

EATING FOR TWO

Hal, early twenties, has been talking to Nicole, twenty-six, online for the last few weeks. They've been spending hours and hours in private chat rooms and sending e-mails to each other. In the past week, they have begun talking on the phone. Today, they discuss plans to meet face-to-face.

CHARACTERS

Nicole: 26, pregnant

Hal: late 20s

SETTING

Nicole's and Hal's apartments; later a suburban
Denny's restaurant

TIME

The present

NICOLE: *(On phone.)* OK, axe murderer check. What about strange collections? Candle-dripped bottles? Skulls? Hello Kitty paraphernalia?

HAL: No, no, and *no!*

NICOLE: Well, you sound healthy. But the thing is, I don't know. You could be a serial killer.

HAL: Oh come on! I still watch cartoons on Saturday morning.

NICOLE: See! Exposed to a lot of violence. All I'm saying is that knowing someone online is a lot different than meeting them in person.

HAL: How profound. Look, my butt is sore. Isn't that even more profound? These late nights online and on the phone are killing me. If we don't stop this behavior, I might be permanently damaged. Even my mother seemed to notice it's lost its shape.

NICOLE: OK, leaving yourself wide open on the mother thing.

Won't touch that. And I apologize to your butt. But I feel I need to get to know you better.

HAL: My God, you already know my deepest secret.

NICOLE: I do? Oh. Yeah. Right. I do.

HAL: Oh my God! You don't remember, do you?!

NICOLE: No, no. I remember!

HAL: You do? What was it then?

NICOLE: Umm. *(Beat.)* Could I get a little hint?

HAL: About the closet? The remote-control fire engine?

NICOLE: Oh, oh, yeah! That girl's graduation party thing.

HAL: Exactly. We were playing ten minutes in the closet and I rolled over onto the remote and it sent the fire engine right toward her . . .

NICOLE: Oh yes. I remember.

HAL: See? We have memories already, and you know my deepest secret. You can use it against me. Cruelly. See, I'm honest. And sweet. Completely meetable.

NICOLE: No offense, but that's not much of a dirty, dark secret. In fact it's sort of cute.

HAL: Fine, unman me why don't you?

NICOLE: In fact, I bet to this day, Becky Johnson still looks at fire engines and gets all hot and bothered.

HAL: You don't know Becky Johnson. Bothered maybe. Hot — not a chance.

NICOLE: Oh God. I must be getting hard up. Somehow ten minutes in the closet doesn't sound half-bad to me. It's been a long time.

HAL: I know what you mean. Now, let's meet. In person. Some place real public if you don't feel comfortable. A very public restaurant. Not too far from campus. *(Beat.)* You know so much about me already. You know I work at the TV station. You know my dreams, my aspirations, even my shoe size.

NICOLE: See. That's the thing. Maybe we know too much.

HAL: But do you know my ATM PIN number? Huh, huh?

NICOLE: Sixty-five. Thirty-four.

HAL: Holy . . . ! I told you my PIN number?!! Jeez, I must've been drunk.

NICOLE: You were. *(Beat.)* It's just weird. Ya know when someone knows weird, specific things about you? Ya know, bizarre things about you . . . like some sweaty guy who tongued you when you were thirteen or some strange habit you have of sucking the salt off of pretzels and spitting them out? It's scary. We share things because we feel connected, but if we don't have that same connection offline, it's just weird. And then you can't be friends online again, because you're too disappointed by how bad offline was. It's like . . . it's like it's all ruined.

HAL: You mean, like, you aren't attracted?

NICOLE: Yeah.

HAL: Well, you saw my pic. You said you liked it. And I *loved* your pic and your profile. You didn't lie about anything, did you?

NICOLE: No! Of course not. Did you?

HAL: No.

NICOLE: You're sure about my profile?

HAL: I told you that from the start. You sound great!

NICOLE: You know, you really are pretty cool too — as far as guys go.

HAL: I am. In person as well as online. So you'll meet me then?

NICOLE: *(Beat.)* Denny's. Tomorrow. 6:30 PM. I'll wear a black jacket. You won't be able to miss me, trust me.

HAL: Cool!! I'll be in a brown leather jacket. OK. See ya there.

NICOLE: Wait, Hal, have you ever done this before? Met other women?

HAL: No. *(Beat.)* Have you met men?

(Cut to Hal and Nicole in their cars.)

NICOLE: No. *(To audience, miming driving.)* Of course I'm lying. I met at least fourteen guys before I got pregnant. But Hal would be the first one since. So I don't feel I'm totally lying because, since I got pregnant, I've become a totally new person. *(Beat.)* It was number thirteen, Hashbrown Sixty-

nine, who caused my condition. I dated him for a month. Jerk! And total liar. Hal's different. He doesn't mind that I'm pregnant. Maybe he even likes it. Never even asked me about it after he read my profile. Saying "Hal" is weird. I've called him Camaro for two months now. That's his online name. He's really into Camaros. He owns two.

HAL: *(To audience, miming driving.)* God, I just keep sweating and sweating. Thank God I have my leather jacket. I won't take it off when I get to Denny's. If I ever find Denny's. It's so cool that she picked a breakfast-food place for our first meeting. Most women choose overpriced bars with silly names like — Neo or Anti. Oh, I have met women before. Only eighteen or so times, but I didn't feel I was lying because it's never worked out. Besides, it's different with Superwoman. We are simpatico. After hours of amazing conversations, from existentialism to steamburgers, I'm finally going to meet her. Nicole's incredibly intelligent, has a great sense of humor, has her life together. I'm really thinking this may be the one! *(Beat.)* I think I'll play it cool though. I mean, she could be a lot uglier than her picture. Right?

NICOLE and HAL: *(Simultaneously.)* Oh God. We really should have been more specific.

HAL: Carry a red rose?

NICOLE: Meet in front of the revolving refrigerated cake display?

HAL: Wear signs that say, "Losers."

HAL and NICOLE: Denny's is packed!

NICOLE: *(To a Denny's patron.)* Hi! Hal? I'm — *(Beat.)* Oh. *(Laughs uncomfortably.)* Oops.

HAL: *(To Denny's patron.)* Hi! Nicole? *(Beat.)* Oh! I thought you were my friend. Haven't seen her in a while. Had facial surgery.

NICOLE: *(To Denny's patron.)* No, no. I'm waiting for a friend. *(Beat.)* He's got brown hair and brown eyes. About 160

pounds. Brown leather jacket. *(To audience.)* Do you know how many friggin' guys fit that description?

HAL: *(To Denny's patron.)* I am not trying to steal your wife, sir! I just simply thought she looked like . . . No, no, I don't want to step outside.

NICOLE: No, God, I'm not interested! Uck!

HAL: *(Not turning to see her yet.)* Nicole?

NICOLE: *(Seeing him.)* Hal?

HAL: *(Turns.)* Oh my God, I've been looking all — *(Seeing she's pregnant.)* Oh my gosh!

NICOLE: What? *(Looking down.)* Oh. Bigger than what you expected, huh?

HAL: No, no, I, uh, wow, uh . . . Hi!

NICOLE: Hi. What? Don't I look like my picture?

HAL: Well, I, well, your face is, is, but —

NICOLE: I know, it was taken a few months before I started showing. Normally, I'm a medium. When I'm not pregnant, you know.

HAL: Right!

NICOLE: But you knew that. From my profile. Right?

HAL: No. I don't think I did. Did you — did I — did we discuss — that? 'Cause I'm thinking I'd remember that discussion if we discussed that.

NICOLE: Well, sure we did. Several times. I asked you the first time you instant messaged me if you were OK with my profile.

HAL: Yeah. I remember that.

NICOLE: Well, it states clearly on my profile that I am eating for two.

HAL: Ohhhh. Ohhh, I thought that meant that you liked to eat a lot or that you were a little chubby. And I like women who are a little chubby. So when I read that, I just thought you were a little —

NICOLE: Chubby?! News flash. Women don't like the word — *chubby*. So are you saying you never knew I was pregnant?!

HAL: *(Beat.)* That's what I'm saying.

NICOLE: Well then, you weren't listening.

HAL: Not listening? Not listening to what? You never mentioned that you were pregnant.

NICOLE: Look, I asked you if you read my whole profile. You said you did and that you loved it. It's not my fault you skimmed.

HAL: I didn't skim! I read it. I just misunderstood.

NICOLE: Who *misunderstands*, "I'm eating for two"? It's a classic American line.

HAL: So is, "I'm pregnant." Now, that's really clear!

NICOLE: So obviously you have a problem with this?

HAL: *(Beat.)* No . . . it's not like, well, I just —

NICOLE: Fine! *(Crying and whimpering.)* "You know my deepest darkest secret, Nicole. I never told this to anyone, Nicole. Please meet me, Nicole."

HAL: *(Comforting her.)* Hey, hey, . . . hey, I think we got a table.

NICOLE: Well, go sit at it. *(Sniffs.)* And eat for two, chubby!

HAL: Hey now. Look, I'm just surprised. I'm not . . . I'd like to get to know you still. Let's sit. *(Beat.)* Please? *(Nicole nods. They sit.)* So how far along are you?

NICOLE: Well, I met Hashbrown Sixty-nine last May, and it's been about seven months.

HAL: Hashbrown Sixty-nine? *(She nods.)* He sounds nice. So he's the father? *(They nod.)* Hey, I thought you never met anyone before?

NICOLE: Well! What about you? You're going to tell me that I'm the first person you met for real?

HAL: Well, the first one on MSN.

NICOLE: You online Ho!

HAL: I'm not a Ho. I'm not even a hhh. Trust me.

NICOLE: Why not? I mean, you're not exactly bad looking.

HAL: Thanks, I think. I guess I'm just really picky.

NICOLE: *(Beat.)* Couldn't get any?

HAL: Nada. *(Pause.)* Do you know if it's gonna be a boy or a girl?

NICOLE: A boy. I'm naming him Cody.

HAL: Cody? Did you say Cody? I love that name! I had a goldfish named Cody.

NICOLE: Really? Did you take good care of him?

HAL: Of course! Until Lee got him. My cat.

NICOLE: No way! That's what I picked for his middle name, Cody Lee.

HAL: Freaky! Don't tell me your last name is Spot?

NICOLE: How did you . . . ? *(She smiles.)* Rosedale actually.

HAL: That's very pretty. It suits you.

NICOLE: So . . . have you ever dated a pregnant girl before?

HAL: Not that I'm aware of.

NICOLE: What if you *were* aware?

HAL: Well, that could be interesting.

NICOLE: Yeah?

HAL: As long as you stay away from the hashbrowns!

NICOLE: Deal. *(Smiles.)* Oops. Don't look now, but there's a kid with a remote-controlled fire engine.

HAL: I know. But guess who pinched the remote? *(He wiggles his eyebrows suggestively.)*

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Dan and Bess, twenties, are best friends on a quest to find their perfect mates. Every week they meet for brunch to discuss the "personals" dates they went on the weekend before. Today, they meet to discuss their disastrous dates.

CHARACTERS

Dan: 20s, gay

Bess: 20s, Dan's best friend

SETTING

An International House of Pancakes

TIME

The present, Sunday breakfast

DAN: Hey, it wasn't my fault! Two trains passed me by. I was waiting for like twenty minutes. I started at nine fifteen. Right when I called you. I really did, Bess.

BESS: Um-hum.

DAN: And I had a crazy person try to rip me off on Thornedale! I'm fine. I didn't get hurt or anything. He was one of those drunks from the rehab around the corner. Had awful teeth. I could have been killed. It was really scary! *(Beat. She pats his shoulder.)* You don't believe a word of this, do you? *(She looks at him.)* Oh my God! You honestly don't believe me at all?!

BESS: You left at nine-forty-five, didn't you?

DAN: I can't believe you! *(Beat.)* Ten to.

BESS: Figures. I ordered you coffee. Cream?

DAN: You ordered me coffee? You're sweet. You're understanding.

BESS: You're buying.

DAN: I'm broke.

BESS: Yes, and I'm on time. And I don't lie incessantly.

DAN: OK. Good point.