

“Girl Trouble”
by
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Play Synopsis

Midnight is when the trouble begins for three single women sharing an apartment in Dallas. Trouble’s never a good thing, but, for these ladies, what begins on this summer night will forever change how they relate to one another. These women are Gina, Julie and Jessica. Two close friends, one new roommate. Julie’s an executive who expects her friends, her life, and her living space organized. Her friend Jessica can handle such expectation, but has yet to accept the stunning looks and romantic success of their new roommate, Gina—a successful model who is always pleasant and continually puzzling.

Julie and Jessica are doing their best to make their new roommate feel right at home. It isn’t easy, considering they aren’t so thrilled with Gina’s lifestyle and have doubts about whether or not she’s the best replacement for Stephanie, whom recently moved out for reasons only Julie seems to know. What is most concerning is a matter of lifestyle: Julie and Jessica are Christians; Gina is not. Gina lives rather spontaneously, runs with a considerably snooty crowd and seems to embrace the empty value and shallow views of life shared by most American glamour models. Gina’s roommates live

by a different set of values and center their attention to things of faith, being mindful of the fact that Gina demonstrates a resistance to their Spiritual example, yet open to influences of another kind.

When midnight strikes, Gina's world is on the verge of collapsing and Julie's foundation becomes unglued. Arriving home from a date with the man of her dreams, Gina announces the romance is over; arriving—unexpectedly—from Nebraska, Julie's sister announces she'll be staying indefinitely. Jessica, a surgeon by profession, is suddenly thrown into the triage of a beauty being scarred by rejection and a friend whose perceived reality has a head-on collision with the reality of the world. Throughout the night and over the course of the coming weeks, Jessica does her best to stitch the wounds of her roommates, but the challenge of getting along despite all three of their differences, creates enough trouble of its own. As the group addresses the conflicts within the apartment, they each realize they have greater conflicts in their hearts.

Clashing personalities, opposing views on what determines whether or not the place is clean, differing opinions about God, and arguments over how to load a dishwasher name just a portion of the trouble these girls experience. The greatest threat lies in not knowing whether the incompatibility of sharing an apartment will keep these women from discovering their true incompatibility rests in not sharing their souls. Midnight is when their trouble begins. It will never end, however, until they see the light.

Girl Trouble has been produced & performed on public stages in 2002 and 2006.

Girl Trouble was developed at the Missouri Playwrights Workshop.

Cast List

JULIE, a low-level executive for a Dallas marketing firm, is in her early thirties. She is insecure, controlling, and the longest residing tenant of apartment 434.

JESSICA is a woman of thirty years, a medical surgeon with an air of good health and strong opinion. She lives in apartment 434 with JULIE and GINA. This is the only reason she has for desiring to know either one of them.

GINA is a thirty-one year old model; a woman of elegance, style, and intelligence. She is tall, slender, and has a natural physical beauty about her - a fact not ignored or shunned by her roommates.

DANA, self-centered and mysterious, is in her late twenties. She is Julie's sister.

STEPHANIE, spontaneous and thirty-three, used to reside with JULIE and JESSICA. She suffers the effects of living in a lower social status than that of her former roommates. She is known to be very boisterous and insecure, but has a certain charm about her that is hard not to like.

Timeline

ACT I: Scene 1, Midnight

ACT II: Scene 1, The next morning

Scene 2, The next morning

Scene 2, Three days later

Scene 3, One week later

Scene 3, Early the next day

Scene 4, Midnight, four days later

Girl Trouble has a run time of just under two hours, including intermission.

Set Requirements

The entire play takes place in a fourth floor apartment of The Stafford Suites - a renovated hotel in downtown Dallas that appeals to the lower-upper class lifestyle. The design of the apartment is riding the cutting edge. The walls are dressed with exquisite paintings. Hand crafted trinkets and pottery escort neatly arranged books on the shelves. An eclectic floor covering rests underneath a couch, end table, and love seat at Center Stage. Along one wall is a narrow, fully equipped kitchen with marble countertops that double as a breakfast nook and service bar in the Upstage corner. In the Downstage corner, an enormous French door leads out to a balcony overlooking Dallas's West End. On the other side of the room is a door with access to a half bath. An archway on this same wall gives access to a hall that leads to the full bath and sleeping rooms.

Dialogue Excerpts

Dialogue Clip #1 • From Act One, Scene One

Julie and Jessica have been discussing Gina since the opening of the play. Their discussion hasn't been in a good light all together: they've covered everything from her occasional swearing to her current boyfriend, Geoffrey — who, they point out, has been contributing a very significant role in Gina's present happiness. In this scene (approx. 15 minutes into the play), Gina has just come home and awakened the girls by setting off the alarm.

GINA

I couldn't keep that stupid alarm from going off.

(She X's to get her purse and answers the phone).

Hello?

Yes?

Sorry. False alarm. There's no trouble.

My name is Gina. The security password is ROMEO.

But there's no need to send anyone.

The second time tonight?

(She looks at JULIE).

Well, it must have been some sort of mistake.

If you insist, then.

GINA (cont'd)

Goodbye.

(She hangs up. TO JULIE).

They're sending someone over in the morning to inspect the alarm.

(She opens her purse and retrieves a pill bottle, drops her purse on the loveseat, and X's back to the kitchen).

I suggest they rip the damned thing right out of the wall!! Honestly, Julie. MUST it be constantly armed? It makes good sense NOT to arm it until EVERYONE is IN for the evening.

(She grabs a glass and fills it with water, then takes two pills out of the bottle. TO JESSICA).

Has she ALWAYS been this controlling?

(She swallows down the pills and chases them with water. She then transfers the food from the takeout box on to a plate and warms it up in the microwave).

JULIE

(holding her robe closed)

I'm not THAT controlling. Are we in a crabby mood?

GINA

We? WE? Crabby? I'm not going to speak for you two. But if your 'WE' is referring to ME then the answer is "Oui Oui."

JESSICA

Why aren't you smiling?

GINA

I don't feel like smiling.

JESSICA

(What, are you kidding?)

You don't feel like smiling?

GINA

I've had a bad night.

JESSICA

You've had a bad night?

GINA

(to JULIE)

Did I not just say that I've had a bad night?

(to JESSICA).

Repeat after me: I will stop repeating things.

JULIE

(Xing into the kitchen and tying her robe)
Gina, what's wrong? What happened tonight?
(She sets out silverware for GINA).

GINA

Go back to bed and ask me tomorrow.

{GINA's food is done warming up, so she
sits down at the counter and begins to
eat}.

JULIE

Nonsense. We'll stay up with you.

GINA

What for? To help me eat my leftovers? No thanks.

JESSICA

You don't normally eat this late. And I've never seen you
take pills before.

GINA

I'm not smiling. I'm eating late. I took a few pills. If
you don't make it as a surgeon you should choose a field
that requires keen observational skills. How on earth did
you overlook the aura of post-traumatic break-up disorder
surrounding me?

(The reactions are instant).

JULIE

What?! You broke
up with Geoffrey?
Oh, sweetheart,
how terrible!!

GINA

Girls! Girls!
I don't want
you to make a
big fuss, okay?

JESSICA

NO WAY! I don't
believe it! Really?
Are you okay! What
Happened?

{The telephone RINGS}.

JULIE

You must be heartbroken.
You both seemed happy.
Were you expecting this?

GINA

I'm fine.
We were.
No-ooooh!

JESSICA

I thought you two
were happy.
Did you dump him?

{GINA's final reply segues into tearful sorrow. JULIE immediately X's to get tissues for her. JESSICA X's to answer the phone, which is still ringing. GINA is naturally hurt and bewildered by both of them Xing away from her}.

JESSICA

(answering the phone)

Hello?

Oh, hi Trevor.

Sure.

(To JULIE)

It's for you. Trevor, the doorman.

JULIE

(handing GINA a tissue)

I don't want to talk to him.

GINA

(blowing her nose)

It must be important.

JESSICA

You don't want to talk to him?

GINA (cont'd)

(drying her tears)

Take the call. I'm fine.

JULIE

Tell him I'm sleeping.

JESSICA

Tell him you're sleeping?

GINA (cont'd)

Just see what he wants.

It's fine; talk to him.

JULIE

I don't want to talk to him.

He gives me the creeps. Can't

you just take a message?

GINA (cont'd)

For God's sake, find out
what HE WANTS!!

{JULIE apologizes to GINA for the interruption and consoles her while JESSICA talks on the phone.}

JESSICA

(into the phone—immediately)

Trevor? It's after midnight. Is this something I can help you with?

(She listens, then to GINA and JULIE).

The police are downstairs. The alarm service asked them to come by. Apparently, two false alarms inside of thirty minutes—AND YOU calling THEM after the first one—makes

them a little suspicious. I TOLD you not to call them: it magnafoozled their system!

JULIE

(defensive and rash)

Oh will you STUFF IT with the MAGNAFOOZLED!!

(Her robe falls open).

GINA

Girls, please! I don't think I can handle another break-up tonight.

JULIE

Oh, you poor dear, we're so sorry. What can I do?

GINA

Let me eat. There's no better comfort than food right now.

JESSICA

(into the phone)

Trevor? Can you convince the police that things are okay?

(pause)

Thanks, Trevor. What's the other problem?

JULIE

(to GINA; somewhat alarmed)

I'm sorry. Did she say there was another problem?

JESSICA

(into the phone, continuing)

Oh?

(She looks at Julie with worry).

I see.

(She shakes her head as she listens).

No, I think you better talk to her yourself.

(She tries to hand the phone to JULIE)

Here.

JULIE

What?

(Her robe falls open).

JESSICA

Trust me. You need to talk to him.

(JULIE takes the phone from her. To GINA).

You and I may want to leave the room.

GINA

(to JESSICA)

Why?

JULIE

(into the phone)

Trevor, what's wrong?

(pause)

JESSICA
Julie's about to come
unglued. I mean, you
think YOU have troubles...

GINA
Oh, no. What's happened?

JULIE (cont'd)
Oh, very funny. (beat)
You're serious? What
does she look like?
(pause)
Well, is she alone?
(beat)
Give me a few minutes
before sending her up.

{JULIE drops the phone to her side and
stands still, in a trance.}

JESSICA
Julie? Oh, my.
(She X's to her).
Julie? It's okay, really. Just take a deep breath. Say it
out loud, Jewels. That always helps you get over the
initial shock.

GINA
I've never seen her this way.

JESSICA (cont'd)
(still to JULIE)
Your sister's here to see you.

GINA
Her SISTER! Oh, my God! There are two of them?
(She's finished little of her food but now
disposes of it and X's to get two more pills and
another glass of water).

JULIE
(softly)
Sah-hhas-hshjha.
(Her words are unrecognizable).
Be-hhas-bbdh.
(She places one hand to her head and begins to
massage her temples as she roams the stage).

JESSICA
It's okay. Take deep breaths, sweetheart.
(She takes the phone from her and guides her to a
stool at the counter. JULIE continues to mutter
garble. GINA puts the glass on the counter.)

GINA

What's wrong with her?

JESSICA

She does this. Any time something happens that removes her from control of a situation she spins into a hypnotic shock. This is phase one, simply trying to get the words out. Phase two is admitting in some peculiar way that she's not in control of what's happening.

GINA

What do you mean by peculiar?

JULIE

(softly, with rythm)

Humpty-Dumpty-sat-on-a-wall. Humpty-Dumpty-had-a-great-
fall-all-the-

JESSICA

By chanting a nursery rhyme. She's progressing faster than usual. Get ready for phase three: She will process this with us—except...

king's-horses-and
all-the-king's-men-
couldn't-put- than
Humpty-together-She
again.

JULIE

(breaking her trance; pacing about the room)

Oh, no! Gina! Jessica! My sister is here and she is on her

JULIE (cont'd)

way up. This just can't be. (She ties her robe.) It just can't be. I wonder what she's doing here? This visit wasn't planned. I talked to Mother today; She said nothing about Dana coming. Of course, Mother WOULDN'T say anything about Dana coming. Why would Dana arrive at this of night? How'd she get here? Is she traveling alone? That's not safe! What am I supposed

JESSICA (cont'd)

...we aren't expected to do any talking. She will just carry on the conversation alone.

GINA

This is how she reacts when something spontaneous happens?

JESSICA

It's a pretty severe response, but her sister arriving un-announced is a pretty severe event. Julie struggles with family issues.

GINA

She's starting to scare me. I've never seen this side of her.

JESSICA
She doesn't show it very often.
I suppose she's processed enough
for the moment. I better snap her
out of it.

(to JULIE, loudly).

THERE'S DRIED TOOTHPASTE IN THE SINK!---here and-----

JULIE (cont'd)
to say to that? How
should I react to
her being here? I
should just say:
"Dana, what in the
world are you doing

{JULIE silences her muttering and
instantly responds to JESSICA's
statement with panic.}

JULIE
What!?! Really?! Where? Your bathroom? My bathroom? The
guests' bathroom?

(She is now back to reality).

Oh-mi-gosh! My sister's on her way up!

Dialogue Clip #2 • From Act One, Scene Three

This scene is near the end of the first act and a week has past since the arrival of Dana and Gina's break-up with Geoffrey. The entire cast has gathered to play a board game, but tension has mounted between Stephanie, the former roommate, and Gina during earlier rounds of the game. Underneath the tension lies some conflict between Julie and Jessica that has been brewing for the past seven days. A round of the game has just been completed when Stephanie announces her final protest.

STEPHANIE

(to GINA)

I caught you that time!! You've given me the Bear card four
hands in a row!!

JESSICA
Stephanie, give it a rest,
Will you? It's only a game.

GINA
Have I? I sure haven't
meant to, Stephanie.

JULIE
I cornered on wheat. That's
one hundred points for me.
Who had the Bull card? Dana?

DANA
Gina's not the type to
play that way, Steph.

JULIE (cont'd)
Did you have the Bull card?
(DANA nods)
Who ended up with the Bear?
Jessica, did you have the Bear
Card?

STEPHANIE
She works it out so I
end up with it every
time---(to JULIE)---
I had the Bear card!!

{DANA rises and X's to use the
bathroom. JESSICA and STEPHANIE stand
and X to get some food at the counter}.

JULIE
(gathering the cards)
Why don't we simply take out the Bull and Bear cards? The
Bear card will no longer be a sword for Gina to stab you
with, Stephanie.

STEPHANIE
(digging into a package of cookies)
Don't bother. Leave them in! I'm finished playing.
(She grabs a bag of chips from the counter).

GINA
Don't quit playing, Stephanie. Let me. I'd hate for me to
push you out of the game because of how I was playing.

STEPHANIE
(Xing with the chips to the French Doors)
You didn't seem to hate pushing me out of this apartment!
(She opens the doors and EXITS into the balcony).

JESSICA
(Xing close to the balcony; calling out to her)
Nobody pushed you out, Steff. You wanted to go, remember?

STEPHANIE
(REENTERING)
You know what I remember? I remember feeling as if I could
never measure up, or fit in, or feel like I...How long did
I live here? All that time and I never...felt...I never...
(She EXITS again on to the balcony).

JESSICA
(to JULIE, as she closes the French Doors)
Can you believe her? The girl's way too emotional. We
should've never invited her to come tonight.

JULIE

No, we should apologize to her. She's obviously very upset with us and is using Gina's cunning Bear attack as a means to express her anger toward you and me.

JESSICA

Apologize? What for?
If anybody needs to
apologize, it's her.

GINA

Hey! I didn't plan to
set her up with those
Bear cards, honest!

JULIE

One of us is going to have to go out there and talk to her.

JESSICA

Why? Why should it be our responsibility to make her feel better? Do you realize the whole time she lived here you were constantly working to keep her happy?

JULIE

What's wrong with trying to get along with someone?

JESSICA

Nothing, as long as the person is capable of getting along with YOU. The girl's got compatibility problems, Julie.

{DANA REENTERS from the bathroom}.

JESSICA (cont'd)

(to GINA)

Stephanie was the type of roommate who didn't understand the word 'compromise.' So Julie and I made the adjustments, surrendered the concessions, found the middle ground to make it work, but Stephanie's incapable of living with others. She's high maintenance, inflexible, demanding.

JULIE, overlapping

---Upset is what she is. We've obviously made her uncomfortable in some way. As our guest we need to smooth things over with her.

JESSICA, overlapping

---As our guest she needs to be less sensitive and more capable of playing friendly with others. She's throwing a fit over a simple game of cards.

JULIE, overlapping

---We're the ones who were being insensitive and I think we should apologize to her.

JESSICA, overlapping

You are not responsible for her life or her feelings. It's not your job to wipe her tears, Jewel, and it's not your job to fix her life! Anything you say to her isn't going to magically fix her problem any more than your playing Suffering Sister Sheila will reconcile you and Dana or playing the Chatty Cathy Christ doll will turn Gina to God.

GINA

(say what?)

A Chatty Cathy Christ doll?

(Feeling uncomfortable, she X's to the counter and begins eating potato chips).

JESSICA

(to GINA)

Two hundred years ago, when our parents were kids, there was this Chatty Cathy doll that would speak these annoying, pithy statements every time you pulled an internal string attached to her back. Every day Julie is like that doll with you, badgering you about Spiritual stuff—only you don't have to pull the string because she does it herself.

(She pantomimes pulling a string from her own back and imitates JULIE's voice).

"Talk to God about Geoffrey and you'll know in your heart what to do."

(She mimes pulling the fake string again).

"God has an unbelievable plan for your life, if you would only trust Jesus."

(She pulls it again).

"If only you would give your heart to Jesus, you'll know what true peace is all about."

(Again).

"I'm praying that you will open your heart and get saved by Jesus."

JULIE

(offended)

Stop it, Jessica! I'm nothing like that!

(to GINA)

She's exaggerating, isn't she? You would tell me if I was bothering you, wouldn't you?

JESSICA

No, she wouldn't. Gina doesn't say anything that isn't nice. Say something mean, Gina. I know you have to have it in you. Say something mean to me. Anything. Let me hear it.

DANA

Yeah, Gina, do it! Really tell her off!

GINA

No way.

JESSICA

WOULD YOU JUST SAY SOMETHING MEAN!?!?

Audiences have loved *Girl Trouble*, calling it an incredibly real, honest and funny story that touches the heart of all who see it. This play deals with real girls facing real issues, and addresses Spiritual issues without drowning out the characters or sugar-coating their situations. The characters are so identifiable and easy to relate to, and the tension of life is balanced in a true, yet lighthearted way. If you're looking for a full-length, all-girl, family friendly comedy, *Girl Trouble* won't let you down.