

EVERYGUY

A -gasp- romantic comedy in two acts

By Derek Sonderfan

5/03

ACT I, SCENE I

A living room. EVERYGUY and FORESIGHT are sitting on a couch, possibly having come back from a bar where they just met. There is the inimitable pre-conversation awkwardness, as they are both sitting on the couch, fidgeting a bit. Finally, they both go to speak at the same time.

EVERYGUY
So, how did you—

FORESIGHT
This is a—

They stop, a little embarrassed. They both motion at the same time for the other to speak. They laugh a bit at this coincidence, and then both try speaking again.

EVERYGUY
I'm sorry, you—

FORESIGHT
What were you go—

They stop. They even motion again, twice each. Then, a moment where they just sit and stare, waiting for the other to talk. Finally, they both start again.

EVERYGUY
No, you can—

FORESIGHT
Why can't—

Slight pause.

EVERYGUY
Hold on a—

FORESIGHT
I've never seen—

They begin to eye each other suspiciously, but only for a moment. This is still somewhat amusing to them. They both try to speak again. Not even a full word comes out. FORESIGHT covers up her mouth in an effort to say she'll let EVERYGUY speak, but EVERYGUY is busily shaking his head, telling her the same thing in essence. Now the look they give is definitely stronger. FORESIGHT gets up and wanders around the room a little, looking at the knick-knacks on the shelves. She periodically looks at EVERYGUY who is watching her, but not saying anything. They stop, peer at each other, and both try to speak again.

EVERYGUY
Have you ever—

FORESIGHT
I'm beginning to—

Slight pause.

EVERYGUY
If you'd just—

FORESIGHT
This is getting—

Slight pause.

EVERYGUY
Maybe if we try to finish a complete—

FORESIGHT
Shut up for a second and perhaps we—

They turn away. EVERYGUY walks to one side of the stage and leans against the wall. FORESIGHT sits down on the other side of the stage, turned away from him. A good deal of time passes. EVERYGUY takes a pronounced breath as if going to speak, but just lets the air out and the silence continues. A few beats pass. One more try, this time not even looking at each other.

EVERYGUY
Thought that might have—

FORESIGHT
I thought you were going—

They are getting a bit upset now, FORESIGHT more so as they've not been able to say anything for a while. There is a long pause. EVERYGUY begins to hum a little tune, figuring that FORESIGHT would as well. She doesn't, but still, neither has spoken. FORESIGHT gets up and begins fidgeting with her purse. A long while passes. EVERYGUY gets up and looks straight at FORESIGHT. They pace around each other. Neither has attempted to speak. FORESIGHT gets an idea. She goes to the telephone and dials. She is eagerly waiting for someone to pick up, but nobody does. Frustrated, she hangs up. EVERYGUY laughs at her. They glare at each other, trying to speak once again unsuccessfully.

EVERYGUY
I have to give you credit—

FORESIGHT
Look, if someone doesn't break—

FORESIGHT begins to gather her coat, clearly having had enough. EVERYGUY doesn't want her to go, but really, the whole night hasn't gone right and he wouldn't have any convincing thing to say to keep her there. She gets to the door and turns around. EVERYGUY shrugs. They stare at each other for what might be the last time if something doesn't stop her. Finally, both stepping towards each other, they catch themselves in an accidental embrace. They are very close to each other, staring at each other with smiles crossing their mouths. As they lean in to kiss, they both try to speak.

EVERYGUY

Well this is more like—oh well.

FORESIGHT

I guess one couldn't—forget this.

FORESIGHT bows her head in defeat, breaks the hold, and exits, never looking back. The lights dim on EVERYGUY, but don't quite go out. THE DEVIL walks on the apron. He is in sweatpants and really nobody should recognize him as the Devil. He talks to the audience.

THE DEVIL

Oh, come on. You knew that wasn't going to work. That was, at best, a passing fling; meaningless lust. It certainly wasn't *love*. That right there was far more *complex* than love. Here's the truth, pared down to its most basic element: lust is easy. One night stands are easy. Dating is easy. And here's the one that trips everyone up: *relationships are so terribly, mind-bogglingly easy*. No one in recorded history has ever believed me, but relationships are simple. It's that period of time leading up to a relationship that sucks. Don't believe me? A case study: Everyguy. He's okay now; why? There was no love. Without love, see, even rejection is easy. And here's why—if you don't have a writing implement handy, I pray you have a good memory—in friendship, lust, or full-blown committed relationships, both participants act rationally. Well, comparatively. It's that midphase where there is desire and apprehension when everything goes to pot. Women master the innate ability to cause emotional 180s with only a sigh or a glance. There's nothing more enticing to a woman than the prospect that, to men, they are unpredictable and often incomprehensible. But let's not be unfair. Men in that midphase have the innate ability to act like dipshits. Irrational behavior in men is more common, statistically speaking, than arms. Once the relationship begins, a joint sigh of relief escapes and things return to relative normality. You're not convinced. Look at our case study Everyguy; he's already moved on. But something in me tells me that that might change. *[doorbell rings]* Oh, imagine that. *[EVERYGUY goes to open door. He freezes when THE DEVIL speaks]* Before I forget—I'm terrible at introductions—I'm The Devil. I'll check back in here in a few minutes. I have to work out the kinks of Shuggles. It may not *sound* like a threatening venereal disease, but when your legs fuse together, heh, we'll see.

Blackout

SCENE II

THE DEVIL exits. EVERYGUY looks through the peephole, and opens the door curiously. In the doorway stands ENIGMA. She is stunningly attractive and greets EVERYGUY with a big smile. He is already taken aback.

EVERYGUY
Yes?

ENIGMA
I've come for the sugar.

EVERYGUY
Excuse me?

ENIGMA
Your sugar is world-renowned. I've come for it.

EVERYGUY
You've come for the sugar.

ENIGMA
Sugar. White, granular. It's like salt but it tastes worse on fries.

EVERYGUY
Can I...can you start this whole thing again but this time with some sort of greeting?

ENIGMA
Hello. I've come for the sugar.

EVERYGUY
That clears everything up.

ENIGMA
I'm making a parfait, and I don't have any sugar. I read one of those emergency substitution charts, but I don't have packed brown sugar. I read that the emergency substitution for packed brown sugar is regular granular sugar, so I'm sorta back where I started. *[beat]* Here's where you come in.

EVERYGUY
I...uh, ...congratulations. You've stunned me.

ENIGMA
That's not quite the right thing to say. You could say either "why sure, I have some sugar you could use," or perhaps, "I'm fresh out, but if you'd like, here's ten dollars to buy some more."

EVERYGUY

For ten dollars, you'd better be making one *hell* of a parfait.

ENIGMA

It's world renowned, my parfait. The Arch-Bishops of the far east love it.

EVERYGUY

I hope I'm given a sample.

ENIGMA

There's a problem with that.

EVERYGUY

What?

ENIGMA

The lack of...okay, this clearly isn't working. Let me try [*having fun with the next two words*] once again. [*she exits and closes the door. A knock*]

EVERYGUY

Hello?

ENIGMA

Bonjourno, principesa. [*bad Italian*] I am-ah making-ah some food-ah for the peasants of the house-ah. I don't have any sugar-ah. Do you-ah have any-ah?

EVERYGUY

Better approach. Just don't get in the habit of calling me your princess.

ENIGMA

I'm glad you otherwise approve.

EVERYGUY

The first-time-meeting outfit could use some touching up.

ENIGMA

Say what you will, the apron's making a comeback.

EVERYGUY

That's what they said about plate armor, and I swear I'm the only guy still wearing that.

ENIGMA

I can't help but notice you have yet to actually answer my question.

EVERYGUY

I'm sorry. I'm having trouble taking you seriously. I wasn't aware people *actually* went to neighboring apartments and asked for sugar. It's so –

ENIGMA

June Cleaver, I know. My own domestication makes me nauseous.

EVERYGUY

I didn't mean that. I actually think it's kinda cute.

ENIGMA

Let's, just for argument's sake, pretend we're in a war and I'm trying to get some life-saving elixir for Earl, who's still discovering shrapnel in his breath.

EVERYGUY

Why would we do that?

ENIGMA

In the hopes that you might actually get it for me sooner or later.

EVERYGUY

Oh, man, I'm sorry. I'll get some for you.

ENIGMA

While you're at it, can I have an egg, too?

EVERYGUY

Wait, what? I thought you only needed sugar.

ENIGMA

Forget it. Earl's dead. The soldiers are dead. Just let them be.

She leaves abruptly. He calls after her but she is gone.

EVERYGUY

No wait, that's not what...come back. I'm getting you some.

ENIGMA

[from hallway] They're all dead.

EVERYGUY

Come back! Hello? That sucks. *[to himself]* That was, umm ...wow. *[sits back down, thinks for a moment. Gets back up to the door.]* Are you still there? Hello? I'm an idiot. I am – they voted, I'm the world's biggest idiot.

He comes back into his room, shutting the door. He retreats to his banana which he had started to peel before the doorbell first rang. He eventually sits on the couch and begins reading a magazine. The doorbell rings again. He curiously gets up and opens the door. In the doorway is ENIGMA with a shawl around her head, extending a pillowcase forward. EVERYGUY laughs.

ENIGMA

Trick or treat.

EVERYGUY

Nice touch.

ENIGMA

I know it's not the right season, and you might not have candy bars in stock, so some ordinary white sugar will suffice. Cuts out the middle-man.

EVERYGUY

Please, come in. Formally.

ENIGMA

I would have gotten back quicker, but I was looking for my Voltron pillowcase.

EVERYGUY

Holy crap! Voltron!

ENIGMA

Only the finest. Getting sugar isn't for the easily thwarted.

EVERYGUY

Oh right, yeah...sugar. Let me get it. Right now. In front of you. While you wait. Here. So, do you have a name?

ENIGMA

Yes I do.

EVERYGUY

Good. Good for you. *[no offering of name yet]* I knew a guy for five years, no name. Had to just call him "Ambiguity"

ENIGMA

My name is Enigma.

EVERYGUY

How fitting.

ENIGMA

And what name do you have the pleasure of responding to?

EVERYGUY

I'm Everyguy.

ENIGMA

Nice to meet you. My name is Engima.

EVERYGUY

Yeah, I...I know. *[pause]* How much sugar do you need for a parfait?

ENIGMA

Enough to lightly cover a Cornish game hen.

EVERYGUY

I didn't know you use game hens in parfait.

ENIGMA

You don't. I just imagine that would be more than enough.

EVERYGUY

[showing her a measuring cup] How's this? It's a small hen's worth.

ENIGMA

It'll work.

EVERYGUY

So you live upstairs?

ENIGMA

Downstairs. I moved in last week. Still haven't managed to locate a grocery store.

EVERYGUY

There's one on the corner. Like literally on the corner.

ENIGMA

I'm not saying I've tried very hard.

EVERYGUY

Hey, can I get you anything else while you're here?

ENIGMA

An egg?

EVERYGUY

Okay. I meant to eat or drink.

ENIGMA

Me too. *[beat]* No, I need an egg for the parfait. I'm one shy.

EVERYGUY

You're one shy what?

ENIGMA

I'm one egg shy.

EVERYGUY

You mean one shy egg? Oh, wait, duh...I get it. One egg shy. Yeah, oookay. I can get you one. I always buy eggs in bulk, you know, just in case.

ENIGMA

They come in twelve-packs now, I hear.

EVERYGUY

[laughs] Yeah. Hey. Who'da thunk it? You only need one?

ENIGMA

Yup.

EVERYGUY

You sure?

ENIGMA

Unless the recipe is outright lying to me.

EVERYGUY

Here you go. *[Gives her egg]*

ENIGMA

Thank you.

EVERYGUY

You sure I can't get you anything to drink?

ENIGMA

No. I really should be getting back. The rest of the ingredients are getting lonely.

EVERYGUY

I'd imagine so.

ENIGMA

Thanks for the egg. Know that its death will be for a greater cause. I may not even need to amputate Earl's arm.

EVERYGUY

That's – you know – good for Earl.

ENIGMA

We'll see.

EVERYGUY

Yeah, good luck with that. Hope the parfait turns out well.

EVERYGUY is waiting for some final remark, but she just walks out of the room. He is stuck firmly between enamored and dumbfounded. Finally, he smacks himself in the head.

EVERYGUY

One shy egg. Nice move, me.

Blackout. Spotlight comes on THE DEVIL.

THE DEVIL

Okay. That was pretty simple. The next step in this process is essential; let him alone for a few days so his own hyperactive imagination can take over. The hypothetical scenario is one of the most amazingly powerful and potentially devastating mental conditions one could possibly experience. If Noah got carried away with hypothetical scenarios, he would be thinking, “What if I can only gather one cheetah and by accident a third lemur comes aboard?” He’s be so consumed with these trivial scenarios that he’d forget to build the arc entirely and he’d end up fleeing forty days of rain on an inflatable raft with an emu on his back and a pair of silkworms in his pocket. But nevertheless, these mental scenarios are essential. If Everyguy didn’t have an imagination, Enigma would be nothing but a memory by now. See, the lonely brain is pretty much a DVD player. It comes with rewind for those unimaginably perfect moments, freeze frame for those embarrassing catastrophes, and, get this, even deleted scenes. It’s a movie fanatic’s dream – take two characters and they can do anything they didn’t get to do in the movie. Thankfully, the lonely brain will never alter the actual, given ending of the movie. You watch. I’m going to get some jerky.

Blackout.

SCENE III

A psychiatrist’s office. There is a couch and a chair placed SC, and a desk US. EVERYGUY walks into the room and before introductions are even underway, he plops himself right down on the couch and begins talking to OBSERVATION. As EVERYGUY talks, OBSERVATION finds his way to the chair to listen.

EVERYGUY

Observation, I’m screwed.

OBSERVATION

I traditionally start a conversation with ‘hello’, but I’m also old-fashioned.

EVERYGUY

I think I broke laws of theory this weekend.

OBSERVATION

That’s good for you, isn’t it? You typically begin your sessions with ‘a whole bucket of nothing happened this weekend.’

EVERYGUY

You haven’t even heard the half of it.

OBSERVATION

I’m all ears.

EVERYGUY

If it’s okay with you, I’m not doing the couch thing today. Too much energy.

OBSERVATION

Whatever makes you most comfortable.

EVERYGUY

Let me ask you a question. Are you married?

OBSERVATION

The purpose of these sessions is to discuss you, not me.

EVERYGUY

This isn't a discussion. It's a question.

OBSERVATION

People use questions as a diversion from their own lingering problems—

EVERYGUY

Don't get shrinky on me. Please, just answer it.

OBSERVATION

No, I'm single.

EVERYGUY

Have you ever been in love?

OBSERVATION

No. It's not possible for figures like us to fall in love. Somewhere out there, there's a person named Love. If you wanted to fall in her, I mean, be my guest –

EVERYGUY

Leave the comedy to Humor, Observation. You're supposed to help me, remember?

OBSERVATION

Allegorical figures are incapable of true love. It's not their job to emote.

EVERYGUY

Exactly!

OBSERVATION

You'd really help me out if you start forming sentences.

EVERYGUY

We can't be in love, right? Love isn't possible.

OBSERVATION

I assume you think you are.

EVERYGUY

Someone like me can't fall in love. I can't be in love. Right? That's what you just said.

OBSERVATION

There's no rulebook. I'm certainly not the end-all, be-all.

EVERYGUY

No, I know that. I not looking for – I don't know what I'm looking for from you.

OBSERVATION

You want validation. For your feelings.

EVERGUY

No, I know my feelings are valid. You can't change a feeling, no matter how much you may want to.

OBSERVATION

How about we start with 'what happened?'

EVERYGUY

The greatest five and a half minutes of my life, apparently. Which doesn't say a whole lot about my life. Especially since those five minutes have caused me to go to my therapist. I met this girl – surprise surprise – and I'm totally floored. I haven't been able to get her out of mind since then.

OBSERVATION

This was last weekend?

EVERYGUY

Sunday. I've been thinking about her just about every free moment I have. Do you know how many moments there are in three days?

OBSERVATION

2,619. *[no reaction]* Just a guess.

EVERYGUY

I can't get her out of my head, Observation.

OBSERVATION

Not getting someone out of your head constitutes love?

EVERYGUY

I don't know. That's a loaded question.

OBSERVATION

How so?

EVERYGUY

There's no right answer. I don't think it's love at first sight because, for all I know, she thinks I'm repulsive or pushy or bland. Love has to be both ways. I think she's gorgeous, at the very least. But it's – it's more than just that. I've seen pretty girls before. I've been with pretty girls before. But they – I didn't have this thing *[taps chest]* in here. Something in my chest that won't let this be chalked off as just an event. For the first time ever, girls on the street don't interest me. They're not *right*. Why

she's right – I have no idea – she just is. I mean, hell, look at me. I'm maudlin! I'm talking about my feelings. *This* isn't normal.

OBSERVATION

I wouldn't consider sentimentality to be your foremost attribute, no.

EVERYGUY

And I'm not *normally* in love.

OBSERVATION

You're also not *normally* on fire, but we can rule that possibility out.

EVERYGUY

I'm glad I pay you all this money for a stand-up routine.

OBSERVATION

It got you to –

EVERYGUY

Why is it totally preposterous that I might be in love?

OBSERVATION

No, no not at all. You may very well be in love.

EVERYGUY

But love can't exist according to you.

OBSERVATION

You're smitten. That much is clear.

EVERYGUY

I'm not, I can't – No, you're right. I'm not in love. *[beat]* Am I?

OBSERVATION

Everyguy, the fact is that allegorical figures have to stand for something. They have to be steadfast in their personified meaning. Leave the thoughts of wistful romanticism and damsels to Passion. He's great at that type of thing.

EVERYGUY

Oh, come on. Passion is *so* gay.

OBSERVATION

You're Everyguy. You always have been, you will continue to be. Concentrate for a moment on who that is.

EVERYGUY

No, I know who I am.

OBSERVATION

Every week we discuss who you really are. Don't think you're a changed man now. You're still Everyguy. I don't care how good your weekend was, it isn't going to alter your personification.

EVERYGUY

So what do I do?

OBSERVATION

About what?

EVERYGUY

About her?

OBSERVATION

What about her? *[beat]* She's been in five minutes of your life.

EVERGUY

Three days counting thoughts.

OBSERVATION

Either way, we're talking supporting character in one episode of a sitcom. We're not talking a regular. She's hardly had time to make a first impression.

EVERYGUY

Aren't first impressions usually correct?

OBSERVATION

They can be. What's your first impression of her?

EVERYGUY

She's perfect.

OBSERVATION

I don't know that that will really help us.

EVERYGUY

Observation...you gotta help...I mean, her name is Enigma. Enigma. You'd think that would be a tip-off, but no. Something in me won't let this drop. She's such a – no pun intended – she's such a puzzle.

OBSERVATION

Sorry to burst your haughty bubble there, but that's girls in general, not just Enigma.

EVERYGUY

No, she's different.

OBSERVATION

I tell this to you in all sincerity. See what happens. I know it's going to sound like poison, but do absolutely nothing. Fate has this uncanny tendency to make the most unlikely of occurrences fairly commonplace.

EVERYGUY

How do you know that? Have you ever met Fate?

OBSERVATION

Oh yes.

EVERYGUY

Really? What's he like?

OBSERVATION

She. She's a delightful lady. Very tall. You wouldn't think...

EVERYGUY

I never really gave it much thought, to tell you the truth.

OBSERVATION

But seriously, Everyguy. Listen to me. Live your life, and do yourself a favor; try not to think about Enigma.

EVERYGUY

Okay. I'll do my best.

Blackout. Spot up on THE DEVIL.

THE DEVIL

You would think I would get upset with pesky do-wellers who give advice like "try not to think about her." After all, their message is directly counter-productive to my goal. See, the joy about the often-perplexing mid-phase is the brain-washing effect it has. There's no way in home that Everyguy is *not* going to think about Enigma. He could be watching a late night infomercial about a new dietary supplement that will make your skull stronger and he'd somehow think of Enigma. There's a rule about this: when other people downplay the importance of something, it makes it *so* much more important. Especially love. "No, this time is different!" "She's unlike anything I've ever seen" "But I've never felt like this before." It's a beautiful thought, isn't it? Whoever coined the phrase 'hopeless romantic' was a genius. *[starts to exit]* Oh wait, that was me.

Blackout.

SCENE IV

The interior of an elevator. EVERYGUY steps into the elevator and then hears a call from offstage.

ENIGMA

Hold the door!

He does. She walks in. EVERYGUY brightens up immediately.

EVERYGUY

Hey there!

ENIGMA

Oh, hi.

EVERYGUY

We're slowly mastering the chance meeting.

ENIGMA

We live in the same building. It hardly constitutes chance.

EVERYGUY

I suppose not. I could have taken the stairs, though, but something in me said 'take the elevator'.

ENIGMA

That's Lethargy. He talks to me too.

EVERYGUY

Hey, how'd the parfait come out?

ENIGMA

Very well. Your ingredients were highly cooperative and nobly sacrificed themselves for the good of the people.

EVERYGUY

The people?

ENIGMA

The me, specifically.

EVERYGUY

Okay.

The elevator suddenly stops, which could be denoted by both EVERYGUY and ENIGMA heaving forward a bit.

EVERYGUY

Oh you can't be serious.

ENIGMA

In addition to mastering random chance, we seem to have become quite adept at conquering the world of the television cliché.

EVERYGUY

Elevators don't actually stop in real life.

ENIGMA

Even to let people off?

EVERYGUY

No, I mean...you know what I mean.

ENIGMA

Well, this elevator begs to differ.

EVERYGUY

This is uncanny.

ENIGMA

What are the proper clichés for being stuck in an elevator?

EVERYGUY

You mean aside from stripping down naked and ravaging each other?

ENIGMA

Ah, the wonders of the male mind. I meant more like frenzied button-pushing. Shouldn't we be doing that?

EVERYGUY

Maybe.

ENIGMA

[playing] Oh my god! Oh my god! *[she starts pushing buttons wildly]*

EVERYGUY

You're good.

ENIGMA

Thank you. Do people trapped in elevators ever run around in circles?

EVERYGUY

I wouldn't necessarily call that a cliché. Although I guess it's possible.

ENIGMA

What if I just really wanted to run around in circles?

EVERYGUY

I won't stop you.

ENIGMA

Ahhhh! *[screams and runs around in tight circles]* I could use some help here.

EVERYGUY

Am I the guy who is supposed to yell at everyone to be calm?

ENIGMA

No. You're the guy who runs around in circles with me.

EVERYGUY

Am I now?

ENIGMA

Yes.

She starts running and screaming. Soon, EVERYGUY joins in.

EVERYGUY

We're gonna die! We're gonna die!

They laugh.

ENIGMA

You kind of get the impression that there's this huge lizard waiting for us as soon as the elevator opens, huh?

EVERYGUY

And the earthquake tremors are starting.

ENIGMA

And there's only twenty seconds left until the bomb goes off.

EVERYGUY

Oh my god!

They both have a good laugh.

ENIGMA

How'd we go from television cliché to disaster movie montage?

EVERYGUY

Who knows?

ENIGMA

Elevators just inspire dread, I suppose.

EVERYGUY

I'm that way with accountants. *[pause sets in]* So, penny for your thoughts.

ENIGMA

I'd like the payment in advance, please.

EVERYGUY

You run a tight ship. *[gives her a penny]*

ENIGMA

I'm just thinking of the irony that today is the one day my boyfriend actually gave me a time when he'd be at my apartment, and today's the day this happens.

EVERYGUY

You have a boyfriend?

ENIGMA

His name is Allegiance. Good guy.

EVERYGUY

How long have you been dating?

ENIGMA

Eight months.

EVERYGUY

So it's pretty serious?

ENIGMA

No, it's definitely more comedic. If you knew Allegiance, you'd know what I was talking about.

EVERYGUY

Well, you live downstairs from me. I'm sure I'll meet him eventually.

ENIGMA

Have you ever seen the nighttime court drama *Relentless*?

EVERYGUY

Periodically.

ENIGMA

He plays Jake Stout, private detective.

EVERYGUY

The lanky guy with the big chin?

ENIGMA

I prefer to think of him as the Strasberg trained actor using his finely-honed craft to produce riveting drama.

EVERYGUY

If I recall, he was having an affair with a potato.

ENIGMA

Well, yeah. The writing on that show really took a dive after Commercialism took over as head writer. Why they ever fired Inspiration, I'll never know. And I heard they might hire Product Placement as writing consultant. Shoot me.

EVERYGUY

Your boyfriend must still bring in a healthy paycheck.

ENIGMA

I'm not in a position to complain.

EVERYGUY

I have to ask; what's it like sitting back and watching him have love scenes with other women?

ENIGMA

Well, for the past two months it's pretty easy. Any romantic scenes he's had were with potatoes or hash browns, so it would take a firmly demented mind to get jealous.

EVERYGUY

But in general?

ENIGMA

For a while, his character was messing around with another girl on the show. But she was played by a woman named Acquaintance. You really can't get nervous about that. Plus, he's Allegiance. It's sort of just assumed he's coming home at the end of the day.

EVERYGUY

You got him whipped, huh?

ENIGMA

I'm going to reiterate – his name is *Allegiance*.

EVERYGUY

Point taken. So, what do you do?

ENIGMA

Right now, I work at an elementary school for special ed students.

EVERYGUY

Wow. What's that like?

ENIGMA

It's like any other job, except the pay is worse and the conditions are less bearable. But I wouldn't trade it for the world.

EVERYGUY

That's amazing. Makes me feel a whole lot more insecure about what I do.

ENIGMA

Which would be what?

EVERYGUY

Watch an incredible amount of television, mainly.

ENIGMA

Which, I assume, is the only reason you would know *Relentless*. I certainly hope it isn't part of your normal viewing regiment.

EVERYGUY

No. Thankfully.

ENIGMA

What are you hoping to do?

EVERYGUY

Save the world. Or scrape by. Whatever's easiest.

ENIGMA

A man of high ambition.

EVERYGUY

I like to think of myself as latent.

ENIGMA

Just in general?

EVERYGUY

Yeah. I'm a bundle of potential.

ENIGMA

Ah, so you're a high school physics problem?

EVERYGUY

Something like that.

ENIGMA

I never understood physics. They give you problem after problem which *would* have actual applicability except they negate air friction. They negate *air friction*. So every problem you solve would work *except* for the fact that we don't live in a vacuum. Does that make any sense to you?

EVERYGUY

I live in a vacuum.

ENIGMA

[*she laughs*] You must love physics.

EVERYGUY

Got a C in it in high school.

ENIGMA

A C, even with the unfair advantage of needing that knowledge?

EVERYGUY

Eh, sue me. So, hey, I was thinking of rounding up some friends and checking out “The Scapula Brothers” this weekend. It’s that weird movie about the conjoined twins. Maybe you would want to check it out? I just have this theory that you only appear randomly, and I was just seeing if you could actually make formal plans.

ENIGMA

Sounds pretty good but the next few days aren’t good for me. What about Wednesday night? That’s my good night.

EVERYGUY

Actually, no, that’s my one bad night. Thursday?

ENIGMA

Ooh, I’m sorry, I got something I can’t miss on Thursday.

EVERYGUY

Ah well. Hey, you know it will come out for rental in about five months –

ENIGMA

You have yourself a date.

The elevator lurches back into action.

EVERYGUY

The elevator seems to be working again.

ENIGMA

Ah, the cliché is not fulfilled. My pants are still on.

EVERYGUY

Somewhere, a television writer is upset.

ENIGMA

Are you going to your apartment?

EVERYGUY

Yes. Another fun-filled evening of Cheez-Its and Nick-at-Nite.

ENIGMA

Look on the bright side...you got Cheez-Its.

EVERYGUY

Every cloud has a silver lining.

ENIGMA

Every cloud also has a high concentration of ice particles.

EVERYGUY

You like to take the mystery out of everything, don't you?

The door opens.

ENIGMA

On the contrary. Mystery makes life a whole lot more interesting.

She punches him in the stomach and bounds out the door. The door closes (somehow indicated with lighting, perhaps).

EVERYGUY

Yes, and a whole lot more aggravating.

Blackout.

THE DEVIL

This is going splendidly. *[pause]* No, it is. This is the storybook case of perpetuating the agony of the midphase. Sometimes I get upset with all the planning I go through and something stupid screws it up. Take Canada. When the Earth was still cooling, I started colonies of people in Canada who had an average life expectancy of six years. I was hoping that, through some mating, I would slowly be able to bring down the life expectancy of the world. Months of planning down the tubes because I overlooked the fact that most people don't mate by the age of six. I also forgot: nobody mates with Canadians. In fact, that only bright side is that Canada is still an infectious blot on the face of the globe. Even when you lose, sometimes you still win.

The Devil exits. Lights come back up to OBSERVATION's office. He is already sitting at his chair while EVERYGUY is sitting up on the couch, not lying down.

SCENE V

EVERYGUY

So, yeah, it happened again.

OBSERVATION

The dream where you sleep with the Repetition sisters?

EVERYGUY

No. Holy crap, those were great. I haven't had one of them in a while. Those used to brighten my whole week.

OBSERVATION

Then I'm assuming this is again about Enigma.

EVERYGUY

Well, Fate seems to be siding with me on this one.

OBSERVATION

What happened?

EVERYGUY

You know how in dreams you have those moments that you assume in real life nothing even close to that could happen? It was one of those. Nothing earth-shattering, I'm not going to convert to a different religion or anything. We were just joking, we were being stupid, we were having a blast. And then I found out the bombshell. She's got a boyfriend. You know my first thought when she told me? "Ah, that makes sense. How could someone like that *not* have a boyfriend?" But you know the ironic part about that? My *brain* was actually lying to itself. Usually you lie to yourself and your brain is the one that tells you to rejoin the real world. But no, my brain says, "Ah, that makes sense." What the hell is that? I mean, shouldn't my brain have been swearing or something?

OBSERVATION

Not necessarily. The brain and the heart aren't necessarily unconnected organs.

EVERYGUY

No, that's screwed up. My brain took the news way too well.

OBSERVATION

I'm imagining this should diminish the craving you feel for her.

EVERYGUY

Not being able to get something makes you want it more. Man, you may have gotten a degree in this stuff, but sometimes you are clueless.

OBSERVATION

So you're still thinking about her often?

EVERYGUY

You know something? Everyone says that the cruelest people in history are the power-hungry politicians or the bomb-makers or lawyers. Not true. The cruelest people in the world are the great romantic poets who spent their lives glorifying love. They wrote verse after verse about how great love is and how wonderful it is to be in love and the eternal hope they have. How much heavy medication were they on? Sorry to say, love is not like any poem. Where are the poems about getting shot down, huh? Which sonnet is that?

OBSERVATION

Have you ever read all the world's sonnets, Everyguy?

EVERYGUY

A few.

OBSERVATION

Most of them aren't uplifting. Those writers were probably more jaded than you.

EVERYGUY

Not right now, they're not.

OBSERVATION

They're also considerably more dead than you are.

EVERYGUY

Either way, those writers are crueler than any medieval torture device.

OBSERVATION

Do me a favor. On my shelf is a book of sonnets. Pick it up. It's the one right on the end.

EVERYGUY

Okay.

OBSERVATION

Randomly pick one. Any one. Read it aloud. Then tell me the writers are all full of fluff and hope.

EVERYGUY

Okay. [*opens book*] It's by Anonymous. Speaking of which, did you see the Behind the Lives documentary on him? He is stupidly rich. Do you know he owns *four* houses and a petting zoo?

OBSERVATION

Just read.

EVERYGUY

Were Time but numbers fixed upon a clock,
Nor age nor passage would they thence decree;
Were every fleeting tick and passing tock
Mere rhythm for a dreamer's rhapsody;
And were, perchance, these foul days only measured
But with the weight of minutes or of hours,
My aching heart would't feel not thus displeas'd,
But rest relieved in Future's mighty bow'ers.
Alas, it is not so, nor shall it not,
For Time forever constant does transpire:
Unwaveringly true to its sole thought
That joy be quick but torment stretched like wire.
Think me a fool henceforth; to hope I cling
That Time, in time, willst retribution bring.

OBSERVATION

Okay, that's a rarity, believe me. Pick another one.

EVERYTHING

No, see, that's how they all are. Love rules. Love is simple. Have hope. Everything works out fine. But it only does that in poems and in movies. Not in life. In life, the scum win and the good guys end up marrying the girls with stability problems. So here's something I came up with, right? I'm sure you've heard someone bitch that girls date jerks who hurt them and then the girls complain to the nice guys. You've probably heard it from a self-proclaimed nice guy. Well, it's the truth, but that's not the whole deal. The truth is that girls *like* jerks, they strive to date jerks. It's not an accident when they end up with another jerk...they search hard for these jerks. And why? When you get hurt by a jerk, it's not that bad. Some girl dates a jerk, he breaks up with her. She cries on Nice Guy's shoulder, she calls the jerk a jerk, she moves on. Jerk 2 dumps her, she cries even more, she swears off men, she moves on. But god forbid, if Nice Guy ever hurt her...if she ever put herself in a position where Nice Guy could hurt her, it would be her death. Who would she cry to? So on to Jerk 3, Jerk 4, Jerk ∞ .

OBSERVATION

You seem to have them all figured out.

EVERYGUY

For years, I *was* one of those "nice guys", but I never tried for the girl, so I really could only blame myself. Now, finally, I do everything right and Fate has killed my chance. This one isn't my fault.

OBSERVATION

Wasn't Fate on your side for this one?

EVERYGUY

In terms of meeting, yes. That's about where it ends.

OBSERVATION

Unrequited love can seem difficult, yes.

EVERYGUY

What, have you been there?

OBSERVATION

Once, but it's really not—

EVERYGUY

Observation? You gotta spill it. Don't hand me the "we're here to talk about you" speech. I need other people's thoughts who have been there.

OBSERVATION

Oh, suddenly now you can evaluate me?

EVERYGUY

I pay you money each week for you to listen to my problems and hopefully offer help. In fact, shouldn't you be named Therapy or something?

OBSERVATION

There's a reason I'm named Observation.

EVERYGUY

Oh wow. Fantastic. I'm paying someone to point out what everyone can see. *[OBSERVATION really can't argue that. Therapists are pointless]* Well, let me observe. You learn a lot from watching and listening. Tell me about your past and maybe it will clear things up for me.

OBSERVATION

[sigh] Understand that this is not my professional advice but rather just an anecdote.

EVERYGUY

I got it. So what happened to you?

OBSERVATION

Her name was Intrigue. If the name alone wasn't enough of a lure, you should have seen her. She was the type of girl that you would see in a shopping plaza and you'd immediately know that more than half the people at that plaza had already developed a crush on her. It wasn't that she was the embodiment of perfection. No, it was just in her smile, her eyes, her persona. To cut the story short, I befriended her, trying with my subtle persuasiveness and refined machismo to win her over. For two years. In that time, she dated one guy. His name was Cunning...*Cunning*...but it didn't matter, she was absolutely enamored with him. *[he seems to end his story]*

EVERYGUY

So what happened after two years?

OBSERVATION

After two years of leaving myself and my heart out to be slowly picked at by the vultures of naivete, I moved on. No person is worth the price of waiting that long. And since then, I've led a much happier life of solitude.

EVERYGUY

If you were so after this girl, wouldn't you say you were in love? Before you said it wasn't possible.

OBSERVATION

I wasn't in love. I was in awe, perhaps. Look, love is an idyllic thought, and it's a wonderful backbone for romantic comedies. I really wish love was possible but I choose to dwell in the harshness of reality where I won't get my hopes up every time someone looks at me and smiles.

EVERYGUY

But you didn't see her smile.

OBSERVATION

Has anyone ever told you not to think so much?

EVERYGUY

My philosophy teacher.

OBSERVATION

Oh, that's bad.

EVERYGUY

So I'm guessing you think Enigma should just remain a memory?

OBSERVATION

At the risk of sounding pretentious, who's the well-adjusted one of us?

ENIMGA

You know what? You're right.

OBSERVATION

She's taken. Wish her well and move on.

ENIGMA

Okay, I see your point.

THE DEVIL enters on the apron, wearing nicer clothes. He is a little upset. As he starts speaking, all action on stage stops and lights go down on the psychiatrist scene.

THE DEVIL

Okay, now see, that pisses me off. It really gets under my skin how impressionable the male mind is in the mid-phase. Some guy with some letters after his name speaks and suddenly Everyguy's willing to give up. That's not good. He should have some perseverance. Trying harder is the key to getting what you want. Every third grader learns that!

He exits. Lights back up to psychiatrist's office. A buzzer sound comes from the phone on the desk.

OBSERVATION

Excuse me a moment. *[he goes to the phone]* Lackey, I told you not to buzz me when I'm in with a patient.

LACKEY

[a voice from the phone] I'm sorry Observation. It's just there's a Mr. The Devil here to see you. He says it's urgent.

OBSERVATION

Ah yes, send him right in.

LACKEY

Yes sir. *[phone hangs up]*

OBSERVATION

You'll have to excuse this, Everyguy. An old friend of mine.

EVERYGUY

You're friends with the Devil?

OBSERVATION

Don't judge a book by its cover.

A knock is heard.

EVERYGUY

We're allegorical figures. Isn't that exactly what we're supposed to do?

OBSERVATION

He's reformed quite a bit. He runs a support group now. He's actually a pretty good guy.

OBSERVATION lets THE DEVIL in and they shake hands.

THE DEVIL

Observation, you old so-and-so. How are you?

OBSERVATION

Quite well. And you?

THE DEVIL

I've never been better, thank you.

OBSERVATION

What brings you to this neck of the woods?

THE DEVIL

I just wanted to update you on the condition of those patients you sent over to me. *[thumbs up]* They're great. Patients seem to respond better to people who have more in common with them.

OBSERVATION

Yes, patients often develop a complex—even if it is unknown—to not fully divulge their problems to someone who gets paid to listen.

THE DEVIL

I just wanted to mention that any other patients are welcome at any time.

OBSERVATION

Thank you, The Devil. I have a few patients I'd like to send your way. In fact, I'd like to introduce you to Everyguy, a patient here. Everyguy, this is The Devil. *[they shake*

hands] The Devil just started a support group called Allegory Anonymous where others like you can share their dilemmas in a supportive environment. You said you wanted to hear more from those who are going through what you are, right Everyguy?

EVERYGUY

It's run by the Devil?

THE DEVIL

Believe me, if anyone knows about battling an image given by his name, it's me.

EVERYGUY

I suppose, but do you think—

THE DEVIL

AA is the perfect forum for getting help in all areas of your life. Coping with who you are, trying to change your image, love problems. The meeting is tomorrow night. Observation will give you all the details. I look forward to seeing you there.

OBSERVATION

Leaving so soon?

THE DEVIL

Have some important business to attend to.

OBSERVATION

Looting, pillage, and devastation?

THE DEVIL

Observation, I gave you so much more credit than that.

OBSERVATION

Just a joke, old chum.

THE DEVIL

Take care. I'll see you soon. If you know what I mean. *[pause]* Heh heh.

He exits abruptly. EVERYGUY is stunned. OBSERVATION hands him a business card.

OBSERVATION

Here's the phone number and address. I think...*[OBSERVATION grabs at his chest and starts to falter a bit]*... going would be... the...the...

OBSERVATION collapses on the ground.

EVERYGUY

Observation? Observation!?? Lackey?!?!

OBSERVATION

[popping up, dusting himself off, laughing] That's the best. Haha. I never get tired of that one.

EVERYGUY

You bastard!

OBSERVATION

Lighten up. If a psychiatrist tells you that, you know it's important.

EVERYGUY

You scared me half to death.

OBSERVATION

Look, here's my advice. One, laugh – it's good for you. Two, go to the Allegory Anonymous meeting. I think it would be the most helpful thing you could do at this point.

EVERYGUY

It's just – I'm just a little – I don't know, he – you suck, you know that?

OBSERVATION

Just go tomorrow. We'll talk about it next week. If you don't like it, you don't have to go back. Deal?

EVERYGUY

All right.

The DEVIL comes back on, smiling.

THE DEVIL

Sometimes you have to take a train that's derailing and put it back on track. That's all. Not saying that it wouldn't happen this way *anyway*, but what's wrong with a few extra precautions? So we now leave Everyguy's fate in the hands of Chance and in the hands of his peers. If *anyone* can screw him up better than himself, it's his peers. But in the meantime, take a break. Have some drinks. Don't worry, they're fine. *[pause]* Trust me.

Blackout.

ACT II, SCENE I

The set is now the Allegory Anonymous meeting, a semi-circle of chairs. As the lights come up, REGRET, ORBIT, DISTRACTION, and EVERYGUY are all sitting in chairs. There is a cushy chair for THE DEVIL, who is not there. There is some quiet chatter between REGRET and DISTRACTION. Finally, THE DEVIL walks in. He takes his seat.

THE DEVIL

Welcome all to Allegory Anonymous. A rather small turnout today, I'm afraid, but there are a couple of new faces. We'll get to proper introductions in a minute, but I'd like to start immediately with where we left off last week, so as to give the newcomers an idea how these meetings run.

DISTRACTION

I'll go first. Helicopters—angelic transportation device or circular blades of death? I'd like to recite this dissertation that was made up by a tiny man named Blippy.

THE DEVIL

Distraction, hold on to that thought for the time being. We're going to begin with Regret, because he didn't get to finish last time.

DISTRACTION

Blippy always gets preempted by something or another.

THE DEVIL

Regret, you were telling us about your close friend – I think we called him “Billy”. We were about to have you do a mock-confrontation with Billy, so let's begin with that. Now obviously Billy isn't here, so we'll just use this chair. So pretend this is Billy. Now what do you want to say to Billy? Say exactly what you want to say.

REGRET

[takes a moment to compose himself] Hey, Billy. Billy-boy. *[pause]* Wow, I really don't know what to say. It's been a while. *[pause]* Okay, I know what you're thinking. And you're right. You're right. I wish there was something I could say now to make it all better. Something, anything...an apology...I remember it all so clearly. Me, Irony, Chaos and Gluttony would be sitting in my room, with you there. And then we would—look, we were children, Billy—Bill—Children do stupid things. I would put you in the corner of the room, Irony would throw a sheet over you, and Gluttony would..... Gluttony would sit on you. I know, it's cruel. He'd stay there, perched on you like a stone gargoyle until your legs could barely hold him up. *[pause]* Look, I don't know why we did it. It seemed like fun. And then we'd leave you there. Chaos would make sure the blanket was tight over you so Mom wouldn't know where you were, and then we'd turn out the lights and lock you in the room. It was wrong, I know it was wrong. *[DISTRACTION stands up to leave, but sits back down for no real reason]*

You know what, Billy? It's your turn. I want to know how it feels, Billy...the pain, the torture, the endless psychological damage caused at the hands of our skewed childlike mischief. It's time for you to enact your revenge, Billy. *[REGRET lies down on the floor, near the chair]* Sit on me. No, I'm serious. Sit on me. *[nothing happens]*

I'm not after forgiveness, Billy. It's about retribution; it's about equality. SIT ON ME!
[REGRET grabs the chair and puts it over himself.] There. See? No, put more weight
on me. Don't be kind. We weren't kind. We weren't ever kind. [REGRET takes the
chair and puts it so the legs aren't touching the ground, but the entire weight of the
chair is resting on REGRET's body.] There. Only now do I realize how sorry I am.
Now I feel the pain you must have felt. Finally, Billy, we are even.

There is a moment's pause, and THE DEVIL claps. Everyone catches on and applauds too.

THE DEVIL

That was very brave, Regret.

ORBIT

That's harsh, dude.

DISTRACTION

Nice diction, Regret.

THE DEVIL

What kind is Billy?

REGRET

He's one of those school chairs with the desks attached. My mom was a teacher.

THE DEVIL

I hope when the time comes, Regret, you'll be able to tell Billy in the same way you did
here. Let's have another hand for Regret.

Another round of applause.

ORBIT

I feel your pain, man. It's all just like you said.

THE DEVIL

Regret, anything else you'd like to say?

REGRET

Not right now. Thank you.

ORBIT

Hey, man, if you ever need to talk, you know, I'm here for you. I understand how hard
it can be.

DISTRACTION

I'm sorry. I was eavesdropping and I overheard the whole thing.

THE DEVIL

That's good. You were supposed to hear.

DISTRACTION

Oh, I was now, huh?

THE DEVIL

Distraction, you clearly want to get your peace in. Why don't you introduce yourself to the group and explain why you're here?

REGRET

Why is it that this place is called Allegory Anonymous and yet we all know each other's names?

THE DEVIL

[beat] I don't...I don't know *his* name. *[pointing to ORBIT]*

DISTRACTION

You're avoiding the question.

THE DEVIL

Why don't you begin with an introduction from you, Distraction?

DISCTRACTION

I'd love to. *[she stands up and walks out of the room]*

THE DEVIL

[beat] Well, that was, um, that was Distraction. She comes to AA because –

DISTRACTION

I can introduce myself Speedy Cahoots! I can see your little ploy, The Devil. Trying to shift all the attention to me. Don't think I'm blind. See, he knows I hate that. Everybody just assumes that it's my goal in life or something, like it's this overblown quest for constant recognition. I must be seen, everyone thinks.

ORBIT

I hate assumptions, too. They are *so* bogus.

DISTRACTION

[standing on a chair] I can't be everyone's object of attention all the time. I am tired of making people temporarily ignore their lives, even if it is just for a split second. Am I just a focal point for everyone? *[beat]* Could everyone just turn away? I'll continue, but everyone do something else.

Everyone tries to start fiddling with something. ORBIT is actually pretty engrossed, though.

REGRET

Sure thing. I really don't think I could handle disappointing you.

DISTRACTION

Okay, so I know I'm supposed to – the little guy is still watching me.

ORBIT

What? I'm totally into this. You're, like, absolutely dead on. It's sick.

DISTRACTION

Are you even listening to me?

ORBIT

I'm *so* on your level right now.

DISTRACTION

You don't see me staring at me while I talk.

REGRET

You can't really fault him for being engrossed. You've got quite a story there.

DISTRACTION

I can't even get it out. Peeks Mahoney over there keeps giving me the staredown.

THE DEVIL

Hey, guy, just let her have her moment.

ORBIT

I'm not disrespectin'. Don't get me wrong. I just feel her, that's all.

DISTRACTION

The Devil, can't you do something? Like, tear his meniscus or something?

THE DEVIL

Hold it! Let's take a minute here. Distraction, you don't like makes rash judgments about you and your desire for prominence based on your name, right?

DISTRACTION

You got it, baby.

THE DEVIL

And I don't like how you insinuate I do bad things to good people because I'm named the Devil. Now, Hypocrisy didn't come to this meeting, so let's establish this one rule: Allegorical figures hate the baggage that comes with their name universally, so there will be no more pointing out.

ORBIT

No way, that's bunk. Being allegorical may be crazy, but it's our way of life.

THE DEVIL

Very interesting. Why don't you introduce yourself to the group?

ORBIT

[with too much enthusiasm] I'm Orbit, and man, I gotta say the whole allegorical thing is tough. I mean, you guys know what I'm talking about. Every day, I gotta live with

who I am, having to mean stuff and be a representation all the time. It's tiring. So I figure I'll try just being happy with—

THE DEVIL

I'm sorry to interrupt, but what was your name again?

ORBIT

Orbit. Like this one time I go to the video store and I rent "Apostle Crank and the Bane Brigade" and they're lookin' at my membership card, and they're like, "Ohhh, you're one of *those*", like I'm a leper or something. I just wanted to rent some quality entertainment, and I get that? *So bogus!*

THE DEVIL

You say your name is Orbit?

ORBIT

Yeah, what's the deal?

DISTRACTION

What *is* that thing up there?

THE DEVIL

I don't think you're an allegorical figure, Orbit.

ORBIT

What are you talking about? I'm allegorical, yo. Why do you think I'm here?

THE DEVIL

I'm not entirely sure.

REGRET

I'm sorry Billy. I'm so sorry. I didn't mean it!

THE DEVIL

[beat] I assume it was because —

ORBIT

Look, I don't know what this is about. I'm the real deal — I'm so allegorical it hurts.

THE DEVIL

No, you're really not. Distraction here is an allegorical figure. *[everyone looks at her as she falls out of her chair]* She embodies something. You can't even take a peek at her without being sucked into her allegory. Regret...well, you don't get much more allegorical than him. He's the tried and true case — allegory born out of one horrifying, scarring moment in his life. You, on the other hand —

ORBIT

Dude, I'm hardcore allegorical.

THE DEVIL

Your name is Orbit.

ORBIT

The allegory runs real deep.

DISTRACTION

Must be *really* deep.

ORBIT

I don't even think you can see it. It's, like, on another level altogether.

THE DEVIL

You're – how can I put this?

REGRET

You're not one of us.

THE DEVIL

I'm afraid he's right. You're not allegorical. You're not even representational. You're just a noun.

ORBIT

No way, man. This is where I belong. I know your pain.

THE DEVIL

You're not allegorical!

ORBIT

Yes I am. Here, check it out. Stand up.

THE DEVIL

What?

ORBIT

Stand up. Just do it.

THE DEVIL

No.

ORBIT

Come on, stand up. I'm gonna prove I'm allegorical.

THE DEVIL

Fine. [*stands*] There, I'm standing.

ORBIT

Check this out. [*he walks over to THE DEVIL and begins to circle around him*] It's uncanny, man. I'm elliptical and everything.

THE DEVIL

You're just walking around me.

ORBIT

I'm *orbiting*.

THE DEVIL

This is ridiculous.

ORBIT

Now doesn't someone feel like an idiot?

THE DEVIL

You're going to have to leave. Only allegorical figures are allowed into AA.

ORBIT

But dude, that's what I'm telling you—

THE DEVIL

Thank you for coming, but you have to leave. [*manhandles him outside*] If you change your name, maybe we'll do business, but for now, goodbye. [*closes door*] It's a shame. In the olden days, people *stood* for something. That was just sad.

DISTRACTION

He's gone. Don't worry about him.

THE DEVIL

Let's try our other new face. Would you like to introduce yourself?

EVERYGUY

Oh, hi. I'm Everyguy. My psychiatrist Observation recommended I come here.

REGRET

Hi Everyguy. I knew a guy named Everyguy.

EVERYGUY

You did?

REGRET

No. I was just trying to spice things up a little.

THE DEVIL

So what actually brings you here, Everyguy?

EVERYGUY

I have a, uh, something of a problem I don't know if any of you can relate to.

DISTRACTION

Does anyone want any Fig Newtons?

THE DEVIL

No, Distraction. Please, Everyguy, continue.

EVERYGUY

Has anyone here ever been in love?

ORBIT

[from outside the door, after a silence while everybody thinks] I'm in love with being allegorical.

THE DEVIL

Shut up, you're not part of this anymore!

REGRET

I can't be in love.

EVERYGUY

Finally, someone who understands.

REGRET

No, I mean I actually can't risk love. It's not a smart idea for me and my condition. I mean, I can get *in* love maybe, but if something were to ever go wrong, I would never be able to live with myself.

EVERYGUY

Oh. You really think that?

REGRET

I won't let myself dabble in love. It only leads to bad things.

EVERYGUY

I kinda hoped you'd –

REGRET

I'm the same way with candles and woodworking, though.

DISTRACTION

I've never been in love either. I'm just every shmoe's momentary plaything to distract them from their own dwindling and decrepit life. Which shouldn't come as a surprise to anybody.

EVERYGUY

You're not the most optimistic person are you?

DISTRACTION

What? Sorry I missed that, I was paying attention to me.

EVERYGUY

You were never in love with any of them?

DISTRACTION

They weren't in love with me. I was just a diversion. I guess I can't complain, though. I get tons of action.

REGRET

You can't complain. Your case isn't so bad. It's not like you're Adultery or anything.

Nods of approval and knowing noises from everyone but EVERYGUY.

EVERYGUY

Who's that?

REGRET

You've never heard of Adultery?

EVERYGUY

The thing, yes. The person, no.

REGRET

He has it rough. His entire life he's remained single. For a while, he would try to lure very suspecting married women away from their husbands with sweet promises of a blissful future. This would usually come very close to working, but girls would get scared away when they found out his twin brother was Empty Promises. On this skepticism alone, they'd give up cheating on their husbands. Eventually, he tried a new tactic – to look for a wife of his own so he might live up to his reputation. Problem is most women would get ever even get engaged because, well, they pretty much knew what they could expect from the marriage.

EVERYGUY

That's terrible.

REGRET

Makes you forget about your own problems for a while. No, wait, I just started again.

DISTRACTION

Their father was Abuse and their mother was Neglect, so you could really blame their upbringing for their luck.

ORBIT

[still outside the door] Does anyone want to know what I think?

THE DEVIL

[getting up and going outside the door to confront ORBIT] Go away you wanna-be freak! I have real allegorical people to deal with here.

REGRET

And you, Everyguy? Have you been in love?

EVERYGUY

I don't know. It could be love. I'm not exactly sure what that's supposed to feel like.

DISTRACTION

I thought I felt love once before. It's way down here, kinda just below the solar plexis? It tingles a little but then hits you sharply all of the sudden? And it feels awkward like you were going to be sick only you don't seem to mind it so much?

EVERYGUY

Yeah, that's it!

DISTRACTION

Turns out that's a seizure.

REGRET

I *have* been in love!

THE DEVIL walks back in with *ENIGMA* following close behind.

THE DEVIL

I took care of the little bugger. And I found a straggler outside.

DISTRACTION

Engima!

REGRET

How's it going?

REGRET and *DISTRACTION* recognize her and are happy to see her. *EVERYGUY* is shocked. *ENIGMA* herself is quite sad.

ENIGMA

Hi, everybody. I'm sorry I'm late. Hasn't exactly been the best day.

THE DEVIL

No problem, Enigma. Our friend Everyguy just introduced himself to the group.

ENIGMA

[happy to see him] Oh, hey.

EVERYGUY

Hi there. I...I didn't know you came here.

ENIGMA

There's only been a couple of meetings so far, but I wouldn't miss one for the world.

REGRET

I missed the first one and it's still coming back to haunt me.

DISTRACTION

So what is it, Enigma? What's got your tooter?

EVERYGUY

Yeah, what is it? We're here to listen.

ENIGMA

Thank you. I think all of you remember Allegiance, my boyfriend. I mentioned him the last few times I was here, if I recall.

EVERYGUY

[immediately excited, then calmer] Yeah. Yeah. I think I remember something about him.

ENIGMA

I figured I would stop by his shoot last night, check out how his show was going, and found that he was with one of his costars – Utopia – in her trailer rehearsing lines. Apparently, Utopia's character was going to be killed off the show and Allegiance decided to give her a farewell present that consisted almost entirely of tongue. According to the editing guy, he'd been cheating on me with just about every girl on his show. Even Acquaintance. I talked to him about it, and he got upset and walked out. So it's official, Allegiance left me.

THE DEVIL

[aside] This is too perfect. *[about to go back to the scene, but then, to the audience]* Oh, don't think I'm being rude. You just have to understand my position. You see, hope is even more destructive than the internal scenario. With internal scenarios, there is still the knowledge that that *isn't* the way things are. With hope, anything is possible, and to give hope to a romantic is like bellows on a fire. If Everyguy had officially stopped thinking about Enigma like Observation had suggested, he just started again. A whole lot. This is perfect. *[back into it]*

ENIGMA

Why is trust something that takes forever to build but only a fraction of a second to break? But when you think about it, so are commercial airlines. You know, love is like a commercial airline: You willingly purchase a ticket from the start. You travel this sometimes-comfortable sometimes-turbulent path until your destination. In his case, I made it to Santa Fe but he got off at Tulsa and took a connecting flight. Which leaves me stranded at the airport. You know something? I'm falling into my own pet peeve. I hate it when people lament so much about love that they end up comparing it to just about anything. And now I'm doing it. Ready, watch. Think of an object. Any object.

DISTRACTION

A grain silo.

ENIGMA

Love is like a grain silo. It's an empty vessel in which you store as much or as little of your metaphorical grain. If overtapped immediately, you run out of resources. If neglected, it goes bad before it's enjoyed. Give me another word.

EVERYGUY

Parfait.

ENIGMA

Love is like parfait. You spend all your time in this process to make this final product which could either be a success or a kitchen calamity of epic proportions. And more often than not, it just gets saved for the next person to consume. One more. Just a noun – any noun.

THE DEVIL

Orbit. Because *it's a noun!*

ORBIT

[from outside the door] I heard that!

ENIGMA

Love *is* a perfect orbit. Consistently close by but constantly just out of reach.

EVERYGUY

I know exactly how you feel!

ENIGMA

Have you had your other half just get up and leave?

REGRET

I have. *[sobs quietly]*

EVERYGUY

No I haven't, but—

ENIGMA

Then I doubt you'd know.

THE DEVIL

Getting accusatory won't help, Enigma. We're here to help.

ENIGMA

Everyone always assumes they know. Any problem, it doesn't matter; they know. 'Your mom was attacked by a charcoal grill? I know how you feel!' No, you don't. Nobody does. I'm an individual; my problems are individual. I have special instances.

THE DEVIL

We know. We're all individuals. Except the Repetition sisters, but they're not here.

The next bit of dialogue happens quickly, and then speeds up more (makes sense, right?) EVERYGUY is spreading his time between the arguments and trying to watch ENIGMA.

DISTRACTION

What do the Repetition Sisters have that I don't have? I mean, aside from sheer numbers?

REGRET

I thought you don't like being the center of attention, Distraction.

DISTRACTION

I hate it.

REGRET

Then why do you want to be better than everyone?

EVERYGUY

I don't think she meant that, really.

DISTRACTION

That's so typical of you, Regret. Compensate for your own shortcomings with –

REGRET

Can I help it that Billy's existence was that symbolic in my –

DISTRACTION

Oh, we are totally throwing down.

THE DEVIL

Distraction, there's no need to get –

DISTRACTION

See? Signaling me out again!

REGRET

What do you expect? He's evil.

THE DEVIL

Don't pull that card on me, Brooding Boy. I didn't start this for –

REGRET

Throwing names at me, eh?

DISTRACTION

He's right. Don't you have to go somewhere and mope now?

REGRET

Don't make me do something I might me.

EVERYGUY

Guys, just stop this. This is stupid.

REGRET

Tell Distraction to pipe down.

DISTRACTION

Tell Regret to not suck so much.

ORBIT comes back into the room.

ORBIT

Dude, this bites. I'm not taking this lying down. I'm allegorical, yo.

REGRET

Take a look at me, kid. This is what you're going to end up like if you keep this up.

THE DEVIL

Get out of here, Orbit. I've got my hands full enough here.

EVERYGUY

We're all in this together. We just have to –

DISTRACTION

Oh great, someone more pathetic than Regret.

REGRET

You're just jealous because I'm not paying attention to you.

THE DEVIL

Look, kid, this is a serious support group –

ORBIT

[walking around REGRET] Check it out...revolutions every five seconds...

REGRET

Go away.

ENIGMA

[to EVERYGUY] I'm sorry, I just snapped for a minute.

THE DEVIL

And Distraction, didn't I warn you about –

DISTRACTION

Me me me me me me! What is this? There are other people in the room!

EVERYGUY

[putting full attention to her and sitting with her] No, no it's okay.

ORBIT

And now for when I'm particularly symbolic. *[orbits tightly around DISTRACTION]*

REGRET

You people are so juvenile.

DISTRACTION

Are you trying to say the whole world revolves around me?

REGRET

Am I the only one who actually thinks about consequences?

THE DEVIL

Solely, yes. And as for you – *[to ORBIT]*

ORBIT

You can't even handle my allegory.

THE DEVIL

I'm going to handle a whole lot more than that in a minute.

REGRET

See, back to the threats!

DISTRACTION

Kid, I'm gonna pop you in two seconds.

All the action is gravitating towards the front door. THE DEVIL is trying to gain some calm. ORBIT is continuing to annoy DISTRACTION while everyone just upsettly ends up outside the door, keeping the door open and walking down the hall. EVERYGUY is talking quietly with ENIGMA and they have a moment of silence before talking.

ENIGMA

Thank you, for just listening.

EVERYGUY

I actually thought I did know what you were going through.

ENIGMA

You might, I don't know.

EVERYGUY

Hey, that's fine. If you just want an ear, I'm here.

ENIGMA

I prefer whole heads. *[musters a smile]*

EVERYGUY

There's no way I'm offering my nose.

ENIGMA

I'm just pretty volatile right now.

EVERYGUY

That time of the month?

ENIGMA

What do you mean?

EVERYGUY

Nothing. Stupid joke.

ENIGMA

Tell me.

EVERYGUY

I just meant, you know...*that* time of the month.

ENIGMA

The 12th?

EVERYGUY

No, not the date.

ENIGMA

What are you talking about?

EVERYGUY

You mean...you don't...allegorical girls don't get...the television lies!

ENIGMA

You're a few parts of speech short of a sentence.

EVERYGUY

And make myself perfectly clear? That would give you a distinct advantage. [*they giggle*]

ENIGMA

I'm Enigma. I'm always going to have a distinct advantage.

EVERYGUY

You're a *girl*. That's where your advantage comes from.

ENIGMA

We're simple people, we girls. We really are. Ice cream, hugs, occasional surprises – not like being cheated on; pleasant surprises – being held tight, and more ice cream. That's pretty much the formula.

EVERYGUY

That's all there is to it?

ENIGMA

One or both of the ice creams can be substituted with chocolate, but yeah, basically.

EVERYGUY

You've enlightened me.

ENIGMA

It looks like the session has finished.

EVERYGUY

That sucks, you really didn't get to talk.

ENIGMA

I don't know that I wanted to talk to them anyway.

EVERYGUY

Hey, my phone's open tonight if your finger gets bored and wants to touch buttons.

ENIGMA

Thanks.

EVERYGUY

I'm serious. I'll give you my number.

ENIGMA

I don't know that I'm really going to be up for it.

EVERYGUY

That's fine. I mean, whatever you want to do. Just know the offer's there.

ENIGMA

There's really only two people who can help me tonight, I think. And they both manufacture ice cream.

THE DEVIL finally comes in to see them talking. He is mildly concerned.

THE DEVIL

I'm so sorry, Enigma, that we didn't get to your predicament. I can see you're pretty upset by this whole deal.

ENIGMA

It's okay. It happens, you know?

THE DEVIL

It's a long shot, but hopefully the next meeting will go more peacefully and we'll be able to discuss it fully.

EVERYGUY

Do all the meetings go like this?

THE DEVIL

This was pretty tame. When Temper and Riot show, the meetings are horrendous.

EVERYGUY

I can imagine.

THE DEVIL

So I'll see you both next week?

ENIGMA

I wouldn't miss it.

EVERYGUY

Yeah, I'll probably be here too.

ENIGMA

Bye. *[She starts to exit. EVERYGUY catches her.]*

EVERYGUY

Wait. Here's my number. Give me a call tonight, okay?

ENIGMA

We'll see. Bye. *[she exits, taking number]*

THE DEVIL

Everyguy, I'm sorry if this meeting didn't really pan out the way you'd hoped. It was certainly a disappointment from my end. But I hope I can convince you to try one more session next week. In fact, to try to convince you, I've arranged for a friend of mine to talk to you right now about your problem, and then you can speak with everyone next week. Please consider this my way of saying I'm sorry.

EVERYGUY

Okay, who is he?

THE DEVIL

Foresight.

EVERYGUY

He sounds like he could be a big help to me. Thanks.

THE DEVIL

I bumped into Foresight a minute ago. Foresight, come on in! I'm sure you two will have an awful lot in common.

EVERYGUY

Great, thanks The Devil.

THE DEVIL

It's my job.

FORESIGHT enters. She is the girl from the first scene, although she is now not in the first-date mode. She's a streetsmart type. EVERYGUY reacts and THE DEVIL talks to the audience.

If there's one thing that can guarantee the loss of emotional function and clarity it is advice from a woman. See, men think—and probably rightfully so—that the female species isn't a gender, it's a conspiracy. Women will never give supportive relationship advice to a man, even under gunpoint. Their duty is simply to allay the man's fears while never actually steering him towards any sort of definitive resolve. Which is why this moment right here is the *best* part of the midphase. *[back to the scene]* Foresight, I'd like you to meet Everyguy. Everyguy, Foresight.

Both balk for a moment.

EVERYGUY

I was supposed to be getting advice from—

FORESIGHT

As if my day wasn't going poorly enough—

Pause.

FORESIGHT

Oh man.

EVERYGUY

The Devil, what is this? I thought that I'd be getting advice from a guy.

THE DEVIL

Well, I'm sure you two have plenty to discuss. I'll be on my way.

EVERYGUY

But, hey—

He's already gone. There is an awkward pause. They both speak over each other.

So you're here to—

FORESIGHT

Of all the people—

They pause.

Stop! I speak now, you listen now.

EVERYGUY

Hey, if you're Foresight, how come our date was such a mess? Shouldn't you have seen that coming?

FORESIGHT

There's a male question for you. It could have been...you, for starters. But, whatever, that's not what I'm here for. The Devil wants me to give you some advice, and it looks like you could use it.

EVERYGUY

Not really. I was kinda stuck on this girl, but I think I'm okay.

FORESIGHT

You mean Enigma?

EVERYGUY

Yeah. How'd you know that?

FORESIGHT

Everyone is stuck on Enigma at some point in their life. Even gay guys. She just has that magnetism. And what I can say to you is just to forget it. It's not going to happen.

EVERYGUY

Well, I...I really just want to try to be her friend right now. She's going through a rough time and –

FORESIGHT

That's crap.

EVERYGUY

And I thought – wait, what?

FORESIGHT

That's crap. You want to date her and very badly. That's why you will console her.

EVERYGUY

I'll console her because I'm a thoughtful guy.

FORESIGHT

You're EVERYguy. You don't want friendship, you want everything.

EVERYGUY

Anyone ever tell you you remind them of someone who sucks?

FORESIGHT

It's not my job to get you to like me, it's my job to lay down the facts. These are they: Fairy-tale love is for Disney movies and very pleasant daydreams. But in waiting for that fairy-tale love, you're passing up very plausible realistic-love.

EVERYGUY

But she and I have hit it off really well.

FORESIGHT

Have you ever noticed that some people just make a good first impression? In general? The kind that, when someone meets them, they walk away saying, "That guy or girl was *so cool?*"

EVERYGUY

Yeah.

FORESIGHT

That's Enigma. Look, I know people in love like to consider themselves special, but they're really not. Love is more universal than that. You're just the same as the other hundreds of smitten guys who will excrete sappiness until they end up dating a girl who is equally as wonderful, slightly less magical, and a whole lot more accessible. It's the way of the world. Once the male population accepts that, we'll have a happier society.

EVERYGUY

I suddenly don't feel so bad about our date not working out.

FORESIGHT

I'm Foresight. I'm not Evasion. Though conversations with Evasion are always an adventure and I heartily encourage them if you're patient enough.

EVERYGUY

So that's it? That's your verdict?

FORESIGHT

I know girls like Enigma. They end up with guys just like her. You're not a guy like her; you're a regular guy. You'll end up with a delightful regular girl. Accept it and don't kill yourself.

EVERYGUY

Do you really believe this or did the Devil tell you to say it?

FORESIGHT

I'm Foresight. I know what to expect. I've seen it all. I know you'll do yourself a truckload of good by avoiding the Enigmas of the world.

EVERYGUY

I suppose I should thank you then?

FORESIGHT

You can thank me by listening to me.

EVERYGUY

Yeah, okay, we'll see. Thanks for the [*she's already gone*] help.

Blackout. The stage is set for EVERYGUY's apartment. Meanwhile, OBSERVATION and THE DEVIL come on to the apron. The entire time they speak, EVERYGUY is rummaging around his apartment and all action described is happening soundlessly over. THE DEVIL is eating an apple, an obvious reference to the fall of man.

SCENE 6

THE DEVIL

Now, I know what you're thinking. This would be a nice place for an ending. It would be hopeful for some happiness for Everyguy. But I have a problem with ending it here. It wouldn't be right for my character. Don't forget, we still have some hope in the air. We need to see how that resolves.

He eats the apple while EVERYGUY is waiting on the couch by the phone. It is that night and she hasn't called. OBSERVATION walks on stage and greets THE DEVIL, who is silently watching the scene.

OBSERVATION

What are we watching?

THE DEVIL

Shhh, this is the best part.

Nothing happens for a bit.

OBSERVATION

I don't get it. Is this German expressionism?

THE DEVIL

This is the waiting scene. Everyguy clinging desperately to the hope that she'll call. But she won't.

OBSERVATION

Doesn't seem all that entertaining to me.

THE DEVIL

This is what's it's all about. The most important opportunity he'll ever have with her and she won't give it to him. Priceless.

OBSERVATION

Okay, you've made your point.

THE DEVIL

Not quite.

OBSERVATION

Oh I see. Why consider the game over with a score of 50 to nothing when the winning steam still gets one more at-bat?

THE DEVIL

It's just a little game called Reminders. The final stage of the midphase, and the one that perpetuates it into a permanent lifestyle. *[Time is elapsing on stage – EVERYGUY dons a new shirt. EVERYGUY has moved on a little, but there is a knock at the door. He gets it, and it's ENIGMA. He's quite surprised. She comes in and they sit on the sofa and talk.]* See, this is marvelous. This is just what he needs. One week later, a little reminder of his place in life: the good friend.

OBSERVATION

You realize no matter who he dates, no matter who she dates, he will never forget her.

THE DEVIL

Realize it? I'm counting on it.

OBSERVATION

That doesn't hurt your goal?

THE DEVIL

Remembrance is the key. If he forgets her, this whole experiment was pointless. It wasn't love. It was...just a distraction.

OBSERVATION

You know she will never forget him either, right?

THE DEVIL

Of course not. She needs someone to complain to about her disasters.

OBSERVATION

Sometimes friendships outweigh relationships.

THE DEVIL

Don't justify his torment. You're just as embittered because you are incapable of loving someone else. Don't think for a second I bought that Intrigue story.

OBSERVATION

That was a true story.

THE DEVIL

And I created AA to better everyone's lives.

OBSERVATION

Love is possible, the Devil.

THE DEVIL

Is it now? Love is possible?

OBSERVATION

It isn't commonplace, true love, but it's possible.

THE DEVIL

I recall you preaching something else.

OBSERVATION

Unlike you, I don't like to goad my patients on. It's better to be surprised by love than disappointed by its absence.

ENIGMA leaves. EVERYGUY goes back to watching television, as if it's late at night.

THE DEVIL

See, she's left. It's a beautiful thing. A good dose of that kind of visit once a month or so should be the correct formula. Random chance also helps. Humans love to attribute coincidence as holding some ethereal power; that things that happen are *destined* to mean something when, in actuality, they just happen.

OBSERVATION

Nothing can mean anything?

THE DEVIL

Don't get extremist. I'm making a generalization here. Things just happen – people will make what they will of it. A wrong number for some people could mean marriage.

OBSERVATION

But if something is supposed to happen, it will.

ENIGMA, without knocking, comes back carrying a video rental, assumedly of the movie they were supposed to watch a while back. She and EVERYGUY are on the couch, watching a movie. She is cuddled under his arm.

THE DEVIL

Are we getting into a semantic argument about destiny versus free will now? I love these philosophical debates. Charon and I had a wonderful conversation about infinity the other day.

OBSERVATION

Destiny aside, everything aside, love happens.

THE DEVIL

Love happens, but is it possible?

OBSERVATION

Are you saying that the impossible can happen?

THE DEVIL

We're using different definitions of love. *People* think they're in love all the time, so yes love happens. But is love – true love – possible?

OBSERVATION

This is getting a bit cyclical.

THE DEVIL

I merely point out that you're not going to get what you actually want. You'll end up loving something you have. It's human nature. If these poor slobs ever realize this, I'm out of a job.

OBSERVATION

We're not humans.

THE DEVIL

Look, what is the big deal? You're getting extra patients this way. If I stop right now with Everyguy, you're out one patient. Hell, if I stopped altogether, you'd be out of job too.

ENIGMA and EVERYGUY start having a pillow fight. They are rolling around, having a wonderful time.

OBSERVATION

I'm not complaining. I'm observing. It's what I do.

THE DEVIL

And I'm the Devil. This is what I do.

OBSERVATION

And man will do what he always does. Strive for that perfection, whether attainable or not. Some will settle on less, some will be the jerks that cause those to settle on less, and one in a million will achieve their dream.

They stop fighting and ENIGMA leaves. EVERYGUY goes back to watching TV.

THE DEVIL

That's a wonderful pitch for the lottery but a horrific one for love.

OBSERVATION

Personally, I agree with you. I understand your point. But that doesn't mean I am oblivious to the ideal...to the Utopian view of love and bliss. I don't think I'll ever find it. I'm *sure* you'll never find it. But that's not to say nobody will.

THE DEVIL

I'm not concerned with everyone. I'm concerned with Everyguy. Long after Enigma is a memory—which will eventually happen...I'm not going to continue this forever—he'll fall in love with whoever he is with.

OBSERVATION

Are you saying the reverse is impossible? To fall in love *before* they're already yours?

THE DEVIL

On the contrary. It's more than that, it's commonplace.

OBSERVATION

But to win? To actually go through the entire process and end up victorious with the one you've fallen in love with – that's the impossibility?

ENIGMA re-enters, carrying a wrapped present.

THE DEVIL

Now you're talking sense. And don't get me wrong. I'm not screwing people up. I'm not malicious in that respect. I only take the pain they already have and extend it.

OBSERVATION

Which isn't malicious at all...

THE DEVIL

I'm not killing young lovers or anything. I mean, aside from Shuggles, and that's not death, that's more permanent discomfort and near-certain ridicule. I could certainly be doing much worse with my time.

EVERYGUY unwraps it. It's a regular egg. They embrace.

OBSERVATION

I love the implication that psychological torture is somehow moralistically better than physical torture.

THE DEVIL

I never brought morals into this. It's not really my field of expertise.

OBSERVATION

Perhaps you should look at your case study.

THE DEVIL

Oh, I'm entirely aware that Enigma is there. All part of the plan, my friend. If she's gone entirely, it becomes lost love, which isn't painful, it's just cumbersome. It's incessant sentimentality which falls in the 'annoying' realm. No, unattainable love – unrequited love – is so much better.

OBSERVATION

You are absolutely right.

THE DEVIL

Why the grin? Are you caving in to the 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em' mentality?

OBSERVATION

Unrequited love is annoying. That's all.

THE DEVIL

Right. *[beat]* I don't get it.

OBSERVATION

In my vast medical expertise, *[points to the couple]* I would definitely label what I'm seeing as unequivocal, requited love. He seems to be attaining it without much difficulty at all.

THE DEVIL looks back right as ENIGMA and EVERYGUY kiss. It's a really long, passionate kiss...the kind you've been waiting to see this whole play.

THE DEVIL

Wait. Wait wait wait wait wait wait. What's going on? What just happened?

OBSERVATION

Passage of time.

THE DEVIL

I know that, but that's not what passage of time is supposed to do. Passage of time makes things worse. It makes them harder.

OBSERVATION

Apparently not.

THE DEVIL

This isn't right. Stop it! Stop kissing! This isn't supposed to happen. She's supposed to get comfort from him and then date another jerk. That's the formula. It's a tested formula – passed down from the ages. It's a good formula. It works.

OBSERVATION

Not for everyone.

THE DEVIL

Shut up! I have to think of something. That's it, perfect. I'll have Allegiance call and beg forgiveness. Perfect. You can never totally extinguish an old flame. *[the phone rings]* Pick it up. Piiiiick it uuup. PICK IT UP!

OBSERVATION

You might have lost this one.

THE DEVIL

I don't lose. More than that, love *can't* win. Love is an idea, not a fact.

OBSERVATION

Love is possible.

THE DEVIL

Love is a sham. Love is like UFOs and a plausible government. Love is crap.

OBSERVATION

Should I ask Enigma and Everyguy if they would agree with—*[pointing to the couple, who are finishing their kiss]*

THE DEVIL

Shut up, she's answering the phone. Let's see how your precious Love handles this.

OBSERVATION

What happened to you not being malicious?

THE DEVIL

I'm testing fidelity, that's all.

ENIGMA goes over and pulls the plug on the phone. She leaps back to EVERYGUY and knocks them both onto the couch and they give a bigger kiss, the kind that you've been waiting for since they stopped a few seconds ago.

OBSERVATION

The Devil: one million. Love: 1.

THE DEVIL

No. Love can't happen. I swear it.

ORBIT enters. He begins circling THE DEVIL on the apron.

ORBIT

I told you I'm allegorical.

THE DEVIL

Get away from me.

ORBIT

Who's on the elliptical plane? Ooh, check me out.

OBSERVATION

I'm sorry...you can't win them all.

THE DEVIL

Get away from me, you little monkey.

ORBIT

Everything comes full circle. Just like an orbit. Harsh, huh?

THE DEVIL

This isn't the—stop walking around me!!!—this isn't the end! It isn't over!

OBSERVATION

I'm just noticing, The Devil, that it does, in fact, appear to be over.

THE DEVIL

Shuggles to both of you!

EVERYGUY

[pulling away from her] I must say, my darling, this could be the beginning of something pretty beautiful.

ENIGMA

Error! That was a movie cliché, not a TV cliché.

THE DEVIL

This is not right! This is the wrong ending!

ORBIT

Dude, red guy, it's over. They'll be together, and I'll be *orbiting* you until you realize it.

THE DEVIL

Leave me alone!

EVERYGUY

What's wrong with the movies?

ENIGMA

I'll allow it just this once.

EVERYGUY

Kiss me, giddy music will play, the screen will fade to black, and the credits will roll.

ENIGMA

The end.

They kiss. The last image on stage is them kissing, OBSERVATION looking on happily, and THE DEVIL in torment, being circled by ORBIT. REGRET had killed himself the night before on a lethal overdose of pills. End.