

Eros in Training

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Characters List:

Ruby: A hopeless romantic, recently dumped by her boyfriend, in search of the love of her life. Her horoscope tells her she'll find love over a cup of coffee, so she's waiting for "the one" in a small Café.

Noah: A cynical college guy having trouble getting over his ex, Jessica. He goes to the Café to study for his college finals, which will be the next day and he knows nothing about.

Mel: A senior student at Cupid Academy and a new trainee at Cupid Corporations. Her dream is to gain a permanent position and become, in the future, the Chief Administrative Officer in International Love Affairs. Her first "mission" is to make Noah and Ruby fall in love with each other, like they're destined to be.

Waiter: A small town boy trying to make it in the city. Meanwhile, he works at a small family Café in order to gain some money.

Noah 2: Noah's best friend and study buddy.

Cupid: Owner of Cupid Corporations and Mel's boss.

ACT 1

(The setting is a small Café. Ruby is sitting down at a coffee table anxiously waiting for someone and Noah is sitting down at another, quietly studying. Meanwhile, Mel is at the back of the stage, in another table, disguised as an old man. Suddenly, the waiter appears and puts a mug on Ruby's table)

Waiter: Here's your other Miss. Le'me do a quick check...A Double Chicken burger, with no tomatoes, onions, cheese or chicken, right?

(Ruby doesn't move)

Waiter: ah-Miss? Your food is ready *(no response)*. Miss? I'll put it right here. *(starts to leave)*

(The waiter is about to leave, but Ruby grabs his arm)

Ruby: *(Realizes what she did)* Oh, I-I'm sorry.

Waiter: No problem...Is there anything wrong?

Ruby: Wrong? No, nothing. Why? Does it seem like there's something wrong? Am I looking weird? Oh god, is it the dress? I don't usually wear dresses you see...I'm more of a pants person, but I was hoping that-

Waiter: I mean with the food Miss. Is there anything wrong with your food?

Ruby: Oh, the food. No everything is perfect, thank you.

Waiter: yes...well...since everything is alright, I'll continue working...but if you need something-

Ruby: I'll call you. I mean...Not call "call" you because I don't have your number, I meant your name since you are my waiter. I'm sorry not "my waiter", I am not objectifying you...and I'm not possessive either...Yes, sure, you're cute. The typical hot guy working to pay his college tuition, or help his single mom. But c'mon, we barely know each other! *(silence)* I just realized I don't even know your name so...how am I supposed to call you?

Waiter: Jeff is okay (*silence*) I have to get other orders, so... (*signaling he has to leave*)

Ruby: Yeah, sure...Duty calls! (*laughs awkwardly*) We'll talk more later!

(The waiter leaves)

Ruby: Shut up. Shut up! Oh my god Ruby, why do you keep embarrassing yourself? I know you were nervous because that waiter was flirting with you, but why did you have to act so strange? Wait, you think he's the one? No, he's not. I'm sure-

Noah: Excuse me, I don't want to be rude and interrupt your...conversation, but I have a really big test tomorrow and I *really* need to study.

Ruby: Ah well-

Noah: I know! But It's not like I can go home because...my roommate...is a little busy (*cough*) with his girlfriend and I can't focus with all...the noise. Anyway, you get it. I'm trying to cram as much as I can, but it's kinda hard when...not trying to be judgmental...there's a stranger right next to you talking loudly to herself.

Ruby: Oh, was I being too loud? I'm sorry for bothering you Mr.-

Noah: Noah

Ruby: Mr. Noah?

Noah: No, my name is Noah.

Ruby: Well Noah, I apologize, you probably know how conversations can get intense when you discuss certain matters with yourself.

Noah: I wouldn't know...I normally talk with other people.

Ruby: Oh my! You should start talking to yourself then. I'm pretty sure I read somewhere that people who talk to themselves are more creative than people who don't.

Noah: Uhm

Ruby: Surprising, isn't it? Apparently, it makes people generally more successful too. That's why I started talking to myself, as a curiosity. At first it was weird, but now it happens naturally.

Noah: oh, interesting.

Ruby: yes, I agree...Are you studying by yourself?

Noah: I'm waiting for someone. He was supposed to be here 30 minutes ago, but...well...here I am by myself.

Ruby: I am waiting for someone too.

Noah: Also, late?

Ruby: I don't know. You see, I am waiting for "someone". No one specific.

Noah: What?

Ruby: I checked my horoscope this morning and it says that today specifically, I'll meet "someone" interesting in the local café and it will lead to a love adventure.

Noah: How long have you been here?

Ruby: Just a few hours. 5 or 6, I'm not really counting.

Noah: And you still really believe this "someone" will come?

Ruby: Why wouldn't I?

Noah: Ah, never mind. It's not really my business. I mean, It's nothing.

Ruby: Are you sure? 'Cause it really sounds like you want to say something.

Noah: Well, it's just that you implied that we are foreordained to meet certain people.

Ruby: So, you don't believe in destiny?

Noah: I believe we are responsible for our own choices and, therefore, responsible for our own future.

Ruby: Then you don't believe in soul mates?

Noah: It's delusional! Love is basically chemistry. It's all about pheromones. There's no such thing as "meant to be together", it's evolution! Biology! It's about increasing our chances of survi-

Ruby: Looks like someone was really hurt in the past...what's her name? Or his name...I don't want to assume things.

Noah: Jessica has nothing to do with this!

Ruby: I knew it! Of course it's a Jessica...they're always troublemakers.

Noah: You know what, I need to study. Good luck finding your "lover" today. Let's hope "cupid" shoots his arrow correctly, huh?

Ruby: Good luck on your studying then. You'll need it. Cramming never works, everyone knows. You'll probably fail.

(Both of them turn around annoyed and go back to what they were doing. Mel gets up from the table and abruptly takes off her disguise, revealing a typical cupid outfit. She snaps her fingers and, suddenly, Ruby and Noah freeze)

Mel: *(groans)* Why is this so hard? I'm pretty sure it's them! *(pulls up a book from a bag)* Ruby and Noah: Married in 5 years, madly in love, 3 kids, 2 dogs...yup, it's them. Then why? I mean, if it's on the book...then it's supposed to happen. Maybe I'm missing something...what's the protocol again? *(thinks about it)* Ah, I can't believe I forgot. 3 years of training and paying tuition for this? I can't mess up now. I'll just...use telephone assistance! *(pulls up a phone)*. Oh, Hi! It's- Did she just put me on hold? *(pause)* Hello? Hi, my name is Melissa...yes, yes, the new trainee. Yes...it's an emergency. *(pause)* Yes, it's about the couple. No, no one died. It's just that there's no chemistry *(pause)* Yes, no attraction *(pause)* I'm sure *(pause)* If I checked? Well, no...but *(pause)* Alright, fine *(pause)* Yes, I'll call *(ends the phone call)*.

(Mel grabs a machine and puts on Noah's head)

Mel: uhm

(walks to Ruby and puts the machine on her)

Mel: *(grabs the phone again)* Hi, it's me again. *(pause)* I checked. *(pause)* their love percentage is low. Like, really low. *(pause)* 0.001% for him and 0.0001% for her *(pause)* Uhuh, I'm sure the love meter is not broken. That's why I need Mr. Cupid to come. It's an EMERGENCY *(pause)* 1 hour? What do I do with them until he's here? *(pause)* I'm still in training, I don't know what to do in this situation! *(pause)* Fine. Fine! I'll figure something out. I'll start with something...simple.

(Mel gets Noah's pen and Ruby's keys and places on the floor. She snaps her fingers and they unfreeze)

Noah: Where's my pen? It was just here- oh

Ruby: What? My keys are- ah

(Both of them try to get their things at the same time and end up hitting their heads with the other)

Noah and Ruby: Ouch!

Noah and Ruby: I'm sorry

(Both of them giggle. They are having a moment)

Noah: Sorry for being rude to you.

Ruby: uhm?

Noah: When I called you delusional. I recently broke up with someone,

Ruby: Jessica?

Noah: Don't say her name. Anyway, I haven't been feeling very romantic these days. I mean months.

(silence)

Noah: Alright, years!

Ruby: It's okay. Sometimes I feel like I'm delusional too. My boyfriend of three years broke up with me 5 months ago and has already moved on. With my best friend to be more exact.

Noah: What a jerk.

Ruby: I know, right? So, when I read the horoscope, I was just...hopeful.

Noah: I'd be hopeful too.

(Ruby and Noah are facing each other. They're very close and are staring directly into each other's eyes. Mel appears again, snaps her fingers and both of them freeze)

Mel: Well, this is better than what I expected. Maybe I don't need Mr. Cupid's help after all *(pause)*. Maybe if I fix this before he gets here...he'll be so impressed that I did everything on my own that...I might even get a permanent job in the company. I won't be a trainee anymore! *(starts to jump in excitement)* Oh yes, I can see it. A position as the Administrative Love Assistance, a promotion to Management...a few years and I'd definitely be at the top: Mel d'Amour, Chief Administrative Officer in International Love Affairs. Dad will be so proud! *(she is daydreaming and there's a long pause)* Alright, I've decided. I'm doing this. How long do I have till he gets here? *(pulls a huge clock out of the bag)* Crap. It's okay, they're doing great. I just have to...speed things up.

(Mel walks towards Noah and Ruby, whispering something in their ear)

Mel: This will do *(snaps finger and hides)*

Noah: I'll heal your broken heart, right now. You have bewitched me, body and soul, and I love, I love, I love you. I never wish to be parted from you from this day on.

Ruby: Oh Noah, I've never felt this way before. Forget about Jessica and how she dumped you for a richer, better, more attractive m-

Noah: Why do you keep repe-

Ruby: shh just listen. This is not going to be easy. It's gonna be really hard. We're gonna have to work at this every day, but I want to do that because I want you. I want all of you, forever, you and me, everyday. Now kiss me.

Noah: As you wish.

(Both of them lean in and are about to kiss)

Noah and Ruby: WHAT?

Noah: What did you just say? You just told me that -

Ruby: No, no, no. What did YOU just say. You were the one telling ME all those cheesy lines first. You think I didn't recognize the quote?...Mr. Darcy.

Noah: Says the girl who thinks she's the female version of Ryan Gosling.

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

Noah: Don't act all innocent now! You think I won't recognize the lines from my favorite movie?

Ruby: Your favorite movie is The Notebook?

Noah: So what? Just because I'm a bit of a cynical guy doesn't mean I won't occasionally fantasize about declaring my love in the pouring rain or chasing down girls through airports.

Ruby: Chasing down?

Noah: You know what I meant! We're losing focus here. What I'm trying to say is that what happened was absurd and that I definitely wasn't in my right mind.

Ruby: Well, you know what they say: making a mistake is fine, but repeating it again makes it a choice and you did say "I love you" three times.

Noah: I don't love you! We don't even know each other.

Ruby: No need to be so aggressive. I don't love you either!

(Silence. Both of them look stressed and confused)

Noah: Look, we were both talking about our past relationships, being emotional and blah blah blah...we got too carried away! You know how they say it's easier to open up to strangers...I'm still in love with my ex-girlfriend and you're probably still in love with your

ex-boyfriend...so when I heard this little voice in my head saying “tell her you love her” it was directed to Jessica, not you.

Ruby: Stop overanalyzing what happened. It was probably-

Noah: What? Destiny?

Ruby: I never said it was-

Noah: Cupid? “It's just cupid playing a trick on us” is that your genius theory?

Ruby: I never said such stupid thing. It's ridiculous!

Noah: And waiting in a restaurant for hours in order to find “the love of your life” just because a horoscope said so...is not?

Ruby: You know what? Who do you think you are to talk to me like this?

Noah: I'm just shocked that a grown women would be so naive. Think about it. If “cupid” (*says mockingly*) really existed he'd be doing a pretty crappy job, wouldn't he? Your ex started dating your “best friend” and, my Jessica, went in a journey of “self discovery” to “focus on the immaterial” with a rich Italian dude. Not exactly the best loves lives! Not even creative! Very cliché if I'm being honest...

(freeze)

Mel: This son of a- (*starts throwing punches in the air and in Noah's direction*). You think I'm doing a terrible job? Jessica leaving you has nothing to do with Cupid's Corporation. She left with Antonio because you are a conceited jerk! It's not my fault that no one can stand your personality! (*breathing heavily in anger*) But here I am, trying to give you a second chance. You think I'm having fun? (*shaking him violently through his shirt's collar*)

(Starts walking in circles)

Calm down. Relax. I still have time. I can fix this. (*points at both of them*) YOU will fall in love today my friends, whether you like it or not. Let me see...another strategy...what do they say in the manual...physical touch! People always fall in love after...you know... (*gets embarrassed*) ...these naughty humans! I'll just make them **do it!**

(whispers again in their ear)

This will definitely work. Oh, I better close my eyes (*embarrassed*).

(As soon as Mel snaps her finger, Noah and Ruby unfreeze and start taking their coats off. They walk towards each other and they kiss. Then, they realize they're kissing each other and abruptly separate)

Noah and Ruby: Sorry!

Ruby: I didn't mean to-

Noah: No, I didn't mean to-

Noah and Ruby: kiss you.

Noah: I-I think, I mean, this is probably- ah, the logical...dammit...Do you understand what's happening?

Ruby: I have no idea and I don't want to stay to find out. Horoscopes, blind dates, magazine tests...I'm tired of all of it! I don't want to keep chasing after love. I don't need someone to be happy. Honestly, after my breakup...I've been having a great time by myself. Being single is...not that bad (*laughs*). It's actually really fun! I'm done with chasing relationships that don't mean anything. I'm not desperate and I'm doing just fine on my own. You know what? This time, I'll wait. I'll wait for love to come to me and I know it'll happen. At the right time with the right person...and I'm sure, Noah, you'll find someone too. And that person is not going to be Jessica. We deserve people who appreciate us, you know? Well, I'm gonna leave (*starts to leave*).

Noah: Wait! I'm sss- (*clears throat*) I Apologi- (*coughs*) I'm sorry for what I said before. You're not naive, or foolish. I was wrong. I hope one day we'll see each other around...under normal circumstances (*they both laugh*).

(Ruby slightly nods and then she leaves. Mel snaps her fingers and they freeze)

Mel: No, no, no...it's not gonna end like this. (*brings Ruby back to where she was*)

(Snaps her fingers and they unfreeze)

Ruby: Ah...didn't I just?

Noah: I'm pretty sure you...

Ruby: It's probably deja vu *(she says, looking scared)* Yes, deja vu. Bye!

(Mel acts again and they freeze. She then brings Ruby back)

Mel: Stay there!

(She then grabs Noah and places him closer to Ruby. Very close)

Mel: C'mon guys, just go for it.

(unfreeze)

Noah and Ruby: WHAT THE HELL?

Ruby: I'm pretty sure I left...

Noah: We're trapped here.

Ruby: No...we're not. It's impossible.

Noah: I saw you leave twice through that door. I'm very cynical, but there's no logical explanation for what's going on. It's almost as if we're being...controlled.

Ruby: What?? No, that's too crazy.

Noah: Well, let's do this then. When I say go...we just...*(speaks silently, afraid of someone hearing their conversation)* run.

(Ruby nods her head)

Noah: 1,2,3...go!

(Both of them start running in opposite directions. Mel quickly freezes them, bringing both back)

Mel: I said...just GO FOR IT.

(Mel gets their heads and make them kiss. She snaps her fingers and they unfreeze. Simultaneously, the waiter appears and sees them together)

Waiter: Pardon me for the interruption.

(Noah and Ruby separate in an instant. They look at each other and then they scream)

Ruby: No, it's not what it seems! I'm not doing this because I want to.

Waiter: Is he assaulting you?

Noah: Wait, what? NO! I didn't want it either!

Ruby: Yes, we're doing this because of...

(Ruby and Noah stare at each other as if they've realized something)

Noah and Ruby: The food! *(turn to the waiter)*

Ruby: Did you put any sort of aphrodisiac in our orders?

(The waiter is visibly angry)

Waiter: Miss, I know there are some pretty "unconventional" and trendy cafés nowadays, but this is a family-friendly environment.

Noah: It can't be! Then why do we feel this way?

Waiter: Am I some kind of therapist? How am I supposed to understand you young people and your raging hormones? God, I knew my mom was right. I'm just a small-town boy...what am I even doing here? Big city people...y'all are too weird for me. I quit.

(Freeze)

Mel: What do I do? What do I do? I tried EVERYTHING. I'll...have to do it. I'll have to use the last resource... *(takes a bow and an arrow out of the bag)*. Mr. Cupid will kill me if he finds out I stole this from him...but it must be done. It's the only way to save this situation. Okay, I can do this...No I can't! I'm just a trainee, what am I doing here? NO! I have to do

this. Mr. Cupid will be here at any second and I can't risk being expelled from Cupid Academy. I need a job at Cupid Corporations! This is the only way! *(closes eyes)*

(She shoots the waiter instead)

Mel: CRAP. I forgot that I failed the archery course. Crap, crap, crap...what do I do? It's okay, there is one more left. This time I can't fail. *(closes eyes)*

(She shoots the waiter again)

Mel: WHAT THE HELL? Why did I close my eyes? What do I do now? There are no more arrows left. Damn it! There has to be something. Why are humans so complicated? Could it be...my fault? But I'm doing everything I can...I'm pretty sure I followed the protocol. I mean, most of it. Damn it! I can't give up now. The mess has been done, I'll fix this. But first...I have to see how drastic is the situation... *(snaps fingers scared and they unfreeze).*

(The waiter turns around and tries to kiss Noah)

Noah: What the hell man?

Waiter: I just...suddenly...fell in love with you. It's almost as if I'm under a spell.

(Noah starts walking backwards and the waiter keeps getting closer)

Waiter: Oh, I've never felt this way before. Your eyes, your face, your lips, your body...

Noah: We got the idea...

Waiter: I'm feeling inspired. So, inspired I can create a poem right now.

He touched me, so I live to know
That such a day, permitted so,
I groped upon his breast

Noah: W-What?

Waiter: It was a boundless place to me,
And silenced, as the awful sea
Put minors streams to rest.
And now, I'm different from before,

As If I breathed superior air-

Ruby: I'm pretty sure this was created by Emily Dickinson

Waiter: Oh, well, this is unexpected, but I am more surprised with the fact that I've memorized a poem by Emily Dickinson.

Noah: Can we focus? Don't you realize what's going on? We're all going mad. Is this some sort of supernatural nightma-

(Another man enters the scene dressed almost exactly as Noah)

Man: Noah?

Noah: Hey...you're finally here!

Guy: Sorry for being late dude. On my way here there was an accident and someone ended up hitting my car, so I had to go to the police station...I tried calling you but my phone died and *(sees Ruby)* ...who's this beauty?

Noah: Who? Oh, her? She's...uhm...

Ruby: Ruby.

Guy: Ruby...what a beautiful name...perfect for a beautiful girl...

Ruby: *(becomes shy)* Thank you, nice to meet you...

Guy: Nice to meet you too. My name's Noah.

(Mel freezes the scene)

Mel: *(silence. Mel screams)* THERE ARE TWO NOAHS? This can't be. This is not happening *(grabs book, opens it and passes pages furiously)* I hate myself *(silence)*. I've been *(breathes)* doing this with THE WRONG NOAH THIS WHOLE TIME? *(screams again)* I'm definitely being expelled from Cupid Academy. There's not even a chance of fixing this *(cries)* Unless... *(looks at Noah. Becomes silent)* No, I can't do this! But I accidentally hit the waiter with the love arrow...which is irreversible. So now he's in love with original Noah... *(says with realization)* and original Noah isn't in love with anyone...yet.

(Pulls phone out of bag)

Hey, hi. It's me again. I need an extra arrow *(pause)* Uhum, it's urgent *(pause)* I don't have time for questions! I need this right NOW. *(pause)* I know it's against the rules! But I NEED IT *(pause)* You know what? I didn't want to do this, but I know that you stole a love potion from the Academy's lab last week...You're getting married right? So suddenly...it's almost...magical. Anyway, you wouldn't want me to disclose this information, would you? I don't think Mr. Cupid or your fiancé would be happy about it...*(pause)* Thank you for your cooperation.

(Shakes bag, opens it and gets the arrow)

YES!!

(Gets ready to shoot)

This time, I won't miss it

(Shoots Noah)

GOT IT!! *(jumps in excitement)* RIGHT ON THE TARGET!!! *(says arrogantly)* I'm such a badass. Let's end this, shall we? *(snaps fingers)*

Noah: I feel weird.

Waiter: Weird how?

Noah: I think I just feel in love too.

Waiter: With who?

Noah: With you. I never thought I'd feel this way for a guy, but...I don't care anymore. Do you want to...go somewhere? With me?

Waiter: I-I'd love to *(hold hands and start to leave)*

(Noah stops and looks back)

Noah: Do you mind rescheduling our study date dude?

Noah 2: *(looks at ruby)* Not at all. See ya.

Noah: See ya...nice to meet you Ruby. Today was...an adventure, but I had fun.

Ruby: Me too. We'll see each other again...someday. B-bye.

(Noah whispers something in the waiter's ears and walks towards Ruby. Ruby walks towards Noah and they hug)

Noah: We'll definitely see each other again. Good luck finding your "someone".

(Ruby looks at Noah number 2)

Ruby: I think I found him already.

(They smile and Noah leaves)

Noah 2: Well, I came here to study...but my plans got cancelled. Are you free right now or are you waiting for someone?

Ruby: I'm not waiting anymore.

Noah 2: Want to go to the movies?

Ruby: Yes, but only if we're watching a horror one *(laughs)*

Noah 2: *(giggles)* Deal

(They go offstage. Mel appears again and sits on the stage)

Mel: That was...cute. I'm just gonna lay here for a sec *(lays down exhausted)*.

(A white shining light "appears" on stage with the sound of an opera song. Cupid's lines are said offstage)

Cupid: I heard there's an emergency?

(Mel gets up quickly)

Mel: Mr. Cupid! No, no...everything is great...mission complete!

Cupid: I knew you were going to make it. It was such an easy mission after all.

Mel: Yeah...a piece of cake.

Cupid: You passed. You're not a trainee anymore.

Mel: Really? Oh my god...Mr. Cupid you have no idea how long I've been waiting for this.

Cupid: No need to thank me. This is a result of your own hard work. Your next mission will be as my assistant and it is somehow related to what you did here today. Your couple was Noah and Ruby, right?

Mel: Yeah...

Cupid: Well, our next subject is named Noah too and friends with Ruby's Noah. I believe he was also here today, so you're probably familiar with him.

Mel: Wait. What do you mean by next subject?

Cupid: Yes. We have to make him and Steve get together. They're best friends, study at the same college, she's been in love with him for a while now...so it will be easy too. Anyway, get prepared. See you at seven tomorrow.

(Cupid leaves)

Mel: Oh no...not again.