

"ADVICE FOR LOSERS"

A Comedic "Zoom" One Act

3 F/ 3 M

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CHARACTERS:

Mickey: (F) Becomes an "Advice Specialist" on AdviceColumn.com

Martha: (F) A client

Fred: (M) A client

Lilly: (F) A client

Andy: (M) Mickey's blind date

Pop-Up Ad Man: (M) Sentient spokesperson for AdviceColumn.com

SYNOPSIS:

A strange pop-up ad convinces a young woman to become an "Advice Specialist" on a website where she has to desperately attempt to sort out the lives of her zany clientele.

**"Advice for Losers" was written specifically to be performed on the Zoom platform. Characters interact as though they are speaking to each other through a webcam. There are also fun visual gags that each actor can easily carry-out in the comfort of their own home, with things lying around the house.

MICKEY: Yes! Final paper of the semester submitted! (*Checks phone*)
Okay, I've got some time before my blind Skype date tonight... Maybe I should check if anyone left any comments on my new Star Wars fanfic...

POP-UP AD MAN: Are you interested in helping people?

MICKEY: Ugh, I hate pop-up ads! Get out of here!

POP-UP AD MAN: Hey! I'm talking to you! Don't you dare click that "x" button on me!

MICKEY: I'm sorry?

POP-UP AD MAN: You heard me. Do you want to help people?

MICKEY: I don't know. I guess?

POP-UP AD MAN: Are you poor?

MICKEY: Who isn't poor?

POP-UP AD MAN: Don't answer my question with a question!

MICKEY: Yes, okay, fine, I'm broke.

POP-UP AD MAN: Are you always the person giving good advice to your friends and family only to have it be blatantly ignored?

MICKEY: Actually...yeah, I am.

POP-UP AD MAN: Then it's time for you to sign-up as an Advice Specialist for AdviceColumn.com!

MICKEY: Advice Specialist?

POP-UP AD MAN: That's what I just said! Create a profile, set your hours, and have people "visit" you for advice in your virtual office.

MICKEY: I don't know, it doesn't seem like I'm super well-qualified to be dishing out advice. I hardly have my own life together. I don't know how I can help other people-

POP-UP AD MAN: You'll get \$20 for every client you see!

MICKEY: Say what now?

POP-UP AD MAN: Become an Advice Specialist on AdviceColumn.com today!
(*In a disclaimer voice - fast but intelligible*) Legal disclaimer:
AdviceColumn.com is not responsible for any loss or damages, be it
physical, mental, or financial. AdviceColumn.com does not hire
licensed counselors and cannot be held responsible for terrible
advice. Physical ailments that have been reported by users include
Slippery Knees, Fuzz Forehead, Toxic Middle Finger Syndrome, the
desire to become "More than Friends," and Leprosy.

MICKEY: \$20 for every client... and I don't even have to leave my house?
I guess I don't really have anything else going on. Well, besides my
blind date, but that's not until 8... What the hell? I'm gonna do it!
Looks like I just sign up here... and I'm done! Now I just wait! Am I
really qualified to be doing this?

MARTHA: (*Very close to screen*) Hello?

MICKEY: Ah! Someone's already here? Too late now! Hello! Martha, is
it?

MARTHA: Hello?

MICKEY: Yes! Hello! Martha.

MARTHA: Martha.

MICKEY: Yup! That's you!

MARTHA: Can you hear me?

MICKEY: Yes!

MARTHA: Oh, well why didn't you say anything?

MICKEY: Martha, can you move away from your camera a bit? I can't
really see you... (*Martha moves away from her camera revealing she's
surrounded by an ungodly amount of cats, cat paraphernalia, stuffed
cats*) Oh shit.

MARTHA: Is this better?

MICKEY: (*Strained*) Yes. That's much better. Uh, hello, again! My name's Mickey Henderson and I'm your Advice Specialist for this session. Would you like to tell me about the problems you've been having?

MARTHA: Yes, just a second. (*Picks up a cat, or a stuffed cat*) Although I bet just by looking around you can figure out what my problem is!

MICKEY: I have a few guesses.

MARTHA: (*Squints at screen*) Well... Mickey, is it? What, are you named after a cartoon character?

MICKEY: Possibly.

MARTHA: Well, Mickey, I'm here to tell you there's no joy quite like owning a cat. Did you know that the first pet cat dates back to 9,500 years ago? Or that a cat was the mayor of a town in Alaska for 20 years? His name was Stubbs. Well, that's *Mayor Stubbs* to you.

MICKEY: Fascinating.

MARTHA: He died three years ago. (*Starts sniffing*) Pour one out for Stubbs.

MICKEY: I'm sorry for your loss. Martha, this is all wonderful information, but this session is meant to be about you.

MARTHA: Oh, right of course. I apologize.

MICKEY: Why don't you start by telling me a little bit about yourself?

MARTHA: Good idea. (*Holds up cat*) This is my cat Bones. We call her that because every morning we find her in a new pile of them.

MICKEY: Martha, I think I can surmise what your problem is. It appears as though you have a slight obsession with cats. Is that true?

MARTHA: Well, yes, I'm obsessed with them, but I don't see it as a *problem*. My problem is I can't get any more cats!

MICKEY: Oh no.

MARTHA: The animal shelter won't let me adopt them anymore. The last time I tried they told me it would be "morally irresponsible" and that my house was becoming a "threat to public safety." I was hoping you could help me draft a letter to congress telling them about this grave injustice.

MICKEY: Would you hold on for just a moment? (*Steps away from computer, paces a bit*) Alright, get a hold of yourself, girl. You can do this. Just give it to her straight.

MARTHA: You know I can hear you, right?

MICKEY: (*Sits back down*) Martha. Listen to me. You don't need any more cats. In fact, you could stand to lose a few of the ones you already have.

MARTHA: Why would I get rid of any of my sweet pumpkins? I'm only one away from having the same amount of cats as my lucky number.

MICKEY: Please tell me your lucky number is four.

MARTHA: It's 19.

MICKEY: Oh, God. Okay. Do you realize that hoarding animals is considered a form of animal cruelty?

MARTHA: Hoarding? Who's hoarding animals?

MICKEY: You are! 18 cats?! You have so many they could be getting diseases and dying right under your nose, without you even realizing it! (*Gestures to her cat*) How do you think that one got its name?

MARTHA: (*Has a realization, looks at her cat*) Bones! But what am I supposed to do if I get rid of all my cats?

MICKEY: You don't have to get rid of *all* of them, just most of them. Find some nice homes for them.

MARTHA: But then what would I do with my time?

MICKEY: (*Thinks*) Well, what about getting some houseplants? Buy some african violets, or some spider plants? They're safe for cats.