

The Man 2 Dialogs
(Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Dating,
Explained In Three Acts)



BY KARL MAMER

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CHARACTERS

MAN 2 A man in his mid-30s.

MAN 1 A Caucasian man in his early 30s.

WOMAN 1 A Korean woman in her late 20s. Professional in appearance.

WOMAN 2 A woman in her early 20s.

MICHAEL A reasonably attractive, yet carelessly dressed computer programmer.

TINA A woman in her 20s with a visible head injury and an eye patch.

SETTING

All scenes take place in a bar.

ACT I

MAN 2 sits at bar, he has a drink in front of him. To his right sits **MAN 1**. To his left sits **WOMAN 1**. The play opens with a spot light on **MAN 2** and **MAN 1**. **WOMAN 1** is in the dark.

MAN 1 *[motions to woman in audience]* She's cute. Think I should approach her?

MAN 2 Do you see a ring?

MAN 1 No.

MAN 2 *[shakes head]* Better not then.

MAN 1 Huh?

MAN 2 These women if they're still single after the age of 25 most of them are bi polar. Crazy! You know? I don't blame them entirely. They've been so screwed over by guys since the age of 14 that by the time you get to them they're total whack jobs. Yeah, the bad boys have all the fun when we're younger and then they leave us with spent emotional husks when we're older. A woman's mistake early on is thinking because you were so nice to her, all men are going to be equally nice to her, including that guy over there with the boot knife. So she runs off with Mr. Boot Knife. He kicks her around for several years, tells her she's ugly, fat, stupid, and her tits are too small. He cancels dates on her so he can hang out with his buddies at a strip bar, and then he dumps her because he got his second cousin pregnant.

Of course, forget about her ever trying to fix you up with one of her friends who is also looking for "a nice guy". Cause, if you and her friend hit it off, she doesn't have you to fall back on. No shoulder to cry on. No one to bring her flowers when she's hospitalized because Mr. Boot Knife's Camero stalled out on some train tracks and he didn't bother to stick around to help her get out of the car before the train hit. Most women say they're looking for a nice guy but once a woman meets a nice guy she doesn't believe she's actually met one. After her experience with Mr. Boot Knife, she thinks Mr. Nice Guy has something so devious planned for her that he's playing the perfect man to set her up for a huge emotional soul crushing fall. So she'll drive the guy off long before he can even get to first base by trying to crush his ego every moment she's with him or being a huge bitch. Or she'll sleep with his best friend. They've got their ways.

But I mean good luck even getting up to bat, let alone getting a chance at first base. See, the thing is these women won't even look at you unless you're at least as good looking as Harrison Ford and have more money than Bill Gates. Even if you have movie star looks and money, well, that might get you a coffee date. Actually these women are so on edge you can count yourself lucky if you approach a woman and only get shot down and not a face full of pepper spray. Of course, as a nice guy, the last thing you'll ever do is approach a woman. I mean yeah they bitch all the time *[does whiney woman voice]* "only losers try to pick me up! Where are all the nice guys?" and yet they make it seem like the very act of approaching them is a violation of their friggen human rights.

[does whiney woman voice] "I can barely step out my door without a crowd of men six deep asking me for my phone number, whine whine..."

So as a nice guy you respect their space and of course they never ever meet you. If you manage to negotiate this ever changing minefield and actually begin to do boyfriend/girlfriend like things, you're in for a whole new kettle of crap. If you pay too much attention to her, you're "clingy" and she pulls away. If you try to respect her space, she thinks you don't like her and she pulls away.

MAN 1 Yeah, better not approach her. Thank god for the Internet.

MAN 2 Yeah, thank god for the Internet.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

WOMAN 1 Why can't I meet a nice guy?

MAN 2 You don't want a nice guy.

WOMAN 1 Yes I do.

MAN 2 Oh no you don't.

WOMAN 1 Oh yes I do.

MAN 2 What about Steve? He was a nice guy.

WOMAN 1 Yeah, he was really nice.

MAN 2 So what happened?

WOMAN 1 *[Waffles some what]* Of course, he was very nice --

MAN 2 Yes. Nice.

WOMAN 1 Yes. Nice. *[pause]* But kind of boring.

MAN 2 See, it's not just about nice.

WOMAN 1 Well, it's mostly about nice.

MAN 2 What about Roger from the bank?

WOMAN 1 Don't remind me. He was such an asshole.

MAN 2 And how long did you date him?

WOMAN 1 Two years.

MAN 2 And he wasn't half as nice as Steve.

WOMAN 1 No. But Roger and I connected. In the sack. Steve was everything I wanted Roger to be but Roger was good in bed.

MAN 2 So Roger was an asshole but he got access to the holy of the holies, your bed chambers, and Steve was a nice guy and he got?

WOMAN 1 Three coffee dates.

MAN 2 Nice guys finish last.

WOMAN 1 Not necessarily. Steve was too passive. If he had been a bit more open about his desires, well, things might have been different. If nice guys finish last it's only because they want women to carry them over the finish line. No guts. No glory. You know?

MAN 2 Uh huh.

WOMAN 1 Okay, I admit I'm a bit screwed up. Is that what you want to hear?

MAN 2 No. No. You're normal. I assure you. Men and women are the same. We both want someone who can fuck us in half. The only difference is if men are getting it good in the sack we don't sweat the small details like "Oh, she forgot my birthday." Women want their cake and eat it too.

WOMAN 1 I worry sometimes I'm too picky.

MAN 2 You are picky.

WOMAN 1 I am the hell not.

MAN 2 Yes you are. Remember that guy Tony last year, he was a great guy. He was good looking. He was nice. He owned his own restaurant. He really liked you but you wouldn't so much as give him a chance.

WOMAN 1 Give me a break. The guy was short. He was like five seven!

MAN 2 You're five three, in heels! The guy towered over you!

WOMAN 1 So what. I like guys who are taller. That doesn't mean I'm picky.

MAN 2 Oh, please. You're waiting around for the perfect man. And until you meet him, you'll never commit to a good guy. You'll only bed assholes because they're easy to kick out of bed.

WOMAN 1 You have no idea what you're talking about. The fact is, I have no idea who my perfect man is.

MAN 2 Yes you do. You and all your friends are waiting for the same perfect man.

WOMAN 1 Yeah, right. And who is he?

MAN 2 His height is between five ten and six one. He's fit. Not scrawny. Not a muscle head. He has a swimmer's body. His hair is dark. His eyes are green. His looks range from cute to handsome. He's definitely not pretty. He dresses well. He looks good in a suit and tie but also knows how to dress casually. He looks good in sweaters and v-necks. He's not 100% perfect, mind you. That would ruin the fun. He leaves room for you to make improvements in his wardrobe. He's career oriented but -- god no -- he's not in computers. He's a lawyer, stock broker, doctor, or owns his own business. He works hard but he doesn't ignore you. He's a terror at work but he's gentle and kind to you at home. For hobbies, he likes camping but he also likes the art gallery. He cooks. He's athletic but he never makes you feel like a lazy slob. He plays basketball with his friends after work, but only when you've got a night course. He understands, supports, and encourages you in your hobbies but he doesn't take an active, controlling interest. He certainly doesn't take interest in any of your hobbies that might make your mother and all your women friends suspect his masculinity. He'd never pick up knitting. No, ma'am, there can be no doubt that this man is straight. You like to think he's a pervert at times but he knows when to keep it in his pants. He won't walk up to you and start fondling your breasts while you're working on your laptop at home. Sexually he's creative in bed. He knows when to use you for his pleasure and when to slow down and please you. He predicts your needs but doesn't make you think he's predicting your needs. He knows when to give you your space and when to yank you back. He's not controlling but he knows when you need a firm push in the right direction.

WOMAN 1 You think you're so smart but you left out one thing.

MAN 2 What's that?

WOMAN 1 How many children does he want?

MAN 2 He wants zero to two children. If you don't want children, he'd be content being the world's greatest uncle. Children love him, of course. He makes children laugh and smile. If you want children, he'll take an active role in child rearing but he'd never be a stay-at-home dad.

WOMAN 1 You can be a real asshole sometimes.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1

MAN 1 I met this woman. We had coffee. We talked for three hours. That's a good sign, huh?

MAN 2 I guess.

MAN 1 It's got to be!

MAN 2 Great. Let's celebrate. Let's get drunk. You buy.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1

MAN 1 *[hands covering face, distraught]* I don't know what happened...

MAN 2 It flamed out, didn't it? I mean there were so many "good signs"! The phone calls from her at 2 in the morning. The weekly e-cards from her featuring pictures of bears holding balloons and hugging each other. She baked you cookies. She donated you AB negative blood. She kept touching your leg while driving and laughing at everything you said. And then she just dropped off the face of the earth. Later you get an email from her saying she's married a guy in the naval reserve named Eugene and thanks for being such a good friend.

MAN 1 It's all true. What happened?

MAN 2 You assumed these "good signs" were good signs. You failed to realize any GOOD SIGN can always be interpreted in the context of her treating you like a good friend. AND NOTHING MORE. Oh, there are bad signs. Those are generally easy to spot and there's lots of 'em. Court orders, calls from her brother the Green Beret telling you to back off, and your ecards to her featuring pictures of bears holding balloons and hugging each other don't get read for 2 weeks. When they do get read you don't even get a "thanks for the card that was so cute!" email back. Yeah. Frankly, friend, there's only one good sign. Full frontal nudity. Anything else, you're just fooling

yourself.

MAN 1 Sigh.

MAN 2 Let's get drunk. You buy.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

WOMAN 1 I am so pissed off.

MAN 2 What now?

WOMAN 1 Me and my boyfriend we're at this Van Morrison concert last night and this group of little high school tramps in front of us took off their tops and spent most of the concert dancing around half naked in their bikini tops.

MAN 2 Tragic.

WOMAN 1 My asshole boyfriend spent the whole concert watching them jiggle around. What a bunch of little bitches.

MAN 2 How dare they!

WOMAN 1 I know. I went to the restroom later and one of them was in there smoking up. A bunch of us women gave her the dirtiest looks. Someone hissed "slut" to her back as she walked out. That will learn her.

MAN 2 I don't get it. Why the hostility?

WOMAN 1 Because do you know how disgusting it is to watch your boyfriend ogle some half naked chicks who don't have the decency to dress properly?

MAN 2 You know what's sad about this?

WOMAN 1 What?

MAN 2 Did it ever occur to you instead of calling the girl a slut that you should have smacked your boyfriend and demanded he pay you some proper respect?

WOMAN 1 Like that will ever do any good.

MAN 2 It's a sad state of affairs when women think it easier to change the dressing habits of all women kind than to change the attitude of a single man.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1

MAN 1 I've been thinking lately that maybe the best way to meet a woman is to wear a wedding ring.

MAN 2 Why not get a cute little dog?

MAN 1 I'm not good with pets.

MAN 2 I know what you mean. They're a lot to take care of.

MAN 1 But a fake wedding band. Slap it on and suddenly the women flock to you.

MAN 2 Why do you suppose that is?

MAN 1 Conventional wisdom dictates it's because you're now a challenge. Women can't have you.

MAN 2 Personally I think it's the opposite. It's not that a wedding ring says a woman can't have you. To a woman a wedding ring means you can't have her.

MAN 1 Huh?

MAN 2 It's like this. I have this woman friend who bedded a few married men she met on the Internet. She was going through one of those confused, libidinous "relationships are a bother but I need sex and lots of it" periods in her life. She preferred married men for short-term sex partners for the simple reason that they would not demand a relationship. They were already in one. She never had to worry about meeting his mother or feeling pressured into ditching her own family over the holidays to spend it with his. She could see the guy as much or as little as she wanted. She did not have to fret over a birthday or Valentines day present. Sex with someone who was not his wife was gift enough.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

WOMAN 1 If I ever start talking about meeting another man from the Internet again, please come to my house and tear out my Ethernet card.

MAN 2 You betcha. What happened with this guy?

WOMAN 1 He was married.

MAN 2 How'd you figure that one out?

- WOMAN 1** He told me after our second date. The way he said it too was in this "oh yeah, by the way, I'm married" tone of voice. Like "gosh, we're getting along oh so well it's just a small item we can work around." It's as if he forgot to mention up front he likes Country-Western music or something. It's a real shame. He's the best looking guy I ever met from the net.
- MAN 2** They say you can meet sane, attractive, single people online. But they'll only ever have two of those qualities.
- WOMAN 1** I believe it. What is it with these guys?
- MAN 2** There is nothing more dangerous on the face of the earth than a married man. He has nothing to lose but his wife and family.
- WOMAN 1** Oh, I can't wait for the day they put marriage registries online.
- MAN 2** Someone could make a lot of money opening up an ISP called StayAwayFromHimBitchHeIsMine.com. Married women can then insist their husband only use that ISP.
- WOMAN 1** Maybe make it part of the standard marriage vow. "I pledge to love, honor, and only surf the net with StayAwayFromHimBitchHeIsMine.com"
- MAN 2** Here's a radical idea. Next time you chat with a man, simply ask him if he's married
- WOMAN 1** He'll lie.
- MAN 2** Try this then. Say "are you married *too*?" Odds are if the guy is married, he'll think he's found a married woman looking to play and he'll then honestly answer.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1

- MAN 1** I got the kiss of death from that woman I met at the book store.
- MAN 2** Oh no.
- MAN 1** She was vicious about it too.
- MAN 2** Don't tell me she said --
- MAN 1** -- yes --
- MAN 2** -- she told you --
- MAN 1** -- yes --
-

BOTH "let's be friends"

MAN 2 That hurts.

MAN 1 Tell me about it. Third time I got the "let's be friends" line this year.

MAN 2 Sucks.

MAN 1 This time, when she told me we should just be friends, I decided to try something different --

MAN 2 -- you didn't!

MAN 1 I did! I tried to actually be friends with her.

MAN 2 How'd that go?

MAN 1 It didn't.

MAN 2 Alas, in the vast majority of cases when a woman says "let's just be friends" it's the kind of friendship where you don't actually do any friend-like things. It just means "if I see you in a bank line I'll say hello and, as an added bonus, I won't say bad things about you to all the single women I know as long as you make sufficient and demonstrated effort to stay out of my life."

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

WOMAN 1 If you have sex before you have great passion, the great passion won't happen. I think I shouldn't have had sex with James this early. Maybe I should stop sleeping with him. Build the great passion.

MAN 2 Why did you hump him anyway? *[short pause then begins to answer that question himself]* Other than he's well built, tall, handsome, dark, mysterious, he has nice hair, he smells nice, he has a deep rumbling voice that reminds you of a powerful ocean tempest but he has the most calming touch, he has eyes so sharp they pierce you, they leave you feeling naked in his gaze, leave you feeling like you may as well bare your beautiful, golden nude body to him as his eyes already see what you work so hard to keep hidden--

WOMAN 1 *[cuts MAN 2 off, she is not even listening to him. She's really just talking to herself out loud.]* -- I should stop having sex with him.

MAN 2 Wouldn't hurt I suppose

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1

- MAN 1** When is it too early to send a woman you've been dating flowers?
- MAN 2** Have you seen her naked yet?
- MAN 1** No.
- MAN 2** Then it's too early.
- MAN 1** How is that?
- MAN 2** It's a rule I have. I can't explain it but every women I've ever given flowers to before I've seen her naked has stopped returning my phone calls.
- MAN 1** How many times has this happened?
- MAN 2** Four times.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

- WOMAN 1** I don't understand. I can't seem to do anything to win Mark's heart.
- MAN 2** What did you do?
- WOMAN 1** Everything I could think of.
- MAN 2** You had sex with Mark?
- WOMAN 1** Of course.
- MAN 2** And surprise, when you ask him about the relationship thing he tells you things like he's not ready for a relationship, or his heart has been broken and it's going to take him time to heal, or his parents were divorced and that's given him serious reservations a relationship can ever work, or he questions whether you two are compatible in the long term.
- WOMAN 1** Yes, yes, all that.
- MAN 2** Basically every time you bring up the subject of you two forming a more perfect, post-coital union, he always has a different answer for you?
- WOMAN 1** Yeah, odd that.
- MAN 2** Look, every time you ask a man the exact same question and he has a different answer for you, he doesn't want to tell you the *right*

answer.

WOMAN 1 And what is the right answer?

MAN 2 He's simply not attracted to you.

WOMAN 1 But I've done everything I can to make myself more attractive to him. I dress more provocatively now. I get him tickets to the game. I bake cookies for him. His mother loves me. I sat through the extended DVD edition of that *Rollerball* remake for Christ sakes. I laugh at his jokes. He keeps telling me the same stories again and again and I always act like it's the first time I've ever heard it. In bed I act like it's the most amazing sex I've ever had, when in fact he's not quite sure where all my, ummm, buttons are.

MAN 2 Stop right there. I'm going to let you in on the secret of how to win a man's heart.

WOMAN 1 I'm not going to read another one of those self help books. I already read this book called "How to Make a Man Over Come His Fear of Commitment: 12 Steps that Require No Thought on His Part and a Titanic Effort on Your Part". That didn't help at all. What a rip. There were more words on the cover than there were actual words in the book.

MAN 2 My method is easy and you can accomplish it in one step: Give the man you're interested in the faintest impression that he has a dim hope with you. If a man is at all attracted to you, he'll do all the rest. If he's not attracted to you, no effort on your part is ever going to change that fact.

WOMAN 1 That's dumb.

MAN 2 Obvious truth usually seems dumb.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1

MAN 2 How are things going with your new woman?

MAN 1 Not too bad. We're going clothes shopping next weekend.

MAN 2 Sounds serious. Are you going to be ready when she pops the question?

MAN 1 I don't think I have to worry about the marriage question quite yet. We've only been dating for a month.

MAN 2 No not that question. I'm talking the "Do I look fat in this dress?" question.

- MAN 1** Oh yeah. That question. Is any man ever ready?
- MAN 2** No. But that doesn't mean you can't be ready. The key is to have ready answers that sound like you're saying something when in fact you're saying nothing at all.
- MAN 1** Huh?
- MAN 2** Okay suppose your girlfriend gets a new haircut and it looks terrible. She comes into the room. What do you say?
- MAN 1** Pretend I don't notice?
- MAN 2** WRONG!
- MAN 1** Say, "Oh you got a haircut, it looks nice."
- MAN 2** WRONG AGAIN. Every woman knows "it looks nice" is code for "it looks bad".
- MAN 1** I should be honest then?
- MAN 2** *[nearly snorts up beer]* You're a man, remember. You're incapable of honesty in a relationship. Even when telling the truth is a perfectly serviceable option, a man will still craft a lie. I refer you to my original assertion that you should become practiced at the art of saying things that sound good but say nothing at all.
- MAN 1** What should I say?
- MAN 2** You say "Wow, honey, you got your hair cut. It looks very fresh."
- MAN 1** Fresh?
- MAN 2** Yeah. It sounds complimentary without actually saying anything of actual substance. It's non committal. You're really just saying "it looks recently cut" while she can interpret it as you're saying it's bold, sassy, cute.
- MAN 1** Okay I can get away with it once, maybe twice, but I can't really pull that trick on a woman all the time. Eventually I'll have to cough up something resembling actual opinion.
- MAN 2** When "fresh" doesn't cut it anymore a good tactic is to compare her hairstyle to some 1930s-era woman celebrity with a recognizable name but no easy to recall image. "It's very Josephine Baker!" "It's got that tight, sculptured Myrna Loy look".

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

WOMAN 1 I've been dating this guy for five months now and I think he's losing interest.

MAN 2 Why do you say that?

WOMAN 1 When we first started dating he used to do more. He'd surprise me with little gifts or he'd send me e-cards with bears holding balloons and hugging each other. He would take me to nice restaurants. Christ, he'd even bother to put on a clean shirt.

MAN 2 See here's one of those differences between men and women that women just don't get. Remember how six months ago you swore up and down you were not at all interested in getting into anything permanent and now the relationship has become the focus of your life? Well, men are the opposite. When your boyfriend was single, he moved heaven and earth to win you and now he treats you like you're as permanent as the underwear his mom bought for him. Men have this big mental check list. "Okay, I have the girlfriend. Sex has been secured. Check! I can now turn my attention to my career and/or my car."

WOMAN 1 Men. You can't change them.

MAN 2 You can. You just have to convince him he's about to lose the single greatest love of his life. If he doesn't believe that about you, then maybe you shouldn't be with him in the first place.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1

MAN 1 Ha. You're brilliant. She did it. She popped the question. She asked me "does this dress make my ass look too big?" and I said "No way. It really updates your look while retaining and enhancing that classic Golden Era figure you have that so attracted me in the first place."

MAN 2 What did she do?

MAN 1 At first she looked at me. Then she smiled. Then she kissed me.

MAN 2 Told you. Honesty is never the best policy.

MAN 1 I don't know. I think women appreciate honesty.

MAN 2 They do. To a point. Sometimes you can be too honest.

MAN 1 How is that?

- MAN 2** Wait until she pops the next question.
- MAN 1** Which question is that?
- MAN 2** The masturbation question.
- MAN 1** What the hell is that?
- MAN 2** It's more like a three-part question. "Do you masturbate?", "How often do you masturbate?", "What do you think about when you masturbate?"
- MAN 1** Hrm. Yeah. I can see how one might be a bit hesitant in answering.
- MAN 2** Here's where too much honesty can get you into trouble. To the first two questions, I have no problem answering "yes" and "generally every other day unless I'm tired or my ISP's news server is down again". Answering the first two questions honestly can only be a positive thing. It makes you seem open about your sex life. Women like that. It relaxes them. It implies you're not hiding any strange diseases.
- MAN 1** So how do you answer "What do you think about when masturbating?"
- MAN 2** This is where you have to make a judgment call on the how secure the woman is in herself and her expectations. I mean, honestly, what do you think about when you masturbate. Do you think about her?
- MAN 1** Of course... err... well sometimes...
- MAN 2** Come on!
- MAN 1** Yeah, not really.
- MAN 2** Exactly. What you can't tell her is you fantasize about her best friends, your neighbors, your former teachers, the cute red head at Starbucks. You fantasize about what their nipples look like. You fantasize about them looking back at you while you're doing them from behind.
- MAN 1** Yes. Yes. It's all true. So what am I supposed to answer?
- MAN 2** Usually I say something like "Oh honey, I always think about us doing it in public, like the coatroom of that expensive new French restaurant you want to go to and, hey, while we're on the subject of that expensive restaurant why don't we go there Friday and what shoes do you think you will wear?"

MAN 1 You pay for a lot of meals you don't have to, don't you?

MAN 2 Quite.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

MAN 2 Why so down, my friend?

WOMAN 1 I was talking with my boyfriend. We're pretty open about sexual matters. But he said something that kind of hurt me.

MAN 2 What did he say?

WOMAN 1 I asked him what he thought about when he masturbated.

MAN 2 And what did he answer?

WOMAN 1 He said he thinks about my best friends! And a couple of his former teachers. And some red head at Starbucks. I assumed he thought about me!

MAN 2 *[mumbles to self]* They always go for the honesty route.

WOMAN 1 What?

MAN 2 I said, honestly that's not so bad.

WOMAN 1 How is that not bad?

MAN 2 He could have said he thinks about that time he was the alter boy and --

WOMAN 1 -- you know, whatever. The point is, if he's not thinking about me, I must be lacking something.

MAN 2 You're not. But remember, this is a sexual fantasy. You're his sexual reality. Do you think about him when you masturbate?

WOMAN 1 Yes, of course.

MAN 2 Really?

WOMAN 1 Sure. I think it's him. It's usually dark. He comes at me from behind and takes me. Sometimes he comes from the side. Out of a dark alley.

MAN 2 That's what you think about? It's dark and a man takes you?

WOMAN 1 It's not about the visuals. It's about the feelings and the method.

MAN 2 The method how he takes you?

WOMAN 1 The method in which I choose to masturbate that night.

MAN 2 Ah, yes. The method. This is why men have to have such varied and vivid masturbation fantasies. Women have so many different methods of masturbation they don't have to work so hard on their actual fantasies to keep it all interesting. It's like women have bath taps, shower massagers, various devices that vibrate, pillows, other people's legs, grocery products, the back of their boyfriend's motorcycle, repeated crossing and uncrossing of the legs. Men have one and only one approved method. Their right hand. In fact, the use of anything else like a woman's shoe filled with hand lotion, a watermelon with a hole, or a specially modified vacuum cleaner attachment is considered a perversion.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1

MAN 2 Why so down, my friend?

MAN 1 I was talking with my friend Nadia. She's a mutual friend of my ex-girlfriend Angela. Angela broke the cardinal rule. She broke the great sacred trust between ex's!

MAN 2 What?

MAN 1 She told Nadia what I was like in bed.

MAN 2 You're always telling me what current and ex girlfriends are like in bed.

MAN 1 That's different.

MAN 2 Oh right.

MAN 1 Yeah, I never say anything bad.

MAN 2 Oh dear. She said something bad?

MAN 1 Yeah. She told my friend I was "mechanical" in bed.

MAN 2 Mechanical?

MAN 1 Yes. Mechanical.

MAN 2 *[pause]* That's not so bad.

MAN 1 How can that not be bad?

MAN 2 Maybe what she's saying is you were mechanical as in "technically perfect".

MAN 1 *[pause]* Yeah. Technically perfect.

MAN 2 In fact, if you think about it, mechanical things are machines. So being mechanical means you're a machine. Your ex is really saying in bed, you're a machine. Dude, you're a sex machine.

MAN 1 I knew it all along.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

WOMAN 1 I'm so pissed off.

MAN 2 What now?

WOMAN 1 I'm not entirely sure. I'm either pissed off because I have to admit you're right or I'm pissed off at Mark.

MAN 2 I thought you broke up with him.

WOMAN 1 I did. I couldn't stand his inattentiveness. But now he seems to want me back big time. He calls me every day. He flirts with me over email. He's always trying to buy me lunch. When I was throwing myself at him, I was lucky if he granted me a movie date every other Saturday night and a lunch every third Wednesday. Now that I've ditched him, it seems like nothing would make him happier than to spend every day with me. What the hell is up with that?

MAN 2 Men in relationships are like fruit trees. If they think they have all the time in the world, the relationship will never bear fruit. Sometimes you have to prune them back a bit.

WOMAN 1 I have a similar saying.

MAN 2 What's that?

WOMAN 1 Men in relationships act like idiots.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

WOMAN 1 How do I get rid of him?

MAN 2 Who?

WOMAN 1 Mark. The guy I liked but he wouldn't give me the time of day until I broke it off with him. This is getting ridiculous. You'd think he would

take a hint after I didn't return four of his phone calls. Why does he want me back?

MAN 2 He doesn't want you back, per se. He wants the attention back.

WOMAN 1 He's getting no attention. But more I ignore him, more he keeps going out of his way to make me think he really likes me. Maybe he's changed. Maybe I should take him back.

MAN 2 Bad idea. The moment you pay attention to him again, he'll go back to ignoring you. He's only trying to prove to himself he's irresistible to all women. That you can resist him, this is glaring evidence to the contrary. So he has to prove you're the one who is mistaken, not him.

WOMAN 1 What can I do to drive him off?

MAN 2 Sleep with his best friend.

WOMAN 1 Not my style.

MAN 2 Your options are limited, then.

WOMAN 1 What if I tell him I met someone else.

MAN 2 That won't work. He'll just work twice as hard to steal you away.

WOMAN 1 His best friend isn't that bad looking, come to think of it.

MAN 2 There is one way. Whenever he calls, just keep talking about some new guy in your life. Talk about how handsome he is, and how well he dresses, and all the romantic things he does. No man will put up with that for long.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1

MAN 2 Did you see that graffiti in the bathroom?

MAN 1 The one that said if you're in this stall Tuesday at 7 pm you should tap your foot twice for oral servicing?

MAN 2 No. The one written above the right urinal that said "I want to fuck Britney Spears".

MAN 1 Oh yeah. That one.

MAN 2 It occurred to me just now that, aside from stating the obvious -- yes most men want to sleep with young attractive blonde women -- isn't this fellow setting his standards a little high? I mean I want to

bed the red head at Starbucks but I think my chances are slim to none.

MAN 1 I guess if you're going to dream, dream big.

MAN 2 Well, then I'd dream about a Calvin Klein women's underwear model.

MAN 1 You know what pisses me off? Those CK women's underwear model bus shelter ads. How can a scantily clad waif model in underwear be effective at selling panties to women? Wouldn't that just turn a woman off, present her with a bodily ideal she can never attain?

MAN 2 You sure that pisses you off there, Susan Faludi?

MAN 1 Actually, they're kind of sexy ads. It's really just an unwelcome, nagging reminder of the hot sex I'm missing out on.

MAN 2 See, here you've tapped into the appeal of those ads. Those ads aren't directly selling underwear to women. They're trying to reprogram your male sexual response.

MAN 1 Huh?

MAN 2 It's like this. Every time a man sees those ads, he gets a small sexual thrill. One day he's making love with his girlfriend and she's wearing CK panties. His love making is just a little more passionate. Eventually she makes the connection between the panties and his heightened sexual response so she buys more.

MAN 1 That's crap. Ads don't influence me.

MAN 2 And I guess advertising is a 20 billion dollar a year industry because it doesn't influence anyone?

MAN 1 I didn't say that. I'm sure advertising works on most people. What I said was it doesn't influence me.

MAN 2 Everyone thinks advertising affects everyone else but them. It's like the individual drop of water never thinks it's the cause of the flood. Let me put your notion of advertising immunity to rest. How much tooth paste do you use in the morning on your brush?

MAN 1 I dunno. The right amount. The length of the brush.

MAN 2 Then you, my friend, are a victim of advertising! Most people squeeze out enough toothpaste to cover their entire brush. However, no dentist would instruct a patient to use that much toothpaste. Any dentist will tell you you needed no more than a pea-sized dollop to prevent tooth decay. So why do people use four

times as much toothpaste as needed? Quite simply toothpaste ads all showed fully covered bristles.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

WOMAN 1 Drink up. I'm buying the next round.

MAN 2 Hello. What's the occasion?

WOMAN 1 It's my six month anniversary with Bryan.

MAN 2 You've been dating someone for half a year?

WOMAN 1 No. It's been six months since the love of my life dumped me.

MAN 2 Tragic.

WOMAN 1 Tragic, upsetting, different.

MAN 2 Different?

WOMAN 1 Yeah, different. Hence the reason I need to drink. He didn't leave me for another woman. He left me for a guy.

MAN 2 Get out.

WOMAN 1 He went to Vancouver for a month, came back, and announced he was gay.

MAN 2 Strike Vancouver off my travel plans.

WOMAN 1 I'm trying to be serious. I don't know who to talk to. When your boyfriend dumps you for another woman, there's at least a cultural infrastructure to help you deal with it. There're Ingrid Bergman movies you can rent; there're Tori Amos CDs you can listen to. When a guy leaves you for another guy, there's nothing in society that tells you how to feel, how to act, how to get revenge.

MAN 2 Just send him a postcard with "I'm late" written on it. Don't sign it.

WOMAN 1 puts her head down

MAN 2 *[Reaches out and strokes her hair in a reassuring friendly matter]*
There there. Forget him. He's gone.

WOMAN 1 That's the problem. He IS GONE. Normally when a guy dumps you there's a faint-hope transition period. You've got a couple weeks to work on a new hair style or find a short skirt that might bring him

back. All what I have is an immediate sense of closure.

MAN 2 Don't worry about closure. It's an over used term anyway.

WOMAN 1 How do you mend a broken heart?

MAN 2 I just try to forget her.

WOMAN 1 How do you forget her?

MAN 2 Find new love.

WOMAN 1 Hair of the dog?

MAN 2 It's the only way. When I'm in a new relationship, my ex-girlfriend could be making porno films with my best friend and I wouldn't give a rat's ass. But until I find new love, hardly a moment goes by that I don't think of her, where it went wrong, and the jobless loser she tossed me over for.

WOMAN 1 Isn't that what all you men want? Your ex's to regret tossing you over and fall in with some loser bum?

MAN 2 No. Personally I'd feel better if she tossed me over for a brain surgeon or an F-14 pilot. You know, someone who can give her something I can't.

WOMAN 1 It's very noble of you to wish her happiness.

MAN 2 It has nothing to do with that. Heck I'd feel better if she got hit by a truck right after she stormed out of my place. But if she falls in with Mr. Zero, that just means I'm less than zero.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1

MAN 1 Drink up. I'm buying the next round.

MAN 2 Don't tell me your girlfriend just left you for another woman?

MAN 1 What?

MAN 2 Never mind.

MAN 1 I'm going to do a bit of power drinking tonight. I'm stressed. My ex-girlfriend called me this weekend.

MAN 2 Oh. Rough. What did you guys talk about?

MAN 1 We didn't talk. She just left a message on my answering machine.

It's like I haven't seen or heard from her in four months and she just up 'n' calls and says "I've just gotten back from a trip to Iceland. Call me."

MAN 2 Did you call her?

MAN 1 Not yet. I'm not sure what to say.

MAN 2 Trust me on this one. Don't call her back. Delete the message.

MAN 1 Why? What harm could come from talking to her?

MAN 2 It could only lead to harm.

MAN 1 But I have no idea why she's calling me.

MAN 2 Regardless of her end game, it's a no win situation for you.

MAN 1 Explain.

MAN 2 There are three possible cases. Case one: She wants to see you once. She wants to show you photographs of her trip and have you ask her intelligent questions, the kind her dip-head friends wouldn't ask, and then she buggers off and you're alone again. The result: heartbreak. Case two, she wants to be friends. So, great, a woman you're accustomed to seeing naked suddenly wants to be your bestest friend. Every time you're out with her, you're sitting across from her thinking to yourself "I know what your nipples look like." The result: heartbreak. Case three: she realizes breaking up with you was the biggest mistake of her life. No one ever treated her as nicely as you. Those blonde, blue eyed, athletic, slender Icelandic men just wanted to do her Viking style. Maybe she's now thinking: What did I give up? Maybe we can try just a little bit harder. Maybe we can try just a little more passion. Reality check: No one ever changes. You're just back into the same unworkable crap that broke you apart. The result: Heartbreak. The logical course of action is to press the delete button no matter how painfully lonely you are.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

WOMAN 1 I'm in a bit of a moral quandary.

MAN 2 Why?

WOMAN 1 The network guy at my work just got married.

MAN 2 Were you having an affair with him?

WOMAN 1 Not a chance. That guy's creeped me out from day one.

- MAN 2** So what's the moral quandary?
- WOMAN 1** Normally when a coworker gets married, I'm in charge of organizing a little cake-and-wine office party to commemorate the event. I usually enjoy that sort of thing but I'm not sure I can work up much excitement about this marriage.
- MAN 2** Did he marry his sister?
- WOMAN 1** If only. He married a Russian mail-order bride he found on some web site.
- MAN 2** Ah, the depravity men are willing to sink to.
- WOMAN 1** It's very unsettling for some strange reason.
- MAN 2** It's unsettling because the mail-order bride industry upsets the balance of power in Western style male/female relationships. Women hold all the power until they fall in love.
- WOMAN 1** It's simply not right that any man with appliances and central heating can be irresistibly sexy to a nation of young, tall, thin blonde women.
- MAN 2** Is she tall, thin, and blonde?
- WOMAN 1** Yes. She's 19. She has short blonde hair and dazzling green eyes. She has one of those slim figures that make me hate her on sight and one of those perky Hollywood noses that make me want to string piano wire in her path while she jogs at night. To look at her you'd think she was a model or an Israeli prime minister's wife. Apparently in Russia she was a teacher. Apparently they are all teachers. *[pause]* Promise me you'll never get a mail order bride.
- MAN 2** I promise. I'd like to think I'm capable of finding a woman within 2 time zones of home. Even if I couldn't I'm convinced a love that's meant to last a life time should have a good first meeting story. I can't imagine my daughter asking her mom one day how her and daddy met and her mom having to answer "well, daddy was very lonely one night until he saw a picture of me in a bikini and high heels on a web site. He was very drunk but managed to enter my order number into a secure server page..."
- WOMAN 1** I feel sorry for her, having to marry a disgusting 55-year-old creep like the smelly old network guy to escape poverty.
- MAN 2** Tragic. My heart goes out to her. But you know, if I could save one leggy 19-year-old blonde from having to marry some old creep by marrying her myself, I mean morality dictates I'd have to do it.
-

Wouldn't I?

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1

MAN 1 So I've got a new girlfriend. And we're thinking of moving in together.

MAN 2 Great.

MAN 1 Yeah. There's one small problem.

MAN 2 Of course.

MAN 1 Yeah. She's a bit young.

MAN 2 How old is she?

MAN 1 19.

MAN 2 How old are you?

MAN 1 32.

MAN 2 Uh huh.

MAN 1 But she's very mature. As they say age doesn't matter.

MAN 2 But it does matter.

MAN 1 How so?

MAN 2 I don't care how mature a woman is at 19. You're a world apart in terms of life experiences and expectations. Do you think any 19-year-old woman is ready to settle down, enter your 9-5 world, and nest with you?

MAN 1 For sure, we've discussed it. She goes to university. She plans to be a doctor. She needs to study a lot and she'll appreciate the stability.

MAN 2 She'll appreciate it until she talks with her other female friends. Suddenly stability will start to seem boring to her.

MAN 1 What do you mean?

MAN 2 No matter what she thinks now, her single friends will always provide her a "grass is always greener on the other side" example. Think about Monday morning when they compare their weekend activities over coffee. Her friends are like "oh my god we had the best time we totally got shit faced at this pub and then met these

totally gorgeous Navy pilots and we all got kicked out of the bar because the Navy guys started beating up other guys looking at us and we were so drunk we had wild animal sex behind the bar in a trash dumpster and then they took us for a ride on the back of their motorcycles and we like totally peeled out because I think a truck hit us and I lost most of the skin on this leg but it didn't hurt because I was so drunk! It was the wildest time! We're meeting them again next weekend and they're going to take us rock climbing or skydiving or something." Then they turn to your girlfriend and ask her what you guys did and she answers "Oh we order pizza, anchovies on half, watched Survivor on tape, and then went to bed at 10 pm." Trust me, in 6 months time, you'll stop seeming "stable" and you'll start seeming boring. Pretty soon every time she experiences the least bit of ennui, you'll get blamed. "You're so boring! All you ever want to do is go to movies and restaurants! We never have sex in trash dumpsters! We never get drunk and break into houses! You're so boring! BORING BORING!"

MAN 1 So, like, I should isolate her from her friends then?

MAN 2 Even if that were possible, you have to accept a 19-year-old is a walking ball of anxiety about the future. As certain cusps in her life approach -- like the end of school, med school applications, the start of a career, not to mention fertility issues -- she'll start to freak out, reexamine her life, and begin to worry that others only three or ten years older than her are so much further ahead than her. After she asks herself what she has managed to accomplish lately, she'll turn her thoughts to you. She'll begin to wonder exactly what you have done for her lately. She'll ask herself "Why am I always the one suggesting things? Why do I always have to push him to try new things like vegetarian food or Julia Roberts films? Why do I always have to take the lead in this relationship?" One night you'll wake up at 3 am and find her reorganizing the sweater drawer mumbling to herself that her mother is coming over on the weekend and that's the first place her mom will look. And then -- and then my friend -- she'll realize the solution to this pitiful existence is to completely change everything in her life. And she'll start with you. She'll dump you. If she can accomplish a task as difficult as jettisoning a man who has real feelings for her, she can do anything. Secure in the knowledge she can affect real change in her life, she'll begin and end her campaign of life changes with you.

MAN 1 Ugg!

MAN 2 Wash, rinse, repeat.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

- WOMAN 1** It's not entirely true that all the good ones are either married or gay.
- MAN 2** Oh found a good one who's straight and single?
- WOMAN 1** Yes. But the problem is he's a coworker. So that rules him out.
- MAN 2** Why?
- WOMAN 1** It's unethical. I'd never date a coworker. What happens when you break up? It causes way too many problems on the job.
- MAN 2** I'd have no ethical reservations about dating a coworker as long as I was getting into the relationship with the honest belief that the relationship was going to last longer than either of our jobs at that company. I think what's wrong is when people just start dating a coworker because there is no one else available at the moment.
- WOMAN 1** I still won't date a coworker. I have standards.
- MAN 2** I wish I had standards.
- WOMAN 1** I'm sure you do.
- MAN 2** No. I don't.
- WOMAN 1** I'm quite certain there are a lot of women you would not date. I'm positive you would never date a stripper.
- MAN 2** You're right. I want a smart, kind woman. I want a woman who challenges me to think, to see the world through her eyes. I want a woman who values in me what I value in myself. I want a woman who will cherish me as much as I cherish her. In sum, I'd NEVER date a stripper, unless she asked me.
- WOMAN 1** You're right. You really don't have standards.
- MAN 2** The sad fact is, men don't have standards. We have aspirations, but we pretty much will take whatever comes along.
- WOMAN 1** Pig!
- MAN 2** I want to walk into a room and have women come up to me and thrust their phone numbers and body parts into my hands. I want women to melt under my gaze and my touch. I want to date young, up-and-coming porn stars. But I'll never have that, so I have to be happy with what I have.

ACT II

Dark. Spot lights fade up on MAN 1 and WOMAN 1. They are in their traditional spots from Act I. MAN 2 is absent. The seat between them is in shadow.

WOMAN 1 has a small bouquet of flowers in front of her. MAN 1 looks at the dark spot usually occupied by MAN 2. He looks back at the audience and sighs. WOMAN 1 looks at the black spot usually occupied by MAN 2. She looks back at the audience and sighs. Both look at their watch. Both look simultaneously at the dark spot usually occupied by MAN 2. Their eyes meet. They both look away in embarrassed shock. They both look back and stare at each other for a moment.

MAN 1 Sorry for staring. I was looking for a friend.

WOMAN 1 Me too.

MAN 1 Oh, are you waiting for...

WOMAN 1 Yeah. You too, huh?

MAN 1 Yeah. Me too.

WOMAN 1 He's a bit late.

MAN 1 He's usually not late.

WOMAN 1 A man who's on time. You don't find that quality in your gender very often.

MAN 1 It's not exactly a common trait in women either. You just don't hear us complaining about it.

WOMAN 1 We have more to do to get ready. You think I can just roll out of bed looking this good?

MAN 1 Yes. You've got that natural Ingrid Bergman look, there's a silver screen air about you, a look that --

WOMAN 1 -- Oh shut up. Don't give me that. I talk to him as much as you talk to him. I know his tricks.

MAN 1 Well, anyway, you women should obsess a bit less on how you dress.

WOMAN 1 I have to obsess. You try walking in my shoes for a day, literally. You put on a top and a pair of shorts, you have to worry if they

clash. I have worry if they clash and if some guy on public transit is going to get turned on by what I'm wearing and follow me for the rest of the day.

MAN 1 and WOMAN 1 look away and stare at the audience. There's silence. MAN 1 pulls out a book and starts reading. WOMAN 1 grows bored and begins to resent MAN 1 ignoring her.

WOMAN 1 You just going to read that until he comes?

MAN 1 Sure. As a woman, you might be accustomed to waiting for a man by planning how you're going to fume for the rest of the night, but I had a girlfriend who was frequently 30 minutes late. I learned to start carrying around a book so I could read that while waiting.

WOMAN 1 Not a bad idea.

MAN 1 Yeah. At first I tried tricks like telling her a concert started at 7:30 when it started at 8. But infrequently she would actually arrive at the appointed time and then I appeared half an hour late. The consequences of me making her cool her heels for half an hour were so severe I eventually accepted simply waiting half an hour with a good book was all around better for our shared happiness.

WOMAN 1 How is that shared happiness going?

MAN 1 She dumped me.

WOMAN 1 Why?

MAN 1 We moved in together.

WOMAN 1 That's always the beginning of the end.

MAN 1 It was something of a learning experience. Taught me what married life is like.

WOMAN 1 And what did you learn about married life?

MAN 1 Being married means never being able to wear what you like ever again.

WOMAN 1 Yes, when we're younger we have dolls and when we're older we have our husbands.

MAN 1 I can't count the number of times I was ready to head out in the morning to work and she would bar the door and scream "I certainly hope you're NOT going to work dressed like that?" What business is it of hers how I dress at work?

WOMAN 1 Because it reflects poorly on her. How can she possibly meet your female coworkers at the company Christmas party and keep her head up knowing she lets you leave the house wearing a yellow golf shirt, khaki pants, green socks, and grey Bass loafers? So did you learn anything else?

MAN 1 Yes. There's no such thing as relationship karma with a woman.

WOMAN 1 What do you mean?

MAN 1 Being in a relationship means you're only as good as your last trip to the grocery store.

Stage lights go dark and then spot light an area of the stage to the right of the bar.

To the right there is a stand with a paper grocery bag on it. WOMAN 2 removes an item from the bag and then checks something off a list. MAN 1 stands on the other side of the table reading a newspaper.

WOMAN 2 Thank you for doing the grocery shopping, sugar kisses.

MAN 1 No problem, muffin feet.

WOMAN 2 *[removes another item, makes check on list]* And thank you for proof reading my master's thesis, apple sweets.

MAN 1 I was only happy to do it, bunny boots. You really opened my eyes to how 1,200 years of cyclical crop failure contributed to the socio-political make-up of low German culture.

WOMAN 2 *[removes another item, makes check on list]* You know that was so thoughtful of you today to drive all the way downtown in that snowstorm and bring me my lunch, huggy bear.

MAN 1 I didn't want you to go without lunch, my lil' cherry bomb!

WOMAN 2 *[removes another item, makes check on list]* And, binkie kisses, that love poem you wrote and tucked into the lunch sack, that was so sweet.

MAN 1 *[MAN 1 looks up from newspaper, tries to recall the words to the poem, and then recites it]* RAM is red / ROM is blue / Your beautiful face / Makes my heart race / Faster than a Pentium III C-P-U

WOMAN 2 *[removes another item, makes check on list]* You are such a creative boo boo buns!

MAN 1 You inspire me, my pogo stick of passion.

WOMAN 2 *[removes another item, makes check on list]* And thanks again for donating my mother one of your kidneys. You are such a pinchy bums!

MAN 1 For the woman that gave birth to you, I could refuse her nothing, my wiggle winks.

The woman looks in the bag. She up ends it to verify the bag has been emptied of groceries. She looks at her list. She looks at the groceries on the table. She looks back in the bag.

WOMAN 2 Umm... tinkle toes?

MAN 1 Yes, butter lips?

WOMAN 2 Where are the peas?

MAN 1 What peas?

WOMAN 2 This list I gave you. Right after "pads, heavy flow" I had "peas, 1 can". Where is the can of peas?

MAN 1 It's not there?

WOMAN 2 No.

MAN 1 I must have forgot.

WOMAN 2 *[pushes grocery products onto the floor, enraged]* YOU ARE UNBELIEVABLE AT TIMES! A PERSON MAY AS WELL BE TALKING TO THE WALLS WITH YOU. YOU DON'T LISTEN DO YOU? AND YOU NEVER WILL! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU. YOU'RE THE WORST ASSHOLE I'VE EVER DATED. SOMETIMES I THINK I CAN'T BE IN THIS RELATIONSHIP.

Stage lights go dark and then spot lights come back on WOMAN 1 and MAN 1 in their traditional seats at the bar.

MAN 1 It would be nice if there was some stored-up relationship karma. Some small degree of mercy you could bank for those times you're not 100% perfect. I mean, it was just a can of peas!

WOMAN 1 It's not just about a can of peas with a woman. Don't you understand? Today you forget a can of peas, tomorrow you might forget the baby and bassinet on the hood of your car as you drive off. It's never just anything.

MAN 1 Who said anything about a baby? We never even planned on having children.

WOMAN 1 Doesn't matter. Mistakes happen. Underneath it all, a woman who's sleeping with you will always have in the back of her mind an uneasy feeling about what kind of father you'll make. Are you the type who'll stick around and help raise the child? Are you the type who will run off to Vancouver, change your name, and destroy your dental records? Are you a cheap bastard she'll have to battle 18 years for child support?

MAN 1 That's entirely irrational.

WOMAN 1 Yeah, so?

MAN 1 So, I really hated that about my girlfriend. I hated how irrational things would freak her out. I'd be like "what's wrong, honey?" and she'd tell me she was stressing over some minor thing like the couch doesn't match the drapes and her mother is coming over in two days. I'd think about it and then give her 4 logical reasons why her fears were unfounded, irrational, and everything would be alright. I then expected her turmoil, in the words of Douglas Adams, to vanish in a puff of logic. But it never did. Instead, she'd start freaking out at me, calling me an insensitive jerk. Insensitive? Like I'm only trying to help!

WOMAN 1 My boyfriends do that to me too. I hate that. Why can't a man just say "Wow, that sucks" and give me a hug. Don't try to solve it. Women are not stupid. I know rationally why I shouldn't freak out. But I can't stop freaking out. That's why it sucks, Einstein. Don't remind me how irrational I am. I already know. I can see the irrationality of my anxiety. You telling me my fears are ungrounded only makes me feel worse.

MAN 1 Yeah, I suppose, but my work makes me tackle problems logically. It's hard to turn off at the end of the day.

Bit of silence. WOMAN 1 calms down a bit.

WOMAN 1 What do you do for a living?

MAN 1 I'm a developer.

WOMAN 1 Developers are kind of sexy. What sort of land do you develop? Residential or commercial properties?

MAN 1 Not that kind of developer. I'm a software developer.

- WOMAN 1** Oh, I see. *[Looks from side to side to see if maybe there isn't someone more interesting she should be talking to at the moment]*
- MAN 1** I get that a lot.
- WOMAN 1** It's not that there's anything wrong with software development, per se. I just had a bad experience with the type.
- MAN 1** That's too bad.
- WOMAN 1** Oh well, at least it opened my eyes. I work in advertising which means I use Mac. I was vaguely familiar with Steve Jobs as some sort of computer guy archetype. Computer people seemed then dark, mysterious, and sexy like Jobs. How quickly I learned.
- MAN 1** You met a Unix developer?
- WOMAN 1** I met Michael. He was 28, he had already sold two software companies for several million dollars before I met him, and he was starting a third company. Oh yeah, he was a fair kisser.
- MAN 1** It could be worse.
- WOMAN 1** It got worse. For all his millions he was the biggest cheapskate I ever met. He would do things like invite me over for dinner and serve two-day-old microwaved pizza he brought home from the office after an all nighter.
- MAN 1** If that's not a reason to dump a millionaire, I don't know what is. A man should be a walking checkbook, shouldn't he?
- WOMAN 1** Look, harkening back to your can of peas incident, it was just a lot of little cheap things he did to drive me off. At some point, a woman realizes the guy doesn't need a life partner. He needs a mother. And it's not like I didn't try to work with what I had. But eventually I had to admit defeat. I took Michael grocery shopping one day. I wanted to teach him food came in something other than a square cardboard box with coupons for a free 2-liter Pepsi stapled on top.
- MAN 1** It doesn't?
- WOMAN 1** No.

Stage lights go dark and then an area of the stage to the left of the bar is spot lighted.

There is a stand with some vegetables on top. Vegetables include celery, green peppers, and white mushrooms. WOMAN 1 and MICHAEL are looking at the vegetables. MICHAEL is holding a plastic shopping basket

MICHAEL *[picks up a celery bunch]* Vegetables, I've read about these.

WOMAN 1 Yes, we're going to make shishkabob. It's fun and easy to make.

MICHAEL What's in it?

WOMAN 1 Meat, mushrooms, green peppers, tomatoes.

MICHAEL Like pizza.

WOMAN 1 *[snaps]* Not pizza. You put it on a skewer and then barbeque it.

MICHAEL Meat on a stick. Like a corn dog. Nature's most perfect food.

WOMAN 1 Correction, meat and vegetables on a stick.

MICHAEL What sort of batter?

WOMAN 1 There's no batter. It's pointless to eat vegetables if you're going to deep fry them.

MICHAEL I guess I can pick the vegetables off.

Spot light comes on MAN 1

MAN 1 Strike one!

Spot light on MAN 1 goes dark

WOMAN 1 I'm going to pick out a couple green peppers. You get some mushrooms.

WOMAN 1 goes to the other side of the stand, pulls out a plastic bag, starts looking for the perfect green pepper. WOMAN 1 notices MICHAEL picks out a single white mushroom, holds it up to the light as if he's looking for a flaw in a diamond, and then places the single mushroom in the basket. He repeats this several times. WOMAN 1 watches with increasing horror and frustration. She eventually puts her green pepper down and walks to the other side. She takes the basket from MICHAEL,

dumps the mushrooms back onto the pile, opens her plastic bag, shoves a handful of mushrooms in, spins the bag closed and seals it with a green wire twist tie. She places the bag into MICHAEL's basket. MICHAEL removes the bag and holds it up, looking at it like a boy looking at a couple goldfish just bought from the pet store.

MICHAEL You know I noticed there are no price tags on these mushrooms or the bag.

WOMAN 1 They weigh the bag at the cash.

MICHAEL Weigh it? One damn minute.

MICHAEL removes the twist tie, throws it behind his back, and squeezes all the air out of the bag. He then ties it shut.

MICHAEL If they're weighing this, the hell I'm paying for this twist tie and all this air.

Spot light comes on MAN 1

MAN 1 Strike two!

WOMAN 1 *[looks at MAN 1]* I didn't wait around for strike three. I got out of that grocery store and his life.

Lights fade and come back up on WOMAN 1 and MAN 1 in their traditional seats. The MAN 2 space between them is still dark.

MAN 1 Hey, who are the flowers for?

WOMAN 1 No one.

MAN 1 Flowers are always for someone. They're not for him, are they?
[Motions to MAN 2's empty seat]

WOMAN 1 No, they're not for him.

MAN 1 You love him.

WOMAN 1 Sorry?

MAN 1 You love him. *[Motions to MAN 2's empty seat]*

WOMAN 1 Is that a question?

- MAN 1** A statement of the obvious phrased as a question.
- WOMAN 1** You don't know me nearly well enough to be making statements like that.
- MAN 1** I hit a sore spot?
- WOMAN 1** Not really, but it's true. I don't love him. *[gets slightly annoyed]*
Like what do you know about me really?
- MAN 1** Not much. But he has his charms. It's not unbelievable a smart, feeling woman would be charmed by him.
- WOMAN 1** Granted. Still that proves nothing.
- MAN 1** Hence the questioning tone in my voice. I might be 90% sure but I'll leave room for doubt. Or more accurately, I'll leave room to be convinced by the arguments you use to convince yourself you're not in love with him.
- WOMAN 1** I don't need to convince myself of anything. I'm not in love with him. It's just a simple fact.
- MAN 1** Yeah. Sure. So then who are the flowers for?
- WOMAN 1** I've decided to start buying myself flowers.
- MAN 1** Isn't that the man's job?
- WOMAN 1** It should be, yes, but I'm tired of waiting around for a man to do the job or waiting for Mother's Day.
- MAN 1** What does Mother's Day have to do with it?
- WOMAN 1** Because I can buy flowers for myself but the sales person will think I'm buying them for my mother.
- MAN 1** I don't see the problem with walking into a flower shop and buying flowers for yourself.
- WOMAN 1** It's about shame. It's akin to the unexpressed shame a man feels when he buys a skin magazine. It's like admitting to the register jockey "I will never have this in my life for real."
- MAN 1** I never realized.
- WOMAN 1** It's true. But there's hope. I read studies that showed an increasing number of single women are not waiting around for a man to do the deed. They are buying themselves flowers in record numbers. Higher the woman's education, more likely she is to buy them for
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herself. It seems the ad wizards are beginning to wake up to an untapped and slightly bitter demographic: single women, 25-32, with good paying jobs, one bedroom condos, and no worthwhile male prospects to be found this side of the Earth's curvature. These marketers probably have an insulting name for them like "Empty Womb Hold Outs" (EW-HOs?).

MAN 1 *[pause]* So you don't love him?

WOMAN 1 Look, we're both waiting for him and I hardly know you, so can we talk about safe, getting-to-know you things?

MAN 1 Sure.

WOMAN 1 *[pauses a long while trying to figure out what to talk about and then finally stumbles on...]* So what kind of company do you work for?

MAN 1 I work for a bank.

WOMAN 1 It's as good a job as any these days.

MAN 1 I know. I was pretty lucky to get it too, given I had some dot.com experience on my resume.

WOMAN 1 You were one of those guys?

MAN 1 Yep. Sometimes I think if you're going to apply to a bank or financial company you should remove any dot.com experience you have from your resume. It's better to tell them you had a two year break in employment because you were strung out on heroin than to tell them you worked for a dot.com.

WOMAN 1 What did you do for the dot.com?

MAN 1 Like most of my coworkers, I mostly spent my time planning a ski vacation. Which is probably the reason banks are so reticent to hire former dot.com'ers. When I had actual work to do, it was paint monkey stuff. I've never seen such an overstaffed company. They went from three employees to three hundred in three months. Now they are down to two employees. I think only one of the guys is an actual employee. The other one is appointed by the bankruptcy court. He spends his days going over receipts and asking the other guy "you spent \$25,000 on something called a J45. Where is it and is it in saleable condition?"

WOMAN 1 *[chuckles]*

MAN 1 This company was right messed up. They raised \$30 million in an IPO and blew half of it on a single party in Vegas.

WOMAN 1 That's some party!

MAN 1 It was incredible. They flew all the employees there, loads of journalists, even the CEO of their main competition. They rented out rooms for everyone for the weekend. And to top it all off, they had Sting and Sarah McLachlan play at the bash.

WOMAN 1 What did they do with the other \$15 mil?

MAN 1 They spent \$2 million on a super bowl ad that only ran once. It's like everyone is trying to redo Apple's 1984 commercial. The rest they spent on some pretty nice water-front offices and a European pastry chef for the executive dining room. I think Pete Townshend was briefly on the payroll. Almost any lame brain thing they threw money at was always justified as "we need this in the current economy to attract and retain good employees".

WOMAN 1 I've always been under the impression you attract good employees because you have a good product and a work environment that presents interesting challenges. Good workers create their own fun. You attract slackers if you throw crap at them.

MAN 1 It was a crazy time. These dot.coms were so desperate for people it seemed they would give a 50K-a-year job to anyone who at least knew a mouse wasn't something you roasted over an oil drum full of burning tires.

WOMAN 1 What did this company do?

MAN 1 You're going to laugh when I tell you. I did when they told me. But then they offered me a 95K a year job and 30,000 stock options and I shut up my god damn trap.

WOMAN 1 I promise I will laugh if appropriate.

MAN 1 The company was called JustDayOlds.com. They were basically a B2C and B2B site that brokered merchants' day old inventory.

WOMAN 1 What sort of day old merchandise?

MAN 1 Anything really. Donuts, muffins, bread, deli counter items, newspapers, sushi.

WOMAN 1 Someone gave them \$30 million for that idea? What was their business plan? Their revenue generation model?

MAN 1 *[replies initially with a long, hearty laugh]* Given they blew all their money on parties, I'd say none, beyond ignorantly assuming because they had dot com after their name there would always be

someone ready with another 30 million to fund their ego trip. The only time they acted like they ever gave any thought to actual reality was when they closed up shop and posted on their web site a long, open letter to their customers and shareholders apologizing for JustDayOlds.com closure. Their explanation was "The market for such a service has not developed as quickly as expected". Hello! The market never existed in the first place. Our monthly payroll was ten times higher than our gross sales for the year.

MAN 1 lets out a long sigh

MAN 1 Oh well, who could blame them? I mean the whole idea of the dot.com was to put the traditional brick-and-mortar stores out of business.

WOMAN 1 Ah, then you achieve profitability?

MAN 1 *[reaches out and pretends like he's strangling someone]* You have to get off this whole profitability kick. Profit never, ever figured into the dynamics of the New Economy.

WOMAN 1 Then what's the point of going into business? Why throw \$30 million dollars at a venture?

MAN 1 It was all about control of society's infrastructure. No one makes money directly from infrastructure. That's why we pretty much let the government build our roads, dams, sewers, libraries, air traffic control systems, etc. These things require massive capital investments and if you tried to run a nation-wide highway system for profit, you'd not see a return on your five hundred billion dollar investment for two hundred years.

WOMAN 1 So why throw so much money at Internet infrastructure?

MAN 1 Because with the net, you don't have to build anything. You just have to sign deals, make alliances, generate ideas, get them to work or sort of work online, and then patent them.

WOMAN 1 So you build this non-existent infrastructure. What good is it?

MAN 1 Lets imagine you're a trucking company and you could build a national highway system for fifty million bucks. Since you own the highway, you can control when other trucking firms use the roads. So you let your trucks make deliveries during off-peak times and limit the competition to morning and afternoon rush hours. Your trucks make deliveries on time and all the competitors are hung up in traffic and late. Soon, you don't have any competitors.

WOMAN 1 Spooky.

MAN 1 It gets even spookier if you consider things like online book stores. If you own amazon.com and you put the brick-and-mortar stores out of business, you control what society reads. The New Economy really begged the question "how much are you willing to pay to play God?"

WOMAN 1 You talk like you were somehow above it, but you cashed their checks.

MAN 1 A man has to eat. Like you've ever put ethics before eating?

WOMAN 1 It just so happens I quit a job over ethics.

MAN 1 What did you say you did again?

WOMAN 1 Advertising.

MAN 1 Oh well, you're a fine one to lecture me about ethics.

WOMAN 1 Hear me out. One of my first jobs was working for an advertising company that got a contract for a new brand of cigarettes called "Fireworks".

MAN 1 Never heard of it.

WOMAN 1 Good, because it was targeted at women aged 18 to 24. After children, it's the only demographic that offers an expanding market to tobacco growers. The company wanted to position Fireworks with this sort of riot grrrl/in-your-face campaign. The gimmick was to sell the smokes in a cylindrical package that was supposed to look like a roman candle but looked more like a penis.

MAN 1 Odd, that.

WOMAN 1 It gets worse. The bus shelter campaign featured a picture of woman about to deep throat the carton. The ad copy read "Fireworks: It's like having a big, purple bang in your mouth!"

MAN 1 And that's why you quit?

WOMAN 1 That's why I almost quit. I quit when they wanted me track down all the ad space in bus shelters near high schools. *[pause]* So what do you like to do for fun?

MAN 1 I'm sort of addicted to a networked computer game called Stalin Attack.

WOMAN 1 Stalin Attack?

- MAN 1** It's the latest 3D shoot-em up. Totally wicked. 14 different guns, shoot down U2 pilots, snatch Czech playwrights off the street and wire their nipples to car batteries --
- WOMAN 1** -- Enough! What is it with you keyboard jockeys and your need to simulate mass murder?
- MAN 1** It's not murder. It's just a way to work out pent-up aggression.
- WOMAN 1** That's just an excuse
- MAN 1** "That's just an excuse." That sounds a lot like "it's all in your head".
- WOMAN 1** Huh?
- MAN 1** You know PMS. By saying that you're dismissing me exactly in a manner you wouldn't want a guy to dismiss you.
- WOMAN 1** Come again?
- MAN 1** *[stands and begins to pace around]* When it was that time of the month, guys used to claim it was all in your head. Women eventually convinced us that there was something more going on, a complex interaction of brain chemicals and body hormones. Stuff we males couldn't possibly comprehend but should try to understand anyway, even if that meant occasionally letting you kill us.
- WOMAN 1** Great. You've taken high school biology and read *The Burning Bed*.
- MAN 1** If you had taken some biology instead of pursuing a little advertising degree, you would know that men have their own unique hormonal chemistry. It's called testosterone.
- WOMAN 1** Heard of it.
- MAN 1** Great. *[grows increasingly aggravated]* Let's not forget a little thing called "Survival of the fittest". It should come as no surprise the male of the species needs to occasionally strangle something. You're looking at the product of thousands of years of evolution. I'm a descendant of only the most ferocious alpha males who lived long enough to pass on their genetic code. *[Stands with his hands on his hips, stomach thrust outward, shirt untucked, looking entirely unlike someone worthy of the title "alpha male"]*
- WOMAN 1** You know I really hate that.
- MAN 1** *[takes seat]* What? An explanation of human behavior based on ethnology?
- WOMAN 1** No, that attitude you programmers and engineers have that people
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with an arts degree somehow don't rate in this world.

MAN 1 Everything we use -- computers, VCRs, radios -- they're all products of science and engineering. So yeah, I feel like I'm contributing to society. I ain't a YODA.

WOMAN 1 YODA?

MAN 1 *[says each letter individually]* Y-O-D-A. It stands for Young Opinionated but Directionless Artsie.

WOMAN 1 Gosh, you make it sound like being an Artsie is a bad thing. When you go home, what do you watch on TV?

MAN 1 I dunno. You know. PBS. Mystery Science Theater 3000. Lots of movies.

WOMAN 1 And who do you think writes those movies? Engineers?

MAN 1 No. But who gives you the tools? Who makes your movie cameras and iMacs? You artsies would be nothing without us technical people!

WOMAN 1 You still don't get it. Technical people are in the service of the artistic community. Not the other way around.

MAN 1 Meaning?

WOMAN 1 If tomorrow a nuke war fried our TVs, the survivors would go back to the hillsides to watch actors in stone masks. Humans make art, no matter how primitive the tools.

MAN 1 Yeah, but what would you rather do... sit on some mushy hill side and watch Oedipus Tech or sit in a dry movie theater and watch a flick?

WOMAN 1 *[turns nose up]* I prefer live drama.

MAN 1 And how many plays have you seen in the last year?

WOMAN 1 Ummm... none.

MAN 1 And how many first-run movies have you seen in the last couple months?

WOMAN 1 Six.

MAN 1 Wow. That many. I love movies.

WOMAN 1 So do I. *[Silence, WOMAN 1 waits for MAN 1 to get a clue]* It's just

so hard at times to find someone to go to the movies with. *[Silence, WOMAN 1 waits for MAN 1 to get a clue]* I just hating going alone. You know? *[Silence, WOMAN 1 waits for MAN 1 to get a clue]* So many good movies at the theater these days. *[Silence, WOMAN 1 waits for MAN 1 to get a clue]*

MAN 1 Errr, did you want to go see a movie some time?

WOMAN 1 Sure.

Lights fade and come back up on WOMAN 1 and MAN 1. MAN 1 is in MAN 2's traditional spot.

MAN 1 is rubbing WOMAN 1's arm. They're talking, laughing, and generally carrying on. Clearly their movie date was a success and they've gotten to know each other better.

Spot light suddenly comes up on MAN 2. MAN 2 is standing behind WOMAN 1 and MAN 1

MAN 2 has a look of shock on his face. He's stunned that not only is MAN 1 in his spot, but MAN 1 and WOMAN 1 have met and are on highly personal terms. WOMAN 1 and MAN 1 soon detect MAN 2's presence. They look back with equal horror. Busted!

Lights go out.

ACT III

Dark. Spot lights fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1. They are in their traditional spots from Act I.

MAN 2 So how was your date with my friend?

MAN 1 I'm not sure it was a date.

MAN 2 Where's the confusion?

MAN 1 It's just so hard these days to tell when it's a date and when it's just two friends doing something together.

MAN 2 True, true. A date is ultimately defined by having similar end games.

MAN 1 What sort of end game?

MAN 2 Sex of course.

MAN 1 We didn't have sex!

MAN 2 It doesn't matter. You'd eventually like to have sex with her?

MAN 1 Yeah. Eventually. So does that make it a date?

MAN 2 No. Her end game has to be, of course, wanting to have sex with you.

MAN 1 Eventually.

MAN 2 Eventually.

MAN 1 And I suppose it would be way way out of line to ask her at any point "Are we going out because we merely have some common interests and enjoy each other's company or are these one-on-one outings a building process by which we set down emotional tendrils, grow the relationship, and eventually get it on?"

MAN 2 You have learned well, my young padewan.

MAN 1 So sex is like opening the box on Schrödinger's Cat. What we do together is both a date and not a date. The question cannot be resolved until we, like, yee ha! ride 'em skipper! We're gonna use all the furniture tonight, baby!

MAN 2 Absolutely. And whatever you do make sure you don't let the relationship evolve into a No-Girlfriend situation.

MAN 1 A No what?

MAN 2 A No-Girlfriend. She's yes to all sorts of boyfriend/girlfriend like activities: horror films, Christmas at your parents' place, rides to the airport. She is, however, no to one thing [*holds up index finger then extends the rest of his fingers and flattens out his hand parallel with the bar*] horizontalling. The only dimension that defines a relationship.

MAN 1 Only you would reduce love to planar geometry.

Dark. Spot lights fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1. They are in their traditional spots from Act I.

MAN 2 So how was your date with my friend?

WOMAN 1 It was nice.

MAN 2 "Nice" as in "he's a nice guy and I think we can be friends" nice? Or "nice" as in "some entirely new and unheard of female use of the word nice to describe a guy she just met and finds attractive" nice?

WOMAN 1 "Nice" as in "he did nothing piggish and he knew how to keep a conversation going and I sort of wished he called me the next day but it was nice in a way he didn't" nice.

MAN 2 Sounds nice.

WOMAN 1 Yes, very nice. One concern, if I may.

MAN 2 Naturally.

WOMAN 1 He's not one of those Asian fetish guys, is he?

MAN 2 What?

WOMAN 1 I never know initially if a guy is after me because he likes me or he's just one of those Asian fetish types.

MAN 2 What's an Asian fetish type?

WOMAN 1 He likes Asian women.

MAN 2 And if he disliked Asian women?

WOMAN 1 He'd be racist, of course.

MAN 2 Well, then, let me make it clear at this juncture in our friendship, I like Asian women.

WOMAN 1 I always knew you were one of those Asian fetishers!

MAN 2 Look, all I'm saying is I don't dislike Asian women. I don't care if she's white, black, Asian, or one of those green Star Trek women. An attractive woman is an attractive woman. Period! And what if I were to say I prefer Asian women? Hypothetically speaking, of course.

WOMAN 1 Hypothetically speaking then you just might probably be an Asian fetisher.

MAN 2 That's entirely unfair. There are a lot of white woman that will only date like Latino guys or Jamaican guys. Why is that okay? No one slaps that woman with a label. People just say "oh, that's what she likes." But if a guy expresses some overt racial preference, he's got a fetish. And yet, if his tongue was hanging out every time a big breasted blonde woman walked by he'd be labeled "normal". I just so happen to like women with dark hair, who are intelligent, speak more than one language, like spicy food, work in the medical, accounting, or engineering fields. Okay so sue me if more Asian women match those criteria.

WOMAN 1 Okay, sorry, there are some exceptions. I'm just a little sensitive. If you met some of these creeps you'd understand. They seem like pretty nice guys at first. Then after about a date or two the guy announces that he "likes Asian women" as if it were some sort of magnanimous gesture on his part. He then drops such key phrases that he likes Asian women because they're "demure" (i.e. "subservient"), "feminine" (i.e. "no body hair"), and "exotic" (i.e. "in possession of secret sexual techniques unknown to white women"). My god, the lot of them are really nothing more than shallow, sex-crazed anal freaks who have written off an entire race of women because they got dumped on prom night!

MAN 2 I had no idea.

WOMAN 1 No you don't, do you? You have no idea how hard it is sometimes. Not only do I have the normal problems of trying to weed out the married cheaters, ax murders, stalkers with anger management problems, and musicians, but then I have to figure out if a guy is an Asian fetisher or even an egg.

MAN 2 An egg?

WOMAN 1 Those are dudes who are white on the outside but yellow on the inside. They're not interested in dating me, per se. They're trying to date me and a thousand years of Korean history. They're not aggressively scary like the Asian fetish types. They just get boring really quickly. They're so predictable. Everything they want to do

revolves around Korean or Asian culture. You know I really like eating Greek food and then seeing a German opera. I rarely want to spend every weekend eating Korean food, seeing a Korean film retrospective at the art gallery, and then going to Koreatown for *no rae bang*.

MAN 2 No ray what?

WOMAN 1 At least you're not an Egg. It's Korean karaoke.

MAN 2 I can assure you, he's not an egg or one of those Asian fetish types either.

WOMAN 1 Good. I think he has some possibilities.

MAN 2 Oh yeah?

WOMAN 1 Yeah. But don't tell him I said so. I don't want him to think I'm easy.

MAN 2 Your secret is safe with me.

Dark. Spot lights fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1. They are in their traditional spots from Act I.

MAN 2 Dude, good news, she likes you!

MAN 1 Get out of here.

MAN 2 Yes. But you didn't hear it from me.

MAN 1 No probs. Unless you have a problem with this.

MAN 2 Why would I have a problem with this?

MAN 1 You spend a lot of time with her. I feel like I'm stealing one of your women. We're best friends. I don't want this to come between us.

MAN 2 When did anything like a life-long friendship ever stop a man from trying to steal another man's woman?

MAN 1 True. So, now that it's looking like I'll be off the market, I guess I can devote a bit of time finding you a woman.

MAN 2 Why couldn't you do that before?

MAN 1 Because I was single too. We were both competing for the same pool of available, attractive women. And no matter how much I tell myself we have completely different taste in women, I know we'd

both chase after the first reasonably attractive woman that came along.

You know, now that I'm not in competition with you, I find your wit and stylish clothing less irritating.

MAN 2 Thanks.

MAN 1 *[motions to audience]* Hey, what about her. She's cute. She looks like Julia Roberts.

MAN 2 *[Does not even look]* Forget it, I hate Julia Roberts. The woman is fugly.

MAN 1 She's a helluva lot cuter than that co-op you were slobbering over last month.

MAN 2 Which co-op?

MAN 1 The short one with the facial hair.

MAN 2 Oh yeah her. She was sort of cute. Sue me for noticing.

MAN 1 You're trying to tell me a five-foot one-inch tall bearded woman is more attractive than Julia Roberts?

MAN 2 No. What I'm saying is it's all relative. At a software company where there are more stalls in the women's restroom than there are actual women in the company, a five-one bearded woman looks pretty good. If Julia Roberts was an intern at work, you can bet I'd take the long way to the coffee room just to go by her cubicle every day. But against the pantheon of Hollywood goddesses, a fantasy world where I could have any woman, Julia Roberts wouldn't get a second look from me.

MAN 1 Oh well, excuse me, Hef.

Dark. Spot lights fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1. They are in their traditional spots from Act I.

WOMAN 1 I was thinking about fixing you up with my coworker Cheryl.

MAN 2 Have I ever met Cheryl?

WOMAN 1 No. She's fairly new.

MAN 2 Do you have a photo?

WOMAN 1 No, I don't. But I've told her a lot about you and she's pretty keen

to meet you.

MAN 2 Hrm. So this would be like a blind date?

WOMAN 1 I guess. But the way you say "blind date" makes it seem like I'm suggesting lung surgery.

MAN 2 I've never had much luck with blind dates. You ever go on a blind date?

WOMAN 1 You know once my dad tried to fix me up on a blind date.

MAN 2 Your dad? How weird is that?

WOMAN 1 Yeah, it's kind of embarrassing, actually. I was 21. My father and mother had been married at 18 so in their minds, I was rapidly approaching old maid status. I had come home from a night class. My dad was sitting on the living room couch with a stack of letters in front of him on the coffee table. He called me over. He explained he had run an ad in the local Korean paper requesting letters from young men of noble character between 21 and 25 who might be interested in dating his daughter, a smart, traditional lady with traditional Korean values and American citizenship. He received over two hundred and fifty letters. He told me he spent a week narrowing it down to these seven letters. He offered them to me. I should now choose.

MAN 2 Did you?

WOMAN 1 No! He totally picked the wrong time. It had been a bad day for me. The kind of bad day only a hormonal woman in her early, early twenties can have. On top of trying to grapple with issues of school, friendship, romance, fertility, work, and the frightening, ever looming future, I was retaining water and none of my friends had noticed my new shoes, which were hurting my feet, possibly because they were new or possibly because I had gained an enormous and obvious amount of weight since I bought them three days ago. My friends were purposely avoiding commenting on my shoes because then they would have to tell me "you're too fat to wear those shoes". And now this. Now here was my father in my face trying to tell me... tell me what exactly? Tell me that the only hope I had of ever finding a man was by taking out an ad? My own father was telling me this? I ripped the letters from his hands, burst into tears, and ran to my room. I bunched the letters into a big ball and threw them into my garbage pail. I crawled into bed and cried myself to sleep.

MAN 2 Sounds traumatic.

WOMAN 1 Yeah, well, around two in the morning I woke up and began thinking. "Dad read through two hundred and fifty letters and found only seven men worthy of me? What sort of men does dad think are worthy of me?" I got out of bed, removed the letters from the trash, and got back into bed with them. I smoothed out the letters in front of me and started reading. Four of the letters had pictures and three of them were really, really cute. One was an intern at a children's hospital. Another just started work as a commodities broker. The third, Peter, was 24 and in law school. Peter was a third generation child of the family that controls the Samsung empire.

MAN 2 Good work, pa!

WOMAN 1 You're telling me! In the morning, I put the law student's letter in front of my dad and sort of mumbled "He seems okay."

MAN 2 Did you ever meet him?

WOMAN 1 Oh yeah. He became my first serious boyfriend. For having the kind of looks, brains, and old money that let you get away with being supremely cocky, he lacked a dominant asshole gene typically found in his type. When I finally had to break up with him, it was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do.

MAN 2 Why did you break up with him?

WOMAN 1 He was bucking to get married and I couldn't conceive of marriage until I was in my early 30s. Ever try to break up with someone that your parents love like a son? I had to tell them he was getting all creepy and that's why I broke up with him.

MAN 2 Was he getting creepy?

WOMAN 1 No, that's just a story I made up to convince my family I was making a rational choice. He was a prince to the end. About the only thing that bothered me about him was he would say odd things. I think they were meant to sound romantic in their original Korean. However, when he said them in English they lost a lot in the translation. I can still picture him leaning over a restaurant table and saying to me in this bedroom voice "I want to wrap my loving arms around you like seaweed around well-prepared sushi rice".

MAN 2 Do you ever regret breaking up with him? I mean, a young, good-looking, nice, rich lawyer doesn't come along every day.

WOMAN 1 Yes, many times I do regret breaking up with him.

MAN 2 You'll have a helluva time finding better.

WOMAN 1 Sometimes a woman doesn't care about doing better. Sometimes a woman just wants to do differently.

Dark. Spot lights fade up on MAN 1 and WOMAN 1. WOMAN 1 is in her traditional seat from Act I. MAN 1 is in MAN 2's spot again.

MAN 1 and WOMAN 1 are laughing a bit, discussing something between themselves

Spot light fades up on MAN 2. MAN 2 is in MAN 1's traditional spot from Act I. He does not look pleased by his displaced spot.

MAN 2 So now where'd you two little love birds get off to tonight?

WOMAN 1 We went for Thai food.

MAN 1 It was great. It was really spicy.

WOMAN 1 That wasn't at all spicy. I suspected it wasn't going to be that good. I was the only Asian in the place.

MAN 1 You know you do that a lot.

WOMAN 1 Insult your favorite restaurants?

MAN 1 No. You have this habit of counting Asians.

WOMAN 1 Hey?

MAN 1 No matter where we go, you always give me an Asian head count.

WOMAN 1 begins to protest but she's cut short by MAN 2

MAN 2 He's right. You're always making comments like 'lots of Asians at this mall' or 'I think I've doubled this neighborhood's Asian population'.

MAN 1 *[to MAN 2]* Well, I liked it. We'll have to go there for lunch one day.

MAN 2 What's it called?

MAN 1 Magic Thais.

MAN 2 Magic Thais. Magic Thais. Why does that sound familiar?

MAN 1 Did you ever read *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*?

- MAN 2** Of course. It's a pun on Majicthais. He's one of those two philosopher in *Hitchhiker's* that were bested by Deep Thought.
- MAN 1** Exactly. All their menu items are named after *Hitchhiker's* characters. There's dishes like Marvin the Paranoid Android Pad Thai and Zaphod Spicy Chicken with Peanut Sauce.
- MAN 2** Errr... on second thought maybe I'll pass on that. Sounds a bit too cutesy. I love Thai food but I'm growing a little tired of these Thai puns restaurant reviewers load up their headlines with. "Thai one on!" [*shakes head in disgust*]
- MAN 1** The food is Fan-thai-stick!
- WOMAN 1** Indulge your Fan-Thai-see!
- MAN 1** Hold the rosemary, give me the Thai menu!
- WOMAN 1** Thai me up, Thai me down this food is good!
- MAN 1** Make thai-er tracks to this place!
- WOMAN 1** A great place on a Thai-ght budget!
- MAN 1** It's a Thai-dy little place!

MAN 2 is glaring at them

- MAN 2** Are you guys having fun?
- MAN 1** I have to use the little boys room.
- MAN 2** Me too.
- MAN 1** If you'll excuse me.
- WOMAN 1** Certainly.

MAN 1 gets up and moves towards the back of the stage, into the dark.
MAN 2 whistles to self and taps fingers on bar top.

- WOMAN 1** I thought you said you had to go to the bathroom too?
- MAN 2** Yes.
- WOMAN 1** So why aren't you going?
- MAN 2** Men never go to the bathroom together. It's polite to give another

guy at least a ten second lead. *[looks at watch]* Okay, safe.

MAN 2 gets up and moves towards the back of the stage, into the dark.

Lights fade up behind the bar. There are four evenly spaced urinals. A row of sinks and a hand dryer is further towards the back of the stage.

Lights on the bar fade out.

MAN 1 is facing the audience, standing behind the left-most urinal. MAN 1 is in the process of relieving himself. To the far right, perpendicular to the line of urinals is a group of sinks and an electric hot air hand dryer. MAN 2 enters the restroom from the left. MAN 2 considers the row of urinals and takes up a position behind the right-most urinal and begins relieving himself. MAN 1 finishes and flushes. MAN 1 turns to MAN 2.

MAN 1 So I need new eyeglasses --

MAN 2 *[gives MAN 1 a dirty look]* -- excuse me I'm urinating here. Do you mind waiting?

MAN 1 You can talk and piss at the same time, can't you?

MAN 2 Do you know nothing about male bathroom etiquette?

MAN 1 is about to answer but MAN 2 cuts him off by raising his index finger to indicate "one minute". MAN 2 finishes urinating and flushes. MAN 2 moves to the sinks. MAN 1 follows. With great dramatic flare MAN 2 presents his hands to MAN 1, as if to show he's unarmed. MAN 2 begins washing his hands and MAN 1 then follows.

MAN 2 When two males are in a public washroom, it is customary to a) avoid eye contact b) avoid conversation until such time as both men's flies are firmly in the upright position. It is preferable that both men's right and left hands are clearly visible in the non-threatening act of hand washing. Conversation must be strictly limited to sports or work. You were saying?

MAN 1 I was about to say I need new eyeglasses and I was thinking of taking her with me. Any potential pitfalls there?

MAN 2 No. I think that's a brilliant idea. There are two things no male should buy without the advice and consent of a woman. Eye glasses and a leather jacket.

MAN 1 presses his face closer to the mirror. MAN 1 teases his eyebrows a bit.

MAN 1 Good god, these eyebrows are growing out of control. They're going Brezhnev on me.

MAN 2 You look like a bad *Star Trek* makeup effect.

BOTH finish washing their hands. BOTH move simultaneously to the single hand air dryer. MAN 2 is just a little bit quicker and bumps MAN 1 aside. MAN 1 reflexively looks around for another air dryer but sees none and stands there with his hands held up before him like a surgeon who has just disinfected his hands.

MAN 1 This is the problem with public washrooms. They'll put in twelve sinks but only one hand dryer. Wouldn't you think if twelve people were washing their hands, they'd all get done about the same time?

MAN 2 presses the hand dryer lever but it doesn't turn on. MAN 2 pounds it a few more times. Nothing.

MAN 2 Great.

MAN 2 thrusts his right hand under his left arm pit and his left hand under his right arm pit. He lowers his arms and quickly removes his hands, wiping them dry under his arm pits.

MAN 1 That's just a little disgusting.

MAN 2 Hey, why do you think God gave us arm pits?

MAN 1 shrugs and wipes his hands in the same manner.

Dark. Spot lights fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1. They are in their traditional spots from Act I.

MAN 2 You sure your parents won't have a problem with you dating a white guy?

WOMAN 1 Not so much these days.

MAN 2 Don't they want full blooded Korean grandchildren?

WOMAN 1 Luckily I have a younger brother and that responsibility seems to

have fallen on him.

MAN 2 How did you swing that?

WOMAN 1 Some luck and some chutzpah. For a couple years my mother was putting on the full court press about marrying and producing grandkids. Meanwhile I was sort of seeing this white guy named Dave at school. I kept it a secret for a few months but knew eventually I'd have to let mom know. So what I did was acclimatize her. I started hinting I was hanging out with a group of school friends that may include a white guy named Dave. Then I started showing her group photos of my friends and I would casually point out Dave. At some point my mother commented Dave looked like an intelligent young man. Emboldened I then showed her a picture of Dave and I sitting on top of a picnic table together.

MAN 2 My god, sitting with a man on top of a picnic table! You may as well have told her you were sleeping together!

WOMAN 1 Hey, I left some wiggle room. In the picture a picnic basket was between us.

MAN 2 Ah yes. I believe the nuns in Catholic school used to insist the width of a picnic basket was ethical distance between a man and woman. Or was it the width of a baptismal fount? I can't remember anymore.

WOMAN 1 The thing is, my mom fixated on the picnic basket. She wanted to know whose it was and the contents. I said it was Dave's and he packet it with ham sandwiches and potato salad from the deli. What happened next I'm still not sure of. Either mom suggested maybe Dave would like to try some traditional Korean cooking or I suggested Dave's diet was bland and could be enriched with some of her wonderfully spicy dishes. In any regard, a dinner invite was extended and dinner invite was accepted.

MAN 2 Ah, dinner. Was it one of those *Joy Luck Club* moments?

WOMAN 1 The dinner was a painless affair. Dave actually managed to make my father laugh. But after Dave left, my mother started raising the customary objections. I was not about to let months of prep work go down the drain. I stared directly at my mother and said "Mom, is he *my* boyfriend or *your* boyfriend?" She had no answer and never raised an issue with who I was dating ever again. I think she feels I'm somehow lost and it is better to concentrate on my poor brother Timmy.

Dark. Spot lights fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1. They are in their

traditional spots from Act I.

- MAN 1** Did you know rice isn't a vegetable?
- MAN 2** Says who?
- MAN 1** Says my girlfriend.
- MAN 2** If it requires sun, soil, and water to grow and it does not taste good mixed with yogurt, it's a vegetable.
- MAN 1** People mix rice and yogurt.
- MAN 2** I think you're thinking of pudding, rice pudding.
- MAN 1** Oh yeah.
- MAN 2** Ever try rice pudding?
- MAN 1** *[ponders]* Yeah. Still, it doesn't make the pudding taste bad. Actually it doesn't really add any taste.
- MAN 2** It doesn't add taste; it adds weird. It adds crunchy, which is as bad.
- MAN 1** Anyway, on the food pyramid rice is considered a grain.
- MAN 2** Screw the food pyramid. I eat so many processed microwaved foods my diet is better described by the bottom rung of the Periodic Table of Elements.
- MAN 1** We're reaching that age where we have to start thinking about our health.
- MAN 2** Suddenly you're a health nut. It's her influence isn't it?
- MAN 1** What do you mean?
- MAN 2** Nothing is more unsettling to a woman than being in a relationship with a man who's cavalier about his health. Not only does it piss her off that men have nothing comparable in terms of the pain and degradation of a visit to the gynecologist, but if she starts seeing you as a potential life partner, it adds another thing she has to worry about at night.
- MAN 1** Like what?
- MAN 2** She begins to think "Is this guy going to die of a heart attack at age 55? Because when I hit my 50s, I'll be old and crusty and I'll never be able to find another man."

- MAN 1** You know what goes on at those gynecologists?
- MAN 2** Only what I saw in that Jeremy Irons movie *Dead Ringers*.
- MAN 1** You been to a doctor lately?
- MAN 2** Why, need the name of one?
- MAN 1** Not really. I'm just wondering if I'm at that age where I need regular rectal exams.
- MAN 2** I don't know, man. I've not been to a doctor since the end of the Reagan administration.
- MAN 1** You should probably start going to a doctor yourself. You're at that age.
- MAN 2** What age?
- MAN 1** 36.
- MAN 2** What's so special about 36?
- MAN 1** Given the average male life expectancy is 72, you're, well, you're half dead.
- MAN 2** You're such a pessimist. I prefer looking at it from the optimist's point of view. I'm not half dead. I'm half alive.
- MAN 1** You won't get any arguments from me.
- MAN 2** I'm not scared of death.
- MAN 1** Bull crap.
- MAN 2** It's true. I went to the dentist last year and he put me under the gas. One moment I'm in the dentist's chair and counting backwards from ten. The next thing I know I'm being woken up and told the procedure was done. Something like an hour passed but as far as I knew, no time had passed. There was zero perception during that hour. I got to thinking that's what death is like, except you're under the gas forever. It's nothing more than a deep, dreamless sleep from which you never wake up.
- MAN 1** Sounds horrible.
- MAN 2** Why does that sound horrible?
- MAN 1** Because you're dead.
- MAN 2** What's so bad about being dead?
-

- MAN 1** As you said, it's the cessation of all thoughts, feelings, pleasures. It was like working for that dot.com.
- MAN 2** What's so bad about a cessation of thought and feeling?
- MAN 1** Dude, why do I have to keep coming back to this? You're dead!
- MAN 2** You're arguing in circles. Think a second: before you were born, you experienced no thoughts, no feelings, no pleasures. Weren't you technically dead for millions of years before you were conceived? You didn't seem to mind then.
- MAN 1** When I was in my mother's womb, I was wet, naked, and fed through an umbilical cord. In the same way I don't want to go back to sucking food out of a slimy appendage, I no longer want to give up the consciousness I know I possess. In fact, I so fear losing that, I'm more than willing to entertain the idea that, as boring as it seems, there is a heaven where people sit around on clouds playing harps for eternity.
- MAN 2** That's your vision of heaven?
- MAN 1** No. I said I was willing to entertain the idea. I don't necessarily believe it. My vision of heaven is a nudge weirder.
- MAN 2** Weirder, huh?
- MAN 1** Yeah. In Catholic school in grade 4 a priest came to my class. He mentioned that in heaven you will know everything. Cool. But I figured just simply having the knowledge beamed into my newly acquired super consciousness couldn't be that fun. The acquisition of knowledge shouldn't be so boring, especially in heaven. So what I envisioned was your first couple centuries are like an extended episode of Leonard Nimoy's *In Search Of*. Everything you've ever wondered about is covered in an episode.
- MAN 2** Everything?
- MAN 1** Absolutely. Everything from "Who broke my Rock 'm Sock 'm Robots?" to "Who shot JFK?" Everything you ever wondered about would be presented in the form of an *In Search Of* episode except, and this is the appealing part, Leonard Nimoy comes out in the end and actually gives you the damn answers. You're not left with a bunch of questions and a disclaimer in the credits claiming the ideas put forward were based on conjecture.

Dark. Spot lights fade up on MAN 2, MAN 1, and WOMAN 1. They are in their traditional spots from Act I.

MAN 1 Length.

MAN 2 Thickness.

MAN 1 and MAN 2 both look at WOMAN 1

WOMAN 1 *[shakes head]* Cleanliness.

Dark. Spot lights fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1. They are in their traditional spots from Act I.

WOMAN 1 Aren't there any women you're attracted to?

MAN 2 Yes.

WOMAN 1 Who?

MAN 2 Most of them.

WOMAN 1 Hey Brigham Young, pick one.

MAN 2 The woman I keep seeing at the bank.

WOMAN 1 A teller?

MAN 2 No. A customer. We always seem to do our banking at the same time. Either I'm in front of her in line. Or she's in front of me in line.

WOMAN 1 Why don't you talk to her?

MAN 2 Forget it.

WOMAN 1 Why not? Take a risk.

MAN 2 At the risk of making a woman feel uncomfortable?

WOMAN 1 You're infuriating.

MAN 2 Here's my glitch. When I see a woman in a bank line, I think she's there to do banking. When I see a woman in a book store, I think she's there to buy a book. When I see a woman in Starbucks, I think she's there to enjoy her short double shot half decaf half soy half skinny extra hot with light foam. In sum, I don't believe women leave the comfort and privacy of their home so they can constantly endure men picking up on them.

WOMAN 1 Look at it this way, if you don't hit on her, the next guy will. And I'm pretty certain you're a far nicer guy than the creep that will hit on her.

MAN 2 It's a good, if familiar logic. What would I say to her?

WOMAN 1 Since you see her regularly, engage her in small talk that will determine if you have some common interests. Like, ask her what her weekend plans are or how her weekend went. It's a great way to determine if you have common interests.

MAN 2 No can do. I do my banking on a Wednesday.

WOMAN 1 And Wednesdays are bad because?

MAN 2 Because as far as weekend chit chat goes, it's a conversational dead zone. The earliest one can possibly ask a person their weekend plans without looking desperately lonely or insane is end-of-day Thursday. And Monday is the only day you can legitimately ask a person how their weekend went. If you're lucky enough to have missed seeing the person on Monday, Tuesday mornings are permissible. But Wednesday? Never on a Wednesday.

Dark. Spot lights fade up on MAN 2, MAN 1, and WOMAN 1. They are in their traditional spots from Act I.

MAN 2 and MAN 1 have paper and pencils in front of them. They're making checks on a piece of paper. MAN 1 holds up his piece of paper and looks troubled.

MAN 1 *[to MAN 2]* For your football picks, who do you like? The Buffalo Bills or the NY Jets?

MAN 2 Good, question. Hard call.

MAN 1 *[to WOMAN 1]* You got any ideas?

WOMAN 1 I don't know much about football.

MAN 1 *[to WOMAN 1]* I need some beginner's luck.

WOMAN 1 *[frustrated]* I really don't know much about football.

MAN 1 Just tell me which team you think has the cutest quarterback. I'll go with that.

WOMAN 1 *[She does not like being talked down to, takes pick sheet from MAN 1. She considers the pick sheet for a moment and hands it back.]*

The Jets' coaching is in turmoil over the arrest of its head coach for soliciting prostitutes. The Bills are currently trying to get city council to foot the tax bill for a new stadium. While the TV market in upstate New York is a strong one for the Bills, I think everyone concerned realizes there's opportunity in emerging southern TV markets, possibly in an Atlanta edge city. So I'd count on the Bills to cover the spread for the next few weeks in hopes of increasing their bargaining position.

Stunned silence

MAN 2 Wow, I thought you said you didn't know anything about football?

WOMAN 1 I don't. I just know a lot about political intrigue.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

WOMAN 1 Well that's it. My last female friend from university is married. I'm officially friendless. I hate this. I can never have a life in balance. I have the boyfriend, I have the career, but now I have no meaningful female friends.

MAN 2 Just cause they're married doesn't mean you can't hang with them, right?

WOMAN 1 I'm afraid it means exactly that. They all married these lunk heads. I tried for a while to keep up my friendship with my best friend from university. We'd go out for dinner and coffee and talk about books and subtitled films. But when we did that after her marriage, she would always have her husband in tow. I guess the guy would whine if she left him home alone. When he came out with us, he would just sit there staring at us, breathing through his mouth, unable to add anything of substance to the conversation. When they got home, he'd start freaking out on her for ignoring him and she'd call me later in tears. It just all became too much to deal with. *[pause]* You know what's harder sometimes then finding a man? Finding a woman friend.

MAN 2 I know. It's not that easy to find a male friend either. By a certain age everyone has their set of friends.

WOMAN 1 There are a couple women at work I wouldn't mind gal palling with but other than the occasional drink after work I've had no luck getting better acquainted.

MAN 2 Would it seem rude or desperate to ask if they have a waiting list? "In the event of a death or job transfer and a space becomes

available on your friends list, please consider me as a candidate for trips to antique shows and celebrity chef cookbook signings."

WOMAN 1 I keep thinking I should run an ad on one of those personals web sites advertising for a straight woman friend.

MAN 2 It won't work. You'll only get men responding.

WOMAN 1 I figure I could put in a line like "ABSOLUTELY NO MEN NEED APPLY".

MAN 2 *[laughs like WOMAN 1 just claimed she was going to open a frogurt stand on Mars]* Good luck with that. Any man reading that ad is going to think "Yes, but clearly she doesn't mean me because I have a twelve inch penis." In his mind, he's practically doing you a favor by responding.

WOMAN 1 I'm doomed.

MAN 2 Not quite. I suggest a better alternative to "ABSOLUTELY NO MEN NEED APPLY TO THIS AD" would be something like: "Absolutely no men need apply to this ad. If you're a man and you do respond I will email you back immediately and engage in months of online flirting. After you've professed your total undying love for me and you've sent me numerous expensive gifts to my P.O. Box, I will demand you fly to a remote city to meet me and then I will not show up and never respond to another email of yours again. So you can waste my time now or I can waste the next year of your life and the greater part of your disposable income. Don't say I didn't warn you."

WOMAN 1 Think that would work?

MAN 2 There's a slim chance.

WOMAN 1 You're noticeably single. Would you run an ad on the net?

MAN 2 No way!

WOMAN 1 Never?

MAN 2 Never!

WOMAN 1 Oh come on.

MAN 2 Well, actually...

WOMAN 1 Yes...

MAN 2 I've tried it once or twice. Just to see. Of course.

WOMAN 1 Oh, where'd you run your ad?

MAN 2 Yahoo personals.

WOMAN 1 Yeah?

MAN 2 And Match.com.

WOMAN 1 Right.

MAN 2 Plus lavalife.com, kiss.com, friendfinder.com, and americansingles.com.

WOMAN 1 Meet anyone.

MAN 2 One or two people.

WOMAN 1 And?

MAN 2 And I learned there are six different kinds of people you will meet online. One, people you'd never meet. Two, people you'd meet if they lived down the street. Three, people you'd meet if they lived on the other side of the city. Four, people you'd meet if they lived in another city in your state. Five, people you'd meet if they lived in any city in North America. Six, people you'd meet if they lived any place in the world. The only problem is, I keep meeting people online who live in another state but I wouldn't cross the street to meet them.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2, MAN 1, and WOMAN 1

WOMAN 1 I'm thinking about making that salmon dish again for Sunday dinner.

MAN 1 Ah yes. That was an amazing dish.

WOMAN 1 You think so?

MAN 1 Absolutely. Except the asparagus was a bit over cooked.

WOMAN 1 What do you mean over cooked?

MAN 1 Your asparagus is mushy.

WOMAN 1 You know, I really hate when you do that.

MAN 1 Do what?

MAN 2 begins to look increasingly uncomfortable. He begins to look

around for some excuse to flee the scene, get away from this burgeoning lovers' quarrel.

WOMAN 1 You know exactly what you do!

MAN 1 No I don't. If I did, I'd not ask.

WOMAN 1 You can never just say something good about me or what I do or what I like and leave it at that. You always have to add in a little nit pick. "It was great but..." "Fantastic except..." "The best ever if it hadn't been for..."

MAN 1 I'm sorry. That's just my nature. It's got nothing to do with you. I'm like that with my friends all the time. *[turns to MAN 2]* Ain't that right?

MAN 2 draws back, puts his hands up to communicate "don't pull me into the middle".

WOMAN 1 I'm not your buddy. I'm your girlfriend. And a fairly new one at that. In case you're unclear, there is a difference. You don't place your whole sense of self into the hands of a friend. I expose to you every vulnerability, including my... my deformity.

MAN 1 Your what?

WOMAN 1 Oh, please, don't tell me you haven't noticed.

MAN 1 Noticed what?

WOMAN 1 Oh my god! Haven't you noticed when I fold my arms my right hand is like this.

WOMAN 1 demonstrates, folding her arms and covering her left breast with her right hand.

WOMAN 1 Or when I wear a purse, the strap always crosses over my left side. Or when I wear a shirt with double front pockets, I always put my sun glasses in my left pocket.

MAN 1 Uh! Uh!

WOMAN 1 points directly at her tits.

WOMAN 1 You can't have not noticed my right breast is bigger than my left!

MAN 2 makes facial contortions like he is definitely hearing too much information

MAN 1 We're barely at that stage where you let me see you naked in good light! How can I tell that?

WOMAN 1 You sure feel them enough!

MAN 1 When I touch them I'm not exactly trying to compare them by doing four-pie-r-squared.

WOMAN 1 looks at MAN 1 with a "what the fuck are you talking about?" look.

MAN 2 *[Interrupts]* You mean pie-r-r-squared-plus-h-squared-raised-to-the-power-of-point-five.

MAN 1 What?

MAN 2 Four-pie-r-squared that's how to calculate the surface area of a sphere. Wouldn't the formula to calculate the surface area of a cone be more appropriate?

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

MAN 2 I've been having the worst possible luck with dating.

WOMAN 1 How so?

MAN 2 Remember that cute co-op I was talking about last month?

WOMAN 1 The one with the beard?

MAN 2 Not her! A guy finds one woman with some excess facial hair cute and suddenly he's branded as a guy with a bearded woman fetish.

WOMAN 1 Sorry, I can only recall the odd ones. Like the woman who used to always email you pictures of her dog in different hats.

MAN 2 Oh yeah, her. I crafted a new rule after her. Never date a woman who treats her dog better than you.

WOMAN 1 You pine over so many women, I have a hard time keeping track.

MAN 2 I'm talking about the curly haired blonde.

WOMAN 1 Oh dear. You mean Tina. Wasn't she in a bad car accident?

- MAN 2** Actually, she got hit by a truck.
- WOMAN 1** Ouch.
- MAN 2** Before her accident, I bumped into her in a Starbucks and we got to talking. We exchanged emails and made plans to catch a movie or something. The next bloody day, she got hit by the truck.
- WOMAN 1** That is bad luck.
- MAN 2** It wasn't totally bad. I sent a little Get Well Soon ecard to her email address. When she got out of the hospital, she picked it up. She thought it was pretty cute, two bears hugging each other and holding balloons. She emailed me to say thanks. We got to talking and somehow we made plans for that coffee date.
- WOMAN 1** Great!
- MAN 2** That's what I thought. The poor woman suffered some bad head trauma and still wanted to keep our date only a few weeks after being released from the hospital after brain surgery.
- WOMAN 1** So what happened on this coffee date?
- MAN 2** In my effort to power charm her, I went a bit too far.
- WOMAN 1** Oh?
- MAN 2** She still had all these scars from the accident. Lots of her hair was shaven away from surgery, half of one of her incisors was chipped away, and she had an eye patch.
- WOMAN 1** Oh, lovely.
- MAN 2** And she limped a bit. But you know, despite all that, I thought to myself, "she's still pretty cute".
- WOMAN 1** Of course.
- MAN 2** Yeah so I asked her a bit about the accident and that's where it went wrong.

Stage lights go dark and then spot light an area of the stage to the right of the bar.

To the right there is a small round table with two chairs. MAN 2 and TINA sit on either side. TINA has bandages on her head and she is wearing an eye patch. There are paper Starbucks coffee cups before them.

MAN 2 What did you think of the movie?

TINA I can't believe I let you take me to see a slasher film!

MAN 2 What? *Torso Versus the Axe Men*? A slasher film?

TINA Yes.

MAN 2 It's a classic! The director mentored Kubrick! The ax scene in *The Shining* was a total homage to *Torso Versus the Axe Men*!

TINA What's classic about a film that continually repeats the same two scenes: woman takes her top off; woman gets her head cut off?

MAN 2 They were different women. Hey, I like art films. I've seen *Das Boot* and *Mallrats* fourteen times. But sometimes I like to see a movie where I can just sit back and eat popcorn.

TINA You ate all your popcorn during the Pepsi ad. What were you left with?

MAN 2 Ninety minutes of silent, non-judgmental companionship. [*fumbles for some conversation, points to bandages*] Any lasting effects from the head injury?

TINA Just some double vision. I'll have to wear this eye patch for a few months

MAN 2 Anything else?

TINA I limp.

MAN 2 Hardly noticeable. Anything else?

TINA What do you mean?

MAN 2 I mean, like, you got psychic powers now?

TINA What?

MAN 2 If I suffered a head injury the first thing I'd do is check for psychic powers.

TINA What?

MAN 2 Yeah like can you see my future or read my thoughts?

TINA What?

MAN 2 Here try to move this coffee cup with your mind.

MAN 2 puts his right index finger to his right temple and starts pushing the coffee cup towards TINA with his left index finger in an effort to demonstrate what he'd like her to try but MAN 2 pushes it too far and it spills into TINA's lap. TINA stands and quickly limps off stage.

Stage lights go dark and then spot lights come back on WOMAN 1 and MAN 2 in their traditional seats at the bar.

MAN 2 She stopped returning my emails after that.

WOMAN 1 Perhaps it best you didn't get involved with a woman who lacks a robust sense of humor.

MAN 2 I don't know. I was intrigued by a woman with double vision.

WOMAN 1 In what way?

MAN 2 I figured she would be a cheap date. You know, you take her out for sushi, order her six pieces, she thinks she has 12.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and MAN 1

MAN 1 How do you know when you're in love?

MAN 2 I guess when you feel, like, feelings of love?

MAN 1 Not a valid test. It's so easy to confuse love and lust.

MAN 2 True. Telling the difference between love and lust is non-trivial. But after a number of relationships I think I finally know the difference.

MAN 1 Yeah, sure.

MAN 2 I'll tell you, but it's a bit embarrassing.

MAN 1 Sounds juicy.

MAN 2 Not really. Love is all about feet.

MAN 1 Feet? You got some kind of foot fetish I don't know about?

- MAN 2** No! The opposite, in fact. Feet are such horrible, disgusting things, I can only bring myself to touch the feet of a woman I truly love.
- MAN 1** What do you mean by touch? You mean lick? Kiss?
- MAN 2** Kiss? Lick? God, no. Not even if she were the Duchess of York! I'm talking, you know, giving her a foot massage.
- MAN 1** Ah yes, foot massages. But, when you give a girlfriend a foot massage, doesn't it invariable lead to sex?
- MAN 2** Sure.
- MAN 1** Not a fair test then.
- MAN 2** Okay, look, another foot example. Is there anything you hate worse than going shopping with your girlfriend?
- MAN 1** Yeah. Especially when I was dating Lorna.
- MAN 2** Why?
- MAN 1** Because she spent an endless amount of time looking for shoes.
- MAN 2** See, here's the key, if you're merely in lust with a woman, you'll weasel out a shoe shopping expedition
- MAN 1** I think the lure of sex after would keep you mildly interested.
- MAN 2** Did it keep you interested with Lorna?
- MAN 1** No actually.
- MAN 2** See. Even the promise of a long, slow blow job with a no-cuddling-afterwards rider is not enough to make the average man put up with anything more than a cursory once over of the for-sale bin.
- MAN 1** True true.
- MAN 2** If it's just lust, you'll warm the bench outside and watch other women go by or you'll tell her to meet you in front of the fountain in twenty minutes then you go grab a coffee at the Starbucks, hoping that cute red head is working the afternoon shift. The key here is if you're in love with a woman, you'll follow her into the shoe store. You'll hold her packages while she tries on shoes. You'll even offer an opinion on what looks nice.
- MAN 1** Offer an opinion? Whoa! Danger Will Robison!
- MAN 2** You're catching on. When you're in love, you'll risk it. You just want
-

to be near her.

MAN 1 I see. So how do you know a woman is in love with you?

MAN 2 Oh. That's easy. She lets you name her puppy.

MAN 1 And what if she doesn't own a dog?

MAN 2 Then she names her Sim character after you.

Spot lights go dark then fade up on MAN 2 and WOMAN 1

WOMAN 1 I'm so stressed. I have to meet his parents tomorrow. I look horrible.

MAN 2 No you don't.

WOMAN 1 Yeah, I've gained weight.

WOMAN 1 How much?

WOMAN 1 A pound, maybe two pounds by now.

MAN 2 Yeah, you're really packing it on.

WOMAN 1 Jerk.

MAN 2 Look, I can sit here and argue you've not gained weight and you're looking better today than you've ever looked before and you can sit there and argue that I'm just saying all that to be nice. We can go back and forth like this for most of the night.

WOMAN 1 You're right.

MAN 2 Whenever you're down about your appearance, always remember Rule Number 3A for living: You're always more attractive than you think you are.

WOMAN 1 Rule 3A? Why A?

MAN 2 Because 3A applies to women only. Rule 3B applies to men.

WOMAN 1 What's rule 3B?

MAN 2 Rule 3B for Living is: Dude, get over yourself already. You're not all that.

WOMAN 1 What's with men? Almost every guy I know has this inflated sense of self.

- MAN 2** I think it's because early on in a guy's dating life, he had one girlfriend who told him he was great in bed and he assumes forever more all women will come to that conclusion.
- WOMAN 1** That's so hurting. What I find enjoyable in bed is not necessarily the norm. Actually I don't think there is a norm. There's a lot my girlfriends and I can never agree on. Some like men who are slow, attentive lovers. Some like men who are really aggressive and bend them every which way.
- MAN 2** Which do you prefer?
- WOMAN 1** Not telling.
- MAN 2** See there's rarely any disagreement between men what we find sexy. Hence most men assume what one woman likes all will like.
- WOMAN 1** One thing I've always liked about you is you're not very hung up on yourself.
- MAN 2** Yeah, well, it's through no fault of my own. The thing is, I don't feel sexy. No woman I've ever dated has ever told me what she found sexy about me. I think this is a problem endemic to women kind and maybe the root of many of your own problems with men. You're very good at telling us what you don't like about men. But you never articulate what you actually like about men. In the absence of this information, we're forced to conclude women like about men what we like about ourselves, namely our penis and our car. Possibly in that order.
- WOMAN 1** You really don't feel sexy?
- MAN 2** I don't feel sexy enough.
- WOMAN 1** What do you mean enough?
- MAN 2** I always assume if a woman wanted sex, there are always better available candidates out there.
- WOMAN 1** Not in my experience.
- MAN 2** You're just not really looking or you're holding out for one of those bothersome relationships. It's undeniably true that an average woman in possession of a full set of adult teeth can go into a bar and if she was bold enough, she could go up to the best looking man in a bar, offer him a night of no-strings sex, and there's a ninety percent chance he'll say yes. However, with the exception of rock stars, few men could ever do that. And I'm no rock star.

WOMAN 1 But you've had women in bed. What do you think they were doing there if they didn't find you sexy?

MAN 2 As best I can figure, committing acts of charity, compassion, and self sacrifice.

WOMAN 1 If I were single, I'd do you, and not for reasons of charity.

MAN 2 Now you tell me! How come we never got together?

WOMAN 1 I didn't mean to imply that I'd have had casual sex with you. I just mean, you've always been boyfriend material.

MAN 2 *[Sounds a little disappointed]* That's what I meant. Over the years I've seen you drift in and out of relationships. How did we always avoided hooking up?

WOMAN 1 You never really asked me.

MAN 2 Is that all I had to do, ask?

WOMAN 1 No. If you had come out and asked straight out I would have been spooked. But you know, we've always done friend-like things together.

MAN 2 Ah, right. I'm in, as they say, "the friend zone".

WOMAN 1 I don't believe in the friend zone. Because I've dated guys who were friends. It's sort of nice to have that familiarity and security.

MAN 2 So what do I lack?

WOMAN 1 Honestly?

MAN 2 Yeah.

WOMAN 1 *[thinks a bit]* Magic.

Spot lights go dark and remain dark for longer than normal. They then fade up on MAN 2, MAN 1, and WOMAN 1.

MAN 2 Well, I'm going to call it a night.

MAN 1 Dude, it's Friday. It's only 10 pm.

MAN 2 I know. I've been finding it hard to stay up late on weekends.

MAN 1 Since when?

MAN 2 Since... since I don't know. It's weird how these things just creep up on you. It's like when did every band on the radio start sounding like Green Day?

MAN 1 Yeah. Or when did I start seeing the adult humor in *The Flintstones*?

WOMAN 1 Or when did I stop bursting into tears after throwing up?

- MAN 2** When did I start needing coffee?
- MAN 1** When did my parents stop being able to answer all my questions to my satisfaction?
- WOMAN 1** When did I stop being able to eat two pieces of cake in a bowl of chocolate milk and whip cream and not gain any weight?
- MAN 2** When did I stop thinking the guy at the Sunoco station had the neatest job in the world?
- MAN 1** When did the cashiers at McDonald's stop looking like bosomy women and started looking like pimply girls?
- WOMAN 1** When did I stop liking Toy R Us and started liking the house wares department at Sears?
- MAN 2** When did I start thinking family portraits make a nice gift?
- MAN 1** When did I start thinking that the government doesn't necessarily know the best way to spend my tax money?
- WOMAN 1** When did non-matching living room furniture become a worry that keeps me up at night?
- MAN 2** When did I start worrying about my credit rating?
- MAN 1** When did my friends and I stop planning a social renaissance and started planning our retirement?
- WOMAN 1** When did I start worrying if the mustard in my fridge is past its expiry date?
- MAN 2** When did I start saying "youth is wasted on the young"?
- MAN 1** When did I start thinking of a year as January to December and not September until school lets out in June?
- WOMAN 1** When did I get so grumpy?
- MAN 2** When did I grow up?

All nod in agreement and sigh.

END