

# **Trivial**

by

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### Setting

A brewpub. One table, three chairs.

### Time

Now and then.

### Cast

LORI - Fiancée of Alan in her 20s.  
ALAN - Fiancé of Lori in his 20s.  
TERRY - Alan's boss in his 30s-40s.

### Synopsis

An epic battle for the future of humanity takes place in a brewpub between a woman who values knowing things and man who does not.

(Lights up on a brewpub. LORI and ALAN sit at a table looking at oversized menus. On the table is a box of trivia cards.)

ALAN

Can you believe this place? They've got two hundred and seventy-eight beers on tap.

LORI

It is a brewpub, honey. That's kind of what they do.

ALAN

But how am I supposed to decide?

LORI

Get the Athena Ale.

ALAN

Why?

LORI

Because you like ales and you like goddesses.

ALAN

Sold! Thank you!

(TERRY enters, beer in hand, scrolling on his phone. ALAN reacts like a giant tarantula has just crept into the room.)

ALAN

Oh no...it's Terry!

LORI

Who?

ALAN

(hiding behind his menu)

My boss from work. Don't make eye contact!

LORI

Oh. You mean jerkwad, numb-nuts, knuckle-dragging Terry?

ALAN

Shh!!! I have only been working there six weeks! They can fire me for any reason or no reason. And I only got the job in the first place because your sister works in Human Resources.

LORI

Now you stop that! You are a numbers genius! And how many of your co-workers came straight out of the Peace Corps like you? How many of them want to specialize in financial planning for families with special needs children?

(as ALAN opens his mouth)

None of them! They're all sociopaths with MBAs from Harvard and Yale.

ALAN

Okay, I'm not going to argue that, but Terry is my boss and--

LORI

You're a saint and I love you. So, let's have some fun.

(waving to TERRY)

Yoo-hoo! Hi! Over here!

ALAN

Oh my God...oh my God...

(as TERRY approaches)

Please don't be a crazy woman.

TERRY

Alan! How you doing? And this must be...?

ALAN

This is my fiancée, Lori. Lori, this is Terry from work.

TERRY

So you're the little lady! Alan has told me a lot about you.

LORI

Not about my femur collection, I hope.

TERRY

I'm sorry?

LORI

I collect celebrity femurs...

(off TERRY's confusion)

...just picked up Sonny Bono's last week. You know those collector cases they have for baseball bats? Turns out they're ideal for large leg bones too.

ALAN

She's kidding! She's...she doesn't actually have a femur collection.

LORI

One can dream.

TERRY

You guys aren't drinking?

(sitting down and pulling a  
trivia card from the box.)

Tell you what. Answer a trivia question and I'll buy you a beer.

(reading)

Okay...whose funeral in 1926 was attended by over one hundred thousand people?

LORI

Rudolph Valentino.

TERRY

(flipping the card over)

Wow...that is correct! Rudolph Valentino. Whoever that is. You must have memorized the cards.

(putting the card back)

Actually, you know what's good here? The Pandora's Porter. If you like darker beers, that is...

LORI

I didn't memorize the trivia card. I've never been here before.

TERRY

Well, you probably have the game at home.

LORI

No. No, I don't have the game at home.

ALAN

So, what was that beer again? The--

TERRY

Pandora's Porter. And I like the Rabid Terrier IPA too.

LORI

So what does that mean?

TERRY

What does what mean?

ALAN

Honey, what kind of beer looks good to you?

LORI

The Arrogant Ass Stout.

ALAN

The...? I don't think I saw that on the menu...

LORI

But first, I want to reach the end of the logical chain here. I have never been in this brewpub, I don't have the game at home, and yet I knew the answer to the trivia question. So, what does that mean?

TERRY

You lost me.

ALAN

Honey, it's trivia! You know why they call it trivia? Because it's trivial! It's not that big a deal.

LORI

Oh, I think it is. It is a big deal. In fact, if you ask me, I don't think there is any bigger deal on the planet.

TERRY

(getting up)

You know what? Two Pandora's Porters on me.

(as ALAN is about to object)

Relax, compadre. It's going right on the company card. Rule number one, Alan. Everything is a business expense.

(Leaving his beer, TERRY exits.)

ALAN

What are you doing? That's my boss! Why are you making a big deal about the trivia question?

LORI

I'm not making a big deal about the question! The big deal is his reaction to me knowing the answer.

ALAN

What did you expect? He's a dope! He's one of those people, he's been told the sun shines out of his ass his whole life, and he actually believes it.

LORI

Well, I think he should know the truth and I'm of an upbeat, positive, optimistic nature. Don't you love my can-do attitude?

ALAN

Maybe not at this precise moment. Look...

(seeing TERRY reenter)

...oh Jesus, he's coming back! Lori, you are the smartest person I have ever met, I love you more than life itself, and yes, I know you're batshit crazy, but for some reason I love that too. So please, just do me a favor and drop it.

(TERRY hands beers to ALAN and LORI, then sits down and raises his glass.)

TERRY

Cheers kids! To as many years of marital bliss as you can stand. Me, I'm already on wife number three, which raises the obvious question, why the hell did we ever outlaw polygamy?

(laughing as they clink glasses)

Anyhoo, what were we talking about?

LORI

The trivia question.

TERRY

Right! The...

(grabbing the card again)

...Rudolph Valentino! Who the hell is Rudolph Valentino?

LORI

He was a hugely popular silent movie star whose most famous film was *The Sheik*. He was Elvis and The Beatles before Elvis and The Beatles.

TERRY

Well, cheers to Rudy! You're a big fan of his?

LORI

Not particularly. But I did know the answer to the trivia question, which means...

(off TERRY's mystification)

...it means I know stuff.

ALAN

Boy, does she! She is like a walking encyclopedia. You want to know the capital of Iowa or some President's middle name, just ask Lori.

TERRY

But what's the point of knowing the capital of Iowa?

LORI

I like knowing things. I think it's important to know things.

TERRY

Well, no offense, but that seems incredibly pointless. I mean, who cares? Like, what is the capital of...Delaware?

LORI

Dover.

TERRY

Okay, who was the eighth President of the United States?

LORI

Martin van Buren. Interestingly enough, the only President to speak English as his second language. He was raised speaking Dutch.

(to ALAN)

Honey, I need pretzels.

ALAN

What?

LORI

Pretzels. Salty, crunchy bits of deliciousness that go good with beer. I need some.

(As ALAN hesitates...)

TERRY

Hey, get the little lady some pretzels. I'll take some corn nuts too.

(as ALAN heads off at speed)

Alan's a good guy...hey, look at him go! I don't think I've never seen him move that fast.

(shouting)

Relax buddy! You're gonna pull a hamstring!

(turning to LORI)

Anyway...is it Lois?

LORI

Lori.

TERRY

Lori, right. Well, I'm going to let you in on a little secret. You know what I do when I want to know the answer to something?

(pulling out his phone)

I Google it. The answer is right here on my phone. And not just any answer, every answer to every question.

LORI

So for you, there is no value in actually knowing anything, ever?

TERRY

I'm not saying that! Of course I like knowing things!

LORI

Like what?

TERRY

Well, first thing in the morning, I like to know how the Tokyo Stock Exchange is doing, so I check my phone. Where is the best Chinese food in Dover, Delaware? I check my phone. It seems to me that you have spent a lifetime accumulating a lot of useless information, but you have somehow convinced yourself that it's worth something. But it isn't. It's just trivia that no one cares about.

(ALAN rushes back in with a bowl of pretzels and a bowl of corn nuts.)

ALAN

Okay, here we go! Pretzels and corn nuts for everyone!

LORI

Thank you, honey!

(turning to TERRY)

Anyway...is it Timmy?

TERRY

Terry.

LORI

Terry, right. Well, you and I don't know one another at all, but in the next two minutes I am going to make you a better person.

ALAN

Oh my God...Lori...

TERRY

No, no. I want to hear this.

LORI

Excellent! Your curiosity is commendable. Now...

(pulling a corn nut from the  
bowl and putting it on the  
table)

...you see this corn nut? This corn nut is Rudolph Valentino's funeral.

(putting more corn nuts and  
pretzels on the table)

This pretzel is James Buchanan, our only bachelor President; this is Maputo, the capital of Mozambique; this is Bob Ford, the killer of Jesse James; Phobos and Deimos, the moons of Mars; Kitty Hawk, 1903; Self-Contained-Underwater-Breathing-Apparatus; the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882; Jonas Salk inventing the polio vaccine...

(dumping the bowls on the table)

...and on and on and on. Each one of these corn nuts and pretzels is a trivial fact. But combine them together and you start to see patterns of information. You see connections...relationships. Do you know what that means?

TERRY

Can't say that I do.

LORI

It means that when I read something or someone tells me something, I have other information to judge it against. "Immigrants are destroying America!" Bullshit. "Vaccines are bad!" Bullshit. It's harder to yank my chain and I don't overreact to every idiotic thing I hear on the radio or see on the internet.

TERRY

Are you saying I do?

LORI

I'm saying...

(LORI sweeps all of the corn nuts and  
pretzels off the table to the floor.  
As ALAN scrambles to pick them up, LORI  
points to the empty table.)

LORI

...this is what you know. Nothing. And you take pride in knowing nothing. You've taken complete and utter ignorance and somehow convinced yourself that it's a virtue. And you're not alone. Once upon a time, people actually valued things like knowledge and expertise. Now, people trumpet their ignorance on every social media platform out there and sneer at the people who actually know things because they have devoted their lives to knowing things. That's why, if you ask me, humanity is doomed, because increasingly the world is being run by clueless know-nothings and the morons who support them.

TERRY

You know I'm Alan's boss, right?

LORI

Which means?

TERRY

Just throwing that out there.

LORI

Ooh, that sounds like fun! Let me throw something out there too. In my experience, people who have no respect for facts have a tendency to just make things up and hope nobody calls them on it. And when I answered the trivia question, your reaction wasn't, "Wow, it's great that you know that." Your reaction was that I must have cheated. So, what does that suggest? See, this is where I start making connections between points of information. For example, at your fancy-ass financial company, how many people have lied on their resumes?

TERRY

Well...I'm sure everyone embellishes a little.

LORI

No. No, they don't. Alan would never do that. You on the other hand, you assume that other people do that because...?

TERRY

(laughing and checking his phone)

That's great! That's...yeah. But you know what, I'm on a conference call in a couple of minutes, so I really need to run...

(to ALAN as he stands up)

You missed a couple of corn nuts there, buddy! Right under that chair...there you go. You're on fire! So, great chatting with both of you. I'll see you at the office, Alan!

(TERRY exits as ALAN comes back to LORI.)

ALAN

Okay, that was fun. And when I say "fun" I mean ten minutes of living hell. I just have one question. Do I still have a job?

LORI

You? Of course! It's Terry who doesn't have a job.

ALAN

What?

LORI

Well, after you started working there and told me what a tool he was, I asked my sister if Human Resources had ever done a review of everyone's resume at the company. As it turns out, there's a few lying rat bastards who will be escorted out of the building this Friday.

(off ALAN's reaction)

You're welcome.

ALAN

Oh my God...you knew that when he came in here.  
 (off LORI's nod)  
 Why didn't you tell me?

LORI

I wanted it to be a surprise, so...surprise!

ALAN

You are a truly terrifying human being.

LORI

Just stay on my good side and you've got nothing to worry about.  
 Now, I'm going to ask you a trivia question, and if you get it wrong,  
 I'm not going to marry you.  
 (as ALAN is about to object)  
 Shh. You can do this. Just one question and I'll give you a big  
 hint. I already gave you the answer.

ALAN

(raising his menu)

I am so screwed.

LORI

Don't be silly. Here we go. For the chance to marry the woman of  
 your dreams and occasional nightmare...who is the Greek Goddess of  
 Wisdom?

ALAN

(lowering his menu)

You. And I don't care what the mythology books say or the fact that  
 you're not actually Greek. You are the only goddess I have ever  
 known, or ever want to know. You're the moon, the heavens, and the  
 stars, with just a little bit of Hades thrown in to keep things  
 interesting. It's you.

LORI

Good answer. Now let's get out of here before any more of your co-  
 workers show up.

(They both stand up and start walking  
 towards the exit.)

ALAN

And you'll tell me more about silent movie stars and Martin van  
 Buren?

LORI

Oh sweetheart...all night long and for the rest of your life.

(LORI and ALAN exit holding hands.)

END OF PLAY.