

Two Excerpts From

**LEMONADE**

A Comedy

By Mike Folie

**Excerpt No. 1**

*[CARL is married to JANE but having an affair with JANE's best friend, BETSY. CARL's best friend, JIM, is in love with JANE. In the following scene, all four are spending an afternoon at an art gallery, when CARL finally succeeds in getting BETSY alone.]*

**BETSY**

They were going this way.

**CARL**

Hold on! I'm not finished talking to you.

**BETSY**

Well I'm finished talking to you.

**CARL**

You're not interested in Jim. You're just doing this to annoy me.

**BETSY**

Is it working?

**CARL**

Yes!

**BETSY**

Good. But you're wrong. I like Jim very much. We have a great deal in common.

**CARL**

Such as?

(SHE sees the same painting JIM and JANE were rhapsodizing over.)

**BETSY**

Gawd! Look at this monstrosity!

**CARL**

I don't know what people see in this garbage.

**BETSY**

(Shudders.)

Ugh.

**CARL**

I want you to stop seeing Jim.

**BETSY**

Oh, you do, do you?

**CARL**

Jim's a sensitive guy. I don't want you hurting him just to get at me.

**BETSY**

Since when are you so concerned about Jim?

**CARL**

Men bond in a way women can't understand. I learned all about it at a masculinity workshop I took last month. It's because we started out as hunters, hunting in packs. Then it was reaffirmed through centuries of fighting together as brothers in combat.

**BETSY**

You've never been in combat!

**CARL**

Of course not! It would be a terrible tragedy if someone with my potential were killed in combat.

**BETSY**

Yeah. Terrible. There'd be one less PR hack in the world (today.)

**CARL**

Stop this nonsense with Jim. He shouldn't suffer for our mistakes.

**BETSY**

I thought it was Tiffany who shouldn't suffer for our mistakes.

**CARL**

Her, too. And Jane. No one should suffer for our mistakes. Just us. We should suffer for our (mistakes.)

**BETSY**

You mean I should suffer for your mistakes. You've got everybody right where you want them. You've got Homemaker Barbie for a wife, Career Gal Barbie for a mistress. Jim for a friend and Baby Tiffany for a daughter. I'm the only one (suffering!)

**CARL**

Shhhhh! Okay! I concede the point. You've got the worst hand in this deal, granted.

**BETSY**

Well, thank you.

**CARL**

So now that we've identified the problem, how do we fix your hand?

**BETSY**

What do you mean "fix my hand?"

**CARL**

It's just a problem to be solved, right? Just like we do at work every day. So c'mon. Let's solve this problem. What would make you happy?

**BETSY**

Leave Jane and marry me.

**CARL**

Not a wise course of action at this point in time. Too much flaming debris.

**BETSY**

Huh?

**CARL**

There's Tiffany, the house, Jane's family, my family. Too much flaming, flaming debris.

**BETSY**

So you admit you won't leave Jane?

**CARL**

I didn't say that. I said it would not be viable at this time. In the future, after I've done the advance work, gotten my ducks in a row, then I could explore the option of spinning off Jane with a bare minimum of negative eventuality. Zero flaming debris. And our future long-term alliance would not, therefore, be tainted by any left-over vibratory dissonance.

(Pause)

**BETSY**

You are so full of shit.

**CARL**

Okay. Let's look at it from the other end. If we cannot successfully achieve your stated goals, let us re-examine their assumed utility. To wit, what's so goddamn bad about being my mistress anyway?

**BETSY**

Being your mistress sucks. Even the word "mistress" sucks.

**CARL**

Perhaps you only think it sucks because you have been trained, subliminally, to believe that it sucks. Maybe it doesn't suck at all.

(SHE looks dubious.)

You've been fed a steady diet of negative images from the culture, images based on traditional notions of sexual repression and gender inequality. Perhaps you are letting these preconceived and outmoded societal norms from our parents' generation distort your evaluation of this basically positive experience.

(Pause)

**BETSY**

You're awfully good, you know that?

**CARL**

Think about it. As my -- let's not use the tainted word "mistress" -- as my "alternative spouse" -- you don't have to put up with me all the time. You have a great deal of personal freedom. You are my societal equal, not dependent upon me financially. And, most importantly, you are not required to spend holidays with my family.

**BETSY**

I'll get old and you'll dump me.

**CARL**

I'll get old, too. And perhaps you'll dump me for some young stud.

(As if this settled it.)

Your argument is sexist in nature. Mine is feminist.

**BETSY**

I don't care! I want a husband!

**CARL**

I'm no bargain as a husband. For goodness sake, I cheat on my wife!

**BETSY**

Well, you wouldn't cheat if you were married to me.

**CARL**

I wouldn't?

(Slight pause.)

I wouldn't!

**BETSY**

Because I'd make you truly happy.

**CARL**

Well, of course.

**BETSY**

And because I know all your tricks and I'd kill you!

**CARL**

Are we beginning to see this situation in a new light?

**BETSY**

Nice try, Carl, but no cigar. I'm not going to settle for anything less than a husband and kids. And if you're not (going to . . .)

**CARL**

Marry Jim.

**BETSY**

What did you . . .?

**CARL**

Marry Jim

**BETSY**

Maybe I will.

**CARL**

No. I'm serious. Marry Jim, and continue to be my mistress!

**BETSY**

What?!

**CARL**

It's perfect! Brilliant! It solves everything! You get a husband, children, everything you want. We would still have each other. And we'd continue in the kind of relationship where we already have a proven track record.

**BETSY**

Furtive and sneaky?

**CARL**

Secret and delicious.

(Pause)

**BETSY**

I have a headache.

**CARL**

Think about it?

**BETSY**

I used to be such a good, smart girl. How did I get into this?

**CARL**

Just lucky, I guess. Think about it?

**BETSY**

I'm not promising anything.

**CARL**

You know me. I love suspense.

**Except No. 2**

*[JIM and JANE having been indulging in their shared passion for art by going to museums and shows together. In this excerpt, which ends Act I, they get caught in the rain.]*

(Sound of thunder and rain. Lightning flashes. Lights up on a freestanding doorway under an awning. JIM and JANE run into the doorway and huddle against the rain. Music out. The sound of rain continues under during most of the following scene.)

**JIM**

Wooo!

**JANE**

My God! That blew up fast!

**JIM**

Are you wet?

**JANE**

I'm not Carl. I can't walk between the raindrops.

**JIM**

Carl can walk between the raindrops?

**JANE**

Carl says that a Chu Wah master can walk in the rain without getting wet by walking between the raindrops.

**JIM**

And you believe this?

**JANE**

(Laughs, shaking HER head)

How about you? You're into that stuff, too, aren't you?

**JIM**

In Sha Zen they teach you to come in out of the rain.

**JANE**

Now that's what I call enlightenment!

(Pause. THEY become aware of how close THEY are.)

**JIM**

It'll blow over in a minute.

**JANE**

I'm so glad I didn't bring Tiffany.

**JIM**

Yeah, where is she today?

**JANE**

Carl has her. I insisted.

(Pause)

Thank you. So much. For going with me. To the show.

**JIM**

Oh, believe me, the pleasure's all mine.

**JANE**

These little gallery dates . . . outings, have become . . . well, very important to me. It's just so (nice to . . .)

**JIM**

They're important to me, too.

**JANE**

Oh, it's just charity work for you, I'm sure! Taking pity on the poor housewife!

**JIM**

Not at all.

**JANE**

Or as a favor to your friend, Carl.

**JIM**

You're more my friend now than Carl ever was.

**JANE**

Betsy's going to start getting jealous.

**JIM**

Betsy trusts me.

**JANE**

But does she trust me?

(Pause)

It was such a big thing for me to insist that Carl take Tiffany today. I had to steel myself to go through with it. And Carl was no help, of course. He bitched and moaned. I felt like this awful, selfish person. This terrible mother. Throwing off my child to do something for myself. To spend time with . . . with some man. But I wanted to do it. I needed to do it. I had to do it.

(Pause. JIM and JANE kiss. Not passionately, but a good, long kiss. THEY stop. JANE continues talking as if nothing happened.)

**JANE (CONT.)**

Having a child changes so many things. Before I was just "Jane." Now I'm always "Jane, the mother of Tiffany." And then if you want something (for yourself . . .)

**JIM**

Jane?

**JANE**

Yes?

**JIM**

We just kissed.

**JANE**

Oh, that was silly.

**JIM**

It didn't feel silly to me.

**JANE**

It was silly. The rain and . . . and everything. And being here. It was romantic. Like a movie. I'm a terrible person.

**JIM**

No you're (not!)

**JANE**

You don't know what goes on in my head. Sometimes I think I must be crazy. I'm a wife. A mother. I'm not just Jane anymore.

**JIM**

You are Jane. And . . . and I love you.

**JANE**

Oh, now you're being really silly.

**JIM**

I've loved you since the first night we met.

**JANE**

(Laughs)

You don't have to bring out the big "love" guns, Jim. I was standing here thrilled to death just because you wanted to sleep with me.

(Quickly)

Not that I'm going to sleep with you, so don't get excited.

**JIM**

I do love you.

**JANE**

You love Betsy. Everybody loves Betsy. Even in college everybody loved Betsy.

**JIM**

Jane . . . ?

**JANE**

No.

**JIM**

There are some things I think you should know.

**JANE**

(With more force than we've come to expect from HER)

No!

(SHE puts a finger to HIS lips. Gently.)

No.

(SHE kisses HIM.)

**JANE (CONT.)**

Don't say anything. Please.

(Pause)

We should go. I told Carl I'd be back by four.

(Pause. THEY don't move.)

**JIM**

I've completely blown it with you, haven't I?

**JANE**

You are so silly! You . . . We got caught in the rain. That's all. And we both went a little crazy. It'll blow over. Just like the rain. And then everything will be back to the nice way it was. You loving Betsy, me loving Carl, everybody loving little Tiffany and all of us . . . happy.

(Pause. SHE doesn't look very happy.)

**JIM**

Jane . . . ?

**JANE**

Yes, Jim?

**JIM**

One of my suppliers can get V.I.P. tickets to the Carravagio show at the museum. You want to go? Next weekend? What am I saying? You used to work there. You can probably get all the (V.I.P. tickets you want to . . .)

**JANE**

No! I mean, yes. I . . . I think . . . that would be lovely. I would like to go. With you. Please.

**JIM**

Jane, I could be blissfully happy the rest of my life just going to art galleries and museums with you once a week.

(Pause. THEY look at each other. SHE suddenly throws HER arms around HIM and kisses HIM again, this time with some passion. Blackout.)

END OF ACT I