

# *Check Please*

a play by Jonathan Rand

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## **Cast of Characters**

GIRL

GUY

LOUIS

MELANIE

KEN

PHOEBE

MARK

PEARL

TOD

SOPHIE

BRANDON

LINDA

MATT

MIMI

## **Setting**

A restaurant or bar or café: two tables and four chairs.

## **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.

## Scene 1

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. Definitely. 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 napkin over his head. 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

**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 hits 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, moving on. 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? Don't worry – I'm a great multitasker.

**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:)* Ahhh!

**GUY.** What's up?

**MELANIE.** What's *up*? What's *up* is that our fullback fumbled. *That's* what's *up*. We jumped on it, but come *on*: You *gotta* have better ball security. You *gotta*. But sorry, you were saying?

**GUY.** I don't think I *was* saying.

**MELANIE.** Are you *joking*?! *Pass the ball!! It's third and long!! Who runs on third and long?!*

**GUY.** The Bears...?

**MELANIE.** Oh I'm being loud...

**GUY.** Loud's a relative term.

**MELANIE.** I'm sorry. But silver lining: this place has a crème brûlée that 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's 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...

**MELANIE.** They do... They suck.

**GUY.** They'll bounce back –

(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

**GIRL.** It's great to meet you.

**KEN.** The pleasure...is all mine.

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

**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.

**GIRL.** Appetizer?

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

**GIRL.** The popcorn shrimp looks good.

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

**GIRL.** So can I ask sort of a blunt question?

**KEN.** Anything your heart desires will be—

**GIRL.** Yeah yeah. Are you going to be like this for the rest of dinner?

**KEN.** Whatever do you mean?

**GIRL.** All creepy and nauseating?

*(Beat.)*

**KEN.** Yes.

*(Blackout.)*

## Scene 4

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. Nooo, too dry.

GUY. Okay. The shrimp scampi.

PHOEBE. Nooo, too moist.

GUY. Oh.

PHOEBE. I actually have mild case of hygrophobia.

GUY. Hygrophobia?

PHOEBE. It's the fear of dampness.

GUY. Oh, okay. How about the eggplant parmesan?

PHOEBE. Porphyrophobia.

GUY. What's that?

PHOEBE. Fear of purple.

GUY. You could get the cheese plate.

PHOEBE. Coprastasophobia.

GUY. Fear of?

PHOEBE. Constipation.

GUY. What about the sushi?

PHOEBE. Japanophobia. *(Beat.)* It's the fear of –

GUY. No, I got it. What about this Hawaiian fish? Let's see if I can pronounce it right: Humuhumunukunukuapua'a'.

**PHOEBE.** That actually sounds delicious.

**GUY.** Great!

**PHOEBE.** But I suffer from a rare case of hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia.

**GUY.** Which is?

**PHOEBE.** Fear of long words.

**GUY.** Okay! How about this: peanut butter and jelly.

**PHOEBE.** Sorry.

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

**PHOEBE.** I recently developed arachibutyrophobia.

**GUY.** Fear of sandwiches?

**PHOEBE.** Fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of my mouth.

**GUY.** So what *can* you eat?

**PHOEBE.** Not much. I do have sitiophobia.

**GUY.** Fear of?

**PHOEBE.** Food.

**GUY.** Right. So if you have all of these dietary issues, why *dinner*?

**PHOEBE.** Good question.

**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 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 just looking at him, deadpan. After a little time passes, he looks up.)*

**MARK.** *(Innocent:)* What?

*(Blackout.)*

### Scene 6

**GUY.** So nice to meet you.

**PEARL.** Likewise! Julia's told me all about you.

**GUY.** You've 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 youth soccer when we were, like, eight. And let me tell you: it was intense.

*(They laugh, and while they do, PEARL swipes a napkin.)*

Seriously, Julia is my favorite. And she's got great taste, so when she told me about you, I was definitely on board.

*(Once GUY begins speaking, PEARL swiftly 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 – great...

PEARL. No, really, I've been looking forward to this for a while.

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

PEARL. You hungry? I'm about ready.

*(They look at their menus. The moment GUY begins speaking, PEARL steals her menu)*

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

PEARL. What are you talking about?

GUY. *(As PEARL steals a plate:)* I'm sitting right here – You just stole that plate.

PEARL. Wow, that's a cruel accusation.

GUY. *(As PEARL steals sugar holder:)* Accusation? I'm watching you steal those sugar packets right now. You really think I don't notice.

PEARL. *(Starting to leave:)* Look, I don't know what your problem is with me as a person, but this is really insulting. I'd better go.

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 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.)*

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

**TOD.** What's yer favorite animal?

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

**TOD.** I like elephants.

**GIRL.** There may have been a misunderstanding. See, when your profile said you were still in school, I thought maybe a PhD progra –

*(GIRL is suddenly interrupted by TOD's elephant impression.)*

That's lifelike.

**TOD.** Do you have a scar? I have a scar. Wanna see?

**GIRL.** No, that's all right.

*(TOD throws his leg up on the table and shows his knee.)*

**TOD.** I got it from kickball. Isn't that *cool!* So cool...

**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 boring lunch to school and Courtney Shuler smells like dirt.

**GIRL.** You've got a lot of girlfriends.

**TOD.** Yeah will you be my girlfriend?

**GIRL.** I can't begin to express how uncomfortable I feel.

**TOD.** Oh no... Mommy calls that a brain boo-boo. You have a brain boo-boo? We can fix that. *(Calls to an offstage server, maybe with two claps:)* Two chocolate milks!

*(Blackout.)*

### Scene 8

*(SOPHIE enters the restaurant. She is very, very, very old – like, death’s door old. GUY just looks at her, deadpan. Blackout.)*

### Scene 9

*(BRANDON and GIRL are mid-laugh.)*

**BRANDON.** I didn’t even –

**GIRL.** –I know –

**BRANDON.** –I mean, seriously?

**GIRL.** –I know!

**BRANDON.** So hey – all joking aside...this is fun! I’m having a good time.

**GIRL.** Yeah, it’s been great.

**BRANDON.** Hasn’t it? Wow.

**GIRL.** Aw – there’s a fly in my water.

**BRANDON.** Gross. Take mine. *(Looking off:)* Excuse me, another water?

**GIRL.** You are so sweet.

**BRANDON.** Ah, c’mon.

**GIRL.** No really.

**BRANDON.** Anyone would do that.

**GIRL.** You’d be surprised. With my dating luck...

**BRANDON.** Really? But you’re so fun. And gorgeous.

**GIRL.** Oh please.

**BRANDON.** No, for real.

**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 fidgets.)*

**GIRL.** Is it your girlfriend?

**BRANDON.** No.

**GIRL.** Who is she?

**BRANDON.** Oh no: He.

**GIRL.** He?

**BRANDON.** He.

**GIRL.** You're gay?

**BRANDON.** No! Well, yes. But Jamie's my agent. I'm an actor.

**GIRL.** You're gay.

**BRANDON.** Yeah.

*(Beat.)*

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

**BRANDON.** Okay, so here's the deal: I got cast as Stanley in a local production of *Streetcar*, and since I'm a method-actor, I can't understand the part until I method-act straight.

**GIRL.** Method-act.

**BRANDON.** Yeah. I can't be Stanley Kowalski until I experience firsthand what it feels like to court a lady.

*(Pause.)*

**GIRL.** So let me walk through this:

**BRANDON.** Sure!

**GIRL.** I just got myself ready for this date—

**BRANDON.** Yup!

**GIRL.** —drove all the way downtown—

**BRANDON.** Uh huh!

**GIRL.** —and then felt optimistic that I'd finally met a good guy—

**BRANDON.** Oh thanks!

**GIRL.** —and 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—

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

*(Blackout.)*

*(Note: The character of Brandon should NOT be played in a flamboyant manner.)*

### Scene 10

*(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 no 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 – explain again what's happening right now?

LINDA. You've seen that movie *The Shining* where that kid speaks with his finger? Y'know, "Redrum"? That's Walter.

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. For example... *(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. Not really.

LINDA. Just 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:)* Hmmmm, 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:)* Tell her that you're cool with our 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. 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. *(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! *(To GUY:)* See ya, buddy. Oh and you can borrow those dance moves whenever you want. *(To the departing LINDA:)* Hey, slow down!

*(He "leaves." In reality, LINDA/WALTER/DELORES still sits there, silently, without expression. A moment, as GUY just sort of takes it all in. Then:)*



**GUY.** So, to confirm: now I'm on a date with a monkey.

(DELORES *monkey-screeches and devours the banana.*)

(*Blackout.*)

### Scene 11

**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.** 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.)*

## Scene 12

*(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.

*End of Play*

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