



Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune

Terrence McNally

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The setting is a walk-up apartment on Manhattan's West Side where, as the curtain rises, Frankie (a waitress) and Johnny (a short-order cook who works in the same restaurant) are discovered in bed. It is their first encounter, after having met several weeks ago on the job, and Frankie is hopeful that Johnny will now put on his clothes and depart, so she can return to her usual routine of watching TV and eating ice cream. But Johnny, a compulsive talker (and romantic), has other ideas. He is convinced that he loves Frankie, a notion that she, at first, considers to be ridiculous. She has had more disappointments than delights in life, and he is the veteran of one broken marriage already. And neither of them is in the bloom of youth. Yet out of their sometimes touching, sometimes hilarious interplay the promise of a relationship beyond a "one-night stand" does begin to emerge and, as the lights dim, the two are back in bed again, but this time side-by-side, holding hands before the glowing television screen.

Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune Details

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From Reader Review Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune for online ebook

John says

There's some great dialogue here, and yet the characters seem a little too moody and flippant to be completely believable. A great idea that could have been fleshed out more.

Gretmcg says

Favorite playwright of all time..... Heart-wrenching and raw..... The way love is best.....at its most dramatic moments.

Alex says

I'll be honest. I didn't want to read this. I was assigned it for a theater class. And it was okay. Not good, not bad, just okay, and somewhat boring. Granted, I usually find reading a play disappointing (although there are some notable exceptions, The Crucible comes to mind). It's completely possible that had I seen this on stage, I would have found it enchanting. But I didn't, so I don't.

Jessica says

I read this today because I am covering a stage manager on this show in a couple weeks. I found this play charming. Frankie would be a fun character to play in about 15 years.

Colin says

2.5

Funny enough, but too rambling. Normally, I adore anything by McNally!

Dani Peloquin says

All of the action in this piece takes place in Frankie's apartment. The play opens with the couple having sex. It is clear from the beginning that they know each other though not very well. The audience soon learns that they met at the diner where both work. Frankie is a waitress while Johnny is the cook. Johnny is idealistic,

looking for true love, and has set his sights on Frankie. Frankie is jaded/grouchy, suspicious and will have none of Johnny's romantic advances. This creates 71 pages of back and forth between the two. The repartee is humorous at its best and laborious at its worst. The two characters are grotesque stereotypes in which Johnny's idealism actually becomes creepy to the point that I questioned if the play was going to reveal that he was an escaped patient from a mental institution. Frankie's abrasiveness is further exaggerated as she huff and puffs around the apartment threatening to leave or kick him out. As they go back and forth, they start to open up to each other and see the potential for happiness within themselves and with each other.

Don't get me wrong, I love Terrence McNally (Love! Valour! Compassion! is one of my favorite plays) but this is just uncharacteristically weak. The dialogue feels stilted and unrealistic, the symbolism barrels in on anvils, and the ending is childishly foolish. Overall, McNally is a classic playwright who deserves great respect and praise. Unfortunately, this is far from his finest work and is worth skipping over on your way to his other pieces.

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Darius says

The whole play seems to have a lurking insidious feel until some bit of magic makes you realize you're not tense anymore. That's a pretty cool effect to build a play on.

Christine says

This is a tough one for me. I liked a lot about this two-person play set in a modest NY apartment over the course of 24-ish hours, but There's always a but, right? In our current #metoo climate, some of Johnny's actions can be construed as stalkerish rather than sincere and romantic. Can a production be successful now? Probably, but it'd have to be handled very, very delicately.

Megan says

I liked this play but I didn't love it. I would like to read some of Terrence McNally's other work.

Nick K says

The play is repetitive, the characters are a bit obnoxious and the play is long and boring. Although maybe Kathy Bates (who originated the role of Frankie) brought a little magic to it. Maybe it plays better onstage, but it was a disappointing read.

Tiffany Day says

I'd only read bits and pieces of this in the past, for scene work and monologues, etc (and saw the movie, which everybody knows is a total re-working... although I really liked it), and just never got around to reading the whole show --- but SO glad I did. I absolutely love this play and these characters. I actually cried -more than once- reading it. I have to see this live someday (or even better - perform it!) - sorry I missed Kathy Bates back in the day... 5 stars
