The Only Virgin in Jubilee County

A Comedy in One Act

By Patricia Milton

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DEDICATION

This play is for my mother, Jane Anne,
and for my sisters, Eileen and Mary.

STORY OF THE PLAY

In this rollicking comedy two brides-to-be get caught up in a web of lies and half-truths while shopping for their wedding dresses at Tammy Ann Rennert's One-Stop Bridal Bootique in rural Texas. When an iconic image of the Virgin Mary makes a miraculous appearance on the back of one of the gowns, chaos ensues. Secrets are revealed, hair is let down, and all the women present must each reconsider her attitudes towards marriage, men, morals, and miracles. Ultimately, everyone gets her heart's desire. About an hour.

Winner of the 2007 Hill Country Playwriting Festival in Marble Falls, TX.

Sometimes it takes a miracle
to screw up the perfect wedding.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 m, 5 w)

PRECIOUS JONES: 20. A young bride-to-be. Naïve, outspoken.

TAMMY ANN RENNERT: 29. Proprietor of Rennert's One-Stop Bridal Bootique. Knows her own mind, "loose."

MERCY PERSONS: 23. A bride-to-be. Schooled, cowed by her mother.

LORETTA POMERANTZ: 46. Mercy's mother. Controlling, talkative.

LUPITA ROSARIO: 45, but ageless. A Mexican seamstress with a past.

BILLY RAY JOHNSON, JR.: 35. A drive-thru liquor store impresario. Clueless.

SETTING

The scene is Tammy Ann Rennert's One-Stop Bridal Bootique. The extremely simple set includes a counter. There is the suggestion of a dressing room, perhaps a screen. There are two chairs for visitors waiting for those in the dressing room. Perhaps blocks on which the brides can stand to be hemmed. Set dressing may include tape measure, pins, sewing box, maybe a dressmaker's dummy, but these are optional.

TIME

Friday morning, the present. It is the day before Mercy Person's wedding, and one week before Precious Jones' wedding.

PROPS

A framed photo of a young man and a car.
Catalogue of wedding dresses.
A framed photo of a man (Billy Ray).
A large, heavy-looking stone candleholder with a red candle in it.
A bottle of soda water and a rag.
Matches or lighter for the candle.
A thimble.
A basket or display easel filled with rosettes.
A pair of bright red panties.
A small statue of Our Lady of Guadeloupe.

THE ONLY VIRGIN IN JUBILEE COUNTY

(AT RISE: LIGHTS up on Tammy's shop. TAMMY is applying pins to the wedding gown PRECIOUS is wearing. The gown is cheap and too large for her frame. She is dressed casually and inexpensively underneath the gown and her shoes (i.e. tennis shoes) are dramatically not right for her dress. Precious clutches a large framed photo.)

PRECIOUS: I want Beau to remember me on that destroyer, Tammy Ann. That's why I need the perfect dress – one that will stay in his mind forever.

TAMMY: I doubt he'll be rememberin' you in any dress.

PRECIOUS: Did I show you his picture? This is Beau standin' next to his silver grey 1997 Trans Am.

TAMMY: A Greek god and his chariot.

PRECIOUS: My heart breaks to think of him bunkin' with that bunch of riffraff in the United States Navy. You know, all those ... "seamen."

TAMMY: Aren't you proud of him?

PRECIOUS: I like his uniform and all. And I support our commander-in-chief and all his decisions on behalf of my freedom. But, Tammy Ann ... sailors have such a bad reputation.

TAMMY: Sailors? I can't imagine why.

PRECIOUS: Let me see that catalogue again. *(SHE leafs through it.)* I love this dress with the ribbons. Can't you add some ivory-colored ribbons to this dress?

TAMMY: Precious, with your budget, you'd better get used to the one you're wearing.

PRECIOUS: I had my heart set on some tassels, or maybe ruffled tiers. Spaghetti fringe on the yolk, like Dale Evans wore.... Or rosettes, Tammy Ann!

TAMMY: Every bride is beautiful on her special mornin'. You'll take his breath away. Even in that gown.

PRECIOUS: I like to dream, though.

TAMMY: You are gittin' married, girl. It's high time you set dreams aside.

(Enter MERCY and LORETTA. Mercy is dressed casually but expensively in Western style. Loretta is wearing an orange jumpsuit with necklace of parrots.)

LORETTA: Tammy, Tammy. What a morning! Can't you just feel the delicate petals of spring unfolding like a Mai Tai cocktail umbrella out there? The breeze is waftin' through the air, sweet as perfume through a prom. And the announcements of big city fiddle competitions are overflowin' my mailbox!

MERCY: Mother, please.

LORETTA: It's spring days like these I wish I were a bumblebee, flittin' from foxglove to foxglove, sucklin' their sweet, heavy nectar.

TAMMY: Ms. Pomerantz, you sure are poetical this mornin'.

MERCY: Mama can talk ten words a second. With gusts to fifty.

LORETTA: Just breathe in that sun-kissed air! It cleanses your very innards, like a clean drink of water flowing into your lungs.

MERCY: A clean drink of water flowing into your lungs will kill you.

TAMMY: I'll just bet you're here to pick up Loretta's dress!

PRECIOUS: Loretta Pomerantz is getting married? Again? Oh, ma'am, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean ....

TAMMY: When I said "Loretta's dress," I meant the dress Ms. Pomerantz here wore to marry her first husband.

LORETTA: That's the dress I wore to marry Mercy's daddy.

PRECIOUS: Of course.

LORETTA: And my daughter Mercy will wear that very same dress when she gets married tomorrow afternoon!

PRECIOUS: You're wearin' an OLD dress?

MERCY: Well ... you see, my mama --

LORETTA: It's not OLD, young woman. It's reinvigorated. She's wearing a reinvigorated dress to marry Mr. Billy Ray Johnson, Jr. ....

MERCY: Mama likes to call Billy Ray --

LORETTA: "The biggest drive-through liquor store impresario in the great state of Texas!"

End of Freeview

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