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The Great-West Life Assurance Company

**Great-West Life**  
ASSURANCE COMPANY  
STRONGER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER™

**NOV. 21 – DEC. 27, 2009**

Book by Jeffrey Lane | Music and Lyrics by David Yazbek | Based on the film Dirty Rotten Scoundrels written by Dale Launer & Stanley Shapiro & Paul Henning | Directed and choreographed by Max Reimer

**A PLAYHOUSE THEATRE COMPANY PRODUCTION**

# PLAY GUIDE

## PART 2: LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES

Lesson Links: Women, Aging, Marriage and “Charity Casinos” | Grade 9 and up

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**DOWNLOAD OTHER PARTS (GLOSSARY, QUOTES, LINKS)**

**AND MORE LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES AT [VANCOUVERPLAYHOUSE.COM](http://VANCOUVERPLAYHOUSE.COM)**

Created to provide you with explorations and insights into this production beyond the actual performance, this Play Guide includes information on its creators and characters, notable quotables and more:

**You can download additional suggested practical lessons and activities at [vancouverplayhouse.com](http://vancouverplayhouse.com)!** As a teacher, you can adapt these to your classroom activities before or after your performance. As a parent, you can draw on some activities to enhance your child’s theatre experience. And, as a patron at large, these activities might stimulate your own exploration or offer a new insight into the production.

**\*Playhouse Teachers Advisory Board**

# **LESSON LINKS: WOMEN, AGING, MARRIAGE + “CHARITY CASINOS”**

**Type:** post-viewing and pre-viewing | **Suitability:** grade 9 and up

## **Read:**

***Dirty Rotten Scoundrels - 1<sup>ST</sup> Script Segment*** – Act 1, Scene 1 (pp. 2 – 5)

This segment’s theme, “Giving them what they want” offers a sense of legitimacy to the swindling operation. The assistance of Andre, the chief of police in the casino resort, also gives the scam legitimacy. As Lawrence and Andre state, swindling success comes from applying “dignity and weight to the illusion you create,” and giving visiting, wealthy American women what they want - “an adventure of their own...[who resolve] to cut loose...escape from ennui...a bore [a 94 year old husband, as well as]... grey hair in the mirror.”

***Dirty Rotten Scoundrels - 2<sup>nd</sup> Script Segment*** – Act 1, Scene 1 (p. 16, 17)

This segment has elements of the classic Sleeping Beauty being reawakened by the noble Prince. Her whole purpose in life is “to help my dreamy royal boyfriend.” In return, she gets “romance and the feeling I was young again.”)

***Both segments can be downloaded at [vancouverplayhouse.com/education-outreach](http://vancouverplayhouse.com/education-outreach).***

## **For Discussion:**

The lyrics sung by Lawrence and Andre from the 1<sup>st</sup> segment, “Giving them what they want,” are confirmed by the yearnings of women sung in the 2<sup>nd</sup> segment. Adhering to a casino culture (what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas), women are seen as “corruptible..willing infidels” resolving to “cut loose” from a boring marriage and aging – “He gave me romance and the feeling I was young again.” Nevertheless, some legitimacy is lent to the con artist’s infidelity appeal, as the women “suddenly” have a life-changing “purpose and a cause” from which others derive “hope and strength.”

1. How much of this portrayal of women is about life imitating art or art imitating life? What’s it say about our view of women, aging, and marriage?
2. Appealing to both sides of the casino experience – cutting loose and supporting a noble cause - some Ontario casinos are named “Charity Casinos.” Freddy cons a woman by giving her what she wanted, that is, “to feel all good and charitable about herself.” What does the casino and lottery culture teach us about the relationship between giving “hope and strength” to a life-changing “purpose and cause” and getting a “princely” prize? How does the “feeling all good and charitable” giving/getting culture work in what we do for the homeless and the dumpster divers?