



SLOW FOOD

**BY WENDY
MACLEOD**



**DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.**



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For Read, with whom the years fly by

SLOW FOOD was originally produced by Merrimack Repertory Theatre (Sean Daniels, Artistic Director; Bonnie J. Butkas, Executive Director) and premiered in January 2019. It was directed by Sean Daniels, the scenic design was by Apollo Mark Weaver, the costume design was by Deborah Newhall, the lighting design was by Brian J. Lilienthal, the sound design was by David Remedios, the production stage manager was Becca Freifeld, and the producer was Peter Crewe. The cast was as follows:

WOMAN (IRENE) Daina Michelle Griffith
MAN (PETER) Joel Van Liew
WAITER (STEPHEN) Brian Beacock

SLOW FOOD was developed during a residency at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's (Preston Whiteway, Executive Director; Wendy C. Goldberg, Artistic Director) National Playwrights Conference in 2015. At the O'Neill it was directed by Kent Nicholson, the dramaturg was Tanya Palmer, and the cast was as follows:

WOMAN (IRENE) Jane Kaczmarek
MAN (PETER) Reed Birney
WAITER (STEPHEN) Michael Berresse

CHARACTERS

WOMAN (Irene), Peter's wife, 40s–50s

MAN (Peter), Irene's husband, mid-40s–50s

WAITER (Stephen), 40s

The couple wears expensive, paper-thin cashmere sweaters;
hers is a beige cashmere hoodie.

Age range can vary with casting, as long as the Man and Woman
could believably have a child that's a recent college graduate.

PLACE

A Greek restaurant in Palm Springs

TIME

A Sunday night in March

SLOW FOOD

A Sunday night in March. A Greek restaurant in Palm Springs. A prosperous-looking, middle-aged married couple sits at a table, holding menus. There are two glasses of water on the table and an unlit candle. A handsome middle-aged waiter, with a leathery tan, hurries over.

WAITER. Here I am!

WOMAN. Hurray!

MAN. Not a moment too soon.

WOMAN. Our hero.

WAITER. (*Pulling out his pad.*) Now then, who needs a drink?

MAN. I gave my order to the other waiter.

WAITER. Brian?

MAN. The guy with the beard...?

WAITER. Did they not tell you I was your waiter?

MAN. We were looking for you...

WAITER. I just had to pop into the kitchen.

MAN. And when we couldn't find you, I asked the other guy...

WOMAN. Brian...

MAN. Brian.

WOMAN. (*Re her husband.*) He was really thirsty.

WAITER. You had your waters. That's liquid gold in these parts.

MAN. I was thirsty for a beer.

WAITER. (*Brightly.*) Let's start over, shall we? "My name is Stephen and I'll be your waiter tonight."

WOMAN. Hi Steven.

WAITER. That's Stephen with a "ph." What did you ask Brian to bring you? Just so I can get up to speed on my own table...

MAN. A Sam Adams.

WAITER. We have a microbrew on special. The Sweet Goat.

MAN. Sam Adams is fine.

WAITER. It's local.

WOMAN. *I'll* try it.

MAN. I thought you wanted wine...

WOMAN. It's local.

WAITER. You're on vacation. Try something new.

MAN. I'll try it the next round.

WAITER. You can't just go from a Sam Adams to a...it's delicate.

MAN. How delicate can a beer be?

WAITER. Oh my God. You need a candle.

WOMAN. We're fine.

WAITER. You're sitting in the dark!

Waiter pulls a lighter from his apron pocket and tries to light their candle.

Were you guys planning to make out?

WOMAN. (*Joking.*) You never know.

MAN. (*Joking.*) I was working on it...

WAITER. Oh my God. This lighter's hopeless. I'll be right back.

MAN. Could we go ahead and order? We're starving.

WOMAN. (*Apologetically.*) It's midnight our time.

WAITER. Just tell your stomach you're in California now. Where it's only nine o'clock.

WOMAN. We were lucky you were still serving.

WAITER. You *were* lucky. On a Sunday night.

WOMAN. (*Looking at the menu.*) I was thinking about the spanakopita...

WAITER. You haven't even heard the specials! *Such* a different rhythm! You're from the East Coast, am I right?

WOMAN. New York.

WAITER. See? You can tell.

MAN. And she told you.

WAITER. The mindset is so fear-based.

MAN. In this case, it's actually hunger-based.

WAITER. The *fear* that we'll run out of beer. The *fear* that we'll run out of food. We've got plenty of food!

WOMAN. Why don't you tell us about the specials?

WAITER. We do have an *amazing* lamb special...

MAN. I love lamb.

WAITER. It's braised.

MAN. (*Closing the menu.*) Sold.

Waiter collects the Man's menu and tucks it under his arm.

WAITER. It's been braising all day. Dmitri has had those chops stewing in rosemary, tomato sauce, olive oil, feta...

WOMAN. Yum.

WAITER. (*Writing on his pad.*) So you want to switch to the lamb...?

WOMAN. No, it just sounded good.

WAITER. Oh.

WOMAN. I think I'll stick with the spanakopita.

Waiter makes a show of scratching out what he'd just written down.

MAN. But I'm having that lamb! It sounds delicious.

WAITER. Not more delicious than the spanakopita apparently.

MAN. She's a vegetarian.

WOMAN. I mean not a *total* vegetarian...

MAN. She rarely eats meat.

WAITER. Well that might have been a helpful thing to tell me. I could have recommended vegetarian options...

WOMAN. Do you not recommend the spanakopita?

WAITER. Spanakopita is spanakopita, you know? It's like the Sam Adams of Greek food.

MAN. I like Sam Adams.

WOMAN. And I like spanakopita.

WAITER. Then everybody's happy.

WOMAN. You don't sound happy.

WAITER. It's just, over the years, one develops a certain expertise...

MAN. Absolutely.

WAITER. And there are some customers who appreciate that expertise and others who, you know, go their own way...

MAN. We totally appreciate it, which is why I'm trying that lamb...

WAITER. You're *trying* it?

MAN. I'm *having* it...

WAITER. You're going to like it. It's been braising all day...

MAN. I'm sure it's very tender...

WAITER. We're all so used to pressing that minute button on the microwave!

MAN. What time does the kitchen close?

WAITER. See? Right there. Fear. Everybody just needs to relax.

MAN. That's what we're trying to do.

WOMAN. We're just so hungry.

WAITER. Breathe.

WOMAN. Right.

WAITER. No really. Breathe. Ujjayi breath. In through the nose, out through the nose. One. Two. Three.

Waiter and Woman close their eyes and breathe.

Like a breaking wave. Better?

WOMAN. Better.

WAITER. Do you do yoga?

WOMAN. I do.

WAITER. And it shows.

WOMAN. (*Pleased her yoga shows.*) I think maybe I'll have a salad too...

WAITER. Which salad?

WOMAN. The Greek salad.

WAITER. Oh.

WOMAN. Is there a better salad?

WAITER. How many Greek salads have you had in your life? Palm Springs is about going wild, you know? We swim naked here. We have orgies. People come here, they've always come here, to *experiment*. And there you are ordering the Greek salad.

WOMAN. Bring whatever salad you'd recommend...

WAITER. I don't want to decide *for* you. I'm just asking for an exchange, you know? Let me suggest two or three salads so that you can choose with the benefit of my expertise...

MAN. If we could maybe move things along. We've had a stressful day. They didn't have our rental car. So now we're driving an enormous white van that makes us look like Jehovah's Witnesses...

WOMAN. Or serial killers...

MAN. We get to our hotel and the hot tub is on the fritz...

WOMAN. We'd been looking forward to a hot tub...

MAN. We head out to dinner only to find the first three restaurants closing up for the night...

WAITER. So we were your fourth choice?

WOMAN. Oh no, the concierge recommended you...

WAITER. Do you even like Greek food?

WOMAN. I love it. I lived on Naxos!

WAITER. Oh well you're the expert then.

WOMAN. I wasn't saying *that*...

WAITER. (*To Man.*) What about you?

MAN. I'll eat anything. I'll eat a braised kitten at this point!

*The Waiter begins to weep. The Woman looks at the Man like,
"What were you thinking?"*

WOMAN. Not a kitten...

MAN. I wouldn't really eat a kitten...

WOMAN. He would never eat a kitten...

WAITER. My cat...

SLOW FOOD

by Wendy MacLeod

2 men, 1 woman

A vacationing couple celebrates their anniversary at a Greek restaurant in Palm Springs—but will the marriage survive the service? As a needy waiter insinuates his way into their meal—and their lives—the couple examines their past and their future together. Playwright Wendy MacLeod brings us a tender comedy that delves deeply into what we hunger for.

“...in SLOW FOOD, playwright Wendy MacLeod comes up with every imaginable (and unimaginable) way to delay [the couple’s] gratification, while simultaneously serving up 95 minutes of delicious comedy for the audience to relish. ...If you’ve never understood the concept of the term hangry, you’ll get it after seeing SLOW FOOD. ...a tasty recipe for a great night at the theater.”

—**BroadwayWorld.com**

“...a well-written comedic meditation on marriage.”

—**NETheatreGeek.com**

“[SLOW FOOD] generates plenty of laughs from a conflict that most of us have experienced: the desperate fight to have dinner in peace.”

—**ArtsFuse.org**

Also by Wendy MacLeod

THE HOUSE OF YES
THINGS BEING WHAT THEY ARE
WOMEN IN JEOPARDY!
and others

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