

○ VENTI ○

By Matthew Burkholder

Cast: MISSY - Sarcastic and cynical
 IAN - Optimistic and recently single
 JOSH - Pimpily faced Coffee Jockey
 LEAH - Gen X and very energetic
 HEATHER - Gen X follower
 LOUIS - Attractive stranger
 KIM - Heartbroken
 STEVE - Heartbreaker

SCENE: A coffee shop.

A door upstage center with the counter to the immediate right and down from the counter another door which leads to the bathroom. There are four tables in the establishment. One table near center is home to two girls with one extra chair and a large duffel bag on the floor, at another table a man sits alone reading the Village Voice. The table down left is occupied by a man and a woman and a fourth down right is empty with only one chair and some empty cups on it. All are in their twenties or early thirties.

MISSY: Why did you make me come here?

IAN: What? What's wrong with a coffee shop?

MISSY: Ten years ago? Nothing. Today I walk into a coffee shop and I'm suddenly presented with twenty five options. Latte, mocha, cafe au lait, Colombian, Honduran, Caribbean, cappuccino, espresso. It's all too much! All I want is a coffee, and I don't need any more pressure in my life, all right? Trust me, I have enough pressure in my life. My boyfriend is impotent, did I tell you that. He get's apoplexic any time I even look at the bedroom, much less suggest that we go in there. *(Leah and Heather are looking at Missy who turns on them)* Hello, can I help you? *(Missy turns back to Ian)* Can't get an erection to save his life. My boss at work is coming on to me, did I tell you that? So the last thing I need is to go to a coffee shop with a pimpily faced coffee jockey pressuring me. I was drinking coffee before he was born!

IAN: Can I make a suggestion?

MISSY: Please!

IAN: Decaf.

MISSY: Oh shut up.

They go to the counter.

JOSH: What can I get you?

MISSY: Coffee. Just a plain simple coffee.

JOSH: What kind?

MISSY: What did I tell you?

IAN: Why me?

MISSY: Look, just give me the most basic coffee you have.

JOSH: Short, tall, or Venti?

MISSY: Venti? What the hell is "Venti?"

JOSH: Um, very large.

MISSY: Why can't you just say small medium or large? Why does it have to be short tall or what was it?

JOSH: Venti.

MISSY: Well, I, I'm sorry, what is your name?

JOSH: My name?

MISSY: You do have one, don't you?

IAN: She's always like this, just play along.

JOSH: Josh.

MISSY: Josh. Of course it is. Josh, I'm Missy, and I will have a medium coffee. Just a plain old run of the mill caffeine infused coffee.

IAN: Two please.

JOSH: Coming right up.

MISSY: Great. See? Pressure, everywhere I go, pressure.

IAN: Has it ever occurred to you that you create some of that pressure?

MISSY: Of course. Why do you think I'm in therapy?

Ian and Missy engage in a silent conversation or simply observe those around them.

LEAH: I think what I really want to do is teach, but like, I feel like I have so many options.

HEATHER: Yeah, yeah, there are a lot of options out there.

LEAH: Cause, you know I get up and go work out, then I'm taking a dance class which is like totally cool, and then I'm teaching a step-robics class at the Y.

HEATHER: Oh wow, I've always wanted to take one of those.

LEAH: God, Heather, you should come!

HEATHER: Yeah?

LEAH: It's so, like, really invigorating. But I really want to do some real teaching so I'm taking this other class, 'cause you know I'm really into self improvement.

HEATHER: Uh huh.

JOSH: Here you go. Two coffees.

MISSY: Thanks.

IAN: There's a table.

LEAH: 'Cause, you know, a lot of people don't like care about themselves, but I like totally want to take care of my body.

HEATHER: I should loan you this book I have.

LEAH: I'd love it! But I'm starting this new diet next week, it's high on antioxidants and very organic and stuff.

HEATHER: It's really good, it's all about, you know, reclaiming your child. Leah, you would love it!

LEAH: Oh, yeah? Wow.

HEATHER: I haven't finished it yet, but when I'm done...

MISSY: Excuse me, can I borrow this chair?

LEAH: Sure. Oh shoot, I gotta get going!

HEATHER: What do you have going on?

LEAH: I'm taking a class on the Alexander Technique, do you know it?

HEATHER: I've heard of that! I've heard of it. It's some sort of

relaxation thing?

LEAH: Yeah, but it's so much more! Oh my God, I just had a great idea! You should take it with me! That would be so much fun. I would love to be in a class with you!

HEATHER: Can I still get in?

LEAH: Come with me today, we can talk to the teacher, he's SO cool. And I bet if I asked him he would let you join late cause he's like really cool.

Heather and Leah gather their things and leave.

MISSY: Tell me I'm not like that?

IAN: Like what?

MISSY: Those two girls. I'm not like that am I?

IAN: I wasn't listening to them.

MISSY: Ian, how many times do I have to tell you, pay attention to what is going on around us.

IAN: Sorry.

MISSY: Just learn from your mistakes, that's all I ask.

IAN: I'll try. So anyway, Mitch and I broke up.

MISSY: Like I didn't see that one coming.

IAN: Well, they can't all work out.

MISSY: Oh, come on! Some relationships are doomed from day one and believe me, You and Mitch? Doom.

IAN: I don't believe you're saying this.

MISSY: You have to admit you two made a pretty odd pair.

IAN: Not that odd!

MISSY: Hello! Felix and Oscar had more in common.

IAN: Bitch.

MISSY: Smile when you say that. Hey, hey, that guy... he's looking at you.

IAN: Missy, I just broke up with Mitch. Is he cute?

MISSY: I don't know, I guess.

IAN: He is not looking at me.

MISSY: He totally is!

IAN: You think?

MISSY: Who are you talking to? I am always right about these things.

IAN: He is kind of cute.

MISSY: God, that pisses me off.

IAN: What? You aren't still mad about...

MISSY: No, no, I'm over that, no I just hate you guys.

IAN: Us guys?

MISSY: You can see each other and immediately start flirting with each other. I do that, I start getting compared to Mae West.

IAN: And that's a bad comparison?

MISSY: Well, no. But, for example, how many guys have come onto you on the F train?

IAN: That's how I met Mitch.

MISSY: Bad example, but you get my point.

IAN: I guess.

MISSY: You have that damn sixth sense about each other and can come onto each other anywhere. Straights can't do that.

IAN: OK, OK, what's he doing now?

MISSY: He's just sitting there. He's sipping his coffee and reading the Voice.

IAN: Can you tell what section?

MISSY: Do you want me to go look?

IAN: No! What's he doing now?

MISSY: I am not going to sit here and give you a play by play of what he's doing.

IAN: Missy.

MISSY: He's ... oh, oh, he's getting up. He's up. He's...

LOUIS: Excuse me, could you watch my things?

MISSY: Sure, no problem.

LOUIS: Thanks.

Louis goes to the bathroom.

MISSY: Like I wasn't watching them anyway.

IAN: I'm going to look at what he was reading.

MISSY: See, this is why your relationships fail, you're obsessive.

IAN: Oh, and you're so well adjusted?

MISSY: Yes, I am.

IAN: Dream on.

MISSY: What are you going to tell from what he was reading?

IAN: It can be a window into his personality.

MISSY: The article he's reading in the Voice is going to tell you something about him?

IAN: He's reading the personals.

MISSY: Get out!

IAN: He circled a couple. He's single.

MISSY: Here we go.

Ian returns to their table.

IAN: You started this.

MISSY: My bad.

KIM: What? No, no what do you mean?

STEVE: I just don't think that this is going anywhere.

KIM: You son of a bitch!

STEVE: Look I...

KIM: How can you do this to me?

Louis comes out of the bathroom.

STEVE: Shhh...

KIM: Don't you shush me!

STEVE: Can we just talk...

KIM: If you think just because we're in public I won't make a scene, you are dead wrong. Dead wrong!

STEVE: Kim, please.

KIM: Please? Please? Please what? Please don't embarrass you?

STEVE: Sit down.

KIM: What's the matter Steve? What's wrong? I can't even believe ... I just ... bye. Bye. You son of a bitch.

Kim slaps Steve and turns to leave. Steve sits at his table and watches her leave as does everyone else, once she exits he rises and follows her out.

STEVE: Kim. Kim!

MISSY: Ah, the breakup. I know it so well. And this is what you want to get yourself back into?

LOUIS: Thanks for watching my stuff. Hey, don't I know you?

MISSY: Oh please! *(Ian kicks her under the table)* OW! please... pass me the sugar from that table?

LOUIS: No problem.

As he turns to get the sugar Missy and Ian exchange a silent bicker.

MISSY: Thanks.

LOUIS: Where do I know you from?

IAN: I don't know. I'm Ian.

LOUIS: Louis. That was quite a scene huh?

IAN: Oh, yeah, yeah it was. Relationships, huh?

LOUIS: Yeah, I guess. So, well, thanks for watching my stuff.

IAN: No problem, it was my pleasure.

LOUIS: Good. Well, I gotta get to work.

IAN: You work near here?

LOUIS: Yeah, in the mall.

IAN: I'm headed that way, mind if I walk with you?

LOUIS: No, not at all, maybe I'll figure out where I know you from.

IAN: Missy, I'm going to...

MISSY: Oh, am I still here?

IAN: I'll call later.

MISSY: I'll want a blow by blow.

IAN: Bitch.

LOUIS: Ready?

IAN: As I'll ever be.

MISSY: Oh god.

LOUIS: Great. Oh, nice to meet you.

MISSY: Sure thing. Have a great day!

Ian and Louis start out.

IAN: Where are you from? I thought I heard an accent.

LOUIS: Brazil originally, but my family moved here when I was really young.

IAN: Brazil, wow!

Ian turns back to Missy just as they go out the door and gives a BIG very enthusiastic thumbs up, he's very excited.

MISSY: Josh! Another one please. Make it a venti.

The End.