

CHAMPAGNE LADIES

WRITTEN BY DARREN BREALEY

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CHAMPAGNE LADIES

These two darlings are the epitome of all that is offensive with the society set. Preened, primped, cut and set, the pair meets at one of the *in* places in order to see and be seen. While they keep an eye out for their well-heeled colleagues and guzzle down champagne, we are privileged to have an insight to our high society pages and ladies of the high-class set. The correct social functions, birthdays, opening nights at the Opera and the Ballet can prove to be hell. One must make sure the correct attire is worn in hats, gloves, shoes, jewelry and shawls to mix and match.

Champagne Ladies was first performed at the Workhouse Theatre, Melbourne, on 17 June 1998, with the following cast:

NARELLE	...	<i>Miranda King</i>
DARLENE	...	<i>Elizabeth Penny</i>
WAITER	...	<i>Tim Constantine</i>

Two society ladies sit down to a glass of champagne, after coming out from witnessing the worst performance of a well-known stage musical. Narelle purchased the tickets for both of them. Both try to hide their disappointment regarding the quality of the show.

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NARELLE sits at a café table decorated with matching salt and pepper grinders, an ashtray and an afternoon snack menu. Darlene is in the ladies room powdering her nose.

NARELLE: Overrated show, I thought. What a waste.

Narelle picks up her glass of champagne and studies it.

NARELLE: Looks like it would strip wallpaper. Dirty too.

Narelle takes a tissue from her purse and polishes the champagne glass. DARLENE enters, adjusting her dress. She hasn't noticed the long piece of toilet paper stuck to her shoe.

DARLENE: There you are.

NARELLE: Champagne?

DARLENE: Oh, yes please.

Narelle hands over the champagne glass she has polished. Darlene sits with Narelle.

NARELLE: To a fantastic matinee.

DARLENE: Absolutely – I'll drink to that.

They toast and drink.

DARLENE: If you need to powder your nose, my dear, the ladies' room is down the hall to your left.

NARELLE: Are they clean?

DARLENE: Not as clean as the Ladies' Auxiliary.

NARELLE: Well, they're modern, *new*, cleaned professionally.

DARLENE: Can't find clean amenities these days.

NARELLE: Inexcusable.

DARLENE: Totally unreliable service these days.

NARELLE: Yes, totally.

DARLENE: This is delicious champagne. What sort is it?

NARELLE: French – of course. (*Smiles*)

DARLENE: Of course. Did you enjoy the performance, dear?

NARELLE: Divine.

DARLENE: I thoroughly enjoyed it.

NARELLE: Yes, especially when the girl found out she truly loved...what's-his-name.

DARLENE: ...Daniel?

NARELLE: No, the one who ended up cornering the villain...

DARLENE: Oh, you mean...

NARELLE: Yes, that's him.

DARLENE: He was superb...

NARELLE: He was also in that concert we went to...

DARLENE: The supper and wine night at...

NARELLE: No, dear, it was the charity night for...

DARLENE: The opera night at the Arts Centre.

NARELLE: Yes, he was much better in that.

DARLENE: Opera for the Deaf...what's-its-name.

NARELLE: They raised a lot of money that night.

DARLENE: It was a good night.

NARELLE: That girl in this afternoon's second half...

DARLENE: Do you mean...?

NARELLE: ...the tap dancer...

DARLENE: ...she wasn't any good...

NARELLE: ...she skipped so many beats.

DARLENE: And with all those wonderful costumes...

NARELLE: You think she'd wear something *amazing*...

DARLENE: That dress...

NARELLE: Dreadful!

Pause.

NARELLE: How's your sister?

DARLENE: She's still having trouble with her ankles.

NARELLE: Poor thing.

DARLENE: She still can't walk without that awful cane.

NARELLE: Just like Lady Farquet.

DARLENE: Lady Farquet?

NARELLE: She's now on a cane.

DARLENE: No?

NARELLE: Yes!

DARLENE: When?

NARELLE: After her last performance.

DARLENE: We were at her last performance.

NARELLE: That's when it happened.

DARLENE: I didn't notice anything.

NARELLE: I know, neither did I. That's how good she is.

DARLENE: She's so professional. Such grace!

NARELLE: And her poise...

DARLENE: ...it's amazing...

NARELLE: Divine.

DARLENE: We are talking about the same performance?

NARELLE: Yes, dear. It was the very same charity evening.

DARLENE: The Ballet...

NARELLE: For the Blind...

DARLENE: For the Blind.

NARELLE: They raised a lot of money that evening.

DARLENE: It was a wonderful evening.

A WAITER saunters by.

NARELLE: Another champagne?

DARLENE: The same again?

NARELLE: French?

DARLENE: Of course. *(To Waiter)* Excuse me, waiter?

WAITER: Yes, madam?

DARLENE: Two more please.

WAITER: Two more what, madam?

DARLENE: Champagne!

WAITER: Yes, madam.

Waiter walks off to exit, and then notices toilet paper attached to Darlene's shoe. The Waiter attempts to remove it, without embarrassing Darlene.

WAITER: Look, madam – look who's over there.

DARLENE: Where?

WAITER: There. *(Pointing)*

DARLENE: Look, Narelle, it's him from the show. He's better-looking in person.

NARELLE: He looks much taller on stage.

WAITER exits, unsuccessful at removing the toilet paper.

NARELLE: Darlene?

DARLENE: Yes, Narelle?

NARELLE: That waiter...

DARLENE: What about him?

NARELLE: He looks familiar.

DARLENE: No, he doesn't.

NARELLE: Are you sure?

DARLENE: Quite.

WAITER enters with a tray to remove the salt and pepper grinders from the café table. He notices the toilet paper.

***** Truncated *****

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