

Script Dr. Love and The Art of Dating

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ACT 1

SCENE 1

Spot on Travis. Travis is stage left standing in front of a door. He appears to be nervous and hesitant. He holds up his hand to knock on the door but brings it back down before he knocks. Frustrated with himself, he begins to pump himself up to get the courage to knock on the door. Finally he knocks.

Dr. Love opens the door. He is a man in a shirt and tie with a big cheesy smile. He is wearing sunglasses despite being indoors.

DR. LOVE

Travis! It's good to finally meet you!

He extends hand and freezes.

TRAVIS

(To audience, walking around a bit as Dr. Love is frozen)

I think I knew my life had hit rock bottom when Dr. Love opened his door and offered for me to shake his hand. Dr. Love is a relationship counselor. Not for couples who have failing relationships, but for people who are terrible at being in relationships. I guess that's me. He's like a dating coach. And if he's the dating coach, then what does that make me? Desperate. Because somehow I convinced myself that a session with a guy who calls himself Dr. Love would be a good idea.

Travis returns to his place in front of Dr. Love and the the scene unfreezes as Travis shakes Dr. Love's hand

DR. LOVE

Come on in! I'm glad you showed up. You sounded a bit hesitant over the phone but I promise you that this will be the best decision you ever make.

Travis walks into the office. The office is outfitted with a cheap, bright red fuzzy rug. The walls are covered in photos of Dr. Love in corny positions. Dr. Love plops himself down on a beanbag chair and motions for Travis to sit down on the other beanbag chair in the room.

TRAVIS

This is a very interesting office you have here, Dr. Love.

(CONTINUED)

DR. LOVE

Thanks, Travis. I appreciate that. I worked very hard to create a comfortable environment. How are you feeling?

TRAVIS

I guess I'm alright. I'm feeling a little off about this whole "dating-coach" thing. I guess I just don't know if I believe it will work.

DR. LOVE

Oh, it will work alright. I've never failed once. My clients leave knowing exactly what it is they need to do. They leave my sessions feeling better than ever. I'll tell you a secret though, Travis. I don't even really do anything. You are going to be figuring this out yourself. Sure, I'll facilitate. But you are going to do the heavy lifting here.

TRAVIS

Maybe I'm misunderstanding... I thought you were going to make me better at approaching people, staying interested and, I don't know, making commitments. Things like that. I can't teach myself those things, believe me, I've tried.

DR. LOVE

(Laughing)

Travis, Travis, Travis.

(Pause and then serious again)

No. Listen. We do things differently here.

TRAVIS

How so?

DR. LOVE

I'm here to help you learn about you and why you're bad at being with women.

There is a pause as Travis considers this.

Travis, you look like a guy who's had a lot of failed relationships.

TRAVIS

Um, wow okay, what a forward comment to make. Yeah, I guess so or else I wouldn't be here, right?

DR. LOVE

Good. Well in that case, what you're going to do is talk to me about every single one of them.

(CONTINUED)

TRAVIS

That would take all day.

DR. LOVE

Good thing I've got all day. And so do you, I presume.
Or do you have a date or something?

TRAVIS

Do you just make fun of patients?

DR. LOVE

Start talking.

TRAVIS

God, okay. Um, do I start with the first girl I had
feelings for?

DR. LOVE

Yes, from the beginning.

TRAVIS

Okay, well I guess the first girl I liked was Jessica,
this girl in my neighborhood. But it was a long time
ago, I think I was in sixth grade.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 2

*Lights come up stage right on a young Travis and a
young girl. They are standing outside in the rain
at a bus stop. Travis looks awkwardly at his shoes*

YOUNG TRAVIS

Hi, Jessica.

JESSICA

(Short and uninterested)

Hi, Travis.

YOUNG TRAVIS

What are you up to today?

JESSICA

I'm going to school.

YOUNG TRAVIS

(Faltering)

Oh cool. Yeah... me too. That was a dumb question.

*There is a long, painful silence. Finally, the
sound of a bus is heard as the lights fade out.
Over a blackout, Travis and Dr. Love are heard.*

(CONTINUED)

TRAVIS

Yeah, a little hard to look back on. I actually liked her for about two years before anything really took off.

DR. LOVE

Two years? Man, that's a long time.

TRAVIS

I was young, I didn't know any better.

DR. LOVE

Did it get less awkward?

TRAVIS

It did. We started actually talking to each other. About random middle school stuff like teachers and other students.

Lights come up dimly on Jessica and Young Travis carrying book bags and talking a bit. The voice over continues as action takes place on the stage. They slowly fade out as Travis speaks.

TRAVIS

Man, did I try hard to make conversation with her. I'd spend my time in class planning out what I'd say to her the next time in class. I'd try to think of every possible thing she might say and then have a joke ready for it. I wouldn't sleep at night because I'd be making sure I had the right thing to say for the next morning.

DR. LOVE

So you put a lot of effort into this.

TRAVIS

Yeah, I guess I did. It paid off. Well, kind of.

The lights fade back up again with Travis standing at the bus stop. Jessica walks up to wait. They both look a bit older, cleaner cut, with a slightly better sense of fashion.

YOUNG TRAVIS

Hi Jessica.

JESSICA

Hi Travis. Did you study for the math quiz today?

YOUNG TRAVIS

No, I just didn't want to. As usual.

They both laugh.

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA

Hey Travis. I've been thinking. Maybe we could study together. Like for tests and stuff. You live so close. Thought it might be a good idea.

YOUNG TRAVIS

(A little dumbfounded)

Well... sure Jessica. That sounds great. Maybe studying with someone would be good for me!

JESSICA

Cool. Maybe tomorrow night you can come over and we can get ready for that Social Studies test. Around 7:00 or so?

YOUNG TRAVIS

Yeah sure, I'm not doing anything. That sounds great.

JESSICA

Great!

There is another silence but this time there is no awkward tension. The lights fade out and the bus is heard approaching.

DR. LOVE

So this sounds fine so far. What's the kicker?

TRAVIS

Well it was really exciting for me. I liked Jessica for a long time and finally I had my chance.

DR. LOVE

Go on.

Lights up on Young Travis and Jessica in her house. The voice over of Dr. Love and present day Travis continues.

TRAVIS

I remember I couldn't wait to go over to her house. So I finally got there and we started studying in her kitchen. As the night went on, she kept getting really close to me and I kept feeling weird about it. Weird that she was close to me. But then I felt even weirder because I was feeling weird. I remember being mad at myself. I kept saying in my head, "Dude, this is what you want." But I couldn't shake feeling funny.

Lights fade out and voice over continues.

(CONTINUED)

DR. LOVE

So then what happened?

TRAVIS

I left pretty early. Made up some excuse about my mom wanting me home. When I got home I realized I didn't like Jessica anymore. She was a good friend after that but I just didn't have feelings for her.

Lights fade back in on Dr. Love and Travis in the beanbag chairs.

DR. LOVE

Interesting.

TRAVIS

Yeah.

DR. LOVE

You were caught up in the chase.

TRAVIS

Yeah I was. I burned myself out. It took a lot out of me thinking about how every conversation would go for two years. Not worth it, I guess.

DR. LOVE

There you go. You're better at dating already. Start a list of "do-nots". Rule number 1: Do not spend too much time going after one girl.

TRAVIS

Well... hmm. That seems a bit hasty. What if I spent that time but then decided it was worth it? Could've happened just as easily, right?

DR. LOVE

No, Travis. Follow the rule. It'll never be worth it. You spent too much time on Jessica, and ended up not liking her because of that. Don't let another girl become Jessica. That's the rule.

TRAVIS

(Struggling a bit with how cut-and-dry this advice is)

Whatever, that hasn't been an issue since then anyway.

DR. LOVE

Good. And it won't be ever again.

TRAVIS

Okay.

(CONTINUED)

DR. LOVE
Okay.

There is a moment of reflection for Travis. Dr. Love stares at Travis waiting for him to continue the conversation. Travis notices this and there is a moment of odd eye contact.

TRAVIS

(Trying to make some sort of conversation)

So do you have an actual chair I could sit on or something?

DR. LOVE

No. Just enjoy the beanbag chair. When was the last time you sat on a beanbag chair? You're telling me you don't like beanbag chairs? Travis, you're a weird guy, you know that? You're probably the only person in America that doesn't like beanbag chairs. Don't tell any girls you don't like beanbag chairs. Add that to the "do not" list too.

TRAVIS

I didn't say that I don't like beanbag chairs, I think it's just a bit odd that-

DR. LOVE

(Cutting off Travis)

So tell me about the next girl, Travis.

TRAVIS

Um, okay. Next girl that I was with was a high school girlfriend. Steph. We dated for a few months.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3

Lights up on Travis in high school. The end of school bell is heard. Travis is standing by a locker putting his things into his backpack. This Travis is played by the actor who has been playing Travis in the present day. Steph walks up. Steph is over affectionate and upset when Travis doesn't reciprocate.

STEPH

Travis!

She runs up excitedly and hugs Travis.

(CONTINUED)

TRAVIS

Hey, Steph.

STEPH

I missed you.

TRAVIS

We had Biology together two hours ago.

STEPH

I know. Travis, you know what today is right?

TRAVIS

Friday, yeah thank God. Glad the weekend is here, maybe we can hang out tonight or tomorrow.

STEPH

Well, yes it's Friday... But you're forgetting something.

TRAVIS

Um, am I?

STEPH

(Her face deflates)

I can't believe it. You don't know that this is our 14 week anniversary? The big one-four. W-e-e-k-s. You know? 14 weeks, the big one-four?

TRAVIS

You know I'm actually surprised I forgot.

STEPH

I made you this.

Steph hands Travis a large card that is very well made. It says, "The Big One-Four"

TRAVIS

Wow, thank you. I'll put it with the the big one-three

STEPH

Okay.

TRAVIS

Steph, I'm sorry I forgot. I really am.

He hugs her and she hugs him back.

STEPH

It's okay.

She leans in for a kiss.

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Travis kisses her quickly and pulls away. She goes for another. Kids start walking by and the hallway is a bit busier. Travis looks around and notices this.

TRAVIS

Steph, there are so many people around. Let's not do this right now. Maybe later.

STEPH

What? Are you embarrassed to kiss me in front of them? Am I embarrassing to be with?

TRAVIS

No, of course not! I just think that public displays of affection are a little weird. They don't want to see you and me kiss in the hallway.

STEPH

(Pulling away and getting upset)

Okay, Travis. I've been really stressed out and I've been working really hard on these gifts for you and you've basically given me nothing.

TRAVIS

Nothing? We go out to dinner, we have a good time, we-

STEPH

And I'm asking you to kiss me and you can't even do that. Then I'm thinking to myself, why do I love this guy if he can't even kiss me without thinking he looks dumb?

TRAVIS

Love?

STEPH

You don't love me? Here I am looking like an idiot on our big one-four and you can't say you love me?

TRAVIS

Can you stop calling it the big one-four?

STEPH

Is everything I do wrong?

TRAVIS

No, it's just that no one really says that but you say it a lot.

STEPH

Goodbye, Travis! We're breaking up. Can't believe this is how we're spending the big one-four.

(CONTINUED)

TRAVIS

(Bewildered and overwhelmed)

What?

STEPH

Goodbye!

She storms off.

Blackout. The voices of Dr. Love and present day Travis begin again.

TRAVIS

So that was the story of Steph.

DR. LOVE

Sounds like you really screwed up man.

TRAVIS

You're kidding, right?

DR. LOVE

I am not.

TRAVIS

She was too much for me.

DR. LOVE

No she wasn't. You weren't enough for her. She broke up with you, didn't she?

TRAVIS

(Stammering)

Well, yeah but...

DR. LOVE

On the big one-four too.

TRAVIS

Don't flip this on me! She was nuts.

DR. LOVE

Look Travis. You're here so we can help YOU become better at dating. Not Steph. We're not here to discuss if Steph was crazy. We're discussing how to make you more successful in relationships.

TRAVIS

Oh okay, Dr. Love. Then please tell me what I did wrong in this relationship.

(CONTINUED)

DR. LOVE

You should already know. Steph didn't feel like you cared about her as much as she cared about you. Thought that was obvious, Travis, come on.

TRAVIS

I did care about her! I just didn't make cards all the time like she did and didn't want to make-out in public places.

DR. LOVE

Maybe you should've.

(Raises eyebrows at Travis)

Here's what I know. Telling a girl you care about her is very different from showing it. Sometimes we as humans don't notice what people are saying, but we absolutely do notice the actions of our peers.

TRAVIS

So, you're saying I have to make a card for the girl I'm with every week to prove I care for her?

DR. LOVE

If that's what it takes. That is the rule.

TRAVIS

(Standing)

That's absurd. I might not have the most successful track record with women, but I'm not dumb enough to believe that advice. I think I'm going to go.

DR. LOVE

You can go if you want. Or you can stay for the remainder of the session and we can try to reach some more conclusions. I know you might not be too fond of everything I have to say but I think it's worth listening. If you don't agree, then you don't agree. But at least you have a safe space to reflect in.

Travis looks at Dr. Love, giving him an "are you kidding me" face.

DR. LOVE

Bean bag. (he points)

Travis sits and sighs.

DR. LOVE

We'll move on from that part of your relationship with Steph. Answer this question for me, Travis. How did you meet her? Did you really get to know her before you two started seeing each other?

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TRAVIS

She was a friend of a friend. She and I only kind of knew each other before we started dating.

DR. LOVE

So you didn't really know her.

TRAVIS

Not too well, but isn't that the point of dating?

DR. LOVE

Well, it'd be great if it were, but no. You should make absolutely sure you could be in a relationship with that person before trying anything really.

TRAVIS

That just really seems wrong to me. How could I have known she was going to act the way she did?

DR. LOVE

Did you know anyone that dated her?

TRAVIS

Yeah but what was I supposed to do? "Hey, you know your ex-girlfriend, Steph? Is she a lunatic? Just wondering."

DR. LOVE

Maybe. All I'm saying is you could've gotten some information on her in some way if you tried. Social media, maybe? Who knows. Either way, this is a rule: Make sure you know what you're getting into, no matter how hard it may be to find out.

TRAVIS

Let's just move on. I feel like we aren't making progress with this story.

DR. LOVE

Oh, alright. Just keep these things in mind. They're important rules to follow in the future.

TRAVIS

Sure.

DR. LOVE

Let's move forward. Who was your next romantic interest?

TRAVIS

After that is where things started to go downhill.

SCENE 4

The lights begin to dim and Travis gets up from the beanbag chair. He walks downstage. Some girls walk by him as he talks.

TRAVIS

I didn't date much more in high school honestly. Couple of crushes but nothing serious. I think could've made an effort to talk to these girls but I just kept to myself. I really didn't see anyone until college.

Cathy walks out on stage and takes Travis's arm.

TRAVIS

I met this girl Cathy in the first month of my freshman year. We would go out to parties together but I would get really drunk and say dumb shit, break things, and barely be able to get home. Too much for her. Fair enough. You don't have to explain that mistake to me.

DR. LOVE

Great. After that?

TRAVIS

Well, after my freshman year had ended I cut back on drinking and going to parties.

Sits down at a chair that is downstage.

TRAVIS

Got more interested in my studies. Met Kelly in my economics class.

Kelly walks out and sits on the chair next to Travis.

TRAVIS

I start seeing her around campus and we tend to study at the library around the same time of day. We talk a bit, *Kelly places her index finger in front of her lips*, quietly of course, and she tells me she's all into rock climbing. She wants me to go with her. I'm sorta in shape at this point so I see no issue with going to a rock-climbing gym with this girl.

The two begin miming driving in the chairs they are in.

TRAVIS

We drive about an hour away from campus up to this huge mountain and I realize she wants me to climb a real rock face, not just those ones with the colorful pegs

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(CONTINUED)

TRAVIS (cont'd)

protruding from the wall. Says I'll have a harness and I'll be perfectly safe. I'm afraid of heights so I say no. She's okay with it, we drive back. We keep seeing each other at the library and she keeps inviting me to do this crazy stuff. Run a half-marathon, take some scuba diving lessons, skydive. I don't have the guts for this stuff nor the cash so I keep saying no.

Kelly gets up and leaves the table, saying goodbye to Travis.

TRAVIS

We stop talking eventually, probably because she thinks I'm some wuss.

DR. LOVE

Which you were. Skydiving is the shit.

TRAVIS

Anyway.

(Gets out of chair and pushes chair back)

I shake that off and meet Corrine.

(Pauses)

And Corrine was actually really great.

Corrine comes out and starts studying at a nearby table.

CORINNE

She was a biology student who wanted to be a doctor. She was naturally smart. Like that kind of student who never had to study but would still ace the test while the rest of the class worked like crazy to maintain D averages.

DR. LOVE

The worst kind of people.

TRAVIS

Right. Anyway, she would come over to my apartment and bring a book to read for leisure while I would sit there and study. It was nice to have company. But it was a little hard to be around someone who was so naturally intelligent, because well, I'm the opposite of that. I really had to work in college to do well. So when I'd have a test or something and she'd just be sitting there doing essentially nothing, I'd start to get upset. I'd snap at almost anything she said. Like one time she said...

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CORINNE

Hey are you hungry? Maybe you can take a break for a bit and we could get some food.

TRAVIS

No, Corinne. I really can't right now. I told you I can't leave for the rest of the night. You should know this by now.

CORINNE

Okay. Sorry.

TRAVIS

No... I'm sorry. That wasn't cool for me to say.

(Back to conversation with Dr. Love)

And I kept apologizing but it kept happening.

CORINNE

Hey Travis, want to hear something funny I just read?

TRAVIS

Corinne. I need to get this done and I'm having trouble focusing as it is.

CORINNE

Okay.

(A beat)

You know if I'm a distraction, then I don't have to come over all the time.

TRAVIS

No. You're not a distraction. It's just distracting when you keep trying to talk to me while I'm doing work is all.

CORINNE

Then I should go. Because I don't want to just sit here in silence. We'll hang out when you are less busy.

TRAVIS

No. I want you to stay here, Corinne.

CORINNE

I'm confused. You get angry at me, but you want me to stay?

TRAVIS

It's complicated, Corinne. Just let me work for right now.

CORINNE

It's just that... well if I'm going to be here then I'm going to want to talk to you. But you always seem to get upset with me.

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TRAVIS

Corinne, I'm not... just... let me finish this, okay?

CORINNE

No come on. Let's just talk about this. This can't be forever right?

TRAVIS

(Coming to a realization)

Fine. You know what it is? It's those freaking books you're reading all the time.

CORINNE

What?

TRAVIS

Yeah. I'm always sitting here working my ass off while you do nothing all day but read for fun. And every time I see that you have a new book I feel worse. You're reading like one a week. Jesus, how the hell do you have time for that? You don't know what it's like to have no time to do anything. You don't know what it's like to have to work hard for success. Shit just comes easy to you. You don't know what it's like to be stressed. I do. So stop bothering me with these little anecdotes from your books and let me finish this.

CORINNE

Travis. You're being very mean and I'm not sure that I'm doing anything wrong.

TRAVIS

(Getting more upset)

Fine, then just go, Corinne.

Corinne gets up, looks at Travis as he continues to do his work without looking at her, and then finally leaves.

DR. LOVE

That sucks big cock, Travis.

TRAVIS

It's okay. I messed up. After that I didn't date anyone for a while.

Travis returns to the beanbag chair and plops himself down and sighs.

DR. LOVE

How's that bag treatin' ya? Feel those beans? Pure cocoa beans. Imported from Ghana. How bout that? Huh? Nah, just kidding. They just lil pellets in there.

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TRAVIS

Are you here to help me or just sell me beanbag chairs?

DR. LOVE

Little bit of both. So why do you think you stopped dating?

TRAVIS

Just didn't want to fall into that again. I was really focused on work and I knew I'd treat anyone else the way I treated Corinne.

DR. LOVE

Cool beans. Any other reasons?

TRAVIS

I think that's it.

DR. LOVE

Well, there's never just one reason you do something.

TRAVIS

I don't know, do you have any ideas?

DR. LOVE

I think Corinne's intelligence made you feel bad.

TRAVIS

Well, yeah it did.

DR. LOVE

Maybe you can't handle being with someone who is better than you.

TRAVIS

Maybe I couldn't then, but I think I can now.

DR. LOVE

Hmm. How about after Corinne?

TRAVIS

Well, like I said, I didn't date anyone for a while after that. Just got too scared to be with anyone at all. I didn't want anything to end the way that it did with Corinne.

DR. LOVE

So that's it then? She was the last girl you dated?

TRAVIS

No. There was one more recently.

FADE OUT

SCENE 5

Lights up on Travis sitting at a barstool. People are milling around but Travis is alone drinking. The bartender is making some conversation with him. He is talking to Dr. Love still but acting as he if he is in the scene in the past.

TRAVIS

I met Sam two years ago at a bar. I was at this bar almost every night. Some nights I wouldn't drink. Some nights I would. I don't think I was an alcoholic or anything, in case you were wondering. I was just there because I became friends with the bartender. He was nice to me and outside of a couple co-workers and my family, I didn't really have many people like that.

DR. LOVE

Where does Sam come in?

Sam enters the bar and sits down.

TRAVIS

She was just at the bar one night and we started talking.

DR. LOVE

No crazy story about how you guys met?

TRAVIS

No. Just started talking one night about what I was having to drink and then we kept talking. Then she came in another night. And another and another.

DR. LOVE

How did you guys start dating?

SAM

Say Travis, do you want to come by my place tonight?

DR. LOVE

Just like that?

TRAVIS

Yup. After 6 years of being single I just decided to go for it.

DR. LOVE

Okay. Go on.

Travis and Sam hold hands and begin walking together. Birds are heard.

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TRAVIS

Well, we got really close. We just worked. I think I just tried to enjoy myself. And she did the same.

SAM

What a beautiful day.

TRAVIS

It absolutely is.

There is no dialog as the two walk. They just smile and enjoy the time together. No speech is needed.

TRAVIS

But of course, things got worse. I guess you know that. I wouldn't be here if they hadn't.

The two stop walking and reach a table with a folder on it. An older couple, Sam's parents enter. Her parents look to be middle aged. They begin miming speech with Sam and Travis.

TRAVIS

Sam's mom had breast cancer. Stage four. It had metastasized to her bones. Her mother was in her early 50's. I guess she wasn't young... but it still felt early for this kind of news. It was unlikely that she could be saved.

Sam's parents exit. Sam's head is buried in her hands. Travis sits with her and holds her. There is silence. Finally Sam gets up and walks upstage left and is with her family again. Travis stays where he was.

TRAVIS

She wasn't the same after this news. But who could expect her to be? She moved in with me soon after her mom's diagnosis because I lived closer to her parents. Sam would spend a lot of time with her family and just be around at night. Truthfully, I wish I got to see her more, but I wasn't upset with her, I would've done the same.

He pauses.

DR. LOVE

So tell me more, if you are willing to.

TRAVIS

Yeah sure. Well, Sam didn't handle the news very well, as is expected. She'd bottle everything up at work to

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TRAVIS (cont'd)

get through the her day there, then she'd hold back her pain when she would spend time with her mom. She couldn't show her how badly this hurt her. She didn't want her mom worrying about that on top of the cancer. I became her only outlet.

*Sam returns and sits on the bed with Travis.
Travis picks up a remote to change the channel on the TV.*

SAM

Did you vacuum today?

TRAVIS

No, damn. I forgot to again. Sorry I'll do that tomorrow morning before I leave for work.

SAM

I'll go do it now.

TRAVIS

No no, don't. I'll just get it tomorrow before I leave. It won't be a problem at all. Relax. Try to sleep.

SAM

No, I really think I need to do it now.

TRAVIS

What, why now? It's fine. And besides it's 11:00 PM you'd wake up the neighbors.

SAM

I just wish you didn't forget. You keep forgetting things like that.

TRAVIS

Well, yeah, but they get done, right? Our house is clean, we pay our bills. What else could you ask for.

SAM

I just really need you to start remembering to do these things on time.

TRAVIS

Sam, look I know this is a hard time for you. I know everything else in your life needs to be perfect so you can really focus on your mom without distractions. I get that. But the floor will be just as clean tomorrow morning as it would be if we vacuumed it tonight. Try to rationalize that.

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SAM

(Calm but more stern than necessary)

Don't tell me about rationalizing things, Travis. I've been trying and you know that. I know it makes no sense that the floors had to be vacuumed today instead of tomorrow but I need this to keep my sanity. I don't know why but I do.

TRAVIS

Okay. It won't happen again.

SAM

Okay.

There is silence and Sam begins crying.

SAM

I'm sorry.

TRAVIS

It's okay. Shh, it's okay you don't have to be sorry, I understand. I'm sorry too.

Sams crying fades a bit. Lights fade out.

DR. LOVE

Were you sorry?

TRAVIS

No. Every time she'd get mad at me it would eat at me. But I couldn't snap at someone who was experiencing grief. I had to be strong. As her mom got more sick, she got worse too.

The lights come back up dimly on Travis's bedroom. Sam is yelling at Travis. She is pulling things off the walls and grabbing her hair. She is hysterical. Travis isn't looking at her. He is looking straight out into the audience.

TRAVIS

I had to take it. She didn't want to hurt me but she was. I was a crutch, a punching bag. I was anything but someone she loved. And yet it was because she loved me that she treated me like this. I told myself this over and over.

(Beat)

But I finally did snap.

(To Sam)

Fucking stop it, Sam. Just fucking stop it. Stop tearing things off of the walls. Stop screaming at me the second you walk in the door. It isn't helping anyone. Do you want me to be here for you? I want to be

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TRAVIS (cont'd)

but not if you keep treating me like I'm the problem.
I'm not the problem. Your mom's cancer is the problem.
Don't put that on me.

(Beat)

Do you think your mom would want to see you like this?
No. She wouldn't. She wouldn't, Sam.

*Looks at Travis and has nothing to say. Sam pushes
Travis and walks out the door. Travis is alone.
Lights fade down.*

SCENE 6

*Lights come back up on Dr. Love's office. Travis
is sitting back down in the beanbag chair. Dr.
Love is finally sitting upright in the chair and
not lounged back.*

TRAVIS

She came by the next day while I was at work and took
her stuff out. That was a few months ago. And you know,
I don't think I was in the wrong, but I also don't
blame her at all.

DR. LOVE

I don't blame her, either. Sounds to me like you could
have done some things differently.

TRAVIS

I guess I could have not snapped that one night. It was
a cognizant decision to yell at her. I could've taken
the beating for a while longer, maybe waited until her
mom passed and waited to see improvement. But I felt
like she needed to hear it. I would've been upset with
myself if I didn't say something. So I think I made the
right call for myself.

DR. LOVE

For yourself, but not for the relationship.

TRAVIS

Guess not. But I need to take care of myself too.

DR. LOVE

I'm not arguing that. I'm just saying that if you want
to maintain the relationship, you can't kick your
partner while they are down. You can't make a mistake
like that and expect it to continue.

TRAVIS

You know, Dr. Love, I feel like you think I'm not
allowed to make any mistakes at all.

(CONTINUED)

DR. LOVE

You aren't. And that's why we're talking. To prevent any mistakes from happening in the future.

TRAVIS

But I'm going to mess up something right? Of course I'm going to at some point.

DR. LOVE

Well sure if you go in without a plan. But if you create a set of rules for yourself and stick to them then you'll be good to go. No slip ups.

TRAVIS

I don't think telling Sam how I felt was a slip up.

DR. LOVE

You wouldn't call a relationship-ending moment a slip-up? I would. You need to follow rules. We are making that set of rules right now and we have been for this entire session. That's been the goal here. And now that we've gone through all of your past relationships, we can start working on a list of rules for hypothetical situations in the future.

TRAVIS

What? We can't possibly make a rule to follow for every possible scenario I might find myself in. That'd be ridiculous.

DR. LOVE

It's systematic and the most foolproof way to find success with dating.

TRAVIS

Well I... I don't. This is all so weird. You're trying to create rules for dating. Dating is complicated, right? Rules are meant for things like speed limits. Or like, "don't swim during a riptide." But what if you are rushing a sick friend to a hospital, or what if you're going to swim in a riptide to try to save someone who is really far out in the ocean? I don't know, rules are flimsy sometimes.

DR. LOVE

That's why we have to be meticulous with our rules. We might have to make a long list but we'll get there and you'll be successful. Is that not what you want? To find yourself in a successful relationship?

TRAVIS

I don't know, Dr. Love, not if it means dating has to be a science. That makes dating less fun. I thought I'd

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TRAVIS (cont'd)

come here and we'd talk about being self-confident again and not giving up and forgiving people you care about. Thought maybe we'd work on problem solving skills. It seems like you just want to give me a cheat sheet to dating and even if I thought we could make one of those, I don't think I would want it.

DR. LOVE

Then I can't help you then. I can give you a cheat sheet to dating, because that's what I'm good at and what works for me. These are field-tested rules that have proved themselves to be effective time and time again. Don't wait too long, show your affection, replace chairs with beanbags, never snap at loved ones.

TRAVIS

These haven't been field-tested. These aren't some commandments. These are rules we made specifically for me.

DR. LOVE

Travis, this is what I have for you. Take it or leave it.

TRAVIS

Getting up Then I don't think there's anything else to discuss.

After a beat.

You know, despite everything, I actually think you helped me.

DR. LOVE

Oh good. I thought I was of no help to you based on the past minute or two of debate.

TRAVIS

No. This did make me feel better a bit.

DR. LOVE

Well then I guess I did my job sort of. Would you like to schedule another meeting next week? We can just discuss something else? Maybe you buy a chair? I don't know.

TRAVIS

I'll pass.

DR. LOVE

Well. It's been nice talking to you, Travis. *Goes for handshake.*

(CONTINUED)

TRAVIS

You too, Dr. Love.

Travis receives handshake. Then leaves.

DR. LOVE

You still owe me \$100 for the session.

TRAVIS

I thought maybe you felt bad that we weren't really successful.

DR. LOVE

You just told me you feel better. I'm charging you full price.

TRAVIS

Okay. Goodbye for real this time.

Travis exits the office and closes the door. He walks to center stage and breaths in and exhales deeply on a smile. Speaks to audience. He looks around and hears the birds chirping again. He exits.

BLACKOUT

THE END