

Where's Columbus?

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ArtAge Publications

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WHERE'S COLUMBUS?

PLOT

What might have happened to change history if Christopher Columbus had sailed in a different direction back in 1492? We explore this hypothetical situation as Mrs. Columbus nags Chris to quit hanging around the house and go out and discover something. He finally does sail away, and eventually he sights land — but he is in for a shock.

CAST

NARRATOR
MRS. COLUMBUS
COLUMBUS
FIRST MATE

STAGE POSITIONS: From stage left toward stage right: Narrator, Mrs. Columbus, Columbus, First Mate.

SET-UP: Stands are placed two together at stage left for the first scene between Columbus and his wife. Then a space is open toward stage right before the next two stands are placed. The space in between indicates a “travel distance” between one country and another.

PROPS: An eye patch and a spyglass for the First Mate. A toy spyglass will do, or if one is not available then the First Mate can simply curve his fingers to form an opening and hold that hand up to the eye. The eye patch can just be worn across the forehead until it is brought down to cover the eye for the spyglass bit. Two telephones are optional. The “hand-shaped” telephones are simpler.

PERFORMANCE NOTES: This skit is suitable for any audience, but it has at times been performed for groups of upper elementary school children around Columbus day, after which the kids are asked what they noticed that didn't make sense. They mention the telephones, and they giggle about the four fingers held up to describe three ships. They notice the Popeye reference and the pizza. They laugh about the spyglass held up to the patched eye, and of course they think that the underwear references are hilarious.

NARRATOR: Did you ever stop to realize that maybe just one little decision might have altered the course of history? We can't help wondering what might have happened if the events back then had been a little different. Our scene opens in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Columbus in Genoa, Italy.
(Narrator remains onstage for further lines.)

MRS. COLUMBUS: Chris, I'm getting pretty tired of you hanging around the house all the time. Why don't you go out and discover something?

COLUMBUS: Like what?

MRS: I don't know. But there must be a lot of stuff out there before you get to the edge of the earth.

COLUMBUS: There isn't any edge of the earth, woman! The world is round!

MRS: You just keep on saying that, don't you? You just keep on with that dumb idea! If the world was round, a lot of people would be walking upside down. You don't see anybody doing that, do you?

COLUMBUS: Of course not, but that isn't because the world is flat. There is a physical law —

MRS: Well, I would think so! There SHOULD be a law against walking upside down. The women's skirts would all fall up!

COLUMBUS: No, you don't understand —

MRS: I'll TELL you what I don't understand, Chris. Other husbands are out working or helping around the house, but all YOU do is sit and look at maps.

COLUMBUS: I'm a navigator, woman! That's what navigators do. They study maps.

MRS: And they also navigate, I presume?

COLUMBUS: Well, yes.

MRS: Then go and navigate somewhere!

COLUMBUS: Believe me, I'd like to, but the government here in Genoa won't give me any money for exploration.

MRS: Then go over to Spain and ask Queen Isabella for the money.

COLUMBUS: Oh, I couldn't do that. I hardly know her.

MRS: Maybe not—but I heard that she likes YOU!

COLUMBUS: What do you mean?

MRS: She saw you in tights at the Borgias' party, and she thought you had really cute knees.

COLUMBUS: *(pleased)* Really?

MRS: Yes. She LIKES you. So go on over and ask her to bankroll a voyage for you. I bet she will.

COLUMBUS: Oh, I don't know. Ferdinand is such a tightwad.

MRS: Don't worry about it. Trust me. Isabella is a woman, and we women have our ways to get what we want.

COLUMBUS: Yeah, I've noticed that.

MRS: Well, you'll never get the money if you don't try, so go on and do it.

COLUMBUS: I guess you're right. Okay. I'm off to Spain. *(He gets up and crosses to the stand representing the 'ship'.)*

NARRATOR: Time passes and passes, and one day Mrs. Columbus gets a collect call from Madrid.

MRS: *(on phone)* Hello? Is that you, Chris?

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