

# Swipe *Left*

By

*Jenna Cormier*

**WHY I LIKE IT:** *Drama Editor JANET EHRLICH COLSON writes... Swipe Left by Jenna Cormier is a smart and funny one act about the dating misadventures of Jo, an aspirational anti-hero looking for an authentic connection. In the era of shallow social media interactions, Jo stands out as a strong female character with lessons for all of us in the wake of social distancing. Any one of Jo's dates could be the basis of a TV episode, but what keeps Swipe Left more playlet than romcom besides snappy dialogue interspersed with Jo's inner monologue (see below for an excerpt) is that the whole thing takes place in a tidy ten minutes. The play as commentary serves the form of live theatre, because where else are we going to get this up close and personal with a bunch of strangers right now unless we're in the unfortunate position of being in the dating trenches ourselves? Also, I appreciate the convention of having all of Jo's dates portrayed by the same person. It gives a versatile actor a lot to chew on and at the same time reflects, even subconsciously how we keep repeating history, interpersonally speaking. No need to get heavy or heady here, though. Swipe Left keeps it lighthearted; it's just what the doctor ordered to give our swiping thumbs along with our current existential fears a welcome break.*

*JO cries into her almost empty bottle of wine.*

I just want someone decent. Someone who loves their mother, but not too much. Someone who likes watching The Great British Bake Off. Someone that doesn't drink cow's milk. Someone who isn't a bigot. Someone that likes weird socks. Someone who appreciates art. Someone who likes pickles and peanut butter. I mean, get on board people, it's a great combination! Someone who won't tell me to get back in the kitchen. Someone who...

*JO is interrupted by ETHAN.*

ETHAN

Excuse me?

*Spacing is playwright's own. JEC*

*Swipe Left*

### Synopsis

*Swipe Left* is a comedic journey through the unfortunate dating life of main character, Jo. Jo has been through the wringer when it comes to dating, leaving her wondering whether the problem is her or the fact there are no good guys left. When things start to go south just when her love life starts looking up, will Jo find a suitable match when she is least expecting it?

### Characters

Jo, 20's, a serial dater, not by choice

\*Chad

\*Marcus

\*Noah

\*Brett

\*Waiter

\*Guy on street

\*Ethan

\*All the male identifying characters in this show are played by the same actor

Setting: Various locations (with minimal props/set).

Act IScene 1

*We open the scene to find JO and CHAD after a date, their arms linked, strolling along the streets of New York City. CHAD stops suddenly, clears his throat, and faces JO.*

CHAD

(nervously)

You look beautiful tonight, Jo. I mean... you look beautiful every night. I'm not saying that tonight you look *more* beautiful than you usually do but um...

(He chuckles awkwardly)

I'm rambling...Sorry.

JO

Don't be sorry.

CHAD

Listen Jo, what I wanted to say is...I *really* care about you. And I know this is a huge step but...you're the one I've been waiting for my whole life. So...

*He gets down on one knee and pulls out a ring.*

Will you marry me?

JO

(shocked)

Oh my god.

CHAD

Ha ha, I'll take that as a yes?

JO

Oh my god... No.

CHAD

What-

JO

Chad! This is our *second* date.

*The lights fade on CHAD as JO steps forward, addressing the audience.*

JO

I am the queen of dating disasters. From stage five clingers, late night "You up?" texts, unsolicited dick pics, to this guy..

*MARCUS enters to meet JO.*

MARCUS

(smiling)

You know, you remind me a lot of my mother.

*JO turns her head to the audience, proving her point. MARCUS exits.*

JO

I mean, seriously, where do I find these people? I'm starting to question whether I just can't spot red flags or if maybe *I'm* the issue to begin with. I mean, I guess the problem with dating during this age is that it's so hard to tell who people really are.

*NOAH enters with a chair and sits looking at his laptop. JO walks over to meet him.*

JO

Hey! Noah, right?

NOAH

(turns around and looks her up and down)

Heyyyy. Um, you're... Jo?

JO

Yup, that's me!

NOAH

(sighs)

I'm sorry...I thought you were, well, I thought you were a guy.

*NOAH takes chair and exits.*

JO

I mean, you really can't make this shit up, can you? Maybe I should just swear off men forever and dedicate my life to being a reclusive, eccentric, death-obsessed spinster like Emily Dickinson...

*JO begins walk away, looking at her phone. As she continues to walk, not paying attention, BRETT calls out to her.*

BRETT

Miss?? Excuse me, Miss!

JO

(not looking up from her phone)

Sorry pal, I'm not buying what you're selling.

*BRETT catches up to her.*

BRETT

Hey! You dropped this back there, I figured you might need it.

JO

(finally looking up, realizing this stranger is quite handsome)

Oh... my gosh, my license. Thank you so much! Sorry for ignoring you back there, um I'm just, like, a crazy professional businesswoman, so...

*JO looks to the audience, cringes and shrugs, then turns back to BRETT.*

BRETT

Don't worry about it, I like a woman I can chase.

JO

(beginning to giggle like a little schoolgirl)

Haha okayyyyyy.

BRETT

So, I was wondering if I could possibly get your number. I'd hate to let a pretty girl like you get away again. Maybe we could grab dinner tonight?

JO

(stuttering)

Um, ye-yeah totally!

*They exchange numbers.*

BRETT

Cool. See you soon...Jo.

*He winks.*

JO

(giggling and blushing)

Hehehe yeahhhh.

*BRETT exits as JO waves goodbye until he is offstage.*

JO

I take back the whole spinster thing.

*JO begins to get ready for her date with BRETT, she applies a new lipstick, puts in earrings, and checks her face in a compact mirror.*

I wonder if our kids are going to get his blue eyes or my charming personality.

*JO finishes her pampering and crosses the stage and grabs a table and two chairs. She sits excitedly.*

WAITER

Dining alone tonight, miss?

JO

Actually, I'm waiting for someone! I'll just grab a glass of wine for now.

*The WAITER nods and exits. JO sits, alone, patiently reading the menu. The WAITER brings her wine. JO sits longer, tapping her foot. She begins to get antsy. She looks around her.*

I'll just text him, maybe he got stuck in traffic.

*JO continues to wait. At first sipping her wine, then eventually downing the glass. The WAITER comes back to check on the table but notices she is still alone.*

You know what, I'll just call him.

*JO dials BRETT's number. It rings and rings. No answer.*

Maybe his ringer is just off!

*The WAITER walks by again, this time JO grabs him.*

Yeah actually, can I just get a whole bottle of this wine? Thanks.

*JO continues to sit, waiting impatiently. She looks around her to possibly recognize BRETT somewhere. JO checks her phone frequently, for texts from him. She checks her watch. The WAITER enters back with the bottle of wine, sympathetically. JO grabs the bottle and begins to chug. The WAITER exits. JO gets up, bottle of wine in hand, throws down cash on the table, then exits that scene, on to the street.*

JO

(to herself, but out loud)

Who needs men?! Certainly not me! Am I right ladies?! Who's with me!

*No response. GUY ON STREET walks by.*

GUY ON STREET

Show us your tits!

JO

OH, fuck off!

*She starts barking at him. GUY ON STREET exits, confused.*

Yeah, I'm bringing back the whole spinster thing, final answer. Emily Dickinson probably had it made. You know, all alone. Writing poems about death. Alone. Living with her parents. ALONE.

*JO, now slightly inebriated, begins to cry on the street.*

Oh look, a Bumble notification! "Twenty-four new bees think you're pretty special. Open Bumble to see if they're a match." I mean, why not! Let's take a gander, shall we!

*She opens up the app on her phone and begins swiping left on everyone. She is having a breakdown.*

Nope! Too ugly. Too handsome, he's probably hiding something. Too dumb. Too smart. Ew, man holding fish. Nope! Too bald. Too hairy. Too skinny. Too tall. This man has a foot fetish, no thank you! Unless...nope, still no. Oh, this couple is looking for a third? Cool, good for them for having each other! Don't be greedy, save some for the rest of us! Oh my god, this guy is wearing a Trump hat, NOPE. Is there no one good left in New York City!?

*JO cries into her almost empty bottle of wine.*

I just want someone decent. Someone who loves their mother, but not too much. Someone who likes watching The Great British Bake Off. Someone that doesn't drink cow's milk. Someone who isn't a bigot. Someone that likes weird socks. Someone who appreciates art. Someone who likes pickles and peanut butter. I mean, get on board people, it's a great combination! Someone who won't tell me to get back in the kitchen. Someone who...

*JO is interrupted by ETHAN.*

ETHAN

Excuse me?

JO

(swigging her wine)

Oh, what do you want chump?

ETHAN

I just wanted to make sure you were okay. I could hear everything you said from my open window. I mean, like everything. Very loudly.

JO

(embarrassed)

Oh. Thanks. Yeah, I'm okay. Just a girl drunk on the street after getting stood up.

ETHAN

That sucks. Fuck that guy. Should we kill him?

JO

(laughs)

Like yeah, probably. I could go to jail; my schedule is pretty open right now so...

ETHAN

(pausing)

Sorry for intruding but... I heard you say you liked pickles and peanut butter...

JO

Oh yeah, that's embarrassing. I'm sorry you-

ETHAN

(dead pan)

I love pickles and peanut butter.

JO

No way.

ETHAN

Yes way! Pregnant women were onto something! Anyway, do you think a man in socks that look like corn on the cob would lie to you?

*Ethan pulls up the legs of his pajama pants and gestures down to his socks, which do in fact look like corn on the cob.*

JO

Well, when you put it like that...

*They laugh.*

I'm Jo, by the way.

ETHAN

Ethan.

*They smile.*

END.

**THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS:** *I started writing this play as part of a class assignment and found myself drawing from my own personal experiences, as well as the experiences of other young women in the college dating scene. When this play was shared aloud to the class, my friends started laughing together during the part where the main character has “Show us your tits!” shouted at her. My professor, curious as to what seemingly inside joke we were laughing at, asked me to explain. When I explained that a man had yelled this at my friends and I from his truck as we stood outside a restaurant on 50 cent wings and \$5 margarita night, my male professor earnestly said, “People still do that?”. Ummmmm, yes old man, women still get catcalled? And reactions like that is exactly why I wrote this play. It explores the often perilous modern dating scene, where mobile dating apps, ghosting, catfishing, and unsolicited nudes leave young women feeling inadequate and self-conscious. I wanted to explore different categories of men, the straight up looney birds, the self-proclaimed “nice guy”, the catcallers. The type of men other men don’t see, or choose not to see, because this stuff isn’t happening to them. All played by the same actor because in this world it is hard to know who some really is or who someone could end up being. So, my inspiration for this isn’t any text I read or anything profound. It’s my own experiences and the experiences of other women I have heard and the experiences I can only imagine have happened. It’s comedic because it’s real. And while I could be entirely pessimistic, I do believe in happy endings and meeting someone when you least expect it... gag.*

**AUTHOR BIO:** Jenna Cormier is a recent college graduate from Massachusetts with degrees in English and Theater Arts who likes to write short, wacky plays.