

ERIN

(SCENE: The stage is divided into three sections. A bedroom, or more specifically a bed, with pastel sheets and a large feather pillow. An office, or more specifically a desk, with a computer and a phone and a black swivel chair. And a downtown bar, dark and quiet, with little more than the bar itself and several stools. And a table with two chairs.)

(AT RISE: On the bed, ERIN sleeps. She's tall, mid-20s, long hair, confident aura. She's wearing a nightgown, covers drawn over her. Next to her head is the ring and a rose with a small card stuck to one of the thorns.)

(Slowly, she stirs. Notices the rose. Notices the ring. Picks them up, rolls onto her back. Stares at them.)

(She sighs, sets them down and climbs out of bed, walks slowly toward the bar.)

ERIN

Why does this happen? Why do they do this? Why do they always do this to me? I want to love them, I try to love them, sometimes even I really do love them, but...

(LIGHTS UP ON BAR: DAVID, a sad little man with a mind full of problems, sits at the bar with his head in his hands. He's dressed in suit and tie, but his jacket lies forgotten on the floor.)

(Erin goes over to where the door might be. And looks at him.)

ERIN (Continued)

He was sitting at the bar when I came in that night. Wet. He was wet. He was wet because it was raining and he didn't have an umbrella. And I came through the door, and I saw him, and I knew. I saw it in him, the spark of passion, hidden beneath the sadness they all cover it up with.

(MORE)

ERIN (Continued)
(walking forward)
I went over and sat down next to him. Smiled at him. And
tried to get him talking.

(LIGHTS DOWN ON BED.)

ERIN (Continued)
I'm Erin...
(He looks up at her. She smiles at
him.)

DAVID
I'm...
(He stares at her. She stares back
with anticipation.)

DAVID (Continued)
...David.

ERIN
And what's the matter with David this evening?

DAVID
Nothing...

ERIN
Liar.

DAVID
What?

ERIN
You're a liar.

DAVID
I'm...

ERIN
We've only just met, and already you're lying to me.

DAVID
How...

ERIN
I know.

DAVID
But...

ERIN
I know. Just tell me.

DAVID
There's...

ERIN
Tell me...

(He looks down at the bar.)

(She takes his head in her hand and lifts it to look into her eyes.)

ERIN (Continued)
Tell me.

DAVID
I... lost my job today. I work... worked... this morning I worked... as a paralegal in a law firm uptown. I worked with a partner, one of the partners, one of the two... partners... of the firm. And he likes me. He liked me. And I like him a lot.

ERIN
What happened?

DAVID
I got this phone call, the phone rang, it was ringing and I was there, so I just sort of picked it up. I answered. And the person on the other end was this guy. And the guy wanted to know if my boss was in, the partner. He wasn't, so I said no, and the guy said he was involved with this case, a case we're working on, a case that's... apparently... pretty hush hush. I didn't know it's pretty hush hush. I mean I did, all cases are, but...

ERIN
Who was he?

DAVID
A reporter...

ERIN
You didn't know...

DAVID
He didn't tell me...

ERIN
So it wasn't your fault...

DAVID
I shouldn't have talked to him...

ERIN
He said he was involved...

DAVID
I shouldn't have believed him...

ERIN
Not everybody's lying...

DAVID
But he was...

ERIN
But you didn't know...

DAVID
But they fired me anyway...

ERIN
But it wasn't your fault...

DAVID
But I'm still out of a job...

ERIN
But you don't need a job. You have me.

(David stares at her. She stares
back. He smiles slightly.)

(She gets up and walks to the front
of the stage.)

(LIGHTS DOWN ON BAR.)

ERIN (Continued)
I wanted to help him. To heal him. To stoke the fire
smoldering in his gut, to show him the flames that just
needed air. If he breathed, if he loved, if he let himself
live...

(LIGHTS UP ON OFFICE: She steps
backward, toward the desk.)

ERIN (Continued)
But that's how it starts with all of them. Somehow I
convince myself I can help. I always think I have what they
need. I let them in, make them part of my life, and then...

(She sits in the swivel chair,
swivels it up to her desk.)

ERIN (Continued)
Then they start depending on me...

(The phone rings. She answers it.)

ERIN (Continued)
Erin Nitesh... Hi, what's... Calm down, what happ-- what
happe-- Stop. What happened? ... Right. ... Yes. ... And you
said you worked for...

(chuckle)

I'm sure he loved you. No he didn't. No he didn't! Well if
he does then he's a moron and you don't need his job anyway.
But trust me, he loved you, and he'll call and ask you to
start tomorrow. Yes he will. He will! But he'll get the
machine because you're talking to me, and then you'll be
worrying for nothing.

(smiling)

Okay. ... Okay, I'll see you-- I'd love that. I'll see you
in a bit then. Bye.

(She hangs up and sighs.)

ERIN (Continued)
And I feel like I'm helping them, and it feels good to be
helping them...

(She gets up and steps forward.
LIGHTS DOWN ON OFFICE.)

ERIN (Continued)
And I feel like I can help them more, make them happy, close
off the black hole in their soul that's sucking the life out
of their fire, and the idea of doing that, of accomplishing
something that can change someone's life...

(LIGHTS UP ON BAR: David is sitting
at the table, dressed in jeans and
a t-shirt.)

(She walks toward him slowly.)

ERIN (Continued)
And it's fun. When we're together, it's...

(She sits down, takes David's hands
across the table. David laughs.
She smiles.)

ERIN (Continued)
When we're together, we're happy...

DAVID
Yes. Yes we are.

ERIN
I like being happy...

DAVID
Me too.

(They gaze at each other. Smiling.)

(And then David looks down at the table.)

DAVID (Continued)
I... didn't get it. The job.

ERIN
I bet you did...

DAVID
No, I mean I didn't... I went by there today and they said it was filled...

ERIN
Oh... Well then they don't know what they're missing, right? You'll get the next one...

DAVID
Will there be a next one?

ERIN
Yes.

DAVID
How do you know?

ERIN
There's always a next one. There's a million jobs out there, you just have to find the right one.

(He tries to smile. Frowns.)

DAVID
I... got an eviction notice today...

ERIN
What?

DAVID
I didn't make rent...

ERIN
Once!

DAVID
I'll die on the streets...

ERIN
Stop it.

DAVID
No job, no apartment, no money for food... I'll freeze to death on the side of the road and it won't even matter...

ERIN
It will matter.

DAVID
To who? Nobody cares about me.

ERIN
I do.

DAVID
I don't even care about me.

ERIN
You'll stay with me. You'll be fine. I'll make sure of it.

(She touches his cheek. His hair.
He looks up at her and smiles.)

(She gets up and moves to the front
of the stage.)

ERIN (Continued)
And then it starts to be less fun...

(LIGHTS DOWN ON BAR.)

ERIN (Continued)
And then it starts to feel like work... And I care about them, and I want to help them, I want... so badly... to help them...

(LIGHTS UP ON BED: A lump of sheets
in the shape of a person, covered
up, unmoving. The rose and ring
and note aren't there.)

(Erin moves toward the bed.)

ERIN (Continued)
To give them passion... to give them life...

(She looks down at the lump.)

ERIN (Continued)
To give them a reason to get out of bed...

(She stares down at the lump.
Touches it. Nudges it. Slowly
shakes her head.)

(And then she looks away from it.
LIGHTS DOWN ON BED.)

ERIN (Continued)
But I can't let that reason be me. Right? Because they
can't live their lives around me. They have to live because
they want to live, they have to live their lives for
themselves. And that...

(LIGHTS UP ON OFFICE: She moves over
to the front of her desk.)

ERIN (Continued)
That's the part I can't get right.

(David walks in, happy. Grabs her
face. Kisses her.)

DAVID
Hey baby...

ERIN
Hi.

DAVID
Have you been thinking about me?

ERIN
Sure...

DAVID
I've been thinking about you. I'm always thinking about you.
I think about you too much I think.

ERIN
No...

DAVID
No I do. It's scary how much I think of you. How much I
miss you. How much I want you. I'm probably crazy.

ERIN
No...

DAVID
Yes I am. I'm crazy. I don't know what you even see in me...

ERIN
How was the interview?

DAVID
Let's not talk about it. I wanna be happy.

ERIN
How bad was it?

DAVID
Let's just...

(He sits on her desk.)

DAVID (Continued)
Let's talk about us.

(She looks at him closely.)

ERIN
You... went... right?

DAVID
Where?

ERIN
To the interview! David...

DAVID
Well what do I wanna work for anyway? I can stay home and take care of you...

ERIN
David!

DAVID
I can't *think* about work, Erin! All I can think about is--

ERIN
Stop! David, what are you passionate about. And don't say me! There's something inside you, something you care about, something that excites you more than anything can...

(He takes her hands, grins.)

DAVID
I'm excited when I'm inside you...

(She pulls away.)

ERIN

You know what I'm saying, stop being... You need to find something. Something that makes you feel alive.

DAVID

You make me feel alive.

ERIN

Something you have that's all for you.

DAVID

I don't want anything all for me. Erin, are you...

ERIN

You need to go after whatever burns you. The thing that pesters you from in your soul.

(He hops off the desk.)

DAVID

Are you leaving me?

ERIN

No.

DAVID

You can't!

ERIN

I'm not.

DAVID

Erin, please...

ERIN

I'm not leaving you! I just... I want to help you...

DAVID

You *are*! You are helping me, baby! You love me, that's all I need. All I need in life is you.

(She looks down at her feet. Steps forward. LIGHTS DOWN ON OFFICE.)

ERIN

And then...

(LIGHTS UP ON BED: The lump is gone, the rose is back. Along with the ring and the note. She goes to them.)

ERIN (Continued)

And then one morning I wake up. And there's a rose on my bed. And a ring. And a note. Be my wife? And the boxes. Yes or no. Check one. Yes or no.

(She takes the note off the rose.
Looks at it. Shakes her head.)

ERIN (Continued)

And I care about him. I care so much. I don't want to hurt him, that's the last thing I want, but...

(She drops it back onto the bed.
Wanders off toward the bar.)

ERIN (Continued)

I just wanted to help.

(LIGHTS DOWN ON BED.)

ERIN (Continued)

I just want to help them, to give them a life...

(LIGHTS UP ON BAR: David sits on the stool he first sat on. He's nervous. He's smiling. She looks at him.)

ERIN (Continued)

He was sitting at the bar when I came in that night. Wet. He was wet. He was wet because it was raining and he didn't have an umbrella.

(She shakes her head. Tries not to cry.)

ERIN (Continued)

I can be his towel, I can give him dry clothes, but...

(LIGHTS DOWN ON BAR.)

(She looks to the audience.)

ERIN (Continued)

I'm not ready to be his sun.

(LIGHTS DOWN.)