

CUCKOO BANANA PANTS
a ten-minute play by Jake Lewis

First draft 9/13/22

Characters

RITA – a slightly above-average woman, 30s-40s

DALE – a completely average man, 30s-40s

LILAC – a completely average woman, 30s-40s

Setting

A coffee shop

Present

Lights rise on a coffee shop. RITA is sitting at a table, anxious. A few moments later, DALE enters.

DALE: Rita?

RITA: *(Jumping.)* Who?!?

DALE: Sorry, I didn't mean to bother you—

RITA: No, it's my fault. I am just really jumpy.

DALE: Maybe meeting up in a coffee shop wasn't the best choice then.

RITA: It's better than a bar, trust me.

DALE: Good to know. I'm Dale.

RITA: I gathered as much when you said my name, unless I should be worried now that total strangers out there are tracking me down.

DALE: You never know. People are cuckoo banana pants these days.

RITA: Did you just say "cuckoo banana pants"? Like, really? Or is the copious amount of coffee causing me to hallucinate?

DALE: ...no?

RITA: Liar.

DALE: May I sit?

RITA: I don't know after that last line...

DALE: I'll take that as a yes. *(Sits across from her.)* So you're really her. Wild.

RITA: Not what you expected, huh?

DALE: No, not really.

RITA: Gee, thanks.

DALE: No, I mean, I thought you'd be, well, worse-looking.

RITA: On one hand, I could take that as a compliment, that you are consumed by my beauty....but on the other, it sounds like my personality led you to believe I was ugly.

DALE: Then let me ask you. Am I what you expected?

RITA: *(Sizes him up a bit before answering.)* I thought you would be taller.

DALE: Taller? Why?

RITA: You talked online like you were a tall person. That's all.

DALE: How does a tall person talk?

RITA: Like you did. I don't know! This is not going well.

DALE: I'm just teasing you. I've always wanted to be tall, so at least I got the conversational attributes of someone who is.

RITA: It's crazy, isn't it? A dating website where you don't see anyone else's pictures. It's like that TV show where you can't see the singer but only hear their voice. But for faces! Who thought such a thing would work?

DALE: Probably the guy who invented it?

RITA: It was actually created by a woman. Do you really think a guy would create a dating website where you couldn't see what your matches looked like?

DALE: You have a point there. But, look, it's working for us...isn't it?

RITA: So I have a confession to make.

DALE: That's exactly the response I was hoping for.

RITA: I'm actually that woman.

DALE: What woman?

RITA: *The* woman. The one who created the website. That we met on.

DALE: Oh. That's...cool? Good going.

RITA: I'm not done.

DALE: Alright...

RITA: There are no other women on the site.

DALE: What do you mean? I've talked to others there before you...

RITA: Most of the other women are just AI...algorithms programmed to make conversation. It's really no different than those old computer games where you could type anything in and it would respond with a question.

DALE: So you're telling me I've spent hours upon hours talking to...a computer?

RITA: Yes. Well, not entirely. You did talk to one person.

DALE: One? Just one? Who was it? Belinda? Allie? Oh, wait, I know. Kate. Although maybe it was Gwen, now that I think of it.

RITA: Yes.

DALE: Yes, what? You said I talked to one person. Which one?

RITA: All of them. They were all me.

DALE: That's...that's not possible.

RITA: Because if it were me, you'd need multiple phones and computers to be able to keep up appearances?

DALE understands she just explained how she did it.

DALE: This is certainly an interesting development. But...why? What's the point of all this? Was I some sort of lab experiment?

RITA: I'm so glad you asked!

DALE: Judging by your response, I probably wish I didn't.

RITA: You are one in a million. Actually, you're more like one in 3.97 billion.

DALE: I am?

RITA: After years and years of research, which would be much too complicated for you to understand—

DALE: Thank you?

RITA: —it was determined that you, Mr. Dale Raines, are the....are you ready for it?

DALE: Probably not.

RITA: Too bad. You are the most average man in the world!

DALE's reaction is unreadable.

RITA: Ta-da!

DALE: Wow.

RITA: Right?? That's quite an accomplishment! I was curious about where I ranked in terms of all the women in the world. Turns out I'm in the top tenth percentile. Blew. My. Mind. But you, you couldn't be more average! Isn't that such a weight off your shoulders?

DALE: Not where my mind immediately went, if I'm being honest.

RITA: Think about it! You're neither too handsome, nor too unattractive! Too thin nor too overweight. Too interesting nor too boring.

DALE: You know what's weird? Each time you say something, I end up feeling worse!

RITA: Exactly! You're neither too resilient nor too sensitive!

DALE: (*Sarcastically.*) This sure is my lucky day.

RITA: And you're *definitely* not too funny.

DALE: ...nor?

RITA: Nor what?

DALE: In all the other examples, you said "not this NOR this." So while the first part kinda hurt my feelings, the second part made me feel a little better? So, according to that pattern, I'm not too funny, but I'm not too, what? Serious?

RITA: Oh. Um. Yeah. Let's go with that.

DALE: This is cuckoo banana pants.

RITA: See what I mean?

DALE: But there's no way you could have studied *all* men. I mean,

DALE: And the whole dating, finding-the-love-of-your-life-based-on-who-the-person-is-and-without-being-first-judged-by-your-appearance mission of the website...

RITA: Yeah, that wasn't real. Just a ruse to find the most average man in the world. And it worked!

DALE: Maybe we should've met in a bar after all, because I could use a drink.

RITA: Not too alcoholic nor too teetotaler!

DALE: Can we still chat? We sort of hit it off online, you know. We had chemistry, didn't we?

RITA: Oh. Dale. Honey. I'm so sorry. That chemistry was just part of the experiment. (*Shows ring.*) I'm married.

DALE: Ah. Right.

RITA: Yes, my Chad is in the top 1 percentile of men! I sure am a lucky girl!

DALE: But you couldn't have possibly studied all men! I mean, what about all the men who aren't on your website?

RITA: A single man who doesn't try every way possible online to get laid, especially when it costs nothing to be on there? Clearly below average.

DALE: That's a slightly unfair portrayal of men.

RITA: There's another! Neither too offended nor too passive. But I must be going...Chad is waiting for me. He's going to love to hear all about this!

DALE: Well, if I can bring Chad some pleasure, consider my life fulfilled.

RITA: Um, sure. And don't worry, Dale, I'm sure there's a perfectly average girl who's for you. Maybe even slightly above average, like my Chad. Trust me! She's out there somewhere. Probably in Tanzania, but fingers crossed!
(Exits.)

DALE sits a moment longer, digesting everything he's just heard. LILAC, who has been at the counter behind him, getting her coffee, begins to turn around on her way to exit. DALE decides to leave, and gets up. In so doing, he and LILAC collide, coffee going all over her.

DALE: Oh no! Oh God! I'm so sorry! It was an accident! Let me get you some napkins! *(He turns to get napkins.)*

LILAC: This is cuckoo banana pants!

DALE freezes, turns towards her, a shocked smile on his face.

DALE: What did you say?

Lights fade to black.

The End