

THE NEW MRS. JONES

By James Armstrong

Copyright © 2003 by James Armstrong, All rights reserved.
ISBN: 1-932404-62-7

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice:

Produced by special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

CHARACTERS

MRS. JONES, 50, a homemaker

SAM JONES, 28, her son

MR. HARRIS, 40, their neighbor

ELIZABETH MCKAY, 29, Sam's fiancée

TIME: The present

SETTING: Suburbia, the living room of the Jones'

On one side of the room is the front door and a hat rack; opposite it is the door to the kitchen. A hallway at the back of the room leads off to a staircase. Near the hallway, is a door to a closet. On the wall hang several knives, a sword, and an iron chain, with perhaps a few instruments of torture. Otherwise, it is a typical suburban living room.

PROPS

Mrs. Jones

Vacuum cleaner

Kitchen knife

Camera

Sword coat

Iron chain

Sam

Hat

Elizabeth

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The *New Mrs. Jones* requires only a simple set. A living room with a front door, another door to the kitchen, and a closet with a door or a curtain to hide MR. HARRIS. At the back of the set, there should also be a passage to the hallway where characters exit to go to the rest of the house.

The room should be decorated as a simple suburban living room, or perhaps something out of a 1950s family sit-com. There should also be knives and chains hanging on the walls, as well as any instruments of torture that can be found. This should contrast strongly with the bright atmosphere of the rest of the room.

THE NEW MRS. JONES

by
James Armstrong

The lights come up on a typical suburban living room, with the exception of medieval torture devices lying in strange juxtaposition to a coffee table and a lava lamp. MRS. JONES, a typical housewife, enters with a vacuum cleaner. SHE plugs it in and is about to turn it on when a bizarre, twisted look comes over her face. SHE exits and reappears with a large kitchen knife. SHE is about to plunge it into the vacuum cleaner when SAM, her adult son, enters through the front door.

SAM: Hi, Mom! I'm home! **(MRS. JONES quickly hides the knife behind her back. SAM places his hat on a hat rack by the door.)**

They're killing me at the office.

MRS. JONES: Sorry to hear that dear.

SAM: Mom?

MRS. JONES: Yes dear?

SAM: What do you have behind your back?

MRS. JONES: A knife, dear.

SAM: What were you doing with it?

MRS. JONES: Sacrificing the vacuum cleaner.

SAM: Ma!

MRS. JONES: I'm sorry, I was just temporarily possessed.

SAM: Well, maybe that wouldn't happen as much if you stopped performing those rituals in the back yard.

MRS. JONES: Samuel, you know very well how much they've helped you. Why just last week I made that voodoo doll of your boss....

SAM: He was about to give me a raise when he keeled over.

MRS. JONES: I was just trying to help.

SAM: Well, stop helping.

MRS. JONES: And besides, I cook your food, I give you a roof over your head--

SAM: Mom, I'm twenty-eight. You wanna throw me out? Fine.

MRS. JONES: Nonsense. Hold still, you've got some dirt on your face.

(SHE spits on a handkerchief and tries to clean his face)

SAM: Ma! Will you stop that? I'm getting tired of putting up with this. Sacrificing appliances?

MRS. JONES: Well....

SAM: Come on!

MRS. JONES: Look, when you're possessed, you're possessed.

SAM: Why can't we be a normal family?

The New Mrs. Jones – Page 4

MRS. JONES: Normal's boring, dear.

SAM: And this is exciting? We just stay cooped up in this house all day. Never go anywhere. Never do anything.

MRS. JONES: What! Why just last summer I took you to England.

SAM: I still can't believe you did that at Stonehenge.

MRS. JONES: It's a druid monument. I got caught up in the moment....

(exit SAM) Well, I'm sorry if my son is just too embarrassed to be seen with his own mother.

SAM: **(offstage)** And I'll never forgive you for Charley.

MRS. JONES: Charley?

SAM: **(re-entering with a sack of potato chips)** Fourth grade. I invited him over for supper one night.

MRS. JONES: What did I do?

SAM: When I said I wanted to have Charley for dinner, I didn't mean I wanted to have *Charley* for dinner!

MRS. JONES: That was one of the finest dishes I've ever prepared. And if I remember correctly, you still didn't clean your plate.

SAM: Listen. Can you please just act normal for one night?

MRS. JONES: What's so special about tonight?

SAM: Well... I've been working late at the office....

MRS. JONES: That really isn't good for digestion, Samuel.

SAM: Well, the fact is, I *haven't* been working late. I've been seeing someone.

MRS. JONES: A girl! Is she pretty?

SAM: Gorgeous. But she insisted on meeting you.

MRS. JONES: I must make it a point to see her, then.

SAM: She'll be here at six o'clock.

MRS. JONES: You could've given me more notice.

SAM: Yes, but I spent the last week trying to talk her out of it.

MRS. JONES: You didn't--

SAM: Please, Ma, don't judge her too quickly. And don't think you always know best for me like you did with Sarah.

MRS. JONES: Sarah is in a better place now.

SAM: Our refrigerator is not a better place!

MRS. JONES: Listen, dear. You go upstairs and get ready. I'll get started with dinner.

SAM: Mom, not Sarah, OK?

(SAM exits. The doorbell rings.)

MRS. JONES: I'll get it! **(SHE crosses to the door and admits MR. HARRIS, a middle-aged man in a plaid flannel shirt.)** Come in, Mr. Harris. Make yourself at home. Come down, dear! Mr. Harris is here! How do you do, Mr. Harris?

The New Mrs. Jones – Page 5

MR. HARRIS: Fine, Mrs. Jones. Just fine.

MRS. JONES: Just a little neighborly visit?

MR. HARRIS: Actually, no. I've been having a bit of--domestic trouble. I thought you might be able to help me out.

MRS. JONES: There's nothing wrong with your wife, is there?

MR. HARRIS: Now that you mention it, she was just diagnosed with cancer, probably terminal... but I was really more concerned about my dog.

MRS. JONES: Oh.

MR. HARRIS: Been real peculiar lately.

MRS. JONES: Sam, I really think you should come down here!

MR. HARRIS: Well as you know, I like to hunt, but lately Rex hasn't been much for huntin'. He hasn't been much for anything actually. He just sort of sits there and whimpers. You don't know what coulda gotten into him do ya?

(SAM enters from the hallway)

MRS. JONES: Sam! Mr. Harris's dog has been acting strangely lately. You don't know what might be wrong do you?

MR. HARRIS: He just doesn't want to go outside anymore.

SAM: **(looking at his mother)** You mean like someone scared him out of his wits?

MRS. JONES: He was almost run over! Yes, that must have been it. He was almost hit by a truck and it gave him a scare.

MR. HARRIS: We don't live on a very busy street, Mrs. Jones.

MRS. JONES: Oh.... Mr. Harris, would you like a cup of tea? I just made a pot.

MR. HARRIS: Why, thank you, Mrs. Jones. That's awful nice of you.

MRS. JONES: It's right over here in the kitchen. Just help yourself.

(SHE opens the door and MR. HARRIS exits.)

SAM: All right, Mom. What did you do?

MRS. JONES: Please don't be angry, dear. I did it for you.

SAM: For me?

MRS. JONES: Remember how a couple days ago you stepped in that pile of dog droppings?

SAM: Yes.

MRS. JONES: And you said you wished that old dog didn't, you know... relieve himself quite so often.

SAM: Mother!

The New Mrs. Jones – Page 6

MRS. JONES: Well, it's true. Everywhere you look there are... dog feces. That cur goes more than your father used to. I swear! Mr. Harris must feed him oat bran.

SAM: What did you do?

MRS. JONES: I mixed some of the medicine I take for diarrhea in with his food.

SAM: Diarrhea medicine? You mean Mr. Harris's dog has been acting irregular, because--

MRS. JONES: He's irregular.

SAM: I can't believe this! You fed the.... He's constipated?

MRS. JONES: But I did it for you! Don't you see? Everything is for you!

SAM: Quiet down. He'll hear you.

MRS. JONES: Relax. The tea is drugged.

SAM: Oh, Okay. (**realizing**) Wait a minute! How did...?

MRS. JONES: Oh, well, uh....

SAM: You've been giving me tea every night lately.

MRS. JONES: Well, you've been having such trouble sleeping. A few tranquilizers never hurt anyone, Sam. Remember, I know what's best for you.

SAM: Well this is just great. My own mother is drugging me, Mr. Harris is half dead in the kitchen, and the most wonderful woman I've ever met will be here any minute. We better get Mr. Harris back to his house before she comes. Give me a hand. (**exits**)

MRS. JONES: Okay.

SAM: (**offstage**) And I don't mean Sarah's!

(MRS. JONES follows SAM into the kitchen. They re-appear carrying MR. HARRIS. The doorbell rings.)

MRS. JONES: I'll get it!

(SHE drops her half of MR. HARRIS and walks toward the door.)

SAM: Mother, get back here! We'll put him in the closet. (**They carry MR. HARRIS to a closet and stand him up in it. The doorbell rings again and they rush to open the door.**) Elizabeth! Come in.

Elizabeth, this is my mother. Mother, this is Dr. Elizabeth McKay.

ELIZABETH: Pleased to meet you, Mrs. Jones.

MRS. JONES: Oh! A doctor.

ELIZABETH: (**eyeing a sword hanging on the wall**) Nice place.

SAM: Let me take your coat.

(SAM takes her coat to the closet. HE opens the door, throws it over MR. HARRIS, and shuts the door)

The New Mrs. Jones – Page 7

MRS. JONES: Samuel was going to be a doctor, you know. He changed his mind right before he went into medical school. I never understood why. Why was that, dear?

SAM: Mom, don't you think you should be watching dinner? We don't want it to burn.

MRS. JONES: Of course, dear. Whatever you want. (**MRS. JONES exits**)

ELIZABETH: Don't you think that was a little rude?

SAM: I'm sorry. I just need to talk to you alone.

ELIZABETH: Why didn't you ever tell me you were going to be a doctor?

SAM: What?

ELIZABETH: Your mother said you were going to be a doctor.

SAM: She probably saw me put on a band-aid. When I was a little kid, I played with blocks, and she swore I'd be an architect. She never quit. Last week I sent a letter to my aunt, and she asked me why the President hadn't named me Postmaster-General yet.

ELIZABETH: Every mother in the world is like that. You've just got to confront her.

SAM: You don't understand. This woman is a witch.

ELIZABETH: You shouldn't say that.

SAM: No, I mean a real witch. Just like in *Hansel and Gretel*. She's got toad's eyes in the cupboard.

ELIZABETH: That's what I love about you, Sam. You've got such a sense of humor.

SAM: Elizabeth, you can believe whatever you want, but please, let's not tell her. We'll just elope.

ELIZABETH: Sam Jones! Will you listen to yourself? I haven't even met this woman yet, and you want to elope? I don't want a rushed ceremony in some judge's chambers, or in the crowded office of some justice of the peace. We deserve more than that. We deserve a big wedding with all our friends and both our families.

SAM: I'm just afraid of what she'll do.

ELIZABETH: What can she do? Just go up to her and say, "Mother, Elizabeth and I love each other and we're going to get married. You may not like that, you may think we're not ready, but we're getting married. I'd like to have your blessing, but if I can't, then it's just your loss."

SAM: I've never really confronted her like that before.

ELIZABETH: Well, then, don't you think it's about time? I'm going to go freshen up. You talk to your mother, OK? (**SAM sighs**)

SAM: The bathroom's up the stairs and on the right. (**ELIZABETH exits**) Mom. Mom, can you come out here for a minute?

MRS. JONES: (**entering**) Yes, dear?

SAM: Oh, uh....

The New Mrs. Jones – Page 8

MRS. JONES: Elizabeth is such a nice girl. So polite and proper and pretty, and a doctor too! She's such a sweet little darling. I hope you'll be seeing more of her.

SAM: Elizabeth and I love each other and we're going to get married.

MRS. JONES: That slut! You're going to marry that cheap bimbo? I thought I raised my son better than to marry any old strumpet right off the street.

SAM: Mother!

MRS. JONES: Out of the blue he's going to abandon me. I spend hour after grueling hour in childbirth to bring him into the world and--

SAM: You had a caesarean.

MRS. JONES: What do you know? And after all that I clothed you, I put a roof over your head, I fed you--

SAM: Half the time it was my old girlfriends.

MRS. JONES: And I haven't even mentioned your conception. That was no picnic either! Come to think of it, maybe we were at a picnic. Anyway, your father was not a good looking man. Why do you think you're an only child?

SAM: Mother, you can't keep me here forever.

MRS. JONES: Why not?

SAM: I love her! I love you not like it, but we're getting married.

MRS. JONES: Love! Love doesn't have anything to do with marriage. Do you think your father and I got married because we were in love? Did I ever tell you the story--

SAM: Many times.

MRS. JONES: Well sit down. You're going to hear it again. **(SAM obediently sits on the couch)** My father, your grandfather, one day decided that it was about time I got married. And I was going to live under the same roof with him, not run off like you want to do. Well, soon after he made this decision, a traveling salesman came to our door. Papa whipped out his shotgun and said, "You! You're gonna marry this chick."

SAM: How romantic.

MRS. JONES: Romance isn't something that just happens. It's something you have to force after years of listening to your parents moan about not having grandchildren.

(ELIZABETH enters visibly upset)

ELIZABETH: Interesting reptile collection, Mrs. Jones.

MRS. JONES: Elizabeth, dear, good to have you back.

SAM: Mother, you don't have to put on an act.

MRS. JONES: Act? Whatever do you mean? I'd just love to meet your family, Elizabeth. Do you have any pictures of them?

The New Mrs. Jones – Page 9

ELIZABETH: Yes, I think I have one of my parents in my wallet. I didn't bring my purse.... It must be in my coat pocket.

SAM: It's in the closet. (**realizing**) The closet!

(ELIZABETH opens the door to the closet and MR. HARRIS falls upon her. SHE screams hysterically until SAM gets him off of her; MR. HARRIS gradually awakens.)

MR. HARRIS: What in the world am I doing here?

MRS. JONES: That's exactly what I'd like to know. What were you doing in my closet, Mr. Harris?

MR. HARRIS: Huh?

SAM: Yeah, what gives you the right to go sneaking around in other people's closets?

MR. HARRIS: Now wait a minute, I was just having a cup of tea when everything went black. The next thing I knew this poor thing was screaming her head off. Now someone must've stuffed me in there.

MRS. JONES: Well I'm not strong enough to have dragged you all the way from the kitchen.

ELIZABETH: I just got here.

(All three look at SAM)

SAM: Who, me? Why would I stuff you in a closet, Mr. Harris?

MRS. JONES: (**insinuating**) Why indeed?

SAM: But that's absurd. If you were in the kitchen, why wouldn't I have just thrown you in the pantry?

MRS. JONES: Why didn't you put him in the pantry?

SAM: Shut up, Mom.

MR. HARRIS: I'm getting an explanation if I have to stay here all night.

SAM: Well, uh...

MRS. JONES: Come now, Mr. Harris. Settle down. Why don't I fix you another cup of tea?

(MRS. JONES and MR. HARRIS exit)

ELIZABETH: Sam, what just happened here?

SAM: Elizabeth, Mother is... eccentric. Or rather... psychotic. We don't do things like other people. We don't even do things like other species. Listen to me; let's just get out of here. I'll get away from this place, and we'll live happily ever after. Just like in a fairy tale! I've got a suitcase packed upstairs. We can just--

ELIZABETH: Sam, get a grip. So your mother's a bit protective--

The New Mrs. Jones – Page 10

SAM: I'm worried about you, Elizabeth. There's no telling what she could do.

ELIZABETH: This isn't like you, Sam. What did she say when you told her?

SAM: She just went crazy. She was hysterical.

ELIZABETH: That was not a woman who was hysterical. You never told her!

SAM: But I did!

ELIZABETH: Don't lie to me, Sam. How are we ever going to have a successful marriage if we aren't completely truthful with one another? (*tenderly*) Sam, please, just go into the kitchen, and tell her. For me?

SAM: For you... anything. (**SAM exits, then comes back.**)

ELIZABETH: What?

SAM: Elizabeth--could you--go upstairs--for a minute?

ELIZABETH: Upstairs?

SAM: It's just--there's something--we need to--take care of. About dinner.

ELIZABETH: What's wrong?

SAM: Just--please?

ELIZABETH: You can't avoid it forever.

SAM: I... I know. (**ELIZABETH sighs and exits; MRS. JONES enters wiping off her hands**) I can't believe it. I can't believe you did it.

MRS. JONES: I needed something to cook for dinner tonight.

SAM: Do you think you can just kill a person and that will be it? Do you think that Mrs. Harris will simply not notice when her husband doesn't come home?

MRS. JONES: Of course she won't notice. She came to the back door to borrow a cup of flour. She's in the freezer right now.

SAM: How can you do this? That's the third couple in that house to disappear. The neighbors are going to start to wonder.

MRS. JONES: Well, Mrs. Harris was always dropping hints about how she wanted to go to Niagara falls. We'll just tell everyone that they went on their second honeymoon.

SAM: But they're not coming back!

MRS. JONES: We can tell them they were leaning a bit too far over the railing. And you can write the obituary! You're very clever at those, Samuel.

SAM: I thought they had us for sure last time. This time we may not be so lucky.

MRS. JONES: Then a few more cops disappear. Big deal.

SAM: Mom, when are you going to learn that you can't kill people just because you don't have time to go to the grocery store?

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from NEW MRS. JONES by James Armstrong. For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:

**Brooklyn Publishers, LLC
P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406
Toll Free: 1-888-473-8521 • Fax (319) 368-8011
www.brookpub.com**

Do Not Copy