CHAPTER 2 — Play Version — George & Jennie First Date

(RING OF CHAT ON COMPUTER)

JENNIE
(Opening her screen)
Hi!

GEORGE
Hi, it’s me, five minute man.
(looks over screen)
Yeah! Okayyyy!

JENNIE
Is that a review?

GEORGE
No, no, uh, just a response . . .
Hello.

JENNIE
Hello.

GEORGE
I think I’ve put a lot of pressure on these next five minutes.

JENNIE
You could cut it with a knife.

GEORGE
I think, if you don’t mind, if I ... look around your apartment there, it would lessen the tension.

JENNIE
Oh my God, yes, please.
(she gestures to look behind her)

GEORGE
Ah ha!

JENNIE
Does that mean you comprehend my apartment?

GEORGE
No. It means I like it. “Aha” can be used in many situations, like buying a little time to get over opening moment jitters.
JENNIE
Sometimes a glass of white wine can
do the job - do you have any there?

GEORGE
That's good thinking. I'll get some
too.

(THEY BOTH FIND TIME TO GRAB WINE
OFFSCREEN)

GEORGE
(while she's away from her
screen)
Is it all right if I pry some more?
Occupational hazard.

JENNIE
Oh I understand. I generally
motivate too much.

GEORGE
You a football fan?

JENNIE
Oh, that's my ex-husband. He was a
wide receiver for the New York
Giants.

GEORGE
No kidding! What's his name?

JENNIE
Gus Hendricks.

GEORGE
Gus Hendricks? . . . Funny, don't
remember him. How wide a receiver
was he?

JENNIE
Well, he was cut in the beginning
of his second year. Bad hands, I
think they call it. He couldn't
hold on to the football.

GEORGE
Some coaches are very demanding.
What does he do now?

JENNIE
Well, he was in mutual funds, he
was partners in a saloon, he was in
broadcasting, sports promotion -
GEORGE
Very ambitious.

JENNIE
He did all those in three months.
He has some problems to work out.

GEORGE
Who doesn’t?

JENNIE
True enough. (Holds up her wine to the screen) Here’s to working out problems.

GEORGE
Leo was right. You’re very, very attractive.

JENNIE
Thank you.

GEORGE
I’m curious. You don’t have to answer this, but how was I described?

JENNIE
"Not gorgeous, but an intelligent face."

GEORGE
That’s true. I have. You can ask my face anything. Do you think this was a dumb thing to do?

JENNIE
I thought so three minutes ago, but I’m beginning to get the hang of it.

GEORGE
It was an idea born out of fear. "Necessity is the Mother of Calamity."

JENNIE
Do you write the way you talk?

GEORGE
This is not talking. This is impressing. Talking comes later.
JENNIE
Oh, good.

GEORGE
I don’t know. No matter how old or experienced you are, the process never seems to get any easier, does it?

JENNIE
What process?

GEORGE
Mating.

JENNIE
Mating? My God, is that what we’re doing?

GEORGE
First thing I did when you came onscreen was notice your arms were wide open. I don’t know if you are aware of it or not, but in our particular species, one’s body language is a determining factor in sexual attraction.

JENNIE
This is just a guess, but do you write for Field and Stream?

GEORGE
Please, give me a break, I haven’t done this in 14 years. To tell you the truth, you’re not the first girl that Leo introduced me to.

JENNIE
What were the others like?

GEORGE
Pearl Harbor? 9/11? First there was Bambi. Her name should tell you everything.

JENNIE
I got the picture.

GEORGE
Then there was Vilma. A dynamite girl.
JENNIE
Really?

GEORGE
Spent three years in a Turkish prison for carrying...

JENNIE
... dynamite.

GEORGE
Do you want me to go on?

JENNIE
No, I've had enough.

GEORGE
Since then I've decided to take everything Leo says with a grain of panic... And that's why I'm very surprised to be sitting here with an attractive, intelligent and what appears to be a very nice girl.

JENNIE
Thank you. I really enjoyed talking to you on the phone. You're very bright. I found I had to stay on my toes to keep up with you.

GEORGE***** (BIG CHANGE HERE)
Oh. And, is that unusual?

JENNIE
I haven't been off my heels in years... What kind of books do you write?

GEORGE
Ah, we're moving into heavy territory. What kind of books do I write? For a living, I write spy novels. For posterity, I write good novels. I make a good living but my posterity had a bad year.

JENNIE
Name some books.

GEORGE
From column A or column B?

JENNIE
Both.
GEORGE
Well, the spy novels I write under the name of Kenneth Blakely Hyphen Hill.

JENNIE
Hyphen Hill?

GEORGE
You don’t say the hyphen, you just put it in.

JENNIE
Oh, God, yes. Of course. I’ve seen it. Drugstores, airports...

GEORGE
Unfortunately, not libraries.

JENNIE
Who picked the name?

GEORGE
My wife. You see, my publisher said spy novels sell better when they sound like they were written in England. London is where I spent my honeymoon.

JENNIE
And, from column B?

GEORGE
I only had two published. They were a modest failure. That means “Bring us more, but not too soon.”

JENNIE
I’d like to read them someday.

GEORGE
I’ll send you a couple boxes of them. (awkward pause)
I’m forty-two.

JENNIE
Today?

GEORGE
No, just in general.
JENNIE
Oh. Is that statement of some historic importance?

GEORGE
No. I just wanted you to know it because you look to be in your late 20’s. I feel like I’m acting seventeen...I didn’t want you to think I was too young for you.

JENNIE
I’m thirty-four.

GEORGE
Thirty-four. It’s a good year for women. So what do you think?

JENNIE
About what?

GEORGE
About me.

JENNIE
God, you really like to come right to the point, don’t you.

GEORGE
I’m not always this direct, but we are fighting the clock.

JENNIE
Well, my hunch is you’re a very interesting person, George.

GEORGE
Well, my advice to you is to play your hunches.

JENNIE
Should we have more wine?

GEORGE
I think I’d better be going.

JENNIE
Oh? Time’s up?

GEORGE
Well I don’t need any more. I think I know what my next move is.
JENNIE
Really, what's that?

GEORGE
I would like to make an actual date...your basic normal hours...seven to twelve. What's today?

JENNIE
Tuesday

GEORGE
How's Wednesday?

JENNIE
Wednesday works out well.

GEORGE
You could play hard to get and make it Thursday.

JENNIE
Let's stick with Wednesday and I'll keep you waiting half an hour.

GEORGE
Fair enough. This was really very nice. I'm very glad we met, Jennie.

JENNIE
So am I, George.

GEORGE
I can't believe that you would come from the same man who gave us Bambi and Vilma.