

Her Selenic Majesty

By B E Turner

A one act play of duration about 20 minutes.

CAST: **PAM:** Mid twenties (approx)

SAM: Pam's partner.

SET: *A reasonably affluent working class living area. Sam is sitting reading a race book. Pam is looking from the window.. It is at night.*

SAM: What are you looking at?
PAM: The moon.
SAM: The moon?
PAM: Yes.
SAM: What are you looking at that for?
PAM: It's beautiful. It's a beautiful silvery globe.
SAM: Beautiful?
PAM: Yes it is.
SAM: Her Selenic Majesty.
PAM: What?
SAM: Her Selenic Majesty.
PAM: What's that?
SAM: It's another name for the moon.
PAM: Another name for the moon?
SAM: Yes.
PAM: Where did you get that from?
SAM: I must have read it somewhere.
PAM: Read it somewhere? The only thing you ever read is the race book.
SAM: No. I read "Truth" sometimes. *(Or any yellow press.)*
PAM: *(Pause, comes back.)* I don't believe you.
SAM: What?
PAM: That you read about "Her Serenic Majesty", it's too poetic for you.
SAM: Selenic.
PAM: What?
SAM: It's selenic, not serenic.
PAM: Oh. I thought it was because the moon was serene.
SAM: No. It has a Sea of Storms.
PAM: Not really. That name was given before they had telescopes to see what it really was. There is also a Sea of Tranquillity. I did have an education you know.
SAM: Oh. Yes. Some people do have an education.
PAM: What is Selenic then?
SAM: It's from Selenites.
PAM: Well what are Selenites?
SAM: They're people that live on the moon.
PAM: Don't be silly. Nobody lives on the moon.
SAM: I know that. But if they did they would be Selenites.
PAM: How do you know that?
SAM: I read it in a book by H.G. Wells.
PAM: A book by H.G. Wells? Since when did you ever read a book by H.G. Wells?
SAM: I read it at school.
PAM: "Her Selenic Majesty". I can't understand how you would ever come across a phrase like that.
SAM: *(Pause. Unconvincing)* It's the name of a race horse.
PAM: I don't believe you. *(She snatches the book away from him and looks at the index at the back.)* I can't see any "Her Selenic Majesty" here.
SAM: Pulled up lame last week. They won't be racing her for a while. *(She chucks the race book back)*
PAM: They named her after the moon did they?

SAM: Must have done.

PAM: *(Pause)* One thing I never understood is why they always refer to the moon as a she.

SAM: It's because it changes all the time.

PAM: That's hardly a liberated thing to say.

SAM: Sorry.

Pause.

PAM: I feel scratchy.

SAM: Scratchy?

PAM: Yes.

SAM: It's probably the moon. Being full I mean.

PAM: What makes you say that?

SAM: Must be coming up to that time...(of the month?)

PAM: Now don't be personal. *(Pause)* I should clean out that den of yours.

SAM: Why is it that whenever you get scratchy you have an irrational urge to clean out my den?

PAM: I need to have something to do. I should clean it out.

SAM: You know you can't do that. We have an agreement that you would never go in there.

PAM: An agreement? It wasn't an agreement, it was a condition you made when I came here to live with you. You said we should both have a private place where we could be alone. You said it would be good for the relationship to have moments of personal solitude.

SAM: If we don't we could get on each other's nerves, and you did agree.

PAM: I agreed to the condition that you made because I had no alternative, it wasn't an agreement. You made the condition.

SAM: Well you have your own private area.

PAM: Yes, the kitchen.

SAM: You see.

PAM: All that means is I have to do the cooking.

SAM: But when we first met you said you didn't like people intruding on you in the kitchen. I thought it was an ideal choice for you to have that for your private area.

PAM: It was your idea you see, not mine.

SAM: I suppose.

PAM: I'm going to clean out your den.

SAM: You know you can't do that. You know I have the only key. *(Takes the key from his pocket and places it on a nearby appurtenance.)*

PAM: God knows what you get up to in there. It's probably full of girly magazines.

SAM: Don't be silly, you're enough of a girly magazine for me.

PAM: Watch out or there won't be any girly... *(Gets up and goes to the window)* Why are you so secretive about the whole thing. You know what I do in the kitchen. You even come in there sometimes. But you, you have a key and you lock yourself away... At least you could tell me what you do.

SAM: It's nothing unusual.

PAM: How do I know? It's not natural. How do I know what sinister things aren't going on in there.

SAM: Now really, I must protest..

PAM: That damned den is the one thing I can't stand about you Sam Saddler, and the fact that you keep secrets from me. It doesn't have to be.

SAM: *(Pause)* No it doesn't.

PAM: You agree?
SAM: I've been thinking.
PAM: Yes?
SAM: Will you marry me?
PAM: (*Matter of fact*). No.
SAM: No? Just no?
PAM: Yes.
SAM: I'll let you clean up the den. (*She reaches for the key. He puts his hand over it.*) After we're married.
PAM: No.
SAM: Why not?
PAM: Because you didn't get down on your knees.
SAM: Is that what I have to do?
PAM: If you really wanted to marry me Sam Saddler then you could make a little effort to woo a girl into the idea. Instead you just sit there in your jumper and jeans and ask me to marry you as if you were asking for a cup of tea.
SAM: Well what do you want me to do then?
PAM: What do you expect?
SAM: I don't know.
PAM: You could create a romantic setting for example. You could turn the lights down and play some sentimental music...
SAM: I might miss out on the race commentary.
PAM: You could open a bottle of wine...
SAM: There's some Guinness in the larder.
PAM: You could put a cushion on the floor and get down on your knees and look at me with everlasting love in your eyes.
SAM: I shouldn't have to do things like that.
PAM: Why not?
SAM: It's not as though we had just started courting. We've been living together for almost a year, as man and wife, I shouldn't have to go through a lot of rigmarole after that length of relationship.
PAM: You never did propose to me in the first place.
SAM: I know. It just happened.
PAM: You took me to the pub and filled me up with gin. You must have known I get all soft and woozy when I've had a few drinks.
SAM: That was before I knew you as well as I know you now.
PAM: You took advantage of me, in a weak moment.
SAM: Advantage? I didn't take advantage. I asked you out and you came. You wanted to do it. We could have parted after that first night but we didn't. I wanted to stay with you and you wanted to stay with me. We both wanted to be together.
PAM: Yes. I suppose we did.
SAM: That's what love is, wanting to be with someone.
PAM: I suppose.
SAM: Will you marry me then?
PAM: No.
SAM: If I get down on my knees?
PAM: I can't marry you. I'm already married to someone else. You know that.
SAM: What do you mean, already married to someone else?
PAM: I'm married to Graham.
SAM: You can't still be married to Graham, he's dead.

PAM: It says in the marriage service "till death do us part".

SAM: Well that's what I said, he's dead.

PAM: But I'm not.

SAM: You don't have to both be dead before the marriage contract expires.

PAM: Contract? It wasn't a contract I had with Graham, I loved him. Surely love is stronger than death. The marriage may be legally over, but it isn't in spirit as far as I am concerned, not until I am dead too. When I am dead then you can marry me.

SAM: *(Somewhat aside)* "Her Selenic Majesty".

PAM: What did you say?

SAM: If you loved him...

PAM: Oh I love you too Sam...

SAM: Do you?

PAM: It's a different sort of love. You understand, Graham was a poet, there has to be someone to sustain his memory. And love for a poet is different from love for an engine driver, even if it's just as strong.

SAM: A poet? *(Aside)* A poet's arsehole.

PAM: What did you say?

SAM: Did you love him more than you love me?

PAM: Love him more? Of course not. I said it was different. Graham was a gentleman...

SAM: And I'm a working class slob?

PAM: No, I didn't say that, it was different. If you were poetic you would understand.

SAM: *(Suddenly angry)* Oh for Chris's sake, the man was a...

PAM: What? What was he?

SAM: A profligate.

PAM: What's a profligate? Where did you learn words like that?

SAM: In the pub. He treated you poorly. He slept with other women, all the time.

PAM: I knew that. I told you all about it.

SAM: I don't know how you could have put up with it. He even brought his women into your own house.

PAM: It was part of his passionate nature.

SAM: So you told me.

PAM: Poets don't sit around all day. A poet has to be free. A poet has to experience life to the full. A poet can't be tied down, he has to explore, all aspects of reality.

SAM: He certainly did that.

PAM: You're just jealous, that I was married to a poet, who had culture. All your culture is a race book.

SAM: And "Truth".

PAM: Well how do you think I could marry "Truth" and a race book?

SAM: The same as you could marry anything else. I'm me you know, I'm not some artificial idea of what culture is. And if culture means you act in an improper way then you can stick it.

PAM: You wouldn't know. You're impossible.

SAM: I can't understand why you still think well of him. I mean you did separate from him in the end, and then he had his night of fatal over indulgence. Why do you still feel attached to him?

PAM: Because of the vows we made. In a church.

SAM: The vows you made. They didn't bind him, why should they bind you?

PAM: Because he had to be free. Honestly. how could I marry you Sam?

SAM: *(Sam is down, talking to the moon. During this Pamela is upstage.)* You could marry me like you could marry any man, out of love. You shouldn't have such strange ideas just because you were once married to some stuck up fool who pretended he was a poet. *(She picks up the key and exits.)* At least I respect you. I don't go off chasing other women. I have a bit of a sense of common human decency, which is more than I can say for your... *(He turns back and notices that she has gone.)* Sneaking off when my back is turned eh? *(He notices that the key has gone)* My God she's taken the key. The den. *(He moves towards it then stops.)* Too late now, she'll be in there. *(Pause)* Oh well, easy come, easy go. *(He moves down and talks to the moon.)* So you're still shining there eh? Her Selenic Majesty. What a corny line. I really do love her you know old moon. Oh well too late now. *(He recites this remembered poem.)*

I see the sweet grey eyne of thee;
let not the dullness of the night
impair such moonlit mystery
or shadows cast before thy sight.
The water-fall has a rainbow veil
which covers it with fine delight
let not the rain and bitter hail
cast shadows dark before thy sight.
The mystic moon will light the sky
silver orb in the womb of night,
cast no darkness in thy eye,
cast no shadows 'fore thy sight.
And in this world's uncharted sea
may thy light e're blessed be.

Pam returns with two or three slim volumes and a typewritten sheet.

PAM: Sam?

SAM: Yes.

PAM: I've been in your room.

SAM: I thought you might have been.

PAM: It's full of books.

SAM: Yes.

PAM: Poetry books.

SAM: Yes.

PAM: And literature. Stuff like that.

SAM: Yes.

PAM: What do you do in there.

SAM: Read books. Write poetry.

PAM: These books of poetry are by Samuel Edwards.

SAM: Yes.

PAM: Is that you? Your middle name is Edward.

SAM: Yes.

PAM: Some of them have got swear words in them.

SAM: I know.

PAM: That's modern is it?

SAM: Something like that.

PAM: "Her Selenic Majesty", is that one of your phrases?
SAM: No. Graham wrote that.
PAM: Oh. That's one of his I haven't seen.
SAM: It was never published. I got it from one of his old mistresses. It's typical of his pompous inflated style.
PAM: What have you been doing with his old mistresses.
SAM: Just disinterested research. I must admit his taste in women was rather gaudy. Present company excepted of course.
PAM: So our life together has been one long deception?
SAM: Only as far as the den was concerned. I really do like to follow the horses.
PAM: And read "Truth"?
SAM: Sometimes. When I need inspiration.
PAM: *(Shows the sheet)* There's a poem here. "Oh the sweet grey eyne of thee..."
SAM: You don't have to read it all out. I know it by heart.
PAM: It's called "Prayer for Pamela". Is that me?
SAM: Yes.
PAM: It's not like the other stuff, with the swear words?
SAM: It's not very good. It's a sonnet. I wanted to write a pretty poem, with rhymes.
PAM: Why.
SAM: Because you are pretty.
PAM: You are silly. *(Pause)* What are eyne?
SAM: It's poetic for eyes.
PAM: You could have put eyes?
SAM: Yes.
PAM: Why didn't you?
SAM: I wanted to put eyne.
PAM: Oh.
SAM: Do you like it?
PAM: It's a bit posh for me isn't it?
SAM: No. Not really.
PAM: Why did you hide all this away from me?
SAM: Because I knew that you believed that all poets were profligate, and I didn't want to be...
PAM: Profligate?
SAM: Yes. I didn't think you would be able to put up with a poet for any length of time.
PAM: Oh. Didn't you?
SAM: No. *(Pause)* I can help you pack if you like.
Pause
PAM: Samual Saddler?
SAM: Yes.
PAM: Will you marry me?
SAM: *(Turns to her smiling)* Get down on your knees.

BLACKOUT.