

No Returns

by

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Cast of Characters

JUSTINE:

40's

SHANICE:

30's

Place

Shanice's apartment

Time

Evening

2.

Setting: The play takes place inside Shanice's apartment. It's a stuffy yet cozy atmosphere, reminiscent of a college student apartment.

At Rise: The play opens up with Shanice drinking from a glass of white wine while seated on the living room sofa. Justine enters through the front door. Dinner could be seen on the kitchen table.

SHANICE: You actually showed up.

JUSTINE: Hi...

SHANICE: Didn't think you were coming.

JUSTINE: Car trouble.

SHANICE gives JUSTINE a disbelieving look.

(admittedly) ...It wasn't car trouble.

SHANICE: ...You hungry?

JUSTINE: Starving.

SHANICE points to the kitchen with her chin.

SHANICE: It should still be warm...maybe.

JUSTINE: Thanks.

JUSTINE tries to kiss SHANICE. She rejects her.

JUSTINE takes the rejection and enters the kitchen, fixing herself a plate of food.

SHANICE flips through the TV with remote.

JUSTINE enters the living room with her plate of food and utensils. She sits beside SHANICE.

SHANICE: You can't eat in here.

JUSTINE: Why not?

SHANICE: I had the old ratty carpet shampooed.

JUSTINE notices.

JUSTINE: Oh. Wow. Looks brand new.

SHANICE: Thought about getting a new carpet but it achieved the same result with a shampoo, so...

JUSTINE: Looks brand new.

SHANICE: I mean it, you can't eat in here.

JUSTINE: I won't spill anything.

SHANICE gives JUSTINE a dirty look.

...I promise.

SHANICE: You'll be buying me a brand new rug then. Not having it shampooed a second time.

JUSTINE: ...Thank you for the food.

SHANICE: Why are you so late?

JUSTINE: I almost didn't come. Not because I didn't want to see you, of course I want to see you, but I just...I feel bad about everything.

SHANICE: Feel bad about what?

JUSTINE: Damned if I do, damned if I don't.

SHANICE: What does that even mean?

JUSTINE: I'm on the outs with my wife, you know that.

SHANICE: Ha! You've been on the outs with her for the last three years.

JUSTINE: This is different. I'm grateful to her for everything she's given me, I mean...i've learned a lot about my own stamina. I used to be one of those women that you could bulldoze your way over and leave stuck to the ground. And I'd never get up but Alison taught me how to have strength, not be a pushover. I learned how to express and expand my feelings and how to handle the impact of hers. I was always a square, but with Alison I was broken open and saw life differently, better in some ways, but, it's gotten to the point where I can't even hold a conversation with her without...without us getting mad at each other...it's an abuse of the power we have over one another...there's nothing left but argument after argument. And for some sick reason I can't muster the courage to break free from all this...then there's you, Shanice...I love being with you, making love to you, but I don't know if it will ever be enough, just a piece to a puzzle that I'll never have all the pieces to and the result is that we use one another, don't we? And there's nothing more...I guess what I'm saying is that I know what we should do and I know that we can't keep ignoring it but I just can't find the strength to do it.

SHANICE: To what...leave?

JUSTINE: To leave the both of you.

SHANICE: I left my wife. Can't say it was for you Justine, but I left her to keep that door open between us.

JUSTINE: Well, I never made any promises.

SHANICE: Neither did I and I'm not holding you to anything.

JUSTINE: Yeah.

SHANICE: I'm not bothered by it one way or the other.

JUSTINE: You're not?

SHANICE: Not at all.

JUSTINE: Why?

SHANICE: Because I'm a grown up. I don't have time for little girl games. I am not interested in being one of those women who cry and wait for the woman she loves to make her big girl decision.

JUSTINE: Are you angry?

SHANICE: I don't know what you call it.

JUSTINE: So you do want to be with me?

SHANICE: That ship has sailed, don't you think?

JUSTINE: What's left?

SHANICE: Memories.

JUSTINE: Right.

SHANICE: Nothing wrong with that. We did what we did. It lasted for as long as it lasted and turned out the way that it did. That's life.

JUSTINE: Shouldn't there be something more?

SHANICE: Come on now, Justine. Stop playing yourself. It is what it is and it's fine.

JUSTINE: So, we're done? There's nothing more to it?

SHANICE: That's on you. It would be nice if you could say it because I think that would be good for you.

JUSTINE: Good for me?

SHANICE: I've known you long enough to give you the final decision on us because I think you need to. Maybe then, you'll end things with your wife once and for all.

JUSTINE: Okay.

SHANICE: Say it.

JUSTINE: What?

SHANICE: Say we are over.

JUSTINE: ...What good will that do?

SHANICE: I just told you.

JUSTINE: ...

SHANICE: Go on...

JUSTINE: ...Shanice, we are over.

SHANICE: How did it feel to put your big girl pants on?

JUSTINE: Felt...empowering.

SHANICE: Did it?

JUSTINE: Like I can climb a mountain.

SHANICE: Ha! Ha! You're stupid.

JUSTINE: But I appreciate you. I've always appreciated you being in my life, the calm you make me feel...never raising your voice...never allowing things to get the better of you, how do you do it?

SHANICE: Because I've learned in my life that I can only care to a certain point before I start chipping away at myself. I refuse to ever get shattered to pieces. All it does is waste time and I think our time, whilst we have it, is all we can control. What about your Wife, how does she see things?

JUSTINE: She's a volcano.

SHANICE: So you're afraid of her?

JUSTINE: I guess...I mean there's a lot at stake.

SHANICE: You're never gonna feel satisfied Justine unless you do what needs to be done. You need to live your own life....you've been running away here to me for a long time...it's time now to move on from her.

JUSTINE: Our kids.

SHANICE: They'll figure it out.

JUSTINE: It's not what I wanted. It's not what I had planned, I never imagined leaving her.

SHANICE: It never is...life moves too fast for us to see it and when we do, it's too late.

JUSTINE: Unfair, don't you think?

SHANICE: Maybe, when we have the wrong perspective. When we adjust our thinking, life is a dream.

JUSTINE: ...I have to end it...

SHANICE: You just need to put a label on the box and ship it away.

JUSTINE: No returns.

SHANICE: No returns.

END OF PLAY