

CHARACTERS

IVY: Hopeless romantic, energetic optimist, professionally driven, perfectionist, believes in love at first sight and soulmates, young twenty-something, female

VALENTINA: Practical realist, commitment-phobe with no clear life goals, bounces from job to job, artsy, adventurous, spontaneous, feels stuck standing still, an older twenty-something, female

ACT I

SCENE ONE

Setting: Rose petals are scattered across the stage. On stage left, there is a table decorated with a lace cloth. It has two wine glasses on it, a bottle of champagne, three candles, and a vase of flowers in the middle. Behind the table is a shelf of food and a refrigerator. On stage right there is a couch and a coffee table with a few large hardcover books and a magazine.

At Rise: Ivy moves across the room making sure that everything is perfection. She spreads out the rose petals, moves the champagne over an inch to the left, and readjusts her bowtie.

Ivy takes a deep breath.

IVY

Valentina, I've been so --

Ivy takes out her flashcards before continuing. She gets on one knee.

Valentina, I've been so lucky to have you in my life.--

Valentina tosses her coat on the couch, exasperated, and switches on the lights. She is dressed messily wearing jeans and a half-tucked T-shirt. Ivy quickly gets up.

VALENTINA

You wouldn't believe this woman on the subway. She kept yelling at her kids who were already screaming and --

Valentina turns around, sees the petals, the candles, and Ivy awkwardly holding the bottle of champagne.

What's going on?

IVY

Champagne?

Valentina hesitantly sits down at the table.

VALENTINA

Are you going to propose to me or something? Because this, this is an awful lot.

Ivy lets out a nervous giggle and opens the champagne. It's loud and spills everywhere. Ivy is embarrassed. She fills the glasses on the table.

IVY

Okay, here it goes.

Ivy grabs the velvet box from the table and kneels on one knee as she opens the box. She takes the flashcards out of her jacket pocket and places them beside her.

IVY

Valentina, I've been so lucky to have you in my life. To have someone to hold when the world seems upside down and side--

VALENTINA

Ooooh, no.

VALENTINA

(scared but assertive)

No, no, no, no. No.

Ivy has a confused look on her face.

VALENTINA

Please, don't. Please don't ask me what I think you're going to ask me.

IVY

Why? Why are you acting this way?

Valentina presses her head against her palm.

VALENTINA

Ivy, we've been here before. We've talked about this.

IVY

Okay yes, but let me make my case.

Ivy stands up clearing her throat and scanning her flashcards to find where she left off.

Valentina awkwardly gives Ivy a half-smile and continues.

IVY

...someone to hold when the world seems upside down and sideways. Valentina, we've been together for four years--

VALENTINA

Three years.

IVY

Three and a half years.

VALENTINA

Fine.

IVY

(reading from the flashcards)

I love you more than the ocean stretches out against the warm sun. More than Romeo loved Juliet or a Doris Day type character loved a Rock Hudson type.

Ivy wipes her sweaty palms against her leg.

VALENTINA

Okay, I'm going to stop you right there.

IVY

I know it's cheesy and I should've spent longer on the similes but in summation I love--

VALENTINA

You really got to stop it with the grandiose 'I love yous'.

IVY

But I do love you and it's an important talking point.

VALENTINA

Is it?

IVY

Shouldn't it be the only talking point?

VALENTINA

No. No, it shouldn't. That's just something you've learned from your little rom-coms. I can love you and not want to marry you.

(beat)

I do love you and I don't want to marry you.

Ivy changes her flashcard.

IVY

(reading from her flashcards)

There are many perks to marrying me. I'm an excellent roommate and if we get married I vow to make you pancakes every morning with little smiley faces on them and...

(stops reading from the card)

Oh, what's the point.

Ivy puts her flashcards back in her pocket and begins to blow out the candles.

VALENTINA

I'm sorry, but I know my answer won't change. It was never open to being changed.

IVY

(mumbles)

That's just because you're a commitment-phobe.

VALENTINA

It's more than just-- never mind.

Valentina watches Ivy blow out the candles trying to figure a way out of this and pushes her sneakers off her feet.

IVY

Remember when I lent you my copy of Jane Eyre?

VALENTINA

This is starting to feel a little deja vu...

IVY

And you didn't even read past the first page. Come to think of it, I don't think I've ever seen you read a book that you didn't give up on halfway through.

VALENTINA

This is what you want to talk about right now?

Ivy becomes increasingly frustrated with Valentina and goes to the fridge looking for a snack.

IVY

And this is the halfway point in our relationship so you're giving up. Sound about right?

Valentina doesn't know what to say.

Your commitment phobia extends beyond our relationship and it's only been detrimental to you. I mean, you can't stick with a career for more than a month without getting bored.

Ivy snacks on a stick of cheese when she notices a carton of almond milk that she takes out of the fridge.

The longest relationship you've had outside of me is this carton of milk you still have yet to throw out.

VALENTINA

Oh, give it up. It's almond milk. Almond milk doesn't expire.

IVY

Then why does it have an expiration date?

VALENTINA

It has a "best by" date. There's a difference.

Ivy puts down the milk.

IVY

Okay, forget the thing about the milk. I'm just saying that I'm one of the longest-lasting things in your life and that terrifies you.

Ivy takes a deep breath.

But I'm pleading with you not to run away from me because I love you and we can get through this. I mean-- I'm here for you.

Valentina shakes her head.

VALENTINA

Ivy, that's very sweet, but that's not really why I'm saying no.

IVY

(defensively)

So you don't think you're a commitment-phobe?

VALENTINA

Ivy, you're just blindly rushing into this. There are consequences to saying yes to this.

Valentina puts the almond milk back into the fridge. This annoys Ivy but she doesn't say anything.

IVY

Umm... Like a lifetime of happiness?

VALENTINA

No, I meant unintentional consequences like committing to something that could lead to severe emotional impairment.

IVY

Emotional impairment?

VALENTINA

I think I would lose my sense of self. You said it yourself. I can't even commit to a career. Ives, I need to get my life together.

IVY

And as a married woman, you wouldn't be able to put your life together because...

VALENTINA

I need to figure some things out for myself and I need to know that the person that I am is more than just the person you want me to be.

IVY

I just want you to be the type of person who says, “yes” to their girlfriend’s sweet and thoughtful marriage proposal.

Ivy grabs the broom that’s resting on the side of the refrigerator and sweeps away the flower petals.

VALENTINA

You want more than that. You want me to be the type of girl who finishes books. Who lives in the suburbs, owns eight huskies, and stays in watching romcoms Friday nights.

IVY

Val, I don’t want you to change. I just wanted you to take interest in... I just wanted to share my interests with you.

VALENTINA

What would a marriage between us even look like? Look, you love your job. There is no reason for you to leave New York, but I don’t know where I’ll end up. Maybe I’ll move to Florence, or Berlin, or Hong Kong. The point is... is... there’s so much to see and to do and to become. I can’t just--

IVY

Waste your life being married to me?

Valentina sinks down onto the couch.

VALENTINA

(softly)

I didn’t say that.

IVY

Yeah, but you were thinking it.

VALENTINA

No. No, I was thinking... Ivy, why do you even want to get married? Don’t you want to do more? To see more? To suck the marrow out of life? To carpe diem? Or whatever.

IVY

I told you. It’s because I love you.

VALENTINA

And why is that?

IVY

Because you're adventurous and outgoing and creative and absolutely nothing like me.

VALENTINA

You don't find being polar opposites exhausting? Because I do. Ivy, I'm so exhausted.

Valentina tears up a little. Ivy sits down next to her and holds her hand.

IVY

Opposites are supposed to attract not break up.

VALENTINA

You say that like it's a rule and not some dumb saying.

IVY

Well, I believe in it. We'll learn from each other's differences. And yes, life may force us to grow apart but in the end, we'll always come back together.

VALENTINA

But what if we don't?

IVY

You're just being pessimistic.

VALENTINA

I'm not, or maybe I am. But I think you're more in love with the concept of love than you are with me.

IVY

Valentina, I literally just gave you a list of all the reasons why I love you. Every time that I say I love you or that you're smart, witty, and beautiful, those aren't lies. I mean them.

VALENTINA

I know, but that doesn't mean that they're true.

IVY

I'm not delusional. Are you saying I'm delusional?

No. VALENTINA

Ivy sits up and pulls away from Valentina.

IVY

(with conviction)
I'm a very rational non-delusional person.

VALENTINA
I know you are. I just don't want to live in some romantic bubble like you do. I want the world and my experiences in it to be what helps me grow not one singular person.

Ivy fidgets, anxiously.

IVY
Valentina, what if you're the love of my life and I'm the love of yours and this is our one opportunity for happiness.

VALENTINA
I promise you that that is not the case.

Valentina squeezes Ivy's hand.
Ivy, I want you to know that I do love you. Not being able to say yes to this has nothing to do with how much I love you.

Then Valentina exits.

Ivy cries for a minute mourning what she just lost. She stares at the velvet box contemplatively before opening it.

IVY
Will you marry me?

Ivy puts the ring on her finger and feigns a smile.

BLACKOUT.