

THE TEST

A 10-minute play

by Rom Watson

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Cast:

Steven MacKenzie, male, early twenties, theatre major
Charlie Doth, male, early twenties, journalism major

The location: a university in America.
The time: the present.

(STEVEN hands CHARLIE a thin three-ring binder. CHARLIE puts it in his backpack.)

STEVEN
Thanks for loaning me your notes.

CHARLIE
What are friends for.

STEVEN
You ready for the mid-term?

CHARLIE
Pretty much. Yeah.

STEVEN
Whoa, you must have actually studied.

CHARLIE
I confess. I did study.

STEVEN
I'm impressed.

CHARLIE
It's one of the benefits of not having a social life.
Plenty of time for study.

STEVEN
So if you're not worried about your grades, . . . why do you look so . . . troubled?

CHARLIE
I am not troubled. I'm brooding.

STEVEN
What are you brooding about now?

CHARLIE
I'm not sure if I like guys or girls.

STEVEN
So?

CHARLIE
So??

STEVEN

Charlie, your sexuality is like college. You don't have to declare a major right away.

(Slight pause.)

You can take classes in all kinds of subjects, and see what you . . . respond to.

CHARLIE

Well how do I . . . know? I mean--

STEVEN

Have you taken the test?

CHARLIE

What test?

STEVEN

There's a standardized written test to determine . . .

(Steven trails his sentence off without finishing it.)

CHARLIE

Whether or not I'm gay.

STEVEN

Yeah. If you want, I can give you the test right now. I've administered it so often I know it by heart.

CHARLIE

How come so often?

STEVEN

I'm a theatre major. A lot of questioning goes on in the theatre.

CHARLIE

Were there always this many gay people, or did I just not notice them before?

STEVEN

There's way more gay people than there used to be.

CHARLIE

Why is that?

STEVEN

Overpopulation. When there's too many people in the world, nature starts making more of them gay so they won't reproduce.

CHARLIE

I read somewhere that the more boys born into a single family, the greater the chances the younger ones will turn out to be gay.

STEVEN

That's Nature at work. She changes the intrauterine chemistry.

CHARLIE

So if I am gay, it's because of overpopulation.

STEVEN

If you're gay it's because of the Catholic Church.

CHARLIE

I wasn't raised Catholic.

STEVEN

Doesn't matter how you were raised.

CHARLIE

I don't get it.

STEVEN

The Catholic Church forbids its followers to use birth control.

CHARLIE

So?

STEVEN

So Catholics all over the world pop out babies, five, six, seven to a family, or more. When there gets to be too many people on the planet, what happens?

CHARLIE

Nature makes more babies gay.

STEVEN

Exactly. The church condemns people for being gay, but they are such a major contributor to overpopulation, that the Catholic Church is actually responsible for there being more gay people in the world.

CHARLIE

They're causing the very thing they condemn.

STEVEN

It's like my father used to say; "If you don't want certain plants to grow, then you have to stop spreading the fertilizer."

CHARLIE

I don't think religion is ever going to stop spreading fertilizer.

STEVEN

Which means overpopulation will eventually reach epic proportions.

CHARLIE

Then everyone will be gay.

STEVEN

And people will have to find something else to discriminate against.

CHARLIE

Does this test take very long?

STEVEN

No, there's only five questions.

CHARLIE

Only five?

STEVEN

It's a pop quiz.

CHARLIE

(Wary.)

Uh-huh.

STEVEN

Come on, it'll be fun. Get out a pencil and a piece of paper.

(Pause.)

Wouldn't you rather know?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

(Charlie pulls a pencil and a pad of paper out of his backpack.)

CHARLIE

(Writing.)

One, two, three, four, five.

STEVEN

You ready?

CHARLIE

I guess.

STEVEN

Relax.

CHARLIE

What if some of the questions get really personal?

STEVEN

Well . . .pretend I'm your doctor.

CHARLIE

I'll try.

STEVEN

First question. How many Barbra Streisand albums do you own?

CHARLIE

Really?

STEVEN

Really.

CHARLIE

None.

(Charlie writes "none" on his paper, or draws a zero.)

STEVEN

None? Hmmm. Second question. When applying drag makeup, what do you put on first? False eyelashes, or eyeliner?

CHARLIE

I don't know. I guess . . .

(Charlie writes.)

Eyelashes.

STEVEN

Wrong. You apply the eyeliner first, *then* you glue on the false eyelashes.

CHARLIE

You've done drag?

STEVEN

No, I haven't. Not yet anyway; I'm only a sophomore. Third question. This one's multiple choice. In 1999, Jerry Falwell warned parents that one of the Teletubbies was a gay role model. Which Teletubbie was it? Was it A, Tinky Winky, B, Dipsy, C, Laa-Laa, or D, Po?

(Charlie thinks for a moment and then writes down his answer.)

CHARLIE

Laa-Laa.

STEVEN

Wrong.

CHARLIE

Dipsy?

STEVEN

No. Tinky Winky.

CHARLIE

(Perhaps Charlie gasps.)

Was that ever proven?

STEVEN

No. But where there's smoke there's fire.

CHARLIE

So on Sesame Street, Ernie and Bert . . .?

STEVEN

Oh yeah. Fourth question. What day is National Coming Out Day?

CHARLIE

Hmm.

(Charlie writes.)

Friday.

STEVEN

Friday? No. October eleventh. Geez. Final question. When you see an attractive man, what do you look at first: his eyes or his shoes?

CHARLIE

Well . . .somewhere in between.

STEVEN

(Firmly.)

Eyes or shoes?

CHARLIE

(Charlie writes.)

Eyes.

STEVEN

Shoes, Charlie. Gay men look at shoes.

CHARLIE

Why?

STEVEN

To judge attractiveness.

(Looks at Charlie's shoes.)

You're not even trying.

CHARLIE

It's easier when people don't realize you're attractive.

STEVEN

Easier?

CHARLIE

You don't have to deal with attention you don't want.

STEVEN

Or know how to handle. Lemme see your answers.

(He takes the paper from Charlie and quickly scans it.)

I don't know how you can think that you're gay. You didn't get a single question right.

CHARLIE

Steven, I fantasize about . . . When I see certain men, I have these feelings . . .

STEVEN

Oh that just means you want to have sex with men. That doesn't mean you're gay.

CHARLIE

I don't understand. There's a difference? I mean, I thought . . .

STEVEN

Charlie, Charlie, men have sex with each other all the time. But being gay, well, that's an entire sub-culture. That's like belonging to an exclusive club. You can't just label yourself gay because you have sex with someone of your own gender.

CHARLIE

You can't?

STEVEN

No. There are rules.

CHARLIE

So I'm not gay?

STEVEN

Definitely not. Not even close.

CHARLIE

But Steven, how can . . . I mean . . . this test doesn't really tell me if I like guys or girls.

STEVEN

Well . . . no. For that you need to take the oral test.

(Charlie laughs; looks at
Steven; shakes his head.)

CHARLIE

So this test was a waste of time.

STEVEN

Not at all. I accomplished what *I* set out to do.

CHARLIE

What was that?

STEVEN

I made you laugh.

(Charlie smiles and nods his
head.)

CHARLIE

You did.

STEVEN

You wanna have sex?

CHARLIE

Well, since we're not gay . . . yeah, sure, why not?

(Blackout. End of play.)