

He Asked For It

by
Erik Patterson

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CAST BREAKDOWN:

5 male actors, 1 female actor

CAST OF CHARACTERS (in order of appearance):

TED, HOLLYWOODTED: An actor from Wyoming. (20s)

NEAL / FUNSPORT9: A buff, gym dude. (30s)

RIGBY / RIGBYINLA: A gaffer from Encino. (45)

MARCUS: Ted's agent. (30s-40s)

SOPHIE: Ted's sister. (16)

HENRY / LOOKINGFORTHEONE: Not an actor. A romantic. (20s-30s)

STEVE: A random guy. (30s)

Note: Neal / Funsport9 and Steve should be played by the same actor.

SETTING:

West Hollywood, now. Various locations.

NOTES:

A right slash (/) indicates an overlapping in dialogue.

Words in brackets [like these] are thought, but not said.

When the actors are engaged in IM conversations, they should mime the act of typing, while also speaking their dialogue. They may speak directly to their "computer screens" or out into the audience, but they should not have eye contact with each other during these IM conversations. Same rules apply with telephone conversations. We should feel the distance created by the computer and the phone so much so that when characters finally have face-to-face encounters, these moments feel heightened.

The "Voice of AOL" can either be pre-recorded, or a voice from off-stage. It should be a woman's voice.

ACT ONESCENE 1

Crunch Gym in West Hollywood.

Neal runs on a treadmill, reading Us Magazine. Ted enters. He starts running on the treadmill next to Neal. After a beat, Ted discretely checks Neal out. Neal catches Ted looking at him. Embarrassed, Ted looks away. Neal checks Ted out, isn't interested, goes back to his magazine. Ted looks back at Neal. Neal catches Ted looking at him again. They have eye contact. Ted nods at Neal and smiles. Neal smiles and politely nods back.

I'm Ted.

TED

Neal.

NEAL

(Neal returns his attention to his magazine. They run on their treadmills for a beat, then...)

Cool. So, how's it going, Neal?

TED

Huh? Oh, it's good. The running's good.

NEAL

Can I..., uh...I mean, do you...um...

TED

You wanna ask me something?

NEAL

I guess.

TED

Then ask me.

NEAL

Do you like Madonna?

TED

NEAL
That's what you wanna know?

TED
Do you like her music?

NEAL
Random.

TED
Is it?

NEAL
Yeah. *(beat)* No.

TED
No, it's not random?

NEAL
No, I don't like her music. That's all you wanna know about me?

TED
No—okay—sorry—wait—yeah—another question.

NEAL
Shoot.

TED
Do you have a girlfriend?

NEAL
I thought you were flirting with me.

TED
I was. I mean, I am.

NEAL
Then you don't really think I have a girlfriend, do you?

TED
You look like you could. I recently moved to Los Angeles. From Wyoming. Three weeks ago, actually. In Wyoming, everyone has a girlfriend. I mean, everyone swings that way, if you know what I mean. I mean—at least, everyone I know. Or knew. I mean, I'm sure there were other guys—like me—who didn't have girlfriends, but I was never any good at finding those guys. There was this *girl* in high school who had a girlfriend, she was pretty extreme—but that was it. And then when I went to college, there were some guys

there, guys who didn't have girlfriends like me, if you know what I mean. I mean, do you know what I mean? I keep saying "I mean." Oh my God. What am I trying to say? This is painful. Anyway, fast forward. Or rewind. Or whatever—just, let me start over: before, when I asked you that question about Madonna, I was trying to figure out if you were...*(beat)*...*you know*. Which is kind of ridiculous, because *I'm—you know*—and I don't like Madonna, but it was the first thing that popped into my head. Sorry, okay, let me—I'll just...ask: if you don't have a girlfriend, then, do you, like, have a boyfriend?

NEAL

No.

TED

But you *are*, um...

(Neal waits a beat for Ted to say the word, but Ted doesn't finish his sentence. Finally...)

NEAL

I am.

TED

Cool, cool. Glad that's over with.

(Ted laughs. Neal doesn't.)

TED

Okay.

(Awkward beat. Neal goes back to his magazine.)

TED

Sometimes I wish everyone had to wear tags.

NEAL

Tags?

TED

So there was never any question. You could just look at someone and you'd immediately know what they were from their tags.

NEAL

That sounds awful—

TED

No, you don't understand, I mean, then it wouldn't be an issue anymore. Sexuality. It'd be something like hair color or eye color—

NEAL

It *is* something like hair color or eye color—

TED

But you know what I mean—it'd be something you knew immediately—

NEAL

You're proposing a Nazi state.

TED

I'm not making myself clear—I'm just saying that I wish there wasn't so much guessing involved. I'm always guessing if someone *is* or *isn't*. And I wish I just knew. I wish no one had to pretend. Anywhere. Pretend they weren't...*you know*.

NEAL

It might help if you could actually say the word.

TED

Right. Yeah. Okay.

(Awkward beat.)

TED

It's hard to meet people, that's all.

NEAL

You should try the internet.

TED

I'm afraid of the internet.

NEAL

Dude. The internet.

TED

Actually...I was wondering if maybe *you'd* wanna go out. With me?

NEAL

Sorry, but: I don't go out with guys I meet at the gym.

TED

Oh, okay. I can respect that.

NEAL

Thanks.

(Awkward beat. Neal continues running.)

TED

I'm feeling awkward now, so I'm just gonna...um, leave.

(Ted shuts down his treadmill, stops running, exits.)

(Lights shift.)

SCENE 2

Three weeks later.

Basix Café in West Hollywood.

Rigby stands outside, waiting. Ted, late and flustered, enters, dressed for a date.

TED

Excuse me, are you—

RIGBY

I'm Rigby. / You're Ted?

TED

I'm Ted. Nice to meet you.

(They shake hands, awkward, checking each other out.)

RIGBY

I like your tie.

TED

I never wear ties, but then I figured: why own them if you're not gonna wear them?
Should we—*[get a table]*

RIGBY

I gave them my name. It'll be about ten minutes.

TED

Cool. How'd you know who I was?

RIGBY

I recognized you from your profile.

TED

Of course. I didn't think of that. I've never done this before—never met anyone from the internet. I'm a little bit nervous.

RIGBY

Don't be.

TED

I read your profile ten times.

RIGBY

You're exaggerating.

TED

I don't exaggerate. I'm not an exaggerator.

RIGBY

Ten times?

TED

Ten times.

RIGBY

Wow.

TED

I know.

RIGBY

Was that before you emailed me, or after?

TED

Five before and five after.

RIGBY

Five before and five after, that's—

TED

It's kind of—

RIGBY

It's obsessive.

TED

Or thorough.

RIGBY

I don't know if I should be scared or flattered.

TED

You should be flattered. It was well written. It made me want to meet you.

RIGBY

How's the real thing compared to the profile?

TED

It's good. You're good. (*beat*) How about me? Do you like me? I mean, you just met me two minutes ago, but is your first impression—

RIGBY

It's good.

TED

I'm good?

RIGBY

So far.

TED

You're sure?

RIGBY

I'm positive.

TED

It's surreal meeting a guy from the internet—because I feel like we know so much about each other, but we really don't know anything. (*beat.*) I'm not perfect, you know.

RIGBY

That's fine. I'm not either.

TED

I don't understand guys who want perfection. I mean, who's perfect, right? Oh, and this might be a weird question, but I have to ask if you're out of the closet?

RIGBY

I'm forty-five years old.

TED

Is that a yes?

RIGBY

There comes a point in your life when, if people don't like who you are, you gotta just tell them to fuck off, you know? Anyway, yeah, I'm out of the closet.

TED

It's just that everyone I've ever dated was in the closet and I vowed I'd never put myself in that position again. It was too stressful. So I had to ask.

RIGBY

You're not from Los Angeles.

TED

No. I grew up in Casper, Wyoming. It's this little town about 100 miles outside of Laramie. It's practically a ghost town. Which is appropriate because of the name. All the guys I've ever dated—the closeted guys—that was in Casper.

RIGBY

Are you out with your family? In Casper, Wyoming.

TED

Well, I wasn't, and then I was. And that was *different*. My parents, they...they don't really...I mean, are you close to your parents?

RIGBY

No.

TED

Right. Well, I *was*. So, yeah. Anyway—I moved to L.A., and here I am, and...I wanna find someone who isn't afraid to be real.

RIGBY

You moved to L.A. to find someone who isn't afraid to be real?

TED

Funny, I know. It's just that...I know I'm young, and I know I'm naïve, but...I want the long haul, I wanna have something with someone that's totally unlike anything anyone else has ever had with anyone else—a completely unique connection. With someone I can be vulnerable with, and human with, and not-perfect with. And this other guy—he doesn't have to be perfect either, as long as we're not perfect together.

RIGBY

Are you for real?

TED

Yeah.

RIGBY

I don't know that I've ever met anyone like you.

TED

Is that a good thing?

RIGBY

Definitely. And today's your lucky day, because if you want real, I can be real.

TED

Really? Then tell me something "real" that's not in your profile. Something most people don't know about you.

RIGBY

This is embarrassing, but...

TED

Tell me—

RIGBY

I cry a lot. It just happens. It doesn't even necessarily mean I'm sad or happy. I'll just cry.

TED

How often?

RIGBY

Every day.

TED

You're making this up—

RIGBY

No. It usually happens when I'm in the car—alone. I don't know why that is.

TED

You just cry?

RIGBY

That's something I usually wouldn't tell someone until I'd gotten them invested in the relationship. Now you think I'm odd.

TED

Have you ever been to therapy?

RIGBY

Oh, yeah.

I don't think you're odd.

TED

You do, I can tell.

RIGBY

No, you're kind of endearing.

TED

...in an odd way?

RIGBY

Okay, yeah: oddly endearing.

TED

Your turn. Tell me something "real" about yourself that's not in your profile.

RIGBY

What do you wanna know?

TED

Let's see...random question—What's your biggest fear?

RIGBY

That's easy: heights. Is that a problem?

TED

Why would it be a problem?

RIGBY

Because in your profile—which I read ten times, remember—you mention you love to go sky-diving, and I feel like I should warn you that anything above six feet in the air is pretty much—it's no-man's land. So if that's a deal breaker...

RIGBY

It's not a deal breaker.

TED

Good.

RIGBY

You'd love it, though. Sky-diving—it's amazing.

I won't.

TED

You won't love it? Or you won't do it?

RIGBY

I just can't. The height thing. It's...

TED

You're afraid.

RIGBY

Yeah. I get too freaked out. Heights, they make me vomit.

TED

Have you ever done it?

RIGBY

Done what?

TED

Jumped out of a plane.

RIGBY

No.

TED

Because I'm HIV Positive.

RIGBY

What?

TED

And I won't live in fear.

RIGBY

Wait—

TED

I don't believe in being sick. I don't believe in wasting time. I don't believe in parachutes.

RIGBY

Wait, what?

TED

RIGBY

I have HIV. It's what I have.

TED

That just came out of your mouth. We were talking about sky-diving and that just, it just...where'd that come from? In the conversation—where'd that come from?

RIGBY

(matter-of-fact)

You wanted "real." I don't know how much more real I can get.

TED

Okay, but...that's how you told me? Just like that? Before we've even gotten our table? You just...said it?

RIGBY

I have to be honest here.

TED

Right, of course.

RIGBY

You need to know. Might as well get it out of the way.

TED

Thank you. I think.

(Beat.)

TED

So, um...

(Beat.)

RIGBY

I think I killed the conversation.

TED

No, you didn't. You didn't. I'm sorry. Are you...

RIGBY

Yeah?

TED

Are you healthy?

I'm healthy.

RIGBY

Good, okay.

TED

If you want to end the date right now—

RIGBY

It's just a lot of information—

TED

—I'd understand.

RIGBY

That's all. Just give me a second—

TED

I wouldn't hate you.

RIGBY

I'd hate me.

TED

You shouldn't.

RIGBY

But I like you.

TED

I like you too.

RIGBY

TED

Standing here talking to you feels good, and the emails you sent me were funny and charming and...I feel like we could have a connection—and I don't feel that with very many people. And even though, honestly, a part of me *did* want to leave when you said that thing you just said, a bigger part of me still wants to stay. So...I just need to think for a second.

Okay.

RIGBY

(*Beat.*)

RIGBY

I've never been here. Well, I've been here emotionally, but that's not what I mean. I mean this restaurant. I've never been to this restaurant.

TED

It's good. I've lived in L.A. for six weeks and I've already eaten here twelve times.

RIGBY

You keep track?

(Ted nods.)

RIGBY

So what do you like to eat when you come here?

TED

The salmon. It's the best thing on the menu. It's the only thing I eat here now.

RIGBY

Then it's settled. We're both getting the salmon. If you stay.

TED

Okay.

(Beat.)

RIGBY

The biggest decision we have to make tonight is what we're gonna eat.

TED

We don't need to decide anything else?

RIGBY

Not tonight. But...I want to be clear about one other thing.

TED

Okay.

RIGBY

You understood what I meant when I said I don't believe in parachutes, right?

TED

I'm not sure.

RIGBY

You know that I wasn't talking about parachutes.

TED

What do you / mean—

RIGBY

I mean, Ted: if you really want to *be* with me—I mean, if you aren't afraid—I mean, if you really want a completely unique connection—then: let's jump out of the plane together.

(Ted suddenly realizes what Rigby's saying.)

(Lights shift.)

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