

THE LOVE GAME

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - MAIL ROOM - DAY

The sun streams in through the overhead windows. ELLIOT, 25, a hopeless romantic, stands in front of his mailbox, staring into the empty compartment. A man takes a package from the box next to him and leaves.

Elliot looks up and spots JULIE, 24, the typical girl-next-door, as she walks up to her mailbox. She catches his stare, and he quickly turns his attention back to the empty box.

Julie opens her mailbox. Her eyes widen as she pulls out a handful of carnations, along with a pink envelope.

Elliot watches intently as she opens the envelope and pulls out a letter.

INSERT - THE LETTER

"My dearest Julie, your hair is like a June bonfire. The blue of your eyes is like an ocean I cannot swim out of. Everyday is made better when I see your beautiful face. I hope you feel the same when you look at these flowers."

BACK TO SCENE

Julie raises an eyebrow. Elliot leans against the door of his mailbox, but it slips and closes with a BANG. Julie jumps and stares at him as he adjusts himself.

ELLIOT

(clears throat)

Those are some nice flowers. Are they from someone special?

JULIE

I don't know, it doesn't say.

ELLIOT

Well, whoever they are, they must really care about you.

JULIE

Yeah, I guess so. Too bad I'm--
(sneezes)
allergic.

ELLIOT
(frowns)
You're allergic to carnations?

JULIE
I know, I thought it was crazy,
too. It's not--
(sneezes harder)
It's not all bad, though. I don't
really like flowers to begin with.

ELLIOT
What about the note, huh? I mean,
whoever wrote it must have had a
lot to say about you.

JULIE
Oh, they did. "Your hair is like a
June bonfire." So corny.

ELLIOT
Corny isn't horrible, Julie.
Sometimes, it's hard to find the
right words.

He flashes a huge smile at her. She looks back down at the
letter.

JULIE
Well, I'll give them points for
trying. Have a good day, Evan.

Julie waves and exits the room with one final SNEEZE.

ELLIOT
(shouting out to her)
It's Elliot, but thanks.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Elliot walks back towards his room. Along the way, he passes
by a young couple, who laugh with each other and hold hands.
He longingly watches them turn the corner before continuing
towards the far end of the hallway.

He passes a trash can and pauses to visibly sniff the air.
The scent leads him to the inside of the can. He reaches in
and pulls out the letter and flowers from Julie's mailbox.

ELLIOT
Corny really is horrible.

He marches to his door and enters his room. The door SLAMS shut behind him.

INT. ELLIOT'S ROOM - DAY

Elliot paces back and forth in his kitchen.

ELLIOT
Okay, we didn't know about the
flowers, but what was wrong with
the note? I spent hours on that
thing, it should have been perfect!
(inhales)
Alright, calm down. What else can
we do for her?

He looks around the kitchen and snaps his fingers.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)
Of course, a romantic treat. Maybe
something with chocolate. It's
perfect!

He opens his cupboard and takes out some candy bars. After breaking the bars into smaller pieces, he places them into an empty container. He ties it up with a small bow and smiles at his masterpiece.

INT. HALLWAY - VENDING MACHINE - DAY

A plastic chair sits on the left side of a vending machine and a potted tree placed in the corner of the hallway. Elliot puts the box of chocolates on the chair, along with another note. He jumps behind the tree and giggles to himself. Julie enters from the other side of the hall.

Julie approaches the chair, picks up the note, and reads it aloud.

JULIE
"For you, my dear Julie."

ELLIOT
(whispers to himself)
Yes, my dear. Surely, you'll
realize how much I love you.

She opens the box and frowns at its contents. A woman enters the hallway and approaches the vending machine. Julie taps on her shoulder.

JULIE

Hey, do you like chocolate? I'm on a diet.

Elliot's smile fades. He waits for Julie to leave, then dashes back towards his room.

INT. ELLIOT'S ROOM - EVENING

Elliot stands in front of a mirror in a nice tuxedo. He holds up a bouquet of roses.

ELLIOT

"Julie, I love..." No. "My dear, it would please me greatly if..." Oh, that's even worse. "I've loved you since the moment I saw you. We may not know each other, but I would love to give this a shot. What do you say?" Yeah, that's it.

He grins and exits the room.

INT. HALLWAY - JULIE'S DOOR - EVENING

Elliot knocks on the door, eyes closed tightly. As it cracks open, he begins his speech.

ELLIOT

Julie, I've loved you since the moment I first saw-

JULIE

Oh god, it was you?

Elliot opens his eyes. Julie is standing in the doorway, dressed in her pajamas. He clears his throat.

ELLIOT

Yes, it was me. I'm sorry the gifts were all wrong, but I wanted you to know that I truly care about you. If you're willing to give me a chance, I promise to do better.

JULIE

Are you serious?

ELLIOT

Absolutely.

Julie pinches the bridge of her nose and sighs.

JULIE
I'm not going out with you.

Elliot drops the bouquet.

ELLIOT
What? Why not?

JULIE
First of all...

She swings the door back. The interior of her room is visible. A handsome young man, ERIC, is sitting with a young child, MATTHEW. They are watching TV contentedly.

JULIE (CONT'D)
I'm married.

ELLIOT
Since when?

JULIE
Since eight years ago, bud. I've been here longer than you have.

ELLIOT
Well, I can forgive that. We can make this work. I'm willing to wait for you.

With a HUFF, Julie steps out and closes the door behind her.

JULIE
Are you kidding me? I'm not going to ditch my family just because you want me. You don't even know anything about me.

ELLIOT
Yes, I do. You said you're allergic to carnations.

JULIE
I also said I hate flowers, and you showed up here with a bunch of them.

ELLIOT
They're roses. I thought girls still loved roses?

JULIE
(rolls her eyes)
You are unbelievable.
(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)

This isn't some romantic comedy.
You don't just get the girl because
you gave her a bunch of things.
Love is founded on trust, teamwork,
and compassion. This isn't love,
it's an obsession, and it's really
creepy.

Elliot stares down at his feet. With a gentle bow, he bends down and picks up the bouquet.

ELLIOT

I don't understand how I lost this.

JULIE

If you look at love as a game, then
you'll always lose.

She reaches for the door handle.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Good night, Elliot.

Julie closes the door. Elliot stands frozen in place.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Elliot shuffles towards his room. He passes by the trash bin and catches sight of his first gift.

Gingerly, he removes a rose from the bouquet he's holding and brings it up to his nose to sniff. He smiles for a second, then stops.

Elliot places the roses in the can with his other gift. With one last glance behind him, he continues down the hallway.

FADE OUT.