

What Was I Thinking?

A ten-minute play

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“What Was I Thinking?”

Characters

Bea* Female. Works at Kinkos and is trying to get promoted.

Josh..... Male. Bea’s husband who is helping her study.

Setting

Josh and Bea’s apartment.

Synopsis

Josh trains Bea to be a psychic.

Other Notes

* ‘Bea’ is pronounced ‘Be’.

“What Was I Thinking?”

JOSH and BEA are sitting at a table. JOSH has half-a-deck of cards face-down in front of him, the other half face-up, and he’s holding one in his hand, with the back facing-towards BEA.

BEA is concentrating.

BEA

Five of clubs.

JOSH

Wrong!

JOSH throws down the card, picks up another one.

BEA

Shit shit shit shit shit shit shit! I’m never going to get this! And if I can’t figure this out, you know I’m going to lose my job. You know I will. I’ve said it before: Kinkos doesn’t know what to do with me.

JOSH

Relax your mind, see past the card, into my eyes, and try again. What face am I looking at?

BEA

I come in to work, I don’t know if I’m going to be promoted, or fired. Now, if I were to kill someone, there would be a law to punish me.

JOSH

What face am I looking at?

BEA

I would be tried, and go to jail, right? But there’s no law that protects me. There’s nothing that says, ‘make this many copies, and you get promoted’.

JOSH

All you have to do is read my mind once...

BEA

No law. No assurances. Totally arbitrary.

JOSH

Once, then you can practice at work until you get it mastered. And you’ll know what Jim, the Dictator of the Laminator, expects of an assistant manager. Right?

BEA

Right.

JOSH
So what card am I holding?

BEA
Jesus, just put a gun to my head.

BEA concentrates.

JOSH
We've worked too hard to quit. One more, that's it.

BEA concentrates.

BEA
Queen of Spades.

JOSH
Wrong.

JOSH throws-down the card.

BEA
Well I guess we can-

JOSH picks-up another card.

JOSH
One more.

BEA
Josh.

JOSH
One more.

BEA
Queen of Spades.

JOSH throws-down the card.

JOSH
Wrong. One more.

JOSH picks-up another card.

BEA
Queen of Spades.

JOSH
How about we change it up a little bit and you trust that I've spent as much time in this as you have and give my time some respect!

BEA
We're both tired-

JOSH
I've called in sick from Fed-Ex for the past two days so I could learn how to prepare your mind!

BEA
Josh-

JOSH
I cut my fingers three times to give you enough diced carrots to sharpen your mind! All because you wanted it!

BEA
I'm taking this seriously.

JOSH
You took that 300 piece puzzle last week very seriously-

BEA
What puzzle?

JOSH
I had to move into another room, and turn on the TV so I wouldn't hear you reason it out.

BEA
It's a puzzle-

JOSH
I know that I haven't heard you utter a word of concentration all day! That's what I know.

BEA
I do not talk when I think.

JOSH
Yeah, ok.

BEA
I don't. (*he doesn't believe her*) I'm really going to take it seriously this time, and I'm not going to utter a word. Watch.

BEA stares at it.

BEA
Two of hearts.

JOSH
Yes! You got it!

BEA
I did?

Kidding.
JOSH

JOSH turns around the card.

BEA punches him.

BEA
I'm going to rip your stupid face-off!

JOSH
You took it seriously, but you were concentrating too hard on the face. Your mind needs to relax, see past the cards, behind my eyes, and on to what I'm thinking.

BEA
(sulking)
I'm going to gnaw on your finger-tips while you sleep.

JOSH
And if you can't, then visualize the promotion you're going to get.

BEA
I am boycotting.

JOSH
Or visualize whether or not I'm going to rip your heart out.

BEA
Josh.

JOSH
Am I joking? Am I serious? You can't read me!

BEA
Maybe I should just apply to another job. Maybe I can work at Fed-Ex with you or something.

JOSH puts down the card.

JOSH
Now you're quitting.

BEA
Maybe I can't read your mind because I don't have enough incentive for advancement. But if I had a better job, like with you, then it could be better.

JOSH
You were never serious about reading these cards.

BEA

These cards have been our lives for the last two days. I dream about Jacks and Aces. I have been serious. But I just don't think it's going to work.

JOSH

You can't see this card because you didn't put effort in!

BEA

No Josh, I can't see that card because reading minds is impossible!

JOSH

It's like what I'm working on doesn't matter to you at all.

BEA

I'm the one that's been trying to crack-open your thick, wooden skull from behind your eyes!

JOSH

And I've put what I want aside so you could do it! And my feelings on this are just being ignored!

BEA

Because there's a time when you should just cut your losses, and give up. But you can't recognize that because your head is too-far up my ass to think for yourself! And we're cutting it off now.

JOSH

No.

BEA

What?

JOSH

We can work through this. Let's get through these last cards. Finish the deck. Then we'll see how we feel.

BEA

Not me. I'm done.

JOSH

Ok. Five more. And we'll see how we feel.

BEA

Why do you care?

JOSH

I skipped two days of work. I can't get sick for the rest of the year.

BEA

I'm going to look for another job.

JOSH

One more.

BEA

One more, and it's done.

One more, and we'll see. JOSH

One more, or nothing. BEA

Pause. JOSH picks up the card.

Ok. So, relax my mind. Stare past. And. (pause) You're going to break up with me. BEA

END OF PLAY