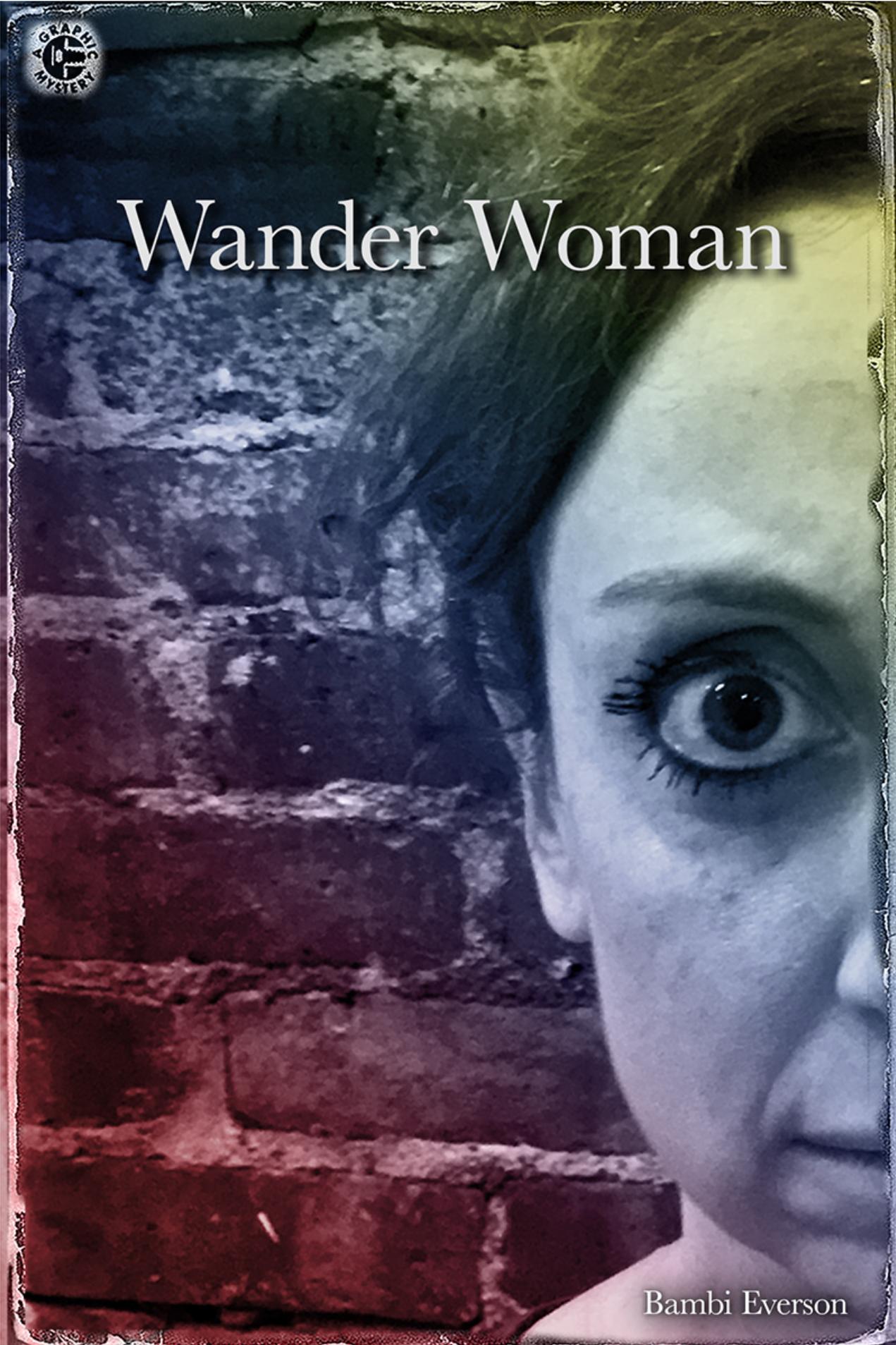




A GRAPHIC  
MYSTERY

# Wander Woman



Bambi Everson

## **WANDER WOMAN**

One act, approx. 40 minutes

### **CHARACTERS**

**CAROL** (30s) - Jeff's wife. Thin, controlling, health-conscious.

**JEFF** (late 30s) - Abby's ex-husband. World-weary.

**ABBY** (30s) - Frazzled, neurotic, somnolent.

**TED** (late 30s) - Abby's partner. Patient, compassionate, exhausted.

**ALISON** (pre-teen) - Surly, wise beyond her years.

**TIME:** The present.

**PLACE:** Carol and Jeff's apartment; Abby and Ted's apartment.

**SYNOPSIS:** On medication, Jeff's ex-wife keeps turning up at their old apartment while walking in her sleep. The families attempt to get to the root of her problem.

## SCENE 1

*Lights up on a small one-bedroom apartment on in New York City. It is the wee hours of the morning before the sun has risen. ABBY enters the apartment with her keys. She is wearing pajamas, bunny slippers and is carrying a purse. Her hair is disheveled. She dumps her purse, and proceeds to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. She pours herself some apple juice. She grabs some paper towels and goes to the couch. She picks up the remote and turns on the TV. It is loud. Law and Order or some cop show. She watches aimlessly while eating. CAROL enters bleary eyed from the bedroom. She is wearing a red nightgown. She spots ABBY.*

CAROL

Oh, God! Not again! Jeff! Jeff, get in here please.

*JEFF enters exhausted.*

JEFF

Dammit. I literally just fell asleep. Is it...? Oh dear...

CAROL

*(to JEFF)*

How does this keep happening? Look at her!

*(Snaps her fingers in front of Abby)*

Hello! That was the last of the bread! I was saving that for your lunch tomorrow. It was the expensive gluten free whole grain sunflower bread.

JEFF

Ha! Serves her right then... Sorry, honey. I'll buy my lunch. One less thing for you to do tomorrow. Go back to bed. I'll handle this.

CAROL

You'd better. Honestly, Jeff, it's not like I'm unsympathetic, but this is really creeping me out!

JEFF

I got this.

*CAROL exits, clearly annoyed. JEFF quickly turns off the TV. ABBY does not move. She is staring blankly and eating. He tries shaking her gently. Then a little rougher.*

JEFF (CON'T)

Come on! Wake up! Abby! Abby!

ABBY

*(in a fugue stare, not really awake)*

Jeff? It's not Saturday, is it?

JEFF

It's 3am! What the hell are you doing here?

ABBY

Do you want a sandwich? Tastes weird.

JEFF

No I... Abby... Do you know where you are?

ABBY

Abby has soccer practice and I can't find her shoes. Maybe Mrs. Cooney put them in the wash. I'm so hungry. I'll pick up potato bread at Gristedes after practice.

JEFF

Carol! Carol!! She seems really out of it. Should I call 911?

*CAROL re-enters.*

CAROL

Call Ted. Come on, Jeff, did you really need me to tell you that? I have class tomorrow.

JEFF

Sorry. You're right. Sorry. Go back to bed. Abby? Abby! I am calling Ted.

*JEFF picks up his cell phone and dials watching ABBY closely. She is eating sloppily and crumbs are falling on the rug. JEFF picks them up and sticks some napkins on her lap.*

JEFF (CON'T)

Jesus, Abby, you eat like a toddler.

*ABBY continues to stare into space eating her sandwich. JEFF dials.*

JEFF (CON'T)

Hey Ted. Who else? Take a look. Surprise! Yeah... She's here. You gotta do something, man. This is the second time this month. I don't know. Maybe put a little bell on her like a cat. This time, she is really spacey. I have no idea how she made it all the way over here without anyone noticing. I know. Not your fault. Ever think about tying one ankle to the bed? ...Don't bother getting dressed. It'll be fine. You'll look like a matched set. No, don't wake Alison. Kid has enough stress as it is. I'm not dissing anyone, Ted, it's just a fact! Do we need to get into this now? Your wife is getting peanut butter on our new couch! Look, I'd throw her ass in a taxi but if she woke up... I'm not a doctor...I don't know how these things work. Just get here. Right. See ya.

*JEFF walks over to ABBY. He takes the sandwich out of her hand and tosses it. He rubs her hands.*

JEFF (CON'T)

Abby? Abby? Come on kid, snap out of it. I don't have time for this shit.

*No response.*

JEFF (CON'T)

Carol? Carol!

*CAROL re-enters. She is angry.*

CAROL

What? I guess if you can't sleep, nobody sleeps. What now?

JEFF

It's really bad this time.

*CAROL goes over and takes away the sandwich. Tries gently rubbing her wrists. ABBY does not move.*

CAROL

Abby, it's Carol. You are in our house. Your husband is on his way.

*(to JEFF)*

Ted is coming, right?

JEFF

Yeah. He's a little worried about leaving Alison alone.

CAROL

Why? Does she sleepwalk too?

JEFF

No!

CAROL

Ally is 11 years old. She's not going to wake up at 3am and start eating Legos! Did you tell him to just leave her a note? That he'll be back before she even wakes up?

JEFF

I didn't want to tell him how to parent.

CAROL

She's your daughter, not his! Oh, my God! The three of you belong in a mental ward. Call Abby.

JEFF

Why? She's right here.

CAROL

Trust me. I am now going to go back to bed. Unless there is an earthquake or a nuclear meltdown, please leave me out of this, and you know...

JEFF

I know. Locks. Tomorrow.

*JEFF looks into her purse and takes out her cell phone. He places it on her lap, grabs his own and calls her. "You're So Vain" by Carly Simon starts playing. JEFF reacts to the ringtone. ABBY is jolted awake by the phone. She reaches for it but JEFF pulls it away and turns it off.*

ABBY

Jeff! What are you doing here?

JEFF

I live here. Jesus, Abby!

ABBY

Oh, my God!

*(looks at what she is wearing)*

Oh, my God!!

JEFF

Just be grateful you don't sleep in the nude.

ABBY

Never. Never again.

JEFF

Ted is on his way.

ABBY

Oh no!! Call him back. I'll just go. I am so sorry, Jeff. Does Carol have a pair of pants and maybe some socks I can borrow?

JEFF

She's not your size.

ABBY

In socks?

JEFF

In pants.

ABBY

Oh, rub it in, why don't you? I know you married a stick insect.

JEFF

I'm sure Ted's on his way by now. I am going to try and salvage what is left of my night. You can let him in. Give me your purse.

ABBY

Why?

JEFF

Keys. I really don't want to change the locks.

ABBY

But Alison...

JEFF

I'll work out things with Alison. As Carol said, she's 11. She can start coming here on her own.

ABBY

Oh, "Carol said!" Well, maybe I am not comfortable with my 6th grader coming to this neighborhood by herself!

JEFF

And I am not comfortable with my ex-wife making herself at home in my home.

ABBY

It used to be our home.

JEFF

That you left.

ABBY

Because Carol...

JEFF

I am not going there. Just give me the keys.

*ABBY reluctantly hands them over.*

ABBY

I do still have things here you know. Furniture that is mine.

JEFF

Doesn't mean you have 3am visitation rights. You said leave it. You said Alison needed to see some familiar things even though I redecorated.

ABBY

Redecorated? Is that what you call moving a new woman into my house?

JEFF

I thought we got past all this. It's water under the bridge. You moved on, I moved on. We agreed to co-parent amicably.

ABBY

The TV is mine.

JEFF

Technically, ours, since your dad bought it after we were married, but hey, you want the TV, take the TV. We can afford to replace it. The damn thing is at least 10 years old.

ABBY

I want it.

JEFF

Fine. Good night Abby. Talk to your doctor about this. It's... well, it's not a normal thing.

*JEFF exits into the bedroom. After a moment, ABBY starts unplugging wires on the TV. She tries to lift it but it's way too heavy. Buzzer sounds.*

ABBY

*(yelling)*

I got it.

*(realizing they went back to sleep)*

Sorry! It's just Ted.

CAROL

*(off stage)*

We know! It's 3:22 in the morning!

ABBY

Sorry.

*(quieter)*

Bitch.

*Door knocks. ABBY opens the door. It is TED. A coat thrown over ridiculous pajamas. He has a coat for ABBY.*

ABBY (CON'T)

Sorry.

*TED enters. He is bedraggled and exhausted. Sleep deprived, not just from tonight but in general. He is patient and kind to ABBY but clearly frustrated by her actions.*

TED

Here's your coat. Let's go home.

ABBY

Did you bring the car?

TED

Of course I brought the car. I am not in the habit of riding the trains in my pajamas like some people.

ABBY

Good. 'Cause the TV is really heavy.

TED

What are you talking about?

ABBY

The TV. Jeff said I could have it.

TED

Not tonight Abby. It's a three floor walk-up. We need a handcart or something.

ABBY

He took my keys! I'm never setting foot in this house again. Are you going to help me or not?

TED

I don't think you are thinking rationally right now. Let's go home. Take your coat.

*ABBY tosses the coat on the floor.*

ABBY

Whose side are you on?

TED

Your side. I am always on your side, even when you are wrong. It's late. The neighbors...

ABBY

Fine. I'll do it myself.

*Starts to lift giant TV off the stand. Knocks over something. TED reluctantly goes to help her. CAROL enters from the bedroom.*

CAROL

Abby? What? Why are you stealing our TV?

TED

Hi Carol. Sorry. Apparently Jeff and Abby had a bit of a...

ABBY

My dad gave me this TV. My dad's gone. His DNA is on this, so I'm taking it.

CAROL

That was a lot of years ago. You want it? OK by me. Jeff will put it in the car when we drop off Alison on Sunday. You can't move it now.

ABBY

Watch me.

CAROL

Jeff? Jeff!

*JEFF re-enters.*

JEFF

You're still here? Hi Ted.

TED

Hey. Sorry about this.

CAROL

*(to JEFF)*

You're giving her the fucking TV now?

JEFF

Not now. Not tonight. Come on, Abby. Go home. Get some sleep.

ABBY

I need it. It's mine.

TED

It's not like we don't have a TV, Abby.

ABBY

I'm not leaving without it.

CAROL

*(to JEFF)*

Oh, for God's sake. Put on some shoes and get rid of the thing.

ABBY

Who are you calling a thing? You look like a walking thermometer.

TED

Abby, you are not yourself.

*(to CAROL)*

Sorry.

ABBY

Stop apologizing for me. I'm taking the TV. You gonna help or not?

JEFF

It weighs like a hundred pounds.

ABBY

So does your wife, but you seem to carry her just fine.

CAROL

What is that supposed to mean?

ABBY

Only that I worked my butt off while we were married, while Jeff worked on his non-existent novel, and NOW he seems to have no problem working a 40 hour week, so you can do your granolier-than-thou shit!

CAROL

I work.

JEFF

*(overlapping)*

She works.

TED

*(overlapping)*

Can we not...

JEFF

Fine. TV. Who needs sleep? Hold on.

*JEFF puts his shoes on.*

CAROL

*(to ABBY)*

Happy? Really, Abby, we are not the enemy. We love Alison, and we care about you. I just think...

TED

It's the meds.

ABBY

I can speak for myself. My head is splitting. Like a thousand bees inside my skull. The doctor said the drug might make me a little irritable. Sorry about the thermometer crack. The red nightgown is actually nice. I hate you for being so thin.

TED

She hasn't slept in about 3 days. Not really. Last night she ate all the frozen vegetables. Didn't even defrost them. Sleep eating. Ever hear of that?

CAROL

No.

ABBY

Of course not. She barely eats when she's awake. Sorry. Let's blame the meds. It's the meds' fault.

*JEFF returns. He has shoes and gloves on.*

JEFF

Alright. Let's do this.

TED

I'll grab the front. Abby, just go open the downstairs doors. The car's right out front.

ABBY

Be careful. I mean it.

*ABBY grabs her coat and exits.*

TED

Sorry about all this, man. Fucking meds. You have no idea.

JEFF

I think we had a pretty clear demonstration. Whatever. Got it? Wait, the wire...

*CAROL picks up the loose wires and piles it on top of the TV.*

CAROL

You OK? I'll get the door. Careful, Jeff.

*(to TED)*

Bad back. He was laid up most of last week. He really shouldn't be carrying anything.

JEFF

I'm fine. Ok, I'll back up, you watch where I'm going. Damn, this fucker's heavy. I feel like Laurel and Hardy in The Music Box.

TED

Yeah. Just be grateful Abby's dad never gave you guys a piano. Heave...

JEFF

Ho!

*Grunting, they get the TV out the door and off stage. CAROL closes the door. Looks at the time. Irritated, she goes back to bed, slamming the door. There is a long pause. Then a knock at the door.*

JEFF (CON'T)

*(Rattling the door)*

Honey? Carol? You locked the door. Sweetie?

**BLACKOUT**