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BLIND DATE

A One-Act Play

by

Colette Mazunik

Blind Date

By Colette Mazunik

David: Early thirties. Very eager to have this blind date have a happy ending. It's been two years since he's kissed anyone.

Abbie: Late twenties. She's here because she wants to find a husband—but she is sick to death of dating.

Waiter: Living on tips.

(A restaurant. MUSIC plays. ABBIE is seated at the table with two menus. A candle, etc. DAVID enters. MUSIC fades.)

DAVID

Hi. Abbie? Sorry I'm late.

ABBIE

No problem. So you're . . .
Sit down—sit down.

DAVID

I—my train got stuck between stations. I'm so sorry.

ABBIE

It's fine. It happens. So, you're David—right?

DAVID

Yes. And you are Abbie.

ABBIE

I am.

DAVID

This looks like a nice place—nice atmosphere.

ABBIE

(Nodding.)
Are you late often?

DAVID

What?

ABBIE

No. I'm sorry—don't get me wrong, I'm not upset. I was just wondering if this was a habit for you.

A tendency.

To be late.

DAVID

Oh.

No.

ABBIE

You're usually on time?

DAVID

Yeah.

ABBIE

You're not compulsive about being on time, are you?

DAVID

No. I wouldn't say that.

Why?

ABBIE

No, I'm just curious. So.

DAVID

So.

WAITER

Hi. How are you folks tonight? Can I get you something to drink?

ABBIE

Water's fine for me.

DAVID

I'll have a . . . Coke.

WAITER

Excellent. A Coke and a water. I'll be back with that shortly.

DAVID

So. Your mom tells me you're in graphic design.

ABBIE

Yes. Yes. I am. And you're a teacher.

DAVID
Yes.

ABBIE
Which grade was it that . . . ?

DAVID
Second.

ABBIE
Right. Second. So you must really—like—kids . . .

DAVID
Well, you know—it depends on the day.

(A small laugh.)
No—no it's a good job for me—you know—I mean some days you want to pull your hair out, but it's—it can be really rewarding too.

ABBIE
Financially?

DAVID
Excuse me?

ABBIE
I'm sorry. I was just asking if it was financially rewarding?

DAVID
No. That's not what I—
I mean it pays the bills but—
You don't go out much do you?

ABBIE
What?

DAVID
I'm sorry. I was just saying that you must not go out on a lot of dates.

WAITER
Here you go. A Coke and a water. Are you folks ready to order or do you—

ABBIE
Give us a few more minutes.
Why did you say that? That I must not . . .

DAVID

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have—but it just seems that—no, I, don't know why I said that.

ABBIE

I go out on dates constantly.

DAVID

Of course I don't know . . .

ABBIE

. . . why you said that? Is it because you find me to be a bit aggressive and intrusive in my questions?

DAVID

No. No.

ABBIE

It's okay if you do. But why should I change who I am to make you feel more comfortable, right?

DAVID

Right. Of course. Absolutely.

ABBIE

Right.

DAVID

I'm sorry.

ABBIE

No.

DAVID

It's just that I get—no I'm sorry. I just get nervous when it comes to—you know, small talk.

ABBIE

You're doing very well.

DAVID

Oh, I wasn't . . .

ABBIE

No, you're—you're doing very well. Listen, do you mind if—let's just be open with one another. Alright?

DAVID

Yeah!

ABBIE

Okay. Then. To let you know: I am initially attracted to you. *And* you have a job that actually benefits society—very good—very rare too. And since you're attracted to me too—you know there's . . .you're doing well.

(HE is flustered.)

No. No. It's just—your pupils are dilated which is a fairly reliable signal of attraction—and all of your body language is confirming that—the feet, pointed towards me, leaning in—therefore I conclude—I have a habit of speaking my mind—but you are attracted to me—at least on a purely physical level.
I'm right—no?

DAVID

Yes.

ABBIE

So. Like I said, we've got a good start. Do you mind if I take your picture?

DAVID

What is that for?

(SHE pulls out a Polaroid camera. Before he has a chance to respond she snaps a picture.)

DAVID

No. No. I don't mind at all.

ABBIE

Thanks. Sorry about that—I always think candid are the best.

DAVID

Okay? Are you trying to make me feel uncomfortable?

ABBIE

No. No! Are you uncomfortable?

DAVID

No. You just seem rather—

ABBIE

Yes?

DAVID

No. No. Never mind. It's nothing.

(The picture is developing nicely.)

ABBIE

Okay then—by the way, you wouldn't happen to, um, have a copy of your resume on you, would you?

DAVID

No. Why?

ABBIE

It would just save some time. But don't worry about it.

DAVID

Okay.

ABBIE

So—what kind of jobs have you had?

DAVID

Um. You want to know my work history?

ABBIE

Yeah—you don't have to go over every job you've ever had—just, tell me the highlights.

DAVID

What is this? Are you—excuse me if I've got something terribly wrong—but are you under the impression that I am here to interview?

ABBIE

Nnnnoooo.

DAVID

Do you thing you are hiring me for something?

ABBIE

Maybe that was an ill-timed question. I can understand that you might be reticent about revealing your former employment.

DAVID

No, it's not . . .

ABBIE

It's okay. I won't ask anything more about that at present.

DAVID
So, do you like your job?

ABBIE
What's your shoe size?

(HE gives her a questioning stare.)

WAITER
Have you decided what you want?

ABBIE
Yes. I'm ready. Are . . . ?

DAVID
You order first. I'll be ready by then.

ABBIE
All right. I'd like your vegetable lasagna.

WAITER
Vegetable lasagna. Sir?

DAVID
That sounds good. I'll have the same.

WAITER
Two orders of vegetable lasagna.

DAVID
Yes.

WAITER
Okay.

DAVID
(to ABBIE)
Are you a vegetarian?

ABBIE
No!
You?

DAVID
No.
I mean, I was for a while in college . . .

ABBIE

Yeah.

(Pause. SHE continues to look at him.)

DAVID

Yeah.

But I wasn't smart about it—you know. And I'd always end up not getting enough protein.

(Pause.)

Yeah. I felt tired all the time. So . . .

ABBIE

So now you're a carnivore once again.

DAVID

Exactly.

Listen, I'm sorry if—if I said something inappropriate. The truth is *I* don't get out much. And so maybe I'm just feeling, I don't know, nervous or something. I probably shouldn't admit that I'm nervous, right? The thing is—you know—I've never been good at this kind of thing. But the truth is— I guess what I'm saying is that maybe I've been being overly sensitive or something—but you—and I don't want my nervousness to get in the way or anything. Do you know what I . . . ?

ABBIE

Absolutely. That's perfectly . . .

(SHE's made up her mind—he's a possibility.)

Listen, I need to run to the ladies room, but while I'm gone, would you mind filling out this—it's just a release form that gives me permission to do a background check.

(HE takes it—SHE starts to leave.)

DAVID

Okay, sure . . . I . . .

(This is too much.)

What? What is this? Abbie—come back here. Abbie . . .

ABBIE

I'll just be a minute.

DAVID

I don't care. I want you to come back here now and explain this to me.

ABBIE

Is there a problem?

DAVID

Yes. A release form? You know, you are weird and scary and you are confusing me.

ABBIE

I'm weird and I'm scary?

DAVID

Yes! You do not give some one a release form to sign on a blind date.

ABBIE

I do.

DAVID

Obviously.

ABBIE

But then, I'm weird and scary.

DAVID

ABBIE

Maybe you should leave.

DAVID

What?!

ABBIE

Maybe you should leave. I'm scaring you. I'm making you feel uncomfortable. Maybe you'd be more comfortable if you left?

DAVID

You want me to leave?

ABBIE

If you want to.

DAVID

I am not leaving! I came here—on this blind date—although I hate blind dates—I hate dates in general—but I came here—even though this was not easy for me—even though it would have been the simplest thing in the world to say no—but I came here, because your mom has been telling me all about you all year long—and she showed me your picture—not that . . .—but you sounded like a really nice person—you looked like a really nice person—and so I said okay—I'm gonna do this—and I got all dressed up—ironed my shirt—I went out and got a haircut—because I needed to get a haircut anyway—but I did it *today* and NOT tomorrow or next week—and I practiced in the

mirror what I was going to say when I walked in—and I overcame my innate shyness and nervousness and I came here to meet you. So sit back down and start behaving like a normal person.

(SHE sits. Her eyes are glowing.)

Okay. Thank you.

It has been over a year since I went out on a date. Okay? And it has been over two years since I've kissed anyone. Two years! Yes. So. Now—give me that picture you took of me.

ABBIE

(SHE's pleased as can be—and ready to fight.)

It's my film.

DAVID

It's my face.

ABBIE

You saw my picture.

DAVID

(sarcastically)

Yeah, and I took it home with me and masturbated while imagining things we'd do if tonight went well.

That was a joke.

(ABBIE kisses DAVID aggressively. It's like a slap. HE is surprised, and on the verge of being a little pleased, although HE's sure HE shouldn't be.)

ABBIE

You're free to leave now. You got what you came for.

(Long pause.)

DAVID

I don't know what you think you're doing, but if you're trying to scare me off—you're gonna have to try a little harder. I am not leaving. If anyone leaves, it's gonna have to be you. I am going to sit here and wait for my lasagna. But you can go. You can go. You just *can't* go this time crying to your mother about the jerk she set you up with that left in the middle of the date. Because I am staying.

ABBIE

I wouldn't do that.

DAVID

No?

(pause)

You do know, don't you, that people don't generally behave the way you do on dates.

ABBIE

I do. But you hate dates—right?

DAVID

Yeah.

ABBIE

So?

DAVID

ABBIE

DAVID

ABBIE

I am just so sick of playing the game—you know—doing the little dating dance. I have wasted so much time trying to subtly find out information that . . .—I'm tired. I'm tired of trying to make things work that aren't gonna work. And I am tired of—. . . You know, I have gone out with a lot of guys. And inevitably I have to break up with them. Once. Once someone broke up with me—but every other time it was me—I know this sounds egotistical, but I'm just trying to explain something to you, and that's just the truth. I say to myself, why am I always the one doing the breaking up, you know—maybe I'm afraid of commitment. So I go around saying, "I'm afraid of commitment—they're nice guys—why don't I stick with them—what's wrong with me," you know. But I'm *not* afraid of commitment. That's the truth. I'm *eager* for commitment. But virtually none of the guys I've gone out with live up to my expectations. I know I don't want to be with them. Even if part of me does want—they aren't what I want. And that feels so stuck up to me. What? I think I'm too good for them? I don't know. Not too good. Just different, I guess. Or maybe too good. Anyway, they aren't what I want. And I am sick and tired of treading water. Okay. So it's sink or swim. You're either marriage material or this is the last date I'm going to waste with you. So if you want to go—please. Be my guest.

(Pause. The gauntlet has been thrown down.)

DAVID

You think you're too good for me?

(Long pause. The challenge has been accepted. It's ABBIE's turn to make the first move.)

ABBIE
I have to warn you that I am very intelligent.

DAVID
???

ABBIE
I am. I can't help it.

DAVID
Okay?

ABBIE
And I'm not going to pretend to be dumb.

DAVID
Right.

ABBIE
No. I am telling this to you—so you can't tell me later that you didn't know.

DAVID
Okay. So?
(Pause. Defensive.)
I'm good at math.
I enjoyed Calculus.

ABBIE
So did I.

DAVID
I was on the debate team in high school.

ABBIE
Chess club president.

DAVID
Senior class president.

ABBIE
1520 on the SAT.

(Pause.)

DAVID

There's more than one kind of intelligence.
I volunteer at a rest home.

ABBIE

Old people make me nervous.

DAVID

What?

ABBIE

They make me nervous. Do you have a problem with that?

DAVID

I get nervous around babies.

ABBIE

What?

DAVID

I'm scared to hold them. I'm afraid I'm gonna hurt them. Why? Do you have a problem with that?

ABBIE

I don't give my seat up on the subway.

DAVID

I don't hold doors.

ABBIE

I don't write thank you notes.

DAVID

I forget birthdays.

ABBIE

I pick my nose.

DAVID

I fart in public.

ABBIE

I don't return phone calls.

DAVID

I think I stalked my ex-girlfriend.

(Pause.)

ABBIE
What?

DAVID
I think I stalked my ex-girlfriend.

ABBIE
Think you stalked?

DAVID
When we broke up, I gave her her key back, but I had a copy made first. And I'd call sometimes just to see if she'd pick up. When she didn't I'd stand outside her apartment and think about going in.

ABBIE
Did you?

DAVID
No. But I still have the key.

(Pause.)

ABBIE
Sometimes I want people to fail. My friends even. I'm happy when I hear they've lost their job or not gotten into the grad school they wanted. Because I want them to experience pain.

DAVID
Sometimes when I'm talking with my best friend and he's telling me all about how his father's cancer is progressing and how hard it is for him, all I can think about is that I just wish he'd shut up, because I'm tired of pretending to be empathetic, and I just want to talk about me.

ABBIE
I'm rude to my mother. And I don't think I love my oldest sister. I think I might hate her. And I try to get the rest of the family to hate her too.

DAVID
Sometimes I intentionally befriend unpopular people because being around them makes me feel sophisticated by contrast. And I feel noble—the friend of the friendless, champion of the unloved. And they need me so much that they're willing to give me everything. And I let them.

(Pause. The next is a change of tone for ABBIE. It's less of a competition now. More of a revealing.)

ABBIE

I'm ugly.

Not on the outside. On the inside. And the problem is that it's easy to hide—because it's on the inside, you know. And I'm so afraid that someone will find out. I'm afraid someone will find out and—I'll have been with them, and I'll love them, and they'll think they love me—and then they'll find out—they'll see me—I don't know, say something horrible to my mother and they'll find out. And then they'll feel like they've been tricked into loving me.

(Pause. ABBIE is crying. DAVID's tone has changed as well. This is an offering. A confession.)

DAVID

When I was sixteen—I was out with my girlfriend. My first girlfriend. I'd just gotten my license. And we got into an accident. A drunk driver. She was killed. And I was fine.

ABBIE

I'm sorry.

DAVID

I was the drunk driver.

(Pause.)

I left Arnold—that's my hometown—I left as soon as I could because of course everybody there knows. But since I left . . . I haven't told anyone. I keep worrying people will find out.

ABBIE

DAVID

ABBIE

DAVID

ABBIE

(ABBIE reaches out and touches his hand, briefly.)

DAVID

ABBIE

DAVID

(DAVID makes a decision and grabs ABBIE's hands. SHE is more frightened than we had realized.)

ABBIE

DAVID

ABBIE

DAVID

WAITER

Alright. We've got two orders of lasagna. Can I get anything else for you folks tonight?

(Pause. ABBIE and DAVID remain focused on each other.)

Can I get anything else for you?

ABBIE

No.

(ABBIE smiles. Pause. LIGHTS FADE to BLACKOUT. MUSIC up.)