

BLIND DATE

A short fairytale comedy

**by
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Characters

(in order of appearance)

The WAITRESS (*slightly snappish*)

A GUEST (*the waitress's boy-friend, non-speaking part, this part can be omitted*)

The WOMAN (*dressed with care, maybe a little old-fashioned*)

The MAN (*wears a jacket with rose in the buttonhole and sunglasses*)

A restaurant/café, several tables. Low background music. A woman comes in, a photograph in her hand, spots GUEST sitting at one of the tables. Advances, smiling, when the WAITRESS shoots her a warning glance from behind her counter. WOMAN, slightly taken aback, goes to an empty table, sits down. Looks uncomfortable, gets up again, looks at her chair, on which a pea is lying. Takes the pea between her fingers. Disgusted expression. Calls.

WOMAN: Waitress!

WAITRESS *comes over*: Yes?

WOMAN *with an expression of disgust*: What do you think I found lying on my chair just now? (*Waitress signals that she doesn't know*) A pea! (*shows it to her*) What kind of hygienic standards are these? Letting yesterday's vegetables lie around for people to sit on...

WAITRESS *studies the table and the woman with a rather unmoved expression*. I'm sorry ... ma'am. (*shrugging*) Pigs must have been here.

WOMAN: Pigs? Oh my God. (*small pause, suspiciously*) How many?

WAITRESS: What? How many? (*realizes what she means, namely "Three Little Pigs"*) Nooo. Not that. Just untidy people.

WOMAN (*more or less to herself*): I'm so glad. (*wipes chair clean with a handkerchief*)

WAITRESS: Now - can I bring you something to drink?

WOMAN: Yes! Um, no. Not yet. I'll order later, I'm waiting for someone.

WAITRESS: Sure. (*retires*)

Woman sits down at the table, looks at it, spots a small glass with toothpicks in it. Winces at the sight of it. Looks around cautiously, then takes her handkerchief, wraps the toothpick-holder in it and puts it on another table, so that it is out of her sight. Goes back to her place and sits down, checks her make-up in a small mirror, slightly nervous.

A man enters. He is wearing sunglasses and a rose as a buttonhole. He looks around, searching for someone. The woman discovers him and hastily puts her make-up things into her handbag. Smiles cautiously. The man comes over to her table. Her smile deepens.

MAN: Hello. Are you...?

WOMAN: Yes, I suppose I must be. Are you...?

MAN (*still standing*): Yes. Hi!

WOMAN: (*smiling*) Hi. (*Pause, he doesn't move*) Why don't you sit down?

MAN: Oh yes, sure. (*sits*) I've never done anything like this before, so you mustn't mind if I'm acting bit... awkward.

WOMAN: *giggling* Oh, me neither, so I don't mind. (*Pause, she has discovered the rose and stares at it*) It's just... Don't think me odd, but could you get rid of that... rose?

MAN: The rose? Why, but isn't that essential for a 'real' romantic blind date? The unknown beautiful woman at the table and the man with the rose in his buttonhole, so she will know him in the crowd? (*laughs*)

WOMAN: Yes, but... But I'm... I know that roses are supposed to be romantic, but...

MAN: But?

WOMAN: I don't want to be a spoilsport. But I'm sort of allergic to them.

MAN: Really?

WOMAN: Really. No kidding. Sorry.

MAN: Oh, it's alright, you don't need to apologize. (*fumbling with the rose*) I mean I certainly don't want you to get asthma or a rash or have you sneezing all the time. That wouldn't be very romantic.

WOMAN: Thank you. And anyway, what's so romantic about a rose anyway? Sure, there are the flowers, and they're basically nice, but think of what your average rose consists of? (*getting angry*) Stems, briars, thorns – I mean, ninety percent of a rose are briars and thorns! Nothing but briars and thorns! Briars and Thorns!!! (*Pause*) Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to get all upset about something as silly as roses, not very romantic of me, is it? I'm so sorry.

MAN: (*has meanwhile removed the rose from his buttonhole, holding it a bit awkwardly*) It's alright, it really is alright. Now the damn thing has served its purpose I don't need it any more anyway. (*idea*) Waitress!

WAITRESS *hurries over*: Yes?

MAN: Would you like a rose? (*hands it to her*)

WAITRESS: Oh, thank you. (*Bewildered. waits a moment, then turns to withdraw again*)

MAN: And we'd like the menu, please.

WAITRESS: Oh, I'm sorry. (*Gets them the menus, withdraws.*)

(*They look at the menu*)

MAN: So you're allergic to roses and don't like them at all. (*small pause, then, cautiously*) But do you like flowers in general?

WOMAN: (*calm again*) Yes, I do.

MAN: What's your favorite flower, then? Do you have one?

WOMAN: Oh, I like almost all flowers. Violets, lilies...

MAN: I like lilies myself... Especially water lilies.

WOMAN: A bit unconventional, but yes, water lilies are nice.

WAITRESS *approaches, stands behind table*: Can I bring you something to drink?

MAN: Yes. What would you like to drink?

WOMAN (*haughtily*): A white wine, please.

WAITRESS: Yes... ma'am.

MAN: And a glass of water of please.

WAITRESS: Sure.

MAN: And to eat?

WOMAN: A mixed salad please. And the vegetable soup. But no peas, do you hear!

MAN: I'll have the mixed meats-plate, please.

WAITRESS: Alright. (*goes off*)

WOMAN: Don't you like wine?

MAN: Oh, wine always makes me sort of – jumpy. Besides, I have to drive. (*Pause*) So you like water lilies too... do you like lakes in general? (*dreamily*) Because I just love lakes, and rivers, and ponds... I think they're very romantic places. There's nothing so romantic as a small pond at dawn, birds singing...frogs croaking...

WOMAN: Oh, you are the romantic one, aren't you? Birds are okay. (*makes a face*) But I don't like frogs.

MAN: No?

WOMAN: No. Do you?

MAN: Well – I don't mind them, let's put it like that. Those little creatures have the right to be here just like you and me – don't they? (*Pause*) But you like water? I mean, water in general is great. I also love water-sports.

WOMAN: (*interested*) You do?

MAN: Yes, swimming is just great. And rowing and sailing and water-skiing and –

WOMAN: I like sports too. I like all kinds of sports, actually. But – sailing and water-skiing are just so expensive...

MAN: Yes ... but – money never was a problem for me, you know. My, my ex-wife was rather well off... Hmm, you know that I'm divorced?

WOMAN: Yes, yes, it was in your self-description. You know that I'm divorced, too?

MAN: Yes. (*WAITRESS comes with the drinks*) Thank you.

WOMAN: Thank you. (*in the background, but clearly audible the song: "What's in a kiss" or other song with the word "Kiss" distinctly audible in it.*)

WOMAN: Strange.

MAN: What?

WOMAN: Strange, that song. That used to be 'our' song. I mean, my ex-husband's and mine... Oh sorry, that's probably not the right time to say that. M (*laughs*) You're laughing?

MAN: Well, this really is extraordinary – that was 'our' song, too! That of my ex-wife and me...

WOMAN: Well, we do seem to have a few things in common.

MAN: Oh yes. (*raises his glass*) To us. Cheers!

WOMAN: (*smiles*) To us. (*They drink, he gulps very audibly, she is slightly irritated, embarrassed silence*)

MAN: Umm. What else is it that you like? Or what is it that you don't like? I found that just so curious - you wrote in your description that you loathe needle-work? Why is that? I mean, I don't like it either, but for a man that's rather normal, I guess. Did your mother force you to knit tea-cosies for all your aunts when you were a child?

WOMAN: Well, I grew up a bit... alternatively, you might say. Yes, I had to do a lot of needlework as a child. We even had a spinning wheel at home. (*embarrassed*) Oh.

MAN: Oh, I see. Ecologically correct. Your parents were – some sort of... hippies?

WOMAN: No, not quite! I mean, um, yes, yes, of course, I mean, who else would have a spinning wheel at home, if not hippies? (*laughs*) A sort of anachronism, that's what they were, my parents. What about your parents?

MAN: Hm, I guess that is what you could call my parents, too. (*they laugh together, and are interrupted by the WAITRESS who approaches with plates.*) Ah, thank you very much.

WOMAN: Thank you. (*They start to eat*)

WOMAN: *has found something in her soup– disgusted:* Uuugh! There's a fly in my soup!

MAN (*eagerly*) Oh, can I have it? (*WOMAN stares – MAN laughs*) Just joking! But I tell you when I was away on one of my expeditions, and we ran out of provisions, we just had to eat

insects – and, I tell you what – they’re quite tasty! Quite crunchy, nothing like a fat beetle...
(*He notices that the WOMAN is torn between disgust and fascination*) Oh, sorry.

WOMAN: Um, you were on an expedition? You didn’t write that in your description. But it sounds intriguing.

MAN: It really was. Survival of the fittest and so on. I do a lot of extreme things actually. Climbing wells is another thing. (*nervously*) I mean, I work as an engineer and when you work in developing countries you sometimes have to climb down a well, to check if it’s alright and so on. That’s also a sort of sport for me – rather exciting. The darkness, the humidity and you never know what you meet on your way –

WOMAN: Like what?

MAN: I actually met my wife that way... (*she looks irritated*) Ex-wife, I mean.

WOMAN: In a well?

MAN: Well, no. But at the rim of one. But I wasn’t working as an engineer then, it was rather – I was on a – um... sabbatical... at that time, yes that’s what you might call it. It was rather romantic then – even though she didn’t think so at first. (*laughs*) But that was once upon a time, it’s all past now, over. Long ago. Forgotten.

WOMAN: You certainly are a fascinating man. Strange, yes, but fascinating.

MAN (*has something between his teeth, is first trying to remove it with his tongue, then starts looking for toothpicks, a bit embarrassed*): You haven’t by any chance seen something like toothpicks around here?

WOMAN (*startled*) Toothpicks? Um- No.

MAN (*has discovered toothpicks on other table, goes over, “May I?” and takes one out, comes back, picking at his teeth, but in a civilized sort of way, woman winces at every movement of the toothpick, man notices that*): Is everything all right? Have you hurt yourself?

WOMAN: No, no, I’m perfectly okay. I just can’t stand watching anyone using such a... thing! (*points at the toothpick. Seriously*) You might hurt yourself with one of these.

MAN *takes toothpick between index finger and thumb and demonstrates that nothing happens*: But it’s just a toothpick. (*Woman can hardly watch it.*)

WOMAN: Yes, but, please don’t do that. You might still hurt yourself. (*as he looks at her uncomprehending*) It reminds me of something I’d rather forget. (*Pause, then, tragically*) A sort of childhood trauma. (*looks away, bitter memories*)

MAN (*concerned*): Oh, I’m sorry. Did your brothers always poke you with sticks or something? (*bitter memories*) I know what little boys with sticks can do...

WOMAN: No. I was an only child. That was part of the problem. (*she looks at him, just as he is trying to get rid of the toothpick by dropping it on the floor behind his back, he turns to her, eagerly*) But if you don’t mind, I’d rather not talk about it. (*she looks away, he manages to get*

rid of the toothpick) But we were talking about you, I think. About your job and your hobbies and so on. *(he has discovered that there is still the glass with toothpicks on the table, he puts it into his pocket, she notices nothing of all this.)* So, what else do you do? I mean, what do you do if you're not climbing wells or going on expeditions? Where do you live when you're in this country?

MAN: My ex-wife lets me use part of her house. It's a rather big house actually. We hardly ever meet.

WOMAN: How big?

MAN: Um, about 130 rooms, I guess.

WOMAN: A castle? Oh, don't tell me you live in a castle.

MAN: It's actually, well actually, well, yes, so to speak.

WOMAN: Oh my God, not again.

MAN: I beg your pardon?

WOMAN: Oh, nothing, nothing. It's just that I'm a bit intimidated by large, solid houses, especially when they have towers and things.

MAN: How's that? Are you afraid of heights?

WOMAN: Yes, a bit, but it's nothing serious. *(touches his hand accidentally)* Oh, you've got cold hands.

MAN: Low blood pressure.

WOMAN: Oh, I see.

MAN: And I'm nervous. *(smiles)* It's my first blind date, as I told you.

WOMAN: I'm nervous too. *(leans closer)* You know something?

MAN: No. What?

WOMAN: Before I can tell if I really like a man, I have to take a look at his eyes. And you've still got your sunglasses on.

MAN: Yes, but it's a blazing day, and my eyes are rather sensitive. I would rather not...

WOMAN *(coaxing him)*: But you'll have me let a look at your eyes, won't you, stranger?

MAN: Oh, yes, if it matters that much to you, sure, sure. *(removes his sunglasses)*

WOMAN *looks deeply into his eyes. Double-take. She looks at him questioningly.*

WOMAN: Your pupils? What happened to them?

MAN: Oh, yes, yes. Don't worry about that. Contact lenses, you know... Today you can put anything into your eyes, um, you can have stars and stripes and aiming crosses and little smilies... and... well, these.. frog's eyes... *(laughs nervously)* I, I am just trying these out and I forgot to remove them... *(looks deep into her eyes)* But anyway, they are fascinating, aren't they?

WOMAN: Yes.

MAN: But your eyes are fascinating too.

WOMAN: Yes. *(They lean closer, are about to kiss, then she turns away)*

WOMAN: Something tells me I shouldn't do this.

MAN: Something tells me I shouldn't do this either. *(Pause)* But what could possibly happen?

WOMAN: I don't know. Superstition. There's still that song. Our Song... *(Pause, she turns back, takes his hand)* Our song. And we're grown-up people. And this is a free country. And it's not like my ex-husband will come around the corner and punish me for kissing another man. *(leans closer)*

MAN: And it's not like my ex-wife could turn up out of thin air and make a scene because of me kissing another woman. So what? *(leans closer)*

WOMAN: So what?

They kiss. The lights go black. Thunder, dishes rattle, a frog croaks. Lights on, the WOMAN is lying with her head on the table among the dishes, sleeping soundly, maybe even snoring. Instead of the MAN a frog is sitting on his chair or on the table, maybe in his water-glass.

The WAITRESS hurries in and stares. Shakes the WOMAN, who doesn't stir. Ma'am? Hello? Are you alright? WOMAN doesn't react, except by giving a little snore. WAITRESS steps back, shakes her head. Sees the frog. Oh my God! Eugh! Thinks. Idea. Takes the frog by one leg, exits, calling off (to kitchen): Hey chef? Do we have a recipe for frog's legs?

Blackout.