FULL FRONTAL TRANSPARENCY

A 15-minute play

By Jenna Jane

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Summary

Sick of wasting time and effort on bad dates that go nowhere, Jaime and Sam are taking a different approach: They're going to ask all the questions you're not supposed to ask on a first date. There are only three rules: No more than 10 minutes. No ordering food or drinks. And no lying. OK… maybe one lie.

Optional: All three actors learn all three parts. At the beginning of each performance, in front of the audience, the actors draw names out of a receptacle of your choice to decide who plays which role.

A note from the playwright: All roles can be performed by actors of any gender expression, any ethnicity, and any age (18+). This is a lightning fast-paced ***15-minute romantic comedy*** *with zero jokes based on gender stereotypes, sexual orientation, race, or age.*

Cast of characters

JAIME: Any gender expression, any age (18+). Uptight. Strategic. Values efficiency. Low tolerance for bullshit. They know what they want and aren't afraid to ask for it bluntly.

SAM: Any gender expression, any age (18+). Free-spirited. Doesn't take anything too seriously. Down for adventure. Sarcastic and witty, but with a sentimental streak.

AVERY: Any gender expression, any age (18+). Disingenuously cheerful, masking passive aggression. AVERY is the artificially sweet foil contrasting the raw authenticity happening between JAIME and SAM. AVERY has an impeccable knack for poor timing.

Setting

A restaurant. At minimum, one table with two chairs.

Content warnings

Vulgar language, vivid references to sexuality and bodily functions. Let's get uncomfortable.

Optional opening sequence

(Actors enter with a receptacle of your choice – hat, bowl, bucket, airplane barf bag, whatever.)

ACTOR 1

Welcome to "Full Frontal Transparency!" Thank you so much for supporting live theatre. Before we get started, we wanted to tell you a little bit about how this play was conceived.

ACTOR 2

Do we have to use the word "conceived?" Our playwright, Jenna Jane, was sick of watching romantic comedies where the jokes are all based on stereotypes, sexism, and other systemic bullshit. She wanted to prove plays don't need to rely on all that to be funny. So, Jenna wrote a romantic comedy where all the roles can be performed by actors of any gender expression, any race, and any age.

ACTOR 3

We've all got a memorization kink, so each of us has learned all three parts in this play. Before every performance, we pick character names out of a hat to decide which actor will play which role. That means, if you come back tomorrow, you're likely to see a totally different performance than what you see today.

(The actors each pick a character name written on a slip of paper out of the receptacle and announce it to the audience. Or they can ask an audience member to pick the names.)

ACTOR 1

OK, now that this performance has been cast, enjoy the show!

(Actors exit. Blackout.)

Lights up on a restaurant. JAIME is seated alone across from an empty chair. They're organizing the menus, salt and pepper shakers, etc. on the table so they're evenly spaced. SAM enters, spots JAIME, approaches the empty chair.

SAM

Jaime?

JAIME

(Standing and smiling broadly.)

Yes! Hi. Sam. It's nice to meet you in-person.

SAM

Wow, you actually look like your pictures on the app! That never happens.

JAIME

So do you! Actually, I'm pretty sure you were wearing that shirt in one of your photos.

SAM

Wow, you noticed. Such attention to detail.

JAIME

Have you ever been to this restaurant be--

(JAIME's face falls. They sit abruptly. They're exhausted. Exasperated.)

I'm sorry. I can't do this.

SAM

(A beat.)

Was it the shirt?

JAIME

(Rubbing their temples.)

I’m so sorry. I just can’t. I cannot do this again.

SAM

Well, this is the fastest I’ve screwed up a date. What did I do wrong this time?

JAIME

Nothing yet. But I’m sure you’ll get there. They always do. No offense. It’s not personal.

SAM

It feels kind of personal.

(AVERY enters and crosses to JAIME and SAM’s table.)

JAIME

I’m so tired of all the bullshit small talk, Sam. Aren’t you tired of all the bullshit small talk?

AVERY

Hey there, you two, I’m Avery. It’s my pleasure to be taking care of you this evening. Can I start you off with some waters?

JAIME

No.

SAM

Not yet.

AVERY

No problem, I'll come back in a few minutes when you've had a chance to get settled. Take your time! Lean into that hashtag Friday feeling.

(AVERY winks and exits. Their face changes from enthusiasm to a blank expression as soon as they turn away from the table.)

SAM

(Still standing. They haven't put their coat/bag/whatever down yet.)

I believe you were talking about 'all the bullshit small talk?'

JAIME

Yes! Let's just skip the pleasantries, shall we?

SAM

It seems we already have. Is this how you start off every first date or am I just special?

JAIME

People never really talk on the first date.

SAM

I actually feel like I do so much talking.

JAIME

But no one’s really saying anything, right? You don’t really get to know the stuff you want to know. I’m sick of dating someone for seven months and then finding out they only like ARTIFICIAL maple syrup.

SAM

Or they have a kid in Michigan.

JAIME

And another one in Iowa.

SAM

(Shaking their head.)

Midwesterners.

JAIME

Right?!

(A pause. They look at each other assessingly.)

I have a proposition for you, Sam.

SAM

(Finally sitting.)

You know, normally, people buy me dinner first, but go ahead. Proposition me.

JAIME

Let’s not waste each other’s time. Let’s ask all the questions you’re not supposed to ask on a first date.

SAM

(A pause. Intrigued.)

Ooh, the tough questions. Like, are you an anti-vaxxer? How racist are your parents? Creamy peanut butter or crunchy?

JAIME

I just want to get all that stuff out of the way. I want to know exactly what I'm getting up-front.

SAM

Full frontal transparency.

JAIME

Exactly.

SAM

That's your proposition.

JAIME

That's my proposition. Let's get it all out there. Get it all on the table.

SAM

What the hell, let's do this.

JAIME

Really?

SAM

Yeah. Sounds fun. Let the interrogation begin.

JAIME

(Excited, taking out their phone.)

First, a few ground rules: We set a 10-minute time limit. We're not going to even place our orders until we've gotten through 10 minutes of questions. There's no point wasting our time and money on yet another date if it's not going to go anywhere.

SAM

Have you done this before?

JAIME

Done what?

SAM

The whole, 'wham, bam, tell me all your secrets, ma'am' thing. You seem to have really thought about these rules.

JAIME

Never. You're my first.

SAM

I'm blushing.

JAIME

So, you're good with that? 10 minutes? Timer? No ordering?

SAM

Works for me.

JAIME

One more rule: No lying. Every answer has to be 100 percent truthful.

SAM

(A pause.)

Deal. But I want to add a rule of my own.

JAIME

What’s that?

SAM

We each get one free pass. One question we don’t have to answer.

JAIME

I don’t know about that.

SAM

That’s my condition.

(AVERY enters with a tired expression. As they cross to JAIME and SAM’s table, they put on a broad smile.)

JAIME

(A pause, considering.)

Fine, one free pass. But only one.

AVERY

(Artificially perky.)

Ready for those waters?

JAIME

Yes, thanks.

SAM

Yes, thank you, Avery.

AVERY

Thank YOU! The pleasure is all mine! Don’t go anywhere, I’ll be right back with those.

(AVERY exits to get the waters. Their face falls.)

JAIME

Alright, I’m setting a 10-minute timer on my phone… now. I’ll start.

(Putting the phone in the middle of the table.)

How would you feel about homeschooling our kids?

SAM

I don’t want kids. Just parakeets.

JAIME

I see. What’s your five-year plan?

SAM

Sweetheart, I don’t even have a five-week plan.

JAIME

Spontaneous. I like that.

SAM

I’m just a shitty planner.

JAIME

Gotcha.

SAM

Who did you vote for in the last presidential election?

JAIME

I’ve never voted. I’m not even registered. But I have a lot of opinions on Facebook.

SAM

Well, at least you’re still contributing to the public discourse.

JAIME

Exactly.

SAM

Have you ever cheated on a partner?

JAIME

Yes. You?

SAM

Yes, but it was high school.

JAIME

We don’t have to count that.

(AVERY enters with JAIME and SAM’s waters. They put on their best fake smile.)

SAM

Great. What religion are you?

AVERY

(Setting the waters on the table.)

Alright, I’ve got those waters for you. Can I get you anything else to drink? Any appetizers? Our shrimp cocktail is my absolute favorite.

JAIME

Not yet.

SAM

Still looking at the menu, thanks.

AVERY

(Disingenuous Customer Service Giggle.)

Take your time. No worries at all! I’ll be here all night.

(AVERY turns away from the table and rolls their eyes. They exit.)

JAIME

I’m Jewish.