

Cast of Characters

Mark Fitzhenry:

Indulges the audience into his pathetic dating life, despite the fact that he adheres to every "how-to" article ever written.

Fake Mark:

Acts out my pathetic attempts not attract a woman.

Woman:

Fake Mark has to hit on somebody. And it's her.

Scene

Shifts between Powerhouse Theater stage, bars.

Time

Four minutes.

SETTING: Stage of the "No Shame" Theater.

AT RISE: Mark Fitzhenry, by himself on stage, addressing the audience.

MARK

Are you like me? God, I hope not. If you were, you'd be masturbating 14 times a week. I've read every how-to article on dating in the past 15 years and I still can't get a handle on it. So tonight, I ask my friends at the No Shame Theater, what the fuck is my problem?

(Carrie enters, stage right.)

Carrie will be playing women I'm typically interested in.

(to Carrie)

Do you have the time?

WOMAN

My watch stopped.

MARK

See? She won't even give me the time of day.

(Fake Mark enters, stage right.)

Ian will be playing me.

(to Fake Mark)

You look good, by the way. You will also be wearing what I typically wear on a night out.

(I hand him a Red Sox jersey)

(to audience)

So here we go, using actual advice from actual articles I've read, along with actual situations, let's find out: What the fuck is my problem?

(Beat, allowing Fake Mark and woman to "get in the zone.")

Tip number 1. Maintain eye contact. Look astray, and you're telling the woman she's not the most important thing at the moment.

(Fake Mark approaches woman.)

FAKE MARK

Hi.

WOMAN

Hello.

FAKE MARK

So what are you up to tonight?

(As woman explains everything, she avoids eye contact in a manner that builds from subtle to obvious.)

(She looks away ... looks at her watch ... ties her shoe ... and Fake Mark contorts to match eye contact with her the entire time until woman is so frustrated she bolts.)

WOMAN

Well, I'm here with friends from work. We usually find one Happy Hour after work on Friday, and this is as good a place as any ... and ... um ... my purse is on fire ... I gotta go, okay?

(As Mark speaks, Fake Mark and woman reset, as they will throughout.)

MARK

Tip number 2. Be observant. Pointing something out, no matter how small the detail, shows the woman that you're paying attention.

(Fake Mark approaches woman.)

FAKE MARK

You had your hair done today, didn't you?

WOMAN

Why, yes.

FAKE MARK

You'd look a lot better if you grew it out.

MARK

Can you understand why I'm frustrated? Tip number 3. Don't fidget. It's distracting and shows that you're uncomfortable. Not fidgeting tells the woman you're totally confident.

(The woman does some playful touching as she talks. Fake Mark is rigid the entire time.)

WOMAN

My friends and I are heading to this dance club and it would be so cool if you came along. We could dance, and groove and ... are you there? Hello?

MARK

Okay, full disclosure. That scenario never actually happened. No woman has ever invited me to a dance club. Tip number 4. Talk about something you're passionate about.

FAKE MARK

So the Red Sox send Dave Roberts in to pinch run, and the whole place knows he's gonna try to steal second. Now, do you do it right away, or do you wait until the count's in your favor, because if it's a 2-0 count there's no way the Yankees will throw a pitchout. But Rivera's just money, even if he did just walk Millar, and you definitely don't want two quick outs ...

(Woman leaves.)

MARK

So there you are. I don't know what went wrong but maybe you do.

(Fake Mark walks over.
He's talking over Mark.)

MARK

If you know what the fuck my problem was, send an email to fitz at markfitzhenry dot com, and hopefully I'll learn --

FAKE MARK

(to Mark)
So Roberts finally takes off, and I just can't bear to watch. I mean, if he gets thrown out I'll be totally depressed, worse than the day Siobhan Fahey left Bananarama in 1988 --

(Mark snaps out of his speech at the mention of "Bananarama.")

MARK

Stop. Did you just mention Bananarama?

FAKE MARK

Yes.

MARK

I love Bananarama!
(mutual admiration)
Can I buy you drink over at Finn McCool's?

FAKE MARK

Absolutely.

(They walk off, buddy-buddy, through the crowd, out the front door.)