

THE LOVERS

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THE LOVERS

Black out. V/O. Professor Ure Noise of lecture theatre.

PROFESSOR URE

**Welcome back to English Literature
202 The Poetry of Love. Today
we're...**

He breaks off annoyed.

Excuse me Ladies and Gentlemen this is a lecture theatre not a playground and a lot of you appear to be focused on your cell phones rather than my lecture. Research has shown that the neuroplasticity of the brains of young people is being changed by their over concentration on cell phones. That their brains are reverting to a sort of cerebral soup. It has even been promulgated by a Professor from this university that when he forced his students to look in each other's eyes two of them actually fell in love, which is, I might add the subject of today's lecture. Please put your phones away. Thank you. We begin with one of the most famous love poems from the 16th century by Andrew Marvel which you will see on the screen behind me. I would remind you that poetry is a spoken art form and to understand the rhythms and meter and tone you should memorize it and recite it out loud if of course there is any part of your brain left which is capable of performing such a task. To His Coy Mistress. Now would anybody care to elucidate what the word "coy" means.

(pause)

Yes. Quite right. "

(MORE)

PROFESSOR URE (CONT'D)

**Pretended shyness"...a sort of
flirtatious modesty....Look at the
first line. "Had we but world
enough and time, This coyness lady
were no crime.**

His speech tails off as the volume of the Bartok increases. Beginning of Bartok string quartet No.2,II Allegro, is heard for two minutes softly in the background under the rising sound of an underground train rattling along the track then both music and track sounds stop abruptly. Lights go up on an empty stage. Sound of doors opening. Silence. There are two chairs SL and one SR facing the audience. Two passengers seated.

Enter young man and other passengers as if entering underground train compartment. One arrives late. They are each locked in their own lives and preoccupations. He is average to good looking wearing jeans and shirt and a backpack over his shoulder. Holds his cell phone. Ear buds in. Sits. Looks around him at other passengers. Sound of doors closing. Music/track sounds begin again. His body rocks gently to the movement of the train as do the other passengers who stare at their cell phones. He glances at others taking in their heights and appearances. He makes eye contact with a person opposite him, is startled, frowns and looks back at the cellphone screen. Becomes absorbed. Takes earbuds out. Writes a text message, his thumbs flicking back and forth. Presses send.

YOUNG MAN

What? Ain't gonna happen!

Realizes he has said this out loud instead of to himself.

Looks around plaintively. Shakes his head, points to the cell phone. Mimes that it was someone else's fault. Shaking his head, he stops. Puts his phone to his ear.

**Jim I am not sending you my essay.
You'll just copy it. Like you did
the last time. Luckily the prof
never noticed. Yes I know you're
my friend. Well you are supposed to
have read the poem. I actually
learned it as we were asked to.**

(Pause as he listens)

Fuck off.

(Pause. Phone call ends)

(MORE)

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Well, at least I'm not a cheat.

.

Shakes his head. The music/track sound comes to a stop. Sound of doors opening if at the next station. Station lights up. All passengers

An attractive young girl enters, mimes going round standing passengers. She starts to sit down next to young man but stops, turns her back and moves to SR Chair and sits.

YOUNG GIRL

Excuse me. Sorry.

Young man's gaze follows her. He sits up straight. Continues to look at screen but glances in her direction a number of times as train noise resumes. This distracts him from the screen and he presses it haphazardly changing the apps.

The girl looks over. They make eye contact for the first time. It lasts about four seconds

YOUNG MAN

Wha.....?

She turns away first.. Coyly. He shakes his head.

She glances back at him, their eyes meet. The gaze is held. She turns away as if embarrassed by the intensity of the look. She takes out her phone. He whispers.

This coyness lady were no crime.

He shakes his head again. The music/sound continues. The train rocks back and forth. Twice he tries to catch her gaze but fails. They look at each other when the other one of them is not looking. They both stare at their cell phones. They appear to be on their own. The music/sound starts again. He gets up as if to get off at the next station. The music and train noise rises to a crescendo. She also prepares to leave and rises. Suddenly there's a loud metallic screeching noise, a crash of metal. The lights go out. The girl screams. Then a crash,. Loud hissing noise. Electric sparking. Flashing. Both of them are thrown violently to the floor.

DAMNIT!

YOUNG GIRL
Help. Ow! My ankle .

Lights flicker and come up a bit. They are both on the floor.

YOUNG MAN
What the hell?

YOUNG GIRL
My ankle.

YOUNG MAN
**Where's my phone. I can't find my
 phone.**

YOUNG GIRL
I think it could be broken.

YOUNG MAN
**Broken? Oh no! It must be
 somewhere.**

YOUNG GIRL
**God it hurts. Could you help me
 please?**

YOUNG MAN
What?

YOUNG GIRL
Help me.

YOUNG MAN
Here....

He holds out his hand.

YOUNG GIRL
Thank you.

YOUNG MAN
Must be a power cut, or something.

YOUNG GIRL
**Maybe I just twisted it.It's
 tingling.**

YOUNG MAN

**Where the hell could it have gone?
My contacts, calendar, texts,
everything? I've got my assignment
on it.**

He searches on his hands and knees in the semi-darkness.

YOUNG GIRL

**My purse? Where's my purse? Oh, got
it.**

YOUNG MAN

It must be here.

YOUNG GIRL

Peers out the train window.

There are lights.

YOUNG MAN

Now he is back on his hands and knees searching for his
phone.

It's gone. Damn

Stands and goes to doors.

I can't see anybody.

YOUNG GIRL

It's the station.

YOUNG MAN

**The damned doors are locked. They
won't open. They're stuck.**

He mimes trying to get them open.

YOUNG GIRL

I don't think I can walk.

She stands but then collapses.

Ow...aahhhh. It's broken.

She crawls to the chair but can't get up. He peers around
searching for his phone . Shakes his head.

YOUNG MAN

**I have to find my phone. It's got
to be here.**

YOUNG GIRL

**Here, here use mine. Call the
police or fire department or
somebody..**

YOUNG MAN

Young man looks at small old cell phone and grimaces.
**I haven't seen one of these in
years**

YOUNG GIRL

I've had it a while. O.K.?

YOUNG MAN

O.K.

The lights come up fully.

**At least the lights..now I can
see..**

Looks at the phone. Then looks at her. Her face pulls him
away.

Stares and looks at her as if for the first time

I think he was right He was right.

YOUNG GIRL

Who?

YOUNG MAN

The professor ...he was right.

YOUNG GIRL

Right about what?

YOUNG MAN

**It sounded so stupid.
He told us to stop looking at our
phones**

YOUNG GIRL

Skeptically

What?

YOUNG MAN

He said we spend too much time on
our phones. It is destroying our
brain chemistry,

YOUNG GIRL

But.....

YOUNG MAN

He said two students had fallen in
love looking into each other's
eyes.

YOUNG GIRL

Oh, please.

YOUNG MAN

Does this sound strange but I feel
I've always known you.

YOUNG GIRL

What are you talking about?
You don't know me.

YOUNG MAN

But... I do. The look. The glance.
I think... I might be in love.

YOUNG GIRL

That's not possible. Call the
police will you?

YOUNG MAN

Oh please...please..The way you
looked at me before .. It was...
coy.

YOUNG GIRL

Coy?

YOUNG MAN

Willfully playful.

YOUNG GIRL

I'm sorry but would you stop
talking in riddles and do something
about getting the doors open?

YOUNG MAN

Fiddles with her phone.

Your phone doesn't work.

Gives her back her phone.Pauses.

**Then worms shall try that long
preserved virginity.**

YOUNG GIRL

**Are you a weirdo? You're not on
drugs are you? I... I.. have a
gun.**

Grabs her purse

YOUNG MAN

Nods his head knowingly

And into ashes all my lust.

YOUNG GIRL

**Oh my God! Now what do I do? I'm
stuck on the B Train with a psycho
and I have a broken leg.**

YOUNG MAN

**But at my back I hear Time's winged
chariot hurrying near.**

He moves round her.

YOUNG GIRL

**I knew it. I knew this was a shit
day when it started out. Where the
hell's my gun?**

She fumbles in her purse. Throws out lipstick, etc..

YOUNG MAN

**When I got up this morning, I said
to myself. This day is going to be
important...very important.**

YOUNG GIRL

Now what?

Searches through the purse again.

**Crap. I must have left it in the
bedside drawer. The one time I
needed the damn thing.**

YOUNG MAN

Loudly

**And yonder before us lie deserts of
vast eternity.**

YOUNG GIRL

**I have to call the police. He said
the phone didn't work. You have to
switch it on. Let's see. 9-1-1. 9-1-
1. Please answer. Answer! I'm in
deep trouble and this is the reason
I got my cell phone.. For
emergencies. It's not working.**

YOUNG MAN

**Don't you see. This is the way it
was meant to be.**

YOUNG GIRL

Please, God help me.

She throws the phone on the floor.

YOUNG MAN

**Calm down. I don't have a phone
either. We have been liberated from
shackles of technology to be our
true selves.**

YOUNG GIRL

**Look, You can have my money...
here. There's a hundred and fifty
dollars. It's this week's rent.**

YOUNG MAN

**You're missing the point. This is
IT.**

He kneels beside her.

YOUNG GIRL

He is going to try to rape me. I can see the headline now. Accident victim with broken leg raped by madman on the B train.

YOUNG MAN

Thou by the Indian Ganges should rubies find. I by the tide of Humber would complain.

He reaches out and nearly touches her face

YOUNG GIRL

Ahhhhhhh

I would love you ten years before the flood.

YOUNG GIRL

Ahhh. HELP!!!

YOUNG MAN

Looks around

What?

YOUNG GIRL

I'm frightened.

YOUNG MAN

It's just a love poem

YOUNG GIRL

I'm even more frightened.

YOUNG MAN

I'm sorry but this is how we were supposed to meet. Don't you understand? This was our fate.

YOUNG GIRL

I have an infection . . . Bad, bad, bad case. It's contagious...very contagious.

YOUNG MAN

**You're lying. So, while the
youthful hue, sits on thy skin like
morning dew.**

YOUNG GIRL

Tries to distract him.

Look. Over there. There. A lever

She points to the train door.

**In case of emergency - PULL...
Emergency...**

She tries to get up but falls

My leg..

YOUNG MAN

**Now let us sport us as we may.
All right. Stay there.**

Gets up and reads sign.

Emergency. Pull.

He pulls it. Nothing happens.

YOUNG GIRL

Shit.

YOUNG MAN

He turns back to her.

And, now like amorous birds of prey

YOUNG GIRL

He's completely nuts.

**Pry it open, the door! Pry it
open.**

YOUNG MAN

Rather at once our Time devour.

YOUNG GIRL

Desperately

**Listen pry the door open with
something.**

YOUNG MAN

I have a buckle on my belt. Here that'll do it.

YOUNG GIRL

Terrified

Ahh... Your trousers will stay up won't they?

YOUNG MAN

Than languish in his slow-chapt power. Of course.

He mimes forcing the door open with his belt buckle.
Success.

YOUNG GIRL

You opened it. Thank God.... Thank God...

YOUNG MAN

Slips belt back on.

Well now we can get out of here.

YOUNG GIRL

I think I am going to need help.

YOUNG MAN

(With joy)

Look. There's my phone. But do I pick it up? Is it nothing but a leash controlling me.

YOUNG GIRL

Are you all right? Could you... I...You're not going.... ?

YOUNG MAN

Not going to what?

YOUNG GIRL

To.... Oh... never mind? I don't know. Perhaps I misjudged you.

YOUNG MAN

That ankle looks damaged.

YOUNG GIRL

I'm sorry but you had me...
terrified. What was all that stuff
you were saying?

YOUNG MAN

A poem. Andrew Marvell. To his coy
Mistress. It's a love poem. I
learned it..

YOUNG GIRL

But. Amorous birds of prey sounded a
bit..

YOUNG MAN

He's asking her to seize the
moment. Don't wait. Life is too
short. Thorough the iron gates of
life.

YOUNG GIRL

What?

YOUNG MAN

Life is short and it's tough.

He pauses. Looks at her.

Here, I'll pull you up

YOUNG GIRL

It must be broken.

YOUNG MAN

I'll sit here and pull you up onto
the seat. Come on. Here.

He sits in the chair.

Let us roll all our sweetness into
one ball.

YOUNG GIRL

That sounds strangely beautiful.

YOUNG MAN

Put your arm round my neck.

He pulls her up. Looks in her eyes.

Though we cannot make our time
stand still, yet we will make him
run. May I kiss you.

YOUNG GIRL

Why not.

He kisses her gently and she does not resist.

They assume the position of Rodin's sculpture The Lovers and
kiss. As they kiss there's the sound of police sirens and
running feet and shouting.