

# SMALL TALK

## By David MacGregor

Copyright © 2016 by David MacGregor, All rights reserved.  
ISBN: 978-1-60003-882-2

**Caution:** Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

**Reservation of Rights:** All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation.

**Modifications:** There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to this Work or title of this Work, unless directly authorized by the publisher or otherwise allowed in the Work's "Production Notes." This includes changing of character gender, cutting or adding of dialogue, or alteration of language.

**Royalties:** All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice and will be set based upon your application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged. Any licensing requests and questions concerning rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

**Credits:** All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s). Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: *Produced by special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.*

**Reproduction:** Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

**PUBLISHED BY BROOKLYN PUBLISHERS**  
**1-888-473-8521**

## SMALL TALK

*A Ten Minute Comedic Drama Play*

**By David MacGregor**

**SYNOPSIS:** A recently engaged couple visit a counselor in hopes of resolving the one problem in their relationship. He is hoping to be made partner in his law firm, and as his wife, she will be expected to make small talk at company functions and social gatherings. However, she has a phobia when it comes to small talk. She just can't do it. Is there any path that will lead to a happy ending for everyone?

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(2 females, 2 males)*

RACHEL (f)..... A woman in her late 20s-30s.  
*(27 lines)*

ANTHONY (m)..... Lawyer, in his late 20s-30s.  
*(20 lines)*

DR. COOPER (f) ..... Therapist, in her 30s-50s.  
*(37 lines)*

MATT (m) ..... A deliveryman, in his late 20s-30s. *(21 lines)*

**SETTING:** A therapist's office.

**TIME:** Present.

### PROPS

- Desk
- Three Chairs
- Package
- Desk Phone

**AUTHOR'S NOTE**

There are four instances in the script in which the director and/or actors will need to fill in a blank space with, respectively, the name of a currently popular TV show, a celebrity, a popular news show, and a celebrity couple.

Do Not Copy

**AT RISE:** *RACHEL and ANTHONY sit in chairs across from an empty desk. RACHEL is ill at ease as ANTHONY tries to calm her down.*

**ANTHONY:** Will you relax? It's going to be fine!

**RACHEL:** I'm just not comfortable with this...discussing our personal lives with a complete stranger.

**ANTHONY:** Dr. Cooper is a trained professional. This is what she does. And believe me, plenty of people go to couples counseling these days.

**RACHEL:** But this...it just seems weird. It's going to make me seem weird because I can't--

*DR. COOPER enters briskly. She shakes hands with ANTHONY and RACHEL.*

**DR. COOPER:** Rachel? Anthony? I'm Dr. Cooper. It's very nice to meet both of you! *(Sits down behind the desk, clasps her hands, and smiles.)* So, what is it I can help you with?

*As RACHEL and ANTHONY hesitate.*

And there's no need to be shy. Trust me, I have heard just about everything a human being can possibly hear. I don't judge, I don't preach, and I don't call the authorities... *(She holds up her hands.)* Kidding! I'm kidding. That's just an old therapist joke. The relationship between a therapist and her clients is inviolate, like between a priest and a penitent.

*As RACHEL and ANTHONY hesitate.*

Is it communication between you, finances, in-laws--?

**ANTHONY:** We're not actually married yet.

**DR. COOPER:** Okay. Issues with intimacy of some kind?

**ANTHONY:** It's...Rachel has this issue when it comes to...she can't seem to...this is embarrassing.

**RACHEL:** Then can we just go? We don't have to do this!

**ANTHONY:** Yes, we do! Pretending it's not a problem is not going to solve anything!

**DR. COOPER:** Go on with what you were saying, Anthony.

**ANTHONY:** It's...small talk. Rachel can't make small talk.

**DR. COOPER:** I see.

**ANTHONY:** And I'm a lawyer...hoping to be made partner in the next year or so, which means a lot of social functions and whatnot. My firm is very big on spouses and families being part of our gatherings and...Rachel, did you want to say something?

*RACHEL shakes her head.*

**DR. COOPER:** It's okay. We're all friends here and nothing leaves this room.

**RACHEL:** It's not that I don't...I mean, I try! I do, I really do!

**ANTHONY:** But she just can't! And what I do in my profession...the people we'll be with socially...you have to make small talk! That's just the way it is!

**DR. COOPER:** Okay then. I understand where we're at. And let me assure both of you, this is not uncommon. I've dealt with many cases like this.

**ANTHONY:** You have?

**DR. COOPER:** Absolutely. Now, let's do a quick little assessment, shall we? Because just as with most conditions, there is the issue of degree. There are mild cases, severe cases, and everything in between. So, Rachel, let's you and I engage in a little small talk.

*DR. COOPER gets up and helps RACHEL out of her chair.*

**RACHEL:** Do we have to? Maybe we could try this next week?

**DR. COOPER:** Just relax. Everything is going to be fine. Now, let's pretend we're at a cocktail party and we've just met.

**RACHEL:** Oh no...

**ANTHONY:** You see what I mean?

**DR. COOPER:** Come on now. You can do this. Deep breath...good, and here we go. Nice weather we're having.

**RACHEL:** Okay.

**DR. COOPER:** Did you happen to catch the last episode of [insert insanely popular show]?

**RACHEL:** I don't really watch TV.

**DR. COOPER:** Oh, me neither! Who has the time? But can you believe those photos of [insert insanely popular celebrity] on the Internet?

**RACHEL:** I don't know who that it is.

*Shaken, DR. COOPER forces a smile as ANTHONY buries his face in his hands.*

**DR. COOPER:** Boy, can you believe the price of gas these days?

**RACHEL:** I don't pay any attention to the price of gas.

**DR. COOPER:** Okay, this is more serious than I thought.

*DR. COOPER guides RACHEL back to her chair, then leans against the desk, thinking.*

**ANTHONY:** You see what I mean? It's hopeless!

**RACHEL:** I'm sorry! I don't know what to say when people talk about meaningless things I don't care about! Why is this such a big deal?

**ANTHONY:** It's a big deal because, say we're at some museum fundraiser, all right? Everybody's dressed up, people have had a few drinks, they get to talking, and... and this happens.

**DR. COOPER:** It will embarrass you and make you look bad with your law firm.

**ANTHONY:** Exactly! I'll be lucky to get a job as office janitor.

**DR. COOPER:** Anthony, we'll work through this. And Rachel, I don't want you to panic or feel overwhelmed. I feel very confident that you can do this. You just need to familiarize yourself with The Four Noble Paths of Small Talk: weather, TV shows, mating habits of celebrities, and the price of gas.

**RACHEL:** What about whether or not midgets will disappear thanks to genetic engineering?

**DR. COOPER:** No.

**RACHEL:** Or whether or not Jesus really existed?

**DR. COOPER:** Absolutely not.

**RACHEL:** Should our government be chosen by lottery?

**DR. COOPER:** No, no, no, no, no. Weather, TV shows, mating habits of celebrities, and the price of gas. Here, Anthony, let's you and I demonstrate.

*ANTHONY stands up.*

Ready?

**ANTHONY:** Give me a second. (*Does some neck rolls and shakes his arms out.*) Okay, let's do this.

**DR. COOPER:** How about this weather we're having?

**ANTHONY:** I know, right? Still, it's not too bad. I heard it was thirty below in North Dakota this morning.

**DR. COOPER:** Are you kidding me? I mean, seriously, why does anybody live there?

**ANTHONY:** Because they have to, I suppose. The good thing is, gas is insanely cheap in the Dakotas.

**DR. COOPER:** Is it really? I can't believe how much I'm paying these days.

*DR. COOPER touches ANTHONY'S arm.*

**ANTHONY:** I know, right? And did you see that [insert insanely popular TV news show] piece on solar-powered cars?

**DR. COOPER:** I did! In fact, I heard that [insert insanely popular celebrity couple] ordered one and those cars don't even exist yet!

**ANTHONY:** Hey, with their money, why not?

*DR. COOPER and ANTHONY share a good laugh, then stare at one another, genuinely charmed. DR. COOPER snaps out of it and turns to RACHEL.*

**DR. COOPER:** There. You see? That wasn't too hard, was it?

**RACHEL:** You guys are so good. You make it look so easy.

**DR. COOPER:** Now, did you notice what I did there, because it's very important. On the third part of the conversational exchange, reach out and touch the other person's arm. It's a reassuring, physical gesture that communicates comfort and intimacy.

**RACHEL:** Okay, Four Noble Paths...arm touch...third part of the conversational exchange. Got it.

**DR. COOPER:** Now, you need to try. (*Picks up the phone on her desk and punches a button.*) Danielle, are you busy at the moment?... Okay, is anybody else out there? ...No, that should be fine! In fact, that's perfect! Tell him it's just for a minute or two.

*DR. COOPER hangs up the phone as MATT, a deliveryman enters, carrying a package.*

**MATT:** Did you want to see me?

**DR. COOPER:** Yes! Come in, come in, come in! You're a deliveryman, yes?

**MATT:** Right.

**DR. COOPER:** What's your name?

**MATT:** Matt.

**DR. COOPER:** Matt! What a wonderful name. So, Matt, as a deliveryman, you must make small talk with people on your rounds.

**MATT:** Not really.

**DR. COOPER:** Oh, come on now. You go into an office, you hand a package to a secretary or a receptionist. What do you usually say?

**MATT:** Sign here.

**DR. COOPER:** No, I mean besides that.

***Thank you for reading this free excerpt from SMALL TALK by David MacGregor. For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:***

**Brooklyn Publishers, LLC**

**P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406**

**Toll Free: 1-888-473-8521 • Fax (319) 368-8011**

**[www.brookpub.com](http://www.brookpub.com)**