

# Waiting for Google

By Joy Hinckley

## Characters

ONE

TWO

THREE

FOUR

## *Lights up*

*ONE is sitting slouched on a chair with an ipad, searching, reading, sighing, searching. There are a couple of coffee cups on the floor and a biscuit packet. Two other chairs are nearby.*

*TWO enters and sees ONE working away.*

TWO You still looking?

*ONE replies without looking up.*

ONE Yeah.

*ONE sighs, straightens, and finally looks up at TWO. ONE reaches down and grabs the edge of the biscuit packet, holding it up to TWO.*

ONE Biscuit?

TWO Oh thanks. *(takes the packet and looks in it)* It's empty.

ONE Already? *(takes the packet and peers into it)* How is that possible?

TWO You have been there for six hours straight.

*ONE blinks and looks around, looks at the time on watch or ipad.*

ONE Well it's hard. *(yawning)*

*TWO peers over ONE's shoulder.*

TWO A hundred and forty-five million results. There must be something suitable there.

ONE You'd think so, wouldn't you?

*THREE enters with a cup of coffee.*

THREE Whatshappnin'?

TWO Still looking for a suitable script. Unsuccessfully so far.

THREE I've found this great script about –

ONE Has it got men in it?

THREE Yes, and –

ONE Nope.

TWO No men to be had.

ONE Not even for ready money, as Oscar Wilde would say. Is that coffee for me?

THREE Well, I –

ONE Thanks. *(Takes coffee)*

THREE You're probably just using the wrong search terms. What have you got there?

ONE "Short plays women".

THREE *(peering over ONE's shoulder)* Well you've got a hundred and forty-five million results. There must be something suitable there.

ONE and TWO You'd think so, wouldn't you?

THREE Nothing you like?

ONE Nothing with three or fewer women in it.

THREE Three women is all you can round up?

*The others nod.*

ONE *(looking at THREE)* One of those had to be wheedled into it.

THREE You wouldn't think it would be that hard to find a play with three or less women in it.

ONE Fewer.

THREE What?

ONE Three or fewer.

THREE That's what I said. I did read recently that two out of every three roles in plays are for males.

ONE Nah. I reckon it's more than that. Two and half roles.

TWO But there are loads of good plays with all female casts.

*The others look at her expectantly.*

TWO There's *Steaming*, there's – *Menopause the Musical*, there's – *Shirley Valentine*, – there's — *(she falters)*

*ONE sighs and goes back to her searching.*

TWO Here, give it to me.

*ONE stands and hands over the ipad. TWO sits. THREE peers over her shoulder. ONE stretches and searches the bottom of the biscuit packet for crumbs.*

TWO *(after some tappety-tapping on the keyboard)* Here we are. “*Uncle Vanya vs Dracula*. A hilarious take on Chekhov's classic”.

*The others look at her with pained expressions.*

THREE That. Sounds. Utterly. Ghastly.

ONE And – does the “Uncle” part of the title not suggest to you a certain casting requirement?

TWO Ah. *(Keeps searching)* Here's one: “*Bitter Droplets (3 Female)*. An absurdist tragedy. As they shelter in an abandoned slum house, three broken women reflect on the circumstances that brought them there. Throughout the play, drips of rain from the leaking roof fall ceaselessly on their heads and on the Ikea furniture they are trying to put together by the ragged moonlight coming in through the broken window.”

*The others just look at her.*

TWO *(defensively)* It's got a cast of three women.

ONE Obviously that's not the ONLY criterion.

TWO Right, right.

*They all sigh.*

TWO Keep up your spirits. You've only been searching for six hours.

ONE Today.

THREE When did you start looking for a play?

ONE Three weeks ago.

THREE Ah, that explains it. I thought you were leaving your run a bit late to start looking.

TWO The festival's on in a month.

ONE I do know that, yes. Might be time to give up.

TWO You can't do that. Give in to defeat. It'll gnaw at you. You'll be a broken woman. You'll end up in an abandoned slum house trying to put together Ikea furniture.

THREE Broken women don't even get an Allen key. You'll be trying to use a broken shard of glass from the broken window. That's a whole heap of broken right there.

TWO Anyway, what about us? You promised us a play.

THREE You practically wept at my feet to convince me to be in it.

TWO We've been eagerly awaiting the awesome script you said you'd find.

THREE You painted glowing pictures of what it would be like if we won first prize.

TWO And now we're losers before we even start. We'll be the laughing stock of the Sunshine Coast theatre scene.

*Pause.*

ONE I suppose I'd better keep looking then.

*They do not move for a beat.*

ONE *(with a sigh)* Come on then. *(takes the ipad)*

THREE Here's an idea. Look up short plays for three men, and just make the characters into women.

TWO Worth a try.

ONE All right. *(types in the search criteria)* Short plays for three men. Here we go. "Savages. Black comedy. Three hitmen reminisce about the women they've had, while polishing their weapons for their next big hit."

TWO "Polishing their weapons, eh?" Heh heh. We'd need a few props for that one.

ONE Settle. Now, "Jobs. Drama. Set in 1960. Three factory workers argue about the effect that allowing women to work on the machines will have on their jobs."

THREE Jobs. That's a funny word isn't it? Jobs. J o b s.

*The other two try it out and shrug noncommittedly.*

ONE No jobs for the girls there. *(THREE mouths "JOBS")* Next one. "Honour and Glory. Drama. In a World War I trench, two soldiers try to prevent a coward from deserting."

THREE Horror and Gory more like. "I say, Archie old chap, be a sport, King and country what what?"

TWO "Righto, spiffing, old bean, I'll just pop the old scone up over the trench and shoot some Huns then."

THREE Bang!!

TWO Aaargh!!

ONE Now, children. Are you going to help or just distract me?

TWO Help.

THREE Yes. Sorry.

*TWO and THREE make cheeky faces and 'high five' behind ONE.*

ONE We've got a job to do here. (*THREE can't help mouthing 'JOB' again*) Next one. "Trevor Comes Up Trumps. Period Farce. Unbeknown to his best friend Algy, Lord Balderplotz is a Nazi spy. When Balderplotz plots to sneak the plans for Algy's new anti-Nazi weapon to his evil colleagues at the garden show, it's up to his gardener Trevor to foil his evil plan." Not bad I suppose. But nah. Too derivative.

THREE There are limits.

ONE "Hot and Bothered. Comedy. Ned Kelly's testicles complain about the hot, cramped and unsanitary conditions they live in."

TWO That one could actually be quite funny.

ONE But hardly transferrable to female cast, no? Especially considering what the third character probably is.

*The others think for a second.*

TWO Oh, right.

THRE I still don't get it.

ONE Let's face it, most scripts with just three men are not going to be translatable to women.

THREE Maybe if we try a new search term.

*They think.*

*They think some more.*

ONE I've got nothing. My brain has died. I've been doing this for too long. I've had a mental aneurysm and all my enthusiasm has leaked out.

TWO Have you tried Googling other things than "short plays women"?

ONE Oh, absolutely, of course I have.

THREE What were they?

*ONE thinks.*

ONE I honestly can't remember now. It hardly matters though, does it?

THREE Why not?

ONE Because if they were any earthly use at all I wouldn't still be here farting around, would I!

THREE Fair call.

TWO Are you sure you can't get just one man? (*pointing to screen*) Look, there are plays for one man and three women.

ONE Yes, I'm sure.

THREE What about —?

ONE No.

*Pause.*

TWO I suppose you could try calling —

ONE Done it. I'll just have to keep sifting through these (*types original search term back in and peers at the screen*) hundred and forty-five million results.

*The others peer over her shoulder.*

ONE You're putting me off.

*The others jump up and wander. TWO exits and comes back with a cup of coffee. ONE looks at laptop, occasionally scrolling, clicking, etc. THREE comes back over and peers over ONE's shoulder.*

THREE I can't believe it.

TWO Can't believe what? (*coming over and looking*) I can't believe it.

THREE We're desperate for a script and you're on Facebook.

TWO Watching funny pet videos.

THREE Doesn't need us to distract her.

ONE (*defensively*) My brain needed a rest. Oh, is that coffee for me? Thanks, you're a sweetheart. (*takes coffee*) Look, I'll get straight back into it. I haven't been slacking. I'm up to results page 35 and all the results within those results within those results. I've been down an endless rabbit-hole of results and I'm tired and look it's puppies doing this (*does the cute puppy turning head sideways face*).

*The others look at the screen and unconsciously do the cute puppy head thing too, so now all three of them are doing it.*

ALL Aww.

ONE (*snapping into action*) But now I'm searching again, OK? (*searches*)

TWO (*looking as ONE clicks on a link*) Ooh.

*They all lean in and peer closely.*

THREE Well it IS short, and that woman is playing with it.

*Pause.*

ONE Getting less short by the second.

*They stare, increasingly both repelled and fascinated. TWO is more fascinated than repelled. Then, as one*

ALL Euroughre! (*they turn away, making faces etc*)

*ONE quickly clicks away and scrolls.*

ONE This is a losing game. I'm really sorry girls, but there's no way –

*She stops suddenly, clicks on a link, reads. Intrigued, the others look back at the screen and read too. Smiles begin to play about their faces. They chuckle. They react silently to the plot.*

*TWO starts singing the opening notes of the theme from 2001 (Thus Spake Zarathustra).*

TWO Daah ...

THREE Daah

ONE Daah

ALL Da da!!!

*They look at each other.*

ONE It's a play.

TWO For THREE women.

THREE And behold they saw that it was good.

ONE It is good and I feel good...wait, hang on, here we go –

*ONE clicks a link and puts down the ipad, and James Brown's "I Got YOU" starts.*

***Disco lighting.***

*They dance to the music.*

***FOUR enters. Sound level lowers as she speaks.***

FOUR Whoa, have warm ups started already! Looks like I'm just in time.

*Joins in dance.*

Sorry, I've only just got all your desperate messages. But I've reorganized my entire calendar and I'm all yours! Isn't this exciting! You managed to find a play for FOUR women – sweet!

*During the dance as FOUR speaks, the others react as they understand what she's saying.*

*FOUR dances on, joyously oblivious.*

*ALL Freeze.*

***Blackout, sound cuts with lights.***