

# *Check Please: Take 3*

by Jonathan Rand

— Revisions rundown —

Date of book in circulation:	December 1, 2009
Date of these revisions:	September 18, 2020

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, most of which relate cutting extraneous opening dialogue in each scene.

## Scene 1

**CELESTE.** It's nice to meet you.

**GUY.** Same here.

## Scene 2

**GIRL.** Nice to meet you.

**JONES.** Rock on!

## Scene 3 (replace entire scene)

**RUTH.** My fellow American...good evening.

**GUY.** Good evening.

**RUTH.** It is a honor and a privilege to spend this moment with a citizen of our magnificent country.

**GUY.** Likewise. So I'm gonna take a wild guess that you're in politics.

**RUTH.** On the contrary. We must *abandon* partisan politics, bridge the divide, reach across the aisle, and at long last dispense with the same old Washington games. Politics? Not in *my* backyard.

**GUY.** (*Might as well continue.*) So where you from?

**RUTH.** I was born in a small village called Farmandfactorytown. Farmandfactorytown is a humble community of hard-working families...rolling prairies...and oats. And I'll ya: the first lesson you learn as a proud citizen of Farmandfactorytown is the difference between a good oat...and a bad oat. A good oat has *character; resolve; dedication*. A bad oat? Well a *bad* oat leaves a bitter taste in a young child's mouth; a bad oat can't be trusted; a bad oat destroys homes and increases deficit spending.

(*The SERVER has arrived.*)

**SERVER.** Can I start you off with anything?

**GUY.** Sure, I'll have the goat cheese truffles.

**SERVER.** And for you?

**RUTH.** My esteemed colleague wishes to order the goat cheese truffles. I, on the other hand wish to improve our schools and keep the government out of the pocket of big business.

**SERVER.** (*Unfazed.*) Coming right up.

(*SERVER leaves.*)

**GUY.** So hey, can we just— ?

**RUTH.** I've traveled all across this fine land shaking the hands of real Americans just like you. Take the 60-year-old mill worker I met in Stoneridge, Ohio. His name was Yipple. Now Yipple may have a ridiculous name, but Yipple does *not* have a ridiculous heart. Yipple spoke to me about what we need in this country – that we need is a leader...who leads. Not a leader who *doesn't* lead. That would be a waste of the first four letters in "leader." Or the young woman I met in Great Bend, Kansas. Her name was Lynn...she was black.

**GUY.** Please stop. You're on *date*.

**RUTH.** A date which will live in infamy.

**GUY.** That was in poor taste.

**RUTH.** Give me your poor; your huddled masses, yearning...to meet me.

**GUY.** Okay... I don't mind politics. It's great that you're so dedicated to the country. But can we change the subject?

**RUTH.** It *is* time for a change!

**GUY.** No, like a new topic of *conversation*.

**RUTH.** Time for a new beginning! A new dawn! I'm Ruth Hayes and I approved this message.

*(Beat. GUY tries a new tactic.)*

**GUY.** Y'know, I just remembered something. *(Beat.)* I already voted.

*(Suddenly RUTH's diplomacy vanishes. She whips out a printout and her phone.)*

**RUTH.** *(To the phone:)* Richard!! The canvassing list is wrong – that's *twice* today! *(Back to GUY with a halfhearted diplomacy-smile:)* God bless you. And God bless America. *(Back to her phone:)* Richard, clean out your desk!

*(Blackout.)*

#### **Scene 4**

**GIRL.** Good to meet you.

**GARRETT.** I lost 300 pounds.

#### **Scene 5**

**GUY.** Nice to meet you.

**BROOKE.** Yes.

#### **Scene 6**

**GIRL.** Good to meet you.

**DAN.** *In a world* where anything can happen...one man...goes on a date...with a woman...

**GIRL.** Okay.

**DAN.** Once in a lifetime...one moment comes along that changes us...forever...

**GIRL.** –

**DAN.** *She's* from the mean streets of South Central...

**GIRL.** *(Pointing to herself:)* Actually, South Dakota.

**DAN.** ...*He's* a renegade cop...

**GIRL.** You're a *renegade cop*?

**DAN.** ...Together, they just might make...the perfect pair...

**GIRL.** *(Cheerily trying to end the madness:)* Listen, let's –

**DAN.** From Universal Pictures and the producers who brought you *Norbit*...comes the conversation...forty-five seconds in the making...

**GIRL.** Okay, stop! *(Beat.)* Is there some *reason* you're doing an impression of that movie trailer voice?

**Scene 7**

**GUY.** It's nice to meet you.

**SARAH.** Give me some details about you.

[...and later on...]

**GUY.** What are my parents' names?

**SARAH.** Steve and Doris.

**Scene 8** (replace entire scene)

**CHASE.** No, I agree!

**GIRL.** And still it's #1 on Netflix!

**CHASE.** For real! I thought I was the only one who was bothered by that.

*(They share a moment.)*

**GIRL.** Hey listen – this is great.

**CHASE.** It is great.

**GIRL.** It seems like we've got the same taste, same values...

**CHASE.** ...same religion...same *therapist*...

**GIRL.** ...we're from the same part of the country.

**CHASE.** Pretty unreal.

**GIRL.** That's not *bad*, right? To have too much in common?

**CHASE.** No, I think that's good. Unless you also shave your beard.

**GIRL.** Ahhh we're so different.

**CHASE.** So hey I know we're supposed to wait a few days before scheduling another date, but... can we schedule it now?

**GIRL.** Totally.

**CHASE.** Yeah?

**GIRL.** Yeah!

*(They check their phones.)*

**CHASE.** Cool. Well, I can't next Friday.

**GIRL.** Yeah, me neither. Not to be a downer, but I've got a funeral.

**CHASE.** Actually, me too. My whole family's in town.

**GIRL.** Same here. My Cousin Trudy had like a hundred cousins.

**CHASE.** That's so *weird*. The funeral I've got is for *my* Cousin Trudy.

*(They look askance.)*

**CHASE.** Wait a second, are you – ?

**GIRL.** Is your dad – ?

*(Pause.)*

**CHASE / GIRL.** *(Simultaneously cringing:)* EW! / No!! / Gross! *(etc.)*

*(Blackout.)*

**Scene 9** (replace entire scene)

**ANNIE.** No, I agree!

**GUY.** And still it's #1 on Netflix!

**ANNIE.** For real! I thought I was the only one who was bothered by that.

*(They share a moment.)*

**GUY.** This is fun.

**ANNIE.** Same here. I'm having a good time.

**GUY.** Speaking of dates that somehow go well—I just heard this story where the date turned out to be their *cousin*.

**ANNIE.** No. Way.

**GUY.** I kid you not.

**ANNIE.** That's exactly how my parents met.

*(Blackout.)*

## **Scene 10**

**BARRY.** Thanks for meeting on short notice. Shall we get started? Good, good. I recently underwent a failed merger with my previous client so what I'm looking for at this stage is a floor-to-ceiling overhaul of the status quo—essentially a paradigm shift, if you will, that takes us to the next level, bringing us from Relationship to Relationship 2.0.

**GIRL.** Can I say something?

**BARRY.** Please hold your questions till the end. Now as you'll see in these projections—

*(He reveals either a projection screen with PowerPoint slides, or a flipboard, or some other sort of presentation.)*

—my four-year plan is to hit the ground running with a strong foundation in the first three quarters, synergizing from the word Go, and by 2024 have fully reinvented our relationship using a game-changing, scalable approach to seamless integration.

How exactly do I *plan* to accomplish this? I'll tell you:

Thinking outside the box.

Win-win situations.

Giving 110 percent.

Maximizing leverage.

Pushing the envelope.

Squaring the circle.

And finally... texting if one of us is late for a movie or something.

If I'm reading the room right—and I do believe that I am—in short order you'll co-sign my proposal as a value-add and if we run it up the flagpole and see who salutes; if we skate to where the puck is going; if we stick a fork in it to see if it's done; if we tickle the artichoke till it sings a cappella hip hop—then I guarantee this merger will bear fruit.

And by "bear fruit" I am not referring to babies.

Unless you want to talk about it.

But totally cool if not.

I want four.

Any questions?

*(GIRL raises her hand.)*

**BARRY.** Ah, yes, you.

**GIRL.** Can you tell me how it's possible that I've actually had worse dates than this one?

*(BARRY thinks it over, and the reason dawns on him. He confidently scoffs.)*

**BARRY.** They didn't use PowerPoint.<sup>1</sup>

*(Beat.)*

**GIRL.** I'm gonna hit the ladies room.

[...]

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<sup>1</sup> Alternate line: "They didn't use pie charts."