

# **BLUSHES**

A CURTAIN RAISER

by **Bill Connolley**

**SchoolPlay Productions Ltd**

BLUSHES  
and  
A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

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15 Inglis Road,  
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ISBN 978 1 872475 36 3

Printed and published by  
**SchoolPlay Productions Limited,**  
15 Inglis Road,  
Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HU

CAST

**Mrs. Peters**

**Helen Peters**

**Jane**

**Rosemary Graham**

**Saika**

**Jamilla**

**Lisa Taylor**



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*SCENE 1 (All the action takes place in the sitting-room of Mrs. Peters. The room is comfortably furnished and typically middle-class)*

*(MRS. PETERS and her daughter, Helen, a young teacher, are sitting at a coffee table)*

**Mrs. Peters:** I think it's a lovely idea, dear. I thought that you might have asked some of your awful College friends.

**Helen:** Actually, I did. But being a bridesmaid is not fashionable at the moment.

**Mrs. Peters:** Thank heavens for that. I could just imagine them, multi-coloured hair and huge ear-rings.

**Helen:** Mother! Most of them are teachers, now. We all grow up, you know.

**Mrs. Peters:** I don't care. What would Kevin's parents have thought if your bridesmaids had turned up looking like Boy George?

**Helen:** No-one looks like Boy George. Certainly not respectable Primary School teachers.

**Mrs. Peters:** I suppose so. But I still think that it's a marvellous idea. The winners of a wedding poem to be the bridesmaids.

**Helen:** And with you, Aunt Jane and Mrs. Graham to choose the winning poem nothing can go wrong. So stop worrying.

**Mrs. Peters:** I'm looking forward to the judging. *(Pause)* What if a boy wins?

**Helen:** They won't enter. I showed them a picture of Little Lord Fauntleroy. They'd run a mile rather than be seen dressed like that!

**Mrs. Peters:** I hope Lisa Taylor wins, she such a nice girl.

**Helen:** They're all nice girls, mother.

**Mrs. Peters:** But Mrs. Taylor's on the P.T.A. and the Bible Society Committee. It would be a real....

**Helen:** *(interrupting)* Don't be such a snob. It doesn't matter who wins, it will be a lovely wedding. *(Door bell rings)*

**Mrs. Peters:** See who that is, dear. *(HELEN goes to the door. She returns with AUNT JANE)*

**Mrs. Peters:** Jane, how nice to see you.

**Jane:** I had to call. Has the dress arrived?

**Helen:** No.... We're expecting it to be delivered any time now.

**Mrs. Peters:** I'll make some tea. *(goes offstage)*

**Jane:** Have you seen the poems?

**Helen:** No, Mrs. Graham is bringing them over later. (*doorbell rings*)  
**Mrs. Peters:** (*offstage*) I'll get it. (*Pause*) It's the dress. (*MOTHER enters*).  
**Mrs. Peters:** Come upstairs and try it on.  
**Helen:** O.K. I'll be right there.  
**Jane:** Can I help? (*ALL exit. Lights out*).

SCENE 2

(*MRS. PETERS and JANE seated, drinking tea. HELEN enters with boxes of wedding presents which she sets on table*).

**Helen:** How did it look?  
**Jane:** Just lovely. You'll be a beautiful bride.  
**Mrs. Peters:** It's a pity your Father won't be there to see it.  
**Helen:** Don't start, Mother.  
**Mrs. Peters:** But it's not fair. His only daughter and....  
**Helen:** (*interrupting*) I know. I miss him too, but I'm sure he'll be watching.  
**Mrs. Peters:** Are you sure? (*door bell rings*).  
**Jane:** I'll get it. (*gets up and goes offstage*) It's Mrs. Graham.  
**Helen:** Come in Rosemary. (*enter JANE and MRS. GRAHAM*).  
**Mrs. Peters:** Good evening, Mrs. Graham. It's so kind of you to give up your time like this. I'm sure you're very busy.  
**Rosemary:** It's my pleasure, Mrs. Peters. Helen is a very popular and valuable member of my staff.  
**Mrs. Peters:** It's still nice of you to give up your time.  
**Helen:** Take no notice, Rosemary. She believes all our propaganda about working a twenty five hour day!  
**Mrs. Peters:** You work hard enough.  
**Helen:** (*to ROSEMARY*) Sit down. Mother will get you a cup of tea. (*MRS. PETERS moves offstage*).  
**Jane:** Have you got the poems? I'm so excited.  
**Rosemary:** Yes, they're all here. (*She puts an envelope file onto the coffee table*).  
**Helen:** How many are there?  
**Rosemary:** Ten altogether. I've had a good look at them. Three are very good.  
**Helen:** It doesn't really matter how good they are. It's nice that so many took the time to try to write a poem.  
**Rosemary:** They all want to be your bridesmaid.  
**Helen:** I know. It's a pity they can't all win. (*enter MRS. PETERS with tea*).  
**Mrs. Peters:** Excuse me. (*puts tea tray on table, picks up envelope file*) Are these the poems?  
**Helen:** Yes, Mother.

**Mrs. Peters:** Can we look at them?

**Helen:** That's what they're here for. (*takes file from MRS. PETERS*) Now, let's do this properly. I know the children's handwriting, so does Rosemary, so we'll choose the winners this way. Rosemary will read each poem out loud. You and Aunt Jane will choose the winners and if there is a tie, I have the casting vote.

**Mrs. Peters:** That's fair.

**Helen:** Should we start, Rosemary? (*ROSEMARY takes a sip of tea and takes out the first poem*).

**Rosemary:** Our first entry. (*she reads*).

*Miss Peters, I want to say  
Best wishes for your wedding day.*

**Mrs. Peters:** That's lovely, isn't it?

**Jane:** It's sweet.

**Rosemary:** Number two. (*she reads*).

*Roses are red, violets are blue,  
Miss Peters, I love you.*

**Helen:** Not very original.

**Mrs. Peters:** But the thought is nice.

**Rosemary:** Number three. (*the lights dim for a few seconds*) And last, but by no means least, number ten. (*reads*).

*When my love comes to me  
It will be spring.  
When my love comes to me  
The sun will shine from  
His eyes and his voice,  
When he speaks, it will be as  
An eternal lullaby, soft and  
Beautiful.*

*When my love comes to me.* (*ROSEMARY puts the paper down and waits*).

**Jane:** That's simply lovely.

**Mrs. Peters:** That's the winner. Such a nice sentiment.

**Helen:** And the second choice?

**Mrs. Peters:** Flowers in church. That was nice, too.

**Helen:** I agree. Who wrote them, Rosemary?

**Rosemary:** Flowers in church was written by Lisa Taylor.

**Mrs. Peters:** I knew it. Such a nice child.

**Rosemary:** And 'When my love comes to me' was a joint effort.

**Helen:** Who did write it?

**Rosemary:** Saika and Jamilla. (*Lights out*)

SCENE 3

(*HELEN is reading the poems. MRS. PETERS enters from the kitchen.*)

**Mrs. Peters:** You'll have to do something, Helen. I mean, they're not even Christian, are they?

**Helen:** No, Mother. They're Muslim.

**Mrs. Peters:** It's not even as if they're white.

**Helen:** I should hope not. Their parents are from Pakistan.

**Mrs. Peters:** What will Kevin say? What will his parents say?

**Helen:** Kevin will be as pleased as I am. As for his parents I just hope they are more tolerant than you are.

**Mrs. Peters:** That's not fair. I've nothing against them.

**Helen:** But you don't want them as my bridesmaids.

**Mrs. Peters:** It's not that, but what will the Vicar think? Will he let them in the Church?

**Helen:** Of course he will let them in the Church. They're two children, not international terrorists!

**Mrs. Peters:** But what will people think? Can't you just have Lisa Taylor?

**Helen:** No, Mother, I can't. Rosemary Graham knows who won and the children have obviously worked very hard. They deserve to be bridesmaids and they will be bridesmaids.

**Mrs. Peters:** I'm glad your Father isn't alive to see this. I'm sure he'll turn in his grave.

**Helen:** Dad was cremated.

**Mrs. Peters:** (*on the verge of tears*) That's unkind. You're shaming the dead.

**Helen:** Dad would have loved every minute of it, especially as you are so against it.

**Mrs. Peters:** Yes, he always did take your side.

**Helen:** He didn't take sides, he just spoke his mind.

**Mrs. Peters:** Well, I'm speaking mine. You'll have to tell them that they can't be your bridesmaids.

**Helen:** No, Mother. You can tell them.

**Mrs. Peters:** I'm not going near them. They live in ghettos. I wouldn't be safe.

**Helen:** You won't have to. They're coming here tomorrow evening.

**Mrs. Peters:** What do you mean?

**Helen:** I'm going to ask them to come here tomorrow to meet you and Aunt Jane and sort out the bridesmaids' dresses.

**Mrs. Peters:** You can't. What will the neighbours say?

**Helen:** They won't notice. It will be dark. I'll smuggle them in with blankets over

their heads if it makes you feel any happier!

**Mrs. Peters:** You're determined to shame us, aren't you? What will my friends think?

**Helen:** Knowing your friends, half of them will stop talking to you, and good riddance. The other half won't bat an eyelid, and why should they?

**Mrs. Peters:** I give up. I've got one of my heads coming on. I'm going to bed.

**Helen:** Goodnight, Mother. (*MRS. PETERS exits. Lights out*).

#### SCENE 4

(*MRS. PETERS is reading. HELEN enters carrying a briefcase*).

**Helen:** Mother, I'm home. (*takes off coat and takes it offstage. Returns, sits and takes a magazine from her briefcase and reads*).

**Mrs. Peters:** You're late.

**Helen:** I know. I've been to see Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Begum and Mrs. Akhtar.

**Mrs. Peters:** And they said their children couldn't go into a Christian church?

**Helen:** No. They were delighted. They have even offered to make special costumes for the wedding.

**Mrs. Peters:** What do you mean, costumes? It's a wedding, not a fancy dress party!

**Helen:** Now, don't start. They'll be here soon.

**Mrs. Peters:** What shall I say to them? I'll not be able to understand them. They'll speak foreign.

**Helen:** They speak English. They wrote the poem, didn't they?

**Mrs. Peters:** I suppose so. (*Door bell rings. MRS. PETERS goes offstage. Returns with LISA*) It's Lisa, Helen.

**Helen:** Hello, Lisa, sit down.

**Lisa:** Thank you, Miss Peters. (*sits*).

**Mrs. Peters:** I'll get some tea and biscuits. (*exits*).

**Helen:** It was a very nice poem, Lisa.

**Lisa:** I'm pleased you liked it. (*Door bell rings*).

**Helen:** I'll only be a moment. (*goes offstage. Returns with JANE*) Come in. Lisa's here already. (*shouts*) Mother, it's Aunt Jane. (*to JANE*) Sit down, mum's making some tea.

**Jane:** I timed it perfectly. Hello, Lisa, isn't it?

**Lisa:** Yes.

**Helen:** This is my Aunt Jane.

**Lisa:** Hello. (*MRS. PETERS enters with a tea tray*).

**Mrs. Peters:** Tea everyone. Hello, Jane.

**Jane:** Where are the other young poets?

**Helen:** Poetesses. They'll be here soon.

**Mrs. Peters:** Lisa will look lovely in apricot.

**Lisa:** (to HELEN) What's apricot, Miss Peters?

**Helen:** It's a sort of dark yellow, rather like a peach. (door bell rings) I'll get it.

**Mrs. Peters:** (whispers to JANE) It will be those, dark children.

**Jane:** Hush. HELEN, SAIKA and JAMILLA enter. The girls both carry small parcels)

**Helen:** Saika, Jamilla, this is my Mother, Mrs. Peters. Mother, this is Saika and this is Jamilla.

**Saika:** Good evening, Mrs. Peters. Please accept this gift from guest to host.

**Jamilla:** Good evening, Mrs. Peters. Please accept this gift from guest to host.

**Mrs. Peters:** Thank you, I'm sure. (she takes the parcels).

**Helen:** Sit down, girls. What would you like to drink? Tea?

**Saika:** Orange juice, please.

**Helen:** For both of you?

**Jamilla:** Yes please, Miss Peters. (HELEN goes offstage).

**Jane:** Your poem is very beautiful. Whose idea was it?

**Jamilla:** I had the idea, but Saika chose the words.

**Jane:** It worked very well.

**Saika:** Thank you.

**Lisa:** I'm going to wear an apricot dress.

**Jamilla:** (puzzled) Apricot?

**Lisa:** Yes, it's an orange colour. (HELEN returns with two glasses)

**Saika:** Thank you.

**Jamilla:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Peters:** About the dresses....

**Helen:** Mother, not yet.

**Saika:** It's all right, Miss Peters, my Grandma said that if you give us a sample of the material she will buy some and make us both appropriate outfits.

**Mrs. Peters:** That's not necessary. It's our custom to provide the bridesmaids' dresses.

**Saika:** But do you know how to make our style of clothes?

**Mrs. Peters:** No. But....

**Helen:** (interrupting) Saika, will it be all right if I bring the material to your house so that your Grandma can make the dresses?

**Saika:** That will be fine.

**Helen:** That's settled then. Lisa, if you go upstairs with Aunt Jane, she can measure you for your dress.

**Lisa:** O.K. Miss Peters. (JANE and LISA exit).

**Helen:** Now, Mother, I believe you have something to say to Saika and Jamilla.

**Mrs. Peters:** Have I? Oh yes, the gifts are lovely.

**Helen:** You haven't opened the gifts.

**Mrs. Peters:** I know, but they will be lovely.

**Helen:** About the wedding.

**Mrs. Peters:** Of course. You will be here at one o'clock prompt, won't you? (*The GIRLS look at HELEN, puzzled*)

**Helen:** (*conspiratorially*) Mother thought that you would both have two heads and forked tails.

**Saika:** You mean she's....

**Helen:** Yes. Silly, aren't you Mother?

**Mrs. Peters:** No, I'm not. (*to the GIRLS*) I'm very pleased that you will be Helen's bridesmaids.

**Helen:** Good. Now girls, if you need to know anything just ask Mother. I'm going to see how Lisa and Aunt Jane are getting on. (*exit*).

**Jamilla:** Did you really think that we had two heads?

**Mrs. Peters:** Of course not. That's Helen's little joke.

**Saika:** You don't mind Grandma making our dresses, do you?

**Mrs. Peters:** Of course not. Does she make all your clothes?

**Saika:** Oh no, only the special ones,

**Jamilla:** My big sister makes mine.

**Mrs. Peters:** They're very nice.

**Saika:** I like English clothes, but Muslim girls can't wear them. It's part of our religion.

**Mrs. Peters:** That's a shame.

**Jamilla:** Not really, it's part of Islam. (*HELEN, JANE and LISA enter. HELEN carries coats*).

**Helen:** All done. Come on, girls, I'll drive you home.

**Saika:** Good night, Mrs. Peters.

**Mrs. Peters:** Good night. (*HELEN and GIRLS exit. JANE and MRS. PETERS sit*).

**Jane:** They are very nice children, aren't they?

**Mrs. Peters:** They're so polite, and pretty. They'll make lovely bridesmaids. (*Lights out. JANE exits. Lights on. HELEN enters, takes off coat and throws it onto a chair*).

**Helen:** Hello, Mother. I thought you'd have gone to bed with one of your heads by now!

**Mrs. Peters:** I don't know what you mean!

**Helen:** Mrs. Fitzgerald was peeping through the curtains as we left.

**Mrs. Peters:** Nosy old bag!

**Helen:** So all the neighbourhood will know by lunchtime tomorrow.

**Mrs. Peters:** Know what?

**Helen:** They'll know all about our visitors.

**Mrs. Peters:** So what? We've got nothing to hide.

**Helen:** You've changed your tune. What about the Vicar? What about Kevin's parents?

**Mrs. Peters:** Jesus said, "suffer little children to come unto me" didn't he?

**Helen:** You weren't saying that last night.

**Mrs. Peters:** I hadn't met them. They gave me two lovely little bottles of perfume.

**Helen:** So you have your price.

**Mrs. Peters:** Don't be silly. They are very nice, polite children.

**Helen:** I know that. What did you expect?

**Mrs. Peters:** I don't know. I've never met a Muslim before.

**Helen:** Mother! (*Lights out*).

#### SCENE 5

(*After the Wedding*).

(*JANE and MRS. PETERS are sitting drinking tea*).

**Jane:** It was a lovely wedding

**Mrs. Peters:** Yes, it was.

**Jane:** Helen looked beautiful.

**Mrs. Peters:** She did, and Kevin was handsome.

**Jane:** The bridesmaids were delightful, weren't they?

**Mrs. Peters:** They were. You did a lovely job on Lisa's dress.

**Jane:** I wish I could produce something like the dresses that Saika's Grandmother made..

**Mrs. Peters:** They were very nice, I must admit.

**Jane:** They were gorgeous, everyone thought so.

**Mrs. Peters:** I know. Kevin's father talked about nothing else.

**Jane:** What had Mrs. Taylor to say? You were in deep conversation with her.

**Mrs. Peters:** Did you know she teaches Asian ladies to speak English?

**Jane:** Where?

**Mrs. Peters:** At the Community Centre and she asked me if I would like to help.

**Jane:** You?

**Mrs. Peters:** Yes. She said it was obvious that I was keen on encouraging integration and suggested that I might have a lot to offer.

**Jane:** Integration! You!

**Mrs. Peters:** We are all God's children, you know.

**Jane:** And he certainly works in mysterious ways! (*Lights out*)

THE END