

A Splash of Red

A 10 minute play
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Three young women are getting ready for a night out on the town. They discuss makeup, what to wear, and how to hide the blood. Based on a true story, it's a play about the real power those considered insignificant and dismissed actually have.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Hattie: 17-year-old girl

Zelda: 16-year-old girl

Mira: 16-year-old girl

SETTING

1941 A small bedroom of a modest home in Holland, Hattie's house

A SPLASH OF RED

The year is 1941. Two young girls are in the small bedroom of a modest home in Holland, putting on makeup as they talk. They are both skinny but bubbly. There are a few dresses scattered around on the floor and furniture is sparse. Neither girl is wearing shoes, but both are dressed as for a party. There is a dirty shovel propped in the corner.

HATTIE

Mira said she'd be here by seven. She had to make dinner for her father. Where's my lipstick, the red one?

ZELDA

She wasn't making him a 12-course meal--honestly, how long does it take to fry some meat and boil a few potatoes? It's after eight. She should be here by now.

HATTIE

(still searching for the
lipstick)

Stop worrying about her. She can handle herself.

ZELDA

Remember that time when she ran into the officer as we were delivering the documents?

HATTIE

Yea. She did good. She knew what to say--and what not to say, which is the more important skill, if you ask me. She's a natural sneak.

ZELDA

What is she ran into the same officer again?

HATTIE

Zelda, stop. You're getting yourself all worked up again. Mira is a big girl. We all are. (Examines her closely) Are you sure you're still up for this?

ZELDA

(determined)

Huh. Are you kidding? I'm always ready for this. How're my cheeks? Do I need more blush? I want to look innocent.

They giggle.

HATTIE

It looks good--Nubile. I'd go with a different shade for the lips though. That pink clashes with your dress. You can use some of my red once I find it. I know it's around here somewhere.

ZELDA

The guys don't care about whether the color of my lips match my dress anyway. They'll be looking at either my chest or my face, but mostly my chest. Do you remember that bar we went to, the one with the green lights strung over the dance floor?

HATTIE

How can I forget? That's the night I ended up with the soldier with the mustache and uneven haircut. Ugh, that guy. It was worth it though--He had some good information.

ZELDA

Right. The one I got--the guy with the buck teeth and the big ears--when we were walking into the woods, I asked him what color my eyes were, and he couldn't even tell me. He'd been staring at me all evening and the pitiful fool couldn't even tell me if my eyes were blue or brown: Didn't even want to guess. It was like his mind couldn't even go there.

HATTIE

Eyes would have made you a real person.

ZELDA

Exactly. I was a pair of boobs, no details--Until I pulled out the gun. Then, he was able to focus.

HATTIE

Ha! I'm sure of that! Nothing like a mortal threat to recalibrate one's attention.

ZELDA

He didn't cry though, I'll give him that. He was firmly in the fantasy world of his own making until the end.

HATTIE

Not my mustache guy. He was 100% present. Cried and whined like a god damned baby. It was pathetic. Ahh! Here's my red lipstick!

ZELDA

Why do you think they do that?

HATTIE

What? Cry?

ZELDA

No, crying I can understand, but beg? I mean, do they really think it'll work?

HATTIE

Sure. Why not--We're harmless little girls, after all. They always think they can talk some sense into us.
(Sarcastically adopts a girly voice) We're so malleable and weak.

They both laugh at this.

HATTIE

(examines the lipstick)

Not much left in this. Get what you can out, unless you want to stick with the pink.

ZELDA

I'm keeping what I have on--don't want to waste it. I think I hear Mira. (To off stage) Mira! Is that you?

HATTIE stands still and shushes
ZELDA for quiet. They both listen
intently.

HATTIE

(somewhat worried)

Quiet. I think that's my father. I'll go and see what he wants.

HATTIE exits. ZELDA checks her lipstick one more time in the mirror then goes to her handbag and retrieves a pistol. She handles it with a level of unexpected familiarity, checks the chamber, and returns to the mirror. HATTIE re-enters.

ZELDA

What did he want?

HATTIE

He was looking for his shovel.

ZELDA

What did you tell him?

HATTIE

Nothing. I told him I hadn't seen it.

ZELDA freezes and looks at HATTIE, who ignores her as she continues to apply makeup.

HATTIE

What? I'll put it back once we're done with it, and in the morning, I'll tell him it was there the whole time. It's what I do every time. There's a hollow tree about 12 yards into the forest where I stash it on our way to the bars. It's safe there. No one's going to see it.

ZELDA

But what about the dirt on the shovel? Won't he notice it's been used recently?

HATTIE

It's fine. I make sure to clean it off. Stop worrying. I have this.

ZELDA

One of these days, he's going to catch on. Then what are you going to do?

HATTIE

(shrugs) I'll improvise. I'll tell him that your cat died while giving birth, and I needed it to help you bury it. Something like that--he won't ask any more questions if I allude to reproduction in any capacity.

ZELDA

My dad was the same way--one mention of "that time of the month" and he'd clear the room in 3 seconds flat.

As the girls laugh, MIRA enters.
She is the same age as the others.
She tosses an overcoat covering a
plain frock on the floor and
dashes for the makeup.

MIRA

Holy smokes! I thought I'd never get out of there.

ZELDA

Where were you? We were dead worried about you. Thought that you'd been picked up or something.

MIRA

Me? Never!

HATTIE

What are you wearing?

MIRA

I couldn't get dressed at my house. I think my dad's getting suspicious. He kept asking me where we were planning on going.

ZELDA

You didn't tell him, did you?

MIRA

Sure, yea. I said, "My girlfriends and I plan to spend our evening picking up Nazi officers at a local bar, charming information out of them, and then taking them into the woods to kill them." And then he and I had a hearty laugh, and he said, "In that case, my dear, let me offer you my pistol."

ZELDA stands shocked and still,
unsure.

HATTIE

Mira, don't tell Zelda things like that. You know how she gets. Look at her--she believes you.

MIRA

Zelda! Stop being so gullible. Of course I said nothing of the sort. I told him we were studying. With exams coming up, it's fairly believable. Even for him, in his perpetually heightened state of alarm.

ZELDA

(more to herself)

You can't blame him, with what happened to your brother.

HATTIE

So he kept you in the house because he was suspicious?

MIRA

I think so, yea. He didn't say anything, but I think he knows that his gun is missing.

ZELDA

What? Why do you think that?

MIRA

Well, he didn't say anything, but I feel like he wants to say something to me but doesn't really want to know the answer.

HATTIE

Do you have the gun with you now?

MIRA

Yea, in my purse. So anyway, it's probably the last time I can do this with you girls. At least for a while. The last thing we need is for him to figure it out, panic, and try to stop us.

ZELDA

Fine by me. I'm starting to feel jumpy all the time. I can't help but feel like we're pushing our luck big time.

HATTIE

I'm okay with laying low for a while after tonight--Do normal stuff, stay out of trouble. But just for a little while. Mira, did you bring any towels?

MIRA

Oh, sugar! I meant to, but my dad had me all flustered, it was all I could do to remember the gun. Hattie, can I borrow a dress?

HATTIE

Sure. Look in my closet or on the floor. You can have one of our rejects.

ZELDA

I brought an extra towel. It was for Hattie, but you can use it Mira.

MIRA

Thanks.

MIRA steps behind a screen to change while the other girls continue to preen and get ready.

HATTIE

My ma is wandering where all of her towels are going.

ZELDA

(sarcastically)

You could bring them back to her, but the bullet holes might look kind of suspicious.

HATTIE

A little.

MIRA

(from behind the screen)

One thing about rationing food, it keeps the extra weight off.

ZELDA

Ahh. What I'd give to have to squeeze into my pencil skirt again. I might have to take it in again. Do you still have my sewing kit, Hattie?

MIRA

I have it. I borrowed it from Hattie to mend my dad's socks. I'll bring it to you tomorrow at school.

MIRA steps out, now dressed in a party dress. It fits loosely on her skinny frame.

MIRA

Ta-da! How do I look?

HATTIE

You look so pretty in red. It suits your complexion.

MIRA

I figure, you know, red was a sensible choice, for the splash-back.

She motions to simulate an explosion in front of her.

HATTIE

Dark colors, girls, dark colors.

MIRA approaches the mirror now and hastily begins applying makeup.

MIRA

We have to hurry, the officers tend to leave earlier than the enlisted men. So they're more rested for work, I guess.

ZELDA

Gotta be fully awake and alert for a day of terrorizing the local population.

HATTIE

Mira, you can use the last of the red if you want.

Hands her the lipstick.

MIRA

Thanks.

HATTIE

What are we going to do for lipstick next time?

ZELDA

There's still some of the pink left/

HATTIE

(takes on a German accent)

/We'll have to be good little Aryan women and display our naturally superior beauty without the corrupting illusion of beauty products, just as Der Furer prefers.

ZELDA

One more reason why Der Furer can stick it up his butt.

They giggle.

HATTIE

Zelda!

MIRA

I don't know about you girls, but I'm bagging an officer tonight. I've had it with these young, teen-age soldiers. They never know anything, and if this is our last chance for a while, I want it to count.

MIRA scrapes out the last of the blood red lipstick, applies it deftly, and turns to her friends.

MIRA

Well, how do I look?

ZELDA

Like a bombshell.

HATTIE

Killer.

MIRA

That, my dear friends, is exactly what I'm going for. Let's go.

The girls put on their heels quickly, grab their bags and coats from various surfaces, and rush out the door. HATTIE returns almost immediately grabs the shovel and takes her with her.

LIGHTS OUT. END OF SCENE