

# The Oracle

by Joe Queenan and T.J Elliott

© T.J. Elliott & Joe Queenan & Knowledge Workings  
Theater 2022

<https://offthewallplays.com>

This script is provided for reading purposes only. Professionals and amateurs are hereby advised that it is subject to royalty. It is fully protected under the laws of the United States of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion of Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including but not limited to professional, amateur, film, radio, and all other media (including use on the worldwide web) and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved; and any unauthorized use of the material may subject the user to any and all applicable civil and criminal penalties. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher or author, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. Although every precaution has been taken to verify the accuracy of the information contained herein, the author and publisher assume no responsibility for any errors or omissions. No liability is assumed for damages that may result from the use of information contained within. For any information about royalties or to apply for a performance license please click the following link:

<https://offthewallplays.com/royalties-and-licensing-of-plays-sold-by-off-the-wall-plays/>

**The Oracle** written by Joe Queenan & T.J. Elliott was originally produced by Knowledge Workings Theater (Marjorie Phillips Elliott, Executive Producer) at THEATER FOR THE NEW CITY in May 2022 with direction by T.J. Elliott, lighting design by Mikelle Kelly, set design by Kathleen Ritter, and sound and visual effects by Luke Lutz. Emma Denson served as an associate producer. The production stage manager was Morgan Lindsey Fears assisted by Aislinn Cain. The cast was as follows:

**BART** ..... Hassan Hope  
**MICKY** ..... Jasmine Dorothy Haefner  
**AISSLING** ..... Alyssa Poon  
**LEO** ..... Patrick Smith  
**FRED** ..... Ed Altman

## Characters

### **CAST** (In order of appearance)

- **Bart Little**, an African American man in his late 20s, who is the very new, very eager assistant to Micky Cohen
- **Micky Cohen**, a White woman in her early 30s, who juggles her demanding job as Head of Information Services reporting to Leo Sweeney and partnering with her same-sex spouse in the parenting of their two children
- **Aisling OToole**, a young Asian American woman, a Harvard post-grad bearing all the attitude that usually entails, and the CEO's new hire as a second Oracle
- **Leo Sweeney**, an older, vibrant White man, who is the corporation's so-called "Oracle"—officially titled the Chief Knowledge Officer, an engaging know-it-all
- **Fred Spee**, another White man who is the longtime CEO of the corporation, top dog with equal parts bark, bite, and blandishment

## Scene 1

### **Early morning at a multibillion-dollar corporation in the 21st century**

*LIGHTS rise to show us a raised platform at center stage rear with a screen above it and angled steps on either side leading up to it. The screen reads: 'Do It Yesterday.'*

*Upstage left, there is an overhang at an angle tilting up, creating a kind of alcove, which represents a space off the boiler room. Beneath the overhang are some boxes indicating its cellar position, and along the backstage wall in this nook is a large dartboard. Far stage right is an office break room with an oval table surrounded by a few modern chairs.*

*BART LITTLE  
stands at the  
table, taking  
sheets of paper  
out of a bin  
and sorting  
them into  
piles. MICKY  
COHEN  
enters stage  
right, her  
arms filled with  
folders sporting  
large numbers  
from 1 to 12.*

MICKY

You're here already, Bart?

BART

Hey, Micky. Figured best to be early on the first day of a new assignment. Came in with my dad. Is Leo already here?

MICKY

Before eight AM?

*Places folders down,  
shaking her head*

Ill-advised. At these ritualistic human sacrifices, Leo discourages being the early bird.

*Sorts the papers that BART  
handled into folders*

BART

He compares his presentations to human sacrifice?

MICKY

Don't worry. The rituals are bloodless. Leo jokes that the only real excitement at our (*makes air quotes*) three reveals comes from this crowd's stampede for the free bagels.

BART

*Laughing*

Yes, I've heard that one. Leo's a funny guy.

MICKY

The funniest. I am privileged to dine on his daily doses of wit.

BART

Well, I thank you for the privilege of getting to work up close and personal with The Oracle. This is a big deal for...//

MICKY

Yikes! You should not, under any circumstances, call Leo... that.

BART

That—*what?*

MICKY

The coy, euphemistic title that dares not speak its name.

BART

He doesn't like being called The Oracle?

MICKY

Leo? He couldn't care less. *Fred Spee* doesn't want that word used. As CEO, he thinks the nickname "The Oracle" is his private property. It's trademarked. Years ago, Leo came up with the idea of telling our glorious leader every day in front of

*Gestures toward audience*

the brethren, his *divination*—the three things we should all pay attention to that day. The three reveals. So Fred started calling him The Oracle.

BART

Like the ancient Greek Oracle. At Delphi.

MICKY

Yeah, but Fred must've gotten the idea somewhere else because he wouldn't know the Greek gods from the Greek yogurts.

BART

But why can't anyone else call Mr. Sweeney The Oracle?

MICKY

Being the only one allowed to call Leo “The Oracle” is just another reminder to everyone that Fred is in charge. Very insecure. On his third hair transplant. Anyway, when they come in, just call our CEO, Fred, and our Chief Knowledge Officer, Leo.

BART

Got it.

*Gestures to papers*

Question. How does Leo choose these “three things”

*Makes air quotes*

I keep hearing about every morning?

MICKY

That’s the secret sauce. Unknown even to his faithful servant. I just provide the raw ingredients for this strategic smorgasbord. And they’re not three *things*. They’re three reveals.



BART

Right, reveals.

*Gazes downstage*

Boy, you can actually feel the excitement building out there, people waiting to hear Leo's picks. Literally sitting on the edge of their seats.

*Another woman,  
AISLING  
O'TOOLE,  
appears stage  
left, observing  
them. She moves  
closer*

MICKY

*Shakes head and sniffs*

Take a good whiff. Not excitement.

*Sniffs again*

Fear. Each morning, eight a.m. sharp, one hundred senior managers gather here for what Fred calls Leo's "daily divinations." The saps hang on every word Leo utters. Why? They're scared shitless they might run into Fred later in the day and get tested on what Leo said.

BART

*Chuckling*

Divinations. Oracles. Reveals.  
Kind of weird, isn't it?

MICKY

Welcome to the corporate culture.

*MICKY notices AISLING*

Oh, hi.

*AISLING smiles*

Sorry, but this is a restricted area.

AISLING

Restricted to whom?

MICKY

I mean, you probably shouldn't be here right now.

AISLING

This is where I was told to go. Here. Specifically. Fred, Mr. Spee, your CEO, asked me to report to this area. Even if it is restricted.

MICKY

Really? A new administrative assistant. I didn't know. Sorry.

AISLING

Administrative assistant? The term "secretary" always struck me as preferable.

MICKY

*Laughs*

Secretary? Kind of politically incorrect these days—says the former administrative assistant.

AISLING

“Secretary” appeals to me. After all, “secretary” comes from the medieval Latin *sēcrētārius*, a title applied to various highly dependable, highly knowledgeable officials. Or even, in some cases, those entrusted with direct commands from God.

BART

Commands from God? Now we’re definitely deep into Oracle territory.

MICKY

*Stares at AISLING*

You’re like a walking dictionary.

AISLING

In this case, Oxford English. I try to memorize at least one definition every day. Today’s entry was “ultramontane.”

*She points to the folders*

What are those?

MICKY

Papers. Just papers.

BART

Wait. I thought...

MICKY

Okay, fine.

*Micky glares at Bart*

These are the twelve ideas The  
Ora—I mean, the Chief Knowledge  
Officer, uses to select his three  
reveals. Reveals to which

*Gestures to audience*

this motley crew devotes their  
undivided attention. And I mean  
*undivided.*

AISLING

Ah, yes, the legendary “three  
reveals.”

BART

Hey, how do you already know  
about Leo and the...//

LEO

*Entering stage right*

*Guten tag. Bonjour. Maidin  
mhaith.*

*Shakes BART's hand*

That, my friend, is Gaelic. “Good morning” in the language of my ancestors. And you, sir, are Bart Little, correct? Your father is Lonnie Little. My go-to guy in Facilities.

BART

*Awed*

Dad always talks about you, Mr. Sweeney, and your motto, “*My job is to make you a success!*”

LEO

With emphasis on the *you*.

MICKY

And so, the wisdom of the ages flows seamlessly from one generation to the next.

LEO

And my job *is* to make *you* a success. But speaking of real success, how about your mom, Cheryl—my hero, just getting elected to town council? Surprised I know that? Hey, I am The Oracle after all. Boom!

BART

Mr. Sweeney, Mom would be thrilled you noticed her election...//

LEO

Leo, not Mister Sweeney.

*Turns to MICKY*

Just plain Leo. And how is my trusted *consigliere*, my right-hand... *person*, this fine day? Lavinia good? Over that cold that had you sleeping on the couch for the past week?

MICKY

*Embarrassed*

We are all good, Leo.

*Turns to AISLING*

LEO

And to whom do I owe the pleasure?

AISLING

Aisling O'Toole.

*Shaking hands*

LEO

Aisling. That's Irish. Means  
"dream." Did you know that?

AISLING

Actually, I did. It's my name.

LEO

*Oblivious, looking at the  
papers on the table, and  
picking up three, which  
MICKY notes and signal by  
the communication to  
offstage, never seen, tech  
people*

One, two, and... three!

*Smiling at Aisling*

Tell me, Aisling, to whom do you  
report in this *ziggurat* of an  
organization?



AISLING

Fred.

*Beat*

Mr. Spee.

*He looks at her more  
attentively*

Our CEO?

*FRED SPEE enters stage  
left from behind the screen.  
He has a determined, fit  
look affecting a military  
air. As he bounds up onto  
the platform, AISLING  
waves at him. He smiles*

FRED

Ready to rip?

*BART gingerly nods at  
FRED*

LEO

And *bonjour* to you too, Fred. Yes,  
we can start. *Andiamo*, guys.

*LEO follows him but is surprised that FRED motions to AISLING to join them. She climbs up as MICKY and BART look on, also surprised*

FRED

Have you two met? Aisling is joining us for a while to do some high-level consultations. She's a super-forecaster from *the* Harvard Business School.

LEO

*The* Harvard Business School? Ah, dropping the H-bomb, are we?

*Salutes*

Well, super! Welcome aboard.

AISLING

It's an honor to be here with you. Everyone at HBS knows about Leo Sweeney and the iconic three reveals technique.

*LIGHTS shift to  
the platform.  
The screen  
shows the words  
'Morning  
Presentation'  
then changes to  
'Slide B: Three  
Reveals'*

FRED

Which is what we're going to get  
to right now.

*Gesturing downstage to his  
senior managers sitting in  
an open-plan office space*

Good morning, everyone. Time for  
the daily divination. Let's find out  
from our Oracle the three reveals  
most deserving of our attention  
today.

LEO

*Shubh Prabhat!* Hindi for “Good morning,” my colleagues.

*A generic slide with the three reveals comes up on screen*

Top three for today: One, security concerns on our servers in India. Two, gathering clouds of war with Amazon. And three, you leaders

*Points to audience*

need to learn the newest methods on best understanding uncertainty. Which, coincidentally, happens to be the topic of my seminar taking place in Meeting Room Alpha immediately after this pep rally.

FRED

I dunno about that third one.  
Uncertainty? Kind of woo-woo, if  
you ask me.

*To audience*

But hey, that's The Oracle.

*Back to LEO*

He who sees all and knows all.  
Okay, now: India. Server security?  
Why are we concerned about that?

LEO

It could have something to do with  
the fact that our workers over there  
are paid below-average wages.

FRED

I had no idea. So, what's average  
comp for IT people in India?

LEO

Well...

*MICKY flips through the  
papers, as does BART*

AISLING

*Quickly*

As of this year, \$21,325.

*MICKY protests silently*

With the rupee marked to market.

*LEO is not pleased;*

*MICKY is agape*

LEO

That's misleading, because sixty-seven percent of the staff make less than that amount.

AISLING

Yes, but in preliminary analyses conducted at Harvard, we zeroed in on the median value, not just the mean.

*MICKY slaps her head;*

*BART stares*

Sorry to drop the H-bomb again.

FRED

Kaboom! Thank you, Aisling.

*To audience*

Aisling O'Toole. New addition.

*Emphasizing the term*

Super-forecaster! Harvard! You'll  
be seeing more of her. Lots more.  
Finance, get me a report on this  
Indian snafu. And Amazon? Leo,  
do you have one of your woo-woo  
historical... whatever... for us?

LEO

Analogies? For the best way to describe Amazon's behavior, let's go back to World War II and the disastrous German-Soviet nonaggression pact of August 1939.

*Pauses to check audience's understanding*

Ribbentrop sneaking schnapps into Molotov's cocktail?

*Gives up trying to explain*

Simply put, we are Mother Russia foolishly trusting Amazon, which is rapidly turning into the Third Reich.

*Slightly exasperated*

You do know about Hitler, right?

AISLING

Interesting. But wouldn't a more relevant analogy to the situation be the 1802 Treaty of Amiens, where we are replicating Napoleon's strategy, and Amazon is behaving exactly like the British Empire?



LEO

If you want to go that way, how  
about the 1807 Treaty of Tilsit,  
where Fred is the Czar, and we're  
still Holy Mother Russia.

AISLING

Specifically, Alexander I,  
succeeded by his useless brother  
Nicholas.

FRED

*Laughing*

Oh, my stars, I'm seeing czars!

*Plays up joke to audience*

Pretty good, eh? Seeing *czars*. To tell you the truth, I have no idea what you guys are talking about, but I'm sure our team will run with that... analogy.

*Puts arm around AISLING,  
who is caught off guard by  
the gesture*

Aisling, up at Harvard, you're probably used to people saying, "Let's do it now." But *here* we take it up a notch. We say, "Do it yesterday!" That's how fast we want to follow up on what The Oracle says.

*To audience encouraging  
them*

So, what are we waiting for?

*Cups ear and shouts as  
others onstage join him*

Do it yesterday!

*Regular voice*

26

Over and out.

*LIGHTS shift to  
indicate the  
platform post-  
presentation*

AISLING

*Shaking first FRED's, then  
LEO's hand*

This was very interesting, Leo and Fred. I look forward to discussing it further. I see some exciting opportunities for collaboration here.

*Exits the platform, moving  
toward MICKY and BART  
to socialize*

*LIGHTS dim in  
the break room*

LEO

Fred, what gives?

FRED

What? Yeah, yeah. Aisling's a pistol, isn't she? Met her when I gave that speech at Harvard you set up. I was very impressed. Turns out she's a super forecaster. You know what that is?

LEO

Let me take a wild guess. A very good forecaster?

FRED

*Chuckling*

I know, I know, I never heard the term before, either. But the way Aisling described her job, let me tell you, it made it sound like a game changer. Plus, she's a younger person, and, you know, she's got that whole diverse thing going on.

LEO

Exactly what is *Aisling* going to do here? In her diverse way?

FRED

Super forecasting.

LEO

No matter how many times you say it, Fred, the meaning of the term "super forecaster" doesn't get any clearer to me.

FRED

*Stiffening*

It means I hired her, Leo.

LEO

You what?

FRED

I hired her.

LEO

To be another Oracle?

FRED

Sort of.

LEO

Like a trainee Oracle?

FRED

She's from Harvard, Leo. She can't  
be a trainee anything.

LEO

Having two Oracles... is like  
having two suns in the same sky.  
To quote the *Měnggǔ Mishǐ*, or  
'Mongol Secret History'.

FRED

Forget the *Měnggǔ Mishǐ*. No, having two CEOs would be like having two suns in the same sky. Because the sun is the center of the universe, right? Whereas two Oracles is more like... having two hands. I think Aisling will be very handy.

*Laughs, but LEO does not*

She can help us connect the dots, right?

LEO

Oracles don't connect dots. First-graders do. Being The Oracle means having the ability to see what no one else is seeing and quickly distill that into three reveals every morning. Three shots of intoxicating divination to reduce uncertainty.

FRED

Okay, but isn't your motto, "My job is to make you a success?"

LEO

It is, Fred.

FRED

So, work your magic. Make  
Aisling a success.

LEO

But you just sprung this on me.  
You took me by surprise. You, the  
person who's always telling me,  
"No surprises."

FRED

*Agitated*

Surprise! I changed my mind. So,  
feel free to surprise me by getting  
seven out of ten successful product  
launches from your marvelous  
nuggets of wisdom. Up from your  
current batting average of five out  
of ten.

LEO

Who out there has a better batting  
average than that, Fred?

FRED

At Harvard, Aisling asked, “Why not get ten out of ten, Mr. Spee?” Or even eleven?” Super forecasting does that.

*Arm around LEO*

Hey, you’re still my Oracle—  
Aisling’s just a kind of copilot.  
You shouldn’t view her as a threat.  
Now, I gotta go. Need to grill Sales  
about Amazon. And don’t you  
have to go lecture people about  
uncertainty?

*Waves his hands*

Woo-woo!

*LIGHTS down on platform*



## Scene 2

*LIGHTS shift to breakroom.*

*LIGHTS rise to where we left  
AISLING, MICKY, and BART stage  
right.*

AISLING

Can I have a sit-down with Leo  
now?

MICKY

Sorry. He's giving a seminar on the  
future of uncertainty.

AISLING

Now there's a growth industry.

BART

His seminars are amazing.  
Standing-room-only.

AISLING

What specific aspect of uncertainty  
is he covering?

BART

You mean, there are different  
kinds?

AISLING

Yes, Leo writes about that in his 1998 book, *Knowing the Unknowable*. In it, he talks about Knightian uncertainty, which encompasses indeterminacy, incompleteness, ignorance, incommensurability, and even ambiguity.

MICKY

Ignorance is my favorite.

AISLING

Might I grab Leo for a few minutes after the session?

MICKY

In your dreams! You have to get on his Outlook calendar. We all need an appointment to see Leo or Fred, or anyone else, for that matter.

AISLING

How about a walk-and-talk after his seminar?

MICKY

Actually, no. Endless meetings. Back-to-back-to-back. To back.

BART

Everybody wants to talk to The Oracle... uh... Chief Knowledge Officer.

MICKY

Not everybody. Finance would rather eat glass.

AISLING

No wiggle room in his schedule?  
No cancellations?

MICKY

He calendars a few blocks of time each week for structured spontaneity. But even I don't know what Leo does then.

AISLING

So never an unplanned encounter where he just sits down and chats with someone?

*BART is about to speak, but  
MICKY cuts in*

MICKY

Never. Around here, our Outlook calendars rule us all.

BART

That's what they'll tell you in orientation. If it's not in Outlook, it doesn't exist.

AISLING

Fine. Consider me oriented.

*Starts to exit stage left*

BART

The seminar is this way.

AISLING

*Taps smartphone*

Sorry. Not in my Outlook calendar.

*Blackout*

## Scene 3

### **A week later**

*LIGHTS shine on platform post-presentation.*

*The projection on screen reads: ‘Slide C: Do it yesterday already!’*

*LEO in a different jacket animatedly addresses FRED stage left.*

LEO

Yes, Fred. I accept that. But why does Aisling insist on having her own team?

FRED

Something to do with the numbers. Maybe her folks can “out-number” yours.

*Laughs*

Get it? Out-number?

LEO

What numbers? Is the H-Bombshell annoyed because around here, two plus two doesn’t equal five, like at Harvard? Micky can run rings around her nerds.

FRED

Good. Let Micky supervise the new team too. It will be The Oracle slash super forecaster talent pool. Problem solved. Do it now. Or yesterday. Whichever is more convenient.

LEO

*Calmer*

Right. And how do we get two Oracles to agree on the three reveals everyone needs to pay attention to every morning?

FRED

Leo, have I ever asked you how you do what you do?

LEO

No. And your trust in me is much appreciated.

FRED

Trust has nothing to do with it. I don't ask because I don't want to know how the sausage is made. I just want the goddamn sausage. The really good sausage. Like a nice Bratwurst. A little red cabbage on the side. Served by the Saint Pauli Girl.

*Laughs*

LEO

Understood. But now you brought somebody in who thinks that the sausage making can be done exclusively through forecasting in a super-rational way about rational people and rational markets and rational everything. And that is just not the way people work—or how sausages are made.

FRED

You're saying you're not rational?  
That *I'm* not rational?

LEO

We think that we're rational, that if we set our minds to it, we can know everything. But, no, most of the time, people are not rational.

FRED

See? This is why I don't want to know how the sausage is made, Leo. Because you're scaring the shit out of me by telling me that you're not rational. Making sausage is the most rational activity known to man. There are no irrational sausage makers. None.

*Sighs*

Look, work this out with Aisling, okay? Do it yesterday. And do it rationally.

*FRED exits  
stage left, but  
LEO heads to  
the alcove,  
where, for a  
fleeting moment,  
we see his nook  
with the  
enormous  
dartboard. He  
picks up the  
darts and starts  
to throw. Really  
hard*

*Blackout*



## Scene 4

### **A few days later**

*LIGHTS shine on the break room.*

*The screen shows FRED's smiling image with a slogan reading: 'Slide D: Do It Yesterday; Now Is Too Late.'*

*A single light shines over the platform where MICKY and BART stand.*

MICKY

*To BART*

But what did she say? Exactly?  
This is important, Bart.

BART

*Ticking off topics*

Turns out her mom is in local politics, just like mine. Back in Evanston, Illinois—that's where Aisling grew up. She asked what your wife did for a...//

MICKY

No, no. The part about the papers we prepare for, Fred.

BART

Aisling said that from now on,  
could we please show all of Leo's  
papers to her *before* they become  
the daily divination with Fred.

MICKY

Show Aisling all of Leo's papers in  
advance? Who died and left her in  
charge? And Bart, please use the  
official name for our morning  
sessions. It's "the three reveals,"  
not "the daily divinations." I've  
mentioned this before.

BART

It's just that when you and Leo  
were talking...//

MICKY

When Leo and Micky are talking,  
you hear things we say, but you  
have to act as if you never heard  
them. Leo is Plato. Micky is  
Aristotle. You're Bart.

BART

*Frustrated*

Micky, you do realize how confusing it is to try to remember what I'm allowed to say and who I'm allowed to say it to? Don't you think we're wasting a lot of time trying to hide things from each other?

MICKY

Yikes! Wasting time? Seriously? The whole purpose of a corporation is to first waste time and then figure out a way to camouflage it. You're adorable, Bart. And, as you now know, I mean that in a *very* non-sexual way. But wasting time? A deep commitment to wasting time should be in every corporation's mission statement.

BART

Okay, but...//

MICKY

You show Aisling the papers *after* they go to Fred. Not before.

BART

She's not going to like that. I mean, I know how you always say that Leo is the 800-pound gorilla in the room....

MICKY

But now there's a new gorilla on the premises. A cunning gorilla. A devious gorilla. A gorilla with *multiple* degrees from Harvard. So, until further notice, we let Leo thrash it out with Aisling. Meanwhile, we hide in the undergrowth with everyone else that didn't go to Harvard and just watch. Got it?

BART

I guess. Who knew hiding was a core competency?

*Blackout*

## Scene 5

*LIGHTS shine on the platform, post-morning presentation. Text on the screen reads: 'Slide E: Three Reveals for May 21' A few days later, LEO, AISLING, in different clothes and FRED address their audience from the platform.*

FRED

*Pointing to AISLING*

Aisling thinks that Leo underestimates what's about to happen in our turbulent Middle Eastern markets.

*Playing to audience*

*Under-estimates! Uh-oh! Oracle fight!*

AISLING

No, not a fight, Fred. Just that my model predicts a disruption...//

LEO

"Those who have knowledge don't predict. Those who predict don't have knowledge."

*Bows to audience*

FRED

Peter Drucker, right?

LEO

Lao Tzu. Or Lao-Tze. Fifth  
Century B.C.E. Philosopher.  
Chinese.

FRED

*Laughs*

Very intimidating to have a guy  
around who knows everything.  
And now *a gal* who also knows  
everything.

LEO

I'm not young enough to know  
everything.

AISLING

Someone else said that first.

LEO

Someone else said everything first.

AISLING

No, literally, that's a line from a  
book.

LEO

*The Admirable Crichton* by J.M. Barrie. And it's a *play*. The guy who wrote *Peter Pan*?

AISLING

You're sure it's not Santayana?

LEO

Please.

AISLING

It sounds like something Santayana would say.

LEO

Everything sounds like something Santayana would say. But he didn't say it.

AISLING

He said everything else.

LEO

That one I'll give you.

FRED

Look, guys, how about we get back to the Middle East?

LEO

Said no one ever.

*Blackout*



## Scene 6

### **A few days later, late afternoon**

*LIGHTS shine on the break room.*

*Bart has rolled the cart on during the blackout, and now along with Micky, unloads beer cans onto the table downstage right.*

BART

Beer *and* tea? What's up with that?

MICKY

Beer *or* tea. Today, it's beer for the interns.

BART

Beer? What does beer have to do with knowledge generation?

## MICKY

People keep the best knowledge locked up in their heads. Give them tea, and they rattle off ideas. Suggestions. Proposals. So, sometimes we do tea. But pour them beer at the end of the day, and you'll hear everything that ticks them off. All the things that didn't work. All the things they hate. Their "unsuccessful encounters with predictability," is what Leo calls them. And those with the liveliest imaginations get invited back for wine—because that's what Leo's really interested in. Talky imaginations. The unvarnished thoughts of the slightly hammered.

## BART

You sound like Leo now. You could be The Oracle, Micky. I read this book about how the oracles of Greece were women chosen by the gods, and they gave...//

MICKY

No, thanks! Being The Oracle here means being chosen by Fred. It's like being Captain of Vladimir Putin's yacht. Prestigious, but not much future in it.

*Blackout*

## Scene 7

### **A few days later, morning**

*LIGHTS shine on the platform, post-presentation.*

*The screen reads: 'Slide F: Did It Yesterday'*

*FRED, AISLING, and LEO are on the platform.*

FRED

*Snapping his fingers*

Darn! I have something for you, Aisling. And you're gonna love it!

*Exits*

LEO

Should have forecast you'd put a spring in Fred's step.

AISLING

Maybe it's just my super-accurate probability estimates.

LEO

Of course. Nothing turns Fred on more than a shapely, log-odds, extremizing-aggregation algorithm.

AISLING

Was making wisecracks part of  
your job description when you  
came here? Oracle *and* Court  
Jester?

LEO

Of course, We can share that job  
too. Want to borrow my old Marx  
Brothers movies to get up to  
speed? Or Monty Python?

AISLING

Unnecessary. Aced Harvard's  
workplace sarcasm course.

*FRED returns  
holding a  
Harvard T-shirt  
that reads:  
"Don't make me  
drop the H-  
bomb, Yalie."*

FRED

Great, right? Fits you to a tee.

*Laughs*

Get it? Tee?

AISLING

Oh! To a tee. Good one, boss.

*Smiling while holding the  
T-shirt up against herself*

Love it.

*Blackout*

## Scene 8

### **Late afternoon**

*LIGHTS shine downstage left to a corridor.*

*MICKY is far stage left on the phone.*

MICKY

What can I say, lover? Every month is the ‘Mythical Man Month’ in this lunatic asylum.

*Beat*

No, it’s just a phrase that they use in business, Lavinia.

*Beat*

Sorry for my *jargon*, but I am in business, a business where my boss and his nemesis, in order to facilitate their unending, ever-escalating know-it-all contest, keep throwing more people at our projects, which only slows everyone down. And that’s what Mythical Man Month means, love. And it also means that I am now supervising double the number of people involved in the production of the daily “three reveals to which to pay attention” presentation.

*Pause*

Yikes, honey, *you* asked me why I would be late.

*Pause*

I'm trying to both explain *and* say that I'm sorry to leave you holding the bag. I mean, the baby. Yes, *our* baby.

*Beat*

Lavinia! Lavinia? Really?

*Pockets phone*

Shit.

*Blackout*



## Scene 9

### **Morning**

*LIGHTS shine on platform.*

*Writing on screen reads: 'Slide G: Your three reveals!'*

*LEO, AISLING, and FRED stand on the platform flanking the slide*

LEO

Thank you, Fred. And, *Gut morgen, Aun di resht fun di velt.*

*To a surprised Fred*

Just a *bisl* of Yiddish to spice things up.

FRED

Very impressive. And your first reveal?

LEO

It's not a slam-dunk, but we need to pay close attention to a particular market that I think...//

AISLING

*Interrupting forcefully and  
clicking to show a striking,  
colorful slide*

*Writing on the screen changes to:  
'Slide H: Renewable energy'*

Energy. *Es tut mir leid, mein herr,*  
but renewable-energy markets are  
where we need to be. *Macht  
schnell.*

LEO

Renewable energy? No, we were  
going to...//

FRED

*Rubbing his hands*

Aha! Looks like we have another  
Oracle smackdown.

AISLING

*To LEO*

Sorry. Unscheduled spontaneity.  
An analogy hit me in the middle of  
the night: Renewable energy is the  
modern equivalent of Iron bringing  
an end to the Bronze Age.

LEO

The Iron Age and the Bronze Age overlapped.

AISLING

Fine, then when the Mongols gave way to the Moghuls.

LEO

The Mongols did not give way to the Moghuls. It was just a name change. The Mongols figured it was better PR not to be associated with Genghis Khan. So, they rebranded themselves. Harvard Business School peeps must understand rebranding.

FRED

Mongols, Moguls. As the old saying goes: “Those that Khan, do.” Get it? *Genghis Khan?*

*No one laughs*

Anyway, what’s your problem with renewable energy?

LEO

Uncertainty! Aisling’s theoretical model fails to factor...//

FRED

Please shoot me. Leo! Always with the goddamn uncertainty.

AISLING

Yes, always. And yet, don't Leo's beliefs fit the dictionary definition of *certainty*? Determined? Fixed? Settled? Not variable or fluctuating?

FRED

Ouch! She nailed you that time, Big Guy.

*To audience*

Not that I'm keeping score. Back to your idea, Aisling. Renewable energy? Sounds like a gas!

*Laughs at his own joke*

Get it? Gas?

***Blackout***

