

Like Medicine After Death

by
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LIGHTS UP ON:

Two café tables at a tiny bistro. At one table sits PRESTON, who has spent the last ten minutes making faces into the curve of his spoon. At the other table sits CATHEE, who has spent the last ten minutes taking selfies.

Simultaneously, RYAN and LISA enter from opposite sides of the stage and sit with their respective gender.

The couples at each table are not aware of the other couple's presence.

NOTE: The simultaneous scenes should play without unnecessary or empty pauses; it should never feel like one table is simply waiting for the other table to finish speaking.

PRESTON

Dude!

CATHEE

Darling!

RYAN

Hey man.

LISA

Hey Cathee.

PRESTON

So...

CATHEE

How did it go?

PRESTON

Did you do it?

LISA

Well...

RYAN

No. I didn't.

LISA

Terrible. I didn't do it.

PRESTON

Dude!

CATHEE

Why not?

RYAN

It's not that easy.

LISA

It's not that simple.

PRESTON

Dude!

LISA

I wanted to, but it just wasn't the right time.

RYAN

It wasn't the right place. A Starbucks?

CATHEE

No more excuses. It needs to happen now.

PRESTON

Rip it off like a Band-Aid, man. One quick rip and it's over.

CATHEE

He's bringing you down, my dear. Like a parasite.

PRESTON

It may leave a scar, you know, but pour some Neosporin on that sucker...

CATHEE

Sucking like a parasite sucks.

Cathee makes sucking noises.

PRESTON

Neosporin will heal those scars right up.

RYAN

What are you talking about?

PRESTON

Eh, I lost the metaphor.

LISA

I need a drink.

The WAITRESS enters and walks over to the women's table, taking their order.

RYAN

I don't know why this is so hard. I just need to do it and be done with it.

PRESTON

That's what I was saying, dude. The Band-Aid thing!

RYAN

That made no sense.

PRESTON

Sure it did. Neosporin! Heals scars fast.

RYAN

If you already have a scar, Neosporin does nothing.

PRESTON

Okay, but like, Neosporin represents other chicks, right? Riiiiight?

RYAN

(sarcastically acting like he's in agreement, then:)

Ahhh...No.

PRESTON

You'll see.

The waitress walks over to the men's table.

WAITRESS

Hi, my name's Annie, I'll be taking care of you today.

CATHEE

I thought you were going to break up with him six months ago.

LISA

I know, I still am, but...he just has one of those faces.

CATHEE

One of those faces that can't understand he's being broken up with?

LISA

A puppy dog face. When he gets sad, his eyes get all droopy, his lower lip sticks out, and-- it's just torture. When I tell him, it's gonna kill him.

CATHEE

So text him.

LISA

I am not going to break up with him through a text.

CATHEE

Why not? Your relationship began with one, so it's only natural it should end the same way. Circle of life, darling.

LISA

Ryan and I are too serious to not have a face-to-face.

CATHEE

Chad and I were serious. I mean, for me.

LISA

You broke up with Chad with a text?

CATHEE

Oh God yes. Best move I ever made.

LISA

What did he do?

CATHEE

He sent me back a sad face. He was brief in all areas of our relationship, if you get me. It's why I had to end things.

LISA

Clearly.

The waitress exits.

RYAN

Question.

PRESTON

Shoot.

LISA

So how do I break up with Ryan without hurting him?

RYAN

How do I break up with Lisa and still be friends?

Cathee laughs.

LISA

Why are you laughing?

PRESTON

You want to keep the late night hookup option?

CATHEE

Hurting him? My dear...

RYAN

No, just friends. Platonic friends.

LISA

“My dear”? Why do you keep talking like that?

PRESTON

Platonic?

CATHEE

My class is doing scenework from *Gone With The Wind*. I’m Clark Gable.

PRESTON

Men and women cannot be friends because the sex part gets in the way.

CATHEE

I have to live the part, my dear. And frankly, I don’t give a damn what you think!

RYAN

That’s from *When Harry Met Sally*.

LISA

Oh yes. From the movie. You’re quite good.

PRESTON

Doesn’t make it any less true.

CATHEE

Fine, I'll stop.

RYAN

Oh God.

CATHEE

Bathroom?

The women exit

PRESTON

Name one girl you've been friends with that you didn't want to sleep with.

RYAN

Tracie.

PRESTON

Tracie doesn't count. Tracie was weird looking.

RYAN

She was really sweet! I can't believe you're saying that.

PRESTON

I'm not the only one. Remember in school? They'd only let her model when the art students were working on their cubist paintings.

RYAN

You're terrible and I don't know why I'm listening to you.

PRESTON

I may not be Mr. Casanova with the ladies, but I am a pro at getting rid of them. You've been with Lisa for what, like, two years? You can't tell me you're not dying to be single.

RYAN

First off, it's just a Casanova. No mister.

PRESTON

Casanova was his first name?

RYAN

No, you can just say Casanova. Like Cher is just Cher.

PRESTON

Who wants to be a Cher?

RYAN

Forget it. All I want to do is end things on good terms.

PRESTON

Impossible.

RYAN

Why?

PRESTON

You're asking for the impossible. The mutual break-up. Found in the daydreams of emotional wimps perhaps, but never in real life.

RYAN

So what do I do then?

PRESTON

Make yourself so unattractive that she has to break up with you. Put the ball in her court.

RYAN

Oh, I just love your metaphors.

PRESTON

Analogies.

RYAN

It's a metaphor.

PRESTON

Let me break it down for you, my friend. You can't bring yourself to dump her, right? So be a dick to her until she has to do the dirty work. Make her pay when you go out, be selfish in bed, fart whenever possible-- speaking of which, safety--

RYAN

(smelling it)

Oh, God, safety? What are we, in middle school?

PRESTON

I hated middle school. The only thing that made puberty bearable was raiding my dad's liquor cabinet in celebration of my balls dropping.

The waitress enters with the men's drinks. Awkward beat.

WAITRESS

(handing drink to Preston)

Jack and coke?

PRESTON

But of course.

WAITRESS

(handing drink to Ryan)

And an iced tea.

PRESTON

Pussy.

WAITRESS

Excuse me?

PRESTON

Not you. Him. He's the pussy.

WAITRESS

So, have you decided on an entrée?

The women reenter from the bathroom as the men order.

CATHEE

--you answer a modeling ad on Craigslist, you hope it's legit. He did have very nice equipment. Camera equipment. But these guys always end up showing their true colors. I mean, this guy thought he *was* Mr. Casanova. And when he told me to take my panties off, that was the last straw.

LISA

Unbelievable. What did you say?

CATHEE

I kicked him in the balls.

LISA

No way. You're joking.

CATHEE

Would I lie to you? I kicked him in the balls, and he went down like *that*. Maybe you should try it on Ryan.

LISA

Haha! No!

CATHEE

I'm serious. A man kicked in the balls is utterly helpless. You could dump him and still make him pay for dinner.

LISA

It's tempting, but I don't think I'll go that route.

CATHEE

So if you're not interested in hurting him emotionally or physically, why are you even breaking up with him?

LISA

(unsure)

It's a lot of things, really.

CATHEE

Like what?

LISA

Well...for one, the sex is terrible.

CATHEE

Shut up. Details!

LISA

His friend bought him this kama sutra book for Christmas.

CATHEE

Oh dear.

LISA

He started referring to sex as "congress," and started calling his penis the "lingam."

The waitress walks over and sets their drinks down on the table.

WAITRESS

Can I take your lingam---uhh, order?

PRESTON

Dude, our waitress is gorgeous.

RYAN

(mocking)

You should do her.

PRESTON

I should, man. She has a great ass.

RYAN

Leave your phone number on the receipt. Chicks love that.

PRESTON

Really?

RYAN

I'm joking, you shithead.

PRESTON

Oh, very funny. Here I am, giving you pearls of wisdom--

RYAN

Movie quotes.

PRESTON

--pearls of wisdom with your current situation, and you repay me with sarcasm.

RYAN

You're right. You should get a gold star!

PRESTON

All I ask is for a simple thank you. But I'm more of a selfless person than you are.

RYAN

Selfless, right. Weren't you just commenting on the waitress's hot ass a second ago?

PRESTON

Exactly. Thinking of *her* nice ass.

RYAN

I can't believe I'm taking advice from you.

PRESTON

Well, what do you want, man? I don't even know why you're breaking up with this girl in the first place.

RYAN

I don't even know half the time. Well...to be honest...

PRESTON

Dude...

The waitress exits.

RYAN

It's the sex life.

LISA

So...the sex.

RYAN

It's frustrating.

LISA

Totally awkward.

RYAN

She just lies there. Totally uninterested.

LISA

He has no idea how to please me.

RYAN

And I'm trying every trick in the book.

LISA

This kama sutra book, right?

RYAN

Literally. That book you gave me--

CATHEE

Oh ho ho, I thought you were joking!

PRESTON

That book?

LISA

I wish.

RYAN

Dude, that book is the shit!

The men high five.

LISA

So now he wants to try "crushing spices," "the jewel case," and my personal favorite, "the congress of the crow," and I'm like, can't we work on the basics first?

RYAN

But she isn't having any of it.

CATHEE

How embarrassing.

RYAN

I don't know what I can do to get her into the K Sooch.

LISA

It took everything in my power to hold it together when he offered to "suck my mango."

PRESTON

She must be a prude.

CATHEE

Understandably.

RYAN

No, I don't think that's it. But whatever, it's just terrible in the bedroom.

RYAN AND LISA

Is that enough to dump her/him?

Beat.

CATHEE AND PRESTON

YES!

PRESTON

She's not feeling the K Sooch, dude!

CATHEE

You want terrible sex for the rest of your life?

PRESTON

This stuff has been around for like a billion years.

CATHEE

And don't think you can change him. You can't be taught these things.

PRESTON

And you're positive you were doing it right?

RYAN

Yes!

LISA

I just think he's confused.

PRESTON

And you tried sucking the mango?

RYAN

I tried everything.

CATHEE

I don't see why you're still in this position.

PRESTON

Then that's that.

CATHEE

It's time to get rid of him.

PRESTON

You gotta move on.

CATHEE

Every time I've seen you for the past month, you've been set on dumping him.

PRESTON

I know you want to. You can't tell me you don't want to.

CATHEE

And we both know it's more than the sex that's bugging you.

PRESTON

The sex, man! The sex is terrible!

CATHEE

You're young! You should be out there living it up!

PRESTON

God damn it!

CATHEE

Not stuck with this loser. Listen to your friend.

PRESTON

Right now.

CATHEE

Right now.

CATHEE AND PRESTON

Do it now.

PRESTON

You've put this off long enough.

CATHEE

Each day more is another day wasted.

PRESTON

Stop procrastinating!

LISA

I know, it's just...

RYAN

I don't know if it's the right time.

LISA

Valentine's is coming up soon...

RYAN

I already bought her an anniversary present, I'll just wait until after that.

PRESTON

You want bad sex for the rest of your life?

CATHEE

Honestly, Lisa, you can't keep putting it off!

PRESTON

You could be having good or at the least very mediocre sex right now!

CATHEE

If you don't do it now, you'll never do it. You'll be unhappy for the rest of your life.

PRESTON

Be a man and break up with her now!

CATHEE

Now or never!

Fine! RYAN

Fine! LISA

Ryan and Lisa turn and face each other.

I'm breaking up with you! RYAN AND LISA

Beat.

What? RYAN

Me? LISA

You? RYAN

How could you! LISA

I can't believe this... RYAN

What did I do wrong? LISA

I thought we were happy. RYAN

NO! LISA AND PRESTON AND CATHEE

Oh. Right. RYAN

LISA

It's just that, well, things aren't exactly great in the bedroom.

RYAN

You can't use that! That's what I was going to say!

LISA

What? What am *I* doing wrong?

RYAN

It's just that, you know, some of the ideas I have, you always seem to be against them...

PRESTON

Call her a prude.

RYAN

Not helping, man.

LISA

I am not a prude!

RYAN

I never said that! It was him.

LISA

But do you think I'm a prude?

RYAN

No! No...I never know if what I'm doing turns you on. And I don't know how to tell if it's working or not.

LISA

I could just tell you. It's not.

RYAN

Wow. Yeah, that works.

CATHEE

C'mon Lis. Cut to the chase already.

PRESTON

Yeah, this is getting boring.

LISA

Oh be quiet! Both of you! What are we doing taking advice from our friends when they haven't had one successful relationship?

CATHEE

Hey! I resent that.

PRESTON

Fair.

RYAN

I guess...

LISA

Is this really what you want? I'm not so sure anymore.

RYAN

What do you mean?

LISA

Every time I've wanted to break up with you, I never could bring myself to do it. I always talk myself out of it.

RYAN

Me too.

LISA

So maybe breaking up isn't the answer.

RYAN

To be honest, I felt kinda bullied into it this time.

LISA

Yeah, same here.

RYAN

I like this.

LISA

What?

RYAN

This talking about our feelings thing. It's nice.

LISA

Yeah. It is nice.

RYAN

Forget what I said. I don't want to break up with you. I'll take it down a notch in bed.

LISA

A few notches. And I'll be more willing to try new things. Within reason.

RYAN

I'll get rid of the book.

LISA

Thank you.

RYAN

So...should we kiss and make up?

LISA

Sure thing, Mr. Casanova.

RYAN

It's not...nevermind.

They kiss.

PRESTON

You gotta be fucking kidding me!

CATHEE

I know!

RYAN

Dude!

LISA

Cathee!

PRESTON

You two hate each other and you know it.

CATHEE

Every day you call me, and you go on and on about how you can't stand him!

PRESTON

This is the last time I ever help you out.

CATHEE

And to think, I went through three whole issues of Cosmo to prepare myself for our lunch date.

PRESTON

I gave you the K Sooch, man! K Sooch! Christ almighty.

Preston storms off. And then he reenters.

PRESTON

(to Cathee)

Hey, you're cute. Ever tried congress of the platypus?

CATHEE

Yuck! Don't bother calling, Lisa!

The waitress enters with entrées for both tables as Cathee exits.

PRESTON

What is with all these prudes!

Preston storms off again, this time in Cathee's direction.

Ryan and Lisa exit the other way, giggling together.

WAITRESS

Someone has to pay for this!

Blackout. End of play.