

Check Please: Take 3

a play by Jonathan Rand

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Cast of Characters

GIRL
GUY
CELESTE
JONES
RUTH
GARRETT
KIM
HANK
BROOKE
DAN
SARAH
CHASE
ANNIE
BARRY
SERVERS

Setting

A restaurant or café: two tables and four chairs. Also briefly in a suggested laundromat and a suggested dance floor.

Author's Note

If any technology or pop culture reference becomes dated, please replace with a more modern reference. And feel free to be flexible with gender.

Prologue

(GIRL and GUY are leisurely folding laundry together.)

GIRL. Tonight?

GUY. Yep.

GIRL. That's exciting.

GUY. Please – a blind date is not exciting. Christmas is exciting; Bruce Willis movies are exciting; this undershirt is exciting.

GIRL. Ooh, what if we made a Christmas movie starring Bruce Willis's undershirt?

GUY. (*Opens his cell phone:*) I'm calling Hollywood.

GIRL. Get this, though: I have a blind date tonight, too.

GUY. Nice!

GIRL. Yeah...

GUY. So remind me why we go on these? We've had, like, comically bad luck with blind dates.

GIRL. Hey, *we* met on a blind date.

GUY. We met in the same restaurant during blind dates with *other people*. That's a blind date with an asterisk. Plus we broke up. Double-asterisk. Hand me that sock.

GIRL. Without blind dates, we wouldn't be besties now.

GUY. And only my bestie would know how much I love the word "bestie."

(*Beat.*)

Just to make sure: It's not weird that we're talking about this?

GIRL. Not as weird as an ex-couple that folds laundry together.

GUY. True.

GIRL. Hold on a second! We are so a romantic comedy right now! Best friends...folding laundry...everything's platonic...*until*...the girl innocently passes the guy his sweatpants.

GUY. (*Delivering a line as a bad actor might:*) "Hey best friend, pass me those sweatpants."

GIRL. Their hands meet.

GUY / GIRL. (*Ad-libbing:*) Whoops! / Oh my! / Didn't see your hand there! / Goodness me!

GIRL. The camera zooms in as they lock eyes with hitherto unspoken passion.

(They've been goofing around, acting this out, and they really are staring at each other, touching hands, as she passes the sweatpants. At this point there is a pause that's a bit longer than expected for a pair of platonic besties.)

(They break their stare.)

GIRL. Well I'd pay to see it.

GUY. *(Into the phone:)* Get me Matt Damon!

GIRL. You would *not* be played by Matt Damon.

GUY. *(Back into the phone:)* Get me Jennifer Lawrence!

GIRL. Hey, you're going to Kim and Hank's wedding, right?

GUY. Yeah. You?

GIRL. Yep.

GUY. I'll probably I'll bring this girl I meet tonight.

GIRL. Oh yeah?

GUY. Yeah, 'cause she's totally not going to be awful.

GIRL. Hey, when is your date?

GUY. Eight. When's yours?

GIRL. Eight. What time is it?

(GUY looks at his cell as GIRL looks at her watch. They look at each other. A moment.)

(They suddenly start to fold laundry at superhuman speed. The following is barely intelligible – just overlapping cacophony – as they begin to fold at warp speed.)

GUY. *(Simultaneously:)* SOCK SOCK SOCK SOCK SOCK!

GIRL. *(Simultaneously:)* GIMME THE BRA! THAT BRA! THAT BRA!

(Blackout.)

Scene 1

(At a restaurant table.)

CELESTE. It's nice to meet you.

GUY. Same here.

CELESTE. I love your jacket.¹

GUY. Oh, thank you.

CELESTE. This guy Frank I knew in college had the same one.

GUY. Frank's a copycat.

CELESTE. Totally. So... What's your favorite hobby?

GUY. Well my new guilty pleasure is karaoke.

CELESTE. I *love* karaoke. I used to go with this friend who'd sing Bon Jovi literally every time. Actually – coincidence – it's the same guy with the jacket.

GUY. Frank?

CELESTE. Frank.

GUY. Frank's got great taste in jackets and dumb hobbies. (*Beat.*) So how long have you lived in town?

CELESTE. About a year. I moved to be closer to my best friends: Tracy from high school, Denise from pre-school, Frank, Janine, Claire, Frank, Alison...

GUY. What about Frank?

CELESTE. Oh right! Frank! Frank is one of my closest friends.

GUY. I figured.

CELESTE. You know how it's impossible for guys and girls to be only friends? Frank and I are the one exception.

GUY. That's great.

CELESTE. I mean, we did date once, a lonnnng time ago, but just for a few weeks.

¹ Or some other article of clothing the character is wearing (shirt, tie, shoes, etc.)

(Beat.)

Or it might've been a couple of months.

(Beat.)

Eight years. But I don't want to talk about him, because it's rude to talk about an ex. Frank taught me that.

GUY. Smart idea.

CELESTE. Frank you so much for listening to me.

GUY. Did you just say "Frank you"?

CELESTE. No. What? I said "*Thank you.*" Anyway, what were we talking about a second ago? I'm drawing a Frank.

GUY. Okay, you *definitely* said Frank that time.

CELESTE. What? I did not! This is Franking ridiculous.

(SERVER appears.)

SERVER. May I take your order?

CELESTE. *(Feigning surprise, pretending to act normal, but doing so poorly:)* Oh! Yes! I would *love* to order...

(SERVER suddenly recognizes CELESTE.)

SERVER. Seriously? We broke up years ago. Quit stalking me.

(SERVER leaves. Beat.)

(CELESTE turns to GUY, trying to play it off like that wasn't Frank. She's not convincing at all.)

CELESTE. Who was *that* guy?

(Blackout.)

Scene 2

(At a restaurant table. JONES is decked out like a total '80s hair band rock star. A standard guitar case is nearby. He also wears heavy eyeliner and other makeup, and might be wearing leather pants.)

GIRL. Nice to meet you.

JONES. Rock on!

GIRL. So your profile said you're a musician. I see now that you probably don't play cello for the Philharmonic.

JONES. *Cello?! More like, Hello!*

GIRL. *(Tries to force a slight laugh.)*

JONES. I made a joke! All riiiiight!!

(He stands up and gives a high, rock star leg-kick.)

GIRL. What was that.

JONES. What was what?!

GIRL. You kicking.

JONES. It's how I crank up a sentence with more *juice!* Sometimes you gotta add an exclamation point with your feet! *Owww!! [Kicks.]*

GIRL. Awesome... *(She lightly punches her fist across her body.)*

JONES. Heyyy! You got your *own* punctuation, baby!

GIRL. Yes. It's my way of adding a...dot-dot-dot... *(Half-hearted punch.)*

JONES. We're so alike!

GIRL. True – though you do wear more makeup.

JONES. Now before we jump on this train called Love, you gotta understand the priorities of an international rock sensation. Those priorities are... *(He counts them out.)*

the music

groupie make-outs

lady love *(Indicates GIRL.)*

Cool Ranch Doritos.

(Pause.)

Hold on, it's the music; Cool Ranch *Doritos*; groupie make-outs; lady love.

GIRL. I'm the same way.

JONES. Uh oh! I can see that look in your eyes. Your eyes'r'sayin' "Play me a song right now!"

GIRL. My eyes are not saying that.

JONES. Well I haven't tuned up, so I don't think I should...

GIRL. I *do not* want you to play a song in this restaurant.

JONES. Okay fine! Anything for my lady love.

(He opens the guitar case, the contents of which are unseen. JONES looks at the beauty within.)

Takes my breath away every time.

(He takes it out. It's a very small toy guitar.)

GIRL. Isn't that meant for a small child?

JONES. One, two, uh one-two-three-four!

(He rocks out on the guitar as a rock star would. After some of this, JONES screams over to GIRL, as if the music is too loud for a regular speaking voice to be heard.)

JONES. Unbelievable, right!? She handles so smooth!!

GIRL. It's really smooth.

JONES. What?! I can't hear you?! The music is overpowering!! Wahhhhhhhh!!!

(He wails a rock star high note while shredding on the guitar and high-kicking.)

(She lightly punches her fist.)

(Blackout.)

Scene 3

(At a restaurant table.)

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 Farmandactorytown. Farmandactorytown 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 Farmandactorytown 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

(At a restaurant table.)

GIRL. Good to meet you.

GARRETT. I lost 300 pounds.

GIRL. Oh. Wow.

GARRETT. You don't believe me, do you?

GIRL. No, I believe you.

GARRETT. Well believe *this*.

(He stands up with a pair of oversized pants, and holds them up to his waistline.)

Guess who used to wear these pants.

GIRL. You?

GARRETT. Me. *I* used to wear these pants.

(He sits, stashes pants.)

GARRETT. Some people go Gluten Free; others do paleo. But I swear by three words:
(Listing:) Determination. Hard work. Onions.

GIRL. Onions.

GARRETT. I start off every day with an onion smoothie, then for lunch dive into an Onionwich – which is a pile of onions held together with two slabs of onion. And then at dinner? An onion.

GIRL. Does it ever get boring for you?

GARRETT. Well, once a week I splurge with a low-fat onion sorbet.

GIRL. Mm.

GARRETT. It was all worth it, 'cause look at what four years of onions can do!

(He stands up with the oversized pants and holds them up to his waistline.)

Look at that!

(He sits, stashes pants.)

Do you know where most of the weight goes when you're 300 pounds overweight?

GIRL. I don't know.

GARRETT. Hips? Thighs? Gut? Wrong, wrong, WRONG. Answer? The skull. Out of those 300 pounds, 112 lived right here.

GIRL. I didn't know that was possible.

GARRETT. Are you kidding me?

GIRL. No.

GARRETT. Are you kidding me?!

GIRL. No.

GARRETT. I should also mention that the rest of the weight went to my *waist!*

(He pulls out the oversized pants, stands up, and holds them up to his waistline. He sits, stashes them.)

GIRL. Do you carry those pants around with you everywhere?

GARRETT. What, *these* pants?

(He pulls out the oversized pants, stands up, and holds them up to his waistline. He sits, stashes them.)

No, not really. Seldom. Infrequently. Occasionally. Sometimes.

GIRL. Always?

GARRETT. All the time.

(Beat.)

GIRL. Don't get me wrong. I'm impressed with what you've accomplished –

GARRETT. I know; I could tell.

GIRL. – but I'd really prefer you not take out your oversized pants.

GARRETT. Oh. Okay. That's fine. I won't.

GIRL. It's just not really date-appropriate.

GARRETT. No no, you're right. It's not. I'm sorry. I'll stop showing the pants.

GIRL. Thank you.

GARRETT. But check out these bad boys.

(He stands up with a pair of oversized underwear, holding them up to his waistline.)

(Blackout.)

Midlogue

(A wedding. GUY and GIRL are dancing on a dance floor. There could be others unobtrusively dancing in the background. Music is playing. GUY and GIRL are focused on each other's conversation, all the while going through the rote motions of dance moves. It could be "YMCA" or "The Git Up" that's playing. They do those specific dance moves while talking. Or just standard dancing.)

(All of the following dialogue is spoken very loudly, as they are trying to be heard over the music.)

GUY. There's no way that really happened.

GIRL. You think I could make that up?

GUY. No. 300 pounds *is* impressive, though.

GIRL. I hate you.

(They break from their conversation to do some special dance move, again, without appearing to put much effort into it.)

GUY. So why are we putting ourselves through this again?

GIRL. Dancing at a wedding isn't optional.

GUY. No, I mean horrible blind dates that lead nowhere.

GIRL. You'll strike gold soon enough. You'll find a girl you can date without having to text "Save Me" from the bathroom.

GUY. I know.

GIRL. And when that time comes – you have to dive in headfirst without thinking twice. My grandma always said: You can't nibble at the jalapeño; you have to eat it in one bite.

(Beat.)

My grandma was weird.

(Beat.)

GUY. Your advice would probably be a lot more effective if I could hear you.

(KIM and HANK walk up.² They all greet each other with hugs and handshakes, while sharing the following genuine pleasantries, which bleed into each other a bit.)

KIM. Hey you guys!!

GUY / GIRL. Hiiiiii! / Kiiiiim! / Hannnnnk!

HANK. Heyyy! Thanks for comin'!

GIRL. *(To KIM:)* You look beautiful.

KIM. Thank you! Thank you so much!

(Pause. Then they all start to dance without talking.)

(This goes on for a little.)

HANK. *(Simultaneously:)* All right, see you guys later!

KIM. *(Simultaneously:)* Byyye!

GUY. Congratulations!

GIRL. So good to see you!

(HANK and KIM start to walk off.)

(The music ends, but HANK and KIM are still screaming as if the music was still loud.)

HANK. Why aren't they dating again?

KIM. Because they're idiots.

(KIM and HANK are gone. Pause. GUY and GIRL have been expressionless. Nearly simultaneously:)

GUY. They didn't know we could hear them.

GIRL. No.

(The music starts up again. GIRL and GUY start to dance again.)

(Blackout.)³

² Kim doesn't have to wear a classic wedding dress. It can be a casual wedding.

³ If it's too difficult to perfectly time the music cut-off, don't worry about it. The scene should still work even with the music playing throughout.

Scene 5

(At a restaurant table.)

GUY. Nice to meet you.

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. *(Looking around:)* This place is pretty cool. Have you been here before?

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. Food any good, or...?

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. Oh. Well that's good to hear.

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. Uhhhh... So you live downtown, right?

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. 'Dyou like it?

BROOKE. Yes.

(Beat.)

GUY. Do you say anything other than Yes?

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. You do?

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. Are you going to tell me?

BROOKE. No.

GUY. Ah. *(Beat.)* You do speak English, right?

BROOKE. Yes.

(The SERVER has arrived.)

GUY. Oh great— food.

SERVER. Yes.

(Beat.)

GUY. Wait, you say more than “Yes,” right?

SERVER. *(Confused:)* Do I say more than “Yes”?

GUY. Good, never mind. I’ll get the chicken salad entrée with the gazpacho to start.

SERVER. Ma’am?

BROOKE. Yes?

SERVER. Can I get you something?

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. Here, allow me. Do you want an appetizer?

BROOKE. No.

GUY. Soup?

BROOKE. No.

GUY. Salad?

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. Caesar salad?

BROOKE. No.

GUY. Greek salad?

BROOKE. No.

GUY. Garden salad?

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. Dressing?

BROOKE. Yes.

(GUY exhales. Doesn’t see it on the menu.)

GUY. *(To SERVER:)* Can you help me out here?

(The following happens really fast. The SERVER, unfazed, is just going through the motions like usual.)

SERVER. Blue Cheese.

BROOKE. No.

SERVER. French.

BROOKE. No.

SERVER. Ranch.

BROOKE. No.

SERVER. Reduced-fat Ranch.

BROOKE. No.

SERVER. Low-fat Ranch.

BROOKE. No.

SERVER. Fat-Free Ranch.

BROOKE. No.

SERVER. Balsamic Vinaigrette.

BROOKE. Yes.

SERVER. Mixed in.

BROOKE. No.

SERVER. On the side.

BROOKE. Yes.

SERVER. We have 34 entrees to choose from. Would you like grilled salmon.

BROOKE. No.

SERVER. Roast chicken.

BROOKE. No.

SERVER. Short ribs.

BROOKE. No.

SERVER. Duck L'Orange.

GUY. You know what? Why don't we just start with the salad for now.

SERVER. Very good, sir...

(The SERVER exits.)

GUY. Is everything okay?

BROOKE. No.

GUY. Is that why you're answering with only Yes or No?

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. I'm sorry... What's wrong?

BROOKE. Yes.

(Pause.)

GUY. Oh...

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. So your answers haven't really been corresponding with any of my questions at all.

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. What's two plus two?

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. What's the capital of Oregon?

BROOKE. No.

GUY. Do you kick puppies for a living?

BROOKE. Yes.

GUY. What's your opinion of two random words like triceratops dodgeball?

BROOKE. No.

(Beat.)

GUY. So I guess the real question is: Español? Français? Italiano?

BROOKE. *(At machine-gun speed:)* Parli Italiano! Grazie a dio! Mi rendo conto che fosse stato di brutta figura di uscire con un ragazzo senza controllando se parlasse la mia lingua, ma di solito non sono una persona di bella figura. Cosa ne pensi?⁴

⁴ Translation: "You speak Italian! Thank God! I realize that it may have been impolite to go out with a guy without checking if he speaks my language, but usually I'm not a very polite person. What do you think about that?"

(Pause.)

GUY. Si.

(Blackout.)

(NOTE: Until her very last line, Brooke should not have a foreign accent. Throughout the scene, it should seem as though her one-word answers are realistic-sounding responses to what's being spoken to her.)

Scene 6

(At a restaurant table. DAN speaks in that deep, intense movie trailer voice. You know the one.⁵)

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...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?

⁵ In case you don't, watch the trailers for *Terminator 2* and *Fatal Attraction*, among countless others.

DAN. That voice...is mine...

GIRL. (*Not buying it:*) That's really you? That's your job?

DAN. It is...

(*Beat.*)

GIRL. Okay, that's actually pretty cool... Still, it'd be less weird if you just talked in your normal speaking voice.

DAN. This *is* my normal speaking voice.

GIRL. It is...?

DAN. I've been the official movie preview voice for so long, I've forgotten how to speak...like a normal person...

GIRL. Uh huh.

DAN. My voice makes life...harder than you think... I've found it difficult...to show emotion... For example...here is what it sounds like when I say...something exciting...

I can't believe my team won the Super Bowl. How about that catch in the game-winning drive. What a play. I'm freaking out. Woo.

GIRL. It does lose something in the translation

DAN. Or last week...when my friend's grandmother died... It was hard to sound sincere...when I told him *this*:

I'm so sorry for your loss... Grams was a wonderful woman... My condolences to you...and your family.

GIRL. It must be hard for you.

DAN. It's made me...desperately sad...

GIRL. Well, what if we try to fix your problem?

DAN. I'm fairly certain...it can't be fixed...

GIRL. We could try... Here – give me an example line from one of your movie trailers.

(*He briefly prepares himself, putting his hand over his ear as if he were in a studio.*)

DAN. *In a world* where parakeets rule, one man –

GIRL. Okay, there. Say "In a world" again.

DAN. *In a world...*

GIRL. Right. But this time, say it like I do. "In a world."

DAN. *In a world...*

GIRL. Better. *(It wasn't better.)* Try again.

DAN. *In a world...*

GIRL. Okay, try saying: "Inside this planet."

DAN. *In a world...*

GIRL. All right, forget it. I can't stay if you're gonna to talk like that the whole time.

(She gather her belongings.)

DAN. Before you go...can you do me one favor...

GIRL. What?

DAN. Could you give me...a ride home...

GIRL. You don't have a car?

DAN. I can't...afford it...

GIRL. You can't afford a car? You're a Hollywood celebrity. Shouldn't you have a lot of money?

(He puts his hand to his ear as if he's in the studio again.)

DAN. *In a world* of plastic surgery and million-dollar makeovers... *one man...* risked it all.

(Beat.)

(In his regular voice:) And now he's broke and lives with his mom.

(Blackout.)

Scene 7

(At a restaurant table.)

GUY. It's nice to meet you.

SARAH. Give me some details about you.

GUY. Oh. Let's see. I went to college at State.

SARAH. *(Slightly overlapping:)* State, yes. Go on.

GUY. I was an English major, but I minored in – Astronomy.

SARAH. *(Overlapping:)* Astronomy. Yes, I know. All of this is obvious. Give me *details*.

GUY. I don't understand. How is this obvious?

SARAH. *(Exasperated:)* Have you ever been on a date before? *(Sighs:)* Fine. I'll show you. Ask me questions about your life.

GUY. Okay. Where am I from?

SARAH. Baltimore.

GUY. What are my parents' names?

SARAH. Steve and Joan.

GUY. What was my MCAT score?⁶

SARAH. You didn't take the MCAT.

(Beat.)

But you got a 1250 on the GRE.

GUY. That's amazing...

SARAH. Child's play. Your family dog's name was Dexter; he was killed by an 1986 Buick Lesabre when you were ten. You got straight-A's all through middle school except when you failed Volleyball. You were second place in your ninth grade spelling bee, losing on the word "anemometer." You have a phobia of nursing homes and peacocks; you love black licorice but hate Twizzlers, and your blood-type is AB-positive but you

⁶ Pronounced "EM-cat."

didn't know that till I just told you 'cause you've never given blood. Ask me something hard.

(Pause.)

GUY. I'm not sure whether to be impressed or creeped out, but I think I'm just creeped out.

SARAH. All of this information is publicly available. Ever heard of the "internet"? I'll bet you only use it for email.

GUY. Yep.

SARAH. Seriously? What are you, trapped in 2018?⁷

GUY. You found all of that about me online...

SARAH. Of course. Why else do you think they invented Google, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, CriminalSearches.com, OpenSecrets.org, and RedSox.com?

GUY. RedSox.com?

SARAH. You bought tickets last week.

(Beat.)

GUY. All right, well... *(Trying to hold back the sarcasm:)* Tell me about you.

SARAH. *(Exasperated:)* Are you kidding me? Who doesn't research their date in advance? Do your homework.

Here.

(In one simple, fluid motion she pulls out a laptop or tablet, and slides it over to GUY.)

I'll wait.

(Blackout.)

⁷ Use the year before the current year.

Scene 8

(At a restaurant table. GIRL and CHASE are mid-conversation, fully engaged.)

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

(At a restaurant table.)

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

(At a restaurant table. BARRY is all business – dressed for success.)

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.⁸

(Beat.)

GIRL. I'm gonna hit the ladies room.

(GIRL gets up, takes out her phone, and turns to walk away. GUY is suddenly there.)

GIRL. Hey! What are you doing here? I was just texting you! *(Leans in:)* Save me.

GUY. Okay.

(He takes a breath.)

I thought for a long time about what you said at the wedding. Or what you screamed at the wedding... I realized that for years I've been texting escape plans from the bathroom, but never when I'm with you.

GIRL. Me too. Like just now all I could think about was us doing laundry, instead of listening to whatever garbage this guy was talking about. *(Indicates BARRY.)*

BARRY. How's it goin'.

GUY. So I think we should quit nibbling at that jalapeño. We should eat the whole thing. Which sucks 'cause I'm allergic to peppers.

What I'm asking is: Will you come with me to dinner?

GIRL. Yes.

GUY. But not just one dinner. All the dinners.

(He gets down on one knee and reveals an engagement ring.)

(There is a moment where GIRL's breath is taken away, but she doesn't telegraph her emotions.)

(A pause where it's unclear what will happen.)

BARRY. Check please.

End of Play

⁸ Alternate line: "They didn't use pie charts."