

Gymnophobia

Logline: Two therapy patients with a deathly fear of nudity attempt to cheat their way through a game of strip poker.

1 EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER

A lively summer day. SARAH approaches the community center dressed in full, multi-layer winter gear.

SARAH
I hate summer.

2 INT. COMMUNITY CENTER

The door opens as Sarah tepidly enters. She shudders.

SARAH
I hate this building.

The more doors she passes the more nervous she gets.

SARAH
I hate this group.

She finally gets to the right door, labelled "Gymnophobia Game Night!" She steels herself before opening the door.

SARAH
I hate everything.

3 INT. GAME ROOM

Four individuals chat amiably around a circle of five chairs. They are all, save KAREN, wearing unusual amounts of layers. The door clangs behind Sarah as she enters. Everyone looks up.

KAREN
Sarah! You made it!

SARAH
I hate you.

KAREN
That's the spirit! Come join us!

Sarah sits. TED, a man in his late 20's, raises his hand.

TED
I have pink eye.

KAREN
So you do, Ted.

TED
I just don't think I should play in this condition.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN

Well Ted, pink eye doesn't-

Ted holds up a finger and reaches for an EYEDROPPER. He takes it out and drops some medicine into his inflicted eye.

TED

You see? You see what I have to do?
It's so itchy. It's so itchy,
Karen.

KAREN

Well Ted, the thing is, if I don't get four people to participate in this little extracurricular project of mine then I don't get the credit, and if I don't get the credit I don't graduate, and not only would I very much like to get my Master's degree on time, but Professor Peters thinks this would be very beneficial for you as his patients, so wouldn't it be nice if everything worked today?

TED

I have pink eye.

KAREN

Okay, let's play some strip poker!

LEO and NAOMI, both in their late 20's, sit down.

KAREN

Again, no one is actually getting naked. But Professor Peters and I believe that the act of taking off clothes and being comfortable with relatively little on will still be beneficial. I can't wait to see what breakthroughs we make today.

Karen looks directly at Sarah.

KAREN

We WILL be having breakthroughs today.

SARAH

Where are the chips?

(CONTINUED)

KAREN
It's strip poker. There aren't
any-

SARAH
Where are the chips?

KAREN
Fine. I'll go get some chips.

Karen leaves.

LEO
Sarah, if you gave it a chance-

SARAH
I hate you most of all, Leo.

TED
I have pink eye.

SARAH
For the love of God.

Sarah grabs Ted's hair and eyedropper. She yanks his head back and empties the contents of the eyedropper into his pink eye. Ted examines his eye, which looks much worse.

SARAH
Now you have something to whine
about. Really whine about.

LEO
...I'm gonna go get a drink of
water.

NAOMI
Yeah, I need to vomit.

Leo and Naomi leave. Ted looks over at a smug Sarah.

TED
...you're a genius! Now I'm out of
the game for sure.

SARAH
Yeah. Good for you. That's great.
Really, really great.

TED
You know, you only have to strip if
you lose.

(CONTINUED)

Sarah and Ted share a poignant look. Karen reappears at the table and notices Ted's pink eye.

KAREN

Okay, so who's ready to have some breakthrou-oh! Oh hi Ted! ...you know what? I bet if you just sat over there and talked about your feelings we could call that a participation. Go sit. Go. Over there.

Leo and Naomi return and sit down.

KAREN

Alright, let's get started!

Karen deals the cards. Ted peers over Karen, then stretches, extending his fingers into a two and then a three. Sarah puts in her chips.

Cut to next round. Sarah is about to bet everything.

TED

Did anyone hear about that reboot of Full House? Man, I hope it's good, but I wouldn't put all my chips in one bet, if you know what I'm saying.

Sarah pulls back her chips.

SARAH

I too am nervous for this Full House. I have fond memories of the show.

TED

Yeah, I...I actually liked it, too.

A few rounds later: Ted gets up to stretch and casually walks behind Leo. He has a straight.

TED

Karen, just out of curiosity, are people with gymnophobia more likely to be gay or straight? Is it straight? I bet it's straight.

Sarah casually folds her cards.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

What an insightful question, Ted!

KAREN

Go back to your corner.

Next round: Sarah intently studies Ted, who is reading a magazine about the British Royals from the magazine rack.

Everyone at the table is now in T-shirts and shorts, with the exception of Sarah. The cards on the table are eight, ten, Q, K, A. Sarah looks down at her hand. She has a two and a K.

Sarah puts in all of her chips and places down her cards. Karen places down her Q and then moves it over to reveal a nine.

SARAH

What!? Ted! You said she had a queen!

TED

I meant a Royal Flush!

KAREN

Oh my God, now I'm going to have to pretend in my thesis that two of my participants didn't cheat, and there was already so much bullshit going into this paper. I'm afraid that breaking the rules means stripping. Strip now. Look at Naomi and Leo! Their bare arms are beautiful! They made breakthroughs today! Why won't you make a breakthrough?!?!

SARAH

No. Absolutely not.

KAREN

I can't graduate until you take off your clothes!

TED

(panicked)

Uh uh I'm having a breakthrough!

Ted throws off his coat, revealing a Batman T-shirt. As the others watch, Sarah smiles and takes off her coat, revealing a Robin T-shirt. Ted and Sarah look at each other and smile.

FADE OUT.