

SMALL DEATH

Written by
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1. INT. JUNE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

"THE MATCH"

MUSIC CUE - Intro to "Dreamer" by Laufey

Lights up down stage. JUNE, a frustrated and hyper focused twenty-something stands center downstage. She swipes left on her phone repeatedly, looking unappetized at guys on her feed. She begins to pace left and right. Her swiping and pacing becomes more and more frustrated and frantic, escalating to a point where she's practically hitting her phone with her finger. Her swiping reaches an absolutely livid speed and she marches over to sit on the sofa up stage left. She slams her phone down and defeatedly puts her head into her hands.

When she throws her phone down, the **MUSIC CUTS**. Lights up on her apartment. The stage is set with a bed upstage with a window stage left. Her cocky but well-meaning roommate ARIN sits on the other side of the couch. They grab her phone and try to give it back to her.

ARIN

No no no. Don't put this down, missy. You've been on it for what - fifteen minutes?

June looks up at them. She takes a breath and takes the phone.

JUNE

Sorry, I... god this whole thing is just way harder than I thought it'd be.

ARIN

God, June. You're not crawling out of a horrible breakup. You had like what, one flaky boyfriend in high school? That's it! Come on, just keep trying; it gets easier. There's gotta be someone out there you'd wanna meet, right? Because if you don't even try with this - honestly, I don't know what else to tell you.

June tucks herself back onto her corner of the couch propped with her phone. Still exhausted.

JUNE

You were saying?

She resumes mindlessly swiping.

ARIN

Oh, right. So it's been what - three dates? And this guy still can't bother to get my name right. He's been saying "E-rin" this whole time. It's always fucking "EEEE-rin" with this guy. Like - it's Arin, you moron! Now I know what you're thinking - shouldn't I just correct him? [pause] No! That's not my job. Nobody looks at A-R-I-N and says EEEEE-rin, he's the one that should fucking know better, my god. [beat] But other than that, the date went fine.

She barely gives a response. Still swiping. Arin commits to rambling.

ARIN (cont.)

Okay well it was kinda boring. [Pause] No you know what, it was exhausting! I felt like we were heading toward a whole lotta nothing the entire time. I thought by this point he'd make a move or something; get a little closer to me, hold my hand, get a little flirty. But nope, he's just mouthing off about whatever. Probably forgot where the hell he was. My bar's higher than a guy who cleans up and can talk good - I want him to Romeo the fuck up a bit. Jesus, date after date everything just leads straight into the abyss no matter where I go!

June suddenly sits up. She's taken aback by someone who comes up on her feed. Arin doesn't notice. June looks over at them.

ARIN (cont.)

Like what happened to romance? What happened to passion? I want fire, June. Why is it so hard for people to sit down, take someone, and just -

June cuts them off by waving her phone at them. Arin sits down beside her and the two look at her phone in silence. June raises her eyebrows and looks over at them for approval - as if to say "not bad, right?". A beat.

ARIN

Ew. No. What kind of name is "Ricky"?

June is immediately pissed.

ARIN

What?

JUNE

I don't know... he looks... normal?

ARIN

(Laughing)

Normal?

JUNE

I don't know. He seems nice. [Chuckles] Like I don't even think he knew he was in half of these photos.

ARIN

And you like that? I mean... okay. Fine, I'll forgive his name. He seems -

Arin takes another cursory look at him. Their eyes widen and they shove their face into her phone.

ARIN

Wait oh my god what are those cargo shorts?

June pushes them away and spools over the edge of the couch, dramatically swiping right. A **TING** goes off - it's a match. Arin shrugs and laughs.

ARIN

Jesus, June. You win. If you're gonna be this riled up about it, I guess it's a start.

Fade to black.

2. INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

"THE FIRST DATE"

MUSIC CUE: Air So Sweet by dodie (fade into 0:16)

Lights up down center stage. June enters wearing some jewelry, holding a pair of shoes and a cardigan. She puts everything on. Though she's ready, she gets stuck on fidgeting with her jewelry for an awkward amount of time until Arin walks up behind her, holding out her bag.

JUNE

Thanks.

ARIN

You'll be fine, Juney. Probably.

She gives them a look.

ARIN

Okay. Just promise me you'll keep trying, okay?
Hopefully he will, too.

Arin exits stage left. June forces herself to take her hands off of her jewelry. She grips onto her bag and takes a deep breath. RICKY, a mild-mannered, awkward, semisweet guy in a jacket and jeans enters stage left and walks up to her, close to but not in the light.

RICKY

June?

June jumps and turns to look at him. **MUSIC FADES OUT.** Lights up on a purple-tinted full wash. There is a single table set with napkins and menus.

JUNE

(Clears throat)

Uh, yeah. Ricky, right?

RICKY

Yup. That's me.

Ricky's nerves stop him from showing any semblance of charm or even a smile, but he still politely extends his hand.

RICKY

Thanks for meeting me here.

June's taken slightly aback at the handshake but still obliges.

JUNE

(Shaking his hand)

Of course. Thanks for - matching? With me?

RICKY

(Not knowing when to end the handshake)

No - yeah - for sure.

They both look down at their handshake and pull away. They walk to their table together center stage.

JUNE

Do you... live around here?

RICKY

Like a 20 minute walk away.

JUNE

Oh, cool. I'm like thirty minutes away.

RICKY

That's cool.

An off beat. Ricky takes the menu.

RICKY

Are you hungry?

JUNE

Yeah, but - uh -

June trails off, already showing signs of panic. She clears her throat again aggressively.

JUNE

We could start with drinks?

RICKY

Drinks? Do you drink?

June nods. Ricky snaps closed the menu.

RICKY

O-kay.

He scans the room and looks behind him stage left. He meekly raises his hand.

RICKY

Waiter? Two... drinks. Please.

He snaps a finger gun and a wink at the off-stage waiter and immediately regrets it. He retracts his arm and shoves it hands onto his lap.

RICKY

So... what do you do?

JUNE

Oh! I, uh, I'm in community college.

RICKY

Oh me too. Camosun?

JUNE

Yeah.

An off beat.

JUNE

Do you... like your classes?

RICKY

Hm?

JUNE

(stammering)

I mean , uh, what do you study?

RICKY

Oh - I'm in Business Administration. You?

JUNE

Nursing.

RICKY

Ah, dope.

Another off beat.

JUNE

Do you like your program?

RICKY

(blunty and immediately)

No.

JUNE

No?

RICKY

Yeah, no. (Chuckles) I kind of hate it.

JUNE

Why's that?

RICKY

(Fidgeting with his napkin)

I don't know. I just - I kind of picked it because it seemed professional.

JUNE

Oh [awkward laugh] well anything business does sound good so... you got that much right?

RICKY

Yeah no thanks - it does, I guess. But nursing too - uh - do you like it?

JUNE

(blunty and immediately)

No.

RICKY

Oh. Sorry.

Yet another off beat. This date isn't going anywhere. A deadpanned WAITER enters stage left holding their drinks.

WAITER

Okay so you guys just said "drink" and didn't elaborate so the bartender just -

The two immediately grab their drink and chug it in sync. The waiter is taken aback and slowly backs off and exits stage left. The two put their glasses down and look at each other.

JUNE

(Nervously laughing)

Sorry. I - I thought this would help.

RICKY

Yeah, no. Me too.

June gains a tinge of confidence from the drink she just downed. She wipes her mouth and puts the menu aside.

JUNE

Should we try again?

RICKY

Wow, really? I mean (laughs) sure?

Ricky turns to the waiter once more

RICKY

Waiter! Two more of that!

JUNE

(Semidrunken)

Yeah waiter! Make it snappy, waiter!

RICKY

Yeaaaaah! Can you even hear us over there?

WAITER

(Peeks out stage left)

Oh my god, I'm right here!

Fade to black.

3. INT. JUNE'S APARTMENT - DAY

"THE NEXT DAY"

Lights up. Arin is in the middle of getting ready to leave the house while **MUFFLED TV NOISES** play in the background. They head stage right and June swiftly opens the door; still in the same clothes. Her hair is unkempt. She leans against the door and slides onto the floor. She looks around and yelps when she sees Arin silently starting back at her.

ARIN

Where the fuck were you?

JUNE
(Sternly)

Don't laugh.

ARIN
(Suddenly in disbelief)

No.

JUNE
We both got shitfaced last night. And he was better looking in person.

ARIN
(Grinning)

No.

JUNE
(Frantic)
The place was closing - his apartment was on the way back I - I thought it was too soon to call it a night so I -

Arin squeals in excitement and lets out a hearty laugh.

ARIN
You WHORE! No way!

June covers her face.

JUNE
Don't fucking say that.

ARIN
Well how was it? How was he? Godawful? A dreamboat straight out of your shitty romance paperbacks?

JUNE
Quit it! It was fine. He was fine. From what I can remember, I guess. (Sigh) I'm worried I scared him off.

ARIN

June, a fucking guppy fish is scarier than you.

JUNE

I woke up and he was halfway out the door, Arin. He looked at me for a split second and his face was red. I tried to text him hours ago and... it's...

She takes out her phone.

JUNE

(Helplessly)

Help.

ARIN

Well what did you text him?

JUNE

I said "Hey".

ARIN

And what did he say back?

JUNE

He said "hi".

ARIN

And you followed up with...

JUNE

(Embarrassed)

I said "How is your day".

Arin begins to get impatient.

ARIN

And what did he say to that?

JUNE

..."Good".

ARIN

And you said...

JUNE

[long beat] ..."Cool"?"-

ARIN

Jesus fucking *Christ* June you're killing me -

Arin marches over to June, grabbing her phone. They scroll through her texts and scoff.

ARIN

Oho my *god*, June! This is pathetic! Neither of you know how to deal with this, do you?

June sulks even more. Arin notices.

ARIN

I just mean - if this is any indicator of how you two talked all night it's a miracle both of you were young and horny enough to have sex. Both of you seem like total amateurs.

June shoots Arin a look. They backs off in surrender.

ARIN

Which could be a good thing! I don't know!

She doesn't respond. Arin shuffles in place, fidgeting with the phone in silence. They gently give the phone back to her.

ARIN

(Softly)

Do you like him?

JUNE

Yes? Kind of? Enough? I still don't know anything about him.

She puts her head into her hands

JUNE

I feel like I just fucked a coworker.

Arin laughs. They pat June on the back and resume getting ready to leave.

ARIN

Well, you didn't. Good news is there's nothing stopping you from ghosting him - or blocking him - or just never seeing him again.

Arin exits through the door while scrolling on their phone. June sits down on the couch and places her phone beside her. She fidgets with her hands and stares at it. A beat. Arin bursts back through the door. June jumps.

ARIN

(looking at their phone)

You can't be fucking serious.

JUNE

What?

Arin shoves their phone into June's face

ARIN

Is this your guy?

June squints to read the screen. She gasps.

ARIN

At Oak and Maine. That corner with no fucking stop sign. The car just sped straight into the edge and everyone's talking about this Camosun guy who got...

Immediate blackout.

4. GATE TO AFTERLIFE

"RICKY'S DECISION"

MUSIC CUE - Guitar intro to "Narakalaoka" by The Mountain Goats

Music CUTS at the end of the guitar intro (0:21).

A **SPOTLIGHT FLASH**. Lights up on a spotlight down center stage. Ricky immediately shields his eyes from the light. His clothes are tattered and bloody. He's pale and Bruises cover his neck and arms. An off-stage, booming voice addresses him directly.

VOICE

Richard Edgar Hughes.

RICKY

Wh - huh?

VOICE

I am the representative of RELIGION administrations and am your gateway into the afterlife.

Ricky's eyes widen. He frantically looks down at his clothes and arms - and looks back up.

RICKY

Did I just fucking die?

VOICE

Yes. You have [clears throat]: "just fucking died".

RICKY

(Panicked)

Wh - how? I didn't feel anything! One moment I'm on the fucking sidewalk and the next -

VOICE

It was pretty immediate, honestly. Your neck pretty much [mimics cracking sound] snapped in half. Clean through. But believe me - you're dead. Your bones were sticking out and everything.

Ricky instinctively caresses his throat at the thought of it being broken.

VOICE (cont.)

Pretty seamless death for a car crash, if you ask me. I'm almost impressed! One of the best ones I've seen. Good job!

RICKY

...Thanks?

VOICE

Now you see, Richard - the reason why you're here, still in a conscious state, is because your soul has been deemed too "un-rested".

RICKY

"Unrested"?

VOICE

We here at RELIGION administrations need the ascension of your soul to go smoothly. The travel from this physical and conscious body of yours into a rested spirit in the afterlife must be blissful. Carefree. But we see that your soul is not fit for ascension unless you - as we like to say in the biz - "sort some shit out".

RICKY

[pause] ... What??

VOICE

Look, we're giving you one last chance to spend some more time with your body to make peace with a person still alive on Earth. Is there anyone in particular that you would like to return to? Anyone you would deem the closest to you? A person whom you must see one more time?

Ricky gets lost in thought. An off beat.

VOICE

Any family? Friends? Lovers? Relationships you'd like to mend?

Suddenly, someone comes to mind.

VOICE

[beat] Do you have a dog or anything-

RICKY

It doesn't have to be family?

VOICE

No, it does not.

RICKY

Does it matter how long I've known them?

VOICE

No.

RICKY

Does it matter if -

VOICE

Look if there were limits I would have told you - I'm not some genie with weird caveats. Have you made your choice or not?

Ricky stalls to commit to his decision.

RICKY

Fuck. God damn it.

VOICE

Keep your stalling to a minimum, Richard. The afterlife is infinite but my patience is not.

RICKY

Okay. Okay. Fine. I have someone in mind. I'm done thinking.

VOICE

[beat] Usually people who return are more... relieved. To get a second chance. Are you confident in your decision?

RICKY

[Sighs] Anyone else would be worse.

VOICE

Understood.

**MUSIC CUE - Fade in Narakalaoka (Roughly from 2:00 to end).
Overlay static sfx.**

VOICE

You will be returned to your person of choice. The rest is your responsibility.

Ricky looks back down at his bruises - the thought of this being his final moments begins to sink in.

VOICE

(Soothing)

We will see you soon, Richard.

5. INT. JUNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

MUSIC CUE - Misty by Laufey

Ricky remains down stage. Dimmed lights fade in on June's bed upstage. June enters stage left, scrolling on her phone with headphones on. Her phone illuminates her face and she's visibly restless. She sits on her bed and Ricky rushes out stage left. She scrolls on her phone for a bit.

An **OBJECT FALLING** off stage suddenly snaps June out of her thoughts. She puts her glass down and takes off her headphones - the **MUSIC CUTS**. She looks around.

JUNE

Arin?

Arin **SNORES** loudly off-stage. June sighs, putting herself back into bed. The **MUSIC RESUMES**. Another **RUSTLING** sound alerts her again and she takes her headphones off. The **MUSIC CUTS**. This time, she looks over to her window stage left. She creeps over to it and a BLUE spotlight fades onto her bed.

Slowly, she places her hand along the window pane - preparing herself to peek through - when suddenly, Ricky appears from the other side, grabbing her window.

RICKY

June!

June shrieks and immediately pushes herself away from the window. Stumbling over, she rushes over stage left and tries to put herself out of the window's view.

Lights up from dimmed to full upstage. The blue light stays.

RICKY

June. It's me. Please, let me explain. I didn't mean to scare you.

June slides onto the floor and quietly wails in fear, still refusing to look at the window.

RICKY

It's me. Ricky. From the other night?

June's expression changes from fear to confusion.

RICKY

Do you remember me? It - it's okay if you don't. I mean - we did only see each other once (pause) but on the other hand we did also -

JUNE

(Still shaken)

What the hell? Ricky?

She looks over and is taken aback by how dead he looks. Ricky lets out a small sigh of relief.

RICKY

Yeah. Well... not in the flesh. I'm dead now. Apparently it was a car crash?

JUNE

Wait. Yeah it was on the news but - wh-

Ricky, still nervous, straightens his posture and prepares to explain himself.

RICKY

Okay. So. Let me catch you up. There's an afterlife.

June stares at him in shock.

RICKY

Well. I guess.

Still speechless

RICKY

I don't know. Some voice talked to me. I was in a [panicked, vague gestures] void?

She squints at him.

RICKY

He told me I had to come back to the living world before I could "properly" die. But I had to choose someone to go back to, and... I wanted it to be you.

JUNE

(To herself)

Oh my Jesus I'm hallucinating.

RICKY

Wait no, that's not-

June violently rubs and pats her face and eyes. She looks back at the window. Ricky's still there. She tries again more vigorously. Still there. She slowly creeps over and touches his shoulder and immediately retracts her hand.

JUNE

Oh my god you feel - weird.

RICKY

Yeah. Sorry. My actual body must be in a morgue somewhere. [Lost in thought for a moment] Probably... rotting. Or something.

JUNE

Wait. So... you're dead.

RICKY

Yeah.

JUNE

And you're like a ghost now?

RICKY

(Looks down at himself)

I guess.

JUNE

And there's an afterlife.

RICKY

[Pause] Allegedly?

JUNE

And they told you to come back here?

RICKY

Yup.

JUNE

And you wanted to come back to *me*.

RICKY

[Pause] Because I wanted to say I'm sorry.

JUNE

What?

RICKY

Look - June - I - I'm sorry that I bailed on you. It made me feel like a total piece of shit the moment I left I just - I didn't know what to do. I thought leaving after you woke up would be even worse. I could barely process what happened - I didn't expect the night to have gone that far. [Pause] I was scared. But I could have handled it a million other ways.

JUNE

You were scared? Of me?

RICKY

Kind of? Not like, you you. I think the whole thing threw me off. I don't really do anything like that.

JUNE

No, me neither.

June hesitates to continue the conversation. Still processing if this is real or not.

JUNE

Look... Ricky - I also need to apologize. I went straight to getting us drunk and it warmed me up to you a lot faster than I anticipated. I feel like I practically threw myself at you, and that I got you to do something with someone you didn't even like all that much.

RICKY

No, I promise you didn't do anything wrong. You're really nice. And it was fun and... it's my fault for choosing the stupid way out. Nobody deserves being ditched like that.

JUNE

No it's okay. This kind of stuff happens. I guess.

RICKY

Yeah. But, really, I hope you're okay.

JUNE

I'm fine. Thanks for talking to me about it.

An off beat. Ricky looks down at his body.

RICKY

Why didn't that work.

JUNE

What?

RICKY

I thought I just had to apologize.

He pats around his body.

RICKY

I'm still here?

JUNE

Is that... did you want to die now?

RICKY

Well not exactly but - that fucking thing - voice - whatever - told me I was an "unrested soul" and I thought it was because of my guilt, you know?

JUNE

Yeah but, did you really not have a backup plan? Is a quick apology all you wanted to do before dying again?

RICKY

I don't know! I'm doing my best here. You try getting hit by a car and waking up like this.

JUNE

Oh my god. Would you even have said sorry if you were alive or are you just doing this because you died and felt bad?

RICKY

No, I would have reached out about it. Honest. I was thinking about asking you out again. Like, properly. But I didn't get a chance to.

JUNE

Awh. Thanks; I did want to see you again too, you know.

The two fall quiet. Ricky has an idea.

RICKY

Well... are you free now?

JUNE

What? Like right now?

RICKY

Yeah.

JUNE

Yes?

RICKY

(A tad nervous)

We can like, you know, hang out for a bit. At least see when this whole thing blows over - I don't know.

JUNE

"Hang out?" As friends or as a date?

RICK

I don't fucking know at this point.

JUNE

Well, I mean - yeah. I got time.

They both laugh to themselves.

JUNE

We can start by having you not just stand at my window. Did you want to come in?

Ricky looks over at her door.

RICKY

Oh, right - I'll just, um...

He closes her curtains and they both make their way to the door.

6. INT. JUNE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUED

"THE REAL FIRST DATE"

Lights up on a full wash on June's apartment. June makes a last-minute effort to fix her hair before opening the door.

RICKY

Thanks.

He walks inside and takes a look around.

JUNE

Wait take your shoes -

June looks at the track from her door to him and sees no trace of anything.

JUNE

Oh, no footprints.

RICKY

Oh cool. I don't have to take these off. Score.

Ricky goes to sit on her bed as June locks the door. She comes over and sits beside him - unintentionally close. The two notice the lack of space between them and scooch an inch away from each other.

JUNE

We don't have to, like, do anything crazy.

RICKY

Yeah, that's ok. We can keep things chill. To... balance out last time.

JUNE

Yeah. Exactly.

An off beat.

JUNE

Could a human even have sex with -

RICKY

We're not gonna try that.

JUNE

No no - sorry. I'm sorry. It was a question. Like you said, we're keeping it cool this time. I didn't mean anything by it.

RICKY

I know. It's not that I'm uncomfortable with talking about it. It's just that... god; I was fucking awful at it.

JUNE

You weren't that bad.

RICKY

I was terrible!

JUNE

Oh shut up. We were both being idiots.

RICKY

You're not an idiot. What makes you say that?

JUNE

Well... I don't know. My roommate read our texts And I feel like they just know so much more about relationships than I do and they said -

RICKY

Wait, your roommate's read our texts?

June nods.

RICKY

What did they think of me?

JUNE

Uhh - they - didn't like your cargo shorts.

RICKY

Oh god that photo. I could have sworn I told my friends not to put that one in - I was barely sober.

JUNE

Wait, you didn't make your account?

RICKY

Kind of - a bunch of guys I met at Camosun decided to be my shitty wingmen. They kept going on about [Doing an over-the-top shitty frat boy impression] "Bro, you're falling behind." "The fuck are you doing with your time, man?" "When's the last time you hit up a girl, my guy?" and "I wish my dad loved me."

June chuckles and puts her hand over her mouth.

RICKY

Don't get me wrong; they're good guys. I just don't get them sometimes. They're a lot.

JUNE

Oh, Arin's like that. They said that I wasn't trying hard enough and that sitting at home wasn't gonna "help" me get anywhere. Sometimes I feel like they're my coach and I'm this helpless underdog that I never asked to be. (Pause) Don't tell them I said that.

RICKY

I won't. [Pause] I probably can't, actually.

JUNE

Oh. Right.

RICKY

I honestly had the app for like less than a day until I matched with you. The only thing I feel like I had a say on was to make my name Ricky.

JUNE

Yeah - why is that? Who gave you that nickname?

Ricky immediately tenses up and starts fidgeting.

RICKY

Promise you won't judge?

June nods as she takes a sip of her water.

RICKY

[Pause] My girlfriend in high school.

June chokes on her water.

JUNE

You made your Tindr name a nickname your ex gave you?
What, are you still in love with her or something?

RICKY

No! God no. That ship has sailed – sunk, rather –
it's been years. I just...

He trails off, realizing how stupid his logic sounds.

RICKY

(Hesitant)

I just assumed that's what girls would want to call
me.

JUNE

What do you mean "assumed"? You don't have any women
in your life? Who was the last woman you talked to?

Ricky thinks for a moment.

RICKY

My mother?

JUNE

That's not – oh my god, Ricky.

June laughs in disbelief. Ricky, still embarrassed, tries to
defend himself.

RICKY

What! Do you have any guy friends?

June stops and thinks for a second.

JUNE

No, not really.

RICKY

Aha! See! We're even!

JUNE

Yeah but you don't see me using some nickname from my ex on my dating profile!

RICKY

(Backing down)

Does it really sound that bad?

JUNE

No no, it's fine. I didn't really care.

RICKY

Because it was either Ricky or Dick, so.

JUNE

(Rolls her eyes and chuckles)

Yeah that would not get you anywhere, either.

RICKY

(Teasing)

See? Ricky wins, Dick loses, and the name Ricky ended up getting you some Di-

JUNE

(Embarrassed, cutting him off)

Okay! Message received!

June stands up desperate to change the topic and looks around her apartment.

JUNE

Okay, well that sure woke me up, what do you wanna do?

Ricky shrugs.

JUNE

It's your last chance to live a little you can't think of a single thing you want to do?

RICKY

Well, what do you usually do around here?

JUNE

I'm usually in my room but when Arin and I eat dinner,

June walks over and practically forces herself to bring over a stack of DVD cases. She puts them in his hands and they fall on the ground - Ricky's body can't hold anything. As Ricky inspects the weird state of his hands, June scurries down and picks the DVD's up, showing him each one herself.

JUNE

We watch whatever obscure DVD series they dug up from their parent's place. It's basically all we watch together.

RICKY

Yeah, I've heard of these. I think I watched a few growing up.

JUNE

(Slightly disappointed)

Oh. Which ones did you like?

Ricky takes a sharp inhale and looks at her.

RICKY

I kind of thought they were all ass.

JUNE

Oh thank GOD! Thank you! I feel so bad that I can't tell Arin that I rarely like the stuff they bring home... but...

June puts the cases back on the table.

JUNE

I don't want to hurt their feelings.

RICKY

Aw, June - I feel like that's nobody's fault.

JUNE

I know. I know. We should just do something else.
What do you like to do, anyways?

Ricky is reluctant to answer.

RICKY

I don't know if you'd like it.

JUNE

What's that supposed to mean?

RICKY

No - [Pause] I usually like to whittle.

JUNE

Oh, like little wood sculptures? That's... cute?

RICKY

I'm getting the sense that you're patronizing me.

JUNE

No...

She basically is. Ricky feels around his pockets and takes out a small wooden dinosaur.

RICKY

Honestly though I can only carve the same three types of dinosaurs.

June holds back a snicker and hurries over to take the dinosaur. Holding it in her hands, she's lost in its cuteness.

JUNE

Okay, now I actually think your hobby's cute.

RICKY

Wow. Way to respect the dead, June.

Ricky takes back his little dino and tosses it onto June's bed.

RICKY

Well what do you like to do?

JUNE

I like to read.

RICKY

Okay. Vague. What do you read?

June immediately tenses.

JUNE

Books.

Ricky gestures to her to elaborate.

RICKY

And the types of books are...

JUNE

We- we don't have to sit here and read. Let's do something else.

Ricky glances over and immediately clocks the stack of books by her bed. He points at them.

RICKY

Are those your books?

The two go silent. June realizes she's screwed. Ricky rushes over to them and June desperately tries to get to them first. Ricky tries to pick up one and it immediately falls through his hands and onto the ground. He squats down and reads the title.

RICKY

"My Slutty Little Vampire" - Holy shit, June. You read porn books?

JUNE

Shut up, Dick! They're romance novels!

She picks the book up and hugs it close. The backside faces outward and Ricky walks over and reads the synopsis.

RICKY

(Overdramatic)

"Serenity was a lone wolf her entire life. Disdained by anyone that dared to ask for her company. But everything changed when she realized her mysterious sexy professor was none other than a vampire, and the two embark on a wayward love triangle--"

June panics for a way out. She looks upstage. She throws the novel out of her window.

RICKY

Jesus Christ, June!

JUNE

It actually has a heart of gold! It's a self aware satire at its core, you don't know what you're talking about! The cover completely does the story a disservice.

RICKY

June, it sounds amazing. I poked at it harder than I meant to. Genuinely, it sounds fun.

JUNE

(Suspicious)

Oh, really? Fun?

RICKY

No, honest. I can't judge. It's cool that you like those kinds of things.

June smiles.

JUNE

Okay. We're even.

The two fall quiet. June looks up and down at Ricky.

JUNE

How... do you feel, anyways?

RICKY

Huh? Uh, pretty light. It's like I'm full of helium.

JUNE

No I mean - like. You're dead. You died. Doesn't it bother you?

RICKY

Oh.

Ricky looks down at himself and spaces out.

RICKY

We don't need to think about it. We're in pseudo-date mode now, right? Let's change the topic. Since when have you been to alternative books, eh?

June hesitates to go along with this.

JUNE

Well, I guess forever. But I just got back into it recently. I was super into them up to high school until... well I guess when I started seeing a guy.

RICKY

Why did getting a boyfriend stop you from reading?

JUNE

I felt betrayed by them. I wasn't happy with him and I blamed it on the hope that fiction gave me instead of blaming the loser who made me feel like shit.

She sighs.

JUNE (cont.)

I grew up as a hopeless romantic because of books like those. Everything was so - exaggerated and elaborate. I was hoping that saying yes to some jock would turn my life into a fairytale. [Pause] But all I remember from then was being sixteen and having one-sided conversations and shallow sex with some guy who barely gave me any mind. [Pause] Sorry, that was a bit much.

RICKY

What? No. You're fine. I kind of get what you mean.

JUNE

Really?

RICKY

My ex - the "Ricky" girl. We were both fifteen, and I liked the way she carried herself. Really sharp. But - honestly - she didn't listen to a word I said. I didn't have a lot to say and I just stood around not knowing what to do but... I barely saw myself in her life. I still wonder if she even liked me or if it was all for fulfilling some teenage quota. Ended after a few failed attempts to have sex and she got sick of trying. And I guess I stopped trying altogether after. I really can't keep up in relationships and I don't know why.

JUNE

"Keep up"? You weren't losing some love race. I'm sure you would have been a catch to somebody who actually listened to you.

RICKY

Oh, but I'm sure there were so many nerds who would have loved a bookworm girlfriend. Your guy sounds like the real dick here. Bet his wasn't even that big, my condolences.

June bursts into laughter.

7. INT. JUNE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUED**"GETTING OUT"**

June's laughter causes Ricky to start giggling himself. Suddenly, the sound of Arin rustling off stage startles the both of them.

ARIN (O.S)

June? It's the middle of the night. Are you crying or laughing because I can't tell the fucking difference with you.

Rick and June continue to panic.

JUNE

Sorry! It's fine! It's nothing. I'll keep it down.

Arin begrudgingly falls back asleep. June sighs in relief.

RICKY

Do they talk to you like that all the time?

JUNE

No. Well, yes, but they're not always pissed off. They're nice, most of the time. They love trying to make me laugh and since day one they've treated me like a long time friend. I just think they're misled sometimes with how much they should help me.

RICKY

Yeah, it looks like they had more control of your love life than you had. And they dissed my cargo pants. From what you said it seems like you still feel a little off with them.

JUNE

Yeah, I do. I don't know how to bring it up, I guess.

RICK

June, if I may - there's never gonna be a perfect time, but the regret of ducking out would probably suck more.

JUNE

Like your regret with me?

RICKY

Yeah, but no - I've always been like this. Unfortunately. [Hesitant] I was worse with my family. I never tried academically; getting into my dad's university wasn't even an option. So the moment I got rejected from my mom's, they were pissed. They blew up, I blew up, and it ended with me telling them I'm moving out to go to community college and they could fume about it far away from me. But looking back there were so many chances for me to tell them that I was completely lost with what I wanted to do in life. We were never close, and who knows if they would have helped, but I think saying something - anything - could have saved me years of feeling lost. It's a burned bridge now. I could never change how they feel about me. But I think I would have felt better years ago knowing that I at least tried. [he looks down at his hands] God, what are they gonna think of me now that I'm...

Ricky's hands start to shake. June leans in to hold his shoulder and he frantically puts his hands down.

RICKY

But - anyways - please, you should talk to them. You actually still have a chance. Please.

The two go silent.

JUNE

So... you really don't know what the afterlife is like? You don't just get to go to some heaven -

RICKY

[Forces on a smile]

Or hell!

He snaps a finger gun but she immediately puts his hand down.

JUNE

Stop. You're trying to ignore this. I know you don't want to. Haven't you thought about what could be after this?

A beat.

RICKY

Nothing. I think it's going to be nothing. I don't think I'm gonna keep this body for long. I think I'm just a vessel for some soul to live through. It gets to move on having lived my stupid life - but not me. It might really be the end after this.

A beat.

RICKY

What does death feel like to you?

JUNE

M-me?

RICKY

Yeah.

JUNE

Well, I mean, the only thing that comes to mind was when my grandfather died. Not to - overstep - your experience - of course. I remember imagining what my mom was going through. Losing a parent. That someday I have to deal with the loss of her, too. It seems...almost impossible.

RICKY

What do you mean "impossible"?

JUNE

Like, she's not supposed to die. She's my mom, you know? I can tell it takes a lot for her to keep living every day without him. And to me, to imagine her not in my life anymore... [pause] Like - there's going to be a day where I'll wake up and be forced to accept that my mom is dead. The first and one of the only people I've held. How her hands feel - how her thoughts feel. Her stream of consciousness and existence that I coexist with. Every detail of her life. Her love. All I'll ever have is what we used to have - it'll never be enough.

June starts to choke up.

JUNE

She's only getting older, Ricky. Whenever I notice a new wrinkle on her face, or feel the skin on her hands, or hear about how she's sick of dying her gray hair, or how she gave up on hiking because it hurts her back; they're just reminders that she's... decaying. Slowly. Without any way to stop it. [Pause] I spiral about it sometimes. It... I think my brain refuses to accept a world without her. It's an angry refusal of something I'm forced to accept is inevitable. It happens to everyone but it shouldn't happen to her. It hurts.

June hugs her knees and covers her face. A heavy silence. Ricky hesitates to comfort her.

RICKY

You really love her.

JUNE

I do.

RICKY

(Gently)

And that's a real feeling, right? Like, [gestures to her] you can feel it. Physically.

June looks down at herself.

JUNE

Yeah, I guess I do.

RICKY

Then maybe, that way, if and when you keep loving her for the rest of your life, a part of her will keep existing. In a sense. It came from her and you keep it alive, right? It's real and she'll always stay with you that way.

June smiles at his comment. She sits up.

JUNE

Thanks. For that. And for listening.

RICKY

[Chuckles] I try.

The two go silent, but they're smiling to themselves. A short beat.

JUNE

Do you know another hobby I have that isn't sexy vampire books?

RICKY

Well, I think you're pretty set on hobbies by now, but continue.

June laughs and takes out her phone.

JUNE

Music. I like listening to music.

RICKY

Oh me too! God, that's gotta be one of things I'll miss the most.

She gives him a bittersweet smile.

RICKY

What do you listen to?

JUNE

Well, I listen to jazz, soft rock, Rob Cantor, Oh Wonder, Sales -

RICKY

Oh, I know Sales!

JUNE

Really? I could maybe...

Ricky smiles and gestures for her to go for it. She walks over to her table and starts the music.

MUSIC CUE: Renee by SALES

First verse, June begins to hop around and dance to the music while Ricky sits on the bed, casually swaying. Halfway through the first verse, she looks over at Ricky.

JUNE

Oh, don't tell me you don't dance. Don't tell me you're one of those guys who refuses to dance.

Ricky chuckles at the comment and gets the courage to stand up. He begins to sway to the beat stage right. He looks over to June who moves in small jumps and in reserved, but fun spins to the beat. She's trying to loosen up and is halfway there. She looks over to Ricky's low energy quote unquote "dancing" and the two move to opposite ends of the stage.

The song's bridge. LIGHTS fade out. A YELLOW SPOTLIGHT on June center stage right and a BLUE SPOTLIGHT on Ricky center stage left. They begin to strike poses to the beat - June stretching and spinning and Ricky putting his hands on his hips. A big emphasis on him looking at his arms and body throughout.

As the guitar portion begins, they look at each other. They begin to take turns posing, looking at each other to see what the other does next. It's dramatic but in a goofy sleepover way. Just letting loose.

The second verse begins and their posing turns into taking turns dancing in turns. Ricky's movements start to open up more, raising his arms and turning. June giggles and claps in approval. When it's June's turn, Ricky (respectfully) cheers her on, making her get even more loose and energetic.

The song's outro begins and the two waltz over to each other and happily, hand in hand, begin to dance together. FULL WASH fades in. Overlaid, LIGHTS fade from YELLOW, to BLUE, to GREEN, to PURPLE. Ricky lets go for a moment for June to spin before she returns back to him as they continue. They take turns as the lead. Dopey unapologetic smiles are on both their faces as they casually dance around the room - restraining themselves from laughing like idiots at the whole time.

As the music comes to an end, the COLOURED LIGHTS fade out. Ricky lets go of June, who dances over to her bed and flops onto it. Ricky follows her and sits on the floor.

RICKY

(Teasing)

For the record, I am one of those guys who refuses to dance. I don't even like moving.

June chuckles uncontrollably and lightly shoves him. She flops back on her bed and kicks around her feet.

8. INT - JUNE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUED

"RESTED BODIES"

Ricky wanders over stage left and rests himself outside her window. He shakes around the frame.

RICKY

You gotta get this fixed, June. Unstable.

JUNE

Yeah yeah call me a window lady and we'll take care of it, 'kay? Stop criticizing my beautiful college apartment.

Ricky realizes he can actually hold the window frame and gets confused. Slightly concerned. He feels around his shirt and neck. He can feel the peace, and the end, setting in. June doesn't notice.

RICKY

Promise me that you'll talk to Arin?

June's taken aback at the sudden serious comment.

RICKY

You can kick ass at an argument when you wanna, you know.

JUNE

Thanks. I will. It'll be okay.

She sits up eager to tell Ricky what's on her mind.

JUNE

O h, I forgot to say; if you think I'm a romance dork then my mom is ten times worse. She's the one who got me into those books.

RICK

(Chuckling)

Really?

JUNE

Yes! Oh my god, her collection is massive. She can still go through a book in like a day or two. I don't know how, but I've never gotten sick of listening to her talk about it.

Ricky quietly laughs to himself. Warming up to every word she says, he rests his head on his hand and gazes at her.

RICKY

Tell me about it.

Full-wash slowly fades out. A BLUE SPOTLIGHT on June's bed fades in. It leaves the window in the dark.

JUNE

It's like we have our own two-person book club. Growing up she used to love T.V dramas. Instead of reading me books to sleep I'd be up with her to watch the latest episode of whatever she was watching. I think when I got older she realized she didn't give me any love for reading. And not enough sleep. So we switched to reading books together and that spiraled both of us into this.

RICKY

You definitely take after her. I'm glad that she makes you so happy.

June laughs. A pause. She looks down at herself. JUNE'S SPOTLIGHT FADES INTO WHITE through the remainder of her monologue.

JUNE

You know, at my core, I am happy with this, you know? I think I just forget that sometimes. That's probably why I was excited to throw myself on you - I wanted to see what would happen and what I would feel - and I think you felt the same. I only started overthinking it the next day and ended up fumbling my way through talking to you. Honestly, I wish I just accepted it from the start. You wanted to see me again, right? It just proves my point. What we had wasn't bad, or embarrassing. It's about enjoying each other, that's it. It's not something to just forget. Or pretend it's not a big deal. It was a big deal. It was a big deal because I like you. A lot.

Ricky softly chuckles.

JUNE

And I liked our time together. You're good company, Richard. I don't think that will change. I don't think that should change. [Pause] I'm happy that I met you.

She goes quiet. A beat. She notices the silence and zones back into her surroundings. Another beat. It's dead silent for way too long. A deafening silence. Lights up on her apartment. The curtain is closed. June is alone. She rushes over to throw open the curtains and Ricky is gone.

MUSIC CUE: Landscape With a Fairy by aspidistrafly.

The music fades in. She sees the wooden dinosaur left on her bed and grabs it. She sits up, staring at it. Her shoulders sink, and she looks ahead towards nothing. There's nothing else left of him.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.