The Perfect Man

By Gina Wendkos
Holly, you've gotta open up.
I'm not so sure about this.
Come on open the door,
tough guy.
Okay.
You look awesome. Turn.
I cannot believe
that you talked me
into going to the dance.
I thought you said
you've been to like,
a million schools.
Schools, a million.
Dances, zero.
I'll get it.
Go.
It's a simple matter
of self-preservation.
I mean,
when you move around a lot...
you just don't let yourself
get attached.
Much less, make plans
to go to school dances.
I hate to break it to you,
but in exactly one week...
your streak is
officially going to end.
Maybe you're right.
Surprise!
Come in.
Jean.
We need to talk.
What?
Jean.
Why? How could you?
Jean.
Wait, don't you "Jean" me.
Just calm down.
Please, calm down.
We can be civilized
about this.
I'll be right back.
Civilized?
Just calm down.
No, why are you
telling me this?
Are you in love with her?
She meant nothing to me.
Well, technically,
they meant nothing to me.
"They"?
"They?"
Look on the bright side.
It's out of my system.
Have a nice day.
Explain this
to me again.
Patsy's back.
It's packing time.
Does this mean you're
not going to the dance?
We'll be gone
by the end of the week.
I'll stay in touch.
Bye.
I'll miss you.
Where are we going
this time?
There's a spot open
at Dolores' bakery.
You know, I've always
wanted to go there...
and you kids
will love Brooklyn.
It's time
for a new adventure and...
I'm sorry, honey.
I know you were finally
making some friends here.
It's no biggie.
There's friends everywhere.
Right?
Hey, all you bloggers.

**It's me:**
Well, here's a big shocker.
My mom got her heart broken.
Again.
Yep, we're starting off
on another big adventure.
That's my mom's word
for running away.
"T- I-C" Tic.
Trick.
Stick.
Come on,
little Miss Mary Sunshine.
Play the game.
Give us a word
with "tic" in it.
Fine.
Tragic.
Fantastic.
Pathetic.
Ecstatic.
Thank you.
Sarcastic.
Psychotic.
It's genetic.
By some miracle...
my mom only got
one speeding ticket
the whole way.
It's Miss Jean Hamilton.
Are you married?
He should write her a ticket
for reckless flirting.
Wow!
I will say one thing, though.
For those of you
who haven't done it yet...
put "Must see
New York skyline"
...on your list of things
to do before you die.
Oh, wow!
Oh, girls!
I bet it's full of
quaint details, pretty
moldings on the ceilings...
and old hardwood floors.
And charming little
rat droppings
in the breakfast nook.
How delightful.
Cut it out.
It's going to be perfect.
The sad thing is, I'm actually
getting good at this.
If all else fails,
I have a very
promising future...
as a professional mover.
Our new apartment has history
and character.
And exotic local wildlife.
My mom calls it home.
I call it the
Witness Relocation Program.
Mommy, look!
There it is.
I told you.
The same one
as in Wichita.
It still comes out
every night.
Even in hard times.
To remind us
that every day holds
the potential for beauty.
It's getting late,
and I'm wiped.
So, time to hit the sheets.
Even though I have no idea
which box they're in.
Keep reading
my on-line journal
for more days...
in the life
of a teenage gypsy.
I'll be here.
The same me,
just a different zip code.
No! That's it! I'm not going.
You go with him.
Sorry.
Check her out.
Hey, you.
Yeah, you.
How much your kicks
cost you?
What?
I paid $50 for mine.
You?
Free.
I pulled them
out of a garbage can
somewhere in Portland.
You win.
See you, freak.
Hey, you're new here?
Yeah, how'd you know?
Your skin.
My skin looks new?
It looks virgin.
No piercing, no tats.
See, us Brooklyn girls,
we lose our skin virginity
by fifth grade.
In fifth grade,
I was just learning
long division.
Attention, all students.
Check in with your
homeroom monitor each day...
That stinks.
You're going to
have to take
your yearbook photo...
with all the losers
who missed it
in the fall.
I don't do yearbook photos.
You have no choice.
It's like taxes
and death.
Mandatory pain.
If you don't
do it yourself...
they'll hunt you down
like an animal
and force you to smile.
Not if I'm not here anymore,
they won't.
I'm so glad you came.
Thanks.
Now, we keep the mixers
in the back.
But I got to warn you,
they're all older than God.
They don't really
mix very well...
they just kind of move
things around.
So I hope
your manual mixer's
in real good shape.
And watch out
for our no-good oven.
It's worse than that one
in Chapel Hill.
Off by a good 10 degrees.
Well, you know me.
I'm off by way more than that.
Yes, you are.
And this is Gloria.
Gloria, this is Jean...
the one I was
telling you about.
Really nice to meet you.
Likewise.
Do you know anything
about wilting rose petals?
The fondant's too soft.
You need to add
more cornstarch.
See, I told you she was good.
No wonder my rum cakes
always look so drunk.
Help me. I like you.
You never eat the cakes?
You made it on time?
Yeah, I'm here.
Attention, all students.
Talent show auditions
will take place...
this Friday evening
in the auditorium.
Come on out
and show us what you got.
That's my seat.
Is there assigned seating?
No, but...
Why don't you take
one of those?
I don't like sitting up front.
Me, neither.
Isn't it big?
It's gorgeous!
It's so heavy.
I need a crane
to lift my finger.
Well, baby,
if he's any good at all...
you'll never have to lift
a finger again.
I'm so glad
I listened to you.
He was a customer.
Dolores coached me
through the whole thing.
When to give him
an extra doughnut,
when to hold back.
You never told me that.
I told you.
You just didn't
want to listen.
So I've had a few
bad relationships.
Honey, if ex-boyfriends
were dollars...
you'd be loaded by now.
Now, baby,
what you gotta do is...
Mom, what you gotta do
is sign my enrollment form.
Girls, this is
my daughter, Holly.
Hi.
I'm going to get my purse.
Look at you!
All grown up.
Got your little speed bumps
and everything.
Welcome to Brooklyn, Holly.
See you girls tomorrow.
Don't embarrass her.
I've known her for so long.
So, tell me. How was it?
It was good.
Tell me more.
Excuse me, real quick,
I was just, I was over here.
I was just wondering,
did it hurt at all?
Did what hurt?
When you fell.
You know, from heaven.
'Cause I was just thinking
with a face like that...
you gotta be an angel, right?
Has that line
ever worked for you?
Well, I got you to laugh,
right? That's Step One.
I'm Lenny Horton.
I'm the bread manager.
I make, you know, the bread.
We got Italian bread,
French bread, bulky rolls...
different kinds
of kaiser rolls, pita bread.
You like pita bread?
I'm Jean.
This is
my daughter, Holly.
Hey, how you doing, Holly?
Great, and I think we gotta go
before you learn Step Two.
Lenny, tell me
you didn't use
the heaven line.
First days at new schools
always feel the same.
Like suddenly
you're on a new planet,
breathing a new atmosphere.
Can you scan this
into Match. Com?
Mom, I'm busy.
Doing what?
Do you have to
do this right away?
Can't you just
wait this time...
and see if you meet a guy
the normal way?
Have you seen these lines?
I am in a race against time.
Now get on in there
and scan this thing.
Every second counts.
Tick-tock, tick-tock.
If a student brings
a cell phone to school,
it will be confiscated...
regardless of how...
Excuse me.
I don't even know
why we're here.
It's not like they're
going to be my teachers
four months from now.
That's negative imaging,
Holly.
...are not permitted
in the school building.
Only winter hats
will be permitted between
the months of November...
and February
and kept in your lockers.
Now, I'd like to introduce
to you the Head of our
Guidance Department.
Dr. Charles Fitch.
All right, Fitchy!
Hey, Fitch!
Hey, Dr. Fitch!
Hey there, everyone.
Let me tell you how I run
the Guidance Department.
I have an open-door policy,
which means you can
stop by my office...
whenever you want.
I also have
an open-mind policy.
There are no stupid questions.
So please, if you have
something on your mind,
knock on my door.
Mom.
Or raise your hands.
Woman in the back.
Go ahead.
Hi.
Instead of once a year,
have you considered
a monthly forum where...
students and teachers
could exchange thoughts
in an effort to enhance...
communication and bridge gaps?
That's a...
That's a great comment,
Mrs...
Miss Hamilton.
I also wondered if you'd
thought of monthly mixers
for single parents.
Not that I don't want to meet
married parents as well.
I would.
It's just that sometimes
we single parents...
have different concerns
than married ones.
Different priorities.
If you know what I mean.
And by priorities I mean:
I need to meet a good man.
In that case,
where do I sign up?
Okay, well,
this was interesting.
Where were we here?
So you're just not
going to talk to me
for the rest of your life?
Come on, Holly.
Every unmarried parent there
appreciated the suggestion.
Did it ever occur to you
that the point
of the meeting...
wasn't for the needs
of the single parent?
That the point
of the meeting was maybe
for, I don't know...
the kids?
Well, sure.
I was just thinking...
About you!
Because you're always
thinking about you.
She's doing it again.
Only this time,
I can't smile and play along.
Because the truth is
I'm tired...
of bubble-wrap
and change of address cards,
of figuring out new towns...
and finding new friends.
It's just not fun anymore.
It's just not.
You know what
the entire student body...
is talking about this morning?
The Krispy Kreme truck
that got in a wreck on Eighth Avenue.
There's donuts everywhere.
It's a total free-for-all.
Between the excitement and the sugar buzz,
everyone's pretty much... forgotten everything that happened

before 8:
It could have been worse.
Don't worry, it will be.
It always starts the same.
I mean, she starts out hopeful, and then when the perfect man...
doesn't come around in two weeks,
she gets desperate... and hooks up with some loser.
Some guy who's not even good enough to mop her floors.
And then, when it doesn't work out, because it never works out...
we pack up and move again, and there's nothing I can do about it.
I can't even run away because that's what she does.
I thought you said you didn't mind all the moving around.
I didn't. I mean, I don't. I just got here.
The River Bistro. What are we doing here?
I can't even afford to pee in a place like this.
Much less actually eat here. Relax,
it's under control.
My uncle's the owner.
Him?
You've got to be kidding.
No, him.
No, you didn't do that, did you?
Well, how long did you keep her waiting?
What? An hour?
Of course she's mad.
What? Hold on.
This is Holly.
Hi.
Hi, Holly.
Nice to meet you.
Why wouldn't she be mad?
Well, there's only one thing you can do:
And you can't go cheap, either. Nope.
A dozen, long-stemmed.
He knows about females.
He knows more about females than I know about females.
In my opinion, roses always work, always.
He doesn't actually believe that, does he?
But who am I to know?
Call me tomorrow and let me know how it worked out. Bye.
Yes, I do believe that.
Don't you?
That flowers always work?
Yeah.
Not if the guy's a loser.
The flowers aren't going to change anything.
Flowers are just flowers, right?
Wow, your friend's
so cynical.
Sounds like
she's not into romance.
You know what?
This is for you.
Why?
Because a flower like this
is perfect.
And giving a woman
a dozen of them,
it's like saying...
there is such a thing
as perfect.
And it's out there.
Don't give up.
You'll find it.
Really?
A yellow rose says
all of that?
Actually a yellow rose
is for your sick grandma.
For a woman, a red rose.
But if you really want
to knock her socks off,
you give her an orchid.
Why? What do orchids say?
You ever seen an orchid?
How it floats in the water,
so delicate and beautiful?
When a woman gets an orchid...
well, she feels like...
she's floating on a cloud
of infinite possibility.
I swear I'll pay you back.
I still don't get how flowers
from you will fix things.
Well, they're not flowers,
they're orchids.
And they're not from me.
They're from her perfect man.
Then let him pay.
I would, if he existed.
I'm lost.
Do you remember
what your uncle said?  
An orchid will make  
my mom feel special.  
Which will make her happy.  
And not so desperate.  
Which would make me happy,  
and then everybody wins.  
Holly?  
What?  
Are you sure  
this is a good idea?  
I'm sure.  
A few flowers  
ever hurt anyone.  
"Annoying mammal. "  
Six letters.  

Hey, Mom.  
Badger.  
Boy, am I thirsty.  
Was that the buzzer?  
Five letters for  
"In line to get, maybe. "  
Mom, wasn't that  
the buzzer?  
The Times thinks  
they're so clever.  
I've got to go take  
a shower right now.  
Hey.  
Excuse me.  
Hello, that's my flower.  
No, it's not, it's mine.  
Is your name Jean?  
No, that's my girlfriend.  
Okay, what's the card say?  
It says,  
"To my dearest girlfriend...  
"on her birthday,  
I love you so... "  
Give me my flower back.  
Could you be  
any more crazy?  
I was just  
bringing them to you.
Wow! How beautiful.
Who are those for?
Me.
Isn't that weird,
someone left me flowers?
Who? What's the card say?
Let's see.
"How many women can look
like a goddess
in a bakery uniform?
"You are a vision."
Who sent them?
"A Secret Admirer."
Who could it be?
Well, obviously,
someone that saw you
at the shop.
Yeah, but how would
he know my name?
Well, you wear a nametag,
don't you?
Or where I live?
Duh? Google.
Or that I love orchids?
Maybe he followed you home.
It's very strange.
No, it's probably scary.
Mom, look, this is
the most romantic thing...
that a man has
ever done for you.
Quit questioning it
and enjoy it.
You are absolutely right.
Why are you wearing jeans
under your robe?
How would you like
to have bruises
all over your body?
Your uncle is a genius.
It worked?
She was singing happy songs!
She never sings happy songs.
Yeah, well,
neither do I, but don't send me flowers, okay? I like it that way.
Hey.
Hey, check it out.
Do I got juice or what?
Look at Jean.
A little attention from me and she's all poofed up like a peacock.
It's the guy peacock who poofs up.
You know what I'm saying. It's an animal thing.
She's like a lioness letting the lion know she's ready.
It's the guy lion who poofs up, too.
People, don't forget to read Chapters 42 and 43.
There will be a test on Friday.
Peter, can I see you a minute, please?
Hurry up!
What's that?
Nothing.
Is that supposed to be me?
No, it's somebody else.
The face. This looks exactly like my face.
No, it isn't.
Okay, the face a little bit.
But that woman is on a horse.
You're not on a horse. That's a completely different person.
It's pretty good.
My dad sponsored comic book conventions when I was a kid.
He'd take me.
If you hang around long enough, you pick it up.
So you hung out with your dad a lot?
No. Actually, after he and my mom split up...
that's pretty much the only thing we did together.
But, hey, at least I learned how to draw, right?
Divorce as a career builder.
That's nice.
So, hey, have you ever been?
Divorced? Not yet.
No, to a comic convention.
No, not that, either.
Well, there's one coming up.
Six weeks from now.
Westside Convention Center.
It sounds geeky, but it's kind of fun.
Yeah. I'm not much of a planner, you know.
Has anyone been asking for me?
Like who?
I don't know.
Anyone?
No.
Hey, Jean.
This has your name written all over it.
Dolores, you're crazy.
No! She's right.
You're way too good for this place.
This contest is
for professionals.
I mean, I'm basically
a salesperson.
Explain this to me.
How come when it's a man
you're looking at...
you're blind to his flaws...
but when it's you,
flaws is all you see?
Hmm?
Mmm.
Is it you?
Yeah, it's me, babe.
Hi.
Hi.
I love orchids. Thank you.
This is a rose.
Which I also love.
So are you free
Saturday night?
What did you have in mind?
Nothing short of
rocking your world, babe.
Well, my world doesn't
rock that easy.
That's right,
make him work for it,
girlfriend.
That's on account
of you've never had...
your world rocked
by Lenny "The World-Rocker"
Horton.
Okay.
Let's say I check
my social calendar...
and it turns out I am free
Saturday night.
Where are we going?
Only to hear the
greatest American band...
ever to pipe out
a power ballad.
Styx concert.
Something I've never done.
You're a Styx newbie?
These are really hot tickets.
I must really like you.
Okay, so Saturday night.
Saturday.
Saturday.
What? Stop!
It's impossible that
Lenny is your secret admirer.
Nothing's impossible.
No. Some things are.
Like a man
that sends you an orchid,
the most romantic flower...
and then turns around
and sends you a yellow rose.
That's the kind of flower...
that someone sends
their sick grandmother
in the hospital.
I'll get it.
Mom, please,
can you just listen to me?
I read that note, okay?
A man like that...
a poet, he doesn't take
a woman to a Styx concert.
Well, it's different.
So is a peanut butter
and glue sandwich.
That doesn't mean
you eat it.
Holly, I like this guy.
He seems to like me.
Would it kill you
to give him a chance?
Princess Zoe?
Yes.
You can tell
I'm a princess from all
my beautiful necklaces.
N- E-C-K-L-A-C-E-S.
Okay. Yeah, that makes sense.
Hi, Lenny.
Wow, Jean. Whoa!
Great outfit.
Damn, where did you get that?
Who's-a-hottie. Com?
All right. So, you got everything you need?
Yeah. Let me just put this on.
Okay.

Hey, Holly, your mom said that Saturday night is movie night.
So, what do you say on me... you take Princess Zoe here, you guys go see Bambi?
I'm not actually sure that Bambi is still in theaters.
Which is such a shame because I'm just dying to take...
my 7-year-old little sister to a movie where the mom gets...
killed by the evil male hunter.
I want to go see that.
Thank you, Lenny.
That's very nice of you.
Thank you, Lenny.
That's very nice of you.
Be good.

Wow! It's great.
Yeah, it's a 1980 Pontiac Trans Am two-door hardtop.
Got the original paint, the original exhaust.
I re-built the tranny, tweaked the mill.
And as a matter of fact, I got...
some new passenger mats
right here,  
so would you mind...  
just taking your shoes off?  
Before you get in?  
I should have bought a pair  
of those hospital booties.  
Wait, do you have any?  
Let me guess.  
The sick-grandma argument  
didn't fly?  
She barely even heard it.  
She was too busy  
picturing herself  
as Mrs. Lenny Hair Band.  
He's got to be derailed.  
By what?  
I don't know.  
Listen, I'm going to drop Zoe  
off at Dolores'...  
and I'll meet you  
at the Bistro in 20.  
Ice cream is going to help.  
No, but your uncle will.  
He knew exactly what to do  
about the orchids...  
and he'll know  
what to do next.  
Ciao.  
Lenny, I don't think  
that's Styx.  
No, they're Kilroy,  
they're a tribute band  
to Styx.  
Yeah, the singer's not  
as good as the original.  
But if you close your eyes,  
you can't even  
tell the difference.  
Yeah, you can tell.  
We have a question.  
Mel, put those  
two tables together.  
Kid, can it wait?  
I'm a little busy.
No, it's really important.
It's for
our school assignment.
Due tomorrow.
We need to know
what the perfect man
would do...
as a follow-up
to the orchid.
Well, can't we talk
about it tomorrow?
Wait, what could be
more important
than the perfect man?
Duh, perfect shoes.
Lance, please.
Don't "Lance, please" me.
Take a break
and help these girls out.
You try the new Shiraz...
sit at your table
and let good old Lance
handle the floor.
All right. Five minutes.
Don't play with your hair
at the bar, Lance.
So, what are you
writing a school paper on,
dating or something?
Yeah.
Well, what class
would that be?
English.
I'm looking
at romantic heroes,
like in literature.
You know...
Romeo.
Right, or Heathcliff.
Taking guys like that...
and comparing them
to their real-life
counterparts.
But you don't believe
in romance.
I'm stretching.
Well, girls,
I'm really not
an authority on this.
Hot!
What makes today's
Perfect man perfect?
What is it that he says
or does that makes him
a woman's perfect man?
Well, that depends.
Every woman's different.
But yet, orchids work
for all of them?
Well, as a gesture, they do.
I mean, but that's just a...
That's a beginning,
that's...
He's got to have
a deeper connection than that.
He's got to know
what makes her tick.
Which is why,
if you don't know
who the woman is...
it's rather a moot point.
She listens to Patsy Cline
when she's sad.
Hypothetically.
Say she does.
Then what?
Patsy Cline's her sad music?
Wait a minute.
Now.
This is very happy music.
Keep it. But you know what?
Even if he does
cheer her up...
he can't be a guy
that's afraid of tears.
It's like he wrote
it about us.
What if she's into word games?
Scrabble, you know, stuff like that?
Oh, yeah. Good stuff.
A little wit,
a little wordplay.
I like that.
And if she's been dumped a lot? Then what?
A lot?
That's a tough one.
I guess the perfect guy would be...
He'd be someone who could...
He could be anywhere in the world...
but he chooses
to be with her because...
life is better with her by his side.
What do you think?
Did I pass the test?
Very nice to meet you.
Stop it!
Big problem.
Hey, cutie.
Hi, Amber.
Hey, okay. Designer dress, bias cut, wedding chic.
Where's the problem?
It's a small fortune.
No, that's a lie.
It's a large fortune.
It's your day. Do it.
Really?
Yeah.
I adore you.
Okay, what about the cake?
You know what, girls?
I got to go to work. Really.
I was thinking of something layers,
chocolate, strawberry.
Amber, let's talk about it tomorrow.
Lance, step away
from the purse.
She's gorgeous.
Yeah.
Together they look
like the winners of
a genetic lottery. Come on.
Here, let me get this
for you. You got it?
Thanks. Well, Lenny, I...
Whoops, we're wet. Watch it.
I don't even know
what to say. It's been...
Now, Jean,
I had a fantastic time.
I got to tell you,
I really, you know.
I really, I could get
used to this.
You're a good kisser.
It was a really good time.
All right. So,
I'll see you at work, okay?
My shoes.
I'm sorry.
How was the '80s flashback?
You scared me!
His stupid car is louder
than a jumbo jet.
He probably woke up
the whole entire neighborhood.
Holly, for me, would you
give Lenny a chance?
Mom, for me,
would you go slow this time?
You don't know
who else is out there.
No, but here's what I do know:
Tonight I had
a pretty good time.
"Oh what a tangled web
we weave
"When first
we practice to deceive!"
Who wants to talk about what that means? He needs to write her a letter. Who? The perfect man. Adam, care to elucidate? Yeah, you. What do you think Sir Walter Scott was talking about? You're going to forge a letter? I have to. If I don't... my mom's going to be walking down the aisle... to the sound of Mr. Roboto. Well, I think, it's that lies get complicated. Because? Usually if you tell a lie, you have to tell another lie. Except she's totally going to recognize my handwriting. She won't recognize mine. True. And each lie turns into another lie... and another lie, and it makes things complicated. Until, eventually, you're left with this big mess of lies... that you can't find your way out of. We'll do it right after school. Perfect. Perfect. All right. I'll buy that. Alana, what does "tangled web" symbolize? What if she's into word games? Scrabble, you know, stuff like that?
Oh, yeah. Good stuff.
A little wit,
a little wordplay.
I like that.
I know what I'm doing
borders on delusional...
but what can I say?
Desperate times call
for desperate measures.
Trust me. If you met Lenny...
you'd lick the envelope
and lend me a stamp.
Hi.
Where did her troops go?
She needed some quiet time...
to think things out.
What kind of things?
Well, you know,
like what her next step is.
You know,
whether she's going to form...
a powerful alliance
with a prince or go it alone.
Which is she gonna choose?
I think she's going to go
with the prince.
Really?
Oh, yeah.
He's kind of a great guy,
you know.
He's handsome.
He's very nice.
And the thing with the...
Jousting.
Jousting. Yes.
You should see him joust.
He is like Joe Jouster.
Any time that anybody
ever wants to hang out
with him...
he's like "Guys,
I can't. I've gotta
practice my jousting."
Do you want to sit?
No.
I made plans
with someone. So...
I thought you weren't
much of a planner.
Yeah. Right.
Holly? Do you think
we're going to stay here?
I don't know. Why?
There's a big spelling bee
coming up with
all the other schools.
My teacher entered me.
I bet you're
going to win that. You're the
best speller I know.
Yeah. Only, it's not
for a couple of months.
Well, you never know,
we might still be here.
I hope so.
I've never entered anything.
Hi, girls.
Mommy, are you sick?
What?
You don't look normal.
I got a letter.
What kind of letter?
It's a love letter.
What does it say?
One second.
Hey, you! Give me that!
"My dearest Jean.
"The letters J-E-A-N
used to spell out just
another word for denim."
This guy is great, Mom.
"But, since I found you,
I hear those
four-letter words...
"and all I think about is
another four-letter-word:
"love. L-O-V-E."
Love?
Yeah.
He loves you?
That's what he said.
Zoe, he's trying
to be romantic.
"Being near you
is like standing
on a triple word score."
He plays Scrabble.
"Everything matters
three times as much.
"The sun shines three times
as bright...
"and I am three times
as happy."
What's this?
He gave you a present?
I like him now.
Smart, witty, romantic.
You can't still think
this guy is Lenny, right?
It is kind of hard to picture
Lenny playing Scrabble.
Come on, Mom, let's dance.
You go, Mom!
Mom.
No!
Come on.
I can't believe it.
And he sent you
a present, too?
Yeah, a CD of a band
I'd never heard of,
but I loved.
It's like he knows me better
than I know myself.
So why is he hiding?
He's not hiding.
He's just...
Just what?
Excuse me? Can you help me?
Dinner's ready.
There must be something wrong
with him.
Who?
Mr. Wonderful.
What? No,
there's nothing wrong
with him. He's perfect.
Then why all the secrecy?
Why doesn't he just come on
over, show his face,
and say hello?
Like a normal person.
Listen to yourself.
The man wants to be
the least bit romantic...
and all of sudden you think
he's not normal.
How do I know if he is?
And if he is,
what does he look like?
Is he tall, is he short?
Does he have
blond, curly hair,
straight, black hair, what?
I bet he has a big,
fat wart on his nose.
I bet that he's really,
really handsome.
And how would you know?
He writes like
he's really handsome.
Honey, have you seen
pictures of Shakespeare?
Bald, skinny.
Does that
even really matter?
Yes. Because you can't have
a relationship with a man...
you've never laid eyes on.
Honey, I've got a party of 50
coming in a half an hour.
It will only
take a second.
Oh, You can take my picture.
Just be sure
to get my good side.
Over here, Brad Pitt.
Over here, David Spade,
not so cute.
No, I'm just swamped,
I'm sorry.
Hey, Uncle Ben,
what's that stuff you put
on top of your spinach salad?
Parmesan what?
Cheese.
Ben. It's a nice name.
Uncomplicated.
Dependable. Ben.
And it's way better
than Lenny. And he's way cuter
than Lenny.
Don't you be mean
about Lenny.
He's a good egg.
Just not the egg for me.
I like this egg.
I want this egg
to be my boyfriend.
When's he coming over?
As soon as he gets back.
Well, where did he go?
He's opening up
a new restaurant
in China.
And the phone lines
there are impossible,
evidently.
So as soon as he gets back,
he's going to call.
Cool. What else
does the letter say?
That's private.
Excuse me.
China.
How are we ever going
to get a stamp from China?
We won't.
Now that he's traveling,
he asked her to send...
her e-mail address
to his e-mail address.
He has
an e-mail address?
Brooklyn Boy,
this new account
that I'm setting up.
Well, at least
it's consistent, since
everyone lies in cyberspace.
But we can't use
the computer at my house
in case my mom finds it.
I'd offer ours,
except my brother's on
buying those
little Yu-Gi-Oh cards on eBay.
Who else?
It's kind of messy.
It's kind of dark.
Oh, yeah.
Should be on.
Thank you so much
for letting me do this.
You must think that I'm crazy,
but at least my mom's happy,
you know.
It's such a change...
'cause she usually spends
most of her time depressed
or with idiots.
Maybe I should try it.
My mom only smiles
once a month
when the alimony check comes.
And if she's been dumped
a lot? Then what?
A lot?
That's a tough one.
I guess the perfect guy
would be...
He could be anywhere
in the world...
to be with her because...
life is better with her
by his side.
Dear Passionate Baker...
I'm spending my days
with very serious
business people...
and I know
I should be listening
to every word they say...
But all I keep thinking is...
what am I doing
all the way in China?
Unbelievable. Listen to this.
Come on. Let's go.
It's from Ben.
"I planned this restaurant
before I'd ever laid eyes
on you.
"If I had to do it over...
"I'd buy the building
right next to yours
and open there."
He'd rather be with me.
Why don't you write him back?
Good.
Excuse me.
Dear Brooklyn Boy...
if your food's half as good
as your letters...
nothing would make me happier
than having your restaurant
on my block.
But I'd hate to deprive
the nation of China...
of that kind of satisfaction.
So open your restaurant
there first.
Dear Passionate Baker...
as long as
I'm in the kitchen cooking...
it doesn't matter where I am.
It's a real specific kind
of satisfaction, isn't it...
cooking for people?
I'm only a baker,
but I put as much creativity
and passion...
into my cakes
as a painter puts on a canvas.
Granted, when all's said
and done,
all I've made is a cake.
But then again, you can't eat
the Mona Lisa.
Waiting, the Passionate Baker.
Dear Passionate Baker...
creativity and passion, huh?
I'm starting to figure out
what makes you tick.
And as for the Mona Lisa...
after a few thousand years...
people are going to get tired
of her smile.
But a good fudge brownie
is eternal.
Dear Brooklyn Boy...
I'm modest about some things,
but not this.
I make the best fudge brownies
on the planet.
Well, it just so happens...
I make the best
homemade ice cream.
Ice cream and brownies.
Now that's a good combo.
That's all I'm looking for.
My own good combo.
Someone I can bring out
the best in...
and someone that brings out
the best in me.
How you doing?
Surprise, surprise.
Lenny, there's something
I need to tell you.
We don't need words.
I know
what you're going to say.
And I feel the exact same way.
No, this is important
for me to say.
I met someone...
"And his name is Lenny...
"and he's rocking my world."
I know.
And I know you're scared.
I'm scared, too.
But I also know
if the world turned
upside down...
baby, I know you'd always
be around my mind.
The best of times.
These are "the best of times."
I met someone else.
What?
I mean,
I didn't meet someone,
but I might.
But the perfect man
is standing right here,
next to my cuddles.
Lenny, I'm sorry.
I really am.
You are a great guy.
I'm sorry this wasn't...
"the best of times." 
Hey.
I'm in the middle of writing
my mom an e-mail
and she just logged on.
IM her.
Should I?
Yeah, It will make Ben
seem more real, won't it?
Okay.
Fancy running into you here.
What time is it there?
Late.
I thought it would be morning.
It is. Late morning.
What are you doing?
Just thinking.
About what?
You'd be bored.
Try me.
If I stop replying,
you'll know I fell asleep.
Well, I have kids.
Have I mentioned that?
No. That's great.
Two daughters.
Seven and sixteen.
They're lucky to have you
as a mom.
You are the only person
on earth who would say that.
And it's just because
you haven't met me.
I've made
so many mistakes.
Everyone makes mistakes.
Yeah, well,
I make whoppers,
over and over...
and my kids are the ones
who suffer.
It's not fair.
This wasn't the plan,
you know.
I had a big future in mind
when I was younger.
I was going to be
a famous baker.
Like Julia Child,
but with desserts.
I was going to go
to a fancy cooking school.
Write cookbooks.
Make people fall in love
with baking again.
I had
all the applications, too.
I was in the middle
of filling them out
when I learned I was pregnant.  
I thought  
it was good news.  
A baby fit into  
my happily-ever-after plan  
just fine.  
But it didn't fit  
into the guy's.  
Or maybe it was me  
that didn't fit.  
Whichever. I was on my own.  
So you had your kid instead  
of fulfilling your dream.  
I guess I did.  
If you had to do it all over,  
would you have gone  
to school instead?  
Life definitely  
would have been easier  
if I'd done that.  
Gotten my act together first.  
Had kids later.  
But those kids...  
wouldn't be Holly  
and Zoe.  
And life  
without Holly and Zoe,  
I can't even imagine it.  
It's just no life at all.  
Special message...  
to all you bloggers out there  
being raised by single moms.  
Give the old lady a break.  
She's doing the best she can.  
Yeah.  
Okay, one cherry cake.  
Yeah,  
that would be great.  
$12.99. Thanks.  
Thank you. Bye.  
Can I help you?  
Attention, shoppers.  
Need a little pick-me-up?  
Why don't you head on over
to our coffee corner...
and pick yourself up a
half-caf caramel macchiato?
But remember,
coffee can be hot.
It can have an intensity
like you've never felt before.
Searing deep into your flesh.
Is he joking?
Your tender, vulnerable...
so-easily-hurt flesh.
So be sure to ask
for a protective sleeve
when you pick up your coffee.
Maybe ask for another one
to slip over your heart.
Thank you.
And I bought
these butterfly clips
so that you can use it...
and clip the braids back.
But don't pull.
Okay.
It hurts.
Okay, I'm taking Zoe
to her play date, then
I'm going to Gloria's shower.
Don't burn the place down.
Wow. Look at you.
Where they having it,
at the Ritz?
Close to it.
Some whoop-de-do spot
named the River Bistro.
No!
Ow!
Isn't that way over
everybody's budget?
Yeah, but Gloria's
cousin's wife works
with their dairy guy...
and he got her a deal
on the party room.
I heard the food's
really bad there. Everyone who eats there gets really sick. Vomiting for days. I'll take my chances. Let's go, sweetie. Where is he? I don't know. Maybe the restaurant. Maybe home. Okay, you go to the restaurant. I'm going to go to his place. If I see him, I'll stall him. Now, what's his address? "To begin again in Egypt." Seven letters. Oh, The Times thinks they're so clever. Hello? Hey, thank God you're here. Who is this? It's Holly. Who? Amy's friend, Holly. Oh, Holly. Yeah, well, Amy's not here. I know. I came to see you, actually. It's something really important. Okay. I'll buzz you in. The door's open up here. Hi. Hey, straight ahead. Hey. Hi. Wow! This is the most amazing kitchen... I've ever seen in my whole entire life. Really?
Yeah.
Thanks.
I know someone that would just kill for this kitchen. I bet Amber likes it a lot, huh?
Amber?
Well, she's got her finger on everything I do... but not this kitchen.
How about you have a seat and I'll get you a soda?
Is that okay?
Okay.
You do The Times crossword in pen?
Yeah. Is that a bad thing?
How do you feel about the moon?
Excuse me?
Do you think that it's a little piece of magic... that comes out every night, even when times get hard... to remind you that every day holds potential for beauty?
What has Amy told you about me?
Nothing.
She just said that you were really smart. And I'm new to town. It's a new school. I don't really have a dad to turn to for advice, either. So thought I'd ask you. Well, all right. I guess I can try to help. I'm not really a, you know... What did you want to know?
It's nothing.
It's just, I'm going through my teenage years.
And that's confusing.
I'm confused about who I am and what my purpose is in life.
What college I should go to.
If I should even go to college.
I'm trying to resist peer pressure to do all sorts of things...
that I know that I shouldn't do, but some of them I kind of want to do.
If you know what I mean.
I'm considering getting my nose pierced and my belly button... and nine other parts of my body.
But my mom said she would totally kill me if I did that...
so now I'm just thinking about getting a tattoo on my back.
But it wouldn't be really considered my back... because it would be so low that you wouldn't be able to see it.
Unless I wore my jeans low enough.
I'm really confused.
Where?
Yeah?
Ben.
Yeah?
We got big problems down here.
Huge, massive.
What?
The pilot light on that big thing that cooks the food? It's out again. No, it can't be broken. I just bought it two months ago. Ben, I am telling you, the only gas I'm smelling is coming from Pablo. Okay. Calm down. I'm coming right now. Goodbye. Holly, I got a problem at the restaurant, so I have to go. No, you can't! Why not? I mean, can I come? Yeah, why not? Come on. I've got to go to the bathroom really bad. Yeah, well, go. There's the bathroom there, but hurry up. Right there through that door. I love this. You have got to be kidding me. This isn't going to cover anything. That's exactly the point. Houston, we have a problem. What kind? The very, very bad kind. He's on his way to the restaurant now. Oh, my God! What do we do? Create a distraction. A really, really big one. I'll see you there. Bye. Do we have to take a cab?
I hate cabs.
Maybe we should walk.
What are you, crazy?
We're going to
the River Bistro.
I get carsick.
Boys!
Come on,
get your free beer.
Free beer!
Bring on the beer.
Yeah, bring on the Beer.
Look, it's time
for your break.
Bye-bye.
Hi! How are you?
Good.
Some sort of Village People
convention in town?
We saw the sign outside
and we want the free beer.
Free beer?
Why would I give you...
I'd give you free beer.
You look absolutely parched.
Thanks a lot, my friend.
I think I'm going to need
another mimosa...
to open the rest
of these gifts.
I'll get the waiter.
Lance!
Hi, Mom.
What are you doing here?
I just, I miss you.
Free...
Lance!
What is this?
What, nothing.
Is this your idea?
No.
No, I would never do...
Well, actually
I would do that,
but I didn't do it.
Why didn't I?
The sign says free beer.
We want our free beer. Yeah.
J-E-T-S! Jets!
What's that?
Look! What a neat gift!
I feel like a queen.
Fellows, we're not
a sports bar, but one
free beer on the house...
but that's it.
Free beer!
You're a Jets fan, right?
Oh my God, hello!
I live for West Side Story.
Pablo, what happened?
I don't know.
Now, these are
brand new stoves.
What about the pizza oven?
Try it.
Okay, I am getting
the waiter.
Does anyone want anything
besides mimosas?
That's working. It's got
to be the gas line, right?
Champagne.
White wine.
What happened?
It's not lighting?
What are you doing?
Sorry.
Mom! I'm going to
get the waiter.
Why don't you sit here
and enjoy your lunch?
Pablo, keep working on it.
I got to call.
Waiter! Excuse me.
I'm calling
from the River Bistro.
We have a problem here.
I need someone right away.  
This isn't working.  
I know, what do we do?  
Think.  
Go stall.  
Put this on here.  
It's so much more fun  
if you accessorize with color.  
Lance.  
Please, please forgive me.  
I don't know.  
I got to make sure that...  
Front door, everyone.  
Floor's wet.  
Be careful, don't run.  
Don't panic.  
Front door. Don't panic.  
Everybody out the front door.  
Where's Holly? Holly?  
We may be  
in big trouble,  
but that rocked!  
I swear the CIA  
should hire us.  
Nobody saw anybody.  
I mean, are we great,  
or what?  
Your uncle does  
crossword puzzles in pen.  
What?  
And his kitchen is,  
it's perfect.  
So?  
You know even though  
he didn't say it out loud...  
I know that he knows that  
the moon isn't just a rock.  
What are you  
talking about?  
There is such a thing  
as the perfect man.  
And I know exactly  
who it is for my mom.  
Who?
Your Uncle Ben.
What?
And now because
of my stupid scheme,
they can never meet.
I'm so beyond lost.
You were right.
I should have never bought
that orchid.
The whole thing was
just a huge mistake.
Hey.
I need to ask you
a huge favor.
Hi to you, too.
I need you to break up
with my mom for me.
When did I start
dating her?
Not as you.
As the perfect man,
Ben.
No way.
Come on. Please.
Just call her at 7:00,
put on a deep voice
and tell her it's over.
What's my reason?
Men never have reasons.
They just split.
Why can't you just
break up over e-mail?
Because that's too cold.
Besides, I want her
to hear his voice.
Yeah, but it wouldn't be
his voice.
It would be mine,
what with him
not existing and all.
Come on, you know
what I mean.
Please, Adam.
If I tell her
that this was all fake, she'll be crushed.
And she'll never forgive me.
But if he just dumps her, that she's used to.
Hello?
There's no way I'm doing this.
May I ask who's calling?
Holly, can we just talk about it?
Sure.
Mom, it's for you.
No, no, it's not funny.
Hello.
Hi!
This is Ben calling.
Ben?
As in "Ben" Ben?
I don't know.
How many Bens do you know?
None.
I mean, one.
I know you.
Wow.
How is China?
China.
It's very Chinese.
Lots of Chinese people.
Chinese food.
You're funny.
And you're calling me...
from halfway around the world.
Yes, because there's something that I wanted to tell...
It's really good to finally hear your voice.
Wait. Are you crying?
No.
God, yes.
Yes, I am, but only because
I'm happy.
You make me happy.
Know what I mean?
I guess.
Yeah, I do.
God, my whole life...
I mean, everything's been
so messed up...
and I just started getting
to know you,
and I don't know, I just...
I started feeling just...
Clearer.
Yes!
Yes. You know what I mean.
Yeah, I do.
It's like
all of the bad stuff
that you went through...
that you hated
along the way...
the people
who disappointed you...
the things that didn't go
the way you wanted.
Suddenly you feel grateful
to them because
they're the things...
that got you to here.
To this.
Yes. Exactly.
I guess that's just what's
it like when you, you know...
No.
What?
Really like someone.
So, you like me?
Yeah. Yeah.
I do. I mean I might even...
You might even what?
Give me a ride, horsey!
No. Not now, Zoe.
I might even...
Holly!
Love you.
Hello?
Hello?
Hey!
What were you thinking?
That isn't even close
to what I asked you to do.
I got distracted.
By what? A lobotomy?
Because short of that,
short of you telling me
that somebody came...
and actually removed
your brain,
I can't even begin to...
By you.
I was distracted by you.
Hey, Mom?
Yeah?
Do you remember
when we first got here...
and you were feeling
so lousy?
What about it?
Well, the thing is...
I just hated seeing you
like that. And...
Will you shut up?
No way.
I'm sorry.
Rock out, buddy!
What are you...
Encore! Sweet!
Very good.
Hey, take it easy.
Marry me?
Marry him!
Oh, God, please tell me
that you didn't say yes.
Please tell me
that you said no.
I said I'd think about it.
What? What is there
to think about?
Is there even a jewel in there?
Lenny is not your soul mate.
Ben is.
Ben is in China. Maybe.
I mean, who really knows?
The only thing I know for sure about Ben is he is a beautiful idea.
But you can't grow old with a beautiful idea.
Why are you so desperate?
Oh, Holly, it is so easy for you to judge.
You haven't had to go through life alone with kids.
Nobody to turn to for help.
I'm not complaining.
I made my bed.
But I have been slugging it out alone for a heck of a long time.
You two girls are the best thing that's ever happened to me.
In the blink of an eye, you'll be grown and gone.
And Lenny's a sweet guy.
Maybe he'll be different than the others.
I don't want to wind up alone.
Do not unlock that door till I get back.
Hello.
Hi, I'm calling for Miss Jean Hamilton.
Yes, this is Jean.
This is Ben's secretary. Ben's coming back into New York... and he would like to see you.
Really?
How's tomorrow afternoon...
under the Brooklyn Bridge sound?

**Excellent. 4:**
He'll see you then.
Where's Ben?
I need to talk to him.
It's an emergency.
Oh, Too late, little lady.
He's already gone.
Where?
The almighty wedding.
Wedding? What wedding?
Well, Amber and...
Amber?
Amber?
I know.
He didn't really want to
do it...
but she's hard to say no to.
Where is it?
Liberty Grand Hotel.
Thanks.
So not a party without me.
Whatever.
Sorry, guys.
We are gathered here
in the sight of God...
and in the face
of this company...
to join together this man
and this woman...
If anyone present...
knows a reason
why these two should not be
lawfully wedded...
speak now
or forever hold your peace.
He can't marry her!
What are you doing?
You can't come in here.
He's got to marry my mom.
You might not even know it
yet, but you will once
you read these.
Holly.
It's pages and pages of proof
that you guys
are soul mates...
and right now
she's waiting to meet you
under the Brooklyn Bridge.
And when you do,
you'll know that you guys
are perfect for each other.
You guys both
do the crosswords in pen...
and know what a kitchen
should feel like
and what the moon really is.
And without even meeting her,
you picked out
her favorite song.
And it's made her happier
than she's ever been. And...
You know what,
you guys?
I'm looking for
the Silverman wedding.
Sorry. Carry on.
My bad.
David, I'm so sorry.
Son, are you all right?
Holly!
I'm sorry.
I made a mistake, okay?
Well, that's just
the understatement
of the year.
What are you thinking?
I thought you were
the one marrying Amber.
Me?
Lance said...
No! Amber's one
of my dearest friends.
I'm catering her wedding.
What's left of it.
What are you doing?
Read these.
No, that's not an answer.
Yes, it is.
If you'd just read
these e-mails, you'll see.
There's someone
that you need to meet.
Hi, Mom.
What are you doing here?
I didn't want you
to think
you'd been stood up.
He's not coming.
What?
How do you know?
How did you even know
I was here?
I know, because...
Because?
Because I made him up.
What?
The flowers and the letters
and the e-mails
and everything.
The phone call?
A friend of mine
did that.
But it wasn't all made up.
There was a man. There is.
Most of what I wrote
came from him.
So there's a man out there
laughing at me, too?
No! He doesn't know.
He thought...
How could you be
so cruel?
I wasn't trying to be cruel.
I was trying
to make you happy.
Well, you have a lot
to learn about happiness.
You haven't exactly
showed me a road map, Mom.
Oh, so this is my fault.
I brought this humiliation
on myself.
What? Because we moved
around a little bit?
A little?
Whatever. A lot.
You never seemed to mind.
Yes, I did. You just never
heard any of it
if it wasn't about you.
That is not true.
I hear everything
you say to me.
You hear,
but you don't listen.
You never listen
to anything I want.
All right, fine.
What do you want?
I want a mom that sees
in herself what Zoe and I
see every day.
That's talented
and pretty and funny...
and cooks great
and dances great...
and doesn't need a man
to be those things.
Okay, so maybe
the perfect man wasn't real.
But the perfect you is.
S-I-L-E-N-C-E.
Hi.
Hi.
I'm sorry that I didn't
call you back.
I've been really busy.
I drew you something.
"Princess Holly."
Well, a side of her anyway.
I realized
she doesn't need an army
to protect her.
You don't let anybody close
enough to hurt you
in the first place.
Wait. Holly!
I want to move.
What?
I hate this place.
I'm over it,
and I want to move now.
We've moved more times
for you
than I can even count.
And just this once,
I want to move for me.
Hi.
Hi, I'm Adam.
Holly's friend.
Is she home?
No, she's out
getting packing boxes.
Why?
We're moving.
You want her to call?
No.
Thank you.
Could you give this to her?
Sure.
And tell her she only saw
one side of the drawing.
I was inspired.
I miss you.
Why did you bug out
on me?
Newsflash.
Everyone's scared.
That's no reason
to run away.
It's what my mom does.
And you want to end up
like your mom?
Some role model.
I heard once that...
love is friendship on fire. 
That's how I feel 
about you. 
Do you really have 
to go? 
Holly, guess what? 
I get to be in a spelling bee. 
C-O-O-L. 
What are you doing? 
Unpacking. 
Yeah, but why? 
I thought that we all agreed 
that it was time 
for a new adventure. 
This is our new adventure. 
Staying is our new adventure. 
What? 
Why can't you ever do 
anything that I want? 
I want to be alone. 
Nobody wants to be alone. 
I do. 
Okay, I'm through 
with these people 
and I want new ones. 
Unfortunately, honey pie, 
new people are 
only new for a day. 
After that, 
they're just people. 
Who will excite you, 
disappoint you... 
scare you a little bit. 
And, boy, I know how tempting 
it is to run away 
when that happens. 
It's good for avoiding things. 
But the problem is 
you end up... 
avoiding yourself. 
Avoiding people you love. 
You end up avoiding life. 
So, I've decided 
to start setting an example
for you girls.
I'm going to try
showing you what
sticking it out looks like.
Really get to know people.
And let people
get to know us.
I don't promise
to be any good at it,
but I will try.
Because I want you and Zoe
to be better at this
than I am.
I want you to learn
how to let people in.
He's a sweet boy. I think
it would be worth it.
Turn it over.
Everything always has
two sides.
You want a bigger ring?
Combustible.
C-O-M-B...
U-S-T...
I-B-L-E.
Combustible.
That is correct.
J!
E!
T!
S!
Jets! Jets! Jets!
Looks like
we're going to
the World Series.
Ladies and gentlemen,
five minutes.
Five minutes.
We'll be commencing
in five minutes.
First place goes
to Number 73,
Jean Hamilton.
You did it, Mommy!
Where? The second one?
Yeah, that's Mom.
Hi, may I help you?
Yeah, I heard that
you can find...
the best fudge brownies
in the world here.
We try.
I'll take this.
Ben.
Hi.
On the house.
No, I have to pay you
somehow.
How about dinner?
I don't even know you.
Well, I don't know
about that.
Thank you.
That is very sweet.
But I don't think so.
Are you dating someone?
Actually, no.
For the first time
in my life, I'm not.
And, and I think
I should stay this way...
until I get my feet
back on the ground.
I see. Yeah.
It's nothing personal.
No, of course not.
You know, I should
probably take
a dating moratorium, too.
I recommend it.
Yeah, clean-out-the-closet
sort of thing.
It's a good idea.
You know,
get my head together and...
Exactly.
So, pick you up Saturday
at 8:
Perfect.
It looks like Mom was right.
Staying turned out to be...
the greatest adventure of all.
And let me tell you,
it has made me do
some crazy things.
Like plan ahead
and paint my room
and hang pictures on the wall.
I mean, I used a nail
and everything.
Hi, come on in.
Sorry I'm late.
There was this
Krispy Kreme truck that
overturned on Eighth Avenue.
Thank you.
Here, let me deal
with that.
It goes...
Relax. What is this?
Like, your first dance
or something?
Can you believe it?
The Teenage Gypsy
has finally settled down.
Now I don't just
have a homepage.
I have a home.
SkyFury