

# The Dandelion Ladies' Decisive Tea

Pamela Loyd





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## THE DANDELION LADIES' DECISIVE TEA

by Pamela Loyd

### CAST

STELLA: Hosting a special tea party for her friends today. She is sensible and practical, the planner of today's event. Sensitive to other's feelings. Dressed in a tea dress or attractive blouse and slacks with a nice apron.

LIBBY: Worry wart, unsure of herself. Wears a tea dress or pretty blouse and slacks and she wears a lovely hat she bought for today's tea party, small or no brim so it will not cover her face.

PINKY: A flamboyant, cheerful, outgoing woman, who is a bit controlling. She dresses all in pink, a pink hat, and perhaps a pink feather boa.

FRANCINE: A strong-willed, bossy woman, who thinks it's silly to sweat the small stuff. She is president of the Dandelion Ladies Club. Wears a tea dress, or blouse and slacks that have a tailored fit. If she wears a hat it is understated, no ribbons or flowers.

### Place

*STELLA's apartment.*

### Time

*A springtime afternoon.*

*Setting: STELLA's apartment. There is a round table set for a pretty afternoon tea party with chairs for four. A pastel or lace tablecloth is on table. At center of the table is a turntable or a lazy susan with a round platform that revolves. At the back, or at the side, is a sideboard or serving table. The dining chairs are almost secondary characters in this play, and every switching of chairs represents a change in position in the hierarchy of power within this group, or a transformation within a character. The chairs receive names during the play. Around the upstage side of the table, from stage right to stage left, they are the: Andrew chair, Richard chair, Stella chair, Nobody chair.*

*At Rise: STELLA is arranging small vase of flowers on tea table. Doorbell rings. STELLA answers door, LIBBY enters.*

STELLA: Libby, dear, come in, come in. Everything's almost ready.

LIBBY: I hope I'm not late. I hate to be late for things. You haven't started yet, have you, Stella?

STELLA: No, no, we haven't started yet. You're right on time.

LIBBY: Oh good, because I hate to be late. I hope the others aren't late. I really want to get on with this. Any delays and we might...well, you know...you never know what might happen, everything could turn into a disaster...

STELLA: Libby, you're just a little wound up. Why don't you sit down and have a nice soothing cup of tea? (*hands LIBBY a cup of tea*)

LIBBY: Isn't it rude if I start before the others?

STELLA: No, dear, it's fine.

(*doorbell rings, STELLA goes to door. LIBBY sits in what will become the Andrew chair*)

LIBBY: (*looks at cup*) This is a nice cup. I'd love to make something like this.

(*STELLA answers the door. PINKY enters.*)

STELLA: Pinky, look at you! All dolled up.

PINKY: Well of course, this is a very special event. I want to be seen at my best. And look at you, Stella. You look pretty gorgeous yourself.

STELLA: Well like you say, this is a special event.

LIBBY: I got dressed up, too. I bought a new hat for the occasion. Do you like it, Pinky? Does it look O.K.? Or am I over-doing it? Will I just look ridiculous? I don't want to look ridiculous.

PINKY: You look marvelous, Libby. Like a perfect Dandelion Lady. And it's a very stylish hat. Quite appropriate for the occasion.

LIBBY: Yes, I want to be appropriate for the occasion.

PINKY: Anyway, look at me, all in pink. If anyone's look is overdone, it's me. And you know what? I don't care. Because I am going to have the time of my life today.

STELLA: (*puts four small plates on table*) So choose your spot and sit down, Pinky.

PINKY: Hmm. Choose my spot. That's quite a profound decision, isn't it Stella? I am now responsible for choosing my spot. My very fate may depend on which spot I choose.

LIBBY: Talk like that makes me nervous, Pinky.

PINKY: I'm not talking about *your* fate, Libby. You already have your spot. (*circles table, touches each chair at the table*) Do I want this spot, or this spot, or this spot, or...what if I want this spot, where Libby is?

LIBBY: But I already have my spot. You just said.

PINKY: Oh, Libby, don't be so fussy today. Get up and let me try that spot.

(*LIBBY gets out of chair, PINKY sits in the chair. Doorbell rings, STELLA opens door, FRANCINE enters*).

STELLA: Come on in, Francine. Everyone's trying to decide where to sit.

FRANCINE: (*looks at the food*) Oh, look at those petit fours. I love those little cakes.

PINKY: Yes, this is the right spot for me. You have to let me have this chair, Libby. You can pick another one.

FRANCINE: Still trying to control everything, huh, Pinky?

PINKY: The outcome of one's choices can be important—

FRANCINE: Oh, balderdash! Just sit anywhere. It won't make one whit of difference.

LIBBY: (*looks indecisively at remaining chairs*) I don't know where to sit.

FRANCINE: Just sit anywhere, Libby. It doesn't matter.

LIBBY: But what if it turns out that my first spot is the right place to be? And I gave it up?

FRANCINE: Look, Libby, was your first husband the right choice?

LIBBY: You mean Andrew?

FRANCINE: Yes, Andrew. Should you have stayed with Andrew, or was your second husband the better choice?

LIBBY: Richard was the better husband.

FRANCINE: O.K. then. *This chair (indicates PINKY's chair) is Andrew. And this chair is Richard. (pushes LIBBY into Richard chair.)*

LIBBY: Oh, I see what you mean. Maybe *this* is the lucky chair.

FRANCINE: That's right, it's the lucky chair.

PINKY: *(stands)* Wait a minute, if this is Andrew, I don't want to be with Andrew either.

FRANCINE: Don't make a big deal out of this, Pinky.

STELLA: Ladies, I think everyone's a little nervous today, but let's not let that spoil things. 'Someone' went to a lot of work to make things nice. Not that anyone has to care. Anyway, we are the Dandelion Ladies, and we have a very special tea party to enjoy.

FRANCINE: That's right. Come on everyone, let's help Stella bring things over. *(all go to sideboard to bring remaining teacups to table)*

LIBBY: And I can help with the scones, Stella. You did make scones, didn't you?

*(FRANCINE returns to table, sits in what will become the STELLA chair. PINKY sits in what will become the Nobody chair.)*

STELLA: Of course. It wouldn't be a proper tea party without scones. And here's the lemon curd and the raspberry jam.

LIBBY: They're my favorite toppings.

*(LIBBY samples the toppings. STELLA takes food to table, frowns at FRANCINE, takes off apron, throws it angrily on sideboard, sits in Richard chair.)*

STELLA: *(sarcastic)* I see that everyone has been considerate in their choice of chairs.

*(LIBBY brings toppings to table, stares at STELLA in Richard chair, looks perturbed and defeated, sits again in the only empty chair, the Andrew chair.)*

STELLA: It's going to be an afternoon tea for indulgent feasting.

FRANCINE: A beautiful farewell celebration for four old friends.

STELLA: Oh, I forgot the most important thing. *(goes back, brings teapot to table)* And now the tea.

*(everyone stares at the teapot, a moment of collective anxiety)*

STELLA: Well, shall I pour?

LIBBY: *(worried)* But once we drink the tea, doesn't that mean...?

PINKY: *(anxious)* We're not going ahead yet, are we?

FRANCINE: *(nervous)* Aren't we going to eat first?

STELLA: We're not ready for that part yet. *(pours tea as she speaks)* And yes, of course, we are going to eat first. Let's not rush things. *(sits)*

FRANCINE: Perhaps we should have a toast. A toast that everything will come out right for each of us. *(all raise teacups)*

LIBBY: That we all chose the right chair.

PINKY: The right husband.

STELLA: The right life.

*(they all sip their tea, eat, during next dialogue, except LIBBY)*

FRANCINE: Oh, this is so good Stella. You could have been a pastry chef.



STELLA: I always wanted to be.

LIBBY: I always wanted to just be me.

PINKY: As a last meal together this is the way to go. *(everyone laughs except LIBBY)*

STELLA: Libby, you're not eating. You're not worried about today, are you?

LIBBY: Well, I'm not in the right spot. It seems like everyone gets to choose where they sit except me.

STELLA: But you chose first. You sat in that chair to begin with.

LIBBY: That was before I knew it was the Andrew chair. After all the problems I had with Andrew, I don't want to sit in this chair.

FRANCINE: Libby, you do know that's just a chair. It's not actually Andrew.

LIBBY: But you're the one who said it is.

FRANCINE: That's not what I said —

LIBBY: And Pinky made me get up and give her this chair, so she should still sit here.

STELLA: This sounds like a replay of past times.

LIBBY: What past times?

FRANCINE: This is ridiculous, but for the sake of moving on, Pinky get up, trade chairs with Libby.

PINKY: I don't want to.

FRANCINE: I don't care. Libby will just keep on about this until you do. So trade places.

*(PINKY and LIBBY trade places. PINKY is now in the Andrew chair.)*

LIBBY: So whose chair is this?

STELLA: That's nobody's chair.

LIBBY: Nobody's chair?

STELLA: I mean it's your chair now.

FRANCINE: Certainly no ex-husband chair.

STELLA: Well, except for Pinky now.

FRANCINE: Stella, don't bring up old stuff.

LIBBY: What old stuff?

STELLA: Francine's right, let's just move on, O.K? The past is the past.

FRANCINE: (*changing the subject*) Stella, why don't you tell us how this thing is going to work today?

PINKY: Yes, the Decisive Tea.

STELLA: A tea to celebrate new decisions.

LIBBY: That will change our lives. Even though it's kind of scary.

*(next eight speeches spoken in a hurry, as though they are trying to convince themselves)*

STELLA: Because it's time we move on. Right? We don't have husbands anymore that might hold us back.

LIBBY: And we can't use them as an excuse anymore, can we? We can't say, "Oh, I can't do that because my husband won't like it."

FRANCINE: Our kids are grown and gone with families of their own, so we don't need to stick around to take care of them.

PINKY: And really, I want more out of life than always being available to babysit the grandkids. I mean, when I was younger, I never said, "When I grow up I want to be a babysitter."*(beat)* What I wanted to be was an artist. Boy, I sure didn't get that.

STELLA: This might be the best time of our lives.

FRANCINE: And we're not too old. In fact, I refuse to ever say I am old. I like to say--I am wise.

PINKY: How about say "wise-ass?" (*laughs*)

FRANCINE: I like that even better. (*everyone laughs*) Let's look to the future, not the past.

LIBBY: Speaking about the past, Francine, what did you mean about my past?

FRANCINE: Your past? I wasn't talking about your past.

LIBBY: No, I mean earlier, when we were sorting out where I should sit, you said to Stella, "Don't bring up old stuff." What old stuff did you mean?

FRANCINE: You know what I was talking about, Libby.

LIBBY: No, I don't.

STELLA: Of course you do. The thing with Andrew and Pinky.

LIBBY: Andrew and Pinky? What thing?

STELLA: You mean you don't know? Oh dear.

FRANCINE: We all thought you knew.

LIBBY: Did something happen with Andrew and Pinky?

STELLA: (*looks at PINKY*) Oops. I don't think I should say any more.

LIBBY: What oops? Pinky, what happened?

PINKY: Oh...uh...

**END OF FREEVIEW**

***You'll want to read and perform this show!***