

# CELADINE

*Charles Evered*

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CELADINE

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charles Evered's published plays include: *The Size of the World and Other Plays*, *The Shoreham and Other Plays*, *WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS*, (B P P I), *CLOUDS HILL*, (B P P I), and *ADOPT A SAILOR*. Mr Evered is a graduate of Rutgers, Yale University and The Naval Aviation Schools Command in Pensacola, Florida. Additional plays include: *BOSTON*, *LOOKING AGAIN* and *TED'S HEAD*.

Mr Evered has written screenplays for Universal Pictures, Dreamworks and Paramount Pictures. He is married to Wendy Rolfe Evered and is the proud father of Margaret and John.

CELADINE was given its world premiere production at The George Street Playhouse (Managing Director, Mitchell Krieger; Producing Director, George Ryan) in New Brunswick, New Jersey, opening 19 November 2004. The cast and creative contributors were:

MARY ..... Leslie Lyles  
ELLIOT ..... Matt Pepper  
CELADINE ..... Amy Irving  
JEFFREY ..... Rob Eigenbrod  
ROWLEY ..... Michael Countryman  
*Director* ..... David Saint  
*Scenic design* ..... Michael Anania  
*Costume design* ..... David Murin  
*Lighting* ..... Joe Saint  
*Sound* ..... Christopher J Bailey

## CHARACTERS & SETTING

*CELADINE, forties/fifties, proprietor of the house*

*MARY, forties/fifties, CELADINE's maid servant and friend*

*JEFFREY, a youth, mute*

*ELLIOT, a striking actor*

*ROWLEY, an unassuming man*

*The play takes place in the Teale Coffeehouse, London, during the 1670's.*

*A note regarding music: Music in the style of mid-Baroque should be employed whenever appropriate, particularly during transitions.*

for *my* Margaret

## ACT ONE

*(In the darkness, music. Then, at rise, the main room of a coffeehouse is revealed. It is not well kept. Knocking is heard and a man's voice [ELLIOT])*

ELLIOT: Hello, inhabitants!? Hello! Hello! Is anyone present!? Hellooo!

*(A woman, MARY, enters. She seems to have just woken up and has a hard lived beauty about her. She walks to the door, shouts at it)*

MARY: Who dares knock at the crack of dawn?!

ELLIOT: Hark!? I warrant it is the "crack of noon," milady.

MARY: And what is that you say; "Hark!?" What is "Hark?"

ELLIOT: Only but a useful "term of art." You have my assurance.

MARY: I see. Then I would like to "Hark" as well: "Hark!"— do I detect the voice of an UN-interesting person?

ELLIOT: Why say you thus?

MARY: Because everyone interesting—is STILL ASLEEP! Now; tell me something interesting or I will go back to bed.

ELLIOT: Very well. *(Pause)* I—am an actor!

*(She starts to walk away.)*

MARY: Good day, sir.

ELLIOT: With—money!

*(The woman stops. Goes back to the door)*

MARY: You have money, you say?

ELLIOT: I do!

MARY: And you are an actor?

ELLIOT: That is correct!

MARY: Then you are a liar, sir. Good day.

*(She starts to walk off again.)*

ELLIOT: It is true, behold!

*(Coins slide under the door. The woman stops, looks back at them. She walks over, picks them up and inspects them. After fixing her hair a little, she opens the door. A handsome man steps in. He is dressed in clothes that appear finer than they are. The woman regards him, then)*

MARY: Your business, sir?

ELLIOT: This is the Teale Coffeehouse?

MARY: It is.

ELLIOT: Have you no customers?

MARY: Have you no vision?

ELLIOT: Do you know who I am?

MARY: Have you as yet identified yourself?

ELLIOT: Is it necessary that I must?

MARY: No sir, not at all. *(Pause)* Unless of course you want me to know who you are.

ELLIOT: Then you do *not* know?

MARY: Oh, but of course I do, sir.

ELLIOT: I naturally assumed you would.

MARY: You are the man I let in the house who keeps asking me whether I know him or not.

ELLIOT: But what of my features? The shape of my eyes, my chin? The familiar contour of my nose?

MARY: None provokes recognition, sir.

ELLIOT: Then what of this voice? No doubt you have heard this voice before?

MARY: I am afraid not, sir.

ELLIOT: Have you been to the theatre?

MARY: I have.

ELLIOT: Here in London?

MARY: Yes.

ELLIOT: And is your vision adequate?

MARY: My vision is fine, sir.

ELLIOT: Surely then you purchase seats far from the stage.

MARY: No sir. I sit up front.

ELLIOT: At the Drury Lane?

MARY: I do, sir.

ELLIOT: Then what of *The Plight of Zeus*? Did you not see that storied production?

MARY: I did see that production, sir. And who did you play?

ELLIOT: Zeus. The *title* character?

MARY: Oh. Oh, well—I do not have a great recollection, I am afraid. I do remember the production however.

ELLIOT: And your opinion of it?

MARY: I remember it as being—restful.

ELLIOT: "Restful?"

MARY: Yes. I recall the experience as being—fleeting in its entirety.

ELLIOT: "Fleeting?"

MARY: Aye, as though I had only to close my eyes—and when I opened them again three hours later, the entire experience had already passed. As though in—

ELLIOT: —a dream?

MARY: As good a word as any, sir.

ELLIOT: Then one would not be inaccurate in describing my performance as "encouraging of sleep?"

MARY: No sir, do not be so hard on your self. It did not "encourage" sleep as much as "facilitate" it.

ELLIOT: Yes, I thank you. That distinction does much to bolster my already acutely diminished self regard. Allow me to formally introduce myself: *(He extends his hand.)* Elliot Blakely: Actor, Tragedian.

MARY: Oh, yes, sir. Mary Maher: Harlot, Equestrian.

ELLIOT: What say you?

MARY: I jest, sir. I am allergic to horses. Now, as to your business?

ELLIOT: I am here for a play.

MARY: A play?

ELLIOT: Yes, I would like to order a play. Written for myself. This is the residence of the talented playwright and author Celadine, is it not?

MARY: At certain times.

ELLIOT: Do you act as her agent?

MARY: Among other things.

ELLIOT: Good. Then tell me: talk about town has it that she is “beside herself.” Is that true?

MARY: Who else would she be “beside”—except herself?

ELLIOT: Is she capable of another play?

MARY: There is no one more capable. I will tell her you called.

*(He bows ceremoniously.)*

ELLIOT: Pleasant day.

MARY: I thank you kindly, sir.

*(He exits. MARY closes the door behind him as suddenly we hear the sound of a woman, laughing. Bursting through the back door, on the shoulders of a handsome young man is CELADINE. She is laughing and whipping the young man playfully with her fan as he trots her around the room, stomping like a horse. MARY looks up in astonishment.)*

MARY: What is this, milady?

CELADINE: Why, it is my new steed, Mary—have you no eyes?

MARY: Your new steed, eh? Might I have a go?

CELADINE: There will be time enough for that. First, let me “break him in” myself!

*(They both laugh as the young man begins to slow down.)*

CELADINE: There’s a good horsy. Now, do put me down. Such a good horsy.

*(The young man gently lowers her to the ground. She dismounts.)*

MARY: You have been out all night.

CELADINE: Are you my mother now?

MARY: And where did you find your—mount?

CELADINE: Oh, he found me, the dear child. I broke the heel of my shoe and the sweet thing pounced out of nowhere and saved me, carrying me all the way across Saint James. Is he not a sight for sore eyes?

MARY: And for rested ones as well.

CELADINE: And do you know what I like about him best?

MARY: I can wager a guess—

CELADINE: —you would be wrong.

MARY: Then what?

CELADINE: He cannot speak.

MARY: Can he not?

CELADINE: No. And as a result, we have gotten along passing well. Which leads me to surmise that the problem with the other men I have known is that they could speak.

MARY: That has the sound of reason.

CELADINE: Go on, try to speak with him.

MARY: Very well.

*(MARY looks toward the young man, who smiles cheerfully.)*

MARY: Come hither, boy. *(He moves to her)* Tell me. Do you speak?

*(He motions toward his mouth, shrugging his shoulders.)*

MARY: Not at all?

*(He nods no.)*

MARY: Do you churn butter?

*(He nods yes.)*

MARY: And chop wood?

*(He nods yes.)*

MARY: And yet not a peep from you?

*(He nods no.)*

MARY *(To CELADINE)* I declare he is the perfect man.

CELADINE: I warrant we shall keep him.

MARY: But where?

CELADINE: Here, where else?

MARY: What will the neighbors say?

CELADINE: What they say already. Only now it will have a basis in fact. He goes by "Jeffrey."

MARY: How do you surmise?

CELADINE: I had him write it in the dirt. *(To JEFFREY)* Jeffrey, go to the kitchen and feed yourself.

*(She claps twice as JEFFREY promptly gallops into the kitchen like a horse. MARY turns to CELADINE.)*

MARY: You are reckless.

CELADINE: I am alive.

MARY: We can hardly afford to keep ourselves.

CELADINE: The poor thing has not eaten in days. And for your information: he cannot speak because he has no tongue.

MARY: No tongue? And how is that?

CELADINE: I heard a rumor—which of course means it is likely true—that as a boy of only fourteen—he spoke against his church so they cut out his tongue.

MARY: An evil act.

CELADINE: He can use shelter and we can use a strong back.

MARY: The strange reputation of this house will only increase.

CELADINE: If it is even possible.

MARY: Your kind heart will land us in debtors prison. We have a coffeehouse with no business and an increasingly odd roster of employees.

CELADINE: Put your trust in Providence.

MARY: I would, if Providence would see fit to pay our bills. You had two callers.

CELADINE: Did I?

MARY: One; an actor who wants a play.

CELADINE: I fear myself incapable.

MARY: We can make use of the money.

CELADINE: I am not much for worldly concerns of late.

MARY: When have you ever been?

CELADINE: I am going up to rest my eyes.

*(She starts up the stairs)*

MARY: You were seen, Celi.

*(CELADINE stops.)*

CELADINE: What is it you say?

MARY: You were seen—witnessed, in your—"attempt."

CELADINE: My "attempt."

MARY: At Westminster.

CELADINE: What is it you think you know?

MARY: That you made your way to the top, to the left spire. You walked out to the ledge and that if it were not for the bell ringer, Stephens—

CELADINE: —you lack understanding.

MARY: I understand a true friend would never—

CELADINE: —I was collecting air for my lungs.  
I was out for a walk. No more. No less.

MARY: Do you regard me as ignorant?

CELADINE: You are the true dramatist, Mary.

MARY: And so I know nothing of the workings of your heart?

CELADINE: You are as accurate regarding the intent of my heart as critics have been regarding the intent of my pen. And what if I had such a fanciful thought, eh? You saw the sign. You yourself saw the candle go out.

MARY: Pray, no more of the candle.

CELADINE: You saw it as clearly as I. I held the candle. It illuminated *her* face—the painting you made of her face, and without even a breath of air, OUT it went. Could that not be construed as a sign? She beckons me.

MARY: This is how rumors begin.

CELADINE: What “rumors?”

MARY: That you are losing your mind.

CELADINE: But what “rumor” is that? That is a fact! I am but a ghost to myself.

MARY: You are no “ghost,” only a self involved coquette.

CELADINE: And you Mary are a simple and dull stone.

MARY: Children die.

CELADINE: What is that you say?

MARY: Children die.

CELADINE: Is that how we regard her now? Now she is consigned to be known as nothing but a subject in a sentence outlining a general statement of fact? Lumped

in altogether, just one in a line of any such “sad” occurrences—

MARY: —yes, except that we loved her.

CELADINE: By Heaven, “Loved her”? Is that all we did? Did you not raise her with me? Did she not curl herself against *your* breast as well as mine? Do you not recall the way the world collapsed into a tunnel of light when she would bless us with something as seemingly inconsequential as a *grin*? How we would have to catch our breath when she saw fit to reward us with a smile?

MARY: I remember, yes.

CELADINE: And her laugh? What of that, eh? Do you not recall how every care in the world fell off us—when it would wake us up in the morning? Her laughter was more profound than scripture. It danced around moons. It lit dark caverns. It leapt mountains and thrust spears of truth into cynical and blackened hearts and yet all you can do is “remember”?

MARY: I am not deserving of this.

*(Pause)*

CELADINE: Dear Mary—

MARY: ...someone else came.

CELADINE: Who?

MARY: “Rowley,” I believe he called himself.

CELADINE: Did he?

MARY: Yes. He seemed to have the demeanor of a used horse salesman. Somewhat “shifty,” I thought.

CELADINE: Was he alone?

MARY: Entirely.

CELADINE: And his message?

MARY: That he would call again.

*(CELADINE starts up, then stops again, looks down at MARY.)*

CELADINE: Your love for me—breaks my heart.

MARY: That is not my intention. My love is meant to repair it.

CELADINE: Such is my misfortune—for not being able to tell the difference.

*(Knocking is heard. MARY starts for the door)*

CELADINE: I will answer it. You make sure our friend has enough to eat.

MARY: Aye.

*(CELADINE walks over to her, kisses her sweetly on the cheek.)*

CELADINE: My sweet, Mary.

*(MARY smiles, goes into the kitchen. CELADINE turns to the door, shouts)*

CELADINE: Who knocks?!

*(A voice from the other side of the door.)*

VOICE: It is a friend, milady.

CELADINE: And *who* is my friend?

VOICE: Why, “the truth” milady. The truth is your friend.

CELADINE: Pray, why is the truth my friend?

VOICE: Because whether you believe it or not—it remains.

*(She slowly opens the door, then walks away from it. Stepping inside is an unassuming middle aged man with tufts of unkempt hair sprouting off his head. The man stops and regards her. She turns back at him.)*

CELADINE: "Rowley."

ROWLEY: At your service.

CELADINE: You have aged.

ROWLEY: You have not.

*(He presents her with a pineapple he had hidden behind his back.)*

CELADINE: What is this?

ROWLEY: It is called a "Pine Apple."

CELADINE: It is very odd.

ROWLEY: I have rather taken a liking to them. "Prickly on the outside, yet soft and sweet on the..."

CELADINE: —oh, do spare me your tired metaphors. Only stupid women in need of money would abide them.

ROWLEY: You have not changed.

CELADINE: State the purpose of your visit.

ROWLEY: If you ever loved me, it was only for who I could have been—not for who I was.

CELADINE: I was in love with you. For who you were.

ROWLEY: I failed you.

CELADINE: You failed yourself.

ROWLEY: You see, I cannot tell you how much I miss that. Being spoken to like that. No one insults me anymore. I cannot pay people to insult me. And I have!

CELADINE: Make a habit of telling your friends the truth. I promise—you will be insulted.

ROWLEY: I did see your latest play.

CELADINE: Did you?

ROWLEY: It was revolutionary.

CELADINE: Yes, revolutionary and un-attended.

ROWLEY: It can be said you do not write for the many-headed multitude.

CELADINE: Have you come here to state the obvious? Perhaps you would care to remind me that water is wet?

ROWLEY: Your work has more merit than that of Aphra Behn.

CELADINE: THAT is a name you would do well never to mention in my company again.

ROWLEY: But why? She is not half the writer you are. Anyone can write in accordance with people's wishes. It is more than whispered in several corners of only the most august literary salons that *you* dear lady, are the most brilliant writer in all of England.

CELADINE: Yes, and the least successful.

ROWLEY: Oh, but Miss Behn is only—sorry, “you know who,” is more or less perceived as nothing but a literary facilitator, really.

CELADINE: She does write to taste, that is true. State your purpose or leave. I require sleep.

ROWLEY: There, see, *that!* Extraordinary. You want to take leave of me—*before* I make it clear I would like to take leave of you. No one does that to me anymore. I cannot tell you how much the pure audacity of that thrills me!

CELADINE: Shut the door behind you. (*She starts up the stairs.*)

ROWLEY: Your country—is in need of your service.  
(*She turns back to him.*)

ROWLEY: The Dutch. An invasion is feared any day. Your skills of cunning are much in demand.

CELADINE: This is a worldly consideration I no longer find compelling.

ROWLEY: The matter is pressing, I can assure you.

CELADINE: Do you never think of her anymore? Does she never appear to you as she does to me? Do you ever hear her voice? Do you ever have a recollection even? You may not have raised her, but she was yours as well as mine.

ROWLEY: —as you might have imagined, I have been somewhat “otherwise engaged.”

CELADINE: Go thy ways; out of my sight.

ROWLEY: What else would you have me say?

CELADINE: That you *recall* her! That in some corner of your being she still lives.

ROWLEY: Unlike you, I do not have the luxury of so frequently taking a dip in the inviting and medicinal waters of self pity.

*(She grabs a candle holder off the table, threatens him with it.)*

CELADINE: You do not get insulted enough? Is that your complaint? If you utter one more glib word— I will beat the repulsive smugness right out of you.

*(He slowly manages to lower her hand)*

ROWLEY: So you are as mad as they say.

CELADINE: It was you who put us on that ship.

ROWLEY: And so now I am Prospero—responsible for the weather as well?

CELADINE: I wish for you to die in a little way—like little men do. *(She starts up the stairs.)*

ROWLEY: I do not recall her. But not for the reasons you think. I do not recall her for my own self-preservation.

*(He starts toward the door. She turns to him.)*

CELADINE: Stop!

*(He turns.)*

CELADINE: I may—be inclined to help you. *(Pause)*  
But only for something in return.

ROWLEY: You will be paid.

CELADINE: Your money continues to hold little sway  
over me.

ROWLEY: Then what?

CELADINE: I want her raised from the dead.

ROWLEY: You are in ill humor.

CELADINE: In name, at least. I want her to have existed  
in name. I want her acknowledged—as your own.

ROWLEY: For reasons outside of my own control,  
that may not—

CELADINE: —then we have no business, goodnight.

*(She starts up the stairs)*

ROWLEY: Very well!

CELADINE: And you will swear on it?

ROWLEY: Yes. *(Pause)* Goodnight, Celadine.

CELADINE: Goodnight—good Rowley.

*(He leaves. CELADINE stands frozen on the stairs as the  
lights fade to black with music.)*

*(Lights come up again the next day, as we see MARY  
standing over JEFFREY who is on his knees, drawing on  
the floor with a piece of charcoal.)*