

WAITING ON LINE
By Ken Green

CHARACTERS

BRITTNEY – 22, African American, concerned with her looks, but it masks an insecurity. Refuses to be second but is good at pretending to not care on occasion.

ASHKAN – 25, Iranian, marketing company exec. Assertive, assured, quick-witted, problem solver...except when he's around Brittney, then he becomes unsure of himself.

MARLA – 39, African American

JACKIE – 40, Latino

VAL – 33, African American

All work at the same tax consulting firm in the Loop.

MYLES – 17, biracial. Funny, witty, smart, very openly gay teen and not afraid to let it show in his manner or clothing. Except around his dad, who is divorced from his mom.

DAD (JEFF) – 38, white. MYLES' dad. Tries to be the "cool dad." Knows that MYLES is gay and tries really hard to show that he's extremely cool with that... except that he's kinda not.

BUNNY B – The biggest pop star on the planet. Period. Flamboyant, over the top, and is always seen in her trademark bunny outfit. Loves her fans and frequently goes out to meet them in line before the show.

SECURITY GUARD

DUAL ROLES

Bunny B, Security Guard

ACT I
Scene 1

SETTING: Chicago. The outside of the United Center on a Friday night, 2017. A group of people are waiting to get inside to see a concert by the pop sensation Bunny B. Since the concert is general admission, they're waiting in a line to get the best opportunity to get seats at the front of the floor.

SCENE: Two people, BRITTNEY and ASHKAN are standing along the wall of the concert venue (they are stage right). The murmur of anxious fans can be heard, perhaps some music to set the mood. BRITTNEY appears upset - arms folded, face tight, staring off into the distance - while ASHKAN is trying to get her attention.

ASHKAN

Brittney. (no response) Brittney. (no response) Brittney. (no response). Brittney (no response) C'mon, Brittney. (no response). Brittney. (no response) Brittney. (no response). Brittney, c'mon. No response, although BRITTNEY raises her hand to his face to indicate he should stop talking. Will you just talk? Brittney. Brittney. Brittney? Brittney. Brit...

BRITTNEY

(annoyed) Ashkan, what?

ASHKAN

Will you just talk to me?

BRITTNEY

(terse) Talk about what? What do you want to talk about? Huh?

ASHKAN

Look, you know I gotta work, OK?

BRITTNEY

I know you work. You don't think I know you work? I know you work, Ashkan. I work too. We both work.

ASHKAN

Alright, then, you know I work. So you should understand that...

BRITTNEY

Four weeks, Ashkan. Four weeks.

ASHKAN

Four weeks what?

BRITTNEY

Four weeks ago. We set this up four weeks ago.

ASHKAN

(heavy sigh) I know, but, dang, c'mon Brittney, I gotta work...

BRITTNEY

Ugh, I swear, if you say "I gotta work" one more time... That's why we arranged this four weeks ago. Four. Weeks.

ASHKAN

(looks to the heavens) For the millionth time, I gotta... (pause) I work late sometimes and...

BRITTNEY

(BRITTNEY recreating both parts of a past conversation) "So, what time are we leaving for the show, Ashkan?" "I don't know, Brittney, what time do you want to leave?" "How about we get there at four to be near the front of the line and get in a spot right in front of the stage since I'm the biggest Bunny B. fan you know." "Ok, Brittney, that sounds like a great idea, I'm gonna make sure I leave work early so we can get near the front of the line and get inside as soon as possible so you can see your idol Bunny B up close and personal." "Great, then we're gonna be there at four."

ASHKAN

Brittney, look, I'm sorry but...

BRITTNEY

Four o'clock, Ashkan. And what time did we get here?

ASHKAN

Look, Brittney, c'mon. Ok, I fucked up but...

BRITTNEY

Six, Ashkan. We got here at six. That's what time we got here. Six. One, two, three, four, five...

ASHKAN

Brittney...

BRITTNEY

...Six.

ASHKAN

(pause to look at line in front of them) Look, we're not that far from the front. We'll get a good spot, trust me.

BRITTNEY

Not that far from the front? Ashkan, where's the front of the line?

ASHKAN

Right up there... around the corner.

BRITTNEY

Ashkan, you can't even SEE the front of the line. You don't know HOW many people are up there. We could end up way at the back and I will NOT be happy.

ASHKAN

I'll make sure we're up near the front.

BRITTNEY

Like you were gonna make sure we got here at four.

ASHKAN

It's gonna be fine, I promise. (sigh) I wish you would just...

BRITTNEY

Just what?

ASHKAN

Just rela... Nothing. Nevermind.

BRITTNEY

I just wish YOU would do what you say.

ASHKAN

I follow through all the time, c'mon. (Starts listing events) Your cousin's wedding. Meeting your work friends at the bar. Your mom's birthday party. Your church's fundraiser. I busted my ass to get there on time for all of those. So if I'm late this one time, then I... (stops short of making an ultimatum, regains his composure and abruptly zips his lip).

BRITTNEY

I know that, but... (seeks to regain composure) Look, we talked about about this show for a long ass time. You had plenty of time to make sure we got here at six, that's all I'm saying. I mean, it's Bunny B. Just... nevermind. (goes silent) (several beats go by)

ASHKAN

So, you're gonna do this now? Fine, don't talk. We just won't talk for the whole show. Fine with me. Just... not talk.

MARLA, VAL and JACKIE arrive and take a spot behind ASHKAN and BRITTNEY. The three are excited to be attending the concert, well, with the possible exception of JACKIE who is wary of the whole scene.

BRITTNEY

Ashkan! ... Look, let's drop it, OK? It's fine. We're at the show, we're in line...

MARLA

(excitedly)...Alright, ladies... formation!

BRITTNEY

...we're gonna see Bunny B, it's fine. (ASHKAN stays silent) Ashkan... (he looks at her but says nothing). It's fine...

VAL

...Don't you know it! (MARLA and VAL high five)

ASHKAN

So, it's fine because you say it's fine. OK, then...

BRITTNEY

Ashkan, let's drop it. Let's do a reset. Let's just... stand here and wait for the line to move...

JACKIE

...Yeah, yeah, but why are we here so early? It's six o'clock, the show doesn't start 'til eight.

ASHKAN

We'll just stand here, then. Cool. Whatever you want.

(BRITTNEY and ASHKAN pull out their phones and start angrily flipping through them.)

MARLA

Because we're gonna be right up front to see... (MARLA and VAL together) Bunny
Beeeeeeeeee!!!!!!

JACKIE

(unimpressed) Hmph.

MARLA

Right down front!

VAL

Singing every word.

MARLA and VAL start singing/rapping a Bunny B hit. Note: The song can be sung to any melody that fits or the actors/director/etc. can come up with.

"I know you want summa this yum-yum./But best believe you ain't about to get some some./
You ain't got what it takes for this pum pum./ Cause you ain't nothing but all-day dum dum.
(MARA and VAL together) ALL DAY! ALL DAY! ALL DAY!"

JACKIE
(unimpressed) That's a real song?

MARLA
A real song? Girl, that is THE song. Bunny B, "Yum Yum!"

VAL
(echoing) Yum YUM!

JACKIE
Never heard of it.

MARLA
Never heard... ? Is the radio in your car broken? For like the last six months?

JACKIE
I listen to news on the way into work in the morning. `BBM. I like to keep up on world events.

MARLA
(to VAL) You hear this? She listens to "news" and never heard of "Yum Yum." Girl, "Yum Yum"
has BEEN the news.

VAL
Well, she's gonna know it after tonight. The place is gonna go crazy when Bunny B busts that
one out. (pause, then shaking her head with sympathy) Jackie, Jackie, Jackie...

JACKIE
Yup, poor Jackie. And guess what? I'm not really sure who Bunny B is either. I mean, I think I
know her but...

VAL
(to MARLA) Why did you invite this woman? (back to JACKIE) Bunny B? You seriously don't
know Bunny B?

JACKIE
You can say her name as many times as you want. I don't have time to follow the flavor of the
month.

MARLA

Yeah, but it's Bunny B, Jackie. How could you NOT know HER? She does it all... hip-hop, rap, R&B, a little rock even...

JACKIE

What would I be jumping around to rap by Bunny B or anybody else? I'm not twenty anymore. None of us are.

MARLA

What's that gotta do with anything? You're not DEAD. And if you don't know who Bunny B was, why the hell did you want to come to the show?

JACKIE

(frustrated) I didn't want to come to the show, you made me come!

MARLA

I didn't make you do anything! I said that instead of going to our usual Friday after-work hang-out spot, we were going to a show and asked you if you wanted to come. And you said "sure".

JACKIE

I thought you meant a little show at a nice restaurant, some place I can get a good cocktail, maybe listen a little jazz combo or something.

MARLA

Yeah, but instead I bought you a ticket to see Bunny B with us, which is so much better. You should thank me. (pause) Which reminds me, you owe me fifty dollars.

JACKIE

Fifty dollars???

MARLA

That's without the ticket fees, so...you're welcome.

JACKIE

(shaking her head) Fifty dollars. You know how many cocktails I could have gotten for fifty dollars?

VAL

No, but now you're gonna see Bunny B instead, so that's better.

JACKIE

(assessing the situation) I'm standing outside in a long line waiting to get into a show where I probably won't be able to sit down to watch somebody I barely know sings songs I've never heard before. That's better?

VAL

You'll be thanking us in another three hours. You're gonna see Bunny B, girl. This is the hottest ticket around. You're gonna be telling your kids about tonight.

JACKIE

Yeah, that ship has pretty much sailed. And a stadium full of kids in their twenties probably isn't gonna change that. (looks around) There ain't nobody over thirty here `cept for us.

VAL

There's a few. (looks up and down the line, sees DAD) Alright, very few. But so what?

JACKIE

We look like chaperones who got tired of waiting in the station wagon.

MARLA

Hey!

JACKIE

Though I guess Val is OK. She's not forty... yet. You fit in. Kinda.

MARLA

Hey, I fit in, too. Don't throw me under the bus just `cause you think you're too old to be here. I gets my swerve on.

JACKIE

My swerve has been in off mode for a while

MARLA

Well, then we're in the right place. Bunny B's gonna put that swerve back in your hips.

JACKIE

My hips need to be sitting down on a stool in front of a dirty martini enjoying Friday.

VAL

We'll get you a cocktail after the show.

JACKIE

Wait... don't tell me they don't serve alcohol in here.

VAL

I think they do. But you gotta get a wristband or something.

JACKIE

A wristband? I haven't had to wear a wristband to get a drink since I was hitting ladies' night every Wednesday at The Big Nasty. C'mon, guys... (looking around) Look, there's a bar down the street, I'll go wait there for you, have a cocktail or two, you can go see your Bee Bunny show and you can meet me afterwards.

MARLA

First off, it's Bunny B, get it right. And nope, nu-uh, stay right here, girl. You're going to this show. Look, you don't even have to pay me back...

VAL

What?

MARLA

...until next week. Jackie, girl, c'mon, we haven't hung out like this in, like, forever. Remember Thursday after-work at Bin 36?

JACKIE

I remember the next day at work. Ugh...

VAL

Nobody said you had to sample ALL the wines. But we were the Marketing Crew. We hung out all the time.

JACKIE

Well, things changed when... you know...

VAL

What?

JACKIE

When you got the promotion. (quiet for a few beats)

VAL

Jackie...

MARLA

Alright, you two, not tonight, OK?

JACKIE

Alright, alright. (pause) Look, just let me go right down the street. I can wait for you two, listen to some music and then...

VAL

Jackie, stay right here. You're gonna love this. And if you don't like the show, if you TRULY, honestly don't like it... you don't have to pay for the ticket.

JACKIE

(looks at MARLA and VAL, sighs) Fine, whatever. We'll just stand here in line for two hours...

MARLA

Hour and a half now.

JACKIE

... and watch this Bee Bunny...

VAL

Bunny B.

JACKIE

...Bunny B show. (pause, looks around) And I hate crowds.

MYLES and his DAD get in line behind MARLA, JACKIE and VAL. They are not talking to each other a lot. They aren't angry at each other but there is an air of some discomfort. DAD is wearing jeans, gym shoes, a band t-shirt (Culture Club or Depeche Mode) to try to fit in, and a hoodie. MYLES is wearing high top pink gym shoes, cut off blue jean shorts with a bunny tail attached at the back, a white t-shirt with red suspenders, a backpack and, on top of his head, black bunny ears. He shuffles nervously, looks around at the other people waiting in line, occasionally glances at his father, who also is slightly discomforted but trying to play it cool.

DAD

Lotta people here.

VAL

(to JACKIE) Since when? You used to weave your way through those afterwork bars like a damn sexy-ass snake.

MYLES

(to DAD) Uh, yeah.

JACKIE

Yeah, but never this many people. I mean, look at all these people here.

DAD

This person's pretty popular, I gather.

MARLA

Of course, it's a lot of people, it's Bunny B! Everybody but you knows who that is.

MYLES

Yeah. I guess. I mean, yeah, she is.

DAD

Like Madonna or something, right?

MYLES

(Rolls his eyes but doesn't let DAD see) Yeah, sorta. I mean, she's not, but... I guess.

DAD

What, Madonna's played out or something now?

MYLES

I mean, she's, like, still pretty well-known and stuff but nobody really...

DAD

Oh, no, wait, what's that other one... more recent. She's like her?

MYLES

Who?

DAD

That one... She's at all the awards shows. Wears those crazy outfits.

MYLES

I don't...

DAD

You know the one. She's popular with... people like... (doesn't know how to say gay, like his son)

MYLES

You mean Lady Gaga?

DAD

I do? (pause, thinking) Yeah, I do. She's still a thing, right?

MYLES

(Getting frustrated) Yes, she's still a "thing."

Tension between the two.

DAD

(Trying to lift said tension) So how's school?

MYLES

School's school.

DAD

(exasperated) Sorry, just asking. I don't get to see you that often, so I don't know.

MYLES

I know. Sorry. School's OK. You know, the usual stuff. Lotta tests coming up.

DAD

You don't need to be home studying or anything do you?

MYLES

Dad, it's Friday. Did you study on Friday nights?

DAD

Point taken.

MYLES

I'll be fine. I've been studying nearly every day for the past two weeks. Don't worry about me.

DAD

I don't. I mean, I do. Just wanted to make sure. I don't get a lot of info from your mom on stuff like that.

MYLES

(terse) Well, you and her should probably work on that.

DAD

(getting pissed) Alright, I just wanna know. Take it easy.

MYLES

(Irritated) I am.

Silence. DAD tries to break the tension by playing with one of MYLES' rabbit ears.

Dad, c'mon, you'll mess `em up.

DAD

Sorry, just trying to break the tension.

MYLES

There's no tension, we're fine. Just... (pause)

DAD

So, when's the show start?

MYLES

In a couple of hours

DAD

(a little surprised) Couple of hours? Then why are we here so early?

MYLES

We actually got here late.

DAD

How? We're here at six o'clock ...

MYLES

That's late.

DAD

For a show that starts at eight?

MYLES

(exasperated) We got here early because I wanted to try and get good spots up front. But now, we're actually gonna be pretty far back, but... whatever.

DAD

I woulda left work sooner. Why didn't you say something earlier?

MYLES

I did.

DAD

Did what?

MYLES

Say something earlier.

DAD

When?

MYLES

(exasperated) When you said you were gonna buy the tickets and come to the show. I told you you didn't have to and you said you wanted to and I said well, I wanna get there early to get a good spot and you said fine, what time and I said six o'clock and you said fine and I said that

means we're going to have to leave at four-thirty to get to the United Center and park and get a spot in line and you said fine and you showed up at the house at five-thirty and... well...

DAD

(facepalm) Ah, fuck. Myles, I'm sorry. Your mom mentioned how hopped up you were about this show. I just thought it would be a cool thing if we...

MYLES

Anyway, I told you you didn't have to get the tickets, I was gonna go with some friends of mine anyway. (pause) But, it's OK.

DAD

No, it's not. Shit. You coulda went with your friends and done this the way you wanted to, and I screwed that up. (pause) Would you have come with David? Your brother likes this kind of music, right?

MYLES

(feeling a little guilty) Well, no, he's not really into this stuff, but, he would have come. He gets it. He's cool with... everything.

DAD

Yeah, you'd have been alright here with him.

MYLES

(upset) What's that mean? I'm almost, he's barely nineteen.

DAD

Yeah, but... you know... David could... In case something happened.

MYLES

(a little pissed) Look, dad, if you wanna get out of here it's no big deal.

DAD

Yeah, it is. (looking around) Are your friends here?

MYLES

Probably. (sees DAD looking around) Why are you looking around? You don't know them.

DAD

(stops looking) Yeah, you're right.

MYLES

Besides, they're probably up at the front of the line.

DAD

If you wanna go find 'em, it's cool. I'm fine waiting here. I can meet you inside.

MYLES

Dad, it's fine. Seriously. (pause) Look, you don't have to be here, you know. I'll be fine. You can go hang somewhere and I can text you when the show is over. There's a bar called the Billy Goat down the street. You can go there and watch a football game or something.

DAD

Nah, I came here with you and we're gonna see this show. (thinking) Wait, do the Bears play tomorrow or tonight? You don't know...

MYLES

No, I don't know when the game is.

DAD

I know you don't, I was just... (thinking) Nope, I'm staying. We're doing this together. Besides I've never seen... whatshername.

MYLES

Bunny B.

DAD

Bunny B? Do I know her?

MYLES

Seriously, just walk four blocks that way, have a beer and watch a game. I bet there's SOME game on.

DAD

(to himself) There's probably a college game... No, I'll be fine.

MYLES

I, um, might meet up with some of my friends. Besides, not sure if you'd like them. They can be a little...

DAD

(insistent) Myles. We're going to this Bee Bunny show...

MYLES

Bunny B.

DAD

...whatever show together. It's dance music, right? I like dance music. Well, not all of it, but... I'll like it. I promise.

MYLES

(more frustrated) You don't have to promise to like it. You don't even have to be here, I'm fine by my...

DAD

(anger level at a 4) Myles! (calming down) Can we just do this one thing together? I'm trying to... I want to ... I want to know... you know, you and...

MYLES

Dad, how about not right now? I mean this is the shittiest time for me to try to explain things like that.

DAD

(playing dumb. A little) Like what?

MYLES

Like ... you know what.

DAD

I'm not talking about... that. I don't mean... that. I understand... that. I'm fine with it, I told you.

MYLES

(a little ticked off) I don't need you to be... (breath deeply) Then what are you talking about?

DAD

I mean, I want to know YOU you. Like why you, I don't know, like this stuff and like to dress... up.

MYLES

(sarcastically) Because it's fun?

DAD

I'd ask you if you were a daughter too, you know. Just wondering about the whole get-up, if that's something that's common with... you know.

MYLES

Dad, not every gay person in Chicago is here, and not every gay person HERE is wearing this so, no, it's not common with gay people.

DAD

OK, there, see, I learned something. I might have previously thought... but now I know... (awkward silence) How much longer 'til...

MYLES

Hour and a half.

DAD

Ok, then.

(Stage goes dark)

END SCENE