



nystea

## The Sole Reader

Student (playwright's) name: David Fresolone

School's name: Hauppauge High School

Region: Long Island - Suffolk County

Teacher's name: Ruthie Pincus

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# **THE SOLE READER**

### Cast of Characters

BUDDY CROWLEY: 16 years old, unlucky high school student

MADDIE GEHRIG: 17 years old, Buddy's supportive friend

MADAME ZEALOUS: 43 years old, quirky foot "palm reader"

### **Place**

A middle class household, Oswego, New York.

### **Time**

Early Winter, 2015

## ACT I Scene 1

Setting: Inside a modestly decorated upper middle class household, we see a worn sofa C, an aged coffee table in front of it, and two small circular tables on either side of the sofa. On the coffee table, there is a scattered pile of magazines and various drink coasters.

At rise: Our protagonists Maddie and a sullen Buddy are sitting on a couch. Having returned from school after being rejected by his longtime crush, Buddy is feeling hopeless as his best friend, Maddie is trying to cheer him up.

MADDIE

(consolingly towards Buddy)

Listen, Buddy, I know you're upset-

BUDDY

(harshing cutting her off)

Upset?! I'm miles past upset! (rising) I have spent the last three years of my life crushing on Emily, and now she just goes and rejects me.

MADDIE

(patting him on the arm in support)

C'mon, it's not all that bad.

BUDDY

(annoyed)

Not all that bad?! Maddie, I'm hopeless. You don't have to try to cheer me up just because you're my friend, it's okay. Why even try anymore?

MADDIE

That's exactly it, Buddy, don't let this define you! You're so much more than how some girl values you.

BUDDY

(hopelessly)

Just stop, Maddie. Stop trying to cheer me up. I'm a sad hopeless sack. (buries his head in his palms) I'll never amount to anything in life.

MADDIE

(chiding yet declarative)

Buddy...

BUDDY

(with his head still in his palms, depressed)

What do you want?

MADDIE

(satisfied)

I'm so glad you said that.

BUDDY

(with pity towards himself, sarcastically)

Oh, I'm so glad you're able to enjoy my pain.

MADDIE

(getting up from the couch and walking R)

Not quite. Since you think you're doomed and you'll never accomplish anything, I invited someone over who might be able to help you out.

BUDDY

(annoyed, nervous)

Maddie, who did you invite?

MADDIE

(excited yet calming Buddy)

Okay, don't freak out... but I invited-

(From stage L, a woman, Madame Zealous, dressed in tie dye clothing as well as mismatching socks with no shoes enters loudly)

MADAME ZEALOUS  
(extremely upbeat and eccentric)  
Did somebody call... Madame Zealous!?

BUDDY  
(honestly)  
Finally, the pizza's here.

MADDIE  
No, Buddy, she's not a pizza delivery person! Madame Zealous is-

BUDDY  
(incredulously, questioning her name)  
Madame Zealous?

MADAME ZEALOUS  
(crossing to Buddy and sitting on sofa)  
Why, yes! Madame Zealous! I am only the most renowned sole reader on this side of  
the Mississippi!

BUDDY  
(confused, uncomfortably moving away from Zealous on the couch)  
What on Earth is a 'sole reader'?

MADDIE  
You see, Buddy, I knew you were down in the dumps, so I called someone who might  
be able to tell you some good things about your future.

MADAME ZEALOUS  
(moving strongly towards Buddy on couch)  
Exactly! I shall tell you everything about your future, all through staring at your sole!

BUDDY  
(cautious)  
How are you going to stare at my soul?

MADAME ZEALOUS  
(confidently)  
Well, that's easy! Take off your shoe.

BUDDY  
Excuse me?

MADDIE  
(intervening)  
Madame Zealous is a sole reader! As in she reads your sole! And in order to see your soul, she needs to see your feet.

BUDDY  
(confused)  
But how does seeing my foot help her to see my soul?

MADAME ZEALOUS  
(compromising)  
Fine, how about we get to know each other first, I'm Madame Zealous, what is your name?

(Buddy hesitates to respond, he is very nervous)

MADDIE  
C'mon, just tell her your name!

BUDDY  
(to Maddie)  
But I don't even know her!

MADAME ZEALOUS  
(grabbing Buddy's arm)  
Oh, pish posh! It's okay, I don't bite!

BUDDY  
(acquiescing)  
Fine. I'm Buddy Crowley.

MADAME ZEALOUS  
(excited)  
Ah ha! Now we're getting somewhere, Buddy, aren't we?

BUDDY  
(annoyed)  
Sure.

MADAME ZEALOUS  
Great! So, how about we get that shoe off?

BUDDY  
(angrily)  
What? No!

MADDIE  
(disappointed, annoyed)  
Buddy!

BUDDY  
(disbelieving)  
What? Am I the only one hearing this?

MADDIE  
Just take your shoe off already!

BUDDY  
(staring at Maddie in disbelief for a beat, then acquiescing)  
... okay. (he takes off his shoe and looks at Maddie for approval) There!

MADDIE  
(dissatisfied)  
Keep going.

BUDDY  
(annoyed)  
The sock too? Fine! (he takes off his sock and puts his foot on Madame Zealous' lap)

MADDIE  
Well, now that your shoe is off, Madame Zealous can finally see your sole.

BUDDY  
(realizing)

Wait a minute, you literally meant, read my sole.

MADAME ZEALOUS

(nervous, worried, and unconvincing)

Uhm, yeah, I can read your sole. (she takes Buddy's foot and shoddily inspects it)

MADDIE

(curious)

Well, what does his future look like?

MADAME ZEALOUS

(clearly making it up)

It looks... very bright!

MADDIE

Can you give more details than that?

MADAME ZEALOUS

(standing up, honestly)

Listen, I've never gotten somebody to actually take off their shoe before.

MADDIE

(surprised)

So, you're a fake?

MADAME ZEALOUS

(putting her head down)

I guess I should go now.

MADDIE

Yeah. You should.

(Madame Zealous exits L with her head down as Maddie crosses L and Buddy gets up from the sofa and crosses R)

BUDDY

I'm hopeless.

MADDIE

(crossing to Buddy and touching his arm)

You know, Buddy, I'm kind of glad Emily rejected you.

BUDDY

(confused)

Why are you glad?

MADDIE

(flirtatiously)

Well, maybe there's another girl who might be better for you?

BUDDY

(interested)

Maddie, are you thinking what I'm thinking?

MADDIE

(taking a step closer to Buddy, coming close, as if to embrace)

I think I am.

BUDDY

Well, do you think I should ask this girl out?

MADDIE

(still flirty)

I do.

(they pause for a moment)

BUDDY

(breaking from Maddie and running L)

Okay... Wait up, Madame Zealous! You wanna get a coffee?

(Buddy exits L, running off)

MADDIE

(following Buddy off left, surprised)

Buddy!

END