

*Barefoot in the Park* was written in 1963. The plot is simple: newlyweds begin their marriage, disagree, and reconcile. The pop culture references are few, but obscure. The gender roles are far from politically correct—so why in the world are people still doing this play? Certainly Simon’s crisp and engaging style gives us a welcome chance to laugh, and escape from everyday drudgery. But I think there’s more to it. Corie’s mother tells her, “you’ve got to give up a little of you for him.” Certainly a pre-women’s-lib sort of sentiment. But what’s important here is, I believe that if Paul had asked, Mother would have given him the same advice.

*Barefoot in the Park* was a theatrical love letter to Neil Simon’s early married years, and, in addition to creating a delightful evening of theatre, I believe he was also creating a treatise on compromise. Mother learns to take some risks, while Velasco learns to tone it down. Corie learns to appreciate stability while Paul takes a walk on the wild side. And in the end, Corie crawls out on the ledge to rescue her husband, but really, I believe all of these characters—and by extension all of us—are actually rescuing each other.