

Little White Lights

By John Muggleton

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CAST

**JENN
AVERY
CHLOE
PAM
MAN**

A small simple cafe, 3 tables, PAM, sits at one. AVERY, sits at the other and one has no one sitting at it, and no chairs. Decorating the cafe are strings of little white lights, woven through the set. It is raining outside.

A women, JENN, enters shaking her jacket from the rain. She looks around the room. She closes her eyes and breaths in the fresh smell of coffee. She looks around the room.

JENN: Coffee. The smell of perfection. *(Beat.)* Relationships, parents, jobs, friends, whatever... very few of those things are rarely, if ever, perfect. You think they are at first, but you realize over time...they aren't. *(Beat.)* But the coffee shop... It is actually perfect. It doesn't pretend to be anything else other than what it is. They are everywhere, you get exactly what you want, everything is exactly where you need it to be. A coffee shop will never disappoint you. And the smell....they all smell exactly how you want them to smell. The smell that greets you. You can describe something you see or a sound you hear...but a smell? You can't describe a smell. A coffee shop smells like coffee. I'm four years old with my dad after kinder ballet class. Hot chocolate with whip cream. It was a treat...a treat *if* I listened to Miss Abbey and didn't wander out of the room. A hot chocolate with whipped cream. Every time I walk into a coffee shop I think of those times. Every time I walk into a coffee shop I scan the room thinking he might just be sitting there...waiting with my hot chocolate. He never is of course but I still look. That's what I do. It used to make me sad, now it comforts me, just like the coffee. It's a good team. Grief and coffee. *(Looking around)* People in their own little world. Some read, some work, some wait. Everything slows down. *(looks at AVERY)* She's waiting for someone. She probably spent all morning trying to look like she didn't care what she looked like...*(AVERY checks her phone)* yes check your phone. I love the off the shoulder look *(Looks around, sees the only available table, but no chairs)* Perfect.

(JENN realizes there is no chair at the other table, she notices AVERY's table has three chairs, two that no one is using. JENN approaches AVERY.)

JENN: *(Touching the available chair)* May I?

AVERY: *(looking up)* hmm?

JENN: Are you using this chair?

AVERY: *(Smiles)* Oh...uh...No

JENN: Thanks

(AVERY watches JENN as she slides the chair to the open table, JENN smiles back somewhat awkwardly. JENN takes out a book and opens it to where she left off.)

(Long Pause.)

AVERY: My sister is an actor

JENN: *(Looking up, somewhat confused)* I'm sorry?

AVERY: My sister is an actor

(Beat.)

JENN: Oh...great *(Back to her book)*

AVERY: That was well done

JENN: I'm sorry?

AVERY: Show coming up?

JENN: I think you may —

AVERY: I could never do that

JENN: Do what?

AVERY: *(Motions to where Jenn was standing)* That

(Beat.)

JENN: *(Looking around)* What did I do?

AVERY: Are you rehearsing for a play?

JENN: What? No. *(confused)* What?

AVERY: An audition? My sister goes to them all —

JENN: — I'm not an actor. What are you saying I did?

AVERY: You walked in, looked around..then walked over and faced that wall and did a monologue. That's what they are called right? A monologue?

JENN: *(Really confused)* I dunno...what? A monologue?

AVERY: Yeah, I mean it was a little...well...weird...that was about me right?

(Beat.)

JENN: Do you mean...when I asked you about the chair? Because all I said was —

AVERY: — before you asked for the chair you walked in, looked around...then you walked over there and started talking

JENN: Why would I stand there talking?

AVERY: You were doing a monologue

JENN: I didn't do a monologue

AVERY: Well —

JENN: — was I talking to someone?

AVERY: No one

(JENN stares at AVERY for a moment, she laughs.)

JENN: Very funny...okay, you've had your laugh, well done...do I know you? Wait...Are you a friend of Karen's because she —

AVERY: — I don't know who the...hell... Karen is and I'm not trying to be funny. Forget it

JENN: You're fucked up, I just want to read my —

AVERY: — You talked about coffee...a lot...how awesome a coffee shop is, stuff like that...taking ballet as a kid, your dad told you something and you would get a hot chocolate. You said something snarky about what I was wearing... about taking a long time to look like I just threw something on, Which I didn't, I actually did just throw this on. I couldn't hear all of it...uhm..oh, you commented on me checking my phone for a text... basically you were saying you are obsessed with coffee shops. Okay? Have a nice day

(Pause as it sinks in.)

JENN: How did you....

AVERY: You don't think you said those things?

JENN: Not out-loud

AVERY: If you aren't rehearsing for something, then it was kinda weird

JENN: But...I was....How long did I stand there?

AVERY: I dunno...three minutes maybe

JENN: THREE MINUTES??

AVERY: Yeah, around three minutes, maybe two

JENN: Jesus!

AVERY: I thought you were on your phone, but then when you turned around...I noticed you weren't. So I thought maybe it was performance art or something

JENN: *(thinking)* three minutes

AVERY: Yeah I mean it might have been less

JENN: Three minutes is a long time!

AVERY: It was probably like..two minutes

JENN: I thought about my dad for a second

AVERY: Oh it was longer than a second

JENN: Oh my God...you heard everything?

AVERY: Most of it...you mumbled a bit

JENN: I mumbled?

AVERY: Yeah

JENN: I don't fucking think so

AVERY: You did

JENN: I don't think so

AVERY: You did

JENN: I don't mumble, I'm a god damn —

AVERY: — Okay, you dropped your voice a lot

JENN: A lot?

AVERY: A little...for effect I think. look, It doesn't matter

JENN: Well...fuck!

AVERY: Okay, it was weird but whatever. I was just curious

JENN: — It's just...

AVERY: What?

JENN: I don't know. Never mind

(Beat.)

AVERY: Like I said, it's no big deal. Sorry.

JENN: Okay, let's just...okay...

(JENN turns away to mind her own business)

AVERY: *(Turning to the audience)* It's the pain...well...pain isn't really the word, pain you can fix. Pop a pill. It's really a lonely ache. You think you have everything planned. You've rehearsed, practiced and then...in a flash everything you were going to do, it's gone. Everything you wanted to say...it's gone. You just sit..look around at your life, sort of like looking around a room...oh there's all my dreams, I thought I lost those... It's all in the rear view mirror, put the foot down and don't look back, just put your foot down and —

JENN: — Whoah whoah whoah

AVERY: What?

JENN: What are you doing?

AVERY: Nothing

JENN: You were talking

AVERY: No I wasn't

JENN: Yeah...you were

AVERY: I was just....oh what is this payback? Please don't even —

JENN: *(repeating her words)* — Painful isn't really the word, everything was planned. You've rehearsed, practiced and then...everything was gone, you wanted to scream and drive fast

(Beat.)

AVERY: Oh my God

JENN: And run away

AVERY: What?

JENN: *(Dramatically)* Oh there's my dreams, I thought I lost those. Oh look everything is in the rear view mirror

AVERY: *(Thinking, recalling)* Put the foot down and don't look back

JENN: Something like that

AVERY: No, that's what it was

JENN: Pretty dramatic

AVERY: What is going on?

JENN: At least now I don't feel so stupid

AVERY: What the hell? I didn't make fun of your clothes...did I?

JENN: Why would you make fun of my clothes?

AVERY: Well Punky Brewster I don't know

(JENN gets up and sits at AVERY's table)

JENN: Okay I'm sorry about the comment about your clothing

AVERY: I could have but I didn't

JENN: Okay, it's a really nice sweater

AVERY: Thanks

JENN: It's just too big

AVERY: It's supposed to be big

JENN: Very Jennifer Grey

AVERY: ANYWAY, what I'm saying is...this is really weird right?

JENN: Very...you heard me thinking about my —

AVERY: — not thinking

JENN: What?

AVERY: No, we are not thinking. You were *talking* not *thinking*

JENN: This is fucked up. (*Beat.*) Think of something and see if I can hear it

AVERY: That's stupid

JENN: Just do it

(With a doubtful sigh, AVERY stares at JENN for a long pause.)

AVERY: Okay what was I thinking?

JENN: You were wondering how many people could fit into your sweater

AVERY: Oh my God!

JENN: Really???

AVERY: No

JENN: Jackass. See?

AVERY: Hmmm

JENN: We were just talking out loud

AVERY: And...talking out loud is normal

JENN: Of course

AVERY: Right?

JENN: Yep. I mean...not normally in public...but whatever. Fuck it right?

AVERY: Exactly

JENN: There we go...I talk out loud at home all the time

AVERY: Right? I mean, it's not usually as well structured but yeah

JENN: Yeah, It's like Charlie

AVERY: yeah...wait, what?

JENN: I know, lame..but —

AVERY: No, what about Charlie?

JENN: What?

AVERY: You said “It's like Charlie”

JENN: Yeah

AVERY: What about Charlie? How do you —

(A woman enters, CHLOE, modern stylish business attire. She walks in and walks directly downstage.)

CHLOE: — Imposter syndrome is a thing. My therapist said so. Sitting in my first meeting of my first *real* job, but now instead of *making* the sandwich platter, I was *eating* from the sandwich platter. Okay I mean yeah I also ordered it, but I volunteered. So there I was, sitting at the big table waiting for someone to say “Excuse me..but this is for important people...but they didn't, in fact they wanted my *input* and my *feedback*.”

JENN: Oh for...

CHLOE: So, shitty jobs long done, now I was sitting at the big table...dialoging...

AVERY: Oh God I hate the word

CHLOE: — And when did people start using “so” at the beginning of every sentence?

JENN: Dialoguing?

AVERY: Yeah

JENN: Shall I?

AVERY: Please before she says Wheelhouse

JENN: (*Louder*) Excuse me!

(*CHLOE looks at JENN.*)

CHLOE: (*politely and calmly*) Yes?

JENN: You...uh...

CHLOE: Yes?

AVERY: We can hear you

CHLOE: I'm sorry?

JENN: You're being a little loud

CHLOE: Loud?

JENN: yes...sorry, but you —

CHLOE: Well...I'll be sure to stir very quietly. (*mutters under her breath*) weirdo

JENN: Excuse me?

AVERY: Just let it go

JENN: No, I'm not going to let it go. I'm trying to help her and she calls me a weirdo

AVERY: Coming from the coffee queen, I mean...

JENN: Oh shut up

CHLOE: Excuse me, did you say....you were trying to help me?

JENN: Yes

CHLOE: With?

AVERY: We could hear you talking

(*Beat.*)

CHLOE: What the hell are you talking about?

(AVERY gives JENN the “go ahead” look.)

JENN: *(a bit of a mocking voice)* Oh I love sandwich platters and no one told me to leave, they wanted my feedback and input...so so so...oh look at me I'm at the *big table!*

(Beat.)

CHLOE: What the fuck?

AVERY: Did you have to be mean about it?

JENN: *(Sarcastic)* Dialoging?

AVERY: Fair

CHLOE: I walked over there to the..station thingy...picked up the milk —

JENN: You stopped before the station thingy, stood where you are and talked about meetings.
(To AVERY) So is that what I looked like?

AVERY: Pretty much

JENN: Ugh

(CHLOE approaches their table.)

CHLOE: I was talking our loud?

JENN: Yeah, same thing happen to me if it makes you feel any better

AVERY: Yeah, she came in talking too. She made fun of my sweater

CHLOE: Because it's too big?

AVERY: *(Sharply)* Not the point!

CHLOE: Wait, she did the same thing?

AVERY: Yeah

JENN: I didn't know I was doing it

CHLOE: So you heard me

JENN: We both heard you

JENN: And she heard me

AVERY: And then she heard me

(PAM who has been sitting silently suddenly laughs)

CHLOE: Something funny?

PAM: I can hear all of you

(They all turn to PAM)

CHLOE: You heard me?

(PAM nods)

JENN: You heard me?

PAM: Yes..it was wonderfully entertaining

(PAM gives another little laugh and goes back to her book. CHLOE turns back to AVERY and JENN)

CHLOE: *(Under her breath)* okaaaaaay then

JENN: Look it doesn't matter, you did it, she did it, I did it...*(motioning to Pam)* she'll probably pop up any minute and start yapping about being old or something

PAM: *(Without looking up from her book)* I can still hear you

JENN: YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO! *(JENN back to the others)* No big deal, so we all talked out loud

CHLOE: Yeah but in public like that? I've never done that before. At home yeah

JENN: That's what we were just saying!

AVERY: Who doesn't right?

CHLOE: All the time!

JENN: Yeah, I bet everyone does it

CHLOE: Alright...okay then...well... I'll leave you to it.

(CHLOE goes to sit at the only table available, which was the one that JENN sat at before she got up to join AVERY)

AVERY: Charlie

JENN: What?

AVERY: Why did you mention Charlie?

CHLOE: Charlie? (Beat.) Wait, did I just do it again?

AVERY: What? No...I wasn't talking to you

AVERY: *(To Jenn)* How do you know about Charlie?

JENN: How do I know about Charlie? I talk to him

AVERY: You talk to him??

JENN: Oh, yeah...Charlie says things like *(French accent)* *Where is my dinner?*

CHLOE: *(Turning)* Did you just say Charlie?

JENN: Yeah Charlie my cat

AVERY: What???

CHLOE: Woah just a second! You have a cat named Charlie??

JENN: *(Confused)* Yes

CHLOE: And you speak *for* it, you give it a French accent?

JENN: Yeah? Okay so I'm lame or whatever, let's not get all judge —

AVERY: — So do I

JENN: What?

CHLOE: Me too...well I did have a cat named Charlie, I called her that because..

AVERY/JENN: The patch under her nose

CHLOE: (Slowly) yeah....

(Beat.)

AVERY: So...all three of us have a cat named Charlie

CHLOE: Had. And I used to...

AVERY:... Give him a French accent

CHLOE: (*setting in*) yeah

JENN: that's weird....isn't that weird?

CHLOE: (*Sarcastic*) Do ya think?

JENN: They do it in cartoons and stuff though right? Who's that French cat Pepe something—

CHLOE: — That was a skunk

JENN: Oh right...well then that is weird

(*Pause while they all think*)

CHLOE: Well the name too

AVERY: Yeah

CHLOE: It's not common...for a cat...it's not like buttons or Felix

JENN: or Smudge

AVERY: Smudge?

(*PAM Gets up and walking over*)

PAM: I'm sorry I couldn't help but overhear

JENN: That's going around

(*The wait for PAM to speak.*)

CHLOE: So...

(*Beat.*)

PAM: Why are you here?

JENN: Me specifically or why are all of us here?

PAM: All of you, why are you here?

CHLOE: Uhmm...well...not that its really any of your —

AVERY: — I'm meeting someone

PAM: *(Interested)* Who?

AVERY: Uhmm...I...

PAM: It's a simple question

(Beat.)

JENN: It's a personal question actually

(PAM looks at CHLOE)

PAM: And you?

CHLOE: Me?

PAM: Yes, what is your purpose?

CHLOE: Okay well, not that its any of your business, but I'm prepping for a meeting

PAM: A meeting?

CHLOE: Yes

AVERY: *(Pipes up from the other table)* Big meeting!

PAM: Ah...with whom?

CHLOE: Uhmm...how is that any of your —

AVERY: *(To Jenn under her breath)* Awkwaaaaard

PAM: *(Turns to Avery)* Oh I can assure you...awkward is later

JENN: Excuse me?

PAM: *(Smiling)* I enjoy you two

CHLOE: You enjoy us?

PAM: Oh yes, enjoy the banter

AVERY: Okay well this has become sufficiently weird enough

JENN: You know what? I think it's time to banter my way out

PAM: Not yet *(PAM talks at the same time as whoever else is speaking.)*

PAM / AVERY: I mean you just walk over to us and —

PAM / JENN: What the —

PAM / AVERY: —fuck?

PAM: I don't know why you swear so much

PAM / AVERY: Okay this is truly.....what the hell is....

PAM / JENN: Going on?

PAM: Told you!

PAM/AVERY: Woah

JENN: Is this really —

PAM: — Happening? Yes *(Everyone is stunned.)*

PAM: Or would you like every other time someone speaks?

CHLOE: What does that mean?

PAM / JENN: How did you do that — stop that!

AVERY: What the hell???

PAM / JENN: How are you doing that???

AVERY: Just —

PAM/JENN: Wait..no one speak!!!

JENN: Shit I just did

PAM / AVERY: — STOP IT!

PAM: Which one?

PAM/AVERY: FUCK OFF!

(Everyone sits in stunned silence.)

PAM: See now you made me swear!

(PAM walks back to her table slowly, she is deep in thought. The others stand in stunned silence, frazzled.)

AVERY: I don't know about you, but I'm getting the hell out of here (Pointing at PAM) **JENN:** Good call, there's a great little coffee —

(JENN and AVERY start collecting their things.)

CHLOE: — No uh uh, no you're not leaving me here with her

PAM: Oh you're all leaving?

AVERY: *(Quietly)* Just ignore her

PAM: Oh you can't ignore me I'm afraid

JENN: *(Whispering)* Holy fuuuuuck she's crazy

PAM: *(Laughing)* Where are you going to go?

AVERY: Anywhere other than here

PAM: Where?

AVERY: I..

(PAM slowly walks to them, they are standing and ready to leave.)

PAM: Where are you going to go?

CHLOE: What's your problem?

PAM: I'm just asking

PAM: if I were to leave here I would go pick up a sandwich at Delfino's, then walk along Fifth doing some window shopping until I reach my home, at which point I would go in, change into my pj's and spend the rest of the day binge watching a really bad show...and loving every minute of it.

CHLOE: How wonderful for you

JENN: Wait was she...was she doing...

AVERY: What we were doing?

CHLOE: I don't care what the hell she was doing

PAM: No, I was talking to you. I was giving an example of where I would go after asking Avery where she was going to go. I need to know where you're going!

CHLOE: Who are you?

PAM: It doesn't matter who I am

JENN: This is bullshit, I'm outta here

AVERY: Wait, how do you know my name?

JENN: She heard me say it

AVERY: When?

JENN: When I sat at the table

AVERY: No. We didn't introduce ourselves

JENN: We didn't?

AVERY: No

(Beat.)

JENN: That's weird *(Looking at the others)* isn't it?

AVERY: Does it really matter right now?

JENN: It's just odd not to introduce —

CHLOE: —Really? You're concerned about fucking social etiquette right now?

AVERY: You're not going to give her shit for her swearing

PAM: I'm not sure why Chloe swears as much as she does

CHLOE: Keep this up and you're going to hear a lot worse

PAM: I'm not sure why, but I'll find out

AVERY: She did it again. How does she know your name? We don't even know your name! *(To Jenn)* Right?

JENN: Yeah, I don't —

CHLOE: How the fu...how do you know my name???

JENN: How do you know so much about us?

(PAM looks at all three of them.)

CHLOE: Answer the question!!

AVERY: I swear if you don't give us an —

PAM: Do you think you're ready?

CHLOE: Ready?

JENN: Ready for what?

PAM: For this (*outstretches her arms*) WELCOME TO THE LOBSTER TRAP LADIES!!!

(*Beat.*)

AVERY: See, I didn't expect that

CHLOE: Holy shit

JENN: Lobster trap..what the...

PAM: ...and we've got fun and games

(*Beat.*)

JENN: Let's go....now!

AVERY: Yeah, time to go

CHLOE: Just wait a minute!

AVERY: Listen, if you want to stay here, that's up to you. I'm not, so —

PAM/AVERY: — Ciao

JENN: I knew she was going to do something like that

CHLOE: You see???

JENN: I knew she would do something weird, do that thing she does again

AVERY: (*getting emotional*) I don't care, I just want to go home

CHLOE: Avery

AVERY: What?!

CHLOE: How does she know what we are going to say???

AVERY: (*packing up her things*) I don't care

CHLOE: Aren't you the least bit curious???. I mean Jesus Christ, she spoke at the same time, she knows what we were going to say!!

JENN: Avery...Karen's right

CHLOE: Chloe

JENN: Chloe. Wait...didn't it used to be Karen?

CHLOE: What are you talking about?

JENN: *(Sitting down slowly)* I don't know

PAM: Yes you do. Oops...momma needs a refill?

(They all just stare at her)

JENN: I —

CHLOE: — Jenn

JENN: Never mind

PAM: Then I'll be right back and

(PAM goes back to her table and sits, smiling and watching. CHLOE is deep in thought.)

AVERY: Momma needs a refill...seriously what the fuck?

JENN: Why did I think your name is Karen?

CHLOE: *(To Jenn)* I don't know..Karen..Chloe...close enough *(To Avery)* So where are you going?

AVERY: Home!

CHLOE: Home?

AVERY: Yes

CHLOE: Where is that?

JENN: Oh God don't you start

(Beat.)

CHLOE: Do you want to know where I live?

AVERY: *(Almost out the door)* I don't really care

CHLOE: I live in...no...*(Beat.)* ...at the same time

AVERY: What?

CHLOE: We need to say where we live at the same time

JENN: Oh God don't you start

AVERY: Why?

CHLOE: Trust me

(The others look at each other, AVERY comes back to the table)

JENN: Okay

AVERY: This is ridiculous

CHLOE: *(To Jenn)* On three...one...two...

JENN: Wait!

CHLOE: What???

JENN: Like, the city or street or what?

AVERY: Street...just the street name

CHLOE: All three of us...same time...ready?

AVERY: Oh for fuck sakes I live on Hemlo....thirty nine Hemlo

(JENN gives out a little yelp.)

CHLOE: You live at....thirty nine Hemlo?

(CHLOE sits at her table slowly.)

CHLOE: *(In shock)* What city?

JENN: Really? You think there is a better likelihood that we both live at the same address, but in different cities?

CHLOE: Are you saying you both live at thirty Nine Hemlo?

AVERY: Not both...

CHLOE: All three??

JENN: This is just a coincidence...right? All of us.... from...I mean what else would it be? Right?

CHLOE: We're not getting it

AVERY: *(Fed up)* What are we not getting!?!

CHLOE: — What we need to do —

JENN: We?

AVERY: — Please don't tell me what to do

CHLOE: I'm in crises management, Okay? I know how —

AVERY: Crises management, what does that even mean?

(PAM enters, walks to her table, speaking as she does)

PAM: *(Laughing out loud)* Oh God how cliché!

CHLOE: *(Ignoring Pam)* It means I get to tell people like you, in certain stressful situations, not to freak out and listen —

AVERY: — I will freak out when and how I want OK miss big-shot business fucking sandwich platter —

CHLOE: —Big-shot? I never said I was a big shot!

AVERY: Big meeting?

CHLOE: What, so I'm not allowed to say I have a big meeting?

PAM: Okay, maybe this has gone far enough

(They all turn to PAM.)

JENN: What?

PAM: Your big meeting today?

CHLOE: What about it?

PAM: Who was it with?

(Beat.)

CHLOE: It was with.....it's a company of....

PAM: Yes? A company of?

(Pause as CHLOE struggles to think.)

CHLOE: I don't know...Jesus just like where I live. I just don't know

(PAM walks up some little white lights.)

JENN: Pam...

AVERY: Jenn? You know her name

JENN: I do...yeah I guess I do

PAM: There haven't been any more lights lately...I guess that's it

CHLOE: That's what?

PAM: Time to decide

AVERY: Where are we?

PAM: A coffee shop

AVERY: I was hoping for more

PAM: More?

JENN: You need to tell us now

PAM: I suppose I do...okay...well you see, you are in a coffee shop, a coffee shop that doesn't seem to have any staff or any other people in it...Just the three of you

CHLOE: I don't think I like where this is going

PAM: I, however, I'm at home...ironically enough with a coffee... sitting in front of my laptop trying to meet a deadline

AVERY: A deadline?

PAM: Yes, for a book

CHLOE: What are you saying?

PAM: My fourth book actually

JENN: How fucking wonderful for you, now —

AVERY: — This can't be happening..she's crazy right? This is crazy

PAM: You see I am torn between writing about a woman who buys a coffee shop and has conversations with her deceased father each night, after she closes

JENN: *(softly)* Wha —

PAM: — Or a story of a woman, a lonely woman who keeps getting her heart broken, not being able to find friends...love...and then one morning...

AVERY: No...not like that....enough, just stop

PAM: *(To Chloe)* but you...you are a tough one. You're new

CHLOE: New?

PAM: Yes you just walked into my life today, at first I wanted to call you —

JENN: — Karen

PAM: Yes. After a dear friend, but I changed it later...it needed to be tougher. So Chloe, the tough talking business woman who climbs her way to the top and finds the top lonely, so she opens a coffee shop with her partner...

JENN: Her partner.....Me

PAM: Bingo *(To Jenn)* I've always liked you and wanted a happy ending for you **CHLOE:** Oh my God, its funny because when I saw you..I felt like I knew you **JENN:** Me too, I even said it to Avery when you walked in

(Beat.)

AVERY: Oh COME ON! You're not seriously listening to this shit are you??? *(looking at them for an answer)* She's...

JENN: She's what?

AVERY: She's tricking us

PAM: How on earth would I be "*tricking*" you?

AVERY: I don't know. You looked online, found shit about us

PAM: I never use social media...hate it...the world is not meant for everyone to voice an opinion

AVERY: Well however the fuck you did, syou found out stuff about us

CHLOE: Avery...

AVERY: *(To Chloe)* She found stuff about us...personal stuff...and she's using it on us **CHLOE:** Why would she do that?

PAM: Found stuff out about you? No, I gave you just enough for me to use

CHLOE: That's why we only know what city we're from, nothing else

PAM: That comes later *(Walking to Avery)* Right now you're just three of my little white lights

JENN: Little white lights?

PAM: Yes. Every one of those lights is a an idea. Just ideas, some good some bad. I park them here until I need them. *(looks at the lights in the set)* I know every one of them

CHLOE: *(quietly)* My God

PAM: Until I find my story. *(Turns to Jenn)* And I think I have. I don't need the other lights now

(The little white lights turn off)

JENN: This can't be real

(CHLOE moves to stand next to JENN)

CHLOE: What you said about me...about us

JENN: *(Looking at Chloe)* But she —

CHLOE: *(To Pam)* Can you make it work?

PAM: Yes. It will take a bit of time ti connect the dots and flush out the story, but I think it will work. I can see it happening

CHLOE: Oh my God I can feel it

JENN: Me too, I never thought I would...ever be

PAM: It works

AVERY: Hello??? When you're finished with Ellen and Portia....what about me?

PAM: I don't know, I mean *(laughs)* your story is so depressing

AVERY: You made it depressing!

PAM: People love depressing for some reason

AVERY: I don't!

PAM: Oh I know, but it's just too sad. I was in a weird frame of mind *(laughs)*

AVERY: So....so change it!!

PAM: Maybe you can be a customer or something

AVERY: A customer?

PAM: Or something

AVERY: I want to be more than a fucking customer!

(AVERY looks at the other two)

AVERY: I'm just going to be a customer and you two find love and buy this place and sit around giggling at each other all day?

CHLOE: I'm not a giggler

JENN: Oh my God, neither am I!

AVERY: I'm gonna throw up

JENN: So there you go, we won't be sitting around giggling, I mean....we'll have work to do

AVERY: Yes you'll be very busy with your imaginary work I'm sure

JENN: Yeah how does that work?

CHLOE: We will have to spruce the place up a bit

JENN: Maybe get some cups...

CHLOE: and coffee

JENN: *(Agreeing)* And coffee

PAM: Well it won't be this place, this was just a generic —

AVERY: — Whatevrrrrr. I can't believe I'm getting screwed

JENN: What if we hired her?

CHLOE: yeah the funny server

AVERY: The funny server? I don't fucking think so

PAM: This isn't Alice..okay..it's a romantic —

JENN: — Can't she Chloes ex? She causes problems?

PAM: No, that's all wrong

AVERY: Yes! I can stalk them, keep coming in making their life hell!!

PAM: It wouldn't work, look, let's just —

CHLOE: Maybe she kidnaps me!

AVERY: Yes!!!

PAM: Kidnaps? No

JENN: Why not?

PAM: Because it's not a thriller. *(Looking around)* Why am I explaining this?

JENN: It is a thriller!

PAM: No it isn't, it's a romance

JENN: A romantic thriller!

PAM: There's no such thing OK? Look, you two buy a coffee shop, and you are a..okay...a regular customer...

AVERY: How about we make you the fucking customer!

PAM: I think you're a little confused on how this works, you see..I'm the writer and you are —

AVERY: — Oh no, I'm not confused at all. I'm crazy..I mean those are the best characters right?

CHLOE: Totally!

AVERY: *(To CHLOE)* I'm your ex

CHLOE: I love it!

PAM: ALL WRONG, sorry but you...okay, time to put the lid on this

AVERY: — and you know I'm dangerous

CHLOE: *(Excited)* So I get a restraining order!

JENN: Ooooh perfect!

CHLOE: Right??

JENN: Do I know she's crazy?

PAM: Okay amateur hour is over! I've had enough of this for one day...

AVERY: Hey when did the customer get a line?

PAM: *(Laughs)* A customer? I'm not a fucking customer Okay, I'm —

CHLOE: Language Pamela

PAM: This is my....I'm home...this isn't even —

AVERY: —Where is that?

(PAM laughs looking at them.)

JENN: It's not a difficult question...Pam

PAM: Home, I...just home

(CHLOE walks over to the door and flips the open sign to closed.)

PAM: You think flipping a sign is going to make any difference to —

(AVERY steps towards PAM and stretches her arms out.)

AVERY: WELCOME TO THE LOBSTER TRAP!!

PAM: Excuse me.*(realizing, fear setting in)* Lobster trap?

CHLOE: *(Walking up to Pam)* Oh and we've got fun and games

(Light's down, and up on a desk far stage right.)

(AVERY walks to a chair in front of the desk and sits down.)

AVERY: So, the writer get's stuck in the world she created

PUBLISHER: Uh huh...What does she do there?

AVERY: I don't know, it's the end

PUBLISHER: The end?

AVERY: Yeah. That's the twist

PUBLISHER: What about the others

AVERY: They get to create the world they want

PUBLISHER: uh huh

AVERY: And the spirit of the father comes to visit his daughter

PUBLISHER: At the coffee shop

AVERY: Yes, at the coffee shop. The whole story takes place at the coffee shop (The PUBLISHER picks up the manuscript and slowly flips through it.)

AVERY: It's fantasy. A "what if" kind of thing

PUBLISHER: How does a person get stuck in a story

AVERY: How does a boy become a wizard?

PUBLISHER: *(looking up)* You got a story about a boy who becomes a wizard?

(Beat.)

AVERY: No

PUBLISHER: Look, I'm sure this is...good, but we're really looking for thrillers

AVERY: Thrillers?

PUBLISHER: Yeah, with a romantic element

AVERY: Romantic thriller?

PUBLISHER: *(still slowly flipping through)* Hm hmmm..if you had something I could pitch like that, then....

(Pause.)

AVERY: Two women. Partners. One was a big shot executive who throws it all away to open a coffee shop, live a simpler life. She has this unstable ex...who stalks them and makes their life hell...

PUBLISHER: (Sitting up.) I'm listening

AVERY: And then one day, the crazy ex kidnaps...let's call her Chloe...and kills this woman who gets in the way.... a customer in the wrong place at the wrong time....let's call her Pam...

BLACKOUT