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BLIND DATE
by Samara Siskind

Cast of Characters

MARCIA, pretty young woman in her twenties. A little mousey and shy. Hasn't had much experience with men.

TED, twenties. Not particularly attractive, yet not unattractive. Seemingly sweet and honorable. A real gentleman.

Place

Marcia's apartment.

Time

Evening.

Production Notes

Props include:

- Hair curlers
- Wax strip
- Clothes/debris
- Sunglasses
- Walking stick
- Panties
- Bottle of water
- Glass
- Bottle of eye drops

BLIND DATE

by Samara Siskind

(At rise: MARCIA runs around her apartment in a frenzy with curlers in her hair, wax strip above her lip, and only one shoe on. In an attempt to tidy up she shoves clothes, debris, etc. under the couch.)

(The doorbell rings.)

MARCIA. Great, he's early. *(Calling out:)* Uh...hold on a sec! Just, give me a minute!

(She exits and returns, now presentable. She gives her hair a smooth over and checks her breath. It is passable.)

MARCIA. Alright. Come in!

(TED enters. He is rather dressed up, wearing sunglasses. Both of his hands are grasped behind his back. He speaks with a British accent.)

MARCIA. Hello. You must be—

TED. Ted.

MARCIA. Ted.

TED. And you are—

MARCIA. *(Nervous:)* Marcia. Hi. It's so wonderful to meet you. My, you look nice. Very...dapper.

TED. Why thank you. So kind of you to notice.

(MARCIA does a little turn, waiting for him to compliment her ensemble. It doesn't happen. Awkward beat.)

MARCIA. So, ah...Carol didn't tell me much about you. Well, except that you were new in town.

TED. That is correct. I just moved here as a matter of fact.

MARCIA. From London?

TED. Why yes. Is it that obvious?

MARCIA. I couldn't help notice your accent. Oh, and Carol said you gave up your seat on the bus for her...which isn't a very American thing to do.

TED. Yes, well. She was wheezing you see.

MARCIA. Yeah, asthma. It sucks.

(Beat. They stand awkwardly.)

TED. *(Motioning inside:)* So... May I...

MARCIA. Oh yes! Yes! Please. I'm so sorry. Do, do come in.

(She reaches out and grabs his arm to pull him inside. TED trips and falls with his face flat on the floor. We can now see that he was holding a walking stick behind his back.)

TED. Whoops a daisies!

MARCIA. Oh god! Oh dear, Ted I'm terribly sorry. Are you alright? Here, let me help you.

(MARCIA helps TED to his feet.)

TED. I'm quite alright. Just a little spill. Really, it happens all the time you see.

MARCIA. I should have that fixed. Here, you dropped your—

(MARCIA picks up and examines the stick trying to make sense out of it.)

MARCIA. Your—

TED. Walking stick?

MARCIA. Huh?

(Beat.)

TED. I'm afraid Carol didn't tell you.

MARCIA. Tell me what?

TED. That I'm—

MARCIA. Ohhh.

TED. Blind.

(Beat.)

MARCIA. I see. I mean—

TED. You seem rather uncomfortable. I understand. I should go.

MARCIA. No! No, of course not. I'm just...surprised, that's all. *(Beat.)* Why don't you sit down? Here, take my hand and I'll lead you to the couch.

TED. *(With a laugh.)* Most kind of you, but I think I can manage.

(TED makes his way in. On the way, his stick picks up a pair of MARCIA's panties. MARCIA runs and tries to yank them off with some difficulty. TED expertly makes his way to the couch.)

TED. No need to worry about me. I've been doing this for quite some time now you see.

MARCIA. I didn't realize. I mean, you were wearing sunglasses, I just thought...how *Tom Cruise* of you.

(She takes a seat next to him and stuffs the panties under a sofa cushion.)

TED. I thought you were well aware. I'm quite embarrassed. Now you're stuck with the likes of Helen Keller all night. *(Beat.)* Except that I'm not deaf. Some date, eh?

MARCIA. To be honest, I haven't been out on many dates. So relax, I don't have much to compare you to.

TED. Why, I don't believe that. An attractive lass like— Well... Carol said you were an attractive lass.

MARCIA. It's not that I haven't had the opportunity. It's just difficult for me to trust people, especially men. *(Beat.)* To be perfectly honest, I was going to cancel on you tonight, but Carol said I needed to get out more. "Throw caution to the wind Marcia!" So I said to myself— "The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams."

TED. So true. Thoreau?

MARCIA. No, Oprah. Besides, Carol said you were very sweet. So I decided why not? You only live once! Go ahead Marcia, fly blind for once in your life! *(Beat.)* Oh god. I'm sorry.

TED. Don't be. That has always been my motto as well. That and look both ways before crossing. *(Beat.)* Ha! Got you! Who said Brits don't have a sense of humor? So, my dear... What did you have planned for the evening?

MARCIA. Well—since you're new in town I thought that maybe we'd go see the sights!

(Awkward pause. MARCIA buries her face in her hands.)

MARCIA. Oh god. I did it again. That was horrible.

TED. It certainly was not.

MARCIA. It was. I'm an idiot.

TED. Rubbish. I actually think you're rather smashing. I quite fancy you Marcia.

MARCIA. *(Blushing:)* Why thank you. I quite fancy you too, Ted. *(Beat.)* Well, since that plan's out the window... What would you like to do?

TED. Actually, I don't mind staying here in the flat. Have a nice chat, get to know one another better. How does that sound?

MARCIA. Awesome! I mean...I'd like that.

TED. Brilliant!

MARCIA. Splendid! *(Beat.)* So...what do you do for a living Ted?

TED. I teach little children how to read braille.

(Beat. MARCIA melts.)

MARCIA. Oh. You kind soul.

TED. You see, I myself was a child when I lost my sight.

MARCIA. That's horrible. How did it happen?

(TED bows his head. MARCIA takes his hand.)

MARCIA. It's alright Ted, you can tell me.

TED. *(Taking a deep breath:)* I was all of nine, playing rugby with some mates when I noticed old Mrs. Whitman trying to make it across the street with an armload of groceries. So I left the game and ran over to help her. I was in the BBS, British Boy Scouts you see.

MARCIA. Then what happened?

TED. *(Reenacting:)* A black Mini came speeding down the pavement, right in Mrs. Whitman's direction! So I pushed her aside, groceries flying everywhere, and then—

MARCIA. *(Edge of her seat:)* And then?

TED. The car hit me.

MARCIA. So that's how you lost your sight?

TED. Yes.

(Beat.)

MARCIA. *(Confused:)* How?

TED. You know. Little shards of glass from the windshield got lodged in my eyes.

MARCIA. How dreadful. You poor, poor thing.

(MARCIA draws TED's face down to her chest to console him.)

MARCIA. And you were just performing a random act of kindness, helping a defenseless old woman! Life can be so cruel!

(As she pets and soothes him, TED removes his sunglasses wiping away phony tears. His eyes widen and a smile forms as he relishes the close up view of MARCIA's chest.)

TED. It's been over a decade now, but it's still ever so painful.

MARCIA. It must be.

TED. What makes it so difficult is knowing that I will never again be able to enjoy the vision of a beautiful woman. A woman like you Marcia.

(She releases his head as he raises it, their eyes meet. TED looks away.)

TED. I apologize if I seem forward. I know we just met and all—

MARCIA. You are the most charming man I've ever met.

TED. And you the most lovely I've met. Woman, not man.

(She embraces him passionately.)

MARCIA. Oh Ted.

TED. Oh Marcia.

MARCIA. I've never felt this way before.

TED. Nor have I.

MARCIA. This is so unlike me, but the way you opened up to me—

TED. And you to me.

MARCIA. You're the man I've been waiting for. *(Beat. Flirtatious:)* I'll be right back.

TED. *(Hopeful:)* Slipping into something more comfortable?

MARCIA. No. I uh, have to go to the loo. Don't you go anywhere.

(MARCIA exits. TED jumps up, performing an elaborate victory dance on the couch. He flails around throwing pillows into the air and catching them. MARCIA reenters, witnessing his celebration. She exits silently.)

MARCIA. I'll be right out Ted!

(TED freezes, jumps off and repositions himself on the couch. MARCIA reenters.)

MARCIA. I'm back.

TED. So I see, er, hear.

MARCIA. You know, this may sound horrible, but I was secretly thrilled when I found out that you were blind. I mean, considering my job and all.

TED. Oh? What is it that you do?

MARCIA. Carol didn't tell you? I'm a graduate student, in Med school.

TED. Brilliant! What are you studying?

(TED takes a bottle of water out from his jacket and takes a swig.)

MARCIA. Ophthalmology.

(TED does a spit take.)

MARCIA. Isn't that a crazy coincidence? My specializing in the treatment of the eyes?

(TED nods, turning pale.)

MARCIA. In fact, I was hoping to show you some of the new products we're researching here in the U.S. We've been experimenting with certain formulas that may in fact, help blind people regain their sight!

TED. You don't say.

MARCIA. We've only been able to experiment on lab rats, but we need to test the formula on a human specimen before it can be FDA approved, and here you are!

TED. Darling, I ah...hmm. I don't think this is such a great idea. You should ah, test someone else, not me. An American. I don't even have a Visa. I'm completely illegal actually—

MARCIA. Ted, you are so noble...unselfish. Wanting to give someone else a chance to undergo this breakthrough treatment, but you *deserve* this. Listening to my problems, helping old Mrs. Whitman across the street that fateful day.

(MARCIA pulls TED's legs so he falls backwards collapsing on the couch. She sits on his chest so he cannot move.)

TED. Oh heavens would you look at the time? I mean, blimey! It must be late. You see, I completely forgot I have a reading, and you wouldn't want me to keep those blind orphans waiting would you?

MARCIA. *(Removing his sunglasses:)* Now just relax, and open your eyes wide...

(She takes a bottle out of her pocket and holds it over him.)

TED. (*Terrified.*) What is that?!? I mean, well...I have this strange sense you're holding something over me!

MARCIA. Just a mixture of potassium hydroxide and hydrochloric acid.

TED. Oh no! Please Marcia, enough of this fooling about—

MARCIA. It's perfectly safe, trust me. It's only caused impotency and penile dysfunction in 70% of the specimens tested.

TED. (*Covering his privates.*) Penile dysfunction?! Are you off your trolley?! Get that away from me!

MARCIA. Hush. I'm a professional Ted, I'm only trying to help you.

(She squeezes the drops into his eyes and TED lets out a terrifying howl. He grabs a glass of water on the table and throws it on his face, rubbing his burning eyes.)

MARCIA. You saw the glass. On the table.

(TED stops, caught. He looks at MARCIA. Beat.)

MARCIA. You can see! It's a miracle!

(MARCIA begins to jump and dance around. TED's eyes are red, blotchy, watering, and twitching. Despite his discomfort, he dances and jumps around with MARCIA.)

TED. Jolly good! Why look at that! I am blessed! I see colors! I see such beauty in the world! You look like an angel and those, my dear, those are little drops from heaven!!

MARCIA. How many fingers am I holding up?

TED. Two!

(MARCIA pokes him in the eyes with her two fingers, Three Stooges style.)

TED. Owwww! Whatever did you do that for my love?

MARCIA. It was shampoo you fool, *No More Tears* no less. You can cut the act. I've called your blindman's bluff.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

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CONTROLLING INTEREST
by **Wayne S. Rawley**

Cast of Characters

JACK, an eight-year-old boy

BRAD, an eight-year-old boy

DAVID, an eight-year-old boy

STEVEN, an eight-year-old boy

ASHLEY, a nine-year-old girl

BETHANY, an eight-year-old girl

Setting

Jack's office. In the office is both "hard" and "soft" seating. Jack's desk and chair, plus a chair next to Jack's desk. The "soft" seating is a small couch and coffee table. Jack's office should be tidy, as Jack is a tidy kid.

Note

These characters should speak in tone and manner as if they are adults. No kid voices. At some points the "kid" in them comes out, but at all times their actions and mannerisms are adult. At no point do the characters become children. No kid voices.

Characters can be played by actors of any age.

Costumes

The boys should be dressed for a day at the office. If they are not wearing suits they should be wearing khakis and polo shirts. They should look like smart, wealthy urban professionals.

The same for the girls. They should be dressed very professionally, in business suits, with some allure.

CONTROLLING INTEREST

by Wayne S. Rawley

(At Rise: JACK sits at his desk wearing a telephone headset. The phone rings. JACK answers.)

JACK. This is Jack. Yeah... Ye—Yeah, what can I do for you Fred? I've got a meeting starting here like right now. Uh, huh. Uh, huh. Fred, Fred, Fred—honestly, let me stop you right there, I don't know if you're ready. Uh, huh. Well—we're gonna swing. Yes, Fred on the swings—that is where you swing—see? That's what I'm talking about— Well, let me ask you this: Can you pump?

(BRAD enters.)

BRAD. Jesus Christ, Jack, we're getting creamed out there.

(JACK holds up his hand as if to say "I'm on the phone.")

BRAD. Oh, sorry.

JACK. *(To BRAD:)* It's okay, have a seat. *(To FRED:)* Yes, Fred, pump. Pump. Can you propel the swing back and forth under your own power without having to be pushed by a second party. Don't mess with me Fred, you know what it means. *(Motions to BRAD, "Can you believe this guy?")* Okay look Fred, I have to go. You come around lunch recess, we'll give you a go, but listen to me Fred, I don't want to see you eating your boogers because we're not doing that anymore. We're eight now. Okay, well, okay. See you then. *(He hangs up. To BRAD:)* Dude still eats his boogers.

BRAD. Gross.

JACK. What's up?

BRAD. We're getting cremated out there, Jack. They got ghost runners on every base, and they keep changing where second is, one minute it's the garage door, the next minute it's the side hedge, it's like they're just making it up as they go along.

JACK. They're Big Kids Brad, it's important we give them the impression that we are happy they're even letting us play.

(*DAVID and STEVEN enter.*)

DAVID. I'm telling you Steven—

STEVEN. I'm sorry, that sounds extreme.

DAVID. I'm telling you. Ask Jack.

STEVEN. Jack, I'm sorry, I missed last week. Is it true we aren't eating our boogers anymore?

JACK. It's true, we're not.

STEVEN. That sounds extreme.

JACK. If you want a voice, come to the meetings. Sit down.

STEVEN. So what are we supposed to do with them?

BRAD. We don't know yet. For now, just leave them in there.

DAVID. We're looking into it. I'm talking to an 11-year-old, says you can flick them on people.

STEVEN. Who the hell here has got that kind of hand-eye coordination?

JACK. Gentlemen, enough. We aren't here to discuss old business.

BRAD. What are we here to discuss, Jack?

DAVID. You know, I'm scheduled to smash an anthill today.

JACK. I know—

STEVEN. And I'm supposed to meet Gary for a late Lunchable at three— One thing I don't need in my life is more meetings, Jack.

JACK. I know fellahs, listen— Your time is valuable, I understand that. I have something very important I need to discuss with you. I've been thinking about this since, like, this morning—

BRAD. (*Concerned, this is important.*) Jesus, Jack.

DAVID. I'm sorry, um, wasn't this morning like, a bahzillion years ago?

JACK. I know. Yes. It was. That's why I asked you guys to come over to play today. I've been thinking—I've been thinking about this and... I want to discuss the possibility of... Of us... Liking girls.

BRAD. NO WAY!

DAVID. GROSS!

STEVEN. (*Pointing at JACK.*) FAG! FAG! FAG!

JACK. Hey. Hey. Hey. Hey now. We don't— Okay? We don't need that kind of insensitive talk around here, Steven. Please. Let's be kids about this. Besides, and I think I will have the support of the membership here when I say— You're the Fag.

STEVEN. You're the fag.

JACK. You are the fag.

STEVEN. Nuh-uh!

JACK. Yes-huh.

BRAD. Gentlemen, please— You know, we've run around this pole before and I have a feeling we aren't going to come to any real concrete decisions about it today. While you both make excellent points on the other person being the fag, I think we should stick to the issue on the table, namely Jack's proposal that— What I'm hearing you say, Jack, is that we somehow stop hating girls and begin, what? Liking them?

JACK. Yes, Brad, thank you.

DAVID. Okay, um, I'm uncomfortable with this and I'll tell you why. Number one, there is the whole size thing, I mean, they are just bigger than we are, physically taller, and that, that's new, okay, that's a recent thing and it frightens me and number two— They seem to be... What's the word? Smarter. Than we are. More advanced somehow—

STEVEN. Not to mention the whole cootie issue—

JACK. That is unsubstantiated.

STEVEN. Says who, Jack? Unsubstantiated? Says who? Where is this coming from?

JACK. Look, I know this is new territory for all of us, but David, look at this way— Okay? Your Mommy. You know your Mommy?

DAVID. *(Not sure where this line of questioning is headed.)* Yes, Jack, I know my Mommy.

JACK. Okay, well—your Mommy is a girl, right?

DAVID. Um... I don't know that.

JACK. Well she is. Trust me. She is.

BRAD. It's true, David. Her boobies make her a girl.

DAVID. *(Cornered:)* What's your point, Jack?

JACK. My point is that I have a feeling they may have something to offer us. And I think we ought to hear them out.

STEVEN. Hear them out?

JACK. They've sent representatives. Two representatives. To discuss what would be involved. They are in the outer playroom right now.

DAVID. I am *very* uncomfortable with this.

STEVEN. You're setting us up.

BRAD. Guys. Come on. We can do this. I believe in Jack. This is the guy who taught us how to make a shadow on the ceiling that looks like a butt—using only a flashlight and our knuckles. Huh? Now—we run this block and we have all day. We can do this. This is easy. Game face. Come on.

(Pause. They agree by their silence. JACK speaks into a speaker on his desk.)

JACK. Send them in.

(ASHLEY and BETHANY enter. As they do, BRAD, STEVEN, and DAVID all shift to the other side of the room and stand in a clump.)

ASHLEY. Good Afternoon Gentlemen.

JACK. Afternoon Ladies, please come in, welcome to the playroom. Can I get you some Legos or something?

ASHLEY. Thank you, no. My name is Ashley with an E-Y, my daddy's a policeman, and I'm nine. This is my associate, Bethany.

BETHANY. I can do short division.

(The BOYS are impressed by this but try not to show it.)

JACK. Please sit down.

(The GIRLS sit on chairs between the desk and clump of BOYS. STEVEN immediately reaches over and tugs on a piece of BETHANY's hair.)

BETHANY. *(Whirling around:)* Hey! Knock it off!

STEVEN. What? Wasn't me! Wasn't me!

(The BOYS snicker.)

ASHLEY. *(Standing:)* Very good. Have a nice day Gentlemen.

JACK. Wait! Hold on. Steven! Dammit! Please! Um, please let's not step off on the wrong foot here. That won't happen again. Will it? Please. Don't go. We would like to talk.

(ASHLEY looks at BETHANY. BETHANY nods.)

ASHLEY. We understand you are interested in liking us?

JACK. We are interested in exploring that possibility, yes.

ASHLEY. And you are ready to discuss terms?

JACK. That is why we're here.

ASHLEY. Excellent. Bethany?

BETHANY. *(Pulling a document from her clipboard:)* I know how to type.

ASHLEY. *(Taking the document:)* Thank you.

BETHANY. And I speak French.

JACK. So what do you want.

ASHLEY. Your complete and undivided attention.

JACK. Well, you've got it.

ASHLEY. (*Smiling:*) Ah, yes, of course I do. Um, no. No. I mean your complete and undivided attention until the end of time.

DAVID. Uh-oh.

JACK. Excuse me?

ASHLEY. In accordance with the terms of the agreement, we will be occupying your every thought, motivation and decision making process from the moment you wake up in the morning until the moment you fall asleep at night, at which point we will play a major role in 9 out of 10 of your dreams— We do allow one wild card dream, usually a sports dream or flying dream of some type, that is completely up to you, of course. But everything else becomes, for all intents and purposes, about us.

BETHANY. Love.

ASHLEY. Right. Until, of course, you actually fall in love with one of us, then we get pretty much 10 out of 10.

DAVID. Yeah, um— I'm sorry... I'm not falling in love with anybody.

ASHLEY. Right. Bethany, am I missing anything?

BETHANY. Stop doing stupid stuff.

ASHLEY. Right. And you will have to stop doing stupid stuff. Like playing Star Wars and making laser beam noises with your mouths.

DAVID. Yeaah, okay, I'm very sorry, I'm just not comfortable with this.

STEVEN. (*Scared:*) Okay so what if I don't even care? I mean, like, what if I don't even want to stop playing Star Wars, what if I don't even care if I think about you or not, like if say, like, I don't even care?

ASHLEY. I'm afraid that won't be possible.

BRAD. Alright then, so what's in it for us? Right? I'm mean I'm just thinking out loud here at this point but it seems like you're asking a lot, with all that thought time and no Star Wars and everything, so, like, what is it for us? Exactly?

ASHLEY. Knowledge, mostly.

BRAD. But we already know everything.

ASHLEY. Right. So let me ask you a question then. Do you ride the school bus?

BRAD. *(This is easy!)* Yeah.

ASHLEY. Where do you get off?

BRAD. I get off in front of my house.

ASHLEY. You do?

BRAD. Yeah.

ASHLEY. You get off in front of your house?

BRAD. Yeah!

(BETHANY begins to snicker.)

ASHLEY. You *get off* in front of your house.

BRAD. What? Yes!

DAVID. Dude, you get off in front of your house?

BRAD. What? I mean— The bus! What?

STEVEN. Dude gets off in front of his house!

JACK. Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute. Am I crazy or did you just get Brad to admit, in front of all of us, that he masturbates, in public, outside of his own house?

(ASHLEY shrugs like it was nothing.)

JACK. And you can teach us stuff like that?

ASHLEY. That was just a parlor trick.

BRAD. Oh yeah? So what? Like you're so smart? What else? What else do you know?

BETHANY. *(Looking right into their very souls:)* We know where babies come from.

(The BOYS are stunned.)

DAVID. *(Defiant but timid:)* Y-yeah? S-so? So what? Everyone knows where babies come from. They— They come from the garden. With the morning dew.

(ASHLEY and BETHANY shake their heads a very definitive NO.)

DAVID. Jack, I'm very uncomfortable with this.

STEVEN. This is out of control, man, this is out of control!

BRAD. I meant get off the bus.

JACK. Yeah, Ladies, I think we are going to need some time. To think. This a lot to consider and wow, we really do appreciate you coming by—

ASHLEY. Oh, and of course there is the possibility—no guarantees of course, but if you play your cards right, there is the possibility—that some day, you might possibly be able to see one of us without a shirt on.

(The BOYS stop cold. Long pause as they contemplate this possibility. Finally—)

BRAD. You mean, um, you mean like right in front of us? Like right there in person or like pictures in books or what?

ASHLEY. Well, you will probably start out with pictures in books, but someday—who knows?

(The BOYS look at each other. Defiance is gone. The negotiation is over.)

BETHANY. *(Writing on her clipboard:)* Steven, Jack, David, Brad.

ASHLEY. Yes, well, Gentlemen, thank you for your time. We will definitely be in touch.

BETHANY. I can write cursive.

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DOROTHY AND ALICE
by Itamar Moses

Cast of Characters

(in order of appearance)

DOROTHY, a young girl, with brown hair

ALICE, another young girl, with blonde hair

BILLY THOMASON, a young boy

Setting

An elementary school playground, lunchtime.

A Note About Costumes

It is important that the characters of Dorothy and Alice *not* be costumed in a way that reveals anything about who they really are. While it may be tempting to get a hold of ruby slippers, or a nice blue and white dress, a great deal of the universality and fun of the play is lost as a result. I recommend, instead, matching schoolgirl uniforms.

DOROTHY AND ALICE

by Itamar Moses

(A young blonde girl, ALICE, sits on a bench in her playground at school. She has a brown-bag lunch. She takes items out of her bag and sets them on the bench next to her: a slice of cake, a small flask filled with colorful liquid. Sounds of children laughing and playing are distantly audible. A second girl, DOROTHY, with brown hair, approaches. She, too, has a brown-bag lunch.)

(DOROTHY stares at ALICE for a few moments. A wind rustles them both, and ALICE looks up, suddenly.)

ALICE. Oh! Hello.

DOROTHY. Hi. *(Pause.)* Do you...?

ALICE. What?

DOROTHY. Do you mind if I eat with you?

ALICE. Oh! Not at all! Sit, sit. Sit.

DOROTHY. *(She does so, relieved.)* Thank you. I hate not having anyone to eat with. It makes me feel very—

ALICE. I know.

DOROTHY. Sometimes, I like to eat by myself, anyway. But I'd just someone to ask. So I have the choice.

ALICE. I know.

DOROTHY. But nobody does.

ALICE. *(Beat.)* Do you want to eat alone?

DOROTHY. What? Oh, no. Today I asked because I really want someone to eat with.

ALICE. I'm Alice.

DOROTHY. I know.

ALICE. You're Dorothy, right?

DOROTHY. (*Pleased:*) Yes!

ALICE. I pay attention during roll call. I pay attention to everything. My big sister thinks I'm absent-minded but I'm very observant is the truth.

DOROTHY. Most people don't know my name, because—

ALICE. You just moved here.

DOROTHY. That's right! You're very—

ALICE. I'm very observant. Also, the first day you were in class you gave a speech: "My name is Dorothy. And I just moved here."

DOROTHY. From Kansas.

ALICE. I know. (*Pause.*) I'd love to visit Kansas.

DOROTHY. What for? It's a very boring place.

ALICE. No, I don't think so. I think it's exciting.

DOROTHY. But you've never been there.

ALICE. Exactly!

DOROTHY. What?

ALICE. Even the *word* is exciting. Kansas! Kaaaan-sas! It sounds so strange and wonderful, doesn't it?

DOROTHY. (*Pause.*) No.

ALICE. It does!

DOROTHY. No. I lived there. There's nothing.

ALICE. Why did you move away?

DOROTHY. There were...problems with the weather.

ALICE. Well, it was silly to move here.

DOROTHY. What do you mean? This place is *much* more exciting than Kansas.

ALICE. Maybe. But now that you're here, it will just be the place that you are, which is never as exciting as places you haven't been, but might go to.

DOROTHY. I know what you mean.

ALICE. No, I don't think you do.

DOROTHY. No, I think I know what you mean better even than you do.

ALICE. I really don't think that's possible.

DOROTHY. Well, I guess we'll just see.

ALICE. Yes, I guess we will.

(Pause.)

DOROTHY. That's a pretty weird lunch you've got.

ALICE. What do you mean?

DOROTHY. Well, it's just cake, and a drink. That's not very healthy. Don't your parents want to make sure you eat right?

ALICE. Oh, I didn't get these from my parents.

DOROTHY. Really? Then who made you these thoughtful notes?

(DOROTHY turns the food so that we can see there are notes on ALICE's lunch. The cake says "EAT ME" and the potion says "DRINK ME.")

ALICE. I don't know. *(Pause. She considers the cake.)* Do you ever feel like you're growing up too fast?

DOROTHY. Of course. All the time.

ALICE. Me too. I'm afraid of getting so big that I can't even fit in(side of)—

DOROTHY. Tell me about it. Fitting in is so hard, what with moving, and everything. I feel so awkward all the time, like I'm saying or doing something wrong.

ALICE. What? Oh, no, I meant... Literally. Changing...physically...

DOROTHY. (*Crosses her arms.*) Oh. Yeah. That makes me feel awkward too.

ALICE. (*Impressed:*) You know what I'm talking about?

DOROTHY. Of course. It happens to all of us, doesn't it?

ALICE. Are you sure?

DOROTHY. Oh, yes!

ALICE. I don't *think* so. Falling, all alone, down a dark hole...?

DOROTHY. It can feel like that. But it happens to everybody. Even animals. That's how I learned about it. Watching animals on my farm.

ALICE. You had a farm?

DOROTHY. Yes.

ALICE. I'd love to visit a farm!

DOROTHY. Why? Farms aren't very exciting.

ALICE. Of course they are! Listen: Faaarm. Faaaarm. What a wonderful word! It even has the word "Far" *in it*. That's what makes it sound so far away and exciting.

DOROTHY. It doesn't matter what other words are in it. You can be right on top of a farm, and it would still have the word "far" in it.

ALICE. No, I think then it would be a Nearm.

DOROTHY. You're very silly about words.

ALICE. I'm sorry.

DOROTHY. No, I like it.

ALICE. Really? You should hear me rhyme!

DOROTHY. I'd love to! (*Pause.*) Those are things they don't let you do so much when you grow up.

ALICE. I know.

DOROTHY. The years just start to slip away, swallowed up by—

ALICE. Giant monsters.

DOROTHY. *(Beat.)* I was going to say: “Responsibility.”

ALICE. Oh.

DOROTHY. My Aunt and Uncle are always talking about “responsibility.” *(Beat.)* What were you thinking of?

ALICE. The Jabberwock.

DOROTHY. What’s that?

ALICE. Responsibility also. More or less.

DOROTHY. Sometimes, I just wish there was a magic potion I could use that would make me small forever.

(ALICE offers DOROTHY her drink. DOROTHY doesn’t pick up that this is a direct response to her wish, and declines:)

DOROTHY. Oh, no, thank you. I have my own drink.

(DOROTHY takes a large bucket of water out of her bag.)

ALICE. What is that?

DOROTHY. Just water.

ALICE. Why so much of it?

DOROTHY. I always like to have a lot of it with me. You never know when you might need it, for self-defense.

ALICE. I know what you mean.

DOROTHY. You do?

ALICE. One time, Billy Thomason wouldn’t leave me alone. He was chasing me all day. And then the teacher sprayed him with water and said, “Cool off.” And he did.

DOROTHY. Why was he chasing you?

ALICE. I don’t know.

DOROTHY. It was probably because you’re changing physically.

ALICE. I hate boys. They’re completely mad.

DOROTHY. No!

ALICE. They're heartless, brainless, cowardly, dogs.

DOROTHY. No! *(Beat.)* Well, yes. But not usually all four at once. And, even so, they're very dependable companions.

(Pause.)

ALICE. What kinds of problems with the weather?

DOROTHY. What?

ALICE. You said you left Kansas because of problems with the weather.

DOROTHY. Oh. Do you ever feel like you've been swept up in a great wind, and spun around, and flown through the air, and then dropped down somewhere completely unfamiliar and strange and frightening and even dangerous?

ALICE. That must be what it feels like to move.

DOROTHY. That's *also* what it feels like to move.

ALICE. Oh. I see.

DOROTHY. You *do* understand.

ALICE. Yes. Oh yes.

DOROTHY. Tell me.

(Something shifts. A string is plucked, somewhere. They each look out, as though in a trance, and speak slowly.)

ALICE. You were told to stay put, but you saw him, and chased him—

DOROTHY. Your small furry friend, kidnapped, pleading, his bark—

ALICE. Furry, yes, but huge, white, and his lateness disgraced him—

DOROTHY. You caught him—

ALICE. —no, lost him—

DOROTHY. —and then came the dark.

ALICE. And you found yourself falling and falling—

DOROTHY. No, rising, first.

ALICE. Clocks on the walls—

DOROTHY. —ripped away, as you passed.

ALICE. And then, wondering whether you'd weathered the worst—

DOROTHY. You descended—

ALICE. —so slowly—

DOROTHY. No, terribly fast.

ALICE. And you're there.

DOROTHY. But where?

ALICE. Wonderland?

DOROTHY. Oz?

ALICE. Brigadoon?

DOROTHY. Shangri-La?

ALICE. Lilliput?

DOROTHY. Narnia?

ALICE. Atlantis?

DOROTHY. And you'd wished for so long—

ALICE. —every bright afternoon—

DOROTHY. —every night, for adventures like this.

(Pause. They look at each other.)

ALICE. But now that you're there, free to play—

DOROTHY. —free to roam.

ALICE. You have a new wish.

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LEFT TO RIGHT
by Steven Dietz

Cast of Characters

ANGIE

DEE

RON

SCOTT

All the characters are in their late-twenties, or early-thirties.

LEFT TO RIGHT

by Steven Dietz

(Seated at the table, from left to right: ANGIE, DEE, RON, SCOTT.)

(There is only one thing on the table: a cup of coffee, which is directly in front of ANGIE. The rest of the table is bare.)

(After a moment, ANGIE takes a sip of the coffee. She turns to DEE.)

ANGIE. That's good coffee.

DEE. Shade grown.

ANGIE. Really?

DEE. The beans.

ANGIE. Right.

DEE. Kept in the dark.

ANGIE. What do you know.

DEE. Another cup?

ANGIE. I'm sleeping with your husband.

DEE. Are you?

ANGIE. Mm hmm.

DEE. I see.

(Silence.)

ANGIE. I feel awful.

DEE. I know.

ANGIE. Really, Dee, I just—

DEE. I know.

ANGIE. No, please, let me explain—

DEE. I mean: I know. I've *known*. I've known this, Angie. I have *been knowing this*.

(Silence.)

ANGIE. Did he *tell you?!*

DEE. What do you think?

ANGIE. So, how on earth did you— *(Stops.)* We're friends, Dee.

DEE. Yes, we are.

ANGIE. I can't believe you'd do this to me.

DEE. Excuse me?

ANGIE. I can't believe you'd keep this from me. That you *knew*. That you have *been knowing this*. And you don't say a *word*. You just let me go on about my—

DEE. You can't believe that.

ANGIE. I trusted you, Dee. I thought we were friends.

(They are looking at one another. After a moment...)

(DEE turns immediately to RON.)

DEE. She didn't know I knew.

RON. So: boom?

DEE. What?

RON. So, just—boom—you told her?

DEE. Yes.

RON. Wow.

DEE. Boom.

(Silence.)

Could *you?*

RON. Hmm?

DEE. Tell Scott. Could you tell Scott about us?

RON. He's my *best friend*.

DEE. And he's my *husband*.

RON. Exactly.

DEE. So? (*Leans in.*) Could you?

(*Silence.*)

RON. We go on a trip. Every year Scott and I go on what we call The Trip.

DEE. Yes, I know.

RON. And this is the thing you *don't* know: whatever happens on The Trip—whoever we meet, whatever we do—any, you know, *commandments* that get a little bent or broken—all of it *stays* on The Trip. We leave it right there—and we come home *clean*. (*Pause.*) You keep your friend's secret and you keep your friend. It's as simple as that.

SCOTT. I'm thinking Tahoe.

(*RON turns immediately to SCOTT.*)

Tahoe or Miami Beach. What are you thinking?

RON. For The Trip.

SCOTT. Yes, for The Trip.

RON. I haven't thought about The Trip.

SCOTT. And don't say Prague.

RON. I won't—

SCOTT. Every year: "Prague."

RON. I said I won't—

SCOTT. Like we're gonna—what?—like we're gonna have FUN in Prague?! I mean, c'mon. We don't make The Trip to LEARN SOMETHING, Ron. I think you know that. We don't make the trip to COME HOME BETTER PEOPLE. We make the trip—

RON. Yeah.

SCOTT. I mean, even the years when NOTHING HAPPENS on The Trip—*still*—the reason we make The Trip—

RON. *I know.*

SCOTT. I know you know.

RON. Okay.

SCOTT. So, I'm thinking Tahoe.

RON. Or Miami Beach.

SCOTT. Now you're talkin'.

RON. How's Angie?

(SCOTT stares at him.)

Does your wife know?

(SCOTT stares at him.)

About Angie. Does she know about Angie?

SCOTT. How do you know about Angie?

RON. You told me.

SCOTT. I did no such thing.

RON. There's this girl named Angie—you said. You don't know her—you said. Friend of Dee's. And we've been sort of, you know...*seeing* each other.

SCOTT. Jesus, Ronnie—

RON. Those were your words.

(Silence.)

Does she know?

SCOTT. Is that a threat?

RON. No, it's—

SCOTT. Like you'll—what—like you'll TELL HER?!

RON. Hey, I didn't—

SCOTT. My wife who you do not even *know*—not *really*—never made the effort—not really—all these years, Ronnie—Christmas, New Years, birthdays by the lake—all these years and *you never made the effort to know her*—

RON. Hey—

SCOTT. People like you—my wife is *wasted* on people like you.

RON. HEY—

SCOTT. Your loss, pal. Dee is a remarkable woman.

RON. I know that.

SCOTT. Bullshit.

RON. I KNOW THAT.

SCOTT. THE HELL YOU DO.

RON. I HAVE MADE AN EFFORT!

(Silence.)

SCOTT. Meaning what?

(A bell rings—or a whistle blows—and they ALL stand and rearrange themselves at the table, sitting in a new order.)

(Left to right: RON, DEE, SCOTT, ANGIE.)

(Beat.)

(Then: RON immediately turns to DEE.)

RON. Haven't I made an effort?

DEE. More than you should have. More than both of us should have.

RON. *(Troubled:)* Why would he say that?!

DEE. How should I know? He's *your* friend.

RON. He's *your* husband. *(Beat.)* It just—I mean, you have no idea—it just *eats at me*.

(Silence.)

DEE. You want me to *ask him*?

RON. (*Quickly, eager:*) Could you?

DEE. You've got to be kidding.

RON. Dee—

DEE. You're taking me to *bed* three days a week, but you want me to ask my husband why you never tried to be my *friend*?!

SCOTT. How should I know?

(*DEE turns immediately to SCOTT.*)

How should I know? That's just Ron. Lives in a box. Doesn't reach out. It's his loss.

DEE. Do you? (*Beat.*) Do you reach out?

SCOTT. Say again.

DEE. To *my* friends. Do you...*reach* a little? A little more than I know. A little more than you should?

ANGIE. What did you say?

(*SCOTT turns immediately to ANGIE.*)

SCOTT. The phone rang. Saved my ass.

ANGIE. Who was it?

SCOTT. What does it matter?

ANGIE. It matters.

SCOTT. How does it matter?

ANGIE. It might matter. It just might matter.

SCOTT. I don't care who it was—it rang—saved my ass—Dee changed the subject.

ANGIE. Just like that?

SCOTT. What are you—

ANGIE. Just: BOOM—NEW SUBJECT.

SCOTT. YES.

ANGIE. And you don't think it *matters*—you think it could have been just ANYONE on the phone.

SCOTT. It wasn't just ANYONE. It was NO ONE. There was NO ONE on the phone. I answered. THEY HUNG UP.

ANGIE. *Now.*

SCOTT. What?!

ANGIE. Now, you *get it.*

(Bell or whistle, as before, and they ALL rearrange themselves again:)

(Left to right: DEE, SCOTT, RON, ANGIE.)

DEE. That was a week ago.

SCOTT. Yes.

DEE. You expect me to remember a phone call from a week ago?

SCOTT. Was it Ron?

DEE. What?

(Silence.)

Why would it be Ron?

(SCOTT turns immediately to RON.)

SCOTT. Was it you?

RON. Why would it be me?

(Silence.)

If I called your house, why would I hang up?

(Eye to eye.)

SCOTT. That's what I'm asking.

(Silence.)

Do you know why we go on The Trip, Ronnie?

RON. What kind of ques—

SCOTT. You think we go on the trip to *fuck around*—is that it?

RON. I'm not gonna talk about this. You're not—

SCOTT. (*Overlapping:*) We go on the The Trip—we go on *The Trip to stay friends*. The day we stop going on The Trip—the day we stop knowing something about the other that we're not supposed to know—well, that day, Ronnie, that day we are *done*.

RON. Whatever you say.

SCOTT. *Did you call my house?*

(Silence.)

RON. (*Simply:*) Hey, I met Angie. (*Beat.*) She's nice.

ANGIE. What can it hurt?

(RON turns immediately to ANGIE.)

RON. Right.

ANGIE. A little get-together. Casual. Just the four of us. Sounds great.

RON. Good.

(A beat. A shared smile.)

ANGIE. You got my number from Dee, didn't you? (*Beat.*) Well. I'm glad. Dee talks about you all the time. Says you're the one friend of her husband's who really *makes an effort*.

RON. Scott.

ANGIE. Hmm?

RON. I got your number from Scott.

(Silence. She stares at him.)

ANGIE. (*To RON:*) Would you pass my coffee?

(RON looks at DEE. DEE lifts the coffee. It is handed to SCOTT, then to RON, then to ANGIE.)

ANGIE. Thanks.

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**PLEASE HAVE A SEAT AND
SOMEONE WILL BE
WITH YOU SHORTLY**

by Garth Wingfield

Cast of Characters

DAVID, 20s, 30s, or 40s. The kind of person you might not notice at first.

SUE, same. Pretty, though she has no idea about that.

Production Requirements

The simpler, the better. Two chairs and a side table will suffice, with perhaps a few office-generic paintings or wall-hangings to suggest a waiting room. It would be nice if our two characters were isolated (by light even) into a small, confined space.

Acknowledgments

Please Have a Seat and Someone Will Be With You Shortly was originally produced Off-Broadway by the Vital Theatre (Stephen Sunderlin, Producing Artistic Director; Linda Ames Key, Producing Director) at the McGinn/Cazale Theatre in New York City on December 15, 2005. It was directed by Laura Josepher, and the cast was as follows:

DAVID.....Michael Anderson
SUE..... Karin Sibrava

PLEASE HAVE A SEAT AND SOMEONE WILL BE WITH YOU SHORTLY

by Garth Wingfield

(A waiting room. DAVID and SUE sit in chairs next to one another reading magazines. At Rise: A long beat; DAVID considers SUE, who's lost in her magazine. Then, finally:)

DAVID. Sue?

SUE. Excuse me?

DAVID. Your name is Sue, right?

SUE. *(Uneasy:)* It is...

DAVID. *(A little overcome:)* Wow...

SUE. What?

DAVID. So we're finally talking...

SUE. *(Even more uneasy:)* We are...

DAVID. I mean, after all this time...

SUE. It's been...a while now, I guess...

DAVID. And it was just as easy as saying that one word. "Sue." Who knew it would be that easy?

SUE. You know what? And please don't take this the wrong way. But I'm not sure I like it that we're talking.

DAVID. You don't?

SUE. I think...no, I'm pretty sure I preferred it when we never spoke at all.

DAVID. Oh, shit. Oh, God. I crossed a line. I crossed a line and you hate it.

SUE. I think you might have crossed a line.

DAVID. I am so sorry.

SUE. That's okay.

DAVID. So I should shut up now.

SUE. I think that would be for the best.

DAVID. Gotcha. Right. I'll stop talking to you. I can do that. The end.

(A long beat.)

SUE. *(Then:)* You know my name. Okay, that's a little weird.

DAVID. No, it's not.

SUE. Yes. It is. I'm sorry but it is.

DAVID. Of course I know your name, Sue. Do you mind if I call you Sue?

SUE. Look, okay, I'll have you know I have mace in my purse...

DAVID. Calm down! Hey, easy there! I know your name because your therapist has come through that door, stood there, smiled at you and said "Sue?" every Monday night for the last eighteen months. Hello?!

SUE. *(A little flattered at this:)* I didn't realize...that you'd paid attention to that...

DAVID. Of course I'd paid attention to that!

SUE. Huh...

DAVID. *(Gently playful; not pissed:)* But I wouldn't want to upset you anymore. And I wouldn't want you to mace me.

So like I said...the end.

(Another long beat.)

SUE. *(Almost embarrassed to admit this:)* I...I'm afraid I don't know *your* name.

DAVID. Excuse me?

SUE. You remembered my name. I don't know yours; I feel bad.

DAVID. Well, that...that's because my therapist comes through the door, stands there, glowers basically, and says, "It's time."

(Then:)

He's this super-strict, super-scary Freudian.

SUE. Oh my God, he does seem scary. Is he German?

DAVID. Oh my God, he is! We do the whole routine. I lay on the couch. He sits behind me. All very formal.

(Then:)

Actually, I'm not entirely sure if *he* knows my name.

SUE. I bet it's Albert.

DAVID. What?

SUE. Your name.

DAVID. Albert...?

SUE. Yeah. You just...look like an Albert. If I had to guess.

DAVID. Ouch. Okay, that hurts.

SUE. You don't want to look like an Albert?

DAVID. Uh, no. No self-respecting man wants to look like an Albert.

SUE. Fine, I bet it's Herman then.

DAVID. Double ouch.

SUE. Or Thaddeus.

DAVID. Okay, you're not making any friends here, Sue...

SUE. Or Simian.

DAVID. Simian?

SUE. I went to college with a guy named Simian. I'm kidding. I always thought that was like the meanest name ever.

DAVID. Please, Simian's parents should be in therapy!

SUE. For child abuse. Thank you!

(A beat.)

DAVID. My name is David. Nothing exciting. But that's my name.

SUE. That's a nice name.

Please, my name is Sue. So I'm not one to judge in the naming department.

DAVID. It's nice to meet you, Sue.

SUE. Likewise, David.

(A beat. They finally smile at one another.)

DAVID. So...so hold on. You've never really noticed me during all these months we've been waiting out here?

SUE. I never said I didn't notice you...

DAVID. Because I sure noticed you.

SUE. You did?

DAVID. Absolutely. Lots.

SUE. Okay...

DAVID. In fact, I spent the first couple of months trying to catch your eye over the magazines we were reading. I made a huge effort trying to do this.

SUE. That's what you were doing?

DAVID. I was...

SUE. Because I honestly...I swear I thought you either had an astigmatism or a tic.

DAVID. Are you serious?

SUE. You'd do this thing where you'd read your magazine, then lower it...read it, then lower it...read it, then lower it...

It was almost hypnotic to witness out of the corner of my eye.

DAVID. Okay, I'll be up front here: I have obsessive-compulsive issues that I am dealing with during my sessions here.

SUE. Well, that explains so much.

DAVID. I'm doing much better with that stuff now, I'm happy to say.

SUE. I'm glad to hear that.

DAVID. Dr. Reifenschneider has me on a very mild antidepressant, a wonderful side effect of which is that it's wiped out that O.C.D. stuff altogether.

SUE. Not entirely. You still do this thing where you run your forefinger back and forth across your upper lip while you read.

DAVID. *(Pleasantly surprised to hear this:)* So you really have noticed me...

SUE. I don't know.

(Pulling back a little:)

Maybe. Sometimes. Now and then.

(A beat.)

DAVID. Okay, I don't mean to cross another line here...but now that we're talking...and since we only have who knows how many more minutes before one of our doctors walks through the door...

I've also thought about you. Outside of this room, I'm talking now. I feel I should come clean about this.

SUE. You've thought about me?

DAVID. I have.

SUE. *(Turning away a bit:)* But why...why would you do that?

DAVID. Am I scaring you?

SUE. A little...

DAVID. I'm sorry, it's just, I've thought about what kind of apartment you'd have. I've thought about what your life is like.

(Then:)

I've imagined you're a first-grade teacher.

SUE. (*Taken aback by that:*) You have?

DAVID. Yeah...I don't know...there was just something about you. Your demeanor. Your scarf. The impeccably patient way you turned the pages of *Us Weekly*. I could just see you reading *Where the Wild Things Are* to a class of screaming six-year-olds and keeping your calm while children all around you pulled one another's hair and vomited.

SUE. That's...wow...

(*Then:*)

Okay, I'll be up front with you: In my sessions here, I've been dealing with the ways I put up walls and push people away. And while part of me wants to run screaming into the night now that you've told me all this—or promptly change my sessions to Tuesdays...I won't...and I'll just...

Say thank you.

DAVID. (*Smiles:*) You're welcome.

And just so you know, there's no need to worry about changing your therapy night. Because this is my final session with Dr. Reifenschneider. He's closing up his practice and moving to Vermont to spend his twilight years running this little candle shop. And I only wish I was making that up because that is JUST SO FREUDIAN. I mean, CANDLES?!

SUE. (*Laughing:*) Oh my God...

DAVID. So starting next Monday, I'll be seeing Dr. McBee down in the Village. Dr. Reifenschneider says he's a kid—which is cool—who wears shorts in the summer. I'm looking forward to a change of pace.

SUE. I'm sure...

DAVID. But I saw you sitting here tonight, and I don't know, I just decided...

I had to say hello to you before I could say goodbye.

(A little beat.)

SUE. I imagined you were a carpenter.

DAVID. Oh my God...you did?

SUE. On several occasions.

DAVID. A carpenter. Holy shit...

SUE. This is very hard for me to say out loud. I'm also dealing with issues of trust and abandonment in my sessions. So you're really pushing all my buttons here tonight.

DAVID. A carpenter, I'm sorry. That's the kind of thing guys dream about being mistaken for.

SUE. You have very strong forearms. And I could just tell you knew a clean line when you saw one. I imagined you designed and made your own furniture. These very rough-hewn chairs and benches that you'd rub with linseed oil while NPR played in the background.

DAVID. I love NPR...!

SUE. Oh my God, so do I! I'm sorry, "Car Talk"?

DAVID. Please, I don't even have a car, and I live and breathe by "Car Talk"!

SUE. Absolutely!

DAVID. *(Boldly plowing ahead:)* I imagined you lived in Chelsea.

SUE. I imagined you lived up by Columbia...

DAVID. And that you have a cat...

SUE. And that you have this enormous moosehead thing for some reason...

DAVID. And that I'd ask you out for coffee first, but things would move quite fast from there. We'd have dinner at Grammercy Tavern.

SUE. See, now, I pictured Balthazar...

DAVID. And we'd take buggy rides in Central Park...

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POST-ITS
(NOTES ON A MARRIAGE)
by Paul Dooley and Winnie Holzman

Cast of Characters

ACTOR

ACTRESS

Author's Note

If each Post-it is attached to another Post-it on the back (upside-down) they will stick together as one Post-it, no loner sticky when handled.

Acknowledgments

Post-Its (Notes on a Marriage) premiered at a benefit performance for the Gilda Radner Cancer Fund in 1998 with the following cast:

ACTORPaul Dooley

ACTRESS..... Winnie Holzman

POST-ITS

(NOTES ON A MARRIAGE)

by Paul Dooley and Winnie Holzman

(There is a chair with a small table and a glass of water on either side of the stage a la A.R. Gurney's "Love Letters." The ACTOR and ACTRESS enter simultaneously from either wing somewhat formally. They are dressed simply. Each grasps a handful of post-its as if it were a script. Each of them stands beside a chair. The ACTOR realizes that the ACTRESS is waiting for something. Slightly annoyed, he goes to her, pulls out her chair, and seats her. He returns to his chair, stands waiting; she realizes he is waiting to be seated also. Long-suffering, she goes to him and repeats the chair business. She then returns to her chair and sits. The ACTOR lifts his first post-it, to begin...and reads.)

(Every line is read from a post-it—held aloft.)

ACTOR. Had an early meeting, couldn't bear to wake you. Close front door hard or it won't lock. PS: Last night was incredible.

ACTRESS. Helped myself to breakfast. You need milk. PS: Next time, wake me.

ACTOR. Hey, sleepy head. Tried to wake you. Not easy. Left you some coffee, hope you like it black.

ACTRESS. Thought I should spend at least one night this week at my place. Picked up some milk; you don't have to pay me back.

ACTOR. Off to work, extra set of keys on hall table.

ACTRESS. Darling: Went jogging with Lila. If you go out, we need milk. Wow. I can't believe we're a "we!"

ACTOR. Hon: If you have time, could you pick up my shirts? Ticket on hall table. Thanks. PS: Milk.

ACTRESS. Shirts are in your closet. Your mother called. She seemed surprised to hear my voice. You obviously never mentioned me. *(Icy:)* Your shirts came to fourteen fifty.

ACTOR. Gone to florist. Back soon. Hope you liked the chocolates.

ACTRESS. Darling— don't go in the den.

ACTOR. Sweetheart. I understand how much it means to you, but at this stage of our relationship I'm just not ready...to have a dog.

ACTRESS. *(After a beat:)* We need Milk-Bones. *(Next post-it:)* Your mother called; call her. *(Next post-it:)* Did you call your mother? *(Next post-it:)* Went to lunch with your mother. Back soon.

ACTOR. Your new best friend, my mother, called. Call her.

ACTRESS. We need milk. Also, your mom mentioned how much you hate Eugene. I don't think Eugene's so bad. You should hear *my* middle name. Thank God *my* mother's dead!

ACTOR. Please do not mention the name Eugene to me ever again. Thank you.

ACTRESS. Shopping list: Pistachio ice cream. Sardines. Those tiny little cheeses that come in that cute little net bag...they're so adorable, they make me cry.

ACTOR. Darling: I understand how much it means to you, but at this stage of our relationship I'm just not ready—

ACTRESS. We need pampers. And baby wipes. And we need to get married.

ACTOR. Meet me City Hall, six sharp. You bring old and borrowed; I'll do new and blue. Mom will stay with Eugenia.

ACTRESS. Note to self: Find breast pump.

ACTOR. Take cold shower.

ACTRESS. Lose forty pounds.

ACTOR. Re-direct sex drive into career. *(Next post-it:)* Home late. Don't wait up.

ACTRESS. Hey stranger, if you're not too busy, could you call Eugenia tonight, around bedtime? Just to see if she recognizes your voice?

ACTOR. Hon: Sorry about your birthday. PS: I got the raise!

ACTRESS. To the new vice president in charge of marketing. We need milk. Please advise.

ACTOR. Hon: I think we're out of milk. *(Next post-it:)* Still no milk!

ACTRESS. If you want it so bad, get it yourself. The milk train doesn't stop here anymore.

ACTOR. If you can't even manage to get to the store—get some household help!

ACTRESS. *(Icy:)* Have gone to bed. Dinner is in fridge. If there is something in particular you wish for dinner tomorrow night, please leave note to that effect, and I will have Ursula, or Carla, or *Jose*, if it's *heavy*, pick it up. *(Beat.)* I can't take this anymore! We barely—

(Turns post-it over.)

—communicate! There's got to be more to this marriage than a few hastily scribbled words on a small square of pastel paper! *(Beat.)* By the way, we're out of post-its.

ACTOR. You think I *want* to spend every night at the office? You have absolutely no concept of how a business is run.

ACTRESS. To Whom It May Concern: Regarding your post-it of June the tenth, allow me to clarify my position—up yours. Eugenia and I will be at your mother's. PS: *You* need milk.

(The ACTOR glances over at the ACTRESS, she sips her water, coolly avoids his gaze. Finally—)

ACTOR. Call her at my mother's. *(Next post-it:)* Must call her. *(Next post-it:)* Reminder: Take out garbage. Call her. *(Next post-it:)* People to call: Her.

(The ACTOR looks over again at the ACTRESS. She continues to ignore him.)

ACTOR. Shopping list: Small loaf bread. Half pint milk. Soup for one. *(Next post-it:)* Scotch for one. *(Next post-it:)* Inflatable doll. *(Next post-it:)* Scotch for two.

(The ACTRESS looks at him. He catches her eye. Caught, she hastily looks away.)

ACTOR. Things to tell her. That I'm sorry. That I miss her. That all I want—all I ever wanted—is for her to be happy.

(The ACTRESS turns to him, touched by this. Then...takes the next post-it. Reads.)

ACTRESS. We need milk.

ACTOR. Dearest—have gone down to then end of the driveway to get the paper. Back soon.

ACTRESS. Honey, that therapist called back. He can see you Monday.

ACTOR. Sweetie—Your therapist says your Tuesday is now Friday.

ACTRESS. What a session! Dr. K. believes that part of me is locked in unconscious competition with you, and envious of your masculine role. By the way, we need cucumbers, sausages and a really big zucchini.

ACTOR. At last—a breakthrough today with Dr. G. It all became crystal clear. My mother. My father. *His* mother. You. *Your* mother. *(Turns post-it over, continues:)* I see our entire marriage in a new light! I must free myself from the past so we can truly have a future. This changes everything.

ACTRESS. Hon: A diet coke exploded all over that note you left. Hope it wasn't important.

(He stares at her. Oblivious to his reaction, she reads the next post-it.)

Took Eugenia to Brownies. Back soon.

ACTOR. Took Eugenia to kick-boxing. Back soon.

ACTRESS. Took Eugenia to therapy. Could be a while.

ACTOR. Someone named Olaf called. Needs your resume. What resume?

ACTRESS. I landed the job! I start Monday! *(Next post-it:)* Last minute meeting. I'll try to call. *(Next post-it:)* I'll be working late, don't wait up. *(Next post-it:)* I'm glad you waited. Last night was incredible.

ACTOR. Drove Eugenia to DMV. Hope she doesn't drive me home.

ACTRESS. Eugenia called. Loves college. Mentioned someone named Tyrone. Doesn't miss us at all.

ACTOR. Pick up travel brochures.

ACTRESS. Eugenia called. When can we meet Tyrone?

ACTOR. Schedule trip to campus when we get back.

ACTRESS. Sweetheart: Travel agent called. Cruise is confirmed! The honeymoon we never had! A time for us to leave all this behind and enjoy ten glorious days of total togetherness.

(A long, silent beat. Very long. Very silent. They both look straight ahead. Finally, he lifts the next post-it...)

ACTOR. *(With great relief:)* God it's good to be home! *(Next post-it:)* Dinner Wednesday with Eugenia and what's his name.

ACTRESS. Tyrone called—it's a boy. Kareem Eugene.

ACTOR. Eugenia called. Loves being a mom.

ACTRESS. Off to throw pots! Back soon! *(Next post-it:)* Don't forget— we're bird-watching Thursday! *(Next post-it:)* What night is good for square-dancing?

ACTOR. Any night you want—we're free! Nothing to tie us down.

ACTOR. Eugenia called. Could we take Kareem for the weekend.

ACTRESS. Tyrone called. Could we take Kareem for spring break.

ACTOR. Kareem called. Could he spend the summer with us. Again. *(Next post-it:)* Took Kareem to DMV.

ACTRESS. Honey—last night was incredible. I couldn't believe how long it went on. You've *got* to do something about your snoring.

ACTOR. Shopping list: Ben Gay. Dentucreme. Viagra.

ACTRESS. Wrinkles Away. I-Can't-Believe-It's-Support-Hose. Estrogen in a Drum.

ACTOR. We need milk of magnesia.

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THE PROPOSAL
by Paul Siemens

Cast of Characters

STEPHAN (pronounced with stress on the second syllable: steh-FAHN), age 27, Natalia's WASPy older brother, a bit of a blowhard.

EVAN, age 23, a thinking man who thinks too much. Has never felt fully at home in the world of the Drakes' apartment.

NATALIA, age 23, Stephan's younger sister and Evan's childhood friend. Strong and opinionated, often just for the sake of an argument.

Production Notes

Since the textual reference to The Dwight School only makes sense to a New York audience, I recommend changing the name to a different school, one that the audience would find, well, laughable.

Acknowledgments

The Proposal was first presented by The Immediate Theater Company on September 19, 2005, as part of a benefit evening in New York City, with the following cast and credits:

STEPHANJames Carmichael
EVAN..... Adam Green
NATALIA.....Bridie Harrington

Directed by: Marisa Echeverría

THE PROPOSAL

by Paul Siemens

ADAPTED FROM THE PLAY BY ANTON CHEKHOV

(The living room in a posh Upper East Side townhouse. STEPHAN sits watching television and wearing Polo. EVAN enters, a bit too dressed up.)

STEPHAN. Evan Lonoff, you dog! This is a surprise, a real surprise. How the hell you been?

EVAN. Thank you. I mean, good. Well...I'm well. And how are you?

STEPHAN. Oh, you know how it is: the market's up so can't complain. I can't remember the last time I saw you...must've been before you graduated. *(He notices how EVAN is dressed.)* What's with the outfit? Going to the opera or something?

EVAN. No, I've come to see your father.

STEPHAN. *(Laughing:)* Well, you've come to the wrong place. You want to see Mr. Drake, you go to Morgan Stanley. I haven't seen the old man around here since May. Rumor is that he's been seeing his secretary, though, so he's on the outs with the Missus. What do you have to see him about?

EVAN. You see, I... I want to ask him a favor. I've helped out your sister a lot in the past, what with the studying together and helping with her college essays, and we've grown quite close over the years... Look at me, I'm shaking... I'd love some water, if it's alright.

(EVAN pours himself a drink of water from the sidebar.)

STEPHAN. *(Aside:)* He's come to ask me for money! It's always the same with these people. *(To EVAN:)* What's the matter, buddy?

EVAN. Sorry, Stephan, but...I'm such a wreck... Basically, you're the only man who can help me. Though I haven't done anything particularly special to deserve it, and...and I have no right to ask for your help...

STEPHAN. Spit it out, Lonoff. Just tell me how much you need.

EVAN. No, no, it's not that. The fact is that I've come to ask for your sister's hand in marriage!

STEPHAN. My good friend! Say it again, I don't believe it.

EVAN. I have the great honor to ask...

STEPHAN. My good friend! My brother! I don't know what to say other than yes, yes, yes! There's no need to ask our father, you can have my blessing! You know, I've always thought of you as a brother...well, a distant cousin, maybe...certainly a family member of some sort. And now this! May God grant you love and happiness and all the rest of it. But what am I doing? I'll go and get Natalia so we can...

EVAN. But Stephan, what do you think she'll say?

STEPHAN. What will she say? She'll say yes, yes, yes if she knows what's good for her!

(He exits.)

EVAN. Oh, I'm so cold. I'm shaking all over. There's definitely something wrong with me, I have to go to the doctor. No! Just make up your mind and stick to it! If you keep thinking and thinking and waiting and hesitating you'll never find the right woman. Natalia is an excellent choice: good-looking, funny, educated enough... What more could I want? I think I might faint. She'll take care of me, won't she? What with my heart condition and my seizures...they flare up so easily, I've got to calm myself down. Oh, my right eyelid's twitching again. And I didn't sleep last night because of that sharp pain in my side. I'd have guessed it was my appendix if it hadn't already been removed.

(NATALIA enters.)

NATALIA. Oh, it's you! Stephan said the cook wanted to ask me a question about dinner. How are you feeling, Evan?

EVAN. Oh, my asthma has been bothering me a little and my left arch is cramping, but on the whole I'm feeling rather well, thank you. How are you?

NATALIA. Good, but we haven't seen you in a while...where have you been?

EVAN. I've been working, trying to save money, you see for... The fact is that I've come to ask you...listen, Talia... You'll probably be surprised, I think, maybe even angry, but I can't think of that, now can I?

NATALIA. What is it, Evan?

EVAN. I'll be brief. I have had the honor of knowing your whole family for...well, for a long time. You and I practically grew up together. My father was your family's dentist and we've always lived just across the park from each other. And we spent so many hours studying together in high school. That night I wrote that college essay for you, that was a...

NATALIA. You wrote for me? I beg your pardon, but you really only helped me...

EVAN. Yes, yes, of course, you wrote it. It was only a helping hand, yes...but it was my idea after all!

NATALIA. No, I quite clearly remember that I came up with the premise.

EVAN. Premise? Well, it wasn't so much of a premise as a pastiche of various other essays that I had shown you...

NATALIA. I wouldn't call it a pastiche. That implies that it wasn't original, and I definitely put my own imprint on it.

EVAN. Well, yes, but let's be honest that whatever imprint you put on it was heavily influenced by my writing expertise. I had gotten into Yale two weeks earlier so...

NATALIA. Oh, really, like that means anything! How many times have you gone off on the Yale undergraduate program? You used to ask me all the time for the reading lists of my core classes.

EVAN. Yes, but those were survey courses, just to give you a basic overview of literary history. Besides, the Barnard program isn't on the same level as the Columbia program...

NATALIA. I did go to Columbia. Barnard College is within Columbia University, no matter how many times I tell you that you always seem to forget!

EVAN. No, no quite right, you're quite right about that. But still you probably wouldn't have gotten into Columbia if I hadn't written your essay!

NATALIA. My essay! My essay!

EVAN. Okay, fine then, ours!

NATALIA. No, mine!

EVAN. Ours!

NATALIA. Mine!

(STEPHAN *enters.*)

STEPHAN. Hey, you two lovebirds! (*He notices the tension.*) What's going on?

NATALIA. Stephan, please explain to this boy: who got me into Barnard? Me or him?

STEPHAN. Dad's money got you into Barnard.

NATALIA. Well, yeah, but who wrote my essay?

EVAN. Look, I think we're getting off the point here. I didn't come over here to talk about how I wrote her essay for her...

STEPHAN. Hey, Lonoff, if my sister says she wrote her essay, then she wrote her essay.

EVAN. Okay, well maybe she typed it, but I basically wrote it for her!

STEPHAN. Prove it, then.

NATALIA. Yeah, prove it, Lonoff.

EVAN. Well, fine then...you see, it's just...how can I...just look at...

NATALIA. (*Laughing:*) How could he have written my essay if he can't even speak!

EVAN. Stop laughing at me! You've stolen my words and called them your own and now you expect me to stay calm and talk to you as if nothing's wrong. Good friends don't behave that way... I feel like I'm in the Warsaw ghetto. Steal from the Jews! Steal from the Jews!

STEPHAN. What are you saying? Are you calling us Nazis?

NATALIA. Oh, Stephan, make him leave!

STEPHAN. What exactly are you saying, Lonoff?

NATALIA. It was my essay. Mine!

EVAN. I'll prove it in court if I have to...

STEPHAN. In court? That's how you people react to everything. A weakness for litigation, all of you!

EVAN. Anti-Semite! Nazi! Fascist!

NATALIA. Every member of your family is a miser!

STEPHAN. Your father is a tightwad, and your mother is an alcoholic.

EVAN. Well, your father's a womanizer and your mother is deformed! Oh God, this pain in my side! The blood's gone straight to my head...I can't breathe!

NATALIA. Your sister is a cheat and a phony!

STEPHAN. Your brother is a gambler and a glutton!

EVAN. You're a pretentious blowhard... *(To NATALIA:)* And everyone knows that you got a nose job. Flashes in front of my eyes... I can't feel my leg. Where's that water?

NATALIA. How dare you? How dare you?

STEPHAN. We never liked you, we just played nice as a favor to our parents so we could get a discount from the dentist.

EVAN. Oh! I think I'm dying... Where's the door? Oh, I can't move my leg!

STEPHAN. I forbid you from ever setting foot in this house again!

NATALIA. Take us to court! You'll see!

(EVAN staggers out.)

STEPHAN. Oh, he can go straight to hell for all I care!

NATALIA. Have you ever heard of such an idiot? Try trusting friends after that!

STEPHAN. That cockamamie scarecrow! The scoundrel!

NATALIA. The monster! Steals other people's words and passes them off as his own!

STEPHAN. And this pathetic little man, this pea-brain—yes, he has the gall to come here and make a proposal like that! Can you believe it? A proposal!

NATALIA. What proposal?

STEPHAN. Yes, just imagine. He came here to propose to you!

NATALIA. To propose? To me? Why didn't you tell me that before?

STEPHAN. That's why he was all dressed-up. The shrimp!

NATALIA. Oh! Bring him back! Bring him back! Oh, please bring him back!

STEPHAN. Bring him back?

NATALIA. Quickly, quickly before he leaves!

STEPHAN. Wh...? *(It dawns on him.)* Oh, stupid!

NATALIA. *(In tears:)* I'll die! Bring him back!

STEPHAN. Just calm down. I'll get him. *(He runs off, shouting to the maid in bad Spanish.)* Juanita, el hombre...judeo. Por favor, venga aqui, gracias.

NATALIA. What have we done? Bring him back, oh please, bring him back!

STEPHAN. *(Running back in:)* He's coming, he's coming back. But I can't speak to him. You talk, you talk to him; I won't do it!

NATALIA. Bring him back!

STEPHAN. He's coming, don't you worry. Oh, I feel awful. We've insulted the man, we've kicked him out, and it was all your fault. Your fault!

NATALIA. No, it was your fault!

STEPHAN. Oh, so you're blaming me now?

EVAN. (*Entering:*) These awful palpitations...I can't feel my leg... and this shooting pain in my side...

(STEPHAN gives NATALIA a look, then goes out.)

NATALIA. Please forgive us, we were mistaken. I remember now, though, you really did write my essay.

EVAN. My heart won't slow down, it's going a million miles a minute. Yes, the essay was mine. Oh, now both of my eyelids are twitching...

NATALIA. Yes, it was yours, yours, yours. Please sit down. We were wrong.

EVAN. It's a matter of basic principle...I don't care about the words, but it's the basic principle...

NATALIA. Yes, of course, the principle. But why don't we talk about something else? How's work going at the magazine?

EVAN. Work? How's my work? Well, it's fine. Working on an article about the new Governor.

NATALIA. Yes, yes, and what do you think of him?

EVAN. I don't know...he's passable.

NATALIA. Would you prefer a woman?

EVAN. Who cares if it's a woman! How about if it's a political moderate?

NATALIA. Who cares if it's a woman? Well, I care, I care if it's a woman.

EVAN. Yes, but we just want the best man for the job, right?

NATALIA. The best man for the job? Well, that shows an inherent misogyny and a clear lack of sensitivity towards women.

EVAN. Now that isn't true! It's just an expression!

NATALIA. Yes, an expression of your inner cruelty and ignorance to the plight of anyone who is not you!

EVAN. That's unfair! That's patently unfair!

NATALIA. Don't tell me what's unfair!

EVAN. Oh, be quiet!

NATALIA. I will not be quiet!

(STEPHAN *enters.*)

STEPHAN. So now what's the matter?

NATALIA. He's a sexist!

EVAN. She's being unreasonable!

STEPHAN. What are you talking about?

EVAN. The Governor—I think he should be more moderate.

STEPHAN. What, you think he's too conservative for you?

EVAN. Any conservative is too conservative for me!

STEPHAN. Well, I'm conservative. Does that make me too much for you?

EVAN. Well, yes, I guess so.

STEPHAN. Well, excuse me for not being a bleeding heart socialist who smokes up every night!

EVAN. Of course, you only smoke up in the mornings! Where'd you learn that? At Princeton? Or at Dwight? You know what Dwight stands for, don't you? Dumb White Idiots Getting High Together!

STEPHAN. You take that back!

NATALIA. Don't call my brother a druggie!

EVAN. Druggie, druggie, druggie!

NATALIA. Liar!

STEPHAN. Liberal!

EVAN. Oh, my head, my heart, my leg, my eyelid! I can't breathe. Fascist!

NATALIA. Weakling!

STEPHAN. You probably voted for Nader!

EVAN. Oh my God...my heart's exploding! My shoulder's falling off! Where's my shoulder? I'm dying... Doctor!

(He faints.)

NATALIA. Runt! Crybaby!

STEPHAN. Oh, it's too much. I can't take it either!

NATALIA. Stephan! Oh, look, Stephan! Evan. He's dead. *(She goes to EVAN.)* Oh, what have we done?

STEPHAN. He's dead? My God! He really is dead. Water, give him some water! Drink! No, he's not drinking... He's really dead. What have we done? Oh, why don't I just put a bullet through my brain? Why don't I cut my throat? What am I waiting for? Give me a knife. Give me a gun.

(EVAN makes a slight movement.)

STEPHAN. I think he's coming round. Here, drink some water. That's it...

EVAN. Flashes before my eyes...a kind of mist...where am I?

STEPHAN. Please, get married as soon as possible. She consents and I give you my blessing. Just go, go get married quickly.

EVAN. What? Who?

STEPHAN. She says yes! Well, go on and kiss each other.

NATALIA. Oh, he's alive! Yes, yes, I accept...

STEPHAN. Come and kiss each other!

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**RON BOBBY HAD
TOO BIG A HEART**

by Rolin Jones

RON BOBBY HAD TOO BIG A HEART

by Rolin Jones

(Sweet, simple music.)

(Typical suburban two car garage. A convertible. Two young women, AMY and ANYA. They are wearing prom dresses. ANYA is packing up the car. A bulky laundry bag sits in the back seat. AMY carries a bright pink suitcase, her dress and face are slightly...no...aggressively bloodied. She addresses the audience.)

AMY. You grow up in a small town, you don't dream big. You think you do, but you don't. You dream about college and marriage and what your breasts are gonna look like after you've had kids. You dream about living in a big house with a whirlpool bath and getting a job somewhere in the dental arts. You dream your husband will be handsome and kind and manly and fix your breasts when they begin to sag. These are the things you dream of.

ANYA. Where's your Dad keep his guns, Amy?

AMY. In the broom closet behind the Swiffer.

(ANYA exits.)

AMY. So you have small dreams. But until life asserts itself you don't know they're small. You just think that's all there is and all there ever will be. And more than anything when you're a young girl of age growing up in a small town, you dream about Prom.

(ANYA enters with a bright yellow suitcase and a shotgun.)

AMY. And when things don't go right at the Prom...

ANYA. They voted Cindy Dillingham Prom Queen.

(ANYA tosses the suitcase in the car. Checks the shot gun for shells.)

AMY. When things are rightfully yours and through coordinated sabotage, are given to the unqualified and undeserving...

ANYA. She caught Ron Bobby fingering Cindy Dillingham's junk after the coronation. Where's he keep the ammo?

AMY. Under the Kitchen sink, next to the Liquid Tide.

(ANYA puts the shotgun in the front seat and exits.)

AMY. When you're a young girl of age and life reveals itself as unbearably and instantaneously cruel you see your town for what it truly is.

(ANYA enters with a shovel and a box of shotgun shells.)

ANYA. A four foot by six foot hole in the ground that rains non-stop dirt.

AMY. So go ahead. Take a picture.

ANYA. Record it while you can.

AMY. 'Cause we're ghosts.

ANYA. We're smoke.

AMY. Vapor.

ANYA. My best friend Amy.

AMY. My good friend Anya.

ANYA. The car.

AMY. The open road.

ANYA. The past.

AMY. The future.

ANYA. Ron Bobby's mix tape.

AMY. Ron Bobby.

ANYA. Ron Bobby.

(We hear a moan coming from the laundry bag. AMY picks up the shotgun.)

AMY. Shut up bitch. SHUT YOUR GOD DAMN LYING ASS UP!

(She hits the laundry bag with the butt end of the shotgun.)

BITCH IN THE LAUNDRY BAG. Uh.

ANYA. Too big a heart, he had.

AMY. Men should know better.

ANYA. You ready, Amy?

(AMY holds up her suitcase.)

AMY. Two sweaters. Thirty-one pair of cotton underwear. Girl's gotta breathe.

(AMY throws her suitcase in the back seat. ANYA throws in the shovel. They get in the car.)

ANYA. We drive.

AMY. We're drivers.

ANYA. Got ourselves early admissions to the university of Guam.

AMY. And we're driving all the way there.

(ANYA starts up the car.)

AMY & ANYA. Boo-ya.

ANYA. Listen to that bitch. We got Mickey over at the Jiffy Lube to hook us up.

AMY. Micky's a miracle worker if you give him a HJ. And I did.

ANYA. Gets eighty-three miles to the gallon. 'Cause while we might be remorseless and entitled...

AMY. ...and at this very moment understandably unlikable protagonists...

ANYA. We care about the environment.

AMY. That Al Gore scared the shit out of us.

ANYA. Where's your Dad keep the garage door opener?

AMY. Underneath the seat with his Trannie Porn.

(ANYA searches for the garage door opener.)

AMY. They wanted to barter us off. Marry one of us to the Sheriff's son. Bury us under the bleachers when we die. We will not be buried.

(ANYA comes up with the garage door opener and some trannie porn. The BITCH IN THE LAUNDRY BAG begins to wiggle her way loose.)

AMY. We're going west.

AMY. North.

ANYA. Southeast.

AMY. We're not telling you where we're going.

ANYA. You might know the Sheriff's son.

AMY. You might turn us in.

ANYA. Then we'd have to kill you.

AMY. With the lug wrench in the trunk.

ANYA. Or the butcher knife in the glove compartment.

AMY. Or the bottle of chloroform under my skirt.

BITCH IN THE LAUNDRY BAG. *(Delirious:)* Ron Bobby...

(A glimpse of a tiara from the laundry bag and another nearly involuntary smack to the head with the butt of the shotgun from AMY.)

ANYA. We're prepared.

AMY. We're angry.

ANYA. That's Cindy Dillingham in the laundry bag.

AMY. Cindy thought she could fuck with my shit.

ANYA. Cindy got put in the laundry bag.

AMY. And Ron Bobby got his ass cut.

ANYA. And sliced.

AMY. And distributed.

ANYA. Lying ass cheating boyfriends make great potting fertilizer.

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SAVING FACE
by **Richard Keller**

Cast of Characters

ASHLEY, late twenties/early thirties

DICK, late twenties/early thirties

GRACE, late twenties/early thirties, Asian American

RICHARD, late twenties/early thirties

Setting

Restaurant. Present day.

Acknowledgments

Saving Face received its world premiere at Actors Theatre of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky, in 2005 with the following cast and staff:

GRACE	Becky Chong
RICHARD	Alexander V. Thompson
ASHLEY	Sarah Parker
DICK	Jeff Lepine
Director	Michael K. Brooks, Jr.
Dramaturg.....	Julie Felise Dubiner
Set	Brenda Ellis
Costumes	Kevin Thacker
Stage Manager	Danielle Teague-Daniels

SAVING FACE

by Richard Keller

(ASHLEY and DICK are studying menus at a table in a restaurant. DICK has a new set of braces on his teeth. There's a bowl of nuts on the table.)

ASHLEY. French onion soup? The cheese. A broth maybe. You could have something soft. Yogurt. I wonder if they have yogurt. Like a yogurt dinner platter?

DICK. There's no such thing as a yogurt platter.

ASHLEY. Two front teeth.

DICK. What?

ASHLEY. Right on the front of your teeth.

DICK. Christ!

(DICK covers his mouth with one hand while he uses the fork to pick at his teeth.)

ASHLEY. I thought Dr. Stu said not to pick at your braces? Do you want to go to the restroom to do that? You're just going to have to get used to having food in them.

DICK. If you want me to get used to having food in them, don't tell me every time there's something stuck in them.

ASHLEY. Don't yell at me when I'm trying to help you. You know this isn't a bed of roses for me either. The timing couldn't be worse. With Richard and Grace's wedding coming up. I'm sure as soon as they sit down we're going to see the disappointment on their faces.

DICK. If they would've given us more notice about the wedding, I could've held off with the braces. So what anyway? I'm not crazy about him. He always lords his name over me. Is it gone?

ASHLEY. Most of it. What do you mean he lords his name over you?

DICK. He's Richard. I'm Dick. Why should they be disappointed about my braces?

ASHLEY. We're in their wedding. The photos?

(Back to the menu.)

Grilled cheese?

DICK. The cheese.

ASHLEY. You like the name Dick. What's wrong with Dick?

DICK. I do like Dick.

(Realizes he can be overheard.)

Look, there's a whole one-upmanship thing that goes on between Richards and Dicks...forget it. If I need to explain it...

ASHLEY. It just couldn't be worse timing.

DICK. I have to go on living. Should I lock myself in the apartment for a year and a half?

ASHLEY. I thought Dr. Stu said a year?

DICK. Year to a year and a half.

ASHLEY. In sickness and in health...

DICK. You act like it's cancer.

ASHLEY. I know it's not cancer. Of course it's not cancer. You don't get braces when you have cancer.

(Back to the menus.)

DICK. In China, they pick their teeth at the table. They get tooth-picks during the meal.

ASHLEY. What?

DICK. Yeah, and they burp too. If they like the meal. That's a sign that they liked the meal.

ASHLEY. Where did you learn that? In some fourth-grade social studies class?

(RICHARD and GRACE enter and approach the table. GRACE is Asian American.)

DICK. Ask Grace.

ASHLEY. I swear if you so much as make one reference to the Chinese picking their teeth—

GRACE. Hey, guys.

ASHLEY. Oh, they're here.

(GRACE and ASHLEY embrace.)

GRACE. Sorry we're late. Richard had a last minute thing.

RICHARD. Hey, Ashley.

(Kisses ASHLEY on the cheek.)

Dick.

DICK. Hey...you two.

(RICHARD and GRACE pause ever so slightly when DICK speaks.)

ASHLEY. What do you say we order some drinks before dinner?

GRACE. Uh, yeah. Sounds good.

RICHARD. Unless we're having wine with dinner.

DICK. I'm not much for wine.

RICHARD. This is sort of a bar atmosphere. What do you say we roll up our sleeves tonight? How about a pitcher of beer?

ASHLEY. If it's light beer. I have a dress to fit into, which I love and which I bought already. I'm so honored that you asked me to be in the wedding.

GRACE. We might not see each other as much as we'd like, but you're still one of my best friends.

(Awkward pause. ASHLEY looks at DICK. GRACE munches from a bowl of nuts on the table.)

DICK. And I'm excited about being a...a groomsman? Is that what it's called?

RICHARD. Grace likes the idea of couples in the wedding party.

ASHLEY. That's so sweet. Did you know Grace was in our wedding?

RICHARD. Yeah.

DICK. Groomsmen. It sounds like a group from the early sixties. Guitars high up on their chests. Matching suits.

(DICK pops a few nuts into his mouth.)

GRACE. Actually, we do want the men to wear matching suits.

DICK. You mean tuxes?

GRACE. No, suits. We have a few designers in mind. But we're going to let the groomsmen decide.

(As GRACE listens to the conversation, she puts her hand in front of her mouth and starts picking at her teeth with a toothpick.)

ASHLEY. That's cool.

DICK. An opportunity to buy a new suit.

ASHLEY. So, Richard, you have other friends in the wedding party?

(DICK tries to motion to ASHLEY with his head. ASHLEY has noticed GRACE, and she is pointedly ignoring DICK.)

RICHARD. The best man goes way back. The others are couples who are mutual friends of mine and Grace's.

ASHLEY. And what are you wearing that day?

RICHARD. This might sound corny, but the suit my father wore. I'm the same size he was when he married and the suit...it has classic lines.

ASHLEY. That's not corny...that's...have you chosen your dress, Grace?

(GRACE, still going at her teeth, nods her head yes. There's a long awkward moment. ASHLEY notices that DICK has some nuts stuck in his braces, and she surreptitiously signals to her own teeth. DICK thinks she's referring to GRACE. RICHARD notices her and then notices GRACE.)

RICHARD. Uh, Grace, I think Ashley would prefer it if you stopped picking your teeth.

ASHLEY. No, I...I was motioning to Dick—

RICHARD. I'm sure he noticed too.

GRACE. Would you rather stare at nuts in my teeth all through dinner?

RICHARD. Just a simple matter of etiquette.

ASHLEY. I wasn't staring—

DICK. I thought it was a cultural thing.

GRACE. What?

DICK. You know, like burping at the dinner table.

GRACE. Excuse me?

ASHLEY. *(Trying to diffuse the moment—loudly:)* Did you see Dick's braces! Doesn't he look weird?

(Laughs loudly.)

GRACE. I don't burp at the table. Nor do "my people" burp at the table.

RICHARD. No, not at the table.

GRACE. What is your problem tonight?

RICHARD. I don't have a problem tonight. You do sometimes burp. I'm not saying it's a cultural condition. I'm not saying it's a social condition. For all I know it's a medical condition, but you do, in fact, burp at certain times.

GRACE. You get sweat rings under your arms when you eat a hot dish.

RICHARD. That's a malicious lie.

(DICK starts attacking the nuts in his braces with his fork.)

GRACE. Watch his underarms at dinner. If he orders soup, his armpits will look like an oil spill.

RICHARD. I can't control that, now can I?

GRACE. Did you ever think that maybe I can't control picking my teeth?

ASHLEY. Like a cultural thing.

GRACE. What did you say?

ASHLEY. I didn't mean that the way it sounded. I meant—

RICHARD. I do have a problem tonight. My problem is I don't want to be here tonight. I told you that outside the restaurant. I don't want to break bread with these people, and I certainly don't want them in my wedding. I'm sorry, Dick. I feel I owe you an explanation, but quite frankly I find Ashley intolerable. I have the best regards for you but your wife... Ashley, you're a crone.

DICK. *(Still fighting the fork in his mouth:)* What did you say?

RICHARD. I'm sorry, but that's how I feel.

ASHLEY. I can't believe you just said that.

DICK. So...you like me?

(The fork has become stuck in his braces. Without any other recourse, he simply lets the fork hang out of his mouth.)

You really like me?

GRACE. If your sister hadn't broken up with her boyfriend, she'd still be in the wedding, and we wouldn't be here tonight.

ASHLEY. What are we, the "B" team?

GRACE. Let's be real, Ashley. We're no longer that close. When you and Dick got married we were hanging out more, but now...well, Richard doesn't like you. I would spend more time with you—

(Burps loudly.)

Excuse me.

ASHLEY. Richard and I don't even know each other that well.

RICHARD. Oh, I think I've seen enough to make up my mind. Your prying nature. The constant little digs. The way you put people down. The way you had to point out that Dick has braces. Of course we could tell Dick's got braces. He looks absurd. But let's not hold him over the fire.

DICK. Thanks, Richard.

ASHLEY. What? What are you talking about? He's my husband. I love Dick. I don't hold him anywhere. Would you get that freaking fork out of your mouth!?

(ASHLEY yanks the fork out of DICK's braces.)

DICK. Owwww!

RICHARD. Even the way you say his name. "Dick." I find it offensive.

DICK. It's like the big fight you had with Grace when you insulted her name.

ASHLEY. I never—

DICK. "Why are so many Chinese girls named Grace?" Ring a bell?

ASHLEY. You asked me to ask that!

GRACE. As if the name Ashley is so hot. How many soap operas did your mother have to watch before she came up with that one?

DICK. I know I'm very sensitive about my name.

RICHARD. Don't ever be embarrassed of your name! You have a fine name! It's a strong, one-syllable name. I'd love to be called Dick. I envy you your Dick. Don't ever shy away from your name, my friend.

DICK. Man, I don't know what to say. Christ, I'm tearing up...

GRACE. You know, "Ashley," it's not even about the racial slurs. It's about your husband. Just like Richard isn't crazy about you. The reason we stopped hanging out is because you married a moron. And if I was a true friend, a real friend, I would have told you that when you first started dating Dick. You and I would still be best friends—

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THERE SHALL BE NO BOTTOM
(A BAD PLAY FOR WORSE ACTORS)

by Mark O'Donnell

Cast of Characters

JEFF

JOE

JANE

JED

Acknowledgments

There Shall Be No Bottom was presented at Playwrights Horizons in New York City on November 14, 2005, directed by the author, with the following cast:

JEFF John Bedford Lloyd
JOE..... Christopher Evan Welch
JANE Mia Barron
JED..... Nat DeWolf

THERE SHALL BE NO BOTTOM

(A BAD PLAY FOR WORSE ACTORS)

by Mark O'Donnell

(We hear eight bars of Handel's "Water Music" or any baroque brass voluntary to indicate classy theatre is afoot. Lights come up on JEFF, the actor who is playing the indolent, slightly overaged young heir in this drawing room drama. He sits reading an upside-down newspaper, fitfully stealing glances off, since he expects another actor to enter. JEFF's main problem, we shall see in time, is a moronic tendency to misdeliver his lines, changing their meaning. He wears a second-hand smoking jacket. JOE, the actor who plays the Sherlock Holmes-like inspector, appears, looking menacing, he hopes. He is a smooth, ominous hero/villain, but his main problem as an actor is a tendency to skip large portions of the script. He presses an imaginary or prop doorbell several times, to no effect.)

JOE. *(Hissing stage whisper:)* Sound cue!

(Finally he covers the error awkwardly.)

Ahem...bing-bong!

(JEFF jumps up promptly. He overdoes the jaunty cad act.)

JEFF. Ah! The doorbell! That will be all, Wickersham. Inspector Billingsgate! At last you're here!

JOE. *(Crisp, formal, mysterious:)* I'm here, that is true.

JEFF. *(Sunny as only the guilty can be:)* Yers, quite here! I think it's topping of you to come to our lovely summer home, which I shall inherit in the fullness of time.

JOE. *(Doesn't give an inch:)* Do you? *(Pause.)* Where is your only sister, Fanny?

JEFF. In the garden, I expect—though I'm so indolent and destined for a bad end, I scarcely keep track of details! Do come, in? *(This last line has been oddly delivered. JOE eyes him hatefully but goes to center stage.)*

JOE. Than... *(He crosses, sits, and elaborately crosses his legs.)* ...Kyou.

JEFF. (*Whose back has been turned briefly:*) Have a sea... (*He turns, sees his error, and corrects it hastily.*) I see you're sitting, Inspector. How elegant. A drink, perhaps, or two? At once? Ha-ha?

(Pause.)

JOE. (*Coolly:*) You're nervous, Fenton. (*Pause. Now he makes his first attack:*) Do the words *millizend aspimoza* mean anything to you?

JEFF. (*Panicked; they clearly do have meaning.*) No! No! Why should they?

(Pause.)

JOE. I was just testing you. They're nonsense words, you're quite right.

(JEFF, as Fenton, nervously leans on the fireplace mantel, imaginary or not. In any case it seems awkwardly high. JEFF's arms are at head level, so his attempted insouciance seems strained.)

JEFF. (*In pain:*) Would you care for a cigarette? Or two at once, ha-ha? They're here on the mantel in this silver box...

(JOE, as Billingsgate, regards JEFF contemptuously.)

JOE. You make me laugh, Fenton.

JEFF. No, you make *me* laugh, Inspector!

(There follows a brief hot uncomfortable, slightly crazed "laughing" contest.)

BOTH. Ha-ha, ha-ha-ha, ha-ha-ha—

(It ends abruptly.)

JOE. How little you've changed since your boyhood!

JEFF. Time is a bitter artist, Inspector. Cigarette?

JOE. (*Glowering:*) I've already said no.

JEFF. No you haven't.

JOE. (*Overlooking this:*) Have you ever known a man named Cinnamon Boris?

JEFF. *(Suavely:)* Certainly not. I've never even been to that part of town.

JOE. *(Relentless:)* But you know him well enough to borrow money of him!

JEFF. *(Confused:)* Of him?

JOE. *(Annoyed but accommodating:)* From him!

JEFF. Ahh!

(He adopts an attitude of well-bred boredom, but then misdelivers his line like an "Is so!" school yard taunt.)

Really, Inspector!... This IS SO fatiguing!

(Beat. He realizes this didn't sound right, and corrects this delivery.)

This is SO fatiguing!

JOE. You're complacence itself, aren't you? Even if the Bluebottle fortune hangs in the balance?

(JEFF misinterprets the word "afraid" in the following line by trembling and speaking with cartoonish fearfulness.)

JEFF. I'm afraid!... *(Now lackadaisical again.)* ...I can't help you, Inspector. I think you're mistaken in your suspicion.

JOE. Do you?

JEFF. *(Breezily, automatically:)* Yes, I do. I so very do!

(That isn't the next line, so JOE pointedly cues him again.)

JOE. That's not right. So you do, do you?

(JEFF regards him blankly. He's forgotten where they are in the script, and this throws both of them.)

JEFF. Do I?

JOE. Do you? *(Aside:)* What's the next line? *(He covers ineptly and in a panic.)* Answer me, do you?

JEFF. *(Unhappily, also panicking:)* Yes, I do!

JOE. *(Still stuck, agonized, helpless:)* Do you?

JEFF. *(Tears and anger about to surface:)* As I've said, yes!

JOE. *(Trying to stall, a shambles:)* Do you?

JEFF. *(Resentful and near hysteria:)* Yes I do, if you want to know the truth!

JOE. *(In a tiny, miserable voice:)* Do you?

JEFF. *(Desperately takes over:)* But what's this you were about to tell me, Inspector, about my sister being in grave danger?

JOE. *(Relieved, hectic:)* Oh, that's right, thanks! *(Now, as Billingsgate:)* She is! That's right! Grave danger!

(JEFF recoils at the news he himself has just revealed, and considering the next line, ill-advisedly puts his hands on his hips.)

JEFF. Danger? My Fanny in danger? *(He takes one step back.)* I am taken aback! *(He turns and calls offstage:)* Fanny, enter right, quickly! *(Now he turns his hate on the Inspector, but the actor again mispronounces his line:)* You dog! You cure!

(FANNY enters, an ingenuous bauble of a girl, played by a smart if also overaged actress named JANE.)

JANE. Fenton, I've been dressing for simply hours! Kendall will be here at any moment! We're going to the Sophomore Ambassador's ball! Tell me, do you think the Count likes pearls on women?

JEFF. *(Frisks her from head to toe.)* Fanny, you're in no danger!

(He turns on the Inspector angrily, in a comically overdone pivot.)

You lied to me! And you didn't tell me the truth!

JOE. *(Implacably:)* She is in no grave danger, it is true. I did lie. I was just...testing you. No, it is not Fanny who is in grave danger, but her child!

JEFF. Child! Fanny!

JANE. *(With cardboard pathos:)* I am underdone!

JEFF. *(Mangling his delivery:)* Fanny, what? Have you and Kendall been to each other? *(He realizes his error and corrects it.)* Fanny, what have you and Kendall been to each other?

JANE. *(With painful periphrasis:)* He...had his way with me.

JEFF. *(Solicitously, but increasingly eager and turned on:)* You mean...he worked his will upon you?

JANE. *(Simply:)* He pressed the advantage.

JEFF. He led you down the path of dalliance?

JANE. He made a dishonest woman of me.

JEFF. *(Slavering:)* He enjoyed your sweet favors?

JOE. *(Intervening curtly:)* That's quite enough, Fenton.

JEFF. Sorry.

JOE. *(Significantly:)* So you mean to say you've risked the family fortune on a racehorse, just to ransom Fanny's little Charlie?

JEFF. *(Boggled:)* Uhhhh... *(Improvises:)* You read my mind, Inspector! *(With a sting:)* Like a man who has skipped many pages ahead in the script! *(He turns to deliver an entrance cue.)* But I say Hang It All to Blazes! *(Wheels again to face an expected actor, who isn't there.)* And as for you, Kendall! Uh, sorry, I thought I heard someone come in. Kendall, in fact. *(Now louder:)* Hang it all to blazes!

JANE. *(Gamely trying to cover:)* Why, I hear gravel crunching in our driveway...er, footpath now! *(Silent terror onstage.)* I'm sure someone is about to enter as if on cue!

JOE. *(A bad improviser, he addresses empty space with fury:)* So! You thought you were pretty clever, didn't you?

JANE. *(Again trying to help:)* Yes, er, that's right, Kendall! Hide behind the drapes like the coward you are!

JEFF. *(Actor to actor:)* Good cover!

(Suddenly a breathless boob stumbles on, carrying the script and a clipboard. It's the stage manager, JED, headset and all, covering for an absent actor. He's no performer and reads tonelessly from the script.)

JED. "I—don't ka-now..." Whew, sorry! Jarrod's stuck in traffic! "I"—*gasp*—"I don't know what—you're insinua—"

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