

Catfish Isn't Kosher

A Ten-Minute Play

By Caleb Stenzinger

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CHARACTERS

TESSA	23, Nice Jewish girl
MILDRED	50, Tessa's single mother
EVAN	25, Tessa's date, handsome hipster
KENNY	60, Mildred's date, a bit creepy

SETTING

Mildred and Tessa's dining room

TIME

Saturday evening, date night

CATFISH ISN'T KOSHER

(A table and two chairs sit in the middle of the stage. TESSA and MILDRED enter carrying plates and silverware. Both wear dresses, their hair done up. They proceed to set the table)

TESSA

Mine just texted me. He's on his way. Did you hear from your date?

MILDRED

I don't know about this. Inviting men from the internet to our home. I've heard things, ya know.

TESSA

It's perfectly normal. Everyone is meeting people online now. And, ya know, that Gramper app is built specifically for old people like you looking for love!

MILDRED

Let me make this clear. I am not looking for love. I am doing this for you.

TESSA

For me? I don't need this. This is for you.

MILDRED

You said this is a Jewish boy right?

TESSA

Mom.

MILDRED

What? You're getting along in years.

TESSA

I'm 23.

MILDRED

In my day if you weren't married by 23, you ended up in Vietnam.

TESSA

Oh really, mom? All unmarried women joined the army?

MILDRED

Army? No. Lots of high end brothels in Ho Chi Minh City. Pretty good money, from what I hear.

TESSA

Probably lots of Jewish men there, too.

MILDRED

Come on, Tessa. Think about the future. This isn't just a stage in your life.

TESSA

You're right. It's a burlesque.

(the DOORBELL rings)

MILDRED

Ooh, there's one!

(TESSA looks out the window)

TESSA

It's yours. He looks nice! I'll check the oven.

(TESSA exits. MILDRED fixes her hair, opens the door. KENNY enters. He's wearing a blazer and tie)

KENNY

Oh, hi.

MILDRED

Hi, welcome. I'm Mildred. Come in.

KENNY

Nice to meet you. Is your daughter here?

(KENNY looks past her eagerly, moves into the room)

MILDRED

Tessa? How did you know-- Oh, my profile! Right. I forget everything about me is online these days. Do you have any children?

KENNY

I'm sorry? Oh, yes. No. Will she be out soon?

MILDRED

I-- I'm sure she will be. Why don't you have a seat.

(KENNY sits at the table)

So, you're into woodworking.

KENNY

Can you call her out here?

(KENNY stands, moves toward the kitchen)

Tessa!

MILDRED

Where are you going?

(KENNY checks his breath. TESSA enters with a plate of food)

KENNY

There she is!

TESSA

Uhh, here I am.

MILDRED

You, sit back down.

(MILDRED pulls TESSA to the side. KENNY shrugs and sits)

What have you gotten me into?! This guy is crazy! He keeps asking for you. We gotta get rid of him.

TESSA

Calm down. It'll be fine.

MILDRED

I'm serious! We need to talk. Let's go in the kitchen.

TESSA

Ok. Let me set this plate down.

(MILDRED exits. TESSA crosses to the table, sets down the plate)

Well?
KENNY

Well...?
TESSA

Well, are you surprised?
KENNY

By what?
TESSA

I know I don't exactly look like my picture, but--
KENNY

Oh no, you look great. This is going to be fun.
TESSA

Why don't you come have a seat.
KENNY

I should get back and help my mom.
TESSA

Just for a second.
KENNY

(TESSA sighs and pulls out the chair)

I guess.
TESSA

No no.
KENNY

(KENNY pats his lap and winks at her)

Whoa. What?! You creep. Mom!
TESSA

Yeah, get her in here, too.
KENNY

(the DOORBELL rings)

What did you think was going to happen tonight?
TESSA

KENNY

We got all night to figure that out.

TESSA

You probably need to leave.

(the DOORBELL rings again)

Ugh. Hold on. I'm not done with you.

KENNY

I should hope not. You got a bathroom? I want to make room for dinner.

TESSA

Ew. It's through there.

(KENNY stands and exits toward the kitchen. TESSA runs to the door. EVAN steps in, wearing typical hipster attire. He's holding a bag)

Hi, come in. I trust you're here to save the evening?

EVAN

Oh, am I late?

TESSA

Well, you missed the opening act, that's for sure. But I'm almost positive the fun is just beginning. Can you promise me you're not weird?

EVAN

Oh, I promise. Here, I made this for you.

(he sets the bust on the table, sits down. TESSA looks inside)

It's a bust of Judge Judy I carved out of a gavel.

TESSA

Um, what?

EVAN

Cause I know you like knick knacks and daytime court shows. Your profile was hilarious by the way.

TESSA

What do you mean--?

(MILDRED marches in)

MILDRED

Tessa! I've been waiting. What are you--?! Oh, hello.
Where's the creep?

TESSA

Bathroom.

EVAN

Creep?

TESSA

You'll see.

MILDRED

Very handsome, this one! What's in the bag?

(she grabs the bag, looks inside)

Judy!

TESSA

This is my mom.

MILDRED

Oh, hi. I'm--

(EVAN jumps up to shake her hand)

EVAN

Mildred! I'm Evan.

TESSA

Evan?

MILDRED

Yes, Mildred. How did you--?

EVAN

I figure. Nice move, actually, using her picture and
her name. I never would have guessed Mildred was real.
That's clever. Really sold me.

(EVAN sits back down)

TESSA

What are you talking about? How do you know her?

EVAN

Come on.

TESSA

Come on, what? How did you know her name?

EVAN

That was the name you used.

TESSA

On what?

EVAN

Gramper.

TESSA

You're on Gramper?

EVAN

Uuuhhh-- Is this a joke? Are you putting me on?

TESSA

Ok ok. This has been the weirdest night. Already. After, like, eight minutes. So, I'm really afraid to ask, but... Seriously, what you are talking about?

EVAN

I'm talking about your profile. On Gramper.

TESSA

I don't have a profile on Gramper. She does.

EVAN

Wait...So...That was you?!

MILDRED

Of course it was me! You saw the picture, didn't you? Isn't that how it works?

EVAN

No! Ew! No! Not at all! Gramper isn't actually for old people. It's ironic! Get it?

(They just stare at him)

You know, all us millennials are into super old stuff, like VHS tapes, and books made of paper. So with Gramper we use old people to represent who we should have been in a past life-- like, 80 years ago.

MILDRED

Excuse me?!

EVAN

I thought your profile was hilarious with all that stuff about People's Court and tchotchkes. You seemed perfect! But I guess none of it was real.

TESSA

It is real! It's her! You're trying to date my mother.

MILDRED

I love People's Court.

EVAN

Wait wait wait...Wait. If I was talking to her, why'd you think I was here for you?

TESSA

Ummm, because we met on JDate.

EVAN

On what?

TESSA

JDate. Jewish dating site.

EVAN

I'm not on JDate. I'm not even Jewish.

MILDRED

Oy gevalt!

(MILDRED throws up her hands, and falls back into her chair)

TESSA

Mom! Be nice. Hold on...

(TESSA pulls out her phone. Shows EVAN)

Look. Isn't this you?

EVAN

Whoa! That's creepy. Someone's catfishing you!

TESSA

No way!

MILDRED

Someone's whating her?

TESSA

Catfishing. It's when you pretend to be someone else on the internet.

MILDRED

Well, we'll have none of that. Catfish isn't kosher.

TESSA

That's what you're concerned with here?

EVAN

I guess I'm flattered you chose me by my real photo, but if I'm being honest, I don't know how I feel about the fact that you went for the version of me that--

(reading off the screen)

"Isreali smart"

TESSA

I like puns.

EVAN

"Don't Jewish you could be Meshuggah-mama?"

TESSA

Well, when you read it out loud--

EVAN

That's how puns work. That's literally the only way they work.

MILDRED

Alright alright. But if you're not you, and you thought I was her, then who is--

(TOILET FLUSHES. TESSA, MILDRED, and EVAN look toward the bathroom. KENNY ambles in, tucking in his shirt)

KENNY

I'm ready for some motza--

(he freezes. EVAN jumps up)

EVAN

Kenny!

KENNY

Ahhh shoot.

MILDRED

You know this guy?

EVAN

My Uncle Kenny. I used his picture on Gramper.

(TESSA jumps up, suddenly realizing)

TESSA

And he used yours! To get with young Jewish girls? Ew!

EVAN

I should mention we call him pervy Kenny.

KENNY

What can I say? Every goy needs a gal to schlep with on a Seder-day night.

TESSA

Oy gevalt.

(TESSA throws up her hands, and falls back into her chair)

(END OF PLAY)