

# PEACHES EN REGALIA

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## **PEACHES EN REGALIA**

### **Characters:**

Peaches	20-30 yo female
Norman	25-35 yo male
Syd	35-50 yo male
Joanne	30-40 yo female

### **Synopsis:**

An innocent side dish at Doug's Diner changes lives forever.

### **Set and Prop Requirements:**

A "cafe" type round table, three chairs. Forks, knives and spoons for three.  
Three cloth napkins. A few bowls.

**Running Time:** 35 minutes

On Rise: The first 24 bars or so of “Peaches En Regalia” (from the album “Hot Rats” by Frank Zappa) plays and all the characters dance around a bit, maybe while they set the stage.

Then they all leave except for Peaches.

### PEACHES

Hello, my name is Peaches. I am a third year student at the university. I think my major is business.

I got interested in business while in high school, when I did a term paper which examined recent history through the lens of gas prices. For better or worse, much of what has transpired in the last century can be directly linked to gas prices. At least that is what I set out to prove in my high school term paper.

In my term paper I created graphs of gas prices around the world and then tried to relate those graphs to world events. This turned out to be complicated for a fifteen year-old high school student to do, particularly given that we only had four weeks to write it. While I completely failed to prove my premise, my teacher gave me an “A” anyway, as he was impressed by the scope of my ambition. I still maintain that gas prices drive much of what goes on in the world. And I hope to show that some day.

So, anyway, I’m a business major. But maybe I should be a history major with a minor in business. I don’t know. I certainly like history.

I always go to my history professor’s office hours. Recently he and I got to talking about the origins of the Second World War. I had a lot of questions, so I guess that’s why he invited me out to dinner.

I said, sure, whatever. I thought maybe he’d explain World War Two in terms of gas prices, you know, over steak and stuff.

I just started to work this summer at Merrill Lynch. Since I’m a business major, I suppose it makes sense to work at a financial institution. I am really having fun at Merrill Lynch, not taking it too seriously.

I like to wear totally killer clothes. Daddy calls me a clothes horse. I’ve named all my outfits. So for casual Fridays I always wear this little number I call “Black Death,” named after a particularly memorable menstrual period I had last year.

So anyway, every dress-down Friday these guys are all walking around like slobs and I’m sizzling in “Black Death.” I don’t know why, I just like to shake things up a bit. Daddy says “Peaches, you gotta think outside the box.” So I really try to not let him down.

Most people make certain assumptions about you if you’re named “Peaches.” In my case, these assumptions are absolutely false. Well, every assumption except for one.

My professor asked me where I wanted to go for dinner and so I said "Doug's Diner." It's not too expensive, kinda campy - I love the atmosphere - and the people are great.

He wanted to take me to some French restaurant, but I insisted we go to Doug's Diner.

We had a nice dinner. My professor didn't talk about gas prices at all. In fact, we didn't even talk about history. He just asked me questions about myself. That was nice I suppose but I was really hoping he would take an interest in my gas price theory.

So, we finish dinner and they bring the dessert menu. The waiter tells us they are featuring a new dish called "Peaches En Regalia." Well, being named Peaches myself, I have to try it. "Peaches En Regalia." What's so regal about a peach, I wonder.

Once the dish is presented, I can make out the peach part. And the regal part is apparently some cottage cheese that adorns the crater of the peach, a bed of iceberg lettuce, a dash of paprika on the cottage cheese, and a cherry on top.

I know this sounds strange but it did have a certain stately air. I loved it.

After dinner my professor offers to drive me home. It's late at night so I accept his offer. We get to my apartment, and he offers to walk me to the door. That's always nice, you know, in my neighborhood.

So, we get to the door of the apartment building and I say thank you and stuff and see you in class next week. Well, I'm about to turn to go when he leans forward to kiss me. Well, I don't want to kiss my professor. I mean, he's my teacher. Not only that but he's gotta be well into his 30s. I mean, huh? So I just pretend he's sneezing and I say "bless you." I thought that would save us both some embarrassment. Then I turn and walk inside. I found I enjoyed this spiritual angle to parting. Now, instead of "good-bye" I always say "bless you."

So anyway, as I'm putting away my purse, taking off my clothes, and getting into my nightgown, it just hits me. "I think my professor wants to have sex with me."

(pause)

And simultaneously I have another thought. Merrill Lynch is stupid. Doug's Diner is probably the only restaurant in the world with a dish named "Peaches En Regalia." And I make the decision then and there. I'm going to quit Merrill Lynch, and waitress at Doug's Diner.

(Lights off Peaches)

(Lights up Norman)

NORMAN

So I'm sitting at the counter, having just enjoyed another fabulous meal here at Doug's Diner, and I'm feeling like having just a little something more. I ask the waitress what she recommends. She suggests their new dish called "Peaches En Regalia." I go to Doug's Diner all the time, and I know this waitress is new. She's kinda nervous. She told me it was her first day. Never waitressed before. Real nice though. So, to make her feel good, I take her up on her suggestion and order "Peaches En Regalia." She returns with the dish and slides it across the counter to me, like she had probably seen in movies. Unfortunately the counter was a bit wet, and the dish goes right over the edge of the counter into my lap. I get cottage cheese all over my pants. She's horrified, you know. I try to tell her it's all right but she feels awful. Anyway, I excuse myself to go to the men's room to try to clean up this mess on my lap.

I enter the rest room there at the diner. There are two stalls. Someone is standing outside the stalls, at a respectable distance, by the sink, waiting patiently for a stall.

I have been practicing social banter. My heart always quickens before I try to speak to a stranger, but I try to reach out anyway. My heart quickens because I fear that I will make an attempt to be friendly, but that I will be rejected . . . that the response will be a grunt or a cold stare. Then I will feel like a fool. How can you actually speak words to someone and just get a stare in return? I wonder.

"Waiting?" I smile to the man already there.

It does not come naturally to me. But, gosh, we are all so alone in this world. We all, or at least most of us I think, long for connection. My need for connection, my need to reach out, is hampered by my insecurities. I have been practicing being secure. No, I have been practicing *acting* secure, with the hope that the *being* might follow.

One way I practice acting secure is I am trying to teach myself how to wink. I mean, I can wink, but not as a form of communication.

There is an elite strata of humans that are able to wink as a form of communication. These people are usually male. They are usually gregarious, quick with a compliment, they often throw their head back when they laugh, which they do a lot. Everyone likes these people but no one ever feels close to them. But that's okay.

You do not wink at someone in the men's bathroom. I know this and do not practice my wink on the fellow ahead of me waiting for a stall to open up. Instead, I ask "Waiting?" and act confident. He replies simply, "yes," but in a nice way that makes us both feel comfortable.

So I form a line, or more accurately, I *become* the line, waiting behind him. Politely.

Now the previous month I had taken a time management class. So, following what I learned in the class, I use my waiting time wisely by practicing my wink in the mirror, there in the rest room. I do it discretely, so that the other fellow will not notice.

My winking goal - by the way, if you learn nothing else in life, you should learn to have a goal, that is what they said in my time management class - my winking goal is to be able to wink as a way of saying "you and I have just shared a little secret that is special just to us." I want to be able to make that kind of a wink. I would never actually do it, of course, but I would like to be the type that *could* do it, if somehow called upon.

So, I very discretely practice my wink in the mirror there in line while waiting for a stall. But somehow the fellow ahead of me senses that something is going on. So, he, also discretely, turns ever so slightly and glances in the mirror -- just as I am winking in the mirror.

This alters the social dynamic there in the line.

(pause)

Now I know I should not be a score keeper. But I think up until that moment, I had the upper hand in the line, as it was I who confidently initiated a conversation by asking "Waiting?" Now the balance of power is shifting to the fellow in front of me, and we both know it. He turns back, and takes a little step away from me.

(pause)

Where the North American Plate meets the Pacific Plate, you find something called "the collision zone," where these massive plates vie for position, first one dominating, forcing the other down into the mantle. Then moments latter, in geologic time, the tables are turned and the formerly subservient plate rises up and grinds past the dominate plate. As these giant plates move, tremendous energies are unleashed resulting in tremors that transform Earth's surface.

There in the rest room of Doug's Diner, the tectonic plate of the fellow in front of me is thrusting upwards, crushing my plate, transforming the emotional landscape of the men's room.

There's not enough time to explain everything I had learned in my time management class. I think perhaps I can just pretend he hadn't seen me wink. Or perhaps I can make up a story that would explain the winking. Something involving contact lenses perhaps. But if I try to explain it, then that just further acknowledges that he caught me doing something weird.

While concocting a story about having trouble with my contacts, suddenly the door to the rest room flies open and a man strides in. He marches right past us, tries a stall door. It's unlocked, no one is in there. He goes in and shuts the door.

(pause)

Between the North American Plate and the Pacific Plate there is a small, almost unnoticed plate off the coast of Washington called the Juan de Fuca Plate. This small, unassuming plate is responsible for some of the most devastating eruptions in history, most recently that of Mount Saint Helens in Washington in 1980, an eruption which spewed 500 million tons of ash at high as 16 miles into the atmosphere.

And the ash from that eruption is falling . . . falling there in the men's room at Doug's Diner, burying both me and the fellow in front of me in a sea of hot, molten emotion.

What to do? What to say? Are the two of us in this small line now united by humiliation, frustration, anger? And what of this . . . this . . . GUY. . . this Juan de Fuca, now savoring all that stall #2 has to offer?

There is a relationship, a trust relationship, that you find in every rest room in the world, except for the one that I am in. In this bathroom, that trust relationship has completely broken down. And this . . . this Juan de Fuca (which, as you know, is Spanish for "John the Fucker") has climbed upon the broken shards of that trust and has mounted the throne that he now occupies.

Did he break the circle of trust? No, no, he did not. To break the circle you must first JOIN the circle. No, he did something much more egregious. He IGNORED the circle of trust, as if it wasn't there. So cocky, so confident.

A nice person, upon discovering an empty stall, would turn to the those patiently waiting in line, and would say "this one's empty." A nice person would not hoard the spoils of his conquest, but rather share the fruits of his discovery with others, who were equally deserving, if not more.

I was convinced that this gaucho, now relieving himself in stall #2, was not a nice person. I was sure he would be successful at whatever endeavor he chose to pursue. Probably already was. He was a Republican, that much was clear. And probably would be for life.

So why, why did I find myself craving to be just like him?

Could I ever be like him? If so, would that make me happy? Do I really truly want to be like him? That is the question, the question that must be answered. And I realize that it must be answered now.

I will jump ahead in my story and tell what you probably already suspect. He did not wash his hands.

Meanwhile, the relationship outside that stall had deteriorated beyond repair.

I make my move. I clear my throat, and without as much as a glance at the fellow in front of me in line, I stride right up to stall #1, the stall unoccupied by Juan de Fuca, and give a tug at the door. "Just a moment," comes the answer from within.

(pause)

I do not want to look at the other fellow waiting ahead of me, so I look down at the floor, and as I am looking, I notice that the floor is composed of one foot square tiles, black tiles alternating with white tiles, forming a . . . a chess board pattern on the floor. The symbolism is not lost on me.

I know. I know as I raise my gaze from the floor that our eyes must finally meet. But that's okay. I am no longer the innocent victim that I had been minutes before. I now have taken the aggressive position. I now have a preemptive policy.

Our eyes meet. He is not smiling. My old self would have said, "Just checking." But my old self was already a distant memory.

I have to say something. What if he says, "I already checked that one." ? He might. He might say "I already checked that" and his tectonic plate would once again rise up and crush mine into the hot molten mantle. I must speak first or this day will haunt me forever.

The brain. How does it do it? How does it form sentences even as the sentences are leaving the mouth? This amazing instrument quickly served its duty, as I said to this fellow, who was first in line, "You lose your turn."

(pause)

My old self, now dead and buried, would have never said such a thing. But you know, as I said those words, I suddenly felt a longing, a longing for those carefree days that I use to know when I was nice and insecure. A longing for the old me.

Yes, the old me had vanished. But, I was not sure that I liked the new me. And, as I stare at that other fellow who moments before had been ahead of me in line, I can see that he isn't sure he likes the new me either.

(pause)

Then he glances down and I can see by his expression that he notices the curds of cottage cheese dripping off my crotch. He goes like this-

(NORMAN does facial expression of the other guy)

But the new me doesn't care. I am no longer bound by the circle of trust. I briskly exit the bathroom, defiantly wearing my cottage cheese, like a curdled badge of courage.

(Lights off Norman)

(Lights up Peaches)

## PEACHES

That first day working at Doug's Diner was nerve wracking. But everyone was very nice. The manager was supportive, even after I spilled "Peaches En Regalia" all over a customer's lap.

I didn't miss the job at Merrill Lynch at all. But I did miss the people, especially my friend Joanne. Joanne has worked at Merrill Lynch like, forever. Four years at least.

Joanne loves Angora sweaters. She has the most beautiful collection of Angora sweaters I have ever seen. But she has this odd habit of picking at the fuzz of the Angora when she gets excited.

Joanne recently took a time management class. In the time management class they apparently told her that the most important thing in life is to have a goal.

This information nearly destroyed Joanne.

They told her she should create a flow chart to achieve her goals. One flowchart for each goal. She should hang these flowcharts on her wall and refer to them every morning.

Well, Joanne took this whole flowchart thing to heart. To catch up for lost time, she decided to create all the flowcharts that she should have created five years ago. In doing this, Joanne discovered that, according to the flowcharts that she should have created five years ago but didn't, she was suppose to have been married by the age of 35. She was now 36.

So she brings in these flowcharts to Merrill Lynch to show me. As she is explaining the charts, she becomes increasingly upset. And the more upset she becomes, the more she picks at the fuzz of her Angora sweater.

She bought this roll of paper so she could make nice, long, uninterrupted flowcharts. Down the left hand side of each flowchart is "time." Down the middle of the paper are the things she must accomplish by the time written on the left hand side. This is how she discovered that she was suppose to have been married last year.

I try to get her to calmly talk about her charts. Joanne is not calm. We are in the break room at Merrill Lynch, but she is using an outside voice. Every sentence starts with "But you don't

understand . . .” She is getting louder and louder and the Angora was flying faster and faster.

Joanne at this point is screaming “But you don’t understand, only 10% of the males in my age bracket are available. The rest are either taken or gay.” She is now just a voice booming out of this cloud of Angora. It’s like totally Biblical.

She has many flowcharts. At the top of each flowchart is the goal that the flowchart is to achieve. At the top of this flowchart that was so upsetting for Joanne, it says “Goal: Buy a house.”

But in the middle of this “Buy a House” flowchart there are these boxes, connected by lines, with “to do” items like “Join a church,” “Get a dog,” “Learn how to hang glide.” All devices to find someone to fall in love with and marry.

There are about ten of these boxes. Then at the bottom of this line of ten boxes is a diamond that says “Married?” with a question mark under it. If she is not married, there is a line that goes back to the top of the ten boxes, where she is to try again.

Two-way communication with the Angora cloud is at this point impossible, so, without asking permission, I take scissors and, from this “Buy a House” flowchart I cut out the section with the ten boxes and the “Married?” diamond. I then tape the house-buying flowchart back together. Then, at the top of this new flowchart, I write “Goal: Get Married.” On the left-hand side of this new “Get Married” flowchart, I change “Age 35” to “Age 45.”

“All fixed” I announce to the cloud.

Slowly, the cloud of Angora settles into a fog about her feet, and there once more stands Joanne, looking somewhat like a shorn sheep.

(Lights up Joanne)

JOANNE

Fixed? How?

PEACHES

See.

(PEACHES shows new flowchart to Joanne)

One flowchart for each goal, remember?

JOANNE

*(affectionately)* Peaches . . .

(Lights off Peaches)

(JOANNE takes off her sweater)

My sweaters just don't seem to retain their bounce. I'm always having to take them to the dry cleaners. Whatever they do to them seems to get some of the bounce back.

Last time I went to the dry cleaners, I met a man that I really liked. Well, I didn't exactly meet him. But we were in at the laundry at the same time.

He walked in just ahead of me. He exuded such confidence, just the way he opened the door. I found him attractive. It's so hard to know, meeting a perfect stranger. You have so few clues to go by, you really have to trust your intuition.

In this case, I thought, well, obviously he is someone who cares about his appearance. I mean, he's in a laundry. Now, I'm not sure I would want to meet someone at one of those one-hour martinizing places. But a laundry . . . Funny, "Do laundry" was not even one of the boxes on my flowchart. Isn't that the way it always is?

We glance, we smile politely. He had a pleasant, polite smile.

Then I notice it. The nice suit he was handing the nice Chinese lady who runs the nice Chinese laundry had this . . . this stain. Right in the crotch.

It looked like some odd mixture of milk and baking soda that had dried to a pale white pasty dusty crusty stain.

Look, I'm not going to say what I thought it was, but, well, you see this desiccated white stuff on the lap of a man's slacks and well, I suppose you all have dirty minds too.

But still, he was so cordial and nice yet with a certain swagger. I am never good in these situations. I don't know how to meet people. Particularly male-type people. I just try to not act desperate and I'm not desperate, really. (pause) Well, okay maybe.

He finishes the laundry transaction. He turns to leave and I smile again, and he does also. Again a formal, but warm smile. Certainly it was not a "shall we have intercourse?" smile. I know people who can smile a "shall we have intercourse?" smile while picking up their dog's poop in the park. I can't smile like that even while *having* intercourse.

He opens the door to leave and I am shaking I am so . . . so . . . furious with myself. Sometimes I just feel like . . . what's the saying? . . . like . . . like I'm my own worst victim.

Thinking quickly I call out after him "Really nasty stain."

(pause)

He pauses and turns to me and, with that warm, polite smile says "Peaches En Regalia." And leaves.

(pause)

The nice Chinese lady is hanging his slacks on a rack and I say to her "What do you think it is?" She doesn't respond immediately and I realize she probably can't tell me. You know, cleaner - client confidentiality. But she turns and says "Look like mixture of milk and baking soda. Kinda crusty."

She's willing to talk. So as she is itemizing the sweaters I have brought in, I ask as casually as possible, "What's Peaches En Regalia?" She says "Dessert dish at Doug's Diner." I am awed with the realization that I am in the only Chinese laundry in the world where they know what "Peaches En Regalia" is. As she hands me my receipt, she says "That man picking up suit on Friday. I put you down for Friday, okay?" I am so embarrassed. "Yes, Friday is fine."

I open the door to leave and she calls out "Excuse me." "Yes," I say. "It may be a side dish." And as I look at her, I find I am not shocked at all to discover on her face a perfect "shall we have intercourse" smile.

As I return to my car, I can't help this nagging feeling that I recognized that man from somewhere. But where?