

NUDGE

Written by

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ACT ONE

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

A stretch of the city you'd visit for lunch but would make sure you lock your car and take your phone. Various small businesses line the street.

DARIYA BREWER, 32, t-shirt, baseball hat, and an intensity that comes from broken dreams and too much coffee, waves a sign for "Derek's Discount Tattoo - Double Coupon Tuesday".

ENRIQUE ORTIZ, 27, Derek's Discount Tattoo Apron, could be a stoner or an adjunct professor, leans against a door. Enrique watches Dariya spin, dance, and twirl with her sign.

ENRIQUE

No, no, it's way too big.

DARIYA

Oh, that's what she never said.

ENRIQUE

Ha, ha. Hilarious.

DARIYA

Thank you. Be sure to check out my one woman show "The Fallacy Of Free Market Solutions And Why They Can Suck My Ass". It's ground-breaking, contains partial nudity, not mine, makes you think, but not too hard, and totally worth the cover charge and two drink minimum.

ENRIQUE

Are you done?

DARIYA

You know I'm not.

ENRIQUE

The sign waving. It's way too big. You're taking it way too seriously.

DARIYA

When you're avoid real jobs you gotta put in a thousand percent.

ENRIQUE points across the street. Stepping out of the high end bakery shop "The Upper Crust" is MINDY TARLOP, 30, flower dress and stiff walk. Mindy carries a basket of muffins.

Mindy approaches a HOMELESS MAN, 60, frayed overcoat, torn beanie and a cardboard sign that reads "WILL WORK FOR FOOD."

Mindy grabs a muffin from the basket and throws it at the Homeless Man. She quickly begins pelting him incessantly.

MINDY
Get out of here!

Dariya and Enrique just watch.

DARIYA
That's none of our business.

Mindy continues throwing insults and muffins. The Homeless Man feebly throws his arms up.

HOMELESS MAN
Ow! The ones with nuts hurt!

DARIYA
OK, that's the line.

Dariya run over and blocks the muffin barrage with her twirling sign. Mindy, quiet rage in her eyes, stops.

MINDY
Excuse me, mind your own business.

DARIYA
Uh, this is my sign waving teacher.
So it is my business.

Dariya turns to the Homeless Man. She digs five dollars out of her pocket and gives them to the Homeless Man.

DARIYA (CONT'D)
Now, what was that one move?

The Homeless Man turns his sign to the side.

DARIYA (CONT'D)
Innovative.

Dariya turns back and smiles condescendingly.

MINDY
You people are parasites on this neighborhood. Why don't you go back to the crap hovels you came from?

Dariya's face hardens. Behind her a sedan with a furry, round, stuffed animal with bug-eyes hanging in the window, pulls up behind a truck.

DARIYA
Counter proposal. Why don't you go-

A sedan HONKS its horn.

DARIYA (CONT'D)
Yourself right up your-

The sedan HONKS its horn again.

DARIYA (CONT'D)
With a giant-double-

The sedan HONKS TWICE. The truck and sedan drive off.

MINDY
Well, I never!

DARIYA
You should. It will probably make
you less cranky.

Mindy walks off in a huff. The Homeless Man gathers all the muffins off of the ground as Dariya walks back to Enrique.

ENRIQUE
I saw you steal that five bucks
from the tip jar earlier.

DARIYA
And I gave it to a hobo. So it all
evens out.

ENRIQUE
Does it?

DARIYA
It does if you shut up about it.

Dariya spins her sign and accidentally hits her face. WHACK!

EXT. STREET - LATER

The sun sets as cars muscle through gridlock. Dariya, riding a bicycle, stops at an apartment building.

As Dariya walks up TERRY LAUFLIN, 32, wide shoulders stuffed in a fan football jersey, opens the door.

DARIYA
Hey babe.

TERRY
Did you cheat on me?

DARIYA
In the last two weeks?

TERRY
Ever?

DARIYA
Let's stick with two weeks.

TERRY
How could you?

DARIYA
It was spur of the moment. I mean, I haven't been in a threesome since college. And like, separately they weren't hot, but as a couple they were so... it just made sense.

TERRY
What? No. My co-worker Brandon.

DARIYA
Ooooooh... yes, that also happened.

Terry goes inside and SLAMS his door shut.

Dariya's head drops. She takes a deep breath.

Dariya bashes her bicycle into a trash can. Sticky garbage, a few bottles, and food wrappers spill out. Another small, furry, stuffed animal with bug-eyes rolls out with the trash.

Spying the bottles Dariya grabs them and yells to nobody.

DARIYA (CONT'D)
These go in the recycling!

Dariya puts the bottles in the green bin next to the spilled trash. She rides away from the rest of the mess.

INT. JACKSON'S BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

A crowded bar with PATRONS in top dollar thrift-store finds. They mingle and drink. A KAROKE DJ on a small stage watches as a YOUNG MAN sings a pop-hit from yesteryear.

YOUNG MAN
(singing)
I am a tiger... hunting for love-

Dariya sits on the bar nursing a fruity drink with an umbrella. The BAR TENDER restocks the maraschino cherries.

DARIYA

So I said, to his face, that I'm the one dumping you. Nice, huh?

BAR TENDER

Uh-huh.

DARIYA

I mean, you can't smother me, right? Like, I'm the kind of person who needs her space, you know?

BAR TENDER

I don't know... you.

DARIYA

Well then answer me this... am I cute enough to get out of paying for all these drinks?

BAR TENDER

Maybe the beers.

Dariya grimaces.

KAROKE DJ

Next up we have Kate with the new classic "You Done Me Wrong".

DARIYA

Uhhh, that's me... I promise I'll pay when I'm done.

Dariya rushes over the small stage and pushes a woman in a black dress, KATE, 25, away from the microphone.

KATE

That's my song.

DARIYA

Nope, mine. We probably picked the same song and have the same name.

Dariya and takes the microphone as the song queues up.

DARIYA (CONT'D)

(singing)

Why you gotta play me like that?
Like an extra game piece, you threw
to the matt. Wasn't I good enough?
Didn't I have the right stuff?

Suddenly another voice joins in and harmonizes with Dariya.

DARIYA (CONT'D)	ARGLE-BARGLE
I'm telling you with this song, you... done me wrong!	I'm telling you with this song, you... done me wrong!

Dariya looks over. On the stool sits a small, furry, bug-eyed creature singing it's heart out. This is ARGLE-BARGLE.

ARGLE-BARGLE (CONT'D)
You got to see the light. You got
to make it right! I'm gonna-

Argle-Bargle stops and turns to Dariya.

ARGLE-BARGLE (CONT'D)
Was I off key?

Dariya drop her mic and runs towards the bathroom door.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dariya busts into the bathroom that looks like it's just barely meeting health codes. She SLAMS the door shut and walks backwards while keeping her eyes on the door.

Dariya turns around and sees Argle-Bargle on the sink.

ARGLE-BARGLE
We didn't get a chance to do
intros. I'm Argle-Bargle.

Dariya steps back. Her hand touches a stall door. She spins into the toilet stall, closes the door, and locks it. CLICK.

INT. TOILET STALL - CONTINUOUS

Dariya enters. Argle-Bargle sits on the toilet tank.

ARGLE-BARGLE
This is cozy. And gross.

Dariya grabs a plunger standing next to the toilet and holds it like a samurai warrior.

ARGLE-BARGLE (CONT'D)
Is this your first time meeting a
five-dimensional cosmic being who
dwells on the four temporal paths?
I guess it can be pretty weird.

DARIYA

What... what do you want?

ARGLE-BARGLE

In terms you can understand? Um, I want you to be my avatar. To bring my message of peace and... can you put the plunger down? It's a very aggressive bit of body language.

Dariya slowly puts the plunger down.

DARIYA

OK...

ARGLE-BARGLE

But yeah, my representative, my girl Friday. Together I think we can do the little things and nudge humanity back onto the right path. Just like you did with the muffin hobo. I've got a whole list of to-do's. Check it!

Argle-Bargle motions to an old Trapper-Keeper on the wet floor. It opens itself revealing several loose pages with scribbles, notes, and drawings.

DARIYA

Why would I help you? Obvious figment of my imagination.

ARGLE-BARGLE

Oh, it's because you're perfect.

DARIYA

Like... as a person?

ARGLE-BARGLE

Ha, ha, ha, ha... oh no. It's because you're smart, desperate, capable, directionless, creative, and you're easily blackmailed.

A page flips over revealing several bullet pointed items.

DARIYA

You can't blackmail me. Because this is all an illusion brought on by stress, or drugs, or drugs I took for stress.

ARGLE-BARGLE

I'd check your phone.

BUZZ. Dariya reaches for her phone and reads a text.

DARIYA

A text from my Mom? "I know you broke my TV. Thanksgiving is off"... awww man, I love her mashed potatoes and gravy.

ARGLE-BARGLE

You help me out, I'll help you clear up an indiscretion or two. Maybe I'll throw a little enlightenment your way too.

DARIYA

What do you mean enlightenment?

Argle-Bargle blinks. The world falls away and is replaced by stars, math equations, mystical symbols, and bright colors.

DARIYA (CONT'D)

Ahhhh, I understand! I know the answers to everything! It's all connected! I can see... I can see-

The world returns back to normal. Dariya blinks and gasps.

DARIYA (CONT'D)

Where, where did... I can't... I-

Dariya hits the floor and vomits.

ARGLE-BARGLE

You missed the toilet. It's right there. Jeez. You gotta get enlightened slow, or it's puke city every time.

Dariya looks up.

ARGLE-BARGLE (CONT'D)

Anyway, let's get started. And the first thing on the list is to help out that baker Mindy. Neat, huh? So, ready to start your journey?

Dariya grabs Argle-Bargle and shoves him into the toilet. GURGLING and bubbles stream out from the toilet water.

Dariya reaches up and FLUSHES. The furry mass spin around and disappear. She quickly runs out of the stall.

END ACT ONE