

LOOKING FOR MR. RIGHT

By Catherine Rhoden-Goguen

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CHARACTERS

CHARLOTTE WALDEN	Rich, neurotic heiress
BYRON	Butler
KATE	CHARLOTTE's assistant
BRAD	CHARLOTTE's handsome, athletic boyfriend
MARK	A contestant
PATRICK	A contestant
DEREK	A contestant
TRAVIS	A contestant
RONALD	A homeless drunk who lives on the sidewalk in a box

PROPS

Stopwatch
Telephone
Duster
Newspaper
Empty wine bottle
Wine glasses
Glass for breaking offstage
Bouquet

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The stage should be safe for doing the gymnastic moves required for this play. Costuming will be fun but, normally, plus size clothing is needed for the males dressing up as CHARLOTTE. The success of this play will depend on your ability to create an atmosphere where actors feel comfortable being zany.

This play is dedicated to Randall for always making me laugh and to my brother, Travis whose wit continues to inspire me.

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SCENE 1

AT RISE: CHARLOTTE glares at a stop watch and mumbles to herself outside of a stadium. BRAD enters.

BRAD: Hey, babe. *(tries to kiss her cheek but his lips meet her hair as SHE turns away from the kiss)* How did I do?

CHARLOTTE: You didn't win.

BRAD: I'm glad you pointed that out to me, Charlie.

CHARLOTTE: My name is Charlotte and I would appreciate being addressed as such.

BRAD: What's wrong my little lambchops... er I mean my little Charlotte lambchops? Considering that I was supposed to come in last, second is pretty darn good. You should be proud of me.

CHARLOTTE: Proud of you? You came in second, Bradley! I guess you know what this means!

BRAD: Yeah, it means I didn't come in first. *(laughs)*

CHARLOTTE: How dare you joke with my honor!

BRAD: Pardon me, Madame Charlotte. *(HE mocks her. SHE smacks his face.)* What the hell is wrong with you?

CHARLOTTE: I thought you were the one! You passed all the other tests. I mean your name has 15 letters and you're exactly six feet tall. I just don't understand it. *(HE sits there silent but looking at her in amazement.)* Well there's nothing left to do. The marriage is off!

BRAD: Whose marriage?

CHARLOTTE: Okay, okay. Now you're joking about our marriage. God, I've been such a fool. How could I have ever wanted to marry you in the first place?

BRAD: I never asked you to marry me.

CHARLOTTE: So you were just after me for my body!

BRAD: Charlotte, you've blown your mind and mine. Even if we were supposed to get married, which we weren't, what in the world would my losing a race have to do with anything?

CHARLOTTE: Don't play dumb with me. You know good and well that you have passed all the tests up until now but don't think that I'm going to be stood up. You see, Mr. "Let's pretend I don't know what Charlotte's talking about," I timed you today and if your car were to break down on our wedding day, you could not run fast enough to

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get to the church and therefore I would be stood up. I am no fool, though. I am not about to marry someone who would stand me up!

BRAD: I think you had better sit down. I don't think your brain is getting enough oxygen.

CHARLOTTE: Nice try. There's no time for resting however. I have a husband to find.

BRAD: A husband? But, Charlotte, what about me? What about us?

CHARLOTTE: We are finished... done for... through... over... a thing of the past... history. I will never allow you to stand me up. You sorry dog! You probably have 16 letters in your name anyway!

BRAD: **(laughs fiendishly, deciding to play along with the madness)** So the truth's finally out - only it's worse than you thought. I don't have 16 letters in my name. I have 18. **(SHE gasps in disbelief.)** My middle name is Lou which makes a total of 18 letters in my name. **(rubs it in)** So how do you like them apples, Psycho Charlotte? You were this close to marrying a man with 18 letters in his name.

CHARLOTTE: **(immediately drops to her knees in prayer)** Dear Heavenly Father, can you ever forgive me for almost marrying Brad? I swear to you I did not know that he had 18 letters in his name. I hope that isn't the unpardonable sin. If you can show me forgiveness for this, I promise that I will find a husband with 15 letters in his name within the next 2 weeks. And Lord, as an additional requirement for my potential husband because my sin really was a severe one, my future husband must be able to...well Lord, you can read my mind so you know already what he must be able to do. Amen **(starts to get up but remembers something and drops back down to her knees)** PS, Lord, I would love to stay and chat. I wouldn't want you to think that I don't like your company, but time is of the essence when you're on a manhunt. **(SHE gets up. BRAD is nowhere in sight.)** Charlotte Walden, you are on your way to achieving perfection. Look out, men, here I come and Mr. Right, you WILL be mine.

(CHARLOTTE exits the stage and the lights dim on this scene.)

SCENE 2

AT RISE: CHARLOTTE in her mansion, talking to her best friend.

KATE: Charlotte, you can't be serious about all of this. You won't find a better guy than Brad. He's good for the eyes, too, in case you haven't noticed.

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CHARLOTTE: That's all over with.

KATE: He still looked good the last time I saw him.

CHARLOTTE: I didn't mean his looks were over with. He's still all right if you like that type.

KATE: And what girl in her right mind wouldn't?

CHARLOTTE: Are you trying to imply that I'm not playing with a full deck? I'm probably the sanest person in the whole world and certainly am the sanest in this house. **(KATE sighs.)** Oh, Charlotte, you keep forgetting. Kate's only a servant and certainly no valid judge of sanity.

KATE: **(ignores the remark)** I just think that you should think things through; do a little more planning before you make such decisions.

CHARLOTTE: I have thought it through and planned. Don't you see? I've planned everything right down to the last detail. Let me tell you my latest...

(Phone rings interrupting the story. KATE answers it.)

KATE: **(into phone)** The Walden's residence, Kate speaking. How may I direct your call? I beg your pardon. There must be some mistake. **(chuckles)** That is the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard. The ad says what? **(Looks at CHARLOTTE and holds the phone away from her mouth. CHARLOTTE is beaming)** Oh, no! You didn't. Charlotte, please tell me you did not place an ad in the newspaper.

BYRON: **(enters)** She didn't, Kate. I did. Miss Charlotte made me.

KATE: **(back into phone)** Yes, it appears you do have the right number. You have 15 letters in your name? **(away from the phone)** Well, at least he can count. That's always a plus. **(back into the phone)** And you're 6 feet tall and, sir, I hardly think I need to know that piece of information. Yes, I look forward to meeting you myself. Yes, those would be the correct directions to get you to the Walden estate. Good day.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, this is so exciting! Byron, you must have done an excellent job if I am already getting phone calls. **(hugs BYRON)**

BYRON: Can I get anything for you this morning, Miss Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE: I would love to see a copy of the ad just to make sure you had everything I requested.

BYRON: I will get you the morning paper. It is running on the front page.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, splendid!

(BYRON exits to get the newspaper.)

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KATE: Charlotte, what are you doing? You never mentioned anything about an ad to me.

CHARLOTTE: Well, I was going to, but you were so torn up over my breaking up with Bradley that I wasn't sure your heart could handle this.

BYRON: (*enters with newspaper*) Wanted: a husband for attractive, wealthy young woman. Must be in excellent health and able to meet specific requirements such as (*shows KATE the ad*)

KATE: Oh good heavens! You put THAT in there? Well, that would explain why the strange man on the phone felt so inclined to share that bit of knowledge with me. Serious inquiries only. Only those with exactly 15 letters and who would be willing to marry in 2 week need apply. Apply at the Walden estate etc etc etc.

CHARLOTTE: Did you get the TV spot as well?

BYRON: (*nods*) There were several inquiries via email and I fielded a host of calls last evening. According to my calculations, the men will be arriving soon. I have made sure that the tests are set up to your specifications.

CHARLOTTE: Splendid! Oh, it is better than I ever imagined. Just think, in only 2 weeks, I am going to be married! (*jumps for joy and tries to get KATE excited*)

KATE: I think this is the most ridiculous idea you have ever had. There is no guarantee that anyone will actually show up and even if they do show up there is no guarantee any of them can make you happy. Besides, the losers who actually do show up are only interested in one thing, your fortune.

CHARLOTTE: You won't be so cold when I am married and you're still a lonely old spinster. You aren't getting any younger you know.

KATE: 38 is not old and, besides, I had rather be 60 and alone than to be with someone who only married me because I had money.

CHARLOTTE: There are lots of women out there with money but I am unique. There is not another ME in the whole universe and I am charming and smart and polite and I AM going to marry THE ONE.

KATE: This would be a good time to call upon those smarts you say you have. Do you really believe that you will find THE ONE in a 2 weeks time frame. What's up with that anyway? You have searched all these years and haven't found Mr. Right. If you had to try such a ridiculous method, why such a short time span?

CHARLOTTE: Oh, I promised God that I would find this person and be married in 2 weeks.

KATE: And be married? Are you out of your mind? A proper wedding takes almost a year to plan.

CHARLOTTE: Well mine is going to be proper and I am going to do it in 2 weeks. You'll see. (*The doorbell rings.*) Oh, my! (*jumps up and*

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down) That must be the first batch arriving now! I had Byron schedule them at intervals until the right man is found.

KATE: Oh good heavens. If only your father was still alive, maybe he could talk some sense into you.

CHARLOTTE: Well he isn't and I am going to prove you wrong. You'll see. **(Door bell rings again.)** Quick, how do I look? How does the place look? How many times should I let the doorbell ring?

KATE: Well three times would show some persistence on their part I suppose...

BYRON: Or desperation...

KATE: But of course when millions are at stake, who wouldn't ring the doorbell three times? **(BYRON exits as the doorbell continues to ring.)** Good grief, this is more like 3000 times.

BYRON: **(enters with four attractive men)** Miss Charlotte, these four gentlemen are here in response to your ad.

CHARLOTTE: I thought there would be more.

BYRON: Seven had to be escorted out because their names had more than 15 letters. This is what is left of the noon crew.

CHARLOTTE: Well, it is quality, not quantity anyway. I don't know where my manners are today. Please have a seat. Make yourself right at home because if you can pass all of the tests then this will be your home in 2 weeks, too.

(They sit down, looking around the mansion.)

BYRON: Will you be needing anything else, Miss Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE: I think I can take it from here, Byron. You may get the suit ready for test number 2.

BYRON: Certainly, Madame. **(exits)**

CHARLOTTE: Kate, please get the gentlemen something to drink. I think white wine shall be fine with all of them. **(They all nod their head agreeably. CHARLOTTE begins to outline every inch of their body with her eyes.)** I certainly would not mind having any of you for a husband, but I can only pick the one man who passes all the tests. I hope you can understand and appreciate the seriousness of the tests that you are soon going to be asked to take. You have already passed test number 1. I assume it is correct that all of your names have exactly 15 letters.

TRAVIS: I am Travis Joe Morris.

PATRICK: Patrick Evan Ruth. **(kisses her hand)**

DEREK: Derek Alan Parson.

CHARLOTTE: Nice to meet you, Derek.

MARK: And, saving the best for last, I am Marcus Ian Wilson.

(BYRON enters. KATE hands them all their drinks.)

BYRON: The suits are ready now, Miss Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: Well in the world we live in, I am sure you will agree that image is very important. That is why that your name must have 15 letters. My name has 15 letters... Charlotte Walden. You see I have no middle name and I must make sure that our names line up exactly on the wedding invitations. I mean nothing is more tacky than having a bride and groom whose names have a different number of letters. And then people wonder why there is such a high divorce rate. I mean how much more obvious can it be?

MARK: Exactly. I couldn't agree with you more, Ms. Walden.

(All the others nod in agreement fearing that SHE would find favor more in MARK if they don't.)

CHARLOTTE: I have set the tests up like a pageant, but you will be eliminated at any time you fail a test. Is everyone ready? ***(They all nod yes and raise their wine glasses.)*** Then here is to finding Mr. Right. Let the tests begin. ***(jumps up and down)*** Oh, this is SO exciting!

(Lights fade out.)

SCENE 3

AT RISE: CHARLOTTE is seated by KATE at a mock judges' table. BYRON is standing with a microphone as HE is the M.C. for the show.

BYRON: I would like to welcome all of you to the Search for Mr. Right. The judges for tonight's competition are Ms. Charlotte Walden ***(CHARLOTTE claps wildly for herself.)*** and the lovely Ms. Kate Delaney.

KATE: ***(claps, too, getting sucked in to the excitement of this all)*** I still think you are crazy, Charlotte, but you are my best friend and a couple of the guys were actually quite handsome. Besides, I am just a servant and not a valid judge of sanity.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, Kate, don't be so hard on yourself. When this works out maybe I can help you find a Mr. Right, too.

KATE: No, thanks. I think I'll stick to the traditional way of meeting guys... at the grocery store or a bar.

CHARLOTTE: A bar? You?

KATE: I hear things you know.

CHARLOTTE: This first test is very important because it will let me see how resourceful each one is. If on the day of our wedding, a kidnapper were to want to kidnap me and hold me for ransom, then it would be of the utmost importance that my future husband be able to foil the plan by looking like me. You see that way, the kidnapper would get my husband to be instead of me and then after the kidnapper gets him to the car, he could easily use his muscles and overtake the bad guy and then call the police.

KATE: What?

CHARLOTTE: It makes perfect sense you know. I mean, of course everyone knows I am quite wealthy which makes me a likely target for a kidnapper and especially once word gets out that I am getting married there will be all the crazies taking one last stab at getting me and my fortune.

BYRON: I think the crazies are making their one last stab to get you today.

KATE: Wouldn't it be easier to just not get married?

CHARLOTTE: Why settle for not eating the cake when I can have my cake and eat it, too? This way I can get married and be protected. Byron has shown the guys to my closet and they have each chosen clothes to make themselves look like me. So for this first round of competition, we are looking for the man who can make a kidnapper think he is me.

BYRON: The men uh, women, uh, the contestants are ready, Miss Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: Okay. Send them in.

BYRON: Okay, Travis is our first contestant... candidate for fiance.

(TRAVIS enters dressed in a wig and a long dress which clearly does not fit him, but HE is trying to be a good sport.)

CHARLOTTE: Okay, let's see you from all angles. ***(HE turns to each side and to the back also.)*** Now let's see you walk down the catwalk. ***(TRAVIS walks down the pretend catwalk.)*** Work it, baby! Thank you, Travis. ***(TRAVIS exits.)***

KATE: Charlotte, this is quite possibly the craziest idea you have ever had. He looked nothing like you.

CHARLOTTE: There's three more choices and I will know when it is right.

BYRON: Had I not promised your father I would try and look after for you, I would walk right out that door. Somehow I don't think this is what Master Walden had in mind.

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CHARLOTTE: Father wanted me to be happy. God rest his soul. I wish he could be here to see my wedding.

BYRON: He probably is turning over in his grave as we speak but now we have the next candidate for fiancée, Patrick.

(PATRICK enters dressed in a housecoat, house shoes and a wig with hair in curlers.)

CHARLOTTE: What an ingenious idea. When I am just getting out of the shower is probably my most vulnerable moment. Good thinking, Patrick.

PATRICK: They always have called me Think Fast Pastrick.

(KATE rolls her eyes and CHARLOTTE beams, eating it up.)

CHARLOTTE: **(to KATE)** They call him Think Fast Pastrick. See you have to learn to trust my instincts. **(PATRICK turns to both sides and backwards without being asked.)** See, I don't even have to tell him what to do. Let's see the catwalk, Fast Pastrick.

(PATRICK walks down the pretend catwalk, kisses CHARLOTTE's hand and then exits.)

KATE: Good heavens, this is a nightmare. They look nothing like you. Besides, why not just hire a bodyguard?

CHARLOTTE: Haven't you heard of these undercover corruption rings? A bodyguard is the occupation most kidnapers have because they will be the least suspected. It's a good thing I'm the brains of this outfit.

KATE: **(screams)** Next!!!!

(DEREK enters wearing panty hose, a mini skirt and tube top with also a wig and glasses. KATE just covers her eyes.)

CHARLOTTE: Oh, how daring!

DEREK: Well, they don't call me Daring Derek for nothing, honey. **(walks over to her and sticks out his leg)** Rub my leg, babe. I dare ya!

CHARLOTTE: **(rubs his leg)** I do love a good dare. Let's see the whole package. **(DEREK models to each side and backwards. HE walks down the catwalk on his own.)** You go, girl!

(DEREK exits)

KATE: Charlotte, these are freaks, not potential fiancées.

CHARLOTTE: How many men do you know who would do this for their wife, much less a potential wife?

KATE: I don't know any men that want wives that would be doing this under any circumstances.

BYRON: Next! (**screams**) Next, please!

(MARK enters wearing a wedding gown and veil and carrying a bouquet. HE looks very much like CHARLOTTE.)

CHARLOTTE: If I were a kidnapper, I would be sure to get you. You are beautiful.

(MARK smiles but doesn't speak.)

CHARLOTTE: Not speaking? (**MARK shakes his head.**) I don't understand. Why would you not have anything to say?

KATE: Maybe he doesn't talk like you. Isn't it enough that he looks like you?

CHARLOTTE: (**jumps up and down with excitement**) Yes! That's it. What an incredible idea. You look so much like me that if you spoke it would give it all away. (**MARK only smiles and then exits.**) Well, I think we know who the winner of this round is but who do we eliminate?

BYRON and KATE: DEREK!

CHARLOTTE: Okay, Derek it is. I trust your judgment. Byron, please show Derek out and prepare for the next contest.

BYRON: Gladly. (**exits**)

KATE: Charlotte, you are beautiful and rich. You can find a man without all of this and you can have a normal courtship and marriage and life. You don't have to go to these great lengths.

CHARLOTTE: Kate, Father had the same traits. He was handsome, good looking, rich, smart. He had everything... way more than I have, but he didn't plan. One day, he didn't plan. He let his guard down and you see what happened.

KATE: Charlotte, you surely don't think your father could have prevented his death...

CHARLOTTE: That will never happen to me, Kate. I made a promise the day he died and I have made a promise to God. I will find Mr. Right and I will be Mrs. Right before two weeks have passed. End of discussion. Now let's get ready for round two.

KATE: Yes, Charlotte.

(Lights fade out.)

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