

Spring Chickens

By Jay Cundell Walker

Characters

Maureen(55)	Mother of the bride. Married to Billy.
Jess(29)	Friend of the bride, bit of a flirt.
Doris(78)	Grandma of the bride, mother of six including Maureen, the eldest and Sally, the youngest.
Claire(31)	The bride. Pretty, reticent, lacks self-esteem, dreading the public display of the wedding.
Sally(38)	Auntie and good friend of the bride, mother of Keira.
Keira(18)	Younger cousin of the bride. In this version, Keira is written as a young woman with an eating disorder. If this presents casting difficulties then a change can be made to highlight an alternative mental health issue. Please contact the writer to discuss amendments.

The play has multiple scenes but the set requirements are few. A good sound plot, a range of projections. Four plain chairs, a small table and two bar stools will suffice.

The play is set in Leeds and Grimsby but could easily transfer to any other towns or cities to suit the regional accents of the actors.

The play lasts approximately 95 minutes and can be played through or broken between Scenes 7 and 8.

Prelude

Scene 1 The smoking shed outside Murgatroyd's, one of the few remaining big manufacturing employers in Leeds. September

Scene 2 The kitchen of Sally's home. September

Scene 3 The Coffee Shop. September

Interlude One

Scene 4 The bus stop. October

Scene 5 Maureen's House. November

Interlude Two

Scene 6 The kitchen of Sally's home. November

Interlude Three

Scene 7 Maureen's House. November

Scene 8 The Seaman's Mission Grimsby June 17th the following Year

Interlude Four

Scene 8 (continued) The Seaman's Mission

Prelude

JESS STANDS IN A TIGHT SPOT. SHE DIALS ON HER PHONE AND WAITS. WE HEAR A VERY FAINT RING TONE.

JESS:

Hi there, Keira it's me Jess. No not that Jess, I'm Jess the chief bridesmaid. You know for Claire. For Claire's wedding, yes. Yeah, nice to talk. It's ages since I've seen you. I know. I know. Yeah, it was great, wasn't it. Oh, about three years I'd say. I know. Good times, eh? I expect you've grown up quite a lot since then. Filled out, you know what I'm saying? Anyway, I'm not just ringing for a chat there's a purpose.

Yeah sure, I'll hold.

(Jess waits, preens in an imaginary mirror.)

Right well, here's the thing. It turns out it's my job to organise the Hen. No, you fool, the Hen Do. The trip away or whatever we decide. Yeah, I know. Nobody tells you that when they say 'will you be my chief bridesmaid' do they? It should be in the original contract, honestly! Never get caught out like this Keira, that's my advice.

Right well, we don't know what we're doing yet but I've got a date. June the 17th and 18th. Yeah, next year. So, are you free? Now that you're over the legal limit, if you get my drift.

(She listens)

All over with, eh? Well that'll be a relief. So, it's good timing then, from an exam point of view.

Brilliant, that's just brill. I'll put you down. Now don't book anything else. Keep it free. Planning meeting soon, OK? Yeah, see ya. Wouldn't want to be ya.

(She hangs up)

Great, one down twenty-five to go!

(She dials again. We hear a slightly louder ring tone.)

Hi there it's Jess. No not that Jess, I'm Jess the chief bridesmaid. You know for Claire. For Claire's wedding, yes. Well, I am actually.

What do you mean?

So that's a no then.

(She hangs up)

Same to you too.

(Jess pulls out a list from her pocket and then dials another number. The ring tone is louder)

Hi there Kim, is it? It's Jess here. No not that Jess, I'm Jess the chief bridesmaid. You know for Claire. For Claire's wedding, yes.

That's right I got lumbered with the Hen. June 17th and 18th.

Any good?

Oh, that's a shame.

See you at the evening do anyway. Sure, great. Bye then.

(She hangs up)

God, this is going to be harder than I thought

(She dials again, very loud ringtone)

Annie? it's Jess. No not that Jess, I'm Jess Watkins the chief bridesmaid. You know for Claire. For Claire's wedding, yes.

(loud phone ringing throughout this conversation)

Chrissie? It's Jess. No, not that Jess.

(Multiple phones are now ringing. Jess keeps shifting her phone from ear to ear.)

Jen?

It's not that Jess.

Katie?

No?

Are you sure?

Please come on the 17th of June.

17th of June?

Please come

PLEASE

(Very loud multiple phones ring. Jess shouts over the cacophony:)

Please will somebody just say yes to this

(Sound stops abruptly)

Fucking Hen Do.

BLACKOUT

Scene 1 The smoking shed outside Murgatroyd's

*JESS IS SMOKING AN E
CIGARETTE. CLAIRE COMES OUT
TO JOIN HER*

CLAIRE:

I thought you'd given up?

JESS:

Morning, Jess, nice to see you.

CLAIRE:

Sorry, morning Jess, I thought you'd given up smoking.

JESS:

These don't count.

CLAIRE:

Yeah, that's what we all say.

JESS:

Well, you don't smoke at all now, I thought. That's what he said, anyhow. Your Graham.

CLAIRE:

They like to think that, don't they? That you gave something up for them. Bless, so romantic, aren't they, men?

JESS:

Claire! I never had you down as the cynical type. I thought you and Graham were all 'love's young dream'. That's definitely what he thinks anyway. He's well loved-up. Can't wait for the wedding. Poor sod.

CLAIRE:

Oh, we are...really. I just said that. It's what we do when we get together, isn't it? The hens. We slag men off and make fun of them. It's just a thing. We don't mean it. Really.

JESS:

I suppose. But you've ruined the image now.