

Check Please

by Jonathan Rand

— Revisions rundown —

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This play has been rewritten since publication, so if you've got a book, it's an old version of the play. The latest edits are in this document.

See below for scene-by-scene replacement dialogue.

Scene 1 (replace entire scene)

LOUIS. It's great to meet you.

GIRL. Same here.

LOUIS. So how long have you lived here?

GIRL. Eight months. Feels longer, though.

LOUIS. Three years for me. It's a great city.

GIRL. What do you like most about it?

LOUIS. What do you like most about living here?

GIRL. (*Momentarily confused:*) Well... I love walking my dog in the park. Especially in the spring.

LOUIS. Oh yeah? I'm a little different. I'm all about walking my dog in the park in the spring.

GIRL. No, I enjoy that, too. I said as much.

LOUIS. Hey, so you're into violent action movies, right?

GIRL. No.

LOUIS. Me, too!

GIRL. Are you listening to me at all?

LOUIS. I was watching this sweet one last night—what was it *called*... I think it was, like, *Death Punch* or *Death Kick* or *Kick Punch*... Anyway, it had the *perfect* amount of needless violence. And I just sat there thinking: I could totally be in movies. I bet I could do acting. And I've already got the face and body for it.

GIRL. This is bizarre...

(*Waving her hands toward his face:*) Hey! HEYYYYYYYY!

All right... (*She leans or walks over and drapes a large napkin over his head and face. He keeps talking.*) Nothing? (*She removes the napkin and sits back down.*)

GIRL. Wow...

LOUIS. But hey, enough about me. I wanna hear all about you. Tell — me — *everything*.

GIRL. Sure! Or I could just leave, since you're a self-centered tool.

(*A brief pause; we assume he is going to break.*)

LOUIS. I'm a Capricorn myself.

(*Blackout.*)

Scene 2 (replace entire scene)

GUY. It's great to finally meet you.

MELANIE. Definitely.

GUY. So how did you –

MELANIE. Wait, sorry – do you mind if I check on the Bears game real quick?

GUY. Oh, of course.

MELANIE. *(As she pulls out her phone to check:)* Thanks. Just my luck a playoff game heads into overtime right before a date.

GUY. No worries.

MELANIE. *(As she checks:)* Thanks. I love the Bears. What a secondary, right? *(Sees score; puts phone away:)* Okay, I'm done. So Laura's told me tons about you.

GUY. Oh great; no pressure.

(They laugh together. MELANIE's laugh then fades directly into her suddenly serious next line.)

MELANIE. I'm just gonna check one more time.

(She digs into her purse.)

GUY. Okay.

MELANIE. *(Showing an earpiece:)* Actually, is it cool if I listen to the game while we chat? I promise it won't be distracting.

GUY. Sure.

(She sticks the earpiece in her ear.)

MELANIE. Oh no, I'm making a bad first impression. Right? It's just 'cause it's the playoffs. I'm usually normal. *(Suddenly:)* Ahh!

GUY. What's up?

MELANIE. What's up is our fullback just coughed it up. The center jumped on it, but come on: You gotta have better ball security. You gotta. Anyway, sorry, you were saying?

GUY. I don't think I was saying.

MELANIE. Are you kidding me?! *Pass the ball!!* Who runs on third and long?!

GUY. The Bears...?

MELANIE. Oh am I being loud?

GUY. Loud is a relative term.

MELANIE. I'm sorry. Hey if it's any consolation, the crème brûlée here just melts in your – A DRAW PLAY ON FOURTH DOWN? A DRAW PLAY ON FOURTH DOWN? A DRAW PLAY ON FOURTH DOWN?

GUY. We could go to a sports bar.

MELANIE. Oh I wouldn't do you that to you. And the game's basically over. *(Takes a deep breath.)* All right, I'm done. Let's order.

(They look at their menus.)

GUY. Laura said the flatbread here is good.

(MELANIE suddenly shrieks and rips her menu in half.)

GUY. Not a flatbread fan.

MELANIE. They lost...

GUY. Oh.

MELANIE. *(Starting to tear up:)* They lost. The season's over.

(MELANIE cries, delicately. GUY offers his handkerchief or a napkin.)

GUY. I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do?

MELANIE. *(Still weepy:)* The Bears suck...

GUY. No, they don't.

MELANIE. They do... They suck.

GUY. They'll bounce back next year —

(MELANIE grabs his collar, pulls him extremely close, and speaks in a monstrous, deep voice.)

MELANIE. THE BEARS SUCK.

GUY. The Bears suck.

(Blackout.)

Scene 3

KEN. I was raised in the mountains of Guam...and was born...on the shore of New Jersey.

GIRL. Appetizers?

KEN. Only if that will bring joy to your beautiful lips.

GIRL. The popcorn shrimp looks good.

Scene 4

[This scene is now the scene that used to be MANNY, but is now PHOEBE.]

GUY. It's nice to meet you.

PHOEBE. Same.

GUY. Man this menu's huge.

PHOEBE. I can never decide when the menu's so big. I can be picky.

GUY. Ooh! I'm definitely getting the sea bass. What about you?

PHOEBE. Nothing really leaps out.

GUY. Really? Why don't you tryyyy — the pork chops.

...

PHOEBE. It's the fear of dampness.

...

GUY. Okay, so how about we just call it a night?

PHOEBE. Ooh, I can't.

GUY. Why not?

PHOEBE. Anuptaphobia?

GUY. *(Sarcastic:)* What's that? Fear of staying single for the rest of your life?

PHOEBE. Yes.

GUY. Oh.

PHOEBE. On the other hand, it's probably best we end the date now, on account of my deipnophobia.

GUY. Fear of?

PHOEBE. Dinner conversations.

(Beat.)

GUY. Okay, well in that case, have a good night.

(GUY extends his hand for a friendly handshake.)

PHOEBE. Fair enough! Just give me twenty minutes.

(In preparation for the handshake, PHOEBE produces a rubber glove to put on her right hand, then produces a large bottle of hand sanitizer that she begins liberally pumping sanitizer on to the gloved hand.)

(Blackout.)

Scene 6

[There are plans to further edit this scene. Some preliminary changes are below.]

GUY. So nice to meet you.

PEARL. Likewise! Julia's told me a lot about you.

GUY. You guys have been friends for a while, right?

(While GUY speaks the above line, PEARL quickly and slickly steals a fork. GUY thinks he saw wrong.

PEARL continues on as if nothing has happened.)

PEARL. Yeah, a really long time.

GUY. *(As PEARL quickly steals the rest of the utensils:)* How'd you meet again?

PEARL. We played soccer when we were, like, eight. And let me tell you: it was *intense*.

...

GUY. Wait. Listen: if you'll stop stealing things, I won't get on your case. Okay?

PEARL. Okay...

GUY. Yeah?

PEARL. Yeah...

GUY. Great. So where are you from—?

(She whips the tablecloth off the table and starts stuffing it down her pants. Or, if possible, in one swift motion she swipes the tablecloth, an article of clothing from Guy, and one or both chairs.)

(Blackout.)

Scene 7

GIRL. No, I'm serious. I need to know your age.

...

TOD. 'Cause Katie Johnson always brings boring lunch to school and Courtney Shuler smells like dirt.

...

GIRL. *(Sarcastically:)* Fine... But only if you pay for dinner.

TOD. You got it!

(He quickly produces a huge piggy bank. Either he smashes the piggy bank with a hammer or he pours all the coins on the table at once. Blackout.)

Scene 9

GIRL. You are just too good to be true.

BRANDON. *You* are, Jamie.

(Beat.)

GIRL. What?

BRANDON. What?

GIRL. Who?

BRANDON. What?

GIRL. Who's Jamie?

BRANDON. What do you mean?

GIRL. You just called me Jamie. Who's Jamie?

...

BRANDON. Okay. I'm sorry I didn't tell you this sooner, but it would've totally backfired if I did. Here's the deal: I got cast as Stanley in a local production of *Streetcar*, and since I'm a method-actor, I won't be able to understand the part until I method-act straight.

GIRL. Method-act.

BRANDON. Yes. I can't be Stanley Kowalski until I experience first-hand what it feels like to court a lady.

(Pause.)

GIRL. So let me walk through this:

BRANDON. Sure!

GIRL. Tonight I got myself ready for this date, drove all the way downtown, and then got real optimistic that I'd finally met a good guy. And I did all of this just so you could get a better feel for being straight?

(Beat.)

BRANDON. You don't *mind*, right?

(She takes her glass of water and douses his face.)

BRANDON. Oh my god. That was perfect! The ultimate heterosexual dating moment! I'm in! I'm straight! STELLAAAAAAAAAAAAA—

Scene 10 (replace entire scene)

(Note: LINDA, WALTER, and DELORES are all played by the same performer.)

LINDA. It's nice to finally meet you.

GUY. Likewise.

(LINDA and GUY shake hands.)

LINDA. Ugh—where are my manners? This is Walter.

WALTER. Hey, man; how's it goin'?

(WALTER and GUY shake hands.)

GUY. I'm sorry—Walter...?

LINDA. Oh, it's not on my profile? Walter's my imaginary friend.

WALTER. It's on your profile.

LINDA. You sure?

WALTER. Yep.

LINDA. Well I stand corrected.

(Beat.)

GUY. (Remaining respectful:) So, is this a medical condition, or—

LINDA. Oh, no no—nothing like that.

WALTER. Yeah, *this* one just hates flying solo on blind dates.

LINDA. Oh, this is *my* fault.

WALTER. Well it's not *my* fault.

LINDA. Well agree to disagree.

WALTER. Fine.

GUY. Sorry, but this is a first for me. Explain again what's happening right now?

LINDA. You know that movie *The Shining* where that kid speaks with his finger? Y'know, "Redrum" and all? Walter is essentially that.

WALTER. Oh so all I am to you is a talking finger?

LINDA. *Stop it...*

WALTER. I'm that insignificant?

LINDA. You are *overreacting*.

WALTER. *Am I?*

GUY. I'm still confused.

LINDA. Okay, here: Walter is everything I'm not when I need the opposite of me. So I'm an introvert, and Walter's the extrovert.

WALTER. *Oh yeah.*

LINDA. Let me show you what I mean. (*She stands.*) At the club, I might dance like this, all withdrawn and shy. (*She does.*) But Walter...?

WALTER. I dance like I'm on fire. (*He dances like a maniac.*)
(*"They" sit.*)

LINDA. See?

GUY. *Sort of...?*

LINDA. Anyway, don't mind Walter. You can I can have a perfectly nice date without worrying about— (*To WALTER:*) What are you *doing*?!

WALTER. (*Pseudo-innocent:*) Hmmm, what...?

LINDA. You did *not* seriously bring Delores.

WALTER. What's wrong with Delores?

LINDA. Nothing! You just don't bring her on a date.

WALTER. (*To GUY:*) Hey man, just tell her: you don't mind that I brought my seeing-eye monkey.

GUY. What now...?

LINDA. You're not even blind.

WALTER. I'm *color* blind.

(*"WALTER" takes out a banana and tries to feed "Delores" for a moment and then puts the banana on the table.*)

LINDA. All right, this whole night is ruined. I'm leaving.

WALTER. Don't make a scene!

LINDA. (*To GUY:*) I'm sorry, we'll have to reschedule. Goodnight. (*To WALTER:*) And Walter, we will talk about this at home.

(*She "leaves." In reality, she's still there because "WALTER" is still there.*)

WALTER. Don't leave! Wait up! (*To GUY:*) See ya, man. Oh and you can borrow those dance moves whenever you want. (*To the departing LINDA:*) Hey, slow down!

(*He "leaves." In reality, LINDA still sits there, silently, without expression.*)

(*A moment, as GUY just sort of takes it all in. Then,)*

GUY. So just to confirm: now I'm on a date with a monkey?

(*DELORES shrieks, then devours the banana. Blackout.*)

Scene 11 (replace entire scene)

[This used to be Scene 4 with Mary; now it's Scene 11 with Matt.]

GIRL. Good to meet you.

MATT. Wow. *Wow.* Do you feel that?

GIRL. Feel what?

MATT. That *spark* between us that just *detonated*. It's straight-up *kinetic*. What a rush. WOW. And it's well beyond physical attraction—there's something about the way we *vibe* with each other on an *intellectual* level. It like we finish each other's...

(For a second MATT tries to coax GIRL into saying the same word at the same time.)

GIRL. Oh, you want me to...?

MATT. (*Interrupting:*) –sentences! Amazing. We should just schedule our second date now. Right? Y'know? It just feels right, right? Next Sunday? There's this party and you could be my date and I could introduce you to my friends and my parents and my extended family and I should mention it's less a "party" and more "my nephew's baptism."

GIRL. Oh I don't think so.

MATT. You're right. Too soon? It's too soon. Right. Sometimes I get ahead of myself. Sorry about that.

GIRL. It's okay.

MATT. So let's pivot from the baptism to this wine tasting my folks are throwing on the eighteenth, which would be the ideal chance for you three to meet, because if you don't, and you and I end up getting serious, my parents might be skeptical of our relationship, which could then make for an uncomfortable ceremony and the ten-day honeymoon in Cabo, and then nine months later, you can't tell me Kayla won't notice because she'll notice I know she'll notice she'll notice.

GIRL. Wow...

MATT. You don't like the name Kayla? My backup names are Penny and Apple. What? Something's on your mind. You know can always tell me anything—today and *always*.

GIRL. Okay.

MATT. Something's on your mind. You know can always tell me anything—today and *always*.

GIRL. Well, stating the obvious: we just met and you have our whole relationship planned except the wedding dress.

MATT. Does that make you uncomfortable?

GIRL. Yes.

MATT. That's fair. (*Beat.*) Let's just pick it out now.

(MATT reveals several boxes or wedding dresses. Blackout.)

Scenes 12-13 (combined and replaced)

(GUY is sitting across the table from a fully outfitted mime, MIMI, who is extremely over-the-top and exuberant, as stereotypical mimes are. The scene begins with MIMI "leaning" on "something." Mimed actions in this scene will be indicated with brackets.)

GUY. So what do you do for a living?

MIMI. [Pulling something heavy with a rope.]

GUY. You pull rope. Look, I respect your profession. Sort of. To be honest, I didn't know mimes were still a thing. Either way, I don't see why you'd bring your work to a date.

MIMI. [Battling against harsh winds.]

GUY. Yeah, quite a storm in here.

(GUY opens his menu and reads. MIMI mimes picking up an imaginary menu, and peruses it page after page. GUY watches.)

GUY. Okay, I'm gonna hit the men's room.

(GUY gets up, takes his jacket from the back of the chair.)

MIMI. [You're going to drive away while waving bye-bye?]

GUY. No, I'm not leaving. I'm taking my jacket with me because...it might get cold.

(GUY starts to leave. MIMI jumps in front of him.)

GUY. No no, you stay here.

MIMI. [I'll feed these chickens.]

GUY. I don't know what that is.

(GUY tries again to exit but MIMI again gets in his way, maybe with a big Mime Smile. An idea dawns on GUY has an idea. The following is loud and animated – very frantic for MIMI; sarcastically frantic for GUY.)

GUY. Oh, how about this... *(Looking up:)* Oh no! A box!!

MIMI. [Where? Where?]

GUY. A huge, glass box, falling from the sky!!

MIMI. [Oh no! It's about to land on me!]

GUY. Noooooooooo!

(GUY follows the "box" with his finger as it lands on the frantic MIMI, who is now very much "trapped" inside the box.)

MIMI. [I am trapped inside this box.]

GUY. Best of luck.

(GUY starts to exit as lights rise on other side of stage, where MARK sits at a table wearing the same burlap sack, reading the menu. GIRL is also exiting and bumps into GUY. MIMI is still in her box, but she doesn't distract from the action.)

GIRL. Sorry.

GUY. No, no. My fault.

(A short moment of chemistry. Then they start to go their separate ways. But then GUY turns around.)

GUY. Hold on a second. This may seem random, but do you like football?

GIRL. A little. Do you own any burlap?

GUY. No.

MARK. *(Calling out, without looking up:)* It's Versace.

(Beat.)

GIRL. Should we go get some ice cream?

GUY. We should.

(GIRL and GUY exit together. In very short order, MIMI finds a "key" in her "pocket," unlocks the "door" to the "box," exits – or if it's faster, "shatters" the "glass" with a swift kick – sees MARK, moves to him, "spits" in her hand, and exuberantly extends it to him for a handshake. MARK looks up and notices what is going on in front of him.)

MARK. *(Deadpan:)* Check please.