



Punch Bowl

A SHORT PLAY

David-Matthew Barnes

PUNCH BOWL

A Short Play by David-Matthew Barnes

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The Story

At the Junior Prom, a sly misfit named Judy convinces Conner and Taylor, the newly elected Prom King and Queen, that she's poisoned the punch after they've each drunk a glass. Even though they fear their lives are nearing an end, Conner and Taylor refuse to repent for all the wrong they've done in their lives, especially for the horrific way they've treated Judy.

Cast of Characters

JUDY, the misfit.

CONNER, the Prom King.

TAYLOR, the Prom Queen.

Place

A high school prom in rural Illinois.

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(At rise, JUDY, enters the light from the dark. Music can be heard, faintly and in the distance. She stands at a punch bowl, displayed lovingly on a small table covered with a lace table cloth. Next to the bowl is a stack of red plastic cups. Although she is pretty, Judy is wearing an outdated prom dress, her hair is over styled and her make up is almost frightening. Judy lifts the ladle in the punch bowl and stirs the punch slowly, smiling and pleased.)

A few moments pass before CONNER enters. He also dressed for a school dance but he exudes an effortless charisma. His tuxedo shirt is untucked and unbuttoned to the middle of his chest. He is wearing a crown on his head as he's just been named the Prom King.)

CONNER. *(Mostly to himself:)* I can't believe I won.

JUDY. *(As if she wants to drink him up:)* You must be thirsty.

CONNER. *(Annoyed:)* Why do you look like that, Judy?

JUDY. *(Panicky:)* They said the dance was formal. *(Beat. Her composure has been regained.)* Miller Ramsey brought me.

CONNER. Miller Ramsey is almost thirty.

JUDY. *(A small flash of anger:)* So! He says we have a lot in common.

CONNER. Why would you make a guy like that go to the prom?

JUDY. He wanted to come.

CONNER: He's asleep in the corner.

JUDY. If you must know, Conner, he didn't have a choice...all right?!

CONNER. You're blackmailing him?

JUDY. Blackmail is a harsh word. *(Beat.)* But if you must know...yes...I am.

CONNER. Do you realize no one likes you?

JUDY. Perhaps to a cretin such as yourself, I recognize that I might appear unconventional.

CONNER. Why do you always talk like that? You're supposed to be sixteen but you sound like a teacher.

JUDY. I should apologize for my intellect? *(Offers him a cup of punch.)* Drink?

CONNER. *(Takes the cup and gulps it down. After he's finished:)* Why do you keep staring at me?

JUDY. Did the punch taste all right?

CONNER. A beer woulda been better, but it was cool. *(Suddenly:)* Why?

JUDY. No reason...except...I added something extra to it.

CONNER. *(Pales:)* Like what?

JUDY. *(Relishing the moment:)* Poison.

CONNER. *(Not believing her:)* You're crazy.

JUDY. Perhaps you're right.

CONNER. *(Believing her:)* You're crazy.

JUDY. How crazy *am* I? No one in this world is meaner to me than you or your consummate girlfriend. It makes sense that my teen angst would be directed at the two of you.

END OF PREVIEW