

**From the full length play:
Checking In
By Tracy Wells**

JOHN, *Man on a business trip who needs help remembering that there's more to life than work in "Guest Relations"; male*

MARTHA, *Hotel concierge who has a zest for life; female*

AT RISE: At start of scene, JOHN SPENCER is seated at the table, typing on a laptop, files, papers, and pens spread out on the bed and table and perhaps even on the floor. It is evening.)

JOHN

So the third quarter earnings have increased by thirteen percent, but the bi-annual expenses have also increased at a rate of two thirds of the factor for inflation.

(Makes a few notes on a nearby tablet or piece of paper.)

So the expected growth for next quarter should be—

(A knock on the door is heard. JOHN briefly looks up.)

Come in!

(JOHN resumes typing into the computer as MARTHA enters, carrying a clipboard and a few pamphlets.)

MARTHA

Good evening Mr. Spencer.

JOHN

(Without looking up.)_

John—call me John.

MARTHA

Alright—John. My name is Martha from Guest Relations. I'm the concierge here at the Regency Arms Hotel.

JOHN

I didn't call for the concierge.

MARTHA

I always make a point to stop by our guests' rooms if I haven't had a chance to meet with them yet. I like to get to know our guests—their likes and dislikes, their hobbies and interests—so I can help direct them to some great excursions in the area.

JOHN

I'm not here for excursions. I'm here on business.

MARTHA

(Looking around.)

Is Mrs. Spencer around? Maybe I could meet with her while you're working.

JOHN

(Sighing and looking up, finally.)

There is no Mrs. Spencer. It's just me. And I appreciate that you're just trying to do your job, but I've got a job to do here too. So if it's not too much trouble, could you just leave me alone?

MARTHA

I'm sorry, Mr. Spencer. I'll let you get back to work.

(Turns and starts to walk quickly to the door, embarrassed.)

JOHN

Wait.

(Sighs and stands as MARTHA stops and turns.)

It's John. And I'm sorry. I was a little...*abrupt* just now. It's just that I have this deadline. If I don't get this report done by tomorrow, the client will be furious and my boss will have my head.

MARTHA

I understand. My job's important to me too. I'll leave you alone so you can work.

(Turns back to the door.)

JOHN

(He crosses around the table and perches on the edge of it, rubbing his hand through his hair, exhausted, then looking at MARTHA.)

Truth is, I kind of hate my job.

MARTHA

(Turns back.)

Why?

JOHN

Have you ever stood up in front of a room full of your colleagues, ready to give the presentation of your career, only to discover that instead of your necktie you tied your Hogwarts winter scarf around your neck because apparently you were so exhausted from working on your presentation the night before that you couldn't tell the difference between your necktie and a winter scarf?

MARTHA

(Chuckling.)

Can't say that I have. But I do love Harry Potter—my house is Gryffindor.

JOHN

(Points to himself.)

Ravenclaw.

MARTHA

Naturally.

JOHN

(Stepping closer to MARTHA.)

How would you like to sit in a six by eight cubicle for twelve hours a day listening to your neighbor cracking open peanuts, sucking the salt off the shells and watching the damp, soggy remains rain down on your head as he throws them over the side of the partition?

MARTHA

Ok, you're pulling my leg now.

JOHN

I swear I'm not. But speaking of pulled legs, have you ever had yours strapped to your co-worker's leg during a team building exercise at a corporate retreat?

MARTHA

No, but I love a good three-legged race. They're a blast!

JOHN

Not when said co-worker uses an ineffective homemade deodorant that he concocted out of mayonnaise and lemon juice.

MARTHA

Gross.

JOHN

Oh! And did I mention it was over one hundred degrees? And there were a lot of bees out that day? Let me just say, that mayo mixture got pretty warm, and apparently bees are quite fond of warm mayo.

(Shakes his head.)

I found out that day that I'm allergic to bee stings—

(Thinks.)

—or maybe it was just the fact that I was stung more than ten times.

MARTHA

(Incredulously, stepping closer to JOHN.)

Twenty times?

JOHN

Who knows? I lost count.

(Thinks.)

Or I passed out. It's all a blur really—that much bee venom really does a number on you.

MARTHA

I bet!

JOHN

Have you ever spent three hours in crowded restaurant watching a grown man in a bib cracking open three pounds of Alaskan King Crab legs and splashing hot melted butter all over himself like he's spritzing on cologne?

MARTHA

(Smirking.)

Actually, yes.

JOHN

(Shocked, taking a step closer to MARTHA.)

You have?

MARTHA

That sounds exactly like a first date I went on recently.

JOHN

Was there a second date?

MARTHA

Goodness, no! Crab legs are great, and I'm all about hot melted butter—

JOHN

For sure!

(Holds out his hand for a high five, which she returns.)

MARTHA

—but I just couldn't get past the sight of a grown man in a bib.

JOHN

Yeah, I think you have to wait the bib until at least the fourth date.

MARTHA

I was thinking more like the twelfth date...or never.

JOHN

Yeah, never's good too.

(Chuckles.)

Well those are just a few of the horrors I get to experience every day at work. Frankly, I'm miserable.

MARTHA

Then why do you keep working there?

JOHN

All I've done for the past four years is work myself to the bone so I could climb the corporate ladder. My goal was to be a millionaire by the time I was thirty and I was willing to do anything to achieve that goal.

(Looks down.)

Now I'm not so sure.

MARTHA

(Taking a step closer to JOHN.)

It's okay to change directions when the one you're on isn't working for you.

JOHN

But how do I know which direction to go in now?

(Crosses to the window.)

I feel like I'm lost in a foreign place and I don't know what to do next.

MARTHA

(Smiling.)

Good thing you have a concierge.

JOHN

(Turns back to MARTHA and smiles.)

So you're going to help me figure out what to do with the rest of my life?

MARTHA

No. But I *am* going to help you figure out what to do right this minute.

(Pulls out her clipboard.)

Now tell me—what's your favorite color?

JOHN

My favorite color? How is that going to help you figure out anything?

MARTHA

Just trust me.

JOHN

Alright.

(Thinks.)

I guess its blue.

MARTHA

Right—Ravenclaw.

(Writes something down.)

Are you a music fan?

JOHN

Sure. Isn't everyone?

MARTHA

(Smirks.)

You'd be surprised.

(Writes something down.)

What kind of music?

JOHN

I'm kind of a fan of the old standards—Sinatra, Dean Martin, Tony Bennet.

MARTHA

(Smiling.)

I'm partial to Sammy Davis Jr. myself.

JOHN

No kidding!

MARTHA

Sammy Davis....and Wham.

JOHN

Wham? As in the George Michael boy band from the eighties!

MARTHA

“Wake Me Up Before You Go Go” is the best!

(Starts doing the dance from the music video.)

JOHN

(Laughing.)

Okay, you've got me there. It is pretty catchy. But if it's George Michael you want, nothing beats Careless Whisper.

MARTHA

Yes! When he hits that high note at the end of the chorus—pure magic.

(Swoons then shakes her head.)

Now you've got me all flustered. If I didn't know better I'd think you were trying to distract me from my questions.

JOHN

Not at all! Proceed.

MARTHA

(Writes something down.)

Ok last question.

(Looks pointedly at JOHN.)

What is your biggest dream?

JOHN

(Thinks for a minute.)

Honestly?

(MARTHA nods. JOHN looks into her eyes.)

I just want to find someone to love and who loves me in return. I want to spend as much time as possible together—seeing the world, sleeping in late on Saturday mornings, going for walks in the park. I guess I just want to be happy.

MARTHA

(Smiling.)

I think that's a great dream.

JOHN

So does that help you figure out what I'm going to do next?

MARTHA

It sure does.

(Makes one final mark on her clipboard, then drops it to her side.)

You're taking me out to dinner.

JOHN

(Smirking.)

I am? But don't you have to work?

MARTHA

(Looks at her watch.)

My shift ends in three...two...one.

(Looks up at JOHN.)

Looks like I'm free.

JOHN

Great.

(Holds out his arm.)

So what restaurant do you recommend for a nice, romantic dinner?

MARTHA

Hmmm...let me think.

(Thinks for a moment, then breaks out in a grin.)

Anywhere...as long as you're not wearing a bib.

JOHN

Got it.

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