

# HEART OF HEARING

by JOSEPH ZECCOLA

## CHARACTERS

ANGIE

JOSH

## SETTING

Angie's room. Josh's room.

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that *Heart of Hearing* is subject to a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright convention and the Universal Copyright Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including professional and amateur stage performing, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound taping, all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as information storage and retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages, are strictly reserved.

Inquiries concerning all rights should be addressed to the author at [Zeccola@gmail.com](mailto:Zeccola@gmail.com)

Copyright © 1994 by Joseph Zeccola

# HEART OF HEARING

*[ANGIE sits on her bed, the phone is at her ear.]*

ANGIE

*[Practicing to herself.]*

Hey, what's up? ... What's up? ... How's it going? ... Sorry I blew you off last year, but how the hell are ya? ... That's good.

*[Pause.]*

Yeah, great.

*[The phone rings in JOSH'S darkened room.]*

ANGIE

You don't have a fucking answering machine?

*[JOSH'S answering machine clicks on.]*

I was gonna say...

*[JOSH's voice is heard on the machine, saying: "Hey, This is Josh. I'm out. You know the drill."]*

Cute.

*[JOSH runs into his room as the machine BEEPS.]*

Uh, hey Josh, this is Ang, um, my number is—

JOSH

*[Picks up the phone.]*

Yeah! Hello?

ANGIE

Um. uh. Is Josh in?

JOSH

*[Out of breath.]*

This is.

ANGIE

Oh, hey Josh. ... .. This is Angie...

JOSH

*[Pause.]*

Hey...

ANGIE

Hey. ...You don't sound like you want to talk to me?

JOSH

No, I uh—

ANGIE

I mean, you sound out of breath.

JOSH

...Yeah. Yeah, I am. I just ran in. Heard the phone ringing.

ANGIE

Oh.

JOSH

Yeah.

*[Pause.]*

Can you hold on a minute?

ANGIE

Sure.

*[JOSH sets the phone down and goes to his closet, changing his shirt and taking off his shoes quickly. ANGIE gets up off her bed and starts pacing.]*

JOSH

*[To himself.]*

Look, Angie we're obviously way past the point of no return on this one, so let's just... let's just quit while we're ahead, okay?

*[JOSH picks up the phone, checking his hair in the mirror.]*

I'm back.

*[Pause.]*

So...

ANGIE

How are you?

JOSH

*[Almost simultaneously.]*

What have you been up to?

ANGIE

Sorry.

JOSH

*[Lays back on his bed.]*

You go first.

ANGIE

Just wanted to see how you've been?

JOSH

I'm good. Going to school.

ANGIE

Yeah. How's that going? Anything interesting?

JOSH

Not really. How bout you? You still writing?

ANGIE

I'm making Thirteen-fifty an hour doing dispatch for mercy ambulance. I might go back in the fall.

JOSH

You're a good writer.

ANGIE

You only saw one essay.

JOSH

And it was very good.

ANGIE

Uh-huh. Well I always knew what I cared about.

*[Pause.]*

You seeing anyone?

JOSH

*[Sits up on his bed, then gets up.]*

Yeah. ...I'm seeing someone. ... still.

ANGIE

I thought you broke up with her?

JOSH

Well... two years is a long time.

ANGIE

Yeah, it is. Two years ago you were still telling me to keep writing.

JOSH

I guess I always tell you that.

ANGIE

Yeah. But that's what I like about you....

*[Silence. They both pace quietly.]*

So, you got back together with her?

*[Pause.]*

That's good.

JOSH

So, how bout you?

ANGIE

Me?

JOSH

Yeah.

ANGIE

Oh.

*[Pause.]*

Yeah. ... I'm seeing someone.

JOSH

What's he like?

ANGIE

He's alright. Pre-med.

*[Silence.]*

So--

JOSH

--That's great. A career guy. How long?

ANGIE  
I, uh ... six months.

JOSH  
No shit. First long-termer.

ANGIE  
And last. Relationships suck. Too much work.

JOSH  
I thought that was a guy saying.

ANGIE  
Not one of yours.

JOSH  
*[Pause--that stings.]*  
Well we both know about me. So--

ANGIE  
No. It's just—

JOSH  
Mr. Marriage would never say that, would he?

*[No response.]*  
I just figured once you actually tried a relationship, you'd like it.  
*[ANGIE casually sets down her phone and walks to the wall that separates the rooms.]*

ANGIE  
I guess I'm just not with the right guy.

JOSH  
*[Pause.]*  
I'm sure he's cool. I'm happy for you.

ANGIE  
*[Long pause.]*  
Thanks. So, how's your relationship going? Everything alright?  
*[During the following exchange, ANGIE enters JOSH's room, comes up behind him and playfully steals his phone.]*

It could be worse.

JOSH

It could be like us.

ANGIE

That'd be worse. We'd only talk every six months.

JOSH

I'd blow you off.

ANGIE

After I pushed you away.

JOSH

And I'd call you six months later.

ANGIE

That's weird.

JOSH

That's us. It's how we are.

ANGIE

*[Silence. ANGIE sets JOSH's phone down on his bed, takes his hand and leads him into her room.]*

It's funny.

*[Pause.]*

You know my sister Rosa, she always says that you and I are gonna end up together.

Who?

JOSH

My sister, Rosa.

ANGIE

She never even met me.

JOSH

ANGIE

SO!

*[She lets go of his hand.]*

That doesn't matter.

JOSH

*[Long pause.]*

So ... what's the problem with you and your dream guy?

ANGIE

He's not my dream guy. He's an asshole.

*[Pause.]*

He has this ex-girlfriend in California.

JOSH

Ah.

ANGIE

Yeah. And he went back there last month. You know to see his friends.

*[Pause.]*

Well, anyway... He gave me this big long explanation about how I was like this new pair of sweats--nice and new--fresh. And she was this old, comfortable pair of sweats. Easy to wear, you know ... comfortable. So... ..

JOSH

Sweats metaphors.

ANGIE

What do you think?

JOSH

I think you're not made of cotton.

ANGIE

I understand what he meant. ... I do.

*[No response.]*

Well, nobody's perfect.

*[No response.]*

Everyone can't be like you, Josh.



JOSH

*[Pause.]*

No. I guess not.

ANGIE

That's not what I meant. I mean most guys—

JOSH

Most guys don't even talk to girls who've blown them off as much as you have me. Most guys don't even get into a bizarre relationship with a girl they saw for three weeks in 1997. Especially when they already have a relationship of their own. And most guys are much too smart to dump that girlfriend for their once-every-six-months telephone lover.

*[JOSH turns and steps back towards his room.]*

ANGIE

Yeah.

*[Pause.]*

What I was gonna say was that most guys don't treat girls as well as you do.

*[He stops.]*

JOSH

Yeah. Most guys are a lot smarter than me.

ANGIE

You were smart enough to get back together with her.

JOSH

*[Pause.]*

They were the only comfortable pair of sweats I had.

ANGIE

Why didn't you throw them out?

*[ANGIE takes JOSH's hand again.]*

JOSH

There was this song ... It was on this really bad album. This George Benson song, "Kisses in the Moonlight?"

ANGIE

I don't know it.

JOSH  
You heard it.

ANGIE  
No I--

JOSH  
You did.  
*[He takes her hand and starts to lead her through a slow dance.]*  
We danced, kissed mostly, through it. While I was making you dinner.

ANGIE  
What were you making me?

JOSH  
Pasta ... My grandmother's sauce--

ANGIE  
It all got stuck together--

JOSH  
Becasue I wasn't stirring it. I was with you, dancing...  
*[He kisses her.]*

ANGIE  
I don't remember the song.

JOSH  
It was really bad ...  
*[He kisses her again, she responds.]*  
I asked you what you thought of it, after we were done dancing.

ANGIE  
Did I like it?

JOSH  
You said, *(whispers)* "I didn't hear it."

ANGIE  
See, that's why I didn't remember. I wasn't listening...  
*[She kisses him.]*

JOSH  
Must be.

ANGIE  
I remember all kinds of things...

JOSH  
I believe you.

ANGIE  
I remember you always wanted me to watch *Star Trek* with you... I said I would try. For you.

JOSH  
We never got a chance...  
*[She pulls away from him, slightly.]*

ANGIE  
I remember I never apologized...

JOSH  
For what?

ANGIE  
I did some lousy things to you. Said them, too... "Mister Marriage."

JOSH  
Yeah, well--

ANGIE  
I'm sorry...  
*[Long Pause.]*  
I remember changing channels and seeing *Star Trek* on, and wanting to watch it with you. Wanting to find out what I missed.  
*[Silence.]*  
So... do you think ... we'll end up together?  
*[No response.]*

JOSH  
*[Long Pause.]*  
I...  
*[ANGIE moves closer to JOSH.]*

ANGIE

Do you think we'll end up together?

JOSH

I heard you.

*[Pause.]*

I was just thinking...

ANGIE

Of what?

*[JOSH steps back from ANGIE.]*

JOSH

Of this *Star Trek* convention I went to a couple of years ago.

ANGIE

You're thinking of a *Star Trek* convention? A *STAR TREK* convention!?!

*[ANGIE turns around and starts to walk away.]*

JOSH

Yeah. Shatner was there. I always wanted to see him. I grew up with Captain Kirk, so...

ANGIE

So?

JOSH

So I'm at this convention--nerds everywhere--waiting for Shatner. All the other actors had just been themselves, you know, answering questions, a joke or two. But not Shatner. He comes out onstage and starts doing this stand-up routine--one-liners and all--joke after joke. He'd answer a question, but not until he got a few jokes in. Well there was this deaf guy, a deaf mute I guess, who would hand the actors a card with his question written on it.

*[Pause.]*

He walks up to Shatner and holds out his card. Shatner takes the card, but without even looking at it says, "I'm sorry, I don't like boys." And there's like this total silence over the convention hall. Shatner just drops the card, turns his back on the guy and goes to the other end of the stage. The guy just lets out a "Ahhhhh" or "Uhhhh" or something, trying to ask his question. Shatner ignored him--called on someone else.

*[Pause.]*

So the guy picked up his card and walked away.

*[Silence. JOSH leaves her room and steps back into his own. ANGIE steps after him but stops at the invisible wall--she can't cross in.]*

It's a true story.

*[Pause.]*

It's sick, I guess. But that show means a lot to some people. Whenever I used to watch *Star Trek*, I always thought about the future. You know, Hope. Compassion. Possibilities.

*[JOSH picks up his phone.]*

ANGIE

That's what I always liked about you. I've been trying to watch it, you know—

JOSH

I wonder if that deaf guy thought that, too.

*[JOSH turns his back on ANGIE holding the phone close to his ear.]*

I got a test in the morning. I gotta go.

ANGIE

*[Pause.]*

Oh.

*[Pause.]*

You know, just because he was an asshole doesn't mean the show isn't still good. I know you know that, but—

*[ANGIE goes to her phone and takes it in her hand.]*

JOSH

I always do have the fantasy.

ANGIE

Yeah. You always do. And--

JOSH

But the reality isn't...

*[Pause.]*

It just isn't.

*[ANGIE presses her phone close to her ear.]*

ANGIE

*[Long pause.]*

Well, you have your girlfriend in reality.

*[Pause.]*

It really was great talking to you again, Josh.

JOSH

For me, too. Good luck with your boyfriend.

ANGIE

Yeah.

*[Pause.]*

Call me sometime. Whenever.

JOSH

I will.

ANGIE

Later.

*[They both hang up. The lights start to fade in both of their rooms.]*

JOSH

Yeah. ... Later.

*[Lights out.]*

END of PLAY