

VIKING VAMPIRES

By Jerry Rabushka



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SYNOPSIS: Who doesn't love a good vampire flick? And who doesn't love their electronic gadgets? Put them both into one play and you get two obsessions for the price of one! The hit TV show *Viking Vampires* follows the love story of Torger and Hallvör—they live and love eternally! In “real life,” a high school student named Erica decides to share that same eternal love with Roderick, a classmate who's barely interested enough to look up from his computer screen. And when he does, he notices her best friend! Throw in a cooking show where poor taste rules, a wacky family picnic, and an internet café where speaking out loud is virtually forbidden, and you've got a comedy to “obsess” your cast, crew and audience!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(11-13 female, 6-7 male, 3-7 either, 0-10 extras)

PLAYERS IN THE TV SERIES *VIKING VAMPIRES*: While the cast of the TV show is Scandinavian, the author encourages multi-cultural casting. These characters are glamorous and “larger than life.” They are like the “perfect people” that show up on many soap operas and romantic dramas. They are most likely overdressed and overly made up.

TORGER (m)	Lead in the series. (Pronounced Torger with a “hard” g.) (82 lines)
HALLVÖR (f)	His eternal love—at least for now. (pronounced hal-vuur). (60 lines)
ODIN (m)	Torger's brother, and more sensible than Torger. (43 lines)
HASBHAR (m)	King of a rival land. (42 lines)
ÚLFHILDR (f)	Hasbhar's sister, an eligible bachelorette. (50 lines)
MINISTER (m/f)	At a wedding. (4 lines)
MESSENGER (m/f)	(2 lines)

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CHARACTERS THAT FREQUENT THE INTERNET CAFÉ:

ERICA (f).....	High school student, big fan of <i>Viking Vampires</i> . She longs to have the glamorous life of the characters in the show. (207 lines)
ALAYNA (f).....	Her best friend who watches it with her, but is more grounded in reality. (156 lines)
RODERICK (m).....	A nerdy-type who loves his technology and cell phone. He doesn't have a lot of friends, until all of a sudden... (94 lines)
MADISON (f).....	Coffee house customer, self-absorbed, loves to text and not talk. (30 lines)
ADDISON (f).....	A friend of hers, not that they ever speak. (23 lines)
BARISTA (m/f).....	At coffee house, who finds customers annoying and prefers they text rather than order by voice. (43 lines)
JAMIE (m/f).....	A customer who finds <i>everyone</i> annoying. (24 lines)
MANAGER (m/f)	At the café. (7 lines)
CUSTOMER (m/f).....	On a cell phone.

CAST AND STUDIO AUDIENCE OF IMELDA'S BUDGET KITCHEN:

IMELDA (f)	A cook, and if you're lucky, she's not cooking for you. (56 lines)
RANDI/RANDY (m/f).....	Imelda's reluctant assistant. (30 lines)

THE STUDIO AUDIENCE: People who have to taste her food. Costuming and hair for these characters can border on the ridiculous if desired. (Studio audience players can be either gender by changing names and gender references.)

STEVE (m)..... (8 lines)

BOB (m)..... (7 lines)

BELINDA (f) (6 lines)

JOANIE (f)..... (6 lines)

RODERICK'S RELATIVES: These are all the “embarrassing” type relatives no one wants you to know they have. Costuming and performance can be outrageous to add to the humor.

GIGI (f) Roderick's cousin, flashy and over the top. (9 lines)

FEEFEE (f)..... His aunt, thinks she's really funny. (11 lines)

DEEDEE (f) His domineering mother. (8 lines)

ZEEZEE (m) His uncle (by marriage), has off-putting appearance and behavior. (10 lines)

KIKI (f) Another relative, ready to party it up! (6 lines)

EXTRAS:

Coffee house customers

Audience members on *Imelda's Budget Kitchen*

Guests at Roderick's pot luck dinner

Servants, maids, etc, to the cast of *Viking Vampires*.

DOUBLING POSSIBILITIES

BOB / MINISTER

STEVE / ZEEZEE

BELINDA / GIGI

JOANIE / KIKI

MESSENGER / FEEFEE

MANAGER / DEEDEE

RANDI / CUSTOMER

STAGING AND SETTING

This play is set in various locations. Some smaller but recurring locations are Erica's house (living room, den, or bedroom) where all that is needed is a couple pieces of furniture and a TV set that can be moved out of the way easily after the scenes. Another setting is for the TV shows themselves. *Viking Vampires* and *Imelda's Budget Kitchen* can take place in the same area of the stage by quickly moving a couple set pieces. The Internet Café is where most of the action happens, and much of this set can be left up throughout the show. Towards the end of the play, it can be reconfigured to represent Roderick's family potluck. For a smaller playing area, you can set up a few chairs and small tables that can be moved on and off stage easily. There are times when *Viking Vampires* will play out its scenes at the Café (even though in reality they are "on TV") as the patrons are "watching" the show there on their portable devices.

NOTE: *While the TV characters' names may be unusual, they aren't that difficult to pronounce. Take a minute to learn them and make sure the entire cast says them the same way.*

PROPS

- ☐ Cell phones
- ☐ Laptop computers
- ☐ Coffee cups, mugs, etc
- ☐ Letters & envelopes
- ☐ Cooking utensils
- ☐ Table Ware
- ☐ TV remote
- ☐ School supplies: books, backpacks, etc
- ☐ Bags of chips and paper cups
- ☐ Pen and notepad
- ☐ Quill pen and “Marriage contract”
- ☐ Picnic items (paper plates, cups)
- ☐ Paper bags full of “food”
- ☐ Purse with money inside

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT RISE: *As the play opens, we are watching a scene from the hit drama Viking Vampires. HALLVÖR and TORGER are the couple that all of America is in love with and follows—they are the “it” couple in teen society so everything they say or do has monumental importance. The acting in the TV show can be self-indulgently dramatic, as if the show is all too aware of its own popularity. As the scene progresses we find out that ERICA and ALAYNA are watching the show at ERICA’s house, which can be simply set up with a couch or a couple chairs, a TV, and several bags of chips. There also needs to be a notepad and a pen in this area for use later in the play. Music can quietly accompany the scenes from the TV show.*

HALLVÖR: I would do anything for you, Torger. Anything. I would give up my eternal soul if it would save you.

TORGER: I trust you, Hällvor, and I believe in you. *(Holds up a paper or envelope with a handwritten note folded inside.)* You must take this note to Hasbhar. Wait while he opens it and come back with his response.

HALLVÖR: What does it say? I must know.

TORGER: It’s private; it must remain between Hasbhar and me. It doesn’t affect you, yet his response may save my life.

HALLVÖR: How can it not affect me if it affects you? What affects you affects me. Our affects—they’re so special.

They start to kiss but at the last moment TORGER decides against it and turns away; HALLVÖR is upset about this.

TORGER: There is no time to waste. Take the note, now.

HALLVÖR: I love you, Torger. Always know that.

TORGER: And I love you. You must promise never to read the note, nor its reply. That will demonstrate that I can trust you and your love.

HALLVÖR: My love is pure and true for now and forever.

Lights up on ERICA and ALAYNA, they’re at ERICA’s house immersed in a show. They should be on or around a couch,

slouching or in some seemingly uncomfortable position. Feel free to decorate this room with unhealthy and demotivating snacks and drinks. A Viking Vampires poster could be a nice touch.

ALAYNA: *(Analyzing the action, as they always do.)* She'll read it.

ERICA: She *better* read it.

ALAYNA: And soon! I want to know what it says. I think he's using her.

They watch awhile, as TORGER hands HALLVÖR the note and they exchange affectionate glances. We can see she wants to open it, but under his gaze she reluctantly hides somewhere in her costume.

HALLVÖR: It is safe. I never look there.

HALLVÖR and TORGER gaze at each other lovingly and talk romantically in pantomime.

ERICA: I want that.

ALAYNA: The note? Or that dress. It's way too Norwegian for our crowd.

ERICA: The *feeling*. The feeling that I can tell a man "I'll do anything for you." And mean it.

ALAYNA: I think that's too open ended.

ERICA: I really want to try it.

ALAYNA: We should wait to see what happens to Hallvör and Torger.

ERICA: *(Determined.)* Alayna, if she can have that, I can have that.

ALAYNA: That's not real, Erica. If it was real, Torger would call Hasbhar on a cell phone and just ask the question instead of putting Hallvör in all that danger. If he was a man's man, he'd take the message himself.

ERICA: It's set in old times. That's how they did things.

ALAYNA: It's set in modern times. With vampires and old Norse names. What, they can't use a phone? They do everything else we do. They just have unhealthy dietary habits. Type O, Type A. *(As if to a waiter.)* "Can I have a side of AB negative? I know it's rare, but price is no issue. We're celebrating."

ERICA: You've never been on a date, that's your problem.

ALAYNA: So? You've never been on a second date.

The TV characters finish their conversation. HALLVÖR exits and TORGER sits down to think things over.

ERICA: *(ERICA is over the top, but she means it.)* I'm going to find someone. I'm going to find true love! Passion! Eternity!

ALAYNA: Me too, but not till I'm about thirty five. I want to have fun first.

ERICA: I want it now! I'm watching this show for lessons.

Notices TORGER is looking at them annoyed, waiting for her to be quiet. He makes hand motion that signifies "shut your mouth."

Shh! We're missing it.

They settle back in to watch.

ODIN: *(Enters as the GIRLS watch intently. ODIN is jovial yet concerned.)* My brother Torger!

They have a brief hug, ODIN notices TORGER is perturbed.

Did you give that letter to Hallvör? I told you I would take it myself.

TORGER: It couldn't wait any longer. I'm sorry, my brother.

ODIN: I'm sorry for you, if she reads it.

TORGER: She swore she would deliver it unopened!

ODIN: Your mistake was telling her not to look. You've made it too tempting.

TORGER: Time is of the essence. You know Hasbhar's plans!

ERICA: *(Can't wait any longer.)* I don't know them. Spill it, Torger!

ALAYNA: *(Loves the show, but thinks ERICA is overzealous.)* Hurry! Or Erica's gonna lose it!

ERICA: You want to know just as bad as I do!

ODIN: Hasbhar has no idea what you are proposing?

TORGER: Which is why the note must be delivered post haste!

ODIN: The note should have gone with the most secure delivery, and not necessarily the fastest.

TORGER: My brother, you doubt my messenger!

ODIN: If she reads it, it's liable to wind up in the river.

ERICA: *(Shouting at the screen!)* You idiot! Write him another one! Take it yourself!

ODIN: *(To TORGER, with a great idea!)* Why can't you just take it yourself?

ERICA: *(Loud and animated.)* Exactly!

TORGER: You know I'm not allowed to set foot in Hasbhar's compound. He would stun me with garlic-breath and drive a stake through my heart.

ODIN: So Hallvör is risking her life by proxy. Because you are too afraid to risk yours.

TORGER: *(Laughing theatrically.)* As vampires, there isn't really any "life" to risk.

ODIN: You disappoint me, my brother. She would not love you if she knew the truth. *(Starts to leave.)*

TORGER: *(Follows ODIN.)* And I would love you less, if you told her. *(Pauses on the way out and talks to himself.)* I must change Hasbhar's mind. About a lot of things. *(Exit.)*

ERICA: I trust you, Torger!

ALAYNA: You're a coward, Torger. A coward. A user. And you have bad teeth.

ERICA: But the actor who plays him is so hot!

ALAYNA: *(Agrees, swooning.)* Sooooo hot!

HALLVÖR enters slowly, reading the letter. She has an unhappy look on her face, as if she's been betrayed.

HALLVÖR: *(To herself.)* I have already betrayed him by reading this. Perhaps I shall do so yet again by destroying it. Betray Torger, or betray Hallvör. Either way both shall suffer. *(She thinks briefly, then tears up the letter and runs off stage.)*

ERICA: *(In sympathy.)* Love is so painful.

ALAYNA: That's why I'm waiting till 35.

ERICA: I want to get experience *now*.

ALAYNA: We should stop watching so much TV.

ERICA: That would involve getting off the couch. Something's gotta be on. We have three hundred channels.

ALAYNA: *(Playing with the remote to see what else is on TV.)* Grandma said she had four. Not four hundred. Four.

ERICA: And she had to get up to change channels.

ALAYNA: And one phone in the house. On a six-foot cord. I hate it when they lie like that. Look, here's the same network a half day ahead in the Chinese time zone. It's that cooking show.

ERICA: Good. If I'm going to find eternal love, I'll need to learn to cook.

Some happy corny music can play for the transition and into the first lines of a show called Imelda's Budget Kitchen. This show takes place in the same location on stage as Viking Vampires (or elsewhere at director's discretion). An easy set change would involve bringing in a table that has been pre-set with dishes and ingredients. On stage is IMELDA, a middle-aged to elderly woman who has been doing this show for many years. She seems sweet, but we find out otherwise, as both her cooking and her personality hide some unpleasantness. First she addresses the audience. A STUDIO AUDIENCE will be required for her next scene, and can be used in this one as well.

IMELDA: Are you trying to eat at home, but you think it costs as much as eating out?

ERICA: *(Slurps loudly out of a large cup.)* Eat at home? What's that?

IMELDA: You're probably saying, "eat at home, what's that?"

ALAYNA: That's really bizarre.

IMELDA: That's really bizarre.

ALAYNA is surprised.

That people think eating out is as cheap as eating in. But if you think it costs too much to shop, today we're going to show you a way to cut down your at-home cooking expenses *and* your calorie count. No heavy sauces, no high calorie mayo.

ERICA: She's killing us!

IMELDA: In fact, there's a part of the recipe you can make yourself as often as you like. Today, on *Imelda's Budget Kitchen*, we feature... "Cooking with Urine!"

A short silence as they stare at the TV in disbelief.

ALAYNA: *(Still in shock.)* Change it!

ERICA: *(Sees the bright side.)* No, it'll teach us how to budget.

ALAYNA: I don't want to save that much money! Ever!

IMELDA: *(Talking to the TV audience, but the GIRLS react as if it's directed just at them.)* You might be quick to judge. But allow me show you some recipes that are easy to make, and taste... well... delicious! *(She motions abruptly for RANDI to enter, perhaps a couple times with increasing annoyance.)* Randi, my assistant, will help with the cooking. You loved our last week's recipe, didn't you, Randi?

RANDI: *(Afraid to say the truth, but does; RANDI often speaks "aside" with darting eyes to avoid dealing directly with IMELDA.)* Not really.

IMELDA: Yes you did, Randi. Or do I need to hire someone who *likes* Imelda's cooking?

RANDI: Good luck with that.

IMELDA: This is a very simple and delicious chicken recipe that was a favorite of the Gandhi family!

RANDI: Uh... Imelda... Gandhi didn't eat chicken.

IMELDA: I mean the Gandhis up the street. It's a very common name, you know. And this recipe is one of their favorites. First, you need a pot and a chicken. Both of these are very important. If you have chickens in the back yard, make sure you get a plump one! Randi, you can get one later.

RANDI: *(Scared.)* Uh... oh... kay...

ALAYNA: Eewwww. Change it!

ERICA: Alayna, no! This is very instructive.

IMELDA: Next, our ingredients. Five cups of coffee, a three-liter bottle of cola, 50 ounces of water, and these handy anti-bloating pills.

RANDI: How does all that fit into the recipe?

IMELDA: *(Stern.)* You drink it. So get started.

RANDI: Drink it?

IMELDA: You need to make sure you have a plentiful supply of the main ingredient! *(To audience.)* When you cook with urine, you just make it yourself! It's the ultimate in recycling for the family in a budget kitchen.

RANDI: Um... ew?

IMELDA: If I were you and I wanted to keep my job, I'd get started, pronto.

ALAYNA: Okay, I've had enough.

IMELDA: Keep watching and you'll get a recipe you'll never forget!

ALAYNA: *(Takes remote and presses some buttons.)* New show!

RANDI: *(Changes character, now as an announcer.)* And in sports today, the Dodgers have signed-

ERICA: Sports! Don't care! *(Grabs remote switches back.)*

IMELDA: As I said, don't miss a minute.

ALAYNA: Too late! *(A bit of a struggle, but ALAYNA gets the remote and makes the switch.)*

RANDI: *(As the host of another TV show.)* Japan announced today that it has developed a new cell phone technology. *(With a sinister smile.)* Kids, your phones are obsolete.

ALAYNA: I can't watch! *(Switches again.)*

RANDI: Your remote is obsolete, too. You're stuck watching *Japanese Technology Update* until you get a new one. There's a lot of Japanese technology and it's always being updated. So settle in.

ERICA: I'm sick of watching TV.

Remote doesn't work.

RANDI: Ahahahahah!

ALAYNA: We've got to do something.

RANDI: *(Like a villain in a Saturday cartoon.)* You'll never stop me!

IMELDA: Or me! *(With an evil grin, she holds up a coffee pot, or a very large cup.)* Have some coffee.

ERICA: *(Thinks quickly.)* The previously unthinkable!

She gets up and unplugs TV, RANDI and IMELDA react with panic.

IMELDA: *(Looking around for an audience which she can't find.)* So lonely!

Blackout on the TV stars.

ERICA: That was scary. *(Short pause, she looks around the room and feels useless.)* What a life. I wish I was Hallvör.

ALAYNA: Erica. You don't. *(Holds up the remote, and perhaps her cell phone, looking at them with wonder.)* She has no Japanese technology. No Israeli fiber-optics, and no parts assembled in Mexico. She writes longhand. And she puts everything together herself.

ERICA: *(Pretty much ignores all that.)* I want to love someone so much I'd do anything for him.

ALAYNA: It's not realistic.

ERICA: *(Getting more into the fantasy.)* I'm going to make it happen. I watch her week after week. She's so driven. So pure.

ALAYNA: *(Pulling ERICA back to reality.)* So overwritten.

ERICA: I've been after the wrong boys. You know, the ball players, the cute guys... the clarinet section.

ALAYNA: The clarinet section.

ERICA: It's eclectic. Only certain types of boys play trumpet, but anyone can puff on a clarinet! What I need is someone who can... fix my phone, retool my computer, someone who would appreciate a girl's attention.

ALAYNA: Yeah, because you're not really all that.

ERICA: Alayna! That's so rude.

ALAYNA: Neither am I. Our hair and skin isn't perfect. We can't afford the latest fashion. The pretty girls aren't *watching* Hallvör. They're *being* Hallvör. And they don't deserve it. *(Picks up the remote and looks at it longingly.)* This isn't obsolete. It probably just needs some new batteries.

HALLVÖR enters where the TV shows take place, but talks to the GIRLS directly. She will cross over into their world after a couple lines. This is not part of the TV show but rather a fantasy-turned-reality that many of the characters have with the cast of the show.

HALLVÖR: (*Speaking as if in a dream-state.*) No one deserves to be me. Only I can be me. No one can love, think, or embrace beauty like I can. Face it, Erica, you can only live this dream through me.

ERICA: I'll change the channel if you don't change your attitude.

HALLVÖR: No Erica, you won't. Ever. I'll send Hasbhar to you in the middle of the night to suck out your blood, and you'll be a dim memory turned into internet folklore.

ERICA: (*To ALAYNA.*) She's not going to win.

ALAYNA: (*To ERICA.*) You can break the cycle. You can beat Hallvör.

ERICA: I don't want to destroy her. I want to see what happens if I take over her lifestyle. (*Crosses directly to HALLVÖR to meet her face to face.*) You just betrayed the man you loved, selfishly, because you put yourself before him. Since when is that true love? So you can get off your kick about love and eternity and all that. Have some pie. It's much more satisfying. (*Runs to her couch and grabs the pen and notepad.*) Oh, and here. (*Scribbles out a note.*) Take this to Hasbhar. You don't get off the hook so easily.

HALLVÖR looks at the note, tears it up defiantly, tosses it away and exits. ERICA crosses back to ALAYNA with a plan in mind.

Alayna, I know what I'm going to do. (*Grandly!*) I'm going to fall in love with Roderick Heinzroth.

ALAYNA: (*Not impressed.*) Roderick Heinzroth? You've never even spoken to Roderick Heinzroth. He's... he's...

ERICA: (*Still grand.*) Nerdorama. Geekosaurus. Dweebopotamus. But he's a nice guy. He's cute under all that nerdy-geeky-dweebopotamus-ness.

ALAYNA: Who's looked under all that?

ERICA: He needs a girl's attention. It should be a snap.

ALAYNA: I was going to say he's out of your league, but have it your way.

ERICA: Let's go find him.

ALAYNA isn't interested.

ERICA: *(Continued.)* Now.

ALAYNA: Now?

ERICA: You said you were tired of watching TV. Let's go for a dose of real life. I'll find him! With my Japanese-Israeli-Mexican phone, I can find anyone anywhere! *(Clicks up her phone.)* Here he is... at the internet café.

ALAYNA: I thought he was the internet café.

ERICA: Coffee. The first ingredient in Gandhi Family Chicken.

ERICA gets more excited by the moment! ALAYNA gets less excited as ERICA gets more excited.

I'll beat Hallvör at her own game. I'm tired of *her* getting all the love, romance, and glamour while we sit on in front of the TV eating doughnuts and popcorn and drinking blue-flavored high fructose corn syrup.

ALAYNA: Uh, that would be *you*!

ERICA: Roderick is the new Torger! *(ERICA drags ALAYNA with her offstage to visit the coffee house.)*

HALLVÖR: *(Enters shortly after.)* Uh... good luck with all that! *(Exit.)*

TORGER enters hoping to be left alone, ODIN is following and won't allow it.

ODIN: She has betrayed you.

TORGER: No! You are jealous of me because I have the type of love you can only dream of. You want to tear us apart.

ODIN: *(Grabs TORGER and won't let him get away.)* Torger!

TORGER relents, ODIN hands him the torn up letter piece by piece.

I found this on the road. So much for trusting her not to read it. You tore her apart like she tore this letter, *(This would be shocking news to the audience, so it must be delivered with grave importance so your audience doesn't miss it.)* having her take your marriage proposal to an enemy kingdom.

If music is playing, turn it out loud for a moment while TORGER reacts to having his plan exposed.

TORGER: *(Making things up like a politician caught off guard at a debate.)* Uh... so, she tripped and fell, and the letter tumbled out of her pocket, and two birds, mistaking it for carrion, fought over its remains. She loves me and will do anything for me.

ODIN: You've spurned a woman who loves you eternally to try to make a marriage you have no hope to achieve. You're an idiot. And, as a vampire, you must live with this decision for a long long time.

TORGER: Or, I'll have time to rectify it.

HALLVÖR: *(Enters.)* Yes, Torger, you blew it. Look at me. *(She twirls around and gives everyone a chance to admire her. Once she's satisfied, she continues.)* Beautiful. Stunning. Perfect in every way. Hammering home to teen girls everywhere that they will never, ever, be as perfect as I. Yet you walk away from it in order to make a wedding with Hasbhar's fat ugly sister Úlfhildr.

ERICA and ALAYNA enter, watching from the sidelines, as if THEY're sneaking into a movie theater.

TORGER: Úlfhildr is not fat and ugly.

HALLVÖR: Uh... yeah she is. Both!

TORGER: I have met her.

HALLVÖR: You met her last year, before she spent twelve months on the couch with unlimited access to Dunkin Donuts.

TORGER: It's not her beauty I was after, so much as the charm on the inside.

HALLVÖR: *(Breaking down.)* I don't understand why you don't love me!

TORGER: Because you're clingy. Whiny. Self obsessed. What's in it for me?

ODIN: I think I need to go.

TORGER: No, Odin. You stay. You must learn what eternity would have me endure.

ODIN: Two hundred years of the same argument. Being a Viking vampire has lead to little reward. I wish I'd never been bitten.

HALLVÖR: Once bitten, twice shy.

ERICA: (*Upset with the plot.*) What's happened to this show! It's really jumped the shark. Gone off track! Hasbhar's sister has ruined the greatest love story of all time! I'm going to continue the story myself—with Roderick at the internet café. Hallvör, I'll show you what it's really like to be a woman in a relationship!

TORGER: (*Trying to smooth things over, speaks to HALLVÖR.*) If I marry Úlfhildr, it puts me in a position of wealth and power. We'll overthrow Hasbhar, I'll divorce his sister, and you and I will rule all of Vikingland. How's them apples?

HALLVÖR: Keep your apples. I don't believe a word of it.

ERICA: You tell 'em!

HALLVÖR: But I must risk it. Rewrite the letter, and I'll take it.

ALAYNA: She wouldn't!

TORGER: Can't we just tape it together? It loses impact in a rewrite.

HALLVÖR: (*Sharply.*) Torger!

TORGER: (*Meekly.*) Okay.

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT RISE: *At the internet café. A counter is stage right; the BARISTA works behind it. Feel free to place cast members where you see fit, however, the author's suggestion follows. At the far (audience) right of the stage is JAMIE, working on some homework. JAMIE is very studious and prefers the place to be quiet. RODERICK is at the table to JAMIE's left, perhaps surrounded by hi-tech toys. ALAYNA and ERICA are to the left of RODERICK; as the scene opens THEY can be seated, or settling in while THEY chat. If this is a smaller stage, just a few chairs can set the scene. If desired, a menu or other coffee-oriented poster can be put up on the wall behind the counter. There should be a sign up on or behind the counter saying "please text your order to 54812" or something to that effect.*

ALAYNA: (*Uncomfortable with what is about to ensue.*) I can't believe I'm doing this with you.

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
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ERICA: I need moral support.

ALAYNA: My morality says you should stay home.

ERICA: *(Trying to create excitement where there isn't any, as if she is in a Broadway musical.)* This is the internet café. Where it all happens!

ALAYNA: *(Looking around at EVERYONE engrossed in gadgets.)* The internet café. Where human interaction isn't allowed.

MADISON and ADDISON enter, bubbly, and take the table to the left of ERICA and ALAYNA, on the opposite side of them from RODERICK. The CUSTOMERS are a bit annoyed with their volume but don't say anything, however some dirty looks would be useful. Make it obvious that MADISON is the "leader" and ADDISON is the "follower." MADISON establishes the "rules" and "dress code," etc., while ADDISON goes along with it and is perfectly content to do so.

MADISON: It's so cool we can finally hang out. Why haven't we done this before?

ADDISON: I don't know. Life gets in the way. Busy busy busy.

MADISON: Let's make the best use of our time! No homework, no TV, no boys. Just Madison and Addison on a girls night out.

While this is going on, JAMIE glares at them, shakes head, returns to studying. They don't notice.

ADDISON: Enjoy life before you get too old. That's what I always say!

MADISON: Let the party begin!

They both whip out phones with the same motion at the same time, and begin to play with them, ignoring each other. SOMEONE giggles occasionally.

ALAYNA: *(Watching them for a while.)* That's sad.

ERICA: They seem to be having a great time. Here we are wasting the day in conversation. I could be talking to six people in the virtual world instead of one person live.

MADISON: *(Reads a text and is shocked.)* Oh my gosh! I can't believe it.

ADDISON: What is it?

No answer, MADISON is back to her phone.

Madison, who? *(ADDISON is annoyed.)* What is it already? I can't believe you're being this way!

MADISON: *(No big deal.)* Oh you don't know her.

ADDISON: *(Calms down immediately.)* Oh. okay.

They go back to the phones.

ALAYNA: *(Sarcastic.)* So where's your Torger?

ERICA: There he is. Nose to the grindstone.

ALAYNA: Nose the computer. He'll never look up.

ERICA: *(Primping her hair.)* I'm sure he will.

ALAYNA: You sure he's the one?

ERICA: No competition? Check. Desperately lonely? Check. Smart enough to fix my apps? Check.

ALAYNA: Checks out fine.

ERICA: *(Waiting for RODERICK to notice her, tries primping her hair a couple more times.)* He's not looking.

ALAYNA: This *(Imitates ERICA's primping.)* is not a mating call.

ERICA: I really do need help with this.

ALAYNA: *(Refers to MADISON and ADDISON.)* They seem pretty tuned in to modern love.

ERICA: Let me go ask. *(To MADISON.)* Excuse me, but you seem pretty cool with this... can you...

MADISON: Excuse me, but I am busy!

ADDISON: We're... *(Really snotty with her voice trailing upwards and her hand in ERICA's face.)* talkiiinnnnng.

ERICA: No you're not.

MADISON: *(Holds up phone, speaks in the same inflection.)* We're... talking???

MADISON sighs heavily with annoyance and goes back to her phone. ERICA leaves them and goes back to ALAYNA.

ADDISON: So rude!

MADISON looks to ADDISON with annoyance, holds her phone up to ADDISON and shakes it in her face.

Sorry.

She realizes she shouldn't have spoken, and texts quickly... MADISON reads the text and they look at ERICA and giggle.

ERICA: Okay, like, I need a dishrag to wipe that away. This place is creepier than a New York Gentlemen's Club at 2 a.m. (*Resolved to speak to RODERICK.*) I'm gonna do it!

ALAYNA: Okay Hallvör.

ERICA: I won't be betrayed. Roderick isn't in love with anyone's sister.

ALAYNA: He probably has 12 internet girlfriends, all of whom think he's someone else. I have six boyfriends who think I'm Jessica Simpson.

ERICA: I'm about to rock his world! (*Goes up to him.*) Roderick? (*Louder.*) Roderick.

She raps on his table and talks loudly; OTHERS notice her but try to ignore it.

Roderick!!! (*To ALAYNA*) He's ignoring me.

ALAYNA: (*Embarrassed.*) Everyone's ignoring you.

ERICA: He's ignoring me in particular.

ALAYNA: And I'll be next. If you wanted to be so loud you should have gone to a library.

ERICA: (*Changes strategy and shows him her phone.*) Roderick, I'm having problems getting this app to show up. Can you help?

He takes her phone without looking at her, presses a few buttons with a disinterested look on his face, and hands it back.

ERICA: *(Continued.)* Thanks! Thanks! I said... *(She can't get his attention.)* Uh... thanks!

ALAYNA: *(Points to ERICA's original chair.)* Sit!

ERICA: Well, let me get something to drink.

ERICA goes up to counter and picks up a menu, or looks at one behind the counter if there is one. The BARISTA stares at ERICA impatiently while SHE looks over a menu; this goes on awhile.

May I please have a latte with extra cream?

BARISTA still stares at her.

I said may I please have a-

BARISTA: *(Cutting her off in disbelief.)* Excuse me. Did you really "talk" to me?

ERICA: You work here. Or believe me, I wouldn't have even made the effort.

BARISTA: Did you not read the sign? If you have an order, please text it to 54812. We will then text you when your order is ready. Do not complicate the matter with words. As if.

ERICA: Okay, but since you already know what I want, you might as well make it.

BARISTA: *(Explaining, rudely.)* This is an internet café. You order over the internet. *(Proud!)* Our customer service is second to none... provided you follow the protocol.

ERICA: I don't want to follow the protocol.

BARISTA: Then good luck getting that latte, lady.

ERICA: Fine, then I'll just go to the condiment bar and pour myself a nice combo of two-percent milk and half-and-half flavored with honey and Sugar in the Raw. It'll be free. Most places charge \$2.95 for a glass of milk. Win for me, epic fail for you.

BARISTA: You can't do that.

ERICA: Excuse me, but did you just "talk" to *me*? Text me. But I don't always read them.

MADISON: *(Shocked.)* She's talking? Out loud?

ADDISON: Like, I haven't had like a conversation in like three years. My last boyfriend didn't even know my name, just my phone number. He didn't even know that. I was on speed dial. *(Disappointed.)* Number 7.

MADISON: Shhh I have incoming Facebook!

ADDISON: Oops me too. I almost missed something.

They get back to their phones. ALAYNA's phone rings. A loud annoying ringtone would be best, as long as it doesn't drown out dialogue.

ALAYNA: Do you think I can get that?

ERICA: I guess so.

ALAYNA: I'm not sure we're really allowed to speak in here.

ERICA: You're on a cell phone, it's sort of internet. Try it.

ALAYNA: It's my sister. Surely there's a family exemption.

BARISTA: Will you answer it already? Have you girls never heard of vibrate?

As her conversation goes on, more and more PATRONS are annoyed with her as she gets carried away.

ALAYNA: Hey sis, what's up? *(ALAYNA gets some "shocking" news.)* He did? I'm really tired of our brother getting away with that. Do you know what happened last night when you were at ballet class? We're having dinner and he reaches over and starts hogging all the popcorn. And I'm like "look, get your own bowl," and he's like "why should I when your bowl is right there," and then he said, "I thought you were on a diet." And I said "look it's dry pop, so I'll eat as much as I want, without you stealing it." *(By now she is up and walking around, animated.)* And then he says "well there's like enough for three people" and so I said "it's like all I'm having for dinner so if you don't, like, like it, go in the other room and watch some other stupid reality show" and he said "I can't believe the TV you watch, it's as empty as the popcorn you eat," *(Loud.)* and I said...

JAMIE: *(Loses temper, this stops ALAYNA in mid-sentence.)* Would you shut up already? I'm trying to read. I'm trying to study. I'm trying to enjoy an evening out with my book and my specialty coffee drink of choice. *(Gets up as well, in ALAYNA's face.)* Here's some news for you. No one cares what you said. No one cares what he said. No one cares what you said back, and no one cares what he said back to you after you said whatever it was you said. So stop talking, ok? Just stop. No one cares! *(JAMIE sits back down.)*

If there are extras, a few people clap... then... silence. ALAYNA is mortified, and no one knows what to say for a while. After an uncomfortable silence, ALAYNA puts away her phone and sits back down.

RODERICK: *(Alone at his table, speaks up against much opposition.)* I do.

JAMIE: You what?

RODERICK: I want to hear what she said.

BARISTA: You do?

RODERICK: I want to hear what she said. I was following it. Hogging popcorn, on a diet, it's dry pop, you're stealing it, go in the other room, hate your TV show, and then she said... and you cut it off! It's like getting to the climax of a film and then your little brother makes you take him to the bathroom. I still haven't seen the end of *Harry Potter Part Five*. So, be that as it may I would like to hear the end of the conversation.

ALAYNA: You eavesdroppers! I was having a private conversation that neither of you were privy to.

JAMIE: Excuse me, but a private conversation is not held in public at a volume loud enough to drown out The Who.

RODERICK: There's really no such thing as privacy anymore. *(Holds up a phone.)* Not with this.

ALAYNA: Can you just tune me out?

JAMIE: Ah, that pleasure is not possible to grant when you SHOUT! I said, he said, you said... you don't say anything, you shout it.

MADISON: *(Providing etiquette advice.)* You need to text in all caps.

ERICA: Can you even do that? I can't on my phone.

MADISON: (*Friendly.*) Sure, I'll show you. (*Oops!*) O wait, I can't, I'm hanging out with Addison. Maybe later.

ERICA: Well, uh... Roderick... why don't you... come to our table and she can finish her story. I've "said" a few things too, that I'd like to share.

RODERICK: (*Has no idea.*) Who are you?

ERICA: I'm Erica. You fixed my phone.

He doesn't get it, but she approaches him seeing this as an opportunity to get to know him better on his own terms.

I have the xPhone model V-255-42-12-A, second edition.

RODERICK: (*Now he gets it.*) Oh yeah, I know who you are. I have a qPhone model 25534-56854-782-V. You can call me 25534 for short. That's what my friends call me. Not that I have any.

ERICA: (*Flirty.*) Well... 255...

RODERICK: (*Not picking up on the flirtation.*) That's 25534...

ERICA: Well, 25534... I really... wait, if I'm a 25542 and you're a 25534, then I can call you 34 and you call me 42. It's like a pet name thing.

RODERICK: No. My name is 25534. Otherwise it's like calling me "Ick" instead of Roderick.

ERICA: It was nice of you to stand up for Alayna.

RODERICK: I wasn't. I just wanted to hear what she said.

ALAYNA: Never mind, it's not that interesting.

ERICA: It's just that... you're so... well...

RODERICK: I've been called enough names for one lifetime. So I'll retreat to my phone, if you don't mind.

ERICA: (*Peering over his shoulder.*) Hey, you're using the *Viking Vampires* App.

RODERICK: It's my favorite show. Until Hallvör jumped the shark, as they say. But Torger. I wish I could be more like him. With this app, I can.

ERICA: (*After a pause.*) What a beautiful name.

ALAYNA: Roderick? It's so 1600.

ERICA: No. 25534. (*Romantic.*) Two... five... five... three... (*Sighs.*) four!

She whirls in the thrill of love, lost in her own world and leaving RODERICK alone. He hardly cares and goes right back to his technology; ERICA returns to her table to ogle RODERICK and chat with ALAYNA. TORGER enters and comes to RODERICK.

TORGER: Roderick. Roderick Heinzroth.

RODERICK: Torger. (*Can't believe it.*) Torger!

TORGER: (*Buddies up to him.*) So... 25534. Cool name. I thought Torger was the doughnut but 25534? You got me.

RODERICK looks back to his phone, thinking perhaps it's something in the app. TORGER works to regain his attention.

Hey kid, I'm over here. Look away from the phone.

RODERICK: I can't. The world is on the phone. The coffee house is just a small part of it. Too confining.

TORGER: (*Takes the phone.*) Look at me.

RODERICK: (*To anyone who will listen.*) He took my phone!!!

BARISTA: Uh... there's no one sitting next to you.

RODERICK is confused, and embarrassed, ADDISON and MADISON giggle.

TORGER: No one else can see me.

RODERICK: I wish I was like you. Well I did, until you pulled that letter thing with Hallvör. You gave her a note to take to another man proposing marriage to his sister.

TORGER: I was compelled.

RODERICK: By what? A lazy writer?

TORGER: Úlfhildr has money and beauty even beyond Hallvör.

RODERICK: Money and beauty? Is that all you're after?

TORGER: What I'm after isn't relevant.

RODERICK: It is, if you're my idol. I want to be a caterpillar and crawl into a cocoon and come out like you.

TORGER: If I'm your idol, you need to wake up!

RODERICK: Give me my phone!

TORGER: Hear me out.

RODERICK: I guess I have no choice.

TORGER: The girl. The girl you call 25542.

RODERICK: I don't call her that. She's not a number. (*Sadly.*) Just a name. Erica.

TORGER: The girl you call 25542. She's into you.

RODERICK: Her phone is obsolete. We have nothing in common.

TORGER: Learn from my mistakes. Talk to her.

RODERICK: You didn't hear me. Her phone is obsolete.

TORGER: And so will yours be, in another week.

RODERICK: I'll move up. She won't. I get the latest models featured on *Japanese Technology Update*. She's trapped in another country, in another century.

TORGER: As am I. And, it seems, neither of us will ever get the girl.

RODERICK: I don't want the girl. I want the phone!

TORGER: You don't have a choice in your predicament. If a girl is interested in you, you should go for it. Look at me. Handsome, dashing, debonair, never a hair out of place, always in style. If I can't get the girl, there's little hope for you!

RODERICK: More and more, I can see why you don't get the girl. (*Getting more frustrated and louder.*) Look. I don't want to go out with Erica. Okay? I don't want to go out with Erica! I don't want to go out with ERICA!

EVERYONE stares at ERICA and SHE tries to hide herself.

BARISTA: Knock yourself out.

JAMIE: If I flunk this test I'm suing all of you!

ERICA: Roderick! How is it going to look when people realize I can't even get a date with *you*!

RODERICK: Your motives are suspect!

TORGER: Now you're talking.

HALLVÖR: (*Enters with a flourish, approaches TORGER, takes over the attention.*) Your motives, Torger, are all too well known. You're using me to get to a richer—and in your misguided opinion—more beautiful woman. The money and the looks will dwindle.

TORGER: I know. Then all I'll have is a kingdom with unlimited power, servants to coddle my every whim, and the ability to tax my way back to prosperity. Whoop dee do. A kingdom. Who would ever want that? You're petty, Hallvör. I could never love you.

He exits, sound of a door slamming off stage.

HALLVÖR: *(Very dramatic.)* Me, petty? Me, petty? You can't tell the difference between petty and pretty. It's a lot more than just an "r".

She exits, after him, door slam again.

JAMIE: Ow. What was that about?

ALAYNA: I don't know, but no one better accuse me of being loud again.

RODERICK: I could see it.

ERICA: I could see it too.

BARISTA: See what?

ERICA: Hallvör and Torger. They were here!

ALAYNA: You're nuttier than I thought.

RODERICK: Nope, they were here.

ERICA: We have a gift, Roderick. A gift!

RODERICK: That we do.

ERICA starts to approach him as if this makes the difference.

I still don't want to go out with you.

ERICA: Oh, but you will. We're meant to be together. I'll be your Hallvör and you'll be my Torger. And we'll get it right. *(She gets close to RODERICK; finally she gets a chance to say the words she longs to say.)* I would do anything for you. Anything. *(She waits for him to give her something to do.)*

RODERICK: Well... uh... okay.

ERICA: Anything.

RODERICK: *(Thinks it over.)* Well, I have this report due. *(Gives her some heavy books.)* Here... can you take some notes out of chapter seventeen and get back to me? And... I have to bring this dish to a family pot luck dinner. I'm not a very good cook. Maybe you can make something for me. That's kinda what I'm looking for.

ERICA: Uh...

ALAYNA: *(Approaches RODERICK's table.)* If this isn't a case of be careful what you wish for...

RODERICK: Seeing that I'm not now, nor ever, going to date you, this is very altruistic on your part. *(To ALAYNA, with more than passing interest.)* And I still want to hear what you said. Maybe... tomorrow?

ERICA: *(Jealous!!!)* Alayna, don't you dare!

ALAYNA: *(To RODERICK.)* Yeah, rejecting the person who asks you out and then asking out her best friend right in front of her immediately thereafter is kind of a big bad idea.

RODERICK: She didn't ask me out. She asked me to fix her phone. Which I did. If you think that's a date, I'm sorry for your boyfriend.

ERICA: Fine!

ERICA storms away from him, winds up near JAMIE. ALAYNA follows to calm her down.

JAMIE: *(To ALAYNA.)* The more I think about it, the more I want to hear what you said too. It's been bugging me.

ALAYNA: I don't even remember. It wasn't that important.

JAMIE: It must have been; you blew a gasket over it a few minutes ago.

ALAYNA: *(Relishing her power.)* Next time you'll take the news while it's hot. Perhaps you'll be lucky and I'll have another conversation tomorrow. Perhaps. Erica, can we go? Too much drama in this place.

ERICA: In a minute. *(Goes to BARISTA.)* I want three large lattes to go. Plus that soda over there. Lots of sugar. Large. And two iced teas.

BARISTA: As soon as you text me your order I'll put it into action.

ERICA: I just told you what I wanted.

BARISTA: And I told you what I wanted. (*Holds up phone and pretends to text.*)

ERICA: I'm the customer.

BARISTA: Oh, like that gives you special privileges. What if people started to mail in orders?

ERICA: Give me what I want!

BARISTA: Give me what I want!!

JAMIE: Be quiet! Take her order already! You act like we have nowhere else to go to get coffee.

BARISTA: I'd say you don't. You keep coming here.

JAMIE: The wireless is perfect. The service is abysmal. We text you because we don't want to talk to you, not because you demand it.

BARISTA: Spoken word orders are contrary to our mission statement.

ERICA: Here, I have an order for you. (*Texts something.*)

BARISTA: (*Reads.*) You are a big, disgusting, unpleasant, difficult... uh... where is the order here?

ERICA: The word order. It's perfect. I'm going to the Starbucks. Sorry.

ALAYNA: Why do you want so much latte?

ERICA: Gandhi Family Chicken. For Roderick's pot luck.

They exit.

MADISON: (*Checks the time.*) Oh, I gotta go.

ADDISON: Me too. Hey it was great hanging out with you!

MADISON: Same time next week!

They exit, still looking into their phones, if desired, SOMEONE can run into a wall on her way out, distracted by the phone.

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

AT RISE: *When lights come up, HASBHAR, ODIN and ÚLFHILDR are onstage in the middle of an episode, but the coffee house is still in place; the customers in the coffee house are watching the episode. ERICA, ALAYNA, RODERICK, MADISON, ADDISON, JAMIE, and BARISTA are watching, plus any extras in the coffee house.*

ODIN: *(Enters, or we see he has just come in.)* Hasbhar, I bring a message from my brother, Torger.

HASBHAR: I'd rather you bring his head instead of his message.

ODIN: I would, but he still pretends to be using it on rare occasions.

HASBHAR: I'm sorry to hear that.

ODIN: Though he is not using it wisely. It's not about a head we must speak, but about a hand.

HASBHAR: A hand. Not nearly as interesting.

ODIN: Your sister's hand.

HASBHAR: Well, just like Torger's head, I believe my sister wishes to keep her hand.

ÚLFHILDR: *(Enters on HASBHAR's previous line.)* My hand is fine, dear brother. It is my heart that lies withered and untouched.

ODIN: Perhaps we can change that. Torger has lost his head enough to request your hand—in marriage.

ÚLFHILDR: Marriage to Torger? *(Thinks it over while EVERYONE waits for her response, then she overreacts.)* Yes! Yes! Yes! *(Looks at HASBHAR, who disapproves.)* I mean... are you kidding? Never! *(Whispers to ODIN.)* Yes!

HASBHAR: I thought Torger was in love with Hallvör.

ODIN: We all did. But you know love. Changes every day.

ÚLFHILDR: Torger wants to marry me!

HASBHAR: He is a traitor!

ÚLFHILDR: He has done you no wrong. It is simply a small feud that you've blown up into an excuse to ruin kingdoms.

HASBHAR: He's a traitor to Hallvör. And my sister will not marry a traitor.

ÚLFHILDR: Because he likes me better?

HASBHAR: Because I cannot be brother-in-law to a mortal enemy.

ÚLFHILDR: Then make peace, for my happiness. And yours. What happened anyway, did he win a game of checkers?

HASBHAR: It's not that simple, dear sister. (*Embarrassed.*) He double jumped me. Twice.

ODIN: (*Produces a paper and a quill pen.*) Torger has provided a marriage contract. All you need to do is sign.

ÚLFHILDR: I don't see why Hasbhar has to do anything. He doesn't own me.

HASBHAR: But I do own my kingdom, and you are part of that. So, I say...

ÚLFHILDR: Yes!

HASBHAR: No!

ÚLFHILDR: Yes!

HASBHAR: No!

ÚLFHILDR: Yes!

HASBHAR: No!

ÚLFHILDR: No!

HASBHAR: Yes!

ÚLFHILDR: Oldest trick in the book. Sign!

HASBHAR: You will live to regret this.

ÚLFHILDR: I doubt it, we're all vampires, so we're all sort of dead anyway.

They start to sign, enter HALLVÖR.

HALLVÖR: Úlfhildr! So now you are an accessory to your brother's betrayal! I dare you to sign this and look me in the eye.

ÚLFHILDR: That will be easy. Give me that quill.

HASBHAR: Here.

ÚLFHILDR: (*Tries to sign repeatedly.*) It's out of ink.

HASBHAR: (*Happy about that, takes the quill and the contract.*) The kingdom is out of ink. So... that means we can't sign (*Rips up the contract.*) and we remain at war.

HASBHAR exits, ÚLFHILDR follows him out, angry.

ODIN: *(Looks after them and is about to exit as well.)* Hallvör, you must give up Torger. For the sake of peace. And, because he doesn't love you anymore. *(Exit.)*

HALLVÖR: *(Calling after him.)* I'd rather see him dead. *(Realizes he already is, sort of.)* Well you know what I mean. *(Exit, in a hurry to see what happens with the marriage contract.)*

RODERICK: *(Talking to the "show" rather than anyone at the coffee house.)* Wow, you are all a bunch of nut cases.

ERICA: *(Doing the same.)* You jumped the shark, as well as the entire animal kingdom.

RODERICK: I wanted a love like Torger and Hallvör. I thought if I couldn't have it, I could live through them.

ERICA: I wanted a love like Hallvör and Torger. Since they can't do it, I'll have to create it myself. *(Calls RODERICK, who answers the phone at the next table.)*

RODERICK: Hello.

ERICA: Roderick!

RODERICK: *(Confused.)* What. Did you actually call me? *(To himself.)* Using a phone to talk on, whose stupid idea was that?

ERICA: *(Starts to talk, then just gets up and goes to his table.)* We have to go out. We have to create the love that the Viking vampires can't find. We have to prove that it can happen.

RODERICK: *(More interested in his gadgets than in ERICA, who is more and more incensed as he goes on.)* No we don't. You just have to work on my paper. I can't jeopardize my grade because you want a relationship. And the potluck. You do the work and I get the credit. That's love, sort of. So, the best way to make all this happen is... you start cooking.

ERICA: *(Angry at being spurned.)* Fine. One paper and one potluck. Coming right up. If I can't work in opposition to Hallvör, I'll just have to emulate her. Roderick, this is war.

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 4

AT RISE: *It's another episode of Imelda's Budget Kitchen. IMELDA is onstage with RANDI, and has four guests (plus extras if desired). JOANIE, BELINDA, BOB, and STEVE are her studio guests on hand to taste her cooking. ERICA and ALAYNA are watching from the couch, again with a roomful of unhealthy snacks. Consider making the studio audience decidedly unglamorous, as if they have sunk to the lowest part of their lives and are desperate for the fame that comes from having to taste the world's worst food—for example out of style clothes that don't fit, bad hair, glasses and makeup, etc. They can wear the expressions of bored-to-death students in class.*

IMELDA: *(Claps her hands happily.)* We've been marinating our chicken for three days. It smells absolutely scrumptious!

RANDI: *(Meekly and fearful.)* No it doesn't.

IMELDA: It's moist. Very very moist. And it's ready for a taste test.

RANDI: No it's not.

IMELDA: Yes it is.

RANDI: No, it's not.

IMELDA: Oh what a tight job market it is. I pity the poor soul who has to navigate it. Now... our studio audience has no idea what they're about to taste. Isn't that right?

BOB: No idea.

STEVE: No idea.

BELINDA: None whatsoever.

JOANIE: My mother told me not to accept food from strangers. And you're pretty strange.

RANDI: I would have to agree.

IMELDA: "There are no strangers here. Only friends we have not met." It's in the lyrics to a song from the Bollywood film *Uuf Kya Jadoo Mohabbat Hai*. *[Pronounce hai "hey"]* Shall we all sing a few bars?

RANDI: I'd rather taste the chicken.

STEVE: Me too. I'm hungry.

IMELDA: Everyone gets a little plate... and...

She lumps out spoonfuls of something that looks disgusting onto some plates and RANDI passes them around.

IMELDA: *(Continued.)* This should be great! We want to show the viewers at home how tasty this is.

STEVE: *(Picks some up with his fingers, take a bite and hates it.)* It's wonderful.

BOB: *(Does the same.)* Love it. I.... think.

BELINDA: I can't quite put my finger on that taste.

JOANIE: This is really good! What's in it? People will want to make it at home.

IMELDA: My home audience knows that this is the result of our special feature... "Cooking With Urine!"

BELINDA: That's why it tastes like cola.

BOB: Eeeewww!

STEVE: Yuk! I need some gum!

ERICA: Perfect! *(Talking to RODERICK even though he's not there.)* Roderick, you and I have a dinner date!

ALAYNA: Are you sure! Then... how will you ever...

ERICA: He rejected me. The least I can do is cook him dinner to show I'm a good sport.

ALAYNA: But you're not.

ERICA: I thought true love could happen, but if it can't work for the Viking vampires, it can't work for a poor lonely high school girl.

ALAYNA: You are neither poor or lonely.

ERICA: I can't get a date.

ALAYNA: Do you need a date? Who out there that is dating is happy? "Hey look at me, I'm dating someone, so I'm going to throw our love in your face until you throw up!" That's not love, that's braggadocio. Then next week it's "He dumped me! The world has to come to a complete and total stop and everyone has to wallow in my grief." The next week it's "I've met the love of my life—again!" *(She settles down.)* I'll wait till college when everyone is more mature.

ERICA: My sister's in college. You need to wait till you're fifty.

ALAYNA: My mother's fifty. Better make it seventy-five.

ERICA: Anyway, it's time for Roderick to have a home cooked meal.
(*Places a call.*) Yep, I'd like a small pizza and three two-liter bottles of...

ALAYNA: I think I need to go.

ERICA: You will after three two-liter bottles of cola.

ALAYNA: I mean now. Like leave. I don't want any part of this.

ERICA: Much too late for that. And our show is on!

They continue to watch as there is now a scene from Viking Vampires taking place. TORGER and ÚLFHILDR are getting married, ODIN is next to TORGER as the best man, and HASBHAR is nearby. Please resist the temptation to have anyone standing with their backs to the audience!

MINISTER: We are gathered here together to celebrate the civil union of Torger and Úlfhildr. Two powerful families from previously warring lands.

TORGER: Hasbhar, I must thank you for changing your mind... and for agreeing that I am a great match for your sister.

HASBHAR: Once you showed me your accounts, your lands and all I stood to gain by bringing you into my family, I realized she could do no better.

ODIN: (*Aside to TORGER.*) Torger, you own nothing.

TORGER: (*Aside to ODIN.*) By the time he realizes that, the wedding will be finalized.

HASBHAR: (*Acting happier than he really is.*) Already keeping secrets?

TORGER: Uh... it's nothing.

ODIN: I'm congratulating my brother on his good fortune.

ÚLFHILDR: It is a wonderful day indeed. My brother, Hasbhar, finally saw the light. Love can triumph over money.

HASBHAR: But love and money together... that is a double triumph!

TORGER: To think I could have passed this up. (*Aside to ODIN.*) Am I making the right call?

ODIN: (*Aside to TORGER.*) Not really. You know where your heart lies. And lies, my brother, are all you are made of. I'm not sure you're the same brother I once knew.



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