ACT I

Scene 0

Audience outside the theater are able to peruse Olivia's press information, Instagram photos, Facebook wall, and etc.

Scene 1

(Logan sits in front of his computer with a box of photos and letters next to him. He is talking to Candie over Skype, because he has hired her as a life assistance provider.)

LOGAN: Did you see that one? Okay. Go to the next page. Page 3. And scroll down to the third row of pictures. The fourth thumbnail. That's her. That's my favorite picture of her.

CANDIE: She looks a little bit skinny to me. A sad set of boobs.

LOGAN: Are you kidding? She's perfect. I bet if Leonardo da Vinci got out the tape measure for a painting or a sculpture, he would just ... he would be like, "Mona Lisa, get your beaver face back in the closet." And then Olivia's face would be in the Louvre. (He realizes he can do this with a little digital manipulation.) I am going to blow this up and print it out.

CANDIE: So you're a connoisseur of Renaissance painting, then, as well as opera and classical music?

LOGAN: I ... sure. Uh huh.

CANDIE: I see. And what do you do for a living?

LOGAN: I thought you were an advice-giver, not a third-degree-er.

CANDIE: I'm sorry. I like to get to know my life advancement and social balance advising clients. After assessment, I often find that I can do more meaningful work in my other capacities, such as confidence and awareness visualization coach, symbiopsychocybersexualtalk therapy, and tarot readings. But we can take things slowly, of course. We will move at your pace.

LOGAN: I am an independent contractor.

CANDIE: Wonderful. And what exactly do you need my advice on? Remember, while your first half hour is free, I do begin charging the next half hour, even if you are a first-time client. Would you like to begin posing your questions?

LOGAN: Well, how am I supposed to know that you give good advice?

CANDIE: There are a number of testimonials on my website.

LOGAN: You could have made those up yourself.

CANDIE: Well, how would you like to resolve this issue?

LOGAN: (Thinks for a minute.) If you were a mountain lion, and you saw a gazelle and a bear, which one would you try to attack for food?

CANDIE: The gazelle. You should always go for the more ambitious. Plurs, bear meat is fatty and tough.

LOGAN: Steak or chicken?

CANDIE: Steak at a restaurant. Chicken at home.

LOGAN: Dead by fire or death by drowning?

CANDIE: Neither. I keep a cyanide tablet hidden inside my locket at all times.

LOGAN: That's really smart.

CANDIE: I know. I can get to it with my teeth if my hands are tied up. Now. Do you feel prepared to continue with your session now?

LOGAN: Yes. I do.

CANDIE: Wonderful. What can I help you with?

LOGAN: So you saw her, right?

CANDIE: Yes. You had many pictures and links to share with me.

LOGAN: Okay. Now get this. She's my neighbor.

CANDIE: Uh huh.

LOGAN: She's like, for real famous, and she's my neighbor. She lives right above me. And guess what? She's my friend now.

CANDIE: And you want some guidance to turn the friendship into a relationship.

LOGAN: Well, it's already a relationship. I mean, a friendship IS a relationship, right?

CANDIE: That's correct.

LOGAN: Okay. Right. So what do I do?

CANDIE: About what?

LOGAN: About my friend!

CANDIE: Is she ... uh ... Well. (A clearing of throats, of sorts). What kind of attention or need is your friend demanding of you?

LOGAN: What should I do if she comes over again? (Beat.) She came over today. To my house. I didn't know where to put her!

CANDIE: ... Well. How big is she? Life size? Or pocket friendly?

LOGAN: Life size! Because, I mean, she was at my door! Like, really really her. And she wasn't, like, a little person or — or a pre-adolescent. I didn't know where she wanted to sit or what she wanted to drink, or where I should sit or what to say or ... or what to do. Oh my God. She totally thinks I'm a D-O-L-T.

CANDIE: I get the sense that you don't have company very often, that she might be the first person to visit you in months. Am I right in thinking this?

LOGAN: (Beat.) I have a lot of friends.

CANDIE: I'm sure you do, Mr. Blake. Can I call you Logan? I like to be on a first-name basis with my patients. You can call me Constance.

LOGAN: Call me whatever. She brought me things. Her things. (He lifts up a box full of papers and notebooks and diaries.) She wants me to put them on the Internet for her on a secure site that no one can read. I'm supposed to scan things, but I'm not supposed to read. She said she doesn't trust diaries anymore because anyone can read them. But if she burns them, she'll lose them forever.

CANDIE: What is the nature of your relationship with this woman again?

LOGAN: She's my neighbor. We met on the elevator.

CANDIE: And?

LOGAN: And she sings into my vents.

CANDIE: Huh. So what is it about her then? How has she ... what's the phrase? ... grabbed your goat.

LOGAN: She has the most incredible voice. Like, every morning, at eight, she'll wake up, and she'll start singing. Scales, first. Just scales. Really softly. And then, like, half an hour later or something, she'll come back, and she'll just, burst into song. Like, her voice will explode into my bathroom.

CANDIE: From those vents.

LOGAN: Yeah. And the first time I saw her, on the elevator, she was humming the song, and then I knew it was her. Standing next to me. And she looked completely different from how I thought she looked, cuz I thought she would look more like a bird or a peacock, but she doesn't. She looks perfect.

CANDIE: And is she aware? That you listen?

LOGAN: Sometimes I think she's singing just for me. (Beat.) But if I had to speak completely linearly and not at all co-centrically, then I would have to say that, no, she does not know that I am listening. (Beat.) But I love the way she sings for me.

CANDIE: And you want to know what to do, when she comes over?

LOGAN: I just ... I ... don't have guests very often.

CANDIE: And you don't get invited as a guest very often either, do you?

LOGAN: I'm invited to stuff. All kinds of stuff. I got an invitation to a Midnight Tea Party. I mean, it's online. But so what? I wouldn't go out to someone else's house anyway.

CANDIE: Why not?

LOGAN: It's like, gross? And not fun. And I just wouldn't do it.

CANDIE: Okay. That's fine. You're entitled to your likes and dislikes. It does seem to me that you have some unwarranted anxiety to release though, and then you will be able to see that you can be exactly who you were born to be, regardless of —

LOGAN: Okay. But what do I say? What should I do?

CANDIE: Well...perhaps you could try some of the standard stock phrases. Such as "How is your day?" "It's so good to see you again." or "Come in. Don't worry about your shoes."

LOGAN: Uh huh. Okay.

CANDIE: Maybe you could try watching some movies. Do you like movies?

LOGAN: Yeah.

CANDIE: Look at what they say in the movies. Take some notes.

LOGAN: "Insert a funny movie line."

CANDIE: Yeah. Like that. Nice job. We're nearing the end of our hour now, but we can continue, if you would like to learn some mantras for anxiety control?

LOGAN: It's almost eleven. That's when she sings.

CANDIE: I see. Well, then. I like to finish my advising sessions with a brief mantra development exercise. Work with me to complete the sentences. "When I feel anxious, I like to ..."

LOGAN: Rip apart lines of code and then put them back together again.

CANDIE: "Now, instead of doing this, I will take deep breaths, find my center, and gravitate to my source of energy and support." Close your eyes and do this with me now. Take three deep breaths.

LOGAN: (Takes three quick sharp breaths.)

CANDIE: Deeper. You really need to feel the oxygen go to your brain.

LOGAN: (Takes three longer breaths.)

CANDIE: That's good. Now, focus your mind on your heart center. Channel yourself to the place you feel most safe and secure. What do you see there? What color is the flame of your inner chakra of light?

LOGAN: I see purple. No, lavendar. A lavendar iguana.

CANDIE: Oh. A spirit animal. How wonderful. Let your spiritual animal be your guide next time you encounter the dark pit of anxiety, the boiling vat of uncertainty. Take deep breaths and focus your energy onto your purple iguana. And let him be your guide.

LOGAN: Lavendar.

CANDIE: Lavendar. (Beat.) All right then. Our time is up. Your credit card will be charged within the next business day, and you will receive an email with the date and time of your next appointment. Don't forget to cancel with 48 hours to avoid a fee. And remember, (insert her slogan) when life is a lemon, it's up to you to find the -ade. Other services offered include confidence and awareness visualization coaching, symbiopsychocybersexualtalk therapy, and tarot readings. Accuracy not guaranteed. See you next week!

LOGAN: Bye! I —

CANDIE: (Hangs up.)

LOGAN: — enjoyed talking to you...

LOGAN: A lavendar iguana. A lavendar iguana who sits on my heart. And he'll lead me to you. (Picks up picture of Olivia.)

(Behind him, her singing begins to float in through the vents. He crouches closer to listen.)

End of Scene 1

Scene 2

(EVAN and OLIVIA’s bedroom. Olivia undresses and gets ready for bed, rehearsing a song as she does so. She moves out of the bathroom and into the living room, putting her earrings away. As she rests her hand on the jewelry box, she seems to grow lost in thought. Then Evan enters. He's just returned from a late evening of work. Holy shit. I don't know what he does for a job anymore.)

EVAN: You know what really gets me about cupcakes though? There's no good way of holding onto them. You always look like some continental prat. They're like, finger food, except finger cake, and they're just not very good.

OLIVIA: We don't have to have cupcakes. Relax.

EVAN: I just want to make sure you never think another absurd thought about cupcakes ever again. (Kisses her.) Hello.

OLIVIA: Hi. How are you?

EVAN: Good. Looks like our ad campaign is about ready to roll out, and I'll have just enough time off to focus on the wedding and the concert.

OLIVIA: That's good.

EVAN: How was your day? Did you get the invitations out?

OLIVIA: Um. No, actually. I was running back and forth all day between my students and my rehearsals. So I just — ran out of time. I had breakfast with Beth today though. She said she'd be thrilled to make our cake. So. Your cupcake nightmares are over.

EVAN: That's awesome. We'll have awesome cake.

OLIVIA: I'm sorry about the invitations.

EVAN: Oh, don't worry about it. I could drop them off tomorrow.

OLIVIA: You don't have to. I'll get them out.

EVAN: (Laughs at her sincerity.) It's okay. Don't worry about it. (Evan gets a drink and get ready for bed.) Nightcap?

OLIVIA: No thanks.

(Evan returns with a drink in hand.)

EVAN: What's wrong? You seem kind of down. Did your rehearsal not go well? (Comes by and rubs her shoulders.)

OLIVIA: No, it was fine. I'm making progress with the aria.

EVAN: Oh good. What's wrong then?

OLIVIA: Nothing. I'm just — Long day.

EVAN: Oh. Tell me about it. (Kisses her along her neck.)

OLIVIA: (Artfully disentangles herself.) I think I'm just going to go sleep. I'm tired. (She gets into bed.)

EVAN: Okay. (Shrugs it off and finishes his drink, puts some things away.) Hey. When we’re married, do you think we should get our initials carved into some kind of rubber stamp? (Moves away from her and does some other stuff.) We could get fabric paint and glassware paint. That seems like the easiest way to monogram all our dishtowels and wine glasses, right? We should have our own seal, you know. All the properly married people do.

OLIVIA: (A small laugh.) That's an idea.

EVAN: It's a great idea.

OLIVIA: If you say so.

EVAN: Maybe we should take a trip. Get away for a while. I'd like a break, too, after I get this project done.

OLIVIA: We're already taking a honeymoon.

EVAN: Just a small trip. A day trip. I feel like I almost need to catch up with you. (Beat.) We could go back to Port Townsend. Hang out on that little beach behind the inn again.

OLIVIA: You hated Port Townsend.

EVAN: And you found dusty flea markets and lopsided pottery unequivocally charming. I’ll never know why.

OLIVIA: I liked the ocean.

(Evan gets into bed, too. Olivia watches him get settled in.)

OLIVIA: Sometimes I feel like it doesn't matter where you go. You'll never completely be free.

EVAN: But it's still a vacation, right?

OLIVIA: Yeah. I guess so. (Beat.) One of my student is tone deaf. You know, the little six year old girl? I play her three ascending notes and she thinks they're descending. Today, we had the kids' recital with all the other classes, and she sang louder than anyone. Most of the kids are a little shy, but she loved it. She could barely stand still she was so excited.

EVAN: She was singing from her heart. Just like you.

OLIVIA: Do I? I think I sing from my stomach now.

EVAN: (Thinks about it.) Diaphragm. It's your diaphragm.

OLIVIA: No. I think it's my stomach. That's where all the tension is before I get on stage. And then, when I start singing, everything melts away starting from my stomach. And when I'm not singing, all I want to do is fill myself with food. I ate three hot dogs today.

EVAN: Hot dogs? You? Ms. Gluten Free Rainy Day Vegetarian?

OLIVIA: Don't judge me. They smelled so good. You wouldn't believe how good they smelled.

EVAN: Did you get toppings. You got toppings, right?

OLIVIA: Everything I could.

EVAN: Good. I'm happy for you. I think everyone should be free to enjoy their hot dogs. The only person holding you back was you.

OLIVIA: Evan.

EVAN: What?

OLIVIA: Nothing. (Beat.) I love you.

EVAN: I love you, too. (Kisses her hand.) We're going to be so great together. Oh, that reminds me. The arts editor at City Scope agreed to cover the concert. Do you want to look at your schedule tomorrow and see when you can do an interview?

OLIVIA: Sure. I'll look at it tomorrow.

EVAN: You should post the new recording onto the web site too. Do you want me to do it?

OLIVIA: No. I'll do it. Tomorrow.

EVAN: Okay. Good night. Port Townsend. I'll look at my schedule and we'll take trip, okay?

OLIVIA: Okay. That sounds nice.

(Evan kisses her.)

EVAN: Sweet dreams.

OLIVIA: Good night.

(Lights off until the middle of the night. Lights up on Olivia as she sits up in bed and ponders Evan’s sleeping form. She kisses his forehead and tucks the blanket over his shoulders. Then she gets up and walks around the room. She takes out a gun out of a drawer and a sheet of paper and a pen. She pauses a long time over the note she is writing, but then she doesn't write very much. Finally, she simply sets the paper down and curls up in a fetal position on the floor. It takes a while for her to press the trigger, but she does it, she puts that fucking bullet inside her brain. The sound of it jolts Evan awake.)

End of Scene 2.

Scene 3

(While looking at pictures of him and Olivia together online, Evan is transported back to a memory of them on the beach in Port Townsend. Olivia is seated on the stage. Evan stands behind her, watching her a moment before walking over.)

OLIVIA: (Looking up.) Took you long enough.

EVAN: You didn't leave a note. I had to ask the front desk if they saw you.

OLIVIA: I left a note. By the lamp.

EVAN: Oh. I guess I missed it. How long have you been out here?

OLIVIA: Not long. Just since the sun started creeping up. It's so beautiful here. It's like we're sitting at the edge of the world.

EVAN: You really didn't pay attention in geography class, did you?

OLIVIA: Shut up. Just sit with me. (Pats the spot next to her.) It's so nice to get away.

EVAN: From me?

OLIVIA: No. From the world, silly. Why would I need to get away from you?

EVAN: Well. Last night wasn't the most pleasant, was it?

OLIVIA: We had a fight. That will happen, you know.

EVAN: So you didn't wander off at daybreak to get away from me?

OLIVIA: (Shakes her head and takes his hand.) I did not.

EVAN: Oh. Cool.

OLIVIA: Is that what you thought?

EVAN: I didn't really know what to think.

OLIVIA: So you came out looking for me?

EVAN: Had to try. Right?

OLIVIA: Well, I'm glad you did. And I'm sorry I didn't put the note somewhere more obvious.

EVAN: That's okay. Listen. I'm — I'm sorry. Your voice is your art. It's entirely your thing. And I should't try to interfere or meddle with it. I feel really stupid. I can't believe I said your music was like your secret Italian lover.

OLIVIA: Who...what was it?...lived in my closet, ate snails, and talked in trills?

EVAN: There was alcohol involved.

OLIVIA: It was stupid.

EVAN: I know it was. And I'm sorry.

OLIVIA: It was stupid because, can't you see how much I like you?

EVAN: You're very forgiving. Have I ever told you that? That might be one your best attributes.

OLIVIA: (Laughs a little.)

EVAN: Why me? I mean, I'm just a guy. I don't have anything special like that. An art, or a gift. I'm just — I'm just a blip.

OLIVIA: We're all just blips. And you're lucky. You're lucky you don't have a thing.

EVAN: What do you mean?

OLIVIA: Maybe my music is like a lover, but it's the lover that never gives back.

EVAN: What are you talking about? You're amazing. Everyone knows you're amazing. You're going to be a star one day.

OLIVIA: I just like to sing.

EVAN: I know. And I don't want to take that away from you. I want to be part of it with you. (Beat.) I want to be part of your future.

(They share a look as they both realize that the future is coming for them. Olivia slowly turns away from Evan, and loops back to the beginning.)

OLIVIA: It's so beautiful here. It's like we're sitting at the edge of the world.

EVAN: (More stilted this time. As if he is outside of the scene.) You really didn't pay attention in geography class, did you?

OLIVIA: Shut up. Just stay with me. It's so nice to get away.

EVAN: From what?

OLIVIA: From the world, silly.

EVAN: What's so bad about the world?

(OLIVIA is silent.)

EVAN: What did you write in your note?

OLIVIA: Which note?

EVAN: You know which note.

OLIVIA: Nothing.

EVAN: What did you mean to write?

OLIVIA: "Dear Evan..."

(Three knocks at the door.)

EVAN: That's the part you did write. What did you mean to write? In the part you did not write?

OLIVIA: "Dear Evan... what?"

(Four knocks at the door. The lights on the stage flood back and we see Evan's dishevelled apartment. He is seated on the ground in front of his computer. Perhaps his balls are hanging out or perhaps they are not. That is up to costume and design. But Evan is in a rather rumpled kind of state.)

BETH: Evan, are you there? It's me! It's Beth!

EVAN: (Gathers up his strength, shuts his computer, and opens the door.) Beth! Hey! How are you?

BETH: I'm all right. How are you holding up? I haven't seen you since the memorial service.

(She picks up her bag and a bouquet of flowers and walks in.)

BETH: I found these outside my door. I think they were for you.

EVAN: (Reading the outside of the envelope). "To Olivia."

BETH: What does it say? I feel very touched, you know, seeing how much she meant to her fans. Not just to her students, or her peers, but people who just happened to hear her sing, and it made a difference in their lives somehow. I think that's what she wanted, you know?

EVAN: "You're gone now. But I needed to write you. Because you sang with more of a bang than anyone I've ever seen. Life ain't no thang, but yours was a thing. I miss the way your titties moved when you sang."

BETH: Oh.

EVAN: I don't get it. Am I supposed to rap this? Who sent this?

BETH: I — I don't know. I just found them outside my door.

EVAN: (He admires the flowers.) They're pretty. (He chucks them in the garbage.)

BETH: I brought you a beef stroganoff!

EVAN: Oh. Thanks, Beth. You don't have to do that, you know. I'm okay. I've got — I've got three plates of deviled eggs left over from the service. Do you — Can I get you an egg?

BETH: Oh. I'm all right. Don't worry about me. I just wanted to check on you.

EVAN: I'm great, Beth. Look. Check out these eggs. I've got your basic deviled egg, with the chili pepper on top. You know, very basic. This plate goes up a notch, with the addition of celery and dill. It gives it a great crunch, the celery. And now these guys, these sick little green guys ... Avocado and crab meat. Can you believe it? Avocado and crab meat. In an egg! Like, what are they going to do next, right?

BETH: Yeah...

EVAN: Have one, Beth. Have an egg.

BETH: Uh. Okay. All right. (Takes a bite.) Oh. They're good.

EVAN: Aren't they?

BETH: But they might be...going bad?

EVAN: (Sticks an egg in his mouth and speaks muffledly.) Can you believe how fucking good this is? Like, Come. On.

BETH: Mmm hmm. (Politely swallows or spits it out into a napkin.) Hey, why don't I heat up that stroganoff for you, and you can...you can have it later.

EVAN: You're the best, Beth.

BETH: (Comes back and sits next to him.) I meant what I said, you know. Everyone's taking her death really hard. There's a whole community of people mourning with you right now. You're not alone.

EVAN: (But he feels pretty damn alone.) Great.

BETH: Please let me know how I can help, Evan. I really just want to help. Whatever you need. I'm right across the hall.

EVAN: You really are the best, Beth.

BETH: (Smiles kind of shyly. She's touched by the compliment, but this re-surfacing crush on Evan reminds her of Olivia.) Did you know they changed her web site into a memorial?

EVAN: Who did? The web site I made? Or the one with the Music School?

BETH: Her personal one.

EVAN: That's the one I made.

BETH: It's a memorial page now. People have been leaving her notes, and posting pictures and stuff. I was on it this morning. It felt — It was strange, but it also felt good, you know. Having these people — these strangers, really — to mourn with me.

EVAN: They changed it into a memorial?

BETH: You should look at it, Evan. Read some of the notes. She meant a lot to some of her listeners.

EVAN: Yeah.

BETH: I posted some pictures, too. Of the trip we all took to the San Juans. That was our first time all hanging out together, remember? I was really nervous, because I'd only known you guys for like a month, but Olivia was so nice. She insisted I come along to see more of the redeeming qualities of the west coast.

EVAN: You're not in Iowa anymore, Toto.

BETH: She was so excited to be on the ocean. She said it was like the edge of the world.

EVAN: Yeah. She said that.

BETH: And then the whales came out of the water. It was so perfect. Three whales and three of us. And Olivia said that whales ....

EVAN: It's an old myth.

BETH: She was one of those most people, you know. She burned slightly brighter than the rest of us. But she was so warm with her light. I never would have thought — But then I should have known, and I ... I'm so sorry, Evan. I told myself I was only going to talk about happy things. Like you really need to listen to me blab on and on right now. God. I am so —

EVAN: Relax, Beth. It's okay.

BETH: I am so sorry.

EVAN: I know. (Shrugs.) What are you going to do, you know?

BETH: (Rushes away and takes out the food.) I have to get to work, but, please take care of yourself, Evan? Eat some stroganoff and, maybe, get outside for a while?

EVAN: I will. Don't worry about me. (Eats another egg.)

BETH: (Looks at him a moment and then gives him a tight but quick hug before she exits.)

EVAN: (Drops the smile and puts the half-eaten egg back on the plate. He looks off into the distance puzzled for a moment as he lets his mind wander. Then he remembers what Beth said about the web site.) "Life ain't no thang, but you life was a thing." Memorial page.

EVAN: (Jumps off his seat and over to his computer, where he goes to the web site that he made for Olivia.) Someone just changed my web page?...What is this? 1996 html? ... Bad design.

(As he scrolls through the web page, perhaps a chorus of various other voices can read the notes from off stage?)

NOTE 1: (Female voice) I was checking your website for new recordings and I realized what had happened. This made me so sad. I've never met you or even seen you on stage, but my friend gave me your CD last year and I listen to it often. I will listen to it again today and say prayers for your loved ones. I'm sorry you were in so much pain.

NOTE 2: (Female voice) I went to middle school with Olivia. She was in the school musical and I was her understudy. I remember watching her and thinking, damn, she's going to be Sarah Brightman one day. But now she's dead. Dead and buried and gone. It just reminds me that we should never ignore someone else's pain. What the world needs now is kindness and love.

NOTE 3: (Bad male singing) "When the wind is blowing in your face/And the whole world is on your case./I could offer you a warm embrace./To make you feel my love, [Oliviaaa] ... The storms are rolling on the raging sea..."

EVAN: (Winces and switches to something else.)

NOTE 4: (Unisex quote generator voice.) Like a bird singing in the rain, let grateful memories survive in time of sorrow.

NOTE 5: (Female quote voice.) Death leaves a heartache no one can heal. Love leaves a memory no one can steal.

NOTE 6: (Male quote voice.) When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure.

NOTE 7: (Advertisement voice.) FIND YOUR TREASURE ON THE HIGH SEAS. CLICK HERE TO WIN A FREE CRUISE IN SUNNY FLORIDA KEYS.

EVAN: What?

LOGAN/TIMOTHY: (Perhaps in a digitally distorted voice?) When the bullet went through you, it also went through me. It ripped through my dreams and lodged itself into my heart. My heart bleeds because you are gone. You took my breath, my soul, with you.

EVAN: "Love, Timothy-Timone." Who? Timothy? Tim?

LOGAN/TIMOTHY: I know I haven't known you long, but the letters we've exchanged and the time we've shared have meant so much. Now that you are no longer here, I can only direct my questions to the air and look for your response in the raindrops or the wind.

EVAN: Who the hell is this guy?

(He types some stuff into the computer and does a search. A whole bunch of other sounds of messages rushing in or files opening flood the room. Evan has entered a different email account of Olivia's.)

EVAN: Liv2Sing. Is that Olivia?

TIMOTHY/LOGAN: Hey there, Liv2Sing! I checked with my friend and he said hells yeah you can come downstairs and knock on his door. He'll be happy to help in any way he can. Just remember he's super shy, okay? But he's really, really nice, and he's like, your biggest fan ...

Liv2Sing: You mentioned your friend...the one who's good with computers. I really need someone's help right now, because I'm having some issues with privacy, and people I don't know are following me ...

DISTORTED VOICE: I want to eat your pussy out and suck your juices dry, you dirty, sexy whore...

DISTORTED VOICE: Put my cock in your mouth ... Put my cock in your mouth ... Put my cock in your mouth ...

Liv2Sing: (In a clear and distinct Olivia voice.) But there are parts of me that must stay hidden. That don't belong in daylight. That nobody should see.

DISTORTED VOICE: Damn, girl. You hot. You can sing opera to me all night long. When you hit those high notes, I just want to close a hand over your throat and feel it hum in my fist. Let me see you sing again, girl.

OLIVIA: (Steps onto the stage behind Evan.)

DISTORTED VOICE: (Good female singing voice?) "...I'd go hungry. I'd go black and blue./ I could make you happy, make your dreams come true./There is nothing that I wouldn't do./ To make you feel my love..."

(Olivia reaches a hand out and touches Evan's shoulder. He jumps in surprise and looks back at her, grabbing her hand. They freeze and hold the gaze a moment. The lights change to the strange memory/digital lights over Port Townsend.)

End of Scene 3

\*\*\*Should there be more of a response from Olivia to her emails? Should there be more evidence of her having more conversation/exchange with these people?

Scene 4

(Olivia touches Evan's shoulder. He jumps in surprise and looks back at her, grabbing her hand. They freeze and hold the gaze a moment. The lights change to the strange memory/digital lights over Port Townsend.)

(Evan slowly moves away from Olivia and stands.)

EVAN: What are you doing here?

OLIVIA: You brought me here. (Beat.) You shouldn't have. You shouldn't go digging in the past.

EVAN: What else am I supposed to do?

(Olivia moves around the room a bit. They move around each other, Evan keeping a safe distance, from which he can observe this person he no longer knows. Perhaps some distant music can go up here. I'm listening to Patsy Cline "You Belong to Me" as I write this. So veto away.)

OLIVIA: You can't live in the past, Evan. You can only live for tomorrow.

EVAN: (Laughter.) Really? That's all you have to say to me?

OLIVIA: (Shrugs and sits down.) We're at the edge of the world here.

(Evan watches her a moment.)

EVAN: You left me nothing. Do you realize that? You left me nothing.

OLIVIA: Shhh. (She looks back at him.) We can't stay here long. Let's just ... let's just be together.

EVAN: You want to be with me? (He steps closer to her.)

OLIVIA: Of course I do, baby.

EVAN: You want to be with me. You want to marry me? Travel the world with me? Spend your life with me? (He closes the distance between them as he asks these questions.)

OLIVIA: I just want to be with you.

EVAN: (He takes her chin in his hand and gazes into her face a moment.) You beautiful liar. Who the fuck are you?

(He lets her go and sits down next to her. Behind them, shadows and lights of a shifting world/identity bloom and sweep past.)

OLIVIA: Remember when you used to ask me what it was like to step on stage? You thought it was good therapy for my nervousness. And I said it was like a transition, when I'm neither myself nor the person I'm supposed to be. I'm in between. I could be anyone.

EVAN: And who are you?

OLIVIA: Who do you want me to be?

(Evan has no response for her. She gets closer to him and touches his face. Perhaps she gets up on her knees so that she is taller than he is.)

OLIVIA: Shhh. Rest your head on me, sweetheart. There, there. It's going to be okay. Just because I'm not with you... That's no reason to ...

(Evan pulls away from her, distrusting of her.)

OLIVIA: Hit me. Curl your fist up around all that darkness inside you. Smash your hand across my face. You know you want to. And you can. You can feel the bones crack in my cheek. You can hear the rip of my eyeball as it —

EVAN: Stop it. (He grabs her shoulders or pins her down on the ground.)

OLIVIA: Dear Evan. (Gently touches his cheek.) Dear, dear Evan.

EVAN: No.

OLIVIA: Evan, who is so dear to me.

(He gives in to the touch of her fingertips on his face. But then he remembers he has other things on his mind.)

EVAN: Why do those people write you? Who are they? What do they want from you?

OLIVIA: Can't you just leave people to their whims and machinations? Can't you just be a little more accepting? Not everyone can be perfect. Not everyone can be you.

EVAN: That's bullshit. Cut it out.

OLIVIA: Do you think you're better than them or something? Do you think you're different? Do you think I picked you out from a crowd for your impeccable grooming and your glowing pristine heart?

EVAN: I don't know what you're harping on about.

OLIVIA: Or maybe you think we're soulmates. Like God or some higher power stole a piece of your rib and made me just for you. Created me to fit along your breast bone. The missing piece of the puzzle.

EVAN: Seriously. What are you talking about?

OLIVIA: But here's the thing. You're not special. You're just like all the rest of them.

EVAN: Are you done now? If anyone here is airing out grievances, I think it should be me.

OLIVIA: What? Did I leave a stain on the carpet?

EVAN: You fucking bitch!

(He pushes her down again, but this time she fights back. They continue the next lines in a tussle, like the beginnings of a rape.)

EVAN: Don't you know what you're doing to me?

OLIVIA: All you ever wanted was to control me. Dress me up like a doll and loop me through your keychain —

EVAN: All I ever wanted ...

OLIVIA: ...Keep me in your pocket like loose change.

EVAN: All I ever wanted was to love you!

(Beat.)

OLIVIA: (Changes back to her sweet self.) Oh, baby. I love you, too. Oh, dear Evan.

(Evan pushes her away and sits up holding his head, laughing-crying, until he can gather his thoughts enough.)

EVAN: When exactly did you become insane?

(But she's no longer there, and he's alone.)

EVAN: Olivia?

(Lights go back up to normal. Evan realizes his surroundings and stands back up. He is able to conduct himself like normal, but looks around for a moment as if to check the perimeters. He shuts the computer, goes over to her armoire, and picks up the letter.)

EVAN: (Reading.) "Dear Evan..."

(He crumples the letter up and throws it into the corner. Then he goes back to the computer and begins typing, staring intently at the screen.)

End of Scene 4.

Act 1 Scene 5

(Logan is sitting in front of his computer. There is some festivity in the air: party music or whatnot.)

LOGAN: (Laughing.) Oh. My. God. Marie, you crack me up. Are you guys listening to this? This woman is hilarious. Oh, boy, Marie Antoinette. You need to start taking your show to Youtube.

(Logan switches to another computer, or to a different place on the couch.)

LOGAN: Okay. I know the jokes are a little bit racist, Izzy-K-Pop, but hey man, you just gotta chill, man. We're all here for each other, all right? Now my pal Timothy, he really needs us right now. He's going through a rough patch here. I know he's pretty new to this group, but let's try to figure out how we can be here for Timothy. Because he just lost the love of his life. Okay?

(Logan types something and then sighs loudly.)

LOGAN: Yes, Ferdinand. I know you thought she was the Isabella to your Columbus, and I know your feelings are hurt, too, but she just didn't like the way you came on too strong, now did she? Maybe next time, you should think twice before you send a photoshopped Mona Lisa Bridal Portrait to someone. Goodness. Can we get something to lighten it up in here?

(He switches the music to something more upbeat and opens a can of beer. There are a few other empty bottles and beer cans and takeout boxes around the room.)

LOGAN: Okay. So. Let's review our operations. Daniel Stephen Smith has created a memorial page for the deceased, and we have all left our notes of sympathy. Is that right? (Reviews his notebook.) Gertrude and Marjorie, I am missing your notes of sympathy. Just leave a few lines of poetry or an inspirational quote. Maybe share a story you've heard about the deceased. We want to let the world know that she was loved. All right. Moving on. Daniel has also emailed the local papers to write a profile about her, and he has nominated her for a posthumous award from the Society of Women on Stage. I think a posthumous would be just the thing to cheer up our dear friend Timothy. So remember to be alert for the date that voting opens. Next issue. —

(A knock on the door interrupts him.)

LOGAN: (Pauses.) We have no deliveries scheduled, do we?

(He checks his schedule as the door knocks again. He goes over to the door and leans his back against it, surreptitiously peering out the cat eye. Finally, when the women is turning to go, he rushes to open the door.)

LOGAN: Wait. I'm here! I'm right here! I — Hello.

(He holds himself very shyly and protectively.)

BETH: Oh. Hi. I thought you weren't home.

LOGAN:...Hi.

BETH: Hi. How are you? Um. My name is Beth. I live up on the fourth floor.

LOGAN: "Come in. Don't worry about your shoes."

BETH: Oh. I'll just — I won't be long. (She doesn't really step inside very much.) Anyway, I'm just here because ... I'm here on account of the tragedy that happened last week. When we lost one of our neighbors in this building.

LOGAN: (Nods. Perhaps he is also excited to know what she is talking about and excited that someone else cares.) I know. Olivia. That was her name. She died. She was my best friend.

BETH: Oh. Ummm. I didn't know you were so close to her.

LOGAN: I mean, she was my friend's best friend.

BETH: Well, she was one of my best friends, too. And, you know, she did mention you once.

LOGAN: She did? What did she say?

BETH: Uh. She said you were one of the most interesting people who lived in this building. And she said you were very talented and nice.

LOGAN: (Happy but then sad.) I'm sad that she's gone.

BETH: Yeah. Me too.

LOGAN: I — I heard the gunshot. It woke me up. In the middle of the night. And all the police cars and the sirens came. And I watched them, right over here, (moves to his window), I watched them put her in the back of an ambulance and take her away. She was in a bag, but I knew it was her.

BETH: (Shudders. Or something. Tries to get back to business as usual.) Um. I'm bringing a card around, to all the neighbors, and I'm also asking for any donations you'd like to make to Olivia's fiance, Evan. (Perhaps a few sounds from upstairs here, making Beth pause to look at where Evan is.) He lives right above you. But, um, just a few dollars or anything you can spare.

(Logan looks at her hard for a moment, before whipping out his checkbook and writing on this desk.)

BETH: You really don't have to give very much. I know Evan will appreciate anything for covering his rent and the funeral costs. Now, I'm not asking for a handout, and I know we're not a socialist building, so really, just, don't listen to Mrs. Widlansky. She is a malicious, mean-spirited —

(Logan hands her the check.)

BETH: Thanks so much for your — (She gets a better look at the check, which is for $5,000) Oh! This is ... a lot of money.

LOGAN: Take it.

BETH: I – Are you sure? I mean, I'm really not looking for hand-outs. And this is ... This is really nice of you.

LOGAN: It's for her.

BETH: Thank you so much.

LOGAN: It's no problem.

BETH: Olivia was right about you. You are very nice.

LOGAN: (Shrugs shyly and considers how to phrase his question.) Do you like inspirational quotes?

BETH: I have to get to work soon, so I better keep going, but it was really nice to meet you! Thank you, again.

LOGAN: You're welcome. It was nice to meet you, too.

(He slowly extends a hand to her as if to shake hello, but she has already dashed off on her way.)

LOGAN: My name's ... Logan.

(He slowly turns back to his apartment, where the emptiness is for a moment, overwhelming. And then he forces himself back into his role as the puppeteer maestro.)

LOGAN: Okay, gang. Good news. So it turns out we are not alone in this operation. Isn't it great? (Beat.) There are other people out there who care. There's a whole building of people. All the people around us. (Beat.) So does anyone have a very good comment we can post?

(He sighs and sits down. He drinks the rest of his beer, this time as an angry loner thing, rather than a social party thing. Then he turns on his computer and looks up Candie's/Constance's web site again. He dials her Skype phone.)

CANDIE: (She answers with a purr.) Hello there, Governer Mc — (She loses the sultry.) You're not my two o' clock.

LOGAN: You're not wearing a shirt.

CANDIE: I — uh — (Changes her uncertainty.) Why? Does this ... bother you?

LOGAN: I think I would like to upgrade my sessions.

CANDIE: Well, you're going to have to go through my appointment maker application.

LOGAN: What you're doing right now ... Is this symbiopsychocybersexualtalk therapy?

\*\*\*Maybe, instead: cyberpsychosexualcognitiveimmersivetalk therapy

CANDIE: It's part of it. Yes. My therapy ranges from levels red, to red hot. What would you like to sign up for?

LOGAN: Is there a red orange?

CANDIE: We can talk about this transition and whether or not it is fitting with your treatment plan at your next session. Remember that you can only dial me during our appointed time slot. How did you get my screenname just now, anyway?

LOGAN: (Shrugs.) I know some people.

CANDIE: I'm going to have to talk to my tech guy again. Anyway. I've got other clients who are in need of my services right now. But I look forward to seeing you, at our appointed time slot.

LOGAN: Right. I'll check you later.

CANDIE: Good bye, Mr. Blake.

(She hangs up. Logan looks around the room for a moment. It is an empty and barren place. He goes over to his closet, or underneath his desk, and pulls out a box. He rifles through a notebook of pages, and then he pulls out a picture of Olivia.)

LOGAN: Where do you go after they take you away?

(There is a sudden incoming-message noise from his computer.)

A READING VOICE (OLIVIA'S): "Dear Timothy-Timone. If this message somehow reaches you. It is exceedingly quiet here. There is nothing to hold me but the darkness. Death is an empty room, a room that stretches as wide as the ocean. And I am floating in it. The tides are carrying me away, one by one, further and further. Please. Please save me."

End of Scene 5.

Act 1 Scene 6

(Beth and Evan are in Evan's apartment having dinner. Beth heats up the food and brings the last dish over to the table.)

BETH: There. This is just like what my mom would do on Fridays. Throw out all the bad stuff and turn the still decent stuff into leftover soup.

EVAN: (Distractedly.) This looks delicious, Beth. Thank you.

BETH: Hopefully it's not as bad as it sounds. Eat up.

(Neither of them eat and there is a pause, until Evan remembers to pick up his fork.)

EVAN: So how was your day?

BETH: It was good. I finished doing some errands, and I got to make the scones today. So, they're starting to trust me more at the bakery. Pretty soon I'll get to start making cakes.... (She trails off as she notices that Evan is not listening, but staring off into space.) I have a surprise for you.

EVAN: Hmmm?

BETH: (Takes an envelope and a card out of her purse.) This is for you.

(Evan takes the envelope without really thinking about it.)

BETH: It's from me and everyone in the building. To let you know that we care.

EVAN: (Looking at the check she wrote.) Beth. This is a lot of money.

BETH: It's to help with the rent, and the service. I mean, I know you've got a great job, but you just put down so much money for the wedding and the concert and now ... I know Olivia was trying to budget and money was still kind of tight.

EVAN: How did you get people to open the purse strings?

BETH: Everyone wanted to help.

EVAN: (Clearly not buying it.) I think you're the only person I know in the world who would decide to do something like this and have the ability to actually do it. Thank you, Beth. This was — This was really nice of you.

BETH: (Shakes her head.) It wasn't just me. It was everyone. We're all here for you. And that guy downstairs? I mean, I know Olivia was kind of friends with him. But he really seems to care about her, and he was really generous.

EVAN: What guy downstairs?

BETH: Oh, you know. That guy. The one who, like, never leaves his house? He gets all his groceries delivered and all those packages that come in downstairs are always for him. Olivia knew him somehow, and I thought he was a little strange — I mean, he IS a little strange — but Olivia said he was nice. Didn't she ever mention him?

EVAN: No. What was his name?

BETH: Logan. I think Blake is his last name?

EVAN: (Thinking to himself.) No. That's not right.

TIMOTHY-TIMONE/LOGAN/NOTE FROM BEFORE: I am so beyond excited to meet you and I

BETH: I think that was one of the most beautiful things about Olivia. She never judged people, you know? She was always so willing to talk to you and to listen. It didn't matter who you were.

EVAN: Everyone was the same and no one was worth a thing.

BETH: What?

EVAN: Nothing. I'm just...thinking out loud.

BETH: Are you okay, Evan?

EVAN: Yeah. I'm just ... When love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure. Right?

BETH: (Relieved.) I think of that one, too. It reminds me of heaven, and storing our treasure in heaven. I have to believe that she's up there now, you know? That her pain is gone and she's at peace. I haven't been to church in years, but I went to church the weekend after she... It helped. Being in church.

NOTE FROM MEMORIAL RUNNING THROUGH EVAN'S HEAD: "I was head pastor at the Covenant Church where Olivia was directing a women's chorus in our practice space. She was a lovely woman. I feel like I have been a remiss pastor as I have ignored the lost sheep. I just wanted to post here to make myself available to those now suffering because of this senseless tragedy, or those who are suffering due to their own pain. I encourage you to get in touch with me, before it is too late, and the eternal love and forgiveness of the Father is no longer available to you...

(Evan stands up from the table and paces into the living room. He stops at Olivia's writing desk, where the jewelry box is standing. His eyes eventually fall on the jewelry box and he fingers the lock.)

BETH: Evan?

(Beth walks over to him and finds him intently touching the locked jewelry box. She can't help herself. She hugs him from behind.)

BETH: Oh, Evan, I can't imagine what it's like for you. I can't imagine how you feel or how much it must hurt. I just — I just wish I could take it away for you. I wish I knew how to help you heal.

EVAN: (Straightening up.) Beth?

BETH: (Realizes what she is doing and is suddenly embarrassed and shy. She releases him and steps back.) I'm sorry. Oh Gosh. I'm really sorry. I — (Laughs awkwardly.) — I always was a big hugger, wasn't I? I should, um — Well, I'll just go clean up dinner.

(She waits to see if he has a response but he doesn't, so she slowly backs away and returns to the dining table. Evan watches her a moment before he goes over to help.)

EVAN: (After a pause.) She doesn't really care about people, you know. You didn't really care. If she cared, she wouldn't have... she wouldn't have done this.

BETH: I'm sure she was in so much pain. I'm sure this isn't what she really wanted.

EVAN: She didn't leave a note. She didn't let anyone know. She didn't even try.

BETH: Remember how happy she was? When you got engaged? She was radiant.

EVAN: She didn't even try.

BETH: She must have been in so much pain, feeling like she had to hide it all the time. If only I had realized or talked to her more. I knew she was tired but she was also so busy.

EVAN: Don't you dare do that, Beth. Don't you take her responsibilities and put it on yourself. She should be the one who's sorry. She should be the one to blame. She should —

(His voice breaks, and so does Beth's heart. Evan catches himself and gazes off at the far wall for a moment, where a flash of the digital world dances across the stage.)

EVAN: Was I good to her?

BETH: What?

EVAN: Was I good to her?

BETH: Evan, you were wonderful.

EVAN: Why did she go away?

BETH: I think that the last thing she wanted was to leave you.

EVAN: I don't even know ... How could she do this? What kind of person could do this?

BETH: I brought some other things for you, too, Evan. (Goes back to her purse and pulls out a stack of handouts, like she has been collecting them for days.) Look. Look at these. I know you feel alone, but there are support groups all over the city for "survivors of suicide." That's what the term is. I've been researching this. Look. There's a meditation group, talk therapy, Letting Go by Letting Live, and a Peaceful Healing watercolor class. I would sign up for that! That looks really fun.

EVAN: Sometimes I think it's better that she's dead. Because if she came back to life, I'd kill her myself.

BETH: You don't mean that.

EVAN: But I do. (Turns to look at her.) There's something inside of me now. This darkness. Fury. She put that inside of me.

BETH: (Holds out a pamphlet to him.) I think it would be really helpful if you checked out one of these groups.

EVAN: Beth. You're a sweetheart, did you know that? And a lifesaver.

BETH: Well, I'll be here. If you ever need any life-saving. Except for, well, (Realizes what she has inadvertently referred to) except for any actual life-saving, because I'd probably just toss you my inhaler because well, that's what saves my life, you know? (Makes a face at herself.) I'm just ... going to head out, I guess.

EVAN: Leaving so soon.

BETH: I think I've intruded long enough.

EVAN: You're definitely not intruding.

BETH: I can come by in the morning, if you like. Before work or something.

EVAN: And any intrusion is more than welcome right now.

BETH: And I can bring you some day-old goods if you'd like.

EVAN: Please don't go. (Beat.) I'm sorry. The nights are hard. It's like she haunts me.

BETH: I can stay. If you want me to.

EVAN: I don't want to inconvenience you...

BETH: I'll stay. It's not a problem at all.

EVAN: (Relieved.) Great. Um. You can take the bed!

\*\*\*OLIVIA/VOICEOVER: Yes, I do have a boyfriend. And he's very wonderful. So, thank you for your offer, but I'm going to have to decline. (Beat.) The only problem with my boyfriend is that he is sometimes too wonderful. It hurts sometimes, you know? When people are too wonderful. It can make it very difficult...to live with them. (Beat.) Yes, I do notice when other women admire my lover. It doesn't make me jealous, though. I guess I'm not the jealous type. It's weird. Sometimes I begin to think about what if my lover was with another woman. And what if the two of them actually made the better couple...

(As she reads these interview tidbits and email excerpts, Evan and Beth act out the routine of the rest of the evening and we finally end with them sitting on the edge of the bed. They are facing each other and unsure what to do. Finally, they hug, perhaps a little awkwardly, and they settle back together into the bed. The lights go off and in the middle of the light, they become somewhat brighter, as if our eyes have adjusted to the dark. As Beth and Evan are sleeping, Olivia's computer suddenly lights back up, casting a glow across the room. There is that similar sound of emails and alerts rushing in. Evan jerks awake and sits up. A shadow moves in the corner of the room. Olivia lays supine on the floor, where she killed herself, or perhaps she is huddled in the corner. Evan goes over to her, music starts up. He touches her face, but she has nothing to say to him, no words to speak. She crumbles under the weight of his touch. Rose petals and burnt scraps of paper scatter around him, but there is nothing that he can hold on to. Music and the Internet noise grow louder around him.)

End of Scene 6.

End of Act I.