

CACOPHONY AMORE
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CACOPHONY AMORE

CAST

SARAH

26. Tall, dressed in a colorful blouse with jeans. Always straining to be nice.

JARED

41. An office manager in drab business casual. Weak-willed, and has a crush on Sarah.

AMY

27. Sarah's best friend. A wild child, and dressed to a party

LINDSAY

14. All in black, already a pessimist. Can/should be played by a youthful adult.

BERT

32. Sarah's ex-boyfriend. Not too bright. Red flannel top, thick wool pants.

KEVIN

29. A coffee shop owner. Casual.

SET

All settings are minimally suggested, with smaller playing spaces defined with lighting. Locations include Sarah's workplace and front porch, Amy's apartment, a street, and a dance club.

TIME

The play starts Friday at 3:00 p.m. Summertime.

(A spotlight rises on SARAH looking at the audience. Everyone but KEVIN stands behind her in the shadows.)

SARAH

Sometimes, as Friday afternoon at work wears on and on forever, I just sit and stare... and I begin to hear a hum.

(The cast creates a low hum, slowly building underneath her words.)

I don't know if I can count this as meditation or not... Meditation is very good for you. It calms the mind. At least that's what I've read. But really, I'm hearing a hum that isn't there... that can't be good... this job may be driving me out of my mind.

(The humming abruptly stops.)

It's especially hard today, because all I can think about is tomorrow. I'm going on my second date with Kevin... you never know, but he makes me laugh and smile, so that's a good start, right? I'm a regular at the coffee shop down the street from here, which he owns. By the time he asked me out, we'd already discussed everything from Helen Keller's later life socialism to whether it's better to be fat from sugar or have your brain melted by those little packets of sweetening chemical powder. And he KNEW I would say yes. And we both knew it was going to be fun. That's when I usually get really nervous, but at the end of our evening of bowling, dinner, and train-watching...

(Lights shift and KEVIN enters the scene. The others watch them from the dim light behind them.)

KEVIN

That was great, Sarah. Thanks for coming out with me.

SARAH

No, thank you for asking. I had a great time.

KEVIN

Really?

SARAH

Yes.

Interesting... KEVIN

Is it? SARAH

Greatly increases the likelihood that you'll say yes if I ask you out again for next weekend. KEVIN

True. It will affect my answer, I assure you. If you ask. SARAH

I think I might. I don't want to be hurt. It's happened to me before. Believe it... or NOT. I know this makes me unique. Very unique, if you will. KEVIN

Really? Very unique? SARAH

Extra unique. KEVIN

Super unique. SARAH

Uber-unique! Same time, next week? KEVIN

Sounds uber-great. SARAH

(He gives her a very quick peck on the cheek and exits quickly. The lights return to normal.)

Are you kidding?? Oh, he's a player. No kiss, just a dart in and out... I'll show him. I'll get HIM on the cheek next time! What I'm saying is... yum. Why can't it be Saturday already? All I have to do is get through today. Get a good night's rest, take a bath, relax—

(The cast makes a ringing noise. A spot rises on JARED in his office.)

JARED
Hi, Sarah.

SARAH
Hi, Jared.

JARED
Um... I was just calling to check on the... uh... you know, the Detroit trip travel, seeing if that's done.

SARAH
Did the deadline change?

JARED
No.

SARAH
I'll get it done by Monday.
(pause)
Anything else?

JARED
No.

SARAH
Okay, then...

JARED
Okay, bye!

(His light goes out. SARAH speaks to the audience.)

SARAH
His office? Across the hall from mine. He's in charge, and... just being frank? I'm a terrible employee. Really bad. Lazy, don't care, don't hide that I don't care. But he's scared of me. He's a nice guy, I guess. Of course, you don't have to have a sense of humor, or a sexy physique, or an interesting personality to be a nice boss. If he had any of those traits, hell, one of them... I'd think about it. But he's broken. He fell in love with a girl fifteen years ago. They never dated, but he knew she was the one. Of course, now she's happily married to someone else... three kids, very happy. But he can only love her, so it's a life without hope. He's let everything go that isn't an essential life function. He can do his job, bathe, eat... but he's lost all interest in any life

SARAH cont.

other than the private one going on in his memories. He makes me sad. He has a weird little crush on me, but all he really wants to do? Talk about how he's over her. Every move he makes, you can see her weighing on him. It's horrible how people let love kill them. Ugh. Work on a Friday, just waiting for the weekend to begin. They should pay me less on Mondays and Fridays... like half-pay for half-work. I just need to get to tomorrow.

(Phone rings. Lights up on AMY in her apartment.)

AMY

Girlfriend!

SARAH

Shh... Jared will hear you!

AMY

Am I on speaker?

SARAH

No, you're just loud and he's only across—

AMY

We are ON tonight, girl!

SARAH

Wait, what?

AMY

You forgot?!

SARAH

No...

AMY

We are dancing tonight.

SARAH

Oh, yeah... can't wait.

AMY

You're not bailing on me, are you?

SARAH
No, I'm there.

AMY
Don't ditch me again. Not tonight.

SARAH
Again?

AMY
You remember that one time!

SARAH
Whatever. I'll run home, change into a dress, and I'm good to go.

AMY
We're gonna dance our asses off!

SARAH
Okay, I'll see you around seven.

AMY
I can pick you up!

SARAH
Amy, I'll see you there.

AMY
Party!

(The light goes down on AMY.)

SARAH
Amy is a lot of fun, if sometimes a little much... okay, actually, she's a little too much fun, most of the time. There's never anything calm or real... it's always this screaming about how much fun it is to have fun, and how much fun we're having right now... it's a vicious cycle. I'm going tonight because... could you say no to that? We've been friends since I first moved here. Junior high. She was the first person to say 'hi.' I mean, our friendship's not based just on that... like, this one time, in college, we got really wasted at my apartment... well, actually she ended up getting taken off by the cops... she kind of hit a few of them, with her purse, mostly, while screaming at them. And in the morning, I pick her up at the police station... she's starving and broke, so I buy her some fast food. My landlord is waiting when I get home.

SARAH cont.

Amy has never thanked me for breakfast, and never apologized for getting me evicted. I mean... she's fun. Ugh. Is work over yet?

(JARED enters her spotlight.)

JARED

Hi, Sarah.

SARAH

Ah! Sorry... you scared me.

JARED

Sorry. I wasn't standing here long.

SARAH

Okay...

JARED

I just wanted to make sure you were all right with me calling you earlier.

SARAH

What do you mean?

JARED

You know, instead of just walking over to ask a question. I don't want it to seem like I'm lording over you that I'm the boss or something...

SARAH

Never even crossed my mind, so no problem.

JARED

I hate being the boss.

SARAH

Oh. I'm sorry.

JARED

It's not your fault. I just feel like it keeps me from being, you know... just a guy. I'm really nice!

SARAH

You're a nice boss.

JARED

That's just it... I'm a nice PERSON! In general. And you can't even see me.

SARAH

No, I see you.

JARED

I might as well be invisible. I don't understand how I became someone you wouldn't notice. It's over a year you've been here, and I've tried to work up my nerve, and I know it's not appropriate for the workplace... yeah... but will you have dinner with me tonight?

SARAH

I would, but I already have plans with a friend.

JARED

Oh... oh... course you do. Right. Get those travel plans to me.

(He leaves. She turns back to the audience.)

SARAH

Sexual harassment is so overrated.

(looks at her watch)

Oh! Six, five, four, three, two, one!! Against all odds, the day finally ends!

(She crosses to her porch, where LINDSAY sits, vandalizing the porch with a screwdriver.)

Whoa. Lindsay... sitting on my porch... hi there.

(They stare at each other. Some fear, some animosity. LINDSAY looks away and lets out a long, sad sigh. SARAH turns to the audience.)

Okay... you're going to think I'm being mean to the poor teenage girl, and boo-hoo, their lives are so hard. But there are lots of rotten devil children out there. Those Omen movies, Pet Cemetery, all those remakes of Asian films like The Ring, Children of the Corn, Rosemary's Baby... I'm saying she's one of those kids. A demon-possessed child of the corn. She steals my jewelry, and vandalizes my furniture, and then denies it. I didn't ask for her! She's my ex-boyfriend's ex-girlfriend's child from a marriage to someone I've never met. I think that earns a young person a kind smile on the street, and that's really it. She seemed really sad, so I said a couple of nice things to her because I felt sorry for her. You know, positive energy, make a difference in a young

SARAH cont.

person's life. But I'm not helping. I'm just hoping to avoid being around when she causes the downfall of humanity.

(to *LINDSAY*)

I have plans tonight.

LINDSAY

Everyone always has plans.

SARAH

Does your mom know you're here?

LINDSAY

Yes.

SARAH

Is that the truth?

LINDSAY

There is no truth.

(SARAH leans in to examine her carving.)

SARAH

What is that... a soccer ball?

LINDSAY

It's a skull. It's decomposing.

SARAH

Oh. Well, that's lovely, thanks for that. I have to get going. Let's go inside and call your mom.

LINDSAY

No. Please. Stay out here with me. You're the only one who loves me.

SARAH

I do? I mean... I am?

LINDSAY

Why can't I just stay with you? They won't care.

SARAH

Look... I'm not your family. I want to help you, but... I'm pretty sure I can go to prison if I don't get you back to your mom.

LINDSAY

You probably could. You should be careful.

SARAH

Was... was that a threat?

LINDSAY

It doesn't have to be.

(They stare each other down, then LINDSAY lets out a long sigh and looks away.)

SARAH

Lindsay... ugh. Sit on the porch if you want. Whatever. I'm going to change my clothes, and then I'm calling your mom.

(As she starts to go, BERT enters.)

BERT

Sarah!

SARAH

Oh no.

BERT

It's me!

SARAH

I know it's you. That's why I said "oh no."

(BERT and LINDSAY freeze as lights crossfade to a spot from which SARAH speaks to the audience.)

My ex. I'm sorry in advance. I don't know how I ended up with Bert for nine months. I didn't want to go on a second date, but I couldn't find the way to say "please leave me alone." I tried to let him down gently, but the more I bent over backward to make it easy on him, the worse he got. I finally gave him a two-page list of reasons why we couldn't see each other anymore. We had almost reached a month of no contact... almost. Tomorrow can be so far away.

(Lights return to normal and the other two unfreeze.)

BERT

I wanted you to know: I got a job.

SARAH

(indicating his clothes)

Lumberjacking?

BERT

What?

SARAH

Bert, you said a restraining order wouldn't be necessary.

BERT

Aren't you glad I got a job?

SARAH

I don't care. I don't have to care, Bert. We're not friends anymore.

LINDSAY

That's not a very nice thing to say, Sarah. HI, BERT. I'm here, too.

BERT

It's okay... little girl.

LINDSAY

It's Lindsay.

BERT

I knew that. I know that. I know it.

LINDSAY

Sure you did.

BERT

I'm good with names.

LINDSAY

Why do you let her treat you that way?

SARAH

Hey, what?

BERT

Sarah and I have a special relationship.

LINDSAY

So do we! She's my best friend.

BERT

I'm just saying, if she gets a little nasty once a month, it's okay. I understand what's going on.

SARAH

(holding back)

Congratulations on your job. Is there anything else?

BERT

You know that list of reasons why you didn't want to see me anymore? I've been using it to, you know, batter myself.

SARAH

What? Oh, BETTER yourself.

BERT

Right, exactly. I can change for you, Sarah.

SARAH

You're not helping yourself here, Bert. The point of the list was not that you check things off and then you'll be the one for me. You will never be the one for me.

BERT

I'm making progress. My back acne is all cleared up, and you're going to be proud... I've started brushing my teeth. It's still a dentist conspiracy to get our money, but I've decided that I'm willing to pay for their paste... for you. Sarah... since you've been gone, I can't think about anything else. I'm always just sitting around talking to you in my head. I say this thing, and then you say this thing I want to hear. I want to hear that you can love me again. I want to hear you say that I can change and be the man you want me to be. Because I want to be the man you need.

LINDSAY

That was sickly beautiful. He loves you, Sarah. You should marry before it's too late for you.

SARAH

He gave me crabs, Lindsay.

LINDSAY

Crabs are expensive.

BERT

I said I was sorry.

SARAH

Not good enough. You got them from a whore.

BERT

I said I was sorry about that, too.

SARAH

Why are you dressed like that? It's the nicest day of the summer.

BERT

Well... I got them again.

SARAH

What?

BERT

The C-R-A-B-Zees.

LINDSAY

I can spell. I spell better than you do.

SARAH

You're kidding.

BERT

I'm sweating them out. Once they've crawled onto these clothes, I'm gonna burn them.

SARAH

Did... you didn't go to the same whorehouse, did you?

BERT

They're cheap. I was lonely.

SARAH

And they come with free crabs... are you insane??

LINDSAY

Crabs are expensive!

*(LINDSAY's phone rings. She moves away from
and looks at the caller ID.)*

SARAH

Oh heck.

(answering phone)

Hey, Amy.

*(AMY stumbles into a separate spot, a little tipsy
and now at the club.)*

AMY

Where are you??

SARAH

I'm sorry.

AMY

You're still coming, right?

SARAH

Yes, absolutely. I've got a situation here. I'm –

AMY

No. Uh-uh. We talked about this, you are not bailing on me!

SARAH

No, calm down. I'm coming, I promise, I'm coming. I am so ready for a drink.

LINDSAY

I can get you something!

BERT

She doesn't mean a drink YOU can get her.

LINDSAY

I CAN GET SARAH WHATEVER SHE WANTS!

BERT

You're not old enough! She wants alcohol. I'll get her something!

SARAH

Can you two please be quiet??

BERT & LINDSAY

Sorry, Sarah.

(BERT exits into the house.)

SARAH

Bert, where are you going? Get out of my house!

AMY

When are you going to get here?

SARAH

Ugh. Amy, wait for me, I'll try to be there soon.

(LINDSAY yanks on SARAH's shirt.)

LINDSAY

Do you want me to get him out of there?

AMY

Get here, cause I am having so much fun! I've met someone. He just keeps buying me drinks... it's great!

(JARED enters and puts a drink in AMY's hands, smiling at her sadly.)

SARAH

Okay, just don't overdo it before I get there.

JARED

Who's on the phone?

AMY

Just my girlfriend – noooooo, not like that! Pervert.

SARAH

What? Amy... Lindsay, stop tugging on me... Amy, I have to go.

AMY

Fine. Whatever.

(AMY clicks her phone off, then grabs JARED by his tie and drags him off to go dancing.)

SARAH

Amy, I'm not trying to... hello? Ugh. Dancing. Whoopee.

(BERT enters carrying a large plastic cup.)

BERT

You didn't have much to chose from, so I made you a modified martini.

SARAH

I'm scared to ask.

BERT

It's rum, cranberry juice, and vermouth.

SARAH

Why did you add the vermouth?

BERT

It's a martini! Try it.

LINDSAY

Why are you scared of everything, Sarah?

SARAH

All right, all right...

BERT

I hope you like it.

(She takes a tiny sip, winces, and puts it down on the porch.)

SARAH

Okay, I've tried it. Bert, you have to go. I'm trying my hardest to be nice, but you have to let go of having me in your life. Meet someone new. Live alone in a log cabin. Join a chess club. Move on! Am I making myself clear?

(He takes a moment, then straightens up. He nods to her. She smiles and accepts his closure. She turns to go and he throws himself at her waist, clinging to her.)

BERT

Take me back! I need you!

SARAH

Let go of me!

LINDSAY

He wants to give you more crabs!

(SARAH screams and pushes BERT to the ground. She runs offstage. As he stares after her, LINDSAY takes the glass and chugs it.)

BERT

Sarah!!!

(He sobs and turns around. LINDSAY finishes the drink and stares at him.)

Hey...

LINDSAY

(belches)

That was terrible.

(He sits next to her. He picks up the cup and drinks the last few sips.)

BERT

Nothing personal... but you weird me out.

LINDSAY

Nice thing to say to a kid.

BERT

Yeah... you're welcome. It's just... you look like your mom. I have to, you know, hate her now. And a lot. I hate her a lot.

LINDSAY

Me, too. She's crazy, and so mean, and she's ugly.

BERT

She's not ugly.

LINDSAY

She's no Sarah.

BERT

(pause)

What do we do now?

LINDSAY

We can't let her get away.

BERT

I like the way you think... you're right! Let's go... little girl!

(He runs offstage. She follows him yelling.)

LINDSAY

I am not a little girl!

(SARAH rushes on from the other side of the stage, panting.)

SARAH

Oh... wow... just a sec. I know... I know I shouldn't leave her with him, but they're both just... coming at me. I think I heard them chasing me! I mean, what the heck? I am not responsible for them. He's my EX-boyfriend, and she's his mess. Heck, maybe he could become her evil minion. He'd make a great Igor... it might make him happy. I am going to get a drink and dance in my jeans, and leave as soon as Amy has forgotten about me. Get a good night's rest—

LINDSAY & BERT

(off)

Sarah!!

(They enter and charge up to her.)

BERT

There you are.

SARAH

Oh, hi, Bert, Lindsay.

LINDSAY

You left me alone with Bert.

BERT

We had fun.

LINDSAY

You're hardly appropriate.

BERT

That's true.

SARAH

I'm really sorry about that. Both of you. Running out like that was... um, well, I just felt like—

BERT

Why'd you run, Sarah?

SARAH

I...

BERT

We were just talking, Sarah.

LINDSAY

We were having a great conversation until you showed up, Bert.

BERT

Little girl, calm down. We're a team, remember? A team!

LINDSAY

Old people are so freaking condescending. You're not my coach.

BERT

Well, maybe... maybe I am your coach, or, like a coach... um...

LINDSAY

You're an idiot, Bert.

BERT

Don't call me an idiot.

LINDSAY

You are an idiot!

BERT

Shut up!

LINDSAY

You shut up, IDIOT!

SARAH

Oh dear God.

(SARAH mouths "Help" to the audience, then sneaks away.)

BERT

You should be nicer to people.

LINDSAY

Oh shut up, Bert. You were named after the boring Muppet. Your mouth flops around like Sesame Street!

BERT

I'm an adult... respect me!

LINDSAY

Earn it.

BERT

Always whining about having no friends... you're so lame, who would want to be your friend?

LINDSAY

Again, you work with the young much?

BERT

It's good for you to get a little compunctuary feedback.

LINDSAY

“Compunctuary,” Bert? Really?
(looking around)
 Wait a minute... where’d she go?

(They look for her frantically.)

BERT

Sarah!

LINDSAY

See what you’ve done?!

BERT

I can track her.

LINDSAY

What?

BERT

I can smell her. She leaves a trail.

LINDSAY

Creepy... but useful. Okay, lead on, Gunga Bert.

BERT

What?

LINDSAY

It’s a movie. Don’t you watch movies?

BERT

Let me focus.

(BERT makes an exaggerated sniff... another... and then leads LINDSAY offstage in the opposite direction from where SARAH exited. She enters from the other side, freaked out.)

SARAH

I’m sorry. I’m really sorry. I keep running away... I don’t think I’m a coward, but I don’t have any excuse. I guess it’s easy to think you’re brave if you’ve never actually had to prove it. I actually took “evasive actions” just now... at

SARAH cont.

least I think that's what I did... I mean, I didn't come straight here. That seems evasive to me. And now, more than an hour late, I prepare to face...

(Lights change to the bar where AMY, now truly drunk, is standing unsteadily, drink in hand.)

Amy.

AMY

Sarah!! Girl, where you been?

SARAH

You wouldn't believe me. I need a drink.

AMY

I thought you ditched me.

SARAH

No.

AMY

Not tonight.

SARAH

Well, I'm going to get a drink...

AMY

Wait!

(SARAH turns and looks at her in fear.)

Not tonight.

SARAH

What are you talking about? How long have you been here?

AMY

I was a little early... and you're LATE...

SARAH

I told you—

AMY

Do you like my dress? I thought you'd like it.

SARAH

Oh no.

AMY

(sloppily trying to be seductive)

I was in the store, and I was looking at dresses, and I kept saying "would Sarah like this?" And then I noticed I was doing it... and I tried to say would "some guy" like this? And I just didn't care... you're the one I want to impress. You can't dance at all, but you don't care... you just swing your gangly limbs everywhere, and every time you elbow someone you shoot them that smile and they're like "anything you want to do to me, you can do it." I get very jealous. Now I know... I love you.

SARAH

I'm not a lesbian!

AMY

Me, either. Just you.

SARAH

Et tu, Amy, et tu?

(JARED enters with a drink for AMY.)

JARED

Here you go... Sarah!

SARAH

Jared. Of course.

AMY

You two know each other.

JARED

Yes.

AMY

Oh great, Sarah, now you're going to steal another man from me!

SARAH

Another?

AMY

You remember, that one time—

JARED

No! I mean... we work together, Amy.

AMY

Wait... nooo... you're not... THE Jared?

JARED

(smiling, to SARAH)

You talk about me?

AMY

You bet she does!

(They both look at SARAH. She takes AMY's drink and chugs it.)

AMY

Hey!

JARED

I can get you a drink of your own.

AMY

Yeah!

SARAH

Sorry, I just needed that.

JARED

What do you drink?

SARAH

No, I couldn't—

AMY

The girls drink Long Islands!

JARED

Same drink, okay, I can do this!

(He rushes off to get more alcohol.)

AMY

I don't know what you're talking about. He's not so bad.

SARAH

He's great. You should go for it.

AMY

No, now that you're here, I don't think he's very interesting anymore. It's all about you, Sarah.

SARAH

Does it have to be?

AMY

You're the only one I need, Sarah.

SARAH

Wait... what was that?

AMY

It's you.

SARAH

No, I am not your one.

(AMY takes SARAH in a very awkward embrace and plants a long kiss on her cheek. BERT and LINDSAY enter, bumping fists.)

LINDSAY

Thanks, dad!

BERT

Awesome.

(noticing SARAH)

Did you change your perfume?

SARAH

I'm not wearing anything but sweat. You found me.

LINDSAY

Bert's an urban tracking machine!

BERT

Sure am.

SARAH

Wonderful.

(AMY sits on the ground, feeling neglected.)

AMY

Hello? I'm still here...

LINDSAY

Bert's my dad! That's what we told that guy at the door.

BERT

She promised not to drink any more if I helped her get in.

SARAH

Any more?

LINDSAY

We're straight, B-Man... Daddy-O!

(JARED enters and gives AMY and SARAH their drinks.)

JARED

Long Islands!

AMY

Woo-hoo!

BERT

(to JARED, confrontationally)

Who are you?

JARED

I'm Sarah's boss. Who are you?

BERT

I'm the ex-boyfriend! Problem with that?

(The men stand chest to chest, puffing themselves up. SARAH steps between them with her drink.)

SARAH

Okay, now we know who we are. Everyone, I can't say how exciting it is to have so many of my... friends in the same place. And coming out of everywhere...

(SARAH steps forward and speaks to the audience. The other characters also turn straight out and speak to the audience.)

It's a nightmare. I should make introductions, but nothing nice comes to mind about any of them... "Idiot ex-boyfriend and psychotic teenager, meet my pathetic boss and alcoholic by-default best friend." Amy is just a mess.

AMY

Ptahhh!!!

SARAH

She ends up talking with Lindsay...

LINDSAY

That is awesome. You are so old, and totally wise.

AMY

Right?

SARAH

...Jared and Bert decide that they're rivals for my affections.

JARED

Give it up, Grizzly Adams.

BERT

Screw you... Button Down Guy!

SARAH

Everywhere I turn, it's "remember when."

AMY

Remember that time we got DRUNK??

SARAH

Probably.

BERT

Remember how beautiful it was when we sat down next to the water reservoir at sunset?

SARAH

We sat in snails.

LINDSAY

Remember when we first met?

SARAH

Only vaguely.

JARED

Remember to get that travel done on Monday.

SARAH

I will!

EVERYONE BUT SARAH

Remember, remember, remember!!

(Everyone but SARAH freezes in party positions.)

SARAH

Just as I start to doubt myself... as I begin to think that I'm judgmental and unfair to these people, and that they are the loyal ones...

(KEVIN enters with a drink. He quietly talks to someone offstage. She sees him and stares for a moment.)

And then I think... no. I am allowed to move on.

(She crosses to him.)

Kevin... hi.

KEVIN

Sarah! Hi. Pleasant surprise.

SARAH

You, too. If you're really here.

KEVIN

I believe I am.

SARAH

This could be one of the times when the mind retreats into happy illusion.

KEVIN

I think that only happens on television. Glad I'm not an unhappy illusion.

SARAH

I'm glad I'm not an unpleasant surprise. Are you here with someone?

KEVIN

Yes.

SARAH

Oh.

KEVIN

Many someones. It's part of a program we've got going at work. Barristas Without Bedtimes. I buy the first round for the crew. It's very popular.

SARAH

That couldn't help my boss.

(They turn and look at SARAH's frozen friends.)

KEVIN

Oh, he's a sad looking man. Heartbroken, huh?

SARAH

Like a country CD on repeat.

KEVIN

People like that, you smile, you say "move on" very kindly, and then? You take your own advice and leave them in the dust.

SARAH

Sounds good.

KEVIN

Who's the little girl whose parents don't love her, and let her dress like that?

SARAH

My ex's non-ex-step-daughter. She stalks me, and he's helped her sneak into this club.

KEVIN

Perfect... hey... looking at this motley crew of yours... It's no real wonder I look good to you. Now I see the competition, I'm wondering what's wrong with you that you're so cool, but can't do any better than that.

SARAH

Maybe I just hate myself, and you're a bad man for bringing it up so nonchalantly.

KEVIN

Maybe. That's a possibility. Everything's possible.

SARAH

And anything, also, is possible. Wouldn't want anything to feel neglected.

(They look at each other and smile. The others come to life. BERT itches. LINDSAY looks about, a bit dazed. AMY has begun to look a little sick, wavering back and forth. JARED looks paranoid.)

BERT

(itching)

Oh, man! Come on, little guys, get off me already.

JARED

What's going on with you? Why do you keep itching?

LINDSAY

Hey, Sarah... who's this??

AMY

(to KEVIN)

Helloooo, handsome!

JARED

What?

BERT

Another one?

KEVIN

(to SARAH)

Time to meet the family, huh?

SARAH

Looks like.

(She turns to audience as he moves into mutely socializing with her friends. They break off into small groups as appropriate.)

Dread would not be an overstatement. They've come to destroy me. And yet... as Kevin charms his way through this very hostile crowd... I begin to hear them better. Through his ears...

(She remains detached from the following scenes.)

JARED

She's the one. The only one for me.

KEVIN

Sarah?

JARED

No. Katy. It was there... the magic hear about from the day you're born. And then it seemed to disappear. But it was real. I was there, and it was real, and I can't dishonor her by letting it go. I don't bug her... haven't talked to her in years. But one day the spell that has her will fade, and she will remember us.

KEVIN

Wow. So... you won't mind if I see Sarah then?

SARAH

It's sad and sweet, and looks like a hard way to live. But really, his offense is loving too deeply. There's worse behavior.

LINDSAY

(to AMY)

...and Mom's new boyfriend is boring. If she was a lesbian, she could date you!

AMY

I'm gonna be sick.

(AMY rushes offstage.)

LINDSAY

Everyone leaves.

BERT

I'm still here, little girl.

LINDAY

I'm not a little girl. And –

BERT

I know your name is Lindsay. 'Little girl' is like a nickname for you. I think you're way cooler than other people do.

LINDSAY

Bert!

BERT

You're like the daughter I'm could be the lame dad for... you know? Like, parents are all lame. Every dad and mom I know mostly sucks at it... I was thinking I'd like to be more of that for you.

LINDSAY

Oh...

SARAH

And Bert is an idiot, but he doesn't want to be. And sometimes he says something accidentally deep.

(AMY reenters.)

AMY

I'm fine!

JARED

Are you okay? I'm sorry, I shouldn't have bought you so many—

AMY

I'm all right... ready for round...
(she cups her mouth)

...two...

(AMY rushes back offstage. JARED follows her.)

JARED

Oh dear.

KEVIN

(to BERT and LINDSAY)

... so she comes down waving my fish tank at me and screaming about something she saw on the evening news!

BERT

Crazy!

LINDSAY

I could hit someone with a fish tank...

KEVIN

She didn't actually throw it, but we didn't have fish for much longer. I'll never know what Dad saw in her.

BERT

Parents are all crazy!

KEVIN

Not all of them. You've just got to strive to be the exception. Having kids is like being in the Super Bowl, every day. Can you do that, Bert? Can you great every day in Lindsay's life as the most important day of the year?

BERT

Whoa... well, when you put it that way...

LINDSAY

Can you hang out with me once a week?

BERT

Sure.

LINDSAY

Done. Bert... you're like my family. Only better. But I need to get home to them. Will you help me... Dad?

KEVIN

(handing BERT money)

With this twenty, I now pronounce you surrogate father and daughter with enough cab fare to get home. You may now get the minor out of the bar.

BERT

Oh... good idea. Well...

(looks at SARAH)

Um, night.

LINDSAY

Let's go!

(LINDSAY and SARAH exit.)

SARAH

She is smart for her age.

KEVIN

She'll do great things, you wait.

SARAH

You really are going to be that much better than me, huh? Can't just be 'kind of nice?'

KEVIN

Massive dark side. Massive. Don't worry, you're in for a wild ride with a maniac.

SARAH

Phew. I was getting worried.

(AMY, somewhat soberer reenters. JARED follows Meekly behind her.)

AMY

Sarah!

SARAH

Oh, Amy...

AMY

Just wanted to say... I'm taking off. Jared and I are going to...

(big wink)

...share a cab.

JARED

Just a cab!

SARAH

Go! God's speed, go.

(They exit. SARAH shrugs to KEVIN.)

Hopefully now alcohol and hormones take over for both of them... and you never know. Maybe they'll fill each other's empty places. You never know.

(The two of them look at each other. They come together... and she pecks him on the cheek and darts off. He smiles, watching her go, then gives chase. Lights out. End of play.)