

THE QUEEN HAS LEFT THE VILLAGE

A Comedy

Cast of Characters

- JIMMY: The youngest sibling. A highly successful novelist, who speaks eloquently. Vindictive over childhood memories
- JAKE: The middle child. Overly dramatic. Flashy dresser. Obsessed with musical theatre. He sings all of his lines and occasionally tap dances.
- JOANIE: The oldest sibling. A clean-freak and stress eater.
- MOMMA: An older woman. Exhausted from travel.

TIME: Late afternoon. Present day.

SETTING: A simple living room.

AT RISE: JIMMY opens his phone, takes a selfie, then pours himself a drink. He straightens a small stuffed teddy bear that's sitting on a table. JAKE enters gives JIMMY an awkward hug.

JAKE

Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy. What happened to Mia? Momma Mia?

JIMMY

Jake.

JAKE

It can't be true. Oh, oh, Jimmy, please tell me, our momma's not dead.

JIMMY

Momma was camping with the Zula-mambas, one of the friendliest tribes in Mombola. It's a tranquil little village where the sun burns steady and children dance, as carefree as a summer breeze.

JAKE

Darkness. Oh, deep deep darkness, it covers me...like a soggy wet blanket. Oh, oh, Jimmy, whatever shall we do?

JIMMY

That trip was her lifelong dream. I watched her closely as she vigorously packed more close-up lenses into her carry-on than Joey Chestnut consuming a heaping plate of wieners.

JAKE

Momma, momma, momma. Light, as an evening breeze, soft, as a dewey rose, warm, as-

JIMMY

The tribal chief doesn't speak a word of English. Just makes those clicking sounds. You know, like (*he makes some sounds*) All I could make out from the tour guide was something about Momma wanting a close-up of an elephant at sunset. Then he mumbled something incomprehensible about an elephant rushing, or crushing or-

JAKE

Stop. Stop. That can't be. Our Momma would never, never, approach an elephant.

JOANIE enters carrying a large purse.

JOANIE
Jake, Jimmy. My God. I can't believe it.

JAKE
Oh, Joanie. Dearest Joanie. Our momma's gone. Gone. Gone. Angels swooped down and carried her away. Away, to the sweet by and by, to the sweet by and by.

JOANIE
Whatever you're paying your shrink. It's too much.

JAKE
In case you haven't noticed, I tap much less. *(he does a few steps of tap dancing)*

JOANIE walks around. Picks up the teddy bear and holds it out at arm's length.

JOANIE
Bunky-boo. *(pause)* I'm amazed she still has this thing. I can only imagine how many dust mites it has.

She sets the bear back down.
Her jewelry box? Have you seen Momma's silver victorian jewelry box?

JIMMY
Wow. That's why you're here? For her jewelry?

JOANIE
No. I was just curious about her Tahitian pearls. So, exactly what happened?

JIMMY refreshes his drink.

JIMMY

As I told Jake, Momma was camping with the Zula-mamba's. They had just finished their evening meal of roasted goat and sweet potatoes, as the sun began slowly sinking behind the the horizon. Momma and the guide, Ayanda, crept out of the camp, and waited under a giant Marula tree for the perfect golden-hour close-up of mother elephant with her calf.

JOANIE

She does love those golden-hour shots.

JIMMY

True. However, the lead elephant deemed her too close for comfort. That's when it shook its head, trumpeted, turned, and rushed toward Momma. Evidently the herd followed.

JOANIE

No.

JIMMY

Sadly, yes. Then the guide stated that when a woman dies there they have a tribal saying, "The Queen has left the Village."

JAKE AND JOANIE

Stop!

JAKE starts tap dancing furiously while singing.

JAKE

No. No. Not crushed. Not crushed. Not Momma. Not Momma.

JIMMY

Jake. Shut the hell up.

JOANIE

Elephants? Our Momma was crushed by a heard of filthy mad elephants? Chips! I need chips.

JOANIE grabs a bag of chips from her purse and begins frantically eating them.

JAKE

Oh Momma. My Momma. Hair like a woven crown. Skin soft as thistle fluff. To see you once more. To see your smile. To hear your laugh (*he fake laughs*)

JIMMY

One more sappy song and you're not going to *see or hear* anything.

JAKE

You know I can't help it. It just happens. Especially when I'm stressed. My therapist says *singing* is my cosmic release.

JIMMY

Alright, well, I don't know *for sure* that momma was crushed by a herd of elephants. It could have been a single rogue female wanting to protect its calf.

JOANIE

Fruit? I need pectin.

JOANIE pulls an apple out of her purse and takes a bite.

JIMMY

Does it help? All your stress eating?

JOANIE

Go to hell, Jimmy.

JIMMY picks up the teddy bear.

JIMMY

Been there, remember? You stuffed me down the clothes chute into a pile of dad's putrid laundry.

JOANIE

That was 20 years ago. Get over it. (*JOANIE offers JAKE a banana*) Banana?

JAKE

(*Sings and taps*) No. Never. Get that thing away.

JOANIE

Oh right. The banana phobia. You really do have issues.

JAKE

And, you don't? Don't? Don't?

JOANIE

Remember the holidays? Momma always wore those shiny red shoes with that string of Blue Tahitian pearls. She always looked so classy.

JAKE

And she bought those little cans of Cheese-Whiz for us to squirt, squirt, squirt on crispy Water Crackers.

JIMMY

What I remember is the two you spraying nests of Cheese-Whiz on my head, licking my face and calling me your little cracker head.

JOANIE

(Laughing) That's right. I had forgotten about that.

JAKE

(Sings) The candy house. Oh, oh, remember, the candy house?

JOANIE

Every year she made a new one, with a little stack of pretzels rods for the firewood.

JIMMY

Which Jake snitched, along with the Andes Candies, roof shingles. Again, blaming me.

JIMMY sets the bear down.

Momma was so mad. She sent me to my room for the whole night.

JOANIE

And when Dad got home he gave you a whippin'.

JAKE

(Sings) Oh, the whippin' the howlin', the tears you must-ashed. Kleenex. Kleenex. Kleenex.

JIMMY

As a matter of fact, he never touched me. We just sat and talked.

JAKE

What? No! No! No! How can that be?

JOANIE

I can't do this. Just thinking about Momma getting crushed or tusked or whatever the hell happened with that elephant.

JIMMY

Maybe we should start making some kind of funeral arrangements.

JOANIE

Celebration of life. Not funeral. And, somewhere clean. Not Wiffel's, that dingy crack-house-looking place on Vine Street.

JIMMY

Fine. Somewhere clean, sanitized, less crack-house-looking, for a celebration of life.

JAKE

Celebrate, celebrate. We gonna celebrate our Momma, our Momma, our Momma.

JIMMY

I'll go look for her address book. Why don't you two go make us a bite to eat.

JIMMY exits SR. JOANIE and JAKE exit SL. A few seconds later you hear someone fumbling and muttering as they enter. An older woman enters lugging a suitcase. She has a camera dangling from her neck. She notices that the lights are on.

MOMMA

What the hell? (pause) Hello? Hello?

JIMMY enters carrying her address book.

JIMMY

Momma? I thought you were-

MOMMA

Coming back Thursday? I changed my flight. Didn't want to bother you for a ride. What are you doing with my address book?

JIMMY

Uh, funny story-

JOANIE and Jake enter with a plate of food. They see their mother and shriek.

JAKE AND JOANIE

Momma?!

MOMMA

What's going on here?

JOANIE

Momma! You're alive! I'm so glad you're alive! I love you Momma. I love you!

JAKE

(Sings, dances and does leg kicks) She's alive! She's alive! Lord have mercy, my momma's alive! Alive and kickin', kickin' kickin'.

JOANIE

Jimmy said you got trampled. By an elephant, and that you were-

MOMMA

What? Dead? Jimmy! You told them I was dead? Good God why the hell would you do that?

JIMMY

Because Momma. Because, I thought...you need to know the truth about them. Here, listen to this.

JIMMY grabs the teddy bear and pushes a button on the back of it which has recorded their previous conversations.

JOANIE

Remember the holidays? Momma always wore those shiny red shoes with that string of Blue Tahitian pearls. She always looked so classy.

JAKE

And she bought those little cans of Cheese-Whiz for us to squirt, squirt, squirt on crispy Water Crackers.

JIMMY

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JIMMY

Which Jake snitched, along with the Andes Candies, mint roof shingles. Again, blaming me.

MOMMA grabs the teddy bear and smacks JIMMY with it.

MOMMA

Good lord. Are you crazy?

JOANIE

You recorded us? With Bunky Boo?

JAKE

Evil. You're Mr. Evil. You lied 'bout Momma. You lied 'bout elephants. You lied. You lied. You lied.

JIMMY

It was them Momma. It was always them. They did all those things, and I always got blamed.

MOMMA

So, you told them I was dead? Holy snot-balls, Jimmy, you're 32 years old.

JIMMY

They need to apologize.

JOANIE

For what? We were kids.

JAKE

And, you were obnoxious, so so obnoxious.

JIMMY

That was no reason to shove me down the laundry chute.

JAKE

I may sing, and I may dance, but you, Jimmy boy are nutso, nutso, nutso.

MOMMA

Alright. Alright. This stops now. Jimmy, what was your obsession as a kid?

JIMMY

Reading. Grisham novels.

MOMMA

Right. And when I sent you to your room, what did you do?

JIMMY

I read. A Time to Kill. The Firm. The Client-

MOMMA

Exactly. You read Grisham novels, while they were washing dishes, taking out the garbage, picking beans and folding laundry.

JOANIE

That's right! You never did any of that.

JAKE

I still hate beans.

MOMMA

You may have initially gotten blamed for all those shenanigans, but I knew what was going on, and they're the ones who paid the price.

JIMMY JAMI JAKE AND JOANIE

Huh.

MOMMA

Huh, indeed. Now I believe it's you that owe your brother and sister an apology. Especially since you're a successful novelist, and they all have...well, just apologize.

JIMMY

You're right Momma. Joanie, Jimmy. My apologies. Evidently I've harbored foolish resentments against you.

MOMMA

And?

JIMMY

And...I sincerely apologize for telling you Momma got crushed by a herd of angry African elephants.

MOMMA

Good. Now will one of you please go and make me a big bowl of mac and cheese? I'm exhausted and need carbs. And, no bickering.

JIMMY, JOANIE AND JAKE

Yes, Momma.

And a cold beer. (pause) ^{MOMMA} Geez. Kids these days.

The End

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