

THE BLIND DATE

A Play in One Act

By

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Cast of Characters

Bernard	HE / SHE is very stiff and does things by the book.
Janet	SHE is the grizzled veteran waitress.
Mary	SHE is highly nervous and passionate about food.
Musician	HE is a dude.
Chef Groady	HE / SHE is possibly the best chef in the world and certainly the most egotistical.
Sy	HE is flamboyant and can work any table into submission.
Water Person disgusting.	HE / SHE is very into pouring water and incredibly
Barney way.	HE is shy and awkward, but cute in a nerd-type
Sophie	SHE is confident and cute in a nerd-type way.
Foo Foo Man	HE is highly rich and snobby.
Foo Foo Woman	SHE is highly rich and snobby.
Girl One	SHE is out on the town.
Girl Two	SHE is out on the town.

SCENE

A fancy restaurant in a big city.

TIME

Now.

This play was first performed at the Sub-Section One Act Play Contest in Stewartville, Minnesota on January 20, 2007 by the students of Studio Academy Charter Arts High School.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

The original cast / crew of this production who made my vision a reality: Kaitlyn King, Mercedes Madline, Sarah Mayer, Shane Fisher, Tasha Harwood, Matt Chase, Heather Clark, Michael Baker, Morgan Converse, Colin Foster, Desirae Fox, Sara Lutz, Jing He and Dan Brandt.

Becca Stiles-Nogosek for directing this world premiere and being flexible enough to come in and take over the reins.

Studio Academy for allowing me the creativity and freedom to do what I wanted.

Stephen Larson for the menu.

My family, as always: Missy, Jackson and little Sophia.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The casting can easily get by with four males and nine females. If Bernard is played by a female, simply change the name to Ms. Bernard whenever someone mentions the name in the script. Water Girl can also be changed to Water Boy. In dire situations where males are scarce, the Musician and Sy could also be changed to female, leaving Barney and Foo Foo Man as absolute musts.

It is important that the actors play the restaurant staff as pretentiously as possible, using the utmost care in creating a classy, upscale experience. The comedy comes from them not being able to do it effectively.

SETTING: A small dining room of an up scale restaurant. The entrance from the outside is located stage left. By the entrance is a podium adorned with a small lamp, phone and reservation book. Located directly upstage center are the kitchen doors that swing back and forth, one being the ‘in’ door and the other being the “out” door. Stage right leads offstage to the main dining room and restrooms. There are three tables on stage, with one being directly downstage center.

AT RISE: A young waitress, Janet, is putting the final touches on the small dining room by putting down silverware, glasses, etc. An older man, Bernard, is standing behind the podium, studying the reservation book. They are relaxed and seem in no particular hurry. They work in silence for a few moments before the phone rings.

BERNARD

(Answering the phone) Thank you for calling The Golden Shoe. This is Bernard, how may I help you? (Pause) No, I’m sorry. We are full tonight. We do have one opening for tomorrow night, if you are interested. (Pause) Yes, ma’am, we are very busy. It is the weekend after all. Shall I put you down for tomorrow? (Short pause) No, the small dining room is full for the next two weeks. (Pause) Excellent. Your last name please? (Pause as he writes it down.) Thank you, Ms. Winfrey. We’ll see you tomorrow at 8:30. Yes, of course, thank you. (He hangs up the phone.)

JANET

You know, one of these times you’re going to get caught.

BERNARD

Don’t worry, we’ll be full by tomorrow night.

JANET

But we’re not full for tonight.

BERNARD

It doesn’t matter. By denying people what they want, you make them desire it more. When they finally get it, they think it’s greater than what it was.

JANET

Sounds like the new Play Station 3. (Feel free to substitute name here with other recent fad.)

BERNARD

(Stares at her for a moment) I don't understand anything you say. As I was saying, the more I deny the customer, the more they want to eat here. Then everyone wants to eat here, and then we're a hit.

JANET

I'm familiar with your philosophy, Bernard.

BERNARD

(At this point, Bernard is resetting the silverware, classes, etc. that Janet has been placing.) And it's working, isn't it?

JANET

I guess.

BERNARD

Of course it's working. This little dining room has been booked solid from day one.

JANET

But it's only three tables. The large dining room hasn't even been close to full.

BERNARD

Damn it, Janet! I've been in this business far longer than you have. I know what I'm doing. Oh, yes, I know!

JANET

Okay, okay. You don't have to snap at me.

BERNARD

I'm sorry. That was uncalled for. I apologize. Things have just been a little tense lately.

JANET

Whatever. (She begins resetting the silverware, glasses, etc. that Bernard was resetting.)

BERNARD

It is absolutely critical that we do the very best that we can. Once word spreads of our wonderful dining experience, the larger dining room will fill and we will be a success.

JANET

If you want the very best, then maybe you should take a harder look at some of the staff.

BERNARD

What are you suggesting?

(The phone rings. Bernard answers it.)

BERNARD

Good evening and thank you for calling the The Golden Shoe. This is Bernard, how may I help you? For this evening? Let me check. No, I'm sorry, but our small room is full this evening. I do have an opening in the other section for 9:00.

(Janet shakes her head at Bernard's tactics. Bernard's voice trails off as he continues to take the reservation. Mary, another waitress, enters hurriedly from stage right. She stops at the podium and waves timidly to Bernard, but he ignores her. She then gives her attention to Jane.)

JANET

Hi. (Short pause) Who are you?

MARY

I'm Mary. Mary Twitchy?

JANET

Why are you saying it like a question? Don't you know your own name?

MARY

Of course I know. I was hoping you'd know my name.

JANET

Why would I know you? I've never seen you before in my life.

(Bernard hangs up the phone.)

BERNARD

You're late.

MARY

I know, and I'm very sorry, but I was running late and then I had to stop for a train and...

BERNARD

How can I properly train you in if you're going to be late?

JANET

Wait a second. You're going to be working here?

BERNARD

I'm sorry, Janet. I'm afraid I forgot to mention it to you, but we're hiring a new service person and here she is.

JANET

Hold on a second. No offense, but as head waitress of this restaurant, I should be involved in any hiring decisions.

BERNARD

And as manager and owner of this restaurant, I can do whatever I want.

JANET

But we don't need more wait staff.

BERNARD

Yes, we do.

JANET

We're perfectly under control with what we have, especially with our assistants. If we keep this up, we're going to have more people working than there are customers. What is this, a Culvers? (Feel free to insert other chain restaurant name.)

BERNARD

It's all part of the illusion. Besides, we're going to get busier within the next few weeks, and we need to be prepared. Therefore, I've taken the liberty to hire Mary before the rush so that she can be properly trained in, and, of course, the most perfect person to do the training would be you.

JANET

How do you know we're going to get busier?

MARY

Look, if it's going to be a problem, I can come back tomorrow night or something.

BERNARD

There is no problem. You can shadow Janet tonight and do as she says.

JANET

Don't expect to be getting any of my tips.

MARY

Fine.

BERNARD

Despite Janet's apparent rudeness, she is one of the best that we have.

(A MUSICIAN enters from right, dressed modestly with perhaps some sort of cheesy blouse-like shirt.)

BERNARD

You're late!

MUSICIAN

Dude, I'm not scheduled to play for another ten minutes.

BERNARD

Don't you have to prepare?

MUSICIAN

Relax, dude, everything's already set up.

(He meanders over to the keyboard.)

(CHEF GROADY sticks her head out of the kitchen "OUT" door. She is unkept and disgusting. Despite her crude appearance, she is an artist when it comes to food and has earned the respect of the staff, despite her flashes of anger and lack of social skills.)

CHEF

Staff meeting in one minute at table one. Be there! (She pops his head back in.)

BERNARD

Right away, Chef. (To the girls) Do as she says. I'll get the others.

(Bernard quickly exits left.)

MARY

My god, was that Chef Groaty?

JANET

Oh, I get it. You're a food groupie.

MARY

Excuse me?

JANET

Yeah, we get one or two in every week. I'm not stupid.

MARY

I don't know what you're talking about. Chef Groaty is a legend.

JANET

Yeah, we'll see. And just because she was on Iron Chef and won doesn't make her a legend.

MARY

What about that famous Julia Childs episode where she called Julia a talent-less, Muppet face?

JANET

What?

MARY

You haven't heard that story?

JANET

No, I've only known her for a month and she doesn't like it when people make chit chat. It's shop talk only.

MARY

Got it. Thanks for the tip. And look, I understand your position here and I'll stay out of your way.

(CHEF GROADY enters with several copies of the specials menu. She stumbles / walks to the center table and sets down the tray. She itches herself and then begins.)

CHEF

Are we all here?

(BERNARD enters quickly with SY, the wine steward, and WATER GIRL. SY is all about his own presentation and loves to love people. WATER GIRL is disgusting, with dark greasy hair pasted against her forehead. She plods about and seems to have a cold, sniffing often.)

BERNARD

Yes, Chef, we're here.

CHEF

(Looking at Mary) Who the hell is this?

MARY

I'm Mary Twitchy, Chef Groady. It is truly an honor to be working for such an esteemed and revered master of the culinary arts.

CHEF

(To Bernard) What's her job? Is she the official brown noser?

BERNARD

She'll be joining the wait staff, Chef. Tonight is her training run.

CHEF

What's your name? Moses?

MARY

Mary.

CHEF

Yeah, look. Here's the rules. The only thing I want to hear you say in the kitchen is the words "order in" when you're putting in an order. Got it?

MARY

Of course.

(WATER GIRL SNIFFS)

CHEF

When I call your name, you'll be in this kitchen within ten seconds. I don't care if you're in the middle of pouring a two hundred dollar bottle of Chateau LeSnotty Phew to Mr. and Mrs. Lotta Cash. When I call your name, you come and get the food and you serve the food. Got it?

MARY

Certainly.

(WATER GIRL SNIFFS)

CHEF

If you want to pass on a compliment from the table, that's fine, but do it quickly. I do NOT want to hear about a customer complaint and I certainly will not do special orders. What is on the menu is what they get. I do not devote my life, my passion in creating the perfect meal so that Mr. and Mrs. Open Wallet can decide they can throw some capers into my duck stock reduction. You got that?

MARY

Every word.

(WATER GIRL SNORTS)

CHEF

And if you find out you're waiting on a food critic, let me know immediately so I can put broken glass in their food.

BERNARD

He's joking, somewhat.

CHEF

Critics are worthless hacks who use their own subjective views to feel important.

MARY

I agree.

(WATER GIRL HACKS)

CHEF

Would you stop that incessant noise?!

WATER GIRL

(Speaks rather creepily) I am sorry. I am afraid a cold has gathered in my nose.

CHEF

Well, make sure your snot stays away from the plates, huh?

WATER GIRL

I am here for you.

CHEF

Here are the specials tonight. (They all gather in closely.) The appetizer is a simple salad consisting of Rock Spring Farms organic micro greens tossed with stone pressed, German extra virgin olive grape seed oil and ice wine vinegar. The salad is topped with a fresh thyme seared lobe of heritage duck liver foie gras; thinly shaved, chestnut fed, two year aged Black Iberian hog; natural rind, hand-milked, spring cooled Amish blue cheese and fire toasted, fair trade, Chippewa hand-harvested, Wisconsin wild hickory nuts. The customer can have this for a mere \$27.

BERNARD

Most reasonable.

CHEF

The first course is a warm layered seafood terrine of thinly sliced, sashimi grade, Big Eye otoro tuna belly. The fish is slow poached in Italian extra virgin white truffle oil. The other layer is a hand-dived, live Maine sea scallop mousse flavored with #1 Indian Kashmir, virgin plucked, red-saffron stamens and whole medallions of Dom Perignon champagne steamed Brittany homard blue lobster tail; The terrine is served in a sauce of 1953 vintage Dom Perignon champagne reduction blended with hand-churned, artisanal, small batch, unsalted Hope Creamery Jersey cow butter and sprinkled with Point Reyes Bay California with sturgeon caviar, which as we all know is humanly removed by surgical cesarean section so as to not cause the fish any unnecessary trauma before it is returned to the ocean. This is \$69.

MARY

Ohhhhhh. Absolute genius.

(WATER GIRL hacks loudly. The MUSICIAN has wandered over to table.)

MUSICIAN

Yeah, hey, excuse me?

CHEF

Please do not interrupt my dissertation.

MUSICIAN

Dude, I said excuse me.

CHEF

I don't care what you are saying, because you are saying it. I must have silence!

BERNARD

(Pulling the musician aside.) What is it?

MUSICIAN

Yeah, my keyboard isn't working.

BERNARD

What? Are you sure?

MUSICIAN

Dude, I double-checked everything.

BERNARD

This is unacceptable. My customers will be arriving any minute now, and they expect live music in the small room and that is what they shall receive.

MUSICIAN

Well, I got another keyboard in the car, but it's...

BERNARD

Then what was the problem? Go get it.

MUSICIAN

Dude, I'm not sure you want me to...

BERNARD

I want you to do your job. Now get your other keyboard and start playing!

MUSICIAN

Fine, dude, fine.

(The musician exits. Bernard rejoins the Chef's meeting.)

CHEF

The Kobe beef was Shiatsu massaged three times a day and fed Kirin Ichiban reserve beer. It is perched atop gently crushed, Sea of Japan harvested, kombu seaweed and dashi stock poached, heirloom Oregon state new crop Russian yellow fingerling potatoes, and is accompanied by Lapsang Souchong team smoked, Kyoto Prefecture grown white asparagus spears, all finished with a sprinkling of course ground, hand-mined Montana pink Jurassic salt. This is a steal at \$135. There is no special dessert at this time, but who knows, the muse may hit me later on tonight. Are there any questions? (She does not wait for an answer.) Good. I am finished. (She leaves as Bernard talks.)

BERNARD

Remember, as always, wait staff, it's all about the show.

(A young man enters. He is nerdish in appearance, nervous and appears to be looking for someone.)

BERNARD

All right then. The house is open. Places, please.

(Everyone scatters either stage left or into the kitchen. Bernard walks slowly to the podium. Sy quickly grabs Janet and pulls her aside.)

JANET

What?

SY

Please, I need to talk to you about last night.

JANET

Not now.

SY

But I love you.

JANET

Stop it. You're going to get us both fired.

END OF FREE PREVIEW- PLEASE CONTACT FORREST MUSSELMAN FOR FURTHER INFORMATION!