

Courting

A full-length play

By Cecilia Copeland

Cecilia Copeland
845.901.4427
ceciliacopeland@gmail.com

The Cast

MADELYN-	She is an attractive woman who appears to be in her late twenties with an exotic quality. In certain scenes she appears very sexy, but in others she looks bookish and wears glasses. This gives her a chameleon-like quality.
MYSTERY MAN-	He is comfortably taller than MADELYN. He is attractive and distinguished.
BOB-	The Politician. He is fifty something man with glasses.
TIM-	The Lawyer. He is an early thirties very tall and handsome man with broad shoulders.
BRIAN- few	The Musician. He is even taller than TIM, and a years younger. He is almost as handsome as TIM and cockier. He is an excellent singer.
DEVON-	The Artist. He is medium height, late twenties and thin build with a delicate sensibility.
CHEERLEADER-	She is an attractive athletic woman in her mid twenties. She wears a blond wig, and has pompons.

The Set At the top of the show, the stage is bare and black except for two chairs. One is downstage left and the other upstage right in the center of a raised platform with dimensions of 3’x3’. The platform should be two steps up, around a foot high. On the back wall are two large screens. One is hanging center stage at seven feet high. The other screen is hanging two feet above the height of the other screen behind the chair on the raised platform.

Time Present day

Note The level of nudity in the scenes where MADELYN poses for DEVON should be determined by each production. Whatever the level of exposure, the woman playing MADELYN should feel comfortable and confident with the choice.

Madelyn is surrounded by suitors in a ridiculous whirling cesspool of romance, sex, money, and societal constrictions. Her nemesis and alter ego The Cheerleader tries to push her into a cookie cutter version of womanhood. The main problem with this prescribed formula is The Mystery Man. He is Madelyn’s old love and off limits. The play rises to a climax when The Cheerleader auctions off Madelyn to the highest bidder.

PRELUDE

MADELYN enters pulling a fainting couch. She speaks the lines as she pulls the couch on. It should look heavy, and hard for her to pull. She is wearing a large fluffy robe. Though she appears tired, the lines should move at a quick pace.

MADELYN

Outta booze
Outta money
Outta time

Outta excuses
Outta luck
Outta shape

Need some dosh
Some cash
Some dough
Gotta go

But where?
Can't afford to cut my hair

Don't know where to turn
Wish had bridges to even burn

Tapped out
Knocked down
For the count

But when is it ten?
Can I get back up again?

Gotta pay the man who keeps callin my phone
Gotta find a bank foolish enough to give me a loan

There is no shining knight
For me tonight

No one but me
The Wiley Coyote

Too moral to sell my ass
Too paranoid to smoke grass

So I'll jump the start
Get fuckin smart

Always do
Nothin new

But in the mean
And time can be mean

All the men and the CHEERLEADER enter slowly.
The MYSTERY MAN goes to his special chair
upstage right. The CHEERLEADER goes to her
chair downstage left.

MADELYN CONT.

I'll open the back door
Let the dogs in to dirty the floor

As I clean up the mess
I get to forget

All about me
The things I haven't achieved

The person I'm not
All the shit I haven't got

(She starts to adjust the cushions.)

And maybe if I'm lucky
There might be somebody

To make me smile
Laugh... a little while

Or perhaps to share some of my load
Can I find a man who isn't a toad?

The lights brighten.

SCENE ONE: Orbits

MADELYN sits on the fainting couch and the MYSTERY MAN sits in his chair. As they sit, the two screens light up with muted colors. All the men with names are gathered around her like planets. MADELYN occasionally looks at MYSTERY MAN. He occasionally looks at MADELYN. They never look at each other at the same time for more than a few seconds. When either of them looks at the other, the other's screen brightens. When the CHEERLEADER speaks she stands, otherwise she sits either facing upstage, or the watching the action.

Ready!?

CHEERLEADER

ALL MEN EXCEPT MYSTERY MAN
turn to face the CHEERLEADER.

Ready!

ALL MEN EXCEPT MYSTERY MAN

READY?!

CHEERLEADER

(Clap.)

READY!

ALL MEN EXCEPT MYSTERY MAN

(Clap.)

OKAY!!! Be

CHEERLEADER

(Clap.)

aggressive,

(Clap.)

B. E. Aggressive.

(Clap.)

B. E... A. G.G... R. E. S.S. I. V. E. Aggressive.

(Clap.)

B. E. Aggressive!!!

The men turn away from the CHEERLEADER.

TIM
Did I mention I'm a lawyer?

BOB
I'm practically a celebrity.

BRIAN
Please! You don't care about any of that.

DEVON
I appreciate you.

BRIAN
You just want to have fun. Come out and hear my band again.

BOB
I listen to you.

TIM
I look good on your arm.

BRIAN
You love dancing when I'm singing to you.

BOB
Can you dance *with* her?

DEVON
Can *you* immortalize her? I-

TIM
But we're perfect together.

BOB
No, she's perfect for me.

DEVON
I need her.

TIM
She doesn't need anybody.

BOB
Yes she does.

TIM

We have so much in common. I-

BOB

I'm a good person.

BRIAN

I've taken bigger shits than you.

TIM

You're just a kid.

BOB

You can talk.

BRIAN
(To Bob.)

So how old are you?

BOB

What's it to you?

BRIAN

I'm just asking.

(To MADELYN.)

How about Thursday? My band is playing at-

TIM

There's a party at the firm on Thursday, but after-

BOB

I have a meeting with the campaign director at five, but after that-

TIM

I'm good for Wednesday. How's Wednesday? Sushi?

BRIAN

I'll be starting at eight. Just stop by. Anytime.

DEVON

Sunday? Can you pose for me on Sunday?

BRIAN

So Thursday?

BOB

Let's just do a late lunch on Tuesday?

TIM, DEVON, and BRIAN

She does scheduling on Tuesday!

BOB

So? Your boss actually likes it when I come in. I'm a good friend to have.

TIM

Did I mention I'm a lawyer?

BRIAN

I have a huge cock.

TIM

I don't do too bad either.

BRIAN

Look buddy, I'm sure you do okay, but I'm a freak.

They all turn to look at him questioningly. He stands smugly.

TIM

I can go for hours. I stay hard after I come.

BRIAN

Well, I don't talk the whole time.

TIM

I don't, talk... the whole time.

DEVON
(Sarcastically.)

Sure you don't.

(To MADELYN)

This time I won't get scared, I won't pull another Houdini. I promise. I'm ready.

MADELYN stops looking around at the men and slowly starts curling up into a protective ball.

BRIAN

She wants *me*. I put lotion on my hands for you. You said they were rough. It's from the guitar.

TIM

She likes it rough.

DEVON

Not all the time.

BRIAN

She likes to have fun. You guys are all too serious.

DEVON

No such thing. When you pose for me the perfect silence that exists between us electrifies the air. You're my muse.

BOB

But what can you offer her?

DEVON

Admiration, immortality, aff-

BOB

Romantic, but not very practical. What kind of life can you give her? Can you take care of her?

TIM and BRIAN

She doesn't need to be taken care of.

By now MADELYN has her feet up on the couch, her knees up at her chest, her arms wrapped around her knees, and her head buried.

BOB, and DEVON

Yes she does.

BRIAN

She's she strongest woman I've ever met.

DEVON

Look at her.

All the men including the MYSTERY MAN look at MADELYN. Her screen brightens. She looks straight front and puts her feet back on the floor. She turns to look at the MYSTERY MAN, but he is now looking front.

MADELYN

I'm fine.

TIM

If you needed it I'd help, but I don't actually care about anyone but myself.

BRIAN

I do. I think I care, but I'm kinda lazy.

DEVON

I care, I do, but I can't... do anything.

BOB

I could... I could do all kinds of things.

BRIAN

You'd have to nag the shit outta me, but I'd do it eventually.

TIM

I'm not saying I wouldn't help out, of course I would, but I'll make sure you realize what a huge fucking favor I'm doing, because I'm a nice guy and that's what nice guys do.

BOB

I'd enjoy it. I'd go out of my way and, but then I would make you feel obliged to return the favor somehow and in fact, I would expect it. Naturally.

BRIAN

She doesn't need help. She needs a good time.

MADELYN

Uh, I'm kinda busy right now. Can I call you later?

ALL EXCEPT MYSETERY MAN

Sure.

MADELYN

Great. I'll talk to you later okay?

ALL EXCEPT MYSTERY MAN

Okay.

(They all exit.)

DEVON

Sunday-

BRIAN

Thursday-

TIM

Wednesday-

BOB

Tuesday.

(The men with names have left.)

MADELYN

Okay, I gotta go now.

MADELYN looks at the MYSTERY MAN. He looks at her and then looks front. She looks front.

CHEERLEADER

Gooooo Girl!

Work out!

Eat right!

Look good!

Iiiiit matters!

Dye your greys,

Shave your legs,

Get a Brazilian

To win a Brazilian.

Be attractive!

B! E! Attractive!

B. E... A. T.T... R. A. C.T. I. V. E.

Attractive!

B! E! Attractive!

SCENE TWO: Found

The two screens flash, and get borders that would indicate a live chat on a computer.

When MADELYN and the MYSTERY MAN speak, colors appear on the screen where the text would normally be. They colors should range throughout the spectrum and be abstract representations of their emotional states, but there should not be any images. The colors should be a complement and amplification of the scene, but not a distraction.

Is it you?

MADELYN

Yes.

MYSTERY MAN

Strange.

MADELYN

I can't believe you remember me.

MYSTERY MAN

How could I forget?

MADELYN

You... I don't know. You uh... you... anyway... I've always thought of you.

MYSTERY MAN

Really?

MADELYN

Well, yes.

MYSTERY MAN

I wanted to find you before now, but I heard that you...

MADELYN

Yeah.

MYSTERY MAN

So how are you?

(Pause.)

MADELYN

It's been a rough year. I don't recommend getting divorced if you can avoid it. It's not a solution. It's a last resort to happiness. But I'm better now. It's for the best. You?

MYSTERY MAN

The business is taking off. It took off a while ago actually. I'm just trying to stay on the ride.

MADELYN

That's good.

MYSTERY MAN

I saw you on some website. You modeling again?

MADELYN

No. Booker. I book models. My boss put the picture up. I think half the reason I got hired was because I did that stupid Evian launch.

MYSTERY MAN

What?

MADELYN

The first time I stayed in London I did this really big product launch for a new bottle design for Evian. There were five of us in white bikinis hanging off the Tower Bridge in the photo shoot. When I showed up for my interview last year my boss recognized me immediately. Apparently she has a thing for white bikinis.

MYSTERY MAN

How long do you think you wanna stay in the industry?

MADELYN

I don't know. I've been thinking about applying for my PhD.

MYSTERY MAN

You were into ESP and paranormal-

MADELYN

Parapsychology.

MYSTERY MAN

Yeah.

MADELYN

I can't really study it here. I mean a few classes here or there but not much. The Kloestler Parapsychology Unit in Edinburgh's the only place in the world where you can do a full PhD. They have a great program.

MYSTERY MAN

Really?

MADELYN

I want to study, specifically, the phenomenon of how expectation and desire affect the outcome of experimentation. Not just the placebo effect.

MYSTERY MAN

That's the sugar pill theory right?

MADELYN

Yes, but the implications are massive. What else is the mind capable of, and how does that latent ability affect science itself? How does our own emotional energy output influence the various particles involved in a given experiment?

MYSTERY MAN

I'm following you I think, but it seems a bit of a stretch from a sugar pill to altering chemical structures in Petri dishes.

MADELYN

Aren't we made of chemicals? Don't we affect our own bodies with thought? How can we use that consciously? Harness it. Just think of what we could do with stem cells! They're the most easily influenced component of life. The possibilities...

MYSTERY MAN

And you're booking models?

MADELYN

(Laughs.)

Sure, one pays. The other, gets laughed out of scientific communities in America.

MYSTERY MAN

But you're okay?

MADELYN

Yeah.

MYSTERY MAN

It's good to talk to you.

MADELYN

(Turns to look at the MYSTERY MAN.)

You too.

Are you...?
MYSTERY MAN

What?
MADELYN
(Turns away from MYSTERY MAN.)

Are you going out a lot? Now that you can?
MYSTERY MAN

Yes. I have a few...
MADELYN

That's good. You should go out.
MYSTERY MAN

I know. I'm happy.
MADELYN

Nothing too serious.
MYSTERY MAN

What?
MADELYN

Nobody too serious?
MYSTERY MAN

No. I don't... I'm not ready for that... not now.
MADELYN

I'm sure you're making these wanna be suitors jump through hoops just to have a conversation with you, and so they should.
MYSTERY MAN

Well they're not you, if that's what you wanted to hear.
MADELYN

Good. And yes that is exactly what I wanted to hear. Of course now I don't believe you. You're one of kind Madelyn.
MYSTERY MAN
(Laughs.)

MADELYN goes to speak but doesn't.

I should let you go. I'd like to keep in touch.
MYSTERY MAN CONT.

MADELYN

Me too.

The screens darken.

CHEERLEADER

Why did you go looking for him? What's the point? You can't waste time talking to him. You have to Be Decisive!

B. E. Decisive.

B. E... D.E.C... I.S.S... I. E.V.E.

Dec-

Wait, that's not how you spell decisive. Fuck!

CHEERLEADER sits.

SCENE THREE: Posing

DEVON enters carrying and easel and charcoals.

You ready?

DEVON

(He begins to set up to draw her.)

Mm Hm.

MADELYN

(Stands up, and faces the MYSTERY MAN. She takes off her robe. She turns around and lies down on the fainting couch. Her pose is sensual and artful. It is not in the least bit obscene.)

That's good.

DEVON

(He starts to draw furiously.)

Are you comfortable?

BRIAN enters and stands upstage left.

Yes.

MADELYN

I...

DEVON

(He starts to focus and becomes quiet while he studies her, and paints her.)

Are you thinking about him?

BRIAN

Who?

MADELYN

Him.

BRIAN

(Looks at MYSTERY MAN.)

MADELYN turns her head to look at MYSTERY MAN, his screen lights up and he looks at her. He reaches and arm out to her. Her screen lights up. Then he looks away and lowers his arm. Both of their screens go dark. MADELYN takes a blanket off the fainting couch, and covers herself with it.

You cold?

DEVON

MADELYN
(To DEVON.)

Yes.

DEVON

I'm sorry, I should've brought a heater to the studio. You can keep the blanket on. I'll work on your face today. You look beautiful today. Are you alright?

MADELYN

I'm fine.

DEVON resumes drawing.

BRIAN

You were thinking of him.

MADELYN

Yes.

BRAIN

I knew it.

MADELYN
(Turns to BRIAN.)

Not all the time. Sometimes, I think of you.

BRIAN

Sometimes?

MADELYN

Yes.

DEVON

Could you face forward again?

MADELYN

Sorry.

DEVON
(Crosses to her.)

Do you mind?

MADELYN

No.

DEVON positions her body. He doesn't take the blanket off or expose her in any way, but just adjusts her limbs and face. He stares into her eyes. She kisses him and wraps her arms around his neck. He kisses her back. They hold an embrace and then break away.

CHEERLEADER

Score for the Artist! Bang Bang Choo Choo train let me see you do your thing So get it, get it, get it now you got it, got it, got it, Uh!! and lose control Uh!! and let it roll.
(Toe touch herkie or a high kick at the end)

DEVON goes back to his drawing. BRIAN exits.

CHEERLEADER

Gooooo Fuck!
Taste good,
Smell good,
Feel good.
Beeeee a good fuck,
A great fuck,
The best fuck.
Gooooooo Fuck!

MADELYN

I can't stay tonight.

DEVON

No. Stay.

MADELYN

I can't.

DEVON leaves his painting and wraps his arms around her.

DEVON

Stay.

MADELYN

Not tonight.

DEVON

Fine. (Pouting.)
(He crosses back to his painting, but doesn't pick up a pencil.)

Don't pout. MADELYN

I wasn't pouting. DEVON

Yes you were. Don't pout. MADELYN

It's fine. DEVON

Okay. I'm gonna go. MADELYN

Okay. DEVON

MADELYN gets up with the blanket wrapped around her. She picks up her robe and exits.

DEVON looks at the drawing, checks to see if she is watching, she isn't. He pokes a hole in the center of it with his pencil.

SCENE FOUR: Gotta Eat

TIM enters. He sits on the couch facing the audience. DEVON turns his easel down to make it a table. DEVON now becomes the waiter to TIM and MADELYN. She enters wearing a sexy skirt and top with heels. She crosses to behind TIM and the couch. TIM doesn't see her or hear her.

MADELYN

Let's see the options are...
Eggs, again
Pataks Organic frozen curry, again
Cheese n bread, again
Fast food, again
Three Mich ultras, again
Cheap wine, again
Cleaning the dishes, again
Leaving them dirty in the sink, again
Surfing the internet for Medical schools, again
Looking for one that doesn't snub their nose at psychokinesis, again
Scanning the reviews of all the newest research projects, again
Being disappointed how they tear down any theory they can't prove, again and again
Being shocked how they approve any new dangerous drug, again and again

MYSTERY MAN'S screen lights up and then goes dim.

MADELYN CONT.

Re-reading old emails, again
Cleaning up the dirty clothes off the floor, again
Stepping over them, again
Getting four hours of sleep, again
Waking up tired for no good reason, again
Going to work to sell women's bodies, again
Putting on make up for my job and not myself, again
Or?...

(Crosses downstage.)

TIM
(Sees MADELYN and gets up.)

Wow! You look great.

MADELYN and TIM kiss on the cheek hello.

CHEERLEADER

Gooooo Girl!
Work out!
Go to the gym!
Eat right!
Look good!
Iiiiit matters!
Be attractive!
B! E! Attractive!

MADELYN

Thank you.

(She joins him on the couch.)

TIM

(He looks at her for a minute, and then says.)

So do you wanna get outta here?

MADELYN

Sure.

TIM

Check please.

DEVON AS WAITER

(Brings them a restaurant check in a little black folder.)

So, how was everything this evening?

TIM takes the bill and puts his credit card in it.

MADELYN

Good. It was really good.

DEVON AS WAITER

I'll go run the card for you.

TIM

Thanks.

DEVON AS WAITER exits.

TIM CONT.

What was with that waiter?

MADELYN

What?

He gave me weird look. TIM

Did he? MADELYN

Yeah. He must be jealous. TIM

I didn't think he was weird. MADELYN

He was, trust me. TIM

DEVON AS WAITER comes back with the check.
He hands it to TIM.

So this is my signature. TIM CONT.
(He signs it.)

(He shows the bill to MADELYN.)

MADELYN looks at it politely. She doesn't hear
the next exchange between TIM and the WAITER.

Nice one dick head. DEVON AS WAITER
(To TIM.)

Look buddy, I fuckin swear to god- TIM
(To WAITER.)

What? You swear that you'll show her your signature again next time. DEVON AS WAITER

Right. So... MADELYN

Here you go. Thank you. TIM
(Hands WAITER the check.)

MADELYN

Thank you. (To WAITER.)

Thanks for dinner. (To TIM.)

Sure, sure. No, problem. TIM

should MADELYN also doesn't hear the exchange between the CHEERLEADER and TIM. She be putting on lipstick.

Hey tight ass! CHEERLEADER

What? TIM

How much do you think she paid for that outfit she's wearing? How much do you think she paid for those shoes? Her hair? Her nails? Her make up? Her bikini wax alone was- CHEERLEADER

I get it! TIM

Yeah, well paying for dinner is the least, the very least you can do buddy. CHEERLEADER

I always pay. TIM

Yeah, sure. After you complain about how expensive it is. DEVON AS WAITER

Tight ass! DEVON AS WAITER and CHEERLEADER

I have to get up early tomorrow. DEVON AS WAITER walks off stage with the bill.

You want dessert? MADELYN

MADELYN

No, I had enough to eat. I mean I was pretty hungry, but those two orders of bread you got before the food arrived kinda filled me up so I'm pretty good.

TIM

You look really amazing tonight. I love those shoes.

MADELYN

I thought you might.

TIM

I'm sure that waiter was just jealous. I know I would be.

MADELYN

You're sweet.

TIM

It's cold out. I'll go get the car. You wait here.

MADELYN

Okay.

TIM

(Kisses her quickly on the cheek.)

Don't go anywhere. I'll be back in a sec.

MADELYN

Okay.

TIM exits. MYSTERY MAN'S screen lights up. MADELYN looks at MYSTERY MAN. He doesn't look at her. She looks away, and buries her head in her hands. After she looks away, her screen lights up, and MYSTERY MAN looks at her.

CHEERLEADER

Open out the barn yard and kick out the hay!! We're the best team in the USA! Turn on the radio and what do u hear? Elvis presley doin a cheer! Firecracker, firecracker boom boom boom. Firecracker, firecracker boom boom boom. The boys got the muscles!!! The teachers got the brains !! The girls got the sexy legs and we won the game!!!!!!!!!!

BRIAN enters.

BRIAN

Ditch that asshole.

MADELYN

He's not a complete wanker.

BRIAN

Yeah he is. He's a dick.

MADELYN

And you're not?

BRIAN

No, I'm not. Shit. Are you gonna come and hear my band play later?

MADELYN

How many groupies are gonna be there tonight?

BRIAN

Look, that's the business. You know that. I have to network. Shit, it's not like you don't have other guys hanging around.

MADELYN

I don't bring them with me to hear you play.

BRIAN

Just forget it.

TIM enters. He doesn't see BRIAN.

TIM

I'm right outside.

MADELYN

I...

(She looks at the MYSTERY MAN. He doesn't look at her.)

CHEERLEADER

Dribble it, pass it, we want a basket!

TIM

Did I tell you how beautiful you look tonight?

MADELYN

Yes, you did, but thank you.

TIM

Let's go.

Okay.

MADELYN

MADELYN takes his arm and they walk as if to exit. TIM exits and MADELYN stops. BRIAN takes her arm.

SCENE FIVE: Sex

BRIAN takes MADELYN downstage. They make out throughout the dialog, but in a slow, deliberate, highly stylized, choreographed way. They never undress or kiss. The movement is representational.

BRIAN

No talking. No bullshit, just this. Sweat, hands, sex.

MADELYN

Yes. No lies. No words. Just flesh.

BRIAN

Turn off your brain.

MADELYN

Perfect silence.

BRIAN

This isn't love.

MADELYN

I know.

BRIAN

This is everything.

MADELYN

Right now.

BRIAN

Everything, right now.

MADELYN

No need to think.

BRIAN

You okay? Am I hurting you?

MADELYN

Yes, don't stop.

BRIAN

Yes?

Yes. Don't stop.

MADELYN

(She climaxes. It should not be played over the top, but in the same style as the rest of the choreography in the scene.)

Now?

BRIAN

Not yet.

MADELYN

Now?

BRIAN

Yes, now.

MADELYN

BRIAN freezes, his orgasm is a nonevent.
MADELYN freezes.

Did you?

MADELYN CONT.

Yeah. Did you?

BRIAN

Yeah. Before you.

MADELYN

So... ?

BRIAN

I'll see you.

MADELYN
(Pause.)

Call me.

BRIAN

I will.

MADELYN

It was good seeing you again.

BRIAN

Yeah. MADELYN

I should get going. BRIAN

Yeah. MADELYN

Bye. BRIAN
(Kisses her.)

See ya. MADELYN

BRAIN exits.

WHORE! SLUT! You don't even like him. CHEERLEADER

Shut up! MADELYN

CHEERLEADER
WHORE! At least make him buy you dinner. At least make him take you out. At least wait till the second date. At least don't suck his cock. At least don't let him put his finger in your ass. He used you.

I used him. I wanted it. I- MADELYN

CHEERLEADER
He's a man. You're not. Wake up! The rules are he used you, and you're a whore. Don't tell anybody what you did. Don't tell anybody what you let him do. He better not tell anybody. Keep it quiet. If they knew you were a whore, they'd never respect you. They'd never take you seriously. Nobody wants a whore.

I AM NOT A WHORE! Are you from the 1950's? Go away. MADELYN

Believe me, if I could, I would. CHEERLEADER

CHEERLEADER sits.

MADELYN
(Looks at MYSTERY MAN.)

Where are you?

The screens light up in colors inside the instant chat computer frames.

I'm right here.

MYSTERY MAN

You're never here.

MADELYN

I'm always here.

MYSTERY MAN

Yes, I suppose you are.

MADELYN

MYSTERY MAN
I think about you all the time. I miss you. I haven't seen you in years, but I find myself missing you. Is that strange?

MADELYN
I don't know you, and yet I feel like I do. Like we share some kind of fundamental understanding. The first time I looked into your eyes it was like I was recognizing you, not meeting you.

MYSTERY MAN
I just felt completely lucky that you saw me at all. I'd heard about you. I was told we were meeting up with some friends, but I didn't know you... I had no idea. I want to know everything about you. I wanna know your history, what you think, what you feel, what are you afraid of?

More than anything?

MADELYN

Yes.

MYSTERY MAN

MADELYN
I fear for myself, the world. The same fears... mediocrity, surrender to escapism, indifference, and falling away from the effort to create change by descending into a

hopeless, self serving, chaos... I think most humans are endowed with the kindling to transcend the rampant hypocrisy and cruelty in the world. It's the spark that's missing.

MYSTERY MAN

I can only give you a small part of me, but I want you to know that you will get every fucking ounce of that small part... I know it's not enough, not near what you deserve, and certainly doesn't do you justice but there's no use trying to say it any other way.

MADELYN

I'm completely in love with you.

MYSTERY MAN

Since when?

MADELYN

Since forever, I think.

MYSTERY MAN

Why now?

MADELYN

I just realized... I can't deny it any longer.

MYSTERY MAN

I've loved you for fifteen years. Will you come to me?

MADELYN

I can't. Can you?

MYSTERY MAN

You know I can't.

MADELYN

(She looks away, very hurt.)

I know.

The screens darken.

CHEERLEADER

Push um back, push um back, waaaaaaay back. Push um back, push um way, way a-way back!

SCENE SIX: Laugh or Cry

BOB enters.

Hey gorgeous, how are you?

BOB

Okay. You?

MADELYN

I'm alright. Been busy with the campaign. It's going well.

BOB

I'm sorry I couldn't make it to yo-

MADELYN

(She starts crying.)

I'm sorry.

BOB

(Puts his arm around her shoulder.)

It's okay.

(Little pause.)

You wanna talk?

MADELYN

It's hard.

BOB

I know. I've been through it. You think you're fine, and then it hits you.

MADELYN

That too, but... Other stuff.

BOB

I'm here for ya, you know.

MADELYN

I know. You're a good friend, Bob. It's good to have someone to talk to.

BOB

(Gives her space.)

You tell a good story. Why don't you tell me a story? A funny story. It'll cheer you up.

MADELYN

Sure. I'll tell you about the worst date I've been on since the separation.

BOB

I don't know if I want to hear that.

MADELYN

Really?

BOB

No, go ahead. I'm just... never mind.

MADELYN

What?

BOB

Tell me the story.

MADELYN

Okay. So, he asks me out. He makes a big deal about taking me somewhere nice.

TIM enters and addressed the audience.

TIM

So, where have these other guys been taking you?

MADELYN

(Addresses the audience.)

Well, one took me to Rosa's, and the other took me to The Bistro.

TIM

Alright, I guess they know what they're doing. You should let *me* take you to-

MADELYN

(To BOB.)

Of course, he wouldn't think that *I* know what I'm doing.

BOB

Amateur.

(He takes out a handkerchief and hands it to MADELYN.)

MADELYN

(She takes the hanky and blows her nose subtly.)

Thanks. Remember that bad snow storm we had this winter?

BOB

Yeah. Half the city lost power. Nightmare.

MADELYN

Right! So, it was that night. He comes to pick me up wearing a zippy windbreaker. After making this big deal about taking me somewhere nice. I'm all dressed up, and he's got on a plaid button down and a zippy windbreaker. Keep in mind, earlier that day-

TIM

(On his cell phone addressing the audience.)

Yeah, so I've been looking at this house. They want 1.4, but I'm like 'Who do think you're talking to?' I can easily afford it, but it's not worth more than 1.2. I mean really, even to ask a million for that neighborhood is a lot.

(Hangs up, and then throughout MADELYN'S speech, he takes pictures of himself using his phone. He checks how he looks adjusting his hair, and then taking another picture. TIM does this until he speaks again.)

MADELYN

(To BOB.)

Okay, so you would think he could spend a few hundred on a wool coat. I'm not saying it needs to be Calvin Klein, but that was the first sign. Then, he didn't even mention anything about how I looked. I put in all this effort because he insisted on taking me somewhere nice, and I go ahead and buy a new dress which I totally can't afford, and then he shows up in a fucking zippy windbreaker and plaid button down with snaps for buttons.

BOB

Hey, I wear windbreakers.

MADELYN

It gets worse.

BOB

Of course it does.

MADELYN

So we're having sex.

BOB

You had sex with him?

MADELYN

I didn't have the benefit of hindsight. We'd been out a couple times for lunch, and coffee. Dinner was great, nice conversation... Well, as I look back on it... the main thing we had in common was-

TIM

My divorce went through last year.

MADELYN

It's been six months and mine's still processing. I went to pick up some of the paperwork last week. It's a mountain.

TIM

It sucks, doesn't it?

MADELYN

Yeah.

TIM

How long were you together?

MADELYN

Six years, and married for the last two.

TIM

If it's any consolation you beat me by a year.

MADELYN

Really?

TIM

Yeah. She cheated on me.

MADELYN

That's awful. After a year of marriage?

(To BOB.)

That should've been a tip off, but I was feeling sorry for him. I didn't consider that maybe she had a reason to cheat. You know, maybe she needed to go elsewhere. I didn't consider that because I didn't cheat. Even at the end, even when I wanted to.

TIM

She was a bitch. She sat across the table from the guy while the three of us had dinner together.

MADELYN

I felt sorry for him. Two bottles of wine, and a Frangelico later I'm thinking he would be a lot cuter without the plaid shirt.

TIM

Jesus. It's a designer shirt. It's not like I wore a lumberjack flannel.

MADELYN

So we're having sex, and he starts with the-

TIM

(Turns to face her MADELYN.)

Oh you like that, don't you?

MADELYN

(Pause.)

Um, I guess?

TIM

(Accusing.)

Yeah, you like that.

MADELYN

(To BOB.)

I don't really know what to say. I mean, I should be liking it right? If I don't like it, then he's doing something wrong. But he says it like-

TIM

You like that, don't you? You like that cuz you're a dirty slut. Only slutty girls like to fuck. And you're a dirty bad slut.

MADELYN

I didn't respond. I just kinda looked at him

(Looks directly at TIM giving him a knock it off look.)

So he stopped with chitchat, thank god. But then he-

TIM

(While, doing pelvic thrusts in the air turns his head to his downstage shoulder as if there is a small person sitting there and gives a deep low laugh that sounds like Satan.)

Ha ha ha. Ha ha.

TIM continues to thrust in the air, and faces MADELYN again.

BOB

(Laughs.)

What?

TIM

(Turns his head and does it again.)

Ha ha ha. Ha ha.

MADELYN

At first I think, 'no he didn't just laugh like Satan did he?' I mean, what the hell I've had a few drinks, the fan is on maybe he didn't just-

TIM

(Still thrusting does it again, but one less ha.)

Ha ha. Ha ha.

MADELYN

He did it again! I swear it was like he was having a private joke with someone else. It was like he was having a conversation and a joke with someone else.

TIM

(Head turned to the side and doing hip thrusts.)

Ha ha, look at me. I'm having sex right now. Ha ha. Look at me fuck this girl. Ha ha ha.

MADELYN

So I can't just let that go. I can't. So I say,
(Looks at TIM.)

'Hey what'cha laughin at?'

TIM

(Snaps out of his daze and looks at her.)

What? Nothing, nothing.

(He freezes for a minute, but then starts thrusting again. A few seconds later he laughs again quietly with his head turned.)

Ha ha. Ha.

MADELYN

(Addresses the audience.)

WHAT'S SO FUNNY!?

TIM

(He stops thrusting.)

What?

MADELYN

(To TIM.)

What's so funny?

TIM
Nothing.

BOB
I can't believe you slept with him.

MADELYN
(To BOB.)
Yeah, well the worst part was how he left.

BOB
Why did you sleep with him?

MADELYN
I didn't know he was gonna have a private conversation with himself during sex, until we were having sex. I didn't know he was gonna get all weird in bed until we were in bed.

BOB
Okay, okay.

MADELYN
So then, after it's all done. And bear in mind I'm omitting some details.

BOB
Like what?

TIM
(Addresses the audience.)
So she hands me this condom. First of all, I hate condoms. Then, it's really tight.
(To MADELYN.)
Could your condoms get any smaller?

MADELYN
(To TIM.)
You gonna be alright?

TIM
Yeah, I'll make it work.

MADELYN
(Addresses the audience.)
The thing is, unless you're sure, I mean absolutely positive that you've got one of the biggest dicks on the planet you don't bring up something like that. You don't draw attention to it. I mean, I don't care. As far as I'm concerned there are only two sizes really. Adequate, and inadequate. He was adequate, but he wasn't like... Well he didn't

need to bring it up that's all. If you're really that big, I'll fucking bring up. I'll say, 'lets take it slow, or be careful with me.' I'm not a big girl, so I don't need a big guy. In fact I don't like it when they're too big. It feels like I'm getting fucked form across the room. I would rather be able to kiss each other, than have to shout 'HOOOOOOW'S IT GOOOOOOOOING FOR YOUUUUU?'

BOB
(Laughs.)

You're crazy.

TIM
(TIM exits.)

Bitch.

MADELYN

He ran out of the place like it was on fire. I hadn't even gotten out of bed to take the 'after sex piss', and he was gone. I get out of bed and look around my apartment thinking he was there somewhere, but he was gone. I'm wandering from room to room like, are you fucking kidding me? It was like he did this.

(Pantomimes taking a pair of pants off of the floor, and puts both feet/legs in at the same time while hopping and pulling the imaginary pants up a bit at a time. All the while she is hopping to exit. Once the pants are they're all the way up. She looks back behind her without stopping and continues by running away. She stops just short of exiting.)

I swear to god.

BOB Laughs.

MADELYN CONT.
(Walks back over to BOB.)

So I call him.

BOB

No!

MADELYN

Yeah. I pick up my phone and call him. I say 'uh hello?'

TIM
(Pokes his head out from the wing.)

Hello?

MADELYN

Dude. Did you, just, fucking, bail?

TIM
Uh?
MADELYN
What the hell?
TIM
I thought I would avoid any awkwardness tomorrow.

MADELYN
So you created some tonight?

TIM
I-
MADELYN
Why would there be any awkwardness? Neither of us is ready for anything serious. We both just went through a divorce. But more than that, we're both adults. Right?

TIM
Uh...
(TIM exits.)

MADELYN
I don't know Bob.

BOB
I don't know why you waste your time on idiots.

MADELYN
I'll tell you why, cuz that's all there are.

BOB
Why do have to have sex with them?

MADELYN
I spent the past ten years in committed relationships. I was married. I went to the mountain, and you know what? I don't really know if it was worth it. I haven't figured that out yet, but I'm tired now. I'm hungry for my own life, and I'm horny. I'm not a teenager sitting around waiting for somebody to say I love you so I can be a 'good girl'. In whose eyes? You don't need love to enjoy sex. It feels good for its own sake. It's healthy. It's just a handshake with different parts of the body. It means what you make it mean. Sometimes, yes it can be spiritual and uplifting, but honestly Bob, at the time I was thinking, 'well I could get laid tonight or I could *not* get laid tonight'. Really. I

thought, 'I can't condemn the guy for wearing a windbreaker'. That would be pretty shallow of me to bar the guy for a fashion faux pas.

BOB

You shouldn't-

MADELYN

What?

BOB

You don't have to sleep with them.

MADELYN

I don't have to do anything. If I say yes it's because I want to. I'm not gonna say no to something I do in the privacy of my own bedroom because I'm afraid of what saying yes means to small minded, tight-assed, puritanical prudes who are stuck in the dark ages.

BOB

But-

MADELYN

What? Are you one of those, Bob?

BOB

I... Are you gonna make it to my rally next month? There's a pancake breakfast.

MADELYN

Thank you, yes. Will there be blueberry pancakes?

BOB

We can always bring some blueberries.

MADELYN

I'll be there. Don't worry I'll do the cardigan and pearls look.

BOB

You always look great. Whatever you wear, you look great, but yes something... conservative might make you feel more comfortable.

MADELYN

It would certainly help me feel comfortable fitting in.

BOB

I didn't mean it like that.

MADELYN

I know how the world works Bob. I would never wear this to one of your-

BOB

I know that. I wouldn't care if you did either. You need to relax a little Madelyn.

MADELYN

(Change of tone.)

You're right. Yeah. Hey, thanks for cheering me up.

BOB

(Goes to kiss her, but stops himself.)

I'll see you this weekend.

(He walks offstage.)

CHEERLEADER

Be aggressive, B. E. Aggressive. B. E... A. G.G... R. E. S.S-

MADELYN

Shut up!!

CHEERLEADER

(Gasps very shocked.)

(She sits.)

MADELYN

I've had just about enough of your shit.

CHEERLEADER

Clearly you haven't.

MADELYN

Can't I have a friend?

CHEERLEADER

No. Not if he's a man. Not if he wants to be with you.

MADELYN

So now if I don't sleep with him I'm leading him on?

CHEERLEADER

Do you seriously pretend that you can just keep him as a friend? You think you can let him take you to lunch, and listen to your stories, and listen to his and he won't eventually expect you to get involved with him? I mean really, what does he want from you? You can't help his career. You aren't that witty.

MADELYN

I'm the one person who doesn't want anything from him. I don't ask him for favors or backroom deals. We can just be friends.

CHEERLEADER

Sure you can.

MADELYN

What?

CHEERLEADER

No, no. Go ahead.

MADELYN

What do you want from me?

CHEERLEADER

I'm helping you.

MADELYN

Really? Well then, do me big favor and shut the hell up on my date tonight.

CHEERLEADER

Oh, him?

(Looks at MYSTERY MAN)

MADELYN

Yeah, him. You remember him?

CHEERLEADER

How could I forget? You never forgave me for that one.

MADELYN

So then do us both a favor and stay out of it this time!

CHEERLEADER sits facing upstage.

SCENE SEVEN: Reunion

The screens brighten, but this time the colors are muted and there is no instant chat computer outline. Only when MADELYN and MYSTERY MAN touch do the lights come up to full brightness.

Are you coming?
MADELYN

Yes.
MYSTERY MAN

(Crosses to MADELYN.)

MADELYN goes to kiss his cheek hello, and he goes to kiss her mouth. It's awkward, for a brief second and they pull away. She reaches up a hand and caresses his cheek and then leans in and kisses his mouth and he kisses her back. Both closed mouth but passionate and sweet. They separate gently.

Hi.
MADELYN

Hi.
MYSTERY MAN

Pause.

You... You look...
MYSTERY MAN

MADELYN looks down shyly.

Thank you... It's good to see you. I...
MADELYN

Are you nervous?
MYSTERY MAN

A bit. You?
MADELYN

More excited than nervous.

MYSTERY MAN

I could use a drink.

MADELYN

Yeah... Let's get a drink.

MYSTERY MAN

Thank God.

MADELYN

They go and sit down opposite each other and BRIAN comes in wearing an apron and carrying the easel to use as the table top.

What can I get for you?

BRIAN AS WAITER

Belvedere Martini, straight up with olives.

MYSTERY MAN

Belvedere Pomarancza Cosmo with lots of fresh of lime. Enough lime to make it pale pink.

MADELYN

I don't know if we have Pom... erancha?

BRIAN AS WAITER

Mandarin is fine.

MADELYN

Anything else?

BRIAN AS WAITER

MYSTERY MAN looks at BRIAN for the first time. He does so as if to say... Are you fucking kidding, get lost! BRIAN exits.

How was your... thing?

MADELYN

Good. It went well. I didn't think it would. We had a plan, but then at the last minute they called and changed the agenda so then we had to adjust our plans, but it went well. They were really happy... How was the drive?

MYSTERY MAN

Quick.

MADELYN

How long did it take you?

MYSTERY MAN

I was speeding.

MADELYN

95?

MYSTERY MAN

Not usually, but... I think I made it in about an hour. What time does your flight leave tomorrow?

MADELYN

At eleven. I get back home around four.

MYSTERY MAN

BRIAN AS WAITER returns with the drinks.

Martini.

BRIAN AS WAITER
(He sets it in front of the MYSTERY MAN.)

(He sets it in front of MADELYN.)

Cosmo. Will you be staying for dinner?

MADELYN and MYSTERY MAN look at one another. Neither of them looks away, but the MYSTERY MAN answers BRIAN.

MYSTERY MAN

Yes. We'll need a minute to look at the menu.

BRIAN AS WAITER

I'll come back.

MADELYN

Thank you.

BRIAN AS WAITER leaves. There is a pause.

MYSTERY MAN

I assumed you still eat.

MADELYN

Never stopped.

MYSTERY MAN

I'm not one to hand out bullshit compliments right and left, but you do look stunning.

MADELYN

Thank you.

MYSTERY MAN

What would you like to have?

MADELYN takes a big sip of her cocktail.

MADELYN

That's perfect.

MYSTERY MAN

(Takes a sip also.)

I had one before you got here.

MADELYN

I tasted it on your lips.

MYSTERY MAN

You hungry?

MADELYN

Starving. Actually, if I don't eat I'll be completely legless after this.
(Takes another big sip.)

MYSTERY MAN

Legless?

MADELYN

Legless. Drunk.

MYSTERY MAN

That an English saying?

MADELYN

I suppose. I forget anymore which sayings are from here and which are from there. I guess legless is from there.

MYSTERY MAN

It makes sense. I mean those sayings seem pretty obvious. Clear.

MADELYN

Yeah... God, I'm... Look, I... I have to say something. There's a pink elephant in the room.

MYSTERY MAN

There is?

MADELYN

Yes. We both know what it is, and neither one of us wants to talk abo-

MYSTERY MAN

I can talk about it.

MADELYN

I don't want to. I don't... I mean I don't want to talk about it right now. Maybe... I mean I'm sure there will come a time when I will want to talk about it, but not... not now.

MYSTERY MAN

Well, whenever you want to talk about it, we can talk about it.

MADELYN

There is something else I want to talk about though.

MYSTERY MAN

Okay.

MADELYN

I heard, I mean I was told... that when we... that you and your girlfriend broke up... back then. After my separation last year I was talking to Scott. Well anyway, I asked about you. It'd been years, and there was that flood, and I was worried. Of course we've never lived near each other so it's not like I would just run into you. He told me that you... Well I said, 'I knew it, I knew you would.' And he said... He called me an idiot.

(Looks at CHEERLEADER and back to MYSTERY MAN.)

He said that you left her for me. Back then when we were lovers, years ago. Is that true?

MYSTERY MAN

(Pause.)

Yeah. I broke up with her.

MADELYN

Why didn't you tell me?

MYSTERY MAN

I though you knew.

MADELYN

No. How would I know?

MYSTERY MAN

I was told you didn't want to see me anymore.

MADELYN

So that night when you came back in town... when I saw you at, fuck what was that place? Whatever, when I saw you...

MYSTERY MAN

She had moved out.

MADELYN

Why didn't you tell me?

MYSTERY MAN

I was too late.

MADELYN

It wasn't too late.

MYSTERY MAN

It wasn't?

MADELYN

No.

(Pause. She takes a drink.)

I didn't... The last time we were together alone I wanted to ask you how you felt about me. I wanted to tell you how I felt about you, but... I couldn't. I was scared. I was scared of being vulnerable to you. I couldn't tell you how much... So instead, I asked you about her. Instead of asking you how you felt about me, I asked you about her. I said, 'so tell me about your girlfriend?' I mean I knew that you guys could see other people. I knew it was an open relationship, but she had you first. I didn't know... Anyway, you made it pointedly clear that you didn't want to discuss her with me. You said, 'I'd rather not discuss *her* with *you*'.

MYSTERY MAN

I don't remember that.

MADELYN

I do. It's why... I mean, I took it to mean that she was number one, and I was number two. I was afraid that I was turning into your plaything. I'm not that.

MYSTERY MAN

No, no. Never. I would never think of you like that.

MADELYN

I don't come in second to anybody. I was afraid of being your second choice, so I took mine.

They both take a drink.

MYSTERY MAN

I don't remember that conversation.

MADELYN

You wouldn't. It wasn't... I didn't make it into a big deal. I just didn't see you again... I mean here was this... he was pursuing me, and I was his number one, and I... Why didn't you tell me?

MYSTERY MAN

Because you were with that guy. I thought... You were cavorting with him right in front of me. You said you didn't want to see me. I was *told* you didn't want to see me anymore.

MADELYN

I thought you would never leave her. Was I wrong?

MYSTERY MAN

She wanted me to stop. She wanted me to be committed. She said she couldn't handle an open relationship anymore. I said... I told her I'd met someone... She said 'it's either her or me', and I said...

(Pause.)

She moved out.

MADELYN

So you... ?

MYSTERY MAN

I was... I thought you were in love with him.

MADELYN

No. And you weren't in love with her?

MYSTERY MAN

I chose you.

MADELYN

But then later?

MYSTERY MAN

Yes... She... I couldn't have you so...

MADELYN

And now, here we are... Ten years later.

MYSTERY MAN

More than that.

MADELYN

Really?

MYSTERY MAN

Almost fifteen.

MADELYN

Was it that long? I guess it was. Weird.

MYSTERY MAN

You look the same. You feel the same.

MADELYN

So do you...

They reach their hands across the table and touch in some way.

MYSTERY MAN

Did you think this would happen?

MADELYN

I wanted to see you. I couldn't stop thinking about you. Over the years, you would just pop into my head, and I would let you stay there.

MYSTERY MAN

Did you think we'd be here, like this?

MADELYN

I didn't know... It's a tragedy. I can't believe I never knew.

MYSTERY MAN

I always hoped. Honestly, I was devastated. You know that?

MADELYN
No.

MYSTERY MAN
You destroyed me.

MADELYN
Why didn't you come after me?

MYSTERY MAN
Same reason you wouldn't see me I suppose.

MADELYN
You were afraid?

MYSTERY MAN
I am afraid.

MADELYN
I won't ask why.

MYSTERY MAN
I don't regret my life. We make choices, right or wrong and they shape our life. But... if either one of us would've done it differently...

MADELYN
We're too much alike.

MYSTERY MAN
True.

MADELYN
I've compared every man I've ever known to you. You set the bar. The first night we were together you said something to me. We were in bed, and you said, 'If there's anything I do that you don't like, just tell me and I'll stop.' At moment you gave me permission to like everything you did. You took away any judgment.

MYSTERY MAN
I'm surprised you had judgments.

MADELYN
No, I didn't really. But I guess, since then I haven't run across anyone like you. I feel like you understand me. Despite the obvious colossal fuck up where we both ran away from each other like kindergartners.

MYSTERY MAN

(Laughs.)

God you're funny.

MADELYN

Only on accident.

MYSTERY MAN

You have a great way of being self-deprecating and arrogant at the same time.

MADELYN
(Sarcastically.)

Thanks.

MYSTERY MAN

I love it. Everything about you.

MADELYN

When did you decide you wanted to be with me again?

MYSTERY MAN
(Pause.)

There was never a time I didn't want to be with you. I didn't think you wanted to be with me. There was a moment when we were lying on a couch together. I had come in town for the weekend and it was the morning after one those massive nights. Everybody was circling around us in a general hubbub of activity. We were under a blanket and just holding each other. I knew right then... my feelings for you were... I was lost. I still feel the same way.

MADELYN

I love you.

MYSTERY MAN

I love you too.

They stand and embrace. The lights go dim except the screens. The MYSTERY MAN goes back to his chair. MADELYN sits down and begins to

undress.

CHEERLEADER

I didn't say anything.

MADELYN

Don't.

CHEERLEADER

I'm not saying anything.

MADELYN

Don't. When it comes to him, you don't get to say anything. I listened to you tell me I was too young for him, I wasn't good enough, I wasn't pretty enough, I wasn't smart enough. You said he was using me. He wasn't using me.

CHEERLEADER

Not then...

MADELYN

Fuck off!

CHEERLEADER

I'm not saying anything.

MADELYN

I'm not listening to you.

CHEERLEADER

Fine, I'm not saying anything you don't already know.

SCENE EIGHT: Disconnect

The lights change.
MADELYN is posing on the fainting couch.
DEVON is drawing her.

Sorry I was so late.

DEVON

I just... You could've called.

MADELYN

I didn't notice the time.

DEVON

I have to get up early and I still have a lot of work left. I can't sit for much longer.

MADELYN

Let me make it up to you.

DEVON

If I was late, I would've called.

MYSTERY MAN

Not tonight.

MADELYN

DEVON draws and doesn't say anything.

Being with you again was everything I imagined it would be and more. I miss you.

MYSTERY MAN

I fluctuate between masochistic pleasure and fury waiting to hear from you.

MADELYN
(Turns to MYSTERY MAN.)

You don't wait on anyone, and nor should you.

MYSTERY MAN

DEVON

Could you...?

MADELYN

Sorry.

(Turns back to DEVON.)

DEVON

It's good to see you.

MADELYN

(Covers herself a little.)

I... I'm having birthday drinks on Tuesday. I want you to come.

DEVON

I want to do something really special for your birthday. I want to take you out to a really nice place. In a couple of weeks though when my commission comes in.

MADELYN

Okay... but on the actual night I just wanted to have something low key. I mean I have scheduling and then I have to study for at least an hour before I go out. I'm retaking the MCAT in a couple weeks. I did okay the first time, but I know I can do better. I won't be able to head out until after nine, but then I wanted to go out to a pub or something. For a couple drinks at least... with the girls and... You know... just... wanted you to be there.

DEVON

Sure.

MADELYN

Good...

(Long pause.)

Can I see it?

DEVON

No. Not yet.

(Starts packing up.)

I'm just getting back into it... shaking off the dust. It's not... Not yet.

MADELYN

Sure. Yeah fine.

DEVON

I would, I just... I'd just rather not.

MADELYN

No problem. I get it. I understand... Okay so...

DEVON crosses to her to hug her. They hug and he kisses her. She pulls away a little and looks into his eyes. He looks away very quickly and gathers his things.

DEVON

You have to get up, and I have to get going. I...

MADELYN gets up and dresses. She crosses to DEVON, but he is already exiting.

DEVON Cont.
(Exits.)

I have a thing.

MADELYN

Okay. Sure...

CHEERLEADER

Girls are sexy made of Pepsi. Boys are rotten made of cotton. Girls go to college to get more knowledge! Boys go to Jupiter to get more stupider! Girls go to Mars to be super stars! Boys go to school to act like a fool!

MADELYN

Boys go to school to act like a fool.
Boys are nothing but a box of broken tools.

MADELYN and the CHEERLEADER play patty cake with their hands clapping while they speak.

Bursting Balloons at my Birthday party.
Screwing up Double Dutch they aint no smartie
Fast hands
Fast feet
Girls are
Sweet
Sweet
Sweet
Essept.
When they take
Yr man
Steal him away
Like only
Your best
Friend can

CHEERLEADER and MADELYN face off as if to fight.

SCENE NINE: Politics

MADELYN changes into going out clothes. A broken disco ball comes down slowly from the ceiling. It has several missing mirrors and is hanging precariously by a dodgy rope. One light shines on it as it cripplingly limps in a circle casting a dim red light on the audience and stage like a second rate skating rink.

BRIAN enters with a guitar and a bottle of beer. MADELYN sits on the fainting couch.

BRIAN

It was a good set. I need a shower.

MADELYN

You guys were good tonight.

BRIAN

It's a crappy place though.

MADELYN

Yeah.

BRIAN

The pay is good. I don't know how he manages to keep this place busy. It's a shit hole.

MADELYN

CBGB was a shit hole.

BRIAN

It's closed.

MADELYN

True.

BRIAN

How was the pancake breakfast?

MADELYN

Good.

BRIAN

Bullshit.

MADELYN

Okay it sucked.

BRIAN
(Laughs.)

I thought so. Why do you do it? You don't care.

MADELYN

I do care. When I was in England they were talking about making voting compulsory. I can see why. Here, everybody complains about how it is but they don't participate. Then, I go to one of these things, and... it just feels fake. Everybody standing around congratulating themselves for selling out in a corrupted system.

BRIAN

We're all gonna die before we want to, so you may as well have a drink,
(Hands her the bottle.)
a smoke, relax, and have good time. You can't change anything unless you're a career politician or you're a major donor to a party. Otherwise, they don't give a shit.

MADELYN
(Takes a drink.)

You just want to resign to being powerless?

BRIAN

You don't resign to powerless, powerless just is. I can admit that and then I go about the business of not giving a shit so it doesn't effect me. I'm not in a position to change it so it doesn't do me any good to worry about it? Why waste my time?

MADELYN

Out of a sense of social responsibility.

BRIAN

I don't feel that. I'm too worried about trying to pay my own bills.

CHEERLEADER

My side's better than yooour side!

BOB enters. DEVON and TIM enter from the other side of the stage. BOB stands near the CHEERLEADER.

DEVON and TIM

Weeeee, Wiiiiiiilllllll,

(Clap.)

Weeeee, Wiiiiiiilllllll,

(Clap.)

Rock you!

(Stomp, Stomp.)

(Clap.)

MADELYN

There was a lot of yelling given it was just a pancake breakfast of the new city council .
Signs, banners, branding everywhere. Vote Collins, Vote Jenkins, Vote Me not them.

CHEERLEADER and BOB

You're bad!

(Clap.)

You suck!

(Clap.)

We're gunna Fuck you up!

DEVON and TIM

You wish.

(Clap.)

You do.

(Clap.)

But, *we'll beat you!*

BOB and CHEERLEADER

Go liberals!

Go rights!

Go and fight for what is right!

DEVON and TIM

Go Red, White, and Blue.

We'll keep the money we earn, thank you!

BRIAN

I don't know how you stomach it.

MADELYN

(Addresses Audience.)

Sometimes I'm on a date and I think...

(To BRAIN and he can't hear it.)

If you could just shut the fuck up and stop making me loath you by speaking, then I could take you home tonight.

CHEERLEADER and BOB

But we're the winning team!

We're right they're wrong.

They suck,

Don't you wanna fuck?

DEVON and TIM

Not hardly true.
We kick your ass everyday,
You know we do!
You wannnna a winner
Not a belly-itcher.

MADELYN

(To the MEN and CHEERLEADER.)

I'm bored with this. You're boring. Your childish ineffective corrupt behavior is why brain sucking zombie reality tv is compelling to the masses. Watching a faux celebrity picking out a wedding dress is like hard hitting news compared to your rhetoric!

DEVON, TIM, BOB, CHEERLEADER

We are fighting the good fight.
Doing what's right.
Protecting the masses from sins.
And all the while we're full of them!
Be a part of our crew!
Become famous, and wealthy, And righteous too!
Tell the world you care.
Have good hair!
Smile and wave!
Start a new craze!

BRIAN starts to play his guitar. He starts to play
'Pink Houses' (America), by John Mellencamp.

BRIAN

Sing it.

MADELYN

I can't sing.

BRIAN

You don't have to sound good.

MADELYN

(She sings.)

Oh but Aint that America? You and me.

BRIAN Joins her. When he starts to sing BOB,
DEVON, and TIM leave.

BRIAN and MADELYN

*Aint that America. Somethin to see baby. Aint that America, home of the free yeah.
Little pink houses for you and me.*

BRIAN puts down his guitar. MADELYN sits on his lap. They kiss. BRIAN exits with his guitar. The disco ball goes back up.

SCENE TEN: Birthday

MADELYN changes into a conservative party dress. She sits and waits. The MYSTERY MAN looks at her and reaches out a hand to her. Her screen lights up. She looks at MYSTERY MAN and reaches out to him. His screen lights up.

Happy Birthday.

MYSTERY MAN

Thank you.

MADELYN

After a moment they both let their hands drop and face front again. The screens dim slowly.
TIM enters.

Merry Christmas.

TIM

(Kisses her cheek.)

I got you a diamond Cartier. I know you like red, but I thought you could wear the black band with everything.

Thank you.

MADELYN

TIM walks off stage.

Why didn't you just buy her a sewing machine!

CHEERLEADER

Let him go.

MADELYN

BOB enters and crosses to MADELYN.

Happy New Year!

BOB

Happy New Year.

MADELYN

BOB leans in to kiss MADELYN, but she turns her head and he kisses her cheek. BOB starts to exit.

I'll see you later.

MADELYN

Is that a threat or a promise?

BOB
(Stops.)

It's a goodbye salutation.

MADELYN

BOB exits in a huff.

Told you!

CHEERLEADER

I didn't think he'd get mad about it. He seemed so nice.

MADELYN

Some people just don't take rejection well.

CHEERLEADER

I wasn't rejecting him. He's a friend.

MADELYN

BRIAN comes onstage. He brings flowers.

Hi!

MADELYN

I have a gig so I gotta go, but here.

BRIAN
(Gives her the flowers and kisses her cheek.)

Happy Valentines Day.

Thank you.

MADELYN

BRIAN exits.

Hey, so when's your artist getting here?

CHEERLEADER

I don't know. I thought he would be here by now.

MADELYN

CHEERLEADER

Did he call you? I thought he liked you. I thought he wanted to immortalize you. He said he loooooooved spending time with you. He said he loooooooved how you felt in his arms. I mean really, I mean honestly... what the fuck! Does he know you took a step down for him? He's not that cute, and I think he's gay.

MADELYN

He's not gay. You always think the ones I like are gay.

CHEERLEADER

Not always, but I *do* think *he's* gay.

MADELYN

He's not gay.

CHEERLEADER

But, it's not like he has anything... like, he's not, like really attractive or successful, and he's not really smart. He's definitely not funny. It's not like he has really big dick or anything. It's not like, I mean... He was an hour late last week. Over an hour late, and now he doesn't even show up for your birthday. I feel sorry for you.

MADELYN

Would you just shut up!

CHEERLEADER

Are you gonna call him again?

MADELYN

What for?

CHEERLEADER

I don't know.

MADELYN

Me neither.

(Sits down. She looks back at the MYSTERY MAN but he doesn't look at her. She looks forward.)

Devon?

DEVON

(Pokes his head out from the wing.)

Yeah?

MADELYN

Are you coming?

DEVON

I don't know. I uh'... left my bag in this guy's car at lunch, and I have to go and meet him to get it, and then I kinda have to get up early tomorrow.

MADELYN

So you're not coming? For my birthday?

DEVON

Ah'... Probably not.

MADELYN

Well, hey, the girls are shaking their heads. They can't believe you're not coming.

CHEERLEADER
(Shakes her head.)

No, I *can* believe he's not coming.

MADELYN

I'm really disappointed.

DEVON

It's not really a big deal. I'll talk to you tomorrow.
(He exits.)

MADELYN puts her head in her hands, and shakes her head no.

CHEERLEADER
(Crosses to MADELYN.)

Look honey, you need to be smart about this. If you want an asshole like that you're gonna have to get pregnant on "accident". You're not getting any younger. Stop letting these men use you. They will just take and take until you are old and broke, and then they will trade your fat ass in for the next young idiot who will be blown away by a fancy line and a flashy-

MADELYN

Stop it. I don't need to do that and I don't let them use me. I don't want money, or social position, or power. Not from a lover. I want intellectual stimulation, a good fuck, an emotional connection, a shared understanding, without being forced to fulfill demands on my time that I don't have, without having to give up on the dreams I have for myself. I don't want anything more than that.

CHEERLEADER

You're worse than a whore. At least a whore is smart enough not to give it away for free. You give it away.

MADELYN

I don't give it away.

CHEERLEADER

Please! You gave it away to the starving artist, who isn't here for your birthday. You gave it away to the married guy for-

MADELYN slaps the CHEERLEADER.

CHEERLEADER CONT.

Oh' what you think he loves you? That married guy.
(Points to the MYSTERY MAN.)

MYSTERY MAN doesn't respond, but his screen lights up along with MADELYN'S.

CHEERLEADER CONT.

You think he would leave his wife?!

MADELYN

I don't want him to leave his wife. Not now. She can pick up his dirty socks, and be his maid and his nanny. I don't want that. I never wanted that. Even if he left her tomorrow, what could I offer him? I don't have time for what he needs, and I don't want... Not until I'm settled. Not-

CHEERLEADER

Not until you realize it will never happen! What about what you need? You should just cut your losses while yo-

MADELYN

No. You were the one who ruined it for me the first time.

CHEERLEADER

Really? Let's see about that.

(Crosses to the MYSTERY MAN, and gets on his platform.)

Hey honey, I finally got the kids to bed.

(Stands behind him and wraps her arms around his neck.)

You wanna...?

MYSTERY MAN

(Looks forward ignoring her.)

Oh... yeah... I was just watching this thing. It's really good.

Really? What is it?
CHEERLEADER
(She sits on his lap.)

It's a... about beetles.
MYSTERY MAN

The Beatles?
CHEERLEADER

No, just beetles.
MYSTERY MAN

Sweetheart, I was thinking we should go on a skiing trip next week. Just take the kids out of school for two days. If we leave Wednesday afternoon and come back Sunday night we can have three full days on the mountain. I already checked, and the sitter can come with us... Don't you think that would be fun?
CHEERLEADER

Yeah... I...
MYSTERY MAN
(Looks at MADELYN, and then to the CHEERLEADER.)

I was... supposed to go on this trip next week.
MYSTERY MAN

It can wait. Can't you reschedule it? You know how hard it is to get the sitter to come along.
CHEERLEADER

I know. I can...
MYSTERY MAN

MADELYN'S screen starts going dark.

I'll reschedule it. Do you need me to make reservations at the chalet?
MYSTERY MAN CONT.

Already done. Everything's all taken care of. Oh' and your dry cleaning came back this afternoon. I put it away before dinner.
CHEERLEADER

You're the greatest wife ever. You know that?
MYSTERY MAN
(His screen starts going dark.)

I'm sorry I don't appreciate you more. I don't deserve you.

CHEERLEADER

That's true, you don't... C'mon honey, let's go to bed.

(She takes his hand.)

CHEERLEADER and MYSTERY MAN exit.

Both screens go dark.

MADELYN

I HATE YOU!!!!!!

Lights go dark.

END OF ACT ONE

SCENE ELEVEN: The Bargain

MADELYN Sits alone on stage on the fainting couch. She shuffles papers. She wears glasses. She has a small table in front of her, that could be a tv tray.

MADELYN
(She reads.)

Tina. 20 years old. 118 pounds. 5foot 9. Dark brown hair, beautiful blue eyes. Small tits. Fake tits. Docle Gabanna perfume campaign 60, 0000, for print work.
Amy. 21 years old. 117 pounds. 5foot 8. Red hair, green eyes. Freckles. Nestle yogurt campaign 90,000 for print and commercials. Single, two abortions last year.
Nikki. 19 years old. 115 pounds. 5foot 8. Short blonde hair, brown eyes. Cocaine addiction, anorexia, alcoholism. Last months featured model on TRL, 8,000 a day. Rock star boyfriend.
Belinda. 22 years old. 120 pounds. 5foot 9and a half. Laser resurfacing, two nose jobs, collagen lips, liposuction, broken and rewired jaw. Gorgeous! First runway pick for Channel, Dior, and Versace. Professional athlete fiancé.

(No longer reading.)

Madelyn. 34 years old. 125 pounds. 5foot 5. Seventeen grey hairs, hazel eyes. Booking contract capped at 45,000 for the first year including commissions. Failed marriage, dead dog, small apartment, box dyed hair with an expensive cut from four months ago. Homemade manicure, real tits, real nose, real ass, Real.
Real broke,
Real tired,
Really
Needing
Some help.

CHEERLEADER
(Pops her head out from the wing.)

Really?

MADELYN

Yes, really.

CHEERLEADER
(Enters and crosses to MADELYN.)

Let's talk.

MADELYN

Wha'do I do?

CHEERLEADER

Well... First, I would just like to say, thank you for finally coming to your senses. You can't walk around pretending the world isn't the way it is. That's insanity. Don't get snippy, but I just had to say, 'I told you so.' Now... You just leave everything to me.

MADELYN

No, no, no. I have stipulations, I have requirements. I have... some fucking pride.

CHEERLEADER

Of course you do. That's exactly why we're doing this. I will do the preliminary interviews, gather the financial documentation, and sexual history- as much as can be found out. We will outline all of your needs. A minimum bid will be set. Nothing less than the minimum bid will be accepted. You won't regret this.

MADELYN

I want the final say. I get the final say.

CHEERLEADER

Naturally. On the final sale, you will have my full support on anyone who makes the minimum bid. But keep in mind, you asked for this. You wanted, needed help. This is help. This is reality. This is life my dear. Welcome to adulthood.

MADELYN
(Sarcastically.)

Thanks.

CHEERLEADER

Now, let's discuss the matter of payment.

MADELYN

What?

CHEERLEADER
(Laughs.)

Nothing's free. Not even the opportunity to sell out. I will need a bit of that delicious pride you're clinging to. Yes, just a little bit. You don't need it. Not if you have someone to take care of you. You don't need all that self sufficiency, I mean how self sufficient are you anyway if you need my help? It's only a token of your commitment to making a positive change.

MADELYN

What do I have to do?

CHEERLEADER

Just climb down on your knees... Go ahead...
(She waits.)

MADELYN gets on her knees.

CHEERLEADER CONT.

Good. See, not difficult at all. Now, say loud and proud “I am only worth what they think I am worth.”

(Pause.)

Go on, “I am only worth, what they think I am worth.”

MADELYN

But...

CHEERLEADER

You know it’s true Madelyn. Even if you don’t think it’s true, the world thinks it’s true and that makes it true. So, lie to yourself if you want, but *say* that aloud.

MADELYN

I am...

(She gags and shakes her head.)

I am only worth... What... they think I am... worth.

(She falls down on all fours.)

CHEERLEADER

(Goes to her and puts her hand on MADELYN’S head. She comforts her.)

It’s okay. See, all better. Trust me.

Lights go dark. Both exit.

SCENE TWELVE: Transformation

CHEERLEADER enters carrying a pair of conservative black leather heels, (with a height within a quarter inch of two inches) and black suit coat and shirt that have just been to the drycleaners still wrapped in plastic. She lays the jacket and shirt across the seat of the chair she has been using. She takes off the blond wig, and pulls her hair into a low pony tail at the base of her neck. She removes her tennis shoes and puts the heels on. She removes her cheerleader top folding it over the back of the chair. Underneath it she wears a white tank top. She takes the plastic off the hanger and drops it on the floor. She puts on a well tailored, heavily starched, pale pink button down shirt. Next, she puts on the fitted suit jacket. The jacket should not be too long as to cover her cheerleader skirt. The jacket should not be completely unbuttoned. From one jacket pocket, she pulls a strand of pearls no longer than sixteen inches. She puts them on. From the other pocket, she pulls a pair of pearl earrings and puts them on. She takes the plastic off of the floor and walks it off stage. She comes back dragging a large lectern. She stands behind it facing down stage. She pulls out her pompons and the handles for her pompons fit together. She secures them with a strap and then removes the fluffy part successfully turning them into a gavel. She bangs the gavel three times.

DEVON, BRIAN, TIM, BOB, and the MYSTERY MAN enter carrying a chair. They all put their chairs down facing downstage.

MADLYN enters and sits in the chair previously used by the MYSTERY MAN upstage left. She is brightly lit from all sides.

The lights go dark very fast. In the black, the two screens light up.

SCENE THIRTEEN: The Auction

CHEERLEADER bangs the gavel three times. The lights slowly come up while she begins to speak. The screens at the back of the stage continue to reflect the exchange between MADELYN and the MYSTERY MAN by changing colors and brightness.

CHEERLEADER

Thank you all for coming. Today we have for auction, MADELYN Vogelle. Her estimated value is currently unknown. Today we will establish her worth in quantifiable terms. Let's begin with her history... She comes from an upper-middleclass family on the right side of town. Her family is of excellent social standing with only a few scandals, and most of them are so long ago that they don't affect her current value. She attended the best schools money could buy, and was socialized in the manner befitting a young woman of the highest stature. She studied classical ballet, is an avid chess player, a bonifide Mensa member, and well read in philosophy. She won't fail to impress when it comes to quoting Janice Moulton, Simone De Beauvoir, or Mary Wolstoncraft. Not only is her family connected to politics and the art world, but she herself is known to float through the most exclusive arenas with ease and notability.

She has been married once, but has no children from that first marriage. In this day and age gentleman, any woman of Madelyn's worth and years has been married at least once. To her credit and your benefit her womb is virginal. She has no children that you will have to foster, adopt or more to the point- pay for in any way. If you decide to have offspring they will be her first issue, and as all know, for a woman, that means the best. She has never contracted any STD's, and insists that all bidders have a clean bill of health. She has expressed to us that she is more than willing to accept an offer by a man who has children from a previous marriage. She will not accept an offer from a man who has had children out of wedlock. She also insists that all the children be in school, and preferably above the age of 12.

Gentleman, let me assure you that all these points are negotiable for the right candidate. Let me continue with the attributes that make Madelyn one of our prime objects up for auction this year. As noted in your handout, she is well over thirty, but as you can see she has the physical appearance of a woman in her mid twenties. This benefits you in that you may appear to have a much younger woman, and yet- can with all social appropriateness say that her age is more than acceptably close to your own. You won't be chastised by other women for choosing Madelyn.

Her body fat is maintained at less than 20%, through vigorous aerobic exercise. Let me assure you this will not slacken. Her minor problem with asthma is managed through extended sessions at the gym. So, while other items you have seen in their "prime" are in excellent shape, I ask you... Will they remain so? Madelyn must due to her medical condition, and this puts her in our top category despite her age and previous marriage. Next... She is flawless in any social gathering. She dresses appropriately, speaks well, listens very well with genuine human interest and curiosity. She is polite without appearing false, can manage herself alone or on your arm. She is funny without being

CHEERLEADER CONT.

overly crass, and she never fails to draw attention thereby making you the envy of every man in the room. She is intelligent, but will never, never make you look dumb in public. She is successful, but she will never, never earn as much money as any of you. On a more personal level, but still along the lines of social graces Madelyn is an expert at adapting to family dynamics. Your mother, father, brother, sister and Granny will all love her. She is the kind of woman you take to meet your family, and she is also the kind of woman you want to take to bed. Her sexual dossier is very impressive. I have saved not the best, but the juiciest for last... She is open to manage-a-trios provided they are with another woman. She has extensive lesbian experience. She enjoys dominating and being submissive. She is curious and open to exploring your fantasies, and will offer up some interesting ones of her own... Alright gentleman, now that I have wet your appetite shall we start the bidding?

Pause.

DEVON
(Raises hand.)

I have a question.

CHEERLEADER

Yes?

DEVON

Does she give head?

CHEERLEADER

No.

MADELYN

What? Yes I do.

CHEERLEADER

Let me see.

(She flips through some papers.)

Well... There is a stipulation.

BRIAN

What Birthday's and Christmas?

CHEERLEADER

No, no. She will more frequently than that, but...

(Reads from the paper.)

'Will perform the act of fellatio on a woman in nearly any position,' oh but no women made the minimum bid here today. So, 'if the receiver is male, the receiver must be in a

CHEERLEADER CONT.

position of submission.’ Submission in this instance is defined as, ‘With both of the hands bound in such a way as to prevent any movement.’

MADELYN

I only like it when their hands are tied. I won’t do anything I don’t like.

CHEERLEADER

No-one is suggesting you do dear, but we are here to establish what will and will not be done, and in what way. This is all for the sake of creating later happiness.

DEVON

It just can’t be off the table. What?... I like it?... I give it too.

CHEERLEADER

Oh, yes that was a must in her screening process. All of you noted in your file that you prefer to give than receive... Any other questions before we proceed?

(Waits for a moment.)

Alright then, let’s start the bidding at a proposal with a modest ring, small wedding, apartment, and a car no older than three years... Do I hear an engagement ring? An apartment, a small wedding, and a car no-

BRIAN

I’ll make the bid with trips to Florida every year for Christmas. I will change the oil for our cars at home, and will build us a hot tub. I kill all bugs, stand up to assholes in bars, take out the trash, and no affairs.

CHEERLEADER

Manly offer! And how long before the proposal?

BRIAN

Within two years, but I’ll go ahead raise the apartment to a house in the suburbs today.

CHEERLEADER

So the bid has gone to a modest ring, a small wedding, a house, and recently purchased car. Do we have any higher offers gentlemen?

DEVON

I’ll see your bid replacing Florida by taking you to Europe every other year for three months, where you will get to visit all of your friends in England. I go with you, while I pay for you to do a six week parapsychology summer course at the Rhine Institute at Duke University. I will not take the trash out, but I will immortalize you in several art shows. I’ll raise the house in the suburbs to a large country home, and a one bedroom apartment in Soho.

CHEERLEADER
(Starts flipping through pages.)

Wait. Is the country house in your name? Only property which is in you own name may be used.

DEVON

I will inherit it.

All the other men laugh.

CHEERLEADER

When?... You see that's really the problem.

DEVON

I'm an only child. My father died when I was young. It's all in my file. I will gain access to my trust when I turn thirty next year.

CHEERLEADER

I see it here. The bid stays with the country house.

BOB

That's bullshit. Look I'll raise the ring to a rock, and the small wedding to a huge tropical wedding. We will have two homes, one in the mountains, and the other in the most affluent area in town. We will be married till the end.

BRIAN

So will we!

BOB

You will never have to stress about money. Not once. Not ever, and you will achieve a minor celebrity status with me. When I retire from political life I will move with you to Edinburgh while you do your PhD.

CHEERLEADER

Nice offer sir. Nice offer. Eternal couple-dom, public adoration, and a PhD!

TIM

I'll raise the ring by adding a large diamond band as a wedding gift. And I'll pay for all the tickets for the guests to get to the location, as well as an exotic honeymoon. We will have a girl and a boy. Both will be healthy, attractive, and successful. I will willingly pay for any facelifts and breast augmentation. After our children graduate I will pay for you to do whatever the hell you want.

CHEERLEADER

Well done sir. Eternal youth bought and paid for! Do we have any better offers gentlemen? Anything?

The screens get brighter.

MYSTERY MAN

I offer you love.

CHEERLEADER

What was that?

MYSTERY MAN

I offer unending passion, romance, intellectual stimulation, permanently satisfying sex, and butterflies in your stomach every time you see me or speak to me. I will understand your fears, and share all your dreams. I will never doubt your abilities or make demands of your time that you cannot fulfill. In my mind you exist as the perfect woman, and thus in your mind you get to be her.

CHEERLEADER

I'm sorry the minimum bid is an apartment. In order to make a bid you must offer property of some ki- Excuse me who are you? This is a private auction, and I don't have you on my list.

MADELYN

I invited him.

CHEERLEADER

I don't have his file. You came to us because you wanted assurances. If you can't offer even a monthly allowance to support my client, then I can't, in good conscience allow you to buy her. Am I to understand that you are offering nothing? You are saying that Madelyn isn't worth anything?! You would sacrifice nothing, offer nothing, pay nothing to have her?

MYSTERY MAN

I can't. But I love you.

BOB

This is a joke. I love her too.

CHEERLEADER

Yes, there is a special love clause which can trump some of the financial benefits, but gentleman we haven't even begun the full disclosure portion of the bidding. I certainly appreciate *most* of you putting your most expensive shoe forward, but don't think for one minute you will be able to skate through the auction with just a surface bid. Who'll start? Do I have an affair? Any affairs gentlemen?

BRIAN

I'll never cheat on you. I do have chronic laziness, and I'm addicted to sports. I'll never go shopping or put the toilet seat down, and I won't ever have a serious conversation with you about anything you care about.

CHEERLEADER

Is that all?

BRIAN

We will have good sex for the most part, but I have a family history of cancer, so I will develop prostate problems in my early forties leading to untreatable erectile dysfunction.

CHEERLEADER

Any children?

BRIAN

No.

DEVON

I will substitute the prostate problem with frequent affairs, which will begin three years after our marriage. We will adopt a beautiful, smart, little girl, who'll be five when we divorce. You will have sole custody and receive a more than fair settlement, because I will feel guilty about being a terrible husband and you will have at last decided to use my guilt against me.

CHEERLEADER

And the artwork?

DEVON

Our daughter will inherit all the pieces which were done during our marriage. My widow will scam the rest.

TIM

My third wife will get the bulk of my fortune. Our children will have ample trust funds, but I will screw you in the divorce because of a no cheat clause. I will fuck the stripper at my bachelor party contracting Chlamydia and pass it on to you on our wedding night. I will have several more affairs, but so will you. You will still end up with a 2.5 million dollar home, convertible Mercedes, the cats, and a small retirement package.

MADELYN

(To CHEERLEADER.)

What about love?

BRIAN

Eventually you will be able to convince yourself you didn't settle despite shoplifting at Walgreen's for excitement. The love I have for you provides you with the same comfort as a moderately warm bath in the winter. It's not exactly bad when you're in it, but it's worse when you get out.

TIM

We will convince ourselves that detailed loathing is a kind of love until both of us hates the other enough to have violent fantasies. But you will look hot, well into your sixties.

BOB

I will have one major affair that you will never know about. It will make you paranoid and crazy, even though to all appearances everything will be fine. Our youngest son will be gay and become a drag queen of some notoriety in New York, the eldest will be killed in a drunk driving accident, and the middle son will follow my footsteps into a life of politics while suffering from an alcohol addiction.

CHEERLEADER

Moving on?

MADELYN

He's hiding something! You said full disclosure. I want it all.

CHEERLEADER

Oh yes, indeed I see here in the file, there is quite a bit more.

BOB

You will be completely isolated. You will never share any of your unhappiness because you fear that your friends would try to take advantage of the situation and move in. We will both go on antidepressants after the death of our son, and never come off of them.

CHEERLEADER

Sir...

(Looks at MYSTERY MAN)

Sir?

MADELYN

As you respect me, don't insult me by telling me a lie or giving me some vague illusion of a response.

CHEERLEADER

And don't leave anything out!

Throughout his speech MYSTERY MAN'S screen darkens.

MYSTERY MAN

Because no one can ever know about our affair you will feel like my dirty little secret. But I will love you above all others, and you will love me above all others. Neither of us will move on, and we will torture ourselves with the pleasure and pain of our doomed affair. As much as I tell you I don't love my wife, the truth is I am not unhappy with the convenience she provides. You will never meet anyone who makes you feel the way I do, and I will always regret not fighting for you when I had the chance. I will justify keeping you because I do genuinely love you, but it is a selfish love for which I am willing to hurt you to enjoy.

CHEERLEADER

And!

Both of their screens get darker.

MYSTERY MAN

You will spend every holiday alone. You can never call me in a crisis, or for practical everyday troubles. I can't support you emotionally, or look after you when you get sick. I will lie to you, even though it isn't necessary, and you will always come in second to my wife and children.

CHEERLEADER

Ah yes, the beauty of love.

BOB

Look, I'll raise the offer I made. At the end of our marriage, I will confess the affair I had, and you can get a divorce cleaning me out completely. Until then we will appear to everyone to be the perfect couple even though you have never loved me, and never will.

CHEERLEADER

Now that's an offer. We accept.

MADELYN

I do not accept.

CHEERLEADER

Madelyn I strongly urge you to accept this offer.

MADELYN

I can't.

CHEERLEADER

This is the best offer you will get sweetheart. You aren't that young. You aren't that pretty. Think about your future. Do you want a life of living hand to mouth, or are you going to be smart about this? You are fortunate enough to have a choice, chose wisely. Do not squander yourself. Value yourself.

MADELYN

I want to be happy.

CHEERLEADER

Happiness comes in all forms. To some it means not having to worry about the bills, and to others it's having a family, being a mother. I will say this... I don't know anybody who is happy with the scraps off another woman's table.

MADELYN

But...

CHEERLEADER

Madelyn, these are not everlasting offers. They are good for today and today only.

MADELYN

(Ty MYSTERY MAN.)

Tell me? Do you still love your wife?

MYSTERY MAN

I... ..I... I... yeah. Sort of. She's the mother of my children. I... I love you too though, it's just different.

MADELYN

Yeah... I think I want to love you with all of me, and there's this whole part of me you'll never know, this whole other person you'll never meet. You'll never see me in my element because I'm not there yet and when I do get there... you'll be with your wife and your kids.

MYSTERY MAN

I don't want to hurt you.

MADELYN

I know.

CHEERLEADER

We have new evidence! There is a letter.

(She pulls out an envelope from the lectern and reads the letter inside.)

Congratulations Madelyn Vogelle. The Rhine Institute of Edinburgh, Scotland is thrilled to offer you a position in our PhD Program. Please consider our offer carefully and contact us with your decision.

BOB

You can still go whenever you want. Don't you want a family of your own?

MADELYN

I do, but... None of your offers are good enough. I know I'm looking at all the good and the bad together, but even just the good alone... Not enough...

MYSTERY MAN'S screen gets dark.

BOB

Not enough what?

BRIAN

Not enough money?

MADELYN

Not enough life. Not enough choice. Not enough...

CHEERLEADER

Madelyn, you have some good offers here. Offers that would be good for a younger woman with a prettier face. Don't be hasty. Think about these offers.

MADELYN

I can provide my own home. I don't need it to be big as long as it's mine. All mine. Hardwood floors and a lot light. I don't even want kids, and I don't have to have them! I don't want to spend every day at the spa, and come home knowing I haven't done anything to impact the world. I don't care if I never have more money than is in my wallet right now. And I have a place to go... I have a future to look forward to, a next step to take that's waiting for me.

CHEERLEADER

Then do you reject all the offers?

MADELYN

Yes. I reject them.

MYSTERY MAN'S screen gets even darker.

CHEERLEADER

Once you reject them, they are gone. Each of these men has other pieces in mind. Their interests will go to something else.

MADELYN

I want to own myself.

CHEERLEADER

Can you make the minimum bid?

MADELYN

I don't own the apartment, but the lease is in my name. I do get a regular paycheck, and in the future I will make more money than I do now. With any PhD Program I'll have enough to live on, even if it means student loans for the next several years... I'll be okay.

CHEERLEADER

The car?

MADELYN

I'll sell it.

CHEERLEADER

And the ring?

MADELYN

I have a pair of diamond earrings that I can trade in for one stone, have it set, and wear it on my right hand as a cocktail ring.

CHEERLEADER

And love?

MADELYN

And trust, and loyalty.

CHEERLEADER

Sex?

MADELYN

Good question... The whole give and receive thing is a mute point now. Lucky I'm a switch.

CHEERLEADER

That's true... Well... You make the minimum bid. It's up to you, but I warn you, you'll be lonely. You'll be very lonely sometimes, especially at night, and at weddings, and on holidays.

MADELYN

But I won't be waiting for someone who doesn't call or someone who doesn't show up. Will you stand behind my decision? You said I get the final say.

CHEERLEADER

I gave my word... I'll give you the pamphlet on PMS... and I promise to cheer for you when you need it... and when you score.

MADELYN

Then I choose myself.

CHEERLEADER

Sold! Sold to the woman with no money, no security, but lots of potential and an acceptance to a PhD Program!

MADELYN

Thank you.

CHEERLEADER

Get ahead Madelyn. Work hard. Work smart. Be Successful. B. E. ..S. U. C... C. E. SS. F. U. L. Successful. Be successful.

MEN except MYSTERY MAN gather their seats and slowly start to exit.

DEVON is the first to exit. BRIAN hugs MADELYN good bye and he and BOB exit.

TIM

You're gonna regret not being with me.

MADELYN

I don't think so.

TIM

Last chance.

MADELYN

Goodbye.

TIM

(As he leaves.)

Bitch.

The screens brighten.

MYSTERY MAN

(Stands looking at her.)

My offer stands.

MADELYN

I know it does. But the shoes you would have me wear... don't fit.

MYSTERY MAN'S screen becomes dim.

No... they wouldn't.

MYSTERY MAN

I can't see you anymore.

MADELYN

You sure?

MYSTERY MAN

Unfortunately.

MADELYN

MYSTERY MAN'S screen is almost black.

I'll go.

MYSTERY MAN

MADELYN breaks down crying. MYSTERY MAN'S screen lights up.

I can't.

MYSTERY MAN
(Doesn't go to her, but reaches out a hand to her and MADELYN'S screen lights up.)

I know.

MADELYN

I'll always love you.

MYSTERY MAN

But I will always love me more.

MADELYN
(She stands up and wipes her face.)

(MYSTERY MAN'S screen flickers.)

I will never love you more than I love me. I'm okay alone. I would rather... Just knowing that you exist in the world gives me faith in men. Thank you. I'll miss you.

I'll never leave you.

MYSTERY MAN

I know... but I'll miss you.

MADELYN

MYSTERY MAN'S screen shuts off.
MADELYN'S Screen comes on full power. It is nearly blinding.

All the lights go down. MADELYN and
MYSTERY MAN exit.

The End.