

Gravity Rides Everything

A one-act play by Christopher Quilici

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By Christopher Quilici

CAST

James.....late 20's, sarcastic, but a nice guy
Serephina.....mid to late 20's, dorky
Audrey.....early 20's, doesn't give a shit
Tyler.....18, takes job too seriously
Gary.....the boss
Greg.....old, not tech savvy
Douche.....douche
Charlie.....James' best friend
Gloria.....middle aged
Jen.....Serephina's best friend

At Rise: A customer service desk in an electronics store.

Scene One

JAMES enters, coffee in hand. He goes to one of three computers at the long desk counter and reaches down to turn it on. He does the same to the other two computers, then returns to the first. This is routine, auto pilot. We see him type a little, use the mouse. An occasional sip of coffee.

AUDREY enters.

JAMES

Morning, Audrey.

AUDREY

Hey.

AUDREY slowly finds her way to an unoccupied computer.

JAMES

How was your weekend?

AUDREY

Pretty good.

JAMES

Yeah? What'd you do?

AUDREY

Nothing.

JAMES

Nothing? You didn't do anything all weekend?

AUDREY

Not really.

JAMES

Alright.

TYLER bursts in, throwing his jacket off and yelling as he slides behind the counter, trips, and falls to the ground. He picks himself up and gets to the remaining computer.

TYLER

I'M SO SORRY!!

JAMES

It's fine, Tyler. Just calm down!

TYLER

I've failed you!

JAMES

Really Tyler, you're okay.

TYLER

I'll make it up to you!

JAMES

Please, god, do not do that.

TYLER

I'll bring in some cookies or something!

JAMES

Tyler, that's really nice of you, but you're fine. You're only a few minutes late.

TYLER

Not good enough!

JAMES

Okay, stop, let's all just take a deep breath.

He leads TYLER in an exaggerated breath in and out.

Great. Just get ready to open, okay bud?
JAMES (cont.)

Thanks, James.
TYLER

Audrey and I can just handle the first few people until you're ready.
JAMES

GARY enters.

What's the commotion over here, James?
GARY

We were just a little excited.
JAMES

Excited. Interesting.
GARY

Yep. We're all good now.
JAMES

GARY squints a bit at JAMES.

How's the knee?
JAMES (cont.)

Just fine, thank you.
GARY

Good to hear.
JAMES

Yes. Well, if you are ready, James, I'll let the front know to open.
GARY

Sure. I think we're just about ready.
JAMES

Just about ready? Or ready?
GARY

Ready. We're ready.
JAMES

He doesn't look ready.

GARY

He will be.

JAMES

If we're opening, James, I need him to be ready.

GARY

Sir, I can-

TYLER

Please make sure your employees are here and ready on time, James.

GARY

GARY exits. TYLER is visibly devastated. AUDREY speaks suddenly.

Fuckin' hate that guy.

AUDREY

Jesus, Audrey, don't say that here!

JAMES

Just saying. Guy is an absolute dick.

AUDREY

Audrey! (*whispering*) I mean, yeah, but can you wait to say that kinda stuff until you're off the clock?

JAMES

Sure.

AUDREY

Tyler, don't worry about Gary.

JAMES

I don't deserve this job.

TYLER

I think you're doing fine.

JAMES

I was late!

TYLER

JAMES

For maybe the second time ever.

TYLER

You saw the way he looked at me! Disgust!

JAMES

Look, I'm the one who hired you, not Gary. And I'm not gonna fire you.

TYLER

I guess.

JAMES

Now, let's get ready, it looks like they're opening the doors.

AUDREY promptly pulls out a "Next Window Please" sign and places in front of her portion of the desk.

JAMES (cont.)

Audrey, you're not even doing anything.

AUDREY

I have to go to the bathroom.

She doesn't move.

JAMES

It seems urgent.

AUDREY

It is.

JAMES

Really?

AUDREY

Yeah. Hope I make it.

JAMES

Wow, okay.

Still no movement.

JAMES (cont.)

Wanna go do that, then?

AUDREY

Sure.

She remains still. A customer enters. AUDREY nudges the sign forward, then slowly exits.

GREG is the aforementioned customer. He holds a laptop box under his arm. JAMES watches AUDREY exit, turns to GREG, smiles, and goes into customer service mode.

JAMES

Hi, how can I help you?

GREG

My computer is broken.

JAMES

Alright. What seems to be the problem?

GREG

That's why I came.

JAMES

Okay, great. What's the problem?

GREG

No, that's why I'm here. It's broken.

JAMES

Sure. And, uh... what exactly happened with the computer, sir?

GREG

I don't know. That's your job.

JAMES

I'm sorry?

GREG

Isn't that your job? To figure out the problem?

JAMES

Ah. Yes, it is. I guess I was just wondering what the last thing that happened with the computer was before it crashed?

GREG

Well, it didn't crash.

JAMES

Oh okay. Did it just not start back up then?

GREG

I guess.

JAMES

Alright. Why don't I just take a look at it?

GREG hands over the box. JAMES opens it and looks inside. He pulls out a few foam pieces meant to hold a laptop in place, as well as some bubble wrap. After a moment, he puts his face to the box, looking, and comes back up.

JAMES

Sir, the notebook isn't in here.

GREG

The notebook?

JAMES

Laptop.

GREG

Oh, yeah, I know. I brought the box 'cause it has all the numbers and stuff on it.

JAMES

So you don't have the laptop with you today?

GREG

No, it's at home.

JAMES

Alright. Well, I mean, if you don't have the laptop...

GREG

Can't you just tell me how to fix it?

JAMES

Unfortunately, I don't think so.

GREG

Why not?

JAMES

Well, if I had a little more information about what might be wrong, I might be able to. But I can't right now, no.

GREG

How do you not know how to fix a computer? Isn't that your job?

JAMES

Yes, it is. But there are many ways a computer can malfunction. Unless I know specifically what the problem might be, I can only offer general advice.

GREG

Well, what's your 'general advice'?

JAMES takes a moment to breathe.

JAMES

Does your computer power on successfully?

GREG

You mean does it turn on?

JAMES

Yes.

GREG

Yeah.

JAMES

Okay. Is the problem occurring while you're working on something or operating a program?

GREG

It's a message that comes up and tells me my coffee isn't updated. I don't know.

JAMES

Your coffee?

GREG

Yeah, it goes on and on about 'Java.'

JAMES

Oh! Okay, that's actually probably a good thing.

GREG

I don't want coffee.

JAMES

No, sir, Java is a program used to-... Well, it's a program. Did you try clicking 'accept?'

GREG

No, I don't want coffee.

JAMES

It will actually just update the program named Java.

GREG

I don't want that.

JAMES

You may, actually. It helps operate-

GREG

Don't tell me what I want and don't want, young man.

JAMES

I'm sorry. I only meant that Java helps in ways not everyone knows.

GREG

That's fine.

JAMES

Okay. Well, sir, if you'd like, you can bring the laptop in another time and I can take a look at it. But I would recommend just clicking 'accept' and seeing what that does for you.

GREG

We'll see. *(walking away)* Stupid computer people. Can't even fix their own problems.

GREG exits.

JAMES

So. Gonna be one of those days.

TYLER

Okay, James, I'm ready to go!

JAMES

Great bud. Great.

AUDREY returns slowly, finding her way back to her station and removing the sign.

JAMES

Welcome back.

AUDREY

Thanks.

Two customers walk in and the first, DOUCHE, goes straight to AUDREY. It is clear he has chosen the one female customer service rep for exactly the wrong reason. AUDREY remains unfazed during their silent interaction.

The second customer, SEREPHINA, holds a laptop. She goes to TYLER.

SEREPHINA

Hi there.

TYLER

Hi! What can I do for you?

SEREPHINA

You know, I'm not totally sure. I was just looking for the Dunkin' Donuts.

TYLER

I, uh...

SEREPHINA

Sorry, that was just a joke.

TYLER

Oh. Haha.

SEREPHINA

Yeah, I just came in 'cause I got locked out of my laptop and I never turn the thing off soooooo yeah. Don't know the password.

TYLER

Ah.

SEREPHINA

Is that something you know how to get around?

TYLER

Hmm, I don't know. You don't know your password?

SEREPHINA

I know, I'm a dumbass. But yeah, I just have no idea. My hint is "hell on earth" so I'm sure it's something I thought was super clever.

TYLER

Oh gosh. Well, I haven't actually dealt with this before. Umm...

TYLER turns and looks at JAMES. After a moment, JAMES realizes this and comes over to TYLER's station.

JAMES

What's up?

TYLER

She doesn't know her password and she's locked out.

SEREPHINA

Sorry, I'm kind of a dumbass.

JAMES

I'm sure you're just human.

SEREPHINA

I dunno...

JAMES

Well, I can say you at least know what's going wrong here, which is more than most of our customers can say.

SEREPHINA

I always knew I was gifted.

JAMES

It seems your intelligence has come through for you.

SEREPHINA

Wow, college did pay off.

JAMES

Great, can I see the laptop, Tyler?

TYLER hands him the laptop and JAMES begins to mouse over different things on the lockout screen.

SEREPHINA

Is it bad, doctor?

JAMES

I'm not sure we can save it, Miss. The wounds I'm seeing here are... catastrophic.

SEREPHINA

Hail Mary!

JAMES

Exactly.

JAMES goes the route of manual override, which just means we see him put in a few combinations of keys, some reading looks at basic text screens, and then a final button push accompanied by him turning the laptop around on the counter to show the desktop.

JAMES (cont.)

Ta-da!

TYLER

How'd you do that?

SEREPHINA

My hero!

JAMES

All in a day's work, ma'am.

SEREPHINA

But actually, wow, thank you. Sorry about that.

JAMES

That is literally the only reason we're here.

SEREPHINA

The only one?

JAMES

Well, between you and me, I do have a rousing ambition to serve people in a barely-above-minimum-wage job for the rest of my life. It's my real passion.

SEREPHINA

Am I detecting a hint of cynicism?

JAMES

I'm caught.

A moment while JAMES and SEREPHINA forget why they are there.

JAMES (cont.)

Well, uh, is there anything else we can do for you?

SEREPHINA

Um, no, I think that's it. I mean, is this for sure fixed now?

JAMES

Oh! Yeah, I'm sorry, you're definitely back in. These computers are old enough that their encryption is really basic. But I would suggest going in and changing your password to be something a little more memorable, maybe right now.

SEREPHINA

Yeah, good idea. This is why they pay you the big bucks.

JAMES

That's me. So if you wanna go in, I can grab a post-it note and you can write it down if you'd like.

SEREPHINA

Sure, that'd be great.

She starts to click through the password changing screen as JAMES goes and grabs a post-it note from his portion of the desk. He returns and nabs a pen from TYLER's area.

JAMES

Great, so here's a pen and a note, and you can write down whatever on that.

SEREPHINA

Hey, you learn something new every day.

JAMES

I've been practicing just stating the obvious.

SEREPHINA

You guys, I don't know what to change my password to!

TYLER

Are we allowed to help with that?

JAMES

Technically, no. But we're also technically not supposed to hack into a customer's laptop.

TYLER

Ohhh.

SEREPHINA

You are such bad boys, aren't you?

JAMES

Well---

*JAMES is interrupted by the DOUCHE's words towards
AUDREY.*

DOUCHE

Fine, but you don't know what you're missing.

AUDREY

Oh, I'm sure I do know.

DOUCHE

Just one night. That's all I need.

AUDREY

Oh, Prince Charming, you know how to woo a girl.

DOUCHE

Hey, fuck you, okay?

AUDREY

I already told you, I'll pass.

DOUCHE

Oh whatever, bitch.

JAMES

Hey now.

JAMES walks over to AUDREY's area.

JAMES (cont.)

Sir, we don't tolerate that kind of language.

DOUCHE

Tell that to your little---

JAMES

Sir, it's time for you to leave.

Hey, I didn't do anything, she just---

DOUCHE

SIR. It is time for you to leave. Thank you.

JAMES

Whatever.

DOUCHE

DOUCHE exits.

What a douche.

AUDREY

Audrey, what the hell happened?

JAMES

That guy was hitting on me.

AUDREY

I figured as much.

JAMES

I dunno, he just got up in my face. I told him to fuck off.

AUDREY

Oh god. You did?

JAMES

Yeah.

AUDREY

Well, I'm in deep shit.

JAMES

Wow, tense in here right now.

SEREPHINA

Oh my god, I'm sorry you saw that.

JAMES

Hey man, it happens.

SEREPHINA

JAMES

Well, I hope---

JAMES suddenly sees GARY approaching quickly.

Great. Hang tight guys.

JAMES (cont.)

James!

GARY

Hey, Gary!

JAMES

Can I speak with you a moment?

GARY

Yeah, of course. What's up?

JAMES

GARY's attention turns to SEREPHINA.

Have you been helped, ma'am?

GARY

Oh, uh, yeah. Just finished.

SEREPHINA

Excellent. Thank you for coming in today.

GARY

Yeah, definitely. These guys were definitely helpful.

SEREPHINA

Glad to hear it.

GARY

Yup. They definitely made the experience better.

SEREPHINA

Well, that's... Good.

GARY

Especially... uh...

SEREPHINA

SEREPHINA searches for a nametag on JAMES.

SEREPHINA (cont.)

James here. Especially James. Helped me out.

GARY

Alright. That's good.

SEREPHINA

It certainly is.

GARY

Did you need help with anything else?

SEREPHINA

Oh, uh... No, I think I'm good. Thanks.

A really awkward pause as GARY looks at SEREPHINA, waiting for her to leave. She finally understands, and rushes to pack up her things.

SEREPHINA

Right, I'll just sneak away. Have a good one, everyone...

She exits. GARY turns on JAMES.

GARY

What is your job, James?

JAMES

Sir?

GARY

What is your job?

JAMES

I'm the customer service manager.

GARY

Exactly. So your purpose is to...?

JAMES

Manage?

GARY

Your *main* purpose.

JAMES

Serve customers.

GARY

Exactly. And I just had a gentleman, a customer, storm out of the front door. How does that reflect upon what you're supposed to be doing here?

JAMES

Sir, if you're referring to a man who came to our desk a few minutes ago, then I promise you, you wouldn't want him in the store.

GARY

And why is that?

JAMES

He was being... well, inappropriate, for one.

GARY

Was he needing help?

JAMES

I'm not sure.

GARY

What do you mean?

JAMES

I didn't deal with the customer personally.

GARY

As the manager, you are the last line of defense against these sort of occurrences. Why did you not interact with him at all?

JAMES

Audrey was doing fine, and then all of a sudden, he started yelling and swearing.

GARY

You still could have stepped in and solved the problem before it ever arose.

JAMES

Sir, I---

GARY

I'm sorry, James. Not this time. Let's have a chat in my office.

GARY beckons and exits. JAMES follows.

Lights out.

Scene Two

Lights up on a bar. It is moderately full, nothing crazy. JAMES sits at a table with two freshly emptied glasses, waiting. CHARLIE enters with a full pitcher of beer.

CHARLIE

I'm tellin' you, man, I still don't get how you got that call.

JAMES

Well, it basically comes down to my being a master of rhetoric.

CHARLIE

I think you're a master of bull shit, that's more likely.

JAMES

Hey now, I think my argument was fair. Obviously the judges agreed.

CHARLIE

Yeah, about that, though. Where did Terrence pick these guys up anyway? They seem to be pretty flip-floppity about some of their own calls.

JAMES

He said they'd done a few of the more legit comic book drafts through some amalgam forum.

CHARLIE

Come on, man. They said Phoenix could beat Doomsday. There's no coming back from that.

JAMES

Okay, you've got me there. That was just a bad call.

CHARLIE

And yours was any better?

JAMES

Think about it, Charlie. If anyone would be able to convince Dr. Manhattan, it'd be Bruce Wayne.

CHARLIE

I guess I just thought it was such a long shot.

JAMES

A long shot that paid off.

CHARLIE

Maybe I'm just pissed I didn't think of anything better.

JAMES

Possible.

SEREPHINA walks in with JEN, who is quite inebriated, and sits her down. She doesn't notice JAMES.

JAMES (cont.)

Holy shit.

CHARLIE

What?

JAMES

This is gonna sound kinda creepy, but I recognize her.

CHARLIE

So?

JAMES

She came into the store a week or two ago.

CHARLIE

Yeah, holy shit. She uses electronics.

JAMES

No, shut up, Charlie. I just meant... I dunno, she left an impression on me.

CHARLIE

Wait a SECOND. Is this the kind of impression I think it is?

JAMES

Oh god.

CHARLIE

The kind that makes little children inherit the earth?

JAMES

What does that even mean?

CHARLIE

James, are you into this girl?

JAMES

Okay, first, she's not a girl. She's a woman. We're old enough, for god's sake.

CHARLIE

Girl.

JAMES

And second, you are not turning this into one of your fantasy wingman quests.

CHARLIE

Oh, come on, man! I never get to do this!

JAMES

I know, that's usually on purpose.

*JEN suddenly gets up and rushes to the bathroom.
SEREPHINA watches her go, and in doing so, her eyes fall
upon JAMES. She gets up and walks over.*

SEREPHINA

Oh my god! Hey!

JAMES

Hey there.

SEREPHINA

Is it... Oh man, um... James?

JAMES

Nailed it.

SEREPHINA

Kobe! Weird seeing you here.

JAMES

Well, normally I'd agree with you, but we frequent this bar quite a bit.

SEREPHINA

I suppose it might be better to say, then, that it is weird you seeing me here.

JAMES

I suppose.

SEREPHINA

Since it is my first time here.

JAMES

Ah, then it makes a little more sense. By the way, I never caught your name.

SEREPHINA

Serephina.

JAMES

Well, it's nice to formally meet you, Serephina.

SEREPHINA

The same to you, James. Also, it's nice to meet you...

CHARLIE

Charlie. Nice to meet you.

JAMES

Is your friend alright?

SEREPHINA

Oh yeah, she'll be fine. She's a lightweight, but she's convinced she can drink anyone under the table. Really not sure how she got that into her head.

JAMES

This a regular thing?

SEREPHINA

Well, I don't wanna make her sound like an alcoholic...

JAMES

Fair enough.

SEREPHINA

So what are you fine gentlemen up to this evening?

JAMES

Just the usual.

CHARLIE

Sitting around.

JAMES

Drinking beer.

CHARLIE

Talking a little bit of comic books.

SEREPHINA

Oh? Do tell.

JAMES

About the comic books?

SEREPHINA

Yeah, what's the news?

JAMES

Well, we mostly talk about this thing we do as a hobby. It's called a comic book draft.

SEREPHINA

Don't shit your pants, but I know what that is.

CHARLIE

Oh really?

CHARLIE's head swivels around to look at JAMES.

SEREPHINA

Yeah, my brother did them all the time when we were teenagers. Crazy comic book fan. And I was exposed just by being in the same house.

JAMES

Wow, nice.

SEREPHINA

I tried a draft one time, it just didn't turn out too well. I think my problem might have been that I drafted people I liked more than anything. Like She-Hulk. I love her, but she never wins against asshole DC heroes.

CHARLIE

Accurate.

JAMES

Yeah, true.

SEREPHINA

But anyway, not really something I keep up with anymore.

CHARLIE

Never too late to pick it back up again.

SEREPHINA

True. Well, hey, this is actually sort of funny that I ran into you.

JAMES

How so?

SEREPHINA

I may have accidentally locked myself out of my computer again today.

JAMES

Ahhhhh.

SEREPHINA

Yeah, and I lost the post-it with my new password on it.

JAMES

Well, I don't suppose you have it with you?

SEREPHINA

As much as I love to carry it around with me drunk babysitting, I don't tonight.

JAMES

Figured. You seem like the irresponsible type.

SEREPHINA

Oh really? Well, I could say the same about you. Meeting your clients outside of the workplace.

JAMES

As long as you don't tell anyone.

SEREPHINA

Yeah, especially not that old guy you work with.

JAMES

Oh god, no, please. Gary is the last person you want to tell anything. Except maybe your two weeks' notice.

SEREPHINA

Really? That bad?

JAMES

No, I mean... As long as you keep your head down and do your job, it's not terrible.

SEREPHINA

Was he mad at you that day?

JAMES

Yeah, actually, he yelled at me pretty hard. Barely kept my job.

SEREPHINA

Oh shit.

JAMES

Man, what I put up with for you people.

SEREPHINA

Hey, I tried to save you.

JAMES

That's true, you did. Thanks for that.

CHARLIE glances towards the bathroom.

CHARLIE

Hey, is your friend okay?

SEREPHINA

Shit, I almost forgot. I'll be right back.

SEREPHINA runs to the bathroom.

CHARLIE

Holy shit, dude.

JAMES

Please, Charlie.

CHARLIE

No, I don't think you even need me.

JAMES

What?

CHARLIE

That girl---

JAMES

Woman.

CHARLIE

That woman is flirting with you so hard I already feel like the third wheel.

JAMES

You think so?

CHARLIE

Man, she has done nothing but go toe-to-toe with you on every lame joke.

JAMES

They aren't that lame.

CHARLIE

And she likes comic books.

JAMES

Okay, but I'm really not trying to do anything.

CHARLIE

You don't have to *try* to do anything. Just let it happen.

JAMES

That's not even... What?

SEREPHINA returns, looking ready to go.

SEREPHINA

Well, Jen is thoroughly sick and ready to head home.

CHARLIE

Oh, you headed out?

SEREPHINA

Yeah. But it was nice meeting you, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Sure.

SEREPHINA

And as always, a pleasure, James.

JAMES

Yeah, definitely. And feel free to stop by the store. I can probably hack into your computer again.

SEREPHINA

Oh yeah, shit. I won't be able to for probably a week or so?

JAMES

Oh okay.

Yeah.

SEREPHINA

Wait, is your laptop at home?

CHARLIE

Yeah, why?

SEREPHINA

Well, I mean, James and I were gonna go hang out at my place, but I actually have a 24 hour shift tomorrow at the hospital, so it might be better if we called it a night. Why don't you just go fix the thing now, James?

CHARLIE

Well, I---

JAMES

That's not a bad idea, actually.

SEREPHINA

Yeah, I mean, just fix it now so you don't have to worry about it later. And then you'd have an extra hand with your friend.

CHARLIE

Yeah, true. Can you, James?

SEREPHINA

I mean, if you want...

JAMES

CHARLIE and JAMES exchange glances. Maybe, just maybe, CHARLIE winks at him.

Okay, yeah, you guys have fun. I'll see you soon, James.

CHARLIE

Nice meeting you, Charlie!

SEREPHINA

Night, Charlie.

JAMES

SEREPHINA goes to grab JEN from the bathroom and exit. JAMES follows her and steals one last look back at CHARLIE, who just waves him on.

Lights out.

Scene Three

SEREPHINA's apartment. JAMES and SEREPHINA enter. As they talk, she throws her keys on a table by the door, takes off her coat and shoes, etc. He stands near to the door without taking his jacket off.

SEREPHINA

Okay, I'm beginning to think maybe she is an alcoholic.

JAMES

She just seems a little enthusiastic, that's all.

SEREPHINA

Let's hope.

JAMES

Well, I'm sure if it's a problem, she'll have a killer support system.

SEREPHINA

True. Hey, thanks again for going out of your way like this.

JAMES

Yeah, of course. Sorry you have to drive me around, though. Normally I'm content to let Charlie chauffeur me on nights like this.

SEREPHINA

Oh, do you have a car?

JAMES

Yeah. Not a great one, but she's been good to me.

SEREPHINA

Well, my conceptions about you being a moocher were all wrong. Guess it's back to the drawing board. You can make yourself at home. You want anything to drink? I could do coffee or tea or like milk.

JAMES

Uh, that's okay.

SEREPHINA

Perhaps something of the adult persuasion? I think I have some beer in the fridge. Or wine.

JAMES

Hmm. That doesn't sound bad.

SEREPHINA

Which one? Wine or beer?

JAMES

Whichever's easiest for you. Beer probably.

SEREPHINA

You know, I could actually do with a glass of wine. Do you mind?

JAMES

Hey, it's your house. Go for it.

SEREPHINA

I don't have any fancy shit, but I found this cheap red wine that I like enough. Want some?

JAMES

Yeah, sure.

SEREPHINA

And, um... You can take off your jacket if you want.

JAMES

Oh! Yeah, sorry.

As SEREPHINA opens a bottle of wine, JAMES slowly takes his jacket off, looking around. He spots the computer sitting on the coffee table and crosses to it.

JAMES (cont.)

I remember this little guy.

SEREPHINA

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Why's it gotta be a guy?

JAMES

It doesn't have to. But the one look I've had gives me the impression that it's a boy laptop.

SEREPHINA

I'll have you know Jasmine is a beautiful computer, and very much a lady.

JAMES

Well, if you love her so much, why is she so angry with you? Unrequited love?

SEREPHINA

'Tis a hard life I must look to, for my one true love despises me!

JAMES

Aw, come on. I'm sure it's not so bad. There are other fish in the sea.

SEREPHINA

There is no other like Jasmine!

JAMES

Maybe you don't swing that way.

SEREPHINA

Ha! If only I did!

JAMES

What, computers?

SEREPHINA

No, women.

JAMES

Wait, you don't?

SEREPHINA

You aren't the first to mistake me.

JAMES realizes he hasn't been even looking at the computer. He clears his throat and gets to work.

SEREPHINA (cont.)

So are you gonna just hack in again?

JAMES

Pretty much. But not in such badass terms.

JAMES finishes up unlocking the computer.

JAMES (cont.)

And there it is. All done. This time, I went in and changed the password to something I know as well.

SEREPHINA

Oh? And what is that?

JAMES

“She-hulk”

SEREPHINA

Very nice! That’s definitely something I’ll remember.

JAMES

Yeah, I’m hoping. But I suppose this visit wasn’t all bad.

SEREPHINA

Wait, was it some bad?

JAMES

Well, no...

SEREPHINA

That’s just because you haven’t had any of your wine.

JAMES

Fair enough.

SEREPHINA

Here, let’s spice it up. Drinking game.

JAMES

Uh oh, here we go.

SEREPHINA

It’ll be fun, I promise! It’s called I Never.

JAMES

Ah! I know this one. Alright, with the wine then?

SEREPHINA

Works for me.

JAMES

You go first.

SEREPHINA

Nope, it’s your turn first. I have home team advantage.

JAMES

Alright. Um...

JAMES takes a moment to think.

JAMES (cont.)

I've never had a cat.

SEREPHINA drinks.

SEREPHINA

I've never painted a house.

JAMES drinks.

JAMES

I've never... gotten a speeding ticket.

SEREPHINA drinks.

SEREPHINA

I've never had a gym membership.

JAMES

Nope! I've never been to New York.

SEREPHINA drinks.

SEREPHINA

I've never been to Disneyland.

JAMES

Oh boy, you were a damaged child.

JAMES drinks.

SEREPHINA

You're saying every kid who didn't go to Disneyland is damaged.

JAMES

To some degree. You missed out.

SEREPHINA

I guess ignorance is bliss.

JAMES

I guess. Um... I've never been locked out of my computer and didn't know the password.

SEREPHINA

Low blow.

SEREPHINA drinks.

SEREPHINA (cont.)

I respond with this: I've never worked in retail.

JAMES

Ouch. I think that hurts worse.

JAMES drinks.

SEREPHINA

At least yours makes sense.

JAMES

But at least forgetting your password is a one-time thing.

SEREPHINA

Alright, you have me there.

JAMES

I've never kissed a guy.

SEREPHINA drinks.

SEREPHINA

I've never... gotten so drunk I blacked out.

JAMES drinks.

SEREPHINA (cont.)

Well, well, well. What do we have here?

JAMES

It's happened. Not frequently, but you can't blame a guy for his 21 run.

SEREPHINA

That is true, I cannot.

JAMES

I've never been drunk enough that my friends were embarrassed of me.

SEREPHINA drinks.

JAMES (cont.)

Ha! See, same vein.

SEREPHINA

Barely. I think I had special circumstances that deemed it appropriate.

JAMES

Go on.

SEREPHINA

Sometimes you just have a bad night. This one in particular involved a break up.

JAMES

Hmm. I've been there. I wasn't in public though.

SEREPHINA

Eh, it's whatever.

JAMES

Your turn.

SEREPHINA

I've never dated someone for longer than a year.

JAMES drinks.

JAMES

I've never drunkenly slept with someone I didn't know.

SEREPHINA thinks for a moment, but doesn't drink.

JAMES (cont.)

Alright.

SEREPHINA

I've never gone to a stranger's house in the middle of the night and hooked up with them.

JAMES doesn't drink. A breath while he thinks.

JAMES

I've never invited anyone over to my house in the middle of the night, possibly to hook up with them.

He watches her closely. She looks at him for a moment, then looks down casually, takes a sip, stands up, and walks over to a stereo.

SEREPHINA

I don't know what kind of music you like, but I can turn some on.

JAMES

Sure. I like music.

SEREPHINA

You do? Well, that's good, I suppose.

JAMES

Sorry, yeah, of course I like music.

SEREPHINA

Let's see if you like this music. You know the band Modest Mouse?

JAMES

Not super well. I've heard some of their stuff, but not much.

SEREPHINA

Not to put any pressure on you, but they're one of my favorite bands. So if you don't like it, we may not be able to be friends.

JAMES

Then I'm sure I'll like them.

SEREPHINA

You mean you'll for sure like them? Or regardless of whether you do or not you're gonna tell me you do?

JAMES

I don't know what you're talking about.

SEREPHINA has plugged in her iPod to speakers and presses play. Something like "Gravity Rides Everything" by Modest Mouse plays. They both listen quietly for a few seconds.

JAMES (cont.)

I like it.

SEREPHINA

We're only a ways in. But yeah, it's a great song.

JAMES

Kinda trippy at first, but it really has a nice sound.

SEREPHINA

Yeah, definitely.

JAMES

In fact... Well, this is gonna sound weird, but it kinda just makes me happy.

SEREPHINA

Exactly.

JAMES sits, listening intently. After a moment, he puts down his wine and begins to slowly sit back on the couch, sinking in to the cushions. She walks over to the couch, sitting next to him.

JAMES

I like this.

SEREPHINA

Me too.

A brief look at each other. She lowers her head down and they kiss for a long second. They part for a moment.

JAMES

Yeah, pretty great song.

They kiss again. They begin to go horizontal on the couch.

Lights out.

Scene Four

Back at the bar. CHARLIE and JAMES sit in the same place they did before, beers in hand. This time the bar is a little more full than before.

CHARLIE

Okay, I'll give you the trump match. You had the advantage right away. But again with the Batman calls! It's like every time he has a matchup, he's up against some insurmountable enemy, and you somehow convince the judges he'd win! I just don't understand it.

JAMES

You have to think about it this way, Charlie. You give Bruce Wayne 24 hours of prep time, that means he has 24 hours to get to know his enemy, come up with a plan of attack targeting their weakness, and use his nearly limitless resources to execute the preparation. He's basically 100 times more lethal, he's in his element when he knows his enemy well.

CHARLIE

I get all that. But when you go up against an enemy who has no weakness, who can really only be overpowered by sheer force, how can Batman really win?

JAMES

You just have to think of another way than sheer force.

CHARLIE

Yeah, yeah. Master of all comics over here.

JAMES

Don't be bitter. At least I'm not rubbing it in.

CHARLIE

You are such a great winner, James.

JAMES

Sorry! God, so angry with me, just for being good at something.

CHARLIE

Sure, sure.

JAMES

And you can't complain, I've offered you help in drafting your team.

CHARLIE

It wouldn't feel as genuine if I won.

JAMES

I'm just saying.

CHARLIE

You think Serephina's gonna draft next year?

JAMES

Not sure. I don't wanna ask about something so far in the future.

CHARLIE

Yeah, I get that.

JAMES

I mean, I hope she does, I'd love to see that.

CHARLIE

Absolutely. I feel like she'd kick ass.

JAMES

Well, I mean, she'd be good. But if I'm playing, I can only root for her for so long.

CHARLIE

I see where your priorities are at.

JAMES

Gotta know what's important.

CHARLIE

So what was the deal tonight? I thought tonight was her birthday or something.

JAMES

No, it's not 'til Saturday. But I guess Jen is gonna be out of town this weekend, so tonight was their only night to go out.

CHARLIE

Ah, okay.

JAMES

So I get her on the night of.

CHARLIE

Man, it's weird thinking that all started here.

JAMES

Technically, it started at work.

CHARLIE

Just give me this one thing, James! It started here!

JAMES

Okay, it started here.

CHARLIE

And it was thanks to me. I opened a door for you.

JAMES

That part, I believe, is actually true.

CHARLIE

And that door led to many a good times with your now lady, Miss Serephina.

JAMES

Yes it did.

CHARLIE

I expect a placard of some kind in your house.

JAMES

You won't be getting that. But I really do appreciate that you helped me out that night.

CHARLIE

I really am the greatest wingman of all time.

JAMES

Pushin' it. But okay.

CHARLIE

Really though, I'm happy for you, man. I know it's only been a few months, but I can see how great she's been for you.

JAMES

What do you mean?

CHARLIE

When she walks into a room, you light up. Like some kind of super halogen. Just... Ding!

JAMES

Is that so?

CHARLIE

Yeah. This is absolutely cornball, but you seem like you just enjoy everything a little more lately.

JAMES

I really do.

CHARLIE

And that's great.

JAMES

I'm not sure why. But... I dunno. She's just one of my favorite people.

CHARLIE

That's perfect. You're golden.

JAMES

Maybe even on par with my favorite wingman over here.

CHARLIE

Don't push it.

SEREPHINA, JEN, and two others stream in and head towards a booth. SEREPHINA sees JAMES and CHARLIE, and stumbles over.

Heyyyyy!

SEREPHINA

Hey, Serephina.

CHARLIE

How's everyone doing over here?

SEREPHINA

We're great. How's---

JAMES

Before he can finish, SEREPHINA leans down and kisses him. She pulls away and stands a little unsteadily.

Ah, are we having fun?

JAMES (cont.)

So much fun.

SEREPHINA

I take it you've had a few?

JAMES

Not much. Just a couple. I'm not drunk, James, believe me.

SEREPHINA

Oh, I do. But it seems like you're on your way.

JAMES

Perhaps.

SEREPHINA

Which is totally okay.

JAMES

Yeah, it is.

SEREPHINA

CHARLIE

Do you guys need a ride home?

SEREPHINA

That depends. Do you have the ambulance with you tonight?

CHARLIE

As much as I would love that, they don't just let EMT's take the ambulance out for joy rides.

SEREPHINA

Then I'm afraid my answer must be a resounding negative. But it's no problamo. Jen is DD tonight, because of my birthday and all.

CHARLIE

Oh yeah, happy birthday!

SEREPHINA

Thank you, Charlie! You know, you are so sweet, I totally support you two being friends.

JAMES

Thanks, Ser.

CHARLIE

Thanks! Well, I do think I need to head out. Another long day tomorrow.

JAMES

Yeah, do you mind if I still grab a ride with you?

CHARLIE

You don't wanna stay with your lady?

SEREPHINA

Charlie, he has a penis, he's not allowed.

CHARLIE

Ohhhhhhh

JAMES

I'm sure I could stay if I wanted to---

SEREPHINA

Nope.

JAMES

---but I do think I'll let the ladies have their fun without me.

CHARLIE

Fair enough.

JAMES

Ser, I'll see you tomorrow, okay?

SEREPHINA

Okay.

She gives him a clumsy hug.

SEREPHINA (cont.)

I love you.

JAMES

I love you, too. Have fun.

SEREPHINA

Bye you guys!

SEREPHINA returns to her friends as CHARLIE and JAMES exit the bar.

Lights out.

Scene Five

The electronics store. In the same places as before, JAMES, AUDREY, and TYLER are behind the customer service desk. A customer, GLORIA, stands in front of TYLER's portion of the desk as both he and JAMES stand facing to her. She's laying on the guilt trip tactic.

JAMES

Yeah, I'm sorry, unfortunately, ma'am, once the seal is broken, CD's can't be returned.

GLORIA

But I never even listened to it.

JAMES

No, yeah, I understand. I believe you, I just---

GLORIA

Then why can't I return it.

JAMES

To be honest, ma'am, it's not up to me.

GLORIA

Well, who is it up to then?

JAMES

There's actually a law in place that says once a disc can possibly be copied, it isn't returnable.

GLORIA

A law?

JAMES

I know, it sounds strange. But once the seal's broken, it's very possible that someone could have copied the disc and you're now returning the original. Now, I'm not saying that's what you're doing, I just---

GLORIA

Young man, that sounds like lying to me.

JAMES

Well, in a way, you're absolutely right.

GLORIA

I'm not a liar. That's not me.

JAMES

No, of course not, ma'am.

GLORIA

I just want to return this Shania Twain CD.

JAMES

And I would love to do that for you. It's just not in the cards for us.

GLORIA

Not at all?

JAMES

Unfortunately, no. That's the policy I can't avoid.

GLORIA

Alright. Well, that's really just sad.

JAMES

I know, I'm sorry ma'am.

GLORIA

You tried your best.

The buzz of a phone vibrating is heard. JAMES glances at his phone behind the counter.

JAMES

(looking at phone) Mmhmm.

GLORIA

Guess I'll just head back home then. Can't really afford the Hymnal CD if I can't get a refund on Shania Twain.

JAMES

I wish it were different, ma'am.

GLORIA

Me too.

They sit there, staring. Finally, GLORIA goes to leave.

GLORIA (cont.)

Well, maybe I'll see you later.

GLORIA just sort of floats away, looking back at the desk. After she is out of sight, JAMES checks his phone again.

JAMES

I don't understand.

TYLER

I thought you just said CD's can't be returned when---

JAMES

No, my phone.

TYLER

Hmm. Can that be returned?

JAMES

No, sorry, Tyler, I'm just thinking out loud.

TYLER

Oh okay. Everything okay?

JAMES

Yeah, my girlfriend just called me.

AUDREY

Booty call.

JAMES

Thank you, Audrey, no. She just called me like 5 times.

AUDREY

Desperate booty call.

JAMES

Just a second, guys. I'm gonna give her a call back really quick.

TYLER

Okay!

AUDREY

I'll continue to do absolutely nothing.

JAMES

Sure, great.

JAMES listens while the phone rings. After a moment, the other end picks up.

JAMES (cont.)

Hey, Ser, what's goin' on? ... Charlie? Why are you answering Serephina's phone? ... What?

A long moment as JAMES listens to CHARLIE's hurried explanation, unheard by audience.

JAMES (cont.)

Um...Yeah. I'll head right over.

He hangs up the phone and starts gathering his things, putting on his jacket, etc.

AUDREY

Whoa, what's goin' on?

JAMES

I gotta go.

TYLER

James...?

JAMES

Not right now, guys.

JAMES rushes off.

Lights out.

Scene Six

Back at the bar. CHARLIE and JAMES sit quietly at their usual table. The bar is back to a medium level of liveliness. CHARLIE keeps an eye on JAMES, who simply stares at his beer.

They stay silent for a long time. Finally, CHARLIE speaks up.

CHARLIE

Hey, so Terrence wanted to know if you were still interested in being a judge for the next draft.

JAMES continues to stare.

CHARLIE (cont.)

James?

JAMES

Hmm?

CHARLIE

I was just saying I think Terrence was wondering if you still wanted to judge in the next draft.

JAMES

Oh, yeah. I dunno, I guess we'll see.

CHARLIE

He asked me earlier and I said I'd ask you for him.

JAMES

Right.

CHARLIE

But I know you missed the last couple matches, so... I guess it'd be okay if you didn't want to.

JAMES still stares. After a moment, CHARLIE speaks with renewed vigor.

Okay, James. It's been three weeks. CHARLIE (cont.)

What? JAMES

It's been three weeks. Can we talk? CHARLIE

What do you mean? JAMES

I'm sorry, dude, but you've been doing this every time I see you. CHARLIE

Doing what? JAMES

Just spacing out. Staring at nothing. CHARLIE

No I haven't. JAMES

Yeah, you have been. CHARLIE

Okay, Charlie. JAMES

Can we just talk? CHARLIE

What about? JAMES

Just stop it, you're not a child. CHARLIE

Hey, thanks. JAMES

CHARLIE

I'm sorry, but I'm tired of feeding the pity party.

JAMES

Wow, so that's what you think's happening.

CHARLIE

Look, man. I know you, I'd say better than most. Can we just talk about what happened?

JAMES

You already know. You, of all people, know everything that happened.

CHARLIE

I mean with you. You're just shut off from the world.

JAMES

Yeah, well, it feels a little better than skipping around all fake happy or something.

CHARLIE

That's not what I mean. Come on.

JAMES

What do you want from me?

CHARLIE

I want you to pick yourself back up. Look, I know this has all been really shitty. I know. But if you don't start trying, then I don't know how you're ever gonna feel better.

JAMES

I just need a little more time.

CHARLIE

That's fine. But you've still gotta try.

JAMES

Look, I know you're trying to help---

JEN walks in the bar slowly, looking around. JAMES sees her and stops mid-sentence. He walks over to her and plants, looking right at her. She notices and turns to face him. As she is about to say something, he interjects.

JAMES (cont.)

Comin' in for a drink?

JEN

I just, uh... No. No, not a drink.

JAMES

Are you sure?

CHARLIE rushes over.

CHARLIE

James, hold it, man.

JAMES

I'll buy you a drink, Jen.

JEN

James, you know I---

CHARLIE

James, stop. You're not a bully.

JAMES

I'm just trying to buy the lady a drink. I know she loves them.

JEN

Not anymore.

CHARLIE

James, I mean it. Walk away. Right now.

JAMES looks as if he's about to pounce, but after a moment, he lets releases, slowly turning his back to JEN.

CHARLIE (cont.)

Good choice.

JEN

I'm so sorry, James.

JAMES

I know you are.

JEN

You have no idea.

JAMES

I have some idea.

JEN

I just meant, you know---

JAMES

Thanks, Jen.

JEN

Please. I'm trying to talk to you.

JAMES

Seems to be a trend today.

CHARLIE

Come on, man.

JEN

Please, James.

JAMES

Sorry. Go ahead.

JEN

I know I can't really ever make up for the mistake I made. But I want you to know how deeply sorry I am. She was my friend, too, and I miss her so much.

JAMES

I guess I just don't quite understand.

JEN

What?

JAMES

What you could have possibly been thinking.

JEN

I don't....

JAMES

What could have crossed your mind. Because you were the designated driver. She said that to me. So why, then, would you drink at all? Just doesn't quite compute.

JEN

I'm sorry. I made a huge mistake. I wish I could take it back. I really do.

JAMES

Yeah.

I need to go. JEN

Great. JAMES

I just wanted to talk to you. JEN

Super. JAMES

Alright. Bye, James. JEN

See ya. JAMES

Thank you, Jen. Take care. CHARLIE

She exits.

Fuck. JAMES

You okay? CHARLIE

Fuck. Fuck fuck FUCK. JAMES

JAMES sits, and his head comes down to his arms, resting on the table. He starts to cry. CHARLIE puts a hand on his back.

Light out.

End of play.