

LADIES AT LUNCH

By Carol Woods

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Ladies at Lunch

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Six alert and active senior ladies meet for lunch each week. Between their arranging chairs, sharing OTC medications, discussing mammograms and men, they give a waiter and his manager a really bad day. About 20-25 minutes.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Ladies at Lunch was originally performed by the Merry Clements Players, produced and directed by Charles Ault.

Original Cast:

DEBBIE -- Hazel Brandl	KATHERINE -- Charlotte Eakins
SARAH -- Barbara Farley	GRACE -- Nirna Steinberg
LINDA -- Fern Wood	SUZIE -- Carol Woods
GEORGE -- Charles Sparks	MANAGER -- Frank Nevil

ADDITIONAL PLAYS

Ladies at Lunch met with such success that playwright Carol Woods wrote two additional plays, creating a trilogy of one-acts which may be performed together as an evening of entertainment, *Ladies -- A Trio of Six*.

Ladies at Poker: (1m, 6w) One interior. The Ladies meet at Suzie's home for a game of poker -- which they know little if anything about. Suzie's husband, Willoughby, sticks his two-cents-worth in and the game disintegrates into a sharing of make-up and poker-bridge. As usual men are a part of the discussion. About 20-25 minutes.

Ladies on Vacation: (6w) The Ladies go on vacation and rent a condo with only one bathroom. From trying to get all of their luggage into one minivan, deciding who sleeps where and what to eat, to finally selecting the activities, life gets wild and silly, all intensified by lack of sleep. About 20-25 minutes.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 6 w)

Six women at or near retirement age:

KATHERINE

DEBBIE

SUZIE

GRACE

LINDA

SARAH

Two men:

GEORGE, the waiter

MANAGER

SETTING

A restaurant. The Ladies' table with six chairs is downstage close to a wall and crowded next to another table center stage. Manager stands stage right.

PROPS

Four water and two wine glasses, silverware, four salad bowls, two plates, wine bottle, coffee pot, water pitcher, napkins. Menus and meal tabs. Thirty pill and aspirin bottles.

LADIES AT LUNCH

(AT RISE: GEORGE is escorting KATHERINE and SARAH stage left to table set up for six.)

KATHERINE: I wonder how many are coming today. I sure hope everyone gets here on time.

SARAH: This is a lousy table. It's too noisy. Maybe we could get the waiter to change us to the nice one over there in the corner. Ours is right against the wall on that end.

KATHERINE: Look, here they come. Debbie did the phone calls and made the reservations, so you can talk to her about changing the table.

(LINDA, GRACE, and DEBBIE enter.)

LINDA: Hi, guys! Don't you think the weather has been absolutely crazy? I think we should fire all the weather forecasters.

GRACE: How come the table is set for six when there are only five of us?

DEBBIE: Because, Grace, there is one more coming--slow Suzie.

SARAH: I wish Suzie would learn to be on time. We should give her an earlier time to arrive; then she might be on time.

LINDA: That sounds like a winner, Sarah. Why don't you do that?

SARAH: Oh, I don't think I could do that. I haven't been feeling well and I'm spending a lot of time at the doctor's office.

LINDA: Good grief! Why don't we sit down? We all look idiotic standing here like we don't know what chairs are for.

(EVERYONE sits down with SARAH in middle of back of table.)

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GEORGE: (*Enters.*) Hello, my name is George. May I bring you ladies something to drink before you order?

LINDA: You know, I think I'll have a glass of the house white wine.

DEBBIE: That sounds like a wonderful idea. Me too.

KATHERINE: You're not going to drink and drive, are you? If you are going to have alcohol, I'll take you home.

LINDA: Don't get your bloomers in an uproar, Katherine. Grace is the designated driver today. We are only going to have a small glass of wine, not go on a three-day binge.

GEORGE: What are the rest of you young ladies going to have to drink?

KATHERINE: I'll have a cup of coffee. That is decaffeinated, isn't it?

GEORGE: (*Nods.*) We have either kind.

SARAH: I'll have a glass of low-fat milk. All of you should be ordering milk so you get your calcium.

LINDA: I have my calcium pill with me, and I'll wash it down with wine and it might absorb twice as fast.

GRACE: I didn't know wine helped calcium to absorb. I'll have ice tea please.

(GEORGE is rolling eyes, tapping pen on pad.)

DEBBIE: Look, here comes slow Suzie.

LINDA: You know, I'll bet she's late to her own funeral.

GRACE: How can you be late to your own funeral?

(LINDA and DEBBIE grin at each other and wink.)

SUZIE: (*Enters from left.*) Hi, sorry I'm late but the phone rang just as I started out the door, and I had to stop by the bank. You can't believe how busy this week has been. I'm so frazzled I don't know if I'm coming or going.

LINDA: So, what else is new? Suzie, tell George here what you want to drink, so the poor man can do his job instead of listening to us yak.

SUZIE: I'll have a good strong black cup of coffee, caffeine and all.

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KATHERINE: Suzie, you shouldn't be having caffeine, should you?

SUZIE: No mommy, but I'm going to anyway. Maybe it will give me the energy to make it through the afternoon. Thanks, George.

(GEORGE departs right.)

SARAH: I can't sit here in the middle like this. My bad knee is really hurting today. Can I change places with you Debbie, and sit on the end so I can keep my right leg straight?

(GRACE, LINDA, DEBBIE, and SARAH stand up and move from table. Sit down again with Sarah comfortably seated at stage right end.)

GRACE: That light is shining right in my eyes. I just had cataract surgery, and my eyes are real sensitive. I'll have to change with you, Katherine.

KATHERINE: Grace, why didn't you think of that when we were changing our chairs.

GRACE: I don't know. I just didn't notice that light there.

(Once more chairs are changed. SUZIE moves to Grace's chair, KATHERINE to the end, and GRACE occupies Katherine's place. GEORGE comes with drinks. With everyone in a new place he doesn't know what drink belongs where.)

LADIES: *(Adlibbing.)* No, mine is the tea. That milk is mine. Give me my wine. I have the coffee - unleaded. Decaf here.

(GEORGE hands out menus and exits right.)

SUZIE: What has everyone been doing lately?

LINDA: Debbie, my neighbor, and I went on a mammogram party.

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GRACE: A mammogram party?!? My doctor never gives me a party when I have a mammogram. Where do you go?

DEBBIE: No Grace, the doctor didn't give us a party. We all had to have our annual check-ups so we made our appointments for the same time. We went together and afterwards went out to lunch.

GRACE: *(Still looking puzzled.)* O-o-oh. That was what you call a party?

LINDA: You know those tests haven't changed in the last 20 years. You sure can tell a man designed them. I'll bet the method would be changed in a hurry if men had to have their two parts checked like that every year.

DEBBIE: Gosh, what a picture that would make! Can't you just imagine a man standing there for that side view. WOW!

GRACE: *(After EVERYBODY laughs.)* I don't get it. What are you laughing at?

KATHERINE: Ladies, I don't think that is a proper conversation topic for lunch.

DEBBIE: Yes Miss Manners, I'm so sorry to have broken your rules. Ge-e-ez! Come on, let's order and enjoy ourselves. We are supposed to have fun.

(GEORGE returns from right to take orders.)

KATHERINE: I'll have the garden salad with low-cal ranch dressing.

SUZIE: Oh shoot. I just can't make up my mind. The chicken salad sounds good but so does the pasta. I had chicken the other night and I think my daughter is having pasta tomorrow night.

LINDA: For pete's sake, Suzie. Just order before it's time for dinner.

SUZIE: O.K. I'll have the chicken salad.

LINDA and DEBBIE: Me too. That sounds good.

SARAH: Well, I'm allergic to chicken, and the sauce on the pasta always upsets my stomach. I guess I better just have the salad like Katherine but I'll have low-cal Italian.

End of Freeview

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