

CAST LIST:

LAURENCE / WRITER a college student
writer of Lee & Laurence's story

LEE / ACTRESS a prostitute
the actress playing the prostitute

THE MAN / ACTOR a mentally slow homeless person /
actor playing the supernumerary

THE STAGE MANAGER overbearing, uptight & disciplined

TIME & PLACE:

March in Anchorage, Alaska.

SET:

The stage is mostly bare, with a sidewalk painted on the floor running down the center of the stage. The back wall has an urban looking scene painted on it. In front of the mural are two piles of garbage, one on each side of the sidewalk.

The stage is sharply divided by color, with one side in a soft blue light, the other in blood red. When the walking spot comes up center stage, it is a more neutral color, and the sides become less distinct.

(Before the play begins, the ACTRESS is out in front of the theatre in character as LEE, dressed in a provocative short skirt and heavily made up, ostensibly waiting for a date, eyeing patrons as potential tricks. With the house lights still on, the WRITER comes out on stage and addresses the audience.)

WRITER

Hello, hi... if everyone could just take their seats... oh, you're all already sitting. Well, good. Excellent. Greetings. I'd love to welcome you all to our charity preview. We're presenting, as I hope you all know, since you are here, my original script, "Eye Contact." Half of the proceeds from tonight's show will be going to benefit the Women's Shelter.

(He turns to get into place. The STAGE MANAGER scurries on stage and deposits his coat in his starting spot. She then goes off.)

STAGE MANAGER

(whispered) *Sorry!*

(He walks back to the audience.)

WRITER

This is technically a dress rehearsal, so anything could happen, but I have every faith that it will run smoothly.

(A door slams offstage.)

Uh, again, thank you for being here and I hope you enjoy the show.

(The lights fade to black. When they rise, the WRITER has put on the coat

and is listening to a walk-man. He is now playing LAURENCE. The ACTRESS enters in character and approaches him. She remains on the red side of the stage, he on the blue.)

ACTRESS (LEE)

Hey.

WRITER (LAURENCE)

What? I'm sorry, I didn't hear what you—

(He takes off his headphones.)

ACTRESS (LEE)

I just said "hey."

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Oh. Uh, hello.

ACTRESS (LEE)

What are you listening to?

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Uh, Falco.

ACTRESS (LEE)

Really? God, he was big when I was in, like sixth grade.

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Yeah, that's about when it was for me, too. We must be something like the same age.

ACTRESS (LEE)

I'm twenty-two.

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Twenty-three.

ACTRESS (LEE)

Yeah, I'll be twenty-three in a couple of months, in July, July twenty-sixth.

WRITER (LAURENCE)

That's cool.

(There is a pause. She takes a step closer to him.)

ACTRESS (LEE)

(pause) You familiar with the term "working girl," sir?

WRITER (LAURENCE)

What?

ACTRESS (LEE)

Call girl, street walker, hooker?



Poster art from the 1996 Eccentric Theatre Company production of *The Making of Eye Contact*.

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Oh, yeah, I knew what you meant.

ACTRESS (LEE)

Would you be interested in having an orgasm? Whatever you want. I can give you a blowjob for twenty dollars.

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Well, I, uh, no. Thanks. I am interested, but I just got through with a really romantic evening, and it probably wouldn't be good for my karma if I got a blowjob from you on the way home.

ACTRESS (LEE)

Oh, you got some already then, huh?

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Well, no.

ACTRESS (LEE)

Oh, whatever.

WRITER (LAURENCE)

No, it was really very nice. We—

(Suddenly a police siren comes up, and his side of the stage is hit with passing police lights. They wait as the sirens and lights fade away.)

ACTRESS (LEE)

(turning away) There sure are a lot of cops out tonight. I've seen seven, eight of them. Last thing I need is for one of them to stop me and ask me my name. Dude, they're all over the place.

WRITER (LAURENCE)

They usually are around here.

ACTRESS (LEE)

This is more than usual. Somebody's gonna get busted tonight.

WRITER (LAURENCE)

(looking her over) Yeah, well, probably. It seems like there's always a lot of activity around here.

ACTRESS (LEE)

I'm gonna take off. Want to get out of this neighborhood, get downtown, to the Avenue.

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Where?

ACTRESS (LEE)

The Avenue. It's a bar. You never been there?

WRITER (LAURENCE)

No, I don't think so.

ACTRESS (LEE)

It's on Fourth and D. It's not too bad. I've never been there on a Monday. I've been there on Fridays and Saturdays. It's usually packed then, probably dead tonight.

WRITER (LAURENCE)

So, what, do you work there, or—

ACTRESS (LEE)

As a waitress?

WRITER (LAURENCE)

No, I don't, no, I mean—

ACTRESS (LEE)

Oh. Sometimes, yeah... tonight I just want a drink, which is stupid cause I had a hot-dog at Tommy's back there and I'm never gonna get any kind of buzz on a full stomach.

(He starts giggling. She stares at him
questioningly.)

WRITER (LAURENCE)

You'd swear that was the last thing you'd want to eat.

ACTRESS (LEE)

What?

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Well, with your job... you know, a hot... (he illustrates) Sorry, never mind, it was just a joke.

ACTRESS (LEE)

Oh, it was a joke. (laughs a little too loudly) I get it, that's funny. You're funny. Anyway, it was nice talking with you. I'm—

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Look, I could walk you down there, if you want.

ACTRESS (LEE)

What?

(They look at each other. He looks
away first.)

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Well, I was waiting for a cab, and it doesn't really look like it's going to show up anyway. So I could walk you down there... if I wouldn't be bothering you or, uh, in the way.

ACTRESS (LEE)

No, no, that's cool. Come on.

(They turn in a very stylized/silly semi-circle and end up center stage. They begin mime walking as a spotlight comes up on them. There is an uncomfortable pause. It is obviously her line.)

WRITER (LAURENCE)

So...

ACTRESS (LEE)

You sure I... can't...

(The ACTRESS looks out over the audience, seeming uncomfortable.)

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Uh, yes, you have a question?

ACTRESS (LEE)

You sure I can't interest you in a...

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Yes?

(She turns to him, looking scared.)

ACTRESS

(breaking out of character) *I just can't do it!*

WRITER (LAURENCE)

Uh, can't do what?

ACTRESS

(beginning to cry) *This, this mime walking, I just can't act like this.*

WRITER

(out of character) *What on earth are you doing?*

ACTRESS

This felt awkward enough during rehearsals, and now with an audience, I can't even begin to connect with her emotions.

WRITER

We are in production!

ACTRESS

But you never gave me a chance to—

WRITER

This is not the time!

ACTRESS

Look, when I was out front, because you said that you wanted to shock the audience when they first got here—

WRITER

I never said that!

ACTRESS

Yes you did. And they were. My parents were out there, and they were so shocked they just left. I don't think they knew it was me.

WRITER

They're your parents!

ACTRESS

I hope they didn't know it was me.

WRITER

Look—

ACTRESS

People pointing me out to their kids, men leering... and now it's this horrible miming!

WRITER

Not now, please, not now—

ACTRESS

I have a question.

(He pulls her away from the audience.

They speak in hushed tones.)

WRITER

All right, all right, what's your question? Ask with alacrity, please.

ACTRESS

Alacrity?

WRITER

Alacrity, speed, hurry up!

ACTRESS

Then why didn't you just say that? Using language to avoid communication is a sign of insecurity, a little cry for help!

WRITER

What's your question?

ACTRESS

Aren't you worried that this mime walking is going to make us look silly?

WRITER

What? No!

ACTRESS

I mean, it does, it looks silly!

WRITER

It's just a stage convention!

ACTRESS

Couldn't they be doing something else besides walking downtown? (addressing the audience) I mean, I'm right, aren't I? This does look silly. How are they supposed to take our relationship seriously when we're directly in front of them bobbing our knees.

WRITER

It represents the spiritual journey they're taking.

ACTRESS

But the mime walking—

WRITER

All right, what would your suggestion be, just walking back and forth across the lip of the stage?

ACTRESS

We could wander in the aisles.

WRITER

I've told you a thousand times, this is not that kind of play. I do not want to break down the fourth wall.

ACTRESS

Well, maybe we could just set it at a bus stop or something. Then you could have a bench! We could sit on it, walk around it, I could lean over it—

WRITER

No, please, I hate that idea. Everybody suggests that.

ACTRESS

Well, maybe you should be a little more open to suggestions.

WRITER

I am perfectly open to suggestions!

ACTRESS

Please. If you're not going to discuss this like the rational adult that I know you are capable of being, never mind. We really should get back to the plot.

WRITER

What are you talking about? We can't just go back and—

(The ACTRESS starts in again, speaking to the empty space where the WRITER should be. Her walking is awkward and perfunctory.)

ACTRESS (LEE)

You sure I can't interest you in a blow job or something? I mean, it's only twenty dollars.

(She keeps walking. He pauses,

glances at the audience, then goes back to his place and begins walking in place badly, dazed and confused.)

WRITER (LAURENCE)

I'd like to, but really... uh, right... I can't. I can't even afford it right now. Twenty dollars is about all I have to my name.