

FADE OUT

SCENE 2 - MAX'S HOUSE AND KLARA'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

MAX'S side of the stage is lit. He enters on the phone with his mail, throws it on the table.

MAX

Yes, I'll have it for you later today. (*looks at his computer*)
Let me call you back. Okay, bye. (*to computer*) Yes! (*sings*) I've
got mail. (*bragging*) Another e-mail from Klara.

He immediately starts typing his reply to KLARA.

MAX (cont.)

(*typing and speaking*) Well, good morning. I just got back
from dropping Nick off at school and my first thought was
emailing you. Two brilliant minds but with a single thought.

LIGHTS UP ON KLARA

KLARA

(*re:her computer*) He's funny. I like getting to know him
this way. It's safe. It does feel like we're moving pretty
fast though. He responds so quickly.

MAX

This is great. She's great. I'm getting to know so much
about her already.

KLARA

We've covered a lot of the basics. He's a pianist.

MAX

She's a dancer.

KLARA

Jewish.

MAX

Latvian.

KLARA

Single father.

MAX

Devoted daughter. (*pause*) How does she think she's not
pretty? She must not own a mirror.

KLARA

Clean freak. Doesn't like pets. Thinks I am pretty. I
already question his taste.

MAX

I can't believe I asked her what her sign was. She must
think I am such a dope.

KLARA

I can't believe he asked me what my sign is. That's adorable.

MAX

I am a little nervous about telling her anything more.

KLARA

What can we talk about now?
They reflect a moment, then . . .

BOTH

I should talk to Jake.

They both call JAKE.

LIGHTS UP ON JAKE.

JAKE

Hi. You've reached Jake Kelly. Your call is very important to me. Please leave your number and a brief message and I'll get back to you as soon as humanly possible. Beep.

LIGHTS OUT ON JAKE.

Both MAX and KLARA hang up without leaving a message.

MAX

I don't need to talk to Jake to know where this is going.

KLARA

Nowhere. And fast.

MAX

She is probably too busy with her studies and her job.

KLARA

With a kid and a career, how can he possibly have time for anything else.

MAX

But I wonder? Is she...

KLARA

Is he...

BOTH

... as lonely as I am?

MAX rises from his chair and moves to center stage, as does KLARA. Together they sing LONELY.

SONG: "LONELY"

MAX

LONELY IS MINE
PASSING THE TIME
I ONCE WAS MARRIED
NOW SCARES I CARRY

KLARA

ALONE I'LL BE
 IS THERE NO ONE FOR ME
 WILL HE EVER COME
 THERE MUST BE SOMEONE
 KLARA (cont.)
 LONELY IS FOR ME
 CAN I BE FREE
 MY WISH IS HERE
 IS AN ANSWER NEAR

 MAX
 IS THERE NO ONE FOR ME?
 I NEED TO BREAK FREE
 FROM MY LONELY LIFE
 I WANT TO FLY

 MAX & KLARA TOGETHER
 IS THIS MY LONELINESS I FEEL
 I CAN'T TELL ANYMORE I SIMPLY DEAL
 LONELY IS MY LOT; LOVE I HAVEN'T GOT
 IS THERE NO ONE THERE FOR ME?

LONELY IS FOR ME
 CAN I BE FREE
 MY WISH IS HERE
 IS AN ANSWER NEAR
 IS THERE NO ONE FOR ME?
 I NEED TO BREAK FREE

 FROM MY LONELY LIFE
 I WANT TO FLY

We hear the familiar quick arpeggio of the AOL Instant message, letting us know that someone is talking to us via the Internet. Max and Klara return to their respective chairs to see who it is. Where it says AIM in parentheses they are using AOL Instant Messaging.

 JAKE
 (AIM) Hi. What are you doing?

 BOTH
 (with relief) Jake.

 JAKE
 (AIM) Max, I saw that you called right before my cell phone died. Lucky for me you are on-line. What's up?

 MAX
 (AIM) She is e-mailing me, so I guess she is not too busy. Or is she just being polite?

 JAKE
 (AIM) Let's find out. (to Klara AIM) Klara, How's e-mailing Max going?

KLARA

(AIM) It's good. I like him a lot, but I'm not sure what to do next. The whole process is kind of slow.

JAKE

(to Max AIM) She likes you.

Max does a little happy dance.

MAX

(AIM) Colon. Right Parentheses. Smiley face.

JAKE

(AIM) She's concerned how slowly it is going.

MAX

(AIM) Left bracket. Colon. Left parentheses. Furrowed brow.

JAKE

(AIM) Not to worry, my friend. We can speed this along. I am sending you a link to a chat room. Join me. (to Klara AIM) *Klara*, Why don't you start a conversation with him? Follow the link.

Music starts to play. KLARA, MAX and JAKE walk away from their computers to center stage. MAX and KLARA stand awkwardly, like kids at a junior high school dance. The conceit here is that while they are "in" the chat room, they are talking to each other, but we know that they are actually sitting at their computers.

SONG: "INSTANT MESSAGING"

JAKE

(singing recitative)

WELCOME TO MY NEW CHAT ROOM
IT IS JUST THE THREE OF US
WE DON'T NEED ANY MORE THAN THAT
FOR TOPICS TO DISCUSS

JAKE

All right you two. Let's get to know each other.

MAX

(to Jake) What if I make an ass out of myself, Jake?

JAKE

First of all. It's a chat room. This all takes place in cyberspace. How much damage can you do? Second, you have to type to communicate. If you say anything that offends her, just say it's a typo. And finally, it's a chat room. She can see everything that you're writing.

MAX

You can?

KLARA

Yes.

JAKE

Well, at least you no longer have to worry about making an ass out of yourself.

MAX

All right. Here goes nothing.

(sings)

HELLO KLARA HOW'S IT GOING?
THAT QUESTION REALLY SOUNDS SO LAME.

JAKE

DON'T WORRY IF YOU'RE NERVIIOUS

KLARA

BELIEVE ME I'M THE SAME.

JAKE

(spoken to Max) You see?

KLARA

SO TELL ME 'BOUT THE VALLEY
AND MAYBE A WORD ABOUT YOUR SON

JAKE

WATCH OUT YOU TWO I WARN YA
THIS SHARING CAN BE FUN

(spoken) Don't get cold feet now you two. Klara, tell him how you take a full class load AND work a full time job. Max, talk about raising a son by yourself and composing music.

KLARA

DON'T KNOW WHICH IS HARDER
MUSIC OR RAISING KIDS.
YOU MUST BE MOTIVATED
TO KEEP FROM HITTING THE SKIDS.

MAX

(spoken) How about you?

MAX (cont.)

(sung)

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU WORK ALL DAY
THEN STUDY ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT
YOU'RE NOT ONLY VERY PRETTY
BUT ALSO YOU'RE VERY BRIGHT

ALL

INSTANT MESSAGING
CAN BE SURPRISING
IT'S EXHILARATING
COMMUNICATING

YOU CAN MAKE YOUR HEART SING
 YOU CAN BE AT EASE
 AS CALM AS YOU PLEASE
 YOU'LL FIND THAT IT'S A BREEZE
 YOU MAKE A NEW FRIEND
 JUST BY CLICKING "SEND"

*End of song. MAX & KLARA share a laugh and continue to "chat".
 Jake "logs off" and quietly takes himself out of the scene.*

MAX

I like your picture.

KLARA

Oh my hair's a mess in this one. I'm not very photogenic.

MAX

Looks great to me.

KLARA

Thanks. I like yours too.

MAX

Just get rid of the dog and it would be perfect.

KLARA

I can't believe you're not a dog person.

MAX

I have a 10 year old son. That's close enough.

KLARA

LOL. *(pause)* You talk about him a lot.

MAX

Well, he's the most important thing in my life. He's my partner in crime. I don't know what I'd do without him.

KLARA

That's great. I didn't know fathers could feel that way about their kids.

MAX

I'm sure your dad does.

KLARA

(after an awkward moment) I should probably go.

MAX

No please. I didn't mean it, whatever I said. It was a typo. Right, Jake? *(a moment)* Jake?

KLARA

The time stamp says he logged off about two hours ago.

MAX

That sneaky ?@!# ampersand . . . colon!

KLARA

LOL.

MAX

(realizing) Oh shoot. I got to go. I have to pick Nick up from school.

KLARA

You go. It was nice chatting with you.

MAX

Can we chat again tomorrow?

KLARA

I look forward to it. Colon. Right Parentheses. Happy face.

MAX is thrilled. KLARA "logs off".

BLACK OUT

SCENE 3 - JAKE'S PLACE - DAY

JAKE is sitting in a chair reading a journal. BARBARA is standing and looking out the window.

BARBARA

It is such a beautiful day out. It looks perfect for a walk on the beach.

JAKE

Yes dear.

BARBARA

Don't you "yes, dear" me, Jake Kelly. You hardly have any time for yourself now that you are teaching a full load of classes and treating that girl. Come on let's get out of this stuffy office.

JAKE

I will in a minute. I just want to finish this.

BARBARA

You've been saying that for an hour.

JAKE

This is important. Klara is letting me read her journal. All the things she was having trouble saying out loud she's been writing down. This is huge. Listen to this. Here she writes
 . . .

LIGHTS UP on KLARA far side of stage as she sings the journal entry. During song slowly bring LIGHTS UP center stage to include watching BORIS silently berating YOUNG KLARA, drunk & angry.

SONG: "CHRYSALIS"