

Terminal App

(Comedy Drama)

by
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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Urban	Friendly. Easygoing	25 to 35	Male
Daria	Executive type.	50	Female
Doctor	Serious. Concerned	60+	Any

A table and two chairs sit downstage. There is a newspaper and a gift wrapped box. A man sits alone at the table reading the newspaper, the gift sits on the table. A doctor sits alone at another space at a table for one.

The man turns towards the Doctor

DOCTOR

You're not dying.

URBAN

Doctors are usually happy when they tell patients that.

DOCTOR

(Not amused) This app is designed for people with a terminal illness.

URBAN

I want to date someone who's terminal.

DOCTOR

You want to date someone who's dying?

URBAN

Is that strange?

Woman enters and man turns his attention to her.

DARIA

Are you Urban?

URBAN

(Warmly) Daria?

DARIA

You're not late.

URBAN

I wanted to make a good first impression.

DARIA

I was prepared to wait.

URBAN

I know punctuality is important to you.

DARIA

And you mentioned you are often late.

URBAN

I've been sitting here twenty minutes.

DARIA

You're serious about making a good first impression.

URBAN

Of course, and so what if I input our meet time as 60 minutes ago.

DARIA

(Amused) Forty minutes late to be twenty minutes early. If you're not punctual at least your creative.

URBAN

I enjoy giving people the opportunity to practice forgiveness.

DARIA

This is an authentic newspaper isn't it?

URBAN

Have you seen one before?

DARIA

They were around when I was a child, but I've never looked at one.

URBAN

(Offers the newspaper) Be my guest. My grandparents saved a ton of stuff. When they died my parents wanted to burn it all.

DARIA

They kept "things?"

URBAN

They were traditionalists, wouldn't digitalize anything they didn't have to. Did you know that books smell when they get old?

DARIA

Really?

URBAN

(About the newspaper) Be careful, the ink rubs off.

It's so light.
DARIA

Look at page 28.
URBAN

Manga?
DARIA

They were called comics or funnies.
URBAN

These are supposed to be funny?
DARIA

Like everything else, things change.
URBAN

Woman turns to Doctor

DOCTOR
Six months is a likely prognosis. (Pause) The Evolutionary Guide Society have been notified that you're being told today. You'll hear from them. Tonight.

That's sudden.
DARIA

DOCTOR
The protocol is in place to ensure final days are fully supported. Their assistance in preparing for death is not required but highly recommended. They are supportive.

There's no mistake?
DARIA

DOCTOR
Experience shows that the sooner one accepts the reality the sooner one can mentally prepare for death. (Pause) The Evolutionary Guides will handle all aspects of grief counseling and provide any required emotional support.

I see.
DARIA

DOCTOR
You have no reason to be concerned. Death is very natural.

Woman turns to Man

URBAN

I'm big on retro.

DARIA

I see that. You didn't enhance your profile pic.

URBAN

I was hoping to off-line.

DARIA

So was I, but I still enhanced.

URBAN

If I'd enhanced and then when we off-lined you were disappointed, not a great start to a relationship.

DARIA

You're disappointed in me.

URBAN

Not at all. I only off-line people when they get my interest for who they are, not what they look like. But, I do like what I see. Are you disappointed in me?

DARIA

No, but there is something different about you. There's a feeling. Something is different isn't there?

URBAN

Honesty?

DARIA

(Realizing) Honesty. You look more honest off-line than in your profile.

Man turns to Doctor

URBAN

I've been diagnosed with Consecutive Monogamy.

DOCTOR

I see that in your file.

URBAN

You're a skeptic.

DOCTOR

I'm required to take into account all recognized medical conditions. I'm not sure how Consecutive Monogamy permits you special privileges with regards to accessing the Terminal App. Consecutives aren't famous for their concern for others now are they.

URBAN

You think the love we feel isn't honest?

Woman turns to Man

URBAN

I did alter my pic.

DARIA

I can't see how.

URBAN

I took the facial characteristics traditionally connected to untrustworthiness, eyes closer together, sloping forehead, chin less pronounced .

DARIA

You enhanced your profile pic to look more dishonest.

URBAN

Less honest, not more dishonest.

DARIA

Interesting distinction.

URBAN

But you like what you see?

DARIA

Very.

URBAN

Me too.

Woman turns to doctor

DARIA

What can I expect?

DOCTOR

Your situation is quite fortunate. You'll experience good health until things take a sudden turn.

DARIA

And after the sudden turn?

DOCTOR

A swift change in condition. Very swift. Days, sometimes hours. But the important thing to remember is there is a great deal of time before that occurs. To tidy up any affairs. It's best to avoid leaving messy details for others, don't you agree?

DARIA

It would be best to avoid messy details.

Woman turns to Man

DARIA

I've never met anyone through a dating app before.

URBAN

But you've used them?

DARIA

Everyone's browsed, but nothing serious.

URBAN

Lonely Saturday night window shopping?

DARIA

No.

URBAN

Really?

DARIA

(Laughing) Sunday mornings.

URBAN

And I'm the first person you've met.

DARIA

I've preferred virtual relationships.

URBAN

Safe but sterile.

DARIA

They met my needs.

URBAN

Virtual relationships are so neat and tidy.

DARIA

The lack of connection is liberating. Off-lining means I have to focus on another, accommodate another, be concerned for another.

URBAN

People can be messy.

Man turns towards Doctor

DOCTOR

Those with a terminal diagnosis need clear and structured emotional support. This is a time of extreme mental dissonance and the terminal need assistance focusing their mind, preparing for passing.

URBAN

Neat and tidy.

DOCTOR

Judging others adds nothing constructive.

URBAN

Sorry.

DOCTOR

The terminal have many decisions to make and often those left behind, unfairly, are left with feelings of anxiety and guilt. The protocols in place are to ensure that death is a positive for the terminal, as well as for all involved. There is no reason for anyone to suffer negative consequences. Because of a passing.

URBAN

Very compassionate.

Man turns towards Woman

DARIA

Social Networks are proven to enhance positive social experiences. I can't imagine the disruption at work if we were to enact team building exercises off-line. What a waste of energy navigating all those individual feelings.

URBAN

But for romance?

DARIA

Romance? You are retro.

URBAN

I told you I'm an old fashioned guy.

DARIA

You prefer in-person. I don't think I've ever said, "in person" before. It's such an awkward phrase. Shouldn't the opposite be "out of person?"

URBAN

You like saying "in person." Starting to enjoy the retro feel of it. See this has more opportunity for getting to know someone.

DARIA

There are people I've worked with that I've never off-lined with.

URBAN

That's pretty normal.

DARIA

Off-line has more risk.

URBAN

And more reward.

DARIA

There's so much emotional uncertainty in person. Don't you worry you'll say something wrong, have an emotional impulse that you can't delete or mute?

URBAN

I've been a jerk, but, people are pretty understanding.

DARIA

What about the people that aren't?

URBAN
You're pretty negative.

DARIA
Oh.

URBAN
Sorry, I didn't mean to...

DARIA
No. It's alright, I need to hear that. I don't want to be negative. I'm looking for a different perspective.

URBAN
What kind of perspective?

DARIA
I want to do things. For myself. To feel everything.

URBAN
You want to be selfish.

Man turns to Doctor

DOCTOR
Six months is an accurate estimate.

DARIA
So, no variability?

DOCTOR
I'm experienced with those in your situation, and they all follow a familiar path.

DARIA
I see.

DOCTOR
It is best to explore experiences that bring you emotional comfort.

DARIA
It sounds very pastoral.

DOCTOR
Coming to peace with your circumstance is highly recommended. For the good of all. No point being rash.

Man turns to woman.

DARIA

I guess I've got time to be selfish now.

URBAN

You did say you're not working.

DARIA

Right.

URBAN

Not a choice?

DARIA

(Laughs) I suppose we're going to have a lot of awkward conversations.

URBAN

I don't feel awkward. Your profile says you've got six months till you die, and you're looking for adventure and companionship. I'm looking for passion, I'm pretty selfish, and like all foods except blue ones.

DARIA

Blue food?

URBAN

I can't think of any, but I thought I'd come across as superficial if I didn't have any boundaries, so that's mine.

DARIA

That's very odd.

URBAN

Odd or honest?

DARIA

Honesty makes everything seem simple to talk about.

URBAN

Have you had a lot of awkward conversations?

DARIA

Situations. Well, one situation. An offer of religious support.

URBAN

Did they ask you to convert?

DARIA

Someone left literature on my desk outlining a proper religious ritual for body disposal.

URBAN

I didn't know there was a "proper" ritual.

DARIA

All the hair on my body has to be shaved off and my body cleansed with vinegar before body disposal.

URBAN

(Laughing) You'd smell like a french fry.

DARIA

(Laughing) So you see the up side.

URBAN

Are you considering it?

DARIA

Not at all, though I did start investigating options for remains disposal.

URBAN

Any decisions?

DARIA

You're really interested aren't you?

URBAN

Planning your own disposal ceremony is like winning a lottery, everybody dreams about it, but no one gets to see it happen.

DARIA

What about you? Do you have a disposal ceremony wish list?

URBAN

Not a lot of detail, but I know I want music. I have a list of five songs from each decade of my life, those songs will be played while people are hanging out at my house, with all my resources directed towards food and booze.

DARIA

That's a lot of detail.

URBAN

I keep changing my song choices. What about you? What's going to happen.

DARIA

You really aren't concerned that I'm dying are you?

URBAN

No. I like you. You're easy to talk to and you've got a power-edge thing going on that I'm into.

DARIA

A power-edge?

URBAN

You're an executive. Type A. Confident, at that level where you don't even need to try. Real confidence comes across relaxed and I like relaxed.

DARIA

All the labels I lived with stopped being important once I got diagnosed. But I like "power-edge".

URBAN

My first gift to you.

DARIA

Thank you.

URBAN

No labels means you can start fresh. Picking your own.

DARIA

Yeah.

URBAN

So what label's important to you now?

DARIA

Alive.

Man turns towards doctor.

URBAN

People who use your app are looking for life.

DOCTOR

No, their life is ending, the app doesn't change that. It is intended to help them see their death rationally.

URBAN

People who are dying aren't looking at dying, they're looking at living.

DOCTOR

They need the support of those around them.

URBAN

If they're using this app do they have people around them?

Man turns to Woman

DARIA

There was one other situation.

URBAN

Awkward one?

DARIA

An intern I'd hired for the summer program approached me while I was heading into my office one morning. He handed me a cup of coffee, and told me he was sorry to hear of my illness, and offered help if I needed anything.

URBAN

That was nice?

DARIA

I looked at the coffee a long time before having him fired. I watched him being escorted out of the building while I standing in my office drinking that coffee

URBAN

Wow.

DARIA

He was 26, doing his masters in communications. Bright guy. I off-lined him during the interview process because there was something about him. It's funny, but I thought of him as the future. Not the future generations, but the actual future.

URBAN

He crossed a line.

DARIA

He did. (Beat) You disapprove of what I did.

URBAN

How did your colleagues take you firing him?

DARIA

They agreed. Without hesitation. He became personal, and deserved to be corrected.

URBAN

Oh.

DARIA

Corporate life can seem barbaric. We follow rules, and those not following the rules don't succeed.

URBAN

Maybe you did him a favor.

DARIA

I thought about him all night.

URBAN

And.

DARIA

He spoke to me as though I was a person who needed help.

URBAN

What's his name?

DARIA

Farhan Stills. "Don't call me Far, my name is Farhan."

URBAN

Do you regret firing Farhan?

DARIA

No.

URBAN

It sounds inhumane.

DARIA

I quit.

URBAN

Your company?

DARIA

The day after firing Farhan Stills I got a call from the chief executive assuring me that the rest of my time with the firm would proceed without any encroachment on my personal life.

URBAN

Encroachment on your personal life?

DARIA

(Laughing) Encroachment.

URBAN

I want to encroach on your personal life.

Woman turns towards Doctor

DOCTOR

Your Evolutionary Guide will be chosen to fit your preferred aesthetic life. You are free to make any changes, of course, but in my experience, life-changes made by terminals rarely result in positive outcomes.

DARIA

Evolutionary. I suppose I've lost in Darwin's game of the fittest.

DOCTOR

You should be very proud of all you've achieved. You leave behind an outstanding legacy of accomplishments.

DARIA

And now I require a guide.

DOCTOR

They're efficient.

DARIA

I would expect so.

DOCTOR

And suitably compassionate.

DARIA

Oh?

DOCTOR

You specify the degree of compassion before any interaction occurs. They even offer off-line interaction if that's something you might like.

DARIA

That's comforting.

Woman turns to Man.

DARIA

I've done some reading on Consecutive Monogamy.

URBAN

It doesn't require you to shave your body or be dipped in vinegar.

DARIA

Your interest in that is frightening, yet attractive.

URBAN

I promise, I'll never ask you to do anything with vinegar.

DARIA

Nothing I've read about your condition mentions vinegar.

URBAN

Most people assume it's all about sex.

DARIA

(Joking) It isn't?

URBAN

(Laughing) Are you disappointed?

DARIA

Is it a coincidence that men are 75% more likely to be diagnosed as consecutive monogamists?

URBAN

(Joking) Sexist? I didn't think you'd be the type.

DARIA

It's the research.

URBAN

Does that matter to you right now?

DARIA

No. (Pause) I'm surprised to hear myself say that, but no, it really doesn't matter to me.

URBAN

Because what matters now is-

DARIA

Me. I'm what matters now.

Woman turns to Doctor

DOCTOR

Everything you need is provided for.

DARIA

Everything I need.

DOCTOR

Absolutely.

DARIA

What about what I want?

DOCTOR

Pardon?

Woman turns to man.

URBAN

It's just like singular monogamy, except there's a clear end date.

DARIA

I've never understood singular monogamy.

URBAN

The idea of falling in love with one person for life sounds so comforting.

DARIA

You actually fall in love?

URBAN

I don't know how other people fall in love, so I can't compare. But it's an intense feeling. Everything I see or eat or do is about the other person.

It's funny to think people go to work or even eat when they're in love. Consecutive Monogamy was categorized an obsessive-compulsive behavior for a long time, but now it's accepted as a neurological condition.

DARIA

Does the love end abruptly? Is there any warning?

URBAN

Have you ever been in love?

DARIA

Love is for the young.

URBAN

They have nothing to lose.

DARIA

You're funny, now answer my question. How does your love end?

URBAN

Pretty normal, I guess. I wake up one morning and find I'm more interested in my breakfast than my partner. They can always tell, which amazes me.

DARIA

Your love terminates at that point?

URBAN

It takes about a week. There's usually some fighting, always over pointless things. Sometimes there's intensely emotional sex, but the relationship's effectively over.

DARIA

Has it ever reversed itself?

URBAN

Nope. Sometimes it ends on friendly terms, but that's usually with male partners.

DARIA

The research said it was non-gender specific.

URBAN

Physically I prefer women, but I can fall in love with anyone. It's the person.

DARIA

And after your love ends?

URBAN

It's over. I have positive feelings, but not strongly emotional. Like the way you remember a pet from childhood. Fond memories, but nothing that stops me from living my life.

DARIA

What happens if the other person ends the relationship before your cycle ends?

URBAN

I'm totally vulnerable. I won't eat or sleep, I can do a lot of self-harm, gambling, drinking, drugs. That's why it's a disability. I get to a hospital fast and I'm sedated until my cycle ends. I'm not my usual charming self.

Man turns to Doctor

DOCTOR

You're registered as a Consecutive Monogamist, which raises questions about whether you should be allowed near terminal patients.

URBAN

My condition is a neurological, not a mental illness.

DOCTOR

I'm not aiding your sexual gratification.

URBAN

If my condition was sexual then the cycle would be days not months. I hope you don't see my condition as trivial, it's not trivial to me.

DOCTOR

If your obsession ends before the patient terminates you'll be putting the patient into a state of grief. You'll be robbing them of the experience of positive passing.

Man turns to Woman

URBAN

How are you going to die?

DARIA

I haven't decided yet. When I was a child I used to day dream about having a natural death. No planning, just falling asleep one night and never waking up.

URBAN

Sounds nice.

DARIA

My Evolutionary Guide says I can experience that.

URBAN

Are you considering other options?

DARIA

I've been reading about people surrounded by loved ones and holding someone's hand...

URBAN

Very traditional.

DARIA

Appeals to your retro sense?

URBAN

Not really. Dying's the last personal act a person can have. I'm not sure I'd want others there.

DARIA

Do you have "loved ones"?

URBAN

I have friends, but it's hard to be friends with me because when I fall in love I'm so focused.

DARIA

I have no one.

Woman turns to Doctor

DOCTOR

Your data shows you have no familial relationships.

DARIA

I have no existing relationships.

DOCTOR

Terminals may often exaggerate their condition, so you'll excuse me wanting to clarify. Do you-

DARIA

I have no existing relationships.

DOCTOR

There is a socialization app we've developed that might interest you.

Woman turns to Man

URBAN

You know my cycle is six months.

DARIA

And, I've got just under six months of health left.

URBAN

If you die while I'm in love....

DARIA

You'd grieve?

URBAN

Yes.

DARIA

(Lighthearted) I'm intrigued by the idea of someone grieving over me out of love.

URBAN

Yeah?

DARIA

You're afraid to grieve.

URBAN

Yeah.

DARIA

Have you grieved before?

URBAN

I've never had anyone die, but I have been rejected before my cycle is up.

DARIA

Is it bad?

URBAN

Yeah it is. And if a lover dies....well, a lot of Consecutives do the self-ending ritual....

DARIA

I don't want you to do that.

URBAN

Oh good, because neither do I.

DARIA

If we...if we work out, then?

URBAN

You have control over your ending, I don't.

DARIA

So, if I die before your love cycle ends, you are in danger, but if your cycle ends before I die?

URBAN

Well, it won't kill you. The question you have to decide is do you want love before you die knowing the love might end?

DARIA

Better to have loved and lost?

Woman turns towards Doctor

DARIA

Only those with a terminal illness can use the app?

DOCTOR

We want to ensure you're meeting those who understand what you're going through.

DARIA

What is that exactly?

DOCTOR

Passing should be a positive experience.

DARIA

When my father was diagnosed I was 21. I took time off school and moved home to support him.

DOCTOR

Your father was lucky to have you.

DARIA

He lamented about everything he hadn't done. He'd fight with my mother over the cost of everything. His disposal ceremony was dreary. She was very understanding. She only cried when he was alive.

DOCTOR

The stress of dealing with this can be difficult.

DARIA

He died the way he'd lived. Wasted opportunities, looking for what he couldn't do. My mother beside, him holding his hand to the end, trying to manage his emotions.

DOCTOR

That sounds difficult.

DARIA

I don't need someone to help me die, I want someone to help me live.

Woman turns towards Man

URBAN

Sex?

DARIA

What?

URBAN

Your profile says someone to help you touch unexplored territories.

DARIA

And to you that means sex?

URBAN

What unexplored territories do you want touching?

DARIA

The amazon rain forest, the Northwest Passage, the Galapagos, the pyramids?

URBAN

You want to live your last six month as a tourist? Waiting in airports, lining up for luggage? Are you going to take pics to look at in your old age?

DARIA

A little brutal.

URBAN

It's better to drink champagne at home than water in a tourist dump.

DARIA

You forget, I have money. First class tickets to Paris?

URBAN

Right. Sex.

DARIA

Paris doesn't mean sex.

URBAN

Listen high-powered-executive-woman, every place you named has a "the" before it, 'the Galapagos.' Places that need a "the" are not romantic, they are self-important. "The" places are for people who make checklists because they don't understand living. Places to make love and feel adventure don't begin with "the".

DARIA

You're ridiculous.

URBAN

Really? The Philippines - Check list. Tahiti - sex. The Kremlin - check list, St. Petersburg - sex, The White house - check list, Buckingham palace -

DARIA

You did not have sex in Buckingham palace.

URBAN

So, back to my original question.

DARIA

What kind of sex?

Man turns to Doctor

URBAN

I need a person who's last wish is to live.

DOCTOR

How long is your cycle?

URBAN

Six months.

DOCTOR

And if the prognosis changes and he or she falters earlier than projected?

URBAN

Something to be worked out.

Man turns towards woman.

DARIA

I can accept limits.

URBAN

You don't want to "rage, rage, against the dying of the night?"

DARIA

(Laughing) I haven't lived raging against fate, I won't die that way.

URBAN

Pragmatic.

DARIA

Evolutionary Guides can maintain my body if needed.

URBAN

If you begin to die.

DARIA

My body will be kept alive, so that you can slavishly be by my beside.

URBAN

A romantic deathbed scene.

DARIA

It sounds very retro.

URBAN

I think I'm falling in love.

Man turns to doctor.

URBAN

I want to help someone live.

DOCTOR

There is someone recently diagnosed.....

Man turns to woman

DARIA

What's in the box?

URBAN

A gift for you.

DARIA

What is it?

URBAN

Something I picked up at Buckingham Palace.