

# **No Greens**

---

A Play in One Act by

Edith L. Freni

# No Greens

by Edith L. Freni

## CHARACTERS:

GUINEA PETE ..... 40s, a blue collar working stiff  
OLD LADY TIERNEY ..... Late 30s, an "old maid," Irish  
KITTY TIERNEY ..... Late teens, pretty, slightly nuts  
L'IL JACKIE PAPIZ ..... Late teens, a delinquent  
MAN IN WHITE ..... 30s/40s, a nut-house employee

## LOCATION:

The interior and exterior of a depression era tenement building in Brooklyn

## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

Set can and should be purely representational. Anything to set the mood, i.e. clothes lines, Deco style furniture – so long as it ain't brand new; worn out brick face. More emphasis on color (or the lack thereof) in lighting and costumes.

A tenement air shaft. Two visible windows. A clothes line hangs. Through one window GUINEA PETE, a Blue Collar Joe, sits smoking a cigar. Standing at another window, OLD LADY TIERNEY, who is neither old nor a lady. Her hair in rollers.

GUINEA PETE

Damn Yankees.

MS.TIERNEY

(screams in brogue)

KITTY GOD DAMMIT, IF YOU'RE DOWN THERE WITH THAT BABY--

(Guinea Pete sticks his head out the window. He shouts at her. She shouts back. They both shout.)

GUINEA PETE

I got da game on, you mind?!?

MS.TIERNEY

Oh, get yer fat wop head back inside and shut yer pie hole.

GUINEA PETE

(shaking his fist)

Why I aughta!

VOICE FROM ABOVE

Shaddap da bodda yiz!

GUINEA PETE

WHY DON'T YOU STICK IT, PALLY?!?

TIERNEY

KITTY!

GUINEA PETE

Still ain't found that crackpot neice 'a yours, huh?

TIERNEY

I'll thank you kindly to mind your own blasted business.

GUINEA PETE

I hoyd about the baby, you know.

MS.TIERNEY

You didn't hear nuttin' that ain't a lie.

GUINEA PETE

What I hoyd came right outta your neice's pretty little mouth.

MS.TIERNEY

Don't you be talkin' about her mouth like that.

GUINEA PETE

It's a negro baby you know. Found it in a garbage can.

MS.TIERNEY

It t'aint true. My neice is not the kind of girl to go runnin' about wit no foundling child.

GUINEA PETE

(brief beat)

She's not sayin' it's hers is she?

MS.TIERNEY

She's not sayin' anything that concerns you.

GUINEA

I sure hope not. Goyl's a coyrtified nut cake. I hope she stays lost. She's a menace to society.

MS.TIERNEY

I'm warnin' you--

GUINEA PETE

--You'd betta watch out for that padded wagon, Tierney. They come for people with far fewer troubles than she got. They came for my bruddah!

MS.TIERNEY

He killed a priest!

GUINEA PETE

Dat ain't my point! They'll puddah inna straight jacket, shave her head and turn her into a human potata'. Now, you don't take care of dat kid yourself, someone else might.

MS.TIERNEY

Keep. Out. Of my affairs.

GUINEA PETE

Keep your affairs outta the airshaft.

(Guinea Pete slams the window shut and disappears.  
Tierney turns, shouts.)

MS.TIERNEY

KATRINE MARY MARGARET TIERNEY! You put that baby back where you found it and come home!

(Black out. Lights up on the Alleyway. KITTY TIERNEY, teens, wears a dress far too small for her and holds what appears to be a baby wrapped in pink swaddling clothes. A ring on a chain hangs

around her neck. L'IL JACKIE PAPIZ, a YAHOOOLIGAN, stands menacingly before her. He wears coveralls and holds a stick ball stick.)

KITTY

Get outta here, Papiz!

PAPIZ

I been lookin' all ovah for ya'.

KITTY

So you found me. Now scram!

PAPIZ

I wanna know why you ain't been comin' around lately!

KITTY

I been busy.

PAPIZ

Busy widdat kid.

KITTY

Maybe. So what if I have?

PAPIZ

Kitty, I gotta know. (beat) Is it yours?

KITTY

'Course not. You seen me enough ovah the last few months. Doncha think youda noticed if I was knocked up?

PAPIZ

I dunno. Wah do I know about dat stuff?

KITTY

You think I'm that kinda girl, Jackie?

PAPIZ

Well, you have been runnin' around a lot.

KITTY

So?

PAPIZ

So--so who knows who you been runnin' around wit.

KITTY

(beat/angry)

I told you I found huh in a dumpstah behind Leventhals. What am I to you, some kind of cheap whoore?!?

PAPIZ

Now you stop widda puttin' woyds in my mout. I didn't say nuttin 'a da kind. If you say you found huh, well den, I believe ya'. (beat) But even if ya did, Kitty...it ain't natural.

KITTY

Wadda you know from natural? You grew up here just like the rest of us. If y'ain't drinkin' brown water, yer busy holdin' the walls up or fightin' widda bugs.

PAPIZ

Those bugs got moxy.

KITTY

And I'm sick to death of 'em, Jackie. I'm sick of it all.

PAPIZ

This is what I'm sayin' to ya' the whole damned time! No use making yourself sick ovah somethin' you can't do nothin' about!

KITTY

Who says I can't do nothin'?

PAPIZ

I says!

KITTY

Who are you!?

PAPIZ

You know damned well who I am! I'm L'il Jackie Papiz. Leader of the Back Alley Boys, king of the block and so's you and me are clear on things, the very boy whose ring you got hanging round that neck a' yours!

KITTY

Just cuz I wear your ring don't mean you know the world.

PAPIZ

I'm tellin' you and you're gonna listen for once. You're stuck here. Got me? And when you're stuck you make the best outta the worst and you don't complain. You get used to the way things are even if the way things are don't suit your fancy. I'm sorry that you ain't satisfied by simply having a roof ovah your head and a boy who's sweet on you but that's what you got and that's all you're getting!

KITTY

Ain't true.

PAPIZ

Kitty!

KITTY

I been hearin' otherwise.

PAPIZ

People are takin' advantage a' ya'.

KITTY

NO! Nobody takes advantage of Katherine Tierney. I am mothah's daughter after all. (beat) I been hearin' about a town—and it ain't even too far from here—that's perfect in every way. Perfect streets, with rows of perfect houses, all the same. Except on one street, there's a house that stands out from the rest. This house, it's entirely pink. Pink paint, pink wall paper, little pink beds and bath towels and curtains. And Jackie, nobody's livin' there right now. Wanna know why? (beat) It's waitin' for me. It was built for me.

PAPIZ

Get outta town. (beat) Who told you this?

(Beat. Kitty looks down at the baby)

KITTY

She did.

PAPIZ

Katherine. She's a baby. Baby's don't talk.

KITTY

You don't know nothin'! She talks to me every night. It was fate, me finding her. My mothah used to tell me about fairy babies, well I think she's one of them.

PAPIZ

She's a niggah!

KITTY

No she ain't!

PAPIZ

Why doncha gimme de kid, Katherine and I'll get rid of it for ya'.

KITTY

You sonofabitch!

PAPIZ

I don't like you actin' like this. Yer actin' all fruity. Gimme the baby. (beat) Now!

KITTY

You stay away from her, L'IL JACKIE PAPIZ. And stay away from me. I don't want nothin' to do wid you, no more! I DON'T WANT NOTHIN' TO DO WIT NOBODY!

TIERNEY

(from above)

Kitty! Are you down there?!? I know yer down there.

(Kitty pauses. Runs out. Papiz looks around.)

PAPIZ

Wadda woyld.

(BLACK OUT ON PAPIZ. Lights on Kitty, teary eyed, with the baby, walking through the hallway back to her apartment. Guinea Pete appears.)

GUINEA

Hey, Kitty. I got da game on. Wanna come and listen?

KITTY

Not again.

(BLACKOUT. Five count in black.)

KITTY

(in black/piercing)

NO!

GUINEA PETE

OW! GOD DAMMIT!

(Lights rise. Guinea Pete is doubled over, cupping his crotch, while a MAN IN WHITE, pursues Kitty with a butterfly net. She holds tight to the baby.)

MAN IN WHITE

Come on, little Miss Crazy, your numbah's up!

GUINEA PETE

You get that bitch!

MAN IN WHITE

Nevah you worry! I gottah cornered. Come on, Kitty, waddayou want more 'an anything right now? What does every goyl your age want more 'an anything? YOU'RE OWN ROOM! I got one waitin' for ya'! And it's even sound proof so you can have yer boyfriends ovah and do a little entahtaining, if you know what I mean!

(Kitty runs to the window and shouts out.)

KITTY

AUNTIE!

GUINEA PETE

Fuh God's sakes, what's takin' so long?!? Sedate 'er!

(The Man in White grabs Kitty from behind.)

MAN IN WHITE

Dat's a good grip you got dere, kiddo. I mean, a good solid grip. I wish my mudda had a grip like dat. She nevah woulda dropped me on my head dat time. I gotta dent. If yer a good goyl, I'll letcha feel it.

(She stomps his foot, he cries out, she tries to get away. Guinea Pete blocks her path and grabs her. She struggles.)

GUINEA PETE

You know what happens to little goyls who lie?!?

KITTY

Get your hands offa ME!

GUINEA PETE

They go strait to hell!

KITTY

I'm already there!

GUINEA PETE

Oh, you think this is hell, do ya'? You'll see. You'll all see. Liars, cheats, whoores, all of ya', y'all deserve to be locked up! Yer a pox on society!

(to the Man in White)

Waddid I tell ya? Coytified lunatic. Just like her mothah!

MAN IN WHITE

Them's the one's I like best!

GUINEA PETE

Poor little, Kitty. I hate to see you go out like this.

(whispers)

But I can't have you runnin' loose out there tellin' tales about me, now can I?

(A banging.)

TIERNEY

KITTY!

GUINEA PETE

Well? Waddaya waiting for?

KITTY

I didn't make nothin' up.

(The Man in White approaches with a large hypodermic needle and sticks it into Kitty. She lets out a piteous whimper. Guinea Pete releases her and she backs off into a wall. The banging continues. Guinea Pete wanders off. A moment. Tierney comes barging into the room.)

TIERNEY

I don't know what you've done with my girl but if she's—

(Tierney stops when she sees Kitty. All is silence for a moment. Kitty sits, rocking the baby slowly and humming a lullaby.)

GUINEA PETE

Thought you might like to say yer goodbyes.

(Another silent moment.)

MAN IN WHITE

Women. So often. So far gone. Quite often, just too late. I wouldn't blame yourself, Mrs. Tierney—

TIERNEY

It's Miss.

MAN IN WHITE

Right. Well. What can you do? These kids, they're left to wander, am I right? You should see what I seen. Now, you want my opinion, and take it widda grain a salt, I mean, who am I right, but you want my opinion, it's the overall lack a color in dees neighborhoods. Dey ain't got no greens, no reds, no yellahs. It's all black, black, black, gray, gray gray. All. Day. Long. Da food's gray, de air's gray, the skin...well for da most part, dees kids got gray skin but not dis one, she's white as snow, isn't she? Widdem pink cheeks. A real lookah. You hear me Kitty, I'm payin' you a compliment.

(he kneels by her)

Kitty. I need to take the baby now.

GUINEA PETE

(jumping)

I'LL take the baby.

TIERNEY

You will like hell.

GUINEA PETE

Hey, Man, you said—

MAN IN WHITE

I know what I said. Sorry state of affairs my friend. Unfortunately there are people 'round here who pay good money for a newborn even if it's a darkie and, uh, well, I got my own kids to feed.

GUINEA PETE

I'll pay ya'.

TIERNEY

What the hell do you want with it?

MAN IN WHITE

You ain't got this kinda cash, bud, sorry. Kitty, I was tryin' to do this nice but--

(He reaches for it, Kitty pulls away violently with the last of her strength.)

KITTY

I wouldn't do dat if I was you. She bites. I taught her. My mothah taught me how to bite, her mothah taught her and now, I... Age old family secret. I taught her how to bite, but her fathah, he taught her how to throw a split fingahd fast ball. He always said, too bad she ain't a boy, huh? Coulda' played ball in the big leagues. Beat those damn Yanks once and fer all. Isn't that right, Pete?

TIERNEY

Sweet Mary Mother of—

KITTY

You want dis baby? So much fuss. I don't unnerstand. So much fuss ovah somethin' so small. In fact, she's much smallah than a baby should be. Dis baby was a gift from God. A gift from God to me because I have been good all my life. And with her, he sent my perfect house, in a town not so far from here. It was a...puh...puh-pink house with green trees outside and a little pond of bright blue watah out back and you could wake up in the mornin' and breath in and out and in and...and there was no threat, there were no shadows, there was no darkness. Once, that house existed and it was just waiting for me. (beat) You wanna know what happened to it? Huh? Auntie! Ask me what happened!

TIERNEY

(soft)

No. Kitty.

KITTY

YOU! Man in white, I know yer curious!

(He bows his head.)

KITTY (CONT'D)

Pete? (beat) No, Pete doesn't have to ask. Pete knows. You wanna tell 'em?!? G'head! Tell 'em da story.

GUINEA PETE

(in a whisper)

You shut yer mouth.

KITTY

It burned down to the ground. Someone set it on fire. Turned it into garbage, nothin' but a towering pile of rubble that smoked and burned for DAYS! Someone destroyed my house. Why? (beat) WHY DID THEY HAVE TO DO DAT?!?

(beat/she swoons)

Jesus, I'm tired. I'm fallin' asleep. You want her? You can have her. There ain't much left, see? Because she went down widda house. Not much left. But what's left. You can have.

(Kitty slumps back in a daze. Ms. Tierney approaches her and kneels. She gingerly removes the baby from Kitty's arms. She looks at it. A moment.)

TIERNEY

This baby is not black.

(Guinea Pete takes the baby. Looks at it. Pause.)

GUINEA PETE

This baby is no longer.

(Beat. Black out.)