

French Onion

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INT. HEPPECH'S ROOM - NIGHT

HEPPECH slouches against the wall, BOTTLE OF ALCOHOL in one hand, PHONE to his ear in the other.

HEPPECH

So today I saw her walking down the street and everything

(pause)

No, I don't think so, I ran away. But it got me thinking.

(pause)

When you're born, your mind is this empty photo album and as you get older it fills up. And this one album, my love life... it's all her and every picture is this masterpiece and I look happy. I look good.

He takes long draught.

HEPPECH

But since then in all the pictures I've been pathetic and drunk. And when I saw her she was just picture perfect as ever.

(pause)

Three months and two days. I wrote her a poem last night.

He takes out a folded piece of PAPER from his pocket. He unfolds it and a couple of PEANUTS fall from it to the floor.

HEPPECH

Love's Nipples by Heppech Truman,
your true love.

He clears his throat.

HEPPECH

What a sight to see, love's nipples must be.

He starts to choke on tears.

HEPPECH

Are they swans dancing in water?
Are they as innocent as lambs to the slaughter?

He drops the bottle to the floor.

HEPPECH
 If there were nipple police could I
 report her...

He sobs uncontrollably.

HEPPECH
 For being mankind's most beautiful
 daughter?

The line goes dead. He drops the phone and continues weeping.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY.

BENEDICT and ELWOOD, Heppech's best friends, light CANDLES on
 a table. A knock on the door. Elwood hides behind the FRIDGE
 DOOR as he changes his clothes...

BENEDICT
 Come in!

Heppech staggers in.

HEPPECH
 You guys wanted to see me?

Benedict sits Heppech at the table.

BENEDICT
 Yes. We found you last night. It
 didn't look good Hepster. We've
 held a meeting and the verdict is
 in. You need to move on.

He points at Heppech who opens his mouth to speak. Benedict
 puts a finger on Heppech's lips.

BENEDICT
 Sssh. The unstoppable events train
 has already left the station.

Heppech looks to the fridge. He sees Elwood's TROUSERS draped
 over the door.

BENEDICT
 Its time to get you out of your
 cage. Today Elwood and I will
 transform you into a dating god, my
 friend. Here's the rules. When I
 clap my hands
 (He claps.)
 I want you to say something funny
 and when I stamp
 (MORE)

BENEDICT(cont'd)

(He stamps)

You need to change the subject.
When I beep my watch the date
starts and when I beep it again the
date stops. And until we're
finished, I don't want you to think
of us as your friends. Don't even
think of us as men. For the next
ten minutes...

He waves a finger between himself and the fridge door.

BENEDICT (CONT'D)

...we are women.

Benedict sits down opposite Heppch. He produces some
LIPSTICK, applies a coat to himself, beeps his watch and
holds out his hand.

BENEDICT

Hi, I'm Olivia.

EXT. PARK - DAY.

Heppch runs away from an unknown assailant. SFX: ANSWERING
MACHINE BEEP

FEMALE VOICE 1 (V.O)

Hi fearless, I'm Rachel and I'm
afraid of the usual stuff like
knives and guns and terrorism.

Heppch looks over his shoulder, trying to see his attacker.

FEMALE VOICE 1 (V.O)

Oh and I love smelling permanent
markers. Let's meet, call me.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY.

Heppch looks blankly at Benedict.

Silence.

Heppch eats a peanut from his pocket. Benedict beeps his
watch and buries his head in his hands. Elwood peers over the
fridge door.

ELWOOD

Don't worry Heppy. So there was no
conversation. You just need to
learn how to start a dialogue. Try
questions. How are you Olive?
Questions will get you responses.

Elwood drapes his T-SHIRT on the fridge door.

ELWOOD

But remember this. The question you ask is an answer to her unspoken question - what is he like? Ask about sports and she'll know you like sports. The question is a bridge. If it's about a common interest you'll be over running water. Now ask Olive something.

Heppech looks up to Benedict. Benedict bats his eyelashes back and beeps his watch.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Heppech is in the bed, on the phone. His BEER rests on the pillow. He chews peanuts from his palm.

HEPPECH

I keep trying to think of an analogy for our relationship, to understand what she meant to me. The best I got is a flipbook.

(pause)

You know those little doodles you used to do in the corner of your school books?

(pause)

Well, I used to. Anyway it was this two year long flipbook. And when I look back and flip through, I can't slow it down and its all a blur.

He drops a peanut and knocks his beer over, listening to the phone as he attempts to clean his mess. He frowns.

HEPPECH

Aren't you supposed to be helping me here?

(pause)

Yes, I know it's a voluntary help-line I just, yes I'm sorry.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY.

Benedict beeps his watch.

BENEDICT

Not good Hepster. Not good at all.
You're just not approaching this
right.

He stands up.

BENEDICT

Its time to let you in on the
secret, because I think we can all
agree, if anyone here knows about
women it's Benedict, baby. Elwood,
are you ready yet?

ELWOOD

Just a second... I'm almost ready for
my entrance...

BENEDICT

(whispers to Heppech)
He put a lot of effort into this.
Don't laugh.

Elwood steps out. He wears a DRESS, HEELS and sports a
HANDBAG awkwardly. He takes Benedict's place at the table.
Benedict paces up and down the floor.

BENEDICT

Dating is boxing. Yes, it really is
that simple, gentlemen. At first
there's a little dancing around,
the combatants sizing each other
up, trying to find their opponents
weak spot. And then...

He hits his hands together.

BENEDICT

POW! You go for the knockout. Now,
planted inside of Gertrude's
personality...

He points to Elwood. Elwood waves.

BENEDICT

... is a weakness. You have three
minutes to find it. Aaaaannnndd.....

He beeps his watch.

EXT. PARK - DAY.

Heppech runs as fast as he can.

FEMALE VOICE 2 (V.O)

(angry, rushed)

Now listen up, fearless. Listen good, you punk. When I was nine I went camping with my parents. I got lost in the woods. A big bear came up to me. Right up to my face. It sniffed me. And then it left. Just like that. Since then I fear nothing. You think you've nothing to fear? Well I'll scare the living crap out of you. Then I'll hold it right up to your nose. I'll make you smell fear, alright. I'll be seeing you soon, real soon.

SFX: ANSWERING MACHINE BEEP.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY.

Benedict crouches next to Heppech.

BENEDICT

(whispering to Heppech)

Throw in some jabs.

HEPPECH

So, Gertrude. Do you, uh, what's your biggest fear?

BENEDICT

(whispering)

Hit her. Hit her.

HEPPECH

You, uh, bitch.

ELWOOD

(effeminately)

The horror movies. Eeek!

Benedict.

HEPPECH

Something funny. Erm. I was in a factory one time and I, uh, saw a sign about steps being stolen from the office and it read 'if the steps are not returned further steps will be taken', uh...

Elwood smiles, closes his eyes and leans forward for a kiss.

Benedict stamps.

HEPPECH

I, well, erm, do you have a favourite day of the week? I like Sundays.

Benedict claps.

HEPPECH

I like them so much I can't go a week without one!

Benedict STAMPS and CLAPS at the same time.

BENEDICT

(shouting at Heppech)
Knock her out! Knock her out!

Heppech SLAPS Elwood. Benedict beeps his watch.

BENEDICT

And that's time.

Heppech bangs his head on the table. Benedict and Elwood hangs their heads in failure.

ELWOOD

(nursing his cheek)
We might as well tell you. After we found you last night, we went to every bar in town and kind of wrote your phone number in the ladies washrooms...

Heppech picks his head up and puts a peanut in his mouth. He chews blankly at Elwood.

BENEDICT

And a couple of the men's.

EXT. HEPPECH'S ROOM - NIGHT.

Heppech sits on the bed, bottle on the floor by his feet, on the phone.

HELP LINE GIRL

Just stop it.

HEPPECH

What?

HELP LINE GIRL

You just go on and on and you know what I think? I think you'd rather pine over some perfect album than get out there and risk getting some bad pictures.

HEPPECH

Stop. I can't take this. Everyone who's supposed to be helping me isn't- they're just giving me bad advice. Take my best friends. To find me a new love, they've put my phone number in every girl's toilet in town.

HELP LINE GIRL

Wait, you're the Hespter? Huh. You're the talk of the toilets. Every girl in town wants to meet the fearless Hepster.

HEPPECH

That explains the messages- but why do they keep calling me fearless?

HELP LINE GIRL

They must all think you wrote it. It says your number, name and then 'I am not afraid'.

Heppech kicks out and knocks his bottle over.

HELP LINE GIRL

Huh. Imagine that. The brave Hepster gets his friends to write his number in the stalls for him! Turns out Mr. Fearless is just a coward.

Heppech mops the spill with his shirt.

HEPPECH

I'm not! I mean, I am. I am brave is what I mean! Here- I'll ask you out right now.

(pause)

Will you go out with me?

HELP LINE GIRL

No way. Besides, help line policy- we don't date cases.

(MORE)

HELP LINE GIRL(cont'd)

Next time you call, ask for someone
else, alright? I can't stand
cowards!

Click. The line goes dead.

Heppech gets up and puts on his COAT. On his way he checks
the ANSWERING MACHINE. SFX: ANSWERING MACHINE BEEP.

<p>HEPPECH'S MOM Heppech, its your mother. Your father's having another episode. Its vegetables this time. And why is your number in the ladies washroom? I love you; call me.</p>	<p>HEPPECH'S DAD (background) I'm a carrot, I'm a potato, a rhubarb, a big, giant prize winning rhubarb!</p>
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Heppech sighs and leaves. SFX: ANSWERING MACHINE BEEP.

FEMALE VOICE 2
It's me again, you little punk.
Time's up...

EXT. PARK - DAY.

Heppech sits on a bench, eating peanuts, reading his poem to
himself softly.

FEMALE VOICE 2 (V.O.)
Today I'm going to boil you up a
big bowl of fear, give you a fork
and then I'm going to make you eat
it... I'll be seeing you VERY soon.
Ta-ta!

Over his shoulder a WOMAN comes out of nowhere, rushing
toward him, waving a BLADE. Heppech drops his poem and starts
to run, leaving a trail of peanuts.

As he runs, he remembers...

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O)
You're just a coward after all...

ELWOOD (V.O)
Bridge over running water...

HEPPECH'S DAD (V.O)
French Onion! French Onion!

BENEDICT (V.O)
Knock her out! Knock her out!

Heppech stops and turns. He pulls his arm back, ready to punch as she reaches him with the blade in hand...

INT. KITCHEN - DAY.

Elwood and Benedict hold hands over the table. They smile into the candlelight. Under the table, Elwood's leg reaches for Benedict's...

EXT. BENCH - NIGHT.

Heppech sits with the running woman. She holds a NAPKIN to her face, nursing a bruise. He holds out his hand.

HEPPECH

Peanut?

WOMAN

No. Yes. I mean...

She slaps him, and takes a peanut.

WOMAN

Thanks. I'm sorry I tried to scare you.

HEPPECH

It's ok. You thought I was something else.

WOMAN

I, uh, wrote you a poem.

She digs a hand into her pocket, takes out a PAPER. A couple of PEAS drop to the ground. She clears her throat.

WOMAN

Fear's Armpits by Rotunda
Lessmore...

FADE TO BLACK

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