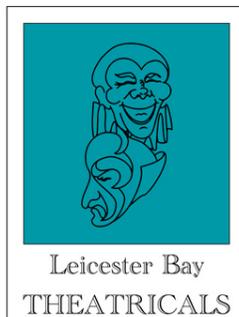


# PERUSAL SCRIPT



by  
**Eric Samuelson**



Newport, Maine

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## **HE & SHE FIGHTING: A LOVE STORY**

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

HE — college-aged, Public Relations major

SHE — college-aged, undecided major

Original production directed by Davey Morrison-Dillard.

**HE & SHE FIGHTING: A LOVE STORY** by Eric Samuelsen 1f 1m. 80 minutes. Simple interior. Contemporary costumes. (*Suitable for Professional, College/University and Community groups.*) They are completely incompatible. He says something. She says the opposite. He wants to do something. She doesn't want any part of it. They don't like the same movies. They don't like the friends of their friends. He can't do anything right. She can't do anything wrong. He fears... She fears... No golf, no football, no playstation. No romantic movies, no excuses for not understanding her friend's gay friends, no making out because it's too normal/expected. One thing they agree on: making out might lead to something more. And in a way, it does, but not how you would suspect. Premiered at the New Play Project in Provo, Utah — 2010. **ORDER #3030**

**Eric Samuelsen** taught at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio before joining the faculty at Brigham Young University in 1992. He became head of the Playwriting program at BYU in 1999. He has also taught as an adjunct faculty member in the Religion department. He retired from BYU in 2012.

As a playwright, Samuelsen has had twenty-seven plays professionally produced in Utah, Indiana, Louisiana, New York, and California. Some of his plays include *Gadanton*, which has seen three professional productions across the country, *A Love Affair with Electrons*, *Family*, *The Plan*, and *The Way We're Wired*. He is resident playwright at Plan B Theatre Company in Salt Lake City, who designated their 2013-14 season a 'Season of Eric, including productions of six of his plays.

He is a member of the Playwrights' Circle, and the Dramatists Guild. He is three-time winner of the Annual Award in Playwriting offered by the Association for Mormon Letters (AML) and he became president of AML in 2007. In 2013 the organization awarded him the Smith Pettit Award for his lifetime work as a playwright.

He has been a staff writer for the on-line satirical magazine *The Sugarbeet*. He was also featured in the book *Conversations with Mormon Authors*, edited by Chris Bigelow. He is a noted Ibsen translator, and has also published scholarly articles on 19th and 20th century Scandanavian Theatre, and more recently, on LDS drama and film. He blogged at *Mormoniconoclast.com*. Eric died in September of 2019 after a long battle with polymyositis. This has left a huge hole in the Theatre Community within, and outside of, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

## **HE & SHE FIGHTING: A LOVE STORY**

**SCENE ONE** — *Hip hop music in the background. Party sounds. He looks at her, sitting, makes a decision, mimes opening a sliding glass door.*

**HE:** Hi.

**SHE:** What are you doing?

**HE:** Well, I just thought I'd . . .

**SHE:** Shut the door!

**HE:** Oh, the, uh...

**SHE:** Shut it now!

**HE:** Um, sorry —

**SHE:** Stay, go, I don't care, just shut the door!

**HE:** Sorry. Sorry.

*(Mimes shutting the glass door behind him, stands awkwardly. Music volume abruptly quiets.)*

Hi.

**SHE:** Look, I came in here to get away from the whole, you know, and the noise and . . .

**HE:** No, I got that, I just uh. . .

**SHE:** And then you have to just stand there, door wide open—

**HE:** Sorry.

*(He looks around for a place to sit, finally takes stuff off a coffee table, puts it on the floor. Sits.)*

**SHE:** That's a coffee table.

**HE:** Well . . .

**SHE:** Hey, it's not my house, what do I even care.

**HE:** Right. Yeah. Sorry....

*(Long pause.)*

Anyway, I was just out there. The party. And saw you, and thought I'd come over and say hi.

**SHE:** Hi.

**HE:** Hi.

*(Extending a hand.)*

Anyway, I'm—

**SHE:** (Cuts him off.) The thing is, I had that door shut for a reason

**HE:** Right. No, I got that.

**SHE:** So . . . ?

**HE:** So, I thought I'd bring a little party spirit in with me. You know? Like, share.

**SHE:** Just took it upon yourself, did you? Party ambassador.

**HE:** Well, yeah. Just took the initiative to—

**SHE:** Well, good for you. 'Cause all-a-sudden I'm having so much more fun, thanks to you.

**HE:** You're certainly welcome.

*(Pause.)*

**SHE:** Does it have to be so . . . loud?

**HE:** You know what they say—

**SHE:** No.

**HE:** Sorry?

**SHE:** You said ‘you know what they say’ like there’s this thing they say, and I don’t know what it is they say, so what, what do they say?

**HE:** (*Lamely.*) That...loud parties are fun. . . ?

**SHE:** Glad we cleared that up.

**HE:** Me too.

*(Pause, while he contemplates how dorky he sounds.)*

So. You’re here with, uh...?

**SHE:** Yeah. With, um...

*(Trying to remember her roommate’s name.)*

you know...and those guys.

**HE:** You’re the guys from the party house.

**SHE:** What?

**HE:** Boy, have I heard stories about that place.

**SHE:** I—

**HE:** Rumor is, these girls ran a prostitution ring out of it couple of years ago.

**SHE:** Great. See, I —

**HE:** I mean, not now, I don’t mean to imply —

**SHE:** No, no.

**HE:** But that’s what I heard. Partaaayyy Villa. Girls gone wild.

**SHE:** I don’t, really—

**HE:** That kind of thing. What I’m talking about. Girls gone wild. As an example.

**SHE:** An example of...?

**HE:** Of what goes on. Went on. May have gone on.

*(She turns away. He flounders on.)*

Girls gone wild. You know what I’m talking, those videos? Dude, have you seen those? I mean, the ads, *for* the videos, of course you haven’t actually *seen* the *videos*. Me neither. Just the ads. Girls flashing their boo

*(Catches himself.)*

...bare tops. Drunk, right, you’d have to be. Not *you* you, um, but girls generally, right? I mean, to just go around flashing people, who does that? Unless you do that, which would be totally your call. But, I mean, listen to me, it sounds like I’m accusing you of, whatever, it may have sounded like I was accusing you of, which I’m totally not, but all I was saying, that’s the sort of thing you *hear about* happening some places. Not yours. I mean, yes, yours, but not anymore. Unless it’s still that way. Or never was. Which I would be cool with. Either way.

**SHE:** I just moved in.

**HE:** Great.

**SHE:** Today. I don’t actually, you know, know anything....

**HE:** Which is all I was saying.

*(Pause.)*

**SHE:** So.

**HE:** Yeah.

*(Pause. He shifts awkwardly on the coffee table.)*

Listen, I don't suppose there's room on the—

**SHE:** Nope.

**HE:** It's just this coffee table's pretty—

**SHE:** Sorry.

**HE:** Okay.

*(Long pause.)*

**SHE:** Anyway.

**HE:** Yeah.

**SHE:** I'm glad there's this one room. That's at least a little quiet. I could do without the glass doors, but—

**HE:** At least we can see the party from here. Sort of be a little part of it.

**SHE:** I guess. They can see in here too, though.

**HE:** Well, we're just talking.

*(Pause.)*

Unless you want to, you know. . . Like they're doing?

**SHE:** They're either drinking, making out, dancing, or eating pizza.

**HE:** We could do...one of those—

**SHE:** No.

**HE:** I just meant—

**SHE:** Don't dance, don't feel like pizza.

**HE:** Okay.

**SHE:** I drink. I mean, I do drink. Sometimes. On occasion.

**HE:** Me too.

**SHE:** But some people, you know, it's like their life.

**HE:** Sad, alcoholics...

**SHE:** When I have something to celebrate. I'll have a little wine. A white, a Zinfandel or . . .

**HE:** Whiskey sour, sure ...

**SHE:** Don't like beer much, though. It always tastes like... Like, what's that thing they say. Like someone ran it through a horse first.

**HE:** How would you actually run it through...?

**SHE:** So. A party pooper. You could say. Party pooper me.

**HE:** To run it through a horse, you'd have to . . .

**SHE:** Party pooper me.

**HE:** The horse would actually have to drink . . .

**SHE:** The no fun girl. That's what they're thinking.

**HE:** Oh! And then the...so it actually tastes like ...

**SHE:** No fun at all.

**HE:** That was funny.

**SHE:** What was?

**HE:** Your line. Beer.

**SHE:** *(No idea what he's talking about.)* Right.

*(Pause.)*

Actually, I'm a little stuck.

**HE:** How so?

**SHE:** Well, you know, I came with...her, my roommate, and she's got the key. I mean, there's six of us and...one key.

**HE:** You don't have extra keys?

**SHE:** We just moved in. And the landlady said she'd have keys for us. Monday.

**HE:** She didn't have keys? What kind of psycho landlady —

**SHE:** She just changed the locks, something about seeing *Paranormal Activity*<sup>1</sup> and not feeling safe anymore —

**HE:** That makes sense.

**SHE:** So we all came here together, and we can't really go home until, you know, we all go home.

**HE:** That movie, I couldn't sleep for three days after —

**SHE:** I mean, I could ask her. Her, over there.

**HE:** That scene where the, you know, the door moved just thaaaat much —

**SHE:** I could say, give me the key, and then let her in when she got home. But then I'd have to wait up.

**HE:** I about jumped out of my chair.

**SHE:** Plus then I'm suddenly the weird roommate who doesn't party and who needs that.

**HE:** That door. Man.

*(Demonstrates the door opening with his hands. Pause. She stares at him oddly.)*

So.

*(Has no idea what she said last, but realizes some response is required.)*

So. Sucks to be you, huh.

**SHE:** Well...yeah, it does.

**HE:** So your roommate, she's the one . . . ?

*(Gesturing.)*

By that potted plant?

**SHE:** Her, yeah, that's her, key girl.

**HE:** I met her, I think, what's her name again?

**SHE:** Uh, well, um.

**HE:** Thing is, she just met my roommate. Um, Steve? Hawaiian shirt?

**SHE:** Yeah, I don't think she's going anywhere anytime soon.

**HE:** No.

*(Pause.)*

**SHE:** In fact, it would take a crowbar to pry them apart. Geez, they just *met*.

**HE:** Yeah. Awkward.

**SHE:** So I'm here. On two hours sleep. And I get to enjoy this nice loud party. In which I don't know a soul. With people dancing. To lots of, you know, hip hop.

**HE:** Well. You know me. That's one person.

**SHE:** Yeah.

*(Pause.)*

Listen, this is the one quiet room in the entire—

**HE:** Oh, I know exactly what you mean. I headed straight here myself. I mean, I like to bust a move same as

---

<sup>1</sup>This could reference essentially any extremely scary movie. It's just that I had recently seen *Paranormal Activity* and it scared the wee out of me.

the next guy, but you know, sometimes you just need a little—

**SHE:** It's just my flight was delayed, I got in really late last night, and then a full day moving in and...I was just wondering if you wouldn't mind...?

**HE:** Keeping you company. Absolutely.

**SHE:** *(Quite the longish pause.)* Thanks.

**HE:** *(Shifting position again.)* Listen, on this coffee table, having to twist around to even see you.

**SHE:** That does look uncomfortable.

**HE:** So...

**SHE:** Sorry.

**HE:** Okay.

*(Pause.)*

So. You're in school, I guess.

**SHE:** Yeah.

**HE:** Whatcher major?

**SHE:** I'm still just trying to, um

**HE:** Lemme guess, lemme guess. Ed?

**SHE:** No.

**HE:** Art History?

**SHE:** Honestly, I'm still trying to—

**HE:** Wait, wait, one more. Exercise Science.

**SHE:** No.

**HE:** Come on, just look at you, has to be something hot.

**SHE:** Sorry. No.

*(He looks a little hurt.)*

Look, how about you, what's your major?

**HE:** Comms. Public relations.

**SHE:** PR. Okay.

**HE:** Tried some other things. Business, accounting. But they're competitive programs, and you know . . .

**SHE:** Too bad.

**HE:** Lemons to lemonade, right? PR.

**SHE:** Sure.

**HE:** Every time a door closes, another one opens somewhere else.

**SHE:** That's what they say. So, PR, that's it, your thing, your passion.

**HE:** Well, I wouldn't say it's my passion. . .

**SHE:** It's what you want to do with your life.

**HE:** It's a major where you can get a good job.

**SHE:** But...you don't like it, you don't care about it, you're not passionate—

**HE:** Look, you can't major in girls, cars, sports and video games.

**SHE:** I totally don't get that, spend four years and all that money majoring in something you hate.

**HE:** I don't hate it.

**SHE:** You're not passionate about it.

**HE:** I don't hate it. It's fine, it's fun. I like it.

**SHE:** But not passionately.

**HE:** So, okay, what's your major, what're you all passionate about?

**SHE:** I'm...not going to tell you.

**HE:** You haven't found it yet, have you?

**SHE:** Have too.

**HE:** Have not. You don't have a passion either.

**SHE:** But at least I'm looking!

**HE:** Maybe I am too! Maybe that's why I'm on my third pre-major.

**SHE:** Or maybe God's trying to tell you something.

**HE:** He did. He told me. . .

**SHE:** What?

**HE:** To check out the girl behind the glass door.

**SHE:** Oh please. Worst line ever.

*(He looks away, a little hurt. She yawns.)*

Boy, it's really getting late.

**HE:** Yeah.

**SHE:** Look at those two. I'm gonna be here another *year*.

**HE:** Me too.

**SHE:** What do you mean?

**HE:** He's my ride.

**SHE:** Great.

*(Pause.)*

Can I say this? I hate hip hop.

**HE:** Yeah?

**SHE:** I hate it. Everyone likes it, it's my generation's music, and I still...It's *not* music. It's all drums, not even drums, drum synth, and a guy shouting stupid filthy stuff that sort of rhymes. And that's supposed to be, you know, authentic. Which it totally isn't; I have black friends, they're in school, they don't spend all day talking about how much bling they wear or their girlfriends' butts.

**HE:** It's not so bad.

**SHE:** It's awful. You probably really love it.

**HE:** Not really. I mean, I'll listen to, you know, Jay Z or, you know, classic Tupac. . . Lil' Wayne. B.o.B<sup>2</sup>.

Only sometimes and I have to be in the mood.

**SHE:** I hate it.

*(Pause.)*

I wanna go home.

**HE:** It won't be that much longer. Probably.

**SHE:** Yeah.

*(Pause, as they both look off. Suddenly.)*

Oh my gosh. Did you see that?

**HE:** That's totally unnecessary.

**SHE:** Yeah, they're gonna be awhile.

*(They watch a bit more.)*

Great. That's just great. My new roommate, whose name I don't even remember, is a slut.

---

<sup>2</sup> Just toss any ol' name in here.

**HE:** That's a little harsh, doncha think—

**SHE:** And I'm *stuck* here, and there she goes.

**HE:** Are they getting enough oxygen, do you think?

**SHE:** Hope not, if she passes out, I get to go home.

*(Pause. He stands up.)*

What are you doing?

**HE:** That coffee table's a little bit...

**SHE:** So, what, you're just going to stand there?

**HE:** No.

*(Sits again.)*

So. Um, what kind of music do you...?

**SHE:** You wouldn't know it.

**HE:** Try me.

**SHE:** I'm into this whole thing.

**HE:** Tell me about it.

**SHE:** OK, like Enya. Loreena McKennit.

**HE:** Like, Evanescence.

**SHE:** Well, um. I mean this really ethnic-y, world-y music-y sort of stuff. Especially the Christian part of it.

Christian celtic new age. And like that.

**HE:** That's awesome.

**SHE:** I mean, I'm a Christian. I know that's not cool and all, but—

**HE:** Oh, me too.

**SHE:** Seriously?

**HE:** Sure.

**SHE:** When were you saved?

**HE:** Um. . .

**SHE:** You don't know.

**HE:** Well...

**SHE:** Okay, you don't know, you pass.

**HE:** Pass?

**SHE:** There's Christians, right? And then there's like *Christians*. Right? Who can like tell you the exact day they were saved and all?

**HE:** I had this roommate . . .

**SHE:** Just, you know? I go to church. But more like in a trying to be a good person sort of way.

**HE:** This roommate, he'd spend all day listening to, like, you know, Bless the Fall, Underoath...

**SHE:** Exactly! Instead of like Switchfoot.

**HE:** So I'm a Switchfoot Christian.

**SHE:** And I'm a Loreena McKennit Christian. So we're good.

**HE:** We're good. Okay.

**SHE:** Good.

*(A long pause. They watch the party some more.)*

And now they're upside down.

**HE:** That looks so uncomfortable.

**SHE:** Like in Spiderman? The upside down kiss? I heard they almost drowned.

**HE:** Man, her shirt in that rain—

**SHE:** What?

**HE:** Nothing.

**SHE:** When they fell off the sofa, I thought it might at least slow ‘em down a little.

**HE:** I guess not.

*(They watch some more.)*

**SHE:** I mean, there are people dancing, like, two feet away.

**HE:** Well, when you’re that much into it, I guess...

**SHE:** I’m stuck here for hours.

*(They watch some more.)*

**HE:** You wanna go out some time?

**SHE:** Yeah okay.

*(They keep watching.)*

**SCENE TWO** — *On a sofa. They’re kissing.*

**SHE:** Mmpphh.

*(She backs away.)*

**HE:** What?

**SHE:** Nothing, it’s okay.

*(She moves in again. They kiss. She pulls back.)*

Sorry.

**HE:** What’s the matter?

**SHE:** Do you have to do that?

**HE:** What?

**SHE:** Nothing, never mind.

*(Another kiss, again she pulls back.)*

**HE:** What?

**SHE:** Well...

**HE:** Tell me.

**SHE:** Well. You’re forming like a suction. On my mouth.

**HE:** A suction.

**SHE:** Yeah. Like those rubber suction cup things? You can put on glass?

**HE:** I don’t know what you’re talking about.

**SHE:** Well, you were. You were doing like this suction thing.

*(She makes a suction sound.)*

**HE:** You’re saying I suck at kissing?

**SHE:** As a matter of fact, literally, I —

**HE:** You are! You’re saying I suck as a—!

**SHE:** I’m saying, yes, you create a kind of suction with your mouth that’s not terribly pleasant, yes!

**HE:** No one’s ever complained before.

**SHE:** Look, you're making my cheeks go like this.

*(She demonstrates, sucking her cheeks in, forming a fish mouth.)*

**HE:** Oh, that's appealing.

**SHE:** Well, that's what it feels like.

**HE:** It felt plenty good to me!

**SHE:** Well, it didn't feel good to me! It felt like kissing a vacuum hose.

*(He turns, sulks.)*

And now you're sulking.

**HE:** Am not.

**SHE:** Are too.

**HE:** Call a guy a vacuum cleaner.

**SHE:** Hose, I said hose.

**HE:** That's better?

**SHE:** More accurate.

*(Pause.)*

**HE:** Boy. You sure know how to spoil a mood.

**SHE:** Your mood. Mine was spoiled the first time I felt my intestines in my throat.

**HE:** We go out to dinner, I spend twenty eight dollars—

**SHE:** You finish that sentence, you die on the spot.

*(Another hurt pause.)*

**HE:** I'm just saying. Here we are, all cuddly and romantic, and all you can do is—

**SHE:** Forget it, forget I said anything.

*(Hostile silence, pause.)*

**HE:** Look, okay, forgive and forget, I'm willing to try again.

**SHE:** Not if you're going to try to suck my tonsils out again.

**HE:** Some chicks like a hard kisser.

**SHE:** Yeah, well, a hard kisser is not the same thing as a sucky kisser.

**HE:** Like I said, I've never had any complaints before.

*(Pause.)*

**SHE:** If this isn't just a typical guy thing. We're having this nice romantic evening, I offer a little constructive criticism —

**HE:** Constructive...! We were kissing!

**SHE:** You were bad at it!

**HE:** What makes you the expert?

**SHE:** I'm a girl!

**HE:** So? I'm a boy.

**SHE:** Girls are better kissers than boys.

**HE:** That's completely ridiculous.

**SHE:** Is not. Kissing is about, like, empathy and feelings and...stuff that girls are better at.

**HE:** No, no. No, you're making it too complicated.

**SHE:** It is complicated.

**HE:** Not even. Think of kissing like a physical skill, like, I don't know, shooting a free throw.

**SHE:** A free throw?

**HE:** Well. Sort of.

**SHE:** Kissing is like tossing a ball through a hoop.

**HE:** A repetitive physical skill type deal.

**SHE:** Well, girls are better at that too.

**HE:** Oh, please. Girls are not better at basketball than boys are.

**SHE:** Not free throw shooting, we're better at that part.

**HE:** Are not!

**SHE:** You watch boys' basketball and girls' basketball and see who shoots free throws better.

**HE:** Boys!

**SHE:** Girls.

**HE:** Nuh uh.

**SHE:** Yuh huh.

**HE:** You don't even know what you're talking about.

**SHE:** Says the guy who compared kissing a girl to shooting free throws.

**HE:** They're kinda the same. Sort of principle.

**SHE:** No wonder you suck at it, then.

*(Pause.)*

**HE:** Besides, we do too have, like, emotions and feelings and crap.

**SHE:** Not the same way girls do.

**HE:** You don't know that. You don't know what it feels like to be a guy.

**SHE:** You don't know what it feels like to be a —

**HE:** *(Intensely self-pitying.)* You don't know what it feels like to be sitting there kissing someone you really like, holding her in your arms, just feeling all close and...and like that, and then, *then*, she starts telling you every single thing you're doing wrong. In the most hurtful, personal . . .

**SHE:** Well, what am I supposed to do? Just let you suck all the moisture from my body?

**HE:** You could have said it nicer.

**SHE:** I said it plenty nice.

**HE:** Did not.

**SHE:** Did too.

*(Hurt pause.)*

You just don't listen to me. Ever. At all. About anything.

**HE:** That's just so ridiculous, I don't know what to—

**SHE:** Example: today at the gym. We ran, we lifted weights.

**HE:** I had a great time.

**SHE:** Hi, you were doing it wrong.

**HE:** Yeah, like I'm supposed to listen to you when I'm lifting, like, three times what you were—

**SHE:** You did curls wrong. You're going to hurt your wrist doing 'em that way.

**HE:** And you know this how?

**SHE:** I took a class. And, *and*, I payed attention.

**HE:** You're all, 'turn the wrists in more, turn your wrists in—'

**SHE:** You were doing it wrong, and I tried to tell you, and you were SO interested in that girl in the Colts tee shirt, I could have been *on fire*, and you wouldn't have —..

**HE:** How do you remember that?

**SHE:** Remember what?

**HE:** What team tee shirt she was wearing. How do you remember stuff like—

**SHE:** So you *were* looking at her!

**HE:** No! Maybe. I don't know, I might have glanced over.

**SHE:** But you know what girl I'm talking about.

**HE:** No, I, look, this is way off the subject—

**SHE:** You're staring at her and her boobs sticking out from *under* her sports bra, and in the meantime, giving yourself, like, carpal tunnel because you—

**HE:** What does any of this have to do with kissing?

**SHE:** Oh, I think we both know.

**HE:** I just—

**SHE:** You were kissing me, and you wished it were her. That's why you were sucking so hard.

**HE:** Oh, now, come on, that's completely... You don't know what's going on in my head—

**SHE:** Oh don't I? Glancing over at her every two seconds.

**HE:** She was doing it wrong.

**SHE:** She was doing something.

**HE:** No, no, she was having problems with the universal—

**SHE:** You could practically see her nipples, and—

**HE:** I thought she was going to hurt herself. That was all. I thought I was gonna have to spot her.

**SHE:** Oh, *spot* her! So full of chivalry, such a knight in shining armor —

**HE:** She was totally not my type.

**SHE:** Short skinny big boob blonde, she's *every* guy's type.

**HE:** I mean, if we're even talking about the same girl. I don't even remember.

**SHE:** Uh huh.

**HE:** You mean the one with the zit?

*(Pause.)*

**SHE:** She did have a zit.

**HE:** See, if I was staring at all, which I don't even remember, I was probably, like, distracted by that, whatever, I mean it wasn't even a pimple, more like a boil.

**SHE:** Yeah, okay.

**HE:** If we're even talking about the same girl.

**SHE:** Look, I need you to tell me the truth. You never thought of her once? While we were kissing?

**HE:** Never once. Cross my heart.

**SHE:** You were only thinking about me?

**HE:** Only you.

**SHE:** Okay, then.

**HE:** Okay.

**SHE:** I'm the only girl in your life right now?

**HE:** Except my mom.

**SHE:** Except your mom.

**HE:** Absolutely.

**SHE:** So I was wrong. About tee shirt slut bimbo whore. I apologize.

**HE:** Okay. But I still don't think I'm that bad a kisser.

**SHE:** Well, here's the bottom line. If you wanna make out with me, you have to listen, and you have to do it my way.

**HE:** And you're such a big expert.

**SHE:** As a matter of fact, yes, I am an expert on how I like to be kissed. Absolutely.

*(Pause. He can't really argue with this.)*

**HE:** Okay.

**SHE:** So you'll listen? You're willing to, like, change?

**HE:** Well, how about you?

**SHE:** What about me?

**HE:** Will you listen to me?

**SHE:** About kissing?

**HE:** About what I like. What works for me.

**SHE:** You're a guy.

**HE:** So?

**SHE:** If I'm willing to make out at all, you're fine with whatever.

*(Pause.)*

**HE:** Okay. Can we try again?

*(She wriggles away.)*

**SHE:** And now you're just gonna grab me.

*(Quick blackout.)*

**SCENE THREE** — *Sitting at a table, heads bowed, food in front of them.*

**HE:** Amen.

**SHE:** Amen.

**HE:** *(Smacking his hands together in anticipation.)* This looks great.

**SHE:** Good, I'm glad.

**HE:** I've been looking forward to this all day, I'll tell you.

**SHE:** Well. I hope, you know, it lives up to—

**HE:** *(Takes a deep breath, then noisily lets it out.)* Is that curry?

**SHE:** Uh, well, no, no curry.

**HE:** Are you sure that's not curry I smell?

**SHE:** Uh, yeah. I did use a little nutmeg, maybe that's what you—

**HE:** Love curry. That one Indian restaurant, you know the place? To die for.

**SHE:** So, um. Shall we?

*(Lifts the lid of a dish. The food is disconcertingly orange.)*

**HE:** Wow. You serve this on rice, or —?

**SHE:** Yeah, about the rice. I'm afraid it may have gotten just a little—

**HE:** *(Lifting another lid.)* And there it is. Great, I love it like this, kinda clumped together.

**SHE:** Oh. Well—

**HE:** Gluey, you know? Sticks to your ribs.

**SHE:** Sure...

**HE:** And now the main dish.

**SHE:** Okay, listen, about the sauce—

**HE:** Sure smells great.

**SHE:** The thing is, it called for some ingredients that I was pretty sure we had, but when it actually came time to—

**HE:** Did you know that the sense of taste is directly related to the sense of smell?

**SHE:** I'd heard that. The point is, I ended up having to substitute—

**HE:** (*Big whiff.*) See, when it smells like this, I already know it's going to taste awesome.

**SHE:** Well, I'm glad you like the, um, smell. The thing is—

**HE:** It's the color of it, too, the texture.

**SHE:** Really? See, to me it looks maybe just a little—

**HE:** (*Dishing himself a huge serving.*) Fabuloso.

**SHE:** It doesn't seem a trifle...orange?

**HE:** That's just the curry.

**SHE:** The thing is, I didn't use any, um—

**HE:** So, chicken, and curry and, what, tomatoes?

**SHE:** See, it was supposed to be lamb, and I thought I bought lamb, I really did. But I thought maybe I could maybe substitute chicken, I mean everyone likes chicken.

**HE:** Oh, there's a sort of leaf thing. So, doing yard work, were you, got a leaf in there?

*(He laughs heartily at this.)*

**SHE:** That's a bay leaf...actually.

**HE:** I just want to savor it.

**SHE:** It called for marjoram. I figured maybe a bay leaf might be...in the ballpark...

*(She holds her breath as he takes a big forkful, eats.)*

**HE:** Oh!

**SHE:** Yeah?

**HE:** Oh! Just...amazing.

**SHE:** Seriously?

**HE:** The best. Absolutely.

**SHE:** Here, have some lemonade.

**HE:** *Love* lemonade.

**SHE:** (*A pause as he eats—she watches in some amazement.*) It's really okay?

**HE:** This is seriously the best meal I've had in weeks.

**SHE:** Okay, then.

*(She relaxes a little as he digs in.)*

I had to substitute all these...like I thought we had garlic, ended up using garlic salt. We were totally out of sage, but that's sort of like oregano, right? Which we had. Plus it called for unsweetened cocoa. I mean, seriously, cocoa. Then after I'd put in Nestle's Quik, my roommate said I should substitute chili powder instead. Plus there was this whole thing where I thought I read tablespoons and it was really teaspoons, but...but you really like it?

**HE:** (*Mouth full.*) Terrific.

**SHE:** Okay then. Okay.

*(She takes a bite. She can't believe it, it tastes like dirty socks. Fiery hot dirty socks. She tries*

*desperately to find a solution. She holds up a spoon, but he's looking at her adoringly, and she can't bring herself to spit her food out. Her eyes are watering, it's so bad. Finally, heroically, she swallows, then gasps as it, traces a lava path down her esophagus. She drinks her lemonade, pours herself a second glass, drinks it too. Sits there, trying to breathe.)*

**HE:** Great, huh?

**SHE:** Yeah. Just a little, uh . . .

**HE:** Just a touch bland? That was my first thought too. But the more I eat, the less I think so.

**SHE:** Really.

**HE:** It's just such an amazing flavor.

**SHE:** Wow. It's, uh, certainly powerful.

**HE:** Sure is.

*(Watching her.)*

Hey, now, none of that.

**SHE:** What?

**HE:** Look, I know I'm your guest and all, but we've been dating for how long? Eat up!

**SHE:** Oh, well—

**HE:** I want us both to enjoy this!

**SHE:** Really, it's okay...

**HE:** I insist.

*(Piles her plate full.)*

There you go.

**SHE:** That's...um...that's actually...Stop!

*(He looks at her strangely.)*

I'm not all that hungry. I was piecing while I cooked.

**HE:** That makes sense.

**SHE:** So you really like this?

**HE:** Honestly, it's terrific.

**SHE:** *(Turned off by the idea.)* This is your idea of a great meal.

**HE:** Well, yeah. I could eat this five days a week.

**SHE:** And it doesn't seem a little too spicy? Or, you know, nauseating?

**HE:** *(He laughs heartily.)* You're such a kidder.

**SHE:** I just...I, actually, don't think it's my best.

**HE:** You can cook better than this?

**SHE:** Well...

**HE:** Don't believe it. This is gourmet quality.

**SHE:** It's not, okay? I'm not a great cook, I'm barely a competent cook. I mean, I told you that already. I can do a few things.

**HE:** Proof's in the pudding. This stuff, I mean, if this is the kind of thing I can expect on a regular basis, I'm definitely dating the right chick.

**SHE:** *(Maybe a little sharply.)* So there's nothing wrong with this meal, at all, in your opinion.

**HE:** *(Puzzled, a trifle hurt.)* No.

**SHE:** And that's your honest to gosh opinion? This is gourmet —

**HE:** Okay, you want some honest criticism? Really, genuinely?

**SHE:** I want you to be honest with me, and I'm just not sure you have been because —

**HE:** 'Cause, I mean, I am a satisfied customer, don't get me wrong.

**SHE:** I understand. But, you know, it's okay. Let me have it.

**HE:** Well, okay.

*(Pauses, contemplating.)*

To be completely honest—

**SHE:** Yes?

**HE:** I think the lemonade's a little off.

**SHE:** The lemonade?

**HE:** Just a little, I don't know...

**SHE:** The lemonade.

**HE:** The food itself is primo, perfecto. But, I don't know, maybe you could work just a little bit more on the beverage side of things.

**SHE:** The lemonade took ten seconds. I opened a can, added water.

**HE:** Well, maybe you should have taken a little more time—

**SHE:** It was frozen, a concentrate, a monkey could've made the lemonade.

**HE:** Well, for me it was the one part of the dinner—

**SHE:** This food tastes like someone ate it already.

**HE:** Oh, now, that's just—

**SHE:** It tastes like what you scrub off the shower floor! It's the worst meal in the history of mankind!

**HE:** I liked it.

**SHE:** I could barely gag it down! And now you're telling me that this food, this this this bright orange radioactive horrible chem lab experiment gone bad, you're telling me you *like* it? That it's the *lemonade* you don't care for?

*(Pause. She's seething. He's utterly baffled.)*

**HE:** You're mad at me because I like your cooking?

**SHE:** I'm mad at you because...because...you can't possibly like this, you have to be lying!

**HE:** I'm not. I think the food is great.

**SHE:** Arrggghhhh!

**HE:** What?

**SHE:** This meal was an abortion, and you ate it, you ate tons of it, and you liked it, and, *AND*, you *don't like* my perfectly okay lemonade and I can't believe it, I kissed you, on the mouth, I'm totally grossed out right now thinking about it, I kissed you *last night*, and it turns out you have some kind of mutant taste buds that —

**HE:** Now, come on, it smells great, it tastes great —

**SHE:** Oh, oh, oh, so it's your nose that's to blame, your nose...

*(Sudden dawning.)*

Oh my gosh oh my gosh oh my gosh.

**HE:** What?

**SHE:** It *is* your nose!

**HE:** What are you —?

**SHE:** Two days ago, Tuesday, you came over, I'd been cleaning.

**HE:** Yeah, so.

**SHE:** You said I smelled great! That you liked the way I smelled! That day!

**HE:** I did!

**SHE:** I was cleaning toilets!

**HE:** I liked the way you smelled!

**SHE:** It was Tidy Bowl you were smelling, how can you like that? Here you were, complimenting me on how I smelled, and me, dummy me, I thought it was SWEET! I thought it was FLATTERING. I never even got it, not 'til this very second, I told my roommates you *WERE SO ROMANTIC*. What is my problem, every warning bell in the world—

**HE:** You smelled good!

**SHE:** I smelled as bad as this food tastes!

**HE:** Which is good! Your smell! And your cooking! To me!

*(Long pause.)*

**SHE:** That's just sick and wrong.

*(Long pause.)*

**HE:** I'm having seconds.

**SHE:** Oh no you're not.

**HE:** I am! See! I'm eating another bite!

*(Shoves a big spoonful into his mouth.)*

Man this is great! Delicious!

**SHE:** I'll never kiss you again!

**HE:** *(Another huge bite, it's spilling out of his mouth.)* Yum! Best I've ever tasted!

**SHE:** Stop it stop it stop it.

**HE:** *(Taking big bites.)* I think it's great. And I'm taking it home. And I'm reheating it for lunch tomorrow.

**SHE:** I'm not letting it out of my house.

**HE:** You invited me over—

**SHE:** Yeah, well, that was before I knew—

**HE:** I'm the guest here.

**SHE:** Sicko guest, who can't even tell—

*(He suddenly grabs the bowl of food, tucks it like carrying a football.)*

You give that back.

**HE:** No.

**SHE:** I didn't say you could have it, give it back!

**HE:** I'm keeping it.

**SHE:** I won't be responsible for your health or the health of your roommates. Give it back.

**HE:** I'm taking it.

**SHE:** Look—

*(She grabs for it, he protects it with his body.)*

I don't want to fight over this.

**HE:** Then let me take this home.

**SHE:** No you don't.

**HE:** I'm taking it!

**SHE:** You can't have it!

*(They wrestle. They sit heavily on the floor, both holding the bowl of food, breathing heavily, glaring at each other. She abruptly shoves it at him.)*

All right! Take it home.

**HE:** I can?

**SHE:** On one condition.

**HE:** What's that?

**SHE:** You take the lemonade too.

*(Very long pause. He stares at the lemonade—the thought is clearly unpalatable.)*

**HE:** I don't think I have room in my car —

**SHE:** Both, or neither.

**HE:** Okay.

*(Pause.)*

**SHE:** Okay.

*(They slowly back down. They sit together. Staring at her all the way, he sits at the table, picks up his fork.)*

**HE:** Pass the salt.

*(Quick blackout.)*

**SCENE FOUR** — *In a car. There's already some tension in the air.*

**HE:** Gabriel. He went by Gabriel.

**SHE:** Do we really have to do this?

**HE:** I mean, why not just Gabe?

**SHE:** Maybe he prefers—

**HE:** There are just some names. If you're James, you go by Jim. Right? I mean, that's the normal—

**SHE:** I'm done talking about this.

**HE:** A Thomas goes by Tom, a-a-a Joseph: Joe. William: Bill. So what's wrong with Gabe? He could be Gabe. Gabe's a, you know, normal person name.

**SHE:** You don't like him. Fine. Message communicated.

**HE:** It's not a question of liking.

**SHE:** Could we drop it, then? Please.

*(Pause.)*

**HE:** And then you abandoned me.

**SHE:** I didn't abandon you.

**HE:** Did too. Ditched me.

**SHE:** I didn't abandon you. I had to use the facilities.

**HE:** I bet.

**SHE:** I did.

*(Pause.)*

**HE:** You *and* Lauren.

**SHE:** Okay, that's just a normal, a normal—

**HE:** Why do you do that? Go to the john together, why do girls—

**SHE:** The john, that's so elegant, the john —

**HE:** Restroom, okay.

**SHE:** Okay, well, I went because I had to use the—  
**HE:** You could have done that by yourself.  
**SHE:** And left you with Lauren and Gabriel.  
**HE:** I'da been fine. They just would have started making out again, giving me time to study the dessert menu. No, you went together, because that's what you do.  
**SHE:** What's what who does?  
**HE:** Women. Go together. To the facilities.  
**SHE:** We don't—  
**HE:** You do. We're in a restaurant, you, me, Lauren, Gabriel. Lauren's all "I need to use the powder room." You're all: "I'll go with you."  
**SHE:** You don't want to be the only girl at the table.  
**HE:** You'd never see guys doing that. "Hey, I gotta take a leak." "Say, Dave, why don't I come with you, keep you company."  
**SHE:** No.  
**HE:** But you and Lauren...  
**SHE:** Look, okay, it's a thing. An assessment thing.  
**HE:** Assessment?  
**SHE:** How the date's going, what she thinks of your guy. What you think of hers. You're in there, you're fixing your face, plus, Gabriel's this new guy in her life.  
**HE:** Great. Did I pass?  
**SHE:** She was very complimentary.  
**HE:** I bet. And so you're having this heart-to-heart, and meanwhile, what I am I supposed to do?  
**SHE:** You could talk to Gabriel. About us.  
**HE:** Boy, you don't know anything about guys, do you?  
**SHE:** Well, you could have. And you did: when I came back, you were having this perfectly fine conversat—  
**HE:** It was awful.  
**SHE:** It wasn't awful.  
**HE:** No. No, look. We were in booths? You know what I mean, benches, bench seats, on either side of the table. So, okay, you want to sit across from your date, so guys on one side, girls on the other. So *you* get up, *you* leave, both you *and* Lauren, where does that leave me? Two guys, on benches, on the *same side of the table*. I mean, the waiter was actually snickering.  
**SHE:** So move over to the other—  
**HE:** I was on the inside! He should have moved, it was his move. But no, he's completely oblivious to the fact that it took us like five seconds to move from 'double-date' to 'gay couple.'  
**SHE:** Nobody thought—  
**HE:** I thought about sliding under the table to the other side. But then it's one guy sitting and another guy under the table.  
**SHE:** Nobody noticed.  
**HE:** Everyone noticed.  
**SHE:** You're making way too a big a deal out of—  
**HE:** We don't do that. Sit next like that. Movie theatres, girls sit next; guys never.  
**SHE:** I've seen guys in movie theaters—  
**HE:** *Brothers*, maybe. *Cousins*. Or when the theater was crowded, where you had to. And don't even get me started on urinals.

**SHE:** Urinals.

**HE:** Oh, man, there's a whole thing there.

**SHE:** Okay, how'd we get on the subject of —?

**HE:** There's this entire etiquette. There's, like, five websites devoted to it.

**SHE:** Urinal etiquette websites?

**HE:** Five, six of 'em. Google it sometime.

**SHE:** Etiquette, how can there be etiquette, it's a urinal, this is not about which fork to use.

**HE:** Etiquette's a lot more than—

**SHE:** Okay, I mean, okay, you don't want to pee on each other's shoes, but —

**HE:** Which one to use. Especially if some of the other ones are taken.

**SHE:** Well, girls just go to whatever stall's free.

**HE:** Well, yeah, 'cause it's private. You're in this stall. With walls. It's not a urinal, is what I'm saying.

**SHE:** And there's an etiquette.

**HE:** Five stalls, right? So if you're alone, you go to number one: closest to the sinks. Next guy: to five, as far away as possible from guy one. Guy three enters, it's urinal three, equidistant from guys one and two. But then guy four comes in? Awkward. Mostly, you wait 'til someone else is done.

**SHE:** Why?

**HE:** These are strangers. You don't know what they're like. Maybe they'll, like, check you out or something.

**SHE:** But isn't it true that guys' showers, in a locker room, that you don't have walls, curtains?

**HE:** Just a big open space, with like fifty shower nozzles. There's an etiquette there too.

**SHE:** So you're just in there. Everybody's naked.

**HE:** Yeah. And you think that's weird but what I think is weird is, like, curtains.

**SHE:** But I mean a crowded shower room with all these naked guys? I mean, aren't fears of people checking out your whatever, like, majorly *amplified* in a setting —

**HE:** No, no no, this isn't just about not wanting other guys to think you're gay. Which I'm not, of course. I mean, you'll testify, right, that I'm —?

**SHE:** I'm pretty sure you like girls, yes.

**HE:** Damn straight. No, it's about, like, Lauren. And Gabriel. And you abandoning me.

**SHE:** Okay, fine, I'm a bad person. But when Lauren and I came back, we saw you two having a perfectly cordial conversat—

**HE:** I tried! I asked him, so “what about the whole Tony Romo thing?” I figured, no matter what he looked like, sports would be safe enough. Football.

**SHE:** He's not into football.

**HE:** He's in school in Texas! He told us, he's UT Austin! And he's never apparently heard of Tony Romo!

**SHE:** I've never heard of Tony Romo.

**HE:** You're a chick, you're not supposed to. Gabriel, though, he's a guy. Theoretically.

**SHE:** Theoretically?

**HE:** Well?!?! What's he want to talk about? Stephen Sondheim!

**SHE:** The musical guy?

**HE:** I guess. I never heard of him. Apparently.

**SHE:** Well, okay. You don't like Gabriel. Geez, I got that about two sentences into this whole—

**HE:** You need to tell her.  
**SHE:** Who, Lauren?  
**HE:** She's your friend, right? You need to tell her.  
**SHE:** Tell her what?  
**HE:** That the guy she's dating is—I'm not saying *is*, I don't know that, I don't want to know that, but might be, okay, might be?—not completely, you know. Uh, straight.  
**SHE:** You did not just go there.  
**HE:** I'm not saying—  
**SHE:** Uh, yes you are.  
**HE:** No, I'm just—  
**SHE:** You're saying, he doesn't like *football*, so that makes him—  
**HE:** Not just that, not just not liking football.  
**SHE:** Then what?  
**HE:** Look how he dressed!  
**SHE:** He dressed fine, he looked good, he's a good looking —  
**HE:** No, no, he dressed like—  
**SHE:** You could take some pointers, frankly, those jeans.  
**HE:** I like these jeans.  
**SHE:** He's maybe a little metro.  
**HE:** No, no.  
**SHE:** Plus, you saw them. During the play.  
**HE:** Yeah, a play. Don't even get me started; a play. Not even a movie, we had to go all the way downtown to see a-a-a—  
**SHE:** I liked it.  
**HE:** It was dumb.  
**SHE:** It wasn't either dumb. I felt really bad for the girl.  
**HE:** She was annoying. And the guy, geez, he was supposed to be her boyfriend and he was practically swishing—  
**SHE:** Fine, okay, fine. Geez. My point is, he had his hand practically down her entire—  
**HE:** Oh, I noticed.  
**SHE:** So I'd say it's pretty obvious he's—  
**HE:** Pretending.  
**SHE:** Oh, please.  
**HE:** I'm just saying, there are signs, there are clues.  
**SHE:** I can't believe this.  
**HE:** Guys and girls, we're not the same.  
**SHE:** Big revelation there.  
**HE:** Girls *touch*, you know, you *touch* each other, hug, do each other's hair, toenails. Guys, a guy sits next to you, you scooch over. On the sofa. Give him room, no, not just giving him room, no, it's giving him *all the room*, as much room as there is on the sofa. You scooch *all the way* over.  
**SHE:** I've seen you watching football, eight of you crowded together, and not just on a sofa either; a love seat, *bean bag chair*, an *ottoman*—  
**HE:** Yeah, but that's football.  
**SHE:** And that changes the rules.  
**HE:** Sure.

**SHE:** And that has to do with —?

**HE:** Ol' Gay-briel? Sat next to me on the bench without a single...In a locker room, we'd...back away. From someone like him. If he ever even went to a locker room, which I doubt.

**SHE:** So I don't get this. You don't like the guy, fine. You don't do plays, fine. But this whole homophobic rant—

**HE:** Please, I'm not—

**SHE:** And the whole time, we both know you shower naked with guys! All the time. Every day.

**HE:** After I play basketball.

**SHE:** That's right! You play basketball, every day at noon. And afterwards, you go to the gym, and what do you do? What do you do, something I've never in my life done, something I'd rather die than even think about doing! You hop right in a great big shower room full of naked people. Strangers! Guys you've never met before in your life!

**HE:** It's a locker room shower.

**SHE:** And that doesn't bother you. But sitting in a restaurant, with a perfectly good, smart, good looking, well dressed—

**HE:** Mascara wearing.

**SHE:** It brought out his eyes.

**HE:** It brought out something.

**SHE:** Whatever. You're on this whole thing about having to sit in a restaurant for five minutes alone with a guy who happens to be dating my best friend from high school. Based on what? On nothing. He doesn't like football, he knows about musicals. Nothing.

**HE:** I didn't like him.

**SHE:** I actually did get that.

**HE:** Well. That's all I was saying.

**SHE:** Fine.

**HE:** But, you know, she's your friend. I'll put up with him. If you want me to.

**SHE:** Don't do me any favors.

**HE:** I'm just saying. I will.

**SHE:** So, great, you'll make this big sacrifice and put up with my best friend and her boyfriend. Wow. I'm overcome, really.

*(Long pause.)*

**HE:** Plus they wanted to talk politics.

**SHE:** Okay, that *was* weird.

*(FAST BLACKOUT.)*

***17 pages to the end of the script***