

The Dating Game: Eccentric Madman Edition

Rebekah Frumkin

HOST: Ladies and gentlemen, we've got a really, really wonderful group of bachelors here for you tonight—a really exceptional group. Gentlemen, would you like to introduce yourselves? . . . No? I guess I will, then.

Bachelor Number One comes to us from Denmark. His royal blood has been angered by an adolescence of sleepless nights and suicide attempts. Ladies, this man has got the four Rs on his mind: reading, writing, and retaliatory regicide. Let's say hello to . . . Hamlet, Prince of Danes!

HAMLET: O, that this too too solid flesh would melt, thaw and resolve itself into a dew!

HOST: Thank you. Bachelor Number Two is a pale young man with a hatred of sunlight and love of the bottle. He spends his time riding reindeers, feeling up trolls, and bearing the sins of his father. Let's say hello to . . . Peer Gynt, son of Jon Gynt!

PEER GYNT: See here now—I'm fleeing from trouble. I thought at least here I'd be free!

HOST: Right, son, nothing freer than network television! And finally, Bachelor Number Three is basically blind, old for his looks, and young for his age—this bachelor's heresy drove his mother to an early deathbed while he played Cronus to his father's Uranus. Please say hello to the Dublin-born lecher . . . Stephen Dedalus!

STEPHEN DEDALUS: On and on and on, ho! I can see my future unfolding magnificently before me!

HOST: Yes, you can! Especially if you use Brill-O shaving cream: the only cream that's worth a close shave and our official sponsor of the night.

Now let's meet our lovely bachelorette. I'd like to reassure the network audience that she has been kept in a sound-proof booth this entire time, so she knows neither the names nor the biographies of our thrilling young bachelors.

Come on downstage, sweetie. What's your name?

DOLORES: It's Dolores.

HOST: Wonderful! And tell us a little bit about yourself.

DOLORES: I'm a systems analyst from Denver, Colorado. I enjoy ice cream and am a licensed scuba diver.

HOST: Ice cream? Well, that's just swell! Now Dolores, we've got some very special bachelors here for you tonight. If you don't mind, we'll just have you sit in that chair and start asking the gentlemen on the other side of the wall a few questions.

DOLORES: Bachelor Number One, do you think you have been treated well by the women in your life?

HAMLET: Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman!—

A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears: —why she, even she—
O, God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules: within a month:
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not nor it cannot come to good:
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

DOLORES: Ha-ha! You're funny! Bachelor Number Two, same question.

PEER GYNT: Tell me, does the woman wear her little apron on her shirt front and carry with marked innocence her book of verses? Does she do a waltz around you in the snow and beckon you by the bye with the gleam in her eyes?

DOLORES: Umm . . . can—

PEER GYNT: Hush now! There's time enough for that yet. Have you been to the mountains of Geldin? There is a princess who lives there, magnificent astride the wild horse of King Bjaärturk, and she rides gracefully across the white cliffs, appearing only to those suitors who've drunk the sacred mead of the evil troll Gleskinglaäk . . .

DOLORES: OK . . . Well, I'm certainly not going horseback riding with you! Bachelor Number Three, can you tell me where you're most ticklish?

STEPHEN DEDALUS: Restate the inquest.

DOLORES: The, um, place . . .

STEPHEN DEDALUS: I find every particle of this insensate body's composition is woefully dead to the touch—a woman's or a mother's—until I can claw my way out of Satan's unheavenly maw. To be good is to die; only in death, perhaps, will I find pleasure.

DOLORES: Umm . . . Bachelor Number One, what do you like better, sunrises or sunsets?

HAMLET: Ha-ha! Are you honest?

DOLORES: What do you mean?

HAMLET: Are you fair?

DOLORES: I'm afraid I don't understand . . .

HAMLET: That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

DOLORES: That's sweet of you.

HAMLET: Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?

HOST: Hate to interject, Bachelor Number One, but it's nearly time for a message from our sponsors. Dick, would you like to tell us about what these kids are going to take home this evening?

ANNOUNCER: Sure thing. Tonight, we're competing for an all-expenses-paid trip to a mystery vacation spot and three suitcases of Brill-O and Brill-O for Women, "the Hair Cream That Will Keep Your Man Guessing About What Type of Hair Cream You're Using."

HOST: Wow! That sure is some powerful hair cream—huh, kids? What do you think, Dolores?

DOLORES: Gosh, it sure does sound great!

HOST: I bet it does. Keep asking questions.

DOLORES: Bachelor Number Three, what's your idea of a hot date?

STEPHEN DEDALUS: To be one of two woeful poets observing the shadows projected onto the walls of the soul's aged cavern.

DOLORES: Oooh. And what would we do afterward?

STEPHEN DEDALUS: An evening of eschatology; we'd pore over the verses of Byron, Tennyson, and Dryden,

then a recitation, then an attempted—and perhaps successful—unification of the flesh.

DOLORES: Hmmm. What about you, Bachelor Number Two?

PEER GYNT: I would ask your father Ingmar for your hand in a dance. We would waltz briefly until the glares and caustic words of the other partygoers became too unbearable. Then we two pariahs would hie to the mountaintop and plunge our knives into the tough skin of an elderly reindeer, and thereafter consume its meat. We could even play a little game with the reindeer's antlers, where you would wear them upon your head and pretend to be Queen Solveig of the Frozen Tundra and I your King Ingfster. We could ride a makeshift sleigh of reindeer hide.

DOLORES: You're quite the partying man, aren't you? Bachelor Number One, I have a situation for you: I'm talking to my girlfriends and you suspect we're gossiping about you. What do you do?

HAMLET: God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

DOLORES: The answer I was looking for was, "Act curious but nonchalant." Bachelor Number Three, what's your favorite thing to do when you get home from work?

STEPHEN DEDALUS: Forsake my God.

DOLORES: Bachelor Number Two, you get to answer the final question. Tell me what's on your mind right now.

PEER GYNT: Embrace me, sweet girl! It doesn't matter that I'm drunk or that the evil troll witch is after us or that no amount of wealth or success will rid me of my immanent evils—not if I conquer the world for you, fair maiden, will I die a happy man. For we are all born wretchedly unhappy, and that is a permanent fact. How I hate this life! Oh, Mother, you homely old fool—I miss you so!

HOST: Well, that just about wraps it up. Dolores, it's time to make a choice. Who will it be?

DOLORES: Gosh, it's so hard to choose. But I guess I'm going to have to say . . . Bachelor Number Three!

HOST: Bachelor Number Three it is. Will you please step out from behind the curtain, sir?

STEPHEN DEDALUS: I shall come forth, but not of my own free will.

HOST: You kids are such a cute couple! Dolores, can you tell me why you chose this bachelor?

DOLORES: He was the least threatening.

STEPHEN DEDALUS: Would that I were dead!

HOST: Dick, tell them where their mystery vacation spot is!

ANNOUNCER: You've won a trip to beautiful Bridgewater, New Jersey! You'll spend a romantic evening at the Bridgewater Four Seasons, followed by a tour of the city!

HOST: And this was all made possible by Brill-O, "the Hair Cream with the"—

HAMLET: Auuuuughhh!
O, I die, Horatio;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit!

HOST: It seems . . . it seems we're having some technical difficulties here.

PEER GYNT: I swear upon it, I did not kill that man!

DOLORES: Oh gosh! Is Bachelor Number One dead?

STEPHEN DEDALUS: Drunk the poison of his own misery, methinks.

HOST: We've got a few messages here, from our commercial sponsors . . . Goodnight folks!

HAMLET: auuuuuggggghhh!

[Theme music and audience applause.]