

# Hot Ticket

(draft 0.2)

by  
Glenn Zucman

Glenn Zucman  
2623 Willard Avenue  
Rosemead, CA 91770  
(626) 307-4015  
writer@artboy.info

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The setting is a bare stage. Center is a  
brass bed that glows in the cold light.  
*Jill enters stage right.*

**JILL**

Hi, my name's Jill and I'll be your narrator this evening. I'd really like to thank you all for coming out tonight, by being here each of you is helping prove that theater in [Los Angeles] isn't the wasteland everybody tries to claim it is.

(goes to audience member and shakes hands)

Hi, I'm Jill, what's your name?

(introduces herself to several audience members in the first row  
and several up along the side aisle)

So, if you have questions or whatever, just let me know and I'll see if I can help you get through this. If you need the bathroom, it's over there. You don't... I assume you don't have any questions yet since the thing's just starting now, but if you have some as we go along just let me know. And anyway, I'll be inserting some stuff as we go to keep you on track.

Anyway, the thing is, well, basically, this is a really difficult play. You'll see people who love each other – but love won't be enough. You'll see people who want to save each other, but in the end all they can do is destroy each other. And the thing is, well, Catherine, she's our director, she keeps telling me that as the narrator my job is just to tell you what's going on, that it's not my job to tell you how to feel. But really, I just don't see how anybody could watch all this and not be bothered by it. I mean, at the very least, I think you should feel sad for these wretched, hopeless characters, who, I think, try so hard, but things just don't work for. And, even more, if you're open to it, I just don't see how you can not ask yourself how this all reflects on the veneer of your own allegedly happy, complete life.

I mean, look, I'm not stupid, I've been to lots of plays where they're always trying to manipulate your feelings and make you feel like this or think about that. And then when it's over maybe we go out for beers and say, well, she really gave a beautifully nuanced performance, it was so right on the edge, so honest so vulnerable. Or what about him – amazing! To be so powerful and then see it slowly, methodically, all taken away, what a performance. And we sit and

drink and talk about these pathetic characters and we think that because we have some idea of what makes their lives pathetic that somehow that makes us better or smarter than them or that it makes us immune to the failures and the desire and the empty voids of their lives. By discussing how pathetic they are we think it means we're not. By discussing how they can never truly join with each other we think it means that we *have* joined with each other. By discussing them really dealing with their relationship with each other we think it exempts us from really dealing with our own.

And the thing is, I've thought about all of this so many times before. And I know you're sitting there thinking the same thing right now. Maybe you're sitting there with somebody you've been married to for a long time. Between the careers and the kids you never really stop to think if you should be or why you are with this person. You just move on in life from task to task. You never really stop and say why am I even with this person? I mean, basically, that's just the whole fucking point, isn't it? You're so goddamn busy with your fucking pagers and cell phones and e-mails that you don't even have time to ask *why* you're doing any of it.

(calms herself down, straightens her clothes a bit)

Anyway, I wasn't really going to go into all that, at least not yet... Maybe that's totally not you anyway... maybe this is a first date... you're just sitting there, expecting us to emote or whatever so you can have something to talk about over beers later... what a troubled character... what a great performance... and anyway the main issue is probably just whether you'll get some action later tonight.

But the thing, and I'm sorry if I'm rambling, but the thing I'm just so bugged by is aside from having sex with your date and taking the kids to soccer, is there any other reason to be together? The people who are going to be on that stage... me... you as you're sitting here, is it all just pointless? Is it all just artifice for the things we're afraid to discuss. Is living with an asshole better than living alone? Anyway, the one thing I know for sure is that Christine's gonna kill me when this is over! So, um, listen, I'm sorry. Let's just back up to, hi, I'm Jill and I'll be your narrator tonight. This is kind of a heavy play, and I'm here to help you make your way through it if I can. I'm kind of like your ombudsman, or your concierge.

(to “above”)

Okay, Randi —

(to audience)

Randi’s our stage manager, she’s been just so great, she’s really been my best friend through all of this...

(she finds an aisle seat and sits)

(to “above”)

Randi, let’s start this thing! ... Curtain!

*Tony enters stage left.*

**TONY**

Hi, my name’s Tony... I’d really like to thank you all for coming out tonight, by being here each of you is helping prove that theater in [Los Angeles] isn’t the wasteland everybody tries to claim it is.

Anyway, I’ll be your narrator tonight, which basically means I’m like your ombudsman, or your concierge. This is kind of a fun, light play and hopefully I can make your experience with us here tonight all the more enjoyable.

Some of you may be wondering why we have a narrator. There’s lots of reasons. Maybe the events in this play span such a great space of time and place that you’ll need my help figuring out where you are sometimes. Or maybe the characters are a little bit psycho and you’ll need my help figuring out what’s going on with them. Of course, it could also just be that the playwright was lazy and it was easier to have me tell you what was going on than to take the time to reveal it to you in dialog, character and so on.

It doesn’t really matter. For whatever reason I’m going to help you figure out what’s going on in this thing tonight.

(goes to audience member and shakes hands)

Hi, I’m Tony, what’s your name?

(introduces himself to several audience members in the first row and several up along the side aisle)

So, if you have questions or whatever, just let me know and I’ll see if I can help you get through this. If you need the bathroom, it’s over there. You don’t... I assume you don’t have any questions yet since the thing’s just starting now, but if you have some as we go along just let me know. And anyway, I’ll be inserting some stuff as we go to keep you on track. I think this is gonna work out well, so why don’t we get started already,

(to audience)

Yes?

(to “above”)

Okay, stage manager, darling, why don’t we roll this thing already.

**JILL**

(rising)

Yes, I have a question: what exactly do you think you’re doing?

**TONY**

(to audience)

It was May.

**JILL**

It was June.

**TONY**

(to each other)

You say tomato.

**JILL**

I say tomato.

You said Long Dong Silver.

**TONY**

(to audience)

I did not.

**JILL**

You said there was pubic hair on your Pepsi.

**TONY**

I said there was pepperoni on my pizza.

**JILL**

I said, ‘don’t!’

I said, ‘stop now.’

**TONY**

She said, ‘don’t stop now...’

**JILL**

You just want someone to ignore.

**TONY**

You just want someone to smother.

You're stupid.

JILL

No, you're stupid.

TONY

No, you're stupid.

JILL

No, you're stupid.

TONY

No, you're stupid.

JILL

No, you're stupid.

TONY

No, you're stupid.

JILL

No, you're stupid.

TONY

No, you're stupid.

JILL

No, you're stupid.

TONY

No, you're stupid.

JILL

No, you're stupid.

TONY

No, you're stupid.

JILL

You son of a bitch.

TONY

Cunt.

(He finally said the 'C' word and Jill is brutalized. After a pause she speaks in a quiet unfocused voice.)

JILL

They say that fights in homosexual couples are shorter because the partners think and perceive more similarly.

TONY

Sexual response is also better.

(Jill's attention shifts into the house as if responding to a question.  
She puts her hand to her brow to shade the lights.)

JILL

Why do I love him?

TONY

I don't know.

JILL

It's been so long...

TONY

It's hard to remember.

JILL

When you stand in front of all your friends like that... everyone dressed so pretty and smiling. It's hard to imagine that this is the man who's going to forsake you for a stupid computer.

TONY

You just don't realize that she's going to become this breakfast monster that won't even allow you the simple pleasure of reading a paper.

Why?

JILL

I guess I thought I loved him.

Nine years ago. I remember the day. It was...

TONY

Nine weeks ago; we met at a laundromat.

JILL

We met at the park. My first marriage had just ended.

TONY

My business had just failed. How could anyone love a failure.

JILL

I felt thoroughly unlovable. Nobody would want me now.

I was this wretched waif. I looked up and saw this Adonis.

TONY

I was in rags and this goddess entered. She said I was a gem.

JILL

He said I was a gem; that he'd found a treasure... that he couldn't believe that everyone else had missed.

TONY

It was so great, the way she treated me when my friends were around.

JILL

I'll never forget how great he made me feel when no one else was around.

(Tony turns toward Jill and speaks with sincere feeling)

TONY

I love you.

JILL

(sincerely)

I love you.

TONY

(one upping)

I love you.

JILL

(seductively)

I love you.

TONY

(even bigger)

I love you.

JILL

(playfully)

I love you.

TONY

(frustrated)

I love you.

JILL

(hurt)

I love you, too.

TONY

(angrily)

I love you.

JILL

(bitter)

I love you.

TONY

(furious)

I love you!

JILL

(frightened)

I love you.

TONY

(threatening)

I love you.

JILL

(screeching as she slaps him)

I love you.

TONY

(recoils  
pauses a beat  
then apologizes)

I love you.

JILL

I guess I love him. I don't know. We've had our differences...

(warmly)

but he gave me our son. He was always so busy - I don't think he really wanted a son, but he did it for me...

TONY

She did it for me. The labor was horrible - she almost died. Things weren't so great then and I thought well, at least if we split I'll have my son out of it. And then when I almost lost her I remembered how much I loved her, how hard I had fought to get her. And then the baby didn't seem so important anymore.

JILL

And then that unpleasant little tax thing came up and there was much talk of jail. There were so many days I'd wanted to throw him away and then suddenly strangers were talking about taking him away. They wanted to take away a part of me. Suddenly the baby didn't seem so important anymore.

TONY

And then the baby got sick and nothing seemed so important anymore.

JILL

He'd always been underweight and I guess the virus hit him harder. The fighting stopped.

TONY

We hardly spoke at all.

JILL

We just clung to each other like frightened animals.

TONY

Like drowning rats clawing at an air hole. Then the baby died. I blamed her.

JILL

It was your fault.

TONY

No, it was your fault.

JILL

No, it was your fault.

TONY

No, it was your fault.

JILL

No, it was your fault.

TONY

No, it was your fault.

JILL

No, it was your fault.

TONY

No, it was your fault.

JILL

No, it was your fault.

TONY

No, it was your fault.

JILL

No, it was your fault.

TONY

No, it was your fault.

JILL

No, it was your fault.

TONY

You drank while you were pregnant! There's no more irresponsible thing a mother can do.

JILL

You were practically a drug addict; you don't think that's transmitted!  
(to audience)

Every time I yelled at him I became a little more convinced that it was my fault.

TONY

I blamed myself.

I thought we were pretty much over. There didn't seem to be much point in our staying together now.

JILL

Tanya said I could stay with her for a while; I didn't know if I should tell him or just take my stuff and go. I thought I'd wait till after the funeral.

TONY

And then there was the funeral. The night before was my longest nightmare. I couldn't sleep at all, I just turned restlessly and tried not to look at her.

JILL

Neither of us could sleep. We made love.

TONY

We had sex.

JILL

We fucked.

TONY

It was brutal, like we were punishing each other. But there was also a softness because I knew...

JILL

It would be our last time together. I know it was all pain for him, but strangely it made me feel better.

TONY

It helped, me anyway. I know it only hurt her. Morning finally came and we got dressed in silence. Silence, you know, is so hard to interpret.

JILL

Words, you know, are so deceiving. They never mean what you want them to mean and you can never really hear what anyone is saying because speech detached from the body language of the speaker is, deceit. So we dressed in silence.

TONY

It was a beautiful silence. She put on that black dress that had always seemed so seductive. But now her face was ashen and the dress wept.

JILL

He put on his black suit. I used to associate it with his vague unspecified protest against mysterious powers that lorded over the land. But now he was mourning our baby. Something real had died.

TONY

We had died.

JILL

We had shared death.

TONY

The church thing was all very beautiful. But then at the cemetery when everybody was throwing their handful of dirt on the coffin.

JILL

They were spitting on me.

TONY

They were burying me.

JILL

My family looked,

TONY

so disappointed, like I had failed.

JILL

I couldn't even succeed at the one thing they had made me for. And then Tony went and talked to my parents,

TONY

and she was so great. She told them about my feelings like I had never been able to tell them...

JILL

my parents, who had made careers out of pointing out my flaws and inadequacies...

TONY

and who lately had taken to pointing out how Jill wasn't good enough for their formerly inadequate son...

JILL

and he was taking it to them.

TONY

I couldn't believe all the things she told them.

JILL

He even had me convinced I'd been a good wife.

TONY

Husband.

JILL

(to Tony)

I lo...

(he covers her mouth with his fingertips)

(to audience)

He really saved my life that day.

TONY

She really saved my life that day.

I am afraid of death.

JILL

I am afraid of life.

(Tony turns to Jill and in American Sign Language he says, "I love you.")

(Jill responds in ASL, "I love you.")

(They hold hands)

(They kiss)

—CURTAIN—