ACT ONE

PART ONE: THE PARK

Lights up on three women of varying ages sitting in a park. They all have huge bowls of salad and forks. TORI, 20-25, wears a tank top and yoga pants, and carries a mat. SANDY, late 50s, wears a tastefully luxe ensemble. MEREDITH, 30-35, wears some sort of retro 50’s outfit with postmodern touches. Roackabilly-type.

A nearby lit bus stop sign has a picture of a WOMAN LAUGHING ALONE WITH SALAD and the slogan “She’s Waiting For You. HotMatch.com, the Only Dating Site You’ll Ever Need.”

They eat their salad like it’s the most delicious and hilarious thing ever. It goes on for a while. They eat, glance at each other in acknowledgement, laugh, eat, play with cherry tomatoes, etc. It is just so much frivolity.

It goes on for a full three minutes. Seriously. Maybe longer. During the eating, the women eventually become skittish, suspicious, catty, possessive. You’re looking at my salad? Don’t covet my cucumber. That kind of thing.

Meanwhile, a GUY walks by, talking on the phone. Cute, scrubby, late 20’s. The second he stops before them, they all freeze, faces screeching in ecstasy, salad half-way to their mouths. Their eyes watch
him.

GUY

…ok maybe you’re on a work call or getting a facial or whatever, maybe that’s why you you keep sending me to voice mail… or, maybe you just don’t wanna talk to me ‘cause you’d rather send commands from on high and expect me to comply without further question… and I told myself I wasn’t gonna leave a message ‘cause you never listen to them anyway… but here I am. So.

I got your text. And here’s my answer. No. I’m not buying your fucking priest boyfriend his top shelf booze again. You can buy it yourself. I’m tired of it. I’m not your employee. I’m the wet fleshy blob you expelled from your vagina 29 years ago, and I don’t appreciate being manipulated. I have a life. A job. I mean both kind of suck right now, but they’re still mine.

Also dinner this week sounds great. Looking forward to it.

Also. I can’t hang up. Because I know that the second I do, I’m gonna walk to the liquor store, plop down my credit card, and buy your priest boyfriend his top shelf booze. Because I’m dead inside.

Am I dead inside?

Do I have to be?

Beat. He hangs up. Notices the salad chicks.

Huh. That’s weird. He exits.

The women unfreeze. Glare at one another. Take a final few bites of salad. Then exit, carrying their precious salad bowls with them.

PART TWO: ROOFTOP BAR

MEREDITH walks over to the bar to get a drink. Notices GUY.

MEREDITH

Ha! He’s looking at me again. Saw me dancing downstairs. Six years of jazz, two of tap, two months of ballet before the teacher told me I was too fat to be in the Christmas show. Also gymnastics. I probably should lead with that, right?

GUY

Caught me staring again. Heh. Seems to like it. That’s cool. Bet she took gymnastics as a kid. She’s super flexible probably. Why are flexible chicks so hot? Fun to fuck a chick with her knee behind her ear. Especially a bombshell like that. Meat on her bones. Yeah. She could smother me with her maternal bosom.
MEREDITH
I don’t want to be a slut and fuck you the second we go back to your place, but well I kind of do. I just don’t want you to think it’s my idea. Why isn’t he moving? He could be a freakshow. I don’t mind, I just want to make sure I know what I’m getting myself into.

MEREDITH pulls a subtle, sexy dance move, seemingly aimed at GUY.

GUY
Whoa. You see that shit? Ha. That was for me. I see you. I see you. I bet you’re a little slutty. Bet you’d fuck me the second we got back to your place. But then act like it was my idea. I dig that.

MEREDITH
I can tell him about the time I was in Berlin at that club and that guy told me he was a producer for a TV show where kids dance and he asked if I would go on it, and I was too high to believe him so I just kept laughing. If I tell him that he’ll think I’m someone worth fucking. Or maybe he’ll think I’m desperate. Well I’m both. I can be both, right? Should I go over?

GUY
My mouth is dry. I’m not moving. What am I getting into here? Nothing bro, you’re just looking. It’s not a crime. She’s down with being watched. She seems worldly. I bet she has stories. I bet she’s been to Berlin. Clubbing around Europe. Yeah. You’re wild. You’re audacious. You--

MEREDITH starts walking towards GUY.

GUY (CONT’D)
Oh shit. Oh shit. Keep it together, man.

MEREDTH is there.

Hi.

GUY
Hi.

MEREDITH
Hi.

GUY
I saw you dancing.

MEREDITH
I saw you see me. One time I was at this big club in Berlin in this converted powerplant and this guy came over to me and told me he was a producer for a TV show where kids dance and he asked if I would go on it.

GUY
Cool. Meredith

I’m a really good dancer. I took tap and ballet as a kid. And gymnastics. I can put my knee behind my ear.

Guy

Yay.

What about you?

Meredith

Guy

I’ve never been to Berlin. But I’m flexible for a guy. I can do the splits.

Like right now?

Guy

Only when I’m super drunk and jamming out pretty hard.

Are you in a band?

Meredith

Guy

Karaoke.

Meredith

You look like you’re in a band.

Guy

So does every other asshole in here. I like your style. You’re like retro. Like Bettie Page-ish.

Meredith

It’s just the bangs--

Guy

A pin-up. Yeah. How many tattoos?

Meredith

A bunch.

Guy

Got a favorite?

Meredith
The one on the back of my shoulder. It says “Winona Forever.” It actually says “Forver.” The dude misspelled it. But I thought it was so funny I left it. I also have a secret tattoo.

GUY
Where?

MEREDITH
On my lower lip. Inside.

GUY
Can I see it?

MEREDITH pulls down her lower lip.

GUY
“Bite me.” That’s great. It’s got like double meaning.

MEREDITH
Do you? Have tattoos?

GUY
I have a skull right above my pubic bone.

MEREDITH
Because your dick is poison?

GUY
Because I’m an idiot. I did it when I was fifteen. But I don’t regret it. It’s kind of like, I dunno. A body diary.

MEREDITH
Yeeaahhh…. Cool.

GUY
Are you drunk?

MEREDITH
A little.

GUY
You seem fucked up.

MEREDITH
I should have had more than just salad for lunch.

GUY
You’re not a salad-eater.
MEREDITH
You’re right. I detest salad. Ever hear that quote about the typical French woman, how she sees herself as beautiful, not in spite of her physical flaws but BECAUSE of them? She just owns her shit. It’s about decadence, not deprivation. I mean… Paris in the 20’s? Total decadence. Those bitches owned the fuck out of their shit. Did you know there are more lingerie shops in Paris than bakeries?

GUY
I like you. I like the way you talk. I like the way you dress. I like the way you smell.

MEREDITH
I like the way you like that stuff about me. I also like the way you flirt.

GUY
I don’t really try to flirt. I just don’t generally talk to girls I’m not interested in sleeping with.

MEREDITH
This conversation just got 20 percent more interesting.

GUY
Only 20?

MEREDITH
Needs room to rise. Like a cake.

GUY
I like girls who love cake.

MEREDITH
Guys like girls who love salad. The media told me.

GUY
Fuck the media.

MEREDITH
Are you drunk?

GUY
Yeah.

MEREDITH
What are you drinking about?

GUY
Right now? You.

MEREDITH
Ha!

GUY
I’ve been trying to get the courage to come talk to you.

MEREDITH
I’m not *that* scary.

GUY
You’re scarier than you think, Meredith.

Beat.

MEREDITH
I didn’t tell you my name.

GUY
You didn’t have to.

MEREDITH
Okay.

Beat.

Now what?

GUY
I wanna say some dirty dirty shit to you.

MEREDITH
Okay.

GUY
Where should I start?

MEREDITH
My mouth. Tell me what you think of it.

GUY
I picture it wrapped around my cock.

MEREDITH
Wow. What about my wrists.

GUY
I hold you down by them while I fuck you face down in your bad little place.

MEREDITH
Damn. We got there fast.

You don’t like to waste time.

Neither do you.

So let’s go

Where

In the bathroom

Yeah?

In the alley

Yeah?

In the basement

Yeah?

On the surface of the sun

Yeah.

Now.

No.

When?
Later. I need to yank you out of time first. BANG.

Music changes. They are in 20’s Paris. Couples jazz-step drunkenly, drink moonshine, etc.
MEREDITH and GUY start dancing.

MEREDITH
We’re in Paris now. 1920. Everything is so decadent. The drinks are decadent. The music is decadent. Do you feel it?

GUY
I don’t feel any particular way. I just am. I called my mom once when I was getting a blowjob from a prostitute. I just don’t give a fuck.

MEREDITH
_Spectacular._

GUY
My mom used to be an activist. Long time ago.

MEREDITH
What is she now.

GUY
A cunt.

MEREDITH
Ha! I remind you of her, don’t I.

GUY
Yeah, kind of.

MEREDITH
How come?

GUY
Because you don’t seem to care what I think of you. Because you probably have a higher tolerance for pain than me. Because you’re probably smarter than me. Than _I_.

MEREDITH
I look a little like her…

GUY
Not one bit.

MEREDITH
You wanna fuck your mother.
GUY
Not literally, but sometimes, yeah. Like, rage-fuck. Like, fuck you for asking my dad to leave. Or fuck you for getting older and obsessing about your looks. Or fuck you for making me love horseback riding and snowboarding-

MEREDITH
You’re rich?

GUY
Maybe.

MEREDITH
This night is great. This is a great night. Like the air is moist and heavy and filled with adventure and I’m gonna grab a plastic knife and cut myself a slice.

GUY
Devil’s food.

MEREDITH
unstraps a flask from her garter, takes a belt, and hands it to GUY. He also takes a belt.

MEREDITH
Does it taste like lighter fluid?

GUY
I didn’t taste it.

MEREDITH
GUY screws on the cap and tucks the flask slowly into her garter. His hand remains on her thigh. Her breath catches.

MEREDITH
Now.

GUY
Where.

MEREDITH
Close.

GUY
Bathroom, alley, basement, sun.

MEREDITH
Carpet.

GUY
Whose?
Yours.

Um fuck okay. I have to ask the girl I came with.

Oh. She’s here?

Yeah.

Is she skinny?

Yeah.

Like how skinny?

Like so skinny people worry about her.

Is she so skinny I could shove her entire body up my ass without any lube?

You want to shove my date up your ass.

YES I DO, OKAY? Because I’m tired of pretending to be something I’m not. Civilized. Don’t make me civilized, Person-Whose-Name-I-Don’t-Know yet. I don’t want to be your girlfriend. I want to fuck your girlfriend while you watch. I want to make her come harder and louder than you ever could. I want you to fear me, and I want her to fear you fearing me. I want to lead with my mass, I want the gravity of my circumference to suck you and everyone you love into me, and I want you to stick there against my body like a suction cup.

Alright.

Tori appears. She sips a drink forlornly in the corner.

That’s her.
MEREDITH
Are you in love with her?

GUY
I don’t know. I mean I enjoy being adored. I have empathy for her, but I don’t really have the other thing. The step after empathy.

MEREDITH
What’s that?

GUY
Like that moment of self-annihilation when you kind of become the other person? I dunno. There’s something wrong with me.

MEREDITH
Then why don’t you just hang around with me. I don’t require annihilation. Which makes me a lot less work than some emaciated butt-plug.

Hey.

GUY
Don’t act offended. You’re the one who brought her here to watch you hit on another chick.

That doesn’t mean I don’t respect her.

GUY
I wonder if she’d agree with you on that. Should we ask her?

MEREDITH
No.

GUY
The thing about dudes who go around with chicks like that? They need props. Pretty little trinkets to prove what MEN they are. When in actuality? It’s the total opposite. THEY ARE BABIES. Why don’t you grow the fuck up and be a man.

Beat as GUY processes this. It hurt.

MEREDITH (cont.)
Ah. So that’s the sound of someone’s balls shrinking. Paris a bit much for you? Too decadent?

GUY
I don’t even know why we’re here.
MEREDITH
I was romanticizing a time when the feminine ideal was vital and autonomous.

GUY
You know what I think?

I think you know as well as I do that none of this is happening.

Music stops, we’re back in modern-time.

GUY (cont.)
You come here alone, like you do most Friday nights, thinking you’ll find some dickhead drunk enough to go home with you, but not too drunk to lose his erection. If he even gets one in the first place. Which rarely happens. Except tonight, when you see me across the room watching you dance. We make small talk and it’s hot as fuck. But then you take me to metaphoric Paris. And you say some mean stuff that makes me nervous. And I say some mean stuff back and walk away.

And then, I’ll probably get really drunk very quickly and pass out in the cab ride back to my apartment while my skinny lady-friend gives me head in the back seat. And I will try to forget about this encounter completely. Except the part where I accidentally brush up against your breasts and think to myself, this chick has a gorgeous rack. And maybe I’ll picture myself sucking on your nipple for a split second. But that’s it.

MEREDITH
That’s not a nice thought. Let’s go backwards a few beats. Let’s go back to the part where you tell me you like watching me dance.

GUY
I was just looking at your ass. Like every other guy here.

MEREDITH
That’s a start…

GUY
You have a rip in the back of your dress. Right at the crack.

MEREDITH checks. Sure enough, there’s a gaping hole showing off her cotton panties.

GUY exits.

PART THREE: THE BEAUTY COUNTER

SANDY appears at the cosmetics counter of a very high-end department store. She talks on her
Blackberry and smells/tests creams and potions.

SANDY
Hi Kristen it’s Sandy, when you get a chance would you call my son and remind him to pick something up for the monsignor? I texted him but I’m too busy to follow up. Also he hates when I ask him to do things. Thanks. Ok listen I’m stuck in traffic and not gonna be able to make lunch with Barb so could you reschedule and maybe order me a salad from down the street? Okay. Oh, I forgot to ask if Jeremy from Singer Properties called. Great, what did he say.

She gestures to the sales lady to wrap up one of the creams for her.


As she listens, something wet, fleshy, blob-like and glistening with blood drops from between her legs and lands on the floor with a splat.

SANDY (cont.)
Shoot.

SANDY regards it in horror, but not surprise—obviously this has happened before, more than once.

SANDY (cont.)
Okay Kristen listen I’ll have to call you back.

She hangs up. Regards the blob. Looks around to see if anyone saw.

SANDY scoops the blob up and tucks it back between her legs. It stays. She looks vaguely relieved.

PART FOUR: THE CARPET

IN THE BACKGROUND—billboard. Photo of a WOMAN LAUGHING ALONE WITH SALAD with the slogan “Handleman’s Lite Dressing. For the YOU in You.” Salad dressing logo.

GUY is passed out on the couch. He snores. Beat. THEN-- A large bowl of salad trails down from the sky.

MEREDITH enters. Catches the bowl. Dances the

TORI enters. Picks up the bowl of salad MEREDITH left. Stares at guy sleeping.

TORI
You drank a lot last night. You’re never this hung over. It’s weird.

She eats the salad. She stares. Finishes eating. Goes off-stage. Sound of retching, vomiting from off. Water running. TORI emerges, brushing her teeth loudly.

GUY
Shhhh…

TORI
Sorry.

She exits to spit. Returns. Curls up onto the floor on the blanket. Grabs a magazine. On the back is an advertisement for Branson Community College (BCC), showing a WOMAN LAUGHING ALONE WITH SALAD. Slogan: “Education = Liberation.”

GUY groans. Sits up. Rubs his head.


GUY appraises TORI oddly. Something has changed…

TORI (cont.)
What?

Nothing.

GUY

TORI
You want brunch? We could go get brunch.

GUY
Sure.

TORI
There’s that place on Avenue B. The one that Kenyatta and his girlfriend always want us to try. They have buckwheat soba pancakes with tofu cream cheese. They also have like fried sesame rice balls? They’re like Asian influenced I guess? His girlfriend eats like a caveman but she’s Korean so all the fat just melts right off her. They use organic soy sauce. They have dim sum too.

GUY
Okay.

He continues to watch her oddly. She senses it, but barrels ahead as though things are normal. Returns to her magazine.

TORI
I’m so OVER the winters here. Even with all this body fat I freeze to death. You know if we lived in LA we’d have an orange tree and I’d squeeze my own orange juice with like a manual press. And I’d wear flip flops every day. Even in the rain. And do yoga, like serious yoga, like I’d get my certification. I think I could get my dad to pay for that, right? He paid for my tuition and my Vespa. I think he still feels guilty about my step-brother molesting me. Isn’t that weird? I barely remember it, but yet I get tons of free shit for the rest of my life.

Beat. She looks at him staring at her.

TORI (cont)
What? Seriously.

GUY shrugs.

TORI (cont)
They have normal food there too. Like bacon and eggs and toast. Should I put on NPR?

GUY
No.

Okay.

TORI
You smell like puke.

GUY

TORI
I brushed my teeth.

GUY
Brush your tongue.

TORI

Sorry.

She goes to brush her tongue. GUY starts getting dressed.

TORI
(nonchalant)

Who was that fat chick you were hitting on all night?

She wasn’t fat.

GUY

Well-marbled.

GUY

She had beautiful breasts.

GUY

Are you trying to make me feel insecure?

GUY

She was the only gal there who looked like she was having a good time.

TORI

I was having a good time. You didn’t notice.

GUY

I was avoiding you. Because when I say stuff like “I need space” you fucking show up to my restaurant like a lost goddamn ferret.

TORI

Maybe if you stopped pelting me with clichés you’d get better results.

GUY

And maybe if you stopped being a cliché I wouldn’t need space.

TORI

Don’t you have a blog to write? About being a young feller in the big bad city with an ulcer and a creative writing degree whose meeeeeaang girlfriend won’t let him do anal?

GUY

You let me do anal. Twice.

TORI
Complete accident. Both times. I was too drunk to employ corrective measures.

Beat.

GUY

God. That kind of changes everything.

TORI

Really?

GUY

Kinda. Makes me feel like, rapey.

TORI

Well it was, a little. But like, fun rapey, not like sex-offender rapey.

GUY

But you didn’t enjoy it.

TORI

I didn’t despise it. It’s just not my thing.

GUY

Twice.

TORI

What’s the big deal?

GUY

If I didn’t like something you were doing I would tell you to stop.

TORI

But part of you wanted me to like it.

GUY

Because some girls do! And you’re a little kooky, which is what I dig about you, and I wanna do kooky shit to you that you like, but it’s fucked up to act like you like something when you think I want you to like it but you don’t actually like it.

Beat.

TORI

I’m sorry I let you ass-rape me. It won’t happen again--

GUY

And like, how you bring up the fact that you were molested like it’s all, “oh, I was just waiting for the bus and I got finger-banged by my brother!”
TORI
*Step*-brother. What does that have to do with ass-rape?

GUY
And how you memorize the entire menu at every goddamn place we go eat but then you order a leaf of lettuce?? EVERY FUCKING TIME?

TORI
I have food allergies, what is your point?

Beat.

GUY
Nothing.

Beat.

TORI
You know, I’ve been getting checked out way more recently. By older men especially. You know as someone who’s had periods in her life of feeling totally fucking invisible? It actually feels really good. It’s like a little sex fairy sprinkled some magic dust on me and for like a teeny tiny second I have power.

She spits, then:

Lights change. GUY freezes. Kanye West’s “Power” begins to blast. Like, really loud. (Unless you don’t get the rights, in which case a song that has a similar impact and braggadocio by a similarly notorious performer plays).

MEREDITH and SANDY emerge from nowhere dressed like oldschool Flygirls. They cradle riches in their arms and approach TORI.

They mouth the opening lines to the song, and continue throughout.

MEREDITH and SANDY

Aw
Heey-ay
Aw
Heey-ay
Aw
Heey-ay
Heey-ay-ay-ay
Heey-ay-ay-ay
THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!!

Please check samuelfrench.com for the published version.

Thank you for reading!