

Nemeses
By Tom Moran

Setting

The Place: A coffee shop

The Time: Tuesday afternoon, 1 pm

Characters

HANNAH: female, late 20's-30's

BRANDON: male, late 20's-30's

WOMAN #1, 20's

WOMAN #2, 30's-40's

BRIANNA, female, 15-ish

DAD, male, 30's-40's

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(A table and two chairs center stage. Salt and pepper shakers and a sugar container on the table. HANNAH sits, sipping from a mug and scrolling through her phone. BRANDON enters stage right carrying another mug, sees her, and advances toward the table. He is dressed in a t-shirt and sweatpants, a baseball hat pulled low and thick, ugly glasses.)

BRANDON

Excuse me. Are you Hannah?

HANNAH

(points)

Brandon.

BRANDON

Yes.

(BRANDON offers his hand for a handshake. HANNAH shrinks back.)

HANNAH

Please no touching at this time.

BRANDON

(taken aback)

Oh. Sorry. That's not really a response I get much.

HANNAH

It's not personal.

BRANDON

Um ... what are you drinking? Can I get you another?

HANNAH

Also no food or beverage purchases on my behalf.

BRANDON

Sorry.

(BRANDON sits, draping a jacket over the chair. He puts down a pen and a notebook. Awkward silence.)

HANNAH

You seem nervous. Are you nervous? That's normal.

BRANDON

I guess I don't know where to start.

HANNAH

You can start by relaxing. This isn't a transaction. Yet. Just a getting-to-know-you-chat.

BRANDON

Oh, okay. Well, I grew up outside Boston, did my undergrad at Syracuse, after that I got a job at-

HANNAH

Let me rephrase that. It's more of a getting-to-know *me* chat.

BRANDON

Oh. You can probably guess my first question.

HANNAH

Am I legit? Can I really do what I say I can?

BRANDON

That's two questions.

HANNAH

Yes, but they're kind of the same one. And the answer is yes.

BRANDON

How can you be so sure?

HANNAH

Did you look at the website? At the testimonials?

BRANDON

I don't trust anything on the internet these days. I wanted to hear it from you.

HANNAH

My time is precious, Brandon. So first let me ask you: are you legit?

BRANDON

(surprisingly defensive)

What do you mean? Am I legit about what?

HANNAH

I mean, can you afford my services?

BRANDON

(Calms down)

Oh. Yeah, I've been saving up for this.

HANNAH

Fine, then we'll continue. But I intend to be brief.

(As HANNAH relates the following story,
BRANDON takes occasional notes.)

HANNAH

Two years ago, I was flipping through the paper, looking for a job.

BRANDON

Really? Who reads the classifieds anymore?

HANNAH

When your chief qualification is a master's in Slavonic languages, you leave no stone unturned.

BRANDON

Huh.

HANNAH

Anyway, I passed the engagement announcements. And there was my ex-boyfriend Rodney, getting married. Rodney and I had gone out for a few months, it didn't work out, we moved on. Good for him, all the best, et cetera. Nothing unusual, correct?

BRANDON

I guess not.

HANNAH

But. The announcement had the usual meet-cute vignette, and it turned out he had met his fiancée at a July 4 barbecue the previous year.

BRANDON

And?

HANNAH

We had broken up July 3.

(BRANDON has been looking around the room furtively and shrinking behind his hat.)

BRANDON

(distracted)

Quick on the rebound, huh?

HANNAH

A regular Dennis Rodman.

(HANNAH notices BRANDON looking around.)

HANNAH (cont.)

Are you hiding or something?

BRANDON

What? No. I'm listening. Go on.

HANNAH

Anyway, that made me remember another ex. My prom date. Derek. We split up when we went to different colleges.

BRANDON

He gave you the old turkey drop at Thanksgiving break?

HANNAH

No, we ended it the day before we both left town. Then, Derek met a girl at freshman orientation. His first day on

campus, for god's sake. Now they live in Dallas and have a four-year-old named after a Kardashian.

BRANDON

Sounds like maybe you dodged a bullet there.

HANNAH

Agreed. But now I had corroboration.

BRANDON

That still just sounds like a big coincidence.

(HANNAH reaches into her valise and pulls out some papers. She hands papers to BRANDON one by one. Meanwhile, WOMAN #1, attractive, enters stage right and stares at BRANDON.)

HANNAH (cont.)

(hands paper)

Rodney.

HANNAH (cont.)

(hands paper)

Derek.

HANNAH (cont.)

(hands paper)

Antonio Mizzuni. This was a two-week fling while I was-

(WOMAN #1 approaches the table.)

WOMAN #1

(to BRANDON)

Excuse me. I don't normally do this, but I saw you across the place and I just felt, like, I don't know. Can I maybe, I guess, write something down in your booknote, and, you know?

BRANDON

Sure.

WOMAN #1

Oh, great! Wow!

(WOMAN takes BRANDON's pan and scrawls something in the notebook.)

WOMAN #1

I look forward to, you know, yeah.

BRANDON

Sure.

(WOMAN #1 exits, running her hand over BRANDON's shoulder. On the way out she turns and gives him a 'call me' sign. HANNAH looks after her then turns back to BRANDON.)

HANNAH

What in the holy hell was that?

BRANDON

(shrugs)

Just a thing.

HANNAH

Did she give you her number?

BRANDON

So, Antonio was it?

HANNAH

(Suspicious)

Right. Antonio and I had a fling while I was backpacking around Tuscany with my friend Brooke. You know those saucy Italians. I flew home. But Brooke stuck around for another week ... and now lives with him in one of those Eat Pray Love towns, driving Vespas and feeding each other grapes under trellises. Or something.

BRANDON

Okay that one maybe didn't quite break for you.

HANNAH

(unconvincing)

It's cool, not at all bitter in the slightest. Sensing a pattern yet?

(BRANDON bobs his head and shakes his hand in a 'maybe' gesture. HANNAH hands him another paper.)

HANNAH

Melanie Jones. Undergrad, junior year. (BRANDON looks up. HANNAH shrugs) It was a phase. But not for her. Melanie met Rachel *twenty minutes* after we split up, and after that, you can guess.

BRANDON

Twenty minutes?!

HANNAH

Melanie went straight to the campus bar to drown her sorrows. Rachel was bartending, gave her a dark and stormy on the house, and the rest is three kids and a mortgage.

BRANDON

Wow. That is some Midsummer Night's Dream-level action right there.

HANNAH (cont.)

(hands paper)

Except there's no antidote. And since we've come this far, here's the kicker. Paul Hopkins. Summer camp.

BRANDON

Summer camp? How old were you?

HANNAH

Twelve. Paul and I held hands and kissed one Friday on the dock. The next night I caught him out there in liplock with little Sally Jackson.

BRANDON

Who is now Sally Hopkins.

HANNAH

Convinced yet?

BRANDON

So every single person you've ever dated. No exceptions?

HANNAH

There was Martin. He entered the seminary the day after we broke up. But you know, personal relationship with god, et cetera, so I figure that counts as finding a soulmate.

BRANDON

That's ... a hell of a story.

HANNAH

That's one way to put it.

BRANDON

You're like the Wally Pipp of romance. (Puzzled reaction from HANNAH.) Wally Pipp, played for the Yankees, replaced by Lou Gehrig-

ANNIE

-Oh, right, who played like two thousand straight games. Cute.

BRANDON

Hey, that mug is definitely empty. Can I get you another one now?

HANNAH

Can't let you do that. Then this becomes a date.

BRANDON

This isn't a date?

HANNAH

Dammit, Brandon, did you even read the FAQ?

BRANDON

Again, I'd rather hear it from the horse's - or rather (clears throat) the alluring woman's mouth.

HANNAH

Nice try, but flattery will get you - well, a slightly less condescending explanation. This is an exploratory meeting. A sampler platter. If this were a date, then I'd be working for free, right?

BRANDON

(Takes a note)

Oh yeah. I didn't think of that. So what happens now?

HANNAH

Okay. First we finish this meeting, which, as noted, is a meeting and definitely not a date. Then, if you wish to retain my services, you give me half up front. Then we go on what definitely is a date.

BRANDON

What do we do?

HANNAH

You tell me. Thai food and a Wes Anderson movie. Skee-ball? PBR's in brown paper bags at a picnic table?

BRANDON

Walk barefoot along the beach in the moonlight? Make googly eyes at each other over drinks with little umbrellas.

HANNAH

Sure. Or do donuts in your GTO in a Stuckey's parking lot. Whatever, I'm nondiscerning, and you're paying.

BRANDON

In addition to your fee.

HANNAH

Indeed, the linchpin of the whole enterprise.

BRANDON

Then what?

HANNAH

Then, we're dating! There might be a second date, or a third or fourth one. But at some point, as per the

agreement, we enter some state that can be considered tangential to a relationship.

BRANDON

Who decides that?

HANNAH

(shrugs)

The universe? Whatever malevolent entity has foisted this peculiar curse upon me?

BRANDON

You make it sound so romantic.

HANNAH

Just business.

BRANDON

Okay. Then what?

HANNAH

I dump you. It can be as informal or as ceremonious as you want. One guy made me drop him in front of a notary public. But honestly, if you just want me to text you the broken-heart emoji, that would probably do it.

BRANDON

What if I dump you first?

HANNAH

Then I can offer no guarantee of success.

BRANDON

And what if neither of us *want* to break up?

HANNAH

(snorts)

I don't deal in hypotheticals.

BRANDON

But still-

HANNAH

Then no refunds.

BRANDON

So we break up. And that's when...

HANNAH

That's when some thoroughly amazing woman - or man - man, maybe?

BRANDON

That's cool, but, woman.

HANNAH

Suit yourself, square. Woman, unexpectedly wanders into your field of vision. You will fall in love immediately and spend the rest of your lives in the connubial bliss I have been so cruelly denied. Happily ever after.

BRANDON

Wow. It's like you have a superpower.

HANNAH

Right. "The Amazing Also-Ran."

BRANDON

That's a little harsh. It's a gift.

HANNAH

I prefer the term "affliction." Anyway, your turn. Why are you here?

BRANDON

Me? You want my romantic history?

HANNAH

I told you mine. Quid pro quos are all the rage these days.

BRANDON

Oh, nothing remarkable, really. Just a few women here and there, you know, high school, college, grad school. Just your typical average everyday-

(WOMAN #2 enters and walks over to the table.)

WOMAN #2

Excuse me, hi. I was just sitting there nursing my Americano and studying some telemetry and I wanted to say hello.

BRANDON

Hello.

WOMAN #2

I saw you looking at me and thought maybe, I felt a click.

BRANDON

I was just looking toward the bathroom. I kind of have to pee.

WOMAN #2

Of course, right. So, can I hump your brains out and bear your children?

HANNAH

What the hell! I am sitting right here. There is a woman (points at self) sitting right here.

WOMAN #2

(to HANNAH)

Yeah, but he's way out of your league.

HANNAH

(exasperated)

You could fry ants with those glasses he's wearing!

WOMAN #2

(to BRANDON)

So how about it, soldier?

BRANDON

(rolls eyes)

All of our operators are busy at this time. Your proposition will be answered in the order it was received.

WOMAN #2

(undeterred)

Oh. So where does that leave me?

(BRANDON sighs and pulls something out of his jacket. It's a roll of deli counter tickets. He pulls off a number and hands it to her.)

BRANDON

Number thirty-two.

HANNAH

You have a machine?! And, thirty-two?!

WOMAN #2

I like those odds.

HANNAH

Good lord, woman, you're going to settle for that? What century are you from?

(WOMAN #2 grabs pen and scribbles in the notebook.)

WOMAN #2

I'll be commanding the International Space Station for a couple of months, let's hook up after that. I'll be pretty weak from the zero gravity, so you'll just have to have your way with me.

(She exits, also running hand over his shoulder.)

BRANDON

(to HANNAH)

Right. So as I was saying, really my dating life has been pretty vanilla-

HANNAH

What the hell!

BRANDON

What?

HANNAH

Take off the hat and glasses.

BRANDON

Why?

HANNAH

Are you that handsome? Is that it? Do you have some sort of magic good looks that can shoot right through those ridiculous Clark Kent coke bottles?

(BRANDON removes hat and glasses.
HANNAH looks at him thoughtfully.)

HANNAH

(flatly)

Meh. Good cheekbones, aquiline nose. Weak chin. I'd give you a seven-point-five. (Pause.) Naw, seven straight up.

BRANDON

Thanks, I guess. Can I put these back on?

HANNAH

Doesn't seem like it's stopping anybody. So why are you here? Really?

BRANDON

Because I need you. I want to do the thing. I want to pay you, and get my ass dumped, and find the love of my life.

HANNAH

Bullshit! You hardly need me for that! Every woman you see falls in love with you! (realization) Holy crap!

(HANNAH stands up and shrinks away from BRANDON.)

BRANDON

What?

HANNAH

I knew you were out there somewhere. You're my opposite! My nemesis! My Bizarro! Or maybe Lex Luthor! You're here to destroy me!

(BRANDON stands up as well. They circle each other warily.)

BRANDON

What? How? Why? You know how ridiculous that sounds?

HANNAH

Every superhero has one! It's all part of the package.

BRANDON

Okay, true. But hold on. First off, what makes you the hero and me the villain?

HANNAH

That's easy. All you do is make women crazy, and leave them empty-handed and broken-hearted. Whereas I change lives for the better.

BRANDON

Yeah, for a steep fee! Superman would never charge anybody.

HANNAH

A girl's got to make a living! We can't all me mild-mannered reporters for great metropolitan newspapers.

BRANDON

Second of all, what makes me your enemy?

HANNAH

Logic! Everyone you meet falls in love with you-

BRANDON

Not everyone! (Gestures to HANNAH) Case in point!

HANNAH

-Everyone else you meet falls in love with you, and everyone I meet falls in love with exactly not me. We're yin and yang, matter and anti-matter, oil and water, peanut butter and - wait, dammit, everything is good with peanut butter. (Gestures to him.) Winner, (and to herself) and loser.

BRANDON

You really think I have it so great.

HANNAH

My entire livelihood is based on losing out. You think I like it? Knowing that everyone I drop is on the express train to happiness, and I get nothing out of it? Meanwhile, I'm waiting to see who comes in next to throw themselves at you! Kamala? Beyonce?

BRANDON

I think I have her number in the notebook somewhere-

HANNAH

Not helping your cause!

BRANDON

You don't understand. I don't want this! I'm trying to-

(BRIANNA enters stage right and approaches BRANDON.)

BRIANNA

Excuse me, mister. (Pause.) I don't normally do this, but-

HANNAH

Oh, yuck!

BRIANNA

-But we're having our eighth-grade Sadie Hawkins Dance next weekend, and I was wondering if-

HANNAH

No he's not interested! Ewww!

BRANDON

(to GIRL #1) That's very sweet, but I don't think that I can really take you because, see, I'm going to turn 30 next month, and that's maybe really inappropriate for me to-

(DAD enters stage right and grabs TEENAGE GIRL's arm.)

DAD

Brianna! There you are! (To BRANDON) I'm sorry if she's been bothering you, she's so impulsive sometimes.

BRANDON

It's okay, not a big deal.

(DAD fishes out a business card and hands it to BRANDON.)

DAD

No, really, I'd like to make it up to you. *I don't normally do this, but-*

HANNAH

FOR GOD'S SAKE GO AWAY!

DAD

-I'll just leave this here. (Places card on table.) If you ever need anything, or - (raises eyebrows suggestively) want anything - give me a call.

BRIANNA

Hey no fair! I saw him first!

DAD

(to BRIANNA)

Daddies get dibs, sweetie. (To BRANDON) Bye now!

(DAD exits stage right pulling BRIANNA. As they exit he makes the "call me" sign. BRANDON looks at HANNAH.)

HANNAH

I had no idea.

BRANDON

Can we sit back down?

HANNAH

By all means.

(They sit.)

BRANDON

You can perhaps see my conundrum. This is not what I want.

HANNAH

Don't tell me you've never gotten anything out of this.

BRANDON

Oh, don't get me wrong, I've had a lot of really, just mind-blowing sex. But look! How old was she? Like, fifteen? And also, I have a master's in Balkan prehistory. What the hell was I going to have to talk about with the commander of the ISS?

HANNAH

Huh. I told you I majored in Slavonic languages, right?

BRANDON

Then it's a good thing you've got another skill to fall back on, isn't it.

HANNAH

You're telling me.

BRANDON

You know how long it takes me to get through a supermarket line? And it's not they want a quickie or a one-night stand, either. No, it's love at first sight all down the line. That spacewoman wasn't kidding about wanting to bear my kids. Which makes dating all of these wildly inappropriate people all the more awkward when it doesn't work out, because it. Never. Works. Out.

HANNAH

Maybe it's you? Are you unconsciously doing something that's flipping everyone's 'on' switch?

BRANDON

Not everyone's. You, as noted, appear unmoved.

HANNAH

You'll forgive me if I'm a bit jaded.

BRANDON

Have you just given up?

HANNAH

I've thrown in the towel on lust. I'm running with greed instead. But anyway, about you.

BRANDON

(throws up his arms)

How am I causing this? Look at these glasses. I'm sitting here across from really, a very attractive woman -

HANNAH

Thank you.

BRANDON

An eight, minimum.

HANNAH

(rolls eyes)

Ha.

BRANDON

-A nine who looks to the world to be my partner. I'm wearing this phenomenally unappealing getup, hunched over in a corner, not projecting a damn thing, and you see what happens. I even started wearing a wedding ring, didn't matter. I even tried a priest's habit! Nothing!

(He pulls a receipt from his pocket.)

BRANDON (cont.)

Look. The receipt for my coffee.

HANNAH

What, mash note from the barista?

BRANDON

Take a look.

(He hands it to HANNAH. She reads.)

HANNAH

Actually, two of the baristas. And the manager.

(HANNAH looks over in the direction of the counter. BRANDON directs her attention back to him.)

BRANDON

Don't look! You see? I mean, give these people a little credit, they're all modern, self-actualized humans, and can clearly do a hell of a lot better than me. What I have defies logic. *I* have a superpower.

HANNAH

You think I don't.

BRANDON

Yours is a little harder to pin down. I mean, maybe you're doing something. Maybe you're somehow prepping these guys - and woman - for fulfilling partnerships.

HANNAH

That's flattering. Wait, is that flattering? (BRANDON shrugs.) But, really, I don't think making out with Paul on the shores of Lake Wanocksett somehow leveled up his emotional maturity, right?

BRANDON

Seems unlikely.

HANNAH

So it's not you, and it's not me. So what do we do about it?

BRANDON

You could use your power for good.

HANNAH

How so?

BRANDON

Go out with hopeless guys, ditch them, help them find happiness.

HANNAH

Already doing that, dude.

BRANDON

Yeah, but like world-class hopeless guys. You realize how many mass shooters, tinpot despots, and general dicks are just men externalizing their sexual frustration?

HANNAH

Well, when you put it that way, sign me up!

BRANDON

But think what you could do for Kim Jong Un.

HANNAH

Also-Ran versus Rocket Man. Hard pass.

BRANDON

With great power comes great responsibility.

HANNAH

And great clichés. And anyway, what about you? You could, (thinks) seduce reprehensible public figures and snare them in sex scandals.

BRANDON

There are no sex scandals anymore. Remember Stormy Daniels?

HANNAH

Barely.

BRANDON

Exactly. No one cares anymore. I'm afraid our abilities fall squarely into the 'not very useful' category.

HANNAH

Speak for yourself. Mine's been lining my pockets for a year now.

BRANDON

Is it worth it?

HANNAH

Do you have a better idea?

BRANDON

The one I came here with. Can you help me?

HANNAH

Screw that.

BRANDON

I've got the money. And I know a great Macedonian place for a first date.

HANNAH

Skopski Merak?

BRANDON

Oh, you've been?

HANNAH

(Pause)

I do love their bureks. But! Beside the point. I don't want to go out with you.

BRANDON

Oh. I don't hear that often.

HANNAH

Sorry.

BRANDON

No, it's refreshing. One more time?

HANNAH

I don't want to go out with you. We're dealing with inexplicable cosmic forces here. I don't want to mess with them.

BRANDON

Listen. You don't get to offer a tantalizing clue to our mutual lifelong enigmas and disappear out of my life. Can we talk this through?

HANNAH

Okay.

(HANNAH grabs the salt and pepper shaker.)

HANNAH (cont.)

So let's say you, touch my hand. (BRANDON moves to touch her hand. She recoils.) Don't touch my hand! And touching leads to you buying me a drink, and a date, and all of the other things.

(HANNAH makes the salt and pepper shakers kiss and gyrate.)

BRANDON

Sexy salt.

HANNAH

I see three possibilities here. One: We short-circuit each other. Both of our powers, gone forever.

(She moves the shakers toward each other, they kiss, then she knocks them both over.)

HANNAH (cont.)

And I go back to looking for waitressing jobs.

BRANDON

(gestures toward the salt shakers)

Possibly. May I?

(HANNAH releases the shakers. BRANDON grabs them and has them start making out, as before.)

BRANDON

Two. We date, you drop me like a bad habit, and I fall in love with somebody by dinnertime. I mean, they fall in love with me, of course. But this time it's mutual.

(He takes the salt and pepper shakers, moves them apart, and has the salt shaker start making out with the sugar.)

BRANDON (cont.)

Which maybe breaks my curse? Or at least I find a life partner and we can go be hermits together. I can live with that.

HANNAH

Off the grid. Big these days. And what about me?

BRANDON

You can keep on doing what you're doing.

HANNAH

Aaaaand option three: nothing. Our powers cancel each other out. I continue my status as also-ran and you keep emitting whatever magical pheromone you've got going for you.

BRANDON

Not going to do any condiment theater for that one?

HANNAH

Seems a little dramatically underwhelming.

BRANDON

And there you go. One-in-three chance you lose your curse and come out of it a normal person.

HANNAH

A nice, normal, unspectacular, unemployable person.

BRANDON

Who no longer has to traffic in heartbreak and woe. Plus you can maybe help me out of my own predicament.

HANNAH

Oh, must be tough, having your ego constantly affirmed by everyone within earshot. The universe has completely screwed me, Brandon. And I've spent too much time turning it into a burgeoning startup to just throw it away.

BRANDON

Even to help somebody out who desperately needs it?

HANNAH

Sorry.

BRANDON

You know, there is an option four.

HANNAH

Go on.

(BRANDON moves the salt shakers together, kisses them, and leaves them in place next to each other. HANNAH has no reaction. BRANDON continues to hold the salt shakers together, miming a successful relationship: kissing, dancing. He then stages a mini-wedding with the sugar shaker as the pastor, humming "Here Comes the Bride." HANNAH smiles, then stops herself.)

HANNAH(cont.)

Okay, that was convoluted. But, pretty charming. Then what?

BRANDON

Well, you're free of your curse. Maybe I am too?

HANNAH

I remain unconvinced. Also, that's really technically a subcategory of option one.

BRANDON

Granted. Okay, I'll pay double.

HANNAH

Where are you getting this money anyway?

BRANDON

I may have been named in a will or three.

HANNAH

A-ha! So I'm not the only one turning a profit!

BRANDON

Hey, I never asked anyone to do it. Just happened.

HANNAH

Nonetheless, I think your high horse just galloped away.

BRANDON

Okay. So will double do it for ya?

HANNAH

All signs point to no.

BRANDON

Can you at least think about it?

HANNAH

Sure. But don't hold your breath.

(He stands up and gathers his things.)

BRANDON

Nothing else I can do to convince you?

HANNAH

Afraid not.

BRANDON

All right. Then, see you around I guess.

(BRANDON dejectedly exits stage right.
HANNAH sits for a moment, thinking and
looking at the receipt. Then her phone
RINGS.)

HANNAH

(into phone)

Hello? (Pause.) Yes, that was my ad. "Want to find love? Find me first!" (Pause.) Yes, I did come up with that myself. (Pause.) Thanks. (Pause.) My fee is on a sliding scale, and we can discuss it in person. Three o'clock today? (Pause. She flips through the notes. She's suddenly reluctant.) Let me check my calendar. (She lowers the phone and stares into space for a moment. Picks phone up.) Yes, I'm sorry, I'm full up this afternoon. Tomorrow as well. You know what, I have your number, let me just call you. (She hangs up phone.) Dammit.

(Long moment of silence as she stares dejectedly. Then noise from offstage. BRANDON reenters stage right, chased by WOMEN #1 and #2, BRIANNA, and DAD. They all cross and exit stage left. HANNAH watches them with fascination. A few moments later BRANDON reenters stage left, alone, looking after him. He approaches HANNAH.)

BRANDON

I think I lost them. Listen, I forgot to give you my number.

HANNAH

But you already-

(BRANDON makes a 'hold on' motion, reaches into his pocket and pulls out one of the take-a-number machine numbers and offers it to HANNAH.)

HANNAH

Oh, your *number*. Ha. Thirty-three. How romantic.

BRANDON

No, I was saving this one.

HANNAH

(takes number, and holds it up. It's No. 1.)
This one. Cute.

BRANDON

Yeah. Listen, if you just want to look at this as another transaction, fine. But I don't. You think you've been screwed by the universe? So have I. In a bad way.

HANNAH

(looking offstage left)
I'm beginning to see your point.

BRANDON

Right! Yes! And you're the only person I've ever met who can even begin to grasp what I'm going through. And that

means something to me. Please. I'm an atheist and I'm this close to joining a damn monastery. I-

(WOMEN #1 and 2, BRIANNA and DAD all enter stage left. They approach BRANDON.)

WOMAN #1

Brandon, it's been ten minutes and you haven't, you know! Don't you like, like me?

WOMAN #2

Listen, I have to hop on a plane to Cape Kennedy in twenty. (Gestures offstage) You up for a quickie in my Corvette?

BRIANNA and DAD

We don't mind sharing!

(HANNAH gets BRANDON's attention.)

HANNAH

Hey Brandon. Those glasses are truly hideous, I can't believe you're wearing sweats in public, and I was being generous when I called you a seven. So how about it.

(HANNAH grabs BRANDON's hand. He grabs back, and they stare into each other's eyes. The lights go bright and flicker and we hear a loud BOOM. HANNAH and BRANDON look around in shock. The WOMEN, BRIANNA and DAD look at BRANDON and rub their eyes as though seeing him for the first time.)

WOMAN #1

Wow. I was going to jump that?

WOMAN #2

I never even got his name.

BRIANNA

(raises fists)

We're better than this, sisters!

(The four pump their fists in the air and yell in affirmation. They exit cheering, with WOMAN #2 tossing her number on the floor.)

HANNAH

I think it worked. I think we just jarred something loose in the universe.

BRANDON

Wow. I guess so.

(They stare at each other. It's a moment.)

BRANDON (cont.)

So, question: which scenario are we in? No way to find out unless you dump me.

HANNAH

Way to ruin the moment.

BRANDON

Just want to know where we stand. Is this a date now?

HANNAH

How about for now we say I'm working pro bono.

BRANDON

I'll take it.

HANNAH

Except, you can now buy me a drink. But I think I need something stronger than a coffee.

BRANDON

First round's on me.

(HANNAH grabs her coat, and brushes her hand over Brandon's shoulder as she exits. He picks up the receipt, looks at it, gleefully balls it up, tosses it on the table and follows her off stage left. Blackout. End of Play.)