

Date Night

A play

by

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CHARACTER	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Christopher	Philosophy professor, bookish and effete.	40s	Male
Deandra	Working class, lives in the moment.	30s	Female
Tony	Working class, abusive and mean.	30s	Male

In a well-appointed Manhattan apartment, there's a couch and a bookshelf full of philosophy books and classical records. CHRISTOPHER irons his shirt delicately. Classical music plays. He's dressed conservatively, in corduroys and a dress shirt, tucked in.

Offstage, we hear TONY and DEANDRA arguing loudly in the hallway. Christopher listens but only bits and pieces are intelligible. Tony's voice fades...

DEANDRA (OFF STAGE)

Fuck you! You piece of shit!

Deandra cries audibly in the hallway, behind the closed door. He shuts off the music, grabs a book, approaches the door to the hallway, presses his ear against the door, opening it slowly.

Deandra stands there, sobbing. He raises the book in fear, as if to strike her. She runs in and hugs him desperately. Frightened, he half-embraces her, still holding the book.

DEANDRA

Oh my God, thank god you're here.

CHRISTOPHER

Who are you?

DEANDRA

I live across the hall.

CHRISTOPHER

Is everything OK?

DEANDRA

No, I'm not OK. I just got beat up by my piece of shit ex.

CHRISTOPHER

That is truly, truly awful. Now, you'll have to pardon me, but I am running quite late--

DEANDRA

(sitting on his couch)

That piece of shit. What a fucking piece of shit. What kind of asshole hits a woman?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, that is awful.

Deandra grabs Christopher's shirt from the ironing board and wipes away her tears.

DEANDRA

Thank God you're here. I don't know what I would do I was alone right now.

CHRISTOPHER

Ah excuse me, that's a Thomas Pink and--

DEANDRA

Oh I'm sorry. It was just hanging off the table there, I didn't think you were using it.

CHRISTOPHER

That's an ironing board. And I do need it, I have a date tonight.

DEANDRA

You already have a nice shirt on.

CHRISTOPHER

That's my backup shirt, in case something spills on this shirt.

DEANDRA

Well I don't see you going to get me a tissue. I know I'm not exactly the Mona Lisa right now but I'm still a lady.

CHRISTOPHER

(getting her a tissue)

Right, I'm sorry. Here you go.

DEANDRA

Thank you...

CHRISTOPHER

Christopher. Some of my friends call me Christoph.

DEANDRA

I'm Deandra.

(exaggerating the pronunciation and bowing)

But you can call me *De-an-dra*.

CHRISTOPHER

Very funny.

DEANDRA

Is that really what you're going to wear on your date?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes. I mean, do you think it's OK? I wanted something classical contemporary. It's not *too* American is it? I thought of wearing an Italian shirt, but (sigh), I don't want her to think I'm too, uh, exciting.

DEANDRA

I don't think *that's* gonna' be a problem. Undo a button or two, you gotta' show off some chest.

He hesitates and unbuttons the top two buttons.

CHRISTOPHER

Like that? Is that better? I've always been insecure about my... physique.

DEANDRA

I think it looks cute.

CHRISTOPHER

I suppose you'll want to help me pick out a tie now.

DEANDRA

A tie!? You are too fancy. Come on Chris, let it hang out a little bit. It's just a date.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes well for me it's a bit more than just a date--

DEANDRA

DAMN you got a lot of books! I just noticed how many damn books you have. What is this, a library?

CHRISTOPHER

I'm a philosophy professor and as I was saying-- and to be honest, I'm not really sure why you're still in my apartment-- but as I was saying, it's not just a date. It's my first date in five years.

DEANDRA

Five years!?! So you've just been sleepin' around or what since then?

CHRISTOPHER

No, I do not just sleep around.

DEANDRA

You mean you haven't had...

CHRISTOPHER

No...

DEANDRA

In five years?

CHRISTOPHER

It's actually ... quite a bit longer I'm afraid.

DEANDRA

Longer!?! What the fuck Chris? You must have some lonely-ass balls!

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, my balls, they have been rather... neglected. My last relationship was frigid to say the least. There was not a great deal of sex in the last year or so.

DEANDRA

You were together but not having sex? Was she in another country or somethin'?

CHRISTOPHER

No, no, we lived together. We just didn't.. I'm sorry I don't feel comfortable talking about this.

DEANDRA

You brought it up, I was just tryin' to blow my nose.

CHRISTOPHER

(going to the door to open it)

Right, well, you must be feeling better by now. It's been lovely. I suppose we should do this again quite soon.

DEANDRA

(lighting a cigarette)

Oh sure, you can come over whenever.

CHRISTOPHER

Are you? What are you? You're smoking? In my apartment?

DEANDRA

Shit I didn't know you smoked. Here, you can bum one from me.

CHRISTOPHER

No thank you very much. In fact, I'm running late, you really must be going.

DEANDRA

Aww Chris, do you think I could stay just a little longer? I feel safe with you here.

CHRISTOPHER

I suppose I can afford to be a few minutes late, if you put out that cigarette.

Deandra gets up and looks for a suitable receptacle for her cigarette. Eventually she settles for a plant.

CHRISTOPHER

I hope I'm not being too prying or direct here, but I am curious...

DEANDRA

What were we fighting about?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes.

DEANDRA

That's was Tony, my ex. He don't like that we're not together no more. He gets jealous and came around today even though I told him I don't wanna see him no more but he wants to get back together and when I told him no, he got angry and started pushing me around so I burned his face with a cigarette so he ran off to the bar.

CHRISTOPHER

That is quite a tale.

DEANDRA

Yeah he's a real dickhole. You heard it yourself. I just need to camp out here a little bit an' get composed before he comes back.

CHRISTOPHER

He's coming back.

DEANDRA

Yeah he just went down the corner to drink but he'll be back. He always comes back.

CHRISTOPHER

Back... Here?

DEANDRA

Yeah don't worry though, he's just after me, he won't bother you.

CHRISTOPHER

He already has bothered me, quite a bit in fact.

DEANDRA

Are you gettin' paid every time you say 'quite'?

CHRISTOPHER

Sorry?

DEANDRA

I'm just messin' with you Chris! Relax!

CHRISTOPHER

Ah yes, humor. I recognize that. Well don't you think you ought to go back to your apartment, so as not to confuse Tony as to my involvement in this situation.

Deandra investigates Christopher's music collection.

DEANDRA

You got all kinds of nice stuff in here!

She picks up a Bach record.

DEANDRA

(mispronouncing 'Bach')

Bach. He's old as shit isn't he?

CHRISTOPHER

I have a penchant for the late Baroque. *Bach* was a bit of an anachronism in his own time, continuing to compose Baroque music despite its falling out of fashion.

DEANDRA

(picking a book off the shelf)

Sounds like someone I know. You actually read all these books? Soren Kierkegaard. *Fear and Trembling*. That's some serious shit right there.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, I do feel that I have an affinity for him, we both have had troubled love lives.

DEANDRA

What, he couldn't get laid either?

CHRISTOPHER

It's more complicated than that but yes, something like that.

DEANDRA

You should get your head out of all this old shit, you might get laid more.

CHRISTOPHER

Can I ask you something? Do you think I'm... attractive?

DEANDRA

Aww Chris, I'm sure there's a really smart woman out there that would love all of these books and old music and shit.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm just asking because, sometimes I wonder if I'll spend my whole life this way, without a woman, just reading these books, alone. Do you think that will happen to me?

DEANDRA

Hell no! I had a cousin who was dumb as shit, he was working construction and had a piece of metal go straight through his head, barely lived, and well I guess he's pretty much retarded nowadays, can't really talk good or anything and is real slow, but he found a girl so I think there's someone out there for everyone, ya know?

CHRISTOPHER

I'm not sure that makes me feel better.

DEANDRA

And shit you can walk down the street and see two homeless doing it in an alley so I'd say there's someone out there for everyone, I really believe that.

CHRISTOPHER

Well I do appreciate the kind words. But I'm afraid I'm qui-- *very* late, already.

She starts crying again.

CHRISTOPHER

(patting her back awkwardly)

Oh no, you're crying again.

DEANDRA

(embracing him fully)

I just, I just don't know what to do. I'm scared Chris.

CHRISTOPHER

It's obvious that you do not want to see him again. So just tell him firmly, 'Tony, I do not wish to see you again, you need to leave.'

Deandra stares at him for a beat, then bursts into laughter.

CHRISTOPHER

What?

DEANDRA

You're really funny, you know that Chris?

CHRISTOPHER

I am?

DEANDRA

Yeah you are. And I got an idea of how you can help me. You ever been in a fight?

CHRISTOPHER

I've been punched.

DEANDRA

Did you punch him back?

CHRISTOPHER

I was ambushed and did not have time to properly respond.

DEANDRA

Well don't worry about that, you'll have time to prepare. Now, he ain't too big but he fights kinda crazy like. I've seen him go off on a dude.

CHRISTOPHER

In that case I should probably stay out of it.

DEANDRA

You can't let me go back to my apartment and just wait for him. He might kill me!

CHRISTOPHER

Deandra, I really shouldn't get involved in this.

DEANDRA

Well you are involved! And he might kill me, Chris. We could just scare him off. You have a gun, right?

CHRISTOPHER

Why would I have a gun? This is a safe neighborhood.

DEANDRA

I've seen a guy killed around the block. I mean, he had it comin'.. Still, got stabbed right in the face.

CHRISTOPHER

You know, my life was quite pleasant and peaceful until you marched in here with all this drama! I should be on my first date in five years right now but instead I've been dragged into your, your mess!

DEANDRA

I'm so sorry that me getting beat up has spoiled your happy little life!

CHRISTOPHER

That's not what I meant! And I'm not... happy.

DEANDRA

So I guess this is it then.

CHRISTOPHER

I guess so.

Deandra walks to the door and turns the knob.

CHRISTOPHER

Deandra, wait. I'll cancel my date.

DEANDRA

You will?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes. Stay here.

DEANDRA

Oh Chris, I knew you had it in you!

She runs up to him and kisses him on the cheek.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh. I have to make a call.

He pulls out his cell phone and dials.

CHRISTOPHER

Hello. Hi, Jessica... Listen, I'm terribly sorry but something's come up... Yes, I know it's late notice but one of my students has had some trouble with her dissertation and I have to help her... I do hope that we can reschedule?... Yes I'm busy too... I understand--

Loud footsteps from the hallway. Tony starts shouting for Deandra from the hallway.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh dear, I really have to run... Listen, I really um like you-- um, OK, bye.

Tony's shouting intensifies.

DEANDRA

'I really like you'?

CHRISTOPHER

I've ruined it haven't I!? There's too much pressure right now!

More shouting from Tony. He's drunk and angry and aggressive, approaching the apartment.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh god!

TONY (OFF STAGE)

Dee!

CHRISTOPHER

(cautiously approaching the door)

Tony, we need to talk.

TONY (OFF STAGE)

Who the fuck are you?

CHRISTOPHER

Ah, Christopher, I'm a friend of Deandra's.

DEANDRA

Fuck off Tony! I got a man in here gonna' fuck you up!

CHRISTOPHER

You don't have to provoke him like that--

Tony bangs on the door, trying to force his way in.

TONY (OFF STAGE)

You are in a lot of trouble bitch!

DEANDRA

I'll get a knife.

Deandra runs into the kitchen.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh God. Oh God. Oh God.

Tony breaks through the door and enters.

TONY

Who the fuck are you and what the fuck are you doing with my girl?

CHRISTOPHER

Well actually, that's what I wanted to discuss with you. As it turns out, she is *not* your girl--

TONY

Oh what so you're fucking her now? Is this some kind of joke?

(moving towards the kitchen)

Dee! Get your ass out here!

CHRISTOPHER

(blocking him)

I'm afraid you can't go back there.

TONY

Get the fuck out of my way faggot.

CHRISTOPHER

Ok, that's not a word we use in this apartment.

Tony punches him. Christopher reels to the ground in agony.

TONY

Dee!

CHRISTOPHER

(picking himself up, in pain)

I'm warning you, if you hit me again I will have no choice but to--

Tony punches him again and knocks him to the ground.
Deandra enters from the kitchen with a knife.

DEANDRA

Leave him alone you piece of shit!

TONY

Oh you little bitch, you're gonna get it, what'r you gonna do, stab me? Huh, come on, stab me.

Deandra lunges towards Tony with the knife as Tony grabs her wrist and pushes her against the wall, strangling her, the knife falls.

TONY

I'm gonna fucking kill you you little slut.

She's gasping for air, beat, Chris picks up the knife and stabs Tony through the back, he screams. He stabs him more, Tony collapsing in a heap to the floor.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh my God! What have I done! I've killed someone! I've killed a person!

DEANDRA

You saved my life. He was gonna kill me.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh what have we done! There's a dead man in my apartment! I'll go to prison! I'll be a prisoner! We have to do something! Oh my God!

Deandra kisses him passionately. They break apart, panting, for a beat.

DEANDRA

You're funny, Chris.

BLACKOUT.