

THE ONLY COFFEE SHOP
IN THE CITY

A Play in Two Acts
by Ellis Stump

Phone: (717) 808-4067

Email: theellisstump@gmail.com

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(All are 20s-early 30s. Gender is totally open to personal identification and interpretation, and diverse casting strongly encouraged!)

CARRIE (f): Creative writer and hopeless romantic learning to live alone. Imaginative, eccentric, easily influenced. Surface Manic Pixie Dream Girl.

COOPER (m): “Actor-academic” prone to fits of broody narcissism dispersed with quirky comedic bits. Surface Sad Boi. Far more enthralling in Carrie’s mind.

YAEL (f): Perhaps the only devoted follower of Carrie’s blog. Somewhat superficial, oblivious, but kind and well-intended. Jew-ish Long Islander looking for love.

JESSA (f): Yael’s darker sleeker gal pal. Quite insightful and sensitive beneath her badass bitch front.

NOAH (m): The Boy Next Door (or two floors down). Happy-go-lucky, agreeable, eager or honestly desperate to please.

ROWAN (f): Comparatively stable, smart, self-assured, at least seemingly, “PR associate/social media analyst/ marketing savant” and “Master of the House” (Airbnb)

BARISTA(/FITNESS INSTRUCTOR/DOG WALKER): Self-explanatory. Classic New Yorker juggling three gigs with varying levels of passion.

SYNOPSIS

Following a melodramatic post-college breakup, writer Carrie leaves NYC for London to navigate the Kubler-Ross Model (“DABDA”), from Denial through Acceptance. She and an ensemble of initial strangers explore maturity, independence, mental health, and commitment both in Real Life and their imaginations – while, of course, presenting pristine social image.

SET / SCENE / NOTES

January through June 2017. Simultaneously Carrie’s subletted flat in London, Cooper’s studio in New York, and their favorite coffee shop they “basically lived in” during college. This last locale is a more symbolic “headspace” for Carrie’s flashbacks and highly exaggerated fantasy meetings.

Minimalist aesthetic can be embraced with a simple desk or armchair for Cooper, couch for Carrie, and, for the coffee shop, table, two chairs, and an A-frame Daily Specials chalkboard. Throughout the show, Barista updates it and decorates the cafe with seasonal

flare: paper snowflakes (Jan), Valentine's Day hearts (Feb), raindrops (April), flowers (May). Nothing for March, because what even is March?

Carrie and Cooper might both start with dead plants they eventually replace with live ones. The spaces can be filled in with color - I recommend "library cozy" toasty browns and golds for the coffee shop, then contrasting cooler greens and blues for Cooper and London - knick-knacks, art, books (perhaps all the ones referenced throughout).

For lighting, I suggest no blackouts, instead more natural human transitions, and twinkly string lights. These are simply suggestions, however; do whatever the heck ya want.

INTERACTION

Include audience in the dialogue with a text-in poll (a feature available multiple places online for free): "Should Carrie and Cooper end up together?" (*Act II, end of Scene 2*) Have them vote, then save results for after the show. Response does not alter the script, but should provide a jump-off point for discussion afterwards.

Additionally, I encourage the cast to craft social media platforms for their characters, how they performatively present themselves to the world. The handles to these pages can be shared with the audience before curtain or during intermission. We have also, in the past, provided a BuzzFeed quiz for audience entertainment: "Which *Only Coffee Shop* character are you?" These opportunities for engagement are highlighted.

RUN TIME

~90-100 min. without intermission

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

- Production (Co-Director/Co-Producer), Hudson Guild Theater NYC, NY Theater Festival Summerfest (off-off-Broadway), *Oct 2019*
- Publication, Penn State Schreyer Honors College, *May 2019*
- Self-Production (Producer/Tech Director), Penn State Theatre Building, Penn State School of Theatre, *Jan 2018*
- Workshop & Staged Reading (Director), Penn State Theatre Building, Wonderlust Theatre Company, *2018*

SOUNDTRACK

A fun sound choice can be nearly nonstop background music, like is always playing in real life (in our cafes, gyms, homes, AirPods). For the NY Theater Festival, I reached out to **local** musicians and used **original** music. Creative collaboration for the win!

My Penn State production featured these specific songs and artists inspired by NYC, London, or LA. I own no rights, in fact am not even sure this is legal.

“Oxford Comma” – Vampire Weekend
“You Don’t Know Me – Ben Folds, Regina Spektor
“Everywhere” – Fleetwood Mac
“m’Lover” – Kishi Bashi
“Break My Fall” – Doc Robinson
“Polymorphing” – Chairlift
“Everything is Embarrassing” – Sky Ferreira
“Self Control” – Frank Ocean
“Don’t Dream It’s Over” – Crowded House
“Post Break-Up Sex” – The Vaccines
“It Only Hurts Me All the Time” – The Graverobbers
“Little Woman” – Twin Shadow
“Put Your Records On” – Corinne Bailey Rae
“Heart of Glass” – Blondie
“Girls Chase Boys” – Ingrid Michaelson
“London Thumakda” – Amit Trivedi, movie Queen
“On Hold” – The xx
“Don’t Delete the Kisses (Remix)” – Wolf Alice, Charli XCX, Post Precious
“Don’t Be So Hard on Yourself” – Jess Glynne
“It’s Too Late” – Carole King
“A World Alone” – Lorde
“Ooh La La” – Faces
Bow Song: “thank u, next” – Ariana Grande

Bonus inspo: “Love” Lana Del Rey, “Manhattan” Sara Bareilles, “I Get Lonely” Janet Jackson, “Track 10” Charli XCX, “Lonely Cities” Tigertown, “Crocodile Rock” Elton John, “I Want to Break Free” Queen, “It’ll Come, It’ll Come, It’ll Come” Ashford & Simpson

YO, ALSO CHECK OUT

[Reviews](#), like this one from a stranger on Reddit (and from professional news outlets)

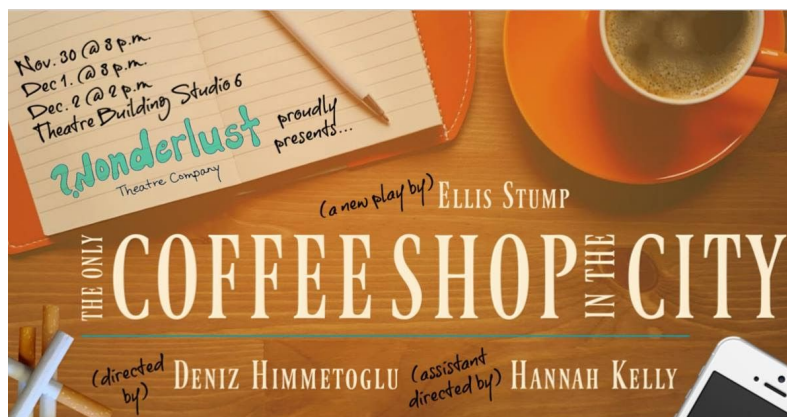
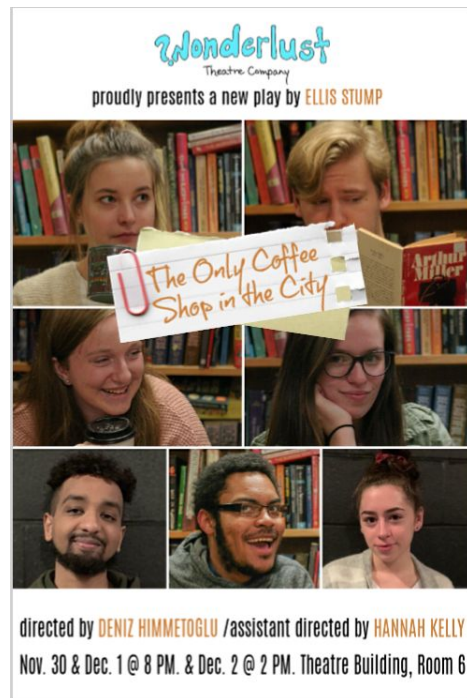
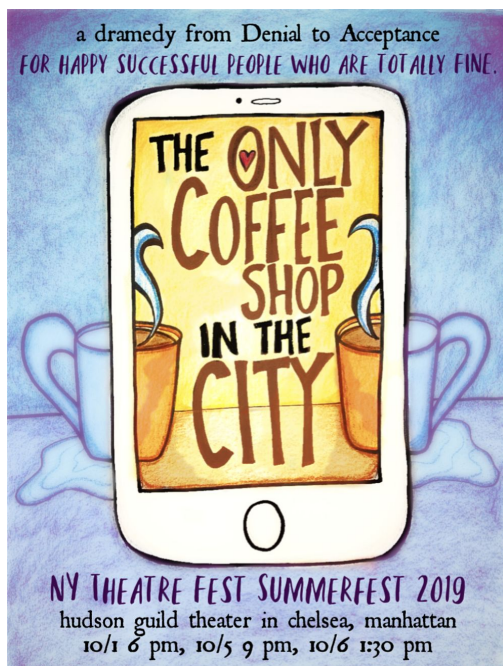


nosurprises23 · 1y

Incredible play! Funny and tragic and brilliant.
Stump is a genius writer

And my prefacing academic research [Thesis](#), “*Millennial Existence is a Streaming Meta Dramedy: Contextual Genre Hybridity, Episodic Format, & Feminism Screen to Stage*”

And finally, my designs:

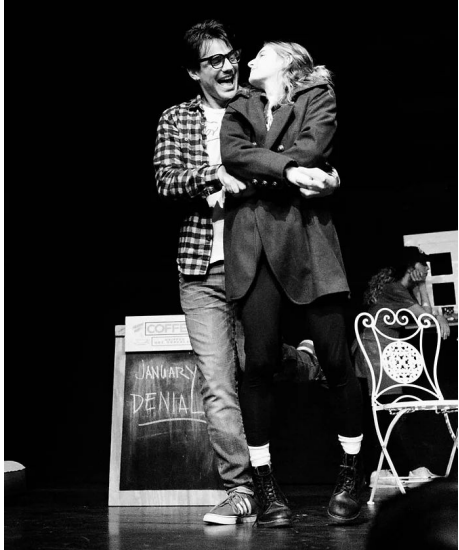




Penn State School of Theatre with Wonderlust 2018



Hudson Guild with NY Theater Fest 2019



^ on a rare occasion playing myself

ACT I
SCENE 1

SETTING: Early winter. Early morning, depending upon your definition of early morning. The coffee shop and Carrie's subletted flat. Books, clothes, records, dirty kitchenware, empty bottles and cigarette boxes, a stuffed puppy dog, and other on-brand Carrie items litter her "bedroom" - the couch, which exists as the sun of her chaotic solar system.

AT RISE: JESSA and YAEL sit across from each other in the cafe, sipping to-go drinks - black iced coffee and foamy latte, respectively – and flicking absently through their phones. If we see their screens, JESSA browses a career networking site, searching for, plainly, "A JOB." YAEL scours a dating app, widening her desired age range or circle of passable distance.

CARRIE is curled up on the floor of her flat, knotted within a blanket, her back to the audience. We shouldn't even know she's there.

(At last, JESSA puts down her phone and looks up at YAEL)

JESSA

It's cool we could finally find the time to catch up. You know, face to face.

YAEL

Oh, my gosh, Jessa, same. I'm so happy.

(Beat, then BOTH awkwardly return to their screens.)

YAEL, cont'd.

Hey, check this out. Do you remember Carrie David? She was roommates with Anne for a while I think? Short. Hair sort of like...

(Ruffling her own mane to resemble Carrie's messy 'do)

Face sort of like this.

(Contorting her face into a look of spaced-out delight)

JESSA

Oh, with the pretentiously zany librarian aesthetic? A lot of retro Modcloth skirts with little woodland creatures on them?

YAEL

(A statement of agreement)

No yeah, I think she looked her most normal on Halloween.

JESSA

Right, she's Cooper's ex. The bearded theatre kid. I subscribe to his Vimeo so if he goes viral I can reap first fan benefits, and when inevitably gives up and transfers to corporate finance, I can exploit the video content for blackmail money.

YAEL

Queen!

JESSA

So what about her?

YAEL

So they broke up a few weeks ago, right after the holidays. Christmas or whatever white sitcom families celebrate.

JESSA

You do know that you're—

YAEL

And then she just dashed off on this exotic residency abroad. London.

JESSA

She probably figured, what better way to forget years' worth of intimate experience than to catapult myself away into a new and distracting, disorienting environment?

YAEL

(Impressed, maybe snaps)

Queen, right? But what happened to him, do you know? He was cute, in that gastro pub enthusiast, Seth Rogen with bad intentions sort of way. Is he still here in the city?

JESSA

Nah, he's playing recluse cowboy out West I think. In Utah or Colorado, or maybe L.A.

YAEL

Oy... Dramatic split.

JESSA

Dramatic people.

YAEL

(Waking up her phone)

Yeah so anyway, Carrie just dropped a new post to her travel blog. It's super inspiring. It's like born again virginity, but for like, life. Want to hear it?

JESSA

More than I want to improvise a monologue framing my daily routine of browsing entry-level gigs over Cinnamon Toast Crunch before inevitably dozing off and then angrily watching Queer Eye until 2 a.m. as an era of healthy personal growth. Or worse – sit painstakingly through your rehearsed spiel.

YAEL

Oh, I know, right? Super, here goes.

(Reading)

“As English writer Virginia Woolf once said, ‘You cannot find peace by avoiding life.’ I am not avoiding life so much as I am overwhelming myself by it, waking every morning to a horizon fresh with inspiration and blinding with potential. I'm thriving, embracing aloneness, a concept entirely different from loneliness.”

(CARRIE rolls over to face the audience, opening her sleepy eyes.)

JESSA

Loneliness, ew. Bitch needs a frickin' vibrator. Let me see this... Greta Gerwig, Rupi Kaur shit. [May I?]

(YAEL passes over her phone.)

JESSA, cont'd.

“With no ties to anyone or anything, I’m free to stroll the streets in mindful bliss, stop into any bookstore I please, or enjoy a cappuccino and breakfast of baked beans and sausage that, thanks to limited data and spotty Wi-Fi, I’m freed from the burden of having to share on Snapchat to everyone I’ve ever crossed paths with.”

(CARRIE meanwhile slides off the couch and collapses onto the ground, a dead caterpillar in a sad lumpy cocoon. She shakes a few empty boxes of cigarettes, settles for a nearly empty bottle of wine.)

YAEL

(Smearing on some lip balm, a habit)

Baked beans and sausage. Cultural.

JESSA

I assumed she was vegan.

(CARRIE finds a stick of beef jerky from who-knows-when. Rips a bite.)

YAEL

(Correcting)

Vegetarian. Because remember that time she showed up wasted to the Beach House concert, her overall pockets stuffed with shredded cheese? It was on Campus Story.

JESSA

(Sarcastic-ing)

How could I forget?

YAEL

Well, because drunk diet choices don’t really count, I guess.

JESSA

And vegetarians don’t eat sausage, anyway. It’s like the most sacrilegious meat on the market, right?

YAEL

Definitely not kosher.

(Growing giddy)

She’s really tossed her morals out the window, hasn’t she?!

JESSA

Yeah, maybe next she'll have sex with a goat.

(Beat; Yael doesn't know how to respond.)

Or... confess that beneath all the thesaurus adjectives she's actually pretty distraught. Alright. "My days are a montage of museums, engaging class workshops and conversations, and trips outside the city to the Scottish Highlands or grassy countryside of Wales, then my nights living dreams of pitchers toasted under low-stone ceilings cozied up amongst friends and strangers alike. Life is both curious and wise, childlike and mature, and sincere as a storybook tale or song."

(CARRIE curls into the fetal position with her stuffed puppy and checks her phone - the blog post.)

(YAEL snatches hers back to read the following sign-off, as CARRIE mouths or mumbles it, too.)

YAEL

"Wherever you're at, in whatever corner of the world you're reading this, I hope you're traveling your universe like a tourist and creating art and relationships. You'll hear from me soon. Love, Carrie." And check out the darling pictures she attached to it!

(Leaning across the table to show JESSA)

Scones!

CARRIE

Dry as hell.

YAEL

A Burberry plaid scarf-

CARRIE

It's a knockoff.

YAEL

And all the pretty bridges!

CARRIE

That you aren't allowed to jump off of.

(With this, SHE tosses her phone aside.)

YAEL

Ugh, what's the British word for jealous?

(Small beat.)

JESSA

It's good to know she's doing well, if you ask me.

YAEL

No, yeah, I'm happy for her.

JESSA

Oh my god, same. So happy.

YAEL

So, we're in the city of possibility, living our best lives. What should we do now?

JESSA

Uh, well... a new sushi burrito joint just opened down the street?

YAEL

You're kidding!

JESSA

No, bitch! Better than the last one, I heard. What they do is they make, like, a normal sushi burrito, but bigger.

YAEL

Oh my god, it's about time.

JESSA

For lunch? Well, yeah, it's around 11. By the time we get there, it'll be like, 11:10. The place opens at 11:30 and they love people lined up waiting outside the door.

YAEL

Perfect. We can stop for coffee on the way?

(THE TWO begin gathering their coats and belongings.)

YAEL, cont'd.

I have a few BuzzFeed quizzes bookmarked for the walk over. Love Languages. Myers Briggs. Are you an INTJ?

JESSA

IDGAF.

YAEL

Like, this one that tells you which domesticated house pet which domesticated house pet you are, then what your Starbucks order would be.

JESSA

Your coffee order if you were a dog or a cat?

YAEL

The identity guidance we need to know! Genius, right?

JESSA

Brilliant.

(THEY EXIT as CARRIE'S phone rings. She glares at it like it's an annoying screaming child.)

CARRIE

Shut up, you. Seriously, shuuuuush.

(It stops ringing for a joyful second, then continues seemingly louder. She grabs it, annoyed, and speaks in a low growl.)

CARRIE, cont'd.

Hi, mom... No, yeah, I'm fine, I meant

(Higher pitch, perkier)

Hi mom! No no, you didn't wake me, I've been up for hours. Who needs a rooster when you've got debilitating insomnia? I'm just, I'm at the library; you know me, your little bookworm. Emphasis on the second part of that compound currently...

(Worming around)

Nope, no, I didn't say anything.

(Sitting up, lazily tipping over an empty bottle of wine)

Yeah, no, life is positively splendid this side of the sparkling sea. Writing is - hi Dad. Yes, I can hear you. Yeah, my seminars are swell. Writing? Wonderful.

(Searching for shoes. She wears leggings and a loose t-shirt, what she slept in.)

No, I haven't talked to "him" since. You can call him Cooper; he's not god. But no, not for twenty-eight, or.... twenty-nine days. He won't text me back, but, like I said, I'm fine.

(She locates a shoe, finds a pack of cigarettes inside. There is one left, and she punches the air, triumphant.)

Hey, listen, I've gotta run. I'm gonna stop by this coffee shop I drunkenly stumbled, I mean brightly jogged, by the other day, or maybe week [... I forget?]. Looks just like the one from the city that, you know, I used to essentially live at with... that I used to frequent, a lot. Yep, yes, I shall keep you posted. I do love you, too... And, jeez, yes, I'm fine. Totally fine. Okay, bye - er, cheers.

(CARRIE hangs up then fidgets, nervous, maybe bites her nails. Speaking with her phone again, as she holds it, poised precariously, above her backpack.)

Ya heard that, friend? I said I'm *fine*. Count your lucky emoji stars it doesn't pain you to grace my skin so rawly, vulnerably, before being tossed into the depths of this deep dark void, discarded as unwanted weight to already heavy baggage. *Oh, that I were a phone within that hand, that I might touch that cheek...*

(SHE drops it, to a loud "craaaaack." Her face falls.)

Bloody hell.

(END OF SCENE.)

(LIGHTING TRANSITION.)

(As scene changes, a definition appears in minimal simple type upon a projection screen:)

The Kubler-Ross Model, commonly referred to by the acronym DABDA, proposes a series of emotions experienced in five stages, following the death of a close loved one, a diagnosis of a terminal fatal illness, or a melodramatic college breakup.

ACT I
SCENE 2

SETTING: The cozy coffee shop.

AT RISE: COOPER is seated engrossed in a thick book, jotting notes, as CARRIE stands nearby, waiting. BARISTA enters with two mugs.

(The following words appear on a projection slide, and are written by BARISTA upon a Daily Specials board. The Barista's presence can reflect the month and emotional tone; during this scene, they might hang paper snowflakes.)

January – Denial.

BARISTA

Cappuccino for Carrie for here. Cappuccino for Cooper for here.

(CARRIE and COOPER step forward, accepting their cups with grateful nods to BARISTA. COOPER resumes reading, as CARRIE lingers, watching him with interest. Finally, she makes a move.)

CARRIE

Both of our names start with C.

COOPER

What a... crazy coincidence.

CARRIE

Critically cosmic.

COOPER

Circumstantial.

CARRIE

Consequential.

COOPER

Chance.

CARRIE

Course.

(COOPER nods, impressed, but still sizing up his opponent.)

COOPER

Destiny is a pretty heavy accusation; don't you think? Especially since my name is actually spelled with a Q.

CARRIE

Quirky.

COOPER

(Taking a deep breath, preparing to dive in)

An introduction isn't quite necessary, but we could shake hands, for culture's sake?

CARRIE

It is our civic duty to keep interpersonal socially constructed formalities alive.

(THEY shake hands, visceral chemistry between them.)

CARRIE

So... what're you reading?

COOPER

This? Uh, this is the Bible.

CARRIE

Oh, dope. Jesus is cool, cool, cool.

COOPER

Right, and by that you mean: pretty much the grand Messiah and sole truth speaker, and will be returning soon to cleanse our dirty planet and polluted souls. I'm just staying ahead of the game, to decipher his secret coded messages before the Illuminati.

CARRIE

Wow, yeah, that's... awfully smart. They're some sneaky boys, the Illumi-*naughty*.

COOPER

I'm kidding.

CARRIE

(With a laugh)

Oh, oh my gosh. You seriously got me there. Dang, good one.

(COOPER performs gimmicky finger guns, which she replicates back curious.)

COOPER

Thanks. What I'm really doing is critiquing a couple choice verses for Religious Studies. I'm sort of obsessed with what people are obsessed with.

CARRIE

Oh, whoa! Me too. I mean, I'm a student as well.

COOPER

Yeah? Of what?

CARRIE

Of...

(With a flourish, splashing drops of coffee)

The worrrrrrrrrld!

(Beat.)

Guess.

COOPER

You're seriously going to make me do this?

(CARRIE raises an eyebrow, challenging him. Finally deserting the Bible, COOPER takes in the bizarre, eccentric individual before him.)

COOPER, cont'd.

Uh. Fine. You're slightly too polished to study art, but not quite enough for anything within Communications. You're too instantly riveted and wiry for anything related to financial security or involving toxic easily spilled chemicals, so...

(Moving her drink away from the table's edge)

Anthropology, perhaps?

CARRIE

I prefer Free People.

COOPER

Poly Sci, then? Or – Gender Studies! You know, because you're an excessively extroverted female wearing a designer peacoat from Goodwill.

CARRIE

Those are some seriously evidence-backed stereotypes.

COOPER

I know my oversimplified representations. Now think fast: what's your favorite season?

CARRIE

Cinnamon.

COOPER

I meant-

CARRIE

Oh, this one. Winter. Duh.

COOPER

Favorite kind of tree?

CARRIE

Christmas.

COOPER

So not Plant Science.

CARRIE

I believe in magic.

COOPER

Of course you do.

CARRIE

Don't "of course you do" me. You know nothing about my life.

COOPER

I know you're an English major. A writer.

CARRIE

What- how?!

COOPER

You abnormally adored our alliterating earlier.

CARRIE

Well, what about you, then, Mr. Charles Darwin? What are you passionate about?

COOPER

Was that the question?

CARRIE

It should be! Your passion is your study, if you're doing it right.

COOPER

I'm not sure if that's correct but fine. I have a double major in Chemistry and Comparative Literature, and a minor in Theatre.

CARRIE

Jeez, okay. So what do you *care* about, then? Hydrogen two sulfide four - bi-hydrogen tetra-sulfide, if you will-

COOPER

Sulfuric acid.

CARRIE

-or Dionysus and Apollo?

COOPER

You're intelligent.

CARRIE

I'm well-read.

COOPER

And I wear glasses.

CARRIE

So open up those eyes, then, silly – what *fascinates* you? What stirs you awake in the morning and keeps you up fueled all night because it dismisses any point to sleep? Makes you laugh cry floor-collapse voids you of words while simultaneously filling you with them like toxic air you need to breathe? What do you fancy, flirt with, wanna kill but also hold dearly, warmly, intimately, forever? What do you just wanna shake in front of humans’ faces and shout: “This is real! This will seriously change your life!”

COOPER

Uh, quite frankly...

(HE rubs his neck, a tick, then suddenly adopts a Mid-Atlantic character and accent. A 1930’s Fred Astaire style riff like the Charleston trickles in.)

COOPER, cont’d.

Carrie with a C, Queen of Sheba, it ain’t a want, it’s a who. What I fancy is you.

CARRIE

(Doing the same)

Oh, hooley.

COOPER

No dame, I’m not bent [*lying*], I swear! You’re a choice cut of calico. A bearcat, but fine.

CARRIE

And you’re a copper-plated dumbbell, quick with the lines!

COOPER

You’ll see I’m also quick with my feet.

(Music swells as COOPER stands with gusto, presenting a hand to CARRIE.)

CARRIE

Why, don’t pull the trigger, yet. Prove it, Pete.

(SHE takes his hand, and they waltz or swing about with cinematic flare. Ultimately, COOPER attempts to dip CARRIE but fumbles and she falls, halting the music and instantly shifting the tone to something darker.)

COOPER

Oops.

CARRIE

Get out of my head.

COOPER

I would in a heartbeat, if there were a way out of this fucked-up, cluttered mess of a space you call a brain. It's like eternal Black Friday in here with No Exit. You know No Exit, right?

CARRIE

Sorry?

COOPER

(Correcting)

Sartre. Sartre said Hell was other people, people you don't know, but perhaps it's the one you know more than anyone, or even worse, the one you *pretend* to know.

CARRIE

What are you suggesting?

COOPER

You know the old proverb: if you love something, let it go?

CARRIE

This isn't love; it's hate.

COOPER

Then let it go faster.

CARRIE

That's impossible.

COOPER

And also futile.

(CARRIE sticks out an outstretched hand, like Cooper did when asking her to dance.)

CARRIE

Help me up.

(Dismissing her, he heads towards a chair.)

COOPER

You're an agent of free will.

CARRIE

Fine. Whatever. You can sit there now, acting all composed and mature, but we'll fall back together someday. I know it and you know it too.

COOPER

Sure, pal.

CARRIE

I see our paths like this:

(Tracing two routes on the ground)

So they're together at first, then detour off to chase new opportunities but above all, progress, not regress, fighting onwards against the vertigo and winds. Then eventually, they cross back, like a braid that slipped apart for a minute but upon being separated out can be pulled tighter than ever.

COOPER

Stellar artistic work, Care, clearer than the reference maps of Middle Earth or Westeros, but.. what if you're facing the wrong way? And that-

(Gesturing to her "drawing")

is actually backwards?

CARRIE

Backwards...?

(She gazes over her shoulder, “backwards.” Her eyes catch on something in the distance - in the past - and light up as she returns to Cooper.)

CARRIE, cont'd.

Oh my gosh, Coop, do you see that dog back there? Bundled up in a little houndstooth sweater? Oh he's so precious I want to die alone with no one who cares. Remember how we used to name dogs we'd pass on the street after deceased depressed artists?

COOPER

Ha, yeah, that routine certainly does ring a bell. A Pavlovian one.

CARRIE

(Shaking an imaginary bell)

Dinner's ready, puppos! Come get a treat!

(COOPER pants, acting like a dog as he moves closer to his ex, taking care to avoid “tripping” over her imaginary lines.)

COOPER

Hans Christian Houndersen, Charles Pawdelaire, Edgar Allen Bone.

CARRIE

Vincent Van Go Fetch!

COOPER

That one was all you.

CARRIE

Yeah, 'cause he had one perky ear, then the other flopped over like this, so from a distance it looked like he had-

COOPER

(Crouching to join her near the ground)

-only one ear!-

CARRIE

Yeah, that was on our-

COOPER

-weekend in South Philly-

CARRIE

-which we spent primarily in 24-hour diners-

COOPER

-and that-

BOTH

-hotel rooftop!-

CARRIE

-with that bitter old drunkard-

COOPER

-we convinced we were-

BOTH

Sonny and Cher!!

(Laughing, they fall back together and lay side by side, gazing up into stars and space. They huddle close, as if it's cold outside; snow may fall.)

COOPER

(Impersonating Sonny Bono)

“They say we’re young and we don’t know. We won’t find out until we’re grown.”
That’s a quote. From “I Got You, Babe.”

CARRIE

I know. “Love, love is strange. A lot of people take it for a game.” That’s from “Love is Strange.” But not for us, Coop, because we really know each other. We’re on the same team. We keep each other cozy and warm, with our coffees, of course. Don’t you agree?

(LIGHTING TRANSITION, dim, dark. CARRIE can't see COOPER in the darkness, and panics)

CARRIE, cont’d.

Cooper....? Coop?

(BARISTA updates the Daily Specials board, like before, perhaps now hanging Valentine's Day hearts with bitter annoyance.)

February – Anger.

(END OF SCENE.)

ACT I
SCENE 3

SETTING: The coffee shop, lit normally, and the London flat.

AT RISE:

CARRIE is hastily tidying her space – shoving things under the couch, hiding the stuffed dog in particular – braiding her hair, and ripping shots of vodka chased with espresso.

Meanwhile, JESSA stands behind a seated YAEL, braiding her friend's hair. They have their trademark drinks.

YAEL

So the next post starts like – “If you're reading this by any chance, know your silence only propels me onwards. I don't mind one bit. You were flaky as a croissant, while the boys here stand crisp as biscuits or baguettes to rip your teeth into. With dress and manners smart as their speech, they charm like storybook princes.”

(Gazing off, romanced)

JESSA

Do you ever feel pity for your parents, then crippling shame for feeling that way?

YAEL

“I met one strapping lad through my residency the other day, another expat who coincidentally lives in my building. He called me crazy, so I called him the next day, living up to my accusations I suppose. I'm nothing if not entirely unreliable.”

(Examining her reflection in a compact mirror from her purse)

Some of these tangents are just like, oy, self-obsessed much, right?

JESSA

Yeah, it's like my mom just passive-aggressively tugs my sister and I down into these frickin' repressive places we've outgrown. And she doesn't even want to take care of *us*, necessarily, just like, anyone besides herself.

(YAEL reaches for Jessa's iced coffee, and Jessa nods absently, granting permission. Yael slurps.)

For her birthday in May, I should give her a DS with Nintendogs. Like, put your Dalmatians in obedience cups, mom, not your daughters in frickin' beauty pageants.

YAEL

(Eyes still fixed on phone)

"I wonder, though, what am I missing? What am I trying to gain? Am I filling some emptiness? I suppress those doubts." Then there's like, another few paragraphs of subtly disguised anti-Cooper propaganda and ego inflation...

JESSA

And *this* is when I start fretting about grandchildren! My mom had me when she was young, my dad eleven years her senior, but you couldn't tell; he does a lot of Botox. She just needs time to be on her own, you know? Mature. Escape like, eternal adolescence.

(Now she goes for Yael's latte, takes a big gulp.)

But on the flip side my dad deserves grandkids while he's still able to roll around the floor with them. It's always felt like a numbers game.

YAEL

(Scanning the blog)

Yada, yada... it's pretty long.

JESSA

It's pretty complicated.

YAEL

It's just like, doesn't she understand the Internet is supposed to be easy to read?

JESSA

It's just like, I think I can contribute more to the world as an independent than to my family as a parent.

YAEL

And it ends with "Fuck you to the moon and back." Ouch.

JESSA

(Reentering awareness)

Shit. Sorry.

YAEL

No, I meant,

(Holding up her phone)

this is harsh.

JESSA

Oh. Yeah.

YAEL

But that does sort of hurt, though. I have a/ sensitive skull.

JESSA

/Sensitive skull/ I know.

(Beat. She sits, finished with YAEL's braid.)

So what do you think?

YAEL

(Still referencing her phone)

About this?

JESSA

What? No, but you're falling way too deep into that blog, if you ask me.

YAEL

(Somewhat defensively)

You know I love blogs.

JESSA

Yeah, but if you think it's long or boring, just unsubscribe. Peace out. There are a frickin' million options out there.

YAEL

I like sticking with something. It's long, but not boring, all the parts about princes and travel! I'm also obsessed with this other one Carrie shared recently. It's basically Eat, Pray, Love, except the writer is definitely single, atheist, and a Soylent enthusiast.

JESSA

Sounds like my type.

YAEL

Total queen. She's in India for a few months, and it's called "Myself in Mumbai." But I think it should be called "All Mumbai Myself." Isn't that funny?

JESSA

Hilarious. I meant what you think about getting married and having kids.

YAEL

Oh my god! I'm super excited to start trying.

JESSA

I've been trying for like, a quarter of a century.

YAEL

I mean for kids! The choice to make children is, gosh, just so selfless and pure. It's a miniature you that you get to dress up in fancy expensive American Girl doll clothes and exploit all over Instagram. And pass proudly around brita, to which of course you invite all your ex-boyfriends.

JESSA

I'm pretty sure that entire response was an oxymoron.

YAEL

No, that's when three words are broken up by commas. The Vampire Weekend song, you know, "who gives a fuck about an oxymoron?"

(Beat. JESSA adopts the facade we're familiar with as they return to more surface topics.)

JESSA

So wait, though, how's the post wrap up, bitch? Do you think Carrie knows Cooper is back in the city? And back on Tinder?

Yael

(Smashing on some lip balm)

No, yeah.

Jessa

No or yeah?

Yael

(Confidently)

Honestly? Probably maybe definitely not.

(THEY EXIT as CARRIE welcomes NOAH, who ENTERS from Stage Left.)

CARRIE

Noah, hi, howdy, hello! Come in, come in. Welcome to my humble abode. Or, the humble abode of the elusive Rowan, a “PR professional, slash communications analyst, slash creative content creator, slash social media savant,” who’s off doing some marketing consulting in Mumbai. I’m just renting the place off Airbnb, I don’t even know her last name...

(Trails off, bites at her nails)

NOAH

(Eyeing the sofa set-up)

You’re renting the place or the uh, couch?

CARRIE

Oh. Oh my gosh no, the flat, the whole bachelorette pad, baby! I sleep there by choice. I find couches sort of calming and secure, like big spoons for the lonely? *And* you never have to worry about a sofa getting a pesky boner.. Sometimes I think I feel a dick poking around back there

(Playfully poking his shoulder with her finger)

But it’s usually just a chopstick. Ha.

(Beat.)

Wanna take some shots?

NOAH

Uh yeah, I’m –

CARRIE

Cool! I mean –

CARRIE

Only if you're up for...

NOAH

Totally down for...

BOTH

That.

(Another beat.)

CARRIE

Cool! Cool, cool, cool. We'll just do one or two apiece, or three or four combined, maybe five or six each... Just toss 'em back and hit the road, Jack.

NOAH

It's Noah.

CARRIE

Oh, yeah, I know, I was just –

NOAH

I'm kidding.

CARRIE

Oh, ha, I get it! Hit the road, Noah.

NOAH

If you insist, I'll pack my bags and go uh...

CARRIE

Yeah, get the heck outta my sight!

(NOAH makes an exaggerated move for the door.)

CARRIE, cont'd.

Wait, I already regret my fickle impulsive farewell! Come back, my love, Nooooo-ah!

NOAH

It's actually Jack.

(THEY force relatively awkward laughter.)

(CARRIE shoots finger guns, a gesture she picked up from Cooper, and NOAH returns them by firing a mimed assault rifle. This alarms her and embarrasses him.)

NOAH

Sorry, that was... /weird..../

CARRIE

/So uh.../ shots-?!

NOAH

Oh, hell yeah! Let's do it, do it.

CARRIE

I make a mean glass of pure cheap vodka.

NOAH

Ooh, mixology. Whip me up, sister.

CARRIE

(Crossing towards the "kitchen" Stage Left)

The bars are gonna be so loud and stimulating, we won't have to chat about class, or our personal narratives... Or even acknowledge each other's presence!

(She EXITS, leaving NOAH alone for a brief moment.)

NOAH

Uh, awesome...

(LIGHTING TRANSITION resulting in NOAH and CARRIE on the floor, leaned against the couch with empty bottles between them and Noah's jacket and things sprawled about. Switching music helps here, too.)

CARRIE

How about... favorite past U.S. politician?

NOAH

Didn't we relocate to another continent to, you know, avoid American government?

CARRIE

That is fair, but hey, this isn't the present. We're talking history here, baby! Her-story.

NOAH

Okay, I mean, yeah, let's do it. 1...2...3!

CARRIE
SONNY BONO!

NOAH
GEORGE WASHINGTON!

(Beat.)

CARRIE

G.W. Cuhhhhclassic choice.

NOAH

He was the first.

CARRIE

No way! You should be on Jeopardy.

NOAH

(Sincerely flattered)

Oh, um, thanks.

CARRIE

Your turn to question the pick.

NOAH

Okay, um... How about... What's one thing you haven't told anyone here?

CARRIE

Dang, that's a wonderful Q! Now we're talking. Or, shouting I guess, over each other.

NOAH

That's the name of the game, isn't it? "Shouting Over Each Other." It could be picked up by Hasbro.

CARRIE

Screaming is therapeutic. Okay, I'm ready. Let's count together.

(THEY try, but NOAH begins on 1, and CARRIE on 3. After a few attempts, they eventually figure this out in Carrie's favor.)

BOTH

1... 2... 3!

NOAH

I HAVE A BILLION DOLLARS
AND FOUR BMW'S!

CARRIE

I HAVE A TON OF UNPACKED
BAGGAGE AND A FRESHLY
BROKEN HEART!

(A beat, as each processes what the other revealed.)

CARRIE

What did you just confess? You have four BLTs? Jeez, I don't even have one BLT. I don't even have the B or the T; all I've got is a little lettuce sitting on a plate in the fridge, all wilted...

NOAH

Not BLTs, BMWs. And a boat, and a plane, too, but technically that's my family's, like, you know, it doesn't have my name on it or anything. We also have a blimp.

CARRIE

That's a lotta... modes of transportation.

NOAH

Yeah. I mean, it's my parent's money, and they never gave me too much. I still feel privileged, obviously, but I hate that word. Privilege. It doesn't make me like, immune to sadness or whatever.

CARRIE

Ha. When this residency river runs dry, I'll have to start escorting for health insurance. Not a *sugar* daddy, per se, more like a bread and necessities father? In college, I learned how to write cover letters, not Seeking Arrangements profiles, like how to thrive instead of survive as if that's possible in this economy. The house I grew up in, this one-story in Indiana, is the nicest place I'll ever live.

NOAH

Same. Just my house had three pools. And that's what I'm talking about. It's all relative. My life perspective has just been, you know, molded by a slightly different upbringing.

CARRIE

Yeah, I'll say.

NOAH

What did you say, speaking of which? I heard the word "broken?"

CARRIE

Broken, ha! No, ha nope, it's -

NOAH

Are you sure?

CARRIE

No, yeah, it's nothing.

NOAH

Okay.

CARRIE

I'm just in a poor emotional state currently, that's all. Call me the latest resident of Mississippi, the most impoverished state per capita.

NOAH

What?

CARRIE

(Brushing it off)

Bad joke.

NOAH

Okay, your turn. We've already covered favorite pet and TV show, and...

CARRIE

Coffee order?

NOAH

Oh, I don't drink coffee. I can scream decaf, but... Hm. Now I've ruined the surprise.

CARRIE

Hey, can you give me a second actually? I have to have a panic attack; I mean, a... peeing attack. Drank too much, silly Carrie!

(SHE stumbles away towards the Coffee Shop and attempts to compose herself.)

(Just then COOPER ENTERS, accompanied by gloomy 80's breakup song, like "Don't Dream It's Over," over-acting a cool burnout, John Bender type. He's pretending they're at a school dance.)

CARRIE, cont'd.

Oh, jeez! Of course, you choose *now* to instantly-

COOPER

Hey, Ace. What's a fine Betty like you doing spending this bitchin' dance in the corner?

CARRIE

(Reluctantly slipping into the bit)

Book outta here, wannabe.

COOPER

For cear? 'Cause you're having such a major rush without me, huh? I'll bet you are, with this narbo zeek as your prom date.

CARRIE

Bag your face. You're no bad stud.

COOPER

You gonna' take him to third base, get freaky?

CARRIE

So what if I did? Would that make ya crunchy [jealous]?

COOPER

Get real.

CARRIE

Step off.

COOPER

You're the one always kirkin' out. Take a chill pill.

CARRIE

I would, but

(Dropping the act; earnest, bordering on fearfully)

I don't have any.

COOPER

Fine, we can take 5. But that was a fun scene, partner, let's run it again sometime.

CARRIE

(To HERSELF)

How does one go about legally obtaining a "chill pill?"

(Meanwhile COOPER heads over into the London flat to mess with NOAH, who has produced a DS from his pocket for entertainment.)

COOPER

So, uh... this kid. He certainly bares a striking resemblance to yours truly. Style wise. Conversationally, I must say he has a little difficulty keeping up with bits.

(Ruffling NOAH's hair or picking at his collar. NOAH is oblivious.)

CARRIE

Don't be an asshole. He's trying his best.

COOPER

Yeah? Isn't that adorrable?

CARRIE

Yes! It is! He's cute and nice and down to earth.

COOPER

Well, there's a Tinder bio better suited for e-Harmony - one only your parents would swipe right on. The old Boy Next Door.

CARRIE

The Boy Two Levels Down, actually.

COOPER

Yeah, I would say he's at least two levels down for you, Care; you know that by "cute and nice and down to earth" you mean he's well-groomed and predictable and easy to read. And quite frankly, you hate books like that. You find 'em boring.

CARRIE

He's a good person.

COOPER

Which also bothers you, because you, most certainly, are not.

CARRIE

Sorry?

COOPER

Oh, did I not articulate enough?

CARRIE

No, your enunciation was a-nnoy-ing-ly sharp, per usual, but it's pretty weird to hear that I'm not a good person, coming from the masochist Machiavellian martyr addicted to indulgence and indifferent to love and support who can theatrically articulate monologued promises like "I'll always love you," while not actually caring about anyone besides himself. And Kanye West.

COOPER

(Rising from his chair, stone-cold serious)

He's the modern day Da Vinci.

CARRIE

He's mediocre at best. You're lazy, and unoriginal, and not going to make it as an actor.

COOPER

And you're crazy, and self-absorbed, and not going to make it as a writer.

CARRIE

Hey! You're cold.

COOPER

You're sensitive.

NOAH

(To his DS, the bad guys in his game)

You're gonna get it...

CARRIE

Ugh! Like.

(Breaking down a bit, showing emotion.)

Goddamn it, Coop, I just... I miss you! Okay? And somewhere deep inside my stupid heart, that stupid fucked-up cluttered mess of a space, I just, I just hope /that you still—/

COOPER

Hope is a foolish hunger that's never satisfied. Recalls a quote to mind – “Life is under no obligation to give us what we expect.” You know who said that?

CARRIE

Yes.

(Beat.)

No.

COOPER

Margaret Mitchell. Gone with the Wind.

(A gust of wind blows Cooper Stage West and he tumbleweeds away with a dramatic wave. CARRIE grabs his arm, shutting that down. They end up Center again.)

CARRIE

Coop. Cooper. Stop it. Let me ask you a question. Um.

(Beat.)

Do you still love me?

(Beat. No response.)

Did you ever?

(Silence still from COOPER, provoking CARRIE to burst off in angry thought.)

CARRIE, cont'd.

When we were dating, I thought we were facing each other through a window. Like. An open frame without a screen to welcome in the pure summer breeze. But... I think I was wrong. I think it was more like a mirror between us. And a cracked clouded one at that.

(SHE may gaze into the bathroom mirror. COOPER crosses his arms.)

CARRIE, cont'd.

See? I can't climb through this space to hang out on the same side as you, as partners. It's always been a versus game, a competition, like chess which yes I KNOW you know how to play and I don't. Instead it was always, "who can point out their own flaws they see reflected in their opponent first."

COOPER

Still a better pitch than "shouting over each other."

CARRIE

At least it's not shouting at each other!

COOPER

It can't be; you're the only one shouting.

CARRIE

I have to, or else you won't HEAR ME!

NOAH

(re: his DS, throwing it down)

Ugh. Defeated again.

COOPER

Would you quit yelling in front of the kid?

(CARRIE fumes. COOPER remains calm.)

COOPER, cont'd.

Here's a thought for you, Care: what if... I'm not even listening in the first place? What if every message you chuck into the void under your delusional belief that the universe will deliver it directly to me like Amazon Prime, is lost, because you, quite frankly, don't have my address anymore? Your beloved pet energies don't operate like a commerce conglomerate.

CARRIE

I think they do. They're not as greedy and capitalist, so they work because they want to. I think. I'll prove it!

COOPER

Fine. Shout away, pal. Scream until your throat goes raw. But I'm like,
(Slipping in AirPods)
going to have my AirPods in, if you don't mind...

CARRIE

Oh my god, you're.... You're unbelievable. You're – seriously.... FUCK YOU.

(SHE spins furiously on her heels, sucks in a breath.)

Goodbye, love...

(Flinging open the bathroom "door," striking a pose in the frame, and tossing her hair. In her sexiest "come hither" voice –)

Hello, stranger.

NOAH

Hey... Um. Did you just vomit?

CARRIE

No! I -- wanna role play? Imagine: I'm a 20s flapper trapped in the lowest level of the sinking Titanic, and you're a first class tobacco dealer caught in a loveless marriage. Or -- ooh, we're Rose and the Tenth Doctor during the falling of Pompeii.

NOAH

Carrie, I don't think any of that makes sense, historically or geographically. And uh, Doctor Who?

CARRIE

Just – come on! Roll with it, riff with it.

NOAH

Riff...?

CARRIE

PICTURE THIS. You're Genghis Khan, and I'm-

NOAH

Jesus, Carrie! Why are all of your fantasies so hopelessly tragic?

CARRIE

Because they're not real; they're romantic!

NOAH

They're sad.

CARRIE

They're magical! They're – I don't know, love is pain, right?

(Self-conscious)

I'm just doing, you know -- a bit.

NOAH

(Totally lost at this point)

A bit of what?!

CARRIE

Okay, new vision. I'm a lit fuse, and you're an unsuspecting coping mechanism, eager to indulge my vengence because you're either lonely or sexually suppressed or sexually confused-

NOAH

I'm sorry? I'm confused-

CARRIE

No, I am. I'm being inappropriate. Just like.

(Desperate beat)

Wanna kiss?

NOAH

Yeah, I – um, I do. Do you? Are you sure?

CARRIE

Yes, silly!

NOAH

Okay, uh, hell yeah! Let's do it, do it.

(THEY do. CARRIE holds up her middle finger in Cooper's disinterested direction. When NOAH nuzzles his face in Carrie's neck, she notices this and stares ahead, her eyes empty, flat.)

(LIGHTING TRANSITION.)

(END OF SCENE.)

ACT I

SCENE 4

SETTING:

The coffee shop, early spring – a shift designated by changes in clothes, or characters may carry umbrellas.

Halfway through, we'll also see action happen for the first time in COOPER'S apartment.

AT RISE:

CARRIE tosses her backpack over her shoulder and shuffles into the coffee shop. As she speaks, she writes away feverously, using alternatively her laptop and journal.

(As before, the following words either appear on projection slide, and are written on a Daily Specials board updated by BARISTA. Perhaps for March, they wear rainboots or have wet hair, drag a bit, glumly hang some paper raindrops.)

March – Bargaining.

CARRIE

Dear Cooper. Or should I say “friend Cooper?” Or just “Cooper,” but then comma, colon, suspenseful ellipsis? It feels strange you haven’t reached out today. I know it shouldn’t; it’s not our anniversary anymore. The date belongs to other happy-go-lucky couples now, all smug and self-obsessed, soaking in their rush of unfiltered love. But still it feels like someone declared “No more Christmas,” and you know how much I fucking love Christmas.

(Yael enters Stage Right, marking the first time action has taken place there. She sits and attempts to braid her own hair.)

CARRIE, cont’d.

Anyway, just checking in, casually. I have your best interest at mind, too, like, don’t you agree that as a once successful collective unit, we deserve some sort of closure? I just feel so in the dark, and remember how whenever you’d switch off the light, I’d have to nuzzle up and - scratch that. I love you. Nope, double scratch that... Exercise restraint, Carrie, jeez. So, have you been in any shows lately? How’s the fam? Are you eating enough fruits and vegetables to stave off scurvy? As for me, I finally watched *Moonrise Kingdom*, as you always recommended. I’ve been paying attention to your horoscope, both your moon and sun, and. Oh, I have a new cold brew machine. And also boyfriend.

(Meanwhile Noah enters Carrie’s flat; he has a key. He tidies the space a bit, then eventually flops onto the couch with his DS.)

CARRIE, cont’d.

Or, I’m seeing this guy Noah, who you’d like. Maybe you two would even get along as friends, or trigger in each other jealousy and decisiveness. Just kidding. No. How about just: life over here is... swell. Or. Fine. Stay... optimistic? Vulnerable? Stay gold or stay cold or no um, stay cool. Yeah. Cool, cool, cool. Annnnd happy anniversary, love! I mean, happy... March Equinox, pal.

(She sighs and puts her head in her hands, exhausted.)

Come on, Coop, when I just wanna live my life, you won’t leave me alone, but when I call out like this, you’re nowhere to be found? I feel torn between two places... Fine, I don’t care.

(Seeking distraction, Carrie opens her laptop and scrolls through Facebook, until her eyes catch on something and her face goes cold.)

(JESSA ENTERS, wearing the same expression as Carrie. She's eating a wrap, sporting a blazer, and cradling a stack of resumes, having just come from a job interview, while looking at her phone. SHE shuffles items around to make a call, ultimately grasping the wrap by biting it, phone in the crook of her neck.)

JESSA

Facebook official? Bitch, were you not gonna tell me? Not ask for my blessing? He should've come to my parlor and requested your hand. Or at least like, bought me a few Long Islands the other night.

YAEL

He did, Jessa. He bought you three.

JESSA

Yeah, bitch, I said a few.

YAEL

Three is a few. Here, I'm putting you on speaker.

(Tapping her phone and setting it down, to continue braiding her hair)

JESSA

No, a few constitutes five, at least. It's like, a handful?

YAEL

But that would just be like, one cocktail. That's all you could hold in one hand.

JESSA

Don't you doubt my drink-holding skills. So, how'd he ask?

YAEL

Not with a ton of chutzpah, I don't know.

JESSA

You don't know? Were you not there?

YAEL

No, he just... So we're doing dinner with his step fam tonight - they're Italian, so probs some churchy-shmurchy spaghetti schmoozefest - and I asked how he plans on introducing me. Like, this is, you guys, the chick I take home Thursday through Saturday night and sometimes also Tuesday and Wednesday. Orrrr this, Mom, is Yael, the darling lady who might just end up being The One, but I don't know, we don't know, who's to say?

(Fed-up with her hair)

Oy...

JESSA

The other night at Anne's you kept telling people, hey, this is my crush.

YAEL

Ugh, that's embarrassing.

JESSA

It's endearing. You were like, "Shh, don't tell him!"

YAEL

That's not what I sound like.

JESSA

Yeah, you sound more like,

(Drunken and sloppily)

"ShHhHhhH, don't TeLl HiM!"

YAEL

Feh.

(COOPER enters.)

COOPER

Hey babe, who're you talking to?

YAEL

Guess.

Uh, your dad?
COOPER

I don't have one of those.
YAEL

Mom?
COOPER

She's in surgery right now.
YAEL

Jesus-
COOPER

Close, but no cigar! *Jessa*, obviously.
YAEL

Oh. Uh, hey, *Jessa*.
COOPER

He says hey.
YAEL

Yeah, she can hear –
COOPER

What up Coooooooooper
JESSA

She says hi!
YAEL

Right, so the gimmick of speaker phone is actually–
COOPER

Don't mind him.
YAEL

JESSA

Exactly so anyway-

COOPER

Oh my god.

JESSA

So that's it? You two are like, frickin' old school girlfriend-boyfriend now?

(YAEL swipes up her phone and brings it back to her ear, sheepish in the schoolgirl way.)

YAEL

Idk I guess...

JESSA

You should take more pictures together! The only one that pops up with the Facebook announcement is that goofy group shot from last weekend, the two of you sharing one lei, so it's like, strangling him? Caption: "got leid?" Hilarious. I thought of it. Well, of taking the photo; you deserve caption credits, my punning queen.

YAEL

Classic. Hey, we're leaving soon, so I'll talk to you later.

JESSA

And by that you mean you'll text me the second you hang up?

(COOPER plays with YAEL's hair and tickles, goofs with her.)

YAEL

Cooper, stop it! Okay, Jess.

(COOPER switches up his distraction tactic and, during JESSA'S monologue, shows YAEL memes off his phone.)

JESSA

Wait, yeah, 'cause I have to tell you about this sub I just got from that bodega that lets you pay entirely in nickels? The one between the coffee shop and the subway - the train,

not chain. I stopped by right after this networking coffee date I just sat down for... Which went really frickin' well...

(Beat. She wants YAEL to ask about it.)

Right, so the line was frickin' Midtown lunch rush hour long, so we were all passing the time on our phones, obviously, but for a second, that sort of struck me strangely, so when I made it to the counter I just word vomited like: "Are we escaping our identities and existences by burying into literal virtual reality because disassociation may be the only current safe space?"

(Beat. Everyone on stage is indeed immersed in their technology.)

And the sandwich artist was like, "Sorry, I had my AirPods in. What kind of meat do you want?" I was just... Off in my own world. And they just assumed I eat meat when I only wanted mayo. Then they pointed out some toothpaste on my blazer, but I said no, gross, that's actually mayo, so they were like, "So you're eating mayo for the second time today? Or that's really old mayo?"

YAEL

(Distracted by Cooper's phone)

Oh my gosh same.

JESSA

In my defense, the shape of the sub way too closely resembles a soma pill capsule - I'll send you a picture - from like, Brave New World, you know? I'm reading it on podcast audiobook. It's good though, like, probably not made of old people. Imagine like, "Yummmm, tastes like grandma."

YAEL

(Still distant)

Queen!

JESSA

Right? But so I have to tell you that story, because if you ask me-

YAEL

(Innocently)

I didn't - did I?

(Beat.)

JESSA

Oh. Uh, yeah, no. You didn't. So. Alright, then, I'll talk to you later. "Mazel tov" on the engagement.

YAEL

Thanks and shalom!

JESSA

Love you, Yael...

YAEL

Byyyyyyye!

(JESSA hangs up, newly dejected. She puts in her headphones and stalks off, EXITING.)

(Meanwhile, NOAH calls CARRIE, who picks up absently.)

NOAH

Hey, babe!

CARRIE

(Echoing Yael's absence, but more indifferent than distracted)

Hi.

NOAH

I'm in your apartment.

CARRIE

Dope.

YAEL

(To COOPER)

Jessa says we need to take more pictures together.

COOPER

I'm surprised she hasn't asked for couples' nudes yet, quite frankly.

YAEL

Ooh, maybe that's what she meant.

COOPER

How fortunate you happen to be dating a semi-professional erotic male model.

YAEL

Is that on your business card?

COOPER

It's called an *acting resume*, dear.

YAEL

Jargon. Hot. Here, lemme get your good side.

COOPER

You mean this side?

(HE turns around to show off his rear end, perhaps uncomfortably close to an audience member, if being performed in the round.)

NOAH

So, are you like, coming home anytime soon?

CARRIE

I don't know. I'm still working.

(YAEL snaps pics as COOPER "models.")

YAEL

Yes, queen, work!! The camera loves your little tuchus, Coop!

(COOPER bearhugs YAEL and they take some together.)

CARRIE

Coop?

NOAH

Like a chicken coop?

CARRIE

No, I said uh, oops.

NOAH

Oh. Cool. Cool, cool, cool. So do you wanna watch some shows together tonight? With takeout, per usual my treat, from that Indian block around the cafe? I mean that Indian cafe around the block. I mean if that's what you're hungry for. Cock. I, oh god, I meant... I, ha, I get so nervous asking out my own girlfriend. Sorry, sorry, I know you hate labels.

YAEL

(Checking their photos)

Oh my gosh, they're super cute actually.

COOPER

Actually?

YAEL

You know what I mean.

COOPER

Yeah, that I'm fat?

YAEL

You do turn a lot of drunk food into hangover food.

(YAEL goes to sit and look through the pictures.)

COOPER

Hey, now, I'm just trying to round myself out a little, babe! Grow into the dad bod so I can expand my range and settle into older, goofier characters – the lovable father in “Cheaper by the Dozen” and “Daddy Day Care.” The stepdad who just wants the family to bond over his summer picnic or Christmas – or Hanukkah! – extravaganza. I'm tired of playing types like “withdrawn and misunderstood boy in gray hoodie who won't leave his room, with dark rings around his eyes even though he's only 16.”

YAEL

(Brightly)

You'll be an adorable old person.

COOPER

You think?

YAEL

Not as often as the average bear, but now and again, yes.

COOPER

(Miming using a walker, acting elderly)

How old we talkin', sonny?

YAEL

Thirty?

COOPER

Thirty?!

NOAH

Yeah soooo do you hate me forever, or....?

YAEL

Oh my gosh, talk thirty to me, darling.

COOPER

Oh, I'll talk forty to you, babe.

(Standing back, puffs his chest out, presents himself as older)

Financial stability. Job security. Health insurance coverage. Prime time television sitcoms. Emotional and mental health satisfaction. PTA meetings.

CARRIE

No, no, it's cool. Cool, cool, cool.

NOAH

Are you sure? Uh, okay, great! Let's do it, do it!

YAEL

So, how's this sound for my Insta caption: "Headed to a PTA meeting for date night. Hope the weird pictures little Kirsten doodles aren't cause for alarm! Lol"? No filter.

COOPER

Kirsten's our kid? That's hilarious, Yael. You really crack me up, pal.

CARRIE

(Picking at her nails)

They have inside jokes?

NOAH

Who?

CARRIE

What?

NOAH

Okay. I'll um, quit distracting you, babe; you sound hard at work on that Great American in England Novel. I'll see you soon for some Netflix and Chicken tikka masala. Get it? Like Netflix and chill...? Oh Jesus I forgot about your vegetarianism, I am *so* sorry!! I mean, um, Netflix and Chickpeas? Ha, this is why you love me, right?

(It dawns on him)

We haven't used that word yet.

(In a panic, hanging up)

Bye, Care!

CARRIE

(Hanging up)

Later.

NOAH & CARRIE

Goddamnit.

(NOAH EXITS, forgetting his DS. A longer beat. CARRIE has formed a finger gun with just one hand, closes an eye, aims it at the happy couple. NOAH at any point during the rest of the scene speedily returns, snatches his DS, and EXITS for real.)

COOPER

So, uh... Where did Little Kirsten come from?

Yael

(Slightly bashfully)

Oh. She was my favorite American Girl doll.

COOPER

Damn, Yael. I am so happy with you.

(COOPER and YAEL kiss, sharing a special moment as observed by CARRIE from the coffee shop - reflecting the end of the previous scene. They then EXIT, with YAEL forgetting her lip balm and having to run back for it, repeating Noah's action. Finally, she departs, deserting CARRIE alone onstage.)

CARRIE

Dang, Coop, I am so... So...

(She aims the finger gun at her own head. Her phone buzzes and she drops the "gun" to check it. Texts from her mom appear on screen, accompanied with weird emoji choices, something like)

Hi Carrie, just checking in... it's mom.... Haven't heard from u in a few days.
 How r you !?! How is school.
 What're you up 2?
 R U eating enough fruits and leggies.....???
 **Veggies (I meant veggies)
 (vegetables)
 R u OK...
 ??????
?

(CARRIE responds:)

Yes, I am fine! Lol!

(SHE remains frozen for a moment, before her face wrinkles up and she lays her head down on the table, on the verge of tears.)

I am so...

(LIGHTS FADE TO BLACKOUT.)

(END OF SCENE.)

(END OF ACT.)

**INTERACTIVE DIGITAL ELEMENT:
CHARACTER SOCIAL MEDIA**

During intermission, post characters' social media handles (created by cast) on the screen and encourage audience to browse them, reach out. For example, they can Snapchat the characters, whose actors respond accordingly.

ACT II
SCENE 1

SETTING: Late winter. Late morning. Carrie's apartment which, in the passed time, has become horribly messier.

AT RISE: NOAH is knocked-out on the couch, drooling over and spooning a pillow.
CARRIE lies still upon the bathroom floor.

(BARISTA drags themselves to update the Daily Specials board, especially slow, exhausted, with that late winter/early spring sorta gross grayness.)

April – Depression.

(ROWAN ENTERS from the airport with a suitcase and bag, shades down and headphones on [or AirPods in])

ROWAN

Hello...? Carrie...?

NOAH

(Emerging with a mutter)

Morning sunshine.

(Realizing Rowan is not Carrie, blinking)

Whoa. Who are you?

ROWAN

(offended)

Who am I? Who am I? Who are you?

NOAH

(like, "duh")

I'm Noah. From the Internet.

ROWAN

I was expecting Carrie. From... also the Internet.

NOAH

Aw. Yeah, that's where we met. And would you look at us now.

(Beat. There is not much to look at.)

NOAH, cont'd.

Are you the famous host Mrs. Ronan?

ROWAN

Ms. Rowan, Master of the House, yes. Are you some homeless queer kid?

NOAH

No. Or, at least, not all of those things.

ROWAN

Then why are you here? And, out here? Did you, or she I mean, not ever find the bedroom key? I was explicit over Airbnb messenger about hiding in that plastic baggie inside a small envelope inside a larger manilla folder behind the fake fern under the broken AC inside the largest mouse hole-

NOAH

A bedroom? And a mouse hole? Cool. I didn't even know flats had those. No, Carrie just always preferred, we prefer, camping out here on the couch, due to this kind of fetish thing for sofa boners? It's niche.

ROWAN

Jesus, I - I feel like I just stumbled into a Rip Van Winkle narrative, except instead of a children's fable, it's a cheap-ass porno.

NOAH

A porno, ha! Now don't get it twisted, Miss Rowana. The only stains you'll find on this *(re: the couch)* upstanding piece of upholstery are tikka masala and vodka sauce. That's cheap vodka and pasta sauce blended together in a NutriBullet. Our daily routine is get high, order takeout, watch cartoons until I fall asleep by twelve. Noon or night.

ROWAN

And where's she go? Where's she now?

NOAH

Uh, bathroom maybe? I hear the shower running a lot, so she won't be able to hear you unless you like, FaceTime or something. You should try that. Girl to girl. Meanwhile, I'll go whip us up some delicious instant coffee.

(NOAH fumbles up out of bed and shuffles towards the kitchen, leaving ROWAN exasperated and confused.)

NOAH, cont'd.

Oh, and, Rotunda ma'am? If you get in touch with her, could you please let me know?

(NOAH EXITS. ROWAN, baffled, calls CARRIE, who now sits up from the bathroom floor. When she realizes what's going on, that Rowan is home, she freaks out.)

CARRIE

Rowan?! Oh my god I thought you weren't coming back for another month, I-

ROWAN

Another month? How bloody long have you been asleep for?!

CARRIE

I... have no idea, honestly. I am so sorry, this like, is totally NOT how I live my life, I'm just, I'm surviving this breakup see, and just like sitting in the time I need to-

NOAH (O.S.)

Milk or sugar?

ROWAN

Rebound?

NOAH (O.S.)

Sorry I don't know soccer!

ROWAN

You mean football?

CARRIE

I'm healing.

ROWAN

Yeah?

(as she further examines the disgusting space)

What genre of self-help books are you streaming on Audio Book that suggest this?

Walling yourself away by bowls of cold dry carbohydrates?

(Holding one up)

This is a mug of... uncooked rotini noodles? And some Cinnamon Toast Crunch.

CARRIE

(perking up)

Ooh, can I have that? You can just leave it outside the bathroom door like a doggy bag. I mean, unless you want it, then, help yourself-

ROWAN

Goddamn, dudette! Your Airbnb profile called you a frequent flyer, not off your rocket.

When's the last time you went outside?

CARRIE

Of the eternal Black Friday that is my brain?

ROWAN

Real life.

CARRIE

Pass.

ROWAN
Showered?

CARRIE
Isn't that the silver lining of London weather?

ROWAN
No.

CARRIE
Then, alas...

ROWAN
Been to therapy??

CARRIE
Oh uh, I don't know, a long time ago, back in the day, when I was young. Then during high school briefly. Therapy's expensive. And I'm busy. And fine. And a good person. You're, meanwhile, showing up all harsh stranger-

ROWAN
Alright. Just to reinforce this because it seems like everyone's forgetting:
(Louder, so Noah can hear too)
This is my home! I own - or, rent - this residence! I'm not a stranger!
(Back to Carrie / normal volume)
But god, don't you have any friends who-

CARRIE
No.

ROWAN
Gotcha. Well uh, friends feel too much empathy for this sorta scene, anyway. They'd probably see you as under a sad cloud, not the eye in a tornado of self-pity.
(Making moves towards her bedroom)

CARRIE
Can we talk about it?

ROWAN

Uh... you and me? We uh, we just met, man. I've gotta unpack my luggage, change clothes before class. You could try like, writing about it. I know you followed my blog, "Myself in Mumbai," sooo take that as inspiration, y'know? But don't plagiarize. Namaste. Or, nama-go. Anywhere but here....

(ROWAN prepares to exit when CARRIE lets out a sob, causing her to, after brief hesitation, stay.)

ROWAN, cont'd.

Alright, yeah. Healing sucks.

(CARRIE finally breaks, clutching her stuffed puppy in tears. ROWAN sits outside the door.)

CARRIE

That whole canon of stupid 80s movies makes it look all light and breezy and feminine. I don't wanna soak in a floral-fresh bubble bath or slurp a tub of strawberry ice cream. I can't even bring myself to boil these pastas or wash my hair *(sorta mumbled)* which is turning into /sorta culturally inappropriate dread see/

ROWAN

Yeah, that's Hollywood for ya, idolizing suffering since there isn't enough of it there in the writer's rooms. Now Bollywood. Damn, some of the movies I watched over there, like, on the plane, were awesome. Ever heard of Queen with Kangana Ranaut?

CARRIE

Yes, obviously.

(ROWAN eyes CARRIE quizzically.)

CARRIE, cont'd.

A long time ago...

ROWAN

Right. So it's about this woman from New Delhi whose shitty fiance calls off their wedding, so she embarks on their honeymoon solo. And she celebrates female friendship

and tries on all these hot clothes. Until she accidentally sends a selfie to her ex, so he sets out to find her.

CARRIE

And what – does he? Do they end up together?

ROWAN

That phrase is hilarious. “End up.” What about all the time before then? And I’ve spoiled too much already, you’ll have to watch it – or at least the music video, it’s a musical-

CARRIE

You’re into those?

ROWAN

-to London Thumakda. The lyrics are literally, “You’re the Bell of Big Ben.”

(At this, CARRIE bubbles with another sob.)

CARRIE

Cooper’s half-brother’s name is Ben. God, I’m so sorry.

ROWAN

It’s alright. Just witnessing.. this.. tugs at my own heartstrings, which have been snipped and re-tied many a time, too, believe me.

(CARRIE cracks open the bathroom door.)

CARRIE

Really?

ROWAN

Duh.

CARRIE

So when do they quit feeling like this, like they’re frickin’ strangling you? When do you stop lying eyes wide open all night and then jerking awake again after a few minutes of precious sleep because you can’t breathe, because you had some stupid dream where you’re back together so being conscious feels so freezing and alone and the hearstrings just pull so achingly and –

ROWAN

Breathe. Breath, alright? Breathe now, and eventually you won't have to remind yourself to. I promise.

(Finally, CARRIE is coaxed out to sit upon the messy couch with ROWAN, who, while moving things aside, encounters a bong poking up from between two cushions.)

ROWAN, cont'd.

Is this the kink your rebound was referring to?

CARRIE

No! Oh my gosh, no.

ROWAN

May I move it?

(CARRIE nods, and ROWAN sits.)

ROWAN, cont'd.

Consider this a rite of passage, my dudette, a universal human experience. You'll emerge empowered and matured as hell, whether you trust that now or not. This is when you get to find yourself, and love yourself the way you loved –

CARRIE

Cooper.

ROWAN

Gross. Did he rock scruff and a lot of flannels?

CARRIE

(Nearly tearing up again at the thought)

Oh, so much. His wardrobe was like in a cartoon, all plaids lined up in a row. He'd wear them unbuttoned though, with quirky t-shirts underneath.

ROWAN

Right. So he's about as adorable and creative as every other Homo Saipan in this era of time between the age of 13 and 69. Coffee and wool sweaters are not defining personality

traits. Nor are cigarettes when drunk, indie bands like Tame Impala, owning a record player, or disturbingly charming cynicism.

CARRIE

It was mutual.

ROWAN

The record player? That sucks.

CARRIE

No, the split.

ROWAN

Oh good grief. You, my tenant, are a true card-holder for the Lonely Hearts Club.

CARRIE

My mom once said if you push a boy out your door, he should come climbing back through your window.

ROWAN

Was your mom a Victorian era prostitute that had to hide her night job from her parents?

(Beat. ROWAN passes the rotini mug to CARRIE.)

No offense.

(CARRIE crunches down on a cold noodle.)

ROWAN, cont'd.

Newsflash, kiddo: people don't climb. They didn't when your prostitute mom kept a shrine to John Cusack in her closet, and they can't now. The lead in every classic rom-com or Shakespeare remake, Disney Channel movie or Taylor Swift song is like, a stunt double on a rope, giving the illusion they can fly. Real people are... Penguins, you know? Flightless birds stuck to the ground.

CARRIE

(Gazing longingly at the bong)

I guess that's why I like getting high...

ROWAN

Duh. But the shitty truth of your window story? No one's ever gonna do that. No one's ever gonna show up outside your house in the rain with a boombox because all we have are iPhones whose speakers are only loud enough for one, and lofting electronics into the air in a storm is pretty much a request for electrocution. And also, people are insecure as hell and nobody wants to face possible rejection like that.

CARRIE

I just thought I was worth possible rejection.

ROWAN

And you're letting this amateur DJ type white boy bitch tell you you're not? Maybe you have to stop rejecting yourself first.

CARRIE

I can't. I have no clue who I am.

ROWAN

Yeah, that makes two of us. How old are you? Where are you from? What's your last name, your favorite holiday, museum, breakfast order? Are you a dog or a cat person? Are we gonna' fuck?

CARRIE

What?

ROWAN

Just kidding.

(NOAH reappears with the coffee.)

ROWAN

Oh, I forgot about you.

NOAH

That's what my parents used to say.

ROWAN

Alrighty, kiddos, your girl is hitting up hot yoga - hot referring to the instructor's sweaty abs and fire playlists.

(To NOAH)

Could I have that to go, please?

NOAH

Yes, ma'am.

(HE turns to leave, dutifully.)

CARRIE

Hey, uh, Rowan, I know we just met and all, but... if you happen to have one of those bring-a-guest gym packages... Could I come?

ROWAN

To yoga? You think you can handle it? You've clearly been neglecting those workout leggings you're wearing for quite some time.

CARRIE

Hey, now...

NOAH

I'd be honored to join, too, if you don't mind. Take it as a quick warm-up before I hit the pool or rockwall. I do quad-athalons.

CARRIE

What? When?

ROWAN

Of course you do. Fine, yeah, if it'll get you all out of my bathroom and your pajamas, let's go, team.

NOAH

(with enthusiasm)

Team?! Oh, wow, are you sure? Should we like – hands in, all say something on three, you know, like...?

(Urging ROWAN and CARRIE to participate, to no avail)

Yeah, no, okay. I'll go grab my sweat towel.

CARRIE

I'll go change.

(NOAH EXITS, headed to his apartment. CARRIE EXITS too, off to the bathroom or bedroom. ROWAN lingers momentarily, processing. Then she takes a bite from one mug's contents, crunching on the cold noodle/cereal combo.)

ROWAN

Hm. Not... Great. But... Not bad.

(SHE EXITS.)

(LIGHTING TRANSITION.)

(END OF SCENE.)

ACT II

SCENE 2

SETTING:

Split scene: Briefly a NYC gym, then the coffee shop, for Yael and Jessa. Also Rowan (and Carrie's) flat. Spring has sprung!

AT RISE:

Yael and JESSA, center stage at a workout class, performing a bizarre series of moves led by BARISTA, aware of but ignoring each other. It's been a while since they hung out. The BARISTA is *alive*; clearly working the coffee shop is their day job and *this*, fitness instruction, is their passion.

Meanwhile, Stage Left: CARRIE and NOAH follow ROWAN through some slow, gentle yoga asanas - sun salutations and the like.

BARISTA

Alright ladies, I wanna see you channel all your years of socially conditioned self-hatred into these forward lunges. Can I get a "yes, queen"?!

YAEL and JESSA

Yes, queen!

(THEY glare at each other, annoyed.)

BARISTA

That's right! Spring body coming up!

YAEL

(Calling out)

Spring mind coming up!

BARISTA

Yes, hunny! You deserve to be so skinny you have trouble buying clothes!

JESSA

(Loudly enough to be heard over the workout music)

Suck up!

YAEL

Shut up! This is / my gym! /

JESSA

/ Your gym, / I know! /

YAEL

/I know you know! /

JESSA

(Sarcastic)

Sorry you know about me more than most people! My b!

YAEL

Sorry you care sincerely to share your secrets with me!

JESSA

Sorry they're offering one week pilates for free!

YAEL

Sorry the juice bar's smelly as a Metro rat's kink for feet!

BARISTA

Whatever you're feeling, dollies – lonely or unsuccessful, lost or confused, scared, angry, anxious, or broken – it can be sweat out. That's called keto dieting. Yes, queen!

YAEL

(Again, loudly. They are angrily yelling genuine things)

So, how's your job search?!

JESSA

Fine. How's your relationship?!

YAEL

Good! Thank you for asking!

JESSA

You are fucking welcome!

BARISTA

I see some of you shouting out your aggressions – that's the right idea! Screaming helps you achieve breathlessness, which carries you one step closer to fainting, and we all know that when we're unconscious, we're unable to snack! You go girls! Don't you love it?

YAEL and JESSA

(BOTH to themselves)

I hate this.

(THEY stop and peek at one another.)

JESSA

Wait, you do?

YAEL

Duh.

JESSA

Me too.

YAEL

Wanna take a drink break?

JESSA

Uh, sure.

(BOTH go for their reusable water bottles. YAEL tentatively offers hers to JESSA.)

YAEL

It's a latte.

JESSA

I'll stick to water.

(Small awkward beat.)

YAEL

Hey, if you're not like, busy or whatever, we could head to the coffee shop for a little, and, like-

JESSA

Oh, um.

YAEL

Catch up, face to face? My treat?

JESSA

Uh, yeah. Alright.

(YAEL and JESSA walk back to sit at the table in their usual spots. BARISTA cartwheels off, EXITING.)

(At this point, yoga has wrapped up. NOAH has exited, and CARRIE and ROWAN kick back on the couch, on their phones, CARRIE'S feet in ROWAN'S lap.)

CARRIE

Oh, jeez.

ROWAN

What?

CARRIE

Mercury's in retrograde.

ROWAN

Batten down the hatches.

CARRIE

Seriously, Rowan! Do you know what Mercury retrogrades influence? They're eras of personal reflection –

ROWAN

Sounds helpful.

CARRIE

-accompanied by longing, dwelling, pondering what could have beens. And this one's in Capricorn, an earth sign-

ROWAN

Sounds grounding.

CARRIE

As in dirt paths to stumble along backwards, maybe. I'm especially at risk, as a Gemini ruled by Mercury.

ROWAN

Mercury? A random chunk of rock taking laps in outer space 50 million miles away? You aren't ruled by anything, dudette. Where are you reading that?

CARRIE

This daily text summary I get from this app, see? It tracks the movements of my relevant stars and planets, so I can –

ROWAN

(Sarcastically)

Avoid permanent contracts on full moons –

CARRIE

Close enough.

ROWAN

And open possibility when the sun is up?

CARRIE

They're just suggestions.

ROWAN

They're dumb. You're letting an app that fantasizes totally artificial, empty science with random algorithms dictate your life.

CARRIE

You've been on Bumble for the last hour.

ROWAN

And peek into my trove of treasures! This is Zoey. She's from Berlin, so I bet she carries a leather vibrator that pulses to EDM around in her Fjallraven Kanken backpack.

CARRIE

She's cute.

ROWAN

Cute? She's an alt-indie fairy pixie sex toy. And she likes Queen – the band, not the movie, though equally impactful. You can be ruled by the planet Mercury, but bitch I'm ruled by Freddie Mercury.

CARRIE

Wanna listen to the Queens on a loop?

ROWAN

(Miming picking up a telephone)

Ring, ring, who's that? Oh, that's a good call. Yes, my dudette, play to me from my Royal Court.

(Attention back on YAEL and JESSA, sitting tensely in the coffee shop on their phones, just like at the beginning. YAEL knows she should speak first but can't find anything to say, so she returns to an old reliable topic.)

(Meanwhile, CARRIE, ROWAN, and occasionally a helpful NOAH clean the space once and for all, jamming to their music. They could also come in with museum gift shop bags and replace the dead plants with live ones, in a montage of fun activities.)

YAEL

So hey, uh... any idea how Carrie's doing? She hasn't blogged in a while. It makes me feel kinda nervous. I'm like, the other woman.

JESSA

Didn't you see her Instagram [*a verb*] that screenshotted Tweet about leaving Facebook? It was like a suicide note.

(Pulling it up to read)

"I think what's best for me is a little time in the present, cut off from image and expectations. Reach out if you want, if any of you even read this. Here's my address." An address... Like frickin' Little House on the Prairie.

YAEL

Little House on the Carrie.

JESSA

That's funny. You're funny.

YAEL

Thanks... Maybe we should try detoxifying our lives like that.

JESSA

Probably healthier than the lemon-ginger tea I've tried injecting intravenously.

YAEL

It's just like, how many Snap stories do we have to target at one sloppy drunk idiot fuckboy who won't even watch-

(JESSA snaps her fingers, appreciatively.)

YAEL, cont'd.

Or how many captions do we have to spend hours perfecting, before we realize that like, honestly, no one even cares? Who we pretend to be and know – isn't even like it is IRL. Maybe we should delete our social media.

JESSA

Maybe we should. Oh wait, that reminds me. I got a job.

YAEL

You're kidding! Doing what?

JESSA

Social media management. For this new digital startup. It's a grassroots organization and I'm allergic to grass, but I think I can make it work.

YAEL

Wow, queen, I'm super proud of you.

JESSA

I'm proud of you, too. You're in a relationship in which you feel happy and healthy.

YAEL

Yeah, I do. Thanks.

(Beat. YAEL and JESSA smile at each other.)

JESSA, cont'd.

You know what? Let's do it. Let's each delete one app.

YAEL

Oh my gosh, okay!

(Taking out her phone)

I'll delete LinkedIn.

JESSA

Maybe not that one.

YAEL

How about Tinder?

JESSA

Better! I'll take LinkedIn. And show you how to use it eventually, if you want.

YAEL

If it helps my career as an Instagram influencer.

(JESSA offers YAEL her phone.)

JESSA

Can you do it for me?

YAEL

Yeah, let's switch. Ready?

JESSA

(With a nod)

One...

YAEL

Two...

BOTH

(Shutting their eyes and tapping their screens together)

Three!

(Beat.)

YAEL

Wow. I feel more relaxed already.

JESSA

Me too. Oh my god, wait, I just had an idea. Imagine an app that's like, both LinkedIn and Tinder. Referrals, past experiences, certifications like "recently checked for STDs."

YAEL

It could be called KinkedIn.

JESSA

Double whammy! Yael, you're brilliant.

YAEL

Jessa, you're brilliant.

JESSA

(Genuinely touched)

Thanks, bitch.

YAEL

Welcome, queen. Wanna go get sushi?

JESSA

I just heard of a new place that makes sushi burgers. What they do is carefully craft each delicate roll, then mash all of that up with a sledgehammer, and flatten the remains into patties.

(As THEY stand, collecting their things)

YAEL

We really are living in the future, aren't we?

JESSA

If you ask me, we're living our best lives.

(On their way out, JESSA eyes Yael's water bottle.)

JESSA, cont'd.

Hey, could I try a sip of that actually?

YAEL

Duh! Could you braid my hair?

JESSA

Always.

(The TWO link arms and EXIT.)

(Volume up on the Bollywood jams, streaming from CARRIE'S phone as NOAH ENTERS.)

ROWAN

Hey, bitch.

NOAH

Hey... friends. Ah, this song! I've been practicing the dance moves you taught me, Rowan. Something like...

(NOAH attempts Bollywood moves, haphazardly but with heart. CARRIE and ROWAN drop their phones to applaud his performance, ad libbing support.)

(After a moment, just when it's perhaps stretched on too long...)

ROWAN

So, what's up, kiddo?

NOAH

We're playing Spoons downstairs. You two wanna join?

ROWAN

You're playing what?

NOAH

Spoons! It's the spoon game where you have a spoon for everyone except one person doesn't have a spoon, and then you lay the spoons out on a table or hide the spoons around the room, and if you get a certain hand of cards, you take a spoon, sneakily though, because everyone wants a spoon, and if you don't get a spoon, you lose Spoons.

ROWAN

What's it called again?

NOAH

Uh... spoons. I just said that like, ten times. It can get, you know, pretty insane.

ROWAN

Gotcha. Yeah, sure, we'll be down in a few.

NOAH

Right on. Oh also, do you guys have any spoons?

ROWAN

In the kitchen.

NOAH

Hell yeah.

(HE tosses finger guns and EXITS. This gesture has been passed along from Cooper to Carrie to Noah.)

ROWAN

Alrighty, let's go. We can bring the rest of our Nutella and pretzels.

CARRIE

We just finished off half the jar like, an hour ago.

ROWAN

Yeah, exactly, still half full.

CARRIE

(Suddenly regarding ROWAN with rawer emotion)

Hey, can I say something?

ROWAN

Uh, yeah?

CARRIE

It's just – dang Rowan, you've meant a lot to me these last few weeks.

ROWAN

Oh, good grief.

CARRIE

I'm serious! Our memories, in the few hours a week we're not busy or exhausted, are endless: riding bikes through Hyde Park, hitting up the ER after I crashed my bike in Hyde Park, the British Library, which is my favorite museum here if you count it as one

like you totally should, Borough Market for fresh produce because we make the dopest dinners together. We're like the Project Runway of cooking.

ROWAN

Well, cooking shows are a thing that exist, but yeah.

CARRIE

I know, I'm just... I'm gonna miss you.

ROWAN

I'll miss you, too, dudette, but I'm not going anywhere. You can FaceTime whenever.

CARRIE

I will. But I can't stick my legs into the screen and have them pop into your lap.

ROWAN

I'd love to watch you try.

(CARRIE sticks out her bottom lip, and ROWAN pushes off Carrie's legs.)

ROWAN, cont'd.

Whoa, don't gimme those puppy eyes, like I'm the love of your life or some /desperate shit.../

CARRIE

/What?!/ I'm not! I know /you're not.../

ROWAN

/I mean, It's just.../

CARRIE

I know you're not the love of my life, Rowan.

ROWAN

Carrie: no one is! Not me, not Noah, not what's-his-name. Haven't you learned that in therapy yet?

(CARRIE shrugs.)

ROWAN, cont'd.

Should be like, the first base they cover. No person is responsible for or in charge of your happiness. I for real don't know why we let humans run anything – the government, education system. We're irrational as hell.

(She stands, stretches.)

Ready to rock?

CARRIE

I'm uh, gonna take some time for myself, actually.

ROWAN

Gross. You sure?

CARRIE

Yeah. I...

ROWAN

Sorry I said you're not falling in love with me. You can if you want, but know you can't tame a stallion. Or a panther.

CARRIE

Or a manatee!

ROWAN

Ouch... Or most animals, which sucks but is also fair. Alright, I'll catch ya later then. Enjoy doing your freaky introvert thing where you run your thoughts into haywire and spiral off into distant, high-tension, existential panic.

CARRIE

Thanks. I'll send you a postcard from wherever I end up.

(ROWAN EXITS Stage Left, forgetting her phone on the couch. CARRIE rests for a moment, biting her nails, then notices.)

CARRIE, cont'd.

Oh, Rowan, you forgot your...

(Her eyes catch on Rowan's phone wallpaper. Amused-)

Her background is her dad and her cat? Hey, that reminds me...

(Trading Rowan's phone for her own, SHE dials a number and holds it to

her ear. It goes to voicemail.)

Hi, mom and dad, it's Carrie, your, you know, human. Just wanted to check in, say hi, howdy, hello. And uh, thanks for everything, of course. Sorry I don't... say that enough. Happy Anniversary. It's pretty dope you have this special day that, you know, belongs to you two. I'm excited to see you in two weeks. Thanks for being cool with me coming home a little early. Love you both. Bye.

(CARRIE hangs up, puts down her phone, and stands. At last, she strolls Center Stage to wait patiently, knowing COOPER will arrive soon, which he does.)

(ENTER COOPER, tentatively.)

COOPER

Hey, Care.

CARRIE

Hi, Coop. Can we talk? And by that I don't mean "can I ask you something" or "can we yell at each other," but just like, carry a conversation?

COOPER

Uh... Sure, alright.

CARRIE

Okay. So what if we tried being more honest towards each other? What if instead of stacking filters between us to protect our silly prides and easily wounded egos, we had just... I don't know... Stood out in a field with clear air. Thrown open the rafters and said everything? I'm /mixing metaphors/

COOPER

Said, or... *acted* everything!

CARRIE

No way, Cooper, that's all we ever did.

COOPER

You've gotta commit to the bit.

CARRIE

Fine. We can do both. Action.

(THEY mime everything, choppily and comically, the sincerity gradually shining through.)

COOPER

Why are you leaving?

CARRIE

I'll be back.

(Points to her back)

COOPER

What if you meet

(Mimes cutting a steak)

someone?

CARRIE

That's an

(Rolling dice)

unlikely gamble.

(Grabbing his hands)

And you could come with me.

COOPER

(Purposefully slipping away, fingers loosely hooked)

Sounds awful committal, pal.

CARRIE

Fair. But you can't blame me for your fears.

COOPER

Right back at you. We're self-destructive.

CARRIE

Which is just a fancy term of hedonic.

COOPER

Which is just a fancy term for-?

CARRIE

Scared.

COOPER

I am.

CARRIE

Of... ?

(COOPER shrugs.)

CARRIE, cont'd.

Wanna see me do a foxtrot?

COOPER

What?

CARRIE

Whip up a diner-style omelette?

COOPER

No.

CARRIE

Read one of my stories or blog posts?

COOPER

Certainly not.

CARRIE

But I write for you. You're my muse.

COOPER

That makes me cringe.

CARRIE

Why?

COOPER

Because they're better than anything I could create for you, alright? Also, you crave attention.

CARRIE

I do not.

COOPER

And validation, yes huh. I don't think you like yourself.

CARRIE

You like me.

COOPER

Yeah? And to hold up your self-esteem, along with my own, is a hell of a lot of work.

CARRIE

Work? Jeez, I don't want to be...

COOPER

Yet you were. Keeping you happy was an unpaid internship.

CARRIE

You *quit* all your unpaid internships. You carry around a wallet of semi-completed coffee shop punch cards - practically a metaphor for commitment issues.

COOPER

You have to sample places to know what's worth the cost.

CARRIE

What will be?

COOPER

I don't know. But I'll find it, I hope.

CARRIE

Hope is foolish hunger that's never satisfied. A half-wise, half-cocky kid told me that once, or quoted it, as if it's not the singular energy keeping us going. Remember that

Oscar Wilde quote from *The Importance of Being Earnest*? “I hope you haven’t been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.”

COOPER

And hoping for wicked instead of good would be pretty fucking twisted self-sabotage.

CARRIE

I *do* do that, don’t I?

COOPER

Yes. Also, I never read *The Importance of Being Earnest*, just a couple quotes off Goodreads.

CARRIE

What?

COOPER

You get the general gist. A lot of people do it.

CARRIE

People, maybe, not readers. Not seekers of knowledge and insight. Not...

(With a flourish; callback to their meet-cute)

students of the world! Phonies do that. Phony. Noun. Holden Caulfield catchphrase, but I doubt despite being such a Sad Boy you actually *catch* that reference either.

COOPER

No, I do, ninth grade English! I loved *Catcher in the Rye*. All the riveting angst, incorrect language and grammar, identity guidance through click-bait quizzes...

(Quieter)

On SparkNotes...

CARRIE

Oh my gosh. You don’t learn new instruments or chess strategies, or study dusty old physics textbooks, for fun, do you? You don’t stargaze alone on brisk nights atop abandoned buildings?

COOPER

No, I do not. Why the hell would I do any of that?

CARRIE

I don't know, because-

COOPER

Those activities sound miserable, and... freezing.

CARRIE

Freezing?

COOPER

Yes! Every time you dragged me up onto some rooftop to fulfill your aesthetic cinematic visions, it was always like, zero degrees out with horrible wind.

CARRIE

Well, we'd have-

COOPER

-cups of coffee, sure, Care, but heat radiating through paper, cardboard, and gloves only travels so far. We need warmth.

CARRIE

You're right. We need warmth.

COOPER

Did you just agree with me?

CARRIE

Yes, and I'll enunciate: we need warmth, not just chemistry. You need security, and I need stability. I've just been obsessed with you, Cooper, in love with you, but –

COOPER

Not love, in love.

CARRIE

Exactly. And love isn't instant, is it?

COOPER

Not the good kind. Like coffee!

CARRIE

Right. It's not rushing and crashing, fighting and tragedy. I wrote you like Mary Shelley created Frankenstein, charming and alluring on the exterior but inside: cold empty steel. But you're three dimensional... I've been playing characters for so long, I don't even know who you are.

COOPER

(Whimsically)

Well, I am a projected figment of your overactive imagination.

CARRIE

(Overdramatically, doing a bit)

And maybe you have been... the whole time!

(THEY share mock shock, then smirks, before CARRIE turns inwards.)

CARRIE, cont'd.

I don't even know who I am.

COOPER

Do you still think we're supposed to fall back and end up together?

INTERACTIVE DIGITAL ELEMENT:

AUDIENCE POLL

Upon the screen, pose the question: "Should Carrie and Cooper end up together?"

As described in production notes, audience can respond to the poll with their phones. Save results until after the show, as a jumping off point for talk back discussion.

(CARRIE regards COOPER, realizing what she is finally about to do – let him go. SHE embraces him in a tight, meaningful hug.)

COOPER, cont'd.

And... scene?

CARRIE

End scene. Thank you for playing a role in my life.

COOPER

Pleasure doing bits with you.

(HE salutes her, a bittersweet moment, then EXITS. For the following monologue, CARRIE may explore the empty stage, all three locations.)

CARRIE

Her name is Carrie. She likes poetry, pottery, plants, and puppies; diner breakfast; and vintage skirts with little forest critters. She loves braiding her hair, albeit aggressively, and strapping on a backpack with renewed purpose. She craves clarity, honesty, for people to be themselves. She often unsettles strangers with her authenticity. And while she doesn't perform, she plays pretend and... Needs grounding, so she'll stop drifting away with silly ideas. But atop all that - all the likes, wants, loves, and needs - is passion. Addictive and toxic, or the singular energy that keeps us moving. And if the passion is an art, not a person, then the rush is productive, burning ache and confusion, clearing space to grow. To process the human experience, articulate universality, and unite the pursuit of knowledge and progress with ultimate....

(This time, CARRIE writes upon the Daily Specials chalkboard-)

May – Acceptance.

(LIGHTING TRANSITION.)

(END OF SCENE.)

ACT II
SCENE 3

SETTING: The coffee shop. Summer.

AT RISE:

CARRIE stands center stage, a rolled-up yoga mat under one arm, shades propped up on her head. She wears a lightweight cotton sundress.

(BARISTA as Dog Walker strolls in, also wearing their coffee shop attire. Updates the Daily Specials board to:)

“Summer. In the City.”

(This immediately snags the attention of CARRIE, who runs to the dog.)

CARRIE

Oh, my gosh, you are the sweetest thing! Oh, you’re so kind I just wanna take your leash and hang myself, yes I do, yes I do. I’m going to call you Virginia Woof.

BARISTA

His name is Quill-

CARRIE

(Speaking to the dog, quoting Woolf)

As a woman, you have no country – or, dog park. But get this – you want no dog park! As a woman, as a fierce and resilient bitch, your dog park is the whole wide world!

BARISTA

Excuse us.

CARRIE

No, see, I’m reclaiming the word bitch. I learned it from my flatmate I had, back in London. She’s so fierce and on top of her shit. It’s a whole movement.

(Standing, allowing BARISTA to pass as she waves)

Bye, Ginny! Hm. Maybe I should adopt a dog.

(COOPER ENTERS. He sees Carrie first.)

COOPER

Care?

CARRIE

Cooper...

COOPER
Hey.

CARRIE
Hi.

COOPER
This is, uh... Chance?

CARRIE
Maybe. Maybe not.

COOPER
How was Europe?

CARRIE
Europe is doing well.

COOPER
Lots of pubs and zoos?

CARRIE
Those are two venues that do exist around the continent.

COOPER
Cool. Cool, cool, cool. How does it, uh, compare to New York?

CARRIE
London? The more cities I visit, the more I start to imagine them like people. Deep down so similar, with our core necessities - to survive and thrive. But we chase and pursue all that in different ways. I can't really compare the two...

COOPER
I get it. New York and LA have different vibes, too. Hell, East and West Village do.

CARRIE
Fair.

(Jokingly)

Ugh, West Side.

(COOPER begins snapping, West Side Story fashion.)

CARRIE, cont'd.

So how was L.A., by the way? I thought you were still out there.

COOPER

Oh, that sort of – I uh... I figured it would be beneficial to stop back through where I came from, you know where I have firmer connections. Strong roots in the concrete jungle. I'm only passing through, though.

CARRIE

When'd you get back?

COOPER

A... couple months ago.

CARRIE

Oh, hey that's –

COOPER

Temporary.

CARRIE

Like everything. It's okay to like this city, despite its flaws. To want to help make it better. I moved back for a reason, obviously. For myself, I mean.

COOPER

Right, of course. So, what's next for you then?

CARRIE

I don't know. Maybe the PeaceCorps someday. Or a trip to India. I'm focusing on the now instead of the next, currently.

COOPER

Oh, same.

CARRIE

Yeah, you're dating that girl Yael from school, huh?

COOPER

How'd you know?

CARRIE

A little blue bird. Twitter. She's your profile picture on every possible social medium, including LinkedIn.

COOPER

Oh, uh...

(Tugging at his collar with an exaggerated face)

Guilty as charged. We haven't been dating too long, but we're both certainly ... Invested.

CARRIE

That's cool.

COOPER

It's alright.

(Hastily)

I've been holding down the fort. I come here a lot.

CARRIE

Really?

COOPER

For noon-time brunch and the weekly open mics, sure. Still the most stirring source of inspiration on the square.

CARRIE

On the square.... It feels smaller than before. And younger. All these freshmen kids brooding about in beanies as if January will never turn to June.

COOPER

Oh! Speaking of hats, would you want to sit down with our Capps for a bit - our cappuccinos – and, you know, catch up face to face, my treat? Our old table is open.

(Gesturing to the table, where his backpack and book sit)

CARRIE

Oh, I don't know. It's so beautiful out, so liberating. Too free to be *cooped* inside.

COOPER

But it's near the window. The air is *carried* in... What do you say, pal?

(ENTER DOG WALKER, now as BARISTA. Could still be with dog.)

BARISTA

Cappuccino for Cooper for here. Iced green tea for Carrie to-go.

COOPER

Oh.

CARRIE

(To BARISTA)

Decaf, yeah?

BARISTA

As you asked for.

CARRIE

Thanks.

BARISTA

(Turning away, to SELF)

Decaf. Sociopath.

COOPER

(Mock pretentiously)

So... an iced tea?

CARRIE

(Playing along with the bit)

I'm a changed woman.

COOPER

A regular Kafka metamorphosis.

CARRIE

Hey, I've gotta run to work. There are words out there begging to be lassoed from the universe like unruly stars. Or - planted into the paper garden to grow like magic seeds. I'm just gonna write those down.

(Rummaging in her bag for her writing notebook)

COOPER

I should be going, too.

CARRIE

Okay.

COOPER

Crossing paths again was dope. I hope you're well.

CARRIE

I am, thanks. You too.

(CARRIE takes her tea and exits the coffee shop, leaving COOPER hesitant but alright. He eventually gathers his belongings as CARRIE rolls out her yoga mat to sit outside.)

(Meanwhile, NOAH and ROWAN have ENTERED Rowan's flat to play Spoons on the couch, maybe atop a cardboard pizza box, rapidly flipping cards as they converse. The stuffed dog is tossed casually among the couch pillows.)

NOAH

So, how do you think Carrie's doing these days?

(ROWAN shrugs, focused on the game.)

NOAH, cont'd.

Do you think she's gone back to that café she always talked about?

ROWAN

No shit, bitch.

NOAH

But after we helped her pack, she like, promised us she wouldn't. I mean she pinky-toe promised.

ROWAN

Sure, so she could cross her fingers. She won't be able to resist.

NOAH

I don't get that.

ROWAN

Yes, you do. Noah, you could be on a shiny white yacht sailing any sea, but you're here in my crappy flat living room, fiddling with plastic spoons instead of dining on fine china. Why?

NOAH

Because it's fun.

ROWAN

Well, why in the first place? 'Cause you were curious.

NOAH

Curiosity killed the cat.

ROWAN

Cats have nine lives. People only have one. If we had all those chances, we wouldn't care much about anything either, yeah? We'd be just as lazy and indifferent as cats. Instead, we have to rush our screw-ups while we're still here to do so. That's a pillar of Hinduism.

NOAH

Really?

ROWAN

No, you fucking idiot.

NOAH

We should visit her, next time I head home for holiday.

ROWAN

Show up outside her window with a boombox?

NOAH

Yeah! Let's do it, do it.

ROWAN

I would be down to see more of the States.

NOAH

Me too! I've always dreamt of playing road trip games in a real car and not our vacation blimp. Like, the alphabet game - that must be so much easier with license plates and billboards instead of just clouds, right?

ROWAN

Are you implying I don't travel in a "vacation blimp?"

NOAH

You could bring Zoey.

ROWAN

Oh, please. You know my shelf life for dates expires faster than avocados. Plus - it's not like I'm planning ahead or anything, but I have received some totally come-hither comments on my blog lately, from this badass Brooklynite named Jessa. I've got bitches in every city, my dude. Also:

(Holding up the spoon, wiggling it)

Gotcha already.

NOAH

Jesus, Rowan! I give up.

(Beat. ROWAN raises an eyebrow.)

NOAH, cont'd.

Wait, no. Rematch, let's do it.

(NOAH and ROWAN continue their match mute, battling over the spoon or "yelling" at each other. It obviously doesn't make sense they are just playing the two of them.)

(At this point, COOPER has left the coffee shop. He ENTERS his apartment with a Whole Foods or Trader Joe's paper tote.)

COOPER

Honey, I'm home!

YAEL

(ENTERING his apartment to meet him)

Hi, dear! Long day at the remote virtual office? Kick up your feet; let me get you a cigar. Or an IPA?

COOPER

That sounds amazing, babe, but you've worked hard today, too.

YAEL

Feh...

COOPER

You have! I saw your Instagram post. You're really racking up the followers.

YAEL

(Touched)

Thanks. I'm trying out a new angle around self-love. Turns out, people love seeing other people self-love.

COOPER

That's surprisingly surprising.

YAEL

I know, right?

COOPER

Well, I hate to have you lift another typing finger, but if you don't mind putting in a little additional work.... Check out what I picked up today.

(HE slips a packet of sushi mats from the bag.)

YAEL

Sushi mats!

COOPER

So we can make our own California rolls!

YAEL

Ah, you're kidding!

COOPER

(Sincerely grateful)

Nope. Honestly, I don't feel like I have to do that around you.

YAEL

(Inspecting the package)

Thanks, Coop. You know what's funny? I love California rolls, but I've never been to California.

COOPER

You'd like it out there. Especially like, Malibu.

YAEL

Malibu! That definitely sounds nice.

COOPER

We could browse some Airbnb listings over this awesome dinner, if you're up for that? Just for like, a weekend trip or something.

YAEL

Wow, yes! I would love that.

COOPER

Cool.

(Beat. HE smiles at his girlfriend eagerly unpacking the box.)

COOPER, cont'd.

So, is Jessa joining us tonight?

YAEL

No, she's got plans. Okay, queen, let's get rolling!

(THEY sit and start excitedly removing the mats.)

(JESSA ENTERS from upstage, stepping into the coffee shop phone to ear. She quickly sits and gets out her computer, very business-oriented.)

JESSA

Alright, so the branded phrasing and graphic are fine and dandy, emoji usage supreme, but I do have a few suggestions, since you asked. First, stop referring to a handful of Tweets - that's like, five - as a media "push" or "blast." It's over-the-top aggressive. This isn't guerilla warfare. Today's audiences are frickin' smart, sincere. They reject competition between companies and can smell bullshit through the Wi-Fi, so we have to be honest. Less "this is the best grass in the universe," and more "this is some pretty decent, humble, lovable grass." No filter. Grass is what we're offering, yeah? ... No yeah, hold on Bill Gates, I'm getting another call. Hello?

(Beat.)

Yep, the train ticket is purchased, and I'm preparing to board within the hour. All systems go.

(Dropping the professionalism)

Thanks Mom, I love you too. Don't cut into that birthday cake without me.

(CARRIE has been seated on her yoga mat, re-reading old journal passages. She now rises, notebook and pencil in hand, to roam the stage and explore the spaces she's been.)

CARRIE

As Virginia Woolf once said, 'You cannot find peace by avoiding life.' I am not avoiding life so much as I am....

(Using her pencil to cut and edit one line)

Trying to understand it. Waking up every morning to a horizon fresh with inspiration and blinding with potential - not because the skyline is different, but because its inhabitants and storylines are. It's new to me, which is cool. I'm thriving out here on my own, actually embracing aloneness. I'm open to fate and coincidence alike, because... maybe there is more than one chance. More than one course. There isn't like, only one coffee shop in the city, for example. That'd just be silly. And when there is, I can always, you know, build a new one. That idea makes me, oh my gosh, so happy.

(A moment passes as we observe the individuals interacting in their daily lives – working, playing, thinking, all so naturally grounded. Literally seated comfortably, invested in items that aren't tech or digital.)

CARRIE, cont'd.

Wherever you're at, in whatever corner of the world you're reading this, I hope you're adventuring your universe like a protagonist and creating art and relationships. You'll hear from me soon. Love... [carrie]

(LIGHTS FADE TO BLACKOUT.)

(END OF SCENE.)

(END OF ACT.)

(CURTAIN.)