One Wife Too Many

By Tony Howell

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DEDICATION

To my wife, my support system and my inspiration:
Deanna Kay

STORY OF THE PLAY

James Holden, TV star, is a busy man. He has just returned from his honeymoon with his 4th wife, or so he thinks. Turns out his first wife, Velvet, didn't die in that avalanche five years ago after all. And his second wife, Phoebe, didn't file the divorce papers correctly. And his third wife, Rita, didn't sign the annulment. Rita's current fiancé, Max, happens to be a mob boss and has decided to take the annulment into his own hands. Everyone has their own agenda as they make their way to James's apartment. Max and his goons arrive and begin to take hostages as James is busy auditioning his sitcom wife and trying to manage his real wives. By the time everyone gathers in his now trashed apartment, James has to sort out four marriages, three gangsters, and cast the role of his TV wife, all while getting back the woman he has always loved. Approximately 85 minutes.

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

The play was originally staged at Central Noble High School,
Albion, Indiana on March 22nd, 2013.
Eli Eckert, Marlee Conrad, Kara Fields, Erin Cole, Autumn Knox, Mitch Comparet, Jessica Bennett, Anthony Stevens, Jacob Luneke, Colton Conrad, Ashlyn Fields, Trevor Harlan, Sara Mosley, Austin Vance, Amanda Crawford, Emily Weber, Sarah Denton, Nyla Merriman, Mallorie Klemp, Courtney Steele, Nick Jones.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(Cast of 21: 6 m, 9 w, and 6 flexible.)

6 men:
JAMES HOLDEN: The famous actor with too many wives.
HANK FORD: James's buddy, a cowboy movie star.
LANCE CONROY: Phoebe's new husband #9.
MAX MALONE: Rita's gangster fiancé.
MONSTER: Max's henchman, big and dumb.
WEASEL: Max's henchman, scrawny and psycho.

9 women:
VELVET TAYLOR HOLDEN: James's long dead wife.
PHOEBE KING HOLDEN CONROY: James's rebound wife.
RITA COOPER HOLDEN: James's Vegas showgirl wife.
ALICIA WINTERS HOLDEN: James's newest wife.
MITZI MASON: Alicia's nasal and dumb best friend.
SALLY FOX: Velvet's best friend and agent.
PEPPER NEWTON: Auditioning loud-mouth, comic type.
EBONY IVERSON: Auditioning overly dramatic "artist."
ANGEL SAUNDERS: Auditioning awkward, slow-witted type.

6 flexible:
LANE LAWSON: James's pushy agent.
KELLY WILSON: Writer of the new TV show.
MORGAN READE: Writer of the new TV show.
ALEX STANFORD: Network lawyer.
SIDNEY HIGHTOWER: Director of TV show.
OLLIE JONES: Apartment building manager.

COSTUMES

Modern clothing is best. Phoebe should dress as a movie star. Rita is a bit too flashy. Mitzi is tasteless and gaudy. The gangsters should wear dark suits and white ties. Ebony is in black with a long, red scarf, while Pepper wears sweatpants and sweatshirt. Angel is cutesy. Alicia and James start in Hawaiian shirts, but change into everyday clothes after their bathrobe appearances. Velvet is casual but very stylish. Lawyers and agents wear suits. Hank should wear a cowboy hat, jeans, boots, and a tight shirt.

PROPS

Two suitcases, James's keys, plunger, tray of snacks, two bowls of popcorn, a soft drink, cell phones for Sidney, Alicia, James & Mitzi, Velvet's scarf and sunglasses, 8 audition scripts, three revolvers, Ollie's large ring of keys, Alex's briefcase, sets of rope for ankles and hands, gags, Lance's wallet and Rolex, and three pillows that come apart and scatter their stuffing.

SETTING

The stage is divided in half. Center stage is a hallway that opens onto two apartments. Stage left is the inside of James Holden's apartment which has a 71 on the door. The back wall contains two doors. Closest to the front door is the door to the kitchen. Next is a door to the bedroom and bathroom. In between is a desk or bookcase with personal items. On the stage left wall are French doors out to the terrace. In the center of the room is a small couch, a coffee table, and a large chair. The place is modern, clean, stylish, and obviously decorated by a professional. The other half of the stage contains an identical apartment in reverse. This is apartment 72. Two doors on the back wall, and French doors out to a terrace on the stage right wall. Unlike James's apartment, however, this one is completely unfurnished. The two front doors open exactly opposite each other. These two doors and the hall are relatively far upstage, allowing for the audience to see into both apartments.

PROLOGUE

(FX: Various newspaper articles are projected chronicling the five years leading up to the beginning of the play. They included headlines such as:

"Holden and Taylor to Make 1st Film Together"
"Holden & Taylor Having Secret Romance?"
"Holden & Taylor Tie the Knot"
"Taylor Lost in Avalanche"
"Holden in Mourning"
"Holden & Phoebe King Marry"
"Holden & Phoebe King Divorce"
"Holden & Buddy, Hank Ford, Vacationing in Vegas"
"Holden & Alicia Winters Marry"
"Fans Hold 5-Year Vigil in Memory of Taylor"

NOTE: While the slide show creates an informative and interesting beginning, it is not necessary and need only be used if the director desires.)

ACT I

(AT RISE: LIGHTS come up on the hallway. Both apartments are dark, but there is moonlight streaming into James's apartment from the French doors as the curtains are pulled back. The door to the empty apartment is open, but the curtains are closed on those French doors and will remain so for the entire show. JAMES and ALICIA enter the hallway, with James carrying two suitcases. They head for his apartment.)

JAMES: Home at last!
ALICIA: Not quite.
JAMES: It's right here.

(JAMES puts down the suitcases, pulls out keys, and opens the apartment door. ALICIA glances over at the open door for the other apartment and then steps closer and looks in.)

ALICIA: Empty. Still haven't rented it, I guess.

JAMES: Good. I like not having neighbors.
ALICIA: Not me. I'd rather get it over with. Are we getting an old lady who'll watch us like a hawk; a fat, old bachelor who'll give me the creeps; an aspiring bongo player who'll practice all night?
JAMES: Doesn't matter to me who lives over there, as long as you're living over here, with me.

(THEY kiss. He opens the door. They step in and he flips on the light switch by the front door. The LIGHTS come on.)

JAMES: *(Cont'd.)* Okay. Now, we're home.

(THEY enter, close the door, put down the suitcases. ALICIA turns and hugs him.)

ALICIA: Are you sure you're feeling better?
JAMES: Look, darling, I know I ruined your honeymoon...
ALICIA: Our honeymoon!
JAMES: All right, our honeymoon, but I'm over the food poisoning, and I feel fine, and I'm ready to make it up to you.
ALICIA: I admit that playing nurse wasn't my dream honeymoon.
JAMES: It's just us now. No one knows we're home so we can have a wonderful honeymoon right here.
ALICIA: I'll take you up on that offer, James. Why don't you get us unpacked while I get us a snack, and then...well... we'll start our honeymoon all over.
JAMES: *(Kisses HER.)* Sounds wonderful. Don't take too long.

(JAMES exits into the bedroom, bringing the suitcases. ALICIA creeps over and listens at the bedroom door. Satisfied that he's busy, slips over towards the terrace doors, pulls out her cell phone, and makes a call.)

ALICIA: Mitzi, it's me. Listen, we're back home, and James is feeling…romantic. *(Pause.)* I know, Mitzi. *(Pause.)* I know, Mitzi. *(Pause.)* Mitzi! I KNOW! *(Pause.)*

End of Freeview

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