

ACT I

(The set is multi-leveled. At rise we see three “home” areas, one each for Cheryl, Maggie and Lou. The home areas contain a computer, telephone and whatever else is required by the script and represents the personalities of the occupants. [See diagram] Behind and slightly above each home area is a projection screen and a playing area in front of the projection screen. At center stage there is a main playing area that will be used for restaurant scenes etc.)

At rise in dim light we see the various lights of the computer terminals and phones blinking. There are also computer terminals on the projection screens and in the playing areas in front of the projection screens. A cell phone starts ringing in the audience. Another cell phone rings in the audience (different ring). A cell phone starts ringing on stage (yet another kind of ring). We hear a computer dialing into the internet. A land line telephone begins to ring. On the second ring from the land line a machine picks up.)

CHERYL'S ANSWERING MACHINE

Hi, this is Cheryl. Please leave your . . .

(We hear computer sounds –pings, start up music, etc. Lou's phone starts to ring.)

CHERYL'S ANSWERING MACHINE

message after the beep. (We hear the beep.)

COMPUTER #1

You've got mail

LOU'S ANSWERING MACHINE #2

Leave me a message.

(Whoever is calling Cheryl hangs up on machine.)

COMPUTER #2

Goodbye

COMPUTER #3

Hello

COMPUTER #2

Goodbye

(We see Tim's cartoon on Maggie's projection screen and hear his voice.)

TIM

Pick up, pick up, pick up

MAGGIE'S ANSWERING MACHINE

You know what to do.

TIM

(Tim's cartoon a little larger and voice over.) Pick up, pick up, pick up

MAGGIE'S ANSWERING MACHINE

This is the beep.

COMPUTER #3

Hello

(We see Maggie struggling for the phone.)

TIM

(Tim's cartoon larger and voice over.) Pick up, pick up, pick up!

MAGGIE

Hello . .

TIM

(New cartoon for Tim. We now see Tim in front of cartoon and in the same attitude as his cartoon.) Cindy, Hi. I just got in. My plane was late. I feel like such a jerk. I tried to call from the plane but, I don't know, the system was screwed. So, I'm sorry I'm calling so late but I've felt terrible for hours. I've never stood anyone up. This is a first and it sucks. (PAUSE) Hello?

MAGGIE

I'm sorry. Who is this?

TIM

It's Tim.

MAGGIE

Oh, Hi Tim.

TIM

Cindy, I am so sorry.

MAGGIE

I'm sure you are. Especially now.

TIM

What do you mean?

MAGGIE

This is Maggie.

(PAUSE)

MAGGIE

I think we're scheduled to see each other tomorrow or maybe it's tonight, by now. At any rate, we have a date for the 21st. Not the 20th, so—ooooops. Maybe you should hang up and check Cindy's phone number? Or maybe your palm pilot misfired?

TIM

Yeah.

MAGGIE

Again?

TIM

See you this evening?

MAGGIE

Sure.

(They both hang up. Tim disappears and his cartoon changes.)

MAGGIE & TIM

Arrrrrrgh!!!

(Tim's cartoon disappears. On all three screens we see Theologian/Psycho-Therapist's cartoon and hear voice over. The cartoon throbs on the first three words.)

THEOLOGIAN/PSYCHO-THERAPIST

Handsome, energetic, love machine! Who am I?

DANCING ARCHITECT

(Actor in area in front of Maggie's screen.) I am the guy just around the corner.

LOU'S DATE

(Actor in area in front of Lou's screen) The one you are waiting to meet.

JOEY

(Actor in area in front of Cheryl's screen) I am a safe harbor in the cold, cold night.

THEOLOGIAN/PSYCHO-THERAPIST

(All three actors can become Theologian/Psycho-Therapist with a similar identifying feature such as cigar or hat etc.) A Theologian/Psycho-Therapist, divorced, extremely comfortable, three children living at home.

(Morning. Lights up in Maggie's area. We see Maggie dial phone. Cheryl's phone rings. Cheryl is asleep. She tries to get to her phone.)

MAGGIE

Pick up, pick up, pick up!

(Cheryl finds something shaped like a phone. It is a small (2 lb) barbell.)

CHERYL

Hello.

MAGGIE

Pick up, pick up, pick up!

CHERYL'S ANSWERING MACHINE

Hi, this is Cheryl. Please leave

(Maggie hangs up on Cheryl's machine.)

CHERYL

Oh shit.

(Maggie phones Lou. Lou's phone rings.)

MAGGIE

Pick up, pick up, pick up!

LOU

Hello.

MAGGIE

Loube, Loube, Lou!

LOU

Hello?

MAGGIE

I'm so sorry. I am such a jerk! I forgot I had a date and he forgot we had a date and then he called thinking I was Cindy and of course I'm not Cindy and I was half asleep and now I have to go out with this jerk tonight and I can't go with you!

Excerpt from **searchers.net**
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This so sucks! I am sick about it! How dare he call me at 3:00 in the morning. I am so sorry. Forgive me?

LOU

It's 7:30. You're calling me at 7:30 am.

MAGGIE

Because I love you.

LOU

Unhuh.

MAGGIE

You can't talk right now?

LOU

Un-un. Bye.

MAGGIE

Too much sleep is not good for you.

(Maggie phones Cheryl. Cheryl's phone rings.)

CHERYL

Oh my god, oh my god . . . (answering the phone) It's 7:32 – my alarm's not gone off. What are you doing to me?

MAGGIE

Tim called last night.

CHERYL

That's good.

MAGGIE

No it's not!

CHERYL

Why?

MAGGIE

He thought he was calling someone named Cindy!

CHERYL

You woke me up. What?

MAGGIE

He thought he was calling someone named Cindy!

CHERYL

Oh my god, I am hearing this without my morning coffee.

MAGGIE

He missed a date with her and he was calling to apologize. At 3:00 in the morning.

CHERYL

Delete him! Bye.

MAGGIE

I'm seeing him tonight.

CHERYL

Oh dear.

MAGGIE

Oh yes!

CHERYL

OK. Get a good meal out of it. Bye.

MAGGIE

I don't know if I can.

CHERYL

Why not?

MAGGIE

He's cooking.

CHERYL

Oh dear. Oh dear. Cindy?

MAGGIE

Cindy.

MAGGIE

Her name is very retro, isn't it?

(Theologian/Psycho-Therapist cartoon appears on Maggie's screen. Actor is in front of screen. The drawing may be of him well dressed – he is actually wearing boxers, is smoking a cigar and drinking a beer.)

THEOLOGIAN/PSYCHO-THERAPIST

Hi! I enjoy movies, dining in, and long walks on the beach. My philosophy? Accept with gratitude what life sends your way. And I accept you. Who are you? Sexy, beautiful, compassionate, a good listener. In short, an equal partner, for me. (He burps.)

(Lights out on Theologian/Psycho-Therapist and cartoon. Cheryl now has her coffee and has begun to do her morning exercises.)

CHERYL

I think it may be time for you to go trolling.

MAGGIE

I don't have the energy, the stamina, the guts right now.

(Joey cartoon on Cheryl's screen with Joey in front.)

JOEY

I am recently separated

CHERYL

A pair and a spare!

JOEY

(Cartoon and Joey change to reflect his state of being.) separated

MAGGIE

I thought this one might work out.

CHERYL

A pair and a . . .

MAGGIE

He's funny!

JOEY

separated (Joey and cartoon slump. Lights out.)

CHERYL

Listen to me! You have got to have a pair and a spare. That's what they do! Diversify your portfolio!

MAGGIE

Oh, God.

CHERYL

Trolling time!

Why do we even try? MAGGIE

Trolling time! CHERYL

Here we are, two middle aged women MAGGIE

Don't depress me. CHERYL

Alone. MAGGIE
(Joey cartoon on Maggie's side now.)

Coffee. Do not depress me until I've had my . . . CHERYL

Every relationship has been a disaster. MAGGIE

(Joey in front of cartoon) I am recently separated and . . . JOEY

Or else, we wouldn't be alone now would we? MAGGIE

Thank you for this. CHERYL

Well, would we? MAGGIE

What are you saying? CHERYL

Are all your exes still alive?? MAGGIE

I'm I'm . . . (Joey disappears.) JOEY

Yes. CHERYL

Well, mine too. MAGGIE

(We see slumping Joey cartoon and then it disappears.)

MAGGIE

At least if one were dead there'd be a chance, a ray of hope that perhaps things with that one dead one might have worked out differently – that that one dead one was the tragedy of my life and, if he had lived, I would have had the perfect relationship – so, in fact, there would be hope for the future. But, I don't have a perfect dead one that things could have worked out with. I am not that lucky. What I've got is a long, long string of jerks in my past. So, why, why, why would I think things could possibly, ever, ever be different!

CHERYL

You are ruining my morning coffee! That is irresponsible of you. There is nothing constant but change. Repeat that.

MAGGIE

(By rote) There is nothing constant but change.

CHERYL

You know very well why we started this campaign. And it is a campaign! Do not forget that. Search terms! Now!

MAGGIE

Cheryl . . .

CHERYL

Search terms! What are we looking for? Now!

MAGGIE

(As if by rote) An extremely intelligent, compassionate man with a sense of humor.

CHERYL

I am hanging up now. Call me back after you've had your morning run.

MAGGIE

'Bye.

(They hang up.)

CHERYL

God.

MAGGIE

God.

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Coffee.

CHERYL