

**PERUSAL SCRIPT**

# **AT THIS HOUR**

**In Memory of the Actress Lynn Cohen 1934 - 2020**

by Alice Jankell



Newport, Maine

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## **AT THIS HOUR**

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**ORDER #3359**

**CHARACTERS: 2f**

**JODY**.....A Woman in her 40's

**LYNN**.....A Woman in her 80's

**TIME:** Winter of the quarantine, 2020

**PLACE:** A book shop, closed for the duration.

**AT THIS HOUR** a 10-minute play by *Alice Jankell* 2f. Simple Interior setting. Modern costumes. In the Winter of Quarantine, two actresses meet at an deserted book shop to celebrate their friendship and share a very special meal. Is it real? Is it a memory? Or is it a gift? *Presented in The Acronym Plays, Urban Stages, NYC, 2022 ORDER #3359*

**ALICE JANKELL** — For Disney, Alice helped to create and develop new Broadway musicals. As Associate Artistic Director of The Williamstown Theatre Festival, her directing work included *AS YOU LIKE IT*, *DINAH WAS*, and *ENOUGH ROPE*, the special event on Dorothy Parker starring Elaine Stritch. As Creative Director of The Barrow Group's F.A.B. (For, About, and By) Women, Alice co-helmed the company of 125 women and helped generate and produce 48 new plays. She has worked in theaters around the country, including the Mark Taper, L.A. Opera, The Public Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, The Hollywood Bowl, La Mama, and City Theater, among many others, as well as in film and TV. Favorite acting roles include a solo performance, backed by the L.A. Philharmonic, at the Hollywood Bowl. She has taught acting at Carnegie Mellon and on the graduate level. Alice directed and co-wrote *URBAN MOMFARE*, which won a Best Musical Award from the NY International Fringe Festival, was a Critic's Choice, and garnered 4 stars from Time Out. Just before Covid, Alice directed *AN ENCHANTED APRIL* Off-Broadway, and more recently, she directed and filmed Craig Lucas' brand new play, *MORE BEAUTIFUL* for the Putnam Theatre Alliance. A founding member of Core Artists Ensemble, member of The Actors Studio PDW, Theatre Now National Musical Theatre Workshop, New York Theatre Workshop Usual Suspect, and a co-founder of Putnam Theatre Alliance. AEA/SAG-AFTRA/Dramatist Guild  
<https://www.alicejankell.com>

## AT THIS HOUR

*(Silence.)*

*(Spotlight up on JODY. She is standing, in her coat, taking in the utter quiet.)*

*(A siren cracks through the silence. JODY listens.)*

*(The siren fades away.)*

*(Silence.)*

**JODY:** That's it.

*(LIGHTS open up on a book shop. Books line the walls. Cash register is in place, but the shop is empty of customers.)*

*(A small table is set for lunch for two, in the middle of the room, among the shelves.)*

*(JODY steps in.)*

Alright. Perfect.

*(JODY arranges her bag and coat, and sits at the table. She looks around. She waits.)*

*(LYNN enters from the restroom.)*

**LYNN:** It's Lynny! Hello there!

**JODY:** Lynn! You're here. I wasn't sure.

**LYNN:** Nature called. My bladder's not what it used to be. I can't hug you, but I'm hugging you from here.

**JODY:** Me too you.

*(They sit.)*

**JODY:** You look beautiful.

**LYNN:** Ah, well you know, it's early in the day for me!

**JODY:** I know. Our lunches were always your breakfasts.

**LYNN:** Except for my coffee. I have to have my morning cup of coffee. That shirt is glorious on you! What that color does for your eyes!

**JODY:** Thank you.

**LYNN:** Gorgeous.

**JODY:** I can just see you setting this all up. Look at this table!

**LYNN:** The flowers are from Ronny.

**JODY:** And this space?

**LYNN:** This shop belongs to a friend of ours.

**JODY:** You guys always had so many friends.

**LYNN:** When the restaurants were shuttered, I said to Ronny, “But Jody and I have one of our power lunches this Thursday! One of our all-important power lunches!”

**JODY:** Solving the problems of the American theater!

**LYNN:** And then some!

**JODY:** And then some!

**LYNN:** So my brilliant husband made a call. He said to our friend, a lovely young man, “Why let the store sit empty?” And you know that nobody can resist Ronny. So our friend, who is a vivid actor by the way, just lovely, but hated it so he changed careers and opened this shop---he turned the lights on. For us.

**JODY:** And for the American theater. He banished the dark.

**LYNN:** I love how you speak, Jody. And it filters into everything. I knew it that first time, remember that first little reading? And you came to my apartment to rehearse, and I just instantly knew I was in good, strong hands.

*(JODY reaches into her bag and pulls out a bottle of wine and a corkscrew.)*

Wine! Look at you!

**JODY:** Our Pinot Grigio. May I pour? We have no young waiters to flirt with.

**LYNN:** God yes, pour away. And I filled up this pitcher with good old tap water from the restroom back there. What New Yorker would pay for water when we have the best in the country?

*(JODY pours the wine and LYNN pours the water.)*

**JODY:** There we go. To lunch!

*(They toast.)*

*(LYNN reaches into her bag and pulls out two take-out containers.)*

**LYNN:** Take-out still works! Chicken Caesars. This one's yours, extra anchovies.

**JODY:** And yours, dressing on the side, no croutons.

**LYNN:** I'm an old lady. I have to watch it.

*(JODY pulls out a bag of rolls.)*

**JODY:** Tada!

**LYNN:** Rolls! You are a genius. And now...*(whispers)* I've got the goods!

*(LYNN reaches into her bra and pulls out a tiny bottle of hand sanitizer.)*

**JODY:** Purell!

**LYNN:** Hold out your hand.

**JODY:** You know all the rules, even though you were already...

**LYNN:** I'm rule-bound. Always have been.

*(LYNN squirts a tiny drop of hand sanitizer onto both of their hands. They rub.)*

I kind of like rules. They force you to be creative. There. Done. And now let's eat!

**JODY:** I'm starving

*(They serve, and dig in, under the following.)*

**LYNN:** You're a lifesaver, Jody. I don't have a clue how to connect on computers -- Thank God for Ronny!  
-- and I can only do so much reading.

**JODY:** You were never a sit-at-home gal.

**LYNN:** I'm not a sit-*anywhere* gal. I was about to leave for Seattle, if you can believe it, for a beautiful film. I'm not sure the director knows what he's doing, but the script is very good. Poignant. And 'Chekov at the Lake' is indefinitely postponed. That breaks my heart. We have to get you up there. And there was going to be a reading of a new, very funny play at MTC. I was so flattered to be involved. The writer is young and smart as a whip. Fresh out of school and *smart as a whip*. I need to introduce you to her. And The Actors Center, oh I love my class there.

*(Loud sirens screech outside. The women wait.)*

*(The sirens fade.)*

I do miss the cute waiters. Some flirting would do us good right now. And I miss my granddaughter.

**JODY:** Oh God, I know she misses you.

**LYNN:** She once told me on the phone that I am her BFF. I like the “Forever” part. I’ll hold her to it!

**JODY:** You were the BFF to a lot of us. Oh, hold on-

*(JODY jumps up and coughs into her elbow.)*

Whew! That was just a *tickle*, I swear to you. My throat tickled. It’s dusty in here. It was just a tickle.

**LYNN:** I know.

**JODY:** I’m not sick.

**LYNN:** I know. Sit down.

*(JODY sits back down.)*

There. And your beautiful kids! Are they going nuts? They’re so creative. Like their mama!

**JODY:** Aw, stop don’t stop! God, I wish they saw me even a little bit the way you do. I feel like I’m wearing a clown nose and big clown shoes whenever I talk to them.

**LYNN:** You have just animated how all moms feel sometimes.

**JODY:** You felt that way? You did?

**LYNN:** Of course. And the more you say, the bigger those shoes grow, and the more foolish you sound even to yourself.

**JODY:** I want them to understand that I’m not an idiot. That I know things. That I am passionate about my work and getting better at it all the time. I want them to recognize that. Hell, I want my peers to recognize that too. Maybe that’s the problem.

**LYNN:** I recognize it. I see it in you all the time.

**JODY:** Really?

**LYNN:** Call on me whenever you doubt it.

**JODY:** Where were you when I was younger? When I was coming up?

**LYNN:** In the Midwest, memorizing lines, raising my kid, and polishing my own clown nose.

**Three ad a half more pages to the end.**