



**Sample Pages from
The Date**

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THE DATE

A VIRTUAL PLAY IN ONE ACT BY
Steven Stack



The Date

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Casting

2W + 2M

Chris: 15, best friends with Ray and Felicia, who are dating. Speaking of dating, Chris has never been on a date. Until tonight.

Felicia: 16, dating Ray. Likes to research the odd happenings in St. Claire. Very loyal and direct.

Ray: 16, dating Felicia. Sees Chris as a little brother even though he's only a few months older. Seems to have it all together.

Jinny: Probably 15. A girl who is inhumanely attractive and mysterious. Started school at St. Claire three weeks ago and is very attracted to Chris, for reasons unknown.

Set

The Date occurs online. It can either be pre-recorded or performed live with a screen projecting it for the audience as it is occurring.

Props Needed

Paper and Pen (Felicia and Ray)

Special Notes

The “Shadows” can be accomplished by having a shadow simply appear or having someone “cloaked” in some way to mask their appearance. You could also make their appearance more demon-like to add to the horror.

Dedicated to E.H.

Someone who deserved a lot more than the universe gave her.

Setting: The online world.

At Rise: We see a computer screen on with the face of CHRIS, 15. He is currently the only one at the meeting and clearly looking at another site that we cannot see. He, at first, is reading to himself. He then takes a bite of his large bowl of applesauce, savors it, closes his eyes, and begins to talk.

CHRIS: All right, Chris. Here we go, five steps to a successful online date. One, don't be late. (*opens his eyes*) Check. Someone was an hour early and that someone is me. (*laughs and then closes his eyes again*) Two, look your best. (*Opens his eyes and looks at himself. A look of disappointment crosses his face.*) With lowered expectations, that one is also a check. (*closes his eyes again*) Three, have a strong listening face while adding encouraging words to make sure your date in this case, Jinny, knows that you are listening. (*Opens his eyes and tries a variety of "listening faces" while saying listening words. First face.*) That's very interesting. (*Makes a new face. Laughs a little.*) Are you... serious? (*makes a new face*) That's a story I would love to tell my grandmother. (*considers*) Wait, both my grandmothers are dead. I guess that could still work if I went for some sympathy. (*considers*) I'll just file that away for now. (*Makes a new face. Realizes he doesn't like that look.*) Gross. That one makes me look like I'm leering at her while smelling a fart. (*considers what to do*) I'll just go with three. (*closes his eyes*) Step 4: Remember past dates and what went well. (*opens his eyes and ponders*) What went well on past dates? Past... dates. Um. Since there were no past dates, I'll move on to Step 5. (*closes eyes*) Step 5: Visualize right now the perfect date happening while keeping your eyes closed. This will be fun. (*visualizing*) Oh, hello... Jinny. I didn't see you there. You love my hair? Oh, thank you. I washed it today. Twice. (*he smiles*) Even took a shower. With soap.

FELICIA, 16, appears online, unbeknownst to CHRIS.

I do work out a little. Thanks for noticing. What do I lift? I don't know... Weights. Horses. I don't like to talk about it because I'm pretty humble. About everything. Kind of the best at being humble.

FELICIA stares on in bewildered wonder. RAY, her boyfriend, appears and is about to talk but is stunned to silence by watching CHRIS flex his non-existent muscles. FELICIA draws a message on paper that says, "Don't say anything, Ray." He nods he won't.

Wait, enough small talk? Okay? You want to... kiss? But we can't. We're in two different locations and that... you're right. Our passion will transcend the space between us. (RAY writes a sign to FELICIA that reads, "What is going on???") Before we... kiss, I need to tell you something. I've never actually been kissed before. Except by my mom and my Aunt Dot, so... be gentle.

At this point, CHRIS moves in to kiss the screen, rather passionately. FELICIA and RAY are laughing. At some point, sooner than later, FELICIA unmutes her mic.

FELICIA: Chris, are we interrupting something? (CHRIS screams and falls out of his chair. RAY now unmutes himself and can be heard laughing.) Are you okay?

RAY: More importantly, who was the better kisser? Your mom or your Aunt Dot? I'm going with Aunt Dot because I don't feel like your mom is that passionate.

CHRIS: (struggling to get up and now has applesauce on his face) I was rehearsing!

FELICIA: (noticing his face) You got a little something... all over your face.

RAY: Looks like applesauce.

CHRIS: It is applesauce. With cinnamon. I tend to stress eat cinnamon applesauce. (tries to wipe it off) Did I get it all off?

RAY: Relatively.

FELICIA: What were you rehearsing?

CHRIS: I was rehearsing the five tips for a successful online date.

RAY: Oh, is that why we're here?

CHRIS: Yeah, you guys are a couple and my best friends, and I figured the only chance I had for this date to work out was to do research and make it a double date.

RAY: Wait, you have a date?

CHRIS: Yeah.

RAY & FELICIA: Seriously?

FELICIA: Not that we're shocked but –

CHRIS: No, you are, and I was too. Still am. I mean, I just assumed I would never have a date.

RAY: I always thought you would. I mean, not, you know, in our teenage years. Or even in your 20s. More like when –

FELICIA: When you had a job and a lot of money. Who is she? Someone at school?

RAY: Dude, is it Elizabeth? I mean, she has had a massive crush on you since...

CHRIS: Since first grade and no, it's not her.

FELICIA: Well, who else could it be? She's the only one that's ever shown any interest in you.

CHRIS: That's a self-esteem building thought. Thanks. And it's a girl named Jinny.

RAY & FELICIA: Who?

CHRIS: You know that new girl, who started like three weeks ago, and who's really, really attractive?

FELICIA: You don't mean the inhumanly hot one that never goes to any classes and never talks to anyone, do you?

CHRIS: I do.

FELICIA: Why would she be interested in you? No offense, but she's like a 98 out of 10, and you, at best, are a 5.

RAY: I would go a solid 6 for you. Especially when you fix yourself up. But seriously, she's way out of everyone's league, so why you?

CHRIS: No idea.

FELICIA: When did you talk to her?

CHRIS: A couple of days ago, when I was out hiking. (*RAY and FELICIA seem shocked*) Don't worry. By hiking, I meant taking a couple of steps into the woods and remembering that hiking is dumb. I turned around to head back to my car, and when I did, she was standing there. Looking super hot.

RAY: I bet.

CHRIS: She said, "Hi Chris, my name is Jinny and I like you. A lot."

FELICIA: She did not.

CHRIS: She did! I promise.

RAY: Did she realize she was talking to you?

CHRIS: I wasn't sure, but she did say my name, no one else was around, and she was looking directly at me. I was at a loss for words, so she kept talking about how awesome I was, and how she wanted to get to know me better. Way better. And then eventually we set up tonight's online date. (*silence*) Say something.

RAY: Something's off about this.

FELICIA: Ray's right. A girl who no one really knows comes out of nowhere, is basically perfect, and is obsessed with you? That doesn't happen in real life. Something bad's going to happen.

RAY: Yep.

CHRIS: C'mon. I feel like you both are only thinking that because you can't fathom someone as attractive as Jinny liking me.

RAY: And?

FELICIA: Not to mention, if something too good to be true ever happens here in St. Claire, it always is too good to be true and someone, usually multiple someones, die.

CHRIS: None of us are going to die. It's just a date. The very first date of my entire life and I think she likes me. Like a lot. She even gave me a Valentine's card.

FELICIA: It's October, and we're in high school. What did it say?

CHRIS: It said, "Sometimes dreams come true." I looked up to thank her, but she was already walking away. Her shadow was weird, though.

RAY & FELICIA: What?

CHRIS: Like it wasn't attached to her. And it was facing the wrong way. Plus, I swear it was watching me.

RAY: A somehow unattached shadow, facing the wrong way, and watching you? (*CHRIS nods*) That seems normal.

FELICIA: We should leave this call now before she gets here, and we can all talk to her at school Monday.

CHRIS gets a text.

CHRIS: Too late. She just texted me and said she's getting online now. Please don't mess this up for me. I'm tired of being lonely. Just make me look good tonight. If anything gets weird, we'll just end the date early.

FELICIA: Promise?

CHRIS nods.

RAY: We got you, Chris. Besides, it's only one date. What's the worst that could happen?

FELICIA sighs and shakes her head.

FELICIA: And one more thing. Everything you were rehearsing, don't do it. Any of it.

CHRIS: *(smiles)* Okay, I won't. Guys, thanks for helping and uh, being like my only friends in the world. *(RAY and FELICIA smile. We see a notification that JINNY is entering the call. At first, we simply see a black screen.)* Jinny, are you there? *(silence)* Jinny?

JINNY's camera comes on. She is striking.

CHRIS: Hi, Jinny.

JINNY: Hi. *(noticing that FELICIA and RAY are there)* Oh, I thought it was just going to be you and me.

CHRIS: No. Sorry. This is –

JINNY: Ray and Felicia, your best friends.

CHRIS: Yeah. How did you know?

JINNY: I see you three together at school all the time.

FELICIA: Hi, Jinny. Sorry that Chris didn't let you know that this was going to be a double date. *(notices a drawing of some sort on her hand)* Hey, what's that thing on your wrist? It looks familiar.

JINNY: *(looks down and notices the drawing)* It's nothing. I just tend to draw on myself sometimes.

FELICIA: But it looks familiar. Like I've seen it before.

JINNY: You haven't. *(changing the subject)* And it's okay that you and Ray are here.

CHRIS: Yeah, I wanted to give myself the best chance of not messing this up and figured having them here would help. I haven't had

much experience at, you know, dating. Or any. (*realizes what he said*) I didn't mean to say that last part.

JINNY: It's okay. I've always loved your honesty. (*The others seemed confused. JINNY realizes this and tries to explain.*) I've talked to people about you. (*silence*) I haven't had much experience dating either.

CHRIS, FELICIA, & RAY: Really?

JINNY: Yeah.

FELICIA: Why?

JINNY: I'm not sure.

FELICIA: Well, Chris is an awesome guy. Like one of the best.

RAY: And he totally likes you. I mean, probably 90% for your looks but

—

JINNY: You like me, Chris? (*silence*)

CHRIS: I mean, yeah. I know I don't know you well —

JINNY: But you do. You know me better than you think.

CHRIS: Oh, okay. And you're pretty, and no one even mildly attractive has ever looked at me before.

A quick moment of sadness passes over JINNY, but we are unsure why.

JINNY: Well, you're exactly what I want and tonight will prove that somethings are just meant to be. Just like Felicia and Ray.

RAY: I wouldn't go that far.

FELICIA: Hey. (*RAY and FELICIA both laugh*) What grade are you in?

JINNY: 10th, like all of you.

RAY: But you're not in any of our classes.

JINNY: I'm on a different schedule.

RAY: Oh.

FELICIA: Well, who do you hang out with? Maybe we know —

CHRIS: Can we stop all these questions?

FELICIA: Oh, would you rather use some of those lines I saw you —

CHRIS: Nope. I simply think that –

JINNY: It's okay. I hang out with a few people. Not too many, and I'm not close to anyone besides one person I think you all know. Elizabeth Berring?

RAY & FELICIA: Seriously?

JINNY nods.

RAY: I didn't think she hung out with anyone besides Chris every now and then.

CHRIS: I wouldn't call it hanging out.

JINNY: I think she's very nice.

CHRIS: She is. We've known her since first grade.

RAY: *(laughs)* And that's how long she's had a crush on him.

JINNY: Really?

CHRIS: Yeah. She's given me a Valentine's Day card every year. And when you gave me one, it made the second person who's given me a Valentine's card who wasn't forced.

FELICIA: Better watch out, Jinny. You might have some competition for Chris.

FELICIA, RAY, and CHRIS laugh. A change comes over JINNY's face.

JINNY: Why are you laughing? Is something funny?

They stop laughing.

CHRIS: Um... no.

FELICIA: It's just that Elizabeth is sweet and all, but...

JINNY: But not pretty enough for someone to like? Not pretty enough like... I am?

FELICIA: We didn't mean anything by it.

JINNY: I know.

RAY: We all like her, but she's just kind of sad. And her obsession for Chris is... different.

JINNY: How so?

RAY: I don't know. Maybe the fact that it's been going on since first grade and nothing's ever happened. She probably should move on. For her sake.

JINNY: What do you think, Chris?

CHRIS: I don't know. I don't like her that way, so I guess. Although, I am kind of flattered by it. I mean. It's nice to be liked. Even though it's a little weird.

FELICIA: I feel like we're all coming off poorly about Elizabeth. The bottom line, Jinny, is she's our friend.

JINNY: Is she? Is she really?

RAY: Well, not close friends, but yeah.

JINNY: Uh. When was the last time you saw her?

Confusion shows on their faces.

CHRIS: I think I saw her today in class.

JINNY: You think?

CHRIS: I mean, I thought I did.

JINNY: (*pointed*) You didn't. (*to RAY and FELICIA*) When was the last time you two saw her?

FELICIA: I don't know, this week.

RAY: Yeah, definitely this week.

FELICIA: Well, I wouldn't say definitely.

RAY: Yeah. Maybe we saw her.

JINNY: You haven't seen her either. For the last three weeks. That's how long she's been gone. But none of you would know because she's forgettable. Background noise. That's all she is to you.

CHRIS: That's not true.

JINNY: Maybe not to you, but to these two, she is.

FELICIA: What's your deal with Elizabeth? She's not even here and –

JINNY: My deal with Elizabeth is that she hasn't been to school in three weeks. What it must be like to be the person who disappears, and no one notices. No one.

RAY: I can't believe she's been gone that long. Wow. I haven't noticed her –

CHRIS: Don't finish that sentence. Look, Jinny, we're teenagers. And not knowing that Elizabeth was gone for three weeks, though clearly wrong, doesn't mean we don't care about her. It just means...

JINNY: Means what?

FELICIA: It means that we're too wrapped up in our thoughts and problems to notice things.

JINNY: You noticed me.

RAY: Yeah, but you're like...

JINNY: Everything Elizabeth's not.

CHRIS: Look, I like Elizabeth, and I feel terrible that I didn't know she wasn't at school. Where is she?

JINNY: She's gone.

CHRIS: What?

JINNY: She's gone.

RAY: When is she coming back?

JINNY: (*smiles*) She's not. But what of it? No one missed her anyway. The world never saw her value and never would have so... good riddance.

CHRIS: That's not true.

JINNY: I almost believe you.

CHRIS: It's true.

JINNY: (*takes a moment and then smiles*) Good. I forgive you for not knowing she was gone. Now, everything is almost perfect.

FELICIA: You started about the same time that Elizabeth –

JINNY: Disappeared? Yes. It was the same day.

RAY: Then how were you friends with her?

JINNY smiles but doesn't answer.

FELICIA: We have to get off this call. Right now.

CHRIS: But –

FELICIA: Just trust me. We need to go –

JINNY: You can't. Go ahead and try. You're here with me until I get what we want.

CHRIS: What is going on?

JINNY: Felicia, why don't you explain it to the boys because I know you know.

FELICIA stays silent.

RAY: Felicia?

FELICIA: That marking on her wrist isn't some random drawing. It's a crossroads branding.

CHRIS: What?

FELICIA: A crossroads branding. It's what one gets when they make a crossroads deal with a demon. It basically marks them as property until their debt is paid.

RAY: Holy crap.

CHRIS: Why would you know that?

FELICIA: Think about where we live, dummy. It pays to know stuff.

JINNY: Not well enough, apparently. (*Silence. JINNY smiles.*) You are a smart girl. It is a crossroads branding. Several weeks ago, I made a little deal. Or should I say, Elizabeth made a deal with someone. And if you three play along, you can all reap the benefits, especially Chris.

RAY: So, you're Elizabeth?

FELICIA: Duh. So, your deal was –

JINNY: To be everything Elizabeth was not and to live one perfect year.

FELICIA: What was the cost?

JINNY: After my year is up, I go away. For good. Because my bill comes due.

RAY: Wow. Someone overpaid.

JINNY: When one has nothing, no cost is too expensive.

FELICIA: How does Chris fit into this?

CHRIS: Yeah, how do I fit into this?

JINNY: Because you are the one I choose to spend my perfect year with, in a constant state of bliss.

FELICIA: You can't do this, Chris. Elizabeth, these deals never go the person's way. And yours is just stupid.

RAY: Probably don't say that –

FELICIA: No, it needs to be said! Elizabeth, one year? Even it's perfect? You have a whole life ahead of you. And you give up –

JINNY: I gave up nothing. You talk about an entire life ahead of me. That's easy for you to say. For Ray. Even for Chris.

CHRIS: Why even?

JINNY: But for me? You think this life is going to be better? I've seen my family. I know what I was born into and what awaits me. I see it every day when I watch my parents. I get that it's only a year, but I value quality over quantity. And in my case, quantity would lead to nothing but disappointment.

FELICIA: You can't guarantee that. No one knows how their life is going to turn out.

RAY: Yeah, I mean, I could see how you think your life sucks now. I mean, you're okay looking, you clearly have family issues and –

CHRIS: Is anything you're saying right now supposed to be helping?

JINNY: It does help. To prove my point. And it doesn't matter anyway. I've already made the deal, and deals like these aren't the kind you break. Chris, say yes, and you will have the best year of your life. Trust me.

CHRIS: What's happens to me after –

JINNY: You'll go back to your normal life.

CHRIS: That's a little anti-climatic.

RAY: That's because she's lying. She's going to *Romeo and Juliet* this thing.

JINNY: I'm not lying.

FELICIA: Even if you're not, you can't be sure that whoever you made a deal with won't just take Chris.

JINNY: And what if they do? I'm offering Chris a year of perfection.

CHRIS: But it's only a year.

JINNY: A lot can happen in a year. A lot.

CHRIS: *(silence as he seems to be considering it)* I –

RAY: Wait, Chris, you cannot seriously be considering this.

CHRIS: I mean –

FELICIA: No, Chris, you're not doing this. We're your best friends. We've always been there for each other, and this is no different. You know all of this is wrong and won't go the way she's saying it will. It never does.

CHRIS: Yeah. You're right.

RAY: I agree with Felicia. We'll find you some other girl who hasn't made a deal with a demon. I mean, she'll be less attractive but I'm also thinking she'll also have less baggage. Probably.

Silence as everyone looks CHRIS, who is trying to decide what to do.

JINNY: Huh. Such a shame. I had hoped not to do this.

CHRIS: Do what?

JINNY: See, my deal with the crossroads demon was a little different. I've always loved the stories with the genie and three wishes, and I've only used one, but now I see I'm going to have to use another one.

FELICIA: What are you talking about?

JINNY: I had hoped that you and Ray, Felicia, would support our love, but now I see that you won't. So, you'll have to go away.

FELICIA: What are you –

JINNY looks at them all almost as though she is in another place. A shadow appears in RAY's room. He doesn't see it. FELICIA does, though.

Ray, something is in your room.

RAY: What?

CHRIS: Ray, get out of there!

RAY turns and screams as his camera goes dark.

FELICIA: Ray! (*RAY's camera comes back on. He stares at the camera blankly.*) Ray? Ray? What did you do to him?

JINNY: I gave him to someone. He's now hollowed out for something else to use. Something beautiful.

FELICIA: Fix him. Now!

JINNY: I'm not doing that. Because I can't.

CHRIS: But you do have one wish left.

JINNY: I'm sorry. I meant I don't want to. But I couldn't if I wanted to.

FELICIA: Is he –

JINNY: Dead? No, he's still in there. But when the new resident takes over, it's not going to be pleasant for him. But don't worry, you're about to find out what it's like, too.

FELICIA: I gathered.

JINNY: You know, I've always envied you, Felicia. Ever since the first time I met you... And not just because of how close you were to Chris. I envied you because of everything you had. Everything you were. I wanted to be you every single day of my life. Did you know that? I bet you didn't. And since I couldn't be, I at least wanted to be your friend. But I didn't get that either.

FELICIA: I was never mean to you.

JINNY: Never mean to me. How sad that that counts for friendship when it comes to people like Elizabeth. (*silence*) I have a question for you: if you can't be loved, is it better to be hated and scorned or simply forgotten? The answer is hated and scorned because at least that means someone feels something for you. And now, because of what I've done to Ray, I see the hate in your eyes, Felicia. Thank you. But now it's time for you to go, too.

CHRIS: Please, Jinny... I mean, Elizabeth. Don't. I'll do anything if you –

JINNY: It's too late. It's already in the room.

The shadow appears in FELICIA's room.

CHRIS: Watch out Felicia, it's behind you!

FELICIA turns and screams. Her screen goes dark, and when it comes back on, she is hollow as well. Silence.

JINNY: I thought having them watch us would be a nice touch, but it makes it awkward somehow. *(She snaps her fingers, and their screens go dark. They have left the meeting. JINNY smiles at CHRIS.)* Now it's just the two of us. *(silence)* Say something silly.

CHRIS: This is the worst first date ever.

JINNY: You're just saying that because of what happened to your friends.

CHRIS: Yep. That would be it. I thought you were a good person, Elizabeth.

JINNY: I was, but one can only be pushed to the background so many times before they ask, "What about me?" Instead of complaining about it and doing nothing, though, I decided to fix it. And to be honest, what happened to Ray and Felicia is really your fault, Chris. Tonight was supposed to only be you and me. But you invited them, and their words reminded me of how they had always been standing in the way of our love, since the beginning. In first grade.

CHRIS: Wait, what?

JINNY: That's right. You've loved me since first grade.

CHRIS: No, I didn't. I don't even think first graders can –

JINNY: No, they can. Because we did.

CHRIS: No, I –

JINNY: Yes! You did. I saw the way you looked at me then, especially after our puppet show. Remember? You were kind to me, and that's when we fell in love and have been ever since. You just forgot because Ray and Felicia poisoned your mind against me.

CHRIS: That's not true. Any of it. I barely remember that puppet show.

JINNY: That's okay because I do. When you picked me to be your partner, it made me happy. And that day turned out to be one of the best days of my life.

CHRIS: Good, I guess. But, to be honest, I didn't pick you to work with. Mrs. Corn did. I wanted to work with Lisa, but Ms. Corn wouldn't let me because she despised giving me anything I wanted.

JINNY: What? Lisa? With the buck teeth?

CHRIS: Yeah. I had a huge crush on her.



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