

Speed Dating Nightmare

By

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Speed dating is a great way for singles to meet other people; each "date" only lasts a few minutes, and if it doesn't work out, you can hope the next one will be better. For Cindy, those few minutes feel like an eternity, as she is subjected to a seemingly endless parade of jerks and losers. To make matters worse, she can't help but imagine what their children would be like, and they all display the worst qualities of their fathers. Will she find a good match, or resign herself to staying single forever?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(From 5 - 13 actors.

2-6 m, 1 w, 2-6 flexible kids or adults.)

CINDY: A nice young woman, trying out speed-dating for the first time.

MARCUS: An inquisitive fellow.

TREVOR: A man with very little motivation.

SCISSOR: An artistic man with an inflated sense of ego.

ERNEST: A socially awkward boy-slash-man.

DALE: A man who has no trouble being heard.

JASON: A humble young working man.

KID #1: Marcus's imaginary offspring.

KID #2: Trevor's imaginary offspring.

KID #3: Scissor's imaginary offspring.

KID #4: Ernest's imaginary offspring.

KID #5: Dale's imaginary offspring.

KID #6: Same as Kid #5, and dressed the same.

FLEXIBLE CASTING

Thirteen actors would be required to cast a unique actor in every role. At minimum, the show could be performed with only 5 actors: Cindy, 2 suitors (one as Marcus/Scissor/Dale and the other as Trevor/Ernest/Jason), and 2 kids (one to play Kid #1/3/5, and the other to play Kid #2/4/6). To include more than 13 actors, you could have other tables on the stage where additional participants in the speed dating are sitting. (They would need to rotate tables along with the buzzers.) Or you could have extra kids appear during the final segment with Jason.

The kids could all be played by either gender. The suitors are all male characters, but could potentially be played by females, if necessary.

The ages of the performers could vary greatly, from school-age students to adults. Even the kids could be played by adults, for comedic effect.

SETTING

A speed dating event at a restaurant. However, the focus is only on one participant named Cindy, so all that is needed is one table and two chairs. The stage could be otherwise bare, or decorated to look like a public venue, perhaps with some plants in the background. Cindy will remain in the chair on the SL side. Suitors will enter from SR, sit in the SR chair, and then exit SL.

SCENES

The script has been divided into six scenes for greater convenience and ease in scheduling practices or rehearsals, if necessary. However, there should not be any breaks or pauses between scenes. It should be played as one long, continuous story, with no scene changes or blackouts. As each suitor leaves, another one should step on within moments.

ALTERNATE ENDINGS

Two different endings have been provided. You may perform whichever ending is the best fit for your group and/or audience. Scene 6, Version 1 is probably more student-friendly, for school performances. Scene 6, Version 2 is intended more for adult audiences, such as community theatres.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: A speed dating event at a restaurant. The CS table has two chairs. CINDY is seated in the SL chair, with a drink. After a beat, MARCUS enters from SR. He is handsome and nicely dressed.)

MARCUS: *(Extending his hand.)* Hi, I'm Marcus. What's your name?

CINDY: *(During the handshake.)* I'm Cindy, nice to meet you.

MARCUS: *(Sitting in the SR chair.)* You, too. And where are you from, Cindy?

CINDY: I'm...originally I'm from Indianapolis. I moved here about two years ago.

MARCUS: I see. And how are you doing tonight, Cindy?

CINDY: Good. I'm good. *(Beat.)* A little nervous, to be honest. I've never done this before.

MARCUS: This is your first time speed dating, huh?

CINDY: Yep, first time.

MARCUS: Well, we only have a few minutes, Cindy, so let's get right to it. What are you after here, Cindy? What are you looking for in a man?

CINDY: *(Taken aback by the question.)* Wow. Direct. Well, let's see...The usual, I guess. Someone sweet, intelligent, funny...

MARCUS: What's your long-term goal?

CINDY: Long-term?

MARCUS: *(Gesturing all around him.)* This, all this, the dating. What do you want it to lead to?

CINDY: *(Flustered.)* Um...I don't know. I mean, I... *(Puzzled.)* I'm not sure what you're asking.

MARCUS: What do you THINK I'm asking?

CINDY: I...think you're asking if I'm looking for something serious.

MARCUS: Are you?

CINDY: I don't know. Right now I just want to meet people and see what happens.

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MARCUS: Are you looking to settle down and start a family, Cindy?

CINDY: A family? Not...You know, maybe. EVENTUALLY, I guess, I want to start a family with someone. I think that's the ultimate goal. But that's WAY down the road.

MARCUS: So you want kids, is that what you're telling me?

CINDY: Well, not TOMORROW...but probably. Some day. I mean, I think it's natural, when you date someone, to imagine what it would be like if you ever had a family with that person...What their kids would be like. I always seem to envision them in my head.

MARCUS: Yeah? What do you think MY kids would be like?

(CINDY looks up, as if imagining. Enter KID #1 from SL, carrying a teddy bear. Like all of the other kids, KID #1 isn't real; he/she is a figment of Cindy's imagination. Only Cindy will look at the kids and acknowledge them in any way; to the suitors, the kids aren't even there. The suitors will completely ignore the children.)

CINDY: Well, if they're anything like you, I imagine they would ask a lot of questions.

(KID #1 walks right up to CINDY, staying on SL so that Cindy is between Marcus and Kid #1.)

KID #1: Mommy, why is the sky blue? And why is glue sticky? Oh, and why come do people sleep all through the whole night?

MARCUS: *(Leaning forward on the table, like a detective intently questioning a subject.)* Do questions bother you, Cindy?

CINDY: No, not really, it's just that we only met 30 seconds ago, and I—

MARCUS: *(Interrupting.)* Do you think there's something wrong with curiosity?

CINDY: *(Considers for a moment. Then, tries to be funny.)* There is if you're a cat.

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KID #1: Mommy, why is water blue in the ocean, but not in the bathtub?

MARCUS: Don't you think it's natural for me to determine if our goals are similar?

CINDY: Well, yes, I guess. It just feels like I'm being interrogated here, a little.

MARCUS: I'm sorry. Do you want me to ask some questions that aren't as personal?

CINDY: I would feel more comfortable with that, yes.

KID #1: *(With a finger twisting in one nostril.)* Mommy, what are boogers for?

CINDY: *(To KID #1.)* Ew. Get your finger out of there.

MARCUS: *(Looking at his hands in confusion.)* I'm sorry?

CINDY: *(Snapping back to reality.)* Oh, nothing. Forget it.

MARCUS: *(Leaning back, less intense with his questioning.)* Okay. So what kind of music do you like?

CINDY: Oh, all kinds, but my favorite band is The Brain-Dead Intellectuals *(Or substitute a popular band name.)* I'm kind of bummed...they're playing tomorrow night in the city, but I couldn't get tickets.

MARCUS: Huh. What do you do for a living, Cindy?

CINDY: I'm a waitress. At the Singer Grill on Nolan Street.

MARCUS: Do you enjoy it?

CINDY: Well, you know, it's a job. It's all right, I guess.

KID #1: *(Trying to look sideways without turning his/her head.)* Mommy, why do we have two little eyes instead of one great big one?

MARCUS: Do people tip well there?

CINDY: Sometimes. I can usually tell who's going to tip well and who isn't right when they walk in the door.

MARCUS: What percent do you think I tip?

CINDY: *(Appraising him.)* I'm guessing you...are a 15 percent-er.

MARCUS: Exactly! How did you know?

CINDY: *(With a shrug.)* I just have a good feeling for that.

KID #1: *(Tugging on CINDY's sleeve.)* Mommy, why is pee-pee yellow?

MARCUS: How long have you worked there?

CINDY: About six months now. I started back in J—

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