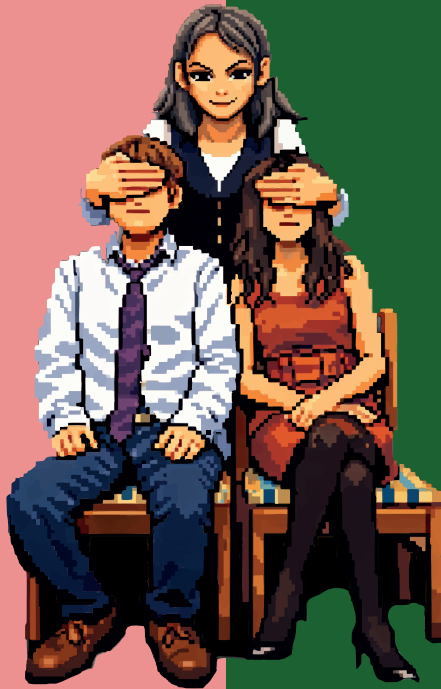


ADVENTURES IN MATING

by Joseph Scrimshaw



▶ START

29 MAY, 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20 JUNE 2026

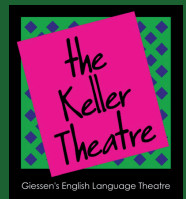


TICKETS



TICKETS VENUE

HAUS DER KARTEN Kleine Bühne
Kreuzplatz 6 Bleichstr. 28
35390 Giessen
Doors open 30 min prior to show.
Show starts at 7:30 PM



ADVENTURES IN MATING is presented by a special arrangement with the author.
Artwork created with the assistance of ChatGPT.



Synopsis

Good evening and welcome to Café Surprise. On tonight's menu we've got an indecisive couple on a blind date, their waiter and you, dear audience. Play the role of cruel fate by deciding what our couple cannot: red wine or white, stay or leave, kiss or slap?

We have more than 90 variations up our sleeves but you determine which version of our play you are about to witness. We can promise one thing: you won't get to see the same show twice.

About the Author

Joseph Scrimshaw is a comedian, writer, actor, director and self-proclaimed geek from Minneapolis. His early career at local late-night cabarets together with his brother developed into a multi media fueled journey through literature, film and theater. His plays *Adventures in Mating*, *An inconvenient Squirrel* and *My Monster* have been performed world-wide. Last year Scrimshaw's first feature film *Dead Media* about a haunted DVD premiered to great success and complements his experience in writing for film and television networks like Adult Swim. Those who haven't had enough to laugh yet may experience his comedic talent in one of his many podcast appearances or side projects.

Special Thanks...

to Bruce for setting the mood and adding depth with his beautiful painting; to Ludger for getting the tables ready to shine again and to Siyana and Elah for contouring the hell out of the furniture to make our vision of Café Surprise come to life; to our wordsmiths Chris, Rumi and Kende for writing about our production; to the Social Media Team for accompanying our production; to Siyana for creating essential props; to Lothar for his advice and solutions to all our quirky questions, to our test audience members; to the phenomenal stage version of *Plamen Danev* at Theatre 199 "Valentin Stoychev" in Sofia, starring Yoanna Boukovska, Gerasim Georgiev and Georgi Spasov that made us want to bring it to Gießen; to the Kulturnacht for giving us the opportunity to show a first teaser; to the Gießen International Church for the beautiful additional rehearsal space

Choose Your Character!

Cast

Miranda - Lene Wolff
Jeffrey - Jannik Schurmann
Waitress - Gaby Hopfenmüller

Crew

Background Painting - Bruce Boettcher
Dance instructor - Julie Ann Pownall

Furniture Painting - Siyana Pavlova
Elaheh Akbari

Prompters during rehearsal - Siyana Pavlova,
Veit Lorenz & Hendrik Wagner

Directors - Mimi Kiefer & Florian Siebrecht

Set Design - Mimi Kiefer

Poster Design - Jannik Schurmann, Mimi Kiefer

Light & Sound Design & Operators -Hendrik Wagner
Elaheh Akbari

Stage Management - Sarina Geisler
Nicolas Schimmelpfennig

Costumes - Cast & Crew

Dramaturgs - Rumjana Kiefer, Kende Bors

Make-Up - Lia Puhze

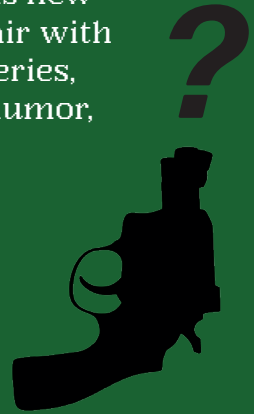


Coming Soon

“it's only murder” by Sam Bobrick

Jerome Teppel, a well-off accountant, discovers his new wife, Francine, bought a gun and is having an affair with their neighbor's husband. Following these discoveries, the plot descends into a chaotic mix of betrayal, humor, a prison break, and a prune danish.

11, 18, 19, 25, 26 September,
02, 03 October



Open Helpers' Night

The Keller Theatre relies on members and volunteers to keep the tradition of community theatre going and we are always glad to have new people on board. We need not only actors, but also light and sound, hair and make-up, stage and props management, people working with costumes, set construction, directing, PR work, support on show nights and more.



Join us for our OPEN HELPERS' NIGHT on
Tue, 06 October 2026
Tue, 16 March 2027 or
Tue, 29 June 2027
6-9 PM, at the Kleine Bühne Gießen.

Email: info@keller-theatre.de
Web: <https://keller-theatre.de>

Food for Thought

The Eternal Crisis

Much has been said and written in podcasts or feature pages lately about the precarious state of heterosexual dating. Charlatans with snake-oiled upper arms are peddling vulgar clichés to young men, mixed with obsolete fantasies of conservative romantic ideals. Others bemoan a presumed unwillingness of women or younger generations in general to even be appropriate dating partners at all. The pressure towards general full-time-employment and the necessary restructuring of what once would have been called the private, domestic stage of romanticism has become a hot plate on which ideals of traditional love seemingly evaporate at break-neck speed. The romantic comedy, a genre once thought dead, makes its return to movie theaters, even though movies like *Pillion* or *Materialists* are far more cynical towards the possibilities of love. A title like Woody Allen's *Whatever Works* nowadays appears as anachronistic naivety. Looking at the crisis of dating one might therefore rest assured: The relationship between the genders is as strained a path as always, leading through a rocky wasteland of teeth-gritting misconceptions and hypocrisies. To quote the french author Alfred Karr: The more it changes, the more it's the same.

Our mating rituals definitely change their mode of communication. They are, as everything nowadays, accelerated and most likely digital. Dating apps – though still consensually surrounded by the faint smell of desperation – have become far more common and incredibly diverse in their target audiences, while online forums harbour communities, always keen to evaluate and categorize dating behaviour. It is here that we can perceive two dynamics of modern mating rituals that I deem important to our play and possibly modern dating in general: modularity and gamification.

Modularity

A willing participant in the modern, digital mating game is split into neatly distinguishable data segments. These, once defined, can be endlessly arranged, replaced and rearranged. They may include swipeable pictures of our subject, fillable text boxes designated towards specific information of our subject and most likely the option to link our subject's profile with other social media platforms. The dating app OkCupid has easily the most abundant modularity to offer. It anticipates any significant or insignificant trait any person could possess is already promised. Based on these segments one is free to pass judgment and quantify the amount of "red flags" or "wife-materialness" of any potential mating partner. It should not come as a surprise that our female protagonist Miranda compiles her ideal object of desire as some form of shopping list or rates them according to their 'viability'.

As an editor of rather stereotypical romance novels, she is a construction worker at the assembly line of such mating-categories. Should a specific configuration of segments not yield the promised result of the ideal partner, some optimization might be necessary. Modularity then allows us to switch around our information segments, replace our less efficient pictures or we might even link our spotify account to influence the algorithm's suggestions of available partners. In this sense we all become editors of our love-lives.



Foto von Timothy Dykes auf Unsplash

Gamification

In this way modularity may lead towards gamification. Mating rituals then become a process of trial and error-optimization towards a predefined goal. Suddenly imbecilic questions and details – like the choice between red or white wine – become important acts of micromanagement, fueled by the belief that romantic spontaneity will arise automatically as long as any single segment of self-description is aligned in the most optimized manner. An unspeakable frustration must of course arise out of the realization that dating is rarely a matter of reasonable self-optimization. In our protagonist's obsessions we might recognize our modern discourses about the “dating-market”, in which any kind of romantic interaction is neatly categorized as a transactional win or lose-situation according to an assessed market value of mating-partners. Dating is then understood as a technical skill, which can be developed through workshops, podcasts or 10-step guides, laid out in the smelly self-help-sections of franchised book stores – most likely right next to the novel Miranda last edited.

Murder by Chance

The safety network of pedantic micromanagement has no effect in our play's fine establishment, accordingly named Café Surprise. Yet it is we who are served by the waitress, while Jeffrey and Miranda's struggle for control over their lives is unveiled as fiction. Alas, dear audience, do not get caught up in megalomaniac fantasies of control. Not every decision you will make will yield the anticipated result – there are no rights or wrongs; no possibilities for functionalism. Some choices might even outright murder our dear characters, though do not be deterred from trying another path – or to simply murdering them again, if you so wish. Miranda and Jeffrey might struggle under their own relationship goals which are far too rigid to adapt to any kind of spontaneous eruption of reality. We on the other hand have all the choices yet to make. What even is the purpose of such a date? Do we even want to see them succeed? Can we imagine them as a couple or as an adventurous one-night-stand? And if so, what does a relationship even necessitate? Is compatibility necessary for desire? Is desire necessary for lasting love or is lasting love the death of desire? Is love necessary for a relationship or have we long murdered and buried our romanticism under a blanket of red flags and banners of expectations?

By Kende Bors

Romantic Comedy and Mythology

Romantic comedies are evergreens. In novels, film, television, and drama, they celebrate the art of revival.

Joseph Scrimshaw invented a remarkable romcom that performs its own reincarnation again and again, much like the myth of Prometheus. Tonight, our team presents an adaptation of “Adventures in Mating,” which is deeply devoted to Scrimshaw’s original. However, should you be ambitious enough to investigate further, you will be surprised to find that Scrimshaw’s “original” can no longer be found on his homepage—at least, not in its original shape. How many times has “Adventures in Mating” reinvented itself since it was first performed as part of the Minnesota Fringe Festival in Summer 2005 or since Mimi Kiefer first saw it at the “sacred basement” of the Theatre 199 “Valentin Stoychev” in Sofia in 2015, which inspired our production this season?

Every year, every month, every week, every night? We cannot say for sure. But we can give you some clues to ponder and laugh about:

- Consider “Adventures in Mating” in the light of the myth of Prometheus!
- What does a romcom share with ancient Greek drama and mythology? Is this a serious question, or the first joke of the evening? Be assured, many more are to follow!

Think of Prometheus, bound to the rock, his liver destroyed by the eagle by day and regrowing by night. Now, imagine new adaptations picking up the pieces of Scrimshaw’s play, flying in new directions, and shaping new approaches to his work, the latest iteration to be seen here on our Keller Theatre stage. The setting is new, and there are variations due to our interpretation, but we all adhere to the original core of the play:

Miranda and Jeffrey, dating at Café Surprise, apparently directed by the Waitress. It is up to the audience to decide how their relationship develops. Although the plot structure seems unpredictable, dynamic, and even catastrophic at first glance, at the end of each sequence, reincarnation begins again following the well-known scheme.

But there are even more mythological references in Scrimshaw’s romcom: In ancient Greek drama, gods play the role of fate when protagonists make decisions. Please, do not neglect the importance of the question: “Red wine or white wine?” – simply because waiters ask such things in real life! Your answer is essential to the development of the plot and the fate of the characters from beginning to end. In “Adventures in Mating,” it is the audience who plays the part of a divine power or acts as a kind of Greek chorus. This is irony and comedy at its best! Think of Woody Allen’s romcom “Mighty Aphrodite” and its Greek chorus, commenting on and interfering in the protagonist’s quest to find his son’s biological mother.

Watch the play and enjoy your divine power, dear Audience!
Can we indeed find traces of myth in the everyday lives of Jeffrey and Miranda?
Despite his background in marine biology, Jeffrey is working in a pet store, struggling with physical afflictions and a series of personal misfortunes. Miranda is a cat lady working in a dubious publishing house, looking for a fake boyfriend to rescue her at a family gathering. What could possibly be mythological about their lives?

Bearing a Shakespearean name, Miranda lives with the expectation of being admired, longing for the “companionship of a fully-mature adult.” Yet, her desire to encounter even a “minor deity from Greek mythology” invariably ends in disaster. Viewing blind dates as nothing more than the “human equivalent of animal mating rituals,” she finds herself a regular on dating apps. Meanwhile, at the publishing house, her Jane Austen-inspired dreams of great love and social status are sidelined by the reality of her work: producing erotic parodies of the myth of happiness to earn her living.

Jeffrey’s passion for Star Wars is more than just a hobby; it is a connection shared by both the character and Joseph Scrimshaw. It brings to mind the profound link between George Lucas and the mythologist Joseph Campbell. Through his work, Campbell showed that even modern epics like Star Wars are deeply rooted in ancient mythological patterns – patterns that offer a roadmap for the individual. For Jeffrey, these stories are not just entertainment; they are a way to imagine himself as the hero of his own epic, struggling to find meaning in his own chaotic life. We would like to conclude our introduction with a quote from Campbell’s famous book, *The Power of Myth*:

“Greek and Latin and biblical literature used to be part of everyone’s education. Now, when these were dropped, a whole tradition of Occidental mythological information was lost. It used to be that these stories were in the minds of people. When the story is in your mind, then you see its relevance to something happening in your own life. It gives you perspective on what’s happening to you. With the loss of that, we’ve really lost something because we don’t have a comparable literature to take its place. These bits of information from ancient times, which have to do with the themes that have supported human life, built civilizations, and informed religions over the millennia, have to do with deep inner problems, inner mysteries, inner thresholds of passage, and if you don’t know what the guide-signs are along the way, you have to work it out yourself. But once this subject catches you, there is such a feeling, from one or another of these traditions, of information of a deep, rich, life-vivifying sort that you don’t want to give it up.”

by Rumjana Ivanova-Kiefer



Foto von Clint Bustrillos
auf Unsplash