

*You and me, taking up space. And food. . . .
But then we're sort of not participating in the gene pool, are we?*

PECULIARITIES

PIZZA AND A MOVIE

By Eric Samuelsen

CHARACTERS

CARLENE . . . BYU co-ed, early twenties,
COURTNEY . . . BYU co-ed, early twenties,

CAST

Peculiarities was first presented at the Villa Theatre, Springville, Utah, mid-October 2002. It was directed by Tony Gunn. The original cast for the "Pizza and a Movie" portion was:

CARLENE . . . Shelley Burton
COURTNEY . . . Sarah Nielsen

EDITOR'S NOTE: "Pizza and a Movie" is the third of five storylines from Eric Samuelsen's play, *Peculiarities*, that SUNSTONE has agreed to run serially. The first two installments, "Tahoe," and "Temps," were published in the December 2005 and April 2006 issues. Samuelsen wrote *Peculiarities* as an exploration of LDS attitudes toward sexuality, in particular situations in which moral rigidity and sexuality collide in Mormon culture.

An early cut of the film version of *Peculiarities*, was screened at the 2006 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium. We are pleased to announce that the film has now been completed and has been submitted to several film festivals. We'll announce any screenings or other news of the film at sunstoneonline.com and in future magazine issues.

NOTE ON SCRIPT

In this play, a dash (—) indicates an interrupted line. An ellipsis (. . .) should suggest a pause, a line trailing off.



ALL PHOTOS FROM THE FILM PECULIARITIES

SCENE ONE

(BYU-approved housing apartment in Provo, Utah. CARLENE and COURTNEY are in the kitchen eating pizza. *Laughter.*)

CARLENE: Okay, so by then she's about to die. You know? I mean, she has to go so bad

she's almost hopping up and down right there in the car seat.

COURTNEY: (*Laughing.*) I can just see it.

CARLENE: And see, the thing is she really likes the guy. That's what makes it so horrible; first date, so she can't, like, say "Excuse me, I have to go." Right? But she also doesn't want to cut the evening short, either. And then he goes, "Let's go for a ride up the canyon." And she's all, "Okay." Like, teeth clenched.

COURTNEY: (*Hooting.*) Oh no!

CARLENE: So they go for the ride up the canyon, right? And the thing is, they're having this great conversation and all, that's the worst of it, because half of her is dying, and the other half is having this terrific date and all. So *finally*, he says to

ERIC SAMUELSEN, Ph.D., is head of playwriting and screenwriting at BYU, where he has been on the faculty since 1992. This is his fourth play published in SUNSTONE (Accommodations, June 1994; Gadianton, July 2001; Family, March 2005). Sixteen of his plays have been produced professionally.



Guys have wanted her, so she figures they always will.

- her, "Listen, I'd better get you home."
- COURTNEY: Okay, so he takes her home.
- CARLENE: And she's like, "Okay, can I hold it for ten more seconds." I mean, she's bursting, she told me. And then, he goes around, opens the door for her, a real gentleman, and she's so impressed, but also wants to, like, Olympic sprint into the house.
- COURTNEY: Right.
- CARLENE: He walks her up to the apartment. Slowly. And he's so nice, and he's funny, and he's thoughtful; that's what makes it so horrible. They get to the porch. And he wants to *stand and talk!* Okay? And she's in agony.
- COURTNEY: This is so amazing.
- CARLENE: So finally, finally she gets the door open, and he says goodnight, and he starts to walk back to the car, and she's like, okay, ten more seconds, ten more seconds. And then he turns around again, and he says "Oh, one more thing." And she turns to him. And he kisses her. Right there on the porch. The shock, the surprise. And she loses it. I mean *whoosh*. Right there on the porch.
- COURTNEY: Oh, my gosh!
- CARLENE: I mean, soaked. Everywhere.
- COURTNEY: Oh my gosh. Oh, the poor girl.
- CARLENE: True story.
- COURTNEY: And this was your old roommate?
- CARLENE: My old roommate's sister.
- COURTNEY: So, what happened?
- CARLENE: Six months later, they were engaged. I mean, if their relationship could survive *that*. . . .
- COURTNEY: That is hysterical! (*They laugh.*)
- CARLENE: True story. I swear.
- COURTNEY: You're right, though. If their relationship could survive that.
- CARLENE: Totally.
- COURTNEY: (*Having another piece of pizza.*) Okay, one more piece.
- CARLENE: You were gonna stop at the last one.
- COURTNEY: So I lied. (*They laugh.* CARLENE *has another piece of pizza, too.*)
- CARLENE: I swear, I love ham and pineapple. You can't even get it back in K.C.
- COURTNEY: Really? We got it.
- CARLENE: Well, Seattle. I mean, that's practically west coast.
- COURTNEY: It is on the west coast, doofus.
- CARLENE: You know what I mean. The closer you are to Hawaii—
- COURTNEY: I mean, you can see the ocean from our house.
- CARLENE: You know what I mean.
- COURTNEY: I guess. What time is it, anyway?
- CARLENE: Eight-thirty.
- COURTNEY: (*Tempting her.*) You know what's on at nine?
- CARLENE: What? Oh, no.
- COURTNEY: MTV's. *DisMissed*.
- CARLENE: No. No, no, no, no, no, no,—
- COURTNEY: Come on. You know you want to.
- CARLENE: That show is so gross.
- COURTNEY: We both saw the preview, and we both thought that guy was hot.
- CARLENE: I'm not listening.
- COURTNEY: Come on. Humiliating personal rejection on national TV. . . . What's not to like?
- CARLENE: I hate that show.
- COURTNEY: Don't give me that. You love it; you know you do.
- CARLENE: I don't.
- COURTNEY: Plus this is the one where the guy gets naked doing karaoke.
- CARLENE: All these no-morals losers—
- COURTNEY: Who we're supposed to laugh at.
- CARLENE: No. Seriously. I don't want to watch it.
- COURTNEY: Come on. It's healthy. It's, like, educational.
- CARLENE: Educational.
- COURTNEY: It tells us a great deal about relationships.
- CARLENE: Well, you can watch it.
- COURTNEY: It's more fun with someone.
- CARLENE: I'm just gonna read my book.
- COURTNEY: Carlene. Please.
- CARLENE: No.
- COURTNEY: Please?
- CARLENE: Look, okay, but the first girl who talks about how she's bi, we're turning it right off.
- COURTNEY: Oh yeah. Ick. (*CARLENE has another piece of pizza. COURTNEY watches her, has one, too.*)
- CARLENE: I wonder how those guys are doing.
- COURTNEY: What, Brittany and Todd? Climbing all over each other, of course.
- CARLENE: Two weeks to the wedding. I don't think they're gonna make it.
- COURTNEY: She had to see the bishop last Sunday.
- CARLENE: No!
- COURTNEY: Oh, yeah.
- CARLENE: I didn't know that.
- COURTNEY: Allison told me. She had an appointment, and Brittany was coming out as she went in.
- CARLENE: Well, that's none of our business.
- COURTNEY: Hey, how much of a surprise is it? You see 'em.

Right here on this sofa 'til past midnight.

CARLENE: Oh, I know.

COURTNEY: You ever see his face?

CARLENE: Who, Todd? He's dating my roommate, of course I know his—

COURTNEY: No, I mean, while they're, you know. Like they do.

CARLENE: Hi, like I watch 'em?

COURTNEY: It gets all red.

CARLENE: What are you talking about?

COURTNEY: His face. I came in the other night to get a drink of water—I mean they were really, I mean, like, tongues and stuff.

CARLENE: Gross.

COURTNEY: And he, like, looks over the top of the sofa at me. His face was, like, totally red.

CARLENE: Do you think that's . . . you know.

COURTNEY: Well—

CARLENE: Part of it. Like, blood flow or something? His face getting all red?

COURTNEY: All I know is, he was holding this pillow in front of himself. A big pillow.

CARLENE: (*Whapping her.*) Courtney! (*They laugh.*) No, actually, though, I meant those other guys. Erin and Lynda, and those guys from 2A.

COURTNEY: Group date. It's better than nothing.

CARLENE: It's just . . . that guy, what's his name, Mitch something.

COURTNEY: Sweeney?

CARLENE: Yeah, him. He was going.

COURTNEY: There were like ten of 'em.

CARLENE: Well. Erin really likes him.

COURTNEY: It's just a group thing. Movies 8.

CARLENE: It's a start.

COURTNEY: I guess. You coulda gone.

CARLENE: I wasn't invited.

COURTNEY: It was a group thing. Informal.

CARLENE: No. Look. They came over.

COURTNEY: I know.

CARLENE: They go, "Hey, we're going to Movies 8. Erin, Lynda, you guys wanna come?"

COURTNEY: "You guys" inclusive. "You guys" as in, all you guys in the apartment.

CARLENE: No, "you guys" as in Erin and Lynda.

COURTNEY: You coulda gone. No one woulda thought anything of it.

CARLENE: I didn't feel right about it.

COURTNEY: Okay. (*Pause.*)

CARLENE: You coulda gone.

COURTNEY: Me? No.

CARLENE: Seriously, you could have.

COURTNEY: I saw it.

CARLENE: What?

COURTNEY: What they were going to see. With what's-his-name.

CARLENE: Oh.

COURTNEY: So instead we watch *DisMissed*.



I really truly wish, one time, I could . . . you know. Do the deed.

CARLENE: Yeah, "Who's she gonna sleep with, big suspense."
 COURTNEY: It's educational. Think of it that way.
 CARLENE: Whatever. (*Blackout.*)

SCENE TWO

(COURTNEY and CARLENE watching television.)

CARLENE: I would just *die*.

COURTNEY: Hey, that's the way it works. They do that time out thing, and that's the cue to start making out.

CARLENE: I would just die.

COURTNEY: She coulda stopped before he came back in. See, she *wants* him to know.

CARLENE: He looked like he was going to cry.

COURTNEY: He's fine; he's cool about it.

CARLENE: He's the only one who looks like a halfway decent. . . Really, let's not watch this any more.

COURTNEY: No, I wanna see who she chooses.

CARLENE: You know who she's gonna choose. Cleft chin guy.

COURTNEY: Come on, five minutes.

CARLENE: Shallow airhead like her, you know she's gonna—

COURTNEY: Shh, shh, look what they're . . . aaaaannnddd the tongues come out.

CARLENE: Gross.

COURTNEY: Yeah, like you'd know.

CARLENE: I don't have to watch it. (*She does for awhile.*) It's like showering in a sewer.

COURTNEY: Five more minutes and then they announce.

CARLENE: (*After a pause.*) You know, it's so dumb.

COURTNEY: What do you mean?

CARLENE: Well, these people, they don't need to be on this show to meet someone, right? They're all the type who can meet people if they want to.

COURTNEY: Because they sleep around.

CARLENE: It's not just that. They *can* sleep around because they've got no problem finding people to sleep around *with*.

COURTNEY: Well, duh. "Hi, I want to fool around, who wants to go out with me?"

CARLENE: I'm not talking about that.
 COURTNEY: Yes you are. And I'm saying, if you want to be a slut, you'll have no problem finding someone who—
 CARLENE: No, that's not what I'm saying. I mean, okay, up to a point. But it's more a confidence thing. They've got confidence.
 COURTNEY: Okay.
 CARLENE: That girl, look at her. She knows guys are gonna want her. She just knows it. And they do. And she's not even that cute.
 COURTNEY: She's cute.
 CARLENE: Cute, okay. But also kind of a big butt, and . . . you know what I mean. (*Pause.*) She's not afraid. Guys *have* wanted her, so she figures they always *will*.
 COURTNEY: I'm not afraid of anything.
 CARLENE: "Fear of intimacy." "Self-esteem." That's so bogus. (*Pause.*) If you're a girl guys hit on, then you know that and you can expect to be hit on. You can live your life that way. Whereas—
 COURTNEY: I hate these Old Navy commercials.
 CARLENE: You know what I mean?
 COURTNEY: Sure.
 CARLENE: (*Getting up.*) You want some more pizza?
 COURTNEY: One more.
 CARLENE: Okay, and there she is now with the other one! I would just die. (*Slow blackout.*)

SCENE THREE

CARLENE: Okay, I'm not watching this anymore.
 COURTNEY: Okay. . . .
 CARLENE: I mean, they're in front of a camera, they know everything they do is, like, being broadcast.
 COURTNEY: Of course they know.
 CARLENE: How is this different from porn? Okay, they're just making out, but really. Can we turn it off?
 COURTNEY: Can I just mute it?
 CARLENE: I don't want to wat—
 COURTNEY: Mute and surf? They got *Dinner and a Movie* on USA.
 CARLENE: If you want to.
 COURTNEY: Okay.
 CARLENE: I just . . . I feel like I'm rubbernecking at a car wreck or something.
 COURTNEY: No, I know, it's okay. Oh, look, it's *Road House*. Patrick Swayze.
 CARLENE: He was so good in *Dirty Dancing*.
 COURTNEY: So this is okay?
 CARLENE: I guess. (*Pause.*) Hey, Courtney?
 COURTNEY: Yeah?
 CARLENE: Okay, the naked karaoke thing. They sorta blurred it all, right?
 COURTNEY: Unfortunately.
 CARLENE: I was just . . . Did you ever . . . have you ever seen a . . . a . . .
 COURTNEY: What?

CARLENE: A guy's
 COURTNEY: No! Well, sort of. I mean, my little brother, when I used to change him.
 CARLENE: Okay, I've seen little kids. And, like, statues. But I mean. . . you know.
 COURTNEY: Plus that movie that one time. *Room with a View*. It had that one scene—
 CARLENE: Okay, that—
 COURTNEY: But a real one—live? Is that what you're asking?
 CARLENE: I mean, they get bigger. Right?
 COURTNEY: Well of course they get b—
 CARLENE: That's what I mean. (*Pause.*) Did you?
 COURTNEY: Oh, man, this is the big fight scene. Oh, that *musta* hurt.
 CARLENE: I mean, for real.
 COURTNEY: What?
 CARLENE: Have you ever seen one?
 COURTNEY: I told you, my little bro—
 CARLENE: Never mind.
 COURTNEY: Pool cue across the head. I wonder how they do that. (*She watches. CARLENE watches her watching.*)

SCENE FOUR

COURTNEY: See, I know. I'm gonna die a virgin.
 CARLENE: You don't know . . . you could meet—
 COURTNEY: Get real.
 CARLENE: No, I just think you—
 COURTNEY: Seriously, my whole education, it's about career, because face it, when I graduate, I go to work, and that's what I'm going to do. With my life.
 CARLENE: That's depressing.
 COURTNEY: I'm not depressed by it. Why should I be? I'll buy a house, I think. I'll probably have cats. I'll, like, what? Garden. Do genealogy.
 CARLENE: Well, I'm not giving up.
 COURTNEY: Yes you have. You just haven't admitted it to yourself.
 CARLENE: This is *so* depressing.
 COURTNEY: Only if you let it be. I'm not going to. . . . you know the one thing I really wish.
 CARLENE: What?
 COURTNEY: That I could, you know, feel what it feels like.
 CARLENE: Courtney!
 COURTNEY: I'm serious. It's never gonna happen, and I know that, and, you know, the law of chastity and all that, but I just wish I could—
 CARLENE: You're awful!
 COURTNEY: Don't you?
 CARLENE: No.
 COURTNEY: Liar.
 CARLENE: No!
 COURTNEY: I just wish I could feel it. I mean, whatever God wants, I'll . . . Stay pure. Whatever. But I really truly wish, one time, I could . . . you know. Do the deed.
 CARLENE: (*A long pause.*) You're totally awful.

COURTNEY: Just once.
 CARLENE: You could still meet someone.
 COURTNEY: Yeah, and the Rock of Gibraltar could break off and fall in the ocean.
 CARLENE: You could.
 COURTNEY: Not.
 CARLENE: (*Playfully.*) Meet someone. Across a wide dance floor. And his eyes will sweep across the room, past you at first, and then his glance will return. And your eyes will meet. And suddenly, it will be as though you're alone, just the two of you, as though all the other dancers have disappeared.
 COURTNEY: (*Laughing.*) Stop.
 CARLENE: And he'll lean towards you. . . . (*She leans towards COURTNEY.*) And his eyes will glance quickly down to your decolletage, and he'll say "Ma chère."
 COURTNEY: Oh, yeah, he'll be French, why not?
 CARLENE: "Ma chère. I feel zat ve haf met before, in a previous lahf. Can I buy you a drink?"
 COURTNEY: (*Laughing.*) You nut.
 CARLENE: (*Slight French accent.*) And you will say, "But of course." And he will take you in his arms, and sweep you across the floor. (*She takes COURTNEY, they dance.*)
 COURTNEY: Wait a sec—are you leading, or am I?
 CARLENE: (*Laughing, too.*) I thought you were. (*Steps on her foot.*)
 COURTNEY: Ow! (*Limps to the couch, sits.*)
 CARLENE: Well, it could happen!
 COURTNEY: Yeah, it's about as realistic as that. Damn. (*She rubs her foot. Blackout.*)

SCENE FIVE

CARLENE: How can you even watch this?
 COURTNEY: Lots of good action. Patrick Swayze with his shirt off. What's not to like?
 CARLENE: Utterly mindless.
 COURTNEY: Hi, like anyone wants to watch a movie where you have to think?
 CARLENE: Sometimes I don't mind it. (*Pause.*) They're really late.
 COURTNEY: They're probably having a good time.
 CARLENE: (*Watches the movie a bit.*) Okay, so as far as I can tell, there's now about five people left alive in that whole town.
 COURTNEY: Yeah, well, you saw those bar scenes. No great loss to the world, right?
 CARLENE: (*Laughs a bit.*) So true.
 COURTNEY: It's like the Darwin awards.
 CARLENE: What's that?
 COURTNEY: Haven't you seen those? They're like the kind of thing people send you e-mail. I think there's even a website.
 CARLENE: I don't think I've seen 'em.
 COURTNEY: It's all about complete idiots who died some totally dumb way.
 CARLENE: Oh, like the guy that tied the weather balloon to his lawn chair?



**. . . aaaannnnddd the tongues
 come out.**

COURTNEY: Right, ended up ten thousand feet up in the air, hit a jet or something.
 CARLENE: I have too seen those.
 COURTNEY: Usually it's guys, and usually there's a lot of beer involved.
 CARLENE: Right.
 COURTNEY: And then they, like, tie themselves under their truck and have a friend drive it so they can see what's wrong with it. And die, of course. And so, the Darwin awards. A death that improves the gene pool.
 CARLENE: That's . . . sort of not all that funny.
 COURTNEY: What? I can think of lots of people the world would be better off without. Rednecks like on this movie, for one group.
 CARLENE: Don't.
 COURTNEY: Muslim terrorists. Bill and Hillary. Teachers who grade on a curve.
 CARLENE: I wish you wouldn't.
 COURTNEY: (*Laughing.*) Guy-magnet girls. The whole cast of *The O.C.* Telemarketers.
 CARLENE: Someone could make that argument about us.
 COURTNEY: (*Pause.*) I was just kidding around.
 CARLENE: You and me, taking up space. And food. Right? But then we're sort of not participating in the gene pool, are we? So I guess we don't have to worry about it.
 COURTNEY: I was just joking.
 CARLENE: I know.
 COURTNEY: Geez!
 CARLENE: I'm sorry. Really, I am. (*She gets up.*) You want more pizza?

SCENE SIX

CARLENE: So anyway, I went in there, and my dad still had all his shaving stuff out. And he had this brush. A shaving brush. He used it to spread shaving cream on his whiskers.
 COURTNEY: I've seen those.
 CARLENE: Well, I hadn't. And it just seemed like such a guy thing. You know what I mean?
 COURTNEY: Mysterious.



I'll buy a house, I think. I'll probably have cats.

CARLENE: That's it! Exactly. Like something unique to the male of the species.

COURTNEY: I mean, they probably feel the same way about us, all that personal hygiene stuff that they don't get.

CARLENE: Oh, sure. I'm just saying. Like football. Stuff we'll never understand.

COURTNEY: I like football.

CARLENE: Not the same way. I promise.

COURTNEY: What? You like watching it, or you don't.

CARLENE: No. Not really. I tell you—boys like football at a totally different level than the way girls like it.

COURTNEY: How do you know this?

CARLENE: I just do, that's all.

COURTNEY: Well, fine. I like it fine, my way.

CARLENE: But see, that's the point. You'll never know what it's like to like it their way.

COURTNEY: Big deal. Oh, look, *Back to the Future's* next.

CARLENE: Which we've only seen nine million times.

COURTNEY: Can we at least watch the scene where he plays "Johnny Be Good"?

CARLENE: Like at the end of the movie?

COURTNEY: I'm not sleepy. Are you?

CARLENE: I guess not. (*They watch together.*) Hey, Courtney.

COURTNEY: Yeah?

CARLENE: You know we were talking earlier? And you were saying that you were planning on a career, and probably wouldn't ever marry?

COURTNEY: Sure. You want some more pizza?

CARLENE: I can't.

COURTNEY: Mind if I finish it?

CARLENE: Go ahead. (*COURTNEY helps herself.*) Anyway. Do you remember? That conversation? And you were thinking about buying a house?

COURTNEY: And having cats. Several cats. What about it?

CARLENE: Would it be safe? Do you think? Single woman living alone.

COURTNEY: Why wouldn't it be?

CARLENE: You hear all those stories.

COURTNEY: You get a decent security system. . . .

CARLENE: You wouldn't . . . you don't think you'd want company? (*Pause.*) A roommate, say. (*Pause.*) What do you think?

COURTNEY: Oh, look, I love this. He's so good on that skateboard.

CARLENE: Yes, he is.

COURTNEY: Love Michael J. Fox.

CARLENE: Yeah. Me, too. (*Watches wistfully. Blackout.*)

SCENE SEVEN

CARLENE: Man, it's late.

COURTNEY: They're having a good time.

CARLENE: Still. Man.

COURTNEY: This is my favorite part.

CARLENE: Yeah.

COURTNEY: I love the reaction shots. He's doing all that Eddie Van Halen stuff, and they're all just shocked.

CARLENE: Yeah. Me, too.

COURTNEY: And then his mom just doesn't know how to react. (*She yawns.*) Man, I'm getting tired.

CARLENE: All that pizza.

COURTNEY: Listen, I may just stretch out for a sec. Do you mind?

CARLENE: Of course not.

COURTNEY: Just rest my eyes a little. (*She stretches out.*)

CARLENE: Of course. (*A pause. As COURTNEY drifts off.*) I'm just thinking. Do you mind?

COURTNEY: No.

CARLENE: I was just thinking. About what you said earlier. I mean, we're in school, and we're taking it pretty seriously—you in accounting, me in computer science—because we're not either of us, probably, gonna marry. And I just think that it would be easier if we had roommates. I mean rather than live totally alone. What do you think? (*COURTNEY is asleep.*) I'm a senior. And you're a junior. So . . . I'll graduate and probably just stay here, this apartment, while I work. It makes most sense. And then, maybe next year, you'll get a job, too. And it won't matter where, or doing what, because I'll have a year's experience, and I'll be able to find work wherever you do. And we'll find an apartment. And, maybe, look for a house. A two-bedroom, say. And we'll divide chores, you know. In fact, you could just pick the ones you don't like doing, like maybe toilets, and I'd just do those, and you could only do the chores you like. That'd be okay with me, really. And rent, we'd share that. And . . . we'll garden. You want cats, that's great. Cats would be fine. I just think . . . we're going to be single, you and I. Single. And life is so much harder when you're lonely. And it would be so much better if we were together. And I'd take good care of you. You know what a good cook I am. And from time to time, we'd treat ourselves. Order pizza. Watch bad movies together. And . . . we'd chat. Or not, if you didn't want to. It would really all be up to you. (*Gently strokes COURTNEY's hair.*) What do you think? Does that sound good to you? (*Pause. She looks at COURTNEY sleeping.*) It's settled then. (*She sits looking at COURTNEY. Slow blackout.*) ☺