

KALAMAZOO

BY
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DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

KALAMAZOO

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To Stephanie and Max

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to Bruce Miller.

AUTHORS' NOTE

Peg and Irving are real people going through real emotions. They must be truthful.

But if the production and the acting are too “grounded” the comedy of this play will fall painfully flat. Please remember this is not *The Crucible*. And if they are played too “knowingly” they come across as mean.

If there is a laugh to be had, it's because we worked very hard to put it there and we want you to come and get it. That being said, if the actors and director play too boldly for the laughs, the characters will come across as inauthentic and the comedy will die in a very uncomfortable way. Peg and Irving are funny because they don't know that they're funny. All of their humor comes organically from their quirks of character.

Lighting and sound should be enough to show the passage of time and transition to a new location. Scene changes should be as fluid as possible and the set need not be complicated. For example: a beach umbrella for the beach, a disco ball for the strip club, a cake tray for the Four Seasons. It's much more important in this comedy for the transitions to be quick rather than labored. Peg and Irving dancing works very well between scenes and pulls the attention away from any stage business.

Finally, *Kalamazoo* is about living an abundant life at whatever age. In every directing or acting choice you make, lean into the joy and delight that Peg and Irv discover in one another. Audiences love love, and if we believe these two love each other, everything will take care of itself.

Love has a funny way of doing that.

KALAMAZOO received its world premiere at the Bloomington Playwrights Project (Chad Rabinovitz, Producing Artistic Director; Jessica Reed, Managing Director) in Bloomington, Indiana, on September 26, 2014. It was directed by Chad Rabinovitz, the lighting and scenic designs were by Lee Burckes, the costume design was by Chris Rhoton, the sound design was by Chris Alexeev, the choreography was by Rebecca Itow, and the production stage manager was Tiffany Lutz. The cast was as follows:

PEG Kate Braun
IRVING Ken Farrell

The rolling world premiere of KALAMAZOO followed at Pacific Residents Theatre (Marilyn Fox, Artistic Director) in Los Angeles, California, on November 15, 2014. It was directed by Dan Bonnell, the scenic design was by Amanda Knehans, the costume design was by Joseph Kennedy, the lighting design was by Nicholas Davidson, the sound design was by Googi Franklin, and the production stage manager was Tymica Spiller. The cast was as follows:

PEG Sharon Madden
IRVING Paul Eiding

The New York premiere of KALAMAZOO was produced at the Adirondack Theatre Festival (Chad Rabinovitz, Artistic Director; Heather Carroll, Managing Director) on June 24, 2015. It was directed by Chad Rabinovitz, the lighting and scenic designs were by Lee Burckes, the costume design was by Chris Rhoton, the sound design was by Scott O'Brien, and the stage manager was Emily Paige Ballou. The cast was as follows:

PEG Kate Braun
IRVING Ken Farrell

CHARACTERS

PEG

Female, 70s, Irish-American. Sweet and naive but not dumb, nor a shrinking violet. She doesn't have a mean bone in her body (especially important to remember when she makes off-color or anti-Semitic remarks), but she isn't afraid to stand up for herself. She's an innocent in a complicated world.

IRVING

Male, 70s, East-Coast Jewish. Irving is a self-made man, and a funny guy, but not a borscht-belt comedian. His veneer can be a little abrupt, but underneath he's an open, tender-hearted man. He's an explorer in a new world.

PLACE

Scene 1: The stage

Scene 2: A Mexican restaurant

Scene 3: A hotel room

Scene 4: The beach

Scene 5: A living room

Scene 6: A strip club

Scene 7: The Four Seasons

Scene 8: A bird sanctuary

TIME

The present.

KALAMAZOO

Scene 1

Peg, dressed in her Sunday best—including a flowing scarf and a hat with a bird motif—is perched on a high-back stool, facing the audience.

PEG. I'm a bird person. *(She flaps her arms like wings.)* There! I said it. Full disclosure is best. That's my motto. You might think it's because I admire their ability to fly, but not really. Anyone can do that nowadays, right? It's more their power to molt. Feather shedding. Must feel so good. I admire their molting, mostly. *(French accent.)* Molting mostly, monsieur! *(Italian accent.)* Molto-bene! *(Pleased with her puns.)* I'm seventy-*(Muffles her mouth.)* years young, but you wouldn't know it by the looks of me. *(She adjusts.)* So if you're looking for a supermodel, carry on with your search. If, however, you're looking for someone sexy, uninhibited, voracious... well, carry on a bit further too. But seriously, I'm a nice person. And fun. I can be fun. I enjoy learning and experiencing new things, especially if I've done them before. I'm not a couch potato, but I do like a can of Pringles, especially when paired with a good bottle of Asti Spumante. *(Irving sits on a stool. He wears a cardigan over a button-down shirt. The sweater looks fine but upon closer inspection it may look a little worn—as if it's a favorite and he doesn't want to replace it—or bother shopping for another one. He wears chinos, maybe a jaunty hat and comfortable sneakers.)*

IRVING. Okay. Good. Let's see. What kind of woman are you looking for? *(Beat.)* Breathing. A woman who's breathing would be romantic at my age. But beyond that, I wouldn't mind a shiksa. Never had one. I've always run with the tribe. I don't mean some twenty-year-old shiksa—I'm not that crazy. I mean someone with a different kind of background; a woman of the land, maybe... or

someone who went to school with nuns and can explain what the heck the Holy Ghost is all about; a woman who knows how to use a hacksaw— I don't know, just someone who wouldn't be from the same shtetl if we were to go back a couple of generations. Someone I could learn something from. Learning new things keeps you from getting Alzheimer's, I read that in *USA Today*. Or was it the *Times*? I'd like a woman who could keep me from getting Alzheimer's. (*Beat.*) And also if she liked the Mets, I wouldn't complain. (*Lights shift back to Peg.*)

PEG. My passions include but are not limited to... (*As if reading.*) Acting. Ancient history. Animals. Archery. Art. Astrology. Astronomy. Ballet. Boating. Boxing. Bridge. Camping. Carpentry. (*Beat.*) Wait, was I supposed to click on all of these? Because I don't know a thing about carpentry. Oh, I see. I was supposed to... Well... (*Beat.*) I'm a bird person! But we've established that. Molt. Let's see. What else? I'm a Sagittarius! That's something, isn't it? No idea what that means, but just in case you were, you know, wondering.

IRVING. Let's see... "Do you enjoy cooking?"

PEG. No, but I love eating. "How patient do you consider yourself?"

IRVING. Well that would take forever to answer. "Favorite color?"

PEG. Rainbow. "How much do you like reading?"

IRVING. My God this is long! "Do you enjoy going to the movies?"

PEG. Too loud, too explosive, too darn 3-D! What's with the glasses and everything poking out at you? It's like sitting through a two-hour glaucoma test! "How much do you enjoy going to live theatre?"

IRVING. Booooo-ring! "Turn-ons?"

PEG. Cockatoos. Peacocks. (*Unconsciously touches her throat.*) Swallows. (*Beat.*) "Places you've always wanted to visit?" Oh, that's an easy one. The W.K. Kellogg Biological Station. One hundred eighty acres of wildlife habitats on Wintergreen Lake. It's a bird sanctuary. In Michigan. Near a place called Kalamazoo. Doesn't that sound like a magic word? (*Magician accent.*) Kalamazoooooooo! (*Beat.*) What if you could just say that and everything would be okay?

IRVING. "Where is a place you never want to go?" (*Beat.*) Hell. I don't want to go to hell. Or Boca. I want to be the one old person in the world who never goes to Boca. But I would like to go to Shanghai. I'd like to go to Shanghai and eat something that I've never eaten before, like crickets or blowfish. They can be poisonous, you know, blowfish... Have to be cooked a certain way or you're dead. That'd be a good way to go, I think: death by blowfish. It's a

lot more interesting than a heart attack. Or cancer. Hell, anything is better than cancer. When you get to be my age you've seen enough cancer to fill a truck. It's the worst insult the Almighty ever dreamed up. By the way, ask me what I don't want in a woman and I'll tell you that I don't want another woman with cancer. (*Lights shift back to Peg.*)

PEG. Alrighty. So. "What are you looking for in an ideal mate?" That's a tough one. I appreciate honesty, loyalty, integrity, a sense of humor, kindness, playfulness, compassion... A man who keeps himself healthy... Spontaneity as long as he's prepared me for it. Someone who'll try anything once. Someone who's comfortable in his own skin. I like that a lot. Someone who likes anything scenic. The moon over the water at night. Crunchy leaves in the fall. Snowmen in winter. Spring mountains. Someone who will take the time to get to know me. Someone who likes birds. Someone like Arthur. (*Beat, change in tone.*) I was married for forty-six and a half years to a kind, loving man. (*Beat.*) And it's hard to have dreams for the future when you don't have someone to share your dreams with. (*Beat.*) And I'm new at this. (*Beat, back to prior tone.*) Oh, and I drive a '91 Buick LeSabre! They don't make them anymore. And I won't sell mine because I like the name. LeSabre. Makes me feel like a Musketeer. (*Musketeer accent.*) En garde! (*Lights shift back to Irving.*)

IRVING. "What is your idea of the perfect first date?" Straight into the sack. No, just kidding. I guess anyone who watches this can tell that I like to kid. I was always the funniest guy at the office. The truth is I might be a little nervous about jumping in the sack after all this time. Wait. That's not exactly putting me in the best light. Oh, never mind. You want me, you get my dopey sense of humor. (*Lights shift back to Peg.*)

PEG. Okay, last question, "What's the one thing you want out of life?" I guess... Just one, huh? That's the max? (*Long beat.*) What I really want... is seven. Someone who'll face the seven most difficult things in life. Together. The seven hardest things that every year seem to get just a little harder: (*Beat.*) Monday. Tuesday. Wednesday. Thursday. Friday. Saturday. Sunday. (*Beat.*) That's really what I want. (*Long pause.*) Oh, and no Jews! (*Beat, considering.*) Actually. I'm open. That's my motto. (*Extends her hands out wide.*) I'm open. (*Smiling, she begins to flap her arms like wings. Lights shift back to Irving.*)

IRVING. "What's the one thing you want out of life?" (*Beat.*) After my Rosie died, I realized there wasn't a thing in the world I could

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1M, 1W

Peg and Irv, two quirky but endearing baby-boomers, bravely venture into the world of modern dating. But when these opposites attract, they discover love isn't any easier the second time around. Winner of the Riva Shiner Comedy Award, KALAMAZOO is a romantic comedy about life's second act and learning you're never too old to be young.

"A disarming comedy that lets us laugh about growing older while addressing the very real hardships and heartaches that come when one spouse from a life-long marriage is suddenly left alone. ... the banter in this play is both hilarious and startlingly honest. It just rings true in ways that can be surprising and shocking, but always satisfying."

—**Examiner.com**

"... a rich story about love at any age."

—**EncoreMichigan.com**

"... an involved and skillful piece of writing."

—**Indiana Public Media**

"Bouts of riotous laughter... it's hard to imagine a better show."

—**Herald-Times (Bloomington, Indiana)**

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