

Cloud Nine

by Caryl Churchill (from: Churchill Plays: 1)

Act 2, Scene 3

The park. Summer night. **Victoria**, **Lin** and **Edward** drunk.

Lin Where are you?

Victoria Come on.

Edward Do we sit in a circle?

Victoria Sit in a triangle.

Edward You're good at mathematics. She's good at mathematics.

Victoria Give me your hand. We all hold hands.

Edward Do you know what to do?

Lin She's making it up.

Victoria We start off by being quiet.

Edward What?

Lin Hush.

Edward Will something appear?

Victoria It was your idea.

Edward It wasn't my idea. It was your book.

Lin You said call up the goddess.

Edward I don't remember saying that.

Lin We could have called her on the telephone.

Edward Don't be so silly, this is meant to be frightening.

Lin Kiss me.

Victoria Are we going to do it?

Lin We're doing it.

Victoria A ceremony.

Lin It's very sexy, you said it is. You said the women were priests in the temples and fucked all the time. I'm just helping.

Victoria As long as it's sacred.

Lin It's very sacred.

Victoria Innin, Innana, Nana, Nut, Anat, Anahita, Istar, Isis.

Lin I can't remember all that.

Victoria Lin! Innin, Innana, Nana, Nut, Anat, Anahita, Istar, Isis.

Lin and **Edward** join in and continue the chant under **Victoria's** speech.

Goddess of many names, oldest of the old, who walked in chaos and created life, hear us calling you back through time, before Jehovah, before Christ, before men drove you out and burnt your temples, hear us, Lady, give us back what we were, give us the history we haven't had, make us the women we can't be.

All Innin, Innana, Nana, Nut, Anat, Anahita, Istar, Isis.

Chant continues under other speeches.

Lin Come back, goddess.

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Victoria Goddess of the sun and the moon her brother, little goddess of Crete with snakes in your hands.

Lin Goddess of breasts.

Victoria Goddess of cunts.

Lin Goddess of fat bellies and babies. And blood blood blood.

Chant continues.

I see her.

Edward What?

They stop chanting.

Lin I see her. Very tall. Snakes in her hands. Light light light - look out! Did I give you a fright?

Edward I was terrified.

Victoria Don't spoil it Lin.

Lin It's all out of a book.

Victoria Innin Innana - I can't do it now. I was really enjoying myself.

Lin She won't appear with a man here.

Victoria They had men, they had sons and lovers.

Edward They had eunuchs.

Lin Don't give us ideas.

Victoria There's Attis and Tammuz, they're torn to pieces.

Edward Tear me to pieces, Lin.

Victoria The priestess chose a lover for a year and he was king because she chose him and then he was killed at the end of the year.

Edward Hurray.

Victoria And the women had the children and nobody knew it was done by fucking so they didn't know about fathers and nobody cared who the father was and the property was passed down through the maternal line -

Lin Don't turn it into a lecture, Vicky, it's meant to be an orgy.

Victoria It never hurts to understand the theoretical background. You can't separate fucking and economics.

Lin Give us a kiss.

Edward Shut up, listen.

Lin What?

Edward There's somebody there.

Lin Where?

Edward There.

Victoria The priestesses used to make love to total strangers.

Lin Go on then, I dare you.

Edward Go on, Vicky.

Victoria He won't know it's a sacred rite in honour of the goddess.

Edward We'll know.

Lin We can tell him.

Edward It's not what he thinks, it's what we think.

Lin Don't tell him till after, he'll run a mile.

Victoria Hello. We're having an orgy. Do you want me to suck your cock?

The stranger approaches. It is **Martin**.

Martin There you are. I've been looking everywhere. What the hell are you doing? Do you know what the time is? You're all pissed out of your minds.

They leap on **Martin**, pull him down and start to make love to him.

Martin Well that's all right. If all we're talking about is having a lot of sex there's no problem. I was all for the sixties when liberation just meant fucking.

Another stranger approaches.

Lin Hey you, come here. Come and have sex with us.

Victoria Who is it?

The stranger is a soldier.

Lin It's my brother.

Edward Lin, don't.

Lin It's my brother.

Victoria It's her sense of humour, you get used to it.

Lin Shut up Vicky, it's my brother. Isn't it? Bill?

Soldier Yes it's me.

Lin And you are dead.

Soldier Fucking dead all right yeh.

Lin Have you come back to tell us something?

Soldier No I've come for a fuck. That was the worst thing in the fucking army. Never fucking let out. Can't fucking talk to Irish girls. Fucking bored out of my fucking head. That or shit scared. For five minutes I'd be glad I wasn't bored, then I was fucking scared. Then we'd come in and I'd be glad I wasn't scared and then I was fucking bored. Spent the day reading fucking porn and the fucking night wanking. Man's fucking life in the fucking army? No fun when the fucking kids hate you. I got so I fucking wanted to kill someone and I got fucking killed myself and I want a fuck.

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Lin I miss you. Bill. Bill.

Lin collapses. **Soldier** goes. **Victoria** comforts **Lin**.

Edward Let's go home.

Lin Victoria, come home with us. Victoria's coming to live with me and Edward.

Martin Tell me about it in the morning.

Lin It's true.

Victoria It is true.

Martin Tell me when you're sober.

Edward, Lin, Victoria go off together. **Martin** goes off alone. **Gerry** comes on.

Gerry I come here sometimes at night and pick somebody up. Sometimes I come here at night and don't pick anybody up. I do also enjoy walking about at night. There's never any trouble finding someone. I can have sex any time. You might not find the type you most fancy every day of the week, but there's plenty of people about who just enjoy having a good time. I quite like living alone. If I live with someone I get annoyed with them. Edward always put on Capital radio when he got up. The silence gets wasted. I wake up at four o'clock sometimes. Birds. Silence. If I bring somebody home I never let them stay the night. Edward! Edward!

Edward from Act One comes on.

Edward Gerry I love you.

Gerry Yes, I know. I love you, too.

Edward You know what we did? I want to do it again. I think about it all the time. Don't you want to any more?

SONG - Cloud Nine - [ALL.]

It'll be fine when you reach Cloud Nine.

Mist was rising and the night was dark.
Me and my baby took a walk in the park.
He said Be mine and you're on Cloud Nine.

Better watch out when you're on Cloud Nine.

Smoked some dope on the playground swings
Higher and higher on true love's wings
He said Be mine and you're on Cloud Nine.

Twenty-five years on the same Cloud Nine.

Who did she meet on her first blind date?
The guys were no surprise but the lady was great
They were women in love, they were on Cloud Nine.

Two the same, they were on Cloud Nine.

The bride was sixty-five, the groom was seventeen,
They fucked in the back of the black limousine.
It was divine in their silver Cloud Nine.

Simply divine in their silver Cloud Nine.

The wife's lover's children and my lover's wife,
Cooking in my kitchen, confusing my life.
And it's upside down when you reach Cloud Nine.

Upside down when you reach Cloud Nine.

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