

ONLY CONNECT

by MARIA VIERA

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ONLY CONNECT

SYNOPSIS

The lives of five lonely people randomly intersect for fleeting moments in a neighborhood bar. The play is about relationships that never develop and opportunities that are lost because of the changing values of contemporary society which make it impossible for us to “only connect.”

SETTING

A modest neighborhood bar.

TIME

2010 or whereabouts

CHARACTERS

SLADE: The bartender; in his thirties; easy-going and affable.

MATT: A man stranded somewhere in his forties. A regular at the bar. He wears a business suit, the coat is rumpled and his tie hangs loosely around his neck.

BRAD: A tightly-wound, and usually slightly drunk, young man in his late thirties who is working his way towards becoming an alcoholic.

LISA: An attractive woman hovering around 40; smart and confident.

KARA: A fun loving, up-beat woman in her late 20s.

Scene Breakdown:

All the scenes are set in The Bar. The scenes are separated by a quick LIGHTS DOWN/LIGHTS UP during which the actors either exit if they are not in the next scene or take a new place at the bar.

Scene 1: All Five characters "Blind Date"

Scene 2: Brad, Kara, Slade "Phone Break-up"

Scene 3: Matt, Brad, Slade "The Boys"

Scene 4: Lisa, Slade "Zebra Stripes"

Scene 5: Matt, Kara, Slade "Trickable"

Scene 6: Lisa, Brad, Slade "Apology"

Scene 7: Lisa, Kara, Slade "Girl Talk"

Scene 8: All Five characters "Pickup lines"

Scene 9: All Five characters "Bar Talk"

Scene 10: All Five characters "The Dance"

Scene 11: All Five "Technology"

Scene 12: All Five "Politics"

Scene 13: All Five "Confessions"

Scene 14: Matt, Slade "Got me"

LEFT BLANK ON PURPOSE

ONLY CONNECT

SCENE 1

AT RISE

(At a neighborhood bar, Slade, the bartender, cleans and wipes glasses behind the counter. Matt huddles around a drink placed on the counter in front of him. His phone is on the bar. He glances at it often. Kara sits at opposite end of the bar twiddling with her phone throughout the entire scene.)

MATT

No, I believe it was three times. Three times that evening. Everyone was incredible too.

SLADE

This is still the first date? Or did we move onto the second?

MATT

No, it was the first date. There was only one time. Well, there were three times, but they were all on the one date. Then boom! It's over. She hasn't answered another email.

SLADE

So, all of these times...

MATT

Three times.

SLADE

Okay, three times. All three times were this one night?

MATT

Yes. It's all a matter of stamina, you see. With the right amount of stamina these things can take place.

SLADE

Can take place in one night?

MATT

Exactly. You go at it for an hour, you rest an hour. You go at it for another hour. It keeps going like that. Of course it helps to already have stamina built up.

SLADE

And from where do you get this stamina?

MATT

From just being fit, you know, in shape and all. I try to keep the stamina up all the time. You'll never know when you might need it.

SLADE

When?

MATT

When what?

SLADE

When did you find the time to stay in shape? They let you exercise at work or something?

MATT

No. You got to make the time. Have all your priorities straight and everything.

SLADE

When did you say this all took place?

MATT

Two weekends ago.

SLADE

Which night?

MATT

Friday or Saturday. Hell, I don't remember.

SLADE

Let me see, now. Two weekends ago, both Friday and Saturday, if I remember correctly, and correct me if I'm wrong, I believe you were here until closing both nights as you are every Friday and Saturday night.

MATT

Well, maybe it was Wednesday, or Thursday.

SLADE

All night long and then you got up for work?

MATT

Well... you know... it's stamina, like I was talking about before. Anyway, get me a refill here.

SLADE

Sure, Matt.

(Slade mixes a drink. Brad barges his way into the bar, muttering to himself.)

MATT

Hey, if it isn't the stud of the night. Figured you'd be working on those night moves about now.

(Brad sits on the stool next to Matt.)

BRAD

The usual, Slade.

SLADE

Got you covered.

(Slade pours a drink for Brad. Brad downs it in one swallow.)

BRAD

Keep 'em coming, Slade.

SLADE

You got it.

BRAD

Internet dating. What a shit idea. Can't trust those dating sites. They'll fuck you every time, man.

MATT

What's going on?

BRAD

I should have known. I mean blind dates always suck, right? But I figured what the hell, right? Her picture looked okay. Her answers were funny.

SLADE

Match.com analyzed 250 online dating profiles and found that men were two times more likely to boast of their humor-production ability. Women were two times more likely to be looking for a humor producer.

MATT

Anyone ever tell you you're one weird dude, Slade? (*back to Brad*) Didn't work out?

BRAD

What a fucking understatement.

MATT

What went wrong?

BRAD

What didn't go wrong? I'm supposed to meet her at Enrico's across the street. Overpriced shit hole. Waiters who congratulate you on your order: "Excellent choice, Sir."

MATT

You didn't fuck up and get there first, did you?

BRAD

Of course not. I played it cool. Got there a few minutes late. I get there and tell the host...

MATT

Maître d'...

BRAD

Whatever. I tell this guy the name of the girl...

MATT

Woman...

BRAD

...this woman who I'm supposed to meet, and he says she's waiting at the table.

MATT

(*hurrying him along*)

And he takes you back to...

BRAD

Right. I follow him back until he stops...

MATT

And?

BRAD

And, and I'm shocked. The table he is pointing at has this really ugly woman sitting at it. I'm thinking, no way, this can't be the one.

MATT

Oh, shit.

BRAD

I'm looking around, thinking there's been some mistake, because I know I'm not supposed to be meeting some dog...

MATT

Well, yeah...

BRAD

But then, as I'm looking around, I hear a woman say, "You must be Brad," and I turn and it's her.

MATT

The ugly one.

BRAD

Yeah. Man, was I ever suckered. Fuck that dating.com shit.

MATT

She wasn't even worth doing?

BRAD

Man, I do have some standards, okay?

MATT

That bad, huh?

BRAD

Hideous. I sit down, we order a bottle of wine. We start to talk... a real man-hater. Spewing out all kinds of feminist bullshit.

MATT

Aw, dammit. That's the worst.

BRAD

Man, I couldn't take it. I thought I'd try and make it through dinner, but this shit was just too thick.

MATT

So, what happened?

BRAD

I left her. Right there in the middle of dinner. I say, I got to go to the gents, and I just walk out.

SLADE

You stiffed her?

BRAD

Hell, yes, I did. I'd had it, man. Besides, if she's so liberated, she won't mind picking up the damn check. I'm going outside for a cigarette.

(Brad starts searching his pockets for cigarettes.)

BRAD

Damn, I'm outta smokes. I'm gonna run down to the Seven Eleven.

(Brad exits. Matt checks his phone.)

MATT

Why bother to meet people in real life anymore?

SLADE

Yeah... You know you can set up a personal website. There's a company out there that advertises that they'll enhance your own "brand." Increase your visibility through search engines; raise your profile; let your personality shine through.

(Lisa enters and sits at the bar. She is very attractive and Matt cannot take his eyes off her.)

SLADE

What can I get for you?

LISA

Gin and tonic, please.

SLADE

Coming up.

(While Slade makes the drink, he looks at Matt and nods toward Lisa. Slade gives her the drink. Matt pretends to be checking his phone.)

LISA

Thank you.

(Matt takes a few deep breaths, puts down his phone and decides to talk to Lisa.)

MATT

Excuse me, but would you mind if I were to touch your arm?

LISA

(apprehensively)

Why do you want to do that?

MATT

Because you are the exact woman I was dreaming about last night, and I just want to see if you are real.

LISA

(laughing)

That is the worst pick up line I have ever heard.

MATT

But it did get you to laugh.

LISA

I could use a good laugh. You expecting a call?

MATT

No, I just, ah...

LISA

You know they got a service where you can have a pretend girlfriend call you and then all your friends will think...

MATT

What makes you think I need a pretend girlfriend?

LISA

You're sitting in this bar playing with your phone? Sorry. I should talk. I seem to be flypaper for jerks. Guys with attention deficient disorder who nervously bounce their knees all the time. I don't know why nowadays it's so damn hard to find regular guy, a guy who isn't named Chance or Chip. What happened to all the Freds? *(to Slade)* Do you serve any food in here?

SLADE

No, just drinks.

LISA

Damn. I'm about to starve.

MATT

Well, look, I know a little café just a block over. What do you say? We can walk from here.

LISA

(half jokingly)

I don't know if I should trust you.

MATT

Oh, come on. It's my treat. I probably haven't told you, but I am outrageously wealthy.

LISA

Then why do you hang out in this bar? *(to Slade)* No offense.

MATT

Well, I like to mix with commoners.

LISA

Okay, okay, I'll go. Let me get my act together here a little bit.

(Lisa goes to the restroom. As she leaves, Matt gives a thumbs up to Slade. After Lisa exits Brad comes barging back into the bar.)

BRAD

Think I'm gonna try electronic cigarettes.

SLADE

You still can't smoke them in here.

(Brad sees Matt grinning widely.)

What's up with you? BRAD

You missed all the action. MATT

What action? BRAD

While you were gone, a pretty little thing came in here, and she and I are hooking up. MATT

Bullshit. BRAD

She's in the shitter right now, freshening up. MATT

Is this true, Slade? BRAD

Sure is, Brad. SLADE

Well, I'll be damned. BRAD

(Lisa returns from the restroom, and as she enters, she and Brad look at each other with equal expressions of horror.)

Oh shit! BRAD/LISA

You're friends with this guy? LISA
(to Matt)

Don't listen to her, Matt. BRAD

Well, yes, kinda. MATT
(to Lisa)

LISA

That's it. I'm outta here.

MATT

Wait, wait. We're not that good of friends. Acquaintances really.

LISA

No, no, no. If you hang around that jerk at all, then I want no part of you.
(to Brad) You obnoxious asshole. I thought I was rid of you when I ditched you at the restaurant.

MATT

Wait. You left him?

LISA

You're damn right I did. And now I'm leaving you.

(Lisa storms out.)

MATT

Shit.

SLADE

Damn, and she left without paying her bill.

(Matt and Brad look at each other and shrug. They sit back down on two stools and set their phones in sight on the bar.)

MATT

Give us another round, Slade, and keep 'em coming.

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

SCENE 2: another night

(Slade is behind the bar. Brad enters.)

SLADE

Hey, Brad, what's up?

BRAD

I'll have a Jack on the rocks.

SLADE

Guess you're back on the dating scene.

BRAD

Boy, that was a real fiasco last weekend. That Lisa chick...

SLADE

What happened to Teresa? Haven't seen her around for quite a while.

BRAD

We broke up last month.

SLADE

Sorry to hear that. You two seemed so...

BRAD

No big deal. Ships that pass in the night.

(Kara enters angrily texting away on her phone. She sits at the bar.)

BRAD

You trying to murder that thing?

KARA

Nope. But wouldn't mind murdering the textee. Wish I could send anthrax through this thing. *(to Slade)* House Red please.

BRAD

That bad?

KARA

Terrorism by texting.

BRAD

Revenge texting? There must be an app for that.

KARA

I believe in the Greek idea of revenge—not an eye for an eye but a head for an eye.

(Slade brings her wine and returns to the other end of the bar where he remains engrossed in his phone.)

BRAD

I can relate to that. I just broke up with my girlfriend—now ex-girlfriend-- last month.

KARA

I'm being broken up with right now here as we speak. Here look. (*shoves her phone in his face*) See. "I just don't think you turn me on enough to commit this much time." (*swiping the phone*) "I've started to see someone else who turns me on more than you do." (*swiping the phone*) "You'd be better off without me."

BRAD

Sorry. (*beat*) Maybe you are better off without him.

KARA

That's what everyone says to try to make you feel better. (*back at him*) Maybe you're better off without her.

BRAD

Maybe she's better off without me.

KARA

How can we all be better off without anyone? I don't see how it's better to be alone.

BRAD

Turn off your phone. Just turn off your phone. You don't have to take that from him. Don't respond. Just delete. That's it. It's over. No more. Here, give me the phone.

(He takes the phone and turns it off.)

BRAD

All gone. Don't you feel better?

KARA

Yeah, just great. Alive and well and doomed to live alone.

(He hands her the phone back.)

BRAD

See that wasn't so bad.

KARA

Thanks. (*beat*) What went wrong... with your relationship?

BRAD

Oh, nothing much. She just cheated on me.

KARA

(jokingly)

I hate it when that happens.

(He doesn't laugh.)

KARA

Sorry. Didn't mean to be flip. *(beat)* Don't tell me it was with your best friend.

BRAD

No, she hooked up with some guy at a bar. She was at a birthday party for one of her girlfriends. Seems it was more important to outdo her long-time best friend slash archrival than be true to me. Women just have to compete. It's in their DNA.

KARA

What about men? They'll compete over anything. Who can pee the furthest or belch the loudest.

BRAD

How come it's easier to tell a stranger your real feelings?

KARA

Because they don't judge?

BRAD

Maybe because they don't care.

KARA

I joined this thing on the Internet called Lonely Poetry. I guess it's a new literary genre.

BRAD

Not much into new literary genres... or poetry for that matter.

KARA

There's another new genre—Six-word memoir. Try it.

BRAD

I got nothing.

KARA

That's three words.

BRAD

Like I said, I got nothing. Six words.

KARA

Heard about "Whispers?" The anonymous messaging service. You express your inner most thoughts. It's all about talking to strangers.

BRAD

I understand that. You sit at home browsing through photos of everyone you know having a great time and you feel like shit.

KARA

It's an online version of a confessional. No one knows who's confessing. Secrets, sins, sex...

BRAD

Does it have a link you can click if you're Catholic to find out how many Hail Marys you have to say?

KARA

Dunno. I'm bored with Facebook. It used to be fun, now it's a chore. Constantly updating. Trying to come up with new ideas to show my friends how happy I am. A friend told me I should set up my own personal home page. She says I need a more "robust digital identity." (*finger quotes*)

BRAD

Doesn't seem necessary. You already exist all over the Internet.

KARA

If you Google my name, Kara Brown, you get 92,000,000 results. And if you look at Images for Kara Brown you get everything from cowgirls to drag queens.

(Slade comes over to them.)

SLADE

Another round?

KARA

Not for me. Thanks.

(Kara makes motions to leave. Turns on her phone and puts it in her handbag.)

SLADE

You know, Zuckerberg started all this 'cause he was a lonely, introverted guy. All this just to make up for his own inadequacies.

BRAD
(*toasting*)

I'll drink to that.

SLADE

You'll drink to anything.

BRAD
(*to Kara*)

By the way, I didn't catch your name.

KARA

Well, if I told you that, I wouldn't be a stranger anymore, now would I?

(*She gets up to leave.*)

BRAD

Well, then, Stranger, I'll see you around.

(*Kara exits.*)

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

SCENE 3: another night

(*Matt sits at the bar looking at his phone.
Slade putters around the bar. Brad is texting
on his phone.*)

MATT

(*to Brad but not looking up*)

How ya doing, Slugger?

BRAD

(*not looking up*)

Great. What's up?

MATT

Checking out this fake girlfriend texting service someone told me about.

BRAD

Like you're ordering a hooker?

MATT

No. It creates a pretend girlfriend who'll text you. Even call you with pre-recorded messages.

BRAD

And why would you want to do that?

MATT

To make other women jealous. You put the fake girlfriend's number in your phone and then when you're out with another woman you text that number and you'll get a text back.

BRAD

Sounds pretty lame.

MATT

Based on science. Research shows that a women's attraction to a man is doubled when she is told he is already taken.

BRAD

You could just wear a wedding ring.

MATT

And if you really want to be convincing you can subscribe to cloudgirlfriend. Create the perfect woman who'll write on your wall.

BRAD

Guess that's easier than hiring a real-life fake girlfriend to show up at special family occasions.

MATT

You've done that?

BRAD

Nope, but I considered it once. My brother's wedding.

(Slade comes over to them.)

SLADE

Another round?

BRAD

Hey, Matt here has signed up to have a fake girlfriend send him texts.

SLADE

Why would you do that?

MATT

Thanks, Brad, you just blew my cover.

BRAD

What? You want to make Slade jealous?

SLADE

You hear about a group of South Koreans who created a totally fake North Korean rock star on the Internet?

MATT

Must have driven the secret police nuts trying to find him.

SLADE

You know there was a time when information could travel no faster than a man on horseback.

MATT

Yep, the good old days. Smoke signals, homing pigeons...

BRAD

(to Slade)

Bet you still have a flip top phone.

SLADE

Yup. And proud of it.

BRAD

(toasting)

I'll drink to that.

SLADE

You'll drink to anything.

MATT

Hear about this "right to be forgotten" controversy?

BRAD

Who wants the right to be forgotten? I'd rather have the right to forget.

MATT

The EU says you have the right to have stuff about your past erased from the Internet.

SLADE

So you can't be stigmatized by actions done in the past.

MATT

Youthful indiscretions...

BRAD

Seems impossible to me. How'd you get all that stuff off the Internet?

SLADE

Impacts on a lot of issues: censorship, right to privacy, freedom of expression.

BRAD

The right to be a stupid teenage boy making bad choices...

MATT

Speak for yourself, buddy.

BRAD

Hey, Slade, speaking of bad choices, you still have that online romance with that crazy chick in New York?

SLADE

No longer online. She showed up and moved in.

MATT

Moved in with you? Who's this?

SLADE

We'd been online for months. She kept saying she felt this real bond with me. I sort of put her off. She wrote she'd like to meet me in person. Then she showed up on my door step with a suitcase.

MATT

Whoa, guy, you better be careful.

SLADE

She's nice. Worked in New York as a paralegal, then moved to San Diego to be with her mom. Said since she was in the neighborhood...

MATT

San Diego is in the neighborhood?

BRAD

She showed up on your doorstep with a suitcase? Sounds like a flake?

SLADE

She's not a flake. Well, she's a total flake, but if she held down a job as a paralegal for years she must be mentally competent.

BRAD

Wouldn't count on it.

MATT

Do you want her here?

SLADE

Not sure. She's kind of like a lost kitten.

BRAD

Where is she now?

SLADE

In my apartment.

MATT

I don't know, guy, you left her alone in your apartment?

BRAD

Why didn't you bring her here?

SLADE

She doesn't like to go out.

MATT

Agoraphobia?

SLADE

Sort of... not really... she's just really happy at her laptop for hours...

BRAD

Sex?

SLADE

Yeah...

MATT

How is it?

SLADE

It's okay... It's good... She's kind of pretty...

BRAD

You just let some weird chick you met online move into your apartment?

MATT

Sounds like a stalker?

BRAD

What if she's a thief...

SLADE

More like a little lost puppy... Very sweet.... Very gentle...

MATT

You supporting her?

SLADE

Yeah, she doesn't eat much... likes peanut butter on saltines...

MATT

Man, you've got do some serious research...

SLADE

Hope... her name is Hope... doesn't have much of a digital footprint... went to the University of Wisconsin... lived in Brooklyn...

MATT

You need to completely check her out.

BRAD

Complete background check. Eating disorders, codependency, drug/ alcohol problems, outstanding warrants...

MATT

Weird... Are you sure she exists? Not just a figment of your imagination?

BRAD

(toasting)

I'll drink to that.

SLADE

You'll drink to anything.

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

SCENE 4: another night

(The bar is empty except for Slade. Lisa, wearing a striped T-shirt, enters.)

LISA

Hi. Remember me? I walked out on my tab the other night? Sorry. I was just so pissed... What do I owe you?

SLADE

That's okay. On the house.

LISA

Thank you.

SLADE

Would you like something now? Not on the house.

LISA

Gin and tonic. Who was that guy who was here?

SLADE

You mean Brad?

LISA

No, the other guy.

SLADE

Matt?

LISA

Yeah. Matt.

SLADE

He's just a regular.

LISA

Oh.

(She pulls out her iPhone.)

LISA

You worked here long?

SLADE

About a year.

LISA

Like it here?

SLADE

Yeah, it's quiet. Laid back. Suits me. I used to work in a place where I served \$15 cocktails to women wearing short sequined skirts and stilettos.

(She puts down her iPhone and engages with him.)

LISA

Why'd you leave? Tips must have been better there.

SLADE

The owners were a nightmare. A crazy Chinese lady and her rabid right-wing partner-slash-boyfriend. They'd never let you shut down their regulars no matter how drunk they got. And there were some classic regulars, let me tell you. Like Las Vegas Man—dressed and acted like Dean Martin. And Woo Woo Man—at first I thought he had Tourette's syndrome but it turns out he just liked to yell out "Woo Woo" when he got drunk.

LISA

You gave your regulars pet names?

SLADE

Yep. Kept me amused.

LISA

Yeah?

SLADE

Like Cyborg man—had a knee replacement and was always trying to show off his scar. You know, 10% of the US population is technically cyborg—electronic pace makers, artificial joints, silicon-chip implants. Plus the cyborg is without a doubt the most interesting metaphor of our time.

LISA

What do you mean?

SLADE

I've read that the cyborg is at the intersection of three of the dualisms that have been basic to modern Western culture: animal v human, organism v machine, and fiction v reality.

LISA

Jeez, you sound like a philosopher.

SLADE

Just an observer.

LISA

Okay, hit me again.

SLADE

Another gin and tonic?

LISA

No another observation.

SLADE

When a robot production company did a survey around the country asking kids what a robot must be able to do. The number one response was wear a cape. The second was fart.

LISA

You know a lot of stuff?

SLADE

You pick things up working in a bar. Why do Zebras have stripes?

LISA

I don't know... camouflage?

SLADE

Yeah, that's been one theory. Also heat management, predator defense, social interaction... but it turns out none of those are the evolutionary driver for zebra stripes.

LISA

So what's the reason?

SLADE

Biting flies. Biting flies don't detect animals with stripes. Stripes disrupt the fly's ability to detect the animal in nature.

LISA

Do you think that's true for this shirt I'm wearing?

SLADE

Probably just the opposite. It's designed to attract flies... at least barflies...

LISA

Thanks a lot.

SLADE

I observe, then classify, then name. The scientific method.

LISA

So how do you begin your customer classification?

SLADE

First I divided them up into introvert or extrovert.

LISA

What am I?

SLADE

Probably an introvert in extrovert clothing.

LISA

I'm trying to expand into extroversion. For example, I just got this wine app. You scan the label on a bottle and it tells you all about the wine.

SLADE

Fruity with a hint of smoky onions and damp oak trees.

LISA

I know, it never tastes like the description but the app has 2 ½ million labels on it. Okay, so after classifying customers as either introvert or extrovert what do you do?

SLADE

I place them on the happiness scale.

LISA

How do you do that?

SLADE

I listen. People tell me things. I ask questions. *(looking at her very intensely)*
For example, what's wrong with your life?

LISA

What's wrong with my life? I'll tell you. I sit up late at night with a glass of wine checking out random dudes on a dating website.

SLADE

Any luck?

LISA

Well, last night I found a guy and we “favorited” each other’s posts on Twitter.

SLADE

Probably doesn’t constitute real communication.

LISA

Probably not. On the other hand, social networking is a good thing in that it makes up for what people are missing in their lives.

SLADE

That’s because we no longer have a sense of belonging—to an extended family, to a neighborhood, to colleagues where we work... But how can we expect photos of drunken nights and place settings of food and... and...

LISA

... misbehaving cats...

SLADE

... make us feel more connected with others? Social networks are just detaching tools. Throwing you further into isolation.

LISA

But what’s a girl to do? It gets pretty lonely out there. What about you?

SLADE

I’m not really able to fall in love.

LISA

Why not?

SLADE

Psychologists believe that the lack of trust in childhood prevents us from being able to love as an adult.

LISA

What do you think?

SLADE

Probably I’m just a selfish jerk who doesn’t want to commit.

LISA

Relationships shouldn’t be so hard. So difficult.

SLADE

Why not? If we all agree that life is messy and complicated why do we expect our relationships to be simple and pure?

LISA

I still believe you can have a great, romantic, spectacular, relationship—love and be loved-- if you just try hard enough. You've got to try. You've got to keep yourself open. You've got to keep trying to find someone who is also trying. You've got to keep searching that damn Internet, those dating sites... that's how you do it now... that's how it's done. That's life...

SLADE

But what if you're wrong?

LISA

About?

SLADE

About life. About who you are. What you believe in. What if what you think is important, isn't?

LISA

But...

SLADE

No, listen. What if you've got it all wrong? What if we all have it all wrong? What if we're off on a really bad path and we can never get back to where we were before we took this turn... before we backed ourselves into so tight a little corner...

LISA

Too scary to think about.

SLADE

You're right. Too scary. And way too depressing.

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

SCENE 5: late at night

(Slade is behind the bar. Matt sits at the bar. Kara stands waiting by the front door of the bar. It is late. She isn't sure what to do. Seeing Kara's distress, Matt approaches her.)

MATT

You need a lift or something?

KARA

I am waiting for my boyfriend. I have my car, but I am parked down two blocks.

MATT

Probably not a good idea to walk there alone.

KARA

He was supposed to meet me here two hours ago. I probably should leave.

MATT

How about I walk you to your car?

KARA

I don't know why he didn't get here.

MATT

Tied up at work?

KARA

If only...

MATT

Maybe he went to the wrong place.

KARA

The plan was very clear.

MATT

Maybe he just forgot.

KARA

This is kind of embarrassing. I hate him. I really hate him. He does this to me all the time.

MATT
Well, get rid of him then, dummy.

KARA
I know, but...

MATT
But what?

KARA
I just keep waiting for my life to get started. I always seem to be on hold.

MATT
I know what you mean.

KARA
Sort of hate to go home alone.

MATT
Come on, have another drink. On me.

(He leads her back to the bar.)

SLADE
What can I get you?

KARA
Bailey's.

MATT
Me, too.

KARA
I saw you sitting here last week. I saw you try to pick up that woman.

MATT
Grrr.....

KARA
I sort of fantasized... played out various scenarios in my mind. If you'd tried to pick me up.

MATT
Like what?

KARA
I am not going to tell you!

Why not? I was in them. MATT

Because I don't even know you. KARA

Do you want to know me? MATT

I don't know. How do I know if I want to know you until I know you? KARA

You've got me there. MATT

So why don't you drop him? MATT

Because I can fool him. KARA

That's a weird reason. MATT

He's better than nothing. KARA

That's not reason enough. MATT

I can trick him. KARA

You're going to stay with a guy because you can trick him? MATT

Yeah, I am going to stay with a guy because I can trick him. KARA

You can trick me. With no strings attached. MATT

I don't want to sound... KARA

MATT

I like to be tricked. You can trick me all the time. You can trick me and trick me and trick me. I bet I am more trickable than anybody you know. I bet I am the most trickable guy you've ever met.

(He gets up and does a little tap dance.
They laugh.)

MATT (cont.)

You can trick me in the morning, you can trick me late at night, you can trick me all day long, you can trick me in the pale moon light.

(He stops and very seriously takes Kara's face in his hands. He almost kisses her.)

MATT (cont.)

I am here to be tricked.

(She laughs. He laughs. The moment is gone. They both give up.)

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

Scene 6: another night

(Slade is behind the bar. Lisa enters and sits down.)

LISA

Hi. I don't see Matt.

SLADE

He was here earlier. Getting fortified. He's got a date tonight.

LISA

Oh... I'll have a gin and tonic. Who's his date?

SLADE

I have no idea. Someone online. I think he kind of lied about his age—he seemed a little touchy about the topic of age.

LISA

Men lie.

SLADE

As long as women keep believing them. Did you know that men with wide faces are more likely to cheat than those with narrow faces?

LISA

Come on...

SLADE

No really. Scientists believe that more testosterone creates a wider face... and more testosterone also means more aggressive... more risk taking... more prone to lying.

LISA

Interesting, but I don't know... Hell, we all lie... especially online. It's all about advertising. About marketing ourselves. Online dating is just exchanging our own advertisements with others. Does my personal brand resonate with your personal brand? If so, let's meet for dinner.

SLADE

You know the purpose of a brand used to be a way to tell who owned the cow.

LISA

That's right, partner. Then it became a way to tell one cereal from another—snap, crackle and pop.

SLADE

Easier to exchange advertisements than do all the work it takes to get to know someone.

LISA

That's for sure. You get to avoid all that difficult communication. Asking questions. Listening to answers. Which is so boring because it's not all about you.

(Brad enters and goes up to Lisa.)

BRAD

Is this seat taken?

LISA

Obviously not.

BRAD
I just want to apologize for...

LISA
...being a jerk?

BRAD
Yes. I'd had too much to drink...

LISA
(sarcastically)
Wow! A really good excuse. I love that excuse. That is my very favorite excuse.

(Slade comes over to get Brad's order.)

BRAD
The usual. *(to Lisa)* Look, I'm sorry. I don't know what came over me. You just seemed so in charge...

LISA
And to you that means a feminist?

BRAD
No... yes... and then you said you'd get your own check and sort of started to set up the rules...

LISA
The rules of engagement? For the ensuing battle of the sexes?

BRAD
Then I called you a damned feminist...

LISA
I am a feminist. A real live, died in the wool feminist.

BRAD
Okay, that's cool. I didn't mean it as an insult.

LISA
Yes, you did.

BRAD
Some of my best friends are feminists.

LISA

I doubt you have any friends.

BRAD

I have lots of friends who are... Well, I have a few friends who probably know someone who is a feminist.

LISA

What the hell?

BRAD

I have to admit it. I get queasy when I see a guy pushing a kid in a stroller. Or when guys are carrying a kid in one of those back-pack-stomach-pack- baby-slingy things.

LISA

I get queasy when I see a woman stumbling around on five inch heels in a five inch long skirt—all flustered and bewildered. So eager to please.

BRAD

What's wrong with that?

LISA

It's just a masquerade. It says: Don't worry about me. I'm no threat to you. See I'm vulnerable, and fragile, and uncertain. I won't take that job away from you. I won't take that promotion from you. I'm not competition, I'm cute.

BRAD

Huh... I thought they were saying I want to go to bed with you.

LISA

Get real.

BRAD

Why else would women act so sexy? They must want sex.

LISA

They want guys to like them. To ask them out. Maybe even to fall in love with them.

BRAD

I know lots of girls who just hookup. You also got your "friends with benefits" crowd.

LISA

I didn't mean women don't like sex. But I'm sure most women want more in a relationship. Sure women are willing to hookup but they're just copying men thinking that will make men attracted to them. Acting like one of the boys—swearing, drinking, drugs, casual sex, DWIs, rehab... All that “what kind of fuckery is this?” stuff out there in Pop/Slut culture. You know, “aimless and shameless.”

BRAD

But don't you women want freedom, independence, to be one of the boys? Wasn't that what it was all about?

LISA

Sort of backfired, didn't it? We got into the work place alright but now it takes two salaries to afford a middle-class life style. And women still do most of the house work and child rearing on top of working full time.

BRAD

The old “be careful what you wish for?”

LISA

I'm not saying we should go back to the barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen model but it doesn't seem we've come up with a really good solution.

BRAD

You've got me there. Probably best to just avoid the whole relationship thing. Always worked for me.

LISA

(clinking his glass with hers)

Agreed.

BRAD

So where do you work? I assume you do work. I see you're not barefoot or pregnant.

LISA

I work for a 3-D modeler of hearing aids.

BRAD

(toasting)

I'll drink to that.

SLADE

You'll drink to anything.

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

SCENE 7: late that night

(Slade is behind the bar. Lisa and Kara sit at the bar. Both are on their iPhones.)

LISA

Oh, my god, here's a profile picture of a guy sitting next to a tiger.

KARA

You on Tinder?

LISA

Yes, how'd you know?

KARA

The tiger guys are all over Tinder. OkCupid too. Tigers are a trend. A total cliché. Guys think a picture of themselves with a doped up tiger taken in some Southeast Asian animal park makes them look sophisticated, gutsy, and like they have money to travel.

LISA

Guess you know the Internet dating scene pretty well.

KARA

I keep my hand in but I have a boyfriend. He's not a great catch but I didn't plan on keeping him anyway. We're pretty much in the final stage of breaking up. It's lonely. I'm going to have to start going back online seriously again.

LISA

Sometime you can feel the most lonely when you are in a relationship going sour.

SLADE

You know, the loneliest one among us all is not necessarily the one who is alone but the one who is trying the hardest not to be alone.

KARA

Sometimes I feel the most lonely when I'm in a room full of people.

SLADE

Someone analyzed the data on OkCupid and found that 20 year old women are most attracted to 23 year old men. Forty year old women are most attracted to 38 year old men. But for men: 20 year old men are most attracted to 20 year old women, by 25 they are more attracted to 21 year old women, at 30 they are back to 20 year olds again, and at 40 they want a 21 year old woman. In other words men from 20 to 40 want women who are 20 or 21.

KARA

Yikes! That's depressing.

LISA

You tried Datefinder?

KARA

Nope. Did try MateUp.

LISA

Yew... I hate that site. Full of Brads and Chads. I can't take those guys with restless leg syndrome—bouncing their knees up and down, up and down, like a jackhammer.

KARA

Yeah, our Brad here is one of the Braddiest and Chadiest of all Brads and Chads.

LISA

He's not that bad, but he is a drunk.

KARA

I have a friend who had 42 coffee dates before she gave up. All the guys cared about was what gym she worked out in.

LISA

I hear you. I went on ProfessionalsOnly but I kept attracting older guys who wanted to ask my advice about younger women. One guy spent the whole date asking me if I thought it was possible if the 17 year old daughter of a friend of his could really love him.

KARA

Once I had a great dinner with a guy—really clicked--until he walked me to my car and asked if I would like to spank him.

LISA

What'd you say?

KARA

No, but I'll gladly slug you in the jaw.

LISA

And the married guys who click "currently separated." I wasted way too much time before I caught onto that scam.

KARA

I had an affair with a married man I met on line. He'd just moved here from Cleveland. His wife and kids hadn't moved yet. He bought a house and we lived in the house until they arrived. He wasn't very sophisticated. I think I was good for him. I got him to stop wearing white socks with his sandals.

LISA

You still seeing him?

KARA

Nope. He started seeing my best friend.

LISA

So much for best friends.

KARA

So much for digital matching.

LISA

What are you looking for?

KARA

I just want someone to stay home with, cuddle on the couch and watch movies. Eat popcorn. And he's really rich. You?

LISA

I just want to find somebody to spend the rest of my life with. But how do I get to that point?

KARA

I think feminism took a wrong turn when it got women thinking they could detach sex from love and caring.

LISA

And you always have to cope with some guy's selfishness or dishonesty. Or worst of all his insecurity. What men lie about most in their online profile is their height.

KARA

Yeah, like you'd fail to notice when you meet him. I had a date with one guy who said he was 5'6" but was really 5' 3" or so and I immediately went into a plié position.

(Kara gets off the bar stool and demonstrates.)

KARA (cont.)

I spent the whole date slouching or with bent knees or my legs wide apart... tried every position I could think of.

KARA

Oh god, you're right. I always feel I need to build a man up as a man... I suppose this is because there are fewer and fewer real men... and that is scary... and that means we have to try to create them as best we can.

SLADE

Men have reasons to be insecure. They die younger than women. They are more prone to coronary disease. They find it difficult to seek help when the need it. They regard illness as a sign of weakness.

KARA

Yeah, well, tough shit. Things aren't so great for women either. There's plenty we have to deal with in our lives.

LISA

Yeah, like always trying to look fabulous...

KARA

And posting all that fabulousness... Speaking of which, Lisa, I need to take a selfie. You and me, best buds.

(Kara moves in on Lisa and puts her arm around her and starts snapping photos.)

LISA

Please, Kara, I really don't want to...

KARA

Come on... I need some new photos to post.

LISA

I look a mess... my hair...

KARA

I want to show everyone my new best friend.

LISA

Kara, I've known you for like three minutes...

KARA

I need a full length shot...

(She hands the phone/camera to Slade and pulls Lisa up off the bar stool.)

KARA

Thanks, Slade.

(She strikes various poses with Lisa. Slade takes various shots. Lisa stands there like a wooden stick while Kara strikes pose after sexy pose. She pulls up her shirt a little bit and puts her thumbs on the top of her pants pulling them down a bit.)

KARA

Gotta show them abs. I worked like a mother for those. Okay, Lisa, turn around. Over your shoulder. Have to flaunt my butt. Not quite Brazilian but it'll do.

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

SCENE 8: another night

(Slade is behind the bar. Lisa sits at the bar. Matt enters.)

MATT

Excuse me, is this seat taken?

LISA

Obviously not. None of the other seats are either.

MATT

Sorry about what happened last week... with Brad...

LISA

It's all okay. Ran into him here a few nights ago. He apologized. All taken care of. Got any more pickup lines?

MATT

Sure. Tons. (*He moves closer.*) I'm not a photographer but I can picture me and you together. Or the ever popular: Do you have a sunburn or are you always this hot? Working?

LISA

Nope.

MATT

I seem to have lost my phone number. Can I have yours?

LISA

Lame.

(Brad enters.)

BRAD

Hi, guys. Hello, Lisa.

LISA

Hi, Brad.

BRAD

What's happening? (*to Slade*). Jack on the rocks, please, and another round for my friends here.

MATT

Trying out pick-up lines on Lisa here.

BRAD

(*moving in on Lisa*)

Hey, is your name Wi-Fi? Because I'm feeling a connection.

LISA

Groan. Okay, come on, you two. Worst pick-up line you've ever heard.

BRAD

Hey, Babe, congrats. You've just been moved to the top of my to-do list.

LISA

Matt, your turn.

MATT

I'm not staring at your boobs. I'm staring at your heart.

LISA

Okay, okay, that's enough.

(Kara enters. She walks and tweets at the same time.)

BRAD

Hey, Kara, you want to hear a great pickup line?

KARA

Yah, right, like I haven't heard enough pickup lines.

BRAD

Here's one. You look in great shape. You're a spinner, right? You know what would look good on me? You.

LISA

(laughingly)

You are so gross. Come on, Slade, bet you've heard some great ones.

(Kara sits down and continues on her iPhone. Slade brings her a drink.)

SLADE

You're the Apple of my i-Mac.

BRAD

The word of the day is legs. Let's go back to your place and spread the word.

LISA

Okay, okay, you guys spend way too much time in bars.

SLADE

It's my job.

LISA

(to Matt, Brad, and Kara)

Slade's a philosopher. Bet you didn't know.

BRAD

Say something philosophical.

SLADE
No, you don't want to hear...

BRAD
No really...

KARA
Philosophy can be very sexy...

LISA
Yes, we'd love to hear...

MATT
Bartenders are supposed to be philosophical...

SLADE
(slowly explaining)
The couple is the site of "love." The truth of "love" is in the movement from chance encounter to challenging commitment. The commitment is to the recognition and acceptance of "difference" between two people. Each negotiates a shared encounter with the world, no longer from the perspective of the One, but from the perspective of the Two.

LISA
That's beautiful... Did you think that up?

BRAD
Hey, Dude, that's really philosophical...

MATT
You make that up?

SLADE
Nope, quoting Alain Badiou...

(Kara starts to type in the name on her iPhone.)

KARA
Alan who?

SLADE
Alain. Spelt a-l-a-i-n.

KARA
Spell the last name.

SLADE

B-a-d-i-o-u.

BRAD

I've heard of Adrian Balboa. Rocky's wife.

KARA

(reading)

Badiou. A French philosopher... Badiou has written about the concepts of being, truth and the subject in a way that, he claims, is neither postmodern nor simply a repetition of modernity. Politically, Badiou is committed to the far left, and to the communist tradition.

MATT

Who are you, Slade? You work for the CIA or something?

LISA

Adrian Belew. Fronted the rock group King Crimson.

KARA

(typing on her iPhone)

How do you spell Belew?

LISA

Never mind. Too obscure a reference.

BRAD

Adrienne Barbeau. The chick with the big tits in *The Fog*. Scary fucking movie.

SLADE

Never mind. Forget it. So much for philosophy.

BRAD

(toasting)

I'll drink to that.

SLADE

You'll drink to anything.

(They all check their iPhones.)

MATT

(looking up)

(to Slade) Hey, by the way, how things going with Hope? Clean you out yet?

LISA

Who's Hope?

BRAD

Slade's on-line, now live-in agoraphobic girlfriend...

MATT

...Who may or may not be on the same space-time continuum as the rest of us.

SLADE

Why are you so pessimistic? I thought you'd be happy for me.

MATT

Always believed in pessimism.

SLADE

Well, Phil Libin says it's well known in cognitive science that if you are pessimistic, you sound "smarter." People are more likely to listen to and repeat pessimistic assessments. Libin says pessimism is a failure of imagination.

KARA

(on her iPhone)

How do you spell Libin?

ALL

Forget it, Kara.

MATT

Let's get back to enigmatic Hope.

KARA

How do you spell enigmatic?

ALL

(warning)

Kara...

MATT

You've told us she's really, really sweet. But I wonder--not much there, there?

SLADE

Dunno. She's a little vacant at times, but she's very computer savvy... Can't be dumb... She's very good at organizing stuff... electronically...

BRAD

Well, that's something we all want in a woman. I know it's high on my list.

LISA

Well, one good thing about the Internet is how we can organize our personal information.

SLADE

In the 1760s a Swedish Naturalist invented the index card.

MATT

Where do you get this stuff?

SLADE

In the 1880s filing cabinets became a popular way of storing documents.

MATT

Slade, your infinite facts are your best defense.

SLADE

Matt, your personality is your best defense.

LISA

Isn't that true of all of us?

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

SCENE 9 - another night

(Matt and Brad sit at the bar. Both are on iPhones. Kara is at the other end of the bar on her iPhone. Slade is behind the bar. Lisa walks in.)

SLADE

The usual?

LISA

Yep.

MATT

Hey, Lisa. I got some more pickup lines.

LISA

Oh, god, please.

MATT

No, these are great. There are all these sites with pickup lines. Here's one: I was so enchanted by your beauty that I ran into that wall over there. So I'm going to need your name and number for insurance purposes.

LISA

That's so pathetic. Guys going online to get pickup lines.

BRAD

(to Matt)

You on Pickup Lines Galore?

MATT

Yep. They got great categories: dirty, Disney, cheesy, math, Harry Potter...

BRAD

Here's one: You look so familiar... didn't we take a class together? I could've sworn we had chemistry.

MATT

Here's one: You're so beautiful you made me forget my pick up line.

LISA

I miss the old standards: May I buy you a drink? Do you want to dance?

BRAD

Oh, here's a good suggestion. Use a put down. I love your hair cut. Must be the style 'cause I saw five women today with that exact same cut. Or love your dress. There were five other dresses just like it in here tonight? Supposed to make the woman feel all insecure and unsure of herself.

LISA

Or make her think you are a total jerk.

(Lisa takes her drink and moves over next to Kara.)

LISA

Hi, Kara. What are you doing?

KARA

Working on my timeline.

MATT

What's that?

KARA

Your timeline contains information on your major milestones: marriage, acquisition of a pet, purchase of a house, first Christmas with your spouse, birth of children, honeymoon. Of course I don't have any of those but it has minor milestones too—the song I listened to on Tuesday and what I had for dinner on Friday. I'm working on my minor milestones.

LISA

Hey, Matt, you can present a picture of yourself in your past.

(Matt puts down his iPhone.)

MATT

Yee, gods, what happens when you get older? Your first divorce? The foreclosure on your house? You begin taking cholesterol medication?

LISA

Doesn't it assume that your past is so interesting that it deserves to be on the Internet? Forever?

SLADE

It's just a way to gather more information on you. The more you post the more Facebook collects about you—data that is extremely valuable to companies that want to sell you things.

KARA

Oh, I never thought about that. Just thought it was cool.

SLADE

All of our social rituals are changing. You know you can Skype into a funeral—a whole new way of mourning is going to develop.

KARA

I don't think things are changing much. Except maybe people don't want to get married. They don't want to settle down.

LISA

Yep, nobody is out looking long-term. We're all short-term.

MATT

Nobody's exclusive. That's what dating is. I'm dating four women at the moment.

LISA

Really?

BRAD

I just want to hang out with my friends. Get tattooed and live life.

KARA

Have fun.

LISA

Women my age are too busy having a career, having a job, not really having fun.

SLADE

All you guys think about is dating. Look around you at what the hell is going on? Terrorist groups are selling stuff on the Internet: T-shirts, toys, hoodies.

LISA

So what? Facebook's a good thing. Like giving everyone the chance to be the star in their own ongoing personal documentary.

SLADE

A fictionalized documentary.

MATT

That's for sure.

SLADE

What's the current mindset?

MATT

Boredom?

SLADE

And what created that mind-set? No challenges. We live in a void and what created that void? Lack of community, technology, detachment, lazy thinking...

KARA

This is so much fun. I love you guys. I love hanging out with all of you.

BRAD

Okay, Slade, give us another fancy word.

SLADE

Agnotology

KARA

How do you...

SLADE

A-g-n-o-t-o-l-g-y

MATT

Who are you anyway? In witness protection?

LISA

A professor who didn't get tenure?

KARA

(reading her iPhone)

The study of the culturally induced ignorance or doubt... the cultural production of ignorance... a neologism... what's a neologism?

SLADE

A new word. A name for a newly coined term. The issue is if we live in the information society how come we are drowning in ignorance?

BRAD

(toasting)

I'll drink to that.

SLADE

You'll drink to anything.

(They all are getting progressively drunker.)

LISA

(to Kara)

I like your outfit.

KARA

Thanks. *(to Matt)* And I love your outfit—sort of your basic death of the salesman look.

BRAD

What about mine?

LISA

(sarcastically)

Very stylish.

MATT

Brad, you're drunk. Men don't wear outfits.

KARA

Sure they do. I love men in working-class chic.

MATT

What do you know about working-class anything?

BRAD

Yeah, Kara, you wouldn't know working class if it bit you in the ass. Hey, Slade, tell her something about the working class?

SLADE

The economic base determines the superstructure.

MATT

What are you? A Marxist?

SLADE

You can talk about social class without being a Marxist. Marxism had its day. Didn't work out so well as an economic policy, did it?

KARA

Nor a fashion statement—all that boring gray... and those stupid hats.

SLADE

The problem with Marxism was it didn't account for human nature. Especially male human nature—power, control...

MATT

Testosterone...

SLADE

Marxist theory is dead. There are no more big ideas. Those who believe the world can improve at all, know it is only by baby steps.

BRAD

Slade, what the fuck are you talking about?

SLADE

Nothing. Forget it. Another round?

BRAD
(*toasting*)

I'll drink to that.

SLADE

You'll drink to anything.

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

Scene 10: another night

(Slade is behind the bar. Lisa is the only customer.)

LISA

You got a code name for me yet?

SLADE

Oh, that'd be zebra stripes.

LISA

So where have you put me on the happiness scale?

SLADE

Actually, you're pretty high up. Eight to nine.

LISA

That's good to know. Give me your next type of classification?

SLADE

I like to identify customers with a basic plot line.

LISA

I have no idea what you're talking about.

SLADE

There are seven basic plot lines.

LISA

For example?

SLADE

Rags to riches. The Cinderella story.

LISA
Oh, my god, that'd be Kara.

SLADE
Overcoming the monster.

LISA
Brad?

SLADE
Definitely.

LISA
And Matt?

SLADE
Oh, harder to say. Maybe rebirth. He certainly could use one. Or maybe the quest.

LISA
The quest might be you.

SLADE
Possible, but it's more likely I'm tragedy--the fall from grace.

LISA
What about me?

SLADE
Oh, you're most likely voyage and return.

LISA
Yeah, I have no idea where I'm going and less an idea where I'd return to. At least I'm on the move. But are you sure you're tragedy?

SLADE
Yep, the revenge variation. I didn't kill my father but I sure am making him suffer.

LISA
But are you sure about this line of inquiry?

SLADE
Well, if you're not comfortable with categorizing people into the basic plot lines you can always try using the four humors.

LISA

A touch medieval don't you think?

SLADE

Yeah, but it works. Black bile, blood, yellow bile, and the ever popular phlegmatic.

LISA

Okay...

SLADE

For example, Matt tends toward black bile—thoughtful, sentimental, un-enterprising, a touch of melancholic. Kara is blood—joyful, amorous, up-beat.

LISA

And Brad?

SLADE

Not fully formed yet, but definitely a yellow bile in the making-- easily angered, impatient, loud, opinionated, demands quick actions and responses, can be vengeful.

LISA

What's the fourth one again?

SLADE

The phlegmatic—composed, undemonstrative, cool, calm. And that would be me.

LISA

What about me? Which one am I?

SLADE

The goal is to balance all four. You're the balanced one.

LISA

I try.

SLADE

In "Octopussy" Ian Fleming laid out four types of drunks based on the four humors. The sanguine drunk—gay, to the point of hysteria and idiocy.

LISA

Our lovely Kara.

SLADE

Right. The choleric—fighting, smashing people and things, the mean drunk.

LISA

Our potential Brad.

SLADE

The phlegmatic drunk—sinks into a morass of sullen gloom. And the fourth, the melancholic drunk full of self-pity, mawkish, cries in his beer.

LISA

Neither one really sounds like Matt.

SLADE

Give him time.

LISA

Guess I could end up the melancholic variety talking about who I love or have loved or should have loved. People I've loved and lost or loved and left.

SLADE

Lisa, what are you talking about?

LISA

Nothing. Forget it.

(Kara enters.)

SLADE

Hi, Kara. The usual?

KARA

Yes, please. I'll have a glass of water first. Just came from spinning class.

LISA

You're really the epitome of self-discipline.

KARA

That's me. The modern woman and her to do list: one, pilatisize, two botoxify, three liposuctionate.

LISA

The modern woman, that's for sure.

(Brad wanders in already slightly drunk.)

BRAD

Greetings, everyone. We really must stop meeting like this. It'll start to look like we have no place else to go.

SLADE

Good to see you too.

LISA

Hi, Brad.

KARA

(pulling out a stool for him)

Over here, Slugger.

BRAD

(to Lisa)

You wouldn't have an aspirin, would you?

LISA

Is that a pick up line?

SLADE

One aspirin coming right up.

(Matt enters.)

BRAD

Oh, good, the gang's all here.

LISA/KARA

Hi, Matt.

MATT

What's up?

KARA

Isn't it great that we have each other?

MATT

What do you mean have each other?

KARA

Like friends, like we're getting to know all about each other. Like a co-ed fraternity.

LISA

Or a co-ed sorority.

KARA

We know a lot about each other.

BRAD

Hey, Kara, I don't know what you do for a living.

KARA

I frame pictures.

BRAD

What kind of pictures?

KARA

All kinds. I work in a picture framing shop. We frame everything—from old family photos to crappy posters to hang over the couch. Very boring. I'd like to start my own business.

MATT

What kind of business?

KARA

I'm not sure. Maybe cupcakes. I make really good cupcakes and I love to decorate them. I thought maybe I could start a business that sells them to restaurants.

MATT

Tough business. How to distinguish your cupcakes from all the others out there.

KARA

I also thought about pet photos. I'm a pretty good photographer.

MATT

Yeah, but it's so easy for everybody to take their own photos. Just click your phone. Do people still pay for professionally-taken photos?

BRAD

You see that story on television about the guy in Mexico who shot himself in the head while taking a selfie of himself with a gun?

LISA

Did someone post the selfie?

BRAD

I don't think so.

KARA

I also was thinking about starting a skype dating service. First I could offer a makeover and then set decoration and really flattering lighting.

MATT

Promising idea.

BRAD

(in a mechanical voice) Recalculating route. (normal voice) Hey, Slade, can you put on some music? I think we need some music.

SLADE

Sure.

(Slade plays the music fairly loud so they have to shout to be heard.)

KARA

I also thought about doggie make overs. I could do a makeover on all those little dogs in the pound and then they'd have a better chance of getting a home.

MATT

But who would pay the bill? Not the pound.

KARA

Never thought of that.

LISA

I heard about a woman who gotten beaten up in a bar for stepping into a picture someone was taking.

SLADE

Did you hear that the Turkish Prime Minister said that women shouldn't laugh in public?

KARA

Bastard.

(She gets up and starts dancing alone.)

LISA

Well, one positive side of the Internet is people can't get away with much anymore. The secret police around the world have a hard time being secret.

(Lisa gets up and dances alone. Brad takes out an electronic cigarette and starts to smoke it.)

MATT

Phone photos have curbed police violence. Always someone around taking a picture of an arrest. Much harder to beat up the suspect.

SLADE

Hey, man, you can't smoke that in here.

BRAD

No one's looking.

MATT

It's the law, man. Come on, don't give Slade a hard time.

BRAD

What the fuck...

MATT

Slade could lose his job.

KARA

Come on, Brad, dance.

(Brad gets up to dance but stumbles into the bar stool.)

BRAD

Don't you hate it when that happens?

(Kara, Lisa, and Brad dance alone, each in their own world, with their own steps.)

KARA

Come on, Matt, dance.

(Matt joins them.)

BRAD
Slade, get out here.

MATT
If I can do it you can do it.

KARA
You don't have to stay behind the bar all the time.

(Slade joins them. They all dance each in their own little world.)

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

Scene 11: another night

(Kara, Matt, Lisa, and Brad sit at the bar.
Slade is behind the bar.)

LISA
Okay, who turns on their computer in the morning and gets their email before they get their coffee?

MATT
Me.

BRAD
Me.

SLADE
I do.

KARA
I don't drink coffee.

LISA
Okay, before you brush your teeth.

KARA
Me.

LISA
See my point? *(beat)* Bet Brad has a "Yo" app.

What's that? MATT

It posts the single word "Yo." LISA

Brad? MATT

Yo. BRAD
(admitting)

See my point? LISA

Well at least I don't have Titstare. BRAD

Titstare? MATT

The app that lets guys share photos of themselves staring at tits. BRAD

Cleavage... SLADE

Cleavage... BRAD

Good, god, see my point? LISA

No, but I'd like to see your... BRAD

Brad... Cool it... MATT

In a few years we'll all be wearing our technology. SLADE
(changing the subject)

KARA

Fashion and technology.

MATT

Not me. I don't wear jewelry.

LISA

Yep, wearable technology—that's the future.

BRAD

I think it's going to be cool!

KARA

Brad, you already dress like you're still in middle school.

SLADE

They've got tennis shoes that analyze your physical activities. Calories burned... heart rate...

BRAD

And sneakers that hook up to Google map. To guide runners. They vibrate when you should turn left when you're out jogging.

MATT

When's the last time you went jogging?

KARA

I can't keep up with all this stuff.

LISA

A woman in Lebanon created a survival tweet.

KARA

What's that?

LISA

She got tired of having to tweet everyone who'd be worried about her after every bombing so she invented an app. I'm alive. One touch and a tweet goes out to all your followers saying I'm still alive. After a terrorist bombing networks are all jammed—this lets you notify everyone you're okay.

MATT

Good for war zones.

KARA

Good for earthquakes.

BRAD

Good for bar fights.

MATT

If you hook it to one of those health monitors and it reads that your pulse has stopped will it send out a tweet I'm dead?

BRAD

Wonder how many people I'd send that to. Wonder who'd really care.

LISA

Interesting question. Have to think about my list.

MATT

May turn out that none of us really has anyone who cares.

KARA

We care. We're all best buddies here. We're really close. We've got something special here. Best friends forever. I love you guys.

(Brad makes motions to go.)

BRAD

Tab, Slade.

MATT

Me too.

(Except for Lisa they all settle up with Slade during the following conversation and make their moves to leave.)

LISA

You leaving?

BRAD

Gonna go watch Naked Dating.

LISA

You've got to be kidding.

BRAD

No, it's great. They're at this resort and it's all really embarrassing...

KARA

I'd never watch that. I like shows that aren't so stupid... and that are real...

BRAD

Like?

KARA

Project Runway for example.

BRAD

What's reality, Kara?

KARA

Reality is when things are for real, like really real, like they're really as real as reality can make them real... Like shit, man, this is for real...

MATT

Reality TV—what's real? They shoot 60 hours of footage to get one hour of show.

KARA

Besides the people are so unattractive. Who wants to look at ugly people? Only pretty people should be on TV.

MATT

Give me a good cop show anytime.

BRAD

Bye, everyone, catch you later.

KARA

Bye, guys, love you.

(Matt, Kara, and Brad exit. A stillness after the flurry of the exits. Slade and Lisa take a moment.)

SLADE

Survival is insufficient.

LISA

Plato?

SLADE

Star Trek.

LISA

Do you know what you need, Slade?

A girl friend?

SLADE

No.

LISA

A lawyer?

SLADE

You need to take risks.

LISA

Back at you, Lisa?

SLADE

I'm better in theory than in practice.

LISA

Me, too. The world has turned out to be pretty disappointing.

SLADE

I'm with you there, bud. My general state of being is pretty much confused, scared, lonely.

LISA

That's how we come into the world. And then if we get lucky we have parents who fool us into thinking that isn't the case. Until you reach adolescence, then it's back to confused, scared, lonely.

SLADE

A few get to stay in that ignorance-is-bliss state. But then a life unexamined is not worth living...

LISA

Plato.

SLADE

My aunt Cressy. So wipe the fog off the rose-colored glasses and deal...

LISA

You've always got your avoidance mechanisms... religion... drugs...

LISA
(raising her glass)

Alcohol...

SLADE
But then we die—confused, scared, and devastatingly lonely. What it is, is what it is.

LISA
Plato?

SLADE
James Brown.

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

Scene 12 – another night

(Matt, Brad, Kara, and Slade are huddled at the bar.)

KARA
How come Asian women are getting all the eligible guys?

MATT
I guess guys think they are more pliable, soft, not so in your face.

KARA
But supposedly they have big dark nipples.

BRAD
So what's wrong with that?

SLADE
It's called "yellow fever." The white guy drawn to the exotic. The stereotype of the Chinese women--less aggressive, more submissive, sex-kitten...

BRAD
Hey, Matt, you ever dated a chink?

SLADE
Cool it, Brad...

MATT

Jesus, Brad... Language.

BRAD

(indicating Kara)

Well, she started it.

(Lisa enters.)

LISA

Hi, guys, what's happening? What are you talking about?

SLADE

Oh, just bar talk.

LISA

You're discussing classical music? Bartok? As in Bela Bartok?

MATT

No, as in shooting the shit around a bar.

KARA

How do you spell Bartok?

LISA

B-a-r-t-o-k.

(Kara types on her iPhone.)

BRAD

How about Bela Lugosi? Now that was one scary dude.

KARA

(reading)

A Hungarian composer and pianist. Considered one of the most important composers of the 20th century. Through his analytical study of folk music, he was one of the founders of comparative musicology, which later became ethnomusicology.

BRAD

Now there's a Slade word for you. Hey, Lisa, are you a conservative or a liberal? I seem to be surrounded by a bunch of politically correct lefty liberals.

LISA

I'm an independent.

MATT

Ya, you would be.

SLADE

Bar rules. Don't talk religion. Don't talk politics.

BRAD

(getting belligerently drunk)

No, let's discuss politics. We're all friends here. Who agrees with me? Things are going just fine except we shouldn't let any of those foreigners in—Chinks, Japs, Cambodians--the whole slanty-eyed lot. Taking our jobs.

SLADE

Brad, not the time, not the place...

BRAD

What da think, independent Lisa?

SLADE

Let's skip politics. Another round? Anyone?

LISA

(full of sarcasm)

You're right, Brad. Those damn Chinks. Coming over here and sending their kids to school to get all A's. What bastards. And those Japs. Same thing. Their kids all become doctors and lawyers.

BRAD

(missing her sarcasm)

And the Arabs...

LISA

(full of sarcasm)

Yep, those towel heads are all over our shopping malls spending money like it's going out of style. And those damn Pakis and Indians—going to our universities and learning all that computer shit.

SLADE

Okay, Lisa, you've made your point.

BRAD

Damn foreigners...

LISA

Hey, Brad, what about the Wops? If we hadn't let them into New York there would be no Mafia today. And the Micks. Dumb stupid Catholics. All those damn kids. They took over the Boston Police department. Why'd we let Catholics in anyway? Our Founding Fathers were protestants, after all. And Kikes—came to New York and took over The New York Times. And the banks. Money lenders every one of them. And those Pollacks-- all those stupid Pollacks. Those Pollack jokes prove how stupid the Pollacks are.

MATT

Lisa, cool it, he's drunk.

LISA

Just extending his logic that's all.

SLADE

You know there's an evolutionary explanation for the liberal and conservation divide. The tribe needed both the liberal types to take risks, to explore, to breed outside the tribe and the conservative types to stay at home base, keep strangers out. It's in our DNA.

BRAD

I'm with you, Lisa, we need to secure our borders...

SLADE

The theory is that our political convictions are hard-wired. The tribe needed both political types.

LISA

What about Alaska? Why'd we ever make that a state? Those Eskimos are really Chinks—Chinks who crossed over the Bering Strait thousands of years ago. Hawaii—the same thing. All those Islanders—Chinks, originally. And the Redskins, sorry, "Native Americans," originally Chinks one and all.

BRAD

Damn right.

LISA

And I hate the Armenians—Armenia is close to Romania and you know what Romanians are—damn gypsies. And the Spanish. Thank god they went to South American. But then they fucked the Indians and now all their offspring want to cross the border into our land.

BRAD

More border security, that's what we need.

LISA

And the French. I hate the French.

BRAD

Yeah, snotty bastards.

LISA

But, geez, at least they only went to New Orleans. They're the ones who gave us that god damned Statue of Liberty with all that give us your tired and your poor shit. We ought to send that statute right back to them. COD.

BRAD

Yeah, that'd show 'em.

LISA

And Krauts. I hate Krauts—think about WW II. Besides they tend to be big, fat, and ugly. (*to Brad*) You aren't a Kraut, are you? You kind of look like a Kraut. Sorry. Didn't mean to offend.

BRAD

No, I'm not a Kraut. Not that I know of.

LISA

I guess that pretty much leaves the Scandinavians. They're okay. Kind of dull but at least they have blue eyes and blond hair. All your ancestors are from England, aren't they?

BRAD

Maybe. Some of them might a been. Actually I don't really think so.

LISA

Well, I think we've pretty much covered it.

SLADE

Brad, you need to call it a night.

BRAD

Yeah, you're right. See you all later.

MATT

You're walking, right?

BRAD

Yep.

(Brad leaves.)

MATT

You got that out of your system, Lisa?

LISA

Nope I could have gone farther. It depends on where you are from in England. I'm sure the folks from Leeds hate the folks from York. The folks from Hull hate those from Manchester. And what about Liverpool? Just think about the soccer matches.

SLADE

No wonder the world's such a mess. We can't even get along here in this little tiny microcosm.

LISA

It just goes to show you that you can think you know someone and you don't know them at all.

KARA

Jeez, all I asked was why so many white guys are dating Asian women.

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

SCENE 13: another night

(Everyone is sitting around the bar looking at their phones. Each is isolated. There is no energy in the room. They are all quite drunk. Brad is very drunk and has his head on the bar. He suddenly wakes up.)

BRAD

Okay, this is boring. Let's liven up this party. What is this a god damned funeral? Matt's buying this round. Okay, come on. Let's go, folks. We're all buddies. Shit, we see each other almost every night. Let's drop the masks. We're like people who have lost their souls. Fucking zombies. Let's get down and dirty. Revelation time. Any one gay?

KARA

I tried it once with a girlfriend.

BRAD

How'd it work out?

KARA

I can't remember. I was only twelve.

BRAD

Anyone else?

MATT

I got nothing.

BRAD

Me neither.

LISA

Sometimes I wish I were. Women are so much nicer than men.

BRAD

(in a mechanical voice)

Recalculating route. Incest? Anyone?

(They all shake their head no.)

KARA

I always hated my brother.

BRAD

Anyone ever commit a felony?

ALL

Not me. No. Nope.

BRAD

Come on. DWIs? Embezzlement? Money laundering?

LISA

Matt's the only one who's got enough money to launder.

KARA

I had a five dollar bill in my jeans when I washed them last week.

MATT

Doesn't count.

BRAD

My brother-in-law didn't pay his income taxes for eight years. I didn't turn him in.

Felony by omission. SLADE

Doesn't count. MATT

BRAD
(in a mechanical voice)
Recalculating route. *(back to a normal voice)* Any of you ever said "I love you"
to your mother as an adult?

Come to think of it, no. MATT

Not me. SLADE

Huh? Weird... don't think so... LISA

I might have... not sure... KARA

That went nowhere... MATT

BRAD
Okay, gang, come one. *(in a mechanical voice)* Recalculating route. *(in a normal voice)* How about the seven deadly sins. What's the last seven deadly sin that you committed?

I don't even know what they are. KARA

Sloth is one. MATT

I could never do sloth. Why are they called deadly? KARA

They're the mortal sins. SLADE

You mean they're mortal because mortals commit them? KARA

SLADE

No, a mortal sin means you go to hell immediately.

KARA

Oh.

(They all try to come up with them.)

BRAD

Okay, sloth that's one. Then there's gluttony... Greed...

MATT

Avarice...

BRAD

Same as greed...

KARA

Envy.

LISA

Sloth, gluttony, greed, envy... Then there's wrath, pride... lust.

MATT

Oh, hell, we all have committed those.

KARA

They all sound like pretty positive traits to me except, of course, for that sloth thing.

LISA

And gluttony.

SLADE

You know, they're just the old religious version of the shadow side of the unconscious. To use a Jungian explanation.

MATT

Who are you and what did you do with my favorite bartender?

KARA

(typing on her iPhone)

How do you spell Jungian?

ALL
(*warning*)

Kara.

KARA
Why is it called envy instead of jealousy? What's the difference?

SLADE
Envy is wanting or longing for what you don't have...

LISA
Why live at all if you don't long for something you don't have?

SLADE
Jealousy is when you lose something or someone to someone else.

KARA
I don't get it.

SLADE
You envy Brad Pitt if you want a wife like Angelina Jolie. You're jealous of Brad Pitt if your wife leaves you for him.

KARA
What is it if I just want to be Angelina Jolie so I can sleep with Brad Pitt?

MATT/LISA
Lust.

BRAD
These sins don't sound so deadly to me. Greed, envy and pride keep you on your toes.

MATT
Wrath is good. Stand up for yourself. Be a man.

KARA
I think the list needs a little updating.

BRAD
What do you mean?

KARA
Something more modern like Thou shall not deal drugs.

SLADE

Thou shall nots—that's the ten commandments.

KARA

Same thing. A bunch of rules.

LISA

Kara's on to something. Environmental pollution should be a deadly sin. And homophobia.

MATT

Accumulating great wealth. Eye of a needle and all that.

BRAD

Are you Catholic?

MATT

Lapsed.

SLADE

Are there any other kind?

KARA

Once when I was little I went to Saturday morning church school with my Catholic cousin. The nun was teaching us how to hold our hands in prayer and said if they were slack and not pushed tightly against each other the devil could get in. I spent the whole next week holding my hands slacked in the prayer position looking for the devil. He never appeared and I guess that's why I ended up an agnostic.

SLADE

Too chicken-shit to be an atheist?

KARA

I could've believed in a virgin birth but that snakes could talk—that's where I drew the line.

MATT

What about you, Lisa? You religious?

LISA

Let's just say I'm a romantic atheist. Isn't adultery a seven deadly sin?

SLADE

Covered under lust.

BRAD

Okay, now we're getting somewhere. Who has committed adultery?

SLADE

How can any of us have committed adultery? None of us are married.

LISA

You have to be married to commit adultery.

KARA

Does sleeping with a married man count?

BRAD

Sure. Fess up. Details.

KARA

I had an affair with a married man. For two years. Then he asked out my best friend. He told her he wanted to talk about me but it was just an excuse to see her.

MATT

Oh, that's not good.

BRAD

What did you do?

KARA

The obvious. I emailed his wife. It was a really mean thing to do but he made me so mad. I didn't think he should get away with it so I wrote his wife and said I'd been having an affair with her husband for the last two years. Now he has started to see my best friend and I think that isn't fair. I attached a picture of myself so she could see that I'm not cheap. I wanted her to see that I am respectable. I wrote that I lived in her house before she moved here and to prove it I described a tall, thin cupboard for an ironing board right by the back entry way. Then I told her she should keep better tabs on her husband and not let him run around with my best friend.

LISA

Oh, wow, he must hate you.

KARA

I don't care. I hate him.

MATT

Yikes... what a terrible thing to do.

SLADE

A woman scorned...

LISA

Well, on the other hand, it seems men always get away with everything.

(Kara starts to cry. They surround her to comfort her.)

MATT

Oh, come on. It's not so bad. I slept with one of the bridesmaids on my wedding night.

LISA

What?

BRAD

I didn't know you were married.

MATT

I wasn't for very long.

KARA

You slept with somebody else on your wedding night? What the hell were you thinking?

MATT

Actually I didn't sleep with her on my wedding night. I slept with her on my wedding early evening.

LISA

I don't believe that...

SLADE

A mere technicality...

BRAD

God, you're more of a lout than I am.

MATT

My wife, now ex-wife, Diane, and her mom were busy cleaning up after the reception and I was bored. I didn't have anything to do.

LISA

You could have helped them clean up.

MATT

I don't think they really wanted me around. They were having such a good time together. Besides, I was depressed.

BRAD

Wow, Matt! Can anyone top that? Come on, Slade, you've been awfully quiet.

SLADE

What you see is what you get.

KARA

I don't believe that...

LISA

You're the man of mystery here...

BRAD

Still waters run deep...

MATT

I've always suspected you work for the CIA.

BRAD

Yeah, you know way too much shit for a bartender...

MATT

You're not a farm boy from Indiana, are you?

LISA

You told me Illinois... What gives?

KARA

I thought you were from the south. Maybe Kentucky.

SLADE

I'm from back East.

MATT

Hell, when I moved out here I noticed that to all you Californians any place east of Palm Springs is back East.

BRAD

Okay, fess up, where are you from?

New Canaan, Connecticut. SLADE

Fancy... MATT

Up Market... Toney... LISA

Ah, a rich boy... BRAD

How do you spell Canaan? KARA
(typing on her iPhone)

Kara! ALL

Nothing much to tell. I went to prep school... SLADE

A real live preppy... BRAD

Exeter? Andover? MATT

St. Paul's... Then I went to college. SLADE

Harvard or Yale? MATT

Princeton... I went to George Washington Law School. Passed the bar. Then went to work as a dishwasher in a fancy restaurant in Washington D.C. SLADE

Well, I'll be damned... MATT

I knew there was something about you... KARA

BRAD

This is great...

SLADE

Then I worked my way up to bartender. See, I got ambitions.

LISA

Why'd you become a bartender?

SLADE

For all the right reasons. Steady paycheck. Don't have to get up in the morning. Hurt my father.

BRAD

(toasting)

I'll drink to that.

SLADE

You'll drink to anything.

BRAD

Thank you, Slade, that was huge. Okay, can anyone begin to top that?

KARA

I'm pregnant.

ALL

Oh my god. Really? Wow...

KARA

No. Just kidding. But I really got you going didn't I?

(Slade goes back to refreshing drinks.)

BRAD

Okay, now we're getting somewhere. Any more confessions? Nope, okay. How about dirty little secrets? I got it. Tell something that you've never told anyone before. Kara, you go first.

KARA

I'm thinking.

MATT

(blurting it out)

I was fired from my job last October.

SLADE
Gee, man ...

BRAD
I had no idea...

LISA
Oh, Matt, I'm sorry...

KARA
No shit...

MATT
I worked for Verizon for seven years. I got laid off last October. I had six weeks of vacation time coming. I got severance pay. I didn't want to change my life style. I got money saved up.

BRAD
You should a told me, man.

MATT
I'm trying to decide if I want to be an entrepreneur or an employee. I go out every day and look around. I might buy a franchise—gym, hair salon, juice bar. I didn't want anybody to know.

LISA
That's nothing to be ashamed of...

MATT
I have money saved up. I'm single. I can do anything. I didn't change my life style.

KARA
You're in better shape that most of us...

MATT
I got a friend who is VP of a satellite company—TV for rural areas. If he leaves I might take his job—I'd have all the territory west of the Mississippi.

SLADE
God, that's sound great...

KARA
You'll come out on top...

Sure you will... LISA

I killed my mother. BRAD

What... LISA

You mean like in childbirth? She died when you were born? KARA

Nope. I killed her. BRAD

What are you talking about... LISA

What are you saying... SLADE

Jesus, Brad... MATT

BRAD
She got cancer. She was in a lot of pain. She kept asking me to. I didn't want to do it. The doctor kept explaining to me about what an overdose would do. He kept leaving me more and more pills and kept telling me over and over what an overdose would be.

Oh, Brad, I'm so sorry. KARA

You did the right thing, Brad. LISA

(Lisa and Kara put their arms around him to comfort him.)

KARA
My grandfather was in the hospital for two years. He had diabetes. They cut off his leg. Every time we visited he begged my dad to put him out of his misery. But my dad couldn't. You did the brave thing, Brad.

Lisa, your cab is here. SLADE

(Lisa prepares to leave.)

LISA

You guys are great but you just don't get it.

KARA

Get what?

LISA

Kara, you can't just wait for Santa Claus to bring you Mr. Wonderful. To drop him in your stocking Christmas morning. There is no Mr. wonderful that's going to put all your pieces together. You've got to do it yourself. On your own—out in the deep dark void. You need to be your own Santa Claus. And Brad, you can't find yourself in the bottom of a Jack Daniels' bottle. You know we all are on a path and many of us will get stopped along the way—alcohol, drugs, whatever. There is absolutely no guarantee that you make it down the path unless you are a warrior. You need to find the warrior in you. And Slade what a waste. All your brains and education. You're smart. You're insightful. You're charming and have a way with people. What in the hell are you doing? Why are you squandering all your god given talents? Matt, you're stuck. Just plan stuck.

MATT

What about you, Lisa? You're just as stuck as the rest of us.

LISA

Damn right and thanks for making it suddenly so clear to me. You've got to figure out how to live your life. You've got to be your own reason to live.

SLADE

No, you've got to accept the universal insignificance of things.

MATT

Always the philosopher.

LISA

I just want to make sense of my life. The only real question is: how are we to live our lives?

(Lisa stumbles to the door. As she exits she turns.)

LISA

By the way, I'm in love with you, Matt.

BRAD
God, what was that all about?

MATT
I have no idea.

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

SCENE 14: another night

(Slade is behind the bar. It is empty except for Matt who sits staring at his drink.)

MATT
Where is everyone?

SLADE
I dunno. Slow night.

MATT
You seen Lisa recently?

SLADE
Nope. Hasn't been in for weeks.

MATT
What about that other girl? I can't remember her name.

SLADE
Kara. I saw her over at McKenna's last weekend. They have a new band— attracts a younger crowd, lots of drinking, dancing, hooking up...

MATT
What's it all about, Slade?

SLADE
Got me.

LIGHTS DOWN

THE END