

The beginning of

FIT FOR LOVE (from **PLAYING DOCTOR**)

a comedy in one act

by Rich Orloff

Place: A hospital emergency room

Time: The present

Characters: JULIE, late 20's or so
CHARLIE, late 20's or so
NURSE (male or female)
DOCTOR (male or female)

A typical hospital emergency room's examination room. As the play begins, a NURSE opens the door. He or she carries a chart.

NURSE

This way. Make yourselves comfortable.

JULIE and CHARLIE enter. When one first sees them, one can't help but notice the following three things: (1) they both appear to be in their late twenties or so; (2) they're dressed as if they've gone to a dance club; and (3) they're stuck together, as if they had used glue as a sexual lubricant. (They haven't, but you get the idea.) Julie, a smaller person than Charlie, has her legs around Charlie's thighs and her arms around his neck. They enter trying to hold onto her dress and his boxers and pants to somehow hide their private parts.

By the way, one can't help but observe one other thing about Julie and Charlie: They *really* don't seem to like each other.

NURSE

The doctor will see you in a moment.
Please change into the hospital gowns
on the - oh, never mind.

The nurse exits. For a moment, Julie and Charlie glare at each other. Then:

JULIE

Let's try one more time.

CHARLIE

Fine by me.

Using part of the room to pull or push against...

JULIE
Ready?

CHARLIE
Ready.

JULIE
Pull!

They try to pull apart – unsuccessfully.

CHARLIE
I got an idea. Follow me.

Julie glares back, as if to say “Like I have a choice?”
They move to another part of the room.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Okay, now let’s really try this time.

JULIE
Okay.

CHARLIE
Pull!!!

They try to pull apart, but alas, they are unsuccessful once again.

JULIE
Can’t you just think deflating thoughts?

CHARLIE
I’ve tried.

JULIE
Your mother on the toilet!

CHARLIE
This isn’t use—

JULIE
My father with a meat cleaver!

CHARLIE
(angry)
I’m sorry.

JULIE
This is the worst first date of my life.

CHARLIE

You know, it's not necessarily *my* fault.

JULIE

It's not *my* fault.

CHARLIE

The EMT guy said it was *possible*
your girlie muscles went into spasm –

JULIE

"Girlie muscles"? How scientific.

CHARLIE

So sue me; I didn't go to med school.

JULIE

Did you finish *high* school?!

CHARLIE

I graduated college *with honors*.

JULIE

What was your major: English as a second language?

CHARLIE

When was the last time you flossed?

JULIE

When was the last time you showered?

CHARLIE

Before the date.

JULIE

You use deodorant?

CHARLIE

Yes.

JULIE

A recognized brand?

CHARLIE

Drop it.

JULIE

I just think that if a guy expects –

CHARLIE
Thigh stubble!

JULIE
Okay, I'll drop it.

CHARLIE
It's like a thousand acupuncture needles
pressing into my –

JULIE
I wasn't expecting company.

CHARLIE
Well, lucky me!

JULIE
If you tell anybody about this...

CHARLIE
I won't tell a soul!

JULIE
Good.

CHARLIE
And I'm sure no one at the dance club will
tell anyone either. I'm sure the bouncers
are sworn to an oath of secrecy. And I know
the ambulance driver was laughing way too
hard to ever get a good look at our faces.

JULIE
Asshole.

CHARLIE
Porcupine!

In response, Julie squeezes her thighs together.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Ow!

The DOCTOR enters, his or her face studying the chart.

DOCTOR
So, Miss Palmer, how far apart are the contrac—
(looks up, notices them:)
Be back in a second.

The doctor exits.

JULIE

It could be hours before they see us.

CHARLIE

Shit.

JULIE

What?

CHARLIE

The leaflet says if your erection lasts more than four hours –

JULIE

You took Viagra?!!

CHARLIE

(embarrassed)

Well –

JULIE

(confrontational)

Why?!!

CHARLIE

Well, you know, just in case we – you know, I want to be, you know –

JULIE

Locked and loaded?

The doctor enters again.

DOCTOR

Hello again. Thanks for waiting. I'm Doctor Landsman.

JULIE

I'm Julie.

CHARLIE

I'm Charlie.

He *tries* to shake hands with the doctor.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

So how's Miss Palmer?

DOCTOR

She's fine. I think more than anything
she just wanted someone to hold her hand.

JULIE

Oh.

DOCTOR

If she had just wanted someone to hold her hand
eight months ago, she wouldn't be here tonight.

CHARLIE

(under his breath:)

Women.

(being squeezed:)

Ow!

DOCTOR

(starting to take notes:)

So – what brings you to the hospital?

CHARLIE

We're stuck.

DOCTOR

I see.

(writing)

Coitus uninterrupted... And when did
the two of you get stuck?

CHARLIE

About an hour ago.

DOCTOR

Have you two had this problem bef-

CHARLIE

This is our first date.

DOCTOR

(letting this sink in;
perhaps secretly enjoying it)

I see.

JULIE

I don't normally do this on –

DOCTOR

Don't worry; I'm not your mother.*
Or your minister. I'm a doctor.
I'm here to help, not to care.

(*or, if the doctor is male, "father")

CHARLIE

Have you ever dealt with a situation like this before?

DOCTOR

I once locked my keys in the car.
So – this is your first date...

JULIE

We did exchange *several* e-mails first.

CHARLIE

We met through one of those Internet sites.

DOCTOR

I see.

JULIE

My friends talked me into it. I was reluctant,
as I believe such enterprises are one more sign
of the depersonalization of contemporary society.
However, the yearnings of the human heart –

DOCTOR

I considered one once.

CHARLIE

And?

DOCTOR

I realized if I filled out the profile honestly,
there's no way *I'd* go out with me.

CHARLIE

Yeah, they're pretty stupid.

JULIE

People lie all the time.

CHARLIE

Nobody looks as good as their photo.

JULIE

Most guys have the I.Q. of a newt.

DOCTOR

Then why do you do it?

JULIE

Hope springs eternal.

CHARLIE

(overlapping with "eternal")

Fresh meat.

JULIE

"Fresh meat"?

CHARLIE

What was your hope springing for, vegetables?

DOCTOR

Okay. So you went out and –

JULIE

Well, we did meet for coffee once. It was a cloudy afternoon, the kind of day when you had to draw on an inner reservoir of hope –

DOCTOR

You know how they say doctors want to know everything? We don't. So – let's get to what caused the prob—

CHARLIE

We were at this club, dancing –

DOCTOR

What'd you drink?

JULIE

Beers. Just two.

CHARLIE

Manhattans.

DOCTOR

Classy.

JULIE

With extra cherries.

DOCTOR

Very classy. Do any drugs?

JULIE

No!

CHARLIE

(overlapping with the above:)

Nobody offered us any.

JULIE

Well, apparently you found *one* –

CHARLIE

I took a Viagra. One Viagra.

DOCTOR

I see.

CHARLIE

Is that dangerous?

DOCTOR

Not compared to extra cherries.

JULIE

I don't go to clubs often, honest, and I certainly don't, I mean, not on a *first or second* date; but I think the relentlessly pulsating tribal rhythms mixed with the hypnotic dazzle of the lights lured me into a lapse of moral rectitude.

CHARLIE

Julie Is A Writer.

JULIE

You don't have to sound condescending.

CHARLIE

I guess I'm overwhelmed by your *rectitude*.

DOCTOR

Had anything published?

JULIE

I blog.

DOCTOR

About what?

JULIE

About life.

DOCTOR

I see. So what happened next?
Just the facts, not the novel.

CHARLIE

Well, this place had a unisex bathroom.

DOCTOR

Uh-huh.

JULIE

And as the two malt beverages swirled
deep into my consciousness –

DOCTOR

I get it; you had to pee.

CHARLIE

And then we um, well –

JULIE

He looked at me with smoldering intensity,
his gaze peeling away my resistance like
a wine connoisseur unwrapping the top
of a vintage Bordeaux, and although this
was not the path I wanted to want,
I knew I had to surrender to passion.

CHARLIE

Julie Writes Personal Essays.

DOCTOR

I see.

CHARLIE

So we went into an empty stall –

DOCTOR

And here you are.

JULIE

I swear I've *never* done anything like –

DOCTOR

Julie – it is Julie, right?

JULIE

Uh-huh.

DOCTOR

I assure you my short-term memory is so bad
I won't remember your name in ten minutes.
So – did you two use a condom?
(a long beat)
No condom?

JULIE

My period ended about twelve minutes before our date.

DOCTOR

You know, unprotected sex –

CHARLIE

I just had a blood test. I'm clean.

DOCTOR

Why did you have –

CHARLIE

I give blood. Regularly.

JULIE

He showed me his donor's card and everything.

DOCTOR

Very smooth.

JULIE

And I was tested at my last physical. I'm fine.

DOCTOR

And when was that physical?

JULIE

(embarrassed)
Ummm, eight months ago.

DOCTOR

And you haven't been sexually active in –

CHARLIE

Wow.

JULIE

Shut up.

CHARLIE

I just meant –

JULIE

There is nothing you can say you'll be glad you said.

CHARLIE

(sweetly)

I'm, I'm honored you deemed me worthy
of your, your surrender to passion.

JULIE

(receiving)

Oh... well... thanks.

DOCTOR

Okay, let me see if I sum up the *relevant* facts
of this epic: You screwed and now you're stuck.

CHARLIE

I guess I should've warmed her up more, huh?

DOCTOR

(thinks a moment, then:)

I don't need to go there.

JULIE

So –

DOCTOR

Okay, as best as possible, I'd like the two
of you to lie down, um, Charlie on your back.
And take off your shoes. I'll be back in
a moment, and we'll see what we can do.

JULIE

What are you planning to do?

DOCTOR

Oh, gosh, I don't know, I guess I'll do a Google
search. Actually, believe it or not, things
like this *do* happen occasionally.

CHARLIE

Really?

DOCTOR

Oh, yes. An idiopathic increase in vascular constriction and muscular contraction, individually or in tandem, can create a variety of unfortunate physical consequences.

JULIE

Do you think you'll be able to fix this?

DOCTOR

I got the keys out of my car.

The doctor exits.

JULIE

"Fresh meat"? Is that genuinely the way your mental apparatus operates?

CHARLIE

That was before I met you.

JULIE

And now?

CHARLIE

Long-winded baloney.