

Scene 1

A coffee shop. Laurel and Eden sit at a table with two large coffee mugs and a to-go cup.

- LAUREL: The next one?
- EDEN: Laurel, you know I’m right.
- LAUREL: But this was horrible.
- EDEN: How bad an experience could it have been? What was that, like five minutes?
- LAUREL: Three. Look, Eden, I think it’s really sweet that you want me to be happy, you’re a good friend. I just don’t think what I need right now is a boyfriend. I’m fine, really.
- EDEN: Of course you are. And as your friend I don’t want to push you into anything you’re not ready for. I completely support your desire to be a miserable lonely spinster for however long you need to relish in that. But as the manager of your dwindling music career I’m telling you, you need to fall in love. There’s only so long the public will deal with your whiny Chantel Crappiasscheek songs. Distant anguish and emptiness is only going to carry you so far and sweetie, that empty heart train has pulled in to the station and it’s not going on to the next stop.
- LAUREL: There are tons of broken heart songs in the mainstream. The public loves them.
- EDEN: Not broken heart. Angry, gut wrenching teen angst because he ripped my heart out of my chest through my cheerleading uniform and crushed it beneath the heel of his Sketchers as he deleted our relationship status on his smart phone and walked away from my locker while sexting some other girl. Yes. That’s not what you’re selling. You’ve got, my heart is a withered shell of emptiness drained of any life years ago. It’s heart crumble at this point. Heart dust.
- LAUREL: The entire country music industry is built on that.
- EDEN: Then bleach your hair, stuff your bra and put on some cowboy boots, cause sweetie that is the only way your career is going to pick up again. You know I love you. It’s time.
- LAUREL: Okay. When’s the next blind date?
- EDEN: Yay! Okay, I responded to five emails for you culled from the response to your profile I posted. After that you’ll have to search through the site yourself. Here’s the web address. It’s a skeleton profile right now, you’re really going to have to flesh it out if you want to attract the less sketchy people out there.
- LAUREL: You signed me up on an online dating site?
- EDEN: How else are you going to meet anyone?
- LAUREL: I thought you were setting me up with guys you knew.

EDEN: You want to date the guys I know?

LAUREL: No. No not really.

EDEN: Exactly. Besides if I find a real catch I'm keeping him for myself. Look, even if you don't meet the love of your life, you're at least putting yourself back out there. It might be really good for you, and it'll definitely give you some material to write about.

LAUREL: Yeah, I'm going to write a song about a mean micromanaging manager. *(sings)* Oh mean micromanaging manager, you can't even manage your own love life...

EDEN: Hmm. Catchy. The next date is tonight. Since you said you wanted to meet the last guy here, I went ahead and set this as the venue. You should skim his profile before then. Oh, and I signed you up for a speed dating night. I'll text you the info later.

Jennifer enters from the counter with a to-go coffee cup.

JENNIFER: Hey Laurel.

LAUREL: Hey. E you remember Jennifer.

Laurel loads up the dating site and starts clicking through it.

EDEN: Hey, Jen.

JENNIFER: Jennifer.

EDEN: Yeah. Eden.

JENNIFER: Oh, I know.

EDEN: You used to be with Jason.

JENNIFER: Yes.

EDEN: You still dating him?

JENNIFER: No.

EDEN: You broke up with him?

JENNIFER: No.

EDEN: He broke up with you?

JENNIFER: No.

EDEN: Mutual thing?

JENNIFER: We got married. To each other. And no, you can't have his number.

EDEN: Well this was fun. Good catching up with you, Jen. Laur, I'll drop by later and check in on your next one. (*exits*)

JENNIFER: I didn't realize you socialized with her. I thought you two maintained a strictly professional relationship. Oh, are you finally working on a new album? Laurel? Wow enough caffeine to fuel a kindergarten class for a week and she's still dead to the world.

LAUREL: Hmm?

JENNIFER: Were they out of Red Bull?

LAUREL: Oh, yeah, not mine.

JENNIFER: Ooh, on a date? You mind if I sit close enough to eavesdrop and flirt vicariously through you? I miss first dates. All that anticipation, those butterflies when you first accidentally brush against each other, leaving your hand in the middle of the table so it's accessible if he wants to touch you.

LAUREL: Was. Past tense.

JENNIFER: Oh, Laur. It didn't go well?

LAUREL: It was... short.

JENNIFER: There's almost a full cup here.

LAUREL: Short.

JENNIFER: Are you really disappointed?

LAUREL: Um, well, it's not like there was a big build up to it.

JENNIFER: How did you meet?

LAUREL: Uh... in this coffee shop. I walked in that door. I shook his hand over there. I sat here. He sat there. I said hi. He said "you're taller than I expected". I laughed. He didn't. He left.

JENNIFER: You hadn't met him before?

LAUREL: Blind date.

JENNIFER: Who set you up?

LAUREL: Well, no one really. Apparently.

JENNIFER: Eden! You went out with someone Eden suggested.

LAUREL: Um, no. Someone from this online dating site.

JENNIFER: You're doing online dating?! When did this happen?

LAUREL: Well after that dreadful set up with Jason's accountant you so subtly sprung on me last month, it's not like there are other options.

JENNIFER: Oh Laurel honey, you do not have to do this. We will find you someone, someone normal. Besides Gerald told Jason he had a really good time.

LAUREL: Well I'm glad someone did. What's wrong with internet dating? It's completely acceptable now, not just for social outcasts. A lot of people are finding that their lives are just too busy to meet people the conventional way. In fact, I think internet dating is actually becoming the conventional way.

JENNIFER: Did Eden put you up to this?

LAUREL: No.

JENNIFER: Just because she's all about free love and finding pleasure wherever and with whom ever since her divorce does not mean you should be doing that too. You should be looking for a relationship.

LAUREL: You think so too huh?

JENNIFER: I wonder if I can work this into my unit on social media.

LAUREL: Yeah, and maybe you can make my dating life, like, homework for your students.

JENNIFER: So this guy, aside from being femagigaphobic, he was pretty normal?

LAUREL: I guess. I'm pretty sure you'd need to have a loose definition of normal. Want to see his profile?

JENNIFER: Ooh, yeah. Hey, if you get really into this online dating thing can I flip through profiles and pick some potential dates for you? It would be like vicarious online shoe shopping.

LAUREL: You're really into this vicarious thing. Actually it seems kind of like fishing. Look at this, tons of fish out there and I'm the bait.

JENNIFER: Is that him? He's totally not your type.

LAUREL: Maybe my tastes have changed since we met.

JENNIFER: Or your profile isn't a good representation of what you're looking for. Or maybe the guys who are online aren't age appropriate and the only ones left in your age bracket are um, him. Or maybe you're giving up and are more willing to settle.

LAUREL: Hey not all of us have the same body we did in university and a sense of fairy tale ending entitlement.

JENNIFER: Is this your profile? It's hardly overly loquacious.

LAUREL: I guess.

JENNIFER: Well here's your problem. This isn't an accurate depiction of who you are. 26? Darling I love you but seriously? Nobody's going to believe that.

LAUREL: Hey, everyone does it. At least my profile picture is from this decade. I mean, you should see what some of these people put up. Like they honestly believe that the photo of them from their high school sports team is what they still look like a dozen years later.

JENNIFER: This is the photo from your album cover.

LAUREL: Like I said, from this decade.

JENNIFER: You need to change that. You could end up with stalkers.

LAUREL: Okay, once I figure out how to...

JENNIFER: And here, where it says "my friends would describe me as", you need to change that.

LAUREL: What's wrong with it?

JENNIFER: As one of your friends I would not describe you as "happy-go-lucky". Or for that matter "someone who appreciates the simple things in life".

LAUREL: Okay that may just be in contrast to someone like Eden.

JENNIFER: So um, did you choose the date venue or...

LAUREL: Yeah. I like it here.

JENNIFER: Don't you think it's a little strange?

LAUREL: What's that?

JENNIFER: Bringing a date here?

LAUREL: No. It's a nice place. It's casual, there are people here, it's safe. I mean, what's safer than coffee? Besides, when my date bails after two minutes I am ensured the pleasure of running into you for an interrogation.

JENNIFER: Laurel, you don't even drink coffee.

LAUREL: Nobody does. Coffee is like a euphemism for "let's meet in a public place where there's no obligation to spend more than twenty minutes with each other in case there's absolutely no chemistry between us". And it's cheap. Besides, do you even see "coffee" listed anywhere on that menu board? No, you see cappuccino and mochaccino and chai tea latte and strawberry cream frappuccino and salted caramel hot chocolate and iced pumpkin spice—

JENNIFER: And coffee (*pointing to her mug*).

LAUREL: You are a dying breed Jennifer. A dying breed.

JENNIFER: Do you really want any of these dates to work out?

LAUREL: Of course I do, but have you seen what's on here? It'll hardly be my fault if they don't.

JENNIFER: Maybe you just aren't ready.

LAUREL: I'm ready.

JENNIFER: I know you want to be. But maybe coming here... I mean there's got to be some lingering-

Noah enters from the back and catches the end of the conversation.

LAUREL: No.

JENNIFER: Okay. I just want you to be happy.

LAUREL: I know.

JENNIFER: So would he.

LAUREL: I know.

JENNIFER: I've got to run. Just, think about it. There are other coffee shops you could go to. Safe coffee shops, just maybe less "safe", you know? (*exits*)

NOAH: You okay?

LAUREL: Fine.

NOAH: It's okay if you're not.

LAUREL: I'm fine.

NOAH: Okay. (*He puts a biscotti in front of her*) You're fine.

Noah "cleans" around the coffee shop, seemingly busy without actually doing anything, while humming a melody. Laurel scans through the dating site.

Scene 2

The men are spotlighted in tableaux of their profile picture.

TECHIE81: (*In a short sleeve shirt and tie with a tiny science trophy*) A long time ago in a galaxy far far away, actually Etobicoke, I was born. The consensus when I was in high school was that I was a nerd and while I initially rejected that opinion, now that I'm out in the real world, I've fully accepted that moniker. I speak several languages including Klingon, Elvish, and binary. I'm looking for a cute equally nerdy girl to get to know better.

COTTAGE BUM: (*in camping gear holding a big fish*) I'm an active and adventurous guy who is truly humbled by the beauty of the great outdoors. I'm down to earth and have a calm disposition. Looking for a girl who prefers hiking boots to high heels.

BIG_STICK_PLAYA: (*teen in hockey jersey with hockey stick*) Ladies, I'm a 38 year old hockey playing guy who has a great job in the financial district. Let's faceoff and see if we can score a goal together.

MREXTRAORDINARY: (*in a suit/tuxedo jacket with his arm around someone that has been cropped out*) My job does not define me but gives me the financial freedom and ability to live life on my own terms. I work in a high stress environment and may occasionally bring work home with me but I leave the stress at work. I am looking for an outgoing, adventurous person to join me on this trip called life. Someone who believes a healthy dose of verbal sparring is just as beneficial and necessary in a relationship as a passionate physical attraction.

TECHIE81: Activities I participate in include

COTTAGE: Biking, Sailing, Camping, Fishing, Hiking, Walking, kayaking, beach volleyball.

MR EX: wine tasting in Napa Valley, exotic car racing in Monte Carlo, learning to cook Thai food in Bangkok.

TECHIE81: gaming of all types (online, RPG, board games, LARPs, video games, and even the occasional arcade game)

BIG_STICK: Hockey.

COTTAGE: My interests and hobbies include

MR EX: Antiques and furniture restoration, Fine Art Photography, travel.

COTTAGE: Anything outdoors, social activism, and beer.

TECHIE81: Computers, Comic-cons, graphic novels, coding apps.

BIG_STICK: Hockey.

MR EX: My ideal date would be

COTTAGE: A weekend camping trip.

TECHIE81: An afternoon at the science centre and an IMAX film.

BIG_STICK: A hockey game.

MR EX: Dinner and dancing at a masquerade ball in Venice.

BIG_STICK: My idea of romance is

COTTAGE: A walk on the beach.

MR EX: A candlelit dinner, on top of the Eiffel Tower.

TECHIE81: A picnic under the stars.

BIG_STICK: Champagne and box seats at a hockey game.

Scene 3

Laurel and Mr.Extraordinary in the café.

MR EX: No you're wrong.

LAUREL: Excuse me?

MR EX: Your opinion is wrong.

LAUREL: It's my opinion. How can it be wrong?

MR EX: I'm not sure. Perhaps you gathered some misinformation which you used to illogically come to the conclusion that you have. Regardless, it's wrong.

LAUREL: I thought you said you liked verbal sparring.

MR EX: Laurel, this is hardly what I would consider a debate.

LAUREL: Exactly. You shared your opinion, I shared my contrasting opinion and you merely dismissed it as wrong? Where's the back and forth, the arguing of points and counter points?

MR EX: Well it's hardly worth the time to argue about it now is it.

LAUREL: Wow, see that wasn't even a question.

MR EX: *(sighs)* Laurel, you seem like a very nice woman...

LAUREL: Oh don't patronize me.

MR EX: Alright.

Mr. Extraordinary exits as Noah enters.

NOAH: You okay?

LAUREL: Fine.

NOAH: It's okay if you're not.

LAUREL: I'm fine.

NOAH: Okay. *(He puts a biscotti in front of her)* You're fine.

LAUREL: What's this?

NOAH: Biscotti. It's, um, like a cookie, but um, harder so /you can dip it in your latte.

LAUREL: /I know what it is. I mean, what's it for?

NOAH: I don't know what cheers you up, so I thought, maybe there was a chance it was biscotti.

LAUREL: That's random.

NOAH: Is it working?

LAUREL: Kind of.

NOAH: So you going to tell me what's wrong?

Laurel shakes her head.

NOAH: Remember that night? I was closing up and you were the last person in here.

LAUREL: I asked if you wanted me to leave and you said—

NOAH: Never. And then, like you'd done it a hundred times before, like it was no big deal, you leaned across the counter /and

LAUREL: /And I kissed you. Brazen.

NOAH: Well, it's not like I wasn't completely transparent about my interest in you.

LAUREL: Still, that's so not something I would do now.

NOAH: I don't think it was really typical behaviour for you then. You just took a chance.

LAUREL: You said it, it was a safe bet.

NOAH: Regardless. You risked it. You couldn't be positive how I would respond, but you went for it.

LAUREL: Life's more complicated now.

NOAH: No it's not.

LAUREL: Maybe for you.

NOAH: You're over thinking things. Love isn't something you should contemplate, it's something you should feel.

LAUREL: It doesn't work like that.

NOAH: It used to.

LAUREL: Yeah, it did.

Noah goes back behind the counter. Laurel watches him wiping the counters down. He glances at her, they shyly flirt. She gets up.

LAUREL: Oh hey, do you want me to leave?

NOAH: Never.

She leans over the counter and kisses him.

NOAH: Well, that was...

LAUREL: Oh, wow. Sorry. I thought there was a moment there. I guess I-

NOAH: No, no there was a moment. There was definitely a moment.

They kiss.

LAUREL: I can't do this.

NOAH: I know. Sorry, my fault.

LAUREL: Hardly. Shit, I just-

NOAH: I know. *(pause)* I was never the guy you were going to spend forever with.

LAUREL: You don't know that.

NOAH: You do.

LAUREL: I think I really loved you.

NOAH: Yeah?

LAUREL: Yeah.