

A Pinter Milk

By Jamesine Cundell Walker

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Characters

Pinky- female, an older lady

Brown- male, younger than Pinky.

This is a twenty first century revisit to theatre of the absurd and the work of Pinter. All the same tensions exist. A naïve Pinky is unaware of the menace lurking in her home; and what are the lodgers up to?

The 'set' and costumes have the feel of a seedy 1950s room but it is actually present day, the characters are in a bit of a time warp. The SL exit is to the hall, stairs and front door. The SR exit goes only to the kitchen. There is a small table and two chairs centre stage. Some piles of paper and cardboard boxes full of random items are required for the 'plot'.

(Pinky enters the room and looks around. She tidies the table in a cursory manner as she hums an old-fashioned song. She then approaches the fourth wall to look in a mirror. After a moment admiring her reflection, this way and that, she speaks.)

Pinky: You always liked my hair, didn't you? Yeah, well it was a lovely auburn then. Gorgeous, I looked. From a bottle, it was, but I don't think you ever knew. But that was back in the days when this house was bursting full. Travelling salesmen mostly.

(She moves to the table and sits. As she reminisces, she fiddles with a spoon in the sugar bowl. It all looks rather grimy, with brown lumps in the sugar from an overused spoon.)

And thespians, I think they call them, but maybe that's something else. I don't remember 'cos I didn't do the bookings in those days. I was only a kid. But they were exciting times, when the thespians came. This house was full of life then; laughter and jokes. Not the miserable dump it is now. All sorts stay here now. Don't even work, some of them. Lazy.

(Pause)

They used to make a fuss of me, when I was a kid, the actors. Nobody else ever did. That old ham with the loud voice and the pink silk scarf, he gave me a ten-bob note once. 'Take it sweetie, you deserve it' he said. That was a day! Dad went mad. Anyway, I wasn't giving it back. No chance.

(Pause)

I used to love those silk dressing gowns the dancing girls had. All flowers and swirls, they were. 'Flaunting themselves', my dad used to say, but I thought they looked beautiful. Perfect white skin and long, long legs. That's where I got the idea for the red hair. The dancing girls. 'Common', dad said, so I had to wait. I waited a long time but when he was gone, well, then, I had my chance.

(She gets up, with rather creaky knees and goes back to the mirror.)

Yes, lovely it was, my red hair. Auburn, really. Maybe I'll do it again. Maybe people might take a bit more notice of me. With red hair.

(She hums again and goes back to the table)

Blooming sugar. Why can't they use a dry spoon. I always use a clean, dry spoon. Particular, I am.

(She picks up the sugar bowl and sets off to take it to the kitchen SR)

That's what I'll do then, I'll buy some red hair dye next time I go out. I wonder if they have it at Booth's?

(Brown enters slowly from SL and moves to sit at the table. He carries a Booth's shopping bag which clearly has some items in it. Eventually he sits and takes a newspaper out of the bag. After a moment, Pinky enters from SR.)

Pinky: You're back then

Brown: Yes

Pinky: I thought you'd be longer

Brown: No

(Pause. Pinky sits and looks over his shoulder at the newspaper without much interest)

Pinky: Anything good?

Brown: What?