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Crushed

An anti-romantic comedy in one-act

By Don Zolidis

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One-act comedy
8-25 actors, gender flexible

Rather than interact with other humans, Guy and Girl have retreated to their own personal fantasy worlds of sappy romantic comedies and violent video games. Luckily, their hours of gorging on ice cream and battling imaginary enemies cause them to hallucinate their own spirit guides to romance, who will gleefully usher them into the world of dating, starting with lessons in what not to do (like creating a doll made of your beloved's hair or wearing a sympathy pregnancy suit). A hilarious and wild look at the pitfalls of having a crush.

Cast of Characters

FEMALE NARRATOR
MALE NARRATOR

GUY
GIRL

The rest of the parts may be doublecast as necessary. You could do this play with a cast of eight highly talented quick-change artists. Or you could do it with a different actor in each part. The parts are:

BRANDI
TODD
BRENT
MAGGIE
TOM
BRENDA
SALLY
BRADY
MANDA
JIM
APRIL
BRICE
APRIL'S DAD
BIJOU
TRENT
OLIVIA
STEVE
PRINCESS 1-4
PRINCE 1-4

This play is meant to be as flexible as possible. Please feel free to cut scenes as necessary.

(Lights up stage left, on a couch. GIRL sits, watching television, with a remote control in her hand. She's watching the latest romantic movie.)

(FEMALE NARRATOR enters.)

FEMALE NARRATOR

We've all been there.

(GIRL takes out a tub of ice cream.)

GIRL

This movie is so beautiful!

(She gorges on the ice cream. She cries piteously.)

I'm alone! I'm ALONE!!!

(She wails.)

(Lights up stage right, on another couch. GUY sits, with a headset on, perhaps with various bottles of energy drinks stacked up next to him. He has a video game controller in his hand (or if you're adventurous, he's using a Kinekt to act this out. He's playing Call of Duty 3 or some other suitably violent game.)

(MALE NARRATOR enters on his side.)

MALE NARRATOR

And guys – we've been there too.

GUY *(shouting into his headset to someone named Ping)*

Ping! Cover me, I'm going in! AAAAAAAAH They're everywhere! They're everywhere! Ping where are you!? I'm hit! I'M HIT! I'm going down! Ping you were supposed to cover me! WHY PING WHY?!!!!! No. Noooo!

(He cries piteously.)

I'm alone! I'm ALONE!!!

FEMALE NARRATOR

You see, something has gone wrong in the socialization process –

GIRL

No one will ever love me!

(She takes out a second tub of ice cream.)

I don't even deserve this ice cream!

(Pause.)

Yes I do.

(More eating.)

MALE NARRATOR

Something terribly wrong.

GUY

I haven't been outside in three days. I can't remember the last time I talked to a human face-to-face. My blood is now a twenty percent mix of Monster, Mountain Dew, and Red Bull… and it's awesome.

(FEMALE NARRATOR steps in to the scene with GIRL.)

FEMALE NARRATOR

I can help you!

GIRL

Ah! What?! Are you my fairy godmother?

FEMALE NARRATOR

No – I am a divine being.

GIRL

You're an angel?

FEMALE NARRATOR

Yes.

(short pause)

No I'm kidding I'm a hallucination! Twenty-two hours straight watching the hallmark channel has caused your brain to hemorrhage, and therefore I have appeared to you.

GIRL

Why?

(MALE NARRATOR steps in to the scene with GUY.)

MALE NARRATOR

I'm here to help you.

GUY

You have cheat codes?!

MALE NARRATOR

No I don't have –

GUY

I NEED THE CODES, MAN!

MALE NARRATOR

No I'm here –

GUY

You don't understand! There's too many of them! I've been hit with –

MALE NARRATOR

SNAP OUT OF IT! It's time to live in the real world!

GUY

I don't like the real world.

FEMALE NARRATOR

What's clear is that you need a lot of help with love.

GIRL

I do?

MALE NARRATOR

And I'm here to help you.

GUY

You are?

BOTH NARRATORS

We are!

MALE NARRATOR

What's clear to me, and just about everyone else, is that you need to find a girlfriend.

FEMALE NARRATOR

And you don't need a man!

GIRL

I don't?

FEMALE NARRATOR

But it's kind of nice to have one. To buy stuff. And to open doors, cause you know, your arms don't work –

GIRL

I want a man that's going to sweep me off my feet and do romantic things and then probably ignore me for a while until I desperately cling to him and then maybe he's also a vampire who is –

FEMALE NARRATOR

Stop right there!

GIRL

Well, how do I find a man?

GUY

And how do I find a man? Girl. I mean girl. Woman. Female type person.

FEMALE NARRATOR

Well – it's not as easy as you might think!

GIRL

I was kind of hoping to find a notebook from someone written fifty years ago and then somehow travel through time to find him – or, if that doesn't work, I was hoping to have my picture discovered by a man in a coma and then have him seek me out because –

FEMALE NARRATOR

Stop! Let's just take a moment to show you how *not* to do it.

GUY

How *not* to do it?

MALE NARRATOR

You're just not that bright, are you?

GUY

That's what my Grandma says.

FEMALE NARRATOR

Lesson Number 1: Desperation.

(The Narrators set up a table and chairs as GUY and GIRL move from their prospective places to watch the action from the sides. TODD and BRANDI appear on stage. BRANDI is desperate.)

BRANDI

This is such a great date.

TODD

Oh. Yeah.

(BRANDI snorts happily.)

BRANDI

I'm sorry I just snorted.

TODD

That's okay. I snort sometimes too.

BRANDI

You do?! You're so awesome! I love watching you sometimes in Math class.

TODD

Oh.

BRANDI

You're always like… doing math and stuff! It's so cool! I mean like, when you start thinking, and then you start moving your pencil up and down while you're writing stuff! I wish I could do that!

TODD

Uh…

BRANDI

I think about you all the time! I do! I really do. Like yesterday, I thought about you for ten hours in a row. Not the whole time, only like eighty percent of the time – but still it was pretty great. Do you think you love me yet? You don't have to answer, but if you had to put like a timeline on it, when approximately do you think you're going to love me? I want to know so I can start celebrating it on my calendar! Do you like the color teal? Because I was thinking of that for my bridesmaids dresses and maybe we should have an ice sculpture and I love you and I will you forever and even if I die I will return from beyond the grave and I will never ever LEAVE YOU.

TODD

I need to go. I just had a stroke, I think. And it's probably best for me to be in the hospital for a while.

(TODD escapes.)

MALE NARRATOR

And it's not just girls who can be desperate.

(BRENT enters.)

BRENT

Okay, close your eyes.

BRANDI

Where are we going?

BRENT

I have a surprise for you.

BRANDI

I'm so excited!

BRENT

Okay – open them up!

(BRENT produces a small charcoal drawing of BRANDI.)

Skipping Forward

(BRENDA enters.)

BRENDA

Hi!

TOM

Oh hey Brenda.
(He continues to gaze lovingly at MAGGIE.)

BRENDA

What's up?

TOM

We're sharing a special moment.

BRENDA

Cool.
(BRENDA hovers nearby.)
You know what would be a great special moment? If you broke up.

MAGGIE

What?

BRENDA

Did I say that out loud? I didn't mean it. Go ahead, carry on.
(under her breath)
Break up.

TOM

Do you want something Brenda?

BRENDA

Nope. Nope.
(under her breath)
Dump her. Dump that chick.

TOM

What?

BRENDA

I'm going to the dump later. You know, where you get rid of things you don't like anymore. You know, let's say you've got something that's ugly and kind of disgusting and doesn't smell very good and you should probably just toss it into the trash and then turn on the trash compactor and make like a little cube of gross blue-dress wearing stuff. You know, something like that.

MAGGIE

All right, we'll see you later.

BRENDA *(coughing into her hand)*

Dump her!

TOM

Did you just say dump her?

BRENDA

Why would I say that? I mean, if that was the right course of action and anyone in his right mind would see that I would be so so much better than her for you. I mean, I bake brownies, Tom.

MAGGIE

I bake brownies.

BRENDA

No one asked you! He hates you! He loves me instead!

TOM

Um… We gotta go.

BRENDA

Call me?

(TOM and MAGGIE leave.)

MALE NARRATOR

But this is an equal opportunity show! And it just might happen that the girl you like might want to bring you into… The FRIEND ZONE!

GUY

NO!

MALE NARRATOR

YES!

GUY

I CAN'T WATCH!

MALE NARRATOR

You must! Behold the friend zone in all its horrific glory!

(SALLY enters. BRADY enters right behind her, holding her books.)

SALLY

Thanks Brady. You can set those down over there.

BRADY

Sure thing.

SALLY

Oh hey – me and my friends are having a party tomorrow night –

BRADY

I'd love to come!

SALLY

Great! We really need a doorman! We're trying to do this really fancy.

BRADY

Oh.

SALLY

You don't happen to have a white tuxedo do you?

BRADY

No, but –

SALLY

It would be great if you could go rent one for yourself.

BRADY

Yeah – I can do that.

SALLY

You're such a great friend.

GUY

Aaaaaah! Why is he doing that?!

MALE NARRATOR

Silence!

GUY

Spirit, show me no more!

SALLY

You know I didn't really ask you to come over just to do my algebra homework… there's something really important I wanted to ask you.

BRADY

Really?

SALLY

I feel kind of silly asking you this.

BRADY

No it's okay.

SALLY

It's just that… you're such a smart, sensitive guy, and you're so much nicer than any of the guys I normally go with.

BRADY

I know. All of those other guys you've dated have been horrible jerks.

SALLY

Not like you. You're so sweet. You would never cheat on me with six members of the girls' volleyball team like the last guy I dated, or make me walk home twenty miles like the guy before that, or tell me I needed to lose seven pounds like the guy before that… I should really date more guys just like you.

BRADY

You should.

SALLY

I owe it to myself.

BRADY

You do.

SALLY

Which is why… I want you to help me write a letter to this new guy I like. His name is Stan. And he's into pro-wrestling and he has a great car, and he likes to party with his friends all the time, and this other girl told me he was a big jerk, but I think that he's really wonderful underneath. Okay? So how should I write the letter to him?

BRADY

You want me to write the letter?

SALLY

You're so good with words. Will you do it?

BRADY

….yes.

SALLY

You're such a great friend! We have the best friendship ever! And it's so great to be friends with a guy who knows that he's going to stay your friend forever and there will never be anything

romantic at all between you because he wouldn't want to ruin the amazing, fabulous friendship you have! Let's hug?

BRADY

Let's do that.

(SALLY gives him a hug.)

SALLY

You give the best hugs ever! Hey I know! Maybe you could give hugging lessons to Stan!

GUY

Aarrghghghg! I want to tear out my eyes!

MALE NARRATOR

See someone you recognize?

GUY

It's too painful! Make it stop!

MALE NARRATOR

Very well.

(SALLY and BRADY leave.)

GIRL

Do I have to worry about being in the friend zone?

FEMALE NARRATOR

Nope. Not at all.

GIRL

Yes!

FEMALE NARRATOR

You have other things to worry about.

GIRL

I don't think so. As long as I'm direct and clear, things should be okay.

FEMALE NARRATOR

Hardly! Lesson three: Do *not* be direct and clear.

(JIM enters. MANDA approaches, stalking him like a tiger.)

MANDA

Hey.

JIM

Oh… um… hey.
(MANDA looks him up and down.)
What are you doing?

MANDA

Lookin' good.

JIM

I'm sorry?

MANDA

You heard me. Lookin' good.
(she growls)

JIM

Oh. I'm actually dating someone right now.

MANDA

Me too. That does not change the fact that you… are lookin' good.
(growls again)

JIM

Thanks I guess.

MANDA

What's your name, sailor?

JIM

I'm not actually a sailor.

MANDA

You could be.

JIM

But I'm not.

MANDA

My name's `Manda.

JIM

Manda?

MANDA

As in A-Manda. But I shortened it. To Manda. Cause it gets right to the point.

JIM

Okay.

MANDA

I was lying earlier. I don't have a boyfriend. I'm alone.

JIM

Okay.

MANDA

Soooo alone.

JIM

You know I should really get going.

MANDA

Where you going to?

JIM

Um… away.

MANDA

You're a little mysterious, aren't you? Little mysterious man. How bout we unwrap those mysteries together?

JIM

I um… um…

(MANDA circles around him.)

MANDA

Heart beating a little fast?

(She reaches out and touches his chest.)

Oh yeah. There it is. Bum bump. Bum Bump. Bum bump bum bump! That's like the rhythm of my soul.

JIM

I don't have any rhythm in my soul.

MANDA

I'll teach you.

JIM

Leave me alone! Help! Someone help!

(JIM runs.)

MANDA

I like the way you run, sailor boy!

(She runs after him.)

FEMALE NARRATOR

So you see –

JIM *(off-stage)*

Ah! She's got me!

(MANDA emerges with a hold of JIM's ankle, pulling him back on to the stage.)

Mommy!

MANDA

I'm your Mommy now!

JIM

Aaaaaah!

(JIM escapes and flees. MANDA chases again.)

GIRL

So – directness is bad.

FEMALE NARRATOR

You have to cultivate an aura of mystery. You need to keep him guessing as to what you really mean. Don't say anything that's clear at all.

GIRL

Got it.

GUY

By the way, I would totally go for a girl like that.

MALE NARRATOR

Oh be quiet, liar.

GUY

It's a good thing I'm not direct. I'm really a romantic at heart.

MALE NARRATOR

You're a loser who plays video games eleven hours a day and tries not to pee that entire time.

GUY

But inside, I'm romantic.

MALE NARRATOR

Yes, but that brings me to my point. Lesson Four: Don't be too romantic. Watch.

(APRIL enters.)

Skipping Forward

BRICE

Then we shall compose a new poem together.

APRIL'S DAD

Brice, you had me at vanilla.

APRIL

Dad! I don't like Brice!

APRIL'S DAD

What?!

APRIL

He's weird!

BRICE

I've been made mad by your beauty.

APRIL'S DAD

Yes! Did you hear that! He's been made mad by your beauty!

APRIL

I'm leaving!

(APRIL storms out.)

BRICE

Do you happen to have any other daughters?

GIRL

Okay, I think I've almost got everything not to do. I just worry about what the guy is thinking all the time though.

FEMALE NARRATOR

Oh – there's another one.

GIRL

Guys are just so tough to read.

FEMALE NARRATOR

Ha!

GIRL

You don't think so?

FEMALE NARRATOR

Allow me to demonstrate lesson number five: Don't overthink things. So here we have a couple on its first date. I call this: the awkward phase.

(Enter TRENT and BIJOU.)

TRENT

Hey.

BIJOU

Hey.

(Pause. TRENT nods.)

TRENT

Cool.

BIJOU

What?

TRENT

I'm sorry?

BIJOU

Did you say something?

TRENT

No.

BIJOU

Oh.

(short pause.)

Did you want to say something?

TRENT

No I'm good.

BIJOU

Okay. Me too. I'm good. That's what they tell me anyway.

(BIJOU appears to be sick.)

FEMALE NARRATOR

Now let's see that scene again, but with the girl's thoughts translated!

MALE NARRATOR

Wait a minute! Wait minute! You can't just translate the girl's thoughts. Tell you what: I'll translate the girl's thoughts.

FEMALE NARRATOR

You're going to translate it?

MALE NARRATOR

Yeah. I have total empathy for women. I'm like a sponge.

FEMALE NARRATOR

All right. I'll translate the guy's thoughts.

MALE NARRATOR

Like you could translate the guy's thoughts.

FEMALE NARRATOR

Trust me. It's not that hard.

MALE NARRATOR

And begin.

TRENT

Hey.

MALE NARRATOR *(overly female)*

Did he just say hey to me? Does that mean he likes me? Yesterday he said hi. Now he says hey. Is there a difference? Should I be like, "hey yourself" oh wait that's stupid – why am I so stupid my Daddy was right about me!

BIJOU

Hey.

(Pause. TRENT nods.)

TRENT

Cool.

MALE NARRATOR

You're not going to tell us what he was thinking?

FEMALE NARRATOR

I did. I told you what he was thinking.

MALE NARRATOR

You didn't say anything.

FEMALE NARRATOR

Bingo. You can keep going.

MALE NARRATOR *(overly female again)*

What is he talking about? What did he mean by cool? Did he think I was cool? What does he expect of me?

BIJOU

What?

FEMALE NARRATOR

I would like to scratch myself now.

TRENT

I'm sorry?

MALE NARRATOR

He's turned it around on me! That was an expert move! No wait – maybe he's just pretending to be an expert and really he doesn't know what he's doing! He must be waiting me out – trying to determine what my feelings really are –

FEMALE NARRATOR

I wonder if I can scratch myself without her seeing.

BIJOU

Did you say something?

FEMALE NARRATOR

Play it cool.

TRENT

No.

MALE NARRATOR

Play it cool.

BIJOU

Oh.

MALE NARRATOR

I love you! I've always loved you! All you have to do is make the first move!

BIJOU

Did you want to say something?

MALE NARRATOR

Say it! Say it you magnificent prince! You will be my hero and make charming, yet somewhat supercilious remarks! I will be the saucy and feisty companion you've longed for, and I also have the ability to kick people in the head if there are ruffians who would seek to tear us apart! Please! Please let us walk into our destinies together!

TRENT

No I'm good.

FEMALE NARRATOR

Must. Scratch. Must. Scratch.

MALE NARRATOR

You've rejected me! My life is over!

BIJOU

Oh.

FEMALE NARRATOR

And there you have it!
(TRENT and BIJOU exit.)

GUY

So let me get this straight: Don't be desperate, don't be a friend, and don't involve her parents. Okay, that seems like sound advice: So I guess the last one is don't be a jerk.

MALE NARRATOR

You've never really met any girls have you?

GUY

I've met plenty online. Or people who say they're girls.

MALE NARRATOR

Trust me, being a jerk has nothing to do with whether or not a girl will date you.

GUY

But all my friends tell me that they want a guy who's sensitive.

MALE NARRATOR

Oh they do? All your *friends* tell you that? Lesson number six: Don't be sensitive!

GUY

You're saying they're lying?

MALE NARRATOR

Yep.

GUY

Why would they do that?

MALE NARRATOR

To throw you off the scent. Watch and learn.

(OLIVIA and STEVE enter.)

OLIVIA

So what did you think of the movie?

STEVE *(choked up)*

It was just… it was so… beautiful.

OLIVIA

Really?

STEVE

That part where they got together at the end… and he gave her the same piano she used to have when she was a girl…

(he cries some more.)

It was magical.

OLIVIA

Huh. Yeah I liked that part. You okay?

STEVE

Sorry… Let me get a hold of myself. It's just movies like that remind me that there's so much beauty in the world if you just let it into your soul.

OLIVIA

Yeah that's totally what I was thinking too. So where do you want to go eat?

STEVE

Let's go to Olive Garden. Oh wait… I just thought of something. Your name is Olivia – and our first date was at the Olive Garden… it's like fate!

OLIVIA

Yeah. Well –

(STEVE starts to break down again.)

What now?

STEVE

I was just remembering our first date. We were so young!

OLIVIA

It was last month.

STEVE

So young! And now we've been dating for thirty-nine days!

(he starts to cry again)

OLIVIA

Steve, let's just go eat.

STEVE

We'll never have those thirty-nine days back! They're gone! What happens to the past? Does anyone know?

OLIVIA

I think it just disappears.

(STEVE wails.)

STEVE

Noooo! I want to fall in love with you all over again! I want to smell butterflies with you –

OLIVIA

I don't think they have a smell.

STEVE

I wanted to give you this.

(He hands her a card.)

OLIVIA

You adopted a starving third world child for me?

STEVE

I named her Olivia.

OLIVIA

I don't think you can actually name them.

STEVE

Well I did. I named this one. She has your eyes. And with my help, and just forty-nine cents a day, I'm keeping her alive.

OLIVIA

You didn't really need to do that.

STEVE

It's my way of giving back to the world. Of supporting life of…

(he starts to break down again.)

OLIVIA

What?

STEVE

I just realized I'll never be a mother!

OLIVIA

You're a guy!

STEVE

I can't have maternal feelings? I'll never know what it's like to have a baby of my own.

OLIVIA

That's just a little weird –

STEVE

I borrowed this from the home ec department.

(He takes out a sympathy pregnancy bodysuit.)

OLIVIA

What is that?!

STEVE *(putting it on)*

It's a sympathy suit. It allows me to experience what it's like to carry around extra pregnancy weight. I feel so guilty that you women have to go through that and I just lumber around like a monster, never caring about –

OLIVIA

Stop!

STEVE

I just want to get in touch with my feminine side.

OLIVIA

I don't want you to be in touch with your feminine side! I want you not to have a feminine side at all! I want you to crush soda cans against your head and wear a baseball cap and make gross jokes with your friends! I want you to be a totally unfeeling rock of a human being with no inner depth whatsoever! That's what I'm looking for!

STEVE

You do?

OLIVIA

Yes!

STEVE

That really hurts my feelings.

OLIVIA

Arrgh!

(OLIVIA storms off.)

STEVE *(rubbing his belly)*

Abandoned – with a baby on the way…

(he goes off sniffling.)

FEMALE NARRATOR

There. Now you know everything.

GIRL

Wow.

GUY

But how can I attract a girl?

GIRL

And how can I find a guy?

MALE NARRATOR

Let's start with appearance.

FEMALE NARRATOR

That's all they care about.

GUY

Maybe there's a girl out there who will look past my unathletic pasty exterior and find the nuggets of gold on the inside.

MALE NARRATOR

Not a chance! But there is hope for you – because a recent study has determined that your attractiveness is directly related to your facial expression.

GUY

Really? Girls are that shallow?

MALE NARRATOR

Not quite as shallow as you. But still pretty shallow.

GUY

So as long as I keep smiling they'll like me?

MALE NARRATOR

You are a moron. Smiling makes you less attractive.

GUY

What?

MALE NARRATOR

Studies show that women view men who appear haughty and arrogant as more attractive.

GUY

What? That can't be true!

MALE NARRATOR

Have you ever seen a poster for Twilight?

GUY

Wow.

MALE NARRATOR

Watch as I demonstrate.

(The FEMALE NARRATOR approaches.)

(The MALE NARRATOR smiles happily.)

FEMALE NARRATOR

Total loser.

(the MALE NARRATOR smiles less.)

Meh. Not that cute.

(the MALE NARRATOR goes to a blank face.)

I've seen better, okay.

(the MALE NARRATOR gives a slightly scowling, tortured look.)

Hey. Who's that?

(the MALE NARRATOR scowls and appears completely arrogant.)

Hey there hottie.

GUY

Wow.

FEMALE NARRATOR

And it's the complete opposite for women. Watch.

(The MALE NARRATOR APPROACHES.)

(The FEMALE NARRATOR scowls and looks haughty.)

MALE NARRATOR

Crazy psycho woman.

(She looks slightly scowling and tortured.)

Mean, unhappy person who will make my life miserable.

(She looks blank.)

Maybe in my league.

(She gives a slight smile.)

Cute.

(She gives a big, beaming smile.)

Gorgeous.

FEMALE NARRATOR

The biological implications are obvious. Women want to be with a guy who's going to dominate the rest of the tribe and bring her things like diamond rings, expensive cars, and a mansion in Florida.

MALE NARRATOR

And men would like to be with a woman who isn't evil.

FEMALE NARRATOR

Now… I think you're ready for your date.

GUY

Let's do it!

MALE NARRATOR

Shower first.

GUY

Is it okay if I skip the shower and put on cologne instead?

MALE NARRATOR

No. And put on something nice.

(GUY runs off.)

FEMALE NARRATOR

You're perfect just the way you are.

GIRL

I am?

FEMALE NARRATOR

No! Haven't I taught you anything! The guy doesn't want you! He wants an illusion of you! Go change! And change a lot of things about yourself while you're at it.

(GIRL runs off.)

End of Excerpt.
To purchase this play, visit www.concordtheatricals.com