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Great-West Life
ASSURANCE COMPANY
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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

Winning a Lottery and Other “Deceptive Blessings” | Grade 9 and up
Created by Dr. Warren McKinnon, UBC Continuing Studies, PTAB* Member

DOWNLOAD OTHER PARTS (GLOSSARY, QUOTES, LINKS)

AND MORE LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES AT 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! 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**

WINNING A LOTTERY AND OTHER “DECEPTIVE BLESSINGS”

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

Read:

Dirty Rotten Scoundrels - 4th Script Segment – Act 1, Scene 9 (pp. 65 – 67)

Highlighted in the segment’s theme “Nothing is too wonderful to be true,” are the similarities between the scam artist’s trading on the hope for miraculous winnings and the faith healer’s exploiting of the belief in miraculous healings – “the age of miracles comes every hour on the hour.”

Dirty Rotten Scoundrel 5th Script Segment – Act 2, Scene 6 (pp. 105 – 108)

In this segment, Lawrence, the scam artist describes the feeling of being scammed by Christine – “The Player has been nicely played...The Mocker’s now the mocked...The Master’s now the Mark.” Lawrence, the charmer, has allowed himself to be charmed by Christine’s compassion for Buzz (Freddie) – “I never knew people like you existed. You are genuine, sincere...” On reflection, Lawrence admits to himself his mistake – “Your famous self-possession’s vanished from your repertoire...You’re out of luck if love sneaks in on you.”

Dirty Rotten Scoundrel - 6th Script Segment – Act 2, Scene 9 (pp.117– 121)

In this segment, Christine’s scam is completed on both the Master, Lawrence, and his competing apprentice, Freddie. By so doing, Christine takes advantage of Lawrence’s brutish, vulgar view of Freddie’s character – “You’re the kind of man that gives swindling a bad name.” He has no respect for a fellow thief.

The above segments can be downloaded at vancouverplayhouse.com/education-outreach.

Watch (movie):

“Leap of Faith” | Directed by Richard Pearce | Written by Janus Cercone | (1992)

For Discussion:

In what may be seen as justice among thieves and revenge between men and women, the 4th, 5th, and 6th segments describe how swindlers Lawrence and Freddy are scammed by Christine. An admiring Lawrence concludes that “The Player has been nicely played...The Mocker’s now the mocked...The Master’s now the Mark.” Lawrence, the charmer, has allowed himself to be charmed by Christine’s compassion for Freddy (Buzz) – “I never knew people like you existed. You are genuine, sincere..” The same captivating image of pure innocence is echoed by Christine in the lyrics of the song “Nothing is too wonderful to be true.” The line, “the age of miracles comes every hour on the hour,” highlights the similarities between the scam artist’s trading on the hope for miraculous winnings and the faith healer’s exploiting of the belief in miraculous healings.

1. The faked paralytic Freddy sings, “Sometimes God grants our hearts desires...Once I was caller number eight...I won a set of tires.” How do we apply this kind of theological thinking to the desires we have in life such as overcoming sickness, making a living, or finding a mate? Explain how winning a lottery can be a deceptive blessing.
2. A smoke and mirrors faith healer, Jonas, in the film “Leap of Faith,” is upstaged by what he calls “the genuine article” – a beyond-his-control healing. After his anger subsides, he realizes that he must end his scam ministry. Boyd, the young boy who is healed, doesn’t understand why he’s giving up and asks “what difference does it make if you get the job done?” Jonas insists that “it makes all the difference in the world.” What would you say in support of Boyd’s view that there’s nothing wrong when good things happen even when deception is intended? If you believe with Jonas that it makes all the difference in the world, explain those differences.