

On The Night of Anthony's 30<sup>th</sup>  
Birthday Party, Again

*A Farce*

By  
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## CHARACTERS

CHARLIE: 29. *He was always a good listener and a nice guy, too.*

BEN: 30. *He was the coolest guy you knew.*

KATE: 29. *She was the coolest girl you knew and you always wanted to be around her.*

BETH: 30. *She was that smart sarcastic girl who was loud and spoke her mind.*

JENNY: 28. *She was that girl who was quiet in class but knew the answers.*

MAX: 28. *He was that guy who knew everything but you never knew his name.*

OTIS: 32. *He was that guy who was always a blast at parties.*

ANTHONY: 30 or 31? *He was that guy that was always together and always the center of attention.*

The ethnicities of the cast should reflect those of a large city.

## LOCATION

The spare room of ANTHONY'S and CHARLIE'S new apartment. It's a long white wall with a single door in the center.

It's probably winter, it's in Minneapolis, and it's the night of ANTHONY'S birthday party, which takes place in the other room. So, birthday party noises might spill in. Or not.

ACT ONE

*Lights. A white wall stretches across the upstage. There are bits of the wall stage left and right. Upstage in the center is a single door.*

SCENE ONE

*We can just make out some talking on the other side of the wall. Some laughing. It seems to be a gathering of a few people.*

CHARLIE *off-stage*

Let me show you in here, THIS is going to be...

*The door handle rattles. The door is pushed. It doesn't open.*

CHARLIE *off-stage*

That's...foreboding.

BEN *off-stage*

The door is just stuck.

CHARLIE *off-stage*

It's a brand new apartment, doors shouldn't stick.

KATE *off-stage*

What's wrong with sticky?

CHARLIE *off-stage*

Ew.

BEN *off-stage*

Are you going to try the door again?

CHARLIE *off-stage*

No, I figured we could end the tour here.

*The door handle rattles again. A push against the door. Nothing.*

CHARLIE *off-stage*

Maybe we should end the tour here.

BEN *off-stage*

You've got to give it more muscle than that.

CHARLIE *off-stage*

I just ironed this shirt.

KATE *off-stage*

More muscle, more muscle!

CHARLIE *off-stage*

Oh. Fine. Because the masses demand it.

*The door handle twists, there is a great thud against the door, which opens. CHARLIE, 29, stumbles into the room. He recovers. HE is followed by KATE, 29, and BEN, 30, they are looking around the room.*

SCENE TWO

CHARLIE

So, THIS is going to be...Don't mind the boxes. This is going to be...well, it's undecided. Anthony and I are negotiating. He wants to make it a guest room, I want to make it into a home office... We go round and round.

KATE

I want it.

BEN

Check out the windows. I bet you got a lot of light in here.

CHARLIE

That's why I think it would be a great office, and, of course, that's why Anthony thinks it would make a great guest room. But he doesn't understand, if you have a guest room that means people will stay over at your house. And we can't have that.

BEN

Are those your neighbors?

*CHARLIE pulls BEN away from the windows.*

KATE

How did you guys find this place?

CHARLIE

We know people who know people. But believe me, we're paying for it.

KATE

I would love to have a place like this.

*CHARLIE agrees.*

KATE

Do you want a roommate?

CHARLIE

No.

KATE

You didn't even think about it.

CHARLIE

We cut the roommate umbilical, we aren't going back.

KATE

But--

CHARLIE

No.

BEN

It's just so cool.

CHARLIE

We like cool. We strive for cool. Anthony and I thank you.

*A door bell.*

CHARLIE

Excuse me. Duty calls.

*CHARLIE leaves.*

### SCENE THREE

*BEN and KATE are left alone in the room. The sound of CHARLIE meeting and greeting someone else. Silence. Then.*

KATE

The place is great.

BEN

Did you see their TV?

KATE

It's like a movie theater.

BEN

Except better.

*Pause.*

So. Where's Rainbow? KATE

Jenny? Jenny is running late. BEN

She's back to Jenny? KATE

Rainbow was a phase. BEN

Oh. Ok. So, she's running late. Ok. Alright. KATE

*KATE makes her choice and closes the door. She turns to BEN. Lustily.*

Kiss me. KATE

Kiss you? BEN

Yes. KATE

Now? BEN

Life is dangerous. KATE

Yes. It is. BEN

You want to kiss me? KATE

It's that...you know...that-- BEN *nodding*

Thing. KATE

BEN  
That thing...between us.

KATE  
We've never...

BEN  
Ever...

KATE  
But.

BEN  
Oh. Kate.

*THEY kiss and lean against the door. It's not romantic. It's hot, passionate, and just a little dirty.*

*The sound of CHARLIE talking.*

CHARLIE  
And in here...

*The door is pushed, but, KATE and BEN are leaning against it, so it can't open. More pushing. BEN and KATE separate and go to opposite sides of the stage.*

#### SCENE FOUR

*CHARLIE and BETH, 30, enter. CHARLIE is looking at BEN and then to KATE.*

CHARLIE  
What is wrong with this door?

BEN  
It was sticking?

CHARLIE  
Of course it was sticking.

KATE  
It was nothing we did.

BEN  
It was sticking.

CHARLIE

Thank you. I would never have figured it out all by myself. Why did you close it?

BEN

Close it?

CHARLIE

The door?

KATE

Oh. We wanted...

BEN

To see how the room looked.

*CHARLIE looks from BEN to KATE.*

KATE

A room looks different with its door open than when it's closed.

*CHARLIE closes the door a little. Looks around. Then opens the door. Looks around. HE repeats, trying to find the difference. Finally, upset, BETH interrupts.*

*BETH pushing her way in*

Oh, for God's sake, it's a door. Who cares? It's just so uncool.

CHARLIE

And we wouldn't want to be uncool, I think that has been established. Can I get you something to drink?

BETH

Yes, I am dying of thirst, I demand refreshment. Oh. I need to talk to you about the present.

CHARLIE

THE present?

BETH

Yes.

CHARLIE

You didn't bring anything, did you?

BETH



I thought we could go in on it.

CHARLIE

No.

BETH

No?

CHARLIE

No. Vodka?

BETH

Yes.

*BETH takes out a cigarette. CHARLIE stops.*

CHARLIE

What are you doing?

BETH

It's just a ciggie.

CHARLIE

No-no.

BETH

No-no?

CHARLIE

Not in my new apartment.

BETH

Fag.

CHARLIE *sing-songy*

Twat.

*CHARLIE goes. BETH puts the cigarette back into its case.*

#### SCENE FIVE

BEN

Hello, Beth.

BETH

Ben. Kate.

How's it going? KATE

*BETH groans, flops against the wall.*

Don't ask. BETH

Alright. I think I'll help Charlie with the drinks. BEN

I could help you, Ben. KATE

Oh, Kate, darling, please don't leave me! BETH

*BEN waves, leaves.*

#### SCENE SIX

*KATE looks at BETH, there is a pause. BETH pushes away from the wall.*

Oh, Kate, Kate, Kate. Kate... BETH

Beth... KATE

Kate...Kate....Kate.... BETH

Beth? KATE

Kate... BETH

Beth? KATE

What's wrong with me? BETH

KATE

I don't think anything is wrong with you.

BETH

Oh, you're very kind.

KATE

Beth...

BETH

Kate! There has to be something wrong. My soul is wrapped in darkness. I don't think I can go on.

KATE

I think you're just being dramatic.

BETH

I think it's biological. I need to change my medication.

KATE

I have a surprise for you.

BETH

Oh?

KATE

Yes.

BETH

Oh. Let me guess, let me guess, let me guess, I love to guess.

KATE

You're not going to guess.

BETH

You haven't even allowed me to try.

KATE

BETH!

BETH

Kate?

KATE

I'm setting you up.

BETH

For?

KATE

A man. I'm setting you up with a man, Beth.

BETH

Oh.

KATE

I thought you would be excited.

BETH

Kate...a man. Oh, gawd. It just sounds so...bleh.

KATE

What's wrong?

BETH

It's...I don't know. It's just it's. *She makes a face.* That's all.

KATE

He's a funny guy.

BETH *considering*

What kind of funny?

KATE

Funny funny.

BETH *disappointed*

But not zinger funny.

KATE

I don't know. Funny. He's smart.

BETH *considering*

How smart?

KATE

Smart.

BETH *disappointed*

Oh, great, a techno-geek.

KATE

He's a really nice guy.

BETH  
Oh, gawd. It will never work out.

KATE  
He's coming tonight.

BETH  
Tonight?

KATE  
To the party.

BETH  
You invited him to the party?!

KATE  
It's a guy from work, you'll love him. He's hilarious.

BETH  
That is totally uncool, Kate, totally uncool!

*BETH marches out as BEN returns with the drink. BETH comes back in, takes her drink from BEN, gives KATE a nasty look and then leaves, slamming the door behind her.*

#### SCENE SEVEN

BEN  
What the hell?

KATE  
I set her up with a man.

*CHARLIE opens the door, almost hitting BEN who almost spills the drinks. CHARLIE is holding a screwdriver.*

#### SCENE EIGHT

CHARLIE  
What did you say to Beth? She's wearing a snit face.

KATE  
I set her up with a man.

CHARLIE

You brave deluded soul you.

*CHARLIE goes to work on the hinges, tightening them perhaps.*

BEN

Do you think it's a good idea?

KATE

It's someone from work.

BEN and CHARLIE

Oh.

KATE

What?

CHARLIE

It's a bit cliché...

KATE

Max is a good guy.

CHARLIE

Max? Sounds gay.

*BEN and KATE look at him.*

CHARLIE

I can say that.

*CHARLIE checks the door. He is satisfied.*

KATE

He's a nice guy that works down the way from me. He's good looking. He's funny. He's smart.

CHARLIE

Beth is going to hate him.

*Doorbell. CHARLIE goes. Leaving the door open. Which KATE closes right after him.*

## SCENE NINE

BEN

Where were we?

*BEN moves right in and they start to make out—against the door.*

KATE

Maybe later, we can sneak out of the party.

BEN

Sneak out?

KATE

We have got to seize the moment.

BEN

Seize the moment.

KATE

This thing between us? We've got to figure it out.

BEN

But...Rainbow.

KATE

Rainbow?

BEN

Jenny.

KATE

We've got a history...

BEN

That's true.

KATE

So. We sneak out. After the cake or the presents?

BEN

After the cake.

*More kissing. The door moves again. BEN and KATE separate.  
CHARLIE enters.*

## SCENE TEN

CHARLIE

I just fixed that.

*BEN and KATE shrug.*

*JENNY, 31, enters, still in her moderately priced business clothes.*

BEN

Rainbow! Hello, baby.

*He kisses her on the cheek and then puts his arm around her. KATE watches the interaction.*

JENNY

It's not Rainbow anymore.

BEN

Right. It was a phase.

JENNY

I'm sorry I'm late. Work.

CHARLIE

Anthony won't be here for a little longer. I have Otis keeping a look out.

KATE

Otis? Is that a wise choice?

CHARLIE

He volunteered.

JENNY

Otis?

CHARLIE

I know, I was dubious. But, really, who else has the time to stand out on a street corner waiting for a car?

BEN

Hookers?

*JENNY elbows BEN on the chest.*

JENNY

Benjamin!

CHARLIE



He's got beer and a cell phone. He'll be fine. Jenny, Kate...you don't have any drinks, and I demand that you get nice and sauced tonight. Anthony doesn't turn 30 every year.

KATE

Didn't he turn 30 last year?

CHARLIE

It was a trial run. Drinks?

KATE

Yes.

JENNY

I am dying for a drink.

BEN

Do you want me to get you one?

CHARLIE

I can take care of it, talk to your woman.

KATE

Yes. Why don't you talk to your woman?

*KATE wiggles her eyebrows as she follows CHARLIE out of the room.*

### SCENE ELEVEN

BEN

I can get you something. It's not a problem.

JENNY

Are you trying to run away or something?

BEN

What! No. NO!

JENNY

What's the matter? You're all tense.

BEN

Oh. I don't wanna talk about it.

JENNY

Ben...! Come on. We talked about this. You need to open up. You need to feel like you can talk to me.

BEN  
But—!

JENNY  
Ben? Come on, dig in. Talk to me.

*Pause.*

BEN  
Work was stupid today.

JENNY  
Stupid?

BEN  
They want me to come on full time. Like. Be there. Do stuff. For a salary. Benefits. Health insurance.

JENNY  
Get out of here! That's awesome!

BEN  
They want me to decide by Monday. What a thing to hang around a guy's neck all weekend. How am I going to get anything done?

JENNY  
What do you have to do?

BEN  
You know...stuff. This is not my dream job.

JENNY  
What is?

*BEN thinks. Then.*

BEN  
That's beside the point.

JENNY  
You make a good living as a paralegal.

BEN  
But listen to the sound of it...paralegal. Paralegal. Paralegal. Doesn't it sound weird? Vaguely military?

JENNY

No.

BEN

I took the job because it was temporary. Temporary. As in not forever. I could call in sick any time I wanted, I could walk away anytime I wanted. Now they want to shackle me to a desk with chain forged of salary and 401K.

JENNY

It's a good job, you like it, this is a no brainer.

BEN

I haven't made my decision.

JENNY

At some point you're going to have to.

*BEN squeezes his eyes shut.*

BEN

Everything is just rushing by, and no one is giving me a chance to make up my mind, it's now, now, now. Zoom, zoom, zoom. And it all seems SO important to people. They NEED me to make up my mind about this job in two days? It's arbitrary. Two days, two days. Why not a week or a month? We're forgetting the most important thing here, it's me. It's my life. You can't unring a bell. I need a moment to peak my head outside the window and locate myself on the map. I don't know where I am, this isn't the place that I thought I would be—five years ago this is not the future I dreamed of.

JENNY

What's the big deal? Take the job.

BEN

I don't know, I don't know, but here in my gut, it's a big deal. My gut is screaming at me. It's screaming WOAHH, THERE buddy, Woah there! Let's just take a moment, you don't want to be doing anything crazy.

JENNY

It's not crazy to take a good job!

BEN

Stomach, screaming: Woah, there! Don't do anything crazy!

JENNY

Ben—!

BEN

Danger! Danger! Don't do anything you might regret later! Danger!

JENNY

Stop it!

*BEN stops.*

JENNY

Take a deep breath. It's not the rest of your life. It's just a job. A very good job. Better pay, benefits. We can buy a house. Start saving.

BEN

Start saving?

JENNY

Well. We should have money if we're going to have children.

BEN

Woah! Woah! Woah! Danger! Danger! Children?

JENNY

Yes.

BEN

I'm not going to get my girlfriend pregnant.

JENNY

I'm not your girlfriend.

BEN

What?

JENNY

What?

BEN

What did you say?

JENNY

Are you kidding me?

BEN

About what?

JENNY

Ben?

BEN  
What?

*Pause.*

JENNY  
We're engaged.

*BEN remembers.*

JENNY  
You forgot?

BEN  
Oh. No. It's still so...new.

JENNY  
New? Oh, that's so cute!

*JENNY cuddles up to BEN.*

JENNY  
You're right...it IS new. I love how new it is. I love this warm blanket feeling when I get wrapped up in your arms. This feeling of total comfort and protection, a feeling that will last and last and last. I feel like I'm falling onto a giant feather bed, I feel like I'm splashing into a Caribbean sea that has been warmed by the sun. I feel like my life is hinging around this moment, and it's changing forever.

BEN  
Me too.

*BEN puts his arm around her. It's like a wet towel.*

JENNY  
I think we should do it tonight. YES! It'll be PERFECT!

BEN  
Get married?

*JENNY looks at him.*

JENNY  
What?

BEN

You can't do that in Minnesota.

JENNY

Get married?

BEN

Tonight.

JENNY

I'm talking about telling everyone that we're engaged.

BEN

Oh. Everyone?

JENNY

Yes. Tonight. All of your friends are here in one place.

BEN

I don't think that'll be a good idea. Its Anthony's 30<sup>th</sup>. It should be his night.

JENNY

I'm not staying we do it right when he walks in the door, I'm not stupid.

BEN

I didn't say you were.

JENNY

Well, I'm not. I see how your friends look at me. They think I'm stupid. They think I'm not COOL. Well. Ben. For your information, I AM cool. I am very, VERY cool. People at work they like me. I am a naturally likable person. I have charisma. I have what people call an "outgoing" personality.

BEN

Yes. Of course. I just...well, I think we shouldn't do it tonight. We should play it on the down low.

JENNY

The down low?

BEN

Yeah. Play it...

*BEN does some sort of gesture for down low.*

JENNY

I'm wearing the ring, Ben.

BEN

Why are you wearing the ring!?

JENNY

That's what one does with engagement rings. You wear them.

BEN

Yeah. Yeah. Of course.

*Doorbell.*

BEN

It's just.

*BEN shrugs.*

JENNY

It's just what?

BEN

Well! It just IS, I suppose!

JENNY

What are you talking about?

BEN

That's what I want to know.

JENNY

Are we going to tell these people tonight or not?

BEN

I just don't want to do anything crazy!

*The door opens. MAX, 28, enters, wearing a purple bunny suit. HE slams the door. His head snaps to JENNY and BEN.*

## SCENE TWELVE

MAX

Who are you?

BEN

Who are you?

*The door opens, pushing MAX. BETH enters.*

SCENE THIRTEEN

BETH

OMG! Did you guys just see a man dressed as a fucking rabbit? How funny is that?

*SHE sees MAX and starts to laugh. MAX is horribly embarrassed. KATE enters.*

SCENE FOURTEEN

KATE

Max! What are you doing?

BETH

This is Max?

KATE

Yes.

BETH

Max. Max. The Max that you are setting me up with?

MAX

This is Beth?

KATE

Yeah.

BETH

My Xanax cannot handle this. I'll be in the living room drinking.

*As SHE goes, CHARLIE comes in, with a can of WD-40.*

SCENE FIFTEEN

CHARLIE

Is everything ok in here?

KATE

Yes. It is.

CHARLIE

The bunny suit?



MAX

It's a rental.

*BEN stifles a laugh. Jenny glares at him for laughing, shame shame.*

KATE

Charlie, stop it.

*Pause.*

CHARLIE

He's dressed as a bunny. I'm not doing anything.

KATE

Why are you in a bunny suit?

MAX

You said it was a fancy dress party. I thought that meant a costume.

CHARLIE

We're not in Britain.

KATE

Charlie, please. *To Max.* I thought it might be a fancy party...just dress nice.

CHARLIE

Like I would do a fancy party for you heathens.

MAX

Oh, God, I gotta go home.

KATE

You can't.

MAX

I have to.

KATE

No, no, you can't go. I'm setting you up.

*BEN laughs, JENNY elbows him.*

MAX

You mean with the woman I just humiliated myself in front of.

KATE

Yes.

MAX

I have got to go.

KATE

You're staying.

*KATE blocks the way.*

MAX

I'm dressed as a bunny!

JENNY

It's so sweet!

KATE

Change clothes.

MAX

I came like this.

CHARLIE

You drove over here in your bunny costume?

MAX

Is that weird?

*CHARLIE nods.*

KATE

Charlie, you got clothes that he could wear.

CHARLIE

Um...

MAX

That would be great—I am sweating like a pig in this suit.

CHARLIE

Oh. No. I don't think so. He's staying in the bunny suit.

KATE

Oh, come on.

CHARLIE

No one sweats in my clothes. I don't even sweat in my clothes. I had that gland removed.

KATE

Max—you look great.

MAX

I'M A BUNNY!

BEN

A great looking bunny.

JENNY

A-dorable.

KATE

Max? Please stay?

*OTIS, 32, wrapped in a coat and hat, unshaved, long hair, pokes his head into the room.*

#### SCENE SIXTEEN

OTIS

Charlie! Red Alert! Red...Whoa. Who invited the Energizer Bunny?

MAX

I am going!

KATE

No, you're not.

CHARLIE

What is it, Otis?

OTIS

Dude, he's almost here! It's like Defcon 1 and we gotta baton down the hatches.

CHARLIE

Why didn't you call? That's why you have the cell phone!

OTIS

Dude. Is that important? We are at Defcon 1!

CHARLIE

Alright, people...and bunny. I know I'm going to be damned for saying this, but I want Anthony to have a good time tonight. I have planned this occasion, I have made his favorite snacks, and I have bottles and bottles of his favorite wine. So, I wave my hands and whatever petty issues you have right now, I dispel, and we are going to party fabulous. Any questions?

OTIS

Beer?

CHARILE

In the fridge. Positions, people! Positions!

*EVERYONE starts to exit the room. BEN lingers a little bit, JENNY goes in front of him, followed by BEN and KATE.*

*CHARLIE sprays the WD-40 into the hinges. HE tests the door.*

CHARLIE

Ok, people. Let's make this perfect, there are no re-dos.

*Pause. Maybe the sound of a door opening.*

EVERYONE

SURPRISE!

*People begin to sing Happy Birthday to Anthony.  
Lights fade to black.*