

Charade

by

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Cast of Characters

REGINALD:

30's

PHILIP:

30's

Place

Restaurant

Time

Evening

2.

Setting: The play takes place inside a dimly lit restaurant. It's an elegant atmosphere for expensive dining.

At Rise: The play opens with Reginald and Philip sitting at a table across from one another. A check rests between them at the center of the table. Reginald nods and gestures at the check with his chin and smiles at Philip before staring back at his phone. Philip quietly scowls, shakes his head in annoyance and grabs the check.

Philip puts the check back down on the table and observes Reginald's behavior.

REGINALD: What?

PHILIP: Your turn.

REGINALD: Mine?

PHILIP: Yeah.

REGINALD: Not mine.

PHILIP: Uh-huh.

REGINALD: Can't you get it? *(Looks back into his phone.)*

PHILIP: *(Sighs.)*

Beat.

REGINALD: What is your problem?

PHILIP: You could get it.

REGINALD: What's the issue?

PHILIP: There is no issue.

REGINALD: Why are you -

PHILIP: Didn't you say you were inviting me out?

REGINALD: Yeah, but, you grabbed the check.

PHILIP: Yes, I grabbed check.

REGINALD: So?

PHILIP: But you saw the check before I grabbed it.

REGINALD: You mean to tell me you just sat there waiting for me to take it?

PHILIP: Well, I mean, yeah.

REGINALD: Really?

PHILIP: I thought you were treating?

REGINALD: Wow, okay, fine. I'll treat. *(Reginald reaches inside his jacket for his wallet.)*

PHILIP: But wait! Isn't that what you told me earlier? Isn't that why we came here?

REGINALD: We came here because we both like coming here.

PHILIP: I know.

REGINALD: This is our place.

PHILIP: Yes, I know it is -

REGINALD: And now you're ruining it.

PHILIP: Ruining it? Ruining, what?

REGINALD: You're intentionally trying to get me to block out all the good memories I have in this place because of how you're behaving now...this CHARADE.

PHILIP: CHARADE? You're the one playing a charade, dear.

REGINALD: Don't you dare accuse me!

PHILIP: You saw the check.

REGINALD: Of course I saw the check.

PHILIP: I was in the bathroom and when I came back the check was already on the table Reginald. That gave you plenty of time to pay the bill.

REGINALD: So, what? Why the rush? You're the one who ended up grabbing it!

PHILIP: Are you being serious right now, honey?

REGINALD: I'm always serious. Very serious.

PHILIP: You know what? I'll take care of it.

REGINALD: No, you won't!

Philip and Reginald both take hold of the bill, tearing it in half. They both hold one half of the bill.

PHILIP: You ripped it!

REGINALD: YOU ripped it!

PHILIP (*Whispering hard.*): People are beginning to stare.

REGINALD: Let them stare, I couldn't give two shits.

PHILIP: Calm down.

REGINALD: I will pay the bill.

PHILIP: Did it really have to come to this? Really??

REGINALD: You have no patience!

PHILIP: Patience for what? The bill lands on the table, you pay it. What's the hesitation?

REGINALD: Waiter!

PHILIP: I said stop, I'll take care of it.

REGINALD: Didn't I say I was treating you? Let me treat!

PHILIP: Let's go halves.

REGINALD: Never.

PHILIP: Stubborn mule, let's split the bill together. (*Trying to make light of the situation.*) We already have half each. (*He dangles his half of the check.*)

REGINALD: I've been observing you lately, Philip.

PHILIP: Why?

REGINALD: Cheap. You are cheap, Philip.

PHILIP: My ass.

REGINALD: You are.

PHILIP: No, I'm not.

REGINALD: In the cab on the way here, you squirmed for what seemed like an eternity before you coughed up the money to pay the cabbie. I was getting hot flashes all through my neck watching your display of anxiety. And what was it? A measly ten dollars. I asked you to pick up a gallon of milk on your way home from work and it was like I was asking you to recite the entire bible word for word.

PHILIP. My back. You forgot about my back. I have to carry a gallon of milk when I could barely walk as it is?

REGINALD: Excuses!

PHILIP: You work from home all day. Can't you go and spring for some milk on your own damn time? You have to bother me! And it's not like it's on a random night or once in a blue moon! No, It's always timed so perfectly, just when I'm finally on *my* way home from the most brutal day. Like that's what I want to do after drudging away at my job since the early hours. Get milk, get cigarettes, get sponges and sometimes you ask me to get shit I've never heard of that's impossible to find! Like that lip balm you wear, what's that thing called, that carmel shit? I had to go into several stores before I could find that damned thing! And you know I hate it, 'cause I hate that strawberry smell, makes me feel like my throat is closing up, it bothers my allergies! But, do you happen to care Rey? No, I don't think you do, goes in one ear and out the other, doesn't it Reginald. And my allergies, you don't seem to understand how fatal they can be. What if one day I pass out from asphyxiation, what would you do then?

REGINALD: You don't have allergies, you've been tested twice.

PHILIP: I do!

REGINALD: It's all in your mind, freak.

PHILIP: Don't speak to me that way.

REGINALD: ...Sorry.

PHILIP: You know I can't stand that specific word.

REGINALD: Sorry, sorry, I said I was sorry.

PHILIP: (*sighs*)

REGINALD: Can we leave this place?

PHILIP: Can we split the bill?

REGINALD (*sarcastic*): No, I have my pride and I am treating you for such a lovely time. Waiter!

Waiter comes over and Reginald hands his credit card with his half of the bill.

REGINALD: We had a little...I'll pay the whole thing please.

Waiter walks off.

PHILIP: All this for nothing. You could have paid it and been done with it.

REGINALD: Tell me the truth. You knew the check was coming, is that why you went to the bathroom?

PHILIP: Yes.

REGINALD: Yes?

PHILIP: I deliberately set out to dodge the check.

REGINALD: Bastard.

PHILIP: I needed to see if you were gonna take it.

REGINALD: I just did, Phil!

PHILIP: Without the hassle, it would have been nice. I would have liked to have felt appreciated is all. Lately, oh, it's fine.

REGINALD: Talk to me.

PHILIP: NO, I just want to go home now. Tired.

Pause.

REGINALD: I do my share.

PHILIP: Always so quick to defend yourself. I wish you'd...*(Sighs.)*

Waiter comes back and nods before walking away.

Reginald takes his credit card and receipt.

REGINALD: And that's that. Ready to go?

PHILIP: Yeah.

REGINALD: You're welcome.

PHILIP *(Sadly)*: Thank you.

REGINALD: Don't guilt trip me.

PHILIP: I'm not.

REGINALD: Another one of your games.

PHILIP: It's not.

Pause.

Reginald finishes his wine and stares at Philip.

PHILIP: Ready?

REGINALD: Yeah.

Philip suddenly wraps his arms around Reginald and holds him tight, crying softly.

Reginald is taken aback but returns the hugging.

Philip releases his hold and walks away.

Reginald watches him before following Philip out of the restaurant.

Lights fade out.

END OF PLAY