

LOVE LOVES
A
PORNOGRAPHER

(or PLEASE AS YOU PLEASE)

Jeff Goode

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LOVE LOVES A PORNOGRAPHER

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeff Goode is the author of over fifty plays, musicals and children's shows, including the new holiday classic, MARLEY'S GHOST, and the off-Broadway cult hit LARRY AND THE WEREWOLF.

On television, he created the animated series *American Dragon: Jake Long* for the Disney Channel.

LOVE LOVES A PORNOGRAPHER is the winner of five *Backstage* Garland Awards, as well as the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Distinguished Achievement in Writing.

You can follow Jeff's further adventures on his website: www.jeffgoode.com

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DRACULA RIDES AGAIN
LARRY AND THE WEREWOLF
MARLEY'S GHOST

LOVE LOVES A PORNOGRAPHER was presented as a workshop reading in the hotINK International Festival of Play Readings on 28 January 2007 at the Tisch School of Arts Department of Drama (The Classical Studio), Daniel Spector, Curator. The cast and creative contributor were:

FENNIMORE Larry Petersen
MILES MONGERGreg Jackson
MILLICENT MONGERErin Quinn Purcell
LADY LOVEWORTHY Rosemary Quinn
LORD LOVEWORTHY Timothy McCown Reynolds
EMILY LOVEWORTHYKristen Sieh
EARL Steven Stout
Director Jeremy Dobrish

The world premiere production of LOVE LOVES A PORNOGRAPHER opened 17 November 2007 at [Inside] the Ford Theater in Los Angeles, a production of the Circle X Theater Company (produced by Tim Wright and Jillian Armenante, associate produced by Jennifer A Skinner). The cast and creative contributors were:

FENNIMORE Weston Nathanson
MILES MONGER Jim Anzide
MILLICENT MONGER Johanna McKay
LADY LOVEWORTHY Gillian Doyle
LORD LOVEWORTHY William Salyers
EMILY LOVEWORTHY Kathleen Rose Perkins
EARL Matt Ford

Understudies: Rebecca Avery, Alice Dodd, David Fruechting, John Lovick, Lily Rains, Doug Sutherland, Tim Wright

Director Jillian Armenante
Scenic design Gary Smoot
Lighting design Karl Gajdusek
Costume design Paul Spadone
Sound design Jillian Armenante
Prop design Ali Hisserich
Stage managed Mel Stone
Assistant directed Abigail Marateck
Assistant stage managed Kathleen Ressegger
Scenic artist Sharon Mayerchak
Master carpenter Chris Goodson
Board operator Rich Lehmann
Postcard/program design Kevin Fabian

Publicist Virginia Schneider
Photographer Benno Sebastian
House manager Paul Tigue

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

FENNIMORE, *a butler*

MILES MONGER, *a literary critic*

MILLICENT MONGER, *his wife, an avid reader*

SIR CYRIL LOVEWORTHY, *an acclaimed novelist*

LADY LILLIAN, *his wife, a diarist*

MISS EMILY LOVEWORTHY, *their daughter*

EARL KANT, *her fiancé*

To...

Patricia Decker

(without whom this play would be, hamster shavings)

and the Tisch School of Arts'
hotINK International Festival of Play Readings

Catherine Coray, Festival Director
Bev Mitchell, Producer
Marla Shaffer, Production Manager
Chantel Bilodeau, Literary Manager

And for lending their talent and encouragement to this
piece from the very beginning:

Eve Armstrong
Michele Begley
Bridget Ann White
Wayne Yeager

Thank you.

ACT ONE
Lord Loveworthy's Wager

(Scene: The Parlour of Loveworthy Manor.)

(FENNIMORE the butler enters, clears his throat.)

FENNIMORE: Ahem...The Reverend and Mrs Miles and Millicent Monger!

(MILES MONGER enters, as if to thunderous applause, followed by his wife MILLICENT, quietly engrossed in a book.)

MILES: Good afternoon, your Lordship, what an unexpected pleasure it is to finally...and so graciously...be invited into...

(But the room is empty.)

MILES: Fennimore?

FENNIMORE: Yes, sir?

MILES: This room is unoccupied.

FENNIMORE: On the contrary, sir. You are in it.

MILES: But Lord Loveworthy and Lady Lillian are not.

FENNIMORE: That is a keen observation, sir.

MILES: Why, then, did you bother to introduce us?

FENNIMORE: You asked to be introduced, sir.

MILLICENT: *(looking up from her book)* You did ask, Miles.

FENNIMORE: Rather insisted on it, as I recall.

MILLICENT: Quite prickly about it, in fact, weren't you, dear?

FENNIMORE: You seemed convinced of the need for a formal introduction, sir. And when a guest is mistaken, one prefers to err on the side of hospitality.

MILES: An error the Loveworthys have not condescended to commit.

MILLICENT: Perhaps they are unavoidably detained. Will Lady Lillian and Sir Cyril be joining us shortly, Fennimore?

FENNIMORE: I don't see as that's possible.

MILES: Are they not even on the premises?

FENNIMORE: Certainly they are. But it is a very large house. I doubt they are as yet aware of your arrival.

MILES: Can no one make them aware of it?

FENNIMORE: If you like, sir, but it's better if I do it.

(MILES *glowers.*)

MILLICENT: We would appreciate that, Fennimore, thank you.

(FENNIMORE *exits.*)

MILES: Well, here's a fine welcome!

MILLICENT: We must be the first to arrive.

MILES: That goes without saying, as we are the only ones here. And we are like to be the last to arrive, as well, as we are the only ones invited. It is to be you and I and the Loveworthys for tea this afternoon.

MILLICENT: Just the four of us? Won't that be lovely!

MILES: Indeed, it won't be lovely, if the Loveworthys do not deign to grace us with their attendance. What sort of host extends an invitation of a social engagement,

only to leave his guests entirely to their own diversion?
It is unconscionable.

MILLICENT: Must you always be so critical?

MILES: Yes, in fact, I must, my dear. I am, after all, a critic. And no less a one than the chief literary critic for the *Times* of London, the foremost periodical in Her Majesty's kingdom. Therefore, it would be a betrayal not only of my personal circumstances, but of the very integrity of our national press, for me to be anything less than acutely critical of all things at all times and in all places. And it offends me, both as a journalist, and as your husband, that you would have me abandon the very characteristic which has defined both my life and my livelihood for as long as we two have been married.

MILLICENT: You are right, of course. As always. But it's hardly a wonder we are not invited to more garden parties.

MILES: Yes, I'm sure I am entirely to blame for our societal estrangement, as no one has ever been ostracized for being an opinionless mop.

MILLICENT: Very well, I apologize. But there's no need to be cruel. You know how it brings me to tears. *(Sobbing)* Oh! There I go.

MILES: Well, compose yourself immediately. The Loveworthys may be upon us at any moment.

(FENNIMORE enters, clears his throat.)

FENNIMORE: Ahem... The Lady Lillian Loveworthy! Mistress of the Manor, and Lady of the House. *(Thought you might like that, sir.)*

MILLICENT: Oh! She mustn't see me like this. Fennimore, is there a powder room about?

FENNIMORE: There's likely a ladies' loo lurking in the lobby. Right this way, ma'am.

MILES: (*To MILLICENT*) Go on, then!

(*MILLICENT follows FENNIMORE out of the room.*)

(*LADY LILLIAN enters, cheerfully at first, until she sees MILES.*)

LADY LILLIAN: Good afternoon, welcome, and my humblest apologies! I have only just been informed that... *You.*

MILES: (*Bowing*) Lady Lillian.

LADY LILLIAN: What are you doing here?

MILES: I was invited.

LADY LILLIAN: (*Seething*) That was a very long time ago.

MILES: You mistake my meaning.

LADY LILLIAN: Then I shall make mine blisteringly plain: You are welcome in this house only insofar as it would be inhospitable to have you thrown physically from it. Therefore, in the name of decorum, do not force me to ask you to leave immediately. And see that you do so at once.

MILES: Very well. The situation having grown awkward, and your patience thin, I shall take my leave of you. You will, however, have to explain my whereabouts to my wife.

LADY LILLIAN: Don't threaten me! If your wife hears so much as one word of your whereabouts, I shall see to it that you regret every syllable.

(*MILLICENT returns, having composed herself.*)

MILLICENT: Every syllable of what?

LADY LILLIAN: Mrs Monger? What are you doing here?

MILLICENT: Visiting, of course. With my husband.

LADY LILLIAN: Oh. I see. (*She doesn't.*) You could not visit with him at your own residence?

MILLICENT: Ha ha ha! You have the Loveworthy wit, Lady Lillian. My husband is here.

LADY LILLIAN: Yes, apparently. ...And why is that, again?

MILES: As I've already explained, and will, at the risk of redundancy, repeat...

(LORD LOVEWORTHY *enters briskly, unannounced.*)

LORD LOVEWORTHY: He was invited. And the delightful Mrs. Monger, of course.

(LORD LOVEWORTHY *kisses MILLICENT's hand. She giggles and blushes.*)

MILLICENT: Oh, Sir Cyril!

(FENNIMORE *rushes in, out of breath.*)

FENNIMORE: Ahem...Sir Cyril Loveworthy. Lord of the Estate. Knight of the Realm. Man of Letters. (*Panting*) And rather fleet of foot, if I may say so, sir.

LORD LOVEWORTHY: Thank you, Fennimore. (*To LADY LILLIAN*) As I am sure he has made every effort to inform you, my dear Lillian, Mister Monger and I have a matter of business to attend to. Haven't we, Miles?

MILES: Certainly, Sir Cyril.

LORD LOVEWORTHY: And as we've seen so little of the Mongers over the many years they have been our next of neighbors, I thought it high time they joined us for high tea. I hope you don't mind, my dear.

LADY LILLIAN: Why should I mind? It is only the latest in a lifetime of impositions that comprise our marriage.

LORD LOVEWORTHY: Ha! Ha! Charming. Mister and Mrs Monger, please, come in, sit down. You must

forgive us for the unconscionable delay in greeting you. You did find it unconscionable, I hope?

MILLICENT: Not at all.

MILES: Well...

MILLICENT: Not the least bit.

LORD LOVEWORTHY: You see, I have just this morning completed the manuscript for a new novel, and became so caught up in the preparation for publication that I utterly neglected to inform my wife of your coming. And for that she apologizes.

LADY LILLIAN: I? What have I done?

LORD LOVEWORTHY: Well, I can only assume that you would assume, upon finding a strange man and his enchanting wife in our parlour, that they were either unwelcome intruders, or traveling magicians, and greeted them with all due disrespect.

LADY LILLIAN: Nonsense. Miles and Millicent are not strangers. They are our near neighbors. And dear friends. (It is Millicent, isn't it?) And if my reception has made either of them feel less than wholeheartedly welcome, then they have wholly misconstrued.

MILLICENT: Not at all, Lady Lillian. You have been perfectly gracious, as always. We couldn't be happier with our reception, could we, Miles?

MILES: Of course not. And if we could—

MILLICENT: Miles!

MILES: I am speaking strictly in the hypothetical.

MILLICENT: I wish you wouldn't.

MILES: Had we been less than well-received, the oversight was doubtless due to an honest miscommunication, which could have come between

any pair of spouses. (And I'll thank you not to "Miles" me, Millicent.)

LORD LOVEWORTHY: Very good. Now my dear Lillian, if you would do me the further favour of entertaining Mrs Monger alone a moment, I shall try to make short work of this affair with her husband, and rejoin you both in good time.

LADY LILLIAN: I'm sure I don't know what affair you mean.

LORD LOVEWORTHY: I mean, of course, the affair of business to which we alluded earlier. Would you be so kind?

LADY LILLIAN: Certainly, husband. Shall we wait for you in the garden?

LORD LOVEWORTHY: That won't be necessary. It is a spacious parlour. Miles and I shall simply repair to another corner of it to conduct our business. Fennimore?

FENNIMORE: Yes, your Lordship?

LORD LOVEWORTHY: There is a mahogany case on the cedar shelf above the cherry wood desk in the larger of the two studies overlooking the easternmost orchard. Might I trouble you to fetch it here at once?

FENNIMORE: It sounds like something you would do, sir.

LORD LOVEWORTHY: Thank you, Fennimore. (*To MILES*) May I offer you a drink, Mister Monger?

MILES: Thank you, no. I consider the consumption of spirits a vulgar vice which weakens the will and unleashes insidious inhibitions of the flesh that hasten one to sin.

LORD LOVEWORTHY: As do I. Cheers! (*He drinks. As he pours himself another, he gestures to a painting on the wall.*) Perhaps you'd prefer instead to enjoy the intoxicating aesthetic elegance of the serene pastoral setting

depicted in this landscape by an imitator of Gainsborough? Though often attributed to an imitator of Rubens.

MILES: A small one, perhaps.

(MILES *and* LORD LOVEWORTHY *gaze at the painting.*)

MILES & LORD LOVEWORTHY: Ah...

(*Meanwhile, in another part of the parlour:*)

MILLICENT: It is kind of you to receive us on such short notice, Lady Lillian.

LADY LILLIAN: Think nothing of it. It is no more than my duty as host, wherein kindness is a requisite, not a prerogative.

MILLICENT: Still, I know it must be an imposition. Miles is prone to bringing home guests unannounced, as well. Especially when he's been drinking. I find it an intolerable inconvenience.

LADY LILLIAN: If they were tolerable or convenient, we could hardly call them "men".

MILLICENT: Ha ha! That's so. If I may say, Lady Lillian, it's a wonder the two of us have not grown closer friends, over the years, living only a yard apart.

LADY LILLIAN: Well, it's a very large yard.

MILLICENT: Yes, I'm winded just from the ride over. Still, one would think we ought to have so much in common. Your husband, for example.

LADY LILLIAN: You don't mean to suggest that we share my husband?

MILLICENT: No, of course not. However, I am a great fan of his work. And you...well, you married him.

LADY LILLIAN: That's as much an antithesis as a commonality.

MILLICENT: And then there's my husband.

LADY LILLIAN: What of him?

MILLICENT: Well, he and Lord Loveworthy are both of a sort, aren't they?

LADY LILLIAN: They are uniquely themselves, if that's what you mean. And in that respect they are identical.

MILLICENT: Ha ha! And, of course, we share many personal interests as well.

LADY LILLIAN: For example?

MILLICENT: We are both avid readers.

LADY LILLIAN: There, you are mistaken. My husband being a writer, I have long since lost the will to read.

MILLICENT: But you carry a book with you always.

(Indeed, LADY LILLIAN has a small book tucked under her arm even now.)

LADY LILLIAN: Oh, this is no book.

MILLICENT: It bears an uncanny resemblance to one. In a superficial way.

LADY LILLIAN: It is my diary.

MILLICENT: A diary?

LADY LILLIAN: A candid and confidential repository of all my most secret self-confessions.

MILLICENT: Speaking of candor and confidence, I wonder if I might coax a kind of confession from you, myself?

LADY LILLIAN: As you are my guest, Mrs Monger, kindly coax away.

MILLICENT: Why thank you, Lady Lillian, I appreciate that.

LADY LILLIAN: My pleasure.

MILLCENT: Then may I ask you, in all bluntness...

LADY LILLIAN: Yes, Mrs Monger?

MILLCENT: Why do you despise me?

LADY LILLIAN: Oh, my dear Mrs Monger, the question is absurd.

MILLCENT: Is it?

LADY LILLIAN: Of course.

MILLCENT: I am delighted to hear it.

LADY LILLIAN: If I truly despised you, as you seem to suspect I may have given you cause to believe, I would never admit to it, nor the reason for it.

MILLCENT: Why not?

LADY LILLIAN: Naturally, because, I would either assume that you already knew perfectly well wherein you had wronged me, or not knowing, that the torment of wondering would be a penance you richly deserved.

MILLCENT: I see. Then you admit that you do despise me?

LADY LILLIAN: Not in the least. My admission is merely conjectural. If I despised you, which, of course, I do not, it would be absurd of you to ask, for I would inevitably deny it, insisting instead that we were the best of friends. But as we are the best of friends, the question is absurder still as I do not despise you and I must therefore deny it all the more.

MILLCENT: Well, that is a relief, I suppose.

LADY LILLIAN: Of course it is.

MILLCENT: Do you mind if we sit quietly awhile? I am unused to social discourse, and the effort of this conversation, together with the constrictions of this corset, have quite exhausted me.

LADY LILLIAN: Certainly.

(They sit. MILLICENT opens her book and LADY LILLIAN her diary. They read and write, respectively.)