

The Flick Study Guide

The Flick by Annie Baker

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Plot Summary

The Flick is a Pulitzer Prize winning play by Annie Baker. It is set in a theater named The Flick that is being upgraded from using a traditional projector to a contemporary digital system. Just as the theater is going through changes, so are the lives and relationships of the the play's three diverse characters, Sam, Avery, and Rose. Each has an inner need for a change in experiences, perspectives, and dreams.

The play begins with an introduction to Avery and Sam. Long term employee Sam is teaching the new hire Avery the best techniques for cleaning up The Flick after messy patrons have left. During this opening scene, it is apparent that Avery has deep seated troubles. Over time, as he becomes comfortable with his job and his co-workers, the issues behind his woes come to light. Experiences such as coming from a broken home and relying on his wealthy father led to a past suicide attempt. Sam's inner-life is conflicted by his longing, unfulfilled love for Rose, the outspoken projectionist who is oblivious to anything except her own random life.

During a succession of frequently silent scenes, the play reveals further secrets of the characters, hinting that Avery has had an experience of being sexually abused. Also, Sam has a developmentally delayed brother whose unconditional happiness he resents. Then, there is Rose who is more attracted to Avery than she is to Sam, who is very attracted to her. This last secret is revealed in a scene in which Sam confesses his feelings for Rose, without actually looking at her while doing so. This leads Rose to conclude that even though he says he loves her, Sam's feelings are, in fact, "fake". The theme of "fake vs. real" returns later when Avery, who is seeing a therapist, confesses that not only does he feel that he's a fake, but he also thinks that everyone else is fake as well.

Eventually, the theater is sold to a new owner, who completes The Flick's transition from film-based projection into digital equipment. Movie buff Avery is not happy with the new method and tries to get the decision to do away with the old way of projection reversed. The new owner discovers a somewhat dodgy profit-skimming scheme practiced by several years of employees. He triggers a confession of involvement in the scheme from Avery, who then asks Rose and Sam to share the guilt. Rose leads the refusal, saying that the scheme was compensation for the fact that she, Sam, and the employees that have gone before aren't being paid enough. She adds that unlike Avery, who is only part time and is supported by his father, she, Sam, and other employees rely on this job for their entire income. She firmly refuses to do as Avery asks. Avery is fired, but Sam and Rose keep their jobs.

Sometime later, Avery returns to collect the now-dismantled old film projector and some reels of movies that have been left behind. He says that he plans to start a "classics" cinema at the college he's attending. When he leaves, a very contented Sam resumes cleaning the theater.



Act 1, Scenes 1 - 3

Summary

Act 1, Scene 1 – Sam comes into the movie theater, blocking the door open with a large garbage can. He starts to sweep between the rows of seats. Avery, an African-American, comes in shortly afterward and begins sweeping, too. Stage directions and conversation indicate that Avery is new at the job. Consequently, Sam must instruct him on how to do things, like make sure bits of lettuce from discarded sandwiches are picked up by hand. Their conversation includes other tricks of the theater trade such as ignoring lingering patrons, cleaning the soda dispensers, and getting soda spills up at the end of the evening. Other employees are mentioned, including Roberto (who left to join the Marines) and Brian (who works Sundays and Mondays). Sam says Avery will never work on those days. After their sweeping is finished, Sam and Avery leave. As they go, Sam asks whether Avery is “into movies.” Avery says he loves them.

Act 1, Scene 2 – A very apologetic Avery arrives late for work. Sam shows restraint while complaining about how much work he had to do in Avery’s place. At one point, Avery explains that his father was supposed to drive him over, but something happened and he couldn’t. Tension between Sam and Avery is broken when Sam finds a pile of lumpy chocolate pudding on the floor, which leads them to joke (uneasily) about Avery being “shit-phobic”. As they continue cleaning, Sam notices movement in the projection booth upstairs. He tells Avery that it’s Rose, the projectionist. He attempts to get her attention, shouting more and more loudly, but she appears not to notice. This leads Sam to tell Avery that Rose hates him and that she’s a lesbian.

Act 1, Scene 3 – On another day. Avery and Sam play “Six Degrees of Separation.” Avery turns out to be really good, making every connection Sam asks him to make, no matter how difficult. As the game continues, Sam gets excited about their common interest in movies, but Avery is more interested in winning. The game is interrupted by the arrival of Rose, late and hung-over after a party the night before. Conversation reveals that she and Sam have an arrangement they refer to as “Dinner Money,” in which they resell used ticket stubs and use the money to supplement their meager wages of eight dollars and twenty five cents an hour. Sam also explains that “Dinner Money” is a common practice that’s been going on in the theater for years. He and Rose had been told about it by Roberto. Though Rose and Sam are always complaining about how cheap their boss Steve can be, Avery tries to tell them that he’s not comfortable with the arrangement, He comments that he doesn’t want to get caught. He doesn’t think that Steve was anxious to hire an African-American in the first place. As Rose and Sam ponder the question of whether Steve is racist, Avery takes some time for himself, eventually telling Rose and Sam he’s okay with it after all. Rose goes up to the projection booth for a nap, leaving Sam and Avery to resume their game of “Six Degrees.”



Analysis

This section introduces the play's three central characters (Sam, Avery, and Rose). It sketches in the nature of their respective situations, such as Sam and Rose being experienced workers while Avery is a newcomer. This lays the groundwork for the development of their relationships over the course of the play. It is very important that the various changes in those relationships function on two levels by defining various elements of the plot and manifesting the play's central theme exploration of change. The most significant relationship element introduced at this point relates to the comment made in stage directions that describes Sam's call to Rose as a sign of his unrequited feelings for her. This foreshadows later references to how deep those feelings actually run. It also foreshadows his future confessions concerning his feelings. Rose reacts to the actual confession and the manner in which Sam delivers it. References to Sam's feelings in this section also tie into the moment at the end of the play in which the impression is given that he's come to peaceful terms with the outcome of his life. He realizes that his feelings about Rose are probably not going to be reciprocated..

There are several other important elements of foreshadowing in this scene. The picking up of debris from the floor and the reference to Avery being "shit-phobic" hint at later scenes in the play in which increasingly disgusting debris, including actual excrement left in the washroom, have to be dealt with by the employees.

The mention of "dinner money" ties into other references about the practice later in the play, most particularly the confrontation at the play's climax in Act 2, Scene 5. Also, playing "Six Degrees of Separation" foreshadows the play's final scene, in which Avery and Sam revisit the game, signifying a lasting friendship.

The final instance of foreshadowing in this section shows up in Act 1, Scene 2, when Avery is late to work. He apologizes profusely. Then, in Act 1, Scene 8, Avery confesses the real reason he was late for his second day.

Discussion Question 1

Rose's justification for the employees' act of skimming "dinner money" from the box office revenues is that the workers are not paid enough. Do you agree with her thinking? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Do you think Avery is justified in thinking his ethnicity might have an effect on whether he keeps his job? Why or why not?



Discussion Question 3

What are your feelings about movies or films? Would you take a job, as Avery does, just to be able to see movies? What do you think it is about movies that make them so important to so many people?

Vocabulary

Seltzer, anomaly, obsessive, punctual, projectionist, tapioca, oblivious, unrequited, squint, decipherable, moonshine, compulsive, judgmental.



Act 1, Scenes 4 - 7

Summary

Act 1, Scene 4 – As he and Avery sweep, Sam reveals his angry confusion about people sneaking food into the theater and then leaving much of it behind. In response, Avery says he finds it weird that people would pay for food at the concession and leave it on the floor. They find an abandoned shoe and debate why it might have been left. Sam eventually throws it out. Avery asks Sam what he wants to be when he “grows up.” Sam is angry at first, saying he is grown up. Then, as they leave, Sam admits he wants to be a chef.

Act 1, Scene 5 – Sam and Avery come into the theater to clean, unaware that the customer known as Dreaming Man is still there. When Sam notices him, he wakes the man up and sends him out. Once he’s gone, conversation between Sam and Avery resumes. Sam continues his attempt to convince Avery that there really have been great American movies in the last twenty years, listing several movies of different genres by many film-makers. Avery doesn’t agree with any of his suggestions, insisting that “Pulp Fiction,” made in 1994, “was the last truly great American movie.” Their argument is briefly interrupted by Sam pausing to scratch a rash on his collarbone. Just as their argument is getting into the question of whether it’s a good thing that movie-making is easing away from film and into digital projection and production, Rose interrupts with a book that analyzes astrological star signs. The argument over films continues for a while, with Sam revealing that Avery can quote a key moment in “Pulp Fiction” word for word. The quote, spoken by Samuel Jackson in the movie, is from Ezekiel 25:17 in the Bible.

Rose changes the subject, reading from the astrology book. Conversation reveals that she and Sam are both Leos. As such, they are fierce, proud, and sexually driven. Avery is a Capricorn which makes him thoughtful, relatively stable, and a bit of a snob. The book’s analysis reveals that the Leo/Capricorn relationship is stronger and has more professional potential rather than a romantic one. Some of the things the book says about the Leo/Capricorn professional relationship seem to mirror the Sam/Avery relationship. Sam interrupts Rose’s reading of the book by asking about the compatibility of two Leos together. Rose reads that such a relationship could either be really good or really bad. Then, she quickly leaves. After briefly discussing whether Avery finds Rose attractive, Sam turns their attention to an itchy rash on his torso, which he calls “repulsive.” When he goes to check on it in the bathroom, Rose tries to communicate with Avery from the booth, but, Avery doesn’t understand what she’s saying.

Act 1, Scene 6 – While the rest of the staff is out getting food, Avery talks on his cell phone with his therapist, describing in detail a dream in which he’s trapped in Purgatory with his dad. Avery goes on to say that in the dream, Purgatory is a library filled with books and DVDs. The decision about whether someone leaves is decided according to



which particular book or movie that symbolizes your entire life sets off a scanner held by some "person." In the dream, Avery says, his father goes up to heaven when one of the books sets the scanner off. Also, in the dream Avery watches for a long time as the person holding the scanner goes over every single movie he's ever watched and loved but doesn't go off until the scanner reaches a movie that Avery hates. The movie is "Honeymoon in Vegas," which he was obsessed with when he was four. Avery tells the therapist that he feels relieved that in the dream the scanned book sends him to heaven. After explaining his dream, he goes on to comment that he feels like it's time to accept that life is never going to get any better. He's always going to be living with his father. He's "just gonna be that weird depressed guy and [he] should just like accept it." He' is sorry for interrupting his therapist's vacation.

Analysis

As in previous scenes, Act I, Scenes 4 - 7 contain a great deal of foreshadowing. Examples include Sam's comments about people bringing food into the theater. This foreshadows events in Act 2, Scene 1, in which Sam tells a long story involving an incident in which he had taken food into a theater.

Avery's reference to the Ezekiel quote from "Pulp Fiction" will have a significant role in the play's climax.

Meanwhile, the conversation about the astrological aspects of the various relationships foreshadows developments throughout the play in those relationships.

One very important piece of foreshadowing comes at the end of Scene 5 when Rose attempts to get Avery's attention. Her attempt ties into the end of Act I, in which Rose tries to seduce Avery sexually.

Other important elements in the first two scenes of the section include Sam's reference to wanting to be a chef. This is the only time that this is mentioned. Since he never follows up on it and he never explains why he doesn't follow up on it, Sam's comment alludes to the a second theme of futility vs hope. A related point here is Sam's reaction to Avery's comment about being a grown-up.

Act 1, Scene 6 consists entirely of what theater practitioners call a monologue, a long speech spoken by a single character. This monologue by Avery is spoken to a character not on the stage. It reveals how troubled Avery is and how much he struggles to deal with those troubles. Also, it reveals how closely tied he is to his father. Once again, the theme of futility vs. hope is manifested. Avery is resigned to accept the fact that life is what it is with no hope of getting better.



Discussion Question 1

Given that the playwright defines Sam's age as being in the "mid-thirties," why do you think Sam reacts so strongly to Avery's question about what he wants to be when he "grows up"?

Discussion Question 2

In the context of the play and its thematic consideration of the tension between hopefulness and futility, what do you think the Dreaming Man represents? More specifically, how can he be seen as a metaphoric parallel to one or more of the main characters?

Discussion Question 3

Given the meaning and purpose of Purgatory (i.e. as a place for souls to wait while it's determined whether they go to heaven or to hell), how does Purgatory symbolize the characters' lives at The Flick?

Vocabulary

Perspective, incredulous, disdainful, intentional, aggressive, avatar, rational, compatibility, astrology, beset, tyranny, dubious, grim, exuberance, spontaneity.



Act 1, Scenes 7 - 8

Summary

Act 1, Scene 7 – The day after Avery speaks to his therapist, Sam reveals that a chunk of the ceiling fell down into the seats and almost hit an elderly woman. The lady freaked out, but she was calmed down by Brian who turned on the charm. As they resume sweeping, Avery comments that he went up into the projection booth and discovered some old films on reels that Steve never returned to their distributors. He thinks that he and Sam could watch the films one night after closing. Sam says he'd like to do that, but he's going away for his thirty-nine year old "retarded" brother's wedding. He goes on to say that he doesn't know his brother very well. His brother met the woman he's marrying in a care home. She is also "retarded". Holding a yo-yo that she found in her closet, Rose interrupts. As Avery demonstrates how good he is with the yo-yo, the conversation turns to the reels of film in the projection booth and the idea of watching them. Rose immediately agrees with Avery. She suggests that the next weekend would be a good time. Sam withdraws and sits unhappily. When Rose goes, Avery asks Sam about the rash on his back. Sam explains that it's a rare condition that is diagnosed by its distinctive Christmas tree shape. He adds that the rash will go away. As he and Avery go out to start work, Rose appears in the projection booth. Sam pauses and looks at her while Avery waits at the door.

Act 1, Scene 8 – As Avery cleans the theater on his own while Sam's away, Rose puts on some raucous music and dances in the aisles. Avery enjoys watching her performance, but he is not moved by it. Rose turns off the music and tells him she's embarrassed. She asks him if he wants to get stoned with her. He refuses. As they talk, Avery learns that Rose didn't know Sam's brother was retarded. She also shares that she is not a lesbian. Avery tells Rose that his father is a university professor and that Sam still lives at home.

Avery asks Rose to show him how to run the movie projector. He tells her how much he loves the old film reels and that he thinks digital films are a bad idea. Rose comments that Sam keeps asking her to show him how to do it, but she thinks Avery would be better at it because he cares about it so much. She takes him to the projection booth and shows him what to do. They start the film called "The Wild Bunch." As the film plays, Rose sits beside Avery, puts her head on his shoulder, and tries to arouse him. When he doesn't respond, she stops. She returns to the booth and shuts off the film. When she comes back, Avery confesses that he has sexual difficulty and that it is not the first time someone tried to have sex with him in a movie theater.

Then, Avery tells Rose that it's the one year anniversary of his attempted suicide. He says that because of his ongoing depression he had to talk himself into coming to work on the second day of his job. He managed to convince himself because he loves the film reels and The Flick is one of the last places that doesn't show digital movies. Finally, he explains that he thinks the core of his depression is that he does not know



himself. He also makes comments about his mother and about a university friend named Clark. He stops before fully explaining either remark. As Rose listens, she interjects occasionally, telling about her own difficulties with relationships. Ultimately, she becomes more and more comfortable with him. Avery brings up the idea of being "fake." Rose asks him if he was being fake when he was telling her about himself. He says he's not sure – that "it's hard to tell." She agrees. Then, she rests her head on his shoulder as the lights fade.

Analysis

In this section, several elements foreshadowed in earlier scenes (Sam's rash, revelations of Avery's emotional difficulties - including the revelation of the real reason Avery was late for work in Scene 2) emerge fully into the narrative. The importance of these elements also emerges, at times more clearly than in others. The metaphoric meaning of Sam's rash, for example, is not stressed. However, there is the sense that on some level, Sam feels the uncommon rash marks him as a unique individual. That feeling is one that he knows he does not possess in his everyday existence.

By contrast, the meaning of Avery's emotional difficulties are quite explicit. His depression and suicide attempt are revelations that reinforce the impression the narrative gives of him in the previous section as he spoke with his psychiatrist. The sources of Avery's difficulties are dealt with by subtle implication. His statement to Rose that it's not the first time someone tried to have sex with him in a theater and his apparent emotional difficulties suggest that Avery has been the victim of some form of sexual abuse. In a similar vein, his self-interrupted story about his mother and his school friend suggests something was amiss in that situation.

Two new elements of foreshadowing are introduced in this section. Sam's reference to his brother's wedding foreshadows an upcoming event when Sam tells the story of what happened at that wedding. Another important piece of foreshadowing is when Rose shows Avery how to work the projector. This will trigger a strong reaction from Sam when he finds out about it in Act 2, Scene 2. Finally, there is the reference to the abandoned reels of film, which play an important role in the play's conclusion.

Aside from the numerous instances of foreshadowing, the play's themes are developed in this section. The themes include the play's consideration of change (developed through Avery's comments on moving from traditional to digital projection), the play's consideration of the relationship between what's real and what's fake (developed at the end of the conversation between Avery and Rose), and the relationship between hope and futility. This is clearly dramatized as Rose hopes that her attempt to seduce Avery will succeed. It ends up being an exercise in sad futility.

Finally, there are several symbolic / metaphoric elements in this scene. The collapsing ceiling can be seen as further developing the play's thematic interest in change; Rose's yo-yo is a commentary on the play's interest in the relationship between past and present. Avery and Rose watch "The Wild Bunch," a film about a group of rebellious



young people. The title and subject of the film can be perceived as echoing the lives and relationships of the three central characters, themselves a kind of "wild bunch."

Discussion Question 1

Avery's father is a university professor. How is it possible that his father's status might have a connection to Avery's depression?

Discussion Question 2

In what way does Avery's expertise in playing with Rose's old-fashioned yo-yo parallel his affection for the movies and contribute to the play's theme about change?

Discussion Question 3

In what way does the collapsed ceiling relate to the question of whether the theater is going to convert from old-fashioned projection to digital projection?

Vocabulary

Ominous, voucher, liability, pathetic, blasphemous, beseeching, visible, contagious, fungus, distinctive, cathartic, linguistics, semiotics, paranoid, fantasize, nymphomaniac, bulimia, anorexic.



Act 2, Scenes 1 - 3

Summary

Act 2, Scene 1 – Three days later, Sam is back from his brother's wedding. He speaks bitterly about how happy everyone seemed in spite of the whole occasion being a joke. His mother went “over the top” with the arrangements. Also, everybody pretended the food was good when it was awful. Sam tells a long story about how he, the guy who hates people bringing food into the theater from outside, brought some tamales into a movie theater. Then, he lost them. When Avery seems confused about the story, Sam comments that the story made more sense when it was still in his head before he told it.

Rose comes in with news that she thinks that Steve is selling The Flick to a company that will change to digital projection. Avery comments that if that happens, he might have to quit. After Rose goes back to the booth, Sam asks what Avery and Rose did while he was gone. Avery makes light of everything that happened. He reveals that he told Rose about Sam's brother illness. Sam says that what he had told Avery about his brother was in confidence. Avery then tells about Rosie showing him how to run the projector. When Sam hears this, he dumps an abandoned bag of popcorn all over Avery's freshly swept side of the theater.

Act 2, Scene 2 – Sam and Avery clean in silence. Sam is apparently still angry about Avery learning how to work the projector. When Rose tries to hand Sam his dinner money, he refuses to take it. Eventually, he confronts Rose about why she showed Avery how to work the projector. After Avery leaves, Sam becomes angry. Then, his feelings change as he sits by himself. While not looking at Rose, he tells her about his deep feelings for her. After Rose listens, she urges him to turn around and look at her. When he refuses, she tells him that she's not what he thinks she is and accuses him of not being able to be fully honest with her. He begins to cry. At that moment, Avery bursts in, shouting that someone took a “shit” on the floor of the men's bathroom and smeared it all over the walls. As he tries to calm himself, Sam says that he will go clean it up. Rose offers to help, but Sam insists on going on his own. After he goes, Rose confesses that she worries about something being really wrong with her; but, she's afraid that she'll never know exactly what it is. She then goes out to fetch Avery some water.

Act 2, Scene 3 – As Sam and Avery walk through and clean, Rose watches from the projection booth, occasionally looking down at them. Avery and Sam discuss a Facebook video. This leads Avery to confess that he's no longer on Facebook because after his mother joined, she reconnected with an old high school boyfriend and left Avery's father. He also says that the only time that she's been back home was a year ago, when things happened in the family and she had to come back. Avery laughs when Sam shows a video on his phone to him. When the video is finished, he and Sam go back to work. Rose knocks on the window of the projection booth. Avery looks up and waves. Sam keeps on working without looking.



Analysis

Sam's extended commentary on his unhappy experience at his brother's wedding keeps with the play's thematic exploration of "real vs. fake." This theme is also explored, perhaps even more directly, in Sam's story of the tamales. Even though he had said earlier that he hates people who bring outside food into the theater, he did it himself. He cannot honor his own principles. This theme plays out even further in Scene 2, in which he confesses the true nature of his feelings to Rose. His feelings are real. However, since he doesn't look at her, she perceives him as being fake. He feels humiliated when he is unable to reveal himself fully to Rose. His feelings lead him to ignore her when she tries to get his (and Avery's) attention from the projection booth at the end of Scene 3. A more significant component is his anger at Rose for showing Avery how to work the projector and not him. Sam feels that since he cares more for her, he should be the one who gets to learn how to work the projector.

Another important element included in this section is Rose's announcement of the planned sale of The Flick. Its sale could have several repercussions. The co-workers may or may not retain their jobs. Also, the dinner money scheme may or may not be discovered. Most importantly for Avery, the means of projection will be changed from traditional, film-based projection to digital. As the play has made clear previously, Avery cares deeply for the traditional means of film-making/projection, a depth that is reinforced by his stated intention to quit if the change goes through.

A very important part in this section is Avery's discovery of excrement being smeared all over the bathroom floor. The intensity of Avery's reaction had been foreshadowed earlier by his revelation that he is "shit-phobic" (Act 1, Scene 2). Sam's decision to take on the awful job of cleaning up the mess is an ironic foreshadowing of events in the following section when Avery asks Sam and Rose to choose to act on their friendship. Unlike taking care of the bathroom incident, Sam offers no help in cleaning up the dinner money controversy. Both he and Rose refuse to tell the truth.

Finally, there is a passing reference about the return visit of Avery's estranged mother, which took place a year before the play's action. The timing of that visit is significant.

Discussion Question 1

How does Sam's reaction to the events at his brother's wedding reflect the play's theme of "real vs. fake"?

Discussion Question 2

What is the thematic significance of Rose telling Sam that "she's not who he thinks she is"?



Discussion Question 3

What is the significance of the timing of Avery's mother's visit which was a year prior to the play's action?

Vocabulary

Multiplex, tamale, pristine, halitosis, obsolete, charade, nauseous.



Act 2, Scenes 4 - 8

Summary

Act 2, Scene 4 – Avery asks Sam to listen to the letter that he plans to send Steve in an attempt to convince him to keep the original projector and not convert to digital projection. Sam agrees, but only if Avery will do his impression of the Ezekiel 25:17 quote from “Pulp Fiction.” As Avery reads the letter, Sam becomes more and more enthused. At times, he falls silent. When Avery finishes, Sam tells him it’s a good letter. Then, he says he’s not convinced by Avery’s argument, adding that when it comes to the conversion, he (Sam) doesn’t really “care either way.” Avery doesn’t do the impression.

Act 2, Scene 5 – Wearing new uniforms, Sam and Rose discuss the transition to the new owner. An awkward pause leads Sam to confess that he went on a date with a girl named Tiler. After his confession, Rose remarks that she would have liked for Sam to have actually taken the time to get to know her before going out and dating someone else. She adds that now more than ever she thinks Sam’s admission of his love for her was a big “performance.” Sam implies that she’s being a bitch, and Rose accuses him of hating her. Before he can say anything, Avery comes in, also in a new uniform. He reveals that Paul, the new owner, figured out the “dinner money” scheme. Paul knows that Avery was involved because of a note Avery left for Sam in one of the ticket boxes. Avery says that he didn’t tell Paul about Rose and Sam’s involvement. Both of them are obviously relieved; but the relief disappears when Avery asks them to tell Paul the truth about the scheme so that he might be spared from getting fired. Sam and, particularly, Rose have a difficult time with this request. Avery waits for a response. Eventually, he shares that Paul is going to convert to digital projection. Avery is reminded of the time that he told Sam that if The Flick went digital he was quitting. Avery starts to go, but he suddenly turns around and launches into the “Pulp Fiction” / Ezekiel 25:17 quote, which includes the line “Blessed is he who, in the name of charity and good will, shepherds the weak through the valley of darkness. For he is truly his brother’s keeper and the finder of lost children.” He goes on to quote further from “Pulp Fiction,” essentially saying that he’s “tryin’ real hard to be the shepherd.” After Rose comments on Avery’s great impression, he leaves.

Act 2, Scene 6 – Rose and Sam, who appear to be getting along, dismantle the old projector and install the digital one. They test it by projecting images that the audience doesn’t see. They switch it off, then leave.

Act 2, Scene 7 – Sam brings in a new staff member named Skylar. Skylar has both experience and opinions about how things should be done. Since there is no projectionist now, one of the staff runs up to the booth and turns on the projector. Skylar takes on the task and impresses Sam when he does it quickly and correctly. While he’s waiting for Sam to finish for the day, Skylar touches the movie screen (see Quote 11). Sam is bothered, but he tries not to show it. He finishes, and they both leave.



Act 2, Scene 8 – Avery, dressed in regular clothes, waits while Sam brings the pieces of the broken-down projector, several reels of film, and several old storage cases from the projection room. Avery takes them out to the street where his father is waiting with a car. Once everything has been removed, an awkward conversation reveals that Avery is thinking of starting his own theater or film society. Sam then apologizes for not backing Avery up with Paul. Then Avery tells him not to worry because it was actually a good thing that he had lost his job. Actually, he feels okay about things. He then goes on to say that he never really thought he and Sam were friends. He thinks that Sam will still be working at the movie theater while he has a career elsewhere. Sam responds by saying that life isn't so bad (see Quote 14). As Avery goes, Sam challenges him to one last game of "Six Degrees of Separation." At first, Avery refuses and goes out, but Sam waits. Avery bursts back in and, without smiling, solves the problem Sam poses, Sam is smiling when Avery leaves. Then, Sam looks up at the ceiling for a moment. Still smiling, Sam flicks off the lights before he leaves.

Analysis

Act 2, Scene 4, starts building toward a thematic climax. After Avery asks for Sam's help in preparing a protest letter against the eventual transition into digital projection, the action intensifies when Sam does not share the same passionate feelings as Avery about the switch. Also, Rose's confrontation with Sam over Sam's new girlfriend builds further tension. Though Sam and Rose are on opposite sides at this point, they quickly become united again when Avery asks them to tell the truth to Paul about the dinner money. United, they plan on protecting what they see as being their rightful share of The Flick's income.

Avery uses the words of the writer of "Pulp Fiction" to get his own point across to Sam and Rose. He is accusing Sam and Rose of not being good friends, not being the "shepherd" that the character in the film says he's trying to be. This, in turn, makes Rose's comment on how good the impression was deeply ironic. It is the comment of someone who is now moving on after being little more than an admirer. The play's climax occurs at the moment when Avery asks Sam and Rose to side with him in his confrontation with new owner Paul.

Sam's giving the pieces of the projector and the films to Avery suggests that, on some level, he's trying to repair the damage to his and Avery's relationship. It seems that Avery is having none of it. Over the course of the play, Avery has changed, to the point where he feels stronger and more himself than he apparently has in quite some time. This is also true of Sam, it seems, as the dialogue and stage directions give the impression that he's happier and more at peace with himself and his circumstances than he is anywhere else in the play.

Avery leaves under two important circumstances. First, although he is still dependent upon his father, now he's being supported by his dad as he moves forward toward his new dream of his own projection theater. Avery's comments that he will be living a life



he's dreamed of while Sam will still be stuck in the theater seem angry and judgmental. However, they ultimately serve as a trigger. Now, Sam seems happy and content.

This scene is very ironic. Traditionally, as a Caucasian male, Sam should be moving up the ladder of success instead of Avery, who is an African-American. Instead, Sam is stuck and Avery is moving toward his new dream.

In Scene 5, the theme of fake vs. real appears as Rose accuses Sam of being insincere when he professes his deep feelings for her. The climax of the main plot takes place in a silent Scene 6 as a question is proposed. What's going to happen to the old projector?

Discussion Question 1

Sam says, "sometimes the people you fall in love with fall in love with you back. Sometimes they don't. But sometimes they do. And it's awesome." What do you think has been the ultimate outcome of the relationship between Sam and Rose? Consider how their relationship develops the play's major themes in your answer.

Discussion Question 2

What do you think is suggested by Skylar's touching of the movie screen and his comments about it?

Discussion Question 3

Do you think Rose and Sam did the right thing by refusing to support Avery in his confrontation with the new owner about "dinner money"? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

Multiplex, tamale, pristine, halitosis, obsolete, charade, nauseous.



Characters

Sam

Sam is the play's central protagonist. He is described as being in his mid-thirties, which is an important aspect of the character even though the play never addresses it directly. His age, combined with the fact that he still lives with his parents, implies a certain aimlessness, a certain sense of being lost, even a certain inability to function in society. Though the issue is never fully addressed, it clearly relates to the play's key theme of futility vs. hope. Sam has goals and dreams. At one point, he says that he would like to be a chef. He hopes for a romantic relationship with Rose. At the end of the play, when nothing but a continuation of his current situation seems imminent, he is smiling. This suggests that between the play's beginning and its ending, Sam has come to terms with himself and the journey he has taken through life. Like most protagonists, he has undergone a change.

Sam moves from desperate hopefulness to a more positive sense of acceptance and relative peace, with himself and his place in the world. To get to this place, he has (as the action of the play suggests) worked through issues of resentment, loneliness, self-disrespect, and frustration. He has reached a place of acceptance and understanding of frailties and failures in both himself and in other people.

Sam's other character traits include his love of the movies, though his love is not nearly as strong as Avery's. He tends to do the least amount of work that he can on his job. He keeps his true feelings to himself, particularly his love for Rose. His love for her derails when he is unable to look at her as he tells her about his deep feelings. She takes his inability to look at her as a sign of insincerity.

Avery

African-American Avery is the antagonist who triggers transformations of the other characters in the play. Avery is about fifteen years younger than Sam. The difference in their ages gives their relationship a sense of student-teacher dynamics. Though his father seems very attentive, Avery is from a broken family.

He has attempted suicide in the past and is currently seeing a psychiatrist.

Much to Sam's incredulous amusement, Avery is somewhat of a film prodigy. He has a memory like an encyclopedia. He can remember the casts of movies in great detail. He believes in the purity of the outdated film reels as opposed to the new digital technology. Other important aspects of Avery's character include a strong sense of morality. There is evidence of this when he disapproves of and refuses to take sole responsibility for the "dinner money" scheme.



He seems very aware that as an African-American, he has the potential to be victimized by prejudice. He does what he can to prevent that from happening. At the play's conclusion, he is betrayed by Sam and Rose, whom he thought he could trust. However, In the company of his supportive father, Avery moves on. He is prepared to takes steps to build a new life in a way that he perceives Sam is incapable of doing.

Rose

Rose is the third of the play's three central characters. Like Avery, she functions as something of an antagonist, triggering change / transformation in both Sam and Avery. Her means of causing that change is perhaps more aggressive and/or confrontational than Avery's. Avery is passive, putting change in motion simply by being who he is, Rose is more active. She is confrontational, frank, outspoken, opinionated, and at times insensitive. Several years younger than Sam and a few years older than Avery, she is also somewhere between them in terms of her relationships with her job and the rest of the world/culture through which she moves. There is the clear sense throughout the narrative that unlike Sam, the job is not her life. Unlike Avery, the movies are not her passion. Unlike both of them, her sense of self-worth is not defined by her job. Interestingly, the narrative doesn't suggest what defines her life. Perhaps, that is part of the play's point: that for all her focus on her non-job life, Rose is as aimless and as hopeless as the others: just because she has something else to do with her time (i.e. party), it doesn't mean that she has a rewarding life. Other important aspects of Rose's character include her apparently fluid sexuality. She hints that she is interested in both males and females. Since she runs the projector, she is tech savvy. She is determined to fight for what few advantages she believes she has in connection with the "dinner money" scheme.

The Dreaming Man

This character appears only once (Act 1, Scene 5). He is sleeping in the theater as Sam and Avery come through and clean. He wakes up and is told to leave. On one level, he represents exactly what he appears to be – a moviegoer who has lost track of the time and his whereabouts. On another level, he can be seen as representing an aspect of the play's thematic consideration of hope vs. futility (see "Questions for Discussion – Section 2")

Roberto

This character is referred to only in conversation. He is a former employee who joined the Marines. He passed on the tradition of "dinner money" (see "Symbols/Objects").



Brian

This character is referred to only in conversation. Brian works on Sundays and Mondays. The shifts seem to be important or choice times to work because Sam tells Avery that he will never be working them. Brian is mentioned as the employee who used his charm to calm down the audience member who was traumatized by a collapsed ceiling.

Steve

Steve is only spoken about, yet never seen. As the theater's owner, he is described as selfish, stupid, irresponsible, and racist. He is evidently an unpleasant boss. According to Avery, Steve has no regard for the tradition and value of movies on film reels, as opposed to digital recording and distribution.

Avery's Father

Of the many unseen characters referred to in the play, Avery's father comes across as the most compassionate. Sensitive and respectful to the needs of his son, Avery's father is a university professor, and seems to be doing his best to take care and/or support his troubled child.

Avery's Mother

Avery's mother, the narrative reveals, left her family behind to get involved with a high school sweetheart with whom she reconnected on Facebook. Her departure left Avery bitter and unhappy. There is the sense that it was one of the main triggers for his depression and, possibly, his suicide attempt.

Sam's Brother

Sam's brother is never seen. He is referred to as "retarded" by Sam, who says that his brother is thirty-nine years old but has the mind, perceptions, and perspectives of someone much younger. Sam's brother's wedding, to someone who shares his mental/emotional capacities, is the trigger for Sam's rant about the shallowness of apparent happiness (Section 4 – Act 2, Scene 1).

Paul

When Steve sells the theatre, it's purchased by Paul, who converts the traditional projection system to a digital one. Paul also finds out about the "dinner money" arrangement and fires Avery, unaware that Rose and Sam were also involved.

Skylar

New employee Skylar (who, according to stage directions, is played by the same actor who played the Dreaming Man) takes Avery's place when the latter is fired. Experienced, eager, and not afraid to express his opinions, Skylar seems to be a strong contrast, in terms of his work ethic, to the still somewhat lackadaisical Sam.



Symbols and Symbolism

Debris in the Theatre

Several times throughout the narrative, the theater's customers leave things behind – such as shredded lettuce from a sandwich and a smelly running shoe. A more extreme example of the theater's patrons' lack of civility is excrement smeared on the walls and bathroom floor. For further consideration of these items, see “Homework Help – Question 1”.

Dinner Money

“Dinner money” is the name given to a complex scheme of pocketing used tickets and reselling them. Past and current staff of the theatre have put the embezzlement in place to get themselves a little extra income. Secret and illegal, the scheme has been in place for years; however, it ceases at the end of the play when Paul, the new owner, catches on to the deceitfulness.

Movies

Throughout the narrative, movies are referred to as an important art form in culture. Avery seems to be obsessed with watching movies and retaining information about each one.

Celluloid Projection / Digital Projection

The different values of celluloid (i.e. film) and digitization (i.e. computer-based movie-making and/or distribution) are frequent points of contention between the characters. Avery, obsessed with traditional movies, is a passionate advocate for the former, while Sam sees no real difference between either form. The conflict between the two characters and the question of whether the theater in which they work will move from the former to the latter in terms of projection techniques, are two of the key manifestations of the play's central theme about change (see “Themes/Motifs – The Uneasiness of Change”).

The Old / New Projector

For most of the play, movies are projected using traditional, celluloid-defined means. After the theatre is sold, however, a new projector is brought in that shows films digitally. Sam gives the dismantled old projector to the departing Avery, who says he plans to start up an old-fashioned cinema with it. The moment of the hand-over can be seen as



the climax of the play's thematic exploration of the nature of change (see "Themes/Motifs").

"Six Degrees of Separation"

This is a popular game played by film fans in which they try to find connections between actors in the fewest possible films, ideally six or less. It's a game that Sam enjoys, but at which Avery is clearly the best player.

"Pulp Fiction"

This violent, innovative film from 1994 is regarded by Avery as the greatest American-made film of the last twenty years. Its fractured narrative, stylized violence and moralistic tone have made it highly regarded by audiences and historians of the theater.

Ezekiel 25:17

This Biblical quote from the Old Testament plays a key role in defining the violence-centric morality of "Pulp Fiction." It is portrayed in the narrative as having a particular hold on the play's characters. Avery's quotation of it (Section 5 – Act 2, Scene 8) marks the play's climax.

Rose's Yo-Yo

At one point (Section 3 – Act 1, Scene 7), Rose brings a yo-yo into the theater. When Avery plays with it, he reveals he's a master at it. This is one of several ways in which the past makes an appearance in the present. It relates to the play's central thematic exploration of tension surrounding change.

The Abandoned Reels of Film

Several reels of old-fashioned celluloid film are discovered in the projection booth. Some of them are watched by the characters over the course of the play, while at the end of the play, Avery takes some away with him. They, like the yo-yo, can be seen as a representation of how the past makes its way into the present, and also as a manifestation of the play's thematic consideration of change.

The Collapsed Ceiling

At one point, Sam describes how chunks of the theatre's ceiling fell onto the audience, traumatizing an elderly lady. For further consideration of this moment, see "Questions for Discussion - Section 3 – Act 1, Scene 7".



Settings

The Movie Theatre (The Flick)

The play is set within an old-fashioned, single screen, celluloid-projection movie theater named The Flick. The sweeping of The Flick's aisles, the cleaning of its floor, and the discovery of various things left behind between its rows of seats form much of the play's action.

The Projection Booth

High above the floor of the theater, the projection booth (where the projector is located) is the setting for important elements of the play's action – specifically, moments at which the characters (particularly Rose, but later Sam and Avery) can be seen but not heard.

Here and Now

In terms of placement in time, the play is set in the present. Questions of the transition from film to digital are quite contemporary as the vast majority of theaters now showing movies have made exactly that transition. Other important elements of the time setting include references to Facebook and the low-paying jobs of the young characters.



Themes and Motifs

Change

The prospect of change hangs over the narrative from the beginning – specifically, the change from the traditional means of projecting film (i.e. running reels of celluloid film through a machine) to a newer, more advanced means (i.e. running digital images through a computer). There are several facets to this change, depending on the point of view of the various characters, both seen (i.e. Steve the owner-manager of the theatre) and unseen (i.e. Avery, a new employee). For the former, the change in projection methods is a positive: primarily, the shift means economic savings, in terms of costs of shipping / receiving the movies, in terms of potential maintenance of equipment (i.e. the aging traditional machine costs more to repair) and, as the narrative eventually reveals, in terms of staffing costs. This is particularly relevant to the play, in that specialized projectionists like Rose will no longer be required. As the final scenes of the play indicates, the film can now be shown as the result of a cleaner/concession operator simply running up to the projection booth and pushing a button.

In terms of the negative side of this particular change, employee Avery considers the traditional way of projecting film to be a fundamental part of the art form, its quality, traditions, and essential value. He refers to similar perspectives held by famous, respected filmmakers in support of his contention. Ultimately, his arguments fall on deaf ears, and the old projector is replaced. The thematic contention the play makes as a result of the resolution of this question is that change is inevitable. No matter how much resistance there is to change, it's going to happen. Energy spent to block change should be channeled to embrace it. This central thematic contention plays out in several other contexts – in relationships between the characters, in the characters' relationships with their lives/situations, and in the characters' relationships with themselves. For further consideration of this aspect of the play and its themes, see "Homework Help – Question 3".

Fake vs. Real

Several times throughout the narrative, characters bring up the question of whether the actions and/or feelings of other characters are "fake" or "real." The most vivid example of this comes late in the play, when Rose suggests that Sam's earlier confession of having feelings for her was insincere. The point in that situation seems to be that whether a feeling or experience is real or fake depends more on the perceptions of the observer or the person being engaged rather than the intentions of the person having the emotional experience.

This is also true in terms of Avery's implied contention that the use of digital / electronic projection methods is also fake, that it's somehow a betrayal / undercutting / undermining of film's essential value or identity as an art form. Here again, the



determination of what's real or fake is defined by individual perspective or point of view rather than the essential quality of what's being discussed. The narrative seems to be suggesting that in both cases, Sam's feelings and the quality of movie projection, the question of fake vs. real is entirely unrelated to actual identity or experience. Sam's feelings are Sam's true feelings; a shown movie is still a shown movie. The question here is whether perception defines or changes the truth.

Meanwhile, this theme manifests in another way, as Avery questions what his own truth is, whether the aspects of self that he (and, in fact, other people) present to the world is real or whether it's fake. His self-questioning is the only manifestation of a self-driven questioning of what fake and real actually mean. He's not standing outside someone/something and perceiving it as fake. He's standing inside himself and questioning whether what he does is real or fake. While it's important to take into account that Avery is portrayed as suffering from depression and suicidal tendencies, Avery's self-perception takes the theme to a new level. A question is posed as to whether it is even possible for anyone to distinguish real from fake.

Hope vs. Futility

Two of the three central characters, Sam and Avery, have clear and vivid hopes that they act upon, in varying ways and with varying degrees of success, throughout the narrative. Sam's hopes are arguably the simplest. He hopes that one day, Rose will at least find him attractive, and, perhaps, even develop feelings for him which are as deep as his feelings are for her.

Avery's hopes are more complex and more multifaceted. First, he hopes to develop the sense that he and what he offers to the world are real. He hopes to convince Steve (and later his replacement as owner, Paul) to keep the old projector; and he hopes that the relationships he develops with Sam and Rose actually turn into friendships. He acts most emphatically and determinedly to achieve his second hope, and the play makes it clear not only that that hope is never going to be realized (in other words, that change is inevitable, a manifestation of the first theme outlined above), but that his actions in trying that make that hope a reality are, in fact, futile. This point is also made in relation to Avery's third hope: specifically, his hope that Rose and Sam will back him up in his revelations of the truth about "dinner money" likewise prove futile, in the same way as Sam's hopes that Rose will respond to his expressions of feeling also prove futile. In other words, throughout the narrative, the playwright seems to be offering the thematic contention that there is in some ways no hope for hope – that even if positive, responsible action is taken to realize what one hopes for, those hopes are likely to not be realized, if not outright destroyed.

This is not to say that the narrative contends there are no positive possibilities at all. At the end of the play, Sam and Avery experience positive outcomes which neither had pursued or expected. This suggests that growth occurs in circumstances that are the least hoped for and the least expected. Though hope may lead to disappointment, it holds the inevitable possibility of a positive transformation.

Styles

Point of View

The first point to note here is that because this is a play, the primary point of view is that of the audience – what is read describes what is seen, what is heard, and what is done by the characters. It is, in many ways, a very objective point of view. For the most part, there is no narrative to explain why things are happening, to go into the minds and experiences of the characters, or to develop imagery that metaphorically reveals truths about experience and/or motivation. This is not to say that none of these elements are present (see “Language and Meaning” below), only that they do not emerge through prose, but rather through the dialogue and described actions of the characters. Here it's important to note that the latter (i.e. described actions) are actually relatively sparse: the playwright, like many (most?) contemporary writers for the stage, leave the stage directions to a minimum, to only the most essential, in order to leave room for the actors, directors, designers, and other collaborative artists to contribute to the interpretation of the script.

The second point to note, in terms of point of view, has to do with the identification of the play's central character, or protagonist. This is important in the analysis of any play because, for the most part, both the action and the meaning of a theatrical narrative are defined by the experience of its protagonist, his/her journey of transformation and how his/her needs, actions, and reactions define the play's story. In this case, the protagonist is Sam. While the other two main characters (Avery and Rose) are significantly developed, and while Avery undergoes a significant transformation of his own, Sam is the character whose struggles and transformations take central / primary focus. In other words, the play focuses its point of view on Sam: he's not telling the story, he's not experiencing the narrative in the same way that he might in a prose piece that focuses on him: he is, however, the character whose transformation is the most significant, the biggest and the deepest, and the most revelatory of self. While Rose doesn't change much at all (essentially concluding the narrative the same person as she started it), and while Avery essentially becomes more himself (i.e. letting go of a significant degree of his suffering and becoming more connected to his true dreams and values), Sam's sense of who he is changes radically from the beginning to the end of the play. In short, his story is the play's story, his inner change reflects the change in the play's outer circumstances, and his emergence into a new reality for himself defines and embodies the play's central themes (see “Themes”).

Language and Meaning

When commenting on the play's use of language, it is important to take into account the fact that “The Flick” is a play. Virtually everything that can be understood about the characters, their situations, and their stories emerges from dialogue. Dialogue, in turn, is not just defined by what the characters say, but also how they say it, to whom they say



it, when they say it, the circumstances and/or context in which they say it, and the words they actually use. In other words, meaning is inferred from all these elements (which are in turn further defined by grammatical factors like sentence structure and punctuation), as opposed to being revealed in narration or in prose.

The second point to note about the language in this particular play is that the conversations are extremely realistic. Where some plays explore different ways in which language can be heightened or elevated (such as being made more poetic), this play's dialogue is firmly anchored in the intention of making the characters sound like real people, using words in the way real people do. A vivid example of this is the repeated use of the word "like", injected into the lines of the characters (particularly Rose) in the same way as people today, particularly younger people, inject it into virtually every sentence, into virtually every attempt at communication. This makes the characters more relatable and, as noted above, more realistic. It also raises the question, as the original production of this play did, whether "realistic" is fully effective in the theatre, a world in which realism is often the BEGINNINGS of narrative style, rather than its FOUNDATIONS.

A final point about the use of language in the play has to do with the use of "jargon" – that is, terms, concepts, and phrases unique to a particular set of circumstances. In this case, the use of jargon relates to the importance of movies, and specifically techniques of movie projection. While jargon is something many writers, and many theater writers, tend to shy away from because it can, if ineffectively used, feel exclusive to a reader or to an audience member, its use in *The Flick* is appropriate.

Structure

On one level, the play's structure is that of most contemporary plays – two acts, several scenes (of varying lengths) within each act, the acts separated by an intermission. The scenes and acts portray a series of events that span a period of several months.

On another level, and within that overall framework, the play's structure is essentially straightforward, following a linear line of narrative from beginning to end. That is to say, the play follows a sequence or chain of events through the pattern of cause and effect, or action and reaction from its first scene (which begins the relationship between Sam and Avery) to its last (which brings that relationship to its conclusion). Here an important point to note is terminology: this technique, of opening and closing a narrative with similar elements (i.e. the same characters, the same image, the same circumstances) is known as "bookending". In other words, in the same way as a pair of bookends frames a shelf of books or other, similar things, these opening and closing scenes frame the action that takes place between them.

Meanwhile, that action is primarily structured and/or defined, as is the case with many (most?) plays, in relation to the needs, intentions, and actions of its central character, or protagonist. As noted above, that protagonist is Sam, meaning that the play's overall structure, its scene by scene structure, and its grounding in the cause/effect,



action/reaction principles, is defined by SAM's needs, the intentions arising from those needs, and the actions he takes to both meet those needs and realize those intentions. In other words, and again as is the case with most dramatic narrative, character equals action and vice versa.

Finally, it's important to note that the play is not solely about Sam, and that it's structure / line of action isn't solely defined by him, but it is primarily defined by him. Moments when he's not onstage, moments in which the other characters (primarily Rose and Avery) interact, also trigger the cause/effect, action/reaction principles, but in relation to Sam. The effects that Rose and Avery have on each other affect and define their relationships with Sam, which in turn defines the action of the narrative, which in turn defines its structure, over the course of the play, over the course of its two acts, and over the course of the many scenes in each act.



Quotes

Avery goes back to sweeping. Sam keeps watching the window as if he hopes [Rose] might appear again.

-- Stage Direction (Act 1, Scene 2)

Importance: This stage direction is important because when it's enacted onstage, it indicates to the audience just how attracted Sam is to Rose, and how much he wants her to pay attention to him.

Well, it is kind of dinner money, because we're so vastly underpaid and because Steve is a total douchebag and doesn't have a credit card machine and is like totally fishy anyway with his finances and basically has like no idea how to run a movie theatre ... Steve is like a compulsive gambler who doesn't pay child support. He has like five kids somewhere in like Maine and his ex-wife is always taking him to court.

-- Rose (Act 1, Scene 3)

Importance: These lines indicate just how much Rose dislikes Steve. It also foreshadows the moment later in the play when Rose defends her and Sam's choices around dinner money to Avery, who wants them to co-confess their involvement with him.

I'm not saying ... I'm just ... he's like an older angry white dude with a truck and like ... it's just one of those things ... where like if something goes wrong ...

-- Avery (Act 1, Scene 3)

Importance: In this quote, African-American Avery expresses his concerns about being caught with "dinner money" by Steve.

And that feeling of like ... of like knowing that I made the right choices, was like the best feeling I've ever had.

-- Avery (Act 1, Scene 6)

Importance: In this quote, the usually depressed Avery reveals a moment of happiness to his therapist - a moment in which he feels "real" rather than "fake". See "Themes".

Like everyone else is blurry except for me. I'm like totally in focus. And I like look amazing. And everyone is like: holy shit. That girl looks so amazing.

-- Rose (Act 1, Scene 7)

Importance: In this quote, Rose not only describes how she appears to herself in her fantasies, but also inadvertently describes how she appears to Sam. This is quite ironic, in that Rose has no idea about Sam's feelings for her.

And then – it's weird – I didn't even make the decision – but it was like – the second I thought, like – I give up – my body started moving and I like pushed the blanket off and



like stood up and put on my uniform and like walked outside and walked to the bus and took the bus and walked in here and made up some lie to Sam about why I was late and that was it.

-- Avery (Act 1, Scene 7)

Importance: Avery is revealing the truth about what was behind his actions / attitude in Scene 2. He also reveals the drive to live that propelled him out of the aftermath of his suicide attempt.

And the answer to every terrible situation always seems to be like, Be Yourself, but I have no idea what that fucking means. Who's Myself? Apparently there's some like amazing awesome person deep down inside of me or something? I have no idea who that guy is. I'm always faking it. And it looks to me like everyone else is faking it too. Like everyone is acting out some like stereotype of like ... of like ... exactly ... who you'd think they'd be.

-- Avery (Act 1, Scene 7)

Importance: This quote sums up one of the play's central themes – specifically, the question of what constitutes reality and/or the truth, what constitutes the “fake” or the “false”, and who has the right and/or the responsibility to judge and/or question the difference. See “Themes”.

I mean, I haven't really slept for like the past year and a half. And then when I do sleep I dream about you. And you're like talking to me. Or like fucking some other guy. Or standing in front of me in like a motel room like brushing your teeth. It's never been like this before. I walk down the street and all I'm thinking is Rose. Rose. Rose. It's like the fucking soundtrack to my life. Just your name makes me like ...

-- Sam (Act 2, Scene 2)

Importance: This quote reveals the intensity of Sam's feelings for Rose.

Film can express things that computers never will. Film is a series of photographs separated by split seconds of darkness. Film is light and shadow and it is the light and shadow that were there on the day you shot the film.

-- Avery (Act 2, Scene 4)

Importance: With this quote, Avery sums up not only his own views on the value of film, but the play's apparent views as well.

I always have this urge to like ... I always just kind of want to touch it. Don't you?

-- Skylar (Act 2, Scene 7)

Importance: This quote from new employee Skylar indicates that he's in love with the movies and their magic, in much the same way as Avery.

Look, everything that's ... everything that's like ever happened to me has disappointed me. The world keeps ... so clearly I'm like ... clearly I'm like putting too much faith in



stuff. I mean, I think the truth is that you can't trust anybody ... no, I don't mean that in a bad way. Not like everyone is untrustworthy or something. Just like, don't expect anything. Don't expect things to turn out well in the end.

-- Avery (Act 2, Scene 8)

Importance: Avery reveals what he has learned from his experience working at The Flick. He also makes one of the play's darker, secondary thematic statements.

...I still have like twenty thousand dollars in student loans to pay off and my mom is a secretary. And I don't have a rich dad ... and Sam is thirty-five and he lives in a shitty attic above his crazy parents ... and this is our life – this isn't like a job we have WHILE we go to college. This is what we live – feed ourselves with ... I just think you should think about that ... it's just a like really really intense thing to do to ask someone who's super in debt and someone who didn't even go to college to like give up their jobs to like defend you. It just makes me feel like you don't really get it.

-- Rose (Act 2, Scene 5)

Importance: This quote is important because Rose is accusing Avery of being selfish and insensitive. It also reveals how desperate Rose and Sam are to keep their jobs. The irony is that Avery is right. Rose and Sam are as guilty as Avery..

Maybe I never told you about it, but there's some really good stuff in my life. And sometimes the people you fall in love with fall in love with you back. Sometimes they don't. But sometimes they do. And it's awesome.

-- Sam (Act 2, Scene 8)

Importance: Sam is indicating that he's moved on with his life and that he is at peace with both himself and whatever has happened between him and Rose.