

You Must Meet My Wife

By Whitney Ryan Garrity

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DEDICATION

*Carole Logan Carroll
for her unfailing love and support*

STORY OF THE PLAY

In 1949, mystery writer Cornelia Sherwood's book, *Act of Murder*, is adapted to the stage by the Bakersfield Playhouse in California, Cornelia plans a visit, taking her faithful secretary, Eunice Sparks, along. Eunice's cousin, newlywed Rick Winslow, also resides in Bakersfield, so the ladies stop by to meet Rick's new bride, the very beautiful and wealthy Tracy Bennett Winslow. They soon discover that Tracy is missing. But when she returns, safe, sound, and in the company of the amiable Father Hennessy, Rick insists Tracy is not really his wife. Cornelia and Eunice then become involved in a complicated game of deception and delusion. Is Rick losing his mind or is someone trying very hard to make him believe that he is?

Production History

"You Must Meet My Wife" was presented by *Will of the Wind Productions* at the Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts in Lubbock, TX. Direction by Whitney Ryan Garrity, Assistant direction by David Mitchell, Stage Management by Jeffrey Shirey, Costumes by Dea Young Smith, Makeup by Mary Price, Set decoration by Gatlin Alldredge, Lighting and Sound design by Joshua Whitt, Light and Sound operated by Joshua Aguirre and Ronnie D. Miller. The play opened Friday, August 10th, 2018 with the following cast:

Cornelia Sherwood	Carole Logan Carroll
Eunice Sparks	Mariel Morgan
Rick Winslow	Garrett Benson
Father Hennessy	David Mitchell
Tracy Bennett Winslow	Griffin Kimble
Mrs. Myrtle Peabody	Stephanie Johnson
Joey DelMarco	Jeffrey Shirey

"You Must Meet My Wife" was chosen as one of six plays, from over seven hundred submissions, to receive a public reading by the Steel River Playhouse in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. The play was then chosen, from the six, to receive a full production in the spring of 2020. Unfortunately, Covid-19 has suspended the theater's schedule.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 m, 4 w)

(in order of appearance)

CORNELIA SHERWOOD: A successful and somewhat vain mystery novelist.

EUNICE SPARKS: Cornelia's devoted secretary, an unprepossessing young woman, sporting thick, black-rimmed glasses.

RICK WINSLOW: Nice-looking man recently married to Tracy.

FATHER HENNESSY: A traditionally dressed priest in his 50s. He speaks with a slight Irish brogue.

TRACY BENNETT WINSLOW: A beautiful and charming young lady.

MRS. MYRTLE PEABODY: A matronly older woman wearing a hat adorned with many large flowers.

JOEY DELMARCO: A good-looking, strong young man in his 20s. He wears a long apron over his clothes and a tweed newsboy cap.

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SETTING

The study of Cornelia Sherwood's home
in Palo Alto, California

The Winslow living room, Bakersfield, California

TIME

1949

SET

The study of Cornelia Sherwood's home in Palo Alto, California: isolated at SL. There is a desk, chair, and phone.

The Winslow living room, Bakersfield, California: The US wall is dominated by a large stone fireplace. To the R of the fireplace are steps that lead upstairs to the bedrooms. Flanking this area are two draped windows on the US wall. Practical doors SR and SL lead to the kitchen and from outside the house respectively. Another door DSR leads to the study. The middle of room is divided into two spaces. SR has a round table accompanied by two captain's chairs. SL has a sitting area consisting of a loveseat, armchair, and a small table with a lamp. To the R of the kitchen door is a fully stocked liquor cart. To the L of the sitting area is a desk with a telephone [This is the same desk used in the Prologue.] The furnishings and décor of the room are comfortable and elegant, reflecting people of style, taste, and wealth.

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Prologue

(AT RISE: The LIGHTS fade up to reveal the study of CORNELIA SHERWOOD, isolated at SL. She sits behind her desk, simultaneously talking on the phone and playing a game of solitaire.)

CORNELIA: *(Into the phone.)* And how are rehearsals progressing, Marge? Oh, splendid! Just think, a new play by Cornelia Sherwood premiering at the Bakersfield Playhouse. It's quite thrilling! I was just telling Eunice ... what's that, dear? Oh yes, of course, you wrote the play, Marge. But it's based on *my* book, *Act of Murder!* And what about the actor playing Inspector Hubbard? Has he mastered the Irish brogue yet? Only when he drinks? Well ... at least it's in character. Who is playing the glamorous Vanessa Di Rossi? Linda Robbins. *(Makes a move in her game.)* Oh, blast! *(Into the phone.)* Oh no, dear. I'm sure she will be just fine. I just put a red seven on a black queen! *(Adjusts her game.)* All right then, Marge. Eunice and I will see you on opening night. I'll be there with bells on! That's just an expression, dear. *(Returns the receiver to its cradle.)* Theatre people ... honestly!

(As CORNELIA returns to her game, EUNICE SPARKS enters excitedly.)

EUNICE: Miss Sherwood ...!

CORNELIA: Eunice, where in heaven's name have you been all morning? Leaving me here to do all the work.

EUNICE: Meaning no disrespect, ma'am, but I'm pretty sure you can cheat at solitaire all by yourself.

CORNELIA: Eunice, what a thing to say! I assure you, I have never once ...

(EUNICE gives CORNELIA a look. Cornelia disrupts her game and gathers up the cards.)

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CORNELIA: (*Cont'd.*) Oh, very well. This game was getting stale anyway. Were you able to make arrangements for our trip to Bakersfield this weekend?

EUNICE: Yes, Miss Sherwood. Everything is taken care of. I don't mind telling you, I am so excited about this weekend.

CORNELIA: (*Attempting humility.*) Well, thank you, Eunice.

EUNICE: Imagine, the premiere of a brand-new play by Marjorie Freeland!

CORNELIA: (*Miffed.*) Adapted from a novel by Cornelia Sherwood.

EUNICE: Oh yes, of course, Miss Sherwood. *Act of Murder* is one of my favorites ... of your books ... that you've written. And also, I get to see my cousin Rick. You're sure that you don't mind stopping by for a visit?

CORNELIA: Of course not, dear. It works out just fine that he's also in Bakersfield.

EUNICE: Thank you, Miss Sherwood. I haven't seen Rick in years. He was always such a good-looking young man. And quite the lady-killer. So imagine the family's surprise when he suddenly got married a few weeks ago. I admit that I'm very curious about his new bride.

CORNELIA: Well, according to Marge, who's adapted my book for the stage, Tracy Winslow, *née* Bennett, comes from a very wealthy and respectable family.

EUNICE: Isn't that nice for Rick!

CORNELIA: Perhaps you should phone your cousin and announce our plans for a visit. I mean, I wouldn't want for us to interrupt his honeymoon.

EUNICE: Don't be silly, Miss Sherwood. What could we possibly be interrupting? (*CORNELIA gives EUNICE a look. Eunice is quizzical at first.*) Oh? (*Finally catching on.*) Oh! Yes, Miss Sherwood, maybe a little advance warning is in order, in case he ... well, I mean, in case *they* ... well, just in case! (*Moves to the phone and dials for the operator. She speaks into the phone.*) Yes, operator ... please connect me with Mr. Richard Winslow in Bakersfield, California. Thank you. (*To CORNELIA.*) So did Mrs. Freeland tell you how her play was coming along?

CORNELIA: *Our* play is doing just fine, thank you, Eunice.

End of Freeview

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