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## Check, Please

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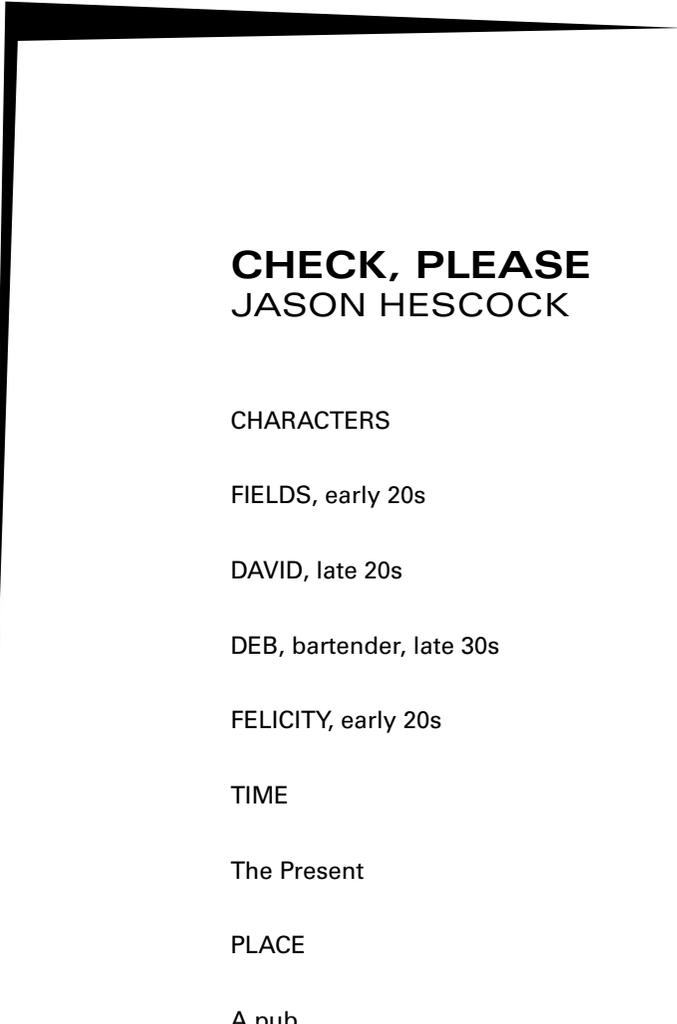
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**CHECK, PLEASE**  
JASON HESCOCK

CHARACTERS

FIELDS, early 20s

DAVID, late 20s

DEB, bartender, late 30s

FELICITY, early 20s

TIME

The Present

PLACE

A pub

DAVID: So, Deb. I'm thinking that you should probably get off work early tonight. You know what I mean?

DEB: Yeah, I think I know what you mean, Dave. But what would I do that for?

DAVID: Because someone I know might have some wine and some leftover lasagna waiting at home.

(FIELDS enters L, drops his book and notebook, stoops to tie his shoes, and then picks his things up.)

DEB: I hope that it's your friend there. I've been wanting to go home with him since the first time he came in here.

DAVID: You want to go home with Sir Reads-a-Lot? You know, David was the one who killed Goliath.

DEB: You been reading your bible lately, Moses?

FIELDS: (Sitting.) Actually, Moses wouldn't have had a bible. In fact, I bet he was right happy when the law was written on some proper stone tablets. Better than a burning bush.

DAVID: Speaking of a burning bush—

DEB: What'll you have, sexy?

FIELDS: A pint of Newcastle and some fish and chips with malt vinegar. That should be spot on.

DEB: And for Goliath?

DAVID: Goliath Killer. I'll have a T-bone medium rare, bottle of Bud, and bring us both a shot of tequila.

DEB: Is that all right with you, sexy?

FIELDS: Yeah, that's fine.

(DEB exits R.)

FIELDS: Why does she keep calling me 'sexy?'

DAVID: Because she totally wants to jump your bones, dude.

FIELDS: First, 'jump your bones' sounds like you're in junior high. Second, it's rather unsettling that she wants to copulate with me, since she's old enough to be my mum.

DAVID: First, don't say 'mum.' You're not British. Second, I know you don't want to screw her, but you need to get laid by someone. People can smell virgin on you like it's cologne.

FIELDS: We're not starting this again.

DAVID: I'm going to. You need to get some pussy.

FIELDS: I don't need any 'pussy.' I have other things to think about. Like—

DAVID: (Reaches over and grabs FIELDS' book.) What? Like Moby Dick? I can't believe you brought Moby Dick into a pub. You can't ever just have a couple drinks and talk about hicks. It's always society, politics, blabbitty blabbitty. You know what? I think you're gay.

FIELDS: What? You're an idiot.

DAVID: Don't you see it, man? You're starting to talk like a British guy. You won't talk to girls—

FIELDS: There's nothing wrong with being gay, which I'm not. And I don't feel the need to get, you know, sex all the time.

DAVID: (Laughs shortly.) Hold on. You just said 'get sex.' Ohhh man. I figured it out. You're not gay. You just don't have a dick. That's why you read Moby Dick. Cause you don't have one.

35

FIELDS: No, I don't have a white whale, and that was the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

(DEB enters R with drinks.)

DAVID: Alright, look, Fields. I'll make you a deal. I'll tell you how to talk to a

girl, and then if you get one to go home with you it will be the last time I bother you. Scouts honor.

DEB: Or you could ignore the blind tour guide and just leave here with me.

FIELDS: Uh, no, ehlll... alright, Dave, it's a deal. I'll try. But I want my book back regardless of whether I succeed.

DAVID: For chrissake you'll get your book back. Alright, there's a girl over there in the corner. You're going to go talk to her. You know, it'd be a lot easier for us if you shaved your scraggly beard.

FIELDS: I'm a writer. I can grow a scraggly beard if I want. It's part of my ethos. I refuse to shave on principle because those six-bladed razors scare me. And to protest those stupid commercials where supermodels make out with muscle-bound men just for shaving. They're so stupid.

DAVID: Okay. No more talking about commercials you hate. That's not sexy. Neither is blabbing on about Greek mythology or politics. No one wants to talk about that. People want to have a good time.

FIELDS: I don't see how that's not—

DAVID: Ah, ah, ah. That's why I'm going to tell you what to say. Now here's what you do. You go over to her table and sit down without asking if you can sit. Women like men who take charge. Tell her you want to buy her a drink. After she says what she wants, compliment her. Women love to be flattered.

FIELDS: I'm not good at flattery. It seems so trite and provincial.

DAVID: You're over-thinking this. She looks like she's about 21 or 22. She hasn't learned to see through flattery yet. Just order her a drink, compliment her, and then ask her about herself. People love to talk about themselves. Ask what she does for a living, for fun, what are her hobbies, so on and so forth. Alright?

FIELDS: Ughhh, I don't—you know, free lunch or not, I wouldn't have met you here if I knew I was going to have to do all this.

DAVID: Well I'm not paying for your lunch if you don't try.

FIELDS: Real classy. You know I don't have any cash on me. This is... social blackmail.

DAVID: You don't have cash? Well I guess you're just going to have to talk to that girl, then.

FIELDS: Fine. I'll do it. Only because I don't have any money, but, for the record, this is ridiculous and despicable. (FIELDS exits L.)

DAVID: (To FIELDS exiting.) Try to breathe a little. (To DEB.) You think he stands a chance?

DEB: If he doesn't talk too much. He just needs to flash those baby blues and a quick smile.

DAVID: That's the problem. He always talks too much.

DEB: If he'd just ask me, I'd show him a few things.

DAVID: I don't understand why you have such a thing for him. I mean, he's my friend and everything, but he's such a nerd.

DEB: Because he looks just like my first. He was a poet, too. After we would do it, he would say his poetry he wrote for me. All kinds of stuff about how I was as beautiful as a rose.

DAVID: Fields doesn't write poetry. He writes about depressed men and how crappy life is. Although I do know someone who could recite poetry to you in bed.

DEB: Really? I wonder who that could be.

DAVID: He's a rather handsome fella who comes in here every Wednesday. He's always complimenting you. A real gentlemanly type, you know.

37

DEB: That real estate guy who's always in here?

DAVID: Close. Think more handsome and more of a gentleman.

DEB: That doesn't sound like any of my Wednesday regulars.

DAVID: Okay, okay. But I think we both know that there is something inside you that makes you think about coming home with me. At least there will be eventually.

DEB: I think your chances of getting me to go home with you are about as good as the chances of your friend getting that girl to go home with him.

DAVID: Really? How about we make a deal?

DEB: A deal? My god, you are a persistent son of a bitch. (Pause) I kind of like that, though. Alright. Let's hear it.

DAVID: If Fields over there doesn't get a girl to leave with him, I will do everything in my power to get him to take you home. But if he does, then you go home with me and we'll have some wine and see where it goes from there. (FIELDS enters L and sits.) How'd it go?

FIELDS: Not well.

DEB: Alright, Dave. You got a deal.

DAVID: How did you screw up?

FIELDS: I sat down and was about to 'tell' her that I wanted to buy her a drink when I remembered that I have no money, so I started with complimenting, and things took a turn for the worse.

DAVID: Oh boy. What did you say?

FIELDS: Well, I told her that she looked like Aphrodite. She didn't know who that was, so I explained it. She actually seemed kind of flattered when I told her that that meant she had flashing eyes and blazing beauty. But... then I told her how Aphrodite was born from the sea because Uranus was castrated—

DAVID: What! Are you—? Okay, okay. We'll try again. But this time no Greek stuff, and no castration.

DEB: I think the Aphrodite compliment is nice.

FIELDS: She thinks it's good.

DAVID: No, she doesn't. Uh, Deb, could you check on my steak?

DEB: There's no way it's done already.

DAVID: Can't you check? Alright, Fields, a hot chick just walked in and sat in the corner. So stay confident, but this time skip the compliment and start asking her about herself. Or if you do compliment her, just use something from a poem you know or something.

FIELDS: No. I'm not one of those guys. Besides, this is my last try. I feel so stupid.

DAVID: Don't worry. This is the only one we need. Just stay confident and stick to the game plan. (DAVID pats FIELDS on the back and he reluctantly exits L.) Poor Fields. He's never going to get any. I mean, seriously. Moby Dick in a pub. The guy needs some sort of supernatural help. Honestly, Deb, I've never seen anyone so smart at everything be so stupid and one thing.

DEB: Well, if he screws up again, it's going to be poor David.

DAVID: I'll take care of it. You just make sure you can get off early tonight. (FELICITY enters L and sits a few seats from DAVID.)

DEB: Hopefully not too early.

DAVID: What?

DEB: Don't hurt your brain, Goliath. I'll be back in a second. (DAVID continues looking confused as DEB walks to FELICITY.) What'll you have, hun?

FELICITY: A glass of merlot. And a decent guy if you can find one.

DEB: Guy trouble, huh? Well, the merlot I can do.

FELICITY: They all try to act so macho that they end up seeming pathetic. It's like they've all been arrested in some pubescent mental development stage.

DEB: I hear you. I've got that one's pubescence in the palm of my hand. Well, maybe if you stick around things will look up.

FELICITY: I doubt it.

DEB: Let me go get your drink for you. (Exits R.)

DAVID: Ohhh, I get it. Not 'too early.' (Turns to FELICITY.) Hi there. I'd like to buy you a drink.

FELICITY: No thanks. I already have one coming.

DAVID: Let me pay for it.

FELICITY: That's quite alright.

DAVID: You know, you have beautiful eyes.

FELICITY: Save it for someone else, buddy.

DAVID: Sorry.

FIELDS: (Enters L with wet shirt and face. Talking to himself.) Why does no one understand the basic differences between—

DAVID: Oh, god. What did you do?

FIELDS: I give up. I'm not cut out for this. I'm not one of those guys from a movie, who smooth talks a lady in ten minutes, and then at the same time they both say, 'Check please.'

DAVID: Calm down, just calm down. What happened?

40 FIELDS: I bought her a drink, right? She started talking about her interests, which were stupid, and then she starts complaining about insurance costs and taxes, so I simply explained to her that taxes aren't bad if we would use them for the right things, like universal healthcare and education. She said she agreed, but that communism is bad government and they don't believe in god. So I told her that communism isn't a form of government that it's an economic system, that universal healthcare is more of a socialist convention, and that communists aren't against god, but that their ideas have been bastardized to seem that way. Then she blathered on about some pedestrian affairs, which I simply put in perspective, and then she throws her drink in my face.

DAVID: How many times do I have to tell you to stop lecturing people?  
Especially not women.

(DEB enters R with glass of wine.)

FIELDS: Yeah yeah. They all want to have a good time and date guys who shave  
with machetes. Can I just have my book back?

FELICITY: Tell me about it!

FIELDS: Excuse me. Tell you—

DAVID: No! That's only two tries.

FIELDS: I don't care. The deal's off. (Reaches and grabs his book.) And give me  
my book back.

DEB: Well, you know what you have to do now, Dave.

DAVID: Just hold on, Deb.

FELICITY: Kuhh. Men. They walk around with their crotch all stuck out and their  
 chests all puffed up and women walk around in their skanky dresses showing  
 off their 'stuff.' It's pathetic.

FIELDS: I know! Why do all men have to be jocks and all women have to be  
 hair-tossing princesses? Why can't a man and woman sit and talk about  
 something important for once?

FELICITY: I know! Like the economy or foreign policy or mythology—

DAVID: We're not done. Fields, you still owe me.

FELICITY: Wait a second. Are you reading Moby Dick?

FIELDS: Yes, I am. Are you a Melville fan?

FELICITY: I love Melville. He's so much better than Hawthorne. Not to  
 mention, Benito Cereno is totally underrated.

FIELDS: (Gasping.) I know! Wait. Eliot or Pound?

FELICITY: Literature—both. Political beliefs—neither.

FEILDS: Of course. Pope or Johnson.

FELICITY: Pope, easily.

DAVID: (Tugging on FIELDS' shirt.) Fields! Hey Fields!

DEB: Dave! Shut up and watch.

FIELDS: Shakespeare or Marlowe?

FELICITY: Marlowe had he lived longer?

FIELDS: Marx or Smith?

FELICITY: You can't be serious!

FIELDS: Of course I'm not. Beards: yea or nay.

FELICITY: Absolute-YEA. (FIELDS and FELICITY lunge at each other and begin kissing. They fall off their bar stools.)

DAVID: (Turns to DEB who is laughing.) What the hell just happened?

DEB: (Handing DAVID the bill.) He decided not to listen to you. Anyway, I got someone to switch with me so I can get off early.

DAVID: But not too early, right? I better take care of my tab, then.

DEB: I put his on there, too.

42

DAVID: (Begins digging in pocket for money.) I guess I owe him, since things worked out for me.

DEB: It certainly wasn't by your doing.

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DAVID: I'll take all the help I can get. I hope you're ready for dinner because I got a fresh box of Franzia and some leftover Hamburger Helper lasagna with our names on it.

(DAVID continues digging in pocket as lights go down.)

END OF PLAY.

