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SF PERUSALS

Cockeyed

by William Missouri Downs

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830
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COCKEYED was first produced by the HotCity Theatre in St. Louis. The production was directed by Marty Stanberry, with the following cast and crew:

PHIL . . . . . Adam Flores
SOPHIA . . . . . Jennifer Nitzband
NORMAN . . . . . Paul Pagano
MARLEY . . . . . Tyler Vickers

Scene Design – Alex Gaines
Lighting Design – Michael Sullivan
Costume Design – Felia Davenport
Sound Design – Jeff Griswold

COCKEYED's first workshop production was staged by the Cheyenne Little theatre. It was directed by Patti Kelly, with the following cast:

PHIL . . . . . Brooks Reeves
SOPHIA . . . . . Sarah Whittle
NORMAN . . . . . Dale Williams
MARLEY . . . . . Rory Mack

Special Thanks to: Lou Anne Wright, Harry Woods, Marty Stanberry, Jeff Tish, Dennis Madigan, Rich Burk, The Last Frontier Playwrights Conference, Chameleons Stage, Alex Gaines, Gwen Feldman, and Patti Kelly.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PHIL – A Nice Guy (Majored in philosophy in college)
SOPHIA – A Pretty Secretary (She has a glass eye)
V.P. MARLEY – A Handsome Boss (He wears a Bluetooth ear cell phone)
NORMAN – A Nervous Accountant (Phil's friend)

SETTING

Setting: There are three small playing areas. At center is Sophia's tiny basement studio apartment. It has a kitchenette and a sleeper-sofa. She's been painting so the walls are mostly bare. On both sides of the studio set are areas that represent the offices of Hibarger Corporation.

On one side is Phil's pathetic office cubicle, on the other the stark employee break room – not much more than a table with a coffee machine.

TIME

The Present

PLACE

New York City

ACT ONE

(Lights up on **PHIL** *in his cluttered office cubicle.)*

PHIL. *(to the audience)* I've seen the woman I shall marry and she is without a doubt the most magnificent creature in all of New York – flawless except for one minor imperfection – she is totally unaware of my existence.

(Lights up on **SOPHIA** *in the break room.)*

PHIL. There, through yonder door, 'tis the company break room and – Sophia.

*(***SOPHIA** *makes several cups of coffee.* **PHIL** *gazes upon her from his cubicle.)*

PHIL. *(to the audience)* I've often daydreamed what our life together would be like. One day we'd accidentally meet in the break room and instantaneously click. There'd be no kiss on the first date; no, we'd both be too excited about our five-hour dialogue on Plato's allegory of the cave as it relates to the movie *The Matrix.* The first kiss would come on our second date – after a six hour heart-to-heart on Hitler and existentialism, I'd take her in my arms and with total confidence – something I've never known – I'd kiss her. A soft sigh would escape from her, letting me know that she had never been kissed like that before.

(During the following **NORMAN** *enters and has a brief unheard conversation with* **SOPHIA***.)*

PHIL. *(to the audience)* On our wedding night we'd make love like Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir – And it would never get old. After which we'd lie in each other's arms and watch PBS or Book TV, or some other intellectually stimulating program.

*(***NORMAN** *exits.)*

PHIL. *(to the audience)* Kids? Lots. Marcus, René, Immanuel and the twins Jean-Paul and Ayn – twins run in her family – all straight "A" students – except for Ayn, she's having trouble with Sartre's *Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* – but that's okay, she's only in the third grade.

*(***V.P. MARLEY** *enters and talks to* **SOPHIA**. *He wears a hands-free Bluetooth cell phone piece imbedded in his ear. We do not hear their short conversation.)*

PHIL. *(to the audience)* Then would come graduation day – Marcus, summa cum laude from Yale, René summa cum laude from Harvard, Immanuel, University of Michigan class valedictorian and the twins, Jean-Paul and Ayn, both Rhodes Scholars – We sure missed them when they were in England, but they flew home every weekend to do laundry. And all of them philosophy majors – just like their father – only, unlike their father, they find good paying jobs with full benefits.

*(***V.P. MARLEY** *exits.* **SOPHIA** *is finally alone for a moment. She sips her green tea; it's been a hard day.)*

PHIL. *(to the audience)* And then one night, after a long evening with the family and extended family, I'd turn to Sophia and say "I think I'm a little tired." And we'd go upstairs. And make passionate love even though we're well into our nineties. After which, I'd lie in her arms. She'd play with my hair. And the last words I'd hear would be "I love you sweetheart" as I drift off into a higher dimension, or non-existence, or whatever transcendental thing you wish to insert here. Aristotle says at the beginning of *Metaphysics*, "We take delight in our senses – apart from their usefulness they are loved for their own sake and none more than the sense of sight." I am in love with the sight of Sophia.

NORMAN. *(Offstage)* Phil! Phil!

*(***NORMAN** *rushes in.)*

NORMAN. *(in a panic)* Phil! Problem! The Mead Report. These figures aren't adding up.

PHIL. *(not taking his eyes off* **SOPHIA***)* The Mead report. It's

right here.

*(***PHIL** *hands his wallet to* **NORMAN**.*)*

NORMAN. This is your wallet!

PHIL. *(not paying attention)* I think you'll find the figures balance out nicely.

NORMAN. We need to talk –.

PHIL. Wait! She's scratching her nostril! Wow!

NORMAN. Phil, we got problems –.

PHIL. Sometimes when she makes coffee she seems to look over at me. I think she likes what she sees.

NORMAN. Who's this?

PHIL. Sophia.

NORMAN. Sophia? That's not possible.

PHIL. Why not?

NORMAN. She's a beautiful woman. You're a nice guy.

PHIL. So what?

NORMAN. Beautiful women aren't interested in nice guys.

PHIL. Says who?

NORMAN. Ask any beautiful woman. They want a guy who has sophistication, a guy with breeding, a guy with a Porsche. "Nice" isn't part of the equation.

PHIL. That's the difference between you and me, Norm. You accept what life hands you. You're nothing but a wallflower; I'm what Nietzsche called a superman.

NORMAN. Phil, you're falling behind. I've been covering for you, buddy, but I can't do it much longer –.

*(***SOPHIA** *exits.)*

PHIL. Wait! She's walking. What a great walk. And. She's. Gone. Wow, she was in the break room for almost five minutes. I'm all tingly – !

NORMAN. Phil. Try to concentrate. Look at me. Over here. *(grabbing* **PHIL***'s head)* Vice President Marley is on the warpath – ! And if this merger goes through you know there'll be layoffs. Did you hear me?

PHIL. Yes.

NORMAN. What did I say?

PHIL. She's wearing blue today.

NORMAN. Phil, I didn't want to say this but you've given me no choice. This isn't easy. Phil – you're average. Not that average is bad. Most of us are average – I'm average! Sophia is what we average call *above average*. Am I making myself clear – ?

*(***SOPHIA** *enters and makes more coffee.)*

PHIL. *(He hauls out opera glasses to watch her.)* She's back! Seven coffee trips in one morning! A new record!

NORMAN. Phil, listen to me kid, you haven't got a chance!

PHIL. *(watching* **SOPHIA***)* I love how she stirs.

NORMAN. That's it. You're talking to her.

PHIL. What? Now?

NORMAN. Yes, now.

PHIL. But I'm late with the Mead report.

NORMAN. Just 'cause we've been friends since childhood and I hired you when absolutely no one would hire a philosophy major, is no reason to assume that I will not fire you right now!

PHIL. What would I say?

NORMAN. What does it matter? I just need you to say "hello" so that she can reject you, so you can fall into a lovesick depression, swear off women, and get back to work. Look, I chat with her every day. She's an okay person – perhaps a little self-absorbed, but approachable. So do it.

PHIL. Do what?

NORMAN. Say "hello" to her.

PHIL. I can't.

NORMAN. Why not?

PHIL. I'm too nice.

NORMAN. Go make coffee.

PHIL. What?

NORMAN. You're my assistant – make me coffee.

PHIL. That's not in my job description –.

NORMAN. If there isn't coffee on my desk in two minutes, you're fired.

PHIL. Okay. Okay. I'm going to do it. I'm going to say "hello" to the most beautiful woman in Manhattan. And then, I'm going to marry her –

NORMAN. One step at a time. She's resting. Now's your chance.

*(***PHIL** *hits his mouth with a heavy dose of breath spray.)*

PHIL. *(to himself)* Okay, calm. Keep calm…I am a rock. I have an island. A calm rock.

*(***PHIL** *nonchalantly approaches* **SOPHIA**. *She stirs her tea – off in her own little world.* **PHIL** *acts as though he's looking for something. Finally, he speaks.)*

PHIL. Hi.

(She doesn't respond.)

PHIL. *(nervous)* It's Phil from accounting…*(no response)* Isn't that something, I also prefer green tea with Sweet and Low…*(awkward beat)* Great name…I mean I love it when a product says what it is – It's sweet and yet it's also low…like…Animal Crackers, it's all there in the name.

*(***SOPHIA** *sips her hot tea not paying the slightest attention to him.* **PHIL** *looks to* **NORMAN** *for support.* **NORMAN** *waves him on.)*

PHIL. Did I mention that I'm from accounting? Yes, I'm an accountant. That's right. Matter of fact I'm head of accounting…Yep, that's my…wing…

(Nothing from **SOPHIA**, *she simply sips her tea.)*

PHIL. …Okay you got me. I'm not an accountant; I'm an accountant's assistant. I was a philosophy major in college – I know women find that a big turn off. I once told a blind date I majored in philosophy – she changed her identity so I wouldn't call her anymore. At least I didn't major in English – she probably would've faked her own death.

(Still nothing from her.)

PHIL. So…what are your thoughts on Hitler and existentialism?

*(***SOPHIA** *lets out a little sigh and exits.)*

PHIL. Well, nice talking to you – Same time tomorrow?

*(***PHIL** *runs back over to* **NORMAN**.*)*

NORMAN. How did it go?

PHIL. What was I thinking? If I've told you once I've told you a million times, Norm, never try to talk to women. It's always better to admire them from a distance – tomorrow I'm breaking it off with her.

NORMAN. What did I tell you –.

PHIL. I've been rejected before but never like this. On rare occasions I've met women who were less than impressed. You know the type, you say "hello" and the way she says "hello" back lets you know that you're a lifeless schmuck who hasn't got a chance. Women must take classes from Lee Strasberg to get all of that subtext into a simple "hello." But this…this…secretary – won't even look at me.

NORMAN. I told you, she's a little self-absorbed.

PHIL. Self-absorbed? She looked straight through me!

NORMAN. Phil, I didn't want to say this but the rumor around the office is that she has –

PHIL. Oh God, not herpes again.

NORMAN. No…she has a glass eye.

PHIL. A what?

NORMAN. A glass eye. A fake eye.

PHIL. You gotta be kidding. Which?

NORMAN. The receptionist thinks it's the right.

PHIL. How do you know?

NORMAN. Some chump in human resources was teasing her about it.

PHIL. Oh my God! That explains everything. I was standing to her right! She never saw me. Wow, for a microsecond I thought I was a loser.

*(***SOPHIA** *steps up to the coffee station and makes another round of coffee.)*

NORMAN. She's back.

PHIL. And she has a glass eye. Isn't that wonderful!

*(***SOPHIA** *accidentally knocks over a cup of coffee.)*

SOPHIA. Oh no.

(She grabs for the paper towels but has no depth perception.)

PHIL. It's a sign! This is the *in* I was hoping for. You gotta introduce me. That's how most office romances start, with an innocent introduction in the break room. But don't tell her I'm your assistant. Tell her I'm – a consultant. Wait, executive consultant!

NORMAN. If I do this will you go back to work?

PHIL. You do this and I'm all over the Mead report.

NORMAN. Her back's turned, let's go.

PHIL. No, not so fast. We need a plan. How about if we just happen to be passing and then you say, "Oh, Sophia, let me introduce you to Phil, my boss."

NORMAN. But I'm your boss.

PHIL. Okay, we'll compromise, senior executive consultant. And I'll say, "Oh, it's nice to meet you." And you'll say something like, "You two have lots of commonalities." What do we have in common?

NORMAN. Not philosophy.

PHIL. How do you know, she might be a Kierkegaard Groupie – Wait! That's right – I read in "It's All My Fault" – the existentialist newsletter – there's a Mensa square dance at the Armory next weekend. We could double date.

NORMAN. Whatever you do, don't invite her to dance.

PHIL. Why not?

NORMAN. Cause you can't dance.

PHIL. Can't dance. Can't dance! I'll have you know I took first place in the disco dance-off at the last Philosopher's Ball.

NORMAN. There are so many things wrong with that statement I don't know where to begin.

*(***NORMAN** *starts towards* **SOPHIA**.*)*

PHIL. Wait wait wait.

*(***PHIL** *again hits his mouth with breath spray. He sprays his armpits and crotch too.)*

*(***NORMAN** *crosses to* **SOPHIA**.*)*

NORMAN. Hi, Sophia.

SOPHIA. Hey, Norm.

NORMAN. Need a hand?

SOPHIA. Oh thanks.

*(***NORMAN** *helps* **SOPHIA** *clean up the mess.)*

*(***PHIL** *walks up.)*

PHIL. *(unnatural – making up a topic)* …Oh hello, Norm. I just thought I'd get some green tea. There it is.

SOPHIA. *(to* **NORMAN***)* We're out of paper towels.

NORMAN. I'll have my *assistant* get some. You okay?

SOPHIA. I'm fine…No, I'm not. I'm having a horrible day. Four years at Vassar and what do I do? Get coffee.

PHIL. *(whispering to* **NORMAN***)* Left, I have to be on the left.

SOPHIA. Everyone says it's a mistake dating your boss but did I listen?

NORMAN. You're dating Vice President Marley?

SOPHIA. Yeah. And he's the same at lunch. I ordered lunch in yesterday. I thought, you know, maybe we could be alone for a moment. What does he do? You guessed it, "Sweetheart, be a darling and get me some decaf."

PHIL. I hate coffee. It makes me diuretic.

SOPHIA. I promised myself that I'd never get involved with anyone at work.

PHIL. I'm thinking of quitting.

SOPHIA. And get this; he dropped *the hint* the other day. The "M" word. He was talking about the pending possible merger with Mead Corporation and he compared

it to "a marriage." And he emphasized "marriage" and met my gaze for a moment. Then this morning I saw a huge diamond ring in his desk drawer.

NORMAN. Wow, he's serious.

SOPHIA. But I'm not so sure. He's been married twice before. But he does have a corner office and a Porsche.

NORMAN. *(throwing this to* **NORMAN***)* A Porsche, imagine that.

SOPHIA. Mother says all I date are losers.

PHIL. I have a mother.

SOPHIA. "You can fall in love with a rich man just as easily as a poor one." I suppose she's right. I mean money is important, but I can't help but think that I'm just being shallow. God, I wish I could meet the right man.

*(***PHIL** *clears his throat.)*

NORMAN. Oh, Sophia, I want you to meet Phil, my assistant –

PHIL. Senior executive management assistant.

NORMAN. I think you might have a lot in common.

SOPHIA. *(not paying attention)* Oh, did I tell you? Mom found me an apartment –

NORMAN. We were childhood friends –

SOPHIA. A horrible basement studio with no windows. It's a cave, but at least I can afford it.

NORMAN. We went to college together.

SOPHIA. Excuse me?

NORMAN. Phil and I.

SOPHIA. Who?

NORMAN. Phil. My assistant.

PHIL. Senior executive assistant in charge of accounting. That's my wing.

*(***SOPHIA** *turns and looks right through* **PHIL***.)*

SOPHIA. What's going on?

NORMAN. Nothing, I just thought you two should meet.

PHIL. Because we have tons of commonalities.

*(***PHIL** *offers his hand.* **SOPHIA** *stares blankly through him.)*

SOPHIA. …Is this a joke?

NORMAN. No, I just –.

SOPHIA. What do you want me to meet? Dead air? The coffee machine?

NORMAN. No, I just thought you and Phil should –.

SOPHIA. Who's Phil?

NORMAN. The person standing beside me.

SOPHIA. Norm, this isn't funny.

PHIL. Are you sure it's the right; maybe it's the left?

SOPHIA. I spill my heart out and what do you do, introduce me to a coffee machine. Ha ha – very funny.

NORMAN. Sophia, wait, it's no joke. I really want you to meet Phil.

*(***SOPHIA** *sees nothing.)*

SOPHIA. Everyone in this office is a sicko. I expect that from the jerk in human resources but not from you, Norm.

*(***SOPHIA** *exits. Beat.)*

NORMAN. What just happened?

PHIL. I told you – she acts as if I don't exist!

NORMAN. What've you done? You've been gawking at her with your stupid opera glasses haven't you! Great, I've introduced my boss's secretary to the office pervert. I've never been so humiliated.

*(***PHIL** *follows* **NORMAN** *back over to the cubicle.)*

PHIL. You're humiliated? She thought I was a coffee machine!

NORMAN. Phil, these are the last words on the subject. Are you listening? Women like that aren't interested in nice guys. You haven't got a chance.

PHIL. She's a self-absorbed paper-pusher with a glass eye! If I can't make it with her then who the hell can I make it with?!

NORMAN. Marybeth in accounts receivable.

PHIL. Who?

NORMAN. Marybeth – the girl with the crutches. I introduced you to her last week.

PHIL. I talked to someone on crutches?

NORMAN. You met her at the office Christmas party.

PHIL. Norm, if I talked to someone on crutches I'd've remembered.

NORMAN. We talked about her physical therapy and how after it's over she'll have only a slight limp. You talked for, like, fifteen minutes – the shy girl with the southern accent.

PHIL. I have no memory of her.

NORMAN. I can set you up.

PHIL. You want to set me up with a shy southern girl with a limp?

NORMAN. She just broke up with her physical therapist. She told me she thought you were nice.

PHIL. Great, you've got me a date with Laura from *The Glass Menagerie* – Whoopee!

NORMAN. Phil, you're always biting off more than you can chew – remember when you asked Michelle Oxford to go to the senior prom?

PHIL. She was bulimic and had a low opinion of herself – I thought I had a chance.

NORMAN. She was homecoming queen, head cheerleader, class president and a lesbian –.

PHIL. And bulimic with a low opinion of herself –

NORMAN. When she refused what did you do?

PHIL. *(a little ashamed)* …I followed her home.

NORMAN. You followed her to college! You became a women's studies minor so you could follow her around campus. Phil, this has gotta stop. No means no, and a restraining order means never. But in this case it's even worse. Sophia obviously thinks so little of you that you don't even exist.

PHIL. Fine, it's over. Now if you'll excuse me.

NORMAN. Phil, you're going to find the right person. I swear, someday it'll happen. Now go through whatever depressive stuff you need to go through in order to justify this complete humiliation and get back to work.

*(***NORMAN** *exits.)*

PHIL. *(to the audience)* I know what you're thinking. The philosopher Descartes, right? Of course you are. In *Discourse on the Method*, 1637, Descartes wrote "Cogito ergo sum." "I think therefore I exist." But what good is existence if people look right through you? Perhaps the stoic philosophers were right – once you reconcile yourself to the imperfectability of life you become less bitter, less prone to self-pity and more likely to date repressed Tennessee William's characters.

*(***NORMAN** *enters.)*

NORMAN. Are you happy with yourself? I just saw Sophia leave. Apparently she was so upset by what you did she went home.

PHIL. What did I do?

*(***V.P. MARLEY** *enters with a file. He has a hands-free Bluetooth cell phone receiver embedded in his ear.)*

V.P. MARLEY. What's going on here?

NORMAN. Vice President Marley!

V.P. MARLEY. Who are you?

NORMAN. Me sir? I'm an accountant. I'm working on the Mead report.

V.P. MARLEY. How's it coming?

NORMAN. Practically almost done, sir. Phil and I are on top of it.

V.P. MARLEY. Phil? Who's Phil?

NORMAN. My assistant.

V.P. MARLEY. Never heard of him –

(He places a finger on his Bluetooth.)

V.P. MARLEY. *(into his ear cell phone receiver)* Hello?…No. Cancel my tennis lesson, get me some coffee and bring my Porsche around. By the way, have you been in my office?…Well?

NORMAN. Oh, you're talking to me. Of course not, I'd never go near your office, sir.

V.P. MARLEY. It must've been Sophia then. She went home. Apparently some jerk introduced her to a coffee machine as a practical joke.

NORMAN. Who would do such a thing?

V.P. MARLEY. Don't know but if I find out he's fired.

NORMAN. Couldn't agree more, sir.

V.P. MARLEY. *(into his earpiece)* No!

NORMAN. No?

V.P. MARLEY. *(into his earpiece)* …No, I said cancel the tennis lesson. *(to* **NORMAN***)* She must've accidentally taken the wrong file off my desk. So, call a messenger, have him take this file to her apartment and bring back the one she took by mistake, okay?…Okay?!

NORMAN. *(still confused as to whom* **MARLEY** *is addressing)* Oh! Me. Right. I'll do it right away.

*(***V.P. MARLEY** *hands* **NORMAN** *a file and a piece of paper with an address on it.)*

NORMAN. *(to* **PHIL***)* Get a messenger up here right away.

*(***PHIL** *dials.)*

V.P. MARLEY. I've also looked over the preliminary report concerning the merger.

NORMAN. I thought you'd be pleased sir.

V.P. MARLEY. It's crap.

NORMAN. That's what I meant.

V.P. MARLEY. Matter of fact this is the crappiest report I've ever read.

NORMAN. I couldn't agree more, sir.

PHIL. *(on phone)* We need a messenger on the tenth floor. When?

NORMAN. Now!

PHIL. *(on phone)* Now!

*(***PHIL** *hangs up.)*

V.P. MARLEY. And to top it off there's a love letter addressed to the "Miss Sweet and Low Lady" signed, "You know who" stuck inside. I think someone's forgot my regulation concerning office romances.

NORMAN. I'll send out an office wide e-mail immediately reminding everyone of your policy.

V.P. MARLEY. What's our company motto?

NORMAN. "Accountability and rock-solid ethical standards give us our competitive edge."

V.P. MARLEY. Whatever you do never ever forget that…ah… ah…

NORMAN. Norman, sir.

V.P. MARLEY. Now make these numbers work. Feel free to work all night if you have to. Final report on my desk noon tomorrow. And if you find out who this practical joker is let me know.

NORMAN. I'm on top of it, sir.

V.P. MARLEY. *(into his earpiece)* No, I said cancel my tennis lesson…And bring me some coffee!

*(***V.P. MARLEY** *exits.)*

NORMAN. *(calling after)* No slip-ups. Noon on the nose, sir, no later!

*(***NORMAN** *waits for* **V.P. MARLEY** *to get out of sight and whacks* **PHIL**.*)*

NORMAN. See what you did! I'm on his radar now!

PHIL. Radar?

NORMAN. Rule one when working in an office – stay under the radar. Gotta do damage control. Get on the report. Make the numbers work, I don't care how – just do it. And one more screw up, one slight infraction, if you so much as look at a female in this office, you'll be where all philosophy majors are.

PHIL. Searching for truth?

NORMAN. Unemployed!

*(***NORMAN** *runs out.)*

PHIL. *(to the audience)* I know what you're thinking, where is Kierkegaard when you need him? Am I right?… Kierkegaard…The Danish philosopher. 1813 – 1855. Before Sartre, Kierkegaard said that we have choices – That the most fundamental choice is between existence and non-existence. That the moment we make a choice is the moment we begin to exist.

*(***PHIL** *picks up the sheet of paper with* **SOPHIA***'s address.)*

PHIL. 69 West 77th Street, lower level, apartment B. *(to the audience)* I know, don't do it. It'll only end in disaster. I'll get fired. My heart'll be broken. I'll lose my best friend. But, unlike you, who are passively sitting in the dark doing nothing, I choose to exist.

(He dials his phone.)

PHIL. *(on phone)* It's Phil –.…Phil in accounting. Cancel the messenger.

*(***PHIL** *hangs up.)*

PHIL. *(to the audience)* It's time that the nice guys of the world let the above average looking women of the world know that we exist! Cogito ergo Zoom!

(He sprays his breath, underarms, and then grabs the address and envelope and exits.)

(Lights up on **SOPHIA***'s one room basement apartment. She enters – It hasn't been a good day. She blows her nose and sighs. The phone rings.)*

SOPHIA. *(on phone)* Hi Mom…How did I know it was you? It's always you…Let me take off my coat and I'll call you back…No he didn't propose today…Mom, I just walked in, I'm cold and tired and…something stinks.… Yes. I took out the trash…Because I always take out the trash before I leave in the morning…Look, Mom, I'll call you back in five…Yes, promise.

(She grabs a bag of trash from under the sink and opens the front door. There stands **PHIL** *with the file and a gorgeous bouquet of flowers. He jumps.)*

PHIL. Oh hi! It's Phil from accounting. Sorry, didn't mean to startle me – I mean, you – I mean, you startled me.

(Totally ignoring him, **SOPHIA** *walks right by him and drops the trash in a garbage can in the hallway.)*

PHIL. We met in the break room today…flowers? They're for me – I mean for me from you.

*(***SOPHIA** *walks back in and slams the door in his face.)*

PHIL. *(calling through the door)* Did anyone ever tell you that you're not a nice person?! As a matter of fact you may be one of the biggest bitc – Not nice person's I've ever met!

*(***SOPHIA** *realizes that she forgot an empty bottle. She grabs it and heads back to the door.)*

PHIL. *(calling through the door)* Everyone in the office says that you're a self important, self-centered, self-absorbed and – !

*(***SOPHIA** *opens the door. They are face to face.)*

PHIL. *(suddenly sweet)* Hi! It's Phil from accounting. We met in the break room today. You might've accidentally taken the wrong file off Mr. Marley's desk –.

(While he is talking **SOPHIA** *again walks right by him, dumps the bottle in the garbage, walks back into her apartment, and slams the door in his face.)*

PHIL. *(screaming through the door)* You're not a human being!

(During the following **SOPHIA** *sits on the foldout couch and begins to cry.)*

PHIL. *(screaming through the door)* You're a monster! A horrible narcissistic she-devil with a glass eye! And here are your flowers. I am destroying your flowers! *(muffled sounds as* **PHIL** *struggles to obliterate the bouquet)* There! And just so you know, you haven't done any damage to

my self-respect! I may never date again, not even Marybeth the quiet girl with the slight limp in accounts receivable, but my self-respect is intact! Do you hear me, totally intact!

*(***SOPHIA** *gently cries. Beat.)*

PHIL. *(talking through the door)* Sophia? *(no response)* Are you crying? *(no response)* Hey, look maybe we didn't get off on the right foot. You know, what you did in the break room today wasn't, you gotta admit, very nice. *(still no response.)* Sophia? I'm coming in…

*(***PHIL** *nudges open the door. He holds the file and a totally annihilated bouquet of flowers. There are even twisted bits of flower remnants on his coat left over from his vicious attack. He finds* **SOPHIA** *sitting on the couch quietly sniffling.)*

PHIL. Your flowers. Ah…They were damaged in transit.

(The phone rings. **SOPHIA** *answers.)*

SOPHIA. *(on phone)* Mom, it hasn't been five minutes. …No it's been three minutes. I'll call in two minutes.

*(***SOPHIA** *hangs up. Upset, she buries her head in her hands.* **PHIL** *slowly enters and sits down beside her on the foldout couch.)*

PHIL. Look, I know life is tough. Relationships are difficult. But you don't want Vice President Marley. He's been married before. Both nasty divorces – rumor is, one ended in a duel. Sophia, I know I'm not in your league but if you'll just give me a chance. Or even, maybe, a fleeting glance…Sophia? Hello…Earth to Sophia…

(He waves his hand in front of her face. She blows her nose.)

PHIL. Helloooo. It's Phil from accounting…Sophia? *(nothing from her)* Okay, this is kinda freaky.

(Beat. He sticks his thumbs in his ears and wiggles his hands)

PHIL. *(singsong)* La La La La La La!

(Still nothing. He thinks for a moment. Then shoots her the bird.)

PHIL. I'm shooting you the bird. Right in your face. … You really can't see me can you? But I exist. Descartes said, I think therefore I exist. So I exist…because I am thinking…or am I just thinking that I'm thinking. Sophia, I beg you to tell me that you can hear and see me – Wait – if you can't see me, can you see this!?

(He picks up a pen off the coffee table and holds it in front of her face.)

PHIL. I'm floating. I'm a pen and I'm floating. *(She sees nothing.)* Nothing. I don't exist and so nothing I touch exists.

*(***SOPHIA** *lets out a little sigh.)*

SOPHIA. *(to herself)* Oh well, another evening alone.

(She exits to the bathroom.)

PHIL. *(to the audience)* I know what you're thinking. First, when Descartes said, "I think therefore I exist" he only claimed his own existence — he didn't prove the existence of others. Secondly, it's important to remember that I'm really really freaked out right now! Okay, okay calm down. Something's happened. Perhaps I've entered some kind of hyperspace or dualistic reality. Or maybe there's only one reality, but two ways of perceiving it. I mean, there are colors we can't perceive and sounds we can't hear so why can't there be people we can't see? Take Marybeth in receiving – Norm claims I had a fifteen-minute conversation with her, yet I remember none of it, so technically does she exist?

*(***SOPHIA** *steps from the bathroom. She wears an eye patch and holds her glass eye –* **PHIL** *is amazed. She puts the glass eye in a special box and then she reaches into her bra and pulls out falsies –* **PHIL** *is even more amazed. The phone rings.)*

SOPHIA. *(on phone)* …Yes Mom. I'm fine… I just needed

to take my eye out and get comfortable…what?… No, I've never told him about my eye. …Yes, I know that's a real turn off to men.

PHIL. I don't find it a turn off at all.

SOPHIA. *(on phone)* No, I left work early…didn't feel well.

PHIL. *(inspecting the glass eye)* Wow.

SOPHIA. *(on phone)* …Oh nothing. This guy in accounting, who's usually really nice, played a stupid practical joke on me. He introduced me to a coffee machine. I know everyone thinks I'm a real loser, but that was just out of bounds…

PHIL. You? A loser? My god Sophia, don't you realize you're every nice guy's dream?

SOPHIA. *(on phone)* …Mr. Marley? I like him but I'm not sure…Yes, he makes a lot of money. But when I kiss him I don't feel much. It's like his lips don't exist… Mom, I gotta find someone who would like me for me – eye patch and all.

PHIL. Sophia, when I was a kid, I was really turned on by the girl on the Bacardi rum bottle.

SOPHIA. *(on phone)* Someone who doesn't try to make a move on the first date.

PHIL. I know what you mean; it's always so awkward. It should come naturally and not be…and not be… what's the word I'm looking for?

SOPHIA. *(on phone)* Forced.

PHIL. Exactly!

SOPHIA. *(on phone)* Kids?

PHIL. Lots?

SOPHIA. *(on phone)* Two or three would be nice. But most importantly someone who will treat me with respect.

PHIL. My god, Sophia, that's me! Besides breaking into your apartment and flipping you off, I've always treated you with respect.

SOPHIA. *(on phone)* Yes Mom, I know the rules…okay. One more time. The way to catch a man. One – never admit that I have a glass eye. Two – never admit I think

the best band in all of Rock & Roll history was the Bee Gees. And above all never ever tell him I was a philosophy major in college.

PHIL. Oh, my, god!

SOPHIA. *(on phone)* Mom, it's tough having you living right upstairs from me – Sometimes I feel like you're listening in – wait a minute, Mom, got another call. *(She pushes the flash button.)* Hello…Oh hi…Where are you?…You're kidding. …Oh, not a problem come on down. *(She pushes the flash button.)* Mom, it's him! Who? Him! Vice President Marley!

PHIL. Here?

SOPHIA. Yes, he's here!…Mom, I gotta go. Bye.

*(***SOPHIA** *runs for the bathroom.)*

PHIL. Eye eye eye!

SOPHIA. Oh, right!

(She grabs the glass eye and runs into the bathroom. **PHIL** *heads for the door.)*

PHIL. Sophia. Look, I know you can't see or hear me but I just want to say it's been real. See you at work tomorrow – well you won't *see* me but I'll *see* you.

*(***PHIL** *starts to exit but just as he gets to the door* **V.P. MARLEY** *knocks.)*

PHIL. Oh crap.

(Panicked, he looks for a place to hide.)

V.P. MARLEY. *(calling through the door)* Sophia?

SOPHIA. *(Offstage)* Coming!

*(***PHIL** *runs into the kitchenette and hides just as the door opens.)*

V.P. MARLEY. Your door's open. I'm just going to let myself in.

SOPHIA. *(from the bathroom)* I'll be right out!

*(***V.P. MARLEY** *gets a call)*

V.P. MARLEY. *(responding to earpiece)* Hello! No. I said sell

Amalgamated. Buy Mead…That's right…Yes, I'll hold.

*(***V.P. MARLEY** *looks around the place.)*

V.P. MARLEY. Sweetheart?

SOPHIA. *(from the bathroom)* Yes!

V.P. MARLEY. Did a messenger stop by?

SOPHIA. *(from the bathroom)* A messenger? No.

V.P. MARLEY. You didn't happen to take a file off my desk by any chance?

SOPHIA. *(from the bathroom)* A what?

V.P. MARLEY. There was this file containing some V.I.P. stuff on my desk and suddenly it's missing. *(responding to earpiece)* Yes. I'm still holding.

*(***SOPHIA** *enters sans eyepatch.)*

SOPHIA. Hi.

V.P. MARLEY. Your door was open so I…

SOPHIA. No problem.

V.P. MARLEY. You look…great.

SOPHIA. *(nonchalantly adjusting her eye)* Thanks.

(They kiss.)

V.P. MARLEY. Fetch me a cup of coffee will ya?

SOPHIA. Decaf?

V.P. MARLEY. You read my mind.

*(***SOPHIA** *goes to the kitchenette. In hiding,* **PHIL** *has a nice view of her legs. She's still trying to get her eye seated.* **V.P. MARLEY** *looks around the place.)*

V.P. MARLEY. So, this is your new place.

SOPHIA. Yeah. It'll have to be instant.

V.P. MARLEY. You need more pictures.

SOPHIA. Oh, I've been painting. Can't decide on a color.

V.P. MARLEY. Feels like a cave.

SOPHIA. I know but I think I can make it work.

(She accidentally knocks over a coffee cup, spilling its hot contents on the invisible **PHIL**'s crotch.*)*

SOPHIA. Oh no.

V.P. MARLEY. Problem?

SOPHIA. Just a little mess, got it.

(She grabs a paper towel and cleans. During the following this cleaning includes reaching down right between **PHIL***'s legs – near his crotch.* **PHIL** *is both shocked and thrilled.)*

V.P. MARLEY. Look, Sweetheart, you left the office awfully sudden.

SOPHIA. Yes. I wasn't feeling well.

V.P. MARLEY. I heard there was an event in the break room.

SOPHIA. Oh, that. It was nothing – A practical joke that's all.

V.P. MARLEY. You know I have regulations prohibiting practical jokes.

SOPHIA. It wasn't that big a deal.

V.P. MARLEY. Sophia, I'm a little concerned. When you left the office I thought perhaps there was something else wrong.

SOPHIA. *(nonchalantly trying to get her eye to seat)* Wrong? What could be wrong?

V.P. MARLEY. I know it must be awkward dating your boss. But from the moment you walked in my office, I knew you were something special. You had a sparkle that most worker bees lack.

SOPHIA. Worker bees?

V.P. MARLEY. That's just a term management uses. I just couldn't see someone as pretty as you standing in unemployment lines just because you made a mistake in college.

SOPHIA. Mistake?

V.P. MARLEY. Majoring in philosophy.

SOPHIA. Oh. Right. That mistake.

V.P. MARLEY. As you know Hibarger Corporation, like most companies, have rules prohibiting the hiring of philosophy majors, but I skirted them.

SOPHIA. And I'm grateful.

V.P. MARLEY. I guess what I'm trying to say is, I think it's important that we be honest.

SOPHIA. I agree.

V.P. MARLEY. So, if you took a file off my desk, even by mistake, you'd tell me.

SOPHIA. Of course.

V.P. MARLEY. So what did you do with it?

SOPHIA. With what?

V.P. MARLEY. The file.

SOPHIA. It wasn't me.

V.P. MARLEY. Sophia, honey, you're the only person who went in my office.

SOPHIA. I swear it wasn't me.

V.P. MARLEY. *(responding to earpiece)* That's bull!

SOPHIA. Excuse me.

V.P. MARLEY. *(responding to earpiece)* That's bull! Don't tell me you can't buy Mead…Yes, I'll hold. *(to* **SOPHIA***)* Sorry business.

SOPHIA. Of course. I understand.

V.P. MARLEY. Come. Sit.

(He sits on the foldout couch.)

SOPHIA. Sure.

(She joins him.)

V.P. MARLEY. Just want to say I've never met anyone like you. I know we haven't been dating for a long time but they've been good dates. And except for that time you launched into that twenty-minute diatribe about Hitler and existentialism we clicked. And as you know I'm a take action sorta guy. That's why I'm where I am and who I am. That's why I earn well over a million a year. Plus perks. Lots of perks – like the condo in Cancun and the corporate getaway in Barbados.

(The phone rings.)

SOPHIA. *(on the phone)* Yes, Mom? *(She turns away so he can't quite hear.)* …Yes, it's in and adjusted. Goodbye.

(She hangs up.)

V.P. MARLEY. What's "in?"

SOPHIA. Excuse me?

V.P. MARLEY. You said it's "in" and "adjusted."

SOPHIA. Oh, that. I'm…I'm cooking a turkey for Mother. It's *in* the oven and the oven is *adjusted.*

V.P. MARLEY. You know, sweetheart, when two companies… amalgamate they really need to get to know each other. You know, check each other out. And as you know, next week my divorce is final. So I was thinking that maybe you and I could perhaps enter into a formal agreement. You know, share stock options.

(The phone rings. **SOPHIA** *picks up the receiver and hangs up.)*

SOPHIA. Look, Richard –.

V.P. MARLEY. Want me to say it, okay; I'm in love with you.

SOPHIA. And I have strong feelings for you –.

V.P. MARLEY. I'll prove it.

SOPHIA. Prove what?

V.P. MARLEY. I'll prove how I feel.

(He gets down on one knee.)

V.P. MARLEY. Sophia, sweetheart, what I'm trying to say is… *(responding to earpiece)* Shut up!

SOPHIA. Excuse me?

V.P. MARLEY. *(responding to earpiece)* Shut up! He didn't… Okay we gotta do an end run. Call Frankie in the London office and let him know what's going on… Can't talk right now, I'm proposing. I'll call you back in a minute.

(He hangs up.)

V.P. MARLEY. Where was I? Oh, that's right. *(He kneels again.)* Sweetheart. I want to make you the happiest woman in

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