

"Last Call"

A one-act play for three actors
Expected runtime: 30m

Characters

Actor 1

Babe: Protagonist; warm and curious; looking for love in all the wrong places; "wounded child" archetype

Actor 2

Guy: Antagonist; cold and dim-witted; can't commit to Babe, but wants to stay fuck buddies; "bad boy" archetype

Buddy: Cute and awkward; only person in the play Babe can really trust; "hermit artist" archetype

Actor 3

Friend: Babe's confidante, though is often criticizing Babe for their decisions; symbolizes Babe and Guy's fears around love; "serpent" archetype

Love: A mysterious matchmaker / unofficial dating therapist; symbolizes Babe and Buddy's hopes and desires around love; "guardian" archetype

Server: A minor character who periodically appears to state the unspoken; symbolizes everyone's needs; "herald" archetype

ACT IScene 1

INT. - CAFE - NIGHT

GUY and BABE sit at a quiet table, ready to talk about their relationship. A half-empty beer glass sits in front of Guy. Nothing sits in front of Babe. They speak at the same time.

GUY I think we should break up. BABE I think we should move in together.

Babe, in slight shock, looks at the ground and exhales, eyebrows raised.

Silence.

BABE
How long have you felt this way?

GUY
I guess I've always kind of known. Just thought I'd wait it out to see if my feelings changed...and they didn't.

BABE
(confused)
You just introduced me to your parents.

Guy looks down at their fidgeting thumbs, hesitant to say anything.

GUY
Yeah.

BABE
I spent four days stuck in a tiny Airbnb with a demonic chihuahua just so they'd like me!

GUY
(slightly defensive)
I don't know what to say.

BABE
Well, you could've said what you don't know what to say a lot sooner!

SERVER approaches table and motions to Guy's glass.

SERVER
You done with this?

Beat.

GUY
(looking at Babe)
Yes. Thank you.

SERVER
It's last call, folks.

BABE
(matter-of-factly)
Yeah, we know.

Server exits with glass.

BABE
I feel so stupid. I really thought we had something special.

GUY
We di-...we do. This doesn't really have to change our relationship.

BABE
So what you're saying is, you'd like us to keep having sex and noncommittally date until you meet the person who is (air quotes) the one for you?

GUY
(admittedly)
More or less.

LIGHTS DIM.

Babe and Guy move from table to bed.

Scene 2

INT. - BABE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

LIGHTS UP.

Babe is turned away from Guy in bed, sobbing. Guy spoons Babe from a slight distance, rubbing their back. Guy looks at the ceiling, unsure how to console them.

GUY

Would doing a crossword puzzle together make you feel any better?

Babe stops sobbing and nods.

BABE

Mmmhmmm.

Guy reaches down next to bed and grabs a notebook and pen, as Babe turns around to face them. Babe lays their arm across Guy's chest.

GUY

Okay. *Small protuberance. Five letters.*

BABE

(without pause)

Penis!

GUY

(offended)

I said *small!* That's not small!

BABE

I guess it depends on what you're comparing it to.

GUY

Ok, well, I doubt Will Schwartz would let "penis" slip through on a Friday without...

BABE

You did!

GUY

I'm not having this conversation with you again!

BABE

Well, I'm...not having sex with you again.

GUY

(matter-of-factly)

Fine.

Guy puts crossword puzzle on nightstand and turns away from Babe.

LIGHTS DIM.

Guy exits. FRIEND enters. Babe and Friend sit at table.

Scene 3

INT. - CAFE - DAY

LIGHTS UP.

Babe recalls dream to a FRIEND
(played by same actor as Server).

BABE

I'm running. Not running away from something, but running because I want to run. I'm on this dirt ravine and there's this moment where there's this big pile of dirt blocking me and so I have to kinda knock it down as I leap over. And the next thing I know, I'm in an ocean, lying on this mattress. I'm with two other people who are also floating on other things (*recalls*) surfboards, maybe. I think I might have a surfboard too, but at some point I become afraid to let my feet dangle into the water, so I move onto the mattress...And then it starts sinking...so I ask the people next to me if they could help get me back to shore. So they do.

(snapping out of daze)

And then I wake up. And I look down the hallway -- my door's wide open because the cat pushed it open in the middle of the night -- and I see a shadow of a person who's standing in the hallway and taking a photo of me. I first just freeze up. And then a second later, my fight or flight kicks in and I start running towards the person. And when I turn the overhead light on, I realize my eyes are just playing tricks on me and there's nobody there. What I thought was the end of their camera or some sort of flash is actually just the reflection of the exit sign in the hallway.

FRIEND

Wow. That's actually pretty terrifying. Annnd...I also hope you're not going to overanalyze this like you do with ever-

BABE

(quickly interjecting)

-It means nothing! I never liked Freudian dream interpretation, anyway. If I believed that shit, then the dirt ravine would represent the life path I'm currently on, the surfboard, all my fears with relationships, the mattress, my defaults and bad habits around dating, and the exit sign, the way out of it all.

FRIEND

And the burglar photographer is your deep-rooted desire to sleep with your dad. (*pause*) Kidding! Ok, so maybe getting dating advice while unconscious isn't the most successful method, but...you could talk through some of those bad habits this sinking mattress represents. Like...maybe...dating d-bags, for a start?

BABE

Guy is not a douchebag! They're just -- you know -- figuring themselves out.

FRIEND

(argumentatively)

I'm figuring myself out. You're figuring yourself out. Guy's figuring out--with very little success mind you--how to operate like a normal, decent, fucking human being. You deserve so much better, Babe!

BABE

Yeah--I know I do! But it sure would be nice to have someone to spend some time with until I find a normal, decent, fucking human being you seem to think is in abundance out there.

LIGHTS DIM.

Friend exits. Babe moves to DC.

Scene 4

LIGHTS UP.

As Babe delivers monologue, various anonymous characters played by the other two actors come on and off stage and mime interactions in slow motion.

BABE

I wish I could meet people slower. It seems like every time someone goes in for a handshake or a hug, instead of looking into their eyes and repeating their name in my head, I begin to worry about whether or not I'll shake their hand well...or wonder if I'm holding their embrace for a socially appropriate length of time. What if they go in for a hug and I hold out my hand? Are my palms sweaty? Is it obvious whether or not I'm attracted to this person? If I could slow down time for anything, it would probably be for that first interaction. I wish I could remember how I felt about the first boy I fell in love with on the day we met. Did I know then that we'd fall in love? Did he have a good handshake? I wonder what was going through my head the first time I met my parents. I'd like to think it was a beautiful moment of mutual unconditional love, but I was probably just thinking Who decorated this heinous room and what's this weird long cable attached to my belly button? It would be unusual to take a picture of myself with every person I meet as I meet them, but it sure would be handy. I could carry around a little whiteboard and a marker, then have each person I meet

write their name on the board, along with the date and location of our interaction. That way, if they became famous, I'd also have documented proof of their autograph. Are autographs still a thing? Were they ever?

LIGHTS DIM.

Babe exists. Takes short break.

Scene 5

INT. - DR. LOVE'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. LOVE (played by same actor as Friend and Server, but with glasses) enters with telephone/notepad/pen, and sits at table.

LIGHTS UP.

LOVE

(to client on phone, while checking off boxes in notepad)

Got it. So we've got: Career driven. Doesn't live with parents, but loves them enough to call at least once a week. Owns a car or has quick access to one (like a generous housemate with an SUV). Has participated in a type of life transformative event such as a long, solo journey, a near death experience, or an ayahuasca trip. Is outdoorsy, but not too outdoorsy. And you're open to casual encounters? Married folks? No. Ok. Polyamory?

BUDDY, played by same actor as Guy but wearing a beanie, enters and patiently explores room for remainder of call.

Oh. Sorry. I just assumed since you were based in the Bay Area...It's a modern style of dating where you can have romantic or sexual relationships with more than one person...No, you need to have consent of everyone involved -- otherwise it's just cheating. Ok, no worries. We can leave it blank for now. Oh, one more for ya: how do you feel about having a unicorn emoji added to your profile?

BUDDY

Ahem!

LOVE

One second, Patricia. (to Buddy) May I help you?

BUDDY

(confused)

Hi. I'm looking for Dr. Luvé. I got this address from a directory of therapists in my area...My name is Buddy. Uh...I'm looking to switch doctors. If this isn't a good ti-

LOVE

(to Patricia)

Listen, Patty. I'm going to have to call you back.

(hangs up)

It's *Love*. *Dr. Love*. Now -- before you say anything, that is my real name.

BUDDY

And you're a real doctor?

LOVE

Well...not exactly. I'm more of an alternative therapist, with a specific focus on your love life.

BUDDY

Oh. My bad. Well, I should be go--

LOVE

Sure, I don't have any sort of fancy credential from a reputable university my family gave enough money to that might offer you any sort of assurance that I'm good at what I do...

BUDDY

And what is it that you do?

LOVE

In a nutshell, I learn more about how you operate, help you deconstruct all your preconceived notions around dating, explore more deeply what you're seeking in a romantic partner, then help guide you towards your vision of your ideal self in love.

BUDDY

Ok. So...what's the catch?

LOVE

There isn't one. I've just seen firsthand how deeply the spill has affected everyone's relationships that I want to help daters get back out there, even if slowly at first.

BUDDY

I appreciate what you're doing. I really do. But...I'm out there. I've got two different profiles I'm A/B testing on a couple apps right now annnnnnd I don't think I need any help.

The telephone rings.

LOVE

Suit yourself.

(answering phone)

Hello? (pause) Oh, hi, Tanya! Yes, I've been quite slammed recently, as I'm sure you can imagine.

Buddy slowly exits.

LIGHTS DIM.

Love exits, takes off glasses, re-enters and moves to bed as Friend. Babe enters and joins Friend on bed.

Scene 6

INT. - BABE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

LIGHTS UP.

Babe and Friend lay on Babe's bed and swipe on dating apps.

BABE

What about this one?

FRIEND

Ooooh, they're cute! (*Reading bio*) Good-mannered conservation archaeologist (turns to Babe) -HOT!- seeks someone who will make my tail wag when they enter the room. (*Scrolling through photos*)...Hm.

BABE

What is it?

FRIEND

Oh, nothing. It's just...they only have three photos.

BABE

Well, they're good photos. See...(*referencing pics*) this one shows that they really love animals..and this one that they really love their dog...and this one...ok, maybe they love their dog a little too much.

FRIEND

Yeah, you can never trust those dog parents. Fido throws up *once* after you spend the night at daddy's house, and they see it as some sort of bad omen for your future together.

BABE

Ooooh, Buddy!

FRIEND

Was that the name of a dog you had growing up?

BABE

No. Look! (*Reads Buddy's profile*) *Plant-based plant parent looking to lay some roots in nature and fertilize new ground with a life partner.*

FRIEND

Ok, so Buddy isn't a dog. Is Buddy a plant? And *fertilize new ground*? Ew! Is that an insemination joke?

BABE

Eep! We matched!

LIGHTS DIM.

Friend exits. Babe gets under covers.

Scene 7

INT. - BABE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

LIGHTS UP.

An alarm goes off. Babe sits up and turns it off. Groggily, they recount the dream they just had into their phone.

BABE

I'm in a car with some friends, driving on the highway somewhere north of here. And the person driving is driving really fucking slow, so all these cars behind us just keep getting angry and trying to pass. So they make like – this weaving motion – or angrily flash their hand, and I tell my friend. I'm like, "Hey, these cars are trying to get around!" And their idea of letting them around is moving to the left, which is silly because cars pass on the left. Finally, we end up at this really ornate high school. I'm walking down the hallway, and there's this series of lockers that say "Fast Pass Student Council" on them and almost look like podiums for a gameshow, but they're actually just these lockers that are closer to where student council members need to go. And I'm somehow able to talk to a friend by writing to them on a locker with my finger. They're offering me this special power, but it requires that I get my arm replaced with something that doesn't have a hand on it. So I let myself consider it for awhile and then decide *Sure, why not?* So I write back to them that I'm willing to do it. And then I keep walking and end up outside. Audioslave is

playing a concert for a lot of people, so I go over and watch that for awhile. And then I run into somebody I know, who offers me a massage. It's right outside of this little cabin. There's like a bunch of cabins that are assigned to people. (*shakes off dream*) And then I wake up.

Guy enters and sits on bed next to Babe.

GUY

(as if speaking to a child)

Hey, Babe! So. Before I leave for this trip, I wanted to have a check-in. You know -- reassess where our relationship is and what we could do to support each

BABE

(hesitantly)

Cool! That sounds like it would be a helpful conversation for us to have, and also potentially really taxing. I'd at least like to brush my teeth first.

(Exits and delivers lines from OS while brushing teeth)

Soo...wahhhr doooo youuu thiiiink awwwwwr relaaaasssssinsip ithh?

GUY

(in all seriousness)

I just love that we can have this direct line of communication!

BABE

(shouting from offstage)

Muhhhhh teooowww!

GUY

The thing is...These trips can be really emotionally draining. And like any warm-blooded human, I crave another person's touch at the end of a long day.

BABE

You cwwave whawww?!

GUY

Physical touch, Babe! Sex! Intimacy! I just want to set proper expectations that something might happen during this retreat.

BABE

(quickly popping head into room)

Ithn't thissss uhk woork twipp?

GUY

Yeah, technically. But...you never know with these sorts of things. We've each been assigned these tiny cabins and--I

mean--...once the door's open, there's really no telling what might happen.

BABE

(walking back into room with mild shock)
That's reassuring. Well...as much as it both hurts and confuses me that you think you might have sex on your work trip, I appreciate you being honest with me. I can't say that I have any sense of confidence

GUY

That's awesome, Babe! I'm so excited for you to get out there!

BABE

(half-heartedly)

Yeah...me too.

LIGHTS DIM.

Babe moves to table. Dr. Love enters and sits at table.

Scene 8

INT. DR. LOVE'S OFFICE - DAY

LIGHTS UP.

BABE

I don't know. I think I'm just destined to be alone forever.

LOVE

A lot of people feel that way. So you're not actually alone.

BABE

Great. Well, I'm glad that others can share in my misery, but I don't feel like I've really got anyone to commiserate with.

LOVE

Yeah. Things have changed since the spill. A lot of my clients...well...let's just say they need a lot of dating help right now.

BABE

(partially trying to convince herself)
I think all of us need help, whether or not we choose to admit it. And we often get it in the wrong places...But...we should always be open to change, as long as it's positive and in alignment with our growth.

LOVE

And how are you working towards your growth right now?

BABE

I think I'm still figuring out how to give myself permission to go after what I want. I've spent a lot of time just finding ways to be excited about existing in this fucked up world in this fucked up time. And, I mean...I'd be lying if I didn't say that every now and then, I feel like just giving up and jumping off a bridge or driving off a cliff...I have this recurring dream where I'm flying...soaring above everything beautiful and everything fucked up...and I can't tell whether or not it's a premonition of my death or just some deep-rooted desire, but I always go back to it, as if it's the most natural state I can imagine myself in. Like I'm just this little fish suspended in the sky.

LOVE

You would be for a moment. And then you would be a very dead fish in the water.

BABE

Yeah. Sorry. I don't mean to scare you. I'm not actually thinking about following through with this. All things considered, I'm excited about life right now and finally ready to get back into the dating pool.

LOVE

Yeah, let's just can it with the fish references, shall we?

LIGHTS DIM.

Love and Babe exit. Buddy, wearing a Darth Vader helmet and holding a rose succulent, enters and sits at table. He tucks the plant under the table.

Scene 9

INT. - CAFE - NIGHT

LIGHTS UP.

Buddy waits for Babe to arrive for their first date. Server, wearing a mask of an old woman's face, approaches table.

SERVER

Hey there, Buddy. You expecting anyone? Your son, perhaps?
(laughs at own joke)

BUDDY

...I don't get it. Um -- oh, yes. I'm waiting on one other person. Do you have a wine list I could look at?

SERVER

How about I just tell you about our selection? One of them is red and one of them is white. I'm pretty sure only one of them is any good, but I can't remember which one.

BUDDY

Great. I'll have a glass of each while I wait. Thanks.

SERVER

Sure thing. Just need to see your ID.

Buddy hands ID to Server. Server squints while trying to match the photo on the license with the Darth Vader helmet. They eventually give up, nod, hand Buddy back ID, and exit.

Babe, wearing an astronaut's helmet, enters and floats around the room almost as if it's been deprived of oxygen, before spotting and floating over to Buddy, who stands to greet Babe. They both extend and retract their hands for a shake, before settling on a weird shoulder-tap-fist bump-combo. It's obvious neither one of them knows what they're doing.

BABE

(nervously)

Hi. Buddy?

BUDDY

Hey, Babe. How could you tell it was me?

BABE

You said you'd be wearing a Darth Vader helmet. And (looking around)...well, I don't see anyone else wearing one.

BUDDY

(snort laughs)

Oh, yeah. Whoops.(*motioning*) Have a seat.

BABE

Thanks (*sits down*). I don't know about you, but it's been...quite some time since I've been out like this. You know...under these circumstances.

BUDDY

I know what you mean. Well...I know that statement has meaning for me. I don't exactly know what it's been like for you. Were you...affected much by the spill?

BABE

Not directly. I have a few friends who have to wear gloves everywhere they go now because anything they touch could become...(searching for the right words) contaminated.

BUDDY

(looking at hands)

Geez. I'm sorry to hear that.

Server comes back with two glasses of wine (one white and one red) and sets them in front of Buddy.

SERVER

(to Babe)

Hi. Are you the other person?

BABE

As opposed to who else?

BUDDY

Uh. Yes. This is my guest. (to Babe) Would you like something to drink? I hear one of their wines is better than the other, but I haven't yet had a chance to figure out which one.

BABE

A glass of the red, please.

Server nods and exits.

Red wine is *always* better than white.

BUDDY

Ah. My mistake. I'm afraid my taste in wine is about as refined as my choice in dining establishments.

The sound of a toilet flushing can be heard in the background.

BABE

No--this is great! In fact, I come here pretty often with a friend.

BUDDY

Guy, is it?

BABE

Oh, no! Just a dear friend. Guy's on a work trip right now. And might be having sex with a coworker. I'm not exactly

sure. Anyway. Full disclosure: we've been seeing each other for awhile, but it's not going anywhere and I know this because that was very clearly stated...but that it would be cool to keep seeing each other, but more as fuck buddies...

BUDDY

(sympathetically)

Wow. And you stayed?

BABE

What would you have done?

BUDDY

I guess I don't really know.

BABE

Yeah -- I don't really know, either.

Server enters and sets glass of red wine in front of Babe.

SERVER

Are you ready to order?

BABE

(to Buddy) You cool if I take over?

BUDDY

Go for it!

BABE

Great. We'll split the #4 combo "salamander style", a large order of swirly fries with special sauce, small garden salad--dressing on the side--and an oat milk peanut butter shake with two straws.

Server commits order to memory, nods and exits.

BUDDY

I like that you know what you want.

BABE

Heh. I don't, really. I've just had so much of what I don't want, that it's getting to be pretty easy to see what a much better option looks like.

Beat.

BUDDY

Oh! I almost forgot...I got you something.

Buddy reaches under table, pulls out a small rose succulent, and puts it in front of Babe.

BABE

(flattered)

Thank you. It's beautiful.

BUDDY

Flowers die so quickly. I wanted to offer you something that might last a while.

BABE

Ah. You're not yet privy to my absolute incredible ability to somehow kill every plant I meet simply by looking at it.

BUDDY

(laughing)

Well... thankfully you only need to water this one enough to keep the soil barely moist. It practically takes care of itself with very little maintenance.

BABE

Well, thank you. Really. It's very sweet of you.

BUDDY

Do you mind if I take a picture of you with it?

BABE

(shyly)

Oh! Sure. Ummmmmm (*lifting plant up to their astronaut helmet*) Cheeeeeeeese!

Buddy pulls out their phone and snaps a photo of Babe.

BUDDY

Hey, I think enough time has gone by that we can take off our masks. They said it was 10 minutes before it's safe for us to be exposed to the atmosphere, right?

BABE

It was 8 minutes, actually. Yeah. I think it's safe to take them off.

Slowly, Babe and Buddy remove their helmets and gaze into each other's eyes. Babe puts their palm on Buddy's cheek and Buddy puts their hand on top of Babe's.

LIGHTS DIM.

Babe and Buddy exit.

Scene 10

INT. - CABIN - NIGHT

Friend enters and gets under covers of bed. Guy enters and paces around room.

LIGHTS UP.

GUY

I don't know why I just feel so...weird about it all. I mean...you're such good friends.

FRIEND

You said you set expectations, right?

GUY

I said there might be a chance. But...I may not have been super clear about who with.

FRIEND

Come on, Guy!

GUY

I know! I should have communicated better. I just wasn't sure how it would land, and if I *had* been more direct (*sits on bed and puts hand on Friend's hand*), this might not have ever happened.

FRIEND

(pulling away)

Yeah -- exactly! That's the whole point of communication! You talk to each other to understand how to take care of each other and if you're not talking for that reason, then you probably don't have Babe's best interests at heart. Or, mine, for that

GUY

That's not true!

(stands up and continues to pace around room)

I care about Babe! I just don't think I can prioritize our relationship...or any serious relationship, right now.

FRIEND

So, am I just a passing attraction for you as well?

GUY

That's not fair. You and Babe are nothing alike.

FRIEND

We may not be alike, but we're close. And I know when-

GUY

If you were close, you wouldn't have fucked the only other person on the planet she can trust! *(retracting)* I'm sorry. That was a low blow for both of us.

Guy goes back to sit on bed next to Friend.

FRIEND

Can we just pretend this never happened?

GUY

I wish it were that easy.

FRIEND

You're not going to tell Babe, are you?

GUY

It's not like I'm trying to lead with it or anything, but Babe is intuitive and sometimes annoyingly curious. I feel like they'd find out after a very short series of simple questions.

FRIEND

Well--you've got to keep that from happening.

GUY

The only way to do that would be to somehow avoid Babe entirely!

FRIEND

You're no stranger to avoidant behavior. Shouldn't be too hard.

GUY

(not amused)

Funny. I don't know. I don't think I can keep this up. I don't really know exactly what it is, but there's something deep in my gut that just doesn't feel good about it.

FRIEND

I think they call that guilt.

GUY

I think we should stop seeing each other.

Silence.

Friend and Guy gaze into each other's eyes. Guy puts their palm on Friend's cheek and Friend puts their hand on top of Guy's. Friend exits.

LIGHTS DIM.

Guy exits.

[Consider fitting a shorter play or performance in between these scenes. You could also lead audience through a short eye-gazing session or other interactive experience.]

Scene 10

INT. - CAFE - DAY

LIGHTS UP.

Friend nervously sits at table. A bubbly, Babe walks in and takes a seat next to them.

FRIEND

Woah! What are you so cheery about?

BABE

Buddy and I are going to the ballet!
(discreetly)

Theatres haven't officially reopened yet, but we

FRIEND

Are you sure that's a good idea, Babe? Not only does that sound a little shady, last I heard, it was going to take some time before theatres were safe to visit again.

BABE

So, what's a little toxic air for a couple hours? We poison ourselves every day with caffeine and booze and sex and sugar and...Our days are numbered, Friend! And we can't live them all hiding behind masks inside our homes! That's no way to live.

FRIEND

We can agree to disagree.

BABE

We seem to be disagreeing on a lot lately. Is everything ok?

FRIEND

(lying)

Yeah. Everything's fine. I'm sorry for being argumentative. I just, you know...look out for you sometimes. You know I only want what's best for you, right?

BABE

(lying)

Yeah. Of course.

FRIEND

Hey... there is something I wanted to talk to you about.

BABE

Oh yeah? What is it?

FRIEND

I'm thinking about leaving town for awhile -- somewhere a bit out of reach. I know we talked about traveling together after everything calmed down, but...I think I really need to do this on my own. I hope...you don't think I'm abandoning you or anything.

BABE

No, of course not...(finally coming to terms) I

Saddened by the statement, Friend exits.

LIGHTS DIM.

Babe exits.

Scene 11

INT. - BABE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

LIGHTS UP.

Babe enters with Buddy, after what appears to have been a fun time at the ballet. They awkwardly skirt around physical touch.

BUDDY

(pointing at a photo on the wall)

Is this you?

BABE

(embarrassed)

Hah. Yes. I wasn't the most attractive toddler. You know how parents always think their babies are the cutest things and take their photos at every moment they get? Not mine. That's the only one I have of me before age 5.

BUDDY

What happened at age 5?

BABE

They decided to send me to circus camp that year. All the families got invited to a performance at the end of the summer, and the older kids thought I would play a great Bozo the Clown. So...there's quite a lot of me from that summer...and the easter I slipped on my cat's vomit and broke my leg...

BUDDY

Rough. (*sits on bed*) My problem is that I was the cutest toddler you'd ever seen, so all I could do was disappoint everyone who ever loved me as I grew older and started to lose my cute baby face.

BABE

(*sits next to Buddy*)

You still have a cute baby face.

BUDDY

(*snort laughs*)

Thanks. (*pause*) I've gotta be honest -- I don't really know what I'm doing.

BABE

I don't either. Does anyone?

BUDDY

I think some people have it figured out...Or maybe that's just from my point of view, and they're over there, looking at me, thinking that I'm the one who has it figured out. But, like you said, maybe none of us do.

BABE

I get the sense that once you have it all figured out, you might as well just shrivel up and die. Like -- why would life be worth living at all if there was nothing to figure out? Nowhere to discover. Nobody to meet. Nothing to try for the first time; or the second; or third. I'd rather be curious than wise, (*admittedly*)... but I guess some of the latter snuck its way in me after what happened at the factory.

BUDDY

Yeah. We all grew up a little bit more that day, whether we wanted to or not.

BABE

(*chuckling*)

It's kinda funny.

BUDDY

What is it?

Buddy removes hat to become Guy,
then sits at table. Babe exits.

Scene 12

INT. - CAFE - DAY

LIGHTS UP.

Babe slowly enters and finds a seat
next to Guy.

GUY

Hey, Babe! It's so good to see you! (*kisses cheek*)

BABE

When'd you get back?

GUY

Thursday. But -- I mostly spent that time unpacking and
reflecting on the trip.

BABE

And...did anything come up in your...*reflections*?

GUY

Oh, definitely. It was an incredibly transformative
experience and I feel so lucky to have been able to share
that container of growth with those people.

BABE

...Right.

Server enters with beer and puts it
in front of guy.

SERVER

(to Babe)

Can I get you anything?

BABE

I think I'm good. Thanks.

GUY

Anyway. It really got me thinking--

BABE

Listen. You don't have to say anything. I get that I'm not
your "person," or whatever other possessive noun you used to
describe it...but, I am somebody who knows you intimately
and has sacrificed a lot just for some sort of half-hearted
hope that you might end up loving me enough to not hurt me.
And...frankly, I'm a bit over it.

GUY

This is actually what I wanted to talk to you about.

BABE

Go on.

GUY

You see...I think I *have* found love.

Guy looks deeply into Babe's eyes. Mistaking who Guy is referring to, Babe's mood shifts, while Guy is clearly struggling to get words out.

BABE

(hopefully)

Oh yeah?

GUY

Yeah...I found love for myself.

BABE

Are you fucking kidding me right now?!

GUY

Why would I be kidding? Do you realize how long it's taken me to get to this point? I thought you, of all people, would be excited for me.

BABE

Oh, I am. Truly.

GUY

There's something else...

The sound of a toilet flushing, followed by a sink and a high-powered air dryer, blocks out our ability to hear what Guy is telling Babe, but from her change in expression, it's not good. Server comes back to table.

SERVER

(motioning to Guy's glass)

Would you like another one?

BABE

(answering for Guy)

All finished. Thank you.

Babe gets up and starts walking towards exit. They stop briefly and turn around to address Guy.

BABE

You know what. I really am happy for you. Now that you love yourself, it won't be too hard for you to go fuck yourself!

Babe flips him off, then storms out. Guy and Server watch in awe.

LIGHTS DIM.

Guy and Server exit.

Scene 13

INT. - BABE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Babe enters with notebook and pen and sits on floor to journal. The bed is unmade, as if to suggest waking in the middle of the night.

LIGHTS UP.

Babe, clearly distraught, journals for a few moments, before addressing audience.

BABE

I had just returned to my family's house from childhood, and it seemed to be just a normal night...but something felt a little off. My older sister and some of her friends were hanging out with this handsome, slightly older man in the living room. He was really charming, but something wasn't quite right about him. One of my sister's friends put on a movie -- something scary that somehow I knew deep down, this man would really like. Too scared to watch the movie, I went upstairs to the room I shared with my sister, but my mom was using it to make calls from this "ask a psychic" call center. She was moonlighting as an operator, but would sometimes fill in as a psychic if they were short-staffed. Which was often. When I opened the door, she got really annoyed that I had bust in, so I just quickly asked how much longer it would be until I could have my room back. I don't remember what she said, but defeated, I walked off and went back downstairs. I don't know what compelled me to do this, but I had this sudden urge to run away. There were a few people hanging out in the kitchen--my exit route--and so, when they saw me climbing out the window, they of course commented on

Babe puts notebook and pen on nightstand, makes bed, turns off light, then exits.

LIGHTS DIM.

Scene 14

INT. - LOVE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dr. Love enters with phone and notebook/pen and sits at table.

LIGHTS UP.

Phone rings.

LOVE

(answering)

Dr. Love. (pause) Ah. I'm unfortunately not licensed to officiate weddings, but I wish you so much luck and good fortune.

(goes to hang up phone, but person on other line is incessant)

No, I don't offer divorce paperwork services, either. You'll want to call somebody named--

Beat. Babe walks in.

I'm sorry. But, even if I was a real doctor, I don't think that's something I'd really be comfortable taking a look at. Can I ask where you got this number? (pause) Hello? Helllllooo?

Babe sits next to Love. Love hangs up.

BABE

Is most of your work over the phone?

LOVE

These days it seems like it is. Wasn't always the case. I think over time, we just became used to the separation. What was first a barrier to connecting with people became more of a crutch. Plus, you don't need to wear masks over the phone.

BABE

Or pants.

LOVE

Well...I'm glad you decided to show up in person, pants and all.

BABE

Thanks for fitting me in so last-minute.

LOVE

Happy to. How can I help?

BABE

Well, the thing is...I've really enjoyed being able to talk to you, and, I do really hope that we can keep in touch-- though I totally understand if that's not kosher in these sorts of relationships!-- It's just...I...I won't be needing your services anymore.

LOVE

(unphased)

What?! That's great news! (*hugging Babe*) I'm so happy for you! Tell me all about them!

BABE

Oh! Well...it's not exactly a *them*. I mean...I have met someone! They're really great. They're name is Buddy. I know what you're thinking and no, they're not a puppy.

Love smirks, knowing very well
Buddy is not a pup.

But...the reason I won't need your help anymore is because I realized that..I don't need anyone else to make me happy. And if the spill reached just a little bit farther out and I was one of those people still quarantined somewhere in the mountains with no

LOVE

That's beautiful Babe. I think a lot of us are still stuck in this insurmountable search for the perfect partner, when deep down, we know that the best thing for us in the long run is finding enough love for ourselves to be able to come to terms with the idea that it might be the only lasting love we ever experience in our lifetimes. It sounds like you've found this love. And I'm so fucking happy for you. (Pause) Also...this doesn't have to end our relationship. (grinning impishly) In fact...

BABE

What is it?

LIGHTS DIM.

Scene 15

INT. - BABE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Babe and Love get into bed. Buddy enters and also gets into bed. Love is in the middle. They're spooning, facing DS.

LIGHTS UP.

The trio giggle about what just occurred.

BABE

Wow.

BUDDY

Wow, indeed.

BABE

Any interest in a crossword puzzle?

BUDDY

As long as it's not Saturday.

BABE

Oh, no. It will never be Saturday.

(picking up notebook from nightstand)

Ok, here's one. Do you want to drive?

BUDDY

Oh. Sure.

Babe hands notebook to Buddy.

Okay...1 Across: *Phrase often heard at pubs just before closing.* Eight letters.

BABE

(without hesitation)

"Last call!"

Love pulls Polaroid camera out from under the covers and takes photo of the audience.

FADE TO BLACK.

End of play.

Notes for Director

This play was intentionally written with ambiguous / minimally described characters to make it more accessible to a broader array of performers and theatre-goers. I hope you'll use this opportunity to create meaningful opportunities for more marginalized community members.

Set

Round table w/ two chairs, bed, end table, partition*(opt.)

**Most scenes take place at a cafe, office, or in a bedroom. A translucent partition may be used diagonally across the stage to direct focus between scenes and provide a backdrop for lighting and/or projection.*

Costume pieces

Bar apron (Server), beanie (Buddy), glasses (Love), three silly masks (I use Darth Vader for Buddy, astronaut for Babe, and an old lady for Server)

Props (may be acquired or mimed)

Half-full beer glass, two smart phones, notebook w/ attached pen, Polaroid camera, small whiteboard w/ black marker, toothbrush, wallet w/ ID, small succulent, three glasses of wine (two red, one white)