

# PENILESS PENNY

WRITTEN BY DARREN BREALEY

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### NOTE TO THE DIRECTOR:

The pace of this play is very fast.

The surname Mallét is pronounced by the family with the accent on the letter e. The other characters in this melodrama pronounce the surname without the accent on the letter e, stating the surname as Mallet - as in a hammer.

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## PENILESS PENNY

During the mid 1800's, Lady Tornsock threw a party for her son and heir to the Primrose fortune, in hope of finding him a wife. The local township attended as guests of Lady Primrose, unbeknownst to Lady Primrose, Master Lauderdale has sent BIGGS, his trustworthy messenger boy to seek out his true love Penny Phonetic. Meanwhile Murgatroyd Miller devises a plan to disgrace Penny and place his daughter, Sally in her place to marry into the family. SMALLS, Master Lauderdale's trusted manservant foils Murgatroyd Miller's plans.

*Master Lauderdale Mallét*

*Lady Primrose Mallét*

*Biggs*

*Smalls*

*Murgatroyd Miller*

*Sally Miller*

*Penny Phonetic*

*Police Officer(s)*

*Night. The moon is full. A garden seat centre stage in the garden with the entrance to the Ballroom upstage.*

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*Lady Primrose Mallét stands by the entrance to the Ballroom.*

**LADY PRIMROSE:** Oh, Lauderdale. My only son, without a wife our heritage will cease.

**BIGGS enters.**

**BIGGS:** Lady Mallét, your guests await in Tornsock Hall. Why do you ponder in the yonder?

**LADY PRIMROSE:** Oh Biggs, my trusted Butler. How long have you served me?

**BIGGS:** Longer than a piece of string.

**LADY PRIMROSE:** You came into our lives on that fateful day. My father stood at the door through which one passes from life to death.

**BIGGS:** Men know where they were born, not where they shall die. May I ask why this talk of gloom?

**LADY PRIMROSE:** Oh Biggs, Lauderdale has yet not married and his time is due.

**BIGGS:** Time is the rider that breaks youth. You need not worry Mum. Master Mallét will marry before the end of this play.

**LADY PRIMROSE:** Oh Biggs, you are wise that has wit enough for his own affairs.

**BIGGS:** Your Guests beg your greeting, Mum.

**LADY PRIMROSE:** Lauderdale walks among the rose thorns.

**BIGGS:** I'll announce his return, my lady. Go you to Tornsock Hall.

**LADY PRIMROSE:** You mustn't leave me with all these people; we shan't have a silver spoon left in the place.

**LADY PRIMROSE exits.**

**BIGGS: (to audience)** Smalls, the messenger has gone forth to gain word from Penny Phonetic. Alas, her words are long and phonetically represented. Ah, here comes my Master.

*Pause.*

**BIGGS:** I say, here comes Master Lauderdale.

*Pause. Speaks very loudly.*

**BIGGS:** I say, here comes...

**MASTER LAUDERDALE enters.**

**BIGGS:** Wait, what's this? The cherub's normally cheerful face is set in sorrow. Why do you look so solemn, Master?

**LAUDERDALE:** Oh Biggs, I'm in love.

**BIGGS:** But why do you walk among the rose thorns. Your eyes weeping and your clothes a-torn?

**LAUDERDALE:** I await word from my love. This very morning I sent out my messenger, Smalls and taking into account wind velocity, black ice, refurbishment of the footpaths, train delays, global warming and peak hour traffic, he should've been back by now.

**BIGGS:** What does your intuition tell you?

**LAUDERDALE:** Do you believe in intuition?

**BIGGS:** No, but I have this strange feeling someday, I will.

**LAUDERDALE:** I pine, I pine, and I pine for my Penny.

**BIGGS:** Look sir, up in the sky, it's a bird.

**LAUDERDALE:** It's a plane.

**BIGGS:** No, it's ... a messenger pigeon.

**LAUDERDALE:** And what's that tied to its leg?

**BIGGS:** Our messenger.

**SMALLS enters.**

**SMALLS:** (*breathless*) Good evening Master. Good evening Biggs.

**LAUDERDALE:** It's Smalls, my messenger. How did you come here so?

**SMALLS:** Travelling for sixteen hours ... onward we trudged, through storm and hurricane, through tempest we flew, the wind blew upon my old grey head, the rain rained upon it, the snow snowed upon it and the pigeon - flew onwards, through the storm.

**LAUDERDALE:** You poor soul. It's put years on you; your hair has turned white.

**SMALLS:** If you'd been travelling under a pigeon for sixteen hours, you'd be white too.

**LAUDERDALE:** That is a very old and rather unpleasant joke, Smalls.

**SMALLS:** It was a very old and unpleasant pigeon.

**LAUDERDALE:** Do you have a message?

**SMALLS:** It's easier to find a travelling companion, than it is to get rid of one.

**BIGGS:** You are suffering from verbal diarrhoea.

**LAUDERDALE:** Enough of these dysentery jokes. What news have you?

**SMALLS:** Your true love is leaving for Melbourne straight away.

**LAUDERDALE:** Capital.

**SMALLS:** No, that's Canberra.

**LAUDERDALE:** Smalls, kindly remember your place.

**SMALLS:** Bottom of page four, sir.

**LAUDERDALE:** That's not very funny.

**SMALLS:** Neither was page three.

**LAUDERDALE:** I must make preparations for her arrival. I'll propose to her upon her entree. Come.

**BIGGS:** Can't it wait till dessert?

**MASTER LAUDERDALE, BIGGS and SMALLS exits. MURGATROYD and LADY PRIMROSE enter.**

**LADY PRIMROSE:** Mr Murgatroyd Miller. I heard you had a capital hunt, this morning. They tell me you got the brush.

**MURGATROYD:** The dirty dogs. Who gave me away? Here, take it back.

*Murgatroyd removes a brush from pocket.*

**LADY PRIMROSE:** My hat brush. Really Murgatroyd, I'm quite disappointed.

**MURGATROYD:** Me too. The pawn shop only offered me thirty-five cents.

**LADY PRIMROSE:** Is it true what I hear, you have three wives?

**MURGATROYD:** Yes.

**LADY PRIMROSE:** Isn't that Bigamy?

**MURGATROYD:** I thought it was big of me too. I only have one wife now. One poisoned by nipplewort, a yellow-flowered weed and the other vanished. It almost destroyed my Sally.

**LADY PRIMROSE:** My son yearns to marry one poor soul.

**MURGATROYD:** Have you met my daughter, Sally? Here comes my daughter upon.

*SALLY enters.*

**LADY PRIMROSE:** Excuse me, Murgatroyd. A guest is admiring my silver spoon.

*LADY PRIMROSE exits.*

**MURGATROYD:** But, my daughter.

**SALLY:** Hello father.

**MURGATROYD:** Why aren't you with Master Mallét?

**SALLY:** He's given me the slip again.

*Sally removes a Slip from pocket.*

**MURGATROYD:** Without you marrying into the Mallét billions, we are destitute. Look, you'll have to pull your skirt up if he's to get his hand in.

**SALLY:** I'm not that type of girl.

**MURGATROYD:** You'll marry Lauderdale Mallét if it's the last thing I do.

**SALLY:** He's a bit peculiar.

**MURGATROYD:** I don't care if he thinks he's the bloody Queen of England.

**SALLY:** You've noticed too.

**MURGATROYD:** Why doesn't he love you?

**SALLY:** My lips can scarcely frame the words.

**MURGATROYD:** Then take your teeth out.

**SALLY:** Can there be ... somebody else?

*MURGATROYD:* I fear so.

*SALLY:* A man is known to be mortal by two things, sleep and lust.

*MURGATROYD:* He that fights and runs away, may live to fight another day. But he that is battle slain will never rise to fight again. You must attack from the rear.

*SALLY:* I fear that will placate him. No violence, father.

*MURGATROYD:* No violence I hear you plea, but your father yearns for his daughter to breed. Wed him you will or my name is not..

*SALLY:* Lauderdale.

*MURGATROYD:* No, it's Murgatroyd.

*SALLY:* Hark, here comes Lauderdale.

*MURGATROYD:* Whist.

*SALLY:* What?

*MURGATROYD:* Whist. Whist. Hide behind that potted palm.

*Sally hides behind the potted palm. Murgatroyd hides behind the garden seat. MASTER LAUDERDALE and LADY PRIMROSE enter.*

\*\*\*\*\* Truncated \*\*\*\*\*

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