

# MOSQUITOES

BY LUCY  
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DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.

MOSQUITOES  
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MOSQUITOES was first performed in the Dorfman auditorium of the National Theatre, London, on July 25, 2017. It was directed by Rufus Norris, the scenic design was by Katrina Lindsay, the lighting design was by Paule Constable, the music was by Adam Cork, the sound design was by Paul Arditti, and the video design was by Finn Ross and Ian William Galloway. The cast was as follows:

ALICE .....	Olivia Williams
JENNY .....	Olivia Colman
THE BOSON .....	Paul Hilton
LUKE .....	Joseph Quinn
NATALIE .....	Sofia Barclay
KAREN .....	Amanda Boxer
HENRI .....	Yoli Fuller
GAVRIELLA BASTIANELLI/POLICEWOMAN .....	Cait Davis
JOURNALIST/SONOGRAPHER .....	Vanessa Emme
SECURITY GUARD .....	Ira Mandela Siobhan

MOSQUITOES was originally commissioned by Manhattan Theatre Club, (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer) with funds provided by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

## CHARACTERS

*This is a play about the English in Europe, and the nationality and race of the characters are important.*

*That does not mean the characters cannot be played by actors of a different nationality or race.*

ALICE  
*(English)*

JENNY  
*(English)*

THE BOSON  
*(English)*

LUKE  
*(English)*

NATALIE  
*(English, of South Asian descent)*

KAREN  
*(English)*

HENRI  
*(Swiss-French)*

GAVRIELLA BASTIANELLI  
*(Italian)*

*who also plays*  
POLICEWOMAN  
*(Swiss-French)*

JOURNALIST/SCIENTISTS/GUARDS

*(The Journalist should be from the country the play is being performed in.  
The Scientists are from all over Europe. The Guards are Swiss-French.)*

*“The general public has long been divided into two parts; those who think that science can do anything and those who are afraid it will.”*

—Thomas Pynchon,  
*Mason & Dixon*

# MOSQUITOES

## ACT ONE

### IN THE BEGINNING.

*Summer 2006. A house in Luton, England, beneath a flight path. Jenny, heavily pregnant. She walks, always in motion. Alice sits. She is 41 and Jenny is 39.*

JENNY. Just it's like waves.

ALICE. And but which part in particular is worrying you?

JENNY. It's the part which, I think it's mainly the part where it comes out.

ALICE. This is very natural Jenny.

JENNY. Mike says millions of women do it every day. He says "look at the animal kingdom."

*Jenny sits down.*

ALICE. Don't worry about Mike. He's just feeling powerless and redundant.

JENNY. I want a cigarette.

ALICE. well okay but that's not / going to—

JENNY. Mum smoked twenty a day when she was pregnant.

ALICE. Both of us?

JENNY. No just me Alice that's why I'm Forrest Gump and you're the Wizard of fucking Oz.

ALICE. That's not / what I was

JENNY. Twenty a day. Marlboro, not light. Red. And we're alright.

*A wave of panic engulfs Jenny. She takes a breath, closes her eyes, trying to control it.*

ALICE. What?

JENNY. No, it's just. It doesn't kick. I don't feel it, kicking, I think it might be in the wrong position. I think the cord might be round its neck.

ALICE. Okay. Okay. But you've had the ultrasound?

*Pause. Jenny makes a noncommittal sound.*

Jenny, you've / had

JENNY. Yeah, it's not, it's not something we felt comfortable doing.

ALICE. But. Okay but so because it's completely safe.

JENNY. Um, no, not, actually, not completely

ALICE. In what way?

*Pause.*

Jenny in / what

JENNY. No because you're going to shout at me.

ALICE. I won't shout at you, when / have I ever

JENNY. They've done animal studies.

ALICE. Which animals?

JENNY. Mammals.

*Pause.*

ALICE. Which mammals?

JENNY. Rats.

ALICE. Rats. Okay. And what did they find in / these

JENNY. Oh you know, just brain injuries. Dyslexia

*Jenny finds a printout of an internet article.*

ALICE. How can a rat be dyslexic?

JENNY. epilepsy (don't do that) mental retardation, an increased incidence in left-handedness in boys

ALICE. Luke is left-handed.

JENNY. well there you go, listen to this:

ALICE. Jenny, we've talked about this.

JENNY. No, I know

ALICE. Googling is

JENNY. Bad, / I know, but just

ALICE. What did we, just because you can access the information doesn't mean you're equipped to understand it.

JENNY. okay, okay but (*Reading.*) "a World Health Organisation report warned that ultrasound can cause reduced fetal weight, neurological changes," this is from a journal by the / way, like a proper

ALICE. Millions of women do it, every single day and

JENNY. So? Millions of women drink Diet Coke.

ALICE. What's wrong with / Diet Coke?

JENNY. "In 2001 an ultrasound transducer placed in a woman's uterus recorded sound as loud as a train coming into a station."

As loud as a *train*.

ALICE. It's safe.

JENNY. As loud as a fucking *train*.

ALICE. In America, you can get it done in a shopping centre.

JENNY. Yeah well in America you can buy a gun in a shopping centre can't you, just cos something happens in America / doesn't mean

ALICE. (oh my God) it's safe, it's safe, it's less dangerous than a hot bath.

JENNY. Yes, well I'd like to believe that Alice / but

ALICE. It doesn't matter whether you believe it, it's a fact.

JENNY. Says who?

ALICE. The doctor, and he's an expert, / so

JENNY. She.

ALICE. She's an expert / so

JENNY. Yeah well I think actually what I feel, *as a mother*, might be stronger than a a a a just a...*fact* don't you?

ALICE. No.

JENNY. Okay well there's not like a single version of



ALICE. Yes there is. There is, absolutely / there is

JENNY. Well that's a very Western way / of

ALICE. A what?

JENNY. I'm just / saying.

ALICE. Western?

JENNY. I'm just saying!

ALICE. You live in Luton.

JENNY. Don't, shouting at me, it doesn't kick. It doesn't move. I think it might be dead.

ALICE. I promise you. I promise you, there is nothing to worry about.

JENNY. yeah well there's a higher rate of Down's

ALICE. From an ultrasound?

JENNY. No, in IVF babies

ALICE. Statistically?

JENNY. statistically, yes, statistically in IVF babies there is a higher rate of Down's and and and and death.

statistically, yes, and all I'm saying is I'm allowed, actually, I am allowed to make my own decisions about what's best for my, without being made to feel like I'm constantly failing some fucking cosmic exam, like I might actually be a capable, grown up woman you know? Who can be trusted to, not just some sack of skin with a pair of tits for people to to examine and and inject and monitor and and stick their fucking fingers in because actually at the end of the day who's in charge? Who's in charge?

fucking, statistically, who's in charge, / Alice?

ALICE. You are.

JENNY. Thank you. Not them. Not you. Me. That's all I'm. Thank you.

*Jenny looks at Alice, wretched.*

Didn't you ever feel like this?

ALICE. I'm sorry, I wish I could...but actually I felt. Sort of amazing.

Like, tuned into some weird frequency, because I understood for the first time. This is what my body is for, and it was like. Wow! / And JENNY. Yeah and your boobs got really big, and then one day you sneezed and out popped Luke, and he trotted off the bed and cut his own umbilical cord. I bet you didn't even shit yourself / did you?

ALICE. Stop it. You know that's not

JENNY. That's not?

ALICE. no, you know that's not

JENNY. Tell me then.

ALICE. I already told you.

JENNY. So tell me again.

*Pause.*

The contractions started, go on. Please. Please Alice.

*Pause.*

Please

ALICE. The contractions started at about ten P.M.

JENNY. But which this worried you because it was too early.

ALICE. Yes it was much too early. I hadn't even packed my case so I instead I put some things

JENNY. Knickers, nightie, inhaler.

ALICE. I shoved them in a plastic bag and I called the ambulance.

JENNY. You get to the hospital, then—no I forgot, this is the best bit, go on.

ALICE. The midwife / was a—

JENNY. The midwife was a man!

ALICE. I nearly said No. I don't want you, I want a woman because this is a very exposing process and also

JENNY. and also he was really fit, you said.

ALICE. yes and also he was problematically good-looking, but then he said is your husband or partner on his or her way?

JENNY. And you said no actually he's in Geneva watching protons collide cos that apparently is more important than the birth / of his

# MOSQUITOES

by Lucy Kirkwood

3M, 6W

Alice is a scientist. She lives in Geneva. As the Large Hadron particle collider starts up in 2008, she is on the brink of the most exciting work of her life, searching for the Higgs Boson. Jenny is her sister. She lives in Luton. She spends a lot of time googling. When tragedy throws them together, the collision threatens them all with chaos.

*“Kirkwood is a writer of reach, intelligence and ambition. There’s a hunger to her work, an urge to fill her plays to brim. She knows how to spring-load a joke and can write lines of total emotional devastation... It’s a joy...to see a play devote this much space and time to examining what it is to be a sister, a mother and a daughter, while also contemplating the workings of the universe and our place within it.”*

—The Stage (UK)

*“...[a] wonderfully ambitious play... fascinating... like all good plays about science, [MOSQUITOES] raises big issues...”*

—The Guardian (UK)

*“Kirkwood is a playwright who tackles giant themes with a swaggering showmanship. ...[MOSQUITOES is] a fascinating and provocative work which uses science as a way of questioning our humanity. ...it is very funny and very sad—often at the same time.”*

—The Daily Telegraph (UK)

Also by Lucy Kirkwood  
THE CHILDREN  
CHIMERICA

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