into the night. Over the bridge, back again, over again...I imagined all the people from the play. The daughter, the husband, the wife, the sisters...all the characters I somehow knew. I knew these people. Intimately. Closely. I could think their thoughts. Live their lives. I wanted them to be happy. To be brave. To love.

...It suddenly occurred to me that if I was able to invent the outcome of the people's lives in the play, that I should have the power to invent my own life, the way that I want it lived. I could not stop thinking about this. I began to understand that there were things I wanted changed. Things about myself; what I do with my time; what matters most in my own play? ...My life; our lives are theatre, aren't they? We write our own narrative. And if something is wrong with your narrative, you *must* change it. You *must* be strong enough to change it! And so, I've decided, over the last few days, that I am going to change my story. I'm going to do the things that only I wish to do and I do not care what anyone else will think.

CHELLI: Is that why you don't want to make your pudding pie?

MARZA: That is *exactly* why I don't want to make my pudding pie. *Exactly!* Tonight is the final dinner I will ever cook.

CHELLI: It is?

MARZA: The final one.

CHELLI: I don't believe you.

MARZA: Believe me.

CHELLI: What about Diego and the kids?

MARZA: They are all grown ups. I cannot baby everyone forever.

CHELLI: But Diego works.

MARZA: So?

CHELLI: What do you do?

MARZA: I'm changing my story.

CHELLI: You are going to destroy your marriage.

MARZA: I don't care.

CHELLI: But you love to cook.

MARZA: Not anymore.

CHELLI: I don't believe you one bit.

MARZA: Chelli, I am telling you something. There is no way I am ever going to lift another pan or pot in this kitchen. No way!

CHELLI: What is the name of this play that you have seen?

MARZA: The name slips my mind...

CHELLI: The play is fake!

MARZA: I play is a fictional world, of course it is fake.

CHELLI: NO, you are making this whole thing up!

MARZA: I did go to the theatre and this play changed my life. I don't give a damn whether or not you believe me. My actions will make you see the truth. My truth.

CHELLI: I want to see this play.

MARZA: No.

CHELLI: Why not?

MARZA: It isn't for you.

CHELLI: Am I in the play?

MARZA: How can you be in the play?

CHELLI: You mentioned sisters. Am I one of the sisters in this play?

MARZA: Not really. No.

CHELLI: Forget it. I don't like this.

MARZA: You aren't in the play.

CHELLI: What else are ypu going to stop doing?

MARZA: I'm starting, not only stopping. I'm going sky diving.

CHELLI: You want to jump out of a plane?

MARZA: Yes!

CHELLI: Are you feeling well?

MARZA: What?!

CHELLI: Do you have the flu? Are you feeling sick?

MARZA: This is why I can't talk to you.

CHELLI: I'm serious, did you bump your head recently?

MARZA: I want a better life!!!

(Pause.)

CHELLI: Go for a drive...

MARZA: I want to do things. Experience things. I want no more of this mundane existence. No! I want to do new things. Feel new things. Something different. Anything, anything but this...I want to feel, feel, feel!

CHELLI: Jumping out of planes.

MARZA: Yes!

CHELLI: You are not well.

MARZA: I'm alive!

CHELLI: You will be placed in a mental home.

MARZA: No.

CHELLI: You can still make dinner for your husband who works all day, slaves, slaves all day at his miserable job. You can make some sort of contribution and stop having such selfish thoughts. Then you will only be considered half crazy...as long as you contribute and hold your own.

MARZA: I have to take my stand. I cannot live my life for other people only. If everyone treated me first, more often, maybe...So, why can't I? I don't want to forget who I am. I want to exist. I want to remember ME.

CHELLI: Are you making the pudding pie?

MARZA: No.

CHELLI: Want me to make it?

MARZA: ...You could make it.

CHELLI: What are you going to eat?

MARZA: What do you mean?

CHELLI: If you're not cooking anymore...what will you eat?

MARZA: I'll eat what everyone else eats...at my own pace, in my own time, whenever I so desire. This is the last turkey roast I will ever make. When the cooking is done, I am done.

END OF PLAY