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*For your free consulting services,
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Cast of Characters

GIRL

GUY

LOUIS

MELANIE

KEN

MARY

MARK

PEARL

TOD

SOPHIE

BRANDON

LINDA

MANNY

MIMI

Setting

A restaurant

Time

Now

Production Notes

I originally wrote this play with the intention of having the same two actors play the roles of GIRL and GUY, and having thirteen different actors play the rest of the roles. Another fun option would be to cast the play using four total actors, with all 12 characters split between two quick-change artists. The other option (which I least prefer) would be to cast every scene with a different pair of actors. While this would be a great opportunity to get heaps of people involved in the production, it does cheapen the conclusion of the play.

Every scene is a pairing of male vs. female. I wrote it this way simply because I only have first-hand experience with heterosexual dating. Should your production group wish to mix and match the characters' genders, I absolutely approve of it (though Scene 9 would have to remain male vs. female).

I envision the stage setup as two small dinner tables at opposite sides of the stage, with GUY and GIRL facing away from each other. I also imagine there would never be a need for a full blackout—just a quick lighting switch at the end of each scene to move from GIRL's table to GUY's table, and so on. If full blackouts make more sense to your production, then by all means, blackout away.

CHECK, PLEASE

by Jonathan Rand

Scene 1

LOUIS. Hi.

GIRL. Hi there.

LOUIS. It's great to meet you.

GIRL. You, too.

LOUIS. So how long have you lived in the city?

GIRL. Oh, eighteen months? I think? It doesn't feel like it's been that long.

LOUIS. I've been here three years. It's a great city.

GIRL. Oh, definitely. What do you like most about it?

LOUIS. What do you like most about living here?

(Pause, as GIRL is only slightly noticeably confused.)

GIRL. Well...I love walking my dog in the park. Especially on a pretty day.

LOUIS. Yeah? Is that the truth? I love to ride my bike around the city—when the traffic is light of course.

(He chuckles.)

GIRL. Same here.

LOUIS. Oh and also—and this may just be me—but I have this thing for walking my dog in the park on a pretty day.

GIRL. No, I like that, too. I said so earlier.

LOUIS. So do you like watching TV?

GIRL. No.

LOUIS. Me, too! I love it!

(Pause.)

GIRL. (*Curious:*) Are you listening to me at all?

LOUIS. Sometimes I like to curl up with a bag of popcorn and just chow down while I watch Home Improvement. Do you like Home Improvement?

GIRL. You really aren't listening to me.

LOUIS. Me, too! That's a riot. Tim Allen just cracks—me—up.

GIRL. This is ridiculous...

(Throughout the below monologue, GIRL gradually tries out different tactics to see how self-centered and non-reactive LOUIS truly is. She tries saying things to him like "pardon me" and "hi"; she tries whistling at him a little; she even tries touching his nose with her index finger or a spoon for a few seconds. No matter what she does, LOUIS just keeps on trucking, as if she wasn't there.)

LOUIS. I mean, his comedy is just choice. It's like his comic timing was a gift from the gods, you know? You know what I'm talking about? Man... I'm just blown away every time I see the show, or one of his movies. Did you see The Santa Clause? Ah! If you haven't, go and rent it *right away*. That is one funny guy. He reminds me of me, actually. We have the same sense of humor. My old roommate, Bill? He says I'm the funniest guy he's ever met. Hey—he's entitled to his opinion, right? Anyway, I've got my personality flaws. Sometimes I'm too funny. People don't realize it when I'm being serious!! Do you believe that?! But jeez, enough about me. I'm talkin' like a motormouth here! Tell me about you.

GIRL. Or we could just end the date right now, since you're the biggest tool I've ever met.

(A slightly long pause; we assume he is going to break.)

LOUIS. I'm a Capricorn myself.

(Scene.)

Scene 2

(This next scene will work best if MELANIE is truly sweet, innocent, and adorable when she's focused on the date.)

GUY. Hi.

MELANIE. Hi.

GUY. It's so great to finally meet you.

MELANIE. Same here!

GUY. So... What do you—

MELANIE. Wait, before you— Sorry. *(Meekly:)* This is so rude, but the Bears game is on right now? You don't mind if I check the score...

GUY. Oh sure. Totally.

MELANIE. *(As she pulls out her cell phone to check her web-browser:)* Thanks. I know this is such an awful thing to do on a first date, but it's late in the fourth quarter, and it's do-or-die if we wanna make the playoffs.

GUY. It's no problem at all. Really.

MELANIE. Thanks. *(As she checks:)* I love the Bears. They're really strong this season. *(Sees score; reacts a little.)* Okay, I'm done. *(Cheerily:)* That wasn't so bad, was it?

GUY. What's the score?

MELANIE. Packers by seven.

GUY. Uh-oh.

MELANIE. Nah, it's no big deal. It's just a game, right? So c'mon—enough about football. Let's hear about "Mister Mystery." Harriet's told me tons about you.

GUY. Man... The pressure's on now.

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

MELANIE. I'm just gonna check on the game one more time.

(She digs into her purse.)

GUY. *(Smiling:)* No worries.

MELANIE. Is it all right with you if I put on this little earpiece thingy? It won't be distracting, I promise.

GUY. Sure.

MELANIE. *(As she puts the earpiece in her ear:)* I'm making the worst first impression, aren't I?

GUY. Not at all.

MELANIE. It's just because it's for the playoffs. I'm usually pretty normal.

GUY. It's really no—

MELANIE. *(Throws her hands up:)* Ah!

GUY. What?

MELANIE. Oh. Nothing. The line only gives A-Train this huge running lane, but he fumbles after two yards. The ball rolled out of bounds, so we're cool, but come on—it's for the playoffs. You don't just drop the ball like that, you know? Now you're third and long, and the whole season is riding on one play.

GUY. That's—

MELANIE. WHAT?!

GUY. What?

MELANIE. PASS THE BALL!!

GUY. What's wrong?

MELANIE. Miller! He doesn't pass it. The man refuses to pass the ball this season. It's third and long— Who hands it off on third and long? Is he suddenly AFRAID OF HIS RECEIVERS?!

(GUY looks around subtly at the other patrons.)

Oh my God, I'm sorry. I'm being loud, aren't I.

GUY. *(Trying hard to be convincing:)* No...

MELANIE. Oh, I am. I'm so sorry. Look, how about this: I'll make it up to you. After dinner I'll buy you dessert at this tiny little bistro on 11th that nobody knows about. It's gotta be one of my absolute favorite places to go. It's so precious. I think you'll just—PASS THE BALL!! Jesus, people! This is FOOTBALL, not FREEZE TAG. It's FOURTH DOWN—pass the FRIGGING BALL!

GUY. Listen—we could go to a bar or something if you want—watch the game on TV.

MELANIE. Oh please, no. I wouldn't do you that to you. The game's basically over. *(She takes a deep breath, and is now very calm.)* Okay. I'm done. I got a little carried away there, didn't I? Let's order.

(They peruse for a moment, as if nothing has happened.)

GUY. Oh. *(Indicating the menu:)* Harriet said we should definitely try the—

(MELANIE suddenly lets out a bloodcurdling shriek and rips the menu in half. Beat.)

GUY. Or, we could order something else. *(Beat.)* Your menu tore a little.

MELANIE. *(Downtrodden:)* They lost...

GUY. Oh. Oh, I'm sorry.

MELANIE. *(Starting to tear up:)* They lost. They just blew the playoffs.

GUY. Well, I—

(MELANIE breaks down, bawling. GUY thinks for a moment, then takes out a handkerchief and offers it to MELANIE. She uses it to blow her nose.)

GUY. I'm so sorry. Can I do anything to help?

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

GUY. Aww, no. They don't suck.

MELANIE. They do... They suck.

GUY. They're probably just having a bad season—

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

MELANIE. THE BEARS SUCK.

GUY. *(Very weakly:)* The Bears suck.

(Scene.)

Scene 3

GIRL. Hi.

KEN. Hello.

(He kisses her hand, lingering there a second too long.)

GIRL. It's great to meet you.

KEN. The pleasure...is all mine.

GIRL. So...where are you from? I can't place the accent.

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

(Beat.)

GIRL. Do you want to order some appetizers?

KEN. Anything...which will ensure happiness for your beautiful lips.

(He looks at menu, unaware of her subtle look of disbelief. She finally looks down at her menu.)

GIRL. Ooh! The shrimp cocktail looks good.

KEN. Shrimp... A creature of the ocean. The ocean...which is not nearly as lovely as the ocean of your eyes.

(Pause.)

GIRL. Listen, can I ask you sort of a...barbed question?

KEN. Anything which your heart desires will be—

GIRL. Yeah yeah. So—are you going to be doing this for the rest of dinner?

KEN. Whatever do you mean?

GIRL. All of this...sketchy, provocative garbage?

(Pause.)

KEN. Yes.

(Scene.)

Scene 4

GUY. Hi.

MARY. Hi.

GUY. It's so great to finally meet you.

MARY. Same here! Listen: I was wondering if you were free next Friday.

GUY. Ah, I think so. Why?

MARY. Well, if dinner goes well tonight, I wanted to go ahead and line up a second date.

GUY. Oh. Okay, sure.

MARY. See, 'cause here's the thing: My parents are having a house-warming party at their new place on August 2nd, and if you and I hit it off tonight and end up seriously dating, that party would be the perfect opportunity for you to meet my parents. So naturally I'd like to squeeze in several healthy-sized dates before then. If we don't, my parents might be a little bit skeptical of our relationship, which could in turn be disastrous for our future, when you eventually pop the question. Not only would it make my whole family uncertain and uncomfortable during the ceremony, but it would also most likely carry over during our sixteen-day honeymoon in St. Martin. Even more importantly, it would be just awful if you had to deal with skeptical in-laws during the years down the road, and all because of a little thing like not setting aside fourteen healthy-sized

dates before the house-warming party. Think about how a family conflict like that could upset Jocelyn.

GUY. Jocelyn?

MARY. Our little darling. Middle child. Bryan first; then Jocelyn, and of course, little Madison.

(Pause.)

GUY. Wow...

MARY. What? What is it? You don't like the name Madison?

GUY. What? No. I mean, yes. No, that's a great name.

MARY. Something's on your mind. Honey, you can tell me. You're talking to your little sugar pumpkin, remember? Tell me.

GUY. Well, it's just— You just seem to have our whole relationship figured out—and we just met thirty seconds ago. *(Chuckling a little:)* I mean, you've got everything pinned down but the wedding dress.

MARY. Does that make you uncomfortable?

(Beat.)

(As she withdraws several boxes:) Because if it does, we can pick it out now.

(Scene.)

Scene 5

(Lights up to MARK dressed in nothing but a burlap sack. He's looking at the menu, as if nothing is out of the ordinary. GIRL is looking at him, expressionless. After several moments, he folds the menu, his dinner decision made. He looks up. Pause.)

MARK. *(Innocent:)* What?

(Scene.)

Scene 6

GUY. Hi.

PEARL. Hi.

GUY. It's so nice to meet you.

PEARL. Same here. Julia's told me a lot about you.

GUY. She's a great girl.

(The moment GUY begins speaking 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. So much fun to be around. We've been friends for something like, oh, I don't know...six years?

GUY. *(As PEARL quickly steals the rest of the utensils:)* Where'd you two meet? In school?

PEARL. Yeah. We played soccer together. Both second stringers, keeping the bench nice and toasty for the rest of the team.

(They laugh together. During their laugh, PEARL swipes her napkin.)

Honestly? Julia is one of my favorite girlfriends. And she's got great taste, so when she told me about you, I was definitely all about it.

(The moment GUY begins speaking the next line, PEARL swiftly and deftly removes the flower from the vase, pours the contents of her glass into the vase, pockets the glass, and replaces the flower in the vase.)

GUY. That's very—sweet...

PEARL. No, I'm serious. I've been looking forward to this for a while now.

GUY. *(As PEARL takes the flower:)* I'm flattered.

PEARL. So... You hungry? I'm about ready.

(PEARL picks up her menu; GUY does likewise. The moment GUY begins speaking, PEARL slides the menu into her jacket.)

GUY. I'm pretty hungry, too—you know, I can see that you're stealing. You don't have to play it off like you're not.

PEARL. What? What are you talking about?

GUY. *(As PEARL steals a plate:)* I'm sitting right here— See? There. You just stole a plate.

PEARL. I don't understand. That's such a cruel accusation.

GUY. *(As PEARL steals sugar holder:)* Accusation?! I'm watching you steal those sugar packets right now? How can you honestly believe I don't notice.

PEARL. *(Starting to leave:)* Look, I don't know what your beef is with me as a person, but this is really insulting. I think we'll have to do this another time.

GUY. Wait. Listen. This is really silly. If you'll stop stealing things, I won't insult you. That's all. Then we can have a perfectly normal dinner. Okay?

(Resolved, PEARL collects herself and moves back toward the table.)

GUY. Great, so—

(She whips the tablecloth off the table and starts stuffing it down her pants. Halfway through, she looks up at GUY's reaction.)

PEARL. WHAT NOW?!

(Scene.)

Scene 7

(GIRL is sitting across from TOD, a little boy—regardless of the age of the actor portraying this role, it should be immediately and abundantly clear that TOD is far too young for GIRL. A long pause.)

GIRL. This may sound insensitive, but...how old are you?

TOD. What's yer favorite animal?

GIRL. No no. I'm serious. I really want to know your age.

TOD. I like elephants.

GIRL. I think there's been a misunderstanding. See, when Christy said that you were still in school, I assumed she meant—

(She is suddenly interrupted by TOD's elephant impression. Beat.)

GIRL. That's very...lifelike.

TOD. Do you have a scar?

GIRL. No.

TOD. I have a scar! Do you want to see it?

GIRL. No, that's all right.

(Before she can finish her thought, TOD throws his leg up on the table, rolls up his pant leg, and shows the scar on his knee.)

TOD. I got it from kickball. Do you see it?

GIRL. No.

TOD. It's right there.

GIRL. Oh I trust you.

(He removes his leg from the table.)

GIRL. Honestly, how old are you?

TOD. *(A quick display on his fingers:)* This many. Will you be my girlfriend?

GIRL. Your girlfriend.

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

GIRL. You've got a lot of girlfriends.

TOD. Yeah will you be my girlfriend?

GIRL. *(Sarcastically giving in:)* Sure, why not... I'd be honored to be one of your girlfriends. But only if you pay for dinner.

TOD. Okay.

(He produces a huge piggy bank and begins emptying change. Scene.)

Scene 8

(SOPHIE enters the restaurant. She is a very old woman, edging toward the table in a walker. GUY just stares. Scene.)

Scene 9

(BRANDON and GIRL are in mid-laugh.)

BRANDON. I didn't even—

GIRL. —I know, I know—

BRANDON. —I mean, seriously! Jeez!

GIRL. —I know, right?

(They settle down from the laughter.)

BRANDON. So listen—all joking aside...this is fun! I'm really loving hanging out with you!

GIRL. Me, too! This has been really, really great.

BRANDON. Hasn't it? Neat.

GIRL. Uh! There's a fly in my water.

BRANDON. Gross. Here, take mine. *(To offstage:)* Waiter? Can we get another water here?

GIRL. You are so—sweet.

BRANDON. Ah, c'mon.

GIRL. No really.

BRANDON. Anyone would do that.

GIRL. Actually, you'd be surprised. With the luck I've been having lately with dating...

BRANDON. Really? But you're so fun. And beautiful.

GIRL. Oh please.

BRANDON. No. I mean it.

GIRL. You are just too good to be true.

BRANDON. Oh, Terry, stop.

(Pause.)

GIRL. What?

BRANDON. What?

GIRL. Who?

BRANDON. What?

GIRL. Who's Teri?

BRANDON. What do you mean?

GIRL. You just called me Teri, who's Teri?

(BRANDON fidgets.)

GIRL. Is it your girlfriend?

BRANDON. Nooo! No.

GIRL. Who is she?

BRANDON. He.

(Beat.)

GIRL. He?

BRANDON. He.

GIRL. You're gay?

BRANDON. No! Well, yes. But Terry is my agent. *(Beat.)* I'm an actor.

GIRL. You're gay.

BRANDON. Yeah.

(Pause.)

GIRL. And why am I on a date with you?

BRANDON. Okay... I'm sorry I didn't tell you this sooner, but it would've totally backfired if I did. Here's what's going on: I'll be

playing Stanley in a local production of *Streetcar*, and since I'm a method-actor, I won't be able to get the part down until I method-act straight.

GIRL. Method-act.

BRANDON. Yes. I can't be Stanley Kowalski until I truly experience what it feels like to woo a woman.

(Pause.)

GIRL. So you're telling me you asked me out on a date, had me get dressed up for a nice dinner, drive myself all the way downtown, and then completely get my hopes destroyed after thinking I had finally met a decent guy—all so you could get a better feel for being straight?

(Beat.)

BRANDON. Yes. I hope that wasn't unfair to you or anything.

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

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

(She grabs the other glass of water and douses his face again.)

BRANDON. I deserved that.

(Scene.)

(Note: The character of Brandon should NOT be played as flamboyantly gay—the audience should only be made aware of that fact when he explains it during the date. The actor should play the part completely straight throughout.)

Scene 10

LINDA. Hi.

GUY. Hi.

LINDA. I've been looking forward to this for a while.

GUY. Me, too. Sorry about all the rescheduling.

LINDA. Pssh, whatever, it's cool. Oh, shoot. Hold on. I forgot to—

(She starts rummaging through her purse, and after a couple of seconds, starts removing objects—compact, lipstick, etc.)

GUY. What's up? What's wrong?

LINDA. Oh, it's this silly thing. I've got this pill I need to take or else I get all weird. *(Back to her purse:)* I know I brought them. They've gotta be— You know, whatever. I'll be fine.

GUY. You sure? I could drive you to a pharmacy or something.

LINDA. Nah it's no big deal. It's just a precautionary drug, you know? It won't kill me if I don't take it for one night. I just may be a little out of whack. You probably won't even be able to tell. Whatever. So— anyway.

GUY. *(Smiling:)* Anyway.

LINDA. It's nice to finally meet you.

GUY. The feeling's mutual.

LINDA. *(Suddenly sarcastic, morose, in a monotone voice:)* Oh yes. It's so wonderful to finally put a name with a face. How wonderfully fascinating.

GUY. Heh. Yeah. Seriously.

LINDA. *(Giggly/bubbly:)* Hee hee hee. You're funny you're cute.

GUY. Oh—

LINDA. *(Gruff:)* He's not cute. You just haven't been out in a while.

(Snobby:) That is NOT—TRUE. He is GOOD—LOOKING.

(Bashful:) No... No... He's—

(Sensual:) Oh, you are absolutely right. He is a hunk of man.

(Jittery:) Shhhhhhhh... You're embarrassing yourself...

(Gruff:) Quit freaking out, man.

(Easily offended:) Wha? Wha? Why are you jumping all over me? I—

(Little girl:) She started it!

(Motherly:) Girls, please don't fight. What would your father say.

(Fatherly:) Oh, let 'em fight. Builds character.

GUY. Excuse me. Are you gonna be okay?

LINDA. *(Pissy, to GUY:)* You stay out of this!

(Reasonable:) Hey, leave him alone. You just met him.

(Gruff:) Oh, he can take care of himself

(Monkey:) Ooh ooh, ah! ah! ah!

(Pissy:) All right, who brought the monkey?

(Easily offended:) I didn't, did you?

(Assertive:) No.

(Little girl:) No.

(French:) Non.

(Innocent:) No.

(Pushover:) I did. It's my fault. I'm so sorry.

(Snob:) Idiot!

(Gruff:) A monkey? Come on!

(Sarcastic:) Way to ruin a magical evening.

(Sensual:) Mmmmm...The evening's about to get a lot more magical.

(Motherly:) You'd better behave yourself young lady, or you're grounded.

(Fatherly:) Get off her case, woman! She ain't a child.

(Monkey:) Ooh ooh ooh ooh.

(GUY notices a bottle under a napkin and shows it to LINDA.)

GUY. Hey, are these the pills?

LINDA. *(Cheery:)* There they are!

(Pissy:) Yeah, too little too late.

(Sensual:) You are so sweet to find them!

(Peppy:) Yeah! YEAH!

(Sarcastic monotone:) Whoop-dee-doo.

(LINDA swallows the pill.)

GUY. Is everything all right?

LINDA. *(Mostly back to normal, but woozy:)* Whoa. Uh. Okay. Okay. It's starting to kick in.

GUY. Great.

LINDA. In a couple of seconds, the medicine'll take effect and I'll settle into a single personality. But don't worry—like 99 times out of a hundred, it's one of the normal ones.

GUY. But with my luck—

(LINDA suddenly lets out a monkey shriek, grabs some bread from the table, sniffs it voraciously, stuffs it in her mouth, and lumbers offstage.)

(Pause.)

GUY. She was nice.

(Scene.)

(Note: Linda's personality switches should be fast. Each personality should be a different level—her voice and demeanor should be changing dramatically throughout.)

Scene 11

GIRL. Hello.

MANNY. Hi.

GIRL. It's nice to meet you.

MANNY. You, too.

GIRL. Do you want to order? I'm starved.

MANNY. Yeah, me too. Let's go for it.

GIRL. Jeez. This menu's enormous! It's got everything.

MANNY. Seriously. I can never decide when the menu's so big. I'm so picky when it comes to ordering.

GIRL. Oh, I'm sure you'll find something. *(Beat.)* Ooh! I'm definitely getting the brisket. What about you?

MANNY. I don't know. I don't think I want any of this.

GIRL. Are you kidding? This menu's got everything. Why don't you tryyyy—the roast chicken.

MANNY. Naaahhhh. Too dry.

GIRL. Okay. How about...the filet mignon.

MANNY. Too moist.

GIRL. Oh.

MANNY. I actually have a tiny case of hygrophobia.

GIRL. Hygrophobia?

MANNY. It's an innate fear of dampness or moisture.

GIRL. Okay. How about...the french onion soup.

MANNY / GIRL. Hygrophobia.

GIRL. Right. Oh, let's see... You could get the potatoes.

MANNY. Too much fiber.

GIRL. Ummmmm, the eggplant parmesan?

MANNY. Porphyrophobia. Fear of the color purple.

GIRL. What about desserts? You could have the banana split.

MANNY. Coprastasophobia.

GIRL. Fear of—?

MANNY. —constipation.

GIRL. How about the sushi.

MANNY. Japanophobia. *(Beat.)* It's the—

GIRL. Yeah, I got it. What about this? It's that Hawaiian fish my dad loves. Lemme see if I can say it right: humu-humu-nuku-nuku-apuaa. Yeah, there we go. You should get that.

MANNY. That actually sounds delicious.

GIRL. Great!

MANNY. But I suffer from a rare case of hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia.

GIRL. Which is—?

MANNY. Fear of long words.

GIRL. Okay! I've got one! And it never fails: Peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

MANNY. Sorry.

GIRL. What could possibly be wrong with peanut butter and jelly?

MANNY. I recently developed arachibutyrophobia.

GIRL. Fear of sandwiches?

MANNY. Fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of my mouth.

GIRL. So what can you eat?

MANNY. Not much. I do have sitiophobia. *(Beat.)* Fear of food.

GIRL. Right. Look, since you have all of these dietary issues, maybe you shouldn't have asked me to "dinner."

MANNY. Huh.

GIRL. Look, how about we just skip this and go to a hockey game or something.

MANNY. Oooh, can't. I'm a pacifist.

GIRL. Play mini-golf.

MANNY. Asthma.

GIRL. See a musical.

MANNY. Depends.

GIRL. On what?

MANNY. I have ailurophobia.

GIRL. (*Overlapping:*) Fear of—?

MANNY. Cats.

(Pause.)

GIRL. Well, what do you want to do.

MANNY. Well, I have one or two ideas.

GIRL. Sounds great. Let's do it.

MANNY. But I have decidophobia.

GIRL. Okay, I'll decide for you. How about I go home, and you go home.

MANNY. I can't.

GIRL. Why not?

MANNY. Nostophobia.

GIRL. What's that? Fear of staying single for the rest of your life?

MANNY. No! That's anuptaphobia. I have that, too. But no, nostophobia is the fear of returning home.

GIRL. I see.

MANNY. Honestly, a lot of these phobias flare up on account of my deipnophobia..

GIRL. And that is—?

MANNY. Fear of dinner conversations.

(Beat.)

GIRL. I think it's time I head out.

MANNY. Why, what's wrong?

GIRL. I recently developed a phobia of my own, and it's really flaring up.

MANNY. Yeah? What's it called? Maybe I have it, too!

GIRL. Phobophobia.

(Beat. Beat.)

MANNY. I don't have that.

GIRL. *(Overlapping:)* No.

(Scene.)

Scene 12

(GUY is sitting across the table from a fully outfitted mime, MIMI, who, throughout the scene, is extremely over-the-top and exuberant, as stereotypical mimes are. I hate to add to the mime bigotry out there in the world, but someone's gotta tell it like it is. The scene begins with MIMI "leaning" on "something." Mimed actions in this scene will be indicated with brackets. A few moments pass, as we get a feel for the ridiculousness of the scenario.)

GUY. So what do you do for a living?

(Beat.)

MIMI. [Pulling something heavy with a rope.]

GUY. You pull rope. *(Pause.)* Look... I respect your profession and all? I think it's noble what you do... The world needs more people who...climb invisible ladders and pull imaginary ropes. But I really don't see how it's appropriate to bring your work to a date.

MIMI. [Battling against harsh winds.]

GUY. Oh yeah, quite a storm in here. Listen, I'm gonna go ahead and order.

(GUY opens his menu and reads. MIMI gets past the storm, and mimes picking up an imaginary menu, and proceeds to peruse it far too elaborately, turning page after page. GUY looks up. There is silence as he watches MIMI do her thing for a few moments.)

GUY. Hey, I'm gonna go...use the restroom.

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

MIMI. [You're leaving? Driving away? Far? Bye bye?]

GUY. No, I'm not leaving. I'm taking my jacket with me because...it might get cold in the men's room.

MIMI. [Cold like me in this wild blizzard?]

GUY. Yeah, exactly like that.

(GUY starts to leave. MIMI follows close behind, maybe as an airplane pilot, or a bus driver.)

GUY. No, you stay here. You—

MIMI. [Let me feed some chickens. Awww, those chicks are adorable. I love petting these lovely animals.]

GUY. I don't know what that is... Look I have to—

(An idea dawns on GUY has an idea. The following is an extremely loud and animated sequence of events—very frantic for MIMI; sarcastically frantic for GUY.)

GUY. *(Looking up:)* Oh my God! A BOX!

MIMI. [Where? Where?]

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

MIMI. [Oh no! Oh no! I can't see it! What in heavens name will I do? Help me, Lord!]

GUY. Noooooooooo!

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

Scene 13

(Lights up to MARK in his burlap sack. He is reading the menu. Long pause.)

GIRL. Why don't you just give up.

MARK. If you've got a bone to pick with me, why don't you just come out and say it?

GIRL. You're wearing a burlap sack.

(Pause.)

MARK. That's your opinion.

(Pause. GIRL stands and takes her jacket.)

GIRL. I need to go powder my nose.

(Beat.)

MARK. Nice jacket.

GIRL. You, too.

(GIRL exits toward GUY's table. The lights on GIRL's table remain up as lights come up on GUY's table. MIMI is still in her box, but not so as to distract from the action center. GIRL and GUY bump into each other.)

GIRL. Oh, sorry.

GUY. No. My fault.

(A short moment of instant chemistry. Then GUY shakes it off, as does GIRL.)

GUY. Well, goodnight.

GIRL. Goodnight.

(They start to go their separate ways.)

GUY. Wait a second. *(Pause.)* This may sound like a really random question, but... do you like football?

GIRL. A little. *(Beat.)* Do you own any burlap?

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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