

## CHECK MATE

### Cast of Characters

DORIS: a 70 year old

CHERYL: a 70 year old

PLACE: A park

TIME: Noon

Setting: It is noon time at a park, where two old ladies are playing chess. They are moving chess pieces throughout the scene.

DORIS

Where have you been? Schlepping down here 30 minutes late.

CHERYL

Sorry I've been running a little behind to our daily meetings. Archie keeps forgetting to set the alarm.

DORIS

I thought I was going to have to play myself.

CHERYL

Well, that way you'd finally win.

DORIS

You're the one losing all the time lately.

CHERYL

At least I'm not losing my hearing.

DORIS

What?  
How's the hip?

CHERYL

Aluminum. But my minds as sharp as ever. I take your pawn.

DORIS

Mazel tov- my pawn takes your knight.

CHERYL

You know Archie tells me every morning, "don't come back here till you beat that old biddy at chess".

DORIS

I take your bishop.

CHERYL

I really could've used some coffee this morning. Archie just-

DORIS

(Interrupts her)

Since I've been on my own, I started paying this nice young man to do some of the yard work. He even makes me coffee.

CHERYL

What's that like?

DORIS

The coffee is could use some work, but his jeans are so tight, I can see his schnitzel

CHERYL

His schnitzel

DORIS

His schnitzel!

CHERYL

And his spaetzle?

DORIS

And his spaetzle!

CHERYL

Both of them?

DORIS

It's been a while, but I remember them always coming in pairs

CHERYL

Every day?

DORIS

Religiously.

CHERYL

He must be doing it on purpose

DORIS

Oh I hope so.

CHERYL

That's great and all, but I'm glad I still have Archie at home.

DORIS

Check. You know, I thought I would never be the same after my Wilber passed.

CHERYL

You seemed to be at peace with it.

DORIS

Yeah. His time had come, I guess. But there is something freeing about being on my own again.

CHERYL

Your husband would rise from his grave if he heard you talking like that.

DORIS

You know, I was always worried about that. So I had him cremated.

CHERYL

Well I'm sure he feels just as free.

DORIS

When I told my youngest grandson that his Gramps passed, you know what that whippersnapper told me?

CHERYL

What?

DORIS

He said well that sucks a fat one!

CHERYL

A fat what?

DORIS

That's what I asked him. A fat what? That brat wouldn't tell me.

CHERYL

I've never heard of that. Sucks a fat one. Archie's been using this new search engine to research things. So he have to Bang! That out for me later.

DORIS

That Bang! site is great once you get the hang of it. I Bang! everything now.

CHERYL

I'm no good at that computer stuff. Archie is/the computer whiz.

DORIS

I hear you can get this thing called an Alexis, and she will do all that stuff for you and you don't have to use a keyboard / Oh yeah, check.

CHERYL

Is she a computer or a person?

DORIS

Both, I think.

CHERYL

So it is like The Jetsons.

DORIS

More like that Hal 9000 fellow. Check.

CHERYL

I think I'll stick with Archie.

DORIS

Check... Check... I'm about to take your king.

CHERYL  
(suddenly upset)

No! Not my king!!

DORIS  
(soothingly)

Is everything ok.

CHERYL

Ohh what have I been talking about this whole time. I guess I gotta face it. I must tell you something old friend.

DORIS

What is it?

CHERYL

I had to put Archie in a home. He's lost his memory a while ago. I guess I've been trying to hold on to memories of him because he can't you know?

DORIS

I'm sorry... That's awful.

CHERYL

Yeah, it sucks a really big fat one. I should've told you soon as it happened. I guess I didn't want to admit to it.

DORIS

Don't worry about it... Can I tell you something?

CHERYL

OfCourse

DORIS

Honestly, I already knew.

CHERYL

How? I haven't told a soul. When did you find out?

DORIS

I just... I knew once you started losing to me at chess.

CHERYL

I'm that easy to read, huh?  
I just feel... I feel that I'm stuck/in this loop that I can't get out of

I know you feel hopeless now, but you will feel better with time.

CHERYL

I feel like I'm going through my end of life crisis. Oh would look at that, my rook takes your queen.

DORIS

Umm, that's not a legal move.

CHERYL

Why not?

DORIS

Rooks can't move diagon-

CHERYL

(Interrupts)  
That's right. How could I forget that? My rook takes your pawn.

DORIS

Why won't Junior and his lawyer wife take you two in?

CHERYL

You said it, lawyer wife. They are too caught up in business.

DORIS

The kids always seem to forget about us old ladies.

CHERYL

Or they choose to ignore us. Years ago, they tried to pawn us off by getting us to move into one of those elderly community centers. You know one of the ones where all they do have sex with each other.

DORIS

Oohh tell me more.

CHERYL

You haven't heard. You must have stopped watching 60 Minutes. People our age go crazy their and they all have sex with each other, and they start contracting STDS

DORIS

Why does it matter? We're old. We might as well all-

CHERYL

And you better watch out, because they say those with that have partial deafness are more likely to contract a disease in one of those places. They call it hear AIDS.

DORIS

What?

CHERYL

Oy vey, never mind.

I just don't really know what to do now. Ya know, with Archie and all.

DORIS

Have you thought about talking to Jerry?

CHERYL

The retired shrink?

DORIS

That's the one.

CHERYL

Why would I do that?

DORIS

It could be good for you.

CHERYL

I would rather have someone yank out my colostomy bag than talk to a bloody-

DORIS  
(Interrupts)

I talked to him once?

CHERYL

Yeah, what did he tell you?

DORIS

To keep my bishop away from the corners. My knight takes your bishop.

CHERYL

Yeah, yeah. What did he say?

DORIS

He told me that I'm in my prime.

CHERYL

Prime what?

DORIS

You know, in my prime. I don't have to work, I don't have an anchor for a husband. I can do whatever I please.

CHERYL

In your prime. That just sounds like shrink crap. Does he know you're 79?

DORIS

Shhhh! Don't say that too loud.

CHERYL

Why everyone here is half deaf.

DORIS

What?

Its taken me sometime to cope with loosing Wilber. But now- I'm on the market

CHERYL

What market?

DORIS

You know, the market.

CHERYL  
(not getting it)

What are you selling?

DORIS

I'm not selling it. I'm giving it away for free. / Even though charging isn't a bad Idea.

CHERYL  
(suddenly getting it)

You mean like dating?!

DORIS

Well... not exactly.

CHERYL

Doris! Shame on you. You should-

DORIS

Grieve? What am I supposed to do, be a crying widow the rest of my life?

CHERYL

No. Just slow down. Take your time.

DORIS

Why? When everyone I know is either dying or ....



CHERYL

My rook takes your queen by the way.  
Dating...hmmm.  
SO what would wear on a date?

DORIS

Oh my. I don't-

CHERYL

Don't tell me / you haven't thought about it

DORIS

A big flowery dress, a cute shawl, pearls, the dangly-ist earrings you've ever scene

CHERYL

Just make sure you look nothing like oFlorence

DORIS  
(silent)

CHERYL

You know the one that always wears her granddaughter's clothes?

DORIS

Oh yeah, I didn't know you could get liver spots in so many places until I met her.

CHERYL

Just the other day I saw her playing shuffle board practically naked.

DORIS

You did?

CHERYL

When she bent over- I saw parts I didn't know existed. It reeked of giveltafish. She normally out in the park around this time. I'm surprised she's not out here.

She... Florence died last month.

CHERYL

She did?

DORIS

Oh Yes- yes. You're right. You were convinced her daughter in law axed her to get her money.

CHERYL

That's right. I'm going to have to talk to Junior's wife about looking into that. You know, even Archie / thought they put that snake in the ground.

DORIS

Can I... I need to tell you something.

CHERYL

Of course. Anything.

DORIS

I've been grappling on how to tell you something to...

CHERYL

Go on with it. If I can tell you about Archie losing it than-

DORIS  
(Interrupts him)

I already knew about Archie...

CHERYL

You already said that. I think you're the one losing it now. Maybe we should switch to checkers.

DORIS

I know because I was there when you put him in the nursing home

CHERYL

No. That's not- I distinctly remember... I remember that-

DORIS

I was there, and you were devastated. That was two months ago.

CHERYL

What? That can't be.

DORIS

About every couple of days you forget that it happened.

CHERYL  
(maybe communicated silently)

What?

DORIS

Sometimes you're pretty shaken up about it, like today. But sometimes you have a great outlook. You even talking about getting all dressed up. Not to date anyone, but just to feel pretty.

CHERYL

Are you saying, that I'm losing it? I'm losing it just like my husband.

DORIS

Yes. Yes you are.

CHERYL

I can't believe this happening to me.

DORIS

I know. But listen I am doing my best to keep you out of one of those damn death homes.

CHERYL

How.. do I... How often do I forget like this?

DORIS

Well you have good days and not so good days. It's about fifty/fifty.

CHERYL

Well on this day, I feel... lost... I feel lost.

(In a moment of clarity)

Can you do something for me?

DORIS

Anything.

CHERYL

Never tell me this again.

DORIS

So you can live in some sort of denial?

CHERYL

I'd rather never go through this again

DORIS

But /maybe if we just...

CHERYL

Even if I don't remember it.

I need to never have this conversation again.

DORIS

I... I can do that. If that's what you want.

CHERYL

It is.

I just want to keep meeting you here, in this park and kvetching about being old, gossiping about the elderly. At least, for as long as I can.

CHERYL

If you end up going to a home / I'll bring you the board.

CHERYL

Hey! Will you look at that.

DORIS

(Not acknowledging)

But I will keep reminding you how to play chess.

CHERYL

I don't think you will have to worry about that yet. Check mate.