

# ④ LEO / PHOEBE

(LEO HAS JUST KISSED  
PHOEBE)

PHOEBE. Please, Leo—Jason could come back in.

LEO. So? He's not your father.

PHOEBE. (*Moving away.*) Well, he is in a way.

LEO. Professionally?

PHOEBE. Every way. A writing collaboration is a very intimate relationship.

LEO. Yeah, I been meaning to ask you about that.

PHOEBE. (*Looks at him.*) This for the article?

LEO. I've already written the article. I wanted an excuse to see you.

PHOEBE. Why?

LEO. I got the hots for you.

PHOEBE. (*Flustered.*) Yes—well, I'm sorry you caught us at such a busy time.

LEO. Is it just that you've never learned to accept a compliment or do you really believe as a woman you're the pits? Every time I get personal, you change the subject.

PHOEBE. I'm sorry. (*Blushing.*) I'm just not used to such—an overt response to my—girlish charms.

LEO. I want you to marry me, Phoebe.

PHOEBE. (*Stares at him.*) Are you serious?

BELGOW



4-2

44.

ROMANTIC COMEDY

ACT II

LEO. Yes. (*She stares at him blankly.*) What's the matter? Am I being too overt?

\* PHOEBE. (*Sitting.*) No, I—I just need a moment to absorb this.

LEO. Okay. (*He waits.*) Absorbed it yet? (*She manages a nod.*) So about Jason. You been to bed with him?

PHOEBE. Why—why would you even think that?

LEO. I'm a pragmatist. You're out of town together. It's an old axiom—desire plus opportunity usually equals humpage. Am I being too personal?

PHOEBE. Yes—you are.

LEO. There's a reason. I've been assigned to the Paris bureau. I leave in five weeks and I want to take you with me. The point is, I can't stick around until the third act to see who gets the girl.

PHOEBE. I see.

LEO. So—you have sex together?

PHOEBE. Once. Well, not together.

LEO. (*Finally.*) That's some trick.

PHOEBE. (*Embarrassed.*) I mean it was once for me. None for Jason—(*He is staring at her.*) It's hard to explain. We were out of town with a show—in Chicago—and the play wasn't working—it never did work—we still don't know why. Anyway, we'd rewritten half the script, but it hadn't helped at all and we just didn't know how to fix it. One night we got back to the hotel, exhausted, our brains numb—totally depressed. We started to drink and Jason became quite drunk—and then—more out of frustration, I suppose—I don't know—he started to—to make love to me, but—right in the middle—he passed out.

LEO. In the middle?

PHOEBE. Well, if we're going to be technical, a third of the way through. It could have been a quarter. I'm only guessing, of course—I mean I have no means of comparison—with Jason, that is. (*She clears her throat.*) When I woke up, he was gone.