

Lonely Hearts Ventura

a play by Kieron Barry

The entire text of this play has been assembled from postings found on the 'Missed Connections' section of the Craigslist website for Ventura, California, and other areas.

Characters

Adam	a younger man
Betsy	a younger woman
Charles	an older man
Dorothy	an older woman

The dialogue in this play should be performed at a pace slighter faster than that which might be considered normal, or even naturalistic.

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We hear the sounds of a busy street, and a babble of voices. Out of the cacophony comes:

Adam I'm posting on here trying to find a cute, funny, adventurous, well-read girl. The kind who you meet at Citibank when she asks to borrow your pen.

Betsy Hey there, you were on the bus today. Your blond hair shimmered through the window. We made eye contact. I think you're German.

Adam Red head during early lunch yesterday. It took me about 10 minutes until I could man up and ask you if you thought it would rain.

Betsy Thanks for honking! I'd driven away without replacing the gas cap.

Adam To the girl at the red box movie thingy at Ralphs. You walked away before your movie return was processed and it spit it out. Apparently the red arrow needs to be towards you, not away from you. I returned it for you.

Betsy We walked past each other on the street kind of in front of the library last week. You are probably the most attractive person I have ever seen. You had on black jeans, a black shirt, black leather jacket... and black faux ray bans, which to be honest I could do without.

Adam So: you had a purple coat on and when you took it off you were stunning and had the sexiest little black dress on. If you're out there let's chat. I wanted to say hi but you left after communion.

Betsy I thought you were smokin hot. Love to hook up with you and talk about funeral homes some more...

Adam Every time I go to Barnes and Noble I see you. Well, you work there to be honest.

Betsy In Trader Joe's this evening with my sister buying trail mixes, you were restocking the dried fruits and we discussed the lack of mangos. You're so cute.

Adam You came into McDonald's, where I work, and ordered a sweet tea, a caramel sundae with light caramel, and a fruit and yogurt parfait. When you came in, time stopped, and my heart was racing. You are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen, and your smile rivalled a renaissance portrait. Maybe we can get together and have food that doesn't require coming up to a counter.

Betsy Guy who works at McDonalds: so basically, you keep denying me ketchup, and you're like super cute. Don't worry, I'm not fat or anything, I just get lazy occasionally.

Adam I saw you sitting in the corner reading *Ender's Shadow*. Did you finish the

book? I have read all nine in the Ender or Shadow series.

Betsy IHOP waiter – Oh sir, you're so cute! You were witty, and impressed my crazy family when we came in this morning. Your service was great, as well as your small talk and commentary. Thank you for putting up with my baroness of a grandmother, who is just so abrupt with her order, and thank you for the lightly buttered toast; you did it right, but someone cut it really oddly.

Adam It was the morning rush hour. I was already on the train, and you ran on before anyone had a chance to get out. Another woman told you to wait for the exiting passengers to alight from the train. You told her:

Dorothy “Shut up, bitch! Who the fuck do you think you are?”

Adam ... I fell in love. You asserted yourself so well. I like that in a woman.

Dorothy You left a note in my bike basket today describing how I stole your “distinct” bike, then painted it and added a basket. Unless the charming elderly couple I purchased it from stole it from you, it’s not your bike. Next time chill out before you write a bitchy note to a stranger. Thanks.

Charles I’m looking for a lady I met online last year on Craigslist. She is a black lady with big breasts. I can’t remember her name.

Dorothy Jimmy is a dick. If you’re hot on him, then you’re a retard...

Charles You walked into TGI Friday's last night wearing black stretch pants that left very little to the imagination. What an amazing bod!

Betsy ... Jimmy is *not* a dick. He’s the Brad Pitt of Ventura. You're just jealous because you are not the Angelina Jolie of Ventucky.

Charles I was captivated the moment I laid eyes on you. We're both married, so I couldn’t say something in the Jacuzzi.

Dorothy Officer at my place tonight. You were hot. You can take my statement anytime.

Charles Actually, I am military, so, yeah...

Adam I looked up as you walked out and have never felt such magic. I watched you as you made your way to your white Toyota SUV. I was stunned. Why would such a creature drive such a behemoth?

Charles You are a tall, shapely black woman. You left one of the upstairs rooms with a business man on Thursday afternoon. I didn’t say anything at the time cause he was HUGE and I don’t want any trouble. Whether you’re a pro or not, I’m interested.

Adam I'm sorry I stared at you. I forced myself to look down at my computer, and then when I dared look up you were walking out the door. What would I have said had you stayed? Nothing.

Dorothy At the Indian buffet. I've never been attracted to limbless men, but I have to admit, watching you use your claw today to eat that cheese literally made me wet.

Betsy I was ranting about my \$70 cell phone bill when I passed by. You responded in shock about my bill, possibly mocking me. But as I walked by, I guess I touched your butt. In front of Coffee Bean. Rawr!

Dorothy Don't respond if you are under 21 or used to be a woman.

Adam Starbucks today. You were wearing a short skirt and high heel boots. It takes a confident woman to wear such an outfit, and a confident woman deserves a secure man. Sadly I am not secure.

Dorothy We were in line at Starbucks together. I sneezed and you said:

Charles "God bless you."...

Dorothy ... I said shut up, there's no such thing as God. You said:

Charles "Oh, I'm sorry."...

Dorothy ... You were pretty cute though. We could date sometime if you're not going to try to convert me every time I sneeze.

A moment of connection; of tenderness and real affection. A tableau, freeze, sound, perhaps music.

Then a sudden change of mood:

Betsy I hate that you didn't have enough balls to save up your money to buy me a ring. Instead I'm wearing my mother's. That's just pathetic.

Charles I hate how you lie to my face and think I don't realize how full of crap you really are. I guess it's true what they say about those with brown eyes.

Betsy I hate how you put video games before me. You say you don't but deep down I think you know you do.

Dorothy I hate that you pretty much forced me to change myself. I loved the way my life was before. Not so much the addictions, but...

Betsy I hate how I always have to stay at your place because my place is "boring". I know the only reason you want to be at home is your video games.

Just don't deny it.

Dorothy You never want me to go out to the club. You say that the only reason people need clubs is to pick up people. Not true. I just really love to dance. Something else you just can't understand.

Betsy And the biggest thing I hate about you is how you are the king of double standards. You freaked out on me for my ex-boyfriend messaging me. But when your ex-girlfriend messages you, I'm not supposed to say anything? What kind of bull is that? You try to play me like a fool and think that I don't know you're talking to her. Well guess what, sweetheart. I know.

Charles Bottom line here is this... I do love you but it will be a snowball's chance in hell before I let my life turn out just like my parents'. Or your parents' for that matter. So please.

Dorothy I guess this is my only means of telling you without telling you to your face and tearing your world apart, even though you may never read this.

Charles At least I got it off my chest.

Betsy Love, your fed-up fiancée.

Transition.

Dorothy He just left. Don't know what to feel, but all I can think is that he wasn't you. His smell is still on me and to tell you the truth, it's kind of making me sick. Don't get me wrong, he's a good looking guy, sweet, and cool, but he just wasn't you. He didn't tease me the way you did, didn't hold me with your arms, and he didn't look into my eyes like you. Just have to remind myself that it's never gonna be you.

Betsy I don't know what happened. I know WHEN it broke but I don't know HOW. I know that I'd do anything in the world to fix it, I know that I worry about ending up in the hospital... doctors and their pieces of paper... and never being able to say goodbye.

Charles Why did you leave?! We had a night of amazing sex! We humped like mooses in the winter. You called me Sir Mix-A-Lot because I loved your big booty and couldn't stop slapping it. I called you Becky. It was the first name that came to mind.

Adam It's clear you don't share the same feelings. That's why I've stopped calling.

Charles I miss you so much. I hate that shit ended the way it did.

Betsy The saying goes “You never know how good you have it, until it’s gone.” That saying doesn’t really apply to me because I knew how good I had it.

Charles I fell in love with you and never planned to. I hope you’re doing good, Babycakes.

Adam I know it didn't mean a thing to you, but thanks for making me feel less invisible.

Charles You deserve a lifetime of happiness. I hope your knight in shining armor finds you soon. But you’re wasting your time bartending at the Camarillo Sportsman, though; you can be so much more.

Dorothy Ventura’s a sad, lonely place. Love really is suicide. No wonder I tattooed it on the top of my foot. Should have blasted it on my head, that’s how down I am. This is for my man crush, you’ve got an old lady and kids, I’ve got an old man and kids but I really would say fuck everyone to be with you. I’m not sure if you’ll ever see this but if you do I want you to know I will be here for you if you ever change your mind about me. Fuck, this sucks. I’m not mad or upset, just a little sad but I’m a big girl and can take some shit.

Adam I won’t come to you because for all I know you are still seeing my brother. I am strong, but it gets to me sometimes.

Charles I wrote your name on a rock at the mountain today.

Transition. The sense that normal life has returned, that all things are renewed, spring-like.

Betsy Tall swimmer I split the lane with today: sorry if I spat at you on one of my flip turns.

Charles Beautiful lady working at Vons checkout late nights. When you see me I usually am in my sleeping clothes and don’t always look my best.

Betsy Bearded man at the Oaks mall. Such a nice beard – so round and full!

Dorothy I am looking for a man by the name of K.I. He was in Vegas back in 1998. I had a child by him, and as my son is growing older if the question arises who is biological father is, I would like to be able to let him know. I don't want your money. Please just email me if this might be you.

Adam You: leggy young lady who resembles the princess from Aladdin. Me: the guy that punches your free cookie card every time you buy a cookie at Vons...

Betsy You offered to help me check out my book at the library. I was too shy. I let the other librarian help me. I think you're awesome.

Adam ... Sometimes I spend an extra couple of minutes in the morning making sure the peanut butter M&M cookies that you love are just right, just in case you come in.

Charles To the Starbucks girl. You asked if my name is spelled with an I or a Y. Thanks. Normally they get it wrong.

Dorothy I work with you. I'm older. It will never happen. But every day I think about dragging you into a closet and totally cougar-pouncing you.

Betsy I read these posts every night... I must say, oh, how I wish this was meant for me.... Alas, I know it's most likely not.

Charles I hope that maybe you will see this...

Adam I know it's a long shot...

Dorothy Super crazy long shot...

Charles It's a shot in the dark but one I had to take.

Adam It's a long shot...

Charles Hell, I probably should buy a lottery ticket if this gets to you.

Betsy It's a long shot...

Charles It *is* a long shot...

Betsy But...

(Snap to black.)

(End.)