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Sex Curve

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
The University of New Orleans
In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

In

Film, Theater and Communications Arts

By

Merridith Allen

BFA Adelphi University

May 2010

Abstract:

In Sex Curve, a quirky cast of characters goes to war with oxytosin, the hormone which makes a woman fall in love with the person she sleeps with. Brilliant biochemist, Marissa, puts love to the ultimate test in this biting satire.

Keywords: MFA, Theater, Play, Sex, New York, Scientific Method, Oxytosin, Relationships

Dedication:

To all of the loves in my life that have made this play possible. And with special thanks to Christina, who hates being recognized, but who has been the best friend and the best partner in crime a girl could ever ask for. You gave me the spark of inspiration for this story.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

Marissa – PHD candidate in biochemistry

Robyn – Marissa’s best friend – ‘sexual how to’ writer

Lucas – Marissa’s other best friend – gay, southern, an actor

Josh – Marissa, Robyn and Lucas’s quirky neighbor

Ted – A very attractive man, late twenties – actor who plays Ted
may also do certain off-stage voices

Production Note: This play utilizes a unit set, with only scenes three and four in Act 2 changing locations. This can be done as easily as changing props as needed to turn Marissa’s bedroom into Josh’s bedroom and then back again.

Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind, and therefore is winged cupid painted blind.

-Helena, in William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

Act 1
Scene 1

“Problem”

AT RISE:

A Brooklyn apartment is represented by a couch center stage with a coffee table in front of it. Props as needed. Stage right, a small area is Marissa’s bedroom. It is represented by an undressed bed, suitcases, beakers, science tools and science books everywhere. A dry erase board hangs next to the bed. There are several self-help books, sex books and vibrators strewn throughout the room.

(Dim Lights. Enter Marissa, who has dark hair, is dressed in a frumpy tee shirt which has a large rat on it and says, “Lab Rat” on the front. She wears large goggles. Marissa arranges a few bottles then writes “Problem” in capital letters on her dry erase board. Underneath ‘Problem’ she writes “Love” and underlines it twice, then adds two exclamation marks. Marissa takes off her goggles, flops on the bed and sighs audibly.

Robyn enters on the opposite side of the stage with two cups of coffee. She flips a switch and the lights brighten)

ROBYN

What kinda trashy whore actually says, “Give it to me, Venti?!?”

MARISSA

I know!

(Robyn crosses to Marissa. They sip the coffee and unpack boxes)

ROBYN

Marissa, I’m so glad you moved back in here, far away from that asshole. Things will be different for you now, believe me.

(Marissa looks around at all of the sex paraphernalia)

MARISSA

Yeah, this is definitely... a change for the better. Though for the record, I would just like to say, I think the person to vibrator ratio in this room is a little frightening.

ROBYN

Oh yeah - I haven't had the chance to move all of my stuff out yet.

MARISSA

Ah...so do you usually give all of your new roommates a 21-dildo salute, or should I be feeling special right now?

ROBYN

Girl, I am a professional, ok? They're for my new book, The Next Toys in Sex Toys; to Vibrate, or not to Vibrate... anyway, it's a working title.

MARISSA

Robyn, it's not like I don't respect your career or anything, but if any of your...red hot rub, or edible panties come in contact with any of the materials I'm about to bring in here from my lab, we could have a very unhealthy chemical reaction on our hands.

ROBYN

You know what? You are taking over my office space, girl. I am moving all of my work stuff into my bedroom – my sacred space - just for you. You can give me a couple of days.

MARISSA

My bad – next time I'll give you fair warning before I catch my fiancé screwing a Starbucks barista doggie-style, in her stupid little apron -

ROBYN

Oh no! We are not gonna even go there. It's over. Rehashing all that shit won't do you any good, believe me. You gotta move on.

MARISSA

Yeah – easier said than done.

ROBYN

Nuh-uh! If I remember correctly, when we were roommates in undergrad you had all sorts of fine men in and out of our place.

MARISSA

That was college. And you know, most of them came with a – like a – metric-ass-load of baggage...I actually thought David was the normal one.

ROBYN

Ok, from this point forward, David shall be known as ‘he who shall not be named.’

MARISSA

Fair enough.

ROBYN

And we need to get you a bigger bed.

MARISSA

What’s wrong with my bed?

ROBYN

Nothing says ‘I’m single and I’m keeping it that way’ like a twin size bed.

MARISSA

Says who?

ROBYN

Fung Shui...and my mother. At the very least, you need a double-sized mattress so you can lay on the floor like they do in Japan. I hear they have a lot of sex in Japan.

MARISSA

Good for them.

ROBYN

Come on, Marissa...it’ll be fun. And I will personally find the cutest sales person at Sleepy’s to lie on top of you so you can find the perfect sex-mattress of your choice.

MARISSA

You keep pushing me, I’m gonna switch your KY with Ben-gay! Besides, it’s not the sex that’s the problem, Robyn. I loved Da – you know... “he who shall not be named.”

(A buzzing sound is heard)

MARISSA

Please tell me that’s your cell phone.

(Robyn picks up her phone)

ROBYN

Hey you – ok – ok, ok, I’m coming!

(Marissa laughs, Robyn holds phone to her chest)

ROBYN

Stop it, Marissa! (Into phone) Lucas, I'll be right there. (Closes phone) Apparently he can't parallel park my car for shit. Did we take out most of your boxes?

MARISSA

I think so.

ROBYN

Ok, I'll be back.

(Buzzing sound)

ROBYN

(Answering phone)

Hello? Lucas, I told you; driving stick on a car is just like doing it on a guy. You should be an expert by now...

(Robyn exits. Marissa unpacks until her box is empty. Then she goes into the hallway to get another box and nearly bumps into Josh)

Act 1

Scene 2

“OBSERVATIONS”

JOSH

Hey there!

MARISSA

Oh my god! You scared me.

JOSH

Sorry. You're Robyn's new roommate, right?

MARISSA

Yeah, I am. I'm Marissa.

JOSH

Great! I have a photographic memory.

MARISSA

What?

JOSH

It happens when the brain operates at a super-sufficient speed.

MARISSA

I know that - and remind me not to leave my diary around you.

JOSH

Ha! You're funny! I meant to say, you won't have to worry about me remembering your name.

(Marissa walks past him. He tries to pick up a box, but she gets to it first)

JOSH

So...are you single?

MARISSA

Is that a joke?

JOSH

We just have a lot of singles in the building. It's a happening place for the young and broke and ah – you know, it's just a question. I'm just talking. Sometimes I make a bad first impression. People think I'm too intense. (Beat) So are you?

MARISSA

Am I single? Yes, I'm – well, I'm single, yes. But available? No.

JOSH

Oh. That's a contradiction in terms, don't you think?

MARISSA

Who are you?

JOSH

Oh, I'm sorry. Terrible manners. My name is Josh. I used to date Robyn – rather, she used to date me is more like it. We were...it didn't work out. But we're cool and everything. I actually live down the hall in 4F. Anyway, Robyn asked me to come by today. I still come around to help her with things she needs – not *everything* she needs, not anymore. What I mean is -

MARISSA

You're here to help with the boxes? You're *that* Josh?

JOSH

In the flesh...but if you prefer you could call me spider man – oh, don't worry! It's not some weird personality complex thing. I'm going to be spider-man for Halloween.

MARISSA

Listen, Josh -

JOSH

Yeah?

MARISSA

Ok um, I'm sure you're a very...very nice, eccentric sort of a person who lives down the hall and used to date my friend, and I know I seem a little cold, but I'm having a bad day today. Actually, scratch that, I'm having a bad week – in fact, I'm having a pretty bad lunar fucking cycle right now and I really can't – can't stand here and exchange strange and mildly disturbing pleasantries with you because what I really feel like doing is eating a vat of butter pecan ice cream and punching the wall until my knuckles bleed, and the only thing that is stopping me from doing that right now is the fact that I am strictly adhering to a schedule. And anything or anyone that might disrupt that schedule could potentially be in a lot of danger. Do you understand?

JOSH

Sure.

MARISSA

Ok, good.

JOSH

Bad break-up, right?

MARISSA

Take this.

(She hands him a box so heavy he nearly drops it)

JOSH

It's cool. If there's anyone who could spot one, it's me. I recently had another one myself – freaked her out that I remembered all her measurements so accurately...and other things...

(Josh struggles and Marissa takes the box from him)

JOSH

Are you a lesbian?

MARISSA

What!

JOSH

I've met a lot of lesbians who say they're single but not available – and happened to be very strong.

MARISSA

Thanks for the help, Josh. It's nice to meet you.

JOSH

Likewise. (Beat) Well, I should get going. Ah...guess I'll stop by when it's full again.

MARISSA

When what's full?

JOSH

The moon...you know...next lunar cycle...

(He holds up the Spock 'V' salute)

JOSH CONT'D

Live long and prosper.

(Josh exits. Marissa goes back to unpacking.
Lucas barrels into the apartment)

LUCAS

Mary! Get your ass over here! I haven't seen you since Jesus!

(Lucas and Marissa hug)

LUCAS

How are you, sweetie?

MARISSA

Well –

LUCAS

Never mind. I know how you are. You wanna talk about the dirty dog?

MARISSA

Why don't you tell me how you've been?

LUCAS

Mmm...well, actually I'm in the dog house myself right now.

MARISSA

Really?

LUCAS

Jimmy! That snoopy son-of-a bitch. He knew damn well we were not on an exclusive basis yet. I should've known not to get involved with the jealous type, but no...he was too hot for me to listen to my common sense. Picture this; we were ordering post-coital Chinese food, right?

MARISSA

As you would.

LUCAS

Uh-huh. Well he goes into my drawer, supposedly for 'the menu' and said that he 'accidentally' found my journal 'open' and saw I wrote in big bold letters 'I FUCKED ANDY. IT WAS GREAT.'

MARISSA

Oh shit...

LUCAS

I know. I'm a bastard. You want some more coffee, sweetie?

MARISSA

Yeah. So what, you had a big fight?

LUCAS

Oh baby, it was like World War Fag.

(Robyn enters carrying another box, filled to the brim with a table cloth, candles and incense. A book drops out of the box and Marissa picks it up)

MARISSA

I thought I got all my boxes up – what is this?

LUCAS

Oh, that's the manual for our exorcism.

ROBYN

Cleansing ritual! And this is my stuff. Lucas and I are having a little trouble with our respective men right now, so I thought we'd do a little spiritual cleansing.

(Robyn starts unpacking her things and setting up on a table. Lucas refills Marissa's coffee)

LUCAS

Spiritual cleansing, my ass. Turn to page 26.

MARISSA
(Reading)

How to expel the 'demon' from inside your boyfriend. Really, you guys?

LUCAS

See? Exorcism. We have the candles, we have the book of chanting, a shit load of herbs, and now we have Mary. She's not a virgin, but she is a Jew.

ROBYN

Lucas!

LUCAS

Potato, fucking pototo, ok?

ROBYN

It is a pre-cursor to 'the dis-connect.' I'll have to try that if this doesn't work.

(Robyn slashes the air when she says
'disconnect')

LUCAS

Aww, shit, 'the dis-connect.'

MARISSA

What is 'the dis-connect?'

(She imitates Robyn's slashing motion)

LUCAS

Where have you been, Mary?

ROBYN

'The dis-connect' is Chapter seven in my pocket guide; How to get him back by pushing him away. You do not call your man, you do not see your man, you do not think about him or allow him to distract you. There is no communication until he gives in and makes the effort to come to you. The idea is not to cling or get stressed about whatever bullshit he's pulling. This makes him realize what a good thing he has, and if he comes around then you know he's a good guy and worth keeping.

MARISSA

Whatever you want, I guess.

LUCAS

We shoulda told her about this before she got into it with David.

ROBYN

We're calling him 'he who shall not be named.'

LUCAS

Ok. Now; (whispering to a picture of his boyfriend) The power of Christ compels you, mothafucka!

(Lucas rips the picture and drops it into a trash can, then puts the trash can on the table. Robyn starts to rip up pictures too. Lucas strikes a lighter and the lights come down on them. Marissa walks into her bedroom, erases 'problem' and 'love' from the dry erase board and writes "observations." She switches on her tape recorder and starts talking)

MARISSA

Here's what it comes down to; if one could choose to whom one feels love for, perhaps the rate of failure within a romantic relationship may dramatically decrease. What if...through a careful and controlled experimentation process, one could thoroughly investigate his or her sexuality and also see what one's options are for possible life-partners based on sex and other compatibility aspects without the fear of getting seriously hurt? I do believe that's a place to start.

(Lights come down)

Act 1
Scene 3

“HYPOTHESIS”

(In the darkness, sparks fly from Marissa's room. A loud pop is heard, lights flicker and smoke billows out from her room. Robyn, who is woken up by all of this, comes out of her room and turns on the living room lights. She is wearing curlers and a pink nightgown)

ROBYN

Marissa?!

(Robyn knocks on Marissa's door)

ROBYN

Mar! Are you ok? What's going on in there?

MARISSA O.S.

I'm putting an end to my fucked up love life, once and for all!

ROBYN

What?

MARISSA

Forget it. I'll explain later.

ROBYN

Uh-uh miss thang. I know you didn't just wake me up at 3am for nothing.

(She enters and smoke is everywhere)

ROBYN

What the hell-

(Marissa, her hair mussed wildly, still wearing the tee shirt and now pajama pants and goggles, tries to usher Robyn out)

MARISSA

Go back to bed!

(She mixes more chemicals)

ROBYN

Not until you tell me what you're doing!

MARISSA

You wanna know what I'm doing? Huh? Remember that guy I met at the mixer last night? Jason? He's really cute, you said, he's totally checking you out, you said –

ROBYN

Well he *was* –

MARISSA

Fuck him, you said!

ROBYN

Oh my god – did you get laid, girl? That's so exciting!

MARISSA

Exciting? Exciting?! That asshole is engaged, Robyn!

ROBYN

What...

MARISSA

We had this amazing date – he took me to central park after dinner and we rode in a horse and buggy, and he kissed me, and I was really starting to think I finally met a great guy and – See, I knew something was up. That date was too perfect, too like, planned out – he must do this all the time!

ROBYN

Wait a minute, how do you know he's engaged?

MARISSA

Because I saw two rings drop out of his wallet when he was leaving.

ROBYN

Two? Oh hell, matching wedding bands...

MARISSA

You know what he told me? He said, 'I've been waiting to return them. It's not working, Marissa; I'm going to break it off, I'm in over my head, Marissa, it's just, I can't do it until after her birthday!'

ROBYN

That is some bullshit...

MARISSA

I can't believe I did this! First I get cheated on and then I turn around and do it to someone else!

ROBYN

It wasn't your fault –

MARISSA

I can't be the other woman – I am *not* that woman!

(Lucas enters, wearing only a black silk bathrobe,
from off stage)

LUCAS

Goddamn it! You bitches done woke up the whole hen house! What in gay hell is going on in here?

ROBYN

Lucas, perfect; tell Marissa how many 'not single' men you've slept with.

LUCAS

Shh! Do you want Jimmy to know my business? (Beat) Oh, fine; four. Why, Robyn?

ROBYN

Because Marissa just did one. Now I've had least three...that I know of. Honey, it's ok; we've all slept with married men or engaged men. It happens. I know what you're going through. The first one is always the hardest...

LUCAS

(Dreamily)

Oh yeah...

MARISSA

This is serious; I can't go on feeling like this for people, it's just...it's too much! So I've made a decision.

LUCAS

Mary, now, don't do anything irrational, like, join a convent or some shit.

MARISSA

No, nothing like that. I've...well, I've decided I'm going to change my body's chemical/hormonal structure, all right? Now will you both please leave me alone?

LUCAS

Change your what? Mary, that ain't right with Jesus.

MARISSA

Well, maybe not change everything exactly. I may not need to.

(Marissa hands Robyn a book)

MARISSA

This girly self-help sex book you left in here actually gave me the idea.

(Robyn turns to a book marked page)

ROBYN

Oxytosin, the cuddle hormone.

MARISSA

Oxytosin is the hormone released in large amounts in women during cuddle time and most especially after orgasms. So, if I can somehow isolate that part of the hormone which causes me to feel like I'm in love with every jackass I end up sleeping with, I'll be a much happier woman, not to mention, I'll actually have an angle for my thesis.

ROBYN

Wouldn't it be easier NOT to sleep with the guy if he's a jackass?

MARISSA

Oh, right. As if all Jackass's have it tattooed across their forehead that they are one!

LUCAS

Exactly, how does this work?

ROBYN

Lucas! Don't encourage her.

LUCAS

Well I just wanna know, baby. Just in case, you know, when we have her committed we can tell them when she started getting delirious.

MARISSA

I am not delirious. Every woman has her own response to the tragedy that is 'love.' Sylvia Plath, for instance –

ROBYN

Do you want to be like Sylvia Plath?

MARISSA

Well – Virginia Wolf then – she poured her heart out onto the page -

ROBYN

Then walked into a lake with stones attached to her.

MARISSA

The point is; these women were suffering, and found an outlet – an extreme outlet, sure, but – well, I'm no writer and I'm definitely no artist, but I am a scientist. I am someone who might be able to find some kind of rational salve to put over all of this pain.

ROBYN

Mar, you think you can find a rational solution to getting hurt by someone you love? Come on...

MARISSA

Well that's only the beginning. Really, this is bigger than that. Imagine the sociological dating-specific playing field, right

LUCAS

Oh Lord, she's usin' her damn Ivy League words...

MARISSA

Lucas, I want to do what all scientists want to do – enlighten the human race...in big ways and in small ways. Now because of how women secrete this hormone, they are more vulnerable than men.

LUCAS

How in the hell you think that's possible? Men get hurt too. You wanna tell me men don't have this oxy-clear stuff?

MARISSA

Oxy-tocin. And yes, men do technically secrete it too, but the majority of the effects are blocked by testosterone.

ROBYN

Uch, testosterone blocks everything.

LUCAS

What about gay men?

MARISSA

Biologically? Hmm...I'll have to get back to you on that. But I know for sure this could change everything as far as women are concerned. If women and men end up on similar hormonal tracks then, well, we may have a chance to even out so much in terms of gender roles alone! Like, you know in school how when more than half the class is doing poorly on a test the teacher will give them a curve on their grades? Well, woman make up more than half of the population and we're definitely having problems with this whole dating/love thing because, we seem to be getting hurt all the time, so, why not present the female gender with their own curve? Except instead of grading, we're talking sex.

ROBYN

A sexual curve?

MARISSA

Precisely.

LUCAS

And exactly how are you gonna test this?

MARISSA

I was thinking I'd sleep with as many people as humanly possible.

LUCAS

That'll work -

(The voice of 'Jimmy,' which can be played by an off-stage actor, starts suggestively calling for Lucas to come back to bed)

LUCAS

Oh hell, Thursday night yoga class is starting without me – Mary, we're gonna talk later –

(Robyn slaps him on the ass as he's leaving)

LUCAS

Woo! Girl, don't hate!

ROBYN

Mar, have you given any thought to the sociological ramifications of this? I mean, what about the nesting instinct?

MARISSA

You, of all people are asking about the nesting instinct?

ROBYN

I know I like sex as much as the next guy, and I don't wanna settle yet, but I do one day. You take away the cuddle hormone and there's no way a woman will even want to. What'll that do to relationships, families –

MARISSA

Robyn, the world is changing all the time. We've got to do something to keep up. I don't mean it would be forever, just until you could make an impartial, informed decision about who to be with – with no 'sex haze' blinders on. I know it might sound crazy, but... I like to imagine Albert Einstein sounded crazy too when he came up with the theory of relativity for the first time.

ROBYN

Aside from having the same damn hair style right now, you and Albert; not so close.

MARISSA

Fine, I get it, you're not supportive. It's cool, but you know what? I didn't judge you for sleeping with whomever you pleased for your 'research,' so don't you judge me.

ROBYN

You think you're bad, huh? Well at least I don't go around trying to stop myself from falling in love. I think you're just scared, Doctor Frankenstein. But it's all good. I'm going to bed now, so, you do what you want...

(Robyn exits. Marissa writes HYPOTHESIS on the board then exits)

MARISSA V.O.

So the official hypothesis is;

By inhibiting the release of Oxytosin during and after a female experiences sexual intercourse, or other sexually stimulating behavior, the biological reactions which cause the 'love' emotion will be blocked. Therefore, sexual behavior will be experienced freely and love will become a choice, rather than an uncontrolled process.

Act 1
Scene 4

“EXPERIMENT”

(The lights dim and Marissa erases the hypothesis. She begins writing men's names on the board, followed by their traits underneath. She will eventually have four names; Brian, Justin, Vinny, Evan. Lucas enters carrying a liquor mixer and two glasses. He begins to pour when the lights come up)

LUCAS

Hey baby, you want a little night-cap? It's a Jew-tini for my little Jew.

MARISSA

A Jew – what?

LUCAS

Josh's recipe, baby. Your people know how to throw a party, that's all I'm saying. I miss his ass coming over here all the time.

MARISSA

Well, he's right down the hall. And it seems like he's here often enough doing this or that for Robyn.

LUCAS

Is that some jealousy I'm hearing there?

MARISSA

No, I just don't want to talk about Robyn right now, ok?

LUCAS

You brought her up. Here.

(Lucas hands Marissa her drink)

MARISSA

What, no yoga class tonight?

LUCAS

Haha, bitch. Even the best needs a rest sometimes. Besides, I'm worried about my girls. Y'all still not talking, right?

MARISSA

You know how Robyn is. Everything's a big drama when you don't see things her way. When she wants to, she'll come to me.

LUCAS

That's what she says about you.

MARISSA

Well I'm a little too busy to deal with her crap right now. I'm working.

LUCAS

(Reading)

Brian; immature, couldn't commit, charismatic, decent in bed – this is working?

MARISSA

I'm compiling a list of some of my major ex-boyfriends – the ones I think would hook up with me again given the chance. Since I've already felt something for them, I know what the oxytocin release did to me and if I sleep with one of them again, but this time with my new serum –

LUCAS

You have a serum now?

MARISSA

For the time being. I'll make a pill later if it works. Anyway, if the serum acts like it's supposed to, I should have a good time with no emotional strings attached. The thing is I've got to pick the right subject.

LUCAS

You sure this'll work? You already fell in love with them so it might not just magically go away.

MARISSA

I know, I thought of that too. I even considered perusing the personal ads, but that whole on-line dating shit makes me nervous.

LUCAS

You could go to the club with me tonight.

MARISSA

Speaking of that, I think this'll work on gay men too. A lot of your hormonal structure is similar to a straight woman's, but then again enough of it isn't...except of course, no gay man will sleep with me.

LUCAS

I dunno, baby. We'll tie up your hair and grease you down –

(A knock at the door)

MARISSA

I got it.

(Marissa answers the door)

JOSH

Hi!

MARISSA

Hi Josh.

JOSH

You look very nice today.

MARISSA

Oh...thanks. (She's wearing frumpy lab clothes)

JOSH

Here, I brought you this.

(From behind his back, Josh brings out a small, sad looking tree)

MARISSA

Oh, ah, thanks. It's very...Charlie Brown Christmas...

JOSH

Actually, it's a Chanukah bush. The new girl I'm seeing thinks they're a joke, but I like 'em. All though I didn't know if you did the Chanukah thing like me, so I made sure to get a green one, so it could be a little Christmas tree too.

MARISSA

I do – ah, Chanukah. I mean, I did when I was a kid. Now I sort of appreciate it from afar, but, this is really nice of you.

(Lucas enters and clears his throat. Marissa turns around to see Lucas giving them an obvious knowing stare)

JOSH

Is Lucas all right?

MARISSA

He's drunk.

(Banging sounds. Robyn getting coffee in the kitchen. Grunting. Robyn enters)

JOSH

Robyn, you're looking lovely as ever.

ROBYN

Shut up, Josh!

JOSH

All right.

LUCAS

Ain't nothing personal, Josh. It's man troubles, you know?

ROBYN

And I don't wanna talk about it, Lucas! I'm fine!

(Robyn slams her door shut and Lucas goes after her)

MARISSA

What are you doing?

LUCAS

She doesn't wanna talk about it, so I'm gonna go talk to her about it.

(Lucas exits)

MARISSA

Well, I better go put this in...a blue blanket or whatever.

JOSH

Marissa?

MARISSA

Yeah?

JOSH

I don't know if you've noticed, but we've completed the third lunar cycle since you moved here.

MARISSA

You're going to ask me out again?

JOSH

You're pretty sharp.

MARISSA

Well, you don't exactly need a photographic memory to recognize a pattern.

JOSH

Right...so, that's a no again?

MARISSA

You're a sweet guy, Josh...mostly...but, I mean, you dated my best friend and don't you already have a 'new girl.?

JOSH

Technically, you know. But it's not serious.

MARISSA

Is that another side effect from you higher brain functioning? You need more than one girl at a time?

(Marissa glances at her research in her room)

JOSH

Hey, come on. Don't be like that. We'll have fun. Being with a person like me is totally helpful. I mean, I memorized the entire Zagat guide last month.

MARISSA

You know, they have game shows for people like you.

JOSH

Yeah, you would think, right? But I tried out for “The Bachelor” and they turned me down.

MARISSA

Josh -

JOSH

Ok, ok. I can sense you’re not ready yet. No problem, but the offer still stands. Remember, I’m right down the hall, in case you change your mind.

(Josh lingers in the doorway, gives the Spock sign)

JOSH

Next cycle, then?

MARISSA

Good-bye, Josh.

(Marissa closes the door on him)

Act 1
Scene 5

(Lights dim as Marissa’s tape recorder plays)

MARISSA V.O.

I shelved the ex-boyfriend idea and decided to take out an ad on Craigslist. I figured it wasn’t exactly the personals, and I have to say, when you put ‘sex’ and ‘no strings attached’ in an ad for scientific research, you better be prepared to get a separate e-mail account for all the responses. I had a couple of trials but finally the serum seemed to work best with Ted.

(Lights up. Marissa enters, wearing a nice coat and dress underneath. Ted enters behind her)

TED

So how does this –

MARISSA

Shh! My neighbors complain about bringing people in late at night. Let me get the door.

(Marissa closes the door, takes off her coat and takes Ted’s too)

TED

Oh, sorry. I was asking, how does this work, exactly?

MARISSA

Do I really need to explain that to you?

TED

No, not *that*. The ah...you know...thing or whatever. We just do this and I go home?

MARISSA

Basically. Is that a problem? I promise I'll give you back your coat first.

TED

No problem. Just – out of curiosity, have you done this a lot? With other guys?

MARISSA

Does it matter?

TED

You don't really seem the type. That's all.

MARISSA

Type for what?

TED

Casual sex.

MARISSA

I have a purpose, Ted. And it's not that casual. Now do you want to do this or not?

TED

Heck yeah, I do. I'm covering my bases, you know? Lots of times girls say "no strings" but then they take it back afterwards.

MARISSA

I see...

TED

I'm not a jerk or anything. I'm not a commitment guy. And I always tell people that.

MARISSA

Ok, non-commitment guy, I'm not going to take it back, I promise. Will you follow me?

(Marissa leads Ted to her room where lots of Robyn's accessories are on the bed)

TED

What is all this?

MARISSA

I'm prepared. Anything you want – toys, trinkets, condoms, you name it.

TED

You picked up all this for me?

MARISSA

Don't be too flattered. Lots of it was already here. My roommate is a sex lit writer and columnist. She stocks up.

TED

That's a new one.

MARISSA

No really, she's Robyn Brooks. She's been on TV, you might have –

TED

Oh my god, really?! Robyn Brooks is your roommate?! My mom loves her! Robyn's book, How to date to find your mate really helped when my mom started dating after her divorce. Do you think...no...

MARISSA

What?

TED

Do you think you could get her to talk to my mom? Just for a minute? (Ted starts dialing his phone) I know it would mean so much to her, and I know she won't be asleep yet – she's such a Robyn Brooks fan, really.

(Robyn enters the living room in the middle of this conversation and hears Ted. She starts walking over to Marissa's room when Marissa sticks a hand out of her door and waves Robyn off, then closes the door)

MARISSA

I'm sure she would, but I think she's staying at her boyfriend's tonight.

TED

Oh...

MARISSA

Some other time, maybe.

TED

Wait a second, you're not trying to sucker me into coming back already, are you? Because I'd do anything for my mom, but like I said, don't get the wrong idea –

MARISSA

Hey, relax. I'll give her your mother's phone number. That way I'm not even involved. If we hook up again, we do, if not, we don't. Ok?

TED

(Putting his phone away)

Yeah...ok.

MARISSA

So...um...I'm going to get changed. You make yourself comfortable, ok?

TED

Yeah. Hey wait!

MARISSA

Yes?

TED

Could we – no...never mind.

MARISSA

Tell me.

TED

Do you think we could take a peek at Robyn's book, Tantra; abridged for the modern lover? I'd never admit it to anyone else, but since I'm here – and she's your roommate, and I always wanted to try it out...

MARISSA

Um, sure...I'll dig it up somewhere...

(Ted exits and Marissa re-enters in a lab coat. She is seen mixing chemicals)

MARISSA V.O.

Ted was the last of my three favorites from craigslist. Though I only slept with one of the others, by the time I got to Ted I had the time frame figured out. Allow between one and two hours for the serum to work its way into your system beforehand and wait no longer than fifteen minutes after you're finished to get moving again. It seems to wear off rather quickly.

Act 1
Scene 6

(There is a knock at the door. Marissa shuts off her tape recorder)

MARISSA

Yeah?

ROBYN

It's me, Mar. Can I come in?

(Marissa opens the door and lights brighten)

MARISSA

What's up?

ROBYN

I'm having a problem with this guy I started seeing.

MARISSA

I know. 'The dis-connect' not going so well?

ROBYN

Not yet...and I need some advice...and it has to be from you. It's about sperm.

MARISSA

I'm listening.

ROBYN

Well the thing is...his sperm is watery and maybe I'm being paranoid but I remember you saying something one time about how it's only watery when the guy is not that into you. See where I'm going here?

MARISSA

Ok, to clarify, what I said was, a man's sperm count is higher when he's very physically and mentally attracted to a woman, therefore producing thick sperm. And it's lower if he isn't really into the woman, which would produce the watery sperm. However, there are many factors which could go into watery sperm. Diet, exercise, stress, how much he masturbates – these are all things which could lessen sperm count which have nothing to do with you.

ROBYN

So it may not be me at all?

MARISSA

You wanna tube a sample for me so I can tell?

(She holds up a little test tube)

ROBYN

Does this mean we're friends again?

MARISSA

I wouldn't offer to analyze your boy toy's sperm if we weren't.

(Robyn hugs Marissa)

ROBYN

You're the best, Mar. So, how's the work going?

MARISSA

Not so judgmental now?

ROBYN

Please, after the week I had, I'd love a distraction.

MARISSA

Well, I'm now in the experimentation stage of the process, as you can see. There were three subjects, and I made sure I liked each of them enough before taking the oxytocin blocker and going home with them.

ROBYN

Ok...so what happened?

MARISSA

Subject #1 was just amazing. I mean, we did it all over his apartment; on the bed, on the floor, on the stairs leading to the bedroom, on the ceiling – that was interesting, I needed a harness for that –

ROBYN

Shut up!

MARISSA

Hey, it really took my mind off the engaged guy.

ROBYN

So how do you feel?

MARISSA

Oh, the endorphin rush is the same, there's just no...I don't know how to describe it. You feel great, you get up, you go home feeling like a million dollars, but there's no feeling like hugging or kissing after you're done.

ROBYN

Was it weird?

MARISSA

Not really. Every time felt a little different, but weird isn't the word for it.

ROBYN

Every *time*?

MARISSA

Yeah – well, ok, two times. Subject #2 actually turned out to be a virgin. Poor guy, I decided to spare him. And subject #3 was really funny – you know what he said to me during our date? We were at this cute little tea shop on St. Marks between first and A and he says; “You’ll have to forgive my awkwardness, but I haven’t dated since my ex. We were together for almost seven years.” I say, gee, that’s a relief, I thought you didn’t like me. “Like you?” he says, “Are you kidding? The moment I saw you I wanted to bend you over the counter and make out amongst the blueberries.”

ROBYN

What?!

MARISSA

They were having a special on blueberry muffins that day.

ROBYN

(Picks up chalk)

That’s hilarious. In fact, I think that from now on Subject #3 shall be known as ‘The Muffin Man.’

MARISSA

Robyn, I bow to a superior editor.

ROBYN

Girl, that is my job. You know what though, I have to confess, I have been thinking about how your project might look as a book.

MARISSA

Oh yeah?

ROBYN

Something like; How not to fall in love with the wrong guy and still have the energy to find the right one; A single girl's sex curve.

MARISSA

Oh my god, I love it!

ROBYN

Well it's still a working title. Anyway, night, Mar. Thanks again.

MARISSA

You're welcome. Oh, one more thing! Would you mind talking to this woman? She's subject #3's mother – loves your books. I promised.

ROBYN

Of course. Think we're even now?

MARISSA

Yeah. Good-night.

Act 1
Scene 7

(Robyn exits. Marissa goes back to work and her tape recorder plays. The lights dim)

MARISSA V.O.

After a little more work on the serum, I assured Robyn all the guys I would be meeting would be potential boyfriends. And that I would use the serum just until I was content they were a good match for me. Hey, I had to meet her half way. As it turned out, she liked the "Sex Curve guide book" idea so much, she agreed to help me.

Lucas decided to jump on the Sex Curve bandwagon for different reasons. He's not ready to commit yet and he doesn't want his partners to get too attached either. So he started testing out the serum with Jimmy. Jimmy doesn't know yet, of course, as Lucas cleverly hid the serum inside a fuzzy navel. I warned him he would have to be careful with that kind of manipulation. He said he knew how to handle Jimmy and he wouldn't do it to anyone else.

(Robyn enters wearing glasses, carrying one of her books. She writes on Marissa's dry erase board during this next monologue. Lucas prepares the living room for a meeting, with cookies, wine, glasses and a notebook and pens. Marissa sits, writes notes, listening to Robyn)

ROBYN

“The compatibility trifecta.” There are three key factors which will help determine how a man will act. The first factor is porn. Yes, it may be uncomfortable for you, the potential love interest, to immediately dive into your potential mate's porn collection. However, his sexual habits, stamina and personality are all reflected through his porn.

The second factor is friends. Get to know his friends, and you get to know the side of himself that you may not see or know or come across otherwise. Friends have all the right character revealing stories. Lastly, look at his habits. This is an extension of factor one, but includes both sexual and non sexual habits. Things such as masturbation frequency, diet, exercise, sleep cycle, work schedule, hobbies and past relationship patterns all fit into this category. After a thorough investigation, if the result is pleasing, then go ahead, hop into bed with the guy.

So, Marissa, if you use a combination of ‘The compatibility Trifecta’ along with the Sex Curve serum, I think you'll have the right formula for picking an ideal companion.

Act 1
Scene 8

(Marissa and Robyn join Lucas in the living room as the lights brighten)

ROBYN

Marissa, these cookies are incredible! Girl, I thought you couldn't cook.

MARISSA

I can't. It's a common misconception. As far as I'm concerned, cooking is alchemy, but baking – baking is a science. Anyway, how are you guys doing? Lucas, tell me everything.

LUCAS

Slow down, Mary. Give me a chance to count.

ROBYN

You liar! I have not seen that many people in and out of your room.

LUCAS

Well you have seen me in and out of here, if you know what I mean.

MARISSA

Guys, is it ok if I tape this?

ROBYN

Hell no! I don't want this getting back to my man. I tried your serum once and once is all I'm gonna do it. I found out what I needed to know.

MARISSA

About the new guy?

ROBYN

Shit, girl, I can't figure out a relationship just like that. I meant about your concoction. How it feels, how it works. I think I can write up what I need to after a little taste of the experience.

MARISSA

So then how did it go when you were on the serum?

ROBYN

I'm getting to that. Just promise me you're not taping ok? As it is, my mama's on my ass about my career all the time. She's like, "You're so talented. Why do you wanna waste it on this stuff you write?" I'm like, "Uh, hello, I'm helping people. Just look at Ted's mother. She about died when I called her – said she found a good man after following my advice.

LUCAS

Well I found many, *many* good men after following your advice, baby, so boo to your mama if she don't like it.

MARISSA

Ok, I'll start. So, I'm seeing two guys at the moment. I added some extra endorphins to the serum and at first it really worked. I'm talking wild, in your face type of intensity. Afterwards it felt like I had a good workout and I was fine. But after a couple of weeks the intensity started wearing off, so maybe I have to change something. Lucas, what's your experience been like?

LUCAS

I don't know what your problem is, baby, I'm flying just fine.

MARISSA

Really?

LUCAS

Mmm, hmm...except with Jimmy though. He's so clingy! Even five minutes is way too long for cuddle time. I gotta shoot right up and get out.

MARISSA

Really? That sucks, I wonder why that is.

ROBYN

Uh, maybe because you can't make this thing work if you're already stuck in love with someone?

LUCAS

Stuck is right. Jimmy is driving me crazy. I'm gonna avoid that boy like the plague for at least a week.

ROBYN

I say Lucas should just give Jimmy "the disconnect" until he gets back in line.

MARISSA

It's not the same thing –

ROBYN

What if he did "the disconnect" with the serum?

MARISSA

I don't think –

ROBYN

'cause it's working for me right now. You wanna know what happened the other day? After I got my groove on, I finished my wine, stood up, got dressed and came back home to sleep. Not even a word to my man. And I slept like a baby.

LUCAS

That's what *I'm* talking about!

(Lucas and Robyn clink glasses and Lucas empties his. He pulls out a white zinfandel jug from behind his chair and refills his glass)

ROBYN

So the next day, I get flowers and chocolates. I'm thinking he really felt "the disconnect."

(On 'disconnect' all three say it as Robyn makes the slashing motion)

MARISSA

Ok, so we don't know much except we're experiencing this thing a little differently depending on if we've already been in love with the guys or not. Next thing; I brought copies of Ted's porn!

ROBYN

Aww, I like Ted. A man who treats his mama well is worth a shot.

MARISSA

I snuck into his computer when he was in the shower.

ROBYN

“Three’s *Cumpany*” with a C-U-M. Yup, Ted’s a typical guy.

LUCAS

I don’t wanna watch this shit.

ROBYN

But it’s fun, Lucas.

LUCAS

You know, baby, ever since I came out of the closet women do nothin’ but show me their breasts and call to tell me they tried anal.

MARISSA

I did that!

LUCAS

I know. You were the third that month. Did you ever try the lube I suggested?

(Lucas’ cell phone rings It’s the song, “It’s Raining Men”)

LUCAS

Oops, that’s...my late appointment. Mmm...ladies, I’m gonna have to cut this short.

MARISSA

But we were just starting to get somewhere. And I have notebooks and flash drives for you –

LUCAS

(Taking a drive)

I’ll use one of these. Everything I write down on paper seems to bring on a gay old war.

MARISSA

Wait, wait, tell me something else before you go.

LUCAS

All right...well, the friends angle you have is a keeper.

MARISSA

Yeah?

LUCAS

Uh huh. Half-way through asking about one guy, I've got another all lined up and ready to go.

MARISSA

Lucas, that is not the point of –

(Lucas' cell rings again)

LUCAS

Oh hell, y'all I gotta go.

(Lucas kisses Marissa and Robyn and exits)

MARISSA

(Finishing her drink)

Great, now I'm going to have to wait up for him if I want to finish my notes.

ROBYN

You gotta play the game, you know?

MARISSA

I'm not playing a game here.

ROBYN

Mar, I love you, but, yes you are. Ask Josh if you don't believe me.

MARISSA

Josh? What's he got to do with anything?

ROBYN

Never mind. Maybe I'm wrong. You want some more wine?

MARISSA

Lucas left his jug.

ROBYN

Ok. I'll get the rest of the cookies then. No use letting a perfectly good girl's night go to waste, right?

(Robyn exits as the lights go down)

Act 1
Scene 9

(Lights up on Marissa's bedroom. After a few moments, Marissa enters wearing a simple floral dress. She begins turning her room upside down and searches the living room too. The messages play and beep in between)

ANSWERING MACHINE

You have three new messages. (Beep)

PROFESSOR KELLY V.O.

Hi Marissa, it's Professor Kelly. I'm double checking for our meeting today at six. I'm very interested in what you have to tell me sweetie. Just reading your proposal gave me goose bumps! See you then – oh, and bring biscotti! (Beep)

ANSWERING MACHINE

Next message;

JIMMY V.O.

LUCAS!! Hi, it's me *again*. This is like the fifth time I am calling you. I couldn't remember if our date was for six or six fifteen because you know how I like to manage my schedule. Where are you?? You won't answer your cell. (Beat, audible huff) I miss you, damn it. Call me back! Love to Robyn – (Beep)

ANSWERING MACHINE

Next message;

TED V.O.

Marissa, hey, it's Ted. I left you a message on your cell too. Um, I know we're going to see each other later but, just wanted to say hi and ah, say...I don't know. We seem to have a good thing going here. You're a really...interesting girl and ah...yeah, so, I guess I'll meet you later –

(Marissa turns off the answering machine)

MARISSA

Lucas! Did you borrow my black strappy heels?

(She keeps looking)

MARISSA

Lucas!

(Marissa goes off stage, screams and runs back on stage with her eyes closed. Lucas runs in after her, tying his robe as he goes)

LUCAS

Mary, what the hell do you want? I'm in the middle of – oh...you're not gonna wear your hair like that, are you?

MARISSA

What? No, of course not. Oh, Jimmy called, by the way –

LUCAS

Shh!!

(Lucas covers Marissa's mouth and checks his room. Marissa mumbles)

LUCAS

Sorry, baby, but you know...

MARISSA

Yes I *know*, and never mind! What do you think of my hair down?

(Marissa shakes out her pony tail and Lucas inspects her)

LUCAS

Let's see...oooh, baby, you got a little knarley spot right here (indicating between her eyebrows). Should I get my brow plucker?

MARISSA

In a minute – I need my other shoe. Do you have it?

LUCAS

Why would it be me and not Robyn who borrowed –

MARISSA

Lucas, I don't have time for this!

LUCAS

I'll check my closet – I thought I gave 'em back after the New Year's costume ball.

(Lucas exits)

LUCAS O.S.

Nope! Borrow Robyn's.

MARISSA

(Peeks in his room then quickly returns)

Lucas I – oh, sorry – I can't borrow Robyn's. I'm not a size 5! Sorry um...

(Lucas returns)

LUCAS

His name is Eric and as I said I am literally 'in the middle' of something.

MARISSA

Ok, whatever. What do I do about my shoe? Keep in mind I have a date after my meeting.

LUCAS

Personally, I don't want you wearin' your big black shoes with your little floral dress, but that's just me. Do you have white?

MARISSA

White is less professional looking.

LUCAS

You prance all up in your lab wearing white all day.

MARISSA

Yeah, but –

LUCAS

Wear the white. Now where are your pantyhose?

MARISSA

I don't have any color pantyhose but black.

LUCAS

Then borrow Robyn's beige –

MARISSA

I can't! Size 5 shoe goes with size small pantyhose. Do I look like a size small to you?

LUCAS

Do I look like a straight man to *you*?

MARISSA

What?

LUCAS

Because I know you didn't just ask me a 'Do I look fat?' question.

(Marissa goes back to looking around her room)

MARISSA

What I mean is, she's 5'2 and I'm 5'7 so – ahh!

(A loud rattling sound is heard)

LUCAS

What the hell –

MARISSA

I don't know! The TV's been doing that on and off today, just rattling and sputtering. Don't tell Robyn, I may have spilled something –

(Robyn enters, wearing a towel on her head and a robe)

ROBYN

Uh-uh, bitch, no you didn't!

MARISSA

Damn it...

ROBYN

Let me see.

(Robyn runs into Marissa's room and inspects the TV)

LUCAS

I guess I'll get back to my date –

MARISSA

No, Lucas! I need you to be my buffer.

LUCAS

Fucking hell, why am I always in between you two? If I'm gonna be in a Lucas sandwich, why don't I ever get Brad Pitt and Leo Decaprio or some shit?

ROBYN

Girl, you are taking your work to school with you and it's staying here! Just a minute –

(Robyn exits into the hallway)

What's she doing?

MARISSA

Getting reinforcements, like usual...

LUCAS

(A voice calls for Lucas)

Just a minute, baby!

LUCAS

Where did you pick that one up, anyway? He's gorgeous.

MARISSA

Don't I know it? I found his sweet ass over at the club. A fellow actor, like moi. Unlike *some* people, Eric understands that an actor starting out has to make his money somehow *and* do auditions during the day. So what if I have to shake it a little in a cage for a few hours at night. The tips pay for my bread and butter.

LUCAS

(Robyn enters, pulling Josh into the apartment. He carries a magic 8 ball)

...and I love this girl but she is not going to burn down my house! Come on, look at this!

ROBYN

(Robyn pulls Josh into Marissa's bedroom)

Wait a second!

MARISSA

Well, looks like you got another buffer! Night, sweetie!

LUCAS

(Lucas scurries into his room, and Marissa enters hers)

Marissa, clean it up! I don't even want to know about it – just make it go away!

ROBYN

(Robyn exits to her room)

Uh, hey.

JOSH

Hey.

MARISSA

(Marissa and Josh inspect the T.V. until Josh gets up and starts laughing)

What are you laughing at? It's not funny!

MARISSA

JOSH

The noise isn't coming from the T.V. It's coming from the drawer underneath the T.V!

(Marissa opens the drawer and pulls out a gyrating vibrator. The rattling stops. She turns it off and hides it back in the drawer. Then she sits back, her hand over her mouth)

It's ok. It's kinda hot actually.

JOSH

I can explain; Robyn had her office in here and –

MARISSA

(Josh hugs her)

Don't worry about it, ok? I won't tell anyone.

JOSH

You promise?

MARISSA

(Josh shakes his 8 ball and giggles)

What?

MARISSA

JOSH

I asked if you did this on purpose so you could get me into your room.

Don't be ridiculous, Robyn went to get you – and what are you doing with that thing anyhow? What are you, ten?

MARISSA

JOSH

It's from my niece. I was asking about you when Robyn stormed into my apartment. Coincidence, you think?

MARISSA

Well, yeah. It has to be.

JOSH

Does it? You haven't reconsidered my offer, have you?

MARISSA

You really want to go out with me?

JOSH

Why wouldn't I?

MARISSA

Ok then, let's do it.

JOSH

Really?

MARISSA

Sure, when are you free? I'll pencil you in.

(Marissa looks for a notebook and a pencil and Josh glances around the room at some of her research. He picks up a stack of papers while her back is turned and flips through it)

JOSH

Uh, you know what? Forget it.

MARISSA

What? Why, what's the matter?

JOSH

Let's just say I don't want to be another one of your lab rats.

MARISSA

Excuse me?

(Josh holds up her papers)

MARISSA

I can't believe you went through my research!

JOSH

Went through? No. Your research is everywhere! Look at the mess in here! It's not my fault my brain imprints everything I see.

(Marissa starts to clean up)

MARISSA

You're right. You better go, Josh. Like you could really be with a woman anyway...

JOSH

Oh, ok. Now I'm the bad guy? You know I've had rough break-ups too, Marissa. You don't think I got hurt? You don't think I have a hard time committing after that –

MARISSA

Lucas and Robyn told me about all of your girlfriends. You don't commit at all! I know men like you. I almost married one.

(The phone rings and Marissa goes to answer)

JOSH

Wait, leave it. I'm sorry.

MARISSA

No you're not. You don't even know me.

JOSH

You're right. And you don't know me either.

(The answering machine clicks on)

ANSWERING MACHINE (Robyn's voice)

"You've reached Robyn, Lucas and the mad scientist. Leave us some love."

TED V.O.

Marissa, hey, it's me again. Uh, listen, I was just in your neighborhood doing a job and ah, figured I might stop by. I know you're busy, but, hope I catch you. If not, see you tonight. Bye.
(Beep)

JOSH

I see you've got an entourage of your own.

MARISSA

Who, Ted? No, he's just a guy I'm seeing.

JOSH

“Just” a guy, huh?

MARISSA

Look Josh, I gotta go –

JOSH

You want to know what I think? I think you’re a little sexist.

MARISSA

What? You don’t know what you’re talking about.

JOSH

It’s all in your research, Marissa. A single girl’s sex curve? What about the other half of the population?

MARISSA

Obviously you don’t understand the biology of what I’m doing. And I do have Lucas who’s doing it with me, so – you know what? Never mind, I’m not going to explain it to you.

JOSH

Why not? I’d be all ears about this one.

MARISSA

You are not a scientist.

JOSH

So what? I bet I could help. I’m extremely quick, *and* business minded.

MARISSA

Business minded?

JOSH

Yeah! What happens if this stuff of yours really works? Then what will you do with it? I’m a PR/marketing genius, baby. I store all the info. right up here. (Indicates his head) I know exactly who to sell to, when to sell and when to cut my losses.

MARISSA

You want to go into business with me? What, just, piggy-back on my idea –

JOSH

No way. I’d be an equal partner. And besides, you need me. I’m your missing demographic.

MARISSA

Ah, no you’re not. What I’m doing is for women and – ok, gay men too, and I haven’t figured out the gay woman perspective just yet but –

JOSH

But *I* am your heterosexual male counterpart. You want a successful venture; you have to appeal to everyone's needs.

MARISSA

What are you saying; you want in on the experiment?

JOSH

That's right.

MARISSA

Absolutely not! I am not going to give you more of a chance to sleep around, breaking girls' hearts -

JOSH

Not sleeping around – I want to do what you're doing.

MARISSA

It's out of the question. My motives are entirely benevolent and scientific. Yours are...I don't know...

JOSH

(Shaking the 8 ball)

Should Marissa take the deal?

MARISSA

Stop it.

JOSH

I'm telling you, we can help each other. Hang on.

(Josh runs out and Marissa walks to the door. Josh runs back with a thick folder and a few pens)

JOSH

Here's an example of my work. Look at it, read through it, make notes –

MARISSA

I really don't have the time to do that –

JOSH

Ok, then just look at the set-up. All this stuff is organized, color coded and marked in the most professional manner possible.

MARISSA

Oh yeah? What's with the Princess Lea pen?

JOSH

Um...don't change the subject here. I'm offering my services absolutely free, in exchange for getting in on this whole thing. I can help you get this out there, start your own business, whatever you want.

MARISSA

Honestly, I hadn't thought that far ahead. My main concern is proving my theory.

JOSH

You want to help people don't you?

MARISSA

Of course.

JOSH

Then you're going to have to reach them somehow, aren't you?

MARISSA

Well...I can't believe I'm going to say this, but, you're right. I do have to get it out there, you know, once I'm finished with the logistics. And I have no idea how to go about that.

JOSH

So do we have a deal?

(Josh extents his hand, and after a beat, Marissa takes it)

MARISSA

I hope I don't regret this.

JOSH

You won't! I'm good at what I do. Come by after the meeting if you want to, or whenever – next moon cycle if you prefer. It's our tradition, after all, and that'll give you enough time to come up with a plan for, you know, the man hormone thing. Ok. This is going to be great. So ah, here, keep the 8 ball. Consider it a little thank-you gift. In case you need help picking which guys or something. I'll see ya.

(Josh gives Marissa the live 'long and prosper' sign and exits. Marissa stands alone for a beat)

MARISSA

Yeah, great...

(Marissa sets the binder down. She goes to her room and makes a call on her cell phone)

MARISSA

Hey, Ted. It's Marissa. I hope you get this in time. I'm just – I'm running so far behind today and I'm really not feeling well either. I had sushi with Robyn yesterday and it's not sitting right.

MARISSA CONT'D

Sooo, I think I'm going to have to cancel for tonight. And I've got to get through a meeting now, so, I won't see you before I leave. I'm sorry. I'll...call you later.

(Marissa clicks her phone shut. She picks up the magic 8 ball and turns it over in her hands as the lights come down)

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

“RESULTS”

Act 2
Scene 1

(Dim lighting. Marissa’s dry erase board now reads “Results.” In Marissa’s bedroom, she and Ted are under the covers. Soft moans. Finally, Ted rolls off Marissa, breathing heavily)

TED

Wow...wow, wow. That was great.

MARISSA

Uh-huh.

TED

Marissa, you know, you’re the first girl in a long time I’ve –

MARISSA

So you’ve said, Ted. I know.

TED

No, you don’t get it. That’s like a big deal for me –

MARISSA

Really, you don’t have to –

TED

I don’t know what it was...maybe the whole ‘no pressure’ thing, and you’re up front and honest, and – I’m babbling, right? I’ll stop.

(Ted tries to put his arm around Marissa, but she resists, pulls her dress down and gets out of bed)

TED

What’s wrong?

MARISSA

Nothing. I’ll be back. I’m...going to the bathroom.

TED

Oh, cool.

(Marissa goes to the kitchen, pours a glass of water. She sits in the dark, in the living room a few moments. Lucas enters, whistling, and pulls out two wine glasses and fills them. He sets them on the coffee table, and screams as he notices Marissa. He turns the lights on all the way)

LUCAS

Jesus, Mary – you scared me. I thought you were doing yoga, baby.

MARISSA

I was.

LUCAS

And what, is he no good?

MARISSA

Shh, he's still here.

LUCAS

Ain't no use being quiet if the boy is no good. He's got to learn sometime.

MARISSA

No, it was...it was fine but I just couldn't...you know...

LUCAS

Come?

(Marissa checks over her shoulder and nods yes. She puts her head in her hands and Lucas sits next to her)

MARISSA

It's crazy, Lucas. Everyone at the University, everyone I've talked to is so interested and supportive and excited about what I'm doing but I...I'm starting to have a couple of doubts.

LUCAS

Doubts? Mary, you and I have slept with the whole damn island and two boroughs and we are still going strong. The stuff works. All fun, no fuss.

MARISSA

It's been working, like clockwork, but then what happened just now? I like Ted. He's fun and sexy, and uncomplicated. I was thinking of, you know, going off the stuff and just seeing him...but I can't until I finish my project. I've got to study the longer term effects too.

LUCAS

Mary, you're just tired, baby. Take a night off or something.

MARISSA

No, that won't help. (Beat) Lucas, you promise you won't tell anyone if I tell you something?

LUCAS

Oh hell...

MARISSA

I'm starting to feel nothing. The last few times I've had sex, it's only gotten worse. It feels good at first but then – then it's like this empty feeling -

LUCAS

That's called un-attachment.

MARISSA

No, this is different. Before the experiment I definitely had a few one night stands. And I didn't feel much but at least there was a little something – some connection, and I do look back fondly on those guys. But now – the names, the faces, they're all blurring together and I'm starting not to even want to anymore.

LUCAS

Oooh, now you're talking crazy. You know, you probably have too much on your mind. Give it a couple of days, let the libido rest some.

MARISSA

I guess...I mean I do have a lot going on. And now my research is more complicated than ever since Josh...I mean, um...

LUCAS

Josh? Back up the truck, baby, what's Josh got to do with it?

MARISSA

Ok, well, what happened was...see, he wanted to be a part of this, and stupidly, I let him because heterosexual male is an area I don't have, but it's been a lot of work, trying to reverse the whole thing, and lately, I don't know, I've been having this funny feeling about him.

LUCAS

Oh for god's sake, Mary, is that it? Well now I understand. Don't worry, let me see. I know what everything looks like.

(Lucas tries to lift her dress and Marissa shrieks)

MARISSA

Lucas! *About* him, not *from* him! Goddamn it!

LUCAS

You mean that's not him in there? I thought you were havin' an STD scare, baby! Excuse the fuck out of me for being a friend!

MARISSA

Of course it isn't him in there! Why would you think that?

LUCAS

Hello! It's only obvious you want him –

MARISSA

I don't want him!

LUCAS

Ain't no shame in –

MARISSA

I don't!

LUCAS

Ok, whatever...

MARISSA

Lucas, I don't!

LUCAS

I said ok! Jesus, now I'm sweating like a whore in church. (takes his shirt off) I'm going to take a shower. Mary, you calm down! Take a walk or something.

(Lucas exits. Marissa finishes Lucas's drink.
Lights down)

ACT 2
Scene 2

(Dim lights. Marissa has thrown all of her research off of her bed. She is now in her slippers, lab rat tee shirt, and open robe. She watches an old romantic comedy on TV. Improvisation is fine here, as Marissa is mouthing words along with the show. She picks at a huge danish while simultaneously using a thigh master)

MARISSA

This is such crap...

(Marissa throws her danish at the TV, then rummages through her mess until she pulls out the magic eight ball Josh got her. She considers, then shakes it. She makes an 'ach' sound after shaking it twice and looking at the results. She crosses to her purse and fishes out a package of cigarettes. She is about to light one but then puts it down and shakes the magic 8 ball again)

MARISSA

Impossible!

(A knock at the door)

ROBYN O.S.

Marissa? Do you want breakfast?

MARISSA

Not hungry.

ROBYN O.S.

You skipped dinner last night.

MARISSA

Um...ok, maybe like, a muffin. And some coffee.

ROBYN O.S.

I already made you coffee.

Well in that case...

MARISSA

(Marissa opens the door and picks up her cigarettes. She lights up. Robyn enters and sets down the coffee)

ROBYN

What - Mar, are you stress smoking? Give me that!

(Robyn takes the cigarette and puts it out)

MARISSA

Oh come on.

(Marissa tries to light another one and Robyn takes Marissa's lighter)

MARISSA

Hey!

ROBYN

Drink your coffee.

MARISSA

Give me back my lighter.

ROBYN

I will not.

MARISSA

Robyn, I'm a grown woman and I want my lighter!

ROBYN

Forget it.

(Marissa tries to get the lighter back but Robyn throws it out the window)

MARISSA

No you didn't!

(Marissa takes a magnifying glass, holds it out the window with her cigarette)

ROBYN

Why don't you just talk to me – hey - what the fuck do you think you're doing?

(Marissa expertly uses the sun to light her cigarette)

ROBYN

Unbelievable.

MARISSA

Just like burning ants.

ROBYN

Fine, just – hold it out the window.

MARISSA

Fair enough.

ROBYN

Marissa, please talk to me. (Beat as Marissa smokes) Look, I'm your best friend. It's not like I don't know what this is about. You're holed up in here stress smoking, all you want to eat is pastries and coffee, which I know is your break up food cause it's all I could get into you for days after Brian broke your heart in college. Except you haven't broken up with anyone and Lucas told me –

MARISSA

He told you? That bitch.

ROBYN

Is it true? Do you have feelings for the guy I think you have feelings for?

MARISSA

Honestly, I don't know what to believe! My biological impulses are going haywire. I'm not responding positively to sex with anyone anymore, I keep thinking about how much I don't want Josh to be involved with my research, but it doesn't make any sense. I'm not supposed to feel like this. I created that formula so this wouldn't happen.

ROBYN

You created the formula for a hormone released during sex –

MARISSA

I know. It's supposed to block the closeness urge, but, I don't know, what if this is a loop hole? Can you really fall in love with someone you don't sleep with? I mean, really really?

ROBYN

Remember puberty?

MARISSA

Yes, actually. I remember I used to have one of these too.

(Marissa shows Robyn the 8 ball)

ROBYN

You consulted a magic 8 ball before me?

MARISSA

I know! And you know what, all I keep getting when I ask it if I'm in love with Josh is 'it is certain.'

ROBYN

How many times did you do it – because you gotta figure it's a 50/50 shot –

MARISSA

Every time, which completely debunks every single probability theory I studied in undergrad. What does that mean?

ROBYN

Nothing, Mar. It's a fucking toy. But if you think it means something, maybe it's your subconscious telling you, you might be falling –

MARISSA

Oh my god...oh my god! What if the oxytocin blocker is completely bogus? What if – what if this loop hole is the direct result of experimenting with that formula?

ROBYN

I was afraid something like this might happen. Mar, people aren't meant to be like that forever. It's like I first thought, if you're really in love maybe nothing can truly stop it.

MARISSA

If you're right my entire thesis is a failure.

ROBYN

But it isn't! Marissa, what if the whole sex curve serum is the same thing as a magic 8 ball? What if the serum is only real if you believe in it? And if that's the case, then nothing can truly stop love. Now answer me this; has anyone been able to offer some hard scientific proof that love isn't all biological and chemical?

MARISSA

Well...

ROBYN

Marissa it could be you! Talk to Josh – dare him to debunk your theory. Maybe you won't prove what you set out to prove, but what if you find out something else just as big?

MARISSA

No...no, it's too late. It's not that simple. There are so many factors to consider –

ROBYN

What's to consider? Come on, girl, you're in love!

MARISSA

No! I'm confused and tired and having a – an emotional response to my confusion. And besides even if what you're saying were true – this ridiculous notion that I could be, or should be in love with Josh, he's your ex, so I wouldn't even dream of going there.

ROBYN

Marissa, you know Josh and I were never soul mates – he's perfect for you – he's just like you – heady, brilliant, a little nuts –

MARISSA

I am not nuts! What I am is – maybe what's going on is that I'm having some sort of allergic reaction to this serum I've made.

ROBYN

You know that's not it.

MARISSA

No I don't! I don't know anything anymore. And that's exactly what I'm going to have to tell my thesis advisor. God, I'm dead. I'm gonna get kicked out of this program. I'll be a laughing stock.

ROBYN

Not if you take my damn advice!

MARISSA

Robyn, I love you, but you don't know what the hell you're talking about. Now please, leave me alone. You and Lucas, just leave me alone.

ROBYN

Marissa –

MARISSA

Get out! Just get out, please. Get out.

(Robyn waits a beat then exits. Marissa paces for a bit, takes another cigarette, but realizes she still has no lighter and gives up. She flops down on the bed and turns on her tape recorder. As the lights dim, the tape plays)

MARISSA V.O.

In the time it took me to calm down and plan my next move, Robyn typed up her notes on the situation for her new book, “Sex Curve; a survival guide”...or something like that. It was still a working title. After a couple of weeks I decided I was going to have to face Josh and figure out the mess I had gotten myself into. At the very least, I was going to try.

Act 2
Scene 3

(The scene becomes Josh’s apartment. A knock at the door. Josh answers and Marissa stands in the doorway wearing her lab rat tee shirt, but the rest of her is well put together)

JOSH

Marissa, hey -

MARISSA

I brought you something.

(Marissa pulls a vial out of her purse)

JOSH

Is that -

MARISSA

Yeah.

JOSH

Wow...I thought it would be more...psychedelic or something.

MARISSA

It’s a serum, Josh, not The Green Fairy.

JOSH

(Putting away papers)

Ha! That’s cute. You know, most people don’t know that absinthe was commonly referred to as

—

MARISSA

Do you have time for this? I did just barge in here and I didn't know if...you know...you were busy.

JOSH

Don't be silly! There wasn't any barging. You knocked.

MARISSA

Well yeah, but...ok. Here.

(Marissa hands Josh the vial. He turns it over in his hands)

JOSH

So...what now?

MARISSA

You um, you swallow it, obviously. And um, the effects come on a lot like alcohol. It's absorbed directly into your body instead of via the stomach, and then, when you feel, you know, comfortable, then you're all set and ready to...put it into effect.

JOSH

I see...so I take this, what, before or in the middle?

MARISSA

An hour or two before, preferably. Unless of course, you forget, in which case the middle works too, just not as well. I did that a couple of times. (Beat) What?

JOSH

Are you ok? You seem a little...

MARISSA

I'm fine. I guess I should just leave you with that and ah, when you've used it we can have a meeting, or something.

(Marissa turns to leave but stops, considers and turns back)

MARISSA

Unless...

JOSH

Unless what?

MARISSA

Unless you might – um, want to...try it out now?

JOSH

Like, right now?

MARISSA

Yeah.

JOSH

With you?

(Marissa gives a shrug and a ‘why not’ gesture)

JOSH

Um...

MARISSA

That’s ok! I just thought I’d ask – I didn’t know how soon you wanted to do this – and it’s not as if it would mean anything anyway, I mean, I took some too just before I came over here just in case and I know we’re working together now which is not usually appropriate but these circumstances are, well...different.

(Josh walks over to her. She braces herself as he looks at her. Then he walks past her and puts his hand on the open door. He looks back at her)

MARISSA

Right. No problem. I’ll just go.

(As Marissa crosses to the door, Josh shuts it and leans up against it, blocking her. He gets close to her, slowly brushes back her hair, places his hand on her lower back and pulls her close to him. They look into each others’ eyes for a moment and finally Josh kisses Marissa. Lights fade to black)

Act 2
Scene 4

(Dim lights come back up slowly. Birds chirp. Marissa's lab rat shirt is strewn on the floor with the rest of her and Josh's clothes. She is under the covers on Josh's bed. Slowly, Marissa stirs, gets up and looks around. She pulls a pad and paper out of her bag and starts writing. Josh wakes up, his hair all over the place)

JOSH

Hey.

MARISSA

Morning.

JOSH

What are you doing? (Marissa hides her paper quickly) Marissa, you're making a pros and cons list? And what's the number four doing next to the word 'brainiac'?

MARISSA

Damn your perfect memory –

JOSH

Tell me, what does 'four' mean?

MARISSA

This is my system – it's like an evaluation thing, and four is...not great.

JOSH

Why? You don't need any extra brains around yours?

MARISSA

It's not that, but when two smart people get together they fight and then –

JOSH

I think that's a turn on. And I happen like our brains together.

(Josh pulls Marissa to snuggle. Marissa pulls a pair of panties from the mattress)

MARISSA

What's this?

JOSH

Oh, um...

MARISSA

Are these – I can't remember what her name is. You're still seeing her?

JOSH

Sure...aren't you seeing other people?

MARISSA

I am, yeah, and I might have liked one of them, but...

JOSH

What?

MARISSA

When did she leave these, exactly? I'm only asking because she might want them back. This... fabric isn't easy to come by in such...small amounts...

JOSH

Marissa...why do you want to know?

MARISSA

There is a system to be followed now that you're in this thing with me. So I need to know, how much are you having sex?

JOSH

Ah...it was earlier. Much earlier than you got here, I promise.

MARISSA

The same *day*?

JOSH

Is that bad?

MARISSA

Yes, that's bad! That's like a number 5 bad, on a scale from 1-5! My system doesn't work that way! You can't do that!

JOSH

Funny, I thought your system involved sleeping with more than one person –

MARISSA

Not on the same day! That cheapens it, or something. You don't have enough time to digest, to

–

JOSH

What?

MARISSA

You wouldn't understand – this was a huge mistake.

JOSH

Why wouldn't I understand? Because I'm a guy?

MARISSA

I wasn't going to phrase it that way, but, yes, something like that.

JOSH

You know, for someone who's trying to evolve, you sure are holding on to the past pretty tight. I wouldn't be surprised if you went back and did this thing with, what's his name? David?

MARISSA

(Gathering her things, getting dressed)

I'm going home.

JOSH

(Standing up)

Now you're offended. Doesn't feel great when someone assumes something about you, does it?

MARISSA

Just let me go...

JOSH

Unfortunately, that's how it is. People make assumptions without considering they might be wrong.

MARISSA

It's none of your business what I'm doing and who I'm doing it with.

JOSH

Then why is it your business what I'm doing?

MARISSA

Hello! Because – it's different! I have to know for my research –

JOSH

Forget about your research for one second here. What about you and me? Why do you want to know so much about me? Why do you want to spend so much time with me?

MARISSA

We're working together!

JOSH

We could do that over the phone, but no! You're here with me now. You were with me last night, which was incredible, by the way. So you can't tell me that what you do is not going to be my business. The lines are all smudged now, and you took the initiative on that, not me –

MARISSA

Not *you*? Are you kidding me? Who's been asking me out every damn moon cycle, who rushes over to my place every time there's a cockroach to kill or a toilet to fix? Who came to whom about taking this stuff, huh?

JOSH

If you don't want to be with me – if you really don't want me, and all this was for your project, then why do your eyes tell me something else?

MARISSA

My what?

JOSH

Your eyes, your body language – it's written all over your face. I know, I've read a hundred articles about attraction in COSMO.

MARISSA

COSMO?

JOSH

Yes, my ex had a subscription - that's irrelevant. What I'm trying to say is –

MARISSA

I know what you're trying to say. You've read some articles about women, you learned a thing or two from a few break ups and that's all you need to figure things out. Well you're wrong. You don't know what you're talking about.

JOSH

Tell me about it then – about everything. About you, Marissa. Tell me why you really had to resort to this experiment. Why you're so keen on helping everyone else but you're too stubborn to see yourself? Why are you still hurting so bad –

MARISSA

Why do you want to know?

JOSH

Why do you think?

MARISSA

(Beat) It's impossible, for both of us.

JOSH

Is it?

MARISSA

Yes.

JOSH

Well, you're the expert. Say the word and I'm gone. We'll talk on the phone, we'll be strictly professional. But if you want my opinion, I think you're special. And you have a lot to give to people - to someone - if you stop hiding behind a formula and an experiment in the spirit of revenge.

(Marissa exits, slamming the door)

Act 2
Scene 5

(Marissa walks into her apartment wearing the same clothes, only disheveled. Robyn flips on the lights, looking crazed in her little pink robe, green face mask, and baseball bat in hand)

ROBYN

Ah ha!

(Marissa and Robyn scream, upon seeing each other)

ROBYN

Damn, Mar, you scared me! (Beat) Are those the same clothes you had on yesterday?

MARISSA

What are you doing?!

ROBYN

Oh. Sorry. Josh told me there were a couple of break-ins last month so I took some precautionary measures. Why didn't you call?

MARISSA

Oh...Josh...

ROBYN

(Gasps)

Did you –

MARISSA

Listen, before I tell you what happened last night, is Lucas home?

ROBYN

Sure. Why?

MARISSA

Lucas! Can you come here please! I want to talk to both of you.

(Lucas enters, rubbing his eyes and yawning)

LUCAS

Hey, baby. Mmm...you tryin' to wake the dead?

MARISSA

Sit down, you guys.

LUCAS

Oh, hell...

ROBYN

What's wrong?

MARISSA

I sort of slept with Josh. (Beat)

ROBYN

And...?

LUCAS

Well about damn time!

LUCAS

Wait a second – did something bad happen with Josh? Is that what got you all fucked up and stocking the kitchen with your break-up food?

MARISSA

No. Well kind of. Guys, I'm so confused! I let Josh be a part of my experiment because it sounded like a good idea at the time – you know, he really knows how to sell himself –

ROBYN

Duh, why do you think I dated him?

MARISSA

Anyway, now I wish I hadn't gotten him mixed up in all of this because I think...guys I really think I'm –

ROBYN

I knew it! I'm right, aren't I? About how you feel about Josh?

MARISSA

I think you were. And now everything's all fucked up. I'm sorry, Lucas, but, you better quit using the serum. I don't think it's going to work for you or me after all.

LUCAS

Yeah, I coulda told you that much.

MARISSA

What?

LUCAS

I came clean, with Jimmy, about everything.

ROBYN

Me too, with my man. And then I had Lucas swear to Leon the stuff doesn't really work. Didn't help, though. I am officially single again, which is always better for my career at least.

MARISSA

So there's no doubt now. I was wrong. And the way I feel about what happened with Josh –

ROBYN

What did happen over there, exactly?

MARISSA

It was great...I mean, wonderful is more like it, but then...things got weird and we had this big fight. It hurts so much, maybe this serum finally caught up with me. Maybe because of what I've done I've been cursed with the pain of a thousand break-ups!

ROBYN

Call Josh, Mar! Tell him how you feel.

MARISSA

I can't. What kind of scientist would I be if I did that? I have to let him be...to see what happens.

ROBYN

Why?

MARISSA

Because...it didn't work for Lucas and I, but what if it does for Josh? What if his demographic is the one the stuff can work for?

ROBYN

You can't be serious.

LUCAS

Mary, I think it's time to stop being so damned serious.

MARISSA

Even if I do tell him how I feel now, he'll never believe me. Not after today.

ROBYN

That doesn't make any sense. Josh is a reasonable guy.

MARISSA

It was pretty clear he doesn't feel the same way about me. And even if he did, how would he know I'm telling the truth and it wasn't some part of the experiment?

ROBYN

Because you'll tell him –

MARISSA

No.

ROBYN

So you're really going to wait this out?

MARISSA

I have to. It's the only way to save face here. If the sex curve serum doesn't work for Josh I can record my solution. If it does work, I'll have to ask for more time...or something.

ROBYN

You really wanna risk that, even if it means Josh might find somebody else?

MARISSA

Yes. I have to do this. I'm not about to give up on everything I worked for because I'm scared. I'm not going to hide in my room with pastries and coffee anymore. I'm going to face this head-on.

LUCAS

That's an interesting way to put it –

ROBYN

Lucas!

MARISSA

Guys, the point is; no matter what happens, when I meet with my thesis committee, I'm going to have something to say to them.

ROBYN

Ok...if that's what you want then, we got your back. Right?

LUCAS

Yeah, sure, baby. We're here for you. Now as long as we're awake, Robyn, break out the candles and the dragon's blood. Cause we need us a séance for our dead relationships.

(Lights come down as Robyn gets some candles)

MARISSA V.O.

I felt like I was back to square one. I got rid of all my prospects and really, didn't have a desire for any. Single again, Robyn was writing up a storm. Lucas and Jimmy are...well, no one really knows. And then there was Josh...he seemed to be doing better than the rest of us. At least from a fly on the wall view at the Starbucks on 23rd and 5th. I watched him with Kristin, the girl that came before me. He looked happy...it gave me this big lump in my stomach, which hasn't gone away yet. I kept wondering if the lump was actually real, or if I had somehow created it, just like the serum and the whole mess it brought about. My presentation is right around the corner, which sucks because I think it's safe to say, no one has any real answers for me, and I certainly don't have any for myself.

(The scene turns into Marissa's bedroom. She erases 'results' on her dry erase board and she writes 'solution.')

Act 2
Scene 6

“SOLUTION”

(Marissa caps her dry erase marker, paces a few times and flops down to sit on her bed. She picks up her magic 8 ball)

MARISSA

The problem is; I can only ask you yes or no questions. (She shakes it) Will I be a big fat failure and lose my mind? (She shakes it so hard it drops) Shit.

(Marissa follows the 8 ball next to her tape recorder and picks it up)

MARISSA

Ah, great. All bubbles.

(Marissa puts the 8 ball down and picks up her tape recorder)

MARISSA

I wish I had something to – oh my god.

(She opens up the tape recorder and her tape is missing)

MARISSA

Oh my god! (She opens her door) Lucas! Robyn! What did I do with my tape?

(Robyn and Lucas enter drinking coffee)

ROBYN

What’s up, Mar?

MARISSA

I can’t find my tape. I didn’t take it out, did I? Oh my god, I had my research *and* all my private notes on there!

ROBYN

Check again. Maybe it fell out, or fell out into something. Lucas and I will check out here –

LUCAS

But I didn't see anything – oof!

(Robyn hits him to shut him up)

ROBYN

(Ushering Marissa back to her room)

It's gotta be here. Don't worry, we'll find it. (Beat, after Robyn closes the door) Lucas! You're gonna botch the whole thing up. How else did you think I could get the whole story across to him?

LUCAS

Go ahead; blame me for being out of the loop.

(Robyn peeks out of the peep hole in the main door)

ROBYN

I don't know why he hasn't seen it yet! I've been waiting all morning, and now Marissa already noticed.

LUCAS

Well so much for that oxy-clear shit. From now on, I'm not listening to Mary, or you and your damn disconnect and exorcisms –

ROBYN

Cleansing ritual!

LUCAS

Whatever! (He pushes Robyn aside to peep)

ROBYN

Ach. We can't wait very much longer here.

LUCAS

Maybe the tape dropped out on his way back to his place.

ROBYN

No, I put it in the middle of the stack. Let me see! (She pushes Lucas and peeks) Wait, there he is! Oh, no. It's just a neighbor – oooh, he's cute, though.

LUCAS

You ready to jump back into the saddle already, baby?

ROBYN

Hey, you never know. I'm beginning to think that relationships are like working titles, you know? People put too much weight on what we are, or were, or will be. Maybe you just gotta roll with it and leave the title blank for a while.

LUCAS

Says the writer.

(Doorbell rings and they jump)

ROBYN

Come on, Lucas, hide!

(They scatter)

MARISSA

Robyn! Lucas! The door!

(Marissa answers it)

MARISSA

Josh?

JOSH

Hey. I found this in my files for the serum. Did you –

MARISSA

Oh my god! I've been looking everywhere for this.

JOSH

Really?

MARISSA

What was it doing with your papers?

JOSH

I don't know, I thought you might have mixed it up in here or wanted me to look at it, but I didn't! Not after the last time I accidentally...

MARISSA

So you didn't look at it.

JOSH

No. Why, should I have?

MARISSA

No! I mean I'm ah, I'm still working. I haven't figured it all out yet.

JOSH

Oh...can I help? I mean, if you're not still pissed at me?

MARISSA

I'm not pissed, I'm – anyway, no, I don't think you can help. Well, maybe. Um, how's it going? With the...you know...

JOSH

Oh, I've tried it a couple times, if that's what you mean. It seems to work fine...

MARISSA

Oh. Right. Ok.

JOSH

But if you think it's not perfect, maybe it's missing something.

MARISSA

Well, Robyn and Lucas have had some confusing results.

JOSH

I see...well can I make a suggestion?

MARISSA

What?

JOSH

I'm no expert, but as a businessman and a guy with a photographic memory, why don't you check to see if you missed a step.

MARISSA

I most certainly did *not* miss any steps!

JOSH

Don't get defensive. I know you've done a lot of work but if memory serves, and it always does, there are eight steps for testing a hypothesis, right?

MARISSA

Eight? No, it's – wait, yeah, you're right, there is a step for retesting but you don't do that unless you think you need to, and it's after your conclusion, but I haven't exactly come to that yet.

JOSH

Well, who says you have to do everything by the book like that? You get so uptight about things.

MARISSA

Hey!

JOSH

I can see it. You want everything to be perfect, like, 'this is the way,' and 'this isn't the way.' Come on, this is an experiment, right? Work out of the box a little.

MARISSA

I like the box. The box always works.

JOSH

Does it?

MARISSA

Yes! Mostly...

JOSH

Ok, so you admit there is a little room for error, even in a perfect, tested system.

MARISSA

Well –

JOSH

So try this; mix up the last couple steps. 'Cause honestly, it sounds to me like you think need to retest now.

MARISSA

I -I don't want to talk about this anymore.

JOSH

I'm your business partner, remember? I'm on your side. I want to help.

MARISSA

Well you're not!

JOSH

Ok...then I should leave you to it, I guess. You got a lot of thinking to do. Good night, Marissa.

MARISSA

Josh?

JOSH

Yeah?

MARISSA

I have to ask; how well is it working?

JOSH

The love juice? I did meet a couple of girls. It's ah – hey, wait, I thought you wanted me to make notes, have a meeting, do this the proper way.

MARISSA

Stop teasing me!

JOSH

Ok, sorry. Geez, lighten up.

MARISSA

Forget it. I'll talk to you later, Josh.

JOSH

You're sure?

(Marissa stares at him)

JOSH

What is it?

MARISSA

Yes! Yes, I'm sure. Go home.

JOSH

Ok, I'll see ya around –

MARISSA

Josh, I think I majorly fucked up!

JOSH

What? Why?

MARISSA

Because! Can't you tell?! I think – all I wanted to do was stop hurting! But then I met you and I – somehow I couldn't control it and I –

JOSH

Marissa, calm down. I don't know what you're trying to tell me.

MARISSA

I'm telling you that – I don't know how to tell you this, because you're infuriating and you turn everything into a joke, or you act strange or something which makes this make even less sense to me –

JOSH

What? What makes no sense?

MARISSA

Well it's –

(They are interrupted by Marissa's cell phone ringing)

MARISSA

Shit!

JOSH

Don't answer it –

MARISSA

I have to – it could be my boss. Hello?

(The buzzer starts ringing as Marissa talks)

MARISSA

What? Yes. Yes, Professor Kelly. I'll be there with bells on. The results? Well...um...

(Robyn looks out the window and goes over to Josh and Marissa)

ROBYN

Mar, sorry to interrupt, but you've got a visitor downstairs.

MARISSA

I'm so sorry, Professor, but I'll have to get back to you on that –

(Marissa hangs up)

MARISSA

Good God, please tell me it's not –

ROBYN

Ted?

MARISSA

Oh...well what the hell is *he* doing here? I thought I cleared this up already!

ROBYN

Don't look at me, girl. I didn't let him in, but someone was going out and I think he's coming up.

JOSH

Who's coming up?

MARISSA

This guy – this guy who used to be like a womanizer but totally flipped on me when I tested my stuff on him. He thought he was in love or something.

ROBYN

You didn't tell me that, Mar! And you dumped him without a word for weeks and now he's – oh no! He's not coming up here to start some shit in this house!

(Robyn locks the door and no sooner does he do that then there is a loud knock on the door)

TED O.S.

Marissa?! Are you there? (More knocking)

MARISSA

Yes, um, go home, Ted. I'll call you and we can talk –

TED O.S.

I'm not going anywhere! You don't return my calls, my e-mails, my texts, my voice mails, my Facebook or my Myspace messages – I can't even find you on Twitter anymore! I'm not going anywhere until I can talk to you – I've been thinking about you all the time.

ROBYN

Holy shit –

TED O.S.

Is that Robyn? Robyn, come on, open the door, ok? I swear it's just like in your book, Ten Easy Steps to Win Back the Love of Your Life, I'm confronting the issue head on and I'm not going to settle for less than I deserve.

ROBYN

Damn, I'm good –

MARISSA
(Whispering)

Robyn, say something to make him leave?

ROBYN

Ah, ok, Ted? Listen, that's a really great go-getter attitude and I admire your courage to use my words (Marissa hits Robyn) – ok, but the thing is, you need to give it a little room to breathe, hun. Call Marissa and –

TED O.S.

Didn't you fucking hear me?! She won't return my calls!

(Lucas enters)

LUCAS

What's all this hollerin' about?

(Ted bangs on the door)

TED O.S.

If you won't open up, I'm coming in!

LUCAS

Oh hell – Mary, what in Jesus fuck did you do to that boy?

MARISSA

Nothing he hasn't done to I don't know how many women before me –

JOSH

Well that solves it – he obviously fell hard for you cause you beat him at his own game. Push 'em away and they only want you more. That's how I –

ROBYN

Exactly the fucking disconnect!

(Ted begins to bang harder on the door)

MARISSA

Oh my god, he's going to break down the door!

JOSH

Robyn, where's your bat?

ROBYN

How do you know I have a bat?

JOSH

You better have a bat! Or else I'll have to knock him out with one of your vibrators!

LUCAS

Don't play, Josh. She's got a big one with a handle on it – like a sword –

(More loud banging. Lucas shrieks, runs off stage)

ROBYN

Oh no! Lucas, don't you dare bring my Spartacus in here –

(The house phone starts ringing)

MARISSA

Stop it, you guys! I'll talk him down. He's not a violent person.

JOSH

Oh really?!

(Lucas enters with Robyn's bat)

LUCAS

Where is that crazy-ass, jock strap, man-whore son of a bitch?!

MARISSA

Lucas, put that down! I can handle this.

LUCAS

Ooooh, baby, you lie like a rug.

JOSH

I can take that, Lucas.

LUCAS

No you don't! I can kill a man for trespassing in my house -

JOSH

Or you can have him assassinated -

(Josh tries to get the bat and it slips from his hands, causing the table with the answering machine to topple. The answering machine is knocked over and clicks on)

ANSWERING MACHINE

You have three new messages. First message –

JIMMY V.O.

Lucas, are you there? You're a half hour late, where are you?

LUCAS

Oh, shit. I forgot.

JIMMY V.O.

You're lucky I don't sue that bitch roommate of yours for –

(Lucas clicks the phone with his foot)

ROBYN

You break that and you're paying for it!

(Robyn pulls Lucas away)

ANSWERING MACHINE

Next message;

PROFESSOR KELLY V.O.

Marissa, it's Louise Kelly. I've been trying to get you back on the other line. I was going to tell you, a Professor from Princeton is very interested in your project and may offer you a grant!

MARISSA

What...?

ROBYN

I'm gonna turn that off –

MARISSA

Wait!

LUCAS

Hold up now -

TED O.S.

Marissa, please...

PROFESSOR V.O.

Don't get upset. I know you wanted to keep this secret, but all the cards were in order, sweetie. Max is a good friend of mine, he won't jeopardize anything. I was going to tell you in person, but there's no time. Do you think we could move up the preliminary presentation?

(Another knock at the door. Marissa clicks the answering machine)

TED O.S.

Please, can we talk?

ANSWERING MACHINE

Next message;

TED O.S. (On machine)

Heey, Marissa...hooooooney, it's me. I can't get you on your cell. I've been thinking about everything, especially after seeing you again last week – and I know what I have to do now. I tried going back to other girls, but it doesn't feel right. I don't want to be like you ex and give up like this. Please, call me back.

MACHINE

End of –

(Marissa shuts off the answering machine)

MARISSA

No! Ted, now you - please leave me alone! We talked about this already.

JOSH

When did you end things with him? Was this before or after we hooked up?

MARISSA

Well, um, I don't remember exactly –

JOSH

And have you been to see your ex? Cause *Ted* seems to know all about him –

ROBYN

She would not! Right? (Beat) Wait, would you? No, you wouldn't –

TED O.S.

She did! She told me! That's when she ended things –

MARISSA

I – I had to go by his place to get the things I left behind and that's it!

JOSH

Was it? It wasn't for any other reason – any at all?

LUCAS

I think my goddamned heart just stopped –

(Ted resumes banging)

LUCAS CONT'D

Nope, there it goes –

MARISSA

I didn't get a chance to tell you because things were awkward after that night and then I didn't even want to think about David –

ROBYN

“He who shall not be named,” damn it! (Beat) Sorry.

MARISSA

Josh, that door is closed, I swear it!

JOSH

I gotta hand it to you, Marissa. You really know how to get yourself in some deep shit.

MARISSA

You don't believe me?

TED O.S.
(Knocking)

Marissa?

JOSH

If that asshole wasn't outside right now, I'd leave. But I won't. Not until he goes away and you get a restraining order.

(Josh finds a chair and puts it in front of the door.
He sits down guarding it)

MARISSA

(To Robyn and Lucas)

You two have nothing to say about this?

TED O.S.

Marissa, please, I love you, I - I think I want to marry you.

(Josh punches the door)

TED O.S.

Ow!

(Lucas pushes them out of the way and swings open the door)

LUCAS

Oh yes, baby! Take me away!

TED O.S.

Get away from me, Lucas –

LUCAS

It's ok baby, don't deny our love, its natural!

(Lucas blocks Ted as he tries to get into the apartment)

LUCAS O.S.

Don't be *scurd*, baby, come give daddy some love –

TED O.S.

Cut it out!

LUCAS O.S.

I know chapter eight won't let us have our day, but that doesn't mean we can't go to Hawaii!

(Lucas pushes Ted and exits with him, closing the door)

MARISSA

Lucas!

LUCAS
(Peeking in)

Well you wouldn't let me hit him with the bat – don't worry, he's almost gone. (Shuts door)

LUCAS O.S.

Wait for me, baby! I see you! You can't hide behind the elevator. Come give me a kiss!

(Lucas and Ted's voices fade, leaving Marissa, Robyn and Josh. Robyn peeks out the door)

ROBYN

Coast is clear. I'll just ah – yeah.

(Robyn exits. Josh gets up, puts the chair back)

MARISSA

Wait, Josh, can you stay a minute?

JOSH

I really can't -

MARISSA

Josh, I think I'm in love with you!

JOSH

Woah, what?

MARISSA

(Pacing)

I've known for weeks, now. It's all I could think about. And I believe this is it for me. This is the real thing. Because despite everything that's happened, here I am, still feeling this way. I'm sorry I didn't tell you before I got you involved in this, and the whole business venture idea and everything, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. It's no good, Josh. The serum doesn't work. Because, I love you. And I've been too scared to say it, but now there's no other choice. And I'm also...really really scared that you don't feel the same way or that, you don't believe me or you think it isn't real because of the serum or something, but, I love you. It's done and I can't take it back.

JOSH

Marissa -

MARISSA

Please, don't, ok? Don't make this moment about why we can't do this, because I so needed to say it. You don't have to say anything now. Just please, think about it?

(Josh stares at Marissa, says nothing. He shakes his head and exits. Marissa leans her back against the door as the lights come down)

Act 2
Scene 7

“CONCLUSION”

(Marissa, dressed in casual business attire, erases ‘solution’ from her dry erase board. She writes ‘conclusion.’ Then she goes to the other side of the stage where Robyn is waiting for her, holding two Starbucks cups. She hands one to Marissa)

MARISSA

Oh, you’re the greatest. Thanks.

ROBYN

No problem, girl. You know I can’t let you go in there with no caffeine in your blood.

MARISSA

Here’s to that.

(They cheers and sip the coffee)

ROBYN

Are you ready?

MARISSA

As ready as I’m going to be.

(She peeks out into the audience)

MARISSA

Shouldn’t be long now. Quick, tell me something to take my mind off this for a second.

. ROBYN

Ah, ok. Um...I’m working on this new short story for Marie Claire magazine.

MARISSA

Oh yeah?

ROBYN

It’s about a woman who sees different colors every time she has an orgasm – something about how the different emotions she experiences in the relationship directly affects her sex life. And then it ends up coming out in these colors, which triggers all sorts of memories and...I haven’t worked out all the details yet.

MARISSA

Sounds wild.

ROBYN

Hey, it's based on a true story. Terra, my editor, said it happened to her.

MARISSA

Huh! Terra and the Technicolor orgasm!

ROBYN

Don't joke, girl, I might just steal that title.

MARISSA

Feel free. What would I do with it?

ROBYN

I don't know...it's good to see you laugh though, finally.

MARISSA

It's good to do the laughing. (Beat) So whatever happened with the thing you were writing about my experiment?

ROBYN

Oh, I'm putting the sex curve project on hold right now. At least until I'm not so close to the material, and, you know, it all sinks in, for everybody.

MARISSA

Right.

PROFESSOR O.S.

Marissa, we're ready for you now.

MARISSA

Be right in! Ok, that's me. Thanks for being here, Robyn. It means a lot.

ROBYN

You know I'm always here for you. Don't think I'm not coming in. I'll sit right in the back. So you need some moral support, just look my way.

MARISSA

What would I do without you?

ROBYN

Mmm, don't go there, Mar. Get your ass up on that podium and set this thing straight.

MARISSA

Ok...ok.

(Robyn exits and Marissa steps up to a podium, now in the center of the stage. The audience is treated as her committee)

MARISSA

Hello, everyone. Ah, thank you for this opportunity. I'm just going to dive right in. (Beat while Marissa arranges her papers) As you know, my project began as the kernel of an idea. I got to thinking about the biology of relationships; what makes them tick, and what makes them stop cold. I basically put together a plan of attack; I wanted to come up with some way to be sure that a woman could pick the right partner for herself. And I did. At least I thought I did. The success rate was nearly one hundred percent at first but then, about halfway into the process, there were...complications. I'll explain. I have papers here, with the specifics of the experiment, but I think I should tell you first that –

(Marissa is interrupted by Josh, who bursts into the room)

JOSH

I'm it! I'm the reason Marissa's success rate is so low.

MARISSA

Josh! I'm sorry everyone. Just a moment. (Whispering) Josh, what are you doing?

JOSH

(Winking at Marissa)

Marissa developed a chemical substance meant to be used just by women. It was supposed to block the release of the oxytocin hormone so a woman could experience free will in terms of picking her partners without any kind of biological component. It also works on homosexual men. She had three test subjects, including herself. And it worked like a charm in the beginning. Didn't it?

MARISSA

Well yes, yes it did, which I said a minute ago –

JOSH

Until me. See, I asked Marissa to be a part of her experiment. I was the one straight guy involved in all of this. She had to alter her experiment to fit my biological needs. And in the time she did so, the charming effects began to wear off on her and the rest of her test subjects. And by the time I started, everything was already unraveling. Now I'm not a scientist, or any other kind of expert, but I happen to have a pretty good memory. I see something, I remember it.

JOSH CONT'D

And I saw this whole project run from beginning to end, and if it were me, I think I would revisit what happened; look at every detail over and over until I could see some other way to attack the problem. Because it didn't work for me either. I'm afraid I fell in love, and this experiment couldn't help that.

MARISSA

What are you – um, what Josh means –

(Josh stares at Marissa, she stares at him a moment)

MARISSA

I'm sorry Professors, but I'm not ready for this yet. In retrospect, I can say now with a fair amount of certainty that – that yes, I would like to retest my project because, as I see it now...

MARISSA CONT'D

...there are no chemical or hormonal processes that can stand in the way of human emotions. And...and um...

JOSH

And?

MARISSA

And I intend to prove it! Yes. I will use all of my research to support the reformed hypothesis that – Scientific methods, as I – no, as *we* know them, cannot and will not control who we fall in love with.

(Robyn jumps up from the audience)

ROBYN

Woo hoo! I mean, I'm sorry everyone. (She runs on stage and whispers to Marissa) I'll take care of them, girl, you and Josh take a minute outside.

(Josh pulls Marissa to the side of the stage and Robyn disappears into the audience)

ROBYN

Everyone, Marissa needs a couple of minutes. She should be back shortly. Can I get anyone coffee?

MARISSA

They must be so disappointed.

JOSH

It's part of the job, isn't it?

MARISSA

True. But now I'll have to give a full report and draft a new proposal – Josh, did you mean what you said in there?

JOSH

Everything. And you should know; I lied. I did listen to that tape.

MARISSA

I don't care. It's over now.

JOSH

Almost. Marissa, I did fall in love and –

MARISSA

You don't have to tell me this –

JOSH

I do. Because, it was you. It was always you.

MARISSA

What? I mean, even, after all the girls you were with? After all the crap I put you through?

JOSH

Not so many girls, really. And what can I say? Every time the moon rises I only think of you. I love you, Marissa. Ever since we met. Your brains, your humor, your drive – I love everything about you. I love that ratty tee shirt you wear everywhere and the fact that even your bathrobe looks like a lab coat. Marissa, I'm yours. That is, if you want me.

MARISSA

So...are you going to kiss me?

(Josh kisses her, she breaks away a moment)

MARISSA

Oh, I'm gonna yell at you later for listening to my tape –

JOSH

Is this what I have to look forward to?

MARISSA

Only if you want me.

(They kiss as the lights fade to black)

END OF PLAY

Vita:

Merridith Allen is a writer living in New York City, whose work has been given staged readings and has been published nationally and abroad. Merridith is also a yoga and martial arts instructor.