

CHARACTERS.

Except for when specified, casting is color blind. Some cast doublings are mandatory, some are suggestions. The goal should be a heterogenous cast, reflecting the diversity of a modern American city.

DANI, female, 24, an aspiring writer, played by an actress of color.

JEFF, male, 20's, Dani's maybe/maybe-not boyfriend.

ERICA, female, 24, college acquaintance of Dani's, played by a white actress.

ANNE, Dani's sister, 29. Can be double cast with Erica. Can also play **RACHEL WHEELER**, late 20s.

MOM, Dani's mother, 60's.

KATHERYN HOYT, female, 41, professional writer/editor. Double cast with Mom.

CASEY, female, 24, Dani's friend/coworker at Randy's. Band member. Can also play **JESSICA**, mid-20s.

MILES, male, late 20's, Dani's coworker at Randy's. Band member.

WAYNE, male, late 20's, Dani's coworker at Randy's. Band member.

CHARLIE, male, late 20's, Dani's coworker at Randy's. Band member.

RANDY, male, mid to late 30's, owner/manager of Randy's Daily Grind. Can also play the **MUSIC AGENT CUSTOMER**.

BABY, Anne's infant son. Double cast with Randy.

ENSEMBLE. Optional. 3 or more, any part not specified here can be played by an ensemble which, in addition to the other cast, can be used as coffee shop customers, background dancers, BookWise audience, etc. An ensemble is not necessary, however.

NOTES.

A / in the text indicates the next line should begin and overlap with the current line.

Small lines embedded with parentheses into larger lines indicate interjections from characters that don't break the pace of the larger line.

Ex: DANI: That was corny as hell. (JEFF: What!) I gotta write it down.

SETTING.

A large American city, 2019, last Tuesday.

Suddenly, Randy opens the staff door. It slams against the wall. The music instantly cuts and the gang freezes. Randy is controlled frustration.

He paces to the stereo system and turns on new music – soft, easy listening music. Randy takes a deep breath to bring down his anger levels and enhance managerial impactfulness.

RANDY. Could everybody please get over here? *(They shuffle over)* Can someone remind me the rule about store music?

Beat.

CASEY. ...Pre-approved / music only.

RANDY. *(ending Casey's sentence with her)* Pre-approved music only, thank you, Casey. And what was I hearing from the back room?

WAYNE. Jams.

RANDY. Not *pre-approved* jams, Wayne. You know I support your music. I respect the fact that you all have a creative interest outside of work *(frustration mounts)* that takes all your focus away from this even though it's your actual job *(pulling back)* and I'm sorry, we're back on topic. When you play your music on the loudspeaker, that's not what Randy's Daily Grind is about.

CHARLIE. Word.

RANDY. Please save your comments until the end, Charlie. *My* brand – the Randy brand-y – is eco-sustainable coffee at fair prices with excellent service. Okay? I encourage your creativity – that's what makes us different from our corporate competitors. But we need to be “on brand”, to use your generation's vernacular. Can we strive toward this goal, united?

Dani bursts in. They all turn and look.

DANI. Sorry there was a delay.

RANDY. You've gotta be *freakin'* kidding me, Dani!

Maybe some of the customers hear and turn. Randy storms off and slams the back door. He quickly reopens it.

RANDY *(cont)*. I'll be back, soon. Have an empowering day.

He slams the door again.

DANI. Randy's pissed.

CASEY. Yeah, he's on crack today.

DANI. He put this music on?

Dani, still in very high spirits, changes the stereo with her phone to a grooving instrumental of 'Gotta Go Fast'. The Coffee Shop Gang looks a bit wary. Maybe someone eyes the back door to see if Randy's about to come back out.

DANI. It's pre-approved, don't worry. I'm the Randy whisperer.

WAYNE. Charlie, see how many people listened.

CHARLIE (*checking his phone*). Whoa. We're at *four* monthly listeners.

WAYNE. Boom! That's four people we got in like thirty minutes.

CASEY. That's just us.

WAYNE. Exactly! We're not even breaking a sweat. Do the math. Imagine if we kept this pace up.

CASEY. No, Wayne. The four listeners are just *us*.

Wayne processes and then deflates.

CHARLIE (*trying to bring back the cheer*). But that demo!

DANI (*looking at the phone*). You're on all the streaming apps, now?? This looks really legit, guys.

CHARLIE. Yeah the official release is tonight at the show. This morning's the... um... (*he looks to Wayne*)

WAYNE (*still a bit crestfallen*). Soft release.

CHARLIE. Soft release.

DANI. You said the show's tonight?

CASEY. Yeah. We're opening for Jeff, fool.

DANI. What!?

CHARLIE. Didn't you see the flyer?

Charlie hands her the flyer.

DANI. Charlie, this still has last month's date on it.

CHARLIE. ...that's my bad, team.

CASEY. But you got a facebook invite, right?

Casey looks at Charlie.

CHARLIE. ...that's also my bad, team.

The others shake their head.

DANI. It's fine! As long as it's before Jeff's set, I can make it.

They ad lib 'yes!', 'thank you, Dani', 'hell yeah'.

MILES. You're still like our only fan who's not related to us so much appreciated.

CHARLIE. And then we can all hang at the partayy!

The others express their enthusiasm (e.g. 'woo!', 'yeah, you know it'.)

DANI. What?

CASEY. It's our seven-year anniversary of working for Randycakes!

DANI (*almost involuntary out of disgust*). Seven?!

CASEY. Yeah, I know. It's super sad. But we plan on getting insanely wasted.

The others laugh and agree.

WAYNE. And it's *also* the official release after-party.

CASEY. Sure.

DANI (*trying to get it straight*). So, the soft release is... here, right now.

Wayne affirms.

DANI (*cont*). The official release is the show.

Wayne affirms.

DANI (*cont*). And then there's a release party after the show.

WAYNE. And a pre-livestream before the party.

CASEY. What??

CHARLIE. Wait, now I'm confused.

Randy peaks his head out the back door.

RANDY. Are we being professionals right now?

They all ad lib mutter as they turn away from each other. Randy slowly shuts the door again.