

Hook, Line and Tinder.

by Sheree Veysey.

Plot Synopsis:

Blind dates are nerve-racking, but they're especially anxiety-provoking if you haven't been on one for decades! Clyde doesn't want to say or do the wrong thing, but there are plenty of other things he could be worried about...

Genre: Comedy
Setting: A quiet bar, a Tuesday night
Place: Australia
Time: Present day

Suggested Props:

Bar set-up: Eftpos machine, Alcohol bottles, Bar glasses, orange juice "alcohol", napkins, chip packets, nuts, bar, high bar tables and chairs.

"Karaoke machine" (Screen, console, microphones)

Large Karaoke binder

Cell phones x3

Pencil and paper

Polishing cloth

Tea-towel

Estimated Running Time: (read aloud, do actions 30-45 minutes) 30 minutes.

Cast List: (gender, age, specific requirements or description)

CLYDE: Male, sixties/seventies, avuncular.

FELICITY: Bartender, a bright young woman in her early twenties.

TERRY: Male, youthful sixties, well presented with money.

DENNIS: Male, sixties/seventies, quirky and confident

Setting: A quiet bar, Tuesday evening. FELICITY is polishing glasses. CLYDE enters looking uncertain.

FELICITY: Good evening.

CLYDE: Hi.

FELICITY: How are you tonight?

CLYDE: Oh, good, good. *He looks about.*

FELICITY: Looking for someone?

CLYDE: Yes. I'm pretty early though.

FELICITY: You'll need a drink then.

CLYDE: Yeah... Ahhh stout, please.

FELICITY: A date is it?

CLYDE: Yes. Hopefully, this will calm my nerves.

FELICITY: I always think being nervous is a good sign.

CLYDE: Yeah?

FELICITY: Means you think the date has potential.

CLYDE: Hmm. It's more that it's been a while. Quite a while. Forty years.

FELICITY: Wow!

CLYDE: Yeah.

FELICITY: You've been off the market?

CLYDE: My wife passed away. *Beat.* Eighteen months ago.

FELICITY: Oh I'm sorry.

CLYDE: It was a long battle. Cancer. She was ready to go.

FELICITY: That's tough.

CLYDE: Yeah. I still feel married. Plus I'm doubtful there's anyone out there to compete. My Evie... I definitely married up.

FELICITY: Don't they say that all men do?

CLYDE: What?

FELICITY: They all marry up.

CLYDE: Oh! *Peers toward name tag.* Felicity eh? She would have liked you. She made me promise I'd get "back out there.

FELICITY: And here you are.

CLYDE: Here I am, dating on the wife's orders! *Beat.* You know before she passed she got all her best photos up on the walls. Apparently, it's to give my next girlfriend a complex.

FELICITY: Oh no! *Laughing* She sounds fun!

CLYDE: Yeah. She was. A lot of fun.

CLYDE carries his drink over to a high bar table and sits down.

CLYDE: Ah, Felicity. Would you mind if I checked something with you?

FELICITY: Sure.

CLYDE: Do I? Does this look alright? *He stands and does an awkward turn.*

FELICITY: *Looks him over.* Yeah, you look good. Nice.

CLYDE: I didn't want to look stuffy, but back in my day a bloke turned up in a tie.

FELICITY: Good call, no tie. You look nice. Approachable.

CLYDE: Approachable. Approachable's good. She'll never know I had to change three times.

FELICITY: *Laughs again.* You sound like me on a night out. Someone special?

CLYDE: Oh she looks nice. But honestly, I just want to get through tonight without making a fool of myself. Well, you can only spend so many nights in front of the telly.

FELICITY: I'm sure you'll be fine.

TERRY enters.

TERRY: Evening.

FELICITY: Good evening.

TERRY: Can I grab a ... *he looks at the liquor bottles.* You got a Macallen?

FELICITY: A what?

TERRY: Macallen. Whiskey.

FELICITY: No, I don't think so. We have Jameson? Glenfiddich?

TERRY: Glenfiddich will do. On the rocks, please.

FELICITY: No prob.

TERRY: Cheers.

FELICITY: The drink's free if you start the singing. *She gestures.*

TERRY: Pardon?

FELICITY: There's a free drink if you're first on the karaoke machine. *Gestures.*

TERRY: Oh Lord no! There's not going to be singing tonight is there?

FELICITY: *Shrugs.* I'm always hopeful.

Terry's phone buzzes again.

CLYDE to TERRY: You been here before?

TERRY: *distractedly.* Not for a while. And not normally on a Tuesday- but pursuit of happiness and all that. *He offers his hand.* Terry.

CLYDE: Clyde. *They shake.* You've got a date?

TERRY: Well, a meetup. Whatever they call it these days.

CLYDE: Same. My son downloaded that Flamey app.

TERRY: Flamey app? Oh, Tinder! *His phone buzzes again.* Terry sighs.

CLYDE: Funny name for it.

TERRY is half listening while typing on his phone.

TERRY: It's Tinder, as in, will there be a spark? Better name than Bumble.

CLYDE: Bumble? What's a bumble?

TERRY: Another app.

CLYDE: Well that's what I'm doing, bumbling along.

TERRY: Bumble, like birds and the bees.

CLYDE: Ohhh. Well, that might be moving things a bit too quickly. *TERRY laughs.* You've done this before?

TERRY: Online dating? Yeah, a few years.

FELICITY: I met my boyfriend on an app.

CLYDE: Really.

FELICITY: Yeah. He just got me this. *She fingers her necklace.*

TERRY: *His phone buzzes again.* Oh, come on.

CLYDE: *musings out loud.* The last time I was out dating, if something was online - it was cause you were having fish for dinner!

CLYDE: And then the net - well you used that to haul your catch in.

FELICITY: And the web - did you find that in the corner if you didn't dust?

CLYDE: Oooh clever girl.

TERRY: My bloody ex. *He turns his phone down flat in frustration.* CLYDE looks enquiringly. She thinks I should link my son up with my business contacts.

CLYDE: You don't want to?

TERRY: Give em an inch and they'll take a mile. That's what you've gotta watch for on these apps. People telling lies, taking advantage.

CLYDE: Does that happen a lot? Really. I better write some of this down.

CLYDE puts his glasses on, FELICITY produces pen and paper.

CLYDE: Bumble. App. People take advantage.

FELICITY: Oh- write down. "Don't use Grindr".

CLYDE: Grindr? What's Grindr?

FELICITY: A different app.

CLYDE: Another one? And it's not any good? *Phone rings.*

TERRY: Not for what you're after. *He steps away to answer his phone.*" Hello. .No. No. It's my final answer. I know what I said. That wasn't what I meant. *Beat.* Yes. Goodbye.

CLYDE: Ok. I open up my app and I do some sweeping.

FELICITY: Swiping. Swiping right or left.

CLYDE: And I sweep one or two people that look nice.

TERRY: *coming back.* No, swipe a whole lot.

CLYDE: I only want one woman.

TERRY: You still need to choose a lot.

FELICITY: Pick anyone that looks friendly.

TERRY: And don't be fooled by photos, half of them are propaganda.

CLYDE: Oh. Propaganda's a harsh word...

FELICITY: Well, it's...

CLYDE: *overlapping* We're in the age of advertising. We all understand the Big Mac in the photo is not the one in the box.

FELICITY: No... it's more like you've gone and ordered a Venta mocha frappuccino...

CLYDE: A whatter whatter?

TERRY: Pretentious coffee.

FELICITY: And what they deliver to you, is a cracked mug of pond muck.

CLYDE: Oh!

TERRY: Yep. Pond muck. Years ago, when I was an online virgin.

FELICITY: Please don't say "online" and "virgin" in the same sentence.

TERRY: Well I booked in for an eight-course tasting menu

CLYDE: What a superb first date!

TERRY: No Clyde. No no no!

FELICITY: Rookie move.

TERRY: Her photos were beautiful though. Leggy redhead and we'd been having great conversations.

CLYDE: And?

TERRY: Well, I'm sitting outside the restaurant, scrubbed and polished waiting for her. And then this strange woman starts beeping and waving at me from the seat of her mobility scooter. Her fluorescent pink mobility scooter.

CLYDE: What?

TERRY: And the damn thing's battery is going flat so she can hardly get it up the ramp, and I realise that this is my date!

FELICITY: She wasn't a redhead?

TERRY: Well some of her hair was red.

CLYDE: How old were these photos?

TERRY: That was the thing, they weren't even hers. Apparently her daughter "looks like like a sister" so she'd borrowed "some bikini snaps"

FELICITY: *Laughing*. Oh, that's not fair.

TERRY: It was farcical. When I started making excuses to leave she said we should enjoy the meal as friends and she'd give me her daughter's number.

FELICITY: And?

TERRY: Well they had a really divine cheesecake. But the daughter apparently took one look at my profile and blocked me.

FELICITY: Sorry. I'm not laughing.

CLYDE: Okay. - *Writing*. Some photos may not be accurate.

TERRY: Most photos! *Counting on his fingers* Retouched. Faked. Old.

CLYDE: Mine are pretty recent. One close-up and a friendly outdoorsy shot.

FELICITY: The outdoorsy shot didn't also feature a fish did it?

CLYDE: Yes.

FELICITY: *Groans*.

CLYDE + TERRY: What?

FELICITY: Men - they're always displaying fish cadavers, or Bambi's mother or something.

TERRY: So?

FELICITY: Ugga ugga. Me provide protein.

TERRY: Hunting and fishing are legitimate sports!

FELICITY: Ugga, ugga. Me much clever spear!

TERRY: Ignore her. Last November I caught a 300-pound Black Marlin.

CLYDE: Three hundred!

TERRY: It was a beauty, it was this long. And solid!

DENNIS: That's immense.

TERRY: Fought like a demon. *He throws a challenging look at FELICITY* What woman wouldn't want to see that fish!?

FELICITY shakes her head in disbelief and exits out back.

TERRY's phone buzzes again. He looks at the screen.

TERRY: Oh for Pete's sake. Now my daughter's jumped in. Numpties. I'm not risking my reputation on him.

CLYDE: It's a risk is it?

TERRY: Bound to be. "No. Sorry." *He presses send.* The boy needs to stand on his own two feet.

CLYDE: Well people do mature at different ages.

TERRY: He's 43.

Phone rings, TERRY sighs and answers it.

TERRY: Hello pumpkin. No. I'm not interested in his research. *Listens* And you're an expert on the market, are you? Really? Anyway, I said Wednesdays are the night to call. Oh so I should work around your life shall I? Well, maybe we'll talk next month then.

He hangs up, there is an awkward pause. CLYDE looks at his watch.

TERRY: Your date late?

CLYDE: No, I arrived too early.

They all turn expectantly as DENNIS enters wearing an obnoxiously loud shirt.

CLYDE: I thought that was her.

DENNIS: Evening. Give us a Pilsner and an orange juice love?

FELICITY: This one? *DENNIS nods*. That's <\$names price>
DENNIS: \$<price>dollars? That's ludicrous.
FELICITY: Well if you get the karaoke started, the next one will be free.
DENNIS: A drink for a tune. *Beat*. Let me see the options.

FELICITY gets the karaoke folder.

DENNIS: "I'm too sexy for this shirt". ...Hmmm... Well possibly.
CLYDE: *From the next table*. You can sing, can you?
DENNIS: I can, I can. Oooo - "We're not gonna take it!" As the kids say that's a "banger".
CLYDE: Oh not that one.
DENNIS: Why not?
CLYDE: It's a great track. But it came out in the early eighties...
DENNIS: So?
CLYDE: So it's pretty clear that we did, in fact, continue to take it.
DENNIS: Well that's fair. We've taken it a few times.
CLYDE: Hey Terry, with online dating... have you ever been mackerelled?
TERRY: Mackerelled?
CLYDE: You know when you think you've got a kingfish on the line, but it was just a mackerel?

TERRY looks to FELICITY but she is also stumped.

CLYDE: The person's faking. They're just a mackerel but they're pulling like a kingfish. Come on, you know?! Like that TV show. The American one?
FELICITY: You don't mean.... Catfished?
CLYDE: That's it! Catfished!
DENNIS: Okay I've found it. *He approaches Clyde*. Mate. My new mate. You wanna be my Dolly?
CLYDE: What?
DENNIS: My dolly. I need a Dolly for my Ken. To perform the apex of twentieth-century song: Islands in the Stream.
CLYDE: No. Ah. I wouldn't be up to the harmonies.
DENNIS: Oh come on. *Beginning to gesture* The magic in the middle when he's crooning and she's just warbling over the top and it's...

DENNIS splashes his Pilsner over CLYDE's shirt.

CLYDE: Oh!

DENNIS: Shit man, sorry! Shit!

CLYDE: Oh no. I've got a date.

Felicity comes over helping him mop up his shirt and then the table.

DENNIS: Sorry mate. Look. Um. Wear this.

DENNIS removes his shirt. CLYDE looks at it in horror.

CLYDE: I couldn't.

DENNIS: Go on

CLYDE: I really shouldn't.

TERRY: It's clean. And distinctive.

CLYDE: Won't you need it?

DENNIS: Nah. I never mind showing off these guns. I'll just go hunt for a good **solo** tune, shall I?

CLYDE puts the shirt on.

CLYDE: I look ridiculous.

FELICITY: You don't.... Look that ridiculous.

TERRY: I'm sure your personality will shine through.

CLYDE: I don't need to worry about being mackerelled. I need to worry about her seeing me through the window and doing a runner.

FELICITY: You won't get catfished if you get things offline quickly. Meet them.

TERRY: And never send money.

CLYDE: Why would I send money?

TERRY: Some accounts are scammers. Clever vixens.

FELICITY: Not just women!

DENNIS: Oh boy, do I know! Some of them aren't even Swedish!

FELICITY: My friend's mum thought she was helping her online boyfriend fly to his dying daughter. All lies.

CLYDE: That's terrible

FELICITY exits with the shirt out back.

TERRY: They'd have a hard time with me. I make my own kids submit a credit check.