

A Simple Kiss

By

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And

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SONG – Our Very First Date

This will be our very first date;
I hope it ends late, pick you up at eight.

This will be our first impression, I hope it's worth a mention
I don't care what you wear, as long as it's stylish and appropriate
Provocative and somewhat low cut and your smile must light up the room

What will be our conversation? I hope it's fascinating
I don't care what you say as long as it's daring and literate
Caring and considerate and you will wear my favorite perfume

Could you be Mrs. Right? All for me, every night?
Guess we'll wait and see, what will be will be

You know, I'm very concerned and nervous about our first date; of course I want to impress you, but I just want you to be impressed without me really trying to impress you, you know? Like you could just kinda tell everything about me without me trying to sell myself to you. I mean, yeah, this could end horribly any second and I may never see you again or maybe I'll see you sometimes but not really say hello cause it's just too awkward cause I was a jerk tonight or uh, you know, it could work out great and we could wind up getting married and I guess I'll buy you a ring with two thirds of my income and then you'll get half of everything I own, uh and then you'll just lose it down the sink or something and that's like seventh eighths of all my stuff down the sink and uh, you know, it makes me a little concerned, that's all, you can understand that, uh, and, you know, maybe we'll have kids or really enjoy each other's company or something, and we'll want to spend the rest of our lives together and that's such a big step to take in one night, don't you think, so let's go slow, we've got plenty of time. So what's your sign? I'm a Scorpio...

I guess we'll eat, I'll have the salad it's only seventeen dollars

I won't eat any meat but don't miss the sirloin or the mac n cheese
the drinks here bring 'em to their knees, when in town I make it a point

Writ in the stars, this might be magic I hope it doesn't turn tragic
Some mistakes turn up late and there's no turning back again
Guess I'll start to wear black again but I don't think that's really the point.

Could you be Mrs. Right? All for me, every night?
Guess we'll wait and see, what will be will be
What will be will be

SCENE 1

[INTERIOR - RESTAURANT - EVENING]

[JOE and MARY are sitting at a table. The WAITRESS is going to take their order.]

Waitress:

Hi, you guys ready?

[JOE motions to MARY to order first.]

Mary:

I'm gonna have a dirty martini. Extra olives, please.

[JOE nods with approval as he looks over the drink menu.]

Joe:

And I will have the...

[to the WAITRESS]

What's the Autumn Harvest?

Waitress:

Oh, it's really good. Are you a gin guy?

Joe:

I am, actually.

Waitress:

Okay, so it was just added to the menu and I think it's amazing. It's got Hendricks, St. Germain, and clove bitters. It's got a lot of flavor and it's really refreshing *and*, it's super tasty.

Joe:

When you say refreshing, you don't mean "little umbrella's" do you?

Waitress:

[Slyly looks both ways then leans in and “whispers”]
No umbrellas.

Joe:

[To the WAITRESS]

Great. I’ll have that. Thank you.

[WAITRESS smiles and exits]

[To MARY]

So how are you?

Mary:

I’m good thanks. And you?

Joe:

So great. I mean. It’s kinda crazy how much has happened in the last year...

Mary:

Really?

Joe:

Well I used to do sales for Raymar Pencils...

Mary:

Really? I totally use those.

Joe:

Yeah. They have accounts with a lot of school districts.

Mary:

And so I guess that made you a... straight-up pencil pusher, right?

Joe:

[laughs]

Yes it did, but I had no passion for it, ya' know? And don't get me wrong, they are great pencils, solid wood, all carbon core, and unless you really know quality...

[He stops as he hears himself giving
his old sales pitch. MARY smiles]

No matter how good I was at selling them, they were just pencils, and it was the people that I worked with... I don't know how they all ended up there, but it seemed like every single one of them was miserable. Just fucking miserable.

Mary:

The teacher's lounge can get like that too. It's draining. They think I'm only enthusiastic about molding young minds because I'm young and naïve.

"Wait 'til you've been doing this for twenty years and then come talk to us about charisma." It's so sad.

Joe:

Yeah.

Mary:

And they're using the same syllabus that they've had for the last ten years, and they could care less about some of the students...

Joe:

[interrupts MARY]

Sorry. They *could* care less or they *couldn't* care less?

Mary:

What?

[realizes JOE is calling her out on mis-speaking]

Oh, I'm sorry. Are you a grammar Nazi? Because *I'm* the school teacher here...

Joe:

[laughing and apologetically]

No. I'm sorry. Go on.

Mary:

[smiling]

Thank you. Teachers who *couldn't* care less about some of the students that they are letting slide through because they just don't want to deal with teaching them again next year. But all they're doing is creating this vicious progression where each grade level is passing along some kid to the next grade for some other disinterested teacher to deal with. And *they* don't want to deal with that kid either, and then four years later, you've got a

[air quotes with her fingers]

"high-school graduate" that "can't read", "perform simple math", or pick out Egypt on a goddamned map! Sorry. I'm putting the soapbox away now.

Joe:

No. It's fine. I agree. I think education is the single biggest issue in our country. I think everything else across the board would improve if we made education the number one issue in politics.

Mary:

Well good luck with that. I just cling to the idea that I know that I care, and I can focus on the kids that I have and hope to affect them in a way that keeps them on the road to seeking more education.

Joe:

And *that's* passion.

Mary:

So you had no passion for pencils then. What made you get into furniture?

Joe:

Well, one, I thought that maybe if I bought some new furniture I'd be happier.

Mary:

[laughing and shaking her head]

Retail therapy.

Joe:

Exactly. I went to Plus Interiors and met Mondy. His name's Carlmando, but everybody calls him Mondy. He's actually a really good friend of mine now.

[MARY nods]

We just totally clicked, you know? It's actually sorta weird.

Mary:

What's weird?

Joe:

I don't know, I mean, he's gay, but that doesn't mean anything. I mean it obviously means something, but that's, I guess, I don't know. Maybe there's nothing weird about it at all. Yeah, I mean, we just get along really well.

Mary:

Do you ever think he might be attracted to you?

Joe:

I don't... Maybe, I guess. But I don't think it's like that. I think he feels the same way I feel about him. We joke around sometimes, but I've never really felt threatened by it.

Mary:

Would you feel *threatened* if he came on to you?

Joe:

No. You know I'm totally comfortable with it. I've had clients ask me out at work, and I just told them thank you, but I'm not interested in guys, and that was it.

Mary:

Have you ever been with another guy before?

Joe:

What? No. I'm not really into that. I mean, I guess I can't really say because I've never done it so I couldn't say for sure that I'm not. But also, I guess the fact that I've never done it and I don't really think about it would mean that I'm not that interested... So I'd say I'm not. I'm not even a fan of ass-play with women, so...

Mary:

Oh...

[sarcastically towards the bar]

Check please.

Joe:

[laughing and slightly frantic]

No! I am all about being a considerate and *goal oriented* lover. I'm just saying that in defense of my statement about not being into men.

Mary:

But definitely not a feeble attempt to bring up anal sex on our first date?

Joe:

No. Exactly. If I was really into it I'd never bring it up so early and risk having it taken off the table.

Mary:

Because a year from now I'll be so in love with you that I'd suddenly decide that I'd want nothing more than for you to be pounding my ass?

Joe:

What? Wait... Maybe. Uh... It wouldn't have to be about love? I mean... if you really wanted to... The point is... It's all about...

Mary:

[playful]

It sounds to me like you're withholding your deepest desires here. That doesn't sound like a very good start.

Joe:

Well on the contrary, I'd say that telling you about my lack of sexual interest in someone's ass is the exact opposite of withholding information.

Mary:

But you just said if you really did want it, then you'd never mention it here, so what else are you not mentioning?

[WAITRESS enters and walks toward their table
approaching from behind MARY.]

Joe:

I see what you're saying, but c'mon, do you not agree that there are some things that people just don't typically talk about on a first date?

[WAITRESS arrives]

Mary:

[to JOE]

Like anal sex.

[smiling to WAITRESS]

Hi. Can we get another round please? Thanks.

[WAITRESS smiles awkwardly and exits. JOE is
mildly stunned by MARY'S coolness]

So you broke up with your girlfriend and you went to buy some new furniture...

Joe:

No... You know I've never broken up with anyone before.

Mary:

Ever?

Joe:

Ever. I mean, there were some girls that I didn't see for a second date or something, but any serious girlfriend I've had; they broke up with me.

Mary:

So how many serious girlfriends have you had?

[Pause – JOE takes a drink]

Joe:

You trying to figure out how many girls I've been with?

Mary:

No. I was asking how many serious girlfriends you've had. I'm actually wondering how many times you've been dumped.

Joe:

[to MARY]

Nice.

[towards the bar]

Check please.

[they both laugh]

Mary:

I'm just wondering if we're talking about three girlfriends here, or twelve...

Joe:

I'd say about four or so that were serious...

Mary:

Four "or so"?

Joe:

That sounds right...

Mary:

So you think you could break up with someone now if you saw that things weren't working out?

Joe:

Now? Absolutely. I'm much more my own man now.

Mary:

It's funny because I guess I've always been the "dumper".

Joe:

[smiling]

Classy. And so how long have you been single?

Mary:

About three months.

Joe:

Three months? That's pretty recent.

Mary:

Yeah, well, we'd been dating seriously for close to a year and then I found out that he'd been seeing someone else since like two weeks after we moved in together. And I wasn't moving back to my mom's house or anything that "low self-esteem", so my friend Kristen let me stay at her apartment until I found my place. It's fine now. It certainly wasn't "all fine" as it was going on, but I'm in a good place now...

[PAUSE]

Joe:

[raises his glass]

To no more assholes...

Mary:

And the unknown future.

[they smile at each other and drink]

BLACKOUT

SONG – What If

What If

What if I'm right and maybe tonite
I've finally found the true love of my life
Waited so long trying to rewrite the wrong
I'm so tired of singing the same old song
What if, What if....

What if I tried, what if you knew
What if we both became something new
What if, oh, what if

What if we tried a new turn in the road
To find something new instead of the old
A breath of fresh air, a breeze through your hair
I wonder if I might be starting to care
What if, what if we knew
What we could do

You'd complete me,
Reveal all my secrets,
I could finally love and finally mean it

This could be something
You've got my heart pumping
I'm not sure where we'll land but I'm sure it's worth jumping
What if, oh, What if

SCENE 2

(JOE and MARY'S apartment - 2 years later. JOE is standing at the bar making drinks for the both of them. They are both drunk.)

Joe:

So I think that we have reached a place in our relationship, where I feel it *wouldn't* be inappropriate to take this opportunity to tell you something...

Mary:

Great.

Joe:

...that I think you should feel proud to hear this because there's a lot of girls or... women out there that could get a little weirded out by what I'm going to say.

Mary:

What is it?

Joe:

Because it's definitely a good thing, and something to be proud...

Mary:

[dramatically exasperated]

Oh my god!?!... Just say it. Enough with the... the pre-... what was the term we came up with?

Joe:

"Over-preamble-ization". Okay. Sorry. I love your breasts.

[MARY smiles and starts to speak but doesn't]

I really really love them. And I'm not saying that they're your best or only great qualities. I'm just taking a moment to celebrate some really great things that are... just... great.

Mary:
[still smiling]

Joe that's very swee...

Joe:
And this isn't some kind of objectification of you, okay? This is a soul-bearing appreciation for you and your...

[making finger flailing groping gesture with both hands]
...eccentricities.

Mary:
"Eccentricities"?
[JOE nods proudly]
You think my *amazing* breasts are odd or peculiar?

Joe:
[JOE stops nodding]
No! Just the opposite!

Mary:
Then you can't say "eccentricities", because I don't think you know what that word means then.

Joe:
[points at MARY]
Fair. And I know you must know how great I think they are, but I don't think I've ever taken the opportunity to put to words how they make me feel.

Mary:
Thank you sweetheart... And maybe I'll take this opportunity to tell you how great your... *cock* is.

[**Mary** laughs at saying "cock"]

Joe:
[laughing along with **Mary**]
Oh yeah? My *cock*, huh?

Mary:

Well “penis” can be so clinical, and I don’t even really know what else you guys call it.

Joe:

Well let’s not get bogged down with semantics. Tell me more about my amazing *triumph*.

Mary:

[laughing]

Oh my god. Okay. I think your *package* is perfect and the exact right size for me.

[JOE winces]

What?

Joe:

Okay so thank you for your sentiments about my... *hog*.

[MARY winces and shakes her head “no”.]

I love that you feel that way. But might that not also be just a kind way of telling a guy that he’s... small?

Mary:

[nodding]

Maybe. But if you can tell me my boobs are incredible, then I can tell you that your *schwanz* is the perfect size for me.

Joe:

Right, but... what if you aren’t the first person to say that to me?

Mary:

Really? Someone else has told you that you were the “perfect size for them”?

Joe:

Yes. And I've been pretty confident for many years now that I have a nice, regular, average sized... *manhood*.

Mary:

And I agree.

Joe:

Great. So somehow, with all the different vaginas out there, I've got some inane ability to find only women who have the exact same size vagina...

Mary:

Okay sorry, hold on. Do you mean "innate" or "inane", because they mean...

Joe:

Alright! Look. If you keep doing that, you're gonna drive me insane.

Mary:

Do you mean inane?

[MARY smiles a big toothy smile]

Joe:

Really?

Mary:

What am I doing? I'm helping the man I love improve his working vocabulary; especially because this same man often likes to use words that he's not one hundred percent sure of the meaning.

Joe:

[pauses to come up with a retort,
but instead, a little defeated]

Thank you. I appreciate that.

Mary:

So I want to say, in an effort to allay your fears about having a... below average key-ock...

Joe:

“Key-ock”?

Mary:

Yes. And this is something I’ve only ever told one other person.

Joe:

Go on...

Mary:

I realized a few years ago... That I... I think I might have a larger than average... vagina.

Joe:

What?

Mary:

Okay, so, I think that I may just have genetically larger lady business than other women, and I only discovered this a few years ago when I slept with a... “bigger” guy.

Joe:

Oh god. Please tell me you mean a fat person.

Mary:

[laughs]

No! He was the largest guy I had ever been with, and when I first saw it I was a little nervous, but as it turns out, he fit... just fine. I run deep. So...

Joe:

This is the worst conversation I’ve ever had in my entire life.

Mary:

Oh, c'mon.

Joe:

Uh, my girlfriend is telling me about the time she fucked a guy with a horse cock and how "genuinely pleasant" it was for her. No it's great. Go on...

Mary:

[screams playfully]

Joe!

Joe:

I don't know a whole lot, but I *do* know that I don't have a twelve-inch dick.

Mary:

And so what? He was just the largest guy I'd been with. All of the other guys just happened to be small-ish? You are the first guy in a long time that has been so... perfect.

Joe:

So let me get this straight. Up until our getting together, you had been with almost exclusively guys suffering from the Irish curse, and I have been with mostly women who all have the same size vagina? Doesn't that sound ridiculous to you?

Mary:

Do you still believe that I think you're small? Because it sounds like you're just not hearing me. Almost like your ears are as small as your micro-penis...

Joe:

WHAT!?!

Mary:

Oh I'm joking. C'mon. What do I have to gain from telling you about my...

Joe:

Cavernous vergina?

Mary:

I should've just accepted the praise you lovingly bestowed on me and moved on.

Joe:

I just hope you're with me for more than my perfect peckerino.

Mary:

I got lots of reasons for being with you. Your shaft is just the tip of the iceberg.

Joe:

[sloppily winking]

Or... the *mast* of the *Titanic*?

Mary:

[smirking]

Oh... you know the *Titanic* had no masts right?

[JOE laughs]

Joe:

Thank you...

Mary:

Of course, Joe. You're smart, funny, creative, generous, thoughtful... You're a great person.

Joe:

You might even say those are the qualities of the person you want to marry.

Mary:

Ha. Ha.

Joe:

No. Seriously. I'm just saying that all of those things that you just said would be the kind of things that someone would say to themselves when considering marrying someone.

Mary:

Sure, but...

Joe:

And there are plenty of examples of relationships that failed and marriages that didn't work, but just because your parents didn't work out doesn't mean you're doomed to a failed marriage if you, or we ever have one.

Mary:

I know that, but that doesn't change what I saw growing up.

Joe:

You're probably the sweetest, most caring woman I've ever met.

Mary:

How does any of that change if we never get married? Do you think I'm afraid to commit? Because I was the one that suggested we move in together. I'm the one checking the real estate sites to maybe buy a place.

Joe:

I don't think you're afraid to commit, just reluctant. Maybe you're too scared of having your parents' marriage, but we are not your parents... or mine. We are Joe and Mary.

Mary:

I can't just un-live everything I saw growing up.

Joe:

And I would never expect you to. Everything you've experienced growing up has made you the best partner a guy could ever have. Maybe it's gonna make you an incredible mom someday. Who knows? I just think you're cutting things out of your potential life because of someone else's difficult circumstances.

Mary:

[reluctant but conceding]

Maybe.

Joe:

We could be one of those good marriages. One of those couples that annoy their friends because they just get along so well, and work through issues, and talk things through, and communicate their feelings with each other; all things that we already do.

Mary:

You wouldn't just stay married to me if you were miserable, right?

Joe:

I hope not. I'm not interested in being with someone where one of us was so un-consoleably unhappy...

[MARY winces]

What? *Inconsolably* unhappy? Is it inconsolably unhappy? But let's not *not* get married because years from now one of us *might* be terribly unhappy but also incapable of letting go, ergo, leading to a long and drawn out emotionally destructive relationship between two miserable, spiteful people that lasts until one of them dies.

[pause]

Mary:

Okay so maybe *that* was the most un-romantic thing you could say.

Joe:

[laughing]

Exactly. And I think you're an absolutely amazing woman and you'd make an absolutely amazing wife to a guy that really wants to be an amazing husband.

[pause]

Mary:

That's some good stuff you just said there...

Joe:

Are you agreeing with me?

Mary:

Maybe...

[MARY gives a big smile]

Joe:

[slightly perplexed]

Wait. So you're saying you're open to getting married?

Mary:

I must say, I'm just as surprised as you are, but I think, yes. I could totally marry you.

[pause]

Joe:

So does this mean that... we're engaged?

Mary:

I'd love to be married to you, Joe.

Joe:

Wait. Does this mean we're engaged?

[**Joe** walks over to **Mary** and sits next to her on the sofa]

Mary:
[smiling]

Yes.

Joe:

Holy shit.

[they kiss]

BLACKOUT
Song: Building a House for Two

Building a House for Two

Seems a Herculean task, to finally find the question's asked
only such a heroic feat could bring a strong man to his knees
I called and you answered, I know I should be sure
But there's some pressing questions that I haven't asked before...

What color the walls? What finish the handles? How high the doors? How
wide the mantle?
A thousand details to consider, I feel like a real beginner, Let's have some
friends over dinner
I love making plans with you, scrubbing each pan with you
We're building a house for two

A cast iron faucet, a porcelain sink, let's add a closet! what do you think?
A window seat could be good, new garden view, new neighborhood
Would you look what a few plants can do! This is the best, we're building a
nest
We're building a house for two

It's on a great block with it's own parking spot, on sunny days, there'll be
plenty of shade
In the wintertime, we'll gather round the fire and we'll be singing, now
we're just beginning

We're pitching the roof, we're laying down roots,
We're building a house for two

We're moving in soon, wishes do come true,
We're building a house for two

SCENE 3

[INTERIOR - EVENING - RESTAURANT]

[2 years later. JOE and MARY are waiting
to meet Mary's father for dinner.]

Joe:

Oh listen to this. I had lunch with Mondy today.

Mary:

Of course...

Joe:

And he always brushes his teeth in the bathroom after he eats, and it's the public bathroom...

Mary:

Uh huh...

Joe:

So I'm standing there talking to him while he's brushing his teeth and Stanley comes into the bathroom. He sees us standing there, Mondy's brushing his teeth, and Stanley says something like, "How was it Joe? Is he better than Mary?" You know, joking about why Mondy was brushing his teeth.

Mary:

[slightly annoyed]

Yeah. I got it.

Joe:

Like he had just...

Mary:

[Irritated]

Yeah I got it Joe, thanks...

Joe:

So I just thought that was really funny. You know?

Mary:

Yes its very funny. I think your gay co-workers making jokes about you getting blown in the bathroom is a riot.

Joe:

Oh c'mon honey. Stanley said I shouldn't tell you because he thought you'd get mad.

Mary:

I'm not mad, Joe. But I wish you wouldn't put yourself in those situations. Maybe you don't have to follow him into the bathroom just to continue a conversation.

Joe:

He was brushing his teeth. I wasn't talking to him through the stall door. And besides, if he had actually given me a blow-job

[seriously]

I would've left as soon as I was done so he could brush his teeth alone...

[JOE laughs immediately as Mary's
cell phone rings in her pocket]

Mary:

[in comfortable disbelief]

Uhh, you can be...

[Pulling the phone out of her purse
and seeing who is calling.]

Oh, it's my dad. Hello? How are you? Where are you? Okay. No problem. We're just having a drink. See you soon. Love you too.

[she hangs up and puts phone down]

Joe:

Where is he?

Mary:

On the FDR. He said about twenty minutes.

Joe:

[annoyed, checking the time on his
phone that is sitting on the table]

Okay.

Mary:

Well, he hit traffic.

Joe:

Of course he did.

Mary:

It's not gonna be a super-late evening either way.

Joe:

It's fine. It just sucks that I have to be up at six tomorrow.

Mary:

This was the only night that worked for all of us.

Joe:

It's fine...

Mary:

Can I just say something?

Joe:

[nervous]

Yeah...

Mary:

Try not to be pouty when he gets here.

[JOE closes his eyes and raises
his face and hands to the sky.]

Joe. I'm not saying you're gonna act like an asshole because I don't think you will, but we both know when you start worrying about how little sleep you're gonna get...

Joe:

You don't have to immediately assume that's how I'm gonna behave.

Mary:

I said that I didn't think you would act that way, I'm just mentioning it in case you weren't thinking about it...

Joe:

Okay. Well I've got something I'd like to mention before your dad gets here.

Mary:

[rolls eyes]

Yeah...

Joe:

Can we please try not to argue in front of him?

Mary:

What do you mean?

Joe:

I just don't feel like dealing with that tonight...

Mary:

Dealing with what?

Joe:

I mean communicating in a way that would be considered argumentative. I really feel weird that your family thinks we fight in front of them...

Mary:

Well... Do you think that we fight too much? Or in front of my family too much?

Joe:

No. That's not what I said. I just don't like fighting in front of your family...

Mary:

You think that my family thinks that we fight too much? I just think that that's totally weird. Why don't you say that you don't want us to be overly-affectionate with each other? You didn't say that kissing me and holding me might be uncomfortable for my dad...

Joe:

[escalating]

What?

Mary:

You're making a ridiculous request that we not fight tonight. Like that's the first thing I'd want to do.

Joe:

[escalating]

Well?

Mary:

I don't know. It's just annoying you asking us not to fight. Like we have to be on guard for it or something...

Joe:

I just don't like your dad to see us fight.

Mary:

When has he ever seen us fight? Do you really think that we fight that much?

Joe:

I don't think we do, no. I'm just asking for us to pay more attention to what and how we speak to each other tonight.

Mary:

I don't know what to say Joe... I don't even think we fight that much. We talk about things...

Joe:

I agree, but sometimes discussions that we have can get a little heated, you know?

Mary:

Sometimes...

Joe:

And I think that's what happened the last time Phil was here, remember? We had that discussion about being late when we go places and we ended up getting kinda heated about it...

Mary:

Yeah...

Joe:

And then Phil went back to your dad and told him that we're like, fighting all the time or something...

Mary:

Joe, nobody cares about that. Nobody probably even remembers that...

Joe:

Well either way, I'd feel a lot more at ease if we just agreed to keep things mellow tonight.

Mary:

I guess the idea of trying to act a certain way in front of other people, a way that's different than the way we usually behave...

Joe:

[uncertain]

Okay...

Mary:

I'm just afraid that you'll start asking for this all the time...

Joe:

Mary, I'm not asking us to change our ways of communicating here. I'm just talking about this particular meal.

Mary:

That's what I'm talking about. What makes this night different from any other night?

Joe:

I don't know. I guess maybe because this is the first time we're hanging out with your dad since Phil told him we fight a lot.

Mary:

[dumbfounded and stoic]

I thought we just agreed that neither one of us thinks we fight too much, right?

Joe:

I think so, but I don't want your dad watching us discuss something and have him thinking about whether we have a good relationship or not. I don't...

Mary:

Everybody makes judgments Joe. Every time people see something and have a thought about it, we're judging. We can't control what my dad thinks about us. I love you. I love being with you. I know that my dad likes you. All we can do is be ourselves and we'll be fine.

Joe:

I agree with everything you're saying, but why can't we just also try to make an effort to not be so defensive about our opinions tonight?

Mary:

Because I'm excitable. We're both excitable and I have a problem with you trying to change the way we behave because you don't want other people to think that we fight.

Joe:

I'm not talking about just any people Mary. I'm talking about your dad.

Mary:

He's still just "other people" Joe.

Joe:

Not really.

Mary:

Joe, this is totally absurd.

Joe:

Why can't you just do this one thing for me?

Mary:

You're basically trying to tell me that you won't allow us to fight in front of my dad.

Joe:

There's no "allowing" going on. It's not about me allowing or not allowing you to do anything. All I can do is ask...

Mary:

I don't want to fight in front of my dad. Why are you making me sound like that's what I want? What are you doing?

Joe:

[agitated]

Mary, I'm not doing anything. All that I asked was that we be more aware of our tones and our topics tonight. That's all. I'm not making any rules... But lets just try this for tonight, okay?

Mary:

Well if you won't mention Mondy tonight then I'll say I'm all for it...

Joe:

[quick burst of laughter]

What?!

Mary:

I promise not to "raise my voice" as long as you don't talk about the man you love, okay?

Joe:

Are you serious?

Mary:

You wanna talk about things my father shouldn't hear?

Joe:

Wait, I can't talk about him at all? He doesn't have a problem with gays.

Mary:

Yes. I just don't want him thinking that you're hot for Mondy, I don't know...

Joe:

[sarcastically]

Right. Because he might judge our relationship...

Mary:

Can we just start this conversation again?

Joe:

Really?

Mary:

Yeah. I'm not asking us to ignore what we just talked about, I'd just like to be in a different place when my dad shows up.

Joe:

So we'll talk about not fighting in front of your family *after* we've been with your family then?

Mary:

Yeah, and also not talking about Mondy until after dinner.

[They both smile at each other.]

Joe:

I just want to make sure, though. You don't think I'm hot for Mondy, right?

Mary:

[Laughs]

No honey.

Joe:

Okay, because if you do...

Mary:

Joe...

BLACKOUT

SONG – Everybody says I'm Gay.

Everybody Says I'm Gay

Everybody says I'm gay, even my girl, I'm used to it
I know what it's like to be straight, it's a man's world and I'm choosing it
I hate to say I'm not gay, if I'd fall for a guy
I'd be blown away, I was born this way
I'm not gay

I don't want to protest too much but I don't yearn to touch another man
I know that you might not believe me; no man shall receive me as long as I
am
I hate to say I'm not gay, this might sound queer
I fear, I'm not afraid, I was born this way

There's girls and there's boys, there's love and there's toys
Phone poles and manholes, there's fate and there's choice
I've got nothing to prove, I've been known to eat fruit
I might have a feminine side, but I'm not trying to hide

Nice shirts and big flirts, there's love and it hurts
Hard hats and brass tacks, there's fate and there's worse
Don't make me holler, keep your bottom dollar
This might sound a little over the top
I wish you guys would stop
I'm not gay
I'm not gay
I'm not gay

SCENE 4

[INTERIOR - NIGHT – JOE’S APARTMENT]

[JOE and MONDY stumble through the door both almost holding each other up, and sit down on the sofa.]

Mondy:

Right here is fine. This is perfect.

Joe:

You can crash here if you want. Mary won’t mind.

Mondy:

You’d like that wouldn’t you. Me just on the other side of the door...

Joe:

You are sooo drunk...

Mondy:

Just behave yourself.

[JOE laughs]

Joe:

That’s be too easy. I need more of a chase...

Mondy:

You are such a fuckin’ tease, you know that?

Joe:

What?

Mondy:

You know you can be *straight* and be a tease with men, you know. Probably makes it even when you say you don’t care...

Joe:

What does that mean?

Mondy:

You enjoy flirting because there's no fear of rejection. If I flirt back then it boosts your ego. If not then you say you don't care anyway.

Joe:

I'm not doing anything wrong Mondy. You know what I mean. You want a drink? How about some Greyhounds?

[JOE gets up and goes to the fridge and takes out a pitcher filled with vodka and grapefruit juice]

Mondy:

I don't think you even know what you mean. I'd love one, thanks. You flirt with everyone... You can ask anybody in the store...

Joe:

Wait. People at work talk about me flirting?

Mondy:

Well its not that you flirt with everybody, but...

Joe:

Because I make sexual jokes sometimes?

Mondy:

Yes.

Joe:

But you know I'm just kidding...

Mondy:

See, you say that you're joking, but you're *always* making those jokes. Eventually they don't sound like jokes. They're more like a pre-occupation.

Joe:

But...

Mondy:

Listen. You don't talk like that to Veronica...

Joe:

Veronica's not like everybody else... With her I'm not really joking. My guess is she probably gets hit on all day long. I'm sure she's tired of hearing people tell her all about what they'd like to do to her.

Mondy:

You don't think she talks about sex?

Joe:

I'm sure she does, but...

Mondy:

Look. I think you think you're open-minded about your comfort with homosexuality because the thought doesn't make you uncomfortable, but you're no different than those guys I've met who just hook up with other guys; but they're all straight-as-hell... They "end up" in a bar with some of your friends, and then you "find yourself" talking to an older gentleman, and before you know it, you're getting blown in the back of a cab. You never go any further, but somehow you always come back. "But *having sex is gay!*" Do you talk to your wife about how you talk to us?

Joe:

No, but...

Mondy:

Of course not. You're not going to tell her about fooling around with the other guys at work because flirting is just like fooling around when you're at work. You don't think we notice when you talk like that?

[JOE starts to maybe respond]

Whaddaya think would happen if Veronica came over and just started talking with you about what she likes when she's having sex? Not asking you for sex, per se, just as a random topic.

Joe:

Well...

Mondy:

You'd be a bumbling mess probably, right?

Joe:

Prob... yes... Look, I can't say I've never thought about being blown by a guy or even possibly blowing a guy, but...

Mondy:

Yes?

Joe:

But... uh... What, so having random, possibly homo-erotic thoughts makes me gay?

Mondy:

No. It means we've all grown up in a society that shames, debases, and ridicules homosexuality, and many people grow up repressing any thoughts of it so early and so well that they never even give themselves the opportunity to live their lives in a manner most true to who they actually are. Like being forced to write right-handed by your teachers when you were born left-handed. You can learn to write just fine, but...

Joe:

Then what makes someone gay?

Mondy:

It's a spectrum...

Joe:

You weren't repulsed by the thought of having sex with a woman?

Mondy:

Honey, I was married... I don't know Joe. But I think you're not as clear with your intentions as you think you are.

Joe:

"Unclear intentions"? I think it's pretty clear that I love Mary.

Mondy:

Let me ask you this...

Joe:

Okay...

Mondy:

If you weren't married and I leaned over to kiss you,
[leaning in]
would you back away?

Joe:

[not flinching]

I don't know... If I was single?

Mondy:

Sure... what would you do?

[2 beat pause]

Joe:

[leaning back]

See, if you asked me if I wasn't married right now would I take an unplanned trip to New Orleans to visit my friend, I'd say yes, but that doesn't mean I'm living a lie. I've chosen to make certain choices with my life as we all do. We're always choosing not to do something.

Mondy:

Let's take sex completely out, well not completely, but let's push sex to the side for a minute and just talk about partnership, or... partnership.

Joe:

Okay.

Mondy:

Okay so what are the most important qualities that you want in a spouse?

Joe:

What like... honest and... respectful?

Mondy:

Sure. Honest, respectful, what else?

Joe:

Well, intelligent, supportive, open-minded, supportive, trusting *and* trustworthy.

Mondy:

And where, in any of that list, does gender appear?

Joe:

Nowhere because you said to take sex out of it.

Mondy:

So Mary, and every other woman you've ever been with was just a pair of breasts and a vagina that you'd share your most intimate thoughts and dreams with? Because you're telling me that a list without sex is a list potentially devoid of women?

Joe:

That's not it at all. In fact, if anything, I would say that you're just helping to prove my point. It's procreation. It's how we've made it this far. From the moment we become fertile, we start having thoughts, and ideas, and fantasies about sex. Procreation and advancement of the species is just below thirst, and hunger, and sleep on the list of things for us to take care of while we're here. Obviously homosexuals are mis-wired for procreation but their attractions are coming from the same exact place as a heterosexual's.

Mondy:

I'm sorry did you just say that I'm defective?

Joe:

You are a valid and wonderful person. You're just not hard-wired "correctly" if "correctly" is to make more people. If you were a zebra you'd be wandering around the African plains getting snubbed by male zebras left and right and you'd have no idea what the fuck was going on.

Mondy:

I'd surely I'd get at least one of them to flip.

Joe:

Of course you would, but how does something as specific and narrow as "what turns you on?" become the defining factor in who you are in the world? It's so fucking boring. I could not give two shits who someone else or *what* someone else is into. It's just what turns each of us on. The only "choice" in the matter is whether someone chooses to act on their feelings or not.

Mondy:

You know I spent a large part of my life denying my feelings, but when I finally came out, there was a lot of pent up emotion to be expressed. It took way too long, but I'm proud of my sexuality.

Joe:

[moves closer to MONDY]

Shouldn't we all be?

Mondy:

Sure, but you never had to deny yours. Or are you?

Joe:

No one should have... What?

Mondy:

[moving closer to JOE]

How does it make you feel?

Joe:

I don't know Mondy. I guess it just depends.

Mondy:

[continuing to lean closer and taking JOE'S hand]

On what? How close you are to someone?

Joe:

Mondy...

Mondy:

Yes.

Joe:

I don't...

[MONDY smiles and leans in again.
They begin kissing.]

BLACKOUT

[4 beat pause. MONDY exits. Lights come back up and JOE is still sitting on the couch alone as MARY enters]

Mary:

Hi baby.

Joe:

Hi... How are you?

Mary:

I'm good.

[leans down and kisses JOE]

Are you wearing cologne?

Joe:

What? No. Well... I went out with some guys from work and Mondy was wearing something.

Mary:

Oh... Are you alright?

Joe:

Uh... yeah... no... I mean I'm fine.

Mary:

What's wrong?

Joe:

Uh... okay. I had a really strange evening.

Mary:

Yeah?

Joe:

Uh... I... uh...

Mary:
Joe. What happened?

Joe:
Uh, well Mondy...

Mary:
Yeah?

Joe:
Well a bunch of us were drinking across the street, and there was no way Mondy was going to make it home by himself so we stopped off here...

Mary:
Okay...

Joe:
So we ended up drinking, uh, talking here for a while.

Mary:
Okay...

Joe:
Well, we got into this pretty big discussion about what it means to be gay, and what makes someone gay, and... uh...

Mary:
[joking]
And what? You're gay?

Joe:
It's a spectrum, right? I'm not gay, but...

Mary:
But?!

Joe:

Something happened...

Mary:

What?!

Joe:

We just... We'd been drinking and he was sorta coming onto me, and we kissed.

[MARY gets up and walks off-stage.
JOE follows her off-stage]

Honey, I'm sorry. I didn't plan for it to happen.

Mary:

You fucking cheated on me!

Joe:

No! It was Mondy! I was drunk!

[They re-enter]

Mary:

Stop it! Being drunk does not make it okay.

Joe:

I know, but it just happened. I wasn't thinking straight...

Mary:

Really? That doesn't change the fact that you cheated on me, Joe.

Joe:

No. It's not like I met some woman at a bar and went back to her place... I didn't cheat. You know me. If it was cheating I'd be racked with guilt.

Mary:

What are you saying? The fact that you don't feel guilty about it has nothing to do with anything other than confirming that you're a selfish asshole.

Joe:

But, you hooked up with that woman you worked with years ago didn't you?

Mary:

You piece of shit. That was before we were even dating! Have you been holding onto that this whole time like some gay ace up your sleeve? You asshole!

Joe:

Okay forget that, I'm telling you, this will never happen again. I promise you...

Mary:

I'm sorry Joe. I won't let this happen again.

Joe:

Wait. Nothing's happening...

Mary:

[breaking down]

You are a married man. And I'm your wife.

[pause]

I'm gonna go stay somewhere else tonight.

Joe:

What are you talking about? Where are you going? Stay here.

Mary:

No. I'll call Kristen or Molly.

[defeated]

I don't know. Maybe my mom's.

[MARY gathers her bag and keys and heads to the door]

Joe:

Stop! Mary! Text me where you'll be so...

[MARY slams the door behind her]

BLACKOUT

SONG- I REMEMBER THIS ROOM

[MARY sings from her childhood room at her mom's house
and JOE sings from his empty apartment.]

I REMEMBER THIS ROOM

Mary:

I remember this room and everything in it
My childhood home with my life just beginning
My stuffed animal with one missing eye
Oh how I would hold you when I'd want to cry

I remember the evening, you said you were leaving and that you'd be home
by nine,
That would've been fine, should've been fine.
coming home after you, some part of you was new I could not define it this
time
Did you cross a line? What happened this time?

I remember the day you were going away and you said that you loved me
and nothing would change and then right then you did it a faulty
commitment
And I wish that you didn't and that left me wondering why it's so easy for
you
It's so easy for you, so easy for you to lie and say goodbye

Joe:

I remember this room and now everything in it
Reminds me of you and now why aren't you in it?
The last thing I'd want is to push you away
And I know you need time but how long is a day?

I remember this room and the smell of the blankets
When I cooked for you with the butter and pancakes
The last time we danced on the table and fell
And the way that you laughed as it started to swell

[Joe & Mary sing last verse simultaneously]

Joe:

I remember the day like it was yesterday
And you said that you loved me and nothing would change and then
Right then you did it though I could forgive it
And I wish that you didn't but you left me wondering why, why did you say
goodbye?
I just want a reason why, you did you say goodbye, why this time?

Mary:

I remember the day you were going away and you said that you loved me
and nothing would change and then right then you did it a faulty
commitment
And I wish that you didn't and that left me wondering why it's so easy for
you
It's so easy for you, so easy for you to lie and say goodbye

Mary (Alone):

I remember this room and everything in it
My childhood home with my life just beginning
My stuffed animal with one missing eye
I still want to hold you, I still want to cry

SCENE 5

[INTERIOR – A bar called The Subway Inn]

Veronica:

You're so quiet the last few days...

Joe:

Yeah. I don't... I had a rough weekend...

Veronica:

Oh... It's Thursday...

Joe:

Yeah. I guess I haven't been sleeping very well the last few nights.

Veronica:

What's wrong?

Joe:

[On the verge of breaking down]

Uh....

Veronica:

What's bothering you?

Joe:

I'm, uh, having some marital issues, I guess.

Veronica:

Joe? Are you okay?

Joe:

So basically, Mary and I had a big disagreement about something and she just left and went to stay at her mom's house.

Veronica:

What happened?

Joe:

Well, Mondy came over and we had a few drinks and we, uh, kissed. And Mary thinks it's cheating and now I'm starting to question my, well, a lot of things. Mary...

Veronica:

Mondy, huh? He's handsome. And I always thought she was... understanding.

Joe:

Me too, but we weren't perfect...

Veronica:

Well who is?

Joe:

And I've never even believed in "perfect" anyway. I just feel like I need to start over or something.

Veronica:

Well what if you could handpick everything that made up your perfect partner?

Joe:

Uh... Well... I guess one thing would be I would want someone who wasn't so prudish. She'd be a very open minded person. Sometimes, with Mary, out of nowhere, there'd be something that she just refused to tolerate, and sometimes I'd feel a little stifled.

Veronica:

Like how?

Joe:

And the most fucked up thing about it is that I start censoring myself because of how she might respond to what I might say.

Veronica:

Well like what?

Joe:

Well, for example, I guess, I have this idea to pitch for a reality show for TV, well, maybe not the networks, but like cable or a web-series or something. I mean, its got some pornographic, uh, it's more, alright, I guess its kind of porn. It's called "Thar She Blows", but it's this reality show that deals with society and how pornography has infiltrated the main stream, and by being a reality show it kind've makes it even more main stream and more of a commentary on the whole thing. And, yeah, it's called "Thar She Blows".

Veronica:

So blow jobs as a social commentary.

Joe:

[exhales]

Yes! So... It's basically two guys living in a house with however many women and the women perform whatever different sex acts on the guys and the women are judged on how well they do whatever it is they are doing. But it really is a commentary on human sexuality and porn's place in our society writ large.

Veronica:

Uh-huh...

Joe:

And then there'd be a documentary about the making of this reality show, and it might have some scripted parts, but they manipulate those shows all the time anyway. And that one would be called "Hearts of Thar-ness".

Veronica:

Right...

[towards the bar]

Check please.

[They both laugh]

And so you really think this is something worth pursuing?

Joe:

I know. I told you that women really haven't found it very interesting at all, but I mean it, every guy I've told has been into it. Way into it.

Veronica:

And what does Mondy think about it?

Joe:

Okay, so because of him, I even added a gay element to the show because that's reality too, and he said he thought it might have some redeeming value. The point is, though, that Mary was totally repulsed by the idea and she said that if I ever went forward with the idea, she couldn't be with me anymore. So, what the fuck?! Obviously, I'm not gonna choose some blow-job TV show idea over my wife, but what if that was an idea that made us rich? Wouldn't it have been worth it then?

Veronica:

Everyone's different though... Maybe she doesn't want to be "Mrs. Thar She Blows".

Joe:

Would you? I mean, what would you do if your boyfriend came to you with that idea?

Veronica:

Well, I feel pretty strongly about not holding other people back. Especially people that I care for...

Joe:

[redeemed]

Thank you...

Veronica:

But everybody has those issues they can't ignore. Maybe I wouldn't stop you from pursuing this TV show as long as there really was a bigger theme behind it.

Joe:

I think she assumed that it was some kind of fantasy of mine; to live in a porn house with a bunch of women who were all there to please me. I mean, c'mon.

[not convinced]

I was totally happy with our sex life.

Veronica:

So you're saying that that's not a fantasy of yours?

Joe:

No. I mean, if you're asking me if in some consequence-free environment would that type of thing be appealing to me, I mean, probably... not, maybe totally, but I don't know. But it was selling the idea that I was interested in. All she saw was some sexual shortcoming that I was resenting her for not doing. I don't know? I mean, can I ask you something personal?

Veronica:

You can ask...

Joe:

And I totally understand if you don't answer.

Veronica:

Ask the question.

Joe:

This is... okay. What do women think of oral sex? Of giving a guy...

Veronica:

Head?

Joe:

Yeah.

Veronica:

Well, I can't begin to speak for all women...

Joe:

Mary always felt that the only women who enjoyed giving a guy oral had self-esteem issues, like it's an act of submission and self-hatred and I'm thinking, "Wait a minute. Is that the same when the roles are reversed?"

Veronica:

I think there can be some truth to what she was saying, but I, personally, don't feel that defines every woman. I think there's a lot about sex that's weird and even dirty sometimes, but that's what makes it so intense.

Joe:

[flustered]

Right...

Veronica:

And how did she respond?

Joe:

We were talking about things we liked and I mentioned that I thought that maybe we should watch something for her to see how to improve her technique, and she just about freaked. She started saying that she wasn't some abused little girl trying to get back at her dad for leaving her. It got super out of control super fast.

Veronica:

She was never

[shakes her head]

was she?

Joe:

No. I mean, but isn't that really drastic? I just told her that I thought it'd be nice for her to learn some different strokes, as it were, and she lost it. She was upset because she felt like I was saying that she wasn't any good at it.

Veronica:

Isn't that what you were saying, though?

Joe:

I just wanted her to learn... for us...

Veronica:

And so is that why she left you?

Joe:

No. I mean, not directly, but maybe? Is it ever really just one thing? It's always a collection of shit that piles up after enough time that blows up over one thing, and before you know it, you're yelling back and forth and someone's storming out.

Veronica:

Yes, but if she feels like it's degrading then it is. Sorta like trying to get a vegetarian to love eating steak by stuffing the meat in their mouth screaming, "This will make things better for both of us!"

Joe:

Really? But I don't think there was anything remotely aggressive about my suggestion. I was making an effort to try and improve our physical relationship. She was always comfortable asking me to do certain things.

Veronica:

So you're "bi-" then?

Joe:

What? I don't think...

Veronica:

I think that's pretty hot.

Joe:

Well I like to experiment...

Veronica:

Do you like to be dominated?

Joe:

Only if it's pleasurable.

Veronica:

That's what sex is, Joe. Pleasure. No one else can tell you what is or isn't pleasurable. So what if it's dominance or deviance; everybody's got things that turn them on and it's not about whether or not it's acceptable to the world. I feel that the dominant one is the one who's giving. If I'm going down on you then I'm in control. I'm controlling the pleasure. That's what gets me wet. And the more you like it, the more control it gives me.

[VERONICA puts her hand on Joe's hand for a lingering moment]

Wait here a second.

[VERONICA gets up and walks to the bathroom door. She checks the handle and it is locked. They smile back and forth with each other, JOE is oblivious to VERONICA'S advances. The door opens and someone walks out. VERONICA grabs the door, peeks inside, steps inside, turns around and motions for JOE to join her. JOE looks around for a stunned second or two and sees no one looking.]

BLACKOUT

SONG - My Poor Wife (Veronica's Theme)

My Poor Wife (Veronica's Theme)

She's so tall and so pretty
I don't know how I met this girl in the city
She's so fine, but she's not mine, if I can't have her I think it's a pity

And I think she should know, I'm not the kind of guy who's slow
And I thought she would say, it's probably better if you stay, away

I can't deny the feelings of my physical side
My poor wife, the lure of strife, I wish I had a brighter side
The things I want I can't afford, is this striking a familiar chord?
I just try to please my poor wife; this'll probably ruin my whole life

She's a doll and she's flirty
And she doesn't look a day over thirty
She's so bright just like sunshine, just one look at her I start to feel dirty

But I think she should know I'm a happily taken man
And I wouldn't let go, my ball and chain wouldn't understand
After all her daddy gave her hand away

I cannot lie these feelings I've been keeping inside
My poor wife, a life unkind, she always finds a silver line
The things I want, I should not have, I'll just stick with what I got and be glad
I just try to please my poor wife; this'll probably ruin my whole life

She's so tall and so pretty
I just know that there's a boy in this city, just as tall dark and handsome
And she's waiting just to make you a man, son.

SCENE 6**[INTERIOR – NIGHT - JOE’S APARTMENT**

JOE and MONDY are drinking]

Joe:

And it’s so absolutely obvious that it would happen right now. I’m trying to figure out what the fuck is going on in my life, and of all people, after all this time, *Veronica* goes ahead and offers herself to me.

Mondy:

Would you rather that it happened a year ago? When you were happily married?

Joe:

No, you’re right, but it still makes everything more complicated.

Mondy:

More complicated than your wife leaving you because you had a romantic encounter with one of your best friends? I think the “complicated” train left the station a week ago.

Joe:

Well, more complicated because now here’s this woman, this incredibly hot, sexiest woman I’ve ever known who’s throwing her hat into the ring.

Mondy:

What ring is she throwing her hat in? Is Veronica really someone that you believe you could spend the next ten or thirty years with? Are you gonna have a family with her? All you ever talk about is how “hot” she is. You know ugly is just a car crash away.

Joe:

[wincing]

Sure, but she’s more than just an amazing body.

Mondy:

Tell me how she stimulates you in any other way than sexually.

Joe:

She's pretty funny.

Mondy:

Funny because she's funny or funny because she's sorta funny and has big tits?

Joe:

I mean, there's probably a little of that there.

Mondy:

Something to consider is that the thrill of being with the sexiest woman in the world dissipates when she's actually yours and you're stuck with this shell of a person whom at one point seemed totally unattainable and now having been attained, you realize that underneath that smoking exterior lies a wasteland of mediocrity.

Joe:

A "wasteland of mediocrity"?

Mondy:

Yeah. A huge, time-wasting mistake. Okay, so on your list of everything you'd like in a partner. How many would Veronica fulfill?

Joe:

I don't know, but doesn't the heart know what it wants?

Mondy:

Yes, but don't confuse what your heart wants with what your dick wants. Has Veronica really turned your life upside-down? She wanted to give you a blowjob in a restaurant bathroom, and you didn't even take her up on it. You're freaking out about a blowjob that you *didn't even get*.

Joe:

So the fact that I turned her down means it was nothing?

Mondy:

No. I think the fact that she invited you into a bathroom so you could put your dick in her mouth is going to make things rather interesting at work tomorrow.

Joe:

No, it wasn't like that. She came back out after a minute or two and I explained that even though it was something I'd been dreaming about for years, I didn't want to do anything that would screw things up for me even more. I already cheated on Mary once here.

Mondy:

Cheated? I thought you felt that what happened with us wasn't cheating. The question you have to be asking yourself is, what happens if Mary comes back?

Joe:

I have no idea. I haven't spoken to her in almost a week. I understand that she feels wronged, but you don't treat somebody like that. *I* feel wronged, but my side doesn't matter. It's all about her and how much she feels like she can trust me. She thinks I cheated on her and for as long as we are going to be together, it'll always be in the back of her mind. It would be almost impossible for anyone to forget.

Mondy:

And she may need to eliminate any way for doubt to exist by saying we can't see each other anymore.

Joe:

What?!

Mondy:

What, "What!?" She's your wife. If I'd been a woman she wouldn't even have to say it. You'd be the one saying, "I'll never see her again. I promise."

Joe:

She wouldn't make that kind of ultimatum.

Mondy:

She can and absolutely could make that kind of ultimatum. She can demand whatever she wants. Whether its right or wrong is irrelevant.

Joe:

But... I don't want to have to make that decision. You are just as important to me as Mary is.

Mondy:

You mean a lot to me too, Joe, but it's not our decision to make.

Joe:

How could someone who supposedly loved, and supported, and respected their husband tell him that he wasn't allowed to see his best friend anymore? I mean, she knows how much you mean to me.

Mondy:

Yes, but you are leaving out the detail that you hooked up with your best friend who is gay, and will be gay for as long as you know him.

Joe:

This is so fucked.

Mondy:

Yeah...

Joe:

Do you regret what we did?

Mondy:

Do you regret it?

Joe:

No. I mean, other than what it did to my marriage, but between you and me, no.

Mondy:

Me too, Joe. So what do you say to Mary if she says you can't see me anymore?

Joe:

If she'd be selfish enough to expect that I'd just drop you because she couldn't handle it, then how can she really say that she's interested in my happiness. It would be my happiness on her terms. Fuck that.

Mondy:

If you can't believe that an intelligent, self respecting woman isn't going to be comfortable asking you to stop seeing me, then I don't think you're seeing things clearly.

Joe:

So you'd support her saying that we can't see each other any more?

Mondy:

I'd support her right to say it if that's what she thought would make it okay to get back together. She's gonna ask for whatever she needs to ask for, and you should hope that she cares enough about your guy's relationship to speak her mind about any potential issues she might have. Because if she holds anything back then you're done and you may not realize it's been over for years when it finally comes out and you've just blown that much more time with someone who didn't trust you.

Joe:

Well fuck that then, because I can't have somebody else controlling my life like that. The idea that my relationship with my wife will be the basis for me losing you makes me ill. I shouldn't have to choose.

Mondy:

You shouldn't, but you may have to.

Joe:

Well fine then. I choose you. Or I would choose you. Our relationship is too important to me. I don't want to lose you.

Mondy:

I don't want to lose you either, but...

Joe:

If there's anything that I've learned over this past week it's who the most important person in my life is. I love you, Mondy.

Mondy:

Joe. I love you too, but I think you might be a little caught up in all of your emotion right now. You're saying that you would choose me over Mary. For the rest of your life?

Joe:

If I had to choose, then yes. The idea of having to make this decision is making me nauseous, but after thinking about it...

Mondy:

For two minutes...

[PAUSE]

Joe:

After thinking about it and weighing both sides, I believe that I would choose you. If I had to.

Mondy:

I like hearing that, but are you really prepared to walk away, or let her walk away from a relationship that less than two weeks ago was something that you were confident would last forever? Are you really willing to throw that away?

Joe:

You know when I was around twenty, my mom, one day, comes busting into my brother Hanks's room where I was hanging out while he was taking a shower, and she's talking about how her radio doctor guru was saying that one out of every three men are gay, and which one of us was it? And I was like, "I don't think any of us are gay, but if it had to be one of us, I'd vote for Mark."

Mondy:

She sounds like a...

Joe:

But the point is that I don't think I've ever stopped to think about whether or not I might be gay.

Mondy:

Darling, if you have to, "stop and think about it," you're probably not gay.

Joe:

Well hold on a second...

[long pause as **Joe** stares at **Mondy**]

What about us? Do you think... we could ever be together?

Mondy:

[surprised]

What?!

Joe:

Seriously. What do you think about us being together.

Mondy:

Stop. You're talking...

Joe:

Crazy? This whole thing is crazy, and maybe it's gotten so crazy because this is what's supposed to happen.

Mondy:

Joe, I care very much for you, but I think the idea that we start dating is, at the very least, shocking, certainly reckless, and plain irresponsible.

Joe:

To who?

Mondy:

To both of us. We're having a conversation about whether or not you are still going to be married next week. A few minutes ago you were telling me that you think you might have blown it with Veronica.

Joe:

Yes, but I just realized what the answer is. You ask me about what qualities I look for in a life partner and you fulfill every one.

Mondy:

Except for the physical attraction thing.

Joe:

But you said that you find me attractive.

Mondy:

Yes, but you don't see me that way. How can I be in a relationship with someone who isn't interested in me sexually?

Joe:

That's the thing, though. It's not all cock and balls, right? I do find you attractive. And I find your mind as stimulating as you are handsome. I don't think it would take that much for me to really get into pleasing you.

Mondy:

And where does that put me? What happens two, three months from now when you realize that you overreacted about your newfound commitment to homosexuality and you start thinking about Veronica or Mary again, and things between us fall apart because you don't want to be with a man anymore? And if this is how you really feel, then Mary's perspective doesn't matter at all, does it? You should be the one calling her tonight to tell her not to worry about getting back together because you're actually gay and you want to spend the rest of your life with me and not her.

Joe:

[defeated]

But you're the most important person in my life.

Mondy:

And that means so much to me Joe, but you can't think that asking me to be your boyfriend is the right thing for us to do. If anything, I think you need to be single for a while and figure out what you want. Because in the last ten minutes you've been talking about being with two women and a man. I don't think you're in any frame of mind to be deciding the future of any relationship.

[Pause]

Joe:

Did I just fuck things up with us?

Mondy:

No Joe. You're trying to figure out what's going on in your life and you said some very flattering and loving things to me.

Joe:

Because I don't want to lose you Mondy.

Mondy:

And I don't want to lose you.

[they hug and **Joe** starts crying]

Joe:

What the fuck is going on?

Mondy:

You'll get through it. It's going to take some time, but we'll get through it.

Joe:

I don't know what to do.

Mondy:

I know.

Joe:

We should kiss. I wanna kiss you.

Mondy:

No Joe.

Joe:

Please?

Mondy:

I should go.

Joe:

No.

Mondy:

I'm gonna go.

[**Mondy** gives **Joe** a hug, and **Joe** holds on until **Mondy** is forced to separate himself from **Joe's** embrace. **Mondy** gets up to leave as **Joe** sits slouched and beaten on the sofa. **Mondy** exits. **Joe** sits, unmoved as the lights dim.]

BLACKOUT
SONG – Simple Kiss

Simple Kiss

M: They say there's things you shouldn't miss like swinging for that perfect pitch,

M: The North Star shining through the mist and twinkling down at you

J: Now I feel that I would be remiss if I didn't make too much of this

J: Sometimes a kiss is so much more than just a simple kiss

B: Sometimes it just might be true happiness...

J: They say that it's forbidden but I can't keep this hidden

J: I think I might be smitten, Oh I think I love this man

M: Just one look from him, I get confused, at jokes of his, I'm so amused

M: To this, I never will get used, I think I love this man

J: I think I love this man

J: He's the only man who cares for me, the only one who's there for me

J: The lonely one who stares at me, I think I love this man

M: And this is something new to me, I fear what this might do to me

M: This love sings something true to me, I think I love this man

B: I think I love this man

B: We don't hold hands, exchange embraces

B: We don't make plans or fight in public places

B: And we don't give each other gifts and we don't live together yet

B: I'm not afraid,

M: What'd people say Is it a crime if it turns out I'm gay

B: What did I just say?

J: I've never put a voice to this but god how I'm enjoying this

J: Complexity, this simple kiss, I think I love this man

M: There must be something wrong with me, his voice is like a song to me

B: His arms, in these, I long to be, I think I love this man

B: I think I love this man

J: I hope that one day Mary understands...

SCENE 7

[JOE sits in his apartment, reading. There is the sound of keys rattling and the door unlocking. MARY enters and stands near the door as Joe puts his book down and looks up – both waiting for the other to say something. JOE stands up and begins to approach MARY. She does not move towards him which causes him to awkwardly stop his advancement.]

Joe:

Hi.

Mary:

Hi.

Joe:

What's... going on?

Mary:

I've got some things I need to say.

Joe:

Okay.

Mary:

I want to tell you how I feel about all this...

Joe:

Please, because...

Mary:

Stop. Just let me... After everything that's happened, I'd ask for you to grant me a few minutes without interrupting...

[MARY pauses, giving JOE a chance to interrupt, but as he begins to say something, they make eye contact and he stops in mid-inhale. – 2 beat pause -]

Mary:

Thank you. What you did was one of the most hurtful things that anyone has ever done to me, Joe. We're married. I know you care about me, and I know that you love me. That's why this hurt me so much. There are so many great things about us that it makes me so mad. That you'd risk losing everything we have together, everything we have yet to have, together by treating us so frivolously. It makes me sad. Why would you do this to us, to me? Why?

Joe:

Mary, I love...

Mary:

[points at JOE]

I know that you love me and I'm sure you're really sorry about what you did, but you *wouldn't* be sorry about it if it didn't bother me. So whether you're sorry or not is irrelevant. I do appreciate the fact that once you saw that it bothered me, you did feel sorry so whatever... My point is this. I am not a doormat. I wish this had never happened, and that you hadn't put us in this situation, but I won't be taken advantage of again... So... we can work this out together, but under one condition. No more Mondy.

[JOE closes his eyes and slouches]

I don't think I'll ever be comfortable with you and Mondy going out for drinks after work and, "Oops. Sorry honey, but it happened again." Mondy's a bad influence. I think it's fine that you're friends with gay men, but I'm not comfortable with your best friend being gay. It's the same thing as if you were friends with an attractive woman who also found you attractive. I'd just be asking for it if I didn't say it like this. I still want to be with you, but not with you and Mondy. It's the only way.

[- 2 beat pause-]

Joe:

But what about if we...

Mary:

There can't be any "but's" Joe. I've always said that I don't believe in second chances, but this means a lot to me. I love you, and I still want to be with you, but I need you to do this for me. If it turns out that you're still hanging out with Mondy, I will leave you, and I don't want to waste my time, so if you're unsure as to whether you could really stop seeing him then there's my answer.

Joe:

You realize that you're asking me to sever all ties with my best friend just out of the blue?

Mary:

That is exactly what I'm asking you to do.

Joe:

But I'll still be working with him. I can't have him hating me...

Mary:

He won't hate you. At most he'll think I'm a controlling bitch that's ruining your life, or something, I don't know. It doesn't matter because he'll be out of my life. And I'm not saying I refuse to ever see him anywhere again, because obviously there are work parties and things and yes, if you're working with him, he'll still be a part of your life, but he can be just be another work acquaintance. It might be awkward for a while and that's unfortunate, but it's the only way I can do this with an open mind, or heart or whatever.

Joe:

So you don't want me to see him anymore?

Mary:

Are you serious? I don't. Want. You. Seeing. Him. Anymore. And I'll say it again... I understand that what I'm asking you to do is extreme, but we've always been honest with each other, so I want you to think about it. I know it's a lot to consider, but maybe it'll be an easy choice, I don't know. You need to pick; either him or me. You've ruined any possibility of having both.

[pause]

Joe:

Can I ask you a question?

Mary:

[matter of factly]

Please.

Joe:

I understand everything that you've said, and I know you put a lot of thought into this, and I am really happy that you're here because I missed you.

Mary:

Yes?

Joe:

So I just want to throw out the possibility...

Mary:

No.

Joe:

Wait.

Mary:

No.

Joe:

Why won't you just let me say what I'd like to say? I gave you your space to talk.

Mary:

Sorry. Go ahead.

Joe:

Thank you. So you'd agree that one of, if not *the* most important aspect of a strong relationship is trust, right?

Mary:

Yes.

Joe:

Okay, then so if our marriage is going to grow, and flourish, and continue to get stronger, then it should be built on a foundation of trust, right?

Mary:

Yes.

Joe:

Great. So if I tell you that I really want you to come back and be my wife for the rest of our lives, *and* Mondy is really important to me, and I want to have him in my life too, and I *promise* that nothing will ever happen between us again, then you should be able to accept that as the truth and not worry or judge or live in fear because Mondy's super-important to me. He's just as important as you are to me. It's a really short list. Two people. And it doesn't diminish my relationship with you at all. If I say that I want to keep Mondy in my life and still be married to you with you knowing that you won't have to worry about anything ever happening, Shouldn't that be enough?

[MARY pauses to make sure JOE is done talking]

Mary:

I can't. I'd be lying if I said I wouldn't worry, and that everything'd be fine. I've already been burned by that, by you, with him. Think about *us*. I did. I thought about spooning on the sofa, eating Ben and Jerry's and watching television together. About artichoke pizza. I can't imagine eating it and not thinking about you. So many of my favorite things are my favorite things because we discovered them together. I love you Joe, and I don't want to lose everything we've created together because of this.

Joe:

So you'd be willing to risk me right now choosing Mondy over you, but then having more time, that I'd realize that you're more important than Mondy and at that point it would've been too late because you asked for the decision right now. You'd be willing to give this all away? Is this really the kind of thing you want me making a snap judgment about, because that's putting a lot of pressure on this moment.

Mary:

I want you to choose me. I don't think you need anymore time to think about it. How are you feeling right now? That's what I want to know because if you want to be with me forever, then it's not that hard of a decision, and if you *don't* want to be with me forever, that probably isn't a hard decision either. I think you know.

Joe:

He's my best friend...

Mary:

If I'd "accidentally" hooked up with Jorge, and I told you about it, and that I was so sorry and it would never happen again, but I still wanted to see him and hang out with him, what would you say? Because Jorge is a good friend of mine. I think you'd be freaking out at the audacity of me trying to defend the idea of continuing to see him.

Joe:

Maybe... Yeah...

[MARY walks over to JOE and sits near him.]

Okay...

Mary:

“Okay,” you’ll stop seeing Mondy, or “okay” you understand?

[JOE sits silently staring at the floor]

Blackout

SONG – Married

Married

Well I'm married to Mary and I find it very scary
To spend the rest of my life with this person called 'wife'
Is this how it's supposed to be?

It gets boring, ignoring your significant other when they're snoring
Well, I wake up at night and I turn on the light,
Is this how it's supposed to be?
On the other hand, she's my best friend
And I'm her man until the end
It's a dream come true, just me and you
And I'll wear this ring till my finger's blue
Cause this is how it's supposed to be.

At my wedding, I was betting
I'd be cool, like a fool, I was sweating
Was I lacking the nerve? is this what I deserve?
Is this how it's supposed to be?
I'll be tempted to end it
But brother this is bought it's not rented
I'm gonna stick by her side, I'm the marrying kind
And this is how it's supposed to be
Yes this is how it's supposed to be
Yes this is, how it's supposed, to be
Well I'm married
Yes I'm married

SCENE 8

[Lights come up on JOE who is on the phone with a customer. MONDY enters and walks past the counter on his way out of the store as JOE is hanging up the phone.]

Joe:

[into the phone]

I'm happy to hear that you love it as much as you do. Let me know if you ever need anything else... Okay... Take care.

[hangs up the phone.]

Hey. Heading home?

Mondy:

Not yet. A few of us are meeting at the Subway Inn.

Joe:

Yeah. Stanley asked me yesterday if I was going, but I told him I had plans.

Mondy:

Right.

Joe:

So I told him that I couldn't go, and he says, "Oh, you should go. It'll be fun. And *Ron* will be there." And I'm like, "*Ron?*" And he says, "You don't know about *Ron?*" And he spins around and walks away like he'd done something wrong.

Mondy:

[deciding whether to stay or go]

Well he didn't do anything wrong.

Joe:

Uh. Who's *Ron*?!

Mondy:

Ron is a guy that I've been dating or I guess seeing recently.

Joe:

[almost over-excitedly]

You've been *seeing* someone? Mondy!? How long has this been going on?

Mondy:

[between staying and going]

I don't know maybe six weeks or so?

Joe:

"Six weeks"!? I can't believe you haven't said anything to me about it.

Mondy:

[Takes out his phone to check the time, puts
the phone back and walks over to the counter.]

Well, I'm seeing someone.

Jay:

[still over-excited]

Oh my god! Tell me something about him? Who is he?

Mondy:

Well his name is *Ron* and he's a food critic. But he's a painter. And he's very much a bumbling musician.

Joe:

Oh my god you are so into *Ron*! I can't believe I had to find out from Stanley.

Mondy:

Well...

Joe:

You weren't keeping it from me were you?

Mondy:

Well... We don't talk as much as we did before, Joe.

Joe:

I know, but...

Mondy:

I also didn't sit down with Evanston to watch him inhale the last of his meatball parmesan sandwich just to tell him that I met a guy.

Joe:

[lamenting]

Yeah, but...

Mondy:

Joe... I understand why you made the decision that you did, and I'm trying to respect our boundaries...

Joe:

"Boundaries"? What are you talking about? It's me.

Mondy:

Yes Joe. It's you. But "you and me" are not the "you and me" we used to be.

Joe:

I know that, but it doesn't mean that we can't still share things about our lives with each other. I still wanna hear about *Ron*, or...

Mondy:

[looking around for other people]

I'd be lying if I said that I didn't sometimes wish we could still have what we had, but after what happened, we're really just co-workers.

Joe:

I don't believe that at all. Does Veronica know about *Ron*? I bet she does. And how much time do you spend with her outside of work?

Mondy:

I don't like it either Joe.

[pause]

What we had was very special, but we don't have that anymore.

Joe:

You keep saying that and, but I don't understand why we can no longer share stuff about what's going on in our lives. It's seems so... drastic.

Mondy:

Very.

Joe:

So then what are you so afraid of? I still want to know what's going on.

Mondy:

[Checking his phone again for the time.
He places the phone on the counter.]

What's going on is that I don't think you make choices in your own life. I think you respond. I think when you are confronted with a challenge, you consider a few different options and ultimately choose the path of least resistance. You are intellectually vibrant but otherwise very stunted.

Joe:

You think that me staying with Mary was the path of least resistance?

Mondy:

I wasn't talking about Mary. I'm talking about you as a person. You're very good at analyzing the situation and coming up with all sorts of potential outcomes, but more times than not, you end up convincing yourself that the easy way is the best way, and I believe you're missing out on so much because of that.

Joe:

I could not disagree with you more.

Mondy:

[MONDY nods and shrugs]

Okay.

Joe:

I will admit that I sometimes have a way of coasting through when I haven't come to a conclusion about what I want to do, but I left Raymar. I met you and made a *concerted effort* to seek out a new career for myself. I met Mary and was laser focused on keeping her because I thought and still think that she's great. That's just three examples of me making *choices*. I just can't get past the idea that you're trying to blame this whole...

Mondy:

I'm not blaming anything on anyone. I'm trying to explain to you something about yourself that you are having trouble admitting. It's so easy for you when it's someone else, but when it's you, you get all wrapped up in the "what if's" and you end up as a spectator in your own life.

Joe:

A spectator...

Mondy:

[puts his phone in his pocket]

You're so scared to try something that may not work out so you sit back and encourage everyone else to follow their dreams and then you live vicariously through their success and failures. I think it's wonderful that you're so supportive, but at some point you're going to have to figure out a way to be happy. The world is an amazing, wondrous place Joe, but it's only as amazing as one makes it.

Joe:

Is your life so amazing and wondrous?

Mondy:

[picking up his bag]

I try. Every day. And yours could be too. I'm not saying it's easy, but it's certainly possible.

[MONDY walks around the counter and gives JOE a hug.]

Mondy:

I have to go. They're waiting for me.

Joe:

Wait.

[pulling back from MONDY'S hug]

That's what you're going to end with? "Go have an amazing life."?

Mondy:

That's not what I'm saying at all. I'm running late to meet people and I want you to know that I care for you, so I'll say it again. I miss you. I miss our friendship. The one we used to have. I still think you're the same great person you were when things were different, but things are different. I can't just turn it on and off. I know what it's like to be really close to you and to have anything else would be like going through the motions or something awful like that.

[MONDY exits]

BLACKOUT

SONG – Married - Reprise