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LOVE/SICK received its world premiere production at Portland Stage Company (Anita Stewart, Artistic Director; Cami Barrantes, Managing Director) in Portland, Maine, opening on March 29, 2013. It was directed by Sally Wood; the set design was by Anita Stewart; the costume design was by Kathleen Brown; the lighting design was by Bryon Winn; the sound design was by Chris Fitze; the incidental music was by Julian Fleisher; the production stage manager was Shane Van Vleit. The play was comprised of ten short plays, and the cast was as follows:

**OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE** ............ Abigail Killeen, David Mason
**THE SINGING TELEGRAM** ................. Torsten Hillhouse, Patricia Buckley

**WHAT??** .................................. David Mason, Torsten Hillhouse

**THE ANSWER** ..................... Abigail Killeen, Torsten Hillhouse

**UH-OH** .................................. David Mason, Patricia Buckley

**LUNCH AND DINNER** ..... Abigail Killeen, Torsten Hillhouse

**CHICKEN** ................................ Abigail Killeen, David Mason

**WHERE WAS I?** ................... Abigail Killeen, Patricia Buckley

**FORGOT** .............................. David Mason, Patricia Buckley

**DESTINY** ............................. Patricia Buckley, Torsten Hillhouse

LOVE/SICK had its first developmental production at High Point University (Ed Simpson, Chair) in High Point, North Carolina, opening on September 30, 2010. It was directed by Jay Putnam; the set and lighting designs were by Matthew Emerson; the costume design was by Ami Shupe; the sound design was by Daniel Horney; the production stage manager was Amanda Mayes. The play was comprised of eight short plays, and the cast was as follows:

**OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE** ..................... Anna-Parsons Charles, Dan Moldovan

**THE SINGING TELEGRAM** .... Maggie Jo Saylor, Daniel Harr

**THE ANSWER** ......................... Marie Ventrone, Nathan Ruffin

**UH-OH** ................................. Jennifer Arnold, Cody Russell

**LUNCH AND DINNER** ........ Cate Lightburn, Nathan Ruffin

**CHICKEN** ............................... Maggie Jo Saylor, Cody Russell

**FORGOT** ................................. Marie Ventrone, Daniel Harr

**DESTINY** ............................... Anna-Parsons Charles, Dan Moldovan
LOVE/SICK had its second developmental production at Ball State University (William Jenkins, Chair) in Muncie, Indiana, opening on November 1, 2012. It was directed by Eva Patton; the set design was by Bri Kuffell; the costume design was by Tyler Phillips; the lighting design was by Adam Kelly; the sound design was by Bryan Martina; the production stage manager was Caitie Noller. The play was comprised of ten short plays, and the cast was as follows:

- **OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE** ............... Cole Abell, Nancy Hale
- **THE SINGING TELEGRAM** ............ Katie Stofko, Edric Mitchell
- **WHAT?!?** .............................................. Jon Whitney, Brad Root
- **THE ANSWER** .......................... Bradford Reilly, Kara Schoenhofer
- **UH-OH** ......................................... Amber Price, Jack McFarlane
- **LUNCH AND DINNER** ............... Macie Tonn, Jon Whitney
- **CHICKEN** ...................................... Brad Root, Cynthia Nesbit
- **WHERE WAS I?** ........................ Sarah Paradise, Kara Schoenhofer
- **FORGOT** ............................................. Cole Abell, Katie Stofko
- **DESTINY** ........................................ Bradford Reilly, Macie Tonn

LOVE/SICK received a professional developmental production at Shadowland Theatre (Brendan Burke, Artistic Director) in Ellenville, New York, opening on June 21, 2013. It was directed by John Cariani and Brendan Burke; the set design was by Drew Francis; the costume design was by Holly Budd; the lighting design was by Chris Hallenbeck; the sound design was by Jeff Knapp; the incidental music was by Julian Fleisher; the production stage manager was Brittney Green. The play was comprised of ten short plays, and the cast was as follows:

- **OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE** ............... Katie Hartke, David Mason
- **THE SINGING TELEGRAM** ............ Daniel Robert Sullivan, Kathy McCafferty
- **WHAT?!?** .............................................. Daniel Robert Sullivan, David Mason
- **THE ANSWER** .......................... Katie Hartke, Daniel Robert Sullivan
- **UH-OH** ......................................... Kathy McCafferty, David Mason
- **LUNCH AND DINNER** ............... Daniel Robert Sullivan, Katie Hartke
- **CHICKEN** ...................................... Katie Hartke, David Mason
- **FORGOT** ............................................. David Mason, Kathy McCafferty
LOVE/SICK received a professional developmental production at the Public Theatre (Christopher Schario, Executive/Artistic Director; Janet Mitchko, Co-Artistic Director) in Lewiston, Maine, opening on October 1, 2013. It was directed by Christopher Schario; the set design was by Dan Bilodeau; the costume design was by Hannah J. Brown; the lighting design was by Bart Garvey; the sound design was by Larry French; the production stage manager was Lisa Bragdon. The play was comprised of ten short plays, and the cast was as follows:

OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE .......... William Peden, Heather Dilly
THE SINGING TELEGRAM ... Sarah Corey, Torsten Hillhouse
WHAT?!!? ......................... William Peden, Torsten Hillhouse
THE ANSWER ..................... Heather Dilly, William Peden
UH-OH ............................. Sarah Corey, Torsten Hillhouse
LUNCH AND DINNER ....... Heather Dilly, Torsten Hillhouse
CHICKEN .......................... Sarah Corey, William Peden
WHERE WAS I? ..................... Heather Dilly, Sara Corey
FORGOT ............................ William Peden, Heather Dilly
DESTINY ............................ Sarah Corey, Torsten Hillhouse

LOVE/SICK received a professional developmental production at Half Moon Theatre Company (Molly Katz, Executive Director; Kristy Grimes, Managing Director; Patty Wineapple, Producer) in Poughkeepsie, New York, opening on November 1, 2013. It was directed by Christopher V. Edwards; the set design and props were by Aaron Ethan Green; the costume design was by Charlotte Palmer; the lighting design was by Jared H. Goldstein; the sound design was by Jeff Knapp; the production stage manager was Michael Castillo. The play was comprised of ten short plays, and the cast was as follows:

OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE .......... Jennifer Skura, Jack Corcoran
THE SINGING TELEGRAM ...... Jack Corcoran, Shona Tucker
WHAT?!!? ........................... Jack Corcoran, Greg Skura
THE ANSWER ........................ Jennifer Skura, Greg Skura
UH-OH ............................... Amy Lemon, Steven Patterson
LUNCH AND DINNER .......... Jennifer Skura, Jack Corcoran
CHICKEN ........................................ Shona Tucker, Greg Skura
WHERE WAS I? ......................... Amy Lemon, Shona Tucker
FORGOT .................................... Steven Patterson, Amy Lemon
DESTINY ................................. Shona Tucker, Steven Patterson

LOVE/SICK received a professional developmental production at TheaterWorks Hartford (Rob Ruggiero, Artistic Director; Nicole LaFlair Nieves, General Manager) in Hartford, Connecticut, opening on May 29, 2014. It was directed by Amy Saltz; the set design was by Michael Schweickhardt; the costume design was by Harry Nadal; the lighting design was by Mary Jo Dondlinger; the sound design was by Fitz Patton; the production stage manager was Kate Cudworth. The play was comprised of ten short plays, and the cast was as follows:

OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE .......... Laura Woodward, Bruch Reed
THE SINGING TELEGRAM ..... Chris Thorn, Pascale Armand
WHAT?!? ................................. Chris Thorn, Bruch Reed
THE ANSWER .......................... Laura Woodward, Chris Thorn
UH-OH ........................................ Pascale Armand, Bruch Reed
LUNCH AND DINNER .......... Laura Woodward, Bruch Reed
CHICKEN .................................... Pascale Armand, Bruch Reed
FORGOT ................................. Chris Thorn, Laura Woodward
WHERE WAS I? ....................... Laura Woodward, Pascale Armand
DESTINY ................................. Laura Woodward, Chris Thorn

LOVE/SICK was given a professional developmental production by Royal Family Productions (Christine Henry, Artistic Director) at the Royal Family Performing Arts Space (Evan Storey and Andy Theodorou, Producers) in New York City. It was directed by Chris Henry; the movement direction was by JoAnn M. Hunter; the set design was by Shannon Rednour; the costume design was by Lux Haac; the lighting design was by Lucrecia Briceno; the sound design was by Danny Erdberg; the incidental music was by Barton Kuebler, Lars Jacobsen, and Chris Henry; the production stage manager was Adrian Peña. The play was in its current form, and the cast was as follows:
LOVE/SICK received a professional developmental production at Arc Stages (Adam David Cohen, Artistic Director; Marlene Canapi, Managing Director; Ann Shankman, President) in Pleasantville, New York, opening on September 25, 2015. It was directed by Stephanie Kovacs Cohen; the set design and props were by Ann Shankman; the costume design was by Libby Brennescholtz; the lighting design was by Adam Cohen; the sound design was by Stephanie Kovacs Cohen; the production stage manager was Emily C. Rolston. The play was in its current form, and the cast was as follows:

MAN, ANDY, BILL, MARK ................................. Collin Smith
WOMAN, CELIA, KELLY, JILL, ABBIE ............... Katie Hartke
SINGING TELEGRAM MAN, BREN, KEITH, KEVIN, JAKE .............................. David Lanson
LOUISE, SARAH, LIZ, EMILY .................. Caroline Kinsolving
THE PLAYS

LOVE/SICK is a one-act, nine-play cycle about love and loss—but mostly loss. Each play has its own arc and tells the story of a couple at a crossroads in their relationship. Since each relationship is more advanced than the previous relationship, a larger arc emerges and the individual plays work together to create a satisfying whole—one that chronicles the lifecycle of a typical relationship from meeting through divorce…and afterwards.

**The plays:**
1. “Obsessive Impulsive”
2. “The Singing Telegram”
3. “What?!?”
4. “The Answer”
5. “Uh-Oh”
6. “Lunch and Dinner”
7. “Forgot”
8. “Where Was I?”
9. “Destiny”

LOVE/SICK works best as an 85-minute intermissionless event. If an intermission is desired, please take it after the fifth play, “Uh-Oh.”
CHARACTERS

1. Obsessive Impulsive
   A WOMAN and a MAN who fall in love at first sight.

2. The Singing Telegram
   A SINGING TELEGRAM MAN who delivers a singing telegram to an enthusiastic woman, LOUISE OVERBEE.

3. What??
   BEN, a guy who is surprised that he has fallen in love, and ANDY, the sweet guy he has fallen in love with.

4. The Answer
   KEITH and CELIA, a groom and bride.

5. Uh-Oh
   SARAH, a woman with questions, and BILL, her content husband of a year and a half.

6. Lunch and Dinner
   KELLY and MARK, a successful couple, married for seven years.

7. Forgot
   JILL, a woman who wants more than she has, and KEVIN, her husband of nine years, who is happy with what he has.

8. Where Was I?
   ABBIE, a hard-working stay-at-home mom, and LIZ, her hard-working wife.

9. Destiny
   JAKE, a recently divorced man, and EMILY, a recently divorced woman.
CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

LOVE/SICK is a play for four actors (2M, 2W). With a cast of four, all actors should be in their 30s/early 40s.

LOVE/SICK can also be a play for as many as eighteen actors (9M, 9W). Using a larger cast affords an opportunity to use actors of all ages. Since the characters in the earlier plays are quite innocent, actors playing roles in the first few plays can be in their 20s and early 30s. As the play progresses, the characters become more worldly, so actors cast in the later plays should be late-30s and could be in their 40s and—in the last play—in their 50s.

The cast should reflect the increasing diversity in America and its suburbs.

TIME

7:30 p.m. on a Friday night in June.

PLACE

An alternate suburban reality.
NOTES FOR ACTORS, DIRECTORS, AND READERS

(If you are involved in a production of LOVE/SICK, please see the additional notes at the back of this volume.)

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, “The sentimental person thinks things will last—the romantic person has a desperate confidence that they won’t.” I am a romantic. And so are the characters in LOVE/SICK. They are desperately confident that things are going to go bad. But they fight like heck to make sure that they don’t.

LOVE/SICK is a romantic play. It is not a sentimental play.


LOVE/SICK is a realistically absurd play. Play it for real. Even though it’s absurd.

LOVE/SICK is a very funny tragedy. Make sure it’s very funny. And very sad.

Notes on Punctuation:
You will see some unusual punctuation in the text.

> at the end of a line means keep talking—don’t wait for the other actor’s line.

// inside an actor’s line is a signal to the next speaker that s/he should start speaking his/her next line.

A dash (—) at the end of a speech means that the next speaker cuts off the current speaker.

An ellipsis (…) at the end of a speech means that the character speaking trails off into thought. The next speaker should not interrupt, but should respond to the trailing off.

Commas after end punctuation are to encourage pace.

Text in brackets [ ] is not to be spoken—it is there for information.

The stage direction (Receives and processes.) means just that. It’s not a full beat, but a sorting through of what’s going on or what’s just been said.
LOVE/SICK

OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE

It’s 7:30 on a Friday night in late June in an alternate suburban reality. Lights up on the SuperCenter.* A Man and a Woman push shopping carts through the SuperCenter consulting shopping lists. This may seem pathetic (it is a Friday night, after all), but places like Walmart and Costco are the places where people are most likely to (almost) find love in over 20 states.** In a flash, the Man and the Woman catch sight of each other, gasp (because they take each other’s breath away), rush to each other, and, from out of nowhere, kiss—a big, long, sloppy, passionate—at least eight seconds!—kiss. They finally break, horrified by what they have just done.

MAN and WOMAN. (In unison, to each other. [Note: This must be simultaneous and rapid-fire. Actors: In these unison sequences, you’re speaking and listening and responding—all at the same time. Make sure that while you speak, you are also listening and responding to each question/statement. You’re taking in the same exact information you’re providing—at the exact same time.]) Oh, my gosh!!! I am so sorry!—No, it’s not you!—I know that’s not an appropriate thing for a person to do, and I can totally explain why I just did that: You see, I’m obsessive impulsive, and—(Each receives and processes what the other just said and then asks:) WHAT?!? (Each quickly receives and processes the question and then answers.) I’m obsessive impulsive! (Each quickly receives and processes this extraordinary information—that someone else in the world might actually be obsessive impulsive!—

* The SuperCenter is like a Walmart or a Target or a Costco.

** [http://flowingdata.com/2013/02/22/map-of-craigslist-missed-connections/](http://flowingdata.com/2013/02/22/map-of-craigslist-missed-connections/)
and then responds.) No you’re not! It’s an extremely rare disorder!, You can’t possibly be obsessive impulsive! (Each quickly receives and processes this information and then responds.) Well—I am! (Each quickly receives and processes this response and then asks:) You are?! (Each quickly receives and processes this question and then answers.) YES! (Each quickly receives and processes this answer and then honestly and excitedly asks:) Are you sure? (Each quickly receives and processes this question and then answers.) YES!! (Each quickly receives and processes this answer and then responds.) No! No—no, you’re probably mistaking it with being obsessive compulsive— (Each quickly receives and processes; then, incredulous and excited:) What?—No! I’m not [mistaking it with being obsessive compulsive]!, I’m not [mistaking it with being obsessive compulsive]! I’m obsessive impulsive, I’m obsessive impulsive! > WOMAN. I’ve been diagnosed!!! MAN. Me, too!!! WOMAN. Clinically!!! MAN. Me, too! WOMAN. And that’s why I just did what I just did to you in the middle of // the SuperCenter! MAN. Yeah, and why I just did what I just did, I’m obsessive impulsive too! WOMAN. Have you been diagnosed?!? MAN. Yes!! WOMAN. Clinically?!! MAN. Yes!!! (They kiss—big, long kiss—at least five seconds. They break.) MAN and WOMAN. (In unison; they’re breathless.) I’m sorry!… It’s just that— (Quick earth-shattering discovery.) —I think I’ve fallen in love with you at first sight! (Joy!) For real?!! Yeah!! Me too!! > WOMAN. And I keep wanting to kiss you! > MAN. Me, too! WOMAN. And I’m just acting on that impulse! > MAN. Yes! WOMAN. (Breaking away.) And that’s something I’m not supposed to do. > MAN. Yeah, I know, I know! WOMAN. As an obsessive impulsive person, I have to guard against that, // acting on impulse like that. MAN. I know, me too, yeah! There’s a lot of stuff that, as an obsessive impulsive person, that you’ve gotta guard against doing—acting on, >
MAN and WOMAN. and falling in love—
WOMAN. Yeah!
MAN and WOMAN. —especially at first sight—
WOMAN. —yeah—is one of those things, because of the consequences, >
MAN. Yeah!
WOMAN. you have to weigh the consequences, // and—
MAN. Yeah!, And as a clinically diagnosed obsessive impulsive,
I’m somehow lacking that capacity to discern consequences.
WOMAN. Exactly— >
MAN and WOMAN. (In unison. [Note: What follows is a recitation
of the suggested course of treatment for the disorder, and its purpose is to
explain to the other person that there’s hope for improvement. The meaning
here is, “I could get better!”]) But Obsessive Impulsive Disorder is
treatable through proper diet and exercise, therapy and counseling,
medication, and having a loved one watch over you every single
moment of the day. >
MAN. (Indicating where his brother is.) my brother’s over
in automotive.
WOMAN. (Indicating where her sister is.) my sister’s over in
home improvement.
MAN and WOMAN. (In unison; amazed.) Wow. You really do
have it, don’t you? (They kiss again with reckless abandon—six-second
kiss. Then:)
WOMAN. (Breaking away; horrified and extremely apologetic.) I’m
sorry!
MAN. Yeah, me // too.
WOMAN. That was a lapse, // and >
MAN. Yeah, you don’t have to explain!
WOMAN. lapses are gonna happen with me, because my OIR—
my // Obsessive Impulsive Ratio—
MAN. Obsessive Impulsive Ratio! I know!, You don’t have to spell it out for me!, I understand!
WOMAN. Well, it’s very high, so what keeps happening [all this
kissing]—is gonna keep happening, ’cause I’ve only been in treat-
ment for three years // and—
MAN. Well, that’s not a real long time! I’ve only been in for seven
and my OIR isn’t exactly low!
WOMAN. Well, what is it?
MAN. One to thirty-three.*

* This is the written-out version of the ratio 1:33.
WOMAN. *(Very impressed.)* You have an Obsessive Impulsive Ratio of one to thirty-three?!?!
MAN. *(A little proud.)* Yeah.
WOMAN. That’s amazing! >
MAN. Thanks…
WOMAN. Wow!, So for every thirty-three things that you think of to do, that you just…wanna do, // you only do—
MAN. Yeah, I only do one now, due largely to the diet and exercise regimen, the therapy and counseling, the medication, and my brother.
WOMAN. Well, that’s just great.
MAN. Yeah, but you know, I used to be a one to one!
WOMAN. No!
MAN. Yup.
WOMAN. Me, too!
MAN. Really?
WOMAN. Yeah! I did everything I thought of to do.
MAN. You’d think a thing, you’d do it.
WOMAN. Yes!
MAN. Exhausting, isn’t it?
WOMAN. You have no idea.
MAN. I think I do!
WOMAN. Oh! You do!
MAN. Because I understand!!
WOMAN. You understand!!
MAN. I understand!!! >
MAN and WOMAN. *(In unison.)* You understand! She/he understands!!! *(Jumping up and down and joyfully proclaiming to the world.)* SHE/HE UNDERSTANDS ME!!!! *(Mortified freeze.)* Oh-my-gosh! *(To each other, mortified.)* I’m so sorry about that! I just wanted to jump up and shout to the whole wide world that you understand me because no one ever has before! Who are you?!? Where did you come from?!? YOU! ARE! AWESOME!! *(Into a crazy kiss—that takes them to the floor and all over each other—twelve seconds. They break. Frozen, horrified little beat.)* Oh-my-gosh! I’m sorry! *(They get up, collect themselves, check out the store to make sure no one saw, and apologize to other shoppers who may have seen them.)* Sorry! >
MAN. Sorry! Sorry…
WOMAN. Sorry about that. *(Relief.)* I don’t think anyone saw— *(She spots her sister.)*
MAN. Yeah, we’re clear!
WOMAN. Oh-my-gosh! >
MAN. What?
WOMAN. I think my sister saw me!—I have to go! *She starts to go.*
MAN. No—no—no, // don’t go!
WOMAN. No—she only lets me come to the SuperCenter on Friday nights when it seems like I’m getting better, and this is not better—*She realizes that her sister didn’t see!* Wait—wait—wait!
MAN. What?
WOMAN. She’s…going into electronics!!!
MAN. Oh!
WOMAN. She didn’t see!!!
MAN. All right!! So stay!!!
WOMAN. All right! *She suddenly kisses the Man quickly.* Sorry!
MAN. No! [Don’t be!] *He kisses the Woman—and the kiss almost becomes tender. He suddenly breaks away.* I’m so sorry I keep doing that!
WOMAN. No—it’s me! It’s me! My OIR is only one to thirteen—you’re the one at one to thirty-three! // It’s me!
MAN. Hey—hey—hey! Don’t compare! You’ve only been in treatment less than half as long as me—you’re doin’ great. This is just a rough patch!
WOMAN. I don’t know—
MAN. Check this out: There’s a guy who’s been in treatment for thirteen years—not even twice as long as me—and he has an OIR of one to one billion two hundred and seven million nine hundred and nineteen thousand six hundred and forty-six.
WOMAN. *In awe.* Really.
MAN. Yeah.
WOMAN. So he’s…normal.
MAN. Yeah. He doesn’t do anything anymore.
WOMAN. Wow.
MAN. Yeah. So let him inspire you. Stick to the program. It’s really good. It’s really helped me get my life together. *He suddenly kisses the Woman; he breaks away, upset.* Argh—even though right now it feels like everything’s falling apart. >
WOMAN. I know!—
MAN. *Honest and true.* Because I really do think I fell in love with you the second I saw you!
WOMAN. Me, too. *She kisses the Man quick.* And, since then, I
LOVE/SICK
by John Cariani

2-9M, 2-9W (doubling, flexible casting)

A darker cousin to Almost, Maine, John Cariani’s LOVE/SICK is a collection of nine slightly twisted and completely hilarious short plays. Set on a Friday night in an alternate suburban reality, this 80-minute romp explores the pain and the joy that comes with being in love. Full of imperfect lovers and dreamers, LOVE/SICK is an unromantic comedy for the romantic in everyone.

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