

# MATCHING STRANGERS

By Gail Phaneuf

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ISBN: 978-1-64479-023-6

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# MATCHING STRANGERS

*A Ten Minute Dramatic Comedy*

**By Gail Phaneuf**

**SYNOPSIS:** Zac comes home to find that his wife just took a message regarding Zac having an operation the next morning that she was unaware of. Zac tries to avoid telling his wife what the operation is and why he needs it. When he finally tells her the truth, Geri cannot believe what she has heard. This crisis challenges the concept of a perfect match.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(1 female, 1 male)*

ZAC (m).....40's Geri's husband. He is kind, funny and searching.  
*(53 lines)*

GERI (f).....40's Zac's wife. She is smart and witty and playful.  
*(53 lines)*

**TIME:** 2009

**SETTING:** Zac and Geri's home

## PROPS

- A plastic vase that looks like cut Waterford crystal. (it should look like it could possibly shatter if dropped)
- Dust rag or feather duster
- Pedestal for the vase to sit on
- Cordless phone
- Cell phone
- Briefcase for Zac

**DIRECTORS NOTE**

Zac is awkwardly dealing with his midlife crisis, and Geri has just begun to take notice. They have been so busy raising a family and working that this is the first time they have confronted their fears of growing older together. Geri should not be portrayed as hysterical or angry, but instead she realizes the difficult process that has brought Zac to this decision to donate his kidney to a stranger. They love each other very much, but time has gotten away from them, and they have this moment to come back together and see each other as both loving and flawed people.

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**AT RISE:** *A single crystal Waterford vase on a pedestal in the room. GERI is standing near the vase. She is tense and deep in thought. ZAC enters, he is upbeat.*

**ZAC:** Hi-

**GERI:** You got a call.

**ZAC:** *(Calm.)* Hi honey.

**GERI:** said you got a call. Just now.

**ZAC:** How was your day? *(Kisses her on the cheek.)* Where are the boys?

**GERI:** They're testing out a new ramp on those suicidal skate boards you bought them! Zac, I said you got a call.

**ZAC:** Yes, you said that. Did you take a message?

**GERI:** You're scheduled for surgery at 7:45 AM tomorrow! They wanted me to remind you not to eat or drink anything until then.

**ZAC:** They're very cautious. It's because of the anesthesia.

**GERI:** You won't be able to eat, if I lock you in the garage! Do you mind telling me what this is all about?

**ZAC:** *(Avoiding.)* What?

**GERI:** Surgery – you're having surgery and this is the first I've heard about it?! From a blasé nurse's aide no less.

**ZAC:** Was she rude to you?

**GERI:** No. Zac! Please stop avoiding my questions.

**ZAC:** I'm not.

**GERI:** I'm your wife.

**ZAC:** Yes, you are.

**GERI:** When did you intend to tell me what you're planning to do? Are you... getting a nose job? What?

**ZAC:** I'm against cosmetic surgery – you know that.

**GERI:** *(In disbelief.)* I'm married to a crazy person.

**ZAC:** Honey, I didn't want to worry you. You really worry too much about everything. I mean things. Like this vase. If you think someone's going to break it – you should put it in a glass case.

*ZAC goes to touch it and GERI intercepts him.*

**GERI:** Then you can't enjoy it. People can be careful. Please don't touch it.

**ZAC:** You worry too much.

**GERI:** Well, maybe I do. Now I happen to be worried about you – so shoot me! Zac, what is this about?

**ZAC:** I'll be fine in a few weeks. It's a fairly... straightforward procedure. They're taking the left one.

**GERI:** (*In disbelief.*) The left what?!

**ZAC:** Geri, please don't get anxious. I didn't want you to be bothered with this. I told the nurse to phone my cell.

**GERI:** (*Frantic.*) Your LEFT what?!

*Pause.*

**ZAC:** (*Amused.*) Oh no, not that. My left Kidney.

**GERI:** (*Dumbfounded.*) Your kidney!? – You're having a kidney operation?! A kidney operation!! Why – what's wrong?

**ZAC:** He needs it.

**GERI:** (*Incredulous.*) Who?

**ZAC:** Paul.

**GERI:** Paul who!?

**ZAC:** Haven't you seen the signs?

**GERI:** What signs? What signs should I have seen? Zac, is this a joke? Because if it is, it's not funny!

**ZAC:** Paul must have spent his life savings to rent those billboards.

**GERI:** Who is Paul?! You've never mentioned anyone named Paul... (*Just catching up.*) What billboards!?

**ZAC:** On route ONE. I think he took one out in every state. It's ingenious really.

**GERI:** What? Who? A stranger named Paul? He put up a sign for a kidney?

**ZAC:** (*Excited.*) Lots of signs - all over the country. He'll die without my kidney.

**GERI:** So might you! Have you thought about that? What in God's name has gotten into you? This is a complete stranger who paid for some billboards, and you signed up to give him your kidney?!

**ZAC:** Yes. I did. I called the 800 number.

**GERI:** Well I certainly hope it's a toll-free call to give your kidney away! I think they should have given you a sanity test before letting you sign up.

**ZAC:** They did. Well, not a sanity test – but they asked a lot of psychological questions. They said I was extremely well adjusted and balanced. You can live a full healthy life with one kidney – I read all the pamphlets. I passed all the physical tests. I'm a perfect match. That's what they said.

**GERI:** (*Almost amused.*) You are a perfect lunatic! Of course they told you you're a perfect match – they need your kidney! It sounds like a scam. Like a kidney farm operation! Why didn't you talk to me? I think they should have insisted that you consult your wife. You have a family, Zac! Don't you think I have a right to know what you're doing?

**ZAC:** No.

**GERI:** What do you mean, no?

**ZAC:** I mean, no. You don't have a 'right' to know what I'm doing. I probably should have discussed it with you. Only, I felt that it was a purely personal decision. And I knew you'd feel very strongly about the risks.

**GERI:** Oh, you did? Well you were right about that. Zac, are you forgetting that you have children? What if one of them needed a kidney and you only had one left. How would you feel then? What would they do? Huh?

**ZAC:** You could donate one of yours to the children.

**GERI:** I have never heard anything so absurd in my life! You'd give your kidney to a perfect stranger – rather than your own children!?

**ZAC:** Honey, please, the kids don't need my kidney. Paul does.

**GERI:** Oh, I forgot about your buddy Paul – the billboard man! What makes him so special!?

**ZAC:** I like his face. His eyes. They're sincere. Like he really wants to live, you know?

**GERI:** And you?

**ZAC:** I think lots of people go through their whole lives feeling numb and dead. They... just exist. I thought that, if I can help this man live his life – it will make my life better. I want to give something of myself!

**GERI:** (*Desperate.*) So, write a check! Write a check for \$10,000 to the kidney foundation.

**ZAC:** Paul doesn't need a check honey.

**GERI:** Paul, Paul, Paul! You're obsessed with this man and his nice eyes! You're bucking to be a martyr, just like your mother!

**ZAC:** My mother was not a martyr!

**GERI:** 47 years of marriage and never once asked your father to install a dishwasher! A martyr!

**ZAC:** She liked to do them by hand. She used to tell me that it was-

**GERI:** Zac! No one likes to do them by hand. Not even your mother. She loved to show me her dishpan hands and say how she could never have smooth, creamy skin like mine.

**ZAC:** She thought you had lovely skin!

**GERI:** She thought I was a lazy bum!

**ZAC:** My mother liked you Geri. Really.

**GERI:** I can't get into that now. We have just 15 hours before a surgeon opens you up and yanks out your kidney –you need to call and tell them you've changed your mind!

**ZAC:** But I haven't!

**GERI:** But I have!

**ZAC:** You can't change my mind.

*Pause.*

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