

Man of Madison Avenue

A ten-minute play

By Jake Lewis

CHARACTERS

Ryan (M) - thirtysomething, attractive, a bit of a dick
Monica (F) - also thirtysomething, very patient, sees the humor in a sad situation
Sir Delbert Weinbaum (M) – 60s+, knight errant

SETTING

A bus stop on Madison Avenue, NYC
Present Day

Lights rise on a city bus stop. MONICA is seated on the bench.

After a few moments, RYAN rushes in.

RYAN
There you are!

MONICA
Here I am. Like everyday. Waiting for my bus.

RYAN
I thought I'd miss you.

MONICA
Good thing they never run on time.

RYAN
Can we talk?

MONICA
I think we've said enough as it is.

RYAN
Well, I don't!

MONICA
It's a free bench and you haven't done anything to me requiring a restraining order...yet.

RYAN
That's not funny.

MONICA
It is, a little.

RYAN
Look, I'm sorry.

MONICA
For what?

RYAN

For...why you're mad at me.

MONICA

Which is?

RYAN

You know exactly why!

MONICA

Yes. I do. But do you?

RYAN

It drives me crazy when you get like this and put your psychologist hat on in our relationship.

MONICA

(Smiling) I know. But a psychologist hat sounds fun! What would that look like? Maybe one of those fascinators you see ladies wear at the Kentucky Derby? Ooh! No, I know! A dunce cap! Because I must have been the biggest fool to stay with you for so long!

RYAN

Maybe what we need is to go to couple's therapy. Have an objective third party help us.

MONICA

I think it's too late for that.

DELBERT enters at a gallop. He is dressed in Renaissance Faire a la homeless person garb. He carries an umbrella in front of him like a sword, and a STOP sign as a shield. He shouts "En garde!" and "Ha!" as though he is in a sword fight with an invisible foe.

RYAN

Only in New York.

MONICA

Let's ask him!

RYAN
Who?

MONICA
This guy. He looks like fun.

RYAN
Are you kidding me?

MONICA
Excuse me? Sir?

DELBERT
Good day to you, gentleman and gentlewoman! My name is Sir Delbert Weinbaum,
knight errant.

MONICA
Hi! I'm Monica, this is Ryan.

DELBERT
Lady Monica and Sir Ryan! What brings you to this dangerous background in this foul
kingdom?

RYAN
Dangerous? It's Madison Avenue.

MONICA
Well, he's right about the foul kingdom. *(To DELBERT.)* We need your assistance!

DELBERT
I am on my way to engage in battle with the dragons of this land, but it would be against
the knight's code to leave stranded travelers to their wits.

RYAN
No, it's cool. We got it. Thanks anyway, Lancelot.

MONICA
(To RYAN) Stop it! Don't make fun of him!

RYAN

Did you hear him? Fighting dragons? Does he think he's on Game of Thrones?

MONICA

Lancelot and Game of Thrones are completely different. And he's acting more like Don Quixote. Probably thinks those new wind turbines are dragons.

RYAN

Who's Don Coyote?

MONICA

Do you want to fix this?

RYAN nods.

MONICA

Noble Knight, I apologize for Ryan being a dick.

DELBERT

I am unfamiliar with the land of Dick, though I have traveled this Earth most of my life.

RYAN

No, what she meant was—

DELBERT

Yet, I am at your service! (*Parrying with the umbrella*) Has a vagabond sullied your honor and you need defending?

MONICA

(*Looking at RYAN*) Well, sort of. We were hoping – I was hoping – you could settle a conflict.

DELBERT

Lady Monica, while I have only now just met you, I pledge to give my life on your behalf on the field of battle if you request it.

MONICA

No, no, it's nothing like that. I am interested in your...ummm....sage wisdom as a knight.

DELBERT

Indeed? You have been very fortunate to cross my path on this day, as I am known throughout my village as the most enlightened of men.

RYAN

Why do I doubt that?

MONICA

(To DELBERT) That's excellent. You see, a fortnight ago, I became Ryan's betrothed.

RYAN

Why are you suddenly talking like him?

MONICA

I used to do a little LARPing before we met. Never told you.

DELBERT

That is news fit for sharing to the world! *(Addressing the rest of the street)* Here ye, good people! Lady Monica and Sir Ryan—!!

MONICA

No, no, no! That's not all!

DELBERT

Apologies, my lady.

RYAN

My lady.

MONICA

(To both) No one's lady. *(Re-adjusting)* Anyway, shortly after our engagement, Ryan here shared our bedchamber with my best friend and danced the Paphian jig with her.

RYAN

More like the horizontal Lambada.

DELBERT

Say it is not so?! *(To RYAN)* You were bound to be wed, yet you performed the service of Venus with a lady-in-waiting?

MONICA

There was very little waiting, I'm sure.

RYAN

Her name was Cathy, not Venus, and trust me, it was more service than pleasure, if you know what I mean!

DELBERT

I know not of what you speak with your Dickish tongue, yet it matters not! You played Nug-a-Nug without the blessing of your Lady!

RYAN

Hey, don't blame me! I tried to get "her blessing," she's just not into poly.

DELBERT

Sir Ryan, you offend me and your lady with your manner of speech when it comes to shooting twixt wind and water, and I find I must punish you for it! (*Jabs umbrella towards him*) Raise your weapon and fight me, you dastardly ostrich!

RYAN

Is this for real?

DELBERT begins swatting him with the umbrella, which is more annoying to RYAN than painful. Eventually, RYAN falls.

RYAN

Monica! Why aren't you stopping him?

MONICA

Oh. Sorry. (*Flatly.*) Stop. No more.

DELBERT relents.

DELBERT

Do you yield, Sir Ryan of Dick?

RYAN

Will you stop calling me that?!? (*He gets up.*) Look, Delbert, you are a man.

DELBERT
You speak the truth.

RYAN
And you must know what it's like to be in love.

DELBERT
Oh. I do, my good sir. I loved majestically, and lost completely.

RYAN
Um, right. But you also must realize that, as a man, our primal instinct is to...err...sow our seeds. To reproduce and continue our species.

MONICA
You said you didn't want kids!

RYAN
It's a metaphor!

DELBERT
My Karen and I were never graced by the Almighty with the gift of offspring, yet I do acknowledge the desire to be a planter.

RYAN
Yes! We are men! We see...ummm...lush gardens and must....uhhh...do them!

DELBERT
But there was never so beautiful a row to hoe as my Karen.

MONICA
(To RYAN) He doesn't mean that kind of ho.

DELBERT
No, you are lucky to have found your life's love, and you must hang on to it with all the strength your manly body possesses, because one day she may be gone, like my dear, sweet Karen.

MONICA
Sir Delbert, what happened to her?

DELBERT

Oh. She moved to Florida and became a Trump supporter.

MONICA

And her name was Karen? Ironic.

DELBERT

But she was the love of my life! I should have stopped her! Spoke my heart's true meaning to her! (*Grabbing RYAN by the shoulders.*) Don't you squander your beloved's affection, Ryan, and end up like me – a crazy, old man, gallivanting through the streets of New York with a broken umbrella and stolen street sign, pretending to be a bold, and brave knight! I was neither bold, nor brave when I needed to be. You still can.

DELBERT is now his true self, and the moment lands for RYAN and MONICA.

DELBERT

Now...I must be on my way. There are dragons to slay. (*Pointing off-stage*) There's one of them now!

RYAN

That's just a–

DELBERT looks at him with sadness.

RYAN

Go get that dragon.

DELBERT

Good day to you, Lady Monica and Sir Ryan of Dick.

DELBERT exits.

RYAN

(*Calling after him*) I'm not from–!!

MONICA

My bus will be here in a moment. Unless Delbert defeats it somehow.

RYAN
Monica...

MONICA faces him.

RYAN
I'm so sorry.

RYAN begins to cry. MONICA holds him.

MONICA
Ok...ok...people are watching...

RYAN
Let them watch! I'll shout it from the rooftops! I love you, Monica, and I'll dedicate the rest of my life to defending your honor!

MONICA
Thank you, Sir Ryan.

RYAN
So, can we try again? Please?

MONICA
Keep talking like that and come with me to the Renaissance Faire, then we'll see.

RYAN first scoffs, but then realizes he's being given a second chance. He bows to her in the style of a knight.

The sound effect of a bus's brakes are heard as the lights fade to black.

The End