

About the Play

by Zach Elton

Bad Dates is a funny and hopeful tale of a woman looking for Mr. Right. A one-woman comedy about a single mother, a slew of cute shoes, and even more horrible dates, the play follows Haley Walker, who moved from Texas to Manhattan with her teenage daughter and 600 pairs of designer shoes. She has spent the last 13 years raising her child and working in a restaurant that may or may not be a money-laundering front. Now, as Haley begins to reenter the dating scene, she recounts to the audience the awful experience she is having dating again. By the end, she has seen a handful of dreadful men, been investigated by the NYPD, and even had a skirmish with the Romanian mob. A hilarious, and sometimes depressing, critique of the dating world, this play is a love letter to lonely hearts everywhere.

Originally produced off-Broadway by Playwrights Horizons in 2003, *Bad Dates* has been a success with critics and audiences for nearly 20 years. Theresa Rebeck has been praised for her naturalistic dialogue and deeply human characters. When it first premiered, the *New York Times* said the play had a “cozy kind of familiarity.”

Since its premiere, the play has been regularly produced by theaters around the country, and this year it has gained new popularity. Due to the global pandemic, *Bad Dates* has been produced virtually by multiple theaters in recent months. Perhaps most notably, it was just filmed by George Street Playhouse in New Jersey. Andréa Burns (seen on Broadway in *On Your Feet!*, *The Nance*, and *In the Heights*) starred in their production with her husband, Peter Flynn, directing. This play, though 20 years old, is now seeing new life on screen. Portland Stage’s production will also be filmed and released for digital viewing.



JULIE WHITE IN *BAD DATES*, PLAYWRIGHTS HORIZONS, 2004. PHOTO BY JOAN MARCUS.