

WOMEN IN JEOPARDY!

BY WENDY MACLEOD



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

WOMEN IN JEOPARDY!
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*To Ed Sobel and Sean Daniels,
who brought the play to life*

WOMEN IN JEOPARDY! was originally produced by Geva Theatre Center (Mark Cuddy, Artistic Director; Tom Parrish, Executive Director), Rochester, New York, in 2015. It was directed by Sean Daniels, the scenic design was by Michael Raiford, the costume design was by Amanda Doherty, the lighting design was by Brian J. Lilienthal, the sound design was by David Remedios, and the stage manager was Frank Cavallo. The cast was as follows:

MARY Jennifer Cody
JO Julia Brothers
LIZ Laurie Wells
AMANDA Ashley Shamoon
TRENNER Scott Rad Brown
JACKSON Liam Craig

WOMEN IN JEOPARDY! was originally developed by the Arden Theatre Company.

CHARACTERS

MARY

40s, divorced, a librarian, “still” pretty, motherly

JO

40s, divorced, her best friend, a publicist, sardonic

LIZ

40s, divorced, Mary’s other best friend,
a Director of Admissions, boy-crazy, a bit of a drama queen

AMANDA

19, Liz’s daughter, an exceptionally pretty college student whose
SATs were in the single digits
(the exceptional breasts can be accomplished by costume)

TRENNER

19, a snowboarder, sweet but not too bright,
anxious to be found manly

JACKSON

40s, a dentist, Liz’s new boyfriend, creepy,
given to strange pronouncements about death and disease
(he may or may not look like Christopher Walken*)

SGT. KIRK SPONSÜLLAR

(played by the actor playing Jackson)

40s, a police sergeant, a John Wayne type, courtly,
a man of few or entirely obfuscated words

*where [Christopher Walken] appears in the text in reference to Jackson, use the name of whatever creepy movie star the actor resembles

WOMEN IN JEOPARDY!

ACT ONE

Scene 1

Mary's kitchen in Salt Lake City. Jo is one of Mary's two best friends. Mary and Jo burst into the kitchen from the living room with a crudité platter, talking in hushed tones about Liz's new boyfriend.

MARY. Who *is* this guy?

JO. Jackson *Scull*.

MARY. He just *sits* there.

JO. Why did you invite him?

MARY. I didn't!

JO. She just brought him?

MARY. Well she *asked*...

JO. And you said...

MARY. What could I say?

JO. It was supposed to be just the three of us.

MARY. I know!

JO. We never see her anymore! What was that thing about zebras...?

MARY. What *was* that?

JO. We're trying to have a serious discussion about the reintroduction of wolves...

MARY. And he's like, "The problem is they kill all the zebras..."

JO. Which isn't funny.

MARY. It *isn't* funny.

JO. *What* zebras?

MARY. This is *Utah*.

JO. It's just weird.

MARY. But also menacing.

JO. Suddenly *we're* the zebra.

MARY. You're scared to move lest you trigger his prey instinct.

JO. But there's Liz laughing like a hyena.

MARY. Did you notice a smell?

JO. What kind of smell?

MARY. A not-right smell.

JO. Body odor?

MARY. No.

JO. After-shave?

MARY. No, like chemical-y...

JO. Formaldehyde?

MARY. Oh my God.

JO. He is a dentist.

MARY. Do dentists use formaldehyde?

JO. They use fluoride.

MARY. He's a weirdo.

JO. He *is* a weirdo. Just sleep with him or whatever but don't subject your friends to...oh hey-y-y Liz!

Liz enters from the unseen living room.

MARY. (*Hearty.*) There she is...!

LIZ. *So.* What do you think?

MARY. It doesn't matter what *we* think.

JO. It matters what *you* think.

LIZ. Doesn't he look a little like [Christopher Walken]?

MARY. Oh my God he does.

JO. He so does.

Mary and Jo exchange an anxious look.

LIZ. When Jim left, I felt like my life was over. And now look. I have a *lover!*

MARY. Of course it's not over...

LIZ. All this time I thought Jim was so perfect when all along there was someone even better out there...

MARY. But so nice, Jim.

JO. So sane.

LIZ. Wait. Now you *like* Jim?

MARY. We're not defending his *behavior*...

LIZ. He leaves me for some soprano after three years of lying to my face...!

MARY. But from *our* perspective...

JO. Just to have dinner with...

LIZ. I know Jackson's awkward.

JO. *No*.

LIZ. That thing about zebras.

MARY. What thing?

LIZ. It's just he's out there, you know. His sense of humor. He is just so *out* there.

JO. Uh-huh.

LIZ. So I totally understand if you don't "get" him. But you will. His hygienists love him.

MARY. Oh?

LIZ. *Love* him. It's a very successful practice. I mean let's face it a dentist is...

JO. Not the most exciting [profession]...

LIZ. A doctor. A dentist is a doctor. Women are always desperate to marry doctors. Why not dentists? They're doctors who work regular hours. I said to him, I said Jackson, why did you never marry? Why weren't you *snatched up*? You who were so successful and sexy and *funny*?

MARY. Did he always want to be a dentist?

LIZ. He likes to fix things.

MARY. Oh right...

LIZ. He wants to get in there and fix things! I'm looking for the corkscrew. He loves the tools, he loves the teeth! He said that to me: "I love the teeth!" You must have noticed how my body is changing...

MARY. Well of course it is, all our bodies are changing...

LIZ. My hair is shinier, my lips are plumper, I'm *lubricated*, my hips swivel when I walk. You can actually feel the heat coming off me!

MARY. Well that happens to lots of women our age...

LIZ. There has been a *renaissance* of my nether parts! My desire has grown so fierce that I can't think of anything else! Sometimes Jackson and I actually weep together over the years we spent apart, when I was just one of those dateless divorced women in sensible shoes doing Fun Runs and book clubs.

MARY. But Liz, we're the divorced women doing Fun Runs and book clubs...

LIZ. Don't give up hope girls! *Your* Jackson is out there somewhere!

MARY. (*The wine bottle in Liz's hand.*) Is that for Jackson?

LIZ. Confidence in a bottle. He feels a little out of place.

MARY. Of course.

LIZ. You were so nice to let him come.

MARY. How could I not? (*Saving herself.*) We'd heard so much about him!

LIZ. He just couldn't be alone tonight.

MARY. Oh?

LIZ. Have you heard about the missing girl?

JO. It was in the paper this morning.

MARY. A girl leaves work and is never seen again...

JO. A girl is abducted just walking to her car...

MARY. But *was* she abducted? Or was she killed right away?

JO. Sometimes it's better to be killed right away.

MARY. Not *better*...

JO. But *preferable*...

MARY. Those poor parents...

LIZ. I know...

MARY. She was a dental hygienist for God's sake! What could be safer? It's not like she was a *Marine* or a *real estate agent*...

Jo and Liz look confused about the dangers of being a real estate agent.

They meet strange people in empty houses. They disappear all the time.

LIZ. And for all we know this guy's still *out* there...

MARY. I guess we don't *know* it's a guy.

JO. Of course we know. Women don't kill strangers. They kill husbands.

LIZ. This isn't public knowledge yet but the missing girl was *Jackson's* hygienist. He's worried. Worried sick. He was with the police all morning. They were collecting everybody's shoes.

JO. They were questioning him?

LIZ. Well, it was *his* parking lot.

MARY. They kept Jackson's shoes?

LIZ. In case they found footprints.

JO. Do they suspect him?

LIZ. Suspect him of what?

MARY. Obviously not murder or abduction...

LIZ. They've worked together for two years. Why would he all of a sudden *abduct* her?

MARY. I'm sure he wouldn't...

LIZ. He doesn't *have* to abduct her. They see each other every day.

MARY. Of course...

LIZ. Do you actually think I'd be dating some abductor?

MARY. Not if you *knew* he was an abductor...

JO. Abductors can be very charming...

LIZ. Does Jackson *look* like some kind of abductor?

JO. Well he was wearing that mask when he first got here...

LIZ. He got that for *skiing*. I've got pretty good instincts about people, Jo.

JO. Well...

LIZ. Well what?

JO. Forget it.

LIZ. Are you referring to my divorce?

JO. I'm referring to the *circumstances* of your divorce...

MARY. You're a trusting person.

LIZ. Of course I trust people! I was *taught* to trust people.

MARY. We all were.

LIZ. I'm not letting Jim take away my ability to trust!

MARY. You shouldn't...

LIZ. I mean Jackson is taking this so hard. He is beating himself up over this. Should he have had brighter lights in the parking lot? Should he have been walking the girls to their cars? He's been afraid of something like this. He had three trees removed last month so that nobody could jump out at his employees.

JO. Had there been a jumping-out problem?

LIZ. And even then he gave the job to some tree guy who was just out of prison. *That's* how big-hearted he is. He is *so* upset, he just loved that girl...

MARY. She was very pretty...

LIZ. He didn't love her because she was pretty! He would be every bit as upset if it were the fat hygienist! Or the one with alopecia! I mean, Jackson was the very last one to see her! She was leaving work, she was borrowing a movie, and his very last words were: "Don't forget to bring back my movie!" You know?

JO. What movie was it?

LIZ. Why does it matter?

JO. Was it a creepy movie?

LIZ. You're as bad as the police. They were harping on that movie! Jackson has lots of movies in the office! To distract the kids from the drilling.

JO. So it was a kids' movie?

WOMEN IN JEOPARDY!

by Wendy MacLeod

2M, 4W

Thelma and Louise meets *The First Wives Club* in this fun and flirtatious comedy. Divorcées Mary and Jo are suspicious of their friend Liz's new dentist boyfriend. He's not just a weirdo; he may be a serial killer! After all, his hygienist just disappeared. Trading their wine glasses for spy glasses, imaginations run wild as the ladies try to discover the truth and save their friend in a hilarious off-road adventure.

"... the laughs in Wendy MacLeod's play... come fast and furious. ... modern, lively, and loads of fun."

—**The Boston Globe**

"WOMEN IN JEOPARDY! is a damn winner. ... a farcical comedy that somehow manages to feel both familiar and innovative. ... If you look behind the laughs, though, there is a conversation MacLeod is looking to have about the tropes and stereotypes of women-centric casts. But she leaves the work up to us. ... The job of this play is not to make any large sweeping statements, or to embed ideologies; rather, WOMEN IN JEOPARDY! inspires conversation through its laughter. At its heart, WOMEN IN JEOPARDY! is comedy gold. It borrows little bits from everything that's come before it, but the result is refreshing and original, and somehow, the laughter comes easy."

—**Rochester City Newspaper**

"... a highly entertaining mystery-comedy... all about those fuzzy feelings of empowerment, watching women triumph in friendship and the biological unfairness of middle age..."

—**Rochester Democrat and Chronicle**

Also by Wendy MacLeod

THE HOUSE OF YES

SIN

THE WATER CHILDREN

and others

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