

THE DATING POOL

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The Dating Pool

Characters

(All the characters are the same person, at different ages, inside 61's dream. Their age is their name)

61, female, widow

16, female, high school

23, female, about to get married

36, female, bisexual

Casting should reflect the diversity in our society.

TIME:

The present.

PLACE:

Inside 61's dream, which takes place in a recreational body of water (Pool, lake, etc).

Synopsis:

A widow, contemplating diving back into the dating pool, is confronted by her younger selves. Together they must sort out past romantic complications and mistakes before there can be any moving forward. Will they sink or swim?

Production Note:

As this is a dream, costuming can be anything for everyone except 61. 61 should be in sleepwear. The others can wear clothes of their time period (61 is existing in 2023) boating wear, a bathing suit, a wedding dress for 23, etc. The water element can be conveyed with theatrical imagination – perhaps they are wearing floaties, or an inner tube. Maybe they are rolled in on something to denote a boat or kayak, etc. Feel free to explore how this might work in your theatre space.

(61 is dreaming. She is alone. She is afraid to jump in the 'water')

OFFSTAGE VOICES of 16, 23, 36

Marco...polo.....marco....polo...

61

Jump in, 61!

(61 admits defeat. 16 appears)

16

Marco...

61

(automatically) Polo... *(61 gasps, recognizes 16)* You're me at sixteen!

16

You're - what happened???

61

Aging happened. Look on the bright side! You're still alive at sixty-one. Yay!

16

Can you please jump? My boyfriend's waiting-

61

Evan? Or is it Michael at this point?

16

Michael? There's no Michael.

61

Evan, then. 1977. Break up with him. He's a manic depressive, with narcissistic tendencies –

16

No he isn't!!

61

You're being a child.

16

I'm very mature for my age.

61

Don't sleep with him!

16
(beat) Who's this Michael guy?

61
He's a cheater. Plus, his mother and his sister hate you and will make your life miserable.
Don't sleep with him!

16
Is that your advice for everything??

61
Save yourself for Jack, in college. Then you could be each other's firsts.

16
You're scaring me.

(23 bobs into view. She may be in a wedding gown)

23
Nothing to be scared of! The water's fine.

61
Me at twenty-three. 1985 in the house!

23
I'm marrying Rex today!

61
Get outta the house!

16
Who's Rex?

61
An actor. And director.

16
Wow!

61
He's not the one.

23
Jealous! Everyone likes him...

61

Everyone? Dad whispers “It’s not too late to change your mind”. As you’re walking down the aisle!

23

...I love him. We’re going to live in New York City-

61

New Jersey...

23

...and open our own theatre company.

61

That doesn’t happen. You separate 20 months after the wedding, when you find some photos of him in a very compromising...anyway. The one saving grace - the cats you rescued.

16

I get to have cats? Dad won’t let us have any pets.

61

You will have many. All wonderful.

23

So is he!

61

He’s not so wonderful when you have the umpteenth fight, and he throws a knife across the room. You’re a theatre kid- you know an exit cue when you see one.

16

She doesn’t like Evan either.

23

Well, Evan was a mess.

16

Not fair!

23

You’re just like mom and dad. Stop telling me how to run my life!

61

You’re not running it, you’re ruining it!

16

You're both ruining mine! I don't want to grow up to be either one of you!

61

There are so many better men out there.

16

What about that Jack guy? She's still hung up on him.

23

He ended it. Broke my heart! I can't change that. Rex isn't Jack, but...

61

Oh, honey. I beg you. Don't settle.

16

I want out.

23

I don't see you with anybody...

61

Rex and I divorced...there was a broken engagement after that. ...a Jewish Buddhist Brazilian. Jew-boo, he called himself.

16

No kids?

61

No. (to 23) I know you wanted them, but there are nephews....a half-sister...

23

It's not the same!

61

Other things become your 'children'.

23

So you abandoned all our acting dreams? All our training?

61

No. I dreamt better ones. (beat) I have great adventures. A life in the arts. Travel. Freedom. (to 23) You do eventually live in N.Y.C. ...but not with Rex.

(36 enters)

61
36! The piano bar years. 1997! So we're –

36
Yes. With Sara. The bouncer from the bar.

16
'With' Sara?

36
Shush. Dad doesn't know.

23
This explains some things.

36
It doesn't matter anyway. Sara's great but –

61
...You just met Bennett at the music school.

36
Yeah. There's such heat between us, and Sara's so caught up with her work...

61
Sara is happily back with her ex. I think I would eventually figure out I was bi, but –

16
What????

61
C'mon, Sixteen, I know about you and the neighbor girl.

16
We were kids! Experimenting! I grew out of it.

23
Not so much.

36
Wait till you hear Bennett play piano...

61
Wait till you find out he's an alcoholic.

36
What?

61
No one takes that many naps in the middle of the day.

36
He doesn't drink!

61
Take a whiff of his coffee thermos sometime.

36
But...he's so talented...

61
You ask Sara to leave, he moves in, you get trapped in the addiction spiral, finally get the strength to throw him out, date again when he gets sober...end it again when he relapses...He dies a year later.

36
What??? He's not going to die. You have no right to say these terrible things.

61
I lived through these terrible things. Please, 36, steer clear.

16
Maybe I should become a nun.

23
We're Jewish.

36
Jewish-lite. Was an issue for the Jew-boo.

23
You never got married again?

61
Oh, I did. At fifty-two.

23
To who?

61
Gene. He was a bit older. A friend, first, then more. He was kind...he truly loved me.

36
But...you're alone...

61
He didn't take care of himself, and he died.

16
Divorces, deaths, your life sucks!!

23
How do you get off lecturing me about Rex –

16, 36
Or Evan/Or Sara –

23
If she stays stuck here, then we're stuck too.

16, 23, 36
(Chanting, getting closer to 61) Jump! Jump! Jump! Jump!

61
I'd like to wake up now. And for all of you to stay in the past.

23
You're scared to jump back in.

61
Of course I am! You hit the water and at first it's exhilarating – but it takes a long time to swim back up to the surface. It feels like your lungs won't make it, that you'll never make it to the top. To air. To safety.

36
You will.

61
What if I never come up again?

36
What if you float? We all survived because we learned to tread water.

23
If any of us had made different choices, you might not have met Gene. And that was good, right?

...But I bear the scars of your decisions! 61

Scars mean you survived. 23

We're all we've got. 16

Who's the you at 70? 23

Doesn't she deserve a chance to be happy? 36

...It's deep. 61

It's the unknown. *(They all look at 16)* I told you, I'm mature.

(beat)

I bet we're fabulous at 85. 61

(Perhaps 61 holds out her hands and they join – or the other selves merge behind 61 . Integration has occurred. They jump. Splash)

END OF PLAY