

# Cracks

By Jacob Marx Rice  
[jacob.marx.rice@gmail.com](mailto:jacob.marx.rice@gmail.com)

**Characters:**

Nicole: Late 20s. Female. A physical biochemist.

Kat: Late 20s. Female. A geographer turned startup CEO.

Allie: Early 20s. Female. A paralegal, then on staff at a nonprofit, then dead.

Humpty Dumpty: Ageless. Masculine. An egg with a thick, refined British accent.

**Setting:**

A lab at Stanford University that is also an apartment living room and a therapist's office and maybe even a sheep's shop. All of these places exist at once within the same space, like memories. There is a low brick wall at the back. Everything is cluttered yet sterile.

**Punctuation:**

Punctuation follows speech patterns over grammatical convention. Additionally, the following punctuations have the following specific meanings:

A dash (—) indicates an interruption by either the speaker themselves or by a new speaker.

A slash (/) indicates the point of interruption if it is not at the end of the line.

An ellipsis (...) indicates a slow trailing off, either on purpose or accidental.

A dash-ellipsis (—...) signifies a sudden stop and then a silent continuation of thought.

**Scene 1**

*(A large egg walks onstage. He ambles over to the wall and, after a bit of a struggle, manages to sit on it. He points to himself and speaks in a high class British accent.)*

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Humpty Dumpty.

*(He points to the wall.)*

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Wall.

*(Pause. He wobbles and almost falls but catches himself.)*

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Worry not. Merely joshing.

*(Pause. The soft sound of rain. Humpty Dumpty sits on the wall looking out at us. The sound of knocking. Then a voice.)*

NICOLE (Voice)

Allie? What's going on? I called your dad, he never heard from you. Allie. Please let me in. It's pouring and you're freaking me out. Come on. If you don't let me in, I'm using the hidden key. Allie? Fine. I'm using the key.

*(Pause. The sound of a key in a door.)*

NICOLE (Voice)

Allie? Where are you, Allie? Oh my god. No, Allie. You can't... Allie. Please. Allie. Allie.

*(Blackout.)*

*(Lights come up. Nicole is sitting at her desk staring at an egg in a small metal stand. Moments pass. Kat walks past the open door. She comes back. She watches Nicole watch the egg. Pause.)*

KAT

You know, a watched egg never chickens.

NICOLE

What?

KAT

Like a watched pot. With boiling. But you were staring at that egg. It was...

NICOLE

Dumb?

KAT

Ouch.

NICOLE

Sorry. I didn't mean to call you...

KAT

It's fine. I sometimes say stupid things around pretty girls.

NICOLE

Oh.

KAT

Like... that, I guess. I'm looking for Doctor Ramirez. He was supposed to meet me twenty minutes ago.

NICOLE

He's kinda forgetful.

KAT

I know. Mom always has to remind him of my birthday. And her birthday. And his birthday.

NICOLE

Oh, you're his...

KAT

Kat. Not his cat. His daughter. My name is Kat. Katarina technically but only my Alzheimer's grandma calls me that. I'm making an awesome first impression, aren't I?

NICOLE

Nicole.

KAT

Oh, totally. You're the egg girl.

*(Humpty Dumpty lets out a short laugh)*

NICOLE

Egg girl?

KAT

My dad told me. You like unboil eggs or something.

NICOLE  
That's not exactly... Sure. More or less.

KAT  
Well, it's less boring than most professors.

NICOLE  
I'm not a.... I'm just a PhD candidate.

KAT  
Oh. Sorry. I thought I remembered my dad mentioning you a few years ago.

NICOLE  
I've been taking a bit longer. I got sidetracked.

KAT  
I know how that is.

NICOLE  
You too?

KAT  
Dropped my PhD last year. Sidetracked over a cliff. Geography. Was my program.

NICOLE  
You can get a PhD in maps?

KAT  
That's not... You're thinking cartography.

NICOLE  
I definitely remember almost failing eighth grade geography.

KAT  
You don't strike me as someone who fails things.

NICOLE  
Well, I almost got a B. But then I didn't.

KAT  
We study the earth's upper crust and atmosphere. Or they do, technically. Not me anymore. Weather patterns. Human migration. Global warming.

NICOLE  
Why'd you quit?

KAT  
I, uh, work in tech now.

NICOLE  
Oh.

Oh? KAT

I should get back to work. NICOLE

Why do you hate tech people? KAT

What? NICOLE

I know that oh. Why do you hate tech people? KAT

Because they're horrible. NICOLE

Well, there's that. KAT

NICOLE  
I went to Cal undergrad, when it was starting to get ridiculous, the apps and things. Then coming here. I've watched every smart person in a hundred mile radius abandon improving the world so they can make cell phone games. Are you from here?

KAT  
Sorta. My Dad took the job here when I was fifteen but I went away for school.

NICOLE  
I've spent my life in the Bay. San Jose, Berkeley, now Stanford. I watched my home taken over by smarmy bro-grammers pushing out culture and diversity while bragging about saving the world by underpaying taxi drivers or Photoshopping toast or whatever new bullshit will glorify their meaningless yuppie existence.

*(Pause.)*

KAT  
I think I'll text my dad. Make sure he hasn't locked himself in the broom closet again.

NICOLE  
I'm sorry for... I'm sure your app only takes important toast photos.

KAT  
I wish. We'd have no problem getting funded.

NICOLE  
What does it do? The app.

KAT  
It's stupid.

NICOLE

That's a terrible sales pitch.

KAT

It's called Looking Glass. It's for global warming.

NICOLE

A global warming app?

KAT

It shows how you contribute to global warming. Like a Fitbit for the environment. And it suggests things to change, gives you credit for reducing emissions. Like, if you ride your bike to work, or install solar panels, you get points. You're trying to accumulate points, beat your friends. And in the process, you save the planet.

NICOLE

Does that work?

KAT

We've already saved enough carbon in the Beta to take eight hundred cars off the road for a year. Obviously, there are other factors, but if as many people were on our app as are on Twitter, it could reduce emissions as much as adding four million windmills.

NICOLE

Impressive.

KAT

Or it could go down in flames like every other app that doesn't send toast photos.

NICOLE

Sorry about ranting. I know it can do a lot of good, I just hate the industry.

KAT

So do I. And I'm in it.

NICOLE

Then why quit geography for it?

KAT

That's... complicated.

NICOLE

Not enough maps?

KAT

I guess I discovered that not every question in in life can be answered by a book.

*(Lights change. Allie enters.)*

ALLIE

Not every question in in life can be answered by a book.

NICOLE

But every question on this test can.

ALLIE

Come dancing, Nic. You got like a hundred percent on both midterms. It's okay to live a little. What's the worst that could happen?

NICOLE

I fail this test, Stanford rescinds my grad school offer, I become a crackwhore, and humanity gets wiped out by a rogue asteroid.

ALLIE

Please, if you drew rainbows and unicorns you'd end up with a B in the class.

NICOLE

You're right, that is worse.

ALLIE

If I have to hold my breath to get you to agree to come, I will.

NICOLE

You can't blackmail me into dancing.

ALLIE

Of course I can.

*(Allie puffs out her cheeks to show she's holding her breath. Nicole laughs.)*

NICOLE

You're impossible. What about Wednesday?

ALLIE

We're graduating on Wednesday. You're abandoning us.

NICOLE

To Palo Alto. It's a forty-minute drive.

ALLIE

We'll be adults. We can't do stupid things.

NICOLE

Like what?

ALLIE

Like...

*(Allie kisses her. It only lasts a second before Allie breaks away.)*

So, will you come dancing?

NICOLE

If you're there, I'll go to the motherfucking moon.

*(Nicole kisses Allie. It's a long kiss. After several seconds Humpty clears his throat. Nicole breaks away. Allie exits)*

NICOLE

Sorry. Sorry.

KAT

Are you okay?

NICOLE

I'm fine. I should... I have to get back to work.

KAT

Unboiling an egg with laser focus.

NICOLE

We don't use lasers, we use acids and centrifuges and... That was a joke, wasn't it?

KAT

Clearly not a good one.

NICOLE

Sorry I'm so...

KAT

It's fine. Uptight is a good look for you.

NICOLE

Thanks?

KAT

I should go find my dad. Don't want to get in trouble for missing a lunch just because he's trapped in a broom closet.

*(Kat starts to leave. Nicole calls after her.)*

NICOLE

It was nice to meet you.

KAT

You too. I'll have to get my dad to forget lunch more often.

*(She exits. Nicole watches her.)*

HUMPTY

Curious.

What? NICOLE

Nothing, dear. HUMPTY

*(Nicole shrugs it off. She stares at the egg.)*

## Scene 2

*(Kat and Nicole sit in Nicole's lab, talking. Humpty watches.)*

HUMPTY DUMPTY  
Time is like an egg. Both are required for making omelets.

Time is like an egg. Round but rather misshapen.

Time is like an egg. Neither are much like a box of chocolates.

Time is like an egg. It repeats itself.

Time is like an egg. It repeats itself.

Time is like an egg. Both may make you fat.

Time is like an egg. It cracks so easily.

*(Nicole is in the middle of explaining.)*

NICOLE  
How do I...? It's like... Do you know what denatured means?

KAT  
Proteins, right? Something about protein molecules?

NICOLE  
Sure. It's what happens when you cook an egg. The proteins lock in, turn the egg solid. And once the proteins are denatured, it's solid forever. No way to get back to the original form, the process has been permanent for the entirety of human existence.

KAT  
Or chicken existence.

NICOLE  
We're undoing it. We started with the egg whites, this professor named Weiss at UC Irvine. I got involved with the centrifuges. We unfolded the proteins, undid the damage.

KAT  
So?

NICOLE

What do you mean so?

KAT

I mean, it sounds cool and whatever, but it's just an egg.

HUMPTY

*(Indignant)*

What do you mean, "just an egg?"

KAT

You couldn't do it to a person. Or a totalitarian state. You can't use proteins to undo dependence on fossil fuels. Who cares if you can ruin an omelet?

NICOLE

Proteins aren't just in eggs. Say you're making a cancer drug and the last step in the process folds half the proteins wrong. Or more. They get maybe 10 percent right and have to throw out the rest. What if you could turn the bad part back to the ingredients and rerun it? You could double, triple the amount of medicine from the same batch.

KAT

Alright. Maybe not totally useless.

NICOLE

And that's not it. Imagine you wanted to transport an egg.

KAT

I thought it wasn't about eggs.

HUMPTY

It is always about eggs.

NICOLE

They're a useful metaphor.

*(Humpty snuffs petulantly.)*

HUMPTY

I am no metaphor.

NICOLE

Imagine you wanted to transport an egg, you'd have to be super careful, right? But if you boil it at the start of the journey, then send it to Africa and unboil it there?

KAT

You'd have a raw egg in Africa.

NICOLE

Medicines are fragile. They need temperature control, moisture control, shock protection. But if you denature them first, then ship them.

KAT

You could fix it at the end. Safe for the journey but soft when it arrives.

NICOLE

More, cheaper medicine traveling farther. It's not curing cancer but when someone does cure cancer, they'll need to make and distribute it.

KAT

But you already did it, right? You said that. With some professor.

NICOLE

Weiss. Partly. He unboiled the egg white, but the egg white is easy. It's almost pure protein. Medicine is complicated, messy. Just like yolks. Egg yolks have fats, and vitamins and pigments to make it yellow. They're full of impurities.

HUMPTY

I will have you know I am quite pure, thank you.

NICOLE

If we can unboil the yolk, we can undo time in complex molecular mixtures. We can fix medicine, food, everything. We can change the world.

KAT

Do you want to go out with me?

NICOLE

What?

KAT

On a date. With me. Dinner. Probably not eggs. I don't eat eggs. Did I mention I'm vegan? I like vegan eggs. I'm gonna stop talking now.

*(Pause)*

Now you say something.

NICOLE

Sorry, I'm just... surprised.

KAT

Good surprised or really good surprised?

NICOLE

I didn't think we were, that you thought of me... like that.

KAT

I'm only required to do lunch every other Tuesday and I've stopped by six times in the past two weeks. I don't like my dad that much.

NICOLE

He's a very nice man.

Not super relevant.

KAT

I... I'm not... This is...

NICOLE

Is it the vegan thing?

KAT

What?

NICOLE

I'm a vegan. You destroy eggs for a living. We're basically star-crossed lovers.

KAT

I didn't think of that.

NICOLE

But I'm vegan for environmental reasons. So if the egg decreases waste in chemical processes... And at least you're not researching mice.

KAT

Eww. No. I shared a lab with a woman who studied mice. She fed them cocaine then chopped off their heads.

NICOLE

Wow. Live fast, die young.

KAT

She had a tiny guillotine. I kept finding mouse snouts she had forgotten to clean up.

NICOLE

I don't think I'll ever get over how disgusting that is.

KAT

*(Slight pause)*  
Dinner? How about tonight? I got us a reservation at this great place.

NICOLE

You got a reservation for tonight? That was pretty confident.

KAT

Technically I got the reservation the day we met and I've spent the last three weeks chickening out. Ha, chickening. Sorry, not the point. I figured this was my last chance.

NICOLE

You could have changed the reservation.

KAT

In retrospect, that probably would've been better. It's really good though, and hard to get a reservation. They do vegan sushi and they have this incredible—

NICOLE

Thanks. But I, uh, I can't.

KAT

Okay, no vegan sushi. We could go anywhere vegan. Or somewhere not vegan and I can get a salad. Or soup, some places have good vegan soups. Minestrone or borscht. Borscht can be nice. Can you tell I talk too much when I'm nervous?

NICOLE

I didn't mean the restaurant. I, uh, I don't date. It's not about you. It's... I'm sorry.

KAT

Okay. Yea. Totally.

*(Slight pause)*

If it's terrible, you can unfold the proteins in your mind and forget the whole thing.

NICOLE

Memories are stored in neurons, not proteins.

KAT

Then you'll just have to keep the memory of a delicious dinner with a cute, funny girl who thinks you're really hot.

NICOLE

Doesn't sound so bad when you put it that way.

KAT

That's a yes, isn't it? That sounded like a yes.

NICOLE

I'm only agreeing because I'm curious about this vegan sushi thing.

KAT

*(Straight forwardly)*

Totally. Lady's love my vegan sushi.

*(Pause. Kat realizes how that sounded.)*

KAT

I'm gonna go before I say something too stupid to recover from. Seven o'clock?

NICOLE

Okay. I'd better pull my samples now then, don't wanna be late.

KAT

Can't wait.

*(She exits. Allie enters with a suitcase.)*

NICOLE

I miss you already.

You're the one leaving. ALLIE

This one again? HUMPTY

*(To Humpty)*  
Shut up. NICOLE

HUMPTY  
How dare you? I'll have you know, I am one who has dined with the King.

*(To Allie)*  
I don't wanna go to the dumb conference. NICOLE

ALLIE  
You'll be fine. You'll be having so much fun you won't even miss me.

NICOLE  
That's not true.

ALLIE  
Good.  
*(Holding up the suitcase)*  
I got you a suitcase. Since you still haven't bought one.

NICOLE  
I've been working.

ALLIE  
You've been avoiding. I also packed it for you.

NICOLE  
You're ridiculous.

ALLIE  
Of course I am. That's why you love me.

NICOLE  
What?

ALLIE  
What? I didn't mean it like that.

NICOLE  
Okay. But do you?

ALLIE  
Do you?

I asked you first. NICOLE

This is not how this is supposed to go. ALLIE

I wouldn't know. NICOLE

You've never told anyone before? ALLIE

Have you? NICOLE

Once. ALLIE

How'd it go? NICOLE

I'm not telling you. That's creepy. ALLIE

I think you should say it first. NICOLE

That's not fair. ALLIE

What if we did it together, like on three? NICOLE

How can someone so smart be such a six-year-old? ALLIE

You have a better idea? NICOLE

Alright. ALLIE

One, two, three, I love you. ALLIE & NICOLE

*(Pause)*

Jinx. ALLIE

You can't jinx an I love you.  
*(Allie pinches her.)*  
Ow. Who's being the six year old now?  
*(Allie pinches her again.)*  
Stop pinching me, butthead.

ALLIE  
You're jinxed. You can't talk till I say your name three times.

NICOLE  
Well then I'm pinching you back.  
*(Nicole pinches Allie)*

ALLIE  
You can't do that.

NICOLE  
Then I'll tickle you.  
*(Nicole tickles her. Allie screeches.)*

ALLIE  
Cheater, cheater. You're a cheater.  
*(They kiss, still giggling. Then again, not giggling. They kiss deeply and lovingly.)*

NICOLE  
If I'm jinxed I can't say I love you.

ALLIE  
Oh no. Hoisted by my own petard.

NICOLE  
You're so pretentious.  
*(Allie pinches her.)*  
Ow.

ALLIE  
You're still jinxed.

NICOLE  
Say my name.

ALLIE  
And if I don't?  
*(Nicole backs off, indicating that she's not talking.)*

ALLIE

Oh come on. That's no fun. Fine. Nicole. Nicole. I love you, my beautiful Nicole.

NICOLE

I like saying it. I love you, I love you, I love you forever.

ALLIE

Don't say forever.

NICOLE

Are you seriously doing this?

ALLIE

I love you.

NICOLE

Forever.

### Scene 3

*(Nicole and Allie lie together on a couch.)*

HUMPTY

All the king's horses are a horrid choice for putting an egg back together again. Have you ever consider that? I have, quite thoroughly. Hooves are hardly eggshell appropriate. And what do all the king's men know of eggshell rehabilitation? I do not mean to insult the king of course, an old friend mind you, but what you really want to fix your cracks would be craftsmen. All the king's jewelers and all the king's toymakers easily put Humpty together again and then adjured to the parlor for a spot of tea. Or grandmothers could do it. Or... I don't know, amateur puzzle enthusiasts. Anything would be better than those bloody hooves.

NICOLE

Are you alright?

ALLIE

Why do you keep asking me that?

HUMPTY

Hmm. Interesting.

NICOLE

We should do something. There's an art fair in the Mission. We could Bart into the city.

ALLIE

Those trains give you chlamydia. I saw it on the news.

NICOLE

That's impossible. Chlamydia is an obligate intracellular parasite, it can only access new cells through a mucous membrane.

ALLIE

Dating a scientist is annoying.

NICOLE

You would have to be masturbating in a two-inch puddle of semen to get chlamydia on a Bart train.

ALLIE

So it's possible.

NICOLE

Come on, let's go. And then we'll come back and you find a new, better job. I was reading about these non-profits that help underprivileged people who have to go to court. The Inner City Law Center. Bay Area Legal Aid. Or maybe it's time to apply to law school. You've been talking about it for three years.

ALLIE

Can we just drop it?

NICOLE

I'm trying to help.

ALLIE

Well, you're doing a terrible job.

*(Pause)*

NICOLE

I'm sorry.

HUMPTY

What?

NICOLE

I'm too pushy. I know.

HUMPTY

And here I thought you were actually progressing.

NICOLE

We don't have to go to the Mission. We could just stay here. Snuggle.

HUMPTY

This is absurd. You cannot be serious.

ALLIE

I like snuggling.

I love you.

NICOLE

Jinx.

ALLIE

HUMPTY

Dwelling exclusively on the good ones is one thing, but this... You cannot alter your memories.

NICOLE

Human beings change memories all the time. There have been studies—

HUMPTY

You cannot erase an attempted suicide because it inconveniences your illusions.

NICOLE

It wasn't a serious attempt. She was stressed about loosing her job.

HUMPTY

And all the other times? Are you going to write over those too?

NICOLE

Why not? Who does it hurt?

HUMPTY

You. Her. Kat.

NICOLE

This has nothing to do with Kat.

HUMPTY

Really? Five years of dwelling in half a dozen memories, and your sudden need to refashion the past has nothing to do with fear of the present?

NICOLE

I'm not... No, it doesn't.

HUMPTY

Well then, if the present holds no great terror, perhaps you should turn and face it.

NICOLE

What?

*(He points. Kat has entered the lab, unnoticed.)*

KAT

I said, did I have something in my teeth?

Teeth?

NICOLE

Last week. Kale or seaweed or shitake sashimi.

KAT

I don't think so.

NICOLE

Cuz I had a really good time. And you seemed like you were also having a good time. You laughed. You leaned in, which is a good sign, according to Dr. Phil.

KAT

Dr. Phil?

NICOLE

My mother. Watches him. Not is him. Although she does sort of look like Doctor Phil with bigger boobs and more facial hair.

KAT

That's... weird.

NICOLE

*(Pause)*

I—...

NICOLE

Should have texted me back.

KAT

Yea.

NICOLE

Or Facebooked. Snapchatted. DMed. Yoed.

KAT

Yoed?

NICOLE

You don't have Yo?

KAT

Should I?

NICOLE

No. But everyone does. It's a messenger app that only ever says Yo.

KAT

That's the dumbest thing ever.

NICOLE

KAT

Yea. And the company's valuation just cracked ten million dollars. Makes you doubt for humanity, doesn't it?

NICOLE

I'm sorry. Things got totally crazy here at the lab and I've been—

KAT

If you don't like me, you can tell me. If you just think I'm weird or off-putting. It's fine. I am weird and off-putting. But tell me. Because talking and laughing for six hours is not an everyday occurrence. At least not for me. And I left thinking, wow, I can't wait to show her this awesome vegan Mexican cantina and then silence for a week. Which is confusing, in case you're wondering. And I wanted to let it go, I tried, but instead I ended up here, doing whatever this is and starting to regret it about four sentences ago. But I have to know. Okay? Tell me I misread it and I'll leave you alone.

NICOLE

You didn't... It was...

KAT

Amazing.

NICOLE

Yea.

*(Pause.)*

I wrote you a text. It's in my drafts.

KAT

Does it say, "Last night was perfect. I want you to ravish me."

NICOLE

It says, "Thanks for dinner. Let's do it again."

KAT

Yea, that does come off a little clingy.

NICOLE

You're really persistent.

KAT

I'm trying to solve global warming. Clearly I have a thing for hopeless causes.

NICOLE

That's not hopeless. If we cut down fossil fuels...

KAT

We'll get maybe twenty more years before the ice caps melt enough to trigger a positive feedback loop that'll burn off this frail fever dream of consciousness.

That's depressing.

NICOLE

Maybe. But if we're gonna die anyway, you might as well date me.

KAT

It's not you. I told you. I just don't date anymore.

NICOLE

Why? What happened?

KAT

That's none of your business.

NICOLE

Okay. Fine. Whatever. Sorry to bother you.

KAT

*(Kat turns to go.)*

Don't leave.

NICOLE

What?

HUMPTY

I don't want you to...

NICOLE

You're very frustrating.

KAT

I like hanging out with you. It feels... right.

NICOLE

If only there was some way we could do that more...

KAT

I can't. It's not... What if we were just friends?

NICOLE

You're friend zoning me?

KAT

But in a good way. Everyone needs friend.

NICOLE

I have plenty.

KAT

NICOLE

I don't.

KAT

Wow, you really are a loser.

NICOLE

We could get coffee. Friend coffee. Now, if you want. If I stare at any more these stupid samples, I'll burst into flames.

KAT

Coffee is definitely better than spontaneous combustion. Fewer emissions.

NICOLE

Great. Awesome. Friends. I'll put these away and then we'll hang out. Like friends do.

KAT

If we're friends, you're gonna have to stop saying we're friends every ten seconds.

NICOLE

I can do that. Friend.

KAT

I'm gonna stop in and grab our mail from my dad first.

NICOLE

Mail?

KAT

We use his address for Looking Glass so it seems like we're Stanford-based instead of East Hayward shithole-based. I'll meet you outside?

NICOLE

Sure.

KAT

Don't lose your nerve and go AWOL again.

NICOLE

Why would I lose my nerve if we're just friends?

KAT

Because you're scared how much you want me.

*(Kat exits. Nicole starts filing the samples. Allie enters. A long pause, Nicole tries to ignore her.)*

ALLIE

Well, you're doing a terrible job.

*(Pause)*

ALLIE

Well, you're doing a terrible job.

NICOLE

Stop it. I have to go get coffee.

*(Pause)*

ALLIE

Well, you're doing a terrible job.

NICOLE

I'm not doing this.

HUMPTY

Memories are not bathrooms. You can't simply open the door and expect everything to go as planned.

*(Pause)*

ALLIE

Well, you're doing a terrible job.

NICOLE

I don't understand why you're being so...

ALLIE

So...?

NICOLE

Something.

ALLIE

I'm not trying to be something. I'm trying to be nothing.

NICOLE

What? What does that mean? Allie.

ALLIE

It wasn't serious.

NICOLE

Are you kidding me? That's why you're so out of it?

ALLIE

It was like ten aspirin. I didn't even buy a fresh bottle. It was pathetic.

NICOLE

You tried to kill yourself.

Mildly.

ALLIE

NICOLE

We talked about this, after last time. You're supposed to tell me if you're feeling...

ALLIE

I didn't want you to worry.

NICOLE

This has not solved that problem.

ALLIE

I didn't mean to. I was looking for jobs all day and my head was hurting so I went to the bathroom and took two aspirin. And then another two. And then nine. It seemed easier.

NICOLE

It's not.

ALLIE

Clearly. And now I feel too sick to look for a job, so, jokes on me.

*(Pause)*

NICOLE

Are you gonna tell Doctor Farmer?

ALLIE

Why? He'd just go back to trying to get me to take medication.

NICOLE

Which you clearly should be on.

ALLIE

The only way they're getting those chemicals in my brain is if they institutionalize me. And a psych ward is the one thing guaranteed to make me kill myself.

NICOLE

Then what am I supposed to do?

ALLIE

I don't know. I'm sorry. I wish it wasn't...

NICOLE

There has to be something. Someone I can call or...

ALLIE

How about a hug? Hugs are nice.

NICOLE

That isn't...

I know.

ALLIE

*(Nicole hugs her)*

NICOLE

We don't have to go to the Mission. We could just stay here. Snuggle.

ALLIE

I like snuggling.

NICOLE

I love you.

ALLIE

Jinx.

*(Pause.)*

NICOLE

Okay. I did it the real way. Are you satisfied?

HUMPTY

That all depends, my dear. Are you?

#### **Scene 4**

*(Nicole works. Pulling samples.)*

HUMPTY

Everyone is so dismissive of eggs. They think us weak because we crack. But who is to say that cracking is inherently negative? Cracks enable change. Direct interaction with the world. Hiding behind ones shell is hardly a suitable way to live.

So the next time some simpleminded pedant makes some... crack as it were. Remind that dullard that eggs can withstand any manner of brutality. Turn up the heat, we become a delicious breakfast. Cold only makes us last longer. Just ask your refrigerator. Beat us and we grow into a meringue.

Humans, meanwhile, can't even handle a couple degrees. You'll have killed yourselves off in a few dozen years, but do you know what will survive? Eggs. And we will not morn you. Humans without eggs? Tragedy. Eggs without humans? Chickens. And then, more eggs.

*(Kat enters, slightly out of breath.)*

KAT

New samples? How'd it go?

NICOLE

They look like chunky diarrhea. But at least we didn't leach the xanthophyll carotenoids

KAT

I hate when that happens.

NICOLE

We didn't make the yellow not yellow. Are we doing lunch today? I don't have it on my calendar.

KAT

No, I have lunch with my dad.

NICOLE

Right, of course. Every other Tuesday.

KAT

That's the agreement. I just had to come tell you about my VC meeting.

NICOLE

I thought you said last month you were gonna stop pitching to venture capital people until you found a way to monetize the app?

KAT

One of my devs knew someone at Sequoia Capital. I figured it was worth a try, since we're running on credit card debt and dreams and we're pretty much out of both.

NICOLE

But it went well?

KAT

It went awful.

NICOLE

Wait, what?

KAT

I go in there, ready, zoning. I'm not distracted by the wood paneling or the unopened Evians or the six brunet white dudes. I'm in it. Throwing out pickup rates, social media chatter, long-term financials, medium-term financials, short-term financials. Pulling budgets out of my ass like motherfucking rabbits.

NICOLE

You pull rabbits out of your ass?

KAT

I wrap up my presentation, stick the landing like a tiny Russian twelve-year-old. Silence. Three seconds. Five seconds. I'm bathing in glory. And then this dude, the center dude, looks me in the eyes and says: "the last woman I had in here pitching a startup was Jessica Alba. She is so hot."

NICOLE

What?

KAT

Jessica Alba, the actor chick with the belly shirts.

NICOLE

Oh, that's... What?

KAT

And all the men nod thoughtfully like he's just come up with the next fucking Twitter.

NICOLE

What did you do?

KAT

I should have said, "Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you about Looking Glass?"

NICOLE

And you did say...?

KAT

"Yea, I'd totally fuck her"

NICOLE

You did not.

KAT

I look more like Mark Zuckerberg than Jessica Alba.

NICOLE

Only around the jaw.

KAT

I went off. How the industry undermines women, how Sequoia has seeded three female-led companies in eight years. They start stuttering about equal opportunity. They don't consider anything besides the idea and the business model.

NICOLE

I mean maybe that's true.

KAT

They told me Jessica Alba was hot. That's what they got from my app pitch.

NICOLE

The world's hot. She's hot. Makes sense.

KAT

I walked out in the middle of them explaining that they had just launched an incubator for "female entrepreneurs" complete with a two thousand dollar stipend. In bitcoin.

NICOLE

I'm sorry, Kat. You'll find a company to fund you.

KAT

I thought of it as my hand hit the door. I wasn't even trying to get anything, I just wanted to scare them. "You know, this is exactly what I was telling the Wall Street Journal"

NICOLE

You talked to the Wall Street Journal?

KAT

Of course not. "I told them an article about female driven start-ups was a terrible idea. Oh well, I guess they'll have to write about sexism in the tech industry again. Do you have a press rep they can call for a quote?" I made it to the parking lot before I got the call. Fifty thousand for five percent.

NICOLE

That's...

KAT

Not even enough to pay back what we owe. But they can't admit it's hush money and with a top three firm in place everyone else will follow. We're moving out of beta, baby.

NICOLE

That's incredible. You're getting funded.

KAT

Pity funded.

NICOLE

You have a chance to save the world.

KAT

It sounds kinda cool when you say it like that.

NICOLE

It is cool. Oh Kat, I'm so proud of you.

*(She gives Kat a big hug. They separate, but not far, a distance with possibility. They stand there, looking at each other. And then, just before they are about to kiss.)*

KAT

And I thought this day couldn't get better.

*(Nicole pulls away.)*

NICOLE

I have to... My samples. I should...

KAT  
God, I really don't know when to shut up.

NICOLE  
No, that wasn't...

KAT  
I mean, it kinda was.

NICOLE  
My samples. I'll see you Thursday for Karaoke.

KAT  
Sure.

NICOLE  
You have to go anyway. Your dad.

KAT  
Yea, don't wanna be late for my suicide lunch.

*(All the air is sucked out of the room.  
Pause.)*

NICOLE  
What?

KAT  
Besides my office is waiting on me for the celebration. We still can't afford champagne but I'm gonna pick up some seltzer.

*(Pause. The soft sound of rain.)*

NICOLE  
Suicide lunch?

KAT  
I shouldn't call it that. My father loves me and worries about me and whatever. I should be grateful I'm not an orphan.

NICOLE  
I don't...

KAT  
My Tuesday lunches. It was my therapist's idea, to remind me of the people whose lives would be ruined if I killed myself. It's kinda douchey if you think about it. Guilt tripping me into living.

NICOLE  
You tried to...

*(The rain grows louder)*

KAT

Umm, yea. This was probably not the best way to tell someone that, was it?

HUMPTY

*(Speaking with an American accent He is playing someone else)*

I heard about Allie. I'm so sorry. You... I'm sorry.

KAT

I never know if I should bring it up. Like, it's weird to like sit someone down, but I guess letting it blurt out whenever is probably bad too. Sorry Mental illness shit is tricky.

NICOLE

That's a... I... You...

*(Pause)*

KAT

Are you okay?

NICOLE

Me? Of course.

HUMPTY *(As A Different Voice)*

You're better off without all that in your life anyway.

NICOLE

You should... I have to test the new acids. Enjoy lunch.

KAT

You're doing that thing you do. Where you're here but not here.

HUMPTY *(As A Different Voice)*

If you want to be angry at her, that's okay. I won't tell anyone.

NICOLE

No. I'm here. Where else would I be?

KAT

I don't know. Back in your shell.

HUMPTY *(As A Different Voice)*

She's in a better place. Even if she was an atheist. God has a plan.

NICOLE

You're gonna be late. The seltzer party.

KAT

Is this about me trying to...?

HUMPTY (*As A Different Voice*)

You have to give it time. You'll feel better soon.

NICOLE

It's not about anything. I have to work. The Xanthophyll.

HUMPTY (*As A Different Voice*)

I always thought she was trouble. Didn't figure it was that bad though.

KAT

Okay. We're still on for karaoke Thursday, right?

NICOLE

Of course. Have a good lunch. And... Congratulations. For the money stuff.

HUMPTY (*As A Different Voice*)

If this is what she wanted...

KAT

Thanks. See you Thursday.

*(Kat leaves. Pause.)*

HUMPTY (*As Nicole's Therapist*)

It's important to recognize that it's not your fault.

NICOLE

I didn't save her.

**To read the rest of this play or inquire about performance rights, please reach out to Jacob Marx Rice at [jacob.marx.rice@gmail.com](mailto:jacob.marx.rice@gmail.com)**