

dick doesn't live here

by Seth Kaltwasser

Audition Sides
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DMACC Ankeny Theatre

characters

Joan (31, she/her) lives here.

Dick (he/him) Joan's boyfriend (who also lives here) (but don't tell anyone).

Jill (28, she/her) Jill's younger sister. She lives in Minneapolis.

****Ram** (he/him) Jill's new boyfriend. He's originally from Nepal. They met on Tinder.

Jamey (25, he/him) Joan & Jill's younger brother. He aspires to be a radical leftist (but let's not talk about it) (seriously).

Glynnis (she/her) Mom (bless her heart).

Jude (he/him) Dad (a terrible liar).

Phyllida (she/her) Or rather, "Grama". Glynnis's mother.

****The role of Ram** is pre-cast with a DMACC student from Nepal

SIDE ONE – JOAN

JILL We should keep the lies straightforward.

JOAN Can we not call them “lies”? It hurts my feelings. These are not lies, okay? These are protections. They are precautions. What I am trying to do is make for a happy Thanksgiving?

JILL I know that.

JOAN Well, you just called me a liar! I just don’t want to upset Mom and Dad.

JILL I don’t know why you wanted to host Thanksgiving anyway, if you are so worried about this.

JOAN I’m not worried! I’m very, very happy with the situation. And Dick isn’t worried, are you?

DICK No.

JOAN It’s just that Mom and Dad have been through all this stress, with the job change . . . Ram, I don’t want this to stress you out.

RAM I’m not stressed.

JOAN Thank you for acting not stressed. That’s all we have to do, is act not stressed.

JILL Let’s just do brunch on Saturday mornings. Then there’s no question about church.

JOAN Dick coaches soccer on Saturday mornings.

JILL He does?

JOAN Yes. Will you help me clean this up? What time is it? Let’s keep brunch on Sunday mornings, like we’ve been saying. Sunday mornings, after church.

DICK Isn’t it out of the way?

JOAN I don’t mind.

JILL But I drive you to church.

JOAN Mom and Dad don't know that.

JILL I'd like them to.

JOAN Okay, so you drive me to church.

JILL So I drive to your place, pick you up, drive you to church, drive us back to Fulton for brunch with Dick, and then drive back to St. Paul to take you home, and then I go back to Fulton?

JOAN Do you mind?

JILL Like, in the real world, do I mind, or in the fake world?

JOAN I don't know. Like, suppose Mom says, "Isn't that kind of out of the way?" What would you say?

JILL In the real world, I would not mind driving you back here.

JOAN Okay, then! But if Dick drives, that's nice, too, because then you two ride together to get me on Sunday mornings, which is sweet, and then he'll drive me home after brunch, because we have friend night on Sunday evenings anyway.

RAM Why not just change the brunch place?

JOAN Well, I like the French bakery being walking distance from Dick's apartment. There's just something charming about that.

DICK But, honey, we'll be in the car anyway for church.

JOAN Do not overthink this! We just need to have consistent answers. So, let's stick to the script we have. We can't start changing things this late in the game. Oh, my god. The time. I have to get dressed.

SIDE TWO – JILL

JILL Okay, look, I take full responsibility here. I put you in a situation you weren't comfortable with. I thought you were ready, but we haven't been together that long. It was too much too soon. But, look, as my boyfriend, your job is not to guru this, you don't have to fix it. Your job is to enter into the crazy with me. And just be here. And that is enough.

RAM That's not a long-term plan, Jill.

JILL Do you want to talk long-term?

RAM No --

JILL Okay, we can! We can talk long-term.

RAM That is not what I meant.

JILL Look, Ram. I want to be transparent to you. That's what I want.

RAM You don't know what you want, Jill.

JILL I do know, though! I do! I want everything with you. I want the happy stuff and the hard stuff and the messy stuff. Ram -- I want it all, because I just want it with you. I want the crazy holidays and the inside jokes and the lazy Sundays in front of the television -- with you! -- and walks in the park and the shoveling snow -- with you! No, listen to me. I want that with you. Ram, there are these moments in my life when I'm not completely fucking crazy, and they are so few and far between, but this is one of them! I want to do this with you. I want to do this with you by my side. Okay? I'm serious. I know this has all been weird, but I'm so glad you've been here for it. Thank you.

RAM I'm going to leave, Jill.

JILL Okay . . . ? So, I'll text you after we go shopping tomorrow? Or . . . what's good for you?

SIDE THREE – DICK

DICK Just ask questions, that's what I always do when I'm not sure what to say. Glynnis loves it if you take an interest in the family. Like, the extended family. I've been practicing.

JILL Dick knows more about our family than I do at this point.

DICK Like, here, take it from a pro. Ha ha. Always talk about the family, Ram. When in doubt, there's a lot of family stuff to talk about. And you're not expected to know all of that. So, just ask questions. Their mom has, like, 12 sisters.

JILL Not 12!

DICK Yes, 12! Susan, Deborah, Pam-Pam, Marsha, Kimmy, Aunt Joan, Leona, Gillian, Margie, Cris-Cris, Sybill, and Phyllis.

JILL Oh, I guess it is 12. I always forget about Cris-Cris.

DICK How can you, she's my favorite!?

JILL We're supposed to be making Ram less confused.

DICK Confused is fine; just ask questions and you get immediate bonus points! It's ridiculous! Glynnis has 12 sisters, and two dead brothers, and so Jill and Joan have approximately one jillion cousins. You can kill hours asking questions about them. And Glynnis loves it! Oh, ask about Rebekah.

JILL Do not ask about Rebekah.

DICK Why not?

JILL There's baggage there. With Rebekah and Katie.

DICK I've talked with your mother about Rebekah and Katie. Are they lesbians? Or sisters? I can never remember.

JILL Both.

DICK What? Lesbians and sisters?

JILL Not lesbians with each other, Dick! God.

DICK Oh, ask her mom about that guy who believes aliens run the world.

JILL Uncle Carl?

DICK Yes! Ram, this is a guy who, like, deeply believes that aliens run the world and like --

RAM Like, honestly? Like he authentically --

DICK Yes. It's awesome! And he's like quiet and socially anxious.

RAM Well, I'd be anxious, too. If aliens were running things.

DICK It's incredible. I met him once. So, he doesn't believe that, like, aliens control every detail, but that they just have enough mind control powers to, like, basically steer the general course of human history. Family weddings are always fun. Ha ha ha.

SIDE FOUR – JAMEY

JOAN Why you acting like a sociopath all of a sudden?

JAMEY I have always been a bit of a sociopath, you're generally just in denial about that. But, look, I am trying to break your bad habits.

JOAN Such as . . . ?

JAMEY Such as basing your happiness off of the approval of others. Look, this is a family. If someone gets fussy because their turkey is too dry, that's exactly the kind of person that you should stop trying to please. I'm tired of you putting yourself in a position where you're gonna get trampled on by Mom.

JOAN All I want, is for everything to be perfect. Just for today.

JAMEY Bingo!! Bingo. That's why you're screwed, Joan. Things aren't going to be perfect. Things are already not perfect. I dare say things are a little bit fucked up.

JOAN Wow! Wow! Why would you say that?

JAMEY I don't know why we try so hard to be happy, you know? It's exhausting! If a person is happy, they just are! They just have that in their DNA. Or they don't. And we as a family, I think, just fall a little bit more into the "don't" category. Which is okay, is what I'm saying. It's okay! But let's stop running that hamster wheel trying to be something we aren't. I mean, Joan, you are almost, what, 35 years old?

JOAN I'm 31!

JAMEY Just -- try and make yourself happy, Joan. Do it for yourself. Don't do it for them. Or anybody. I mean, love them. But don't try to make them happy. Don't waste your time. That'll run you ragged. I am not gonna be happy, okay? Let's just get adjusted to that. I don't need to be happy. I'd like to be a little bit useful. But I'm not trying to be happy.

SIDE FIVE – PHYLLIDA

GRAMMA Finis boo duler. Finis boo doo-ler. Gumcha goo sandwich!

JILL Oh, ha ha ha. That's very sweet, Gramma. She's probably gonna be complimenting you like that all day, Ram.

GRAMMA Ennis mopat d-d-diangelo photon. Phooton. Funkle chum inis book. Schoom!

DICK Ohhhkay. Ha ha ha. I guess I'm not Gramma's favorite anymore.

GRAMMA Goslee, goslee. Ha ha ha. Goslee!!

DICK You just never know what's gonna come out of her mouth.

GRAMMA Come-muh!

RAM Ha ha ha!

GRAMMA Nana lied a over lie.

JILL You don't have to, Ram.

RAM What?

GRAMMA Nana lied a over lie. Gumshee! Ha ha!

JILL No, Gramma. He doesn't want to, see? See?

RAM What?

GRAMMA Jimbombalingding. Schoom! Ha!

JILL Gramma, you're embarrassing me. Now, drink your water and chill out.

GRAMMA Errdonny tondondo. Pfft! Pfft! Pfffft!!

SIDE SIX – GLYNNIS

JAMEY Are you angry with me?

GLYNNIS Jamey! Of course I'm not angry with you. What would make you say that?

JAMEY I was just asking a question!

GLYNNIS Your question is fine. It's your attitude that's invalid. You're always reading malicious intent everything. So, you see things that aren't there! It's a phase you're going through right now, where you make little assumptions and they turn into big, negative ideas, and you just shouldn't do it anymore. Not in life, and certainly not today.

JAMEY What are you talking about?

GLYNNIS It's this cynicism! It's attractive to you now, I guess, to be cynical about everything, to go around thinking you can peek under the rug and find out that everything's phony, that everybody's lying, that everyone's a secret agent, everyone's trying to pull the wool over your eyes. All these ideas -- about politics, about church, even about family!

JAMEY Mom, god, are you attacking me?

GLYNNIS I'm correcting you. Which is my job. You are a soft-hearted young man. You always have been. But sometimes you get too far in your head and you have all of these negative ideas about everything!

JAMEY Well, maybe everything is actually bad, and I'm just calling it out.

GLYNNIS Nonsense, Jamey. Look, I'm not the least bit worried about you. I know this will pass. It's just a phase. We all have bad days.

JAMEY But I thought today was a perfect day.

GLYNNIS It was a perfect day! We'll say that it was! It will be! And you will get on board with that attitude, Jamey, because it's the right thing to do. And now, the laundry is done, and I think it's time for bed, huh? We've got a full day of shopping tomorrow, and we're gonna start early! Jude? You ready?

SIDE SEVEN – JUDE

JILL Dad, how's the colder weather treating you?

JUDE Oh, me? Good.

JILL Yeah? Got any new books you want to read this winter?

JUDE Nah.

 [*Silence.*]

 Well, I'm happy to be here.

JILL Yeah?

 [*Silence.*]

 Staying busy?

JUDE Ohhhh I mean. Some years are busier than others.

 [*Silence.*]

 Yeah, no, I've been good.

 [*Silence.*]

 Nothing really new. I haven't, I mean, you know, same old people. I mean, I've met some new people, but . . . yeah . . . Nothing really out of the . . . I was thinking about buying a dog.

JILL Oh, really?

JUDE No, actually, no. I don't think so. Ahh, I just don't think it's the right time. Nice to be here, though. With the whole family. Dick, where do you live again?

DICK Um. Well. Not far from Jill, actually.

JUDE Oh. That's nice. Place to yourself?

DICK Uh-huh.

JUDE That's nice. I mean . . . nice for some people.