

LOUIS: Yeah? Is that the truth? I love to ride my bike around the city—when the traffic is light, of course.

(He chuckles.)

GIRL: Same here.

LOUIS: Oh and also—and this may just be me—but I have this thing for walking my dog in the park on a pretty day.

GIRL: No, I like that, too. I said so earlier.

LOUIS: So do you like watching TV?

GIRL: No.

LOUIS: Me too! I love it!

(Pause.)

GIRL: (Curious.) Are you listening to me at all?

LOUIS: Sometimes I like to curl up with a bag of popcorn and just chow down while I watch *Home Improvement*. Do you like *Home Improvement*?

GIRL: You really aren't listening to me.

LOUIS: Me too! That's a riot. Tim Allen just cracks . . . me . . . up.

GIRL: This is ridiculous . . .

(Throughout the below monologue, GIRL gradually tries out different tactics to see how self-centered and nonreactive LOUIS truly is. She tries saying things to him like "pardon me" and "hi"; she tries whistling at him a little; she even tries touching his nose with her index finger or a

spoon for a few seconds. No matter what she does, LOUIS just keeps on trucking, as if she wasn't there.)

LOUIS: I mean, his comedy is just choice. It's like his comic timing was a gift from the gods, you know? You know what I'm talking about? Man . . . I'm just blown away every time I see the show, or one of his movies. Did you see *The Santa Clause*? Ah! If you haven't, go and rent it *right away*. That is one funny guy. He reminds me of me, actually. We have the same sense of humor. My old roommate Bill? He says I'm the funniest guy he's ever met. Hey—he's entitled to his opinion, right? Anyway, I've got my personality flaws. Sometimes I'm too funny. People don't realize it when I'm being serious!! Do you believe that?! But jeez, enough about me. I'm talkin' like a motormouth here! Tell me about you.

GIRL: Or we could just end the date right now, since you're the biggest tool I've ever met.

(A slightly long pause; we assume he is going to break.)

LOUIS: I'm a Capricorn myself.

(Scene.)

SCENE 2

(This next scene will work best if MELANIE is truly sweet, innocent, and adorable when she's focused on the date.)

GUY: Hi.

MELANIE: Hi.

GUY: It's so great to finally meet you.

MELANIE: Same here!

GUY: So . . . What do you—

MELANIE: Wait, before you . . . sorry. (*Meekly.*) This is so rude, but the Bears game is on right now? You don't mind if I check the score . . .

GUY: Oh, sure. Totally.

MELANIE: (*As she pulls out her cell phone to check her web browser.*) Thanks. I know this is such an awful thing to do on a first date, but it's late in the fourth quarter, and it's do-or-die if we wanna make the playoffs.

GUY: It's no problem at all. Really.

MELANIE: Thanks. (*As she checks.*) I love the Bears. They're really strong this season. (*Sees score; reacts a little.*) Okay, I'm done. (*Cheerily.*) That wasn't so bad, was it?

GUY: What's the score?

MELANIE: Packers by seven.

GUY: Uh-oh.

MELANIE: Nah, it's no big deal. It's just a game, right? So, c'mon, enough about football. Let's hear about "Mister Mystery." Harriet's told me tons about you.

GUY: Man . . . The pressure's on now.

(*They laugh together genuinely. MELANIE's laugh then fades directly into her next line, which is suddenly serious.*)

MELANIE: I'm just gonna check on the game one more time.

(*She digs into her purse.*)

GUY: (*Smiling.*) No worries.

MELANIE: Is it all right with you if I put on this little earpiece thingy? It won't be distracting, I promise.

GUY: Sure.

MELANIE: (*As she puts the earpiece in her ear.*) I'm making the worst first impression, aren't I?

GUY: Not at all.

MELANIE: It's just because it's for the playoffs. I'm usually pretty normal.

GUY: It's really no—

MELANIE: (*Throws her hands up.*) Ah!

GUY: What?

MELANIE: Oh. Nothing. The line only gives A-Train this huge running lane, but he fumbles after two yards. The ball rolled out of bounds, so we're cool, but come on—it's for the playoffs. You don't just drop the ball like that, you know? Now you're third and long, and the whole season is riding on one play.

GUY: That's—

MELANIE: WHAT?!

GUY: What?

MELANIE: PASS THE BALL!!

GUY: What's wrong?

MELANIE: Miller! He doesn't pass it. The man refuses to pass the ball this season. It's third and long—who hands it off on third and long? Is he suddenly AFRAID OF HIS RECEIVERS?!

(GUY looks around subtly at the other patrons.)

Oh my God, I'm sorry. I'm being loud, aren't I.

GUY: (Trying hard to be convincing.) No . . .

MELANIE: Oh, I am. I'm so sorry. Look, how about this: I'll make it up to you. After dinner I'll buy you dessert at this tiny little bistro on 11th that nobody knows about. It's gotta be one of my absolute favorite places to go. It's so precious. I think you'll just—PASS THE BALL!! Jesus, people! This is FOOTBALL, not FREEZE TAG. It's FOURTH DOWN—pass the FRIGGING BALL!

GUY: Listen, we could go to a bar or something if you want—watch the game on TV.

MELANIE: Oh please, no. I wouldn't do that to you. The game's basically over. (She takes a deep breath and is now very calm.) Okay. I'm done. I got a little carried away there, didn't I? Let's order.

(They peruse for a moment, as if nothing has happened.)

GUY: Oh. (Indicating the menu.) Harriet said we should definitely try the—

(MELANIE suddenly lets out a bloodcurdling shriek and rips the menu in half. Beat.)

GUY: Or we could order something else. (Beat.) Your menu tore a little.

MELANIE: (Downtrodden.) They lost . . .

GUY: Oh. Oh, I'm sorry.

MELANIE: (Starting to tear up.) They lost. They just blew the play-offs.

GUY: Well, I—

(MELANIE breaks down, bawling. GUY thinks for a moment, then takes out a handkerchief and offers it to MELANIE. She uses it to blow her nose.)

GUY: I'm so sorry. Can I do anything to help?

MELANIE: (Still weepy.) The Bears suck . . .

GUY: Aww, no. They don't suck.

MELANIE: They do . . . They suck.

GUY: They're probably just having a bad season—

(MELANIE grabs his collar, pulls him extremely close, and speaks in a horrifying, monstrous, deep voice.)

MELANIE: THE BEARS SUCK.

GUY: (Very weakly.) The Bears suck.

(Scene.)